

## THE MASK OF THE UNDERWORLD DAEMON—SOME REMARKS ON THE PERSEUS-GORGON STORY \*

At the VIIth Congress for the History of Religions, held at Amsterdam in 1950, the central question was posed whether a mythical-ritual pattern could be discerned in various ancient and modern civilisations. Reading the Congress Report, one does not get the impression that many final and far-reaching conclusions have been reached. Various conflicting views were brought forward in the section-meetings. But meanwhile the discussion goes on. And it may be not without interest to inquire into some individual cases where a ritual background behind some famous myth can be reconstructed, if not beyond all doubt, at least with a high degree of probability. In the following pages such an attempt is made in the case of the Seriphian Perseus-legend.

The present writer believes that there is a clue to the understanding of this story, which has been overlooked hitherto, namely its connexion with hot springs. A certain number of cults, myths, and legends were connected with such springs in the ancient Greek world; that they all show in origin a chthonic aspect is self-evident. But to dwell upon all of them would fall beyond the scope of this article. Let us for the present moment turn our attention to the thermal springs of that tiny piece of rock in the Aegean round which a major part of the Perseus-story centres.

*Seriphos* is one of the least important islands of the Cyclades, lying between Kythnos and Siphnos. It is a stony island: the ancients called it *τρηχίαι* or *πετρῶδης*, and in spite of the ever-strenuous efforts of the inhabitants, the soil does not bring forth many fruits; it has a certain importance because of the mines. Indeed, there is some evidence that these mines were used long before classical times,<sup>1</sup> but as no one of the classical writers mentions them, it seems probable that no exploitation took place in the historical period. In fact, the unimportance of the island made the Seriphians often an object of scorn and joke; the anecdote of Themistocles and the Seriphian is well known.<sup>2</sup> J. T. Bent<sup>3</sup> gives an account of a journey to Seriphos, a description of the island and especially of the local folklore. He mentions hot springs near the chapel of St. Isidore,<sup>4</sup> and says that a yearly festival is still held there. He also tells us that there exists a vivid superstitious belief in the Nereids among the inhabitants, who say that 'warm springs flow from their breasts'.

It is, meanwhile, a remarkable thing that such an unimportant island should be the centre of the famous Perseus-Gorgon legend. The story of it runs as follows:<sup>5</sup> Danae is put in a coffer with her little son Perseus by her father Acrisius, and thrown into the sea; they are driven by the waves towards Seriphos, where the coffer is caught by Dictys, the son of Peristhenes, in his nets. He receives the mother with her child, and keeps them in his house. When Perseus has grown up, Dictys' brother Polydectes, King of Seriphos, falls in love with Danae, but being afraid of her son, he contrives a plan to send him on a dangerous expedition. As his contribution to an *Eranos* held by Polydectes, Perseus boasts that he could bring the Gorgon-head: the king seizes the opportunity and sends him out to fetch it. The hero goes on his way, is helped by Hermes and Athena, and overcomes manifold difficulties. First he comes to the Graiai, daughters of Phorcys, named Pemphredo, Enyo, and Deino;<sup>6</sup> they have but one tooth and one eye in common, which Perseus takes away, and returns only on condition that they show him the way to the Nymphs; this they do, and from these Nymphs the hero receives the cap of Hades, which makes invisible, the winged sandals, and the pouch (*κιβισίς*); with the help of these objects<sup>7</sup> he overcomes the Gorgons and cuts off the head of the mortal Gorgon Medusa.<sup>8</sup> Then he returns to Seriphos, where he asks Polydectes to assemble the whole people, whereupon he takes the Gorgon-head from the pouch and turns them all into stones. With this frightful scene<sup>9</sup> the story, as far as it concerns Seriphos, ends.

\* *Introductory note.* This article is a slightly altered version of a chapter from my dissertation on cults, myths, and legends connected with hot springs in the Greek world, submitted to the University of Cambridge. I have to thank Professor W. K. C. Guthrie for much good advice.

*Note on some abbreviations:* Ross, *Inselr.*: L. Ross, *Reisen auf den griechischen Inseln des aegaeischen Meeres*, 3 vols., Stuttgart, 1840-45; *Cat. Br. Mus.*: A catalogue of Greek coins in the British Museum; Frazer, *Paus.*: J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias' description of Greece*, translated with a commentary, 6 vols., London, 1898. Nilsson, *GF*: M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste.*, Leipzig, 1906. *The Herdsman*: The author's *The Herdsman of the Dead*, Utrecht, 1952.

<sup>1</sup> See Büchner, *RE* II A, 1729 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 329 e; Plut. *Them.* 18.

