The pilgrimage to Olympia. Settings and sentiments

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Introduction

IN THE PRESENT article I wish to explore some central aspects of one of the most prominent festival centres in the Ancient Greek world, Olympia, the sanctuary that held a crucial position within Hellenic civilisation over a time span of more than a thousand years. Responding to changing conditions Olympia answered the need for a central cultic space and attracted the entire Hellenic world.[1] Religious urges, competition for political power and personal prestige, the wish for exciting festivity, and the search for profit may have been all involved in the mass celebrations. These living events have cooled down leaving fragments of buildings, objects, and documents.

However in making sense of the material and documentary remains which have reached us we should expand our historical methods focusing on religious, political, demographic or economic questions and include an anthropological perspective. It is within such a framework of inquiry we may try to understand the pilgrimage and settings of Olympia. In doing so I will concentrate on the period of most intense activity at this grand and venerable cult site, the first half of the fifth century BC (Herrmann 1973:173ff., Weiler 1985–86, Mallwitz 1988:98, Hitzl 1995:9ff.).[2]

Being a site where the dominant divinity of the Hellenic world was honoured and common time reckoning was established, Olympia was not just the centre of the Hellenic world, some static map for mortals and immortals to orient themselves, it was the stage of complex symbolic processes.[3] It attracted participants

1 *E.g.* Kunze 1972, Herrmann 1973, Weiler 1985–86, Sinn 1991, Morgan 1990:47–105, Morgan 1996, Kyle 1997, Ulf 1997a.

2 Earlier periods may have had their specific developments, the early Archaic in creating arenas for competing petty kings and aristocrats, while the Hellenistic period offered opportunities for social display to wider social groups (Meier 1993). The Roman period created new arenas, in particular in Asia Minor engaging semi-Greek élites in status enhancing displays (Pleket 1978, Nijf 1999–2000).

from near and far in a common awe of the god, and its prestigious athletic events exerted a magnetic pull with extraordinary power. At the same time the arrangements produced distinctions between Hellenes and non-Hellenes, between winners and non-winners, as well as between men and women.

Theoretical framework of pilgrimage

The most prominent symbolic process was of course the penteteric pilgrimage to Olympia. Being a special kind of journey 'pilgrimage' can have a wide range of meanings.[4] Starting from the general concept of a strenuous journey—the pilgrim beginning 'in a familiar place, going to a Far Place, and returning to a Familiar Place, theoretically changed ....'[5]—we may turn to anthropological studies. These have been particularly stimulated by Victor and Edith Turner's theory of pilgrimage with its central aspect of 'communitas,' an idea which at the same time proved the most controversial.[6]

Against the Turners' emphasis upon the idea that pilgrimages create a levelling of identities into spontaneous 'communitas'[7] several anthropologists have noticed the divisive and competitive mood characterising pilgrimages. Pilgrims may

3 I apply the notion of symbolic processes in the sense it has been developed during the last 35 years, especially in the work of Victor Turner, Barbara Babcock, Sherry Ortner, and others. Among the basic properties of symbols I would like to emphasise the power to order the cultural world of a community or to draw members of that community towards a magnetic centre, charging concepts or action with value. Symbols being omnipresent aspects of social life, they may be given extraordinary attention during symbolic processes, phases in the life of the community when ordinary life is suspended in celebration.

4 Within classical studies the theoretical work about the phenomenon may not be widely known, *cf.* Siebert 1973, Motte 1987, and Morgan 1990. Dillon's monograph only refers to one theoretical study on pilgrimage from 1950 (Dillon 1992:xv n. 5). In his review Fritz Graf criticises Dillon for taking 'a term [pilgrimage] from a very specific phenomenon of Christian worship ... and export[ing] it rather thoughtlessly into a very different religious culture' (Graf 1997:195). The Christian associations adhering to the everyday meaning of the word are perhaps felt more strongly in countries with dominant Catholic traditions. Renate Schlesier likewise criticising Dillon for applying the term does not seem to be aware of its anthropological use either (Schlesier 2000:145 n. 2). More responsive to anthropological issues are Rutherford 1995 and Frankfurter 1998. I prefer to use 'pilgrimage' while it is developed as an anthropological term as well and widely applied to non-Christian or Islamic contexts, especially in Hindu contexts, *cf.* Bharati 1963–64, Messerschmidt and Sharma 1981, Mokashi 1987, Sax 1990–91, 1991, Galey 1994, Coleman and Elsner 1995. Some anthropologists use the terms 'pilgrimage' and 'sacred journey' indistinctly *e.g.* Myerhoff 1978, 1977, Werbner 1989, Morinis 1992, Gothóni 1993. The entry 'pilgrimage' does not yet figure in the 1968 *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*, edited by David Sills. It is however included in recent encyclopedias (Barnard and Spencer's *Encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology* from 1996 and Smelser and Baltes' *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences*, vol. 17 from 2001).

5 Turner 1974:195, *cf.* Morinis 1992:15, Rutherford 1995:276, Coleman and Elsner 1995:6, Eickelman 1996:423.

congregate as a homogenous group but also as competing and conflicting constituencies.[8]

Studying pilgrimage cults of Southern Africa Richard Werbner too analyses the impact of conflict. The fact that a number of more or less independent groups come together at an inclusive regional pilgrimage centre does not mean that conflict and strife are abolished and pure solidarity is created, the cooperation of the community suggested by Émile Durkheim. However, he stresses an important point, the fact that social conflict does not exclude ritual collaboration.[9]

However countering the general scepticism towards a cooperative function of pilgrimage[10] Simon Coleman and John Elsner claim that pilgrimages first of all can be viewed as a specific, bounded and identifiable phenomenon, apart from the

6 Turner 1974, Turner and Turner 1994 [1978]. Their view has been criticised as being too much inspired by the pilgrimages of the major world religions by *e.g.* Morinis 1992:8f., Gothóni 1993:104f., Galey 1994:262f., and especially Eade and Sallnow 1991:3ff. More sympathetic are *e.g.* Yamba 1990:11, and Coleman and Elsner 1995:201. Not only may pilgrimages fail to promote 'communitas,' they may lack the aspirations towards transcendence as well, *e.g.* Galey 1994:290.

7 'A relational quality of full unmediated communication ... communitas is spontaneous, immediate ... it does not merge identities: it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion.' As such it is opposed to '*social structure*, the pattered arrangements of role sets, status sets, and status sequences consciously recognized and regularly operative in a given society and closely bound up with legal and political norms and sanctions' (Turner and Turner 1994:250ff., *cf.* Turner 1974:186). Yet Victor and Edith Turner have made a number of interesting observations and distinctions of pilgrimage processes, which nuance this broad generalisation considerably, *e.g.* 'The social mode appropriate to all pilgrimages represents a mutually energizing compromise between structure and communitas' (Turner 1974:207f.).

8 John Eade and Michael Sallnow observe that complex discourses are found about a sacred centre, various groups of actors holding competing views of the sacred power and meaning of the place. They in fact define pilgrimages as 'above all an arena for competing religious and secular discourses' (Eade and Sallnow 1991:2, *cf.* 5). As an example we may adduce the Saint Besse pilgrimage in the Alps studied by Robert Hertz in the early 20th century (MacClancy 1994:36). In the concrete case of this pilgrimage the competition reigning between the communities celebrating the saint was manifested in the radically different notions of the saint's identity.

9 Werbner 1977:197. Commenting on the High God—Mwali or Mwari—cult of Southern Africa Werbner asserts 'ritual collaboration is no *deus ex machina*, and does not resolve or redress conflict between communities or congregations ...' However, at this particular regional cult the aim is to make peace at the sacred site, and 'though quarrels do sometimes break out, it is forbidden to disturb the peace of the shrine' (*op. cit.*:197).

10 A reaction to the perhaps undue stress upon 'competing opinions,' and in particular to Eade and Sallnow's (1991) way of dismissing pilgrimage as a meaningful category of study altogether.

everyday social processes and conflicts of society.[11] They draw attention to the fact that pilgrimage sites first of all constitute the sacred for the visiting community.[12]

Often a deity will be the image of this ideal, while 'the pilgrimage center may house ideals of national identity ... the identity of ethnic groups or regional cultures.' The power of a pilgrimage shrine to attract devotees is its 'spiritual magnetism' (Preston 1992:33). Different shrines may exert various kinds of 'attraction or authority,' oracular powers or particular cult objects and so forth (Frankfurter 1998:22).[13]

What is important is to realise that pilgrimages are complex processes, staged in a landscape, the pilgrimage 'field.'[14] An aspect of this is their relationship to markets and fairs, offering secular services and attractions.[15]

At a more fundamental level we should realise that pilgrimages may be understood as the individual's experience, but there are many examples of ritual journeys being undertaken by a group, which are generally supportive of social identity.[16] It is the collective aspect of the Olympian pilgrimages that is, I think, important.[17] Such mass pilgrimages often take the form of processions 'transform-

11 Coleman and Elsner 1995:200ff. Pilgrimages centre on movement, they 'act as embodiments of myth-history, allowing adherents to reinvoke elements of their faith in words, images and physical actions' (*op. cit.*:205).

12 Coleman and Elsner 1995:208f. *Cf.* Morinis' definition: 'the pilgrimage is a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued idea' (Morinis 1992:4f.).

13 Several classifications and typologies have been offered, those centring on the goal (Morinis), or the organisational order (Turner), and other qualities. *Cf.* Morinis' typology: devotional, instrumental (*e.g.* providing cure), normative (performed as part of a ritual cycle at major life passages or calendrical rituals), obligatory, wandering (without predetermined goal), or initiatory (1992:10–14). Pilgrimages may vary considerably, and the 'devotional' is just one type among others.

14 Preston 1992:40, 45. *Cf.* Turner and Turner 1994 [1978]:22, Turner 1974:226.

15 Turner suggests that 'As the pilgrim moves away from his structural involvements at home his route becomes increasingly sacralized at one level and increasingly secularized at another. He meets with more shrines and sacred objects as he advances, but he encounters more real dangers ... [and] he has to pay attention to the need to survive and often to earn money for transportation and he comes across markets and fairs, especially at the end of his quest, where the shrine is flanked by the bazaar and by the fun fair,' Turner 1974:182f., *cf.* Turner and Turner 1994 [1978]:22. 'Pilgrimage is a circulation of people, ideas, symbols, experiences, and cash [*sic!*],' Preston 1992:41. Others stress the mercantile aspect as well, *e.g.* Eade and Sallnow 1991:25.

