JAN N. BREMMER

Becoming a Man in Ancient Greece and Rome

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Essays on Myths and Rituals of Initiation

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In gratitude

Ken Dowden

Fritz Graf

Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1930–2006)

Preface

Many scholars have special interests that drive them to return again and again to specific subjects. Throughout my career I have remained fascinated by ancient myths and rituals of *initiation*, mainly those involving the transition of boys into manhood. This interest may well have something to do with my own coming of age during the 1960s, a period that saw an unprecedented explosion of youth culture. It was certainly in the late 1960s that the most influential studies of ancient initiation first appeared, attracting the attention of a number of classical scholars belonging to roughly the same age group: Claude Calame, Fritz Graf, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1945–2008), Jack Winkler (1943–1990) and myself. Despite the added impetus provided by the ongoing cultural revolution of the time, scholarly interest in this topic was not a wholly new phenomenon. Rather, it had its origins in two different approaches, the ethnographical and the Indo-European, which, as we shall see below, merged in the course of time.

Before considering the matter in more depth, it will be useful to state briefly what I mean by male initiation. Unlike in contemporary Western society, where reaching adulthood is often a protracted and, not infrequently, difficult process, most tribal societies proclaimed their young men to be adult at a specific moment in time. They effectuated this sudden transition by making the boys pass through a special ritual, initiation, which varied in detail from tribe to tribe and from community to community, but which nevertheless shows a remarkable family resemblance in structure and content all over the world. After this transition, the boys were treated as adults and were expected to behave accordingly. The initiation of girls has received much less attention from anthropologists, not least because most of the earlier students of initiation were male. It seems that both male and female initiation shared many of the same characteristics, but that the initiation of girls was more closely connected to the first menstruation and/or to marriage.[1]

The structure of tribal initiatory rituals usually follows the famous triad delineated by Arnold van Gennep: rite of separation, liminality, and rite of incor-

[1] For an exemplary analysis of girls' initiation, see A. Richards, *Chisungu: a girl's initiation ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1957). For Greece, see K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden* (London and New York, 1989); C. Calame, *Les Choeurs de jeunes filles en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 2019[3]).

poration (*rite de séparation*, *rite de marge* and *rite d'aggrégation*).[2] First, the adolescents were separated from their family, often by way of abduction. After this separation, they had to pass through a time that was, in some cases, completely different from either childhood or their future adult life. During this period, which could last in different places for anywhere between a few days and several years, novices underwent changes in hairstyle, clothing, food, place of habitation and behaviour. They were often subjected to various kinds of humiliation and tests of their powers of endurance. In this same period, however, they were also introduced into the social, cultural and religious traditions of their tribe, usually by way of singing and dancing, and they were prepared for their future role as husbands. Among some tribes, this marginal period was even conceived of as a kind of death, and the initiates were accordingly symbolically buried or addressed as 'shades'. Finally, the return of the novices into society, which was occasionally seen as a rebirth, often took place via a public procession during a great festival.[3]

In tribal societies, then, these rites of initiation performed functions similar to those of schools in modern society. Through this formal education, the new generations learned how to behave and how to guarantee the continuation of their society. In this sense, initiation and modern education are not essentially different. Schematically, we could say that they are rather the two extremes of a spectrum which runs from initiation in tribal societies, which usually contains a maximum of symbolism and a minimum of instruction, to education in Western industrialised societies, which are characterised by a maximum of instruction and a minimum of symbolism. In all cases, however, the formation of the new generation was and still is treated as an important focus of attention for the whole community.

The Greeks had no specific term for 'initiation', although the names of various initiatory rituals and festivals have survived.[4] As with ritual in general in

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[2] A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris, 1909), translated as *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago and London, 1960). For van Gennep (1873–1957), see N. Belmont, *Arnold van Gennep: the creator of French ethnography* (Chicago, 1979); D. Fabre and Ch. Laurière (eds), *Arnold Van Gennep: du folklore à l'ethnographie* (Paris, 2018).

[3] The best survey of tribal male and female initiation is still A. Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi* (Rome, 1969) 13–112; see also J.L. Brain, 'Sex, Incest and Death: initiation rites reconsidered', *Current Anthropology* 18 (1977) 191–208 (with rich bibliography); J.P. Schjødt, *Initiation between Two Worlds: structure and symbolism in Pre-Christian Scandinavian religion* (Odense, 2008) 22–49. For the difficulty of adapting these rites to modern times, see H. Janssen, 'Initiation Rites in Africa: tradition and crisis', *Zs. f. Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 64 (1980) 81–92.

[4] See, especially, H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes* (Lille, 1939); Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi*, 112–480; P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le Chasseur noir* (Paris, 1983²) 125–207; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1985) 260–64, 448–49 (excellent short survey); A. Moreau, 'Initiation en Grèce antique', *DHA* 18 (1992) 191–244; F. Graf, 'Initiationsriten in der antiken Mittelmeerwelt', *Der altsprachliche Unterricht* 36.2 (1993) 29–40 = 'L'iniziazione nel mondo mediterraneo',

Greece, we, as modern scholars, construct a whole and use comparative terms, while the ancient Greeks were more occupied with the individual parts.[5] When we use the term 'initiation', we therefore apply an etic term, which is inspired by the ethnographic evidence. Keeping this in mind, let us now turn to the historiography.

Modern research starts with Heinrich Schurtz's *Altersklassen und Männerbünde*, published in 1902, which shows the importance of men's societies and men's houses for non-European peoples.[6] However, it seems that this book only became influential in the wake of the 1908 publication of *Primitive Secret Societies* by the American sociologist and anthropologist Hutton Webster.[7] Just a few years after Webster's work, there appeared, almost at the same time, three studies which compared the initiatory systems of Crete and Sparta with those of tribal societies.

In 1912, the creative, but at times over-speculative, Jane Harrison published her *Themis*, which begins with a detailed analysis of the famous hymn to Zeus from Cretan Palaikastro.[8] The book contains the typical catchwords of the time, such as 'mana', 'totemism' and 'tabu', but also 'initiation'. The latter is the key concept for Harrison's interpretation of the hymn, which praises Zeus as 'most mighty youth' (1: *kouros*); it also describes the leaping and dancing of his young followers, whom later sources unanimously identify as the Kouretes, the male youths on the brink of adulthood (see below).[9] While our sources provide

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Aufidus 7 (1994) 23–35. Old but still useful: L. Grasberger, *Erziehung und Unterricht im klassischen Alterthum*, 3 vols (Würzburg, 1864–81).

[5] See also J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 2021²) 44.

[6] Graf, 'Initiation', 5, cf. H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde: Eine Darstellung der Grundformen der Gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1902). For Schurtz (1863–1903), who was *Assistent* in the Bremen Museum für Völker- und Handelskunde, see the obituaries by F. Ratzel, *Deutsche geographische Blätter* 26 (1903) 51–63 and V. Hantzsch, *Biographisches Jahrbuch und deutscher Nekrolog* 8 (1905) 30–34; note also J. Reulecke, 'Das Jahr 1902 und die Ursprung der Männerbund-Ideologie in Deutschland', in G. Völger and K. Welck (eds), *Männerbünde–Männerbande*, 2 vols (Cologne, 1990) 1.3–10. For the Greek appropriation of the men's house, the *leschê*, see J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden, 2008) 154–67.

[7] H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908). For Webster (1875–1955), see his *Genealogical and Autobiographical Note*s (Palo Alto, 1952), which, curiously, does not mention his book on secret societies.

[8] J.E. Harrison, *Themis: a study of the social origins of Greek religion* (Cambridge, 1912) 1–29. For the hymn, see W.D. Furley and J.M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 2001) 1.65–75, 2.1–20. For the sanctuary: K. Sporn, *Heiligtümer und Kulte Kretas in klassischer und hellenistischer Zeit* (Heidelberg, 2002) 45–49; M. Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries and Cults* (Leiden, 2005) 350–53. For Harrison (1850–1928), see Bremmer, *The World*, 533–37 (with bibliography).

[9] Eur. *Bacch.* 120–25; Corinna, *PMG* 654i 12–16; Call. *H. Zeus* 52–53; Strabo 10.3.11; Diod. Sic. 5.65, 70; Hyginus, *Fab.* 139.3; Apollod. 1.1.6; schol. Pind. *O.* 5.42b; this volume, Chapters 1.5 and 4.1. The statue of a beardless Zeus on Crete, probably in the sanctuary of Palaikastro, supports the connection with local initiation, cf. *Et. Magnum* 276.19: ἐνταῦθα δὲ Διὸς ἄγαλμα ἀγένειον ἵστατο.

very little information about Cretan dances, it is plausible that the ecstatic dances of the Kouretes belonged to the final stages of their adolescence, as the ethnographic sources mention that dances occurred at the end of the initiation.[10]

Whereas the hymn is from Crete, it was Sparta that served as the focus of a much more detailed study in the same year by Martin P. Nilsson, *the* authority on Greek religion during the middle of the twentieth century. Like Harrison, Nilsson explicitly mentions Schurtz and Hutton, and also compares the Spartan initiation rituals to those of indigenous societies, such as the Namibian Herrero and Australian Aborigines. But unlike Harrison, he additionally observes that the oldest cohort of young males can develop into the retinue of a chief's son, noting the similarity of this occurrence with the Cretan initiation, in which the son of an elite Cretan assembles other boys around him (Chapter 11.1: see also below).[11]

Nilsson briefly mentions the Spartan *krypteia* in his analysis and remarks that it reminds him of the cruel and crafty Red Indians of the *Indianerbücher*, which he, presumably, had read in his youth, as I did myself. Only one year later, Henri Jeanmaire concentrated on the same Spartan institution by comparing it to the initiatory practices that emerge from the evidence presented by Schurtz and Webster,[12] although paying more attention to the ethnographic material than to the Greek evidence.[13] After the First World War, however, such anthropological comparisons went out of fashion.[14] Classics turned inwards and social anthropology moved away from the kind of big armchair comparisons found in Frazer's *Golden Bough*, instead adopting the functionalist paradigm and propagating field work as the correct approach to the study of tribal communities.[15]

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[10] Ephoros *FGrHist* 70 F149 *apud* Strabo 10.4.21; Janko on *Il.* 16.617–19 (Cretan dancers); F. Graf, 'Tanz und Initiation in der griechisch-römischen Antike', in M. Möckel and H. Volkmann (eds), *Spiel, Tanz und Märchen* (Regensburg, 1995) 83–96; A. L. D'Agata, 'The Power of Images: a figured krater from Thronos Kephala (ancient Sybrita) and the process of *polis* formation in Early Iron Age Crete', *SMEA* 54 (2012) 207–47, and 'Warrior Dance, Social Ordering and the Process of *Polis* Formation in Early Iron Age Crete', in K. Soar and C. Aamodt (eds), *Archaeological Approaches to Dance Performance* (Oxford, 2014) 75–83.