<sup>3</sup> *The Cyclades*, Chapter I.

<sup>4</sup> Also observed by Ross, *Inselr.* I, 137, cf. the same writer's *Ἀσκαλ. Περιόδ.* II (1837), 167 sqq. (I have not seen the latter quotation.)

<sup>5</sup> The best tradition is in Pherecydes, Jacoby, 3 F 10-11

(Müller, fr. 26, vol. i p. 75), ap. schol. Apoll. Rhod. IV 1091, 1515; cf. also Pind., *Pyth.* X, 44 sq.; a good account also in Apollod. II, 4, 1-3. Only a very broad outline can be given here; fuller treatments, with details of variants, etc., in Roscher and *RE* s.v. 'Perseus'; Robert, *Griech. Heldens.* I, 222 sqq.; a useful collection of the main literary sources and the principal representations in art will be found in J. M. Woodward, *Perseus*, Cambridge, 1937; cf. also E. S. Hartland, quoted *infra* note 13.

<sup>6</sup> According to Apollod., they are sisters of the Gorgons, cf. Hesiod, *Theog.* 270 sqq.; Tz., Schol. Lycophr. 838. According to others, they are guardians of the Gorgons.

<sup>7</sup> And other weapons, which according to other traditions he gets from Hephaestus, Hermes, and Athena.

<sup>8</sup> Thereupon Pegasus and Chrysaor are born from the Gorgon's blood; this is told by Apollod., but it is found as early as Hesiod, *l.c.*

<sup>9</sup> The oldest evidence is a b.f. vase, ed. by Kretschmer, *JdI* VII (1892), 38.

Perseus now returns to the Argolid, and from various traditions we hear how he gets his revenge against Acrisius, and how he founded Mycenae, etc.

It is worth remembering that the Gorgons were localised near the mythical entrance to the underworld, just like such infernal beings as Geryon. They lived, according to Hesiod: <sup>10</sup>

. . . . πέρην κλυτοῦ Ὠκεανοῖο  
ἔσχατιῇ πρὸς νυκτός, ἴν' Ἑσπερίδες λιγύφωνοι,

that is, on the dwelling-place in the extreme West, where the sun sets; and just as Geryon, the 'roaring', has a suitable name for a daemon of the Underworld, the names of the three sisters are not less suited to such a function; even if we set aside Euryale,<sup>11</sup> whose name might be derived from the pursuit of Perseus, the two others, the 'powerful one' and the 'ruling one', are significant enough.<sup>12</sup>

It need hardly be stressed that the story, as it stands, contains many folk-tale elements; <sup>13</sup> in particular, the overcoming of many previous difficulties before the hero arrives on the scene of his main task is a curious folk-tale feature; equally the invisibility, the winged sandals, etc. On the other hand, the elements of real heroic legend (the German 'Heldensage') are conspicuous too; <sup>14</sup> there remains the question, whether the element of myth is also present, in other words, whether we can distinguish a cult-pattern underlying the forms of the story.

The first question we have to ask is, therefore, what could be the reason for localising the story on Seriphos. Hero-cults of Perseus are attested by Pausanias abundantly near Argos-Mycenae and also on Seriphos and perhaps at Athens; <sup>15</sup> leaving Athens out of account as uncertain, we have the two former places left as centres of Perseus cult. Accordingly, we find Perseus with the Gorgon-head on coins (late specimens, however) of Argos <sup>16</sup> and rather earlier on those of Seriphos.<sup>17</sup> One glance at the traditional story in Pherecydes and Apollodorus shows us that Perseus was born at Argos, grew up on Seriphos, returned there after his great heroic adventure, and afterwards went back to Argos again. Moreover, we see that the Gorgon-head, frequently used in the story as far as it centres round Seriphos, is given to Athena before the hero returns to his homeland, and plays no rôle in the sequel: Acrisius is overcome in a pentathlon and slain with a discus. As far as the legend is concerned, the whole Gorgoneion story is something particular to Seriphos, and has nothing to do with Argos. But what about the Argive coins showing Perseus with the Gorgon-head? They are so late that they cannot be used as a proof; they were made long after the story was established. Nevertheless, for Perseus himself we have abundant proof that he was a heroic figure deeply rooted in the Argive tradition; the Perseus-cult at Argos, Mycenae, the foundation legend, his genealogy, and above all the cult attested in a very archaic inscription from Mycenae <sup>18</sup> are evidence enough for that.<sup>19</sup> To sum up the facts: Perseus had hero cults in the Argolid, where he is apparently originally at home; moreover, there was a cult on Seriphos, while the legend localises the Gorgon story there, and not at Argos; the Gorgoneion occurs on the Seriphian coins as early as 300 B.C., on the Argive coins much later.

