FRAZER JAMES GEORGE

THE GOLDEN BOUGH: A STUDY IN MAGIC AND RELIGION (THIRD EDITION, VOL. 07 OF 12)

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Содержание

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Preface

In the last part of this work we examined the figure of the Dying and Reviving God as it appears in the Oriental religions of classical antiquity. With the present instalment of *The Golden Bough* we pursue the same theme in other religions and among other races. Passing from the East to Europe we begin with the religion of ancient Greece, which embodies the now familiar conception in two typical examples, the vine-god Dionysus and the corn-goddess Persephone, with her mother and duplicate Demeter. Both of these Greek divinities are personifications of cultivated plants, and a consideration of them naturally leads us on to investigate similar personifications elsewhere. Now of all the plants which men have artificially reared for the sake of food the cereals are on the whole the most important; therefore it is natural that the religion of primitive agricultural communities should be deeply coloured by the principal occupation of their lives, the care of the corn. Hence the frequency with which the figures of the Corn-mother and Corn-maiden, answering to the Demeter and Persephone of ancient Greece, meet us in other parts of the world, and not least of all on the harvest-fields of modern Europe. But edible roots as well as cereals have been cultivated by many races, especially in the tropical regions, as a subsidiary or even as a principal means of subsistence; and accordingly they too enter largely into the religious ideas of the peoples who live by them. Yet in the case of the roots, such as yams, taro, and potatoes, the conception of the Dying and Reviving God appears to figure less prominently than in the case of the cereals, perhaps for the simple reason that while the growth and decay of the one sort of fruit go on above ground for all to see, the similar processes of the other are hidden under ground and therefore strike the popular imagination less forcibly.

Having surveyed the variations of our main theme among the agricultural races of mankind, we prosecute the enquiry among savages who remain more or less completely in the hunting, fishing, and pastoral stages of society. The same motive which leads the primitive husbandman to adore the corn or the roots, induces the primitive hunter, fowler, fisher, or herdsman to adore the beasts, birds, or fishes which furnish him with the means of subsistence. To him the conception of the death of these worshipful beings is naturally presented with singular force and distinctness; since it is no figurative or allegorical death, no poetical embroidery thrown over the skeleton, but the real death, the naked skeleton, that constantly thrusts itself importunately on his attention. And strange as it may seem to us civilised men, the notion of the immortality and even of the resurrection of the lower animals appears to be almost as familiar to the savage and to be accepted by him with nearly as unwavering a faith as the obvious fact of their death and destruction. For the most part he assumes as a matter of course that the souls of dead animals survive their decease; hence much of the thought of the savage hunter is devoted to the problem of how he can best appease the naturally incensed ghosts of his victims so as to prevent them from doing him a mischief. This refusal of the savage to recognise in death a final cessation of the vital process, this unquestioning faith in the unbroken continuity of all life, is a fact that has not yet received the attention which it seems to merit from enquirers into the constitution of the human mind as well as into the history of religion. In the following pages I have collected examples of this curious faith; I must leave it to others to appraise them.

Thus on the whole we are concerned in these volumes with the reverence or worship paid by men to the natural resources from which they draw their nutriment, both vegetable and animal. That they should invest these resources with an atmosphere of wonder and awe, often indeed with a halo

of divinity, is no matter for surprise. The circle of human knowledge, illuminated by the pale cold light of reason, is so infinitesimally small, the dark regions of human ignorance which lie beyond that luminous ring are so immeasurably vast, that imagination is fain to step up to the border line and send the warm, richly coloured beams of her fairy lantern streaming out into the darkness; and so, peering into the gloom, she is apt to mistake the shadowy reflections of her own figure for real beings moving in the abyss. In short, few men are sensible of the sharp line that divides the known from the unknown; to most men it is a hazy borderland where perception and conception melt indissolubly into one. Hence to the savage the ghosts of dead animals and men, with which his imagination peoples the void, are hardly less real than the solid shapes which the living animals and men present to his senses; and his thoughts and activities are nearly as much absorbed by the one as by the other. Of him it may be said with perhaps even greater truth than of his civilised brother, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

But having said so much in this book of the misty glory which the human imagination sheds round the hard material realities of the food supply, I am unwilling to leave my readers under the impression, natural but erroneous, that man has created most of his gods out of his belly. That is not so, at least that is not my reading of the history of religion. Among the visible, tangible, perceptible elements by which he is surrounded – and it is only of these that I presume to speak – there are others than the merely nutritious which have exerted a powerful influence in touching his imagination and stimulating his energies, and so have contributed to build up the complex fabric of religion. To the preservation of the species the reproductive faculties are no less essential than the nutritive; and with them we enter on a very different sphere of thought and feeling, to wit, the relation of the sexes to each other, with all the depths of tenderness and all the intricate problems which that mysterious relation involves. The study of the various forms, some gross and palpable, some subtle and elusive, in which the sexual instinct has moulded the religious consciousness of our race, is one of the most interesting, as it is one of the most difficult and delicate tasks, which await the future historian of religion.

But the influence which the sexes exert on each other, intimate and profound as it has been and must always be, is far indeed from exhausting the forces of attraction by which mankind are bound together in society. The need of mutual protection, the economic advantages of co-operation, the contagion of example, the communication of knowledge, the great ideas that radiate from great minds, like shafts of light from high towers, – these and many other things combine to draw men into communities, to drill them into regiments, and to set them marching on the road of progress with a concentrated force to which the loose skirmishers of mere anarchy and individualism can never hope to oppose a permanent resistance. Hence when we consider how intimately humanity depends on society for many of the boons which it prizes most highly, we shall probably admit that of all the forces open to our observation which have shaped human destiny the influence of man on man is by far the greatest. If that is so, it seems to follow that among the beings, real or imaginary, which the religious imagination has clothed with the attributes of divinity, human spirits are likely to play a more important part than the spirits of plants, animals, or inanimate objects. I believe that a careful examination of the evidence, which has still to be undertaken, will confirm this conclusion; and that if we could strictly interrogate the phantoms which the human mind has conjured up out of the depths of its bottomless ignorance and enshrined as deities in the dim light of temples, we should find that the majority of them have been nothing but the ghosts of dead men. However, to say this is necessarily to anticipate the result of future research; and if in saying it I have ventured to make a prediction, which like all predictions is liable to be falsified by the event, I have done so only from a fear lest, without some such warning, the numerous facts recorded in these volumes might lend themselves to an exaggerated estimate of their own importance and hence to a misinterpretation and distortion of history.

J. G. Frazer.

Cambridge, *4th May 1912*.

Chapter I. Dionysus

Death and resurrection of Oriental gods of vegetation. The Dying and Reviving god of vegetation in ancient Greece.

In the preceding part of this work we saw that in antiquity the civilised nations of western Asia and Egypt pictured to themselves the changes of the seasons, and particularly the annual growth and decay of vegetation, as episodes in the life of gods, whose mournful death and happy resurrection they celebrated with dramatic rites of alternate lamentation and rejoicing. But if the celebration was in form dramatic, it was in substance magical; that is to say, it was intended, on the principles of sympathetic magic, to ensure the vernal regeneration of plants and the multiplication of animals, which had seemed to be menaced by the inroads of winter. In the ancient world, however, such ideas and such rites were by no means confined to the Oriental peoples of Babylon and Syria, of Phrygia and Egypt; they were not a product peculiar to the religious mysticism of the dreamy East, but were shared by the races of livelier fancy and more mercurial temperament who inhabited the shores and islands of the Aegean. We need not, with some enquirers in ancient and modern times, suppose that these Western peoples borrowed from the older civilisation of the Orient the conception of the Dying and Reviving God, together with the solemn ritual, in which that conception was dramatically set forth before the eyes of the worshippers. More probably the resemblance which may be traced in this respect between the religions of the East and the West is no more than what we commonly, though incorrectly, call a fortuitous coincidence, the effect of similar causes acting alike on the similar constitution of the human mind in different countries and under different skies. The Greek had no need to journey into far countries to learn the vicissitudes of the seasons, to mark the fleeting beauty of the damask rose, the transient glory of the golden corn, the passing splendour of the purple grapes. Year by year in his own beautiful land he beheld, with natural regret, the bright pomp of summer fading into the gloom and stagnation of winter, and year by year he hailed with natural delight the outburst of fresh life in spring. Accustomed to personify the forces of nature, to tinge her cold abstractions with the warm hues of imagination, to clothe her naked realities with the gorgeous drapery of a mythic fancy, he fashioned for himself a train of gods and goddesses, of spirits and elves, out of the shifting panorama of the seasons, and followed the annual fluctuations of their fortunes with alternate emotions of cheerfulness and dejection, of gladness and sorrow, which found their natural expression in alternate rites of rejoicing and lamentation, of revelry and mourning. A consideration of some of the Greek divinities who thus died and rose again from the dead may furnish us with a series of companion pictures to set side by side with the sad figures of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. We begin with Dionysus.

Dionysus, the god of the vine, originally a Thracian deity.

The god Dionysus or Bacchus is best known to us as a personification of the vine and of the exhilaration produced by the juice of the grape.[1] His ecstatic worship, characterised by wild dances, thrilling music, and tipsy excess, appears to have originated among the rude tribes of Thrace, who

[1] On Dionysus in general, see L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,[4] i. 659 *sqq.*; Fr. Lenormant, *s. v.* "Bacchus," in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 591 *sqq.*; Voigt and Thraemer, *s. v.* "Dionysus," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 1029 *sqq.*; E. Rohde, *Psyche*[3] (Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903), ii. 1 *sqq.*; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 363 *sqq.*; Kern, *s. v.* "Dionysus," in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. 1010 *sqq.*; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 258 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 85 *sqq.* The epithet *Bromios* bestowed on Dionysus, and his identification with the Thracian and Phrygian deity Sabazius, have been adduced as evidence that Dionysus was a god of beer or of other cereal intoxicants before he became a god of wine. See W. Headlam, in *Classical Review*, xv. (1901) p. 23; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 414-426.

were notoriously addicted to drunkenness.[2] Its mystic doctrines and extravagant rites were essentially foreign to the clear intelligence and sober temperament of the Greek race. Yet appealing as it did to that love of mystery and that proneness to revert to savagery which seem to be innate in most men, the religion spread like wildfire through Greece until the god whom Homer hardly deigned to notice had become the most popular figure of the pantheon. The resemblance which his story and his ceremonies present to those of Osiris have led some enquirers both in ancient and modern times to hold that Dionysus was merely a disguised Osiris, imported directly from Egypt into Greece.[3] But the great preponderance of evidence points to his Thracian origin, and the similarity of the two worships is sufficiently explained by the similarity of the ideas and customs on which they were founded.

Dionysus a god of trees, especially of fruit-trees.

While the vine with its clusters was the most characteristic manifestation of Dionysus, he was also a god of trees in general. Thus we are told that almost all the Greeks sacrificed to "Dionysus of the tree."[4] In Boeotia one of his titles was "Dionysus in the tree."[5] His image was often merely an upright post, without arms, but draped in a mantle, with a bearded mask to represent the head, and with leafy boughs projecting from the head or body to shew the nature of the deity.[6] On a vase his rude effigy is depicted appearing out of a low tree or bush.[7] At Magnesia on the Maeander an image of Dionysus is said to have been found in a plane-tree, which had been broken by the wind.[8] He was the patron of cultivated trees;[9] prayers were offered to him that he would make the trees grow;[10] and he was especially honoured by husbandmen, chiefly fruit-growers, who set up an image of him, in the shape of a natural tree-stump, in their orchards.[11] He was said to have discovered all tree-fruits, amongst which apples and figs are particularly mentioned;[12] and he was referred to as "well-fruited," "he of the green fruit," and "making the fruit to grow."[13] One of his titles was "teeming" or "bursting" (as of sap or blossoms);[14] and there was a Flowery Dionysus in Attica and at Patrae in Achaia.[15] The Athenians sacrificed to him for the prosperity of the fruits of the land.[16] Amongst the trees particularly sacred to him, in addition to the vine, was the pine-tree.[17] The Delphic oracle commanded the Corinthians to worship a particular pine-tree "equally with the god," so they made two images of Dionysus out of it, with red faces and gilt bodies.[18] In art a wand, tipped with a pine-cone, is commonly carried by

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[2] Plato, *Laws*, i. p. 637 e; Theopompus, cited by Athenaeus, x. 60, p. 442 e f; Suidas, *s. v.* κατασκεδάζειν; compare Xenophon, *Anabasis*, vii. 3. 32. For the evidence of the Thracian origin of Dionysus, see the writers cited in the preceding note, especially Dr. L. R. Farnell, *op. cit.* v. 85 *sqq.* Compare W. Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 10 *sqq.*

[3] Herodotus, ii. 49; Diodorus Siculus, i. 97. 4; P. Foucart, *Le Culte de Dionyse en Attique* (Paris, 1904), pp. 9 *sqq.*, 159 *sqq.* (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres*, xxxvii.).

[4] Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* v. 3: Διονύσῳ δὲ δενδρίτῃ πάντες, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, Ἕλληνες θύουσιν.

[5] Hesychius, *s. v.* Ἔνδενδρος.

[6] See the pictures of his images, drawn from ancient vases, in C. Bötticher's *Baumkultus der Hellenen* (Berlin, 1856), plates 42, 43, 43 a, 43 b, 44; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 361, 626 *sq.*

[7] Daremberg et Saglio, *op. cit.* i. 626.

[8] P. Wendland und O. Kern, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie und Religion* (Berlin, 1895), pp. 79 *sqq.*; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d' Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), No. 856.

[9] Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30.

[10] Pindar, quoted by Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35.

[11] Maximus Tyrius, *Dissertat.* viii. 1.

[12] Athenaeus, iii. chs. 14 and 23, pp. 78 c, 82 d.

[13] *Orphica*, Hymn l. 4. liii. 8.

[14] Aelian, *Var. Hist.* iii. 41; Hesychius, *s. v.* Φλέω[ς]. Compare Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* v. 8. 3.

[15] Pausanias, i. 31. 4; *id.* vii. 21. 6.

[16] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 636, vol. ii. p. 435, τῶν καρπῶν τῶν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ. However, the words may equally well refer to the cereal crops.

[17] Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* v. 3.

[18] Pausanias, ii. 2. 6 *sq.* Pausanias does not mention the kind of tree; but from Euripides, *Bacchae*, 1064 *sqq.*, and Philostratus, *Imag.* i. 17 (18), we may infer that it was a pine, though Theocritus (xxvi. 11) speaks of it as a mastich-tree.

the god or his worshippers.[19] Again, the ivy and the fig-tree were especially associated with him. In the Attic township of Acharnae there was a Dionysus Ivy;[20] at Lacedaemon there was a Fig Dionysus; and in Naxos, where figs were called *meilicha*, there was a Dionysus Meilichios, the face of whose image was made of fig-wood.[21]

Dionysus as a god of agriculture and the corn. The winnowing-fan as an emblem of Dionysus.

Further, there are indications, few but significant, that Dionysus was conceived as a deity of agriculture and the corn. He is spoken of as himself doing the work of a husbandman:[22] he is reported to have been the first to yoke oxen to the plough, which before had been dragged by hand alone; and some people found in this tradition the clue to the bovine shape in which, as we shall see, the god was often supposed to present himself to his worshippers. Thus guiding the ploughshare and scattering the seed as he went, Dionysus is said to have eased the labour of the husbandman.[23] Further, we are told that in the land of the Bisaltae, a Thracian tribe, there was a great and fair sanctuary of Dionysus, where at his festival a bright light shone forth at night as a token of an abundant harvest vouchsafed by the deity; but if the crops were to fail that year, the mystic light was not seen, darkness brooded over the sanctuary as at other times.[24] Moreover, among the emblems of Dionysus was the winnowing-fan, that is the large open shovel-shaped basket, which down to modern times has been used by farmers to separate the grain from the chaff by tossing the corn in the air. This simple agricultural instrument figured in the mystic rites of Dionysus; indeed the god is traditionally said to have been placed at birth in a winnowing-fan as in a cradle: in art he is represented as an infant so cradled; and from these traditions and representations he derived the epithet of *Liknites*, that is, "He of the Winnowing-fan."[25]

Use of the winnowing-fan to cradle infants. The winnowing-fan sometimes intended to avert evil spirits from children.

At first sight this symbolism might be explained very simply and naturally by supposing that the divine infant cradled in the winnowing-fan was identified with the corn which it is the function of the instrument to winnow and sift. Yet against this identification it may be urged with reason that the use of a winnowing-fan as a cradle was not peculiar to Dionysus; it was a regular practice with the ancient Greeks to place their infants in winnowing-fans as an omen of wealth and fertility for the future life of the children.[26] Customs of the same sort have been observed, apparently for similar reasons, by other peoples in other lands. For example, in Java it is or used to be customary to place every child at birth in a bamboo basket like the sieve or winnowing-basket which Javanese farmers use for separating the rice from the chaff.[27] It is the midwife who places the child in the basket, and

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[19] Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, ii. pll. xxxii. *sqq.*; A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, i. figures 489, 491, 492, 495. Compare F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 623; Ch. F. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus* (Königsberg, 1829), p. 700.

[20] Pausanias, i. 31. 6.

[21] Athenaeus, iii. 14, p. 78 c.

[22] Himerius, *Orat.* i. 10, Διόνυσος γεωργεῖ.

[23] Diodorus Siculus, iii. 64. 1-3, iv. 4. 1 *sq.* On the agricultural aspect of Dionysus, see L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 123 *sq.*

[24] [Aristotle,] *Mirab. Auscult.* 122 (p. 842 a, ed. Im. Bekker, Berlin edition).

[25] Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35. The literary and monumental evidence as to the winnowing-fan in the myth and ritual of Dionysus has been collected and admirably interpreted by Miss J. E. Harrison in her article "Mystica Vannus Iacchi," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxiii. (1903) pp. 292-324. Compare her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*[2] (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 517 *sqq.* I must refer the reader to these works for full details on the subject. In the passage of Servius referred to the reading is somewhat uncertain; in his critical edition G. Thilo reads λικμητὴν and λικμὸς instead of the usual λικνιτὴν and λικνόν. But the variation does not affect the meaning.

[26] Ἐν γὰρ λείκνοις τὸ παλαιὸν κατεκοίμιζον τὰ Βρέφη πλοῦτον καὶ καρπούς οἰωνιζόμενοι, Scholiast on Callimachus, i. 48 (*Callimachea*, edidit O. Schneider, Leipsic, 1870-1873, vol. i. p. 109).

[27] T. S. Raffles, *History of Java* (London, 1817), i. 323; C. F. Winter, "Instellingen, Gewoontenen Gebruiken der Javanen te

as she does so she suddenly knocks with the palms of both hands on the basket in order that the child may not be timid and fearful. Then she addresses the child thus: "Cry not, for Njaï-among and Kaki-among" (two spirits) "are watching over you." Next she addresses these two spirits, saying, "Bring not your grandchild to the road, lest he be trampled by a horse; bring him not to the bank of the river, lest he fall into the river." The object of the ceremony is said to be that these two spirits should always and everywhere guard the child.[28] On the first anniversary of a child's birthday the Chinese of Foo-Chow set the little one in a large bamboo sieve, such as farmers employ in winnowing grain, and in the sieve they place along with the child a variety of articles, such as fruits, gold or silver ornaments, a set of money-scales, books, a pencil, pen, ink, paper, and so on, and they draw omens of the child's future career from the object which it first handles and plays with. Thus, if the infant first grasps the money-scale, he will be wealthy; if he seizes on a book, he will be learned, and so forth.[29] In the Bilaspore district of India it is customary for well-to-do people to place a newborn infant in a winnowing-fan filled with rice and afterwards to give the grain to the nurse in attendance.[30] In Upper Egypt a newly-born babe is immediately laid upon a corn-sieve and corn is scattered around it; moreover, on the seventh day after birth the infant is carried on a sieve through the whole house, while the midwife scatters wheat, barley, pease and salt. The intention of these ceremonies is said to be to avert evil spirits from the child,[31] and a like motive is assigned by other peoples for the practice of placing newborn infants in a winnowing-basket or corn-sieve. For example, in the Punjaub, when several children of a family have died in succession, a new baby will sometimes be put at birth into an old winnowing-basket (*chhaj*) along with the sweepings of the house, and so dragged out into the yard; such a child may, like Dionysus, in after life be known by the name of Winnowing-basket (*Chhajju*) or Dragged (*Ghasitâ*).[32] The object of treating the child in this way seems to be to save its life by deceiving the spirits, who are supposed to have carried off its elder brothers and sisters; these malevolent beings are on the look-out for the new baby, but they will never think of raking for it in the dust-bin, that being the last place where they would expect to find the hope of the family. The same may perhaps be the intention of a ceremony observed by the Gaolis of the Deccan. As soon as a child is born, it is bathed and then placed on a sieve for a few minutes. On the fifth day the sieve, with a lime and *pan* leaves on it, is removed outside the house and then, after the worship of Chetti has been performed, the sieve is thrown away on the road.[33] Again, the same notion of rescuing the child from dangerous spirits comes out very clearly in a similar custom observed by the natives of Laos, a province of Siam. These people "believe that an infant is the child, not of its parents, but of the spirits, and in this belief they go through the following formalities. As soon as an infant is born it is bathed and dressed, laid upon a rice-sieve, and placed – by the grandmother if present, if not, by the next near female relative – at the head of the stairs or of the ladder leading to the house. The person performing this duty calls out in a loud tone to the spirits to come and take the child away to-day, or for ever after to let it alone; at the same moment she stamps violently on the floor to frighten the child,

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Soerakarta," *Tijdschrift voor Neêrlands Indie*, Vijfde Jaargang, Eerste Deel (1843), p. 695; P. J. Veth, *Java* (Haarlem, 1875-1884), i. 639.

[28] C. Poensen, "Iets over de kleeding der Javanen," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xx. (1876) pp. 279 *sq.*

[29] Rev. J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, edited and revised by the Rev. Paxton Hood (London, 1868), pp. 90 *sq.*

[30] Rev. E. M. Gordon, "Some Notes concerning the People of Mungēli Tahsīl, Bilaspur District," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, lxxi., Part iii. (Calcutta, 1903) p. 74; *id.*, *Indian Folk Tales* (London, 1908), p. 41.

[31] C. B. Klunzinger, *Bilder aus Oberägypten* (Stuttgart, 1877), pp. 181, 182; *id.*, *Upper Egypt, its People and Products* (London, 1878), pp. 185, 186.

[32] R. C. Temple, "Opprobrious Names," *Indian Antiquary*, x. (1881) pp. 331 *sq.* Compare H. A. Rose, "Hindu Birth Observances in the Punjab," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907) p. 234. See also *Panjab Notes and Queries*, vol. iii. August 1886, § 768, pp. 184 *sq.*: "The winnowing fan in which a newly-born child is laid, is used on the fifth day for the worship of Satwáí. This makes it impure, and it is henceforward used only for the house-sweepings."

[33] Lieut. – Colonel Gunthorpe, "On the Ghosí or Gaddí Gaolís of the Deccan," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, i. 45.

or give it a jerk, and make it cry. If it does not cry this is regarded as an evil omen. If, on the other hand, it follows the ordinary laws of nature and begins to exercise its vocal organs, it is supposed to have a happy and prosperous life before it. Sometimes the spirits do come and take the infant away, *i. e.* it dies before it is twenty-four hours old, but, to prevent such a calamity, strings are tied round its wrists on the first night after its birth, and if it sickens or is feeble the spirit-doctors are called in to prescribe certain offerings to be made to keep away the very spirits who, only a few hours previously, were ceremoniously called upon to come and carry the child off. On the day after its birth the child is regarded as being the property no longer of the spirits, who could have taken it if they had wanted it, but of the parents, who forthwith sell it to some relation for a nominal sum – an eighth or a quarter of a rupee perhaps. This again is a further guarantee against molestation by the spirits, who apparently are regarded as honest folk that would not stoop to take what has been bought and paid for."[34]

Use of the winnowing-fan to avert evil from children in India, Madagascar, and China. Karen ceremony of fanning away evils from children.

A like intention of averting evil in some shape from a child is assigned in other cases of the same custom. Thus in Travancore, "if an infant is observed to distort its limbs as if in pain, it is supposed to be under the pressure of some one who has stooped over it, to relieve which the mother places it with a nut-cracker on a winnowing fan and shakes it three or four times."[35] Again, among the Tanala people of Madagascar almost all children born in the unlucky month of Faosa are buried alive in the forest. But if the parents resolve to let the child live, they must call in the aid of a diviner, who performs a ceremony for averting the threatened ill-luck. The child is placed in a winnowing-fan along with certain herbs. Further, the diviner takes herbs of the same sort, a worn-out spade, and an axe, fastens them to the father's spear, and sets the spear up in the ground. Then the child is bathed in water which has been medicated with some of the same herbs. Finally the diviner says: "The worn-out spade to the grandchild; may it (the child) not despoil its father, may it not despoil its mother, may it not despoil the children; let it be good." This ceremony, we are told, "puts an end to the child's evil days, and the father gets the spear to put away all evil. The child then joins its father and mother; its evil days are averted, and the water and the other things are buried, for they account them evil."[36] Similarly the ancient Greeks used to bury, or throw into the sea, or deposit at cross-roads, the things that had been used in ceremonies of purification, no doubt because the things were supposed to be tainted by the evil which had been transferred to them in the rites.[37] Another example of the use of a winnowing-fan in what may be called a purificatory ceremony is furnished by the practice of the Chinese of Foo-Chow. A lad who is suffering from small-pox is made to squat in a large winnowing sieve. On his head is placed a piece of red cloth, and on the cloth are laid some parched beans, which are then allowed to roll off. As the name for beans, pronounced in the local dialect, is identical with the common name for small-pox, and as moreover the scars left by the pustules are thought to resemble beans, it appears to be imagined that just as the beans roll off the boy's head, so will the pustules vanish from his body without leaving a trace behind.[38] Thus the cure depends on the principle of homoeopathic magic. Perhaps on the same principle a winnowing-fan is employed in the ceremony from a notion that it will help to waft or fan away the disease like chaff from the grain. We may compare a purificatory ceremony observed by the Karens of Burma at the naming of a new-born

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[34] C. Bock, *Temples and Elephants* (London, 1884), pp. 258 *sq.*

[35] S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London, 1883), p. 213.

[36] J. Richardson, "Tanala Customs, Superstitions, and Beliefs," *Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, Reprint of the First Four Numbers* (Antananarivo, 1885), pp. 226 *sq.*

[37] Pausanias, ii. 31. 8; K. F. Hermann, *Lehrbuch der gottesdienstlichen Alterthümer der Griechen*[2] (Heidelberg, 1858), pp. 132 *sq.*, § 23, 25.

[38] Rev. J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, edited and revised by the Rev. Paxton Hood (London, 1868), pp. 114 *sq.* The beans used in the ceremony had previously been placed before an image of the goddess of small-pox.

child. Amongst these people "children are supposed to come into the world defiled, and unless that defilement is removed, they will be unfortunate, and unsuccessful in their undertakings. An Elder takes a thin splint of bamboo, and, tying a noose at one end, he fans it down the child's arm, saying:

'Fan away ill luck, fan away ill success:
Fan away inability, fan away unskilfulness:
Fan away slow growth, fan away difficulty of growth:
Fan away stuntedness, fan away puniness:
Fan away drowsiness, fan away stupidity:
Fan away debasedness, fan away wretchedness:
Fan away the whole completely.'

"The Elder now changes his motion and fans up the child's arm, saying:

'*Fan on power, fan on influence:*
Fan on the paddy bin, fan on the paddy barn:
Fan on followers, fan on dependants:
Fan on good things, fan on appropriate things.' "[39]

Among the reasons for the use of the winnowing-fan in birth-rites may have been the wish to avert evils and to promote fertility and growth.