[11] M. P. Nilsson, 'Die Grundlagen des spartanischen Lebens', *Klio* 12 (1912) 308–40; more recently: N. M. Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: education and culture in ancient Sparta* (Chapel Hill and London, 1995); J. Ducat, *Spartan Education: youth and society in the Classical period* (Swansea, 2006). For Nilsson (1874–1967), see Bremmer, *The World*, 13–16 (with bibliography).

[12] H. Jeanmaire, 'La cryptie lacédémonienne', *REG* 26 (1913) 121–50; see also this volume, Chapter 8.1. For Jeanmaire (1884–1960), see L. Gernet, *REG* 73 (1960) xxxviii–xxxix; A.-J. Festugière, 'Henri Jeanmaire', *École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses. Annuaire* 1960–1961, 62–64. For the *krypteia*, see this volume, Chapter 8, note 27.

[13] As observed by M. Lupi, 'Sparta Compared: ethnographic perspectives in Spartan studies', in A. Powell and S. Hodkinson (eds), *Sparta: beyond the mirage* (Swansea and London, 2002) 305–22 at 307 f.

[14] See also the observations by M. Mauss, *Oeuvres* III (Paris, 1969) 451–54 (1935[1]).

[15] Classics: H. Flashar (ed.), *Altertumswissenschaft in den 20er Jahren: neue Fragen und Impulse* (Stuttgart, 1995). Anthropology: H. Kuklick, *The Savage Within: the social history of*

What is noteworthy, in retrospect, about these early studies is that they all concentrated on the Dorian areas of ancient Greece, as if the ethnographic parallels on which they drew had nothing to contribute to a better understanding of other parts of Greece. It is also striking in retrospect that they all concentrated on ethnographic parallels. This was the era of the Indian summer of colonialism, and reports from travellers and missionaries were flooding in thick and fast, providing scholars with a wealth of sources with which to work. Yet much evidence had already disappeared or was in the process of disappearing. For example, in the early eighteenth century, the erudite Jesuit Father Lafitau could still compare ancient Spartan and Cretan customs with those actually observed among, for example, the Hurons and the Iroquois. But around 1900 many native American tribes had already disappeared because of white violence or European illnesses, and analogous situations prevailed in many other parts of the world .[16]

The work of Schurtz and Webster also had an influence on students of Indo-European societies, our second historiographical strand. This development began in the later 1920s and earlier 1930s with German and Austrian studies of Germanic and Scandinavian rites of initiation and men's societies.[17] These works were often driven by an idea of Germanic continuity, an over-accentuation of the tie between men's societies and the dead, and sympathy with the Nazi movement.[18] Yet despite conveying ideas that are, to say the very least, politically nefarious, these studies still offer some interesting suggestions and associations.[19] In the later 1930s, ideas about initiation and men's societies began to influence various Scandinavian scholars, mainly as a result of their personal

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British anthropology, 1885–1945 (Cambridge, 1991); J. Goody, *The Expansive Moment: anthropology in Britain and Africa, 1918–1970* (Cambridge, 1995). Field work: J.N. Bremmer, 'De genealogie van de term veldwerk', in C. Gietman *et al.* (eds), *Huis en habitus* (Hilversum, 2017) 33–35.

[16] J.-F. Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages amériquaines comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps*, 2 vols (Paris, 1724) 2.283–96. For Lafitau (1681–1746), see the excellent annotated English translation: *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, tr. W.N. Fenton and E.L. Moore, 2 vols (Toronto, 1974–1977); A. Motsch, *Lafitau et l'emergence du discours ethnographique* (Sillery, 2001); M. Mulsow, 'Joseph-François Lafitau und die Entdeckung der Religions- und Kulturvergleiche', in M. Effinger *et al.* (eds), *Götterbilder und Götzendiener in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Heidelberg, 2012) 37–47.

[17] See, especially, L. Weiser, *Altgermanische Jünglingsweihen und Männerbünde* (Bühl, 1927); for Weiser (1898–1989), see H.-P. Weingand, '"Sonst ist es natürlich sehr still und einsam für mich, aber die Bücher helfen gut." Lily Weiser-Aall und ihre Handlungsräume im besetzten Norwegen 1940–1945', *SAV* 115 (2019) 41–60; O. Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* I (Frankfurt, 1934); for the controversial Höfler (1901–1987), see, for example, H. Birkhan, 'Otto Höfler. Nachruf', *Almanach der Österr. Akad. d. Wiss.* 138 (1988) 385–406.

[18] Cf. H. Junginger (ed.), *The Study of Religion under the Impact of Fascism* (Leiden, 2008); S.D. Corrsin, '"One Single Dance Form like the Sword Dance Can Open Up a Whole Lost World": the Vienna ritualists and the study of sword dancing and secret men's unions between the World Wars', *Folklore* 121 (2010) 213–33; C. Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore, 2013^2) 114–31.

[19] For a brief, balanced evaluation, see Schjødt, *Initiation between Two Worlds*, 49–52.

contacts with the most influential scholar of this 'school',[20] Otto Höfler. These scholars showed the existence of such practices among the ancient Indians and Iranians, although in doing so they perhaps over-accentuated the importance of the men's societies.[21] In the case of Celtic traditions, by contrast, interest in these topics did not take root until the latter part of the twentieth century, although recent decades have seen the appearance of several fine studies that have concentrated in particular on the tales about the boyhood deeds of CúChulain and of Finn and his *fian*.[22]

The Indo-European studies were not taken into account by the two notable scholars who still applied the initiation paradigm: Henri Jeanmaire and Louis Gernet.[23] Both were rather shy men who spent most of their career working at the margins of French academia, and, as a result, did not achieve any great influence during their lifetimes. However, unlike in his earlier study on the *krypteia*, in his wide-ranging study of Greek initiation rites published in 1939, Jeanmaire looked beyond the Dorian areas of Greece. The title of this work, *Couroi et Courètes*, refers to the male youth on the brink of adulthood, to whom we shall return in several places in the present volume (Chapters 1.10, 4.2, 15.2). In addition to considering Crete, Sparta and Delphi, Jeanmaire also included Athens in his study by focusing on Theseus. Theseus' youth is indeed replete with initiatory motifs, such as his education by his mother's father (Chapter 13.1), his feminine outfit (Chapter 8) and sacrifice of a bull,[24] his wandering with Peirithoos (Chapter 6), the trip to Crete with the battle against the Minotaur and the return

[20] Cf. M. Gasche, 'Die Beziehungen deutscher und skandinavischer Orientalisten im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus: Von traditionellen Banden, weltanschaulichen Brüchen und (teils) getrennten Wegen nach 1945', *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 4 (2016) 53–70.

[21] Especially S. Wikander, *Der arische Männerbund* (Lund, 1938); for Wikander (1908–1983), see M. Timuş, 'La bibliographie annotée de Stig Wikander (1908–1983)', *Studia Asiatica* 1–2 (2000) 209–34 and S. Arvidsson, 'Stig Wikander och forskningen om ariska mannaförbund', *Chaos* 38 (2002) 55–68; G. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran* (Uppsala and Leipzig, 1938) 311–51 and *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* (Cologne and Opladen, 1969); for Widengren (1907–1996), see A. Hultgård, 'Geo Widengren' = https://iranicaonline.org/articles/widengren-geo, accessed 15-11-2020. Recent evaluation: T. Daryaee, 'The Iranian *Männerbund* Revisited', *Iran and the Caucasus* 22 (2018) 38–49.

[22] Cf. J.F. Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw. The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1985); K. McKone, 'Hund, Wolf und Krieger bei den Indogermanen', in W. Meid (ed.), *Studien zum indogermanischen Wortschatz* (Innsbruck, 1987) 101–54; this volume, Chapters 1.7, 5.2 and 15.2.

[23] L. Gernet, *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1960) 154–71 ('Dolon le Loup', 1936[1]); many references to initiation also in the posthumously published notes of his *Polyvalence des images*, ed. A. Soldani (Pisa, 2004). For Gernet (1882–1962), see M. Freedman in M. Granet, *The Religion of the Chinese People* (Oxford, 1975) 4–5; S.C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London, 1978) 76–106, 283–88; R. Di Donato, *Per una antropologia storica del mondo antico* (Florence, 1990) 1–130; Bremmer, *The World*, 12–13.

[24] Cf. F. Graf, 'Apollon Delphinios', *MH* 36 (1979) 2–22 at 14–18, who shows the close connection of Theseus with the life of the Athenian ephebes.

to become king.[25] The antiquity of the Theseus myth, which probably goes back to the Bronze Age,[26] suggests the early existence of rites of initiation in ancient Greece, even though these have not (yet?) been attested in the Linear B texts.

The publication of Jeanmaire's book at the beginning of the Second World War did not help to spread his ideas or stimulate interest in initiation. Indeed, it was not until the end of the 1960s that initiation again appeared on the scholarly agenda. In 1968, Pierre Vidal-Naquet published his 'The Black Hunter and the Origin of Athenian Ephebeia',[27] in which he argued that the ephebe was a kind of anti-hoplite. His use of the terms 'cooked' and 'raw' betrays the influence of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009). More crucially, it has been justly argued against him that, instead of a simple opposition between ephebe and hoplite, we should rather think of 'the existence of a broad band of youthful status, rather than a polarity between marginal youth and incorporated adult: incorporation and socialisation take place over time'.[28] Nevertheless, Vidal-Naquet conclusively demonstrated that ancient rites of initiation had survived within Athenian civic practices, even if they had undergone various transformations.

Vidal-Naquet's influence in French academia and his excellent contacts with the Anglo-Saxon scholarly world contributed to his article becoming perhaps the most famous modern contribution to the study of ancient initiation. It certainly overshadowed the much more wide-ranging study of Greek male and female initiation by the Italian (but son of a Romanian father and a Hungarian mother)[29] Angelo Brelich. Having shown an interest in initiation in his early lectures and his still-fundamental work on the Greek heroes,[30] in 1969 Brelich went on to publish a study, *Paides e Parthenoi*, that paid considerable attention to the topic. His work began with a long discussion of global initiation rites that

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[25] Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes*, 228–378, whose analysis is refined by C. Calame, *Thésée et l'imaginaire athénien* (Paris, 2018[3]) 69–139.

[26] Cf. Fowler, *EGM* 2.468–71. For an origin of the Kouretes in the Bronze Age, see F. Graf, 'Ephesische und andere Kureten', in H. Friesinger and F. Krinzinger (eds), *100 Jahre Österreichische Forschungen in Ephesos* (Vienna, 1999) 255–62 at 260.

