



ARTEMIS AND APOLLO

[In 1304] A certain boy in the region of Hesse was seized. This boy, as was known afterwards, and just as the boy told it himself, was taken by wolves when he was three years old and raised up wondrously. For, whatever prey the wolves snatched for food, they would take the better part and allot it to him to eat as they lay around a tree. In the time of winter and cold, they made a pit, and they put the leaves of trees and other plants in it, and placed them on the boy, surrounding him to protect him from the cold; they also compelled him to creep on hands and feet and to run with them for a long time. . . . When he was seized, he was bound with wood to compel him to go erect in a human likeness.

—FROM *THE CHRONICLE OF THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF SAINT PETER OF ERFURT*

The haunting tale of the boy from Hesse, found in an anonymous chronicle (c. fourteenth century CE) from a German monastery, is an early European example of the almost universal lore about “feral” children—nearly wild children who were said to have lived among animals in woods, forests, and jungles. The story of the Hessian boy recalls a well-known ancient myth about wild children: that of the brothers Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, who, like the boy from Hesse, were raised by a she-wolf. Such stories have been shared, collected, and studied since ancient times because of the

THE ESSENTIALS  ARTEMIS AND APOLLO**ARTEMIS (Diana), Ἄρτεμις****PARENTAGE** Zeus and the goddess Leto**OFFSPRING** None**ATTRIBUTES** Bow, quiver, wild animals (especially deer)**SIGNIFICANT CULT TITLES**

- **Lochia** (Protector of Women in Labor)
- **Potnia Theron** (Mistress of Animals)
- **Agrotera** (Of the Wilds)

SIGNIFICANT RITUALS AND SANCTUARIES

- **The Brauronia** An initiation ritual for young girls before marriage that took place in Brauron, a region east of Athens.
- **Ephesus** The provincial capital of the Roman Empire on the coast of Anatolia, where the Ephesian Artemis was patron goddess.
- **Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia** The location of initiations for adolescent boys, near Sparta.

APOLLO (Apollo), Ἀπόλλων**PARENTAGE** Zeus and the goddess Leto**OFFSPRING** Asclepius (with Coronis); Linus and Orpheus (with Calliope, a Muse); and many others**ATTRIBUTES** Beardless, long-haired, bow, quiver, lyre, laurel branch**SIGNIFICANT CULT TITLES**

- **Catharsius** (Purifier)
- **Musagetes** (Leader of the Muses)
- **Paeon** (Healer)
- **Pythian** (Pythian)

SIGNIFICANT RITUALS AND SANCTUARIES

- **Delos** The island where Leto gave birth to Apollo and Artemis; there Apollo had a sanctuary and an annual festival in his honor.
- **Delphi** An oracular shrine in central Greece where Apollo, through his priestesses the Pythias, dispensed oracles.
- **The Hyacinthia** An initiation ritual for young boys near Sparta and a neighboring town, Amyclae.

questions they raise about human nature. Are human children so pliable that their bodies and minds may be molded by whomever—or whatever—rears them? Does nature or nurture shape human development? Are affinities between human beings and animals deeper and more abiding than “civilized” culture acknowledges? Ancient myths and modern tales of feral children alike address, albeit in different ways, the shifting boundaries between nature and culture, between animals and humans, in the process of defining human identity. Anxieties about these boundaries can be detected in the adolescent initiation ceremonies of ancient Greece, in particular those ceremonies connected with Artemis and Apollo.

**8.1
HISTORY****FROM ADOLESCENCE TO ADULTHOOD**

The gods, of course, were imagined as ageless. But Apollo and Artemis, as the children of Zeus and the goddess Leto, were seen as especially youthful. They do not mature but rather maintain their youthful identity as siblings;

as such, they are charged with helping young Greeks make the fraught transition from childhood to maturity.

In this chapter, we first examine the spheres of influence of each sibling, apart from his or her role in initiation rituals. We focus on Artemis's association with wild animals, young girls, and childbirth; turning to Apollo, we examine his association with music, poetry, medicine, and prophecy. Regarding their roles as initiatory deities, we consider how initiations associated with Artemis were designed to tame (or eradicate) what were believed to be the wild or even animal-like tendencies of girls, whereas initiations of boys under Apollo's auspices more often were designed to cultivate the skills necessary for Greek adult males. Initiation rituals and observances convey Greek ideas about the differences between boys and girls in their relation to human culture and nature. Artemis and Apollo, in all their aspects, epitomize these differences.

ARTEMIS

Among the Olympian goddesses, three were eternal virgins: Athena, Hestia, and Artemis. The character of Artemis's virginity, however, is different from that of Athena and Hestia. Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, is associated with domestic space or city centers. She stands for the integrity of the household in which she resides, and more specifically of the wife of the household. Athena's virginity marks her distance from the domestic sphere of women, allowing her the freedom to associate with men and involve herself with masculine concerns. An urban goddess, Athena has no connection with nature or the outdoors.

Artemis's virginity, on the other hand, forges a connection between her and the nymphs with whom she is frequently depicted. These nymphs are the mythical counterparts to the mortal young girls who worshipped Artemis in rituals devoted to her. Artemis's virginity associates her closely with the life cycle of young women. Finally, Artemis, unlike Athena and Hestia, haunts the forests and open spaces outside cities, houses, and cultivated fields. She keeps company with wild and undomesticated animals.

Wild Animals, Young Girls, and Childbirth In his epics, Homer refers to Artemis as *Potnia Theron* (Mistress of Animals) and *Agrotera* (Of the Wilds).



8.2 Sacrifice of Iphigenia. Calchas, the priest, stands behind the altar next to Iphigenia, while Apollo (upper left, seated and holding a laurel branch) and Artemis (upper right, holding her bow), watch the proceedings. Detail from an Apuleian red-figure volute krater. Kinship with the Iliupersis Painter, c. fourth century BCE. © The Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY, ART497993.

Both titles describe Artemis's connection to wild animals (not domesticated animals or livestock) who dwell in the forests and the mountains where she roams. Among wild animals, bears often appear in myths and rituals associated with Artemis, whereas deer are most precious to her. Yet, paradoxically, Artemis is also often depicted with a bow in her hand or a quiver of arrows on her back (Figure 8.2). Her bow is not a weapon of war but a tool of the hunt. Thus Artemis is represented as both protecting and hunting animals in the wild.

Artemis is often portrayed as leading groups of nymphs in song or dance, and protecting their virginity as well as her own. In one of the more famous stories of Artemis's fierce protection of herself and her nymphs, the hunter Actaeon, in pursuit of game, accidentally sees Artemis and her female followers bathing together in the woods. Angered that she has been violated by Actaeon's gaze, Artemis turns him into a stag, and he is then attacked and killed by his own pack of hunting dogs. Whereas written accounts emphasize that Artemis makes Actaeon's own dogs unwittingly kill their beloved master, many depictions equate Actaeon's dogs with Artemis's arrows: both animals and arrows are at her disposal, and both are equally lethal (Figure 8.12). When a hunter, Orion, attempts to rape Artemis (or, in some accounts, her companion Opis), Artemis kills him directly with her arrows. In other versions, however, Orion is a beloved hunting companion of Artemis who carelessly provokes Hera or Gaia with his boasts about his abilities to hunt and bring down all the earth's animals. As punishment for his pride, Hera (or Gaia, depending on the telling) sends a scorpion to kill him. In these stories, a grieving Artemis (or Zeus at her behest) transforms Orion into a constellation of stars set in the heavens near the constellation Scorpio.

In a variation on this group of myths, an attempted act of sexual violence against a nymph provokes Artemis to punish the female victim, not her attacker. For example, when Zeus impregnates Callisto, a female follower of Artemis, Artemis observes that Callisto is pregnant and turns Callisto into a bear. In some versions, Hera transforms Callisto into a bear out of jealous anger; in other versions, Zeus transforms Callisto to protect her from Hera's wrath. When Callisto's son Arcas goes hunting in the woods and is about to kill Callisto (who, as a bear, is unrecognizable to him), Zeus transforms her into the constellation Ursa Major (Latin for "big bear"). In some versions, Artemis kills Callisto deliberately with her arrows, whereas in others Callisto's death at Artemis's hands is accidental. Artemis, grieving, then transforms Callisto into the constellation Ursa Major, just as she had transformed (or caused the transformation of) Orion.

Taken together, these conflicting versions suggest the difficulties of determining whether Artemis's actions are offered as protection or punishment. Artemis appears both benevolent and cruel to the young girls in

her retinue, just as she seems to the wild animals that surround her. The meaning of Artemis's actions in myth becomes more apparent from the perspective of Artemis's oversight of transitional moments in women's lives: the initiation of girls, rituals before marriage, and childbirth.

Artemis is called *Lochia* (Protector of Women in Labor), and her own birth illustrates this feature of her character. Angry with Zeus for philandering, Hera would not let any land receive Leto when she was pregnant with Apollo and Artemis. Eventually the small island of Delos in the Aegean allowed Leto to deliver her children on its land. Born first, Artemis then helped Leto give birth to Apollo. All three had temples on the island. Archaeologists have found a cache of especially precious offerings in Artemis's Delian sanctuary; Apollo was worshipped there in an annual festival that involved athletic competitions and choral performances for young boys and girls.

As helpful as Artemis was imagined to be in her role as *Lochia*, she was also said to shoot women in labor with her "gentle arrows," wounding or even killing them. In the *Iliad*, Hera says that Zeus made Artemis a "lion among women" and allows her to kill whomever of them she pleases (21.483). These gentle arrows of Artemis may have been used to explain the high mortality rate in childbirth (of mother and baby alike) in antiquity. This gentle yet lethal role is reflected in her attentions to nymphs, who represent the young women whom Artemis stands beside during other transitional moments. Even if these moments were not as dangerous as childbirth, Artemis, striking her charges with her gentle arrows, nonetheless appears to have two aspects, benevolent and cruel. Such is the case in the myth of Hippolytus and his associated ritual for brides before their marriage.



8.3 Hippolytus attacked by Poseidon. As Hippolytus (accompanied by an elderly servant) drives his chariot, Poseidon's bull and a Fury attack, causing the horses to rear up and kill Hippolytus. Detail from a red-figured volute-krater. Darius Painter, c. 340 BCE. © The Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY, ART375622.

Hippolytus in Myth and Ritual A myth concerning Hippolytus—one of Artemis’s adolescent male worshippers—and a ritual for brides that Artemis establishes in his honor offers a way to understand how Artemis attends to her devotees. In his play *Hippolytus* (c. 428 BCE), Euripides depicts Hippolytus as a young man, a virgin and a hunter who prefers the woods and the company of other young men to the city and the demands of adulthood. Hippolytus hoped to remain forever under the auspices of Artemis and never mature into a married man and warrior.

But Aphrodite, angered by his refusal to acknowledge her spheres of love and marriage, causes Hippolytus’s stepmother Phaedra to fall in love with him. When Phaedra tells Hippolytus that she loves him, her confession forces him to acknowledge the power of love and thereby abandon his youthful devotion to Artemis. After being rejected by Hippolytus, Phaedra falsely accuses him of rape, provoking her husband, Theseus (Hippolytus’s father), to curse his son and cause his violent death: he is torn apart and trampled by his own horses when they are spooked by a bull sent by Poseidon (Figure 8.3). At the close of the play, Artemis promises Hippolytus that young women in his hometown of

Map 8.1 Artemis and Apollo



Troezen will cut their hair and sing laments for him before they marry. (In other versions of this myth, Artemis rescues Hippolytus and installs him as a king or as a temple servant in Aricia, in Italy.)

At first glance, this wedding ritual seems paradoxical because it requires young brides to commemorate Hippolytus's virginal devotion to Artemis (and, perhaps, his rejection of Aphrodite) and to mourn his death. Yet, if Hippolytus represents the youthful virginity and devotion to Artemis that young girls must relinquish on marriage, then lamenting his death could be seen as a way for girls to recognize and ritually mourn the end of their own youth and virginity. Moreover, the violence and sorrow attached to Hippolytus's death allows a young bride to address her conflicting emotions on her marriage: once she is transferred from her father's household to her husband's, she forever leaves behind her natal family. Hippolytus's myth and the Troezen ritual, then, connect mythic transformation and death with the losses that adolescents experience when they must enter into a new stage of their lives. Artemis oversees this moment that is both joyful and sorrowful; thereby she herself appears both cruel and benevolent, and her roles as protector and punisher seem to overlap. Such is the case in all initiation rites under Artemis's tutelage.

Girls' Initiations: The Brauronia The most important initiation that Artemis oversaw was at Brauron, a region due east of Athens on the Aegean coast. When girls were initiated at Brauron, they were described as “playing the bear” for Artemis in a ritual variously called the Brauronia, a title emphasizing the ritual's location, or the Arcteia, a title that emphasizes the importance of bears in the worship of Artemis (*arctos* is Greek for “bear”). A foundation myth associated with Brauron describes how a tamed she-bear scratches a young girl with whom she is playing and then is killed by the girl's brothers. Afterward, the Athenians become ill until an oracle advises them that in order to be cured they must make young girls “play the bear” for Artemis, who was angered over the death of the she-bear. This story not only explains why playing the bear was part of a ritual required of girls in Brauron but also equates the young girl with the she-bear: they play together until the she-bear draws blood from the girl (possibly representing menarche), at which point the bear is killed and also made to bleed.



8.4 Young girl running at Brauron. Fragment of an Attic krater. Greece, fifth century BCE. Archaeological Museum of Brauron, Brauron, Greece. Gianni DagliOrti/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY, AA389360.