16 Frankfurter 1998:21f., Coleman and Elsner 1995:206, *cf.* Myerhoff 1974 and 1978.

17 Raphaël emphasises the political function of some pilgrimages referring to ancient Greek festivals (Raphaël 1973:21). There are other polarities: pilgrimages tend to be performed as voluntary personal acts or as obligation, each tending in the course of time to be transformed into the other (Turner 1974:174f.). However, individual journeys, as the Muslim obligation of a pilgrimage to Mecca, may still create 'a heightened awareness of belonging to a larger whole' (Turner 1974:177).

ing movement from a functional, physiological act into a cultural performance.'[18] Related to this collective movement is a general tendency for pilgrimage sites to be located on peripheral places far from political centres, as Victor Turner has pointed out.[19] Often a number of shrines are organised into a network of overlapping cults, hierarchically ordered, or along circuits of shrines (Frankfurter 1998:18ff.).[20] The arrangement of space and time in general is an important aspect of pilgrimage.[21] There is a tendency to interweave physical arrangements with cosmological notions in a symbolic complex.[22] A prominent feature is the connection of the festivities with calendrical and astronomic phases.[23]

An important aspect of pilgrimage is the fact that pilgrim shrines may be arranged with varying catchment areas.[24] There may be a differentiation between shrines, those assembling local communities, clusters of communities in a region, or all members of a given faith, regional cults being intermediate between local and universal (the well-known christian, buddhist or muslim) cults.[25] Local and regional cults are often woven together in complex relationships of interdepend-

18 Morinis 1992:15.

19 Turner 1974:193. This observation he relates to the notion of marginality or liminality as represented in van Gennep's theory of *rites de passage* (Turner 1974:195ff.). *Cf.* Cohen 1992:51. Morinis observes that 'It is conventional to refer to sacred places of pilgrimage as centers, and from a social and especially a cultural point of view, the image of the center is valid. But centrality is only one spatial concept that is tapped in locating the sacred place in relation to its fields. Geographically, the sacred place is actually seldom central. Most commonly, the journey takes the pilgrim to the top (mountain peak), edge (seashore, forest), or beyond (desert, uninhabited region)' (Morinis 1992:19).

20 There may also be a pilgrimage circuit in which each shrine has its place as a specific station (Werbner 1977:xx).

21 In a perhaps unduly schematic statement Victor Turner suggests that 'it is worth mentioning that the limen of pilgrimage is, characteristically, motion, the movement of travel, while that of initiation is stasis, the seclusion of novices in a fixed sacred space. The former liminalizes time; the latter space. Time is connected with voluntariness; space with obligation' (Turner 1992:29–47, 39). I think time as well as space are elaborated upon in both forms of symbolic action.

22 In many ancient civilizations the religious topography of pilgrimage shrines 'replicates the major modes of cosmological classification, translating a cognitive into a spatial arrangement of parts.' Turner 1974:224. *Cf.* 'Indigenous categories tend to merge geographical and non-geographical aspects of sacred journeying' (Morinis 1992:2, *cf.* 19).

23 'There is a time element of movement that creates frequency and repetition of journeys through space. Pilgrimages are often timed to occur within monthly, annual, seasonal, or other cycles ... Symbolism is involved here. So, too, is the relationship of pilgrimage movements to other cycles and movements, such as those of the day, sun moon, seasons, and so on' (Morinis 1992:16).

24 'The geographical area from which the majority of pilgrims are drawn to a particular shrine' (Turner 1974:178f.).

25 Turner 1974:179, *cf.* 224. Regional cults have been the object of special study by Richard Werbner and others (Werbner 1977, 1989).

ence.[26] Examples within Near-Eastern and Mediterranean cultures are provided by Dale Eichelman[27] and Emanuel Marx.[28]

Among the different types of pilgrimages there are, then, those that are more exclusive, attracting or welcoming only a restricted membership and furthering its specific interests, often a specific social or ethnic community, and others that are more inclusive, appealing to human beings as such.[29] We may, thus, distinguish between pilgrimages supportive of social identity and those tending towards universality.[30] This distinction seems to be related to the range from collective to individual participation.[31] Likewise there is a spectrum from communal to general human concerns.[32]

26 A local cult is, in Elizabeth Colson's terms, 'a cult which primarily functions to serve the particular interest of a territorial community on a regular basis,' as opposed to a 'cult serving a wider constituency on an *ad hoc* and non-exclusive basis,' where delegations may 'go for consultation with an oracle or other universalistic cult' (Colson 1977:119–120).

27 Dale Eickelman has studied the complex cult forms of Islam in Morocco: while the muslim tradition upheld by the central urban communities preaches the universality of God, who is not in need of any mediator, local communities adhere to *maraboutism*, the belief in the holy men, 'living or dead, who are thought to have a special relation toward God which makes them particularly well placed to serve as intermediaries with the supernatural and to communicate God's grace (*baraka*) to their clients,' creating a relationship analogous to patron-client ties (Eickelman 1977:6f.).

28 Complex social processes are observed in the religious activities of Bedouins in Southern Sinai by Emanuel Marx. Pilgrimage is practised in a cult of saints and holy tombs. The saints are mediators between man and God in a local form of Islam as 'a link between local societies and the "wider society"' (Mark 1977:30).

29 Pilgrimage centres with more restricted catchment areas tend to be more bound up with the sociopolitical structures, while cult centres with a wider catchment area are more inclusive. Analysing African pilgrimage shrines Turner distinguishes between shrines set up *outside* settlements and those *within* them. This distinction he relates to opposed types of cults: *earth* cults *vs. ancestral* cults respectively and *fertility vs. political* rituals (Turner 1974:184). According to Victor Turner 'ancestral and political cults and their local embodiment tend to represent crucial power divisions and classificatory distinctions within and among politically discrete groups, while earth and fertility cults represent ritual bonds between those groups .... The first stresses exclusiveness, the second inclusiveness' (*op. cit.*:185).

30 Studying the Mwali- or High God-cult in Southern Africa, Werbner suggests that like the earth cults studied by Turner, which strive for greater inclusiveness, its ritual does not represent 'the various political divisions each with their conflicts .... Its theology directs attention to ... the order beyond that of the congregation or any single community .... Its macrocosmic conceptions are ... of such a kind that communities can continue to define their broadest consensus through them irrespective of their differences, hostilities and competition' (Werbner 1977:xxx).

31 Religious practices may develop from particularism to greater universalism independent of other social developments (Werbner 1977:xxiii). Werbner suggests that there may be an increase in inclusiveness. According to Turner 'the communitas spirit presses always to universality and ever greater unity,' Turner 1974:179. (*cf.* Morinis 1992:28, n. 2).

Reverting to the concrete aspects of a pilgrimage centre we may notice Coleman and Elsner's observation that people may gather upon arrival. At this moment pilgrims are directed by the arrangements of the sacred site into some kind of collective experience. There is a ritualisation of movement at the site itself, through topographic and artistic elaboration, resulting in a coordination and integration of pilgrim behaviour. Even though pilgrims may arrive with widely varying ideas and expectations they are in some sense orchestrated into conformity at the site. This '"constraining" function of sites' is an aspect which can be studied empirically on the physical lay-out of the sanctuary, its settings.[33] From other sources we may infer the orchestration of prescribed sentiments.

Olympian settings and sentiments

With this overview of theories of pilgrimage we may look once more at Olympia, and consider its topography, its symbolism and its nature as the stage of social processes. Belonging to those pilgrimages with a wide catchment area the central cult at Olympia gave comprehensive access to pilgrims of *Hellenic* origin but excluded non-Hellenes, manifesting a genuine regional cult.[34] Olympia's special status as the supreme athletic festival was universally acknowledged (Pleket 1975:61).[35] Whatever the realities of material rewards and professionalism, it is clear that the athletes aspired first of all to honour and glory (Pleket 1975:79, Buhmann 1975:24ff., Kurke 1993).

The very name of the celebrations, *Olympia,* refers to Zeus Olympios,[36] the deity symbolising supreme authority in the Hellenic world (Vernant 1974:106ff.). It

32 Even though the professed mission of the journey may be spiritual, the pilgrim's goal can be the acquisition of greater wealth, political power or prestige. A Muslim's pilgrimage to Mecca may convert wealth (signalled by the fact that the pilgrim could afford the journey) into social prestige (Morinis 1992:20).

33 The way 'the pilgrim's movement could be guided and converted into an ordered progression ...' (Coleman and Elsner 1995:209, 212). *Cf.* '... in the final stages, the route itself becomes a sacred, sometimes mythical journey till almost every landmark and ultimately every step is a condensed, multivocal symbol capable of arousing much affect and desire. ... No longer is the pilgrim's sense of the sacred private: it is a matter of objectified, collective representations which become virtually his whole environment ...' (Turner 1974:197f.).

34 Due to this particularism the cult cannot be claimed universal nor can the Eleusinian mysteries which, although concerned with a more universal spiritual well-being, required a knowledge of Greek. The *Olympia* excluded the unfree as well (Crowther 1992:36, *cf.* Pleket 1974). On the panhellenic contests as an exclusive arrangement see Coleman 1997:177, *cf.* Timpe 2000. For the provenance of non-Greek votive offerings see Louis Dyer, who reminds of the fact that 'only at Olympia were non-Greeks completely out of court,' suggesting a central ethnic magnet (Dyer 1905:310). For votive offerings indicating regional and supra-regional connections see Mitsopoulos-Leon 2001 and Maass 1992. For the development of the sanctuary in relationship to Elis see Siewert 2001:247f.

refers to Mt. Olympos as well, the peak level within the metaphysical topography, thus mapping out the cosmic world on earth. It signals the status of the god who assembles the Hellenic community in their most inclusive cult. Olympia also embraced the wide span of time, offering the central chronological measuring standard for the Hellenic tribe.[37]

The sanctuary being located in a sacred grove, a space outside the everyday world,[38] its lay-out was carefully designed: in the centre the meeting point between mortals and immortals, the altars of Zeus Olympios and Hera,[39] the hill of Kronos rising beyond them, with its associations of primordial time, the chaotic-paradisiac age of Kronos.[40] His cult in Olympia was the only really old Kronos cult.[41] The *kotinos*, or wild olive branch, may have evoked primordial time as well, an era before the tree was cultivated.[42] Until Oinomaos' rule Kronos' hill was covered with massive snow, which was dissolved afterwards, according to a passage in Pindaros (Pind. *Ol.* 10.51, *cf.* Jouanna 2002:110).

Pindaros tells how Herakles established the sanctuary and named Kronos' hill: 'at this primaeval rite (πρωτογόνῳ τελετᾷ) the Moirai were present and Time (χρόνος) who is the only one to put unfailing truth to the test.'[43] Pindaros men-

35 Paus. 5.10.1; Strabo 8.3.30–31; *cf.* the *prooimion* of Pindaros' *First Olympian Ode,* and *Ol.* 4.3, *Ol.* 5.5., *Ol.* 6.63 πάγκοινον. According to Francis Cairns, who has studied the ranking according to epinician poetry, there was a considerable distance between the Olympian and the Pythian games while the distance between these two and the remaining crown games was almost 'unbridgeable' (Cairns 1991:98). The monetary rewards offered to victorious athletes in Athens suggests the distance: 500 dr *vs.* 100 dr to the Olympionikes and the Isthmionikes respectively (*IG* I² 77, *cf.* Morrissey 1978). The intense elaboration of myths endorsing claims to Olympia in the Archaic and Classical periods is studied by Ulf 1997b. The fact that a period of hard training in Elis seems to have been required may have been motivated by the wish to enhance the prestige of the *Olympia* (Crowther 1991:166).

36 The name Olympia as designation of the sanctuary can be traced to the middle of the seventh century, *cf.* Siewert 1991, Rausch 1998.