Thus in some of the foregoing instances the employment of the winnowing-fan may have been suggested by the proper use of the implement as a means of separating the corn from the chaff, the same operation being extended by analogy to rid men of evils of various sorts which would otherwise adhere to them like husks to the grain. It was in this way that the ancients explained the use of the winnowing-fan in the mysteries.[40] But one motive, and perhaps the original one, for setting a newborn child in a winnowing-fan and surrounding it with corn was probably the wish to communicate to the infant, on the principle of sympathetic magic, the fertility and especially the power of growth possessed by the grain. This was in substance the explanation which W. Mannhardt gave of the custom.[41] He rightly insisted on the analogy which many peoples, and in particular the ancient Greeks, have traced between the sowing of seed and the begetting of children,[42] and he confirmed his view of the function of the winnowing-fan in these ceremonies by aptly comparing a German custom of sowing barley or flax seed over weakly and stunted children in the belief that this will make them grow with the growth of the barley or the flax.[43] An Esthonian mode of accomplishing the same object is to set the child in the middle of a plot of ground where a sower is sowing hemp and to leave the little one there till the sowing is finished; after that they imagine that the child will shoot up in stature like the hemp which has just been sown.[44]

Use of the winnowing-fan in the rites of Dionysus.

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[39] Rev. F. Mason, D.D., "Physical Character of the Karens," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, No. cxxxi. (Calcutta, 1866), pp. 9 *sq.*

[40] Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166: "*Et vannus Iacchi… Mystica autem Bacchi ideo ait, quod Liberi patris sacra ad purgationem animae pertinebant: et sic homines ejus mysteriis purgabantur, sicut vannis frumenta purgantur.*"

[41] W. Mannhardt, "Kind und Korn," *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 351-374.

[42] W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* pp. 351 *sqq.*

[43] W. Mannhardt, *op. cit.* p. 372, citing A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volks-aberglaube*[2] (Berlin, 1869), p. 339, § 543; L. Strackerjan, *Aberglaube und Sagen aus dem Herzogthum Oldenburg* (Oldenburg, 1867), i. 81.

[44] Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehsten abergläubische Gebräuche* (St. Petersburg, 1854), p. 61. This custom is also cited by Mannhardt (*l. c.*).

With the foregoing evidence before us of a widespread custom of placing newborn children in winnowing-fans we clearly cannot argue that Dionysus must necessarily have been a god of the corn because Greek tradition and Greek art represent him as an infant cradled in a winnowing-fan. The argument would prove too much, for it would apply equally to all the infants that have been so cradled in all parts of the world. We cannot even press the argument drawn from the surname "He of the Winnowing-fan" which was borne by Dionysus, since we have seen that similar names are borne for similar reasons in India by persons who have no claim whatever to be regarded as deities of the corn. Yet when all necessary deductions have been made on this score, the association of Dionysus with the winnowing-fan appears to be too intimate to be explained away as a mere reminiscence of a practice to which every Greek baby, whether human or divine, had to submit. That practice would hardly account either for the use of the winnowing-fan in the mysteries or for the appearance of the implement, filled with fruitage of various kinds, on the monuments which set forth the ritual of Dionysus.[45] This last emblem points plainly to a conception of the god as a personification of the fruits of the earth in general; and as if to emphasise the idea of fecundity conveyed by such a symbol there sometimes appears among the fruits in the winnowing-fan an effigy of the male organ of generation. The prominent place which that effigy occupied in the worship of Dionysus[46] hints broadly, if it does not strictly prove, that to the Greek mind the god stood for the powers of fertility in general, animal as well as vegetable. In the thought of the ancients no sharp line of distinction divided the fertility of animals from the fertility of plants; rather the two ideas met and blended in a nebulous haze. We need not wonder, therefore, that the same coarse but expressive emblem figured conspicuously in the ritual of Father Liber, the Italian counterpart of Dionysus, who in return for the homage paid to the symbol of his creative energy was believed to foster the growth of the crops and to guard the fields against the powers of evil.[47]

> Myth of the death and resurrection of Dionysus. Legend that the infant Dionysus occupied for a short time the throne of his father Zeus. Death and resurrection of Dionysus represented in his rites.

Like the other gods of vegetation whom we considered in the last volume, Dionysus was believed to have died a violent death, but to have been brought to life again; and his sufferings, death, and resurrection were enacted in his sacred rites. His tragic story is thus told by the poet Nonnus. Zeus in the form of a serpent visited Persephone, and she bore him Zagreus, that is, Dionysus, a horned infant. Scarcely was he born, when the babe mounted the throne of his father Zeus and mimicked the great god by brandishing the lightning in his tiny hand. But he did not occupy the throne long; for the treacherous Titans, their faces whitened with chalk, attacked him with knives while he was looking at himself in a mirror. For a time he evaded their assaults by turning himself into various shapes, assuming the likeness successively of Zeus and Cronus, of a young man, of a lion, a horse, and a serpent. Finally, in the form of a bull, he was cut to pieces by the murderous knives of his enemies.[48] His Cretan myth, as related by Firmicus Maternus, ran thus. He was said to have been the bastard son of Jupiter, a Cretan king. Going abroad, Jupiter transferred the throne and sceptre to the youthful Dionysus, but, knowing that his wife Juno cherished a jealous dislike of the child, he entrusted Dionysus to the care of guards upon whose fidelity he believed he could rely. Juno, however, bribed the guards, and amusing the child with rattles and a cunningly-wrought looking-glass lured

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[45] Miss J. E. Harrison, "Mystica Vannus Iacchi," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxiii. (1903) pp. 296 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*,[2] pp. 518 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) p. 243.

[46] Herodotus, ii. 48, 49; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 34, pp. 29-30, ed. Potter; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 19, vol. i. p. 32; M. P. Nilsson, *Studia de Dionysiis Atticis* (Lund, 1900), pp. 90 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. 125, 195, 205.

[47] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 21.

[48] Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 155-205.

him into an ambush, where her satellites, the Titans, rushed upon him, cut him limb from limb, boiled his body with various herbs, and ate it. But his sister Minerva, who had shared in the deed, kept his heart and gave it to Jupiter on his return, revealing to him the whole history of the crime. In his rage, Jupiter put the Titans to death by torture, and, to soothe his grief for the loss of his son, made an image in which he enclosed the child's heart, and then built a temple in his honour.[49] In this version a Euhemeristic turn has been given to the myth by representing Jupiter and Juno (Zeus and Hera) as a king and queen of Crete. The guards referred to are the mythical Curetes who danced a war-dance round the infant Dionysus, as they are said to have done round the infant Zeus.[50] Very noteworthy is the legend, recorded both by Nonnus and Firmicus, that in his infancy Dionysus occupied for a short time the throne of his father Zeus. So Proclus tells us that "Dionysus was the last king of the gods appointed by Zeus. For his father set him on the kingly throne, and placed in his hand the sceptre, and made him king of all the gods of the world."[51] Such traditions point to a custom of temporarily investing the king's son with the royal dignity as a preliminary to sacrificing him instead of his father. Pomegranates were supposed to have sprung from the blood of Dionysus, as anemones from the blood of Adonis and violets from the blood of Attis: hence women refrained from eating seeds of pomegranates at the festival of the Thesmophoria.[52] According to some, the severed limbs of Dionysus were pieced together, at the command of Zeus, by Apollo, who buried them on Parnassus.[53] The grave of Dionysus was shewn in the Delphic temple beside a golden statue of Apollo.[54] However, according to another account, the grave of Dionysus was at Thebes, where he is said to have been torn in pieces.[55] Thus far the resurrection of the slain god is not mentioned, but in other versions of the myth it is variously related. According to one version, which represented Dionysus as a son of Zeus and Demeter, his mother pieced together his mangled limbs and made him young again.[56] In others it is simply said that shortly after his burial he rose from the dead and ascended up to heaven;[57] or that Zeus raised him up as he lay mortally wounded;[58] or that Zeus swallowed the heart of Dionysus and then begat him afresh by Semele,[59] who in the common legend figures as mother of Dionysus. Or, again, the heart was pounded up and given in a portion to Semele, who thereby conceived him.[60]

Turning from the myth to the ritual, we find that the Cretans celebrated a biennial[61] festival at which the passion of Dionysus was represented in every detail. All that he had done or suffered in his

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[49] Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.

[50] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17. Compare Ch. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, pp. 1111 *sqq.*

[51] Proclus on Plato, *Cratylus*, p. 59, quoted by E. Abel, *Orphica*, p. 228. Compare Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, pp. 552 *sq.*

[52] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 19. Compare *id.* ii. 22; Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* vii. p. 280, ed. H. Rabe.

[53] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 18; Proclus on Plato's *Timaeus*, iii. p. 200 d, quoted by Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 562, and by Abel, *Orphica*, p. 234. Others said that the mangled body was pieced together, not by Apollo but by Rhea (Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30).

[54] Ch. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, pp. 572 *sqq.* See *The Dying God*, p. 3. For a conjectural restoration of the temple, based on ancient authorities and an examination of the scanty remains, see an article by J. H. Middleton, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 282 *sqq.* The ruins of the temple have now been completely excavated by the French.

[55] S. Clemens Romanus, *Recognitiones*, x. 24 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. col. 1434).

[56] Diodorus Siculus, iii. 62.

[57] Macrobius, *Comment. in Somn. Scip.* i. 12. 12; *Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres Romae nuper reperti* (commonly referred to as *Mythographi Vaticani*), ed. G. H. Bode (Cellis, 1834), iii. 12. 5, p. 246; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iv. 17 (vol. i. p. 286, ed. P. Koetschau).

[58] Himerius, *Orat.* ix. 4.

[59] Proclus, *Hymn to Minerva*, quoted by Ch. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 561; *Orphica*, ed. E. Abel, p. 235.

[60] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 167.

[61] The festivals of Dionysus were biennial in many places. See G. F. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*,[4] ii. 524 *sqq.* (The terms for the festival were τριετηρίς, τριετηρικός, both terms of the series being included in the numeration, in accordance with the ancient mode of reckoning.) Perhaps the festivals were formerly annual and the period was afterwards lengthened, as has happened with other festivals. See W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 172, 175, 491, 533 *sq.*, 598. Some of the festivals of Dionysus, however, were annual. Dr. Farnell has conjectured that the biennial period in many Greek festivals is to be explained by "the original shifting of land-cultivation which is frequent in early society owing to the backwardness of the agricultural processes; and which would certainly be consecrated

last moments was enacted before the eyes of his worshippers, who tore a live bull to pieces with their teeth and roamed the woods with frantic shouts. In front of them was carried a casket supposed to contain the sacred heart of Dionysus, and to the wild music of flutes and cymbals they mimicked the rattles by which the infant god had been lured to his doom.[62] Where the resurrection formed part of the myth, it also was acted at the rites,[63] and it even appears that a general doctrine of resurrection, or at least of immortality, was inculcated on the worshippers; for Plutarch, writing to console his wife on the death of their infant daughter, comforts her with the thought of the immortality of the soul as taught by tradition and revealed in the mysteries of Dionysus.[64] A different form of the myth of the death and resurrection of Dionysus is that he descended into Hades to bring up his mother Semele from the dead.[65] The local Argive tradition was that he went down through the Alcyonian lake; and his return from the lower world, in other words his resurrection, was annually celebrated on the spot by the Argives, who summoned him from the water by trumpet blasts, while they threw a lamb into the lake as an offering to the warder of the dead.[66] Whether this was a spring festival does not appear, but the Lydians certainly celebrated the advent of Dionysus in spring; the god was supposed to bring the season with him.[67] Deities of vegetation, who are supposed to pass a certain portion of each year under ground, naturally come to be regarded as gods of the lower world or of the dead. Both Dionysus and Osiris were so conceived.[68]

Dionysus represented in the form of a bull.

A feature in the mythical character of Dionysus, which at first sight appears inconsistent with his nature as a deity of vegetation, is that he was often conceived and represented in animal shape, especially in the form, or at least with the horns, of a bull. Thus he is spoken of as “cow-born,” “bull,” “bull-shaped,” “bull-faced,” “bull-browed,” “bull-horned,” “horn-bearing,” “two-horned,” “horned.”[69] He was believed to appear, at least occasionally, as a bull.[70] His images were often, as at Cyzicus, made in bull shape,[71] or with bull horns;[72] and he was painted with horns.[73] Types of the horned Dionysus are found amongst the surviving monuments of antiquity.[74] On one statuette he appears clad in a bull's hide, the head, horns, and hoofs hanging down behind.[75] Again, he is represented as a child with clusters of grapes round his brow, and a calf's head, with sprouting horns, attached to the back of his head.[76] On a red-figured vase the god is portrayed as a calf-headed

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by a special ritual attached to the god of the soil.” See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. 180 *sq.*

[62] Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.

[63] *Mythographi Vaticani*, ed. G. H. Bode, iii. 12. 5, p. 246.

[64] Plutarch, *Consol. ad uxor.* 10. Compare *id.*, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; *id.*, *De E Delphico*, 9; *id.*, *De esu carnium*, i. 7.

[65] Pausanias, ii. 31. 2 and 37. 5; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 3.

[66] Pausanias, ii. 37. 5 *sq.*; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; *id.*, *Quaest. Conviv.* iv. 6. 2.

[67] Himerius, *Orat.* iii. 6, xiv. 7.

[68] For Dionysus in this capacity see F. Lenormant in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 632. For Osiris, see *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 344 *sq.*

[69] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; *id.*, *Quaest. Graec.* 36; Athenaeus, xi. 51, p. 476 a; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 16; *Orphica*, Hymn xxx. *vv.* 3, 4, xlv. 1, lii. 2, liii. 8; Euripides, *Bacchae*, 99; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 357; Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 31; Lucian, *Bacchus*, 2. The title Εἰραφιώτης applied to Dionysus (*Homeric Hymns*, xxxiv. 2; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, iii. 17; Dionysius, *Perieg.* 576; *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 371. 57) is etymologically equivalent to the Sanscrit *varsabha*, “a bull,” as I was informed by my lamented friend the late R. A. Neil of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

[70] Euripides, *Bacchae*, 920 *sqq.*, 1017; Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 197 *sqq.*

[71] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35; Athenaeus, xi. 51, p. 476 a.

[72] Diodorus Siculus, iii. 64. 2, iv. 4. 2; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30.

[73] Diodorus Siculus, iii. 64. 2; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 209, 1236; Philostratus, *Imagines*, i. 14 (15).

[74] Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, ii. pl. xxxiii.; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 619 *sq.*, 631; W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 1149 *sqq.*; F. Imhoof-Blumer, “Coin-types of some Kilikian Cities,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) p. 165.

[75] F. G. Welcker, *Alte Denkmäler* (Göttingen, 1849-1864), v. taf. 2.

[76] *Archaeologische Zeitung*, ix. (1851) pl. xxxiii., with Gerhard's remarks, pp. 371-373.

child seated on a woman's lap.[77] The people of Cynaetha in north-western Arcadia held a festival of Dionysus in winter, when men, who had greased their bodies with oil for the occasion, used to pick out a bull from the herd and carry it to the sanctuary of the god. Dionysus was supposed to inspire their choice of the particular bull,[78] which probably represented the deity himself; for at his festivals he was believed to appear in bull form. The women of Elis hailed him as a bull, and prayed him to come with his bull's foot. They sang, "Come hither, Dionysus, to thy holy temple by the sea; come with the Graces to thy temple, rushing with thy bull's foot, O goodly bull, O goodly bull!"[79] The Bacchanals of Thrace wore horns in imitation of their god.[80] According to the myth, it was in the shape of a bull that he was torn to pieces by the Titans;[81] and the Cretans, when they acted the sufferings and death of Dionysus, tore a live bull to pieces with their teeth.[82] Indeed, the rending and devouring of live bulls and calves appear to have been a regular feature of the Dionysiac rites.[83] When we consider the practice of portraying the god as a bull or with some of the features of the animal, the belief that he appeared in bull form to his worshippers at the sacred rites, and the legend that in bull form he had been torn in pieces, we cannot doubt that in rending and devouring a live bull at his festival the worshippers of Dionysus believed themselves to be killing the god, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood.

Dionysus as a goat. Live goats rent and devoured by his worshippers.

Another animal whose form Dionysus assumed was the goat. One of his names was "Kid."[84] At Athens and at Hermion he was worshipped under the title of "the one of the Black Goatskin," and a legend ran that on a certain occasion he had appeared clad in the skin from which he took the title.[85] In the wine-growing district of Phlius, where in autumn the plain is still thickly mantled with the red and golden foliage of the fading vines, there stood of old a bronze image of a goat, which the husbandmen plastered with gold-leaf as a means of protecting their vines against blight.[86] The image probably represented the vine-god himself. To save him from the wrath of Hera, his father Zeus changed the youthful Dionysus into a kid;[87] and when the gods fled to Egypt to escape the fury of Typhon, Dionysus was turned into a goat.[88] Hence when his worshippers rent in pieces a live goat and devoured it raw,[89] they must have believed that they were eating the body and blood of the god.

Custom of rending and devouring animals and men as a religious rite. Ceremonial cannibalism among the Indians of British Columbia.

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[77] *Gazette Archéologique*, v. (1879) pl. 3.

[78] Pausanias, viii. 19. 2.

[79] Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae*, 36; *id.*, *Isis et Osiris*, 35.

[80] J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 1236.

[81] Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 205.

[82] Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6.

[83] Euripides, *Bacchae*, 735 *sqq.*; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 357.

[84] Hesychius, *s. v.* Ἔριφος ὁ Διόνυσος, on which there is a marginal gloss ὁ μικρὸς αἴξ, ὁ ἐν τῷ ἔαρι φαινόμενος, ἤγουν ὁ πρώϊμος; Stephanus Byzantius, *s. v.* Ἀκρώρεια.

[85] Pausanias, ii. 35. 1; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 146; *Etymologicum Magnum*, *s. v.* Ἀπατούρια, p. 118. 54 *sqq.*; Suidas, *s. vv.* Ἀπατούρια and μελαναίγιδα Διόνυσον; Nonnus, *Dionys.* xxvii. 302. Compare Conon, *Narrat.* 39, where for Μελανθίδῃ we should perhaps read Μελαναίγιδι.

[86] Pausanias, ii. 13. 6. On their return from Troy the Greeks are said to have found goats and an image of Dionysus in a cave of Euboea (Pausanias, i. 23. 1).

[87] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 4. 3.

[88] Ovid, *Metam.* v. 329; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 28; *Mythographi Vaticani*, ed. G. H. Bode, i. 86, p. 29.

[89] Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, v. 19. Compare Suidas, *s. v.* αἰγίζειν. As fawns appear to have been also torn in pieces at the rites of Dionysus (Photius, *Lexicon*, *s. v.* νεβρίζειν; Harpocration, *s. v.* νεβρίζων), it is probable that the fawn was another of the god's embodiments. But of this there seems no direct evidence. Fawn-skins were worn both by the god and his worshippers (Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30). Similarly the female Bacchanals wore goat-skins (Hesychius, *s. v.* τραγηφόροι).

The custom of tearing in pieces the bodies of animals and of men and then devouring them raw has been practised as a religious rite by savages in modern times. We need not therefore dismiss as a fable the testimony of antiquity to the observance of similar rites among the frenzied worshippers of Bacchus. An English missionary to the Coast Indians of British Columbia has thus described a scene like the cannibal orgies of the Bacchanals. After mentioning that an old chief had ordered a female slave to be dragged to the beach, murdered, and thrown into the water, he proceeds as follows: "I did not see the murder, but, immediately after, I saw crowds of people running out of those houses near to where the corpse was thrown, and forming themselves into groups at a good distance away. This I learnt was from fear of what was to follow. Presently two bands of furious wretches appeared, each headed by a man in a state of nudity. They gave vent to the most unearthly sounds, and the two naked men made themselves look as unearthly as possible, proceeding in a creeping kind of stoop, and stepping like two proud horses, at the same time shooting forward each arm alternately, which they held out at full length for a little time in the most defiant manner. Besides this, the continual jerking their heads back, causing their long black hair to twist about, added much to their savage appearance. For some time they pretended to be seeking the body, and the instant they came where it lay they commenced screaming and rushing round it like so many angry wolves. Finally they seized it, dragged it out of the water, and laid it on the beach, where I was told the naked men would commence tearing it to pieces with their teeth. The two bands of men immediately surrounded them, and so hid their horrid work. In a few minutes the crowd broke into two, when each of the naked cannibals appeared with half of the body in his hands. Separating a few yards, they commenced, amid horrid yells, their still more horrid feast. The sight was too terrible to behold. I left the gallery with a depressed heart. I may mention that the two bands of savages just alluded to belong to that class which the whites term 'medicine-men.' " The same writer informs us that at the winter ceremonials of these Indians "the cannibal, on such occasions, is generally supplied with two, three, or four human bodies, which he tears to pieces before his audience. Several persons, either from bravado or as a charm, present their arms for him to bite. I have seen several whom he has bitten, and I hear two have died from the effects." And when corpses were not forthcoming, these cannibals apparently seized and devoured living people. Mr. Duncan has seen hundreds of the Tsimshian Indians sitting in their canoes which they had just pushed off from the shore in order to escape being torn to pieces by a party of prowling cannibals. Others of these Indians contented themselves with tearing dogs to pieces, while their attendants kept up a growling noise, or a whoop, "which was seconded by a screeching noise made from an instrument which they believe to be the abode of a spirit."[90]

Religious societies of Cannibals and Dog-eaters among the Indians of British Columbia. Live goats rent in pieces and devoured by fanatics in Morocco.

Mr. Duncan's account of these savage rites has been fully borne out by later observation. Among the Kwakiutl Indians the Cannibals (*Hamatsas*) are the highest in rank of the Secret Societies. They devour corpses, bite pieces out of living people, and formerly ate slaves who had been killed for the purpose. But when their fury has subsided, they are obliged to pay compensation to the persons whom they have bitten and to the owners of slaves whom they have killed. The indemnity consists sometimes of blankets, sometimes of canoes. In the latter case the tariff is fixed: one bite, one canoe. For some time after eating human flesh the cannibal has to observe a great many rules, which regulate his eating and drinking, his going out and his coming in, his clothing and his intercourse with his

[90] Mr. Duncan, quoted by Commander R. C. Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (London, 1862), pp. 284-288. The instrument which made the screeching sound was no doubt a bull-roarer, a flat piece of stick whirled at the end of a string so as to produce a droning or screaming note according to the speed of revolution. Such instruments are used by the Koskimo Indians of the same region at their cannibal and other rites. See Fr. Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895* (Washington, 1897), pp. 610, 611.

wife.[91] Similar customs prevail among other tribes of the same coast, such as the Bella Coola, the Tsimshian, the Niska, and the Nootka. In the Nootka tribe members of the Panther Society tear dogs to pieces and devour them. They wear masks armed with canine teeth.[92] So among the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands there is one religion of cannibalism and another of dog-eating. The cannibals in a state of frenzy, real or pretended, bite flesh out of the extended arms of their fellow villagers. When they issue forth with cries of *Hop-pop* to observe this solemn rite, all who are of a different religious persuasion make haste to get out of their way; but men of the cannibal creed and of stout hearts will resolutely hold out their arms to be bitten. The sect of dog-eaters cut or tear dogs to pieces and devour some of the flesh; but they have to pay for the dogs which they consume in their religious enthusiasm.[93] In the performance of these savage rites the frenzied actors are believed to be inspired by a Cannibal Spirit and a Dog-eating Spirit respectively.[94] Again, in Morocco there is an order of saints known as Isowa or Aïsawa, followers of Mohammed ben Isa or Aïsa of Mequinez, whose tomb is at Fez. Every year on their founder's birthday they assemble at his shrine or elsewhere and holding each other's hands dance a frantic dance round a fire. “While the mad dance is still proceeding, a sudden rush is made from the sanctuary, and the dancers, like men delirious, speed away to a place where live goats are tethered in readiness. At sight of these animals the fury of the savage and excited crowd reaches its height. In a few minutes the wretched animals are cut, or rather torn to pieces, and an orgy takes place over the raw and quivering flesh. When they seem satiated, the Emkaddim, who is generally on horseback, and carries a long stick, forms a sort of procession, preceded by wild music, if such discordant sounds will bear the name. Words can do no justice to the frightful scene which now ensues. The naked savages – for on these occasions a scanty piece of cotton is all their clothing – with their long black hair, ordinarily worn in plaits, tossed about by the rapid to-and-fro movements of the head, with faces and hands reeking with blood, and uttering loud cries resembling the bleating of goats, again enter the town. The place is now at their mercy, and the people avoid them as much as possible by shutting themselves up in their houses. A Christian or a Jew would run great risk of losing his life if either were found in the street. Goats are pushed out from the doors, and these the fanatics tear immediately to pieces with their hands, and then dispute over the morsels of bleeding flesh, as though they were ravenous wolves instead of men. Snakes also are thrown to them as tests of their divine frenzy, and these share the fate of the goats. Sometimes a luckless dog, straying as dogs will stray in a tumult, is seized on. Then the laymen, should any be at hand, will try to prevent the desecration of pious mouths. But the fanatics sometimes prevail, and the unclean animal, abhorred by the mussulman, is torn in pieces and devoured, or pretended to be devoured, with indiscriminating rage.”[95]

Later misinterpretations of the custom of killing a god in animal form.

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[91] Fr. Boas, *op. cit.* pp. 437-443, 527 *sq.*, 536, 537 *sq.*, 579, 664; *id.*, in “Fifth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada,” *Report of the British Association for 1889*, pp. 54-56 (separate reprint); *id.*, in “Sixth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada,” *Report of the British Association for 1890*, pp. 62, 65 *sq.* (separate reprint). As to the rules observed after the eating of human flesh, see *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 188-190.

[92] Fr. Boas, “The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians,” *Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1895* (Washington, 1897), pp. 649 *sq.*, 658 *sq.*; *id.*, in “Sixth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada,” *Report of the British Association for 1890*, p. 51; (separate reprint); *id.*, “Seventh Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada,” *Report of the British Association for 1891*, pp. 10 *sq.* (separate reprint); *id.*, “Tenth Report on the North-western Tribes of Canada,” *Report of the British Association for 1895*, p. 58 (separate reprint).

[93] G. M. Dawson, *Report on the Queen Charlotte Islands, 1878* (Montreal, 1880), pp. 125 b, 128 b.

[94] J. R. Swanton, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* (Leyden and New York, 1905), pp. 156, 160 *sq.*, 170 *sq.*, 181 (*The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History*). For details as to the practice of these savage rites among the Indian coast tribes of British Columbia, see my *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), iii. pp. 501, 511 *sq.*, 515 *sq.*, 519, 521, 526, 535 *sq.*, 537, 539 *sq.*, 542 *sq.*, 544, 545.

[95] A. Leared, *Morocco and the Moors* (London, 1876), pp. 267-269. Compare Budgett Meakin, *The Moors* (London, 1902), pp. 331 *sq.* The same order of fanatics also exists and holds similar orgies in Algeria, especially at the town of Tlemcen. See E. Doutté, *Les Aïssâoua à Tlemcen* (Châlons-sur-Marne, 1900), p. 13.

