PAIDEIA

rivista di filologia, ermeneutica e critica letteraria

FONDATA DA
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Per i cento anni di
Alfredo Ghiselli

Estratto da

«Paideia» LXXI (2016)

Pars prior

STILGRAF EDITRICE
CESENA

ISTITUZIONE BIBLIOTECA MALATESTIANA
Memory of the World
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DREAM AND VISION IN HERODAS' EIGHTH *MIME*, 'ENHYPNION'[1]

Abstract

Herodas' eighth Mime, *although fragmentary, describes a dream the writer had, followed by an interpretation in terms of literary success: although the poems receive much criticism, the dream signifies that they will be rewarded with fame eventually. This paper gives a new interpretation of the dream itself in terms of Dionysiac initiation. New evidence about the Bacchic mysteries allows us to see allusions in this text to the nocturnal* teletai *in honour of Dionysos. In this way Herodas, the poet, shows himself initiated into the patron god's secret rites, at which he was awarded a prize.*

Keywords: Herodas; eighth Mime; *Dionysiac initiation; Bacchic mysteries.*

The eighth of Herodas' *Mimes* preserved in a papyrus kept in the British Library is unfortunately in tatters and does not permit continuous reading except in parts[2]. But these are enough to discern some important points about the content, even if many questions remain unanswered. The author describes how he – I will not make any formal distinction here between the narrator of the piece and Herodas the poet, as he does not[3] – woke in the middle of one night, having

1 Revised text of a paper read by skype to the conference on Hellenistic poetry in Poznań in September 2015.

2 The chief edition is I.C. CUNNINGHAM's Teubner, Leipzig 1987, in combination with his 1971 Oxford edition with commentary. There is also the voluminous Italian edition by Lamberto DI GREGORIO, *Eronda. Mimiambi (V-XIII)*, Milan 2004, which does not add very much to Cunningham in this respect. Older works are: R. HERZOG, *Der Traum des Herondas*, «Philologus» 79, 1924, pp. 386-433, to which A.D. KNOX, *The Dream of Herodas*, «CR» 39, 1925, pp. 13-15, responded, with further suggestions; G. MASTROMARCO, *The Public of Herondas*, Amsterdam 1984, pp. 70-72. For background and discussion see now Graham ZANKER, *Herodas* Mimiambs, Oxford (Aris and Phillips) 2009 and Elena ESPOSITO, *Herodas and the Mime*, in James J. CLAUSS (ed.), *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, pp. 267-281 (specifically on *Mim.* 8: pp. 269-272).

3 This is not to deny the possibility that Herodas has invented a narratorial personality for himself for this piece: the depiction of himself as owner of a small farmstead need not be accurate, nor the style in which he addresses his servants.

experienced a disturbing dream. He wakes the servants of the household roughly, saying he wants to perform sacred rites. A maid he tells to let the young pig (χοῖρος) out, as it is parched by thirst; she should light a light (λύχνον) if she wishes, showing the scene should be imagined taking place at night, long before dawn. Another he tells to procure some wool, as he needs a woollen fillet for performing the sacred rites. In the meantime he suggests to another servant, probably male, Annas, that he relate his dream to him, as 'his wits are not dull' (15 νωθέας or νηπίας)[4]. This he proceeds to do. Herodas had dreamt he was dragging a goat from, or through, a ravine. He came upon some goatherds, in the country, presumably. They seem to have set upon his goat and proceeded to devour it. A young man appeared dressed, it seems, in a fawnskin (30 νεβροῦ χλανιδίωι), an ivy garland on his head, and in high boots: the description points unmistakeably, as commentators agree, to a vision of Dionysos. Then, in fragmentary lines, we hear of a Dionysiac game, the *askoliasmos*, balancing on an inflated wineskin made from a goat's skin, which Herodas the narrator says he won by acclamation, having 'alone among all this commotion jumped twice upon the skin' (45-46 δὶς μοῦνος ἐκ τόσης λύης[5] / ἐπ᾽ οὖν ἀλέσθαι).

An old man then seems to have contested the victory of the narrator, but Herodas appeals to the young man as arbitrator, and he appears to have ruled that 'both won' (ὸ δ᾽ εἶπεν ἄμφω τὸν δορέα[6] [ ). At that point Herodas ends his narrative and explains how he takes the dream: he sees in the goat which he dragged from the ravine a symbol of the poetic gift which Dionysos has given him (καλοῦ δῶρον ἐκ Διωνύσου). That goatherds rent his goat apart he takes as pointing to the fact that many will 'pull apart' or 'pluck' (72 τιλεῦσιν) his poe-

4 For this and other points in the text see W. Furley, *Textual notes on Herodas* Mim. *8*, Enhypnion *or the Dream*, «BICS» 58, 2015, pp. 93-97.

5 Reading λύης, 'commotion', 'uproar', in 45 instead of the ms. λιης, which gives no sense; see Furley 'Textual notes'. Editors in the past have preferred to correct to λείης, *e.g.* Headlam-Knox 'and I alone out of all this wreck', but this is problematic. If correct, λύης here can be connected with an epithet of Dionysos, Lyaios, meaning 'god of tumult'. There is a question mark about the quantity of the upsilon in λύη, which needs here to be long if the reading is to stand.