Archaeological evidence from the site at Brauron offers information about how girls played the bear for Artemis. A building structure with small rooms for sleeping suggests that girls stayed in Brauron, away from their families, during the festival. Small votive statues and vase paintings of young girls found at Brauron indicate that the age range of girls who played the bear was quite wide—perhaps from five to sixteen years, most certainly before they married (estimated to take place after the age of twelve and ideally between fourteen and sixteen years). Vases from Brauron also suggest what sorts of activities constituted playing the bear: girls ran, danced, and even offered their toys to the goddess (Figure 8.4). These actions prepared them in some essential way to become brides once they had departed from Brauron. Finally, a wall not open to public viewing in the dormitory had depressions in it where clothing might have been dedicated. This wall was most likely used for clothing worn during childbirth. These private dedications indicate Artemis’s oversight of childbirth and show that Brauron served females at other pivotal moments throughout their lives.

In addition to the dormitory at Brauron, a small temple dedicated to Iphigenia was located at the site. Her story is most likely related to the Brauronia (Chapter 13.1). When Iphigenia’s father, Agamemnon, the great king of Mycenae who led the Greeks in the Trojan War, kills a deer sacred to Artemis on the shores of Aulis en route to Troy, Artemis refuses to let the winds blow, thus stranding Agamemnon’s fleet. The goddess demands that Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter to her before she will release the winds and the ships. There are many versions of what happens to Iphigenia at the altar: in some, she is slaughtered; in most versions, Artemis substitutes a deer and whisks Iphigenia to the land of the Taurians to become her priestess or even makes the girl immortal. In Iphigenia’s tale, then, she and the deer that substitutes for her are made symbolically equivalent (Figure 8.2). When girls played the bear at Brauron, they ritually enacted a similar equivalence.

The suggestion, then, of these myths and their associated rituals is that girls (even if raised by their human parents) were still believed by the Greeks to be somehow animal-like: wild, undomesticated, and separate from the adult world, with its social responsibilities. They are in Artemis’s realm. The goddess accompanies them to their initiations, which are necessary to “tame” them and make them suitable members of human society. She protects them as they ritually enact the loss of their youth: the girls playing the bear symbolically die. In other words, the goal of Artemis’s initiation at Brauron is to help initiates give up (or kill off) that which is “wild” (free from adult restrictions) in their youthful selves. The mythical deaths or transformations (into a star or an animal) of young girls, then, capture the experience of an initiate who must abandon her child self to become a socially responsible adult woman.

Boys' Initiations: Artemis Orthia In Sparta, an initiation ritual for boys under Artemis's auspices also requires them to "kill off" a part of themselves that is socially unacceptable, although not "wild." This ritual stands out because male gods, especially Apollo, typically oversaw male initiatory rituals. The sanctuary to Artemis Orthia (Upright) was located along the Eurotas River outside of Sparta. The significance of this title remains unclear. The origin of the ritual to Artemis Orthia is attributed to the murder of inhabitants from four surrounding towns who fought at Artemis's altar. Those who survived fell ill, and an oracle advised that Artemis's altar had to be washed in human blood for them to be released from their illness (Pausanias 3.16.9).

Rather than sacrificing human beings, an action that Greeks did not practice despite myths of human sacrifice, the community established a ritual that came to serve as an initiation for adolescent boys. In order to cover the altar with blood, young men were whipped at Artemis's altar, while a priestess held a statue of Artemis. If the statue weighed down the priestess's hand, the youth were to be whipped more vigorously. In some accounts, the young men had to steal offerings of cheese from Artemis's altar, and, if caught, they were whipped for their failure to steal successfully (not for the act of stealing itself). In other accounts, they were enjoined to laugh riotously at the fact of being whipped; the one who best endured the ordeal without showing signs of pain won a prize. During the Archaic and Classical Periods in Sparta, this ritual was part of an elaborate tiered system of initiating boys so that they could become well-trained hoplites in the Spartan army.

Like the Brauronia, the whipping ritual in front of Artemis's altar was designed to compel initiates to give up certain behaviors that did not comport with the adults they were to become. The whipping ritual took place when the boys were sixteen to nineteen years of age, a period during which they were forced to wear the garments and cropped hairstyles typical of helots. (Helots were residents of towns near Sparta who had been enslaved by the Spartans.) And whereas helots could be (and frequently were) whipped by their owners, Spartan citizens themselves were never subjected to a fellow citizen's physical abuse. Thus the ritual of Artemis Orthia forced the initiates to endure being treated like a helot while acting like a Spartan (i.e., laughing), thereby demonstrating their difference from (and superiority to) helots. In this way, initiates



8.5 Votive mask from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta. Terracotta. Archaeological Museum, Sparta, Greece. Vanni Archive / Art Resource, NY, ART331763.



8.6 Apollo with lyre. Bronze statue found in Pompeii, Italy.
HarperCollins Publishers / The Art Archive at Art Resource,
NY, AA337378.

were taught to desire to be a Spartan and leave behind the socially underprivileged state of helots.

Numerous terracotta masks found at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia are thought to be connected to the whipping ritual. These masks fall into two categories: most are grotesque masks of satyrs, Gorgons, and wrinkled old men and women (Figure 8.5); the rest depict heroic men of different ages. The masks have been interpreted as representing two possible male identities—the grotesque helots and the heroic Spartans. They represent a divide between what the initiates should strive to become (heroic men) and what they should avoid degenerating into (servile helots). The Spartan initiates, then, were forced to act like helots in a symbolic repudiation of a lesser social status, just as female initiates played the she-bear at Brauron. In both rituals, initiates must prove themselves ready to become the adults society requires.

At Brauron and at Sparta, then, Artemis stands on the threshold dividing childhood from adulthood that initiates must cross, while she herself remains more rooted in the wild and untamed world of childhood and animals. Apollo, her brother, also oversees initiations of boys. He too carries the bow and in myth often kills young men. Yet he is associated with cultural achievements—represented by the lyre he carries—and adulthood in a way that Artemis is not.

APOLLO

In his first appearance in the *Iliad*, Apollo wields his bow and lyre in quick succession. He first sends a plague to the Greek camps on Troy's shores; Homer imagines Apollo descending from Olympus with his bow at the

ready and his quiver full of deadly arrows, which he aims at both men and animals. The arrows of Apollo and the plague he sends are one and the same. After killing many Greeks, Apollo returns to Olympus to entertain the feasting gods by singing along with the Muses and accompanying them with his lyre (1.592–593) (Figure 8.6). In a short span of verses, Homer conveys that Apollo's violence is tempered by his embodiment of the cultural arts: poetry and music. Apollo also oversees the cultural accomplishments and practices of medicine and prophecy.

Healing Arts Apollo not only had the capacity to unleash the plague but was also associated with curing or ridding a city of plague, and with the healing

arts more generally. (His title “Paeon” may have referred to a healing god with whom Apollo was conflated or to a ritual song that worshippers used either to call on Apollo for aid or to thank him for his assistance; for example, when the plague Apollo sends at Troy finally abates, the Greeks sing a paean to him.) Apollo is also connected to healing through his son, Asclepius, the legendary figure or god known for healing the sick (Figure 8.7). When Coronis, Apollo’s mortal lover, is pregnant with Asclepius, she has an affair with a mortal man. Learning of her behavior from a crow, Apollo has Artemis slay Coronis and asks Hermes to remove the infant Asclepius from her body when she is on the funeral pyre.

Asclepius is reared and educated by the centaur Chiron (who also taught Achilles and Patroclus), who teaches him the art of medicine. Asclepius presided over Epidaurus, the most renowned healing sanctuary in Greece. Located in the Argolid, this large sanctuary had a theater, baths, a gymnasium, dormitories, meeting rooms, and temples. One form of healing demanded that ill people travel to Epidaurus to sleep in its dormitories, where, it was believed, they would have dreams whose interpretation would lead to a cure.

Oracles and Prophecy Apollo is an oracular god as well as a healing god; like Athena, who has access to Zeus’s thunderbolts, Apollo has access to Zeus’s thoughts. Apollo often says that his prophetic knowledge comes directly from Zeus. Apollo therefore provides “Zeus’s counsel” to men at various sanctuaries, of which Didyma in Asia Minor and Delphi in Greece are the most famous. Men sought oracles on political matters, such as colonization, war, laws, leaders, and treaties; on religious matters, such as whether to plow a field or which god to propitiate; and on personal matters, such as marriage and infertility. Apollo at Delphi was also the source of certain adages, such as “know thyself” and “nothing in excess,” suggesting that Apollo is a god of moderation and reason.

Delphi was a cosmopolitan oracular shrine at which many Greek states and individuals, including leaders from the Near East such as King Croesus of



8.7 Asclepius and his daughter Hygeia (Health) with a snake. Funerary marble relief from the Therme of Salonika. Circa last quarter of the fifth century BCE. Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, Turkey. *Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY, ART21941.*



8.8 Aegeus (right), father of Theseus, consults the Pythia. Attic kylix (drinking cup) from Vulci. Kodrus Painter, c. 440 BCE. *bpx, Berlin/Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany / Johannes Laurentius / Art Resource, NY, ART479247.*

Lydia, sought Apollo's counsel. It also hosted quadrennial games (as did Zeus's sanctuary in Olympia), and it even offered purification from the crime of murder. Indeed, Apollo has the cult title *Catharsius* (Purifier) because he purifies murderers of the blood on their hands so that they may return to society and not cause it harm by provoking the wrath of the gods. In the opening scene of Aeschylus's *Eumenides* (Chapter 6.1), Orestes arrives at Delphi to be purified because he has killed his mother.

Delphi also enshrined Apollo's relationship with several female figures: the Pythias (Apollo's priestesses at Delphi), Cassandra (the Pythias' mythical double), and Daphne. The Pythias, the women who served as Apollo's priestesses, were historical figures (Figure 8.8). They participated in oracular consultations at Delphi and were believed to be inspired by Apollo and to bring his divine knowledge to human beings. Cassandra, the Trojan princess, promised herself to Apollo and then retracted her offer. As punishment, Apollo gave Cassandra the gift of prophecy; yet he made her prophecies (unlike those he inspired in the Pythias) appear untrue to all who heard them. Condemned to knowing about future tragedies yet being ignored by those she tried to warn, Cassandra thus was isolated from those who heard her. The nymph Daphne, like Cassandra, also refused Apollo's advances and was transformed into a laurel tree by her father (a river god), who thereby fulfilled her wish to escape Apollo's attentions. (Contemporary explorations of this myth are described in section 8.4.) This tale offers an explanation of why Apollo is often shown carrying a laurel branch, which symbolized prophecy and poetry, and why poets (like Hesiod) also carry laurel branches or wear laurel crowns.



8.9 Apollo with long hair. Bronze statue. Circa 330 BCE. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy. *Scala / Art Resource, NY*, ART23319.

Music and Poetry Apollo's lyre associates him most closely with music. In the Homeric *Hymn 4 (To Hermes)* (Chapter 7.1), Hermes gives the lyre he has invented to Apollo; in other myths, Apollo himself is credited with inventing the instrument. Apollo's children represent his spheres of influence, especially in the area of music. With one of the Muses, Calliope, Apollo has a son named Linus, a musician who plays the lyre and is killed by Heracles during a music lesson. Poets are said to have mourned Linus at the start and end of their songs, and he is sometimes associated with lamentation. The god Hymenaeus, whose name means "wedding song," was said to be Apollo's son. So too was Orpheus, the great musician and legendary founder of Orphism (Chapter 2.1). Apollo is often seen in the company of the Muses and has the title *Musagetes* (Leader of the Muses).

Boys' Initiations: The Hyacinthia In addition to his oversight of the arts of healing, prophecy, and music, Apollo, like his sister Artemis, presides over initiatory rituals for boys and young men. And, like his sister, in myths he

often kills or greatly harms young men and women (for example, Coronis, Cassandra, and Daphne). When Cyparissus, a young man Apollo loves, will not cease mourning a beloved pet stag, Apollo turns him into a cypress tree, a symbol of lamentation in ancient Greece. Hyacinthus, as we will see later in this chapter, dies directly (if accidentally) by Apollo's actions. In other words, Apollo's relationships with young adults can be as deadly as those of Artemis. Yet the significance of Apollo to the lives of young Greeks differs from that of his sister in some essential ways: Apollo is linked to cultural achievements of Greek society. This distinction reflects prevailing notions about men and women in ancient Greece. Men (unlike women) were believed to be the agents of culture and political actors whose fulfillment of public duties determined communal life. Apollo leads young men from childhood into public life and helps them achieve status and recognition.

Apollo is almost always depicted as beardless, with long hair. This conveys his connection with young men on the brink of becoming full-fledged citizens. Homer describes the Greeks who fight at Troy as "long-haired Achaeans," a description less about cultural standards of beauty for men (although it does convey these) than about the social position and age of those who are fighting at Troy. Although already at war, these are young men who are in the process of becoming seasoned veterans. When they return to Greece, they will be adult men by virtue of their survival of an overseas war. In one famous scene in the *Iliad*, Achilles cuts his hair and dedicates it to a river when his beloved companion Patroclus is killed in battle. Achilles's gesture recalls a ritual practiced in ancient Greece: the cutting and dedication—often to a river god—of a young man's hair, which signals his entry into adulthood. The length of men's hair in ancient Greece, then, is a way of describing age and social position. Long hair describes young men who are in the process of becoming adults. Thus the depiction of Apollo with unshorn hair indicates his affinity with young men (Figure 8.9).

Among the Dorians (the ethnic group of Greeks who settled primarily in the Peloponnese), Apollo was worshipped in many festivals that marked the development of young men. In Amyclae, a village southwest of and politically connected to Sparta, Apollo and the beautiful young boy Hyacinthus were celebrated together during the Hyacinthia. Hyacinthus was loved by Apollo, and in some myths also by Zephyrus, the west wind. When Apollo and Hyacinthus were throwing the discus (a sport that is still practiced today), Apollo accidentally hit Hyacinthus, causing his death. In some versions, Zephyrus, in a fit of jealousy, sent his winds to blow Apollo's discus off course and thus kill Hyacinthus.

