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# AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHILOLOGY

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VOL. XXI, 3.

WHOLE NO. 83.

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## I.—THE CHTHONIC GODS OF GREEK RELIGION.

Some of the most distinctive and interesting developments of Greek religion are connected with the so-called chthonic gods. If, however, the student turn to the handbooks on Greek mythology and Greek worship, he finds many conflicting statements about these deities. For example, Preller<sup>1</sup> holds that the chthonic gods of Homer are the rulers of the underworld—dread rulers, for man naturally expects blessings from above and evils from beneath; while in later time, he seeks to prove, their nature became milder because of their increasing connection with agriculture. H. D. Müller<sup>2</sup> adopted the first part of Preller's thesis and denied the latter. His view was that chthonic gods were always regarded as the source of evils that men seek to avert, never the source of blessing. Starting with the fact that chthonic gods were specially feared, K. O. Müller<sup>3</sup> made the striking suggestion that in Greece propitiatory sacrifices were offered only to the chthonic gods. Very much the same idea is adopted by Stengel,<sup>4</sup> with the result that Apollo, Artemis, and indeed most of the Olympian divinities, come to be classed as at times chthonic gods. Finally, Diels<sup>5</sup> seems to include the worship of the dead, of chthonic gods proper, and of heroes, together with all propitiatory and purificatory rites, under one heading, and to

<sup>1</sup> L. Preller, *Demeter und Persephone*, S. 183 f.

<sup>2</sup> H. D. Müller, *Mythologie der griech. Stämme*, II 39 f.

<sup>3</sup> K. O. Müller, *Aeschylos, Eumeniden*, p. 146 f.

<sup>4</sup> P. Stengel, *Die griech. Sakralalterthümer*, S. 87.

<sup>5</sup> H. Diels, *Sibyllinische Blätter*, passim, e. g. S. 71.

apply the term 'chthonic' to this whole group of divinities and to this entire type of worship.

The reason for this confusion is not difficult to ascertain, but a clear statement of the truth is none the less to be desired. With this end in view, I propose first to ask just how the term 'chthonic' is used in literature and in cultus, secondly to examine the character of the chthonic deities as compared with that of other deities, and thirdly to study the data that remain as to their worship, in order to ascertain how far it is true that their worship differs from that of other gods.

### I.

Both the noun *χθών* and the adjective formed from it are, strictly speaking, poetic words, although the influence of the poetic conception was so great that they came to be used in prose and in later accounts of cultus. The idea of chthonic gods starts with the epic division of the universe into what is above the earth and what is below the earth. The higher gods, the gods in whose realm is included man's daily life on the earth, are called *Ὀλύμπιοι, Οὐρανίῳνες*; and are ranged, now in a family, now in a *βουλή*, on Olympos. Below the earth—or in the dim West—is another realm, the dark counterpart of the brightness of Olympos. Here mighty Hades<sup>1</sup> (called also Zeus *καταχθόνιος*) and dread Persephone rule over the shades of the dead; from the deep, from Erebos, the Erinyes guard the rights of the first-born, protect the stranger, pursue the oathbreaker.<sup>2</sup> The realm beneath the earth becomes in the epic a kingdom of the dead corresponding to the rule of the heavenly gods over living men.

In later poetry—for example, in Aischylos<sup>3</sup>—the *ὑπᾶται θεοί* are set over against the *χθόνιοι θεοί*; the gods above,<sup>4</sup> *οἱ ἄνω θεοί*, over against those below, *οἱ κάτω θεοί, οἱ κατὰ χθονὸς θεοί*. This division is simply the continuation of the epic belief. The gods above are the Olympian gods of the epic, the universal gods of Greece, the gods worshipped in the normal cultus of the state; the gods below are the gods that have to do with the dead—Hades, to whose realm men go at death; Hermes, who conducts them thither;

<sup>1</sup> Iliad, O 187 f.; Y 57 f.; I 457; Hesiod, Theog. 767.

<sup>2</sup> Iliad, Γ 278 f.; I 457; Ξ 274.

<sup>3</sup> Agam. 89; Suppl. 25; Pindar, Ol. I 43, XIII 24; Lyr. frag. adesp. 140.

<sup>4</sup> Soph. Ai. 865; Ant. 451, cf. 749; El. 291; Aisch. Pers. 639, cf. 619; Eur. Alc. 75; cf. Plato, Leg. 828 C.

the Erinyes, whose home, according to the epic, is with the gods of souls, etc. The phrase *οἱ χθόνιοι* is often used as equivalent to *οἱ ἔνεργοι*, to designate the spirits of the dead.<sup>1</sup> Or, again, the adjective *χθόνιος* is used with other words, e. g. with *ἑστία* ('home, or resting-place of the soul,' Soph. O. C. 1727), with *φάσμα* ('rumor that reaches souls,' Soph. El. 1066), to designate that which has to do with souls or with the abode of souls.<sup>2</sup> It is consistent with this general use of the word that the *χθόνιοι θεοί* are the gods connected with souls.<sup>3</sup> Only rarely is the adjective used in a more general sense to designate that which has to do with the earth.<sup>4</sup> E. g. in Hesiod<sup>5</sup> the Titans are *χθόνιοι*, perhaps because their place is in Tartaros, probably because they are children of earth (*χθών = γῆ*), i. e. *γηγενείς*.

