

Ritual Dynamics in Pausanias: The Laphria *

Introduction

Since Robertson Smith's pioneering work *The Religion of the Semites* in eighteen eighty-nine, we have known that ritual is a specific concept and an indispensable tool for studying what he called 'antique religions'.¹ This statement, which may appear to be a truism for us, was quite a revolution when faith, beliefs, creeds, were still the main topics of interest in religious studies. Robertson Smith took a crucial step by placing religious practice in the context of long-term social traditions and disconnecting it from individual mental states. I quote a brief passage from his book:

Belief in a certain series of myths was neither obligatory as a part of true religion, nor was it supposed that, by believing, a man acquired religious merit and conciliated the favour of the gods. What was obligatory or meritorious was the exact performance of certain sacred acts prescribed by religious tradition...

Time has passed since Robertson Smith and his book, but the insights of the Cambridge School, with Frazer, Harrison, Cook, and the like, have deeply marked the study of rituals, and even Greek rituals, during the whole 20th century.² Burkert's work or even Versnel's would not have the same flavour without the English Anthropological School in the background. By connecting ritual with collectivity, Robertson Smith also prefigured the works of l'*École sociologique française*, on the one hand, and those of the British functionalist perspective on the other. Behaviour in the religious context was thereafter considered a source of meaning and an object of scientific investigation.³

* This paper was presented at Heidelberg in June 2003 and I would like to warmly thank Angelos Chaniotis for his invitation to take part in the seminars on ritual dynamics. A first draft of the analysis of the Laphria has been published in French in G. LABARRE (ed.), *Les cultes locaux dans les mondes grec et romain. Actes du colloque de Lyon, 7-8 juin 2001*, Lyon/Paris, 2004 (coll. *Archéologie et Histoire de l'Antiquité. Université Lumière-Lyon 2*, 7), as a part of my communication : "La portée du témoignage de Pausanias sur les cultes locaux", p. 5-20.

¹ W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894 [1889], p. 17-18 (<http://www.cwru.edu/univlib/preserve/Etana/Lectures/1.pdf>).

² Cf. R. ACKERMAN, *The Myth and Ritual School: J.G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists*, New York/London, 1991.

³ B. BOUDEWIJNSE, "British Roots of the Concept of Ritual", in A.L. MOLENDIJK, P. PELS (eds), *Religion in the Making*, Leiden, 1998 (*Studies in the History of Religions*, 80), p. 277-295.

But it is important to note that evolutionism, or 'primitivism', was the mental framework of many reflexions on comparative religion at this time, and deep into the 20th century. Primitivism supports the notion of fixity and rigidity in ritual behaviour and evaluates many religious actions of the historical period as relics of a past that cannot be reached in another way. Accordingly ritual has long been regarded as a kind of primitive action performed by more developed communities in order to maintain their religious traditions. Greece and Rome have not escaped these views, but recent work has shown that the matter was a bit more complicated.⁴ Ritual behaviour is not simply synonymous with primitive action. Ritual is not necessarily a kind of prehistoric island in the ocean of historical and sophisticated societies. Ritual is a cultural and historical matter as much as any other human production and we have to consider at least the possibility of change during the course of time. So ritual dynamics points at the same time to the ritual's place and role in the society at a given time, and to the vitality and variability of its meanings in the course of time.

In this perspective, Angelos Chaniotis has recently provided a very persuasive analysis of the Boiotian Daidala.⁵ He has shown the possible stratification of meanings and even actions of this festival. The puzzling complexity of the Daidala in the Roman period can only be explained in a historical perspective. This festival is not a kind of relic, henceforth unintelligible, which has passed through the years without changing. It is a cultural product that has adjusted itself to new conditions.⁶

Pausanias' project

When we come to the Daidala, we inevitably meet Pausanias. I have just written that Burkert's and Versnel's flavour would not have been the same without the 'Cambridge Ritualists'. But we can wonder too if Frazer himself would have written the *Golden Bough* without Pausanias. Between eighteen-eighty and eighteen-ninety, when the first edition of *The Golden Bough* appeared,⁷ the *Periegesis*' commentary was at the centre of Frazer's work and

⁴ Eg. M. LINDER, J. SCHEID, "Quand croire c'est faire. Le problème de la croyance dans la Rome ancienne", *ASSR* 81 (1993), p. 47-62; J.-L. DURAND, J. SCHEID, "'Rites' et 'religion'. Remarques sur certains préjugés des historiens de la religion des Grecs et des Romains", *ASSR* 85 (1994), p. 23-44; J. SCHEID, *Quand faire, c'est croire. Les rites sacrificiels des Romains*, Paris, 2005.

⁵ A. CHANIOTIS, "Ritual Dynamics: the Boiotian Festival of the Daidala", in H.F.J. HORSTMANS-HOFF, H.W. SINGOR, F.T. VAN STRATEN, J.H.M. STRUBBE (eds), *Kykeon. Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel*, Leiden, 2002 (*RGRW*, 142), p. 23-48. Now, see also S. HUMPHREYS, *The Strangeness of Gods*, Oxford, 2004, chap. 6 : « Metamorphoses of Tradition: the Athenian Anthesteria ».

⁶ Another recent point of view on this ritual: D. KNOEPFLER, "La fête des *Daidala* de Platées chez Pausanias : une def pour l'histoire de la Béotie hellénistique", in D. KNOEPFLER, M. PIÉART (eds), *Editer, traduire, commenter Pausanias en l'an 2000*, Genève, 2001 (*Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Neuchâtel*, 49), p. 343-374.

⁷ J.G. FRAZER, *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion*, 2 vols, London, 1890 [third edition between 1911 and 1915, in twelve volumes].

interest. I quote Frazer himself: 'a work on which I have spent, well or ill, some of the best years of my life'.⁸ Pausanias' wide range of interests, his travels across Roman Greece and his focus on religious practice and mythical stories sound like an echo of Frazer's own preoccupations.

Pausanias' ten books are indeed a precious, and often irreplaceable, source for the study of Greek religion. In many aspects Pausanias is our sole informant; this explains why we find references to his text in so many publications that use it in a split way. I have myself taken Pausanias as a leading thread in my dissertation on the Greek Aphrodite, because a large part of our information on the cults of the goddess in mainland Greece is based on the *Periegesis*.⁹ After this work was completed, I realized how necessary it was to take Pausanias' text as a whole. Pausanias is very interested in the religious and mythical material of the regions he visits. To rightly evaluate the reliability of his text as a source, it is essential to study this preoccupation for its own sake. The primacy of the religious evidence in the *Periegesis* is not a mere chance and the simple consequence of the author's peregrinations. It reflects something important in the work.¹⁰

Sanctuaries are the trails of the past in the landscape. They maintain continuity between past and present. That is the reason why the *Periegesis* has been written as a travel book on Greece without really being – or becoming – a guidebook. Thanks to the sacred places, the landscape is deeply rooted in time and history. In the same way, the current rituals, still performed, are ascribed to the heroic period by the continuity of the cult practice, be it real or simply postulated.

The relevance of such evidence for Pausanias' project is connected with the polytheistic system of the Greeks, where Panhellenic unity balances local diversity. This variety, which stimulates the traveller's curiosity and attracts the reader's interest, illustrates the wealth of the ancient traditions and their roots in the soil.

⁸ J.G. FRAZER, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* I, London, 1897, p. VIII. Chr. AUFFARTH, "Verräter – Übersetzer?": Pausanias, das römische Patrai und die Identität der Griechen in der Achaea", in H. CANGIK, J. RÜPKE (éds), *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion*, Tübingen, 1997, p. 219-238, esp. p. 225, sees Pausanias as an *Ur-Frazer*.

⁹ V. PIRENNE-DELFORGE, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, Athens/Liège, 1994 (*Kernos*, suppl. 4).

