Evidence of Religious Practices in the Tragedies of Eurpides

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EVIDENCE OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES
IN THE
TRAGEDIES OF EURIPIDES

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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PREFACE

The following study grew out of a course in Greek tragedy taken in 1947-48.

I wish to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation to Professor Janet M. Macdonald for her patient guidance, and for her many helpful suggestions and criticisms of this study. I also wish to express my indebtedness to Professor Vergil E. Hiatt for his additional criticisms.

Jeanette E. Hawk

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INTRODUCTION

Athens in the fifth century was the heart of Greek culture and of Greek civil affairs. Thucydides once represented Pericles as saying in his celebrated funeral speech, "Athens is the school of Hellas."¹ There were many aspects of fifth century Hellenic culture, among which were the intellectual pursuits of the day, such as those of the Sophists, and those of Socrates and his followers. Likewise, art in the form of both sculpture and architecture was a vital part of this civilization. Even today one may view the ruins of the great Parthenon, the highest attainment in Greek architecture, in which the great statue of Athena Parthenos stood. Another great phase of Greek culture was religion; but the Greeks had no bible to be handed down through the centuries, through which men of modern times might glean knowledge of this important field. There is a way, however, through which this knowledge may be attained.

Frequently much knowledge can be gleaned from a literary author about a field, such as religion, although the writer did not have as his specific aim the contribution of a coherent body of information on this particular field. From a study of Euripides it is plain that religion was so much an integral part of

fifth century Athens that one can deduce from the tragedies a wealth of information regarding the religious practices of the day. Many of the works traditionally attributed to this author have perished; but a substantial amount of them survive, from which we may glean much knowledge. As a preparatory study of religious practices, an appraisal of the deities worshipped and of their various functions has first been made, followed by a review of places of worship and of participants in religious practices. On the basis of this threefold study an examination of the actual practices is made.

The plan of procedure in this study is to cite secondary source material on each phase of religion and then to note the evidence from primary materials.

The plays entitled the Rhesus and the Cyclops have been omitted from this study, for there is some doubt as to the authorship of the Rhesus; and the Cyclops is a satyric drama, not a tragedy.

The translation of the tragedies by A. S. Way in the Loeb Classical Library has been used for the most part, but a literal translation is used when his translation does not clearly bring out the point at issue.
CHAPTER I

BEINGS WORSHIPPED

Beings worshipped who are mentioned in the plays of Euripides fall into two divisions, the gods and the dead. Obviously, the beings involved did not all have the same degree of importance or the same frequency of worship. It is necessary, therefore, to indicate something of the powers and the relative importance of each being who was honored in religious ceremonials.

In the age of the dramatic poets a polytheistic concept of deity prevailed in the Greek world.¹ There existed, therefore, many deities in the Greek Pantheon, some of whom were of major importance as to their functions and others were of minor importance.²

A group of deities generally known as the Olympians seems to have outranked all other gods worshipped. Men called these the Olympian deities because they believed that these deities lived on or above Mt. Olympos.³ This group of deities

was all related to one another through Zeus either by blood or by marriage. In literature and in cult worship alike they assumed roles of major importance.¹ The Olympian divinities appearing in the Euripidean tragedies include Zeus; his wife, Hera; his brothers and sisters: Poseidon, Hades, Demeter, and Hestia; and his numerous children: Athena, Ares, Hephaistos, Apollo, Artemis, Aphrodite, Hermes, and Persephone. Gaia, who was identified with Rhea-Cybele, and Dionysos, son of Zeus, although not strictly Olympian deities, are of sufficient importance to be included in the list of major divinities.

Zeus played a very important role among the major divinities of Euripides' tragedies. To him alone the term "Olympian"² was applied as a specific epithet; in the Olympian group he had greater power than any other of the deities so that he was frequently referred to by Homer as the "Father of gods and men.³ Euripides suggests that a similar concept existed in his time by the epithets and descriptions: "Zeus, Father art thou called and the Wise God,"⁴ "Heaven's King, reverend

¹Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 138 ff.
⁴Euripides Helen 1441.
Zeus, "Zeus the Lord of Heaven," and "Father Zeus." The god Apollo uttered the last epithet, and mortals the earlier ones.

Many modern critics believe that Zeus was originally a sky god. Descriptions of Zeus in the plays suggesting this special relation to the sky are: "O dweller Zeus in heaven's veiling light," "Zeus star throned," and "the starry ether of Zeus;" two previously mentioned epithets translated as "Heaven's King" and as "the Lord of Heaven" may also imply this special relationship to the sky.

It is interesting to note that several epithets refer to Zeus as the god of the family, which was the unit of social and political life. Epithets and descriptions belonging in this category are: "Kin-god Zeus," "My fathers' God, Zeus,"

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2. Euripides, *Ion* 446.
6. Ibid., 1006.
10. Farnell, *op. cit.*, I, 52 ff.
"Forefather Zeus,"\(^1\) and "Zeus my sire."\(^2\) The term "Zeus of the Courtyard"\(^3\) shows relationship to the family not in the sense of kinship, but in the sense of free and servile membership in a common household.

Some of the epithets of Zeus suggest his relations to individual mortals and their needs. Any individual in special need, even strangers and criminals, looked to Zeus for help.\(^4\) Because he aided suppliants, men recognized him as the "Suppliant's King"\(^5\) and "the Suppliant's Champion."\(^6\) Zeus commonly witnessed the oaths of mortals\(^7\) and punished the breaker of such solemn declarations; in this connection he was called "Oath-warden"\(^8\) and "Oath-steward of men."\(^9\) Themis,\(^10\) as well as Zeus,\(^11\) was concerned with the administering of law and order, for Medea looked to these two deities as cooperating to bring

\(^1\)Ibid., 1242.

\(^2\)Euripides Hippolytus 683.

\(^3\)Euripides The Daughters of Troy 17.

\(^4\)Farnell, op. cit., I, 66 ff.

\(^5\)Euripides Medea 169.

\(^6\)Euripides Hecuba 345.

\(^7\)Farnell, op. cit., I, 69 f.

\(^8\)Euripides Hippolytus 1025.

\(^9\)Euripides Medea 169-170.

\(^10\)Farnell, op. cit., I, 71.

\(^11\)Euripides The Daughters of Troy 884 ff.
about justice and, presumably, vengeance.¹ Though Zeus rarely appeared as a god of war,² such descriptions as "Victory-waft Zeus,"³ "Zeus, smiter of my foes,"⁴ and "Saviour Zeus,"⁵ suggest that a person in need might appeal to him in such a perilous time.

The epithets and descriptions applied to Zeus in the tragedies, therefore, suggest his power in the universe, his origin as a sky god, his relationship to the family and household, and his relation to individuals and their needs.

Hera was not so important a deity as her husband, Zeus; but her significance must not be overlooked. Men reverenced her as the queen of the gods and goddesses⁶ because Zeus was the chief Olympian deity. Euripides makes clear Hera's relationship to Zeus in the passages, "O Queen, who restest on the couch of Zeus,"⁷ and "Hera, bride of Zeus."⁸ Perhaps because this goddess was worshipped on mountain heights,⁹ Medea on one

¹Euripides Medea 168 ff.
²Farnell, op. cit., I, 59.
³Euripides Children of Hercules 867.
⁴Euripides Electra 671.
⁵Euripides Madness of Hercules 48.
⁶Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 150.
⁷Euripides Helen 1093.
⁸Euripides Children of Hercules 349.
⁹Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 150.
occasion called her "Hera, the Mountain goddess."¹

Hera occasionally defended mortals in battle.² In the tragedies Iolaos recognized her as the Argives' champion, but felt that she was no stronger than Athena, the champion of Athens.³

Men worshipped Hera chiefly as a goddess of marriage and of childbirth,⁴ and they believed she was vitally concerned with the welfare of children. Medea probably had in mind this function of the goddess when she looked to Hera as protector of her dead children's tomb.⁵

Hera's chief importance as a deity was contingent upon the fact that she was married to Zeus; and women, therefore, naturally looked to her in matters regarding marriage, and the birth and rearing of children.

Athena, commonly called Pallas, found her place in the Greek Pantheon among the leading Olympian deities.⁶ She was Zeus' daughter,⁷ and she resembled him more than did any other

¹Euripides Medea 1379.
²Farnell, op. cit., I, 197.
³Euripides Children of Hercules 347 ff.
⁴Farnell, op. cit., I, 180.
⁵Euripides Medea 1378 ff.
⁶Farnell, op. cit., I, 264.
⁷Euripides The Daughters of Troy 526; Ion 1606; Phoenician Maidens 1373.
deity, particularly in her high mental capacity. Mortals and gods alike, held her in high esteem, as the following description implies: "Pallas Athena, Queen adored of mortals on earth, of Immortals in heaven;" this attitude toward her is corroborated by titles of honor, such as "queen," "mistress," and "guardian." The fact that she was usually represented as a virgin goddess is suggested in the two references, "Before the Virgin's shrine Pallenian" and "Virgins twain."

Athena had a definite, though slight, connection with agriculture; her gift of the olive tree to mortals was her greatest contribution in this field; this tree, therefore, became sacred to her. Euripides refers to this contribution of hers in the passage:

A wreath of olive set I on thee then: Athena brought it first unto our rock.

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1 Howe and G. A. Harrer, _op. cit._, p. 45.
2 Euripides _Iphigeneia in Taurica_ 1492-93.
3 Euripides _Children of Hercules_ 770.
4 _Ibid._, 772; _Suppliants_ 1227.
5 Euripides _Children of Hercules_ 772.
6 Farnell, _op. cit._, I, 303.
7 Euripides _Children of Hercules_ 1031.
8 Euripides _Ion_ 466.
9 Farnell, _op. cit._, I, 264, 293.
10 Howe and Harrer, _op. cit._, p. 45.
11 Euripides _Ion_ 1433-34, cf. 1479 f.
Athena, as a goddess associated with conflict like her father Zeus, bore epithets relative to war. She, however, did not represent the savage blood lust of Ares, but rather civilized valour and the art of war.\(^1\) As a deity who brought victory in battle Athena was identified with the minor divinity, Victory,\(^2\) an association alluded to in the Ion when she received the name of this deity as an epithet.\(^3\) Her warlike nature is also revealed by the fact that she fought side by side with Zeus against the Titans,\(^4\) and by the fact that she supplied aid to heroes like Perseus, who beheaded the monster, Medusa, and therefore received the title, "Gorgon-slaying Maid."\(^5\) This title was not associated with Athena in cult worship, but rather seems to have been the outgrowth of a late legend invented to explain why she wore the Gorgoneion as a badge.\(^6\) Not only did she protect and defend individuals, but also she protected her favorite city of Athens.\(^7\)

The tragedies, therefore, suggest particularly Athena's titles of honor, her virginity, her gift of the olive, and her

\(^1\)Farnell, op. cit., I, 308 ff.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 311 ff.

\(^3\)Euripides Ion 457, 1529.

\(^4\)Euripides Ion 1528 f.

\(^5\)Ibid., 1477.

\(^6\)Farnell, op. cit., I, 288 f.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 299; Euripides Children of Hercules 347 ff., 770 ff.
connection with conflict.

Apollo, child of Zeus by Leto, held a very important position among the Olympian deities. In the Euripidean tragedies, mortals usually called him Phoebus; but at times they also called him Loxias, Apollo, and the Pythian one.

As his chief function Apollo watched over the oracle at Delphi, and for this reason mortals often called him prophet. Orestes suggested Apollo's integrity in performing his duty when he called him "no lying prophet."

Another very significant function of the deity is implied in the term "healer." Paean originally was the physician of the Olympian gods, but after Homer the name was associated with Apollo as a god of help and healing. In the tragedies

1 Euripides Ion 143, 1619.
2 Euripides Ion 151.
3 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 943.
4 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 408.
5 Euripides Orestes 955.
6 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 58; Euripides Suppliants 1203; Andromache 926.
7 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 711; Orestes 1666; Ion 681.
8 Euripides Orestes 1667.
9 Euripides Andromache 900.
10 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 124.
11 Farnell, op. cit., IV, 246; Howe, op. cit., p. 198.
Apollo assumed the title of "Paean" as an epithet, and was said to have brought herbs of healing to Asclepios' race, with which he healed the pain-distraught. This deity, however, possessed not only healing power, but also the power to harm, a fact which is perhaps alluded to in the words of Peleus, "How Phoebus of children twain hath despoiled me!"

Apollo was recognized as the god of music, and as such he was a skillful performer upon the lyre. The passage, "Victory songs to thy lyre dost thou chant," may be noted in this regard.

A few references give evidence of other aspects of Apollo. The tragedies suggest his important connection with the bay tree or laurel, from which garlands were made. Apollo as the "Highway-king" protected the wayfarer. On several occasions...

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1 Euripides Ion 125.
2 Euripides Alcestis 969 ff.
4 Euripides Andromache 1212; cf. Orestes 954 ff.
5 Farnell, op. cit., IV, 246 ff.
6 Euripides Ion 909-10.
7 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 329 f.; Ion 919 f.; Farnell, op. cit., IV, 124.
8 Euripides Ion 1310; The Daughters of Troy 451.
9 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 631.
10 Fox, op. cit., p. 180.
other occasions in the tragedies Apollo was called "king," a title which he shared with other gods.

Functions of this deity to which Euripides refers include his prophetic powers, his healing quality in contrast to his cursing powers, his important association with music, and his function as the wayfarer's god.

Artemis, the twin sister of Apollo, found her place among the leading Olympian deities in the Greek Pantheon. This goddess was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and was the sister of Athena and of Apollo, whom she resembled in many ways as, for example, in her healing powers. The title of "queen" suggests the high reverence which her worshippers felt.

A chief concern of this goddess was with wild life; yet in the early period of Greek religion she seems to have had some connection with agriculture and the breeding of domestic

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1Euripides The Daughters of Troy 454; Ion 728, 1531.
2Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 39; cf. Ion 467.
3Fairbanks, op. cit., pp. 148, 152.
4Euripides Phoenician Maidens 191 f.; Iphigeneia at Aulis 1468 f.
5Euripides Hippolytus 63 f., 1092; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1230.
6Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1489.
7Fox, op. cit., p. 101.
8Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1481; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1230; Medea 160; Phoenician Maidens 109; Hippolytus 74, 1395.
animals. In the tragedies her association with the wild and her skill as a huntress may be inferred from her epithets: "belonging to mountains," "killing wild beasts," "abounding in wild beasts," "hunting bulls," "deer-killing," and "fellow huntress." As a huntress she commonly employed the bow as her weapon, as is suggested in the descriptions, "guardian of bows" and "Bow-queen maiden." It is interesting to note that Euripides in the tragedies assumed the normal attitude of Greek poetry in considering Artemis as the huntress and destroyer of animal life, in contrast to the older concept of her as protector and patroness of animals.

Strange as it may seem, this goddess was both a virgin goddess and a maternal deity. As a virgin she resembled

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1 Farnell, op. cit., II, 431 ff.
2 Euripides Hippolytus 17 ff., 1397 ff.
3 Ibid., 144; Iphigeneia in Taurica 127.
4 Euripides Madness of Hercules 378.
5 Euripides Hippolytus 145.
6 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1456.
7 Ibid., 1113.
8 Euripides Hippolytus 1093.
9 Ibid., 167.
10 Ibid., 1451; cf. Phoenician Maidens 151 ff.
11 Farnell, op. cit., II, 434.
12 Ibid., pp. 444 ff.
13 Euripides Hippolytus 17; Ion 466; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1230.
her sister, Athena; as a maternal goddess she aided women in childbirth, as the following passage suggests:

But I cried to the Queen of the Bow, to the Helper in travail-throes for refuge fleeing;¹

Artemis was sometimes identified with or confused with other deities. She was identified with Hecate,² who eventually was recognized as a lunar goddess in the fifth century B. C., probably through the insecure position of Selene, the moon-goddess, in the popular belief.³ Artemis' identification with Hecate in the plays is revealed in the passage, "O Queen, O Child of Latona, Hecate."⁴ Artemis also seems to have been confused with Selene, the goddess of the moon, perhaps partly because of her close association with Hecate and partly because her twin brother, Apollo, was confused with the sun, Helios.⁵ In the tragedies Artemis is described as "the light bearing goddess,"⁶ a title which suggests that she might have been a lunar goddess.⁷ On at least two occasions this deity is identified with Dictynna,⁸ the Cretan goddess Britomartis, known

¹Euripides Hippolytus 166-68.
²Farnell, op. cit., II, 460 f.
³Fox, op. cit., p. 187.
⁴Euripides Phoenician Maidens 109-10.
⁵Farnell, op. cit., II, 460 f.
⁶Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 21.
⁷Farnell, op. cit., II, 457 ff.
⁸Euripides Hippolytus 141 ff.; Iphigeneia in Taurica 127.
as Dictynna in western Crete and in the Hellenic world.\textsuperscript{1}

Artemis assumed a significant rôle as a deity in the Euripidean plays; of particular interest are her titles of reverence, her association with wild life, her conflicting aspects as a virgin and as a goddess concerned with childbirth, and her confusion with other goddesses.

Aphrodite, another Olympian deity,\textsuperscript{2} was worshipped in Greece as the goddess of physical beauty, of love, or marriage, and of the family.\textsuperscript{3} The different Greek myths about the birth and parentage of Aphrodite\textsuperscript{4} were reflected in distinctions made between personages sometimes identified with one another; Cypris, for example, was at times identified with Aphrodite, daughter of Dione, and at other times was treated as a separate divinity; the two positions were reconciled by making Dione the adopted mother of Cypris.\textsuperscript{5} Euripides, however, does not appear to have had two separate divinities in mind, for he refers to Cypris as Dione's child.\textsuperscript{6}

In the tragedies Aphrodite appeared both in a favorable and in an unfavorable light. In a favorable sense she is referred to as: "the sweetest of the Gods to men, the Cyprian

\textsuperscript{1}Farnell, op. cit., II, 476 ff.
\textsuperscript{2}Fox, op. cit., p. 197.
\textsuperscript{3}Farnell, op. cit., II, 656 ff.
\textsuperscript{4}Fox, op. cit., pp. 196 f.
\textsuperscript{5}Farnell, op. cit., II, 621.
\textsuperscript{6}Euripides Helen 1098.
Queen—a gracious Goddess! The passage, "Wouldst thou in measure come, thou wert to men else kindest of the Gods," suggests that if this goddess came with due restraint, she indeed was a very desirable deity. Several passages illustrate also the unfavorable sense in which Aphrodite appeared to mortals such as the lines:

Why, insatiate of wrong,
Dost thou use loves, deceits, and guile's inventions,
And love-spells dark with blood of families?

It may be noted, then, that Euripides stresses as the chief aspect of Aphrodite her association with love, which might be benevolent or malevolent.

Dionysos was not originally one of the Olympian deities since in Greek myth he was the son of Zeus and the mortal Semele. Scholars believe that he was of Thraco-Phrygian origin, for by migration he was taken from Thrace into Asia Minor and thence into Greece. Eventually, however, he was accepted as one of the important deities of Greece, whether counted as one of the Olympian gods or as one of the chief deities of earth.