The Hyacinthia, a three-day festival, involved a form of ritualized loss. The first day, on which Hyacinthus was mourned, was generally somber in

tone, and sacrifices were offered at his tomb. On the following day, there was a procession from Sparta to Amyclae, a distance of about four miles. Musical and athletic contests for boys were followed by a sacrifice in Apollo's honor and a meal in which slaves and foreigners could partake. Women participated in the procession; they also took part in dancing during the night preceding the procession. The restrictions of the first day, devoted to mourning, were removed, and a generally cheerful mood prevailed on the festival's second day and third day (about which little is known).

The Hyacinthia connected Hyacinthus with the boys who participated in the festival. We have seen that myths about Artemis portray her transforming or killing young women, thereby capturing the psychological costs and real dangers that attended transitional moments in young women's lives. The myth about Apollo's accidental slaying of Hyacinthus similarly evokes the real dangers that will attend young men's lives when they enter adulthood. All boys must trade playful games with the discus at the gymnasium for deadly battles with shields and spears. Apollo's beauty as an unshorn young man is a measure of how much boys must relinquish in order to become men. They must overcome their particular circumstances and identity by cutting their hair to don the hoplite's helmet and by striving to enact the social ideals of masculinity that Apollo embodies.

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BEFORE YOU READ

❖

UNKNOWN, *HYMN 3: TO APOLLO*
&
HYMN 27: TO ARTEMIS

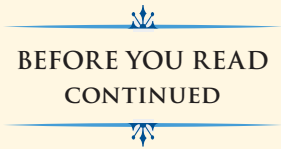
Two separate hymns compose the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*. As is typical of oral poetry (Chapter 2.1), the two hymns have been stitched together but not fully integrated. The first, called the *Hymn to Delian Apollo*, describes Apollo's birth and subsequent worship on the island of Delos. The second, called the *Hymn to Pythian Apollo*, is included here. It describes Apollo's establishment of his shrine at Delphi. (For this reason the line numbering of the hymn starts with 182, not 1.) This mythical account of Delphi's foundation celebrates Apollo's achievements by which he earns, much as Hermes did in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* (Chapter 7.1), a place of pride among the Olympian gods.

The *Hymn to Pythian Apollo* can be divided into two parts: Apollo's establishment of his shrine and his acquisition of priests. In the first part, Apollo arrives at Telpousa—the name of a spring in Boeotia as well as the goddess of the spring. Telpousa tells Apollo to establish his temple in Krisa, in the valley of Mount Parnassos, where Delphi is located (lines 243–276). When Apollo arrives at Delphi, he finds a “snake” (also called a “savage monster”) guarding the

land. This female snake is the caretaker of Typhaon, a monstrous offspring of Hera, until Apollo kills her. The hymn explains Apollo's cult title "Pythian" by connecting it to the Greek word "to rot"—which he tells the snake she will do on the land that will now be his (lines 277–386). (However, the area around Delphi was called Pytho, offering a more plausible explanation of this title.) After building himself an altar, Apollo kidnaps Cretan sailors and makes them his priests (387–end). Just as nymphs were the mythological counterparts of the young girls Artemis initiates, the Cretan sailors may be the mythological equivalents of the young boys Apollo initiates at rituals such as the Hyacinthia.

In contrast to the complex workings of the hymn to Apollo, the brief *Hymn 27: To Artemis* contains little action: Artemis hunts, visits her brother in Delphi, and then sings a hymn. (Translations by Michael Crudden.)

- To what degree does the hymn to Apollo encompass and describe Apollo's many spheres of influence as described in this section? Which, if any, are omitted?
- One of Apollo's central acts—killing the snake—allows him to establish his worship in Delphi. Why do you think the story of Typhaon is included here? Can you find any similarities between Telphousa, the snake, and Typhaon? What makes them hostile to Apollo? How does his defeat of Telphousa and the snake define him as a god?
- To what degree do Apollo's activities at Delphi serve as an initiation for him and for the Cretan sailors he kidnaps?
- What sorts of information does the hymn to Artemis convey about how the Greeks imagined Artemis, apart from her role as a hunter and a sister of Apollo?



UNKNOWN, HYMN 3: TO APOLLO (C. 700 BCE)

The son of glorious Leto, playing the hollow lyre,	182
Approaches rocky Pytho in deathless, scented robes;	
His lyre delightfully rings beneath the plectrum of gold.	
And then he goes to Olympos, speeding like thought from the earth,	
To the house of Zeus, and enters the concourse of other gods;	
At once the minds of immortals turn to the lyre and song.	
All the Muses with beautiful voices together responsively hymn	190
The gods' undying gifts and those pains that humans endure	
At the hands of immortal gods as they live without wits or resource,	

And can find no cure for death or defence against old age.
 But the fair-tressed Graces and cheerful Seasons, with Harmony, Youth,
 And the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite, hold hands by the wrist and dance.
 Along with them is singing one neither ugly nor short,
 But tall and of wondrous appearance, the archeress Artemis reared
 With Apollo; and Ares comes amongst them romping besides
 With the keen-eyed Slayer of Argos. But Phoibos Apollo plays,
 Stepping fine and high, on the lyre; about him radiance shines, 202
 And sparklings flash from his feet and tunic of beautiful weave.
 Leto with tresses of gold and wise Zeus in their great hearts
 Feel joy, as they watch their son sport amongst the immortal gods.

How shall I sing a hymn of you, whom hymns have in every way
 praised?

Am I to sing of you surrounded by brides and love,
 And tell how you once went wooing Azan's maiden child
 Together with godlike Iskhys, Elatos' horse-rich son?
 How you went together with Phorbos, son of Triops by birth?
 With Erekhtheus? Or with Leukippos, and to Leukippos' spouse

.....

On foot, on a car the other; yet he was Triops' match. 213
 Or am I to sing how first you traversed the earth to find
 An oracular shrine for humans, Apollo who shoot from afar?
 When you descended Olympos, you reached Pieria first;
 Passed by sandy Lektos, the Ainienes too,
 And amidst the Perrhaiboi folk; to Iolkos quickly came,
 And onto Kenaion stepped of Euboia famed for ships.
 On the plain of Lelantos you stood, but it did not please your heart
 To set up upon this site your shrine and wooded groves.

Crossing from there the Euripos, Apollo who shoot from afar,
 You climbed a holy, green mountain; but from it quickly reached 223
 Mykalessos, then Teumessos bedded with grassy meads,
 And arrived at the seat of Thebes that was covered over with trees—
 For no one yet of mortals was dwelling in sacred Thebes,
 Nor yet did there then exist any tracks or paths across
 The wheat-bearing plain of Thebes, but forest held all in its grasp.

From there you went on further, Apollo who shoot from afar,
 And to Onkhestos came, Poseidon's splendid grove.
 There the new-tamed colt draws breath in his distress
 At pulling the beautiful chariot; down from his place to the earth
 The driver, though skilful, leaps and walks along the road; 233
 Then for a time the horses rattle the empty car,
 Sending dominion away. But if the chariot breaks

Within the wooded grove, they tend to the horses, but lean
 And leave the vehicle be—for so from the first was the rite.
 To the lord they pray, and the doom of god then guards the car.

From there you went on further, Apollo who shoot from afar,
 And then arrived at Kephisos, that river whose flowing is fair,
 Who from Lilaia pours his water in fair-flowing streams.
 Crossing, you reached the town that many a tower protects,
 Okalea, Far-worker; came to lush Haliartos next, 243
 And went on toward Telpousa. There it pleased your heart
 To set up in that tranquil place your shrine and wooded groves.
 Close beside her you stood, and to her spoke these words:

“In this place, Telpousa, I plan to set up a beautiful shrine
 As an oracle sought by humans. Whether they’re folk who live
 On fertile Peloponnesos, or in Europa dwell
 And on isles that waters flow round, they’ll always bring to me here
 Their perfect hundredfold offerings, hoping to hear my response.
 I’ll give all unerring counsel, responding within my rich shrine.”
 When he had in this way spoken, Phoibos Apollo laid 254
 Wide and long foundations stretching without a break;
 But by this sight Telpousa was angered at heart, and said:

“Lord Phoibos who work from afar, let me put in your mind a thought,
 Since in this place it is your plan to set up a beautiful shrine
 As an oracle sought by humans, who’ll always bring to you here
 Their perfect hundredfold offerings; ponder my words in your mind.
 Quick horses’ clatter, and mules being watered from my sacred springs,
 Will always be causing you pain—a human will then more wish
 To view the well-made cars and the clatter of quick-footed steeds,
 Than he will your great shrine and the treasures lying heaped up inside. 266
 But if you would heed me at all—more powerful, lord, and brave
 You are, of course, than I, and have the greatest strength—
 Make your shrine in Krisa, down in Parnassos’ fold.
 About your well-built altar there will in that place be
 No beautiful chariots’ jolting or clatter of quick-footed steeds.
 The glorious tribes of humans would rather be bringing their gifts
 To you, le-Paieon, and joyful at heart you’d take
 The beautiful offerings made by humans who dwell round about.”

So she spoke, and persuaded the Far-shooter’s mind, so that she
 herself,
 Telpousa, might have—and not the Far-shooter—fame upon earth. 276
 From there you went on further, Apollo who shoot from afar,
 And came to the city peopled by Phlegyai, violent men,
 Who, paying no heed to Zeus, used to make their home on earth

In a beautiful valley lying near the Kephisian lake.
 Rushing on swiftly from there, you approached a mountain ridge,
 And under snowy Parnassos came to Krisa then,
 A slope that faces Zephyr. Above it hangs a crag;
 A hollow and rugged valley runs below. This spot
 Lord Phoibos Apollo marked out as his lovely shrine's site, and said:

"In this place it is my plan to set up a beautiful shrine
 As an oracle sought by humans. Whether they're folk who live
 On fertile Peloponnesos, or in Europa dwell
 And on isles that waters flow round, they'll always bring to me here
 Their perfect hundredfold offerings, hoping to hear my response.
 I'll give all unerring counsel, responding within my rich shrine."

When he had in this way spoken, Phoibos Apollo laid
 Wide and long foundations stretching without a break;
 Upon them a threshold of stone was placed by Erginos' sons,
 Trophonios and Agamedes, dear to the deathless gods;
 And countless tribes of humans, using finished blocks,
 Raised about it a shrine to be famed for ever in song.

But there was near by a fair-flowing spring, and here the Snake
 Was slain by the lord son of Zeus with a shot from his mighty bow,
 Well-fattened and huge though she was, a savage monster, who caused
 Much harm to humans on earth—much harm to humans themselves,
 And much to their slender-legged flocks, since she was a blood-spattered
 bane.

From Hera whose throne is golden she once had taken and reared
 The dread and fierce Typhaon, a bane to mortal men.
 Hera had given him birth in anger at Father Zeus,
 When Kronos' son had begotten renowned Athena within
 His head. At once with anger was queenly Hera filled,
 And she amongst the immortals gathered together said:

"All you gods and goddesses, listen how Zeus who gathers the clouds
 Has begun unprovoked to slight me! He made me his true-hearted
 wife,

And now without me has given bright-eyed Athena birth—
 Amongst all the blessed immortals she is beyond compare.
 But the runt of all the gods is that son whom I bore myself,
 Hephaistos with shrivelled feet. I flung him from my grasp
 Into the sea's expanse, but he was welcomed there
 By Thetis whose feet are silver, the daughter whom Nereus begot,
 And she brought him amongst her sisters—I wish she had done
 something else

To please the blessed gods. Relentless, subtle in *Craft*,

What else will you now *think up*? How did you dare alone
 Give bright-eyed Athena birth? Couldn't I have given her birth?
 Even so amongst the immortals who make broad heaven their home
 She would have been called your own. Take care now lest I *think up*
 Some wicked plan in future—in fact I'll now contrive
 How a son of mine may be born who would be beyond compare
 Amongst the immortal gods. I'll not bring any disgrace
 On your sacred bed or mine, nor shall I be sleeping with you, 329
 But remote from you I'll be amongst the immortal gods."

So she spoke, and far away from the gods she went in her wrath.
 At once then did cow-eyed, queenly Hera begin to pray,
 And with down-turned palm she smote the ground and spoke these words:

"Now listen, Earth, to me, and also broad Heaven above,
 And you Titan gods who about great Tartaros dwell underground,
 From whom come men and gods; let all of you hear me now,
 And give me a son without Zeus who'll be no less strong than he—
 So much mightier let him be as than Kronos was far-seeing Zeus."

In this way she spoke, and lashed the ground with a sturdy hand. 340
 The Earth that bears life's nurture was stirred into motion; the sight
 Gave her joy at heart, for she knew that her wish would be fulfilled.
 From this moment onward then, till the year had brought its end,
 She neither at any time came to the bed of Craft-filled Zeus,
 Nor did she at any time sit on her richly wrought chair as before,
 And devise for him shrewd counsels; she stayed in her prayer-filled
 shrines,

Did cow-eyed, queenly Hera, and took from her offerings joy.
 But when the months and days were drawing near their end—
 The year in its cycle revolving again—and the seasons advanced,
 She bore then one who was like neither gods nor mortal men, 351
 The dread and fierce Typhaon, a bane to mortal men.

Then cow-eyed, queenly Hera took and gave him at once
 To the Snake, who made him welcome, an evil in evil hands.
 To the glorious tribes of humans he used to cause much harm,
 While the day of doom used to carry whoever met her away—
 Until lord Apollo who works from afar let fly at her
 His mighty shaft, and she, being racked with cruel pains,
 Was lying, loudly gasping, writhing upon the ground.
 An unearthly clamour arose beyond words, as she twisted now here,
 Now there through the wood, and expiring departed her bloody life. 361
 Then over her in triumph Phoibos Apollo cried:

"In this place now let you rot on the soil that nurtures men.
 You won't be an evil affliction to living mortals who eat

The fruit of the bountiful Earth and will to this place bring
 Their perfect hundredfold offerings. Neither Typhoeus will ward
 Grim death from you, nor even Khimaira of hateful name,
 But black Earth will make you rot, as will beaming Hyperion's rays."