¹⁰ Recently, interest on Pausanias *per se* has considerably increased: e.g. the introduction by D. MUSTI, in *Pausania. Guida della Grecia. Libro I: L'Attica*, Napoli, 1987² [1982]; Chr. HABICHT, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*, Berkeley, 1999² [1985]; J. ELSNER, "Pausanias: a Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World", *Past & Present* 135 (1992), p. 3-29; K.W. ARAFAT, *Pausanias' Greece*, Cambridge, 1996; J. BINGEN (ed.), *Pausanias historien*, Vandœuvres/Genève, 1996 (*Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique*, 41); V. PIRENNE-DELFORGE (eds), *Les panthéons des cités grecques, des origines à la Périégèse de Pausanias*, Liège, 1998 (*Kernos*, suppl. 8); S. ALCOCK, J. CHERRY, J. ELSNER (eds), *Pausanias. Travel and Memory*, Oxford, 2001; D. KNOEPFLER, M. PIÉART (eds), o.c. (n. 6); P. ELLINGER, *La fin des maux. D'un Pausanias à l'autre. Essai de mythologie et d'histoire*, Paris, 2005; J. AKUJÄRVI, *Researcher, Traveller, Narrator. Studies in Pausanias' Periegesis*, Stockholm, 2005 (*Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia*, 12); W.R. HUTTON, *Describing Greece. Landscape and Literature in the Periegesis of Pausanias*, Cambridge, 2005 (*Greek Culture in the Roman World*), and so many papers recently published in journals...

The information given by Pausanias is not neutral and merely descriptive. The illusion of the objectivity of presentation must be definitively put aside and the split use of the text should be restrained. The religious elements in the *Periegesis* must be evaluated in their mutual relationships and confronted with the work's global project. I think that our vision of the religious elements in the *Periegesis* will be best balanced in this way.¹¹ For years, Pausanias' own religious predilections for archaic practice and stories have been consonant with the modern reader's primitivist point of view. As far as ritual was concerned, the evidence of the *Periegesis* was regarded as the trustworthy reflection of a long-term tradition. As religion is conservative *per se* and Pausanias' first interest was in ancient religious tradition, his text was automatically considered to be reliable evidence for archaic and classical Greek religion. But it is not that simple; I will try to demonstrate this with a dossier as rich as the Daidala evidence. My topic here is the Laphria performed each year at Patrae, at least at the time of Pausanias' visit.

The Laphria

The text

The note on the Laphria is found in the seventh Book. At the beginning of Patrae's evocation, Pausanias' first concern is what he learnt from *oi ta archaiôtata mnēmoneúontes*, "those who have kept the memory of the most ancient things" (VII, 18, 2). He presents the mythical past of the city, with the three old *poleis* related to the stories of Triptolemus and Dionysos. Once the Ionians were expelled from the land by the Achaeans, the eponymous Patreus unified the three cities: Patrae was born. Then, Pausanias skips many centuries, quickly mentions Patrae's misfortunes and closes this historical evocation with a reference to the city's refoundation as a Roman colony by Augustus. The description of the city follows, and Pausanias opens his visit with the acropolis and the sanctuary of Artemis Laphria. Let us consider the text¹²:

¹¹ A larger study on this subject will be published under the title: *Retour à la source. Pausanias et la religion grecque*. Cf. S.E. ALCOCK, "Pausanias and the Polis. Use and Abuse", in M.H. HANSEN (ed.), *Sources for the Ancient Greek City-State. Symposium August, 24-27 1994*, Copenhagen, 1995 (*Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, 2), p. 326-344, esp. p. 326-329.

¹² Pausanias, VII, 18, 8-13 (transl. adapted from W.H.S. JONES, Loeb Classical Library): (8) Πατρεῦσι δὲ ἐν ἄρχῃ τῇ πόλει Λαφρίας ἱερὸν ἔστιν Ἀρτέμιδος· ξενικὸν μὲν τῇ θεῷ τὸ ὄνομα, ἐσηγμένον δὲ ἐτέρωθεν καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα. Καλυδῶνος γὰρ καὶ Αἰτωλίας τῆς ἄλλης ὑπὸ Αὐγούστου βασιλέως ἐρημωθείσης διὰ τὸ τὴν ἐς τὴν Νυκίπολιν τὴν ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀκτίου συνοικίεσθαι καὶ τὸ Αἰτωλικόν, οὕτω τὸ ἄγαλμα τῆς Λαφρίας οἱ Πατρεῖς ἔσχον. (9) ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ἀγάλματα ἔκ τε Αἰτωλίας καὶ παρὰ Ἀκαρνάνων, τὰ μὲν πολλὰ ἐς τὴν Νυκίπολιν κομισθῆναι, Πατρεῦσι δὲ ὁ Αὐγούστος ἄλλα τε τῶν ἐκ Καλυδῶνος λαφύρων καὶ δὴ καὶ τῆς Λαφρίας ἔδωκε τὸ ἄγαλμα, ὃ δὴ καὶ ἐς ἡμᾶς ἔτι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει τῇ Πατρέων εἶχε τιμᾶς· γενέσθαι δὲ ἐπύλησιν τῇ θεῷ Λαφρίαν ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς Φωκῆως φασί· Λάφριον γὰρ τὸν Κασταλίου τοῦ Δελφοῦ Καλυδωνίοις ἰδρύσασθαι τὸ ἄγαλμα τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τὸ ἀρχαῖον, (10) οἱ δὲ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τὸ μῆνιμα τὸ ἐς Οἰνέα ἀνά χρόνον τοῖς Καλυδωνίοις ἐλαφρότερον γενέσθαι λέγουσι καὶ αἰτίαν τῇ θεῷ τῆς ἐπιλήσεως ἐθέλουσιν εἶναι ταύτην.

On the acropolis of Patrae is a sanctuary of Artemis Laphria. The name of the goddess is a foreign one, and her image too was brought in from elsewhere. For after Calydon with the rest of Aetolia had been laid waste by the Emperor Augustus in order that the Aetolian people might be incorporated into Nicopolis above Actium, the people of Patrae thus got the image of Laphria. (9) Most of the images out of Aetolia and from Acarnania were brought by Augustus' orders to Nicopolis, but to Patrae he gave, with other spoils from Calydon, the image of Laphria, which even in my time was still worshipped on the acropolis of Patrae. It is said that the goddess' *epiklesis* was Laphria after a man of Phocis, because the ancient image of Artemis was set up at Calydon by Láphrius, the son of Castalius, the son of Delphus. (10) Others say that the wrath of Artemis against Oeneus weighed as time went on more lightly on the Calydonians, and they believe that this was why the goddess received her *epiklesis*. The image represents her in the guise of a huntress; it is made of ivory and gold, and the artists were Menaechmus and Soidas of Naupactus, who, it is inferred, lived not much later than Canachus of Sicyon and Callon of Aegina. (11) Every year too the people of Patrae celebrate the festival Laphria in honour of their Artemis...

This kind of notice is very typical in the *Periegesis* and it adequately encapsulates Pausanias' working method as far as religion is concerned.¹³ At first the localization: a sanctuary on the acropolis. Then the goddess' characteristics: her name, Artemis Laphria, and her image. Here is the minimal identity card of a sanctuary. But this sanctuary is a historical product too: there follows the story of its implantation. In this case, the story is twofold: one contemporary with Augustus' intervention in the country and one more ancient with the reference to Laphrius and Oeneus. Whatever the origin of the *epiklesis* may be – Pausanias does not decide between the versions – it is deeply rooted in what *we* call the mythical past of Greece. The visitor then displays his scholarship and makes a reference to art history that places the image in the archaic period.

