Hymnic Narrative and the Narratology of Greek Hymns

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Narrative in a Late Hymn to Dionysos (P. Ross. Georg. I.11)

*W.D. Furley**

Introduction

The hymn to Dionysos partially preserved on a papyrus now kept in the National Institute of Manuscripts in Tbilisi and first published in Russian by Grigol Zereteli in 1918,[1] contains an exciting and cruel narrative of how Dionysos punished Lykurgos for his impiety.[2] The first section of the text is lost; we join the narrative at the point when Dionysos makes the earth shrivel and dry, leaving Lykurgos stranded in a horrible desert without water in which nothing grows. The author goes on to describe how Lykurgos continues to resist Dionysos and is punished first by madness, which leads to him slaughtering his own sons and, nearly, his wife, then by vines which throttle him to death.[3] Finally the author does not relent in his description of Lykurgos' punishment even after the latter has descended to Hades as a shade. There he has to draw water endlessly into a leaky jar, in the manner of the Danaids. Thus, the text concludes, the son

* I thank Andrew Faulkner for comments leading to useful revisions of this piece.

1 1918: 873–880, 971–1002, 1153–1180; then followed its publication in G. Zereteli and O. Krüger 1925; further texts were published based solely on Zereteli: Keydell 1931; Tsirimpas 1953; Heitsch 1961, no. LVI; Sutton 1987. In 2006 I studied the papyrus in Tbilisi and published a revised text with photographs in *ZPE* 162, 2007: 63–84. Readings in this chapter refer to this published text.

2 Perhaps the most famous predecessor in antiquity for the story was the third play in Aeschylus' tetralogy *Lykurgia*; see Deichgräber 1939; Lozanova-Stancheva 1995: ch. 2. For further literary versions see Sutton 1987. Sutton suggests that the Lykurgos section of Nonnos' *Dionysiaka* and the Tbilisi hymn may have a common "source" in the lost work *Bassarika* by one Dionysios; see Livrea 1973. This must remain speculative.

3 The lost first section of the text, indeterminate in length, no doubt described Lykurgos' hostility to the god; whether this was modelled on the passage in the *Iliad* (6.130–140) in which Lykurgos was said to have hounded the "nurses of Dionysos" and Dionysos himself into the sea, we cannot tell. Here it is said that "the gods" were angry at Lykurgos for his enmity toward Dionysos; Zeus struck him blind, nor did he live long after the misdeed. See Henrichs 1994: 31–58.

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of Kronos deals with sinners, punishing them during their lifetime and when dead. "Hold on to just this fact"—he admonishes his listeners—"and call on the god(s) to this/these song(s)." As I reconstruct the text at this point the author wrote:

ὢν θεῶν ὢν
α[ὐ]τοῦ[[c]] τοῦ cχέο· τῆcδε καλέc⟨c⟩αι θεοῦ ἐπ᾽ ἀοιδῆc[4]

The last line of this column and possibly the last line of the hymnic text says that this song belongs to a celebration on a certain day of the year:

[ὧν]
ἥς κ]ύρει τόδ[ε ἦμ]αρ ἐπιπλομένων λυκαβάντων.[5]
"which belongs to this day in the turning of the seasons."

There follow lines added in the margin of the papyrus which seem to prescribe certain ritual actions, probably relating to the performance of the hymn in its ritual context. The conclusion of the hymn, then, seems to identify it as a liturgical text intended for performance at a calendrical festival. The lesson of the narrative is intended to be salutary for the audience: learn from Lykurgos' mistakes and remember Zeus' terrible retribution against sinners. Although Zeus is mentioned at the close, Dionysos is the main divine agent in the narrative and we can say that the hymn celebrates his awful power and unrelenting thirst for vengeance against the offender Lykurgos, rather than Zeus.' Dionysos is, after all, the son of Zeus and justice is done in the father's name.

Let us examine the narrative in more detail. It is told by an external narrator who never reveals his identity. Interestingly, the papyrus appears to be an *autographon*, the poet's own draft of his hymn, whether intended for performance by himself or by another. We can tell this much by the unfinished state of the text and the marginal variants which he jotted down at certain places.[6] There are mistakes and metrical irregularities in the text which make it appear to be a first draft rather than a fair copy; the marginal variants appear to record alternative epithets or expressions which the author jotted down as

4 Furley: α[υ]τουτου ex α[υ]τουσου corr. Π: α[ὐ]λούς τ̣ο̣[ι] χέο Tsirimpas: ἄ[λλ]ους το[ι] σχέο τῆσδε καλεῖν ‹σὺ› θεοὺς ἐπ᾽ ἀοιδῆς Zereteli: τῆσδε θεοῦ καλέειν ἐπ᾽ ἀοιδῆς Keydell—καλέσ‹σ›αι iam Sutton.

5 [κ]ύρει Furley: ἦι κ]υρεῖ Zereteli: ἥς κ]- Tsirimpas.

6 This was argued already by Zereteli 1918: 76–77; cf. Dorandi 1991.

he composed.[7] Lykurgos is the central character, but as we shall see, the story is told through the eyes of various participants. The narrator can see into all their minds, including even Zeus' at the end, and is, then, an omniscient external narrator. The context for the narrative is a performance of the hymn in which the poet and a human audience are present together—interacting through a direct address by the poet to the audience at the end of the hymn; so that in the narrative section there is a ready made audience besides the reader, external to the narration (though internal to the text). In this respect, the narrative situation is like that of a typical *Homeric Hymn* and others following that model. This audience, as we have seen, seems to have comprised celebrants at a calendrical festival, presumably in honour of Dionysos. At no point is there direct address of any god. This too is in the manner of *Homeric Hymns*, which prefer third-person narrative of a god's exploits rather than second-person adulation. However, the admonition to the audience at the end to "call to this song" implies a kind of refrain which the audience should utter at the close of the hymn to call on the god directly. We would have then a situation similar to that in Callimachus' sixth hymn in which a "master of ceremonies" both sings a hymnic narrative and calls on the congregation to utter a ritual cry.[8]

The narrator enlivens his story by a wide range of techniques ranging from choice of language to disposition or, to use an older word, artifice. First, he admits his audience (and us) to the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists as they act.[9] He describes how Lykurgos is struck dumb with fear when confronted by the scene of desolation on earth which Dionysos has caused: τάρβ]ει (or θάμ]βει) βεβολημένος ἀμφασίῃι τε (6). "Green fear" (χλῳ[ρ]ὸν δέος) causes the *bouplēx* to fall from his hands at the sight of the god's might (10–11). Lykurgos' resolution in the face of Dionysos' anger is compared to a promontory in the sea which sustains a battering from waves: "thus Lykurgos stood firm although he received a beating" (24). The scourging by Dionysos' attendants is not enough to beat him into submission. He suffers repeated bouts of madness inflicted by Lyssa before finally recognizing the god "through experience of troubles" (π⟨ε⟩ίρηι παθέων 46). We have experienced vicariously his fear, his resolution in the face of adversity, his madness followed by cowed submission.