He spoke these words in triumph, and darkness covered her eyes.
 There she was made to rot by the sacred might of the Sun;
 And this is the reason why *Pytho* is called by its present name, 372
 And they title the lord *Pytheios*, because in that place there
 The might of the piercing Sun had *rotted* the monster away.

And then did Phoibos Apollo see that the fair-flowing spring
 Had deceived him; in anger he made for Telphousa, and soon arrived.
 Close beside her he stood, and to her spoke these words:

"Telphousa, you were not destined to keep this lovely spot
 By deceiving my mind, and pour forth your fair-flowing water: here
 Will my fame also be, and not just yours alone."

When he had spoken these words, lord Apollo who works
 from afar

Upon her piled a peak with a falling shower of stones. 383
 Hiding her streams from view, within the wooded grove
 He built for himself an altar close to the fair-flowing spring;
 And under the title *Telphousios* all there pray to the lord,
 Because he there disfigured sacred Telphousa's streams.

And then did Phoibos Apollo begin to ponder at heart
 What folk he might bring to serve him in rocky Pytho as priests.
 While revolving this matter he saw a swift ship on the wine-dark sea;
 Aboard her from Minos' Knossos were many fine Cretan men—
 It is they who offer the lord his sacrifice, they who report
 The decrees of Phoibos Apollo whose sword is of gold, when he 395
 speaks

From the bay-tree proclaiming his oracles down in Parnassos' glens.
 On a voyage of business and profit toward sandy Pylos town
 And its native Pylian race their black ship's course was bound.
 But Phoibos Apollo met them; in shape like a dolphin he leaped
 Upon their swift ship and lay, a huge dread monster, on board.
 And if amongst the Cretans any was minded to act,
 He shook him in every direction and rattled the planks of the ship.
 Silent and fearful they sat; throughout the hollow black ship
 They were not untying the rigging, nor were they striking the sail
 Of the ship with dark-coloured prow, but as they had set it in place 407
 At the outset with oxhide ropes, so onward they held their course,
 And a southerly gale blew up that roused the swift ship from behind.
 They first passed Maleia and came along the Lakonian coast

To a city crowned by the sea and a place that belongs to the Sun
 Who brings pleasure to mortals—Tainaros. There are the thick-fleeced
 flocks
 Of the lordly Sun ever grazing; he owns this pleasant spot.
 And there they wished to drop anchor and when they had disembarked
 To examine this great wonder and with their eyes to watch
 Whether the monster would stay aboard the hollow ship
 Or would leap out into the swell of the salt sea teeming with fish. 417
 But the ship which was finely constructed would not answer the helm,
 But went on alongside of fertile Peloponnesos; with ease
 Lord Apollo who works from afar directed her course with the breeze.
 To Arene and lovely Argyrpha forging onward she came,
 To Thryon the ford of Alpheios, to Aipy that well-built place,
 Then to sandy Pylos town and its native Pylion race.
 She went past Krounoi and Khalkis, past Dyme and Elis' bright land,
 Where power is held by Epeioi; and as for Pherai she aimed
 In joy at Zeus' favouring wind, the sheer mountain of Ithake hove
 From under the clouds into view, and Doulikhion too was seen 429
 With Same and wooded Zakynthos. But when she had passed beyond
 The whole of Peloponnesos, and when the vast gulf that sets bounds
 To fertile Peloponnesos and stretches toward Krisa appeared,
 Then came Zephyr, mighty and clear, in accord with Zeus' decree,
 In a headlong swoop from the sky, so that with utmost speed
 The ship would hurtle across the salty water of sea.
 Back then again to face the Dawn and Sun they began
 To sail, and the lord son of Zeus, Apollo, led them on.
 At Krisa, clear to view, where vines abound, they came
 To harbour; the sea-going vessel scraped the sandy beach. 439
 Lord Apollo who works from afar then leaped out over the side
 Like a star in the middle of day—there flew from him many sparks,
 And radiance shot to heaven. He passed within his shrine
 Amidst the precious tripods, kindled there a flame,
 Revealing his darting rays, and all Krisa was bathed in light.
 The wives and fair-girdled daughters of Krisa's men wailed out
 At Phoibos' onrush, for great was the dread that he put in each heart.
 But he bounded aloft from there to fly at the speed of thought
 Back to the ship again in the shape of a fine strong man
 Enjoying the prime of his youth, whose locks about broad shoulders
 hung; 450
 And speaking aloud to the Cretans addressed them with winged words:
 "Who are you, strangers? From where do you sail on the liquid
 ways?

Is it on business you travel, or do you recklessly rove
 Across the salt sea like pirates, who wander, staking their lives,
 Bringing harm to foreign nations? Why sit in such sorrow, and not
 Disembark on the shore, or take your black ship's tackle down?
 This at least is the custom of men who are eaters of bread,
 When sick with fatigue they come in their black ship from sea to land,
 And at once their hearts are seized with a longing to taste sweet food."

In this way Apollo spoke, and put courage within their breasts; 462
 And then to him in answer the Cretans' leader said:

"Stranger—although in truth you haven't about you the build
 Or the look of mortal folk, but are like the immortal gods—
 May health and great joy be yours, and heaven grant blessings to you!
 Now give me an honest answer, to set my mind at rest:
 What country is this, what land? What mortals are native here?
 With a different route in mind we were sailing across the great gulf,
 For Pylos bound from Crete—our birthplace, we proudly boast.
 Now here in our ship we've landed, not of our own accord,
 By a journey and ways unintended, though yearning to head back
 home. 472

But to this place has some immortal brought us against our will."

And then to them in answer Apollo the Far-worker said:
 "You strangers who dwelt in times past near Knossos where many
 trees grow,
 But who now will never again return to your lovely town,
 Fair homes, and darling wives, but here will tend my rich shrine
 That is honoured by many humans: I am the son of Zeus,
 And my boast is that I am Apollo. Across the great gulf of the sea
 I've brought you, meaning no harm: no, here you'll tend my rich shrine
 That all humans hold high in esteem, and you'll know the plans of
 the gods,
 Through whose will you'll always be honoured, for ever, throughout
 all time. 485

But now quickly obey my instructions: take the sail down first,
 Untying the oxhide ropes; then dragging ashore the swift ship,
 Unload your cargo and gear; and building an altar there
 On the strand where the sea's surf breaks, upon it kindle a flame,
 Offer white barley and pray while standing about it close by.
 As at first in shape like a *dolphin* I leaped on board your swift ship
 Amidst the cloud-coloured sea, so to me as *Delphinios* pray;
 The altar itself will always be *Delphic* and present to view.
 Then prepare for yourselves a meal beside your swift black ship,

And pour for the blessed gods who have Olympos as home. 498
 But when you have banished desire for the honey-sweet savour of food,
 Come along with me and sing the le-Paieon hymn,
 Until you have made your way to the place where you'll tend my
 rich shrine."

When he had in this way spoken, they heeded his words and obeyed.
 They took the sail down first, untying the oxhide ropes;
 Lowered the mast with the forestays, bringing it home to the crutch;
 Next disembarked themselves on the strand where the sea's surf breaks,
 And dragged ashore the swift ship high up on the sandy beach,
 Drawing long props beside it; and built an altar there
 On the strand where the sea's surf breaks, upon it kindled a flame, 509
 Offered white barley and prayed while standing as bidden close by.
 They made then a meal for themselves beside their swift black ship,
 And poured for the blessed gods who have Olympos as home.
 But when they had banished desire for drink and for food, they set out;
 Apollo the lord son of Zeus was leading them on their way,
 Holding the lyre in his hands and playing a lovely tune,
 Stepping fine and high; behind him the Cretans, stamping their feet,
 Followed toward Pytho and sang the le-Paieon hymn—

A hymn such as those that are sung by Cretans within whose breasts
 The goddess Muse has placed the honey-sweet sound of song. 519
 Unwearied, they reached a ridge on foot, and suddenly came
 To Parnassos, that lovely spot where the god intended to dwell,
 Honoured by many humans. Leading them further he showed
 His holy shrine and rich temple; the spirit was stirred in their breasts.
 Putting to him a question, the Cretans' leader said:

"Since far away from our friends and the land of our fathers, Lord,
 As it pleased your heart, you've brought us, how are we now to live?
 Consider this point, we ask you. The land here, though lovely indeed,
 Neither is fit to yield crops nor offers for pasture sweet grass,
 Whereby we might live well and attend to humans' needs." 530

The son of Zeus, Apollo, smiled and said to them:
 "You senseless humans, you wretched creatures wishing at heart
 For sorrows, hard toils, and troubles! Your answer I'll give you with ease
 And put in your minds to think on. Let every last one of you grasp
 A dagger in his right hand and for ever be slaughtering flocks:
 They will be there in abundance, all those that are brought for me
 By the glorious tribes of humans. Stand guard before my shrine
 And welcome the tribes of humans who gather here in search,
 Above all, of my guidance; but if there will be a rash word or deed,

And outrageous conduct, which is the custom of mortal men, 541
 Then others you'll have as your masters, for ever forced under
 their yoke.
 To you now all has been spoken; keep it safe in your thoughts."
 And so farewell I bid you, Zeus and Leto's son;
 But I will call to my mind both you and another song. 546

UNKNOWN, HYMN 27: TO ARTEMIS (c. 700 BCE)

Of Artemis, goddess with distaff of gold, whose cry resounds,
 I sing, the virgin revered, the archeress shooter of deer,
 The sister by birth of Apollo, god of the golden sword.
 In the chase over shadowy mountains and wind-swept peaks she
 delights,
 And takes aim with a bow of pure gold, dispatching arrows of woe.
 The heads of high mountains tremble, the thick-shaded forest screams out
 A dire echo of bestial clamour, and shuddering shake both the earth
 And the sea that is teeming with fish; but she with a heart that is strong
 Now this way turns, now that, destroying the race of beasts.
 Yet when the archeress tracker of beasts has had pleasure enough 11
 From the hunt and has gladdened her mind, she unstrings her
 flexible bow
 And goes to her brother's great home, to Phoibos Apollo's abode
 In Delphi's rich land, to prepare for the Muses' and Graces' fair dance.
 She hangs up there with its arrows her bow that springs back from the pull,
 And wearing graceful adornments takes the lead in the dance.
 The goddesses, raising their heavenly voices, sing a hymn
 Of fair-ankled Leto, and tell how she gave her children birth,
 Who are in both counsel and deeds the best of immortals by far.
 Farewell to you, children of Zeus and Leto with lovely hair;
 But I will call to my mind both you and another song.

8.2 THEORY

MYTH, RITUAL, AND INITIATIONS

The myth of Niobe portrays the violence of Artemis and Apollo against girls and boys, thus linking it to their roles as initiatory deities. Niobe, the daughter of a mythical king, proudly boasts that she has seven daughters and seven sons, unlike Leto, who has only two children, Artemis and Apollo. To avenge

this insult to their mother, Artemis and Apollo use their arrows to slay all of Niobe's children; Artemis kills her daughters, whereas Apollo kills her sons. As for Niobe, she turns into stone, eternally lamenting the loss of her children (Figure 8.10). Whereas the myth of Niobe, like the other myths in this chapter (and, indeed, like many Greek myths), seems to bear traces of ritual practices, the relationship between myth and ritual is less than clear. This section considers the relationship between myth and ritual by refining the term "initiation" through the work of ethnographer Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) and others on such rituals.



8.10 Artemis and Apollo slay the children of Niobe. Detail from an Attic red-figure krater. Niobid Painter, c. 450 BCE. Louvre Museum, Paris, France. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY, ART442238.

JANE HARRISON AND THE CAMBRIDGE RITUALISTS

Early in the twentieth century at Cambridge University, a group of scholars perceived myth and ritual as inseparable. The Cambridge Ritualists, as this group came to be known, were classicists who argued that myths corresponded to rituals in some essential way. One of the most well-known Cambridge Ritualists, Jane Ellen Harrison (1850–1928), stated the relationship between myth and ritual categorically: "Myth is the spoken correlative of the acted rite, the thing done." Harrison conceived of ritual as a series of events that was acted out, much like a drama or performance, often before or on behalf of others who formed an audience. A myth, in her formulation, was the script or libretto for a ritual. Often, when the ritual itself falls out of practice, the myth remains.

Although this hypothetical scenario offers an explanation for the often seemingly illogical moments in Greek myths, it ultimately does not convince. Certainly, Harrison's tidy formulation may work in some instances; for example, the Homeric *Hymn 2 (To Demeter)* recounts a myth that is closely connected with initiates' ritual activities at the Great Mysteries at Eleusis (Chapter 4.1). But Harrison's formulation is not clearly applicable to most Greek myths or rituals, even if we acknowledge that we have lost the sorts of data and artifacts, not to mention eyewitness testimony, that might clarify such a connection. Greek myths are too elaborate and too detailed to be reduced to a ritual, no matter how creative their interpreters may be. Thus, although later scholars have rejected Harrison's strong claim that myth correlates to ritual, she and the other Cambridge Ritualists did succeed in shifting the focus of myth studies to their societal contexts rather than their purely literary qualities, and in illuminating the vital connections between myth and ritual in ancient Greece and elsewhere. Van Gennep's work on initiations (or rites of passage) has proved particularly relevant to understanding

how myth, although it might be concerned with ritual, is not (as Harrison postulated) a script for ritual.

