Political *Parthenoi*:

The Social and Political Significance of Female Performance in Archaic Greece

Submitted by James William Smith to the University of Exeter

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ……………………………………………………..

Abstract

This thesis will explore how social and political conditions in archaic Greece affected the composition of poetry for female choral performance. My primary source material will be the poetry of Alcman and Sappho. I examine the evidence suggesting that poems by both Alcman and Sappho commented on political issues, using this as a basis to argue that women in archaic Greece may have had a more vocal public presence that has previously been imagined. Rather than viewing female performance as a means of discussing purely feminine themes or reinforcing the idea of a disempowered female gender, I argue that the poetry of Alman and Sappho gives *parthenoi* an authoritative public voice to comment on issues in front of the watching community. Part of this authority is derived from the social value of *parthenoi,* who can act as economically and socially valuable points of exchange between communities, but I shall also be looking at how traditional elements of female performance genre were used to enhance female authority in archaic Sparta and Lesbos.

Once this has been established, this thesis will proceed to examine how public female performance dealt with major political and social issues in the archaic world. I shall argue that the performance of *parthenoi* did focus on primarily feminine concerns such as marriage, desire, and abduction, but that it could also be an opportunity to discuss much broader political themes that were of major importance to the entire *polis.* Alcman and Sappho use their poetry as a vehicle to comment on the society in which their poetry was composed, both discussing threats to order and representing solutions for a stable society. The content of female performed poetry was often composed as much for a male audience as for the performers themselves, using traditional female performance as a means of commenting on the current political climate. Through arguing these factors, the intention of this thesis is to suggest a much more prominent public role for archaic Greek females than has previously been recognised.

Table of Contents

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Abbreviations

Note that the following abbreviations for modern sources (for full publishing details of items listed here, except standard collections of texts and reference works, refer to the Bibliography).

AP	*Anthologia Palatina* (*Palatine Anthology*)
Campbell, 1982	D.A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric: Sappho and Alcaeus*^{rev. edn}
Campbell, 1988	D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric: Anacreon, Anacrontea, Early Choral Lyric*^{rev. edn}
Campbell, 1991	D. A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric: Steisichorus, Ibycus, Simonides, and Others*^{rev. edn}
Cole-Babbitt, 1949	F. Cole Babbitt, Plutarch, Moralia, Volume 3.
Collard and Cropp, 2008	C.Collard, and M.Cropp. *Euripides: Fragments.*
CVA	*Corpus Vasorum Antiqorum*
Davies PMGF	M. Davies, *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*
DK	H. Diels & W. Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*⁶
FGrHist	J. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griecischen Historiker*
Henderson, 2000	J. Henderson, *Aristophanes*: Birds; Lysistrata; Women at the Thesmophoria.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*, 14 vols
K-A	R. Kassel & C. Austin (ed.), *Poetae Comici Graeci* (8 vols)
Latte & Erbse	K. Latte & Erbse, H, *Lexica Graeca Minora*
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*
Lloyd-Jones, 1996	H. Lloyd-Jones, *Sophocles: Fragments*.
Most, 2007(a)	G.W. Most, *Hesiod:* Theogony, Works and Days, *Testimonia,* Volume 1.
Most, 2007(b)	G.W.Most, *Hesiod:* The Shield Catalogue of Women, *Other Fragments*, Volume 2.

Murray, 1995(a)	A.T. Murray, *Homer*: Odyssey, Volume 1, Books 1-12.
Murray, 1995(b)	A.T. Murray, *Homer*: Odyssey, Volume 2, Books 13-24.
Murray, 1999(a)	A.T. Murray, *Homer*: Iliad, Volume 1, Books 1-12.
Murray, 1999(b)	A.T. Murray, *Homer*: Iliad, Volume 2, Books 13-24.
MW	R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, *Fragmenta Hesiodea.*
OCT	*Oxford Classical Texts*
Olson, 2006	D. Olson, *Athenaeus:* The Learned Banqueters. Volume II, Books III.106e – V.
Olson, 2012	D. Olson, *Athenaeus*: The Learned Banqueters. Volume VIII, Book XV.
Page *PMG*	D.L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*
Race, 1997(a)	W.H. Race, *Pindar:* Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes.
Powell, 1925	J.U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina.*
Race, 1998(b)	W. H. Race, *Pindar*: Nemean Odes, Isthmian Odes, Fragments.
SEG	Chaniotis, et al (ed.), *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
SM	Sparta Museum
TGF	B. Snell & S Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*

Note on Transliteration and Translation

Most translations in this thesis are taken from the relevant edition of the Loeb Classical Library, with full referencing in footnotes. Where I have used my own translations or an alternative edition, additional explanation will usually be given to explain these choices. Any adaptations of the work of other scholars will also be highlighted throughout.

For the sake of accessibility, I have chosen to Latinise the majority of Greek names and terms used in this thesis, unless the Greek has become the commonly accepted form.

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to look at how social and political themes were reflected through female choral performance in archaic Greece, focusing on the poetry of Alcman and Sappho. Studying the female chorus provides an opportunity to explore the question of how women were perceived in various archaic Greek *poleis.* As this thesis will demonstrate, female choral performance provides ample evidence that women in archaic Lesbos and Sparta could have a significant public voice on political themes. In this respect, I hope that this thesis can help create further discussion over the question of women's position in archaic society by suggesting that they could have a more prominent public role than has been envisaged previously.

The fact that female choruses could sing about socially important themes has been recognised previously. Since 1977, when Claude Calame first published his brilliant study, *Les Choeurs de Jeunes Filles en Grece Archaique,* it has been accepted that the chorus played an important role as a forum in which girls could mark out the stages of their social development. In the revised 1997 edition, Calame encapsulates his position at the start of his fourth chapter, 'The Function of the Lyric Chorus:'

> The analysis of the female lyric chorus as to internal structure and connections to ritual and cult has shown it to play a frequent role in paying homage to deities. But above all it seems to have provided a vehicle for the intervention of gods into the human sphere, in conformity with the attributions of the divinity in question. The myths, and sometimes certain rituals, have helped explain the semantic configuration of cults that include choral dances by women. These cults are seen as marking the essential stages of the physiological, social and institutional development of the woman from birth to adulthood via marriage.[1]

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[1] Calame, 1997, 207.

Calame and, later, Wayne Ingalls have explored female choral performance as a type of training for young women, which seeks to teach them the civic values of their *polis,* often focusing on issues that were particularly important to the performers stage of life.[2] As a result, they argue that their performances often allude to social and political themes. More recent scholarship has sought to emphasise the importance of these political aspects in the civic sphere. Yung Lee Too has argued that we should view Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* as being a poem that expressed ideas central to Spartan political ideology, whilst Gloria Ferrari has more recently argued that the poem was an important seasonal performance in Sparta's civic calendar, replete with political imagery.[3] In Pindar's case, the Dapnephoria festival has just been the subject of an excellent study by Barbara Kowalzig, who discusses political aspects of Pindar's *Daphnephoricon* at some length.[4] As Laura Swift summarises in her recent overview of the genre*,* the fact that we find social moralising in *partheneia* is by no means a distinctive feature of the poetry. Swift comments:

> Parthenaic choruses moralize no more than epinician or paeanic ones, for example, which consisted of male citizens.[5]

Clearly then, there is a growing acceptance that political and social themes formed a significant part of the female chorus. However, in spite of this acceptance, many scholars struggle to reconcile this political and social content with the fact that its performers are female. For example, Eva Stehle has asserted that *parthenoi* can use performance as an opportunity to simultaneously voice civic messages and assert their own powerless position within society.[6] For Stehle, male poets such as Alcman and Pindar compose words for the chorus that see *parthenoi* consistently assert their inferiority and weak social position, particularly in relation to men. Despite accepting the civic aspects of female poetry, Calame and Ingalls both view Alcman's poetry as being important as education for girls rather than as political poetry for the community.[7] Even Ferrari, whose excellent work has highlighted the political importance of Alcman's poetry, states that the female chorus' authority rests entirely on their dramatic identity.[8] In spite of the fact that *parthenoi* often sing

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[2] Calame, 1997, 207-263 and Ingalls, 2000, 1-20.
[3] Too, 1997, 7-29 and Ferrari, 2008.
[4] Kowalzig, 2007, 377-389.
[5] Swift, 2010, 184, ft36. Klinck, 2001, 276-279 makes the same point.
[6] Stehle, 1998, 72-73 and throughout.
[7] Calame, 1997, 207-263 and Ingalls, 2000, 1-20.
[8] Ferrari, 2008, 113.

about political issues, the overriding view is that their focus remains on feminine concerns, whilst their power to exert influence over an audience comprised of males is limited entirely to a ritual context. Even in such a ritual context, the very fact that they are female means that their voice has less authority than a male equivalent.

In response to this trend, one of the central aims of this thesis is to demonstrate that archaic female poetry reflects the political importance of women in archaic Sparta and Lesbos, and to suggest that it was appropriate for females to comment publicly on these issues. As we shall see, Alcman's chorus did have a potent public voice and a major civic role to play, partially owing to their important political role in archaic Spartan society. Alcman is not a male poet highlighting the inferior social role of women, but a poet expert in highlighting powerful aspects of female performance genre and weaving a public message for his community. By recognising that girls had a valuable social role to play and through understanding that performance reflected this value, I hope to come to a better understanding of the role female performance played in the archaic Spartan social system. From this point, it should become clear that the content of Alcman's *partheneia* was often of paramount importance to the creation and maintenance of *eunomia* at Sparta. Spartan *parthenoi* were implicitly linked to the social and political order of the state, and this fact was reflected both in the poetry that they performed and the forceful voice with which they sang it.

Whilst there is a consensus that Alcman's poetry was important in the social development of Spartan *parthenoi*, scholarship on the political nature of Sappho's poetry remains in its infancy.[9] Indeed, there remains some uncertainty amongst scholars as to whether she even spoke in public or dealt with political themes. Arguments that Sappho's poetry was performed for a small group of her own companions looks increasingly outdated, as scholarship from Aloni, Rösler, Ferrari, Greene, Lardinois, Parker and Nagy has sought to place the performance of Sappho's poetry in a public setting.[10] Aloni, Parker and Ferrari have been the foremost advocates that some of this publicly performed poetry may have been motivated politically, but there has been little work done to place Sappho's poetry in the turbulent context in which she composed or to compare it with similar works from the archaic world.

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[9] Traditionally, Sappho's poetry has been viewed as composed for private, female dominated performance: Page, 1955, 119; Lefkowitz, 1981, 59-68; Skinner, 1983, 13.
[10] Lardinois, 1994, 57-84 and 1996, 113-124; Calame, 1996, 113-124; Hallett, 1996, 132-142; Aloni, 1997, LXVI-LXXV; Parker, 2005; Nagy, 2007; Greene, 2008; and Ferrari, 2010.

Thus, the purpose of the second half of this thesis is to suggest that much of Sappho's poetry was influenced by the political situation on archaic Lesbos. Sappho's poetry subsequently focuses on major social issues in a similar manner to many other male poets of her time. Whilst much of her poetry may have been personal, aspects of Sappho's work on wealth, marriage, death and political rivalries all resonate with her male poetic counterparts. Furthermore, there is evidence which suggests that these politically significant themes could have been publicly performed and articulated by Sappho's female chorus, again suggesting that the women of archaic Lesbos had a public voice to comment on civic issues. The fact that an elite woman like Sappho could compose political poetry that shares many thematic characteristics with her male contemporaries and that could have been performed in a variety of public settings again challenges traditional perceptions of the place of women in archaic Greece. Sappho's femininity is certainly a vital part of understanding her poetry, contributing to its particular character, but this should not cloud the fact that the socio-political context of its composition is also clearly evident from the surviving fragments.

The other central aim of this thesis is to analyse the importance of female performance to the community. Certain social themes appear consistently between archaic Sparta and Lesbos, whilst other content of the poetry clearly has a very specific relevance to the particular context in which it was composed. Anthropologists such as Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and Paul Spencer have long discussed the potential for ritual performances to explore social tensions.[11] Through performance, difficult themes can be confronted within the space of ritual in a manner which does not pose a direct threat to the performers. Potentially dangerous issues can be performed and thus confronted, understood and overcome. Barbara Kowalzig's masterful *Singing for the Gods: Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece,* has recently refocused attention on how such performances could be particularly significant to the politically unstable situation, which existed

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[11] The bibliography on this area is vast, and I will interact with it throughout this thesis. For seminal works see: Van Gennep, 1960; Durkheim, 1961; Levi Strauss, 1963; Geertz, 1973; Turner, 1969; 1982; 1986; 1990; Spencer, 1985. Schrechner, 1990; Turnbull, 1990; and Rappaport, 1999 provide good overviews. Spencer's volume contains several articlaes that have sought to examine the performance of young girls in modern tribal societies and the following articles provided interesting comparative material: Blacking, 1985, 64-91; Middleton, 1985, 165-182; Gell, 1985, 183-205. In terms of the Greek world, Kowalzig, 2007, is a marvellously ambitious and comprehensive attempt to look at politics within Greek ritual performance, Naerebout, 1997, provides a relatively recent overview of anthropological studies of Greek performance. Calame, 1999(b), 278-312, looks at tribal initiation in the context of Plato's *Laws* and Calame, 2009, is a good summary of relevant historiography. Kalavrezou, 2004, 279-296, is also a useful example.

across archaic Greece.[12] Although Kowalzig offers some discussion of Pindar's *partheneia,* her focus is not largely on female performance. Following on from Kowalzig's research, another central goal of this thesis is to assess how female political performance helped confront social tensions, which were prevalent in archaic Sparta and Lesbos. Particularly in the case of ritual poetry, we shall see that Alcman and Sappho composed for performance to help both their chorus and their audience confront the dynamic political changes that affected their *poleis.*

In order to explore some of these themes where our evidence is scanty, I shall also be referring to comparative material. For the sake of clarity, it is worth stating that my intention here is not to attempt to prove outright parallels between societies which will sometimes be vastly separated by time and space. Instead, as Nagy eloquently put it:

> What is achieved, rather, is simply the enhanced likelihood that parallel lines of interpretation might lead to a deeper understanding of the individual traditions being compared.[13]

Through comparative anthropology, some suggestions can be made which help to illuminate some otherwise confusing aspects of female choral performance. This is particularly true in the case of Sappho's wedding poetry, a theme for which ample contemporary comparative material exists. Although Greek weddings songs may be few and far between, a wealth of scholarship exists which explores wedding performance around the world and we shall see that comparative work can help to shed some light on seemingly contradictory elements of Sappho's work.

To summarize, then, this thesis will make the following arguments:

1) Rather than always focusing on feminine concerns, the poetry of Alcman and Sappho could have political significance for the whole community. In both cases the

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[12] Kowalzig, 2007, 377-389.
[13] Nagy, 1996, 3.

performance of their poetry could be public and could deal with a wide range of political issues in a similar way to poetry performed by males.

2) In archaic Greece females were able to perform political poetry in public and with a degree of authority. In archaic Sparta we shall see that Alcman's chorus spoke with an authoritative voice, which aligns with the popular image of powerful Spartan women that blossomed in classical Greece, whilst there is evidence that suggests Sappho and her female chorus could also sing publicly on political themes.

3) Alcman's *partheneia* played an important role in encouraging the *eunomia* of the developing Spartan state. *Parthenoi* had an important role within Spartan society and performance helped to define their place within in. Through ritual performance, both Spartan dancers and the watching audience came to better understand the important civic role of *parthenoi* in their society*.*

4) In Sappho's case, we shall see that her poetry also dealt with the major social and political issues that afflicted archaic Lesbos. Again, through performance, often ritual, Sappho's poetry explores and comments on social tensions that existed within her *polis.*

5) In this respect, Sappho's poetry bears comparison with contemporary male poets. Whilst Sappho's poetry has a female perspective, her reflections on political issues often align closely with those of other archaic poets. As we shall see, poetry on death, marriage, social class, and political turbulence have much in common with the attitudes expressed by her poetic contemporaries.

6) Above all, we shall see that female archaic poetry was heavily influenced by the social and political developments which were occurring when they were composed. Far from being sheltered in a closed off female world, Alcman and Sappho's poetry shows all of the hallmarks of being firmly entrenched in the civic life of their community. *Parthenoi* had an important role to play in their communities, and their performances reflect this.

Through studying these aspects of performance, it should become clear that the women of archaic Sparta and Lesbos had a much more prominent social position than scholarship has previously recognised.

Chapter 1 – Introducing the Female Chorus

In order to understand the nature of Alcman and Sappho's compositions, it is first necessary to understand as much as possible about the nature of female performance in archaic Greece. In this opening chapter, I shall identify some key features for studying social and political aspects of the female chorus.

Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece, the revised and updated English edition of Calame's great work, is still the main work of reference for this topic, with sections devoted to the organisation, composition, and structure of the chorus.[1] However, my focus on social and political aspects of female performance requires certain areas to be explored in more detail, and the purpose of this chapter is to lay groundwork for the rest of the thesis by dealing with some introductory themes. I want to reappraise and redefine some of the evidence concerning the girls who performed in the female chorus, before looking at some particular civic aspects of their organisation. Finally, I shall work through some of these issues with a practical example, Pindar's *Daphnephoricon.* Looking at this poem, our only substantial surviving *partheneon* from the classical period, will not only allow for an examination of the chorus' functions, but will also demonstrate the chorus' ability to perform on social and political themes publicly. This will also allow this thesis to challenge some preconceptions about the female performing voice and assess how female performers could speak on civic topics. As such, this chapter will address the following research questions:

1) Who were the performers of *partheneia?* How do poets characterise them in terms of age and social status? Is the terminology used to describe them significant?

2) Does the organisation of the chorus have a civic aspect, particularly in Sparta? How exactly were girls selected for performances on major public occasions? How do civic aspects of choral organisation contribute to our understanding of their social and political functions?

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[1] Calame, 1997.

3) How can anthropological methodologies help us to understand a female choral performance like Pindar's *Daphnephoricon?* How does Pindar represent girls talking about social and political issues? Under what circumstances and in what ways is it appropriate for girls to talk about social or political issues?

4) How is the female chorus characterised and how does this contribute to their authority as ritual speakers? What characteristics of the female performance genre and of the performers themselves contribute to the authority of their performance?

5) How can we explain the differences between the character of Pindar's classical chorus and Alcman's archaic chorus? Does the way the poets characterise their choruses tell us anything about the authority of female performance in their respective societies?

Through addressing these issues at an early stage, relevant methodologies, recurring themes, and a theoretical framework can be identified with which to better understand the archaic poetry that is the main focus of this thesis.

1.1 Performers in the Female Chorus

In order to study social and political aspects of female choral performance, it is first necessary to know as much as possible about the participants. The age, status, and social standing of the performers would have affected how their audience perceived them and how mythology associated with their performance was interpreted. In order to establish all that we can about these factors, this opening section will address some key issues surrounding the identity of female performers. Calame's exceptional study remains the standard work for information on organisational aspects of the female chorus and it is not my intention to go over old ground.[2] However, aspects such as the terminology used to describe participants and the way the chorus was structured have particular relevance to this study. Discussing them in more detail at this early stage will ensure clarity throughout the thesis.

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[2] Calame, 1997, 19-85 provides facts and figures on various aspects of choral performance. For a more detailed examination of Alcman specifically see Calame, 1983.

The terminology used to describe female performers is especially significant and is often an area that has led to misunderstandings on females in the Greek world. Sappho uses a variety of different terms, almost interchangeably. Fragment 58 sees her address a group of *paides* in what seems likely to be a choral performance*,* fragment 140 sees a group of *korai* performing ritual laments for Adonis, and fragments like 27 show *parthenoi* engaged in wedding performances.[3] What can these tell us about the character of the performers? Does terminology allow us to say anything specific about the girls involved and how exactly should these words be translated? As we shall be encountering these terms at regular intervals, ensuring a good understanding of the connotations attached to them can enhance our understanding of the poetry.

Female Terminology

I begin by assessing the terminology with which poets describe the participants in female choral performances. The performers are referred to by a number of different terms. Although *parthenoi* is the most common term associated with choruses of young girls, *korai, nymphai, neanides* and *paides* all feature in some poems.[4] As in Sappho, at some points it seems that they can be used interchangeably; however, in other cases there is evidence to suggest that the terminology used bears real importance for our understanding of the performer's age and status.

The most common word that we find used to describe girls associated with choral performance is *parthenoi.* Both of Alcman's longest surviving choral poems feature *parthenoi,* a term that also appears regularly in the poetry of Sappho.[5] *Parthenoi* provide the subject matter for the three most substantial female oriented choral poems that survive.[6] *Parthenos* is often used to describe chaste deities such as Artemis and Iphigenia, inspiring the traditional link with virginity.[7] However, as is not consistently recognised, virginity is not a key component for the status of

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[3] Sappho, 58.1-2; 140; and 27.10.
[4] An examination of choruses of married women is beyond the boundaries of this thesis.
[5] Alcman, 1.86 and 3.72. For a further discussion of Sappho poems which feature the term *parthenoi* see chapter 5.
[6] Alcman, 1; 3; and Pindar, 94b.12 and 34.
[7] Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 17 and Herodotus, 4.103.

parthenos. We also see occasions where the term is used to refer to unmarried young girls who have been sexually active. Pindar mentions the following tale:

ἔσχε τοι ταύταν μεγάλαν ἀυάταν

καλλιπέπλου λῆμα Κορωνίδος· ἐλθόν-

τος γὰρ εὐνάσθη ξένου

λέκτροισιν ἀπ' Ἀρκαδίας…..

καὶ τότε γνοὺς Ἴσχυος Εἰλατίδα

ξεινίαν κοίταν ἄθεμίν τε δόλον, πέμ-

ψεν κασιγ νήταν μένει

θυίοισαν ἀμαιμακέτῳ

ἐς Λακέρειαν, ἐπεὶ παρὰ Βοιβιάδος

κρημνοῖσιν ᾧκει παρθένος·

Indeed headstrong Coronis of the beautiful robes fell victim to that great delusion, for she slept in the bed of a stranger who came from Arcadia…… And at this time, when he knew of her sleeping with the stranger Ischys, son of Elatos, and her impious deceit, he sent his sister raging with irresistible force to Lakereia, for the maiden (*parthenos)* was living by the banks of Lake Boibias.[8]

Despite the fact that Coronis, an unfortunate lover of Apollo, has had sex and even become pregnant with Asclepius, she remains a *parthenos.*[9] In Giulia Sissa's study of Greek virginity, she identifies several other girls who have had sexual relations who are still referred to by the term *parthenos.*[10] Furthermore, individuals such as Parthenopaeus, the mythological son of Atalanta

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[8] Pindar, *Pythian,* 3.24-34. Race, 1997, 252-255. Other examples include: Homer, *Iliad,* 2.514; Sophocles, *Trachiniae,* 1219; and Aristophanes, *Clouds,* 530.
[9] Pindar, *Pythian,* 3.34-39. Sissa, 1990, 78.
[10] Sissa, 1990, 73-86.

whose name literally translates as son of a *parthenos,* give further evidence that the word was not essentially linked to virginity, but rather to the status of being unmarried. It is therefore slightly misleading to translate the term *parthenos* as 'maiden,' its most common modern translation, considering all of the connotations of chastity which the word carries today. However, in no case do we find an example where a *parthenos* has already been married. Sissa uses Sophocles *Trachiniae* to illustrate the point.[11] Although both Deianira and Iole are the lovers of Heracles, Iole is still referred to as a *parthenos* as she is not married*.* Deianira makes the difference explicit - it is only when a girl is married that 'instead of *parthenos* one is called *gunē.'*[12]

Sissa is correct to challenge scholars who continued to translate the term inaccurately; however, ambiguity sometimes still exists in modern works.[13] For the sake of clarity, throughout the course of this thesis I therefore resist translating the word *parthenos,* as no modern term succinctly captures its meaning. *Parthenoi* are unmarried girls who are approaching maturity and marriage. Generally, they are associated with virginity, but the fact that one can have sex and remain a *parthenos* should dispel any notions that virginity was an essential feature for the term. This definition will prove important in correctly understanding the character of Alcman's poetry.

Another term that is used frequently to describe choruses of young girls and seems to have had a close equivalency with *parthenoi,* is *neanides*. *Neanis* appears several times in Alcman's poetry, including twice in the *Louvre Partheneion.*[14] Here we see the word used of girls who are described as *parthenoi* just a few lines later*,* indicating that, at least in archaic Sparta, the two terms had similar meanings.[15] Pindar uses *neanis* to describe Cyrene just at the moment when Apollo catches sight of her and is amazed by her beauty.[16] Aeschylus also speaks of *neanides* as young girls who will be looking for marriage:

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[11] Sissa, 1990, 79.
[12] Sophocles, *Trachiniae,* 147-150.
[13] Sissa, 1990, 76-77 criticises Brelich, 1969, and Jeanmaire 1939, specifically for their failure to define *parthenos.* Dillon, 2002, persists in making a strong link to virginity throughout his book.
[14] Alcman, 1.68; 1.90; and 82. See also Alcman, 10b.17 for the use of the term in a male context.
[15] Alcman, 1.86.
[16] Pindar, *Pythian,* 9.31.

νεανίδων τ᾽ ἐπηράτων

ἀνδροτυχεῖς βιότους

δότε,

Give to lovely *neanides* life with a husband.[17]

In the case of *neanides,* it appears that the girls who are referred to are approaching a time when they will be eligible to marry. Both Alcman and Pindar emphasise their beauty as they do *parthenoi.*[18] It therefore seems likely that *neanides* had similar connotations to *parthenoi,* young women who are approaching maturity. Indeed, in the *Odyssey* we see both terms used together to describe the form of a young woman taken by Athena when she comes to Odyssesus' aid.[19]

Korai is a more general word for girls. The term appears to be widely used to describe women across a broader range of time. For example, Sophocles uses *korē* in relation to a virginal girl, whereas both Homer and Euripides use it to describe a young bride or wife.[20] Once again, the term does not have strict associations with virginity. In the *Iliad,* Briseis is described as a *korē,* regardless of her status as a prisoner of war and a concubine.[21] When Sappho speaks of *korai,* she describes the Graces and a group of girls participating in a ritual lament for Adonis.[22] The crucial difference is that, unlike *parthenoi*, we do sometimes see *korai* used of girls who are already brides. However, it is not possible to identify a specific role or status for *korai.* Rather we must be satisfied in saying that it was a more general term for girls, with a less specific status than *parthenoi.*

Paides is an even more ambiguous term that can refer to both male and female children.[23] *Pais* is often used to refer to the daughter or son of a named individual, as we see in the first book of the *Iliad,* when Chryses' daughter is described in this way. Homer also uses *paides* to describe

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[17] Aeschylus, *Eumenides,* 958-960. My Translation.
[18] Alcman, 1.67-69: A Lydian headband is the 'pride of dark-eyed *neanides*.'
[19] Homer, *Odyssey,* 7.20. Euripides, *Andromache,* 192, provides us with a single example where *neanides* is used to refer to a young wife (Hermione), although this may be a derogatory remark in the context of Andromache's speech.
[20] Homer, *Iliad,* 6.247; *Odyssey,* 18.279; Sophocles, *Trachinae,* 536; and Euripides, *Orestes,* 1438.
[21] Homer, *Iliad,* 1.98; 1.337; and 2.689.
[22] Sappho, 53 and 140a
[23] Liddell and Scott, 1925, 1289.

particularly young children.[24] However, Sappho confirms that *paides* could be used in the context of wedding songs. Fragment 113 reads:

οὐ γὰρ ἑτέρα νῦν πάις ὦ γάμβρε τεαύτα

For, Bridegroom, there (was?) never another girl like this one.[25]

This is in stark contrast to Sappho's description of the childlike Atthis:

ἠπάμαν μὲν ἔγω σέθεν ᾿Ατθι πάλαι ποτά

σμίκρα μοι πάις ἔμμεν᾿ ἐφαίνεο κἄχαρις.

I loved you, Atthis, once long ago. You seemed to me a small, graceless child.[26]

Elsewhere Sappho uses the term to describe young girls or to suggest ancestry, but the use of *pais* in a wedding song indicates that a certain degree of ambiguity existed.[27] The use of the term in the wedding song may add poignancy to the departure of the young bride, but it certainly confirms that a *pais* was an acceptable term for a bride on Lesbos. Furthermore, at the end of both Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* and fragment 3, *paides* also refers to girls previously described as *parthenoi,* confirming the Alcman used the term flexibly.[28] Generally, *paides* referred to young children, but we should have no concern about accepting it as a term of reference for girls of marriageable age.

    The final term which must be considered, *nymphai,* is particularly important. *Nymphai* are brides, a state that logically follows from *parthenoi.* Fragments 116 and 117 of Sappho's corpus bid farewell to the bride as she is married. Fragment 116 reads:

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[24] For examples see Homer, *Iliad*, 1.20; 1.443; and 2.289.
[25] Sappho, 113. Campbell, 1982, 136-137.
[26] Sappho, 49. Campbell, 1982, 94-95.
[27] Sappho, 103 and 104a.
[28] Alcman, 1.99 and 3.82-84.

χαῖρε, νύμφα, χαῖρε, τίμιε γάμβρε,

Farewell, bride, farewell, worthy bridegroom…[29]

However, whilst *nymphai* describes brides in the mortal sphere, the same word very commonly refers to a goddess, the nymph.[30] Gregory Nagy explains the significance of this crossover by suggesting that the bride is equated to the deity during the wedding ceremony, claiming that, 'by implication, the ritual occasion of the wedding, as formalised in a bridal song, collapses the distinction between 'bride' and 'goddess'.'[31]

The use of *nymphai* to mean both brides and deities hints at one of the central themes to be explored in this thesis; performance as a means for a girl to take on an elevated status during a particulalry important time of life. This is a theme I shall return to in detail later in this chapter, but for now it is important to establish that the terminology for bride and nymph is the same.

Conclusions

To summarise, with few exceptions, the terms explored in this section carry the following connotations: *Parthenoi* and *neanides* are girls of marriageable age, often characterised by their beauty and desirability. The status of *parthenos* prioritises not being married over being virginal. *Korai* is a more generic term, which can be used to refer to a wider range of girls, even occasionally married ones. *Paides* normally refers to younger children and girls, although both Alcman and Sappho appear happy to use the word to describe brides or girls approaching marriage. Sappho, in particular, seems to be reasonably flexible with the terms *parthenoi, korai* and *paides.* Alcman too

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[29] Sappho, 116. Campbell, 1982, 138-139.
[30] Examples of *nymphai* as brides: Homer, *Iliad,* 3.130; 18.492; *Odyssey,* 4.743; Herodotus, 4.172; Euripides, *Medea,* 150; and *Andromeda,* 140. As nymph: Homer, *Iliad,* 24.616; Hesiod, *Theogony,* 130. There are rare exceptions when we find marriageable young women described as *nymphai* outside of a marriage context, but this is done to emphasise the eligibility for marriage of the girl in question. For example, Homer, *Iliad,* 9.560.
[31] Nagy, 1996, 84.

seems willing to alternate between them. Although these terms do not allow us to draw any precise conclusions about the age or status of participants, they do highlight some distinctions that will be useful throughout this thesis. Most importantly, when a poet refers to *parthenoi* they are referring to girls in a particular group. Whilst other terms appear to have been more flexible, *parthenoi* and *neanides* were girls who were rapidly approaching the time of their marriage.

1.2 Aspects of Choral Performance

Although terminology is a useful tool in identifying broad groups of choral performers, it does not allow us to draw precise conclusions about the age and status of the girls. It merely suggests that choruses would be made up of girls of a similar status, for example those who could be broadly defined as *parthenoi.*

It is the intention of this section to discuss aspects of the organisation of the female chorus in detail. At this early stage, the primary focus will be Alcman's chorus. As we shall see, the evidence for choral organisation and participation in archaic Lesbos requires a different approach. Since the next four chapters of this thesis focus on Alcman's poetry, this section will look at the evidence for archaic Sparta, although comments that apply to the chorus more generally are also included. In order to learn more about choral participants, I shall be looking in detail at what Alcman's characterisation of *parthenoi* can tell us about their age and status.

I also want to consider the extent to which a *polis* like Sparta would have involved its entire population of *parthenoi* in choral performance. Certainly, musical performances were extremely common at Sparta, with Calame identifying numerous ritual contexts in which young women could have performed.[32] Yet the performers of Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion,* and possibly also fragment 5, seem to be elite or even royal girls, indicating that certain performances were reserved for members of high-ranking families.[33] Elite domination of ritual is something that we find elsewhere, with Robert Parker recently suggesting that the *Arkteia,* an Athenian age-class rite, although nominally

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[32] Calame, 1997, 141-206.
[33] See especially West, 1992, 1-7.

open to all, was probably practically reserved for the elite.[34] Knowing as much as possible about who is singing Alcman's poetry, how they were organised and how widespread participation in these choruses extended will naturally help in exploring the socio-political importance of the poetry throughout the following chapters.

In order to address these issues, this section will explore the following research questions:

1) Does Alcman categorise his performers as being of a particular age or status? How can his focus on their hair, often cited as a defining characteristic of *parthenoi,* help us understand their status?

2) To what extent were large numbers involved in female choral performance at Sparta? Was the Spartan chorus dominated by elite members of society? How was the chorus organised? How were factors such as age, social status and tribal origins important in forming choruses?

Initially, I want to challenge arguments that claim Plutarch's comments on Spartan women cutting their hair when they marry can be used as evidence to understand the age and status of Alcman's performers. Christina Clark and Paul Cartledge have suggested that Alcman focuses so extensively on the hair of his *parthenoi*, specifically because it will be cut off when they marry.[35] Alcman certainly does focus a great deal of attention on hair and as Ephraim David has demonstrated in impressive detail, hairstyle was certainly an important social marker in Sparta.[36] However, the archaic evidence strongly indicates that Plutarch's claims should not be accepted. I want to present an alternative model for understanding Alcman's focus on female hair so that we

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[34] Parker, 2005, 228-232. Parker's thesis is the most convincing argument yet concerning the rites that took place at Brauron. He claims that there was 'universal right of access (among citizens) but restricted actual participation.' Based on a passage of Didymus (Schmidt, fr J) which equates 'to tithe' with 'to be a bear,' Parker theorises that the expense required to participate in the ritual would have led to limited participation. A more extensive discussion of the rites that took place at Brauron is beyond the bounds of this thesis, but for further discussion of the rituals that took place there see: Papadimitriou, 1963, 111-120; Kahil, 1963, 5-29 and 1965, 20-33; Sourvinou, 1971, 339-342 and 1988, 39-67; Cole, 1984, 233-244, and 1998, 27-43; Hamilton, 1989, 449-472; Lonsdale, 1993, 171-193; Demand, 1994, 107-112; and Faraone, 2003, 43-68.

[35] Clark, 1996, 159 and Cartledge, 1979, 115 notes that Alcman's focus on hair was significant in a Spartan context before linking this to Plutarch's arguments on pages 122-23.

[36] David, 1992, 11-21.

can recognise exactly how he characterised his performers. Understanding these elements should lay solid foundations to inform the following chapters on Alcman's poetry, allowing interpretations to be made with a full understanding of the participants involved in the performances.

On the question of participation, I hope to suggest that we should imagine the majority of, if not all, Spartan girls participating in the chorus. Though major performances, such as the occasion for which I shall argue the *Louvre Partheneion* was composed, may have been reserved for the elite, generally participation was widespread. In light of this, I also want to address Calame's intriguing claim that performance in the chorus could mark out important moments in the female life-cycle, confirming that the chorus played a major role in the development of girls across archaic Sparta.[37]

The Age and Status of Alcman's Performers

Calame is not alone in suggesting that Alcman's chorus are taking place in an initiation or transitional rite.[38] Naturally, understanding the nature of the chorus' performance is integral to understanding how the social and political content of the poetry should be interpreted. As will become increasingly apparent, I am of the opinion that the status of *parthenoi* and the approach of their marriages was vital to the composition of Alcman's poem. Marriage was of paramount importance to archaic Sparta and subsequently became a major influence on the way Alcman composed his poetry. In this section, it will become clear that Alcman's characterisation of his *parthenoi* was designed to emphasise that they were on the cusp of marriage, a factor that played a key role in determining its mythical narrative.

In order to demonstrate the important distinction that Alcman makes concerning his choruses' status, I shall briefly examine evidence for the age-grade system, before exploring how

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[37] Calame, 1997, 202-206.

[38] For example, Calame, 1997, 202-206; Ingalls, 2000, 1-20; and Luginbill, 2009, 27-54 are the most explicit examples of the chorus as an area for education or initiation. Brelich, 1969, 113-207 provides a wide-ranging discussion concerning initiation of Spartan boys and girls, including some speculation about Alcman's chorus. Vidal-Naquet, 1981, remains an exceptional study of transition, liminality, and initiation in the Greek world and Redfield, 1990, 115-134 is useful for looking at female initiations in the context of ritual and the *polis.*

Alcman's characterisation of his chorus allows us to comment on their stage of life. In particular, I want to focus on the way Alcman discusses hair, a particularly common descriptive feature of his *parthenoi* and an important social characteristic in archaic Sparta. As I noted in the introduction to this section, it has been suggested that Alcman focuses on his chorus' hair because, as Plutarch tells us, it will be cut off when the girls marry.[39] However, the logic of using Plutarch's comments to analyse Alcman's poetry is flawed. The archaic evidence does not support this theory and I shall present an alternative model: Alcman's focus on the hair of his *parthenoi* is an important distinguishing characteristic, not because their heads were shaved but because they began wearing a veil after they are married.

To understand fully the impact of Alcman's references to his chorus' readiness for marriage, it is first helpful to briefly explore the role of choruses more generally in marking out stages of the female life cycle. One of the most exciting aspects of Calame's work was his demonstration that the chorus could serve to mark out various stages in the life of its performers.[40] The concept has been recently summarised by Joan Connelly in relation to female ritual service:

Like choruses, the age-tiered groupings of ritual service reflected the collective character of a family model at the core. Each group had a special relationship to the divinity, based on the goddesses own age, sexual status, and characteristics.[41]

There is certainly evidence from elsewhere in Greece to support the concept that girls performed with contemporaries at a similar point in their life-cycle.[42] The term *hetaira* often appears in a choral context, potentially to signify the close relationship that was encouraged between chorus members and to suggest the girls were of a similar age. The Homeric epics and

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[39] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus,* 15.3. See Clark, 1996, 159; Cartledge, 2001, 115 and 122-23.
[40] Calame, 1997, 202-206.
[41] Connelly, 2007, 29.
[42] Again, the Athenain *Arkteia* can provide some useful, although highly controversial evidence for this. I refer the reader to the extensive bibliography cited above (ft34), Particuarly, Sourvinou-Inwood, 1988, 39-67, who provides an interesting discussion on the age of participants based on their iconographic representation.

Pindar provide prominent examples.[43] For example, lines sixteen to nineteen of Pindar's 3rd Pythian read:

οὐκ ἔμειν᾽ ἐλθεῖν τράπεζαν νυμφίαν,

οὐδὲ παμφώνων ἰαχὰν ὑμεναίων, ἅλικες

οἶα παρθένοι φιλέοισιν ἑταῖραι

ἑσπερίαις ὑποκουρίζεσθ᾽ ἀοιδαῖς.

She could not wait for the marriage feast to come or for the sound of full-voiced nuptial hymns with such endearments as unmarried companions are wont to utter in evening songs.[44]

The word *halikes* is used to describe the girls of the chorus, just as Alcman uses it in fragment 10b to describe male choral performers.[45] *Halikes* regular reappearance emphasises the fact that the girls often performed with others in the same age group.[46]

Calame argued, albeit tentatively, that, like boys in the Spartan *agōgē,* young Spartan girls would proceed through their choral education in groups made up of their contemporaries.[47] Calame's basis for arguing that Spartan girls may have been organised into age-grade bands begins with the *agelē.* In Sparta, *agelē,* which translates as 'herd,' was the term ascribed to the groups into which boys were put form the age of seven, so that they could begin their military training. In Sparta there appears to have been a strict system of age groups in place for the boys. When they began the

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[43] Homer, *Iliad*, 5.325; *Odyssey*, 3.361; 22.208; and Pindar, *Pythian* 3.16-19.
[44] Pindar, *Pythian,* 3.16-19. Race, 1997, 252-253 (adapted).
[45] Alcman, 10b.
[46] Calame, 1997, 26-29. He states the following examples: Aristophanes, *Thesmorphoriazousai,* 1029 and Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris,* 1143. For more evidence on the use of *halikes*: Plato, *Republic,* 461b, sees Plato use the word simply to signify women of a marriageable age, suggesting that he was grouping women by their status rather than by a precise age. See also, Herodotus, 1.209 and Thucydides, 7.60 for further evidence than *halikes* was used when an individual was of an age appropriate to perform an activity.
[47] Calame, 1997, 29-31.

agōgē to the age of twenty, when the individual ceased to be a boy and acquired the title *eirēn,* their life appears to have been divided into a series of age categories.[48] A Scholiast of Herodotus reads:

Εἰρήν. παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίοις ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ ἐνιαυτῷ

ὁ παῖς ῥωβίδας καλεῖται, τῷ δευτέρῳ προκομι-

ζόμενος, τῷ τρίτῳ μικιζόμενος, τῷ τετάρτῳ

πρόπαις, τῷ πέμπτῳ παῖς, τῷ ἕκτῳ μελείρην.

ἐφηβεύει δὲ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ὁ παῖς ἀπὸ ἐτῶν δε-

κατεσσάρων μέχρι καὶ εἴκοσιν.

Eiren: among the Lacedaimonians, in the first year the boy is called 'rhobidas,' in the second 'prokomizomenos,' in the third 'mikizomenos,' in the fourth 'propais,' in the fifth 'pais,' in the sixth 'melleiren.' Among them the boy is an ephebe from fourteen years right up to twenty.[49]

Boys would be grouped with those who had been born in the same year, and would then go through the process of growing up together.[50] At Sparta, the strict division of boys into age categories seems to have been the norm. Although there is no evidence to suggest that girls were organised in such a regimented fashion, Pindar refers to a chorus of young Laconian girls using the term *agelē,* and Calame used this fragment to strengthen his claim that girls were organised into age-bands.[51]

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[48] Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 16.6 and 17.2-4. For further discussion on division of the life-cycle in archaic Greece see Kamen, 2007, 85-107.

[49] Glossae in Herodotum, Epsilon 32: Latte and Erbse, 213. MacDowell, 1986, 161-162. Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 16.2, 16.7, 17.3-4 and 25.1 confirm some of these classes. Plutarch confirms the positions of *melleiren* and *eiren*, whilst also stating that before a man had reached the age of thirty he did not go to the market. From the age of twelve, all boys were expected to live with a greater degree of austerity.

[50] It is worth noting that the precise date on which the child was born may have been of little importance. Tazelaar, 1967, 127-153, puts a great deal of emphasis on identifying the precise definitions between the Spartan age-classes, but it seems far more likely that boys were joined the system with a group of companions of approximately the same age. Davidson, 2007, 71-74 and MacDowell, 1986, 160-163, have both noted that in a time before birth certificates physical development and appearance would have been the preferred method for introducing a participant to an age grade system. Once they were attached to an age-class they would stay in it throughout their development.

[51] Pindar, 112. Calame, 1983, 372.

Alcman also refers to the chorus of girls as a herd.[52] The lexicographer Heysichius notes that the word, which Alcman uses, βοῦα, was the Spartan term for an ἀγέλη παίδων.[53] It remains important not to push the evidence too far - for instance, there is nothing here to confirm that Spartan girls took part in anything as regimented as the male *agoge*.[54] Even so, the fact that girls were organised into groups based upon similar stages of life seems likely, especially given that this seems to conform to evidence from elsewhere. Considering this, it is probable that specific performances would have held particular significance to points in the female life-cycle.

We have seen that the girls in Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* are described as *parthenoi*, which seems to indicate that they were approaching the time of their marriage. As I suggested earlier, another defining characteristic which appears to have been an important social marker in the Spartan life-cycle was hair, something to which Alcman continually pays close attention in a number of his poems. In Alcman's fragment 3, we see Astymeloisa's beautiful hair accentuated twice in lines 9 and 71-72. Furthermore, Hagesichora's hair is elaborately praised in lines 51-54 of the *Louvre Partheneion* and the hair of a further chorus member, Nanno, is accentuated in line 70. We also have the 'curl-loving Dymaenae' of fragment 4, 'the yellow haired Megalostrata' of fragment 59(b) and the 'golden-haired song-lover' of fragment 12A.[55] Hair is an integral focal point of Alcman's praise and stands out as one of the most distinguishing feature of his *parthenoi*.

For Christina Clark, this focus on hair provides us with useful verbal and visual information about the girls who form Alcman's chorus:

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[52] Alcman, 1.47.
[53] Heysichius, s.v. *Boua.*

[54] Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians,* 1.3-4 and Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 14-15. Our principle historical sources on Spartan girls, Xenophon and Plutarch, devote a great deal of attention to female practices without ever mentioning a female *agoge,* or anything similar.
[55] Alcman, 1.51-54; 1.70; 3.9; 3.71-72; 4.fr 5; 12A; and 59(b).

The focus on her hair is a sign of her maiden status, since once a girl had made the transition

from *parthenos* ("maiden") to *gunē* ("woman" and "wife") she was required to cut her hair

and keep it short.[56]

In making this claim, Clark relies on the testimony of our only substantial description of Spartan

marriage found in Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus.* Plutarch states that the girls must shave their heads,

before dressing in a male cloak and sandals. He informs us that this gender inversion forms a key

part of the ceremony.[57] Relating Alcman's focus on hair to Plutarch's text is certainly attractive as it

provides us with important information about their age and status, which fits well the idea that

choral performance could mark out stages in the life-cycle. Ephraim David has pointed out that

Spartan hairstyles provided an important means of non-verbal communication.[58] Hairstyle tells us

something about the social identity of the individual and how they were supposed to be perceived.[59]

David notes that male hair was closely inspected and monitored as Spartans moved through their

lives, particularly whilst young men participated in the *agoge.*[60] Plutarch tells us that during the

agoge Spartan males would keep their hair short before growing it long when they reached full adult

status.[61] A fragment from Aristotle's *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* provides tentative support

for Plutach's claim by suggesting that women reversed this system, wearing their hair long before

marriage and then cropping it short.[62]

However, on closer inspection theories that attempt to trace Plutarch's claims about Spartan

marriage to the archaic period are not viable. It appears that the Spartan scrutiny applied to

hairstyles would have post-dated Alcman. Herodotus argues for a mid sixth-century date for the

male system prompted by Sparta's victory over the Argives at Thyrea.[63] The Argives, ashamed of

their defeat, shaved their heads prompting the Spartan to grow their hair long, a contrast intended

to commemorate the victory. Whilst this tale itself may appear somewhat fanciful, we have no

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[56] Clark, 1996, 159.
[57] Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 15.3-7. For a discussion of adolescent hair-cutting ritual, see Leitao, 2003, 109-129.
[58] David, 1992, 11.
[59] In modern society we need only look as far as the negative stereotypes associates to 'skin-heads' to realise the power of such a symbolic statement.
[60] David, 1992, 11-13. Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians,* 3.2-5 states that young Spartan men were closely monitored. Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 22.1-2; and *Cleomenes,* 9.3 give examples of male hair culture.
[61] Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 22.1-2.
[62] Heraclides Lembus, *Excerpta Politiarum,* 373.13. See also Xenophon of Ephesus, 5.17.
[63] Herodotus, 1.82.

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suggestions for hair-related practices before this point and the Spartan material record seems to confirm that focus on hair became an issue around the mid-sixth century. Statuettes showing warriors with long hair, a beard, and a shaven lip begin to appear only in the mid to late sixth century lending credence to Herodotus' claim about the time when the practice was introduced.[64] Furthermore, in Attic drama, despite focus on characters such as Helen, Lampito, and Hermione no shaven heads are ever mentioned. Meanwhile other 'stock' Spartan female characteristics such as Lampito's impressive physique, athletic tendencies, and comeliness are all highlighted to comic effect.[65] Discussion of shaven heads, an otherwise exceptional trait, is conspicuous by its absence. Bearing this in mind, we must look beyond Plutarch to explain Alcman's focus on the hair of his *parthenoi.*

However, the frequency with which Alcman refers to hair makes it probable that it did serve as an important characteristic of the chorus' status. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that Plutarch's shaven heads were common by Alcman's time, veiling certainly was important in defining the status of a woman.[66] In addition to Plutarch's claims about shaven headed brides, he also records another comment from an early Spartan king, Charillus:

Πυνθανομένου δέ τινος διὰ τί τὰς μὲν κόρας ἀκα-

λύπτους, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας ἐγκεκαλυμμένας εἰς τοὐμφανὲς

ἄγουσιν, 'ὅτι' ἔφη 'τὰς μὲν κόρας ἄνδρας εὑρεῖν δεῖ, τὰς

δὲ γυναῖκας σῴζειν τοὺς ἔχοντας.'

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[64] See Jost, 1975, 355-57, figs 29-31.

[65] Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 78-84. In addition, Lampito's absolute confidence in her ability to persuade the Spartan men to adopt Lysistrata's plan has been taken as indication of the famous female influence over Spartan men, again played up for comic effect.

[66] Precedents for altering hair in marriage ritual can be dated to the classical period. Herodotus, 4.33-34, tells us of the Delian boys and girls who cut off their hair and lament before they are due to marry and Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 1423-1430, suggests unmarried girls at Trozen performed a similar ritual. In Megara, we hear that girls cut off their hair and pour libations before their marriages in honour of Iphinoe, daughter of the legendary Megarian founder Alcathoos, who died while she was still a *parthenos* (Pausanias, 1.43.4). See Dowden, 1989, 1-3 and *passim*, for an introduction to death and initiation. For a broad study of adolescent hair-cutting ritual see Leitao, 2003, 109-129.

When someone asked why they took their girls into public places unveiled, but their married women veiled, he said, "because the girls have to find husbands, and the married women have to keep those who have them."[67]

Whilst the dangers of using Plutarch as evidence for archaic Sparta are clear, in contrast to Plutarch's claims about shaven-headed brides, his report of Charillus' words receives support from archaic iconographic evidence.[68] A hero-relief on a Spartan stele from about 600 BC, possibly featuring Helen, shows her head covered by a veil.[69] Indeed, veiling often features prominently on such hero-reliefs suggesting that it was common in archaic Sparta.[70] Bronze figurines that Conrad Stibbe argues originate from the 570s or 560s also feature mature veiled women.[71] In the *Iliad* too, Helen is shown to cover her head with a veil as she moves into the streets of Troy.[72] Athenaeus, quoting the third-century BC historian Pythaenetus, suggests that it was the Peloponnesian fashion for young girls to go without a veil before their marriage, something that he appears to class as unusual.[73] Certainly, it is typical across archaic Greece for married women of status to wear a veil, but evidence for *parthenoi* and younger children is sparse. In Hesiod's *Theogony,* Pandora is veiled at her wedding ceremony and Lloyd Lewellyn-Jones has suggested that increasing veiling of a woman was likely to mark stages in her life.[74] Alcman's focus on the hair of *parthenoi* coupled with frequent images of mature veiled women suggest that veiling marked the moment of marriage in archaic Sparta, just as we read in Athenaeus and Plutarch's quotation of Charillus. Perhaps when Spartan men started wearing their hair long in the mid-sixth century, Plutarch's practice of shaving the female head was adopted in addition to veiling, but there is no evidence to imagine it as important when Alcman was composing his poetry.

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[67] Plutarch, *Moralia,* 232C. Cole Babbitt, 1949, 392-93.

[68] Plutarch, *Moralia,* 189F asserts that Charillus also commented on Spartan long hair, suggesting that Plutarch believed this practice to be common in archaic Sparta. As we have seen, this claim receives little support from the literary and iconographic evidence, but there is much more archaic support for his claim concerning female veiling.

[69] Sparta Museum, 4860.

[70] For example, Athens, National Museum, 15847.

[71] Stibbe, 1996, fig 8. See also 137 and 152 for dating.

[72] Homer, *Iliad,* 3.139-145.

[73] Athenaeus, 589F.

[74] See Llewellyn-Jones, 2003 for a thorough study of veiling practices in the Greek world and beyond. For a discussion of the control of women's dress as a status marker more henerally see Ogden, 2002, 203-225.

To summarise, I agree with Clark that Alcman's focus on the hair of his chorus marks them out as *parthenoi* who are fast approaching marriage. However, the methodology through which these conclusions are reached and the reasoning that Clark uses to underlie them have no foundation in archaic evidence. Alcman's focus on hair accentuates his choruses' status as *parthenoi* because when they marry they will wear a veil, not because they will become shaven-headed. It provides a marker that Alcman's poetry sought to emphasise that its performers were *parthenoi,* focusing on characteristics that demonstrated their increasing eligibility for marriage.

Social Status, Numbers of Participants, and Civic Solidarity

At this point, it should be clear that choral performance provided an important vehicle for marking out the stages of the female life-cycle in archaic Sparta, with the poetic content accentuating features which signified the girls' age and status. *Parthenoi* were clearly an important focus, but the next logical question to ask is to what extent all Spartan *parthenoi* would have had the opportunity to perform in these rituals? Furthermore, to truly grasp the civic impact of Alcman's poetry, we must consider whether it was designed to be performed by Sparta's elite or whether the entire community participated in the performances. As we shall see, rather than merely focusing on elites, evidence from Alcman's poetry suggests broad participation in female choral performance. Although the chorus of the *Louvre Partheneion* may have been formed of members of the elite, there is ample evidence that suggests that the majority of Spartan girls would have participated in tribal or village choruses. Furthermore, Alcman suggests that choruses were areas that could foster companionship amongst these groups, perhaps helping to increase civic solidarity by forming bonds amongst the young. Indeed, there are distinct parallels, which suggest female choruses were organised along similar lines to male military units.

Beginning with our largest surviving poem, we find that all of the indicators in Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* suggest that the girls are elite. The expensive adornments, which the chorus members describe themselves wearing and the privileged position they assume in the ritual, are both significant status markers.[75] Attention has also been drawn to the names Agido and

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[75] Alcman, 1.64-73.

Hagesichora as potential character names that highlight the status of their performers.[76] Agido probably relates to the ruling Agiad dynasty at Sparta or possibly links to the verb for 'lead', whilst Hagesichora translates as 'leader of the chorus'. Calame notes that all of the names in the *Louvre Partheneion* are appropriate for high status young women.[77] This focus on high status performers is not limited to one poem. Fragment 5 makes mention of members of the Agiad royal family and fragment 10 mentions a chorus leader named Hagesidamus, whose name has similar deviations to Hagesichora. As we see in other Greek *polis,* these may suggest that prominent or high status girls were selected for performance on major ritual occasions.[78]

However, although the *Louvre Partheneion* may be performed by elite *parthenoi*, there is evidence to suggest that large numbers of the Spartan population took part in choral performance. It is my belief, discussed in detail in the following chapter, that the *Louvre Partheneion* was composed for performance on a major civic occasion, but elsewhere the evidence suggests that most of the female Spartan population must have been involved at some point in their lives. Several of Alcman's poems mention the specific tribe to which the girls are said to belong, with the 'curl-loving Dymaenae' being the most prominent example.[79] The *parthenoi* of Pitane, a Spartan village, are also mentioned as having their own independent chorus.[80] If we except Campbell's plausible reconstructions then fragment 11 even notes that the girls of Pitane and Dyme occasionally joined together in choruses:

π[ολ]λάκις δ[έ] [Δ]υμαιν[ῶν παρθένοι ἀφί]κοντο ε[ἰς] τὴν Πιτά[ν]ην
συγ[χορεύσουσαι τ]αῖς Πιτανάτισι.

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[76] Nagy, 1990, 345-350. For the importance of theatricality in Spartan performance see Carter, 1998, 89-98, who looks at performance masks found at the temple of Artemis Orthia.

[77] Calame, 1995, 180-185. The other names of the chorus members are Areta (excellence), Nanno (the little doll), Philylla (beloved child), Thylacis (poppy heart), Astaphis (raisin), Ianthemis (violet), Damareta (excellence in the *demos*) and Cleesithera (famous in hunting). Ainesimbrota (praised among mortals) appears to be external to the chorus. Calame argues that they were names given at birth as a 'reflection of an infant's potential.' Luginbill, 2009, 45 offers a counter view by suggesting that the names all refer to military prowess.

[78] Athenian epigraphic evidence from the fourth century BC onwards confirms that high status *parthenoi* were consistently selected for important ritual roles at festivals. See Turner, J, 1983, 327-342. Connelly, 2007, 33-39, provides a full discussion of the role and social privileges of *kanephoroi.* She also examines images that demonstrate the beauty and fine attire which characterize the girls.

[79] Alcman, 5.fr2, col.ii; 10; and 11. Calame, 1983, 387-89, suggested that the organising of choruses into tribal units could have a political dimension.

[80] Alcman, 11.

'… and often (*parthenoi)* from Dyme came to Pitane to join (in choruses) with the girls of Pitane.'[81]

Numbers of Spartan tribes and obes in the archaic period, and indeed in other periods, are hard to establish. Thucydides notes that Sparta is split into five parts, names elsewhere as Limnai, Mesoa, Pitane (as in Alcman), Konooura and Amyclae.[82] Meanwhile, Tyrtaeus mentions the Pamphyloi, Hylleis and Dymanes (in Alcman), the three original tribes from which the Dorians were descended. Tyrtaeus is describing the three tribes separately lining up in battle formation:

αἱ κοίληις ἀσπίσι φραξάμ[ενοι,

χωρὶς Πάμφυλοί τε καὶ Ὑλλεῖς ἠδ[ὲ Δυμᾶνες,

ἀνδροφόνους μελίας χερσὶν ἀν[ασχόμενοι…

Making a fence with hollow shields, Pamphyloi, Hylleis, and (Dymanes) separately, brandishing in their (your?) hands murderous spears of ash….[83]

Exactly how the system worked is difficult to assess. Wade-Gery suggests hereditary classification into the three Dorian tribes, plus classification by place of residence into five obes.[84] Wade Gery's views are far from certain, but Tyrtaeus and Alcman's use of Dorian tribes, together with Alcman's use of Pitane suggests that Spartans may have been divided into divisions and sub-divisions for both war and performance. That these tribal units were organised in this manner probably indicates that the chorus could be seen to foster solidarity within tribes, and possibly even competition with others.[85] Through aspirational competition with other tribes, excellence could be encouraged between the groups, with each striving to express exceptional Spartan values.

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[81] Alcman, 11. Campbell, 1988, 400-401 (adapted).
[82] Thucydides, 1.10.2. See also Pausanias, 3.16.9. These five are also described as both tribes and obes by later Roman inscriptions.*IG* 5(1)564, 688.
[83] Tyrtaeus, 19.7-9. Gerber, 1999, 64-65.
[84] Wade-Gery, 79. A theory that is not accepted by Forrest, 1968, 40-42 or Macdowell, 1986, 26-27. The three Dorian tribes are acknowledged elsewhere by Herodotus, 5.68.2.
[85] For discussion of competition in Sparta and archaic Greece more generally see Hodkinson, 1999, 147-87 and Fisher, 2009, 524-41. Wilson, 2000, 144-148 and 2003, 163-196, has discussed the importance of dithyrambic

Furthermore, when we consider that the choruses were split into tribes and villages, based on population estimates, it seems highly likely that the majority of girls would have been required to perform. Our best information for numbers of chorus members comes from the *Louvre Partheneion* when the chorus sing 'but this our choir of ten sings as well as eleven girls.'[86] There are twelve young maidens in Theocritus' chorus of Laconians, who celebrate the marriage of Helen.[87] As Calame notes the numbers for mythical choruses fall as low as, but rarely drop below, seven.[88] It therefore seems that the number of chorus members at any given event was variable, and was dictated by the nature of the occasion. Numbers could vary from a handful of girls performing in unison to vast choruses of fifty or more individuals on special occasions. Material evidence can provide some additional evidence here. Roger Crowhurst's study revealed 81 complete, or largely complete, iconographic representations of females engaged in choral dance from 800-350 BC. In contrast to this, there are only 28 depicting males and a further 7 showing a mixed chorus.[89] As well as demonstrating the attractiveness of the female chorus for artistic purposes, these images also give us a rare insight into the number of girls who may have participated. The numbers depicted range from between two and eighty, although 58 of the images show the number of participants to be between 4 and 15.[90] Coupled with the evidence from the *Louvre Partheneion,* the iconographic material suggests that the average chorus would have been between seven and fifteen members strong.

When considered alongside population estimates for archaic Sparta these figures are significant. Based upon Demaratus' claim that Sparta could draw upon 8000 Spartan citizens of fighting age by 480, Paul Cartledge has estimated a population of between 35000 and 40000 for that

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contests as a means of fostering social order through competition in the Greek world. Dillon, 200, 457-480 and Serwint, 1993, 403-422 look at competitive female participation in the Olympic games, with a particular focus on initiatry aspects.

[86] Alcman, 1, 98-99.

[87] Theocritus, 18.4.

[88] Calame, 1997, 21-25. The Pleiades and choruses of Theseus are both prominent examples that conform to these numbers. For Theseus see, Scholiast A on Homer, *Iliad,* 18.590 and Plutarch, *Theseus,* 15.1.

[89] Crowhurst, 1963, Vol 2, 61. This does not include any fragments that were so severely damaged that an estimate of the number of participants was impossible.

[90] In his extensive study of these images, Crowhurst, 1963, 205-208, also noted that the lower numbers of participants shown may not necessarily reflect the number of performers. Space restrictions may have led to the painter, depicting a low number of participants merely to give a sense of what was going on. He gives the example (no 163) of an image displaying 17 Nereids, whilst we know from the literary evidence (e.g. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 1054 and *Iphigenia in Tauris,* 425) that there were fifty. It therefore seems logical that often the numbers of choral dancers may have been greater than those shown in the iconographic evidence.

date.[91] However, Morris tends to estimate that even the largest population centres would have no more than 5000 citizens by 700 BC, whilst Kennell and Luraghi note archaeological evidence suggests that the population density of Laconia did not increase dramatically until after 600 BC.[92] By the time of Alcman's compositions, it therefore seems likely that Sparta would have a relatively small population. The suggestion that Alcman divided performance along the lines of Spartan villages and Dorian tribes may therefore constitute a significant proportion, if not the entirety, of Sparta's *parthenoi.* If, like the *Louvre Partheneion,* each chorus was formed of about 10 girls of about the same age, then most of Sparta's *parthenoi* must have been involved.

The evidence therefore suggests that Spartan females would have participated in choruses that were divided on the basis of where girls lived and which tribes they originated from. Logistically, this makes complete sense. However, training the girls amongst their contemporaries drawn from the same region would have contributed further to fostering civic solidarity. Just as the Spartan men were arranged into *syssitia* to unite them, so the women participated with their neighbours to bring them closer together.[93] An indication of the importance of this civic aspect can be seen in Alcman's fragment 10b:

τὸ δ[....]λαις ἄρχε ταῖς Δυμαί[ναις] Τυνδαριδαιενα[   ]εσα[   ]εν αἰχμαι,
σιοφιλὲς χο[ρα]γὲ Ἁγησίδαμε κλεε[νν]ὲ Δαμοτιμίδα.....γερώχως κὴρατὼς
χο[ρα]γώς· αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀμέων ἅλι[κ]ες νεανίαι φίλοι τ᾽ κἀγ[έ]νει[οι κ]ἀνύπανοι·

And you, god-loved *chorēgos* Hagesidamus, glorious son of Damotimus, lead the Dymaenae......Tyndarid(ae)....the spear......proud and lovely *choregoi*; for our young comrades themselves (are) dear and beardless, and without hair on the lip.[94]

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[91] Cartledge, 1979, 222. See also Figueira, 1986, 165-213 whose focus begins in the late archaic period and whose figures broadly support Cartledge. Eremin, 2002, 267-283 also provides some useful comments on Spartan settlement patterns.
[92] Morris, 1987, 156-159; 2009, 65-69; Kennell and Luraghi, 2009, 239-254. For a more general analysis of estimating population numbers see Hansen, 2006. See also Hall, 2000, 75-89.
[93] Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 12. Similarly, the Athenians did not allow foreigners to participate in their choruses, viewing it as detrimental to the participant's sense of ethnic identity. Demosthenes, 21.52 and 21.56. See also Wilson, 2000, 80-81, on the importance of 'Civic Purity' to the Athenian chorus.
[94] Alcman, 10b. Campbell, 1988, 400-401.

Although information on Hagesidamus and his father Damotimus eludes us, the meaning of the formers name – 'leader of the *demos*' – is surely suggestive of an important role. As Nagy has argued, it is quite plausible that names such as Hagesichora, Agido, and Hagesidamus, all of which carry meanings that resonate with their performance context, were stock character names designed to carry particular meaning as the poetry was re-performed through the generations.[95] Connections between the chorus and state are frequent, but the styling of a *chorēgos* as 'leader of the *demos*' surely indicates that both the chorus and its leader had an important social role. Furthermore, we see male companions (νεανίαι) are described as *halikes* and *philoi,* identified further as being age mates by their lack of facial hair*.* Participation with one's age-mates and friends in a tribally organised chorus was surely an excellent means of developing solidarity between these groups. That Alcman organises his chorus by Dorian tribe, in the same way Tyrtaeus tells us the military could be organised, suggests that such distinctions could serve an important civic function. What is also interesting about Campbell's translation of fragment 10b is that it makes Hagesidamus the leader of the Dymaenae, a female chorus. Having a male chorus leader whose name translates as 'leader of the *demos*' in charge of a female chorus may be another indicator of the important social role ascribed to performance in archaic Sparta.

Conclusions

The synthesis of the factors explored in this section produces some interesting conclusions. The chorus' function in marking out stages in the female life cycle coupled with Alcman's focus on characteristics that specifically mark out his performers as *parthenoi* on the cusp of marriage, suggests that this was an important social concern for his poetry. When coupled with the evidence that suggests the vast majority of Spartan girls would have participated in such choruses, broader civic implications for these performances become a possibility. It seems that these choral groups sought to foster civic solidarity and group cohesion between members, qualities which were certainly beneficial for the *polis.* One of the central questions that this thesis will proceed to answer is why the status of *parthenoi* and their approaching marriages was so important to civic solidarity in

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[95] Nagy, 1990, 345-349. Carey, 2007, 437-460, provides an impressive recent survey that suggests that Alcman's poetry could have been re-performed at Sparta, and indeed elsewhere, well into the Hellenistic period.

archaic Sparta, to the extent that their entire population of young women took part in choral performances, many of which we shall see focused on marital themes.

1.3 Social and Political Issues in Female Choral Performance.

We have already seen that in a society such as archaic Sparta, large numbers of girls would have taken part in choral performance. However, so far in this thesis, no poetry has been studied in detail, nor have the themes of these poems been further explored. Throughout this thesis, we shall see that Alcman deals with political themes in his poetry, which address not only *parthenoi* and civically important feminine concerns, but also wider ranging political issues relevant to the entire *polis*. The aim of this chapter is simply to show that it was entirely appropriate for a female chorus to comment publicly on political themes and to examine how this process took place.

The following three chapters will focus on various social and political elements of Alcman's *partheneia,* but at this point, I want to focus on our other substantial example of a poem composed for female choral performance - Pindar's *Daphnephoricon.* Although there are clearly differences in style, context, and intention, studying Pindar's *Daphnephoricon* will highlight that female performance was an appropriate arena for song that engaged with political themes. Indeed, the difference in approach between Pindar and Alcman can tell us much about how female performance was imagined in archaic Sparta and classical Thebes, further enhancing our understanding of how female performers could interact with political themes in different *poleis.*

Pindar's fragment 94b*,* otherwise known as the *Daphnephoricon,* provides us with an extremely valuable example of a *partheneion*. The female speaking voice describes the ritual activities of the festival and also offers glimpses of civic aspects in the performance.

Pindar's *Daphnephoricon* was composed for performance at the Daphnephoria, a festival for which Pindar's fragmentary poems provide us with the best evidence.[96] The most substantial surviving fragment of *Partheneion* 94(b) tells us in lines 8-10 that the poem praised the Aeolidae, a prominent fifth-century family.[97] Thucydides tells us that Pagondas, son of Aeolidas, referred to in line 10, commanded the Thebans at the battle of Delium in 424BC. Another named figure, Agasicles, is the son of Pagondas and appears to play the central role in the ritual.[98] Nothing in the poem specifies Agasicles' duties, but between them, Pausanias and Proclus allow us to reconstruct details of his role;[99] each year one exceptional boy was chosen to serve as priest of Apollo Ismenius, carry the title *Daphnephoros,* and participate in the procession. Proclus suggests that he was escorted both by members of his family and a chorus of girls singing hymns. As we shall see, all of the elements would fit with the surviving Pindaric text. The poem is evidence of a politically important Theban family situating themselves at the centre of the ritual and commissioning Pindar to write a *partheneion* to mark the occasion.

The political importance of the festival becomes clearer when explored in the context of its mythic past. Unfortunately, to find out details of the festival's aetiological mythology, we are forced to rely on Proclus.[100] However, as Kowalzig has discussed at length, his account appears to fit well with local Theban tradition.[101] Proclus' aetiological myth relates to the coming of the Boeoti. The action takes place during a festival for Apollo, which has halted hostilities between the invading

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[96] Pindar, 94a, preserved on the same papyrus, also discusses the Aeolidae whilst Pindar, 94c, appear to be fragments composed for the Daphnephoria, possibly to be performed by Pindar's own children.
[97] Thucydides, 4.91-93.
[98] Pindar, 94b.37.
[99] Pausanias, 9.10.2-4; and Proclus, *ap.* Photius, *Bibliotheca,* 239.321b.
[100] Proclus, in Photius, *Bibl,* 239.321a-b
[101] Kowalzig, 2007, 352-391, for an overview of Boiotian aetiological myth and performance. For the Daphnephoria more specifically see 377-389. See also, Lehnus, 1984, 61-92.

Boeoti and the resident Pelasgians. The Boeotian general, Polematas, dreams of being offered a panoply and subsequently of being instructed to set up the Daphnephoria for Apollo. Victory for the Boeoti soon follows and Polematas sets up the festival soon afterwards. The ritual is therefore extremely important in local tradition, helping to explain how the Boeoti first came to inhabit the area.

Pindar's representations of the Aeolidae and Thebes give them an important place within this tradition. Pindar's focus on the Aeolidae is immediately politically relevant to the community. The following passage is particularly significant:

πιστὰ δ' Ἀγασικλέει

  μάρτυς ἤλυθον ἐς χορόν

ἐσλοῖς τε γονεῦσιν

ἀμφὶ προξενίαισι· τί-

  μαθεν γὰρ τὰ πάλαι τὰ νῦν

τ᾽ ἀμφικτιόνεσσιν

ἵππων τ' ὠκυπόδων πο[λυ-

νώτοις ἐπὶ νίκαις,

αἷς ἐν ἀϊόνεσσιν Ὀγχη[στοῦ κλυ]τᾶς,

  ταῖς δὲ ναὸν Ἰτωνίας ἀ[μφ᾽ εὐκλέ]α

χαίταν στεφάνοις ἐκό-

  σμηθεν...

As a faithful witness for Agasicles I have come to the dance and for his noble parents because of their hospitality, for both of old and still today they have been honoured by their

neighbours for their celebrated victories with swift-footed horses, for which on the shores of famous Onchestos and also by the temple of Itonia they adorned their hair with garlands.[102]

Agasicles, and his important role as the *pais amphithales,* is emphasised, immediately highlighting the high position of the Aeolidae. Yet there is more to this than simply praising one family over their aristocratic rivals. The victories from which the Aeolidae claim their fame are taken at major pan-Boeotian sanctuaries.[103] Pindar stresses that they have been honoured by 'their neighbours' and notes that they are regarded as worthy of praise because of their hospitality. It suggests that the ritual provided the Aeolidae with an opportunity not only to impress other Thebans, but also to assert their position in relation to their Boeotian neighbours. A festival whose aetiological roots lie in the coming of the Boeoti now sees Pindar define both the position of Thebes and the Aeolidae within Boeotia. Major public ritual is Pindar's vehicle for political comment, just as is frequently the case with victory odes.[104] As noted in my introduction, Laura Swift has recently gone as far as saying that moralising and political reflections are no more out of place in *partheneia,* than they would be in other genres such as epinician or paeanic.[105]

Following the mention of Agasicles, the honours of his family, and an unfortunate break in the text, Pindar's *parthenoi* go on and sing of the dangers of strife:

ἐνῆκεν καὶ ἔπειτ[   ]λος
  τῶνδ' ἀνδρῶν ἕνε[κε]ν μερίμνας σώφρονος
ἐχθρὰν ἔριν οὐ παλίγ-
  γλωσσον, ἀλλὰ δίκας ὁδούς
π[ισ]τὰς ἐφίλη[σε]ν.

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[102] Pindar, 94(b), 38-49. Race, 1997, 326-327.
[103] Some details of the Onchestus site can be found at Strabo, 9.2.33 and Pausanias, 1.39.5.
[104] Currie, 2005, 17-18 has collected evidence for significant public performance settings.
[105] See Swift, 2010, 184.

And then (bitter anger?) provoked on account of these men's wise ambition a hateful and unrelenting strife, but he cherished the faithful ways of justice.[106]

It is a great shame that the unfortunate state of the text does not allow us to reconstruct the material that came in between these two passages. However, it seems that we are still in the realm of social comment. The ritual sees Pindar's *parthenoi* sing of apparent strife in the community, contrasted with justice, before providing an alternative in the rest of the poem. What follows in the rest of the surviving poem is a description of the ritual procession in which the girls are participating:

Δαμαίνας πα[. .]ọ . .[. . .]ῳ νῦν μοι ποδὶ

  στείχων ἀγέο· [τ]ὶν γὰρ εὔ̣]φρων ἕψεται

πρώτα θυγάτηρ [ὁ]δοῦ

  δάφνας εὐπετάλου σχεδ[ό]ν

βαίνοισα πεδίλοις,

of Damaina, stepping forth now with a … foot, lead the way for me, since the first to follow you on your way will be your kindly daughter, who beside the branch of leafy bay walks on sandals.[107]

The structure of the poem here serves comparison with Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion.* Robbins and Too have both suggested persuasively that Alcman intends to present a distinct split between mythic violence of the *Louvre Partheneion* and the ritual in which the girls are engaged.[108] In so doing, Alcman creates a transition between strife caused by hubristic action in myth and the peace that is encouraged by ritual. A similar pattern can be seen in the final surviving lines of Pindar's fragment 94(b). Pindar's *parthenoi* sing of civic strife, make some positive remarks about justice, and proceed to describe their ritual action. The poem implies that observance of ritual alongside compliance with the social suggestions made by the poem is a benefit to society. We are

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[106] Pindar, 94(b), 61-65. Race, 1997, 326-329.
[107] Pindar, 94(b), 66-70. Race, 1997, 328-329.
[108] Robbins, 1994, 7 and Too, 1997, 16. Further details of Robbins' and Too's theories can be found in the following two chapters on Alcman.

also reminded of the isolated fragment of Alcman's corpus compared by a commentator to Pindar *Isthmian,* 1.40; 'Experience is the beginning of learning.' Having experienced the mythic content of ritual, vividly recreated by the expert performers, the community is able to reflect upon the poet's words. These poems present the dangers of strife through performance, before suggesting ritual solutions that benefit the community. As Pindar's *Daphnephoricon* illustrates, ritual is adaptable enough to accommodate changing social concerns, making the content specifically relevant to the current climate or commission.