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1 Euripides Alcestis 790-91.
2 Euripides Helen 1105-06.
4 Euripides Bacchanals 41 f., 375 f., 581.
5 Ibid., 83 ff.
6 Farnell, op. cit., V. 85 f.
Various epithets assigned to Dionysos suggest that he was a divinity of vegetation, a position which would be natural if Farnell is correct in thinking that Semele, his mother, originally was a foreign-born earth goddess.\(^1\) His connection with the vine, at any rate, is particularly important to note, for "it was as the deity of the grape that he left the deepest impress on the literature of Greece and Europe and on the religious imagination of the Hellenic people."\(^2\) His epithet "Bacchos" points out this aspect of the deity as well as various references\(^3\) in the plays as, for example, "Promius wine-giver,"\(^4\) "Mid Bacchus' clusters,"\(^5\) and "the full-clustered grace of the vine Dionysian."\(^6\) This god used the vine as means of alleviating distress in his worshippers, as the expression, "The joyance of wine,"\(^7\) indicates. Of special importance is the passage in which Euripides stresses the association of this deity with the juice of the grape by identifying the god with drink itself:

He is the Gods' libation, though a God,  
So that through them do men obtain good things.\(^8\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 95 f.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 120.  
\(^3\)Euripides Bacchanals 651, 706 ff.  
\(^4\)Euripides Madness of Hercules 682.  
\(^5\)Euripides Ion 1232-33.  
\(^6\)Euripides Bacchanals 534-35.  
\(^7\)Ibid., 423.  
\(^8\)Ibid., 284-85.
Dionysos as a vegetation deity was connected not only with the grape vine but also with the ivy, and in the tragedies the following reference to the birth of Dionysos shows this association: "And the ivy arching its bowers around him."\(^1\)

A very interesting relationship existed between Apollo and Dionysos, for their attributes and functions were somewhat similar. In the Delphic Hymn Dionysos was hailed as Paean,\(^2\) an epithet commonly assigned to Apollo. Both deities were worshipped at Delphi,\(^3\) and even a statue of Dionysos was located in the innermost sanctuary of Apollo.\(^4\) Euripides refers to Dionysos as a prophet\(^5\) although prophecy was normally a function of Apollo.

Many titles were assigned to Dionysos. In the plays the title "Dithyrambos"\(^6\) appears for Dionysos and suggests a choral performance consecrated to this divinity. "Dithyrambos," however, appears as a synonym for the name of this god only a few times in the entire field of Greek literature.\(^7\)

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1Euripides Phoenician Maidens 651.
2Farnell, op. cit., V, 114.
3Euripides Suppliants 1203; Bacchanals 306 ff.
5Euripides Bacchanals 298.
6Farnell, op. cit., V, 143 f.; Euripides Bacchanals 526 ff.
7Farnell, op. cit., V, 144.
titles applied to this deity in the tragedies are "Bromios,"¹ "Evios,"² and "Iacchos."³ The title "Bromios" apparently was derived from the Greek word, ἀγνως, which means any loud noise. The title "Evios" was derived from the cry, "evoe" ( εὔοι ),⁴ of his Bacchic worshippers. "Iacchos" is connected with a common noun like it in spelling which means a festal song in Dionysos' honour.⁵ The personage of Iacchos is not well understood. Sometimes he apparently was a separate character from Dionysos, and at other times he seems to have been merely the shadow of this god.⁶

There are also a number of common nouns employed as titles in connection with this deity. On several occasions in the tragedies Dionysos received the title "king"⁷ and on one occasion, the title "absolute sovereign."⁸ He was also

¹Euripides Bacchanals 329.
²Ibid., 566.
³Ibid., 725.
⁴Euripides Bacchanals 142; Phoenician Maidens 656.
⁷Euripides Bacchanals 554, 1031, 1192, 1250.
⁸Ibid., 776.
designated as "leader of a chorus."\(^1\)

According to Farnell, the Hellenes regarded the bull and the goat as this god's frequent embodiments,\(^2\) a fact suggested by Euripides in the passages, "Then a God bull-horned Zeus bare,"\(^3\) and "O Dionysus!--appear as a bull to behold."\(^4\) His connection with the bull is also suggested in the line, "A bull thou seem' st that leadeth on before."\(^5\)

A very important aspect of this deity was his association with a mystic type of worship,\(^6\) to which more consideration is given in a later chapter. Mystic societies connected with worship of this god were concerned particularly with the chthonian aspect of this deity, which was also accredited to the aboriginal Thracian earth-god.\(^7\)

In the Euripidean tragedies, therefore, Dionysos, a god probably of Thraco-Phrygian origin, manifests a definite connection with vegetation so far as the grape vine and ivy are concerned; he bears connection with Apollo; he assumes various titles suggestive of some function. His traditional bull-like appearance and his important connection with a mystic type of

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}, 142.\\
^{2}\text{Farnell, op. cit., V, 97.}\\
^{3}\text{Euripides Bacchanales 99-100.}\\
^{4}\text{Ibid., 1017.}\\
^{5}\text{Ibid., 920.}\\
^{6}\text{Ibid., 238, 470 ff., 1108 f.}\\
^{7}\text{Farnell, op. cit., V, 127 f.}
worship may also be noted.

The worship of Gaia was of very ancient origin indeed and was recognized by the earliest Greeks about whom we have knowledge. As an earth goddess she bore in the tragedies the title "Earth" in the passage, "O queen Earth, Mother of dreams that hover in dusk-winged flight." The foregoing reference is also suggestive of her important association with dreams. The materialistic concept of the worshipper concerning this goddess may be inferred from the words of Medea, who suggested swearing "by Earth's plain." Gaia was recognized as the mother of gods, a fact to which Euripides in all probability refers on the occasion when he calls her "mother Earth," without limiting the phrase to gods or men. The passage, "feeder of all," also suggests the maternal concept of Gaia. In spite of the maternal concept of this deity, both as mother of gods and men, people rarely worshipped her. Rhea-Cybele and Demeter were both identified with this goddess. Rhea in Crete and Cybele in

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1 Farnell, op. cit., III, 2.
2 Euripides Hecuba 70-71.
3 Euripides Medea 746.
4 Farnell, op. cit., III, 16.
5 Euripides Hippolytus 601.
6 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 686.
7 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 152.
8 Ibid., p. 156.
Asia Minor both seem to have been originally the earth mother,\(^1\) and in the tragedies their connection with Gaia may be inferred from the references, "Mother Rhea"\(^2\) and "the great mother, Cybele."\(^3\) The identity of Demeter with Gaia is suggested by the reference in which she is also called "Mother of Gods,"\(^4\) and by the following passage in which she is called "Earth" and accredited with the same function as Gaia:

Two chiefest Powers,
Prince, among men there are: divine Demeter--
Earth is she, name her by which name thou wilt;--
She upon dry food nurturreth mortal men:\(^5\)

It is interesting to note that Gaia bore the title of "queen"\(^6\) as did many of the Greek goddesses. In the tragedies she was addressed or mentioned together with the sun,\(^7\) commonly called Helios\(^8\) and sometimes light (\(φως\)).\(^9\) Gaia was indeed a very ancient deity, and in fact she was recognized as the mother of the gods. According to Fairbanks, she was rarely worshipped in actual cults.

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 152 f.

\(^2\)Euripides Bacchanals 128.

\(^3\)Ibid., 78-79.

\(^4\)Euripides Helen 1302.

\(^5\)Euripides Bacchanals 274-77.

\(^6\)Euripides Electra 677; Hecuba 70.

\(^7\)Euripides Hippolytus 601.

\(^8\)Euripides Medea 1252.

\(^9\)Euripides Hippolytus 672.
Demeter, one of the three sisters of Zeus, was identified with Gaia, and, therefore, was called "Mother of Gods." Perhaps a double implication exists in the passages in which the chorus refer to Demeter as "the Mighty Mother" and as the "Mother," for they may have in mind both her relationship to her daughter and her identity with Gaia. While she is obviously a form of Gaia (Ge), she was in function the soil goddess rather than the broadly generalized earth goddess. As a goddess of the soil her primary concern was with grain, an interest of the deity referred to directly or by implication in the tragedies. Cybele took the place of Demeter as goddess of grain in Asia Minor, and as such her worship was of an orgiastic nature as was Demeter's worship connected with the Eleusinian mysteries. This orgiastic worship is mentioned by Euripides in the reference, "For the orgies of Cybele mystery-folden."

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1 Farnell, op. cit., III, 30 ff.; Euripides Bacchanals 275 ff.
2 Euripides Helen 1302.
3 Ibid., 1355-56.
4 Ibid., 1340.
5 Fox, op. cit., p. 225.
6 Farnell, op. cit., III, 34.
7 Euripides Helen 1337 f.; Bacchanals 275 ff.; Suppliants 28 ff.
9 Euripides Bacchanals 78-79.
Demeter is called "the Mountain-goddess,\(^1\) which suggests her resemblance to Cybele, who dwelt in the mountains and was wife to god of the heaven.\(^2\) Demeter bore the epithet, "Fire-bearing Goddess,\(^3\) suggestive of a particular type of worship associated with her;\(^4\) this worship probably commemorated Demeter's nine night search under torch lights for her daughter, Persephone.\(^5\) The tragedies corroborate the belief that the mysteries were associated with this goddess as in the passage, "No mission to Demeter's mysteries.\(^6\) These mysteries are known to have been celebrated in Eleusis near Athens,\(^7\) a fact which explains the reference to Demeter as "warder of Eleusis-land.\(^8\) Demeter, like many of the goddesses, bore the title "queen" and in the particular reference is spoken of as "Queen of all.\(^9\) This deity shared an interest in childbirth and care of children as did many Greek goddesses, but apparently no allusions are made to this function in the plays. Demeter as a goddess of the soil

\(^1\)Euripides Helen 1301.
\(^2\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 152 f.
\(^3\)Euripides Suppliants 260.
\(^4\)Farnell, op. cit., III, 56.
\(^5\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 135; Fox, op. cit., p. 228; Euripides Helen 1301 ff.
\(^6\)Euripides Suppliants 173.
\(^7\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 129.
\(^8\)Euripides Suppliants 1-2.
\(^9\)Euripides Phoenician Maidens 686.
was naturally identified with the earth goddess, Gaia. In the tragedies, therefore, Demeter's concern with the grain crops and her association with the mysteries are particularly important to note; the mysteries are discussed more fully in a later chapter.

A very close relationship existed between Persephone, sometimes called Kore (daughter), and her mother, Demeter.¹ These two, since they were so closely related and shared with each other their major functions as deities, were very appropriately called "twin named goddesses."² Both were goddesses of grain³ although Persephone was not so prominent in this respect as her mother; and as such, both bore a close relationship to the earth goddess, Gaia.⁴ Persephone's function as a goddess of grain is suggested in the passage in which this same attribute of her mother is mentioned.⁵ Another very important relationship which Persephone shared with her mother was with the Eleusinian mysteries.⁶ On several occasions in the tragedies

¹Fox, op. cit., pp. 227 ff.
²Euripides Phoenician Maidens 683.
⁴Euripides Phoenician Maidens 684 ff.
⁵Euripides Suppliants 28 ff.
⁶Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 134; Euripides Ion 1074 ff.
implications are made to this deity's connection with the underworld, to which she was taken when seized by Hades; there she became Hades' bride and the queen of the lower world. On account of the seizure of her daughter, Demeter grieved exceedingly and engaged in a nine night search for her. In the tragedies, therefore, Persephone's function as a grain goddess, her connection with the Eleusinian mysteries, and her association with the lower world stand out as important.

Hades, the brother of Zeus, was connected with the Olympian deities by lineage; but since he was worshipped as the god of the lower world, he was considered as one of the chthonian gods, a group which included, besides himself, Persephone, Hermes (as conductor of souls), Hecate, the Eumenides, and other beings of minor importance. His name, meaning "in invisible," is used in the tragedies in the genitive case to designate the realm of the dead since it was believed that men left the realm

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1 Euripides *Helen* 174 ff.; *Madness of Hercules* 606 ff.
2 Euripides *Helen* 1301 ff.
3 Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 461.
4 Euripides *Iphigeneia in Taurica* 181.
5 Euripides *Helen* 1301 ff.
6 Howe and Harrer, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
7 Farnell, *op. cit.*, III, p. 280.
9 Euripides *Madness of Hercules* 1331.
of light and went to a shadowy realm of Hades when they died.\(^1\)

Besides the references to Hades as a designation of the place of the dead, there exist those Euripidean passages which suggest that Hades was worshipped as a god of the dead, such as "May ... Hades to rest receive thee!"\(^2\) and "Oh Hades, ... who hast welcomed many dead."\(^3\) The epithet, "murderous" is a natural one to apply to Hades as god of the dead.\(^4\)

In the tragedies, therefore, the word "Hades" refers to the place of the dead and to the deity worshipped as god of the dead or of the lower world.

Poseidon, a brother of Zeus and one of the Olympian Council, was the god of the sea and its activities, such as shipping, fishing, and trade by sea.\(^5\) In the plays, therefore, gods and men called him "the Sea-king Poseidon,"\(^6\) "the sea's Lord, dread Poseidon,"\(^7\) and "Sea-abider, Poseidon."\(^8\) This god also had a special interest in horses,\(^9\) and it may be noted

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\(^1\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 182; Euripides Hecuba 367 ff.


\(^3\)Euripides Helen 969-70.

\(^4\)Euripides Alcestis 225.

\(^5\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 154.

\(^6\)Euripides Hippolytus 44-45.

\(^7\)Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1414-15.

\(^8\)Euripides Helen, 1584-85.

that the Euripidean passage:

Of Sea-depths, whose grey-gleaming steeds o'er
the hoary
Surf-ridges speed, ...  

connects the two functions of the deity. Poseidon was a god of
moisture and of vegetation, functions to which the tragedies
apparently do not allude. The tragedies, therefore, particularly
stress the basic function of the deity, which, of course, was
his command of the sea.

Hestia, although an Olympian and a sister of Zeus,
played only a minor role as a goddess in the tragedies. As
goddess of the hearth her worship centered around the home and
family life; but she also presided over the hearths of units
of society, such as the hearth of the state or of the gens. In
the tragedies Alcestis addressed Hestia as "mistress" in a
prayer regarding domestic affairs, which were a natural concern
of this deity; Hestia's interest in domestic affairs is also
suggested in the play in which Alcmena implored the goddess in
behalf of her grandchildren. The tragedies, therefore, by

1Euripides Andromache 1011-12.
2Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 154.
3Farnell, op. cit., IV, 5 ff.
4Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 131.
5Farnell, op. cit., V, 347 ff.
6Euripides Alcestis 163 ff.
7Euripides Madness of Hercules 715 ff.
implication suggest that the chief function of Hestia was that of the Hearth-goddess.

Hephaistos, one of the gods of fire as his name indicates, in early literature was recognized as a deity who worked in metals and in the various arts which required fire. As patron of the smith's arts he was closely associated at Athens with Athena, who was patron of women's handicraft. Torch-light processions known as "lampadephoria" were consecrated to the three divinities associated with arts and crafts: Hephaistos, Prometheus, and Athena; and in the tragedies Euripides suggests the connection of Hephaistos with the torch when he speaks of him as a god who lights the torch in marriage-rites. Hephaistos' function, therefore, as a fire god is plainly revealed in the tragedies.

Although a number of Greek deities had some connection with war, Ares was recognized as the god of war. In the tragedies he is assigned the epithets, "Warlike," "the Waster with spears," and "murderous." There are a few passages suggestive

1 Farnell, op. cit., V, 374 ff.
2 Ibid., pp. 377 f.
3 Ibid., pp. 378 ff.
4 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 343 ff.
5 Farnell, op. cit., V, 396.
6 Euripides Andromache 1014-15.
7 Ibid., 1015.
8 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1006.
of this god's connection with war and blood lust, such as "Ares, . . . , O whence is thy passion for blood and for death . . . .?" The essential difference between Ares as a war god and Athena lay in the fact that Ares represented savage blood lust, but Athena represented civilized valour and the art of war.

Hermes, son of Maia and of Zeus, found a place among the Olympian deities. This deity was a god of flocks and herds, and dressed and conducted himself as a shepherd. He shared with Hecate the guardianship of road ways, for the chorus expressed the wish that this god might bring Aegeus safely home. The fact that Hermes was represented as stealing the cattle of Apollo in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes perhaps explains why he was recognized as the god of thieves, liars, and defrauders. It is interesting to note that this deity, the protector of

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1 Ibid., 784-85; cf. Iphigeneia in Taurica 945 f.
2 Farnell, op. cit., I, 308 f.
3 Euripides Ion 1 ff.; Medea 759.
4 Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 128.
5 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 159.
6 Farnell, op. cit., V, 17 f.
7 Euripides Medea 759 f.
9 Farnell, op. cit., V, 23 f.
heralds and travelers, should also be the herald of the gods, as suggested in the reference, "Hermes, servant of the gods." In addition to escorting the traveler on his way, Hermes guided souls of the dead to the lower world, for in the Alcestis the chorus expressed the wish that Hermes might conduct the wife of Admetus to her home below in a kind manner.

Hermes, although a god of flocks and herds, was chiefly a god concerned with "the way" so that he became both a herald of the gods and a protector of mortal travelers. As a god concerned with "the way" he also conducted the dead to their final abode.

Besides the divinities of major importance, the Greeks worshipped a number of deities of minor rank. Included in this group of deities were Hecate, Hymen, beings associated with some phase of nature, beings associated with the underworld, beings connected with fate, beings arising from abstract ideas, and, finally, mortals elevated to the rank of divinities.

The goddess Hecate was confused or identified with some of the Olympian goddesses. There is much obscurity concerning the name, origin, and character of this deity. Because there is no real mythology and no fixed and accepted genealogy,

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1 Ibid., p. 21.
2 Euripides Ion 4.
3 Farnell, op. cit., V, 22.
4 Euripides Alcestis 743 f.
5 Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 115.
scholars believe that she may have been originally not a Greek goddess but a goddess borrowed from another people; the fact that there were extreme magic practices and sorcery connected with this goddess corroborates the conjecture.¹ "In fact, the importance and reality that she came to have in Greek religion may for the most part have come to her through her association with Demeter and Artemis."² In the Euripidean passage referring to Hecate as Demeter's daughter,³ Hecate apparently is being identified with Persephone, as she sometimes was.⁴ This goddess was recognized as a moon-goddess in about the fifth century B.C., a fact suggested in the tragedies when she was identified with Artemis, also a moon-goddess,⁵ in the passage, "O Queen, O Child of Latona, Hecate!"⁶ "It is in the Attic drama that she first emerges plainly in her lunar character, and at the same time is so closely combined with Artemis that she is called the daughter of Leto."⁷ Hecate also resembled Artemis in her connection with childbirth,⁸ to which there is apparently no

¹Farnell, op. cit., II, 501 f.
²Ibid., p. 502.
³Euripides Ion 1048.
⁴Farnell, op. cit., II, p. 512.
⁵Ibid., p. 510.
⁶Euripides Phoenician Maidens 109-10.
⁷Farnell, op. cit., II, 510.
⁸Fox, op. cit., p. 187.
allusion in the tragedies. This goddess perhaps was allied with
the lesser powers or deities: Pan, the Corybants, and Cybele, who, like her, inspired madness. As a goddess of magic and sorcery Hecate was associated with the cross-ways, where her image was placed probably for the purpose of scaring away evil spirits; in the plays she is called the "Goddess of Highways." A torch was associated with the worship of this goddess as with Artemis, and often her worship was associated with the night. It is interesting to note that Hecate bore the title "mistress," as did many of the goddesses. Hecate offers a problem to the student of Greek religion, for so much confusion exists concerning her. She was, therefore, chiefly a goddess of magic and sorcery and in this connection was associated with cross roads.