Next come ritual and the manifestation of religious vitality in Patrae, 'even in my time'. I would like to briefly comment on this expression, which is rather frequent when Pausanias wants to connect 'the first time' of the ritual action in the past, with his 'own time' *eti kai nun*, 'still now'. That is what I mentioned before: this kind of reflexion maintains the idea of continuity between past and present. But in the case of Patrae and its Laphria festival, the link with the past is very different from other cases of *eti kai nun*, or *es eme eti*. We will immediately see why.¹⁴

τὸ μὲν σχῆμα τοῦ ἀγάλματος θηρέουσά ἐστιν, ἐλέφαντος δὲ καὶ χρυσοῦ πεποίηται, Ναυπάκτιοι δὲ Μέναιχμος καὶ Σοῖδας εἰργάσαντο· τειμαίρονται σφᾶς Κανάχου τοῦ Σικωνίου καὶ τοῦ Αἰγινήτου Κάλλωνος οὐ πολλῶ γενέσθαι τινὲ ἡλικίαν ὑστέρους.

¹³ On this point, cf. PIRENNE-DELFORGE, *l.c.* (n. 1), and the work *Retour à la source...* (n. 11).

¹⁴ Pausanias, VII, 18, 11-13: ἄγουσι δὲ καὶ Λάφρια ἐορτὴν τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι οἱ Πατρέεις ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος, ἐν ᾗ τὸς ἐπιχώριος θυσίας ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς. περὶ μὲν τὸν βωμὸν ἐν κύνῳ ξύλῳ ἰστάσιν ἐπὶ χλωρᾷ καὶ ἐς ἐνκαίδενα ἕκαστον πήχεις· ἐντὸς δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ τὰ αὐτότατά σφισι τῶν ξύλων κεῖται. μηχανῶνται δὲ ὑπὸ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐορτῆς καὶ ἄνοδον ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν λειοτέραν, ἐπιφέροντες γῆν ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ τοὺς ἀναβασμούς. (12) πρῶτα μὲν δὴ πομπὴν μεγαλοπρεπεστάτην τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι πομπέουσι, καὶ ἡ ἱερωμένη παρθένος ὀχεῖται τελευταία τῆς πομπῆς ἐπὶ ἐλάφῳ ὑπὸ τὸ ἄρμα ἐξευγμένων· ἐς δὲ τὴν

(11) Every year too the people of Patrae celebrate the festival Laphria in honour of their Artemis, and at it they employ a method of sacrifice peculiar to the place. Round the altar in a circle they set up logs of wood still green, each of them sixteen cubits long. Inside on top of the altar lies the driest of their wood. At the time of the festival, they construct a smoother ascent to the altar by piling earth upon the altar steps. (12) The festival begins with a most splendid procession in honour of Artemis and the maiden officiating as priestess rides last in the procession upon a car yoked to deer. It is, however, not till the next day that the sacrifice is offered, and not only the city officially, but also the private individuals take part to the festival emulously. For the people throw alive onto the altar edible birds and victims of all kinds, and further wild boars, deer and gazelles; some bring even wolf and bear cubs, others even fully grown wild beasts. They also place on the altar fruit of cultivated trees. (13) Next they set fire to the wood. At this point I saw some of the beasts, including a bear, forcing their way outside at the first rush of the flames, some of them even escaping by their violence. But those who had thrown them in drive them back to the pyre. It is not remembered that anybody has ever been wounded by the beasts.

This ritual has been extensively studied but modern studies can only use one source of information: Pausanias' text in his seventh book. That is all.¹⁵ So I think it is necessary to tackle the problem from another angle, to have a more or less fresh look at this puzzling ritual. Even if it does not seem as complicated as the Daidala, the Laphria, as described by Pausanias, presents some strange features which require a new explanation. Let us consider each aspect of this ritual in turn.

ἐπιούσαν τηνικαῦτα ἤδη δρᾶν τὰ ἐς τὴν θυσίαν νομίζουσι, δημοσίᾳ τε ἡ πόλις καὶ οὐχ ἥσσον ἐς τὴν ἑορτὴν οἱ ἰδιῶται φιλοτίμως ἔχουσιν. ἐσβάλλουσι γὰρ ζῶντας ἐς τὸν βωμὸν ὄρνιθας τε τοὺς ἐδωδίστους καὶ ἱερεῖα ὁμοίως ἅπαντα, ἔτι δὲ ὕς ἀγρίους καὶ ἐλάφους τε καὶ δορυκάδας, οἱ δὲ καὶ λύων καὶ ἄρκτων σκύμνους, οἱ δὲ καὶ τὰ τέλεια τῶν θηρίων καταπιθέασι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν καὶ δένδρων καρπὸν τῶν ἡμέρων. (13) τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τούτου πῦρ ἐνίσσιν ἐς τὰ ξύλα. ἐνταῦθα ποῦ καὶ ἄρκτων καὶ ἄλλο τι ἐθεασάμην τῶν ζῶων, τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ τὴν πρώτην ὀρμὴν τοῦ πυρός βιαζόμενα ἐς τὸ ἐκτός, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκτρέγοντα ὑπὸ ἰσχύος ταῦτα οἱ ἐμβαλόντες ἐπανάγουσιν αὐτοὺς ἐς τὴν πυράν. τρωθῆναι δὲ οὐδένα ὑπὸ <τῶν> θηρίων μνημονεύουσιν.

¹⁵ M.P. NILSSON, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung*, Leipzig, 1906, p. 218-225; *id.*, "Fire Festivals in Ancient Greece", *JHS* 43 (1923), p. 144-148; J. HERBILLON, *Les cultes de Patras*, Baltimore, 1929, p. 55-74; U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* I, Berlin, 1931, p. 381-386; L. BODSON, *Ἱερὰ ζῶα. Contribution à l'étude de la place de l'animal dans la religion grecque ancienne*, Bruxelles, 1978, p. 127-128; G. PICCALUGA, "L'olocausto di Patrai", in *Le sacrifice dans l'Antiquité*, Vandœuvres-Genève, 1981 (*Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique*, 27), p. 243-277; J.-P. VERNANT, *Annuaire du collège de France. Résumé des cours et travaux*, 81, 1980/1, esp. p. 397-398; W.D. FURLEY, *Studies in the use of fire in ancient Greek religion*, New York, 1981, p. 116-151 ("The Rites of Artemis at Patrae"); P. ELLINGER, *La légende nationale phocidienne. Artémis, les situations extrêmes et les récits de guerre d'anéantissement*, Paris, 1993 (*BCH*, suppl. 27), p. 240-246; A. PETROPOULOU, "The Laphrian holocaust at Patrai and its Celtic parallel. A ritual with Indo-European components", *Religio graeco-romana. Festschrift für W. Pötscher*, Graz, 1993 (*GB*, suppl. 5), p. 313-334; M. OSANNA, *Santuari e culti dell'Acaia antica*, Perugia, 1996, p. 142-149; Y. LAFOND, "Artémis en Achaïe", *REG* 104 (1991), p. 410-433, esp. p. 424-427. On the name "Laphria", see E. LEPORE, "Epitèti à divinità plurime: Artemide Laphria", in *Les grandes figures religieuses. Fonctionnement pratique et symbolique dans l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1986 (*Annales litt. de l'Univ. de Besançon*, 329. *Lire les polythéismes*, 1), p. 149-156.

The meaning of *epichōrios*

In the *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique* on Greek sacrifice, held in Geneva in 1980, Walter Burkert asked, in the discussion following G. Piccaluga's paper¹⁶ (p. 287): "Heisst *epichōrios* 'in lokaler tradition verwurzelt' oder einfach 'eine ihnen eigentümliche Art von Opfer'", a particular mode of sacrifice? If we compare this use with the other occurrences of *epichōrios* in the *Periegesis*, *epichōrios* can mean both: the religious action is labelled 'local' because of its peculiarities.¹⁷ So the sacrifice at Patrae is at one and the same time 'local' and 'peculiar', that means different from a 'standard' rule. It reflects the local level of the religious practice, compared to a normative Panhellenic consensus. It means that *epichōrios* does not necessarily point to an archaic ritual action, deeply rooted in a local tradition. This can be the case, but is not automatically so.

