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# Greek Religion A Sourcebook

Valerie M. Warrior

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Cover: Macron Vasepainter. Young man pouring a libation on an altar. Center medallion of a red-figured cup (around 480 BCE) Inv. G 149. Location: Louvre, Paris, France. Photo Credit: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY. Background image © istockphoto / Peter Zelei.

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were burnt, nourishing Hephaestus' flame, we bedded Wealth down in the customary manner. Then each of us arranged our bedding. The temple servant put out the lamps and told us all to go to sleep, And, if anyone heard a noise, 670 we were to keep quiet, and so we all lay there properly. I looked up and saw the priest [of Asclepius] snatching the pastries and the figs from the sacred table. After that he went around all the altars. to see if there were any leftover cakes. 680 Then he consecrated all of them into a sack. Then the god went around, examining everyone's ailments in due order. Then his assistant brought him 710 a stone mortar, a pestle, and a box Next he sat beside Wealth. and first he felt his head, then he took clean gauze and wiped around his eyes. Panacea 730 covered his head with a crimson cloth. and also his entire face.<sup>36</sup> Then the god whistled. Two snakes darted out of the temple, extraordinarily large ones.... They slipped silently under the crimson cloth 735 and licked Wealth's eyelids, I guess. And sooner than you could drink ten goblets of wine Wealth stood up and could see. I clapped my hands for joy and woke my master. The god immediately 740 disappeared into the temple, and the snakes too. You can imagine how those lying beside him congratulated him and stayed awake the whole night long until daylight came.

# **FESTIVALS**

7.1 HOMERIC HYMN TO APOLLO 146–155.

But you, Phoebus, take the greatest delight in your heart for Delos, where Ionians with long flowing robes gather together with their children and their revered wives. And remembering you with boxing and dancing and song, they delight you whenever they hold their contest.

. . . .

For he would see the grace of all and would take pleasure in his heart seeing the men and the women with their beautiful sashes, and their swift ships, and many possessions.

**7.2** ARISTOTLE, *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS* 8.9.5. ...the members of a tribe or deme come together to perform sacrifices and hold festivals at these sacrifices, paying honor to the gods and providing a pleasurable respite for themselves.

The main function of a festival was to honor and please the gods, who were thought to enjoy the same kind of entertainment as humans. A festival generally began with a procession and culminated in a sacrifice and a communal feast. Also included in many festivals were competitions in music, dancing, poetry, performances of tragedies and comedies, and a wide range of strenuous athletic contests.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Panacea*: a daughter of Asclepius; her name means "the healer of all."

<sup>1</sup> Delos: an island in the Aegean Sea, the birthplace of Apollo.

<sup>2</sup> These festivals are often referred to as agonistic, from the Greek agon, contest.

# Organization and regulation

Organizing a festival involved considerable preparation and expense. A midfourth century BCE inscription from Eretria on the island of Euboea gives the regulations for the celebration of the Artemisia, the most important of all Eretrian festivals, in honor of Artemis. Also included is the cost of the various prizes.

7.3 RO no. 73, lines 1–45.3 Execestus, son of Diodorus, proposed: so that we may celebrate the Artemisia as splendidly as possible and that as many people as possible may participate in the sacrifice, the council and people have passed this resolution. The city is to arrange a competition (*agon*) in music with a budget of 1000 drachmas to the Moderator and Guardian [Artemis] and, for five days before the Artemisia, provide lambs, of which two should be choice animals.

The 27<sup>th</sup> of the month *Anthesterion* is to be the first day of the music festival, the music competition is to be for rhapsodes, singers to the pipes, lyre players, singers accompanying themselves on the lyre, and singers of parodies.<sup>4</sup> The competitors in the musical contest are also to compete in the processional hymn accompanying the sacrifice in the courtyard, using the performance equipment they employ in the contest.

Prizes are to be given as follows:<sup>5</sup> to the rhapsode 120 [drachmas], to the second 50, to the third 20; to the boy singer to the pipes 50, to the second 30, to the third 20; to the adult-lyre-player 110, to the second 70, to the third 55; to the singer accompanying himself on the lyre 200, to the second 150, to the third 100; to the singer of parodies 50, to the second 10.

Provisions are to be given to the competitors who are present: a drachma a day for each of them, beginning not more than three days before the pre-competition event and continuing until the competition takes place.

Let the demarchs arrange the competition in the fairest way possible, and let them punish according to the law anyone who behaves irregularly.<sup>6</sup>

The districts are to provide choice victims, an ox each year, and the districts are to contribute in regard to the choice victims as at the festival of Hera.

Those who provide the choice victims are to receive the victims' skins.

The officials in charge of the sanctuaries are to judge the victims according to law. If one of the districts does not send its quota, that provision must be put up for bid.

In the sanctuary, any one who wishes may sell whatever he wants, without tax and without paying any duty; the *hieropoioi* are not to tax the sellers.<sup>7</sup>

The demarchs are to draw up the procession in the market-place, where the sacrificial animals are sold: public victims with the most splendid one first, then choice victims, then victims provided by private individuals who wish to take part in the procession.

Let all the competitors in the music contest take part in the procession to ensure that the procession and the sacrifice are as splendid as possible.

The decree shall be written up on a stone stele and stand in the sanctuary of Artemis, to insure that the sacrifice and musical festival for Artemis shall be celebrated in this way for all time, as long as the Eretrian people are free and prosper and have self-government.

The geographer Strabo (late first century BCE-early first century CE) describes the military display that was part of the procession when the Eretrians were at the height of their power.

7.4 STRABO 10.1.10. The power that the Eretrians once had is indicated by a pillar they set up in the temple of Artemis Amarythia. The inscription said that there were three thousand heavy-armed soldiers, six hundred horsemen, and sixty chariots in the procession.

An inscription from Magnesia on the Maeander in Asia Minor records regulations for the organization of a festival in honor of Zeus Sosipolis (Protector of the City), instituted after 185/4 BCE. The regulations deal with details of the procession and the duties of the civic official before and after the sacrifice and preparations for the ritual of theoxenia (hosting the gods), in which food was set before the gods' statues.

7.5 NGSL pages 97–99, lines 32–64.8 The current stephanophoros, together with the priest and the priestess of Artemis Leucophryne, shall lead the procession on the twelfth of the month Artemision9 and sacrifice the bull which has been displayed. The gerousia (senate), priests, magistrates

<sup>3</sup> RO no. 73 is number 73 in Rhodes and Osborne 2003, a collection of Greek historical inscriptions more widely available than earlier publications. For each inscription RO provide a full Greek text, often revised on the basis of new evidence, together with citations of earlier publications, an English translation, and commentary.

