

Religion in the ancient Greek city



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Rituals

DEFINITION

A ritual is a complex of actions effected by, or in the name of, an individual or a community. These actions serve to organize space and time, to define relations between men and the gods, and to set in their proper place the different categories of mankind and the links which bind them together.

It has often been said that Greek religion was a 'ritualistic' religion, that epithet being understood in a restrictive and depreciatory sense in accordance with the hierarchy of values we have already discussed (chapter 1). If, by contrast, one starts from the definition of 'ritual' that we have just given, Greek religion may then fairly be said to be ritualistic in the sense that it was the opposite of dogmatic: it was not constructed around a unified corpus of doctrines, and it was above all the observance of rituals rather than fidelity to a dogma or belief that ensured the permanence of tradition and communal cohesiveness. However, this Greek ritualism did not exclude either religious 'thought' or religious 'beliefs' (see Part III, below); the formalism of ritual observance, moreover, depended on a comprehensive organizing framework that structured both human society internally and its relationships with the surrounding universe.

NATURE AND PERFORMANCE

Everyday private life, no less than public civic life, was rhythmically regulated by all kinds of rituals, so that every moment and

every stage of the Greek citizen's existence was intimately imbued with a religious dimension. The institution of the rituals was in all cases attributed to the direct or indirect intervention of the gods. Every failure of due observance was thought to provoke divine anger and retribution. Every modification of ritual required divine sanction. Hence one of the functions of the oracular shrines was to act as mouthpieces of the gods; the Delphic oracle, especially, played a decisive rôle in this area throughout the history of the Greek cities (chapter 11).

The observance of rituals was regulated very early on by written enactments. The multiplication of these 'sacred laws', which were inscribed on stone or bronze pillars and displayed at the entrance of temples and in other public places, was one of the characteristic phenomena associated with the emergence of the *polis* form of state in Greece from about 700 onwards. This publicity constituted one of the distinctively original features of Greek religion, in that it rendered widely accessible to all members of the community what oriental religions, for example, treated as the exclusive preserve of a priestly order.

Rituals were most often organized around a particular cult, and they varied greatly in form from one divinity and one city to another. From the simplest individual dedication of first-fruits (*aparkhai*) or the pouring of a libation (*spondē*), they were graduated on a sliding scale of complexity that culminated in the grandest civic festivals, which were typically spread out over several days.

SACRIFICE

Ancient sacrifice in modern debate

The end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries witnessed repeated attempts to establish a general theory of sacrifice. These coincided with the birth of a so-called 'Science of Religions' founded on the then dominant evolutionist paradigm. In the quest for a unitary definition of sacrifice within an evolutionist perspective, Robertson Smith (1894[79]) identified totemism as the elementary and primitive form of aboriginal sacrifice. On this theory, the primitive clan through the commu-

nal eating of its clan animal-totem experienced what he took to be the two essential components of the earliest conception of sacrifice, the communion meal and blood-bonding. In France, however, a different model was proposed by the sociological school of H. Hubert and M. Mauss (1964[77]), which was adopted by E. Durkheim (1912[73]). On their unitary model, sacrifice was accorded the status of a universal religious form.

The limitation of all such unitary hypotheses is that they fail to take account of the peculiar features of each religion's forms of sacrifice, its food-customs and modes of slaughter, the status of the victims, and so on. The same criticism applies to another would-be general theory of sacrifice, the anthropologically based hypothesis of René Girard (1977[74], 1987[75]), who sees in sacrificial violence the very foundational principle of all human culture.

Other current approaches include those of Walter Burkert and J.-P. Vernant. For Burkert (1983[70]) the ritual of the sacrificial meal may be traced back historically, or rather prehistorically, to the condition of man the hunter, before the discovery of agriculture. Vernant (1991[81], originally in Rudhardt and Reverdin 1981[80]), however, does not claim to offer a unitary hypothesis for sacrifice in general but prefers to 'address himself to a precisely delimited religion and society', namely that of Classical Greece, with the aim of providing material, ultimately, for 'a comparative typology of different sacrificial systems'. This same spirit of research is to be found in the collection of essays on the Greeks' 'cuisine of sacrifice' edited by M. Detienne and Vernant (1989[71]) and animates the discussion that follows here.

Sacrifice or sacrifices?

Sacrifice lay at the heart of the majority of Greek religious rituals. But since it could take varying forms, it would be more appropriate to talk of sacrifices in the plural. However, one form in particular, which may be defined as 'bloody animal sacrifice of alimentary type', predominated within the collective civic practice of the ancient city. For this simultaneously gave expression to the bonds that tied the citizens one to another and served as a privileged means of communication with the divine world. In

return the gods authorized and guaranteed the functioning of the human community, maintaining it in its proper station between and at a due distance from themselves and the animal kingdom respectively.

This kind of sacrifice involved the ritual slaughter of one or more animals, a part of which was offered up to the gods by being cremated on an altar, while the remainder was consumed according to precisely fixed rules by those participating in the sacrifice. Initiated by an act of consecration, the ritual of animal sacrifice was concluded by cooking and eating. Indeed, without this strict framework of sacrificial regulation, human beings would themselves have risked sinking to the level of the beasts whenever they ate the flesh of animals.

Animal sacrifice could be prompted by many different occasions. It could be offered by an individual and give rise to a domestic feast, for example at the marriage of a son or daughter. Or it could take place in a sanctuary, on the initiative of an individual, a religious association, or a city. The sacrificer might be, as in the first of the above instances, the head of a family, or a professional *mageiros*, a sacrificial specialist employed as the occasion demanded both to sacrifice and to cook the animal. In sanctuaries it was generally the priests in charge of the sanctuary's cult who carried out the sacrifice in the name of the sacrificing group.

The animal victims varied perceptibly both in status and in number according to the wealth of the sacrificer and the importance of the occasion being celebrated. Another determining variable was the nature of the cult, which might require a particular species of animal to be sacrificed (a cow for Athene, for instance, or a pig for Demeter). In all cases, however, only domestic animals could qualify for sacrifice. Victims were thus placed on a scale of value from, at one end, a goat, pig, sheep, or even a cock (the humblest sort of offering) to, at the top end, a cow or ox, the most prestigious of all. Indeed, at the great civic festivals large numbers of cattle might need to be sacrificed (no less than 240 bulls at the Athenian Great Dionysia of 333, for example), in which case the priest would call on the services of a whole range of specialized assistant personnel.