The number of gods who are thus connected with souls and with the abode of the dead is quite limited. They may be divided into two classes: gods who have no other function, and gods who are connected with the Olympic group, but who also have something to do with souls. Of the former class are the 'rulers of the dead,' Hades and Persephone his bride. Hades is called now *χθόνιος*, now *κατὰ χθονός*<sup>6</sup>; to him and to Persephone<sup>7</sup> Electra prays for aid in avenging her father's death; the king of the dead, *βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐνέρων*, as well as Ge and Hermes, is invoked to send back the soul of Darius.<sup>8</sup> In the Choephoroi of Aischylos Orestes<sup>9</sup> prays to Gaia to let his murdered father view the contest (in which he is to be avenged), and Electra prays to Persephone to grant also goodly power (to the soul), and then the father himself is invoked. Probably we are to understand the *ἡ νεπτέρα θεός*, who conducts Oidipous below,<sup>10</sup> as referring to Persephone, and no doubt she is to be included under the phrase

<sup>1</sup> Aisch. Pers. 640; Choeph. 356, [399,] 476 f.; Pind. P. IV 159.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Soph. O. C. 1752; Eur. Alc. 902; Hel. 344, 1346; Pind. P. IV 43; Alkm. Frag. 151; Plato, Pol. 619 E.

<sup>3</sup> Soph. O. C. 1568; Eur. Hec. 79.

<sup>4</sup> The word is used in this general sense Pind. Frag. 88; [Aisch. Sept. 736;] Eur. Frag. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Theog. 697, cf. also Aisch. Sept. 521 f.; Eur. Bacch. 540.

<sup>6</sup> Eur. Alc. 237; Andr. 544; Phoen. 810.

<sup>7</sup> Soph. El. 110 f.

<sup>8</sup> Aisch. Pers. 628.

<sup>9</sup> Aisch. Choeph. 479 f.

<sup>10</sup> Soph. O. C. 1548.

θεαὶ χθόνιαί as it is used by Sophokles<sup>1</sup> and Herodotos.<sup>2</sup> Ge is invoked as the ruler of the χθόνιοι, i. e. the ruler of the souls of the dead<sup>3</sup>; and as a χθόνιος δαίμων, the Persian elders pray to her to let the soul of Darius appear.<sup>4</sup> The essentially poetic character of this whole line of thought is evident from the position assigned to Ἠρῆ as the divinity who controls the fate of souls<sup>5</sup> (for their bodies were buried in γῆ, the earth), as well as from such a passage as Aisch. Suppl. 24, where χθόνιοι [θεοί] receives the defining phrase θῆκας κατέχοντες 'gods that possess the tombs of the dead.'<sup>6</sup>

Finally, the Erinyes are distinctly gods associated with souls of the dead. This was the Homeric conception<sup>7</sup>; it continues in Aischylos<sup>8</sup> and probably in Sophokles.<sup>9</sup> The Erinyes were all but identified with the dead man's curse which finally brought his injurer to punishment, and so wrought out the justice of Zeus<sup>10</sup>; from this standpoint Δίκη is "co-assessor of the gods below."<sup>11</sup> In cult, as we shall see, the Erinyes retained the epithet σεμναί, which was especially appropriate to gods connected with souls. Probably Hekate "shaking coils of serpents"<sup>12</sup> should also be reckoned in this class as distinctly a god of souls, although Hekate comes to represent one side of the being of Artemis.<sup>13</sup>

Of the deities associated with Olympos, Hermes, Demeter, and Zeus receive the epithet χθόνιος. Hermes is the herald, whose office takes him to gods below the earth as well as to the gods of

<sup>1</sup> O. C. 1568.

<sup>2</sup> VI 134, VII 153.

<sup>3</sup> Aisch. Pers. 640.

<sup>4</sup> Aisch. Pers. 629; cf. Paus. I 28, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Aisch. Choeph. 722 f., where χθών and the tomb are invoked.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also Aisch. Pers. 689.

<sup>7</sup> Iliad, Γ 278 f.; Τ 259 f.; Ι 571 f.

<sup>8</sup> Choeph. 398 f. and probably 405.

<sup>9</sup> El. 112 f. and possibly O. C. 1568.

<sup>10</sup> Aisch. Choeph. 381 f.

<sup>11</sup> Soph. Ant. 451, cf. 749; El. 291 f.; cf. also Bergk, P. L. G. III<sup>4</sup>, p. 733.

<sup>12</sup> Aristoph. Frag. 426.

<sup>13</sup> It seems to me possible that the reference to Hekate in Sophokles, Ant. 1199, might suggest that she performed a function like that of Hermes in conducting the soul to its proper home beneath the earth. If so, the phrase ἡ νεπτέρα θεά, in O. C. 1548, would also be taken as a reference to Hekate, and not to Persephone.

Olympos and to men on the earth.<sup>1</sup> The dead are under his care, *πατρώ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη*,<sup>2</sup> and in this capacity he is invoked to be the ally of Orestes,<sup>3</sup> and to allow the soul of Darius to return to this earth.<sup>4</sup> He is mentioned by Sophokles as the god who conducts souls to Hades,<sup>5</sup> and as such Aias asks his aid.<sup>6</sup> Demeter, so far as I am aware, does not receive the epithet in poetry. In Herodotos,<sup>7</sup> however, the phrase *χθόνιαι θεαί* clearly means the goddesses of the Mysteries, and it is quite probable that the phrase is used in the same way by Sophokles.<sup>8</sup> The Eleusinian goddess granted special blessings after death, so that she might well be classed as a deity who had to do with souls. The case of Zeus is somewhat peculiar.<sup>9</sup> In Homer<sup>10</sup> Zeus *καταχθόνιος* is unquestionably another name for Hades. On the other hand, the Zeus *χθόνιος* of Attic tragedy thunders, i. e. he exercises the function of Olympian Zeus<sup>11</sup>; moreover, we have mention of a Zeus *ἐνάλιος*.<sup>12</sup> 'Zeus of the sea' is to be understood as indicating one of the phases of the Olympian Zeus, and the same is probably true of the Zeus *χθόνιος* of Sophokles and the later drama. These passages, which refer to Zeus as the god of thunder, continue the thought of Homer and Aischylos. In Homer the thunders of Zeus reach down to the realm of Aidoneus and disturb him,<sup>13</sup> and in Aischylos the thunders of Zeus are called chthonic because they reverberate from the earth.<sup>14</sup> Aischylos in the *Agamemnon*<sup>15</sup> speaks of Zeus as a god of souls: *τοῦ κατὰ χθονὸς Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτήρως*, but an examination of a passage in the *Suppliants* makes it plain that this is only another side of the Olympian Zeus.<sup>16</sup> In this passage Aischylos also speaks of a *Ἐρμῆς ἄλλος* and an Apollo