How, then, to explain the Seriphian legend? Nilsson (*cf.* note 18), after calling Perseus 'the most prominent hero of Mycenae in the earlier mythical generation', and saying that the folk-tale of the slaying of the monster Gorgo was in Mycenaean times already connected with the birth story, gives as his opinion: 'The episode taking place on the island of Seriphos seems to be of a rather late date and may be passed over here'; and a little later: 'There was a heroon said to be that of Perseus on the road from Mycenae to Argos, but that may be late, as was certainly the altar on Seriphos'. Quod est demonstrandum! Kuhnert <sup>20</sup> gives a more detailed argument: 'Die Landung

<sup>10</sup> Hesiod, *l.c.*, especially 274 *sqq.* This is our most ancient source of knowledge about the story of Perseus and the Gorgon; in Homer (*Iliad* XIV, 319 *sq.*) we find just a reference to Danae and Perseus, but his deeds are not yet recorded. The connexion between Gorgon- and Geryon-story is not one of localisation only, but Medusa's son Chrysaor is the father of Geryoneus. For the Gorgoneion apart from Perseus in Homer, *cf. infra* note 49. For Geryon, the West and hot springs, *cf. The Herdsman*, Chapter II.

<sup>11</sup> The 'wide-leaping'; the translation is, however, controversial; *cf.* Robert, *l.c.* 224.

<sup>12</sup> Another reference to the legend in Hesiod is *Aspis* 216 *sqq.* On the shield of Heracles we see Perseus with the winged sandals, the Gorgon-head, the pouch, and the Hades-cap. The two sisters of Medusa try to catch him as he flees.

<sup>13</sup> This has been observed before, *cf.* Robert, *l.c.* 224; Kuhnert, Roscher III, 1989; and especially E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, London, 1894-96, who gives a whole complex of folk-tales from many countries, connected in some way or another with the Perseus story; some additions by A. H. Krappé, *Neuphilol. Mitt.* XXXIV (1933), 225 *sqq.*

<sup>14</sup> Kuhnert, *l.c.* calls the *Eranos* of Polydectes a 'genuine epic motive'.

<sup>15</sup> Paus. II, 16, 3 (Perseus as founder of Mycenae, *cf.* Apollod. II, 4, 4); II, 16, 6 (a spring called Perseia in the ruins of

Mycenae); and especially II, 18, 1: 'Ἐκ Μυκηνῶν δὲ ἐς Ἄργος ἐρχομένοις ἐν ἀριστερᾷ Περασῶς παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐστὶν ἡρώων. ἔχει μὲν δὴ καὶ ἐνταῦθα τιμὰς παρὰ τῶν προσχωρίων, μεγίστας δὲ ἐν τῇ Σερίφῳ καὶ παρ' Ἀθηναίοις, <ὸς> Περασῶς τέμενος, καὶ Δίκτυος καὶ Κλυμένης βωμὸς σωτήρων καλουμένων Περασῶς. The text is corrupt; <ὸς> is the reading of Spiro's Teubner-text, but as there is no other evidence for a Perseus-cult at Athens, K. O. Müller proposed to read ἐν τῇ Σερίφῳ οὐ καὶ παρ' Ἀθηναίῳ Περασῶς τέμενος κτλ. See Frazer, *Paus.* I, 572.

<sup>16</sup> Frazer, *Paus.* III, 186: 'probably copied from a statue'.  
<sup>17</sup> *I.e.* some showing Perseus, others the Gorgon-head; *Cat. Br. Mus. Aegean Islands* 119 *sqq.*; they date from 300 B.C. and later.

<sup>18</sup> *IG* IV, 493, mentioning ἱερομόναμοι τὸς ἐς Περασῶν, a reference to what was probably a very old cult. See Nilsson, *Mycen. Origin of Gr. Myth.* 40 *sq.*

<sup>19</sup> Kuhnert, *l.c.* 2023 *sq.* calls him a pre-Doric hero of Mycenae and Argos, taken over by the Dorians; at the end of this article we shall see that there is linguistic evidence in support of this view of a pre-Doric (I would rather say pre-Greek) character.