[27] P. Vidal-Naquet, 'The Black Hunter and the Origin of the Athenian Ephebeia', *PCPhS* NS 14 (1968) 49–64, which also appeared in French and Italian and received its definitive form in id., *Le Chasseur noir* (Paris, 1983[2]) 151–75; see also his 'Alexandre et les chasseurs noirs', in P. Savinel, *Arrien, Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand* (Paris, 1984) 355–65; 'The Black Hunter Revisited', *CCJ* 32 (1986) 126–44; 'Retour au chasseur noir', in J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *La Grèce ancienne 3: Rites de passage et transgressions* (Paris, 1992) 215–51 and his *Mémoires*, 2 vols (Paris, 1995–1998) 2.222–30. For Vidal-Naquet (1930–2006), see his *Mémoires* and F. Dosse, *Pierre Vidal-Naquet. Une vie* (Paris, 2020); note also O. Murray, 'The Reception of Vernant in the English-speaking World', *History of Classical scholarship* 2 (2020) 131–57.

[28] Thus, incisively, J. Ma, 'The Return of the Black Hunter', *CCJ* 54 (2008) 188–208 at 190.

[29] Cf. V.S. Severino *et al.*, 'Angelo Brelich, incroci tra Italia e Ungheria', *Historia religionum* 12 (2020) 41–86.

[30] A. Brelich, *Gli eroi greci* (Rome, 1958) index s.v. iniziazioni, and *Le iniziazioni. Parte seconda: sviluppi storici nelle civiltà superiori, in particolare nella Grecia antica* (Roma, 1961).

was based on much more solid ethnographic foundations than was Jeanmaire's discussion. Brelich then analysed Sparta, Crete, Arcadia and Athens, as well as a series of Greek festivals, to limit myself here to his treatments of male rites. He also persuasively argued that various religious festivals, such as the Hyakinthia and Karneia, incorporated features of initiation rituals, albeit reinterpreted. A very young Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood concluded her review of the volume as follows; '*Paides e Parthenoi* is undoubtedly written by a very brilliant man, and in masterly style. Its apparent authority should not disguise the fact that it must be used with caution'.[31] This is certainly correct. Yet it is also true that Brelich was a pioneer in analysing many Greek initiatory festivals and rites as having a basis in an initiatory past – analyses that have stood the test of time.[32]

Gradually, then, the whole of the Greek world was becoming the subject of studies of initiation, and not only the Dorian areas that had been focussed on at the beginning of the twentieth century. Brelich had cast his net widely, but there were still gaps in his survey, with Macedonia and Thessaly being perhaps the most important areas not to be considered. This vacuum was first filled in 1994 when the Greek ancient historian and Macedonian specialist Miltiades Hatzopoulos published a book on rites of passage in Macedonia in which he shows that the Macedonians also had their own initiatory rites for girls and for boys and that these were remarkably similar to those performed elsewhere in Classical Greece.[33] Inspired by him, subsequent studies have now also demonstrated the existence of comparable age classes and rites of passage in Thessaly.[34]

In the meantime, Fritz Graf, inspired by the warrior exploits of medieval Swiss youths,[35] had also embarked on a series of studies of initiatory rites in Greece, to which he compared the Indo-European evidence.[36] It is my acquaintance with him that led me in the same direction (Chapters 1, 5.2 and 15). Com-

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[31] C. Sourvinou-Inwood, review of Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi*, *JHS* 91 (1971) 172–77. For Sourvinou-Inwood (1945–2007), see the obituary by Robert Parker, *The Guardian* 31 May 2007; A. Kavoulaki (life and bibliography) in ead. (ed.), *Πλειών. Papers in Memory of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood* (Rhetymno, 2018) 1–20.

[32] Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi*. For Brelich (1913–1977), see the autobiography in his *Storia delle religioni, perché?* (Naples, 1979) 21–115; M.G. Lancellotti and P. Xella (eds), *Angelo Brelich e la storia delle religioni: temi, problemi e prospettive* (Verona, 2005).

[33] M.B. Hatzopoulos, *Cultes et rites de passage en Macédoine* (Athens, 1994).

[34] See, especially, S. Kravaritou, 'Cults and Rites of Passage in Ancient Thessaly', in M. Kalaitzi *et al*. (eds), *Βορειοελλαδικά … Essays in honour of Miltiades B. Hatzopoulos* (Athens, 2018) 377–95 (with thanks to Onno van Nijf).

[35] Cf. F. Graf, 'Von Knaben und Kämpfern. Hans-Georg Wackernagel und die Ritenforschung', in M.L. Heyer-Boscardin (ed.), *Wider das "finstere Mittelalter". Festschrift für Werner Meyer zum 65. Geburtstag* (Basel, 2002) 237–43.

[36] Cf. F. Graf, 'Apollon Delphinios' (1979); *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome, 1985) 89–90, 219–27, 415–17; 'Apollo Lykeios in Metapont', in A. Kalogeropoulou (ed.), *Praktika tou 8. Diethnous Synedriou Hellēnikēs kai Latinikēs Epigraphikēs*, 2 vols (Athens, 1984–1987) 2.242–45; *Greek Mythology* (Baltimore, 1993) 74, 107–09; 'Initiationsriten' (1993); 'Ephesische und andere Kureten' (1999); 'Initiation' (2003) and *Apollo* (London and New York, 2009) 103–29.

bining both the ethnographic and the Indo-European approach,[37] it seems reasonable to conclude that the proto-Greeks, when arriving in Greece sometime in the second millennium, brought with them a system of initiation that may plausibly be thought to be related to those that have been identified for the ancient Celtic, Germanic and Indo-Iranian peoples.

Which rites, then, did the early Greeks bring with them? It is obvious that such questions cannot be answered with any certainty and that our answers can, at best, only strive for plausibility. They certainly would have had a system of age sets,[38] which started perhaps around 16, if not sometimes earlier, and will have ended around 20. This system will have comprised the teaching of weapon skills, running, hunting, singing, dancing and, not to be forgotten, cunning, as we witness in the later sources for Crete and Sparta. However, it may have originally also included other aspects of Greek life, such as oaths, healing and sacrifice, given that these are mentioned as parts of the teaching of Cheiron, the mythical initiator *par excellence*.[39]

The early rites may have involved pederastic relationships as well (Chapters 11 and 12), but if they did not then we have no idea at what point pederasty was incorporated into initiation. Towards the end of the initiation, just before the *rite d'aggrégation*, there will have been a kind of transvestism (Chapters 8 and 9) and a period spent outside the civilised community, whether in outlying border areas or wandering further afield, a theme we will encounter repeatedly in this book (Chapters 1.7, 5.2, 6.3, 15.2). It seems that sometimes a group did not return to their original society. Instead, like the Roman *ver sacrum*,[40] they established a new community elsewhere, presumably not in an altogether peaceful manner (Chapter 15). One may even wonder whether such groups played a role in the Greek colonisation of Asia Minor, given the prominence of the Kouretes in Ephesus and of the Molpoi in Miletus, who seem to have been a comparable group.[41]

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[37] For the Indo-European evidence, the best survey is Widengren, *Feudalismus*, 64–101, but also see the balanced surveys in R.P. Das and G. Meiser (eds), *Geregeltes Ungestüm. Bruderschaften und Jugendbünde bei indogermanischen Völkern* (Bremen, 2002).

[38] Cf. N.M. Kennell, 'Age-Class Societies in Ancient Greece?', *Ancient Society* 43 (2013) 42–61.

[39] Cf. *Titanomachia* F 11 Bernabé = 6 Davies; Hes. F 283–85; Pherecrates F 162; C. Brillante, 'Crescita e apprendimento: l'educazione del giovane eroe', *QUCC* NS 37 (1991) 7–28; this volume, Chapter 3.3.

[40] Most recently, H.S. Versnel, *Transition & Reversal in Myth & Ritual* (Leiden, 1993) 304–09; F. Bartol, 'El ver sacrum del 217 a. C.', *Revista General de Derecho Romano* 11 (2008) 1–12; F. Diez de Velasco, 'Una interpretación ecológico-religiosa del ritual *ver sacrum*', in J.A. López Férez *et al.* (eds), *Πολυπραγμοσύνη. Homenaje al Profesor Alfonso Martínez Díez* (Madrid, 2016) 183–90; L. Sacco, 'VER SACRVM. Osservazioni storico-religiose sul rito italico e romano', *Chaos e Kosmos* 17–18 (2016–2017) 1–26.

[41] Kouretes: Graf, 'Ephesische und andere Kureten'. Molpoi: A. Herda, *Der Apollon-Delphinios-Kult in Milet und die Neujahrsprozession nach Didyma. Ein neuer Kommentar der sogenannten Molpoi-Satzung* (Mainz, 2006). Kouretes and Molpoi: Graf, *Apollo*, 110–13.

Our understanding of these early stages is complicated by the fact that, as the case of Theseus illustrates and as can also be seen in the ethnographic literature, the initiation of princes or elite youths sometimes seems to have differed from that of their peers.[42] These cases are even more complicated as we have to reconstruct them from myth, which not only reflects, but also refracts, clarifies, simplifies or dramatises reality.[43] Yet there seem to be certain patterns that are so close to ritual that it is plausible to think that they reflect once-practised rites. I would like to mention three examples.

First, in a number of cases, the sons of kings or members of the elite are educated by shepherds or are depicted acting as shepherds themselves. We find this theme not only in Greece, but also in Rome and in Persia (Chapter 6.3). This is probably a status reversal, which is a recurrent theme in depictions of the marginal period between adolescence and adulthood in Greece, as elsewhere.[44] A clear example is provided by the young Cretan boys who had to wear dirty clothes, sit on the ground in the men's house and wait on the adults, just as elite boys had to do at symposia in Athens and elsewhere (Chapter 12.1–2).

Second, several myths relate the defeat of a monster by a prince, such as Odysseus' defeat of the Cyclops (Chapter 2), Oedipus' defeat of the Sphinx (Chapter 10), Theseus' of the Minotaur,[45] Perseus' of the Gorgon,[46] and Meleager's victory over the monstrous Calydonian Boar (Chapter 4).[47] These myths suggest that the killing of an important enemy or dangerous animal was among the obligations that had to be fulfilled before attaining proper manhood. Such tests are even widespread in fairy tales, in which they have also been interpreted, at least partially, as initiatory motifs.[48] The Hellenistic author Hegesandros (*apud* Athen. 1.18a) reports that, among the Macedonians, a man could recline at dinner only when he had speared a boar without a hunting-net. In other words, he could only join the 'club' of adults after he had singlehandedly killed a boar during a hunt. It seems plausible to suppose that our myths reflect, albeit in

Neither Graf nor Herda compares the Athenian Eumolpids, who may well go back to a similar group.