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, ω 1 f.; Aisch. *Choeph.* 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Choeph.* 1, cf. 727; Schol. Aristoph. *Ach.* 1076, and on *Ran.* 218.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Soph. *El.* 110 f.

<sup>4</sup> Aisch. *Pers.* 629.

<sup>5</sup> *Ψυχοπομπός*, Soph. *O. C.* 1548.

<sup>6</sup> Soph. *Ai.* 832; Aristoph. *Ran.* 1145.

<sup>7</sup> VI 134, VII 153.

<sup>8</sup> *O. C.* 1568.

<sup>9</sup> K. Lehrs, *Populäre Aufsätze*<sup>2</sup>, S. 298 f.; E. Rohde, *Psyche*, S. 191.

<sup>10</sup> *Iliad*, I 457.

<sup>11</sup> Soph. *O. C.* 1606; Eur. *Hipp.* 1201; Aristoph. *Aves* 1747 f.

<sup>12</sup> Prokl. on Plato, *Crat.* 88; Paus. II 24, 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Iliad*, γ 56 f.

<sup>14</sup> *Prom.* 994.

<sup>15</sup> *Agam.* 1386.

<sup>16</sup> *Suppl.* 156 f., 231, etc.

φυγάδ' ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ θεόν, i. e. each of these gods has another phase to his being besides that ordinarily recognized. So Zeus, the god of souls, is essentially the same as the god who pursued Io,<sup>1</sup> i. e. Zeus χθόνιος is another side of the being of Zeus Ὀλύμπιος, a side which seems quite different from the one commonly recognized: it is only Homer who uses Zeus καταχθόνιος as another name for Hades. The reverberation of thunder, apparently from the earth, Zeus's care for justice through the curses of the dead, and the universalizing tendency which affected Zeus particularly, are three factors in making this extension in the sway of Zeus. In a fragment of the Cretans of Euripides (Frag. 904) the poet goes even farther, and identifies Hades himself<sup>2</sup> with Zeus the 'heavenly King.'<sup>3</sup>

Enough has been said to show that lyric and dramatic poetry continue the conception of the epic. Chthonic gods are gods of the realm beneath the earth, which is the realm of souls. They are not *gods* of the souls, for, strictly speaking, only living men worship the gods. They are *rulers* of souls<sup>4</sup>; while from the standpoint of men who offer them worship, they are gods whose home is below the earth, gods who are associated with souls. As gods, men invoke them when the souls of the dead are worshipped, when a man seeks help to avenge wrongs against the dead, or when souls of the dead are to be evoked by magic rites.<sup>5</sup>

But one other passage in earlier poetry remains to be considered. Hesiod (Erg. et Di. 465) directs the farmer to pray to Zeus χθόνιος and Demeter ἀγνή when he begins ploughing. This use of the word to denote a god of agriculture appears occasionally in the accounts of Greek cultus. In the well-known Mykonos inscription<sup>6</sup> there is a direction to sacrifice yearly black offerings to Zeus chthonios and Ge chthonia ὑπὲρ καρπῶν. Clearly, this Zeus is a god of agriculture, the giver of fruits. This function of Zeus, at Athens as well as elsewhere, is too familiar to need

<sup>1</sup> Aisch. Suppl. 162.

<sup>2</sup> So Latin poets identified the bride of Hades with Juno, Verg. Aen. VI 138; Ovid, Met. XIV 114.

<sup>3</sup> Dionysos, so far as I am aware, receives the epithet χθόνιος only in late hymns, e. g. Hym. Orph. LIII 1; the epithet, however, is justified by his connection with spirits of the dead; cf. Roscher, Lexikon, I 1033, 50 f. and 1069, 33.

<sup>4</sup> Aisch. Pers. 629, 640; Choeph. [399]; Paus. II 31, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Odys. κ, λ; Pind. P. IV 43.

<sup>6</sup> Dittenberger, S. I. G. 373; Bull. Corr. Hell. XII 459 f.

illustration. In Hesiod and in the Mykonos inscription, then, the epithet *χθόνιος* denotes Zeus the giver of the fruits of the earth. It is in connection with a harvest feast at Hermione that Demeter also receives the epithet *χθονία*.