The narrator also admits us to Dionysos' thoughts during the struggle. The god is determined to prolong Lykurgos' suffering, rather than finishing him off quickly (27–28). Even when Lykurgos, having killed his own sons in madness,

7 See Furley 2007; Zumbo 1997: 1071 compares a "Hymn to Eirene" written in two versions, with interlinear variants on the *verso*: see Carlini 1966: 5–10 with plate II.

8 Callimachus *Hymn VI to Demeter* 1–2, 118–119; cf. Hopkinson 1984; Bing 1995.

9 What is commonly referred to in narratological terms as "focalization."

recognizes the god's might, Dionysos is unrelenting in his anger (47). He casts his plant, the vine, round Lykurgos' neck and limbs and squeezes the life from him. Lykurgos suffered "the most pitiable death of all living mortals" (51).

The effects of the action on minor characters also briefly become the focus of the narrative. The sons are "fools" to stoop and try to lift their inert father from the ground. They did not realize, the narrator explains, that they would be slaughtered by him before the very eyes of their mother (37–38); this imitates one of the common modes of narratorial intervention in Homer, the *nepios* comment. Kytis, too, Lykurgos' wife, has her moment of glory. Because she had resolutely opposed her husband's deranged impiety, the god spares her from Lykurgos' murderous insanity. Here too, the narrator interjects to comment on the action as well as simply "showing" the action, again in one of the modes frequently employed by the Homeric narrator, the counterfactual ("Kytis *would have died* with them but …" 42). At the end, even Zeus' divine plan, the rationale underlying the narrative, is laid open to view by the omniscient narrator: he punished Lykurgos in life and after death as a lesson to "all men who oppose the gods" (56).

The effect of this focus by the narrator on the effects of the action on several minor characters, his intervening to comment as well as simply "allowing the story to tell itself" in objective fashion, and his showing their motivations (in the case of Zeus), is quasi-dramatic and elevates the narrative technique above the simplest form of third-person external narration, in imitation of Homeric narrative. It enables us to see into the minds of the players as they interact; we feel Lykurgos' pain through the description of his suffering and we understand something of the nature of Dionysos' power through the poet's description of his implacable anger. Minor characters—the passion of the sons and mother—serve to highlight the central drama. As Aristotle says that Homer is in a sense "dramatic," so our poet here dramatizes his narrative by allowing us to feel with and for the individual agents. A direct comparison of our text with Aeschylus' lost play on the punishment of Lykurgos is unfortunately impossible (above n. 2), but one notes the very Aeschylean touch in line 46 where it is said that Lykurgos finally recognized the god through his "experience of suffering" (πείρῃ παθέων).

The disposition of characters is one aspect of narrative. The disposition of time, or sequence, is another. Here, our poet is quite unimaginative. His account—at least in its extant portion—makes no use of analepses or prolepses, unless we can call the statement of Lykurgos' eternal suffering in the Underworld a preview of the future. The narrative is inexorably sequential, perhaps in order to emphasize the unrelenting and terminal nature of Lykurgos' punishment or perhaps simply because the poet was not imaginative enough

to break the sequence with the devices of anticipation or suspense or even dialogue. At one point the poet shows awareness of the diachronic nature of his narrative. Lyssa pours an "illusion of snakes" on Lykurgos' senses to serve as distraction while news of his affliction travels to Thebes and calls his family to his side.[10] It is a slightly strange, but not impossible, construction: we are to imagine Lykurgos wrestling with his imaginary snakes while *Phēmē* flies to Thebes to tell his family about his madness.

Other linguistic signs point up the passing of time and string the episodes together. When Lykurgos bears the scourging by Dionysos' attendants impassively, this "enrages Dionysos all the more" (25). He determines to punish him with long drawn out agony rather than swift death. The sons arrive at Lykurgos' side when the "madness was just abating" (35 ἄρτι νέον λήγοντα πόνου). Upon their arrival Lyssa, we are told, "does not wait long" (39 οὐ γὰρ δὴν πάλι) before she stirs another bout of madness, in which Lykurgos kills his sons. After the massacre of Lykurgos' family, Dionysos "verily does not cease from his anger" (47). This is another way of saying: "the story doesn't end there." Once Lykurgos has met his pitiable end, his soul continues its torment for eternity. The beginning of the narrative is missing—we must supply the reason for Dionysos' anger from other sources—but what survives shows a progressive destruction of Lykurgos' kingdom, family and self, followed by everlasting punishment in the Underworld. It can hardly be said that the narrative of destruction has a climax; rather, it is episodic, lurching from one torment to the next, to end with a picture of Lykurgos in the Underworld suffering endless torment.[11] Pictorial art tended to highlight either the moment of his sin—the slaughter of the nymph Ambrosia—or his strangulation by the vine.[12]

The myth is one of chastisement of an opponent of a god to show the greater glory of that god. We might say that Dionysos' punishment of Lykurgos is a defining event in the god's life, as was his defeat of Pentheus,[13] his reception among the Olympians when he induced Hephaistos to free Hera,[14] and the defeat and metamorphosis of the kidnapping pirates at sea (seventh *Homeric Hymn* to Dionysos). The story chosen by the anonymous author of the Tbilisi

10 This is "Hypoplakian" Thebes near Mt Plakos in Mysia; cf. Chuvin 1991; Sutton 1987.

11 For the episodic style of Nonnos' *Dionysiaka* (a work on a *much* larger scale) cf. Shorrock 2005.

12 Cf. Farnoux 1992; Sutton 1975: 356–360; Griffith 1983: vol. I, 217–232; and, for a new identification: Parlasca 2008: 318–327 with ill.