[42] For various examples, see Brelich, *Paides e parthenoi*, 28, with notes 38–39.

[43] Cf. R. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece* (Cambridge, 1994) 87–88.

[44] For Turner's influential studies, see this volume, Chapter 1, Introduction.

[45] Theseus and Minotaur: Fowler, *EGM* 2.468–74; G. and E. Giudice, *I frammenti Beazley dal Persephoneion di Locri Epizefiri. Una ricostruzione iconografica* (Rome, 2018) 166–67 (iconographical evidence).

[46] Cf. L.J. Roccos, 'Perseus', in *LIMC* VII.1 (1994) 332–48; D. Ogden, *Perseus* (London and New York, 2008); E. Karamanou, *Euripides Danae and Dictys: introduction, text and commentary* (Leipzig, 2012) 1–17, 119–31; Fowler, *EGM* 2.253–58; M.H. Jameson, *Cults and Rites in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 2014) 22–40; D. Angileri, 'La *metis* di Perseo e Dedalo sull'oinochoe di bucchero della collezione Casuccini', *Mètis* NS 18 (2020) 221–31.

[47] For the boar hunt, albeit not always persuasive on the topic, see M.L. West, 'The Calydonian Boar', in J. Dijkstra *et al.* (eds), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity. Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of J.N. Bremmer* (Leiden, 2010) 3–11; this volume, Chapter 4.

[48] K. Horn, 'Prüfung', in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 11 (Berlin, 2004) 1–5.

dramatised form, this kind of requirement for youths of the elite. A likely variant of this theme is the fetching of a valuable and incredibly hard-to-acquire object, such as the Golden Fleece.[49] Indeed, the myth of Jason and the Argonauts is full of initiatory motifs, such as the wearing of one sandal,[50] the young age of the participants (Apoll. Rhod. 1.341, 448; 3.118, 246, etc.), the group of 50 (Chapters 8.2, 15.2),[51] and the presence of maternal uncles (Apoll. Rhod. 1.45, 201: Chapter 13.2).

Third, and last, after the defeat of the monster, Perseus marries Andromeda, just as Oedipus does Iocaste, whilst Jason weds Medea after returning with the Golden Fleece. In other words, in these myths there is a common connection between marriage and the end of the initiation. Indeed, we also hear that this was the case in Crete (Strabo 10.4.20), Samos (schol. *Il.* 14.296a) and the Troad (Ps.-Aeschines , *Ep.* 10.3–5); the collective marriage of the Danaids suggests the antiquity of such marriages, as, probably, does the myth of the Proitids.[52]

All these examples demonstrate that there is no straight line from myth to ritual, but that we have to continuously keep in mind that narratives have their own laws and logic. Narratives can even contain initiatory motifs without reflecting the whole or many elements of the initiatory ritual; employ them in wholly different constellations; or concentrate on specific elements, such as the birth of a hero or his stay in the wilderness. In the end, we should never forget that Greek myths were meant to tell a good story, with which the poets or other narrators had to entertain their listeners and readers.[53]

There are three more aspects of myths related to initiation that I would like to mention in this respect, as they feature in various of the chapters collected here. First, a number of myths relate that the prince, Oedipus for example, was not educated by his own parents but was, rather, fostered by another family until the puberty rites started. Often, this other family was his mother's relatives, either an uncle or the maternal grandfather. The common thread across

[49] For Jason, the Argonauts and the Golden Fleece see, most recently, J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near Eas*t (Leiden, 2008) 303–38; M.L. West, *Hellenica* I (Oxford, 2011) 277–312; Fowler, *EGM* 2.195–234; A. Debiasi, *Eumelo, la saga argonautica e dintorni. La documentazione papirologica* (Rome, 2020).

[50] Fowler, *EGM* 2.206–08, with older bibliography; add E.P. de Loos-Dietz, 'Le *Monosandalos* dans l'Antiquité', *BABESCH* 69 (1994) 175–97; R. Carboni, 'Divagazione sul tema del sandalo: significato e valenza tra la sfera celeste e quella ctonia', *Gaia* 16 (2013) 113–31; S. Blundell, 'One Shoe off and One Shoe on', in S. Pickup and S. Waite (eds), *Shoes, Slippers, and Sandals: feet and footwear in Classical Antiquity* (Abingdon and New York, 2018) 216–28.

[51] For other crews of 50, see *Il.* 2.719, 22.421–22; *Od.* 10.203–09; J.N. Bremmer, 'Oorsprong, functie en verval van de pentekonter', *Utrechtse Historische Cahiers* 11 (1990) 1–11.

[52] Danaids: T. Gantz. *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore, 1993) 203–06. Proitids: Fowler, *EGM* 2.169–78; Bremmer, *The World*, 40–41. Collective weddings: see the suggestive observations of Gernet, *Anthropologie*, 39–45, 203.

[53] As stressed by Fowler, *EGM* 2.xx-xxi; see also K. Dowden, 'Initiation: the key to myth?', in id. and N. Livingstone (eds), *A Companion to Greek Mythology* (Oxford, 2011) 487–505; S.I. Johnston, *The Story of Myth* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2018) 34–64.

myths seems to have run even deeper, with several myths mentioning a role for maternal uncles during the initiatory rites, as in the case of the Argonauts (Chapters 13 and 14). Apparently, when the coming-of-age rituals came to be organised by the *polis*, this family aspect disappeared, for it is no longer mentioned in historical times.

Second, as the myth of the Argonauts shows, Jason went to Colchis with a following of about 50 youths, just as Telemachos went in search of his father with a group of *hetairoi*, 'comrades', youths of the same age (*Od.* 3.363–64). It seems to have been a recurrent phenomenon until well into the Archaic Age that a prince was accompanied by a group of youths at the end of his coming-of-age period.[54] However, the disappearance of the noun *kouros*, 'youth', from spoken Ionic, as can be seen in Homer,[55] suggests that such groups were already disappearing in Homeric times (Chapter 1.10). It is likely that there was simply no longer any room for such enterprising groups of youths in the politically better ordered Archaic era.[56] Yet the fact that in Crete a young son from the elite was initiated together with boys of clearly lower social status suggests that the custom did survive into historical times in a version that was adapted to suit the political and social requirements of the period (Chapter 11.1).

Finally, whereas the ethnographic evidence collected by Schurtz and Webster often mentions the role of the adult males of the tribe as initiators of the youths, this aspect is almost invisible in ancient Greece. Perhaps the only trace of it is to be found in the myth of the Centaurs, where it is given prominence in the tradition concerning the Centaur Cheiron, who probably 'survived' as a result of his part in the myths of Achilles and Heracles. Burkert has called Centaurs 'the wild men of the woods who still belong to the context of initiation',[57] and their being a group does suggest a kind of men's society. But their location on Mt Pelion indicates a hoary antiquity, as does their relatively early disappearance from our tradition, and that is all we can say on the matter (Chapter 3).

With the Centaurs we come to the end of our survey. It should be obvious that this is a sketch in very broad strokes, as we cannot differentiate our myths in virtue of time or place due to lack of sources. In any case, many local communities and *ethnê* must have begun to develop their own characteristics already at

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[54] Cf. Ch. Ulf, *Die homerische Gesellschaft* (Munich, 1990) 131: 'Der Kern der sich um eine Führungsfigur gruppierenden Hetairoi dürfte sich in der Regel aus Gleichaltrigen rekrutieren', comparing *Il.* 5.325–26, 18.251; *Od.* 22.208–09, although this does not exclude the presence of older males (133–34).

[55] Cf. A. Hoekstra, *Epic Verse before Homer* (Amsterdam, 1981) 76–78.

[56] Compare the fate of the returning Trojan heroes, who could no longer find a place in the newly established order of the late Geometric period: R.L. Fowler, 'The *nostoi* and Archaic Greek Ethnicity', in S. Hornblower and G. Biffies (eds), *The Returning Hero* (Oxford, 2018) 43–63.

[57] W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1979) 30.

an early stage as it would otherwise be very hard to explain the striking differences between, say, Athens and Sparta. These differences were not static; with changing political and cultural circumstances, the initiation of the young will surely also have changed. The case of Sparta's militarisation is too well known to need discussion here, but it has been less noted that we have a close parallel for the militarisation of initiation rites in the tribe of Native Americans known as the Crow Nation, amongst whom we can observe the same development to an often surprisingly close degree.[58] In Athens, the training of the youth was put on a new footing in the later fourth century, although one that was not without roots in earlier practices,[59] while in Macedonia in the Hellenistic period the male rites became increasingly influenced by those of Athens.[60] In Hellenistic times, the *gymnasion* became *the* place for military training.[61] Even seemingly age-old institutions are not beyond the forces of history.

Having looked at the rites of initiation and their historiography, we now turn to the present book. This is not a systematic analysis of the ancient rites of male initiation. Originally, the articles should have been part of the second volume of my *Collected Essays*.[62] However, their inclusion would have swelled the volume beyond an affordable size, so they are published here in their own collection. All of the articles gathered here discuss elements of ancient rites of initiation, but they offer a kaleidoscopic view rather than a systematic analysis. The reason is plain: they were all written for different occasions, ranging from a volume on wilderness (Chapter 3) via one on ancient descents into the underworld (Chapter 6) to a collection on the symposium (Chapter 12). Yet they all discuss initiatory aspects of ancient myths and rituals, and at the end of the book the reader should have a good idea, albeit through the prism of myth, of, especially, the earlier forms of those rites.

The book starts with an analysis of the myths of the Trojan War. It is evidently the adventurous analysis of an early-career scholar, written 'in high spirits' as

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[58] Cf. J. Lear, *Radical Hope: ethics in the face of cultural devastation* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2006), whose analysis would reward a comparison with Sparta's education and training of the young.

[59] J.L. Friend, *The Athenian Ephebeia in the Fourth Century BCE* (Leiden, 2019).

[60] Cf. M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Comprendre la loi ephebarchique d'Amphipolis', *Tekmeria* 13 (2015–2016 [2017]) 145–71; D. Rousset, 'Considérations sur la loi éphébarchique d'Amphipolis', *REA* 119 (2017) 49–84. This Athenian influence went further than Macedonia alone; cf. A.S. Chankowski, *L'Éphébie hellénistique* (Paris, 2010) and 'Ideology of War and Expansion? A Study of the Education of Young Men in Hellenistic Gymnasia', in M. Champion and L. O'Sullivan, (eds), *Cultural Perceptions of Violence in the Hellenistic World* (London and New York, 2017) 39–57.

[61] See D. Kah, 'Militärische Ausbildung im hellenistischen Gymnasion', and M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'La formation militaire dans les gymnases hellénistiques', in D. Kah and P. Scholz (eds), *Das hellenistische Gymnasion* (Berlin, 2004) 47–90, 91–96, respectively.