Given these two meanings of the term 'chthonic' as applied to the gods—(a) a poetic term to denote a god associated with souls, and (b) a cultus term to denote a god of agriculture—it remains to consider whether they are so closely associated that they can safely be merged into one, as is done by some recent writers,<sup>1</sup> or whether they are not necessarily connected. This is simply the question whether the rulers of the dead and the gods of agriculture are necessarily identical, or whether the two functions are only occasionally connected. An examination of this group of divinities shows that the connection is not so close as is ordinarily supposed. To say with Preller<sup>2</sup> that the gods of the underworld were at first dread gods of souls, but that later they were made milder by their association with agriculture, does not seem to me to cover the facts. Hades remains dark and terrible to the end, and when Plouton is used as a name for Hades, he shares the same characteristics. Wealth, child of Demeter, in Eleusinian legend is not *ὁ θεός*, the husband of Persephone; in fact, the two sets of ideas are so separate that the bride of Hades and the daughter of Demeter appear in cult monuments<sup>3</sup> as two distinct beings. And when the later Attic drama applied the name Plouton to Hades, the original traits of the king of the shades remained unchanged; the only change was that the name Plouton might now mean either Hades or Ploutos. When a god rather than a goddess is worshipped for good crops, it is commonly Zeus. On the other hand, *Πλουτωνία* are places of access to the lower world, where souls of the dead are evoked. The Zeus chthonios of Mykonos, the agricultural Zeus of Athens or of Magnesia, are not, so far as we know, kings of the lower world; while neither Hermes nor Hekate has any special connection with agriculture.

The truth seems to be that this connection between gods of the earth as receiving the dead (a poetic use) and gods of the earth as producing the grain (a cultus use) is purely local. In Athens the Erinyes were worshipped as Eumenides,<sup>4</sup> who favored men

<sup>1</sup> E. g. Rohde, *Psyche*, S. 190 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Demeter und Persephone*, S. 188 f.; cf. *Artemid. Oneir.* II 34, 2.

<sup>3</sup> The reliefs of Lysimachides and Lakrateides, *'Εφ. Ἀρχ.* 1886, πιν. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Aisch. Eum.* 904 f., 938 f.



with good crops; at Eleusis, Demeter, goddess of the grain, is also a goddess associated with souls. It is only in the Peloponnese, however, that any close connection between agricultural deities and chthonic deities proper can be proved. At Hermione the harvest goddess is Demeter chthonia, and the harvest feast is connected with a Πλουτώμιον. At Sparta this same Demeter chthonia seems to be queen of the underworld, and in several cities it is Demeter rather than Persephone, i. e. it is the goddess of the grain, who is identified with the local 'Despoina' in the worship of the pair who rule the underworld. Demeter Erinys of Thelpousa, Demeter Melaina of Phigaleia, are instances of the grain goddess as a goddess who rules the souls; and when Herkyna of Lebadeia becomes Demeter Herkyna, it is the union of a grain goddess and a soul goddess.

My conclusion is that, in spite of the fact that agricultural functions are frequently attributed to gods of the underworld, gods who rule over souls, it is impossible to identify the two classes of gods. In that case there can be no question that it is wiser for us to use the name 'chthonic,' as it is almost universally used in Greek poetry and in Greek worship, to mean only gods who are associated with souls. The term will not, then, include Apollo, Artemis, Poseidon, or the Winds, as at times chthonic gods.<sup>1</sup> It will not include the heroes, for, in general, Greek cultus draws a sharp line between souls of the dead and heroes who did not die, but were translated into a higher sphere of existence. And while the term can not always be denied to Zeus, the god of agriculture, the presumption is that when it is applied to him, he is also a god connected with souls.<sup>2</sup>

There are, as a matter of fact, four classes of divine beings that are connected with the earth: *a*) souls of the dead, *b*) rulers of souls, *c*) agricultural gods, and *d*) heroes. Particularly in the works of Aischylos the first two classes are treated as essentially alike: prayers are offered, now to the dead, now to the gods with the dead, and the dead are regarded as powerful to work good or evil to surviving men.<sup>3</sup> We have seen that in certain localities the second and third classes are also merged into one. Local

<sup>1</sup> Stengel, Griech. Kultusaltertümer, S. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Certainly there is no justification in Greek usage for the indiscriminate application of this term to all divinities connected with darkness, as in the discussion by O. Gilbert, Griech. Götterlehre, S. 39 f.

<sup>3</sup> Aisch. Choeph. 476 f.; Pers. 219, 523 f., 609, 620, 641; Choeph. 355, 479.

heroes, however, in spite of their connection with caves or with some spot in the earth, are sharply separated from the rulers of the dead and from souls generally. In fact they are often connected with Olympos, in that they are regarded as phases of some Olympian divinity (e. g. Zeus Trophonios, Artemis Iphigeneia). This might perhaps be explained by the fact that many of these heroes were closely associated with Olympian gods in the epic, whereas the realm of Hades was in the epic the direct counterpart of Olympos. Or again, the very movement by which so many local gods were merged in these great gods of Greece may be said to presuppose a likeness of nature between local gods who came to be regarded as mere heroes and the Olympian divinities in whom other local gods were merged. The local heroes are very often conceived as presiding over agriculture in the section where they are worshipped, from the very fact that they are local, and so concerned with the local interests of their worshippers. Moreover, they are commonly connected with some spot in the earth, for this is all that gives them individuality in worship.

## II.

After defining, as I have attempted to do, the use of the term 'chthonic' as applied to the gods, I should like (1) to raise the question whether as a class their character differs from that of the Olympic divinities, and (2) to examine the assertion frequently made, that there is something distinctive and peculiar about their worship.

We have seen already that the conception of the chthonic gods was in large measure formed by the epic. The gods below correspond in a way to the council of the gods on Olympos, though the lesser spirits of the deep are not brought into any such close relation with one another as are the Olympic divinities. In spite of the epic influence, the *local* nature of the chthonic gods is very pronounced. The worship of Hades-Plouton is carried on almost entirely in connection with Ploutonia, wild chasms where men felt that an open way led down from this world to the house of Hades. Of the queen of the lower world I need only say that the conception of her character, her name, and her relation with Demeter or Persephone, differ exceedingly in different localities, and that the conception is in each instance

linked with the ritual of a particular shrine. So the Erinyes were not worshipped except in some local shrines like that described by Sophokles, and in such cases their intimate connection with the spot of earth devoted to them is very marked.