13 Memorably dramatized in Euripides' *Bacchae*.

14 The episode probably constituted the major myth of the first *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos*; cf. West 2001 and id. 2011.

hymn falls, then, into Fröhder's fourth category of narrative in *Homeric Hymns*: "eine einmalige Begebenheit aus dem Leben der Gottheit" (a unique episode in the god's life).[15]

Our author seems to have been aware of antecedents, which he may purposefully have inverted. Thus Lykurgos withstands Dionysos' onslaught "like a promontory jutting into the sea," a πέτρη προβλής (21), whilst Dionysos in the seventh hymn stands on a promontory (ἀκτῆι ἐπὶ προβλῆτι 3) from which he is snatched by the pirates.[16] Dionysos in the *Homeric Hymn* throws off the bonds, described as λύγοι, "osiers," which the pirates tie him up in, whilst Dionysos in the Tbilisi hymn entangles Lykurgos in tentacles of his plant, the vine, which strangle him. Perhaps one can also see a reflex of the *Homeric Hymn* in the mild treatment meted out to those who try to stay others in their mad disobedience of the god. The helmsman of the pirate ship tries to dissuade the crew from imprisoning the handsome young man, as, to judge by his beauty and power, he is surely some god. In the Zereteli hymn it is Kytis, the wife, who is spared by Dionysos, because she had tried to restrain her husband (42–44). This motif of "pardon for the pious" recurs in other hymn-like epic narrative. The story of Salmoneus in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* shows how Salmoneus is brutally punished by Zeus for appropriating his divine prerogative (thunder and lightning), whilst his daughter, who had tried to restrain Salmoneus, is spared.[17]

Perhaps the final element in Lykurgos' punishment—filling leaky jars with water—is also an inversion of Dionysiac epiphany: no wine for the god's enemy, only an endless, frustrating, drawing of water. Burkert in *Antike Mysterien* has pointed to the motif of fetching water in leaky jars in iconography relating to those who have not undergone initiation, for example in Polygnotos' painting of "Odysseus in the Underworld" as described by Pausanias.[18]

The punishment of Lykurgos was a prominent motif in Dionysiac myth as it found expression in poetry and art. Like Pentheus, or the pirates, he exemplifies the stubborn person who spurns the god's rites and is punished accordingly. He is the negative exemplum cited *pour encourager les autres*.[19] Dionysos is not just any god. He is the recipient of *orgia*, mystery rites involving initiation

15 Fröhder 1994.

16 Cf. *Il.* 2. 395–396.

17 Fr. 30.24–28 M-W; cf. Furley 2007.

18 Burkert 1990; to this we can add the interesting testimony of Plato *Gorg.* 493a–b, that in Orphic-Pythagorean doctrine the uninitiated have a "leaky soul" which must be unremittingly filled in the afterlife. Cf. Zumbo 1997: 1077.

19 Cf. Cole 2007: 329: "Rather, the myths of resistance describing excessive frenzy inflicted by a punitive Dionysus show the dangers of refusing to honor the god."

and membership of a *thiasos*. The Dionysiac mysteries are somewhat elusive but certainly existed from the fifth century BC on, in loose combination with other deities of mystery cult such as the Mother of the Gods[20] and Demeter in a number of her manifestations.[21] A.D. Nock wrote: "In general I am inclined to think that, apart from the devotion of the sick to Asklepios, Dionysus provides the single strongest focus for private spontaneous pagan piety using ceremonial forms."[22] The poetry surrounding these cults was commonly attributed to Musaios or Orpheus;[23] indeed there are a number of references, for example in the fourth-century Derveni Papyrus, to a collection of Orphic hymns relating to the cult of Mētēr/Demeter, clearly distinct from the *Homeric Hymns*.[24] We need to consider the possibility that a text such as the Zereteli hymn contained, in fact, the *hieros logos* of such Dionysiac mysteries, as has been argued by Zumbo in an article of 1997.[25]

According to Zumbo, the text may have been the *hieros logos* of a Dionysiac cult group in Egypt of the second century. The myth of Lykurgos will have served as an initiatory text designed to put the fear of god into initiates lest they oppose the god. Such specialized *hieroi logoi*, Zumbo argues, tended to cite a myth with particular local variants in order to distinguish them from shared tradition. He sees in the names used in this hymn, and the details of the mythical narrative, evidence of the particularization suited to a local Dionysiac community, keen to demarcate its dogma from others. It has to be said that the local variants of the Lykurgos myth chosen by the author are odd for a cult context in Egypt. As Zereteli recognized, the names of Lykurgos' sons tend to point to an identification of the Thebes in question as "Hypoplakian" Thebes, near Mt Plakos in the Mysian Plain. Chuvin has strengthened the argument by pointing to place-name evidence connecting Kytis with the same area.[26]

Moreover, as I pointed out in my 2007 re-edition of the hymn, certain markers in the text tell against the use of the hymn for private initiation rites. At the end the author says that his text is designed for performance at a calendrical

20 Mētēr Theōn, Mētēr Oreia, Kybele, Magna Mater.

21 See in particular Reitzenstein 1978; Nilsson 1975; Cole 2007; Robertson 2003; Tassignon 2003; Merkelbach 1988; Bowden 2010: chs. 4 and 5.

22 1972.

23 Cf. Plato *Rep*. 364b–e; Bowden 2010: 139.

24 See Furley 2011: 216.

25 Zumbo 1997.

26 Chuvin 1991: 270–271. For evidence of Dionysiac mysteries in Phrygia see Cole 1991. Note the inscription from Magnesia recording the institution of three *thiasoi* of women in Bakchos' cult: *CD* 146 with Henrichs 1978: 123–137; Bowden 2010: 110–111.

festival. Of course this does not rule out performance at biennial Dionysiaka of a local *thiasos*. Burkert has pointed out that individual initiation and calendrical celebrations of the community of initiates exist side by side.[27] The final "moral" of the story—think of Lykurgos and remember Zeus' wrath at the impious—seems to suit a text for community worship whether by *mystai* exclusively or by a "lay" congregation. It is interesting, as I said above, that Lykurgos' punishment in the Underworld correlates with iconography of those uninitiated in the Mysteries.