Every day, in short, several hundred animal sacrifices were taking place in different contexts within each of the thousand and

more separate political communities of the Greek world. But whatever the precise occasion may have been, they all scrupulously followed a set pattern that we are able to reconstruct from a combination of literary sources, iconographic documents (scenes on vases, sculpted stone reliefs) and epigraphic texts. In fact, all the stages of the great animal sacrifices that were performed by the Greek cities can already be found prefigured in the following passage from Homer, which describes a sacrifice of welcome for Odysseus' son Telemakhos, performed by old Nestor in his palace at Pylos. Note in particular the sharing out of the grilled entrails around the altar, once the gods have received their due portion, and the subsequent feasting of the warriors on equal portions of the huge carcase which in this instance, it is worth remarking, had been spit-roasted and not boiled:

Nestor, Gerenian horseman, was himself the first to speak: 'Dear sons, lose no time in bringing my wishes to fulfilment; before any other divinity, I desire to propitiate Athene, because she came in visible presence to the sumptuous banquet of our god (Poseidon). Let one of you go down to the plain to fetch a heifer; make sure that she comes as soon as may be, with a cowherd driving her! Let another go to the black ship of Telemakhos and bring all his comrades except for two! Let a third order the goldsmith Laerkēs to come and gild the heifer's horns! The rest of you, stay together here, but tell the serving-women to prepare a banquet in these great halls, and to bring us seats and wood and sparkling water.'

So he spoke and all set about their tasks. Up from the plain came the heifer, and from the swift ship the comrades of stouthearted Telemakhos. The smith came too, holding in his hands the tools of his craft, the anvil and hammer and shapely tongs, to work the gold. And Athene came to receive the sacrifice. Aged horseman Nestor handed over the gold, and the smith deftly worked it and gilded the heifer's horns to delight the goddess when she should see an offering so lovely. Stratios and godly Ekhephron led the beast forward by the horns, and Aretos came to them bringing from the store-room a flowery-patterned vessel that held the lustral water; in his other hand he carried a basketful of barley-groats. Nearby stood warlike Thrasymedes, with a sharp axe in his hand to fell the heifer, while Perseus held the bowl for the blood. Aged horseman Nestor began the rite with the lustral water and the barley-groats, and then addressed to Athene a long prayer, throwing the few hairs cut from the victim's head into the flames.

When they had prayed and had sprinkled the barley-groats, mighty-spirited Thrasymedes, son of Nestor, straightway took his stand beside the beast and struck her. The axe sliced through the sinews of the neck and the heifer collapsed senseless, whereupon Nestor's daughters and daughters-in-law and revered wife Eurydike, eldest of the daughters of Klymenos, raised the ritual scream. Then the young men lifted the victim up from the broad-pathed ground and held her, while Peisistratos prince of men cut her throat. The black blood gushed out, and the life departed from the bones. Then quickly they divided the flesh; at once they cut out the thigh-bones in due ritual fashion, covered them with the fat twice-folded, and laid the raw meat on top. The old king proceeded to burn these offerings on cloven wood and to pour glowing wine upon them; the young men stood round him holding five-pronged forks. When the thigh-bones were utterly consumed and they had tasted the entrails, they sliced and spitted the rest. They gripped the spits that went through the meat and roasted it thus.

Meanwhile Telemakhos had been bathed by lovely Polykaste, Nestor's youngest daughter; she bathed him, anointed him well with oil, then dressed him in a handsome cloak and tunic. He came from the bath looking like a god and went to sit by Nestor shepherd of the people.

Having roasted the outer flesh and removed it from the spits, they sat down and began to feast, and faithful serving-men attended on them, pouring wine into the golden cups.

(Homer, *Odyssey* III.417–72, trans. W. Shewring, modified)

Technical aspects of sacrificial ritual

VOCABULARY

thuein, thusia: *thuein* is the most general verb in Greek for consecrating an offering. It embraced rituals that differed both in their procedures and in their objectives. It could be applied equally to bloody and to bloodless sacrifices, to burnt offerings and to votive objects, and to offerings intended for the gods as well as to those designed for dead mortals or heroes. Only the context, or contrast with other more specialized terms, decided its precise meaning in a particular instance.

The primary sense of *thuein*, as attested in Homer, was 'to make to burn for the sake of the gods'. Right down into the Classical era the idea of an offering mediated by fire remained present in its most common usages. The meaning of *thusia*

evolved likewise. Primarily designating the act of 'throwing into the fire for the sake of the gods', it then came to mean generally 'offering to the gods'. But in the Classical epoch it was employed in everyday parlance both for the ritual of sacrifice and for the meat-banquet that followed. (For other sacrificial terminology, see pp. 37–8.)

IMPLEMENTS OF THE *THUSIA*

A whole assemblage of objects, tools and receptacles was used for the different stages of the sacrifice. Though often workaday in themselves, their rôle within the sacrificial domain endowed them with a ritual value. They may be seen depicted on several Attic vases of the Classical period, placed in close proximity to the raised altar (*bōmos*) on which the fire was lit (figs. 17, 18):

implements used for the slaughter included the tricorn basket (*kanoun*) containing the grains of barley with the butcher's knife hidden among them (and so invisible on the vases); the lustral pitcher (*loutērion*); and the basin to catch the blood (*sphageion*)

utensils for the sacrificial cooking included the table (*trapeza*) set beside the altar to serve as a butcher's block, both for the preliminary cutting-up of the carcass and for its distribution among the participants; the spits (*obeloi*) for roasting the innards and the flesh; and the cauldron (*lebēs*) in which the rest of the meat was boiled prior to its distribution.

BUTCHERY AND SACRIFICE

The Greeks did have a word for butcher in the sense of a dealer in meat (*kreopōlēs*), but their most general word was *mageiros*, which meant sacrificer, butcher and cook all in one. As Jeanne and Louis Robert once rightly remarked in their 'Bulletin épigraphique' (*Revue des études grecques* 83 (1970): 511), 'throughout antiquity there was an intimate connection between butchery and sacrifice, even for meat that was sold commercially in shops'. The sale of meat made its first appearance in the form of a simple, post-sacrificial distribution. A sacred law from Didyma (*LSAM*

[59] 54.1–3) laid down that, if it proved impossible for someone after the sacrifice to feast in the tent specially set aside for the purpose, then whoever so wished might take the meat away for it to be sold by weight.