Hymen was the Greek god of marriage and is often regarded as the son of Apollo and of a Muse. He had no prominent

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1 Farnell, op. cit., II, 512 f.
2 Euripides Hippolytus 141 ff.
3 Farnell, op. cit., II, 515 f.
4 Euripides Ion 1048.
5 Farnell, op. cit., II, 515 f.; Euripides The Daughters of Troy 323 f.
6 Euripides Ion 1048 f.
7 Euripides Medea 395.
8 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 123.
9 Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 135.
rôle in the tragedies, but in one play Cassandra addressed him as "Hymen! O Marriage-god, Hymen my King!" in a marriage hymn full of bitterness and mockery.

By the time of Euripides, the deities of major importance were mainly anthropomorphomorphic and ethical personalities who were more or less detached from nature; but there also existed in the Greek religion nature-worship and nature-magic at this time. To the Greeks "all nature was life, spirit, divinity;" and in the tragedies a number of beings were associated with the various phases of nature, such as with the luminaries, water, vegetation, and the wild.

The important luminaries, Helios, the sun god, and Selene, the moon-goddess, were nature divinities. There exists definite evidence of the cult worship of Helios in the historic period, at which time he was an object of religious awe to individuals although he was not regarded as a potent factor of the state religion. The qualities of Helios as a luminary are suggested by various Euripidean passages, as, for example, "Helios, the Lord of the radiant zone." The functions of

1. Euripides The Daughters of Troy 310.
2. Farnell, op. cit., V, 415.
4. Farnell, op. cit., V, 419 f.
5. Euripides Suppliants 261.
Selene, a moon-goddess, to whom Euripides refers as the daughter of Helios, were taken over by Artemis and Hecate as noted earlier in the discussion of these beings. In the tragedies Helios and Selene assumed a minor role so far as actual worship was concerned.

A number of nature deities were closely associated with water. The nymphs, standing for the productive powers of nature, were feminine, divine or semi-divine beings and were almost always anthropomorphically imagined. These beings haunted various places of nature such as: seas, springs, trees, and mountains; and fostered life, especially that of children. Euripides refers to the nymph, Galene, and shows her association with the sea when he represents the chorus addressing her as "Galene, child azure-eyed of the sea." Nereus was a masculine figure connected with the sea. His daughters, the Nereids, also were associated with the sea as sea nymphs. Of these Thetis had individual importance as the mother of

1 Ibid., 176 f.
2 Fox, op. cit., p. 244.
3 Farnell, op. cit., V, 424.
4 Ibid., p. 426; Euripides Electra 625 ff.
5 Euripides Helen 1457-58.
6 Howe and Harrer, op. cit., pp. 177 ff.; Euripides Andromache 1254.
7 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 273 f.
8 Euripides Andromache 1266 ff.; Ion 1081 ff.
Achilles. The Sirens, feminine beings who were thought to be stationed upon a dangerous reef in the sea, lured mortals to their death by their charming songs. In the Helen their connection with music is mentioned. People also worshipped the spirits of rivers, such as Eurotas. Such spirits, however, were not conceived of as anthropomorphic personalities as were the nymphs. In addition to the nymphs associated with the sea, men also believed there existed fresh water nymphs associated with the springs of Peirene (in Corinth), of Callichoros (in Athens), and of Dirce (in Thebes). In the tragedies the chorus mentioned the practice of decking Ismenos with wreaths in times of joy. The daughters of Asopos, a river god, were also worshipped as fresh water nymphs and were called upon at the glad occasion of Herakles' return. It was the custom

1Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 701, 708, 836.
2Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 256.
3Euripides Helen 167 ff.
4Ibid., 348 ff.
5Farnell, op. cit., V, 424.
6Zielinski, op. cit., 17 f.
7Euripides Medea 69.
8Euripides Suppliants 618 ff.
9Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 401.
10Euripides Madness of Hercules 781.
11Howe and Harrer, op. cit., p. 42.
12Euripides Madness of Hercules 785 ff.
for the bride and groom to bathe in waters from such springs before marriage,\textsuperscript{1} for evil was supposedly warded off by such a practice.\textsuperscript{2}

Various groups of deities were originally connected with vegetation, but some other aspect may predominate by the time of Euripides. The Muses were originally closely associated with the nymphs and other goddesses of vegetation who loved song and dance.\textsuperscript{3} But by the time of Euripides the Muses were primarily connected with song, as is revealed in the passage, "Ceaseless I'll hear the Muses sing, queens of my inspiration."\textsuperscript{4} Reference to dance appears in the Electra on the part of these goddesses in the line, "To the dance that the Muses love forth will we pace."\textsuperscript{5} A special haunt of these goddesses was on Helicon located in the Pythian forests.\textsuperscript{6} The Graces seem to have been originally goddesses of the soil and were, therefore, connected with vegetation.\textsuperscript{7} Apparently they were later associated with art and human beauty.\textsuperscript{8} At least on one occasion in

\textsuperscript{1}Euripides Phoenician Maidens 347 f.; Iphigeneia in Taurica 318; Helen 676 ff.
\textsuperscript{2}Fairbanks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{3}Farnell, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 434 f.
\textsuperscript{4}Euripides Madness of Hercules 685-86; cf. The Daughters of Troy 511 ff.
\textsuperscript{5}Euripides Electra 874-75.
\textsuperscript{6}Euripides Madness of Hercules 790.
\textsuperscript{7}Farnell, \textit{op. cit.}, V, 428.
\textsuperscript{8}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 427; Fox, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 236.
the tragedies they are mentioned as deities.  

Other deities of minor importance were those connected with the wild. Pan, a deity of the wild, was associated with the nymphs and other minor divinities of the country-side. He was represented as half-goat and half-man, and was said to haunt certain places in nature, such as mountain peaks, paths, and crags, where he sang and played music, and watched after the flocks. Other beings of the wild closely associated with Pan were the Satyrs. Since these beings had some association with fertility, they were also associated with Dionysos and his band, as is suggested by the lines:

And to Semele's child gave the woodfolk wild
The Homage he holdeth dear,

The Maenads and Bacchanals, participants in Dionysiac worship, were also spirits of the wild, according to Fox. They

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1Euripides Bacchanals 414.
2Farnell, op. cit., V, 431.
3Ibid.
4Euripides Electra 699 ff.
5Euripides Ion 492 ff.
6Euripides Electra 699 ff.; Bacchanals 952; Ion 498 ff.
7Fairbanks, op. cit., 159 f.; Euripides Electra 699 ff.
8Euripides Bacchanals 134.
9Ibid., pp. 103, 1191.
10Ibid., 791; Euripides Ion 718.
11Fox, op. cit., p. 269.
differed from the previously mentioned beings in that they were completely human in form; but, nevertheless, they associated with the beasts of the wild and possessed inhuman spirits.¹

In addition to deities of minor rank, such as the luminaries, the deities of water, the deities of vegetation, and the deities of the wild, there were also divinities of minor rank associated with the underworld, such as the Erinyes. These deities were originally the souls of murdered men which arose from the ground to hound their murderers until expiation was made for the deed.² A later concept of the Erinyes was that they were beings of the lower world³ who took vengeance upon those guilty of murder and perhaps incest, particularly against a kinsman.⁴ That they were conceived of as anthropomorphic beings is suggested by the phrases, "goddesses three"⁵ and "three maidens like night."⁶ As avenging deities also they were invoked in curses.⁷ A still later concept of these beings was that they

¹Ibid., p. 269 ff.
³Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 286.
⁵Euripides Helen 357.
⁶Euripides Orestes 408.
⁷Euripides Medea 1389 f.
were "an impersonation of Conscience"\(^1\) and in hallucinations appeared in the form of phantoms to those guilty of murder. Perhaps this concept is revealed in the tragedies, for Orestes apparently was the only person who was aware of their presence after murdering his mother.\(^2\) The Erinyes were often called Eumenides, "Benevolent Ones," in order to avoid the bad significance of the name, Erinyes.\(^3\) In the tragedies, the fact that bad significance was attached to the name, Erinyes, is suggested in the expression, "Scarce for awe I name . . . . the Eumini-

\[^1\]Liddell, op. cit., p. 579.

\[^2\]Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 285 ff.

\[^3\]Fox, op. cit., p. 277.

\[^4\]Euripides Orestes 37-38, cf. 409 f.

\[^5\]Ibid., 410; Electra 1270.

\[^6\]Euripides Orestes 1669; Medea 1260.

\[^7\]Euripides Electra 1252.

\[^8\]Ibid., 1345.

\[^9\]Euripides Orestes 256.

\[^10\]Ibid., 321.

\[^11\]Ibid., 260-61.
tragedies, therefore, definitely suggest the existence of a belief in the Erinyes.

There were several beings connected with the idea of chance or of fate. Among these divinities were Fate (actually personified), Nemesis, and Necessity; the relation between these is obscure. The relation to Zeus is also variable, but the importance of these personifications of fate cannot be denied. The chorus asserted the strength of Necessity when they sang:

But naught more strong  
Than Necessity have I found.

The Moirai (the Fates), however, as represented in the tragedies were not infallible, for Apollo cheated Death from taking the kind herdsman, Admetus, so that Death said to Apollo:

Did this not suffice thee, to thwart that doom  
Of Admetus, when, all by thy cunning beguiled  
Were the Fates, . . .

Purely abstract ideas were often personified and thought of as deities, such as Reverence, Heedfulness, Hope, Love,

1Fox, op. cit., pp. 283 f.  
2Euripides Phoenician Maidens 183.  
3Euripides Alcestis 965-66.  
4Ibid., 32-34.  
5Fox, op. cit., 282 f.  
6Euripides Hippolytus 78.  
7Euripides Phoenician Maidens 782.  
8Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 392.  
9Euripides Hippolytus 525.
Desire, Peace, Victory, Justice, Death, and Night. Hebe, representing youth, and also Themis, meaning "Law," may be included in the group of abstract divinities; Themis and Zeus were closely associated as divinities concerned with oaths, as is proven in the passage in which the chorus called her "the Oath-queen of Zeus." The importance of deities derived from abstract ideas, therefore, is revealed in the tragedies.

Mortals were sometimes deified by the ancients. Among these were Helen and the Dioscuri, who were also known as Castor and Pollux. Some scholars believe these mortals were originally divinities of light: Helen, on the one hand, is believed to have been identified with the moon, the red of dawn,

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1Euripides Bacchanals 414.
2Euripides Orestes 1683.
3Ibid., 1691.
4Euripides Electra 771.
5Euripides Alcestis 844.
6Euripides Orestes 176.
7Ibid., 1687.
9Euripides Medea 168 ff.
10Ibid., 208.
11Euripides Helen 1666 ff.
12Ibid., 140.
13Euripides Orestes 1636.
and St. Elmo's fire; and the Dioscuri, on the other hand, are believed to have been demons of both morning and evening twilight. Howe and Harrer say the Dioscuri were stars, known as Gemini, or the Twins. Euripides makes definite reference to the fact that these two sons of Zeus, commonly called the Tyndarid pair, were twins in the passage:

Sons of Zeus,
Twin brothers of thy mother, call to thee;
I Castor, this my brother Polydeuces.

Various passages in the plays of Euripides suggest the connection of the Dioscuri with light as, for example, the reference, "In fashion made as stars men name them Gods." Only by implication, however, is it suggested that Helen will be some heavenly light in the reference:

For, as Zeus' daughter, deathless must she live, And shall by Castor and Polydeuces sit In folds of air, the mariners' saviour she.

Helen and the Dioscuri were worshipped by mariners. In the tragedies Helen was called "guardian of the sea" and "mariners'
saviour,\textsuperscript{1} and in various passages the Dioscuri's lordship over the sea was mentioned.\textsuperscript{2} Besides their connection with light and the sea, the Dioscuri were recognized as the "Gods of Stainless Steeds";\textsuperscript{3} and in this connection Castor was called a tamer of horses.\textsuperscript{4} As a mythological character Melikertes was son of the deified Leucothea; he himself, however, was deified as a god of the sea,\textsuperscript{5} and his name then was changed to Palaimon meaning "Storm-Lord." Under this name he was worshipped in actual cult at Corinth.\textsuperscript{6} In the tragedies a herdsman worshipped this deified mortal, for he addressed him in prayer as "Guardian of ships, Sea-queen Leucothea's son O Lord Palaemon."\textsuperscript{7} Among deified mortals Herakles was very important. He was also worshipped as a hero, but there are no references in the tragedies to his hero worship unless by implication in the \textit{Madness of Hercules} in which his twelve labors are described. In the tragedies Alcmena, when told by a servant that her son, Herakles, had become a star,\textsuperscript{8} believed without a doubt that he had been deified, for she

\begin{itemize}
\item 1\textit{Ibid.}, 1637.
\item 2\textit{Euripides Helen} 1495 ff.; \textit{Iphigeneia in Taurica} 272.
\item 3\textit{Euripides Phoenician Maidens} 606.
\item 4\textit{Howe and Harrer, op. cit.}, p. 86.
\item 5\textit{Fox, op. cit.}, p. 46.
\item 6\textit{Fairbanks, op. cit.}, p. 154.
\item 7\textit{Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica} 270 f.
\item 8\textit{Euripides Children of Hercules} 854 ff.
\end{itemize}
said, "Now know I of a surety that my son dwelleth with Gods."¹

It may be noted, then, that in addition to the deities, Hecate and Hymen, the minor beings worshipped fall into the five classes previously mentioned; nature divinities, deities of the lower world, deities of fate, abstractions personified as divinities, and mortals who assumed the rank of deities after death.

Not only did the Greeks worship both major and minor divinities, but also they worshipped the souls of the dead as having special power to bless and to curse living men.² The difficult question of the relation of the worship of dead to the worship of deity is too complicated to discuss in this paper.³ It must be remembered, however, that some personages belonged to more than one category. At times, indeed, a being might be worshipped as a god and at other times worshipped as a hero;⁴ the Dioscuri, for example, were worshipped in this double capacity.⁵ Herakles, although he was a hero, appears in the

¹Ibid., 871-72.
²Fairbanks, op. cit., 169.
⁴"Although modern scholars have proffered other opinions, the Greeks were persuaded that a hero was a man who had once lived, who died and was buried, and who lay in his grave at the place where he was venerated." Martin P. Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 18.
⁵Harrison, op. cit., p. 305; Euripides Helen 137 ff., 1642 ff.
tragedies particularly in his capacity as a deified mortal. The hero Asclepios, who also was a god, is apparently only mentioned in the tragedies. At times, also, a being, normally worshipped as an ordinary deceased man or woman, might be referred to as a god, such as Alcestis; perhaps this was a matter of honor and respect rather than actual worship.

There appear to have been at least three classes of souls whom the ancient Greeks revered and worshipped; the souls of heroes, the souls of kinsmen (especially ancestors), and the souls of any dead. In the tragedies there are a number of dead who belong in one or more of these three categories of deceased worshipped by mortals. Heroes worshipped in the tragedies were Achilles, Proteus, and Hippolytos. Perhaps the tragedies suggest that the Disocuri and Herakles were also worshipped as heroes since they were first mortals before being elevated to the rank of deities, for beings born to parents of which one was a mortal and the other a god, as were these individuals, were often regarded as heroes. Asclepios, who was both a hero and a

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1Fox, op. cit., p. 301.
2Euripides Alcestis 969 ff.
3Ibid., 995 ff.
4Euripides Hecuba 518 ff.
5Euripides Helen 962 ff.
6Euripides Hippolytus 1423 ff.
7Euripides Helen 1644; Children of Hercules 871 ff.
god, is merely mentioned in the tragedies. The worship of ancestral dead looms up as rather important in Euripides' plays. A number of individuals are mentioned in the tragedies as eligible for the worship accorded to the ancestral dead: Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes (when he was believed to be dead), Epaphos, the children of Herakles, Hecuba, the sons of Hecuba, and the Trojan warriors. Perhaps Menelaos also should be included in this list, for Helen pretended to give worship to her husband who, she claimed, was dead. Rather frequently men worshipped the dead although they were neither heroes nor kin. In the tragedies this devotion is implied or actually rendered to the following personages by someone: Alcestis, Eurystheus, Agamemon, and the children and wife

1 Euripides Alcestis 969 ff.
2 Euripides Electra 90 ff.; Orestes 1225 ff.
3 Euripides Electra 113 ff., 470 ff., 1321 ff.
4 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 159 ff., 700 ff.
5 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 676 ff.
6 Euripides Madness of Hercules 1389 ff.
7 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 1131 ff.
8 Ibid., 479 f.
9 Ibid., 511 ff.
10 Euripides Helen 1526 ff.
11 Euripides Alcestis 995 ff.
12 Euripides Children of Hercules 1040 f.
13 Euripides Electra 508 ff.
of Herakles. There is even possibility of such worship being offered to a complete stranger.  

In the tragedies there are many passages which suggest the power of souls to bless or to harm mortals. The powers of heroes to harm the living is suggested in the passages in which Achilles is said to have made sailing impossible for the Greek fleet, and in the reference:

Or doth Achilles, fain to requite with death
His slayers, justly aim death's shaft at her?  

That souls of the dead had power to harm or bless their living kin is implied in Helen's remark concerning her dead sister, Clytemnestra. Any dead person possessed the power to harm mortals, for Eurystheus, the bitter foe of Herakles, spoke of his power to harm Herakles' children after his own death.

In addition to the common concept that the dead lived in a far away land (home of Hades), there existed among the Greeks the belief that the dead lingered near the tomb. In

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1Euripides *Madness of Hercules* 1026 ff.  
2Euripides *Alcestis* 1015 f.  
3Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 f.  
4Euripides *Hecuba* 37 ff., 108 ff.  
5Ibid., 262-63.  
6Euripides *Orestes* 119 ff.  
7Euripides *Children of Hercules* 1032 ff.  
8Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, pp. 182 f.  
9Ibid., pp. 165, 176.
the tragedies the hero Achilles lingered by his tomb, as is suggested in the reference, "For Peleus' son above his tomb appeared." Proteus was also thought to live at his tomb, for Menelaos planned to address him in prayer as "O ancient dweller in this tomb of stone."  

That worship of the dead was a very vital part of Greek religion is suggested in the tragedies by the fact that so many different personages, either dead heroes, or dead kinfolk, or some other dead were worshipped by living men.

The tragedies suggest that a very great number of beings were worshipped by the Greeks. These beings fall into three categories: major deities, minor deities, and the dead; a fourth group, the chthonian deities, however, overlaps the major and minor groups of deities.

The tragedies give a complete picture of the Olympian deities, who, of course, composed the major grouping of gods, and of Dionysos and Gaia in addition. There are found in the tragedies, therefore, references to Zeus, his wife, his brothers and sisters, and his children.