37 Miller 1975:215. The list of *Olympionikai* was however not written down until Hippias of Elis about 400 BC, *cf.* Körte 1904.

38 *Cf.* Graf 1993:28f. studying oracular groves suggests that these locations were considered an exceptionally pure space. Sources in Birge 1984:nrs. 414–432.

39 Aliki Moustaka suggests that her temple was originally dedicated to Zeus, see Moustaka 2002, followed by Sinn 2001.

40 Pausanias refers to the antiquarians of Elis who tell that Kronos was the first to hold the kingdom of heaven, others tell how Zeus defeated Kronos (Paus. 5.7.6–10).

41 Paus. 6.20.1; Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.34.3f. Versnel 1993:99, *cf.* Siewert 1992:116, for regulations of sacrifices for Kronos, Mallwitz 1988:91, sources Mey and Olshausen 1999. The comic poet Kratinos gives Kronos the epithet πρεσβυγενής (Cratinus fr. 240 Edmonds; Plut. *Per.* 3.3).

42 Leduc 1996:264f. Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 4.13.2; Paus. 5.7.7, the tree originated with the Hyperboreans and grew first by the Alpheios, Paus. 5.14.3, 5.15.3; Suidas *s.v.* 'κοτίνου στέφανος.'

43 ἐξελέγχων μόνος ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον, Pind *Ol.* 10.49–55.

tions how Herakles honoured the Twelve Gods at the same occasion.[44] According to Stella Georgoudi the Twelve Gods were symbolically associated with primordial time, 'un passé qui instaure et inaugure.'[45] The sanctuary of the mother of the gods was nearby, the somewhat anonymous divinity simply referred to as Meter. Pausanias reports Zeus' birth from Rhea (5.7.6), and Pindaros mentions 'the venerable Idaian grotto' (Ἰδαῖόν τε σεμνὸν ἄντρον, *Pind. Ol.* 5.17f.). This has been interpreted as a replica shrine of the Cretan 'Idaean grotto' in Olympia,[46] alluding to the birth of Zeus on Crete, which would complete the overall atmosphere of primordial beginnings.

Entering the shrine and proceeding towards Zeus' altar the celebrants passed the tomb of Pelops, his myth being connected with the origin of the great celebrations. A native neither of Peloponnesian origin nor of any other Hellenic city, the hero was a foreigner,[47] and this trait of Pelops' mythical identity suits well a hero who is lifted above particularistic local-patriotic concerns of any specific tribe.

Hieromenia and *Ekekheiria*

The pilgrimage for the *Olympia* was inaugurated with the proclamation of the 'sacred truce.'[48] However, although expressions as εἰρήνη, ὁμόνοια and φιλία are found in ancient oratory as the aim of the Olympic festival, these notions do not seem to have been the essence of the celebration and are not found in the central witnesses of Pindaros, Herodotos, or Thoukydides.[49] Aristophanes' Lysistrate

44 Pind *Ol.* 5.5. For the altars of the Twelve Gods at Olympia: Apollodoros 2.7.2.

45 Georgoudi 1996:63. She concludes that the symbol of the Twelve Gods is associated with 'harmonie et cohésion' (*op. cit.*:74, 64).

46 It has however been difficult to locate the shrine archaeologically, see Hampe 1951.

47 Butterworth 1966:184f. Gantz 1993:530–545. Coming from the far East and being the son of the mythical Tantalos, king of Sipylos, he is rooted in a 'nowhere'-place. His exotic origin is emphasised while his bones are preserved in the shrine of Artemis Kordax, according to Pausanias, an epithet referring to the 'native' Phrygian dance (Paus. 6.22.1). He is most frequently localised in far off Lydia or Phrygia (Pind. *Ol.* 1.24; Paus. 5.1.6., *cf.* 5.13.7. Hermann 1980:61, *RE* Suppl. VII 849ff. Hermann's historical explanation of Pelops' 'Lydian/Phrygian/Paphlagonian' origin, as due to Mycenean migration does not take account of the symbolic effect of this element of the tale, just as Dionysos is both Theban and 'Lydian/Phrygian,' the latter being an expression of the liminal qualities of his cult. Nagy 1986 analyses the myth in Pindaros' poem in relationship to ritual. I am not sure the diachronic interpretation with the distinction he makes between older and younger myths is illuminating. All versions are synchronic as far as they are realised in one ritual setting, in this case the telling by Pindaros, and perhaps elsewhere. For the strategic and manipulative use of different versions see Ulf 1997b. Hansen 2000 demonstrates the folk narrative character of Pindaros' versions.

48 According to Brodersen the *ekekheiria* (ἐκεχειρία), during the sacred period literally meant 'keep hands off,' *i.e.* 'free of weapons' (Brodersen 1991:12, *cf.* Muth 1979:168ff.). Frisk 1960:476, *s.v.* ἐκεχειρία, 'Zustand in dem die Hände zurückgehalten werden.'

chastising the warring parties in fact implies the pervasive state of enmity while reminding them that in fact they are ξυγγενεῖς (Ar. *Lys.* 1128–34).

Rougemont concludes that *hieromenia* did not proclaim a general celebration of peace, but offered a practical arrangement, a temporary convention of protection (ἡ δεδομένη τοῖς ἀγωνισταῖς ἀσυλία καὶ ἀσφάλεια, Plut. *Arat.* 28) for the benefit of the pilgrims to enable the normal procedure of the festivals.[50] The very fact that the celebrants of the *Olympia* were protected by such immunities, according to tradition instituted for the common benefit (κοινὸν ἀγαθόν, Paus. 5.20.1), indicates that the participants were not necessarily friendly disposed towards each other. The number of votive memorials of victory over Hellenic neighbours is another indication of the situation (Semmlinger 1974, Jacquemin 1991).

The sanctions protecting the sacred truce were regulated in the so-called Ὀλυμπιακός νόμος, including enforcements and fines upon the violators (Thuc. 5:49.1, *cf.* Lämmer 1982–83:57). Olympia, then, was not necessarily the focus of spontaneous brotherhood, although communities might formally pledge mutual friendship confirming their agreement in Olympia. Epigraphic evidence offers some insight into these conditions.[51]

After the Persian wars the Hellenic *poleis* seem to have attempted at establishing a 'court of arbitration' in Olympia, as suggested by an inscription which settles disputes between Boeotians and Thessalians and between Athenians and Phocaeans (Siewert 1981).[52] The arrangement itself seems however to have been rather short-lived.

49 Raubitschek suggests that the notion of peace and panhellenic brotherhood can be dated to the end of the Peloponnesian war, as an ideology emerging in the writings of Lysias and Isokrates and may derive from Hippias the historian of Olympia, Hippias *FGrH* 6 F 2 Jacoby (Raubitschek 1985).

50 Rougemont 1973:101. *Cf.* Lämmer, '... eine öffentlich verkündete und formal vereinbarte *Unantastbarkeit* von Personen, Territorien oder Gegenständen anläßlich religiöser Feste einschließlich der dabei stattfindenden Wettkämpfe,' (Lämmer 1982–83:49). 'Die *Ekecheiria* war kein "Ideal," sondern eine Übereinkunft!' (*op. cit.* 66).

51 *E.g.* the pledge (ϝράτρα) concluded under severe sanctions between Anaitoi and Metapioi, probably communities in the neighbourhood of Elis, dating to the Archaic age (Virgilio 1972). According to the conditions of the pledge it was left to the discretion of the ἱερομάοι whether some breach had occurred and to the πρόξενοι and μάντεις to expel the offenders from the Olympian altar.

52 According to Siewert it is probably due to this fact that the umpires, formerly called *diaitateres* were named *Hellanodikai* (Siewert 1992:115). Alternatively the name emerged early in the sixth century (Siewert cited in Ulf 1996:266).

Panegyris

The great Olympic as well as the other panhellenic festivals were concentric circles of interests widening from the holiest sacrifice to fairs and markets, conventional distinctions between sacred and profane being unsuitable to describe the phenomenon of a *panegyris*.[53]

Furthermore, the cultic procedures at *panegyreis* seem, I suggest, to have been orchestrated into a subtly woven pattern of 'prescribed' sentiments following the course of the celebration.[54] This may, I think, account for the fact that no theatre seems ever to have been built in Olympia.[55] Given the overwhelming number of theatres which have been built in the Hellenic world, it is significant that Olympia did not have one, while the extraordinary longevity of the *Olympia* suggests that the absence of a theatre cannot have been just an accidental omission.[56]

It must be an indication of the fact that cult forms of Dionysiac inversion and reversal were felt to be inappropriate at the most revered of sanctuaries and this fact adds to the impression that the overall symbolic atmosphere was one of austerity and ideal forms. In Philostratos' *Life of Apollonios* the *Olympia* are compared with the *Pythia*, the former suppressing the musical and theatrical shows of the latter as inappropriate and unworthy (ἀνάρμοστα καὶ οὐ χρηστὰ, Philostr. *VA* 6.10). In fact Ploutarkhos mentions the tradition that ivy was debarred from the

53 Analysing the phenomenon of periodic markets de Ligt and de Neeve conclude that the development of urban centres not necessarily excludes the periodic festival markets (de Ligt and de Neeve 1988:394, *cf.* Chandezon 2000).

54 For the illuminative parallel in the modern Olympics I refer to John MacAloon 1984. MacAloon has observed a system of 'performative genres' in the celebration of modern Olympic games. In the core of the opening rite the values of human cooperation and mutual respect are revived, other genres surround the ritual celebration in concentric circles, the drama and festival of the competitions, the spectacle of profane show surrounding the arrangement: rite, drama, festival and spectacle each appealing to a specific mood and fascination.

55 According to John Ferguson 'one of the strangest features of Olympia' (Ferguson 1989:57). Minos Kokolakis has collected sources for the informal intellectual and artistic performances held at Olympia (Kokolakis 1987–88). Usually the absence of a theatre is explained with the obvious fact that no musical contests were included in the programme without further comments as to the reason for this (Vendries 1999:270, Miller 2001:78). The expression 'theatron' in Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.31 refers to the spectators' bank at the stadion (Kontis 1958:9, Mallwitz 1981:104).

56 Larmour focusing on the fact that both drama and athletic contests contain the element of *agon* argues that 'the two phenomena are fundamentally connected' (Larmour 1999:2). Certainly, along the syntagmatic axis celebrations followed a certain sequence of preparations, procession, 'spectacle,' sacrifice, banquet and closure. The pervasive element of competition in 'spectacle' performances emphasises their paradigmatic relationship: dramatic and athletic performances were interchangeable in the 'spectacle' phase. At a deeper level the two main performance genres sprung from widely different 'fascinations' or culturally 'prescribed sentiments,' just as there is a fundamental difference between musical contests of an Apollinic, encomic mood and tragic or comic drama, with their Dionysiac fascination.