In the stalls in a Greek market place (*agora*) one might find either the meat of animals ritually slaughtered by a *mageiros* – meat, that is to say, which had been consecrated by a first-fruits offering before the slitting of the animal's throat, and from which the gods' portion had been duly set aside (at Athens a tithe, entrusted to the *prutaneis*) – or sacrificial meat that had been allotted to the priests and resold by them. The cutting-up of the meat that was sold in the market-stalls was done on precisely the same egalitarian basis as that of the meat of victims distributed at a sacrifice.

However, the difference felt by the Greeks to exist between the two types of meat is marked in certain texts by a difference of vocabulary, as in the following passage of the 'On Marvellous Things Heard' attributed to Aristotle (*De auscultis mirabilibus* 842a33–5) apropos the behaviour of kites at Elis: 'they say that among the same people there are kites, which snatch the meat from those who carry it through the market place, but do not touch the flesh of the sacred victims'. Whereas the simple *ta krea* is used for the meat in the market place, the sacrificial meat is here described specifically as *ta hierothuta*, literally 'sacrificed in accordance with the due rituals'.

The great civic sacrifice

The most solemn form of *thusia* was that of the public sacrifices offered up by a city on the occasion of a religious festival and culminating in a civic banquet. The Panathenaia at Athens and the Hyakinthia at Sparta – to select those two states' most grandiose examples – required the slaughter of a huge army of cattle to feed the mass of citizens participating in the festival. Such sacrificial participation, at the same time as providing an occasion to eat meat, reactivated the pact between the city and its gods on which its order and prosperity depended. But for the citizens it also provided the opportunity for communal self-display and for the renewal of intracommunal ties as they shared in the distribution of the sacrificed and cooked meat.

In a stage preceding the sacrificial ritual itself a victim was chosen by a procedure of variable length and complexity. At the very least the priest had to assure himself that the victim met the criteria of 'purity' laid down (for example, a blemish on the animal's coat might be considered a sign of impurity) and conformed in all other respects to the ritual regulations.

The *thusia* proper began with a procession (*pompē*) led by the priest and the sacrificers, whereby the victim was brought to the altar. In the case of a public festival the procession was headed by the civic officials (*prutaneis* at Athens) who were to offer the sacrifice in the name of the city. Around the altar stood all those who were to participate in the act of ritual slaughter: the woman who carried the lustral water, the woman who bore the basket of grain in which the sacrificial knife was concealed, the sacrificer and his assistants, and finally the ordinary citizens in whose name the sacrifice was being made.

The priest then pronounced the customary prayers, sprinkling the victim's head as he did so with the lustral water. This act of purification was designed also to elicit the victim's 'assent' to its slaughter, which it signified by nodding its head (*hupokuptein*). Next, the priest offered up the 'first-fruits' of the sacrifice by throwing onto the altar-fire some grains taken from the basket and some hairs cut from animal's head. Without this preliminary phase of consecration the sacrifice could not proceed. The slaughterer (*boutupos*, literally 'ox-striker') was now authorized to kill the victim, first smiting it on the forehead with an axe and then cutting its throat. For the latter the animal's head had to be turned up, so that the blood might spurt out skywards and fall in a stream upon the altar and the ground. Most often, a vase was positioned to catch the blood which would then be poured over the altar. At the moment of killing, the women present let out the indispensable ritual scream (*ololugē*).

The word *thuein* ('to slaughter ritually') embraced these two operations, both the initial consecration and the throat-cutting. The third act of the sacrificial drama was the butchering and sharing out of the carcase. The *mageiros* first opened the beast's thorax in order to remove the entrails (*splankhna*: lungs, heart, liver, spleen, kidneys) and digestive system (*entera*, eaten as sausages and black puddings). Then the victim was skinned. In

private sacrifices the skins went to the priest, but in public ones they were sold off for the benefit of the state's sacred treasury. Finally, there was the cutting-up of the carcase, which was done in two stages and according to two different techniques. The first stage consisted of removing the thigh-bones (*mēria*), which were placed on the altar, covered with fat, sprinkled with a liquid libation and incense, and then burnt; this was the portion allotted to the gods, since they were thought to derive sustenance as well as olfactory pleasure from the scented smoke, and it was through the smoke that communication was effected between the human and divine worlds. The second stage was the cutting-up and cooking of the remaining flesh, but before that the *splankhna*, the most vital and precious elements of the victim, were spit-roasted on the altar by the priest's assistants and shared out among the worshippers, who were thereby assured of maximal participation in the sacrifice.

The remainder of the meat was then cut up in strips into equal portions, not making any allowance this time for the different parts of the beast and their articulation. One portion, again, was reserved for the gods, though it was consumed by mortal men (at Athens by the *prutaneis*); the rest was distributed by weight. Sometimes the portions of cooked meat were distributed by lot, sometimes in accordance with the merit or status of the recipients, since, given the method of butchering, parity of weight was not incompatible with inequality of meat. Thus the distribution was strictly political, the mode of cutting up the meat corresponding significantly to the ideological model of *isonomia* (meaning both 'equality of distribution' and 'equality of political status').

These remaining parts of the flesh were either boiled in cauldrons (*lebētes*) and consumed on the spot or taken away for cooking and eating elsewhere. In this way a second circle of 'fellow-eaters' was constituted, larger than that of the original participants in the sacrifice who were privileged to eat the *splankhna*. To borrow a formula of M. Detienne (in Detienne and Vernant 1989[71]: 3), 'sacrifice derives its importance from ... the necessary relationship between the exercise of social relatedness on all *political* levels within the system the Greeks call the city. Political power cannot be exercised without sacrificial practice.'

Other types of sacrifice

The type of sacrifice we have just been examining in detail was made up of two essential elements in combination, the ritual slaughter of an animal and the eating of its flesh. A different type consisted of the slaughtering and offering of an animal that was not then consumed but was burnt whole ('holocaust'); such a sacrifice was dedicated in its entirety to the gods through the agency of the flames. This type was employed primarily for certain hero-cults or cults of the dead, which were governed by a different ritual. A particular difference was that the blood was made to flow onto a low altar (*eskhara*), or a grave, or straight onto the ground, rather than onto an altar of the *bōmos* type. Different ritual necessitated also a different vocabulary. So in these cases either a word that placed the emphasis on the slitting of the throat (*sphagizein*), or one that stressed the element of sacralization (*enagizein*), was frequently used, as opposed to *thuein*, which was reserved uniquely for the slaughtering procedure described in the previous section. A third, and quite exceptional, type of bloody sacrifice was performed annually at Patrai in honour of Artemis Laphria, as we learn from Pausanias' remarkably detailed description (vii.18.7); here both domesticated and wild animals were sacrificed, together with game-birds, and were put to the flames when still alive.