<sup>20</sup> *L.c.* 2027. See also A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* I, 406, note 2, who stresses the importance of Seriphos for the dispersion of the legend. He goes even so far as to assume that the whole tale came from Seriphos to the Argolid.

der Truhe mit Danae und Perseus an dem Felseneiland Seriphos ist ein gebräuchliches Bild für die Übertragung eines Kultes, das in ähnlicher Form in Apollo- und Dionysos-Sagen wiederkehrt; Argeier, die auf dem Wege nach Rhodos an der Insel vorüber muszten, haben den Seriphiern die Verehrung der Danae und des Perseus vermittelt.' It is hardly conceivable that the cult and myth were 'dropped on the way' like that. It would be possible, of course, although highly hypothetical, to develop a theory that the island was a half-way house on the trade-route from Argos to Rhodes, and that in the long run Argive cults were imported there; but even so, it would be very much more understandable if we could point to certain circumstances, which made it possible or easy for the local people to 'take over' a cult or mythical pattern, and develop it locally; and in such a case it might be even more interesting and relevant to discover those peculiar circumstances than to ascertain the 'dropping'.

Therefore we ask: Is there some peculiar feature about Seriphos, which might have been the basis for a localisation of the Perseus-Gorgon story, although Perseus is an Argive hero, and a connexion between Argos and Seriphos, comparable with the relations between metropolis and colony, is absent? So much the better if this feature would be primarily concerned with the Gorgon, for, as we saw, this element in the story seems to belong to Seriphos in particular.<sup>21</sup>

Now I have stated in the beginning of this article that Seriphos has hot springs, and that even in modern times a yearly festival near these springs has been recorded by J. T. Bent. In this connexion it is remarkable that at very many places with thermal springs, representations of the Gorgoneion occur in the archaeological finds. This evidence should, however, be handled carefully. Not very long ago, the late M. P. Charlesworth<sup>22</sup> warned us, very rightly I think, against uncritical conclusions about the transmission of ideas from the occurrence of identical art symbols. Moreover, one might say that it is no wonder if a considerable number of pictures of the Gorgoneion occur near hot springs, for there are very many of them in general, so why not accidentally near the θερμὰ λουτρά?

But looking more closely into this vast collection of Gorgon-pictures,<sup>23</sup> we can divide it into three groups: (a) vase-paintings; (b) larger pieces, such as reliefs, etc.; (c) coins. Now the vase-paintings can be discarded here; they never prove anything about local cults. The larger representations are relevant in certain circumstances, especially when they are temple sculptures or paintings, or stelae, and in any case are of more importance than the vase-paintings, not being mass-produced articles for export depicting popular scenes. But the most important of all are the coins. To a very large extent they represent scenes or pictures drawn from local cults and myths. Of course, it sometimes happens that a colonial city merely takes over symbols from the mother-city, and occasionally other borrowings take place, but in most cases it is fairly easy to distinguish this phenomenon. As regards the Gorgoneion, we have especially to be on our guard against cases where it is merely an attribute of Athena.<sup>24</sup> But after taking all these precautions we can reach the following results: The Gorgoneion appears at Seriphos (cf. note 17), Himera,<sup>25</sup> Segesta,<sup>26</sup> Selinus<sup>27</sup> (i.e. all three of the principal Sicilian sites of hot springs!), Melos,<sup>28</sup> Iconium in Lycaonia,<sup>29</sup> Methymna and other places on Lesbos,<sup>30</sup> Neandria in the Troad,<sup>31</sup> Aegae in Cilicia(?),<sup>32</sup> Apollonia ad Rhyndacum and Parium in Mysia.<sup>33</sup> Dubious cases are: Thermon in Aetolia,<sup>34</sup> and Bath (Aquae Sulis) in Britain.<sup>35</sup>

It may be interesting to quote some comparative figures. In the Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum, which covers by far the greater part of the sites, although, e.g., the Gorgoneia on the coins of Melos and Himera are not recorded in it,<sup>36</sup> I noted twenty-seven Greek cities with Gorgoneion coins; among these are Athens and Corinth with their dependent cities, of which Athens had the symbol as an attribute of Athena, and in the case of Corinth one might be inclined to attach importance to the existence of hot springs on the Isthmus, which I have not done. Even so, if we add to the

<sup>21</sup> It is frequently held that the stony character of the island is a sufficient reason (cf. Robert, *l.c.* 234); but there are other stony islands as well on the route from Argos to Rhodes; why, then, especially Seriphos? Moreover, this would imply that the story existed already before the people localised it there. But no trace points to variants, let alone old variants, in which the turning of the hero's enemies to stone occurs elsewhere.

<sup>22</sup> *AJP* LXX (1949), 331 sq.  
<sup>23</sup> A catalogue in J. Six, *De Gorgone*, Amsterdam, 1885; A. Furtwängler, *Roscher* I, 1701 sqq.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Furtwängler, *l.c.*, 1719.  
<sup>25</sup> Coins: Grose, *Cat. McClean Coll. of Greek Coins in the Fitzw. Mus.* I, 272; Head, *HN*<sup>2</sup> 146.