<sup>4</sup> *Anthesterion*: a month in the Athenian calendar which fell in spring. At this time the Eretrians were under Athenian domination. *rhapsodes*: bards, poetic performers. *parodies*: parodies of Homer that were performed by one individual.

<sup>5</sup> *Prizes*: The total of these prizes exceeds the budget stipulated in lines 5–6. Cash prizes were the normal practice, contrasting with the crowns of foliage awarded to the victors at the games held at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and the Isthmus.

<sup>6</sup> demarchs: officials elected by the people (demos).

<sup>7</sup> *hieropoioi*: managers of the sacred rites, one of whose tasks was to see that the victims were perfect.

<sup>8</sup> NGSL is Lupu 2005, a collection of inscriptions recording Greek sacred laws that is more widely available than earlier publications of these inscriptions. NGSL provides a full Greek text, often emended, together with citations of earlier publications, an English translation, and commentary. I have used Lupu's Greek text in making my translation.

<sup>9</sup> *stephanophoros*: the title of an official who had the right to wear a crown. *the month Artemision*: probably around springtime.

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both elected and allotted, ephebes, young men, boys, and winners at the Leucophryena and other crown competitions shall march in the procession. The *stephanophoros* shall lead the procession, carrying the wooden images of all twelve gods in their most beautiful garments; he shall fix a *tholos* in the *agora* (market-place) near the altar of the twelve gods, spread out three couches, as beautiful as possible, and provide for musical entertainment a flute-player, a syrinx-player, and a cithara-player.<sup>10</sup>

On the twelfth of the month Artemision, the *oikonomoi* shall produce three victims, "which they will sacrifice to Zeus Sosipolis, Artemis Leukophryene, and Pythian Apollo: a ram as beautiful as possible to [Zeus], a goat to Artemis, and a he-goat to Apollo. They shall sacrifice to Zeus on the altar of Zeus Sosipolis, and to Artemis and Apollo on the altar of Artemis. The priests of these gods shall receive their customary perquisites. When they sacrifice the bull, they shall distribute its meat among the participants in the procession; as for the ram, the goat, and the he-goat, they shall distribute them to the *stephanophoros*, the priestess, the *polemarchoi*, the *prohedroi*, the *neopoiai*, the *euthynoi*, and those performing services. The *oikonomoi* shall make these distributions. "When the bull has been consecrated, the *oikonomoi* shall let out a contract for it to be reared by the contractor. The contractor will lead the bull to the market place and obtain what is necessary for its nurture from the grain sellers and the other merchants, and it will preferable if they give [this stuff].

Most city states had their own distinctive festival calendar, of which the best known is the Athenian, also known as Attic because the various districts or demes of Attica adhered to it. The calendar year began in mid-summer with the month Hekatombaion, in which the Panathenaea, the greatest festival of the year, was celebrated. The twelve Attic months are as follows, noting only those festivals that are mentioned in this book.<sup>13</sup>

 $\label{thm:lambda} \textit{Hekatombaion}, \ \mathsf{mid}\text{-}\mathsf{summer} \ (\mathsf{late\ June-late\ July}) \text{: Panathenaea}.$ 

Metageitnion, summer (late July-late August)

Boedromion, autumn (late August-late September): Eleusinian

Pyanepsion, autumn (late September–late October): Thesmophoria Maimakterion, winter (late October–late November)

Poseideon, winter (late November-late December): Rural Dionysia

Gamelion, winter (late December-late January): Lenaea

Anthesterion, spring (late January-late February): Anthesteria

Elaphophebolion, spring (late February-late March): City or Great Dionysia

Mounychion, spring (late March-late April)

Thargelion, summer (late April-late May): Bendidia

Skiraphorion, summer (late May-late June)

The following excerpt from a local calendar for the Attic deme of Thorikos (ca. 380–375 BCE) gives specifications for the sacrificial offerings to be made at local festivals in various months of the Athenian calendar.

**7.6** *NGSL* pages 117–119, lines 10–35. [In *Metageitnion*:] for Zeus Kataibates in the sacred enclosure near the Delphinion a full-grown victim, to be sold. An oath victim is to be provided for the scrutineers (*euthunai*).<sup>14</sup>

In *Boedromion*: the Prerosia; for Zeus Polieus, a choice sheep, a choice piglet, at/to Automenai (?) a purchased piglet to be entirely burnt.<sup>15</sup> The priest shall provide a meal for the attendant; for Cephalus, a choice sheep; for Procris, a table; for Thorikos, a choice sheep; for the Heroines of Thorikos, a table; to Sounion, for Poseidon, a choice lamb; for Apollo, a choice young he-goat; for Kourotrophos, a choice female piglet; for Demeter, a full-grown victim, for Zeus Herkeios, a full-grown victim, for Kourotrophos a piglet, for Athena, a sheep, to be sold; at the salt works, for Poseidon, a full-grown victim, for Apollo, a piglet.<sup>16</sup>

In *Pyanopsion*: for Zeus Kataibates, on the land of the Philomelidae, a full-grown victim, to be sold, on the sixteenth; (?) for Neanias, a full-grown victim, at the Pyanopsia...<sup>17</sup>

In *Maimakterion*: for Thorikos, a bovine costing between 40 and 50 drachmas;<sup>18</sup> for the Heroines of Thorikos, a table...

In Posideion: the Dionysia.

In Gamelion: for Hera, at the Hieros Gamos...<sup>19</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *tholos*: a round or circular building. The verb "fix" suggests the demarcation of an area, perhaps for a tent. *three couches*: for the statues of Zeus, Artemis, and Apollo, the recipients of the sacrifice, as indicated in the next several lines.

<sup>11</sup> oikonomoi: civic, not religious, officials.

<sup>12</sup> polemarchoi, prohedroi, neopoiai, euthynoi, oikonomoi: various civic officials.

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Parke 1977: 26-27 and Simon 1983: 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Pyanopsion.... Pyanopsia*: an alternate spelling of Pyanepsion, the Attic month, and Pyanepsia, a festival held in that month. *Kataibates*: the one who descends, with lightning and thunderbolts. Places struck by lightning were dedicated to Zeus Kataibates. *oath-victim*: a victim sacrificed when an oath was sworn.

<sup>15</sup> Prerosia: a pre-plowing offering. Zeus Polieus: Zeus protector of the city.