In this sense, the *Daphnephoricon* highlights one of the key political features of performative ritual: its adaptability to changing circumstances. Ritual, although often firmly embedded in myths of the past, remains open to new interpretations and adaptations as the social climate changes. In other words, it is possible for ritual to represent social and political themes, which are particularly relevant to the present, in a medium that still carries all the authority of past tradition.[109] Ritual can be dynamic – it mutates in response to changes in the world around it. Pindar's *Daphnephoricon* contained political allusions with specific relevance to fifth-century Thebes, enhanced by their association with the ritual's mythic past.[110] Despite deriving its authority from the past, Pindar's interpretations are very much inspired by the presence of his performance.

Furthermore, what Pindar's *Daphnephoricon* illustrates beyond any doubt is that the female chorus was a perfectly appropriate location for political comment. However, what is particularly interesting is that a distinct split can be seen in the manner that Alcman and Pindar allow their female choruses to speak about such issues. Alcman's chorus speak with a much more natural authority than that of Pindar, who seems constantly preoccupied with asserting the difference between female and male authority. This crucial difference will form the subject of the final section of this chapter, but first it is necessary to spend some time identifying the key performative features of female performance. Through this process, it should become clear that particularly in archaic

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[109] Kowalzig, 2007, 32-43 and Calame, 2009, 2-24.
[110] Kowalzig, 2007, 282-289 provides a fuller discussion of the political background to the poems performance. It has also been recently argued by Collins, 2006, 19-32, that Corinna, a possible contemporary of Pindar (for discussion of Corinna's possible dates see West, 1970, 277-287 and 1990, 553-557), took a similarly innovative approach to the mythological tales she dealt with, continually reshaping them to suit her own poetic intentions.

Sparta female choral performance did have an authoritative voice with which to speak on political issues.

1.4. - The Ritual Power of Female Choral Performance

Having briefly confirmed that political themes were appropriate to female choral performance, the purpose of this section is to examine how and to what extent female choral performers gained authority to sing publicly about these issues. The nature of the female voice in performance has been a topic for increased study in recent years. In her impressive work on the subject, Eva Stehle introduces a chapter entitled 'Women in Performance in the Community,' with the following statement:

> An audience will interpret the statements that performers make within the framework created by the performers' physical appearance, movements, location, so their speech will automatically be perceived as gendered. But the speech of performers also adds to their gender identity that they fabricate in performance, extending or modifying the meaning of visual clues.[111]

This is a very proper opening, but throughout the following chapter, Stehle asserts that female performers in Alcman and Pindar's public performances continually deny their authority to speak publicly.[112] Their identity as females and therefore their automatic inferiority to males in terms of public speech authority is continually accentuated. Whilst they can talk about social and political issues, their authority is always less than that of males, and what they say is always coloured by their sex. Christina Clark expresses a similar view with specific regard to the *Louvre Partheneion*.[113] Anne Klinck explores the nature of male poets writing for *parthenoi* and notes that an admission of female inadequacy is a common feature.[114] Throughout this thesis, one of my intentions is to challenge the

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[111] Stehle, 1997, 71. For example, Pindar constantly asserts the inferiority of the female chorus and makes it clear that they had less authority than a male chorus would (Stehle, 1997, 93-100).
[112] Stehle, 1997, 71-118. I refer to more specific instances throughout this chapter and the next.
[113] Clark, 1996, 151-156.
[114] Klinck, 2001, 276-279.

idea that the female performing voice always lacked authority, particularly in the case of Alcman's *partheneia*.

In order to address this issue, three key themes have been identified, all of which carry a particular relevance to understanding how female choral performance achieves its power. In this section, I shall work through each of them, often using comparative anthropological material to make their significance clear. The points under specific consideration are:

1) Mimesis, embodiment, and connecting to the past.

2) Comparison of female voice to siren song.

3) The powerful status of *parthenoi.*

These features are either particular to female performance or, in the case of mimesis, have a strong character in female performance tradition. Following the work of numerous anthropologists, it has been recognised that ritual gains much of its authority from connecting to the past.[115] One of the ways that this can be achieved is through mimesis – not merely singing about the past, but recreating the events through theatricality, embodiment, and performance. As we shall see from examples taken from Pindar, Alcman, Sappho, and other depictions of the female chorus, the ability to recreate, evoke, and embody the past was a vital component of the genre, appearing to feature particularly regularly in female performances. Related to this is the power of Siren song, a regular point of comparison with the female choral voice and something which is completely absent from male choral song. It will become clear that the comparison of the female performing voice to that of the Sirens is another marker of their ability to connect successfully to the past, recreating myths evocatively for the benefit of the community.

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[115] As previously stated, Kowalzig, 2007, 32-43 and Calame, 2009, 2-24 give excellent summaries with relation to the Greek world.

Perhaps most importantly, I shall finally explore the ways in which the chorus' characterisation and idealisation as *parthenoi* can lend them additional ritual authority. In the words of Swift:

> Parthenaic song, then, pays a great deal of attention to the identity and status of the female chorus which performed it. The audience is regularly reminded that the chorus consists of *parthenoi,* engaged in a particular activity, and the singers are characterised through typical feminine attributes.[116]

However, rather than viewing this as empowering, scholars tend to suggest that this is a public statement of femininity, and therefore a statement that they lack the authority of male performers. Instead, I want to suggest that the status of *parthenos* itself had a particular social significance which could lends the speaking voices power. The status of *parthenos* is not a mark of weakness, but is rather the moment of greatest strength in the female life cycle.

Mimesis, embodiment and connecting to the past.

In order to understand the power of performance, it is usually necessary to understand the nature of the rituals in which they took place. In her recent introduction to the power of ritual, Kowalzig comments:

> The thinking about ritual has moved away from the idea that ritual is something fixed and inflexible towards a view which sees in ritual a dynamic and efficient element of social activity, firmly rooted in the present rather than the past. Rituals are constantly renewed and reformed in performance, oscillating as they are between ossification and creativity. A

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[116] Swift, 2010, 177.

powerful tool for maintaining and creating social relations, ritual emerges as a medium for accommodating change.[117]

As we saw in the previous section, ritual was certainly adaptable to the present political situation, with each performance dynamically moulding the ritual to the needs of the present. The authority of ritual is linked to its ability to harness the authority of the past, whilst simultaneously retaining relevance to the present.

As Richard Hunter has commented, dance in itself is a medium that is evocative of the past in Greek tradition, owing to its close associations with deities and epic.[118] Hesiod begins the *Theogony* with a dance of the Muses and girls sing prominently on the shield of Achilles.[119] Dancing is something that participants imagine has been done by many generations before them, even by the gods. It is therefore common for poets and choruses to try to create links to that past, real or imagined, in an effort to create authority for their own performance. Of particular interest, is the description of the Delian women's performance in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*:

πρὸς δὲ τόδε μέγα θαῦμα, ὅου κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται,
κοῦραι Δηλιάδες Ἑκατηβελέταο θεράπναι·
αἵ τ' ἐπεὶ ἂρ πρῶτον μὲν Ἀπόλλων' ὑμνήσωσιν,
αὖτις δ' αὖ Λητώ τε καὶ Ἄρτεμιν ἰοχέαιραν,
μνησάμεναι ἀνδρῶν τε παλαιῶν ἠδὲ γυναικῶν
ὕμνον ἀείδουσιν, θέλγουσι δὲ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων.
πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων φωνὰς καὶ κρεμβαλιαστὺν
μιμεῖσθ' ἴσασιν· φαίη δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕκαστος
φθέγγεσθ'· οὕτω σφιν καλὴ συνάρηρεν ἀοιδή.

And besides, this great wonder, the fame of which will never perish: the *korai* of Delos, the servants of the far-shooter, who, after first hymning Apollo, and then in turn Leto and Artemis

[117] Kowalzig, 2007, 34.
[118] Hunter, 1996, 140. Easterling, 1985, 39-49, notes that to participate in Greek religion is to be involved, with performance and poetry.
[119] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.490-496.

profuse of arrows, turn their thoughts to the men and women of old and sing a song that charms the peoples. They know how to mimic all people's voices and their babble; anyone might think it was himself speaking, so well is their singing constructed.[120]

We also learn from the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* that Delian *korai* would hymn the undying fame of Apollo and Artemis. Their skill in song is consistently emphasised. They have an extraordinary gift for imitation, which allows them to recreate anyone they choose through song, and it is this gift that allows them to so successfully hymn the men of the past. It is this same gift which Homer displays as being so important to all bards, with Demodocus' mimetic ability leading Odysseus to praise him by saying he might have been an eyewitness to the events he described.[121] Such performers are so valued because they can bring the past into the present. In addition to the Homeric Hymn, Pindar and Simonides inform us that when Apollo and Artemis were born on Delos, a chorus made up of female divinities and local women performed ritual cries at the banks of a stream where the action took place.[122] In another fragment, Simonides imagines another watery scene where daughters of Delos are called to sing in honour of a deity who is almost certainly Artemis.[123] The re-performance imagined in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo,* appears to be acted out on a regular basis. Sappho's laments for Adonis may provide another reoccurring example:

κατθνάσκει, Κυθέρη', ἄβρος Ἄδωνις· τί κε θεῖμεν;

καττύπτεσθε, κόραι, καὶ κατερείκεσθε κίθωνας.

Delicate Adonis is dying, Cytherea; what are we to do?

Beat your breasts, girls, and tear your clothes.[124]

In the context of the ritual, one speaker takes on the identity of Aphrodite and the other embodies the mourners. The performers create and perpetuate a link with the past. This type of mimesis lends

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[120] *Homeric Hymn to Apollo,* 156-164. West, 2003, 82-83. Euripides, *Heracles,* 687-90, provides further description of female *performance* on Delos.
[121] Homer, *Odyssey,* 8.487-91. Richardson, 2010, 106-109, makes a more detailed comparison between Homer's depiction of bards and the Delian performers.
[122] Simonides, 519 frg 32 and Pindar, *Paean,* 12.17-20.
[123] Simonides, 519, frg 55.
[124] Sappho, 140a. Campbell, 1982, 155.

the performance a great deal of power. The song the Delian girls sing is simultaneously a celebration and a re-enactment of the performances their ancestors made when Leto gave birth. Such a display has an important political aspect.[125] As the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* specifies, the everlasting fame of Delos was assured by the famous birth which took place on the island. In order to perpetuate the myth, the performances, which embody the characters of the past, are excellent tools. The girls on Delos act out the songs of their mythical ancestors and subsequently ensure that their link to the past is maintained. Their exceptional skill of acting out the past and embodying the events they sing of is vital in achieving their goal.[126]

Mimetic ability is certainly not unique to the female chorus, but it does recur regularly and is highlighted as an area of particular pride on several occasions. It is certainly an area that contributes to the authority of female performance.

Comparison of Female Voice to Siren Song.

The female chorus' ability to link to the past through mimesis may also link in to their frequent characterisation as Sirens. The *Daphnephoricon* and the *Louvre Partheneion,* our two largest surviving *partheneia,* plus Alcman's fragment 30, compare the voices of the female chorus to Sirens.[127] When considered in the light of the limited body of evidence that exists for the female chorus, these three occasions constitute a noteworthy reoccurrence.

The comparison of the female voice to the birdlike Sirens is associated with mimetic performance, owing to the Siren's exceptional abilities in commemoration and recreation of past

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[125] For a fuller discussion of these texts and their political aspects see Kowalzig, 2007, 59-68.
[126] See also Nagy, 1996, 7-9, and 39-45 who provides a substantial and highly convincing discussion of the mimetic powers of birds, alongside its significance as a poetic metaphor. Nagy focuses on: Homer, *Odyssey,* 19.521 and Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 203, with further reference too Aelian, *On the Nature of Animals,* 5.38. Alcman, 39 and 40 uses the same metaphor to compare poetic voice and composition to birdsong, hinting that he may have viewed mimesis in a similar way.
[127] Alcman, 1.96-97 and 30; Pindar, 94b.13-16.

events.[128] In Pindar's fragment 94b the chorus specifically claim to imitate the Sirens.[129] Alcman compares the voice of his *chorēgos* Hagesichora to a Siren in the *Louvre Partheneion,* whilst also suggesting that the female voice was Siren-like on a second occasion. In Alcman's fragment 30, in which Aelius Aristides tells us Alcman equates his chorus with the Muse, we find the following statement:

ἁ Μῶσα κέκλαγ᾽ ἁ λίγηα Σηρήν

The Muse cries out, the clear voiced Siren.[130]

If the Muse is equated with Alcman's chorus, then their voice is again that of the Siren.[131] As Stehle correctly points out, Pindar never compares the voices of men to Sirens so the link must be specifying something significant about female performance.[132] Pindar's comparison reads thus:

σειρῆνα δὲ κόμπον

αὐλίσκων ὑπὸ λωτίνων

μιμήσομ᾽ ἀοιδαῖς

κεῖνον, ὃς Ζεφύρου τε σιγάζει πνοὰς

αἰψηπάς,

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[128] Again, see Nagy, 1996, 7-9, and 39-45 for information on the poetic metaphor of birds as masters of composition.

[129] Pindar, 94b.13-16.

[130] Alcman, 30. Campbell, 1988, 418-419.

[131] There have been several theories put forward in an attempt to understand Alcman's comparison of chorus with Sirens. Most recently, Bowie, 2011, 33-65, put forward the view that 'Harpy-like Sirens' might have been viewed as especially predatory towards *parthenoi* in local myths. He draws upon Homer, *Odyssey,* 20.61-81 and Apollonius Rhodius, 4.891-909 as precedents. The Sirens, also called Pleiades, literally threaten the chorus of *parthenoi* as they approach the time of marriage. Bowie's theories, though intriguing, do require some substantial leaps of faith. Lardinois, 2011, 171, theorises more simply that the Sirens 'enjoyed a better reputation in women's songs than in the Homeric epics' making the vocal comparison completely acceptable.

[132] Stehle, 1997, 96-97.

And I shall imitate in my songs, to the accompaniment of lotus pipes, the Sirens' loud song, which silences the swift blasts of Zephyr.[133]

Stehle argues that Pindar's comparison serves a double function; firstly, by allusion to the Odyssean Sirens, an image of singing impressively is created, but secondly, by identifying the *parthenoi* with the Sirens rather than with the Muses, Pindar indicates that his chorus are associated with a wild, less impressive performer. Certainly, by Pausanias' time we find evidence that the Muses and Sirens entered into competition with the Sirens comprehensively losing.[134] For Stehle, Pindar's Sirens have more in common with Pseudo-Hesiod's Sirens in the *Catalogue of Women,* creatures with the ability to calm the winds, but marked out as inferior as they lack a connection to the Muse.[135]

However, fragment 30 clearly appears to show Alcman equating the Muse and Siren in an entirely positive manner, whilst in the *Louvre Partheneion* the Sirens are described as goddesses.[136] Alcman certainly saw Siren song as impressive and there seems little reason to assume that Pindar expected comparison of his chorus Sirens to have negative connotations. Nor is Pindar's reference to the Sirens' ability to control the winds a prioritisation of the Hesiodic Sirens over those found in Homer. In the *Odyssey,* the winds drop just as Odysseus' ship approaches the island of the Sirens, suggesting that they have the same power here as in Hesiod.[137] Furthermore, the most significant feature of Homer's Sirens, the way they entrap their victims, accentuates their status as exceptional singers of praise. When they catch sight of Odysseus they sing:

‘δεῦρ’ ἄγ’ ἰών, πολύαιν’ Ὀδυσεῦ, μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν,

νῆα κατάστησον, ἵνα νωϊτέρην ὄπ’ ἀκούσῃς.

οὐ γάρ πώ τις τῇδε παρήλασε νηῒ μελαίνῃ,

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[133] Pindar, 94b.13-17. Race, 1997, 324-325.

[134] Pausanias, 9.34.3. Pollard, 1952, 60-63 provides a thorough examination of the differences between Muses and Sirens.

[135] Stehle, 1997, 96-97. Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women,* 27-28, MW.

[136] Alcman, 30 and 1.96-98.

[137] Homer, *Odyssey,* 12, 167-169.

πρίν γ' ἡμέων μελίγηρυν ἀπὸ στομάτων ὄπ' ἀκοῦσαι,

ἀλλ' ὅ γε τερψάμενος νεῖται καὶ πλείονα εἰδώς.

ἴδμεν γάρ τοι πάνθ', ὅσ' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ

Ἀργεῖοι Τρῶές τε θεῶν ἰότητι μόγησαν,

ἴδμεν δ' ὅσσα γένηται ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ.'

Come here as you are travelling, renowned Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans; put in your ship so you may listen to the voice of us two. For never yet has any man rowed past this isle in his black ship until he has heard the sweet voice from our lips, but, he takes joy in it and goes away knowing more. For we know all the toils that in wide Troy the Greeks and the Trojans endured through the will of the gods, and we know all the things that come to pass upon the fruitful earth.[138]

Circe has previously reported that they are dangerous beings who attempt to draw men to their deaths through enchanting song.[139] The Sirens speak of him as 'famous Odysseus' and 'great glory of the Greeks,' flattering him with pleasant epithets. Finally, they claim to know of everything that happened during the Trojan War, as well as everything else that takes place on earth.[140] Why would knowledge of the Trojan War, of which Odysseus, as a key participant, would already be well aware, tempt Odysseus to listen to them further? In fact, the Sirens offer Odysseus the opportunity to hear himself celebrated before his own death.[141] Through their flattery and their knowledge of the Trojan War they offer to glorify his exploits. Richard Lamberton noted that there is a great deal of overlap between the ways in which Homer represents bards and the Sirens.[142] The likes of Demodocus and Phemius have a god-given ability to delight their audience in song and accurately recount deeds of the past.[143] Odysseus praises Demodocus because he sings both truthfully and well, just as if Demodocus had been at Troy himself, suggesting that he may have been inspired by Apollo or a

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[138] Homer, *Odyssey,* 12.184-191. Murray, 1995(a), 444-447 (revised Dimock and adapted). On the sirens enchanting song in the *Odyssey* see Gresseth, 1970, 203-218.
[139] Homer, *Odyssey,* 12.39-46.
[140] Homer, *Odyssey,* 12.184-191.
[141] In the *Odyssey,* the danger of the Siren's song lies in their distraction of Odysseus from his course. They offer him glorious commemoration before he has died and before he has completed his journey. In the words of Holford-Strevens, 2006, 21, 'Sirens words were temptations that ought to be resisted.' As Vermeule puts it 'death first, renown afterwards' (Vermeule, 1979, 203). The Sirens offer men with the dreadful temptation to know how they will be received before they have died, and receive glorious commemoration in advance.
[142] Lamberton, 1986, 6-8.
[143] Homer, *Odyssey,* 1.337, 8.44-45, and 8.61-63.

Muse.[144] When Homer describes the Sirens, he attributes to them the power to know all that happens on earth and to recount the exploits of the Trojan War in glorious song. They are explicitly recognised as exceptional singers, just like the best bards. In summary, Lamberton remarks:

> Thus they share both of the supernatural abilities attributed to the bards: the power of the mind to violate the normal limitations of space and time and the power to entrance their audience. The Sirens' claim to exceptional wisdom corresponds closely to the implicit claim of the *Iliad* poet, aided by his Muse, to universal knowledge of the Troy tale.[145]

Just as Homer himself is inspired to sing of the Trojan War, so too can the Sirens with their vast reservoir of knowledge. In addition, the Sirens stood as a symbol of persuasive and informative speech. Simonides described Peisistratus as a Siren probably owing to his powerful speech.[146] When discussing friendship in Xenophon's *Memorabilia,* Socrates claims that the Sirens sang to entice those 'who yearned for the fame that virtue gives.'[147] In Plutarch's discussion of how the young should study poetry, he counters Epicurus' philosophical claims that preservation of civic myth through poetry should be discouraged, by stating to do so is to 'stop our ears with wax,' the means by which Odysseus' crew prevented themselves from hearing the Sirens song.[148]

The positive representations of the Sirens song in Alcman's poetry coupled with their exceptional status as performers of song in Homer and elsewhere, are the key factor in understanding their significance to *partheneia.* Their presence does not suggest inferiority to males, nor to the Muses, but rather it evokes their exceptional abilities as singers of commemorative song. Following the mention of Sirens in the *Daphnephoricon,* there is a break in the text before the chorus speak of 'many former things' which they have just adorned with song.[149]

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[144] Homer, *Odyssey,* 8.487-491.
[145] Lamberton, 1986, 7.
[146] Simonides, 607.
[147] Xenophon, *Memorabilia,* 2.6.10-12.
[148] Plutarch, *Moralia,* 15d. For good discussion of the Sirens and praise poetry, including but not limited to the Classical world, see Buhler, 2006, 176-193.
[149] Pindar, 94b, 31-32.

As male song is never compared to Sirens, whilst they appear in our two largest surviving *partheneia,* we may consider the Sirens commemorative power to be important to female performance. Just as their position as ritual singers gives their voice power, so does their comparison to the Sirens.

The powerful status of parthenoi.

Up to this point, we have seen significant evidence that suggests female performance was intimately linked to accessing the past. The focus has been on poetic techniques, re-occurring imagery, and common themes in the broad genre of female performance.

In this section I want to adopt a slightly different approach, by arguing that the status of *parthenoi* itself confers additional authority upon performers. Although the primary focus will still be on poetry, I also want to focus on the power that comes from a specific moment in the female life cycle. At this particular point, the social worth of a *parthenos* has never been higher. As evidenced by numerous references in Alcman, Sappho, Pindar, and Attic drama, *parthenoi* are at their most fertile and their most beautiful, with Hagesichora and Agido serving as prime examples.[150] As the examples of Nausicaa and Helen show us, *parthenoi* could be the focus of competition between suitors, attracting a large bride price and serving as a point of interaction between communities.[151] Herodotus' tale of the competition instituted by Cleisthenes of Sicyon for his daughter's hand in marriage, demonstrates that the arrangement of marriages could have a highly political significance. Not only are all of the suitors impressed by Cleisthenes' wealth and magnanimity, but he is also able to ally himself through marriage to the Alcmaeonids.[152] The wedding itself saw the bride become the focus of communal praise, often in a very public setting, again highlighting the importance of this

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[150] The evidence here is vast. Alcman, 1.39-101 contains numerous references to female beauty, as does fragment 3. Pindar, 94(b).6-12. References in tragedy are very common. The appendix of Laura Swift's recent book is an excellent resource. See Swift, 2010, 391-400. Some good examples include Euripides, *Electra,* 167-212; 923-942; and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1138-52.

[151] Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.25-41; 6.158-159; and Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women,* 68.1-106 (Berlin Papyri, No. 9739, and Berlin Papyri, No. 10560).

[152] Herodotus, 6.126-130.

moment in the life-cycle.[153] As *parthenoi,* women are desirable, fertile, politically important, and economically valuable.

Comparative anthropological material suggests that when girls are at the point of their highest social value they can gain additional authority as ritual speakers. Nagy cites the examples of Navajo girls who 'confer the blessings of fertility and prosperity,' during the four days in which they participate in the *kinaaldá* ritual, an initiation into puberty, whilst their Apache counterparts are thought to acquire special power at the same stage of their life.[154] Their fertility, eligibility, and potential lends them power. Thomas Buckley notes that Californian Yurok Indians also saw menstruation as a time when women were infused with great power and potency, although the males within society viewed this as somewhat threatening. To control the danger, women were (and in rare cases still are) secluded for the duration of their first menstruation.[155] In southern India, a similar pattern is seen, with women filled with *ananku,* a sacred power that was particularly potent at menarche or menstruation.[156] The important status of *parthenoi* could have invested them with similar ritual authority in archaic Greece, and in this section, we shall see that there is evidence that it did.

Certainly, the chorus members' beauty and fertility, markers of their status as *parthenoi,* are constantly emphasised by the poet. Alcman explicitly calls his chorus *parthenoi,* frequently highlights their beauty, and, as we saw earlier, distinguishes their status by focusing on their hair. Similarly, a large number of references in tragedy focus on female beauty, finery, and adornments as markers of *parthenoi.*[157] Lines 6-12 of Pindar's fragment 94b show that the speakers are beautifully adorned in a *peplos* and garlanded:

ἀλλὰ ζωσαμένα τε πέπλον ὠκέως

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[153] Best illustrated by Sappho's wedding songs. In particular, see 44A and 103-117. For examples of prominent public weddings, see Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles,* 270-285, and Sappho, 44.13-34.
[154] Nagy, 1996, 87-89.
[155] Buckley, 1988, 187-209.
[156] Jenett, 2005, 176.
[157] Euripides, *Electra,* 167-212 and 304-313; *Hecuba,* 351-355 and 923-942; *Iphigenia in Tauris,* 1138-1152. See Swift, 2010, 391-395. Napier, 1992, looks in detail at cultural symbols as markers within performance.

χερσίν τ᾽ ἐν μαλακαῖσιν ὄρπακ᾽ ἀγλαόν

δάφνας ὀχέοισα πάν-

δοξον Αἰολάδα σταθμόν

υἱοῦ τε Παγώνδα,

ὑμνήσω στεφάνοισι θάλ-

λοισα παρθένιον κάρα,

But quickly tying up my robe and carrying in my gentle hands a splendid branch of laurel, I shall hymn the all-glorious house of Aioladas and of his son Pagondas, my maidenly head flourishing with garlands.[158]

The vocabulary used to describe them suggests that they are kind and gentle (line 7 - μαλακαῖσιν; line 67 - ε[ὔ]φρων); The chorus paint a picture of themselves as graceful, beautiful, and eager to perform well, elements which are consistently reflected in Alcman's *partheneia*.[159]

The effect is to mark them out as idealised *parthenoi,* replete with social potential, beautiful, and ready for marriage. Their status as *parthenoi,* far from denying them authority, makes them valuable to the community and subsequently *enhances* their authority. This can be seen most clearly through Alcman's depiction of Hagesichora and Agido. Alcman's chorus view their success as being intimately linked with Hagesichora and Agido's ability to oversee the ritual in which they are involved.[160] It is through Hagesichora that the girls can achieve 'lovely peace,' following her as they would the directions of a helmsman or a trace-horse, both images that evoke leadership.[161] Throughout the poem, Alcman defines Hagesichora and Agido's status in terms of their exceptional beauty, and it is this that sets them apart from the rest of the chorus.[162] Their exceptional beauty is explicitly linked to their status as the ritual's *choregoi* and contributes to their authority to play a

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[158] Pindar, 94b.6-12. Race, 1997, 324-325.
[159] Alcman, 1.64-77 is probably the most famous depiction of female self-description.
[160] Alcman, 1.77-81: Hagesichora 'guards' the girls. It is only through the cooperation of Hagesichora and Agido who remain nearby and commend the festival that the girls can achieve peace.
[161] Alcman, 1.90-95.
[162] Alcman, 1.39-59.

leading role. The importance of the status of *parthenos* – at the height of fertility, beauty, and marital potential – provided the performer with an inflated role in society, reflected through their significance to ritual performance.

Comparative studies also suggest that the fertility and beauty of young women can also see them equated with deities who represent similar values. As such, the girls are empowered with the potency of the deity with whom they are assimilated. In Southern Indian tribes, young women embody goddesses associated with fertility when they begin menstruating, a phase which is expected to closely pre-empt sexual activity.[163] The girls epitomise the fertility, abundance, and reproductive potential which fertility deities stand for. The connection is also expressed in performative poetry. In the Indian epic, *Cilappatikaram,* one particular young woman is selected and embodies the power of a goddess called Ananku, a fertility goddess whose name is also the sacred power associated with sexuality. The young woman is dressed as Ananku, and surrounded by female attendants in rituals which Jenett comments are still current today.[164] The ritual suggests not only that an equation is made between the goddess and the young woman, but that the young woman embodies the goddess and symbolically holds her power.

This link between *parthenoi* and the divine appears to have existed in archaic Greece. We have already seen that Sappho's fragment 140 saw a performer take on the role of Aphrodite, albeit in the context of a ritual lament.[165] Perhaps more importantly, as we saw earlier in this chapter, the significance of the bride and her temporary elevation in status is made explicit by overlap in the meaning of the word *nymphai.*[166] For a short while, the bride's fertility, beauty, and social worth allow her to acquire the same title as a goddess. Mimesis and embodiment was clearly an important skill associated with the female chorus, and the overlap in meaning of *nymphai* suggests that the bride too embodied the qualities of a deity. Indeed, in performance more generally, similarities and equations between Greek deities and young female performers are common. One is reminded of book 6 of the *Odyssey,* when Nausicaa is said to stand out amongst her companions, just as Artemis

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[163] Jenett, 2005, 182-183.
[164] Jenett, 2005, 179-180.
[165] Sappho, 140.
[166] Nagy, 1996, 84.

stands out amongst her group of nymphs.[167] Hesiod chooses to begin his *Theogony* with a particularly evocative and detailed description of the Muses performing on top of Mount Helicon:

Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ᾽ ἀείδειν,

αἵ θ᾽ Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε ζάθεόν τε,

καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσσ᾽ ἁπαλοῖσιν

ὀρχεῦνται καὶ βωμὸν ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος·

καί τε λοεσσάμεναι τέρενα χρόα Περμησσοῖο

ἤ Ἵππου κρήνης ἤ Ὀλμειοῦ ζαθέοιο

ἀκροτάτῳ Ἑλικῶνι χοροὺς ἐνεποιήσαντο,

καλοὺς ἱμερόεντας, ἐπερρώσαντο δὲ ποσσίν.

Let us begin to sing from the Heliconian Muses, who possess the great and holy mountain of Helicon and dance on their soft feet around the violet-dark fountain and the alter of Cronus' mighty son. And after they have washed their tender skin in Pernessus or Hippocrene or holy Olmeius, they perform choral dances on highest Helicon, beautiful, lovely ones, and move nimbly with their feet.[168]

The Muses are characterised with language that is commonly used by poets to describe female choral performance, linking the divine performance with the human sphere. For example, just as in Hesiod, Sappho, and Alcman both describe beautiful young women in terms of their soft feet, a common marker for dancing ability.[169] Alcman's fragment 3 asks the Olympian Muses to inspire a new song, before describing his chorus' beautiful song and soft feet, coupled with exceptional beauty of Astymeloisa that epitomises everything which the Muses or Graces represent. Similar epithets of grace, beauty, and dancing skill are found applied to both the divine and human female chorus.[170] The use of stock words and imagery for divine and human choruses helps to reinforce the link between the two. The mortal performers gain authority and become idealised by being

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[167] Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.102-109.

[168] Hesiod, *Theogony,* 1-8. Most, 2007(a), 2-3.

[169] Alcman, 3.64-76; Sappho, 44.14-15; 103; and 103B; See also Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris.* 126-131.

[170] For example, Alcman describes the song of his Muses in a similar way to that of his choruses of *parthenoi:* For descriptions of Muses, Alcman, 14 and 27; Compare with Alcman, 3.1-10 which asks the Muse to begin a sweet song for Alcman's chorus.

assimilated with their divine counterparts. In addition to the divine, the chorus can also use self-description and characterisation to link themselves with past heroes or events.

By emphasising idealised qualities such as beauty, grace, and dancing ability, the poet is able to link his chorus to divinity either through traditional similarities to their depiction in earlier works, or more explicitly by having a performer embody a divinity who epitomises everything that is powerful about the status of *parthenos.* This assimilation with divinity helps to highlight the importance that beauty, fertility, and marital status lend to *parthenoi.* It is therefore another way in which the special status of *parthenos* is recognised, giving them additional authority to speak in public.

Conclusions

A number of features suggest that female voice had its own character and authority when embedded in a ritual context. Certainly, female performers like the women of Delos were represented as being masters of the art of mimesis, capable of evoking the past through theatricality and embodiment. In a similar way, the Sirens are represented as being the masters of recreating the past in song. The exclusive comparison of their voice to female song once again highlights the commemorative qualities commonly associated with female performance. Female authority is also enhanced by the similarities that existed between traditional female performers and divine or epic choruses. Poets sought to actively encourage and recreate these links in their poetry, thereby increasing the prestige of their performers by association. The idealised portrayal of *parthenoi* by the poets nicely encapsulates the significance of their status and provides another indicator of their social importance. The combination of the impressive performance characteristics, which become reoccurring themes in female song, and the special status of *parthenoi* imbues their voice with power.

Female performance did not always deny the authority of the speakers, nor did it have to assert the inferior position of women in society. Through recognition of impressive qualities and reoccurring female performance motifs, female song looked to enhance the verbal authority of its

53

speakers. Within that style, a sense of performing pride, strong identity, and ability to speak on political issues arose. Although different to the authority of the male performing voice, the acceptance and promotion of feminine qualities need not detract from the authority of their performance. In the final section of this chapter, we shall see that in the case of Alcman there are indicators that suggest he saw the performance of female choruses as having equal authority to their male counterparts.

1.5. What Is Appropriate for a *Parthenos* to Say?

My final task in this chapter will be to assess the power of the female voice in relation to that of the male chorus. In beginning my discussion of how female choral performance achieved its power, I noted that it has often been asserted that female performance underlines the inferiority of women.[171] Scholars have theorised that male poets such as Alcman and Pindar emphasise women's inferiority by weaving denials of authority and expressions of anxiety into female song. We have seen that particularly in the case of Alcman, but also to an extent in Pindar, the chorus' ability to recreate and embody the past gives them an authoritative public voice. Finally in this chapter, I argue that Alcman's chorus speak with greater authority than that of Pindar, who seems anxious to distinguish the limits of female performance authority in relation to the male voice. Pindar may seek to distinguish between male and female authority, but Alcman gives no indication that female performance should be any less authoritative than male performance.

Ritual status, mimetic ability, and the powerful status of *parthenoi* all contributed to enhance the potency of female voice. I now want to assess how attitudes towards female performance, and specifically what they were allowed to say publicly, was presented by the poets. I also want to explore the similarities and differences that appear when comparing the voice to male song to better understand how female performance was understood in different societies. A clear distinction emerges between the female voice of Pindar's performers in fifth-century Thebes and Alcman's performers in archaic Sparta. Pindar appears to make clear distinctions between female access to the Muses and, thus, authority to speak. In the case of Alcman, such distinctions do not appear.

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[171] See Clark, 1996, 151-156; Stehle, 1997, 71-118; and Klinck, 2001, 276-279.

In Pindar's fragment 94(b), the poet comments explicitly on what it is appropriate for *parthenoi* to comment on. The lines that follow Pindar's comparison of his choral song to that of the Sirens and precede the choruses' description of the Aeolidae read as follows:

πολ]λὰ μὲν [τ]ὰ πάροιθ[

 δαιδάλλοισ' ἔπεσιν, τὰ δ' α[

Ζεὺς οἶδ', ἐμὲ δὲ πρέπει

 παρθενήϊα μὲν φρονεῖν

 γλώσσᾳ τε λέγεσθαι·

ἀνδρὸς δ' οὔτε γυναικός, ὧν θάλεσσιν ἔγ-

 κειμαι, χρή μ[ε] λαθεῖν ἀοιδὰν πρόσφορον.

many are the former things … as I adorn them in verses, while the others … Zeus knows, but it is proper for me to think as a *parthenos* and to speak thus with my tongue. Neither of man nor woman, to whose offspring I am devoted, must I forget a fitting song.[172]

Owing to the public nature of the ritual, Pindar is clearly concerned to present the *parthenoi* as expressing sentiments and ideas that are suitable for them. The line suggests that certain topics and modes of song are appropriate for a *parthenos,* presumably different from those that were appropriate for men. Undoubtedly, as I have stressed, much of the chorus' authority comes from how they perform in ritual. However, Pindar still implies that certain issues would be inappropriate for female song. Eva Stehle has made several sensible comments that can help to explain this passage, with the following statement helping to explain the contrasts that Pindar expresses between male and female performance:

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[172] Pindar, 94b, 31-37. Race, 1997(b), 324-327 (adapted).

A second (contrast) is added, which now distinguishes, not between what Zeus and the *parthenoi* know, but between the full story as Zeus might give it and the social and intellectual constraints that inhibit the young women's speech. The *parthenoi,* it implies, will speak less fulsomely, less assertively in recounting the praises of the Aioladadai [sic] than men would.[173]

Stehle suggests that Pindar compares the *parthenoi* to Zeus before having them claim to sing appropriately, as a means of asserting his choruses' inferiority as speakers. The view becomes clearer when compared to an example for performance by a male chorus:

Ὅθεν περ καὶ Ὁμηρίδαι

ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων τὰ πόλλ' ἀοιδοί

ἄρχονται, Διὸς ἐκ προοιμίου, καὶ ὅδ' ἀνήρ

καταβολὰν ἱερῶν ἀγώ-

    νων νικαφορίας δέδεκται πρῶτον, Νεμεαίου

ἐν πολυϋμνήτῳ Διὸς ἄλσει.

Just as the sons of Homer, those singers of verses stitched together, most often begin from the prelude of Zeus, so has this man received his first instalment of victory in the sacred games at the much-hymned sanctuary of Nemean Zeus.[174]

The sons of Homer, the male bards, begin their work from Zeus. As Nagy points out, 'the ultimate starting-point, in the logic of this song, is the ultimate god, Zeus.'[175] The bards derive their inspiration from Zeus and the Muses, something that allows them to accurately recreate the past. For Stehle, this is the central reason why Pindar compares his chorus to Sirens: although they are impressive commemorative singers, they are also separate from the Muses.[176] In fragment 94b Pindar sets up a contrast between what Zeus knows and what his female chorus can sing, whilst

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[173] Stehle, 1997, 98. Calame, 1994, 139, also marks this distinction with reference to the performers age and the nature of their performance: 'The knowledge of the god contrasts with the adolescent thoughts appropriately expressed by the young *khoreutai,* in their function as commemorative and poetic glorifiers of human beings.'

[174] Pindar, *Nemean,* 2.1-5. Race, 1997(b), 16-17 (adapted – based on Nagy, 1996, 62).

[175] Nagy, 1996, 62.

[176] Stehle, 1997, 93-99.

elsewhere the male bards begin their song from Zeus. Denied access to Zeus and the Muses, the female voice is guaranteed to be less potent than that of the male.

However, a distinct contrast emerges between female voices as depicted by Pindar and as depicted by Alcman, who apparently did not see any need to make a distinction between which sex should have access to the Muses. Alcman certainly saw the Muses as an appropriate source of inspiration for a female chorus:

Μῶσ᾽ ἄγε Μῶσα λίγηα πολυμμελές

αἰὲν ἀοιδὲ μέλος

νεοχμὸν ἄρχε παρσένοις ἀείδην.

Come, Muse, clear voiced Muse of many songs, singer always, begin a new song for *parthenoi* to sing.[177]

Similar invocations of the Muses can be found in Alcman's fragments 3 and 5, both of which feature female performers. Furthermore, as we have seen, Alcman equated the Muse with the Siren when making a comparison with the female chorus. If Pindar's female chorus are denied access to the Muse, then Alcman's are categorically able to take their inspiration from the Muses. Furthermore, again in contrast to Pindar 94b, Alcman's female chorus, here identified by a feminine participle, do begin their song from Zeus:

ἐγὼν δ᾽ ἀείσομαι

ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχομένα.

And I shall sing beginning from Zeus.[178]

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[177] Alcman, 14(a). Campbell, 1988, 406-407. See also, Alcman, 3.1-10.
[178] Alcman, 29. Campbell, 1988, 418-419.

Furthermore, the author who records this fragment, Achilles in his *Commentary on Aratus*, specifically compares this fragment to the opening lines of Pindar's *Nemean* 2, the point at which the sons of Homer begin their poetry from Zeus. Just like the sons of Homer in Pindar, so too can Alcman's female chorus derive their poetic inspiration from Zeus and the Muses.

We may therefore see a distinct split in the way the female voice was presented in fifth-century Thebes and archaic Sparta. For Pindar, his chorus' status as ritual performers give them the authority to speak publicly on social and political issues, but he is keen to make a distinction between what females are allowed to say publicly, accentuated through a lack of access to poetic inspiration possessed by their male counterparts. However, in the case of Alcman, there is no reason why his chorus cannot sing of their inspiration from both Zeus and the Muses. Alcman is more comfortable with infusing his female choral performances with authority, and subsequently feels no need to deny the force of their voice. This is interesting, especially when it has often been argued that Alcman's chorus articulate their own nervousness and lack of authority when speaking in public.[179]

In the following chapter, I shall seek to address these issues by placing the performance in the context of archaic Spartan ritual in order to explain this interesting difference between Alcman and Pindar. Alcman allowed his female chorus access to the Muse, but his poetry is also full with references to mimesis, beautiful *parthenoi,* and commemorative song. As we shall see, there is every reason to believe that *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta did have a particularly potent performance voice and the next chapter will explore the performance context that makes this possible.

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[179] Clark, 1996, 168, and Stehle, 1997, 72-73 are good examples.

Conclusions

This introductory chapter has tackled a broad range of themes all of which will inform the rest of my thesis. To ensure clarity in the following chapters, it is worth briefly recapping some of the key points.

Alcman's largest surviving poems appear to focus on *parthenoi,* a status group which features girls who are approaching the time of their marriage. *Parthenoi* also appear commonly throughout Alcman's poetry and seem to have been of particular significance to his compositions, probably owing to their rapidly approaching marriages. Furthermore, Alcman's mention of *parthenoi* performing in tribal and village groups suggests that the vast majority of Spartan girls must have participated in choral performance, particularly when considered alongside early population estimates. *Parthenoi* and their participation in the chorus was clearly seen as being extremely important in archaic Sparta. Furthermore, we have seen conclusively that social and political issues were entirely appropriate for such female choral performances.

This is particularly interesting when considered alongside the authority that Alcman appears to have attributed to their performing voice. Unlike Pindar's *partheneia,* Alcman allows his chorus to derive their song from Zeus and the Muses, accentuating the beauty of both his performers and their song. Alcman's poetry shows evidence of embracing the exceptional mimetic ability of the birds, recognising the power of Siren song and highlighting the important status of *parthenoi.* His chorus leaders, Hagesichora and Agido, exemplify all the divine characteristics which a chorus leader should possess and hence derive the authority to lead their ritual. In Alcman's case then, it appears that female performance was imbued with its own authority and purpose, with female performers not demonstrably inferior to men. Alcman's *parthenoi* also appear to have a particularly authoritative voice with which to discuss political issues, showing far less anxiety than his counterpart in fifth-century Thebes does. Exploring the nature of female performance in archaic Sparta and establishing more about its political power is the central focus of the next chapter.

Following this, it should become increasingly clear how *parthenoi* and their poetic performances were politically significant to the *polis.*

Chapter 2 - Spartan Female Performance

In line with the general trend, which I have already explored, discussions focused specifically on Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* have tended to focus on the lack of authority with which the chorus speaks. This view jars strongly with my own conclusions based upon empowering themes that reoccur in female performance, but a more specific examination of the *Louvre Partheneion* will both demonstrate its potent voice and help to determine its social function in archaic Sparta.

By way of introduction, I shall begin by briefly examining scholarship that denies the authority of Alcman's chorus. Eva Stehle provides a prime example. For Stehle the performance of the poem serves to publicly 'demonstrate their (i.e the chorus') internalisation of gender roles.'[1] She claims that the chorus refer to their own lack of a speaking voice in the poem. Through comparison of their song to shrill bird cries, description in terms of animals, and use of the word *matān* ('in vain'), the chorus emphasise their lack of authoritative voice. For Stehle, one of the main purposes of the poem is to display 'their lack of voice' thereby emphasising their passive public role.[2] Christina Clark expresses a similar position, once again viewing the performance as a representation of the subordinate female role:

> In the character of young girls, straightforward, authoritative speech becomes impossible….perhaps because female speech was considered inherently deceptive. If women are liars by nature, how can they gain verbal authority?[3]

Clark sees a change of voice between the mythological section of the poem, in which the subject matter and language lend the chorus' voice authority, and the second half where the girls actively deprecate their own voice. For Clark, only the audience's visual perception of the girls as ritual performers gives their voice authority.[4] Even Gloria Ferrari, who recognises that the *Louvre*

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[1] Stehle, 1997, 72.
[2] Stehle, 1997, 73. See also, Bowman, 2004, 1-27.
[3] Clark, 1996, 168. To explain women as 'liars by nature' Clark refers to Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 77-79.
[4] Clark, 1996, 151-156.

Partheneion plays an important role in 'the apportionment of praise and blame,' still considers the significance of the choruses' femininity to be limited:

> Its authority to do so (speak and pass judgement) rests not upon its dramatic identity as a chorus of stars, but upon its official role of ritual agent in a cultic setting, before the polity formally assembled.[5]

For Ferrari, the chorus' ritual and dramatic identity are the key parts of their ability to speak. As we have seen, Ferrari and Clark are correct to point out that the chorus' ritual function and performative character increase their authority. However, although ritual authority is certainly important, even Ferrari provides no recognition that there are proud defining aspects of female choral performance which also contribute to their authority.

However, at the end of the previous chapter, we saw that a distinct difference was visible in the ways that Pindar and Alcman depict female voice. Pindar may deny his chorus access to the Muses, but Alcman certainly does not. It appears that the female chorus in archaic Sparta was represented differently from Pindar's performance in classical Thebes. Furthermore, claims that the female voice was devoid of authority in archaic Sparta appear to be at odds with our surviving historical evidence.[6] As we shall see, the idea that they deprecate their own voice and can only speak by denying their own authority, thereby confirming their role as 'a passive, beautiful object,'[7] does not fit with our historical sources.

To challenge the view that female performance lacked authority in archaic Sparta, I want to explore in detail how Alcman represented the voice of his chorus in the *Louvre Partheneion.* Initially, I shall provide a brief overview of the earliest historical evidence that suggests a prominent public role for Spartan women. I argue that the ability of Spartan women to hold land made them economically and politically significant figures in archaic Sparta, a fact that contributed to their social

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[5] Ferrari, 2008, 113.
[6] For examples of Spartan female authority (all of which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter) see Herodotus, 5.51.2; Herodotus, 7.239; Aristotle, *Politics,* 1269b22-1270a15; and Plato, *Laws,* 637c-d.
[7] Clark, 1996, 146.

status.[8] This elevated social status contributes to the prominent examples of outspoken, authoritative women that we find in our classical sources, a body of evidence that I shall also briefly examine. Following this discussion, I argue that Alcman's chorus emphasise their own authority by alluding to a powerful female performance type, specifically concerned with commemoration: lament. As we shall see, the *Louvre Partheneion* seeks to commemorate heroes from the past and by building references to lament into his song, Alcman accentuates a powerful element of traditional female performance. The focus on mythology already makes commemoration an important aspect of the poem and Alcman's references to lament put this to the fore of the audiences' mind. Subsequently, the authority and power of the performance is not damaged, but enhanced.

Finally, I want to explore this performance type in the context of major Spartan civic festivals. As we shall see, the performance of the *Louvre Partheneion,* and possibly of Alcman's poetry more generally, would have been entirely appropriate for performance at a major Spartan civic festival. These festivals often seek to commemorate heroes from the past, frequently featuring performances which include lamentation. Performances were linked naturally with the social development of the *polis,* helping to re-enforce Spartan values and disseminate important ideas.

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[8] For excellent scholarship on this issue see Hodkinson, 1989, 79-121 and Hodkinson, 2000, 405-409.

2.1 The *Louvre Partheneion*

Much of the analysis in the next two chapters is based upon Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* so, for the sake of convenience, I give the whole text below. The text is based largely on Campbell's 1988 Loeb edition, although at certain points, I have made adaptations based upon scholarship that is more recent. These points are marked in bold and I explain the reasoning behind the alterations in footnotes.

>] Πωλυδεύκης·

> [οὐκ ἐγὼ]ν Λύκαισον ἐν καμοῦσιν ἀλέγω

> [Ἐνα]ρσφόρον τε καὶ Σέβρον ποδώκη

> [   ]ν τε τὸν βιατὰν

> [   ]. τε τὸν κορυστὰν *(5)*

> [Εὐτείχη] τε ϝάνακτά τ' Ἀρήιον

> [   ]ά τ' ἔξοχον ἡμισίων·

> [καὶ   ]ν τὸν ἀγρόταν

> [   ] μέγαν Εὔρυτόν τε

> [Ἄρεος ἂν] πώρω κλόνον *(10)*

> [Ἀλκωνά]. τε τὼς ἀρίστως

> [οὐδ' ἀμῶς] παρήσομες

> [κπάτησε γ]αρ Αἶσα παντῶν

> [καὶ Πόρος] γεραιτάτοι

> [λύθη δ' ἀπ]έδιλος ἀλκὰ *(15)*

> **μή τις ἀν]θπώπων ἐς ὠρανὸν ποτήσθω**

> **μηδ' ὑποτ]ρήτω γαμῆν τὰν Ἀφροδίταν.**

> [Κυπρίαν ϝ]άν[α]σσαν ἤ τιν'

[   ] ἢ παίδα Πόρϙω

[εἰναλίω. Χά]ϱιτες δὲ Διὸς δ[ό]μον *(20)*

   [ἀμφιέπου]σιν ἐϱογλεφάϱοι·

[   ]τάτοι

[   ]τα δαίμων

[   ]ι φίλοις

[ἔδ]ωκε δῶϱα *(25)*

[   ]γαϱέον

[   ]ώλεσ’ ἤβα

[   ]ϱονον

[μ]αταίας

[   ]έβα· τῶν δ’ ἄλλος ἰῶι *(30)*

[   ] μαϱμάϱωι μυλάϰϱωι

[   ].εν Ἀΐδας

[   ]αυτοι

[   ]’πον· ἄλαστα δὲ

  Ϝέϱγα πάσον ϰαϰὰ μησαμένοι· *(35)*

ἔστι τις σιῶν τίσις·

ὁ δ’ ὄλβιος, ὅστις εὔφϱων

ἁμέϱαν [δι]απλέϰει

ἄϰλαυτος· ἐγὼν δ’ ἀείδω

Ἀγιδῶς τὸ φῶς· ὁϱῶ *(40)*

Ϝ’ ὥτ’ ἄλιον, ὅνπεϱ ἇμιν

Ἀγιδὼ μαϱτύϱεται

φαίνην· ἐμὲ δ’ οὔτ’ ἐπαινῆν

65

οὔτε μωμήσθαι νιν ἁ κλεννὰ χοραγὸς

οὐδ' ἁμῶς ἐῆι· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἤμεν αὔτα *(45)*

ἐκπρεπὴς τὼς ὥπερ αἴτις

ἐν βοτοῖς στάσειεν ἵππον

παγὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καναχάποδα

τῶν ὑποπετριδίων ὀνείρων·

ἦ οὐχ ὁρῆις; ὁ μὲν κέλης *(50)*

Ἐνετικός· ἁ δὲ χαίτα

τᾶς ἐμᾶς ἀνεψιᾶς

Ἁγησιχόρας ἐπανθεῖ

χρυσὸς [ὡ]ς ἀκήρατος·

τό τ' ἀργύριον πρόσωπον, *(55)*

διαφάδαν τί τοι λέγω;

Ἁγησιχόρα μὲν αὔτα·

ἁ δὲ δευτέρα πεδ' Ἀγιδὼ τὸ Ϝεῖδος

ἵππος Ἰβηνῶι Κολαξαῖος δραμήται·

ταὶ Πεληάδες γὰρ ἇμιν *(60)*

ʼορθρίαι φᾶρος φεροίσαις

νύκτα δι' ἀμβροσίαν ἅτε σήριον

ἄστρον ἀυηρομέναι μάχονται·

οὔτε γάρ τι πορφύρας

τόσσος κόρος ὥστ' ἀμύναι, *(65)*

οὔτε ποικίλος δράκων

παγχρύσιος, οὐδὲ μίτρα

Λυδία, νεανίδων

66

ἰανογ[λ]εφάρων ἄγαλμα,

οὐδὲ ταὶ Ναννῶς κόμαι, *(70)*

ἀλλ' οὐ[δ'] Ἀρέτα σιειδής,

οὐδὲ Σύλακίς τε καὶ Κλεησισήρα,

οὐδ' ἐς Αἰνησιμβρ[ό]τας ἐνθοῖσα φασεῖς·

Ἀσταφίς [τ]έ μοι γένοιτο

καὶ ποτιγλέποι Φίλυλλα *(75)*

Δαμαρ[έ]τα τ' ἐρατά τε Ϝιανθεμίς·

ἀλλ' Ἀγησιχόρα με τείρει.

οὐ γὰρ ἁ κ[α]λλίσφυρος

Ἀγησιχ[ό]ρ[α] πάρ' αὐτεῖ,

Ἀγιδοῖ .... αρμένει *(80)*

θωστήρ[ιά τ'] ἅμ' ἐπαινεῖ.

ἀλλὰ τᾶν [..]... σιοὶ

δέξασθε· [σι]ῶν γὰρ ἄνα

καὶ τέλος· [χο]ροστάτις,

Ϝείποιμί δ', [ἐ]γὼν μὲν αὐτὰ *(85)*

παρσένος μάταν ἀπὸ θράνω λέλακα

γλαύξ· ἐγὼ[ν] δὲ τᾶι μὲν Ἀώτι μάλιστα

Ϝανδάνην ἐρῶ· πόνων γὰρ

ἇμιν ἰάτωρ ἔγεντο·

ἐξ Ἀγησιχόρ[ας] δὲ νεάνιδες *(90)*

ἰρ]ήνας ἐρατ[ᾶ]ς ἐπέβαν·

τῶ]ι τε γὰρ σηραφόρωι

..]τῶς εδ...........

τ[ῶι] κυβερνάται δὲ χρὴ

κ[ἠ]ν ναῒ μάλιστ᾽ ἀκούην· *(95)*

ἀ δὲ τᾶν Σηρην[ί]δων

ἀοιδοτέρα μ[ὲν οὐχί,

σιαὶ γάρ, ἀντ[ὶ δ᾽ ἔνδεκα

παίδων δεκ[ὰς ἅδ᾽ ἀείδ]ει·

φθέγγεται δ᾽ [ἄρ᾽] ὥ[τ᾽ ἐπὶ] Ξάνθω ῥοαῖσι *(100)*

κύκνος· ἁ δ᾽ ἐπιμέρωι ξανθᾶι κομίσκαι

Polyduces: I do not reckon Lycaethus among the dead but Enarsphorus and swift-footed Serbrus and .... the violent and .... the helmeted and Eucheiches and lord Areius and .... outstanding among the demigods; and great gatherer (of the army), and Eurytus in the hurly-burly (of blind Ares?) and (Alcon), finest warriors by no means we shall pass over. Fate and Poros, those ancient ones, conquered them all, and their valour which was without foundation collapsed.[9] **Let no mortal fly to the sky, nor flee from marrying Aphrodite,**[10] the (Cyprian) queen, nor some .... nor a daughter of Porcus (of the sea) .... It is the Graces with love in their eyes who (frequent) the house of Zeus; .... god .... to friends .... gave gifts .... youth lost .... throne .... vain .... went; one of them (died) by an arrow, (another) by a marble millstone .... Hades ....; and unforgettably they suffered, since they plotted evil. There is such a thing as the vengeance of the gods; man is blessed who devoutly weaves to the end of the web of his day unweeping.

And so I sing of the brightness of Agido; I see her like the sun, which Agido summons to shine on us as our witness; but our illustrious choir leader by no means allows me either to praise or to fault her;[11] for she herself seems pre-eminent, just as if one were to put a horse among

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[9] On fate, see Dietrich, 1965, 249-326.

[10] Alcman, 1.16-17. Ferrari, 2008, 151-155: 'Phaethon's name does not appear in this extremely lacunose part of the text, but the allusion is as unmistakable as the reference to Prometheus would be in the phrase "Let no man steal fire or cheat the gods of their share." Only in the myth of Phaethon do flying to the sky and the prospect of marrying Aphrodite coexist.' This passage will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

[11] Fowler, 1987, 70-72 points out that these lines should emphasise the equality of Hagesichora and Agido. Rather than implying rivalry (a view suggested by, for example, Segal, 1983, 265-269 and Robbins, 1994, 7-16), they suggest that Agido's beauty is so obvious that it requires no praise or blame. Fowler states: 'The point is that words are unnecessary; Agido's beauty is obvious. Agido is therefore the subject in lines 45ff; she is the

grazing herds, a sturdy, thunderous-hoofed prize winner, one of those seen in rock-sheltered dreams. Why, don't you see? The race-horse is Venetic; but the hair of my cousin Hagesichora has the bloom of undefiled gold, and her silver face – why do I tell you openly? This is Hagesichora here; and the second in beauty after Agido will run like a Coiaxian horse against a Thenian, **for the Pleiades are suspended aloft in battle against us, who are carrying through the ambrosial night to Orthria, a robe like the star Sirius.**[12]

For abundance of purple is not sufficient for protection, nor intricate snake of solid gold, no, nor Lydian headband, pride of dark-eyed girls, nor the hair of Nanno, nor again godlike Areta nor Thyiacis and Cleesithera; nor will you go to Aemesimbrota's and say, 'If only Astaphis were mine, if only Philylla were to look my way and Damareta and lovely Ianthemis;' no, Hagesichora guards me. For is not fair-ankled Hagesichora present here? Does she not remain (near) Agido and commend our festival; Come, you gods, accept their (prayers); to the gods belong fulfilment and accomplishment. Choir-leader - if I may speak – I am myself only a *parthenos* screeching in vain, an owl from a rafter, but even so I long to please Aotis most of all, for she proved the healer of our sufferings; but it was thanks to Hagesichora that girls trod the path to lovely peace.

For (like) the trace-horse .... and in a ship to one must obey the helmsman most of all; and she is of course (not) more melodious than the Sirens, for they are goddesses; but this our choir of ten sings as well as eleven girls; why, it's song is like that of a swan on the waters of the Xanthus; and she .... her lovely yellow hair ....[13]

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champion filly. αὔτα, not αὐτά, should be read in line 45, and the meaning understood to be: 'Hagesichora permits no words, for this girl is beautiful.' The chorus would indicate Agido with a gesture, as they do in lines 56f, where exactly the same point is made about her: 'Why do I need to tell you in so many words? This [αὔτα] is Hagesichora.' Her beauty is obvious.' See also, Fowler, 1995, 1-4.

[12] Priestley, 2007, 177-194; Priestley's translation rests on her interpretation of the word φᾶρος, alternatively translated plough or robe. A scholiast, Sosiphanes, and the Greek word for plough, αροτο, appearing above φᾶρος in the manuscript, support the translation of plough. However, as Priestley points out, αροτο has been crossed out and Sosiphanes is a notoriously unreliable commentator. Furthermore, Priestley is convincing in arguing that φᾶρος can and should be read in conjunction with ἅτε σήριον ἄστρον.

[12] In support of this argument, numerous instances of comparisons between beautiful robes, often for goddesses are cited (Homer, *Iliad*, 6.293-5; *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 86-90; Aeschylus, *Solominiai, TGF*, fr216). See also, Calame, 1977(2), 128-129 and Hutchinson, 2001, 91. I have one objection to Priestly's translation, namely that ἀυηρομέναι should be translated as 'suspended aloft' instead of 'rising.' As Ferrari 2008, 87, pointed out, this passive translation is perfectly acceptable and compares favourably with other texts like Euripides' *Alcestis* 445-452. Furthermore, as shown by both Garzya 1954, 54 and Gianotti, 1978, 268, the intransitive translation of 'rising' never appears in archaic poetry (Ferrari, 2008, 87 – ft 47).

[13] Alcman, 1. Campbell, 1998, 360-369 (adapted). Robbins, 1994, 7, hypothesises that the poem may have been split into two sections, with the end of the mythological section representing the break. He believes that

The Time and Setting of the 'Louvre Partheneion'

The time and setting of the poem's performance has been a source of continuous controversy. For the sake of clarity, I shall very briefly explain my arguments on this subject here.

The precise time in the calendar year when the ritual took place is not of paramount importance for this thesis and, on this question, I am happy to accept the suggestions of other scholars, which tend to prioritise Alcman's focus on the heavens. Ann Burnett made the key breakthrough on this issue when she argued that Sirius and the Pleiades referred to stars that were actually present in the night sky. Based on lines 60-63 and translating *auēromenai* as rising, she argued that the performance took place at the heliacal rising of the stars in early May.[14] More recently, Ferrari flagged the reasonable objection that at the heliacal rising of the Pleiades, Sirius is entirely absent from the night sky. Subsequently, she argued that the performance should take place at a time when Sirius is present, several months later when the Pleiades are setting. For Ferrari, the performance is autumnal, with the setting of the Pleiades helping to mark the season of the plough, an item that Ferrari imagines to be explicitly present in line 61 of the poem.[15] Although there is no way of being certain, Ferrari's argument is persuasive.

What is of more significance for my thesis is that the poem's performance was public, an opinion which is now very strongly supported.[16] As Ferrari and Bowie have recently emphasised, the description of the festival as a *thōstēria* marks it out as a festival occasion that was probably reoccurring.[17] Luginbill, supporting a public initiatory hypothesis, details the straightforward observation that display of young women and their addresses to men would lose force if not

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a further scroll may have been lost which would have given us two equal halves, the first centred on mythology, and the second focusing on the girls in the chorus.[13] There is symmetry to this idea that is appealing and fits well when the two sections are compared. Cf Diels, 1896, 340 and Davison, 1938, 441. Wilamowitz, 1897, 251, presents an alternative view.

[14] Burnett, 1964. 30-34. The view that the performance was nocturnal also receives support from Segal, 1994, 264.

[15] Ferrari, 2008, 83-89. In support of her theory, Ferrari translates *auēromenai* as suspended aloft. For counterviews see Bowie, 2011, 59

[16] Bowra, 1934, 35-44, suggested a festival to Dionysus and Helen followed by a dawn offering of a plough.

[17] Ferrari, 2010, 82-82 and Bowie, 2011, 38 and 63. See Calame, 1977(2), 113-114 for fuller discussion of *thōstēria* in this context.

performed publicly.[18] Stehle makes the simple, yet persuasive, argument that to reserve the performance of such an elaborate ritual text for a private group of young girls would have been unusual, whilst adding that Plutarch later claims that public performance of Spartan girls was encouraged.[19] Furthermore, ample evidence exists that public performance of choruses did serve as a major part of Spartan festivals, and considering the arguments outlined above, it seems likely that the *Louvre Partheneion* fitted this context.[20]

The *Louvre Partheneion* was meant to be viewed publicly on a festival occasion. The nature of this festival will become clearer throughout this chapter, but first we must examine the extent to which a chorus of *parthenoi* was able to speak in a forthright manner in such a public forum.

2.2 The Potent Voice of Alcman's Chorus

As we saw at the end of the previous chapter, Alcman had no concerns about signalling that his female chorus gained their inspiration from Zeus and the Muses, an honour that Pindar reserved for male performers.

In this section, I want to go further, suggesting that in archaic Sparta, women could have a significant public voice, something that is reflected in the *Louvre Parthenion*. In order to lay the foundations for this study, I first want to look at the social and political status of *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta. I argue that their ability to inherit land made them highly politically and economically valuable, leading to increased competition for favourable marriages and conflict over women. The result was an elevated social status that further contributed to the authority of Spartan *parthenoi*. Much of our classical and post-classical evidence for Spartan women suggests that they had a much more active and outspoken public role than did women in other *poleis.* Here, I want to show that

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[18] Luginbill, 2009, 28.

[19] Stehle, 1997, 31-32, with reference to Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 15.1. See also Ingalls, 2000, 11 and Rayor, 1987, 80. Calame, 2001, 162, persists with the counterview which he first put forward in 1977, namely that Spartan girls would participate in more private initiation rituals. The updated version of his evidence is collected at Calame, 1997, 141-206.

[20] Sosibus, *FGrHist* 595 F5 = Athenaeus, 15.678bc and Polycrates, *FGrHist* 588F1, Athenaeus, 4.139e-f.

elements of this powerful voice were reflected in the voice of Alcman's chorus. In order to do so, I shall be looking at the following questions:

1) How did the ability of Spartan women to inherit land affect their social position? How did competition for heiresses of elite brides impact on archaic Sparta and the social standing of *parthenoi?*

2) How reliable is our evidence that suggests women had a significant public presence in Sparta? To what extent can these ideas be applied to the archaic period?

3) What elements of Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* reflect authoritative female speech?

4) How should we understand statements that have led some scholars to deny the verbal authority of the chorus? How can apparently negative depictions of female voice be reconciled with the public authority of the girl's performance?

In order to answer these last two questions, I want to suggest that the *Louvre Partheneion* contains references and allusions to lament. Not only is lament recognised as a performance medium in which women excel, but it is also one in which the performers often attempt to commemorate deeds form the past. As such, it fits very well with the performance context of the *Louvre Partheneion,* a poem that we shall see focused on commemorating Sparta's heroic past through ritual performance. By alluding to the performance of lament, Alcman therefore accesses the power of this traditional female performance genre in his poem. Rather than lessening the authority of the female voice, we shall see that references to lament enhance the performance by accentuating the chorus' excellent commemorative ability.

In this section, it should become clear that *parthenoi* had important social, political, and economic roles in archaic Sparta*.* This was largely because of the significant political and economic importance of marriage, which greatly enhanced the value of *parthenoi* and subsequent scrutiny over them at this important phase of their life.

As Stephen Hodkinson has illustrated, a large part of the important social role of Spartan *parthenoi* is concerned with female inheritance of land, a factor that caused competition for favourable marriages amongst men.[21] Aristotle famously notes that Spartan females could inherit land, and in his time held some two-thirds of land in Spartan territory.[22] The ability of women to inherit land and thereby control this wealth meant that they must have become highly sought after. However, despite the importance of marriage, it still appears that the male relatives make the final decision on organising marriage, as they did throughout the archaic Greek world. Herodotus and Aristotle both suggest that the male guardian (*kyrios*) was charged with organising the marriage.[23] Xenophon also indicates that it was a male responsibility to organise the marriages when he claims that no Spartan man would ask for the hand of any female from the house of a trembler.[24] As we might expect, this could have led to infighting and rivalry as best matches were sought.

Herodotus also tells us that if the guardian of a Spartan heiress died before she had been betrothed, then it was the responsibility of the kings to decide who should have her.[25] The involvement of the kings illustrates the importance that the matter of heiresses and inheritance held for the Spartans. With females inheriting at least some of their families' estate, they could become wealthy landowners themselves. Furthermore, because daughters also inherit land in addition to

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[21] See especially, Hodkinson, 1989, 79-121 and Hodkinson, 2000, 405-409.

[22] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1270a-b.

[23] Herodotus, 6.57.4 and Aristotle, *Politics,* 1270a. Furthermore, our classical authors suggest that Spartan males would still be the dominant partner in marriage. As Paul Cartledge points out, Herodotus and Xenophon imply that the man 'has' a wife in a manner which suggests possession. See also Herodotus, 5.39.2; 6.65.2; and Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians,* 1.8. See Cartledge, 2001, 121-123.

[24] Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians,* 9.5.

[25] Herodotus, 6.57.4.

sons, parental holdings would have been subject to much greater divisions. For Spartans, who were required to contribute a certain amount of produce to their messes to qualify for citizen status,[26] the acquisition of a wealthy bride must have been an important preoccupation.

That this was a considerable problem in Sparta is indicated by a number of other measures which existed to help counter the issue by limiting the number of heirs amongst which each parent had to divide his estate.[27] Polybius notes that several Spartan brothers might share one wife, a practice that would have ensured that their property was not divided too thinly.[28] The famous Spartan practice of wife-sharing also helped. When a man had enough children by his wife, he could give her to a friend, with Xenophon claiming that this practice allowed a man to have more brothers for his sons without diluting their inheritance further.[29] In addition, we often find Spartan kings marrying within their own kingship groups to insure their inheritance and power remains within the family. Anaxandridas II marries his niece, Archidamas II marries his aunt, and Gorgo marries her uncle Leonidas.[30] Endogamy helps to concentrate wealth and power within the same family.

In the case of exogamous marriages, homogamy was of paramount importance with families keen to secure matches of similar political and economic status. Indeed, this trend appears to have been prominent across archaic Greece. Theognis' poetry and contentious marriages in Herodotus tell us that marriage between traditional elites and wealthy upstarts was a genuine social concern.[31] An indication that the same concern existed at Sparta is provided by Xenophon, who states that in matters of wife-swapping matches of similar social standing were sought.[32] The evidence suggests that marriage was a key tool in ensuring the continued power of the wealthy Spartan elite. In the words of Hodkinson:

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[26] A practice that Alcman, 98 refers too: 'And at the meals and banquets of the messes it is right to strike up the paean in the presence of the feasters.' Campbell, 1988, 462-362. The passage is taken from Strabo, 4.18 who is comparing the names for public messes in Sparta and Crete.

[27] Hodkinson, 2000, 406-407.

[28] Polybius, 12.6.

[29] Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians,* 1.8-9 and Polybius, 12.6.

[30] Herodotus, 5.39; 6.71; and 7.205.1.

[31] Theognis, 257-260; 183-192; Herodotus, 1.60-4; and 6.126-131.

[32] Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians,* 1.8. A slightly later classical example serves to illustrate the point. While Lysander's daughters are thought to be wealthy heiresses, they are keenly pursued by suitors, however, when they are revealed to have no such inheritance they are soon abandoned. Plutarch, *Moralia*, 230a; *Lysander,* 30.6; and Aelian, *Verae Historiae,* 6.4; and 10.15.

The royal houses provide clear examples of wealthy families who perpetuated and enhanced their socio-economic position over the generations through the judicious combination of endogamous unions and advantageous marriages with other rich families.[33]

In this sense, marriage could act as a means of strengthening political and financial positions. However, ample evidence also exists which confirms that struggles concerning a bride, prompted by both desire and politics, lead to conflict and destroy *eunomia*. The most famous sees the Spartan king Demaratus snatch Percalus, daughter of the famous ephor Chilon, before she can complete her arranged marriage with his relative Leotychidas.[34] The daughter of the esteemed ephor is viewed as such a valuable asset, perhaps both politically and economically, that Demaratus' capture of her is a source of serious animosity between the two. Herodotus points out that the snatching leads to 'strife',[35] when Leotychidas seeks revenge by questioning Demaratus' royal parentage and eventually having him removed from the Spartan throne.[36] In this example, marriage is a political weapon for Demaratus that has damaging consequences for himself, but also leads to disputes amongst the Spartan elite. Furthermore, the issues surrounding Demaratus' parentage also stem from confusion surrounding marriages. We find king Ariston, father of Demaratus, lusting after the wife of his best friend Agetus.[37] The wife of Agetus, described as 'the most beautiful woman in Sparta,'[38] was taken from him when Ariston tricked him into exchanging the items which each most desired from one another. Herodotus makes clear the displeasure of Agetus at losing his wife.[39] He also notes that it was Ariston's lust for Agetus' wife that led to the problems:

Τὸν δὲ Ἀρίστωνα ἔκνιζε ἄρα τῆς γυναικὸς ταύτης ἔρως·

And Eros for this woman cut at Ariston.....[40]

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[33] Hodkinson, 2000, 413.
[34] Herodotus, 6.65.
[35] Herodotus, 6.66.1
[36] Herodotus, 6.65-66.
[37] Herodotus, 6.61-2.
[38] Herodotus, 6.61.
[39] Herodotus, 6.62.
[40] Herodotus, 6.62.1.

Desire and the wife stealing are a source of animosity between the two friends. Subsequently, confusion over whether Ariston's son, Demaratus, belonged to him or Agetus, is the pretext under which Demaratus' was deposed from the Spartan kingship. The Spartan belief that their kings were descended from Heracles, first appearing in Tyrtaeus' poetry, meant that it was crucial for royal children to be descended unquestionably from the king, thereby perpetuating the bloodline.[41] The doubt over Demeratus' parentage threatens the bloodline of Heracles and therefore makes him ineligible for kingship.

Marrying to increase social position could also be a source of tension. Another mid-sixth-century king, Anaxandrides, was allowed extraordinarily to take a second wife, alongside his original wife, after his first marriage was childless for some time. When the first wife eventually did become pregnant, the family of the second wife caused a great outcry feeling that the pregnancy was being faked to undermine their newly acquired position. So great was the outcry, that the ephors were forced to attend the birth to confirm the authenticity of the pregnancy and quell the potential dispute.[42]

The pattern, which we see developing from these archaic examples, is one of a society in which marriage was extremely socially and economically important. Herodotus' examples show that tensions over brides could spark conflicts amongst the ruling elite. In the royal families, this problem was exacerbated by the need to ensure the bloodline of Heracles was maintained, whilst all Spartans citizens must have been concerned to improve their socio-economic position and ensure their status as Spartiates through favourable marriages.

Once again, we see that this can help to explain the elevated position of *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta. The status of *parthenoi* in itself could cause women to gain additional authority and power, owing to the fact that their social, political, and economic worth was so significant. In the context of archaic Sparta, where marriage was such an important factor in society, the value of women was extended further. In Alcman's fragment 5, we find that one of the girls participating in the

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[41] Tyrtaeus, 2.9-15.
[42] Herodotus, 5.39-41.

performance may have been a certain Timasimbrota, daughter of Spartan king Leotychidas.[43] As

royal *parthenos,* Timasimbrota is an incredibly important political performer, as her marriage could

potentially have implications for the entire community. This social worth, in the particular context of

Spartan society where marriage was so important, increases the status of the performer still further.

