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# SALVATION AND FEMALE HEROICS IN THE PARODOS OF ARISTOPHANES' *LYSISTRATA*

THE separate entrances of the male and female semi-choruses in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* are marked by an unusual bit of stagecraft whose importance to a general theme of the play[1]—the salvation of Athens—has never been fully appreciated. The old men enter the stage at v. 254 each carrying a pair of olive-wood logs, a vine torch and a small pot of live embers.[2] Having heard that Lysistrata and her comrades have taken control of the Acropolis, they come intent on burning down the gates of the citadel and removing the women, whom they liken to the Spartan general Cleomenes who occupied the citadel in 510.[3] The men pile their logs before the closed gate, ignite their torches in the hot coals and then try to set fire to the logs (vv. 307-11). But after a few minutes of hilarious bumbling their plans are foiled for good by the sudden appearance of a semi-chorus of old women who rush in with water-jars on their shoulders or in their hands;[4] these women threaten the men and then finally—with an invocation of the river-god Achelous[5]—douse them and their fire (vv. 381-82), thus effectively ending the threat of

[1] Old Comedy need not, of course, have a consistent plot or general theme to be successful, but in this respect, the *Lysistrata* is an unusually compact and well structured play; see, e.g. : D. Grene, 'The comic technique of Aristophanes', *Hermathena* i (1937) 122-3; A.O. Hulton, 'The women on the Acropolis: a note on the structure of the *Lysistrata', G&R* xix (1972) 32-6; J. Vaio, 'The manipulation of theme and action in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*', *GRBS* xiv (1973) 369-80; M. Rosellini, '*Lysistrata*: une mise en scène de la féminité' in *Aristophanes: les femmes et la cité*, Les cahiers de Fontenroy xvii (1979) 11-32; J. Henderson, '*Lysistrate*: the play and its themes' in J. Henderson (ed.), *Aristophanes: essays in interpretation, YCS* xxvi (1980) 153-218; N. Loraux, 'L'acropole comique', *Anc. Soc.* xi/xii (1980/81) 119-50 [slightly revised and translated = N. Loraux, *The children of Athena,* trans. C. Levine (Princeton 1993) 147-83]; R. Martin, 'Fire on the mountain: Lysistrata and the Lemnian women', *CA* vi (1987) 77-105; and A.M. Bowie, *Aristophanes: myth, ritual and comedy* (Cambridge 1993)178-204.

[2] See Henderson, *Aristophanes: Lysistrata* (Oxford 1987) 98-99, for the staging. I use his text throughout.

[3] Vv. 277-280. Unless otherwise noted, all dates mentioned in this essay are BC. The Athenians besieged the Spartan garrison for two days and then let them depart under a treaty (Hdt. v 72). Later in the play at vv. 672-81 the old men assimilate the women on the Acropolis to Artemisia (the Carian queen who helped Xerxes with his invasion) and the Amazons, the mythical precursors of the Persians, who invaded Attica and besieged the Acropolis (see Bowie (n.1) 184-85 and 200).

[4] Henderson, (n.2)107, points out that the lively iambic-choriambic rhythm of the old women's song suggests that they rush onto the stage with their jugs on their shoulders. These water jugs are called *hydriai* at v. 327 and then *kalpides* at vvs. 358, 370, 400 and 539. In archaic and classical Greek *kalpis* is a poetic equivalent of Attic *hydria*—see LSJ s.v. and Richardson (n.45) 184—that may have ritual associations. Aristophanes, for example, uses it only five times in his extant plays, four times in the parodos of the *Lysistrata* and once at *Frogs* 1339, where Aeschylus parodies a Euripidean monody in which someone, upon awaking from a terrifying dream, orders some servants to 'draw water with their *kalpides*', heat it up and prepare a purificatory bath.

[5] Aristophanes does not give the name of the crowded well or fountain from which they have come. Henderson (n.2) *ad* 328-9 and 377-8, suggests that 'an inquisitive spectator' might imagine that the women rush in from the Enneakrounos or the Kallirrhoe at the foot of the Acropolis. The location of this water source (over which Pisistratus built a famous fountainhouse) is a notorious crux, because Thucydides (ii 15.5) equates it with the Kallirrhoe, a spring southeast of the Acropolis near the banks of the Ilissus river, while Pausanias (i 14.1) says he saw the Pisistratid building in the 'new' agora to the northwest. There is, in fact, archaeological evidence for an archaic well-building in both places; see, e.g., J. Travlos, *A pictorial dictionary of ancient Athens* (New York 1971) 204. E.J. Owen, 'The Enneakrounos Fountain House', *JHS* cii (1982) 222-25, argues that the disagreements between the sources reveal a change in designation over time: in the fifth-century Enneakrounos refers to a fountain house near the Ilissus but in the fourth century the same name is attached to a fountain house in the agora. There are two indications that in 411 Aristophanes is thinking of a spring associated (like the Kallirrhoe) with a river and that this might be important to our interpretation of the parodos: (1) the joke about the λουτρὸν νυμφικόν at vv. 377-78 probably refers to the bridegroom's traditional bath in a river (below n.59); and (2) the woman invoke a (male) river god Achelous (i.e. not a female water nymph) when they pour out their jugs on the old men (v. 381). Although most modern editors and lexicographers think that the equation Achelous = water is simply a grandiloquent expression (e.g. LSJ *s.v.* or Dover *apud* Henderson [n.2] *ad loc.*, who points to its use in Euripides), Ephorus (*FGrH* 70 F20) suggests that this equation belongs to the language of prayer, oaths and other forms of ritual speech. It is, I think, dangerous to ignore Ephorus on this point, since Thucydides mentions the special use of the waters of Kallirrhoe

incineration. In the past, this entire choral routine has been explained in one of two ways: either it is a standard bit of slapstick humour with no importance whatsoever to the development of the comic plot,[6] or it is part of an elaborate sexual pun of Freudian proportions in which the closed entranceway to the Acropolis assaulted by men symbolically prefigures the battle of the sexes that is about to ensue.[7] Of course given the wonderful richness and polyvalence of Aristophanic comedy, it is extremely difficult to deny either of these interpretations. I shall argue here, however, that the staging of the parodos also reflects a very popular type of Greek salvation myth, known to the Athenians from the tragic stage, from the visual arts and from rituals associated with local mystery cults. In light of these parallels drawn from the theatrical and religious life of the city, I shall argue that when the audience saw the women rush onto the stage with their *hydriai*, they would have undoubtedly seen them in a very positive light as saviours of the city—precisely the role they claim for themselves later in the play.

Although I shall be discussing the rather positive images in this play of women as the bringers of salvation and civic order, I want to stress at the outset that this procedure will necessarily result in a lopsided treatment of the female characters in the *Lysistrata* as a whole, for the play provides us with two very *different* groups of women: the younger, sexually active wives of divided loyalty whom we meet at the very beginning of the play and the semi-chorus of older women who remain Lysistrata's staunch allies and help repel the attacks of the men. Aristophanes portrays the first group in a strikingly negative manner: they appear foolish and easily manipulated by their bodily desires, especially the desire for sex and wine.[8] The second group, however, is drawn in a much more positive manner: they pray earnestly to the gods, boast their service in the cults of the city and are introduced to the stage while performing a classic type of female work (carrying water from the fountain), which as we shall see has numerous echoes in popular myths and rituals concerned with salvation.[9] Although in the final analysis both sets of images are designed to put women in their 'proper' place, I shall argue that Aristophanes seems to take special care in investing both Lysistrata and the older women with an unusual kind of authority, a female heroism if you will, that stems from their repeated association with both the day-to-day household economy and with the important civic rituals and cults, upon which the safety of the city ultimately depends.

## I. The dramatic tradition: mortal danger and rescue enacted on the Attic stage

I begin my discussion by closely examining the actual staging of the parodos of the *Lysistrata* and by looking to other dramatic genres, especially tragedy, for some clues as to how a fifth-century Athenian audience might interpret the threat of immolation and the subsequent

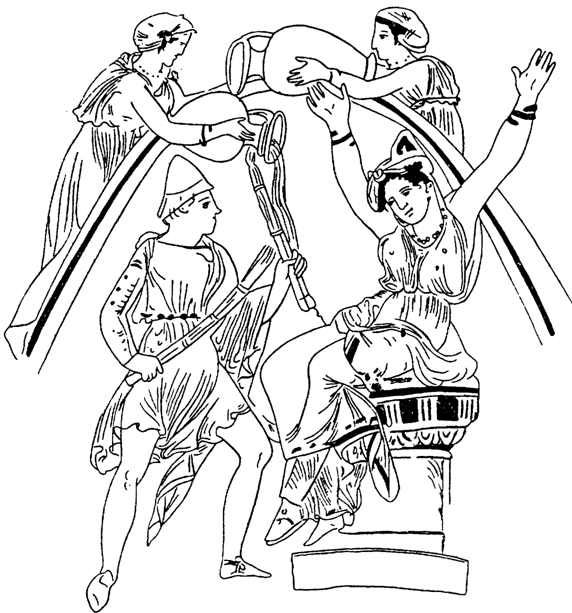
(which he equates with the Enneakrounos) in bridal baths and other rituals (see also n.63 for the special bath of the initiate in the water of the Ilissus at the Lesser Eleusinian *Mysteries*), and we know from Plato that Achelous and the nymphs were worshipped at a spring on the banks of the Ilissus (n.64).

[6] L. Campo, *I drammi satireschi della Grecia antica* (Milan 1940) 196-8, and D.M. MacDowell, 'Clowning and slapstick in Aristophanes', in J. Redwood (ed.), *Themes in drama* x (1988) 10-11. Martin, (n.1) 84, describes the scene as in the style of a Punch-and-Judy farce.

[7] C. Whitman, *Aristophanes and the comic hero* (Cambridge MA 1962) 203 with n.9, L. Spatz, *Aristophanes* (Boston 1974) 96, J. Henderson, *The maculate muse: obscene language in Attic comedy* (Oxford 1991) 95-6, H. Foley, 'The 'female intruder' reconsidered: women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*', *CP* lxxvii (1982) 7, and Loraux (n.1) 138-9, who discusses the repeated double entendre of the words for door and gate in vv. 246-81. Vaio (n.1) 371, expresses a similar idea somewhat differently when he refers to the ramparts of the Acropolis as a 'gigantic chastity belt.'

[8] Henderson (n.2) xxxvi-vii.

[9] The division of female characters by generation and the generally more positive presentation of the older generation is a feature of Old Comedy; see J. Henderson, 'Older women in Attic Old Comedy', *TAPA* cxvii (1987) 105-29.



1. The salvation of Alcmene (c. 325-300): Campanian red-figure neck-amphora, after Cook, *Zeus* vol. iii fig. 323

appearance of the semi-chorus of old women. One important parallel immediately leaps to mind: those tragic scenes in which helpless women and children, standing or sitting at an altar as suppliants, are threatened with immolation by the evil powers-that-be. This type of scene appears at the very beginning of two extant plays of Euripides. The *Heracles* opens with the hero's family—his wife Megara, their young children and his aged father Amphitryon—clinging to the altar of Zeus Soter. Lycus, after failing to persuade them to surrender, threatens to stack up logs about the altar and burn them to death (*Heracles* 240-46). Hermione makes a similar threat after Andromache takes refuge at the shrine of Thetis in the beginning of the *Andromache* (v. 257), and such scenes seem to have been popular enough for Aristophanes himself to poke fun at them in his *Women at the Thesmophoria*, where the gender roles are reversed and the chorus of women threaten to bring wood and incinerate Euripides' 'Kinsman'; after he takes up a position at the altar of the Two Goddesses (vv. 726-30).[10] One might argue, then, that Lysistrata's flight to the sanctuary of the Acropolis[11] and the arrival of the torch-bearing men generally reflects such dramatic opening scenes, although it must be conceded that the threats to incinerate suppliants are never actually carried out on the tragic stage, at least not in the plays that have survived. This objection can perhaps be countered by adducing a similar scene from Euripides' lost *Alcmene*, in which Alcmene's husband Amphitryon—returning home from a long absence—threatens to kill his wife upon learning she is pregnant, presumably with another man's child. When she flees to an altar for sanctuary, he piles up firewood around it and sets it ablaze with torches. Zeus,

[10] Henderson, (n.2) *ad loc.*, discusses in detail the specific verbal parallels between the parodos in the *Lysistrata* and the Euripidean plays, noting, for instance, that the description of the assembly of the pyre by the old-men in the *Lysistrata* recalls the language of Lycus' threat to Megara and her children at Euripides' *Heracles* 240-46. This stage tradition of threatened immolation is picked up in later comedy; see A.W. Gomme and F.H. Sandbach, *Menander: a commentary* (Oxford 1973) 535-6, for discussion. Such threats must have been dramatically plausible, as fire could force suppliants to flee without actually harming them or polluting the site. Indeed, the scholiast at *Andromache* 257 reports that this use of fire was 'common practice'.