Besides these types of animal-sacrifice, the Greeks also offered bloodless sacrifices of different materials, whether comestibles (bread with a variety of shapes and ingredients, fruits, cakes, cooked dishes, vegetables) or spices, the aroma of which was transmitted to the gods through the flames. It was in this bloodless form that the daily sacrifices in private homes were typically made. But there were also certain public cults that demanded explicitly and exclusively bloodless sacrifices, for instance that of Black Demeter at Phigaleia in Arkadia (Pausanias viii.42.11).

Then there were numerous rituals in which bloody and bloodless offerings were combined. At Athens, for example, there were complex festivals celebrating Apollo's rôle in the vegetative cycle, in which the central place was allocated to bloodless sacrifices. In two of these, indeed, it was the bloodless offering which gave the whole festival its name. The springtime festival of the Thargelia

was named for the *thargēlos* or bread specially baked for the occasion from the first flour of the year and carried in procession to the altar; and the central rite of the autumn festival of the Pyanopsia consisted in the offering to Apollo of a cooking-pot in which a kind of pottage (*puanos*) of pulses, especially dried ones, had been boiled (*hepsein*).

Finally, besides these types of sacrifice properly so called, a simple deposition of offerings might be practised. These were left on tables (*trapezai*) specially consecrated for the purpose and set up beside the altar, so that one name for them was *trapezōmata*. Or they might be deposited in a quite different sanctified spot, for example at the foot of a statue. On Delos, indeed, apart from the altar on which hecatombs (a hundred head of cattle) were sacrificed, there was a second altar reserved for these offerings, also sacred to Apollo (under the cult-title Genetōr, 'Begetter' or 'Ancestor'), on which it was absolutely forbidden to offer bloody sacrifices or to light any fire. Devotees of the Pythagorean sect were particularly enthusiastic worshippers of Apollo Genetōr, for reasons we shall now give.

Sacrificial practice among the religious sects

On the fringes of city-life there existed various sects, and it was on the issue of animal sacrifice that they chose to stake their claim to difference by ostentatiously practising bloodless sacrifice only, in the name of ritual purity. The sects in question were the Orphics and the Pythagoreans. The former set their face against the eating of meat in any guise whatsoever and took their nourishment in the perfectly pure forms of honey and cereals, the very foods indeed that they sacrificed to the gods. The Orphics thereby cut themselves off radically from all civic life, since that presupposed, as we have seen, participation in animal-sacrifice and its culminating distribution of meat. Their choice was motivated by a mystical yearning to recover that lost oneness with the gods which, so their theogonies taught them (chapter 12), mortals had once enjoyed in primordial times.

Among the sect of the Pythagoreans, two tendencies should be distinguished. One group of them agreed with the Orphics in withdrawing entirely from political life, rejecting utterly all meat-

eating and offering solely bloodless sacrifices on their altars. But another group, while they abstained from eating the flesh of sheep and cattle, were prepared to accommodate themselves to the humbler offerings of goat and pig. In this way they achieved a compromise between an oppositionist religious stance and participation in civic life, which they aimed to reform from within.

At the opposite extreme from vegetarianism and abstinence from meat-eating was the *omophagia* or eating of raw flesh practised by followers of Dionysos. This ritual took the form of hunting game, tearing the victim apart (*diasparagmos*, end of chapter 12), and devouring its limbs raw. Here we find the precise inversion of all the characteristics and values of the civic sacrifice, and a total confusion of the normal boundaries between the tame and the wild, and between men and the beasts. 'Going wild' was another way of escaping from the politico-religious order of society.

In all the above cases, it is precisely in respect of sacrifice and modes of eating that the sectaries chose to express their difference. That choice tends to corroborate the central position occupied by bloody animal-sacrifice of the alimentary type in the definition of the civic community.

LIBATIONS

An important element in sacrificial rituals was the pouring of a libation (*spondē*). This could be associated with animal sacrifice, as we have seen, but it might also occur as an autonomous ritual with a rationale of its own.

Libations regularly accompanied the rituals that punctuated daily life. Hesiod, for example (*Works and Days* 724-6), evokes those performed by the pious every morning and evening. Libations also served to start off meals, as a gesture of propitiation which fulfilled the same function as the 'first-fruits' offering in animal-sacrifice. They were used too to mark an arrival or a departure, placing familiar actions under the protection of the gods who were thereby invoked as witnesses or helpers. The formulaic scene of 'the departure of the hoplite' was depicted in numerous Attic vase-paintings of the Classical period, with an old man and woman shown grouped around the young, armed

infantryman, as in this typical departure scene on a *stamnos* (wine-jug) now in the British Museum:

In the centre, an armed hoplite grasps the hand of a bearded figure in a grave gesture of farewell . . . On the right, a woman holds a pitcher and a shallow bowl, ritual implements for the libation that was almost obligatory for marking a departure or return. The woman is pouring into the bowl some wine, a portion of which will be tipped out onto the ground for the gods, while the rest will be drunk by each of the participants in turn. The performance of this libation, which combines offering and sharing, marks the bonds linking each member of the group to the others and affirms the relationship that unites this group with the gods.

(F. Lissarrague, 'The World of the Warrior',
in Bérard *et al.* 1989[248]: 45, slightly modified)

The ritual of libation furthermore formed part of the ceremonial of the private party known as the *sumposion* (literally a 'drinking-together'). Finally, it played an important rôle in the solemn acts that were the direct concern of the civic community as a whole, such as the opening of an Assembly at Athens or the conclusion of treaties of peace or alliance between Greek states. Indeed, the plural of the word for 'libation' (*spondai*) was used by synecdoche to mean 'truce' or 'treaty'.

The libation ritual consisted in the pouring of part of some liquid on an altar or on the ground, while reciting a prayer. Most often, the liquid in question was a mixture of wine and water, such as the Greeks customarily drank (three parts water to one of wine), but depending on the ritual it might on occasion be neat wine, or milk, or a mixture of wine, water and honey. The libation most frequently depicted in vase-paintings (as above) shows a man or a woman pouring the liquid from a wine-jug (*oinokhoē*), intermediate in size between the great mixing bowl (*kratēr*) and the drinking goblet (*kulix*), into a shallow bowl of canonical ceremonial shape (*phialē*), and then from the *phialē* onto an altar or the ground. The second stage of the libation, normally, was the drinking of what remained in the *phialē*.