The social importance of *parthenoi* at Sparta contributed greatly to the high number of

myths that feature abduction or conflict over women. Helen's abduction by Paris is alluded to by

Alcman himself.[44] Alcman also relates Helen's abduction by Theseus and the destruction that ensues,

something that will be discussed in detail later in this thesis.[45] As Glenn Most has persuasively

demonstrated, Alcman's fragment 5 featured the capture of Thetis by Peleus.[46] Idas, one of the sons

of Aphreus, even challenges Apollo to combat after the deity snatches his bride Marpessa, a theme

that Bacchylides tells us was sung by Spartan girls.[47] Abduction and conflict over women seems to

have been one of the dominant themes in Spartan female song, reflecting the dangers created by

women's social importance.

Furthermore, this theme is also reflected in some major Spartan political traditions. Spartan

tradition states that the first conflict between Messenia and Sparta was begun by a Messenian

attack on *parthenoi* serving at the temple of Artemnis Limnatis. For a full account of the events, we

are forced to rely on Pausanias although it is mentioned by much earlier sources.[48] Heracleides

speaks of the flight of certain Messenians to Rhegium and their violation of Spartan girls, whilst

Ephorus and Antiochos of Syracuse note that this event was the catalyst for the start of the war.[49]

We are told that while Spartan girls were dancing at the shrine of Artemis Limnatis, situated in the

Taygetus Mountains on the border of Laconia and Messenia, a Messenian group attacked and raped

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[43] Alcman, 5.fr2, col ii.

[44] Alcman, 77. Bowie, 2011, 46-47, suggests that abduction may have been significant to Alcman's poetry, but focuses more generally on abduction narratives across Greece. He goes on to theorise that this fear of abduction accounted for the Sirens presence in the *Louvre Partheneion,* owing to their similarities to Harpies, frequent snatchers of children. To support his case Bowie makes reference to Homer, *Odyssey,* 20.61-81 and Apollonius, *Argonautica*, 4.891-909.

[45] Alcman, 20 and 21.

[46] Alcman 5. Most, 1987.

[47] Bacchylides, 20.

[48] Pausanias, 4.4.2-3 and 3.2.6.

[49] Heracleides, 55. (See Aristotle, frg 611.55); Antiochus, *FGrHist* 555 F9, 13; and Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F216. See also Strabo 8.362. Further support for the flight of the Messenian to Rhegium comes from Thucydides, 6.4.5-6, and Pausanias, 4.23.6. Both claim that Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegium, renamed a town Messene in order to commemorate his ancestors.

them. The Spartan king Teleclus was also killed during the raid. In addition, Pausanias reports that the Messenians offer a counter version whereby young Spartan warriors disguised as females were killed to prevent a forthcoming attack.[50] Either way, here we have a Spartan tradition which links the start of a lengthy war with young girls performing dances in cult service. The Messenian's abduction of the girls is the root course of the conflict.

These myths may be linked to the social reality of archaic Sparta, where the ability of *parthenoi* to inherit land made them increasingly likely to be the subject of fierce competition amongst Spartan men. Competition for desirable brides was undoubtedly an issue across Greece, but the added economic value of women in archaic Sparta may have given this problem additional impetus, as reflected by the frequent occourrences of conflict over women that appear in both myth and historical texts. This added importance also elevated their standing within Spartan society, and may have been a contributing factor to their increased public authority, a feature that I shall now proceed to examine.

Female Authority in Archaic Sparta.

Having established that Spartan *parthenoi* had a high social and political value, I now move on to discuss the verbal authority that our classical sources suggest they possessed. Stehle and Clark's claims that Alcman's chorus lack a voice jar with the historical view that women in Sparta were more outspoken than in other *poleis.* The most discussed evidence is late, with Plutarch, whom we have already seen to be a difficult source on archaic Sparta, a well known commentator on the public power of Spartan women.[51] However, there is substantial evidence from the classical period suggesting that women's public prominence was grounded in the archaic period. In Thomas Figueira's recent article on women in archaic and classical Sparta, he goes so far as to claim that women could essentially 'police' the behaviour of men through their outspokenness.[52]

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[50] Pausanias, 4.4.3.

[51] Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 14.3. One of Plutarch's most intriguing claims is that Spartan *parthenoi* would regularly be involved in public choral performances, also mocking or praising the qualities of young men to encourage a competitive ethos amongst them.

[52] Figueira, 2010, 265-296.

Certainly, classical philosophers were judgemental about the influence allowed to Spartan women. Aristotle claims that they wielded a significant degree of influence over their men and Plato notes their 'indulgence.'[53] Similarly, Euripide's *Andromache* alludes to their exceptional social position through discussion of public athletic competition and scanty dress. Euripides also describes Helen as capable of manipulating Menelaus.[54] Most famously, Herodotus cites the example of a young Gorgo giving advice to her father, Cleomenes, when Aristagoras was attempting to persuade him to support the Ionian revolt. Agreeing with his daughters wise words, Cleomenes follows Gorgo's advice and sends Aristagoras away.[55] This is not the only example that Herodotus provides of Gorgo's involvement in public politics. Before Xerxes invasion of Greece, the exiled king Demaratus sent a secret message to warn the Spartans of the impending threat. Blank wax tablets were sent with a message written underneath. Gorgo is able to solve the puzzle and reveal the message to the Spartans.[56] Once again, Gorgo plays a prominent public role. Not only is Gorgo present and capable of speaking in a politically significant context, but even as a child she is capable of influencing the minds of the men who hear her.

The fourth-century Olympic victor Cynisca provides further evidence of a potent female voice. Xenophon tells us that Cynisca's brother Agesilaus persuaded her to breed chariot horses, whilst he himself would breed warhorses and raise hounds for hunting.[57] Xenophon suggests that Ageisilaus' point is to demonstrate that the civic-minded man should do things to benefit the state. On the other hand, anyone with wealth can pursue victory in chariot racing, but the sport is not useful for the *polis*. However, the epigram, which adorned the base of Cynisca's statue at Olympia, provides a direct statement demonstrating pride in her Spartan heritage and suggesting a formidable female voice:

Σπάρτας μὲν [βασιλῆες ἐμοὶ]

πατέρες καὶ ἀδελφοί, ἅ[ρματι δ' ὠκυπόδων ἵππων]

[53] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1269b22-1270a15 and Plato, *Laws,* 637c-d.
[54] Euripides, *Andromache,* 590-641. Ibycus, 339, provides us with confirmation that their dress caused surprise in the archaic period through his description of Spartan *parthenoi* as 'thigh-flashers.'
[55] Herodotus, 5.51.2.
[56] Herodotus, 7.239. Further evidence of the female capacity to influence political action is provided by Strabo, 6.3. Relating Ephorus, tells us that during war with the Messenians the Spartan women convinced their men to let them mate with young men so as not to decrease the citizen population.
[57] Xenophon, *Agesilaus,* 9.6-7.

νικῶσα Κυνίσκα εἰκόνα τάνδ᾽ ἔστασε· μόν[αν]

δ᾽ ἐμέ φαμι γυναικῶν Ἑλλάδος ἐκ πάσας τό[ν]-

δε λαβῆν στέφανον.

My ancestors and brothers were kings of Sparta.

I, Cynisca, victorious with a chariot of swift footed horses,

Erected this statue. I declare that I am the only woman

in all of Greece to have won this crown.[58]

The lines, all in the first person, show pride, financial power, and a degree of independence. Although influenced by her brother, Cynisca has the right to speak with authority.

There is enough here to suggest that Spartan women did have a greater degree of public presence and authority than their counterparts in other *poleis.* As we shall see, this authority is reflected in their choral song.

Authoritative Speech in Alcman's Louvre Partheneion

In a society where women appear to have spoken with more public authority than was the norm, at least in Athens from where most of our evidence is produced, it would seem strange if a major public performance sought largely to deny authority to that voice. In composing the *Louvre Partheneion,* Alcman intended to do no such thing. Not only do Alcman's chorus address their speech directly to men, but they are also described with imagery that emphasises their influence and status.

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[58] PA 13.16. Pomeroy, 2002, 22. See also Pausanias, 6.1.6.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the language and imagery used to describe the female chorus is highly significant, as it helps to establish the performer's value as *parthenoi*. I have also suggested that the exceptional qualities that make Hagesichora and Agido idealised *parthenoi* enhance their social status, subsequently contributing to their authority. The exceptional status of Hagesichora and Agido is strongly emphasised throughout the poem, but the rest of the chorus' exceptional features are also highlighted. They famously describe their own beauty and attractive adornments in lines 64-77, with Lydian headbands, beautiful jewellery, pretty eyes, and impressive hair all accentuated.[59] In contrast to the description of Hippocoontids that begins the poem, where warrior's martial valour is accentuated, here we find the chorus of girls described by their own attractiveness and beautiful trinkets. These are the characteristics that emphasise their social worth as beautiful, wealthy, and eligible young women. The comparison of women to high value objects through metaphors is a common technique used for women who are approaching marriage. It emphasises the value of the bride as an item of exchange between communities and highlights her worth as a nodal point in systems of gift exchange. The descriptions of Hagesichora, Agido, and their chorus emphasises their social value *as females* in contrast to the masculine values expressed in the first half of the poem. Our evidence already suggests that females had a public voice at Sparta, but the status of the performers as *parthenoi* who are at the very peak of their social value allows them to make a greater impact on their audience.

This authority is most pronounced in the roles of Hagesichora and Agido. Not only are they beautiful *parthenoi,* probably socially elite or even royal, but they are also described in political language that implies leadership. Lines 92-95 confirm their important leadership role in the ritual, by comparing Hagesichora to both a trace-horse and a helmsman.[60] The use of κυβερνάτας certainly suggests a prominent leadership role and it is striking that we find it used to describe a female chorus leader. Compare it with Theognis' depiction of a ship of state:

κυβερνήτην μὲν ἔπαυσαν

ἐσθλόν, ὅτις φυλακὴν εἶχεν ἐπισταμένως·

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[59] Alcman, 1.64-77. Campbell, 1988, 366-367.
[60] Alcman, 1.92-95. Campbell, 1988, 368-369.

χρήματα δ’ ἁρπάζουσι βίηι, κόσμος δ’ ἀπόλωλεν

They have deposed the noble helmsman who skilfully kept watch, they seize possessions by force, and discipline is lost.[61]

Archaic poetic descriptions of the *polis* as 'ship of state' are common and in this case, Theognis states that the loss of the κυβερνάτας is specifically linked to the destruction of order. In this context, Alcman's description of a female *chorēgos* as κυβερνάτας is significant. The control of the *chorēgos* and the completion of the ritual are important to the *polis* and hence Hagesichora has a substantial role to play. Just as the pilot in Theognis' poem is integral to the order of the state, so Hagesichora is integral to the success of the ritual, as it is she who must lead the chorus to the 'lovely peace' of line 91.[62] At a major public ritual, Hagesichora is integral to the choral performance and thus integral to the success of the rite. In turn, the success of public ritual has consequences for the entire *polis,* giving Hagesichora, as *chorēgos,* a significant civic role to play.

The metaphors of the trace horse and the exceptional horses to which Hagesichora and Agido are compared also suggest leadership and high value. Clark recognises that the impressive horses mark their pair out as leaders, but is troubled by 'masculinity' of this leadership metaphor:

> The poet's use of male horse imagery with military connotations to characterise a maiden seems at first glance an odd way to "map" her for the audience and the other younger maidens. I propose that the poet uses this imagery to describe the female leaders because no other leadership paradigm was available to him. Leadership is, in Greek terms, an inherently masculine role, a male construct.[63]

However, on closer inspection, Clark's concerns appear to be unfounded with horsemanship in Sparta having neither a particularly militaristic nor a masculine role. Tyrtaeus famously comments

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[61] Theognis, 675-677. Gerber, 1999, 272-273. In other poetic contexts, we find that κυβερνάτης can be used as a metaphor for government and controlling the direction of the *polis:* Pindar, *Pythian,* 10.72.
[62] Alcman 1.90-91. Campbell, 1988, 368-369.
[63] Clark, 1996, 156.

that no man, despite his wealth or prowess in other areas, should be considered good unless he took up his place in the front ranks of hoplite fighting.[64] Indeed, Xenophon tells us that whilst Agesilaus was proud to keep war horses, he encouraged his sister Cynisca to train horse for racing – to own horses was a mark of wealth and status rather than merit.[65] Elsewhere, Xenophon confirms that foreigners were to ride horses into battle rather than Spartan citizens who would prefer to take up place in the infantry.[66] Horses were extremely valuable, serving as a common mark of wealth and status; Devereux has already discussed that the horses found in Alcman's poetry are exotic, fast and impressive breeds and Alcman demonstrates that horses were a mark of high status by describing Polydeuces as a 'tamer of swift steeds.'[67] However, there is nothing particularly masculine about the horse imagery. Indeed, far from it, the evidence from Xenophon and Tyrtaeus suggests that males favoured phalanx warfare, whilst Cynisca breeds race horses, making arguments that horsemanship carried masculine leadership connotations in archaic Sparta harder to sustain. The comparison of the leading girls to exotic horses serves to emphasise both their leadership qualities and their value as *parthenoi.*[68]

In summary, Alcman clearly marks his chorus as socially valuable females. Their beauty emphasises the feminine value of *parthenoi* in contrast to the masculine epithets we find in the first half of the poem. Yet this femininity does not deny their voice authority. They publicly give gnomic advice, whilst the characterisation of the *choregoi* as exceptional horses and, in Hagesichora's case, a helmsman, suggests a prominent public role. The language suggests leadership, public importance, and considerable authority.

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[64] Tyrtaeus, 12.1-14.
[65] Xenophon, *Agesilaus,* 9.6.
[66] Xenophon, *On the Cavalry Commander,* 9.4.
[67] Alcman, 2; Devereux, 1965, 176-178. See also Richer, 2010, 5-11. Nicholas Richer's recent study states that five percent of Spartan names are derived from equine vocabulary, significantly more than any other derivative.
[68] Rosenmeyer, 2004, 163-178, is also probably right to suggest that the images of horses may also link to the girls beauty and fertility. The similarities with Anacreon 346 and 417, where desirable girls are compared to horses frolicking in a meadow, suggest that the metaphor also contained a sexual element.

The Language of Lament

Up to this point, I hope to have made a strong case for recognising the authority of Alcman's female chorus. I want to conclude by suggesting that Alcman refers to lament, a well known area of female performative pride, to emphasise the potency of his chorus' voice. The blending of genre in this manner is quite common. In Laura Swift's excellent recent book, *The Hidden Chorus: Echoes of Genre in Tragic Lyric,* she explores how different poetic genres are incorporated into dramatic performance. Swift notes that whilst the nature of tragedy makes it a flexible medium for the interweaving of different genres, other styles of lyric poetry are more restricted by their ritual function. For example:

> The incorporation of other genres into a *paian* could only be permissible insofar as it is not detrimental to the *paian* achieving its own ritual function.[69]

Swift notes that for allusions to other genres to work in lyric poetry they need to work in context and enhance the potency of the performance. In this section, I hope to show that Alcman's occasional allusions to lament in the *Louvre Partheneion,* far from being detrimental to the poem, do enhance its power owing to the thematic overlap between the two genres. Both *partheneia* and lament are dominated by female performers and both are also areas of considerable female pride, with commemoration often an important aspect.[70]

I shall argue that it is exactly this desire for poetic remembrance and commemoration that is so important in the *Louvre Partheneion.* The early sections of the poem discuss the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontids, both of whom are celebrated in Spartan hero-cult.[71] Having listed the names of the Hippocoontids who took part in battle with the Dioscuri, Alcman makes the following comment:

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[69] Swift, 2010, 26.

[70] The definitive book for the study of Greek lament remains Alexiou, 2002 (updated version). See also, Holst-Warhaft, 1992. Loraux, 1986, (especially, 42-56) is a seminal study of the relationship between mourning and the *polis.*

[71] Alcman, 1.1-36.

τε τὼς ἀρίστως

[οὐδ᾽ ἀμῶς] παρήσομες

Finest warriors, we shall by no means pass over.[72]

The meaning is clear. The Hippocoontids, as figures who are worthy of receiving hero-cult, do not deserve to be forgotten despite their conflict with the Dioscuri. Like the Dioscuri, they are worthy of reverence as heroic figures in the communities past. Alcman ends the mythological section of the poem with the words:

ἄλαστα δὲ

ϝέργα πάσον κακὰ μησαμένοι·

And unforgettably they suffered, since they plotted evil.[73]

The myth of their evil deeds continues to have value to the Spartan community, and thus Alcman stresses that it cannot be forgotten. There is value to Sparta in memory of myth and this is both why the Hippocoontids receive hero cult and why they find themselves remembered with impressive epithets in Alcman's poetry.

I argue that references to lament help highlight this aspect of the performance. As we have seen, some lines of the *Louvre Partheneion* (85-87; 96-101) have often been taken to represent Alcman asserting the inferiority of the female singing voice. I hope to reverse this trend by demonstrating that as markers of lament they actually enhance the power of the performance by alluding to another area of female performance expertise.

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[72] Alcman, 1.11-12. Campbell, 1988, 362-362. While exploring these themes, Ferrari, 2008, 119-126 draws a contrast with Lycaethus, one of the sons of Derites, whom Alcman appears to exclude from his list of those worthy of commemoration.
[73] Alcman, 1.34-35. Campbell, 1988, 362-363.

Before going any further, it is necessary to explain the positive reasons for referring to the medium of lament in a *Partheneion.* Lament is conspicuous in the Homeric epics and often features commemoration of heroes. In the *Iliad,* Cassandra seeks to publicise the death of Hector to the whole town:

κώκυσέν τ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔπειτα γέγωνέ τε πᾶν κατὰ ἄστυ:

ὄψεσθε Τρῶες καὶ Τρῳάδες Ἕκτορ᾽ ἰόντες,

εἴ ποτε καὶ ζώοντι μάχης ἐκνοστήσαντι

χαίρετ᾽, ἐπεὶ μέγα χάρμα πόλει τ᾽ ἦν παντί τε δήμῳ.

She uttered a shrill cry and called throughout the city: 'Trojan men and women, come and see Hector, if ever you had joy to see him coming back still living from battle, since he was a great joy to the city and all the people.[74]

Following her words, the entire city turns out to witness the funeral of Hector and the laments led by his female relatives.[75] It is important that the whole city is united in their lament for their greatest hero.

That memory, perpetuated by song and often featuring a strain of lament, should be communally important should not come as a surprise following the work of Nagy on the Homeric epics. As Nagy says:

The traditional relationship of *pénthos* to *kléos* is reflected by its fixed epithet *álaston.*[76]

As we saw, Alcman uses *álaston* to describe the sufferings of the Hippocoontids.[77] Nagy further argues that cult is required for communities to express grief for deceased heroes, whereas *kléos* can

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[74] Homer, *Iliad,* 24.703-706. Murray, 1999(b), 614-615 (revised Wyatt and adapted).
[75] Homer, *Iliad,* 24.707-803.
[76] Nagy, 1979, 95.

be conferred in other poetry.[78] Lamentation in cult allows for the commemoration of deeds from the past.[79]

Alcman encouraged this commemoration in the *Louvre Partheneion*, in part through allusions to lament. Indeed, directly following the description of the conflicts between Spartan heroes we find lines that would fit well in the context of lament. Lines 37-39 (quoted above) are certainly thematically appropriate for lament and bear considerable similarities with later *threnoi*.[80] We see this attitude reflected in Simonides' *threnoi*:

ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν μή ποτε φάσῃς ὅ τι γίνεται αὔριον,

 μηδ' ἄνδρα ἰδὼν ὄλβιον ὅσσον χρόνον ἔσσεται.

You are man: then never say what will happen tomorrow, nor, when you see a prosperous man, how long he will prosper;[81]

ἀνθρώπων ὀλίγον μὲν

κάρτος ἄπρακτοι δὲ μεληδόνες...

κείνου γὰρ ἴσον λάχον μέρος οἵ τ' ἀγαθοὶ

ὅστις τε κακός.

Men's strength is slight, their plans impossible....of death an equal portion is allotted to good men and to bad.[82]

For Simonides, the unpredictability of death is a common theme. Death is allotted in equal measure to both the good and the bad, but the unpredictability of human fortune is still a common element

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[77] Alcman, 1.34.
[78] Nagy, 1979, 113-114.
[79] Once again, this recalls Plutarch's comments that praise of the good and blame of the negative, often through poetry, were centrally important to Spartan society. See Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 14.3 and 25.3-5.
[80] Ferrari, 2008, 119-120, also notes that these lines would not be out of place in a funeral lamentation.
[81] Simonides, 521. Campbell, 1991, 416-17.
[82] Simonides, 520. Campbell, 1991, 416-17.

in lament. Certainly, Alcman's reflections in lines 37-39 appear to fit this pattern well. Another line that fits the context of lament, frequently asserted as a denial of female authority, is provided by lines 85-87:

[ἐ]γὼν μὲν αὐτὰ

παρσένος μάταν ἀπὸ θράνω λέλακα

γλαύξ·

I am myself only a *parthenos* screeching in vain, an owl from a rafter…[83]

Stehle claims that these lines provide a perfect example of the chorus publicly expressing their own lack of voice as subordinate females. The verb *laskein* is hardly complimentary for their singing voice, also compared to the hooting of an owl, whilst the chorus themselves say that their voice is 'in vain.' However, recently Ferrari has offered a convincing counterargument. *Lasko* is also a verb that is frequently used to describe female lament.[84] For Ferrari, the use of *lasko* helped express the Hyades' (the star cluster whom she imagines Alcman's chorus represent)[85] status as perpetual singers of the lament. Furthermore, the use of *matān* is also something we would expect – 'Dirges are proverbially "in vain" because the longing they voice for the dead can never be appeased' and it appears extremely frequently in the context of lament.[86]

On closer examination, the *Louvre Partheneion* is filled with numerous references to the medium of lament. Furthermore, as above, elements that have been assumed to detract from the choruses' singing voice, are often explicit references to lament. One such element, often understood negatively, is the comparison of the voice of Hagisichora to the Sirens. The Siren's commemorative

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[83] Alcman, 1.85-87. Campbell, 1988, 366-369.

[84] Ferrari, 2008, 90-91. Ferrari cites two good examples: Sophocles, *Electra,* 121-123 and Euripides, *Hecuba,* 677-79.

[85] Ferrari, 2008, 83-89, imagined that the chorus represented the Hyades, sisters of the Pleiades, owing to their important role as markers of seasonal change. Ferrari takes the chorus claims to be battling with the Pleiades (Alcman, 1.60-63) as a reference to competition with a rival chorus who are also concerned in a ritual which serves to mark seasonal change. Ferrari also notes (90) that the Hyades characterisation as perpetual mourners for their brother Hyas refers to lament appropriate.

[86] Ferrari, 2008, 91. Ferrari also collects a large store of evidence for the use of *matān* in the context of lament: Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers,* 926; Sophocles, *Ajax,* 852; *Antigone,* 1252; and Euripides, *Phoenician Women,* 1726.

power has already been noted in the previous chapter, but, in addition, the Sirens are also consistently associated with lament. Alcman's comparison reads:

ἁ δὲ τᾶν Σηρην[ί]δων

ἀοιδοτέρα μ[ὲν οὐχί,

σιαὶ γάρ, ἀντ[ὶ δ' ἔνδεκα

παίδων δεκ[ὰς ἅδ' ἀείδ]ει·

φθέγγεται δ' [ἄρ'] ὥ[τ' ἐπὶ] Ξάνθω ῥοαῖσι

κύκνος

and she is of course (not) more melodious than the Sirens, for they are goddesses; but this our chorus of ten sings as well as eleven girls; why, its song is like that of a swan on the waters of the Xanthus;[87]

A fine example of the Siren's links to lament can be found in Euripides' *Helen.* In Euripides' *Helen,* Helen's lament when she is informed by Teucer that Menelaus and the Dioscuri are dead, calls upon the Sirens:[88]

ποῖον ἀμιλλαθῶ γόον; ἢ τίνα μοῦσαν ἐπέλθω

δάκρυσιν ἢ θρήνοις ἢ πένθεσιν; αἰαῖ.

πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες,

παρθένοι Χθονὸς κόραι,

Σειρῆνες, εἴθ' ἐμοῖς

†γόοις μόλοιτ' ἔχουσαι Λίβυν

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[87] Alcman, 1.96-101. Campbell, 1988, 368-369.
[88] Euripides, *Helen,* 68-163 for Helen's discussion with Teucer.

λωτὸν ἢ σύριγγας ἢ

φόρμιγγας αἰλίνοις κακοῖς

τοῖς ἐμοῖσι σύνοχα δάκρυα,

How shall I strive in lament? To what Muse shall I call, with tears, with laments, or cries of suffering? AiAi! Feathered *neanides*, *parthenoi, korai* from the earth, Sirens come here to me in mourning, bringing Libyan flutes or pipes or lyres, crying out in distress joined together with my tears.[89]

In the first place, Helen's use of the verb ἁμιλλάομαι is interesting, as it reveals her desire to perform an impressive lament worthy of the news that she has just heard.[90] ἁμιλλάομαι is a verb which is frequently used to describe contesting, competing, or striving for something – it implies a great deal of expenditure of effort deployed towards something.[91] We find that Euripides uses it again in the context of lament, with *Hecuba* featuring the line 'How shall I groan loud enough.'[92] Lament is the female field and the heroines strive to do justice to their theme by providing a lament fitting for those who have recently died. Helen is determined to commemorate Menelaus and the Dioscuri. In order to do so she strives to make her lament as impressive as possible. In Euripides' *Helen,* the 'Muses' which Helen requests to help her perform her lament are the Sirens, a group whose chthonic associations see them frequently associated to lament. For example, an isolated fragment from Sophocles has the Sirens singing 'Hades' tunes.'[93] The Siren's home in the *Odyssey* is also evocative of the underworld. Just as the wind ceases as Odysseus leaves the underworld, so it ceases as his ship approaches the Sirens.[94] Sirens are also associated with death in iconographic depictions, both appearing on tombs and in underworld imagery.[95]

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[89] Euripides, *Helen,* 165-173. My translation.
[90] Allen, 2008, 171.
[91] For examples see Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.31; Herodotus, 4.71.5; and Euripides, *Andromeda,* 127.
[92] Euripides, *Hecuba,* 271.
[93] Sophocles, 861: 'I came to the Sirens, daughters of Phorcus, singing the songs of Hades.' Lloyd-Jones, 1996, 376-77.
[94] Homer, *Odyssey,* 12.167-169 and 11.640.
[95] Vermeule, 1979, 201-206.

In order to commemorate the fates of the Dioscuri, Menelaus, and the Greeks in general, the Sirens, with their beautiful song and connection to death, are the perfect divinities to call upon.[96] The Sirens are not only exceptional commemorative performers, but actually come across as the ideal 'Muse' in connection with the underworld and laments.[97] In addition to, and partly because of, their status as exceptional singers that we explored in the previous chapter, the Sirens come to be associated with commemorative lament. Euripides' image of Helen evoking the Sirens as she attempts to commemorate the deceased Spartan heroes may be an element of Athenian tragedy that reflects an element of Spartan female performance.[98]

In addition, there is further evidence confirming that Alcman's lines 96-101 were influenced by lament. The song of the swan, to which Alcman's chorus compare their voice in lines 100-101, is also strongly associated with lament.[99] By the third-century BC, to sing a 'swan-song' was already associated with mourning at the time of death.[100] Yet there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the link between swans and lamentations existed far earlier and was a common idea. Clytemnestra describes the death of Cassandra who 'like a swan, has sung her last lament in death' during Aeschylus' *Agamemnon.*[101] In Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates explains that swans sing beautifully when they are on the point of death, something which most people believe is a lamentation for their impending demise.[102] By the time that *History of Animals* was written, Aristotle was able to claim that swans regularly sung in a mournful voice as they died.[103] In all these cases, the swan, as singer, is linked as the ultimate bird which performs songs of lament. Coming shortly after Alcman's

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[96] Euripides, *Helen,* 109-110; 135-136; 142; and 198-210 for indications of Helen's attitude towards the deceased. Buschor, 1944, eloquently argued that the Siren's primary function was to act as singers for the dead and to help people make the transition to Hades upon death. Pollard, 1965, 137-145, is less convinced by Buschor's views, but does gather significant evidence that they were associated with commemorative song and were often represented in a sinister, morbid context. Holford-Strevens, 2006, 16-25, also makes the connection to lamentation and the underworld, noting both the sweetness of Siren song and its ability to be a dangerous temptation. Buhler, 2006, 176-193, discusses Sirens and praise poetry through the ages.

[97] Pollard, 1965, 139, stresses their likeness between sirens and harpies on the so-called 'Harpy-tomb' at Xanthus. Here the Harpies carry off the dead to the underworld. Pollard also speculates that a Siren may appear in a feast scene depicted on a Laconian cup to signify that it takes place in the underworld.

[98] I discuss the relationship between Spartan poetry and Athenian tragedy in more detail in chapter 3. For discussion of this see, Bierl, 2011, 415-436 and Carey, 2011, 437-460.

[99] Alcman, 1.100-101. See Fenik, 1964, for a discussion of Rhesus that suggests that Xanthus may also have had links to immortality.

[100] For example, Polybius, 30.4.

[101] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon,* 1444-1445.

[102] Plato, *Phaedrus,* 84e-85a. Socrate's point is to disagree, suggesting that the swans sing beautifully because of their delight that they will soon meet their god.

[103] Aristotle, *History of Animals,* 615.2-5.

comparison of Hagesichora's song to that of the Sirens, the connection to lamentation is very hard to ignore.

The references to lament which appear in the *Louvre Partheneion* are entirely consistent with the poet's desire to commemorate and re-create the past. Lament is the female field and the heroines strive to do justice to their theme by providing a lament which is fitting for those who have recently died. Clearly, commemoration and moralising were important features of the genre. As we saw from Euripides' *Helen,* the eponymous heroine is determined to commemorate her relatives and in order to do so she strives to make her lament as impressive as possible.

As I have shown, the evidence suggests that Alcman's chorus, far from denying the power of their own voice, use the language of lament to connect to Sparta's mythical past. Their song is full of references to lament that highlight the actions of a series of heroes who are worshipped by the Spartans in hero-cult. It appears that commemoration was important to Spartan society and Alcman's chorus of *parthenoi* have a voice to express these important myths. Our historical evidence suggests that Spartan women had a voice in archaic period and it appears that this voice was enhanced by their role in choral performance.

Conclusions

At the start of this section I argued that Spartan women had an important social, political and economic role. The *Louvre Partheneion* is full of elements that suggest that its performers had a significant public voice to match their social worth. The chorus' self-description highlights the value as *parthenoi,* whilst Alcman's use of language featuring helmsman and leading horses suggest a prominent role in society. They sing of the importance of commemorating heroes vital to Sparta's civic identity and accentuate their expertise at doing so through occasional allusions to lament, the female genre of commemoration *par excellence.* This image of a potent female singing voice fits much better with the historical tradition that depicts Sparta's women as outspoken, bold, and socially concerned.

Having established that Alcman's chorus had a potent public voice, the next question of interest is the setting in which they used it. I have already noted that the performance of the *Louvre Partheneion* most likely took place at an important civic festival. In the next section, I shall move on to look at how and why commemoration of heroes was so important to ritual in archaic Sparta, with a view to suggesting a potential performance context for the *Louvre Partheneion.*

2.3 Commemoration of Heroes in Archaic Sparta

This section aims to show that the emphasis on commemoration and perpetuation of mythic heroes that we find in the *Louvre Partheneion* was a common and important feature of Spartan society, particularly in ritual. I shall also explore how archaic Spartan practices concerning commemoration of heroes could serve as a means of fostering civic solidarity and emphasising qualities that were of social value.

I begin by looking at some of the available evidence for commemorative practices. Certainly, as Ferrari has pointed out, commemorative laments appear to have been a major factor at one prominent Spartan festival, the Carneia.[104] In Euripides' *Alcestis,* the death of the heroine is followed by the choruses' comment that Alcestis will be remembered, specifically at Sparta during the Carneia:

πολλά σε μουσοπόλοι

  μέλψουσι καθ᾽ ἑπτάτονόν τ᾽ ὀρείαν

  χέλυν ἔν τ᾽ ἀλύροις κλέοντες ὕμνοις,

  Σπάρται κυκλὰς ἁνίκα Καρνεί-

    ου περινίσεται ὥρα

  μηνός, ἀειρομένας

  παννύχου σελάνας,

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[104] Pettersson, 1992, 62-63.

λιπαραῖσί τ᾽ ἐν ὀλβίαις Ἀθάναις.

Poets shall sing often in your praise both on the seven-stringed mountain tortoise-shell and in songs unaccompanied by the lyre when at Sparta the cycle of the season of the month Karneios comes circling round and the moon is aloft the whole night long, and also in rich, gleaming Athens.[105]

The Amyclae throne confirms that the myth of Alcestis was relevant to archaic Sparta.[106] We discover from later sources that Alcestis' father, Pelias, demanded that any man who wished to marry his daughter yoke a boar and a lion to a chariot.[107] Admetus' successful attempt to complete this difficult task is depicted on the throne.[108] In Euripides' passage, the performance of songs that are *aluros* – 'without the lyre' – is always associated with lament,[109] so it would appear that Euripides imagines the songs performed for Alcestis at the Spartan Carneia are laments.

Furthermore, Euripides suggests some of the reasons why the commemoration of Alcestis through performance was important. Owing to Alcestis' exemplary character, she is celebrated by the very songs that are performed at the Carneia – in the words of the chorus:

τοίαν ἔλιπες θανοῦσα μολ-

πὰν μελέων ἀοιδοῖς.

Such is the theme for song that you have left for poets by your death.[110]

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[105] Euripides, *Alcestis,* 445-452. Ferrari, 2008, 122-123. Ferrari alludes to this fragment to support her argument that Spartan girls performed songs of lamentation to heroes in 'the mourning voice.' This fits with her conclusion that the chorus of the *Louvre Partheneion* are the Hyades lamenting for their lost brother. As will become clear, I favour a different interpretation of their allusions to lament.
[106] Pausanias, 3.18.16.
[107] Apollodorus, 1.9.15 and Hyginus, *Fabulae,* 50-51.
[108] Pausanias, 3.18.16. Pipili, 1987, 24, Image 77, also suggests that a mid-sixth century image may show Admetus engaged in this task.
[109] Ferrari, 2008, 122-123.
[110] Euripides, *Alcestis,* 453-454. Ferrari, 2008, 122-123.

Alcestis' death brings her immortal memory. The chorus of Euripides' *Alcestis* even speculate that their heroine may have received special honours from mortals as a result of her selflessness:

μηδὲ νεκρῶν ὡς φθιμένων χῶμα νομιζέσθω

  τύμβος σᾶς ἀλόχου, θεοῖσι δ' ὁμοίως

  τιμάσθω, σέβας ἐμπόρων.

  καί τις δοχμίαν κέλευ-

   θον ἐμβαίνων τόδ' ἐρεῖ·

  Αὕτα ποτὲ προύθαν' ἀνδρός,

  νῦν δ' ἔστι μάκαιρα δαίμων·

  χαῖρ', ὦ πότνι', εὖ δὲ δοίης.

Let not the grave of your wife be regarded as a funeral mound of the dead departed but let her be honoured as are the gods, with reverence from the traveller. Someone walking a winding path past her tomb shall say, "This woman died in the stead of her husband, and now she is a blessed divinity. Rejoice, lady, and grant us your blessing!"[111]

As well as suggesting the possibility that Alcestis received heroine-cult because of her actions, these lines speak very strongly of the reverence that might be paid to a mortal if they performed admirably in life.

Euripides' *Alcestis* also provides us with a simple example of why commemoration of heroic actions was important: they have value to the community in encouraging positive action. Probably, the myth of Alcestis had special relevance to young women who were on the verge of marriage. As is regularly attested, lamentation for a deceased youth such as Hippolytus or Iphinoe often precedes

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[111] Euripides, *Alcestis,* 995-1004. Kovacs, 1994, 260-61 (adapted).

the marriage.[112] The myth of Alcestis has value both in depicting a devoted wife and in understanding the confusing transitions involved in marriage and death.[113]

Indeed, more generally, hero-cult develops particularly quickly in archaic Sparta. The Menelaion first appears in the late-eighth century, with dedications to Helen appearing there from the late-seventh century.[114] Agamemnon and Cassandra received cult at Amyclae.[115] The Leucippides had a shrine not far from the cult of the Dioscuri at Therapne, and Herodotus relates the mid-sixth century story of the Spartans' determined attempts to regain the bones of Orestes.[116] In short, hero-cult is substantially more common in archaic Sparta than in any other Greek *polis*. The increase in hero-cult in the archaic period suggests a desire to link with the city's mythical past and a desire to increase a sense of communal identity.[117]

Indeed, this trend is reflected in Alcman's poetry. In fragment 7, quoted above, Alcman mentions Menelaus, before stating that 'he is honoured in Therapne with the Dioscuri.' He then goes on to mention Helen in the following line, before a lacuna that is followed by 'have honours in Therapne.'[118] Elsewhere we find reference to 'the holy temple of well towered Therapne'[119] and the 'God built home'[120] of the Dioscuri. Fragment 2 is more explicit in the praise that is owed to the Dioscuri, describing them as 'most worthy of reverence.'[121] The Leucippides also appear in fragment 8.[122] Although we can be unsure of the performance context of these small fragments, they must certainly have promoted knowledge of the heroes and their cults, thereby strengthening the audience's link to their civic past. Furthermore, on closer inspection, isolated fragments suggest that

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[112] Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 1423-1430 and Pausanias, 1.43.4.

[113] The parallels that existed between marriage and death in ancient Greece are well documented and much discussed. Excellent examples are Rehm, 1994 and Seaford, 1987, 106-130.

[114] Catling and Cavanagh, 1976-77, 33-37. Antonaccio, 1998, 57 provides a succinct summary of the evidence for Spartan hero-cult. A counterview, challenging how we view the emergence of hero-cult, can be found in Bremmer, 2006, 15-26.

[115] Pausanias, 3.19.6. Pindar, *Pythian,* 11.17-37 mentions that Agamemnon and Cassandra were killed at Amyclae – for further discussion of this myth and cult, see Salapata, 2002, 131-159. See Larson, 1995, 83 for discussion. Alcman, 7 and 8 both mention the Leucippides. For Orestes see Boedeker, 1998, 170.

[116] For bones of Orestes see: Herodotus, 1.67-68. For location of shrine see: Pausanias, 3.16.1-2.

[117] Hardie, 2005, 13.

[118] Alcman, 7.

[119] Alcman, 14.

[120] Alcman, 12.

[121] Alcman, 2.

[122] Alcman, 8.

Alcman's interest in communal memory was not limited to the *Louvre Partheneion*. Alcman sung of memory in fragment 118:

ἔστι παρέντων μνᾶστιν ἐπιθέσθαι.

We may (preserve?) the memory of those who were present.[123]

Similarly, In the Etymologicum Gudianum we read that Alcman is said to have called Memory 'Big-eyed' since we see the past in our mind's eye.[124]

This provides us with further evidence that Alcman was interested in commemorating socially valuable deeds from Sparta's past. Richard Seaford specifies the participation of the entire community, as opposed to kinship groups, as a key definition of hero-cult. Worship of hero-cult coupled with the mythic, religious, and social significance of the hero facilitated:

The expression and confirmation, in cult and self-image of the unity and identity of the group.[125]

The emergence of hero cult in Sparta was probably closely linked to a desire to encourage their particularly strong sense of civic identity. Hero-cult helped to unite the *polis* in the worship of pan-Hellenically recognised Homeric heroes. As Boedeker has convincingly shown, the significance of Spartan hero-cult is also that the heroes are not related to any individuals but have relevance solely to the community.[126] Orestes, Menelaus, Agamemnon, Helen, and Tisamenus are all Homeric heroes

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[123] Alcman, 118. Campbell, 1988, 474-475.

[124] Alcman, 133.

[125] Seaford, 1994, 117. Antonaccio, 1998, 46-70 looks at how this process works, paying attention to the distinction between hero-cult and ancestor worship. For a recent overview of scholarship on hero-cult see Ekroth, 2007, 100-114.

[126] Boedeker, 1998, 165-172. Other discussions of the social and political significance of the bones of Orestes can be found in Huxley, 1983, 1-16, and Welwei, 2004, 219-230. For examinations of the evidence for hero-cult at Sparta see Salapata, 1993, 189-197 and 1997, 245-260.

who are specifically linked to Sparta,[127] but to whom no living Spartan can claim descent. Because they have no allegiance to any historical individual, their significance lies only in uniting the community. They are a means of boosting the community's social identity. As Boedeker herself, puts it (with specific relation to Orestes):

The bones of Orestes benefit only the *polis,* no individuals or special groups within it.[128]

The result is that hero-cult becomes a valuable point for communal worship. As Walter Burkert concluded in his excellent summary of the topic, 'hero-cult is thus invaluable as a means of uniting all sections of society in worship.'[129] All of the heroes have specific social value to the Spartan community and their commemoration acts as a unifying force.

Conclusion

The commemoration of heroes and the emergence of hero-cult was increasingly significant in archaic Sparta, with the early lines of the *Louvre Partheneion* reflecting this trend. Hero-cult provided common points of focus for Spartans to worship, but also celebrated heroes whose stories had specific relevance to the Spartan state. As we shall see in the following chapter, Alcman's mythology tapped into this historic past to draw morals that were highly relevant to his present. Heroes were valuable to Sparta because their myths had real relevance to society and provided a common point to unite the ideology of the group, whilst they simultaneously acted as aspirational figures. The poets who create and perform their stories therefore have an important civic role to play in shaping the ideology of their state.

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[127] On the close relationship between Sparta, Orestes and Agamemnon, Boedeker, 1998, 167-168 gives the following examples: Orestes: Stesichorus, 39; Pindar, *Pythian,* 11.16; and 31-7; *Nemean,* 11.34. Agamemnon: Herodotus, 7.159.
[128] Boedeker, 1998, 170.
[129] Burkert, 1985, 204.

2.4 Choral Display and Civic Lament in Archaic Sparta

As we see from a variety of sources including Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion,* remembering Sparta's mythical heroes, deceased kings, and honoured war dead was an important part of shaping archaic Spartan society. The final task of this chapter is to demonstrate that performances that reflected these themes were an important part of major Spartan civic festivals. By focusing on the major Spartan festivals of the Hyacinthia, the Gymnopaidia, and the Carneia, I hope that it will become clear that the *Louvre Partheneion* would have been appropriate for performance at all of them. Certainty is impossible, but I want to suggest that the *Louvre Partheneion* was composed for performance at the Carneia, owing to the thematic appropriateness of the mythological section of the poem for the festival's aetiological themes.

Certainly, we have evidence that suggests that Alcman's poetry would be performed on such a major public occasion. Sosibus, quoted by Athenaeus, provides a description of the Spartan Gymnopaedia:

Φέρειν δ' αὐτοὺς ὑπό-

μνημα τῆς ἐν Θυρέᾳ γενομένης νίκης τοὺς προστάτας

τῶν ἀγομένων χορῶν ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ ταύτῃ, ὅτε καὶ τὰς

Γυμνοπαιδιὰς ἐπιτελοῦσι. Χοροὶ δ' εἰσὶν τὸ μὲν προσώ

παίδων, <τὸ δ᾽ ἐκ δεξίου .....> τὸ δ' ἐξ ἀρίστων

ἀνδρῶν, γυμνῶν ὀρχουμένων καὶ ᾀδόντων

Θαλήτου καὶ Ἀλκμᾶνος ᾄσματα καὶ τοὺς Διονυσοδότου

τοῦ Λάκωνος παιᾶνας.

The leaders of the choruses that perform at this festival, during which they also celebrate the Gymnopaidiai, hold them to commemorate the victory that took place at Thyrea. A

chorus of boys is in the front, a chorus of....on the right, and a chorus of men on the left; and dance naked and sing songs by Thales and Alcman, as well as the paeans of Dionysodotus.[130]

The Gymnopaedia festival saw the young men of Sparta displayed naked before the population in the middle of summer. It was an occasion to celebrate their manliness and demonstrate their impressive physiques.[131] The festival is also strikingly inclusive - males of various ages appear to take part. The festival prioritises display and features commemorative choral performances by a variety of participants. Alcman's poetry is clearly seen as being entirely appropriate for a festival concerned with the display of the city's assets and the commemoration of an important battle.[132] As Herington first pointed out, this fragment also tells us that Alcman's poetry was re-performed in a major civic context for centuries after his death.[133] It is a further indication that dramatising the past in performance continued to have significant value for the Spartan *polis.*

Other Spartan festivals prioritise commemoration, display, and choral performance. The Hyacinthia centres on mourning for the death of the hero Hyacinthus at the hands of Apollo, followed by his subsequent deification.[134] The festival featured a solemn procession from Sparta to

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[130] Sosibus, *FGrHist* 595 F5 = Athenaeus, 15.678bc. Olson, 2012, 70-71. The Souda further notes that boys sang hymns at the Gymnopaedia in honour of those who died at Thyrea, whilst the 12th century AD Etymologicum Magnum says that they sang paeans to Apollo in honour of the Thyrean dead. Souda, s.v. *Gymnopaidai.*

[131] Luginbill, 2009, 27-54. This display of youth has led Luginbill to theorise that the *Louvre Partheneion* may have been performed at the Gymnopaedia. He suggests that the girl's mythological songs would have been entirely appropriate for young men about to undergo endurance tests to prove their manliness. For Luginbill, Alcman's poems are performed before endurance tests, serving to tease and encourage the young men.

[132] Confusion over the dates – Alcman and Thales are held to be dead by the time of Sparta's victory at Thyrea in 544 – can be understood by accepting Wade-Gery's theory that the festival was originally introduced to commemorate Sparta's defeat at Hysiai, an event that had handed possession of Thyrea to Argos. Wade-Gery suggests that the Gymnopaedia began in 668, one year after the Spartan defeat at Hysiai, a battle that would have given control of Thyrea to Argos (Wade-Gery, 1949, 79-81. Pausanias, 2.24.7). Accepting this reconstruction allows us to imagine Alcman writing songs specifically to commemorate the defeat, although Sosibius never states that Alcman's songs related directly to the battle of Thyrea in 544. Either way, the difficulty presented by the dates should not cause us to doubt that Alcman's poetry was performed at the Gymnopaedia, at least from 544 onwards.

[133] Herington, 1985, 25-26. Once again, for re-performance more generally, see Carey, 2011, 437-60.

[134] Hyacinthus plays an important part in Sparta's aetiological myths. Lacedaimon was the son of the Taugete (a Pleiad) and Zeus. He marries the nymph Sparte, daughter of Eurotas, and they have two children, Amyclas and Eurydice (Apollodorus, 3.10.3. Hesiod, 129, MW). See also Pausanias, 3.1.2. Amyclas marries Diomede and they have two further children Cynortes and Hyacinthus (Apollodorus, 3.10.3. - See also, Hesiod, 171, MW: Gantz, 1993, 216 perceptively notes that the last word of the fragment, *diskos,* may well refer to the death of

the Amyclaion, from which celebratory festive features are conspicuously absent.[135] It appears the Spartans mourned for Hyacinthus and offered chthonic sacrifices to him through a bronze door on his tomb situated at the centre of the Amyclaion.[136] We also see Hyacinthus depicted on the throne at the Amyclaion along with his sister Polyboea.[137] He is apparently ascending to heaven along with Artemis, Athena, and Aphrodite.[138]

Athenaeus realtes a note from Didymus the grammarian, quoting the work of the little known second century BC historian Polycrates, which conforms to this view in the following description of the festival:

Πολυκράτης, φησί, ἐν τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς ἱστορεῖ ὅτι τὴν μὲν τῶν Ὑά'κινθον θυσίαν οἱ Λάκωνες ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας συντελοῦσι καὶ διὰ τὸ πένθος τὸ γενόμενον περὶ τὸν Ὑάκινθον οὔτε στεφανοῦνται ἐπὶ τοῖς δείπνοις οὔτε ἄρτον εἰσφέρουσιν, ἀλλὰ πέμματα καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἀκόλουθα διδόασι. καὶ τὸν εἰς τὸν θεὸν παιᾶνα οὐκ ἄδουσιν οὐδ᾽ ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον οὐδὲν καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις θυσίαις ποιοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ μετ᾽ εὐταξίας πολλῆς δειπνήσαντες ἀπέρχονται. τῇ δὲ μέσῃ τῶν τριῶν ἡμερῶν γίνεται θέα ποικίλη καὶ πανήγυρις ἀξιόλογος καὶ μεγάλη. παῖδές τε γὰρ κιθαρίζουσιν ἐν χιτῶσιν ἀνεζωσμένοις καὶ πρὸς αὐλὸν ἄδοντες πάσας ἅμα τῷ πλήκτρῳ τὰς χορδὰς ἐπιτρέχοντες ἐν ῥυθμῷ μὲν ἀναπαίστῳ, μετ᾽ ὀξέος δὲ τόνου τὸν θεὸν ἄδουσιν ἄλλοι δ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἵππων κεκοσμημένων τὸ θέατρον διεξέρχονται. χοροί τε νεανίσκων παμπληθεῖς εἰσέρχονται καὶ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων τινὰ ποιημάτων ἄδουσιν, ὀρχησταί τε ἐν τούτοις ἀναμεμιγμένοι τὴν κίνησιν ἀρχαικὴν ὑπὸ τὸν αὐλὸν καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν ποιοῦνται, τῶν δὲ παρθένων αἱ μὲν ἐπὶ καννάθρων φέρονται πολυτελῶς κατεσκευασμένων , αἱ δ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ἁμίλλαις ἁρμάτων

Hyacinthus at the hands of Apollo). In the myths of Hyacinthus, we see an individual who died young, accidentally killed by Apollo (Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women,* 102, MW, and Pseudo-Apollodorus, 3.116).
[135] The Hyacinthia is mentioned as well established in the early fifth century by Herodotus, 9.7 and 9.11. For the fullest descriptions of the festival see Athenaeus, 4.139d-f and Pausanias, 3.19.1-5.
[136] Athenaeus, 4.139d-f. For the importance of the monument itself in the ritual performance, see Osborne, 2004, 37-55.
[137] Pettersson, 1992, 38, argues that Polyboia must be Hyacinthus daughter in this image.
[138] Pausanias, 3.18.10. Schefold, 1992, 49-50 and fig 52. has also suggested that a mid-sixth century Laconian cup showed Hyacinthus ascent to heaven.

ἐζευγμένων πομπεύουσιν, ἅπασα δ᾽ ἐν κινήσει καὶ χαρᾷ τῆς θεωρίας ἡ πόλις καθέστηκεν.

Polycrates, he says, records in his *History of Sparta* that the Spartans celebrate the Hyacinthia festival for three days, and because of the grief felt for Hyacinthus they neither wear garlands at their dinner parties nor serve bread, but instead offer sacrificial cakes and the foods that go with them. And they do not sing the paean or do anything else of the sort, as they do at their other festivals, but eat in a very orderly fashion and the leave. On the middle day of the three there is an elaborate show and a large festival assembly that deserves mention. Boys play the lyre with their tunics pulled up high and sing accompanied by the pipe, running their picks over all the strings and singing to the god in anapestic rhythm and a high pitch; and others pass through the theater mounted on horses in trappings. Numerous choruses of young men come in and sing some of their local poems, and dancers mixed in with them move in the ancient style, accompanied by the pipe and the song. Some of the unmarried girls are carried in expensively ornamented carriages fitted with wickerwork, while others process on two-horse racing chariots; and the whole city is full of movement and the pleasure of the festival.[139]

The festival is inclusive, with boys, young men and girls all playing an active part. The description of the early lamentation for Hyacinthus suggests that all the Laconians take part, whilst the end of Polycrates' passage specifies that all citizens would invite slaves and acquaintances to the feast. Furthermore, *parthenoi,* boys, and young men are all described as taking part in the festivities, again implying different ages and status groups. What we do see is the Spartan young engaged in conspicuous public display in front of the entire community. The males parade on horseback, sing national songs, and demonstrate their musical ability. In a similar way, the *parthenoi* have their beauty showcased before the community. Through performance and display, positive Spartan characteristics are celebrated. As Robert Parker summarised, 'when the city celebrates itself, it displays what it judges most valuable.'[140] By singing national songs and displaying positive characteristics before the community the Spartan youth assert their value.

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[139] Athenaeus, 4.139e-f. Olson, 2007, 166-69. Xenophon mentions that the festival included paeans sung to Apollo (Xenophon, Agesilaus, 2.17).
[140] Parker, 2011, 204-205. See also Calame, 1997(a), 314-319; Pettersson, 1992, 29-36; and Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 122-126, who see the festival as part of an initiation rite. A brief description of the theory runs thus: As

Both these festivals highlight the importance of display of youth, poetic performance, and heroic past to Spartan ritual. This makes both festivals broadly appropriate for the *Louvre Partheneion,* however based on the festival's aetiological mythology, I believe the Carneia to be the outstanding candidate for the poem's performance. Ferrari has already pointed out that the desire to commemorate Alcestis mentioned by Euripides aligns broadly with the desire for commemoration that we find in the *Louvre Partheneion.*[141] However, there are further compelling reasons for suggesting the Carneia that fit well with the tone and content of the poem.

Details of the Carneia reach us via a number of sources. Herodotus and Thucydides are the first to mention the Carneia as an important festival, but otherwise the majority of evidence is late.[142] According to Athenaeus, here quoting Hellanicus, the Carneia featured a musical *agon* that was first won by Terpander.[143] Sosibus, again quoted by Athenaeus, states that the Carneia originally took place in 676-672BC, asserting the antiquity of the festival and was famous for its musical competitions.[144] Callimachus tells us that bulls were sacrificed and that dances, which mixed the sexes, took place.[145] A fifth-century vase also shows young women involved in dances at the festival.[146] Elsewhere, Athenaeus further notes that the Carneia saw nine camps set up, each with nine men commanded by a herald.[147] Hesychius tells us that *Carneatai* was the designated term for a group of unmarried men who served at the festival, whilst the *Staphylodromoi* were an additional group, drawn from the *Carneatai,* who would ritually chase a man wearing 'wooden fillets' during the festival.[148] A scholiast on Pindar's *Pythian* 5 notes that the sacrifice of a ram and a subsequent feast were other important elements.[149] As we see from Heysichius, the male participants were said

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the *eromenos* to Apollo's *erastes,* Hyacinthus is placed in the same status group as young male Spartan initiates. Calame saw a similar function for Hyacinthus' sister, Polyboia, for the female sphere. She is described as a *parthenos,* (Pausanias, 3.19.4) and Calame takes the female participation at the festival as a sign that Polyboia may have been an emblematic figure for the girls. The rebirth of Hyacinthus and Polyboia from death to divinity, as depicted on the Amyclae throne, mirrors the transformation of young initiates to adulthood. Marinatos, 2000, 92-109 and 2003, 130-151, discusses the role of deities in similar adolescent rituals of transition.

[141] Ferrari, 2008, 119-126.

[142] Herodotus, 7.206 and Thucydides, 5.75.

[143] Athenaeus, 14.635e-f = Hellanicus *FGrHist* 4 F 85a.

[144] Athenaeus, 14.635-e-f.

[145] Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo,* 71-79.

[146] Volute Krater in Tarentum: P. Wuilleumier, RA 30 (1929) 197-202.

[147] Athenaeus, 4.141e-f.

[148] Hesychius, s.v. *Carneatai* and *Staphylodromoi.*

[149] Scholiast, Pindar, *Pythian,* 5.104. Pindar, *Pythian,* 5.74-81, and Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo,* 71-79 also suggest The Carneia travelled with to Spartan colonies, with Pindar and Callimachus hinting at the presence of the festival on Thera and Cyrene.

to be young men, whilst the emphasis put upon military living, obedience to a herald and participation in musical performances were all vital for becoming a Spartan citizen.[150] Furthermore, sanctuaries to Apollo Carnaeus were linked to sanctuaries of both Eilytheia and the Graces at Sparta, suggesting a clear link to the traditional feminine preoccupations of beauty and childbirth.[151] Under Apollo, the deity strongly associated with Spartan social order, the youths displayed their integration into their state.[152]

As we might expect from a festival that appeared to focus on the city's young, the Carneia's aetiological myths are strongly linked to Sparta's civic past. These myths, although occasionally diverging on points of detail, all link the festival to the arrival of the Heracleidae in Laconia. The majority of our numerous (although unfortunately relatively late) sources relate how the seer Carnus was killed by a member of the Heracleidae. As punishment, Apollo sent a plague and the crisis was only resolved with the institution of the cult of Apollo Carnaeus.[153] Pausanias relates an alternative local Spartan tradition: here a cult of Carneios Oiketas was worshipped before the arrival of the Heracleidae but a seer associated to it named Crius, acted as an agent to help them gain control of the city.[154] In both cases, the importance of the Carneia is strongly linked to the return of the Heracleidae and their establishment at Sparta.[155] Despite these divergences on points of detail, the Carneia's myths are all broadly associated with the return of the Heracleidae. It is quite possible that the musical performances, which are sources refer to, commemorated these mythic events.[156]

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[150] Pettersson, 1992, 62-63. Pettersson also notes the emphasis placed on leadership and religion in the following pages (63-66). For the importance of music in relation to Spartan warfare, see Thucydides, 5.70 and Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 22.2-3. Luginbill, 2002, 405-414 looks at the importance of Tyrateus' poety in this area.
[151] Pausanias, 3.14.6-7.
[152] Pettersson, 1992, 71: 'In the Carneia, Apollo symbolised the civilised order, the structuring of the city and its body of citizens, expressed in the organisation of the army and of the citizens in the syssitia.' He argues that the meal, mentioned by the scholiast on Pindar may be significant. Herodotus, 1.65, tells us that eating in the communal mess was closely linked to citizenship and military service – the first meal for an initiate at the Carneia may very well mark his acceptance in one of these groups.
[153] Theopompus, *FGrHist* 115 F 357; Pausanias, 3.13.4; Scholiast, Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo,* 2.71; Scholiast, Pindar, *Pythian,* 5.106; and Conon, *FGrHist*, 26 F 1.26.
[154] Pausanias, 3.13.3.
[155] In addition, a scholiast on Theocritus tells us that Alcman said that the Carneia was named after a Carneus from Troy. Alcman, 52. Cf Scholiast, Theocritus, 5.83. There is no other evidence for this, but it might suggest that Alcman linked the original institution of the cult to the time of the Trojan War. A badly damaged scrap of papyrus that may refer to Crius could suggest that Alcman favoured this version of the myth, although Campbell may be right when he suggests that this Crius refers to the Titan who fathered Perses. See Campbell, 1988, 395.
[156] Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo,* 71-79, and Athenaeus, 14.635e-f.

On this basis, the mythical content of the *Louvre Partheneion* would certainly be especially appropriate for performance at the Carneia. The defeat of the Hippocoontids is consistently seen as a vital element in the establishment of the Heracleidae at Sparta.[157] After Heracles defeats them, he returns the throne to Tyndareus with instructions for him to guard it until the Heracleidae return. As such, the defeat of the Hippocoontids in the *Louvre Partheneion* would fit thematically with the aetiological myths of the Carneia. The unfortunate state of the text makes certainty on this issue impossible, but it is clear that the *Louvre Partheneion* would have been entirely appropriate for performance at the major Spartan civic festivals. To my mind, the links between the poems mythical beginnings and the Carneia's aetiological mythology makes it the most likely candidate.

Conclusions

All of the evidence that we have seen in this chapter suggests that women in archaic and classical Sparta had an authoritative voice. Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that Alcman's poetry was often performed publicly in front of a male audience. The *Louvre Partheneion's* themes were entirely appropriate for a major civic festival associated with the display of youth and it is only correct that it should be considered in this context. The performance of young women was seen as entirely appropriate in such circumstances, and their impressive commemorative abilities in song were accentuated by Alcman to highlight the power of their performing voice. The weaving of traditional female performance types like lament into Alcman's *partheneia* helps to enhance the potency of his poetic performance, rather than accentuating the inferior position of females as some have argued. As we have seen, commemoration of the past was of real importance to Alcman's poetry, with female performers playing a role in remembering heroes who retained a lasting significance to Spartan society. By performing mythology with an enduring significance at a major festival like the Carneia, Alcman was able to display important themes to a wide audience.

The significance of the mythological figures whom Alcman portrays in the *Louvre Partheneion* will be scrutinised in chapter 4, but first I shall examine the identity and character of the

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[157] See Malkin, 1994, 22-26 and 33-45. For accounts of the conflict see Strabo, 10.2.24; Apollodorus, 2.7.3; 3.10.4-5; Plutarch, *Moralia* 285e-f; Diodorus, 4.33; Pausanias 2.18.6-7 and 3.1.4-5.

deities worshipped in the poem, to demonstrate their significance to both a chorus of *parthenoi* and the wider Spartan state.

Chapter 3 - The Deities of the *Louvre Partheneion*

In the previous chapter, we have seen that Alcman's chorus of *parthenoi* speak with an authoritative voice, a feature that helps them to commemorate heroic figures from Sparta's past. The result is that the *Louvre Partheneion* fits the context for a major Spartan festival, and it is likely that the poem was publicly performed in front of the watching community. We have also seen that Spartan *parthenoi* were politically significant owing to their ability to inherit land, and thereby act as important commodities of exchange in a highly competitive society. This status placed them in an ambiguous position. Not only did their social position give them an elevated authority, but it also made them subject to fierce rivalries prompted by sexual desire, attempt at political gain, and competition to secure land.

The purpose of this chapter is to argue that the character of the poem's deity, Helen, reflects the ambiguous status of its performers and reflects their political importance. Initially, I shall argue that the goddess represented by the dawn epithets in the poem is Helen. Others have previously argued that Helen was the deity in the *Louvre Partheneion.* Most famously, Calame argued that Helen was the deity represented by the dawn epithets, citing her importance as an initiatory figure in a private cultic performance.[1] Whilst I imagine a very different public performance setting to Calame, complete with authoritative female singers and a public political message, I do believe that many of his points concerning the significance of Helen for Spartan cult are valid. Prior to Calame, Bowra argued that Helen and Dionysus were both worshipped by the performance as part of a ritual connected with fertility.[2] As I shall argue, Bowra is probably right to suspect that more than one deity is present in the poem, although I do not find his arguments for Helen and Dionysus appearing together persuasive. The title of this chapter is also designed to be provocative, focusing more attention on the probability that more than one deity was worshipped in Alcman's poem.

Once I have argued that Helen is the deity represented by the dawn epithets, I shall proceed to explore how her ambiguous status as a heroine makes her an appropriate deity for a chorus of

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[1] Calame, 1977(2), 119-128.
[2] Bowra, 1934, 35-44. For a more recent discussion of the importance of Dionysus to Spartan performance, see Constantidou, 1998, 15-30.

parthenoi to follow. As we shall see, there is ample evidence that suggests Helen was worshipped as a deified figure in archaic Sparta. In addition, both Euripides and Aristophanes imagine Helen to be a prominent performer in Spartan cult. The Homeric epics also note her performative skills. However, fragments of Alcman's poetry and items of archaeological evidence suggest that her abductions both by Paris and Theseus were equally current. This combination of factors makes Helen a character of great complexity. Helen is at once a revered Spartan deity, famed for her beauty, her skill in performance, and her ability to influence men, yet still always potentially a victim of abduction or sexual desire. One of the central aims of this chapter is to explore how these often conflicting attributes made Helen a figure of particular significance to Spartan *parthenoi* in the political climate of archaic Sparta.

Finally, in this chapter, I want to support Nagy's suggestion that Hagesichora and Agido embody Spartan heroines, the Leucippides. Nagy persuasively suggested that Hagesichora and Agido could embody the Leucippides, yet the theory has not received as much attention as it deserves. I shall begin by exploring and endorsing Nagy's view, but I additionally argue that the story of the Dioscuri's battle with the Aphareids over the Leucippides formed part of the damaged mythological section of the *Louvre Partheneion.* The effect is that Hagesichora and Agido are re-performing a myth in which they represent the central characters. By performing the role of deities and singing a myth in which their story is told, Sparta's mythic past is made real and re-performed in the present.

The synthesis of these elements is compelling, as both Helen and the Leucippides have a very particular mythic and religious significance to Spartan *parthenoi.* As we shall see, Alcman's deities have a very particular significance to the socio-political circumstances in which the *Louvre Partheneion* was composed.

3.1 Helen in the *Louvre Partheneion*

In order to establish the framework for this chapter, I begin by arguing that Helen was the deity represented by the dawn epithets in the *Louvre Partheneion,* although she was probably not the only deity included. The identity of the deity (or deities) in the *Louvre Partheneion* has always been one of the most contentious issues surrounding the poem, with the debate centring around the two epithets in lines 61 and 87. The first sees the girls carrying a φᾶρος to a certain Orthria, and the second has the girls express a desire to 'please Aotis most of all.'[3] Both of the terms appear to be connected with dawn. *Aōs* is the Doric word for dawn, and Orthria roughly translating as 'she of the Daybreak.' Neither provides a definitive identification of a deity nor are there any specific references outside of the *Louvre Partheneion* that can aid our identifications,[4] although plentiful candidates have been put forward.[5]

However, as Bowra and, more recently, Bowie, have pointed out, to identify a single deity may be a mistake.[6] In lines 36 and 82-83, where gods are mentioned, the plural is always used. Lines 82-84 read:

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[3] Alcman, 1.61 and 1.87.

[4] In addition, some scholars deny that ὀρθρίαι refers to an individual of any kind. Rather, the term can be read as an adjective that agrees with Πεληάδες to infer that they are rising with the morning light. See Gerber, 1970, 92 and Ferrari, 2008, 83-89. Douglas Gerber rejects the need for a deity in these few lines, seeing the additional description of the Pleiades rising as a more likely translation, whilst Gloria Ferrari imagines Alcman's chorus contending with the Pleiades at daybreak. Even so, the term can equally be seen as a substantive dative in which case it can be translated in relation to the deity.

[5] Page, 1951, 69-82; Clay, 1991, 56; Luginbill, 2009, 27-54; and (tentatively) Bowie, 2011, 59-65 support Artemis Orthia: A scholiast has recommended the emendation of ὀρθρίαι to ὀρθίαι which could then see the ritual object dedicated to Artemis Orthia, a deity extensively worshipped across Laconia, and one who would provisionally look acceptable for a song performed by adolescent Spartan girls. For reasons why this theory is difficult to accept, see Calame, 1997, 4-7. When it is considered that the scholiast commenting on the poem would have been influenced by the much-changed Hellenistic Sparta, in which cult to Artemis Orthia had gained a degree of notoriety owing to the rituals of physical endurance practiced there, it seems prudent to reject the emendation and persevere with ὀρθρίαι. Luginbill, 2009, 39-40, suggests we persevere with ὀρθρίαι, but still accept Artemis Orthia as the poems deity. The unspecified 'labours' of line 88 have tempted Burnett and Hooker to speculate that Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth with strong links to beauty and fertility, may be a likely candidate (Schwenn, 1937, 315; Burnett, 1964, 32-33; and Hooker, 1979, 212-218). However, *parthenoi* status is continually recognised, and before marriage, they would know nothing of the pains of childbirth. Robbins, 1994, 9, suggests a dawn goddess, perhaps Phoebe. Gentili, 1988, 75, & Cyrino, 2004, *passim,* suggest Aphrodite and I shall discuss their thought in more detail later in the thesis.

[6] Bowra, 1934, 35-44 and Bowie, 2011, 58-65. Bowra suggests Helen and Dionysus. Bowie, far more tentatively, suggests Artemis and Apollo.

ἀλλὰ τᾶν [..]... σιοὶ

δέξασθε· [σι]ῶν γὰρ ἄνα

καὶ τέλος·

Come, you gods, accept their (prayers); to the gods belong fulfilment and accomplishment.[7]

Here we have a direct address to plural deities suggesting that limiting our search to one divinity would be a mistake. Evidence that supports this theory can be found in Aristophanes and Euripides, so, at this point, a small digression will be useful to assess the value of using Athenian dramatic evidence to examine archaic Sparta performance. As Anton Bierl has recently shown, the *Lysistrata* bears a great deal in common with Alcman's poetry through what he calls 'choral intertextuality largely based on implicitness.'[8] Bierl suggests that Aristophanes' descriptions of the Spartan chorus may owe a great deal to Alcman's poetry and that his audience would be familiar with the poet's work. In his own words:

> Through the dramatists evocation of a particularly Spartan cultic mood, the mention of dancing *parthenoi* by the banks of the Eurotas and, not least, through the insertion of features characteristic of high lyric in the dialect and rhythm of Spartan poetry, spectators with a certain amount of literary knowledge would be immediately reminded of the maiden songs (*partheneia*) of the famous ancient poet Alcman...[9]

For Bierl, the close similarities between Alcman's *partheneia* and sections of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* make it highly likely that Alcman was well known in classical Athens.[10] Chris Carey has also described at length the reasons why we should recognise that Alcman's poetry would have been well known outside of Sparta, perhaps particularly at Athens.[11] The (comparatively) regular appearance of

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[7] Alcman, 1.81-83. Campbell, 1988, 366-367.
[8] Bierl, 2011, 418. For the relationship of female choral poetry and Athenian dramtic performance see also, Calame, 1994, 136-154.
[9] Bierl, 2011, 417-418.
[10] Bierl, 2011, 415-436. Pages 433-434 contain a particularly useful table that aligns similarities between Alcman's poems and elements of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata.* Lada-Richards, 1999, has also shown that Athenian drama showed an awareness of initiation themes through performance.
[11] Carey, 2011, 437-460.

Alcman in Athenain drama – Carey notes three appearances, twice in Aristophanes and once in Eupolis – indicate that Alcman was well known in fifth-century Athens.[12] Coupled with Sosibus and Plutarch's claims that Alcman was re-performed at Sparta well into the hellenistic period, it seems perfectly possible that an Athenian audience would have had a reasonable knowledge of Alcman's poetry.[13] The descriptions of Spartan ritual and female performance in Attic drama, used cautiously, can therefore provide us with evidence for Spartan performance.

This suggests that Athenian conceptions of Spartan performance may have been well informed and, subsequently, Aristophanes' comments concerning Spartan performance should be taken seriously. His most explicit description of Spartan ritual comes towards the end of *Lysistrata*:

Ταΰγετον αὖτ᾽ ἐραννὸν ἐκλιπῶά

Μῶά, μόλε <μόλε,> Λάκαινα, πρεπτὸν ἁμὶν

κλέωά τὸν Ἀμύκλαις σιὸν

καὶ χαλκίοικον Ἀσά-

ναν Τυνδαρίδας τ᾽ ἀγασώς,

τοὶ δὴ πὰρ Εὐρώταν ψιάδδοντι.

εἶα μάλ᾽ ἔμβη,

ὢ εἶα, κοῦφα πᾶλον, ὡς

Σπάρταν ὑμνίωμες,

τᾷ σιῶν χοροὶ μέλοντι καὶ ποδῶν κτύπος,

χἆτε πῶλοι ταὶ κόραι

πὰρ τὸν Εὐρώταν

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[12] Carey, 2011, 457-460 provides a useful appendix where references to and citations of lyric in Athenain drama are collected. Only Alcaeus can match Alcman's three appearances indicating that he was a relatively interesting subject to the Athenians. Alcman appears at: Aristophanes, *Birds,* 250-251; Aristophanes, frg 590.52-3, K-A; and Eupolis, fr.148, K-A.

[13] Sosibus, *FGrHist* 595 F5 = Athenaeus, 15.678b-c and Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 28.5.

ἀμπάλλοντι πυκνὰ ποδοῖν

ἀγκονίωαί,

ἅπερ Βακχᾶν θυρσαδδωᾶν

καὶ παιδδωᾶν.

ἀγῆται δ’ ἁ Λήδας παῖς

ἁγνὰ χοραγὸς εὐπρεπής.

Come back again from fair Taygetus Spartan Muse, come and distinguish this occasion with a
hymn to the God of Amyclae and Athena of the Brazen House and Tyndareus' fine sons, who
gallop beside the Eurotas. Ho there, hop! Hey there, jump sprightly! Let's sing a song for
Sparta, home of dances for the gods and of stomping feet, where by the Eurotas' banks
young girls frisk like fillies, raising underfoot dust clouds, and tossing their tresses like
maenads waving their wands and playing, led by Leda's daughter, their chorus leader pure
and pretty.[14]

We have a hymn where Apollo, Athena, and the Dioscuri feature, in addition to the divine Helen as
chorus leader. Aristophanes places Helen as *chorēgos* in a ritual that appears to worship multiple
dedicatees. Euripides also imagines Helen performing alongside the Spartan heroines, the
Leucippides, in honour of both Athena and Apollo. Euripides describes Helen joining the Leucippides'
dances in *Helen:*

ἦ που κόρας ἂν ποταμοῦ
παρ᾿ οἶδμα Λευκιππίδας ἢ πρὸ ναοῦ
Παλλάδος ἂν λάβοις
χρόνῳ ξυνελθοῦσα χοροῖς
ἢ κώμοις Ὑακίνθου
νύχιον ἐς εὐφροσύναν,

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[14] Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 1296-1315. Henderson, 2000, 438-439.

I think she will find the daughters of Leucippus by the river or before the temple of Pallas, as she arrives home at the time of the dances or revels of Hyacinth and their nightlong feasting.[15]

Alcman too appears to have mentioned multiple dedicatees when discussing the honours that were owed to the gods at Therapne. Fragment 7, a papyrus fragment originating in the first-century AD, contains comments from an unknown commentator:

...] κῶμα σιῶν.   κῶ]μα θεῶν δ᾽ εἴρη[ται

...] ἀσανάτας τελε[τὰς   ]

ἐτάπφθεν φρέ[νας   ] ὁ Μενέλαος [   ]α.δ.[

......α]ὐτὸν τιμᾶ[σθαι ἐν ταῖς Θεράπ]ναις μετὰ τῶν Διὸς κού[ρων

]κος ἐν τῆι Πελο[ποννήσωι   ]σ[.]αι Ἑλένη καὶ [   ]λεγο[

]ω . . . [.]. αφα[πητιαδ-   ]. μετ᾽ αὐτ[ο]ῦ δ[ἐ   ]ν ἐν

Θεράπναις [τιμ]ὰς ἔχουσι.