<sup>16</sup> Cephalus, Procris: local heroes who were man and wife. a table: for various offerings, a lesser gift than those offered to the male deities or heroes. Thorikos: the eponymous hero of the deme; little is known of him. Sounion: the promontory on the southeast tip of the Attic coast, where there are the remains of a temple to Poseidon. Zeus Herkeios: Zeus of the enclosure or home. Kourotrophos: Nurturer of the Young, an epithet of Demeter.

<sup>17</sup> Neanias: Young Man.

<sup>18</sup> Parke 1977: 48 estimates the average wage of an Athenian in the mid-fourth century BCE to be between a one and a half and two drachmas.

<sup>19</sup> Hieros Gamos: Sacred Marriage, between Zeus and Hera.

In *Anthesterion*: for Dionysus, on the twelfth, a tawny or [black] goat that does not yet have its age-marking teeth; at the Diasia, for Zeus Meilichios,<sup>20</sup> a sheep to be sold.

### The Anthesteria

The Anthesteria, one of the earliest attested Greek festivals, was celebrated in communities throughout the Greek world at the beginning of spring in honor of Dionysus as the god of wine.<sup>21</sup>

Most of the meager and often obscure literary sources refer to the Athenian celebration of the Anthesteria in the month of *Anthesterion*, roughly the end of February.<sup>22</sup> The Athenian historian Thucydides notes that this "more ancient Dionysia" was celebrated in the sanctuary of Dionysus of the Marshes, thus distinguishing it from the City Dionysia in *Elaphaboleion* as well as from the Rural Dionysia in *Poseideon*.<sup>23</sup>

7.7 THUCYDIDES 2.15. The sanctuaries that are outside the acropolis are located more in that quarter of the city (at the foot of the acropolis to the south), namely those of Olympian Zeus, of Pythian Apollo, and of Dionysus of the Marshes, in whose honor is celebrated the more ancient Dionysia in the month of *Anthesterion*, on the twelfth day, a custom maintained even today by the Ionian descendants of the Athenians.<sup>24</sup>

The three parts of the Anthesteria were named respectively the *Pithoigia* for the opening of the large clay jars (*pithoi*) containing the new vintage that had been fermenting since the autumn; the *Choes* (Pitchers or Jugs) for the drinking vessels containing wine; and the *Chytroi* (Pots) for the cooking vessels in which were cooked seeds or grains, and vegetable bran flavored with honey.

The first two parts of the festival focused on Dionysus as the god of wine. At the *Pithoigia*, people came together from the vineyards of Attica—farmers, laborers, and slaves alike—bringing large clay jars on carts. The *pithoi* of new wine were probably opened at sundown on the eleventh of Anthesterion. At the same time the temple of Dionysus, which was normally closed

- 20 Zeus Meilichios, Zeus the Gentle
- 21 *Anthesteria*: the name derives from the Greek *anthos*, flower, although what is known of the festival itself seems to have little connection with flowers, beyond the fact that it was held at the beginning of spring.
- 22 It is generally assumed that the Anthesteria extended over three days, the eleventh through thirteenth. Hamilton 1992: 5-62, however, examines the ancient literary testimony for the Choes festival in detail, questioning its three-day extent and connection with the celebration of a *hieros gamos* with Dionysus.
- 23 City Dionysia: see Athenian drama festivals in Chapter 8.
- 24 *Dionysus in the Marshes*: the exact location of this temple is problematic, see Parke 1977: 108. *Ionians*: the inhabitants of the Greek cities of the coastal area of Asia Minor, who claimed descent from the legendary Ion, a son of Apollo. The Athenian claim to be the mother-city of all Ionians is false, as Herodotus (1.146) shows.



Figure 7.1. This scene from a large red-figure vase (stamnos, c. 450 BCE) depicts women gathered about an image of the god Dionysus that is set up in front of a table. The idol consists of a mask, hung on a pole, with drapery that is held in place with large pins, thus suggesting a makeshift image. On each shoulder is a large disk and the mask is decorated with garlands of ivy. Offerings of cakes or loaves lie on the table between two stamnoi. On the far left, a woman plays the double flute. To the right of the table, a woman ladles wine into a cup. The other women move gracefully, holding wine cups. It is disputed which Dionysiac ceremony is depicted. Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

throughout the year, would have been opened, remaining so until sundown on the following day, the day of the Pitchers.<sup>25</sup>

**7.8** PLUTARCH, *MORALIA* 655 e. At Athens, the people start the new wine on the eleventh day of the month *Anthesterion*, calling the day *Pithoigia*.

A fragment of Phanodemus, an Atthidographer (chronicler of the early history of Athens) who wrote in the fourth century BCE, describes the celebration.<sup>26</sup>

7.9 PHANODEMUS as quoted in ATHENAEUS, *DEIPNOSOPHISTS* 11.465 a. (*FGrHist*. 325 F 12). Phanodemus says that at the temple of Dionysus of the Marshes, the Athenians bring the new wine from the *pithoi* and mix it for the god; then they take it for themselves. Dionysus was called "of the Marshes" because, on that occasion, the new wine was mixed and drunk with water for the first time.... Then, gladdened by the mixture, they celebrate Dionysus with songs and dancing, as they address him with the names Flowery, Dithyrambus, the Frenzied One, and the Roarer.<sup>27</sup>

A number of late sources, mostly scholia, yield meager information about the festival of the Pitchers (*Choes*). All the temples, with the exception of

<sup>25</sup> There is confusion in the ancient sources about the precise beginning of each festival day, but it is likely that sundown signaled the end of a day and that the evening and night of that day were reckoned as belonging to the new day.

<sup>26</sup> Phanodemus' work only survives in fragments quoted by other authors. The standard reference for these and other fragments from lost works is F. Jacoby, *Die fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin-Leiden 1923–1958 = FGrHist.

<sup>27</sup> Flowery: decorated with a garland or crown (stephanos) of flowers. Dithyrambos: an allusion to the dithyramb, a choral song in honor of Dionysus. the Frenzied One: an allusion to Dionysus as the god of ritual madness or ecstasy (mania). the Roarer: another cult name (Greek Bromios) of Dionysus that is prominent in Euripides' Bacchae.

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that of Dionysus of the Marshes, were closed, no sacrifices could be offered, no business conducted. At the beginning of the day, people would chew the leaves of a species of hawthorn that was thought to ward off ghosts, and the doors of the houses were painted with pitch, indicating that this was a day of pollution. Families celebrated the festival inside the house. Children, mainly boys, are depicted in vase paintings with miniature pitchers. The giving of the first pitcher to a child between the age of three and four was a significant event in family life.