The custom of killing a god in animal form, which we shall examine more in detail further on, belongs to a very early stage of human culture, and is apt in later times to be misunderstood. The advance of thought tends to strip the old animal and plant gods of their bestial and vegetable husk, and to leave their human attributes (which are always the kernel of the conception) as the final and sole residuum. In other words, animal and plant gods tend to become purely anthropomorphic. When they have become wholly or nearly so, the animals and plants which were at first the deities themselves, still retain a vague and ill-understood connexion with the anthropomorphic gods who have been developed out of them. The origin of the relationship between the deity and the animal or plant having been forgotten, various stories are invented to explain it. These explanations may follow one of two lines according as they are based on the habitual or on the exceptional treatment of the sacred animal or plant. The sacred animal was habitually spared, and only exceptionally slain; and accordingly the myth might be devised to explain either why it was spared or why it was killed. Devised for the former purpose, the myth would tell of some service rendered to the deity by the animal; devised for the latter purpose, the myth would tell of some injury inflicted by the animal on the god. The reason given for sacrificing goats to Dionysus exemplifies a myth of the latter sort. They were sacrificed to him, it was said, because they injured the vine.[96] Now the goat, as we have seen, was originally an embodiment of the god himself. But when the god had divested himself of his animal character and had become essentially anthropomorphic, the killing of the goat in his worship came to be regarded no longer as a slaying of the deity himself, but as a sacrifice offered to him; and since some reason had to be assigned why the goat in particular should be sacrificed, it was alleged that this was a punishment inflicted on the goat for injuring the vine, the object of the god's especial care. Thus we have the strange spectacle of a god sacrificed to himself on the ground that he is his own enemy. And as the deity is supposed to partake of the victim offered to him, it follows that, when the victim is the god's old self, the god eats of his own flesh. Hence the goat-god Dionysus is represented as eating raw goat's blood;[97] and the bull-god Dionysus is called “eater of bulls.”[98] On the analogy of these instances we may conjecture that wherever a deity is described as the eater of a particular animal, the animal in question was originally nothing but the deity himself.[99] Later on we shall find that some savages propitiate dead bears and whales by offering them portions of their own bodies.[100]

Human sacrifices in the worship of Dionysus.

All this, however, does not explain why a deity of vegetation should appear in animal form. But the consideration of that point had better be deferred till we have discussed the character and attributes of Demeter. Meantime it remains to mention that in some places, instead of an animal, a human being was torn in pieces at the rites of Dionysus. This was the practice in Chios and Tenedos;[101] and at Potniae in Boeotia the tradition ran that it had been formerly the custom to sacrifice to the goat-smiting Dionysus a child, for whom a goat was afterwards substituted.[102] At Orchomenus, as we

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[96] Varro, *Rerum rusticarum*, i. 2. 19; Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 376-381, with the comments of Servius on the passage and on *Aen.* iii. 118; Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 353 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Metamorph.* xv. 114 *sq.*; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 30.

[97] Euripides, *Bacchae*, 138 *sq.*: ἀγρεύων αἷμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν.

[98] Schol. on Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 357.

[99] Hera αἰγοφάγος at Sparta, Pausanias, iii. 15. 9; Hesychius, *s. v.* αἰγοφάγος (compare the representation of Hera clad in a goat's skin, with the animal's head and horns over her head, Müller-Wieseler, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*, i. No. 229 b; and the similar representation of the Lanuvinian Juno, W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 605 *sqq.*); Zeus αἰγοφάγος, *Etymologicum Magnum*, *s. v.* αἰγοφάγος, p. 27. 52 (compare Scholiast on Oppianus, *Halieut.* iii. 10; L. Stephani, in *Compte-Rendu de la Commission Impériale Archéologique pour l'année 1869* (St. Petersburg, 1870), pp. 16-18); Apollo ὀψοφάγος at Elis, Athenaeus, viii. 36, p. 346 b; Artemis καπροφάγος in Samos, Hesychius, *s. v.* καπροφάγος; compare *id.*, *s. v.* κριοφάγος. Divine titles derived from killing animals are probably to be similarly explained, as Dionysus αἰγόβολος (Pausanias, ix. 8. 2); Rhea or Hecate κυνοσφαγής (J. Tzetzes, *Scholia on Lycophron*, 77); Apollo λυκοκτόνος (Sophocles, *Electra*, 6); Apollo σαυροκτόνος (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxiv. 70).

[100] See below, vol. ii. pp. 184, 194, 196, 197 *sq.*, 233.

[101] Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 55.

[102] Pausanias, ix. 8. 2.

have seen, the human victim was taken from the women of an old royal family.[103] As the slain bull or goat represented the slain god, so, we may suppose, the human victim also represented him.

The legendary deaths of Pentheus and Lycurgus may be reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing divine kings in the character of Dionysus.

The legends of the deaths of Pentheus and Lycurgus, two kings who are said to have been torn to pieces, the one by Bacchanals, the other by horses, for their opposition to the rites of Dionysus, may be, as I have already suggested,[104] distorted reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing divine kings in the character of Dionysus and of dispersing the fragments of their broken bodies over the fields for the purpose of fertilising them. In regard to Lycurgus, king of the Thracian tribe of the Edonians, it is expressly said that his subjects at the bidding of an oracle caused him to be rent in pieces by horses for the purpose of restoring the fertility of the ground after a period of barrenness and dearth.[105] There is no improbability in the tradition. We have seen that in Africa and other parts of the world kings or chiefs have often been put to death by their people for similar reasons.[106] Further, it is significant that King Lycurgus is said to have slain his own son Dryas with an axe in a fit of madness, mistaking him for a vine-branch.[107] Have we not in this tradition a reminiscence of a custom of sacrificing the king's son in place of the father? Similarly Athamas, a King of Thessaly or Boeotia, is said to have been doomed by an oracle to be sacrificed at the altar in order to remove the curse of barrenness which afflicted his country; however, he contrived to evade the sentence and in a fit of madness killed his own son Learchus, mistaking him for a wild beast. That this legend was not a mere myth is made probable by a custom observed at Alus down to historical times: the eldest male scion of the royal house was regularly sacrificed in due form to Laphystian Zeus if he ever set foot within the town-hall.[108] The close resemblance between the legends of King Athamas and King Lycurgus furnishes a ground for believing both legends to be based on a real custom of sacrificing either the king himself or one of his sons for the good of the country; and the story that the king's son Dryas perished because his frenzied father mistook him for a vine-branch fits in well with the theory that the victim in these sacrifices represented the vine-god Dionysus. It is probably no mere coincidence that Dionysus himself is said to have been torn in pieces at Thebes,[109] the very place where according to legend the same fate befell king Pentheus at the hands of the frenzied votaries of the vine-god.[110]

Survival of Dionysiac rites among the modern Thracian peasantry.

The theory that in prehistoric times Greek and Thracian kings or their sons may have been dismembered in the character of the vine-god or the corn-god for the purpose of fertilising the earth or quickening the vines has received of late years some confirmation from the discovery that down to the present time in Thrace, the original home of Dionysus, a drama is still annually performed which reproduces with remarkable fidelity some of the most striking traits in the Dionysiac myth and ritual.[111] In a former part of this work I have already called attention to this interesting survival of

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[103] See *The Dying God*, pp. 163 *sq.*

[104] *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 332 *sq.*

[105] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 1.

[106] *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 344, 345, 346, 352, 354, 366 *sq.*

[107] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 1.

[108] Herodotus, vii. 197; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 9. 1 *sq.*; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 257; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 21; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 1-5. See *The Dying God*, pp. 161-163.

[109] Clemens Romanus, *Recognitiones*, x. 24 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. col. 1434).

[110] Euripides, *Bacchae*, 43 *sqq.*, 1043 *sqq.*; Theocritus, *Idyl.* xxvi.; Pausanias, ii. 2. 7. Strictly speaking, the murder of Pentheus is said to have been perpetrated not at Thebes, of which he was king, but on Mount Cithaeron.

[111] See Mr. R. M. Dawkins, "The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxvi. (1906) pp. 191-206. Mr. Dawkins describes the ceremonies partly from his own observation, partly from an account of them published by Mr. G. M. Vizyenos in a Greek periodical Θρακικὴ Ἐπετηρίς, of which only one number was published at Athens in 1897. From his personal observations Mr. Dawkins was able to confirm the accuracy of Mr. Vizyenos's account.

paganism among a Christian peasantry;[112] but it seems desirable and appropriate in this place to draw out somewhat more fully the parallelism between the modern drama and the ancient worship.

Drama annually performed at the Carnival in the villages round Viza, an old Thracian capital. The actors in the drama.

The drama, which may reasonably be regarded as a direct descendant of the Dionysiac rites, is annually performed at the Carnival in all the Christian villages which cluster round Viza, the ancient Bizya, a town of Thrace situated about midway between Adrianople and Constantinople. In antiquity the city was the capital of the Thracian tribe of the Asti; the kings had their palace there,[113] probably in the acropolis, of which some fine walls are still standing. Inscriptions preserved in the modern town record the names of some of these old kings.[114] The date of the celebration is Cheese Monday, as it is locally called, which is the Monday of the last week of Carnival. At Viza itself the mummery has been shorn of some of its ancient features, but these have been kept up at the villages and have been particularly observed and recorded at the village of St. George (Haghios Gheorgios). It is to the drama as acted at that village that the following description specially applies. The principal parts in the drama are taken by two men disguised in goatskins. Each of them wears a headdress made of a complete goatskin, which is stuffed so as to rise a foot or more like a shako over his head, while the skin falls over the face, forming a mask with holes cut for the eyes and mouth. Their shoulders are thickly padded with hay to protect them from the blows which used to be rained very liberally on their backs. Fawnskins on their shoulders and goatskins on their legs are or used to be part of their equipment, and another indispensable part of it is a number of sheep-bells tied round their waists. One of the two skin-clad actors carries a bow and the other a wooden effigy of the male organ of generation. Both these actors must be married men. According to Mr. Vizyenos, they are chosen for periods of four years. Two unmarried boys dressed as girls and sometimes called brides also take part in the play; and a man disguised as an old woman in rags carries a mock baby in a basket; the brat is supposed to be a seven-months' child born out of wedlock and begotten by an unknown father. The basket in which the hopeful infant is paraded bears the ancient name of the winnowing-fan (*likni*, contracted from *liknon*) and the babe itself receives the very title “He of the Winnowing-fan” (*Liknites*) which in antiquity was applied to Dionysus. Two other actors, clad in rags with blackened faces and armed with stout saplings, play the parts of a gypsy-man and his wife; others personate policemen armed with swords and whips; and the troupe is completed by a man who discourses music on a bagpipe.

The ceremonies include the forging of a ploughshare, a mock marriage, and a pretence of death and resurrection.

Such are the masqueraders. The morning of the day on which they perform their little drama is spent by them going from door to door collecting bread, eggs, or money. At every door the two skin-clad maskers knock, the boys disguised as girls dance, and the gypsy man and wife enact an obscene pantomime on the straw-heap before the house. When every house in the village has been thus visited, the troop takes up position on the open space before the village church, where the whole population has already mustered to witness the performance. After a dance hand in hand, in which all the actors take part, the two skin-clad maskers withdraw and leave the field to the gypsies, who now pretend to forge a ploughshare, the man making believe to hammer the share and his wife to work the bellows. At this point the old woman's baby is supposed to grow up at a great pace, to develop a huge appetite for meat and drink, and to clamour for a wife. One of the skin-clad men now pursues one of the two pretended brides, and a mock marriage is celebrated between the couple. After these nuptials have been performed with a parody of a real wedding, the mock bridegroom is shot by his comrade

[112] *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 333 *sq.*

[113] Strabo, vii. frag. 48; Stephanus Byzantius, *s. v.* Βιζύη.

[114] R. M. Dawkins, *op. cit.* p. 192.

with the bow and falls down on his face like dead. His slayer thereupon feigns to skin him with a knife; but the dead man's wife laments over her deceased husband with loud cries, throwing herself across his prostrate body. In this lamentation the slayer himself and all the other actors join in: a Christian funeral service is burlesqued; and the pretended corpse is lifted up as if to be carried to the grave. At this point, however, the dead man disconcerts the preparations for his burial by suddenly coming to life again and getting up. So ends the drama of death and resurrection.

The ceremonies also include a simulation of ploughing and sowing by skin-clad men, accompanied by prayers for good crops.

The next act opens with a repetition of the pretence of forging a ploughshare, but this time the gypsy man hammers on a real share. When the implement is supposed to have been fashioned, a real plough is brought forward, the mockery appears to cease, the two boys dressed as girls are yoked to the plough and drag it twice round the village square contrary to the way of the sun. One of the two skin-clad men walks at the tail of the plough, the other guides it in front, and a third man follows in the rear scattering seed from a basket. After the two rounds have been completed, the gypsy and his wife are yoked to the plough, and drag it a third time round the square, the two skin-clad men still playing the part of ploughmen. At Viza the plough is drawn by the skin-clad men themselves. While the plough is going its rounds, followed by the sower sowing the seed, the people pray aloud, saying, “May wheat be ten piastres the bushel! Rye five piastres the bushel! Amen, O God, that the poor may eat! Yea, O God, that poor folk be filled!” This ends the performance. The evening is spent in feasting on the proceeds of the house-to-house visitation which took place in the morning.[115]

Kindred ceremony performed by a masked and skin-clad man who is called a king.

A kindred festival is observed on the same day of the Carnival at Kosti, a place in the extreme north of Thrace, near the Black Sea. There a man dressed in sheepskins or goatskins, with a mask on his face, bells round his neck, and a broom in his hand, goes round the village collecting food and presents. He is addressed as a king and escorted with music. With him go boys dressed as girls, and another boy, not so disguised, who carries wine in a wooden bottle and gives of it to every householder to drink in a cup, receiving a gift in return. The king then mounts a two-wheeled cart and is drawn to the church. He carries seed in his hand, and at the church two bands of men, one of married men and the other of unmarried men, try each in turn to induce the king to throw the seed on them. Finally he casts it on the ground in front of the church. The ceremony ends with stripping the king of his clothes and flinging him into the river, after which he resumes his usual dress.[116]

Analogy of these modern Thracian ceremonies to the ancient rites of Dionysus.

In these ceremonies, still annually held at and near an old capital of Thracian kings, the points of similarity to the ritual of the ancient Thracian deity Dionysus are sufficiently obvious.[117] The goatskins in which the principal actors are disguised remind us of the identification of Dionysus with a goat: the infant, cradled in a winnowing-fan and taking its name from the implement, answers exactly to the traditions and the monuments which represent the infant Dionysus as similarly cradled and similarly named: the pretence that the baby is a seven-months' child born out of wedlock and begotten by an unknown father tallies precisely with the legend that Dionysus was born prematurely

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[115] R. M. Dawkins, “The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysus,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxvi. (1906) pp. 193-201.

[116] R. M. Dawkins, *op. cit.* pp. 201 *sq.*

[117] They have been clearly indicated by Mr. R. M. Dawkins, *op. cit.* pp. 203 *sqq.* Compare W. Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 15 *sqq.*, who fully recognises the connexion of the modern Thracian ceremonies with the ancient rites of Dionysus.

in the seventh month as the offspring of an intrigue between a mortal woman and a mysterious divine father:[118] the same coarse symbol of reproductive energy which characterised the ancient ritual of Dionysus figures conspicuously in the modern drama: the annual mock marriage of the goatskin-clad mummer with the pretended bride may be compared with the annual pretence of marrying Dionysus to the Queen of Athens: and the simulated slaughter and resurrection of the same goatskin-clad actor may be compared with the traditional slaughter and resurrection of the god himself. Further, the ceremony of ploughing, in which after his resurrection the goatskin-clad mummer takes a prominent part, fits in well not only with the legend that Dionysus was the first to yoke oxen to the plough, but also with the symbolism of the winnowing-fan in his worship; while the prayers for plentiful crops which accompany the ploughing accord with the omens of an abundant harvest which were drawn of old from the mystic light seen to illumine by night one of his ancient sanctuaries in Thrace. Lastly, in the ceremony as observed at Kosti the giving of wine by the king's attendant is an act worthy of the wine-god: the throwing of seed by the king can only be interpreted, like the ploughing, as a charm to promote the fertility of the ground; and the royal title borne by the principal masker harmonises well with the theory that the part of the god of the corn and the wine was of old sustained by the Thracian kings who reigned at Bisya.

The modern Thracian celebration seems to correspond most closely to the ancient Athenian festival of the Anthesteria.

If we ask, To what ancient festival of Dionysus does the modern celebration of the Carnival in Thrace most nearly correspond? the answer can be hardly doubtful. The Thracian drama of the mock marriage of the goatskin-clad mummer, his mimic death and resurrection, and his subsequent ploughing, corresponds both in date and in character most nearly to the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria, which was celebrated at Athens during three days in early spring, towards the end of February or the beginning of March. Thus the date of the Anthesteria could not fall far from, and it might sometimes actually coincide with, the last week of the Carnival, the date of the Thracian celebration. While the details of the festival of the Anthesteria are obscure, its general character is well known. It was a festival both of wine-drinking and of the dead, whose souls were supposed to revisit the city and to go about the streets, just as in modern Europe and in many other parts of the world the ghosts of the departed are still believed to return to their old homes on one day of the year and to be entertained by their relatives at a solemn Feast of All Souls.[119] But the Dionysiac nature of the festival was revealed not merely by the opening of the wine-vats and the wassailing which went on throughout the city among freemen and slaves alike; on the second day of the festival the marriage of Dionysus with the Queen of Athens was celebrated with great solemnity at the Bucolium or Ox-stall.[120] It has been suggested with much probability[121] that at this sacred marriage in the Ox-stall the god was represented wholly or partly in bovine shape, whether by an image or by an actor dressed in the hide and wearing the horns of a bull; for, as we have seen, Dionysus was often supposed to assume the form of a bull and to present himself in that guise to his worshippers. If this conjecture should

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[118] Lucian, *Dialogi Deorum*, ix. 2; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 4. 4. According to the latter writer Dionysus was born in the sixth month.

[119] As to such festivals of All Souls see *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 301-318.

[120] The passages of ancient authors which refer to the Anthesteria are collected by Professor Martin P. Nilsson, *Studia de Dionysiis Atticis* (Lund, 1900), pp. 148 *sqq.* As to the festival, which has been much discussed of late years, see August Mommsen, *Heortologie* (Leipsic, 1864), pp. 345 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 384 *sqq.*; G. F. Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer*[4] (Berlin, 1902), ii. 516 *sqq.*; E. Rohde, *Psyche*[3] (Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903), i. 236 *sqq.*; Martin P. Nilsson, *op. cit.* pp. 115 *sqq.*; P. Foucart, *Le Culte de Dionysos en Attique* (Paris, 1904), pp. 107 *sqq.*; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*[2] (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 32 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, v. (Oxford, 1909) pp. 214 *sqq.* As to the marriage of Dionysus to the Queen of Athens, see *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, i. 136 *sq.*

[121] By Professor U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen* (Berlin, 1893), ii. 42; and afterwards by Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*,[2] p. 536.

prove to be correct – though a demonstration of it can hardly be expected – the sacred marriage of the Queen to the Bull-god at Athens would be parallel to the sacred marriage of the Queen to the Bull-god at Cnossus, according to the interpretation which I have suggested of the myth of Pasiphae and the Minotaur;[122] only whereas the bull-god at Cnossus, if I am right, stood for the Sun, the bull-god at Athens stood for the powers of vegetation, especially the corn and the vines. It would not be surprising that among a cattle-breeding people in early days the bull, regarded as a type of strength and reproductive energy, should be employed to symbolise and represent more than one of the great powers of nature. If Dionysus did indeed figure as a bull at his marriage, it is not improbable that on that occasion his representative, whether a real bull or a man dressed in a bull's hide, took part in a ceremony of ploughing; for we have seen that the invention of yoking oxen to the plough was ascribed to Dionysus, and we know that the Athenians performed a sacred ceremony of ploughing, which went by the name of the Ox-yoked Ploughing and took place in a field or other open piece of ground at the foot of the Acropolis.[123] It is a reasonable conjecture that the field of the Ox-yoked Ploughing may have adjoined the building called the Ox-stall in which the marriage of Dionysus with the Queen was solemnised;[124] for that building is known to have been near the Prytaneum or Town-Hall on the northern slope of the Acropolis.[125]

Theory that the rites of the Anthesteria comprised a drama of the violent death and resurrection of Dionysus.

Thus on the whole the ancient festival of the Anthesteria, so far as its features are preserved by tradition or can be restored by the use of reasonable conjecture, presents several important analogies to the modern Thracian Carnival in respect of wine-drinking, a mock marriage of disguised actors, and a ceremony of ploughing. The resemblance between the ancient and the modern ritual would be still closer if some eminent modern scholars, who wrote before the discovery of the Thracian Carnival, and whose judgment was therefore not biassed by its analogy to the Athenian festival, are right in holding that another important feature of the Anthesteria was the dramatic death and resurrection of Dionysus.[126] They point out that at the marriage of Dionysus fourteen Sacred Women officiated at fourteen altars;[127] that the number of the Titans, who tore Dionysus in pieces, was fourteen, namely seven male and seven female;[128] and that Osiris, a god who in some respects corresponded closely to Dionysus, is said to have been rent by Typhon into fourteen fragments.[129] Hence they conjecture that at Athens the body of Dionysus was dramatically broken into fourteen fragments, one for each of the fourteen altars, and that it was afterwards dramatically pieced together and restored to life by the fourteen Sacred Women, just as the broken body of Osiris was pieced together by a company of gods and goddesses and restored to life by his sister Isis.[130] The conjecture is ingenious and plausible, but with our existing sources of information it must remain a conjecture and nothing more. Could it be established, it would forge another strong link in the chain of evidence

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[122] *The Dying God*, p. 71.

[123] Plutarch, *Conjugalia Praecepta*, 42.

[124] Miss J. E. Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London, 1890), pp. 166 *sq.*

[125] Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 3. As to the situation of the Prytaneum see my note on Pausanias, i. 18. 3 (vol. ii. p. 172).

[126] August Mommsen, *Heortologie*, pp. 371 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, pp. 398 *sqq.*; P. Foucart, *Le Culte de Dionysos en Attique*, pp. 138 *sqq.*

[127] Demosthenes, *Contra Neaer*. 73, pp. 1369 *sq.*; Julius Pollux, viii. 108; *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 227, *s. v.* γεραῖραι; Hesychius, *s. v.* γεραραί.

[128] Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 505.

[129] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18, 42.

[130] The resurrection of Osiris is not described by Plutarch in his treatise *Isis et Osiris*, which is still our principal source for the myth of the god; but it is fortunately recorded in native Egyptian writings. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 274. P. Foucart supposes that the resurrection of Dionysus was enacted at the Anthesteria; August Mommsen prefers to suppose that it was enacted in the following month at the Lesser Mysteries.

which binds the modern Thracian Carnival to the ancient Athenian Anthesteria; for in that case the drama of the divine death and resurrection would have to be added to the other features which these two festivals of spring possess in common, and we should have to confess that Greece had what we may call its Good Friday and its Easter Sunday long before the events took place in Judaea which diffused these two annual commemorations of the Dying and Reviving God over a great part of the civilised world. From so simple a beginning may flow consequences so far-reaching and impressive; for in the light of the rude Thracian ceremony we may surmise that the high tragedy of the death and resurrection of Dionysus originated in a rustic mummers' play acted by ploughmen for the purpose of fertilising the brown earth which they turned up with the gleaming share in sunshiny days of spring, as they followed the slow-paced oxen down the long furrows in the fallow field. Later on we shall see that a play of the same sort is still acted, or was acted down to recent years, by English yokels on Plough Monday.

Legends of human sacrifice in the worship of Dionysus may be mere misinterpretations of ritual.

But before we pass from the tragic myth and ritual of Dionysus to the sweeter story and milder worship of Demeter and Persephone, the true Greek deities of the corn, it is fair to admit that the legends of human sacrifice, which have left so dark a stain on the memory of the old Thracian god, may have been nothing more than mere misinterpretations of a sacrificial ritual in which an animal victim was treated as a human being. For example, at Tenedos the new-born calf sacrificed to Dionysus was shod in buskins, and the mother cow was tended like a woman in child-bed.[131] At Rome a she-goat was sacrificed to Vedijovis as if it were a human victim.[132] Yet on the other hand it is equally possible, and perhaps more probable, that these curious rites were themselves mitigations of an older and ruder custom of sacrificing human beings, and that the later pretence of treating the sacrificial victims as if they were human beings was merely part of a pious and merciful fraud, which palmed off on the deity less precious victims than living men and women. This interpretation is supported by the undoubted cases in which animals have been substituted for human victims.[133] On the whole we may conclude that neither the polished manners of a later age, nor the glamour which Greek poetry and art threw over the figure of Dionysus, sufficed to conceal or erase the deep lines of savagery and cruelty imprinted on the features of this barbarous deity.

[131] Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, xii. 34. Compare W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*[2] (London, 1894), pp. 300 *sqq.*

[132] Aulus Gellius, v. 12. 12.

[133] See *The Dying God*, p. 166 note 1, and below, p. 249.

Chapter II. Demeter And Persephone

Demeter and Persephone as Greek personifications of the decay and revival of vegetation.

Dionysus was not the only Greek deity whose tragic story and ritual appear to reflect the decay and revival of vegetation. In another form and with a different application the old tale reappears in the myth of Demeter and Persephone. Substantially their myth is identical with the Syrian one of Aphrodite (Astarte) and Adonis, the Phrygian one of Cybele and Attis, and the Egyptian one of Isis and Osiris. In the Greek fable, as in its Asiatic and Egyptian counterparts, a goddess mourns the loss of a loved one, who personifies the vegetation, more especially the corn, which dies in winter to revive in spring; only whereas the Oriental imagination figured the loved and lost one as a dead lover or a dead husband lamented by his leman or his wife, Greek fancy embodied the same idea in the tenderer and purer form of a dead daughter bewailed by her sorrowing mother.

The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The rape of Persephone. The wrath of Demeter. The return of Persephone.

The oldest literary document which narrates the myth of Demeter and Persephone is the beautiful Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, which critics assign to the seventh century before our era.[134] The object of the poem is to explain the origin of the Eleusinian mysteries, and the complete silence of the poet as to Athens and the Athenians, who in after ages took a conspicuous part in the festival, renders it probable that the hymn was composed in the far off time when Eleusis was still a petty independent state, and before the stately procession of the Mysteries had begun to defile, in bright September days, over the low chain of barren rocky hills which divides the flat Eleusinian cornland from the more spacious olive-clad expanse of the Athenian plain. Be that as it may, the hymn reveals to us the conception which the writer entertained of the character and functions of the two goddesses: their natural shapes stand out sharply enough under the thin veil of poetical imagery. The youthful Persephone, so runs the tale, was gathering roses and lilies, crocuses and violets, hyacinths and narcissuses in a lush meadow, when the earth gaped and Pluto, lord of the Dead, issuing from the abyss carried her off on his golden car to be his bride and queen in the gloomy subterranean world. Her sorrowing mother Demeter, with her yellow tresses veiled in a dark mourning mantle, sought her over land and sea, and learning from the Sun her daughter's fate she withdrew in high dudgeon from the gods and took up her abode at Eleusis, where she presented herself to the king's daughters in the guise of an old woman, sitting sadly under the shadow of an olive tree beside the Maiden's Well, to which the damsels had come to draw water in bronze pitchers for their father's house. In her wrath at her bereavement the goddess suffered not the seed to grow in the earth but kept it hidden under ground, and she vowed that never would she set foot on Olympus and never would she let the corn sprout till her lost daughter should be restored to her. Vainly the oxen dragged the ploughs to and fro in the fields; vainly the sower dropped the barley seed in the brown furrows; nothing came up from the parched and crumbling soil. Even the Rarian plain near Eleusis, which was wont to wave with yellow harvests, lay bare and fallow.[135] Mankind would have perished of hunger and the gods would have been robbed of the sacrifices which were their due, if Zeus in alarm had not commanded Pluto to disgorge his prey, to restore his bride Persephone to her mother Demeter. The grim lord of the Dead smiled and obeyed, but before he sent back his queen to the upper air on a golden car, he gave

[134] R. Foerster, *Der Raub und die Rückkehr der Persephone* (Stuttgart, 1874), pp. 37-39; *The Homeric Hymns*, edited by T. W. Allen and E. E. Sikes (London, 1904), pp. 10 *sq.* A later date – the age of the Pisistratids – is assigned to the hymn by A. Baumeister (*Hymni Homerici*, Leipsic, 1860, p. 280).