Hieroi logoi of mystery cults tended, by definition, to be secret and are therefore not the subject of Alexandrian editions written up in their turn in medieval manuscripts.[28] In a sense of course, every hymn is a *hieros logos* as it addresses a god of cult and often divulges mythical tradition about the god. Nevertheless there are distinctions. One wonders whether the reason why the *Homeric Hymns* to Dionysos and Demeter (nos. 1 and 2 in recent editions) were not included in the early collection was because they constituted just such *hieroi logoi* of mystery cult.[29] Kevin Clinton has pointed out all the discrepancies between *Demeter* and prominent features of cult in the Eleusinian Mysteries but he has not persuaded scholarly consensus that the hymn is not in some sense the sacred tale of Demeter's search for her abducted daughter which underlay the Mysteries.[30] The first *Homeric Hymn* to Dionysos, concerning as it did the punishment of Hera (for throwing Hephaistos from Olympus) and the return of Hephaistos through the mediation of Dionysos, may also have been a cult *arcanum*.[31]

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27 Burkert 1990. For private initiations see Bowden 2010: 137–147.

28 Note the edict of Ptolemaios Philopator that priests of Dionysos' *thiasoi* were to declare their ἱεροὶ λόγοι: *Corpus des Ordonnances des Ptolémées* no. 29. Cf. Zuntz 1950: 31. Zuntz concludes: "With some confidence it may be asserted that *B.G.U.* 1211 was issued in the early years of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, and quite likely in 203 BC." Zuntz returned to the subject in Zuntz 1963.

29 Cf. Bianchi 1976: 1–2, who, pointing also to Homer's almost complete silence about Dionysos and Demeter, would distinguish mystery gods from "normal" gods; he refers in this connection to Plutarch's distinction between gods and daimons, who suffer changes and vicissitudes (*De Iside* 25; *De E apud Delphos* 9). On p. 5 he writes "the gods of the Mysteries are gods subject to vicissitude. They are subjects and objects of a series of vicissitudes which causes painful events like "death" or loss to be followed by happy events like renewal of life and re-discovery of the lost."

30 Clinton 1986.

31 For this reconstruction of the *HHDionysos* (the first in the collection), cf. West 2001 and id. 2011.

A plethora of salacious *hieroi logoi* in mystery cults is found in Clement of Alexandria's *Protreptikos*. True, he had every reason to pick out the worst and most degrading features of mystery cult in order to claim the moral high ground for Christianity, but I feel reluctant to dismiss his revelations as inventions. Fantasizing about Greek mystery cults would not have won him any converts, as many knew the truth. The stories he divulges involve much violence and rape. He says that the Mysteries of Deo, the Mother, told how Zeus raped his own mother, who became pregnant and bore Kore. Zeus proceeded to rape her, too. Confirmation of the rape of Deo/Demeter by Zeus comes unequivocally as early as the fourth c. BC in the Derveni Papyrus.[32] The Mysteries of Dionysos, according to Clement, involved the dismembering of Dionysos by the Titans to be reassembled by Athena and Apollo following a cannibalistic cooking ceremony by the Titans.[33] The Eleusinian Mysteries revolve, according to Clement, around a sacred narrative of Deo's arrival in Eleusis in search of her daughter, in mourning. One of the Eleusinian *gēgeneis*, "earth-born," Baubo, offers her a refreshing drink, the *kykeōn*, which Demeter refuses, being in mourning. Baubo then exhibits herself, particularly her genitals, and there is talk of a baby boy, too, Iakchos. The sight pleases Deo, she smiles and accepts the *kykeōn*.[34] Clement expects to draw an indignant tut-tutting from his readers through this revelation of the impropriety of Eleusinian myth, and, indeed, adherents of the cult may well have felt shame at this exposure.

Returning to Lykurgos, one may ask whether he is not, as it were, one of the props in Dionysos' mysteries, a man who suffers flagellation by Dionysos' followers, madness which causes him to kill his own family, strangulation by the god's own vine, and further persecution in the underworld. His experience may be not only an *exemplum abhorrendum*, designed to keep initiates of the Dionysiac thiasos on the straight and narrow, but may also, in some sense, represent stages of initiation into the god's cult, albeit in an extreme and negative sense. It has been well pointed out by Susan Cole (and others) that Dionysiac madness has, as it were, two faces.[35] There is the beneficial madness which involves complicity in Bacchic revels, allowing the soul to participate in the *orgia*—θιασεύεται ψυχήν, as Euripides expresses it in the *Bacchae* (75)—and there is the terrible destructive madness which befalls those who resist the god's advances. Examples of such destructive madness, a kind of "bad trip" in experiencing the god's magic, are found among women and men: King Proitos'

32 *Protreptikos* 2.15–17; see Furley 2012: 233–251.

33 *Protreptikos* 2.17.2–18.2; cf. Robertson 2003.

34 *Protreptikos* 2.20.1–21.2.

35 Cole 2007: esp. 329–331.

daughters, the women of Thebes with Agave who rend Pentheus; on the male side Pentheus and, precisely, Lykurgos.[36]

Lykurgos is the centre-piece of a mosaic from Djemila-Cuicul in N. Africa dating perhaps to 135 AD. He is shown wielding his double-ax and about to strike down a cringing woman, perhaps his wife, more probably the nymph Ambrosia—who was turned by the god into a vine to escape Lykurgos' violence. The surrounding panels show other Dionysiac motifs, in particular the unveiling of the *liknon* containing a phallus, at which a female figure recoils in horror.[37] Leschi, the original publisher of the mosaic, Nilsson in his book on the Dionysiac Mysteries and Dunbabin all see in the iconography of the mosaic themes of Dionysiac initiation.[38] Dunbabin considers the hypothesis that this room was in fact used for initiation "highly attractive." It would be a "rare case," she says, of a floor mosaic being in tune with the room's explicit function. The scene of Lykurgos attempting to butcher Ambrosia marks him as an enemy of the god, and captures the moment just before Dionysos' vengeance—when the vine entangles and throttles him.[39] This is the demise of Lykurgos, rather than his scourging.