The earliest and probably most reliable source for the *Choes* festival comes from Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (425 BCE), <sup>28</sup> where there is a humorous account of a communal feast, followed by an all-male drinking contest with a prize offered by the state for the one who is the first to drain his pitcher.

### 7.10 ARISTOPHANES, ACHARNIANS 1000-1093.

#### Herald

Attention, people, attention! As our ancestors did, drain your pitchers (choes) 1000

at the sound of the trumpet. The one who is the first to do this will receive a Ctesiphon-size wine sack.<sup>29</sup>

#### Dicaeopolis

Slaves! Women! Didn't you hear?

What are you doing? Don't you hear the herald's words?

Boil, roast, and turn the hare-meat,

1005

then quickly take it off the spits, and string the garlands.

Bring the spits so that I can skewer the thrushes.

### Dicaeopolis

Bring the ladle

1067

so that I can take some wine and pour it for the Choes festival.

The messenger summons guests to the feast, telling each guest to bring his own food and wine.

### Messenger

Come at once to dinner,

1085

and bring your pitcher (chous), and your food-hamper.

The priest of Dionysus invites you.

But be quick; you've long been holding up the meal.

Everything else is ready:

couches, tables, cushions, rugs,

1090

garlands, myrrh, sweetmeats, the whores are there,

cakes, rolls, sesame cakes, wafers,

and beautiful dancing girls....

After Dicaeopolis has proclaimed that he is the first to drain his pitcher, the comedy ends with him making exaggerated claims about his victory.

#### 7.11 ARISTOPHANES, ACHARNIANS 1224–1234.

#### Dicaeopolis

Take me to the judges. Take me to the king.<sup>30</sup>

Give me the wine-sack.

1225

Look, it's empty. Hail the glorious victor!

#### Chorus

Hail then, if you say so, old man. Hail to the glorious victor.

#### Dicaeopolis

I filled it with unmixed wine and chugged it, without taking a breath.

#### Chorus

Hail to the victor now, my noble fellow.

Take the wine-sack and go.

1230

#### Dicaeopolis

And you must follow and sing "Hail to the glorious victor."

#### Chorus

Yes, we'll follow for your sake, singing "Hail to the glorious victor"

In honor of you and the wine-sack.

1234

A different picture of the drinking at the *Choes* is apparent in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris* (413 BCE), where Orestes tells of his arrival in Athens at the time of the *Choes* festival. Because of the pollution caused by the killing of his mother, he was made to sit at a separate table and so prevented from fully participating in the festival. His experience, he says, has been ritualized in the Athenian celebration of the *Choes*.

<sup>28</sup> Hamilton 1992: 14 privileges Aristophanes' testimony over that of Euripides (7.12), and remarks that "The picture presented by the *Acharnians* is of a riotously enjoyable occasion, in which the chugging contest played only a part and perhaps involved only a small portion of the group. It was the main event probably because it was the only public event—one managed by the city at a fixed time under fixed rules. The parties occasioned by the contest, like our present-day football parties, would be private and unregulated."

<sup>29</sup> A typical *chous* pitcher had a single handle, a trefoil mouth (with three curves), and contained about two and a half liters. *Ctesiphon*: otherwise unknown, but probably a man notorious for the size of his paunch.

<sup>30</sup> *judges...king*: The reference to judges or umpires indicates that this was a state or public contest. The title of "king," *basileus*, refers to the king archon, the official who carried out the religious duties that had originally been held by kings.

7.12 EURIPIDES, IPHIGENEIA IN TAURIS 947–960.

I went there, but at first none of my fellow-guests willingly received me, saying that I was hated by the gods.<sup>31</sup>

Then those who respected me set my portion as a guest on a separate table,

because we were under the same roof.

950

By their silence they banned me from speech

so that I was apart from their eating and drinking.

and, filling for each man his own cup

in equal measure, they took their enjoyment.

I did not think it right to blame my hosts,

955

I silently grieved, however, pretending to be unaware,

but deeply lamenting because I was my mother's murderer.

And now, I hear, my misfortunes are a ritual

for the Athenians, and the custom still endures

that Athena's people observe the Choes festival.

Phanodemus (fourth century BCE) gives a further version of this aetiological story, attributing Orestes' limited welcome to the legendary Athenian King Demophon, and noting that he ordered the participants to take their garlands to the temple of Dionysus of the Marshes after the drinking contest.

7.13 PHANODEMUS as quoted in ATHENAEUS, DEIPNOSOPHISTS 10. 437 c-d, (FGrHist 325 F 11). In connection with the Festival of Pitchers celebrated at Athens, Phanodemus says that King Demophon instituted it when he wanted to entertain Orestes who had come to Athens. Because Demophon did not wish Orestes to participate in the sacred rites or share in the libations since he had not yet been put on trial, 32 he ordered that the sacred vessels be locked up, and a pitcher of wine to be set before each participant, saying that a flat cake would be given to the one who was the first to drain his pitcher.

Because they had been under the same roof with Orestes, Demophon also ordered that, when they had finished the drinking, they should not place the garlands they had been wearing on the sacred images. Rather, each should lay his garland around his pitcher, take the garlands to the priestess at the temple in the marshes, and complete the ritual in the precinct. Since that time, the festival has been called the "Pitchers."

The western Greek historian Timaeus of Tauromenium in Sicily (c. 350-260 BCE) notes that Dionysius, a Sicilian ruler, offered a prize for the man who was the first to drain his chous.

7. 14 TIMAEUS as quoted in ATHENAEUS, DEIPNOSOPHISTS 10.437 b. Timaeus says that the tyrant Dionysius set up a golden crown as a prize at the festival of the Choes for the one who was the first to drain his chous and that Xenocrates the philosopher finished first. Xenocrates took the golden crown and, as he departed, placed it on the herm set up in his courtyard. the one on which he usually place crowns of flowers when he returned home in the evening.<sup>33</sup> He was admired for this deed.

> In Aristophanes' Frogs (405 BCE) the chorus of frogs that inhabit the precinct of Dionysus in the Marshes describe the coming of drunken revelers.

7.15 ARISTOPHANES, FROGS 209-220.

Brekekekex koax, koax,

Brekekekex koax, koax!

210

Children of the marsh and streams.

let's voice a cry, along with the pipes,

our own fair-sounding song

- koax koax -

that once we voiced for the Nysaean son of Zeus,34

Dionysus in the Marshes,

when the mob of drunken revelers,

came to my precinct

on the festival of the Pots (Chytroi).35

Brekekekex koax, koax.