Sometimes, though, the libation was not followed by consumption of the liquid; for instance, in the case of the neat wine that was used to accompany the swearing of an oath, all of it was poured out onto the earth. In the *Iliad* (iv.159), in the context of an oath-ritual Agamemnon invokes 'the blood of lambs, the

libations of neat wine, the clasping of hands . . .'. This ritual wastage established a connection between the world of men and the dangerous world of infernal powers which were ever ready to break loose in chastisement of perjurers.

Another kind of libation that was consecrated in its totality, the *khoai* (from *khein*, 'to pour out in quantity'), was devoted especially to the dead. These libations were poured onto the earth or a burial mound with a view to establishing a bond between the quick and the dead. Since they very often excluded wine, they were known as 'wineless' (*ainoi*, *nēphalioi*) libations. A famous example is the pure water poured by Elektra onto the tomb of her father Agamemnon at the start of Aeschylus' *Libation-Bearers* (translated below, pp. 44–5). But they could also be of milk and honey.

Sometimes *khoai* were associated with the consecrated offerings of food deposited on a tomb (*enagismata*). But certain deities too were specially honoured with them: the Muses, the Nymphs and the Erinyes (Furies). Or, as Pausanias (v.15.10) says was done once a month by the Eleians in the Altis at Olympia according to an antique rite, libations might be offered as part of a sacrifice on all the altars of a sanctuary: 'they burn frankincense with honey-kneaded wheaten cakes on the altars, and lay branches on them and pour libations of wine, except that to the Nymphs and the Despoinai ('Mistresses') and on the common altar (*koinos bōmos*) of all the gods it is the practice to pour no wine'. This last instance illustrates well the complexity of the rituals, each element of which had its special significance in contributing to the coherence of the rites as a whole, as well as in relation to the function or nature of the deities being worshipped.

PRAYER

In the unfolding of a great sacrificial drama, prayer, as we have seen (above, p. 35), initiated the act that was played out around the altar following the procession. Intoned by the priest in a loud voice, the prayer inaugurated the sacrifice proper by placing the proceedings under the auspices of the gods to whom it was being offered. There is plenty of evidence for the sacred formulas that were pronounced during the performance of rituals or as

accompaniments to the chief cult-acts. In the Athenian Assembly, for example, a prayer was said over the silent citizenry before the orators addressed them from the rostrum, as we learn from Aristophanes' parodic version, placed in the mouth of a female herald in his *Thesmophoriazousai* (295–305):

Pray silence, pray silence. Pray to the two Thesmophoroi [Demeter and Persephone], to Ploutos [god of Wealth] and Kalligeneia [Demeter 'bearer of fair offspring'] . . . that this Assembly and gathering of the day may have the most beautiful and beneficial outcome . . . Address your vows to heaven and pray for your own good fortune. Hail, Paian, hail! Let us rejoice and be glad!

The crieress follows this up with curses against any men or women who should break the laws or betray the city.

Likewise, every army commander in real life addressed a solemn prayer to the gods before battle, analogous to the following prayer which Aeschylus placed in the mouth of Eteokles in his *Seven Against Thebes* (252–60):

Pray the gods above to fight with us; listen in your turn to my prayer, and modulate the sacred cry, the happy Paian, the ritual invocation of Greek sacrifices, which gives us the daring that delivers us from fear of war. As for myself, I promise to the gods of my country, to the gods of the earth, to the guardians of our homes, to the springs of Dirke, to the waters of the Ismenos, I promise, if all goes well, if the city is saved, to offer upon the altars of the gods the blood of sheep, to sacrifice bulls. I vow to do so should victory be mine; and I shall drape in our holy places the garments of our enemies, stripped, pierced through with the lance.

Again, Thucydides (vi.32), when he is describing the departure of the Athenian armada for Sicily in 415, provides us with a precise account of the ritual framework within which these prayers were offered:

When the embarkation was completed and all the necessary equipment had been stowed, the herald's trumpet commanded silence. The customary prayers made before setting sail were recited, not by each ship separately, but by the whole fleet in unison following the lead of the herald. The whole force had wine poured into mixing-bowls, and the officers and men then made their libations from goblets of gold or silver. The whole throng of the citizens and other wellwishers on shore added

their prayers to those of the departing combatants. Once the paean had been sung and the libations completed, the fleet put out to sea, at first in line but then racing each other as far as Aigina.

The libation poured by the pious at the start of each day was accompanied by a prayer (again, see Hesiod, *Works and Days* 724–6), and in the same way every meal or banquet was initiated by a libation and a prayer addressed to the gods in accordance with the prescribed formulas. Every enterprise was thus placed under the protection of the gods invoked, especially Zeus, as when Hesiod recommends to the peasant about to commence his agricultural labours (*Works and Days* 465–8): 'Pray to Zeus of the Earth Below (*Khthonios*) and to pure Demeter to grant you the sacred wheat of Demeter heavy in its ripeness, at the very moment when, beginning your ploughing and taking the handles in your hand, you strike the oxen on the back as they strain at the yoke.'

Both in epic and in the theatre much space was devoted, not just to simple formulas, but to various complex forms of prayers, whether dedicatory, supplicatory, imprecatory, or votive. Even if the scenes conjured up in tragedy or epic cannot be read simply as carbon copies of the rituals and of the prayers that accompanied them, still they provide us with precious information, sometimes backed up by scenes on vases, so far as the accompanying actions are concerned. Examples include the prayer addressed to Apollo by his priest Khryses, requesting him to receive an expiatory sacrifice on behalf of the Akhaians, which preceded and ritually assured the efficacy of the sacrifice proper:

Then hastening
To give the god his hecatomb, they led
bullocks to crowd round the compact altar,
washed their hands and delved in barley-baskets,
as open-armed to heaven Khryses prayed:
'Oh hear me, lord of the silver bow, . . .
if while I prayed you listened once before
and honoured me, and punished the Akhaians,
now let my wish come true again. But turn
your plague away this time from the Greeks.'

And this petition too Apollo heard.
When prayers were said and grains of barley strewn,

they held the bullocks for the knife, and flayed them,
cutting out joints . . .