Olympic sanctuary, adding the suggestion that the reason for this may be the circumstance that the plant is 'symbolic of bacchic revels and female possession rites.'[57] At Olympia liminality did not take shape as a mood of disruption. Perhaps the symbolic centre did not tolerate the entertaining aspect of theatre, while other regional sanctuaries, *e.g.* Epidauros, Isthmia or Delos, did.[58]

The pilgrimage process

The structure of the athletic festival at Olympia has been seen as an initiation pattern. The athletic contests however did not engage initiands, but adolescent and adult males[59] in a celebration we may better understand if we take into account its processual dimension. First there is the journey to a distant place. Attracting participants from the whole Mediterranean, including the Euxine, Olympia served the function of a collective regional pilgrimage. Whatever the original arrangements may have been, possibly with participation restricted to the Peloponnese, in the historical period the catchment area was in fact the entire Hellenic world. The peripherical location of Olympia responds to the characteristics of a regional pilgrimage centre, which is usually located at some distant site, out of reach of important secular powers, and necessitating a more or less arduous journey.[60]

After gathering in Elis the host of disparate delegations set out on a last pilgrimage procession from Elis to the Altis, orchestrated into a new, however ephemere and festive, community. The evidence for such a communal procession from Elis to Olympia is not extensive, but there are indications for its existence. Pausanias mentions 'τὴν πομπικὴν ἔσοδον' in the Altis (Paus. 5.15.2; 6.20.7).[61]

Being received in the sacred centre the pilgrims had to cope with a process of restructuring, a transfer from the familiar to the foreign, from local to regional

57 Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 112. Pausanius mentions an altar for Dionysos shared with the Charites, lying close to the *temenos* of Pelops, and beside it are altars for the Muses and Nymphs (Paus. 5.14.10). These manifestations seem to point to symposium ritual. Another altar, which lay outside the Altis was not old according to Pausanias, and dedicated by private individuals (Paus. 5.15.4). The relationship between Olympia and Dionysos may have been entertained by the Elean matrons, see Mitsopoulos-Leon 1984.

58 Nemea never did have a theatre either (Larmour 1999:183). Corinth has a long tradition for comic performances and the atmosphere at Isthmia (the theatre dating from *ca.* 400 BC, Gebhard 1973:26), may have been less austere than in Olympia (or Nemea, Larmour 1999:5). The theatre at Delphi seems to have been used for musical contests (Fontenrose 1988).

59 On the age classes of the participant boys see Crowther 1988, Petermandl 1997.

60 On the difficulty of access to Olympia see Men. Rhet., *Peri epideiktikon* 1.366f., *cf.* de Ligt and de Neeve 1988:397. Morgan observes that some of the early shrines which have continued into historical time, among which Olympia, 'were established close to routes of communication and in areas marginal to the palatial world' (Morgan 1996:57). Beate Wagner-Hasel has studied the development of inter-regional sanctuaries, especially Delphi in the context of trade-routes (Wagner-Hasel 2002:168).

deities, from initial disorder to a new ritual order. It may be argued that the panhellenic cults of Zeus and Apollon acted as 'Great gods,' who were all-inclusive as opposed to the local manifestations of these gods or the particularistic gods and heroes and in each independent *polis* or *ethnos*. [62]An oracular shrine or *stomion* attributed to Gaia/Themis is known from Olympia (Paus. 5.14.10) as well as Delphi. We may compare this arrangement to the opposition between 'ancestral and political' *vs.* 'earth and fertility cults' (Turner 1974:185, see above note 29). The latter are generally interpreted as a residue from an earlier age, a trace of an original fertility cult.[63] We should not however take refuge in 'fertility' magic and genetic explanations without examining a functional one. Georgoudi underscores in her study of Gaia that this goddess is not associated with fertility and motherhood. She seems to be the representation of the civic space or 'home,' with its metaphoric associations with nurturing and caring, someone's 'father- or motherland' (Georgoudi 2002:123). I would suggest that the existence of Gaia and Themis at the panhellenic centres may have evoked the positive associations of the common 'homeland' of the Hellenes, as well as their common morality[64] and that opaque figures as Gaia and Themis may have played a role of enhancing the inclusive function of the pilgrimage shrine. Philippe Borgeaud argues that the *Meter* or *Meter theon* cult should not be conceived of as a fertility cult either.[65] Precisely by being 'anonymous' Meter expresses a universal power and can evoke a 'primordial'

61 Muth 1979:177 assumes a procession 'wahrscheinlich' taking place, Buhman 1988 suggests a procession without offering evidence, Mallwitz 1981:112 indicates a 'Feststraße' on his plan. Siewert 1992:116 assumes that the inscription related to physical arrangements of roads and lodgings refers to 'the great procession from Elis to Olympia before the opening of the games' (Wacker 1997:116). Hugh Lee suggests the route (Lee 2001:10f., 28f.). The gathering in Olympia cannot, I think, be analysed according to the centripetal/centrifugal dichotomy proposed by Graf (Graf 1996), the dichotomy being relevant in relation to particularistic *polis* cults and applying to the relationship between cultic space and civic centre.

62 If the Isolympic celebrations in Naples were a faithful copy of the *Olympia* themselves we may assume that the pilgrims swore oaths to Zeus and Apollon, thereby binding themselves temporally to a common ritual anchorage. See the text of the *Italika Sebasta Isolympia*, Dittenberger and Purgold 1966:nr. 56, line 48. *Cf.* Siewert 1992.

63 Paus. 5.14.10. Weniger 1905:29, Vegas-Sansalvador 1991:147f. Sinn 1996a:19ff.

64 See Rudhardt 1999. It is noteworthy that there did not exist something like a sacred spring in Olympia, a feature which is well known from pilgrimage centres such as Delphi, Eleusis and a number of oracular cults, in particular those of Asklepios. One wonders whether this absence might mean that Olympia was not concerned with the inner well being of the individual as these 'problem solving' cults.

65 As is the tendency, *e.g.* Robertson 1996 (nor necessarily as an orgiastic cult). The Meter temple in Olympia was built about 400–390 (Mallwitz 1972:160, Roller 1999:161). W. Fuchs has argued for the view that Dionysos figured on the pediment, replacing Atthis, the persona of Meter at this stage being a fusion between the ancient Rhea and the more recent Kybele (Fuchs 1956:163).

and all embracing divinity guaranteeing established truth, justice and prosperity (Borgeaud 1996:28, 51).[66]

Symbolic settings at the stadion, Demeter Khamyne

At this point we may briefly consider the curious settings of the stadion: the altar of Demeter Khamyne. The priestess of Demeter Khamyne was the exception to the rule that excluded mature women from the *Olympia* (Paus. 6.20.8–9; 21.1), and the arrangement that she was present at the male *agones* seated by the altar of Demeter in the stadion has caused puzzlement among scholars and elicited a variety of interpretations. The cult epithet is etymologically interpreted as 'having her bed on the earth' or 'having the earth as her bed.'[67] Generally Demeter is referred to as the general power of fertility and fecundity and the priestess' presence accepted without any further explanation.[68] However, social arrangements may often be couched in metaphors from the natural world, being an instance of the general tendency of rituals to cover the 'sacred' truths. As Mary Douglas has emphasised, when 'appeals to nature' are made in support of social arrangements, culture is certainly involved.[69] A general reference to 'fertility cult' does not therefore offer a sufficient explanation. Alternatively a genetic explanation has been offered: the location of the altar of Demeter Khamyne where her priestess attended the male events was the continuation of an earlier *temenos* which the rearrangement of the stadion had intruded upon (Weniger 1905:30f.).[70]

66 The fact that a Meter cult was established for example in the heart of the Athenian political centre, suggests rather a divinity evoking the overarching authority of the polis community (Solon fr. 36.4 West). Meter may shade into other female divinities, such as Ge or Themis, and Demeter borrowing mythical or iconographic fragments from their persona (Borgeaud 1996:38). In Athens Meter received, according to Borgeaud, elements from Anatolian Kybele in the middle of the fifth century, a crucial period of the development of democracy, and during the Peloponnesian war (Borgeaud 1996:38f.). The ancient Meter was so empowered with renewed symbolic charge. The icon of the mistress of lions and the myth of her cosmic wrath are apt at evoking the sense of a formidable power. The Anatolian Meter is attested from the early sixth century BC in the Peloponnese, in Lakonia and Arkadia, and in western colonies from Sparta and Asian Minor (Genière 1986).

67 Derived from χαμαί and εὐνή (Vegas-Sansalvador 1991). Vegas-Sansalvador offers different explanations of the name: chthonic, fertility and healing—together with Iasios, and in connection with horses at the nearby hippodrome. For the 'khameunai' priest called Selloi or Helloi in Dodona see Hom. *Il.* 16.234f.

68 *E.g.* Delcourt 1947:67, Vegas-Sansalvador 1991:147, Mouratidis 1990:103.

69 Douglas 1982:5: '... the ultimate justifying ideas which tend to be invoked as if part of the natural order ... are evidently not at all natural but strictly a product of social interaction.' *Cf.* Moore and Myerhoff 1977:8, Bourdieu 1992:81.

70 *Cf.* Weniger 1917–18:5f. followed by Sinn 1996b:61, 2000a:78 fig. 13.

Apart from the question whether the topography was as Weniger supposes, which is not substantiated,[71] it is doubtful whether such a special arrangement would have been accepted merely as a reverence to the past.[72] People are capable of transforming rituals quite radically if previous arrangements do not satisfy any more. The hypothesis of the persistence of cultic traditions does not, then, seem convincing. Moreover, a conspicuous sight such as a single woman within view of the huge host of men certainly had some meaning other than antiquarian awe. After all, this reverence to the goddess could have been expressed at another moment of the year and without placing the prohibited category of spectators most prominently before the eyes of the 'offended' men.

Still, the priestess' presence may have had some positive meaning. Parallel cultic practices suggest that Demeter was involved in initiatory performances, notably those including races.[73] This function is epigraphically attested in several regions of Hellas and Makedonia and overlaps with the role played by related divinities and heroines (Hatzopoulos 1994:46f.).[74] In Lete in Makedonia an inscription dedicated to Demeter is suggested by Miltiadis Hatzopoulos to refer to a similar practice (Hatzopoulos 1994:44–53). He suggests a relationship between Demeter and a divinity called 'Kale' ('la Belle Déesse') who is attested near the *gymnasion* at Thera (*IG* XII:3.380; Hatzopoulos 1994:50, 60). Hatzopoulos adduces fragments of inscriptions from the sanctuary of Demeter-Kala Thea south of Lete in Makedonia concluding that this goddess protected initiatory foot races for girls as well as boys (Hatzopoulos 1994:54–61).

Possibly the altar of Demeter and her daughter located in the *gymnasion* in Elis was associated with similar activities (Paus. 6.23.3). As to the origin of the epithet 'Khamyne' it may refer to a detail of ancient cult practice.[75] Pausanias tells the

71 The only indication for the existence of the *temenos* of Demeter Khamyne Weniger adduces in fact is Pausanias mentioning the priestess' presence at the male *agones*, involving a circular argument! *cf.* Scanlon 1984:81.

72 *Cf.* Vallois who assumes that some foot races *originally* were dedicated to Demeter (Vallois 1926:316f).

73 According to Jeanmaire an initiatiory cult under the goddess' protection should be at the root of the Eleusinian mysteries, Demeter being the *kourotrophos* of Demophon (Jeanmaire 1939:296f.). The hymn to Demeter mentions battles or contests in honour of the young Demophon. *Cf. Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 266ff.; Jeanmaire 1939:343, Calame 1977:408. Inscriptions from Attica mention Demeter *kourotrophos* (*CIA* III,1:372, 373), and other cases are collected by Price (Price 1978:190f.).