220

215

A scholion to Aristophanes' Acharnians 1076 notes that Theopompus, a Greek historian of the fourth century BCE, explains the origin of the name of the festival of the Pots.

7.16 SCHOLION TO ARISTOPHANES, ACHARNIANS 1076. Theopompus says that those saved from the flood boiled a pot of panspermia, from which the festival takes its name.<sup>36</sup> They sacrificed on the Choes to Hermes Chthonios, but no one tasted from the pot. Those who were saved [from the flood] did this, as they prayed to Hermes for those that had died.

<sup>31</sup> fellow-guests: the Greek is xenoi, and xenia is guest-friendship, a contract whereby each individual will assist or protect the other when needed. hated by the gods: an allusion to the pollution caused by his murder of his mother Clytemnestra.

<sup>32</sup> he had not yet been put on trial: Apollo had ordered Orestes to go to Athens to be tried for matricide. Orestes' trial is the subject of Aeschylus' Eumenides. Although Orestes had been purified at Delphi, concern about pollution evidently still lingered. See 4.27 and 9.28.

<sup>33</sup> herm: a sacred pillar surmounted with a head of Hermes, and a model of an erect phallus in the middle, which was displayed outside most houses.

<sup>34</sup> Nysaean: Nysa was a mountain, said to be the birthplace of Dionysus.

<sup>35</sup> on the festival of the Pots: probably in the early morning hours of that day.

<sup>36</sup> the flood: in the myth of the five ages, Zeus sent a flood to destroy the people of the age of bronze because he was angry at their decadence. panspermia: a concoction of seeds, grains and honey. Hermes Chthonios: Hermes is called "of the underworld" because he escorted the souls of the dead to that place.

A scholion to Aristophanes' *Frogs* 218 also quotes from Theopompus' explanation of the name of the festival of the Pots.

7.17 SCHOLION TO ARISTOPHANES, FROGS 218. For the festival of the Pots. Chytroi is an Athenian festival. It is celebrated for the following reason which Theopompus explains thus. "Therefore the people who had been saved [from the flood] called the whole festival by the name of the day on which they took heart." Then he says, "they have the custom of sacrificing to them and to no one of Olympians at all but to Hermes Chthonios" and (he says) "No one of the priests tastes from the pot that everyone throughout the city boils. This they do in the day." (He also says) "The people then present prayed to Hermes on behalf of the dead." Contests were held there, called Chytrine, as Philochorus says in the sixth book of his Atthis." "37"

Two ancient sources are often cited as evidence that on the evening of the festival of the Pitchers a ceremony of sacred marriage (hieros gamos) was enacted between the basilinna, the wife of the king, and the god Dionysus. <sup>38</sup> Neither passage, however, specifically connects the ceremony with the Anthesteria. <sup>39</sup>

**7.18** ARISTOTLE?, CONSTITUTION OF THE ATHENIANS 3.5. The king occupied what is now called the Boukoleion, near the prytaneion.<sup>40</sup> This is indicated by the fact that even now the union (symmeixis) and marriage (gamos) of the king's wife (basilinna) with the god Dionysus takes place there.

In a speech attributed to Demosthenes, the prosecution alleges that the stipulations regarding the religious ceremonies performed by the wife of the king had been broken by the king's wife, the daughter of the defendant Neaera who was not an Athenian citizen.

**7.19** DEMOSTHENES?, *AGAINST NEAERA* 73. On behalf of this city, this woman [the daughter of Neaera] performed the sacred rites that must not be spoken of;<sup>41</sup> she also saw what it was not fitting for her, a foreigner, to see. And, despite her lack of status, she entered where no other of the numerous Athenian citizens enters, except the wife of the king. She administered the sacred oath to the venerable priestesses who preside over the rites and she

was given to Dionysus as his wife.<sup>42</sup> She performed on the city's behalf the rites that our ancestors handed down for the service of the gods, the rites that are many, sacred, and not to be spoken of. How is it in accordance with piety for an ordinary woman to perform the things that is not possible for all to hear, especially a woman like this who has done such things?

**7.20** DEMOSTHENES?, AGAINST NEAERA 74–76. In ancient times, men of Athens, there was sovereignty in our state.... The king offered all the sacrifices, and those that were most sacred and must not be spoken of were performed, as was natural, by his wife, the basilinna. They established a law that the king's wife was to be a citizen and that she should not have had sexual intercourse with any other man, in order that, in accordance with our ancestral customs, the sacred rites that must not be spoken of be celebrated on the city's behalf and that the customary rituals be properly performed, without omission or innovation.

This law was engraved on a stone marker that was set up near the altar in the sanctuary of Dionysus in the Marshes .... In this way, the people testified their piety to the god and left a pledge for posterity to show the kind of woman that we require to perform the rites and to be given in marriage to the god. This is why they set up the marker in the most ancient and sacred sanctuary of Dionysus in the Marshes in order that only a few have knowledge of what was written. For the sanctuary is only opened once a year, on the twelfth day of the month of Anthesterion. 43

# The Thesmophoria

The festival of the Thesmophoria in honor of Demeter was celebrated by Greek communities in the autumn, before the time of sowing the winter crop. Unlike most Greek festivals, men were excluded from participating in or having knowledge of these rites. The name of the festival literally means "the carrying of the thesmoi." Thesmos literally means "what is laid or put down," and is also used to denote customs or laws.

Writing in the late first century BCE, Diodorus reports two traditions about Demeter: she told humans how to cultivate grain and gave them laws (thesmoi).

**7.21** DIODORUS 5.68. When the grain still grew haphazardly among the other plants and was yet unknown to humans, Demeter was the first to gather it, to realize how to prepare and preserve it, and to show humans how to sow....

Some people say that it was she who also introduced laws through which humans have become accustomed to deal justly with each other, and they

<sup>37</sup> *Philochorus*: 340–260 BCE, a historian who wrote a history of Attica that has only survived in fragments quoted by later authors.

<sup>38</sup> The authorship of both these works is disputed.

<sup>39</sup> *king*: see 7.11 n. 36. *ceremony of sacred marriage*: Most modern scholars think that this ceremony was part of the Anthesteria and that it took place on the night of transition from the Day of the Pitchers to that of the Pots but Hamilton 1992: 53–57 concludes that the connection with the Anthesteria is "without firm basis."