The scenes of Dionysiac initiation from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii contain on one panel a scene of flagellation: a woman looking fairly abject on the ground is about to be struck, it seems, by a winged figure wielding a lash.[40] In discussing this scene Seaford adduces further evidence to show that flagellation—whether real or threatened—seems to have constituted an element of initiation into Dionysos' mysteries.[41] If that is the case the scourging of Lykurgos may be both illustrative of initiation *and* an *exemplum* of the fate of enemies of the god. He suffers, as it were, an extreme fate in the hands of Dionysos and his attendants as punishment for defying the god, and does not survive the chastisement. An initiate, on the other hand, by bowing to the god's

36 Cole 2007: 330; Robertson 2003: 227–229.

37 Dunbabin 1978: 179 sees in this scene an "evident allusion to the ceremony" sc. of initiation.

38 See Leschi 1935–1936. For Picard's dating to approximately 135 AD see Dunbabin 1978: 178; Nilsson 1975: 112–115; Leschi 1935–1936: 159–161 suggests that Psyche, representing the human soul generally, is being shown the symbol of the Dionysiac mysteries, a phallus in a liknon.

39 Dunbabin 1978: 179 writes: "the point of the central scene must be to illustrate the punishment of the enemies of Dionysos. It seems a little out of place in the context of the other scenes, but presumably alludes to the fate reserved for the uninitiated as a contrast to the salvation of the initiates illustrated by the rest of the pavement."

40 Among the sizeable literature on the Pompeii fresci see Baldwin 1996; Hearnshaw 1999.

41 Seaford 1981. For a figurative interpretation cf. Burkert 1990, who talks of the "lash of Lyssa."

will, like the female initiate in the Villa of the Mysteries, survives his or her ordeal and becomes, hopefully, a *bakchos*.

The fates of enemies of the god such as Lykurgos and Pentheus seem, as I said, to illustrate a kind of "bad trip" in the cult: they refuse to go along with the god's cult and are punished with a fatal dose of Dionysiac madness. It is interesting in the Tbilisi hymn how Lykurgos' punishment is accompanied by an epiphany of the god. He sees the god approaching in full glory (18 μέγα κυδαίνοντος), accompanied by intense flashes of lightning and peals of thunder (16–17 ἀστεροπαῖς … βροντῆισι θαμείαις). This is indeed Dionysos Bromios appearing to him. Similarly in the *Bakchai* Pentheus is punished by undergoing a fatal initiation into Bacchic rites. Pentheus' Dionysiac madness is further illustrated on the magnificent bronze krater from Derveni.[42] He brandishes a dagger with the intention perhaps of killing a child which is held by its ankle before him by a maenad.[43] Perhaps we may rationalise the myths of Lykurgos and Pentheus in Dionysiac ritual as terrifying examples of how *not* to undergo initiation.[44]

It is in Lykurgos' destructive madness that the closest link with the ritual madness of Dionysiac initiation can be detected. In the poem Lykurgos is first struck dumb by the devastation and force unleashed by the god's epiphany. Then Dionysos sends madness personified (Lyssa) upon him, in which state Lykurgos imagines he is battling snakes. In a respite of the madness his family come to his side. Madness siezes him again and he kills his sons, taking them for snakes, as they try to help him; his wife is only spared death by the god because she had tried to pacify Lykurgos' *theomania*. Then, the poet concluded, "when madness cleared, he recognized the god" (45–50). In this restored clarity of perception, however, Dionysos completed his punishment by casting vines round him, which throttled him to death.

Myths of madness in those who come in contact with Dionysos are widespread, as we have already noted above. Ritual madness is more difficult to pin down, as these were mysteries, not to be divulged. In Corybantic ritual we hear of divine possession affecting participants, leading them to dance ecstatically. Menander's play *Theophoroumene* has as its eponymous figure a woman gripped by Corybantic enthusiasm who is induced to dance by music from suit-

42 See Barr-Sharrar 2008. Bowden 2010: plate 16 also has a splendid illustration.

43 The publisher of the vase identifies the figure as Pentheus although Susan Cole refers to him as Lykurgos: Cole 2007: 338. For the "partnership in crime" of Pentheus and Lykurgos see Ovid, *Met*. 4.22–23: *Penthea … bipenni ferumque Lycurgum / sacrilegos*.

44 See Herodotus 4.79 for the disastrous case of Skyles who wished to become a Bacchic initiate.

ably metroac instruments.[45] Plato describes a ritual associated with this cult in which an initiate (or perhaps a mental patient) is seated on a "throne" and then cult followers make an almighty Corybantic din with their instruments around him.[46] Abnormal, wild, behaviour was a standard attribute of followers of Bakchos, Kybele or the Great Mother, as well as in more minor cults such as those of Sabazios or Kotyto.[47] Already in Aristophanes we hear of the "women's madness" involving dancing on rooftops and cries of "Sabazios."[48] The Roman edict in 186 BC designed to stem Bacchanalian excesses is well known from Livy.[49]

Similarly the snakes encountered by Lykurgos in his delusional madness can be related to snake-handling in Dionysiac and related initiations. This is a prominent feature of Demosthenes' denigration of his rival Aischines who as a boy, the former alleges, assisted his mother in private initiations and handled snakes as part of the cult rigmarole.[50] Bowden has a fascinating section on modern snake-handling rites in Pentecostal Christianity which, he says, seem immediately comparable to the snake-handling rites in ancient Bacchantism.[51] Although his testimony should always be treated with caution, Clement points to the central role of snakes in Bacchic mysteries:

> The Initiates of Bakchos celebrate a raving Dionysos whereby they induce their sacred madness with *ōmophagia* and accomplish their rending of the sacrificial victims with snakes bound round their heads, crying out their ritual call "Euan, Euan," accompaniment to their ritual wandering. Indeed, the holy sign of the Bacchic mysteries is a consecrated snake.[52]

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45 For a discussion of the papyrus fragments of the play see Handley 1969; Nervegna 2010.

46 Plato, *Euthyd*. 277d, cf. Bowden 2010: 91; Linforth 1946. The rite is called θρόνησις, "enthronement."

47 Aeschylus seems to have described the "madness-inducing racket" of Kotyto's cult (μανίας ἐπαγωγὸν ὁμοκλάν) in his *Ēdonai*: see Strabo 10.3.16 = *TGF* III 178–179 Radt. For Kotyto/Kotto/Kotys see Lozanova-Stancheva 1995.