ARNOLD VAN GENNEP AND RITES OF PASSAGE

At the time that van Gennep was an active scholar, rituals of all societies were divided, classified, and studied by type, such as marriages, funerals, baptisms, exorcisms, and sacrifices. Just as each seemed to serve a distinct purpose (function), each seemed to have a unique structure (form). Amid such diversity, van Gennep discerned a common form and function among one class of rituals that he called rites of passage. All rituals of that class, no matter how different they seem, share a common purpose: they facilitate the transition of participants from one stage to another.

Van Gennep argued that rites of passage “accompany every change of place, state, social position and age.” They may accompany the installation of a new king or queen, a community’s celebration of a new year, or a change in season. In sum, rites of passage (including initiations) enable individuals as well as entire groups to adapt to change. Initiations that accompany various life stages (birth, puberty, marriage, and death) are called age-grade initiations; they often acknowledge and reconcile the biological determinants (such as menarche and puberty) of an individual’s life with his or her social roles (such as marriage and citizenship). They allow an individual to negotiate these transitional moments, while simultaneously ensuring that the individual will conform to the norms that determine his or her social position. In this way, van Gennep argued, rites of passage ensure both a society’s internal cohesion, by enforcing individuals’ assumption of their expected roles, and a society’s continuity over time, by managing reproduction.

Just as van Gennep argued that all initiations share a common purpose (they move individuals from one state or position to another), he also noted that all initiations share a similar structure. Initiations, he observed, consist of three stages: separation, time at the margin (or “limen”), and reaggregation. Borrowing the Latin word *limen*, which means “door” or “threshold,” van Gennep also called these stages preliminal, liminal, and postliminal. These three stages are given different labels in subsequent literature but are generally applied to the same three broad categories: every ritual, like every story, has a beginning, middle, and end. The simplicity of this scheme, however, should not obscure its importance to ritual studies. For in addition to directing scholarly attention to the similarities among different rites, van Gennep also demonstrated that rituals were not meaningless acts repeated over and over again in a rote fashion. Rituals help to shape individuals to meet the social demands placed on them.

The first stage, separation, separates an individual (the initiate) from his or her former status or life stage. The initiate may temporarily move to a

different place, change clothing or appearance in some way, or cross a boundary, whether real or symbolic.

The second stage, *limen*, is perhaps the most important. It may last from a single day to a full year and involves activities that are designed to transform initiates so that they can fulfill their new social role. Initiates often must undergo psychologically, emotionally, and/or physically challenging activities that are disorienting and that create a kind of cognitive dissonance. Body modification, such as scarification or circumcision, and activities of inversion (for example, boys may dress as girls, or individuals may do things that are otherwise socially forbidden) are common. Initiates may also be stripped naked, underfed, and thus reduced to a state of helpless infancy. Alternately, they may be kept in darkness, dressed in dark garments, and treated as though they are dead. Such acts are intended to make initiates submissive to those conducting the initiation and receptive to the demanded changes. They may then engage in educational activities such as learning and memorizing important knowledge or acquiring and performing new skills. Such acts also have a symbolic aspect: by treating initiates as infants or corpses, these activities convey that a part of the initiates must die and that they must be reborn into their new state, position, or status.

In the third stage, reaggregation, initiates are reintegrated into society in their newly attained position, status, or state. A procession or ceremony may mark an initiate's completion of his or her rite of passage.

In many cultures, weddings illustrate the elegance and applicability of van Gennep's rites of passage. At the separation stage, the initiates (the groom and the bride) no longer occupy their former position or state in life. Once they are betrothed to each other, they begin to relinquish their identity as a daughter or son and enter their future roles as responsible members of society. A series of rituals may take place at this time to mark their separation from their former identity: for example, an exchange of goods between the families of the bride and groom (or, in many Western cultures, the gift of a ring from the groom to the bride); a sham kidnapping of the bride; educational activities; and tattooing, scarring, and other body modifications. Traces of these more serious rituals can be found in the bachelor and bachelorette parties that precede many American weddings. In the second stage, the bride and groom may wear special clothing and undergo rituals that may last one or more days, at the end of which the couple will have a different legal and social status. These rituals may include dancing, symbolic enactments of the tasks and duties the bride will be required to fulfill, rites that ensure the fertility of the couple, and a further exchange of goods between families. In the third stage, the couple will enter society as husband and wife. They may wear different attire and wedding jewelry and will often change residence.

Van Gennep's rites of passage offer useful insight into the myths and the initiatory rituals for adolescents that Artemis and Apollo oversee. Interestingly, however, there is no one Greek word that corresponds to the English word "initiation" to describe these rituals. Instead, as we have seen, local puberty rites have names such as the Brauronia or the Hyacinthia. These two festivals conform in many, although not all, ways to van Gennep's scheme.

Whereas the Brauronia is closely connected to reproductive biology, and Artemis presides over ritual activities that accompany and facilitate the transitions of the daughters of citizens into wives, initiatory festivals for boys (such as the Hyacinthia) move male youth into the ranks of citizens and soldiers. They too must be trained (or compelled) to assume a range of military and political duties and thus become contributing members of society. Table 8.1 illustrates how both the Brauronia and the Hyacinthia conform to van Gennep's tripartite division of initiatory rites.

Van Gennep offers a clear definition of the form (three stages) and function (to facilitate the transformation from childhood to adulthood) of initiations. But how might initiations seen through his theoretical lens illuminate myths? Myths attached to Artemis and Apollo have a repeating pattern that loosely correlates to their initiations. Walter Burkert (1931–2015), a German scholar of Greek religion, offers a nuanced view of the relationship between myths and rituals in a way that is particularly helpful in the case of initiations: "The mythical tale . . . names that which the ritual intends" (*Homo Necans*, 34). The first step of initiatory rituals, the separation stage, is designed to separate

Table 8.1: The Three Stages of Greek Initiatory Rites

	BRAURONIA	HYACINTHIA
SEPARATION	Girls depart for Brauron (or other sites dedicated to Artemis in Athens's environs).	Boys enter into a state of mourning for Hyacinthus; they observe food restrictions; and they offer sacrifices at the tomb of Hyacinthus.
TRANSITION	Girls "play the bear for Artemis." They wear yellow robes or are naked; they race, dance, and sing; they dedicate votives and toys.	Boys participate in citywide competitions, processions from Sparta to Amyclae, banquets, and the dedication of a robe to Apollo. Slaves and women participate.
INCORPORATION	Girls return home, prepared for the changes that marriage brings.	Little evidence describes the events of this day.

the initiate from his or her former identity in order to enable and promote change and development into the next. An important part of the initiate’s identity must symbolically die. In many of the myths attached to Apollo and Artemis, young boys and girls die. Here, then, it seems that the myths of Apollo and Artemis name or clarify the intent of initiatory rituals. The ambiguity about whether such deaths or transformations are meant to punish or protect magnifies the ambiguities of gaining adult status while losing the freedoms of youth.

KEN DOWDEN, “INITIATION: THE KEY TO MYTH?”

Dowden (b. 1950) builds on van Gennep’s definition of initiation rituals and then explores myths relevant to girls’ and boys’ initiations.

- After discussing Iphigenia (here spelled “Iphigeneia”; both forms are correct), Dowden turns to the daughters of Protios. How do their myths parallel Iphigenia’s? How do they pertain to girls’ initiatory rituals?
- How does the myth of Leukippos, who experiences a sex change, compare to myths about Achilles and to boys’ initiations? Do these myths offer sufficient proof that boys were considered “feminized” prior to their initiations?
- Do you think that initiatory rites and myths connected with Artemis and Apollo in ancient Greece compelled social conformity? Why or why not?



BEFORE YOU READ



KEN DOWDEN, “INITIATION: THE KEY TO MYTH?” (2011)

IPHIGENEIA AND GIRLS AS ANIMALS

Greek mythology is concerned, *inter alia*, with the virtue, or otherwise, of wives. But a remarkable number of girls (“maidens”) have trouble reaching that stage at all.¹ They may be turned into animals, plants, or even finally constellations (the Proitids, Daphne, Kallisto); they may need to murder their prospective husbands (the Danaids); they may need to give their lives for the community (the Erechtheids); they may die in the course of a pursuit (Iphinoe); or be slaughtered or sacrificed, preferably by their father (the returning Idomeneus). The most famous example of the last category is Iphigeneia, the daughter of Agamemnon.

Her story, as we know it, is part of the saga of the Trojan War, and its focus falls on her father Agamemnon. Helen, the wife of his brother, Menelaos, has been stolen by Paris, the son of the Trojan king Priam; Agamemnon has assembled the Greek forces that will head to Troy to avenge his brother. Their ships are now at Aulis, on the coast of Boiotia facing the long island of Euboia; but Agamemnon cannot gain favourable winds. This is because he has offended the goddess Artemis by shooting a deer. It is not wholly clear why this action has offended Artemis, but one version goes that he boasted as he shot the deer that “not even Artemis” could have shot like that. The prophet Kalchas now pronounces that Agamemnon must sacrifice his daughter if he is to sail to Troy, and Iphigeneia is sent for, ostensibly in order that she may be married to Achilles. Some authors give the impression she is sacrificed; others report that a deer is substituted by Artemis at the last moment and Iphigeneia herself is whisked off to serve Artemis at her shrine amongst the “*Tauroi*,” a Thracian tribe with a name conveniently similar to Artemis’ epithet *Tauropolos* (she of the “bulls,” *tauroi*).

If this were all, we would probably be none the wiser. But there are also related myths told in the next land south of Boiotia, namely Attica (the territory of Athens). On the East coast, at Brauron (near Athens airport), a maiden plays with a wild bear but it scratches her and her brothers shoot it. A plague now descends on the Athenians and an oracle pronounces that their maidens must in future *arkteuein* (“do the bear (rite)”) before they can marry. On the West coast, at Mounychia (near the old port of Athens), again a bear is killed by the Athenians and again a plague results. The oracle prescribes the sacrifice of his daughter by someone who is willing. At this point, Embaros (who is a byword for ingenuity ever after) agrees, provided he gains the priesthood for his clan. But he hides his daughter in the inner room of the temple and proceeds to sacrifice a goat which he has dressed in his daughter’s clothes.

The common structure of these myths is as follows:

an animal is killed	Artemis is angry	an oracle prescribes a remedy	a girl is to be sacrificed by her father	but she is not and an animal is substituted	the prospect of marriage
			the <i>Arkteia</i> is to take place		

The account in which the *Arkteia* becomes a necessity veers from myth to what myth signifies. But in all cases we are at a shrine of Artemis and in two (Aulis, Brauron) the question of marriage arises. The *Arkteia* was indeed a ritual which select Athenian maidens performed prior to marriage. And all versions show an oscillation of identity between girl and

animal, emphasizing that one may under special conditions substitute for the other. In two versions (Aulis, Mounychia) the slayer is the father.

An initiatory interpretation works as follows. The sacrifice expresses the dynamics of the key moment of separation in the initiation ceremony. To become marriageable, a girl must leave the control of her father and enter the control of her husband. In the Greek context this happens within the ritual embrace of the relevant goddess, Artemis. This is dramatically, but logically, represented by father and daughter engaging in a ceremony in the Artemis shrine in which the father symbolically kills the daughter. Mock-death and mock-killing are staples of the phase of separation in initiation ceremonies. They are the necessary preliminary to rebirth and are also reflected in the change of names and change of appearance which can occur at this stage. But the girl is not really dead: she has become something outside the human category altogether, namely an animal, if a vulnerable one specially loved by the goddess. The goddess has helped her to survive the transition by adopting the girl into her service for a period, and indeed the example of the *arktoi* shows that girls *did* spend a period in the goddess's service. It is only after this that marriage becomes available, the marriage to which Athenian girls looked forward and the marriage which was offered (albeit deceitfully) to Iphigeneia.

The myth of Iphigeneia would on this view find its formative context in a regional family of rituals. I have argued elsewhere that this includes some traces of a deer-ritual prior to marriage in Thessaly, and maybe also aspects of the Dionysos cult in Boiotia, in particular the ritual garb of the maenads (raving matrons), the deer-dress (*nebris*). It is possible that there is also an outlier in Arkadia, where the nymph Kallisto (“Prettiest”) is also turned into a bear and shot, this time maybe by Artemis.²

A different region is constituted by the Argolid, Sikyon, and neighbouring areas. There we find a mythology of the daughters of Proitos, King of Tiryns, who offend Hera,³ perhaps by deriding the appearance of her statue. The result is that they suffer from a whitening disease (leprosy, perhaps), and in their madness become convinced that they are cows, then start roaming over the wilds of the Peloponnese. They must eventually find a place to be cured. According to Bakchylides (*Epinician Ode 11*), it is by their father in the waters of Lousoi (north Arcadia). In the most colourful version of the story, though, it is in a ritual chase by the young men, led by the prophet Melampous (“Black-foot”), a chase of such vigour that one of them, Iphinoë, dies at Sikyon—and you can see her tomb.⁴ This ritual chase of the not-quite married is reflected again in the myth of the Danaids (honoured at Argos), who must escape their would-be husbands, who are the sons of Egypt (and therefore black).