[135] *Hymn to Demeter*, 1 *sqq.*, 302 *sqq.*, 330 *sqq.*, 349 *sqq.*, 414 *sqq.*, 450 *sqq.*

her the seed of a pomegranate to eat, which ensured that she would return to him. But Zeus stipulated that henceforth Persephone should spend two thirds of every year with her mother and the gods in the upper world and one third of the year with her husband in the nether world, from which she was to return year by year when the earth was gay with spring flowers. Gladly the daughter then returned to the sunshine, gladly her mother received her and fell upon her neck; and in her joy at recovering the lost one Demeter made the corn to sprout from the clods of the ploughed fields and all the broad earth to be heavy with leaves and blossoms. And straightway she went and shewed this happy sight to the princes of Eleusis, to Triptolemus, Eumolpus, Diocles, and to the king Celeus himself, and moreover she revealed to them her sacred rites and mysteries. Blessed, says the poet, is the mortal man who has seen these things, but he who has had no share of them in life will never be happy in death when he has descended into the darkness of the grave. So the two goddesses departed to dwell in bliss with the gods on Olympus; and the bard ends the hymn with a pious prayer to Demeter and Persephone that they would be pleased to grant him a livelihood in return for his song.[136]

The aim of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* is to explain the traditional foundation of the Eleusinian mysteries by Demeter.

It has been generally recognised, and indeed it seems scarcely open to doubt, that the main theme which the poet set before himself in composing this hymn was to describe the traditional foundation of the Eleusinian mysteries by the goddess Demeter. The whole poem leads up to the transformation scene in which the bare leafless expanse of the Eleusinian plain is suddenly turned, at the will of the goddess, into a vast sheet of ruddy corn; the beneficent deity takes the princes of Eleusis, shews them what she has done, teaches them her mystic rites, and vanishes with her daughter to heaven. The revelation of the mysteries is the triumphal close of the piece. This conclusion is confirmed by a more minute examination of the poem, which proves that the poet has given, not merely a general account of the foundation of the mysteries, but also in more or less veiled language mythical explanations of the origin of particular rites which we have good reason to believe formed essential features of the festival. Amongst the rites as to which the poet thus drops significant hints are the preliminary fast of the candidates for initiation, the torchlight procession, the all-night vigil, the sitting of the candidates, veiled and in silence, on stools covered with sheepskins, the use of scurrilous language, the breaking of ribald jests, and the solemn communion with the divinity by participation in a draught of barley-water from a holy chalice.[137]

Revelation of a reaped ear of corn the crowning act of the mysteries.

But there is yet another and a deeper secret of the mysteries which the author of the poem appears to have divulged under cover of his narrative. He tells us how, as soon as she had transformed the barren brown expanse of the Eleusinian plain into a field of golden grain, she gladdened the eyes of Triptolemus and the other Eleusinian princes by shewing them the growing or standing corn. When

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[136] *Hymn to Demeter*, 310 *sqq.* With the myth as set forth in the Homeric hymn may be compared the accounts of Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca*, i. 5) and Ovid (*Fasti*, iv. 425-618; *Metamorphoses*, v. 385 *sqq.*).

[137] *Hymn to Demeter*, 47-50, 191-211, 292-295, with the notes of Messrs. Allen and Sikes in their edition of the Homeric Hymns (London, 1904). As to representations of the candidates for initiation seated on stools draped with sheepskins, see L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 237 *sqq.*, with plate xv *a*. On a well-known marble vase there figured the stool is covered with a lion's skin and one of the candidate's feet rests on a ram's skull or horns; but in two other examples of the same scene the ram's fleece is placed on the seat (Farnell, *op. cit.* p. 240 note a), just as it is said to have been placed on Demeter's stool in the Homeric hymn. As to the form of communion in the Eleusinian mysteries, see Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* 21, p. 18 ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, v. 26; L. R. Farnell, *op. cit.* iii. 185 *sq.*, 195 *sq.* For discussions of the ancient evidence bearing on the Eleusinian mysteries it may suffice to refer to Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus* (Königsberg, 1829), pp. 3 *sqq.*; G. F. Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer*,[4] ii. 387 *sqq.*; Aug. Mommsen, *Heortologie* (Leipsic, 1864), pp. 222 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 204 *sqq.*; P. Foucart, *Recherches sur l'Origine et la Nature des Mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris, 1895) (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, xxxv.); *id.*, *Les grands Mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris, 1900) (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, xxxvii.); F. Lenormant and E. Pottier, *s. v.* "Eleusinia," in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, ii. 544 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 126 *sqq.*

we compare this part of the story with the statement of a Christian writer of the second century, Hippolytus, that the very heart of the mysteries consisted in shewing to the initiated a reaped ear of corn,[138] we can hardly doubt that the poet of the hymn was well acquainted with this solemn rite, and that he deliberately intended to explain its origin in precisely the same way as he explained other rites of the mysteries, namely by representing Demeter as having set the example of performing the ceremony in her own person. Thus myth and ritual mutually explain and confirm each other. The poet of the seventh century before our era gives us the myth – he could not without sacrilege have revealed the ritual: the Christian father reveals the ritual, and his revelation accords perfectly with the veiled hint of the old poet. On the whole, then, we may, with many modern scholars, confidently accept the statement of the learned Christian father Clement of Alexandria, that the myth of Demeter and Persephone was acted as a sacred drama in the mysteries of Eleusis.[139]

> Demeter and Persephone personifications of the corn. Persephone the seed sown in autumn and sprouting in spring. Demeter the old corn of last year. The view that Demeter was the Earth goddess is implicitly rejected by the author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*.

But if the myth was acted as a part, perhaps as the principal part, of the most famous and solemn religious rites of ancient Greece, we have still to enquire, What was, after all, stripped of later accretions, the original kernel of the myth which appears to later ages surrounded and transfigured by an aureole of awe and mystery, lit up by some of the most brilliant rays of Grecian literature and art? If we follow the indications given by our oldest literary authority on the subject, the author of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, the riddle is not hard to read; the figures of the two goddesses, the mother and the daughter, resolve themselves into personifications of the corn.[140] At least this appears to be fairly certain for the daughter Persephone. The goddess who spends three or, according to another version of the myth, six months of every year with the dead under ground and the remainder of the year with the living above ground;[141] in whose absence the barley seed is hidden in the earth and the fields lie bare and fallow; on whose return in spring to the upper world the corn shoots up from the clods and the earth is heavy with leaves and blossoms – this goddess can surely be nothing else than a mythical embodiment of the vegetation, and particularly of the corn, which is buried under the soil for some months of every winter and comes to life again, as from the grave, in the sprouting cornstalks and the opening flowers and foliage of every spring. No other reasonable and probable explanation of Persephone seems possible.[142] And if the daughter goddess was a personification of the young corn of the present year, may not the mother goddess be a personification of the old corn of last year, which has given birth to the new crops? The only alternative to this view of Demeter would seem to

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[138] Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, v. 8, p. 162, ed. L. Duncker et F. G. Schneidewin (Göttingen, 1859). The word which the poet uses to express the revelation (δείξε, *Hymn to Demeter*, verse 474) is a technical one in the mysteries; the full phrase was δεικνύναι τὰ ἱερά. See Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 22; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, vi. 3. 6; Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 6; Lysias, *Contra Andocidem*, 51; Chr. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 51.

[139] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 12, p. 12 ed. Potter: Δηὼ δὲ καὶ Κόρη δρᾶμα ἤδη ἐγενέσθην μυστικόν; καὶ τὴν πλάνην καὶ τὴν ἁρπαγὴν καὶ τὸ πένθος αὐταῖν Ἐλευσὶς δᾳδουχεῖ. Compare F. Lenormant, *s. v.* "Eleusinia," in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* iii. 578: "*Que le drame mystique des aventures de Déméter et de Coré constituât le spectacle essentiel de l'initiation, c'est ce dont il nous semble impossible de douter.*" A similar view is expressed by G. F. Schoemann (*Griechische Alterthümer*,4 ii. 402); Preller-Robert (*Griechische Mythologie*, i. 793); P. Foucart (*Recherches sur l'Origine et la Nature des Mystères d'Eleusis*, Paris, 1895, pp. 43 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Les Grands Mystères d'Eleusis*, Paris, 1900, p. 137); E. Rohde (*Psyche*,3 i. 289); and L. R. Farnell (*The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 134, 173 *sqq.*).

[140] On Demeter and Proserpine as goddesses of the corn, see L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone* (Hamburg, 1837), pp. 315 *sqq.*; and especially W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasburg, 1884), pp. 202 *sqq.*

[141] According to the author of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (verses 398 *sqq.*, 445 *sqq.*) and Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca*, i. 5. 3) the time which Persephone had to spend under ground was one third of the year; according to Ovid (*Fasti*, iv. 613 *sq.*; *Metamorphoses*, v. 564 *sqq.*) and Hyginus (*Fabulae*, 146) it was one half.

[142] This view of the myth of Persephone is, for example, accepted and clearly stated by L. Preller (*Demeter und Persephone*, pp. 128 *sq.*).

be to suppose that she is a personification of the earth, from whose broad bosom the corn and all other plants spring up, and of which accordingly they may appropriately enough be regarded as the daughters. This view of the original nature of Demeter has indeed been taken by some writers, both ancient and modern,[143] and it is one which can be reasonably maintained. But it appears to have been rejected by the author of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, for he not only distinguishes Demeter from the personified Earth but places the two in the sharpest opposition to each other. He tells us that it was Earth who, in accordance with the will of Zeus and to please Pluto, lured Persephone to her doom by causing the narcissuses to grow which tempted the young goddess to stray far beyond the reach of help in the lush meadow.[144] Thus Demeter of the hymn, far from being identical with the Earth-goddess, must have regarded that divinity as her worst enemy, since it was to her insidious wiles that she owed the loss of her daughter. But if the Demeter of the hymn cannot have been a personification of the earth, the only alternative apparently is to conclude that she was a personification of the corn.

> The Yellow Demeter, the goddess who sifts the ripe grain from the chaff at the threshing-floor. The Green Demeter the goddess of the green corn.

With this conclusion all the indications of the hymn-writer seem to harmonise. He certainly represents Demeter as the goddess by whose power and at whose pleasure the corn either grows or remains hidden in the ground; and to what deity can such powers be so fittingly ascribed as to the goddess of the corn? He calls Demeter yellow and tells how her yellow tresses flowed down on her shoulders;[145] could any colour be more appropriate with which to paint the divinity of the yellow grain? The same identification of Demeter with the ripe, the yellow corn is made even more clearly by a still older poet, Homer himself, or at all events the author of the fifth book of the *Iliad*. There we read: "And even as the wind carries the chaff about the sacred threshing-floors, when men are winnowing, what time yellow Demeter sifts the corn from the chaff on the hurrying blast, so that the heaps of chaff grow white below, so were the Achaeans whitened above by the cloud of dust which the hoofs of the horses spurned to the brazen heaven."[146] Here the yellow Demeter who sifts the grain from the chaff at the threshing-floor can hardly be any other than the goddess of the yellow corn; she cannot be the Earth-goddess, for what has the Earth-goddess to do with the grain and the chaff blown about a threshing-floor? With this interpretation it agrees that elsewhere Homer speaks of men eating "Demeter's corn";[147] and still more definitely Hesiod speaks of "the annual store of food, which the earth bears, Demeter's corn,"[148] thus distinguishing the goddess of the corn from the earth which bears it. Still more clearly does a later Greek poet personify the corn as Demeter when, in allusion to

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[143] See, for example, Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 17. 3: "*Frugum substantiam volunt Proserpinam dicere, quia fruges hominibus cum seri coeperint prosunt. Terram ipsam Cererem nominant, nomen hoc a gerendis fructibus mutuati*"; L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, p. 128, "*Der Erdboden wird Demeter, die Vegetation Persephone*." François Lenormant, again, held that Demeter was originally a personification of the earth regarded as divine, but he admitted that from the time of the Homeric poems downwards she was sharply distinguished from Ge, the earth-goddess proper. See Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, *s. v.* "Ceres," ii. 1022 *sq.* Some light might be thrown on the question whether Demeter was an Earth Goddess or a Corn Goddess, if we could be sure of the etymology of her name, which has been variously explained as "Earth Mother" (Δῆ μήτηρ equivalent to Γῆ μήτηρ) and as "Barley Mother" (from an alleged Cretan word δηαί "barley": see *Etymologicum Magnum*, *s. v.* Δηώ, pp. 263 *sq.*). The former etymology has been the most popular; the latter is maintained by W. Mannhardt. See L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, pp. 317, 366 *sqq.*; F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, i. 385 *sqq.*; Preller-Robert, *Griechische Mythologie*, i. 747 note 6; Kern, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, iv. 2713; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 281 *sqq.* But my learned friend the Rev. Professor J. H. Moulton informs me that both etymologies are open to serious philological objections, and that no satisfactory derivation of the first syllable of Demeter's name has yet been proposed. Accordingly I prefer to base no argument on an analysis of the name, and to rest my interpretation of the goddess entirely on her myth, ritual, and representations in art. Etymology is at the best a very slippery ground on which to rear mythological theories.

[144] *Hymn to Demeter*, 8 *sqq.*

[145] *Hymn to Demeter*, 279, 302.

[146] Homer, *Iliad*, v. 499-504.

[147] *Iliad*, xiii. 322, xxi. 76.

[148] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 31 *sq.*

the time of the corn-reaping, he says that then "the sturdy swains cleave Demeter limb from limb."[149] And just as the ripe or yellow corn was personified as the Yellow Demeter, so the unripe or green corn was personified as the Green Demeter. In that character the goddess had sanctuaries at Athens and other places; sacrifices were appropriately offered to Green Demeter in spring when the earth was growing green with the fresh vegetation, and the victims included sows big with young,[150] which no doubt were intended not merely to symbolise but magically to promote the abundance of the crops.

The cereals called "Demeter's fruits."

In Greek the various kinds of corn were called by the general name of "Demeter's fruits,"[151] just as in Latin they were called the "fruits or gifts of Ceres,"[152] an expression which survives in the English word cereals. Tradition ran that before Demeter's time men neither cultivated corn nor tilled the ground, but roamed the mountains and woods in search of the wild fruits which the earth produced spontaneously from her womb for their subsistence. The tradition clearly implies not only that Demeter was the goddess of the corn, but that she was different from and younger than the goddess of the Earth, since it is expressly affirmed that before Demeter's time the earth existed and supplied mankind with nourishment in the shape of wild herbs, grasses, flowers and fruits.[153]

Corn and poppies as symbols of Demeter.

In ancient art Demeter and Persephone are characterised as goddesses of the corn by the crowns of corn which they wear on their heads and by the stalks of corn which they hold in their hands.[154] Theocritus describes a smiling image of Demeter standing by a heap of yellow grain on a threshing-floor and grasping sheaves of barley and poppies in both her hands.[155] Indeed corn and poppies singly or together were a frequent symbol of the goddess, as we learn not only from the testimony of ancient writers[156] but from many existing monuments of classical art.[157] The naturalness of the symbol can be doubted by no one who has seen – and who has not seen? – a field of yellow corn bespangled thick with scarlet poppies; and we need not resort to the shifts of an ancient mythologist, who explained the symbolism of the poppy in Demeter's hand by comparing the globular shape of the poppy to the roundness of our globe, the unevenness of its edges to hills and valleys, and the hollow interior of the scarlet flower to the caves and dens of the earth.[158] If only students would study the little black

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[149] Quoted by Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 66.

[150] Pausanias, i. 22. 3 with my note; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 615; J. de Prott et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, Fasciculus I. (Leipsic, 1896) p. 49; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; Scholiast on Sophocles, *Oedipus Colon.* 1600; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 312 *sq.*

[151] Herodotus, i. 193, iv. 198; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, vi. 3. 6; Aelian, *Historia Animalium*, xvii. 16; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; *Geoponica*, i. 12. 36; *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Leutsch et Schneidewin, Appendix iv. 20 (vol. i. p. 439).

[152] *Cerealia* in Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxiii. 1; *Cerealia munera* and *Cerealia dona* in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, xi. 121 *sq.*

[153] Libanius, ed. J. J. Reiske, vol. iv. p. 367, *Corinth. Oratio*: Οὐκ αὖθις ἡμῶν ακαρποσ ἡ γῆ δοκεῖ γεγονέναι? οὐ πάλιν ὁ πρὸ Δήμητρος εἶναι βίος? καί τοι καὶ πρὸ Δήμητρος αἱ γεωργίαι μὲν οὐκ ἦσαν; οὐδὲ ἄροτοι, αὐτόφυτοι δὲ βοτάναι καὶ πόαι; καὶ πολλὰ εἶχεν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀνθρώπων αὐτοσχέδια ἄνθη ἡ γῆ ὠδίνουσα καὶ κύουσα πρὸ τῶν ἡμέρων τὰ ἄγρια. Ἐπλανῶντο μὲν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἀλλήλους; ἄλση καὶ ὄρη περιῄσαν, ζητοῦντες αὐτόματον τροφήν. In this passage, which no doubt represents the common Greek view on the subject, the earth is plainly personified (ὠδίνουσα καὶ κύουσα), which points the antithesis between her and the goddess of the corn. Diodorus Siculus also says (v. 68) that corn grew wild with the other plants before Demeter taught men to cultivate it and to sow the seed.

[154] Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 616; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 5; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28; *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 104. 8; W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 235; J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, iii. (Leipsic, 1873-1878) pp. 420, 421, 453, 479, 480, 502, 505, 507, 514, 522, 523, 524, 525 *sq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 217 *sqq.*, 220 *sq.*, 222, 226, 232, 233, 237, 260, 265, 268, 269 *sq.*, 271.

[155] Theocritus, *Idyl.* vii. 155 *sqq.* That the sheaves which the goddess grasped were of barley is proved by verses 31-34 of the poem.

[156] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 5; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, p. 56, ed. C. Lang; Virgil, *Georg.* i. 212, with the comment of Servius.

[157] See the references to the works of Overbeck and Farnell above. For example, a fine statue at Copenhagen, in the style of the age of Phidias, represents Demeter holding poppies and ears of corn in her left hand. See Farnell, *op. cit.* iii. 268, with plate xxviii.

[158] Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, p. 56 ed. C. Lang.

and white books of men less and the great rainbow-tinted book of nature more; if they would more frequently exchange the heavy air and the dim light of libraries for the freshness and the sunshine of the open sky; if they would oftener unbend their minds by rural walks between fields of waving corn, beside rivers rippling by under grey willows, or down green lanes, where the hedges are white with the hawthorn bloom or red with wild roses, they might sometimes learn more about primitive religion than can be gathered from many dusty volumes, in which wire-drawn theories are set forth with all the tedious parade of learning.

Persephone portrayed as the young corn sprouting from the ground.

Nowhere, perhaps, in the monuments of Greek art is the character of Persephone as a personification of the young corn sprouting in spring portrayed more gracefully and more truly than on a coin of Lampsacus of the fourth century before our era. On it we see the goddess in the very act of rising from the earth. “Her face is upraised; in her hand are three ears of corn, and others together with grapes are springing behind her shoulder. Complete is here the identification of the goddess and her attribute: she is embowered amid the ears of growing corn, and like it half buried in the ground. She does not make the corn and vine grow, but she *is* the corn and vine growing, and returning again to the face of the earth after lying hidden in its depths. Certainly the artist who designed this beautiful figure thoroughly understood Hellenic religion.”[159]

Demeter invoked and propitiated by Greek farmers before the autumnal sowing. Boeotian festival of mourning for the descent of Persephone at the autumnal sowing.

As the goddess who first bestowed corn on mankind and taught them to sow and cultivate it,[160] Demeter was naturally invoked and propitiated by farmers before they undertook the various operations of the agricultural year. In autumn, when he heard the sonorous trumpeting of the cranes, as they winged their way southward in vast flocks high overhead, the Greek husbandman knew that the rains were near and that the time of ploughing was at hand; but before he put his hand to the plough he prayed to Underground Zeus and to Holy Demeter for a heavy crop of Demeter's sacred corn. Then he guided the ox-drawn plough down the field, turning up the brown earth with the share, while a swain followed close behind with a hoe, who covered up the seed as fast as it fell to protect it from the voracious birds that fluttered and twittered at the plough-tail.[161] But while the ordinary Greek farmer took the signal for ploughing from the clangour of the cranes, Hesiod and other writers who aimed at greater exactness laid it down as a rule that the ploughing should begin with the autumnal setting of the Pleiades in the morning, which in Hesiod's time fell on the twenty-sixth of October.[162] The month in which the Pleiades set in the morning was generally recognised by the Greeks as the month of sowing; it corresponded apparently in part to our October, in part to our November. The Athenians

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[159] Percy Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins* (Cambridge, 1883), p. 174, with plate x. No. 25.

[160] Diodorus Siculus, v. 68. 1.

[161] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 448-474; Epictetus, *Dissertationes*, iii. 21. 12. For the autumnal migration and clangour of the cranes as the signal for sowing, see Aristophanes, *Birds*, 711; compare Theognis, 1197 *sqq.* But the Greeks also ploughed in spring (Hesiod, *op. cit.* 462; Xenophon, *Oeconom.* 16); indeed they ploughed thrice in the year (Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, vii. 13. 6). At the approach of autumn the cranes of northern Europe collect about rivers and lakes, and after much trumpeting set out in enormous bands on their southward journey to the tropical regions of Africa and India. In early spring they return northward, and their flocks may be descried passing at a marvellous height overhead or halting to rest in the meadows beside some broad river. The bird emits its trumpet-like note both on the ground and on the wing. See Alfred Newton, *Dictionary of Birds* (London, 1893-1896), pp. 110 *sq.*

[162] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 *sq.*, 615-617; Aratus, *Phaenomena*, 254-267; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 241 *sq.* According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 49) wheat, barley, and all other cereals were sown in Greece and Asia from the time of the autumn setting of the Pleiades. This date for ploughing and sowing is confirmed by Hippocrates and other medical writers. See W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,[3] i. 234. Latin writers prescribe the same date for the sowing of wheat. See Virgil, *Georg.* i. 219-226; Columella, *De re rustica*, ii. 8; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 223-226. In Columella's time the Pleiades, he tells us (*l. c.*), set in the morning of October 24th of the Julian calendar, which would correspond to the October 16th of our reckoning.

called it Pyanepsion; the Boeotians named it significantly Damatrius, that is, Demeter's month, and they celebrated a feast of mourning because, says Plutarch, who as a Boeotian speaks with authority on such a matter, Demeter was then in mourning for the descent of Persephone.[163] Is it possible to express more clearly the true original nature of Persephone as the corn-seed which has just been buried in the earth? The obvious, the almost inevitable conclusion did not escape Plutarch. He tells us that the mournful rites which were held at the time of the autumn sowing nominally commemorated the actions of deities, but that the real sadness was for the fruits of the earth, some of which at that season dropped of themselves and vanished from the trees, while others in the shape of seed were committed with anxious thoughts to the ground by men, who scraped the earth and then huddled it up over the seed, just as if they were burying and mourning for the dead.[164] Surely this interpretation of the custom and of the myth of Persephone is not only beautiful but true.

Thank-offerings of ripe grain presented by Greek farmers to Demeter after the harvest. Theocritus's description of a harvest-home in Cos.

And just as the Greek husbandman prayed to the Corn Goddess when he committed the seed, with anxious forebodings, to the furrows, so after he had reaped the harvest and brought back the yellow sheaves with rejoicing to the threshing-floor, he paid the bountiful goddess her dues in the form of a thank-offering of golden grain. Theocritus has painted for us in glowing colours a picture of a rustic harvest-home, as it fell on a bright autumn day some two thousand years ago in the little Greek island of Cos.[165] The poet tells us how he went with two friends from the city to attend a festival given by farmers, who were offering first-fruits to Demeter from the store of barley with which she had filled their barns. The day was warm, indeed so hot that the very lizards, which love to bask and run about in the sun, were slumbering in the crevices of the stone-walls, and not a lark soared carolling into the blue vault of heaven. Yet despite the great heat there were everywhere signs of autumn. “All things,” says the poet, “smelt of summer, but smelt of autumn too.” Indeed the day was really autumnal; for a goat-herd who met the friends on their way to the rural merry-making, asked them whether they were bound for the treading of the grapes in the wine-presses. And when they had reached their destination and reclined at ease in the dappled shade of over-arching poplars and elms, with the babble of a neighbouring fountain, the buzz of the cicadas, the hum of bees, and the cooing of doves in their ears, the ripe apples and pears rolled in the grass at their feet and the branches of the wild-plum trees were bowed down to the earth with the weight of their purple fruit. So couched on soft beds of fragrant lentisk they passed the sultry hours singing ditties alternately, while a rustic image of Demeter, to whom the honours of the day were paid, stood smiling beside a heap of yellow grain on the threshing-floor, with corn-stalks and poppies in her hands.

The harvest-home described by Theocritus fell in autumn.

In this description the time of year when the harvest-home was celebrated is clearly marked. Apart from the mention of the ripe apples, pears, and plums, the reference to the treading of the grapes

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[163] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 69.

[164] Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 70. Similarly Cornutus says that “Hades is fabled to have carried off Demeter's daughter because the seed vanishes for a time under the earth,” and he mentions that a festival of Demeter was celebrated at the time of sowing (*Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, pp. 54, 55 ed. C. Lang). In a fragment of a Greek calendar which is preserved in the Louvre “the ascent (ἀναβάσις) of the goddess” is dated the seventh day of the month Dius, and “the descent or setting (δύσις) of the goddess” is dated the fourth day of the month Hephaestius, a month which seems to be otherwise unknown. See W. Froehner, *Musée Nationale du Louvre, Les Inscriptions Grecques* (Paris, 1880), pp. 50 *sq.* Greek inscriptions found at Mantinea refer to a worship of Demeter and Persephone, who are known to have had a sanctuary there (Pausanias, viii. 9. 2). The people of Mantinea celebrated “mysteries of the goddess” and a festival called the *koragia*, which seems to have represented the return of Persephone from the lower world. See W. Immerwahr, *Die Kulte und Mythen Arkadiens* (Leipsic, 1891), pp. 100 *sq.*; S. Reinach, *Traité d'Epigraphie Grecque* (Paris, 1885), pp. 141 *sqq.*; Hesychius, *s. v.* κοράγειν.

[165] Theocritus, *Idyl.* vii.

is decisive. The Greeks gather and press the grapes in the first half of October,[166] and accordingly it is to this date that the harvest-festival described by Theocritus must be assigned. At the present day in Greece the maize-harvest immediately precedes the vintage, the grain being reaped and garnered at the end of September. Travelling in rural districts of Argolis and Arcadia at that time of the year you pass from time to time piles of the orange-coloured cobs laid up ready to be shelled, or again heaps of the yellow grain beside the pods. But maize was unknown to the ancient Greeks, who, like their modern descendants, reaped their wheat and barley crops much earlier in the summer, usually from the end of April till June.[167] However, we may conclude that the day immortalised by Theocritus was one of those autumn days of great heat and effulgent beauty which in Greece may occur at any time up to the very verge of winter. I remember such a day at Panopeus on the borders of Phocis and Boeotia. It was the first of November, yet the sun shone in cloudless splendour and the heat was so great, that when I had examined the magnificent remains of ancient Greek fortification-walls which crown the summit of the hill, it was delicious to repose on a grassy slope in the shade of some fine holly-oaks and to inhale the sweet scent of the wild thyme, which perfumed all the air. But it was summer's farewell. Next morning the weather had completely changed. A grey November sky lowered sadly overhead, and grey mists hung like winding-sheets on the lower slopes of the barren mountains which shut in the fatal plain of Chaeronea.

> The Greeks seem to have deferred the offering of first-fruits till the autumn in order to propitiate the Corn Goddess at the moment of ploughing and sowing, when her help was urgently needed.