When Pausanias insists on the immemorial tradition of a religious practice, he uses the epithet *archaios*. We have a good example in Olympia, when the visitor presents the monthly sacrifices on all the altars in the Altis. They sacrifice, he says, 'in an ancient manner' (V, 15, 10: θύουσι δὲ ἀρχαῖόν τινα τρόπον). They burn incense with wheat kneaded with honey on the altars, also placing on them twigs of olive, and using wine for libation, except for the Nymphs and for Despoina. In Pausanias' own representation of the past, this sacrificial mode was the purest way to honour the gods.¹⁸ It reflects indeed his predilection in this matter. The Olympic sacrifice is not *epichōrios*. It simply echoes an ancient Greek tradition. It is the relic of a primitive purity and close relationship with the gods.

It is accordingly very difficult to assess the antiquity of this incredible ritual for Artemis Laphria: *epichōrios* does not give any chronological indication and Pausanias is our sole informant. But he delivers first-hand information: he attended the festival and he explicitly describes it, as we have seen. To evaluate the antiquity of this sacrifice, we cannot ignore the fact that Patrae was founded anew by Augustus and received Artemis' image with the spoils of Calydon. The festival is a good illustration of the problems involved in understanding ancient Greek religion and its 'ritual dynamics' through Pausanias text.¹⁹

¹⁶ PICCALUGA, *l.c.* (n. 15).

¹⁷ PIRENNE-DELFORGE, *l.c.* (n. 1).

¹⁸ V. PIRENNE-DELFORGE, "Les rites sacrificiels dans la *Périégèse* de Pausanias", in KNOEPFLER – PIÉART (eds), *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 109-134, esp. p. 129-132.

¹⁹ AUFFARTH, *l.c.* (n. 8), p. 228-230; Y. LAFOND, "Pausanias et le panthéon de Patras : l'identité religieuse d'une cité grecque devenue colonie romaine", in PIRENNE-DELFORGE, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 195-208.

The sacrificial procedure

Historians of Greek religion have often identified the Laphria festival at Patrae as a good example of so-called 'primitive sacrificial violence'.²⁰ More or less consciously, the prehistoric mistress of the animals is always outlined behind this kind of 'Artemisiac' frenzy. And we fly over the centuries, or even thousands of years, to connect our source of information and the 'reality' it is supposed to reflect. The Laphria festival has thus been considered the best illustration of what we call, with a Greek word, a 'holocaust'. Nevertheless, even if we postulate the antiquity of this ritual, we have still to fill the chronological gap in order to explain the 'immemorial local roots' of this Imperial context. Many ingenious solutions have been proposed. Since the early 20th century, scholarship has provided three main hypotheses.

First proposition: In the context of Artemis Laphria's cult at Calydon, the goddess' native country, such a ritual was already being performed, and Augustus transferred it to Patrae with the image.²¹

Second proposition: In the ancient city of Patrae, long before Augustus, such a sacrificial ritual was already being performed in honour of Artemis Laphria, and this was revitalized by Augustus.²²

Third and last proposition: The sacrificial ritual, the 'holocaust', was a part of another cult of Artemis, Artemis Triklaria, which was attested in Patrae from an early time; it was transferred to the cult of the goddess called Laphria once the Calydonian image was established on the acropolis.²³

The first hypothesis supposes the performance of a so-called 'holocaust' in Calydon. But nothing in the Aetolian cult of Artemis Laphria supports this idea. Claudia Antonetti, in her thesis on the Aetolians' religion, is very cautious and does not really agree with this hypothesis. Following the editors of the publication of the Danish-Greek excavations at Calydon, she rejects the view that the practices in the cult of Artemis at Patrae were derived from Calydon, for there is no trace of an altar large enough for holocausts such as Pausanias describes.²⁴

Another argument can be put forward: if the 'holocaust' really was an essential element for the Calydonian cult of the Laphria, it would have been performed in the other cult of the Aetolian Laphria that is attested. At Messene, this cult was established by some Messenian exiles from Naupactus in Aetolia. But Pausanias, who is once more the one and only source of information, does not say anything about a holocaust. Let us examine the text. We are with Pausanias in the agora of Messene. He has just mentioned a

²⁰ NILSSON, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 219 : "echt altertümliche Opfer".

²¹ NILSSON, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 218 : "... der ganze Kult, fremd [ist]..."

²² HERBILLON, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 57-58; ELLINGER, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 247; prudent evaluation by ARAFAT, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 136.

²³ OSANNA, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 141-146. Cf. WILAMOWITZ, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 385.

²⁴ CL. ANTONETTI, *Les Éoliens. Image et religion*, Paris, 1990, p. 253-260; PICCALUGA (*l.c.* [n. 15], p. 321, n. 60) does not agree but without giving adequate reasons.

noteworthy image of the Mother of the gods made by Damophon, the famous local sculptor, and goes on to speak about another work of Damophon:²⁵

By Damophon too is the so-called Laphria at Messene. The cult came to be established among them in the following way. Among the people of Calydon, Artemis, who was worshipped above all the gods, had the *epikleisis* Laphria; and the Messenians, who received Naupactus from the Athenians, being at that time close neighbours of the Aetolians, adopted her from the people of Calydon. I will describe her appearance in another place. The name of Laphria spread only to the Messenians and to the Achaeans of Patrae.

Nothing is said about a sacrifice or any cult peculiarities. When Pausanias postpones the description of Laphria's image, he does announce the seventh book. But only the *schêma*, and not the ritual itself, is put off for the time being. Another point deserves attention at the same place: one paragraph further, Pausanias mentions a temple and an image of Ilithyia. And then:²⁶

Near it, there is a *megaron* of the Kouretes, where they make burnt offerings of every kind of living creature: they begin with cattle and goats, and end with birds, throwing all of them into the flames. There is also a holy sanctuary of Demeter at Messene...

Here is a 'holocaust', but not for Artemis Laphria. We can presume that Pausanias would have made a link between both rituals if the Messenian Laphria had received such a sacrifice. This link would have been all the more probable, because he makes an implicit cross-reference to the description of Patrae and its Laphria. In this case, the argument *ex silentio* seems to be valid. I will come back soon to this Messenian sacrifice to the Kouretes.

Another argument supporting the first hypothesis, which puts the huge Laphrian sacrifice in the Aetolian homeland of the goddess, is connected with the story of the so-called "Phocian despair". According to Pausanias (X, 1, 7-9), it is one of the most famous passages in the general history of the Phocians after the Trojan and the Persian wars! The Thessalians have taken the field against the Phocian cities. After an obscure Apollonian oracle, some Phocians are defeated and the situation becomes desperate. They decide to gather their women and children, all their movable property, their clothes, their gold and silver, and the images of their gods. Thirty men are left in charge to put the women and children to the sword, then place them and the valuables on a vast pyre made in advance, to set the fire and kill themselves

²⁵ Pausanias, IV, 31, 7 (transl. W.H.S. JONES): Δαμοφῶντος δὲ ἐστὶ τούτου καὶ ἡ Λαφρία καλουμένη παρὰ Μεσσηνίοις· σέβεσθαι δὲ σμῖν ἀπὸ τοιοῦδε αὐτὴν καθέστηκε. Καλυδωνίοις ἡ Ἄρτεμις – ταύτην γὰρ θεῶν μάλιστα ἔσεβον – ἐπὶ κλήσιν εἶχε Λαφρία· Μεσσηνίων δὲ οἱ λαβόντες Ναύρακτον παρὰ Ἀθηναίων – τηνικαῦτα γὰρ Αἰτωλίας ἐγγύτατα ὦκουν παρὰ Καλυδωνίων ἔλαβον. τὸ σχῆμα ἐτέρωθι δηλώσω. τὸ μὲν δὲ τῆς Λαφρίας ἀφίκετο ὄνομα ἕξ τε Μεσσηνίους καὶ ἐς Πατρεῖς Ἀχαιῶν μόνους...