6 Ralph M. Rosen, *Mixing of genres and literary program in Herodas 8*, «HSPh» 94, 1992, pp. 205-216, here 213, follows Pisani (V. Pisani, *Glosse a Eroda*, «Paideia» 7, 1952, p. 93) in taking δορέα as derived from δορά, 'the inflated skin' of the *askoliasmos*. The alternative explanation that δορέα = 'flayer' (Herzog, Knox, al.) gives the sense that the 'flayer' (= punisher?) should do something to both men.

tic works (71-72 τὰ μέλεα...τοὺς ἐμοὺς μόχθους...ἐν Μούσηισιν), as that is their designated fate (72 ὦδέ γ' ὥριστο)[7]. His victory in the Dionysiac game, however, sharing the honours with 'the old man', he interprets to mean that he will achieve fame among Ionian Greeks with his limping iambic verse, alongside, or after, his predecessor in the art, Hipponax.

This is a rough sketch of what presents itself relatively clearly in the extant remains of the text, and with which, I think, most commentators would concur. In this paper I wish to develop an aspect which has not been recognized to date, and which I think throws interesting light on the nature of Herodas' Dionysiac initiation in his dream. The position for which I wish to argue is that the Dionysiac rites alluded to by Herodas in this poem do not solely concern the rustic fun and games of *askoliasmos*[8] but rather concern initiation rites at the Dionysiac mysteries themselves. I believe certain points in Herodas' text point clearly toward the celebration of mystery rites in a nocturnal setting, coupled with initiation by a group of 'goatherds'. The interpretation gains plausibility by recent additions to our sources on the Bacchic Mysteries. Apart from the so-called Orphic-Bacchic gold leaves, which have been known for a century, new epigraphic finds, including the long epigraphic mystery text from Selinus, the so-called Getty Hexameters[9], all talk about the role of mystic goats, one male, one female, dragged by force from a garden or explicitly 'from the Garden of Persephone'. If I am on the right lines here, Herodas' allusion to the Dionysiac mysteries in this piece gives depth to the nature of his poetic initiation, as he saw it. His immersion in this art can be seen as an initiation into the secrets of Dionysos. As Hesiod experienced a mystical experience on Mt Helikon when he received, as he believed, instruction from the Muses to become an epic poet, so, it seems to me, Herodas sketches here how he encountered

7 For ὥριστο see Furley, *Textual notes*, cit. n. 4. Cunningham transcribes the papyrus reading as ωδεγῳ[ ]το. On this passage see Richard Hunter, *The presentation of Herodas'* Mimiamboi, «Antichthon» 27, 1993, pp. 34-37. That ἐν Μούσηισιν refers to the Museum of Alexandria is argued by M. Puelma-Piwonka, *Lucilius und Kallimachos*, Frankfurt 1949, p. 346 and n. 2.

8 See e.g. Knox, *Herodas and Callimachus*, «Philologus» 1925-1926, p. 253, points to «rural Dionysia with their dramatic element». For a detailed survey of the Attic evidence on *askoliasmos* see Nicholas F. Jones, *Rural Athens under the Democracy*, Philadelphia 2004, pp. 143-145.

9 First publication: David R. Jordan and Roy D. Kotansky, *Ritual hexameters in the Getty Museum: preliminary edition*, «ZPE» 178, 2011, pp. 54-62.

the mystery god Dionysos one night as lord of his initiation rites: Herodas drew a parallel between this nocturnal vision and his understanding of his own poetic calling. Further ramifications will be explored in what follows.

The Dionysiac mysteries are themselves, of course, shrouded in mystery for us. Apart from Euripides' *Bakchai* there is no continuous literary text telling us what went on at Bacchic orgies; hence there has been much discussion to what extent Euripides' play can be seen as a close representation of a historic reality, or an imaginitive literary construct[10]. However, much fragmentary evidence, textual and pictorial, comes together, from the fifth century BC on, to give us glimpses of the Orphic-Bacchic mystery rites[11]. In particular the sequence of gold lamellae from Sicily, Crete and mainland Greece documents a belief in mystery initiation into the rites of Dionysos, Demeter and Kore, and Magna Mater[12], often in combination, as the key to a blessed existence in the afterlife. These texts have received much attention in recent decades; there can be no doubt that what has been labelled 'Orphic' religion in the past in fact involved the deities just mentioned, and was geographically widespread from the fifth century BC on[13]. Then comes evidence from Christian apologians such as Clement, keen to debunk pagan mystery rites as foolish and childish in comparison with the new true faith[14]. Clement cheerfully reveals the secrets of the Eleusinian and Dionysiac mysteries, and those of Demeter and Kore, giving us evidence, for what it is worth, from a very partisan source. Then there is all the pictorial material, particularly from Greco-Roman antiquity, pointing to the importance of Dionysiac mysteries; one need only mention the Villa dei Misteri near

10 One can hardly doubt the reality of personal Bacchic mystery religion from the fifth century on, however, in view of Herodotus' description of Skyles' devotion to the 'Greek' cult at Borysthenes: ἐπεθύμησε Διονύσωι Βακχείωι τελεσθῆναι (4.79.2).