Thus we may infer that in the rural districts of ancient Greece farmers offered their first-fruits of the barley harvest to Demeter in autumn about the time when the grapes were being trodden in the wine-presses and the ripe apples and pears littered the ground in the orchards. At first sight the lateness of the festival in the year is surprising; for in the lowlands of Greece at the present day barley is reaped at the end of April and wheat in May,[168] and in antiquity the time of harvest would seem not to have been very different, for Hesiod bids the husbandman put the sickle to the corn at the morning rising of the Pleiades,[169] which in his time took place on the eleventh of May.[170] But if the harvest was reaped in spring or early summer, why defer the offerings of corn to the Corn Goddess until the middle of autumn? The reason for the delay is not, so far as I am aware, explained by any ancient author, and accordingly it must remain for us a matter of conjecture. I surmise that the reason may have been a calculation on the part of the practical farmer that the best time to propitiate the Corn Goddess was not after harvest, when he had got all that was to be got out of her, but immediately before ploughing and sowing, when he had everything to hope from her good-will and everything to fear from her displeasure. When he had reaped his corn, and the sheaves had been safely garnered in his barns, he might, so to say, snap his fingers at the Corn Goddess. What could she do for him on the bare stubble-field which lay scorched and baking under the fierce rays of the sun all the long rainless summer through? But matters wore a very different aspect when, with the shortening and cooling of the days, he began to scan the sky for clouds[171] and to listen for the cries of the cranes as they flew southward, heralding by their trumpet-like notes the approach of the autumnal rains. Then he knew that the time had come to break up the ground that it might receive the seed and be fertilised by

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[166] In ancient Greece the vintage seems to have fallen somewhat earlier; for Hesiod bids the husbandman gather the ripe clusters at the time when Arcturus is a morning star, which in the poet's age was on the 18th of September. See Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 609 *sqq.*; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 247.

[167] See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 190 note 2.

[168] See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, p. 190 note 2.

[169] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 *sq.*

[170] L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 242.

[171] Compare Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, 17, ἐπειδὰν γὰρ ὁ μετοπωρινὸς χρόνος ἔλθῃ, πάντες που οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς τὸν θέον ἀποβλέπουσιν, ὅποτε βρέξας τὴν γῆν ἀφήσει αὐτοὺς σπείρειν.

the refreshing water of heaven; then he bethought him of the Corn Goddess once more and brought forth from the grange a share of the harvested corn with which to woo her favour and induce her to quicken the grain which he was about to commit to the earth. On this theory the Greek offering of first-fruits was prompted not so much by gratitude for past favours as by a shrewd eye to favours to come, and perhaps this interpretation of the custom does no serious injustice to the cool phlegmatic temper of the bucolic mind, which is more apt to be moved by considerations of profit than by sentiment. At all events the reasons suggested for delaying the harvest-festival accord perfectly with the natural conditions and seasons of farming in Greece. For in that country the summer is practically rainless, and during the long months of heat and drought the cultivation of the two ancient cereals, barley and wheat, is at a standstill. The first rains of autumn fall about the middle of October,[172] and that was the Greek farmer's great time for ploughing and sowing.[173] Hence we should expect him to make his offering of first-fruits to the Corn Goddess shortly before he ploughed and sowed, and this expectation is entirely confirmed by the date which we have inferred for the offering from the evidence of Theocritus. Thus the sacrifice of barley to Demeter in the autumn would seem to have been not so much a thank-offering as a bribe judiciously administered to her at the very moment of all the year when her services were most urgently wanted.

The festival of the *Proerosia*("Before the Ploughing") held at Eleusis in honour of Demeter.

When with the progress of civilisation a number of petty agricultural communities have merged into a single state dependent for its subsistence mainly on the cultivation of the ground, it commonly happens that, though every farmer continues to perform for himself the simple old rites designed to ensure the blessing of the gods on his crops, the government undertakes to celebrate similar, though more stately and elaborate, rites on behalf of the whole people, lest the neglect of public worship should draw down on the country the wrath of the offended deities. Hence it comes about that, for all their pomp and splendour, the national festivals of such states are often merely magnified and embellished copies of homely rites and uncouth observances carried out by rustics in the open fields, in barns, and on threshing-floors. In ancient Egypt the religion of Isis and Osiris furnishes examples of solemnities which have been thus raised from the humble rank of rural festivities to the dignity of national celebrations;[174] and in ancient Greece a like development may be traced in the religion of Demeter. If the Greek ploughman prayed to Demeter and Underground Zeus for a good crop before he put his hand to the plough in autumn, the authorities of the Athenian state celebrated about the same time and for the same purpose a public festival in honour of Demeter at Eleusis. It was called the Proerosia, which signifies "Before the Ploughing"; and as the festival was dedicated to her, Demeter herself bore the name of Proerosia. Tradition ran that once on a time the whole world was desolated by a famine, and that to remedy the evil the Pythian oracle bade the Athenians offer the sacrifice of the Proerosia on behalf of all men. They did so, and the famine ceased accordingly. Hence to testify their gratitude for the deliverance people sent the first-fruits of their harvest from all quarters to Athens.[175]

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[172] August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, p. 193.

[173] See above, pp. 44 *sqq.*

[174] See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Second Edition, pp. 283 *sqq.*

[175] Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Knights*, 720; Suidas, *s. vv.* εἰρεσιώνη and προηροσίαι; *Etymologicum Magnum*, Hesychius, and Photius, *Lexicon*, *s. v.* προηρόσια; Plutarch, *Septem Sapientum Convivium*, 15; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 521, line 29, and No. 628; Aug. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 192 *sqq.* The inscriptions prove that the Proerosia was held at Eleusis and that it was distinct from the Great Mysteries, being mentioned separately from them. Some of the ancients accounted for the origin of the festival by a universal plague instead of a universal famine. But this version of the story no doubt arose from the common confusion between the similar Greek words for plague and famine (λοιμός and λιμός). That in the original version famine and not plague must have been alleged as the reason for instituting the Proerosia, appears plainly from the reference of the name to ploughing, from the dedication of the festival to Demeter, and from the offerings of first-fruits; for these circumstances,

> The *Proerosia*seems to have been held before the ploughing in October but after the Great Mysteries in September. However, the date of the Great Mysteries, being determined by the lunar calendar, must have fluctuated in the solar year; whereas the date of the *Proerosia*, being determined by observation of Arcturus, must have been fixed.

But the exact date at which the Proerosia or Festival before Ploughing took place is somewhat uncertain, and enquirers are divided in opinion as to whether it fell before or after the Great Mysteries, which began on the fifteenth or sixteenth of Boedromion, a month corresponding roughly to our September. Another name for the festival was Proarcturia, that is, "Before Arcturus,"[176] which points to a date either before the middle of September, when Arcturus is a morning star, or before the end of October, when Arcturus is an evening star.[177] In favour of the earlier date it may be said, first, that the morning phase of Arcturus was well known and much observed, because it marked the middle of autumn, whereas little use was made of the evening phase of Arcturus for the purpose of dating;[178] and, second, that in an official Athenian inscription the Festival before Ploughing (*Proerosia*) is mentioned immediately before the Great Mysteries.[179] On the other hand, in favour of the later date, it may be said that as the autumnal rains in Greece set in about the middle of October, the latter part of that month would be a more suitable time for a ceremony at the opening of ploughing than the middle of September, when the soil is still parched with the summer drought; and, second, that this date is confirmed by a Greek inscription of the fourth or third century b. c., found at Eleusis, in which the Festival before Ploughing is apparently mentioned in the month of Pyanepsion immediately before the festival of the Pyanepsia, which was held on the seventh day of that month.[180] It is difficult to decide between these conflicting arguments, but on the whole I incline, not without hesitation, to agree with some eminent modern authorities in placing the Festival before Ploughing in Pyanepsion (October) after the Mysteries, rather than in Boedromion (September) before the Mysteries.[181] However, we must bear in mind that as the Attic months, like the Greek months generally, were lunar,[182] their position in the solar year necessarily varied from year to year, and though these variations were periodically corrected by intercalation, nevertheless the beginning of each Attic month sometimes diverged by several weeks from the beginning of the corresponding month to which we equate it.[183] From this it follows that the Great Mysteries, which were always dated by the calendar month, must have annually shifted their place somewhat in the solar year; whereas the Festival before Ploughing, if it was indeed dated either by the morning or by the evening phase of Arcturus, must have occupied a fixed place in the solar year. Hence it appears to be not impossible that the Great Mysteries, oscillating to and fro with the inconstant moon, may sometimes have fallen before and sometimes after the Festival before Ploughing, which apparently always remained true to the constant star. At least this possibility, which seems to have been overlooked by previous enquirers, deserves to be taken into

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though quite appropriate to ceremonies designed to stay or avert dearth and famine, would be quite inappropriate in the case of a plague.

[176] Hesychius, *s. v.* προηρόσια.

[177] August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, p. 194.

[178] August Mommsen, *l. c.*

[179] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 521, lines 29 *sqq.*

[180] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 628.

[181] The view that the Festival before Ploughing (*Proerosia*) fell in Pyanepsion is accepted by W. Mannhardt and W. Dittenberger. See W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877), pp. 238 *sq.*; *id.*, *Mythologische Forschungen*, p. 258; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] note 2 on Inscr. No. 628 (vol. ii. pp. 423 *sq.*). The view that the Festival before Ploughing fell in Boedromion is maintained by August Mommsen. See his *Heortologie* (Leipsic, 1864), pp. 218 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 192 *sqq.*

[182] See below, p. 82.

[183] L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Berlin, 1825-1826), i. 292 *sq.*; compare August Mommsen, *Chronologie* (Leipsic, 1883), pp. 58 *sq.*

account. It is a corollary from the shifting dates of the lunar months that the official Greek calendar, in spite of its appearance of exactness, really furnished the ancient farmer with little trustworthy guidance as to the proper seasons for conducting the various operations of agriculture; and he was well advised in trusting to various natural timekeepers, such as the rising and setting of the constellations, the arrival and departure of the migratory birds, the flowering of certain plants,[184] the ripening of fruits, and the setting in of the rains, rather than to the fallacious indications of the public calendar. It is by natural timekeepers, and not by calendar months, that Hesiod determines the seasons of the farmer's year in the poem which is the oldest existing treatise on husbandry.[185]

Offerings of the first-fruits of the barley and wheat to Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis. Isocrates on the offerings of first-fruits at Eleusis.

Just as the ploughman's prayer to Demeter, before he drove the share through the clods of the field, was taken up and reverberated, so to say, with a great volume of sound in the public prayers which the Athenian state annually offered to the goddess before the ploughing on behalf of the whole world, so the simple first-fruits of barley, presented to the rustic Demeter under the dappled shade of rustling poplars and elms on the threshing-floor in Cos, were repeated year by year on a grander scale in the first-fruits of the barley and wheat harvest, which were presented to the Corn Mother and the Corn Maiden at Eleusis, not merely by every husbandman in Attica, but by all the allies and subjects of Athens far and near, and even by many free Greek communities beyond the sea. The reason why year by year these offerings of grain poured from far countries into the public granaries at Eleusis, was the widespread belief that the gift of corn had been first bestowed by Demeter on the Athenians and afterwards disseminated by them among all mankind through the agency of Triptolemus, who travelled over the world in his dragon-drawn car teaching all peoples to plough the earth and to sow the seed.[186] In the fifth century before our era the legend was celebrated by Sophocles in a play called *Triptolemus*, in which he represented Demeter instructing the hero to carry the seed of the fruits which she had bestowed on men to all the coasts of Southern Italy,[187] from which we may infer that the cities of Magna Graecia were among the number of those that sent the thank-offering of barley and wheat every year to Athens. Again, in the fourth century before our era Xenophon represents Callias, the braggart Eleusinian Torchbearer, addressing the Lacedaemonians in a set speech, in which he declared that “Our ancestor Triptolemus is said to have bestowed the seed of Demeter's corn on the Peloponese before any other land. How then,” he asked with pathetic earnestness, “can it be right that you should come to ravage the corn of the men from whom you received the seed?”[188] Again, writing in the fourth century before our era Isocrates relates with a swell of patriotic pride how, in her search for her lost daughter Persephone, the goddess Demeter came to Attica and gave to the ancestors of the Athenians the two greatest of all gifts, the gift of the corn and the gift of the mysteries, of which the one reclaimed men from the life of beasts and the other held out hopes to them of a blissful eternity beyond the grave. The antiquity of the tradition, the orator proceeds to say, was no reason for rejecting it, but quite the contrary it furnished a strong argument in its favour, for what many affirmed and all had heard might be accepted as trustworthy. “And moreover,” he adds, “we are not driven to rest our case merely on the venerable age of the tradition; we can appeal to stronger evidence in its support. For most of the cities send us every year the first-fruits of the corn as a memorial of that

[184] For example, Theophrastus notes that squills flowered thrice a year, and that each flowering marked the time for one of the three ploughings. See Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, vii. 13. 6.

[185] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 383 *sqq.* The poet indeed refers (*vv.* 765 *sqq.*) to days of the month as proper times for engaging in certain tasks; but such references are always simply to days of the lunar month and apply equally to every month; they are never to days as dates in the solar year.

[186] See below, p. 72.

[187] Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* i. 12. 2.

[188] Xenophon, *Historia Graeca*, vi. 3. 6.

ancient benefit, and when any of them have failed to do so the Pythian priestess has commanded them to send the due portions of the fruits and to act towards our city according to ancestral custom. Can anything be supported by stronger evidence than by the oracle of god, the assent of many Greeks, and the harmony of ancient legend with the deeds of to-day?"[189]

Athenian decree concerning the offerings of first-fruits at Eleusis.

This testimony of Isocrates to the antiquity both of the legend and of the custom might perhaps have been set aside, or at least disparaged, as the empty bombast of a wordy rhetorician, if it had not happened by good chance to be amply confirmed by an official decree of the Athenian people passed in the century before Isocrates wrote. The decree was found inscribed on a stone at Eleusis and is dated by scholars in the latter half of the fifth century before our era, sometime between 446 and 420 b. c.[190] It deals with the first-fruits of barley and wheat which were offered to the Two Goddesses, that is, to Demeter and Persephone, not only by the Athenians and their allies but by the Greeks in general. It prescribes the exact amount of barley and wheat which was to be offered by the Athenians and their allies, and it directs the highest officials at Eleusis, namely the Hierophant and the Torchbearer, to exhort the other Greeks at the mysteries to offer likewise of the first-fruits of the corn. The authority alleged in the decree for requiring or inviting offerings of first-fruits alike from Athenians and from foreigners is ancestral custom and the bidding of the Delphic oracle. The Senate is further enjoined to send commissioners, so far as it could be done, to all Greek cities whatsoever, exhorting, though not commanding, them to send the first-fruits in compliance with ancestral custom and the bidding of the Delphic oracle, and the state officials are directed to receive the offerings from such states in the same manner as the offerings of the Athenians and their allies. Instructions are also given for the building of three subterranean granaries at Eleusis, where the contributions of grain from Attica were to be stored. The best of the corn was to be offered in sacrifice as the Eumolpids might direct: oxen were to be bought and sacrificed, with gilt horns, not only to the two Goddesses but also to the God (Pluto), Triptolemus, Eubulus, and Athena; and the remainder of the grain was to be sold and with the produce votive offerings were to be dedicated with inscriptions setting forth that they had been dedicated from the offerings of first-fruits, and recording the names of all the Greeks who sent the offerings to Eleusis. The decree ends with a prayer that all who comply with these injunctions or exhortations and render their dues to the city of Athens and to the Two Goddesses, may enjoy prosperity together with good and abundant crops. Writing in the second century of our era, under the Roman empire, the rhetorician Aristides records the custom which the Greeks observed of sending year by year the first-fruits of the harvest to Athens in gratitude for the corn, but he speaks of the practice as a thing of the past.[191]

Even after foreign states ceased to send first-fruits of the corn to Eleusis, they continued to acknowledge the benefit which the Athenians had conferred on mankind by diffusing among them Demeter's gift of the corn. Testimony of the Sicilian historian Diodorus. Testimony of Cicero and Himerius.

We may suspect that the tribute of corn ceased to flow from far countries to Athens, when, with her falling fortunes and decaying empire, her proud galleys had ceased to carry the terror of the Athenian arms into distant seas. But if the homage was no longer paid in the substantial shape of cargoes of grain, it continued down to the latest days of paganism to be paid in the cheaper form of gratitude for that inestimable benefit, which the Athenians claimed to have received from the Corn Goddess and to have liberally communicated to the rest of mankind. Even the Sicilians,

[189] Isocrates, *Panegyric*, 6 *sq.*

[190] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 20 (vol. i. pp. 33 *sqq.*); E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, Part ii. (Cambridge, 1905) No. 9, pp. 22 *sqq.*

[191] Aristides, *Panathen.* and *Eleusin.*, vol. i. pp. 167 *sq.*, 417 ed. G. Dindorf (Leipsic, 1829).

who, inhabiting a fertile corn-growing island, worshipped Demeter and Persephone above all the gods and claimed to have been the first to receive the gift of the corn from the Corn Goddess,[192] nevertheless freely acknowledged that the Athenians had spread, though they had not originated, the useful discovery among the nations. Thus the patriotic Sicilian historian Diodorus, while giving the precedence to his fellow-countrymen, strives to be just to the Athenian pretensions in the following passage.[193] "Mythologists," says he, "relate that Demeter, unable to find her daughter, lit torches at the craters of Etna[194] and roamed over many parts of the world. Those people who received her best she rewarded by giving them in return the fruit of the wheat; and because the Athenians welcomed her most kindly of all, she bestowed the fruit of the wheat on them next after the Sicilians. Wherefore that people honoured the goddess more than any other folk by magnificent sacrifices and the mysteries at Eleusis, which for their extreme antiquity and sanctity have become famous among all men. From the Athenians many others received the boon of the corn and shared the seed with their neighbours, till they filled the whole inhabited earth with it. But as the people of Sicily, on account of the intimate relation in which they stood to Demeter and the Maiden, were the first to participate in the newly discovered corn, they appointed sacrifices and popular festivities in honour of each of the two goddesses, naming the celebrations after them and signifying the nature of the boons they had received by the dates of the festivals. For they celebrated the bringing home of the Maiden at the time when the corn was ripe, performing the sacrifice and holding the festivity with all the solemnity and zeal that might be reasonably expected of men who desired to testify their gratitude for so signal a gift bestowed on them before all the rest of mankind. But the sacrifice to Demeter they assigned to the time when the sowing of the corn begins; and for ten days they hold a popular festivity which bears the name of the goddess, and is remarkable as well for the magnificence of its pomp as for the costumes then worn in imitation of the olden time. During these days it is customary for people to rail at each other in foul language, because when Demeter was mourning for the rape of the Maiden she laughed at a ribald jest."[195] Thus despite his natural prepossession in favour of his native land, Diodorus bears testimony both to the special blessing bestowed on the Athenians by the Corn Goddess, and to the generosity with which they had imparted the blessing to others, until it gradually spread to the ends of the earth. Again, Cicero, addressing a Roman audience, enumerates among the benefits which Athens was believed to have conferred on the world, the gift of the corn and its origin in Attic soil; and the cursory manner in which he alludes to it seems to prove that the tradition was familiar to his hearers.[196] Four centuries later the rhetorician Himerius speaks of Demeter's gift of the corn and the mysteries to the Athenians as the source of the first and greatest service rendered by their city to mankind;[197] so ancient, widespread, and persistent was the legend which ascribed the origin of the

[192] Diodorus Siculus, v. 2 and 4; Cicero, *In C. Verrem*, act. ii. bk. iv. chapters 48 *sq.* Both writers mention that the whole of Sicily was deemed sacred to Demeter and Persephone, and that corn was said to have grown in the island before it appeared anywhere else. In support of the latter claim Diodorus Siculus (v. 2. 4) asserts that wheat grew wild in many parts of Sicily.

[193] Diodorus Siculus, v. 4.

[194] This legend, which is mentioned also by Cicero (*In C. Verrem*, act. ii. bk. iv. ch. 48), was no doubt told to explain the use of torches in the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone. The author of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* tells us (verses 47 *sq.*) that Demeter searched for her lost daughter for nine days with burning torches in her hands, but he does not say that the torches were kindled at the flames of Etna. In art Demeter and Persephone and their attendants were often represented with torches in their hands. See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) plates xiii., xv. *a*, xvi., xvii., xviii., xix., xx., xxi. *a*, xxv., xxvii. *b*. Perhaps the legend of the torchlight search for Persephone and the use of the torches in the mysteries may have originated in a custom of carrying fire about the fields as a charm to secure sunshine for the corn. See *The Golden Bough*,[2] iii. 313.

[195] The words which I have translated "the bringing home of the Maiden" (τῆς Κόρης τὴν καταγωγήν) are explained with great probability by Professor M. P. Nilsson as referring to the bringing of the ripe corn to the barn or the threshing-floor (*Griechische Feste*, Leipsic, 1906, pp. 356 *sq.*). This interpretation accords perfectly with a well-attested sense of καταγωγή and its cognate verb κατάγειν, and is preferable to the other possible interpretation "the bringing down," which would refer to the descent of Persephone into the nether world; for such a descent is hardly appropriate to a harvest festival.

[196] Cicero, *Pro L. Flacco*, 26.

[197] Himerius, *Orat.* ii. 5.

corn to the goddess Demeter and associated it with the institution of the Eleusinian mysteries. No wonder that the Delphic oracle called Athens "the Metropolis of the Corn."[198]

The Sicilians seem to have associated Demeter with the seed-corn and Persephone with the ripe ears. Difficulty of distinguishing between Demeter and Persephone as personifications of different aspects of the corn.

From the passage of Diodorus which I have quoted we learn that the Sicilians celebrated the festival of Demeter at the beginning of sowing, and the festival of Persephone at harvest. This proves that they associated, if they did not identify, the Mother Goddess with the seed-corn and the Daughter Goddess with the ripe ears. Could any association or identification be more easy and obvious to people who personified the processes of nature under the form of anthropomorphic deities? As the seed brings forth the ripe ear, so the Corn Mother Demeter gave birth to the Corn Daughter Persephone. It is true that difficulties arise when we attempt to analyse this seemingly simple conception. How, for example, are we to divide exactly the two persons of the divinity? At what precise moment does the seed cease to be the Corn Mother and begins to burgeon out into the Corn Daughter? And how far can we identify the material substance of the barley and wheat with the divine bodies of the Two Goddesses? Questions of this sort probably gave little concern to the sturdy swains who ploughed, sowed, and reaped the fat fields of Sicily. We cannot imagine that their night's rest was disturbed by uneasy meditations on these knotty problems. It would hardly be strange if the muzzy mind of the Sicilian bumpkin, who looked with blind devotion to the Two Goddesses for his daily bread, totally failed to distinguish Demeter from the seed and Persephone from the ripe sheaves, and if he accepted implicitly the doctrine of the real presence of the divinities in the corn without discriminating too curiously between the material and the spiritual properties of the barley or the wheat. And if he had been closely questioned by a rigid logician as to the exact distinction to be drawn between the two persons of the godhead who together represented for him the annual vicissitudes of the cereals, Hodge might have scratched his head and confessed that it puzzled him to say where precisely the one goddess ended and the other began, or why the seed buried in the ground should figure at one time as the dead daughter Persephone descending into the nether world, and at another as the living Mother Demeter about to give birth to next year's crop. Theological subtleties like these have posed longer heads than are commonly to be found on bucolic shoulders.

The time of the year when the first-fruits of the corn were offered to Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis is not known.

The time of year at which the first-fruits were offered to Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis is not explicitly mentioned by ancient authorities, and accordingly no inference can be drawn from the date of the offering as to its religious significance. It is true that at the Eleusinian mysteries the Hierophant and Torchbearer publicly exhorted the Greeks in general, as distinguished from the Athenians and their allies, to offer the first-fruits in accordance with ancestral custom and the bidding of the Delphic oracle.[199] But there is nothing to shew that the offerings were made immediately after

[198] Μητρόπολις τῶν καρπῶν, Aristides, *Panathen.* vol. i. p. 168 ed. G. Dindorf (Leipzig, 1829).

[199] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 20, lines 25 *sqq.*; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. (Cambridge, 1905) No. 9, lines 25 *sqq.*, κελευέτω δὲ καί ὁ ἱεροφάντης καὶ ὁ δᾳδοῦχος μυστηρίοις ἀπάρχεσθαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας τοῦ καρποῦ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὴν μαντείαν τὴν ἐγ Δελφῶν. By coupling μυστηρίοις with ἀπάρχεσθαι instead of with κελεύετω, Miss J. E. Harrison understands the offering instead of the exhortation to have been made at the mysteries (*Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition, p. 155, "Let the Hierophant and the Torchbearer command that at the mysteries the Hellenes should offer first-fruits of their crops," etc.). This interpretation is no doubt grammatically permissible, but the context seems to plead strongly, if not to be absolutely decisive, in favour of the other. It is to be observed that the exhortation was addressed not to the Athenians and their allies (who were compelled to make the offering) but only to the other Greeks, who might make it or not as they pleased; and the amount of such voluntary contributions was probably small compared to that of the compulsory contributions, as to the date of which nothing is said. That the proclamation to the Greeks in general was an exhortation (κελευέτω), not a command, is clearly shewn by the words of the decree a few lines lower down, where commissioners are directed to go to all Greek states exhorting but not commanding them to offer the first-fruits (ἐκείνοις δὲ μὴ ἐπιτάττοντας, κελεύοντας δὲ ἀπάρχεσθαι ἐὰν βούλωνται κατὰ

the exhortation. Nor does any ancient authority support the view of a modern scholar that the offering of the first-fruits, or a portion of them, took place at the Festival before Ploughing (*Proerosia*),[200] though that festival would no doubt be an eminently appropriate occasion for propitiating with such offerings the goddess on whose bounty the next year's crop was believed to depend.

The Festival of the Threshing-floor (*Haloa*) at Eleusis.

On the other hand, we are positively told that the first-fruits were carried to Eleusis to be used at the Festival of the Threshing-floor (*Haloa*).[201] But the statement, cursorily reported by writers of no very high authority, cannot be implicitly relied upon; and even if it could, we should hardly be justified in inferring from it that all the first-fruits of the corn were offered to Demeter and Persephone at this festival. Be that as it may, the Festival of the Threshing-floor was intimately connected with the worship both of Demeter and of Dionysus, and accordingly it deserves our attention. It is said to have been sacred to both these deities;[202] and while the name seems to connect it rather with the Corn Goddess than with the Wine God, we are yet informed that it was held by the Athenians on the occasion of the pruning of the vines and the tasting of the stored-up wine.[203] The festival is frequently mentioned in Eleusinian inscriptions, from some of which we gather that it included sacrifices to the two goddesses and a so-called Ancestral Contest, as to the nature of which we have no information.[204] We may suppose that the festival or some part of it was celebrated on the Sacred Threshing-floor of Triptolemus at Eleusis;[205] for as Triptolemus was the hero who is said to have diffused the knowledge of the corn all over the world, nothing could be more natural than that the Festival of the Threshing-floor should be held on the sacred threshing-floor which bore his name. As for Demeter, we have already seen how intimate was her association with the threshing-floor and the operation of threshing; according to Homer, she is the yellow goddess who parts the yellow grain from the white chaff at the threshing, and in Cos her image with the corn-stalks and the poppies in her hands stood on the threshing-floor.[206] The festival lasted one day, and no victims might be sacrificed at it;[207] but special use was made, as we have seen, of the first-fruits of the corn. With regard to the dating of the festival we are informed that it fell in the month Poseideon, which corresponds roughly to our December, and as the date rests on the high authority of the ancient Athenian antiquary Philochorus,[208] and

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τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὴν μαντείαν ἐγ Δελφῶν). The Athenians could not command free and independent states to make such offerings, still less could they prescribe the exact date when the offerings were to be made. All that they could and did do was, taking advantage of the great assembly of Greeks from all quarters at the mysteries, to invite or exhort, by the mouth of the great priestly functionaries, the foreigners to contribute.