²⁶ Pausanias, IV, 31, 9 (transl. W.H.S. JONES): πλησίον δὲ Κουρήτων μέγαρον, ἔνθα ζῶα τὰ πάντα ὁμοίως καθαιρίζουσιν· ἀρξάμενοι γὰρ ἀπὸ βοῶν τε καὶ αἰγῶν καταβαίνουσιν ἐς τοὺς ὄρνιθας ἀφιέντες ἐς τὴν φλόγα.

just after, if the Phocian army is defeated by the Thessalians. Having in their mind's eye the fate they were reserving to their women and children, the Phocians were so courageous on the battlefield that they won the most glorious victory of the age. Plutarch adds another piece of information: each year at Hyampolis, a festival for Artemis Elaphebolos commemorated this victory.²⁷

In considering such a dossier, Nilsson, and others after him,²⁸ have seen in the Phocian despair an aetiological myth explaining a ritual similar to the Laphrian holocaust. And the next step was easy to take: Artemis Elaphebolos in Phocis could be the same goddess as Artemis Laphria in Aetolia; both goddesses are honoured by holocausts, and this assimilation supports the Calydonian origin of the *epichōrios* sacrifice at Patrae.²⁹ Once again, it is not that simple to regard the Phocian despair as an aetiological myth. The story has been carefully studied by Pierre Ellinger in his thesis on *Artémis et les récits de guerre d'anéantissement*.³⁰ He has shown that it is audacious to base the argument on the Phocian despair story to recreate a supposed ritual in Hyampolis. Moreover, the assimilation between Artemis Elaphebolos and Artemis Laphria seems to be very weak. One piece of evidence can nevertheless be produced and will be discussed briefly.

A four-line inscription found at Hyampolis is a dedication of an agonothes, dated by Dittenberger back to the time of Caesar or Augustus (1st century BC):³¹

(X, son of X...) has consecrated at his own expense to (...) and to the city, having been twice agonothes of the Great Kaisareia and of the Great Elaphebolia and Laphria, games of which the one and the first he introduced and celebrated at his own expense.

Ellinger argues that the Great Elaphebolia and Laphria are one: a double name for one and the same festival. But he is conscious that the notion of introduction in this inscription is problematic. Michel Sève, who studies the inscription in Ellinger's book, argues that the introduction is only related to the Megala Kaisareia, and the celebration concerns the Elaphebolia-Laphria, because: "personne ne peut supposer sérieusement que les Elaphebolia-Laphria n'auraient été créés qu'à l'époque impériale".³² For W.K. Pritchett, who also studied this inscription, Laphria and Elaphebolia are two distinct

²⁷ Plutarch, *Moralia*, 244e; 660d.

²⁸ The last is PETROPOULOU, *l.c.* (n. 15).

²⁹ NILSSON, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 221-222. He offers such a doubtful reconstruction for the 'holocaust' of Isis at Tithorea, attested only by Pausanias and which is interpreted as an heritage of an Artemisiac cult at this place (p. 218, quoted and assumed by PETROPOULOU, *l.c.* [n. 15], p. 319).

³⁰ ELLINGER, *o.c.* (n. 15).

³¹ *IG IX, 1, 90*: ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ἀνέθηκεν καὶ τῇ πόλει, ἀγωνοθ[ε] | τήρας αὐτοῦ τῶν μεγάλων Καισαρέων καὶ τῶν μεγάλων Ἐλαφηβολίων τε καὶ Λαφρίων δίς, οὓς ἀγῶνας | μόνος καὶ πρῶτος εἰσηγήσατο καὶ ἐτέλεσεν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων[ων].

³² SÈVE, in ELLINGER, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 345-346.

festivals at Hyampolis, the first for Apollo Laphrios, and the second for Artemis Elaphebolos. The text could reflect some reorganization or reinstitution of the festivals at Hyampolis in Roman times, as attested in other examples, like the Ptoia at Akraiphia in Boiotia (*SEG* 32, 439). Pritchett's scenario is the following: after Kalapodi was levelled by Sylla, and the Elaphebolia and Laphria lapsed for a considerable number of years, these two festivals were reinstated at Hyampolis, where the stone was found, and a third festival was added in honour of the Roman benefactors.³³ I follow Pritchett's hypothesis in one point: the Elaphebolia and the Laphria are two distinct festivals. In the present instance, this inscription does not support the hypothesis that the cult of Artemis Elaphebolos and Artemis Laphria were the same.

However that may be, the first hypothesis finds no real support in the collected evidence.

Let us turn to the second hypothesis, *i.e.* in the ancient city of Patrae, long before Augustus, such a sacrificial ritual was performed in honour of Artemis Laphria and revitalized by Augustus. This proposition must immediately be rejected, because we know nothing of any such cult before the Roman period. Secondly, it implies an ancient cult transfer from Calydon, with the holocaust ritual. That means we have to build this second doubtful hypothesis on the first proposition, which is not reliable either.

The third proposition deserves more attention. It supposes that the sacrificial ritual, the 'holocaust' formed a part of the cult of another Artemis, attested in Patrae from an early time, Artemis Triklaria, and was transferred to the cult of the goddess called Laphria when the Calydonian image had been established on the acropolis.

Just after his description of the Laphrian ritual, Pausanias comes back to the topography of the acropolis and mentions the tomb of Eurypylus. When this man arrived in the country, says Pausanias, the wrath of the goddess Artemis was so heavy on the local Ionians who visited her sanctuary that they had to offer a human sacrifice each year to satisfy the goddess surnamed Triklaria. Pausanias likes love stories and we learn that the virgin priestess of Artemis and her lover had transformed the goddess' sanctuary into a wedding-chamber, as he says. "Pitiable, indeed, was the fate of the innocent youths and maidens who perished on account of Melanippus and Comaetho, and pitiable too the lot of their kinsfolk. But the lovers, I take it, were beyond the reach of sorrow; for human beings alone, better is it than life itself to love and to be loved" (VII, 19, 5).

The inhabitants had received an oracle from Delphi: a foreign king (βασιλεὺς ξένος) would come to their land bringing a foreign *daimôn* (ξενικὸς δαίμων) with him, and would stop the sacrifices to the Triklaria. This man was Eurypylus. Coming back from Troy, where he went out of his mind because of an image of Dionysus, he was travelling with a chest containing the image.

³³ W.K. PRITCHETT, *Greek Archives, Cults and Topography*, Amsterdam, 1996, p. 105 sq.