[11] Some readers may think inappropriate my comparison of Lysistrata and company with helpless fugitives and suppliants, since the former have seized the Acropolis by force and will hold it successfully throughout the play. In the larger scope of the drama this is true, but it is significant that during the parodos itself, at least, the superior position of women on the Acropolis is ignored, especially in the emotionally charged entrance of the chorus of old women (vv. 319-49), who are clearly motivated by a very real fear that their comrades might be burned at any minute, see, e.g.: πέτου, πέτου, ... | πρὶν ἐμπεπρῆσθαι Καλύκην | τε καὶ Κρίτυλλαν(321-22); their plea to Athena: ἀραμένη ταῖσιν ἐμαῖς | δημότισιν καομέναις | φέρουσ' ὕδωρ βοηθῶ (333-35); the reported threats of the men ὡς πυρὶ τὰς ... γυναῖκας ἀνθρακεύειν (340); a second plea to Athena: ὦ θεά, μή ποτ' ἐγὼ πιμπραμένας ἴδοιμι (341); and their final plea: καὶ σε καλῶ ξύμμαχον, ὦ | Τριτογένει', ἥν τις ἐκεί-|νας ὑποπιμπρῆσιν, | φέρειν ὕδωρ μεθ' ἡμῶν (346-49). These repeated and fearful references to the fire are, moreover, imbedded in a particularly serious prayer; see n.21 below.

however, in response to the prayers of Alcmene, sends a rain shower to extinguish the flames.[12] This last scene appears on three south Italian vase-paintings of the late fourth century which depict the rain shower as two women who stand on either side of a rainbow and pour *hydriai* of water down on the flames (see FIGS. 1 and 2); these women are presumably the Hyades ('Rain-Nymphs') acting on the orders of Zeus, who himself stands nearby in the upper register of the painting shown in figure 2.[13] Since the latter scene with Zeus was painted by Python (an artist who often depicts scenes from the tragic stage), scholars once argued that the construction and lighting of the pyre and its subsequent dousing were performed on the stage in the Euripidean version, with Zeus and the Hyades actually appearing on the roof of the stage building. In recent times, however, a more cautious consensus has emerged that the scene depicted on these vases probably was not enacted on the stage, but rather described in detail by a messenger, who went on to recount how Zeus miraculously transformed the spot into a bower, where Alcmene gave birth to Heracles and his brother Iphicles.[14] It is tempting, then, to suggest that in his staging of the *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes may also be recalling the messenger speech from Euripides' lost *Alcmene* (or perhaps some popular painting it inspired), for in both plays virtuous women ensconced upon sacred ground are first threatened with immolation by angry torch-bearing men and then unexpectedly saved by females who extinguish the flames by pouring water from their *hydriai*.

2. The salvation of Alcmene (c. 325-300): Paestan red-figure bell-crater signed by Python, after Cook, *Zeus* vol. iii pl. xli

We should note, then, how Aristophanes, by evoking this stock dramatic scene of suppliants threatened by fire, subtly undermines the male semi-chorus from the very outset of the play by assimilating them to rash, angry characters (usually male, like Lycus or Amphitryon) who impiously threaten the helpless with fire. We must, however, also consider a handful of other possible dramatic sources for such a scene—plays which evoke the theme of salvation by water but place little or no negative emphasis on the bringer of the fiery threat. This is especially true

[12] R. Engelmann, *Archäologische Studien zu den Tragikern* (Berlin 1900) 52-62; L. Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique* (Paris 1926) 242-8; T.B.L. Webster, *Studies in later Greek comedy*² (Manchester 1970) 87-98.

[13] *LIMC* s.v. 'Alkmene' nos. 5-7 (= 'Hyades' nos. 1-3). For discussion, see: A.S. Murray, 'The Alcmene vase formerly in Castle Howard', *JHS* xi (1890) 225-30 pl. VI; A.B. Cook, *Zeus: a study in ancient religion* iii (Cambridge 1940) 506-24; A.D. Trendall and T.B.L. Webster, *Illustrations of Greek drama* (London 1971) nos. III.3.6-8; and E. Diehl, *Die Hydria: Formgeschichte und Verwendung im Kult des Altertums* (Mainz am Rhein 1964) 174. Cook is generally very good on this material, but he goes wrongly astray when he argues that the *hydria*-pouring maidens are merely an artistic convention indicating the golden rain of Zeus, which in later sources is thought to impregnate Alcmene with Heracles. Diehl, *ibid.* 173-76, rightly connects the Hyades with Zeus in his traditional role as sender of rain. According to fifth-century sources, the Hyades were five or seven in number (see n.18 below), but see Beazley (n.23 below) for the convention in Greek vase painting of using two or three individuals to indicate a larger group.

[14] Webster (n.12) 87-96 and Murray (n.13) 229-30.

of two lost tragedies concerned with the fiery death of Semele and the birth of Dionysus. Both Aeschylus and Sophocles wrote plays entitled *Hydrophoroi* ('The Water-Carriers') in which the chorus of women presumably march on stage carrying jugs of water.[15] Scholars usually assume that these women eventually used this water to wash the newborn Dionysus after he has been saved from Semele's burning bed. The extant fragments of both plays are so few, however, that we cannot reconstruct the role of the chorus with any confidence.[16] One can, however, get some sense of the stage action from a passing reference in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where the chorus of bacchantes invoke the local Theban spring Dirke as the daughter of Achelous and justify their prayer as follows: '... for it was you who once received the infant of Zeus in your springs, at that time when Zeus snatched him from the immortal fire (destined as he was) for his thigh (i.e. for a second birth).'[17] Plutarch, a native of Boeotia, associates this story with another Boeotian spring, the Cissussa near Haliartus (*Lys.* 28.7) and in other versions, several watery female characters are implicated, described variously as *nymphai*, Nysai, nursemaids (*tithēnai*), or Hyades–the same water-bearing maidens who (as we saw above) save Alcmene from the fire lit by her raging husband.[18]

Modern scholars tend to assume that, in the lost myth, Dirke or the Hyades simply swaddle and comfort the newborn infant. The Hellenistic poet Meleager, however, apparently knew a version in which the nymphs actually extinguished the fire with their waters and thereby saved the child (*Pal. Anth.* ix 331):[19]

[15] For Aeschylus' lost *Semele* or *Hydrophoroi* see frags. 219-24 (Radt) and for Sophocles' lost *Hydrophoroi* see frags. 670-74 (Radt). Plays in which the chorus enter the orchestra holding containers of liquid are actually quite rare. The most famous extant example is, of course, Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, where the chorus march on stage holding libations to be poured at Agamamnon's grave. See *LIMC* s.v. 'Electra I' nos. 1-49 for the scene on vase paintings of the meeting of Electra and Orestes at the tomb of their father. Electra and her companions are shown holding a variety of vases and baskets, including *hydriai* (e.g. nos. 15, 19, 35, 39, 41).

[16] For each play we have only three or four tiny fragments consisting of a single word or phrase. Only one preserves a complete trimeter. Bergk and Vürtheim (see the bibliography cited by Radt *ad* fr. 674) have argued that Sophocles' version was a satyr play. See Diehl (n.13) 193-94 for the most recent discussion of the fragments. If H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Appendix' to H.W. Smyth, *Aeschylus* 2 (Cambridge MA 1981) 566-71, is correct in assigning *Xantriae* frag. 168 (Radt) to Aeschylus' *Hydrophoroi*, then the chorus of water-bearers was already on stage when the disguised Hera enters, i.e. long before the fiery birth of Dionysus. According to this reading, then, the chorus is simply coming back from the well or fountain (*cf.* the chorus returning from their laundry in the *Hippolytus*) and then later on make use of the fortuitous presence of the water to wash the child, or (as I suggest below) to extinguish the fire and save the child.

[17] *Bacchae* 519-25. My translation follows J. Roux, *Euripide: les Bacchantes* (Paris 1972) *ad loc.*, who sensibly interprets μηρῷ here as a dative that indicates the ultimate destination of the infant. R. Seaford, *Euripides: Bacchae* (Warminster 1996) *ad loc.*, citing Ginouvès (n.63) 235-38, suggests that Dirce simply washed the blood and placental material from the new-born baby. Given the fiery birth of the (still mortal) infant and the echatologically charged meaning of the 'second birth', a closer parallel might be the rites of passing the child through fire and then washing him (see n.49).

[18] For the Nysai, see M.P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman age* (Lund 1957) 111-12. Hesiod, frag. 291 (M-W), names five Hyades, while Pherecydes, *FGrHist* 3 F90, and Hippias, *FGrHist* 6 F9, say there were seven and identify them closely with the stars in the head of the bull in the Pleiades constellation, whose heliacal rising was traditionally thought to signal the start of the rainy season in Greece. According to later sources, the Hyades were the nurses of Dionysus whom Zeus metamorphosed into stars because they saved his son. See *RE* s.v. 'Hyaden' and *LIMC* s.v. 'Hyades' for a full survey of the later literary sources, especially the astronomical writings. The precise moment when the Hyades or nurses save Dionysus is not (to my knowledge) actually depicted in early Greek art, but in later Roman art we find two or more nymphs pouring water from a *hydria* over the head or feet of the infant Dionysus; see R. Merkelbach, *Die Hirten des Dionysos: Die Dionysos-Mysterien der römischen Kaiserzeit und der bukolische Roman des Longus* (Stuttgart 1988) plates 30, 43, 56, 58 and 83. Nonnus calls the Hyades 'the daughters of Lamus', who was a Boeotian river-god (e.g. *Dion.* ix 28 and xiv 146; see *RE* s.v. 'Hyaden' 2621-22).

[19] I use the text, translation and interpretation of A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, (eds.), *The Greek anthology. Hellenistic epigrams* (Cambridge 1965) 252 no. 127.

αἱ νύμφαι τὸν Βάκχον, ὅτ' ἐκ πυρὸς ἥλαθ' ὁ κοῦρος,
νίψαν ὑπὲρ τέφρης ἄρτι κυλιόμενον·
τοὔνεκα σὺν νύμφαις Βρόμιος φίλος· ἢν δέ νιν εἴργῃς
μίσγεσθαι, δέξῃ πῦρ ἔτι καιόμενον.

The Nymphs washed Bacchus when the lord leapt from the fire
and upon the ashes was just then turning.
Therefore when Bromios is with the Nymphs, he is friendly,
but if you prevent their union,
you will receive the fire still burning.

In this somewhat frivolous poem about the necessity of mixing wine (= Dionysus) with water (= the Nymphs), Meleager clearly assumes that were it not for the timely intervention of the nymphs, Dionysus would have continued to burn. The mythological background to this epigram, when combined with other hints discussed above and in note 18, points to a far more active and important role for the chorus in saving the infant Dionysus. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that the choruses of the two lost *Hydrophoroi* were made up either of water-nymphs or of Theban woman who save the still mortal Dionysus from the fire and are subsequently transformed into nymphs by a grateful Zeus. Unfortunately here, too, we run up against the traditional objection that it is unlikely that Aeschylus and Sophocles would have actually staged the immolation of Semele and the rescue of the baby Dionysus. The titles of the two plays plainly suggest, however, that (as in the parodos of Aeschylus' *Choephori*) the chorus in both of these lost plays marched—or perhaps even ran—onto the stage with *hydriai* in hand, precisely like the semi-chorus of women in the *Lysistrata*.