(*Iliad* 1.446–58, trans. R. Fitzgerald,
slightly modified)

Another example is the long prayer addressed to Zeus Xenios (Protector of Strangers) by the daughters of Danaos, the ‘suppliant women’ of Aeschylus’ play of that name (630–710). These women have fled from Egypt to Argos and they want Zeus to reward the Argives for the aid they have been granted by them in their hour of need. Here we find repeated the three themes which feature in one form or other in many votive prayers: the wish that, thanks to the gods, their children, their harvests, and their flocks and herds may flourish and prosper. Earlier, the Danaids on their father’s advice had seated themselves in a sanctuary, ‘piously holding in their left hands branches wreathed with white wool, attributes of Zeus Protector of suppliant Strangers’, branches like those they had already placed before the gods’ altars and statues, saluting them with a prayer of supplication: ‘O Zeus, take pity on our woes, before we succumb to them entirely!’

A final example, again from Aeschylus’ *Libation-Bearers*. In a long scene describing a funerary ritual that involved both libations and prayers (22–161), Elektra pours out the ‘lustral water’ onto her father Agamemnon’s tomb and rehearses the ‘prescribed formula’: ‘may he grant happiness to whosoever vows this offering’. But this prayer by itself is not enough for her, and with the encouragement of the Chorus she develops at length her theme of desire for revenge before requesting the Chorus in its turn to utter ‘the prescribed lamentations and funerary paean’:

ELEKTRA

Most powerful messenger between the living and the dead, O infernal Hermes, help me and convey my message: may the subterranean spirits, avenging witnesses of my father’s death, and may Earth (Gaia) herself, she who bears all, and having nurtured them receives anew the fertile seed, hear my prayers. And I meanwhile pour out this lustral water for the dead and address this appeal to my father: ‘Have pity on me and on your dear Orestes: how are we to become master and mistress in our own home? For now we are but as vagrants, sold by the very mother

who bore us; and in exchange she has taken a lover, Aigisthos, her accomplice and your murderer. As for me, I am treated like a slave, and Orestes is in exile banished from his possessions, while they, insolent in their pride, triumph amid the spoils of your labours. I pray you that Orestes may by some chance return here; do you, father, hear my prayer. For myself grant that I may be chaster in heart, and have hands more holy, than my mother. These are my prayers for us; but, for our enemies, may there arise at last, father, your avenger, and may the slayers in turn be slain in just retribution. I cede (to those for whom vengeance is reserved). But upon the guilty alone I call down my imprecation of death; for us, on the contrary, send joy from the nether shade, with the aid of gods, and of Earth (Gē), and of Justice crowned with victory!’ Such are my prayers, over which I pour here these libations. Do you crown them with the prescribed lamentations and funerary paean.

(*Libation-Bearers* 124–51)

As several of our examples indicate, prayers were on each occasion accompanied by the appropriate hymns and chants: the paean intoned before battle and after victory, or funeral dirges, or the choral songs of choirs of boys and maidens at civic festivals. In short, prayer, whether in fixed ritual form or adapted to suit the individual or the circumstances, was an essential constituent of the complex of ritual as a whole, within which it was frequently combined with a libation.

CONCLUSION: READING THE COMPLEXITY OF RITUALS

By describing a selection of rituals and by analysing their functions, we have tried to show how the actions they involved can be read on several levels: *anthropologically*, in terms of the representation of space which at once separates men from and links them to the gods; *sociologically*, in that a particular image of the city was conveyed especially by the mode of distributing the sacrificial meat; *symbolically*, finally, with regard to the meanings and values attached to different methods of cooking the meat. However, every element of the rituals operated on each of these three levels simultaneously, and ritual behaviour was thus a complex unity that brought into play the entire functioning of the city and its means of self-representation.

CHAPTER 5

Religious personnel

INTRODUCTION

We saw from the preceding chapter that no special intermediary was required for the accomplishment of the principal sacred rituals, in particular the offering of sacrifice, and that there was no exclusive repository of sacral wisdom, no clergy, through whose intervention alone communication with the gods might be effected. Rather, it was open to each and every citizen, either in his or her own home or in a public sanctuary, to carry out the actions which both demonstrated piety and allowed those who practised them to affirm thereby their shared identity as Greeks (*Hellēnes*).

However, outside the sphere of private worship there were a certain number of citizens who were specially charged with religious duties entrusted to them by the city. Moreover, sanctuaries required for their functioning a range of personnel whose status varied from one religious site to another and in proportion to the shrine's popularity and perceived importance.

RELIGIOUS DUTIES DELEGATED BY THE CITY

Religious authority belonged essentially to the people or citizen body as a whole (*dēmos*), on whose behalf it was exercised by a range of personnel. The number and importance of these civic functionaries grew in the course of the fifth century, at the expense of certain ancient priesthoods. It was their job to maintain order and respect for the laws within the sanctuary enclosure

(*temenos*). They organized the great religious festivals (*heortai*), in collaboration with other public officials and the relevant priests. They controlled religious finances, checking revenues and expenditure.

The office of *hieropoioi* (literally 'those who make the *hiera*' – see chapter 2) is attested in numerous cities. At Athens, for instance, they were a board of ten chosen each year by the Council of 500, with responsibility for all the major quadrennial festivals except the Great Panathenaia which had its own special board. They thus oversaw the Brauronia (in honour of Artemis), the Herakleia, the Eleusinian Mysteries and Athens' official delegation (*theōria*) to the festival of Apollo and Artemis on Delos, as well as the annual Lesser Panathenaia. Their remit included the provision of animals for the sacrifices, and the administration and policing of the festivals as a whole. In return for this they were privileged to share in the honours accorded to other officials, in particular in the distribution of the hecatomb sacrificed during the Panathenaia.

At Athens *epimelētai* ('overseers') were appointed individually for particular festivals, among others the Great Dionysia and Panathenaia. Originally, those elected were expected to pay for the processions out of their own pocket, so that being an *epimelētēs* was akin to performing a 'liturgy' (chapter 9). But by the late 330s, probably as a result of the sweeping reform of Athenian public finances presided over by Lykourgos after 338, the cost was borne by state funds. For the Eleusinian Mysteries four *epimelētai* were appointed, two of them chosen from among all Athenians aged over thirty, the other two from the two priestly families who had hereditary prerogatives in the cult of Demeter and Persephone, the Eumolpidai ('descendants of Eumolpos') and Kērykes (literally 'Heralds'). The *epistatai*, however, attested for example in the accounts of Pheidias' statue of Athene Parthenos (M/L [60] 54, A1, lines 3–4) or in a contemporary decree of the Council of 500 pertaining to Eleusis (SEG [61] x.24.11–13), were more narrowly financial functionaries.