He had received an oracle too: wherever he found people offering a foreign or strange sacrifice (θυσίαν ξένην), he would set down the chest and stop his wanderings. Once the three foreign peculiarities come together, the happy end occurs: the mental disorder of Eurypylus and the local sacrifice are both ended. And each year, Eurypylus receives an *enagismos*, a so-called “chthonian sacrifice” as a hero, at the time when the inhabitants celebrate the festival of Dionysus.³⁴

These two cults, for Artemis on the one hand, and for Dionysus on the other, are said to be very ancient, closely related, in the vision of the past given at Patrae.³⁵ The tomb of Eurypylus is situated on the acropolis, but Pausanias localized both sanctuaries, Artemis Triklaria and Dionysus Aisymnetes, in the *chôra*, outside the city of Patrae. So, if we imagine that the holocaust offered to Artemis Laphria on the acropolis was first offered to Artemis Triklaria, we have to suppose – and some have done so – that the goddess had a sanctuary on the acropolis too, or that a huge sacrifice was offered in the *chôra* before Imperial times. The proposition of associating the Laphrian holocaust to the ancestral cult of the Triklaria has been argued by Massimo Osanna. He proposed to connect the sacrificial ideology of the holocaust with the initiatic background of the aetiological myth of the human sacrifice. Accordingly, Augustus would have reorganized the cults on the acropolis of Patrae bringing the Calydonian Laphria exactly as Eurypylus, coming from Delphi, had brought Dionysos and restored civic harmony. In this manner, the holocaust for Artemis would be more ancient than the arrival of the Laphria, and *epichōrios* would mean ‘local’ and ‘ancient’.³⁶

Another scholar, Yves Lafond, the editor of Pausanias’ seventh book in the *Collection des Universités de France*, following a perspective very close to Osanna’s, has proposed connecting the holocaust with another local cult of Artemis, also known by Pausanias. Artemis, called Limnatis, was supposed to have been brought from Laconia by Preuges, the father of Patreus.³⁷ In the Imperial ideology, Augustus was considered as a new founder. This conception would have been supported by the assimilation between Augustus, Preuges and Patreus, and with an image coming from outside, Dionysus on

³⁴ Pausanias, VII, 19, 1-10. On this kind of sacrifice in the Imperial period: G. EKROTH, “Pausanias and the Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults”, in R. HÄGG (ed.), *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*. Proceedings of the Fifth Intern. Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult (Göteborg Univ., 21-23 April 1995), Stockholm, 1999 (*ActaAth-8°*, 16), p. 145-158.

³⁵ M. MASSENZIO, “La festa di Artemis Triklaria e Dioniso Aisymnetes a Patrai”, *SMSR* 39 (1968), p. 101-132; A. BRELICH, *Paidēs e Parthenoi*, Roma, 1969, p. 366-377; J. REDFIELD, “From sex to politics: the rites of Artemis Triklaria and Dionysos Aisymnetes at Patras”, in D.M. HALPERIN, J.J. WINKLER, F.I. ZEITLIN (eds), *Before sexuality*, Princeton, 1990, p. 115-134; K. DOWDEN, *Death and the Maiden*, London, 1989, p. 169-173; P. BONNECHERE, *Le sacrifice humain en Grèce ancienne*, Liège, 1994 (*Kernos*, suppl. 3), p. 55-62; OSANNA, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 132-141.

³⁶ OSANNA, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 142; . M. MOGGI, M. OSANNA, *Pausania. Guida della Grecia. Libro VII. L’Acaia*, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 2000, p. 293-294.

³⁷ Pausanias, VII, 20, 8.

the one hand, Artemis on the other.³⁸ Moreover, the cruel Artemis of Patrae is very familiar to the readers of the third book of the *Periegesis*: The mythical and ritual context of Artemis Orthia' cult in Sparta was also connected with madness, a mighty statue coming from abroad, blood, human sacrifice, and ritual transformation.³⁹ The mythical pattern of Orthia closely recalls what is said at Patrae about Artemis Triklaria and Dionysus Aisymnetes.

This comparison paves the way to a solution in the interpretation of the so-called holocaust. It has been argued that the bloody show of the Orthia ritual at Sparta was an Imperial reconstruction, supposed to reflect the ancient city ruled by Lycurgus. The ephebic flagellation was put on stage in a 'tourist' perspective, in accordance with Roman sensibility. The violence displayed in this context had the flavour of antiquity and was in accordance with the taste for spectacular shows. With all these ideas in hand, let us turn again to the ritual of Patrae.

Massimo Osanna and Yves Lafond have both adequately presented the political and religious reorganization of Patrae by Augustus. Both have noticed the problem posed by the strange ritual of the Laphria, without following the idea to its ultimate conclusion, which I will try to do now.

First, the chronological problem. Pausanias was in Patrae some hundred and fifty years after the creation of the Colonia Augusta.⁴⁰ The transfer of the Calydonian image was no longer a current concern in any sense of the word. If the sacrifice had been performed each year since this transfer, it was a tradition of many years' standing when Pausanias visited the town. Secondly, there is the question of the nature of the sacrifice. What was really done each year on the acropolis of Patrae? Why did Pausanias call the sacrifice *epichōrios*? I have shown that the chronology is a problem in this case. But the very nature of this sacrifice is another problem, even much greater, notably because the animals are not ritually killed before being burnt as in the other sacrifices of this type presented by Pausanias. Let us consider the two examples at hand, which could eventually be recognized as a 'holocaust' for gods, even if Pausanias does not use the term – and in no other place in the *Periegesis*.

– At Messene, as we have seen before, all kinds of animals are sacrificed to the Kouretes, oxen, goats and birds, thrown into the flames. The structure is a *megaron*, and we can postulate the ritual killing of the animals before being thrown into the flames. A holocaust is performed, that means a normal sacrificial procedure followed by the integral destruction of the victims.

³⁸ LAFOND, *l.c.* (n. 19), p. 195-208, esp. p. 202, 205.

³⁹ Pausanias, III, 16, 7-11.

⁴⁰ On this foundation: G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Augustus and the Greek World*, Oxford, 1965, p. 92-95; J.-M. RODDAZ, *Marcus Agrippa*, Paris/Rome, 1984, p. 431-432; ARAFAT, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 134-138; A.D. RIZAKIS, *Achaïe II. La cité de Patras : épigraphie et histoire*, Athènes, 1998 (*Meletemata*, 25), p. 24-28.

– At Plataia, during the Daidala, many victims are burnt too:⁴¹

On the peak of the mountain an altar has been prepared, which they make in the following way. They fit together quadrangular pieces of wood, putting them together just as if they were making a stone building, and having raised it to a height they place brushwood upon the altar. The cities with their magistrates sacrifice a cow to Hera and a bull to Zeus, burning on the altar the victims, full of wine and incense, along with the *Daidala*. Rich people, as individuals, sacrifice what they wish; but the less wealthy sacrifice the smaller cattle; all the victims alike are burnt. The fire seizes the altar and the victims as well, and consumes them all together. I know of no blaze that is so high, or seen so far as this.

Here the sacrificial procedure is quite sophisticated, and can be reconstituted as follows: the victims offered by the cities are ritually killed, their entrails, *splanchna*, having perhaps to be set apart and substituted by wine and incense. At a private level, we can postulate a normal sacrificial procedure for the animal killing and then integral destruction.

In both examples, animals have to be killed before the '*kathagizein*', using Pausanias' own word. At Patrae, all the animals are still alive when the fire is set. Secondly, at Messene or at Plataia, domestic animals are sacrificed, as in most cases in Greece or even in Rome. At Patrae, Pausanias mentions every kind of victim, but has obviously been impressed by wild animals such as boar, deer, and gazelle, wolves or bears. If this is a sacrifice, it looks rather strange.