[200] August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 192 *sqq.*

[201] Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, ix. 534, p. 772; Im. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, i. 384 *sq.*, *s. v.* Ἅλῶα. Compare O. Rubensohn, *Die Mysterienheiligtümer in Eleusis und Samothrake* (Berlin, 1892), p. 116.

[202] Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, ix. 534, p. 772; Im. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, i. 384 *sq.*, *s. v.* Ἅλῶα.

[203] *Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 279 *sq.* (scholium on *Dialog. Meretr.* vii. 4).

[204] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] Nos. 192, 246, 587, 640; Ἐφημερὶς Ἀρχαιολογική, 1884, coll. 135 *sq.* The passages of inscriptions and of ancient authors which refer to the festival are collected by Dr. L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) pp. 315 *sq.* For a discussion of the evidence see August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 359 *sqq.*; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 145 *sqq.*

[205] The threshing-floor of Triptolemus at Eleusis (Pausanias, i. 38. 6) is no doubt identical with the Sacred Threshing-floor mentioned in the great Eleusinian inscription of 329 b. c. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, line 234). We read of a hierophant who, contrary to ancestral custom, sacrificed a victim on the hearth in the Hall at Eleusis during the Festival of the Threshing-floor, "it being unlawful to sacrifice victims on that day" (Demosthenes, *Contra Neaeram*, 116, pp. 1384 *sq.*), but from such an unlawful act no inference can be drawn as to the place where the festival was held. That the festival probably had special reference to the threshing-floor of Triptolemus has already been pointed out by O. Rubensohn (*Die Mysterienheiligtümer in Eleusis und Samothrake*, Berlin, 1892, p. 118).

[206] See above, pp. 41 *sq.*, 43. Maximus Tyrius observes (*Dissertat.* xxx. 5) that husbandmen were the first to celebrate sacred rites in honour of Demeter at the threshing-floor.

[207] See above, p. , note 4.

[208] Harpocration, *s. v.* Ἅλῶα (vol. i. p. 24, ed. G. Dindorf).

is, moreover, indirectly confirmed by inscriptional evidence,[209] we are bound to accept it. But it is certainly surprising to find a Festival of the Threshing-floor held so late in the year, long after the threshing, which in Greece usually takes place not later than midsummer, though on high ground in Crete it is sometimes prolonged till near the end of August.[210] We seem bound to conclude that the Festival of the Threshing-floor was quite distinct from the actual threshing of the corn.[211] It is said to have included certain mystic rites performed by women alone, who feasted and quaffed wine, while they broke filthy jests on each other and exhibited cakes baked in the form of the male and female organs of generation.[212] If the latter particulars are correctly reported we may suppose that these indecencies, like certain obscenities which seem to have formed part of the Great Mysteries at Eleusis,[213] were no mere wanton outbursts of licentious passion, but were deliberately practised as rites calculated to promote the fertility of the ground by means of homoeopathic or imitative magic. A like association of what we might call indecency with rites intended to promote the growth of the crops meets us in the Thesmophoria, a festival of Demeter celebrated by women alone, at which the character of the goddess as a source of fertility comes out clearly in the custom of mixing the remains of the sacrificial pigs with the seed-corn in order to obtain a plentiful crop. We shall return to this festival later on.[214]

The Green Festival and the Festival of the Cornstalks at Eleusis. Epithets of Demeter referring to the corn.

Other festivals held at Eleusis in honour of Demeter and Persephone were known as the Green Festival and the Festival of the Cornstalks.[215] Of the manner of their celebration we know nothing except that they comprised sacrifices, which were offered to Demeter and Persephone. But their names suffice to connect the two festivals with the green and the standing corn. We have seen that Demeter herself bore the title of Green, and that sacrifices were offered to her under that title which plainly aimed at promoting fertility.[216] Among the many epithets applied to Demeter which mark her relation to the corn may further be mentioned “Wheat-lover,”[217] “She of the Corn,”[218] “Sheaf-bearer,”[219] “She of the Threshing-floor,”[220] “She of the Winnowing-fan,”[221] “Nurse of the Corn-ears,”[222] “Crowned with Ears of Corn,”[223] “She of the Seed,”[224] “She of the Green Fruits,”[225] “Heavy

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[209] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 124, 144, with the editor's notes; August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, p. 360.

[210] So I am informed by my friend Professor J. L. Myres, who speaks from personal observation.

[211] This is recognised by Professor M. P. Nilsson. See his *Studia de Dionysiis Atticis* (Lund, 1900), pp. 95 *sqq.*, and his *Griechische Feste*, p. 329. To explain the lateness of the festival, Miss J. E. Harrison suggests that “the shift of date is due to Dionysos. The rival festivals of Dionysos were in mid-winter. He possessed himself of the festivals of Demeter, took over her threshing-floor and compelled the anomaly of a winter threshing festival” (*Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Second Edition, p. 147).

[212] Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* vii. 4 (*Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe, Leipsic, 1906, pp. 279-281).

[213] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 15 and 20, pp. 13 and 17 ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 25-27, 35, 39.

[214] See below, p. 116; vol. ii. pp. 17 *sqq.*

[215] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 640; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques* (Brussels, 1900), No. 135, p. 145. To be exact, while the inscription definitely mentions the sacrifices to Demeter and Persephone at the Green Festival, it does not record the deities to whom the sacrifice at the Festival of the Cornstalks (τὴν τῶν Καλαμαίων θυσίαν) was offered. But mentioned as it is in immediate connexion with the sacrifices to Demeter and Persephone at the Green Festival, we may fairly suppose that the sacrifice at the Festival of the Cornstalks was also offered to these goddesses.

[216] See above, p. 42.

[217] *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 36. 1 *sq.*

[218] Polemo, cited by Athenaeus, iii. 9, p. 416 b.

[219] Nonnus, *Dionys.* xvii. 153. The Athenians sacrificed to her under this title (Eustathius, on Homer, *Iliad*, xviii. 553, p. 1162).

[220] Theocritus, *Idyl.* vii. 155; *Orphica*, xl. 5.

[221] *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 98. 1.

[222] *Orphica*, xl. 3.

[223] *Anthologia Palatina*, vi. 104. 8.

[224] *Orphica*, xl. 5.

with Summer Fruits,"[226] "Fruit-bearer,"[227] "She of the Great Loaf," and "She of the Great Barley Loaf."[228] Of these epithets it may be remarked that though all of them are quite appropriate to a Corn Goddess, some of them would scarcely be applicable to an Earth Goddess and therefore they add weight to the other arguments which turn the scale in favour of the corn as the fundamental attribute of Demeter.

Belief in ancient and modern times that the corn-crops depend on possession of an image of Demeter.

How deeply implanted in the mind of the ancient Greeks was this faith in Demeter as goddess of the corn may be judged by the circumstance that the faith actually persisted among their Christian descendants at her old sanctuary of Eleusis down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. For when the English traveller Dodwell revisited Eleusis, the inhabitants lamented to him the loss of a colossal image of Demeter, which was carried off by Clarke in 1802 and presented to the University of Cambridge, where it still remains. "In my first journey to Greece," says Dodwell, "this protecting deity was in its full glory, situated in the centre of a threshing-floor, amongst the ruins of her temple. The villagers were impressed with a persuasion that their rich harvests were the effect of her bounty, and since her removal, their abundance, as they assured me, has disappeared."[229] Thus we see the Corn Goddess Demeter standing on the threshing-floor of Eleusis and dispensing corn to her worshippers in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, precisely as her image stood and dispensed corn to her worshippers on the threshing-floor of Cos in the days of Theocritus. And just as the people of Eleusis last century attributed the diminution of their harvests to the loss of the image of Demeter, so in antiquity the Sicilians, a corn-growing people devoted to the worship of the two Corn Goddesses, lamented that the crops of many towns had perished because the unscrupulous Roman governor Verres had impiously carried off the image of Demeter from her famous temple at Henna.[230] Could we ask for a clearer proof that Demeter was indeed the goddess of the corn than this belief, held by the Greeks down to modern times, that the corn-crops depended on her presence and bounty and perished when her image was removed?

Sacred marriage of Zeus and Demeter at Eleusis. Homer on the love of Zeus for Demeter. Zeus the Sky God may have been confused with Subterranean Zeus, that is, Pluto. Demeter may have been confused with Persephone; in art the types of the two goddesses are often very similar.

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[225] *Ibid.*

[226] *Orphica*, xl. 18.

[227] This title she shared with Persephone at Tegea (Pausanias, viii. 53. 7), and under it she received annual sacrifices at Ephesus (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 655). It was applied to her also at Epidaurus (Ἐφημ. Ἀρχ., 1883, col. 153) and at Athens (Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 382), and appears to have been a common title of the goddess. See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 318 note 30.

[228] Polemo, cited by Athenaeus, iii. 73, p. 109 a b, x. 9. p. 416 c.

[229] E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece* (London, 1819), i. 583. E. D. Clarke found the image "on the side of the road, immediately before entering the village, and in the midst of a heap of dung, buried as high as the neck, a little beyond the farther extremity of the pavement of the temple. Yet even this degrading situation had not been assigned to it wholly independent of its antient history. The inhabitants of the small village which is now situated among the ruins of Eleusis still regarded this statue with a very high degree of superstitious veneration. They attributed to its presence the fertility of their land; and it was for this reason that they heaped around it the manure intended for their fields. They believed that the loss of it would be followed by no less a calamity than the failure of their annual harvests; and they pointed to the ears of bearded wheat, upon the sculptured ornaments upon the head of the figure, as a never-failing indication of the produce of the soil." When the statue was about to be removed, a general murmur ran among the people, the women joining in the clamour. "They had been always," they said, "famous for their corn; and the fertility of the land would cease when the statue was removed." See E. D. Clarke, *Travels in various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa*, iii. (London, 1814) pp. 772-774, 787 *sq.* Compare J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 80, who tells us that "the statue was regularly crowned with flowers in the avowed hope of obtaining good harvests."

[230] Cicero, *In C. Verrem*, act. ii. lib. iv. 51.

In a former part of this work I followed an eminent French scholar in concluding, from various indications, that part of the religious drama performed in the mysteries of Eleusis may have been a marriage between the sky-god Zeus and the corn-goddess Demeter, represented by the hierophant and the priestess of the goddess respectively.[231] The conclusion is arrived at by combining a number of passages, all more or less vague and indefinite, of late Christian writers; hence it must remain to some extent uncertain and cannot at the best lay claim to more than a fair degree of probability. It may be, as Professor W. Ridgeway holds, that this dramatic marriage of the god and goddess was an innovation foisted into the Eleusinian Mysteries in that great welter of religions which followed the meeting of the East and the West in the later ages of antiquity.[232] If a marriage of Zeus and Demeter did indeed form an important feature of the Mysteries in the fifth century before our era, it is certainly remarkable, as Professor Ridgeway has justly pointed out, that no mention of Zeus occurs in the public decree of that century which regulates the offerings of first-fruits and the sacrifices to be made to the gods and goddesses of Eleusis.[233] At the same time we must bear in mind that, if the evidence for the ritual marriage of Zeus and Demeter is late and doubtful, the evidence for the myth is ancient and indubitable. The story was known to Homer, for in the list of beauties to whom he makes Zeus, in a burst of candour, confess that he had lost his too susceptible heart, there occurs the name of "the fair-haired Queen Demeter";[234] and in another passage the poet represents the jealous god smiting with a thunderbolt the favoured lover with whom the goddess had forgotten her dignity among the furrows of a fallow field.[235] Moreover, according to one tradition, Dionysus himself was the offspring of the intrigue between Zeus and Demeter.[236] Thus there is no intrinsic improbability in the view that one or other of these unedifying incidents in the backstairs chronicle of Olympus should have formed part of the sacred peep-show in the Eleusinian Mysteries. But it seems just possible that the marriage to which the Christian writers allude with malicious joy may after all have been of a more regular and orthodox pattern. We are positively told that the rape of Persephone was acted at the Mysteries;[237] may that scene not have been followed by another representing the solemnisation of her nuptials with her ravisher and husband Pluto? It is to be remembered that Pluto was sometimes known as a god of fertility under the title of Subterranean Zeus. It was to him under that title as well as to Demeter, that the Greek ploughman prayed at the beginning of the ploughing;[238] and the people of Myconus used to sacrifice to Subterranean Zeus and Subterranean Earth for the prosperity of the crops on the twelfth day of the month Lenaeon.[239] Thus it may be that the Zeus whose marriage was dramatically represented at the Mysteries was not the sky-god Zeus, but his brother Zeus of the Underworld, and that the writers who refer to the ceremony have confused the two brothers. This view, if it could be established, would dispose of the difficulty raised by the absence of the name of Zeus in the decree which prescribes the offerings to be made to the gods of Eleusis; for although in that decree Pluto is not mentioned under the name of Subterranean Zeus, he is clearly referred to, as the editors of the inscription have seen, under the vague title of "the God," while his consort Persephone is similarly referred to under the title of "the Goddess," and it is ordained that perfect victims shall be sacrificed

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[231] *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 138 *sq.*

[232] This view was expressed by my friend Professor Ridgeway in a paper which I had the advantage of hearing him read at Cambridge in the early part of 1911. Compare *The Athenaeum*, No. 4360, May 20th, 1911, p. 576.

[233] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 20; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. (Cambridge, 1905) No. 9, pp. 22 *sq.* See above, pp. 55 *sq.*

[234] Homer, *Iliad*, xiv. 326.

[235] Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 125 *sqq.*

[236] Diodorus Siculus, iii. 62. 6.

[237] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* 12, p. 12, ed. Potter.

[238] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 465 *sqq.*

[239] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 615, lines 25 *sq.*; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 714; J. de Prott et L. Ziehen, *Leges Graecorum Sacrae*, No. 4.

to both of them. However, if we thus dispose of one difficulty, it must be confessed that in doing so we raise another. For if the bridegroom in the Sacred Marriage at Eleusis was not the sky-god Zeus, but the earth-god Pluto, we seem driven to suppose that, contrary to the opinion of the reverend Christian scandal-mongers, the bride was his lawful wife Persephone and not his sister and mother-in-law Demeter. In short, on the hypothesis which I have suggested we are compelled to conclude that the ancient busybodies who lifted the veil from the mystic marriage were mistaken as to the person both of the divine bridegroom and of the divine bride. In regard to the bridegroom I have conjectured that they may have confused the two brothers, Zeus of the Upper World and Zeus of the Lower World. In regard to the bride, can any reason be suggested for confounding the persons of the mother and daughter? On the view here taken of the nature of Demeter and Persephone nothing could be easier than to confuse them with each other, for both of them were mythical embodiments of the corn, the mother Demeter standing for the old corn of last year and the daughter Persephone standing for the new corn of this year. In point of fact Greek artists, both of the archaic and of later periods, frequently represent the Mother and Daughter side by side in forms which resemble each other so closely that eminent modern experts have sometimes differed from each other on the question, which is Demeter and which is Persephone; indeed in some cases it might be quite impossible to distinguish the two if it were not for the inscriptions attached to the figures.[240] The ancient sculptors, vase-painters, and engravers must have had some good reason for portraying the two goddesses in types which are almost indistinguishable from each other; and what better reason could they have had than the knowledge that the two persons of the godhead were one in substance, that they stood merely for two different aspects of the same simple natural phenomenon, the growth of the corn? Thus it is easy to understand why Demeter and Persephone may have been confused in ritual as well as in art, why in particular the part of the divine bride in a Sacred Marriage may sometimes have been assigned to the Mother and sometimes to the Daughter. But all this, I fully admit, is a mere speculation, and I only put it forward as such. We possess far too little information as to a Sacred Marriage in the Eleusinian Mysteries to be justified in speaking with confidence on so obscure a subject.

> The date of the Eleusinian Mysteries in September would have been a very appropriate time for a Sacred Marriage of the Sky God with the Corn Goddess or the Earth Goddess.

One thing, however, which we may say with a fair degree of probability is that, if such a marriage did take place at Eleusis, no date in the agricultural year could well have been more appropriate for it than the date at which the Mysteries actually fell, namely about the middle of September. The long Greek summer is practically rainless and in the fervent heat and unbroken

[240] See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907), p. 259, "It was long before the mother could be distinguished from the daughter by any organic difference of form or by any expressive trait of countenance. On the more ancient vases and terracottas they appear rather as twin-sisters, almost as if the inarticulate artist were aware of their original identity of substance. And even among the monuments of the transitional period it is difficult to find any representation of the goddesses in characters at once clear and impressive. We miss this even in the beautiful vase of Hieron in the British Museum, where the divine pair are seen with Triptolemos: the style is delicate and stately, and there is a certain impression of inner tranquil life in the group, but without the aid of the inscriptions the mother would not be known from the daughter"; *id.*, vol. iii. 274, "But it would be wrong to give the impression that the numismatic artists of this period were always careful to distinguish – in such a manner as the above works indicate – between mother and daughter. The old idea of their unity of substance still seemed to linger as an art-tradition: the very type we have just been examining appears on a fourth-century coin of Hermione, and must have been used here to designate Demeter Chthonia who was there the only form that the corn-goddess assumed. And even at Metapontum, where coin-engraving was long a great art, a youthful head crowned with corn, which in its own right and on account of its resemblance to the masterpiece of Euainetos could claim the name of Kore [Persephone], is actually inscribed 'Damater.' " Compare J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, iii. (Leipsic, 1873-1878), p. 453. In regard, for example, to the famous Eleusinian bas-relief, one of the most beautiful monuments of ancient religious art, which seems to represent Demeter giving the corn-stalks to Triptolemus, while Persephone crowns his head, there has been much divergence of opinion among the learned as to which of the goddesses is Demeter and which Persephone. See J. Overbeck, *op. cit.* iii. 427 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *op. cit.* iii. 263 *sq.* On the close resemblance of the artistic types of Demeter and Persephone see further E. Gerhard, *Gesammelte akademische Abhandlungen* (Berlin, 1866-1868), ii. 357 *sqq.*; F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 2, *s. v.* "Ceres," p. 1049.

drought all nature languishes. The river-beds are dry, the fields parched. The farmer awaits impatiently the setting-in of the autumnal rains, which begin in October and mark the great season for ploughing and sowing. What time could be fitter for celebrating the union of the Corn Goddess with her husband the Earth God or perhaps rather with her paramour the Sky God, who will soon descend in fertilising showers to quicken the seed in the furrows? Such embraces of the divine powers or their human representatives might well be deemed, on the principles of homoeopathic or imitative magic, indispensable to the growth of the crops. At least similar ideas have been entertained and similar customs have been practised by many peoples;[241] and in the legend of Demeter's love-adventure among the furrows of the thrice-ploughed fallow[242] we seem to catch a glimpse of rude rites of the same sort performed in the fields at sowing-time by Greek ploughmen for the sake of ensuring the growth of the seed which they were about to commit to the bosom of the naked earth. In this connexion a statement of ancient writers as to the rites of Eleusis receives fresh significance. We are told that at these rites the worshippers looked up to the sky and cried "Rain!" and then looked down at the earth and cried "Conceive!"[243] Nothing could be more appropriate at a marriage of the Sky God and the Earth or Corn Goddess than such invocations to the heaven to pour down rain and to the earth or the corn to conceive seed under the fertilising shower; in Greece no time could well be more suitable for the utterance of such prayers than just at the date when the Great Mysteries of Eleusis were celebrated, at the end of the long drought of summer and before the first rains of autumn.

The Eleusinian games distinct from the Eleusinian Mysteries. The Eleusinian games of later origin than the Eleusinian Mysteries. The Eleusinian games sacred to Demeter and Persephone. Triptolemus, the mythical hero of the corn.

Different both from the Great Mysteries and the offerings of first-fruits at Eleusis were the games which were celebrated there on a great scale once in every four years and on a less scale once in every two years.[244] That the games were distinct from the Mysteries is proved by their periods, which were quadriennial and biennial respectively, whereas the Mysteries were celebrated annually. Moreover, in Greek epigraphy, our most authentic evidence in such matters, the games and the Mysteries are clearly distinguished from each other by being mentioned separately in the same inscription.[245] But like the Mysteries the games seem to have been very ancient; for the Parian Chronicler, who wrote in the year 264 b. c., assigns the foundation of the Eleusinian games to the reign of Pandion, the son of Cecrops. However, he represents them as of later origin than the Eleusinian Mysteries, which according to him were instituted by Eumolpus in the reign of Erechtheus, after Demeter had planted corn in Attica and Triptolemus had sown seed in the Rarian plain at Eleusis.[246] This testimony to the superior antiquity of the Mysteries is in harmony with our most ancient authority on the rites of Eleusis, the author of the *Hymn to Demeter*, who describes the origin of the Eleusinian Mysteries, but makes no reference or allusion to the Eleusinian Games. However, the great age of the games is again vouched for at a much later date by the rhetorician Aristides, who even declares

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[241] *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, ii. 97 *sqq.*

[242] Homer, *Odyssey*, v. 125 *sqq.*

[243] Proclus, on Plato, *Timaeus*, p. 293 c, quoted by L. F. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 357, where Lobeck's emendation of ὗε, κύε for υἷε, τοκυῖε (*Aglaophamus*, p. 782) may be accepted as certain, confirmed as it is by Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, v. 7, p. 146, ed. Duncker and Schneidewin (Göttingen, 1859), τὸ μέγα καὶ ἄρρητον Ἐλευσινίων μυστήριον ὗε κύε.

[244] As to the Eleusinian games see August Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, pp. 179-204; P. Foucart, *Les Grands Mystères d'Éleusis* (Paris, 1900), pp. 143-147; P. Stengel, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. coll. 2330 *sqq.* The quadriennial celebration of the Eleusinian Games is mentioned by Aristotle (*Constitution of Athens*, 54), and in the great Eleusinian inscription of 329 b. c., which is also our only authority for the biennial celebration of the games. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 258 *sqq.* The regular and official name of the games was simply Eleusinia (τὰ Ἐλευσίνια), a name which late writers applied incorrectly to the Mysteries. See August Mommsen, *op. cit.* pp. 179 *sqq.*; Dittenberger, *op. cit.* No. 587, note 171.

[245] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 246, lines 25 *sqq.*; *id.* No. 587, lines 244 *sq.*, 258 *sqq.*

[246] *Marmor Parium*, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, i. 544 *sq.*

that they were the oldest of all Greek games.[247] With regard to the nature and meaning of the games our information is extremely scanty, but an old scholiast on Pindar tells us that they were celebrated in honour of Demeter and Persephone as a thank-offering at the conclusion of the corn-harvest.[248] His testimony is confirmed by that of the rhetorician Aristides, who mentions the institution of the Eleusinian games in immediate connexion with the offerings of the first-fruits of the corn, which many Greek states sent to Athens;[249] and from an inscription dated about the close of the third century before our era we learn that at the Great Eleusinian Games sacrifices were offered to Demeter and Persephone.[250] Further, we gather from an official Athenian inscription of 329 b. c. that both the Great and the Lesser Games included athletic and musical contests, a horse-race, and a competition which bore the name of the Ancestral or Hereditary Contest, and which accordingly may well have formed the original kernel of the games.[251] Unfortunately nothing is known about this Ancestral Contest. We might be tempted to identify it with the Ancestral Contest included in the Eleusinian Festival of the Threshing-floor,[252] which was probably held on the Sacred Threshing-floor of Triptolemus at Eleusis.[253] If the identification could be proved, we should have another confirmation of the tradition which connects the games with Demeter and the corn; for according to the prevalent tradition it was to Triptolemus that Demeter first revealed the secret of the corn, and it was he whom she sent out as an itinerant missionary to impart the beneficent discovery of the cereals to all mankind and to teach them to sow the seed.[254] On monuments of art, especially in vase-paintings, he is constantly represented along with Demeter in this capacity, holding corn-stalks in his hand and sitting in his car, which is sometimes winged and sometimes drawn by dragons, and from which he is said to have sowed the seed down on the whole world as he sped through the air.[255] At Eleusis victims bought with the first-fruits of the wheat and barley were sacrificed to him as well as to Demeter and Persephone.[256] In short, if we may judge from the combined testimony of Greek literature and art, Triptolemus was the corn-hero first and foremost. Even beyond the limits of the Greek world, all men, we are told, founded

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[247] Aristides, *Panathen.* and *Eleusin.* vol. i. pp. 168, 417, ed. G. Dindorf.

[248] Schol. on Pindar, *Olymp.* ix. 150, p. 228, ed. Aug. Boeckh.

[249] Aristides, *ll.cc.*

[250] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 246, lines 25 *sqq.* The editor rightly points out that the Great Eleusinian Games are identical with the games celebrated every fourth year, which are mentioned in the decree of 329 b. c. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 260 *sq.*).

[251] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 259 *sqq.* From other Attic inscriptions we learn that the Eleusinian games comprised a long foot-race, a race in armour, and a pancratium. See Dittenberger, *op. cit.* No. 587 note 171 (vol. ii. p. 313). The Great Eleusinian Games also included the pentathlum (Dittenberger, *op. cit.* No. 678, line 2). The pancratium included wrestling and boxing; the pentathlum included a foot-race, leaping, throwing the quoit, throwing the spear, and wrestling. See W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Third Edition, *s. vv.* "Pancratium" and "Pentathlon."

[252] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 246, lines 46 *sqq.*; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 609. See above, p. 61. The identification lies all the nearer to hand because the inscription records a decree in honour of a man who had sacrificed to Demeter and Persephone at the Great Eleusinian Games, and a provision is contained in the decree that the honour should be proclaimed "at the Ancestral Contest of the Festival of the Threshing-floor." The same Ancestral Contest at the Festival of the Threshing-floor is mentioned in another Eleusinian inscription, which records honours decreed to a man who had sacrificed to Demeter and Persephone at the Festival of the Threshing-floor. See Ἐφημερὶς Ἀρχαιολογική, 1884, coll. 135 *sq.*

[253] See above, p. 61.

[254] Diodorus Siculus, v. 68; Arrian, *Indic.* 7; Lucian, *Somnium*, 15; *id.*, *Philopseudes*, 3; Plato, *Laws*, vi. 22, p. 782; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 5. 2; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, p. 53, ed. C. Lang; Pausanias, i. 14. 2, vii. 18. 2, viii. 4. 1; Aristides, *Eleusin.* vol. i. pp. 416 *sq.*, ed. G. Dindorf; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 147, 259, 277; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 549 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Metamorph.* v. 645 *sqq.*; Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 19. See also above, p. 54. As to Triptolemus, see L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone* (Hamburg, 1837), pp. 282 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Griechische Mythologie*,[4] i. 769 *sqq.*

[255] C. Strube, *Studien über den Bilderkreis von Eleusis* (Leipsic, 1870), pp. 4 *sqq.*; J. Overbeck, *Griechische Kunstmythologie*, iii. (Leipsic, 1873-1880), pp. 530 *sqq.*; A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des classischen Altertums*, iii. 1855 *sqq.* That Triptolemus sowed the earth with corn from his car is mentioned by Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, i. 5. 2; Cornutus, *Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, 28, pp. 53 *sq.*, ed. C. Lang; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 147; and Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 19.

[256] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 20, lines 37 *sqq.*; E. S. Roberts and E. A. Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. (Cambridge, 1905), No. 9, p. 24.

sanctuaries and erected altars in his honour because he had bestowed on them the gift of the corn.[257] His very name has been plausibly explained both in ancient and modern times as "Thrice-ploughed" with reference to the Greek custom of ploughing the land thrice a year,[258] and the derivation is said to be on philological principles free from objection.[259] In fact it would seem as if Triptolemus, like Demeter and Persephone themselves, were a purely mythical being, an embodiment of the conception of the first sower. At all events in the local Eleusinian legend, according to an eminent scholar, who has paid special attention to Attic genealogy, "Triptolemus does not, like his comrade Eumolpus or other founders of Eleusinian priestly families, continue his kind, but without leaving offspring who might perpetuate his priestly office, he is removed from the scene of his beneficent activity. As he appeared, so he vanishes again from the legend, after he has fulfilled his divine mission."[260]

Prizes of barley given to victors in the Eleusinian games.