Again, the *office* of these divinities is quite as important as their name. The king of the dead may be Hades or Zeus *καταχθόνιος*, Klymenos, Eubouleus, Agesilaos, or Plouton; his wife may be Persephone or Kore, Despoina, Europa, Semele, or Chamyne, or Demeter herself may take this place. At Eleusis we do not know what particular name to attach to the pair *ὁ θεός, ἡ θεά*, but there is no doubt that they signify the king and queen of the dead. *πότνια σεμναί, θεαὶ μεγάλαι, δέσποιναί* are frequent names for Demeter and Persephone; evidently the personal name is unimportant (or possibly too sacred for common use), so that some attribute or even the simple *τὸ θεῶ* is more common. The only meaning which I attach to this fact is that the chthonic gods were more important for local worship than for a universal mythology.

Again, if we make a distinction between gods of national worship and gods who were the source both of special blessings and of special evils, the chthonic gods, as well as heroes and agricultural gods, will belong to the latter class. The epic presupposed gods who were not angry with their worshipper except on special provocation. Later the connection of the gods with state worship was so intimate, the fortunes of the god were so bound up with the fortunes of the state itself, that it is hardly possible to conceive of a national god as being angry with the state where he was worshipped except in case of gross neglect or insult. Ritual, too, became really a political function performed with pomp and splendor, a part of the inherited life of the state. The question whether or not it was acceptable to the god would not arise, for both god and ritual had become a part of the state life. On the other hand, it was Demeter on whom the growth of the crops depended; some hero who sent a pestilence, in anger at neglect of his worship; Boreas, who destroyed now a hostile, now a friendly fleet. The chthonic gods with all their uncanny associations clearly belong to the latter class of divinities, whose anger is easily roused, but who have the power to send special blessings. At the same time this class is not limited to the chthonic gods, for it includes heroes as well as Olympian divinities who have nothing to do with souls.

It is entirely unnecessary for me to quote accounts of the worship of these chthonic gods to prove that they were invested with a mysterious dread just by reason of their connection with souls of the departed. In the fact that they were terrible gods whose anger was easily roused and difficult to allay, we see the reason why these divinities were chosen to protect the sanctity of the oath. Not because they were such ancient gods, but because of their dreaded nature were they invoked in this connection. Perhaps the practice goes back to a period when the souls of the dead were thought to pursue with vengeance the oathbreaker as well as other evil-doers. It is impossible, however, that they should be placed in this association without in turn being influenced by it; as personified curses that were invoked upon the head of the oathbreaker, they were dreaded, not for some mysterious nature, but because they were clothed with all the wishes of evil which were in the minds of those who invoked them. Similarly, the Erinyes were the more dreaded from the very fact that they embodied the vengeance of the murdered man toward the murderer. In a word, the dread nature of these divinities is due to their association with the souls of the dead; but this side of their nature reacts on itself, and is increased by the connections into which it brings them.

Nor can we say with Preller<sup>1</sup> that the awe-inspiring character of these gods was later entirely changed by reason of their connection with agriculture. Agricultural gods, too, were easily roused to anger—for the crops often failed. In such a case their anger must be propitiated; but the shrewd Greek thought it better to anticipate their possible anger and offer them propitiatory sacrifices in advance, before the crops were spoiled. The Homeric Hymn dwells at length on the anger of Demeter. It is not the mild mother-goddess who makes the whole world suffer because she feels she has been wronged. In fact, it would seem that the mildness which we attribute to Demeter was *not* hers in virtue of her being an agricultural goddess; it is a developed trait, due first to the fact that she was elevated from the position of a spirit of the grain to the rank of an Olympian divinity, and secondly to the striking development of the mother-idea in connection with the story of the rape of Persephone. As the heavenly grain-giver, as the divine mother who had lost her

<sup>1</sup> Demeter und Persephone, S. 87 f.

daughter and received her back again, she developed those traits which are beautifully expressed in the representations of Demeter in art. In general we may say that agricultural gods as well as chthonic gods, together with certain gods associated with the wilder aspects of nature, belong to one general class, the main characteristic of which is that they are easily roused to anger. The result of this trait was, of course, that men avoided having anything to do with such gods except when it was necessary, and that when it was necessary to approach them, every precaution was taken to soothe their possible anger.

Special blessings also came from chthonic gods. That very connection with the souls of the dead by which they partook of the mysterious and dreaded nature of souls, meant also that they could impart to men a hope of blessedness in the life beyond the grave. The effect of the Eleusinian Mysteries in producing such a hope was based on the fact that the daughter of Demeter was queen of the world of souls. By the mystic worship of soul-gods men might expect favor from these gods after their death.

A scholiast<sup>1</sup> remarks that Hades is never worshipped—and it is true that the god of death is not to be moved or turned aside by any sacrifices. The gods of health were worshipped by men who feared death, not the god of death himself. At the same time Hades-Plouton was not infrequently worshipped at places where there was felt to be some contact with the underworld. Odysseus sacrificed to Hades and Persephone in order to learn the future through the aid of Teiresias. In the later Greek world the Πλουτώνιον was a place where the god of the underworld was worshipped, in order that men might be successful in the citation of souls, and in learning the future from them. So the sick were brought to some of these openings into the realm of Hades, and wonderful cures were wrought on them. These were some of the special blessings which were expected from the gods who ruled over souls of the dead.