Looking for Greek parallels⁴², we can only pick out a piece of evidence from Xenophon's *Anabasis*, when he speaks about his estate at Scillus, near Olympia. He idyllically describes his estate and the sanctuary of Artemis Ephesia funded by booty from his Asiatic adventures:⁴³

Here he built an altar and a temple with the sacred money, and from that time forth he would every year take the tithe of the products of the land in their season and offer sacrifice to the goddess, all the citizens and the men and women of the neighbourhood taking part in the festival. And the goddess would provide for the

⁴¹ Pausanias, IX, 3, 7-8 (transl. W.H.S. JONES): εὐτρέπιστα δὲ σφισιν ἐπὶ τῇ κορυφῇ τοῦ ὄρους βωμός, ποιοῦσι δὲ τρώπῳ τοιῶδε τὸν βωμόν· ξύλα τετράγωνα ἀρμόζοντες πρὸς ἄλληλα συντιθέασιν κατὰ ταῦτα καὶ εἰ λίθων ἐπιποιῶντο οἰκοδομῶν, ἐξάραντες δὲ ἐς ὑψος φρύγανα ἐπιφέρουσιν. (8) αἱ μὲν δὲ πόλεις καὶ τὰ τέλη θήλειαν θύσαντες τῇ Ἥρᾳ βοῦν ἕκαστοι καὶ ταῦρον τῷ Διὶ τὰ ἱερεῖα οἴνου καὶ θυμιαμάτων πλήρη καὶ τὰ δαίδαλα ὁμοῦ καθαγίζουσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ, ἰδιῶται δὲ ὅποσα θύουσιν οἱ πλούσιοι· τοῖς δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίως δυναμ<ένο>ις τὰ λεπτότερα τῶν προβάτων θύειν καθέστηκεν, καθαγίζειν δὲ τὰ ἱερεῖα ὁμοίως πάντα. σὺν δὲ σφισι καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν βωμόν ἐπιλαβὼν τὸ πῦρ ἐξανήλωσε·μεγίστην δὲ ταύτην φλόγα καὶ ἐκ μακροτάτου σύνοπτον οἶδα ἀρθεῖσαν.

⁴² Lucian, in *De Syria Dea*, 49, gives Syrian evidence.

⁴³ Xenophon, *Anabasis* V, 3, 9-10 (transl. C.L. BROWNSON, *Loeb Classical Library*): ἐποίησε δὲ καὶ βωμόν καὶ ναὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἀργυρίου, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν δὲ αἰεὶ δεκατεύων τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἀγροῦ ὠρεῖα θυσίαν ἐποίει τῇ θεῷ, καὶ πάντες οἱ πολῖται καὶ οἱ πρόσχωροι ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες μετείχον τῆς ἐορτῆς. παρεῖχε δὲ ἡ θεὸς τοῖς σιτηνοῦσιν ἄλφιτα, ἄρτους, οἶνον, τραγήματα, καὶ τῶν θυομένων ἀπὸ τῆς ἱερᾶς νομῆς λάχος, καὶ τῶν θηρευομένων δέ. καὶ γὰρ θήραν ἐποιούντο εἰς τὴν ἐορτὴν οἱ τε Ξενοφώντας παῖδες καὶ οἱ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν, οἱ δὲ βουλόμενοι καὶ ἄνδρες ξυνεθήρων· καὶ ἡλίσσαστο τὰ μὲν ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἱεροῦ χώρου, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς Φολόης, σῦες καὶ δορυάδες καὶ ἔλαφοι.

banqueters barley meal and loaves of bread, wine and sweetmeats, and a portion of the sacrificial victims from the sacred herd as well as of the victims taken in the chase. For Xenophon's sons and the sons of the other citizens used to have a hunting expedition at the time of the festival, and any grown men who so wished would join them; and they captured their game partly from the sacred precinct itself and partly from Mount Pholöe – boars and gazelles and stags.

This agrarian and pastoral festival is a feast for the whole neighbourhood. Each participant partakes of the meal provided by the sacrificial victims on the one hand, by the animals shot during the hunt on the other. The text is very clear: τῶν θυομένων on the one hand, τῶν θηρευομένων, on the other. Artemis is a huntress, as we all know, and she is concerned with this typically male activity. She usually received the tithe of each hunt, whether the head, horns, teeth, skin or feet.⁴⁴ But wild animals, caught during the hunting expedition, were not ritually killed as domestic ones were.⁴⁵ In Xenophon's case, we have a ritual on the one hand, and an athletic achievement on the other, both under the protection of Artemis the huntress goddess.

In Patrae, Pausanias' description of the Laphria presents analogies with what has just been mentioned, but it also presents deep differences. Firstly, the analogies: cattle and hunting activity are present in both cases. Artemis' functions are identical too; she is concerned at the same time with cattle and with wild animals. Secondly, the differences: at Scillus, the agrarian dimension of the festival is well illustrated, much more so than at Patrae, where Pausanias only mentions the fruits of cultivated trees. Next, at Patrae all kinds of victims, still alive, are destroyed by fire.

Let us recapitulate the main characteristics of the Laphria:

- a great propensity for gathering victims (φλοτῖμωζ);
- the extent of the hunt, which is the first step of this ritual;
- the large cost of this operation, which did not seem to suppose any return for the participants as food to bring home or to eat on the spot;
- the miscellany of victims, where wild animals seem predominant;
- the Imperial date of our single piece of evidence.

All these peculiarities call for an elucidation, because this ritual is quite exceptional in the evidence at hand, be it literary or epigraphical. Quoting Angelos Chaniotis once more, we can argue that “festivals known primarily or exclusively from late sources are the result of the natural and unavoidable tensions and conflicts between an inherently conservative element on the one hand and a very dynamic element on the other: between ritual actions, which have to be performed in a particular way, and the continually changing

⁴⁴ *Anthologia Palatina* VI, 35; 57; 106; 111; 113-116; 168; 332. Schol. Aristoph., *Ploutos*, 944. Cf. J. AYMARD, *Essai sur les chasses romaines, des origines à la fin du siècle des Antonins*, Paris, 1951, p. 508-512.

⁴⁵ E.g. J.-L. DURAND et A. SCHNAPP, “Boucherie sacrificielle et chasses initiatiques”, *La cité des images. Religion et société en Grèce antique*, Paris, 1984, p. 49-66.

community of performers, participants, and receptors or spectators".⁴⁶ As far as the festival of the Laphria is concerned, we can even go farther in that direction. The simplest and most suitable explanation does not place the sacrifice's origin at Calydon, it does not suppose the antiquity of the cult in honour of Artemis Laphria at Patrae, and it does not attribute this huge ritual to the Triklaria or to the Limnatis. This simplest and most suitable explanation sees in this ritual an Augustan reconstruction, which perfectly fits the profile of Diana-Artemis, the huntress-goddess, for the Greeks and for the Romans. It was perfectly in accordance with the violent Roman shows and the taste for presumed antiquity.

Indeed, at Patrae, the 'community of performers, participants, and receptors or spectators' was deeply changed when the Colonia Augusta was created, the time when Laphria's image was brought from Calydon. Let us recall that the early Colonia Augusta was a veterans' colony. The soldiers who fought at Actium were the first settlers of the colony, with some people of the neighbouring Achaean towns. The relationship between Roman soldiers and Diana are well attested,⁴⁷ and a military dedication to the Diana of Patrae has been discovered at Aquincum on the Danube.⁴⁸ Moreover, it was necessary for reasons of community cohesion to associate the inhabitants of the new city with a common religious manifestation.⁴⁹ Its historical background was outside the new city (the Laphria coming from Calydon), but deeply rooted in Roman military devotion as much as in the rich Artemisiac past of the Greek city of Patrae. These public festivities promoted reciprocal emulation and physical strength, two essential components of Pausanias' description.

Another point to emphasize is the close association between the cult of Artemis Laphria at Patrae and the Augustan Imperial cult in the city. One inscription is very clear. We learn that the young priestess of Diana Augusta Laphria was in charge of the cult of Augustus too.⁵⁰ As Augustan ideology was

⁴⁶ CHANIOTIS, *l.c.* (n. 5), p. 24.

⁴⁷ G. WISSOWA, "Diane", *RE*, V 1 (1903), col. 335-336; E. BIRLEY, "The Religion of the Roman Army: 1895-1977", *ANRW* II, 16.2 (1978), p. 1535-1536; Chr. EPPLETT, "The Capture of Animals by the Roman Military", *G & R* 48 (2001), p. 210-222.