<sup>40</sup> *prytaneion*: this building was the symbolic center of the *polis*; it contained the *hestia* (hearth) of the city and was the place where distinguished citizens and foreign dignitaries were entertained with honor.

<sup>41</sup> must not be spoken of: literally "the unspeakable things," i.e., the secret rites.

<sup>42</sup> *venerable priestesses*: fourteen women who were appointed by the king to be responsible for the temple in the Marshes.

<sup>43</sup> i.e., probably at sundown on the eleventh day.

called this goddess Thesmophoros [Law Bringer] after the laws that she gave them.

In Athens, the Thesmophoria was celebrated in the month of *Pyanepsion* (September–October) over a period of three days: the *Anodos*, or Way Up took place on the eleventh of that month; the *Nesteia*, or Fast, on the twelfth; and the *Kalligeneia* or She of the Beautiful Birth on the thirteenth. The three-day festival was preceded by two other all-female festivals: the Stenia on the ninth, when women gathered together, blaspheming and verbally abusing each other, and the Thesmophoria in the deme of Halimous where the leading women of Athens went on the tenth of *Pyanepsion*. At the conclusion of the festival, there was a great feast, after which the women returned to their homes, probably after two nights of sexual abstinence.<sup>44</sup>

Aristophanes' Women at the Thesmophoria (411 BCE), tells us very little about the actual rites. The audience merely learns that the rites were secret, restricted to women, held at night, and that slaves were not admitted once the ceremonies began.<sup>45</sup> In a parody of the invocation at the beginning of the Athenian assembly, Aristophanes substitutes the names of female deities for the masculine gods customarily invoked.

#### 7.22 ARISTOPHANES, WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA 295-305.

Ritual silence, please; ritual silence. Pray to the Two Thesmophorian Goddesses,

also to Wealth, to Kalligeneia, to the Nurse of the Young, 300 to Hermes, and to the Graces,<sup>46</sup> that this assembly and today's meeting may be conducted in the finest and best manner, to the great benefit of the city of the Athenians,

and also with good fortune for you yourselves. May the woman whose actions 305

and words best serve the Commonwealth of the Athenians and the Commonwealth of Women be victorious.

Let this be your prayer, and for yourselves all good things. Hail, Paion,

310

hail! Paion, hail Paion! 47 Let us rejoice!

The women invite Demeter and Persephone to the sacred precinct.

#### 7.23 ARISTOPHANES, WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA 1148-1159.

Come also, propitious and gracious Ladies, to your own precinct where men are forbidden to behold the sacred rites that by torchlight you illumine, an immortal sight. Come, enter, we pray,

all powerful Thesmophorian goddesses.

Two late sources yield problematic accounts of the rites. Marginal notes by a thirteenth century CE scoliast profess to explain a passage from Lucian's *Dialogues of the Hetaerae* (second century CE). An excerpt from the *Protrepticus* of the Christian writer Clement of Alexandria, (c. 190 CE), tells a story to account for the women's ritual of throwing piglets into a pit. <sup>48</sup>

Modern scholars have generally explained the Thesmophoria as a fertility festival. Lowe, however, suggests that the piglets and the pine branches are fecundity symbols offered, not in the hope of future fecundity, but rather as thank offerings to Demeter for her gift of grain which "civilized the human race." Lowe also notes the scholiast's use of "they believe" and "they say," which distances the scholiast from the beliefs that are attributed to the participants in the ritual.<sup>49</sup>

#### 7.24 SCHOLION TO LUCIAN, DIALOGUES OF THE HETAERAE 2.1.

Thesmophoria: a festival of the Greeks involving mysteries, also known as Skirophoria. The more mythological explanation for the celebration of this festival is that when Kore [the Maid] was carried of by Pluto, 50 as she was picking flowers, a swineherd Eubouleus was grazing his pigs on that spot and they were swallowed up together by Kore's chasm. Therefore, in honor of Eubouleus, piglets are thrown into the chasms of Demeter and Kore.

Women called "dredgers" bring up the putrified remains of what was thrown into the pits (*megara*). After maintaining a state of sexual purity for a period of three days, these women then go down into the inmost sanctuaries; they bring up the remains and place them on the altars. They believe that anyone who takes some and sows it with the seed will have a good crop.

They say that there are also snakes down below in the chasms, which eat most of what is thrown down. And so noise is made whenever the women

<sup>44</sup> See Dillon 2002: 110-120.

<sup>45</sup> On slaves, see Aristophanes, Women at the Thesmophoria 293-294.

<sup>46</sup> the Two Thesmophorian Goddesses: Demeter and Persephone. Kalligeneia: the bearer of fair offspring, a cultic epithet of Demeter.

<sup>47</sup> *Paion*: also addressed as Paian, who was originally a healing god often identified with Apollo and Asclepius, but later came to mean a song that was addressed to the gods in political, military, and personal situations.

<sup>48</sup> For relevant passages from Lucian's *Dialogues* and Clement of Alexandria and other related Greek texts, with translations, see Lowe in Blundell and Williamson 1998: 165–170.

<sup>49</sup> Lowe in Blundell and Williamson 1998: 149-173.

<sup>50</sup> Pluto: Hades, god of the underworld.

**FESTIVALS** 

dredge and whenever they set those models down again, so that the snakes they believe are guarding the shrines will go away.

They bring up sacred objects that are not to be spoken of, things made of dough, models of snakes and of male genitalia. They also take pine branches because of that plant's fertility. These are also thrown into the megara (this is the name of the shrines) and also piglets, as mentioned above—the latter because of their fecundity as a symbol of vegetable and human generation, as thank offerings to Demeter; because, in providing the fruits of Demeter, she civilized the human race....

It is called Thesmophoria because Demeter is given the epithet "Lawgiver" because she set down customs (nomoi), that is, laws (thesmoi) under which humans have to provide and work for their food.

7.25 CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS 17.1. Do you also want me to explain to you Pherephatta's flower-picking and her rape by Aidoneus, the opening of the earth and Eubouleus' pigs that were swallowed up with the Two Goddesses [sic], as a result of which the "megarizing" women throw in pigs at the Thesmophoria?<sup>51</sup> The women variously celebrate this myth at festivals throughout the city, the Thesmophoria, Skirophoria, Arretophoria, as they act out the rape of Pherephatta in many ways.<sup>52</sup>

> The third century BCE poet Callimachus describes the Procession of the Basket, which likely contained mystical objects—a celebration probably modelled on a ritual at the Athenian Thesmophoria.

#### 7.26 CALLIMACHUS, HYMN 6.118-138.

Sing, virgins, mothers add your voices:

"Demeter, all hail, nurturer of many, giver of good measures."