Finally, these gods sometimes played the rôle of national deliverers. Persephone several times receives the epithet *σώτειρα*, and in cases where the meaning of this epithet can be accurately determined, it has to do with the delivery of a nation from the perils of war. Legend assigned a similar office to Demeter in connection with the battles at Salamis and at Plataea; and the

<sup>1</sup> Eustath. ad Iliad. 744, 4; cf. Aisch. Frag. 156.

popularity of her worship was correspondingly increased. Moreover, at Elis there was a secret worship of Hades—the temple was entered by the priest alone once a year—because Hades had once appeared to aid the inhabitants of Elis in battle with an invader. In these few instances the chthonic gods perform the distinctive function of heroes.

### III.

Turning from the consideration of the nature of the chthonic gods to their worship, we are at once confronted by the suggestion of K. O. Müller, that propitiation has to do only with the chthonic gods.<sup>1</sup> The terminology of Greek sacrifice is very accurate at this point, so that the words used in describing a sacrifice leave no doubt as to its character. With reference to propitiatory sacrifices the first question is whether they are offered to other than chthonic gods; the second consideration is whether sacrifice to chthonic gods always follows the ritual of propitiatory sacrifice, or whether such gods receive the *θυσίαι* proper; and thirdly, I should like to call attention to the fact that certain sacrifices to chthonic gods are really mystic rather than propitiatory or honorary.

1. *Propitiatory sacrifice and libation.*—Propitiatory sacrifices are naturally offered, not to the great national gods of Greece whose life is bound up with that of the peoples they represent, but to the gods whose anger is roused easily and on slight provocation. The result of our study thus far has been to limit the term 'chthonic' somewhat strictly to gods associated with souls of the dead, and to show that the class of gods prone to anger includes several kinds of divinities in addition to the chthonic gods proper. One of the most careful students of Greek religion<sup>2</sup> has written: "Bei der eigentlichen Sühnung gehört das ganze Opfer den Unterirdischen," but the statement seems to me entirely without foundation. If we seek for examples of propitiatory sacrifices or sacrifices with similar rites, which are offered to the chthonic deities proper, very few can be found. I do not find mention of any clear cases of propitiatory sacrifice to Hades or to Persephone, although perhaps the rites described in the *Odyssey* κ and λ are based on propitiatory

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the distinction suggested by Porphyry, *De ant. nymph.* VI, p. 60, 15.

<sup>2</sup> H. Diels, *Sibyllinische Blätter*, S. 71.

sacrifices that were offered to the rulers of the dead by those who wished to obtain oracles from souls of the dead. The gods are *στρεπτοί*, while Hades alone is *ἀμείλιχος ἢ δ' ἀδάμαστος*, or *ἀμείλικτος*<sup>1</sup>—such expressions are at variance with any general practice of propitiating the king of the lower world. However, the sacrifice described in the epigram from the Thracian Chersonese (Kaibel, Epigr. Graec. 1034) is distinctly of the propitiatory type, and it seems to me that Euchaïtes must be a name for Hades, and that *ἡ θεά* must refer to his bride.

Nor do I find any instances of propitiatory sacrifice offered to Demeter. The nearest approach to anything of the sort is the peculiar sacrifice at Lykosoura described by Pausanias.<sup>2</sup> The act which transforms Demeter Erinys into Demeter Lousia near Thelpousa<sup>3</sup> is not a sacrifice but a bath of reconciling efficacy. So the word *ἰλάσκεσθαι* in the Homeric hymn to Demeter (vv. 274, 292) has to do with the *ἄργα*, and has no reference to sacrifices of propitiation such as are offered, e. g., to Apollo.

In Dio Chrysostom and several times in the scholia,<sup>4</sup> rites in the worship of Hekate are said to propitiate the wrath of the goddess. In these rites the blood of dogs was used to purify the superstitious, while the bodies were left at crossroads for Hekate and the 'averting gods.' This is propitiation, but not with ordinary propitiatory sacrifices. The latter type of sacrifice is found, however, in the worship of the Erinyes. At a shrine near Megalopolis men sacrificed (*ἐνήγισεν*) a black animal to the Eumenides to avert their wrath; similarly we find a *ὄλοκαύτωμα* of a black sheep at Keryneia, and *νυκτίσεμνα δείπνα* in their worship at Athens.<sup>5</sup>

The result of an examination of *recorded* instances of sacrifice to chthonic gods proper is that practically the only cases of propitiatory sacrifices offered to these gods in Greece are found in the worship of the Erinyes. The chthonic gods, however, i. e. the gods associated with souls, form but a part of a large class of divinities who are easily roused to anger, and to all of these divinities propitiatory sacrifices are necessarily offered. They are offered to agricultural divinities; e. g. to Demeter, Kore, and Zeus

<sup>1</sup> Iliad, I 158; Hom. Hymn. Dem. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Paus. VIII 37, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Paus. VIII 25, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Dio Chrys. IV, p. 168 R; Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 295; Harpocr., s. v. 'Ἐκάτη.

<sup>5</sup> Paus. VIII 34, 3; Schol. Soph. O. C. 42 from Istros; Aisch. Eum. 108.