If we turn to the legends concerning the death and apotheosis of Dionysus' half-brother Heracles, we find some equally interesting traditions. The earliest mention of the story is a brief allusion to a local Boeotian legend about the river Duras, which according to Herodotus appeared from the ground to help Heracles as he was burning on Mt. Oeta (vii 198: τὸν βοηθέοντα τῷ Ἡρακλέϊ καιομένῳ).[20] The manner in which Herodotus refers to this action—the combination of the verb βοηθεῖν with the passive participle καιομένῳ—may be significant, since in their earnest prayer to Athena the semi-chorus of women in the *Lysistrata* use a very similar construction to describe their own actions as they race on stage to rescue the besieged Athenian women (vv. 33-35): ἀραμένη ταῖσιν ἐμαῖς | δημότισιν καομέναις | φέρουσ' ὕδωρ βοηθῶ.[21] A series of fifth-century Attic and South Italian vase-paintings portrays this apparently well known story. In the earliest version—dating to around 460—a dead or dying Heracles sprawls on top of a pyre of burning wood (see FIG. 3). On the right side a

[20] Stein, *Herodotos* (Berlin 1882), suggests *ad loc.* that the story was an aetiology for the hot baths at Thermopylae. There is evidence that in the fifth century Athenians regularly connected hot baths with Heracles; see Ar. *Clouds* 1050 and the scholia. The hot springs at Himera on Sicily were said to have appeared (in the form of water nymphs) to refresh Heracles when he was weary from his labours in the West (Diod. Sic. iv 23), a story apparently known elsewhere in the West Greek world, judging by the connection of Heracles and water-nymphs at curative springs. See M. Bieber, 'Archaeological contributions to Roman religion', *Hesperia* xiv (1945) 272-77, who argues that a type of Roman fountain relief depicting Heracles reclining on rocks (see *LIMC* s.v. 'Herakles' nos. 1322-28) is related iconographically to a much earlier series of fourth-century coins from Himera that depict Heracles reclining near the springs mentioned by Diodorus.

[21] W. Horn, *Gebet und Gebetsparodie in den Komödien des Aristophanes, Erlanger Beitrage zur Sprach- und Kunstwissenschaft* xxxviii (Nürnberg 1970) 60, includes this invocation among his examples of 'echten Gebete', while Henderson (n.2) *ad loc.* notes the sincerity of the prayer, unmarred as it is by any ridiculous asides. The corresponding lines in the antistrophe of their hymn (346-49, quoted above in n.11) again urge Athena, in the guise of Tritogeneia, to help bring water to the fire. L.R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek city states* i (1906) 265-9, argues that the most plausible etymology for 'Tritogeneia' is 'Water-born' and that Aristophanes uses it here to stress Athena's connection with fresh water (e.g. lakes and rivers).

3. Heracles' pyre (early version, c. 460): fragmentary Attic red-figure bell-crater, after Clairmont, *AJA lvii* (1953) plate 45

man—probably Philoctetes—walks briskly away with a bow in his hand, while a barefooted nymph rushes away to refill her *hydria*. Athena stands on the left with her face averted from the fire, watching the arrival of another full *hydria*, presumably in the hands of another nymph. Light streams of grey paint on either side of Heracles' head seem to indicate that the water is being poured over the hero and his funeral pyre. The reverse side (not shown here) is even more fragmentary, but seems to show a continuation of the same scene: amidst the flurry of feet one can make out at least three barefoot females dashing to and fro, one with a *hydria* in her hand.[22]

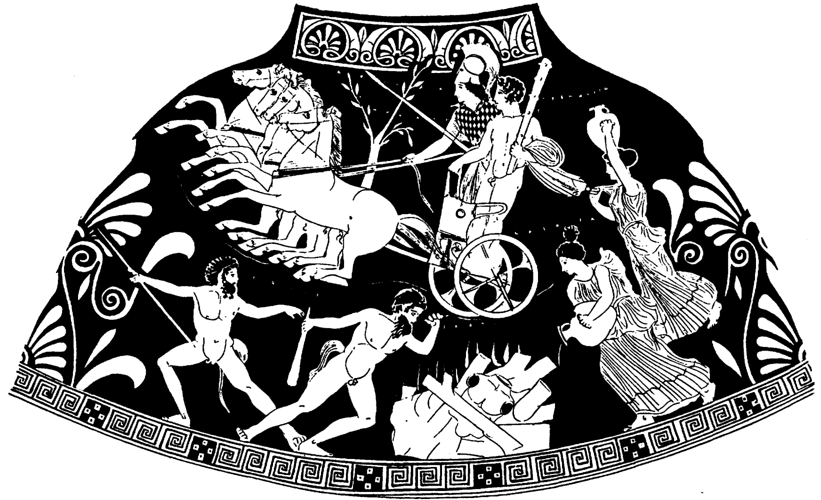
In the late-classical Attic and South Italian treatments of this scene, dating between 420 and 320 (see FIGS. 4 and 5), only an empty breastplate remains on the burnt pyre as Athena or Nike escorts Heracles in a chariot upwards to Olympus.[23] Since two satyrs steal the club of Heracles in one painting (FIG. 4) and a satyr dances before the chariot in another (FIG. 5), scholars have long suspected that these later paintings recall the staging of an Attic satyr play—perhaps Sophocles' lost *Heracles Satyricus*.[24] They suggest, moreover, that this later tradition transplanted the pyre from Boeotia to somewhere within the borders of Attica, since the vase in Munich (FIG. 4) shows an olive tree behind the chariot-horses and labels two of the female water-carriers 'Arethousa' and 'Premnousa', the latter attested elsewhere as the name of a nat-

[22] *LIMC* s.v. 'Herakles' no. 2909 (= 'Hyades' no. 4). For detailed discussion, see C. Clairmont, 'Studies in Greek mythology and vase painting. 1: Heracles on the pyre', *AJA* lvii (1953) 85-89, plates 45-48.

[23] *LIMC* s.v. 'Herakles' nos. 2916-20 (= 'Hyades' nos. 5-9). For detailed discussion and bibliography, see Cook, (n.13) 512-16, and J.D. Beazley, *Etruscan vase painting* (Oxford 1947) 103-5, who reviews all the known examples in his discussion of two similar Faliscan vases in the Villa Giulia and suggests that the scene is an extract of a larger, many-figured traditional depiction (a lost wall painting perhaps?) of the apotheosis of Heracles. For the most recent assessment of these paintings, see: H. A. Shapiro, '*Heros theos*: the death and apotheosis of Heracles', *CW* lxxvii (1983) 7-18; and J. Boardman, 'Heracles in extremis' in E. Bohr and W. Martini (eds.), *Studien zür Mythologie und Vasenmalerei: Festschrift für K. Schauenburg* (Mainz am Rhein 1988) 127-32.

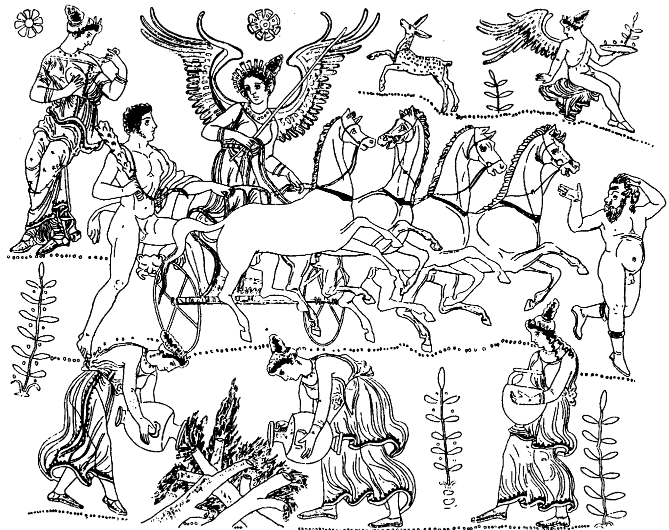
[24] Cook (n.13) 513-15. D.F. Sutton, *The Greek satyr play,* Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie xc (Meisenheim am Glan 1980) 90, dates the vase in my figure 5 more narrowly to 430-420 and suggests that it might depict Sophocles' *Heracles satyricus.*

ural spring in Attica.[25] One wonders if the names of the nymphs reflect an otherwise lost Athenian tradition of aetiological myth, which—like the story about the Duras river in Boeotia—traces the origin of these two Attic springs back to the crucial help they gave to Heracles in his time of need.



4. Heracles' pyre (later version, c. 420-400): Attic red-figure pelike, after Cook, *Zeus* vol. iii fig. 325

There are, however, some obvious and important differences between the earlier and later depictions of Heracles on the pyre. The earlier scene (FIG. 3) shows the moment of or before the death of Heracles: Athena is at his side, water is streaming down over the burning hero and the nymphs seem to be racing to his side as if every second counted; in their agitated movements they appear somewhat like a small town bucket-brigade trying desperately to extinguish a burning house. All of these details are consistent with a rescue operation, but not with the ritual dousing of a funeral pyre after the body has been consumed in the flames. I suspect that this earlier attested version of the story was similar to the Boeotian legend known to Herodotus, where the appearance of the river Duras is



5. Heracles' pyre (later version, c. 360-340): Apulian red-figure volute crater, after Cook, *Zeus* vol. iii fig. 324

[25] Hesychius s.v. Πρεμνουσία· κρήνη ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ. Arethousa is a popular name for a water nymph or a natural spring in many parts of Greece. Beazley (n.23) criticizes the traditional interpretation—see, e.g., Cook (n.13) 515 and *LIMC* 'Hyades' nos. 4-9—that these young women were the 'Hyades', arguing instead that the names 'Arethousa' and 'Premnousa' designate springs, while the Hyades can only rightly be said to pour down rain water from the sky (as in the Alcmene paintings). Maas (n.36) 38 n. 25, similarly distinguishes between rain- and groundwater when he calls the water-pourers in the Alcmene paintings (my figures 1-2) 'Clouds' and those in the Heracles' scenes (my figures 3-5) 'well-nymphs'. This distinction cannot be maintained, however, in the (admittedly late) literary sources where, e.g., the Hyades are identified as the daughters of a river and the saviours of Dionysus (see n.18).

said to 'help Heracles *as he was burning*' on Mt. Oeta—in other words the river water rescued him from the flames. In the later scenes (FIGS. 4 and 5), however, Athena or Nike is shown aloft in a chariot with Heracles, while the nymphs stand by placidly dousing the remains of the pyre and the empty armour of the hero.[26] Scholars have rightly linked this change in the series to the introduction of the story of Heracles' miraculous apotheosis and there has been much discussion of the usefulness of these vase-paintings in understanding *inter alia* whether Athenians in the audience of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* would have interpreted the death of Heracles at the end of that play in a positive or negative light.[27]

For my purposes here, it suffices to point out that if Aristophanes is drawing on some local Attic version of the story of Heracles saved on the pyre, the frenetic movements of the female half-chorus in the *Lysistrata*, and their direct appeals to Athena to help them extinguish the fire (vv. 340-45) all point to the earlier attested version of the myth, in which such actions would have ended in the *bodily* salvation of the hero. We see a similar split in the tradition concerning the fate of one of Heracles' descendants, the Lydian king Croesus, who is saved from a fiery death by a sudden cloudburst.[28] Herodotus says that after his rescue Croesus is simply kept alive and given safe haven in Cyrus' court, but in Bacchylides' poem the watery intervention results in a somewhat paradoxical victory over death, for after the king is saved he ceases his former earthly life altogether and is translated to the mysterious land of the Hyperboreans,[29] a place not unlike the White Island where Achilles finds his final home, after he, too, was snatched from the pyre by his mother Thetis.[30]

There are, then, two dramatic or mythological traditions of water-bearing females: one tradition stresses the helplessness of the suppliant victims (usually women, but old men and children sometimes appear) and the barbarous cruelty of the men who bring the fire; the second tradition, however, involves male victims (heroes or great kings like Croesus) who are at the moment of the story terribly weak, either brought down by misfortune or in the case of the newborn Dionysus unable yet to reveal their greatness. It is, I think, important to stress that in this second tradition a parallel (and eschatologically more complicated) version of the story regularly develops in which a victim like Heracles or Croesus is saved, but nonetheless ceases his human life altogether and moves to another, better life on Olympus or at the edges of the

[26] *LIMC* sv. 'Herakles' no. 2917 is the one exception: Nike drives Heracles away, while Athena appears to be ordering the nymphs who—in a somewhat animated manner—douse the remains of Heracles' armour as it smoulders on the pyre. T.H. Carpenter points out to me the curious fact that in the earlier version Heracles wears his traditional garb (the lion skin), while the later Attic and South Italian pots show a breastplate on the embers of the fire—despite the fact that Heracles is *never* depicted wearing hoplite armour in Attic or South Italian red-figure vase-paintings.