Thus, once again, on an initiatory view, there is a parade of appropriate motifs. The subjects are those on the verge of marriage. The Proitids, in a ritual environment (the temple of Hera), lose their human identity and become confused with animals. Their whitening may reflect the use of white daubs in initiation rituals (part of the scenery of changing identity). They also leave their home and have no bearings. Meanwhile there is a clear hint of a ritual chase of the sexes (one which we also know happened in Boiotia in the Dionysos cult), looking as though the normal paleness of women and tanned skins of men is exaggerated through black and white daubings, maybe washed off at the end. If one of the girls dies, that may indicate that in a sense they all die and that the transition is a difficult one. Are the Proitids attractive enough to marry? No longer. And the Danaids' slaughter of their husbands is as clear a rejection of marriage as you will find in any myth. In this liminal period they are unmarried and unmarriageable.⁵

Somewhere in the background of all this seem to lie organized rites, repeated from year to year (or sometimes maybe at gaps of more than a year). Their function seems to be to take the available girls and convert them psychologically and ritually so that they are ready for marriage. The evidence for the ritual, however, is very thin and this evidence comes from well after the time of formation of these myths; thus, it is possible that the ritual alongside which the myth originally made sense has decayed. We might well ask now whether the *Arkteia* for which we have evidence had not changed significantly over the centuries. Presumably, it had originally not been a ceremony for the Athenian state but for the people of the village of Brauron, where in later years it had come to seem like a colourful local part of the Athenian heritage, with its saffron-dyed robes and running races. In fact, however, it was a survival of rites that had once been held in most places, of which Brauron and (on the other side of Attica) Mounychia were only survivals. The whole of the eligible maidenhood of Attica was scarcely going to assemble at Brauron for the *Arkteia*: thus, by its nature in an amalgamated ("syncretized") Attica, it would be available only to *select* girls. We cannot know whether in origin the ceremony had been restricted to the daughters of leading folk; but it seems unlikely that they would be sufficiently numerous. We do not have evidence for non-mythical girls masquerading as cows at Tiryns, though as Argos destroyed the city and much of its culture in the 470s BC, this is not surprising. But as Spartan boys were dra-gooned in *agelai* (herds) and led by *bouagoi* (ox-leaders), there is nothing implausible about the young girls of Tiryns and its region practising being cows in the same way that Brauronian girls practised being bears. Given that Hera is standardly "cow-faced" (*boöpis*) in Homer, usually translated "ox-eyed," it would seem appropriate.⁶

THE DESTINY OF THE WARRIOR

Boys' myths do not map so easily onto rites and their patterns. But there exists, all the same, a range of myths addressing the key point at which the boy becomes the warrior. Phaistos is in south-central Crete, a bus ride from Heraklion. Today we visit it for its magnificent Minoan palace. But it was a living community in classical times too, and there we hear of a myth associated with a ritual, which the Hellenistic poet Nicander (third–second century BC) had told in Book 2 of his now lost *Metamorphoses* (we have the story as reported by Antoninus Liberalis (second–third century AD?) in his *Metamorphoses* (17), a prose work which draws extensively on Nicander's poem).⁷ A woman called Galateia is pregnant with the child of her husband Lampros (“brilliant”) and he prays it will be a boy. But it isn't. So she pretends it is and calls it Leukippos (“white-horse,” strangely often the name of the king's son in mythology).⁸ Leukippos grows up and her beauty is such that Galateia fears she cannot any longer fool Lampros. So she goes to the temple of Leto and implores her to make Leukippos a boy, which indeed Leto does.

The people of Phaistos even today commemorate this sex-change and sacrifice to Leto of Growth (*Phytia*), who caused the girl to grow male organs; and they call the festival the *Ekdysia* [the (festival of the) Casting Off (of clothes)], since the girl cast off her *peplos* [robe]. And it is the custom that those who are getting married must first lie beside the statue of Leukippos.

This strange myth concerns the “coming-out” of a male under the auspices of a goddess at maturity, and it is associated with the boundary you must cross to reach marriage and with a specific festival, apparently celebrating male “maturation.” The myth is presented as aetiological, that is, as giving the reason why a ceremony is held. But in myth-analysis we regard the chain of causation as being rather in the opposite direction, from ritual to myth: the myth exists because the ritual did, and it serves to explain the dynamics of the ritual. The ritual seems to be in initiatory territory, and the myth exists to explore the dynamics of this moment in human ritual life.

So far this is to interpret a single myth rather heavily. But there are a number of comparable myths. One that is important for us was also mentioned by Nicander and appears in the same chapter of Antoninus' *Metamorphoses* (Galateia's prayer was clearly a fine set-piece in which she cited others who had undergone sex-change in order to support her request). This is the myth of Kaineus, situated in Thessaly in mainland Greece. This character is originally a girl, Kainis, and Poseidon is

enamoured of her and agrees to grant her a wish. She wishes to become a man and invincible.⁹ The story goes on to tell how Kaineus caused people to swear by his spear, and defeated the Centaurs until they took whole fir trees and pounded him into the ground. The latter part is something of a cautionary story, but the sex-change at adolescence (she is not yet married)—granted by Poseidon, a god sometimes elsewhere associated with youths—seems to be from a similar stable to the story of Leukippos.

We then turn to a more famous story, that of Achilles. This greatest of warriors in the Trojan War was not originally going to join the expedition. Indeed, his mother Thetis, knowing he would die if he went, had “disguised him in women’s dress and left him with Lykomedes as a maiden.”¹⁰ Achilles comes from Phthia, a region of Thessaly, and Lykomedes is the ruler of the island of Skyros, around 150 kilometres away, on the other side of Euboia. This ruse does not escape the attention of the Greek forces assembling for Troy. An embassy is sent, and Odysseus cunningly lays out a selection of women’s goods and weaponry before the royal girls on Skyros, whereupon Achilles’ interest in the weaponry gives him away. Achilles has been sent to what is effectively a margin, something that matters for the liminal stage of initiation, as we have seen above in van Gennep’s analysis.¹¹ It is at this point that his gender role is defined and he is no longer counted amongst the females: he can now go to war. So it is that once again, as in the case of Iphigeneia, a story leading up to the Trojan War seems to belong with a family of myths, sometimes local ones not particularly well known, and to concern issues of how you cross the threshold to adulthood—whether to marriage or to war. These are issues that also attract rituals, and the Leukippos case is specifically connected to a ritual, though we know nothing else about it. And just as Artemis holds the ring in the case of several girls’ myths and rituals, so we find in these cases too that the crucial act must be performed by a god—Poseidon or Leto, though obviously this may also be a narrative necessity.

Another myth which seems to belong in this area, though it takes rather a different direction, is that of Zeus and Ganymede. The myth is simple: Ganymede is the most beautiful adolescent and Zeus is enamoured of him; so his eagle carries Ganymede to Olympus where he will be Zeus’s cup-bearer.¹² This then matches a bizarre ritual in Crete, reported by Ephoros in his lost *History* (*FGrH* 70 F 149). It is the custom for a specially attractive youth, who is called the *kleinos* (“famous”) to be ritually abducted by a lover, with the agreement of the friends and family of the *kleinos*, and to be taken into the wilds (with the friends and family) to hunt and feast with the lover for two months. At the end they

return to the city (it is not stated which one) and the *kleinos* receives a warrior's outfit, an ox, and a cup. The ox is sacrificed to Zeus; the cup recalls the role of Ganymede, as does the sexuality of this abduction and further details regarding intercourse during the period in the wilds. The warrior's outfit links visibly with the weaponry selected by Achilles to end his own period at a margin as a girl. Thus this ritual is part of a family of myths and rituals which deal with the emerging warrior and more generally the emerging male.

THE THEORY IN A NUTSHELL

At this point I am going to draw out a possible, if rather extreme, version of the thinking behind the initiatory theory of myth. It will be extreme so that it may be as clear as possible and so that we may see where it could be exaggerating and where it needs to be pruned back.

On this theory, the Greeks who generated this mythology used to hold initiation rites both for boys and, separately, for girls. These effected their transition to their adult roles, as warriors and as wives or, rather, mothers. Every year, or maybe every two or four years, the next cohort of boys/girls would go through the rites in honour of a god such as Poseidon, Leto, Hera, or Artemis—whichever was the local guardian of youth or controller of the portal to adulthood. These rites would be characterized by a van Gennep structure: separation, time at a margin or a shrine in a margin, return (or, rather, entry) to the adult community. Girls would tend to be considered as animals or nymphs in the marginal period, boys as wolves or even as feminized. We cannot know whether "training" as we would envisage it was part of these ceremonies, but it is not unlikely that it was—perhaps weaving for girls and the manipulation of weapons, especially in hunting, for boys. Because these rites existed, myths also existed in a sort of dialogue with the rites. The moment of separation above all was dramatized, and we catch some sight of the period in the margins. Return to the "city" is not generally visible. It would be crude to say that myths were invented to explain pre-existing rites, as though the rites had no voice before that, and it would be much preferable to view myth and rite as a counterpoint to each other, each describing in their own language the issues in question. But the fact remains that this view, if accepted, explains why some myths existed and why they existed in the form that they did. It is a historical explanation of Greek mythology. There are many myths that should be explained in this way and if we knew more about rituals it would be easier to identify them. But this is not a universal theory of myth: it explains one class, if an important one, of Greek mythology.

NOTES

1. See Dowden (1989).
2. Dowden (1992: 106–7).
3. Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* F 130–133 MW (78–83 Most).
4. Apollodoros 2.2; Pausanias 1.43.4 mentions the tomb.
5. On the Proitids, see Dowden (1989: ch. 4, 1992: 108–9), Brulé (1987: 219–21).
6. Interestingly *boöpis* is also used as an epithet for Proitos' wife Stheneboia in Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* F 129 MW (77 Most).
7. On Leukippos at Phaistos, see Dowden (1989: 65–7, 1992: 118).
8. See Dowden (1989: 62–7).
9. See, for example, Apollodoros, *Epitome* 1.22.
10. See, for example, Apollodoros, *Epitome* 1.8.
11. The theme of margin is explored by Vidal-Naquet in his discussions of the Black Hunter (1986) and of Philoktetes (1992); the margin dominates van Gennepe's book (index s.v. 'Transition, Rites of', or in the French original 'Marge (périodes de)'). Achilles' Skyros is the equivalent of Philoktetes' Lemnos.
12. See, for example, *Homeric Hymn 5 to Aphrodite* 206–17; Apollodoros 3.13 for the role of the eagle.

8.3 COMPARISON

ANATOLIA AND ROME: CYBELE

In *The East Face of Helicon*, M. L. West (1937–2015) writes, “oriental deities seem to have cast some reflection of themselves” on Greek gods and goddesses, especially on Apollo. Despite the fact that many scholars have regarded Apollo as the most Greek of all gods because he embodies the cultural values closely associated with Greek civilization, his name does not appear on Linear B tablets in Greece dating from the Bronze Age (Chapter 2.1). This striking absence suggests that Apollo's origins were outside of Greece.

Many scholars have explored how a linguistic connection between the Anatolian god Appaliunas and the Greek Apollo, as well as Apollo's worship in Lycia (a region in southern Anatolia), might suggest that Anatolian gods and religious practices have influenced the ways in which Apollo was understood. In Lycia, Apollo had oracular temples in Patara and Telmessus and was worshipped alongside his mother Leto at a temple called the Letoon near Xanthus. In northern Anatolia, a treaty between the Hittite kings Muwatallis and Alaksundus of Wilusa (c. 1280 BCE) includes a number of gods' names, one of which is remarkably similar to Apollo: Appaliunas. The city of Wilusa is

thought to correspond to Troy, which was also known as Ilion (its Latin form is Ilium). This evidence tantalizingly suggests, rather than proves, Anatolian origins or influence on Apollo. The case for the interaction over centuries between the Greek Artemis and Anatolian Cybele, however, is more convincing.

This section traces how Anatolia has cast shadows on Artemis's worship in mainland Greece and, conversely, how Greek conceptions of Artemis, filtered by the Romans, influenced the design of the well-known statue of Artemis of Ephesus, a coastal city in Anatolia. Unlike Apollo, Artemis's name has been found on Linear B tablets in Greece, and thus we can conclude that she was worshipped in Greece during the Bronze Age. Nevertheless, the influence of “oriental deities”—especially the Great Mother (*matar* is the Phrygian word for “mother”) from Phrygia, a kingdom in western Anatolia that flourished in the eighth century BCE—can be detected in Greek conceptions of Artemis.

ARTEMIS AND THE PHRYGIAN GREAT MOTHER

The Greeks sometimes referred to the Phrygian Great Mother by the name Cybele, which derives from a Phrygian adjective, *kubeliya*, that means “of the mountains.” The Greeks also worshipped a goddess they called “Mother” (*meter*) or the “Great Mother” (*megale meter*) who seems to harken back to the Phrygian Great Mother. Literary and visual evidence from as early as the eighth century BCE in Greece suggests that the Phrygian Great Mother left her imprint not only on goddesses with distinct maternal traits (such as Demeter) but also on Artemis.

In Phrygia, the Great Mother was represented as an older woman, wearing a long, belted gown with a headdress and long veil. On sculptural reliefs, she is often shown standing in a doorway. Accompanied by a predatory bird, such as an eagle or hawk (and, less frequently, by lions or male attendants), she sometimes carries a cup. These reliefs do not appear on temples or palace walls. Rather, they have been found near boundaries, such as city gates and fortification walls, and in rural places apart from human dwellings: on funerary tumuli (mounds), on altars, and especially in the mountains. The iconography and location of these reliefs suggest that the Great Mother was more closely linked to nature than to the political world of the city; yet she facilitated exchanges between natural and civilized spaces. She may have granted to her worshippers power over the natural world, which her attendance by predatory birds suggests she herself had. Curiously, although she is called “mother,” she does not appear with infants or children. Thus she seems to be a caretaker of the natural world who ensures its abundance, but not a goddess who oversees human fertility.



Map 8.2 (Anatolia) Apollo and Artemis



8.11 Artemis of Ephesus. Marble statue. Circa first century CE. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy. *Alinari / Art Resource, NY, ART7892.*

The Phrygian Great Mother’s influence can be detected in the attributes of several Greek goddesses, including Artemis, and even in the worship of the Greek god Dionysus (Chapter 9.3). Demeter, for example, inherited the Great Mother’s oversight of the abundance of the natural world. Yet Demeter’s association with grain and agriculture moves her away from mountains and the wild and toward cultivated fields of grain. Artemis, unlike Demeter, has no maternal traits and nothing to do with agriculture. She wears a short tunic, not the heavy garment of the Great Mother, and she is far removed from maturity or maternity, as she traipses through the woods and keeps company with young adolescent girls. She appears to have inherited the Great Mother’s intimate connection to the natural world; scholars have traced Artemis’s identity as a “mistress of animals” to the Phrygian Great Mother. Both are accompanied by wild animals and are imagined to dwell outside of civilized spaces. Curiously, when the Greeks migrated east to establish the city of Ephesus in Anatolia and brought Artemis with them, she acquired yet another Anatolian attribute: the many protrusions that have been interpreted as breasts (which suggest the Great Mother’s maternity and fecundity), bull’s testicles (which were ritually offered to Cybele), or ornaments (such as those that decorate other Anatolian deities).