11 For a survey of new material see D. Obbink, *Dionysos in and out of the papyri*, in R. Schlesier (ed.) *A Different God? Dionysos and Ancient Polytheism*, Berlin and Boston 2011, pp. 281-295.

12 Who goes by many names: Μήτηρ Θεῶν, μήτηρ μεγάλη, μήτηρ ὀρεία, μήτηρ Ἰδαία, Κυβέλη, Ῥέα, Διν›δυμένη. See Lynn E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California 1999.

13 Among much else see Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, London-New York, 2007; Dirk Obbink, *Poetry and performance in the Orphic Gold Leaves*, in R.G. Edmonds III (ed.), *The "Orphic" Gold Tablets and Greek Religion: Further along the Path*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 291-309.

14 *Protr.* 2,12 ff.

Pompeii as a key item here[15]. The sum of evidence from later antiquity led Nock to the recognition that the Dionysiac cult in this period was the most important and widespread focus of personal belief and religious practice[16]. A good recent survey of where we stand now is provided by Fritz Graf in a chapter of his book, with Sarah Iles Johnston, on the funerary lamellae (see n. 13).

So what pointers are there in Herodas' text that something more is intended than a drunken frolic at the rural Dionysia? A strong signal, in my opinion, comes in line 40. The narrator is describing the revel he took part in during his dream involving balancing on a wine-skin. He comments: ὥσπερ τελεῦμεν ἐν χοροῖς Διωνύσου. The use of τελέω here, in combination with 'Dionysiac choruses' is highly significant; the verb can mean merely 'perform', i.e. rites, in a neutral sense, but it often has the specific sense 'perform initiatory rites', or simply 'initiate' (*LSJ*[9]); *e.g.* Herodotus 4,79 Διονύσωι τελεσθῆναι, Xenophon *Smp.* 1,10 Βακχεῖ' ἐτελέσθη. In *Orphic Hymn* 44 to Semele, it is said that trieteric mysteries for Semele's sacred birth-pangs were celebrated (τελῶσιν) with a 'holy table of food' (εὐίερον τράπεζαν) and 'sacred mystery rites' (μυστήριά θ' ἁγνά). This sense of τελέω is the base of nouns meaning 'mystery initiation': τελεταί, τέλη[17]. χοροῖς is ambiguous to an extent, too. It might mean simply 'choral performances' in an open sense, but the expression ἐν χοροῖς Διωνύσου points rather to mystic choruses such as we find vividly in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. For emphasis, Herodas repeats the verb τελέω in line 70 in the interpretation section at the end of the mime[18]. In equating the dismembered goat in his dream with his poetic gift in the hands of unkind critics he

15 M.P. NILSSON, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman age*, New York (reprint) 1975, (originally Lund 1957), is mainly a compendium, with discussion, of the pictorial and epigraphic evidence for the cult. He does not, for example, include the Orphic-Bacchic gold lamellae in his treatment.

16 Arthur Darby NOCK, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Z. STEWART, Oxford 1972, vol. II, *Hellenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments*, pp. 791-820, here p. 795: «in general I am inclined to think that, apart from the devotion of the sick to Asclepius, Dionysos provided the single strongest focus for private spontaneous pagan piety using ceremonial forms».

17 One example for thousands: the Gurôb papyrus in Dublin, for example, containing instructions for Orphic-Dionysiac mystery rites, mentions τελετή in line 3. See James HORDERN, *Notes on the Orphic Papyrus from Gurôb (P. Gurôb 1; Pack2 2464)*, «ZPE» 129, 2000, pp. 131-140.

18 Knox ad v. 70 sees wordplay in the similarity of τελεῦντες here with τιλεῦσιν (72), 'they will pluck'. This would tie the deed of the shepherds more closely to the literary sphere of critics at the Mouseion.

describes how the goatherds in his dream ripped the goat apart as they 'celebrated the holy rites' (τὰ ἔνθεα τελεῦντες) and dined off the meat. The use of τελέω combined with the 'forceful dismemberment and eating' of the goat (69 ἐκ βίης [ἐδ]αιτρεῦντο), recalls the violent sacred meal of Dionysos' mystery cult known as *ômophagia*[19]. Goat meat is mentioned both in the *Bakchai* and the Gurôb papyrus as featuring in the mystery rites of Dionysos and Mêtêr.

