

# HOMO NECANS

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*The Anthropology of Ancient Greek  
Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*

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Goddess's will. The mother and the maiden, Kore, stand side by side, meeting in the course of the secret rituals of the *Männerbund*. In mythology, the two may become indistinguishable and overlap,<sup>40</sup> in which case the Great Goddess is maiden, lover, and mother at once. But the maiden has her share of sacrifice as well: the ram, an animal considered a kind of father, was sacrificed to Kore.<sup>41</sup> Thus, what appears, when following up the myth by logic, to cause the most severe contradiction, actually has a necessary function in the drama of human society in the counterpoint of familial bonds and male activity.

In the religious ritual and the resultant worship of a god, the cohesiveness and continued existence of a group and its culture are best guaranteed through one supreme and permanent authority. The ritual provides the orientation that transforms confrontation into unity. In the storm of history, it was always those societal organizations with religious foundations that were finally able to assert themselves: all that remained of the Roman Empire was the Roman Catholic Church. And there, too, the central act remained the incredible, one-time and voluntary sacrifice in which the will of the father became one with that of the son, a sacrifice repeated in the sacred meal, bringing salvation through admission of guilt. A permanent order thus arose—cultural progress that nonetheless preserved human violence. All attempts to create a new man have failed so far. Perhaps our future chances would be better if man could recognize that he still is what he once was long ago, that his existence is defined by the past.

<sup>40</sup> Hekate (at Ephesus) comes into existence when Artemis puts her own ornaments on a hanged girl: see Callim. fr. 461 (I.7.n.26 above). So, too, in the Eskimo myth, Sedna is made a sacrificed maiden. For the sacrifice of a virgin for the Great Goddess see Steph. Byz. s.v. Lemnos.

<sup>41</sup> See V.4.n.40 below.

## II. WEREWOLVES AROUND THE TRIPOD KETTLE

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In the first chapter we tried to see man's basic condition from a biological, psychological, and sociological perspective, as indicated in Greek sacrificial ritual. However, in spite of the evidence adduced from prehistory and folklore, we were unable to proceed without hypothetical supplements and generalizations; moreover, since the examples used to illustrate the thesis were chosen selectively, doubts could be raised as to our methodology. The following chapters reverse the procedure. We will examine various individual cult-complexes as exhaustively as possible, then ask to what extent the details fit the perspective developed in Chapter I. If in so doing we find ourselves confronted again and again by sacrificial ritual with its tension between encountering death and affirming life, its external form consisting of preparations, a frightening central moment, and restitution, then we may see in this a confirmation of our hypothesis.

Ancient Greek rituals were bound to permanent local groups and hence to specific localities as well, i.e., the sanctuaries and altars that had been set up for all time. Yet, in studying such complexes, one always discovers similarities to other rituals in other places, just as various myths often reflect a single structure. Thus, related rituals can be grouped; they need by no means invoke or worship the same gods in order to be considered similar. By comparing related phenomena we shall find that details will illuminate each other, that we can bridge gaps in the transmission and surmise certain lines in the tradition which do not always correspond to ethnic or linguistic categories.

First of all, we shall examine a complex that appears especially ancient, since it reflects the ideology of the predatory animal pack at its sacrificial meal, and this in spite of the fact that cooking in a kettle, a clearly cultural achievement, is an essential part of the rite. Antithe-

ses and tensions are the stuff of ritual—hence, individual rituals cannot be explained by their momentary aims; rather, we must understand them in the larger context. Not just the religious cult, but the order of society itself takes shape in sacrifice.

## 1. *Lykaia and Lykaion*

When the wave of Sea Peoples and Dorian migrations destroyed Mycenaean culture, only the mountainous region of Arcadia was able, as a retreat, to assert its pre-Dorian individuality. Later, too, it was slow to join in the rise of the city cultures; it developed an urban center only after 371, at the newly founded city of Megalopolis. The Arcadians themselves were as aware of the antiquity of their race and customs as were their neighbors: long before the Hellenistic Age discovered pastoral Arcadia as the setting for its romantic yearnings, the Arcadians had been known as “acorn eaters” and “older than the moon.”<sup>1</sup>

Rumors of terrible, primitive activity especially surrounded the main Arcadian festival to Zeus,<sup>2</sup> celebrated in the mountains of Lykaion in the heart of Arcadia. There were tales of human sacrifice, cannibalism, and werewolves. Plato is the first source we know who mentions this as a current story (*mýthos*) “that is told of the sanctuary of Lykaian Zeus in Arcadia, namely, that he who tastes of one bit of human entrails minced up with those of other victims is inevitably transformed into a wolf.”<sup>3</sup> Plato compares this eerie metamorphosis with the development of a tyrant who, once having killed, can no longer stop. Bloodshed has its consequences. The pseudo-Platonic

<sup>1</sup>Βαλανηφάγοι: see the oracle (#31 Parke and Wormell [1958]) in Hdt. 1.66; ἄκρον χεῖμα Lyk. 483 with Schol.; Verg. *Ecl.* 10.20; Plut. *Es. carn.* indicates a festival: ἐχορεύσαμεν ὑφ’ ἡδονῆς. Προσέληνοι: see Hippys, *FGrHist* 554 F 7; Eudoxos fr. 41 Gisinger = Schol. Apoll. Rhod. 4.264; Schol. Aristoph. *Nub.* 397; Callim. fr. 191.56 and Pfeiffer *ad loc.*; Lyk. 482 with Schol.; etc.

<sup>2</sup>W. Immerwahr, *Die Kulte und Mythen Arkadiens* (1891), 1–24; Nilsson (1906) 8–10; (1955) 397–401; Farnell I (1894) 41–42, 144–46; Cook I (1914) 63–99; Schwenn (1915) 20–25; Joh. Schmidt, *RE XIII* (1927), 2248–52; G. Piccaluga, *Lykaon, un tema mitico* (1968).

<sup>3</sup>*Resp.* 565d.

*Minos*<sup>4</sup> mentions human sacrifice at the “Lykaia festival” as certain fact, and Theophrastus<sup>5</sup> compares the sacrifice “at the Lykaia in Arcadia” with Carthaginian sacrifices to Moloch.

Pausanias saw and described the altar of Zeus at the summit of Mount Lykaion, but he did not participate in the festival, for the sacrifice there took place “in secret.” To this Pausanias remarks: “I could see no pleasure in delving into this sacrifice; let it be as it is and as it was from the beginning.”<sup>6</sup> Pausanias also named and described the other cult sites of Zeus Lykaios: the mysterious precinct where none may enter, on the mountain slope somewhat below the summit—anyone going in would have to die,<sup>7</sup> and inside he would cast no shadow; then the Cave of Rhea and the precinct called Kretaia on the mountain where, it was told, Zeus was born, and fed and cared for by the Arcadian nymphs;<sup>8</sup> finally, the Stadium, the Hippodrome, and the sanctuary of Pan further down the mountain.<sup>9</sup> This is where the athletic competitions took place during the Lykaia festival. Other literary sources supplement Pausanias’ indications, and excavations have confirmed and expanded our knowledge. Votive offerings dating back to the seventh century B.C. have come to light near the altar of Zeus, a simple mound of earth and ash.<sup>10</sup>

But what Pausanias piously concealed in his description of the altar of Zeus, he mentioned in relating the story of Damarchos of Parhasia, who won the boxing competition at Olympia in about 400 B.C.<sup>11</sup> It was claimed that he “turned into a wolf at the sacrifice to Zeus

<sup>4</sup>315c.

<sup>5</sup>In Porph. *Abst.* 2.27.

<sup>6</sup>8.38.7; cf. 8.2.6, 4.22.7; Kallisthenes, *FGrHist* 124 F 23; Pind. *Ol.* 13.108.