...the sleep of the gods: he uses σιῶν for θεῶν, 'of the gods'

...immortal rites:

They were delighted in their hearts:…Menelaus…that he is honoured in Therapne with the Dioscuri…in the Peloponnese…Helen and….(the sons of Aphareus?)….(with him?)….have honours in Therapne.[16]

The same plural for 'gods' is used here as in the *Louvre Partheneion,* whilst we see Helen, the Dioscuri and Menelaus all honoured. The *Louvre Partheneion* could certainly have referenced

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[15] Euripides, *Helen,* 1465-1470. Kovacs, 2002, 176-177. There is further evidence that also suggests that the Leucippides were affiliated with Aristophanes passage, quoted above. The chorus sing about the Leucippides performing at festivals of both Athena and Apollo. The Leucippides relevance to Spartan dance is further, although indirectly, suggested by Aristophanes. Hesychius *s.v. polia.* notes that the priestesses of the Leucippides were also referred to as πῶλοι, commonly translated fillies. It is this same word that Aristophanes uses to describe the girls performing alongside Helen in the *Lysistrata.*

[16] Alcman, 7. Campbell, 1988, 396-397.

multiple divinities, although both of the Athenian dramatists appear to imagine that Helen took a prominent place in the performances.

Euripides' and Aristophanes' references to Helen as participant and leader in their choruses certainly suggest that she had a significant ritual role in Spartan performance.[17] Helen's associations with the female chorus are emphasised in Theocritus' *Epithalamium of Helen* where we find a chorus of *parthenoi* remembering the good times they shared together before lamenting her departure for marriage.[18] Helen's characterisation as divine chorus leader certainly appears to have been significant at Sparta, as was her appearance in cults related to young girls. Herodotus claimed that Helen protected all young Spartan girls at the temple of Therapne.[19] In support of this statement, Herodotus tells of us of an ugly baby who became beautiful after an encounter with a mysterious woman at the shrine, suggesting Helen's well documented associations with beauty were significant there. Isocrates lends support to this view in his *Encomium of Helen,* claiming to have witnessed the celebration of rites dedicated to Helen by the Spartans at Therapne.[20] Pausanias too tells us she shared a shrine there with the Dioscuri and had another cult site at Platanistas, near to the tomb of Alcman.[21] We also read in Hesychius that the Spartans celebrated a festival called the *Heleneia,* and that unmarried girls held a procession in carts on their way to visit Helen's sanctuary.[22] On the basis of this evidence, Linda Lee Calder has reasonably argued that part of Helen's original function at Sparta was likely to have been associated with fertility, which also extended to human development.[23] This focus included the raising of children from youth to adulthood, a theory supported by Herodotus and Pausanias' stories of ugly babies being transformed into beautiful young women with Helen's help.[24]

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[17] Euripides, *Helen,* 1465-1470 and Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 1296-1315.

[18] Theocritus, 18.39-48. It is also noteworthy that Helen is a mother and that Theocritus sees the production of beautiful children an important function for her.

[19] Herodotus, 6.61.

[20] Isocrates, *Encomiun of Helen,* 10.63-65.

[21] Pausanais, 3.15.3.

[22] Hesychius, ε 1992and χ 675 Latte. Hesychius also mentions that 'to Homerise' may have also had connotations of lying in Sparta. This may allude to a desire to clear Helen's name of any wrongdoing. Hesychius o 720 (III.202 Schmidt)

[23] Calder, 1976, 63-80. Richer, 2007, 237-238, provides a useful summary of this evidence.

[24] Herodotus, 6.61 and Pausanias, 3.7.7.

Our archaic sources also consistently describe Helen as an impressive performer, again making her an appropriate role-model for the *Louvre Partheneion.* In book four of the *Odyssey,* we find that Helen had the power to imitate accurately the voices of the wives of Greeks hidden in the Trojan horse.[25] Menelaus tells us that she circled the horse calling out to the men inside in the voices of their wives, with only Odysseus able to resist her voice and stop the other Greeks from calling out.[26] Helen's commemorative skills are equally recognised in the *Iliad.* In book 3 she produces a tapestry of the battle between the Greeks and Trojans, essentially an iconographic representation which commemorates the events which it depicts.[27] As Calder comments, 'Helen is both subject and author of her work' perpetuating the events in which she participates.[28] Similarly, Nancy Worman has commented that Helen possesses an almost inhuman knowledge that she uses to recreate the past effectively, whilst Helen comprehensively outshines Menelaus during her speeches in the *Odyssey.*[29] However, Helen's role in Homeric epic is famously ambivalent, with her beauty and performance skill capable of beguiling men to her favour, a characteristic that makes her dangerous. Also in book 4, Helen drugs the assembled guests to ensure that the stories of Troy will not bring them heartache, before enrapturing them with her storytelling.[30] Helen's performance ability is potent as it allows her to overcome the minds of men, just as she does when imitating the voices of the Greek's wives to lure them from the Trojan horse. Helen's beauty sparks the conflict between the Greeks and Trojans, and coupled with her performative skill it makes her dangerously capable of getting her own way.

Once again, Helen's ambiguous position in epic makes interpreting her ritual character dangerous, but there is no doubt that she is an exceptional performer and, in this sense, an appropriate chorus leader. In the examples provided by Homer, Helen is in the position to record and commemorate the events in which she plays an important part, qualities that see her recognised as the ultimate *chorēgos*. In Calame's words:

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[25] Homer, *Odyssey,* 4.277-279.
[26] Homer, *Odyssey,* 4.280-285.
[27] Homer, *Iliad,* 3.125-129.
[28] Calder, 1976, 7-8. Calder also discusses the similarities that exist between weaving and poetic performance.
[29] Worman, 2001, 30-37.
[30] Homer, *Odyssey,* 4.220-267.

The deified heroine's affinities with poetry thus confer upon her the status of inspiring Muse.[31]

Helen's position as Spartan *chorēgos,* as suggested by Euripides, Aristophanes, and Theocritus, indicates that performance was a vital element of her cult role at Sparta. Considering that Helen was a deity central to the life of young Spartan girls, we may fully expect them to aspire to Helen's skills in mimesis and recreation of the past.

Helen's prominent cult role and reputation as impressive performer all make her entirely appropriate to act as deity for the *Louvre Partheneion,* but further evidence also exists that links her to the dawn epithets in the *Louvre Partheneion*. Calame argues that representations of Helen linked to dawn on Etruscan mirrors provide a possible link with the epithets, but the geographical dislocation makes this a rather tenuous link.[32] Of more use is Theocritus *Epithalamium for Helen:*

Ἀὼς ἀντέλλοισα καλὸν διέφανε πρόσωπον,

πότνια νὺξ τό τε λευκὸν ἔαρ χειμῶνος ἀνέντος·

ὧδε καὶ ἁ χρυσέα Ἑλένα διαφαίνετ᾿ ἐν ἁμῖν.

The rising dawn reveals a beautiful face, Lady Night, as a white spring with winter ended. In such a manner golden Helen shines among us.[33]

Richard Hunter has shown that the style of Theocritus poem owes a great deal to Alcman.[34] Not only has Hunter demonstrated that Alcman was intimately linked with ideas of female Spartan performance in the hellenistic world, but he also notes several instances suggesting that Theocritus may have taken inspiration directly from Alcman's work. For instance, Theocritus' language 'functions as mimetically analogous to the archaic poet,' whilst Theocritus' description of Helen has

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[31] Calame, 2009, 107.
[32] Calame, 1977(2), 119-128.
[33] Theocritus, 18.26-28. My translation.
[34] Hunter, 1996, 152-156.

much in common with Alcman's Hagesichora.[35] Theocritus' comparison of Helen to the dawn may be very significant, hinting that this aspect of his poetry was also inspired by an earlier Spartan precedent.[36] As Calder points out, Helen is also associated with the stars and moon in art, whilst her name is associated with both 'torch' and St Elmo's fire.[37]

When all of this evidence is considered together, Helen seems to be the most likely choice to be represented by the dawn epithets, although the references to plural deities both in Alcman's poem and in descriptions of Spartan song suggest that other deities may have been explicitly mentioned in parts of the text that are lost to us.

The Character of Helen in Archaic Sparta

Having established that Helen was the deity represented by the dawn epithets in the *Louvre Partheneion,* the next question that we must ask is why she was significant to Alcman's *parthenoi.* Helen's position as central cult figure in Sparta, leader of Spartan chorus in dramatic depictions, and as deity in the *Louvre Partheneion,* have been explained in a number of ways.[38] In this section, I shall argue that the key to understanding Helen's cult role lies in the ambiguous nature of her ritual character. The evidence that we have already seen from Homer, Herodotus, Aristophanes, Euripides and others, coupled with archaic archaeological evidence that confirms her cult role, indicate that at Sparta Helen was a prominent deity associated with beautiful *parthenoi* and performance. However, Alcman himself also relates mythological tales of Helen's various abductions, suggesting that her vulnerable status was reflected alongside her divine persona.

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[35] Hunter, 1996, 154-155. The similarities between Alcman's descriptions of Hagesichora and Theocritus' descriptions of Helen were first noticed by Griffiths, 1972, 21-27.
[36] Hunter, 1996, 152-156.
[37] Calder, 1976, 63.
[38] Calame, 1997, 191-202 provides a thorough survey of the evidence.

First I shall briefly survey the archaic Spartan evidence for Helen's abductions. Alcman highlights the abduction of Helen in two fragments, 21 (by Theseus) and 77 (by Paris).[39] Fragment 77 provides a particularly succinct expression on Alcman's views on woman stealing and the catastrophic consequences that it can cause. His verdict of Paris is damning:

Δύσπαρις Αἰνόπαρις κακὸν Ἑλλάδι βωτιανείραι.

Hard Paris, Dreadful Paris, evil for man-feeding Greece.[40]

The myth of Paris' abduction of Helen was relevant in archaic Sparta, emphasised by artefacts such as a seventh-century Spartan comb showing the judgement of Paris.[41] We find criticism of a man who hubristically stole a bride and caused a huge amount of bloodshed. As I hinted at in the previous section, Helen's vulnerability to abduction is also linked to her own dangerous qualities. Her incredible beauty and her performative skill may all be desirable, but they are also something to be afraid of. As Homer tells us, they are the same attributes that see men abandon their purpose and make irrational decisions.[42] In Alcman's publicly performed poetry that featured Helen, the message must therefore be twofold. As deity of beauty, fertility, and performance she has a role to play in nurturing the young by providing them with a divine role-model to which they can aspire. However, her presence also stands as a cautionary tale, both to the young performers who dance in her chorus and to males in the audience who observe their stunning beauty and hear their enrapturing Siren-like song.

Although the context for fragment 77 is minimal and does not allow us to understand much more about how Alcman explored these themes through Helen's character, fragment 21 provides more details on the poet's treatment of abduction.[43] Fragment 21 comes in the form of reports from Pausanias and a scholiast of Homer that Alcman described the Dioscuri's assault on Attica in

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[39] Calder, 1976, 71. Again, Calder links Helen's many rapes and abductions to her associations with fertility. She also notes that Helen is involved in 'relationships' with numerous men: Menelaus, Paris, Theseus, Enarsphorus, Idas and Lynceus, Corythus, Deiphobus, Achilles and Theoclymenus.

[40] Alcman, 77. My translation.

[41] Athens, 16368.

[42] Homer, *Odyssey,* 4.280-285 and Euripides, *Andromache,* 627-631 are famous examples of Helen's qualities turning men from their original purpose.

[43] See Alcman, 21 and 22.

retaliation for Theseus' abduction of Helen.[44] Pausanias reports that the Dioscuri 'conquered Athens and carried off Theseus' mother as their prisoner.'[45] The scholiast conforms with these details, telling us that Alcman partially related a story involving the sack of Aphidna and the plundering of Athens on account of Theseus' crime.[46] Alcman fragment 22 lends further tentative support to this, mentioning both Asanaioi (Alcman's term for Athens) and Aphidna.[47] The appearance of Theseus, Peirithous, and Helen on the throne at Amyclae confirms that the myth was prevalent in the sixth-century Spartan mindset.[48] Although there is nothing here which explicitly confirms that this song was performed by a female chorus, the thematic similarities which exist within the myth - sexuality, abduction, a battle involving the Dioscuri, punishment of hubristic action – coupled with Helen's extreme relevance for young Spartans, make it the most likely option.

Unfortunately, for a full account of Helen's abduction by Theseus, we are again forced to rely on later sources that are at least relatively consistent in the major details.[49] Hellanicus provides us with the earliest accounts of the abduction, also briefly mentioned by Herodotus, but Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch provide most detail.[50] The myth tells us that the recently bereaved Peirithous comes to visit Theseus at Athens, only to find that Theseus' wife has also just died.[51] In response to the deaths, Peirithous persuades Theseus to abduct the ten year old Helen from Sparta, as she surpasses all other women in beauty despite her young age. Her youth and un-readiness for marriage are emphasised by the fact that she is said to be dancing at the temple of Artemis Orthia when the abduction takes place.[52] The plot is successful and the pair draw lots to see who should take her for his wife. Theseus wins and hides Helen at Aphidna along with his mother Aethra, as the Athenians are displeased with his action. The Dioscuri, enraged by this action, march on Aphidna and raze it to the ground, rescuing Helen and taking Aethra to be their slave in retaliation for Theseus' crime.[53]

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[44] Alcman, 21. Pausanias, 1.41.4, and Scholiast A, Homer, *Iliad,* 3.242.

[45] Pausanias, 1.41.4.

[46] Scholiast A, Homer, *Iliad,* 3.242.

[47] Alcman, 22. Calame, 1983, 610 supports this view and interprets the term Asanaioi.

[48] Pausanias, 3.18.15.

[49] Herodotus, 9.73.1-3 shows a knowledge of the events. Diodorus Siculus, 4.63.1-5, and Plutarch, *Theseus,* 31-34 give the fullest accounts.

[50] Hellanicus, 4F134 and 4F168b. Herodotus, 9.73.

[51] Diodorus Siculus, 4.63.1-5, and Plutarch, *Theseus,* 31-34. Pausanias, 1.41.5 states that Pindar also recounted the myth.

[52] Plutarch, *Theseus,* 31.2.

[53] Diodorus Siculus, 4.63.1-5, and Plutarch, *Theseus,* 31-34.

Theseus' and Peirithous' violent abduction of a bride leads to an excessively violent reaction from the Dioscuri, in this case the devastation of Aphidna. In addition, Theseus is forced to endure losing his mother to slavery.[54] The scholiast on the *Iliad* reports that Castor was also injured during the conflict.[55] In the Dioscuri and Theseus, we are presented with the heroes who are emblematic of Sparta and Athens respectively, being brought into damaging conflict over a woman. Although, as we would expect from a Spartan poem, the Dioscuri emerge victorious, the conflict is damaging for both sides.[56]

One is once again reminded of the Spartan tradition that saw the start of the Messenian Wars initiated by the abduction of *parthenoi* from the temple of Artemis Limnatis. Just as that abduction is supposed to have started the Messenian Wars, so the abduction of Helen saw Aphidna destroyed. Here the traditional catalyst for one of the most significant contests in Spartan history finds a parallel in myth, thereby providing an especially fitting theme for Alcman's chorus. What is particularly interesting is that the myth was so embedded in the Spartan mindset that it was contributing to political policy in the fifth-century. Herodotus informs us that while the Dioscuri were searching Attica for their sister, the people of Decelea, outraged by Theseus' actions, told the Dioscuri where Helen was being hidden.[57] Subsequently, Herodotus tells us, the Spartans would not make war on Decelea when ravaging the Athenian countryside. This would indicate that the myth still held significant political capital in the fifth-century. The myth of Helen's abduction clearly had a long lasting impact on the Spartan mindset indicating that similar issues remained an important part of their mentality into the fifth-century.

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[54] Plutarch, *Theseus,* 24.1-2, lists a whole array of shameful abductions in which Theseus was said to have taken part.

[55] Scholiast A, Homer, *Iliad,* 3.242.

[56] The final fate of Peirithous provides another interesting addition to the myth (Found at Diodorus Siculus, 4.63.3-4). Whilst this episode tends to feature in accounts of Theseus' abduction of Helen, neither of our sources state explicitly that it was included in Alcman's version. However, considering its thematic relevance and the similarities to other mythic elements we find in Alcman it is worth briefly speculating. Theseus and Peirithous make a pact that whoever wins Helen must accompany the loser in a quest for whichever woman he desires. Upon losing Peirithous chooses to pursue Persephone. Theseus, bound by oath, cannot refuse to assist him but as a result of the impiety of the act the pair are captured in Hades and thrown in chains. Attempting to take a divine bride results in Peirithous' eternal imprisonment in Hades. Once again, the consequences of hubristic sexual activity are made clear; destruction for those who initiate the action and damage for the wider community.

[57] Herodotus, 9.73.1-3.

In archaic Sparta, and even within Alcman's poetry, we see Helen worshipped as a deity, but also viewed as a character whose abductions bring serious conflict. In this sense her depiction fits with the social and political outline that has already been established. Like Spartan *parthenoi* themselves, Helen's elevated position sees her as both deity and potential victim.

Aphrodite and Helen

In order to better understand Helen's ambiguous character and her ritual role in archaic Sparta, it is useful to consider her relationship with Aphrodite, the deity with whom she is most frequently associated. The similarities between the two are such that they are often conflated or confused, yet Aphrodite is always the dominant deity when the two interact in myth. Helen's position as a heroine who is extremely similar to Aphrodite, yet always subject to her power, can provide us with an insight into her role within archaic Sparta.

The close parallels between Aphrodite and Helen can be seen in the fact that both have often been identified as the deity in the *Louvre Partheneion.* In recent years, both Monica Cyrino and Bruno Gentili have supported the theory that Aphrodite is the deity to whom the girls are making their dedication. Aphrodite is mentioned explicitly in the early fragmentary part of the poem, along with her perpetual assistants the Graces.[58] Gentili and Cyrino have both pointed out that the dawn epithets may both be associated with Aphrodite, although Gentili uses this as a basis to argue that the poem formed part of a private initiation ritual.[59] Images on art, such as those detailed by Boedeker, accentuate the similarities between Eos and Aphrodite.[60] Aphrodite Ourania is also clearly

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[58] Alcman, 1.16-20.
[59] Gentili, 1988, 75, & Cyrino, 2004, *passim.*
[60] Boedeker, 1974, 14-15. Aphrodite's divine origins also support this assertion. She is a goddess born from the foam of the sea just as the sun appears to be born from the waves at Dawn. Images of brightness and light are commonly associated to Aphrodite in mythology, and relate back to her proto-European origins. Interestingly, Aphrodite Ourania is also associated with marriage elsewhere in Greece. The evidence comes in the form of an early fourth century Attic offering box dedicated specifically to Aphrodite Ourania, bearing the message, '*proteleia* for marriage: one drachma.' (*SEG* XLI 182.) The *proteleia* is the day when the parents of a young girl would take their daughter to make sacrifices before she was to be married. In this case it appears that the parents were offered the opportunity of making a small monetary offering, possibly as an alternative to a grander sacrifice.

linked to fertility. The epithet draws additional attention to the story of the goddesses' origins, which see her born from the foam with gathers around Ouranos' genitals.[61] Colours are also often associated with divinity and one which appears in line 64 has further links to Aphrodite. We find πορφύρας used in an archaic context with specific relation to Aphrodite and Eros in the poetry of Anacreon.[62]

Although I still believe that Helen is the deity referred to by the dawn epithets, I would suggest that the strong arguments which can be made for Aphrodite are significant. The similarities between the heroine and the goddess with whom she mostly interacts can provide us with interesting information on their relationship. Indeed, the two even become associated with one another. Herodotus notes a temple to 'foreign Aphrodite' that he suggests was built in honour of Helen during his discussion of the latter's adventures in Egypt.[63] Ptolemaeus attested that Helen is Aphrodite's daughter, whilst a first-century AD inscription found in Egypt claims the pair were sisters.[64] Yet as Farnell suggested long ago, the relationship between Aphrodite and Helen is far from harmonious:

We might with Herodotus regard her as a double of Aphrodite; but far from the legend justifying the approximation of the two, it suggests an antagonism between them.[65]

Farnell is correct to point out the difficult relationship between the two, which is most conspicuous in epic. Helen is often seen to be unable to resist Aphrodite, yearning for her homeland, but overcome by desire for Paris. Even so, in her far-ranging study of heroines in Greek myth and cult, Deborah Lyons has suggested that this is exactly the kind of dynamic which we might expect:

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[61] Hesiod, *Theogny,* 176-200.
[62] Anacreon, 357 and 358. Sappho, 54 and 101. Sappho, to uses it in one of her wedding songs and in an isolated fragment referring to Eros.
[63] Herodotus, 2.112.
[64] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 149 & *SEG* 8.500.
[65] Farnell, 1921, 324.

A defining feature of heroic figures is their similarity and proximity to the gods, with whom they are intimately but ambiguously connected. Numerous myths detail the relations between heroes and heroines with gods who are their parents, lovers, or protectors, and not infrequently their enemies.[66]

As Lyons notes, similarity to divinity is crucial. It is often the exceptional qualities of the mortal – in Helen's case her beauty – that makes them eligible for heroic status. As Lyons also correctly states, this similarity to divinity can be a great source of tension between the mortal and her divine counterpart – being too close to the deity can evoke jealousy as well as admiration. The relationship between Helen and Aphrodite is characterised in this manner, with obvious similarities present between the two despite their antagonistic relationship. As we have seen, Helen at Sparta embodied many of the traditional characteristics of Aphrodite. Exploring the nature of the tension that existed between the two divine figures can therefore help us to assess the significance of Helen's ambiguous character for Alcman's chorus of *parthenoi.*

In epic Aphrodite and Helen have an intriguing relationship. This is most clearly seen in book 3 of the *Iliad*. After Aphrodite has saved Paris from death at the hands of Menelaus she disguises herself as an aged female servant and attempts to convince Helen to visit Paris in his bedchamber. Not only does Helen recognise Aphrodite, but she reacts with open hostility and familiarity:

> ἧσο παρ᾽ αὐτὸν ἰοῦσα, θεῶν δ᾽ ἀπόεικε κελεύθου,
> μηδ᾽ ἔτι σοῖσι πόδεσσιν ὑποστρέψειας Ὄλυμπον,
> ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ περὶ κεῖνον ὀΐζυε καί ἑ φύλασσε,
> εἰς ὅ κέ σ᾽ ἢ ἄλοχον ποιήσεται ἢ ὅ γε δούλην.
> κεῖσε δ᾽ ἐγὼν οὐκ ...:

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[66] Lyons, 1997, 69. Kearns, 1998, 27-43 also provides a useful summary of the nature of Greek heroines.

Go, sit by his side, and abandon the way of the gods, and turn not your feet back to Olympus; but ever be anxious for him, and guard him, until he makes you his wife, or maybe even his slave. There I will not go....[67]

Helen openly defies the goddess. What's more, her comments are insulting and wilful. Yet, even so, Helen is unable to resist the goddess for long. Aphrodite threatens to withdraw her protection from Helen, making her even more hated by both Greeks and Trojans to bring about her death. Helen is forced into the bedchamber of Paris against her will. The passage is revealing in a number of ways. Firstly it appears to indicate an open hostility, or at the very least, severe tension between goddess and heroine. Elsewhere too Helen's anger at Aphrodite comes through – in Euripides' *Helen* she complains that Aphrodite won her beauty contest at the cost of Helen's marriage.[68] However, despite this hostility, in the *Iliad* Helen still has little choice but to bow to Aphrodite's will. She is reliant on Aphrodite for protection and is unable to resist her bidding.

How does the difficult relationship which existed between Helen and Aphrodite help to illuminate the study of the *Louvre Partheneion?* Aphrodite, as an Olympian divinity, must maintain a certain distance from human events. Although in epic she interferes in human affairs and manipulates individuals, she remains an immortal and thus cannot experience human existence. Helen, on the other hand, mirrors all of Aphrodite's characteristics with the exception that she is a Spartan heroine rather than an Olympian deity. Helen embodies all of Aphrodite's qualities but is still subject to the goddess' whims and subsequently suffers a great deal. Helen actually experiences many things that mortals experience – she experiences desire, dances in the chorus, marries, has children. She is threatened by abduction and marriage to her is something for which many suitors vie. Essentially, Helen's experiences in myth are all things to which young Spartan girls could relate. She is simultaneously desirable and dangerous, beautiful, yet someone who serves as an example of what can go wrong when social conventions are ignored. As the *chorēgos* whom Aristophanes imagines Helen to be, she provides the girls with a relatable figure to follow.

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[67] Homer, *Iliad,* 3.406-410. Murray, 1999(a), 158-159 (revised Wyatt).
[68] Euripides, *Helen,* 1097.

As we have seen, the status of *parthenoi* can be ambiguous, with girls often described in divine terms owing to their beauty and social value. Their value to the community puts them in the ambiguous position of *parthenoi* throughout archaic Greece – they are desirable points of exchange between communities, and thus highly valued, but simultaneously a potential point of conflict. Owing to their added economic importance, the situation may have been more acute in archaic Sparta. Helen shares many characteristics with the *parthenoi* who perform in her chorus. She is worshipped as a heroine whose divine qualities are extremely similar to those of Aphrodite, yet she must still face the same threats that Spartan *parthenoi* themselves encountered. Helen is the perfect deity to appear in the *Louvre Partheneion,* not only because of her divine beauty, her exceptional performance and her status as a deity who helps *parthenoi* attain adulthood, but also because she is still susceptible to all of the same threats and emotions that the chorus encounter. The key to Helen's presence is her ambiguity: she is empowered, beautiful, and desired, yet all of this makes her subject to an array of social threats, just like the *parthenoi* who perform for her.

3.2 Ritual, Mythology and the Past - The Leucippides in the *Louvre Partheneion*

In the final section of this chapter, I want to argue that another pair of female divinities, the Leucippides, were also an important part of the *Louvre Partheneion.* Like Helen, the Leucippides are beautiful young girls whose abduction sparks a significant conflict. The Leucippides were an important pair of priestesses at Sparta, mentioned explicitly in Alcman's poetry on at least one occasion.[69] In Spartan tradition, they were brides of the Dioscuri, who fought for them in a bloody conflict with the Aphareids.[70] Pausanias reports that the abduction was visible on the Bronze House of Athena and the sixth-century Amyclae throne, further hinting at the myths ongoing importance within Sparta.[71] Pausanias also makes mention of a cult to the Leucippides where two priestesses would take on the name 'Leucippides' for their time in service.[72]

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[69] Alcman, 8.
[70]Theocritus, 22.137-66; Lycophron, 512-49 (plus scholia at 538 and 547); Ovid, *Fasti,* 5.699-70; Hyginus, *Fabulae,* 80; Scholiast A, Homer, *Ilaid,* 3.243; and Scholiast, Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.112.
[71] Pausanias, 3.17.2 and 3.18.11.
[72] Pausanias, 3.16.1-2.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Spartan performance proved invaluable for recreating the past and re-interpreting socially important messages for the present. Following scholars like Bowra, Garvie, and Nagy, I shall argue that the performance of Hagesichora and Agido was deliberately evocative of the Leucippides, seeing the mortal dancers embody the heroines. Where my views differ from Bowra, Garvie, and Nagy, is that I believe Hagesichora and Agido's embodiment of the Leucippides was significant as the myth of the priestesses' abduction by the Dioscuri formed part of the opening section of the poem. Helen is a divine figure to whom the chorus can closely relate, but the Leucippides are acted out in the performance. We have already seen that *parthenoi* and young girls in other cultures could take on divine attributes or embody divine roles at this stage of their lives. Hagesichora's and Agido's embodiment of the Leucippides fits within this pattern, but perpetuation of the Leucippides also allows them to commemorate heroines, who, like Helen, face the ambiguous position of being desirable heroines who are subject to social threat.

Initially, I begin by outlining the arguments for believing that Hagesichora and Agido represent the Leucippides. Partially inspired by Pausanias' comments, this idea has existed for some time. Bowra first suggested this theory about eighty years ago, before it was explored in more depth by Garvie and Nagy. For Bowra, the Leucippides were priestesses to Dionysus performing dances in his honour alongside the deified Helen, whilst Nagy does not comment on the mythological section of Alcman's poem.[73] Only Garvie speculates that the Dioscuri's abduction of the Leucippides may have featured in the early stages of the poem, but Garvie states that the theory can only be 'purely hypothetical,' owing to the fragmentary state of the text.[74] The theory reached its fullest and most interesting form with Nagy's 1990 publication *Pindar's Homer* in which he claims 'Agido and Hagesichora, are acting out, on the level of the ritual presented by the chorus, the roles of the two Leucippides, who are cult figures who exist on the level of myth.'[75]

The best evidence that the Leucippides may have been relevant to the performance of the *Louvre Partheneion* comes from the language used to describe Hagesichora and Agido. The term Leucippides can be roughly translated as 'shining horses' - *leuko* means 'radiant or white' and *hippo*

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[73] Bowra, 1934, 37.
[74] Garvie, 1965, 186.
[75] Nagy, 1990, 346.

means 'horse.'[76] The consistent imagery of light and horses that is used to describe both Agido and Hagesichora in lines 39-60 makes an association with the Leucippides a real possibility. Agido is introduced by her brightness (40), compared to the sun (40-43), an outstanding horse (45-49), and an Enetic racehorse (50-51). Hagesichora is silver faced and has the bloom of undefiled gold (51-55), before both girls are famously compared as horses (58-59). Using descriptive language and metaphor, Alcman alludes to the fact that Hagesichora and Agido represent the Leucippides.

More recently, Peponi has speculated that the chorus use a 'traditional stock of diction and imagery' in their song to fire their audiences imagination, a factor which may have been embellished visually through the chorus' own dance performance.[77] Peponi argues that the constant shifting of metaphors between light, horses, and birds in the *Louvre Partheneion* coupled with the power of the chorus' performance allows the audience to imagine these metaphors enacted. By enacting metaphorical imagery, which was well established in early Greek poetry, Alcman's chorus evoke a strong series of connotations in their audience's imagination. What the chorus see and hear in the ritual space creates an environment where they are connected to their city's past. The words and language used in the song are vital in creating and reinforcing the message. As Tambiah has shown, language can be instrumental in giving ritual power – in his own words, language 'owes nothing to reality.'[78] Repetition is often a key factor in that it reinforces cultural messages and ensures that distractions are overcome.

In addition to this evidence from the text, Nagy saw Pausanias' description of the Leucippides' cult as being particularly significant.[79] Pausanias remarks that an egg, said to be the very same from which Helen was born, was kept in the Leucippides' shrine at Sparta. At this shrine, two priestesses, also called the Leucippides, would perform ritual duties including preparing a robe for dedication to Apollo at Amyclae.[80] The human priestesses take on the names of the deities whom they serve, with their youth helping them to capture the identity of the beautiful goddesses. They

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[76] Nagy, 1990, 346. For a discussion of the exotic and high status nature of the horses in Alcman see Devereux, 1965, 176-184.

[77] Peponi, 2004, 295-316. In particular, (304-307) she focuses on the chariot races that took place at the funeral games for Patroclus. Here Homer describes the horse as 'flying,' such is their speed, using the same word - ἀυηρομέναι – as Alcman uses to describe the movement of the Pleiades.

[78] Tambiah, 1968, 202. See also, Tambiah, 1985, 133-134.

[79] Nagy, 1990, 346.

[80] Pausanias, 3.16.1-2.

perpetuate their cult by embodying the Leucippides themselves. The fact that Pausanias records such a practice may well be testament to a long standing tradition, but there is nothing here to specify their participation in ritual performance.

Furthermore, we have already seen that both Euripides and Aristophanes imagined the Leucippides taking a prominent role alongside Helen in Spartan cult dances.[81] When this evidence is considered together, the case for the Leucippides presence in Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* is persuasive. Whilst the deities remain constant, the priestesses who embody them are replaced from generation to generation, continually enacting the divine Leucippides' youthful persona. The names of Hagesichora and Agido provide a further suggestion that the poem was intended for ritual re-performance.[82] There is a distinct possibility that the poem was re-performed by generation after generation thereby ensuring continuity in its myths, with *parthenoi* playing the roles of Hagesichora and Agido. Carey's convincing synthesis of arguments concerning the re-performance of Alcman's poetry can only enhance this argument.[83] Agido and Hagesichora become the priestesses known as the Leucippides, regular participants in the Spartan dance who are etymologically linked to equine and astral imagery.

Although the nature of the evidence prevents us from definitively saying that Hagesichora and Agido were performing in the role of the Leucippides, I would argue that the evidence suggests a strong case. Although the lack of certainty means that we must proceed with caution, the probability that the Leucippides were significant to the *Louvre Partheneion* leads one to consider whether their myth formed part of the damaged early sections of the poem. I shall now argue that the Dioscuri's struggle with the Aphareids over the Leucippides formed the content of the extremely badly damaged lines (lines 22-35) which conclude the mythological section of the *Louvre Partheneion*.

Herington effectively stressed that the chorus' self-referencing coupled with the vivid descriptions that they create serve to dramatise the performance, giving it a theatrical quality, and I

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[81] Euripides, *Helen,* 1465-1470 and Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 1296-1315.
[82] Nagy, 1990, 345-350. Herington, 1985, 54-55 presents a similar view.
[83] Carey, 2011, 437-60. See also Herington, 1985, 54-55, who simply makes the point that it is highly unlikely that a text would be preserved until the Hellenistic period without ever being performed again.

believe that this extended to performing the roles of the Leucippides.[84] An interpretation that situates the Leucippides in the myth has several advantages: It provides continuity with the early section of the poem that also features the Dioscuri and the following narrative section in which Agido and Hagesichora's performance is so evocative of the Leucippides. Furthermore, the following chapter will demonstrate that the myth of the Leucippides had an important political significance in archaic Sparta. Although the state of the text makes certainty impossible, there are indications that make this interpretation preferable to any others put forward.

I begin by briefly reviewing theories concerning the badly damaged lines. The most common interpretation of lines 22-35 is that they refer to a conflict with the giants.[85] The presence of the giants is suggested by their modes of death. Heracles is said to have dispatched many of the giants with a volley of arrows and Poseidon was said to have killed a certain giant, Polybotes, by tearing off a huge rock from the island of Kos and throwing in at him. As has often been noted, the giant's assault also carried a sexual element with Porphyrion's attempted rape of Hera.[86] If this is the case then Alcman relates a political myth presenting hubris and usurpation on a grand scale. On the other hand, Calame tentatively focuses on the attempt of Otus and Ephialtes to abduct Artemis and Hera from heaven.[87] The hubris and sexual motivation contained within this idea make it attractive, but their mode of death does not fit with the fragmentary content of these lines.

However, as Bowra first noted, the gigantomachy theory fails to take into account the reference to 'lost youth' in line 27, which does not seem appropriate for the giants. The giving of gifts indicated by ἔδ]ωκε δῶρα in line 25 is also inconsistent with the giants assault on heaven. However, the giving of gifts does fit very well with competition for brides, lending support to the theory that the Leucippides may have been involved – indeed, in Lycophron's account, arguments arising from bride price are a major instigator of the conflict between the Dioscuri and the

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[84] Herington, 1985, 21-26. See 54-55 for further discussion of re-performance with reference to the names of the performers. Carey, 2009, 21-38 also argues for extensive re-performance through to the Hellenistic period, possibly even outside Athens.
[85] First advanced by Diels, 1896, 346-47; See also Page, 1951, 43; and Farina, 1950, 20-21.
[86] Pindar, *Pythian,* 8.12-21 mentions Porphyrion's defeat but does not contain a sexual element. Pseudo-Apollodorus, 1.36.
[87] Calame, 1977(2), 65-66.

Aphareids.[88] Indeed, several of the instances mentioned would fit well with the reported conflict between the Dioscuri and the sons of Aphraeus.[89] Certainly, the reference to 'lost youth' fits better with the death of Castor and the Aphareids than it would with the ancient giants.[90] Calame suggested (albeit for different reasons) that the youth (ἥβα) of line 27 suggested a link between this section and the youth and beauty of the eligible young *parthenoi* in what follows.[91] Furthermore, during the conflict Pindar reports that the invulnerable Polydeuces is struck in the chest by a large stone grave marker that may be represented by the 'marble millstone' of line 31.[92] The mention of an arrow in the cast of weapons also fits well with Idas reputation as a man willing to take on Apollo with his bow, after the latter abducted Marpessa.[93] The gnomic advice in lines 16-19, which refers to hubristic flight to the sky before mentioning marriage, may also fit well with these lines and I shall explore the context more fully in the following chapter.[94] Both the Leucippides and the Dioscuri received hero-cult in archaic Sparta, making their marriage more appropriate than would have been a union with the Aphareids.

Olivier Gengler provides one further compelling reason for accepting this theory, noting striking similarities between Alcman's lines 34-35 and Pindar's version of the myth in *Nemean* 10.[95] Lines 63-65 of *Nemean* 10 read:

λαιψηροῖς δὲ πόδεσσιν ἄφαρ

ἐξικέσθαν, καὶ μέγα **ἔργον ἐμήσαντ᾽** ὠκέως

καὶ **πάθον** δεινὸν παλάμαις Ἀφαρητί-

δαι Διός.

[88] Lycophron, 512-49. Too, 1997, 12, also discusses the giving of bride gifts and competition for brides in this context. She examines: Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women,* 154b, c, d, e and 155 (Most, 2007(b), 219-231); Cf, Homer, *Iliad,* 22.472; and *Odyssey*, 13.377-78.
[89] A theory put forward by Gengler, 1995, 3-21; Robbins, 1994, 7-17; and Too 1997, 226.
[90] Alcman, 1.27.
[91] Calame, 1977(2), 65-66.
[92] Alcman, 1.31, and Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.67-69.
[93] Homer, *Iliad,* 9.555-64.
[94] Alcman, 1.16-19.
[95] Gengler, 1995, 5-14.

The sons of Aphareus came at once on swift feet and quickly devised a mighty deed, and they

suffered terribly at the hands of Zeus.[96]

When compared to Alcman's lines 34-35 we see that there is considerable overlap:

ἄλαστα δὲ

ϝέργα πάσον κακὰ μησαμένοι.

and unforgettably they suffered, since they plotted evil.[97]

There are clear linguistic and thematic similarities here, which led Gengler to theorise that both

poems tackled the same subject – it is quite possible that Pindar was aware of, and subsequently

influenced by, Alcman's composition.[98]

Once again, none of this is conclusive, but the combination of factors mean that a strong

case can be made for the presence of the conflict between the Dioscuri and the Aphareids in this

section of the poem. The case is made stronger, as there are further scattered references to the

Leucippides and the Aphareids throughout Alcman's corpus, at least making it certain that they were

a suitable subject for the poet. We find Phoebe mentioned explicitly in fragment 8 and the *kai* that

follows her name suggests that Hilaeira may have followed where the papyrus becomes

fragmentary.[99] Fragment 7 also appears to reference the sons of Aphareus although the text is again

extremely fragmentary.[100] Fragment 78 also provides us with an isolated mention of Perieres, the

father of Leucippus and Aphareus.[101] We can infer little from a single name but it does at least

provide us with an indication that Alcman sang songs concerned with the Messenian family. Alcman

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[96] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.63-65. Race, 1997(b), 116-119.

[97] Alcman, 1.34-35. Campbell, 1988, 362-363. Gengler, 1995, 13, gives a fuller description of Alcman, 1.30-36 and Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.60-65 claiming further, smaller, similarities including commenting on the use of the tombstone as a weapon.

[98] Gengler, 1995, 1-21.

[99] Alcman, 8.1-6.

[100] Alcman, 7.

[101] Alcman, 78.

certainly discussed the Leucippides and the Aphareids in his poems, and the appearance of the Leucippides capture by the Dioscuri in the *Louvre Partheneion* is the most likely possibility to fill an uncertain gap.

The results are compelling. Not only do we have Hagesichora and Agido performing the Leucippides and thereby constantly recreating a link to Sparta's past, but we also have them performing a myth in which they play an important part. The relevance of the performance is heightened as the audience hear the myth sung by a chorus featuring two of its central characters. The myth is brought into the presence of the performance, ensuring that the full force of its implications is understood. The precise relevance of the myth to Spartan society in the context of the *Louvre Partheneion* will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Conclusions

The deities that we find in the *Louvre Partheneion* are entirely consistent with the political significance of the poem's performance. Far from being relevant purely in terms of female development and fertility, the appearance of Helen is linked implicitly to the political circumstances of the poems composition. Helen is an enormously significant political figure in archaic Sparta, where her relevance as a deity of beauty, performance, and growth, was recognised alongside stories of her vulnerability to desirous men. In this sense, she shares a great deal in common with the Spartan *parthenoi* who worshipped at her shrines and who performed the *Louvre Partheneion* in her honour. In the case of the Leucippides, the performance brought a myth that expressed these same attributes and vulnerabilities into the present of the ritual.

Helen and the Leucippides undergo the same concerns and experiences that the performers might also face in their society. In this sense, the deities provide *parthenoi* with a means of understanding social threats through performance. Just as with Helen and the Leucippides, the performers of the *Louvre Parthenion* may be of an elevated status owing to their social worth, but that same social worth makes them susceptible to a variety of problems. The deities of the *Louvre Partheneion* were perfect for helping both audience and performers understand the dangers that

could arise from conflict over women, whilst simultaneously providing the chorus with exemplary role-models to understand their place within archaic Sparta.

Chapter 4 - Ritual, Mythology and *Eunomia* in Archaic Sparta

In the second chapter, it became increasingly clear that Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion,* and probably much more Spartan poetry, was concerned with establishing links to the community's past through performance. The appropriateness of these performances for major Spartan festivals implies that they were civically motivated and sought to display the city's virtues. Furthermore, the previous chapter has suggested that the deities who appeared in the poem, alongside their assorted myths, were also equally significant in a civic context.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine how Alcman used mythology to explore difficult social and political themes in this context. Although much of this chapter will focus on the *Louvre Partheneion,* I shall also be looking at other smaller fragments in which important mythological features can be seen. My aim is to shed greater light on Alcman's mythology by looking more closely at the social position of *parthenoi* at Sparta. Throughout this chapter, further reasons behind the social influence of Spartan *parthenoi* will be explored that can help explain some difficult aspects of Alcman's poetry. Their additional importance within archaic Sparta had an impact on the mythological material that Alcman encouraged, leading to an increased focus on marriage, abduction, and violence that arose over young women. As we shall see, these themes appear conspicuously in Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* and in other fragments. The performance of these socially important themes provides Alcman's chorus with a forum in which to experience and understand their position within the community. In addition, this chapter will explore how Alcman's poetry for *parthenoi*, along with poetry at Sparta more generally, was concerned with the promotion of *eunomia.*

In order to achieve these aims, chapter 3 will address the following questions:

1) In the context of archaic Sparta, what was the significance of the myths that begin the *Louvre Partheneion?* How should we reconstruct the damaged mythological sections? Can a coherent mythic narrative that fits the context of the rest of the poem be reached?

2) Do the myths alluded to in Alcman's 'cosmogonic' fragment 5 fit with the cultural climate of archaic Sparta? How should we understand this mythology and how does it fit with that which we find elsewhere in Alcman?

In summary, the purpose of this chapter is to study the position of women in archaic Sparta and consider the performance of Alcman's poetry in the context previously established, in order to understand the social significance of Alcman's mythological poetry. Through exploring these varied aspects of Spartan poetic performance, I hope to demonstrate that Alcman's mythology was implicitly linked to encouraging social order. The position of *parthenoi* in Sparta was high enough to make them an important feature of preserving *eunomia,* and subsequently they appeared in large numbers of mythical narratives that helped them confront potential crises. In this way, Alcman's poetry conforms with the tradition that imagines Spartan poetry as completely vital to encouraging order at Sparta.

4.1 The Social and Political Situation in Archaic Sparta

In order to set the arguments surrounding Alcman's mythology in context, it is first necessary to outline the social and political circumstances under which his poetry was composed. As well as addressing the important issues that arise from our historical sources, I am also particularly interested in how these concerns manifest themselves in archaic poetry. Commemorative performance, choral display, and civic myth clearly played a major part in Sparta's ritual calendar. Furthermore, poets like Thales and Terpander are famous in the historical tradition for encouraging good order in the Spartan *polis*.[1] Certainly, traces of this concern with *eunomia* exist in our surviving Spartan poetry. Alcman's near contemporary Tyrtaeus focuses on issues including social order, obedience to law, and the right of the Spartan kings to govern.[2] *Eunomia* is an important theme in Tyrtaeus' poetry, just, as we shall see, as it is important to Alcman's.

I want to argue that *parthenoi* had a vital social and political role at Sparta, which we see reflected in Alcman's poetry. This aspect is central to understanding the mythology of the Louvre

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[1] Thales: Strabo, 10.4.16; Plutrach, *On Music,* 9.1134Bc; 42.1146b; *Life of Lycurgus,* 4; and Pausanias, 1.14.4. Terpander: Aristotle, *Spartan Constitution,* F545 Rose.
[2] Examples explored in this chapter are: Tyrtaeus, 2.9-15 and Tyrtaeus, 4.1-5.

Partheneion, yet is something that has never been scrutinised in enough detail when interpreting Alcman's work. I have already argued that Alcman's chorus have a voice infused with greater authority than has previously been thought. In this section, it should become clearer that their extreme importance to Spartan society is something that both invests them with power and makes them a particular focus for social concern. Competition over Spartan women is common in our historical texts, coming across as a real political concern that could threaten the *eunomia* of the state. As we saw in chapter 2, political marriages, land inheritance, wife-stealing and plain lust are all shown to create tensions within the *polis.* It is in this context that the utterances of Alcman's chorus of *parthenoi,* themselves on the cusp of marriage, must be understood. By examining the social and political significance of Alcman's *parthenoi* in detail, we can arrive at a better understanding of the poet's motivations in composing the text.

'Eunomia' *and Poetry in Archaic Sparta*

I begin by looking at how our early sources represent social order and disorder at archaic Sparta, before looking at how Spartan poetry was viewed as a means of encouraging *eunomia*. Like many other *poleis,* archaic Sparta appears to have warred with her neighbours and suffered with various internal political problems. Tyrtaeus makes well-known references to the Messenian Wars, although the lack of reliable information makes it almost impossible for the modern historian to construct an accurate chronology for the conflict.[3] Although slightly later, Herodotus claims that Sparta was originally a disorderly *polis.*[4] Aristotle and Pausanias give us a little more detail as to possible causes, telling us that Sparta, like much of the archaic Greek world, was beset by land reform issues.[5] In terms of modern scholarship, Van Wees' examinations of seventh-century Laconian art have led him

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[3] Tyrtaeus, 5.1-2, West, Pausanias, 4.6.5; 5.4-8; Strabo, 6.3.3; and 8.4.10. Pausanias, 4.15.2 dates the first Messenian War from 743-724, whilst Rhianus, *FGrHist* 265 F43, gives the dates 685-688. Nafissi, 2009, 121 argues that a date of around 700 is most probable for Tyrtaeus war of Theopompus. Luraghi, 2003, 109-141 and 2008, 70-75 has reappraised the evidence for the Messenian Wars and suggested that the conflict may have been far smaller than we imagine, perhaps focusing only on a conflict with the town of Messene. See also Luraghi, 2002, 229-250, for a reappraisal of the helot situation in archaic Sparta.
[4] Herodotus, 1.65.2.
[5] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1306b, and Pausanias, 4.18.2-3.

to conclude that class divisions may have existed within Sparta.[6] Alcman himself reflects a divide between luxury and the common food of the people in fragment 17:

οὔτι γὰρ ἀοὺ τετυγμένον ἔσθει,

ἀλλὰ τὰ κοινὰ γάρ, ὥπερ ὁ δᾶμος,

ζατεύει.

He eats no (sweet confections?) but looks for common fare like the people.[7]

Furthermore, Alcaeus' proverb 'Money is the man, and no poor man is good or honourable,' is attributed to Aristodemus at Sparta, and further hints at a society in which wealth was linked to one's social standing.[8]

As these sources indicate and in keeping with trends across archaic Greece, Sparta was faced with a variety of social problems as the *polis* developed. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that our poetic sources seem particularly keen to encourage *eunomia.* Indeed, the later traditions that survive concerning Thales and Terpander all labour the point that poetry was integral in bringing social order to Sparta. Ephorus, quoted by Strabo, is said to have credited Thales with creating Spartan native songs and institutions.[9] Thales is further credited by later sources like Pausanias and Plutarch with being the first poet to bring obedience, order, and tranquillity to the city in times of crisis.[10] Aristotle informs us that Terpander was called to Sparta in response to an

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[6] Van Wees, 1999, 2-3. Scott, 2010, 165-182, provides a recent overview of some of the evidence, focusing on Laconian Black Figure Pottery. Scott suggests that a market for elite Black figure pottery still existed well into the sixth century suggesting a gradual transition to the austere image of archaic Sparta which became famous. Snodgrass, 1960, (particularly 123-159) remains a useful guide to trends accross archaic Greece.
[7] Alcman, 17.6-8. Campbell, 1988, 410-411.
[8] Alcaeus, 360. Campbell, 1982, 393-393. See van Wees 2-6 for further discussion of class division. A thorough dissection of the Spartan wealth and social movement is beyond the bounds of this thesis, but I have found the following studies on dedications and Spartan art to be most useful for considering this issue: Fortsch, 1998, 48-54; Hodkinson, 1998(a), 83-117; Hodkinson, 1998(b), 55-63; Pipili, 1998, 82-96; Powell, 1998, 119-146
[9] Strabo, 10.4.16. Raaflaub, 2000, 23-59, is an excellent discussion of the roles of poets in shaping archaic society.
[10] Plutarch, *On Music,* 9.1134Bc; 42.1146b; *Life of Lycurgus,* 4; and Pausanias, 1.14.4.

oracle to help end civil strife.[11] Terpander, a 'praiser of the deeds of heroes' according to Plutarch, was a victor at the Carneia, equally credited with helping bring order to Sparta in times of crisis.[12] Although these sources are all late, they conform with the idea that within Sparta poetry and order were seen as strongly interlinked.

Interest in the promotion of good order can be seen clearly in Tyrtaeus surviving poetry. Aristotle famously tells us that Tyrtaeus wrote a poem named *Eunomia,* the subject of which was the divisions between rich and poor that the Messenian Wars exacerbated. Following an extremely lacunose passage that appears to encourage obedience to the kings, Tyrtaeus makes their divine right to rule abundantly clear:

αὐτὸς γὰρ Κρονίων⌋ καλλιστεφάνου ⌊πόσις Ἥρης

 Ζεὺς Ἡρακλείδαις⌋ ἄστυ δέδωκε τό⌊δε,

οἷσιν ἅμα προλιπ⌊όντες Ἐρινεὸν ⌊ἠνεμόεντα

 εὐρεῖαν Πέλοπ⌊ο⌋ς⌋ νῆσον ἀφικόμ⌊εθα

For Zeus himself, the son of Cronus and husband of fair crowned Hera, has given this state to the descendants of Heracles. With them we left windy Erineus and came to the wide island of Pelops.[13]

The performance setting of such a poem remains a difficult question. Ewen Bowie suggested in 1986 that it might have formed part of a larger narrative structure designed for performance at a major public occasion. However, more recently Bowie admitted uncertainty moving more towards

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[11] Aristotle, *Spartan Constitution,* F545 Rose. Plutarch also notes the high regard in which the songs were held and states that they were allowed to be performed by Spartan citizens alone, *Agis,* 10.3 and *Life of Lycurgus,* 28.10.

[12] Praise of heroes: Plutarch, *Moralia,* 238c. For order: Plutarch, *Moralia,* 1133c; Aelian, *Varia Historia,* 12.50; Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies,* 1.16.78.5; Thucydides 5.16.3, tells us that when the Spartan kingship was originally founded it was accompanied by dancing and sacrifices.

[13] Tyrtaeus, 2.9-15. Gerber, 1999, 36-39.

Wolfgang Rösler's view that the Tyrtaeus' *eunomia* was sympotic.[14] We have no indications of the poem's length, but Tyrtaeus certainly appears to refer back to Sparta's mythic past for exhortatory purposes. In spite of this uncertainty surrounding performance context, Tyrtaeus' comments concerning obedience and the descent of Spartan kings appears to be promoting the Spartan social order, and referring back to the mythic past is one of his key tools. Although the performance setting may be very different from Alcman's poetry, we shall see that similar civic aspects can be recognised within the *Louvre Partheneion.*

Indeed, similar civic themes can be found at other points in Tyrtaeus' poetry. Despite the fact that only fragments remain of the poem, which Aristotle dubbed *Eunomia*, it can provide us with unique insights into the seventh-century Spartan mindset.[15] Here I give the text as quoted by Diodorus:

Φοίβου ἀκούσαντες Πυθωνόθεν οἴκαδ᾽ ἔνεικαν

μαντείας τε θεοῦ καὶ τελέεντ᾽ ἔπεα.

῾ἄρχειν μὲν βουλῆς θεοτιμήτους βασιλῆας,

  οἷσι μέλει Σπάρτης ἱμερόεσσα πόλις,

πρεσβυγενέα τε γέροντας·

After listening to Phoebus they brought home from Pytho the god's oracles and sure predictions. Counsel is to begin with the divinely honoured kings, who have the lovely city of Sparta in their care, and with the ancient elders.[16]

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[14] Bowie, 1986, 13-35 contrasts with Bowie, 2007, 46-50 in the way that Tyrtaeus' poetry was interpreted. See also, Rösler, 1975. Dalby, 1998, 195-211 is useful for tracking the changing ways in which poetry was performed through the archaic period.

[15] Whether Tyrtaeus named the poem *eunomia,* or the name was simply applied to it by later writers in response to its content, is impossible to say. Van Wees, 1999, 1-2 states that the poem may be typical of a seventh century mindset – 'an attempt to restore harmony by reasserting the order sanctioned by the gods, through rituals, oracles and songs.' Hornblower, 2009, 51-55, provides a recent summary of opinion on political poetry in archaic Sparta and beyond.

[16] Tyrtaeus, 4.1-5. Gerber, 1999, 40-41. Diodorus, 7.12.6. See Ogden, 1994, 85-102 for further discussion of the poem's complexities in relation to the Spartan Rhetra.

Tyrtaeus encourages obedience to the kings and the respect of law, discouraging the citizens from civic dissent. Once again, we see the concept of obedience to social order paramount in the minds of Spartan society.[17]

We also find a brief reference to *eunomia* in Alcman. In a line quoted by Plutarch, Fortune is described as 'sister of *Eunomia* and Persuasion and the daughter of Foresight.'[18] Not only does this reference provide further evidence that *eunomia* was of particular importance in seventh-century Sparta, but it also suggests that he considered it to be associated with qualities which were highly beneficial for the *polis*. It should become increasingly clear as this chapter goes on that *eunomia* was an important concept which was implied throughout Alcman's larger surviving fragments.

Our classical sources also correspond to the view that *eunomia* was of particular importance at Sparta; Xenophon comments that the Spartan education system was designed and regulated by the city in order to instil virtue and unity in her citizens.[19] In Plato's *Crito,* Socrates echoes his admiration for the *eunomia* created within Sparta.[20] Plato continually criticises the militaristic Doric systems in the *Laws* but he clearly recognises the power of a state that is able to create a strong sense of civic unity. A strong social ideology can unite a group – as Plato says 'these are the bonds that keep the entire social and political order together.... ancestral customs of great antiquity.'[21]

Later tradition and the surviving works of Tyrtaeus and Alcman clearly demonstrate that poetic performance played an important part in dealing with the political and social problems that beset archaic Sparta. In light of the previous chapters, it should be no surprise that *partheneia* could tackle such topics at important public occasions, with Spartan girls having a particularly authoritative voice with which to do so.

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[17] A common theme throughout archaic poetry, for example: Hesiod, *Works and Days,* 225-231. Hesiod advocates a similar view to Tyrtaeus' *Eunomia*, arguing that those who give straight judgements and follow justice will avoid disaster. Lines 250-251 state that those who cannot follow justice will be brought to ruin.

[18] Alcman, 64. Compare with Hesiod, *Theogony,* 901-904 in which Zeus and Themis are parents of Eunomia, Dike and Eirene. For further discussion on Hesiod's views on social order and the cosmos see Clay, 2003.

[19] Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians.* 2.1-2. Ducat, 1999, 43-66 and 2006, remain the first points of contact for studies in Spartan education.

[20] Plato, *Crito,* 42e.

[21] Plato, *Laws,* 793a-b.

Conclusions

Eunomia was considered to be of paramount political importance, and Tyrtaeus and Alcman both demonstrate that their poetry was concerned with encouraging good order in the *polis.* As a composer of poems for *parthenoi,* often to be performed at major public festivals, Alcman's poetry focused on mythological tales and issues which were directly relevant to his performers, but which certainly had a significant political resonance for his gathered audience. As we shall see, Alcman's poetry seeks to encourage *eunomia* by addressing issues that were directly related to the special status of *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta. The myths that he relates, recreates, and dramatises have relevance to the entire community, but often maintain a particular focus on the unique social tensions that surrounded Spartan *parthenoi.*

Through performance, mimesis, and recreation of myths from the past, participants in Alcman's performances are able to experience the dangers and difficulties of their society. As we shall see, in the *Louvre Partheneion,* Alcman represents social tensions, so that they can be experienced, understood, and overcome, thereby encouraging *eunomia* through a specific focus on *parthenoi* and their role in society.

4.2 The Mythology and Ritual of the Louvre Partheneion

Understanding the social situation when Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* was composed is no easy task, but attempting to do so can certainly inform our reading of the poem. The mythological section of the *Louvre Partheneion* is undoubtedly one of the most difficult passages of poetry that survives from archaic Greece. Over the years, numerous attempts have been made to analyse various aspects of the text and the fragmentary myths that it contains, though the state of the papyrus has meant that there has been little consensus on the topic.

The weight of scholarship on the *Louvre Partheneion* means that it is necessary to undertake a brief review of relevant literature on the mythological section in order to set my arguments in context. Much of this scholarship informs the following sections, but a brief detour to explore the work of others will also make it easier to highlight original aspects of my own work. I argue that by analysing the mythological section of the poem in light of the social and political context outlined above, it is possible to come to a better understanding of how the difficult and seemingly inconsistent themes of the poem weave together. In this chapter, I shall explain why I argue the mythological section of the *Louvre Partheneion* addressed the following elements:

1. The defeat of the Hippocoontids (lines 1-15):
2. Gnomic Advice Concerning Phaethon (16-21):
3. Conflict over the Leucippides (22-35):

As we shall see, these myths feature themes that are directly relevant to *parthenoi* and marriage.

A Brief Review of Alcman's Mythology and Relevant Secondary Literature

Before exploring the difficult themes of Alcman's mythology, it is prudent to assess what information can be safely taken from the opening sections of the *Louvre Partheneion* and to survey the vast literature on the subject. From this point, it will not only be easier to analyse the surviving material but also to present the key points of my own arguments in relation to those of other scholars.

I shall begin by providing a brief examination of the myth's central themes. It is widely accepted that the first few lines of the myth refer to a conflict featuring the Dioscuri and the sons of Hippocoon. The first mythological character mentioned in the poem is Polydeuces. As several other fragments from Alcman's corpus testify, when Polydeuces appears, it is safe to assume that his brother will almost certainly appear too.[22] Indeed, in Plato's *Laws* the Athenian stranger identifies them as being particularly important to Spartan choral poetry.[23] As Alcman's mythical narrative progresses it becomes clear that the Dioscuri are in conflict with a series of warriors. Pseudo-Apollodorus, Pausanias, and a scholiast on Clement of Alexandria all identify these warriors as the sons of Hippocoon and from the first-century BC onwards, there are several surviving mythological accounts of Tyndareus and his brother Hippocoon entering into combat.[24]

Tyndareus and Hippocoon both play an important role in Sparta's aetiological myths, some details of which are unfortunately only preserved in later sources. Hesiod makes Tyndareus (and a brother, Icarius) the son of Oebalus, a Spartan king who traces his ancestry to Lacadaemon and Sparte.[25] Pausanias elaborates upon this tradition. He speaks of Gorgophone, daughter of Perseus, marrying the Messenian king Perieres before producing Aphareus and Leucippus.[26] Perieres then

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[22] Alcman, 2; 10; 12; 21; 23; 25; and 85.

[23] Plato, *Laws,* 796b.

[24] Strabo, 10.2.24; Apollodorus, 2.7.3; 3.10.4-5; Plutarch, *Moralia* 285e-f; Diodorus, 4.33; Pausanias 2.18.6-7 and 3.1.4-5. This list, along with a more detailed discussion, can be found in Davison, 1968, 442-443.

[25] Hesiod, Fr199, MW, supplies this information. Pausanias, 3.1.3-4, supplies the additional information that Tyndareus' mother was Gorgophone, daughter of Perseus. Apollodorus, 3.10.4 also lists this as one of several possibilities. For an interesting overview of the Spartan mythological tradition , see Calame, 1987, 153-186. For land genealogies specifically see, Malkin, 1994, 22-26.

[26] Pausanias, 4.1-2.2 and 4.2.4. Pausanias informs us that upon the death of Polycaon and Messene, Messenia's original ruling couple, Perieres was summoned, as the couple had no living heirs. Apllodorus, 1.9.5, confirms Perieres' domination of Messenia but makes him father of Tyndareus, Icarius, Aphreus and Leucippus.

dies, allowing Gorgophone to marry Oebalus and give birth to Tyndareus and Icarius.[27] Hippocoon

appears as Tyndareus' illegitimate brother, born outside of marriage from a union between Oebalus

and a certain Nicostrate.[28]

The myth to which Alcman probably refers surrounds a struggle for the Spartan throne

between Tyndareus and Hippocoon. For a coherent account of the myth we are once again forced to

rely on a variety of late sources.[29] Tyndareus, the legitimate ruler of Lacedaemon, is ejected from his

realm by Hippocoon who replaces him as king. While he is absent, Heracles develops a feud with the

sons of Hippocoon[30] and eventually leads an army to defeat them.[31] This done, he restores

Tyndareus to the throne, making him its guardian until the line of Heracles will return to reclaim

Sparta. In so doing, Heracles lays the foundations for his descendants to rule over Sparta.[32] The

throne then passes to Menelaus, husband of Tyndareus' daughter Helen, then to Orestes, and then

in turn to his son Tisamenus.[33] The Heraclid dynasty returns to Sparta through Aristodemus whose

sons, Eurysthenes and Procles, establish the dual kingship.[34]

All the sources appear to agree that the sons of Hippocoon die when Heracles leads his army

against them. It is perfectly plausible that the Dioscuri accompanied him looking to avenge their

father's usurpation, and thus it seems most likely that it was this myth that Alcman related in the

damaged early section of the poem. The absence of Heracles from the passage does not prohibit this

interpretation. It is, of course, possible that he was mentioned in one of the sections of the poem

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[27] Pausanias, 2.21.8 and 3.1.3-4. As a variation on this theme, a scholiast on Euripides, *Orestes,* 457, makes Oebalus the son of Perieres. Steisichorus, 227 makes Aphareus, Leucippus, Tyndareus and Icarius all children of Perieres and Gorgophone.

[28] Scholiast, Euripides, *Orestes,* 457, and Apollodorus, 3.10.4.

[29] For good scholarly overviews see, Davidson, 1938; Page, 1951, 30-33; and Calame, 1977(2), 52-59.

[30] Various origins for this feud are given by Apollodorus 2.7.3, Diodorus Siculus, 4.33.5-6, and Pausanias, 3.15.4-5. The most common theme is that a companion of Heracles named Oionos was killed by the sons of Hippocoon after throwing a stone at their aggressive dog. Apollodorus also notes that the Hippocoontids had sided with Neleus against Heracles in a previous conflict. Pausanias explains that Hippocoon had refused to purify Heracles for the murder of Iphitos.

[31] Heracles' victory comes after two attempts. It appears in the first that he received a wound to one of his joints (Pausanias, 8.53.9), before he gathered an army to return victorious. Davison, 1968, 442 provides a description of all of the potential reasons for the feud that developed between Heracles and the Hippocoontids.

[32] Examples of the reverence given to Heracles at Sparta can be found in Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.52-54; Pausanias, 3.14.6; 3.15.3; and 3.17.3.

[33] Larson, 2007, 200, observes that even after Sparta have regained the bones of Orestes they retain an interest in obtaining relics of ancestors such as Tisamenus and Alcmene.

[34] Herodotus, 6.52-53.

that has been lost and Clement of Alexandria, referencing Sosibus, tells us that Alcman did discuss the wounding of Heracles by the Hippocoontids in his first book of poems.[35]

A further possibility does exist. In a fragment of Euphorion's *Thrakis*, the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontids were said to be suitors in competition for (unfortunately unnamed) brides.[36] A scholiast on Clement records the same tradition.[37] Plutarch also suggests that Tyndareus was forced to send Helen to Athens as a son of Hippocoon, Enarsphorus, was planning to abduct and rape her.[38] The two strands are not necessarily exclusive. It is possible that rivalry over women provided an additional motivation for the Dioscuri's involvement in Heracles' expedition, although this is purely conjecture. There are no representations of this story from archaic Sparta, unlike the story of Tyndareus' return, which seems to have featured on the sixth-century Amyclae throne.[39]

Interpretations of the mythological passage have been varied. Calame famously argues that this section teaches the girls about their civic past, and thus helps to instil them with Spartan values.[40] For Calame the performance serves to teach the girls a little about the mythic history of their *polis* and allow them to perpetuate Spartan values, particularly once they become mothers. More recently, Ingalls has attempted to develop these ideas further, looking specifically at how the performance of a myth featuring the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontids constituted a Spartan education.[41] He concludes that *parthenoi* learnt lessons not only about their civic myths, but also that the sexual elements of the poem encouraged girls to learn to 'control their sexuality.'[42] Yun Lee Too also looks to emphasise the distinction between the violence of the myth and the exemplary behaviour of the girls in the second half of the poem:

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[35] Clement of Alexandria, *Pro,* 36.11-12.
[36] Euphorion, *Thrakis,* Frg 29, Powell, 1925.
[37] Scholiast to Clement of Alexandria, *Protr,* 36.
[38] Plutarch, *Theseus,* 31.1.
[39] Pausanias, 3.18.11.
[40] Calame, 1997, 231-244.
[41] Ingalls, 2000, 1-12.
[42] Ingalls, 2000, 7.

Alcman intends us to perceive a significant discontinuity between the two parts of the poem, between myth and performance, which together and in counterpoint offer a synchronic articulation of Sparta.[43]

Too's theory is convincing and important for situating the poem very much in the political sphere. A split can be seen after the mythic section of the poem, when the girls move away from the violence of myth and replace it with the peace of ritual.

Especially important for this thesis is the exceptional recent work of Gloria Ferrari that has helped to shed new light on several aspects of the poem. Ferrari argues that legitimacy was of central importance to the myth, with Hippocoon's ascension to the throne an important political issue. For Ferrari, the Spartan kings' descent from Heracles is vital to the poem, and Hippocoon's attempt to usurp Tyndareus is the poem's central theme.

To Ferrari also goes the credit of providing a fresh and surely accurate interpretation of lines 16-21. The lines have been traditionally reconstructed to:

[μή τις ἀνθ]ρώπων ἐς ὠρανὸν ποτήσθω

[μηδὲ πη]ρήτω γαμῆν τὰν Ἀφροδίταν

Let no man fly to heaven or attempt to marry Aphrodite.[44]

Many scholars have used these lines to support the notion that the sexual element was prominent in the early part of the myth, making gnomic advice pertaining to an act of sexual hubris relevant. However, Ferrari realised that these lines are much more likely to refer to the myth of Phaethon and his avoidance of marriage to Aphrodite:

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[43] Too, 1997, 16. See also Robbins, 1994, 7.
[44] Alcman, 1.16-17. Campbell, 1988, 363.

Phaethon's name does not appear in this extremely lacunose part of the text, but the allusion is as unmistakable as the reference to Prometheus would be in the phrase "Let no man steal fire or cheat the gods of their share." Only in the myth of Phaethon do flying to the sky and the prospect of marrying Aphrodite coexist.[45]

Subsequently, she supplements convincingly:

μή τις ἀν]θρώπων ἐς ὡρανὸν ποτήσθω

μηδ᾿ ὑποτ]ρήτω γαμῆν τὰν ᾿Αφροδίταν.

Let no mortal fly to the sky, nor flee from marrying Aphrodite.[46]

Given the context that Ferrari imagines, she goes on to argue that the appearance of Phaethon, although not completely explicable, probably related indirectly to the myth of Hippocoon; Phaethon is a bastard who comes to disaster when he tries to take on his father's role. Ferrari's theory represents a real step forward but, as I shall discuss fully in this chapter, I believe there is much more to be said concerning the presence of Phaethon in this myth.

The final lines of the mythic section (22-35) are the most badly damaged and subsequently have been the basis of wide-ranging speculation. As I outlined in the previous chapter, theories include: a description of the giants' assault on heaven, which fits with the themes of hubris and usurpation that we find in the Dioscuri myth;[47] the death of Otus and Ephialtes, which tallies with prohibitions against taking divine brides through sexual violence;[48] and, the theory that conflict arises between the Dioscuri and the Aphareids over their divine brides the Leucippides. As I have

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[45] Ferrari, 2008, 54-55.
[46] Alcman, 1.16-17. Ferrari, 2008, 151-155.
[47] Diels, 1896, 346-47; Page, 1951, 43 (although with some reservations) and Ferrari, 2008, 28 (citing evidence from the Amyclae throne where scenes from the Gigantomachy and the battle with Hippocoontids appear near each other).
[48] Janni, 1965, 68-71 and Calame, 1977(2), 65-66.

previously alluded to, the final myth maintains thematic continuity with the previous characters, myths, and political messages.[49]

Nobody has yet to reconcile the different strands of the mythic section in a satisfactory manner. The relationship between these mythic strands has never been explored convincingly, but by examining them in their proper social and political context, I hope a clear picture will emerge. Using the social and political framework that I have established and considering the public nature of the performance, I shall now proceed to provide a coherent overview of the mythology that begins the *Louvre Partheneion.*

The Dioscuri, Hippocoontids and Heracles

As I outlined above, the first surviving lines of Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion* discuss a mythological conflict involving the Dioscuri, the Hippocoontids, and probably Heracles. With lines 1-15, we are surely right to accept Gloria Ferrari's proposal that one of the central themes of the poem relates to Hippocoon's ascension to the Spartan throne as a bastard. In a society when only members of the pure royal bloodline could become king, such an event would certainly have significant relevance. This immediately gives the poem a political aspect. However, one aspect Ferrari does not address in detail that I believe warrants further attention is the presence of the Dioscuri, a feature which is clearly accentuated in Alcman's version of the myth, but is absent from any other later version of Heracles' expulsion of the Hippocoontids from Sparta. I shall assess their significance in the Spartan tradition to explain why Alcman saw them as important, paying particular attention to their role in representing *eunomia* in archaic Sparta.

Firstly, explanation of Hippocoon's actions and their social resonance in archaic Sparta is necessary. Ferrari has noted that one of the key faults with Hippocoon's rise to power in Sparta is that he was not a legitimate successor to the throne.[50] Pausanias, along with Pseudo-Apollodorus

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[49] Gengler, 1995, 3-21; Robbins, 1994, 7-17; and Too 1997, 226. Robbins imagines that it is the Hippocoontids and the Dioscuri who are battling over the Leucippides.
[50] Ferrari, 2008, 20-29.

and scholiasts on the *Iliad* and Euripides *Orestes* all agree that Hippocoon may have been a bastard, with the result that Tyndareus would have had the legitimate right to the Spartan crown.[51] In Sparta, the king was the only one capable of passing on the royal bloodline of Heracles, and Plato informs us that the king's wife was guarded by the ephors to ensure a legitimate heir came to power. As we have seen, Tyrtaeus asserts that Zeus made a gift of Sparta to Heracles, so that his family would always rule there.[52] Therefore, Hippocoon's accession to the throne as a bastard would have been viewed as a serious political issue, as demonstrated by the ejection of Spartan kings Demaratus and Leotychides, who were removed on the pretence of being bastards.[53] It is an act that causes strife and directly precedes the coming of the Heraclids. The strife that Hippocoon causes contrasts strongly with the prosperity that the Heraclids are said to bring.

In the context of female ritual performance, these elements of the poem may have had a very particular significance for *parthenoi*. It has been often suggested that the name Agido may be related to the Spartan Agiad ruling house.[54] Fragment 5 also suggests that members of the Spartan royal families may have participated in Alcman's chorus. The unidentified second-century AD commentator writing on fragment 5 identifies Timasimbrota, a girl who featured in the song, as a member of the Agiad ruling family.[55] Certainly, the valuable adornments of the *parthenoi* in the *Louvre Partheneion* would appear to mark them out as high status.[56] We have seen in the previous section that Alcman's focus on their hair and material value marks them out as women who are approaching marriage. As we have seen, evidence of endogamous marriages between the Spartan royal families is also common.[57] As either royal or high status *parthenoi,* there is a reasonable possibility that the highest status members of the chorus may actually find themselves involved in royal marriages. Their performative act of recalling the destruction caused by a bastard ascending to the throne may therefore take on additional meaning as they dance. The ejection of Spartan kings such as Demaratus and Leotychides proves that this was a significant political issue and performing the myth of Hippocoon may have served to illustrate this to the community.

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[51] Pausanias, 3.1.1; 3.1.4; 4.2.4; Scholiast A, Homer, *Iliad,* 2.581; and Scholiast, Euripides, *Orestes,* 457.
[52] Tyrtaeus, 2.9-15.
[53] Herodotus, 6.63-70 and Xenophon, *Hellenica,* 3.3.2.
[54] Calame, 1977(2), 140-142; Nagy, 1990, 347-348; and Hinge, 2006, 290-292.
[55] Alcman, 5,col ii.
[56] Alcman, 1.64-73.
[57] Herodotus, 5.39; 6.71; and 7.205.1.

Certainly, Hippocoon's action caused chaos and ultimately brought destruction to his family. The poem's probable re-performance suggests that the myth had an enduring significance to Spartan society.[58] Traditionally, as Tyrtaeus illustrates, it is the arrival of the Heraclids that puts an end to strife is at the root of establishing the successful Spartan kingship.[59] The turbulence of archaic Spartan society gave performance that emphasised the coming of order an added significance.