Herodas could not of course describe Dionysiac mysteries explicitly in his piece, as that broke the rule of silence which was imposed by all mystery cults. A fairly obvious hint, however, that something more arcane was meant by the dream than mere rural Dionysia comes at the beginning where the narrator observes that his servant Annas should get the point when he hears the dream, as he is 'not thick'[20]. At this point we should focus on the significance of the goat in the dream. Goat sacrifice is a common feature of many Dionysiac sacrifices and festivals of a non-mystery type. But the significance of the expression 'I thought I was dragging a goat out of a long ravine' (16-17 τράγον τιν' ἕλκειν [ἐκ] φάραγγος ὠιήθην / μακρῆς)[21] only emerges when placed in parallel with recently discovered texts mentioning the dragging, or leading, of a goat in the context of Orphic-Bacchic *teletai*. David Jordan has published a series of lamellae from Sicily and Crete which contain a number of magical formulae with common elements[22]. One of these is the instruction to 'drive a goat from the garden, the goat whose name is Tetrax (or Tetragos)' (αἴξ - αἶγα βίαι ἐκ κήπου ἐλαύνετε, τῶι δ' ὄνομα Τέτραγος, 'Goat - drive the goat from the garden by force, whose name is Tetragos', with variants). Because of their physical form and the formulaic and magical nature of their inscriptions, these texts represent, as it were, personal passports to a blessed state in the afterlife, as their bearers had participated in the holy rites and become *mystai* of the god.

19 HUNTER, *The Presentation*, cit. n. 7, p. 35, prefers to see in the Dionysiac elements of the poem a reference to the dramatic arts, but also poetry generally, as poetic inspiration was often equated with Dionysiac enthusiasm. But the rendering of a raw goat was never part of the dramatic festival, whilst it was a defining feature of Dionysiac mystery rites.

20 14-15 σύ τε μοι τ̣[οὖ]νᾳρ, εἰ θέλεις, Ἀννᾶ, / ἄκουσον· οὐ γὰρ νη[πία]ς (or νωθέας) φρένας βόσκεις, 'and you listen to my dream, Annas, if you will; for your mind is not silly (or 'stupid')'.

21 ἐκ Zanker coll. v. 67; διὰ Cunningham, al.

22 D.R. JORDON, *Ephesia Grammata at Himera*, «ZPE» 130, 2000, pp. 104–107; *Three Texts from Lokroi Epizephyrioi*, «ZPE» 130, 2000, pp. 95–103.

Recently a longer text has come to light, originating probably in Selinous, the so-called Getty Hexameters, a longish hexameter composition containing similar magical formulae as the lamellae texts and promising at the beginning that the speaker has been empowered by Paiêôn to cure all possible ills[23]. It begins with a narrative told by Paiêôn about a mystical goat which is led by force from the 'Garden of Persephone' to milking; its arrival is accompanied by Hekate, who proclaims 'in a dreadful voice' the advent of a 'deity rich in fruit' (17 δαίμονος ἀγλαοκάρπου). As I have argued in more detail elsewhere[24] this deity is likely to be Bakchos, Dionysos, the god of the Orphic-Bacchic mysteries. Other deities mentioned in this connection (lines 9-19) apart from Hekate are Persephone and Demeter. The constellation of gods matches that on many of the Orphic-Bacchic gold lamellae. If the identification of the deity is correct, the goat is a novelty: a female goat laden with an unending supply of milk (lines 11-12) which is driven by force from the 'Garden of Persephone'[25]. The narrative element seems to be an expansion of the formula on the funerary lamellae I mentioned above: Goat from the Garden by force. The Getty Hexameters *also* contain in a later passage a version of the formula 'goat from the garden by force, goat whose name is Tetrax' (lines 34-35). It seems, then, that we are dealing with a female and a male goat in these mystery texts[26].

This element of the magical lamellae bears a striking resemblance to Herodas' description of how in his dream he was dragging a goat by force from the ravine (ἐκ φάραγγος)[27]. I suggest that the image is intended to recall to the reader or listener's mind – assuming he has the appropriate knowledge and background – a well-known formula of Dionysos' mystery rites: 'lead the Goat from the garden by

23 See now Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (edd.), *The Getty Hexameters. Poetry, Magic, and Mystery in Ancient Selinous*, Oxford 2013.

24 At a conference on the Greek Magical Papyri in Heidelberg, September 2014, proceedings forthcoming.

25 Lines 9-12: Φερσεφόνης ἐγ κήπου ἄγει πρὸς ἀμολγὸν ἀνάγκη‹ι› / τὴν τετραβήμονα παῖ‹δ›' (corr. Furley: παῖς L) ἀγνὴν Δήμητρος ὀπηδόν, / αἶγ' ἀκαμαντορόα νασμοῦ θαλεροῖο γάλακτος / βριθομένην '[…] leads from the garden of Persephone to milking by force the four-legged child, holy companion of Demeter, a goat heavy with an inexhaustible flow of rich milk'.

26 Herodas' goat is very clearly male: it is a τράγος, a billy-goat, with a fine beard and horns (17).

27 In line 16 editors have mainly favoured [διὰ] φάραγγος, 'through a ravine', but Zanker now prefers the supplement ἐκ by analogy with line 67 where we read τῆς φ[άραγγος] ἐξεῖλκον.

force'[28]. The allusion would trigger an immediate association between the import of Herodas' dream of Dionysos and its magico-religious background. Given all the other elements, I suggest that Herodas intends his dream to allude to initiation into the Bakchic mysteries as his graduation to elite status in the Dionysiac art of writing theatrical verse. It is not simply that he won the *askoliasmos* among rustics; far more significantly he gained entry into the god's chosen group of *bakchoi*. His literary critics may carp at his verse, as he concedes at the end, but he is confident of literary fame in the end, as *mystai* of Orpheus-Dionysos were confident that that they were assured a better lot in the afterlife[29].