<sup>26</sup> Coins: Grose, *l.c.* 302; *Cat. Br. Mus. Sicily* 135, Head, *HN*<sup>2</sup> 166.

<sup>27</sup> Metope of the famous temple C, cf. Benndorf, *Metopen v. Selinunt* 44.

<sup>28</sup> Coins: Seltman, *Greek Coins*, 174, cf. n. 36 below. Terracotta-relief: Six, *l.c.* 55; Furtwängler 1719.

<sup>29</sup> Coins: Head, *HN*<sup>2</sup> 713 sq., Hasluck, *BSA* XVIII, 267. Stele with Gorgon mentioned by Eust. in *Dion.* 857, Malalas, *Chron.* O 42 (= ed. in *Corpus Scr. Hist. Byz.* p. 36), connected with local legend. For the warm 'spring of Plato' (this 'Plato' being a medieval magician) there cf. *The Herdsman*, p.

82. Curiously enough, a tale connected with the Gorgon's head was still found near Iconium in medieval times. See Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus* III, 139.

<sup>30</sup> Coins: *Cat. Br. Mus. Troas, etc.* LXIII, 151, 157, 177.

<sup>31</sup> Bronze relief from Neandria near the most famous hot springs of the Troad; Furtwängler, *l.c.* 1718.

<sup>32</sup> Coin: *Cat. Br. Mus. Lycaonia, etc.* XIII: uncertain.

<sup>33</sup> The oldest coins of both cities all with the Gorgoneion: *Cat. Br. Mus. Mysia* 8 sq., 94 sqq.; the country around there is full of hot springs, cf. Hasluck, *Cyzicus* 141 and his map 'Environments of Cyzicus'. The attribution of the coins to Apollonia by Six, *l.c.* 37 sqq. is generally approved.

<sup>34</sup> The famous metopes of the temple of Apollo Thermios: 'Ep. 'Apx. 1903, pl. 4; but again the existence of hot springs is not proved; I hope to return to this question in another publication.

<sup>35</sup> The pediment of the temple of Sul-Minerva with the male bearded Gorgon-head; but it is doubtful whether this has any connexion with the Greek Gorgon at all, and even so, it may be merely an attribute of Athena-Minerva.

<sup>36</sup> I.e. those of Himera are there wrongly assigned to Camarina. For the Melos gorgoneion coin, see *Catalogue of the Jameson Collection* pl. LXVI no. 1295.

list Melos and Himera, out of these twenty-nine there are eleven where hot springs occur in the neighbourhood. Certainly a high percentage.<sup>37</sup>

In view of these facts I venture to draw the conclusion that the occurrence of the Gorgon or more usually the Gorgoneion on coins or major pieces of art of cities near hot springs is too frequent to be explained as a mere coincidence, and that there is a considerable chance that these representations are in many cases an echo of local cults.

After this, returning to Seriphos, we ask: Is the Gorgon-head on the coins of this island merely an echo of the established Perseus legend, or has it an independent significance? In other words, was the Gorgon there before Perseus? J. T. Bent<sup>38</sup> informs us that the inhabitants of Seriphos brought him ancient coins with the Medusa, saying that it was a picture of 'the first queen of the island'. Did these peasants, in their simplicity, grasp something of the truth? In order to answer this question, we have to go further and ask: What is the original meaning of the Gorgoneion?

Both in ancient and in modern times, many theories have been proposed in answer to this question.<sup>39</sup> I do not intend to deal with all of them separately; such an inquiry would perhaps carry us too far afield; and moreover, a certain *consensus* of opinion seems to exist at the present time, which may serve as a good starting-point for a further substantiation from the point of view of the cults, etc., connected with hot springs.<sup>40</sup> I shall be very brief, therefore, about the theories. Ancient explanations are: 1. The Gorgons are Libyan women. This line has been followed up by A. B. Cook.<sup>41</sup> 2. The Gorgoneion is the face in the moon. Gädechens<sup>42</sup> has accepted this. 3. It is a thunder-cloud. The principal champion of this view is Roscher. 4. The Gorgon is a wild animal.<sup>43</sup> The modern explanations in accordance with this view (*e.g.* gorilla), given by Elworthy, Zell, and others, have never made much headway. Others again have entirely discarded the ancient theories, and have followed the line of anthropological research. A new and original contribution has been made by C. Hopkins,<sup>44</sup> and I shall have to deal with his article in more detail, because on the one hand, it is very convincing, and on the other hand, my argument would be seriously weakened if all the implications of Hopkins' theory proved to be true.