I would suggest that this is one of the reasons why the Dioscuri became prominent in Alcman's poetry. Sanders and Kennell have demonstrated at length that the Dioscuri were particularly important within archaic Sparta.[60] Sanders attributes the high number of archaic Dioscuri reliefs that originate in Laconia to their embodiment of *philadelphia* and military valour which were important qualities in archaic Sparta.[61] Alcman mentions the Dioscuri on a number of occasions outside of the *Louvre Partheneion*. Fragment 2 appears to be the remains of a hymn to the Dioscuri and fragment 7 suggests that the pair received worship under the ground at Therapne.[62] Yet his inclusion of the Dioscuri as combatants against the Hippocoontids is interesting precisely because they appear in no other account of the myth. Ferrari explains their presence by saying that we should expect to find Spartan heroes accompanying Heracles in the local Spartan tradition.[63] Possibly, Alcman also highlighted the sexual element of the myth whereby the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontids compete for women.[64] Either way, Alcman has the Dioscuri play a significant part in killing some of the major instigators of strife in Spartan tradition. The significance of the Dioscuri in Alcman's version of the myth should not be overlooked.

In order to understand the significance of the Dioscuri in Alcman's poetry, it is first necessary to gain a better understanding of the mythic character in archaic Sparta. Indicators of this character can be seen from the reasonably common archaic Spartan hero-reliefs that depict the pair. The tradition whereby the Dioscuri shared immortality with each other appears to have been well

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[58] Carey, 2011, 437-60.
[59] Tyrtaeus, 2.9-15.
[60] Kennell, 1995, 138-142 and Sanders, 1992, 205-210. Malkin, 1994, 22-26, looks at their importance in bringing order to Sparta.
[61] Sanders, 1992, 205-210. Sanders refers to several Dioscuri reliefs found in the Sparta Museum. SM 5380; SM 588; SM 613; SM 575; and SM 477.
[62] Alcman, 7.
[63] Ferrari, 2008, 24.
[64] Euphorion, *Thrakis,* Frg 29, Powell, 1925. See also Scholiast to Clement of Alexandria, *Protr,* 36.

attested in archaic Sparta.[65] Laconian votive offerings, dated to the sixth-century, show the pair naked and facing each other.[66] Two of these votives, which display the pair's faces, show one to be bearded whilst one retains his youthful hairless cheeks. This may relate to a tradition that saw Castor as the son of Tyndareus and Polydeuces as the son of Zeus. When Castor was killed, his brother asked Zeus if he could share his immortality with him. Zeus acquiesced allowing them to spend one day living under the earth at Therapne and the next in the heavens. The votives may display one figure without a beard to suggest immortality, whilst the bearded figure is mortal, in an effort to distinguish between them.

The Dioscuri are represented as sharing their power. Indeed, they come to stand as a symbol of the kings. In this sense, the Dioscuri epitomise important Spartan qualities associated with kingship. As Herodotus tells us, before the dispute between Cleomenes and Demaratus that resulted in only one king leading the Spartans on campaign, images of the Dioscuri would always accompany the kings when they went out to battle.[67] After the dispute, only one of the Dioscuri would accompany the king. This example also illustrates that the nature of the dual kingship itself often saw strife erupt between the kings, a fact that is well illustrated by the myth that explains the origins of the system. Herodotus tells the Spartan tale of the successors to Aristodemus, when the practice of dual kingship was first adopted. Unable to choose between her two sons as heir, his wife Argeia, claims she cannot remember which of her two sons, Eurysthenes and Procles, was born first. Once again, the Delphic oracle is questioned and the system of dual kingship is put forward with Eurysthenes given special honours as the first-born. He is the starting point for the Agiad dynasty whilst Procles begins the Eurypontid. Herodotus also notes the bitter rivalry that this caused between the two brothers, creating the potential for civic discord, a fact exemplified by traditional rivalry that existed between the Agiads and the Eurypontids.[68]

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[65] The nature of the Dioscuri's divinity has been a matter of some confusion. The *Odyssey* names them as the sons of Leda and Tyndareus, but goes on to say that they were honoured by Zeus to live one day and be dead the next (Homer, *Odyssey,* 11.298-304). The *Iliad,* which states they were Leda's sons but makes no mention of their father, has them covered by the earth in Sparta suggesting a mortal death (Homer, *Iliad,* 3.237-244). The term 'Dioscuri' itself is not used in either the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad.* In ps-Hesiod's *Ehoiai* and the *Homeric Hymns* 17 and 33 Castor and Polydeuces are explicitly described as the sons of Zeus and Leda, although Tyndareus is recognised as their stepfather (Hesiod, 24, MW and *Homeric Hymns,* 17 and 33).

[66] Pipili, 1987, 54-58.
[67] Herodotus, 7.75.2.
[68] Herodotus, 6.52-53.

However, the fact that the Dioscuri used to accompany the kings on campaign provides a very effective indication of their role as paradigms for the Spartan kings, symbolising the idealised state of shared rule. The brothers are the perfect pair of heroes to illustrate shared rule, as their success is a product of their unity. It is Polydeuces' decision to share his divinity with his brother that leads to the pair becoming the revered deities worshipped across the Peloponnese. They achieve divine recognition and honour through their acceptance of shared power. For a Spartan audience no two deities could have been more appropriate to serve as an example of how the Spartan political system operated. In light of this evidence, I argue that Alcman puts emphasis on their part in the defeat of the Hippocoontids because they help to represent the transition from the disorder created by Hippocoon, to the preferential state of dual kingship that eventually came into being.

This link is made clearer owing to Alcman's emphasis on the importance of shared leadership and equality in the second half of the poem. Robert Fowler has demonstrated that the equality of Hagesichora and Agido is consistently highlighted:

Throughout the poem the girls are very careful to preserve the equality of the two leaders, giving brief attention to one when the other has the limelight (44, 57f), and mentioning the two together at 77ff.[69]

From line 39 onwards when the poem shifts to describing itself, its ritual and its leaders, there is a constant shifting of attention between Hagesichora and Agido. They stand together to commend the festival in which the chorus participate.[70] Clearly, the cooperation of both leaders, coupled with the will of the gods is central to ensuring the success of the ritual:

οὐ γὰρ ἁ κ[α]λλίσφυρος

Ἀγησιχ[ό]ρ[α] πάρ' αὐτεῖ,

Ἀγιδοῖ .... αρμένει

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[69] Fowler, 1987, 71. See also, Fowler, 1995, 1-4.
[70] Alcman, 1.77-81.

152

θωστήρ[ιά τ'] ἅμ' ἐπαινεῖ.

ἀλλὰ τᾶν [..]... σιοὶ

δέξασθε· [σι]ῶν γὰρ ἄνα

καὶ τέλος·

For is not fair-ankled Hagesichora present here? Does she not remain (near) Agido and commend our festival; Come, you gods, accept their (prayers); to the gods belong fulfilment and accomplishment.[71]

Just as the Dioscuri become deified heroes owing to their ability to share their power, so too is the equality of Hagesichora and Agido's relationship important in the *Louvre Partheneion.* The poem features the heroic symbols of the Spartan kings, the Dioscuri, but also features the Leucippides, embodied by Hagesichora and Agido, working together. There is an emphasis of the power of pairs, the success that comes from shared rule, and the *eunomia* that comes from the chorus' obedience to their leaders. In this sense, Alcman's chorus emphasise and recreate the power of joint rule through a choral performance that parallels their ruling system. Shared rule and obedience to the gods are directly linked to the success of the ritual, and by extension, the *eunomia* of the *polis.*

It is perhaps significant that after his victory over the Hippocoontids Heracles sets up a shrine to Athena Axiopoinos – Athena of 'just requital.'[72] Heracles' act is seen as justified and restores balance within Sparta. Whilst the Dioscuri epitomise the symbiotic relationship that should exist between a pair of Spartan kings, the heroic violence of the story provides a demonstration of the perils of political discord. The need for social conformity is thereby transmitted to both the singing girls and the audience. In a poem that discusses the expulsion of strife and the coming of order to Sparta, it is only right that the Dioscuri should be emphasised.

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[71] Alcman, 1.78-84.
[72] Pausanias, 3.15.6. Kahn, 1960, 178-179: We often see balance as being key to cosmic order in the works of Pre-Socratic philosophers such as Anaximander. Herodotus, 1.2.1 begins his history with one such incident.

Phaethon

Another character whose presence we must acknowledge following Ferrari's excellent work is Phaethon, the youthful son of Helius. As Pheathon is nearing adulthood he famously rejects marriage with a deity and attempts to fly his father's chariot across the sky, before losing control and veering too close to the earth. Zeus subsequently kills him with a thunderbolt to avoid any further damage. Ferrari is probably correct to suggest that the myth of Phaethon is 'indirectly relevant' to that of Hippocoon.[73] Both Hippocoon and Phaethon are illegitimate sons and as a result are unable to perform successfully their father's function. In both cases, their hubris causes their downfall. Yet Phaethon's relevance to the *Louvre Partheneion* has only been partially understood, and here I shall argue that the myth is primarily important in the context of the marriage that Phaethon rejects. Following directly on from a myth that focuses on themes central to notions of civic disorder and *eunomia,* we find gnomic advice that relates directly to marriage and Phaethon's hubristic attempt to rise to a position beyond him.

However, the full implications of the marital aspect of the Phaethon myth have not been discussed. There are compelling reasons for paying closer attention to Phaethon's aborted marriage. In the context of competition for *parthenoi* that we have seen existed in archaic Sparta, and considering that Alcman is so keen to mark his chorus of *parthenoi* as approaching the time for marriage the gnomic advice would certainly have been pointed. In addition to the associations to Hippocoon, the following myth concerning the battle for the Leucippides is also directly relevant to marriage. Coming at such a crucial point between these related mythic strands makes the significance of these lines all the greater, and it is worth exploring why aspects of Phaethon's failed marriage were of such interest in archaic Sparta.

Unfortunately, many important details of Phaethon's life and unfortunate marriage are unclear or contradictory in our surviving sources. In Hesiod's *Theogony* Phaethon appears as a son of Eos and Cephalus who is snatched away by Aphrodite.[74] However, in Euripides' *Phaethon* a more

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[73] Ferrari, 2008, 65.

[74] Hesiod, *Theogony,* 986-91. That Hesiod also related a version of Phaethon's ill-fated chariot ride is also suggested by a fragment of the *Catalogue of Women* which appears to refer to the lament of the Heliads over

complex picture of Phaethon's relationship with Aphrodite emerges. Here he is the son of Clymene, an Oceanid nymph, and Helius, although Phaethon believes his father to be Merops, ruler of Aethiopia. In this account, it appears that Phaethon's marriage to a goddess is drawing near and lines 227-244 indicate that the identity of his bride is Aphrodite:

Ὑμὴν Ὑμήν.

τὰν Διὸς οὐρανίαν ἀείδομεν,

τὰν ἐρώτων πότνιαν, τὰν παρθένοις

γαμήλιον Ἀφροδίταν.

πότνια, σοὶ τάδ᾽ ἐγὼ νυμφεῖ᾽ ἀείδω,

Κύπρι θεῶν καλλίστα,

τῶι τε νεόζυγι σῶι

πώλωι τὸν ἐν αἰθέρι κρύπτεις,

σῶν γάμων γένναν·

ἇ τὸν μέγαν

τᾶσδε πόλεως βασιλῆ νυμφεύεαι

ἀστερωποῖσιν δόμοισι χρυσέοις

ἀρχὸν φίλον Ἀφροδίτα·

ὦ μάκαρ, ὦ βασιλεὺς μείζων ἔτ᾽ ὄλβον,

ὃς θεὰν κηδεύσεις

καὶ μόνος ἀθανάτων

Phaethon's body (Frg 150, MW). Diggle, 1970, 16-27, suggests that the evidence for Hesiod should be treated with scepticism.

γαμβϱὸς δι᾿ ἀπείϱονα γαῖαν

θνατὸς ὑμνήσῃ.

Hymen, Hymen! We sing Zeus' daughter celestial, mistress of loves, goddess of marriage for *parthenoi,* Aphrodite! Mistress, to you I sing this marriage song, Cypris most beautiful of goddesses, and to your newly-wed boy, whom you keep hidden in the heaven, offspring of your marriage, you who will betroth the great king of this city, a ruler dear to the starry golden palace, Aphrodite. Oh blessed man, greater happiness than a king, who will ally yourself in marriage with a goddess, and will be praised in song throughout the boundless earth as mortals only connections with immortals in marriage.[75]

Debate over the identity of the goddess Phaethon is to marry is ongoing. Wilamowitz, Webster, and Ferrari all maintain that he will marry Aphrodite, whereas Diggle, following a tentative suggestion by Weil, suggests one of the Heliads.[76] That Aphrodite should marry a mortal does seem extreme – very few instances of marriage between mortals and deities exist[77] - but certainly arises as a possibility for the marriage song quoted above. The answer might lie in Reckford's sensible suggestion that the chorus' talk of marriage to Aphrodite is symbolic.[78] As Euripides' chorus sing in lines 229-230, it is Aphrodite who 'brings marriages to *parthenoi.'* Aphrodite, as goddess of love and sexuality, is responsible for all unions and is vital in bringing all marriages together. Sex outside of marriage can be spoken of as 'the unholy marriages of lawless Aphrodite,' whilst Aphrodite is presented as the active agent in initiating the marriages of Iole and Semele in Euripides' *Hippolytus.*[79] Certainly, the influence of Aphrodite is vital in Phaethon's failed nuptials, either as bride, or as the deity of sexuality who presides over marriage.

In this context, Phaethon's rejection of marriage and his decision to join his father, before attempting to fly the chariot of the sun, is even more interesting. Why does he choose to reject a marriage to a deity, possibly Aphrodite, which would presumably bring him wealth and influence? As

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[75] Euripides, *Phaethon,* 227-244. Collard and Cropp, 2008, 354-357.
[76] For Aphrodite: Wilamowitz, 1883, 411-15, Webster, 1970, Ferrari, 2008, 61-63. For a Heliad: Diggle, 1970, 158-160. See also, Weil, 1889, 322-8.
[77] Ferrari, 2008, 61, cites two examples in footnote 114.
[78] Reckford, 1972, 413.
[79] Euripides, *Helen,* 190; *Ion,* 1092-93; *Hippolytus,* 545-54 and 561. See also Ferrari, 2008, 62.

scholars have noted, the story of Phaethon told by Euripides also bears comparison with *Hippolytus.*[80] Both Hippolytus and Phaethon reject Aphrodite and die in horrific chariot crashes. Neither wishes to enter into marriage, and their rejection of Aphrodite leads to their demise, in the case of Hippolytus, with the deity as active agent.[81] Their rejection of marriage has disastrous consequences, both for themselves and for their communities. In the case of Phaethon, his resulting attempts to fly his father's chariot even threaten the path of the sun and hence the stability of the cosmos. Phaethon's actions therefore have three major problems:

> 1. As suggested by Ferrari, Phaethon is a bastard and is therefore not suited to inherit his father's role.[82]
>
> 2. He rejects marriage and Aphrodite.
>
> 3. He acts hubristically in attempting to fly to the sky and take on the role of divinity.

I suggest that these flaws all have particular significance to Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion.* As numerous scholars have commented, the warnings about flying to the sky work well as a warning about hubris. Both Hippocoon, in attempting to usurp his brother's throne, or his sons, if they competed with the divine Dioscuri his brides, could be said to have acted hubristically. In the context of Phaethon, the statement gains particular weight as his actions endanger the cosmic order, just as the actions of the Hippocoontids temporarily destroy order at Sparta.

In the context of archaic Spartan order, Phaethon's rejection of marriage and was of specific importance. As we have seen, competition and conflict over brides was a major threat to *eunomia*. Equally, Hippocoon's birth outside of marriage is the major catalyst for strife. The common mythical stories, which prioritise conflict over women, suggest a real social concern at Sparta with stable marriage, protecting the line of Heracles, homogamy, and the threat of conflict over *parthenoi.* Phaethon's failure to marry Aphrodite either literally or symbolically is a significant element in his downfall. Subsequently, Alcman's advice that no man should 'flee from marrying Aphrodite' is an

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[80] Reckford, 1972, 413-421, and Ferrari, 2008, 64-65.
[81] Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 1-57 sees Aphrodite introduce her reasoning.
[82] Ferrari, 2008, 65.

attempt to promote stable marriage and hence *eunomia*. As I suggested earlier, the words seem to be directed at men in the audience. By fleeing stable marriage, acting hubristically or attempting to abduct other women, Spartan men could risk the stability of their state. As Reckford suggests for Euripides' *Phaethon,* Alcman's lines may or may not refer to a literal marriage to Aphrodite. Alcman's advice pertains to marriage and sexuality generally – the message is that Spartans should embrace the institution of marriage, entering into the realm of Aphrodite.

The conflicts of the myths that precede and follow Alcman's gnomic advice are both, at least in some part, concerned with marriage and hubris. By having Alcman's chorus of marriageable *parthenoi* warn of the perils of fleeing marriage and acting with hubris, the poet is able to encourage good order. The fact that Hagesichora and Agido represent the deified *Leucippides* over whom the latter conflict erupts, simply adds force to the words that they sing. In the context of archaic Sparta, Alcman's gnomic advice is of real importance in fostering *eunomia.*

The Myth of the Leucippides

As we have seen, the Leucippides were probably embodied by Hagesichora and Agido and their abduction formed part of the mythic narrative in the early stages of the *Louvre Partheneion.* The Leucippides were important enough to be perpetuated in ritual through the generations and this section will examine what aspects of their myth made them so significant to Spartan society.

Certainly, the myth presents a dramatic episode in Spartan mythic tradition. As we have seen, the conflict results in the deaths of the Aphareids and Castor. However, Zeus gives Polydeuces the chance to share his life and divinity with his brother. Pindar reports that while Castor lies dying, Zeus offers Polydeuces the following choice:

ἀλλ' ἄγε τῶνδέ τοι ἔμπαν αἵρεσιν

παρδίδωμ'· εἰ μὲν θάνατόν τε φυγὼν καὶ

158

γῆρας ἀπεχθόμενον

αὐτὸς Οὔλυμπον θέλεις <ναίειν ἐμοὶ>

 σύν τ' Ἀθαναίᾳ κελαινεγχεῖ τ' Ἄρει,

ἔστι σοι τούτων λάχος· εἰ δὲ κασιγνήτου πέρι

μάρνασαι, πάντων δὲ νοεῖς ἀποδάσσασθαι ἴσον,

ἥμισυ μέν κε πνέοις γαίας ὑπένερθεν ἐών,

ἥμισυ δ' οὐρανοῦ ἐν χρυσέοις δόμοισιν.

But come, I nonetheless grant you this choice: if you prefer to escape death and hateful old age, and come by yourself to live on Olympus with me and with Athena and Ares of the darkened spear, that destiny is yours. But if you strive on behalf of your brother, and intend to share everything equally with him, then you may live half the time beneath the earth and half in the golden homes of heaven.[83]

Pindar has previously placed the Dioscuri's home at Therapne, the same location in which Alcman places them in fragments 2 and 7.[84] The myth of the battle between the Dioscuri and the Aphareids therefore explains the origins of the Dioscuri's shared power. Rather than choose divinity for himself alone, Polydeuces chooses to share his divinity with Castor, and adopts life underground at Therapne. The myth serves to explain the origins of the pair who become the symbol for idealised Spartan joint rule. With the full backing of Zeus, Castor and Polydeuces share their power. The presence of this myth emphasises the importance of the Dioscuri's shared rule, particularly coming directly after their participation in the defeat of Hippocoon which helped establish order at Sparta.

Alcman's positioning of the myth of the Leucippides thereby both fits with the character of the mythic narrative which has gone before it, and also provides a fitting conclusion to the mythic section. The myth of Heracles and the Hippocoontids explains how the line of Heracles came to

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[83] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.84-88. Race, 1997(b), 120-121.
[84] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.56; Alcman, 2 and 7. See also Scholiast, Euripides, *Trojan Women,* 210.

Sparta, having previously emphasised the strife that comes from Hippocoon attempting to usurp the Spartan throne. Following the gnomic advice relating to Phaethon, itself relevant to both myths, we then find a myth that also features hubris, the Dioscuri, and conflict over women, but adds progression by relating an incident that results in the joint divinity of the Dioscuri. The result is that the mythic section of the *Louvre Partheneion* provides further important messages about the Spartan kingship. The opening section asserts the importance of line of descent, whilst the episode that leads to the Dioscuri's joint divinity further implies the benefits associated with shared rule.

In addition to illustrating the importance of the Dioscuri, the myth also bears directly on the themes of abduction and conflict over women. Interpretation of the myth is made doubly difficult because narratives surrounding the Aphareids and Leucippides are confused. The motivation behind the conflicts even varies with some focusing on cattle theft between the pairs of brothers and others focusing on a struggle over the Leucippides.[85] In addition, we find the Dioscuri portrayed in an uncharacteristically negative light. In some versions, they kidnap the legitimate brides of the Messenians or initiate the cattle-rustling feud with the Aphareids. They are cast as the aggressors. Few elements are consistent. In all cases both Castor and the Aphareids are killed before Zeus acquiesces to Polydeuces request to allow the Dioscuri to spend alternate days under the earth at Therapne.[86]

In the light of the social and political atmosphere of archaic Sparta, the abduction of the Leucippides certainly has particular resonance. However, the Messenian derivation of Aphareus and Leucippus may have given the poem additional political motivation. As we have seen, Tyrtaeus' poetry clearly indicates that the Spartans were engaged in some sort of conflict with the Messenians, although specific details are elusive.[87] The Dioscuri's marriage to two Messenian princesses, coupled with their defeat of two Messenian heroes to do so, may provide Sparta with a mythic link to domination over Messenia. By defeating Messenian heroes and marrying Messenian heroines who gain cult status within Sparta, the Dioscuri help to explain Sparta's position of power over their rivals. In this manner, the myths of the Dioscuri help to assert Sparta's hegemony over the

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[85] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.49-91 focuses on a dispute over cattle-rustling.
[86] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.49-91.
[87] Tyrtaeus, 5.1-2.

region.[88] The fact that Hagesichora and Agido embody and re-perform the Leucippides serves as a consistent reminder of the mythic link that exists between Sparta and Messenia, with the Messenian heroines now thoroughly absorbed into Spartan culture.

In this regard, Pindar's emphasis that Polydeuces received the support of Zeus in his endeavours may also be significant.[89] Zeus' active role in killing off the Aphareids serves as a divine sanction of the victory of the Dioscuri and hence of Sparta's domination of Messenia. Public performance of such a myth in Alcman's poetry could have helped assert Sparta's dominant position within the Peloponnese. Here the traditional abduction myth is not punished because Polydeuces and Castor have the divine backing of Zeus. Just as Tyrtaeus attributes the right of the Heraclids to rule Sparta to Zeus, the Dioscuri's victory over the Aphareids is also divinely sanctioned. It legitimises their right to marry the Leucippides, and in so doing, it legitimises Sparta's right to Messenia. The abduction of the Leucippides, although resulting in a damaging conflict, is also an important episode in explaining the nature of the Dioscuri and asserting Spartan rule over Messenia.

There is further reason to cast the Aphareids as hubristic rivals to the Dioscuri. Not only are they in competition with traditional Spartan heroes for deified brides, but Idas is also known to have challenged Apollo for his bride, Marpessa. I have already argued that the *Louvre Partheneion* was probably performed at a major Spartan civic festival to Apollo, probably the Carneia. If this is the case, then there is even more reason for the Aphareids to be cast in a negative light. Homer and Simonides tell us that Apollo chose to take Marpessa, intended wife of Idas, but that Idas pursued him and won her back with the assistance of Zeus.[90] Simonides relates that Zeus gave Marpessa the choice between Apollo and Idas, with Marpessa, fearing being discarded when she became old, choosing Idas. Apollo's reaction to this slight is not given, although when another of his mortal lovers, Coronis, takes a mortal man in addition to him, Artemis is swiftly dispatched to kill her.[91] We may safely assume that Apollo held a grudge. If the *Louvre Partheneion* was performed at one of the major civic festivals to Apollo, then Alcman's references to vengeance of the gods and not

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[88] Kunstler, 1983, 297-301, claims that along matrilineal lines the Aphareids had a better claim to the Spartan throne than the Dioscuri. This is what causes the Dioscuri to murder the potential rivals. I remain sceptical as to the value of this interpretation.

[89] Pindar, *Nemean* 10.71-72. Here Zeus kills Idas with a thunderbolt.

[90] Homer, *Iliad,* 9.555-564 and Simonides 563.

[91] Pindar, *Pythian* 3.8-37.

attempting to fly to the skies, would suit a narrative in which a challenger to Apollo was killed in battle with the Dioscuri.

The myth of the Leucippides therefore serves an important political purpose in creating a link between the Spartans and Messenia, whilst simultaneously highlighting the death and destruction that can arise from conflict over women. In addition, as brides of the Dioscuri, the ultimate Spartan heroes, the Leucippides also serve as paradigms of ideal young Spartan women. As Kennell and Sanders have shown, the Dioscuri were the epitome of everything that a young Spartan male would have aspired to be.[92] Pindar describes them as 'stewards of spacious Sparta,' and an array of sources, both archaic and classical, extol the pair's virtues.[93]

However, in spite of highlighting an important incident in Spartan tradition, the myth of the Leucippides also clearly demonstrates the conflict that can arise over women. Through a contest over brides, great heroes like the Aphareids and Castor are killed, and although the myth eventually emphasises the equality between the Dioscuri, it is clearly tinged with tragedy as illustrated by Polydeuces' desperate grief at his brother's death.[94] Despite Zeus' willingness to allow Castor a share of life, the myth still illustrates the dangers inherent in competing over brides. That the Aphareids, as mortal heroes, even attempted to compete with the Dioscuri may have been a hubristic sin in Spartan eyes, referring back to the gnomic advice that appeared in lines 16-17 of the poem.

We therefore have a final myth that explains how the Dioscuri came to marry the Leucippides, whilst equally suggesting the dangerous violence that could arise from either a hubristic attempt at marriage or conflict over women.

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[92] Sanders, 1992, 205-210 and Kennell, 1995, 138-142. A line from, Kennell, page 141 reads: 'The Dioscuri were not just vaguely related to the rites of initiation which a young Spartan went through, but were the very focus of his aspirations.'
[93] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.51-52; Alcman, 2; *Homeric Hymn to the Dioscuri*; and Xenophon, *On Hunting,* 3.1, tells us that the Castorian hunting hound received its name from Castor. Note also Vidal-Naquet, 1981, on the importance of hunting for young initiates.
[94] Pindar, *Nemean,* 10.75-79.

In Summary – The Myths of the Louvre Partheneion

I hope to have shown that traces of three significant myths can be seen in the badly damaged fragments that begin Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion:* Those of the death of the Hippocoontids, Phaethon's refusal of marriage, and the Dioscuri's conflict for the Leucippides. All of these myths are thematically related and connected by the gnomic advice that refers to Phaethon's demise. The Dioscuri are prioritised as central figures and marital themes concerning *eunomia* are highlighted, often with particular regard to young women and marriage. In summary, the myths of the *Louvre Partheneion* contain the following vital elements:

1. The defeat of the Hippocoontids (1-15): An event that ends strife and brings order to Sparta. Hippocoon's birth outside of marriage makes him illegitimate for the Spartan throne. The defeat of his family by Heracles and the Dioscuri is the start of a process that brings stability to Sparta. Alcman includes the Dioscuri in this expedition specifically because they epitomise the importance of joint rule.
2. Gnomic Advice Concerning Phaethon (16-21): The myth of Phaethon warns against hubristic action that can cause disorder and resistance to marriage. It also ties in with the theme of bastardry and helps to encourage marriage as a positive socialising force.
3. Conflict over the Leucippides (22-35): Emphasises the perils of violence over women. The Aphareids are punished for their hubristic action in trying to acquire divine brides. The Dioscuri's defeat of Aphareids and their marriage to the Leucippides asserts Sparta's dominance over Messenia.

I hope to have devised a model that offers some continuity over the mythological section of the poem. The actions of the Hippocoontids, the Aphareids, and Phaethon all display how hubristic acts can damage social order. The myths that feature the Dioscuri, come either side of gnomic advice, and provide aetiological myths for the creation of social order at Sparta. Finally, all three myths demonstrate dangers associated with marriage that our historical texts show were a major concern in early Sparta. Threatening the royal line, refusal to accept marriage, and conflict over women are all addressed in Alcman's poem.

4.3 Alcman's Fragment 5 – The Importance of Thetis in Sparta

In the following section, I shall show that the themes that we have seen to be prevalent in the *Louvre Partheneion* are also visible in another fragment of Alcman's poetry. As we shall see, fragment 5 reflected the dangers of conflict over women, emphasised the importance of civic order, and commented on the important position of *parthenoi* in society. We shall see that fragment 5 focused on the capture of Thetis by Peleus.[95] The marriage of Thetis to Peleus was divinely sanctioned by Zeus and was crucial to the maintenance of cosmic order. Thetis' ability to produce a child greater than its father means that she has the potential to cause hugely disruptive political strife. I argue that her divinely ordained marriage is thus a fantastic example of the importance of marriage, *eunomia,* and the power of female sexuality, all of which made this myth the subject of Alcman's fragment 5.

In order to explore the social and political implications of fragment 5, it is first necessary to spend some time establishing what can be taken from the fragmentary text and surviving commentary. With the exception of the *Louvre Partheneion*, none of Alcman's poetry has attracted as much controversy as fragment 5, commonly known as the 'cosmogonic fragment.' The largest surviving passage of the commentator's work runs as follows:

> πόρον ἀπὸ τῆς πορί[μο]υ [πάντων ἀπχῆς]. ὡς γὰρ ἤρξατο ἡ ὕλη
> κατασκευα[σθῆναι], ἐγένετο πόρος τις οἰονεὶ ἀρχή. π[οιεῖ] οὖν ὁ Ἀλκμὰν τὴν ὕλην
> πάν[των τετα]ραγμένην καὶ ἀπόητον. εἶτα [γενέ]σθαι τινά φησιν τὸν
> κατασκευά[ζοντα] πάντα, εἶτα γενέσθαι [πό]ρον, τοῦ [δὲ πό]ρου παρελθόντος
> ἐπακολουθῆ[σαι] τέκμωρ. καὶ ἔστιν ὁ μὲν πόρος οἷον ἀρχή, τὸ δὲ τέκμωρ οἰονεὶ
> τέλος. τῆς Θέτιδος γενομένης ἀρχὴ καὶ τέ[λ]ο[ς ἅμ]α πάντων ἐγένε[τ]ο, καὶ τὰ μὲν
> πάντα [ὁμο]ίαν ἔχει τὴν φύσιν τῆι τοῦ χαλκοῦ ὕληι, ἡ δὲ Θέτις τ[ῆι] τοῦ τεχνίτου, ὁ
> δὲ πόρος καὶ τὸ τέκμωρ τῆι ἀρχῆι καὶ τῶι τέλει.

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[95] Most, 1987, 1-19.

(called him) Poros since (the beginning 'provided' all things). For when the matter began to be set in order, a certain Poros came into being as a beginning. So Alcman (represents) the matter of all things as confused and unformed. Then he says that one came into being who set all things in order, then that Poros came into being, and that when Poros had passed by Tekmor followed. And Poros is as a beginning, Tekmor like an end. When Thetis had come into being, a beginning and an end to all things came into being, and all things have their nature resembling the matter of bronze, while Thetis has hers resembling that of a craftsman, Poros and Tekmor resembling the beginning and the end.[96]

Previously, the commentator's claim that 'in this song Alcman is cosmogonist' has led many modern scholars to follow him and assign to Alcman an early philosophical attempt to explain the origins of the universe. Chief amongst these scholars is Martin West.[97] West explains that originally Alcman sees the world as a 'confused, unformed mass.'[98] From this point 'Poros and Tekmor' mentioned at the start of column three represent the path to order and a boundary mark respectively.[99] West draws attention to the fact that water cosmogonies are common all over the world and uses this as the primary reason why Thetis is portrayed as the deity who is capable of bringing everything into order.[100]

In 1987, Glenn Most challenged the notion that the fragment was composed primarily as a cosmogony.[101] He noted three main reasons why the commentator's claim that fragment 5 was a cosmogony should be surprising:

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[96] Alcman, 5.iii. Campbell, 1988, 392-393.

[97] Cited here as a reasonably representative sample. See the following for other interpretations of this poem as cosmogony: Penwill, 1974, 13-39; Riciardelli Apicella, 1979, 7-27; and Hirokawa, 1972, 40-48. In addition, I have found the works of Guthire, 1965 and Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, 1983, useful for understanding the context of West's arguments.

[98] West, 1967, 2. Calame, 1983, 437-454, looks at similarities between Alcman's 'cosmogony' and those of Anaximander and Thales.

[99] Alcman, 5.iii.1. West, 1967, 2.

[100] West, 1967, 3-6. West also states that an interest in how the world came into existence was conspicuous in the works of Hesiod, Epimenides and Xenophanes. He sees Alcman's poem as a 'semi philosophical cosmogony' (West, 1963, 154) and states the similarities which exist with a system proposed by Pythagoras (West, 1967, 7). Calame, 1983, 445-446, discusses the possibility that instead of Thetis we may read 'Thesis' i.e creation.

[101] Most, 1987, 1-19.

1. Despite considerable interest in Alcman's poetry amongst ancient commentators, no other source ever makes mention of a cosmogonic fragment.

2. At the time of Alcman's composition, no Greeks concerned with cosmogonic speculation featured an individual 'creator' like Thetis, but rather sought solutions in ideas of biological reproduction.

3. Every other surviving item of Alcman's corpus appears to make little reference to cosmogony. His poetry appears to be largely concerned with Spartan ritual.[102]

Most points out that interpretation of fragment 5 had clearly caused controversies in antiquity following the second-century AD commentator's claim that:

ἐ]κθησ[ό]μεθα δὲ [τὰ δ]οκοῦντα ἡ[μῖν μ]ετὰ τὰς τῶν λοιπῶ[ν πεί]ρας.

'we shall set out our opinions following the attempts of others.'[103]

Subsequently, Most argued convincingly that the poem was originally a *partheneion* beginning with an invocation to the Muses and featuring a myth that could be interpreted by the commentator as a cosmogony.[104] He goes on to suggest that the mythical material involved was the capture of Thetis by Peleus.[105]

Most's primary reasons are outlined here:

1: One of the key lines for understanding fragment 5 is translated thus by Campbell:

ἐν δ]ὲ ταύτηι τῆι ὠιδ[ῆι Ἀλ]κμὰν φυσ[ικός (ἐστι).

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[102] Most, 1987, 3-5 explores these three reasons in detail.
[103] Alcman, 5.ii.26-28. Campbell, 1988, 390-391.
[104] Most, 1987, 9. This interpretation receives the support of Robbins, 1997, 229.
[105] For stories of Thetis capture by Peleus see Hesiod, 210, MW; Pindar, *Nemean,* 3.35 and 4.62; Sophocles, frg 130 and 618; *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 701-707 and 1040-1058; and Herodotus, 7.191.2.

In this song Alcman is cosmogonist.[106]

However, as Most notes the word which Campbell supplements as φυσ[ικός need not refer to anything philosophical. Aristotle often uses the term to apply to Ionian pre-Socratic philosophers and most modern commentators have followed this interpretation.[107] However, we never find this term used of an archaic poet elsewhere. Rather, Most argues the term is frequently used in the context of archaic poetry when an allegorical interpretation of a myth follows:

> 'In this usage, the word is a *terminus technicus* of one kind of allegorical interpretation and means that while the surface level of an archaic poetic text is a mythical narrative, what the allegorist takes to be its real meaning is only to be found at a deeper, hidden level, in a concealed philosophical doctrine about some natural phenomenon.'[108]

2: Allegorical interpretations of other deities who can shape-shift, such as Heraclitus discussion of Proteus, have been treated as cosmogonies.[109] The re-ordering and transformation are compared to the ordering of the world.[110] In Heraclitus' discussion of Proteus, the passage that he looks at is not overtly cosmogonic – Heraclitus' interpretation makes it so. Most is able to show distinct similarities between Heraclitus' cosmogonic interpretation of the Proteus myth and the passage related by the commentator on Alcman.[111] The transformations involved in

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[106] Alcman, 5,ii.26. Campbell, 1988, 390-391.

[107] Most, 1987, 7-8.

[108] Most, 1987, 7. Pages 7-9 bring a considerable amount of supporting evidence to this case. Notably Alcman 57 is interpreted in this manner by Plutarch, *Moralia*, 659b.

[109] Most, 1987, 11-12. Heraclitus, *Quaest. Hom,* 65.

[110] Most, 1987, 12-16, offers a variety of items of speculation as to how the myth may have run together and offers some more interpretations that fit his theory. As Most, 1987, 17 acknowledges all of these claims are extremely tentative and without strong foundation so I choose to omit them here.

[111] Most, 1987, 11. To paraphrase the most significant arguments: Whilst in Alcman's text the beginning of things is confused and unformed before things are set in order, Heraclitus speaks of a formless universe with no distinguishing marks. When Alcman talks of organisation, the passage on which Heraclitus comments refers to 'the craftsman of all things and the generative principle of the cosmos.' I would also note similarities with Orphic hymns that feature Proteus. *Orophic Hymn – To Proteus,* 25; Proteus ability to change into all manner of things sees him attributed with showing 'the beginnings of all nature.' He is the 'first-born' and nature places everything in him. Athanassakis, 1977, viii, provides a discussion of the difficulties in dating the Orphic hymns. It is generally accepted that the hymns come from within the first four centuries of this millennium. A

the capture of Thetis by Peleus formed the basis for the commentator's cosmogonic interpretation.

3: The erotic violence of Thetis capture by Peleus would be an appropriate theme for a chorus of Alcman.[112] The marriage by capture also resonates with Herodotus' brief remarks on Demaratus' seizure of a bride and Plutarch's very late description of Spartan marriage by capture.[113]

Furthermore, on closer inspection, the poem has many features that we have seen are characteristic of Alcman's *partheneia.* The beginnings of fragment 5 column 2 compare the beauty of a female to gold. The commentator states that the meaning is:

οὐδὲ εἷς [σε μέμ]ψεται πλησίον χρυσοῦ στᾶσαν οὐ[δε]

ἐ[ξελ]έγξει σε χρυσός, ἀλλὰ διοίσεις αὐτόν.

Nor will anyone find fault with you if you stand near gold, nor will gold show you up, but you will surpass it.[114]

As we have seen earlier in this thesis, the comparison of females with exceptional beauty to gold and silver is something that we find in the *Louvre Partheneion*.[115] That the song was intended for a female chorus is made explicit by the commentator himself, who tells us that it was intended for the tribal chorus of Dyme.[116] The commentator also refers to a royal girl named Timasimbrota who featured in Alcman's lyrics. A daughter of Spartan royalty, descriptions of female beauty, and a

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date in the 2nd or 3rd centuries appears the most likely: 'Perhaps then, a date in the second part of the third century AD is as good a guess as any.' This would put the composition at roughly the same time as the commentary on Alcman.

[112] Most, 1987, 10. In the words of Robbins, 1997, 229: 'The point here was in all likelihood not the condemnation of erotic violence but the demonstration of the inevitability of marriage, in this case of a fated union.'

[113] Herodotus, 6.65.2 and Plutarch, *Lycurgus,* 15.3.1-7.

[114] Alcman, 5,ii. Campbell, 1988, 388-389.

[115] Alcman, 1.51-54.

[116] Alcman, 5.ii.17.

chorus from Dyme are all elements that we have seen were appropriate for the female chorus and which could probably mark fragment 5 as a *partheneion.*

Essentially, Alcman's poem, which included the myth of Thetis' capture by Peleus, has been manipulated by a commentator with allegorical and philosophical interests into a cosmogony. Most concludes, perfectly sensibly, that while we lose an early cosmogony we gain another of Alcman's *partheneia* with Thetis as a central character.[117] The story of Thetis' capture by Peleus contains strong emphasis on sexuality and the obtaining of a bride, both of which fit with the themes that we have seen in the *Louvre Partheneion*. Thetis certainly appears to fit the mould for one of Alcman's *partheneia.*

Most's aim, successfully achieved, is to prove that Alcman's fragment 5 was a *partheneion* not a cosmogony, but he does not go on to fully explore any potential social and political implications. I hope to show that the story of Thetis' marriage could have contained important political and social messages. In so doing, I hope to provide another reason why the fragment may have been interpreted as a cosmogony.

Naturally, the fragmentary nature of the poem makes this speculative, although evidence from Homer confirms the myth of Peleus and Thetis was archaic.[118] We also have reason to believe that Spartans would have had an interest in Thetis. She appears to have received particular reverence in Sparta, a fact indicated by Pausanias' claim that she received a substantial cult in the archaic period.[119] Pausanias informs us that during the second Messenian war the shrine was founded by Leandris, wife of King Anaxander. Nymphs are also a common theme for Alcman who mentions them in several of his poems.[120]

However, information from fragment 5 is sparse and we must consider further why our commentator mistook the poem for a cosmogony. I want to suggest that the answer lies in the

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[117] Most, 1987, 11-12.
[118] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.429-37.
[119] Pausanias, 3.14.4-5.
[120] Alcman, 1,4A, 5 and 63. For further discussion of the role of nymphs in Spartan marriage see Chapter 3.

ancient perception of the creative and unbounded potential of women. In Aristotle's *Generation of Animals,* we find that the female is both the space in which life can grow and the raw material for that generation. The man provides the life-giving semen that gives this raw material life and order.[121] Elsewhere, Plato suggests that creation is like a mother that can be shaped and moulded with a father's help.[122] This generative ability is reflected in the myth of Aphrodite's birth – Hesiod tells us that when Ouranus' genitals are thrown into the sea, Aphrodite is formed from the foam. The blood that lands on Gaia leads her to produce the Erinyes and the Giants.[123] Ouranus' blood is the catalyst, but Gaia is the raw material from which the creatures are produced. Anne Carson suggests that the female status of creative raw material can help to explain their transformative ability in early Greek myth.[124] Towards the head of any list of transformative deities stands Thetis – the nymph who constantly changes her shape as Peleus attempts to subdue her before marriage.

Thetis is the epitome of female creative potential. In various artistic depictions from as early as the seventh-century Peleus is shown wrestling fish, panthers, lions, and snakes as Thetis transforms into various creatures to escape his grasp.[125] It is only following her reluctant acceptance of marriage to Peleus that her creative potential becomes productive with the arrival of her great warrior son, Achilles. Her divinely sanctioned marriage allows her creative potential to produce an impressive son.

The capture of Thetis therefore marks a transition from uncontrolled creative potential to order through marriage. This interpretation can also explain the positioning of Poros and Tekmor in the text. Poros is generally considered a contriver or provider, sometimes also translated as 'resource.' Poros is the beginning that provides the raw material from which creation can occur. Yet the commentator says that Alcman represents things as 'confused and unformed' at the start of his passage. Eventually though, Poros comes into Tekmor. As West has said, Tekmor can be translated as a 'boundary marker.' Campbell suggests 'ordinance.'[126] Such boundary markers were of crucial importance for the maintenance of social order in archaic Greece. as we see in the *Iliad.* Men are

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[121] Aristotle, *Generation of Animals,* 716a6-7; 727b31-34; and 729b15-21.

[122] Plato, *Timaeus,* 50c-d.

[123] Hesiod, *Theogony,* 176-200. For a discussion of Aphrodite and transformation see Hansen, 2000, 1-19.

[124] Carson, 1990, 154-156.

[125] Gantz, 1993, 229 has collected the references to these images.

[126] Campbell, 1988, 393.

compared to those quarrelling over land and Andromache laments that her son's boundaries stones will be moved without his father to protect him.[127] Our classical sources inform us that, like much of archaic Greece, early Sparta was concerned with land reform issues, with every citizen supposedly being allotted an equal plot.[128] Tekmor, as boundary marker, end, or point of ordinance, therefore represents a key point in forming order. The move from Poros, when all things were 'confused and unformed' yet full of resourceful potential, requires the establishment of boundaries that comes with Tekmor. Thetis' manner is 'that of a craftsmen.' In her supreme generative ability, she can create all things.

In this story, we see Thetis' uncontrolled creative power, manifested through her random transformations, before the establishment of order that comes with her marriage to Peleus. This marriage may be difficult for Thetis - in the *Iliad* she laments her marriage to Peleus, pointing out the shame of being a deity married to a mortal and Peleus' debilitating old age.[129] However, the myth of Thetis' capture was intimately linked with cosmic order and divine power structures, a fact that once again helps to explain the commentator's decision to interpret it as a cosmogony. We find the myth fully explored by both Pindar and Aeschylus.[130] Pindar informs us that both Zeus and Poseidon were vying for the hand of Thetis in marriage owing to her exceptional beauty.[131] At this point Themis, regarded as the guardian of social order, arrives and informs the deities that the child whom Thetis bears will be more powerful than its father. Zeus and Poseidon are dissuaded from marrying her and she is committed to a mortal so that she will see her son killed in war. Just like *parthenoi* throughout archaic Greece who may have faced their marriages with trepidation, Thetis, despite her unhappiness, must marry Peleus to maintain order.[132]

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[127] Homer, *Iliad,* 12.421-425 and 22.489.

[128] Plato, *Laws,* 684d-e and Isocrates, *Archidamus,* 20 seem to suggest this had always been the case at Sparta. Meanwhile Aristotle, *Politics,* 1270a and Plutarch, *Agis,* 5.1 and 6.1 seem to credit Lycurgus with the introduction of the system.

[129] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.429-37.

[130] Pindar, *Isthmian,* 8.29-38; Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound,* 907-927.

[131] Pindar, *Isthmian,* 8.29-38. As far as I am aware, the only scholar to have considered the possibility that Alcman may have initially included Zeus and Poseidon in fragment 5 is Laura Slatkin. In her extremely interesting book on Thetis role in the *Iliad,* Slatkin, 1991, 82-83, footnote 32 devotes a sentence to the possibility. Here I hope to develop the possibility that the myth was especially politically significant for archaic Sparta.

[132] Despite his inferiority to Thetis, it is noteworthy that Peleus does distinguish himself as an individual of exceptional virtue and it thus 'rewarded' with his divine bride (see Larson, 2001, 151-154).

The significance is clear. If Thetis has a child with either Zeus or Poseidon then the rule of the entire cosmos comes under threat.[133] There is every chance that the child of Thetis could usurp his father and become the new ruler of Olympus. Turmoil and rebellion on an cosmic scale are at stake. Thetis must be sacrificed to a mortal husband to ensure political continuity. This story echoes the political messages that I have argued are present in the mythological section of the *Louvre Partheneion* and elsewhere in Alcman. Again, we have a story concerned with the maintenance of political unity, this time on a divine scale. That the myth originally sees two powerful brothers competing for the bride may also have social significance for the Spartan political system, possibly reminding the audience of the struggles between Tyndareus and Hippocoon, or suggesting the dangers of quarrelling between the two kings. It may be particularly significant that Themis helps to ensure that cosmic order is maintained between Zeus and Poseidon, whilst Themis is mother of *eunomia* in Hesiod's *Theogony* and the two are closely linked elsewhere.[134] Good order is derived from obedience to the laws and social conventions. As divinity of these customs, Themis was ideally placed to council Zeus and Poseidon concerning the future prosperity of the heavens.[135]

What then are the social and political messages that are contained within the performance? As we have frequently seen, marriage was an area of importance at Sparta that had the potential to encourage social strife. Here we see a similar problem transferred to a divine scale through myth. Thetis' marriage is vital to the stability of the cosmos and to Zeus' divine rule. Before Thetis' marriage, things are in a 'confused and unformed' state, but following her union with Peleus stability returns. The creative potential is harnessed with Tekmor – the end in our commentator's words - that leads to an ordered society. It is clearly demonstrated to the audience that marriage is intimately linked to civic and cosmic stability. That a Spartan audience would have linked divine order with the order of their own society is not surprising. Herodotus tells us that the two kings held the priesthoods of Zeus Ouranius and Zeus Lacedaemon, immediately linking their position to divine order.[136] The Rhetra itself prioritises Zeus as a key divinity in establishing the rules and regulations of

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[133] Slatkin, 19991, 71-73. For further discussion of marriage and cosmic order in Hesiod see Bonnafe, 1985.

[134] Hesiod, *Theogony,* 901-904; Pindar, *Olympian,* 9.15-16; 13.5-8; and Bacchylides, 15. For further discussion of Themis in archaic Greece see Stafford, 1997, 158-167.

[135] It is potentially significant that in Proclus summary of the *Cypria* we see Zeus and Themis planning the Trojan War (Proclus, *Chrestomathia*, i*)*. The scene which follows in which strife begins the quarrel between Aphrodite, Hera and Athena takes place at the wedding of Peleus. The abduction of Helen and the start of the war soon follow. It is an occasion replete with serious political consequences. Burgess, 2004, 1-23 looks at potential performance contexts for the epic cycle.

[136] Herodotus, 6.56.

the *polis*.[137] Plutarch even reports a later tradition whereby the ephors would watch the skies every nine years for shooting stars.[138] If they saw any then the king's authority was questioned and the Delphic oracle was asked for advice. The ceremony implicitly links the order to the cosmos to the acts of the Spartans on earth.[139]

Spartans then, were well aware that their actions were responsible for fostering *eunomia* and connected this to the cosmic sphere. The example of Thetis and her innate female creative potential is a myth that epitomises the vital role of marriage in securing such order. Through marriage, although not something that brings Thetis joy, cosmic order is maintained and she is rewarded with a great warrior son in Achilles. On the other hand, failure to acquiesce to the will of the gods had the potential to threaten the *eunomia* of the entire cosmos. Alcman's fragment 5 provides another example of a *Partheneion* that is intimately linked with the maintenance of social order.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Alcman's mythology helped both performers and audience to explore social tensions in their society. As the performers were *parthenoi,* a class of women whose social position was particularly important within archaic Sparta, much of this mythological material was directly relevant to their stage of life. Alcman's mythological tales about marriage, abduction, and conflict over women help to dramatise real social concerns, thereby helping the audience and performers to better understand their society. Alcman is able to encourage *eunomia,* promote the Spartan social system, and explain the role of *parthenoi* within it. In the following final section on Spartan poetry, we shall see how this focus on social order is expressed at the culmination of a *parthenos'* life, her marriage, an event that we have seen to be vital to the stability of the *polis.*

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[137] Diodorus, 7.12.
[138] Plutarch, *Agis,* 11.3.
[139] Pettersson, 1992, 119.

At this point though, we may conclude that the fragments of Alcman's surviving *partheneia* reveal an array of intertwining mythological strands. We see that Helen was at once deified heroine, divine chorus leader and victim of abduction, an ambiguous mythical pedigree which made her an ideal figure to help Spartan *parthenoi* comes to terms with the social threats they might face. Furthermore, Alcman links marriage to the stability of the state in both the *Louvre Partheneion* and fragment 5, clearly implying that marriage and *eunomia* go hand in hand. *Eunomia* is continually stressed, with the power of shared rule, the line of Heracles and the dangers of hubris appearing as potent themes in the *Louvre Partheneion.*

Alcman appears to have been a poet concerned with *eunomia* and promoting civic stability in Sparta. Much like the later traditions that see poetry as so important to bringing order to Sparta, we see that Alcman encouraged this order through performance at public festivals. As the *Louvre Partheneion* shows, the performance of *parthenoi* was to the fore. Their importance to Spartan society gave them authority and their performance was integral enough for Alcman's poetry to be re-performed by a great many future generations. *Parthenoi* were inherently political at Sparta and performance was an ideal means for them to confront problems, express the value of *eunomia,* and demonstrate their social worth.

Chapter 5 – Marriage Poetry in Archaic Sparta

The focus of the past two chapters has been the performance of Spartan poetry at major public rituals. The performance of *parthenoi* on such occasions appears to have been important for helping participants and audience understand their roles in Spartan society. In this chapter, the focus will be on the culmination of *partheneia*: marriage. The aim is to see how the civic importance of marriage was reflected in Spartan wedding poetry, a genre for which I shall argue we have two relevant surviving examples in Alcman's corpus. As we shall see from both comparative material and Alcman's poetry itself, wedding performance can reinforce the social importance of marriage, emphasise the good order which it can produce, and smooth the transition from the status of *parthenos* to that of *gunē*. *Partheneia* like the *Louvre Partheneion* and fragment 5 lay emphasis on the importance of marriage and stress the perils that come when conflict arises over *parthenoi,* but wedding poetry serves as a final public display of the social order that comes through marriage. It is therefore an opportunity to express and thus promote the social benefits that derive from successful marriage.

This section of the thesis is particularly significant, as information and scholarship relating to archaic Spartan marriage performance is scarce. There is a little evidence that Alcman was involved in composing wedding hymns. The third-century BC epigrammatist Leonidas of Tarentum describes Alcman as a 'singer of wedding hymns' and a commentator on Theocritus' *Epithalamium to Helen* claims that Alcman's wedding chorus would sing outside the bridal chamber at daybreak.[1] The lack of material to work with has meant that few scholars have attempted to analyse Spartan marriage performances. Contiades-Tsitsoni made a valiant attempt to redress this trend in her 1990 work *Hymenaios und Epithalamion: Das Hochzeitslied in der frühgriechischen Lyrik*, discussing the key features of a range of archaic marriage songs and directing useful focus on Alcman's fragment 4A.[2] Developing our understanding of the religious, social, and civic context of fragment 4A is one of the major aims of this chapter. In this chapter, I argue that fragment 4A formed part of a Spartan pre-marriage ritual featuring both boys and girls, with the intention of helping them achieve a smooth transition to adulthood.

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[1] Leonidas of Tarentum, *AP,* 7.19 and Scholiast on Theocritus, *Idyll,* 18.
[2] Contiades-Tsitsoni, 1990, 46-54.

Elsewhere, Alan Griffiths and Bruno Gentili have both suggested that the *Louvre Partheneion* may have been performed in relation to a wedding ritual, with Griffiths suggesting a performance on the morning following the ceremony.[3] However, neither of these views has been well supported, and, as we have already seen, the poem's ritual character and mythic themes suggest a different setting. More convincing is Anastasia Peponi's theory that Alcman's fragment 3 may have been a wedding song.[4] As we shall explore in detail later in this chapter, Peponi's thesis has a great deal of merit and I explore the social and political implications of the poem in detail. As Peponi has recently argued, fragment 3 should be understood as a song that marked the wedding of its central performer, Astymeloisa. It is my purpose here to explore how Alcman represents the social order that can be created by harmonious marriages. In this sense, the performance of wedding poetry provides a fitting conclusion for *parthenoi* who are about to marry, celebrating their successful transition to marriage and the important social function which their union serves. It should become clear that the final performance acts of *parthenoi* before their marriage help to encourage *eunomia* on a public stage.

In order to achieve these aims, this chapter addresses the following research questions:

- What was the nature of fragment 4A's performance? Why is participation in a pre-marriage ritual socially and politically significant? How does the ritual prepare Spartans for marriage and encourage *eunomia?*

- Why should fragment 3 be considered a wedding song? How does Alcman represent the marriage transition on a public stage? What is the civic importance of the performance?

I begin with Spartan pre-marriage ritual, examining how performance helped young Spartans prepare for the ambiguous emotions and difficult transition that could accompany marriage.

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[3] Griffiths, 1972, 7-30 and Gentili, 1990, 73-77. Davidson, 2007, suggests that the poem's performance may have been a celebration of a sort of Lesbian wedding between Hagesichora and Agido.
[4] Peponi, 2007, 351-362.

5.1 Fragment 4A – A Spartan Pre-Marriage Ritual

In the previous chapter, we have seen that Alcman's poetry allowed *parthenoi* to experience and understand potentially dangerous social issues through performing myth. Recreating the past, whilst highlighting its specific relevance to the presence, allows social tensions to be confronted in the safe environment of ritual and thus helps to lessen the threat such tensions can pose to the state. The focus in this section on marriage is slightly different, as both marriage songs and ritual attempt to represent orderly transitions to marriage. Rather than confronting social threats through myth, they perform an idealised form of marriage and transition to adulthood that demonstrates civic unity.

In this section, I shall be exploring a fragment that formed part of a Spartan pre-marriage ritual – fragment 4A. As we shall see, the fragment tells us of a dedication and ritual that is directly prepatory to marriage. I shall be exploring how a pre-marriage ritual such as this helps to encourage civic solidarity by facilitating a smooth marital transition. I argue that fragment 4A sees young boys and girls dedicate together shortly before their marriage in a ceremony which is designed to encourage stable marriage, fertility, and a safe transition from youth to adulthood, devoid of the dangers which we saw in the previous chapter. As such, the deity to whom the young Spartans make dedication is Ino-Leucothea, a figure associated with raising children to adulthood and also a significant transitional figure herself, particularly in her Peloponnesian cult roles.

Fragment 4A

To begin with, I shall provide some brief remarks concerning the performance context and ritual setting of Alcman's fragment 4A. The fragment reads:

εφ.[.....]ουδεις. [

φρασάμαν μόνος [

]ε Ποσειδᾶνος χα [.]

] . ος

μα. Λευκοθεᾶν ἐρατόν τέμενος

ἐκ Τρυγεᾶν ἀνιών, ἔχον

δὲ σίδας δύω γλυκήας.

ταὶ δ' ὅτε δὴ ποταμῶι καλλιρρόωι

ἀράσαντ' ἐρατὸν τελέσαι γάμον

καὶ τὰ παθῆν ἆ γυναιξὶ καὶ ἀνδρά[σι

φίλτ]ατα κωριδίας τ' εὐνᾶς [τυ]χῆν[,

…. no-one … I planned … alone … of Poseidon … (I came to) the lovely sanctuary of the Leucotheae by going up from Trygeae, and I carried two sweet pomegranates; and when they had prayed to the fair-flowing river that they achieve lovely wedlock and experience those things that are (dearest) to the women and men and find a lawful marriage-bed….[5]

Alcman's use of *kōridios* to describe the marriage may be significant. The impression given by archaic and classical texts is that the adjective *kōridios* signifies a marriage that was properly

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[5] Alcman, 4A, 7-17. Campbell, 1988, 384-385.

arranged and recognised as such by the community.[6] The marriage bed of Zeus and Hera is described with the same terminology,[7] with Zeus subsequently stating that he would never break an oath sworn upon it. *Kōridios* is used to describe the wives of Agamemnon and Diomedes in the *Iliad,* whilst Herodotus twice uses it to signify a wife in opposition to concubines.[8] In a society where marriage played such an important role, it is unsurprising that Alcman includes this distinction here.

What is also striking is that the fragment makes it clear that both sexes were involved in the performance. The group whom the speaker describes as praying to the river are female, however, the 'I' who carries the 'two sweet pomegranates' and who sings the poem is male.[9] The male who carries the pomegranates seems to be an active participant in the ritual along with the girls who pray to the river. In fact, marriage appears to be the most common ritual that brings young males and females together in performance, with Homer, Hesiod, and Sappho all imagining both sexes performing together at wedding celebrations.[10] Even though there is nothing definitive in fragment 4A that allows us to pin down the performance context further, finding both sexes involved in the ritual is another indicator that the poem was designed for performance directly prior to or even as a part of the wedding.

This suggestion is made stronger by archaic evidence which suggests that Spartan men and women would come together to dedicate pomegranates prior to their marriage. The dedication of pomegranates by females and males in archaic Sparta can be seen on sixth-century hero-reliefs.[11] One depicts a heroic male holding a large cup, along with a female deity who is drawing back her veil whilst holding a pomegranate in the other hand. They are approached by a pair of mortals, the male holding a rooster with an egg, and the female bearing a pomegranate and its flower.[12] Matthew Dillon suggests that although the exact reasons behind the worship of this pair of deities elude us, the presentation of the pomegranate with its well-documented links to fertility is suggestive of a link

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[6] Campbell, 1982, 385.

[7] Homer, *Iliad,* 15.40-41. Homer has $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\varsigma$ for bed.

[8] Homer, *Iliad,* 1.114 and 5.414; Herodotus, 1.135 and 5.18.2.

[9] Campbell, 1982, 385.

[10] Homer, *Odyssey,* 23.130-149; Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles,* 270-285; Sappho, 44.13-34. See also Plato, *Laws,* 771e and 772a. Swift, 2006, 125-140 provides a discussion of Euripides' *Hippolytus* that discusses the mixed chorus and marriage songs.

[11] For further discussion of this see Dillon, 2002, 34.

[12] Dillon, 2002, 34. Tod and Wace, 1906 102, fig 1. 103, fig 3 provides another, almost identical example.

to marriage or childbirth.[13] Famously, it is the seeds of the pomegranate, which entice Persephone to break her fast, confirming her marriage with Hades.[14] Maria Pipili and TJ Smith both agree the pomegranate appears as a fertility symbol in Spartan art, and may have been carried at dances in honour of Artemis Orthia.[15] The hero-relief may be representative of a dedication made by a couple around the time of their marriage in the hope of ensuring their fertility. This seems to be the most likely reason for the dedication of the pomegranates in fragment 4A.

From these elements, it seems reasonable to conclude that fragment 4A represents a (pre-) marriage ritual in which both males and females were involved.[16] The dedication of pomegranates indicates that the participants were doing so in the hope of achieving fertile marriages. The coming together of males and females for the dedication or performance may have closely preceded forthcoming weddings, although there is no way of being certain at exactly what time the ritual took place. In summary, it appears most likely that fragment 4A represents part of a ritual that took place prior to or as part of marriage rites. Developing our understanding of 'the lovely sanctuary of the Leucotheae' and the poem's significance in preparing Spartan young for marriage can therefore help us explore how ritual helped Spartans overcome the transition to marriage. I shall now discuss these elements in more detail.

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[13] Dillon, 2002, 34.

[14] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter,* 371-374. Calame, 1983, 627: 'La grenade est dans l'Antiquité un symbole qui relève notamment du domaine du mariage.' For further discussion of the erotic and marital significance of fruit see, Littlewood, 1968, 147-181; Drew Griffith 1989, 55-61; and Faraone, 1990, 219-243;

[15] Pipili, 1987, 73 and Smith, 1998, 75-76: 'As a votive object, the pomegranate was dedicated at the sanctuary of Artemis in various forms, including terracotta, bronze, bone, ivory and lead.' Stibbe, 1972, no219, pls76-77 notes that males are also shown carrying pomegranates in Spartan pottery *komos* scenes.

[16] Contiades-Tsitsoni, 1990, 46-54 discusses this fragment in her work on *Hymenaios und Epithalamion.* She concludes that we should consider the fragment as a song related to marriage on the grounds of the pomegranates, evidence of bridal rites and typical wedding language. Contiades-Tsitsoni also argues that the fragment bears considerable similarities to Sappho, fragment 2, in the beautiful, fertile landscape that is imagined.

The Ritual

In light of the previous section, we may say with some certainty that fragment 4A is intimately concerned with marriage and marital fecundity, but little has been said about the nature of the rites or their potential religious context. By reconstructing the mythic and religious significance of this fragment, conclusions can subsequently be drawn about how the ritual helped its young performers prepare for the transition to marriage.

The main problem with interpreting the passage lies in the difficult term *Leucotheae,* which has alternately been taken as a reference to the Nereids[17] (due to their inclusion of Leucothea) or the Leucotheai[18] (otherwise unknown 'white goddesses'). Here I shall venture an interpretation that prioritises Leucothea and the Nereids. The nymphs, widely worshipped throughout Sparta, provided ideal subjects for worship in terms of their fertility, nurturing role, and transformative ability. In his wide-ranging study of kourotrophic divinities, Price notes that nymphs played a particularly prominent role in helping children reach adulthood in the Peloponnese.[19] It is this ability to facilitate the successful transition between childhood and adulthood that makes the nymph, Ino-Leucothea, a suitable deity for this poem. I shall demonstrate that, through the agency of the nymphs, the performers hope to achieve not only marital fertility, but also a transformation from youth to marriage*.* Ino-Leucothea, a deity who is regularly worshipped in adolescent initiations owing to her transformation from mortal to divinity, provides a mythical figure of particular significance for youngsters who hope to emulate her successful change in status through marriage.[20]

In order to demonstrate that fragment 4A was composed with these issues in mind, I shall make the following arguments in this section:

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[17] Campbell, 1988, 385 and Calame, 1983, 626-629.
[18] Larson, 2001, 35.
[19] Price, 1978, 138-139.
[20] I discuss Ino-Leucothea's role as a divinity involved with rites of passage below. For a thorough overview see: Nilsson, 1906, 432, Graf, 1985, 405-407, and Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 341-343.

1) In both myth and cult, nymphs often appear as deities who nurture the young and help prepare them for sexual encounters. They are often associated with choruses of beautiful young girls. Nymphs also have the power to facilitate transitions from one status to another, often through apotheosis.

2) One such case of apotheosis concerns the deity Ino-Leucothea, whom the Nereids raise to the status of a divinity after she throws herself into the sea along with her son. The successful transformation of Ino-Leucothea sees her become an important transitional figure who was often worshipped as part of initiation rituals.

3) These elements of Ino-Leucothea's character were recognised in the Peloponnese and, more specifically, in archaic Sparta. Her presence in fragment 4A alongside young people making pre-marriage dedications suggests that she may have fulfilled a similar transformative role in archaic Sparta.

In this manner, fragment 4A forms part of a ritual that helps ensure the smooth transition from one status to the next. It is a ritual that helps young Spartans in their progression to successful marriage.

Nymphs at Sparta

In order to understand better the important social role that nymphs could play, I begin with a brief discussion of their presence in archaic Sparta and the poetry of Alcman. A scholiast on the *Iliad* provides us with a strong indication that Alcman spoke of many kinds of nymphs.[21] He quotes Alcman as speaking of 'Naiads and Lampads and Thyiads,' before giving a brief description of the various types of nymph.[22] We are not blessed with great quantities of evidence concerning nymphs but poems 1, 4A, and 5 do all refer to them. The sexually active role of nymphs such as Taugete and Sparte in the Spartan genealogical tradition provides us with a strong indication that they were seen as both powerful and fertile divinities.[23] Furthermore, the Nereids importance in archaic Sparta is certainly hinted at by the prominence of Thetis. As we have seen, Thetis appears to have been a

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[21] Scholiast A, Homer, *Iliad,* 6.21: 'Some say there are many kinds of Nymphs e.g. Alcman.'

[22] Alcman, 63.

[23] Hellanicus, 4F19, tells us that Lacedaimon was born from a union between Taugete and Zeus. Apollodorus, 3.10.3, fleshes out this link, informing us that Lacedaimon went on to marry another nymph Sparte leading to the source of the Spartan race.

particularly significant deity in archaic Sparta and Alcman's fragment 5 identifies her as a goddess whom the Dymaenae would sing about in *partheneia*.[24] Furthermore, as we have seen Thetis had her own shrine within Laconia, supposedly dedicated by the wife of king Anaxandrus during the second Messenian War.[25]

In both myth and cult, nymphs such as these, particularly the Nereids, often play an important role in nurturing the young and preparing young women for sexual encounters or marriage.[26] Zeus was originally nursed by nymphs.[27] In some accounts, Dionysus is also raised by nymphs.[28] When the infant Hephaestus is hurled from Olympus by Hera, it is Thetis and the nymphs who take care of him.[29] Nymphs are frequently seen as the ideal deities to nurture young gods and heroes. For example, Aphrodite sends Aeneas to be raised by the nymphs and Corinna mentions fifty strong heroes that Orion and the nymphs produced.[30] The nymphs are also often associated with beautiful *parthenoi* approaching the time of their marriage. Nausicaa and her companions are compared to Artemis and her nymphs in the *Odyssey*.[31] In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* we see the goddess claim to have been dancing with nymphs before her sexual encounter with Anchises.[32] The latter suggests that the nymph's role in nurturing and preparing the young for adulthood may have also involved preparation for sexuality.

The association extends to choral dances and marriage. A good example is provided by Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis.* Here, the Nereids perform a circular dance at the wedding of Thetis, celebrating the successful transition of one of their number to marriage.[33] Euripides provides us with a full description of the Nereid's role in the marriage of Thetis and Peleus. He describes a 'lovely-haired' chorus performing the wedding hymn and beating the ground with their feet.[34] They also

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[24] Alcman, 5.iii.1.
[25] Pausanias, 3.14.4. Hesiod, *Theogony,* 240-264 provides a list of the Nereids, daughters of Nereus and Doris.
[26] For an overview of the kourotrophic role of nymphs, see Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 106-108.
[27] Callimachus, 1.28-53.
[28] *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus,* 26, and Apollodorus, 3.43.
[29] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.198-199 and *Homeric Hymn to Apollo,* 3.316-21. Dionysus is also looked after by the nymphs following his flight from Lycurgus (Homer, *Iliad,* 6.130-7).
[30] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* 5.273-275 and Corinna, 655, 14-16.
[31] Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.102-109.
[32] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* 115-120. Faulkner, 2008, 23-46 helps set the poem in the context of associated archaic poetry.
[33] Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 1054-1057.
[34] Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 1036-1044.

extol the virtues of both the bride and the groom in their song, in a way that reminds the modern reader of Sappho's *Epithimalia.*[35] Thetis' status as an exceptional bride is further indicated by Alcaeus' contrast between the destructive actions of Helen and the glorious union of Thetis and Peleus.[36] In this sense, Thetis is held up as an idealised bride for *parthenoi* to emulate.

In addition to assisting in transition to adulthood and maintaining a strong link to marriage, nymphs also often play the role of transitional deities between life, death, and divinity. Indeed, it is common to find the nymphs associated with death. Thetis, along with the Nereids, plays an important role in mourning for Achilles and Patroclus in the Homeric epics.[37] It is also through her agency that Achilles is able to go to the 'Island of the Blessed' in the *Aithiopis.*[38] Euripides has Thetis bestow immortality upon Peleus when it is his time to die.[39] Furthermore, we see frequent artistic depictions of nymphs as divine escorts between life and death that date from the archaic period.[40] Not only are the nymphs famous for protecting and nurturing youths to maturity, but they often assist, or even deify, mortals who die. The transitional role of nymphs is the key to their inclusion in Alcman's 4A.

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[35] Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 1045-1046.

[36] Alcaeus, 42.

[37] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.50-64 and *Odyssey,* 24.45-89.

[38] Proclus, *Summary of the Aithiopis*, 20-21; Ibycus, 291; Simonides, 558; Pindar, *Olympian,* 2.79-80; and *Nemean,* 4.49-50 all mention Achilles blessed life after death.

[39] Euripides, *Andromache,* 1253-58.

[40] Barringer, 1995*.* In later sources, we find examples of young women going to their deaths being saved and incorporated by the nymphs. Anticleides tells the story of a *parthenos* who is sunk into the sea in offering to Poseidon and was then received by the nymphs (Anticleides, *FGrH* 140 F4). In Antonius Liberalis' version of the myth of Byblis, the girl is rescued by the nymphs after she tries to commit suicide. (Antonius Liberalis, 30).

Ino-Leucothea

One such mortal, who became a deity through the agency of the nymphs and was worshipped at Sparta was Ino-Leucothea. As we shall see, her apotheosis made her a focus of initiation and transitional rituals in a number of Greek *poleis,* and it is this aspect of her character that is of particular interest to fragment 4A.

The earliest mention of Ino's apotheosis comes in the *Odyssey*:

τὸν δὲ ἴδεν Κάδμου θυγάτηρ, καλλίσφυρος Ἰνώ,

Λευκοθέη, ἣ πρὶν μὲν ἔην βροτὸς αὐδήεσσα,

νῦν δ' ἁλὸς ἐν πελάγεσσι θεῶν ἒξ ἔμμορε τιμῆς.

But the daughter of Cadmus, Ino of the beautiful ankles, saw him, that is, Leucothea, who formerly was a mortal of human speech, but now in the depths of the sea has won a share of honour from the gods.[41]

Unfortunately, Homer provides little else to help us decide how this apotheosis took place. For a full version of the myth of Ino's deification, one must turn to Apollodorus, although Alcman and Pindar also provide useful scraps of information – as Sourvinou-Inwood has noted the use of Apollodorus can be justified as 'the other versions are structured by the same basic schema.'[42] Zeus gives the infant Dionysus to his aunt Ino to be raised as a girl, an action that greatly displeases Hera. Having been driven mad by Hera, Ino is said to boil one of her sons whilst her husband, Athamas, kills the other, whom Hera's madness makes him believes to be a deer. Ino is then chased by her husband whilst holding her recently boiled child, Melicertes, close to her chest. In order to escape, she hurls herself and her baby into the sea where the Nereids take pity on her and make her one of their

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[41] Homer, *Odyssey,* 5.333-335. Murray, 1995(a), 206-207 (revised Dimock).
[42] Apollodorus, 3.4.3 See also: Alcman, 50; Pindar, *Olympian,* 2.28-30; and *Pythian,* 11.1-2. Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 341.

own.[43] She becomes Leucothea and her son becomes the deity Palaemon. From this point onwards, she acquires the status of a sea-goddess, coming to the aid of sailors such as Odysseus as we saw earlier.[44] Ino's death is vital to this status change. She is explicitly said to have died in Euripides *Medea,* whilst Pausanias reports that the Megarians claim her corpse was washed up on their shores.[45]

Ino-Leucothea's apotheosis saw her become a regular recipient of varied cult all across Greece, not just at the sea but also in a variety of watery locations.[46] Most famously, Aristotle records that Xenophanes commented on the difficulties of worshipping a deity who was once mortal, telling the Eleans that they should not lament for a deity, but that they should not sacrifice to a mortal.[47] As a result of this ambiguity, lamentation, chthonic rites, and initiations often played an important role in her cult.[48] Indeed, we see Ino-Leucothea as an initiatory figure across Greece. Conon the mythographer tells us that she played a role in male initiations at Miletus.[49] It has also been variously argued that initiatory rites involving Leucothea were held at Teos, Chios, and Lampsacus.[50] Her death and rebirth provide her with a common initiatory motif.