This interpretation is supported by another element in the text which has also gone relatively unnoticed to date. The beginning of the text shows the narrator roughly waking the servants in his household in order to perform a religious ceremony. It is still night, as he asks Psylla whether she intends sleeping until sunrise, and suggests that she light a torch. Megallis he asks to fetch some wool as he needs to make a woollen fillet such as are worn in religious ceremonies. As Herodas says 'We need a crown for religious rites' (ἀλλὰ μὴν στέμμα / ἐπ᾽ ἰρὰ διζόμεσθα 11-12). The point is this: he has awoken from his dream in the middle of the night and urgently wishes to perform sacrifice in response to the experience. This might, of course, be the response to some other kind of dream, such as that of impending doom, but I doubt that it would be the response to a dream of success in *askoliasmos* among rustics. Herodas believes he has seen Dionysos himself in his dream; and the god in fawnskin, ivy, buskins has ruled in his favour at the competition in person: the dream is of the ultimate vindication by the god in a humourous performance of such theatrical song and dance. As such its dreamer might well wish to sacrifice to the god on waking: thank you, Dionysos! Or 'All hail, Dionysos!'.

It will be seen that I would align the eighth mime with other literary works in which authors describe their initiation into a poetic art

28 In discussion Peter Bing wondered whether it was significant that in one text we hear of a 'ravine' (φάραγξ) whilst the mystery texts talk of a 'garden'. However, in the Getty Hexameters the 'Garden of Persephone' from which the goat is led seems to be located among mountains, so perhaps the difference between 'ravine' and 'garden' is not so great.

29 If the single papyrus containing eight and some fragments of his *Mimes* had not been discovered at the end of the nineteenth century, this confidence might have been sadly misplaced!

as a vision of god, or an initiation into real divine cult[30]. Hesiod's vision of the Helikonian Muses set him on his path as epic, or as we say didactic, poet. Plato in *Phaidros* (249D4-256E2) employs the terms of Eleusinian Mysteries to describe initiation into the philosopher's art. Likewise Diotima in Plato's *Symposion* refers to instruction in the arts of love in terms of initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries (210a). A particularly relevant parallel is Callimachus fr. 2 Pf., in which the poet receives his calling in the course of a dream; like Hesiod, he is transported in a dream to Helikon to meet the Muses[31]. Recently Cazzato has argued that Hipponax also experienced a form of poetic initiation when he encountered an old woman at the seashore who spoke an iambic (or choliambic) verse to him and thus initiated the genre. The evidence is somewhat tenuous but if her reconstruction of the evidence is believed, this poetic initiation must have been important to Herodas who looked to Hipponax as the father of his chosen genre[32].

Herodas identifies as his divine patron Dionysos, among the arts, god of theatre, both tragic and comic, dithyramb as well as minor genres such as *ithyphallica*. Is it surprising that he aligns his limping iambs with Dionysos, rather than, say, Apollo, or the Muses? I think not, as his mimes belong to theatre rather than anything else, regardless of our answer to the question whether they were actually performed or even intended for performance[33]. They are mimetic in the sense of imitating real dialogue and action; they involve – apart from the eighth – more than one speaker or narrator. Although Herodas identifies Hipponax as their true ancestor, their status as literary mimes, that is, play-acting, is indisputable. Their almost exclusive treatment of characters quite low on the social scale seems to be typi-

30 Likewise ROSEN, *Mixing of genres*, cit. n. 6, p. 208, ESPOSITO, *Herodas and the Mime*, cit. n. 2, Vanessa CAZZATO, *Hipponax' poetic initiation and Herodas' 'Dream'*, «The Cambridge Classical Journal» 61, 2015, pp. 1-14. NISBET and HUBBARD give a fairly exhaustive list of poetic initiations in their commentary on Horace, *Odes* II (Oxford 1978), p. 315 (on Horace 2,19).

31 Only the beginning which mentions Hesiod's encounter with the Muses survives; the scholion explains that the poem described how Callimachus received his calling to compose the *Aitia*, like Hesiod, from the Heliconian Muses in a dream (κατ' ὄναρ). Cfr. with further examples, ROSEN, *Mixing of genres*, cit. n. 6, 208. CAZZATO, *Hipponax' poetic initiation*, cit. n. 30, points to a possible poetic initiation of Hipponax, which would stand as Herodas' closest precedent.