And as four white horses pull the Basket,

120

so will the great goddess, the wide-ruler, come to us

bringing the white spring, white summer, winter,

and the season of withering. She will protect us for another year.

When, without sandals and with unbound hair, we walk through the city,

so shall we have our feet and heads unharmed forever.

125

And as the basket-bearers bring baskets full of gold,

so may we taste unlimited gold.

The uninitiated may follow as far as the city hall;

the initiated right to the goddess's temple

—all who are younger than sixty. But women who are pregnant,

130



Figure 7.2. A scene from the east frieze of the Parthenon depicting the priestess of Athena Polias facing two Arrephoroi carrying their secret bundles and, on the right, a male figure, perhaps the king (basileus) archon, receiving a peplos from a girl. Art Resource, New York.

and those who stretch their hands to Eileithyia<sup>53</sup> or are in pain, it's enough that they go as far as their knees allow them. To them Deo<sup>54</sup> shall give everything in abundance, just as if they came into her temple.

Hail goddess, and keep this city safe in harmony and prosperity. And in the fields grant all things in abundance. 135 Nourish the cattle, bring us sheep, bring us grain, bring in the harvest, nourish peace also, so that he who sows may reap. Be gracious to me, thrice-invoked, great queen of goddesses.

#### The Panathenaea

The Athenian festival of the Panathenaea was celebrated annually in the month of Hekatombaion in honor of the birth of Athena, the patron goddess of Athens. 55 This festival probably dates from at least the seventh century BCE and was originally celebrated simply by the gift of a new robe (peplos) for the statue of Athena Polias in the Erechtheum. Each year, aided by older women, a peplos was woven by two young girls between the ages of seven

<sup>51</sup> Pherephatta: Persephone. Aidoneus: Hades or Pluto. megarizing: going down into the megara, pits mentioned in the scholion above.

<sup>52</sup> Arretophoria: this reading is problematic, and apparently does not refer to the Arrephoria.

<sup>53</sup> Eileithyia: goddess of childbirth.

<sup>54</sup> Deo: Demeter.

<sup>55</sup> On the Panathenaea, see Neils 1992.

and eleven, the *arrephoroi* who spent a year on the acropolis serving Athena.<sup>56</sup> The presentation ceremony was preceded by a procession across the Agora to the Acropolis where the robe was presented and sacrifice made.

Sometime in the 560s, probably in emulation of he panhellenic festivals to be discussed in the next chapter, athletic contests including the *pentathon*, running, and boxing were introduced. These contests which were also open to non-Athenian competitors were held every four years and this quadrennial festival is known as the Great Panathenaea . Given what we know about the various contests, the Great Panathenaea probably lasted about eight days. Later the program included musical competitions, recitations of Homer's epic poetry, athletic and equestrian contests, dancing in armor, racing with torches, dismounting from a chariot, and also a boat race in the harbor.

Victors in the contests at the Great Panathenaea were awarded an amphora, a large two-handled vessel, containing olive-oil that came from olive trees sacred to Athena. The best products of Athenian potters and painters, these prizes were taken home to Greek cities ranging from Marseilles to the Black Sea. Most Panathenaic amphoras are inscribed with the legend "OF THE CONTESTS FROM ATHENS" (TON ATHENETHEN ATHLON). The black figure technique was retained for the Panathenaic amphoras, despite the ubiquity of red-figure vases after the late sixth century BCE, and the imagery also remained virtually unchanged. On the reverse there is usually a representation of the athletic or equestrian contest for which the prize was awarded.

In an epinician ode in honor of an athlete from Argos who was a victor in the wrestling contest at the Panathenaea, Pindar (518–c. 446 BCE) alludes to a Panathenaic amphora.

#### 7.27 PINDAR, *NEMEAN* 10.31–36.

The god knows the subject of my song, as does anyone who strives for the heights of the ultimate contests. For most high is the institution of Heracles that Pisa won.<sup>57</sup> Yet, as a prelude, twice before in the rites of the Athenians sweet voices have acclaimed him and, in earth burnt by fire, the fruit of the olive has come to the brave people of Hera in the confines of richly decorated jars.<sup>58</sup>

Probably the most spectacular feature of the Panathenaea was the procession in which the representatives of different segments of Athenian society, including metics (resident aliens), walked or rode along the Panathenaic Way from the Ceramicus, or Potters' Quarter, through the agora to the Acropolis. The procession is represented/depicted in a series of relief sculptures on the Parthenon, the temple to Athena built 437–432 BCE,

35

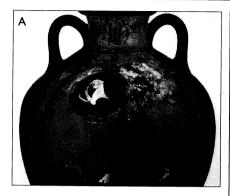


Figure 7.3. Panathenaic amphora, 530–520 BCE (damaged and somewhat restored). Photographs © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Side A. Athena is depicted in silhouette striding to the left, armed with a shield and spear; she wears the distinctive aegis, a snake-fringed cloak that



she is said to have received from Zeus: on the shield is depicted in white the head and forepart of a leopard. The goddess is framed by two columns surmounted by cocks. The inscription "of the contests from Athens" is on the right of the left-hand column.

Side B. A race with five runners. The sharply bent position of their arms indicates the race is long distance.

in the hey-day of Periclean Athens. The scenes on this famous frieze, like other stone sculptural reliefs and statues, was originally painted in bright colors and is arguably the best known visual representation of one of the most essential features of a festival.

After the Persian Wars, a ship drawn on a cart became part of the procession. The ship's sail was a larger version of the *peplos* woven for Athena. In two plays of Euripides, reference is made to a *peplos* depicting the story of the battle of the Olympian gods against the Titans that was woven for the goddess. <sup>59</sup> In the first excerpt, Hecuba, the enslaved Trojan queen, imagines herself in Athens weaving a *peplos*. In the second, Iphigenia, living in Tauris in the Black Sea area, doubts whether she will ever return to her native Greece.

#### **7.28** EURIPIDES, *HECUBA* 466–474.

In the city of Pallas, shall I yoke colts to the beautiful Athenian chariots on the saffron-colored robe, embroidering it with intricate

<sup>56</sup> On the arrephoroi, see 3.13 with note.

<sup>57</sup> Heracles...Pisa: an allusion to the Olympic games.

<sup>58</sup> people of Hera: the people of Argos, where Hera was the preeminent deity.

<sup>59</sup> On the weaving of the peplos see Barber in Neils 1992: 112-114.