<sup>7</sup>Paus. 8.38.6; cf. Theopompos, *FGrHist* 115 F 343 = Polyb. 16.12.7; Architimos, *FGrHist* 315 F 1 (cf. Jacoby III B Notes p. 48 n. 8) = Plut. *Q. Gr.* 300a–c; Schol. Callim. *Hy. Zeus* 13; Strabo 8 p. 388; Pliny *NH* 4.21; n. 33 below; Schol. Theocr. 1.123e–f τὰ εἰσερχόμενα ζῶα ἀγῶνα γίνεσθαι, and cf. Schol. Callim. *Hy. Zeus* 13. On the results of the excavations see *RE XIII* 2240–41; Cook I (1914) 83; the measurements are approx. 60 × 130 m.

<sup>8</sup>Κρηταιά: Paus. 8.38.2. Σπήλαιον τῆς Πέας: Paus. 8.36.3; cf. 8.31.4; Callim. *Hy. Zeus* 10–14 (the scholion confuses the precinct of Rhea with the ἄβατον: see n. 7 above). Cf. *RE XIII* 2243. On the spring, Hagno, and rain-magic see Paus. 8.38.3–4.

<sup>9</sup>Paus. 8.38.5; *RE XIII* 2237–40; Cook I (1914) 82.

<sup>10</sup>K. Kourouniotis, *Eph. Arch.* (1904), 153–214; (1905), 161–78; *Praktika* (1909), 64, 185–200; Cook I (1914) 63–99; cf. E. Meyer, *RE XIII* (1927), 2235–44; G. Mylonas, *Classical Studies in Honour of W. A. Oldfather* (1943), 122–33. On the type see W. Krämer, “Prähistorische Brandopferplätze,” in *Helvetica antiqua* (1966), 111–22.

<sup>11</sup>6.8.2; L. Moretti, *Olympionikai* (Rome, 1957), #359. The name appears as Demainetos (i.e., Damainetos) in Skopas (?), *FGrHist* 413 = Varro in Pliny *NH* 8.82; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 18.17.

Lykaïos, and changed back into a man again in the tenth year thereafter." The condition for being transformed and changed back is just that: "someone was always turned into a wolf at the sacrifice to Zeus Lykaïos, but not for his whole life; if he refrained from eating human flesh while he was a wolf, they say he would turn back into a man in the tenth year; but if he ate it, he remained a beast forever."<sup>12</sup> Pausanias probably found the legend of Damarchos in a local Hellenistic history; but if it is tied to the victory at Olympia, it goes back beyond Plato.

The accompanying myth is found already in the Hesiodic catalogues<sup>13</sup> and reflects the ritual in a particularly transparent way. What was only a vague rumor among Plato's contemporaries is told here as the crime of the ancestral king of the Arcadians; he is related to the wolf even in his name, Lykaon. Once upon a time, the gods, including Zeus himself, came to visit him and be entertained in a common sacrificial meal. But the sacred meal turned into cannibalism, for Lykaon slaughtered a young boy upon the altar at the summit and poured out his blood on that altar; then he and his helper "mixed the boy's entrails in with the sacrificial meat and brought it to the table."<sup>14</sup> Of course, divine punishment followed. Zeus overturned the table, graphically putting an end to the newly formed community, and hurled a bolt of lightning into Lykaon's house; most importantly, Lykaon himself turned into a wolf. In another, frequently told version, the gruesome sacrifice was followed by a flood that destroyed most of the human race,<sup>15</sup> yet Lykaon's descendants, the Arcadians, survived to come together at the altar again and again for secret sacrifice.

Opinions differed as to the identity of the boy whose entrails were sliced into the sacrificial meat. The *Library* of Apollodoros speaks of an anonymous "native" boy; Ovid calls him a "hostage"; Lycophron gives him the name "Nyktimos," the "night-like,"<sup>16</sup> and makes him Lykaon's own son; the Eratosthenic *Katasterismoi*, by contrast, invoking Hesiod as its precedent,<sup>17</sup> say that he was "Arkas," the eponymous hero of the Arcadians, who was Lykaon's grandson. His mother was

Kallisto, Lykaon's daughter, who during her amorous encounter with Zeus was turned into a bear.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the Arcadian par excellence is the "son of a bear," on the one hand, and a victim at the altar of Zeus, on the other. This death does not end the story, for both Arkas and Nyktimos were included in the genealogies as ancestral Arcadian kings.<sup>19</sup> Zeus brought his victim back to life,<sup>20</sup> according to the myth, only to have him come full circle and return to the sacrificial situation: Arkas was brought up by a goatherd, but upon becoming an ephebe he turned to hunting. Once, while in the region of Mount Lykaion, he came on the track of his own mother. According to one text, he hunted her down; according to another, they mated.<sup>21</sup> These mythical variants attest once more to the ambivalence of weapons and sexuality in hunting behavior. The gruesome act occurred in that very precinct on the mountain into which none could enter. For this reason, Arkas and the bear had to be sacrificed again "according to the custom" at the altar of Zeus Lykaïos. At this point the myth fades, allowing the victims to be translated to heaven as stars. The ritual, however, goes on in the same place, and in the circuit of time, it is to form an important junction in the lives of the Arcadians.

Some curious details were reported by a Hellenistic author called Euanthes,<sup>22</sup> who was read by Varro. Admittedly, his concern is not with the Arcadians as a whole but with a single family descended from Anthos, whom the author seems to count as one of his own ancestors. A young boy of the family would regularly be selected by lot and led to a lake. He had to strip, hang his clothes on an oak tree, and swim across the lake; thereupon he would disappear in the wilderness and turn into a wolf. He would have to live as a wolf among wolves for eight years, after which time, if he had abstained from human meat, he could return to the lake, swim across it, take down his clothes from the oak tree, and turn into a human again, though he was now nine years older and a grown man. Thus far, Euanthes. This

<sup>12</sup>Paus. 8.2.6.

<sup>13</sup>Hes. fr. 163 M.-W., and cf. fr. 354; Apollod. 3.96–97; Eumelos, *FGrHist* 451 F 8 = Apollod. 3.100; Lyk. 480–81 with Schol.; a tragedy by Xenokles, *TGF* p. 770; Ov. *Met.* 1.198–239; Clem. *Pr.* 2.36.5; Nonnus 18.20–24; *RML* II 2165–68; *PR* I 127–29; Piccaluga, *Lykaon*, 29–98.

<sup>14</sup>Apollod. 3.98; cf. Nikolaos, *FGrHist* 90 F 38.

<sup>15</sup>Apollod. 3.98–99; Tzetz. ad Lyk. 481; Ov. *Met.* 1.240 ff.; Hyg. *Fab.* 176.

<sup>16</sup>Apollod. 3.98; Ov. *Met.* 1.227; Lyk. 481.

<sup>17</sup>Fr. 163 M.-W. = "Eratosth." *Catast. Fragmenta Vaticana*, ed. Rehm (1899), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup>R. Franz, "De Callistus fabula," *Leipz. Stud.* 12 (1890), 235–365; *RML* II 931–35; *RE* X 1726–29; W. Sale, *RhM* 105 (1962), 133–41; 108 (1965), 11–35.

<sup>19</sup>Paus. 8.3–4, 8.24.1.

<sup>20</sup>"Eratosth." *Catast.*: πάλιν ἀναπλάσας ἄρτιον ἔθηκεν.

<sup>21</sup>"Erat." *Cat.* 1 pp. 52–53 Robert ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου νιού διωκομένην . . . ; ἀγνοήσας τὴν μητέρα γῆμαι in *Fragmenta Vaticana* (see n. 17), where the last word is written between the lines; *matri inscius vim ferre voluit* Schol. Germ. p. 64.21 Breysig.