Deities of minor importance are also well represented in the tragedies; and within this group Euripides mentions deities connected with the luminaries, deities of the water and the wild, deities of the underworld, divinities of fate, abstract divinities, and deified mortals.

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1 Euripides Hecuba 37, cf. 93 f.
2 Euripides Helen 962.
Much information is given by Euripides concerning the chief functions and associations of these various deities, both major and minor. This information does not include every function of every deity, but it surely does include most of the important functions. To the Greek, deity had an important connection with nearly every phase of his life and with all nature.

Worship of the dead is also important. Dead heroes, dead kinfolk, and other dead were worshipped. The tragedies refer to a greater number of dead kinfolk in relation to worship than to dead heroes and other dead. Probably the average individual had more frequent occasion to give religious devotion to the souls of his own kinfolk.

In the tragedies, therefore, Euripides gives a detailed picture of the many deities and dead worshipped; this knowledge is essential for the understanding of the various religious practices of the Greeks.
CHAPTER II

SACRED PLACES

As may be noted in the previous chapter, a number of the deities had specific places, not necessarily earthly, associated with them as their dwelling places. The various beings worshipped were also associated with specific places upon the earth at which mortals worshipped or which they held as peculiarly sacred.

The numerous places where mortals worshipped may be divided into four categories. The most important place for the worship of deities consisted of a consecrated enclosure, which might or might not contain a structure such as a temple or altar.¹ For the worship accorded to the dead, the tomb was the customary place.² Many rites of worship took place out-of-doors; these rites were in honor of deities bearing some special relation to the world of nature. Many ceremonies connected with family life occurred at the home.³ Only a limited survey can be made of the various places at which religious observances took place since the number of examples is so large as to make detailed treatment inadvisable.

¹Fairbanks, op. cit., pp. 66 ff.
²Ibid., pp. 178 ff.
³Ibid., pp. 120 ff.
An enclosure (τέμενος),1 (σηχώς),2 (σηχωμα)3 in which mortals worshipped usually included a temple, a shrine, an altar, or rarely, an oracle. Various words in the tragedies designate temples, but the majority of the words used suggest that the building was a home of the deity rather than a place of assembly for worship. The most common word is probably ναὸς,4 meaning a dwelling of the god or a temple (from ναί— to dwell). Another word, ἄναξτορον,5 means the dwelling place of a lord; the root, ἄναξ, in older Greek was used both for a deity and an earthly king. Three other words used for a god’s house all contain the idea of a home or a building: οἰκος,6 (from οἰκέω—to dwell), and δῶμος7 and δῶμα8 (from δέω—to build). Three words which suggest a portion of a building may, by a figure of speech, refer to the whole structure: μεθασπον9

1 Euripides Andromache 253; Suppliants 1211.
2 Euripides Suppliants 30.
3 Euripides Electra 1274.
4 Euripides Hecuba 144; Helen 1466; Hippolytus 620.
5 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 330; Iphigeneia in Taurica 66.
6 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1373.
7 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 624; Andromache 130.
8 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 748; Phoenician Maidens 35.
9 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 1317; Ion 738.
and φωλύων,¹ both of which mean the roof of a house, and ὄρθανγον,² a foundation. One word which means seat or throne ( ὑδρα )³ may likewise refer to the house or temple where such a throne was located. Two words are of special interest as implying something of peculiar significance: ἵππος⁴ the sacred place would not be used of any secular structure; and the word, ἔωντος,⁵ that which may not be entered, indicates the innermost sanctuary, which probably was accessible only to officiating priests. Little reference is made to shrines as distinct from temples. Perhaps ἀρονομάτων⁶ (from ἀρον—to found or build) is used in this manner. The Greek language apparently does not make a marked distinction between the temple and the shrine as does the English language. It is interesting to note that the word, σχηματος⁷ tent, probably denotes a temporary structure in which religious observances might occur; but the word is used very few times in the tragedies. The words, γυαλον ἕκαστον⁸

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¹Euripides Ion 314.
²Euripides Supplicants 271.
³Euripides Children of Hercules 260; Ion 1306.
⁴Euripides The Daughters of Troy 309; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1027.
⁵Euripides Andromache 1034; Ion 662.
⁶Euripides Bacchanalia 951.
⁷Euripides Ion 982.
⁸Euripides Andromache 1093.


τέραμον; designate some structure, the exact type of which is unspecified. Sometimes a temple of a specific deity is referred to; the Olympian deities, such as Zeus,\(^2\) Artemis,\(^3\) Athena,\(^4\) and Apollo,\(^5\) are mentioned in connection with temples, as well as other deities.\(^6\) The tragedies, therefore, make frequent mention of a temple and occasional mention of shrines and various other structures of a similar nature.

Several words are used in the tragedies to express the idea of an altar. The word of most frequent occurrence is θυμήες;\(^7\) the word, ἱσχάρα,\(^8\) is sometimes used, however, and may bear the special meaning, "altar for burnt offerings."\(^9\) On several occasions the Greek word, θυμέλη,\(^10\) is employed and bears the meaning of a place for sacrifice or an altar. The

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1Euripides Hippolytus 536.
2Euripides The Daughters of Troy 1060 ff.
3Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 66.
4Euripides Helen 1466 f.
5Euripides Phoenician Maidens 35.
6Euripides Andromache 43, 161.
7Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1514; Bacchanals 1359; Ion 1280; Alcestis 1156.
8Euripides Children of Hercules 341; Suppliants 290.
10Euripides Suppliants 65; Ion 228.
words, βαθρόντα and χρησις, both suggest a foundation; but apparently Euripides also uses them to refer to an altar, which really is only a base upon which a sacrifice is performed. The altar, like the temple, was associated with various gods.

There are at least three common words used in the tragedies to designate the seat of an oracle. These words are μαντεῖον, and χρηστήριον, and χρησμός, which may either refer to an oracle as a place or to an oracular response. Probably μαντεῖον and χρηστήριον are more frequent in occurrence than χρησμός. Unlike temples and altars, the oracle was associated with few gods; in Euripides this association was made with Zeus and Apollo, particularly the latter. The tragedies suggest that the dead hero, Trophonios, also was associated with an oracle located in a cave (σηχώς); even in historical times men believed that Trophonios gave advice from a cave at Lebadea, the place where he was swallowed up by the earth according to

1Euripides The Daughters of Troy 16; Madness of Hercules 715.
2Euripides The Daughters of Troy 16; Ion 38, 510.
3Euripides Electra 674; Iphigeneia in Taurica 258; Suppliants 290; Ion 1280.
4Euripides Andromache 926; Ion 1122.
5Euripides Andromache 1112; Ion 1320.
6Euripides Bacchanals 1333; Children of Hercules 403.
7Euripides Ion 300.
Euripides employs several different words to refer to tombs. Included in this group of words are τάφος and τύμβος, both of which mean tomb or grave. The Greek word, μνήμα, means a memorial; but also may be used to designate a monument, which might be either a mound or a building in honor of the dead. The common meaning of σπωκ is a pen for lambs, kids, and calves. Although the word may also be used for a sacred enclosure, chapel, or shrine, in the tragedies it is used for a sepulchre or burial-place. The word, χώμα, meaning "earth thrown up, a bank, or a mound," is extended to mean "a sepulchral mound" and is thus used by Euripides. Worship of the dead took place particularly at the tomb.

Religious ceremonials were sometimes performed out-of-doors in groves, woodlands, and meadows, on hills, near the water, at the scene of battle, in the market place, and in the roadway. Some religious ceremonies took place out-of-doors because of the import of the ceremonial itself; others took

1Howe and Harrer, op. cit., pp. 287 f.
2Euripides Electra 90; Orestes 114.
3Euripides Hecuba 126; The Daughters of Troy 480.
4Euripides Helen 64, 1165.
5Euripides Bacchanals 11.
6Euripides Orestes 116.
7Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 1749.
place out-of-doors because men believed that these rituals honored various gods connected with nature.

Because of the import of the religious observances, the following ceremonials occurred out-of-doors. The contemplated sacrifice of Iphigeneia was to take place in Artemis' grove ( ἀλσος )₁ or meadow ( λειμόν ), ² ( λειμαξ ). ³ In the Helen it was pretended that a cenotaph on the shore and burial gifts at sea would honor Menelaos, Helen's husband, whom she claimed had died at sea; but it is not certain how much true ceremonial was utilized in this feigned burial service. ⁴ A battlefield was often the scene of religious ceremonials, for the victor was in the habit of setting up trophies to Zeus, performing sacrifices, and putting an inscription on the spoils of war. Such a ceremonial is mentioned in a question asked by Polyneices in the Phoenician Maidens:

'Fore heaven, how wilt thou set Zeus' trophies up?
How sacrifice for fatherland 'oercome?
And how at Inachus' streams inscribe the spoils?

πρὸς θεόν, τρόπαια πῶς ἀναστήσεις Διί;
πῶς δ' αὖ κατάρρεσαι θυμάτων, ἐλθὼν πάτραν,
καὶ σκῦλα γράψεις πῶς ἐπ᾽ Ἰνάχου ῥοὴ τῖς; ⁵

When a treaty was made on the battlefield, the exchange of oaths was made a religious ceremony. In the Phoenician Maidens

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₁Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1544.
₂Ibid., 1463.
₃Ibid., 1544.
⁴Euripides Helen 1244, 1436 ff.
⁵Euripides Phoenician Maidens 572-74.
the location of this ceremonial was the open space between the armies of the opponents (μεταξὺ τῶν ἀρμάτων). On at least one occasion religious observances took place in the market place (ἀγορᾶ); these consisted of dancing, singing, playing, and sacrificing. Religious observances occurred in the augur’s seat (θῶσος) and even in the roadway, for Hecate received the epithet, "Godess of Highways" (Εἰ νοσία), alluding to the fact that magical practices occurred at the haunted cross ways.

Out-of-door places were particularly conducive to the worship of deities associated with nature. Dionysos’ worship was associated with the out-of-doors although he was not strictly a nature deity. In the tragedies men worshipped him on mountain tops and hills (ὁرياضος), and in glens (νάπη), mountain glens (ἄγγκος), woodlands (τύλη), and meadow

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1Ibid., 1240.
2Euripides Electra 709.
3Euripides Bacchanals 347; Phoenician Maidens 840.
4Euripides Ion 1048.
5Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 241.
6Euripides Ion 715.
7Euripides Bacchanals 219; Phoenician Maidens 1752.
8Euripides Bacchanals 1084.
9Ibid., 1051.
10Ibid., 688.
lands ( ὀργὰς ).

1 Hippolytos, an ardent worshipper of Artemis, is said to have followed with her train of wild beasts in the woodland ( ὕλη ).

2 In the "haunts of Pan" ( Πανὸς θεσπιστή σωτηρία ), Aegaulus' three daughters danced perhaps in religious observance.

Springs ( ὕδωρ ) and baths ( λουτρόν ) were particularly associated with the nymphs. Rivers and fountains are sometimes referred to as sacred places in the tragedies, such as "the sacred streams of Dirce" ( ἅγια σπηλαίον Διρκας ) and "Peirene's hallowed fount" ( σπηλαιὸν ἅγιον Πειρήνης ὕδωρ ).

Religious ceremonials were performed within the home chiefly upon the occasions of birth, marriage, and death. Sometimes the entire home ( ὀικὸς ), ( δῶμος ), ( δῶμα ),

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1 Ibid., 445.
2 Euripides Hippolytus 17.
3 Ibid. Ion 492.
4 Euripides Suppliants 619.
5 Euripides Helen 676.
6 Ibid.
7 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 401.
8 Euripides Medea 69.
9 Ibid. Electra 1132 ff.
10 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 365 ff.; Medea 1024 ff.
11 Ibid. Helen 1124 ff.; Suppliants 972 ff.
12 Euripides Alcestis 1015.
13 Euripides Electra 1139.
14 Euripides Bacchanals 595; Medea 378.
(μυλαθρον)\textsuperscript{1} is referred to by Euripides as a place in which religious ceremonial was wont to be made; and at other times a particular spot in or about the home is singled out, such as the hearth (ἑστία).\textsuperscript{2} The hearth over which Hestia, the hearth goddess, ruled was indeed the chief center of the home and the spot at which libation offerings were made to the gods.\textsuperscript{3}

Located in the center of a typical Greek home was the open court-yard (συλή), which was quadrangular in shape. As far back as Homer an altar to Zeus Herkeios (Ζεύς 'Ερκεῖος) stood in the court-yard of the home.\textsuperscript{4} Euripides evidently recognizes the court of the home as a sacred spot in the passage from the Ion:

Not in Athens alone then, the city divine,
Stand courts of the Gods, . . . .

οὐχ ἐν ταῖς Χαρθαις Ἄθη-

γαίς εὐχίονες ἡσαν αὖ-

λαί θεόν μόνον, . . . .\textsuperscript{5}

Tokens of religious observances were sometimes found at the gate or on the porch of a home. When a death occurred in the home, it was the custom to set in the gateway (πόλη)\textsuperscript{6} a cup

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}EURIPIDES Helen 1125.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}EURIPIDES The Daughters of Troy 1111; Orestes 1442.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 120.
  \item \textsuperscript{4}Lidell and Scott, op. cit., p. 248.
  \item \textsuperscript{5}EURIPIDES Ion 184-86.
  \item \textsuperscript{6}EURIPIDES Alcestis 100.
\end{itemize}
of water as a token of cleansing. In the event of death, shorn hair as a token of grief for a departed loved one might be found on the porch (πρόσωπον)\(^1\) of the dwelling. In the Hippolytus a servant suggested that statues were placed near the gates of a dwelling when he said, "Even Cypris, there above thy portal set" (τῇ νοτῇ πόλις σαΐς ἐφέστηκεν Κυπρίς).\(^2\) The home, therefore, was an important spot at which religious ceremonials of domestic import were observed.

The tragedies suggest that a wide variety of places was deemed appropriate for religious ceremonials by the Greeks. These places may be divided into the four classes: the enclosure in which a temple, a shrine, an altar, or an oracle might be situated; the tomb; the out-of-doors; and the home. The sacred precinct or enclosure could be associated with almost any god, but select groups of beings were worshipped at the tomb, in open places, and in the home. At the tomb religious ceremonials were performed in honor of the dead; in out-of-door places deities closely connected with nature were particularly worshipped; and in the home, the goddess Hestia, Zeus, and feminine deities concerned with marriage and childbirth were honored by religious ceremonials.

That the Greeks were a very religious people is implied by the fact that worship took place in so many places.

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1Tbid., 103.

2Euripides Hippolytus 101.
CHAPTER III

PARTICIPANTS IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

One approach to the study of religious practices among the Greeks is to note the number of participants in ceremonials, the social ranks of the participants, and the capacities in which they performed. Euripides sheds light upon these matters in the tragedies.

Men and women of all classes participated in religious ceremonials among the Greeks. A few individuals: prophets, prophetesses, priests, and priestesses, devoted themselves to special religious callings.\(^1\) State and military officials, such as kings and generals, participated in religious affairs by virtue of their political and military positions; but their duties were of a secondary importance.\(^2\) Heralds, musicians, attendants, and slaves also took part in religious ceremonials;\(^3\) but it is not easy to determine how many of these had an official part and how many were participating simply as individuals. Sometimes the family worshipped as a group; perhaps in such a case the group included friends and slaves as well as the family.

\[^1\text{Fairbanks, op. cit., pp. 54 ff., 76 ff.}\]
\[^2\text{Ibid., p. 83.}\]
\[^3\text{Ibid., pp. 82 f.}\]
Great responsibility rested upon the religious officials: prophets, priests, and their feminine counterparts, for to them the people looked for religious guidance, particularly in any emergency.

Prophets and prophetesses interpreted signs and omens, and sometimes predicted the future. According to Fairbanks, there existed four groups of prophets and prophetesses after Homer: seers accompanying the Greek army for the purpose of interpreting signs and conducting sacrifices; families of seers connected with certain shrines; seers who were possessed or inspired by a god in some special way, such as Cassandra and the Pythian prophetess at Delphi; and the ordinary prophets of everyday life, who possessed a collection of ancient oracles which they interpreted to the seeker.¹

Numerous references to prophets (μάντις) occur in the tragedies. The prophet (μάντις),² (θυηπόλος),³ Calchas, served particularly as a religious official of the Greek army. Other men assuming the rôle of a prophet in the tragedies were Amphiaraos⁴ and Teiresias.⁵ In the Bacchanals, Teiresias acted

¹Ibid., pp. 55 ff.
²Euripides Iphigenia at Aulis 89, 1262; Iphigenia in Taurica 531.
³Euripides Iphigenia at Aulis 746.
⁴Euripides Phoenician Maidens 174 f., 1111; Suppliants 155 ff.
⁵Euripides Bacchanals 345 ff.
in the capacity of an augur (οἰωνῶμαντίς)\(^1\) by taking omens from the flight and cries of birds. In the *Children of Hercules* allusion is probably made to ordinary prophets of everyday life who interpreted a collection of written oracles; these prophets were not inspired directly by a god; Euripides applies to such prophets the term, μάντις,\(^2\) as well as the special phrase, γυμμοῖν . . . ἰοῖδος . . . \(^3\) prophecy chanters. In the tragedies references are often made to the office of the prophet although no special prophet is named in the particular passages.\(^4\)

A larger number of women appear in the tragedies as prophetesses than as priestesses. The Trojan princess, Cassandra, was recognized in Greek literature as a prophetess\(^5\) believed to be directly inspired (ἐνθος)\(^6\) by the god Apollo; as one inspired by this god she was very fittingly assigned the title, ἀριστίς.\(^7\) In the *Hecuba*, Cassandra is revealed as a prophet-bacchanal (τῆς μαντιστόπολος θάλαττος),\(^8\) a phrase further

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\(^1\)Euripides *Phoenician Maidens* 767.
\(^2\)Euripides *Children of Hercules* 401.
\(^3\)Ibid., 403, cf. 488.
\(^4\)Euripides *Hecuba* 743; *Madness of Hercules* 912; *Children of Hercules* 340, 401, 488, 856; *Suppliants* 211 ff.; *Hippolytus* 1055; *Medea* 239.
\(^5\)Euripides *Andromache* 296 ff.
\(^6\)Euripides *The Daughters of Troy* 366; *Electra* 1032.
\(^7\)Euripides *Hecuba* 827.
\(^8\)Ibid., 121.
suggesting that she was possessed by a god in a peculiar manner. By virtue of her prophetic office she was believed to interpret dreams\(^1\) and to predict future events.\(^2\) The Pythian prophetess, very appropriately called "the Delphian Maiden" ( νοητικός . . . Διός)\(^3\) since she served in Apollo's shrine at Delphi, was also believed to be an inspired prophetess. The noun προφύτικος\(^4\) is applied to her and bears a meaning similar to προφύτης, of which it is the feminine form. A προφύτης was one who spoke for a god and interpreted his will to man. In the Helen, Thersa is known as "the maiden singing in prophetic strain" ( Ἡ θεοπρέσδες θεούνη),\(^5\) for she possessed the power to interpret the present and predict the future.\(^6\) The Bacchanals received some special inspiration from their god, Dionysos, and perhaps could be called prophetesses according to the passage, "He makes his maddened votaries tell the future" ( λέγειν τὸ μέλλον τοὺς μεμηνότας ποιεῖ).\(^7\)

It is interesting to note that the word, μάντις,\(^8\) was used to designate prophetesses as well as prophets. Of the

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\(^1\)Ibid., 88 f.
\(^2\)Ibid., 427 ff.
\(^3\)Euripides Ion 91-92.
\(^4\)Ibid., 42, 321.
\(^5\)Euripides Helen 859.
\(^6\)Ibid., 13 f.
\(^7\)Euripides Bacchanals 301.
\(^8\)Euripides Helen 919.
four classes of prophets and prophetesses listed by Fairbanks, Euripides mentions three: prophets of the army, prophets or prophetesses inspired by a god, and the ordinary prophets who interpreted collections of oracles to people in everyday life.