[27] See most recently, e.g.: P. Holt, 'The end of the *Trachiniai* and the fate of Herakles', *JHS* cix (1987) 69-80 (he discusses these vase paintings briefly on p. 73); and M. Davies, *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (Oxford 1991) xx-xxii.

[28] Herodotus i 86-87 and Bacchylides 3. For a roughly contemporary vase painting of the same scene, see A.H. Smith, 'Illustrations to Bacchylides', *JHS* xviii (1898) 267-69 with fig. 1, and Cook (n.13) 519-22 with fig. 328. J.D. Beazley, 'Hydria-fragments in Corinth', *Hesperia* (1955) 305-19 (esp. 319) and S. Morris, *Daidalos and the origins of Greek art* (Princeton 1994) 285-86, discuss an Attic red-figure scene that may depict a tragic performance of the salvation of Croesus on the pyre.

[29] C. Segal, 'Croesus on the pyre: Herodotus and Bacchylides', *WS* lxxxiv (1971) 38-51, argues that Bacchylides' Croesus (like the vase-painting discussed by Smith (n.28)) is a proud epic hero who refuses to endure a humiliating fate, while Herodotus presents a man tragically stripped of his external, royal goods and forced to acquire a more permanent inward vision. Although Segal does not discuss the differing versions of the rescue of Croesus, one could easily extend his comparison by noting that Bacchylides gives a traditional (albeit non-Iliadic) 'epic' version: the man is whisked away to the Elysian fields (see the next note).

[30] For the non-lliadic version of Achilles and the White Island and similar cases of translation (e.g. Memnon), see E. Rohde, *Psyche: the cult of the souls and belief in immortality among the Greeks*, trans. W.B. Hillis (London 1925) 55-67, and L.M. Slatkin, *The power of Thetis: allusion and interpretation in the Iliad* (Berkeley 1992) 26-7 and 42, who notes the paradox of how snatching a hero like Achilles or Memnon from the pyre 'preserves' him from death, while at the same time it denies him his former heroic life.

earth. In each instance I suspect that an original version of the myth (we might call it the 'salvation-from-bodily-destruction story') has subsequently been connected with or assimilated to similar themes about water as a source of permanent salvation in the afterlife. It is to these eschatological beliefs that I now turn.

## II. The Liturgical Tradition: Death and Personal Salvation in Attic Mystery Cults

Unlike the material adduced in the previous section concerning the conventions of bodily salvation in Attic drama and vase painting, the sources for the mystery cults of classical Athens are notoriously scant, a fact that will force me at some points to look to later or non-Attic evidence for comparison. I should also stress the fact that in their mystery cults the ancient Greeks did not often distinguish the goal of bodily salvation in this life from the goal of ultimate salvation in the next. Indeed, the ancient mysteries appear in many ways to be the logical outgrowth of votive cults which focused originally on 'salvation' in times of illness or danger but gradually included 'salvation' after death.[31] This evolution is obvious in the different versions of the fates of Heracles and Croesus discussed in the previous section and is also reflected in the historical development of the verb σῴζειν which originally meant 'to rescue from death' but as early as the late fifth century comes to refer to salvation of the other sort as well.[32] In the parodos of the *Frogs*, for example, Aristophanes has the chorus of Eleusinian[33] initiates use the verb twice in the context of hymns, first to the goddess Soteira[34] and then to Demeter herself. Given the context of a cult hymn sung in the underworld by dead initiates, one must indeed call this a generalized prayer for 'salvation' in the eschatological sense.[35]

Towards the end of the parodos of the *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes unexpectedly turns our attention to precisely this type of salvation for the dying. As we have seen, when they first come on stage, the goal of the chorus is absolutely clear: to extinguish the threatening fire and save the lives of the women on the Acropolis (see n. 11 above). A curious thing happens, however, after they get there. Since each old man holds a pot of fiery coals and a torch in some

[31] Samothracian initiates, for example, were thought to have special protection against shipwreck or drowning, and Mithraic initiates, many of whom were professional soldiers, believed themselves to be safer in battle. See Z. Stewart, 'L'ascesa delle religioni soteriologiche', in R.B. Bandinelli (ed.), *La società ellenistica: economia, diritto, religione*, Storia e civilità dei greci 8 (Milan 1977) 530-61, and W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge MA 1987) 12-29.

[32] LSJ, s.v. σῴζω, imply wrongly that the 'eschatological' meaning is a later Christian development; see, e.g., my discussion (below in n.35) of *Frogs* 378-81 and Orphic frag. 31. In their discussion of the related noun (s.v. σωτηρία, definition I 4) LSJ do, however, allow that the generalized meaning 'salvation' appears earlier in the Septuagint (a Hellenistic production). The word σωτηρία clearly had a similar meaning in the Orphic tradition as well; see M.L. West, *The orphic poems* (Oxford 1985) 28 n.79.

[33] F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit*, RGVV xxxiii (Berlin 1974) 40-50 and K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Frogs* (Oxford 1993) 61-63.

[34] The precise identity of this goddess is uncertain. Since Demeter is addressed in the antistrophe, the most logical candidate here in the strophe would be Kore. There are, however, reasons for believing that Soteira could refer to Demeter, and J.A. Haldane, 'Who is Soteira (Aristophanes *Frogs* 379)?', *CQ* 14 (1968) 207-209, building on the claim of the scholia, argues plausibly that Soteira is Athena. For a recent discussion, see Graf (n.33) 47-8 n. 37 and Dover (n.33) *ad loc.*

[35] West (n.32). At vv. 378-81, the chorus exhort each other to pray to the goddess Soteira, 'she, whom people say will keep our chorus safe (σώσειν) from one season to the next,' and then at v. 388 they pray to Demeter: σῷζε τὸν σαυτῆς χορόν. See the similar cultic use of σῴζειν in a late third-century papyrus (P. Gûrob 1 = Orphic frag. 31 [Kern] col. i lines 5 and 20), which directs the imperative σῶισομ με at Brimo (= Persephone) and several other deities connected with 'Orphic' and 'Dionysiac' cults. For discussion of this important and frequently overlooked document, see West, *ibid.* 170-71, and Burkert (n.31) 70-71, who note the eclectic nature of this document which has Eleusinian, Orphic, and Dionysian elements and refers to the 'Orphic' myth of Dionysus Zagreus.

state of ignition, the women do not pour their *hydriai* on the pyre itself, but rather over each of the individual men and their fire-making apparatus. The effect, as we shall see, is to personalize the effects of the 'saving waters' on the men themselves. Indeed, in the ensuing dialogue both choruses refer to the water as a ritual bath of sorts, which promises rejuvenation and rebirth for the old men. Thus, in terms of the two dramatic traditions discussed above, Aristophanes moves from what we might call the 'Alcmene model' (the rescue of helpless females in sanctuary) to the later type of Heracles story, in which a formerly heroic but now dying male is saved and then reborn or reinvigorated in some fashion.

The popular fifth-century stories about the salvation of Heracles and Croesus or the second birth of Dionysus certainly show how easily such myths could be assimilated to the eschatological framework common to ancient mystery cults, but unfortunately the general secrecy surrounding these cults prevents us from knowing to what extent stories of rescue by water did indeed figure as charter myths for the salvation of initiates in fifth-century Athens. Numerous hints, however, point in this direction. The most direct evidence is an intriguing late Hellenistic text that does indeed combine initiation with a rescue scene that has close affinities to both the salvation of Heracles on Mt. Oeta and the intervention of Aristophanes' chorus of old women. It is preserved in the so-called 'Philinna Papyrus,' a first-century collection of hexametrical charms that includes a curious incantation against *katakauma*, a 'burning condition' (either an inflamed rash or a burning eye-disease).[36]

> [<σεμνοτάτης δὲ> θεᾶς παῖς μ]υστοδόκος κατεκα[ύθη,
> ἀκρ]οτάτῳ δ' ἐν ὄρει κατεκαύθη· <πῦρ δ' ἐλάφυξεν>
> ἑπτὰ λύκων κρήνας, ἑπτ' ἄρκτων, ἑπτὰ λεόντων·
> ἑπτὰ δὲ παρθενικαὶ κυανώπιδες ἤρυσαν ὕδωρ
> κάλπισι κυανέαις καὶ ἐκοίμισαν ἀκάματον πῦρ.

[The son of the <holiest> goddess,] the initiate was set aflame. On the highest mount he was set aflame <and the fire gulped down> seven springs of wolves, seven of bears, seven of lions, but seven dark-eyed maidens drew water with dark blue jugs and extinguished the untiring fire.

This spell consists of a type of mythological narrative known to students of ancient magic as a *historiola* in which events occurring in the mythic past are narrated as models for the desired action of a magic spell.[37] In this case we find an initiate (μυστοδόκος) assimilated–if the restoration is correct–to a divinity or semi-divine hero, who (like Heracles in the myths discussed above) is apparently burning on a mountain-top. As in the parodos of the *Lysistrata*, salvation arrives in the form of a group of women who pour water from their *kalpides* (see n. 4) and quench the life-threatening fire.

Scribal errors and metrical anomalies in the papyrus, itself a first-century production, suggest to most scholars that this hexametrical charm has been copied more than once, but the precise date of its original composition has been debated. Its first editor suspected that the description of the maidens in the final couplet had a 'Hellenic ring' to it, worthy of the classical period, but

[36] I give the hexameters as they have been restored and supplemented by P. Maas, 'The Philinna papyrus', *JHS* lxii (1942) 33-8 and L. Koenen, 'Der brennende Horosknabe: zu einem Zauberspruch des Philinna-Papyrus', *Chr. d'E.* xxxvii (1962) 167-74. The square brackets indicate restorations of lacunae in the papyri, while the diamond brackets at the beginning of line 1 and the end of line 2 contain supplements added by Koenen to render the first two lines as full hexameters.