74 In Sparta and Messenia inscriptions have been found referring to female *poloi*, indicating a relationship with cultic races, dedicated to Damater and Kore (*IG* V:1.1444, *IG* V:1.594. *Cf.* Hatzopoulos 1994:50 nn. 7–8).

75 Jeanmaire 1939:415ff., who assumes that the etymology of her name may be related to a tradition that Spartan initiands were couched on '*stibades*,' covers of foliage on the ground (*cf.* Plut. *Lyc.* 16.1.4; at the *Hyakinthia*, Athen. 4.138f).

myth that Cretan Herakles with his companions, the Kouretes, slept on heaps of *kotinos* leaves, presumably on the earth (Paus. 5.7.7). Since cult epithets may refer to ritual practice,[76] and the ancient lore about the Kouretes seems to be a web of mythical and ritual traditions, it is not inconceivable that the epithet 'Khamyne' preserves a detail of initiation practices.[77] The presence of the priestess of Demeter Khamyne may then have evoked the symbolic 'growth' of new generations of men. Demanding immense physical effort, the pilgrimage centre celebrated the lofty ideal of vital male strength, under the auspices of the goddess of growth, the *kourotrophos* Demeter Khamyne.

Sacrifice at Olympia

Having outlined the overall symbolic settings at the pilgrimage centre we should look at the cultic events with their sacrificial arrangements and sequence. Since we are exceptionally well informed about the sacrificial programme in Olympia, compared with much that is told about ancient cult celebrations, it may be worth while to examine the way the sacrifices in Olympia ran through several phases. Of course we encounter a difficult question, that of the validity of the late evidence (*e.g.* Pausanias) for earlier periods. However, we may try to reconstruct the sacrificial programme as a complex of interrelated elements, the most prominent of which being of course the relationship between the central 'Voropfer und Opfer' (Eitrem 1977). I will however include a wider range of cultic acts into the overall sacrificial programme of the *Olympia*, following Victor Turner, who stresses that it is necessary to understand 'sacrifice as a process within a process within a process ... .'[78]

76 Examples of epitheta referring to ritual practice are Apollon Daphephoros and Dionysos Omestes (Burkert 1977:285 = 1985:184). Other examples of epithets referring to cultic practices, as Demeter Megalartos, 'of great loaves,' 'goat-eating' Hera, or 'Karneia garlanded Apollo' are discussed by Robert Parker in 'The problem of the Greek cult epithet' (Matin P. Nilsson-lecture given at the Swedish Institute at Athens 8 November 2001. I am most grateful to the author for providing me with a copy of this lecture).

77 Burkert assumes the existence of cult associations of young warriors on Crete, celebrating the birth of Zeus on Mount Ida (1985:261f., *cf.* Jeanmaire 1939:427–444, Bremmer 1978:23ff.). The *Hymn from Palaiokastro* celebrating Zeus Diktaios as the 'Greatest Kouros' may be evidence for the existence of such a cult association of *kouroi*, which is considered the equivalent of *kouretes* (*Insc. Cret.* III.2.2, West 1965:155f.). In other regions colleges of Kouretes and similar men's associations, operating with age distinctions and contests, are attested (Strabo 10.4.16 = Ephoros *FGrH* 70 F 149). In Ephesos however the title refers to leading officials in the polis (Strabo 14.1.20). *Cf.* Luria 1963:31ff., 1928.

78 'In the first place, I have come to see sacrifice neither as a single act or event nor as an intellectual structure perhaps further reducible, as Lévi-Strauss has done for totems, to deep-lying rules, but as a process with several stages (one common sequence runs invocation-consecration-immolation-communion). The whole process, furthermore, may be a phase in a protracted social drama or crisis, with secular as well as ritual moments' (Turner 1992:89).

Leaving at home their particularistic deities and heroes, to which each *polis* and *ethnos* kept exclusive access, the pilgrimage centre Olympia embraced all (male) Hellenes irrespective of polis affiliation in an overarching cult of Zeus. There is an account of the festive mood at the opening of the celebration, which is particularly interesting because it is descriptive but in a sense prescriptive as well, the staging of a joyous 'rendez-vous.' Philostratos, sketching the origins of the *diaulos* foot race, in passing suggest the specific mood of the cultic phase: 'Whenever the *theoroi* of the Hellenes were welcomed, the runners ran a stadion length from the altar and back again, announcing that *Hellas had arrived in joy*.'[79] This announcement may express the sentiments appropriate to the occasion.

What I would drawn attention to is the way the sacrificial programme may have modulated sentiments into a specific order of 'prescribed' moods. Symbolic phenomena do not only categorise the world, they may contribute as well to transforming the affective state of the community in important ways. Of course we cannot possibly register empirically what was happening to the audiences attending the celebrations. There are however indications that a modulation of sentiments was an element of the programme.

On the eve of the *Olympia* the women of Elis used to lament Akhilleus at his grave in the *gymnasion* at Elis (Paus. 6.23.3, 24.1). Women were excluded from the games at Olympia, but the fact that their lament was held on the occasion of the male celebration indicates that this cultic gesture should be included into the Olympic ritual programme, even if the male celebrants were elsewhere. Akhilleus being the most prominent war hero in the Greek *imaginaire* this lament set the tone and established the warrior as a central symbol of the celebration. While recreating the categorial distinction between women and men, the lament contributed still more to infusing the celebration with symbolic sentiments. Akhilleus being a panhellenic hero his inclusion into the programme contributed to disconnecting the athletes and their company from their particularistic polis heroes and loyalties, and preparing them for the ritual acts to follow.

The introductory rituals and sacrifices, taking the oath at the image of Zeus Horkios near the Bouleuterion (Paus. 5.24.9–11), aimed at guaranteeing the proper performance of the athletic contests. Pausanias' report on the impact of the Zeus image with its double thunderbolt may give some impression of an atmosphere of awe, the celebrants being scared into accepting common rules (Lonis 1979:25). We may however concentrate on the central rites in order to capture the meaning of the *Olympia*. According to a scholion on Pindaros the central sequence comprised

79 Philostr. *Gym.* 6 Ἐπεὶ δὲ Ἠλεῖοι θύσειαν, ἔδει μὲν καὶ τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας Ἑλλήνων θύειν θεωρούς. ὡς δὲ μὴ ἀργῶς ἡ πρόσοδος αὐτῶν γίγνοιτο, ἔτρεχον οἱ δρομεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ στάδιον οἷον καλοῦντες τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ πάλιν εἰς ταὐτὸν ὑπέστρεφον οἷον ἀγγέλλοντες, ὅτι δὴ ἀφίξοιτο ἡ Ἑλλὰς χαίρουσα. Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν περὶ διαύλου αἰτίας.

the sacrifice for Pelops followed by that for Zeus.[80] In the central passage *Ol.* 1.90–93 Pindaros tells that 'Pelops rests on the bank of the Alpheios,'[81] having a *amphipolon tumbon* near the *poluxenotatoi bomoi*.'[82]The offering for Pelops is presented as *haimakouriai*, a blood sacrifice of a black ram performed at night,[83] followed by the *hekatombe* sacrifice at daylight including the burning of thighs to Olympian Zeus (Paus. 5.13.8; Lucianus, *Bis accusatus* 2; Weniger 1904:144). Some remarkable details are given by Pausanias, who tells that Pelops is honoured above the other

80 πρὸ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτῷ θύειν, Sch. Pind. *Ol.* 1.149a, *cf.* Sch. Pind. *Ol.* 3.33.

81 *Alpheou poroi klitheis.* Gunnel Ekroth, concludes then that Pelops was honoured with a *theoxenia* (Gerber 1993:142, *cf.* Ekroth 1999:153f.). However even if allusions to a symposium resonate in the passage, the primary meaning of *klitheis* in the immediate context of *tumbon* (92) is of course 'resting/buried,' *cf.* Hom. *Il.* 10.350 (*en nekuessi klitheten*), Thuc. 2.34, *cf.* Verdenius 1988:40ff. on the passage. As to *memiktai* the reference to a symposium is even weaker, the subject being a person, not a beverage. Pindaros frequently employs *meignusthai* as a metaphor for a variety of 'connections' (*e.g. Nem.* 1.18, *Nem.* 4.21, *Nem.* 9.31, *Isthm.* 3.3, *Isthm.* 7.25, *cf. Pyth.* 10.41), *haimakouriais memiktai* thus meaning 'he is honoured with blood offerings.'

82 The Scholion to Pind. *Ol.* 1.150a discusses the identity of the recipient of this altar, suggesting Pelops as well as Zeus. Ekroth assumes that the tomb as well as the altar are Pelops' where he received *enagizein* sacrifice and where an ordinary *thusia* took place (Ekroth 1999:165), referring again to Gerber who assumes, on aesthetic grounds a parallel between hospitable Hieron and Pelops, wondering however about the 'tautology' in the juxtaposition of *amphipolon tymbon* and *polyxenotatoi bomoi* both (presumably) underscoring Pelops' hospitality (Gerber 1993:144). Krummen too prefers to take *polyxenotatoi* as qualifying the altar of Pelops, although she is in doubt, and argues that in case the epithet had to be understood as belonging to Zeus, Pindaros would have made this explicit (Krummen 1990:160f.). We should however not expect too meticulous precision from Pindaros. And without reducing the praise lavished on the recipient of the poem, Hieron, we may as well argue that the hospitable altar is Zeus'. Sicking argues, equally on aesthetic grounds, (without however mentioning the altar or its epitheton) for a parallel between Hieron and Zeus (Sicking 1983:66). William Slater, although emphasising a symposion atmosphere, suggests that the altar 'presumably [is] the Zeus altar' (Slater 1989:491). Verdenius ascribes the altar without further comment to Zeus (Verdenius 1988:42). The lack of identification of the *bomos* does not need to cause any problem if we assume the superlative to be an allusion to Zeus, who elsewhere is called the *megistos* father in whose Altis the banquet space is laid out as distinguished from Pelops' ancient grave mentioned some strophes earlier (Pind. *Ol.* 10.45). The ode under discussion is introduced with a massive superlative, *ariston*, and equivalent priamel, identifying Olympia and Kronos' son. The superlative qualifying *bomos*, therefore, I suggest, may be taken as a restrictive adjective, 'the most hospitable anywhere [*i.e.* Zeus'],' locating Pelops' tomb more precisely, *near* that altar, after the rather vague 'on the ford of the Alpheios' (Pind. *Ol.* 1.93). We are of course in doubt, because neither a possessive pronoun, 'his,' *i.e.* Pelops', nor a definite article, 'the,' *i.e.* Zeus,' is expressed. I would on these grounds suggest that the epitheta *amphipolon* 'frequented' ('tended by cultic worship' Verdenius 1988:41) and *polyxenotatoi* 'visited by/entertaining most guests [of all altars],' may create a distinction between the non-hospitable grave of Pelops [because polluting] and the hospitable alter of Zeus (*cf. Ol.* 3.17 *Dios pandokoi alsei*), thus removing the tautology.