The three senior Arkhons of Athens also included religious affairs in their portfolios. The King (*basileus*), who legendarily had inherited the religious functions of the old kings of Athens, was the principal religious dignitary of the Athenian state. He

was charged above all with the sacrifices involved in the ‘ancestral cults’ (*ta patria*), the cults, that is, whose antiquity was guaranteed by tradition. These included the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Lenaia (in honour of Dionysos). Like the other Arkhons, the King had judicial functions, in his case presiding over impiety trials and arbitrating conflicts involving priesthoods. He also had overall responsibility for the religious calendar (which required a major overhaul and provoked acrimonious litigation at the very end of the fifth century: chapter 10).

Secondly, there was the Eponymous Arkhon, who had charge of the more recently established civic festivals, *ta epitheta* (literally ‘those added on’), most famously the Great or City Dionysia established either during the dictatorship of Peisistratos (545–28) or, more probably, soon after the establishment of democracy in 508/7. He also had supreme responsibility for the Delian *theōria*, which was revamped in the later fifth century, the processions in honour of Zeus Sōtēr (‘Saviour’, no doubt instituted after the Persian Wars) and Asklepios (inaugurated in 420), and the Thargelia (a festival of Pythian Apollo).

Thirdly, there was the Polemarkh (literally ‘War Archon’). As his title suggests, his religious rôle lay in the field of cults that had a specifically military application: those of Artemis Agrotera (to whom battlefield sacrifices were made) and Enyalios (a by-name of Ares), the public funeral in honour of Athenian war dead, and the festival commemorating the famous victory over the Persians at Marathon in 490. But he also presided over the sacrifices celebrating Harmodios and Aristogeiton, the heroic tyrannicides and liberators of the late sixth century.

It would be wrong, however, to give the impression that religious life was circumscribed within the physical boundaries of the city. Oracles, above all that of Pythian Apollo at Delphi, also occupied an important position. For purposes of consultation it was again the state which chose the relevant personnel from among its members: the *theōroi* (the general term for ‘sacred ambassadors’), or, depending on the oracle in question, *pythioi*, *dēmiourgoi*, or *theopropoi*. Such sacred envoys are attested throughout the Greek world and were men of high status – so high, indeed, that the job of maintaining and entertaining (often magnificently, as his prestige demanded) a sacred embassy was

turned into a liturgy (see p. 95) by the Athenians and entrusted to a rich man designated as the *arkhitheōros*. On the other hand, their status and prestige brought political risks, so that steps were taken to limit their powers. At Sparta it was one of the most important privileges of the two kings that ‘each of them nominated two Pythioi, whose business it was to consult the oracle at Delphi, who ate with the kings [in the royal mess] and who, like them, lived at the public charge’ (Herodotus vi.57).

SELECTION OF PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES

Priesthoods and priestesshoods were tied to particular sanctuaries and cults and derived their *raison d’être* solely from their relationship to a god and the cult they performed on that god’s behalf. In most cases a priest or priestess functioned like a civic magistrate, exercising a liturgical authority in parallel to the legislative, judicial, financial or military authority of the city’s officials. The methods of selecting priests and priestesses make clear their affinity to the status of magistrates. Most were appointed annually, and often by lot, and at the end of their term of office they were obliged to render accounts. Into this category at Athens, for example, there fell the priests of Dionysos Eleuthereus, Asklepios and Zeus Sōtēr, and the priestesses of Athene Sōtēria and Athene Nikē. Again like magistracies, these priestly offices were typically barred to foreigners, including permanent residents, and open to all citizens (except those disqualified by some physical blemish or disability).

However, there did also exist priesthoods and priestesshoods that were the exclusive preserve of particular families or corporate descent-groups (*genē*). Holders of these positions were selected from among the relevant family members in accordance with rules of varying complexity and, in some cases, for life. Athenian examples include the priestess of Athene Polias (‘City-Protecting’ Athene) and the priest of Poseidon Erekhtheus, who had to be members of the Eteoboutadai *genos* and held office for life, and the male Hierophant and Daidoukhos (‘Torchbearer’) of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the former a member of the Eumolpidai, the latter of the Kerykes. In all other respects, however, they were just like any other citizens, equally subject to the decrees of the

Council and Assembly of Athens. Other priests, such as those of Apollo at Delphi, were doubtless also appointed for life, but without any stipulation of aristocratic birth. Occasionally, as at Erythrai (*Syll.*³ [62]: 600), the right to a priesthood was sold to the highest bidder.

Priestly functions

We have already encountered the sacerdotal rôle of priests in our consideration of sacrifice (chapter 4); indeed, assisting in public or private sacrificing was their most visible function. They consecrated the victims, as we saw, pronounced the formulas of invocation and recited prayers. The priest might personally stun the animal and cut its throat, but he could also delegate those functions to one or more of the sacrificers, as a priestess was absolutely required to do, since a sacrifice did not have to be conducted by someone holding a priestly office. In Homer, in fact, priests never act as sacrificers but assume a more general sacerdotal function vis-à-vis a god. This continued to be the order of priorities in the great sanctuaries down into the Classical period: whereas the priest or priestess assumed the overall direction of cultic ceremonies, sacrificing was delegated to resident sacrificers.

One of the principal priestly duties was to take care of the accoutrements of the temple and of the sanctuary to which it was attached, with the assistance of one or more sacristans (*neōkoroî*) in the case of the large shrines. This involved looking after the cult-statue, which represented the deity within his or her house, and the relevant cult-buildings. It also included administrative responsibilities for maintaining the sanctuary as a going concern, both financially and as a secure place of worship. But as we have seen, the state increasingly competed in these two spheres of operation, not least by deciding how much revenue to allot for a sanctuary's upkeep.

Priests and priestesses, finally, were obligated to act as guardians of sacred law during their term of office, ensuring that the laws were respected and thereby guaranteeing the perpetuation of ancestral tradition. But even in this area it was the people as a whole, the citizen body, which at Athens controlled the conduct

of religious cults through the decrees it passed with the assistance of the Council.

Priestly revenues

A portion of all sacrificial animals belonged to the priest or priestess by right. Like all the participating magistrates, he or she was entitled to an honorific share in the distribution of the meat; but, additionally, specific parts of the victim – which ones depended on the sanctuary in question – were more particularly set aside for them, regularly including the flesh of the thighs but often also the beast's head. They also got their share of the *trapezōmata* (chapter 4) and *theomoria* ('god's portion'), which provoked some anticlerical sarcasm from comic poets like Aristophanes (e.g. *Wealth* 676–8, on the nocturnal larceny of the priest of Asklepios at Athens: 'Then, glancing upward, I [the slave Karion] beheld the priest/ Swiping the cheesecakes and the figs from off/ The holy table ...').