ARTEMIS IN ROMAN EPHESUS

Once under Roman rule in the first century BCE, Ephesus became an international city that needed a powerful patron goddess. Founded several centuries

earlier by the legendary Athenian Androcles, who fought the nearby indigenous Samians, Carians, and Lydians, Ephesus had long been inhabited by both Greeks and Anatolians. Androcles established a sanctuary to Artemis roughly one mile away from the future site of the city (1086–85 BCE), where a temple to Artemis (called the Artemisium) served as a place of asylum as well as a bank that minted coins and took deposits.

The Artemisium was destroyed and rebuilt several times. Its most famous iteration was a marble temple begun in 550 BCE, shortly after the Lydian king Croesus (595–c. 547 BCE) conquered Ephesus and further integrated its Greek and Anatolian populations. This temple was one of the Seven

Wonders of the Ancient World; burned down in 356 BCE, it no longer survives. When Alexander the Great wrested Ephesus from the Persians in 334 BCE, the Ephesians rejected his offer to rebuild the Artemisium. They rebuilt Artemis's temple themselves, a structure that later survived the Romans' conquest of the city (84 BCE) and was Artemis's home when the emperor Augustus declared Ephesus the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor (30–29 BCE). There the Ephesian Artemis was worshipped by native Anatolians, Greeks, and Romans.

The statue of the Ephesian Artemis (Figure 8.11) is noted for its many egg-shaped protrusions. The various interpretations of these protrusions allowed her to serve Greeks, Anatolians, and Romans alike. Whereas early Christian writers in the third century CE interpreted these as breasts, an interpretation shared by Greeks and Romans in Ephesus, Anatolians would have noted that these protrusions are similar to ornamental jewelry shown on other deities in Asia or to bulls' testicles (which were offered to Cybele in certain rituals). To them, the Ephesian Artemis would have seemed characteristically Anatolian or Eastern. Thus the Ephesian Artemis was neither particularly virginal, like Artemis on mainland Greece, nor maternal, like her distant ancestor the Phrygian Great Mother. Rather, she evolved in response to the fluctuating demographics of Ephesus: her protrusions were depicted with variations so that they could be interpreted as either breasts, testicles, or ornaments. In this way, Artemis offered a vision of wealth, abundance, and protection to all her worshippers.

As the Ephesian Artemis became the patroness of an increasingly cosmopolitan city, she began to resemble the quintessential city goddess, Athena. Indeed, her grand procession, described in *An Ephesian Tale*, bears certain similarities to the Panathenaic procession in Athena's honor conducted in Athens (Chapter 6.1). Thus, from her Greek and Anatolian beginnings, or her "set of prompts" in West's words, the Ephesian Artemis became an international goddess of Asia Minor under Roman rule. She served multiple populations simultaneously until Christianity took hold in the region and made her protection and patronage obsolete.

XENOPHON, FROM AN EPHESIAN TALE

The procession of the Ephesian Artemis is the backdrop of the opening episode of Xenophon's romance novel, *An Ephesian Tale*. There is little information about the dates of either the author or his work, but most scholars date both to the Roman period of the second century CE. Like most ancient romance novels, *An Ephesian Tale* begins when its two protagonists meet, fall madly in love, and marry, before being separated by pirates, slave traders, a shipwreck, and other harrowing circumstances. Here Xenophon provides



BEFORE YOU READ



BEFORE YOU READ
CONTINUED

some details of the proceedings and atmosphere of Artemis's procession in Ephesus, where the lovers first meet. (Translated by Stephen M. Trzaskoma.)

- As you read this selection, what details are reminiscent of the Greek myths or Greek rituals that you have already studied?
- Do you find evidence of Artemis's religious identity as a Greek initiatory goddess, a Phrygian Great Mother, or a Greco-Roman goddess who protects her capital city?

XENOPHON, FROM AN EPHESIAN TALE
(c. SECOND CENTURY CE)
BOOK 1

[1] There was in Ephesos a man named Lycomedes, who was one of the most powerful people there. This Lycomedes and his wife Themisto, who was also an Ephesian, had a son, Habrocomes, a prodigy of exceptional handsomeness. Looks like his had never been seen in Ionia or any other land. This Habrocomes grew more handsome with every passing day, and his intellectual virtues blossomed alongside his physical beauty. He studied every cultural pursuit and practiced various arts, and his regular exercises were hunting, riding, and weapons training.

He was immensely popular with all the Ephesians, but also with those who lived in the rest of Asia, and they had high hopes that he would turn out to be an exceptional citizen. They treated the young man like a god, and there were even those who knelt in reverence and offered prayers when they saw him. The young man was quite egotistical, exulting in his intellectual accomplishments but much more so in his physical beauty. Anything at all that was called beautiful he despised as inferior. Nothing, not a sight, not a sound, seemed to him to measure up to Habrocomes. If he heard that a boy was handsome or a girl beautiful, he scoffed at whoever said it, since obviously they didn't know he was the only one who was beautiful.

In fact, he didn't even think that Eros was a god. He rejected him entirely, considering him beneath notice. He said no one would ever fall in love or submit to the god unless they did so willingly. If he happened to see a shrine or statue of Eros, he would laugh at it and announce that he was greater than any Eros, both in physical beauty and in power. And it was

true. Wherever Habrocomes put in an appearance, no one looked at any statues or praised any paintings.

[2] Eros was irate at this. He's a god that loves to fight and grants no quarter to the proud. He began to look for a stratagem to use against the young man—yes, even the god thought he'd have a hard time capturing the young man. Arming himself and cloaking himself with all the power of love magic, he began his campaign against Habrocomes. 30

There was a local festival of Artemis going on. It was a little less than a mile from the city to the temple, and all the Ephesian maidens, dressed in their finery, had to traverse the distance in a parade, as did all those ephebes who were the same age as Habrocomes. He was about sixteen and a member of the ephebic corps, and he marched at their head in the parade.

A huge crowd made up both of many locals and many visitors had come to watch the parade. It was the custom in that festival, you see, for the maidens to find themselves husbands and the ephebes wives. The participants marched in ranks. First were the holy objects, torches, baskets, and incense offerings. After them were horses and dogs and gear for hunting and warfare, but most of all for peaceful pursuits. < . . . 40

. . . > Each of them was dressed as if she was meeting a lover. Leading the contingent of maidens was Anthia, daughter of Megamedes and Euipe, both native Ephesians. Anthia's beauty was something to marvel at, far beyond that of the other girls. She was about fourteen years old. Her body was blossoming into beauty, and the stylishness of her look contributed greatly to her loveliness: blond hair—most of it worn loose, a little tied up, all of it moving with the blowing of the breeze; lively eyes—radiant like those of a girl, but unapproachable like those of a chaste woman; clothes—a purple dress, belted to fall at the knee, worn off the shoulder, with a fawn-skin wrap; equipment—a quiver fastened on, a bow, javelins in her hand, dogs at her heel. 50

Many a time the Ephesians had spotted her in the sanctuary and knelt in reverence in the belief that she was Artemis. On this occasion too when she appeared, a shout went up from the crowd. The spectators made all sorts of comments. Some of them were so stunned they said she was the goddess, others that she wasn't the goddess but had been made by her. All of them offered up prayers and knelt in reverence to her. They remarked how blessed her parents were. "Anthia the beautiful!" was what all the spectators were talking about. And as the group of maidens passed, no one said anything except "Anthia." 60

But from the moment that Habrocomes showed up with the ephebes, despite how beautiful the sight of the maidens had been, everyone forgot about them as they caught a glimpse of Habrocomes. They turned their

eyes to him and, astounded by the sight, shouted, "Habrocomes is so handsome! No one looks more like a handsome god than him!" Some also then added, "How great it would be if Habrocomes and Anthia got married!"

That was Eros warming up for his plan.

70

Soon the two of them began to hear word of each other, and Anthia longed to see Habrocomes, and Habrocomes, though until now unaffected by love, wanted to see Anthia.

[3] When the parade ended, the whole crowd went into the temple for the sacrifice. The order of the procession was broken up as men and women, ephebes and maidens, came together. Then the two saw each other—Anthia was captured by Habrocomes, Habrocomes defeated by Eros. He stared at the girl constantly. He wanted to stop looking but couldn't as the god held him mercilessly in his power.

Anthia had her own problems. She took in Habrocomes' beauty as it flowed into her wide open eyes and soon forgot the proprieties that apply to maidens. Oh yes, she would say things just so Habrocomes would hear them and bare what parts of her body she could so he would see them. He surrendered himself to the sight and became the god's prisoner.

80

Then the sacrifice was over and they were departing, upset and complaining about how quickly they had to leave. They wanted to keep looking at each other, so they kept turning around and stopping and found many excuses to linger.

They each arrived home, and that's when they realized how bad they had it. Both found their thoughts turning to how the other looked, and love blazed up in them. The rest of the day their desire grew, and when they went to bed they were instantly in turmoil. Their feelings of love were irresistible.

90

[4] Habrocomes took hold of his hair, tearing at it, and ripped his clothes.

"This is terrible! What bad luck! What's happened to me? Up until now Habrocomes was so manly, he sneered at Eros, he bad-mouthed the god—but now I've been taken prisoner. I'm beaten. I'm being forced to be a slave to a girl. Now I can see that someone is more beautiful than I am, and I'll admit Eros is a god.

100

"What a gutless coward I am! Can't I resist it? Won't I stay strong? Won't I be able to overcome Eros? I have to beat this god. He's nothing! Sure, there's a beautiful girl. So what? Anthia looks good to your eyes, Habrocomes, but she doesn't have to look good to you. Not if you don't want her to. That's it. My mind's made up. Eros will never get the best of me."

At this the god increased the pressure and dragged him along as he tried to resist, hurting him because he went unwillingly.

When the young man could hold out no longer, he threw himself on the floor. “You’ve won, Eros! You’ve raised a great trophy in your victory over the abstinent Habrocomes. Accept him as a suppliant and save him now that he has fled for protection to you, the master of everything. Don’t turn a blind eye to me, but also don’t punish my impudence for too long. I was still ignorant of your works, Eros. That’s why I was arrogant. But give me Anthia now. Don’t just be bitter to me because I opposed you—be a patron god to me because I’m surrendering.” 110

But Eros was still angry and planned on exacting a great punishment from Habrocomes for his arrogance.

Anthia too was in trouble, and when she couldn’t stand it any more, she pulled herself together in an attempt to hide things from those around her. 120

“This is not good. What’s happened to me? I’m a girl in love, but I’m too young. I’m suffering weird pains that a good girl shouldn’t feel. I’m crazy for Habrocomes—he’s so handsome . . . but so conceited. How far will my desire go? Where will my trouble end? This man I love only thinks of himself, and I’m a girl who’s constantly being watched. Who will I get to help? Who can I share all this with? Where will I see Habrocomes?”

[5] They lamented like this the whole night through and held before their eyes the way the other looked and imagined in their minds each other’s appearance. In the morning, Habrocomes went to do his regular exercises, and the girl went to worship the goddess as she normally did. Their bodies were worn out from the night before, their eyes dull, their complexions altered. That was the situation for a long while, and they weren’t getting any better. 130

During this period they spent their days in the goddess’ temple, staring at one another. They were too afraid and ashamed to tell each other the truth. It got so bad, Habrocomes would groan and cry, praying pitifully when the girl was within earshot. Anthia’s feelings were the same, but she was more deeply affected by her misfortune, because whenever she caught another girl or woman looking at him—and they *all* looked at him—she was clearly pained, afraid that Habrocomes would like one of the others more than her. They both prayed to the goddess in common—even though their prayers were the same, they didn’t know it. 140

As time passed, the young man couldn’t stand it any longer. By this point his body was a total wreck and his spirit in despair. It was so bad that Lycomedes and Themisto grew seriously worried. They didn’t know what was happening to Habrocomes but were scared by what they saw.

Meanwhile, Megamedes and Euipe were in a similar state over Anthia. They could see her beauty withering away but no apparent reason 150

for her plight. In the end they brought seers and priests to visit Anthia so they could determine how to fix what ailed her. They came and made sacrifices and poured all sorts of libations and recited formulas over her in barbarian languages. They explained that they were placating certain spirits and alleged that her suffering was caused by the gods of the underworld. Lycomedes and his family were also making a lot of sacrifices and praying for Habrocomes. But there was no relief for either one. Their love simply burned more hotly.

They both lay ill, in critical condition, expected to die any minute, unable to confess their misery. At last both fathers sent messengers to consult the god about the cause of their illnesses and how to end them. 160

[6] Not far away is the temple of Apollo in Colophon, a ten-mile trip from Ephesos by boat. This is where the messengers went and asked the god to prophesy truly. They had come for the same reason, and the god gave them in poetic form an oracle that applied to both. This was the poem:

Wherefore yearn to know the end and start of illness?
 One illness holds both; the answer lies therein.
 I see terrible sufferings for them and endless troubles.
 Both will flee across the sea, driven by madness, 170
 will face chains among men with the sea in their veins.

For both a tomb as bridal chamber and destructive fire.
 And yet, after calamities, a better fate will they have,
 and by the flows of the sacred river for holy Isis,
 their savior, furnish rich gifts afterwards.