[37] For the most recent discussion and numerous examples, see: W.M. Brashear, 'The Greek magical papyri: an introduction and survey', *ANRW* ii 18.5 (1995) 3438-40; and D. Frankfurter, 'Narrating power: the theory and practice of the magical *historiola* in ritual spells', in M. Meyer and P. Mirecki (eds.), *Ancient magic and ritual power*, Religions of the Graeco-Roman World cxxix (Leiden 1995) 457-76.

he could not find any early Greek source for the activity of the seven water-bearers.[38] The presence of the *mystodokos* ('initiate')[39] and close similarities to a popular Egyptian myth about Isis and the child Horus then led to a consensus that these verses were borrowed from a hymn or liturgy associated with some Hellenistic, syncretistic cult like the mysteries of Isis.[40] More recent studies, however, trace this mythological vignette back to much earlier Egyptian and Mesopotamian healing incantations[41] and suggest that such eastern myths, borrowed in the context of healing rites, could very easily lie behind some early Greek myths concerned with personal salvation, for example the Eleusinian story of Demophon in the fire[42] and the myths discussed above concerning the immolation and salvation of Dionysus and Heracles.[43] In fact with a slight change in the first line—restoring Διὸς παῖς instead of Θεᾶς παῖς—we could even understand the *mystodokos* himself to be either Heracles or Dionysus.[44]

It is, of course, important to ask at this point whether similar eschatological myths could have been known to Aristophanes' audience. The vase paintings of the pyre and apotheosis of Heracles certainly reveal the popularity of this type of story in the city, but they are not explicitly linked (as is the vignette in the 'Philinna Papyrus') to an actual mystery cult. On the other hand, the author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, a poet probably working in Attica or Eleusis between 650-550 BC,[45] seems to have known some similar myth (probably borrowed from the East, see n. 42), in which the daughters of Celeus play a role reminiscent of the water nymphs in the Dionysian birth legends and of the unidentified maidens in the 'Philinna papyrus'. First of all, they are introduced to us in the guise of water-bearers when they first meet the disguised Demeter (vv. 105-110):

[38] Maas (n.36) 38: '...the two soft-flowing hexameters about the seven maidens have a true Hellenic ring; ἐπῳδαί of this kind may have been those which appealed to Aeschylus, Pindar and Plato.' Maas knew about the later vase paintings of the salvation of Heracles, but dismissed them because only two or three nymphs take part in the rescue. But see Beazley (n.23) for the convention in Greek vase-painting of using two or three individuals to indicate a larger group.

[39] The adjective literally means 'receiving the mysteries' or 'receiving the initiates' and only appears in one other place in extant Greek (Arist. *Clouds* 303), where it apparently refers to Eleusis. S. Eitrem, 'Varia', *SO* 29 (1952) 130, suggested unconvincingly that the Aristophanic passage actually referred to Socrates' *phrontistêrion*, which is destroyed by fire at the end of the play, and argued that if we restore δόμος or οἶκος in line 1 of the incantation, we can understand a reference to Aristophanes' play.

[40] The groundbreaking study was by Koenen (n.36), who was followed by, e.g.: A. Henrichs, 'Zum Text einiger Zauberpapyri', *ZPE* 6 (1970) 204-9 and E.N. O'Neil in N.D. Betz (ed.), *The Greek magical papyri in translation* (Chicago 1986) 258.

[41] Burkert, (n.31) 20-21, and C.A. Faraone, 'The *Mystodokos* and the dark-eyed maidens: multicultural influences on a late-Hellenistic charm' in Meyer and Mirecki (n.37) 297-333 (esp. 330-32), point out that much earlier traditions of very similar *historiolae* (mostly in spells designed to cure fever, skin rashes or eye complaints) were popular in Egypt, Assyria and the Levant.

[42] Burkert (n.31) 21 concludes: 'This would suggest some Egyptian influence on Eleusinian cult or at least Eleusinian mythology right at the beginning of the sixth century, in a context of practical "healing magic"'.

[43] Faraone, (n.41) 321-4, points out that their influence on Greece probably predates the similar Heraclean and Dionysian rescue myths discussed in the first section of this essay.

[44] Faraone (n.41) 321-2. In a late-antique version of this same spell, the phrase ἀκάματον πῦρ is replaced by αἰθέριον πῦρ, suggesting that in one version of this story the *mystodokos*, like the baby Dionysus, was threatened by a lightning blast. See Faraone *ibid.* 297-8 n.2 and 323-4 n. 84.

[45] N. Richardson, *The Homeric hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974) 6, noting the poem's linguistic affinities to Hesiod and the references to Eleusinian rituals cautiously suggested an Attic audience for the poem, a position that is rigorously challanged by K. Clinton, 'The author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*', *Opuscula atheniensia* xiv (1986) 43-9. H.P. Foley, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Princeton 1993) 169-78, reviews the ensuing controversy in detail and argues that the poem, although it is Panhellenic in style and scope, was most probably designed for an Eleusinian audience.

τὴν δὲ ἴδον Κελοῖο ᾿Ελευσινίδαο θύγατρες
ἐρχόμεναι μεθ' ὕδωρ εὐήρυτον ὄφρα φέροιεν
κάλπισι χαλκείῃσι φίλα πρὸς δώματα πατρός,
τέσσαρες ὥς τε θεαὶ κουρήϊον ἄνθος ἔχουσαι,
Καλλιδίκη καὶ Κλεισιδίκη Δημώ τ' ἐρόεσσα
Καλλιθόη θ', ἣ τῶν προγενεστάτη ἦεν ἁπασῶν·

The short catalogue of their names in the final couplet recalls the many lists of nymphs in Homer and Hesiod[46] and the phrase κάλπισι χαλκείῃσι occurs in the same sedes of the hexameter as κάλπισι κυανέαις in the final line of the hexametrical charm in 'Philinna Papyrus'. It is these same maidens, moreover, who rescue Demophon after Demeter removes him from the fire and throws him on the ground (vv. 288-90):

ἀγρόμεναι δέ μιν ἀμφὶς ἐλούεον ἀσπαίροντα
ἀμφαγαπαζόμεναι· τοῦ δ' οὐ μειλίσσετο θυμός·
χειρότεραι γὰρ δή μιν ἔχον τροφοὶ ἠδὲ τιθῆναι.

The girls' intervention at this point is of no real thematic or narrative importance to the poem,[47] but it does suggest that the poet had some knowledge of the traditional plots discussed above, where nymphs—or mortal women who are later transformed into nymphs—bring water to a burning infant. In fact the poet does not so much ignore the rescue work of the maidens as disparage it by describing them emphatically as χειρότεραι ... τροφοὶ ἠδὲ τιθῆναι. Indeed, the emphasis and sharp tone here call to mind other passages in early Greek poetry where poets contest or correct previous versions of a story,[48] and suggest that the poet may be self-consciously 'correcting' an earlier tale in which the daughters of the Eleusinian king Celeus rescue a semi-divine baby, acting very much like the water-carrying women in the Dionysiac birth story, who are sometimes called the 'daughters of Cadmus' (see n. 46).

There are, moreover, hints that similar myths about *hydria*-carrying nymphs were known in the context of Demeter mystery cults in other parts of the Greek world as well. In the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Megalopolis, for example, there stood an intricately carved table depicting a similar story about the nurses of Zeus (Paus. viii 31.3-4): 'On the table are also represented nymphs: Neda carrying the infant Zeus; Anthracia—a nymph of the Arcadians—holding a torch; Hagno with a *hydria* in one hand and a *phiale* in the other. Archeroe and Myrtoessa are carrying *hydriai* down from which water is flowing.' Modern commentators assume a tranquil scene here,[49] but the presence of Anthracia among all these water-nymphs is awkward, as both her iconography (a torch) and her name (lit. 'Burning Ember') evoke images of fire. I suggest, in fact, that she—much like the old men in the *Lysistrata*—may have played a threatening or antagonistic role in the narrative sequence alluded to in the carved table, which perhaps

[46] Hes. *Th.* 135, 248-58, 1017-18; see West's commentary *ad loc.* For the assimilation of legendary virgin princesses to local springs, compare the Argive nymphs Hippe, Automate, Amymone and Physadeia, who are also called 'the daughters of Inachus' or 'the daughters of Danaus' (Aesch. frag. 279; Plato *Rep.* 381d; Diogenes *Ep.* 34.2 and Sch. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1344). For discussion, see K. Latte, 'De tragoedia quadam Aeschylea (*P. Oxy.* 2164)', *Philologus* 97 (1948) 47-56. The nymphs who saved Dionysus at Thebes (see n.18), were in some traditions likewise called the 'daughters of Cadmos' (*FGrHist* 3 F 90). 41

[47] Earlier commentators suspected v. 288 on the grounds that bathing an hysterical infant would be inappropriate; T.W. Allen, W.R. Halliday and E.E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns* (Oxford 1936) *ad loc.*, however, rightly defend the line by recalling that the child had been in the fire and by adducing the Meleager epigram discussed above (n.19).

[48] For example, the presence of Heracles in the underworld in the *Odyssey* or Pindar's correction of popular stories concerning the disappearance of Pelops. See M. Griffiths, 'Contest and contradiction in early Greek poetry', in M. Griffith and D.J. Mastronarde (eds.), *Cabinet of the Muses* (Atlanta 1990) 185-207.

[49] See, e.g., Diehl (n.13) 203, who discusses the scene briefly under the heading of 'Kourotrophic Nymphs'.

recounted how the infant Zeus is first threatened with fire and then saved by nymphs who carry water in *hydriai*.[50] Such an interpretation, moreover, of this scene and the role of the daughters of Celeus in the Homeric *Hymn* dovetail neatly with the growing realization among scholars that the ubiquity of sacred springs in Demeter sanctuaries and the discovery of hundreds of thousands of votives suggestive of the ritual use of water—especially miniature *hydriai* and terracotta figurines of women carrying *hydriai*—point to the important hieratic role of female water-bearers in the mystery cults of Demeter,[51] and suggest further that in many places in the Greek world, the cult of Demeter and Kore may have ousted or become assimilated to pre-existing local cults of kourotrophic or salvific nymphs.[52] Such an historical development could certainly motivate the author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*—engaged as he is in the praise of the parvenu goddess—to dismiss and denigrate an earlier *hieros logos*, in which local water nymphs heroically rescue the burning child.

There is, then, scattered but cumulatively suggestive evidence that a group of *hydria*-bearing females could be generally associated with mystery cults in classical Greece, including those celebrated at Eleusis. And Aristophanes himself provides a glimmer of evidence that such myths were known at Athens. In the *Clouds,* as he prepares to 'initiate' Strepsiades into the Thinkery, Socrates invokes the Clouds as his personal deities and asks them to come from their favourite haunts (269-74), mostly places where we would naturally expect to see clouds: Mt. Olympus, Lake Maeotis and Mt. Mimas. In the middle of his list, however, we find two surprises (vv. 270-71):[53]

> εἴτ' 'Ωκεανοῦ πατρὸς ἐν κήποις ἱερὸν χορὸν ἵστατε Νύμφαις,
> εἴτ' ἄρα Νείλου προχοαῖς ὑδάτων χρυσέαις ἀρύτεσθε πρόχοισιν.

Both of these possibilities—one to the West and the other to the East—differ from the rest as they offer anthropomorphized visions of the Clouds as a group of maidens either dancing or drawing water. Both scenes also call to mind eschatological beliefs. The garden of the Hesperides—located as it is near the Elysian fields—probably needs no comment.[54] The vision of the Clouds drawing water with their golden pitchers, on the other hand, easily calls to mind the salvific myth described in the 'Philinna Papyrus', and suggests that Aristophanes may have known a similar myth about water-bearing maidens in Egypt.[55] The striking similarity of these images takes on even greater

[50] A decorated altar of Athena Alea at Tegea (Paus. viii 47.3) probably depicted a similar scene. Both may reflect or explain an ancient protective ritual performed at birth—discussed in detail by Frazer (n.63) 311-7—that involved passing a newborn through or over a fire or bringing a torch or glowing ember near to it. These repeated scenes of fire followed by rescue at the hands of water-bearing nymphs (e.g. *Hymn to Demeter* 288-90, the Philinna charm, and the Arcadian tableau of Zeus' birth) apparently offer an elaboration of the pattern discerned by Frazer.

[51] For a detailed catalogue, see Diehl (n.13) 188-93, who suggests that the water was used in purificatory rituals generally. S.G. Cole, 'The uses of water in Greek sanctuaries' in R. Hagg *et al.* (eds.), *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stockholm 1988) 264-65, discusses the 'hundreds of thousands' of miniature votive *hydriai* and the numerous figurines of *hydrophoroi* found in Demeter sanctuaries all over the Greek world. By a process of elimination, she concludes that these were probably 'associated with local cults of the mysteries throughout the Greek world.' She also, *ibid.* 164-5, discusses a similar constellation of *hydrophoria* rites and secret mysteries at Hera sanctuaries in Argos and Nauplia and at the temple of Artemis at Didyme.