[62] J.N. Bremmer, *The World of Greek Religion and Mythology = Collected Essays* II (Tübingen, 2019).

Martin West commented.[63] In the original version, I concluded that 'the origin of the complex of the Trojan War is for an important part to be looked for in ancient rituals of initiation'.[64] I would now qualify this conclusion to a certain extent. The direct shift from an epic poem to practised rituals is certainly too simplistic. I would now say that the backstories of important protagonists of the Trojan War – whether from the *Iliad* itself or from the Epic Cycle – such as Achilles, Hector, Neoptolemos/Pyrrhos, Odysseus, Paris and Philoctetes, contain many references to initiatory motifs or, as in the case of Hector and the 'Hectorean hairstyle', have been connected with such motifs. This had not been argued before and still seems to me to be the case.

An explanation is more difficult. In addition to the initiatory role of poets in Archaic Greece, I would now add the youthful age of the Greek army before Troy, which was mostly made up of *kouroi*, 'youths' (Chapter 1.10). Before the rise of the hoplite army, the role of youths in war must have been more important and their rites of initiation of particular interest to them. In a way, the expedition against Troy looks like the dramatisation of a raid organised with young men, such as the expedition of the Argonauts. The dual leadership of Agamemnon and Menelaos, which finds parallels in Rome (Romulus and Remus) as well as among the Anglo-Saxons (Hengist and Horsa) and Vandals (Ambri and Assi), is another archaic feature, although one that is still very present in Homer.[65]

The next four examples (Chapters 2 to 5) look at myths that can plausibly be thought to have preceded Homer. The case of the Cyclops is much debated, but most scholars would probably agree that the poet of the *Odyssey* had forerunners whose tradition he had appropriated. I follow Burkert in seeing the Cyclops as being modelled on the Lord of the Animals, a traditional figure in many tribal initiations (Chapter 2). Some connection with initiation is also supported by a ritual in Magnesia where youths dressed in sheepskins ascended to the cave of Cheiron, the great initiator (Chapter 3.3, but see also 1.4). The latter was already known to Homer (*Il.* 4.219, 11.832, etc.), as were the Centaurs (Chapter 3). The case of Meleager is one of the most frequently discussed examples of Homer's innovations with regard to traditional material, but themes in his

[63] West, 'The Calydonian Boar', 8 note 18.

[64] J.N. Bremmer, 'Heroes, Rituals and the Trojan War', *Studi-Storico Religiosi* 2 (1978) 5–38 at 35.

[65] H.W. Singor, *Oorsprong en betekenis van de hoplietenphalanx in het archaische Griekenland* (Diss. Leiden, 1988) 138 compares, amongst others, *Il.* 4.274 (2 Aiantes) and 4.393 (2 leaders of a group of 50 *kouroi*), 5.592–95 (Hector and Ares), 12.196 (Poulydamas and Hector) and 330 (Sarpedon and Glaukos); *Od.* 14.237 (Idomeneus and Odysseus) as well as adducing Germanic and Celtic examples; add *Il.* 2.511–16 (Askalaphos and Ialmenos), 517–26 (Schedios and Epistrophos), 676–80 (Pheidippos and Antiphos); Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Long.* 1.7 (Vandals); R. Caprini, 'Hengist e Horsa, uomini e cavalli', *Maia* 46 (1994) 197–214; M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 2007) 190.

myth, such as the hunt, the Kouretes (Chapter 1.5) and the maternal uncles (Chapter 13), undeniably bring him close to actual Aetolian ritual practices (Chapter 4). This is less so in the case of Orpheus. Although he is not mentioned in our surviving literature before Ibycus (F 306), there can be little doubt that he preceded Homer, as there is general agreement that he took part in the expedition of the Argonauts, which was known to Homer.[66] After the loss of his wife, Eurydice, he is portrayed as wandering the countryside with a group of young men. We cannot tie this aspect of his tradition to a specific local community, although we can probably narrow it down to Macedonia or Thracia, but we do find here the motif of the wandering youths (Chapter 5).

We find the same motif of wandering youths in the myth regarding Theseus and Peirithoos. They are already mentioned in a line in the *Odyssey* (11.631) that has often been suspected to be a later insertion, although probably wrongly,[67] but they are certainly attested in the Archaic Age. We can only wonder to what extent their wandering as a pair is a variation of that by groups of youths (Chapter 6). And what about the tradition of the stay in the wild by only one Arcadian youth, as related by various authors?[68] Was this a further development of the stay in the wild by groups of youths or of the wandering by only two? Or did the myths perhaps concentrate on only one youth while failing to relate that he was, in reality, accompanied by a larger group of lower status youths, as happened in Crete (Chapter 11.1)? It is clear that myths can vary considerably in their focus. Similarly, we hear of the fight of just one hero against a monster (Perseus), that of a hero with a small company (Theseus went to Crete with a group of about 14 youths), and that of a hero with a full retinue (Jason with the Argonauts). However this may be, the plausibility of a Bronze Age origin for Theseus (above) makes it likely that here, too, we are considering a pre-Homeric motif. If this motif is indeed Athenian, this would point to very early initiatory rites in Athens and, consequently, among the Ionians.

We can be less certain about a pre-Homeric initiatory stage of Heracles' life (Chapter 7). Undoubtedly, some of the motifs with which he is associated are rather old, such as his education by shepherds, but the sources are relatively late (fifth-century mythographers), and it is difficult to locate such a popular hero in a specific area of Greece. On the other hand, it is clear that the myths about his youth bristle with initiatory motifs, which in itself is suggestive of an early tradition in this respect.

The next two chapters focus on the theme of transvestism (Chapters 8 and 9), which was perhaps the earliest initiatory motif identified as such for Greek mythology (Chapter 1.1). The discussion of Dionysos collects the evidence for

[66] Fowler, *EGM* 2.211–12; F. Graf and S. I. Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife* (London and New York, 2013²) 167 f.

[67] Fowler, *EGM* 2.470 note 67.

[68] Cf. Bremmer, *The World*, 358–70.

transvestism in myth and ritual and shows that it could be used in various narrative ways: representing a male youth who was dressed as a girl either as looking feminine or as having actually changed into a girl. At the same time, these cases illustrate that what happened in ritual could also be transferred to tales about the gods (Chapter 8). The discussion of Kaineus is a specific example of such transvestism. His belonging to the Lapiths and his Thessalian origin suggest that a local ritual lies in the background of the myth – this must have been quite old, as is witnessed by the mention of Kaineus in the *Iliad* (1.264) – with the myth dramatising a ritual act by turning transvestism into a sex change (Chapter 9).

The studies of initiatory motifs in myth conclude with an analysis of Oedipus, arguably one of the most intriguing of ancient mythical figures (Chapter 10). Although most modern interpretations and discussions focus on his marriage to his mother, it is his life prior to that fatal event that is of interest to us here. The reports of Oedipus' youth contain several initiatory motifs, such as his discovery by shepherds (Chapter 7.3) and his fosterage by the king (Chapter 14). Meanwhile, Oedipus' defeat of the Sphinx, which leads to him taking both the throne and the hand of the queen, looks like a narrative employment of initiatory motifs rather than a close reflection of ritual.

We now turn to history and ritual. The next two chapters (11 and 12) overlap to a certain extent, as both are concerned with problems and practices of Greek pederasty. The theme has long been a bone of scholarly contention, starting in the early twentieth century with Erich Bethe's famous article on 'Dorian pederasty'.[69] I first argued for a connection between pederasty and Indo-European initiation in an article in which I, in retrospect, overemphasised the Indo-European connection, partially because the article was meant for an Indo-European issue of the journal *Arethusa*.[70] However, I would still maintain that our evidence suggests that pederasty was part of early Greek initiation rites and this view has been strengthened by the discovery of bronze plaques in the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite in Cretan Kato Symi. One of these, nowadays preserved in the Louvre, depicts a bearded hunter face-to-face with a beardless youth and clutching his arm. Robert Parker persuasively notes that even if we do not want to connect this scene with Ephoros' description of Cretan initiation (Chapter 11.1), 'the case for associating the plaques with maturation rituals can stand independently of it'.[71] As the plaques with erotic content go back to the

[69] E. Bethe, 'Die dorische Knabenliebe', *RhM* NF 42 (1907) 438–75; this volume, Chapter 11.2.

[70] J.N. Bremmer, 'An Enigmatic Indo-European Rite: paederasty', *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 279–98.

[71] R. Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca and London, 2011) 235; see also the balanced discussion by A. Duplouy, *Construire la cité. Essai de sociologie historique sur les communautés de l'archaïsme grec* (Paris, 2019) 242–53 (pederasty), 266–73 (young wine-pourers).

seventh, if not the eighth century BC, their chronology suggests that pederasty was an integral part of initiation at a very early date, even though we do not know exactly when it became incorporated into the ritual. As texts and vase paintings show in abundance, boys were present at symposia where erotic relations took place with older men, who sometimes instructed them via didactic poetry. It seems that with the disintegration of the older forms of initiation, some of its parts were preserved and transferred to the symposium.

The final chapters (13 to 15) elaborate on issues that have been touched upon elsewhere in the volume. We start with the importance of the maternal family, of which we have seen several examples in the expedition of the Argonauts (above), but which can also be noted in the boar hunts with maternal uncles by Odysseus (Chapter 1.4) and Meleager (Chapter 4). The close relationship between uncle and nephew lasted well into Byzantine times, and its educational aspect clearly survived the disappearance of initiation as an institution. Earlier scholars considered the avunculate an Indo-European phenomenon, but this is clearly not the case as it has been found, in varying forms, from Native North America through Africa to Fiji.[72] However, its incorporation into rites of initiation does seem to have been more frequent among Indo-Europeans (Chapter 13).

Maternal uncles sometimes played a role in fosterage (Chapter 14), a practice that did not survive the Archaic period in Classical Greece. It did, however, continue to be practised in Macedonia, although in a different way, as it was used to tie important families to the court through so-called alliance fosterage.[73] This is one of those old elite institutions that long survived in Europe in outlying areas, such as in medieval Ireland, and, albeit gradually, developed into the public school system that continues today in the United Kingdom. The prominence of the old Etonians David Cameron and Boris Johnson, who both served as prime minister in the last decade, shows the lasting influence of this institution.