<sup>22</sup>*FGrHist* 320 = Varro in Pliny *N.H.* 8.81; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 18.17. For the Arcadians being descended from the oak see Lyk. 480; Plut. *Q. Rom.* 286a; for Dryas as the wife of Arkas see Paus. 8.4.2.

is not identical with the versions reported by the earlier authors.<sup>23</sup> Any link with the pan-Arcadian festival, the Lykaia, is missing; there is selection by lot instead of the sacrificial meal. But the combination of a transformation into a wolf, a nine-year period, and an injunction to abstain makes the connection very close. Did pan-Arcadian werewolf practices and familial customs run a parallel course? It is more likely that some sort of development took place. With the founding of Megalopolis, urban culture arrived in Arcadia, and there in the agora Zeus Lykaeos was given the most prominent temple.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the Lykaia festival was now organized here, and although, as Pausanias tells us, the Arcadians still sacrificed upon the altar on the mountain, it is safe to assume that some aspects of the cult were changed at that time and, to some extent, civilized. After this reform, the old ways could no longer be carried on officially, but only in the tradition of a particularly conservative family. Plato's testimony comes from before this time, as does the legend of the boxer Damarchos. Regardless of how we conceive of the relationship between family customs and pan-Arcadian rituals, Euanthes' report at least gives us some idea of how such wolf-metamorphoses were accomplished.

Both Pausanias and Pliny considered these werewolf stories to be clear examples of shameless braggadocio and the shameful gullibility of the masses,<sup>25</sup> and when Plato uses the word *mýthos* he is already expressing a certain skepticism. Paradoxically, the modern researcher cannot assume the same critical, enlightened stance. There is no doubt that werewolves existed, just like leopard men and tiger men, as a clandestine *Männerbund*, a secret society, wavering between demonic possession and horseplay, as is common in such a *Männerbund*. In Europe, there is at least one case of a "werewolf" on record in sixteenth-century Livland. There, the werewolvish activity consisted for the most part of breaking into other people's cellars at night and drinking any beer found there.<sup>26</sup> More dangerous and perhaps more ancient were the bands of leopard men in Africa, who conspired to assassinate others and practice cannibalism. Leopard men appear on the

murals in Çatal Hüyük as well,<sup>27</sup> and their costumes recall those of the later Greek centaurs and satyrs, those "wild men" who fell upon wine jars much like the werewolves in Livland. The leopard, one of the great cats and a climber, was the primate's arch-enemy. By training himself in the ways of the wolf, man became a hunter and lord of the earth. Could it be that these bands of leopard men and wolf men were the direct result of this decisive step? Werewolves are, in any case, attested in antiquity not only in fairytales but in a doctor's clinical report. Markellos of Sidon treated cases of "lykanthropy" as a mental disorder,<sup>28</sup> a special form of melancholy, by the cure-all of letting blood. He knew patients who "run out at night imitating wolves and dogs in every way and gadding about for the most part in cemeteries until dawn." Their legs usually bore the scars of dog bites. Strangely, these fits of madness occurred with great regularity, according to the calendar, in February, the month of the Lupercalia: even in late antiquity, then, the so-called mental disorder was regulated through ritual.

By combining rumors about Arcadian sacrifice with local mythology, we arrive at a description of an entirely real, institutionalized ritual. At its center was the secret sacrificial festival at the ash-altar of Zeus Lykaeos. We gather from the name, Nyktimos, that it occurred at night. The entrails of many sacrificial animals were, so they say, sliced in together with those of a man, so that what each person ate was seemingly a matter of chance. Apparently, everything would be stirred together in a large tripod kettle<sup>29</sup> and each person had to fish

<sup>23</sup> Stressed by Nilsson (1906) 9, (1955) 400; cf. Cook I (1914) 73.

<sup>24</sup> Paus. 8.30.2.

<sup>25</sup> Paus. 8.2.6; Pliny N.H. 8.80.

<sup>26</sup> Höfler (1934) 315ff.; L. Gernet, "Dolon le loup," *Mél. Cumont* (1936), 189–208 = *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* (1968), 154–71; W. E. Peuckert, *Geheimkulte* (1961), 100–117; R. Eisler, *Man into Wolf* (1951); 1.2 above. See also B. Lindskog, *African Leopard Men* (Uppsala, 1954). For werewolves in Wallis still in the eighteenth century see H. G. Wackernagel, *Schweiz. Arch. f. Volkskunde* 35 (1936), 1–12; 46 (1949), 74. For "dog-men" in Hittite ritual texts see ANET 360. On the *Hirpi Sorani* see Serv. Aen. 11.785.

<sup>27</sup> See 1.2.n.19 above; 1.8.n.28. For Indians hunting in wolf's clothing see F. E. Zeuner, *Geschichte der Haustiere* (1967), 54.

<sup>28</sup> In Aët. Amid. 6.11 (Oribas. 8.9; Paul. Aeg. 3.16; *Physiognom. Graeci* II 282), cf. W. H. Roscher, *Das von der Kynanthropie handelnde Fragment des Marcellus von Side*, Abh. Leipzig 17.3 (1897); Galen XIX 719 Kühn; *περί Λυκάωνος ἢ λυκανθρώπου* Paul. Aeg. 3.16. "Lykanthropy" no longer plays a role in modern psychiatry (*contra* Piccaluga, *Lykaon*, 58): it was culturally determined.

<sup>29</sup> Because Homeric descriptions of sacrifice, and most depictions on vases, present only the act of roasting on a spit, boiling has gone largely unnoticed; there is nothing about it, e.g., in Stengel (1910; 1920). On the other hand, the significance of the sacred tripod has been studied (K. Schwendemann, *Jdl* 36 [1921], 151–85; P. Guillon, *Les trépieds du Ptoion* [1943], 87–174), but without considering its use as a pot for cooking. Both roasting with spits and cooking in a kettle are represented on a Caeretan hydria, Villa Giulia, ASAA 24/26 (1946/48) pl. 4, Detienne and Vernant (1979) pl. I–IV; cf. a fragment from the Acropolis, Graef and Langlotz nr. 654. Ὀπτήσις σπλάγγων, κρεῶν ἐψησις in the decree of the Milesian *Molpoi* SIG<sup>3</sup> 57 = LSAM 50.35; for boiling at the sacrifice to the Horai see Philochoros 328 F 173. "Partially boiling and partially roasting" is a standard motif in stories of gruesome banquets: Lykaon, Ov. Met. 1.228–29; Thyestes, Accius 220–22, Sen. Thy. 765–67; Harpagos, Hdt. 1.119; Tereus, Ov. Met. 6.645–46; Dionysus, OF 35 = Clem. Pr. 2.18; Eur. Cyclops 243–46, 358, 403–404. Cf. the Orphic taboo ἐφθόν

out his portion with the sacred fork (the trident?) (see Figure 4).<sup>30</sup> For all must partake of the sacred object; no participant was allowed to decline. The sacrificial meal separated the "wolves" from the "sons of the bear," the Arcadians, just as Lykaon had divorced himself from the circle of the gods. Excavators at Mount Lykaion, however, have discovered no human bones among the sacrificial detritus. Yet, even by daylight it is hard to distinguish a piece of human heart, liver, or kidney from that of an equally large mammal; modern surgeons have even pondered the feasibility of transplants. In the flickering flames at night, only the innermost circle of sacrificial servants could know what was really floating about in the kettle. The power of suggestion comes from tradition, from social constraints. Human entrails may well have been thought to be present. The proof lay in their effects on the participants: each time one or more would be struck with "wolf's frenzy," whether spontaneously or because they were somehow manipulated. The "eaters" and the "slaughterers" were not the same. The "wolves" disappeared into the dark and had to avoid human settlements for years. By the time the dawning rays of sunlight hit the golden eagles on top of the columns east of the altar, the sacrifice was long over.