However, none of this demands Ino-Leucothea's presence in fragment 4A. Why should we view the 'sanctuary of the Leucotheae' as referring to Ino-Leucothea and the Nereids? It appears that Ino-Leucothea was a deity of some relevance within Sparta. We see her depicted, along with other religious and mythical figures of great importance, on the sixth-century throne at Amyclae.[51] In this image, she stands next to Semele and Dionysus, suggesting that her role in nurturing the deity was recognised and confirming at least partial continuity with the version of the myth given by Apollodorus. Pausanias also informs us that Leucothea was worshipped within Sparta, although no indication of a date is given.[52] Furthermore, Pausanias notes that at Brasiae in Laconia the

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[43] Apollodorus, 3.4.3. Note the similarities with Dionysus' plunge into the sea and subsequent rescue by Thetis, Homer, *Iliad,* 6.130-137.
[44] Homer, *Odyssey,* 5.333-335; Pindar, *Olympian,* 2.28-230; and *Pythian,* 11.1-2.
[45] Euripides, *Medea,* 1282-91 and Pausanias, 1.42.7.
[46] Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 342.
[47] Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* 1399b6.
[48] Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 342-343, has collected references to cult and festivities for Ino-Leucothea.
[49] Conon, *FGrH* 26 F1.
[50] Nilsson, 1906, 432; Graf, 1985, 405-407, and Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 341-343.
[51] Pausanias, 3.19.3.
[52] Pausanias, 3.23.8 and Pausanias, 3.26.1.

inhabitants have a story 'found nowhere else in Greece,' namely, that Semele and Dionysus washed up at the shore there.[53] Once at Brasidae, Ino nurtured Dionysus in a cave, which the inhabitants were willing to show off in Pausanias' day so her role as a nurturing figure appears to have been recognised in Laconia.[54] In addition, Ino makes a brief appearance in Alcman's fragment 50:

Ἰνὼ σαλασσομέδοισ᾽ ἂν ἀπὸ μασδῶν

Ino, queen of the sea, whom from her breast...[55]

As with most of our fragments of Alcman, there is no context here. However, this small fragment alone can tell us much. That Ino, here referred to by her mortal name, is described as σαλασσομέδοισα is an indication that the Spartans recognised her rare transformation from mortal to immortal deity. Alcman's words 'whom from her breast...' also suggest that he may have related the myth that led to Ino becoming immortal, as it is possible that this is a reference to the hurling of Melicertes into the sea from Ino's breast. Whilst we cannot entirely reconstruct the myth of Ino-Leucothea as it may have existed in archaic Sparta, these fragments of information do allow one to draw some preliminary conclusions:

1. The appearance of Ino with Dionysus on the Amyclae throne suggests her role in nurturing him was recognised.
2. The description of Ino with the epithet σαλασσομέδοισα in Alcman fragment 50 coupled with her depiction on the Amyclae throne suggest Ino was worshipped in her divine form. The combination of the mortal name with σαλασσομέδοισα hints, albeit tentatively, that Ino's apotheosis was recognised.
3. Ino, throwing someone 'from her breast,' is a good indication that the archaic Spartan version of the myth featured Melicertes being hurled into the sea. In Apollodorus version, this incident closely precedes Ino's apotheosis by the Nereids, again hinting that this element of the myth was also present in Sparta.

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[53] Pausanias, 3.24.3.
[54] Pausanias, 3.24.4.
[55] Alcman, 50. Campbell, 1988, 428-429.

Considering the evidence above, coupled with Homer's mention of Ino's apotheosis in the *Odyssey,* I believe that the archaic version of the Spartan myth of Ino featured both her nurturing of Dionysus and transformation into Ino-Leucothea. Accepting that Ino's mythical incorporation into the Nereids was relevant in Sparta alongside her appearance on the sixth-century throne of Amyclae, and Alcman's probable discussion of her mythological death, the preferable reading of the plural *Leucotheae* in fragment 4A must be the Nereids of whom Ino became a member.[56] Ino-Leucothea must therefore have had some significance for the young Spartans who came to the sanctuary to perform Alcman's hymn and dedicate at the shrine.

Ino-Leucothea as Initiatory Figure

It is my argument that the appearance of Ino-Leucothea in this fragment is due to her ability to serve as an initiatory deity for those hoping to make the transition to marriage. There is plentiful evidence to suggest that such initiatory figures were common at Sparta. Hyacinthus and his sister Polyboea have both been interpreted as figures whose death and subsequent apotheosis served as an initiatory model for young Spartans at the Hyacinthia festival. As we saw through Polycrates' description of the Hyacinthia, the festival displayed the qualities of Spartan youth before the population. It has plausibly been suggested by Calame, Pettersson, and Sourvinou-Inwood that this death and rebirth of Hyacinthus helped to dramatise the social transformation that young Spartans must go through to become full adult members of society.[57] The transformation of the Hyacinthia from solemn occasion on the first day, to festival full of revelry and display thereafter, helps to accentuate the change in status that Hyacinthus undergoes. For young Spartan hoping to complete the *agogē* and become citizens, such a transformation may have been significant.

Such transitional themes are also particularly common to marriage rites across ancient Greece, with the marriage famously dramatised as a kind of social death and rebirth.[58] This dramatisation is often reflected in ritual. In Megara, we hear that girls cut off their hair and pour libations before their marriages in honour of Iphinoe, daughter of the legendary Megarian founder

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[56] See Calame, 1983, 626, also references a Messenian equivalent shrine of the Nereids (Pausanias, 3.26.7). Campbell, 1982, 385 also suggests the Nereids in footnote 2 of his translation.
[57] Calame, 1977(1), 314-319; Pettersson, 1992, 29-36; and Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 122-126.
[58] See Rehm, 1994, and Seaford, 1987, 106-130, for excellent overviews of a very large topic.

Alcathous, who died while she was still a *parthenos.*[59] Indeed, we have already seen evidence that the Spartans dramatised marriage, death, and rebirth through myth. The songs that were sung to Alcestis at the Carneia focus on an idealised bride who dies, receives honour, and is brought back to life a heroine.[60]

I suggest that in Alcman 4A, the participants are offering worship to Ino-Leucothea as a mythic figure who dies and is subsequently deified through the agency of the nymphs.[61] The shrine reflects the nymphs' role in helping to transform Ino to a different status. The reason why the *parthenoi* dedicate and pray at the shrine of the Leucotheae is in the hope that the nymphs will assist them in their transformation from *parthenos* to *gunē*. Through the agency of the nymphs, Ino is incorporated into a higher status group, an act that also ensures a prosperous future for her son. As Palaimon, her son not only became a sea god protecting sailors, but also received great honours at the Isthmian games.[62] Alcman's chorus hope to achieve an equally successful transformation through performance and dedication in the sanctuary of the Leucotheae.

Conclusions

We may therefore conclude that the ritual had several features that were vital in the participants preparation for marriage. The dedication of two pomegranates suggests that the ritual was primarily concerned with ensuring fertility for its participants. The myth of the death and rebirth of Ino serves as a fine example of the nymphs' power to facilitate transformations, and those who dedicate at the shrine hope to enlist the help of the nymphs in undergoing their own marital transition. Performance of Alcman's fragment 4A therefore helps young Spartans deal with the approach of their coming marriages, providing them with an opportunity to perform in honour of a famous transitional deity. As we have seen, rituals existed across Greece that saw the young sacrifice or make dedications such transitional figures before marriage. Considering the social and political

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[59] Pausanias, 1.43.4. Also Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 1423-1430. See Dowden, 1989, 1-3 and *passim*, for an introduction to death and initiation.
[60] Euripides, *Alcestis,* 445-452.
[61] Ino's status as a wife with children does not exclude her from being relevant to a group of unmarried performers. Alcestis is married when she undergoes her transformation, whilst Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 1423-1430 speaks of *parthenoi* cutting their hair and mourning for the eponymous male hero.
[62] Pausanias, 1.44.7.

importance of marriage at archaic Sparta, it is not surprising that we find Alcman's fragment 4A providing young Spartans with a similar opportunity.

5.2 - Alcman Fragment 3 – A Spartan Wedding Song

In the previous chapters, we have seen that Alcman's poetry was concerned with the social and political role of *parthenoi* at Sparta*.* Owing to the economic and political importance that marriage could have, *parthenoi* were a real focus of social tensions. Stability in marriage and in society was encouraged as a result. The pre-marriage ritual of which Alcman's fragment 4A formed a part, provided a ritual setting in which young Spartans could dedicate with the intention of achieving successful marriages. Finally, we move on the final stage in this process, the moment that encapsulates everything important about being a bride in archaic Sparta – the Spartan wedding song. In the context we have seen established in the previous chapters, the wedding song takes on increased importance. Whilst the *partheneia* that we have explored before look to explain social tensions and help *parthenoi* understand their social roles, the wedding song is part of the marriage itself and is thus a ritual that expresses the order created by marriage.

In this section, I will argue that Alcman's fragment 3 should be interpreted as a wedding song before suggesting that it served to dramatise the bride's successful transition into marriage and accentuate the importance of marriage for society. Claude Calame has previously asserted that the poem represents the final stages of a rite of passage, which publicly celebrates Astymeloisa's ascension to adulthood,[63] but he does not consider the poem to have been related to a wedding. However, as we shall see, there are compelling reasons to believe that the poem should be understood as a wedding song and, seen in this light, the social implications of the poems performance are altered. In this way, the performance of the wedding song provides a fitting point of culmination for *parthenoi.* Their previous performances in ritual help emphasise the important role they play in Spartan society*,* before the wedding song allows them to perform the successful culmination of their youth in front of the watching community. In a society where marriage was of major social importance, fragment 3's performance helps to dramatise how the process should ideally take place.

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[63] Calame, 1977(2), 91-109.

Alcman Fragment 3.

Before any analysis of the social and political implications of fragment 3 can take place, it is first necessary to explain why the poem should be considered a wedding song. I include the text here, as I will refer to it at length through the following discussion:

Μώσαι Ὀλ]υμπιάδες περί με φρένας

ἱμέρωι νέα]ς ἀοιδᾶς

πίμπλατ’. ἰθύ]ω δ’ ἀκούσαι

παρσενηΐ]ας ὀπός

πρός αἰ]θέρα καλὸν ὑμνιοισᾶν μέλος **(5)**

    ].οι

ὕπνον ἀ]πὸ γλεφάρων σκεδ[α]σεῖ γλυκύν

    ]ς δέ μ’ ἄγει πεδ’ ἀγῶν’[64] ἴμεν

ἆχι τά]χιστα κόμ[αν ξ]ανθὰν τινάξω·

    ]. σχ[ἀπ]αλοὶ πόδες…….. **(10)**

(Next fifty lines severely damaged)

…….λυσιμελεῖ τε πόσωι, τακερώτερα

δ’ ὕπνω καὶ σανάτω ποτιδέρκεται·

οὐδέ τι μαψιδίως γλυκ[ήα κ]ήνα·

Ἀ[σ]τυμέλοισα δέ μ’ οὐδὲν ἀμείβεται

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[64] Calame, 1983, 400-401 analyses ἀγῶν’ as a communal space with militaristic overtones.

ἀλλὰ τὸ]ν πυλεῶν' ἔχοισα **(65)**

[ὥ] τις αἰγλά[ε]ντος ἀστήρ

ὠρανῶ διαιπετής

ἢ χρύσιον ἔρνος ἢ ἁπαλὸ[ν ψίλ]ον

⎵. διέβα ταναοῖς πο[σί·] **(70)**

καλλίκ]ομος νοτία Κινύρα χ[άρ]ις

  ἐπὶ π]αρσενικᾶν χαίταισιν ἵσδει·

ἦ μὰν Ἀ]στυμέλοισα κατὰ στρατόν

ἔρχεται] μέλημα δάμωι

⎵]μαν ἑλοῖσα **(75)**

]λέγω·

]εναβαλ' α[ἰ] γὰρ ἄργυριν

].[.]ία

]α ἴδοιμ' αἴ πως με. . . ον φιλοι

ἆσ]σον [ἰο]ῖσ' ἁπαλᾶς χηρὸς λάβοι, **(80)**

αἶψά κ' [ἐγὼν ἱ]κέτις κήνας γενοίμαν·

Olympian (Muses, fill) my heart (with longing for a new) song: I (am eager) to hear the (maiden) voice of girls singing a beautiful melody (to the heavens)…: **(5)** (it?) will scatter sweet (sleep) from my eyes and lead me to the meeting place, (where) I shall shake my yellow hair as quickly as I may …. soft feet ….**(10)**

...and with limb-loosening desire, and she looks (at me?) more meltingly than sleep or death, and not in vain is she sweet. But Astymeloisa makes no answer to me; no, holding the garland, **(65)** like a bright star of the shining heavens or a golden branch or soft down ….. she passed through with her tapering feet; …**(70)** (giving beauty to her tresses), the moist charm of Cinyras sits on the maiden's hair. (Truly) Astymeloisa (goes) through the *stratos* the darling of the *demos* …. Taking **(75)** …. I say; …. a silver cup …. I were to see whether perchance she were to love me. If only she came nearer and took my soft hand, **(80)** immediately I would become her suppliant. (Campbell, 1988, adapted)[65]

The theory that Alcman's fragment 3 should be interpreted as a wedding song was first proposed by Anastasia Peponi in 2007. Peponi perceptively noted that the intense longing and sense of loss, which the chorus feel for the poems central protagonist, Astymeloisa, was consistent with the emotions often expressed in other wedding hymns.[66] Firstly, in order to establish the marriage context for my interpretation of this fragment, I shall briefly run through the central points of Peponi's arguments and make a few further comments of my own. By reconstructing the choreography of the dance from the surviving lyrics, Peponi argues that the performance of fragment 3 saw Astymeloisa physically move from her choral companions to the watching *stratos*.[67] *Stratos,* the term used for crowd here, has militaristic overtones and lines 73-74 clearly indicate that Astymeloisa is performing in front of this crowd of citizens.[68] The public nature of the performance is also expressed in line 8, when the speaker reveals that she is going to the meeting place, where she

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[65] Alcman, 3. Campbell, 1983, 378-381 (adapted). The papyrus also features the beginnings of a further thirty lines, although there is too little material to speculate as to what may have been said. Campbell notes that the poem was comprised of at least 126 verses, i.e 14 stanzas. Stehle, 1997, 88, notes that potentially the missing lines featured a mythological tale in a similar fashion to the *Louvre Partheneion,* but it is impossible to say with any certainty. The poem begins with an appeal to the Muses, before expressing a desire to hear a chorus of girls perform in song. It is noteworthy that all of the speech in the first section of the poem appears in the first person singular, and it is quite possible, though not necessary, that a solo singer looking to introduce the rest of the chorus sang the opening lines of the poem. It is not uncommon for choruses of multiple members to use the first person singular during song, as the *Louvre Partheneion* demonstrates. Even so, it is tempting to follow Peponi's analysis of these lines and view them as an introductory speech by Astymeloisa before the rest of the chorus begin to sing. Page, 1959, 16-17, has suggested that it would be unusual for a chorus of girls to wish to hear themselves singing, hinting at the possibility a solo singer introduced the song.

[66] Peponi, 2007, 351-362.
[67] Peponi, 2007, 355-357.
[68] Calame, 1983, 414.

will perform an energetic dance, characterised by quickly shaking her hair.[69] Peponi argues that as the dance progresses we see a symbolic rift appearing between Astymeloisa and her chorus.[70] The desire that the chorus express for Astymeloisa in lines 61-63 is juxtaposed with the content of the next line where the chorus lament that she makes no answer to them.[71] In addition, it appears that while the chorus are singing about Asymeloisa's beauty, she is moving away from them.[72] Lines 73-74 see her moving away from her chorus through the crowd, while being described as 'darling of the people.' The dance literally sees her separated from the chorus of *parthenoi*[73] and move among the *stratos*.

Indeed, the name Astymeloisa itself – literally 'darling of the people,' – may be significant. Hagesichora – 'leader of the chorus' – clearly serves the role of a *chorēgos*.[74] In the *Louvre Partheneion* the *parthenoi* are beautiful and approaching the time of their marriage, but Hagesichora is not yet a bride. Her name reflects the fact that she is still primarily a member of the chorus. The subtle difference is that fragment 3 celebrates the point at which Astymeloisa is about to become a married woman. Her name – 'darling of the people' - suggests that she has been socially accepted by the citizen body, and is now ready to leave her chorus of *parthenoi*. The way that the chorus pine for Astymeloisa brings her transition away from them into focus.[75]

The final complete line that survives, provides a poignant reminder that the chorus are about to lose their *chorēgos.* They wish that she would come back to them and take hold of her hand, emphasising that she is now separated from them.[76] The holding of the hand may be particularly significant. The moment when a marriage was formalised was often symbolised by the groom taking the hand of the bride.[77] Not only is this a common theme in depictions of Athenian

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[69] Alcman, 3, 8-9.
[70] Peponi, 2007, 355.
[71] Alcman, 3, 61-64.
[72] Alcman, 3, 64-70.
[73] Alcman, 3.4.
[74] Peponi, 2007, 356.
[75] Alcman, 3.61-64 and Alcman, 3.80-81.
[76] Alcman, 3.80-81.
[77] Rehm, 1994, 14, provides discussion of this. For iconographic representations of marriage with discussion of hand taking, see Sutton 1997/98, 27-48. Sutton notes 45 instances of a groom taking the bride by the hand or wrist. Peponi, 2007, 361, also comments on the significance of the choruses desire to take Astymeloisa's hand in fragment 3.

weddings but it may also be alluded to in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite.[78] After Aphrodite has told Anchises that Hermes has abducted her from the chorus so that she may be his bride, he accepts the news by taking her hand before the couple go to make love.[79] The taking of the hand may have had marital overtones as early as the archaic period. The sense of loss that the chorus feel for their *chorēgos* is highlighted as they carry out the act that will confirm Astymeloisa's marriage and separation from the chorus.[80]

Finally, it is useful to note that a commentator on Theocritus' *Epithalamium to Helen* provides the information that proves interesting alongside fragment 3, claiming that where Theocritus' chorus sing outside the bride's wedding chamber, Alcman's chorus actually do so when day is beginning to break. Although there is no way of telling to which poem the commentator is referring, the statement does provide another indication that Alcman composed poetry for a wedding setting.[81] In accordance with this statement, there is evidence to suggest that fragment 3 may have been composed for performance at dawn. Line seven of the poem states that the speaker will 'scatter sweet (sleep) from her eyes,' as she makes her way to perform.[82] Furthermore, Astymeloisa is described by her chorus as a star travelling through the shining heavens hinting at a nocturnal performance, in a similar way to the astral imagery in the *Louvre Partheneion*.[83]

Nothing here is conclusive, but there is certainly enough information to suggest strongly that fragment 3 was performed as a wedding song. Even if this was not the case as Calame suggests, then all the evidence indicates that it was performed by girls approaching marriage. The following discussion will examine the social and political function of this poem's performance in the context of Astymeloisa's imminent marriage.

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[78] Oakley and Sinos, 1993, *passim.*
[79] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 155.
[80] Peponi, 2007, 359-360: Peponi also notes that the sense of loss may be heightened as the chorus often perform with joined hands. Thus by retaking Astymeloisa's hand the chorus would effectively reintegrate her into their number.
[81] Scholiast on Theocritus, *Idyll,* 18. We have no concrete evidence that Alcman composed a wedding hymn specifically for Helen as Theocritus does.
[82] Alcman, 3.7.
[83] Alcman, 3.66-67; 1.40-43; and 1.60-63.

The Dangers of Desire

By this stage it should be clear that in both historical and mythological examples, marriage appears as a major source of social and political tension within archaic Sparta. Having established that several of Alcman's *partheneia* deal with topics that were historically relevant to marriage, I now examine fragment 3 to see how its themes may have been socially beneficial for marriage in Spartan society.

One such theme is Alcman's representation of desire. From lines 61-63 onwards, it becomes clear that the desire that Astymeloisa creates in her chorus will be one of the dominant themes of the poem. The chorus sing of the *pothos* that a glance from Astymeloisa can inspire:

λυσιμελεῖ τε πόσωι, τακερώτερα

δ᾽ ὕπνω καὶ σανάτω ποτιδέρκεται·

οὐδέ τι μαψιδίως γλυκ[ήα..κ]ήνα·

with limb-loosening desire, and she looks (at me?) more meltingly than sleep or death, and not in vain is she sweet.[84]

These lines hint at the ambiguous power of desire: it can be sweet and pleasurable but it can overcome a person's senses, just as sleep and death can, potentially leading to the very acts of sexual violence that we have seen are common in archaic Spartan myth. By presenting desire in this manner, Alcman recognises the social problems that it could cause and, as we shall see, mediates against them. In the Homeric epics and other archaic poetry, the subjects of Alcman's comparison, desire, sleep, and death, all have this ability to overpower an individual's rational senses. The ability of their powers to overwhelm even a deity is well illustrated by Hera's seduction of Zeus in book 14

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[84] Alcman, 3.61-63. Campbell, 1988, 378-379.

of the *Iliad.* Hera resolves to distract Zeus through seduction, thereby providing the struggling Greeks with an opportunity to rally in battle. Hera begins by visiting Aphrodite and requesting 'love and desire, with which you are able to subdue all immortals and mortal men.'[85] Aphrodite lends her a love charm, which contains desire and love itself, powers described as being able to captivate even the wise.[86] Next, Hera visits Sleep, recognised in the *Iliad* and elsewhere, as twin brother of Death.[87] After a short period of negotiation, Sleep agrees to help in Hera's seduction of Zeus.[88] Hera asks Sleep to:

> κοίμησόν μοι Ζηνὸς ὑπ᾽ ὀφρύσιν ὄσσε φαεινὼ
> αὐτίκ᾽ ἐπεί κεν ἐγὼ παραλέξομαι ἐν φιλότητι.
>
> Lull to bed the gleaming eyes of Zeus beneath his brows for me, as soon as I shall have lain down by his side in love.[89]

Hera then appears before Zeus and, aided by Sleep and Aphrodite's love charm, she overcomes him with desire for her.[90] They lay down to make love after which Zeus falls asleep, literally, in Homer's phrase, 'overcome by sleep and love.'[91]

Zeus' political plans concerning the Trojan War are foiled by Sleep and the desire that Aphrodite helps Hera to create. Desire and seductive Sleep defeat Zeus' rational side and allow his rivals to take advantage. Elsewhere, we find that Sleep has the ability to overcome men. In the *Odyssey,* Odysseus finds himself unable to resist Sleep:

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[85] Homer, *Iliad,* 14.198-199.
[86] Homer *Iliad,* 14.213-221.
[87] Homer, *Iliad,* 16.664-684.
[88] Homer, *Iliad,* 14.222-276.
[89] Homer, *Iliad,* 14.236-237. Murray, 1999(b), 82-85 (Revised Wyatt).
[90] Homer, *Iliad,* 14.312-328.
[91] Homer, *Iliad,* 14.352-353. Vernant, 1991, 95-110, also looks at dangerous female figures associated with death and capable of bewitching men. Kers bring death to men in battle, whilst female figures like Circe and Calypso have to power to enrapture, deceive, and endanger men.

καὶ τῷ νήδυμος ὕπνος ἐπὶ βλεφάροισιν ἔπιπτε,

νήγρετος, ἥδιστος, θανάτῳ ἄγχιστα ἐοικώς

And sweet sleep fell on his eyelids, an unwakening sleep, most sweet, and most like to death.[92]

Again, we find Sleep as a sweet irresistible force that descends on the eyelids and masters Odysseus. As this line suggests, Death had similar properties, and death in turn, is similar to desire. Just like Alcman, Archilochus describes desire with the term λυσιμελής, an epithet famously related to death in the Homeric epics.

ἀλλά μ' ὁ λυσιμελής, ὦταῖρε, δάμναται πόθος.

But, my friend, limb-loosening desire overwhelms me.[93]

Death, like sleep and desire, is an irresistible force to which all mortals are susceptible. The powerful force of *pothos* and its ability to overcome mortals is the focus of Alcman's comparison in lines 61-63 of fragment 3. Sleep and Death, like desire, have the ability to be kind, tender and beneficent towards mortals, as we see when Death and Sleep care for the body of the recently deceased Sarpedon in book 16 of the *Iliad*.[94] However, again like desire, both are dangerous. Death is almost universally feared by men. As well as Sleep's involvement in the deceptive seduction of Zeus, we also find Agamemnon fearing that his camp guards may be overcome by sleep in book 10, an event which endangers all of the Greek army.[95] Alcman's comparison in fragment 3 makes clear the power of desire, whilst also hinting at the dangers inherent in a force that can conquer a person's senses. Pausanias provides us with a little more evidence for a link between desire, sleep, and death at Sparta, although dating the evidence accurately is not possible. He reports that in the Spartan agora there is a statue of warlike Aphrodite 'as old as any in Greece.' Nearby stands an image of Aphrodite Ambologera – 'postponer of old age' – with twin statues of Sleep and Death.[96] As we have seen,

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[92] Homer, *Odyssey,* 13.79-80. Murray, 1995(b), 8-9 (Revised Dimock).
[93] Archilochus, 196. Gerber, 1999, 210-211.
[94] Homer, *Iliad,* 16.366-384.
[95] Homer, *Iliad,* 10.96-100.
[96] Pausanias, 3.18.1.

although sweet and pleasurable, desire, often controlled by Aphrodite, can serve as the catalyst for woman-stealing and sexual violence in both historical and mythological examples.

In fragment 3 then, Alcman recognises the ambiguous power of desire to master a person's self-control. I argue that Astymeloisa's ability to reject this desire from her chorus and show her devotion to the city, publicly praises the virtues that she expresses and thereby promotes the solidarity of marriage. Alcman's comparison of *pothos,* sleep, and death, is used to describe the force of desire that a glance from Astymeloisa can inspire in her chorus.[97] As we read throughout the poem, the chorus long for Astymeloisa's love and proximity:

]α ἴδοιμ' αἴ πως με..ον φιλοῖ

ἆς]σον [ἰο]ῖσ' ἀπαλᾶς χηρὸς λάβοι,

αἶψά κ' [ἐγὼν ἱ]κέτις κήνας γενοίμαν·

....I were to see whether perchance she were to love me. If only she came nearer and took my soft hand, immediately I would become her suppliant.[98]

Clearly, the choruses' desire for Astymeloisa to return to them is very strong. Immediately after Alcman's powerful simile of desire, sleep, and death, we find the chorus sing, 'but Astymeloisa makes no answer to me.' Instead, Astymeloisa ignores the desire, which the chorus express for her and, holding her garland, elegantly continues with her dance. Next, Astymeloisa is described as moving through the *stratos* as 'darling of the people,' an epithet that reflects the meaning of her own name.[99] As the chorus sing of their love and desire for Astymeloisa, Alcman publicly shows her rejecting them before being integrated into the citizen body. As we see from Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion,* homoerotic desire and longing amongst chorus members, such as we find expressed in fragment 3, were a prominent part of *partheneia,* possibly constituting a significant feature of a Spartan girl's youth.[100] Yet here, despite the impassioned pleas of the chorus, we find that

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[97] Alcman, 3.61-63.
[98] Alcman, 3.79-81. Campbell, 1988, 380-381. For discussion of the language of supplication used here, see Davies, 1986, 13-14. Pedrick, 1974, 125-140, provides a broader study of supplication in archaic literature that helps set this in context.
[99] Alcman, 3.73-74.
[100] Alcman, 1.39-76.

Astymeloisa is able to turn her back on the chorus and join the citizens. In this manner, the poem provides an idealised symbolic representation that Astymeloisa's devotion to Sparta overcomes the desire of the chorus members for her. Alcman encourages a stable transition to marriage by displaying Astymeloisa's dedication to Sparta and her ability to reject the desire of her youthful female companions. She is actively shown leaving behind the homoerotic desires of her youth and being integrated into the Spartan citizenry. This ability to reject her chorus' desire in favour of the *polis*, suggests that Astymeloisa will carry this devotion to Sparta forward into her marriage.

Astymeloisa's physical integration into the *stratos* as she dances, confirms the success of her performance. In this regard, the work of the esteemed anthropologist Roy Rappaport can be particularly useful. Rappaport sought to define the terms audience and congregation with regard to ritual performance, concluding that a congregation required participation.[101] Whilst an audience can watch and contemplate what they see, a congregation is drawn into the performance by being required to participate. Alcman's utilisation of the civic space and Astymeloisa's movement amongst the assembled Spartan citizens marks the *stratos* out, by Rappaport's definition, as a congregation. They are an integral part of the performance, signifying the inclusion of Astymeloisa into their number. This gives the gathered citizen body an active role to play. By witnessing the dance and symbolically accepting Astymeloisa into their number, they become involved in recognising that she has performed her ritual successfully. Each citizen sees his fellows accept Astymeloisa, and as a part of the same congregation, accepts her himself. Essentially, through their involvement in the ritual, the congregation dramatise their own acceptance of Astymeloisa. The result is that all the gathered citizens have participated in a rite, which celebrates Astymeloisa's new adult status, and through their participation confirm her acceptance.

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[101] Rappaport, 1999, 39-41 and 135-137.

Aphrodite-Hera

This interaction of desire and marriage is also present through religious allusions in fragment 3, which suggest that Aphrodite and Hera were integrated into the poem. As a final point, I wish to argue that in addition to worshipping these goddesses because of their ability to help girls prepare for marriage, Alcman's poem also seeks to placate goddesses who epitomised dangerous qualities: in Aphrodite's case the ability to manipulate desire, and in Hera's, the nature of the goddess to be rebellious and vindictive in her marriage.

First, I shall briefly demonstrate that Aphrodite-Hera is the deity in Alcman's fragment 3. Claude Calame initially proposed that fragment 3 was performed in honour of Aphrodite-Hera, following Pausanias, who states that the dual deity had a statue on the Spartan Acropolis at which mothers would sacrifice before their daughter's marriage.[102] In order to support this case, Calame draws attention to the word πυλεών found in line 65, a garland that Astymeloisa holds as she performs the dance.[103] The first-century AD grammarian Pamphilus states that this was the specific term for a garland used by the Spartans in the worship of Hera.[104] Fragment 3 also exudes a strong focus on erotic desire, as we have seen in lines 61-63, and refers to Cinyras,[105] a mythical priest of

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[102] Pausanias, 3.13.9.

[103] Alcman, 3.65. Calame, 1977(2), 107-109 and 1981, 407.

[104] Athenaeus, 15.678a. Campbell, 1983, 3,8. also enters into an interesting piece of speculation, by asking if Antheia could have been inserted in line 8 of Fragment three. Antheia is one of the Graces specifically linked to garlands and Campbell uses her here, to suggest the girls are going to the assembly of 'Hera of the flowers (?).' Similarly, the presence of one of the Graces in the poem immediately makes one think of Aphrodite's paradigmatic chorus. However, there is very little evidence from the poem itself the Antheia appeared, meaning that this must be recognised as pure speculation. We also find πυλεών used by Alcman, in Fragment 60, by a female or female chorus making a devotion to an unnamed deity. The use of a female singular participle in line one indicates that the poem is being performed by girls.

[105] Astymeloisa's hair is said to be adorned with 'the moist charm of Cinyras,' a mythical king whom Pindar informs us was a priest of Aphrodite on Cyprus (Alcman, 3, 71-73. and Pindar, *Pythian*, 2.15-17). Pindar also links Cinyras to excellence in music, describing him as favoured by Apollo for his prowess in the dance (Pindar, *Pythian*, 2.13-17). He is mentioned fleetingly in the *Iliad*, as the king of Cyprus who gives an extravagant corselet as a gift to Agamemnon (Homer, *Iliad,* 11.20-23). In addition to this extravagant gift, Pindar also mentions his great wealth, whilst Alcman's contemporary, Tyrtaeus, describes Cinyras as the equal of Midas in terms of his fortune, creating the impression of an extremely prosperous king. Cinyras therefore appears to epitomise musical excellence, prosperity and devotion to Aphrodite. These qualities are all ideal for a chorus of

Aphrodite, further suggesting that Aphrodite was also alluded to in the poem.[106] The combination of Aphrodite, goddess of sexuality and desire, with Hera, primarily associated with marriage, seems to be a fitting combination for young women approaching marriage.

However, Aphrodite's social role is not restricted to kindly sexual initiatrix. As the goddess who controls sexuality and desire, Aphrodite also has the ability to alter social and political events. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* it is explicitly stated that Aphrodite has power over Zeus, in addition to gods and men.[107] Alcman certainly recognised the power of Aphrodite to inspire desire, claiming in fragment 59 that Eros was 'at the command of the Cyprian.'[108] This power over desire instils Aphrodite with the ability to bring mortals together and break down marriages, occasionally with serious political consequences. Indeed, in the *Odyssey,* Helen claims it was madness induced by Aphrodite that prompted her to leave Menelaus.[109] In book 3 of the *Iliad,* despite Helen's protestations, she is still powerless when Aphrodite looks to bring Paris to her.[110] Helen is unable to resist the sexual power of the goddess and the Trojan War is the result. Aphrodite, owing to the desire, which she controls, is a goddess capable of bringing much joy, but she also epitomises the dangerous sexual desire that is capable of inciting conflict. In the words of Paul Friedrich 'In short, she (Aphrodite) is the most potent of the goddesses,' owing to the universal influence that her erotic charms can have on both gods and men.[111]

Furthermore, as we have seen earlier*,* Hera does not always exemplify the faithful wife. In addition to Hera's plot to deceive Zeus through seduction in book 14, she frequently appears as an opponent to his plans throughout the *Iliad.* Homer also speaks of a mutinous attempt involving Hera, Athena, and Poseidon to capture Zeus, where the king of the gods is only saved through the

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girls approaching marriage, whilst the association of Cinyras to Astymeloisa adds splendour to what is a celebratory performance.
[106] Alcman, 3.61-63 and 3.71.
[107] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* 1-6 and 33-44.
[108] Alcman, 59.
[109] Homer, *Odyssey,* 4.261-264.
[110] Homer, *Iliad,* 3.381-446.
[111] Friedrich, 1978, 101. Friedrich developed 18 different criteria for judging the deities, basing his analysis on their appearance in archaic and classical texts. He concludes that Aphrodite is the most floral, insular, solar, golden, aquatic, subjective, beautiful, intimate with humans and she is the most associated with nymphs. She is particularly dominant in terms of fertility and creation. For a more recent study of Aphrodite and the role of erotic mythology and the goddesses power, see Rudhardt, 1986 and Breitenberger, 2007.

intervention of Thetis.[112] Despite her sexual fidelity, the Hera of the Homeric epics can be a jealous, deceptive, and vindictive wife.

These characteristics of Hera and Aphrodite are not ideal for young Spartan brides, however a potential rational for the dedication of fragment 3 to Aphrodite-Hera is provided by Steisichorus. The fragment, which focuses on the daughters of Tyndareus, reads:

οὕνεκα Τυνδάρεος ῥέζων ποκὰ πᾶσι θεοῖς μόνας λάθετ' ἠπιοδώρου Κύπριδος. Κείνα δὲ Τυνδαρέου κόρας χολωσαμένα διγάμους τε καὶ τριγάμους ἐτίθει καὶ λιπεσάνορας.

Because Tyndareos, sacrificing one day to all the gods, forgot only the kind-giving Cyprian; and bereft, in anger she made the daughters of Tyndareos twice-wed and thrice-wed and leavers of husbands.[113]

Stesichorus attributes the failure of Tyndareus' daughters' marriages and the violence that followed to failure to sacrifice Aphrodite. The damage caused, which has wide-ranging and violent political consequences, affects the whole of Greece. Stesichorus suggests, that when not offered the proper dedication, Aphrodite was viewed as being capable of inciting considerable conflict, by destroying marriages with her powers of sexual desire. This suggests that dedication to Aphrodite-Hera before marriage was an important feature in placating the divinities and guarding against the consequences of their wrath. With the appropriate dedications, Aphrodite can bring her pleasing aspects of sexuality to a marriage, whilst Hera, as wife of Zeus, is appropriate for worship before marriage because of her sexual fidelity and high-status. The religious allusions in fragment 3 suggest that Alcman was concerned with paying homage to Aphrodite-Hera, and thereby securing the deities support for the marriage. Alcman's focus on sexual violence and the consequences of woman stealing in several of his poetic fragments, suggest that he was concerned with limiting the potential for such violent acts, which appear as a historical reality in archaic Sparta. By placating Aphrodite-

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[112] Homer, *Iliad,* 1.396-406.
[113] Stesichorus, 223. Campbell, 1991, 156-157.

Hera in fragment 3, Alcman, once again, looks to ensure a successful marriage and civic stability by reducing the potential for conflict, which these two gods have the power to inspire.

Conclusions

The ritual performances, which we have seen in this final section on Alcman, represent the culmination of a Spartan *parthenos'* youth. Throughout this thesis, we have seen that Alcman uses mimesis, embodiment, and display to encourage *eunomia* at Sparta. *Parthenoi* have a powerful presence owing to their important social role. Their performances promote *eunomia* and Spartan custom, but also relate particularly to their own status as *parthenoi.* Naturally, in this context, marriage is of paramount importance, and subsequently the performance of marriage poetry serves as an important demonstration of *eunomia.* By publicly performing fragment 3, Alcman's chorus demonstrate that they have successfully made the transition to marriage, having avoided all of the dangerous threats to order which they encountered in *partheneia.* Whilst poems like the *Louvre Partheneion* help them to confront social tensions through the safe environment of ritual, the performance of wedding poetry displays their ability to overcome these problems and fulfil their social role. Marriage poetry is a display of the stabilising force of marriage Astymeloisa, embodies and performs the idealised Spartan *parthenos* making the transition to marriage, whilst the congregation of watching Spartans symbolically endorse her success.

Alcman clearly recognised the social importance of *parthenoi* to Spartan society. Over the past four chapters we have seen that they performed vocally in public, commanded a powerful voice of their own, and used performance to pass important social comment which helped to encourage *eunomia.* Their important economic and political status, in addition to the fact that they were often desirable young women, invited conflict and tension, a problem that ritual helped to confront. Finally, Alcman's poetry helped to represent the benefits of social order, a factor emphasised both in his *partheneia* and lastly in his wedding poetry. In summary, Alcman's poetry was essential to Spartan society, in that it encouraged *eunomia* and highlighted the important role of *parthenoi* for all Spartan society to see.

204

Chapter 6 - Sappho's Performance Context

In the first four chapters of this thesis we have seen that *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta could sing with authority on a variety of political and social themes. Elements of the economic and political situation at Sparta made their performance highly significant for encouraging civic order. In this chapter and throughout the rest of this thesis, I now move to archaic Lesbos, an island that certainly did not share all of Sparta's customs, and focus on the poetry of Sappho.

The aim of these chapters is to demonstrate that much of Sappho's poetry was also politically motivated and shaped by the social climate in which it was composed. Despite differences between archaic Sparta and Mytilene, I also hope to show that there was a certain overlap in political themes that choruses of young women could perform. Furthermore, I hope to make it clear that much of Sappho's poetry could be performed publicly, in ritual contexts and in front of men, all of which contributed to Sappho dealing with political themes in a similar way to male poets. I shall argue that we see traces of common archaic political philosophy found in other archaic poets such as Solon and Theognis, whilst suggesting that particular events, which took place in archaic Mytilene, provided the motivation behind many of her poems.

As with Alcman, we shall see that Sappho's poetry was often composed with the intention of confronting social tensions that she encountered in her everyday life. Although the political climate of Mytilene was different, Sappho's poetry still acted a means of expressing concerns, overcoming anxieties, and dealing with the world in which she lived. Again, we shall see that *parthenoi* sing both of events that were significant to their whole community and that had particular relevance to themselves. It is my hope that this chapter will see more attention focused on Sappho as a poet who discussed political themes in her poetry, often with men present. Far from being secluded and unheard, we see that Sappho's chorus of young girls could frequently address a variety of political themes in their songs.

In order to analyse the important social functions of Sappho's chorally performed poetry, it is first important to deal with the difficult issue of establishing which Sapphic poems should be

considered to have had a public choral performance context. In this section, I shall briefly look at the evidence for Sappho's poetry being chorally performed and assess some more specific performance contexts for various poems. Finally, I shall address the difficult question of whether Sappho's poetry should be considered to have an 'educational' aspect and what its potential social value might have been. The following three points will be addressed in turn:

1) What evidence do we have that some of Sappho's poems were chorally performed?

2) In what contexts might Sappho's poetry have been performed? What evidence do we possess which suggests that Sappho's poetry was politically motivated?

3) Are scholars right to talk about Sappho's poetry as 'educational?' What were the social values of Sappho's publicly performed poetry?

With this groundwork done and the relevant contexts established, I shall proceed to discuss some more specific socio-political aspects of Sappho's poetry in the next two chapters.

6.1 Sappho's Chorus

Before analyzing potential performance contexts and social themes, it is first necessary to make clear that much of Sappho's poetry would have been appropriate for public choral performance. This has been an area of debate for some time, although in recent years there has been a growing consensus that much of Sappho's poetry was appropriate for a chorus. The counterview was most famously encapsulated in the 1950's by Denys Page.[1] He wrote:

> There is no evidence or indication that any of Sappho's poetry.... was designed for presentation by herself or others on a formal or ceremonial occasion, public or private.... all or almost all of her poems were recited by herself informally to her companions.[2]

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[1] Page, 1955, 119.
[2] Page, 1955, 119. Kirkwood, 1974, 100-149 echoes this view and calls Sappho's poetry 'essentially non-political.'

More recently, scholars such as Calame, Hallett, and Lardinois have argued that many of Sappho's poems may have been performed by a chorus.[3] Lardinois has been the most enthusiastic advocate of the position – in conclusion to his 1996 article entitle 'Who Sang Sappho's Songs' he wrote:

> No matter how one reads Sappho's songs, it is important to realise that most of them probably were intended to be performed in public with the help of choruses.[4]

In a number of extensive articles, Lardinois has suggested that Sappho's poetry was chorally performed in a several different contexts: the poet singing while a chorus danced in accompaniment, poetic exchanges between Sappho and another singer, or the chorus participating in a complete performance of singing and dancing.[5] As we shall see, there is ample evidence to suggest that Lardinois is correct.

Certainly early authorities on Sappho's poetry imagined her as leading choruses. Indeed, the earliest iconographic representations of Sappho, which begin to appear in fifth-century Athens, show her accompanied by young girls or apparently involved in *komos*-style festivities.[6] Unfortunately, all the authors who comment on the performance of Sappho's poetry were writing centuries after her death, yet it is interesting to note that none of them imagines her as a purely monodic poet. In the third-century BC, the female poet Nossis wished to send a message to Sappho on Lesbos with her 'beautiful choruses.'[7] An anonymous author in the Palatine Anthology describes Sappho leading a chorus of young Lesbian women while playing the lyre.[8] Similarly, Philostratus writing in the third-century AD, imagines a scene in which an older poetess leads a young group of girls in song, and is reminded of Sappho.[9] The Souda, written one and a half thousand years after

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[3] Calame, 1996, 113-124; Hallett, 1996, 132-142; Lardinois, 1994, 57-84; and 1996, 113-124.
[4] Lardinois, 1996, 172.
[5] Lardinois, 1996, 170. For Lardinois' discussion of potential performance contexts, see 1994, 1996 and 2009 articles.
[6] The Bochum Krater, INV S, 508; Warsaw Kalpis, INV. 142333. ARV300, National Museum, Warsaw; The Vari Hydra, National Archaeological Museum at Athens, INV1260.
[7] Nossis, *Epigram,* 11.1.
[8] AP, 9.189.
[9] Philostratus, *Imagines,* 2.1.1-3.

Sappho's death in the tenth-century AD, states that her body of material comprised nine books of lyric songs, as well as epigrams, elegiacs, iambics, and solo-songs.[10]

However, the best evidence for Sappho's poetry being performed chorally comes from the poems themselves. This evidence has not always been recognised. At first glance, the language that Sappho uses in her poems appears to support the concept that her poetry was designed for her own personal gratification. Indeed, in several poems, she actually refers to herself by name, and the use of the first person singular in her poetry is commonplace.[11] However, as Lardinois has demonstrated extensively, this does not preclude the poetry from being performed by individuals other than the poet.[12] Alcman refers to himself in three poems (17, 39, and 95b) which may well have been designed for young women and which could have been performed by a chorus.[13] Alcman's poetry also demonstrates that the first person singular can be used when a group of girls is performing the poetry.[14] In the *Louvre Partheneion* we read:

[ἐ]γὼν μὲν αὐτὰ

παρσένος μάταν ἀπὸ θράνω λέλακα

γλαύξ· ἐγώ[ν] δὲ τᾶι μὲν Ἀώτι μάλιστα

ϝανδάνην ἐρῶ·

I am myself am only a girl screeching pointlessly, an owl from a rafter; but even so I long to please Aotis most of all.[15]

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[10] Souda, s.v. *Sappho.*

[11] Sappho mentions herself explicitly in 1; 65; 94; and 133.

[12] Lardinois, 1996, 160-164.

[13] Alcman, 17, 39, and 95. The content is not conclusive, but one such poem refers to learning to sing beautifully like a bird, whilst another concerns a desire to obtain a tripod which could be prize for choral competition. Campbell, 1983, 411 also mentions the potential use of the tripod as a choral prize.

[14] For example Alcman, 1.39-43; ἐγὼν δ' ἀείδω Ἀγιδῶς τὸ φῶς· ὁρῶ ϝ' ὥτ' ἄλιον, ὄνπερ ἅμιν Ἀγιδὼ μαρτύρεται φαίνην· Stehle, 1996, 143 also provides a discussion of this.

[15] Alcman, 1.85-88. Campbell, 1988, 368-369.

Despite the extensive use of the first person singular, less than ten lines later the girls declare 'this our choir of ten sings as well as eleven girls.'[16] Clearly, the first person singular could be used when a chorus was performing the lyrics. Indeed, this phenomenon is common in Greek lyric poetry or in the tragic chorus.[17] It is common for the first person singular to refer to larger groups, but when the first person plural is used the group will always include several individuals.[18] Therefore, although the first person singular in Sappho can have several uses, it seems likely that the first person plural was always designed to be sung by more than one person. With this in mind, it seems highly likely that fragments 6, 19, 27, 30, 96, and 140a, which all make use of the first person plural, were all composed for the singing voice of a group.[19] In some of these fragments, such as fragments 27 and 30, an appropriate choral performance context is clear: 30 begins:

νύκτ[...].

πάρθενοι δ[

παννυχ ίσδο ι[σ]αι[

σὰν ἀείδοιεν φ[ιλότατα καὶ νύμ-

φὰς ἰοκόλπω.

ἀλλ᾽ ἐγέρθεις, ἠϊθ[εοις

στεῖχε σοὶς ὑμάλικ[ας, ὢς ἐλάσσω

ἤπερ ὄσσον ἀ λιγύφω[νος ὄρνις

ὔπνον [ἴ]δωμεν

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[16] Alcman, 1.96-99.
[17] Kaimino, 1970, 251, on the chorus making reference to themselves in the first person singular.
[18] Lardinois, 1996, 162-169.
[19] Stehle, 1997, 279-280, has also pointed out that the use of the plural female vocative in fragment 43 indicates the presence of a group of women.

...night...*parthenoi*...all night long...might sing of the love between you and the violet-robed bride. Come, wake up: go and fetch the young men of your own age, so that we may see less sleep than the clear-voiced bird.[20]

Here we have a chorus who appear to be singing a wedding song soon to be joined by their male contemporaries, a situation that we have seen was common across Greece.[21]

Fragment 140a also suggests a clear performance context, although the setting is rather different:

κατθνάσκει, Κυθέρη', ἄβρος Ἄδωνις· τί κε θεῖμεν;

καττύπτεσθε, κόραι, καὶ κατερείκεσθε κίθωνας.

Delicate Adonis is Dying, Cytherea; What are we to do?

Beat your breasts, girls, and tear your clothes.[22]

Here we have a ritual lament for Adonis, with a group of female singers mourning before receiving a reply from a voice representing Aphrodite. Fragment 6, though very badly fragmented, suggests that females may be going to see a golden-armed deity, whilst 19 appears to mention offerings.[23] The condition of the text makes firm conclusions impossible, but the ritual context that these fragments suggest would be entirely appropriate for a chorus. Two other apparent ritual songs, fragments 2 and 17, also give hints that they may have been composed for a chorus. Athenaeus follows fragment 2, a poem describing a ritual site for Aphrodite, with the words 'for these my friends and yours,' indicating the presence of a group who may have been involved in the song.[24] Fragment 17, a hymn

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[20] Sappho, 30. Campbell, 1982, 78-79 (adapted).

[21] For examples see: Homer, *Odyssey,* 23.130-149; Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles,* 270-285; Sappho, 44.13-34; and Plato, *Laws,* 6.771e and 772a.

[22] Sappho, 140a. Campbell, 1982. 154-155.

[23] Sappho 6 and 19, based on reconstructions from Campbell, 1983, 63 and 71.

[24] Athenaeus, 463e. Nagy, 2007, 211-263, suggests that the performance of this song, particularly with the ending given by Athenaeus, would have been entirely appropriate for male sympotic performance.

which calls on Hera, contains the tantalising π]αρθ[εν and equally fragmentary words which hint at going to a shrine.[25] Possibly these fragments were also composed with choral performance at a ritual setting in mind.

Another strong indication that Sappho composed poetry to be accompanied by group performance is provided by the newly reconstructed fragment 58. The 'New Sappho' explicitly refers to a group of *paides* involved in performance. The opening lines read:

ὔμμες πεδὰ Μοίσαν ἰ]οκ[ό]λπων κάλα δῶρα, παῖδες

σπουδάσδετε καὶ τὰ]ν φιλάοιδον λιγύραν χελύνναν.

Pursue the violet-laden Muses handsome gift,

My children, and the loud-voiced lyre so dear to song:[26]

Clearly, Sappho addresses a group of *paides* with instructions to pursue the gifts of the Muses. Sappho follows this with a comparison between the *paides,* and her own inability to participate now that she is old, her limbs, once 'nimble in the dance like little fawns,' now offering her no support.[27] Certainly, the contrasts of the poem would work best if the *paides* were actually dancing.[28] In this poem, it appears we have an explicit example that illustrates Sappho's poetry was accompanied by performance. In the words of Lardinois:

> The poem suggests that Sappho performed her poetry in public or semi-public settings and not
> in the privacy of her own home. Sappho may have been the singer of the song, but she was
> probably supported by a group of young girls, the *paides* mentioned in line 1, who were
> dancing while she was singing.

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[25] Sappho, 17.14.
[26] Sappho, 58.1-2. Obbink, 2009, 15.
[27] Sappho, 58, 1-6.
[28] This certainly appears to be the case with Alcman's very similar fragment 26 which begins: 'No longer, honey-toned, strong-voiced *parthenoi,* can my limbs carry me.' Antigonus of Carystus, *Marvels*, 23, (recorder of the fragment) claims that Alcman is making a contrast between his own old age and dancing choirs of girls.

The fact that fragment 58 was performed by or with a chorus immediately begs the question as to what the performance context of a poem that sees a chorus of *paides* discuss death and old age might be.[29] For the moment, my intention has merely been to show we have good reason to believe that some of Sappho's poems were performed chorally, but I shall return to this question in a later chapter.

Up to this point, we have seen several of Sappho's poems were appropriate for public choral performance under a variety of circumstances – marital, ritual, or otherwise. The list of poems discussed above is by no means exhaustive – in most cases, we have to admit to uncertainty over how Sappho's poetry was performed owing to a lack of evidence. My purpose has simply been to demonstrate that we must recognise the reality that several of Sappho's songs would be appropriate for performance in a number of different contexts. I shall now explore some of these potential contexts in more detail.

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[29] Lardinois, 2010, 51-53, suggests a wedding performance: 'The comparison of the first-person speaker with the unhappy Tithonus would also contrast with the usual comparisons of bride and groom with great heroes and heroines in other wedding songs, while at the same time, perhaps, entailing a warning for the happy couple that they too, in time, will grow old.'

6.2 Performance Contexts

In this section, my intention is to demonstrate the public nature of much of Sappho's choral performance, but also to make clear that she was a poet who dealt with a wide range of topics and genre, many of which were inherently political. Yatromanolakis has recently suggested that 'gender taxonomies imposed on Sappho's poetry have been facts and ideas that we all take for granted and hardly pause to ponder.'[30] Here I shall consider potential contexts in more details. I argue that we find social, political, and philosophical themes in Sappho's poetry alongside a variety of different performance contexts. This will not only help to situate Sappho's material in context, but also to tackle the difficult issues surrounding Sappho's intentions for her poetry.

Sappho's Marriage Songs

The area in which we find most evidence for the public choral performance of Sappho's poetry is the wedding. As we would expect, young girls are at the forefront of these performances both as performers and as participants. Fragments 27, 30, 44, 107, 112, and 114 all feature *parthenoi* in what appear to be wedding songs.[31] Fragment 108V also appears to mention *korai* in a wedding context. In addition to *parthenoi* and *korai*, Sappho occasionally also uses *pais* to refer to a young woman in this context. *Pais* appears in fragment 27 alongside *parthenoi,* as well as in 103, 104a, and 113. Sappho's fragment 113, specifically described by Dionysus of Halicarnassus as a wedding song, reads:

οὐ γὰρ † ἐτέρα νῦν † πάις ὦ γάμβρε τεαύτα

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[30] Yatromanolakis, 2004, 70.

[31] Stehle, 1997, also argues that 56 should be included in this list on the basis of its similarities to 113, however there is nothing else in this fragment which indicates an association with a wedding and the qualities which the girl possesses are not specified. In addition, *parthenoi* appear in a mythical or ritual context in 17 and 44A, as does the term *korai* in 53 and 140A. Fragment 153 also establishes that the *parthenoi* are 'sweet voiced,' hinting that they may have performed chorally together.

For, Bridegroom, there (was?) never another girl like this one.[32]

As we saw in the first chapter, the use of *pais* to refer to the bride suggests some flexibility in Sappho's use of terminology for referring to young girls and makes clear that we should not be surprised to find it in her wedding poetry. In addition, 141 and 161 also both mention the bridegroom prominently, the former in a mythic context, and it is logical to add them to this list of wedding related songs.

This provides us with a substantial list of songs that may have been performed in a wedding context. Sappho's weddings songs, numbered 103-117 in Campbell's collection, plus 27, 30, 44, 141, and 161 all refer explicitly to weddings and may be counted as appropriate for marriage.[33] Not only do they provide us with a substantial body of evidence for studying the content of marriage songs but they also provide us with some useful hints concerning the performance context of marriage poetry.

Sappho's hymn to Hector and Andromache shows *parthenoi* most clearly in a marital context. They sing at the wedding to musical accompaniment as the celebrations spill into the streets:

λιγέ]ως δ' ἄρα πάρ[θενοι

ἄειδον μέλος ἄγν[ον, ἴκα]νε δ' ἐς αἴθ[ερα

ἄχω θεσπεσία γελ[

…and *parthenoi* sang clearly a holy song, and a marvellous echo reached the sky.[34]

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[32] Sappho, 113. Campbell, 1982, 136-137.
[33] See Contiades-Tsitsoni, 1990, 69-71 and Ferrari, 2010, 117-33 for discussion of classification of Sappho's wedding songs.
[34] Sappho, 44.25-26. Campbell, 1982, 88-89 (adapted).

Here the performance of *parthenoi* forms an important part of the marital celebrations that fill the streets of Troy. Fragment 30, quoted above, also provides us with some more details that help to develop this picture. The fragment tells us a little about marriage practice on archaic Lesbos. The girls who perform wish to sing in praise of the bride and groom, a feature that we have seen consistently in marriage poetry. Furthermore, the poem implies that the girls will take part in a nocturnal performance alongside young men their own age. It appears that, as elsewhere, marriage performances on Lesbos mixed together choruses of unmarried boys and girls.[35] This image of female public performance at weddings conforms to what we find in other archaic and classical texts. Women are equally prominent at the wedding feasts on Homer's 'Shield of Achilles,' and Hesiod's *Shield of Heracles.*[36] The fake wedding feast that Odysseus holds to cover up the slaughter which has occurred in his palace also provides us with an excellent example that both sexes mingled together during the celebrations.[37] The hall is said to resound with the sounds of men and woman dancing together as the minstrel plays in accompaniment. Sappho's fragments 27 and 44 confirm that marriage was a highly public occasion on archaic Lesbos, just as it was across Greece.

To conclude, we clearly have a substantial body of Sapphic wedding songs to work with. Fragments 103-117, 27, 30, 44, 141, and 161 can offer us a rare insight into the public performance of Sappho's poetry and the nature of marriage poetry on archaic Lesbos. We have already seen that Alcman's publicly performed wedding poetry reflected the social and political importance of the institution. In the following chapter, we shall see that Sappho's poems also reflect the importance of the institution, frequently emphasising the varied reasons why marriage was of real political importance to archaic Lesbian society.

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[35] For examples of mixed dances at weddings, see: Homer, *Odyssey,* 23.130-149; Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles,* 270-285; and Sappho, 44.13-34.

[36] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.490-496 and Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles,* 270-285. See also Pindar, *Pythian,* 3.16-19.

[37] Homer, *Odyssey*, 23.130-149.

Political Poetry

First, however, we need to consider other public forms of Sappho's poetry. That Sappho's marriage poetry could have a public choral purpose is relatively certain, but other performance contexts are harder to tease out. However, in recent years there has been steady growth in the opinion that some of Sappho's surviving fragments dealt with social, philosophical, or political themes that would have been well suited to a public audience, probably featuring men.[38] As I shall briefly demonstrate, it has become increasingly clear that we should recognise that Sappho did have an awareness of the political events that took place around her and that these events became themes for her poetry.

Several of Sappho's poems give us snippets of evidence indicating that she was aware of the factional rivalries that existed at Mytilene. These fragments criticise girls for shifting their allegiance to other groups or directly attack female figures in other families. Fragment 71 provides a good example:

]μισσε Μίκα

]ελα[. .]ἀλλά σ' ἔγωὐκ ἐάσω

]ν̣ φιλότ[ατ'] ἤλεο Πενθιλήαν[

]δα κα[κό]τροπ',

Mica … you chose the friendship of the ladies of the house of Penthilus … you villain.[39]

Such a statement probably reflects the position of Sappho and her family against the Penthilidae, the traditional ruling family of Mytilene. Andromeda, whom Ferrari identifies as a Penthilid, is another who comes in for regular criticism with fragments 57, 68, 155, and possibly 99 attacking her or her

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[38] For examples see Aloni, 1997; Parker, 2005; Nagy, 2007; Greene, 2008; and Ferrari, 2010. Assessing the position of Sappho's family is a speculative task – Ferrari, 2010, 17-18 and Kivolo, 2010, provide useful assessments of the evidence.

[39] Sappho, 71.1-4. Campbell, 1982, 106-107.

family.[40] Such fragments have been the basis of a study by Antonio Aloni who concludes that many of Sappho's poems have characteristics that we would not be surprised to see in iambic poetry.[41] As Aloni says, whilst the style, metre, and content of Sappho's poetry is Lesbian, much of the invective contained within would not look out of place in Archilochus.[42] Certainly, these fragments contain the scornful abuse and vitriolic tone that characterise much iambic poetry, and in fragment 99 the Penthilidae appear in close proximity to an *olisbos* suggesting that Sappho may have indulged in some sexual slurs as well.[43] Despite its notorious difficulty as a source, the Souda also notes that Sappho did compose iambic poetry.[44] For Aloni Sappho's iambic-style aggression 'helps to strengthen the identity and the solidarity of the audience,'[45] against political rivals.

Naturally, it is very difficult to establish a precise performance context for any of these fragments. However, Aloni is surely correct to suppose that they were designed for an audience and in suggesting that we have no reason to suppose automatically that males were not present.[46] Poetry such as this, which openly attacks other individuals and families, can certainly have the effect of uniting a group in a common purpose. All the fragments above are critical of the Penthilidae and it is likely that Sappho's invective against them represents her family's own political agenda at the time of composition. The precise composition of that audience and the breadth of the performance context must sadly remain open to speculation. What does appear clear is that some of Sappho's poetry was inspired by the political circumstance in which it was composed.

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[40] Sappho, 57, and 155. Ferrari, 2010, 23-24.

[41] Aloni, 1997, LXVI-LXXV.

[42] Aloni, 1997, LXX: 'D'altra parte l'invettiva, nelle sue diverse forme, e la stresse valenze e gli stressi obiettivi di quella di Archiloco.' The term 'iambic' appears originally to have been used to refer to a particular type of poetry rather than specific metre. Archilochus, 215, suggests a broad range of uses, whilst Archilochus, test, 3 indicates that the content of a poem defined the extent to which it was iambic. A poem is 'too iambic' when its content was too aggressive or obscene. Gerber, 1999, 1 provides a succinct introduction.

[43] Sappho, 99(a). In Campbell's Loeb translation (1982, 125) he notes that the *olisbos* phrase has been variously translated as 'women who use the dildo' or 'strings which welcome the plectrum.' The text is uncertain. The mention of a dildo in a iambic context has the effect of making the Penthilid women appear licentious and their men impotent. For further discussion, see Ferrari, 2010, 81-84.

[44] Souda, s.v. *Sappho.*

[45] Aloni, 2001, 29.

[46] Aloni, 1997, LXVI-LXXV.

Ritual Performance

As I suggested earlier, several of Sappho's poems (2, 6, 17, 19, and 140(a)) are all suggestive of group female performance in a ritual setting. Of these, the fragmentary passages of 17 and 140(a) offer us a particularly good chance to explore the ritual significance of the poetry. A study of 140(a) will form a significant part of the final chapter, but here I wish to explore fragment 17 in more detail to suggest some important features about the ritual performance of Sappho's poetry. We have seen through the poetry of Alcman and Pindar that the performance of *parthenoi* in a ritual setting could be a forum for political comment, and here, I want to suggest that traces of political thought can be seen in some of Sappho's ritual poetry.

In the case of fragment 17, we have good evidence to reconstruct the site of the performance. Alcaeus tells us that female ritual and performance took place at probably the most significant religious site on Lesbos. In fragment 129, Alcaeus speaks of a precinct dedicated to Zeus, Dionysus, and (in all probability) Hera that was held in common by all the *poleis* on Lesbos:

] ... ϱά.α τόδε Λέσβιοι

. . .]. . . . εὔδειλον τέμενος μέγα

ξῦνον κά[τε]σσαν ἐν δὲ βώμοις

ἀθανάτων μακάϱων ἔθηκαν

κἀπωνύμασσαν ἀντίαον Δία

σὲ δ' Αἰολήιαν [κ]υδαλίμαν θέον

πάντων γενέθλαν, τὸν δὲ τέϱτον

τόνδε κεμήλιον ὠνύμασσ[α]ν

Ζόννυσσον ὠμήσταν.

....the Lesbians established the great conspicuous precinct to be held in common, and put in it alters of blessed immortals, and they entitled Zeus God of Suppliants and you, the Aeolian, Glorious Goddess, Mother of All, and this third they named Kemelios, Dionysus, eater of raw flesh.[47]

The location of the shrine has been identified by Louis Robert at the modern day town of Mesa – as the name suggests (Mesa is derived from the Greek *meson* = middle), a location in the centre of the island convenient for all of the *poleis* to converge.[48] Alcaeus goes on to curse Pittacus and pray to the gods to relieve him from exile, a theme that is also central to fragment 130B. In 130B, Alcaeus once again situates himself in exile and mentions the 'precinct of the blessed gods,'[49] before going on to describe an event that takes place there:

ὄππαι Λ[εσβί]αδες κριννόμεναι φύαν

πώλεντ᾽ ἐλκεσίπεπλοι, περὶ δὲ βρέμει

ἄχω θεσπεσία γυναίκων

ἴρα[ς ὀ]λολύγας ἐνιαυσίας

…where Lesbian women with trailing robes go to and fro being judged for beauty, and around rings the marvellous sound of the sacred yearly shout of women.[50]

At the communal ritual space on Lesbos, a location to which Alcaeus flees as an exile to pray and curse his enemy, we find evidence that female performance and beauty contests took place at a regular annual occasion. That Sappho herself composed for performance at the shrine is confirmed by her own fragment 17:

[47] Alcaeus, 129.1-9. Campbell, 1982, 298-299.
[48] Robert, 1960; See also Nagy, 2007, 212-214.
[49] Alcaeus, 130B.1-16.
[50] Alcaeus, 130B.17-20. The beauty contests for women are also attested by a scholiast on *Iliad,* 9.129 who confirms that they took place in a precinct of Hera.

πλάσιον δή μ᾿ [εὐχομέναι φανείη,

πότνι᾿ Ἤρα, σὰ χ[αρίεσσα μόρφα,

τὰν ἀράταν Ἀτ[ρέιδαι   κλῆ

τοι βασίληες.

ἐκτελέσσαντες μ[άλα πόλλ᾿ ἄεθλα,

πρῶτα μὲν πὲρ᾿Ἴ[λιον, ἔν τε πόντωι

τυίδ᾿ ἀπορμάθεν[τες ὄδον περαίνην

οὐκ ἐδύναντο

πρὶν σὲ καὶ Δί᾿ ἀντ[ίαον κάλεσσαι

καὶ Θυώνας ἰμε[ρόεντα παῖδα.

νῦν δὲ κ[ἄμοι πραυμένης ἄρηξον

κὰτ τὸ πάλ[αιον.

ἄγνα καὶ κά[λα

π]αρθ[εν

ἀ]μφι.[

ἔμμενα[ι

ἶ]ρ᾿ ἀπίκε[σθαι

Let your (graceful form appear) near me (while I pray), lady Hera, to whom the Atridae,

(illustrious) kings, made prayer (?); after accomplishing (many labours), first around (Ilium,

then on the sea), they started out to this island, but could not (complete their journey) until

they (called on) you and Zeus the god of suppliants and Thyone's lovely (son); now (be

gracious and help me) in accordance with that ancient precedent. Holy and fair … *parthen(oi)* … to be … to reach (the shrine?).[51]

The presence of $\alpha\varrho\theta$ near the end of the fragment, supplemented by Campbell as $\pi]\alpha\varrho\theta[\varepsilon\nu,$ hints that *parthenoi* may have been involved in the performance of this poem. The fragmentary nature of these lines makes certainty impossible, but Campbell's use of *parthenoi* remains a plausible reconstruction, especially considering Alcaeus' comment that women would perform at the sanctuary. What can be said with more certainty is that the fragment provides a strong indication that Sappho composed for performance at the sanctuary. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that Sappho composed poetry for performance at a major ritual site that held significance as a communal space for the *polis* of Mytilene and the entire island of Lesbos. Clearly, Alcaeus' poetry performed at this site is politically loaded and it therefore seems logical to ask whether any similar political themes can be seen in Sappho's fragment 17.

The setting may also give us some assistance in locating the meaning of Sappho's prayer, which I believe did carry significant political undertones. In the footnotes to the Loeb translation of this poem, Campbell speculates that Sappho may be praying for a safe sea journey for persons whom the fragmentary nature of the papyrus denies us knowledge.[52] Campbell bases this deduction on the passage of the *Odyssey* to which Sappho's fragment 17 refers: Nestor tells Telemachus about the struggles encountered by the Greeks when voyaging back from Troy, mentioning Lesbos specifically as a place where they prayed to the gods for assistance.[53] We have a precedent for Sappho praying for a safe return, when she asks the Nereids for the safe return of her brother.[54] Yet, fragment 17 does not demand this interpretation and there are some obvious differences with fragment 5. Most obviously, fragment 5 prays specifically to sea-based divinities, but it also seems odd that Sappho should pray for a sea voyage with a chorus of *parthenoi* for support, particulary at a major communal shrine.

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[51] Sappho, 17. Campbell, 1982, 69-69.
[52] Campbell, 1982, 69, n3.
[53] Homer, *Odyssey,* 3.130-200.
[54] Sappho, 5.

Furthermore, the passage from the *Odyssey* suggests another interpretation. Nestor relates that the Greeks had been thrown into strife by quarrels between Agamemnon and Menelaus.[55] With Agamemnon wishing to stay longer at Troy to make sacrifices for Athena and Menelaus in a hurry to leave, the Greeks are divided and scattered. Some remain with Agamemnon and the other faction attempt to sail home. Nestor tells Telemachus that the Greeks prayed at Lesbos, asking the best course to get home safely when they were uncertain how to proceed. It is only after asking which path they should follow while at Lesbos that Nestor and his companions are able to sail safely home. Meanwhile, Agamemnon's brutal fate is the last thing that Nestor describes. In addition, although the text is fragmentary, there appears to be a notable difference between the version in the *Odyssey* and what we find in fragment 17. Homer does not have the Atridae themselves call at Lesbos, but Sappho's version in fragment 17 seems to place the Atridae themselves at the shrine.[56] In the *Odyssey,* Agamemnon is absent from this part of the voyage and Menelaus passes Lesbos as the prayers to the gods are taking place. It seems that Sappho's fragment 17 may reflect a local tradition, which gave added importance to the Homeric episode by placing the Atridae on the island.

The political implications of this episode can be related to the turmoil that beset archaic Mytilene. We have already seen that Alcaeus used the shrine as a sight for political performance, and it seems plausible that Sappho may have had a similar intention. The precedent of the quarrelling Homeric heroes may have served as a good point of comparison for Mytilene's own factional rivalries. Mytilene was clearly divided into warring factions, just as the heroes of the Trojan War found themselves split and scattered as they travelled home. Like the Greeks trying to sail safely home from Troy, Sappho may have been asking for the god's assistance to negotiate the difficult political situation that her compatriots faced. The lacunae in fragment 17 make certainty impossible, but it is plausible that Sappho sought salvation for her own faction through consultation at the shrine, just as Nestor relates that the Greeks with him were saved through prayer on Lesbos. That Nestor's tale ends with the death of Agamemnon, whose descendents, the Penthilidae, Sappho rails against elsewhere, may have added an extra layer of meaning to those who witnessed the performance.[57] Certainly, as Rene Gangé has recently discussed, Alcaeus would link Pittacus to the

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[55] Homer, *Odyssey,* 3.130-200.
[56] Sappho, 17.1-12.
[57] Sappho condemns Mica for choosing the friendship of the Penthilids, descended from the Atridae, in fragment 71.

Atridae when he wanted to attack him, singling out the descendants of Agamemnon as a cursed group.[58]

Fragment 17 strongly suggests that Sappho composed for performance at a major religious site on archaic Lesbos and I have argued that, although we cannot be certain, it is quite possible that the poem was politically motivated. Fragments 2, 6, 19, and 140(a) all hint that, rather than fragment 17 being an isolated example, several of Sappho's poems were suitable for ritual performance. Once again, we have evidence for public performance with fragment 17 hinting that such a performance also provided a forum in which to reflect on social and political concerns, potentially with *parthenoi* as important performers.

Political Reflections

In this section, I want to look more generally at the tone and content of some Sapphic fragments that offer a few clues as to their context. As Ellen Greene has pointed out, many of Sappho's fragments contain philosophical reflections that would not look out of place in the corpus of a male poet.[59] Far from dealing with solely 'feminine concerns,' Sappho looks to examine questions of character, beauty, and the nature of a good life. Furthermore, I would like to suggest that Sappho sometimes expresses sentiments and uses language that has distinctly political overtones. Fragments 50 and 148 are both good examples:

ὀ μὲν γὰρ κάλος ὄσσον ἴδην πέλεται <κάλος>,

ὀ δὲ κἄγαθος αὔτικα καὶ κάλος ἔσσεται.

For he that is beautiful is beautiful as far as appearances go, while he that is good will consequently also be beautiful.

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[58] Alcaeus, 70.4-9. Gangé, 2009, 39-43.
[59] Greene, 2008, 35-38. In Greene's words: 'Sappho is not merely interested in the private and domestic concerns typically associated with women in archaic Greek culture.' Contrast with Bowman, 2004, 1-27.

ὁ πλοῦτος ἄνευ † ἀρέτας οὐκ ἀσίνης πάροικος

ἀ δ' ἀμφοτέρων κρᾶσις †εὐδαιμονίας ἔχει τὸ ἄκρον†

Wealth without virtue is no harmless neighbour. The blending of both brings the height of happiness.[60]

Both of these fragments offer reflections on virtue and goodness, and one might also note that, in the first, the advice concerns a male. Stehle has pointed out that such fragments have 'a moral tone,' which form part of philosophical reflections on beauty and goodness. However, there is also evidence to suggest that these fragments were more specifically political.[61] If we compare these fragments with poetry that is openly accepted as being political then we see interesting results. Theognis comments on marriage between traditional elites and new wealth run as follows:

οὐδὲ γυνὴ κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀναίνεται εἶναι ἄκοιτις

  πλουσίου, ἀλλ' ἀφνεὸν βούλεται ἀντ' ἀγαθοῦ.

χρήματα μὲν τιμῶσι· καὶ ἐκ κακοῦ ἐσθλὸς ἔγημε

  καὶ κακὸς ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ· πλοῦτος ἔμειξε γένος.

οὕτω μὴ θαύμαζε γένος, Πολυπαΐδη, ἀστῶν

  μαυροῦσθαι· σὺν γὰρ μίσγεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖς.

Nor does a woman refuse to be the husband of a man who is rich, but she wants a wealthy man instead of one who is noble. It is money people honour; one who is noble marries the daughter of one who is base and one who is base marries the daughter of one who is noble. Wealth has mixed up blood. And so, Polypaides, do not be surprised that the townsmen's stock is becoming enfeebled, since what is noble is mixing with what is base.[62]

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[60] Fragments 50 and 148. Campbell, 1982, 96-97 and 160-161. See also fragment 3.
[61] Stehle, 2009, 149-150.
[62] Theognis, 186-192. Gerber, 199, 200-201 (adapted).