Consequently the economic status of a priest or priestess varied greatly depending on the importance of the sanctuary, though on the whole remuneration seems to have been modest, except in cases like that of Erythrai in Asia Minor (above) where priesthoods were sold and purchased as a sound investment. At Miletos, for example, the priest was guaranteed a minimum salary by public decree, on the following conditions (*LSAM* [59] 52B.11–12): certain magistrates were required to make sacrifices to Asklepios on a fixed date, but should no one have sacrificed, the priest would receive a payment of twelve drachmas – by no means a fortune, since it represented little more than a week's wages for a skilled labourer. In another of Miletos's cultic regulations (*LSAM* [59]: 44.13–15) the conditions are different: 'those who have bought a priesthood shall receive all the parts of victims offered in private sacrifices, except the skin'. Here we see the origins of 'sacerdotal' meat, the meat from sacrifices that was sold in the market and provided certain priesthoods with a significant income (chapter 4).

As vicars mediating between the city and the gods, the priest and priestess were respected personages, and recognized as such by special public honours like a privileged portion of the

sacrificial meat or a reserved seat in the theatre. At the same time their function did not usually confine them to a special life-style; for example, there was nothing to stop most of them from getting married, since ritual chastity was normally a temporary state and tied to an immediate ritual obligation such as arose periodically at the time of a festival. Likewise, performance of priestly duties did not as a rule require residence within a sanctuary, as is proved by the explicit exceptions.

One of Greek religion's most original features emerges from the status of priests or priestesses. Although the religious dimension was ever-present in every facet of human activity, it did not exercise a transcendent influence over it. Just like the political, legislative, judicial and other spheres of communal interaction, religion occupied a subordinate position within social life as a whole. As for religious power, in the final analysis that lay, not with a priesthood, but with the people as a whole, which exercised it through their control of religious laws, institution of new cults, financing of sanctuaries and administration of religious justice (punishment of sacrilege, and so on). Finally, as we have had more than one occasion to remark, the tendency was for central controls over priests and priestesses to multiply, and for non-priestly personnel to compete with the priesthood in performing those functions that were not narrowly sacerdotal.

Freelance religious experts

Before leaving the subject of religious specialists, three categories of practitioners may be mentioned, with whom the city might choose to deal but to whom it did not delegate any of its religious authority. First, there were the *exēgētai* or expounders of sacred laws, who do not appear to have existed in any institutionalized form before the fourth century (Isaios viii, *On the Estate of Kiron* 39). These unelected specialists possessed a unique knowledge of the laws and might therefore be asked either to expound points of ritual or to lay down rules of purification, for example in the case of a homicide. Secondly, there were the oracle-mongers (*khērēmologoi*, see p. 122) who knew by heart or kept written collections of oracles (not only Delphic ones), and could produce a text on demand, for a city or for a private individual, to suit almost

any occasion. Thirdly, there were the diviners (*manteis*), often hereditary and often itinerant, whose skill lay in reading the entrails of sacrificial victims or interpreting such putatively divine omens and portents as chance words or the flight of birds. Their function lent itself to political exploitation, and it is no accident that the only two foreigners known to Herodotus (ix.33–6) to have been granted citizenship by Sparta were two brothers from Elis, members of the mantic family of the Iamidai, of whom one served as diviner for all the Greeks before the battle of Plataia in 479.

An ideal Platonic priesthood

At the end of his long life (427–347) Plato composed *The Laws*, a second Utopia that was both more grimly realistic and far more detailed than the one he had sketched in the *Republic* (c. 380). His construction of the ideal city of Magnesia in Crete in the form of a perfect theocracy went far beyond anything actually known in the Greece of his time, but his prescriptions for the priestly personnel of Magnesia were, like many of its institutional arrangements, based with modifications on those of his native Athens. *The Laws* is cast as a dialogue between a Spartan, a Cretan and an Athenian, the latter being a surrogate for Plato himself:

ATHENIAN. We can say, then, that the temples should have Attendants (*neōkoroī*) and Priests and Priestesses. Next, there are the duties of looking after streets and public buildings, ensuring that they reach the proper standards, preventing men and animals from doing them damage, and seeing that conditions both in the suburbs and in the city itself are in keeping with civilized life. Three types of officials must be chosen: <the Priests> and the City-Wardens (as they will be called), who will be responsible for the points we have just mentioned, and the Market-Wardens for the proper conduct of the market.

Priests or Priestesses of temples who have hereditary priesthoods should not be turned out of office. But if (as is quite likely in a new foundation) few or no temples are thus provided for, the deficiencies must be remedied by appointing Priests and Priestesses to be Attendants in the temples of the gods. In all these cases appointment should be made partly by election and partly by lot, so that a combination of non-democratic and democratic methods in every rural and urban

division may lead to the greatest possible feeling of solidarity. In appointing Priests, one should leave it to the god himself to express his wishes, and allow him to guide the luck of the draw. But the man whom the lot favours must be scrutinized to see, first, that he is of sound body and legitimate birth, and, secondly, that he has been reared in a family whose moral standards could hardly be higher, he himself and both his parents having always lived unpolluted (*hagnos*) by homicide and all such crimes against heaven.

They must get laws on all religious matter from Delphi, and appoint Expounders (*exēgētai*) of them; that will provide them with a code to be obeyed. Each priesthood must be held for a year and no longer, and anyone who intends to officiate in our rites in due conformity with religious law should be not less than sixty years old. The same rules should apply to Priestesses too. There should be three Expounders. The tribes will be arranged in three sets of four, and every man should nominate four persons, each from the same triad as himself; the three candidates who receive most votes should be scrutinized, and nine names should then be sent to Delphi for the Oracle to select one from each triad. Their scrutiny, and the requirement as to minimum age, should be the same as in the case of the Priests; these three must hold office for life, and when one dies the group of four tribes in which the vacancy occurs should make nominations for a replacement.

The highest property-class must elect Treasurers to control the sacred funds of each temple, and to look after the temple-enclosures and their produce and revenues; three should be chosen to take charge of the largest temples, two for the median-size, and one for the very small. The selection and scrutiny of these officials should be conducted as it was for the Generals.

So much by way of provision for matters of religion (*ta hiera*).

(*The Laws* 759A–760A, trans. T. J. Saunders, modified)