The wolf metamorphosis, as described by Euanthes, can easily be seen as an initiation ritual, for stripping off one's clothes and swimming across a lake are clearly rites of passage. If Damarchos won an Olympic victory after his time as a wolf, he could have been no older than 16 at the time of his transformation. Now it is surely the novice, the first-time participant in the nocturnal festivities, who would be most susceptible to suggestion, and hence to the shocking realization that he had eaten human flesh. From this we surmise that the separation of the "wolves" from the "sons of the bear" reflected a division according to age. The myth always speaks of a "young boy" to be sacrificed, that is, a representative of precisely that age-class which the

μη ὀππᾶν, Arist. *Probl. ined.* 3.43 Bussemaker (Paris, 1857), and cf. Iamb. *V. Pyth.* 154; Ath. 656b; Detienne (1977) 163–217. For boiling a ram see IG XII 7, 515.78; for its place in Roman ritual see Varro *LL* 5.98; for the boiling of meat in Germanic sacrifices see J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* I (1956<sup>2</sup>), 416–20; for the Hittites see ANET 348/49; for reference in the OT see n. 30 below. It is not certain whether the invention of boiling presupposes the invention of ceramics; boiling is also possible in stretched-out hides, into which hot stones would be thrown to heat the water.

<sup>30</sup>For the trident as a fork for meat see I Sam 2:13 (cf. Exod. 27.3); E. D. van Buren, *Symbols of the Gods* (1945), 138. The trident also appears as a harpoon: Aesch. *Sept.* 131; cf. Bulle, *RML* III 2855; Simon (1969) 82; J. Boardman, *CR* 21 (1971), 143; III.8.n.21 below.

ephebes must leave. The boy must die if they are to enter the sphere of manhood. But expulsion has to precede inclusion. Life as a wolf in the wilderness, occurring, as we see, roughly between the ages of 16 and 25, was thus analogous to the Spartan Krypteia which, in turn, later corresponded to military service.<sup>31</sup> According to Myron in his history of the Messenian War,<sup>32</sup> Arcadian warriors carried the skins of wolves and bears instead of shields. This behavior, wild and primitive though it was, was enough to preserve Arcadian independence.

In discussing the preparations for the sacrificial festival, the myth makes mention of the precinct "that none may enter." Because both Arkas and the bear went in, they had to be sacrificed.<sup>33</sup> Those who break the tabu are damned and consecrated at once, destined for sacrifice. Predatory animals, it was said, would not follow their quarry past this line.<sup>34</sup> Thus, within this small area they were free although caught in an inescapable trap, for the wolves were waiting just outside. The tabu was evidently created only as an excuse and justification for the sacrificial killing. Presumably the sacrificial animals were set free only to be caught all the more certainly when they would cross the line "of their own free will." The Arcadians' own name may indicate a "bear festival," which would easily fit the well-known type.<sup>35</sup> It is, of course, doubtful whether bears still lived in Arcadia in historical times; perhaps a shaggy ram could have been used as a substitute quarry.

It is clear that women would have been excluded from the Arcadians' nocturnal sacrifices. Instead, there is a female realm that is closed to men. Only "consecrated women" could enter the cave where Rhea bore Zeus,<sup>36</sup> for they represented the Arcadian nymphs who took care of him. Whereas the men gathered for sacrifice, for the "act" of killing, the women attended to newborn life. Thus, the polarity of

<sup>31</sup>Jeanmaire (1939) 550–69. Alcaeus, in exile, calls himself *λυκαιμίας* (130.25 LP).

<sup>32</sup>In Paus. 4.11.3; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 8.282, Stat. *Theb.* 4.303 f.

<sup>33</sup>"Erat." *Cat.* 1 pp. 52–53 Robert.

<sup>34</sup>Ael. *Nat. an.* 11.6, who mentions an *Αὐλή* of Pan at Mount Lykaion; it is presumably identical with the *ἄβατον* nn. 7, 33 above, in accordance with the parallel of the sanctuary of Apollo Hylatas at Kurion (Cyprus). Cf. Ael. *Nat. an.* 11.7: there, too, the dogs do not pursue the *ἐλαφοί* into the sacred grove, and whoever touches Apollo's altar is thrown from a cliff; cf. Strabo 14 p. 683. Anyone who entered the precinct on Mount Lykaion was considered a "deer": see Plut. *Q. Gr.* 300a–c (n. 7 above).

<sup>35</sup>See I.2.n.5 above; *ἄρκος* rather than *ἄρκτος* already in LSS 115 B 16 (fourth century B.C.), not just since the Septuagint (thus Frisk, *Chantraine* s.v.).

<sup>36</sup>Paus. 8.36.3 (n.8 above).



the sexes bound together the course of life and assured perpetuity in the face of death.

Thus, too, there must be a new unity corresponding to the rift in male society due to the sacrifice: following the sacrifice at the altar on the summit, there was the inevitable agon further down the mountain. According to Xenophon, Xenias the Arcadian "performed the Lykaion sacrifice and held an agon"<sup>37</sup> even in foreign lands. In enumerating the Greek agonistic festivals, Pindar mentions the "festive gathering of Zeus Lykaios," "the race-track of Zeus," several times.<sup>38</sup> It is even called the oldest of all Greek agons.<sup>39</sup> The prize there was a bronze implement, probably a tripod, a constant reminder of that nighttime festival. Those who had turned into "wolves" were of course not allowed to participate in the agon, but those who had returned after nine years' abstinence were permitted to enter. Thus, for Damarchos, his time as a wolf was a time of preparation for the agon, and even for the Olympic victory which he then won—the victory that lifted him out of his Arcadian context, bringing him pan-Hellenic fame. In the agon following the sacrifice, societal roles were reasigned. The expulsion of some and the new start for others went together. The younger members of the rising generation had to be forced away into the wild "outdoors" while the twenty-five-year-olds, now marriageable, entered athletic competitions.<sup>40</sup> They were now true Arcadians, "acorn-eaters" as opposed to carnivorous beasts of prey. They had found their way and might now participate in the sacrifice without danger, taking their wreaths from the altar and dedicating their bronze tripods.

Strange to say, there was another god besides Zeus who was involved in the agon—Pan, the lewd goat-like god. His sacred grove and sanctuary were next to the stadium,<sup>41</sup> and the eponymous official organizing the Lykaia was alternately a priest of Zeus, then a priest of Pan.<sup>42</sup> Arcadian coins, moreover, display Zeus's head on one side and

Pan's on the other.<sup>43</sup> In genealogical myths, Arcadian Pan is said to be the son of Zeus and, hence, the brother or half-brother of Arkas.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, when it is told that Arkas was raised by a "goatherd,"<sup>45</sup> it evidently reflects the role played by the cult of Pan in the life of a growing boy. It is thus the polar opposite of the world of the huntress Artemis, to which Arkas' mother, Kallisto, belongs. Zeus and Pan almost seem to embody the antithesis between aggression and sexuality, or at least between order and wild living. The serious sacrifice that divides the group is the antithesis of the unification during a period of license. But the details of the program, and its sequence in time, escape us.

A strange abundance of antitheses is thus impressed upon the celebrants at the Arcadian ritual: predatory animals/sacrificial animals, wolves/bears, wolves/stags, meat-eaters/acorn-eaters; night/day, sacrifice/agon, Zeus/Pan; the old/the young, men/women, killing/giving birth. Characteristically, these antitheses do not merely collapse into a uniform duality. They are, rather, generally transformed, each into the other, like night into day: the hunter becomes the hunted, the cannibal turns ascetic, the living are killed, the dead come back to life—the "secret sacrifice" reveals the primordial situation of the hunt.

## 2. Pelops at Olympia

Although they were of the greatest antiquity, the Lykaia remained a basically provincial, purely Arcadian event. They were clearly eclipsed by the Olympic games, held every four years on the banks of the Alpheios, at the foot of the Hill of Kronos, in the sacred grove of Zeus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.10 τὰ Λύκαια ἔθυσσε καὶ ἀγῶνα ἔθηκε.