Theognis claims that seeking wealth above being *agathos* corrupts society, particuarly when the *kakoi* mix with *agathoi* for financial reasons. Solon expresses similar sentiments; whilst wealth in itself is not an evil, disorder comes when men attempt to acquire it unjustly.[63] Sappho's views in fragment 148 are very similar - when wealth and virtue are combined *eudaimonia* follows, but without *aretē,* negative consequences will surely follow. Certainly, there is evidence that suggests that Sappho was from elite society: Herodotus informs us that her brother Charaxus was a wealthy merchant who was able to pay a large sum of money to free an Egyptian courtesan named Rhodopis.[64] Her other brother Larichus was said to have held a high status position as a wine-pourer.[65] Both suggest a family of wealth and some distinction. Perhaps more significantly she was a woman with time to write poetry, suggesting that she was not overly burdened with labours. Sappho was a member of elite society living in an atmosphere of *habrosyne,* and in this context, Sappho's fragment 148 reads like an extremely political statement. When we consider that Alcaeus slanders Pittacus as 'base-born' before marrying into the Penthilidae, the political concern over class mixing and what it is to be *agathos* appears increasingly relevant to archaic Lesbos.[66]

A similar comparison can be made with fragment 50. The term *agathos* has enormously political connotations, often being used to define the traditional ruling class possessed of *aretē* and influence.[67] Theognis claims that he learnt all values of *aretē* from the *agathoi* as a young man, laments that the *kakoi* are on top of the *agathoi* when the city is in peril, and consistently uses *agathoi* as a signifier of a noble social class.[68] What's more, Theognis believes passionately that those who are not *agathoi* are implicitly inferior to those who are; lacking the *aretē,* wisdom, and moral values of the *agathoi,* they bring ruin and destruction to the *polis.*[69] Sappho's description of the beautiful man in fragment 50 also requires him to be *agathos* to be truly beautiful. The comparison can be taken further. Between lines 1006 and 1013, Theognis laments that youth and beauty are fleeting, with death coming to us all. The only ones who have *eudaimonia* are those who are loyal - not a burden to their friends and unbowed before their enemies.[70] The language Sappho

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[63] Solon, 13.7-15; 13.41-56; and 15.
[64] Herodotus, 2.135.
[65] Athenaeus, 425a.
[66] Alcaeus, 70.4-9 and 348.
[67] Mitchell, 1997, 137-147; Robertson, 1997, 148-157; and Greenberg, 1985, 245-260.
[68] Theognis, 28 and 667-692. For an excellent studies of the term *agathos* in Theognis see Adkins, 1972, 37-45 and Greenberg, 1985, 245-260. Levine, 1985, 176-196, helps set this language in context and van Wees, 2000, 35-67 provides an unusual examination of the violence that could result.
[69] Theognis, 319-22 and 53-60.
[70] Theognis, 1006-1013.

uses in fragment 50 aligns with Theognis' political poetry and suggests that her own sentiments were inspired by similar class ideals. Once again, we see that Sappho's poetry could be politically charged and would be entirely appropriate for a sympotic performance context. As the likes of Greene and Nagy have discussed at length, there is no reason to suggest that Sappho's poetry would not have been performed to (or even by) males.[71] Both have broader appeal that goes far beyond some unfounded and narrow concept of poetry that was designed purely for females. We also have evidence that suggests that such philosophical material was performed by a chorus. Fragment 58, which saw a chorus of *paides* taking part in the poems performance, goes on to explore the myth of Tithonus' abduction by Dawn in a moralising discussion of old age.[72] Sappho's chorus perform a poem that is replete with philosophical reflections on death and aging.[73]

Once again, it appears that Sappho's poetry could have a significant public aspect that stretched beyond young girls. As Greene has pointed out, Sappho is not merely concerned with traditional 'feminine' preoccupations, but seeks to address broader questions of life, death, and morality.[74] In addition to tackling philosophical questions, there is a small amount of significant evidence that suggests Sappho could have discussed political values. Fragment 58 suggests that philosophical poetry was suitable for choral performance by young girls, but others may well have witnessed the performance. Certainly, her political reflections would not have been out place in a male oriented environment.

Conclusions

The purpose of this section has been to demonstrate that Sappho's poetry was suitable for a number of different performance settings. We have examples of wedding poetry and ritual poetry that were performed by female choruses, both of which could have had a public aspect. Furthermore, several of Sappho's smaller fragments show that she composed poetry that was either politically motivated or discussed philosophical themes. In essence, there is no reason to attempt to restrict Sappho's poetry to a female setting or to suggest that her poetry was dominated by an entirely feminine

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[71] Nagy, 2007 and Greene, 2008, 23-45.
[72] Sappho, 58.7-12.
[73] Discussed at length by Greene, 2009, 147-161.
[74] Greene, 2008, 23-45.

agenda. We should accept that much of Sappho's poetry was composed in the knowledge that its performance would be witnessed by males and females. In both ritual and in smaller sympotic style gatherings, Sappho would have discussed political issues in her poetry that would not have seemed out of place in the corpora of highly politicised archaic male poets. Like most poets of the archaic period, Sappho's poetry contained particular references to the social world in which she lived, subsequently commenting on everything from politics to life and death.

6.3 Sappho and Choral 'Education.'

Having established that some of Sappho's poetry could have been performed publicly and that various poems were suitable for a number of different performance contexts, I now move on to the question of whether Sappho's poetry was composed with an 'educational' intent. I also hope to address the question of what social purpose Sappho's poetry served. We have seen that Sappho's poetry commented on social and political issues, but it is important to address whether this poetry was intentionally didactic, as has previously been argued, or rather composed for a variety of other purposes. In order to situate this discussion appropriately, I begin with a brief review of the most relevant literature on this question.

Wilamowitz first produced the theory that Sappho's poetry provided her 'circle' of young women with a kind of poetic and moral education.[75] Wilamowitz saw Sappho leading a private group of girls in matters of poetry, grace, and charm. The theory was perhaps best summarised by Werner Jaeger in his classic work on *Paideia:*

> The very existence of Sappho's circle assumes the educational conception of poetry which was accepted by the Greeks of her time....it meant that women now took their part in serving the Muses and that this service blended with the process of forming their character.[76]

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[75] Wilamowitz, 1913; Campbell, 1967 and Gerber 1970 provide further good examples of a defence of this position. See also Anderson, 1966, for an overview of music and education.
[76] Jaeger, 1939, 131.

Jaeger speaks of the power of Eros to form character through poetry encapsulating 'the ardour and nobility of the feminine soul' alongside the formalised sensual education which Sappho's tuition provided.[77] As time passed, focus on Sappho's potential educative purpose became more concerned with situating her compositions in ritual performance. Claude Calame saw Sappho as leading a private group in 'a sort of school for femininity destined to make the young pupils into accomplished women.' Calame imagined the girls learning charm, elegance, and even female dress though performance of poetry in a private setting, often within a ritual setting.[78] Following a similar path, Judith Hallett attributed to Sappho a socially important institutionalised role in which she provided upper class young women with 'sensual education.'[79] Andre Lardinois, a firm believer that much of Sappho's poetry was choral and public, claimed that 'Sappho's teaching need not have been restricted to music and dance,' but also contained social elements.[80] Most Recently, Franco Ferrari produced another strong defence of the position stating unequivocally that we should view Sappho as someone who formed 'educative allegiances fully recognised as such in Lesbian society.'[81]

Clearly, the view that Sappho was an educator has survived tenaciously, despite a lack of definitive evidence and the scepticism of several prominent scholars, beginning with Denys Page in the 1950's.[82] Most famously, Holt Parker's scathing attack in his article 'Sappho Schoolmistress' went to great lengths to discredit the notion, flatly asserting that 'nowhere in any Sappho poem does Sappho teach, or speak about teaching, anything to anyone.'[83] I shall begin with an important distinction: preparing a group for choral performance and attempting to influence the moral, social, or cultural development of the young.

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[77] Jaeger, 1939, 130-133.

[78] Calame, 1997, 231. Merkelbach, 1957, adheres to the view that Sappho was in change of a *Mädchenbund* whilst Rösler, 1992, 43-54, goes further seeing Sappho as presiding over rites of passage which follow the pattern set out by Van Gennep. Gentili, 1988, 77-89 saw Sappho as presiding over an initiatory cult for Aphrodite.

[79] Hallett, 1996, 136. Burnett, 1983, offers a similar approach.

[80] Lardinois, 1989, 26. Lardinois suggests that fragment 94 may provide a good list of all the activities that Sappho and her circle engaged in, an opinion that is strongly criticised by Parker, 1996, 153.

[81] Ferrari, 2010, 34-45.

[82] Page, 1955, 111-12. See also: Lefkowitz, 1973, 113-123; Pomeroy, 1975, 53; and Stehle, 1997, 262-278.

[83] Parker, 1996, 151.

Preparation for Choral Performance

The first question we must address is whether Sappho prepared choruses for performance. I have already shown that many of Sappho's poems could have been performed chorally and initially it seems reasonable to suggest that the poetess would have played some part in preparing her own chorus for performance. Certainly, our fifth-century Athenian iconographic evidence shows Sappho involved in leading and possibly preparing for performance.[84] Indeed, we find evidence for such a practice in other female performance. In Pindar's *Daphnephoricon,* we find reference to a potential female choral teacher. The relevant passage runs as follows:

Δαμαίνας πα[. .]ο . . [. . .]ῳ νῦν μοι ποδὶ

  στείχων ἀγέο· [τ]ὶν γὰρ ε[ὔ]φρων ἕψεται

πρώτα θυγάτηρ [ό]δοῦ

  δάφνας εὐπετάλου σχεδ[ό]ν

βαίνοισα πεδίλοις,

Ἀνδαισιστρότα ᾶν ἐπά-

  σκησε μήδεσ[ι .]

of Damaina, stepping forth now with a …..foot, lead the way for me, since the first to follow you on the way will be your kindly daughter, who beside the branch of leafy bay walks on sandals, whom Andaisistrota has trained in skills. [85]

At this point in the poem, the singer remarks that a certain Andaesistrota has been involved in training the 'kindly daughter' who seems to play an important role in the procession. Unfortunately, the fragmented state of the text prevents us from gaining the full details of this training however,

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[84] Warsaw Kalpis, INV. 142333. ARV300, National Museum, Warsaw; The Vari Hydra, National Archaeological Museum at Athens, INV1260. Nossis, Epigram, 11.1; *AP*. 9.189; and Philostratus, Imag, 2.1.1-3.
[85] Pindar, 94b.66-72. Race, 1997, 328-329.

considering the context it seems most likely that Andaisistrota was involved in preparing for the performance.[86] For a female chorus leader to train other females seems logical, and it is entirely plausible that Sappho fulfilled such a role on Lesbos. This would help to explain the frequent appearance of young girls in her poetry and fits with the later iconographic and literary imaginings of her performance. An appreciation of graceful performance in Sappho's poems can be seen in the contrasting descriptions of Andromeda and Anactoria. Andromeda is described in fragment 57 as "not knowing how to pull her rags over her ankles" whilst the grace of Anactoria's step in fragment 16 is emphasised.[87] Encouraging and appreciating elegant performance is exactly what we would expect from a poet concerned with dance. It therefore seems likely that Sappho was involved in training and preparing young girls for choral performance of her poetry.

The Chorus as 'Education'

To what extent Sappho's preparation for choral performance involved direct pedagogic intent on moral or social issues is a much more difficult question. Was Sappho's poetry specifically designed, as some scholars have suggested, with the intention of educating young women in the skills they would need to become good wives? The likes of Calame and Ferrari see Sappho as one of several 'educators' operating on Lesbos, with rivals such as Andromeda and Gorgo constantly competing to keep girls in their groups.[88] As we have seen, since Wilamowitz numerous scholars have suggested that Sappho's poetry provided young girls with a kind of 'sensual education'. That is, Sappho's primary role was as an educator designed to equip her students with the grace, charm, and beauty required to be a socially valued wife.

In the light of the themes and performance contexts, which we have seen in this chapter, such a theory appears to be rather reductive. As I have tried to demonstrate, some of Sappho's choral poetry went far beyond ideas of feminine sensuality to tackle philosophical, social, and political issues that were relevant to both sexes. Sappho's poetry was a reflection on the society in which she lived – whilst her political fragments such as 50, 57, 68, 71, 148, and 155 may not have

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[86] A similar role has been suggested for Aenesimbrota in Alcman's *Louvre Partheneion.* See Ferrari, 2010, 37-38.
[87] Sappho, 16.17-20 and 57. Ferrari, 2010, 40-42.
[88] Calame, 1997, and Ferrari, 2010, 34-45.

been performed by a chorus of *parthenoi*, they certainly show that Sappho was politically aware. Her poetry was appropriate for a variety of different audiences and was composed for different occasions. As fragment 58 shows categorically, the issues with which Sappho's chorus interacted could feature philosophical issues and have relevance to both sexes. To limit Sappho to the role of a teacher of traditional femininity is to do her a great injustice. Her work spans a great number of themes, genre, and performance contexts.

Furthermore, aside from a probable desire to encourage impressive performance by those young girls who formed Sappho's chorus, we find little evidence of direct pedagogic intent in Sappho's poetry. As Parker correctly points out, one cannot claim that Sappho is a teacher on the subjects of love, grace, and charm purely because these subjects form the basis of much of her poetry.[89] The issue is more subtle than that and lies in the power of public performance itself, often in a ritual setting. I hope to have shown above, categorically, that Sappho produced poetry to be performed publicly at weddings (103-117, 27, 30, 44, 141, and 161), in a ritual setting (2, 6, 17, 19, and 140(a)), or in other public choral contexts that are harder to pin down. As we have seen throughout this thesis, performance in ritual provides an opportunity to reflect upon society. Ritual can allow for an idealised representation of community to be displayed, but it also provides an opportunity to explore social tensions and experiences. Performance and ritual provide an exceptional space in which difficult issues can be explored, often publicly, providing society with an opportunity to reflect upon what is witnessed. It is a means of confronting, exploring, and dealing with things that are often hard to understand.

Let us take Sappho's wedding poetry as an example. The wedding is an important ritual that facilitates the transition of the bride between her natal family and her new home. As we saw in the previous chapter, it could be an ambiguous occasion. On the one hand, the bride is leaving behind her family to be faced with the potentially daunting prospect of a new husband and a new household, whilst simultaneously preparing for the culmination of her childhood, an event that could certainly have been a source of pride and excitement. In numerous societies across the world, performance of marriage songs at various points in the wedding ritual help to explore the conflicting emotions involved in this transition. The subject of the following chapter will be how Sappho's wedding poetry helped to confront the particular social tensions and joys associated with marriage

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[89] Parker, 1996, 153.

at archaic Mytilene. Through performance, these social tensions can be dramatised, experienced, and thus understood.

However, Sappho's chorally performed poems deal with various social and political concerns that go far beyond marriage. As we have seen, fragment 17 suggests performance at a major public shrine, whilst fragments 140(a) and 58 see Sappho talking about death through her chorus. Once again, to restrict Sappho to the role of a teacher charged with endowing young girls with grace and charm, which they would need for marriage, is to neglect the breadth of her surviving poetry. Sappho's chorus performed at a variety or ritual settings, commenting on broad social, political, and philosophical themes, often discussing issues that are as applicable to men as they would be to women. She may have been charged with preparing young girls for performance, but her role as a poet was undoubtedly far more wide-ranging.

Conclusions

The following points can be concluded from this chapter:

1) Sappho composed poetry for a variety of contexts, some of which was performed publicly by choruses. Men would have very likely formed part of the audience for some of her poetic performances.
2) Sappho deals with a variety of social, political, and philosophical issues in her poetry. Much of this poetry was as relevant to men as it was to young girls.
3) Sappho was probably charged with preparing choruses of young girls for performance. However, to bracket her as an educator in feminine charm and grace is reductive.
4) The performance of Sappho's chorally performed poetry, sometimes in ritual settings, allowed her chorus (and audience) to confront and experience social tensions.

I hope that this chapter will have dispelled any notions that Sappho's poetry should be imagined as private or purely centred on females. Clearly, many of Sappho's poems could be

performed publicly and touched on important political themes that were highly relevant to the elite society of Mytilene. In the following two chapters, I shall explore social and political themes in two areas for which we have good evidence, focusing more on the significance of Sappho's songs for the young female performers who often formed her chorus. Firstly, Sappho's poetry on the subject of marriage and, secondly, Sappho's poetry which focuses on death.

Chapter 7 - Sappho and Marriage at Mytilene

In the previous chapter, we saw that much of Sappho's poetry was not only public, but also highly influenced by the political circumstances in which it was composed. In this chapter, the intention is to focus on marriage; an area that we have already seen was a focus for political performance by *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta. As was the case with Alcman, I hope to demonstrate that Sappho's wedding poetry was highly influenced by the developing political environment of the archaic world. Her focus naturally differs from Alcman's owing to the different social circumstances that surrounded marriage in their respective societies; however, similar value structures remain.

Initially, it is necessary to explore the particulars of marital politics in archaic Mytilene. Throughout archaic Greece, marriage had an important political dimension manifested through the exchange of gifts, the formation of alliances, and public display.[1] It could help establish a reciprocal link between communities, and could be useful for political, military, or commercial purposes. Young brides could attract vast gifts from suitors,[2] who later might offer political or military support to the bridal family.[3] In archaic Mytilene, this may well have been particularly important. Alcaeus' poetry paints a picture of a *polis* ravaged by civic strife and fighting between elite factional groups, all elements that were clearly reflected in Sappho's poetry.[4] In what follows, I plan to interpret Sappho's marriage poetry in this socio-political context. My argument is divided into three main sections:

1) The first aims to demonstrate that Sappho recognised and celebrated the potential of the bride to form a political alliance, have a high commercial worth and become a focus of public pride. In these cases, wedding poetry serves to validate the importance of the institution and demonstrate the worth of marriage to the watching public.

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[1] For important studies see Vernant, 1980; Finley, 1981; and Lacey, 1983.

[2] See Finley, 1981, 237-238. For good examples: Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.158-159 and Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women,* 154b, c, d, e and 155 (Most, 2007(b), 219-231). Cingano, 2005, 118-152 and Irwin, 2005(b), 35-84 provide interesting perspectives on the catalogue's social aspects.

[3] Herodotus, 1.60-61, speaks of Peisistratus marriage to the daughter of Megacles as a means of cementing his return to Athens.

[4] For example, Sappho, 70; 129; and 130B.

2) Secondly, I aim to look at the transitional motifs and themes that Sappho utilises to assist the bride in leaving her familial home.

3) Finally, I shall look at how Sappho explored publicly the issue of leaving behind loved ones as part of the marital transition. Using comparative material from societies where arranged political marriages still take place, I hope to explain some of Sappho's reflections on loss by looking at how separation is confronted to avoid social tension.

Through an examination of these three areas, I hope a consistent picture will emerge: namely, that marriage was an extremely important commercial, political, and social factor at archaic Mytilene, something that Sappho highlights in her poetry. Being well aware of the importance of marriage, Sappho composes wedding poetry that helps to explain and discuss the transition of the bride into her new family.

7.1 – Representations of the Bride and Exchange between Communities

There is ample evidence to suggests that several of Sappho's poems could have been performed by choruses at weddings. The surviving wedding fragments are frequently considered to be important in praising the bride and groom, emphasising transitional motifs, and celebrating the wedding itself.

I agree that all of these issues are of central importance to Sappho's wedding poetry, but here I want to focus more attention on aspects of her work that reflect the enormous communal importance marriage held in the archaic world. In a similar way to the poetry of Alcman, I believe the status of *parthenoi* approaching marriage and becoming *nymphai* gives them an important public presence that is never greater than when they are about to marry. Marriage is the moment when the potential of *parthenoi* is realised, making their public celebration extremely significant. The social, political, and commercial value of both *parthenoi* and marriage is thereby reflected in Sappho's poems.

The Social and Political Importance of Marriage at Mytilene

In order to understand the environment in which these weddings took place, I first hope to explore the unstable situation that existed in Mytilene when Sappho was composing her poems. As will become apparent, Mytilene was an outward looking *polis,* highly involved in Mediterranean politics and international exchange. In this context, young women could have served as valuable commodities to establish relations abroad and encourage the exchange of wealth.[5]

I begin by looking at Mytilene's position in the Mediterranean world. There is limited evidence available to us, yet from what can be established Mytilene seems to be a *polis* rather different to the others on Lesbos. Across the rest of the island, the elite appear to have engaged in competitive display, marking their power, and setting up monuments to establish territorial borders.[6] Their focus appears to have been inward looking, with hardly any evidence of an interest that went beyond their own island. Despite evidence for competitive wealthy elites, which we find in the poetry of Alcaeus and Sappho, there is no archaeological evidence of any similar development around Mytilene. Nigel Spencer has argued that this trend reflects the outward focus of Mytilene – a *polis* that was greatly involved in the Mediterranean world. Indeed this outward-looking focus can be seen in a number of ways. For example, as Herodotus and other later sources show, Mytilene held an interest in Sigeum.[7] Herodotus also tells us that the Mytilenians were involved in setting up the Hellenium at Naucratis.[8] Furthermore, Mytilene was the only Lesbian *polis* that participated in the Ionian revolt.[9] This cosmopolitan outlook is reflected in the poetry of Sappho and Alcaeus. Sappho discusses obtaining expensive Lydian goods in fragment 98 and prays for her brother's safe return from a sea voyage in fragment 5, whilst Alcaeus says that Lydians provided financial aid to help with their political struggles of his faction.[10]

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[5] For seminal discussions of women as objects of exchange, see Irigaray, 1985, 170-191: 'Women on the Market' and Goody and Tambiah, 1973.

[6] For a survey of the relevant archaeological evidence, see, Spencer, 2000, 70-74.

[7] Herodotus, 5.94-5; Diogenes Laertius, 1.74; Diodorus Siculus, 9.12.1; and Strabo, 13.1.38-9.

[8] Herodotus, 2.178.2. Strabo, 17.1.33 suggests that Sappho's brother traded wine at Naucratis. For a discussion of Lesbos' continued heavy involvement in Mediterranean politics during the classical period, see Quinn, 1981, 24-38.

[9] Herodotus, 6.5.2-3.

[10] Sappho, 5 and 98 and Alcaeus, 69.For interesting recent articles on eastern influences in the poetry of Alcaeus and Sappho, plus Mytilene's position in the Mediterranean world more generally see Watkins, 2007, 305-324; Rose, 2008, 399-430; and Dale, 2011, 15-24.

All of this indicates that Mytilene had an array of foreign interests, both commercial and political. Bearing this in mind, it seems likely that *nymphai* from Mytilene would often travel aboard in order to marry, as the islanders of Lesbos sought to develop relations with other *poleis*. Fragment 96 notes one of Sappho's companions now 'stands out amongst the Lydian women,' a statement suggesting that Mytilenian girls could have been married into their neighbouring Lydian communities.[11] Unlike at archaic Sparta, marriages with external communities probably took place on a reasonably regular basis.

Furthermore, the example of Pittacus confirms that marriage could certainly be used for political purposes within Mytilene herself.[12] Alcaeus is our best guide to the factional struggles for power that appear to have spanned much of his lifetime and provide the basis for much of his surviving poetry. These poems provide details of Alcaeus' elitist group and their violent political struggles, first with Myrsilus and then with their former ally Pittacus.[13] Alcaeus famously confirms the potential importance of the marital alliance, suggesting that Pittacus' ascension to power was greatly aided by his marriage into the traditionally powerful Penthilid clan.[14] By marrying a Penthilid, Pittacus was able to provide himself with a link to Mytilene's heroic past, whilst simultaneously securing the support of a powerful faction. It is a conspicuous display that must have greatly enhanced his political position as evidenced by Alcaeus' anger:

κῆνος δὲ παώθεις Ἀτρεΐδα[.].[

δαπτέτω πόλιν ὡς καὶ πεδὰ Μυρσί[λ]ω[

θᾶς κ' ἄμμε βόλλητ' Ἄρευς ἐπιτ.ύχε..[

τρόπην

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[11] Sappho, 96.6-9.
[12] Alcaeus, 70.
[13] See Alcaeus, 69, 70, and 129 for excellent examples.
[14] Alcaeus, 70.

But let *him,* married into the house of the family of the Atridae, devour the city as he did in the company of Myrsilus, until Ares is pleased to turn us to arms;[15]

In the violent and unstable environment of archaic Lesbos, marriage proved to be a shrewd move in securing power.

Our evidence for Mytilene, limited though it is, certainly suggests that marriage could play an important political role in the *polis.* Mytilene's position as an outward looking commercial *polis* meant that the exchange of brides with non-Lesbian communities could be used as a means of strengthening relationships between different groups.

Sappho, Fragment 44

It was in this environment that Sappho composed her wedding poetry and I argue that these factors are reflected in her lyrics. Initially focusing on fragment 44, I hope to show that Sappho recognised, firstly, the value of a bride as an item of exchange, and secondly the political value of the wedding as something that encourages communal unity and develops a relationship with another state.

In Sappho fragment 44, which celebrates the marriage of Hector and Andromache, we find Sappho's only extended description of a mythical wedding. Several arguments have already been made to suggest that the poem was composed for a public audience. Aloni attributes a public function to the poem as part of a wedding ceremony or procession, based on the frequently recurring hymeneal form and content.[16] Rösler attached further significance to the poem, suggesting the action may have mirrored the events of an actual wedding, which was taking place at the same

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[15] Alcaeus, 70.6-9. Campbell, 1982, 274-275. Gangé, 2009, 39-43, has convincingly suggested that Alcaeus use of 'Atridae' as opposed to Penthilidae serves to emphasise his vitriolic attitude towards Pittacus. By emphasising links to the Atridae and their infamous history of reciprocal violence, Alcaeus is able to further smear the character of his rival and suggest that a similar fate may befall him.
[16] Aloni, 1997, LXI-LXV.

time, but Ferrari is probably right is stating that there is too much action for that to be the case.[17] Ferrari's counter-suggestion that fragment 44 'preserves memory of social practice,' and thus may have been performed prior to the ceremony or at a wedding banquet seems more likely.[18]

I want to argue that in fragment 44 Sappho describes both the political and commercial value of Andromache to the watching audience. We have seen that Alcman used fragment 3 to celebrate the successful marriage of Astymeloisa in front of the watching citizen body, and here too Andromache's marriage is publicly celebrated. However, in the context of Sappho's poem, I argue that it is Andromache's value as an item of exchange between communities that is highlighted as opposed to Astymeloisa's acceptance into the inward-facing Spartan community. That beautiful *parthenoi* could have significant economic value as an exchange item in marriage is well attested.[19] In the *Odyssey,* Nausicaa and her companions will soon be attracting valuable bride gifts.[20] In ps-Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women,* Menelaus victory in the contest for Helen is specifically owing to his submission of the highest financial offer.[21] Hector too, is described as having given a 'countless bride price' for Andromache in the *Iliad.*[22] As Luce Irigaray observes, this is a phenomenon we see in many societies where marriage is a means of developing relations or exchanging wealth. Irigaray argues that in these cases women are often reduced and described primarily in terms of their economic value:

> It is thus not as "women" that they are exchanged, but as women reduced to some common feature – (i.e) their common price in gold …… Woman thus has value only in that she can be exchanged.[23]

As the previous examples show, this economic value was important in archaic Greece yet it is inherently linked with the social, communal, and political value of the bride. In Alcman's poetry,

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[17] Rösler, 1975, 275-285; Ferrari, 2008, 130-133. See also, Pernigotti, 2001, 15-16.
[18] Ferrari, 2008, 130-133.
[19] See Finley, 1981, 237-238.
[20] Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.25-41 and 6.158-159.Williamson, 1995, 76.
[21] Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women,* 154b, c, d, e and 155 (Most, 2007(b), 219-231).
[22] Homer, *Iliad,* 22.468-472.
[23] Irigaray, 1985, 175-176. For a critique of using Irigaray in studying Sappho and Greek sexuality, more generally see Skinner, 1996, 175-178.

this is reflected by his comparison of chorus members to high status objects like horses or the descriptions of the beautiful adornments that they wear.[24] Their exchange value is made clear by their comparison with valuable items. Certainly, Sappho recognises that Andromache's commercial value is important but she also emphasises her worth to the community. The fragment specifies that Andromache's arrival is particularly significant because of the gifts that accompany[25] her:

Ἔκτωρ καὶ συνέταιρ[ο]ι ἄγοισ' ἐλικώπιδα

Θήβας ἐξ ἰέρας Πλακίας τ' ἀ[πʼ ἀι]ν<ν>άω

ἄβραν Ἀνδρομάχαν ἐνὶ ναῦσιν ἐπ' ἄλμυρον

πόντον· πόλλα δʼ [ἐλί]γματα χρύσια κἄμματα

πορφύρ[α] καταύτ[με]να, ποίκιλʼ ἀθύρματα,

ἀργύρα τʼ ἀνάριθμα ποτήρια κἀλέφαις.

Hector and his companions are bringing the lively-eyed, graceful Andromache from holy Thebe and ever-flowing Placia in their ships over the salt sea; and (there are) many golden bracelets and (perfumed?) purple robes, ornate trinkets and countless silver drinking cups and ivory.[26]

Immediately after the news of the marriage arrives, Idaeus, the messenger, recounts a list of the marital gifts that accompany Andromache. However, the major difference with Hector and Andromache in the *Iliad,* and with other descriptions of the bride price given above, is that rather than focus on the immense price that Hector gives Eetion for Andromache, Sappho emphasises the gifts that accompany the bride. Idaeus' placement of Andromache alongside the long list of gifts which accompany her certainly emphasises her high commercial value, however, for Sappho, Andromache is not just someone to be bought for a high price. Rather than simply focusing on the price paid for Andromache, Sappho emphasises that the bride becomes a nodal point for exchange between communities, with wealth moving with Andromache in addition to price that Hector pays

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[24] Alcman, 1.39-76.
[25] It should be noted that there is no evidence for the dowry before the late sixth / early fifth century.
[26] Sappho, 44.5-10. Campbell, 1982, 88-89.

for her. The bride is a figure of crucial importance in establishing reciprocal relationships between Troy and Cilician Thebe, something that becomes a source of glory for Andromache. By drawing attention to the reciprocal nature of the bridal exchange, Sappho highlights Andromache's social worth.

Furthermore, as the narrative progresses Sappho emphasise communal aspects of the wedding. We find that 'everywhere in the streets' there was celebration and that the news 'went to his friends throughout the spacious city.'[27] We find choruses of men, young women, and old women equally involved.[28] Indeed, the wedding sees the whole city come together as one. Just as the sounds of the various musical instruments mingle together,[29] so the various groups of the society come together in celebratory performance. In this sense, we can see another important part of the wedding ceremony reflected: its ability to unite a social group, in this case the entire city of Troy, in a celebratory occasion. In the fractious and ill-tempered atmosphere of archaic Mytilene, such an occasion must have been particularly important as a demonstration of solidarity.

Aside from the unification of the community, the wedding also featured another political aspect, namely the potential shaping of alliances. Sappho explicitly mentions that Hector is bringing Andromache from Thebe,[30] and as we find in the *Iliad,* the marriage ensured Thebe's military support for Troy against the Greeks. Eetion and his sons all fought and died against Achilles.[31] We find that two powerful states have been united by marriage and gift exchange, a link that subsequently leads to commitment of military support.[32] The mythical figures, which Sappho uses in comparison with bridegrooms, support the idea that military strength was an important concept. Fragment 111 gives the following description:

γάμβρος †(εἰσ)έρχεται ἴσος† Ἄρευι,

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[27] Sappho, 44.12 and 28.
[28] Sappho, 44.13-14 and 25-33.
[29] Sappho, 44, 23-25.
[30] Sappho, 44.5-6.
[31] Homer, *Iliad,* 6.414-424.
[32] The political and military significance of marriage can be seen in the support offered by Theagenes of Megara to his son-in-law Cylon of Athens. Thucydides, 1.126. See also Herodotus, 5.71. Cleisthenes of Sicyon ties himself to the powerful Alcmaeonidae through the marriage of his daughter. Herodotus, 6.130-131.

ἄνδρος μεγάλω πόλυ μέσδων.

The bridegroom is coming, the equal of Ares,

much larger than a large man.[33]

Similarly, in 105(b) Himerius reports that Sappho compared a certain bridegroom to Achilles.[34] The comparison of the groom to the god of war highlights qualities that a man was supposed to possess – martial prowess is clearly paramount.

In the case of fragment 44, the entire community celebrates the political alliance forged between Troy and Thebe. The significance of the marriage of Hector and Andromache is reflected in the language that Sappho uses to describe it. Rissman has noted that one of the terms Sappho uses is κλέος ἄφθιτον, words only used in the *Iliad* when describing the glory that Achilles will gain by killing Hector.[35] Similarly, the term θεοεικέλος used to describe the happy couple appears only in the context of exceptional male heroes.[36] Clearly, marriage had the potential to be politically and communally important, and Sappho speaks about the figures involved in heroic terms.

In addition to these heroic epithets, Andromache also epitomises all of the qualities that contribute to the worth of a bride as point of exchange between communities. In fragment 44, the description of Aphrodite as 'lively-eyed' and 'graceful' emphasise that beauty was an important consideration in determining the bride's worth.[37] Alcaeus in 130B further suggests that female desirability was highly praised on Lesbos.[38] As we have seen, he speaks of a central Lesbian sanctuary where 'Lesbian women with trailing robes[39] go to and fro being judged for beauty.'[40]

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[33] Sappho, 111. Campbell, 1982, 136-137.

[34] Sappho, 105(b) = Himerius, *Orations,* 9.16.

[35] Rissman, 1983, 123-124.

[36] Rissman, 1983, 123-124. In the *Iliad* the word is only used to describe Achilles, Homer, *Iliad,* 1.131. See also Homer, *Odyssey,* 3.416, 4.276 and 8.256.

[37] Sappho, 44.6-7.

[38] Alcaeus, 130b.

[39] A phrase which emphasise the close similarities between Lesbos and the Near East. The term used - ἑλκεσίπεπλος – is commonly used to describe eastern women. For example, Homer, *Iliad,* 6.442.

[40] Alcaeus, 130B.17-18. Campbell, 1982, 302-303. Scholiast A, Homer, *Iliad,* 9.129 also notes that a beauty contest for Lesbian women was held in the temple of Hera. Williamson, 1995, 82, notes that in Euripides'

Elsewhere, Sappho's wedding poetry continues to celebrate and encourage these qualities. Fragment 113 questions whether there was 'ever another girl like this one,' for her bridegroom.[41] Fragments 103 and 103B both speak of 'the bride with her beautiful feet,' a characteristic that implies graceful movement.[42] Fragment 108 simply states, 'O beautiful one, o graceful one.'[43] The importance of grace and beauty is perhaps best emphasised in fragment 112:

σοὶ χάριεν μὲν εἶδος, ὄππατα δ' …

μέλλιχ', ἔρος δ' ἐπ' ἰμέρτω κέχυται προσώπω

……… τετίμακ' ἔξοχά σ' Ἀφροδίτα

Your form is graceful, your eyes …. Gentle, and Eros pours from your desired face …. Aphrodite has honoured you outstandingly.[44]

The qualities that Sappho uses to describe Andromache are the same that she extols in her other wedding poetry: Beauty, charm, and grace.[45] Doubtless brides who combined all of these characteristics would have been viewed as particularly desirable. A bride who epitomised these qualities could be a valuable asset in developing links between families, a fact that brought her great glory.

Bearing this in mind, the performance of Sappho's fragment 44 and other wedding poems may have had a further function. In all of these poems the same qualities, mainly female beauty and grace, are constantly emphasised. The praise of the bridal figure portrays her as exceptional for the audience of the performance. The heroic language used to describe the wedding of Hector and Andromache highlights the importance of the occasion. Sociologist Susan Birrell has argued engagingly that in modern society sport serves a ritual purpose allowing for the creation of symbolic

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Iphigenia in Tauris, 1143-52, the girls of the chorus appear to suggest that they joined together in contests and rivalry over their devotion to the Graces.

[41] Sappho, 113.

[42] Sappho, 103 and 103B.

[43] Sappho, 108.

[44] Sappho, 112. Campbell, 1982, 136-137.

[45] Sappho, 44.5-8; 103B; 108; 113; and 117A.

leaders and public displays of impressive feats.[46] Birrell draws heavily on the views of Erving Goffman and his thesis that everyday life is a performance filled with ritual actions in which everyone participates.[47] Goffman argues that individuals attempt to embody the cultural values that are considered worthwhile by the community.[48] Following this, Birrell argues that sport acts as an opportunity for this to occur on a grand scale, often in front of a vast crowd of spectators. Those athletes who display courage, skill, sportsmanship, determination – that is too say those who conform to values which society considers valuable – are recognised as heroes.[49] In the case of Sappho's poetry, the bride, particularly Andromache, epitomises the idealised qualities of beauty and grace in front of the watching community. As the epitome of feminine grace, she therefore becomes a heroine whom other girls wish to emulate. As we see from many poems, for example Sappho's fragment 30, *parthenoi* frequently performed at weddings. The exceptional figure of a bride such as Andromache becomes the figure to which they aspire, whilst performance of wedding poetry allows the bride to embody these qualities as the chorus sings her praises. By singing in praise of the bride the chorus emphasise her worth, allowing her to play the role of idealised bride through performance. Thus, Sappho's poetry represents the bride at the pinnacle of her beauty and social worth in front of the watching community.

Conclusions

In this manner, I suggest that Sappho's fragment 44 illustrates two important features of marriage on archaic Lesbos: firstly, it demonstrates the commercial worth that could be attached to a beautiful bride through gift exchange and secondly it suggests that the wedding could be an occasion of communal or political significance. It also unites people in celebration and can be used to confirm a relationship with another powerful group. In the context of archaic Mytilene, a *polis* that shows evidence of a great deal of infighting, but also appears to have had substantial international links, marriage must have been an important tool in affirming relations and encouraging the exchange of wealth. Fragment 44 emphasises the worth of the participants and subsequently gives those who witness the performance of the poem something to which they can aspire.

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[46] Birrell, 1981, 355-356. Hauge, 1983, 131-143 has also commented on the tradition of praise in Greek marriage poetry.
[47] Birrell, 1981, and 2004.
[48] Goffman, 1959, *passim.*
[49] Birrell, 1981, 374.

7.2 – Transitional Elements in Sappho's Wedding Poetry

Sappho's fragment 44, coupled with other fragments of her poetry, illustrate the importance of the wedding in exchanging gifts, bringing the community together, and affirming political relations. Yet, as part of this wedding alliance, Andromache is forced to leave her family in Thebe and travel 'in … ships over the salt sea' with her new husband to Troy.[50] The dislocation from her natal family and friends, coupled with the introduction into married life, could potentially make this a difficult experience for any bride. Indeed, it is usually accepted that the transition from *parthenos* to married woman must have been a difficult time, with most scholars assuming a rather bleak rite of passage for the young woman.[51] When commenting on the prospect of losing *partheneia* and moving into marriage, Judith Hallett comments 'these young women could not have received sexual attention from their suitors or hoped to find emotional gratification within marriage itself.'[52]

Hallett theorises young women must have turned to other young women to become sexually aware, with Sappho's poems helping to form their sensual socialisation. In another impressive article, Lardinois has suggested that keening and lamentations runs throughout Sappho's songs as a mark of the 'dread and apprehension' that women could feel for their approaching marriages.[53] Yet Andromache's marriage is represented as bringing her a great deal of glory, with Sappho portraying it as a wonderful occasion. In fact, despite the strain of lamentation that does indisputably appear in some poems, Sappho's marriage songs present the wedding as a happy, even joyful, occasion and, as we have seen, the brides are always presented as idealised figures.[54]

Indeed, as we shall see, Sappho's female perspective on marriage is generally very positive. Furthermore, numerous female characters from archaic and classical texts actually display a good deal of excitement and ambition concerning their marriages.[55] Lamentation clearly plays a part in

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[50] Sappho, 44.7-8.

[51] For general discussions see, Seaford, 1987, 106-130; Dowden, 1989; Rehm, 1994; and Ferrari, 2003, 27-42.

[52] Hallett, 1996, 134. Calame, 1996, 113-124 also recognises the potential of Sappho's group to serve as an initiation into sexuality. For a counterargument in the same volume see Greene, 1996, 144-145.

[53] Lardinois, 2001, 75-92, particularly, 80-88.

[54] Sappho, 44; 103; 103B; 105; 108; 112; and 113.

[55] For examples (discussed in more detail later in the chapter) see Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.218-246; Alcman, 81; Euripides, *Hipploytus,* 1140-41; and Euripides, *Electra,* 304-313.

Sappho's wedding poetry but we also find numerous references to female pride and positive outcomes that could occur. The social importance of marriage contributes towards it being a major source of pride and importance for the bride, notwithstanding the possibility to being paired with a husband who was actually a desirable match. There is obvious potential for contradictions and highly ambiguous emotions here. On the one hand, a bride loses her natal family, friends, and possibly her romantic love, whilst on the other she gains a husband, often in a communally celebrated union that glorifies her publicly. In this section, I hope to examine further how Sappho explored the contradictions and ambiguities that were inherent in this socially important process.

In order to discuss how Sappho's poetry deals with this dramatic set of tensions, I shall focus on three main areas:

1) The nature of Sappho's bridal laments and the specifics of why *parthenoi* lament.

2) The positive mythical allusions and exampla that Sappho presents in her wedding songs.

3) The positive aspects of marriage and female desire that Sappho discusses. I shall also use some comparative evidence from modern societies where performance of wedding songs is still socially significant to inform thinking about Sappho's own potential performance.

As we shall see, Sappho's representation of marriage reflected female excitement and pride in marriage, just as it recognised the challenges involved.

Lamentation for Marriage

One of the most common themes of the marriage song in Greek history, and indeed one of the most common themes of marriage songs around the world, is the bride's lamentation for the change she must undergo. It is a famously ambiguous occasion, with the bride separated from her friends, family, and childhood home, but simultaneously becoming the focal point for communal praise and facing the possibility of a good marriage. In a later Greek context, these tensions are well expressed by Theocritus' *Epithalamium for Helen*, a poem which sees the chorus shower praise on Helen's excellent marriage, but only a few lines later sees her companions lament the loss of their most illustrious member.[56] Sappho's wedding songs conspicuously contain similar elements of lament. Typically, the young bride and her peers lament for the change in status that takes place with their marriage; Sapphic wedding songs such as 104(a), 107, 109, 114, and 116 all clearly show that such lament was a key part of Sappho's songs.[57] Similar themes concerning the loss of companions forms the major part of several other major Sapphic fragments such as 16, 94, and 96 and it is possible that these too were inspired by wedding transitions, a suggestion that I shall return to later in this chapter.

Certainly, several of Sappho's wedding fragments express this strain of lament for the bride's permanent change of status. Fragment 109 simply reads 'we shall give, says the father,' probably implying the giving of the bride as part of a marriage ceremony.[58] More explicit are fragments 116 and 117, which say goodbye to the married couple.[59] 116 reads:

χαῖρε, νύμφα, χαῖρε, τίμιε γάμβρε, πόλλα .

Farewell, bride, farewell, worthy bridegroom.[60]

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[56] Theocritus, *Epithalamium for Helen,* 38-57 express the grief that Helen's companions feel.
[57] Sappho, 104(a); 107; 109; 114; and 116.
[58] Sappho, 109.
[59] Sappho, 116 and 117. As Ferrari, 2010, 125-126 argues, this fragment is most likely understood as forming part of the final stages of a wedding ritual.
[60] Sappho, 116. Campbell, 1982, 138-139.

Clearly, the chorus imagine that the couple are leaving, suggesting recognition that both bride and groom are undergoing a permanent change in status. Not only this, but we find the bride lamenting the status of *parthenos* that she will soon lose. Fragment 114 sees a bride in dialogue with her own *parthenia*:

παρθενία, παρθενία, ποῖ με λίποισ᾽ ἀποίχη;

† οὐκέτι ἤξω πρὸς σέ, οὐκέτι ἤξω †.

'*Parthenia, Parthenia,* where have you gone deserting me?'

'Never again shall I come to you: never again shall I come.'[61]

Fragment 107 expresses similar sentiments – 'Do I still long for *parthenia*?'[62] The irreversible change of status is also reflected in the imagery of the crushed flower that we find in 105(c):

οἴαν τὰν ὑάκινθον ἐν ὤρεσι ποίμενες ἄνδρες

πόσσι καταστείβοισι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος …

Like the Hyacinth which shepherds tread underfoot in the mountains, and on the ground the purple flower…[63]

The placing of young women in fertile settings before sexual encounters is also a common motif, most famously illustrated through the abduction of Persephone.[64] The link between natural fertility and blossoming female fertility is clearly implied, and often we find the taking of virginity likened to the crushing or picking of flowers. In *Iphigenia in Aulis,* Euripides imagines Phygrian brides using the word ἀπολωτίζω – to pluck flowers – to describe being taken by Greek men.[65] The

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[61] Sappho, 114. Campbell, 1982, 138-139.
[62] Sappho, 107.
[63] Sappho, 105(c). Campbell, 1982, 132-133.
[64] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter,* 2.4-32, and Euripides, *Helen,* 1301-68.
[65] Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* 791-793.

imagery that Sappho employs in fragment 105(c) echoes this idea. The hyacinth flower is crushed just as girl's *partheneia* is permanently taken from them when they marry. The imagery of a plant being plucked is a common theme in wedding songs around the world, signifying the sharp change in status that occurs with marriage.[66] In archaic Greece, this change of status may have involved leaving home, family, and friends, not to mention growing accustomed to a new husband and becoming sexually active.

Yet, as we have seen from Sappho's fragment 44, the wedding could be an extremely happy occasion for bride, groom, and community. Why then, do the girls mourn the loss of their *parthenia* so strongly and so publicly? In most literature, scholars suggest that mourning for the loss of *parthenia* is primarily associated with the transition from one point of life to the next. Essentially, by mourning for the loss of *parthenia* the bride also mourns for everything associated with it, like leaving family and her childhood home. Yet Sappho is specific in her lamentations for *parthenia* in fragments 107 and 114, whilst the crushing of the flower in fragment 105(c) also suggests a focus on the permanent change of status that marriage brings.[67] In addition to everything else, the loss of the status of *parthenia* is of particular importance.

The status of *parthenos* was clearly important. Irigaray suggests that women's social value is intrinsically linked to their virginal status:

Once deflowered, woman is relegated to the status of use value, to her entrapment of private property; she is removed from exchange among men.[68]

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[66] Watson, 1996, 118: Rubie Watson theorises that the comparison of the bride's marriage transition to grass or flowers being cut, a common motif in Chinese wedding songs, may symbolise a change from unproductive virginity to a more useful form of fertility. Rural Chinese bridal laments continue to provide a rich source of comparative material. For further studies see Blake, 1978, 13-33 and McLaren and Qinjian, 2000, 205-238. Ottenberg 1988, 42-62, and 1989, 57-78, discusses of similar transitional performances in African societies.

[67] Sappho, 105(c); 107; and 114. Lardinois, 2001, 82 also notes that the female loss of youth is important, focusing on the perceived negativity of the transition to marriage.

[68] Irigaray, 1985, 186.

Irigaray's view is rather a bleak one and her focus on virginity is not entirely in line with the study of Greek *parthenoi.* Married life could certainly present new challenges and often happiness, a fact which Sappho herself acknowledged, as I discuss further below. However, the central point that Irigaray raises is interesting. As *parthenoi,* the social value of a young female in archaic Greece was certainly high, as we see in the *Odyssey* when Nausicaa is set to to be the subject of competition from noble suitors and is encouraged to groom her reputation as a result.[69] Sappho emphasises the extent to which marriage provided the culmination of a young girl's fame. Andromache is praised as godlike in fragment 44 and Sappho's wedding hymns are quick to praise the exceptional qualities of brides. Fragment 113 is a fitting example:

οὐ γὰρ † ἐτέρα νῦν † πάις ὦ γάμβρε τεαύτα

For, bridegroom, there (was?) never another girl like this one.[70]

The wedding song places the girl above all of her peers, something which must have served as a source of pride for a young bride. As I have already discussed, marriage could be economically or politically significant, providing a rare opportunity for an individual female to be the focal point of praise in front of her community. *Parthenoi* are thus full of potential and of a high value to the community. Their potential value in exchange between communities, forming marriage alliances, or attracting wealth makes them extremely socially important. The wedding is a moment which encapsulates the worth of a female to the community. Sappho's wedding songs capture the sense of loss that this status is being lost forever. For a *parthenos,* the wedding was significant not only in that it required them to leave their family, but also in that it required them to pass out of an important phase of their lives. Never again would suitors compete for her hand with a high bride price, possibly for political alliance or economic gain, nor would a wedding chorus hymn her beauty for the entire community to see. The status of *parthenos* was one full of potential, and it is unsurprising that bride's mourn its loss.

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[69] Homer, *Odyssey,* 6.25-41 and 6.158-159
[70] Sappho, 113. Campbell, 1982, 136-137.

Marriage represents a completely new set of exciting challenges – a new family, a potentially loving husband, sexuality, motherhood – but it does represent an irreversible change and one of the most significant moments in their life cycle has passed. That is not to say that marriage need to be viewed negatively – the prospect of motherhood and wedded life might also have been exciting and doubtless provided some women with a great deal of pleasure. Even so, the loss of *parthenia* marked the distinct closing of a chapter in a woman's life. The social, political, and economic status of a *parthenos* made it an exciting stage of life, one which women might have felt nostalgic about leaving behind.

Positive Mythical Allusions

Sappho recognised that marriage forced girls to face some difficult emotions prompted by leaving family, friends, and the status of *partheneia* behind. However, alongside the lamentation and loss we also find that Sappho explores a variety of much more positive mythical allusions in her wedding songs. Sappho presents mythical imagery, which suggests that the *parthenos* transition to a *nymphē* will be successful, just as Andromache's journey from her homeland to marry Hector is a cause for communal celebration. Encouraging mythical allusions serve as a means of helping to confront change by accentuating the (hopefully) positive and beneficial experiences of marriage.

One such positive mythical allusion appears in Sappho's treatment of Hesperus, the wedding star. Sappho's discussion of the star is one that is initially rather puzzling:

Ἔσπερε πάντα φέρων ὄσα φαίνολις ἐσκέδασ' Αὔως,

†φέρεις ὄιν, φέρεις αἶγα, φέρεις ἄπυ† μάτερι παῖδα.

Hesperus, bringing everything that shining dawn scattered, you bring the sheep, you bring the goat, you bring the child back to its mother.[71]

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[71] Sappho, 104(a). Campbell, 1982, 130-131.

The marriage star, Hesperus, is generally associated with removing *parthenoi* from their families. As a marker of the bridal ceremony, its appearance in the sky signals the point when the girl must leave her family and join that of her new husband. In later wedding hymns *parthenoi* claim to fear the coming of Hesperus as it marks the moment of separation from their families.[72] Yet Sappho's 104(a) is much more positive, focusing on the pleasant animal imagery and the reunification of a mother and child. Campbell has suggested that the following line might have run either 'but Evening does not bring the bride back to her parents' home' or 'so Evening brings the bride to her husband's home.'[73] Both of these suggestions emphasise the split between the *parthenos* and her natal family, but neither appear to fit perfectly with the positive tone of 104(a).

A more complete solution can be found in Hesperus associations to fertility and transition. It appears that in the archaic period the star Hesperus was already being associated with the dawn star Eosphorus. Ibycus is the first to note explicitly that the two stars are the same.[74] As Nagy suggests, the conflation of Hesperus and Eosphorus helps explain the stars relation to marriage.[75] In the evening Hesperus can be seen to plunge into the sea, whilst on the following morning, as Homer remarks,[76] Eosphorus rises from the sea to signal the new day. The sinking of the star and its rebirth on the following morning mirror the brides transformation from *parthenos* to *gunē.* For Homer, Eosphorus is the beautiful star that signals the start of the new day and brings light to the world.[77] It is a potent symbol of a new beginning. In this sense Hesperus is the ideal star to find in a wedding song for expectant brides. It provides a decidedly positive view on their rebirth into married life.

I argue that Sappho's outlook in 104(a) is a positive one. Hesperus may be the star that separates a *parthenos* from her natal family, but it can also signify a positive rebirth into a new life. Just as Hesperus, 'the fairest of all the stars,'[78] sets in the evening, so Eosphorus, harbinger of the new day, will rise in the morning. The star rises and signals a new beginning, just as the bride's life will enter a new phase*.* Furthermore, Sappho's note that the star might 'bring back the child to its mother' hints that reunification with her family may be a possibility for the departing bride. As

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[72] Most explicitly at Catullus, 62.20-32.
[73] Campbell, 282.
[74] Ibycus, 331.
[75] Nagy, 1996(b), 174.
[76] Homer, *Iliad,* 23.226-228.
[77] Homer, *Iliad,* 23.226.
[78] Sappho, 104(b).

Sappho 44 indicates the wedding was a very public occasion that featured all groups of women – parthenoi, *gunē,* and elderly women are all mentioned participating together in the celebrations.[79] The wedding may then have provided the *nymphē* with an opportunity to mingle with her natal family and friends post marriage. For a *nymphē* about to attempt the difficult transition to marriage fragment 104(a) acknowledges the marital death and rebirth which will take place, emphasises the fertility associated with marriage, and hints that reconciliation with her family may be a possibility.

We find a similar situation with the wedding deity himself, Hymenaeus, another young lover of Apollo who was frequently lamented across Greece.[80] As we have seen, mythical figures that undergo death followed by apotheosis often form a perfect model for youngsters who are approaching important transitions themselves.[81] Once again, in honouring and lamenting a hero who died young, the marriage chorus recognise that the adolescent part of the newlyweds must die in order to pass into a new phase of their lives.

Yet in Sappho's 111, as often elsewhere, the shout of Hymenaeus is entirely positive.[82] Here it is followed by a description of an impressive bridegroom, 'the equal of Ares.'[83] The transition is once again depicted as something positive as the bride and groom move into a new phase of their lives. The death of Hymenaeus is a necessary part of his transformation to divinity and, in a similar way, the unmarried part of the bride and groom must die as they begin married life. Such wedding songs provide a mythical paradigm for the death and rebirth of the married couple. The performance helps to confirm the value of the ceremony and provides a positive interpretation of their changing social status.

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[79] Sappho, 44.

[80] Euripides, *Trojan Women,* 310-330, sees Cassandra call on Hymenaeus as she laments the fall of Troy and her impending slavery with Agamemnon.

[81] For interpretations of Hyacinthus see: Calame, 1977(1), 314-319; Pettersson, 1992, 29-36; and Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 122-126. For Ino-Leucothea: Nilsson, 1906, 432; Graf, 1985, 405-407; and Sourvinou-Inwood, 2005, 341-343. Iphinoe: Pausanias, 1.43.4. Hippolytus: Euripides, *Hippolytus,* 1423-1430.

[82] For example, Euripides, *Heracleidae,* 917-18.

[83] Sappho, 111.

Female Desire and Positive Aspects of Marriage

Up to this point, we have increasingly seen that Sappho offered a perspective on marriage that accentuated positive aspects of the transition from *parthenos* to *gunē.* In this section, I hope to push the point a little further by suggesting that some of Sappho's poems also highlight several aspects of female life that could be positive within marriage. As well as suggesting female pride and empowerment, these fragments also serve to demonstrate a degree of conformity with the social conventions of marriage.

Sappho's poetry celebrates one particular aspect of her married life above all others, namely the love which she displays for her daughter. It seems unlikely that Sappho composed poetry about her daughter for any other reason than the love she felt for her however, those who heard her poetry must surely have implicitly recognised another of the joys that could come from marriage. A strong example of this comes through fragment 132:

ἔστι μοι κάλα πάις χρυσίοισιν ἀνθέμοισιν

ἐμφέρη<ν> ἔχοισα μόρφαν Κλέις ἀγαπάτα,

ἀντὶ τᾶς ἔγωὐδὲ Λυδίαν παῖσαν οὐδ' ἐράνναν …

I have a beautiful child who looks like golden flowers, my darling Cleis, for whom I would not (take) all Lydia or lovely….[84]

In fragment 98, we equally find an expression of Sappho's sadness at not being able to provide her daughter with a glorious purple headband, possibly owing to her exile or to Pittacus' austerity laws.[85] Sappho's love of Cleis is clear and consistent. Whilst the tone of fragment 132 does not preclude the possibility that it was a private poem, the descriptive and declamatory voice suggests that Sappho intended others to hear about her beautiful daughter. Sappho's own pride and pleasure in

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[84] Sappho, 132. Campbell, 1982, 148-149.
[85] Sappho, 98(b), 1-3.

motherhood serves as another illustration to those who heard the poem that the transition to marriage contained some very positive aspects.

Furthermore, youthful expressions of sexual desire are also present in Sappho's poetry:

γλύκηα μᾶτερ, οὔτοι δύναμαι κρέκην τὸν ἴστον

πόθῳ δάμεισα παῖδος βραδίναν δι᾽ Ἀφροδίταν

Truly, sweet mother, I cannot weave my web, for I am overcome with desire for a *pais* because of slender Aphrodite.[86]

Unfortunately, there is no indication as to whether this poem was designed to be performed publicly or whether it was intended for a less formal context. The fact that the speaker desires a *pais* and refers to 'mother' would most likely suggest that the speaker should also be a young girl, or at least indicate that the poem was appropriate for an audience of young women. Again, the term is not gender specific and although it could be an expression of desire for a young girl, there is no reason to discount the possibility that it was a boy. Either way, I would certainly suggest that this single line provides a challenge to Hallett's notions that *parthenoi* were uniformly removed from the sexual attentions of their suitors and that they had no hope of finding gratification in marriage.[87] This isolated fragment provides us with an indication that Sappho sang of the sexual desire that young women could feel, and there is no reason to believe that marriage might not bring gratification.

Indeed, despite the marriage to death motif and lamentations that we often find associated with females at weddings, there is also ample evidence to suggest that they were a major source of excitement or even ambition for *parthenoi*. On first catching sight of Odysseus, Nausicaa expresses both her admiration of his manly form and her desire that such a man should become her husband, a theme which appears to have been reflected by Alcman's chorus through their expression 'Father

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[86] Sappho, 102. Campbell, 1982, 126-127.
[87] Hallett, 1996, 134.

Zeus, if only he were my husband.'[88] Euripides laments that the death of Hipploytus will prevent numerous girls from vying for his hand, an extract that implies female pride and competitiveness over marriage.[89] Euripides also has Electra boast that Castor wanted her as a wife before her unfortunate downfall.[90] Sappho's fragment 102 gives us a rare glimpse of a young female voice expressing excitement for a male. Such an expression fits well with the female desire for a good marriage and physical attraction towards a male, indicating that Sappho was well aware of the positive emotional power that females could feel concerning men. Despite the fact that desire overcomes the girl in the fragment 102, the poem remains empowering for females who hear it. There is an open recognition and acceptance that young women can feel desire, a theme that is often considered in a much more negative light by male poets. The loss of the status of *partheneia* may have been dramatic and irrevocable, but it could also have been a source of excitement.

The positivity of the marital transition can further be seen in Sappho's wedding songs when she is seen to make light of the removal of the bride from her circle of friends. Sappho 110(a) sees Sappho describe a doorkeeper, a figure who Pollux tells us was employed to stop the bride's friends from coming to her rescue. Fragment 110(a) reads:

θυρώρωι πόδες ἐπτορόγυιοι,

τὰ δὲ σάμβαλα πεμπεβόηα,

πίσσυγγοι δὲ δέκ' ἐξεπόναισαν

The door-keepers feet are seven fathoms long, and his sandals are made from five ox-hides; ten cobblers worked hard to make them.[91]

The passage is ridiculous and appears to poke fun at the doorkeeper. Demetrius confirms this view, suggesting that Sappho would make cheap jokes at the expense of a doorkeeper at a wedding.[92] It is

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[88] Homer, *Odyssey,* 218-246 and Alcman, 81.
[89] Euripides, *Hipploytus,* 1140-41.
[90] Euripides, *Electra,* 304-313.
[91] Sappho, 110(a). Campbell, 1982, 134-135.
[92] Demetrius, *On Style,* 167.

interesting that Sappho is able to joke about the separation of the bride from her family in a wedding song. Rather than suggesting excessive anxiety, the fragment suggests that the wedding was a happy occasion, a point that, despite the anxieties that may have surrounded it, could serve as the culmination of the youth of a *parthenos* and see her achieve the married life that she desired.

Conclusion

It should now be clear that the common theme of lamentation for the female transition from *parthenos* to *gunē* is present in Sappho's wedding poetry. However, what I hope to have shown in this section is that Sappho's wedding poetry can reflect a very positive side to the marriage transition. Not only could marriage be a great source of pride for the young girl, but Sappho also accentuates positive aspects of her own married life. Most scholars have seen a negative feminine view of marriage in Sappho's poetry – loss of friends and family alongside marrying a strange new husband – I would rather suggest that Sappho's lyrics reflect a more balanced opinion. Her poetry reflects the difficult transition that *parthenoi* must undergo, but also recognises the pride, desire, and excitement that could exist alongside it. Sappho's is a genuine feminine perspective on marriage and it is not as negative has been previously assumed.

7.3 Choral Poetry Related to Marriage

So far, in this chapter, it has become clear that Sappho recognised the socio-political importance of the bride, emphasised desirable qualities in the married couple, and composed poetry that presented the transition to married life as something that could be very positive for the bride. Finally, I want to explore some of Sappho's chorally performed poetry which, although not certainly wedding poems, contained themes which were highly relevant for marriage. Andre Lardinois has been a strong advocate of the theory that fragments 16, 94, and 96, which all lament the loss of a young woman before offering consolatory thoughts, would have been performed at a wedding.[93] This theory is certainly attractive, but it encounters several difficulties not least in the passionate expressions of desire that we find expressed by the performers for named women.

In his exceptional 1996 article 'Who Sang Sappho's Songs,' where Lardinois first suggested the idea that lament was an important theme in Sappho's marriage songs, he also argued that comparative material may hold the key to better understanding Sappho's intentions.[94] In what follows, I use comparative evidence to suggest a framework in which these poems can be better understood. I hope to support the theory that these fragments were directly relevant to marriage, although nothing demands that they were actually performed as part of the ceremony. As we shall see from comparative studies with Afghan tribal groups, where arranged marriages are ongoing, it is considered normal for poetry to confront publicly the issue of love outside of the married couple. Rather than suppress or ignore the issue, the public performance of the poetry serves to confront a tension that, owing to the very nature of arranged marriage, is common. I believe that such comparative material can provide us with a very useful framework with which to explore Sappho's poems that appear to confront issues of love and loss publicly.

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[93] Lardinois, 2001, 75-92. Lardinois, 2009, 51-53, adds Sappho's newly reconstructed fragment 58 to the list of poems he considers to have been intended for a wedding context.
[94] Lardinois, 1996, 172.

Consolation for the departed

I begin with a study of one of Sappho's most famous poems, fragment 96. As I shall be discussing fragment 96 at some length, I include the most complete section of the poem in full:

[. .] -

-σε θέαι σ᾿ ἰκέλαν ἀρι-

γνώται, σᾶι δὲ μάλιστ᾿ ἔχαιρε μόλπαι.

νῦν δὲ Λύδαισιν ἐμπρέπεται γυναί-

κεσσιν ὥς ποτ᾿ ἀελίω

δύντος ἀ βροδοδάκτυλος σελάννα

πάντα περρέχοισ᾿ ἄστρα. φάος δ᾿ ἐπί-

σχει θάλασσαν ἐπ᾿ ἀλμύραν

ἴσως καί πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραις.

ἀ δ᾿ ἐέρσα κάλα κέχυται, τεθά-

λαισι δὲ βρόδα κἄπαλ᾿ ἄν-

θρυσκα καὶ μελίλωτος ἀνθεμώδης.

πόλλα δὲ ζαφοίταισ᾿, ἀγάνας ἐπι-

μνάσθεισ᾿ Ἄτθιδος ἰμέρῳ

λέπταν ποι φρένα κ[ᾶ]ρ[ι σᾶι] βόρηται.

… (she honoured) you as being like a goddess for all to see and took most delight in your song. Now she stands out among Lydian women like the rosy-fingered moon after sunset, surpassing all the stars, and its light spreads alike over the salt sea and the flowery fields; the

259

dew is shed in beauty, and roses bloom and tender chervil and flowery melilot. Often as she

goes to and fro she remembers gentle Atthis and doubtless her tender heart is consumed

because of your fate...[95]

Burnett and Hallett have noted that fragment 96 praises Atthis with the voice of a group and would

thus be appropriate for choral performance.[96] Fragment 96 laments the loss of a woman,[97] possibly a

former lover of Atthis, who now 'stands out among Lydian women like the rosy-fingered moon after

sunset.'[98] That the woman who has left is described alongside Lydian *gunē* suggests that she has

married and left Lesbos to be with her new family. Potentially, the poems performance serves to

console Atthis about the departure in what Merkelbach famously described as a 'Trostlied.'[99]

Following on from this, Lardinois suggested that fragment 96 would be appropriate for performance

as a wedding song, offering consolation for the departed bride and her companions. For Lardinois

Sapphic poems like 16, 94, and 96 are female marital laments that reflect a female 'sense of loss and

anxiety about the marriage' and act as a limited form of 'social protest' for their separation from

their families.[100] As we have seen in previous chapters, the bride's companions often lament her

loss, something that can be seen in Alcman fragment 3, Theocritus 18, and on numerous occasions in

Attic drama.[101] Furthermore, we have seen that Sappho's social view of marriage was not as bleak as

Lardinois implies, suggesting that a different interpretation should be sought.

There have been other challenges put forward to Lardinois' position. Certainly, the

departure of a woman now outstanding amongst the Lydian *gunē* suggests that the poem's theme

was related to marriage. I agree that the group voice also suggests that the poem was intended for

choral performance. Yet the poem implies that the bride has already reached Lydia. Furthermore,

the tone of the poem is personal, focusing specifically on the relationship between Atthis and the

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[95] Sappho, 96.4-17. Campbell, 1982, 120-121.
[96] Burnett, 1979, 312 and Hallett, 1996, 140.
[97] The vocabulary here is very specific – Sappho speaks of a *gunē* suggesting that the departed woman is now also married.
[98] Sappho, 96.6-9. Lardinois, 2009, 41-57, provides some recent remarks on consolation. Merkelbach, 1957, 12 provides a seminal discussion of 'Trostlieder.'
[99] Merkelbach, 1957, 12.
[100] Lardinois, 2001, 80-88.
[101] For an excellent collection of such instances, I refer the reader to the appendix of Swift, 2010 that documents all such occasions in tragedy.

departed woman, an element that initially seems awkward for a wedding performance. Both of these aspects make Lardinois' wedding interpretation problematic.

The result is that we have a poem that is related to marriage, but which would seem rather awkward for public performance. The public discussion of Atthis and the departed bride's affection for each other initially seems an unusual topic to confront with performance. Yet examinations of modern bridal songs from societies that still practice competitive arranged marriage suggest some interesting similarities in terms of consolation, loss, and the finality of the departure. The following publicly performed bridal song from tribal Afghanistan encapsulates many of the most common features that are found in wedding songs throughout the world:

> In the pasture, the filly neighs with joy after her mating; she became a horse.
>
> In the room, the bride cries from becoming a wife.
>
> Don't cry, girl, don't cry, girl, this celebration is yours.[102]

Fertility, lamentation, and praise come together as we might expect, but the final lines of the song consider a theme related to fragment 96. The focus of the poem switches away from the bride:

> Fate ordained by god cannot be broken.
>
> Your house is on the other side of the river.
>
> Your beautiful face is reflected in the water.
>
> What were you wearing? A silk or cotton robe.
>
> Was your promise truth or lie?
>
> The river is flooded, the water is overflowing; I cannot cross.
>
> My horse is weak and I can't reach your place.

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[102] Traditional wedding song of the Fārghanachi, Shalinsky, 1989, 135.

The gravel has weakened my poor horse.

The dark browed girl has made my face pale.[103]

The song ends with a young man unable to reach his beautiful love on the other side of the river. A noted commentator on Afghani bridal songs, Audrey Shalinsky argues that the young man's inability to reach his love is a theme that resonates with many of those who participate in arranged marriages throughout Afghanistan.[104] There is a recognition that not only a loved one's family, but also the person one loves may have to be left behind for marriage. Marriage, when organised for political, commercial, or economic reasons can often result in loved ones being left behind. What is particularly interesting about these wedding songs is that they choose to confront publicly the necessity of marriage, the unbreakable nature of fate, and the enforced separation from loved ones. Often the loves of the Afghani bride and groom were far from secret, but there was an acceptance that marriage was a part of fate that was not to be avoided.[105] As we read in the wedding poem, fate cannot be broken and the waters permanently separate the horseman from the beautiful woman on the other side. The social importance of marriage and its integral place in society mean that it is something to be accepted.

As we see from Sappho's own poetry that publicly laments the loss of *Partheneia* and from the frequent strain of lament that runs throughout Greek wedding poetry, confronting difficult themes associated to marriage were an acceptable theme for public performance. In the case of this Afghani wedding poem, the bridal song acknowledges the fact that love could have existed externally to the marriage, but also publicly demonstrates that the marriage transition is permanent. The watching community witnesses a wedding performance that speaks of the permanent separation of loved ones, becoming aware of the issue and subsequently made complicit in ensuring the success of the marriage. The Afghani poem quoted above sees the young man in the wedding song accept that he is separated from his romantic love forever. Fate makes this unavoidable. Yet rather than repressing the emotion and ignoring the loss, the tension is confronted and explored in the wedding song itself. The performance provides an opportunity to explore another contradiction inherent in marriage. The social tension that may be created by a romantic love, which is irrelevant

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[103] Traditional wedding song of the Fārghanachi, Shalinsky, 1989, 136.
[104] Shalinsky, 1989, 136.
[105] Shalinsky, 1989, 136.

to the marriage, is confronted publicly in song. Just as the lamentation for the change in status of the bride is recognised, so is the lamentation for the loss of a romantic attachment that does not fit with the marriage. As we have seen elsewhere in this thesis, performance helps to recognise, express, and explore a difficult social experience.

I argue that this model can provide a useful framework for studying fragment 96. I see the separation that exists between Atthis and the bride as being entirely relevant to marriage, and believe that we must remain open to the possibility that the poem could have been performed in a wedding context, potentially to acknowledge the split between the two central characters. There has been a long and varied debate as to whether homoerotic relations formed a part of many young girls' lives.[106] Sappho's fragment 94 reminisces about females satisfying themselves on soft beds and fragment 1 makes clear that females could feel passionate desire for one another.[107] It certainly seems plausible that close bonds existed between members of Sappho's chorus. The performance of the poem allows for the tensions created by Atthis' loss to be explored and overcome. By noting the bride's outstanding status among the Lydian women, Sappho highlights the success of the transition whilst also recognising the difficulties inherent in the loss of a loved one. As many scholars have commented, Sappho then offers consolation by encapsulating and immortalising the beauty of the departed in song. Sappho's closeness to the young girls whom she prepared for choral performance provides her with the perfect position to understand the nature of the loss that a marriage could cause.

Fragment 94 presents a similar scenario that may well be interpreted in the same way as fragment 96:

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[106] There is a great deal of literature on this topic. Wilamowitz, 1913, initially sought to remove the sexuality from Sappho's poetry by seeing her as a moral and sensual educator. Hallett, 1996, 131 reminds us that Sappho never uses the first person speaking voice to claim that she engaged in a sexual act with another woman, again challenged by Stehle, 1996, 144-149, who sees Sappho's lyrics as an exploration of female sexuality. In the same volume, section IV 'Women's Erotics' contains a variety of articles which speculate on the topic. Calame, 1997, imagines an institutionalised setting in which homosexuality helped prepare women for their marriages. Lardinois, 1989, 15-35, provides a useful assessment for the evidence in regard to Sappho.
[107] Sappho, 94.21-23 and 1.18-28. Carson, 1996, 226-232, is probably right to argue that fragment 1 sees Sappho recognise that the girl who has rejected her will be subject to the same whims and desires on another occasion.

τεθνάκην δ' ἀδόλως θέλω·

ἄ με ψισδομένα κατελίμπανεν

πόλλα καὶ τόδ' ἔειπέ [μοι.

ʹὤιμ' ὡς δεῖνα πεπ[όνθ]αμεν,

Ψάπφ', ἦ μάν σ' ἀέκοισ' ἀπυλιμπάνω.

….and honestly I wish I were dead. She was leaving me with many tears and said this: 'Oh what bad luck has been ours, Sappho; truly I leave you against my will.'[108]

The speaker is distraught at leaving, and as we saw earlier in this chapter, the emotions expressed within this poem are consistent with wedding poetry. Sappho's solution for the departing woman in fragment 94 is to find consolation in the time they shared together:

ʹχαίροισ' ἔρχεο κἄμεθεν

μέμναισ', οἶσθα γὰρ ὥς σε πεδήπομεν·

Go and fare well and remember me, for you know how we cared for you.[109]

For young women who had no control over the final destination of their marriage, this sense of loss and departure must have been a common theme. A departing *nymphē* might desire not only another lover, but also her family, her friends, and her familiar surroundings. Sappho's poetry brings consolation for these losses by reminding the departing bride of the good times which they shared together. The beautiful girl of fragment 96 and the departing girl of fragment 94 never give any hint that their desires could be fulfilled. As the lament for the status of *partheneia* in fragment 114

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[108] Sappho, 94.1-5. Campbell, 1982, 116-117. Lanata, 1996, 19-21 looks at Sappho's love surrounding love and death, noting similarities with Anacreon. Again, the language used bears comparison with contemporary male poets.
[109] Sappho, 94.7-8. Campbell, 1982, 116-117.

indicates, the wedding represents a definite transition for the young bride.[110] The relationships that *parthenoi* may have experienced will be absent when a girl leaves the area for marriage, and Sappho presents memory as the best consolation for this.

In this manner, the tension created by the loss of a loved one can be confronted publicly. By recognising the tender relationship that existed between the separated girls in fragments 94 and 96 publicly, Sappho is able to commemorate their love, thereby helping to confront the reality that marriage has now forever changed their relationship. Not only does this provide consolation and recognition for the girl left behind, but it acts as a public acceptance of what must have been a common issue. Arranged marriage may serve to change permanently the relationship between young lovers, it does not mean that their relationship cannot be recognised and commemorated through song.

Dangerous Desire and Mythical Messages

Alongside fragments 94 and 96, I would also argue that fragment 16 might have served the purpose of helping to confront the problems of a difficult loss, although in this case Sappho also uses the mythical example of Helen to explore the problem. The fragment reads:

> ο]ἰ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον οἰ δὲ πέσδων
>
> οἰ δὲ νάων φαῖσ᾽ ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν
>
> ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν᾽ ὄτ-
>
> τω τις ἔραται·
>
> πά]γχυ δ᾽ εὔμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
>
> π]άντι τ[ο]ῦτ᾽, ἀ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα

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[110] Sappho, 114.

κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἐλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα

τὸν [πανάρ]ιστον

καλλ[ίποι]σ᾽ ἔβα ᾽ς Τροΐαν πλέοι[σα

κωὐδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων

πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ᾽ αὔταν

  ]σαν

[   ]αμπτον γὰρ [

[   ] . . . κούφως τ[   ]οησ[.]ν

. .]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὀ]νέμναι-

σ᾽ οὐ] παρεοίσας,

τᾶ]ς κε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα

κἀμάρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω

ἢ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κἀν ὄπλοισι

 πεσδομ]άχεντας.