32 See CAZZATO, *Hipponax' poetic initiation*, cit. n. 30.

33 See B. VENERONI, *Ricerche su due* Mimiambi *di Eroda*, «RIL» 105, 1971, pp. 223-242, ROSEN, *Mixing of genres*, cit. n. 6. HUNTER, *The Presentation*, cit. n. 7.

cal of the mime, which had the character of street theatre. Sophron's mimes appear to have been literary enough. Herodas seems in his composition to have combined the poetic tradition of limping iambs, as developed by Hipponax for lampoons, and that of popular mime which showed ribald action played out in the lower classes of society[34]. Most of Herodas' characters are pimps, procuresses, small-time schoolteachers, lower class women. That indeed is the chief aesthetic effect: a strong contrast between the extremely refined diction and the bawdy action and dialogue, like a mix of Oscar Wilde and Dickens[35]. The dramatic action, the buffoonery, are all well suited to Dionysos as patron. The choice of *askoliasmos* to represent the initiation ritual is a brilliant touch, linking lowbrow fun and games at Dionysos' festival with the bawdy humour of his mimes.

If one accepts the proposal that Herodas' dream alludes to a vision of Dionysos such as was permitted to *mystai* of his mystery cult, other ramifications present themselves. Particularly at the beginning of the poem there are some more heavy hints that the reader/listener is meant to be thinking in that direction. The small pig, or sow, χοῖρος, who makes two appearances (2 and 7) is, of course, the mystic animal *par excellence* for initiates: at the Eleusinian Mysteries and generally those of Demeter, or the Mother, the initiate was supposed to sacrifice this animal, or, in the Thesmophoria, to inhume it. In line 2 it is said that the sow is 'suffering from thirst' (αὐονὴ δρύπτει, literally, 'a parched-ness presses it') and Psylla should lead it out to grass. This is exactly the condition of souls as described in several Orphic-Bacchic lamellae: the departed souls are 'parched with thirst' and must seek the Well of Mnemosyne in the Underworld to quench it[36]. They should enter the

34 For the mixing of genres in Herodas see ROSEN, *Mixing of genres*, cit. n. 6, p. 215: «It is the combination of the two … the fusion of the mime and the iambos, that will account for the poet's fame». Rosen believes that Hipponax (the old man in the dream, as he sees it) is annoyed with Herodas for mixing drama with iambic poetry, so disputes his victory at the contest.

35 ESPOSITO, *Herodas and the Mime*, cit. n. 2, p. 270 «much of the comic effect of Herodas' poem derives from a clash between low and high, banal and lofty, prosaic and poetic, straightforward and sophisticated». Cfr. HUNTER, *The Presentation*, cit. n. 7, p. 31.

36 *E.g.* text 1 from Hipponion (Calabria) Graf-Johnston, line 10 δίψαι δ' ἐμ' αὖος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι, cf. their text 2 line 8 (Petelia); text 8.13 (Entella); 10,1 (Eleutherna nos. 1-5); 10,1 (Mylopotamos); 18,1 (Rethymnon); 25,9 (Pharsalos). One can say that the ritual formula 'I am parched and dying; let me drink' is a universal of a common version of these ritual texts for the afterlife. For the text see now R. JANKO, *Going beyond multitexts: the archetype of the Orphic gold leaves*, «CQ» 66, 2016, pp. 100-127.

Meadows of the Blessed. Perhaps this allusion even explains the otherwise puzzling epithet given to the sow in line 7: ἄναυλον, 'not of the farm' seems to be the literal meaning. Explanations to date have not been satisfactory and there have been desperate attempts at emendation: ἄναγνον or ἄναυδον by Heath. But 'not of the farm' would be a good description of the kind of sow Herodas means: 'unearthly', or 'not mundane', meaning a sow which is not your average farm animal[37]. Likewise the description of his household staff sleeping unwakeably – Megallis is said to be sleeping a 'Latmian sleep', referring to Endymion on Mt. Latmos – might be an allusion to the state of dead souls in mystery religions, waiting to awake to a new existence. Psylla is told to 'light a lamp', just as *mystai* carried torches at nocturnal rituals. Perhaps this thought also explains the difficult expression in line 5: 'the nights are nine seasons long', said to the dormant Psylla to get her to wake up. The expression may refer to the 'sleep of the dead' who can only be woken by initiation, which gives them the ticket to happiness in the afterlife. In lines 8-9, Herodas' threat to beat the skull of Psylla until it is soft, might refer to the flagellation which seems to have been threatened in mystery initiation rites[38].

The hypothesis may do service to explain another puzzling element of the dream narrative: the old man who seems to vie with Herodas at the *askoliasmos* (59-63). The old man threatens Herodas after his success at the game, 'get out of my sight or, old man as I am, I'll belabour you with my stick' (ἔρρ᾽ ἐκ προσώπου μή σε καίπερ ὢν πρέσβυς / οὔλῃ κατ᾽ ἰθὺ τῆι βατηρίηι κό[ψω 59-60). Herodas appeals to young Dionysos at that point to adjudicate, saying 'O you onlookers, I'll die above earth, if the old man …'. Dionysos judges a tie, it seems. Two aspects here may be subsumed to my hypothesis here. One is that the old man may be equated with Silenos of Dionysiac cult, the elderly satyr who acts as chief of the satyrs and, as we see in Euripi-

37 Jerzy Danielewicz in the discussion pointed to the interesting possibility that the word could be formed as ἀ-ναῦλος, ναῦλος being the passage-money, or fare, paid to Charon in Aristophanes *Frogs* 270; we might have a learned allusion then to a pig 'which has not paid the fare' sc. to the Underworld: a perfect description of the 'uninitiated' beast which will not be admitted to the blessed company of Dionysiac initiates.