The priests (ιερεύς, ιερές) devoted their attention mainly to local shrines, but sometimes they served elsewhere. Priests usually served in the shrines of gods and priestesses in the shrines of goddesses.\(^1\) In the Iphigenia at Aulis Calchas with the aid of Achilles performed the duties of a priest (ιερεύς),\(^2\) (ιερές)\(^3\) for the Argive army. A priest was also called a μάντις,\(^4\) for this word bears the double meaning of priest and prophet; Calchas is usually called a μάντις in the tragedies since he served in both capacities. In the Hecuba, Achilles' son assumed the position as "president of sacrifice" (θεοματος ε' επιστάταις)\(^5\) when he sacrificed Polyxena in order to appease the wrath of the dead hero, Achilles.

According to Fairbanks, some shrines required that children officiate in them.\(^6\) In the tragedies the child, Ion, served as

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\(^1\) Fairbanks, op. cit., pp. 76 ff.

\(^2\) Euripides Iphigenia at Aulis 1578.

\(^3\) Ibid., 1584.

\(^4\) Euripides Children of Hercules 819; Phoenician Maidens 1255.

\(^5\) Euripides Hecuba 223.

\(^6\) Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 78.
a priest,\(^1\) and as a gold-keeper (\(\chiρυσοφόλαξ\))\(^2\) and steward (\(\tauαμίας\))\(^3\) in the shrine of Apollo. This "child of prophecy" (\(\delta\ μαντευτός \gammaόνος\))\(^4\) called himself a slave (\(\δοῦλος\))\(^5\) and menial (\(\οίκετή\))\(^6\) of the god whom he served.

Priestesses sometimes served in capacities similar to those of priests. In the tragedies Iphigeneia, who served at the shrine of Artemis, is an outstanding example of a priestess (\(\ιερία\)),\(^7\) (\(\πρόσολος\)),\(^8\) (\(\θυηπόλος\)).\(^9\) She watched over a shrine, as did priests, and on one occasion is called "temple warder" (\(\νπυλωρος \tauόνα \δωμάτων\));\(^10\) her special task was to sacrifice in behalf of the deity whom she served.\(^11\)

State and military officials sometimes acted in religious capacities, but their duties in religious matters were not so important as those of regular religious officials. In

\(^1\)Euripides \textit{Ion} 129.
\(^2\)Ibid., 54.
\(^3\)Ibid., 55.
\(^4\)Ibid., 1209.
\(^5\)Ibid., 309.
\(^6\)Ibid., 1373.
\(^7\)Euripides \textit{Iphigeneia in Taurica} 34, 1399.
\(^8\)Ibid., 798.
\(^9\)Ibid., 1359.
\(^10\)Ibid., 1152.
\(^11\)Ibid., 617 ff.
the Greek religion state officers were expected to supervise cults, to criticize ritual, to repair temples, to vote on new cults, and to try cases involving sacrilege. In the tragedies Achilles' son, discussed earlier in this chapter, acted as a priest in the Hecuba; but it is not known whether he was acting in the capacity of a military official, or was merely performing his religious duty to his dead father, Achilles. State and army officials acted in religious capacities other than those of priests. Adrastos and his city of Argos became suppliants of Theseus, king of Athens, asking that the Athenians help them regain possession of the bodies of their dead. Theseus accepted the charge as a religious duty and performed the task successfully, and he also received a solemn oath from Adrastos before surrendering the dead bodies. In the Phoenician Maidens the Argive and Theban chiefs acted in a religious capacity when they swore to observe a truce. Demophon, king of Athens, protected Herakles' children, who sought refuge at the temple of Zeus in his city. A number of soldiers, among whom were

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1 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 83.
2 Euripides Hecuba 523 ff.
3 Euripides Suppliants 334 ff., 385 ff.
4 Ibid., 1187 ff.
5 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1240 ff.
6 Euripides Children of Hercules 236 ff.
Hyllus, Iolaos, and Theseus, set up victory trophies to Zeus after conquering their foes in battle. Theoclymenos, king of Egypt, was evidently acting in his official capacity when he planned to erect a cenotaph to Menelaos, supposedly dead at sea.

Throughout the plays numerous attendants and slaves took part in religious ceremonials. Minor officials connected with the temple are suggested in the tragedies such as keeper of the temple and altar (ναοφύλαξ), gate keeper of the temple (πυλωρός), and guard (φύλαξ). Musicians had a place in the religious ritual of the Greeks, as suggested in a reference to a bard (μουσοπόλος) playing a dirge. Heralds (χώρος) sometimes played a role in religious matters, for in the Ion a herald summoned the people to come to the birth feast of Xuthos' son. In the Iphigeneia at Aulis the herald, Talthybios, proclaimed a religious silence to be observed by the host when

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1Ibid., 936 f.
2Ibid.
3Euripides Suppliants 647 f.
4Euripides Helen 1057 f., 1238 ff.
5Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1284.
6Ibid., 1227.
7Ibid., 1027.
8Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1499.
9Euripides Ion 1167.
Calchas was ready to offer up Iphigeneia. Besides the foregoing participants, numerous attendants, some free and some slave, took part in religious ritual. Sometimes servants acted under orders of their masters; at other times they themselves entered into the spirit of the religious observances; it is not, however, always possible to tell for which motive they participated. In the Hecuba "chosen youths" (ἐξηρτωτοι νεανιαί) were asked to curb the struggling of Polyxena if she should offer any resistance during the sacrifice. Attendants (ἥπαθοί), probably freedmen, performed routine religious tasks, such as leading victims to the place of sacrifice or bearing offerings to the dead. Servants (προσκολοχοί), either men or women, and also slaves (δουλοί) participated in religious ceremonials.

All people participated in religious ceremonials. Men and women individually and collectively worshipped their gods and their dead; even the stranger within their gates was invited to join in the ceremonials. The family worshipped together as

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1Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1565 ff.
2Euripides Helen 1390 f.
3Euripides Hippolytus 54 ff.
4Euripides Hecuba 525.
5Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1462; Alcestis 612.
6Euripides Electra 107; Hippolytus 54.
7Euripides Helen 1391; Electra 799.
8Euripides Electra 779 ff.
a group, particularly in the event of the death of one of its members.\footnote{1} Friends, servants,\footnote{2} and sometimes the whole nation\footnote{3} joined in lamentation with the family at this time. Relatives, friends, and neighbors participated with a household in religious ceremonies connected with births\footnote{4} and marriages.\footnote{5} The Greeks also worshipped together in religious festivals,\footnote{6} such as the Anthesteria\footnote{7} and the Bacchanalia.\footnote{8}

Sometimes people actively participated in religious affairs and sometimes passively. At the sacrifices of Polyxena and of the deer which was substituted for Iphigeneia the armies were really passive participants,\footnote{9} for appointed individuals acted for the whole group in the actual performance of the sacrifice. In the tragedies the chorus usually represented passive participants, who expressed the attitudes of average men and

\footnote{1}Euripides \textit{Alcestis} 762 ff., 817 ff.
\footnote{2}Ibid., 817 ff.
\footnote{3}Euripides \textit{Madness of Hercules} 1389 ff.; \textit{Alcestis} 425 ff., 1154 ff.
\footnote{4}Euripides \textit{Electra} 1124 ff.; \textit{Ion} 663 ff.
\footnote{5}Euripides \textit{Iphigeneia at Aulis} 720 ff.; \textit{The Daughters of Troy} 339 ff.; \textit{Suppliants} 995 ff.
\footnote{6}Euripides \textit{Electra} 171 ff.
\footnote{7}Euripides \textit{Iphigeneia in Taurica} 958 ff.; Fairbanks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 158.
\footnote{8}Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 113 ff., 482.
\footnote{9}Euripides \textit{Iphigeneia at Aulis} 1570 ff.; \textit{Hecuba} 534 ff.
women toward the existing situation; they expressed their mourning by singing dirges\(^1\) and they praised the gods in song on joyous occasions.\(^2\)

In the tragedies, therefore, religious officials, state and army officials, attendants attached to shrines, and all the people participated in religious practices. Both men and women participated in all the capacities mentioned with the exception of state and military official positions, which were reserved for men only. Euripides implies that religious practices were a part of the very life and heart of the Greeks by the numerous individuals he represents as participating in religious ceremonials.

\(^1\)Euripides *The Daughters of Troy* 511 ff.; *Iphigeneia in Taurica* 1089 ff.; *Madness of Hercules* 1045 ff.

\(^2\)Euripides *Hippolytus* 61 ff.
The Greeks like all peoples possessed a deep longing to worship higher powers and to express their worship in outward forms. They, therefore, developed a number of religious ceremonials as mediums of contact with their deities. Religious practices of the Greeks were very similar to those of other people. Prayers, hymns, sacrifices, rites of propitiation, thanksgiving, purification and expiation, divination, ancestor worship, and magic all had a place in the Greek religion. These particular forms of ritual might be a part of state worship, of worship in the home, or of private worship, such as the Eleusinian mysteries and the special worship of Dionysos.

In studying the religious life of any group of people it is easy to discern two groups of religious practices according to the objective the worshipper had in mind. He might have as his chief objective either the supplying of a human need through request to a deity (or a vague power such as magic), or he might have as his objective the paying of honor to the gods. Requests could take one of several forms, such as prayers, hymns, curses, oaths, divination, sacrifice, and even magic.

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1Walter Woodburn Hyde, Greek Religion and Its Survivals (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1923), p. 34.
Likewise, men might honor the gods through such ceremonies as prayers, hymns, sacrifices, festivals, votive gifts, and the mysteries. Many of these forms of worship had a twofold objective and therefore belong in both groups; for example, if a sacrifice was offered to propitiate an offended deity, it was a means of making a request; if a sacrifice was offered in connection with a communal meal, it was a means of honoring the gods.

Prayer was a very important ceremonial among the Greeks, and was offered to the gods and to the dead by everyone. According to Fairbanks no sharp line of distinction existed between the prayer and the prayer-hymn. The more formal prayers contained an invocation to a deity, alleged reasons why the gods should answer the prayer, and the petition proper. Formal prayers of the tragedies sometimes specify the title of the deity invoked and alleged reasons for deserving an answer, but not always are all three elements found in a single passage.

Prayers usually requested something from the deity, and rarely expressed thanksgiving. Prayers were offered on occasions such as athletic events, hunts, before exhibitions in the theatre, at the opening of an assembly, and in time of conflict.

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1Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 36.
2Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 38.
3Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 84.
4Euripides Helen 1441 ff.; Children of Hercules 770 ff.; Phoenician Maidens 84 ff., 1365 ff.; Hippolytus 887 ff.
5Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 87.
prayer, in fact, was offered at the beginning of any new undertaking. In the tragedies there are examples of prayers asking for help in conflict, for healing, for safety and protection, for forgiveness, for guidance and assistance in performing magic, for special favors, and for help in any distressing situation. Prayers also accompanied sacrifices.

Since there are so many prayers in the tragedies, only a few representative prayers are cited. The following prayer addressed to Zeus by Menelaos, in which he asked Zeus to help him and his wife, Helen, out of a perplexing situation, is a typical formal Greek prayer:

Zeus, Father art thou called, and the Wise God: Look upon us, and from our woes redeem; And, as we drag our fortunes up the steep, Lay to thine hand: a finger-touch from thee, And good-speed's haven long-desired we win. Suffice our travail heretofore endured. Oft have ye been invoked, ye Gods, to hear

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1 Ibid., p. 85.
2 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 84 ff., 1373 ff.
3 Euripides Hecuba 1067 ff.; Alcestis 220.
4 Euripides Helen 1584 ff.; Electra 221; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1398 ff.; Phoenician Maidens 782 ff.
5 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1398 ff.
6 Euripides Ion 1048 ff.; Hippolytus 522 ff.
7 Euripides Electra 566; Alcestis 163 ff.
8 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 270 ff.; Andromache 900; Madness of Hercules 320 f.; Suppliants 1 ff.
My joys and griefs: not endless ills I merit,
But in plain paths to tread. Grant this one boon,
And happy shall ye make me all my days.

Zeò, pàtnr te kai sofdàs xàlìxei theòs,
èlèpons òrdòs òmdàs kai metàstouson àkàwòs,
èlkounì ð' òmdìn troôs lépàs tàs sumfòùs
spoudàs dîgasai' kàvò ñkàs ègëias xarì,
ì'mosën ì'n' èlèeìn boulìmesà tàs tòxhès,
àlìs ðè múçeùn ouìs èmòxèouìen pàròs.
kèkllhstè, mo! òthòi, polla òhròst' èmdò xàlìxèin
kai lòtìr: òfèileì ð' ouìk òei pràssèin àkàwòs,
òrefò ðè ñìnài podì: ì'màn ð' èmdò xèrin
dènìtes tò loipòn èùtvìì ìe òhìsete.1

The prayer just quoted fits the analysis given by Fairbanks in that it has a direct invocation to deity, a reason offered for the god's granting the petition, and an actual plea for action on the part of the god. Minor deities as well as major deities were addressed in prayer. Such a request was made by Aegisthos to the nymphs in the following passage:

Nymphs of the Rocks, vouchsafe me oft, with her,
Mine home-mate Tyndareus' child, to sacrifice,
As now, blest, and my foes in like ill case.

Ndìmòphaì petrâtìaì, pollàkÌs ìe òbòvètììm
kai tìn cat', oìkouì Tòvndàrìda dàmòtì, èmòì
pràssontàs ìe ñìùì, tòdò ð' èmdòì èkòròìdì èkàwòs.2

Prayers were offered to the dead3 as well as to the gods. In the Hecuba, Achilles' son offered up a prayer to his dead father, to whom they were sacrificing Polyxena to appease the dead hero's wrath:

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1Euripides Helen 1441-50.
2Euripides Electra 805-07.
"Son of Peleus, father mine,
Accept from me these drops propitiatory,
Ghost-raising. Draw thou nigh to drink pure blood
Dark-welling from a maid. We give it thee,
The host and I. Gracious to us be thou:
Vouchsafe us to cast loose the sterns and curbs
Of these ships, kindly home-return to win
From Troy, and all to reach our fatherland."

Prayers of thanksgiving seldom ascended to the thrones of the gods, for it was the custom to express thanksgiving through votive offerings to the gods. The tragedies, however, give an example of a prayer of thanksgiving in the Children of Hercules:

Zeus, late on mine affliction hast thou looked;
Yet thank I thee for all that thou hast wrought.
Now know I of a surety that my son
Dwelleth with Gods:—ere this I thought not so.

It is interesting to note that the prayers of the Greeks were not always petitions for good to all concerned; sometimes they were petitions for evil to come upon another, if the fulfillment of such request would bring good to the petitioner himself. In the following prayer Polyneices prayed for victory even at

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1Euripides Hecuba 534-41.

2Euripides Children of Hercules 869-72; cf. Ion 1609 ff.
the cost of the blood of his brother:

"Queen Hera,—for thine am I since I wed Adrastus' child, and dwell within thy land,—Grant me to slay my brother, and to stain My warring hand with blood of victory!"—

Prayer-hymns were sometimes offered to a god instead of the spoken prayers, for no lines of sharp distinction were made between prayers and prayer-hymns by the Greeks.² The youth, Ion, who served in Apollo's shrine, offered up the excellent paean to his god:

O Healer, O Healer-king,
Let blessing on blessing upring
Unto Leto's Son as I sing!
'Tis my glory, the service I render
In thy portals, O Phoebus, to thee!
I am thrall to the Gods divine:
Not to men, but Immortals, I tender
My bondage; 'tis glorious and free:
Never faintness shall fall upon me.
For my father thee, Phoebus, I praise,
Who hast nurtured me all my days:
My begetter, mine help, my defender
This temple's Phoebus shall be.
O Healer, O Healer-king,
Let blessing on blessing upring
Unto Leto's Son as I sing!

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¹Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1365-68.
²Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 88.
An antiphony is a musical selection sung alternately by two parts of a chorus. In the Suppliants the chorus divided into two parts and alternated in offering up prayer to the gods as a group and to Zeus:

HALF-CHORUS 1

We have cried to the Gods, and we cry once more
To the first best trust of the sore afraid.

HALF-CHORUS 2

Zeus, hear us, whose offspring was born of yore
Of Inachos' daughter, the heifer-maid!

HALF-CHORUS 1

Oh be our champion thou,
To our city be gracious now!

HALF-CHORUS 2

Thy beloved are we, it was planted of thee,
This city whose sons we would gain
For the tomb from the outrage-stain.

Euripides Ion 125-43.

The following trio of Orestes, Electra, and the old man has an effect similar to an antiphony since the three individuals all participated in the one prayer as the two parts of the chorus did in the previous prayer:

**OR.** My Fathers' God, Zeus, smiter of my foes,
**EL.** Pity us: pitiful our wrongs have been.
**O.M.** Yea, pity those whose lineage is of thee!
**EL.** Queen of Mycenae's altars, Hera, help!
**OR.** Grant to us victory, if we claim the right.
**O.M.** Grant for their father vengeance unto these!
**EL.** O Earth, O Queen, on whom I lay mine hands,
**OR.** Father, by foul wrong dweller 'neath the earth,
**O.M.** Help, help them, these thy children best-beloved.
**OR.** Come! bring all those thy battle-helpers slain,
**EL.** All them whose spears with thee laid Phrygians low,
**O.M.** Yea, all which hate defilers impious!
**OR.** Hear'st thou, O fouly-entreated of my mother?

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1Euripides *Suppliants* 627-33.
Regardless of what the practice may have been in early times as to the choice of a deity to be approached in prayer, in later times the deity was chosen who ruled over that particular province to which the request applied. For example, Zeus was invoked by suppliants; and Apollo was prayed to by individuals wishing to be healed. In the tragedies worshippers addressed prayers to the major gods: Zeus, Hera, Athena,  

1Euripides Electra 671-83.
2Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 87.
3Euripides Suppliants 627 ff.
4Euripides Alcestis 220 f.
6Euripides Helen 1093 ff.; Electra 674 ff.; Phoenician Maidens 1365 ff.
7Euripides Children of Hercules 770 ff.; Phoenician Maidens 1060 ff., 1373 ff.; Ion, 452 ff.
Artemis, Apollo, Aphrodite, Hestia, Demeter, Hades, Poseidon, Dionysos, and Gaia; and they offered prayers to the minor deities: Helios, the Nereids, the nymphs, the Sirens, Palaemon, Selene, and Hecate. Prayers were also addressed to deities whose names embodied some abstract

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2. Euripides Electra 221; Andromache 900; Madness of Hercules 820 ff.; Alcestis 220 ff.