Some say a host of cavalry, others of infantry, and others of ships, is the most beautiful thing on the black earth, but I say it is whatsoever a person loves. It is perfectly easy to make this understood by everyone: for she who far surpassed mankind in beauty, Helen, left her most noble husband and went sailing off to Troy with no thought at all for her child or dear parents, but (love) led her astray......has reminded me now of Anactoria who is not here; I would rather see her lovely walk and the bright sparkle of her face than the Lydians' chariots and armed infantry… impossible to happen…[111]

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[111] Sappho, 16.1-20. Campbell, 1982, 66-67.

There is evidence to suggest that fragment 16 was chorally performed and was intended to have a public impact.[112] As Charles Segal noted, lines 5-6 suggest a desire to make the poetic content 'understood by everyone' a line that suggests Sappho wanted her message to be known publicly.[113] Furthermore, the praise of Anactoria's beauty echoes the descriptions of individual *parthenoi* whom we find in Alcman' songs.[114] Lardinois has again suggested that fragment 16 would be appropriate for performance at a wedding:

> The performer of these songs praises the beauty and erotic appeal of the bride, while at the same time expressing something of her own sorrow and that of the friends and family of the bride in having to let her go.[115]

However, the myth of Helen appearing in such a wedding context does not seem a good fit. The imagery that Sappho employed in her weddings hymns focused on lamenting for the bride's transition, praising the couple, taking a positive view on marital transition, and extolling potential social benefits for the community. To focus publicly on Helen's flight from her noble husband, led astray by love for another, would be difficult at a wedding ceremony. Lardinois' theory goes that Sappho is here warning the bride and groom about the dangers of being led astray by love, consoling those affected by the loss of the bride with memory, and hinting at the military consequences of following Helen's example. Yet, why do all this at the wedding ceremony with the bride and groom present? Would this not cast aspersions on the character of the bride and groom, in direct contrast to the open praise that we find in Sappho's other wedding hymns? To make these suggestions contradicts much of the evidence that we have seen from Sappho's more definitive wedding songs and furthermore, the use of negative mythical examples in wedding poetry is not something for which we find a precedent in any other Greek examples. Finally, the subject of comparison to Helen is one Anactoria who is 'not here,' also suggesting that she may have already left for marriage.[116]

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[112] Frankel, 1975, 172; Hallett, 1996, 140-142; Lardinois, 1996, 166; and Segal, 1996, 64 have all argued that the poem was performed publicly.
[113] Sappho, 16.5-6. See Segal, 1996, 64.
[114] For further discussion, see Hallett, 1996, 140-142.
[115] Lardinois, 2009, 51.
[116] Sappho, 16.15-16.

That Helen would be an odd choice for a public wedding performance on archaic Lesbos is confirmed by Sappho's contemporary Alcaeus who saw Helen as the epitome of the bad wife. Fragment 283 is a particularly strong condemnation of Helen:

κ᾽Αλένας ἐν στήθ[ε]σιν [ἐ]πτ[όαισε

θῦμον Ἀργείας, Τροΐω δ᾽ [ὐ]π ἀν[δρος

ἐκμάνεισα ξ[εν]απάτα ᾽πὶ π[όντον

ἔσπετο νᾶϊ,

παῖδά τ᾽ ἐν δόμ[ο]ισι λίποισ᾽ [ἐρ]ήμαν

κἄνδρος εὔστρωτον [λ]έχος .[

πεῖθ᾽ ἔρω<ι> θῦμο[

παῖ]δα δ[ίο]ς τε

]πιε..μανι[

κ]ασιγνήτων πόλεας μ[έλαινα

γα]ῖ ἔχει Τρώων πεδίω<ι> δα[μεντας

ἔν]νεκα κήνας,

….and exited the heart of Argive Helen in her breast. And driven mad by the Trojan man, the deceiver of his host, she accompanied him over the sea in his ship, leaving in her home her child (desolate?) and her husbands bed with its rich coverlet, (since) her heart persuaded her (to yield?) to love (through the daughter of Dione?) and Zeus … many of his brothers (the dark earth?) holds, laid low on the Trojans' plain for that woman's sake….[117]

[117] Alcaeus, 283.3-14. Campbell, 1982, 332-333.

Crazed by Paris, Helen allows her heart to be persuaded by love, abandoning the good life that she has at Sparta and running away to Troy. The result is clear and shocking. Alcaeus implies that Helen is culpable for the death of many warriors who died 'for that woman's sake.' The same theme appears when Alcaeus contrasts Thetis and Helen as potential brides.[118]

It seems likely that while fragment 16 contained themes extremely relevant to marriage, it was not designed to be performed as part of the wedding ritual itself. Instead, Page Dubois has suggested that this poem reflects the changing position of marriage within society. Dubois has argued that in the changing archaic world where traditional marriage values were being challenged with classes mixed, Sappho celebrates Helen as a woman who followed her heart rather than accept her place as an item for aristocratic exchange.[119] She comments:

> Her (Helen's) action is possible because the world of oral culture, of a certain type of exchange, a type of marriage characteristic of such societies, is no longer dominant.[120]

However, as we have seen, Dubois' view is not consistent with the evidence. Sappho's poetry suggests that she was a member of the aristocracy, with her political views appearing to accord well with other elite archaic poets. Furthermore, her poetry appears to celebrate marriage and the pride that young girls could take in it. In this context, Dubois' interpretation is difficult to uphold.

Once again, I suggest that the performance of the poem was designed to confront the social difficulty of losing a loved one through public performance. I have suggested that fragments 94 and 96 confront the issue of leaving behind loved ones to move into marriage, showing an acceptance that things will change and relationships will end. In fragment 16, we are provided with a myth which represents the difficulties inherent in this process.

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[118] Alcaeus, 42. Campbell, 1982, 257-259.
[119] Dubois, 1996, 86-88.
[120] Dubois, 1996, 87.

Initially, Sappho states that whatever one loves is the most beautiful thing on earth and it is thus Helen's love for Paris that leads her to leave her husband. That love and Aphrodite should have such power is a common theme in Sappho's corpus. Fragments 90 and 200 both describe Peitho (Persuasion) as the daughter of Aphrodite, alluding to the power of love to command action.[121] Furthermore, fragment 1 clearly demonstrates the perceived power of Aphrodite to change a person's will.[122] In Alcaeus' poetry, Helen's submission to desire and her removal to Troy are actions for which she must be condemned.[123] In fragment 16, Sappho once again accepts the emotional power of love and thus presents a much more sympathetic picture of Helen. Sappho then goes on to make the comparison with Anactoria 'who is not here.' Although the speaker yearns to see Anactoria, she remains absent and the fragmentary end to the poem suggest (tentatively) that reconciliation is unlikely.[124] Despite the desire to see Anactoria again, she must remain absent or face similar consequences to those that Alcaeus imagines were provoked by Helen's actions. Potentially the military imagery Sappho uses throughout the poem serves as a reminder of the consequences that Helen's actions provoked in myth, and the potential consequences of Anactoria's actions in reality.

In a similar manner to fragments 94 and 96 then, fragment 16 helped its performers to confront the tensions inherent with losing friends and loved ones in marriage. The difference here is that we find a mythical example that helps to explore both the power of love and the potential consequences of being entirely at love's whim. Again, it is a public confrontation of a significant emotional problem, further explored through myth.

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[121] Sappho, 90 and 200. Pfeiffer, 2000, 1-6 also argues that fragment 16 recognises the irresistibility of love, in spite of the brutal consequences that Helen's actions cause.
[122] Sappho, 1.
[123] Alcaeus, 42 and 283.
[124] Sappho, 16.17-22. The lines seem to suggest that reconciliation is 'impossible to happen.'

Conclusions

As we saw in the previous chapter, Sappho was composing her poetry at a time when archaic Lesbos was often in a state of political turmoil. In this turbulent environment, marriage was increasingly important for a variety of political, social, and economic reasons. The poetess' role in composing public marriage poetry and preparing girls for performance gave her an important social role to play in representing the institution to the community. Not only does Sappho's wedding poetry recognise the high social value of the bride in these marriage exchanges, but it also provides a means for the bride to confront the multiple tensions involved.

The experience of marriage was (and is) fraught with difficult emotional ambiguities that it was important for the bride and the wider community to acknowledge. In the wedding songs, we find the transition dramatised, major life changes lamented, new statuses celebrated and the institution of marriage reinforced. Through performance, the bride is able to understand better what she is going through and prepare for the future. Sappho's marriage poetry is very much a product of the particular environment in which it was written, recognising the particular social, political, and commercial worth of the bride. Yet, Sappho also shows a deep understanding of the emotional experiences that the wedding can bring – excitement and pride coupled with a change of status, and in some cases, the acceptance that relationships with loved ones must change. Sappho's recognises the emotional pull of love, accepting and confronting the difficulties that marriage can raise in this context. Performance helps both chorus and audience understand, face, and overcome the difficulties of marriage whilst simultaneously providing a celebration of its joys.

Chapter 8 - Death in Sappho's Poetry

In the previous chapter we saw that Sappho's chorally performed wedding poetry could explore social issues relating to the very particular sphere of marriage. The purpose of this chapter is conceptually more difficult as it requires an examination of poetry for which the performance context is often more obscure – poetry surrounding death. However, although the performance context of Sappho's poetry on death may be harder to define, we shall see that there are certainly some examples of Sapphic poems on death that could be performed chorally. The 'New Sappho' and fragment 140(a) respectively feature a group of *paides* and a group of *korai,* making their themes relevant to this thesis. Although this thesis will touch on other fragments of Sappho's poetry relating to death, the primary focus will be to examine how the performances of young girls in the 'New Sappho' and fragment 140(a) were influenced by the political and social climate of the period.

There is a reasonable amount of discussion surrounding death, alongside consolation for loss, in Sappho's poetry. Furthermore, the 'New Sappho' has recently focused a great deal of attention on Sappho's attitude towards death and old age, with a variety of studies examining Sappho's philosophy on the subject. Alex Hardie saw the 'New Sappho' as prime evidence that Sappho and her chorus performed in a cult of the Muses, with participation leading to commemoration and benefits in the afterlife.[1] Ellen Greene has argued that Sappho's poetry reflects archaic philosophical thinking, complete with reflections that would align with pre-Socratic thought.[2] In the same volume as Greene, Lardinois has argued that the advice on death that appears in fragment 58 could have been appropriate for a bride and groom, counselling that although they are young now, old age must come to us all.[3]

The intention of this chapter is to explore a different method of approaching death in Sappho's poetry, namely by looking at the changing social and political climate in which Sappho composed her poetry on death. As numerous studies have shown, death was a major political theme in archaic Greece, a fact reflected both by archaeological evidence and surviving evidence for archaic

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[1] Hardie, 2005, 13-32.
[2] Greene, 2009, 147-161.
[3] Lardinois, 2009, 41-57.

legislation.[4] As is most famously reflected by Solon's Athenian legislation, restrictions were placed on excessive funeral lamentation in order to reduce the dangers of reciprocal violence arising from the tense atmosphere created by loss.[5] The purpose of this chapter is to explore Sappho's representations and discussions of death specifically in the context of archaic Mytilene, a *polis* that appears to conform with broader Greek trends on the subject. In this chapter, I shall discuss the attitudes towards death that Sappho represents in her chorally performed poetry in light of this changing political environment. In order to do so, this chapter will be split into the following sections:

1. I shall begin by looking in detail at changes in the way death was viewed across archaic Greece. Following this, I shall look more specifically at how archaic Lesbos fits into these trends. This will establish the context for looking at Sappho's poetry.

2. Following this, I shall look at the models that Sappho uses to think about death. I shall look particularly at issues such as commemoration, views on the afterlife, and the nature of death, assessing how Sappho's views reflected the changing political environment in which she composed.

3. Finally, I suggest an interpretation of Sappho's lamentations for Adonis, arguing that the rituals provided a cathartic experience that allowed the *korai* who perform the lament to confront death in a ritual setting.

Through this study, it should emerge that Sappho presented a model for thinking about death that compares with the reflections of other archaic poets, but also offers a particular feminine perspective. I shall argue that Sappho offers a reflection on death that falls in line with the changing political atmosphere of archaic Greece, and was at least partially motivated by the political circumstances of its composition.

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[4] There is a wealth of literature on this topic and to list it all here would be excessive. I have found particularly useful, Morris, 1987 and 1992; Seaford, 1994; and Sourvinou-Inwood, 1995.
[5] Demosthenes, 43.62 and Plutarch, *Solon,* 21. See Van Wees, 1998(a), 10-53, for a study of changing patterns in the representations of death in iconographic evidence that conforms with the literary evidence.

8.1 Death and Society on Archaic Lesbos

The purpose of this opening section is to establish the context in which Sappho was composing her poetry on death. In Greek society, women have always had a conspicuous role in performance regarding death. In the Homeric epics, it is Homer's female relatives who lead the laments for him, and performance of the *threnos* is also a traditional female role.[6] In iconographic depictions of funeral processions, women are also conspicuous, often mourning aggressively and violently.[7] Frequently, we find that these female laments call for vengeance against those who have wronged them.[8] However, as we shall see, the archaic period saw a marked change in these attitudes, with women consistently discouraged from such vengeful performance.

In this section, I hope to demonstrate that there is enough evidence to suggest that archaic Lesbos conformed with the trends we find across Greece. I shall begin by looking at female reaction to death in early Greek society before examining changes that can be seen throughout the archaic period. This will help place Sappho's poetry in context throughout the rest of the chapter.

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[6] Homer, *Iliad,* 24.725-762. The best reference work on female lamentation remains, Alexiou, 1974.
[7] Van Wees, 1998(a), 23-30.
[8] For a wide-ranging study of this phenomenon, see Holst-Warhaft, 1992.

Much of our best evidence for practices surrounding death in early Greece is iconographic, where the conspicuous and often aggressive laments of women forms a consistent part of the images. Early images of the *prosthesis,* the laying out of the dead, show groups of women surrounding the corpse.[9] Often they appear to lament dramatically, with the chief female mourner placing her hands on the head of the deceased, while the other women raise their arms, beat themselves, and tear out their hair.[10] As Hans van Wees has shown from an inspection of (primarily Attic) iconographic funerary images, between 670 and the early sixth-century, females engaged in mourning were often depicted in violent acts of self mutilation, such as scratching their cheeks or tearing their hair.[11] The women also took part in large scale funeral processions, continually wailing and lamenting the deceased.[12] Mourning in the archaic period is depicted as loud, violent, passionate, and public.

As Seaford has eloquently discussed, such large-scale funerals could be combustible occasions. The heightened emotion and grief for the deceased could be a melting pot for inciting dangerous acts of vengeance. Seaford writes:

> Where there is danger of rivalry between kinship groups, this solidarity of the dead person's kin (and their followers), and its public display, could be divisive, especially when, as occurs in civil conflict, the dead man had been murdered.[13]

In the Homeric epics revenge is an obligation of the close friend and kin of someone who has been killed by another. For example, in the *Odyssey,* it takes divine intervention to prevent Odysseus and his supporters from beginning a new conflict with the families of the recently slaughtered suitors.[14] Women do not have the same opportunity to avenge themselves in battle, although Clytemnestra's

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[9] Alexiou, 1974, 6. See Images, C*VA,* 80.1-2; 81.1-2; 82.1; and 84.1-2.
[10] Alexiou, 1974, 6. See Images, *CVA,* 80.1-3; 81.1-2; and 84.1. Alexiou has also collected a large number of literary references to these practices found in both the Homeric epics and Greek tragedy.
[11] Van Wees, 1998(a), 23-30.
[12] Alexiou, 1974, 7. See Images, Athens, 806, 803, and 10862.
[13] Seaford, 1994, 82.
[14] Homer, *Odyssey,* 24.450-545.

brutal murder of Agamemnon illustrates that their revenge could become violent. Rather women's primary role was in the lament. However, as Alexiou notes, public lament was often exploited by women to curse those considered to be responsible for the death and call for revenge.[15] Hecuba expresses her hatred and desire for revenge against Achilles in venomous terms:[16]

> τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἧπαρ ἔχοιμι
>
> ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα: τότ᾽ ἄντιτα ἔργα γένοιτο
>
> παιδὸς ἐμοῦ,
>
> I wish I could fix my teeth in that man's inmost heart and feed on it: then might deeds of requital be done for my son...[17]

Another common theme in the laments of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen is that they all mourn for themselves as well as for the deceased Hector. Andromache laments the fate of her son and worries for Troy now that her protector is gone.[18] Hecuba speaks of her grief as a bereaved mother in light of the deaths of many sons and Helen is concerned for the loss of protection previously provided by Hector.[19] Not only do the female *gooi* betray a fear for the women's own social position, but they also stress the importance of the dead individual on a social level. Placed in a perilous social position and often with no means of achieving justice for themselves, it is common to call for vengeance.

We also find echoes of this practice in tragedy, with poets using feminine lamentation as a common means for women to call for vengeance. In Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers,* the lamentations for the dead Agamemnon build steadily to the point where Electra wishes his murderers dead.[20] Sophocles has the chorus curse Clytemnestra in his *Electra.*[21] In Euripides' *Trojan Women,*

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[15] Alexiou, 1974, 178-182. For examples, see Aeschylus, *Agamemnon,* 1322-6 and *Libation Bearers,* 354-71.
[16] The verb used to describe Hecuba's cries is κωκύω, a term with frequent associations to lament and normally reserved for use by females. See Liddel and Scott, 1925, 1016.
[17] Homer, *Iliad,* 24.212-214. Murray, 1999(b), 578-579 (revised Wyatt, and adapted).
[18] Homer, *Iliad,* 24.725-34.
[19] Homer, *Iliad,* 24.735-762.
[20] Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers,* 354-71.
[21] Sophocles, *Electra,* 126-127.

Andromache rains all manner of curses down on Helen when the fate of Astyanax becomes clear.[22] The response of these women to death is to incite vengeance against those who have wronged them. They desire 'an eye for an eye' and their lamentations allow them a forum in which to air their grievances. Indeed, the expression of a desire for vengeance through lament appears to be a prominent theme throughout Greek traditions. In the words of Holst-Warhaft, 'Lament is the medium through which revenge is promoted, and it is a woman's medium.'[23] Holst-Warheft goes on to relate a series of Greek laments, ranging from the beginnings of Greek tragedy to the second world-war, in which women use lament in a manner to incite revenge.[24] A particularly fine example comes from Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* as she foretells her own death:

ἅπαξ ἔτ᾽ εἰπεῖν ῥῆσιν ἢ θρῆνον θέλω

ἐμὸν τὸν αὐτῆς, ἡλίου δ᾽ ἐπεύχομαι

πρὸς ὕστατον φῶς †τοῖς ἐμοῖς τιμαόροις

ἐχθροῖς φονεῦσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς τίνειν ὁμοῦ†

δούλης θανούσης,

I wish to speak again, a dirge – it is my own. I pray to the sun honouring me with my last light, that those who murder my enemies at the same time avenge a dead slave.[25]

Cassandra brings down a curse upon her enemies and prays for vengeance. Lament is presented as the medium through which women can express their despair and attempt to gain a measure of justice for themselves.

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[22] Euripides, *Trojan Women,* 766-779.
[23] Holst-Warhaft, 1992, 84.
[24] Holst-Warhaft, 1992, *passim.*
[25] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon,* 1322-6.

Changes in Attitudes Towards Death in the Archaic Period

The violence and desire for vengeance that we find in early Greek literary and iconographic evidence is reflected in historical examples of revenge feuds. Numerous examples illustrate how in the early archaic period a violent death would certainly be a cause for a revenge feud. A prominent Athenian example serves to illustrate the point. Following the death of Cylon at the hands of Megacles and his supporters, we see extended factional rivalry and violence at Athens, with the Alcmaeonid clan seen as polluted as a direct result.[26] The unity of a political community such as the *polis* would be threatened by such acts of vengeance that would have had the potential to tear it apart.[27] The betrayals, factional rivalries, and political intrigues found in Alcaeus' poetry are enough to suggest that archaic Lesbos was certainly subject to such situations.[28]

As Seaford has noted the Draconian laws on murder in the last quarter of the seventh-century represent the first attempt to encourage the legal process and discourage the excessive violence that could accompany a blood feud.[29] Funeral legislation is another measure introduced in response to the civil discord caused by revenge cycles, in an attempt to encourage civic *eunomia.* Demosthenes and Plutarch record a variety of the prohibitions that Solon imposed upon mourning.[30] Many were concerned with limiting female involvement in funerals, owing to the incitements to violence that could be a part of their lamentations. Large lamentations, self-laceration, and bull sacrifice were all banned, whilst women were also forbidden from going to the grave monuments of people unrelated to themselves or lamenting the death of an individual at a different person's funeral.[31] Women would walk behind the procession and only close female relatives (plus those over sixty) were allowed to accompany the procession.[32] Only close female relatives could enter the tomb

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[26] Herodotus, 5.70 and Plutarch, *Solon,* 12.2.

[27] This is also a common theme in Athenian tragedy. Most famously, Aeschylus' *Oresteia* demonstrates the developing *polis* often saw a need to curb blood-feuds and acts of excessive revenge through the rule of law. In *Libation Bearers,* we find the continual, excessive, lamentations of Electra, Orestes, and the chorus for the recently murdered Agamemnon, gradually increasing their desire for vengeance (Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers,* 306-346). It is noteworthy that Aeschylus finally resolves the crisis of the *Oresteia* with a trial in the *Eumenides.* Here, the Eumenides themselves sing against civil conflict and the anger caused by reciprocal killing (Aeschylus, *Eumenides,* 976-87.)

[28] Alcaeus, 129.13-20, is a prime example and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

[29] Seaford, 1994, 98.

[30] Demosthenes, 43.62 and Plutarch, *Solon,* 21.

[31] Plutarch, *Solon,* 21.

[32] Demosthenes, 43.

for the ekphrasis.[33] That these restrictions took effect is supported by iconographic evidence. As Hans van Wees' examinations of the Attic artistic record have shown depictions of women in mourning change dramatically in the sixth-century.[34] The scenes of self-mutilation and violent mourning disappear entirely by 580, although women do still appear in a variety of emotional poses.[35] Archaeological studies by the likes of Ian Morris have confirmed that across Greece large scale burials appear to have been replaced by less ostentatious funerals at a similar time period, whilst later traditions suggests similar legislation was enforced in a variety of Greek *poleis*.[36]

One such *polis* where changes in funeral practice and attempts to lessen violence can be detected is Mytilene. Pittacus' time of governance is one that ancient commentators characterise by emphasising temperance, forgiveness, and equality.[37] Pittacus' double punishments for crimes committed when drunk reads like an attempt to lessen the inflammatory power of alcohol and cool the aggressive atmosphere.[38] Diodorus Siculus notes that he equally re-distributed land and Diogenes Laertius claims that he would only accept a small portion of the land offered him by the Mytilenians, both of which suggest a desire to encourage equality.[39] Unfortunately, our only literary evidence relating specifically to funeral law on Mytilene comes from Cicero, who claims that Pittacus may have tried to calm the potentially unstable political position by preventing those who were unrelated to the deceased from attending funerals.[40] Pittacus' attempt to diminish political violence may also be seen in the emphasis that he placed on forgiveness. Rather than applying a stringent punishment after capturing Alcaeus and his group of exiles, Pittacus is said to have pardoned

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[33] Demosthenes, 43.62. More generally, Demosthenes tells us that the *prosthesis* was to take place inside with the funeral procession following before sunrise on the next day. Plato, *Laws,* 958d-960b also suggests that the duration of the *prosthesis* should be restricted and expenditure on funeral practice should be limited

[34] Van Wees, 1998, 32-41.

[35] By the time of Pericles female display at funerals had diminished considerably. Addressing the women who are present, Pericles says: 'Your great glory is not to be inferior to what god has made you, and the greatest glory of a woman is to be the least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticising you....and now, when you have mourned for your dear ones, you must depart.' (Thucydides, 2.46.2.) The traditional female funeral lament was replaced by the communal funeral oration. Communal praise of the dead has superseded lamentation at Athens, and now the role of the woman is merely to be quiet and orderly.

[36] Morris, 1987 and 1992.

[37] Following Pittacus' ascension to power, he is said to have ruled for ten years before stepping down to become a private citizen (Diogenes Laertius, 1.75).

[38] Diogenes Laertius, 1.76.

[39] Diodorus Siculus, 9.12 and Diogenes Laertius, 1.75. Diogenes also notes that Pittacus would not accept a financial gift from Croesus, claiming that he already had more money than he needed and emphasising his temperance (Diogenes Laertius, 1.75).

[40] Cicero, *De Legibus,* 2.66.

Alcaeus with the words 'mercy is better than vengeance.'[41] Sappho returned from her exile on Sicily and the likes of fragment 58 confirm that she lived to an old age, suggesting that she too would have lived under Pittacus' laws.[42] Indeed, Pittacus' measures appear to have worked remarkably well, with Diodorus Siculus claiming that Pittacus' prudence brought an end to the civil strife and warfare at Mytilene.[43]

Clearly, these sources are late, but archaeological evidence supports the theory that a shift in funerary practice took place on archaic Lesbos. Most of the evidence comes from the cities of Methymna and Antissa, although that which survives from Mytilene (and other Lesbian *poleis*) suggests the trends may have been consistent across the island – in Spencer's words the 'same practices and general patterns' appear to exist.[44] In the early archaic period, inhumations or cremations stored in large *pithoi* were common, sometimes with an accompanying mound, often a signifier of status elsewhere in Greece.[45] However, moving through the archaic period these burial mounds become much less common, later frequently replaced by sarcophagi. Spencer notes that in contrast to Methymna and Antissa, no sarcophagi have yet been discovered for Mytilene.[46] Potentially, the reduction in burial mounds, often the signifiers of status, reflects the common Greek theme of reducing the influence of the individual in favour of the community. Once again, the evidence is far from conclusive, but it does seem to suggest that burial practices on archaic Lesbos changed, with the high-status burial mound becoming less conspicuous. This would conform with the trend of reducing the prominence of funerals which took place throughout archaic Greece.

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[41] Diogenes Laertius, 1.76 and Diodorus Siculus, 9.12.3. As Anne Burnett has commented, the re-integration to Mytilene of the oligarchic warrior class would have greatly benefitted Pittacus in the long-term. In a more fanciful example, Diogenes relates an incident when Pittacus' son was (quite literally) killed by an axe-murderer whilst in a barber's shop. When the killer is brought before Pittacus, Diogenes reports that he remarked, 'it is better to pardon now than to repent later (Diogenes Laertius, 1.76.).' As Burnett, 1983, 112, has noted, it is likely that Pittacus recognised the need to rehabilitate much of the elite class to Mytilene if the *polis* was to be economically and militarily strong in the future.

[42] Sappho, 58.3-6 and Marmor Parium, Ep36.

[43] Diodorus Siculus, 9.12.2.

[44] Spencer, 1995, 295.

[45] Spencer, 1995, 295, notes that this evidence is clearest at the site of Antissa, with relatively little evidence coming from Mytilene owing to the position of the modern town over the ancient settlement. However, what little evidence which can be found at Mytilene does conform with the trends across the rest of the island – there are no *pithoi* burials from the mid to late archaic period. Indeed, burial evidence from this period is almost entirely lacking, possibly suggesting than Pittacus' funeral restrictions restricted burial practices quite severely – however, without additional evidence, this can only remain speculation.

[46] Spencer, 1995, 295.

Conclusions

Although the absence of direct literary testimony and the lack of archaeological evidence from archaic Lesbos makes conclusive statements difficult, the later traditions concerning Pittacus' time of governance, coupled with what archaeological evidence is available, does suggest that a change may have taken place in the way which death was viewed around the time that Sappho was composing her poetry. The political and social climate of the time made reciprocal violence an important theme, although Pittacus may have attempted to curb such violence after his ascension to power. A substantial part of this included a marked change in female attitudes towards death. As we shall see throughout the rest of this chapter, these circumstances can be seen to influence the poetry that Sappho composed on the topic of death.

8.2 Commemoration, Consolation, and the Afterlife in Sappho's Poetry

As a theme, death certainly appears regularly in Sappho's surviving poetry, with reflections on death, the afterlife, and lamentation featuring in several poems. Fragments 55, 58, 94, 140(a), and 201 are good examples of poems discussing death in a variety of different ways that are often difficult to reconcile. For example, how is one to understand the philosophical attitude towards death expressed in fragment 58 or the longing for death in fragment 94, with the flat statement of fragment 201: 'To die is an evil'? It is the purpose of the following section to reconcile some of these fragments and to demonstrate that Sappho expressed a consistent view concerning death, which fits with the social circumstances in which it was composed.

We have already seen that Sappho's views on issues such as marriage, social class, and wealth are comparable with those of other archaic poets. In the following section, I hope to show that Sappho's views on death and vengeance can also be seen to fall into line with other poetic works of the period. In order to do so, I begin by looking at Sappho's fragment 58, a poem on the subject of death that was performed chorally. Following this I shall examine Sappho's view the afterlife, before looking at how Sappho's poetry on death was socially and politically significant to archaic Lesbos.

The so-called 'New Sappho,' henceforth referred to as fragment 58, provides us with the clearest indication that Sappho sung about death and the afterlife. For the sake of clarity, I give Martin West's 2005 translation below:

ὔμμες πεδὰ Μοίσαν ἰ]οκ[ό]λπων κάλα δῶρα, παῖδες

σπουδάσδετε καὶ τὰ]ν φιλάοιδον λιγύραν χελύνναν.

ἔμοι δ' ἄπαλον πρίν] ποτ' [ἔ]οντα χρόα γῆρας ἤδη

ἐπέλλαβε, λεῦκαι δ' ἐγ]ένοντο τρίχες ἐκ μελαίναν

βάρυς δέ μ' ὀ [θ]ῦμος πεπόηται, γόνα δ' [ο]ὐ φέροισι,

τὰ δή ποτα λαίψηρ' ἔον ὄρχησθ' ἴσα νεβρίοισι.

τὰ [μεν] στεναχίσδω θαμέως. ἀλλὰ τί κεν ποείην·

ἀγήραον ἄνθρωπον ἔοντ' οὐ δύνατον γένεσθαι.

καὶ γάρ π[ο]τα Τίθωνον ἔφαντο βροδόπαχυν Αὔων

ἔρωι φ...αθεισαν βάμεν' εἰς ἔσχατα γᾶς φέροισα[ν,

ἔοντα [κ]άλον καὶ νέον, ἀλλ' αὖτον ὔμως ἔμαρψε

χρόνωι πόλιον γῆρας, ἔχ[ο]ντ' ἀθανάταν ἄκοιτιν.

Pursue the violet-laden Muses handsome gift,

My children, and the loud-voiced lyre so dear to song:

But me – my skin which once was soft is withered now

By age, my hair has turned to white which once was black,

My heart has been weighed down, my knees give no support

Which once were nimble in the dance like little fawns.

How often I lament these things. But what to do?

No being that is human can escape old age.

For people used to think that Dawn with rosy arms

And loving murmurs took Tithonus fine and young

To reach the edges of the earth; yet still grey age

In time did seize him, though his consort cannot die.[47]

As I discussed in the section on the performance context of Sappho's poems, there is good evidence to suggest that the poem was performed chorally. The appearance of the *paides* who pursue the Muses gifts in lines 1-2, give us a good indication that a group of young performers are involved, possibly dancing while Sappho sang in accompaniment. As we saw at the start of this thesis, *paides* is an acceptable term for a group of young girls involved in choral performance. However, it is also important that *paides* is not gender specific; there is nothing in the poem that demands that either audience or performers are exclusively male or female.[48] Although the presence of *paides* makes the poem appropriate for choral performance by young girls, the messages contained within are relevant to all ages and sexes, suggesting that the poem could be performed in front of a mixed audience.

In fragment 58, we see Sappho lamenting her old age, as Alcman does in the very similar fragment 26.[49] Both regret their inability to perform the same dances that they enjoyed in their youth.[50] Sappho creates a very strong contrast between the *paides* who dance alongside the performance with her own heavy heart, weak knees, and white hair. She bemoans her old age, but accepts its inevitability. Following this, Sappho goes on to relate the story of Tithonus and his abduction by Dawn. Eventually, his body becomes overtaken by old age – he withers but cannot

[47] Sappho, 58. West, 2009, 14-15.
[48] This view is shared by Janko, 2005 and Stehle, 2009, 157.
[49] See Alcman 26.
[50] Alcman, 26 and Sappho, 58.1-6.

die.[51] What is striking about this myth is that Tithonus, despite the prodigious beauty that makes a goddess desire him, is often seen as something of a figure of ridicule. Mimnermus famously describes Tithonus' fate as worse than death:

Τιθωνῷ μὲν ἔδωκεν ἔχειν κακὸν ἄφθιτον

   γῆρας, ὃ καὶ θανάτου ῥίγιον ἀργαλέου.

He gave Tithonus an everlasting evil to have, old age, which is more horrible than even painful death.[52]

As Sappho says earlier in the poem, we all must grow old, and despite the pains of old age it is preferable to the unending suffering undergone by Tithonus. Once Tithonus has become unattractive to Dawn, he is locked in a room for eternity as a perpetual wittering old man.[53] As fragment 58 makes clear, whilst a goddess like Dawn can remain forever young, a mortal like Tithonus must die or suffer. If humans do not want to suffer perpetual old age then they have to die to avoid a humiliating fate like that of Tithonus. Following this logic, death may be something to lament, but it is necessary and infinitely better than the alternative that Tithonus represents.

Another factor to consider is that there is good evidence to suggest the poem may not have ended after these twelve lines. What has been dubbed the 'New Sappho' comprises separate overlapping fragments of papyrus, a fact that has made it particularly difficult to establish where one poem ends and another starts.[54] The lines that finish the Oxyrhnchus papyrus, and may very well have formed the end of the 'New Sappho,' as translated by Campbell, read:

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[51] Sappho, 58.9-12.
[52] Mimnermus, 4. Gerber, 1999, 84-85. The 'He' which starts the fragment almost certainly refers to Zeus. This is just one of several poems by Mimnermus which present old-age in a particularly bleak light. Johnson, 2009, 162-175 explores the relationship between the poetry of Sappho and Mimnermus in more detail.
[53] Sappho, 58.7-8. The perils of life with a deity are emphasised by Marpessa, who chooses a mortal life with Idas over abduction by Apollo (Simonides, 563).
[54] A detailed textual discussion of the poems ending is beyond the bounds of this thesis. Obbink, 2009, 7-16 and Hammerstaedt, 2009, 17-40 appear in the same volume and provide a very useful examination of the poems text and potential ending. I have found both extremely useful in forming my opinions.

ἔγω δέ φίλημμ᾽ ἀβροσύναν,   ]τοῦτο καί μοι

τὸ λά[μπρον ἔρος τὠελίω καὶ τὸ κά]λον λέ[λ]ογχε

but I love *habrosyne....*love has obtained for me the brightness and beauty of the sun.[55]

Andre Lardinois supports the theory that the poem may have ended with these lines by proposing that we would expect to find a consoling end to this poem as we do in other Sapphic fragments.[56] Lowell Edmunds argues the same thing by noting that, following normal mythic conventions, we would expect an additional gnome at the end of the poem.[57] We cannot be certain, but the theory finds support from other scholars.[58]

Accepting this ending can help us to understand why Sappho composed a poem on old age and the necessity of death for performance by a group of *paides,* although any firm conclusions on the poems precise performance context still elude us. Sappho complains of her old age, provides a mythical example that helps to deal with the problem, and then ends on a consolatory and positive note. In fragment 58 then, Sappho helps to explain death to the *paides* who dance to her poetry. For Sappho, there is acceptance that death and old-age are inevitable – indeed they are eminently preferable to the fate suffered by Tithonus. The *paides* who dance fragment 58 subsequently have less to fear from death and might have found consolation in Sappho's verses. Once again, through performance the participants gain experience of a difficult social issue. Both Sappho's performing group and her audience can find consolation in her song, coming to a better understanding of death that hopes them to deal with the turbulent political climate of archaic Lesbos. The dance and song that begins the poem, the contrast with the miserable fate of Tithonus, and the positive comments that end the poem all suggest that the state of death need not be feared.

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[55] Sappho, 58.23-26. Campbell, 1982, 100-101. The translation is used by Lardinois, during his discussion of fragment 58's ending. Lardinois, 2009, 43. Yatromanolakis, 2001, 208-225 provides a useful examination of the Simonides 22W that explore similar themes.
[56] Lardinois, 2009, 41-48.
[57] Edmunds, 2009, 58-66.
[58] For example, Boedeker, 2009, 73.

The Afterlife

In part, Sappho's reflections in fragment may be prompted by a positive conception of the afterlife. One of the most striking distinctions between Sappho's discussions of death and those found in the Homeric epics is in the way she describes the afterlife. In the Homeric epics death is final. While the image of a man may remain in Hades, his senses are gone. Achilles sums this up in book 23:

ὢ πόποι, ἦ ῥά τίς ἐστι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι

ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον, ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ ἔνι πάμπαν.

Even in Hades there is something – spirit and phantom – though there is no mind at all.[59]

The spirit and image of the man may remain as Patroclus' ghost demonstrates, but the wits that made the man are gone.[60] Furthermore, once Patroclus' body has been burnt, his spirit will never return from Hades – the cremation marks a distinct cut-off point from contact between the dead and the living.[61] In book 11 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus learns that once the body is burnt the spirit is detached from the body and flits around, disconnected in the underworld.[62] In this respect, death is final. There was no continuity or special honours for the deceased in the afterlife.[63]

Sappho, on the other hand, suggests that one's conduct on earth very much affected their existence in the afterlife. Furthermore, there are also suggestions that Sappho envisaged a degree of continuity between life and the afterlife. Alex Hardie's fascinating 2005 article suggests that Sappho may have participated in a cult of the Muses that led to special benefits after death.[64] The second of the two recently discovered Sapphic poems can support this thesis. The smaller and more seriously damaged of the new fragments sees the speaker, possibly Sappho, imagine that she will still receive

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[59] Homer, *Iliad,* 23.103-104. Murray, 1999(b), 500-501 (revised Wyatt).
[60] Homer, *Iliad,* 23.65-66.
[61] Homer, *Iliad,* 23.75-76.
[62] Homer, *Odyssey,* 11.218-222.
[63] Currie, 2005, 31-36 and Garland, 1985, 48-76.
[64] Hardie, 2005.

the same honours even after she is dead as a result of her poetic skill.[65] The text is fragmentary, but enough remains to highlight key themes of the poem. The text below is Hardie's bold reconstruction and translation:

νέρθε δὲ γᾶς περ[ίσχοι

μολπά μ᾽ ἔτι Μοίσε]ιον ἔχοισαγ γέρας, ὡς [ἔ]οικεν,

αὖθις δὲ με θαυμά]ζοιεν, ὡς νῦν ἐπὶ γᾶς ἔοισαν

αἴνεισι μ᾽ ἄοιδον] λιγύραν

'And below the earth, may (song surround me), (still) holding the honour (that comes from the Muses), as is appropriate, (and) may they (wonder at me afresh), just as now, when I am on earth, (they praise me) as the sweet (singer).[66]

As Hardie notes, even without his restorations, the text still suggests continuity of honours below the earth and in life.[67] Sappho will sing on under the earth and continue to obtain the same honour (*geras*) from the dead as she does when she is alive. There are immediate similarities with later writers of *threnoi* who comment on the afterlife. Pindar's fragment 129SM features anthropomorphised souls beneath the earth. Just as in Sappho, they continue to participate in the pleasant activities they enjoyed while they were alive including athletics, feasting, and music.[68] They encounter lovely meadows, red roses, golden fruits, lyres, horses, and sacrifices.[69] In the same way as Sappho, Pindar hints at the possibility of continuity as the soul lives on after death.[70]

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[65] Hardie, 2005, 23.
[66] Sappho, 58(a).4-7. Hardie, 2005, 24.
[67] Hardie, 2005, 22-24.
[68] Pindar, 129. Pindar 130 presents the reverse of this. Those who behave in an inappropriate manner above the earth will suffer beneath it.
[69] Pindar, 129; 131a; and 131b.
[70] The existence of the soul after death was an area of some interest in the sixth century. Pythagoras took Sappho's view further through a belief in reincarnation (Xenophanes, 7(a) and Herodotus, 2.123 – although Herodotus is coy about mentioning names.)

By suggesting that the afterlife provides something of a continuation of earthly existence, Sappho removes much of the fear from the process. Death is made eminently less threatening by the prospect of continuity in the afterlife, specifically for those who live well. By encouraging the idea that one's action in life will have consequences in the afterlife Sappho lessens fears of death and encourages ideas of accountability.

The Political Implications of Sappho's Poetry on Death

Understanding the way Sappho represented death and the afterlife can help us to grasp the socio-political significance of these poems. In this section, I want to argue that Sappho's poetry on death and the afterlife can be explained by thinking about them in the context of the factional struggles that took place on archaic Lesbos. I shall argue that, consistent with other male archaic poets, Sappho expresses solidarity with her own kin and attacks her enemies through poetry. I shall also argue that Sappho draws upon the female area of lament to do so, singing of the pleasant fate that awaits her political group whilst cursing her enemies. Poetry about death, commemoration, and the afterlife, traditionally a feminine field, provides Sappho with another forum in which to express herself. We have already seen that Sappho's poetry engaged with the political climate of the time, by attacking her rivals, probably in a public setting.[71] When Sappho chooses to attack a rival in fragment 55, she does so by denying that she will be commemorated or celebrated once she has died. Supposedly directed to an uneducated woman, fragment 55 vitriolically proclaims:

κατθάνοισα δὲ κείσῃ οὐδέ πότα μναμοσύνα σέθεν

ἔσσετ᾽ οὐδὲ πόθα ὔστερον· οὐ γὰρ πεδέχῃς βρόδων

τῶν ἐκ Πιερίας·

There will never be any recollection of you or any longing for you since you have no share in the roses of Pieria.[72]

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[71] Sappho, 57, 71 and 155.
[72] Sappho, 55. Campbell, 1982, 98-99.

Fragment 55 is in direct contrast to the sentiment that we find expressed in fragment 58 and subsequently constitutes the most aggressive and derogatory example of a Sapphic poem. Sappho's greatest curse towards her unnamed adversary is that she will not receive any commemoration upon her death. The *paides* who perform Sappho's poetry are offered a positive perspective on death, complete with continuity in the afterlife. In contrast, because the woman described in fragment 55 is devoid of the musical gifts denoted by the ´roses of Pieria´ she is destined to descend to the underworld without distinction.[73] The woman who without the skills of the Muses and will not receive commemoration in poetry. She is thus destined to go unremembered. As Hardie notes, the name of the uneducated woman is conspicuously never mentioned.[74] This fragment nicely encapsulates Sappho's views on the nature of death. Clearly directed towards someone Sappho considered to be an enemy, fragment 55 states that after her death the woman will be forgotten.[75] In this case, a lack of commemoration constitutes a significant insult. Sappho has faith that her enemy will be punished in the afterlife whilst, in contrast, the members of her own faction will continue to prosper. Just as other archaic poets seek to wish to be strong for their friends and harm their enemies, so does Sappho through her poetic performances. Solon expresses the sentiment very simply:

εἶναι δὲ γλυκὺν ὧδε φίλοις, ἐχθροῖσι δὲ πικρόν,

τοῖσι μὲν αἰδοῖον, τοῖσι δὲ δεινὸν ἰδεῖν.

Grant that in these circumstances I be sweet to my friends and bitter to my enemies, viewed with respect by the former and dread by the latter.[76]

Sappho's poetry on death and the afterlife conforms with this sentiment. Her poetry explains death to her kin and portrays a pleasant afterlife for when they die. For her enemies, only condemnation and anonymity await. However, despite Sappho's positive depiction of

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[73] Pieria is located in Macedonia and is the traditional birthplace of the Muses.
[74] Hardie, 2005, 18.
[75] Sappho, 55.
[76] Solon, 13.5-6. Gerber, 1999, 128-129. Lewis, 1997, 42-59, provides intelligent discussion on Solon's ideas of justice and revenge. Lewis explores the difficult position that comes between seeking to benefit the *polis* but also to stand together with one's friends.

commemoration and the afterlife, death itself is feared. At first glance, the image of a pleasant afterlife seems to clash with Sappho's clearest statement on death, as reported to us by Aristotle:

φησὶν ἡ Σαπφὼ ὅτι τὸ ἀποθνήσκειν κακόν. οἱ θεοὶ γὰρ οὕτω κεκρίκασιν ἀπέθνησκον γὰρ ἄν.

Sappho says that to die is an evil: the gods have so decided, otherwise they would die.[77]

Zellner has admirably pointed out that vital to our understanding of this fragment is the distinction here between *dying* and the *state of being dead*.[78] The verb ἀποθνήσκω used here, merely suggests the point when one dies rather than the state of being dead itself. Nothing in this statement suggests that life after death need be unpleasant. Zellner goes on to argue that fragment 201 formed part of a poem countering the idea that dying for an ideal was a noble thing. Rather than expressing a view that we might find in Tyrtaeus or Callinus, which suggests that there is glory in dying in service of the *polis,* Sappho states that to die is evil.[79] For Zellner, fragment 201 becomes a poem that reacts against poetry like Tyrtaeus and Callinus, and instead states that to die is an evil whatever the circumstances.

If this were the case, Sappho's views would differ significantly from those of her contemporary Alcaeus, who encourages his friends to either kill their rivals or die in the attempt. In fragment 129, when Alcaeus describes the precinct of Zeus, Hera, and Dionysus on Lesbos, he relates an oath sworn by his companions:

τὸν Ὕρραον δὲ πα[ῖδ]α πεδελθέτω

κήνων Ἐ[ρίννυ]ς ὥς ποτ' ἀπώμνυμεν

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[77] Sappho 201, (= Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* 1398b) Campbell, 1982, 186-187. Ferrari, 2010, 180, provides an interesting, though not particularly convincing, discussion of this fragment following on from his discussion of fragment 31. Ferrari examines Sappho's physical reactions in these poems and speculates about her emotional and psychological reactions.
[78] Zellner, 2006, 333-336.
[79] Zellner, 2006, 333-336.

τόμοντες ἄ..[´.]ν..

μηδάμα μηδ᾽ ἔνα τὼν ἐταίρων

ἀλλ᾽ ἢ θάνοντες γᾶν ἐπιέμμενοι

κείσεσθ᾽ ὐπ᾽ ἄνδρων οἲ τότ᾽ ἐπικ.´ην

ἤπειτα κακκτάνοντες αὔτοις

δᾶμον ὐπὲξ ἀχέων ῤύεσθαι.

and let their Avenger pursue the son of Hyrrhas, since once we swore, cutting …. Never (to abandon?) any of our comrades, but either to die at the hands of men who at that time came against us and to lie clothed in the earth, or else to kill them and rescue the people from their woes.[80]

The fragment goes on to describe how Pittacus disregarded this oath. Alcaeus' companions originally swear to unite and face their enemies, either winning or dying. However, once they have been betrayed Alcaeus calls for vengeance upon those who have wronged him. Zellner's claim that fragment 201 has Sappho suggest that dying in the service of your friends and *polis* was an evil, not only contrast significantly with Alcaeus' view, but also with the views of Sappho's male contemporaries, and with the aggressive female reactions to death that we have seen earlier in this chapter.

Rather than seeing fragment 201 as a poem that countered the idea that dying for the *polis* was a noble thing, I suggest that 201 simply recognised the pain and strife that death could cause. The purpose of poetry such as fragment 58 is to provide consolation for the desolation and despair caused by death, thereby supporting Sappho's own factional group. Through performance of a poem such as fragment 58, the *paides* are assured of commemoration and subsequently made stronger as a group. Meanwhile, Sappho is still in a position to attack her rivals as we find in fragment 55. As we have seen, much of Sappho's consolation poetry helps to explain the difficult social and political

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[80] Alcaeus, 129.13-20. Campbell, 1982, 298-299.

situations that her performers and audience experienced. Sappho's poetry on death is equally a product of the climate in which it was written, supporting her friends and attacking her enemies.

Nor should we be discouraged from such a reading by Sapphic fragments that initially appear to counter suggestion of vengeance. The isolated fragment 120 reads:

ἀλλά τις οὐκ ἔμμι παλιγκότων

ὄργαν, ἀλλ' ἀβάκην τὰν φρέν' ἔχω ...

But I am not one of those with a spiteful temperament: I have a peaceful heart.[81]

Meanwhile in fragment 158, quoted by Plutarch who is discussing the restraint of anger, Sappho once again advocates a peaceful approach to difficulty:

σκιδναμένας ἐν στήθεσιν ὄργας

μαψυλάκαν γλῶσσαν πεφύλαχθαι.

...guard against the idly barking tongue when anger is spreading in the breast.[82]

Taken at face value these lines could be interpreted as an argument against vengeance and political rivalries. However, as we saw when discussing potential performance contexts for Sappho's poetry, many of her poems do attack figures from the Penthilid clan and fragment 55 is clearly an aggressive condemnation of a rival. Aloni is surely correct to argue that these fragments were directed against rivals with the particular purpose of strengthening Sappho's group.[83] Holt Parker

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[81] Sappho, 120. Campbell, 1982, 142-143. Ferrari, 2010, 17-26 sees Ferrari argue that Andromeda is a Cleanactid rival of Sappho's, attacked for her 'harsh and obstinate' character. In direct contrast, Sappho we have Sappho, 120, which expresses her own 'peaceful heart.' In this sense, Sappho's poem is political expressing a sharp contrast between herself and her political rival.
[82] Sappho, 158. Campbell, 1982, 166-167.
[83] Aloni, 1997.

has also noted that a fragment like 120 would not look out of place in the poetry of Sappho's male contemporaries; in Parker's words 'Sappho does not attack her enemies merely from spite; she is merely giving good advice. The language recalls Theognis claims to impartiality and straight speech.'[84] Lines such as these can be compared with Solon, who despite guarding against rash anger, still believes in being strong for his friends and bitter to his enemies. He expresses the inevitability of vengeance that comes from Zeus in the following terms:

...οὐδ' ἐφ' ἑκάστωι

ὥσπερ θνητὸς ἀνὴρ γίγνεται ὀξύχολος,

αἰεὶ δ' οὔ ἑ λέληθε διαμπερές, ὅστις ἀλιτρὸν

θυμὸν ἔχει, πάντως δ' ἐς τέλος ἐξεφάνη·

He is not, like a mortal man, quick to anger at every incident, but anyone who has a sinful heart never ever escapes his notice and in the end he is assuredly revealed.[85]

Like Solon, Sappho idealises a peaceful heart and guards against rash anger, but is still willing to defend her own group. It is my argument that there is enough surviving material from Sappho's poetry on death to suggest that it may have been influenced by the political rivalries that took place on archaic Lesbos. As we have seen, lament and commemoration of the deceased was a typically female field, one that was often used to call for vengeance. Sappho's poetry on death may bring consolation for her own group, but although it sometimes calls for restraint, it still curses her rivals, in line with the political bent of her group. Fragment 58 confirms that groups of *paides* could perform this poetry on death, placing the performance of young girls as an important component of this poetry.

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[84] Parker, 1996, 16.
[85] Solon, 13.25-28. Gerber, 1999, 130-131.

Sappho's Reception – Death and Commemoration in the Following Centuries

The fact that Sappho's poetry on death and commemoration was used in the context of providing consolation finds support in later authors, and can be useful in thinking a little more about the potential performance context for Sappho's poetry on death. Although the nature of the evidence means that nothing solid can be concluded, at this point it is worth making a brief detour to look at the work of later authors, as the way in which they discuss the consolatory power of Sappho's work supports the notion that commemoration was an important aspect of her poetry. In several later authors who reference Sappho's work, we continue to find a connection with lamentation, commemoration, and a pleasant afterlife. The newly discovered poems of Posidippus are an excellent example. Ten years ago the publication of one hundred and twelve newly discovered Hellenistic epigrams by Posidippus shed further light on Sappho's treatment of death.[86] Three epigrams explicitly discuss Sappho. Epigram 51 sees a group of girls known as the Caryae mourning at the tomb of another girl, Telephia.[87] Epigram 122 speaks of the love between Doricha and Charixus. News that Doricha's 'bones were dust long ago' is softened by Posidippus' claim that Sappho's poems bring memory with them:

Σαπφῶιαι δὲ μένουσι φίλης ἔτι καὶ μενέουσιν

  ὠιδῆς αἱ λευκαὶ φθεγγόμεναι σελίδες

οὔνομα σὸν μακαριστόν...

But the radiant lines of Sappho's song remain, and will remain to tell of you. Blest is your name...[88]

We have three examples from the third-century BC that connect Sappho with death, memory, and consolation. Whether Sappho's poetry was performed on archaic Lesbos at tombs and in a mourning

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[86] Acosta-Hughes, Kosmetatou and Baumbach, 2004, 1-7.

[87] Posidippus, 51.5-6: 'And sing the virgin (shoot) with wind swift feet and to your tears let there be joined (Sapphic Songs), divine melodies.'

[88] Posidippus, 122.5-7. Gutzwiller, 2005, 45. For a full collection of texts and translations see Austin and Bastianini, 2002.

context as Posidippus 51 suggests is impossible to deduce. However, Posidippus' odes do provide us with firm evidence that Sappho's poetry dealt with ideas that later came to be viewed as appropriate for such a performance and also suggest that Posidippus imagined Sappho's poetry on death performed with a female chorus. In the context of these epigrams, particularly epigram 122, Sappho's poems are seen as securing the memory of the deceased and providing consolation, as Sappho's poetry brings with it immortality.

Certainly then, Sappho's poetry came to be associated with epigrams that commemorated the dead. The extent to which her poetry carried the same meaning on archaic Lesbos is hard to determine. However, it is clear that Sappho believed in the power of her own poetry, with the aid of the Muses, to bring a certain kind of immortality to the deceased. The Palatine Anthology also notes that Sappho gains a measure of immortality for herself through her songs:

πάντη, πότνια, χαῖρε θεοῖς ἴσα, σὰς γὰρ ἀοιδάς

  ἀθανάτας ἔχομεν νῦν ἔτι θυγατέρας.

Where-ever you are, greetings to you, lady, equal to the gods: for we still have your immortal daughters, your songs.[89]

The above lines are not alone in conveying a kind of immortality upon Sappho. Antipater of Sidon spoke of 'the singer who devised the deathless gifts of the Muses' whereas Tullius Laurea remarked 'as you pass the Aeolian tomb, stranger, do not say that I, the Mytilenaean poetess, am dead.'[90] Tullius goes on to say that Sappho achieved immortal fame through the gifts of the Muses.

These authors all seem convinced that Sappho won a measure of immortality for herself through her poetry. Posidippus also makes clear that Sappho's poetry was able to ensure commemoration for another. Whether any of Sappho's poems were produced specifically for this purpose or even for a funeral context is difficult to establish, but they do indicate that Sappho's

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[89] PA, 7.407. Campbell, 1982, 48-49.
[90] PA, 7.14 and 7.17.

poetry could offer the immortality denied to her enemy in fragment 55. Coupled with what we have seen in fragments 55 and 58, the evidence of later authors suggests that Sappho's poetry could bring immortality of renown to those who performed it.

Conclusions

Fragment 58 illustrates that a group of *paides* could perform poetry that focused on old-age and dying. Furthermore, we have several indications that Sappho's poetry on death could have had significant political importance in the violent political climate of archaic Lesbos. The tone of fragment 58 is philosophical, suggesting that it was meant to provide its performers and audience with solace concerning death. Similarly, the views of later poets like Posidippus seem to indicate that commemoration and consolation were key hallmarks of Sappho's poetry. It is also clear that Sappho believed in an afterlife where there would be some continuity with her current existence, providing solace for those whom she deemed worthy of a good afterlife and condemning her enemies as we see in fragment 55. Lamentation was notoriously a feminine field and the performance of Sappho's poetry on these topics taps into this genre – in this sense, it may also be significant that fragment 55 attacks Sappho's rival in a manner that is relevant to lament and the afterlife. Considering the political context of archaic Lesbos, poetry on the subject of death became an exceptional arena for Sappho to express unity with her kin and attack her rivals. Through poetry on the subject of death, Sappho is able to provide consolation and support for her friends, whilst condemning her enemies.

8.3 Ritual Lamentations – The Death of Adonis

Throughout this chapter we have seen that Sappho discussed alternative ways of thinking about death and commemoration in her poetry. In the changing political atmosphere of archaic Mytilene where reciprocal violence was a significant problem, Sappho's poetry on death was certainly influenced by the climate in which it was produced. Finally in this chapter, I want to offer an interpretation of Sappho's laments to Adonis, suggesting that the rituals were used as a way to explore emotions concerned with death and to obtain catharsis for grief. There have been several modern articles that have attempted to understand the nature of the Adonia, but the majority of these, understandably considering where most of the evidence comes from, have focused on Athens.[91] Sappho is generally acknowledged as providing our first example of a ritual lament for Adonis however further discussion of her participation in these rites or the nature of the Adonia on Lesbos are often given short-shrift. Here, despite the meagre nature of the evidence, I want to focus on the Adonia as Sappho imagined it, arguing that that violent political situation on archaic Lesbos, coupled with changing attitudes towards death in the archaic period, made Mytilene an ideal location for the Adonia to flourish. As we shall see from comparative evidence, ritual lamentation often acts as an opportunity to replicate the release of emotion that can be caused by mourning for a loved one. The ritual laments for Adonis allow the traditional performers of *threnoi* to express their emotions and 'let off steam' in cases where they interact with death.

A Lesbian Adonia

I shall begin by discussing how we should interpret the Adonia in the context of archaic Mytilene. As Nigel Spencer has pointed out, archaic Lesbos had far more in common with her eastern neighbours (from whence the Adonia is thought to have originated) than western Greeks. It is therefore necessary to stress the potential difference between the archaic laments which Sappho composed for Adonis, and the Athenian Adonia, for which our first evidence appears a century and a half later in a completely different political and geographical context. Although I shall argue that some parallels do exist between the Athenian Adonia and the evidence that survives from archaic Lesbos, it is also important to note some significant differences. I therefore propose to reconstruct the

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[91] For example, Winkler, 1990; Reed 1995; and Simms, 1997.

context of Sappho's laments by prioritising her own poetry, and considering potential eastern influences.[92]

To begin with, I want to note a small but potentially important difference between our Athenian sources for the Adonia and Sappho's poetry, namely that Sappho's Adonia poem focuses on *korai*. Famously the Athenian Adonia was a festival that was open to all women in Athens, with wives, mothers, and prostitutes all taking part together.[93] The most prominent example of Sappho's lament for Adonis does not suggest this:

> κατθνασκει, Κυθέρη', ἄβρος Ἄδωνις· τί κε θεῖμεν;
>
> καττύπτεσθε, κόραι, καὶ κατερείκεσθε κίθωνας.
>
> Delicate Adonis is Dying, Cytherea; What are we to do?
>
> Beat your breasts, girls, and tear your clothes.[94]

The fact that these particular lines appear to have been composed for *korai* suggest that Sappho's focus remains on young girls, a factor which should influence the way we think about the poem. Once again, we have a poem featuring death and lamentation that prioritises a group of young female performers. However, additional information to understand why Sappho focused on *korai* is not forthcoming and there is a paucity of additional evidence on the Lesbian Adonia. An entry in the Palatine Anthology, which celebrates Sappho's gifts in song, speaks of her lamenting with Aphrodite as she 'mourns for the young offspring of Cinyras.'[95] Another even shorter fragment, which reads 'Alas for Adonis' is recorded in a work on grammar, whilst Pausanias also notes that Sappho sang of Adonis.[96] Finally, Natalis Comes informs us that Sappho had Adonis laid out in bed of lettuce by

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[92] For recent work on eastern influence on lesbian poetry see: Watkins, 2007, 305-324 and Dale, 2011, 15-24.
[93] Winkler, 1990, 200. For some Athenian discussion of the Adonia see: Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 387-396; Menander, *Samia,* 35-50; and Plato, *Phaedrus,* 276B.
[94] Sappho, 140a. Campbell, 1982, 154-155.
[95] PA 7.407.
[96] Sappho, 168 and 140b = Pausanias 9.29.8.

Aphrodite.[97] Unfortunately, we have no further evidence for the nature of the lamentations for Adonis on Lesbos and the fragment itself is obviously short.

Aside from these rather meagre offerings, we are forced to look to other sources for information of the Adonia. As Burkert notes, '*Adon* is a common West Semitic word meaning "Lord," *adoni* "My Lord."' Hesiod suggests that Adonis was of Assyrian origins.[98] Burkert has shown that consistent elements of the Adonis ritual, most notably the mourning of women over a deceased male youth, has common parallels across Eastern societies.[99] Alcaeus and Sappho both confirm that Lesbos had strong cultural ties with the East, a fact which is confirmed by the archaeological examinations of Nigel Spencer.[100] Spencer notes that evidence from ceramics, cult sites (often featuring Cybele), and architecture all indicate a strong eastern influence on many aspects of archaic Lesbian life.[101]

The eastern origins of the Adonia can provide us with useful clues as to the nature of the festival. The figures of Adonis and Aphrodite have their eastern origins in the Summerian figures of Dumuzi and Inanna. Dumuzi is a young shepherd whom the goddess Inanna falls in love with and subsequently marries.[102] However, soon afterwards Inanna is trapped in the underworld – if one enters they are never allowed to leave. Eventually, Ereškigal, goddess of the underworld, is persuaded to release Inanna, provided she sends someone to replace her. She chooses Dumuzi and he is condemned to the underworld. However, once Dumuzi is in the underworld his sister begs for his release and eventually Dumuzi is allowed to return to life for six months of the year provided his sister goes to the underworld to replace him. During his six months in the underworld, Inanna mourns for Dumuzi resulting in her powers of fertility waning. When Dumuzi returns she recovers.

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[97] Sappho, 211(biii) = Natalis Comes, 5.16.

[98] Burkert, 1979, 105 and Hesiod, 139, MW.

[99] Burkert, 1979, 105-107. From Babylonia, Syria and Palestine Burkert notes the similarities with Tummuz and Ishtar/Astarte. In Summeria the comparison is made with Dumuzi and Inanna.

[100] Spencer, 1995, 288 suggests that these links to the east developed early: 'One striking feature of the record at all sites (on Lesbos) in the proto-geometric and geometric periods is that of even the few remains that have been found the vast majority, especially the ceramics and metalwork, find their parallels in the east Aegean and (especially) in Anatolia rather than westwards in mainland Greece.' The phenomenon continues into the archaic period, 293: 'A greater quantity of archaeological remains is preserved from the archaic period, and these remains indicate that Lesbos mirrored other areas of the East Greek world in many aspects of its culture, including the way in which many *poleis* in the east Aegean showed strong links to the east.'

[101] Spencer, 1995, 293-304.

[102] 1.4.1. *Inana's Descent to the Nether World.* Black, et al, 1998.

The earliest full version of the Adonis myth appears to have conflated these elements and comes from a poet with eastern origins. Panyasis related his version in the fifth-century although the text is transmitted by Apollodorus. Once again this version contains themes of youth, death, and sexuality.[103] Adonis is a beautiful youth whom Aphrodite becomes enamoured with. Rather oddly, in order to keep Adonis safe, she places him in a coffin and entrusts it to Persephone in the underworld. Unfortunately, Persephone falls in love with Adonis and refuses to return him. Zeus intervenes and decrees that Adonis will spend one third of each year with Persephone, Aphrodite, and himself, although Adonis devotes his own share to Aphrodite.[104] In this version of the myth, we see the dramatisation of Adonis' death and rebirth. The goddess of sexuality causes him to move into a liminal phase, here characterised by time with Persephone in Hades. However, through the intervention of Zeus, Adonis is able to leave Hades, at least temporarily, and rejoin Aphrodite.

Another figure whom Sappho laments contains similar features. Linus is of eastern origins and another prominent figure of lament, whom Pausanias tells us featured alongside Adonis in Sappho's poetry.[105] The 'Linus-song' appears as a tune of lamentation on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad,* and is used as a prominent example of a song for the dead by Pindar.[106] Herodotus also tells us that the Egyptians sang versions of the song lamenting the death of a young prince named Manerus, whilst the Cypriots and the Phoenicians sang their own versions of the Linus song.[107] Stories about the death of Linus are rather varied. Pausanias, reporting on a grotto at Mount Helicon, reports that Linus was an exceptional musician killed by Apollo for rivalling him in musical ability.[108] Pausanias also suggests that there was another Linus, also musically gifted to the extent that he taught Heracles.[109] This story is alluded to in much older works of comedy and a satyr play, where we find that Heracles killed Linus with a stool after he remonstrated with his pupil.[110] Clearly, these stories are inconsistent, and it appears likely that several local variants of the Linus myth existed. However, lamentation is always a key factor and Sappho's pairing of Linus with Adonis suggests that she perceived similar threads between the two. Linus too is a man who appears to have been killed

[103] Apollodorus, 3.14.4.
[104] Apollodorus, 3.14.4.
[105] Pausanias, 9.29.8.
[106] Homer, *Iliad,* 18.569-570 and Pindar, frg 128.6.
[107] Herodotus, 2.79.
[108] Pausanias, 9.29.5-6.
[109] Pausanias, 9.29.9.
[110] Alexis, frg 140 K-A; Anaxandrides, frg 16, K-A; and Achaias, frg 16, K-A.

young. Potentially, his musical excellence may have made him an especially relevant figure for Sappho and her musical companions to lament. The fact that Linus, a figure so common to lament traditions, appeared alongside Adonis makes clear that the act of lamentation itself formed one of the central themes of Sappho's rituals.

At this point a comparison with the Athenian lamentations for Adonis can help to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge. There are distinct similarities between the Athenian practices and Sappho's meagre verses. In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata,* the inebriated wife of Demaratus stands on a rooftop and shouts 'beat your breasts for Adonis' to her female companions. The passage makes it quite clear that, although the women are situated on the rooftops, they are quite visible and audible.[111] A fragment of Pherecrates reads 'we were celebrating the Adonia and weeping for Adonis.'[112] Menander gives the impression that the Adonia was both noisy and jocular, featuring rowdy celebrations through the night.[113] Another element attested by Plato and Menander is that the women would carry quick growing lettuce gardens to the roof with them.[114] Just as Adonis died young, soon the lettuce plants will also wilt and die.[115] Furthermore, the comedic texts appear to suggest that both citizen and non-citizen women participated in the festival at Athens.[116] The overall impression is of a festival that encouraged visible lamentation by a large and varied number of women.

Naturally, this type of display is in sharp contrast to what we might imagine from classical Athens. Why were the large scale lamentations for Adonis tolerated? As we have seen, lamentation was a very traditional area for female participation but Solon's reforms appear to have been especially thorough at quashing conspicuous female lament at Athens.[117] Potentially, it is precisely because of the severity of Solon's restrictions that the Adonia flourished at Athens. Simms has

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[111] Aristophanes, *Lysistrata,* 387-396.
[112] Pherecrates, frg 181, K-A.
[113] Menander, *Samia,* 35-50.
[114] Plato, *Phaedrus,* 276b and Menander, *Samia,* 35-50.
[115] Winkler, 1990, 205-206, puts forward the interesting suggestion that the quick wilting lettuce plants represent men's fleeting involvement in the reproductive process. The rowdy joking and lamentation is associated with the brief role that men play in the sexual process, whilst also celebrating the fertility of the female.
[116] Winkler, 1990, 200.
[117] Demosthenes, 43.62 and Plutarch, *Solon,* 21. See also, 'Funerary Legislation in the Archaic Period' earlier in this chapter.

argued that in the restricted environment of post-Solonian Athens, the Adonia provided women with a rare opportunity to express their grief communally and to indulge in lamentation.[118] With praise for the dead superseding lament, women were socially required to act with restraint and decorum, especially around death as Pericles' funeral oration so clearly illustrates.[119] The Adonia provided them with an opportunity to vent their frustration, releasing some of the pent-up emotion which could be created by death. In essence, the Adonia is popular in classical Athens as it provides an element of catharsis for women who found their traditional role in lament significantly curbed.[120]

It may well be that Sappho's poetry for Adonis dealt with similar issues. Clearly, the *korai* who perform the poem are involved in a passionate lament for Adonis. The general trend across Greece to reduce female participation at funerals and lessen the chances of reciprocal violence fits well with this trend. Mytilene's eastern location and outward looking nature made it a logical entry point for the Adonia into the Greek world. Having a ritual that allowed the expression of grief and lamentation may have been particularly important in the violent atmosphere of archaic Lesbos, especially if, after Pittacus' ascension to power, restrictions limited opportunities for mourning. It also allows the chorus of *korai* the opportunity to come to terms with the idea of death through safe ritual expressions for the likes of Linus and Adonis. The environment was perfect for a ritual that allowed for a controlled expression of grief, releasing tensions and helping the young chorus of *korai* to come to terms with death. In the politically charged climate of archaic Lesbos, ritual lament may have been important as a controlled expression of lament which helped the audience come to terms with loss and suffering.

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[118] Simms, 1997, 121-141. Reed, 1995, 317-347 also focuses on the opportunity for women to release their frustrations and experience brief liberation from the tight controls imposed on them at Athens, although his focus is less on the changing political legislation and more on the restrictive lives of Athenian women more generally.

[119] Thucydides, 2.45. Low, 2010, 341-358 provides a good discussion of the changing nature of commemoration in classical Athens.

[120] Simms, 1997, 137 notes that the increase in evidence which we see in fifth century Athens may be related to the continual warfare and death which took place at the time. In the emotional ferment of the period the Adonia took on particular significance.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to show that Sappho's poetry presented an alternative model to thinking about death in the archaic period. In line with the social and political climate of archaic Lesbos, Sappho produced poetry which placed emphasis upon continuity in the afterlife, consolation and commemoration. Choral performances such as those found in fragments 58 and 140(a) allowed Sappho's chorus of young girls to confront the pain and inevitability of death. Meanwhile, poems like fragment 55 suggest that, while Sappho would offer consolation and promise a pleasant afterlife for her own group, she would condemn her rivals to be forgotten. Sappho's poetry on the subject of death provides aligns with the idea that her poetry could be political, expressing solidarity with her own faction and attacking her rivals. In the changing political world of the archaic period, the Lesbian Adonia provided a perfect opportunity to manage the grief that Sappho's *korai* could experience, providing this thesis with one final example of performance serving as a means of dealing with a difficult social problem. By lamenting through ritual, performers were able to vent their frustrations and lament openly in the turbulent political atmosphere of archaic Lesbos, without the inflammatory potential to incite violence. Poems like fragment 55 show that Sappho was not above attacking her foes through performance, but, like Solon, she recognised the value of restraint.

Once again, we find Sappho's poetry is a product of the social environment in which it was produced and it allows both performers and audience to reflect upon something which affects everyone at some point in their lives. As with her marriage and ritual poetry, Sappho's reflections on death were influenced by the political environment of her day and composed poetry for performance by young girls which reflected these issues.

<u>Conclusions</u>

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore how archaic social and political themes manifested themselves in female performance. Rather than focusing on female performance as an area that dwells on purely feminine concerns or seeks to emphasise the social inferiority of its own performers, I have sought to demonstrate that archaic women were often involved in performances that were highly political. Many scholars have seen Alcman's poetry as accentuating the inferior position of women in society, however I have argued that his poetry gives them an assertive voice to speak on political issues and their place in society. Although composing in a different context to Alcman, it is clear that Sappho's poetry also dealt with an array of political and social themes, often in a public context. Like Alcman, Sappho also recognises the important role that women played in archaic society and offered a representation of this through public performance. Furthermore, the fact that some of Sappho's poetry is performed publicly demonstrates that her own community viewed her work as socially and politically significant. Female performance covered important themes, and in the unstable climate of archaic Lesbos, this gave Sappho's songs a political role to play.

As a part of this thesis, we have also seen that the *parthenoi* of archaic Sparta and Lesbos were valuable to their communities owing to the importance of marriage in their societies. In Sparta, the very particular social system that featured competition to marry heiresses who could inherit land and influence made the position of *parthenoi* significant, a historical factor which contributed to the mythical content of the *partheneia* which Alcman produced. Although Alcman's focus was often social or political themes with particular relevance to *parthenoi,* it was not limited to these, also including major civic themes like the nature of dual rule, the line of Heracles and violent political conflict. Alcman's poetry, often performed at major ritual occasions, gave his chorus of girls a public voice with which they could comment assertively on major political issues such as these. Their status as socially valuable *parthenoi,* coupled with their beauty and the theatricality of their performance enhanced their ability to speak publicly on these topics. Through mimesis, embodiment, and theatricality Alcman chorus of *parthenoi* were able to convey messages to the assembled Spartans which promoted *eunomia* and dramatised the society in which they lived. Owing to the importance of marriage in Spartan society, the culmination of the performance of *parthenoi* was the performance of poems like fragment 3, which celebrated the successful marriage of its central

protagonist, Astymeloisa. In this sense, Alcman's poetry provides a visual and performative representation of a successful marriage, displaying publicly a model for social unity within Spartan society.

Sappho's poetry also focused on marriage and the social value of *parthenoi.* In her poetry, we see a more positive representation on the female perspective towards marriage than has previously been acknowledged. Sappho demonstrates that although the marriage transition can be challenging for young girls, it is also a source of public pride, real excitement, and potential glory. In the tense political environment of archaic Mytilene, marriage was an important political tool and Sappho recognised and celebrated the significant role that young women played within it, whilst simultaneously helping them to confront publicly emotional tensions that they might encounter. Sappho's poetry also reflects much broader political concerns that do not fit with the image of her as a poet who composed on feminine topics for a chorus of females. Rather, Sappho was a poet deeply involved by the political circumstances of her time, composing poetry that challenged political rivals, spoke of political concerns, and was a product of the political climate in which she wrote. In the final chapter of this thesis, I have argued that Sappho's poetry on death was particularly influenced by the context in which she wrote, reflected broad social changes that were taking place both across Greece and within Lesbos whilst she was composing. Sappho's poetry on death offers us an insight into commemoration, catharsis and the afterlife, although still shows a willingness to condemn here enemies to oblivion.

The societies in which Alcman and Sappho composed were certainly different. The themes which their poems discuss are neither consistent and nor is the approach which they take to specific issues such as marriage. However, when their poetry is taken together, what it does show is that women in archaic Greece had a voice with which to express themselves in public. Both Sappho and Alcman provide us with public examples of choruses speaking on political and social issues, and both indicate a degree of feminine authority and pride in doing so, albeit in very different ways. Unlike their more restricted counterparts in classical Athens, *parthenoi* in archaic Sparta and Lesbos had a public voice and it was frequently used to discuss, confront, and overcome the varied political issues which affected their both themselves and their societies.

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