⁴⁸ *ILS*, 4044 (mid-2nd cent. AD[?]): *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) et Dianae Patr(ensi) sacr(um) C(aius) Iul(ius) Artemo trib(unus) Mil(itum) leg(ionis) II Ad(iutricis) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*, "Sacred to Juppiter Optimus Maximus and Diana of Patrae, Caius Iulius Artemo, military tribune of the 2nd legion Adiutrix, paid his vow willingly and deservedly".

⁴⁹ LAFOND, *l.c.* (n. 15), p. 426-427, on the civic cohesion implied by the cult. Cf. R.L. FOX, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantin*, London, 1986, p. 90-91.

⁵⁰ *CIL* III, 510 (= A. RIZAKIS, *Achaïe I, Sources textuelles et histoire régionale*, Athens, 1995 [Meletemata, 20], n° 5; early empire): *Aequanae Sex(ti) f(iliae) Musae sacerdoti Dianae Aug(ustae) Laphriae et sacerdoti Aug(usti) imagine et statu II (duabus) [h]on(oratae) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) Sex(tus) A(equa)nus pal(er)*, "To Aequana Musa, daughter of Sextus, priestess of Diana Augusta Laphria and priestess of Augustus, honoured by an image and two statues according to a decree of the decurions, her father Sextus Aequanus". Cf. I.A. PAPAPOSTOLOU, "Monuments des combats de gladiateurs à Patras", *BCH* 113 (1989), p. 351-401, esp. n. 13.

closely related to Apollo, this cultic association with the god's twin sister could have had some symbolic importance for the *imperator*.⁵¹ We do not really know how this Imperial cult evolved in the course of time at the civic level in Patras. Nevertheless the colony's religious history was deeply linked with its Augustean refoundation around Diana-Artemis. The connection between Diana and the *autokrator* was probably still alive when Pausanias arrived at Patras.

In this specific context, Pausanias' use of the term *epichōrios* perfectly fits the peculiarities of the sacrificial procedure, but does not necessarily root the ritual practice deeply in the past. In the particular conceptual framework peculiar to the *Periegesis*, the cult of Artemis Laphria sounds perfectly Greek and Greek only. Pausanias does not say anything of the probable goddess' association with the Imperial cult, which was certainly obvious in the topography of the acropolis of Patrae or even in Artemis' sanctuary. The ideological bias of Pausanias' work is here clearly attested.⁵²

Conclusion

In his impressive book on *Greek Religion*, Walter Burkert presents what he calls fire rituals. He first speaks about the ritual use of fire in general and comes then to the festivals, which, he infers, "are wholly defined by the destructive power of fire" and are "extravagantly costly". "The most detailed account of a festival of this kind", he continues, "is the one – admittedly from Imperial times – which Pausanias gives of the festival of Laphria at Patrae." After quoting the text, he concludes with relevance: "The sanctuary becomes an amphitheatre".⁵³ W. Burkert noticed the problem of this ritual, but without pursuing his idea to its ultimate conclusion. For him, Patrae's festival is a kind of prehistoric relic coming from Calydon, "clearly related to the Elaphebolia of Artemis of Hyampolis and the festival of the Kouretes in Messene", as he concludes on this point.

The present reconstruction hypothesis does not ignore the real Artemisiac background of this sort of tithe, offered each year to the goddess. Nevertheless, this analysis tries to challenge the *communis opinio* of the necessarily long-term tradition of the rituals documented in the Imperial period. The notion of ritual dynamics perfectly fits this perspective. The Laphria confront us with the coexistence of different levels: at a first level, the tithe offered to Artemis, a common ritual with cattle sacrifice, first-fruits offerings and parts of victims shot in hunting; at another level, assuming the new Roman influence, the transfer of Laphria's image created a festive and spectacular performance in the colony. What has been very often regarded as the best known example

⁵¹ Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 94, 4. Cf. AUFFARTH, *l.c.* (n. 8), p. 230-231.

⁵² This could be confirmed once more if the statues of Zeus Olympios, Athena and Hera (VII, 20, 3) were in fact the *interpretatio graeca* of the *Capitolium* in the colony : AUFFARTH, *l.c.* (n. 8), p. 231. *Contra* OSANNA, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 90-91.

⁵³ W. BURKERT, *Greek Religion*, Harvard, 1985, p. 62.

of a 'holocaust' in Greece seems to be something new. The example of the gladiatorial games and animal fights could be illuminating in this respect. As S. Price wrote several years ago: "They became very popular in the Greek world under the empire, [and they] were put on almost exclusively in connection with the imperial cult. But it would be wrong to imagine that this fact shows that imperial festivals were strongly Roman in flavour and out of keeping with traditional festivals".⁵⁴ This kind of complex reconstruction was certainly at the source of the so-called 'Patrean holocaust': something not entirely Greek or strictly Roman but an innovative experience remodelled on different traditions, with a deep sense of competition and physical strength.

Two last examples will support this point of view.

A Swedish scholar, Gunnel Ekroth, has recently published her thesis about the sacrificial rituals of Greek hero-cults.⁵⁵ She has convincingly shown that the common picture of these rituals in modern scholarly literature, dividing it into an olympian and a chthonian sphere, largely depends on Roman literary sources or lexicographers. With a careful study of the epigraphical and archaeological classical evidence, she has firmly established that our vision of the Greek heroic sacrificial ritual has been deeply influenced by some scholarly reconstructions of the Roman period, themselves influenced by some Homeric literary descriptions (when Odysseus consults the shade of Teiresias, for example). As far as the notions of *holokautos* sacrifice or *enagismos* are concerned, the Classical period does not offer as many examples as could be inferred from reading Pausanias. The second example is located at Corinth, another Roman colony visited by Pausanias several years after its refoundation. There, as Marcel Piérart has shown, the cult of Melikertes-Palaimon on the Isthmus was a scholarly reconstruction in the colony.⁵⁶

The available evidence for the Laphria at Patrae must be challenged, as Wilamowitz already felt seventy years ago.⁵⁷ In this case, the documentation makes such an investigation possible. Other rituals, only attested by Pausanias, would surely have to be challenged in the same way. Who could really tell how old the strange ritual is, which was performed each year in summertime at Hermion in Argolid?⁵⁸ The goddess Demeter is here called

⁵⁴ S. PRICE, *Rituals and Power. The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor*, Cambridge, 1984, p. 89.

⁵⁵ G. EKROTH, *The sacrificial rituals of Greek hero-cult in the Archaic and Classical periods*, Liège, 2002 (*Kernos*, suppl. 12).

⁵⁶ M. PIÉART, "Panthéon et hellénisation dans la colonie romaine de Corinthe : la « redécouverte » du culte de Palaimon à l'Isthme" *Kernos*, 11 (1998), p. 85-109. – C. PACHE, *Baby and Child Heroes in Ancient Greece*, Urbana/Chicago, 2004, chap. 6 (p. 132-180), studies the 'child hero' Palaimon in mythography with some insights into the cult without taking into account Piérart's analysis (the title of the paper is wrong in the bibliography).

⁵⁷ WILAMOWITZ, *o.c.* (n. 15), p. 386.

⁵⁸ Pausanias, II, 35, 4-8. Cf. M. JAMESON, "Inscriptions of the Peloponnesos. A. Hermione", *Hesperia* 22 (1953), p. 151-157; PIRENNE-DELFORGE, *l.c.* (n. 18), p. 115-116.

Chthonia and her festival Chthonia. Pausanias' description is very similar to that of the Laphria. First, the careful description of those who attend the procession; then the sacrificial victims, four fully-grown cows, which are hurried into the temple one after the other. Each one is killed behind the doors by four old women using a sickle to cut the beast's throat. There is a last peculiarity: on whichever side the first cow falls, all the others must fall the same way. Ritual dynamics have certainly played a role in the history of this type of sacrifice. But in this case, our evidence is too scanty for such an analysis.

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