5. Euripides Suppliants 1 ff.

6. Euripides Helen 969 ff.

7. Ibid., 1584 ff.

8. Euripides Bacchanals 1020 ff., 1344.


15. Euripides Children of Hercules 748 ff.

idea, such as Heedfulness, Justice, Victory, and Night; and to the deified mortals, Castor and Pollux. The worshipper sometimes invoked all the gods as a group; at other times he invoked only the gods of a particular domain, such as the underworld. In addition to the many actual prayers appearing in the tragedies, there are references to the practice without an actual petition being offered.

According to Fairbanks, a worshipper ordinarily stood when praying, for this position expressed an attitude of trust and confidence; he also lifted both palms up as if to grasp the god or the thing sought from the god; but if the worshipper was in extreme need, he grasped the feet or knees of the image before which he bowed. The ordinary position of prayer is made clear in the tragedies by the phrases, "Lift up thine hands" ( ανεχε κεφαζ), "with arms flung upward to the sky".

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1 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 782 ff.
2 Euripides Orestes 1242 ff.; Bacchanals 991 ff.
3 Euripides Orestes 1691 ff.
4 Ibid., 176 ff.
5 Euripides Helen 1495 ff.; Iphigeneia in Taurica 270 ff.
6 Euripides Hecuba 79.
7 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1603; Bacchanals 712 ff.; Ion 638; Hippolytus 1453.
8 Fairbanks, op. cit., 88 f.
9 Euripides Electra 592.
(ὁρθὰς ὄλενας πρὸς οὐρανὸν ρίπτονε') , ¹ and "with hand to heaven upcast" (χεῖρ' ἐς οὐρανὸν δικαίω... ). ² An example of a mortal grasping the image of a deity when in extreme need is also found in the tragedies, for Andromache approached Thetis as suppliant and cast her arms about the image of the goddess when she feared that Menelaos and Helen would bring about her destruction. ³

The many actual prayers and allusions to prayers in the tragedies suggest the importance of this particular religious ceremonial.

In addition to prayers, the Greeks often expressed their feelings of reverence toward their gods and their dead in song, in music, and in dance. One type of song, the paean (παιάν ), was sung especially to Apollo; ⁴ such paeans were chanted on the eve of battle and of other important undertakings; for example, a paean was lifted to the gods before the siege of Thebes; ⁵ mariners also chanted a paean in answer to Iphigeneia's prayer before she, Orestes, and Pylades escaped from Tauris. ⁶

Mortals might worship their gods with the combination of song, music, and dance. Song, music, and dance in combination

¹Euripides Helen 1095-96.
²Euripides Madness of Hercules 498.
³Euripides Andromache 114 ff.
⁴Euripides Ion 125 ff.
⁵Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1102 f.
⁶Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1403 ff.
were particularly characteristic of the Dionysiac mysteries.\textsuperscript{1}

For these mysteries musical instruments were employed, such as
the drum (\textit{βυροδτουν κύκλωμα}),\textsuperscript{2} the kettledrum (\textit{τύπανον}),\textsuperscript{3}
and the flute (\textit{αὐλὸς}),\textsuperscript{4} (\textit{λυτός}).\textsuperscript{5} Festivals in honor of the
gods,\textsuperscript{6} birth feasts,\textsuperscript{7} marriage ceremonials,\textsuperscript{8} the solemn occasion
of death,\textsuperscript{9} and other occasions of religious significance\textsuperscript{10} were
celebrated with song, music, or dance. A portion of a bridal
hymn, which Cassandra chanted in bitter mockery, is as follows:

\begin{quote}
Hymn! O Marriage-god, Hymen my king!
Happy the bridegroom who waiteth to meet me;
Happy am I for the couch that shall greet me;
Royal espousals to Argos I bring:--
Bridal-king, Hymen, thy glory I sing.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ὑμήν, ο Ὑμηναί, ἀναζ,}
\textit{μακάριος ὁ γαμήτας,}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{1} Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 64 ff.
\item\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 124.
\item\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., 59, 156.
\item\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 380.
\item\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 160, 687.
\item\textsuperscript{6} Euripides \textit{Children of Hercules} 777 ff.
\item\textsuperscript{7} Euripides \textit{Ion} 1165 ff.
\item\textsuperscript{8} Euripides \textit{Iphigeneia at Aulis} 432 ff., 676, 691 ff.;
\textit{The Daughters of Troy} 308 ff.
\item\textsuperscript{9} Euripides \textit{The Daughters of Troy} 608 f.; \textit{Helen} 165 f.;
\textit{Electra} 125 f.; \textit{Iphigeneia in Taurica} 372 ff., 1089 ff.; \textit{Madness}
of \textit{Hercules} 1024 ff.; \textit{Phoenician Maidens} 1036 ff., 1497 ff.;
\textit{Suppliants} 87 ff., 771 ff.
\item\textsuperscript{10} Euripides \textit{The Daughters of Troy} 544 ff.; \textit{Electra} 712;
\textit{Iphigeneia in Taurica} 1336 ff.
\end{itemize}
Iphigeneia, because of a vision, thought she had unwittingly sacrificed her own dear brother to Artemis; and the chorus in sympathy with her chanted the dirge:

Lo, I will peal on high
To echo thine, O queen,
My dirge, the Asian hymn, and that weird cry,
The wild barbaric keen,
The litany of death,
Song-tribute that we bring
To perished ones, where moaneth Hades' breath,
Where no glad paeans ring.

Since song, music, and dance played a part in state and domestic worship and also in private worship, such as the Dionysiac mysteries, they must have been relatively important elements in the Greek religion. Songs sometimes expressed the needs of mortals to their gods, but the combination of song, music, and dance ordinarily were means of honoring a deity.

A curse is a prayer by which an individual invokes evil upon another, and occasionally upon oneself. According to

1Euripides The Daughters of Troy 310-14.
2Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 179-84.
3Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 89.
Fairbanks, curses were sometimes pronounced by the state against individuals, such as traitors, defilers of temples, and certain criminals.¹ Curses also might be pronounced against a state, for in the tragedies Theseus was advised to call down ruin upon Argos if its citizens should break the oath by which they pledged themselves never to bear arms against the land of Athens.² Far more common in the tragedies, however, are the curses pronounced by individuals upon other individuals for some personal reason. According to Fairbanks, in the unorganized state of Greek religion the Olympian deities were not invoked to inflict this type of curses upon men.³ In the time of Euripides, however, curses of individuals were probably addressed to the Olympian gods, for in the tragedies Medea prayed to Zeus for evil to come to Jason.⁴ Phaedra also invoked Zeus in the curse:

May Zeus my sire
Smitethe with flame, blast thee to nothingness!

Cassandra called Apollo to witness her curse:

for, if Loxias lives,
Deadlier than Helen's shall my spousals be
To Agamemnon, Achaea's glorious king.

¹Ibid.
²Euripides *Suppliants* 1190 ff.
³Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 89.
⁴Euripides *Medea* 332.
⁵Euripides *Hippolytus* 683-84.
Theseus invoked Poseidon when he called down curses upon his son Hippolytos.² Besides Zeus mortals also cursed by the deities, Artemis, Themis,³ Justice⁴ and the Furies.⁵ The gods as a group were sometimes invoked,⁶ for Polyneices and Eteocles feared the gods would accomplish the curse passed upon them by their father Oedipus.⁷ Often the one who cursed did not call upon any particular god to inflict the curse; perhaps he really was depending upon the gods to enforce his prayer, or he might have trusted the matter to the force of magic.⁸ Many such curses appear in the tragedies.⁹ Some of these curses are very brief, such as Andromache’s curse upon Menelaos and upon the men of Sparta, “Now ruin seize ye!” (οἰλοίσε’).¹⁰

¹Euripides The Daughters of Troy 356-58.
²Euripides Hippolytus 387 ff.
³Euripides Medea 163 ff.
⁴Ibid., 1389 f.
⁵Ibid.
⁶Euripides Helen 74 f.
⁷Euripides Phoenician Maidens 69 ff.
⁸Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 89.
⁹Euripides The Daughters of Troy 772 f., 1100 ff.; Helen 162 f.; Iphigeneia in Taurica 535; Children of Hercules 52 ff.; Medea 112 ff., 1329.
¹⁰Euripides Andromache 453; cf. Hippolytus 664.
A curse was not always a prayer for evil to come upon another, but might be a conditioned prayer for evil to oneself, as in an oath. Hippolytos pronounced such a conditional curse upon himself when he swore:

But now--by Zeus Oath-warden, by Earth's plain, Swear I, I ne'er attempted couch of thine, No, nor had wished it, nor had dreamed thereof. God grant I perish nameless, fameless all, Cityless, homeless, exile, vagabond On earth,--may sea nor land receive my corpse When I am dead, if I be this vile thing!

Εις θ' ὁρκίδον σωμ. Ζήγα καὶ πέδον χεινὸς ὑμνήμι, τὸν σῶν μήποτ' ἀψαθεὶ γάμων μὴδ' ἄν εἴλησει ἡμοῦ ἂν ἐνυοιαν λαβεῖν. Ἡ τάρ. ἔλοιμην ἀκλεῆς, ανάμυρος, ἀπόλις ἀποκος, φυγὰς ἀλητεῶν χόρνα, καὶ μὴ τὸν ἐσχάτης μὴ τῇ δέξαιτο μου σαρκικὸς θανόντος, εἰ κακὸς πέφυκ' ἀνήρ.

Evidently it was impossible for men to curse the gods, for Hippolytos said, "Oh that men's curses could but strike the Gods" (εἰς θ' ἄραγιν σαμοσίν βροτῶν γένος ).

An oath is defined by Fairbanks as a curse which an individual or a group of individuals placed upon themselves in case they should break their word. Right hands were usually clasped in taking an oath, a custom mentioned several times in the tragedies. In an oath something valuable was pledged, such

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1 Euripides Hippolytus 1025-31, cf. 1191; cf. Iphigeneia at Aulis 1006 f.
2 Euripides Hippolytus 1415.
3 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 90.
4 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 57 ff.; 471 ff.; Helen 838; Iphigeneia in Taurica 700 f.; Medea 20 ff., 496.
as a sceptre or sword\(^1\) (a sign of power), or someone's life.\(^2\) An implied prayer that the gods should take away the valuable thing pledged accompanied the oath. Usually specific gods were invoked in the tragedies; but not always were the valuables pledged or the penalty to be incurred specified, as for example in the oath:

> But I call to witness earth that nursed me,
> witness gods in heaven,
> How with shame and piteous usage from the home-land I am driven,
> Like a bondman, not a son that of one father, Oedipus, came.

\[\text{τὴν δὲ θρέψαν μὲ γαῖαν καὶ θεοὺς μαρτύρομαι: ως ἀτιμῶς οἴκτρα πάσχων, ἐξελαθομαί γονής, δοῦλος ως, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ ταυτοῦ πατρὸς Οἰδίπου γεγος.}\]

The tragedies give a few examples, however, of oaths along with which it is definitely stated and decided what the nature of the penalty would be if the oaths were broken. This part of the oath was really a curse; for example, Hippolytus passed the curse of death upon himself if he were found guilty of defiling Phaedra's couch.\(^4\) In the *Iphigeneia in Taurica* Pylades accepted the penalty of death if he did not deliver the letter as he had sworn to do, and Iphigeneia pledged never to set foot in Argos

\[^{1}\text{Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1677; Crestes 1517.}\]
\[^{2}\text{Euripides Helen 835; Crestes 1517.}\]
\[^{3}\text{Euripides Phoenician Maidens 626–28.}\]
\[^{4}\text{Euripides Hippolytus 1025 ff.}\]
should she break her oath in the mutual agreement.\(^1\) Aegeus took oath to shelter Medea as a suppliant, but expected such evils as come to profane men to come upon him as a penalty if he should be untrue to his oath.\(^2\) It is interesting to note that a sacrifice accompanied the formal oaths. Tyndareus required the suitors of his daughter, Helen, to take an oath to defend whoever should gain Helen for a bride and to march against anyone who should steal her away from her lord. On this solemn occasion burnt sacrifices were made and drink-offerings were poured.\(^3\) Nilsson in his *History of Greek Religion* claims that the sacrifice accompanying an oath was originally a form of conditional magic in which the individual concerned called down the fate of the sacrificial victim upon himself, but the magical element was forgotten when the ceremonial was adopted by religion.\(^4\) Apparently men swore sometimes with no consideration or reverence for the will of the gods in the matter, as when Capaneus swore to sack the town of Thebes whether the god willed or not.\(^5\) Gods called to witness oaths in the tragedies were Zeus,\(^6\)

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\(^1\)&ldquo;Euripides *Iphigeneia in Taurica* 735 ff.

\(^2\)&ldquo;Euripides *Medea* 752 ff.

\(^3\)&ldquo;Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 57 ff.; cf. *Suppliants* 1201 ff.


\(^5\)Euripides *Suppliants* 498 ff.

\(^6\)Euripides *Iphigeneia in Taurica* 749; *Phoenician Maidens* 1006 ff.; *Hippolytus* 1025 ff.
Hera, Athena, Artemis, Ares, Gaia, Helios, Hecate, Nereus, and Demeter. The gods as a group and the demons were sometimes addressed in oaths by the worshipper; even ancestors and rivers were invoked, for Menelaos swore by Pelops and by Atreus, his ancestors; and Helen swore by the river, Eurotas. A number of references in the tragedies are made to the practice of taking oaths, although no oath may appear. The tragedies certainly suggest that the oath was an important element in the Greek religion.

1 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 739 ff.
2 Euripides Ion 1528 ff.
3 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 748; Hippolytus 713 f.,
4 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1007 ff.
5 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 626 ff.; Suppliants 260 ff.; Hippolytus 1025 ff.; Medea 746 f.
6 Euripides Suppliants 260 ff.; Medea 746 f.
7 Euripides Medea 395 ff.
8 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 948 ff.
9 Euripides Suppliants 258 ff.
10 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 433 ff., 626 ff.; Medea 746 f.
11 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 491 ff.; Medea 619 f., 1410 ff.
12 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 473 ff.
13 Euripides Helen 348 ff.
14 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1240 f.; Suppliants 1229; Hippolytus 1306.
Before historical times divine protection for foreigners and suppliants was very important, for laws and state institutions offered little or no protection; even in historical times Zeus was recognized as the god of suppliants and of foreigners.1 A suppliant was an individual in extreme need who by laying his suppliant bough (φυλλάξ),2 (χλάδος),3 (στέφος)4 on an altar or hearth of a house rendered his person inviolable.5 If one injured the suppliant at the altar, he committed a very wicked deed.6 The tragedies suggest that any person, even a guilty criminal, might have sanctuary at the altar.7 Supplicants usually took refuge at a god’s altar or shrine when in physical danger,8 but in one significant example in the tragedies the request is for something other than physical protection. The women of Argos pleaded at Demeter’s and Persephone’s hearth that Theseus would help them regain their dead who had fallen

1Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion, p. 77.
2Euripides Suppliants 32.
3Ibid., 102.
4Euripides Children of Hercules 71.
5Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 700.
6Euripides Children of Hercules 101 ff.; Ion 1256 ff.
7Euripides Ion 1312 ff.
8Euripides Andromache 41 ff.; Children of Hercules 12 ff.; Ion 1280 ff.
in battle waged against Thebes;¹ their plea may be contrasted with the plea of Amphitryon, of Megara, and of Herakles' two sons for physical protection at Zeus' altar.² Euripides represents suppliants as approaching the altars or shrines of Zeus,³ of Apollo,⁴ of Demeter and Persephone,⁵ and of Thetis.⁶ The hearth of the home was also believed to protect suppliants,⁷ for Medea expected to take refuge at Aegaeus' hearth;⁸ and Megara and her two sons lingered at their own hearth when they were in great peril.⁹ It is suggested that even the tomb of the dead offered suppliants sanctuary, for Helen clung to the tomb of the dead Proteus that she might be kept unsullied for Menelaos.¹⁰ In either instance it may be noted that state officials were aware of their solemn obligation to such unfortunate people.¹¹

¹Euripides Suppliants 87 ff.
²Euripides Madness of Hercules 44 ff.
³Euripides Madness of Hercules 44 ff.; Children of Hercules 70 ff.
⁴Euripides Ion 1230 ff.
⁵Euripides Suppliants 32 ff.
⁶Euripides Andromache 41 ff.
⁷Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion, pp. 72 ff.
⁸Euripides Medea 713.
⁹Euripides Madness of Hercules 715.
¹⁰Euripides Helen 61 ff.
¹¹Euripides Suppliants 1187 ff.; Children of Hercules 236 ff.
The Greeks depended upon special revelations from their gods for practical guidance. Through oracles, directly inspired prophets, omens, and sometimes through dreams the gods were believed to reveal their wills to men. The rites of divination have been classified as natural and artificial: prophets were believed to be naturally inspired, and signs and omens were considered as artificial means of divination since the science of interpretation had to be relied upon.

The oracle was the most important means of divination. "A Greek 'oracle' was simply a centre of religious worship where some form of divination was systematized." In Homer local oracles were not so important as individual prophets, but in the historical period the gods were believed especially to reveal their wills through oracles. Although there were many oracles of various deities in many localities, the shrines at Dodona (oracle of Zeus) and at Delphi (oracle of Apollo) had the greatest influence. The Greeks frequented also the dream oracle of Trophonios at Lebadeia to be healed or to obtain some knowledge.

1Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 39.
3Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 40.
5Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 58.
6Hyde, op. cit., pp. 116 f.
7Ibid.
of the future.\(^1\)

In the tragedies the most important oracle, the shrine of Apollo at Delphi,\(^2\) is far more frequently mentioned than any other oracle. Here the inspired priestess, Pythia, sat upon a tripod; and when asked by the official of the shrine a question, she chanted prophecies which he composed into hexameter verse for the seeker.\(^3\) From Apollo's oracle Orestes received orders to avenge his father's death by murdering his mother, Clytemnestra, and also her paramour, Aegisthos.\(^4\) He was also guided by the oracle to make atonement for his sin to the Furies, to bring home from Tauris his sister, Iphigeneia, and to set up in Attica the image of Artemis which he had stolen from the temple in Tauris.\(^5\) Neoptolemos journeyed to the oracle at Delphi to appease the wrath of Apollo, for he had offended him by upbraiding him for the death of his sire, Achilles.\(^6\) By the oracle of Apollo, Laios was warned not to beget offspring.\(^7\) He and his son Oedipus both were seeking this very oracle to find out something


\(^2\)Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

\(^3\)Euripides *Ion* 91 ff.; Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 f.


\(^5\)Euripides *Iphigeneia in Taurica* 939 ff., 1435 ff.

\(^6\)Euripides *Andromache* 1002 f.