<sup>38</sup> Ol. 9.96; *Nem.* 10.45–48; Ol. 7.83–84, 13.107–108.

<sup>39</sup> Paus. 8.2.1; Pliny *NH* 7.205. For a prize of χαλκός see Pind. *Nem.* 10.45; Polemon Schol. Pind. Ol. 7.153d (σκεύη 153c); cf. Pind. Ol. 7.84; Arist. fr. 637; *Marm. Par.*, *FGrHist* 239 A 17; Kleophanes, *Περὶ ἀγῶνων* Schol. Pind. Ol. 9.143a. For inscriptions see *IG V* 2.463, 549, 550, IV 428, 673, IV 1<sup>2</sup> 629, II/III<sup>2</sup> 993 (new foundation ca. 215 B.C.). For coins with the superscription ΛΥΚΑΙΑ see Imhoof-Blumer (1886) 105.

<sup>40</sup> For agon and wedding see I.7.n.13 above.

<sup>41</sup> Paus. 8.38.5 ("Zufall," Nilsson [1906], 444.2); *μαντεῖον Πανός* Schol. Theocr. 1.123c.

<sup>42</sup> *IG V* 2, 550.

<sup>43</sup> Cook I (1914) 68–70. On the statue of Pan in the sanctuary of Zeus Lykaios at Megalopolis see Paus. 8.30.2–3; for altars of Zeus Lykaios and Pan at Tegea see Paus. 8.53.11.

<sup>44</sup> Epimenides, *FGrHist* 457 F 9 = Schol. Theocr. 1.3–4c, and cf. Schol. Theocr. 1.123b; Aristippos, *FGrHist* 317 F 4. For Pan as the son of Aither, see Ariathos, *FGrHist* 316 F 4; as the son of Hermes, see Pind. fr. 100. For Pan as the inventor of astronomy, i.e., putting an end to the primitive προσέληνοι see Schol. Lyk. 482.

<sup>45</sup> "Eratosth." *Catast.*, p. 2 = Hes. fr. 163; according to another version ("Erat." *Cat.* p. 52 Robert), the she-bear and her baby are caught by αἰπόλοι.

<sup>1</sup> E. N. Gardiner, *Olympia, Its History and Remains* (1925); W. Hege and E. Rodenwaldt,



These games were the most important expression of unity above all in the Peloponnesus, but also for all of Greece. Their enormous importance in giving the Greeks a sense of identity in sports and politics, and even in their spiritual existence, is well known. Long after Pindar, the Greeks were still aware that this athletic event was simultaneously a religious festival, even if only through the Zeus of Phidias, which was considered the most important expression of their conception of god. But the fact that both the religious experience and the socio-athletic event were imbedded in a ritual with a striking resemblance to the Lykaia, a sacrificial ritual that centered on the precinct of Pelops and the altar of Zeus, received far less notice and hence has come down to us only in scattered fragments.<sup>2</sup>

Although there are signs of a pre-Doric tradition, the history of the sanctuary at Olympia<sup>3</sup> seems to start in the Protogeometric era. From then on, the significance of the games constantly grows. It is probably just chance that the list of victors begins in the year 776, for it was about then that the Greek alphabet was introduced.<sup>4</sup> Pisa and Elis fought to possess the famous site over many generations until, in the sixth century, Pisa was destroyed and the pan-Hellenic organization of the Hellanodikai was established, with Elis presiding.<sup>5</sup> Thanks to the excavations, we have detailed knowledge of the sanctuary's glorious architectural history, as well as its decline in late antiquity until the emperor Theodosius abolished the games.<sup>6</sup> But it is far easier to

*Olympia* (1936); L. Ziehen and J. Wiesner, *RE* XVIII (1939), 1–174; A. Mousset, *Olympie et les jeux grecs* (1960). On the excavations see E. Curtius and F. Adler, *Olympia* (1890–97); W. Wrede and E. Kunze, *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* 1–5 (1944–64); E. Kunze, *Olympische Forschungen* 1ff. (1944ff.). For the lists of victors see L. Moretti, *Olympionikai* (Rome, 1957).

<sup>2</sup>A. B. Cook, "Zeus, Jupiter, and the Oak," *CR* 17 (1903), 268–78, interpreted the ritual as a battle between the young and the old priest-king; he was followed by F. M. Cornford in Harrison (1927) 219–29. L. Drees, *Der Ursprung der Olympischen Spiele* (1962) sees "pre-Doric fertility cults."

<sup>3</sup>F. Mezö, *Geschichte der Olympischen Spiele* (1930); for a hypercritical account see U. Kahrstedt, "Zur Geschichte von Elis und Olympia," *NGG* (1927), 157–76; cf. F. Jacoby, *FGH Hist* III B: Kommentar 221–28.

<sup>4</sup>L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (1961), 20–21.

<sup>5</sup>The tradition is late, confused, tendentious, and unverifiable; Paus. 6.22.3–4 (destruction of Pisa after 588), 5.9.4; Strabo 7 p. 355 (cf. F. Böhle, *RE* VII A 196–97): destruction of Pisa by Elis and Sparta after the (Second?) Messenian War. On the discus of Iphitos and Lykurgus, see Arist. fr. 533, and cf. F. Jacoby, *Apollodors Chronik* (1902), 116 n. 30, 122–26.

<sup>6</sup>On the prohibition against pagan cults see *Cod. Theod.* XVI.10.10–12 (391/92); the last Olympic games took place in 393.

sift through the archaeological layers than to organize and evaluate the literary evidence for the cults and games at Olympia, for here the most diverse traditions have become superimposed: pre-Doric and Doric, Pisan and Elean, local and pan-Hellenic. Moreover, they are frequently distorted by local patriotism or politics or because genealogies have become systematized.<sup>7</sup> We can often do no more than combine those items that necessarily belong together because of their function.

In so doing, however, we must omit the most famous foundation myth of the Olympic games. Although the story of Pelops' abduction of Hippodameia from her father, Oinomaos, in the chariot race and Oinomaos' death in the process was already a part of the pseudo-Hesiodic Great Ehoiai and appeared on the Kypselos chest about 570 B.C., and although the pedimental sculpture on the eastern side of the great temple of Zeus depicted the preparations for this chariot race,<sup>8</sup> the myth only became important for Olympia once chariot-racing had become the most prestigious and costly sport and thus become the focal point of the games. However, according to the Olympic victory lists, chariot-racing was only introduced in the twenty-fifth Olympiad, that is, in 680 B.C.<sup>9</sup> Until then, only victors in the foot-race were recorded. There are, admittedly, reproductions of war chariots among the votive offerings long before 680—as there are in other Greek sanctuaries as well—and perhaps even the name of the wily charioteer, Myrtilos, can be traced to Hittite roots, which might then be related to the introduction of the war chariot in the middle of the second millennium B.C.<sup>10</sup> But all this does not touch upon the heart of the Olympic festival. Rather, in its details the myth of Hippodameia reflects the strange tabus of Elean animal-husbandry rites;<sup>11</sup> and the fact that it penetrated to Olympia testifies to growing Elean influence in the sev-

<sup>7</sup>In what follows we will not deal with the traditions that attribute the founding of the games to Endymion (Paus. 5.1.4, 5.8.1, 6.20.9), Peisos (Phlegon, *FGH Hist* 257 F 1), Herakles the Idaean dactyl (Paus. 5.7.6, 5.8.1, 5.13.8, 5.14.7), or Zeus after his victory over Kronos (Paus. 5.7.10, 8.2.2).