38 Note the flagellation of Lykurgos by bacchants in Dionysian myth. Hesych. καθαρθῆναι· μαστιγωθῆναι; W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Harvard U. Press 1987, p. 168; H. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, Princeton 2010, pp. 130-131; Yulia Ustinova, *To Live in Joy and Die with Hope: Experiential Aspects of Ancient Greek Mystery Rites*, «BICS» 56/2, 2013, pp. 105-123: p. 113 with note.

des' *Cyclops*, for example, engages in buffoonery in the context of Dionysos' retinue. A Silenos figure features in the scene of lycomancy (itself a mystic rite) among the panels of the Villa dei Misteri.

This suggestion does not necessarily militate against literary interpretations of the mime which have in the past preferred to see in the irascible old man a reference to a poetic rival of Herodas' who takes offence at the latter's success in the Dionysiac context. In particular Cazzato has explored the possibility that Hipponax himself described an episode of poetic initation through the words of an old woman standing on the seashore. In combination with Herodas' overt acknowledgement of Hipponax' patronage of the choliamb at the end of the mime, one can plausibly argue that the old man of the dream scene represents precisely Hipponax, also known for his somewhat wicked temper[39]. But there is no reason why the old man of the dream should not be polysemic. The background of Dionysiac mysteries remains allusive and shadowy in the mime, as it was an *arrhêton*, something not to be openly divulged. A surface level of meaning in which characters and actors have non-mystic significance is quite possible. In this case the old man of the dream can be taken by those 'in the know' to refer to the role of a mischievous Silenos of mystery ritual, whilst operating simultaneously on the literary level to point to Herodas' prominent forebear in the choliambic art, who jealously guards his art.

The second is the curious expression 'I'll die above earth' (θανεῦμ' ὑπὲρ γῆς 62)[40]. There have been no satisfactory explanations for this expression as yet. I suggest in the context of mystery initiations that Herodas means he'll suffer premature death while still on this earth if he is not admitted to the company of initiates. In the literary context in which his dream is related, he means that he does not want to be denied poetic fame in the afterlife by 'dying the death' while still here among antagonistic critics. Since we know that mystery cult promised

39 See CAZZATO, *Hipponax' poetic initiation*, cit. n. 30, who reconstructs a literary initiation of Hipponax from a passage in the late commentator Choeroboscus (ad Hephaest. 3, i p.214.8-20). But other scholars have proposed other names of rivals in the past, among them Philitas, Callimachus, Theocritus and Archilochus, see G. MASTROMARCO, *The Public of Herondas*, Amsterdam 1984, p. 71 with notes. Esposito (*Herodas and the Mime*, cit. n. 2, pp. 271-272) prefers to see in the old man with the stick an allusion to Odysseus threatening the beggar Iros in Ithaka. This is in line with her belief that Herodas' main comic foil is Homer's *Odyssey*.

40 For ὑπέρ + genitive = 'above', *e.g.* earth, see *LSJ*[9] *s.v.* A I.1.

initiates a better lot in the afterlife, Herodas seems to be appealing to his critics in the dream: do not condemn me to premature death, but admit me to the company of initiates.

Askoliasmos itself is not a rite which one automatically associates with mystery religions. There is a tentative connection in that it may have been performed during the Anthesteria, which was also the occasion for the Lesser Mysteries performed for Dionysos at Agrai[41]. But in Herodas' choice of *askoliasmos* to represent his dream encounter with Dionysos we should consider other factors. The game is suited to represent pictorially the rough-and-tumble of the literary world. Herodas draws a parallel between his success 'amid such Dionysiac tumult' and his predicted eventual triumph over carping critics 'among the Muses'. Secondly the scene of *askoliasmos* is depicted as a 'mixture of gaiety and pain'. This, it seems to me, has an application both to Herodas' poetry, which is, indeed, a mix of humour and piquant emotions, and to the competitive nature of the literary arena, where rival poets vie with each other for recognition and acclamation. Above all, *askoliasmos* is a vivid image of a feat of poise and balance against all the odds: it applies well, perhaps, to Herodas' feat in combining highly artificial literary diction with the smutty but intriguing antics of 'little people'. At any rate, there is a huge contrast between the stuff of his mimes and his language. The former is tumultuous, prurient, sometimes naive. The latter is refined to the point of obscurity both in diction and metre (the archaic *skazon*). Perhaps Herodas is drawing a parallel between his literary art and the act of buffoonery he dreams about. As stated earlier, he cannot anyway depict a central aspect of Dionysos' mysteries; that was secret. So he has chosen a very recognizable Dionysiac rite in itself which is at the same time amusing and uproarious, as Herodas hopes his mimes are[42].