\(^7\)Euripides *Phoenician Maidens* 13 ff., 1597 ff.
concerning each other when the son unwittingly killed his father.1 Many things supposedly could be learned from oracles. In the Phoenician Maidens Oedipus wondered if he would be permitted to die in Athens as Apollo's oracle had said,2 and in the Suppliant Aethra credited the oracle with having revealed to her father whom she should marry.3 Through an oracle of Apollo Eurystheus realized that he would be buried in Athens, but would be a curse to Herakles' children if they should ever march in battle upon Athens.4 Even the ancient Cadmos had been directed by Apollo's oracle to follow a heifer and to settle where she lay down.5 The Ion particularly suggests that the oracle of Apollo at Delphi was an important one, for the setting of the play was at Apollo's oracle itself. There Creusa sought to learn the whereabouts of her child, of whom Apollo himself was the father.6 Her husband also came to the shrine to learn how he might have a son to succeed him as king of Athens. The oracle instructed him to kiss the first person he met on the way out, claiming him as his very own son.7

1Ibid., 32 ff.
2Ibid., 1703 ff.
3Euripides Suppliant 5 ff.
4Euripides Children of Hercules 1028 ff.
5Euripides Phoenician Maidens 638 ff.
6Euripides Ion 334 ff.
7Ibid., 519 ff.
Sometimes the sayings of this oracle were very vague. Because of the dark saying of this oracle by which Adrastos was asked to wed his daughters to a lion and a boar, he gave them in marriage to Polyneices and Tydeus on the ground that the two boys fought like animals when once lodging with him.\(^1\) When Aegeus asked how he might have children, he obtained the very vague response from the oracle at Delphi:

Loose not the wine-skin's forward-jutting foot--

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

Till to the hearth ancestral back thou come.

\[\delta\sigma\nu\nu\delta\varepsilon\mu\varepsilon\tau\delta\nu\nu\chi\nu\mu\nu\tau\nu\tau\alpha\nu\mu\nu\lambda\upsilon\sigma\sigma\iota\nu\pi\omicron\omicron\nu\nu\tau\nu\tau\alpha\nu\mu\nu\lambda\upsilon\mu\omicron\delta\omega\nu.\]

It is interesting to note what religious ceremonial had to be observed before one could enter the prophetic shrine. The seeker first had to wash in Castalia's spring before entering the shrine;\(^3\) but one could not go into the inner shrine without an appropriate sacrifice, such as that of sheep.\(^4\)

Other oracles are occasionally mentioned in the tragedies. The oracle of Zeus at Dodona is specifically mentioned in the Andromache,\(^5\) and is probably referred to in the Bacchanals.\(^6\) In the Ion, Xuthos first lingered at the dream oracle

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\(^1\)Euripides Phoenician Maidens 411; Suppliants 140.

\(^2\)Euripides Medea 679, 681.

\(^3\)Euripides Ion 94 ff.

\(^4\)Ibid., 228 f.

\(^5\)Euripides Andromache 386 f.

\(^6\)Euripides Bacchanals 1333 f.
of Trophonios before coming to Apollo's shrine. 1 People who were sick slept in dream oracles seeking a cure for their diseases; but sometimes people frequented them who, like Xuthos, only wanted knowledge of the future.

The Greeks regarded omens and portents as very important means of finding out the will of the gods. Seers were often necessary to interpret these means of divination. Omens had a place in every day life, but were especially important to the army; according to Hyde a seer was more important to an army than even a general, 2 but Fairbanks ranks him second to the general. 3 In the tragedies entrails of sacrificial animals, particularly the liver and the gall, were ominous. 4 The way the blood gushed forth from the sacrificial victim 5 and even the altar flames themselves were significant. 6 Birds portended good or evil by their cries, their flights, and their abodes. 7 At his birth feast the lad Ion heard a slanderous word spoken when the drinking wine was poured, and regarding it as ominous

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1 Euripides Ion 300 ff.
2 Hyde, op. cit., p. 118.
3 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 50.
4 Euripides Electra 826 ff.; Suppliants 211 ff.
5 Euripides Helen 1587 f.
6 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1255 ff.
7 Euripides Helen 745 ff.; Madness of Hercules 596 f.; Suppliants 211 ff.; Ion 374 ff., 1197 ff.
he commanded all to pour out the first cups of wine. Almost anything could be regarded as an omen, such as weeping, a kind word and a fair greeting, a thunderstorm, and even the fact that an old man such as Iolaos should attempt to go to battle. The Greeks regarded as a portent the hind which Artemis sent to be sacrificed in Iphigeneia's stead. They also looked back upon the golden lamb of Atreus and the Sphinx as an evil portents, for they realized what great destruction had followed.

Occasionally men cast lots that they might know the gods' will for them. In the Iphigeneia at Aulis Clytemnestra felt that it would have been better had the Greek army sailed to Phrygia and had they cast lots to determine whose daughter was to die. Teiresias mentioned lots and their use in the Phoenician Maidens, but this means of divination is very infrequent in the tragedies.

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1Euripides Ion 1187 ff.
2Euripides Crestes 788.
3Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 607 ff.
4Euripides Phoenician Maidens 1180 ff.
5Euripides Children of Hercules 730 ff.
6Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1584 ff.
7Euripides Crestes 995 ff.
8Euripides Phoenician Maidens 806 ff.
9Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1197 ff.
10Euripides Phoenician Maidens 838 ff.
The will of the gods was believed to be revealed to men through dreams. According to mythology, Gaia, who revealed the future through dreams, and Apollo disputed over the control of revelation until Zeus definitely settled the argument by giving the function to Apollo. In addition to the dream oracles previously discussed, the Greeks believed that the gods could directly reveal themselves in dreams to mortals, as is suggested in the tragedies by the dreams of Iphigeneia and of Hecuba, concerning the death of their loved ones. It was necessary for divination to be interpreted, for there is evidence that Iphigeneia at first interpreted her dream incorrectly. Divination by dreams, however, is not particularly prominent in the tragedies.

Divination, therefore, is very important in the tragedies, for oracles were often consulted; prophets and prophetesses were likewise frequently sought for direct prophecy or for interpretation; forms of divination such as the examination of entrails, the signs of birds, dreams, and the casting of lots were less frequently used.

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1Fairbanks, op. cit., pp. 51 ff.
2Euripides Hecuba 70 ff.; Iphigeneia in Taurica 1259 ff.
3Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 42 ff.
4Euripides Hecuba 68 ff.
In early times superstition was confused with the religion of the Greeks, and even survived in the classical period.¹ Men believed that there was some vague power which could either be beneficial or detrimental to them. They sought, therefore, to do those things by which they could gain favor of this power; and they tried to avoid doing things that would bring down its wrath upon them.² Certain religious rites and beliefs of a later period have retained traces of a belief in this magical power, such as the rites of purification, and the belief that dead men could curse the living. According to Nilsson, popular superstitions and the purificatory customs of the common religion were confused; and the difference between religion and superstition was a difference of degree rather than of kind.³ For this reason it is difficult to know just how great a rôle superstition plays in the tragedies. Whatever the origin of the purification ceremonial, it definitely belongs to the field of religion and is discussed as a distinct religious rite. The magical character of other religious rites which became a part of the established Greek religion was gradually forgotten, and they were therefore adopted by religion.⁴ The magical element in curses and the belief in the power of the

¹Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion, p. 111.
³Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion, p. 111.
dead to curse mortals have been discussed earlier.

The aspect of superstition which is prominent in the tragedies concerns the use of magic philtres. Certain philtres (φάρμακον),1 (φίλτρον)2 or other magical elements such as the Gorgon's blood, were believed to have power to heal;3 others were believed to bring death;4 and still others were believed to hinder5 or bring about the production of offspring.6 Especially important in the tragedies is Creusa's attempt to kill Ion with the blood of the Gorgon,7 and Medea's wonder working philtres which accomplished the death of her foes.8 Usually no deity at all was invoked in connection with these wonder working philtres. Perhaps this is evidence that the belief in a magic power independent of a personal deity survived in Euripides' time as it did in the early days before any personal beings were conceived of by men. The tragedies give evidence, however, of Hecate,9 the chief deity of witch-craft, and of

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1Euripides Hippolytus 389.
2Ibid., 509.
3Euripides Suppliants 1108 ff.; Ion 1001 ff.; Hippolytus 509 ff.
4Euripides Ion 1001 ff.; Medea 384 f., 787 ff.
5Euripides Andromache 32 f., 355 f.
6Euripides Medea 717 f.
7Euripides Ion 1029 ff.
8Euripides Medea 1136 ff.
9Euripides Ion 1048 ff.
Aphrodite being invoked in connection with magical rites. Witches were sometimes connected with sorcery; two of these are mentioned in the tragedies, Medea and Andromache.

Superstition, perhaps, has no prominent rôle in the tragedies; but there is definite evidence of its existence. Sometimes, however, superstition and religious ceremonial are difficult to distinguish.

In addition to request made of beings worshipped, which might appear in the form of prayers, hymns, curses, oaths, and divination, the Greeks honored their gods and their dead through festivals, votive offerings, sacrifices, and through private worship, such as the mysteries of Dionysos and Demeter.

The Greek religion was not all solemn ritual as is earlier suggested in the discussion of song, music and dance. Local, state, and domestic and private worship all exhibited the lighter festal element. This element manifests itself in the tragedies in music, dance, feasting, and processions.

The tragedies give some evidence of the festive character of local sacred occasions. Perhaps Cassandra was thinking of the local temple feasts when she expressed her regret of leaving these feasts on the sad occasion of the sack of Troy.

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1 Euripides Hippolytus 521 ff.
2 Euripides Andromache 32 ff., 355 f.
3 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 452.
There is more definite evidence of state festivals than of local ones in the plays. It is not always possible to distinguish for certain whether a festival was local or state, for the allusions are often very brief; but there is no doubt about the reference to the Anthesteria (flower festival). This festival was celebrated at Athens and was the oldest of the Dionysiac festivals.\(^1\) According to Murray, Dionysos was practically forgotten; and it became really a festival to appease the spirits of the dead.\(^2\) A public banquet called "Feast of Cups" (\(\chi\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\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sacrifices at Tauris was also to be remembered in this celebration.\textsuperscript{1} Argos proclaimed what was probably a state celebration, in which brides arrayed in woven robes honored Hera in song and festal procession.\textsuperscript{2} The dead as well as the gods might be honored in festivals. The land of Sisyphos (Corinth) was asked to observe a state festival in commemoration of the unholy murder of Medea's children; such occasion was perhaps not a joyous one.\textsuperscript{3} These examples, therefore, are sufficient evidence to suggest that state worship had a definite and important place in the Greek religion. In The Daughters of Troy there is even mention of a foreign festival in honor of Zeus, "the twelve moon-feasts of the Phrygians" (Φυγών τε ζήθεοι σέλαναι ουνδόκεια).\textsuperscript{4} The attributing of festivals to other peoples perhaps strengthens the evidence of the importance of festivals to the Greeks themselves.

Festive celebrations also accompanied domestic affairs, such as birth and marriage.\textsuperscript{5} In the tragedies there are no references to regular birth feasts, but in the Ion a special public birth feast celebrated the child of Apollo as son and

\textsuperscript{1}Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1449 ff.
\textsuperscript{2}Euripides Electra 171 ff.
\textsuperscript{3}Euripides Medea 1381 ff.
\textsuperscript{4}Euripides The Daughters of Troy 1075-76.
\textsuperscript{5}Fairbanks, op. cit., 122 ff.
successor to Xuthos.\textsuperscript{1} Marriage was particularly an occasion of joyous feasting. Theoclymenos, thinking that Menelaos was dead and that Helen was to soon be his bride, anticipated her sharing with him the spousal-feast.\textsuperscript{2} Clytemnestra anticipated the marriage-feast of her daughter only to be disappointed by Iphigeneia's being presented at the altar as a victim for Artemis.\textsuperscript{3}

Private worship such as the Bacchic mysteries definitely manifested the festal element, for banqueting\textsuperscript{4} and torch-light processions\textsuperscript{5} were a very vital part of this worship. The mysteries are later discussed in more detail.

The tragedies probably give evidence of the festive element in local, state, domestic, and private worship; but the evidence of state festivals is particularly strong. There is no doubt, therefore, that the worship of the Greeks had a light aspect as well as solemn one.

The Greeks offered votive gifts to their gods ordinarily as an expression of thanks for some special blessing, but they might offer them to gain the gods' favor or to maintain friendly relations. Sometimes such gifts were offered to the gods in payment of a vow. Votive offerings were presented to the gods.

\textsuperscript{1} Euripides \textit{Ion} 1122 ff.
\textsuperscript{2} Euripides \textit{Helen} 1439 f.
\textsuperscript{3} Euripides \textit{Iphigeneia at Aulis} 720.
\textsuperscript{4} Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 378 ff., 417 f.
\textsuperscript{5} Euripides \textit{Ion} 550.
by the state on various occasions, such as victory in battle and deliverance from a plague. Individuals brought votive gifts to their gods in the event of birth, of coming to age, of marriage, of victory in contests, of healing, and on other unspecified occasions. The votive gifts included temples, lands, and ornaments for the temples.\(^1\) The tragedies suggest that even temple slaves could be offered to the gods as votive gifts.\(^2\) Arms of warriors are particularly mentioned as votive gifts to the gods, by which men thanked them for victory in battle. Sometimes votive offerings (\(\delta\nu\delta\pi\mu\alpha\))\(^3\) were placed in temples,\(^4\) and sometimes victory trophies (\(\tau\rho\omega\pi\alpha\delta\iota\nu\))\(^5\) were erected on the battlefield: Neoptolemos was expected to deck Apollo’s Pythian shrine with arms used in the Trojan war;\(^6\) Hyllos, Iolaos,\(^7\) Theseus,\(^8\) and representatives of the Theban army which conquered Argos in a surprise attack\(^9\) raised victory trophies to Zeus on the battlefield. Other objects besides  

\(^{1}\text{Fairbanks, \textit{op. cit.}, 92 ff.}\)  
\(^{2}\text{Euripides \textit{Phoenician Maidens} 202 ff.}\)  
\(^{3}\text{Euripides \textit{Ion} 177.}\)  
\(^{4}\text{Euripides \textit{Electra} 1000 ff.; \textit{Children of Hercules} 695 ff.}\)  
\(^{5}\text{Euripides \textit{Suppliants} 647.}\)  
\(^{6}\text{Euripides \textit{The Daughters of Troy} 572 ff.}\)  
\(^{7}\text{Euripides \textit{Children of Hercules} 936 ff.}\)  
\(^{8}\text{Euripides \textit{Suppliants} 647 ff.}\)  
\(^{9}\text{Euripides \textit{Phoenician Maidens} 1472 ff.}\)
weapons were offered as votive gifts to the gods. Herakles
gave Apollo shawls from the Amazonian spoils, and the Athenians
offered tapestries as gifts of worship. Sometimes flowers were
offered to the gods. The lad Ion offered his god the chest in
which his mother had left him when only a babe, for he wanted to
be sure to maintain the god's favor. It is interesting to note
in connection with votive offerings the maxim which Euripides
represents Medea as uttering, "gifts sway the Gods" (πετείνων
δώρα καὶ θεοὺς . . . ).

The tragedies also give evidence of gifts being offered
in domestic worship. Fine textured robes of wives perishing in
childbirth were offered to Artemis at the shrine of Brauron
over which Iphigeneia was to officiate. Offerings, such as
garlands, needle work, arms, and shorn hair, were thought
to be appropriate gifts for the dead. It was also the custom
to place a lock of hair on the porch of a home to express grief

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1 Euripides Ion 1141 ff.
2 Ibid., 1158 ff.
3 Euripides Phoenician Maidens 214 ff.; Hippolytus 73 ff.
4 Euripides Ion 1380 ff.
5 Euripides Medea 964.
6 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1462 ff.
7 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 1247.
8 Euripides Cretes 1431 ff.
9 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 1192 f.
10 Ibid., 479 f.; Cretes 96.
for a departed loved one. Members of the household and sometimes members of the nation joined together in cutting their hair as expressions of grief at this distressing time.

Votive gifts as a rule expressed the thanks of a mortal for some favor from the gods. Mortals also offered to their gods and their dead tokens in which this element is not clearly discernable. Perhaps many such offerings were merely honorary.

The sacrifice was a very important religious ceremonial to the Greeks. In fact, animal sacrifice is said to have been the most prominent of all the Greek religious rites. According to Hyde, sacrifice was the sign of a reverent spirit and was made mostly for favors expected rather than for favors received as in the case of votive offerings. All sacrifices of the Greeks may be divided into two groups, the sacrificial meal and the propitiatory sacrifice.

The communal meal was the normal form of worship in Greece. Gods, particularly the Olympian deities, and men partook together of the sacred meat. This sacrifice was made at festivals, at banquets, and on the occasion of the payment of

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1Euripides *Alcestis* 100 ff.
2Euripides *Electra* 333 ff.; *Alcestis* 425 ff., 817 ff.
4Hyde, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
5Fairbanks, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 ff.
6Ibid., p. 98.
7Ibid., pp. 97 ff.
a vow; it accompanied such domestic events as birth, coming of age, and marriage. In fact, the communal sacrifice was made whenever there was need of meat for any purpose.\(^1\) It is interesting to note that a thank offering might take the form of a sacrifice as well as of a votive gift; armies sometimes made a votive sacrifice if their expedition proved successful.\(^2\)

In the tragedies there are several allusions to communal sacrifices. The Argives offered what was probably a communal sacrifice, at the appearance of the golden lamb of Atreus; this event was accompanied by joyous music, song, and dance.\(^3\) In the Hecuba apparently the Trojans had celebrated in communal sacrifice, dance, and song their supposed victory over their Grecian foes.\(^4\) A good example of the communal sacrifice and meal was the public birth celebration in which the lad Ion was celebrated as son and successor of Xuthos. Sacrifice, feasting,\(^5\) drink offerings,\(^6\) and incense\(^7\) all had a part in this communal celebration. Probably the example giving the most detail about the communal meal is that of Aegisthos sacrificing

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\(^1\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 98.

\(^2\)Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 99.

\(^3\)Euripides Electra 699 ff.

\(^4\)Euripides Hecuba 914 ff.

\(^5\)Euripides Ion 650 ff., 804 ff., 1122 ff.

\(^6\)Ibid., 1031 ff.