He begins by pointing out that representations of the Gorgon in art do not occur until after the geometric period, and that then the head alone comes first, just as also in Homer only the head is mentioned; the body does not appear until the Thermon metopes (*ca.* 640–620). He rejects Nilsson's view that the Gorgon is entirely a folktale motif, which eludes the question of origin, while he thinks that the enormous variety of other explanations is due to the fact that in the seventh century the representations of the Gorgon were tentative, and 'no commonly recognised form of the story in legend and art existed'.<sup>45</sup> Then he proceeds to point out that in the same seventh century the influence of Assyrian on Greek art became important; and in this Assyrian art there was a frequently recurring motif of a hero slaying a demon, namely the story of Gilgamesh and Humbaba, which had 'a vogue in Syria'. After this, Hopkins shows us a series of scenes representing the slaying of Humbaba and cognate stories, and faces of Babylonian demons like Humbaba, together with scenes of Perseus with the Gorgon; the resemblance is striking. A link is provided by a Cyprian cylinder, which holds a middle position between Assyrian and Greek art. After a digression on the Egyptian Bes-statues, the obvious conclusion follows: <sup>46</sup> 'The full figure portrayal of the Gorgon, introduced into Greek art shortly after the middle of the seventh century, came over directly and with very slight modification from an Assyrian–Babylonian type of demon or giant.' I think this is an important and interesting discovery, and the argument seems convincing enough, especially because Cyprus is indeed the home of some of the oldest Gorgon representations, and the route Mesopotamia–Syria–Cyprus–Greece was an easy and often used one. The hazardous part of the article follows after this conclusion, namely when Hopkins hints at the possibility that the whole Perseus–Gorgon story is derived from the Gilgamesh saga. Similar theories have been put forward in the case of Herakles, who has also been compared with Gilgamesh,<sup>47</sup> and this question needs an answer on principle. Of course, the artists who tried to find a form for their pictures of the story had a tendency to borrow from existing representations of similar stories in 'foreign' art; Oriental influence on Greek art was immense, and was probably deeper even than we can realise at the moment; but the tradition of mythological forms is a totally different matter. It should not be forgotten that the resemblance between the Gilgamesh and the Perseus stories is quite superficial, the common point being hardly more than the motif of a hero slaying a monster, and where on earth does such a story *not* occur? As a mythical form the figure of Gilgamesh is still more like Herakles than like Perseus, and even in the former case a dependence cannot be proved conclusively.

<sup>37</sup> For the rôle of wells and springs in the folk-tales related to the Perseus story *cf.* Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus* II, 175 *sqq.*

<sup>38</sup> *The Cyclades*, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Summaries of them will be found in Six, *l.c.* 91 *sqq.*; Roscher in his *Lex.* I, 1698 *sqq.* (*cf.* the same author's *Die Gorgonen und Verwandtes* (1879); Ziegler, *RE* VII, 1642 *sqq.*; A. B. Cook, *Zeus* III, 845 *sqq.*

<sup>40</sup> Six, *l.c.*

<sup>41</sup> *L.c.* 847.

<sup>42</sup> Following many others. See Ziegler, *l.c.* 1645 *sq.*

<sup>43</sup> Ziegler, *l.c.* 1643.

<sup>44</sup> *AJA* 1934, 341 *sqq.*

<sup>45</sup> Observe that the inferences from art-forms to forms of the legend begin here already. The only thing that can be said is that apparently the art-type was not fixed.

<sup>46</sup> *L.c.* 356.

<sup>47</sup> Especially by B. Schweitzer, *Herakles*, *cf.* Pfister, *Rel. Gr. u. Röm.* 156. *Cf.* also: G. R. Levy, 'The Oriental Origin of Herakles', *JHS* LIV (1934), 40 *sqq.*

Wherever it is possible to derive Greek mythical patterns from Greek ritual we should always prefer such an explanation, taking into account, however, that such Greek cult-forms may go back to pre-Greek times, and so ultimately to that general Mediterranean foundation from which again many Oriental forms may be derived.

Returning now to the various explanations of the Gorgon, there are a number of points on which many or all scholars agree. The first of these is that there was apparently a Gorgon-head before the development of the type with full body. This can be observed in the oldest art-representations and in Homer. In other words, the Gorgoneion precedes the Gorgon. Then, the most striking features of this Gorgoneion are the glaring eyes and the protruding tongue. These characteristics have been compared with identical hideous faces among many primitive peoples, which are derived from masks with an apotropaic function.<sup>48</sup> And thirdly it is agreed that among the references to the Gorgoneion in Homer, who is, after all, our oldest source, the passage from the Nekyia should be taken into account specially, where Odysseus says that he would have liked to stay longer in Hades, but that he was frightened by the idea that Persephone would send up the grisly Gorgon-head from the underworld.<sup>49</sup>

Any theory based solely, or at any rate principally, upon the solid foundation of these fairly generally accepted points should deserve our special attention. Such a theory was proposed by Miss J. E. Harrison, who explained the Gorgoneion as an apotropaic mask, appearing in the oldest literature as an 'underworld bogey'.<sup>50</sup> She stresses the three basic facts, mentioned above, and points to the use of hideous apotropaic dance-masks among savage peoples; many specimens of such masks may be seen in most anthropological museums. Similar things must have been used, in her view, by the early Greeks. And then she makes an interesting point. Although precise evidence fails us here, so she says, the gorgoneion must have been used by these primitive Greeks as a mask in ritual dances.