[52] Richardson (n.45) 18-20 and 180-81, for example, suggests that worship of Demeter at Eleusis developed from a local cult of Kore, who was worshipped as the leader of a group of kourotrophic nymphs associated with the important Kallichoron spring.

[53] H. Hommel, 'Aristophanes über die Nilschwelle', *RhM* xciv (1951) 315-27, argues that Νείλου ... προχοαῖς is the indirect object of the verb ('...drawing water *for* the mouths of the Nile'), but I follow K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds* (Oxford 1970) *ad loc.*, who interprets the dative as a locative.

[54] Dover, *ibid.*

[55] It is notable that the Greeks, contrary to their usual practice of equating rivers with male deities, seem (in the fifth-century at least) to think that the Nile—given the fact of its many mouths—was comprised of a number of female divinites. In Aristophanes' *The women at the Thesmophoria,* for instance, the 'Kinsman' quotes the opening

significance, moreover, when we remember that Aristophanes patterns this entire scene (the induction of Strepsiades into the Thinkery) on initiation rituals generally associated with Greek mystery cult, especially the enthronement of the initiate, the dusting with white powder and the covering of the head.[56] It is also most appropriate that the divinities worshipped in these 'Socratic mysteries' are the Clouds, who like the Hyades discussed above are traditional bringers of water and fertility and who (in Aristophanes' *Clouds,* at least) are also the source of 'salvation' as well.[57]

In the *Lysistrata,* then, Aristophanes brings the chorus of water-carriers on the stage in a manner that first evokes the scenes of bodily salvation of helpless women, like Alcmene, who are threatened by ignorant and violent men. And indeed he might have been content to end the parodos with the dousing and then move on to the entrance of the Proboulos. But in the dialogue that leads up to the actual dousing, he pointedly shifts our attention instead to the men themselves as the object of the salvific waters. In the first place, as the men approach the gate of the Acropolis, the fire and smoke seem to turn on them. Indeed, a 'refrain' of smoke-induced coughing marks the end of their second strophe and antistrophe and at vv. 296-301 they evoke Heracles himself and complain bitterly that the smoke pouring from their ember-pots attacks their eyes like a rabid dog. Even more surprising is the fact that the old women, once they begin to argue with the old men, make no mention of the endangered women on the Acropolis or the mighty fears that fill their prayers to Athena a few lines earlier (see n. 11). The men, in turn, betray no annoyance that their scheme to burn the women has been foiled. Indeed, in the *stichomythia* leading up to the dousing, both groups focus instead on the water which from v. 376 onwards is described or treated consistently as a special sort of bath for the old men.[58] Thus at v. 377, the women describe the water as a λουτρὸν νυμφικόν, a special pre-nuptial bath that was traditionally thought to increase the man's sexual potency or fertility.[59] Most significant, however, is the following exchange, which occurs in the final lines of the parodos immediately after the

lines of Euripides' *Helen*: 'These beautifully virgin streams (καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί) of the Nile, who water the plain of white Egypt instead of the holy raindrops...', (*Thesm.* 855-57).

56 There is, however, no agreement as to which cult precisely. A. Dieterich, 'Über eine Szene der aristophanischen Wolken', *RhM* xlviii (1893) 275-83, J. Harrison, *Prolegomena*[3] (Cambridge 1922) 511-16, and T. Gelzer, 'Aristophanes und sein Sokrates', *MH* xiii (1956) 67-8, all refer to these rituals with the long popular term 'Orphic.' W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek religion*[2] (Cambridge 1952) 212, cautiously calls it a melange of different mystery rites. P.W. Lehmann, *Samothrace* 3.2 (Princeton 1969) 26, suggests that the Samothracian mysteries are alluded to here, as at *Peace* 277-8, but S. Guettel Cole, *Theoi megaloi: the cult of the great gods at Samothrace* (Leiden 1984) 32-3 and 116 n. 272, argues effectively to the contrary. W. Burkert, *Homo necans* (trans. P. Bing) (Berkeley 1983) 268-9, interprets the scene as an explicit parody of the enthronement of the initiate at the Lesser Eleusinian Mysteries, while S. Byl, 'Parodie d'une initiation dans les Nuées d'Aristophane', *Rev. Belg. Phil. Hist.* lviii (1980) 5-21—with addenda in *Revue Philosophie Ancienne* iii (1985) 32, *Les Études Classiques* lv (1987) 333-6 and *RHR* cciv (1987) 239-48—has argued repeatedly for specific references to various aspects of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Most recently Bowie (n.1) 112-24 has suggested that Socrates is assimilated to disreputable *goetai*, who perform purifications and initiations of a vaguely Pythagorean stripe. The unending dispute suggests that Guthrie was correct in thinking that Aristophanes is purposely being vague here and alludes only in a very general manner to aspects that many of the mystery cults shared.

57 Indeed, it is no surprise that Strepsiades himself decides to go to Socrates to seek 'salvation' (line 72: σωθήσομαι)—in this case from personal bankruptcy brought on by the profligacy of his son.

58 At 376-77 the water is twice called a λουτρόν. After the Proboulos arrives, moreover, the men do not complain about the extinguished fire, but rather about being bathed in their clothes (399-402) and without the ancient Greek equivalent of soap (469-70): οὐκ οἶσθα λουτρὸν οἷον αἵδ' ἡμᾶς ἔλουσαν ἄρτι / ἐν τοῖσιν ἱματιδίοις, καὶ ταῦτ' ἄνευ κονίας;

59 At Euripides *Phoenissae* 347, Jocasta laments her son's lost nuptials noting *inter alia* that he will never enjoy the traditional nuptial bath in the Theban river Ismenos. The scholiast reports: 'For the bridegrooms of old were accustomed to bathe in local rivers and to take water from rivers and springs and sprinkle it about while praying for the generation of children, since water is life-creating (ζωοποιόν) and fruitful (γονιμόν).' See Ginouvès (n.63) 422 n. 5, and I.N. Oakley and R.H. Sinos, *The wedding in ancient Athens* (Madison 1993) 15-16.

women pour water on the men (vv. 383-86):

Χο. (γερ.) τί δρᾷς;
Χο. (γυν.) ἄρδω σ' ὅπως ἀναβλαστανεῖς.
Χο. (γερ.) ἀλλ' αὗός εἰμ' ἤδη τρέμων.
Χο. (γυν.) οὐκοῦν, ἐπειδὴ πῦρ ἔχεις, σὺ χλιανεῖς σεαυτόν;

The women, by using the verb ἀναβλαστάνω to explain their final goal, claim that the water will cause the men to 'bloom *again*', an image that reflects the salvific themes inherent in the eschatological myths discussed above. The response of the men, moreover,—αὗός εἰμ'—is quite oddly phrased until one realizes that it recalls a traditional description of the withered state of the uninitiated dead in the underworld[60] that was apparently known to Aristophanes' audience.[61] Thus the old men refute the women's claim of the rejuvenating capacity of their bath waters by pointing out that in fact the reverse has happened: the cold water has withered them like the unredeemed dead in Hades. The coldness[62] of the bath given to the old men at the climax of the parodos of the *Lysistrata* may, in fact, have had additional eschatological significance for an Athenian audience, for we know that the Lesser Eleusinian Mysteries probably involved a bath in or with the waters of the Ilissus River,[63] which were notably frigid in antiquity.[64] Thus, the experience of the initiate would most likely have been as discomforting as that of the old men doused in the parodos of the *Lysistrata.* This kind of joke, moreover, was apparently familiar to Aristophanes' audience, for he uses it to similar effect in the *Wealth.*[65] And if Aristophanes is indeed alluding to the putative bath at the Lesser Mysteries at Agrae, we might have yet another nod in the direction of Heraclean myth, since the Lesser Mysteries were thought to have been

[60] The phrase δίψῃ δ' εἰμ' αὖος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι appears in a crucial portion of a well known late Classical and Hellenistic series of inscribed gold tablets found buried with the dead in Italy, Crete and Thessaly; see F. Graf, 'Dionysian and Orphic Eschatology: New Texts and Old Questions', in T.N. Carpenter and C.A. Faraone (eds.), *Masks of Dionysus* (Ithaca 1992) 257-8. In the same volume, S. Guettel Cole (p.276 n.3) reports the recent discovery of yet another text from Mytilene. In these texts and and in a popular version of the torment of Tantalus in the underworld (Lucian, *On Funerals* 8: αὖος ... κινδεύων ὑπὸ δίψους ... ἀποθανεῖν) the person is, however, withered from thirst (not fire) and salvation takes the form of a drink of cold water, not a cold bath as in the material under discussion.

[61] At *Frogs* 194-95 Aristophanes mentions the Αὐαίνου λίθον ('the Rock of Withering'—or as Stanford wryly translates: 'Withering Heights'), apparently a place in Hades where the less fortunate dead grow dry and thirsty. See the discussion in the scholia, J.C. Lawson, 'ΠΕΡΙ ΑΛΙΒΑΝΤΩΝ', *CR* 40 (1926) 56, S. Srebrny, 'Αὐαίνου λίθον', *Eos* 43(1948) 48-52, and W.B. Stanford, *Aristophanes: the Frogs* (London 1958) 90. All three modern scholars note the use of εἰμ'αὗος in the 'Orphic' tablets discussed in the previous note.

[62] See the final lines of the parodos (382-86) with the comments of Henderson (n.2) on v. 382.

[63] Polyaenus *Strat.* 5.17: τὸν 'Ιλισσόν, οὗ τὸν καθαρμὸν τελοῦσι τοῖς ἐλάττοσι μυστηρίοις. For a summary of the other sources and discussion, see: J.G. Frazer, *Apollodorus: the Library* vol. 2 (Cambridge MA 1921) 233 n.2; G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian mysteries* (Princeton 1961) 240-41; and R. Ginouvès, *Balaneutikè: recherches sur le bain dans l'antiquité grecque* (Paris 1962) 375-77.

[64] Isocrates reports that some people chilled their wine in the Enneakrounos (xv 287), probably a reference to the Ilissus itself, but there is conflicting testimony over the location of the Enneakrounos in the classical period (see n.5). In the *Phaedrus* (230b-c) Socrates describes a spring of very cold water (μάλα ψυχροῦ ὕδατος) on the banks of the Ilissus at a place sacred to some nymphs and to Achelous, the same river god that the female semi-chorus invoke when they fling their cold water on the men.

[65] Vv. 655-58. After the mention of Wealth's purificatory bath in the sea, a character responds sarcastically: νὴ Δί' εὐδαίμων ἄρ' ἦν ἀνὴρ γέρων ... ψυχρᾷ θαλάττῃ λούμενος. Here the context and phrasing clearly recalls the popular *macarismos*-formula used in a variety of mystery cults (see P. Sfyroeras, *GRBS* xxxvi [1996] 238-39) and sets up the same comic contradiction that we find in the dousing scene of the *Lysistrata*, where the old women claim that the ritual bath will cause the old men 'to bloom again', but for the present it comes close to killing them!

invented to purify and initiate Heracles,[66] an inference that we should undoubtedly connect with the other myths (discussed earlier) in which Heracles is 'saved' in Attica by the sudden arrival of water.

This dramatic shift at the end of the parodos to the salvation of the old men sets up, I think, the larger, related claim of the women in this play that the men of Athens are all dead or near-dead[67] and therefore in need of 'salvation'. Indeed, a few lines before the dousing scene the women call the old men 'burial mounds' (v. 372: ὦ τύμβ') and suggest that the wood stacked before the Acropolis gates is a πυρά (v. 374: a word that usually denotes a funeral pyre) which they will extinguish after the bodies of the decrepit old men have been cremated,[68] imagery which again recalls the vase-paintings of Heracles' salvation. The later debate between Lysistrata and the Proboulos ends on a very similar note when Lysistrata adorns him like a corpse with garlands and ribbons and promises him a burial plot and honey cakes for his funeral (vv. 599-604). In the end he is run off the stage to cries that Charon is calling him to his boat (v. 606).[69] I grant that such insults to older people are not uncommon in Attic comedy, but the abundance of detail and the elaborate stage action (especially dressing the Proboulos as a corpse) clearly point to an important theme here. These parallels, moreover, between the treatment of the male semi-chorus and the Proboulos are more then coincidental, for as we shall see in the next section, both are also designated as targets for personal salvation.