The final chapter (15) moves from Greece to Rome. Here, the fortuitous discovery of an archaic Latin inscription enables us to see the contours of a group of young men in action in the full light of history, instead of in myth as with our Greek sources. The discovery has also thrown new light on historical Italic figures, such as Coriolanus and the Vibenna brothers, and is therefore a fitting conclusion to our search for traces of ancient practices of initiation. Admittedly, our search has only been able to find individual elements and never a 'thick de-

[72] D. Potts, 'The Epithet "Sister's Son" in Ancient Elam. Aspects of the Avunculate in Cross-cultural Perspective', in K. Kleber *et al.* (eds), *Grenzüberschreitungen. Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients: Festschrift für Hans Neumann* (Münster, 2018) 523–55 at 536–40.

[73] Cf. P. Parks, 'Fostering Fealty: a comparative analysis of tributary allegiances of adoptive kinship', *CSSH* 45 (2003) 741–82.

scription' of an ancient initiatory ritual. Still, I hope that my discussions have shown that knowledge of rites of initiation of tribal and other Indo-European peoples does in fact throw light on traditions of the ancient world which would otherwise remain obscure.

I would like to thank the friendly and efficient staff of Mohr Siebeck, Rebekka Zech in particular, for making this such a nicely produced book. My thanks also to Brill (Leiden), Droz (Geneva), De Gruyter (Berlin), Habelt (Bonn), Japadre Editore (Rome), Labor et Fides (Geneva), Les Belles Lettres (Paris), *Les Études Classiques* (Namur), the Norwegian Institute at Athens, Oxford University Press and Routledge (London) for their permission to reprint the articles included in this collection. It is of course impossible to completely redo one's own research of more than four decades. Yet I do not wish to reprint views that I no longer support or to offer the reader out-of-date references. I have therefore updated the bibliographies, made a number of small changes and corrections, removed overlaps where possible, and added more evidence when available. Naturally, this could not be done in every case, but I have always tried to bring the volume up to date with regard to the more important issues. In two chapters, on Meleager (Chapter 4) and Heracles (Chapter 7), I have adapted the original English text instead of reprinting the French translations.

The many debts I have incurred in the course of the years spent writing these articles I mention at the end of each chapter. Here I would like to single out Ken Dowden and Fritz Graf, whose own writings often moved along similar lines, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, with whom I had personal contacts in the 1970s and 1980s.[74] His work as a scholar, a public intellectual and a fearless opponent of torture remains a monument to a remarkable man.[75]

[74] In the front matter of the second edition of his *Le Chasseur noir* he thanks 'tous ceux qui m'ont signalé des erreurs et notamment mon collègue néerlandais J. Bremmer'.

[75] I am most grateful to my friends Laura Feldt, Bob Fowler and Julia Kindt for their comments, to Tobias Stäbler for saving me from several mistakes, and to Paul Scade for his skilful and insightful correction of my English.

Contents

Abbreviations

ABV	J.D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956)
AC	*L'Antiquité Classique*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJPh	*American Journal of Philology*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
ARG	*Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*
ARV^2	J.D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1963^2)
ARW	*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*
ASAA	*Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene*
ASNP	*Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*
BABESCH	*Bulletin Antieke Beschaving – Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology*
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*
Bremmer, *The World*	J.N. Bremmer, *The World of Greek Religion and Mythology* (Tübingen, 2019)
CA	*Classical Antiquity*
CCJ	*Cambridge Classical Journal*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
C&M	*Classica et Mediaevalia*
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CR	*Classical Review*
CRAI	*Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
DHA	*Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne*
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin and Leiden, 1923–1958)
G&R	*Greece & Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
IC	*Inscriptiones Creticae*
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JDAI	*Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*

JIES	*Journal of Indo-European Studies*
JÖAI	*Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
LEC	*Les Études Classiques*
LIMC	*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (Zürich and Düsseldorf, 1981–2009)
MD	*Materiali e Discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*
MEFRA	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome*
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
MSS	*Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*
PCPhS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
PMG	D. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962)
PP	*La Parola del Passato*
QUCC	*Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*
RE	*Paulys Realenzyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1884–1973)
REA	*Revue des études anciennes*
REG	*Revue des études grecques*
REL	*Revue des études latines*
RhM	*Rheinisches Museum*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RIDA	*Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité*
RPh	*Revue de philologie*
SAV	*Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
SMEA	*Studi Micenei ed Eegeo-Anatolici*
SMSR	*Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*
SO	*Symbolae Osloenses*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
ThesCRA	*Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (Los Angeles, 2004–2012)
VigChris	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WJA	*Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*
WS	*Wiener Studien*
ZPE	*Zeitschschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Section I

Myths

Chapter 1

Initiation and the Heroes of the Trojan War

Whereas our ancestors could believe in the historical reality of the Trojan War, our own generation has grown more sceptical. It is hard to disagree with Moses Finley (1912–1986) when he concludes his analysis of that great war by saying: 'We certainly do not try to write medieval French history from the Song of Roland or medieval German history from the Nibelungenlied. Why should we make an exception of Homer's Trojan War?'[1] Neither will we find the story of the Trojan War in ancient ruins, whatever we may hope,[2] nor can the discovery of a single Hittite word, such as Wilusa (Ilion?), explain the contents of Homer's epic.[3] But if this is the case, the question of the material on which Homer drew becomes more urgent. Where did he and his predecessors find their inspiration?[4] The aim of this chapter is not to provide the final answer to this question (if that were in any case possible), but to contribute towards a solution to this problem by studying the nature of the most important heroes involved in the war. We will concentrate on the protagonists of the Trojan War in the *Iliad*, Achilles (§ 1) and Hector (§ 7), and on those whose presence and help were a *conditio sine qua non* for the fall of Troy, Pyrrhos/Neoptolemos (§ 2) and Philoctetes (§ 3). At the same time, however, we will also pay attention to that other iconic hero of the war: Odysseus (§ 4).[5]

Every analysis presupposes certain conceptual tools. I take it that the reader is acquainted with initiation, rites of passage and men's societies,[6] but I will

[1] M. I. Finley, *Aspects of Antiquity* (Harmondsworth, 1972) 31–42.

[2] For recent evaluations of the archaeological publications, see D. F. Easton *et al.*, 'Troy in Recent Perspective', *Anatolian Studies* 52 (2002) 75–109; J. Haubold, 'Dream and Reality in the Work of Heinrich Schliemann and Manfred Korfmann', in D. J. Bennett and E. S. Sherratt (eds), *Archaeology and Homeric Epic* (Oxford, 2016) 20–34. For Schliemann (1822–1890), see A. Louis, *L'invention de Troie. Les vies rêvées de Heinrich Schliemann* (Paris, 2020).

[3] Note the skeptical discussion by D. Schürr, 'Ist Troja das Wilusa der Hethiter? Über Namensassoziationen und ihre fatale Rolle bei der Historisierung Hisarlıks', *Gephyra* 18 (2019) 33–57.

[4] For an older but detailed state of the questions, see A. Heubeck, *Die Homerische Frage* (Darmstadt, 1974) 153–77; more recently, J. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer & The Epic Cycle* (Baltimore, 2001) 47–85; B. Currie, *Homer's Allusive Art* (Oxford, 2016) 55–62, 242–43.

[5] Achilles: Apollod. 3.13.8; schol. *Il.* 19.326. Pyrrhos/Neoptolemos: Soph. *Ph.* 113 ff; Apollod. *Ep.* 5.11; Philostr. Jun. *Imag.* 18.3. Philoctetes: *Ilias Parva*, Arg. 2b West = Arg. 1 Bernabé; Soph. *Ph.* 604 ff; Ovid, *Met.* 13.320; schol. Pind. *P.* 1.100.

[6] See this volume, Preface.

briefly explain the idea of liminality. When Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) published his classic study of the rites of passage, he concentrated primarily on the rites of separation and reintegration, but the in-between period hardly received his attention.[7] This transitional stage between the old and the new situation has been brilliantly analysed by Victor Turner.[8] Turner shows that the liminal period, as he calls this period of transition, is characterised by a confusion or reversal of status and a series of other reversals, such as differences in hairstyle, clothing, behaviour and place of habitation. Such liminal situations occur during the major events of the life-cycle – birth maturity, marriage, parenthood and death – but also during all kinds of transitional stages, such as the change from the Old to the New Year, from peace to war, from impurity to purity, and the movement from one territory to another. In this study, I will use Turner's analysis by arguing that the major heroes of the Trojan War are all characterised in their tradition as being in such a transitional state.[9]

Every analysis also presupposes certain rules of the game, certain principles that are consciously or, more often, unconsciously applied. In addition to the normal rules that are relevant to the analysis of Greek mythology, we also have to follow a number of others: (1) the point of departure of an analysis must always be that the story is not a tale told by an idiot. It is, consequently, not enough to catalogue the single motifs and look only for parallels to these. We must, rather, also look for the internal coherence of the different motifs and take into consideration the possibility of an underlying pattern or structure. (2) An explanation should not ignore important details, as is usual for those scholars who want to retain the Trojan War but have no place for Achilles and the other heroes.[10] (3) Myth, legend and fairy-tale are not concepts that are mutually exclusive, but they can contain the same motifs.[11] It is, therefore, a case of explaining *obscurum per obscurius* when the one is explained only in terms of the other. But enough of methodology! Let us now turn to the actual protagonists.

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[7] A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris, 1909); this volume, Preface, note 3.

[8] Cf. V.W. Turner: *The Forest of Symbols* (London, 1967) 93–111; *The Ritual Process* (Harmondsworth, 1974) and 'Comments and Conclusions', in B.A. Babcock (ed.), *The Reversible World* (London, 1978) 276–96. For Turner (1920–1983), see B. Babcock and J.J. MacAloon, 'Victor W. Turner (1920–1983): commemorative essay', *Semiotica* 65 (1987) 1–27.

[9] For Turner's influence on Fritz Graf, Henk Versnel and myself, see H.S. Versnel, 'Een klassiek antropoloog in de klassieke wereld', *Anthropologische verkenningen* 13.4 (1994) 46–56.

[10] Cf., with bibliography, H. Geiss, 'Troja – Streit ohne Ende', *Klio* 57 (1975) 260–67.

[11] Cf. J. de Vries, *Betrachtungen zum Märchen besonders in seinem Verhältnis zu Heldensage und Mythos* (Helsinki, 1954) and 'Märchen, Mythos und Mythenmärchen', in K. Ranke (ed.), *Internationaler Kongress der Volkserzählungsforscher in Kiel und Kopenhagen 1959* (Berlin, 1961) 464–69; G. Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie* (Berlin, 1959) 171–83; V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, 1968[2]) *passim*; F. Hampl, *Geschichte als kritische Wissenschaft* II (Darmstadt, 1975) 1–60; H. Bausinger and K. Ranke, 'Archaische Züge', in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* I (Berlin, 1977) 733–43.