[7] When this oracle was delivered to Ephesos, the two fathers were immediately baffled and completely lost about what the danger was. They couldn't interpret the god's response. What was the disease? The flight? The chains? The tomb? The river? The help from the goddess? They thought about it a lot and felt it best to go along with the oracle as best they could by joining their children in marriage. They assumed that was the god's will from the prophecy. That was their decision, and they also made up their minds to send the couple away for a while on a trip after their wedding. 180

Then the city was filled with revelers and everything was covered with garlands. The upcoming wedding was the talk of the town, and the couple was congratulated by everyone, Habrocomes because he was going to marry such a beautiful wife, Anthia because she would get to share her bed with such a handsome young man.

When Habrocomes learned about the oracle’s response and the marriage, he was overjoyed that he would have Anthia. He wasn’t at all afraid of the prophecy. His feeling was that his current pleasure more than made up for any suffering. In the same way Anthia was pleased she would get Habrocomes and could not have cared less about the flight or the misfortunes, since she had in Habrocomes something to comfort her in all the troubles to come. 190

[8] When the time for the wedding came, vigils were kept and many animals were sacrificed to the goddess. Once these preparations had been completed and the night arrived (Habrocomes and Anthia thought everything took too long), they brought the girl to the bridal chamber. They held torches as they sang the marriage hymn and shouted their best wishes. Then they brought her in and put her in the bed. 200

The bridal chamber had been prepared for them: a golden bed covered with purple sheets, and over the bed a canopy of Babylonian fabric had been decoratively embroidered—playing cupids, some of them serving Aphrodite (her picture was there too), some riding mounted on sparrows, some weaving garlands, some bringing flowers. That was on one half of the canopy. On the other side was Ares. He wasn’t in armor but was dressed for his lover Aphrodite, with a garland on his head, wearing his short cloak. Eros was leading him with a lit torch in his hand. That was the canopy under which they laid Anthia when they brought her to Habrocomes. Then they closed the doors. 210

ACTAEON AND DAPHNE IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY

8.4 RECEPTION

Most Greek myths of transformation, especially transformations of people into birds, stones, rivers, flowers, or animals, have found their way into the works of later artists through the Roman epic *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (43 BCE–18 CE). Contemporary poets have especially revisited Ovid’s descriptions of Actaeon’s transformation into a stag by Artemis (Figure 8.12) and Daphne’s transformation into a laurel tree, to explore questions of identity and desire.

Ovid’s account of Apollo and Daphne begins with Daphne’s petition of her father, the river god Peneus (1.449–596). She asks him to grant her eternal virginity, and he reluctantly grants her wish. When Apollo, pricked by Cupid’s arrow, sees Daphne in the woods, he immediately desires her and begins to chase her. As they sprint across the countryside, Apollo regales her



8.12 Artemis and Actaeon. Detail from Attic Bell-figure krater. Pan Painter, c. 490 BCE. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA / James Fund and by Special Collection / Bridgeman Images, BST196428.

with boasts of his achievements, as though he were a mortal man trying to convince a woman that he will be a suitable husband. When Daphne can run no more, she prays to her father to change her in a way that destroys her beauty. Ovid describes her arms changing to branches, her hair to leaves, and her head to the green top of a laurel tree. But Apollo's love continues unabated, and he claims the laurel as his, using its leaves to crown his head, lyre, and quiver. Entombed in a tree, Daphne must endure Apollo's claims. Although her father has fulfilled his promise to her, and although she (like Artemis, who in Ovid's telling is called Diana, her Roman name) remains virginal in the woods forever, the reader is left to decide if Daphne has been blessed or cursed.

Contemporary women poets have revisited Ovid's story from Daphne's perspective. Sometimes

they conflate the fateful encounter between Apollo and Daphne with a marriage, in which the wood that encases Daphne symbolizes the dullness and routine of married life. At other times, they express the nymph's regret at having refused Apollo. In her poem "Daphne with Her Thighs in Bark," Eavan Boland (b. 1944) writes, "the opposite of passion / is not virtue / but routine" and then goes on to describe herself "cooking" and "making coffee" or "scrubbing wood," when she recalls the wooded forest where she did not yield: "He snouted past. / What a fool I was! / I shall be here forever setting out the tea." Memories of lovemaking, this Daphne imagines, would be better than, or at least a consolation for, being rooted in a marriage whose routines replace passion.

In "Where I Live in This Honorable House of the Laurel Tree," Anne Sexton (1928–1974), like Boland, speaks from the perspective of Daphne and regrets that she has refused Apollo. "Too late / to wish I had not run from you, Apollo, / blood moves still in my bark bound veins," she muses. It is only years after her transformation into laurel (marriage) that Sexton's Daphne recognizes her own desire "for that astonishing rite" (a sexual encounter). Yet, because Sexton's Daphne recognizes her desire too late, it becomes the source of her eternal isolation. Her lament concludes the poem: "how I wait / here in my wooden legs and O / my green green hands."

In both Boland's and Sexton's poems, Daphne, once transformed, is passive and immobile, unable to act on her feelings. In the poem "Daphne" by Alicia E. Stallings (b. 1968), the transformed Daphne is neither passive nor beholden to Apollo. Stallings's Daphne desires, moves, changes, and

responds to Apollo as she pleases. Stalling animates the laurel tree so that its biological processes enact Daphne's will; Daphne retains the capacity to choose and act.



ALICIA E. STALLINGS, "DAPHNE" (1999)

Do what you will.
What blood you've set to music I
Can change to chlorophyll,

And root myself, and with my toes
Wind to subterranean streams.
Through solid rock my strength now grows.

Such now am I, I cease to eat,
But feed on flashes from your eyes;
Light, to my new cells, is meat.

Find then, when you seize my arm
That xylem thickens in my skin
And there are splinters in my charm,

I may give in; I do not lose.
Your hot stare cannot stop my shivering,
With delight, if I so choose.

Boland, Sexton, and Stallings, like many female poets, take Ovid's poem as an opportunity to meditate not on the violence of Apollo (or on male violence generally), which is unmistakable even in a precursory reading of Ovid's tale, but on female desire for the male. Their transformations of Ovid's tale in which Daphne regrets or rejects a wooded existence as a virgin, like Artemis, highlight the role that desire (or the lack of it) plays in transformations.

Contemporary poets who address the myth of Diana (Artemis) and Actaeon also address the question of desire, yet from a slightly different angle. Following Ovid's lead, they question the connection between desire and guilt. Ovid's tale of Diana and Actaeon begins and closes with a question about Actaeon's guilt (3.131–254). Before describing Actaeon's trespass, Ovid asks the reader to consider if Actaeon should be accountable for losing his way in the woods. Ovid then describes how Actaeon, while hunting in the woods with his pack of hounds, accidentally comes upon Diana bathing naked with her nymphs. Angered by his intrusion, Diana splashes his face with water and tells him he will not be able to tell anyone about what he saw. Diana's threats

transform Actaeon: antlers sprout on his head, his hands become hooves, and he is gradually transformed into a stag. His faithful hunting dogs, which no longer recognize any trace of their master in this beast, run him down and tear him to pieces.

Ovid's description of the moment when Actaeon's hounds tear him apart is tinged with pathos and irony. "All changed except his mind," Ovid writes about Actaeon just before his dogs see him in his new form. He imagines the dogs' disappointment in their master's absence and credits them with an almost human consciousness, whereas Actaeon, no longer able to speak, tragically cannot communicate with them. The longing of the dogs for Actaeon, and his own longing to speak to them, confuses the distinction between animal and human, lending poignancy to this horrific moment. Ovid shifts the reader's attention back to the question of responsibility, guilt, and just punishments. He writes, "some believed Diana's violence unjust; some praised it."

The question of Actaeon's culpability occupies a central place in two contemporary poems: "Actaeon," by Seamus Heaney (1939–2013), and "A Call," by Don Paterson (b. 1963). Both poets (among others) were commissioned by the National Gallery in London to respond to three paintings (*Diana and Callisto*, *Diana and Actaeon*, and *The Death of Actaeon*) by Titian (1488–1576) as part of its multimedia production *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012*. (Like Ovid, Titian calls Artemis by her Roman name, Diana.) Neither poet narrates or provides words for Titian's paintings. Heaney responds more to Ovid's myth than Titian's version of it, whereas Paterson superimposes an experience *like* that of Actaeon onto both the myth and the painting.

Heaney's poem begins after Actaeon has been transformed. When Ovid asks whether Actaeon is guilty of simply losing his way at the start of his tale, the reader is invited to consider whether Actaeon may be guilty of something more. The poem invites the reader to speculate about Actaeon's motivations through a series of hypothetical clauses, each beginning with "as if." Through these clauses, Heaney is able to suggest that Actaeon is *like* a stalking beast before he becomes a beast, that his desires are *like* hounds, and that Actaeon is *like* Diana as well as his own hounds in being "impatient for the kill." What Actaeon *like* a stalking beast might do to Diana, Diana does to him. In this way, Heaney makes Actaeon's crime match his punishment yet does not fully offer any resolution as to Actaeon's guilt.



SEAMUS HEANEY, "ACTAEON" (2012)

High burdened brow, the antlers that astound,
Arms that end now in two hardened feet,
His nifty haunches, pointed ears and fleet

Four-legged run . . . In the pool he saw a crowned
 Stag's head and heard something that groaned
 When he tried to speak. And it was no human sweat
 That steamed off him: he was like a beast in heat,
 As if he'd prowled and stalked until he found

The grove, the grotto and the bathing place
 Of the goddess and her nymphs, as if he'd sought
 That virgin nook deliberately, as if
 His desires were hounds that had quickened pace
 On Diana's scent before his own pack wrought
 Her vengeance on him, at bay beneath the leaf-

lit woodland. There his branchy antlers caught
 When he faced the hounds
 That couldn't know him as they bayed and fought
 And tore out mouthfuls of hide and flesh and blood
 From what he was, while his companions stood
 Impatient for the kill, assessing wounds.

Don Paterson also engages the relationship between desire, violation, and guilt but places the encounter between Actaeon and Diana on a winter train. Diana, in this poem, becomes "Miss Venner." Actaeon is the speaker, and he recalls a time when he was a young boy of six who espied Miss Venner while she was changing her clothes. Despite the fact that the poem is written from Actaeon's/the speaker's perspective, Paterson retains a certain confusion about the speaker's responsibility for his actions.



DON PATERSON, "A CALL" (2012)

vellet abesse quidem, sed adest
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III

A winter train. A gale, a poacher's moon.
 The black glass. Do I honestly still blame
 the wrong turn in the changing rooms I took
 when I was six, and stood too long to look?
 The scream Miss Venner loosed at me. "The nerve!"
 I was ablaze. And it was worth the shame,
 I thought; of course I did. It was too soon
 to tell the dream from what I'd paid for it.
 Then soon too late. Two sides of the same door.

So was it the recoil or the release
 that lashed the world so out of shape? Tonight
 I stare right through the face that I deserve
 as all my ghost dogs gather at the shore,
 behind them the whole sea like the police.

Here Paterson describes a man who cannot resolve his intentions at the cataclysmic moment of his life: “Do I honestly still blame / the wrong turn . . . ?” Because he was a young child and cannot himself discern his volition in his act of staring at Miss Venner, the act and its consequences seem radically out of kilter. Even as the speaker implies that he might have indeed chosen to take a “wrong turn” in order to spy on Miss Venner, the reader feels less certain. The price—is he standing on the shore contemplating suicide at the poem’s close?—seems to be very high indeed for a childhood indiscretion. Both Heaney and Paterson recreate a toxic swirl of desire, violence, and consequences that makes the myth of Actaeon and Artemis/Diana eternally relevant, and perpetually terrifying.

KEY TERMS

Actaeon 338

Artemis Orthia 343

Asclepius 345

Brauronia 341

Callisto 338

Cassandra 346

Catharsius 346

Daphne 346

Delos 339

Delphi 345

Hippolytus 340

Hyacinthia 346

Iphigenia 342

Orion 338

Pythia 346

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Collins, Billie Jean, Mary R. Bachvarova, and Ian C. Rutherford (eds.). *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbours*. Oxford: Oxbow, 2010. This exciting collection of essays considers Apollo’s origins, among other topics pertaining to interactions between Greece and Anatolia.

Fischer-Hansen, Tobias, and Birte Poulsen. *From Artemis to Diana: The Goddess of Man and Beast*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2009. This recent collection of essays addresses different aspects of Artemis from Anatolia to Rome.

Graf, Fritz. *Apollo*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009. Graf provides a comprehensible and thorough overview of Apollo.

Roller, Lynn E. *In Search of the God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London:

University of California Press, 1999. Roller offers a clear and thorough treatment of the evidence for Cybele in Anatolia and her worship in Greece and Rome.



DIONYSUS

*O happy the man
Who, blest with knowledge of the mysteries of the gods,
Lives a pure life
And initiates his soul in the Bacchic company
As he celebrates the gods in the mountains
In holy rituals of purity,
Observes the mysteries
Of the great mother Cybele,
And, swinging the thyrsus high,
And garlanded with ivy,
Does service to Dionysus.
—EURIPIDES, *BACCHAE* (73–82)*

Dionysus, although the son of Zeus and an Olympian god, is distinguished from other Olympians because of his close connection to human beings. Not only is Dionysus's mother, Semele, a mortal woman, but Dionysus even dies. In a less widely circulated account of his birth and infancy, Dionysus is the son of Zeus and Persephone. For reasons that are not

< 9.1 (OPPOSITE): Birth of Dionysus from Zeus's thigh as Hermes watches. After Zeus inadvertently immolates Semele while pregnant, Zeus removes Dionysus from her womb, stitches him in his thigh, and gives birth to the infant himself. Detail from a red-figure lekythos. Alkimachos Painter, c. 470–460 BCE. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, USA / Catharine Page Perkins Fund / Bridgeman Images, BST1762525.