\(^7\)Ibid., 1174 f.
to the nymphs in order that he might obtain a favorable omen for himself and his paramour, Clytemnestra.\textsuperscript{1} That this is truly a communal meal is suggested by Aegisthos' invitation to Crestes and his company to share as associates with him in the feast.\textsuperscript{2} Many objects were needed to carry out the sacrifice proper, such as a bowl for catching the victim's blood (σωγετον),\textsuperscript{3} a basket (χανης)\textsuperscript{4} in which the sacrificial knife was kept, a basin (λεβης)\textsuperscript{5} and an urn (προχοτης)\textsuperscript{6} for the lustral libations (χερωνι).\textsuperscript{7} On this occasion Aegisthos, after binding his brows with myrtle (μυροινη),\textsuperscript{8} cast upon the altar a bit of something, perhaps purifying water, from an urn (προχοτης),\textsuperscript{9} and offered up a prayer to the nymphs. He then cut a bit of hair from the sacrificial victim, which was a calf (μοσχος),\textsuperscript{10} and with his right hand tossed it in the flame. The victim was

\textsuperscript{1}Euripides Electra 774 ff.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 784 f.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 800.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 802.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 803.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 792.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 778.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 803.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 813.
slain, after which its entrails were observed for an omen.\textsuperscript{1} If all had turned out well for Aegisthos, he would have feasted with his guests in a communal meal; but Orestes by violence ended the life of Aegisthos. Other communal sacrifices are implied or only briefly mentioned in the tragedies.\textsuperscript{2}

In contrast to the joyous communal meal, the Greeks offered to beings who were angry or easily aroused to anger propitiatory sacrifices.\textsuperscript{3} This type of sacrifice was offered to the dead and the gods who ruled the souls of the dead, heroes, agricultural deities, many gods of the sea, of rivers, and of winds. Occasionally propitiatory sacrifices were offered to the Olympian gods, especially when some nature deity became merged with an Olympian deity.\textsuperscript{4} In the tragedies several deities and the dead are said to have received this type of sacrifice or were thought as beings requiring such an offering. The Greek host planned to appease the wrath of Artemis by a propitiatory sacrifice.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 827 ff.
\textsuperscript{2}Euripides \textit{The Daughters of Troy} 1060 ff.; \textit{Children of Hercules} 777 ff.
\textsuperscript{3}Fairbanks, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 105, 107.
\textsuperscript{4}Fairbanks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 107.
offering;\(^1\) Apollo,\(^2\) Demeter,\(^3\) the Muses,\(^4\) the Furies,\(^5\) and the gods of the shades\(^6\) also were capable of accepting this sacrifice. It is interesting to note that no sacrifice at all could appease Necessity.\(^7\) The outstanding example of a hero requiring the propitiatory sacrifice is found in the Hecuba, in which the dead Achilles appeared above his tomb and would not let the Greek fleet make its homeward journey until Polyxena was sacrificed on his tomb.\(^8\)

Propitiatory sacrifices were offered on various occasions in the tragedies. This type of offering was particularly important for the army in the event of battle, for angry deities might be pacified and omens might be taken in the course of this sacrifice.\(^9\) Before entering Apollo's oracle\(^10\) and upon taking

\(^1\)Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1570 ff.; cf. Madness of Hercules 375 ff.
\(^2\)Euripides Andromache 1100 ff.
\(^3\)Euripides Helen 1353 ff.
\(^4\)Euripides Madness of Hercules 1022 f.
\(^5\)Euripides Helen 357 ff.
\(^6\)Ibid., 1255.
\(^7\)Euripides Alcestis 973 ff.
\(^8\)Euripides The Daughters of Troy 263, 622 f.; Hecuba 518 ff.
\(^9\)Euripides Orestes 1603; Children of Hercules 340, 399 ff., 819 ff.
\(^10\)Euripides Ion 226 ff.
oaths\(^1\) perhaps men made such sacrifices. The propitiatory offering might also atone for a past sin, as when Neoptolemos planned to sacrifice for a sin committed against Apollo.\(^2\) The spirits of the dead were appeased through propitiatory sacrifice and drink offerings; in the Electra Crestes slew sheep upon his father's grave;\(^3\) and in the Crestes Helen had drink offerings consisting of honey, milk, and wine taken to Clytemnestra's tomb, for she feared that the spirit of her dead sister would be vexed at her.\(^4\) A type of propitiatory offering, commonly called a purificatory offering, was made to cleanse men from blood taints.\(^5\) Individuals guilty of murder found it necessary to be cleansed through this type of offering. Such offerings were considered necessary for Crestes, guilty of his own mother's blood,\(^6\) and for Herakles, tainted by Lycos' blood and the blood of his own wife and sons.\(^7\) The tenth moon offerings in the event of childbirth were believed to cleanse and to ward off evil from the mother and babe.\(^8\) People who were tainted

\(^1\) Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 57 ff.; Suppliants 1187 ff.
\(^2\) Euripides Andromache 1106 ff.
\(^3\) Euripides Electra 92.
\(^4\) Euripides Crestes 112 ff.
\(^6\) Euripides Crestes 429.
\(^7\) Euripides Madness of Hercules 936 ff., 1324.
\(^8\) Euripides Electra 1124 ff.
with blood either through contact with murder or childbirth, or who had become defiled through touching a corpse could not approach the altars of deities, even as propitiatory sacrificial victims, until they were first cleansed.¹ Even a god fled from the house of death lest he be polluted.² A house polluted by a blood taint³ or perhaps a temple and a temple image⁴ were also cleansed from taints through the purificatory ceremonial. Because of the belief in the taint of death, it was customary to place a cup of pure spring water at the gate as a token of cleansing.⁵

Various animals could be used as victims for the propitiatory sacrifice. In actual religious practices even human beings may have been offered to appease the wrath of gods and heroes.⁶ Two outstanding examples occur in the tragedies in which preparations were made to sacrifice mortals. The Greeks, having been stopped on their journey to Troy because of Artemis’ wrath, planned to sacrifice Iphigeneia in order to appease her; but a hind miraculously appeared in the maiden’s

¹Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 380 ff.
²Euripides Alcestis 22 ff.
³Euripides Madness of Hercules 922 ff.
⁴Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 1156 ff.
⁵Euripides Alcestis 100 ff.
stead. On their homeward journey from Troy the Greeks offered up Hecuba’s child, Polyxena, to appease the wrath of Achilles. Several other human sacrifices are mentioned in the tragedies. Animals, however, were normally used as victims in actual religious practice. The tragedies suggest that black domestic animals were used, such as sheep.

According to Fairbanks, the propitiatory sacrifice regularly took place on a low mound of earth (ἐσχάρα) instead of the raised altar (βωμὸς) where the communal offering was slain. The tragedies, however, do not appear to be consistent on this point. These offerings might also be made upon the grave mound of the dead (Χώμα), as well as the altar or hearth of a god.

Before the sacrifice proper began, a cleansing of the participants and of sacrificial victims was necessary, just

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1 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1540 ff.
2 Euripides The Daughters of Troy 263, 622 ff.; Hecuba 518 ff.
4 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 106.
5 Euripides Electra 513 f.
6 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 106.
7 Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis 1589; Alcestis 120.
8 Euripides Hecuba 524.
9 Euripides Iphigeneia in Taurica 334 ff.
as in the communal meal. The officiating priest thrust a brand from the altar into the cleansing water thereby making the water sacred;¹ this water was apparently sprinkled upon the guests as well as upon the sacrificial victims² before the sacrifice proper. It was also the custom for the priest to cast the purified water on the flames just as in the communal meal.³ Objects necessary to carry out the sacrifice were much the same as those needed in the communal meal. When all was in order, the priest with the lustral bowl and with the basket in which the sacrificial knife was kept, ran around the altar while offering up a prayer to the gods.⁴ The victim was then slain⁵ and completely burned.⁶ Apparently drink offerings did not accompany propitiatory sacrifices to deities;⁷ but these offerings did accompany sacrifices made to the dead,⁸ for drink offerings were poured to the

¹Euripides *Madness of Hercules* 928 ff.
²Euripides *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1477 ff.; *Iphigenia in Taurica* 622.
³Euripides *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1111 ff.; 1470 ff.
⁵Euripides *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1587 ff.
⁶Ibid., 1601 ff.
⁸Drink offerings accompanied sacrifices to the dead made at the tomb, but they also were made when no sacrifice was offered; for example, in the *Electra* the old man poured libations at Agamemnon's tomb, but offered no sacrifice. Euripides *Electra* 508 ff.
dead Achilles at the sacrifice of Polyxena. Cake offerings (πελανός) made of meal, honey, and sometimes poppy seed might accompany a regular propitiatory sacrifice. These cakes were burned low on the altars, but were never tasted.

In the tragedies sacrifice is important, and especially the propitiatory sacrifice. Probably the greater prominence of the propitiatory sacrifice is due to the nature of the tragedies.

Most of the religious ceremonials discussed concerned the present need of men, but the Greeks also observed religious rites affording a hope of life after death. Through these rites, called mysteries, men paid honor to their gods as well as securing a hope for their own future through ritualistic purification and through initiation.

In contrast to the state worship the mysteries were observed in private, and the rites were kept strictly secret; only the initiated could know of what the mysteries consisted.

The appeal was made to the individual instead of the group.

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1 Euripides Hecuba 527 ff.
2 Euripides Ion 226 ff.; cf. Helen 1334.
4 Ibid., p. 137.
6 Euripides Bacchanals 471 f.; Hyde, op. cit., p. 29.
7 Fairbanks, op. cit., p. 129.
for example, men accepted the worship of Dionysos as individuals.¹

Probably the most widely celebrated mysteries among the Greeks were those held at Eleusis honoring Demeter and Persephone.² These mysteries originally were observed at the time of autumn sowing, for then Persephone made her return to the upper world.³ There seems to have been a certain Dionysiac element in the Eleusinian Mysteries, but the relation between the Dionysiac cult and Eleusinian mysteries is not clear.⁴

Not much evidence is given in the tragedies as to how the mysteries of Orpheus and of Persephone and Demeter were celebrated. The Orphic mysteries, however, are said to have been observed by abstinence from certain foods.⁵ Probably Euripides had Demeter's mysteries in mind when he represented Hippolytos as going to Attica both to see and to be sealed in the mysteries;⁶ many modern critics think that such a passage suggests that the mysteries consisted of some dramatic representation, as well as a necessary ceremonial to be observed.

¹Euripides Bacchanals 170 ff.
²Hyde, op. cit., p. 28.
³Nilsson, Greek Popular Religion, p. 52.
⁵Euripides Hippolytus 352 ff.
⁶Ibid., 24 ff.
before one could be initiated.\(^1\) Evidently torch processions and song also had a part in the actual observance of these mysteries.\(^2\)

The mysteries were evidently a vital part of Greek religion, for Euripides devoted an entire play to the Dionysiac orgies. It is interesting to note that the worship of Dionysos was particularly connected with Thebes,\(^3\) the birth place of his mother;\(^4\) here Euripides located the scene of the Bacchanals, which is the chief primary source of knowledge concerning the Dionysiac cult. The tragedies suggest that this worship may have occurred every third year.\(^5\) Dionysos' attendants and worshippers were chiefly women\(^6\) called Maenads\(^7\) and Bacchanals,\(^8\) but men\(^9\) as well as women participated in these mysteries; in fact, all people, both old and young,\(^10\) could be initiated. These orgies were kept strictly secret from all except the

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\(^1\)Fairbanks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 131 f.

\(^2\)Euripides \textit{Ion} 1074 ff.

\(^3\)Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 23 ff.


\(^5\)Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 132 ff.

\(^6\)Moore, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 49.

\(^7\)Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 570.

\(^8\)Ibid., 152; Winnington-Ingram, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1.

\(^9\)Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 322 ff.; \textit{Ion} 550 ff.

\(^10\)Euripides \textit{Bacchanals} 206 ff., 692 ff.
initiated;\textsuperscript{1} purification for life after death was apparently believed to come about through participation,\textsuperscript{2} and probably was a part of the initiation ceremonial.\textsuperscript{3} Special garb which consisted chiefly of a dappled fawnskin\textsuperscript{4} and perhaps long linen robes\textsuperscript{5} was worn by all participants; the head was wreathed with ivy, oak, and bryony,\textsuperscript{6} and a thyrsus entwined with ivy\textsuperscript{7} was swung with the right hand in a certain rhythm.\textsuperscript{8} These orgies took place particularly at night.\textsuperscript{9} Normal forms of worship, such as music, song, dance,\textsuperscript{10} banqueting,\textsuperscript{11} and torch celebrations,\textsuperscript{12} had a vital part in the Dionysiac cult. Sometimes the women became so frenzied in the observance of the Dionysiac orgies that they sought the woodlands and hills and there worshipped until their highly emotional state of mind

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 471 f.
\textsuperscript{2}Moore, op. cit., p. 52.
\textsuperscript{3}Euripides Bacchanals 72 ff.
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 111, 249.
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 821.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 702 f.
\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 941 ff.
\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 485 f.
\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 64 ff.
\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 382 ff.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 145 ff.; Ion 550.
The wine, which was an important element in the mysteries, the night time, and the religious frenzy attributed to the possession of Dionysos may explain the delirium and delusions which seized the minds of the participants; for example, Agave thought she had caught and killed a beast, but she had really torn assunder the limbs of her own son. Perhaps the drunken condition and frenzied state of mind also accounts for the extraordinary strength of the participants, and for the suggestion of immorality.

There is definite evidence in the tragedies, therefore, of the participation in the Orphic, Eleusinian, and Dionysiac mysteries. Their great importance is suggested by the fact that Euripides built the theme of one entire play around the Dionysiac cult.

Many religious practices have been observed in the tragedies. Sometimes the chief objective in the mind of the worshipper was to supply some existing need through special requests made of his gods; at other times the glorifying of his gods was his principal aim. The various religious practices might either be a part of state worship, of domestic worship, or of private

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1Euripides Bacchanals 114 ff., 215 ff., 677 ff.
2Ibid., 382 ff.
3Ibid., 1114 ff., 1259 ff.
4Ibid., 1114 ff.
5Euripides Ion 550 ff.
worship. Prayers, hymns, curses, oaths, divination, festal celebrations, the offering of votive gifts, sacrifice, both of the communal and the propitiatory types, all were a part of state worship. Likewise the individual engaged in these same ceremonial in his domestic and personal worship. Not many of these religious practices can clearly be discerned in the mysteries, for it is not known what took place in these rites. The festal element, however, common to both state and domestic worship, was prominent.

Religious practices, therefore, played a very vital rôle in these tragedies, and it is surprising how much knowledge one may gain of this aspect of religion through the study of Euripides.
CONCLUSION

Information both large in scope and extensive in detail concerning the Greek religion is revealed through a study of the tragedies of Euripides.

In order to understand the various religious practices, it was necessary first to appraise what beings were worshipped and what functions they assumed. Euripides represents men as worshipping many beings, both gods and the dead. The picture that he gives of the Olympian deities is complete, for he leaves out of his Pantheon no Olympian god; and his representation of their chief functions is nearly complete as we know them from other sources. Zeus, his wife Hera, his brothers and sisters, and his numerous children appear; and also the grandmother, who was Gaia, and Dionysos, although they were not strictly Olympian deities, are a part of his Pantheon of major divinities. Many epithets and descriptions make plain the various functions and relationships of these deities. Minor deities play a more important rôle in the tragedies than might have been expected; among these were Hecate, Hymen, nature deities, lesser divinities of the underworld, deities of fate, deities whose name embodied some abstract idea, and finally, deified mortals. Pure nature worship appears in the tragedies in addition to the anthropomorphic and ethical personalities which the most important gods assumed, for men worshipped the luminaries, and
the spirits of the water, of vegetation, and of the wild. Many of their functions, identities, and associations are suggested in the tragedies. Men very frequently worshipped dead heroes, dead kinfolk, and other dead in the tragedies. The beings worshipped, therefore, consist of major deities, of minor deities, and of the dead.

In order to understand religious practices it was necessary to find out what places men considered appropriate for worship. In the tragedies men engaged in religious practices in almost every place conducive to worship. They worshipped in sacred enclosures, which might or might not have an altar, a temple, or an oracle erected to a god. Mortals worshipped at the tomb, which indeed was a natural place for hero worship and for worship of any dead. Gods were sometimes worshipped in open places, especially deities closely connected in some way with nature, as were Artemis, Dionysos, Pan, and the nymphs. Out-of-door places suited to worship were the woodlands, meadows, hills, the water, the scene of battle, the market place, and even the roadway. The home was a very important spot and a natural place for domestic worship; here birth rites and marriage ceremonials occurred.

Before the actual study of religious practices it was necessary to find out who participated and the various capacities in which they served. According to Euripides men of all classes worshipped the gods and the dead. Prophets, prophetesses, priests, and priestesses performed in religious
official capacities. State military officials engaged in religious practices by virtue of their offices; and heralds, musicians, attendants, and slaves took part either by virtue of their positions, or entered into the spirit of worship as individuals. Men and women worshipped both in official capacities and in nonofficial positions; they worshipped both individually and collectively. Apparently, therefore, all men engaged in religious ceremonials.

Finally, it was possible to study the religious practices themselves in their objectives and techniques. The Greeks worshipped numerous gods and the dead through the medium of many religious practices. They sometimes had as their objective the fulfillment of some existing need, and they therefore approached their gods and dead in prayers or prayer-hymns on a wide variety of occasions: men prayed for help in conflict, for healing, for safety and protection, for forgiveness, for guidance and assistance, for special favors, and for help in any perplexing situation. These petitions were sometimes for good and sometimes for evil. Prayers often took the form of a curse which usually was spoken against another, but might be spoken against oneself, as in an oath. The gods and perhaps even the power of magic were depended upon by mortals to accomplish such prayers. The oath was a common religious practice, which either contained a curse in actual words or merely implied one; these oaths men swore both by the gods and by the dead. In the tragedies men frequently approached gods as a
suppliant thereby rendering their persons inviolable. Officials felt their religious obligations to such people and were challenged to help them out of perilous situations. Much use was made of divination, for it was presumed that many things could be learned through this means. Oracles were often consulted, and particularly the Delphic oracle; sometimes prophets and prophetesses were consulted directly. Divinations were also effected through entrails of sacrificial animals, through the altar flames, through birds, through chance words, through dreams, and through the casting of lots. The religion of the Greeks was not entirely free from superstition, for Euripides represents this aspect of religion as revealing itself chiefly in philtres, which supposedly worked marvels in healing, in bringing about death, and in bringing about or hindering the production of offspring. Men also made requests of the gods and of the dead through propitiatory and purificatory sacrifices. Such sacrifices were made chiefly to appease angered deities or to keep down the wrath of those easily angered. No drink offerings accompanied such sacrifices to the gods, but they did accompany sacrifices to the dead.

The worshipper often had as his chief aim the honoring of the gods and occasionally the dead. Religious celebrations such as festivals, of which song, music, dance, and the communal sacrifice were a vital part, paid tribute to the gods and occasionally the dead. Festive celebrations even accompanied domestic worship at the time of birth celebrations and of marriage
ritual. In fact, festal celebrations were a part of state, of domestic, and even of private worship, such as the mysteries. Men expressed thanks to the gods and to the dead through votive gifts both as individuals and as members of a state. The Greeks believed that the gods partook with them of the communal sacrifice which was made on any occasion when there was need for meat. Such offerings might be accompanied by drink offerings and incense. The phase of worship of the Greeks particularly concerned with life after death was the mysteries. In this worship deities were believed to give an assurance of a future life, thus satisfying a common human need. At the same time men felt they were honoring a specific deity.

It is interesting to note that nearly all of the religious practices occurring in the tragedies could be a part of state or of domestic worship. Possibly many of the same ceremonies were observed in private worship, such as the mysteries; but very little information has been preserved since they were kept very secret.

Indeed a wealth of material concerning religious practices may be gleaned from the tragedies of Euripides alone. If this author were the only source from which one could get information concerning the religious practices of his day, a fairly detailed knowledge would be available. Religion was evidently such a vital part of the life of fifth century Athens that Euripides could not help reflecting in the tragedies the many current religious practices of his day.