1. Achilles

Knowing that Troy could not be taken without Achilles, the Greeks fetched him from the island of Skyros where he stayed at the court of Lycomedes, dressed up as a girl.[12] As early as 1897, this disguise was recognised as a typical feature of the rite of passage from boyhood to adulthood, an interpretation that has generally been accepted since.[13] For our purpose we deduce from this interpretation that Achilles' arrival at Troy fell in that transitory period of his life.

2. Pyrrhos/Neoptolemos

When Achilles' son Phyrrhos/Neoptolemos was still a boy,[14] he was fetched from Skyros (*Od*. 9.508), where, in typical Indo-European manner,[15] his mother's father was educating him.[16] This boyhood must have been a clear characteristic of Pyrrhos, for the Greeks considered him to be the inventor of the *pyrrhichê*, the armed dance of the boys.[17] He received his name Neoptolemos from his tutor Phoenix (Paus. 10.26.4), but formerly he was called Pyrrhos. Marie Delcourt persuasively interpreted this change of name as belonging to the rites of initiation. And indeed, a change of name is mentioned for a number of heroes and always in their youth.[18] Jason received his name from his tutor Cheiron (Pind. *N*. 4.119), whom he left at the age of twenty (ibid., 104). According to one tradition, Theseus received his name after having been acknowledged as a son by his father Aegeus (Plut. *Thes*. 4.1), when he was a *meirakion*,[19] 'lad' (ibid., 6).

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[12] *Cypria* F 19 Bernabé, but M.L. West, *The Epic Cycle* (Oxford, 2014) 104, rejects the ascription to the *Cypria*; Polygnotos *apud* Paus. 1.22.6; Eur. F 585–86; Bio 2; schol. *Il*. 19.326 (Cyclic poets); E. Crawley, 'Achilles and Scyros', *CQ* 7 (1893) 243–46; A. Kossatz-Deissmann, 'Achilles', in *LIMC* I.1 (1984) no. 94–185 and 'Achilleus', in *LIMC*, Suppl. 1 (2009) 2–15 at 4–5; P. Grossardt, *Achilleus, Coriolan und ihre Weggefährten* (Tübingen, 2009) 76–88 (who notes its early character); this volume, Chapters 8.2 and 9 (later passages).

[13] Some examples: H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes* (Lille, 1939) 354–55; A. Brelich, *Gli eroi Greci* (Rome, 1959) 242; L. Gernet, *Antropologie de la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1968) 203; J.-P. Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1974) 39; H.S. Versnel, *Transition & Reversal in Myth & Ritual* (Leiden, 1993) 56; W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften* VI (Göttingen, 2013) 17; M. González González, *Achilles* (Abingdon and New York, 2018) 58–62.

[14] For Neoptolemos' ephebic nature in Sophocles' *Philoctete*s, see J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1973) 159–84 (by PVN).

[15] J.N. Bremmer, 'Avunculate and Fosterage', *J. Indo-Eur. Stud*. 4 (1976) 65–78; this volume, Chapters 13 and 14.

[16] *Il*. 19.326–27; Soph. *Ph*. 239–44; Strabo 9.5.16; Apollod. *Ep*. 5.11; O. Touchefeu-Meynier, 'Neoptolemos', in *LIMC* VI.1 (1992) 773–79 at 777.

[17] Archilochus F 304; Lucian, *Salt.* 9; *Et. Magnum* 699.1; P. Ceccarelli, *La pirrica nell'antichità greco-romana* (Pisa, 1998) 187–218.

[18] M. Delcourt, *Pyrrhos et Pyrrha* (Paris, 1965) 34. For Delcourt, see Chapter 10, note 5.

[19] The Greek word corresponds with the Indo-Iranian terms *marya-*, *mairya-*, *marika* (*maryaka*), *mérak*, terms for members of men's societies, cf. G. Widengren, *Der Feudalismus*

Achilles was called Ligyron before Cheiron gave him the name Achilles (Apollod. 3.13.6). Bellerophon used to be called Hipponoos or Leophontes (schol. *Il.* 6.155; schol. Lycophron 17). Paris' name was Alexandros when he was a *neaniskos*, 'young man',[20] and it should be noted that his education, as told by Apollodorus (3.12.5), strongly resembles the initiatory education of Cyrus.[21] Heracles was first called Alcaeus, Alcides or Neilos.[22] In Western Europe, a change of name in an initiatory context is testified in the legend of Cúchulainn and in the ceremonies of the guilds.[23] Moreover, a change of name as rite of passage is well known from the monastic world.[24] Such a change of name could be acted out very seriously. Among the African Sara, the returning novices had to be introduced to their parents, who were no longer supposed to know them.[25]

Finally, the ephebic nature of Neoptolemos cannot be separated from the Pyrrhos who was killed in Delphi, in the realm of Apollo.[26] Burkert has pointed out how this killing happened in the way of the men's societies and how 'wolfish' the killers behaved.[27] It can hardly be accidental that this murder was thought to have occurred in the realm of Apollo. What Burkert states regarding the relation between the ephebic god Apollo and Achilles, must also apply to the relation between the god and Achilles' son: 'Der Heros als umdunkeltes Spiegelbild des Gottes in der unauflöslichen Polarität des Opfers'.[28]

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im alten Iran (Cologne and Opladen, 1969) 83; R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, 2 vols (Leiden, 2010) 2.921–22. Paus. 6.23.8 mentions an Aphrodite Philomeirax, 'Loving boys', near a gymnasium in Elis.

[20] Apollod. 3.12.5; Ennius F 20 Jocelyn = 16 Manuwald: *quapropter Parim pastores nunc Alexandrum vocant;* Ov. *Her.* 16,359–60 *paene puer caesis abducta armenta recepi/ hostibus et causam nominis inde tuli*; for further discussion, see I. Karamanou, *Euripides, "Alexandros"* (Berlin and Boston, 2018) 6 f.

[21] A. Alföldi, 'Königsweihe und Männerbund bei den Achämeniden', *SAV* 47 (1951) 11–16; G. Binder, *Die Aussetzung des Königskindes Kyros und Romulus* (Meisenheim, 1964) and 'Aussetzung', in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 1, 1048–65.

[22] See this volume, Chapter 7.1.

[23] Cúchulainn: A. and B. Rees, *Celtic Heritage* (London, 1973) 247; the other great Celtic hero, Finn, was first called Damne: K. Meyer, 'Macgnimartha Find', *Revue Celtique* 1 (1881–83) 195–204 at 201, *c.*18. Guilds: H. Grotefend, 'Die Handwerksnamen', *Korrespondenzblatt des Gesamtvereins der deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine* 1911, 81–98. For guilds and Hansa as deriving from ancient men's societies, see E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, 2 vols (Paris, 1969) 1.70–79.

[24] See the brief but excellent discussion of the 'rite de passage' elements during the novitiate period by R. Molitor, 'Symbolische Grablegung bei der Ordensprofess', *Benedikt. Monatss.* 6 (1924) 54–57. Greek monks often choose a name starting with the same letter as their old name, see J.F. Boissonnade, *Anecdota nova* (Paris, 1844) 24; *Analecta Bollandiana* 14 (1895) 153, note 4.

[25] R. Jaulin, *La mort Sara* (Paris, 1967) 115.

[26] Pind. *Paei.* VI.116–20, *N.*7, 40–47 (with schol.), 58, 62; Sophocles, *Hermione*, p. 192 Radt; Eur. *Andr.* 49–55 and 1122–57, *Or.* 1654–57; O. Touchefeu-Meynier, 'Neoptolemos', in *LIMC* VI.1 (1992) 773–79 at 777–78; Fowler, *EGM* 2.557–60, with full bibliography.

[27] W. Burkert, *Gnomon* 38 (1966) 440.

[28] Burkert, *Kleine Schriften* VI, 17.

3. Philoctetes

A much more complicated case is the one of Philoctetes. The legend is well known. The Thessalian prince Philoctetes was with the other Greeks on his way to Troy when he was bitten on his foot by a snake. Because of the unbearable smell of the wound, he was left all alone with his bow on the island of Lemnos,[29] where he had to live from the hunt for nine years, which suggests a skilful archer. In the tenth year, Odysseus and Diomedes fetched him because it was prophesied that Troy could not be taken without him. After his arrival at the battlefield, he killed Paris who was then the great hero of the Trojans.[30]

We take as our point of departure for the analysis the bad smell, which we will discuss separately from the wound in the foot since it is typical of stories to project simultaneity into succession and to turn a relation into causality.[31] In Greece, the bad smell could undeniably belong to a liminal period. One day in the year, the women of Lemnos kept their men away by means of a terrible smell, just as Athenian women did during the Skira festival.[32] The bad smell does not mean that humans naturally smelled nicely: that was reserved for the gods.[33] This suggests the following scheme as regards the place of smell in Greek life. Liminal humans (= non-humans): normal humans: gods = bad smell: no smell: nice smell: humans as mediators between non-humans and the gods.

The wound in Philoctetes' foot links up with the theme of the wound in the leg, a recurrent feature in stories with a special pattern. In the Grimm fairy-tale *Eisenhans* (*KHM* 136), of which Otto Höfler has argued the initiatory pattern, the hero, called Goldener because of his golden hair, is wounded in his leg, a wound by which he is recognised and which establishes his identity.[34] Similarly, in the Normandian legend *Robert le Diable*, of which Höfler also argued the initiatory structure, the hero is recognised by a wound he had received in his thigh.[35] Odysseus, whose adventures contain a plausibly initiatory pattern (§ 4),

[29] See also M.L. Napolitano, *Philoktetes e l'arco della Magnesia all'Oeta* (Rome, 2002).

[30] Cf. C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage* III.2 (Berlin, 1923) 1207–17; T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore and London, 1993) 635–39; M. Pipili, 'Philoktetes', in *LIMC* VII.1 (1994) 376–85; S.L. Schein, *Sophocles, Philoctetes* (Cambridge, 2013) 1–10; E. Giudice, 'Filottete in Etruria', in E. and G. Giudice (eds), *Studi miscellanei di ceramografia greca* IV (Catania, 2018) 11–28.

[31] Thus, persuasively, L. Brisson, *Le mythe de Tirésias* (Leiden, 1976) 33.

[32] Lemnos: Myrsilos *FGrH* 477 F1; ?Kaukalos *FGrH* 38 F2; Dio Chr. *Or.* 33.50; Apollod. 1.11.17; schol. Apoll. Rhod. 1.609. Skira: Philochoros *FGrH* 328 F89.

[33] *Hom. H. Dem.* 277–78; *Hom. H. Hermes* 231; Hes. F 140; Theognis 9; Aesch. *PV* 115; Eur. *Hipp.* 1391; E. Lohmeyer, *Vom göttlichen Wohlgeruch*, SB Heidelberg 1919; W. Déonna, 'EYΩΔIA. Croyances antiques et modernes: l'odeur suave des dieux et des élus', *Genava* 17 (1939) 167–263.