But is there really no precise evidence? It may be worth trying to verify Miss Harrison's inference. We shall not be able to understand what this means before we are quite clear about the function of the mask. The Gorgoneion as we find it on coins, vase-paintings, shields, etc., is a relic; if it is true that it is a symbol of what once was a ritual mask, we have to assume that it was worn in such ritual; and worn for a purpose. Now the purpose of the mask in ritual, dance, and drama, wherever it is found, is to represent something in the most literal sense of the word. The wearer of the mask in ritual represents the deity, *i.e.* virtually *is* the deity, and the actions he does while wearing the mask are the actions of the godhead; the masked dance, therefore, introduces in a hieratic form the event that the people want to celebrate, the event of the deity appearing on earth and performing actions.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, when a mask is used in *chthonic* ritual, the wearer of the mask enacts the appearance of a daemon from the underworld, and when the mask is apotropaic, this can only mean that the appearing chthonian daemon scares away, frightens, stiffens with fear, or, in mythical terms, 'petrifies' the other ghosts or living creatures present. This is entirely in accordance with the scene from the Nekyia.

Nevertheless, all this will remain highly theoretical and speculative if we cannot substantiate it with examples from Greek ritual which would prove that such representative ritual masks were actually used. There are not very many instances of the use of religious masks in Greece, apart from the theatre. Miss Harrison quotes two.<sup>52</sup> The first is about a goddess Praxidike,<sup>53</sup> whose images were heads and her sacrifices 'the same' (ὁμοίως); there was a multiple form of her at Haliartus, as Pausanias<sup>54</sup> tells us, where the Praxidikai were oath-goddesses. The oath recurs in the second example which Miss Harrison gives, the cult of Demeter Kidaria at Pheneus in Arcadia; our source is again Pausanias.<sup>55</sup> There was a curious structure called Petroma, and on this place the Pheneates used to take oaths; in it was a mask of Demeter Kidaria, which the priest puts on, and then he beats the underground folk with rods. Here the priest clearly represents the goddess by wearing a mask. Pheneus was a centre of chthonic religion; in the neighbourhood was the Styx. There was a Hades entrance nearby;<sup>56</sup> the saga told how Herakles performed engineering works

<sup>48</sup> This was observed already by Furtwängler, *Roscher* I, 1704 sq.: 'Durch die schreckbare Maske eines Dämons suchte man die anderen bösen Geister zu vertreiben.'

<sup>49</sup> Hom. *Od.* XI, 633 sqq.

ἐμὲ δὲ χλωρὸν δέος ἦρει  
μή μοι Γοργεῖην (*alii* γοργεῖην) κεφαλὴν δεινοῖο πελώρου  
ἐξ Ἄιδεω πέμψειεν ἀγαυὴ Περσεφόνηια.

It is not quite clear to me why Nilsson, *Gesch. Gr. Rel.* I, 211, calls this passage 'late'; cf. Wilamowitz, *Hom. Unters.* 140 sq. At any rate it could hardly be later than Hesiod (quoted note 10).

<sup>50</sup> *Prolegomena* 187 sqq. See especially her excellent summary in Hastings' *ERE* VI, 330 sqq.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, pp. 373 sq.

<sup>52</sup> *Prolegomena* 188; there were more, however: see W. Wrede, 'Der Maskengott', *AM* LIII (1928), 66 sqq., especially p. 87.

<sup>53</sup> Photius and Hesych. *s.v.*

<sup>54</sup> Paus. IX, 33, 3 (Miss Harrison's reference is wrong): 'Ἀλιαρτίοις δὲ ἔστιν ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ θεῶν ἱερὸν ἄς Πραξιδικαῖς καλοῦσιν· ἐνταῦθα ὁμνῶσιν μὲν, ποιοῦνται δὲ οὐκ ἐπίδρομον τὸν ἄρκον. Cf. also Paus. III, 22, 2: cult of the same goddesses at Gythium. Persephone is called *Praxidike* in Hymn. Orph. XXIX, 5 (ed. Abel).