48 *Lysistrata* 387–398. For a discussion see Furley 1992.

49 Livy 39.8–13; cf. Bowden 2010: 124–129.

50 Dem. 18.259–260; cf. Bowden 2010: 138.

51 Bowden 2010: 217–220. On 218: "The loud rhythmic music, the dancing and the snakes are all features of Bacchic cult; so too is the autonomy of each worshipping group," then on 220, quoting Burton 1993: 134, he writes: "'Serpent-handlers may be said to be achieving an epiphany, that is, an intuitive grasp of reality, a perception of the essential nature or the meaning of themselves, religion, and God.' This is approaching the kind of experience we have found in mystery cults." For a depiction of snake-handling combined with ecstatic dance in the ancient cult of the Great Mother see ibid. fig. 63–65

52 *Protr*. 2.12.2 Διόνυσον μαινόλην ὀργιάζουσι Βάκχοι ὠμοφαγίᾳ τὴν ἱερομανίαν ἄγοντες καὶ τελί-

There is, indeed, evidence that Lykurgos himself becomes a kind of initiate in Dionysos' cult, albeit a reluctant one initially who suffers all manner of tribulations before finally bowing to the god's power. Thus in Nonnos' *Dionysiaka*, Bk. 21 (probably a fifth-century work), Lykurgos is fettered by Ambrosia-turned-vine, scourged by Dionysos' Bakchai, robbed by Rhea's destruction of his kingdom by earth tremors, driven senseless by thunder and lightning until finally an unidentified female figure appears and rescues him. Zeus makes him wander the earth as a lesson to other mortals not to offend Dionysos. Finally he receives cult in Arabia.[53] In short Lykurgos becomes an ambivalent figure in Dionysos' cult. On the one hand he opposes the god's *thiasos* and receives cruel punishment for that; on the other he becomes emblematic of the cult, a kind of devil's advocate, whose story finally helps cement Dionysos' authority. Lykurgos' madness is the horrifying mythical extreme of ritual madness, that heightened state of awareness, Greek *ekstasis*, to which participants in orgiastic cults aspire.[54] The violence of myth can be seen perhaps as a kind of narrative shock-treatment designed to shake a recipient's mental equilibrium and facilitate a new state of receptiveness.

This raises the possibility that the narrative sequence of the myth somehow reflects stages in the ritual, that the myth may be a kind of script for initiation.[55] The fear and desolation experienced by Lykurgos, his physical punishment by the Maenads and the madness inflicted by Dionysos, all culminating in a clearing of the senses and vision of the god, might be placed in parallel with an initiate's experience. Narrative sequence becomes a programme for mental experience.[56] The suggestive power of narrative, working through pictures of one human's suffering, has a psychogogic effect on listeners. In this way Lykur-

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σκουσι τὰς κρεονομίας τῶν φόνων ἀνεστεμμένοι τοῖς ὄφεσιν, ἐπολολύζοντες Εὐάν, Εὔαν ἐκείνην, δι' ἣν ἡ πλάνη παρηκολούθησεν· καὶ σημεῖον ὀργίων βακχικῶν ὄφις ἐστὶ τετελεσμένος. Bowden 2010: 206–207 urges caution in using Clement's testimony, but other points—the *ōmophagia, sparagmos*, snakes around the head, are confirmed by other sources.

53 Note the "initiation" of Dionysos himself following persecution by Hera: Schol. Lykophron 273; Schol. Homer *Il.* 6.131 A; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.34.

54 For a sympathetic account see Bowden 2010.

55 It would help greatly, of course, if we could reconstruct the ritual sequence in Dionysiac iconography such as the Villa of the Mysteries; but nothing like consensus exists concerning the interpretation of the individual panels or the sequence in which they should be "read." For some relevant literature see above n. 38–39

56 One recalls Aristotle's remark that initiation in the Mysteries involves not so much learning as experiencing something: Synesius Dion. 10 p. 271 Krab. (cf. Dio Chrys. *or*. 12.33 ff.): καθάπερ Ἀριστοτέλης ἀξιοῖ τοὺς τελουμένους οὐ μαθεῖν τι δεῖν ἀλλὰ παθεῖν καὶ διατεθῆναι, δηλονότι γενομένους ἐπιτηδείους, with Burkert 1990: 58 with n. 12.

gos' story becomes a model for the desired ritual transformation. One should not imagine the hymn being recited or sung simultaneously, like a score, with ritual; rather, the narrative, recited at some stage of the ritual, establishes a pattern in the initiates' mind while they celebrate the god's festival. Similarly, Callimachus' sixth hymn pretends to accompany ritual but a precise synchronization of poetical "real time" with the procession of Demeter's basket would be hard to achieve.

Perhaps in this context we can assimilate another case of a myth similar to that of Lykurgos and Pentheus, of a human who offends a god connected with mystery rites and is sorely punished for it. Erysichthon—whose story was known already to the author of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*—offended Demeter by chopping down trees in her sacred grove.[57] Callimachus tells the story in detail in his sixth *Hymn to Demeter*.[58] A white poplar about to receive the chop utters a cry of distress, which Demeter responds to. In the shape of her priestess Nikinna she tries to warn Erysichthon against the sacrilege, just as Kytis tries to restrain her raving husband Lykurgos. But Erysichthon does not listen. He tells the goddess he needs the wood to equip a banqueting hall, and proceeds, with his attendants, to fell the trees. Demeter punishes him with a raging hunger which he cannot still, however much he eats. In the *Catalogue* we hear of how he sells his own daughter Mestra to pay for food to eat, a kind of sacrifice of his child analogous to the killing of Lykurgos' children. We note also how Dionysos is said to join Demeter in punishing Erysichthon: "what angers Demeter," comments Callimachus, "angers Dionysos, too" (70–71). Moreover, the narrative begins by saying that Demeter loves this particular sacred grove of trees as much as Eleusis and Henna in Sicily (29–30). The narrative itself is embedded in the performative context of a ritual procession for Demeter in which her sacred basket, *kalathos*, is paraded around. One feels that the kalathos is analogous to the *liknon* in Dionysiac mysteries. In short, I suggest that in this hymn Callimachus has taken a *hieros logos* of mystery rites for Demeter and Dionysos and embellished it as a literary work. If this is right, we can see in Erysichthon a fig-