83 Pind. *Ol.* 1.90ff.; Sch. Pind. *Ol.* 1.146a,d explaining *haimakouriai* as the Boiotian expression for *enagismata*; Paus. 5.13.2; 6.21.11; Pelops' grave is mentioned in Pind. *Ol.* 10.24, *cf.* Burkert 1972:111f., 1983:98.

heroes as Zeus is honoured above the gods of Olympia (Paus. 5.13.1), while their rituals are mutually exclusive: a taboo on eating the meat from the animal sacrificed to Pelops weighed on those who wished to enter [the] Zeus [area, celebration] (Paus. 5.13.3, the text simply states *para ton Dia*). According to Eitrem and others this passage means that the contact with Pelops affected the celebrants with impurity (Eitrem 1977:80, Parker 1983:39, Boehringer 2001:37ff.). This is of course the emic meaning of the situation, in an etic interpretation the taboo created a clear-cut separation. However the sense of pollution certainly implies contrasted sentiments as well, the feeling of unease *vs.* the sense of ease. The impression left by Pindaros and Pausanias is that the sacrifice to Pelops was an act of renunciation and avoidance, and even if we assume that the sacrificial victim was eaten there cannot have been a copious banquet on the meat of one ram.[84]

Pausanias mentions that the only wood used for the sacrificial pyre in Olympia is the white poplar, *leuke*, a tree Herakles brought from the borders of the Akheron (5.13.3, 14.2; Schol. Hom. *Il.* 13.389, *cf.* Cook 1925:467f.). The leaves present a sharp contrast with its dark upper side and a bright underside. This tradition may be ancient, in the second half of the fifth century Olympia issued a coin decorated with an eagle carrying a white poplar leaf (as identified by Seltman 1948:73f., *cf.* Blech 1982:97f. n. 78, Murr 1969:20ff.). Its quality may have conveyed the association with boundaries or marginal situations, such as the boundary between the living and the dead,[85] extending the contrast between dark Pelops and bright Zeus.

The Pelops – Zeus relationship however is an example of a general pattern: a building complex of the hero shrine as an annex to a temple dedicated to the god frequently combined with athletic contests (Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.25St. Pfister 1909:495ff., Brelich 1958:94–106, 1988). Both Olympia, Nemea and Isthmia as well as other sanctuaries manifested this complex.[86] This supports the assumption that the rites for hero and god constitute a cultic programme and must as such be approached as elements of a system, not as an accidental cult residue.

While it is impossible to trace a sharp distinction between gods and heroes in the ancient sources or in the archaeological evidence,[87] in specific conditions a contrast is created. As far as is possible to know the rite involving the hero preceded

84 William Slater who argues vigorously for the view that the cult of Pelops included dining concludes 'that Pelops would have been invited to dine together with some of the annual officials of the Zeus/Pelops meat' (Slater 1989:491).

85 Plinius the Elder characterises the poplar dedicated to Hercules as 'bicolor' (Plin. *HN* 12.2.3). I think Arthur B. Cook 1925:471f. may be right in labelling the white poplar 'a tree assigned to the limbo between the Upperworld and the Underworld ... a Borderland tree.'

86 Often it is assumed that the god's cult overlaid an older hero-cult (*e.g.* Rohde 1925:152, Eitrem 1977:468, Kyrieleis 1990:181), sometimes however the hero cult does not seem to be very old (Ulf 1997a:49). Where the cult may be old, as may be the case with Hyakinthos, we still need an explanation why his cult was continued and incorporated into a ritual programme.

the offering to the god in the context of athletic festivities (Eitrem 1977:3) constituting a structure which we should attempt to understand. According to Gunnel Ekroth the normal practice of sacrificing to heroes was *thusia* including festive dining.[88] There are however cases in which heroes receive *enagisma* offering, for example blood offerings in which case the blood of the victim was not included in the ritual dining but poured out at the shrine of the recipient.

The cults of the heroes at the panhellenic centres of Isthmia and Nemea seem to share some of the characteristics of hero shrine-temple-athletic-contest complex. Their myths certainly are of a gloomy type, memorising the young hero's fatal accident. Both sites have yielded sacrificial material suggesting cult practices of the type we are investigating. For Isthmia the evidence of sacrificial material does not date earlier than the Roman period (50 AD),[89] but mention of a tomb cult for (Melikertes-)Palaimon is made in Pindaros,[90] and there is evidence from the Classical period for the cult of (Opheltes-)Arkhemoros as well.[91] At the sanctuary at Nemea a baby boy from the Hellenistic period has been found (Miller 1980:192). Nocturnal rites for Palaimon are mentioned by Ploutarkhos (Plut. *Thes.* 25.4.), but their age is uncertain. Philostratos mentions the sacrifice of a black bull and *enagismata, sphattein,* suggesting a blood sacrifice (Philostr. *Imag.* 2.16). Pausanias

87 Ekroth 1999:270ff., Boehringer 2001:37ff. The foundation for the widely accepted polarity of chthonian *vs.* Olympian powers or cults parallel to the distinction hero *vs.* divinity seems to be weak (Ekroth 1999:279, 284, *cf.* Schlesier 1991–92, earlier Nock 1944). According to Brelich a pervasive characteristic of heroes is their connection with death, their cult frequently concentrating on a grave and ritual lament (Brelich 1958:80, *cf.* Rohde 1925:i 150ff.). According to Ekroth heroes may be drawn closer to the dead in case they are offered *enagismata*, entailing some kind of destruction and renunciation of the sacrificial offering and emphasising the status of the recipient as dead (Ekroth 1999:70–73. 203f.).

88 Ekroth may however go too far in identifying hero cults as ordinary sacrifice, assuming a *thusia* wherever the term *thuein* occurs, neglecting the fact that this term may be the 'unmarked' term of the pair *enagizein—thuein* (*cf.* Rudhardt 1992:214, 251; earlier Jean Casabona has come to similar conclusions, Casabona 1966:85, 204, *cf.* Scullion 1994:97). As an example may serve Athenaios' description of the *Karneia*, in which he qualifies the whole celebration as *thusia* lasting for three days including a sacrifice for Hyakinthos (Ath. 4.139d), while Pausanias informs us of an *enagizein* offering for Hyakinthos (Paus. 3.19.3; *cf.* Eur. *Alc.* 449ff.; Sch. Theoc. *Id.* 5.83b).

89 I would like to thank Prof. Gebhard and Prof. Miller for generously providing me with their articles (Gebhard and Reese forthcoming, Miller 2002). Oscar Broneer presents however a votive inscription on a halter from the second half of the sixth century dedicating it to 'Inoides.' (Broneer 1972:176, 1976:52).

90 On the cult of Melikertes/Palaimon see Pind. *Isthm.* fr. 6.5 (1) Snell; *cf.* Paus. 2.1.3, 7; 1.44.7f.; Eur. *IT* 271; for the myth see Eur. *Med.* 1283ff.; Hawthorne 1958, 1972:218–221, Bonnet 1986:57–63, Piérart 1998, Gebhard 1993, Gebhard and Dickie 1999.

91 The fate of Opheltes/Archemoros, and the aitiological myth of the Nemean games seems to have been told in E. *Hypsipyle* fr. 60: especially 98a–111 Bond 1963; *cf.* Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.6.4. Miller 1988, 1992.

mentions a cypress grove for Arkhemoros, a tree associated with death and officials dressed in black cloaks (Paus. 2.15.2, *cf.* Miller 1992:81, Murr 1969:125).[92]

There are indications that the same was the case in Delphi at the tomb of Neoptolemos near the temple of Apollon.[93] According to myth Neoptolemos suffered a lamentable fate, being murdered, and in Pindaros' *Seventh Nemean* ode we hear of 'the Delphians being extremely distressed by the murder of Neoptolemos,' an expression possibly betraying a cultic atmosphere.[94] The question of Neoptolemos' cult in Delphi is extremely complicated. On the one hand there are sources which may indicate that his cult was interwoven with the *Pythia*,[95] on the other hand the fact that he is never mentioned in a Pythian ode, in contrast to Pelops, may be significant.[96]

Whether Pelops follows this pattern of the young hero killed and honoured in athletic celebration is not easy to determine. A large number of competing myths and legends were told in Olympia (Burkert 1988:35, Ulf 1997b). It is however not implausible that different tales were evoked at different occasions.[97] The myth of Pelops' 'first death,' in the cauldron would be the analogous tale, and since his shoulder seems to have been on display (Paus. 5.13.4ff.), his lamentable fate may have been woven into the cultic programme.[98] Alternatively the tragic events were told how Pelops lost his immortality, according to Pindaros, after his father Tantalos deceived the gods (Pind. *Ol.* 1.65f.). Oinomaos' fearful crimes may have been the focus of attention as well, since in all probability 'the ruins of his palace' were 'still visible' in the very centre of the cultic space, inviting storytelling in the course of the celebration (Paus. 6.20.6f., *cf.* Rambach 2002:131 identifying the

92 The meaning of black as a sign of mourning appears from the myth about Theseus signalling death by hoisting black sails (Diod. Sic. 4.61, 4–7, Plut. *Thes.* 17.4). It is often stated that the same dress of mourning was tradition in Olympia. However, according to the *Etymologicum Magnum s.v.* 'Hellanodikai' these arbitrators were dressed in a purple garment, *porphyris*, a custom which does not antedate the second century BC (Blum 1998:101).

93 Pind. *Nem.* 7.34–8 (dated 461); *cf.* Pind. *Pae.* 6.60f., 117ff.; Schol Pind. *Nem.* 7.62a, 68a; Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F 64 Jacoby (Schol Eur. *Or.* 1654f); Euripides, *Andr.* 1264 (dated 430–420) νεκρὸν κομίζων τόνδε, [Neoptolemos] καὶ κρύψας χθονὶ *cf.* 1240 θάψον πορεύσας Πυθικὴν πρὸς ἐσχάραν. Paus. 10.24.6 καί οἱ κατὰ ἔτος ἐναγίζουσιν οἱ Δελφοί. *Cf.* Fontenrose 1960, Delcourt 1965:38–50, 1966, Roux 1976:197, Fontenrose 1974:397ff., Bremmer 1978:9, Nagy 1979:118–141, Woodbury 1979.

94 'βάρυνθεν δὲ περισσὰ Δελφοὶ ξεναγέται. ἡρωΐαις δὲ πομπαῖς θεμισκόπον οἰκεῖν ἐόντα πολυθύτοις εὐώνυμον ἐς δίκαν,' Pind. *Nem.* 7.43, 46ff. Richard Seaford argues that by the fifth century, in Pindaros' and Euripides' time, Neoptolemos had a prominent cult in Apollon's sanctuary, a shrine nearby the god's temple (Seaford 2000:39, *cf.* Chirassi-Colombo 1977, Loscalzo 1998, *cf.* 2000:60). The nature of the cult and its place in the rich cultic calender in Dephi is the object of intense debate. Emilio Suárez de la Torre suggests that Neoptolemos was the centre of an ephebic performance at the festival of the heroes (Suárez de la Torre 1997:172).

remains of an early Iron Age building with 'Oinomaos' palace,' which was 'struck by lightning').