<sup>8</sup>*PR* II 206–17; Hes. fr. 259 M.-W.; Paus. 5.17.7. On the pedimental sculptures see M. L. Säfslund, *The East Pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia* (1970). There is perhaps already an allusion at *Il.* 2.104 Πέλοπι πληξίππου.

<sup>9</sup>Paus. 5.8.7; doubted by L. Deubner, *Kult und Spiel im alten Olympia* (1936), 26–27, on account of the votive offerings.

<sup>10</sup>H. R. Hall, *JHS* 29 (1909), 19–22; cf. F. Schachermeyr, *Anzeiger für die Altertumswissenschaft* 19 (1966), 16.

<sup>11</sup>G. Devereux, "The Abduction of Hippodameia as 'Aition' of a Greek Animal Husbandry Rite," *SMSR* 36 (1965), 3–25; *Hdt.* 4.30; *Plut. Q. Gr.* 303b; Paus. 5.5.2.

enth century. But the Hippodrome was located far from the Altis of Zeus, in the plain of the Alpheios. The stadium, by contrast, was inside the sacred precinct and oriented toward the altar of Zeus.<sup>12</sup> The preeminent agon at Olympia was the foot-race in the stadium, and it alone had a sacral function.

The altar of Zeus, the stadium, and the precinct of Pelops are the cultic centers of the sanctuary at Olympia. It goes without saying that the cultic activity consisted mainly of sacrifice. Of course, in such a highly frequented sanctuary there would be a considerable diversity of rituals current at any one time: private, occasional sacrifice; daily and annual state sacrifice—important because the city administration of Elis was intimately involved in running Olympia; and finally, once every four years, all the sacrifices at the great festival. And yet, to the extent that they concerned the same hero or god at the same site, we may assume that there was some analogy between the smaller sacrifices and the larger ones, the frequent and the rare; they would express essentially the same thing, whether abbreviated or elaborated.

"The Eleans honored Pelops as much more than the other heroes at Olympia as they honored Zeus more than the other gods," says Pausanias.<sup>13</sup> And already Pindar describes his unique status: "Now he is drenched in glorious blood-offerings, lying by the ford of the Alpheios, with his busy tomb right next to the altar which the most people come to visit."<sup>14</sup> The altar of Zeus is the true center of the Altis, remaining until the very end nothing more than a primitive heap of earth and ash, though it had risen to an impressive height through the sacrifices of countless visitors.<sup>15</sup> Not far off, toward the west, was the precinct of Pelops, enclosed by a circle of stones. Before sacrificing to Zeus, one sacrificed to Pelops,<sup>16</sup> who thus got the same number of sacrifices even if they were not as large. In both cases, only white poplar wood could be used, and it was regularly provided by a specially appointed sacrificial servant, the woodman (*ξυλεύς*).<sup>17</sup> Whereas

<sup>12</sup>E. Kunze, 5. *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* (1956), 10–12; *AJA* 52 (1948), 492–93. Πάντα προσθήκη πλὴν τοῦ δρόμου Plut. *Q. conv.* 675c; cf. Paus. 5.8.6, 8.26.4; Philostr. *Gymn.* 12.

<sup>13</sup>5.13.1.

<sup>14</sup>*Ol.* 1.90–93 νῦν δ' ἐν αἵμακουρίαῖς ἀγλααῖσι μέμεικται, Ἄλφειοῦ πόρῳ κλιθεῖς, τύμβον ἀμφίπολον ἔχων πολυξενωτάτῳ παρὰ βωμῷ.

<sup>15</sup>Paus. 5.13.8–11, 14.1–3; cf. Thuc. 5.50.1. On the type, see II.1.n.10 above.

<sup>16</sup>Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 1.149a καὶ πρὸ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτῷ τοὺς Ἥλείους θύειν. On the Pelopion, see Paus. 5.13.1–3.

<sup>17</sup>Paus. 5.13.3, 14.2; for *ξυλεύς* in inscriptions see *Olympia* V (1896), #62, 64, 121, 122, 124.

the entrance to the precinct of Pelops is in the west, the altar of Zeus was approached from the stadium, i.e., from the east. Whereas blood was poured into the sacrificial pit<sup>18</sup> for Pelops, that is to say, downward, the altar of Zeus grew higher and higher. Thus, the two sacrificial recipients were united in a polar tension. The hero and the god went together like night and day. The name *Pelops* can be interpreted to mean "dark-face,"<sup>19</sup> the antithesis of the god of daylight. The agon took place in the daytime and could not be continued into the night.<sup>20</sup> When the schedule started to get too long, the pentathlon and the horse-racing were moved up, to be followed by the sacrifices,<sup>21</sup> which were, in turn, followed by the foot-race in the stadium. Thus, the preparatory sacrifice to Pelops occurred at night. "When the Eleans had slaughtered the sacrificial victim according to their custom, its consecrated parts would lie on the altar, though not as yet set on fire. The runners would stand at a distance of one stade from the altar, in front of which there was a priest signalling the start with a torch. And the winner would set fire to the consecrated parts and then depart as an Olympic victor." Thus, following ancient sources, Philostratus<sup>22</sup> describes the foot-race to the altar; one stade long, hence *stadium*. And in fact, the early stadium ended at the altar.

Philostratus also connects the double course with sacrifice: "When the Eleans had finished their sacrifice, all the Greek envoys present had to sacrifice. But in order that their procession not be delayed, the runners ran one stade away from the altar, calling on the Greeks to come, then turned and ran back as if to announce that all Greece was present rejoicing. So much for the double course."<sup>23</sup> It started at the altar and returned there in the end. Pausanias describes the altar more exactly: "The custom is to slaughter victims in the lower part of the altar, the so-called prothysis. Then they take the thighs up to the very highest point of the altar and burn them there. . . . But only men may climb up from the prothysis to the top."<sup>24</sup> Thus, the foot-race

<sup>18</sup>Εἰς τὸν βόθρον Paus. 5.13.2.

<sup>19</sup>J. B. Hofmann, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen* (1950), s.v. *πελιτνός*; *RE* Suppl. VII 849. Even if Pelops were—as is more probable—the eponym of a people, Πέλοπες (like Δόλοπες, Δρύοπες), the association would not be without significance.

<sup>20</sup>Paus. 5.9.3.

<sup>21</sup>Paus. 5.9.3: 472 B.C.

<sup>22</sup>*Gymn.* 5. Cf. Eumenes' foundation at Delphi, *LSS* 44.15 ὁ δὲ δρόμος γινέσθω . . . ἄχρι ποτὶ τὸν βωμόν, ὁ δὲ νικέων ὑφαπτέτω τὰ ἱερά.

<sup>23</sup>*Gymn.* 6.

<sup>24</sup>Paus. 5.13.9–10.

presupposes the bloody act of killing; likewise Pelops was "drenched with blood" in the preliminary sacrifice. The end of the race, its goal, is the top of the ancient heap of ash, the place where fire must blaze and burn up the thigh-bones. The race marks the transition from blood to purifying fire, from encountering death to the joyful satisfaction of surviving as manifested in the strength of the victor. Thus, the most important agon at Olympia is part of a sacrificial act moving between the Pelopion and the altar of Zeus.

The proper victim for Zeus is a bull;<sup>25</sup> for Pelops, however, it is a black ram—this, too, stresses the dark side of the ceremony. Pausanias describes the annual sacrifice offered to Pelops by the Elean officials: "From this sacrifice the prophet gets no share; rather, it is customary to give only the ram's neck to the so-called woodman. . . . Anyone, whether Elean or foreign, who eats the meat of the victim sacrificed to Pelops is not allowed to go in to Zeus"<sup>26</sup>—that is, he may not enter his precinct or draw near to the altar. Pausanias states this rule in a general way; it was surely not restricted to the annual sacrifice but applied to every Pelops sacrifice preceding a sacrifice to Zeus, especially during the great penteteteric festival.