Bouleus at Mykonos,<sup>1</sup> to Zeus *μελιχίος* at Athens,<sup>2</sup> and to Apollo in Ionian regions.<sup>3</sup> They are offered to Apollo to protect the state from possible or present pestilence. Before battle *σφάγια* were offered, e. g. to Artemis, to allay possible anger of the god. Both annual sacrifices and sacrifices in time of special need were offered to the Winds to allay their wrath and obtain their special favor.<sup>4</sup> Finally, sacrifices of this same general type were offered to souls of the dead. In all these instances the gods who receive these offerings are thought of as able to grant special blessings, while at the same time they are jealous, and prone to anger. They are not all of them gods connected with souls, nor all of them gods connected with the earth, but some of them are distinctly Olympian divinities. To apply the term 'chthonic' to the whole class is to use the term in a way the Greeks did not use it. P. Stengel,<sup>5</sup> in discussing this question, apparently calls *all* the gods who receive such sacrifices, chthonic gods, but he goes on to say that sacrifices to chthonic gods can not be distinguished from propitiatory sacrifices, because the occasion and the mode of offering the sacrifice are the same in each instance. If the rituals of propitiatory sacrifice (to Olympian gods and to chthonic gods) and sacrifice to chthonic gods are the same, it is evidently idle to use the ritual as a test of what gods are to be called 'chthonic' in distinction from 'Olympian'; and there is no foundation for saying that "jeder Gott einen chthonischen Charakter annehmen kann." To say that only gods of the lower regions ever receive propitiatory offerings,<sup>6</sup> is a step still farther from the truth.

'Soothing libations,' *μελίγματα*,<sup>7</sup> are to be discussed in this same connection. So far as we know, they form no part of the worship of Demeter or Persephone, of Hekate, or of Hades. They were, however, an important part of the worship of the dead and of the Erinyes. Wine was not used in these libations, and in general the lesser female divinities receive no wine.<sup>8</sup> At this

<sup>1</sup> Bull. Corr. Hell. XII 459 f., l. 16 f. = Dittenberger, S. I. G. 373.

<sup>2</sup> O. Band, Die attischen Diasien, S. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Preller-Robert, Griech. Myth. I 278, A. 1; Mommsen, Feste der Stadt Athen, 470 f.

<sup>4</sup> Stengel, in Hermes, XVI 346 f.

<sup>5</sup> Griech. Sakralalt., S. 87.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. supra, p. 253.

<sup>7</sup> Soph. O. C. 159; Aisch. Eum. 107.

<sup>8</sup> There is no evidence that wine was excluded from the worship of any chthonic god except the Erinyes, and it is entirely unlikely that the *θυσία* proper



point there is perhaps to be noted a difference between expiatory rites and the worship of certain chthonic gods; the libation is important to appease the Erinyes, but in general it forms no part of propitiatory sacrifice.

2. *Purification and mystic sacrifice.*—The use of blood, the blood of a sucking pig, as the most potent purifier, has been confidently explained as expressing the substitution of an animal's life for the life of a guilty man.<sup>1</sup> Many forms of purification, especially for murder, admit of this explanation. It does not so readily apply to purification before marriage, or before sharing the mysteries, nor, indeed, to the purification of an assembly-hall. In these instances it can hardly be forgotten that the pig is sacred to Demeter, and her favorite sacrifice. The use of a pig's blood can hardly be other than the use of the blood of a sacred animal to produce a mystic connection with the divinity. The result, then, would be such a consecration of the person to the god as will protect the man from the god's anger, and from all consequences of this anger. If this be the case, we may assume a contamination of other rites of purification, such that the use of a pig's blood, which belongs to the worship of Demeter, is extended to other cases in which men seek to remove the cause of some god's anger. This explanation of purification is strengthened by the fact that the blood of the animal sacred to Hekate, the dog, is used for purification in rites connected with the worship of Hekate. Insofar as purificatory rites should be explained in this manner, we are dealing, not with cleansings proper, nor with substitution, but with what I should term 'mystic sacrifices,' sacrifices which produce a mystic connection between the worshipper and his god for the benefit of the worshipper. The idea of mystic sacrifices has been so fully exploited in recent years by English students of the history of religion that it needs no explanation. An example<sup>2</sup> is sufficient. At the shrine of Apollo Δειραδιώτης "the *προφήτης* is a woman to whom marriage is for-

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was offered to chthonic gods without wine. It is therefore needless to assume an unchanging cultus of these gods from a period before wine was introduced into Greece; nor can we say with Stengel (Griech. Sakralalt., S. 86) that wine is excluded from this cultus on the ground that it was the joy-giving drink of living men.

<sup>1</sup> Stengel, Griech. Sakralalt., S. 88 f.; Diels, Sibyll. Blätter, S. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Paus. II 24, 1.

bidden. Each month a lamb is sacrificed at night, and when the woman tastes its blood she becomes possessed of the god." Stengel<sup>1</sup> calls this a *Sühnopfer*, but it has absolutely nothing to do with propitiation. The cults of Artemis and probably some other cults of Apollo furnish even better examples of mystic sacrifice, but I have selected this because of Stengel's reference to it. If it did not lead too far from my subject, I should like to show how Diels' argument for regarding expiatory sacrifices as based on substitution can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to show that expiatory sacrifice originated in a form of mystic sacrifice.

So far as we know, the worship of Hades included no mystic sacrifices. As for Demeter and Persephone, the only sacrifice of this type occurs when the sacred animal, the pig, is used to 'purify' the worshipper. It requires, however, but a slight extension of the word 'mystic' to make it apply to many of the rites in the worship of Demeter. The only objection to such a use of it lies in the fact that in the worship of Demeter the worshipper does not become possessed of the god, *ἔνθεος*, as in the more wild phases of the worship of Dionysos. In the worship of Demeter men see the experiences of the goddesses acted, or at least suggested by visible symbols—they even imitate themselves the acts of the goddess, till they come to share her feelings. It is not so much that a divine spirit enters into them, as that they feel themselves sharing the yearning, the sadness, and the anger of Demeter, and her boundless joy when Persephone is restored, until at length they enter into the very life of the goddess and can look forward with confident hope to a blessed life after death, under the divine protection. The word 'mystic' may be discarded, still the idea of this worship is much the same as the idea of mystic sacrifice, and it is the most characteristic development in the worship of chthonic gods. Many sacrifices to Hekate are clearly of this mystic type. There is a story that Hekate was a woman whom Artemis changed into a dog, and sacrifices of dogs to her can only be explained<sup>2</sup> on the supposition that the dog was her sacred animal. As such its blood was smeared on those who needed purification, to consecrate them to the goddess. The character of other *ἄργυα* in her worship we do not know.