[34] O. Höfler, *Germanisches Sakralkönigtum* I (Tübingen, 1952) 205–13. For Höfler, see this volume, Preface.

[35] E. Löseth (ed), *Robert le Diable* (Paris, 1903) line 3485: *car* (la lance) *Robert feri en la quisse*, cf. Höfler, *ibidem*, 243–47.

had a scar above the knee, surely the thigh (*Od*. 19.450), 'that was to reveal his identity'.[36] Heracles was bitten in the leg during his visit in the underworld, and in Tegea there was a statue of him showing a wound in his thigh.[37] Athena, the goddess par excellence to be associated with young heroes, had a statue in Teuthis with a wound in the thigh, which was bound with a crimson bandage (Paus. 8.28.6).

Elsewhere the marking of the leg is connected with Apollo, the god closely associated with initiation.[38] Each of the Seleucids, who considered themselves to be descendants of Apollo,[39] had a birthmark on the thigh (Justinus 15.4.3–9), and the Ethiopians were reputed to have a golden thigh with an image of Apollo on the knee cap of their children (Lydus, *Mens*. 4.53). The most famous case is Pythagoras, who was reputed to have a golden thigh on which an image of Apollo was imprinted (schol. Luc. 124, 6–7 Rabe).[40] If really old, the tradition uses initiatory themes without us being able to really explain this particular usage. However this may be, the wounds in the leg/thigh seem to reflect an ancient, possibly Indo-European, practice of marking the leg of the passant from boyhood to adulthood.[41]

It has been repeatedly observed that wounds inflicted on novices were sometimes a sign of death.[42] The wounds in the leg may once have had the same meaning in Greece, too, as we find the wound in the leg connected with death in two figures, who are both closely associated with initiation: the Centaur Cheiron (Ch. 3.3) was fatally wounded around the knee (Apollod. 2.5.4) and Achilles in the heel (Hyginus, *Fab*. 107; *P. Köln* 10.402); in medieval exempla, with an initiatory pattern, young men are killed by fire starting in their feet and thighs.[43] The

[36] W. Burkert, *Homo necans* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1983) 120.

[37] Tegea: Paus. 8.53.9, cf. W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge MA, 1972) 160.

[38] For Apollo's ties with initiation, see F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome, 1985) 56–57 (A. Delphinios), 220–27 (A. Lykeios) and *Apollo* (Abingdon and New York, 2009) 103–29; M.H. Jameson, *Cults and Rites in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 2014) 41–61 (A. Lykeios).

[39] For the connection of Apollo and the Seleucids, see L. Robert, *Laodicée du Lycos* (Québec and Paris, 1969) 295 and *Fouilles d'Amyzon en Carie* I (Paris, 1983) 141; K. Nawotka, 'Apollo, the Tutelary God of the Seleucids, and Demodamas of Miletus', in Z. Archibald and J. Haywood (eds), *The Power of Individual and Community in Ancient Athens and Beyond: essays in honour of John K. Davies* (Cardiff, 2019) 261–84.

[40] For recent bibliography, see C. Macris, 'Pythagore de Samos', in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* VII (Paris, 2018) 681–884 at 814.

[41] Cf. Höfler, *Germanisches Sakralkönigtum*, 212, note 470 on the wounds in the leg of Goldener and Robert le Diable: 'Ein alter "Merkungs "Brauch"?' The 'rite de passage' character of the wound is also noted by K. Spiess, 'Ferse, Abschlagen der', in L. Mackensen (ed.), *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Märchens* II (Berlin, 1939–40) 92–104.

[42] Brelich, *Paides*, 80 note 85 (with bibliography); M. Eliade, *Australian Religions* (Ithaca and London, 1973) 90–91; V. Propp, *Die historischen Wurzeln des Zaubermärchens*, 1946[1] (Munich and Vienna, 1987) 110f.

[43] J.C. Schmitt, *Le Corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps* (Paris, 2001) 153–82 ('"Jeunes" et danse des chevaux de bois'). In tales of the Middle Ages, the wound in the leg was a frequent-

wounding of the heel as a symbol of killing may also be assumed in the case of the Austrian Lutzelfrau, a figure akin to Percht and always enacted by young men. During Christmas time, she goes round threatening to cut off the heels of naughty children,[44] but also with the threat of gastrotomy and cutting off the head.[45]

The wounding of a hero in the leg during his visit to the underworld, as in the case of Heracles, may also be a sign of the close connection between wound and death. The connection is frequent in a type of folktale, especially found in Central-Europe, where the hero just escapes the slamming door of the underworld or a magic mountain, but he loses his heel(s) in the process.[46] The connection between the slamming doors and the loss of the heel(s) seems to be a later development[47], so what we seem to have is the connection of the wounded heel and the underworld.

The origin of the idea of wounding the thigh or knee probably is to be looked for in the world of the hunters. From such far away parts of the world as the native Americans, African Bushmen and Laotian Koui, Frazer collected evidence that hunters cut out a piece or removed a sinew from their game's thigh or hamstrung it. As in all these cases, the practice is connected with the idea of laming the game or the hunter.[48] The idea of wounding the heel probably also originated in the world of the hunters, as Eurasian hunters caught their game by cutting the Achilles' heel so that they could not run away.[49] The same hunting method is testified by Strabo (16.4.10) for the Elephantophagoi and by Diodorus (3.26.2) for the Elephantomachoi. We can hardly separate this hunting method from the cutting of the sinews of Zeus' hands and feet by Typhon (Apollod. 1.6.3), the hamstringing of the smith Wayland in the Icelandic *Völundarkviða* (17, pr. 1) and Yahweh's command to Joshua to hough the horses of his oppo-

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ly occurring phenomenon, and in medieval plays the loser was often hurt in his leg or started to limp, see F. Socolicek, 'Der Hinkende im brauchtümlichen Spiel', in H. Birkhan and O. Gschwantler (eds), *Festschrift Otto Höfler*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1968) 1.423–32.

[44] On Percht: J. Hanika, '"Bercht schlitzt den Bauch auf": Rest eines Initiationsritus?', *Stifter Jahrbuch* 2 (1951) 39–53; L. Schmidt, 'Berchtengestalten im Burgenland', *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* 13 (1951) 129–61; R. Bleichsteiner, 'Perchtengestalten im Mittelasien', *Arch. f. Völkerkunde* 8 (1953) 58–75; L. Schmidt, *Perchtenmasken in Österreich* (Vienna, 1972); K. Meuli, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 2 vols (Basel, 1975) 1.102–14.

[45] Cf.. A. Haberlandt, 'Zu einigen Problemen der österreichischen Gegenwartsvolkskunde', *Mitt. Antrop. Ges. Wien* 83 (1953–54) 191–99 at 196–99; L. Kretzenbacher, *Santa Lucia und die Lutzelfrau* (Munich, 1959) 60–65.

[46] Many examples in P. Sartori, 'Der Schuh im Volksglauben', *Zs. Ver. f. Volkskunde* 4 (1894) 412–27 at 416–17; A.H. Krappe, *Balor with the Evil Eye* (New York, 1927) 106–13; Spiess, 'Ferse, Abschlagen der'.

[47] Sartori, 'Der Schuh', 417; Krappe, *Balor*, 11 f.

[48] J.G. Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and the Wild* II (London, 1913) 264–67.

[49] B. Gunda, 'Das Abhauen der Achillessehne der Tiere in der eurasischen Jagdkultur', *Zs. f. Ethnologie* 70 (1938) 454–56.

nents (Joshua 11.6).[50] Originally, the wounding of the leg probably was a symbolic laming to contrast the novices with the adult hunters, for whom running was of such great importance. Running is also a frequently mentioned quality of the young warriors in the *Iliad*, most often of course of Achilles, the paradigmatic young warrior,[51] and in Crete the free adult males were even called 'runner' (δρομεύς).[52]

The wound of Philoctetes did not heal on Lemnos. The detail is not unimportant since in this way Philoctetes is separated from the non-wounded (the non-initiated) but also from those who have already passed their initiatory period. His stay on Lemnos lasted nine years and he could leave the island only in the tenth. The period of time seems to be significant. In primitive Arcadia, it was told how the Olympian victor Demarchos was changed into a wolf and became human again after nine years.[53] And a certain Euanthes relates how in an Arcadian family – presumably his own – once in a while a boy was selected, taken to a lake where he undressed, swam across the lake and disappeared into the wilderness where he lived on as a wolf. If he had not become a cannibal, he could become human again in the ninth year. This nine-year period is illuminatingly compared by Burkert with the nine-year period Odysseus had to stay away before he could return home in the tenth.[54]

Philoctetes' stay was imagined to be in complete isolation from civilisation. He had to live by hunting, an activity which for the Greeks had an ideological aspect. In a number of myths, the hunt precedes agriculture.[55] As the coming of agriculture – on a mythological level sometimes represented by the arrival of Demeter[56] – constituted the beginnings of civilisation, the hunter, consequently, will have been considered as someone outside civilisation. This is also attested by Greek vocabulary which closely associates 'hunt' and 'non-cultivated area'.[57] In addition, his bow was rated an inferior weapon, which a normal Greek male would consider to be below his dignity.[58] Finally, the hunt is characterised by

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[50] See also Genesis 49.6; 2 Samuel 8.4. Among the ancient Arabs: J. Wellhausen, *Reste des arabischen Heidentums* (Berlin, 1897²) 181.

[51] Achilles: πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (about 30 x), but also note Polites (2.792), Meriones (12.249), Antilochos (15.570, 23.756; *Od*. 3.112 = 4.202), Euphorbos (16.808) and Polydoros (20.410); Ch. Ulf, *Die homerische Gesellschaft* (Munich, 1990) 67.

[52] Y. Tsifopoulos, '"Hemerodromoi" and Cretan "Dromeis": athletes or military personnel ? The Case of the Cretan Philonides', *Nikephoros* 11 (1998) 137–70.

[53] Paus. 8.2.6. Olympic Victor: Paus. 6.8.2 = L. Moretti, *Olympionikai* (Roma, 1957) no. 359.

[54] Arcadia: Burkert, *Homo necans*, 84–93, 133 (Odysseus); Bremmer, *The World*, 358–70 (Arcadia).

[55] The myths are discussed by G. Piccaluga, *Minutal* (Rome, 1974) 77–94; see also M. Detienne, *Dionysos mis à mort* (Paris, 1977) 64–77.

[56] F. Graf, *Eleusis und die Orphische Dichtung Athens* (Berlin and New York, 1974) 160–63.

[57] P. Chantraine, *Études sur le vocabulaire grec* (Paris, 1956) 40–65.

[58] See this volume, Chapter 7.2.

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