Characteristically, the sacrifice of a ram is also present in the myth linking Pelops to Oinomaos and Hippodameia. Oinomaos, so it is told, used to sacrifice a ram, letting the suitor get a head start until the "consecrated" parts of the victim were burned; thereupon he would chase after the fleeing suitor and, upon catching up with him, kill him.<sup>27</sup> A series of vase-paintings depicts the sacrifice of a ram, based on scenes from tragedy;<sup>28</sup> admittedly, these rams are white, but this is probably just an iconographical shift caused by some intervening factor. Even the tale is quite far removed from ritual; yet, in the seventh century, those who told the myth were moved to combine Pelops with a race and the sacrifice of a ram, just as these had been combined in ritual until the time of Pausanias and Philostratus.

<sup>25</sup>Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.51. On Milon's sacrifice of a bull at Olympia see *Äth.* 412–13a; Phylarchos, *FGrHist* 81 F 3.

<sup>26</sup>Paus. 5.13.2. Cf. the sacrifice of a ram at the Babylonian New Year Festival. There, the priests and those who do the slaughtering must leave Babylon: *ANET* 333.

<sup>27</sup>Diod. 4.73.4 ὁ μὲν Οἰνόμαος ἔθνε κριόν . . . ἀγισθέντων δὲ τῶν ἱερῶν τότε ἄρχεσθαι τοῦ δρόμου.

<sup>28</sup>Brommer (1960) 370: Calyx-crater *BM F* 271 = D 6, Cook I (1914) pl. 5; amphora *BM F* 331 = D 7, Cook I (1914) pl. 3; bell-crater in Naples H. 2200 = Cook I (1914) 409 = B 3 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 1440.1, *FR* III 151, Harrison (1927) 218; amphora at Ruvo = Cook I (1914) 408 = D 14, *Annali* 23 (1851), pl. QR. For Etruscan urns see *EAA* V 115f. Zeus appears as the recipient of the sacrifice on D 7, Artemis on B 3.

The sanctuary of Pelops was no ordinary grave. It was said that his bones were preserved in a chest not far from the sanctuary of Artemis Kordax;<sup>29</sup> an outsized shoulder blade, however, was kept separately for display, though it no longer existed during Pausanias' lifetime.<sup>30</sup> Pelops' severed shoulder blade belongs, of course, with that other gruesome myth of Pelops which Pindar mentioned in his first *Olympian Ode*, only to reject it indignantly as a malicious invention of the poets.<sup>31</sup> This myth runs directly parallel to the myth of Lykaon: with Zeus leading the way, the gods came to visit Tantalos for a festive meal. Tantalos, however, for whatever reason, turned the divine banquet into cannibalism: he slaughtered his own son Pelops and offered him to the gods as food; and Demeter, unaware because of her intense mourning for Kore, took the shoulder and ate it. Here, too, the justice of Zeus was quick to follow, even though there is little agreement as to the form it took. In any case, Pelops' limbs were put back together in the sacrificial kettle and he was brought to life once more; only the missing shoulder had to be replaced by a piece of ivory.<sup>32</sup>

After Pindar, the Greeks often changed the setting of this cannibalistic banquet of the gods to Sipylos in Asia Minor.<sup>33</sup> Modern mythologists think that the myths of Tantalos and Lykaon must have influenced each other. But because both clearly depict a sacrificial act, from cutting the victim up and cooking him in a kettle, to the typical closing "revival" by putting together his bones, both are therefore bound to a specific locality through ritual. Pelops' shoulder was displayed at Olympia, not in Asia Minor. And just as the Pelopion, the altar of Zeus, and the stadium were all very close to each other, so too the only woman allowed to enter the stadium was the priestess of De-

<sup>29</sup>Paus. 6.22.1.

<sup>30</sup>Paus. 5.13.4–6, cf. Lykoph. 52–56 and Schol. 54; Apollod. *Epit.* 5.10–11; Schol. LV ll. 6.92; Dionysios, *FGrHist* 15 F 3; Firm. *Err.* 15.1. Pelops' shoulder guaranteed the victory of the Pelopids over Troy.

<sup>31</sup>Pind. *Ol.* 1.26–27, 47–53.

<sup>32</sup>*PR* II 290–92; Bacchyl. fr. 42; Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 386–88; Lyk. 152–55; Apollod. *Epit.* 2.2–3; etc. F. M. Cornford in Harrison (1927) 243–51 interpreted the myth as belonging to an initiation and New Year's festival. The "knife of Pelops" was kept in the Sikyonian treasury: see Paus. 6.19.6, and cf. Pind. *Ol.* 1.49. There may be a depiction of Pelops in the tripod kettle on metope 32 from the Heraion at the river Sele: see E. Simon, *Jdl* 82 (1967), 281–86. The myth of Medea, Pelias, and the ram in the kettle is far more popular (for vases see Brommer [1960] 348–49); there, Medea appears as the priestess of "Artemis" (Diod. 4.51; Hyg. *Fab.* 24), i.e., of Hekate, the nocturnal leader of dogs.

<sup>33</sup>Pind. *Ol.* 1.38, and cf. *PR* II 286.

meter Chamyne, who took her place at the games upon an altar opposite the Hellanodikai.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the Olympic ritual combines the very gods that went together in the myth—Pelops, Zeus, and Demeter. The cannibalistic myth of Pelops that so shocked Pindar clearly refers to the Olympic festival.

The hero's mythical fate is strangely connected with the ram slaughtered in the Pelopion—on account of that same shoulder blade. In Greece, as elsewhere, a ram's shoulder blade played a special part in the sacrifice of a ram. In such a sacrifice for Poseidon on Mykonos, it is expressly stated that "the back and the shoulder blade should be cut up, the shoulder blade sprinkled with wine"<sup>35</sup>—i.e., destruction first, then sacred honors. In Slavic and German folk-religion, a ram's shoulder blade is used for making predictions,<sup>36</sup> while at Olympia a seer would have been present at the sacrifice for Pelops. We do not know what was actually done with ram's bones in historical times. Philostratus was content to avoid the problem by simply saying that they did "whatever was customary there"<sup>37</sup> and we too must be satisfied with the realization that, in both the sacrifice of the ram and the myth of Pelops, the traces of ancient hunting and sacrificial customs shine through precisely in the way in which the bones are treated.

One thing is certain—and once again this connects the sacrifice at Olympia with the Lykaia—the big tripod kettle was extremely important in these sacrificial customs. At least part of the sacrificial meat would be collected in such kettles (λέβητες) and prepared in them, although at first without fire. This is apparent from a legend current in the time of Peisistratos and retold by Herodotus: Hippokrates, the father of the future Athenian tyrant, "as yet held no public office, when a great marvel happened to him while he was at Olympia to see the games. When he had offered the sacrifice, the tripod kettles, which were full of meat and water, began to boil without fire and to overflow."<sup>38</sup> Hippokrates was evidently one of those envoys who, according to Philostratus, would sacrifice after the double course. The fact that the kettles began to boil by themselves was a sign of the vic-

<sup>34</sup>Paus. 6.20.9, 6.21.1; 8. *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia* (1967), 69–74.

<sup>35</sup>SIG<sup>3</sup> 1024.5 = LS 96.7 νότογ καὶ πλάτη κόπτεται, ἡ πλάτη σπένδεται. Tearing off the arm together with the shoulder blade plays a special role in the σπαράγμός; see Eur. *Bacch.* 1125–27; Theocr. 26.22; cf. Hdt. 4.62.

<sup>36</sup>F. S. Krauss, *Volks Glaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven* (1890), 166–67.

<sup>37</sup>Philostr. *Gymn.* 5.