However, there is no sufficient ground for identifying the Ancestral Contest of the Eleusinian games with the Ancestral Contest of the Threshing-festival at Eleusis, and accordingly the connexion of the games with the corn-harvest and with the corn-hero Triptolemus must so far remain uncertain. But a clear trace of such a connexion may be seen in the custom of rewarding the victors in the Eleusinian games with measures of barley; in the official Athenian inscription of 329 b. c., which contains the accounts of the superintendents of Eleusis and the Treasurers of the Two Goddesses, the amounts of corn handed over by these officers to the priests and priestesses for the purposes of the games is exactly specified.[261] This of itself is sufficient to prove that the Eleusinian games were closely connected with the worship of Demeter and Persephone. The grain thus distributed in prizes was probably reaped on the Rarian plain near Eleusis, where according to the legend Triptolemus sowed the first corn.[262] Certainly we know that the barley grown on that plain was used in sacrifices and for the baking of the sacrificial cakes,[263] from which we may reasonably infer that the prizes of barley, to which no doubt a certain sanctity attached in the popular mind, were brought from the same holy fields. So sacred was the Rarian plain that no dead body was allowed to defile it. When such a pollution accidentally took place, it was expiated by the sacrifice of a pig,[264] the usual victim employed in Greek purificatory rites.

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[257] Arrian, *Epicteti Dissertationes*, i. 4. 30.

[258] Scholiast on Homer, *Iliad*, xviii. 483; L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, p. 286; F. A. Paley on Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 460. The custom of ploughing the land thrice is alluded to by Homer (*Iliad*, xviii. 542, *Odyssey*, v. 127) and Hesiod (*Theogony*, 971), and is expressly mentioned by Theophrastus (*Historia Plantarum*, vii. 13. 6).

[259] So I am informed by my learned friend the Rev. Professor J. H. Moulton.

[260] J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie* (Berlin, 1889), pp. 138 *sq.* However, the Eleusinian Torchbearer Callias apparently claimed to be descended from Triptolemus, for in a speech addressed to the Lacedaemonians he is said by Xenophon (*Hellenica*, vi. 3. 6) to have spoken of Triptolemus as "our ancestor" (ὁ ἡμέτερος πρόγονος). See above, p. 54. But it is possible that Callias was here speaking, not as a direct descendant of Triptolemus, but merely as an Athenian, who naturally ranked Triptolemus among the most illustrious of the ancestral heroes of his people. Even if he intended to claim actual descent from the hero, this would prove nothing as to the historical character of Triptolemus, for many Greek families boasted of being descended from gods.

[261] The prize of barley is mentioned by the Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* ix. 150. The Scholiast on Aristides (vol. iii. pp. 55, 56, ed. G. Dindorf) mentions ears of corn as the prize without specifying the kind of corn. In the official Athenian inscription of 329 b. c., though the amount of corn distributed in prizes both at the quadriennial and at the biennial games is stated, we are not told whether the corn was barley or wheat. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 259 *sqq.* According to Aristides (*Eleusin.* vol. i. p. 417, ed. G. Dindorf, compare p. 168) the prize consisted of the corn which had first appeared at Eleusis.

[262] *Marmor Parium*, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, i. 544. That the Rarian plain was the first to be sown and the first to bear crops is affirmed by Pausanias (i. 38. 6).

[263] Pausanias, i. 38. 6.

[264] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 119 *sq.* In the same inscription, a few lines lower down, mention is made of two pigs which were used in purifying the sanctuary at Eleusis. On the pig in Greek purificatory rites, see my notes on Pausanias, ii. 31. 8 and v. 16. 8.

The Eleusinian games primarily concerned with Demeter and Persephone. The Ancestral Contest in the games may have been originally a contest between the reapers to finish reaping.

Thus, so far as the scanty evidence at our disposal permits us to judge, the Eleusinian games, like the Eleusinian Mysteries, would seem to have been primarily concerned with Demeter and Persephone as goddesses of the corn. At least that is expressly affirmed by the old scholiast on Pindar and it is borne out by the practice of rewarding the victors with measures of barley. Perhaps the Ancestral Contest, which may well have formed the original nucleus of the games, was a contest between the reapers on the sacred Rarian plain to see who should finish his allotted task before his fellows. For success in such a contest no prize could be more appropriate than a measure of the sacred barley which the victorious reaper had just cut on the barley-field. In the sequel we shall see that similar contests between reapers have been common on the harvest fields of modern Europe, and it will appear that such competitions are not purely athletic; their aim is not simply to demonstrate the superior strength, activity, and skill of the victors; it is to secure for the particular farm the possession of the blooming young Corn-maiden of the present year, conceived as the embodiment of the vigorous grain, and to pass on to laggard neighbours the aged Corn-mother of the past year, conceived as an embodiment of the effete and outworn energies of the corn.[265] May it not have been so at Eleusis? may not the reapers have vied with each other for possession of the young corn-spirit Persephone and for avoidance of the old corn-spirit Demeter? may not the prize of barley, which rewarded the victor in the Ancestral Contest, have been supposed to house in the ripe ears no less a personage than the Corn-maiden Persephone herself? And if there is any truth in these conjectures (for conjectures they are and nothing more), we may hazard a guess as to the other Ancestral Contest which took place at the Eleusinian Festival of the Threshing-floor. Perhaps it in like manner was originally a competition between threshers on the sacred threshing-floor of Triptolemus to determine who should finish threshing his allotted quantity of corn before the rest. Such competitions have also been common, as we shall see presently, on the threshing-floors of modern Europe, and their motive again has not been simple emulation between sturdy swains for the reward of strength and dexterity; it has been a dread of being burdened with the aged and outworn spirit of the corn conceived as present in the bundle of corn-stalks which receives the last stroke at threshing.[266] We know that effigies of Demeter with corn and poppies in her hands stood on Greek threshing-floors.[267] Perhaps at the conclusion of the threshing these effigies, as representatives of the old Corn-spirit, were passed on to neighbours who had not yet finished threshing the corn. At least the supposition is in harmony with modern customs observed on the threshing-floor.

Games at harvest festivals in modern Europe.

It is possible that the Eleusinian games were no more than a popular merrymaking celebrated at the close of the harvest. This view of their character might be supported by modern analogies; for in some parts of Germany it has been customary for the harvesters, when their work is done, to engage in athletic competitions of various kinds, which have at first sight no very obvious connexion with the business of harvesting. For example, at Besbau near Luckau great cakes were baked at the harvest-festival, and the labourers, both men and women, ran races for them. He or she who reached them first received not only a cake, but a handkerchief or the like as a prize. Again, at Bergkirchen, when the harvest was over, a garland was hung up and the harvesters rode at it on horseback and tried to bring it down with a stab or a blow as they galloped past. He who succeeded in bringing it down was proclaimed King. Again, in the villages near Fürstenwald at harvest the young men used

[265] See below, pp. 140 *sqq.*, 155 *sqq.*, 164 *sqq.*, compare 218 *sqq.*

[266] See below, pp. 147 *sqq.*, 221 *sq.*, 223 *sq.*

[267] See above, p. 43.

to fetch a fir-tree from the wood, peel the trunk, and set it up like a mast in the middle of the village. A handkerchief and other prizes were fastened to the top of the pole and the men clambered up for them.[268] Among the peasantry of Silesia, we are told, the harvest-home broadened out into a popular festival, in which athletic sports figured prominently. Thus, for example, at Järischau, in the Strehlitz district, a scythe, a rake, a flail, and a hay-fork or pitchfork were fastened to the top of a smooth pole and awarded as prizes, in order of merit, to the men who displayed most agility in climbing the pole. Younger men amused themselves with running in sacks, high jumps, and so forth. At Prauss, near Nimptsch, the girls ran a race in a field for aprons as prizes. In the central parts of Silesia a favourite amusement at harvest was a race between girls for a garland of leaves or flowers.[269] Yet it seems probable that all such sports at harvest were in origin not mere pastimes, but that they were serious attempts to secure in one way or another the help and blessing of the corn-spirit. Thus in some parts of Prussia, at the close of the rye-harvest, a few sheaves used to be left standing in the field after all the rest of the rye had been carted home. These sheaves were then made up into the shape of a man and dressed out in masculine costume, and all the young women were obliged to run a race, of which the corn-man was the goal. She who won the race led off the dancing in the evening.[270] Here the aim of the foot-race among the young women is clearly to secure the corn-spirit embodied in the last sheaf left standing on the field; for, as we shall see later on, the last sheaf is commonly supposed to harbour the corn-spirit and is treated accordingly like a man or a woman.[271]

Date of the Eleusinian games uncertain.

If the Ancestral Contest at the Eleusinian games was, as I have conjectured, a contest between the reapers on the sacred barley-field, we should have to suppose that the games were celebrated at barley-harvest, which in the lowlands of Greece falls in May or even at the end of April. This theory is in harmony with the evidence of the scholiast on Pindar, who tells us that the Eleusinian games were celebrated after the corn-harvest.[272] No other ancient authority, so far as I am aware, mentions at what time of the year these games were held. Modern authorities, arguing from certain slight and to some extent conjectural data, have variously assigned them to Metageitnion (August) and to Boedromion (September), and those who assign them to Boedromion (September) are divided in opinion as to whether they preceded or followed the Mysteries.[273] However, the evidence is far too slender and uncertain to allow of any conclusions being based on it.

Why should games intended to promote the annual growth of the crops be held only every second or fourth year? The Eleusinian Mysteries probably much older than the Eleusinian games.

But there is a serious difficulty in the way of connecting the Eleusinian games with the goddesses of the corn. How is the quadriennial or the biennial period of the games to be reconciled with the annual growth of the crops? Year by year the barley and the wheat are sown and reaped; how then could the games, held only every fourth or every second year, have been regarded as thank-

[268] A. Kuhn und W. Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche* (Leipsic, 1848), pp. 398, 399, 400.

[269] P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipsic, 1903-1906), ii. 70 *sq.*

[270] A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen* (Berlin, 1843), pp. 341 *sq.*

[271] See below, pp. 133 *sqq.*

[272] Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* ix. 150, p. 228, ed. Aug. Boeckh.

[273] The games are assigned to Metageitnion by P. Stengel (Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, v. 2. coll. 2331 *sq.*) and to Boedromion by August Mommsen and W. Dittenberger. The last-mentioned scholar supposes that the games immediately followed the Mysteries, and August Mommsen formerly thought so too, but he afterwards changed his view and preferred to suppose that the games preceded the Mysteries. See Aug. Mommsen, *Heortologie* (Leipsic, 1864), p. 263; *id.*, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipsic, 1898), pp. 182 *sqq.*; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, note 171 (vol. ii. pp. 313 *sq.*). The dating of the games in Metageitnion or in the early part of Boedromion depends on little more than a series of conjectures, particularly the conjectural restoration of an inscription and the conjectural dating of a certain sacrifice to Democracy.

offerings for the annual harvest? On this view of their nature, which is the one taken by the old scholiast on Pindar, though the harvest was received at the hands of the Corn Goddess punctually every year, men thanked her for her bounty only every second year or even only every fourth year. What were her feelings likely to be in the blank years when she got no thanks and no games? She might naturally resent such negligence and ingratitude and punish them by forbidding the seed to sprout, just as she did at Eleusis when she mourned the loss of her daughter. In short, men could hardly expect to reap crops in years in which they offered nothing to the Corn Goddess. That would indeed appear to be the view generally taken by the ancient Greeks; for we have seen that year by year they presented the first-fruits of the barley and the wheat to Demeter, not merely in the solemn state ritual of Eleusis, but also in rustic festivals held by farmers on their threshing-floors. The pious Greek husbandman would no doubt have been shocked and horrified at a proposal to pay the Corn Goddess her dues only every second or fourth year. "No offerings, no crops," he would say to himself, and would anticipate nothing but dearth and famine in any year when he failed to satisfy the just and lawful demands of the divinity on whose good pleasure he believed the growth of the corn to be directly dependent. Accordingly we may regard it as highly probable that from the very beginning of settled and regular agriculture in Greece men annually propitiated the deities of the corn with a ritual of some sort, and rendered them their dues in the shape of offerings of the ripe barley and wheat. Now we know that the Mysteries of Eleusis were celebrated every year, and accordingly, if I am right in interpreting them as essentially a dramatic representation of the annual vicissitudes of the corn performed for the purpose of quickening the seed, it becomes probable that in some form or another they were annually held at Eleusis long before the practice arose of celebrating games there every fourth or every second year. In short, the Eleusinian mysteries were in all probability far older than the Eleusinian games. How old they were we cannot even guess. But when we consider that the cultivation of barley and wheat, the two cereals specially associated with Demeter, appears to have been practised in prehistoric Europe from the Stone Age onwards,[274] we shall be disposed to admit that the annual performance of religious or magical rites at Eleusis for the purpose of ensuring good crops, whether by propitiating the Corn Goddess with offerings of first-fruits or by dramatically representing the sowing and the growth of the corn in mythical form, probably dates from an extremely remote antiquity.

> Quadriennial period of many of the great games of Greece. Old octennial period of the Pythian and probably of the Olympian games. The octennial cycle was instituted by the Greeks at a very early era for the purpose of harmonising solar and lunar time.

But in order to clear our ideas on this subject it is desirable to ascertain, if possible, the reason for holding the Eleusinian games at intervals of two or four years. The reason for holding a harvest festival and thanksgiving every year is obvious enough; but why hold games only every second or every fourth year? The reason for such limitations is by no means obvious on the face of them, especially if the growth of the crops is deemed dependent on the celebration. In order to find an answer to this question it may be well at the outset to confine our attention to the Great Eleusinian Games, which were celebrated only every fourth year. That these were the principal games appears not only from their name, but from the testimony of Aristotle, or at least of the author of *The Constitution of Athens*, who notices only the quadriennial or, as in accordance with Greek idiom he calls it, the penteteric celebration of the games.[275] Now the custom of holding games at intervals of four years was very

[274] A. de Candolle, *Origin of Cultivated Plants* (London, 1884), pp. 354 *sq.*, 367 *sqq.*; R. Munro, *The Lake-dwellings of Europe* (London, Paris, and Melbourne, 1890), pp. 497 *sqq.*; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (Strasburg, 1901), pp. 8 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte* (Jena, 1906-1907), ii. 185 *sqq.*; H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* (Strasburg, 1905-1907), i. 254 *sqq.*, 273 *sq.*, 276 *sqq.*, ii. 640 *sqq.*; M. Much, *Die Heimat der Indogermanen* (Jena and Berlin, 1904), pp. 221 *sqq.*; T. E. Peet, *The Stone and Bronze Ages in Italy and Sicily* (Oxford, 1909), p. 362.

[275] Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 54, where the quadriennial (penteteric) festival of the Eleusinian Games is mentioned along with the quadriennial festivals of the Panathenaica, the Delia, the Brauronia, and the Heraclea. The biennial (trieteric) festival of the

common in Greece; to take only a few conspicuous examples the Olympic games at Olympia, the Pythian games at Delphi, the Panathenaic games at Athens, and the Eleutherian games at Plataea[276] were all celebrated at quadriennial or, as the Greeks called them, penteteric periods; and at a later time when Augustus instituted, or rather renewed on a more splendid scale, the games at Actium to commemorate his great victory, he followed a well-established Greek precedent by ordaining that they should be quadriennial.[277] Still later the emperor Hadrian instituted quadriennial games at Mantinea in honour of his dead favourite Antinous.[278] But in regard to the two greatest of all the Greek games, the Olympian and the Pythian, I have shewn reasons for thinking that they were originally celebrated at intervals of eight instead of four years; certainly this is attested for the Pythian games,[279] and the mode of calculating the Olympiads by alternate periods of fifty and forty-nine lunar months,[280] which added together make up eight solar years, seems to prove that the Olympic cycle of four years was really based on a cycle of eight years, from which it is natural to infer that in the beginning the Olympic, like the Pythian, games may have been octennial instead of quadriennial.[281] Now we know from the testimony of the ancients themselves that the Greeks instituted the eight-years' cycle for the purpose of harmonising solar and lunar time.[282] They regulated their calendar primarily by observation of the moon rather than of the sun; their months were lunar, and their ordinary year consisted of twelve lunar months. But the solar year of three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter days exceeds the lunar year of twelve lunar months or three hundred and fifty-four days by eleven and a quarter days, so that in eight solar years the excess amounts to ninety days or roughly three lunar months. Accordingly the Greeks equated eight solar years to eight lunar years of twelve months each by intercalating three lunar months of thirty days each in the octennial cycle; they intercalated one lunar month in the third year of the cycle, a second lunar month in the fifth year, and a third lunar month in the eighth year.[283] In this way they, so to say, made the sun and moon keep time together by reckoning ninety-nine lunar months as equivalent to eight solar years; so that if, for example, the full moon coincided with the summer solstice in one year, it coincided with it again after the revolution of the eight years' cycle, but not before. The equation was indeed not quite exact, and in order to render it so the Greeks afterwards found themselves obliged, first, to intercalate three days every sixteen years, and, next, to omit one intercalary month in every period of one hundred and sixty years.[284] But these corrections were doubtless refinements of a later age; they may have been due to the astronomer Eudoxus of Cnidus, or to Cleostratus of Tenedos, who were variously, but incorrectly, supposed to have instituted the octennial cycle.[285] There are strong grounds for holding that in its simplest form

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Eleusinian Games is mentioned only in the inscription of 329 b. c. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] No. 587, lines 259 *sq.*). As to the identity of the Great Eleusinian Games with the quadriennial games see Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, No. 246 note 9, No. 587 note 171.

[276] As to the Plataean games see Plutarch, *Aristides*, 21; Pausanias, ix. 2. 6.

[277] Strabo, vii. 7. 6, p. 325; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 18; Dio Cassius, li. 1; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, *s. v.* "Actia."

[278] Pausanias, viii. 9. 8.

[279] Scholiast on Pindar, *Pyth.*, Argument, p. 298, ed. Aug. Boeckh; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 6. According to the scholiast on Pindar (*l. c.*) the change from the octennial to the quadriennial period was occasioned by the nymphs of Parnassus bringing ripe fruits in their hands to Apollo, after he had slain the dragon at Delphi.

[280] Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* iii. 35 (20), p. 98, ed. Aug. Boeckh. Compare Boeckh's commentary on Pindar (vol. iii. p. 138 of his edition); L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 366 *sq.*, ii. 605 *sqq.*

[281] See *The Dying God*, chapter ii. § 4, "Octennial Tenure of the Kingship," especially pp. 68 *sq.*, 80, 89 *sq.*

[282] Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiae*, viii. 25 *sqq.*, pp. 110 *sqq.*, ed. C. Manitius (Leipsic, 1898); Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 2-6.

[283] Geminus, *l. c.*

[284] Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiae*, viii. 36-41.

[285] Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 5. As Eudoxus flourished in the fourth century b. c., some sixty or seventy years after Meton, who introduced the nineteen years' cycle to remedy the defects of the octennial cycle, the claim of Eudoxus to have instituted the latter cycle may at once be put out of court. The claim of Cleostratus, who seems to have lived in the sixth or fifth century b. c., cannot be

the octennial cycle of ninety-nine lunar months dates from an extremely remote antiquity in Greece; that it was in fact, as a well-informed Greek writer tell us,[286] the first systematic attempt to bring solar and the lunar time into harmony. Indeed, if the Olympiads were calculated, as they appear to have been, on the eight years' cycle, this of itself suffices to place the origin of the cycle not later than 776 b. c., the year with which the reckoning by Olympiads begins. And when we bear in mind the very remote period from which, judged by the wonderful remains of Mycenae, Tiryns, Cnossus and other cities, civilisation in Greek lands appears to date, it seems reasonable to suppose that the octennial cycle, based as it was on very simple observations, for which nothing but good eyes and almost no astronomical knowledge was necessary,[287] may have been handed down among the inhabitants of these countries from ages that preceded by many centuries, possibly by thousands of years, the great period of Greek literature and art. The supposition is confirmed by the traces which the octennial cycle has left of itself in certain ancient Greek customs and superstitions, particularly by the evidence which points to the conclusion that at two of the oldest seats of monarchy in Greece, namely Cnossus and Sparta, the king's tenure of office was formerly limited to eight years.[288]

The motive for instituting the eight years' cycle was religious, not practical or scientific.

We are informed, and may readily believe, that the motive which led the Greeks to adopt the eight years' cycle was religious rather than practical or scientific: their aim was not so much to ensure the punctual despatch of business or to solve an abstract problem in astronomy, as to ascertain the exact days on which they ought to sacrifice to the gods. For the Greeks regularly employed lunar months in their reckonings,[289] and accordingly if they had dated their religious festivals simply by the number of the month and the day of the month, the excess of eleven and a quarter days of the solar over the lunar year would have had the effect of causing the festivals gradually to revolve throughout the whole circle of the seasons, so that in time ceremonies which properly belonged to winter would come to be held in summer, and on the contrary ceremonies which were only appropriate to summer would come to be held in winter. To avoid this anomaly, and to ensure that festivals dated by lunar months should fall at fixed or nearly fixed points in the solar year, the Greeks adopted the octennial cycle by the simple expedient of intercalating three lunar months in every period of eight years. In doing so they acted, as one of their writers justly pointed out, on a principle precisely the reverse of that followed by the ancient Egyptians, who deliberately regulated their religious festivals by a purely lunar calendar for the purpose of allowing them gradually to revolve throughout the whole circle of the seasons.[290]

In early times the regulation of the calendar is largely an affair of religion.

Thus at an early stage of culture the regulation of the calendar is largely an affair of religion: it is a means of maintaining the established relations between gods and men on a satisfactory footing; and in public opinion the great evil of a disordered calendar is not so much that it disturbs and disarranges

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dismissed so summarily; but for the reasons given in the text he can hardly have done more than suggest corrections or improvements of the ancient octennial cycle.

[286] Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiae*, viii. 27. With far less probability Censorinus (*De die natali*, xviii. 2-4) supposes that the octennial cycle was produced by the successive duplication of biennial and quadriennial cycles. See below, pp. 86 *sq.*

[287] L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 605.

[288] *The Dying God*, pp. 58 *sqq.* Speaking of the octennial cycle Censorinus observes that "*Ob hoc in Graecia multae religiones hoc intervallo temporis summa caerimonia coluntur*" (*De die natali*, xviii. 6). Compare L. Ideler, *op. cit.* ii. 605 *sq.*; G. F. Unger, "Zeitrechnung der Griechen und Römer," in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i.^{2} 732 *sq.* The great age and the wide diffusion of the octennial cycle in Greece are rightly maintained by A. Schmidt (*Handbuch der griechischen Chronologie*, Jena, 1888, pp. 61 *sqq.*), who suggests that the cycle may have owed something to the astronomy of the Egyptians, with whom the inhabitants of Greece are known to have had relations from a very early time.

[289] Aratus, *Phaenomena*, 733 *sqq.*; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 255 *sq.*

[290] Geminus, *Elementa Astronomiae*, viii. 15-45.

the ordinary course of business and the various transactions of civil life, as that it endangers the welfare or even the existence both of individuals and of the community by interrupting their normal intercourse with those divine powers on whose favour men believe themselves to be absolutely dependent. Hence in states which take this view of the deep religious import of the calendar its superintendence is naturally entrusted to priests rather than to astronomers, because the science of astronomy is regarded merely as ancillary to the deeper mysteries of theology. For example, at Rome the method of determining the months and regulating the festivals was a secret which the pontiffs for ages jealously guarded from the profane vulgar; and in consequence of their ignorance and incapacity the calendar fell into confusion and the festivals were celebrated out of their natural seasons, until the greatest of all the Roman pontiffs, Julius Caesar, remedied the confusion and placed the calendar of the civilised world on the firm foundation on which, with little change, it stands to this day.[291]

The quadriennial period of games and festivals in Greece was probably arrived at by bisecting an older octennial period.

On the whole, then, it appears probable that the octennial cycle, based on considerations of religion and on elementary observations of the two great luminaries, dated from a very remote period among the ancient Greeks; if they did not bring it with them when they migrated southwards from the oakwoods and beechwoods of Central Europe, they may well have taken it over from their civilised predecessors of different blood and different language whom they found leading a settled agricultural life on the lands about the Aegean Sea. Now we have seen reasons to hold that the two most famous of the great Greek games, the Pythian and the Olympian, were both based on the ancient cycle of eight years, and that the quadriennial period at which they were regularly celebrated in historical times was arrived at by a subdivision of the older octennial cycle. It is hardly rash, therefore, to conjecture that the quadriennial period in general, regarded as the normal period for the celebration of great games and festivals, was originally founded on elementary religious and astronomical considerations of the same kind, that is, on a somewhat crude attempt to harmonise the discrepancies of solar and lunar time and thereby to ensure the continued favour of the gods. It is, indeed, certain or probable that some of these quadriennial festivals were celebrated in honour of the dead;[292] but there seems to be nothing in the beliefs or customs of the ancient Greeks concerning the dead which would suggest a quadriennial period as an appropriate one for propitiating the ghosts of the departed. At first sight it is different with the octennial period; for according to Pindar, the souls of the dead who had been purged of their guilt by an abode of eight years in the nether world were born again on earth in the ninth year as glorious kings, athletes, and sages.[293] Now if this belief in the reincarnation of the dead after eight years were primitive, it might certainly furnish an excellent reason for honouring the ghosts of great men at their graves every eight years in order to facilitate their rebirth into the world. Yet the period of eight years thus rigidly applied to the life of disembodied spirits appears too arbitrary and conventional to be really primitive, and we may suspect that in this application it was nothing but an inference drawn from the old octennial cycle, which had been instituted for the purpose of reconciling solar and lunar time. If that was so, it will follow that the quadriennial period of funeral games was, like the similar period of other religious festivals, obtained through the bisection of the octennial cycle, and hence that it was ultimately derived from astronomical considerations rather than from any beliefs touching a quadriennial revolution in the state of the dead. Yet in historical times it may well have happened that these considerations were forgotten, and that games and festivals were instituted at quadriennial intervals, for example at Plataea[294] in honour of the slain, at Actium to

[291] Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i. 15. 9 *sqq.*; Livy, ix. 46. 5; Valerius Maximus, ii. 5. 2; Cicero, *Pro Muraena*, xi. 25; *id.*, *De legibus*, ii. 12. 29; Suetonius, *Divus Iulius*, 40; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 59.

[292] See *The Dying God*, pp. 92 *sqq.*

[293] Plato, *Meno*, p. 81 a-c; Pindar, ed. Aug. Boeckh, vol. iii. pp. 623 *sq.*, Frag. 98. See further *The Dying God*, pp. 69 *sq.*

[294] Plutarch, *Aristides*, 21; Pausanias, ix. 2. 6.

commemorate the great victory, and at Mantinea in honour of Antinous,[295] without any conscious reference to the sun and moon, and merely because that period had from time immemorial been regarded as the proper and normal one for the celebration of certain solemn religious rites.

The reasons for bisecting the old octennial period into two quadriennial periods may have been partly religious, partly political.