57 Hesiod fr. 43a M-W, with Merkelbach 1968: 134–135.

58 Cf. McKay 1962; Mueller 1987; Cassin 1987: 95–121, who links the myth with Demeter's festival Thesmophoria; Cassin recognizes the paradigmatic status of Erysichthon with respect to Demeter Thesmophoria, without mentioning her mysteries. Against a cultic background to the story: Henrichs 1979; Robertson 1984, sees a quite different ritual background, namely in ritual begging at Athens. Bulloch 1977: 99–101 notes the similarity between Callimachus' account and other narratives of Dionysus' punishment of transgression, especially *Homeric Hymn* 7 to Dionysus: cf. Faulkner 2011c: 180.

ure analogous to Lykurgos as someone who did violence to the sacred mysteries of a god and suffered as a result. As Callimachus concludes his hymn: don't let me be friends with anyone like Erysichthon, who is enemy to Demeter!

Appendix: Text of Hymn[59]

сάτ]υροι φιλοπ[α]ί[γμονε]c ἐξεγένοντο
]ην κρήνη νάεν οὐδ' ἔcαν ἀρδμοί,
θρι]γκοί, οὐ δένδρεα, πάντα δ' ἄϊϊc[τ]α,
πλ]αταμὼν λ[εῖ]oc πάλιν ἐξεφαάν[θη.]. poc
]ɛcκε παρῆν ἅccον Λυκόοργος
]ει βεβολημένος ἀμφαcίῃ τε·
]α πάντα καὶ ἀνδ[ρ]άcιν οὐκ ἐπι‹ε›ικτὰ
μ]ετατράπετ' ἀμφα[δὸν] ἔργα.
]. Διὸc [γό]νον ἀγλα[ὸν ὄ]ντα,
]. ὦ χλω[ρ]ὸν δέος [. . . .]πονεῖ[το
]βουπλ[ὴξ] χɛρὸc ἄν̣τ̣`α′[[ι]] ποδοῖιν
]αι ἔπος [ἤ]θɛλɛν ο̣ὐδ' ἐρέɛcθ[αι.]
]χα δειλὸc ὑπέκφυγε κῆρα κελαιν̣ή[ν] ẋ. [.]ταιην
]δ̣έη`cɛ′[[μ]] θεὸν μήν{ɛ}ιμα μεθεῖναι.
]ɛ̣ουcαν ἑῷ [π]ροτ̣[ιό]ccατο θυμῶι,
ἐλ]θόντα μετ' ἀc̣[τɛ]ροπ[α]ῖc Διόνυcον,
c]ελάγιζον ὑπ̣[ὸ] βρ̣[ον]τ̣ῆιcι θαμείαιc
ἔργ'ἀ]ΐδηλα Δι[ὸ]c μέγα κυδαίνοντος.
Διόν]υcoc ὀπάονας, o`ἵ′ δ' ἄρ' ὁμαρτῇ
θ]ύcθλοιcιν χλοεροῖcιν ἐπαΐccοντες ɛ̣ἴθɛι̣νον.
ɛ̣ἵcτη δ'ἀcτɛ[μ]φὴc πέτρη`ι′ ἴcoc, ἥ ῥά τɛ προ[βλὴ]c
ɛἰ]c̣ ἅλα μαρμαρέην cτɛναχίζɛται, ἤν τις ἀη̣[τ]ῶν
ὀρ]νύμενος πνεύcῃ, θɛίνοντά ‹τɛ› κύματα μίμ[νɛι.
ὣ]c ὅγɛ θɛινόμɛ̣νος μɛ̣́[νɛ]ι̣ ἔμπɛδον οὐ[δ' ἀ]λ̣έγιcc̣[ɛν.
μ]ᾶλλον δ' ἀ[ζῃ]χῆc ἐνɛ̣[δύ]ɛτο παῖδα Θυ[ώνη]c
μ]ηνιθμὸc κραδίην, κραιπνῷ δέ μιν οὔ τ̣[ι] μενοίν[α]
ᾳ̣ἰ̣ρήcɛιν θανάτῳ, δο[λιχ]α[ῖc] δ' ἄταιcιν ἐρ̣[είκ]ɛι̣[ν,]
ἀργαλέην ἵνα τῖcιν ἔτι ζώων ἀποτίcῃ.
ὦ̣ρ[c]ɛ δ[έ] ο[ἰ] [μα]νίην, ὀ̣φίων δ' ἰνδαλμὸν [ἔ]χ[ɛ]υ̣[ɛ]ν,