## III. The political tradition: saving the city and its citizens

We have, at this point, a better understanding of how in his staging of the parodos of the *Lysistrata* Aristophanes manipulates a broad spectrum of religious and mythological connotations associated with salvation. It remains to speak of the twin themes of civic and military salvation that suffuse the agon scene and the rest of the drama. Indeed, even in the prologue of the play, Lysistrata insists that 'the salvation (σωτηρία) of all Greece is in the hands of its women' (v. 30) and that 'we will save Greece by our common action' (v. 41: κοινῇ σώσομεν τὴν Ἑλλάδα), a sentiment that she repeats to the Proboulos in very similar language in the debate scene (v. 525: σῶσαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα κοινῇ). And as they run onto the stage with their *hydriai*, even the female semi-chorus set their goal of rescuing the besieged women into a larger framework of panhellenic salvation when they pray to Athena that they may see the women on the Acropolis 'rescue Greece and the citizens from war and madness' (vv. 342-43: πολέμου καὶ μανιῶν ῥυσαμένας Ἑλλάδα καὶ πολίτας).

Scholars have not, I think, previously noticed that, in all these boasts and wishes, the women repeatedly evoke the rhetoric of military salvation that was made popular during the Persian Wars—always a golden heroic age for the characters of Old Comedy. The verb ῥύομαι, for

[66] Mylonas, (n.63) 240 n. 85, collects the scant primary sources. Scholars have traced the tradition back to the end of the fifth century, and speculate about an even earlier source in a lost sixth-century epic *katabasis* of Heracles; see H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Heracles at Eleusis: P. Oxy. 2622 and P.S.I. 1391', *Maia* xix (1967) 206-229, Graf (n.33) 142-50, and N. Robertson, 'Heracles' "Catabasis"', *Hermes* 108 (1980) 274-99 esp. 295-99. In the past, scholars have focused on a series of later Roman-era reliefs which show Heracles enthroned and veiled, while various females attend to him with lowered torches and winnowing fans, both of which are thought to be purificatory. The probable emphasis of the Agrae rite on water (see nn. 63-64), when combined with the widespread tradition of the immolation and salvation of Heracles, suggests to me at least that the mythological paradigm here might have been the salvation of Heracles by the timely arrival of native Attic waters.

[67] Spatz (n.7) 96 and Martin (n.1) 77-8.

[68] D.C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek burial customs* (Ithaca NY 1971) 161, discuss the use of water generally in such funerary rites.

[69] See A. Willems, 'Notes sur la *Lysistrate* d'Aristophane', *Acad. Roy. Belg. Bull. Class. Lettres et Belles-Arts* (1904) 620-22, for a full discussion.

instance, seems to carry the sense of military salvation in a number of metrical epitaphs of that period. Thus the gravestone of the Corinthian dead at Salamis allegedly boasted that they died while rescuing 'holy Greece' (ἱερὰν 'Ελλάδα ῥυόμεθα) and the literary tradition speaks of a separate epitaph for the Corinthians whose bodies were lost in the same battle: 'those men who rescued all Greece' (πᾶσαν 'Ελλάδα ῥυσάμενοι).[70] Indeed, in composing the old women's prayer to Athena (vv. 342-43), Aristophanes may have had a very specific and appropriate historical moment in mind: a prayer that some Corinthian women made on Acrocorinth in the darkest hours of the war. It is described in an apparently famous epigram attributed centuries later to Simonides:[71]

> αἵδ' ὑπὲρ 'Ελλάνων τε καὶ ἀγχεμάχων πολιατᾶν
> ἔστασαν εὐχόμεναι Κύπριδι δαιμόνιαι.
> οὐ γὰρ τοξοφόροισιν ἐβούλετο δῖ' 'Αφροδίτα
> Μήδοις 'Ελλάνων ἀκρόπολιν δόμεναι.

These women here [i.e. those named or depicted on a memorial stele], dedicated to Cypris,[72] stood praying on behalf of the Greeks and the close-fighting citizens. For divine Aphrodite did not wish to give the Acropolis of the Greeks to the bow-bearing Persians.

Note how the peculiarly pleonastic expression in Aristophanes (vv. 342-43: ῥυσαμένας 'Ελλάδα καὶ πολίτας) echoes the first line of the Simonidean poem and how both prayers are concerned with the safety of an acropolis.[73] If this epigram was as famous as later sources suggest, Aristophanes has once again summoned up an image of heroic and pious women praying for safety at a time of great national emergency. Note, too, that in such a comparison the fire-wielding old men (later aided by the Scythian archers who accompany the Proboulos) clearly play the invidious role of the 'bow-bearing Persians' who once besieged and burned the Athenian citadel. This is, of course, emphatically not the role the old men claim for themselves at vv. 277-80, where they recall their role as the heroic defenders of Athens who once ousted Cleomenes from the very same place (see n. 3).[74]

This generalized goal of military salvation, although it is by no means unique to this

[70] See G. Pfohl, *Greek poems on stone: vol. 1 Epitaphs from the seventh to fifth centuries BC* (Leiden 1967) nos. 7 and 8. See also the similar phrases in two epitaphs preserved in the literary tradition and conventionally dated to the Persian Wars: Pfohl nos. 84 (ἰχθυόεσσαν / ῥυόμενοι χώραν in an epigram attached to an Athenian casualty list for those who died at Byzantium) and 138 (πατρίδα ῥυομένους in the epitaph on a polyandrion at Ossa).

[71] With one exception (see next note) I give the text and follow the interpretation of D.L. Page, *Further Greek epigrams* (Cambridge 1981) 207-11 ('Simonides' xiv). The epigram is quoted by three late sources: [Plut.] *Malig. Herod.* 39.871a-b, the scholiast to Pindar *Ol.* 13.32b and Athen. xiii 573c.

[72] At the end of v. 2, the MSS of all three sources give ΔAIMONIAI, a reading that editors have traditionally rendered as δαιμονίᾳ, a dative singular agreeing with Κύπριδι. Page (n.71) rightly baulks at using this adjective to describe a deity and prints the neuter plural δαιμόνια (= δαιμονίας εὐχάς) Here, however, I follow C.G. Brown, 'The Prayers of the Corinthian Women (Simonides *Ep.* 14)', *GRBS* xxxii (1991) 5-14, who argues that the nominative plural δαιμόνιαι is the best reading, a designation for women who have been 'dedicated' to the goddess (see n.74).

[73] This odd sort of pleonasm may also be part of the wider panhellenic tradition of Persian War memorials. The Megarians praised their war dead as those who died while desiring 'the day of freedom for Greece and the Megarians' ('Ελλάδι καὶ Μεγαρεῦσιν; Pfohl no. 154–the text is preserved on a late-antique inscription from Megara, but is generally thought to quote an epigram dating nearly a millennium earlier *c.* 480-79).

[74] Nor is this evocation of the Corinthian epigram without a touch of Aristophanic irony, for if Athenaeus (quoting Theopompus and Timaeus) is correct, the women praised by Simonides were *hetairai,* who were presumably the special devotees of Aphrodite in Corinth; see Brown (n.72). If we recall how in the *Lysistrata* Aristophanes consistently portrays the younger women on the Acropolis as sex-crazed wine-drinkers, the echo of the epigram is richly and humorously ambivalent.

Aristophanic comedy,[75] is in fact given special emphasis throughout the *Lysistrata*, and scholars suggest that its importance reflects the ongoing political discourse of the crisis-laden years between the Sicilian disaster in the summer of 413 and the performance of the play in 411.[76] Interest in the theme of civic σωτηρία, for example, may indeed have encouraged Aristophanes to choose a Proboulos as Lysistrata's main foil in the play. Although the official decree that created the office of the *probouloi* in 413/12 has not survived antiquity, its wording was probably very close to the motion of Pythodorus (in spring or summer of 411) to appoint an additional twenty *syngrapheis* to aid the *probouloi*[77]—a motion which directed the Athenians to prepare legislation περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας, apparently invoking a special phrase employed in the assembly only in times of dire emergency.[78] The term σωτηρία also shows up in the political oratory of the day, most notably in Peisander's infamous speech to the assembly which occurred some time close to the performance of the play.[79] While urging a change in the Athenian constitution and an alliance with Persia he summarizes the opposed positions as follows (Thuc. viii 53.3): 'At the moment we must think about our salvation (περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας), not our form of government.'[80] This is, in fact, precisely the situation that Aristophanes depicts in the *Women in the assembly* (vv. 396-407), where Chremes describes the debate περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς πόλεως. Here, too, scholars have rightly seen a reference to a contemporary crisis in 394.[81] 'Soteria', it would seem, was a politically potent buzzword in the polarized Athenian debates at the end of the fifth century and one that was explicitly connected with the mandate of the Proboulos who confronts Lysistrata in the agon scene.

I suggest, then, that Aristophanes has arranged the central discourse in the *Lysistrata* around this very question: who indeed *was* best able to save the city? This is most obvious in the argument between Lysistrata and the Proboulos, in which each character claims to be acting in the interest of saving the city. One of the highlights of this debate is the following heated exchange (vv. 497-501):

[75] Similar boasts for panhellenic salvation occur in the *Peace:* ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων πάντων πέτομαι (93) and ἔσωσα τοὺς Ἕλληνας (866). See also the reference at *Frogs* 1419 to the dangerous circumstances of 405: '...so that the city, once it has been saved (σωθεῖσα), may stage its choruses', with the discussion of H. Erbse, 'Dionysos' Schiedsspruch in den Fröschen des Aristophanes' in Δώρημα *Hans Diller zum 70. Geburtstag* (Athens 1975) 56-7, who also notes the plea to Aeschylus as he leaves to return to the living: καὶ σῷζε πόλιν τὴν ἡμετέραν (1501). For the importance of the theme of *soteria* in the *Women in the assembly*, see below in n.81. Aristophanes often describes or stages the entrance of his comic heroes in ways that recall the epiphany of salvific gods in times of crisis, e.g.: *Acharn.* 567; *Kn.* 458 and 836; *Peace* 209; and *Wealth* 1189. For a wide-ranging discussion of the language used for such epiphanies, see V. Frey, 'Zur Komödie den Aristophanes', *MH* v (1948) 168-77, and W.J. Slater, 'The Epiphany of Demosthenes', *Phoenix* xlii (1988)126-30, esp. 127-28, who is primarily interested in the use of σῴζω and σωτηρία in Demosthenes *On the Crown* 170-72.

[76] For this dating see: K.J. Dover, *Aristophanic comedy* (London 1972) 16 and 69; A. Sommerstein, 'Aristophanes and the Events of 411', *JHS* xcvii (1977) 112-26; Westlake (below n.79) 38-39; and Henderson (n.2) xv-xvi.

[77] [Aris.] *Ath. Pol.* xxix 2 and 4; see P.J. Rhodes, *A commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) *ad loc.*

[78] For discussion see Wilamowitz, *Aristoteles und Athen* i (Berlin 1893) 102 n. 7, and P.J. Rhodes, *The Athenian boule* (Oxford 1985) 232-4. There is also evidence for special Athenian sacrifices performed ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας; see, e.g., F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques: supplément* (Paris 1962) no. 11.

[79] See H.D. Westlake, 'The *Lysistrata* and the war', *Phoenix* xxxiv (1980) 39-40, L. Bieler, 'A political slogan in ancient Athens', *AJP* lxxii (1951) 181-84; and Henderson (n.2) xxi-xxiv. Even if the speech was given after the play, it probably reflects the framework of the ongoing political debate.