This pattern of lamentable fates of young heroes may have been widespread. In Amyklai Hyakinthos, who was accidentally killed by Apollon, was lamented dur-

95 If Heliodoros' *Aithiopika* should present some authentic material, Neoptolemos' cult might have been part of the *Pythia* (*cf.* Suárez de la Torre 1997:173f.); the character Kharikles informing the Egyptian Kalasiris that the Ainians, the most prominent tribe in Thessalia and genuine Hellenes, send a deputation every four years to the *Pythia*, and that they do so in honour of Akhilleus' son Neoptolemos, the *reason* being, he explains, that Neoptolemos was murdered at the very altar of Pythian Apollon. The protagonist, who is the leader of the Ainian deputation, claims kinship with Akhilleus (Heliod. *Aeth.* 2.34f., 4.5, for historical discussion of the Ainians see Woodbury 1979:127f.). If we take into account that the entire tendency of the novel is to exalt genuine Hellenic ethnicity, contrasting it with non-Hellenic foils (either sub-Hellenic oriental or super-Hellenic Aithiopian), that it is crowded with Homeric and classical citations or allusions and thoroughly imbued with central cultural symbols (Akhilleus!), this might be an argument for seriously considering the *Aithiopika* as a source. In the expression 'the greatest of heroes Neoptolemos' (Heliod. *Aeth.* 3.10) resonates Pelops' status as the most important of heroes in Olympia (see below). On the other hand we cannot know to what extent the novelist may have transformed the details of the ritual, for example creating a dramatic climax centred on the Neoptolemos rite, and for that reason placing the *enagismos* for Neoptolemos *after* the sacrifice to Apollon in the 'description' of the Pythian festival (Heliod. *Aeth.* 2.35). The procession includes a *hekatombe* of *black* oxen, whose *akra* are burnt on the altar! (Heliod. *Aeth.* 3.1, 3.5), an exaggeration of what would have been normal procedure (a single black animal as an exceptional offering, a holocaust likewise as a restricted procedure). The celebration presents abundant festivity with parading young women and men, music and dance performances (Heliod. *Aeth.* 3.2f., 10) reminiscent of the latter phase of the *Hyakinthia* with its joyous festival activities and display (see above). After this Neoptolemos celebration the Pythian games are terminated (Heliod. *Aeth.* 4.1). Maybe an image of the *Theoxenia* as mentioned in Pindaros' poems is combined with the *Pythia*. The religious festival parade may have been a topos in the novel in order to highlight the superhuman perfection of the protagonist lovers, Xenophon's *Ephesiaka* introduces Habrokomes and Anthia at the great procession of Ephesian Artemis (Xen.Eph. *Eph.* 1.2). As a whole the *Aithiopika* may have been composed by an author who lived distant from the exact details of the cultic programme at Delphi, but who gathered central items of the Pythian celebration from the classical tradition and felt free to embellish them in his 'description.' The Amphiktyonic inscription in Delphi mentioning the value of 'an oxen to the *heros*' is difficult to assess as referring to a Neoptolemos rite (Rougemont 1977 = *CID* I:no. 10, *cf.* Lefèvre 2000 = *CID* IV:no. 1). Several suggestions are made as to which hero is meant, and, the passage is even interpreted as 'a hero oxen,' that is the 'leader oxen of the procession,' with reference to the *bous hegemon* mentioned in Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.29. Mommsen 1887:226, and Rougemont 1977:114 think the passage refers to the *Pythia*, Lefèvre 2000:36 does not.

96 That Palaimon is mentioned in a fragmentary Isthmian ode only, and Arkhemoros is absent from any Nemean ode (while he is mentioned in a fifth century source, Euripides, see above) may be due to the hazards of textual transmission. This might as well explain Neoptolemos' absence from the Pythian odes, which does not exclude his role in the *Pythia* altogether.

97 It is therefore not helpful to discuss the priority of certain 'versions,' as Nagy does (Nagy 1986). Köhnken explains the 'correction' as a rhetorical pretence suitable to the performance (Köhnken 1974). See in addition Hansen 2000 for a folk-narrative perspective.

98 Burkert 1972:114, 1983:99, *cf.* Nagy 1986:80, Köhnken 1974.

ing the *Hyakinthia*, the celebration that gathered the Spartan community, according to the local historian Polykrates, as recorded by Athenaios.[99] According to Pausanias the Spartans used to perform an *enagisma* offering to Hyakinthos (ἐναγίζουσιν, Paus. 3.19.3), before offering (θυσία) to Apollon, followed by athletic contests in later phases of the ritual. Michael Pettersson has carefully studied the rhythm of the cultic programme which did not only comprise a contrast between *enagisma* and *thusia* for hero and god respectively, but entailed a whole series of prohibitions *vs.* permissions with their accompanying sentiments (Pettersson 1992:57ff.): the abandoning and subsequent wearing of crowns, the prohibition followed by permission to eat bread, the taboo on singing the *paian* followed by singing. The most remarkable feature however are the details on the accompanying sentiments, in Polykrates' phrasing as recorded by Athenaios, a sequence of mourning for Hyakinthos, *penthos*, followed by joy, *khara*, and abundant mass festivity. During the *penthos* phase the Spartans dined with restraint *eutaxia*, ('order and gravity,' Pettersson 1992:26, *cf.* Bruit 1990), the subsequent *panegyris* offered a *thea poikile*, 'colourful spectacle,' with boys engaged in music performances, parades on adorned horses, chorus song and dancing, girls luxuriously dressed competing with decorated horse carts, the whole city is in a condition of action (*kinesei*) and festive joy. A clear contrast to the restraint and mourning of the preceding rite for Hyakinthos. The hero-god complex then is responsible for the modulation of the ritual programme affecting (perishable) objects, behaviour and sentiments, none of which will leave traces in archaeological material.

It may be due to accidents of historical record that similar details are not widely known from other cult descriptions. This may however make us cautious about drawing conclusions on the basis of meagre informations from brief epigraphic or sober literary sources, and *a fortiori* from archaeological evidence. It is precisely the minutiae of the living performance, with its manipulations of symbols, orchestrating of behaviours and modulation of sentiments, that gives us the clue to understanding the celebration.

Various interpretations have been offered for the hero-god-athletic contest complex. Henri Jeanmaire interprets these unlucky young heroes as the prototypes of initiands (Jeanmaire 1939:340ff.). This may have been the case earlier, but the celebrations in which they are embedded are definitely collective rites, not just initiation ceremonies. Walter Burkert, referring to the etymology of the Nemean

99 *FGrH* 588 F 1 Jacoby (Ath. 4.139d–f); *cf.* Eur. *Alc.* 445–451; Sch. Theokr. *Id.* 5.83bd; Paus. 3.19.3–5. Athens may be another instance. Here the fatal events causing the death of Androgeos are equally related to athletic events (Paus. 1.1.4; *cf.* Hesych. p. 578 *s.v.* εὐρυγύηι ἀγών). According to Jeanmaire Androgeos was celebrated on the occasion of the *Theseia* (*cf.* Jeanmaire 1939:340f. without sources. For the myth see Plut. *Thes.* 15; Diod. Sic. 4.60).

heros Archemoros, his name sounding like 'Anfang des Todes,' suggests that the sports event represented a 'Vor-Spiel des Krieges' (1988:38f.).

Gunnel Ekroth suggests that the *enagisma* rituals for heroes include situations of crisis, for example violent death, pollution and danger, resolved with the appeasement of the deceased with *enagismata.*[100] She includes parallels with the blood offerings presented to the winds and the sea before departure on a voyage, in which cases it is obvious that they aim at controlling imminent danger. The same may be the case in the taking of oaths (Scullion 1994:95f., Ekroth 1999:198), but here we should definitely abandon the individualistic perspective and seriously include the reality of communal responsibility. Oath taking per definition includes two parties, taken in a situation which is of course potentially fraught with strife. Similar blood rituals are prominent in extraordinary situations such as the *sphagia*, in the immediacy of battle (Scullion 1994:95f., Ekroth 1999:216ff.). The ordered hoplite attack is a collective action *par excellence* and the *sphagia* with their elusive recipients may likewise be understood as an instance where dissolution of group solidarity threatens and the internal cohesion of the warrior group is put to a critical test (Vernant 1988).[101]

Although the classification of chthonic *vs.* Olympic is not warranted, it is possible then to identify certain powers involved in renunciatory rites, a prominent characteristic being their ambivalence,[102] powers which are prepared to spend blessings as well as prone to anger (Scullion 1994:94).[103] Zeus Polieus, in his cults at Kos and in Athens is an instance: he is worshipped in a renunciatory mode followed by a banquet sacrifice and he has connections with agriculture (Scullion

100 The author discusses several literary examples (Ekroth 1999:65–68, 206ff.). She thinks that, once the crisis was removed, these offerings became institutionalised (Ekroth 1999:73ff., 197, 261f.). However Ekroth suggests that these regular offerings 'may have begun as a response to a particular situation,' but their institutionalisation 'can also be seen as an attempt to control a potentially difficult situation in advance through sacrifices' (Ekroth 1999:269). However, it is difficult to assume that after a crisis, 'sacrifices of this kind continued to be standard ritual ...' or 'a reminder of the bloodshed' (Ekroth 1999:207, 269) for no other reasons than memorial. Such an interpretation adopts the emic perspective, the meaning to the ritual community, who normally offers an exegesis for their practice which may not be the real motive for the performance of the ritual, seen from the etic perspective. In any case the memorial celebration is bound to have been felt meaningful to the actual participants.

101 Following Arthur D. Nock both Scullion and Ekroth suggest to call these blood rites 'heilige Handlungen,' as opposed to normal practice, or 'high intensity' *vs.* 'low intensity' sacrifice, a terminology proposed by van Baal, the marked term being signalled by *e.g.* black colour and abnormal treatment of the victim or libation (Scullion 1994:95, Ekroth 1999:266f., Nock 1944:158).

102 'Ambivalence is not, however, unrelieved nastiness, so that forms of worship reflecting assurance or cautious assurance of chthonian good will need not surprise us' (Scullion 1994:118). For the perceptions of the 'chthonians' in Athenian drama, see Henrichs 1991, who observes a polarity within these powers themselves simultaneously manifesting 'Zorn und Güte, Fluch und Segen, Gedeihen und Verderben, Hungersnot und Nahrungsfülle' (166).

1994:85f., 89f., 100, Ekroth 1999:197). We may however observe that the divinity's epithet suggests that not only the fertility of the soil is at stake but the well-being of the community as such. In the Athenian ritual a strange myth of guilt and appeasement after barrenness is involved (Burkert 1972:153–161, 1983:136–143). Another example are the Erinyes/Eumenides whose ambivalence is expressed in their very names. The Erinyes are associated with curses, that is feud, their special force being to provoke revenge, while as Eumenides they are benign, as is illustrated by Aiskhylos' *Eumenides* (Scullion 1994:91).