41 L. DEUBNER, *Attische Feste*, Berlin 1956, pp. 117-118, 135 and JONES, *Rural Athens*, cit. n. 8, pp. 143-144, deny the connection with the second day of Anthesteria, Choes, and prefer a placement at the rural Dionysia. D. WHITEHEAD, *Demes of Attica, 508/7 -ca. 250 B.C. A Political and Social Study*, Princeton 1986, pp. 214-215 prefers the position that the game was probably performed at various occasions. Note the fourth-century Eubulus fr. 8 καὶ πρός γε τούτοις ἀσκὸν εἰς μέσον / καταθέντες εἰσάλλεσθε καὶ καχάζετε ἐπὶ τοῖς καταρρέουσιν ἀπὸ κελεύσματος, with R.L. HUNTER's note, *Eubulus. The Fragments*, Cambridge 1983, pp. 93-94.

42 For a somewhat similar take on *Mime* 6 cfr. Jacob STERN, *Herodas'* Mime 6, «GRBS» 20, 1979, pp. 247-254 (esp. 252-253), who argues that one level of meaning of this mime is as a burlesque of Orphic-Bacchic myth and ritual. The mainstay of this point of his argument is the derivation of βαυβών (dildo) from Baubo, an important figure of Orphic-Bacchic myth.

I have argued for an allusive interpretation of the eighth mime according to which Herodas includes sufficient pointers and hints to suggest to the readers that his dream experience was of nothing less than Dionysiac initiation. At the same time, despite the seriousness of this claim, the tone of jocularity is maintained through a number of means[43]: first the brusque address to his servants including many innuendoes and broad winks to the reader[44]. When, for example, he says that Psylla should get up, because 'the young pig is parched' he uses a word χοῖρος which comic writers frequently pun on for the female genitals. We have already seen how he attributes a sharp wit to Annas, which will be necessary to grasp the import of the dream he is about to tell him. In the dream section humour is maintained chiefly by the grotesque spectacle of wine-skin hopping. The final section of dream interpretation appears earnest enough but there may be another joke in the verb τίλλω used of the critics' laceration of his verse. He says that critics will tear his work apart as the rustics tore his goat apart in the dream; but there was a saying in Greek ἀσκὸν τίλλειν, to pluck a goat-skin, meaning a pointless, never-ending task[45].

Herodas' art is altogether an allusive and sly one[46]. His procuress in *Mime* 1 works by talking suggestively to her prospective client. In *Mime* 7 he continues with a theme, visiting a shoe-maker to obtain leather dildoes, which he has set up in *Mime* 6. But in *Mime* 7 there is no explicit talk of dildoes when the women actually converse with Kerdon the shoe-maker and we must understand what they mean by numerous innuendoes. One feels that there is something of the Elizabethan jester in Herodas' performance. He loves to tease his audience with nods and winks and innuendoes. There is a constant flirtation with the lower classes, an invitation to the *literati* of the day to visit with him the houses of the poor and see what strange things they get up to. When he accompanies two simple women to the temple of

He finds further awareness of mystery cults in Herodas 1,56 (reference to Κάθοδος τῆς Μίσης connected to the wanderings of Demeter), 7,85 (reference to marriage of Artakene arranged by Hekate).

43 ESPOSITO, *Herodas and the Mime*, cit. n. 2, p. 269 talks of «The character of the poem, an elegant literary *lusus* sustained by a lively comedic/parodic mood».

44 On this passage see ESPOSITO, *Herodas and the Mime*, cit. n. 2, p. 270. In particular she recognizes a debt to Homer in this opening passage: the narrator wakes his servants in the manner of «Homeric scenes where a character who is resting or idle is called to action».

45 And note the jingle between τελεῦντες in 70 and τιλεῦσιν in 72.

46 See now ESPOSITO, *Herodas and the Mime*, cit. n. 2.

Asklepios in *Mime* 4 one can almost feel the smile of superiority which accompanies their naive discussion of art works there. At the same time he may be sending up art critics of his day, who set such store by 'realism' and 'mimetic illusion' in their comments. In the 8th *Mime* it is almost as if Herodas is laughing at himself when he depicts himself winning the *askoliasmos*. He is lowering his art to the level of the wine-skin game. And one wonders whether he really would have addressed his servants at the beginning in such rude terms. He seems to depict himself there as a rustic rousing his sleeping servants to perform the arduous day's work in the fields. But nothing of the sort: he wants to prepare a propitiatory sacrifice for Dionysos.

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INDICE DEL VOLUME
Pars prior

Articoli e note

Catulliana

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PAIDEIA
rivista di filologia, ermeneutica e critica letteraria
PERIODICO ANNUALE

QUADERNI DI «PAIDEIA»
collana di studi di antichistica e filologia

Registrazione presso il Tribunale di Parma del 25-11-2004

ISSN: 0030-9435

Stampa

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www.paideia-rivista.it

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a valutazione di referee interni ed esterni.