<sup>38</sup>Hdt. 1.59. According to the bequest of Kritolaos, IG XII 7.515 = LSS 61, 78, a sacrificial ram is cooked and prepared so as to be eaten after the games.

torious strength emanating from Hippokrates, a sign of the future tyranny of his son, who had yet to be born. Such was the importance of cooking in a tripod kettle at the pan-Hellenic festival at Olympia. It is no surprise, then, that—as the excavations have shown—great numbers of tripods were dedicated there from the tenth century on.<sup>39</sup> And when, in the fifth century, the great temple of Zeus was constructed, the architects chose for the acroteria this very symbol of Olympic sacrifice, namely, the tripod.<sup>40</sup> Between the tripods was the battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs, and the start of the chariot race between Pelops and Oinomaos.

Just as Arkas was the ancestor of the Arcadians, so Pelops was the eponymous hero of the whole "island of Pelops" (Peloponnesus). Just as the Arcadians gathered for the festival of Zeus Lykaïos, so the inhabitants of the "island of Pelops" and, later, all of Greece gathered for the Olympic festival "in the wooded valleys of Kronos in Pelops' land."<sup>41</sup> And just as the sacrifice for Zeus Lykaïos divided Arcadian society, thereby shedding light on its workings, so too the sacrificial ritual at Olympia accentuated the distribution of roles in society. The division is most noticeable in those participating in the sacrifice of the ram to Pelops. This chthonic, dark, nocturnal sacrifice is for eating, but the "eaters" must subsequently shun the daytime sky god, Zeus; their expulsion is comparable to that of the werewolves of Lykaion. Of course, age groups and initiations were no longer part of the pan-Hellenic festival; thus, perhaps the meat was given to any social outcasts who happened to be there. There was one person of sacred status who ate of the ram, namely, the "woodman"; consequently he was permanently barred from the precinct of Zeus. The others were probably allowed to purify themselves and return, as in the parallel case, cited by Pausanias, of a purificatory bath in Pergamon.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the "woodman" supplied the wood for burnt offerings to Zeus whereby the ash-altar grew ever higher—a typical distribution of roles in a comedy of innocence. In sacrificing the ram, fasting was definitely required of the seer taking part, and was also required of the athletes. We know with certainty that at least until the late sixth

<sup>39</sup>F. Willemssen, "Dreifusskessel von Olympia," *Olympische Forschungen* 3 (1957), 161, reports that the older pieces found were remarkably numerous around the Pelopion; H.-V. Herrmann, "Die Kessel der orientalisierenden Zeit," *Olympische Forschungen* 6 (1966); 11 (1979).

<sup>40</sup>Paus. 5.10.4.

<sup>41</sup>Pind. *Ol.* 3.23.

<sup>42</sup>5.13.3. On the ξυλεύς see n. 17 above.

century, athletes had to undergo a thirty-day period of preparation with a strict vegetarian diet of cheese and figs. This was likewise a time of sexual abstinence.<sup>43</sup> Such renunciation and focusing of one's strength was meant to lead all the more certainly to a final goal, to the competition, to victory, and to sacrifice. For many kinds of sacrifice followed on a victory, with banquets at the state's expense; the victory celebration also included an evening procession; and in the story that Artemis Kordax was given her name<sup>44</sup>—a name that reflects a lascivious dance—because Pelops' companions held their procession within her precinct, we get some indication of the sexual urges that, having built up inside, would now break out into the open in the festival celebration. Yet, Pelops' bones were kept in the precinct of Artemis Kordax—that is, sacrifice underlay this uninhibited celebration. After this, military symbolism would mark a return to order: trumpets instead of flutes, armor instead of athletic nudity;<sup>45</sup> this was the norm for all Greek men.

Women, though not virgins, were barred from the Olympic games, under threat of death.<sup>46</sup> The festival divided the family in order to illuminate its relationships. At Olympia, the women had to play their part before and after the games. On an evening at the start of the festival, the women, weeping and wailing, would gather in the gymnasium for sacrifice: this was said to be in honor of Achilles,<sup>47</sup> though it may just have been a secondary motivation for the comedy of innocence preceding the sacrifice. After the games, they had an athletic festival of their own, the Heraia.<sup>48</sup> The temple of Hera was built much earlier than that of Zeus, not because Zeus was any less important but, rather, because the men gathered around the site where killing took place, the ash-altar, whereas the goddess of women stayed at home, in her *ναός*. On the other hand, the men were barred from the sacred cave of Zeus Sosipolis and Eileithyia on the slopes of the Hill of

<sup>43</sup>Τυρόν ἐκ τῶν τάλάρων Paus. 6.7.10, until the victory of Dromeus (#188 Moretti, *Olympionikai*, 484 B.C.), for whom the sculptor Pythagoras of Rhegion made a statue; thence, perhaps, the tradition that Pythagoras of Samos introduced a diet of meat rather than cheese, Porph. *V. Pyth.* 15 (from Antonios Diogenes), Iambl. *V. Pyth.* 25. Ἀφροδισίων ἀπέχεσθαι see Philostr. *Gymn.* 22; cf. I.7 at n. 13 above. For the thirty-day period see Philostr. *V. Ap.* 5.43; Johannes Chrysostomos, *Migne PG* 51, 76. For a training period of ten months, see Paus. 5.24.9, 5.21.13, 6.24.3.

<sup>44</sup>Paus. 6.22.1; cf. Schol. Aristid. III 564, 10 Dindorf *ὅτι ἐν τῇ Πέλοπος κρεουργίᾳ ὤρχησατο ὁ Πᾶν*.

<sup>45</sup>Philostr. *Gymn.* 7; Plut. *Q. conv.* 639e; Artemidorus 1.63.

<sup>46</sup>Paus. 5.6.7, 6.7.2; Ael. *Nat. an.* 5.17; Philostr. *Gymn.* 17 (II 270 ed. Teubn.).

<sup>47</sup>Paus. 6.23.3.

<sup>48</sup>Paus. 5.16.2; Nilsson (1906) 62; on Hera at Olympia see Simon (1969) 36–38.

Kronos.<sup>49</sup> An aged priestess and a virgin chosen each year, the "loutrophoros," were responsible for ministering to the cult of the divine child in the room of Eileithyia. The child's name seems to have been of little importance. Olympia was unable to establish itself as the birthplace of Zeus even though Pindar had mentioned the "Idaeon Grotto,"<sup>50</sup> and a temple was built for the mother of the gods in the fifth century. Yet it was evidently not so much a question of the child's name as the expectation expressed in the ritual act, that the incessant killing in the male sphere where Pelops was "drenched" with blood must have its counterpart in the female sphere in the mysterious birth in the cave. How else could the "city be saved," as the name *Sosipolis* suggests? Thus, Rhea's cave on the slopes of Mount Lykaion has its necessary counterpart at Olympia. By combining those aspects which the festival divides, the power of men and the power of women, the circle of life is sealed.

These connections were no longer so obvious when the games grew into a highly organized business and when sport became important for its own sake, yet the two managed to survive side by side for a thousand years. An Olympic victory was a unique societal event, but the victor's status and the order in which the participating cities were ranked became visible mainly in the sacrifice. The winner of the foot-race would be the first to light the sacrificial fire, after which the envoys would sacrifice in a specific order set by the Judges of the Hellenes. Pride in individual achievement, and divine glory radiating from the sanctuary, were inseparably united. The participating communities demonstrated their renewed strength each time in the festive competition, the race between the "dark" sacrifice to Pelops and the fire of Zeus, past death to the sovereign order of life.

### 3. Thyestes and Harpagos

The third and most famous, indeed, proverbial, cannibalistic meal in Peloponnesian mythology is directly preserved only in liter-

<sup>49</sup>Paus. 6.20.2–4, 6.25.4. On the archaeological problem of the sanctuary see R. Hampe, *Studies for S. M. Robinson I* (1950), 336–50.

<sup>50</sup>Pind. *Ol.* 5.18, and cf. Schol. 42a.