Examples from the Hebrew Bible adduced by Scullion demonstrate a relationship between the opposition of renunciatory *vs.* participatory offerings and that of impurities or offences *vs.* well-being in a celebratory atmosphere, offering 'a close parallel' for the type of sacrificial programme we are exploring (Scullion 1994:101f.). Those powers who demand destruction of a victim or other anomalies, for example exceptional libations, seem then to be associated with the pervasive need to avoid crisis, calling for rites averting evil, in mild or dramatic forms. Here it may again be appropriate to remind of the fact that when analysing the efforts made to avoid crisis and promote well-being, we should do so not within an individualistic perspective, focusing on the individual's anxieties, but within the perspective of the community. If renunciatory rites were performed collectively in advance of dangerous interprises, we should not forget the fact that it is the participants as a collective body that are affected by the sacrifices.

The examples suggest Victor Turner's analysis of sacrifice. Drawing attention to the fact that sacrifice is a complex phenomenon, Turner underscores its personal as well as social aspects, and in particular its capacity of transforming.[104] As a social phenomenon sacrifice has an impact upon the relationship between members of a community,[105] repairing or preventing social schism. Turner assumes two basic types of sacrifice: those that serve the prophylactic aim of preventing social

103 For a collection of revengeful heroes, who may turn benvolent see Foucart 1918. *Cf.* Aesch. *Supp.* 24ff. opposing the gods above, ὕπατοι θεοί το τηε βαρύτιμοι (punishing severely *LSJ*) χθόνιοι θήκας κατέχοντες.

104 'Most sacrifices ... are intended to transform the moral state of those who offer them ...' (Turner 1992:111). Turner's focus is upon 'its existential rather than on its taxonomic, structural, or other cognitive capacities' (*idem* 100).

105 'Almost any way of structuring a society—tribal, feudal, oriental despotic, bureaucratic, and so on—into hierarchical or segmentary arrangements of corporate groups, levels of authority, statuses, and roles produces conflicts, either through defects in social engineering or through the disparity between men's aspirations and their achievements, leading to frustration, jealousy, envy, and covetousness, and other "deadly sins" of social structure. Ritual concepts such as pollution, purification, sacrifice, and the like emerge from the recognition that social groups, in the course of time, get increasingly clogged by these negative sentiments .... But human society as a whole has been around long enough for it to have developed all kinds of cultural means for periodically striving to cleanse the polluted generic bond ...' (Turner 1992:96).

schism and those that heal schism in atonement and abandonment. While 'prophylactic' forms 'prevent or guard against pollution or inauspicious interventions,'[106] in forms of 'abandonment' renunciatory offerings dominate.[107] At the personal level these kinds of sacrifice are directed to the interiority, promoting psychic concentration, while subsequent forms of festive sacrifice are by nature s ocial in character. Specific metaphysical powers may be invoked which may contribute to transforming mental conditions and inducing an atmosphere of abandonment.[108]

Arriving at this point I would suggest that in the Greek ritual complex both may be involved, subtly modulated in an extended programme.[109] The hero-divinity polarity with its contrasting *enagisma*-before-*thusia* sacrifice may be a manifestation of a sacrificial complex of abandonment, more specific, the crucial need to heal social schisms potentially breaking into the celebration, while purifications may be prophylactic gestures. Aitiological myths telling a tale of tragic death demanding atonement seem particularly appropriate to orchestrate and channel collective sentiments.

Victor Turner adduces in fact ancient Greek practices and beliefs and interprets the powers of the underworld as associated with 'decay and excrement' (Turner 1992:96), a view which would explain the involvement of the dead and tombs in rites of abandonment. These powers may be metaphors for sentiments of gloom and guilt accompanying a social meeting of people ridden with strife, while ritual gestures may be invented in order to heal these sentiments and to help transform the participants.[110] The gestures of renunciation may prompt the community to give up antagonisms and ease the individual's preparedness to communal and solidary participation in the joyful celebration to follow. What may be going on are

106 Turner 1992:107.

107 'Sacrifice [of abandonment] is one very important means of restoring the flow .... To give up is often painful. Here to give up in sacrifice is a necessary piece of social surgery. For the Invisibles the sacrifice would be a gift; for men, an atonement' (Turner 1992:105); 'Renunciatory sacrifices stress the interiority of the act: prophylactic sacrifices, the performative, institutionalized details' (*idem* 112).

108 In the case of the dark powers with their ambivalent character this interpretation makes eminent sense: the fact that they are to be appeased but at the same time are expected to send their blessings supports their function as interiorising forces, transforming the individual mentally. Turner adduces as an example 'morally active ancestral spirits and personalized powers of nature' (Turner 1992:95), who threaten the living until the latter, through renunciation and spiritual introversion, are reconciled with these powers and among themselves.

109 The slaying of the bull for Zeus Polieus in Athens and at Kos including a sequence focusing upon blame and 'collective responsibility,' with its concomitant aitiological myth and exegesis (Scullion 1994:85–87), may be a symbolic expression of the prevailing mood of the occasion. For an interesting discussion of the mentality of countering (collective) anxiety by renunciation see Versnel 1977.

complex processes which, as Turner suggests, aim at moulding the individual members of a community, the Many, into the communal One.[111]

The community assembling at Olympia was of course not an existing coherent social body, let alone a community characterised by solidarity. Still they defined themselves as an ethnic group, with a well defined boundary excluding all non-Hellenes. While focusing on the extremely arduous achievements and the immensely high demands the arrangement imperceptly created boundaries between those who were entitled to compete and those who were excluded.[112] And while single participants and communities engaged in fierce rivalry they were transformed through the collective evocations, sacrificial gestures and moulded sentiments. We may assume that their aggressive energy was fused into an orchestrated experience of some sense of common cultural and historical identity.[113]

At least by the turn of the sixth century the dispersed Hellenic *poleis* and *ethne* converged from an 'us' integration (local groups distinguishing themselves from non-Hellenic groups) towards a 'we' integration' (focusing on an overarching shared identity, Malkin 2001).[114] As such the pilgrimage assemblage was in need of creating some form of bonding, in ethnic identity.[115] It did so by engaging in death symbolism as well as symbols of rebirth. 'Death symbols indicate the end of a bad era; birth and growth symbols, the hopeful beginning of a good one' (Turner 1992:95f.). The uncanny dark celebration of Pelops gave way to the bright and joyous festivity of Zeus, the renunciatory dark offerings sent to the realm of the

110 'The Invisibles are prompted to action. Some Invisibles, such as African creatures of witchcraft or the Greek powers of the underworld, the chthonic deities, are held to increase the disturbance .... These have to be placated, bribed to go away. One does not eat with them in communion. They are given the wholly burned offering, the totally immolated sacrificial object. They are the powers of the "joyless sacrifice," as the Ibo understand it and what Jane Harrison called the "rites of aversion" .... The Invisibles of the Ibo joyful sacrifice, of Harrison's "rites of service," are the powers of joyful order, who seek from men repentance and atonement and the restoration of the basic social bond ...' (Turner 1992:104).

111 Turner 1992:95, *cf.* 112.

112 For the sources mentioning exclusion of non-Hellenes Hdt. 5.22; Aeschin. 1.138; Philostr. *Gym.* 25, *cf.* Muth 1979:180. For the exclusion of slaves Crowther 1992. For the exclusion of *xenoi* from more restricted cults see Butz 1996. For the historical tradition of instituting funeral games for historical persons functioning as communal forces see Lynn E. Roller. In this tradition 'the involvement of the community with the athletic festival was often further emphasized by restricting participation to citizens of the particular city' (Roller 1981:11).

113 I envisage a process like that of the Palio festival of Siena as analysed by Don Handelman, where the intense rivalry of the contradas is subsumed under the overarching authority of the Virgin (Handelman 1982:168ff.).

114 For the gradual way Hellenic 'Ethnogenese' came about, see Ulf 1996:266ff.

115 '... transforming the group as a whole, and its main individual members, from a social state of mutual antagonism to a social state of communitas' (Turner 1992:95).

dead were followed by the communal meal. The 'bad era' was evoked in the Pelops ritual. The gloomy rituals of mourning, the 'heilige Handlungen,' helped transform the pilgrimage body from aggressively affronting their fellows into humbly cooperating in ritual communality and commensality in the service of the belief in their religious destiny. Initially promoting their individual poleis by establishing separate 'communal houses' in the panhellenic sanctuaries,[116] they coalesced into a stronger sense of unity after the Persian wars, creating an overarching Hellenic ethnic consciousness. The athletic contests added a forceful magnet in the service the celebration of a common ethnic core. The 'good era' was summoned by associations of growth in crops or human beings displayed in the stadion settings and the festive performances of vital force, celebrations of renewal, expressed in the *phyllobolia* of the victors and the epinikion, the glorification of the 'eternally youthful males.'[117]

Conclusions

If Delphi was the 'navel' of Hellenic culture, the theological centre from which new settlements departed and verbal council was gathered, Olympia was its cosmic and ethnic centre,[118] the space where a cognitive order was upheld, and the cosmos was laid out from Olympos through the human world to the realm of heroes, where Kronos' primordial age was linked to the present age along the string of Olympiads. While the oracle in Delphi blessed colonial missions on departure to the new world (Malkin 1987:17-31), Olympia regularly brought their descendants temporarily back to the old world.

Departing from their particularistic and exclusive polis shrines they travelled on pilgrimage to the inclusive sky of Zeus, the guarantor of *oikos* and *polis*, and of universal social values. Familiar powers as Gaia and Themis reminded them of

116 So the dedications commonly labelled '*thesauroi/naioi/oikoi*' should be called, according to Louis Dyer, who wonders why this tradition disappears after the Persian wars (Dyer 1905:209). These panhellenic sanctuaries were areas for conspicuous display by the wealthy inner circle of the Hellenic community (Hölscher 2001), in contrast to a sanctuary like Cape Tainaron visited by the poor and outsiders (Sinn 2000b).

117 I will further develop this in a separate paper in S. des Bouvrie (ed.) *Myth and symbol* II (*Papers from the Norwegian Institute at Athens* 7) forthcoming.

118 It is difficult to agree with Irad Malkin who in an otherwise subtle article states 'there never was a Greek center' (Malkin 2001:14). Possibly he adheres too much to Fredrik Barth's 'there is no core ethnicity' (*op. cit.* 12). Barth has been criticised for being equally sceptical of 'culture.' I refer to Richard Shweder's argument, that whereas 'culture' does not imply passive and uncritical adoption of a homogenous set of values, there are still 'community-specific ideas about what is true, good, beautiful, and efficient,' and while they may be contested, 'only enough has to be shared for a people to recognise itself as a cultural community' (Shweder in Borofski, Barth, Shweder *et al.* 2001:437, 439).

their common 'mother land' and their overarching normative order. This symbolic magnetism was strengthened by the quest for supreme glory. The magnetic pull of the contests secured the perennial ritual collaboration between fiercely competing communities still condemned to celebrating their common destiny.

Proceeding from Elis in procession they reached for sacrificial communality. During the dark hero-phase the participants indulged in the desolation of mutual humility and disarming abandonment, during the divine phase brief jubilation of 'communitas,' however ephemeral, was celebrated. They were not driven towards *homonia*, they met due to an ingrained urge for ethnic identity, this cultural urge going beyond social solidarity or political cooperation.

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