If we enquire why the Greeks so often bisected the old octennial period into two quadriennial periods for purposes of religion, the answer can only be conjectural, for no positive information appears to be given us on the subject by ancient writers. Perhaps they thought that eight years was too long a time to elapse between the solemn services, and that it was desirable to propitiate the deities at shorter intervals. But it is possible that political as well as religious motives may have operated to produce the change. We have seen reason to think that at two of the oldest seats of monarchy in Greece, namely Cnossus and Sparta, kings formerly held office for periods of eight years only, after which their sovereignty either terminated or had to be formally renewed. Now with the gradual growth of that democratic sentiment, which ultimately dominated Greek political life, men would become more and more jealous of the kingly power and would seek to restrict it within narrower limits, and one of the most obvious means of doing so was to shorten the king's tenure of office. We know that this was done at Athens, where the dynasty of the Medontids was reduced from the rank of monarchs for life to that of magistrates holding office for ten years only.[296] It is possible that elsewhere the king's reign was cut down from eight years to four years; and if I am right in my explanation of the origin of the Olympic games this political revolution actually took place at Olympia, where the victors in the chariot-race would seem at first to have personated the Sun-god and perhaps held office in the capacity of divine kings during the intervals between successive celebrations of the games.[297] If at Olympia and elsewhere the games were of old primarily contests in which the king had personally to take part for the purpose of attesting his bodily vigour and therefore his capacity for office, the repetition of the test at intervals of four instead of eight years might be regarded as furnishing a better guarantee of the maintenance of the king's efficiency and thereby of the general welfare, which in primitive society is often supposed to be sympathetically bound up with the health and strength of the king.

The biennial period of some Greek games may have been obtained by bisecting the quadriennial period.

But while many of the great Greek games were celebrated at intervals of four years, others, such as the Nemean and the Isthmian, were celebrated at intervals of two years only; and just as the quadriennial period seems to have been arrived at through a bisection of the octennial period, so we may surmise that the biennial period was produced by a bisection of the quadriennial period. This was the view which the admirable modern chronologer L. Ideler took of the origin of the quadriennial and biennial festivals respectively,[298] and it appears far more probable than the contrary opinion of the ancient chronologer Censorinus, that the quadriennial period was reached by doubling the biennial, and the octennial period by doubling the quadriennial.[299] The theory of Censorinus was that the Greeks started with a biennial cycle of twelve and thirteen lunar months alternately in successive years for the purpose of harmonising solar and lunar time.[300] But as the cycle so produced exceeds

[295] See above, p. 80.

[296] Pausanias, iv. 5. 10; compare Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, iii. 1; G. Gilbert, *Handbuch der griechischen Staatsalterthumer*, i.[2] (Leipsic, 1893) pp. 122 *sq.*

[297] See *The Dying God*, pp. 89-92.

[298] L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 606 *sq.*

[299] Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 2-4.

[300] Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 2.

the true solar time by seven and a half days,[301] the discrepancy which it leaves between the two great celestial clocks, the sun and moon, was too glaring to escape the observation even of simple farmers, who would soon have been painfully sensible that the times were out of joint, if they had attempted to regulate the various operations of the agricultural year by reference to so very inaccurate an almanac. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Greeks ever made much use of a biennial cycle of this sort.

Application of the foregoing conclusion to the Eleusinian games.

Now to apply these conclusions to the Eleusinian games, which furnished the starting-point for the preceding discussion. Whatever the origin and meaning of these games may have been, we may surmise that the quadriennial and biennial periods at which they were held were originally derived from astronomical considerations, and that they had nothing to do directly either with the agricultural cycle, which is annual, nor with the worship of the dead, which can scarcely be said to have any cycle at all, unless indeed it be an annual one. In other words, neither the needs of husbandry nor the superstitions relating to ghosts furnish any natural explanation of the quadriennial and biennial periods of the Eleusinian games, and to discover such an explanation we are obliged to fall back on astronomy or, to be more exact, on that blend of astronomy with religion which appears to be mainly responsible for such Greek festivals as exceed a year in their period. To admit this is not to decide the question whether the Eleusinian games were agricultural or funereal in character; but it is implicitly to acknowledge that the games were of later origin than the annual ceremonies, including the Great Mysteries, which were designed to propitiate the deities of the corn for the very simple and practical purpose of ensuring good crops within the year. For it cannot but be that men observed and laid their account with the annual changes of the seasons, especially as manifested by the growth and maturity of the crops, long before they attempted to reconcile the discrepancies of solar and lunar time by a series of observations extending over several years.

Varro on the rites of Eleusis.

On the whole, then, if, ignoring theories, we adhere to the evidence of the ancients themselves in regard to the rites of Eleusis, including under that general term the Great Mysteries, the games, the Festival before Ploughing (*proerosia*), the Festival of the Threshing-floor, the Green Festival, the Festival of the Cornstalks, and the offerings of first-fruits, we shall probably incline to agree with the most learned of ancient antiquaries, the Roman Varro, who, to quote Augustine's report of his opinion, “interpreted the whole of the Eleusinian mysteries as relating to the corn which Ceres (Demeter) had discovered, and to Proserpine (Persephone), whom Pluto had carried off from her. And Proserpine herself, he said, signifies the fecundity of the seeds, the failure of which at a certain time had caused the earth to mourn for barrenness, and therefore had given rise to the opinion that the daughter of Ceres, that is, fecundity itself, had been ravished by Pluto and detained in the nether world; and when the dearth had been publicly mourned and fecundity had returned once more, there was gladness at the return of Proserpine and solemn rites were instituted accordingly. After that he says,” continues Augustine, reporting Varro, “that many things were taught in her mysteries which had no reference but to the discovery of the corn.”[302]

The close resemblance between the artistic types of Demeter and Persephone militates against the theory that the two goddesses personified two things so different as the earth and the corn.

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[301] L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 270.

[302] Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 20. “*In Cereris autem sacris praedicantur illa Eleusinia, quae apud Athenienses nobilissima fuerunt. De quibus iste [Varro] nihil interpretatur, nisi quod attinet ad frumentum, quod Ceres invenit, et ad Proserpinam, quam rapiente Orco perdidit. Et hanc ipsam dicit significare foecunditatem seminum… Dicit deinde multa in mysteriis ejus tradi, quae nisi ad frugum inventionem non pertineant.*”

Thus far I have for the most part assumed an identity of nature between Demeter and Persephone, the divine mother and daughter personifying the corn in its double aspect of the seed-corn of last year and the ripe ears of this, and I pointed out that this view of the substantial unity of mother and daughter is borne out by their portraits in Greek art, which are often so alike as to be indistinguishable. Such a close resemblance between the artistic types of Demeter and Persephone militates decidedly against the view that the two goddesses are mythical embodiments of two things so different and so easily distinguishable from each other as the earth and the vegetation which springs from it. Had Greek artists accepted that view of Demeter and Persephone, they could surely have devised types of them which would have brought out the deep distinction between the goddesses. That they were capable of doing so is proved by the simple fact that they regularly represented the Earth Goddess by a type which differed widely both from that of Demeter and from that of Persephone.[303] Not only so, but they sometimes set the two types of the Earth Goddess and the Corn Goddess (Demeter) side by side as if on purpose to demonstrate their difference. Thus at Patrae there was a sanctuary of Demeter, in which she and Persephone were portrayed standing, while Earth was represented by a seated image;[304] and on a vase-painting the Earth Goddess is seen appropriately emerging from the ground with a horn of plenty and an infant in her uplifted arms, while Demeter and Persephone, scarcely distinguishable from each other, stand at full height behind her, looking down at her half-buried figure, and Triptolemus in his wheeled car sits directly above her.[305] In this instructive picture, accordingly, we see grouped together the principal personages in the myth of the corn: the Earth Goddess, the two Goddesses of the old and the new corn, and the hero who is said to have been sent forth by the Corn Goddess to sow the seed broadcast over the earth. Such representations seem to prove that the artists clearly distinguished Demeter from the Earth Goddess.[306] And if Demeter did not personify the earth, can there be any reasonable doubt that, like her daughter, she personified the corn which was so commonly called by her name from the time of Homer downwards? The essential identity of mother and daughter is suggested, not only by the close resemblance of their artistic types, but also by the official title of "the Two Goddesses" which was regularly applied to them in the great sanctuary at Eleusis without any specification of their individual attributes and titles,[307] as if their separate individualities had almost merged in a single divine substance.[308]

As goddesses of the corn Demeter and Persephone came to be associated with the ideas of death and resurrection.

Surveying the evidence as a whole, we may say that from the myth of Demeter and Persephone, from their ritual, from their representations in art, from the titles which they bore, from the offerings of first-fruits which were presented to them, and from the names applied to the cereals, we are fairly entitled to conclude that in the mind of the ordinary Greek the two goddesses were essentially personifications of the corn, and that in this germ the whole efflorescence of their religion finds implicitly its explanation. But to maintain this is not to deny that in the long course of religious evolution high moral and spiritual conceptions were grafted on this simple original stock and

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[303] A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des classischen Altertums*, i. 577 *sq.*; Drexler, *s. v.* "Gaia," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, i. 1574 *sqq.*; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (Oxford, 1907) p. 27.

[304] Pausanias, vii. 21. 11. At Athens there was a sanctuary of Earth the Nursing-Mother and of Green Demeter (Pausanias, i. 22. 3), but we do not know how the goddesses were represented.

[305] L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 256 with plate xxi. b.

[306] The distinction between Demeter (Ceres) and the Earth Goddess is clearly marked by Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 673 *sq.*:"*Officium commune Ceres et Terra tuentur;Haec praebet causam frugibus, illa locum.*"

[307] Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,[2] Nos. 20, 408, 411, 587, 646, 647, 652, 720, 789. Compare the expression διώνυμοι θέαι applied to them by Euripides, *Phoenissae*, 683, with the Scholiast's note.

[308] The substantial identity of Demeter and Persephone has been recognised by some modern scholars, though their interpretations of the myth do not altogether agree with the one adopted in the text. See F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre* (Göttingen, 1857-1862), ii. 532; L. Preller, in Pauly's *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vi. 106 *sq.*; F. Lenormant, in Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, i. 2. pp. 1047 *sqq.*

blossomed out into fairer flowers than the bloom of the barley and the wheat. Above all, the thought of the seed buried in the earth in order to spring up to new and higher life readily suggested a comparison with human destiny, and strengthened the hope that for man too the grave may be but the beginning of a better and happier existence in some brighter world unknown. This simple and natural reflection seems perfectly sufficient to explain the association of the Corn Goddess at Eleusis with the mystery of death and the hope of a blissful immortality. For that the ancients regarded initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries as a key to unlock the gates of Paradise appears to be proved by the allusions which well-informed writers among them drop to the happiness in store for the initiated hereafter.[309] No doubt it is easy for us to discern the flimsiness of the logical foundation on which such high hopes were built.[310] But drowning men clutch at straws, and we need not wonder that the Greeks, like ourselves, with death before them and a great love of life in their hearts, should not have stopped to weigh with too nice a hand the arguments that told for and against the prospect of human immortality. The reasoning that satisfied Saint Paul[311] and has brought comfort to untold thousands of sorrowing Christians, standing by the deathbed or the open grave of their loved ones, was good enough to pass muster with ancient pagans, when they too bowed their heads under the burden of grief, and, with the taper of life burning low in the socket, looked forward into the darkness of the unknown. Therefore we do no indignity to the myth of Demeter and Persephone – one of the few myths in which the sunshine and clarity of the Greek genius are crossed by the shadow and mystery of death – when we trace its origin to some of the most familiar, yet eternally affecting aspects of nature, to the melancholy gloom and decay of autumn and to the freshness, the brightness, and the verdure of spring.

[309] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 480 *sqq.*; Pindar, quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* iii. 3. 17, p. 518, ed. Potter; Sophocles, quoted by Plutarch, *De audiendis poetis*, 4; Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 6; Cicero, *De legibus*, ii. 14. 36; Aristides, *Eleusin.* vol. i. p. 421, ed. G. Dindorf.

[310] A learned German professor has thought it worth while to break the poor butterfly argument on the wheel of his inflexible logic. The cruel act, while it proves the hardness of the professor's head, says little for his knowledge of human nature, which does not always act in strict accordance with the impulse of the syllogistic machinery. See Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*[3] (Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903), i. 290 *sqq.*

[311] 1 Corinthians xv. 35 *sqq.*

Chapter III. Magical Significance of Games in Primitive Agriculture

Games played as magical ceremonies to promote the growth of the crops. The Kayans of central Borneo, a primitive agricultural people. The sacred rice-fields (*luma lali*) on which all religious ceremonies requisite for agriculture are performed.

In the preceding chapter we saw that among the rites of Eleusis were comprised certain athletic sports, such as foot-races, horse-races, leaping, wrestling, and boxing, the victors in which were rewarded with measures of barley distributed among them by the priests.[312] These sports the ancients themselves associated with the worship of Demeter and Persephone, the goddesses of the corn, and strange as such an association may seem to us, it is not without its analogy among the harvest customs of modern European peasantry.[313] But to discover clear cases of games practised for the express purpose of promoting the growth of the crops, we must turn to more primitive agricultural communities than the Athenians of classical antiquity or the peoples of modern Europe. Such communities may be found at the present day among the savage tribes of Borneo and New Guinea, who subsist mainly by tilling the ground. Among them we take the Kayans or Bahaus of central Borneo as typical. They are essentially an agricultural people, and devote themselves mainly to the cultivation of rice, which furnishes their staple food; all other products of the ground are of subordinate importance. Hence agriculture, we are told, dominates the whole life of these tribes: their year is the year of the cultivation of the rice, and they divide it into various periods which are determined by the conditions necessary for the tilling of the fields and the manipulation of the rice. "In tribes whose thoughts are so much engrossed by agriculture it is no wonder that they associate with it their ideas of the powers which rule them for good or evil. The spirit-world stands in close connexion with the agriculture of the Bahaus; without the consent of the spirits no work in the fields may be undertaken. Moreover, all the great popular festivals coincide with the different periods of the cultivation of the rice. As the people are in an unusual state of affluence after harvest, all family festivals which require a large outlay are for practical reasons deferred till the New Year festival at the end of harvest. The two mighty spirits Amei Awi and his wife Buring Une, who, according to the belief of the Kayans, live in a world under ground, dominate the whole of the tillage and determine the issue of the harvest in great measure by the behaviour of the owner of the land, not so much by his moral conduct, as by the offerings he has made to the spirits and the attention he has paid to their warnings. An important part in agriculture falls to the chief: at the festivals he has, in the name of the whole tribe, to see to it that the prescribed conjurations are carried out by the priestesses. All religious ceremonies required for the cultivation of the ground take place in a small rice-field specially set apart for that purpose, called *luma lali*: here the chief's family ushers in every fresh operation in the cultivation of the rice, such as sowing, hoeing, and reaping: the solemn actions there performed have a symbolical significance."[314]

Ceremonies observed at the sowing festival. Taboos observed at the sowing festival.

Not only the chief's family among the Kayans has such a consecrated field; every family possesses one of its own. These little fields are never cultivated for the sake of their produce: they serve only as the scene of religious ceremonies and of those symbolical operations of agriculture

[312] See above, p. 71, with the footnote 5.

[313] See above, pp. 74 *sqq.*

[314] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 156 *sq.*

which are afterwards performed in earnest on the real rice-fields.[315] For example, at the festival before sowing a priestess sows some rice on the consecrated field of the chief's family and then calls on a number of young men and girls to complete the work; the young men then dig holes in the ground with digging-sticks, and the girls come behind them and plant the rice-seed in the holes. Afterwards the priestesses lay offerings of food, wrapt in banana-leaves, here and there on the holy field, while they croon prayers to the spirits in soft tones, which are half drowned in the clashing music of the gongs. On another day women gather all kinds of edible leaves in their gardens and fields, boil them in water, and then sprinkle the water on the consecrated rice-field. But on that and other days of the festival the people attend also to their own wants, banqueting on a favourite species of rice and other dainties. The ceremonies connected with sowing last several weeks, and during this time certain taboos have to be observed by the people. Thus on the first day of the festival the whole population, except the very old and the very young, must refrain from bathing; after that there follows a period of rest for eight nights, during which the people may neither work nor hold intercourse with their neighbours. On the tenth day the prohibition to bathe is again enforced; and during the eight following days the great rice-field of the village, where the real crops are raised, is sowed.[316] The reason for excluding strangers from the village at these times is a religious one. It is a fear lest the presence of strangers might frighten the spirits or put them in a bad humour, and so defeat the object of the ceremony; for, while the religious ceremonies which accompany the cultivation of the rice differ somewhat from each other in different tribes, the ideas at the bottom of them, we are told, are everywhere the same: the aim always is to appease and propitiate the souls of the rice and the other spirits by sacrifices of all sorts.[317]

Games played at the sowing festival. Masquerade at the sowing festival.

However, during this obligatory period of seclusion and rest the Kayans employ themselves in various pursuits, which, though at first sight they might seem to serve no other purpose than that of recreation, have really in the minds of the people a much deeper significance. For example, at this time the men often play at spinning tops. The tops are smooth, flat pieces of wood weighing several pounds. Each man tries to spin his own top so that it knocks down those of his neighbours and continues itself to revolve triumphantly. New tops are commonly carved for the festival. The older men sometimes use heavy tops of iron-wood. Again, every evening the young men assemble in the open space before the chief's house and engage in contests of strength and agility, while the women watch them from the long gallery or verandah of the house. Another popular pastime during the festival of sowing is a masquerade. It takes place on the evening of the tenth day, the day on which, for the second time, the people are forbidden to bathe. The scene of the performance is again the open space in front of the chief's house. As the day draws towards evening, the villagers begin to assemble in the gallery or verandah of the house in order to secure good places for viewing the masquerade. All the maskers at these ceremonies represent evil spirits. The men wear ugly wooden masks on their faces, and their bodies are swathed in masses of slit banana leaves so as to imitate the hideous faces and hairy bodies of the demons. The young women wear on their heads cylindrical baskets, which conceal their real features, while they exhibit to the spectators grotesque human faces formed by stitches on pieces of white cotton, which are fastened to the baskets. On the occasion when Dr. Nieuwenhuis witnessed the ceremony, the first to appear on the scene were some men wearing wooden masks and helmets and so thickly wrapt in banana leaves that they looked like moving masses of green foliage. They danced silently, keeping time to the beat of the gongs. They were followed by

[315] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 164.

[316] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 164-167.

[317] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 163. The motive assigned for the exclusion of strangers at the sowing festival applies equally to all religious rites. "In all religious observances," says Dr. Nieuwenhuis, "the Kayans fear the presence of strangers, because these latter might frighten and annoy the spirits which are invoked." On the periods of seclusion and quiet observed in connexion with agriculture by the Kayans of Sarawak, see W. H. Furness, *Home-life of Borneo Head-hunters* (Philadelphia, 1902), pp. 160 *sqq.*

other figures, some of whom executed war-dances; but the weight of their leafy envelope was such that they soon grew tired, and though they leaped high, they uttered none of the wild war-whoops which usually accompany these martial exercises. When darkness fell, the dances ceased and were replaced by a little drama representing a boar brought to bay by a pack of hounds. The part of the boar was played by an actor wearing a wooden boar's head mask, who ran about on all fours and grunted in a life-like manner, while the hounds, acted by young men, snarled, yelped, and made dashes at him. The play was watched with lively interest and peals of laughter by the spectators. Later in the evening eight disguised girls danced, one behind the other, with slow steps and waving arms, to the glimmering light of torches and the strains of a sort of jew's harp.[318]

Rites at hoeing.

The rites which accompany the sowing of the fields are no sooner over than those which usher in the hoeing begin. Like the sowing ceremonies, they are inaugurated by a priestess, who hoes the sacred field round about a sacrificial stage and then calls upon other people to complete the work. After that the holy field is again sprinkled with a decoction of herbs.[319]

The Kayan New Year festival. Offerings and addresses to the spirits. Sacrifice of pigs.

But the crowning point of the Kayan year is the New Year festival. The harvest has then been fully housed: abundance reigns in every family, and for eight days the people, dressed out in all their finery, give themselves up to mirth and jollity. The festival was witnessed by the Dutch explorer Dr. Nieuwenhuis. To lure the good spirits from the spirit land baskets filled with precious objects were set out before the windows, and the priestesses made long speeches, in which they invited these beneficent beings to come to the chief's house and to stay there during the whole of the ceremonies. Two days afterwards one of the priestesses harangued the spirits for three-quarters of an hour, telling them who the Kayans were, from whom the chief's family was descended, what the tribe was doing, and what were its wishes, not forgetting to implore the vengeance of the spirits on the Batang-Lupars, the hereditary foes of the Kayans. The harangue was couched in rhyming verse and delivered in sing-song tones. Five days later eight priestesses ascended a sacrificial stage, on which food was daily set forth for the spirits. There they joined hands and crooned another long address to the spirits, marking the time with their hands. Then a basket containing offerings of food was handed up to them, and one of the priestesses opened it and invited the spirits to enter the basket. When they were supposed to have done so, the lid was shut down on them, and the basket with the spirits in it was conveyed into the chief's house. As the priestesses in the performance of the sacred ceremonies might not touch the ground, planks were cut from a fruit-tree and laid on the ground for them to step on. But the great feature of the New Year festival is the sacrifice of pigs, of which the spiritual essence is appropriately offered to the spirits, while their material substance is consumed by the worshippers. In carrying out this highly satisfactory arrangement, while the live pigs lay tethered in a row on the ground, the priestesses danced solemnly round a sacrificial stage, each of them arrayed in a war-mantle of panther-skin and wearing a war-cap on her head, and on either side two priests armed with swords executed war dances for the purpose of scaring away evil spirits. By their gesticulations the priestesses indicated to the powers above that the pigs were intended for their benefit. One of them, a fat but dignified lady, dancing composedly, seemed by her courteous gestures to invite the souls of the pigs to ascend up to heaven; but others, not content with this too ideal offering, rushed at the pigs, seized the smallest of them by the hind legs, and exerting all their strength danced with the squealing porker to and from the sacrificial stage. In the evening, before darkness fell, the animals were slaughtered and their livers examined for omens: if the under side of the liver was pale, the

[318] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 167-169.

[319] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 169.

omen was good; but if it was dark, the omen was evil. On the last day of the festival one of the chief priestesses, in martial array, danced round the sacrificial stage, making passes with her old sword as if she would heave the whole structure heavenward; while others stabbed with spears at the foul fiends that might be hovering in the air, intent on disturbing the sacred ministers at their holy work.[320]

Dr. Nieuwenhuis on the games played by the Kayans in connexion with agriculture.

"Thus," says Dr. Nieuwenhuis, reviewing the agricultural rites which he witnessed among the Kayans on the Mendalam river, "every fresh operation on the rice-field was ushered in by religious and culinary ceremonies, during which the community had always to observe taboos for several nights and to play certain definite games. As we saw, spinning-top games and masquerades were played during the sowing festival: at the first bringing in of the rice the people pelted each other with clay pellets discharged from small pea-shooters, but in former times sham fights took place with wooden swords; while during the New Year festival the men contend with each other in wrestling, high leaps, long leaps, and running. The women also fight each other with great glee, using bamboo vessels full of water for their principal weapons."[321]

Serious religious or magical significance of the games.

What is the meaning of the sports and pastimes which custom prescribes to the Kayans on these occasions? Are they mere diversions meant to while away the tedium of the holidays? or have they a serious, perhaps a religious or magical significance? To this question it will be well to let Dr. Nieuwenhuis give his answer. "The Kayans on the Mendalam river," he says, "enjoy tolerably regular harvests, and their agricultural festivals accordingly take place every year; whereas the Kayans on the Mahakam river, on account of the frequent failure of the harvests, can celebrate a New Year's festival only once in every two or three years. Yet although these festivities are celebrated more regularly on the Mendalam river, they are followed on the Mahakam river with livelier interest, and the meaning of all ceremonies and games can also be traced much better there. On the Mendalam river I came to the false conclusion that the popular games which take place at the festivals are undertaken quite arbitrarily at the seasons of sowing and harvest; but on the Mahakam river, on the contrary, I observed that even the masquerade at the sowing festival is invested with as deep a significance as any of the ceremonies performed by the priestesses."[322]

"The influence of religious worship, which dominates the whole life of the Dyak tribes, manifests itself also in their games. This holds good chiefly of pastimes in which all adults take part together, mostly on definite occasions; it is less applicable to more individual pastimes which are not restricted to any special season. Pastimes of the former sort are very rarely indulged in at ordinary times, and properly speaking they attain their full significance only on the occasion of the agricultural festivals which bear a strictly religious stamp. Even then the recreations are not left to choice, but definite games belong to definite festivals; thus at the sowing festivals other amusements are in vogue than at the little harvest festival or the great harvest festival at the beginning of the reaping, and at the New Year festival… Is this connexion between festivals and games merely an accidental one, or is it based on a real affinity? The latter seems to me the more probable view, for in the case of one of the most important games played by men I was able to prove directly a religious significance; and although I failed to do so in the case of the others, I conjecture, nevertheless, that a religious idea lies at the bottom of all other games which are connected with definite festivals."[323]

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[320] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, i. 171-182.

[321] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 169 *sq.*

[322] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *op. cit.* i. 163 *sq.*

[323] A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo*, ii. 130 *sq.* The game as to the religious significance of which Dr. Nieuwenhuis has no doubt is the masquerade performed by the Kayans of the Mahakam river, where disguised men personate spirits and pretend to draw

The Kai, an agricultural people of German New Guinea. Superstitious practices observed by the Kai for the good of the crops.

If the reader should entertain any doubt on the subject, and should suspect that in arriving at this conclusion the Dutch traveller gave the reins to his fancy rather than followed the real opinion of the people, these doubts and suspicions will probably be dispelled by comparing the similar games which another primitive agricultural people avowedly play for the purpose of ensuring good crops. The people in question are the Kai of German New Guinea, who inhabit the rugged, densely wooded mountains inland from Finsch Harbour. They subsist mainly on the produce of the taro and yams which they cultivate in their fields, though the more inland people also make much use of sweet potatoes. All their crops are root crops. No patch of ground is cultivated for more than a year at a time. As soon as it has yielded a crop, it is deserted for another and is quickly overgrown with rank weeds, bamboos, and bushes. In six or eight years, when the undergrowth has died out under the shadow of the taller trees which have shot up, the land may again be cleared and brought under cultivation. Thus the area of cultivation shifts from year to year; and the villages are not much more permanent; for in the damp tropical climate the wooden houses soon rot and fall into ruins, and when this happens the site of the village is changed.[324] To procure good crops of the taro and yams, on which they depend for their subsistence, the Kai resort to many superstitious practices. For example, in order to make the yams strike deep roots, they touch the shoots with the bone of a wild animal that has been killed in the recesses of a cave, imagining that just as the creature penetrated deep into the earth, so the shoots that have been touched with its bone will descend deep into the ground. And in order that the taro may bear large and heavy fruit, they place the shoots, before planting them, on a large and heavy block of stone, believing that the stone will communicate its valuable properties of size and weight to the future fruit. Moreover, great use is made of spells and incantations to promote the growth of the crops, and all persons who utter such magical formulas for this purpose have to abstain from eating certain foods until the plants have sprouted and give promise of a good crop. For example, they may not eat young bamboo shoots, which are a favourite article of diet with the people. The reason is that the young shoots are covered with fine prickles, which cause itching and irritation of the skin; from which the Kai infer that if an enchanter of field fruits were to eat bamboo shoots, the contagion of their prickles would be conveyed through him to the fruits and would manifest itself in a pungent disagreeable flavour. For a similar reason no charmer of the crops who knows his business would dream of eating crabs, because he is well aware that if he were to do so the leaves and stalks of the plants would be dashed in pieces by a pelting rain, just like the long thin brittle legs of a dead crab. Again, were such an enchanter to eat any of the edible kinds of locusts, it seems obvious to the Kai that locusts would devour the crops over which the imprudent wizard had recited his spells. Above all, people who are concerned in planting fields must on no account eat pork; because pigs, whether wild or tame, are the most deadly enemies of the crops, which they grub up and destroy; from which it follows, as surely as the night does the day, that if you eat pork while you are at work on the farm, your fields will be devastated by inroads of pigs.[325]

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home the souls of the rice from the far countries to which they may have wandered. See below, pp. 186 *sq.*

[324] Ch. Keysser, "Aus dem Leben der Kaileute," in R. Neuhauss, *Deutsch Neu-Guinea*, iii. (Berlin, 1911) pp. 3, 9 *sq.*, 12 *sq.*

[325] Ch. Keysser, *op. cit.* pp. 123-125.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.