[80] See also the beginning of his speech (viii 53.2) where he asks rhetorically if anyone had any hope of salvation (σωτηρία) for the city in the present circumstances of Sparta's alliance with Persia. A somewhat similar choice appears in the Melian debate where the haughty Athenians insist that the Melians consider how they can save (σῴζειν) their city from destruction (Thuc. v 87-88).

[81] L. Bertelli, 'L'utopia sulla scena: Aristofane e le parodia della città', *CCC* iv (1983) 250-2, and R.G. Ussher, *Aristophanes: Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford 1973) xxxxvi.

Λυ. ἀλλ' οὐδὲν δεῖ πρῶτον πολεμεῖν.
Πρ. πῶς γὰρ σωθησόμεθ' ἄλλως;
Λυ. ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς σώσομεν.
Πρ. ὑμεῖς;
Λυ. ἡμεῖς μέντοι.
Πρ. σχέτλιόν γε.
Λυ. ὡς σωθήσει, κἂν μὴ βούλῃ.
Πρ. δεινόν <γε> λέγεις.
Λυ. ἀγανακτεῖς.
ἀλλὰ ποιητέα ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ὅμως.
Πρ. νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ' ἄδικόν γε.
Λυ. σωστέον, ὦ τᾶν.
Πρ. κεἰ μὴ δέομαι;
Λυ. τοῦδ' οὕνεκα καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον.

With the deliberate four-fold repetition of the verb σῴζειν (and its verbal adjective σωστέον) in the space of five lines, Aristophanes deftly plays with the different meanings of σωτηρία in both its political or military sense (saving the city from slavery or destruction)[82] and its more personal, religious sense (the salvation and ultimate happiness of individuals).[83] Thus when the Proboulos asks 'How will *we* be saved?' he is undoubtedly asking a political or military question and worrying about the entire city, an entity that includes both Lysistrata and himself. Lysistrata, however, shifts the parameters of the question when she responds '*we* will save *you*', once again singling out the men of Athens alone as the weak and helpless individuals in need of personal salvation and the women as the powerful force that will rescue them.[84] As in the dousing scene discussed earlier—where water is poured on the individual members of the male semi-chorus—we see the same movement from the corporate salvation of the city to the personal salvation of the individual men of Athens. This new focus on the mortality and salvation of individual men is further strengthened by the action on stage at the very end of the debate, where (as I discussed earlier) the women dress the Proboulos like a corpse and force him from the stage. These images of imminent death and the need and desire of the women to provide help all dovetail into the larger, and more familiar, themes of Aristophanes' peace comedies: the need to rejuvenate the victors of Marathon and return them to their former military and sexual prowess. In this context I think that the dramatic tradition of salvific myth is most instructive. As I have shown above, Aristophanes brings to the stage a male semi-chorus in a tableau of threatened immolation that recalls tragic scenes and demonizes the men as tyrants and ignoramuses. In the very act of snuffing out their fires, however, the female semi-chorus shifts the focus by evoking myths and ceremonies concerned with the personal salvation, rejuvenation and even apotheosis of that pre-eminent Athenian hero Heracles who was, in fact, also closely connected in the Athenian imagination with the military resistance to the Persians.[85] Indeed, in many ways the Athenian

[82] Bieler (n.79) and Westlake (n.79) 39 both note the importance of the verb σῴζειν in this exchange between Lysistrata and the Proboulos and both connect it with Peisander's speech.

[83] For this meaning of σῴζειν in the fifth-century, see nn. 32 and 35.

[84] There is a similar tension between these personal and public connotations of salvation in the speech at *Women in the assembly* 396-407, where the nearly blind politician Neoclides is deemed unfit to talk about saving the city, because he has failed to save his own eyesight. This is, in fact, yet another salvific sub-theme in the *Lysistrata*, where the members of the male semi-chorus are twice afflicted with eye injuries, first in the parodos by sparks that fly from the pot of embers (296-98) and then by an insect which similarly gnaws at their eyeballs (1025-26); see Martin (n.1) 94-5. In the second instance, the female semi-chorus once again 'saves' the old men by successfully removing the bug from their eyes.

[85] For the mustering of the Athenians at Heracles' sanctuaries first at Marathon and then at Cynosarges, see Hdt. vi 116 and S. Woodford, 'The cults of Heracles in Attica', in D.G. Mitten, J.G. Pedley and I.A. Scott (eds.), *Studies presented to G.M.A. Hanfmann* ii (Mainz 1971) 217, who also discusses *inter alia* the post-war reorganization and expansion of the Marathonian games that were held at or near Heracles' Marathonian *temenos*. The renewed interest

experience in the Persian Wars provides an important subtext for the *Lysistrata*.[86] In their songs at the beginning of the play, the male semi-chorus justify their actions by likening Lysistrata and company to the Spartan King Cleomenes, to queen Artemisia (a Persian ally), and to the Amazons (see n. 3 above). But the actions and the prayers of the female semi-chorus directly contest this association by suggesting that it is rather the Persian sack of the Acropolis that provides the appropriate historical exemplum for the proposed actions of the chorus of old men, i.e. a time when the good and pious Athenian people were threatened and then destroyed by the impious foreigners, who burnt every building to the ground. Aristophanes, of course, circumvents the horrible finale of this historical model by bringing on the semi-chorus of old women, who save the day by promptly dousing the fire and ending the threat of incineration.

## IV. Conclusion: *Hydrophoroi* and Female Heroics in the *Lysistrata*

Let me sum up, then, by reiterating how Aristophanes deftly weaves together these mythological, liturgical and political notions of salvation. *Soteria* is clearly a central theme in the *Lysistrata*, and one with deep resonance in late fifth-century political discourse over the future of Athens. Aristophanes, however, in this comic fantasy of women-on-top has co-opted this traditionally male worry about the salvation of the city and replaced it with Lysistrata's concern with saving the men themselves. By assimilating these themes of public and private salvation Aristophanes is able to employ a traditional mythic image of women as the water-bearing saviours. In a brilliant stroke, he takes a daily, domestic image of female work (carrying water from the spring), infuses it with the dramatic and religious power resident in the salvation stories discussed earlier and creates a dynamic model for female heroism. Indeed, he manipulates this theme of women as religious saviours very cleverly by coordinating it with other instances in this play in which the woman draw power and authority from their important roles in the domestic and the religious life of the city.[87] This is best illustrated, of course, in the way he apparently models the main character Lysistrata after Lysimache, who at the time of the performance of this play was the priestess of Athena Polias, the chief protective deity of Athens.[88] It is thus no accident that the women choose the Acropolis as their base of operations, and that Lysistrata herself seems at

in these games seems to reflect an increase in Heracles' popularity, which itself was probably triggered by the perception that he had somehow aided the Greek fighters in the area. See also the possible connection between Heracles and Thermopylae (n.20), yet another Persian War battlefield.

[86] Bowie, (n.1) 201, stresses how Aristophanes in the course of the *Lysistrata* manages to mention all of the major battles of the Persian Wars, except Plataea.

[87] Vaio, (n.1) *passim*, and Rosellini, (n.1)15-19, both note how the women by taking control of the treasury turn public finance into a domestic concern and turn the Acropolis into a private household run by women. Foley (n.7) 6-1 focuses on the theme of women's work (e.g. woolworking, feeding, household finances) and their central role in the sphere of civic religion. In his chapter 'Travaux féminins sur l'Acropole' in *La fille d'Athènes* (Paris 1987) 99-115, P. Brulé stresses the domestic quality of female roles in Athenian civic cult connected with the Acropolis. Contrast this equation of married women's work and salvation, with the more traditional heroine found in Attic tragedy and in epichoric legends throughout Greece: a virgin who commits suicide in order to save her city; see E. Kearns, 'Saving the city' in O. Murray and S. Price (eds.), *The Greek city from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 323-44.

[88] D.M. Lewis, 'Notes on Attic inscriptions (II) xxiii: Who was Lysistrata?', *ABSA* i (1955) 1-12, who also claims that the character Myrrhine is modeled on a woman of that name who served in the temple of Athena Nike in the second half of the fifth-century. Dover, (n.76) 152 n. 3, dismisses both identifications, while Westlake (n.79) 52 n. 47, agrees with the identification of Lysistrata, but dismisses Lewis' further claims about Myrrhine, which is indeed a fairly common name. The *communis opinio* about the equation Lysimache = Lysistrata continues to gain support; see, e.g., Foley (n.7) 7, Loraux (n.1) 148-9 [= 179-81] and A.H. Sommerstein, *Lysistrata* (Warminster 1990)5. Henderson, (n.2) xxxviii-xl, considers the identification plausible but unnecessary, while D.M. MacDowell, *Aristophanes and Athens: an introduction to the plays* (Oxford 1995) 239-40, supports the identification of both Lysistrata and Myrrhine, with further argument on the identification of the latter.

times to mirror the military spirit, the sound judgment, and the domestic accomplishments of the virgin goddess herself.[89] In a similar manner, Lysistrata in her wonderful speech to the Proboulos assimilates the city to raw wool that must be cleaned, spun and then properly woven into cloth—striking images that again recall both the daily, domestic chores of Athenian housewives as well as the ritual weaving of the Panathenaic *peplos*.[90]

A little later in the play Aristophanes provides a similarly religious source for the authority of Lysistrata's staunch allies, the semi-chorus of old women who perform so heroically in the beginning of the play. In their own debate-scene with the male semi-chorus, the women speak directly to the audience and justify their advice to the city by boasting of their special credentials, all of which refer to a *cursus honorum* of sorts for citizen women in the religious life of the city (vv. 642-47):[91]

ἑπτὰ μὲν ἔτη γεγῶσ' εὐθὺς ἠρρηφόρουν·
εἶτ' ἀλετρὶς ἦ δεκέτις οὖσα τἀρχηγέτι,
καὶ χέουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἦ Βραυρωνίοις·
κἀκανηφόρουν ποτ' οὖσα παῖς καλὴ 'χουσ'
ἰσχάδων ὁρμαθόν.

Here, too, these important religious duties, with their domestic sounding titles like the 'corn grinders' or the 'basket carriers', continue this double image of women as the caretakers of both the household economy of Athens and its religious life, a pattern into which we can now also fit the female chorus' role as *hydrophoroi*: women who carry water from the well, but who also act according to a familiar mythic pattern when they use this water to save the city and its men. I would argue, in fact, that by bringing the women on-stage armed with water jugs Aristophanes is able from the very start and in a very visual manner to present these older women in a traditionally heroic role as saviours—first of the younger women unfairly threatened by fire-bearing men and secondly as saviours of formerly heroic but now helpless men. In this way Aristophanes prepares us for the ensuing action of the play in which the old heroes of Marathon and their city will indeed be saved and rejuvenated by the heroic actions of their womenfolk.[92]

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[89] Foley (n.7) 9-10 and Loraux (n.1) 119-22 [= 161-65].

[90] A duty that would have been overseen (in part) by the priestess of Athena Polias; see G.W. Elderkin, 'Aphrodite and Athena in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes', *CPh* xxxv (1940) 392; Foley (n.7) 9 n. 20; Loraux (n.1) 144-45; and E. Barber, 'The Peplos of Athena' in J. Neils (ed.), *Goddess and polis: the panathenaic festival in ancient Athens* (Princeton 1992) 112-17. In a similar vein, the jokes at vv. 740-52, where Lysistrata turns back the five women trying to sneak back home, are filled with detailed allusions to Athena and her cult on the Acropolis. See L. Bodson, 'Gai, gai! Sauvons-nous!: Procédés et effets du comique dans *Lysistrata* 740-52', *L'Ant. Class.* xlii (1973) 5-27.

[91] For discussion of the text and ritual background, see: Foley (n.7) 11-12; Henderson (n.2) *ad loc.*; MacDowell (n.88); Loraux (n.1) 135-36 [= 164-65], and Bowie (n.1) 180.

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