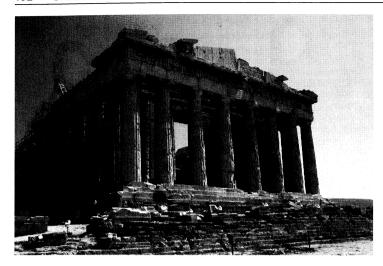


Figure 7.4. The Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis, 448-432 BCE. © istockphoto/.

brightly colored flowers, or the race of Titans that Zeus the son of Cronus lays low with a fiery bolt?

7.29 EURIPIDES, IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS 222-224.

Nor to the sound of my loom, shall I weave the image of Athenian Pallas and the Titans.

The following excerpt from an Athenian inscription (c. 335 BCE) gives some idea of the expenses incurred in mounting the annual Panathenaic festival (sometimes referred to as the Lesser or Little Panathenaea). Two fragments of this inscription give the beginning of a law and part of an attached decree concerning income from "Nea," a tract of land that was to be used to purchase animals for sacrifice at the annual celebration of the Panathenaea. On the first fragment (Side A not given here), the moving of the law is described, whereas Side B gives details of the disposition of the income.

**7.30** RO no. 81, side B 1–35.<sup>60</sup> ... in order that - - - piously - - - annually, and the sacrifice in honor of Athena takes place every year on behalf of the Athenian

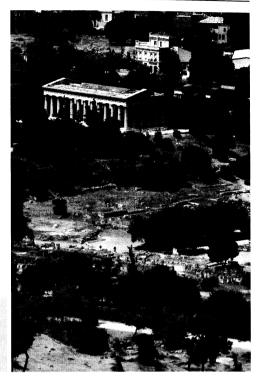


Figure 7.5. View from the Acropolis across the Agora to the temple of Hephaestus. © istockphoto/Styve Reineck.

people, as well prepared as possible, and that all the other things required for the goddess' festival are well managed by the *hieropoioi* forever, let it be decreed by the people, and the rest in accordance with the council.<sup>61</sup>

The *hieropoioi* are to sacrifice two sacrifices, the sacrifice to Athena Goddess of Health (*Hygeia*) and the sacrifice made in the old sanctuary as in the past.<sup>62</sup> They are to distribute five portions of meat to the *prytaneis* and three to the nine archons and one to the Treasurers of Athena and one to the *hieropoioi* and three to the Generals and taxiarchs and the customary distribution to the Athenians who walk in the procession and to the *kanephoroi*.<sup>63</sup> Then they are to divide the rest of the meat among the Athenians.

<sup>60</sup> For the Greek text of sides A and B with a translation and commentary, see Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 396–402. On side A the income is estimated at only two talents (1200 drachmas), but on side B it is apparent that 41 *minae*, the equivalent of 4100 drachmas, was realized, thus suggesting that the second side is a later addition. Parke 1977: 48 estimates the average day-wage of an Athenian at this period to be between one and a half to two drachmas.

<sup>61</sup> *hieropoioi*: a group of ten men, one from each Athenian tribe, who managed the sacred rites. One of their duties was to ensure that the victims were perfect.

<sup>62</sup> *old sanctuary*: the restoration of the text at the point is disputed, see Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 401.

<sup>63</sup> archons: nine annually elected magistrates. They are to receive three portions between them, thus getting more than the prytanneis who only received a tenth of one portion. The ten hieropoioi and ten treasurers had to share one portion. kannephoi: basket carriers. Carrying the baskets with the sacrificial implements was a highly honored task, usually given to young girls; see 3.13.

The hieropoioi together with the cattle-buyers, when they have purchased the cows using the 41 minas [4100 drachmas] rent from the Nea and dispatched the procession for the goddess, must sacrifice all these cows on the great altar of Athena, except for one that they have pre-selected from the best quality cows; this they must sacrifice on the altar of Nike. 64 After they have sacrificed them to Athena Polias and Athena Nike, they should then distribute the meat from all the cows purchased using the 41 minas to the Athenian people in the Ceramicus as in the other distributions of meat. 65 They should distribute the portions to each deme according to the number of participants in the procession that each deme sends.

For the expenses of the procession, the butchering, the decoration of the great altar, and all the other necessary expenditures for the festival and the all-night celebration, 50 drachmas are to be provided. The hieropoioi who administer the annual Panathenaea are to make the all-night celebration as splendid as possible for the goddess. They should dispatch the procession at sunrise, punishing those who do not obey orders with punishments according to the laws.

# COMPETITIONS IN HONOR OF THE GODS

**8.1** THUCYDIDES 5.18. With regard to the common sanctuaries, anyone who wishes may, without fear, offer sacrifices, consult the oracles, and attend as a spectator according to the ancestral customs, both by land and sea.

> This religious stipulation, reaffirming the sacred truce (ekechairia), was the very first clause in the Peace of Nicias between Athens and Sparta in 421 BCE. The sacred truce, a temporary cessation of hostilities among warring Greek states, allowed safe travel to a common sanctuary for celebration of a panhellenic festival.

> The four most famous panhellenic festivals were the Olympic, Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean Games. There were athletic and sporting contests at all four festivals, and musical contests at all except the Olympic games. The games at Olympia were celebrated in honor of Zeus. The Pythian games held at Delphi were in honor of Apollo, the Isthmian at the isthmus near Corinth were in honor of Poseidon, and the Nemean at Nemea between Corinth and Argos were also in honor of Zeus.

> From the eighth century BCE onward people came together at fixed times to such sanctuaries from cities throughout the Greek world, mainland Greece itself, Asia Minor, the Black Sea area, Italy, and Sicily, and also from Egypt and Cyrene to offer sacrifices and either compete in "games" or contests honoring a particular god, or to be spectators.

> Festivals involving contests are often referred to as "agonistic," from the Greek agon, struggle or contest. These competitions were for prizes offered for races, boxing, wrestling and many other strenuous physical contests but also music, poetry, and drama which involved both music and dance.

> The traditional date of the foundation of the Olympic games is 776 BCE, the date from which the Greeks reckoned their calendar. Events were said

<sup>64</sup> The temple of Nike (Victory) is to the right of the Propylaea (the entrance to the acropolis) as one approaches the Parthenon.

<sup>65</sup> Ceramicus: the Potters' Quarter which is located at some distance from the acropolis, across the agora and beyond the temple of Hephaestus.

<sup>1</sup> On Olympia and the games, see Swaddling 2004. For discussion of all four sites and games, see Miller 2004 a. Both works include illustrations.