<sup>1</sup> Griech. Kultusal., S. 92, and A. 12.

<sup>2</sup> We can hardly explain this fact on the ground of the natural antipathy of dogs to the moon, as does Preller (Demeter und Persephone, S. 208, A. 57).

3. *Honorary worship*.—The two types of worship that have already been considered correspond to the special characteristics of that general class of divinities which includes the chthonic gods. These divinities are prone to anger, so that they are approached with fear and receive sacrifices that are intended to propitiate their anger. They also have special blessings to bestow, and in order to obtain these blessings men employ those sacrifices which produce a mystic union with these gods. At the same time, they are not so clearly differentiated from the other gods as not to receive the ordinary types of sacrifice.

In 1894 Stengel wrote of the chthonic gods: "Hier gab es keine Speiseopfer"<sup>1</sup>; the next year this statement was modified.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, the *Speiseopfer* is more clearly proved for chthonic gods than is the *Sühnopfer*. E. g. at Megalopolis<sup>3</sup> there was a double worship of the Erinyes: black animals (sheep) were first sacrificed (*ἐναγίζεσθαι*) to them, and this was followed by a *θυσία*, a communion meal, of white animals. We have no reason to think that the *θυσία* which was offered to these goddesses at Athens by those acquitted of murder<sup>4</sup> was other than a festal communion meal. The sacrifice to Zeus chthonios and Ge chthonia at Mykonos is to be eaten, *δανύσθων αὐτοῦ*, and so, probably, is the sacrifice to Semele mentioned in the same inscription. So the sacrifice to Zeus Sosipolis at Magnesia for blessings on the crops is in no sense a propitiatory sacrifice. We know almost nothing in detail of the sacrifices offered to Demeter and Persephone. The technical terms of propitiatory sacrifice—*ἐναγίζειν*, *ἔντομα*, *σφάγια*, *μειλίγματα*, *πέλανος*—are not, so far as I know, applied to sacrifices offered to Demeter. Moreover, we do know that offerings to Demeter, Persephone, and Eubouleus are mentioned in Eleusinian inscriptions<sup>5</sup> in the same series with offerings to Athena, so that it is fair to regard them as all of the same character. The Eleusinian goddesses are called *χθόνιαι* by Herodotus, and their worship has a distinct reference to the future life, so that these sacrifices at Eleusis may fairly be classed as examples of true *θυσία* in the worship of chthonic gods.

I will refer to but one other type of worship, the *θεοξέμιον* or *lectisternium*.<sup>6</sup> This is best known in the worship of the Dios-

<sup>1</sup> Hermes, XXIX 286.

<sup>2</sup> Festschrift für L. Friedländer, S. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Paus. VIII 34, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Paus. I 28, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Dittenberger, S. I. G. 13; cf. also C. I. A. II 1, 628; IV 2, 385 d 13, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Rohde, Psyche, S. 121, A. 2.

kouroi, and in the worship of Apollo at Delphi. It appears elsewhere in the worship of heroes, as well as in the worship of gods of agriculture.<sup>1</sup> Now, it so happens that the single instance where we have precise knowledge as to the worship of Plouton is at Athens. Three inscriptions of much the same content direct that the hierophant prepare a couch for Plouton, and spread the table for him according to the oracle<sup>2</sup>; i. e. Plouton was worshipped with the *θεοξέμιον* as well as with the *θυσία*. Possibly we should find a reference to the same type of worship in some inscriptions from Mantinea<sup>3</sup> which describe a peculiar *λητουργία* in the service of Demeter. Some woman, not one of the college of priests, invites the goddess to her house; a procession conducts thither the goddess, in the person of her image, and she is richly entertained; later the procession is feasted at the expense of the woman who undertakes the service.

We have found that, so far as the accounts of sacrifice at our disposal are concerned, expiatory sacrifices and libations are offered to the Erinyes, but not to other chthonic gods. We have seen, secondly, that one form of mystic worship is characteristic of the rites of Demeter, Persephone, and Hekate, and that purification seems to be connected with such mystic worship. And, thirdly, we find evidence that the *lectisternium*, as well as the *θυσία* proper, is offered to chthonic gods in the same way that they are offered to Olympian deities. The conclusion is unavoidable that we are not justified in describing any one type of worship as distinctly chthonic. Even the rule that black animals are used in this worship has many exceptions. The forms of worship correspond with the character of the gods. The banquet-sacrifice is the normal form of sacrifice in the case of the greater gods whose worship is carried on by the state. Gods connected with souls, i. e. chthonic gods in the narrower sense of the term, belong to a class of gods who are easily roused to anger and who have special blessings to bestow, and in the worship of these gods propitiatory sacrifice and mystic sacrifice are the commoner forms of worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the reference to a couch prepared for Zeus Sosipolis in the long inscription about his worship at Magnesia.

<sup>2</sup> C. I. A. II 948-50.

<sup>3</sup> Lebas-Foucart, 352 h and i.