59 I reproduce here the text printed in Furley 2007.

ὄφρ᾽ἀπαλεξή[c]ων τρίβῃ χρόνον ἄχρις [ὀλο]ιὴ
φήμη τ[ῆ]c μα[ν]ί̣ης πτηνὴ Θήβην ἀφίκ[η]ται,
Ἄρδυ̣ν τ᾽ Ἀc̣[τ]άκιόν τε δύω π[αῖ]δα[c] καλέουca
καὶ Κύτιν ἥ οἱ γῇ⟨μ⟩ατ᾽ ἐν ἀγκοίνη ⸢ι′ci δαμεῖc[α.] κλιθεῖca
οἱ δ᾽ ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀφίκοντο πολυγλώccοι̣ δι̣ὰ̣ φήμη[c,
ἄρτι νέον λῄγοντα πόνου κιχέτην [Λυ]κ̣[ό]οργον
τρυόμενον μα[νίηι], περὶ δ᾽ αὐτῷ̣ χεῖρ᾽ ἐβ[ά]λοντο,
κείμενο[ν] ἐν κ[ο]νίῃ, μέγα νήπι̣[οι·] ἦ γὰρ ᾧ̣[με]λλον ἐν δαπέδῳ̣
φθίcecθ[αι] ὑπὸ πατρὸc ἐναντίον ὄμμαcι̣ μητρός.
οὐ γὰρ δὴν πάλι Λύc̣ca κελεύοντος Διονύcου
ὀ̣ρθῆιc[ιν μ]ανί̣ηιcιν ἀνήγειρεν Λυκόοργον.
φῇ δ᾽ὅφ[ια]c θείνειν, τεκέ̣ων δ᾽ ἐξείλατο θυμόν. κτείν[ειν]
κ]αί νύ κ̣[εν] ἀμφ᾽ αὐτοῖcι Κύτις πέcεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλε[α]ίρων
ἥ]ρπαξε[ν] Διόνυcoc, ἔθηκε δὲ νόcφιν ὀλ̣[έ]θρ̣[ου,
οὕ]γεκα̣ [μ]αργαίνοντι παραίφαcιc ἐμ̣μενὲc ᾗ̣[ε]ν̣.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐ π[αῦ]εν ἄθελκτ̣ο̣[ν] ἐὸν πόcιν, ὅc̣ [ῥα λυ]θ̣ε̣ί̣[cη]c̣
λα]ιψ[ηρῆc] μανίης π⟨ε⟩ίρῃ παθέων θεὸν̣ ἔ̣[γν]ω̣.
ἀλλ᾽[οὔ] θ̣[η]ν̣ Διόνυcoc ἐ[παύε]το μηνιθμ[οῖο,
ἀ]τ[ρέ]μα δ᾽ ἑ]cτειὼτι δυη[πα]θίῃ τ᾽ ἀλύοντι
ἄ]μ̣π̣[ελον] ἀμφὶ[c] ἔχε̣υ̣ε̣[[ν]] καὶ ἄψεα πάντ᾽ ἐ̣π̣[έδη]c[ε.
c̣τεινό[με]νοc δὲ δέρῃν̣ [δο]ι̣ο̣ὺc θ᾽ ἑκάτ̣ερθ̣ε̣ τ̣[ένοντας
οἴκτιc̣τ̣[ο]ν κάμεν οἷτον ἐπιχθονίων ἀ[ν]θ[ρώπων.
καὶ νῦν ᾷ̣γ̣ χῶρον τὸν δυc[c]εβέων εἴδωλοι̣̣
ὀ]τλε̣[ύ]ε̣[ι] κ̣[ά]μ̣ατον τὸν ἀνήνυτον ἐc πίθον ἀν̣[τλ]ᾷ̣ν
ῥω]γαλέ̣ο̣[ν], τ̣ὸ δὲ πολλὸν ἐc Ἄϊδοc ἔκχυται ὕδ[ω]ρ.
τοίην[οὖν] ἐρίδ[ου]ποc ἐπεκράανε Κρον{ε}ίων
ἀνδρ[άc]ι̣ θ[ε]ιομάχοιc̣ι δίκην, ἵνα τῖc̣ιc [ἔ̣]π̣η̣τ̣[αι
ἀ̣[μ]φότερον ζωοῖc̣ιν ἀτὰρ πάλι τεθνηῶcι.
ὧν θεῶν ὧν
α̣[ὐ]τ̣οῦ[[c]] τοῦ̣ cχέο· τῆc̣δε καλέc⟨c⟩αι θεοῦ ἐπ᾽ ἀοιδῆc,
[ὧν]
ἧc κ]ύ̣ρ̣ει τόδ[ε ἦμ]αρ ἐπιπλομένων λυκαβάντων.

After this five lines follow which were written vertically in the free space between column three and the edge of the papyrus (according to Zereteli, a space of eight centimetres). The last three (at least) are not hexameters; whether the first two are or not is questionable. I guess (with Zereteli) that the first two constitute the last two lines of the hymn; the last three contain notes of some sort, perhaps on the performance of the hymn. I number them consecutively to the hymn.

λείβ̣ειν̣ α̣ι̣θ̣[....
..νης.γ[....
τὰ πρὸ τούτων [....
ἵνα τὸ ποίημ̣[α...
.....λ̣εως [....

I give a full *Apparatus Criticus* in Furley 2007.

Translation of Hymn

... from whom] the playful satyrs descended.
... no] spring gushed nor were there streams,
... no] lintels, no trees, all was wiped
from sight and a featureless plain appeared again.
Where ? ? was before] Lykurgos drew near
and was struck [by fear] and speechlessness.
All was [terrible], unbearable for man,
...] the lands were changed utterly.
... he recognized] that Zeus' son was glorious.
Livid fear [overcame him], [and while he] laboured,
...] the axe [fell] from his hand before his feet
and he was unable to utter] a word or speak at all.
Perhaps then] the wretch had avoided sombre fate,
but it was not] to be that god's wrath ceased.
He sensed in his mind impending [fate]
when he saw] Dionysos approach with lightning
which] flashed to repeated claps of thunder
as Zeus glorified [his son's] destructive work.
Dionysos egged on his company, who, in concert,
struck with their fresh cult branches in attack.
He stood unflinching like a rock which, jutting
in the sparkling sea, sounds when a storm wind
starts to blow, braced against the lashing waves.
So he withstood their blows and took no notice.
All the more virulently rage gripped the heart
of Thyone's son; and he resolved to kill him
by no quick death but with long drawn out agony
so that, living, he would pay a terrible price.
He set madness on him, sent an illusion of snakes,

so that, fighting these, he'd give time for word
of his madness fatefully to fly to Thebes
and summon his two sons Ardys and Astakios
and Kytis, who submitted to his marital embrace.
When they came in response to multiple report,
they found Lykurgos in remission from the pain,
reduced by madness. They threw their arms around him
where he lay in the dust—poor fools, for they would
be killed by their father before their mother's eyes.
On the orders of Dionysos Lyssa did not wait long
but visited Lykurgos with an acute attack of madness.
Taking them for snakes he took his children's life.
And Kytis would have died with them but in pity
Dionysos rescued her, took her from harm's way,
for she had tried to stop her husband's folly
but without success. When the acute madness
left, he recognized, through suffering, the god.
But Dionysos' rage did not abate at all.
Standing there unmoved and suffering from pain,
he cast a vine around him, bound all his joints.
Strangled round the neck and its two tendons,
he died the most pitiful death of all mortals.
Even now, in the abode of sinners, a shadow,
he suffers the unceasing toil of filling a broken
jar, while most water drains away to hell.
This punishment the mighty thunderer Zeus
decreed for enemies of gods, that punishment
should be their lot, in life as well as death.
these hymns gods
Take this to heart! Call to this hymn of god
are
which is due this day in the seasons' course.