<sup>55</sup> Paus. VIII, 15, 1-3: παρὰ δὲ τῆς Ἐλευσινίας τὸ ἱερὸν πεποιήται Πέτρωμα καλούμενον, λίθοι δύο ἡμισσμένοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους μεγάλοι . . . . Φενεατῶν δὲ οἶδα τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ ὁμνύντας ὑπὲρ μεγίστων τῷ Πετρώματι. καὶ ἐπιθήμα ἐπ' αὐτῷ περιφερές ἐστιν, ἔχον ἐντὸς Δήμητρος πρόσωπον Κιδαρίας· τοῦτο ὁ ἱερεὺς περιθέμενος τὸ πρόσωπον ἐν τῇ μείζονι καλούμενῃ τελετῇ βράβδους κατὰ λόγον δὴ τινα τοὺς ὑποχθονίους παίει. For the meaning of the beating of the soil see Frazer's note *ad loc.* (Frazer, *Paus.* IV, 239): it was a fertility ritual.

<sup>56</sup> Ganschietz, *RE* X, 2386, cf. Lawson, *Anc. Gr. Rel. Mod. Gr. Folk.* 85.

near the city.<sup>57</sup> Immediately after the passage quoted above, Pausanias<sup>58</sup> tells us how Herakles' brother Iphikles, wounded in the contest against the Molione, was tended at Pheneus by a Pheneate called Bouphagos and his wife: in another publication<sup>59</sup> I had occasion to point out that Bouphagos was a cult-name of Herakles himself, occurring near hot springs. Another story calls Bouphagos an eponymous hero of a river near Heraea,<sup>60</sup> who tried to violate Artemis and was shot by her.

Other examples of masks, and especially of masked ritual dances, will be given presently. From the instances quoted above, especially that of Pheneus, we have some idea already of the use of a mask in Greek ritual, especially chthonic ritual; we saw how at Pheneus the priest enacts the appearance of the chthonic goddess Demeter, and represents her. The oath is a sign of the fearfulness of the place.<sup>61</sup> We have to imagine much the same atmosphere around the primitive use of the Gorgoneion as a mask, more exactly as an apotropaic underworld mask. But now, returning to Seriphos, we ask once more how to explain the fact that the exploits of the Argive hero Perseus with the Gorgon-head came to be localised on this small island in the Aegean. I think the solution is that at the bottom of the story lies an aetiological myth.

I have stressed already the frequent occurrence of the Gorgon or Gorgoneion near hot springs. This, of course, is in accordance with the fact that the Gorgoneion is an underworld phenomenon,<sup>62</sup> and that the cults of the hot springs have always something underworldly about them. But if the Gorgoneion is a mask, it must originally have been *used* as a mask, and the natural conclusion is that there must have been certain rites in which it was used and which were performed near hot springs. And this would explain the story of Perseus on Seriphos, where, as we saw, hot springs occur, near which there exists, even in modern times, a yearly festival. Assuming this, and using the story of Perseus as a pattern, we can describe the hypothetical ritual as follows: The 'priest' or 'leader of the rite' comes forward in the festive assembly of the community (*i.e.* the mythical hero in the mythical *eranos* of Polydectes), and is commissioned to fetch the mask of the underworld daemon from Hades (*i.e.* the mythical expedition to the Western dwelling-place of the Gorgons). He then appears in the (dancing?) circle of the people, with the mask as the personification of the daemon himself. They are all stiffened with terror.<sup>63</sup>

This is, of course, a mere hypothesis, but it has a basis of fact; still this basis would be too narrow if we could not point to some parallel, which would clearly show us the masked dance in a clearly rather primitive form, and which would give a decisive substantiation to our theory. For this we have to turn to *Letrini*. This town, the modern Pyrgos, not far from Olympia, situated near the west coast of the Peloponnese, is of great interest for the student of cults connected with hot springs. Indeed, such springs are found immediately to the North of modern Pyrgos, on some heights nowadays called Skourochorio,<sup>64</sup> but as other thermal waters of outstanding medical virtue and easily accessible are found in the immediate neighbourhood, at Cyllene and Kaiapha, the springs of Skourochorio have apparently fallen into oblivion. But nevertheless, if the neighbouring Olympia formed a centre of the higher Greek religion, Letrini must have been an outstanding centre of popular religion in ancient Greece. Walking, as I did, on a pilgrimage to the principal centres of hot springs in Greece in 1949, along the small cart-track from Pyrgos to Agoulenitza, one comes after less than half an hour to a ford across the mouth of the Alpheus.<sup>65</sup> Strabo<sup>66</sup> has given a famous description of this area. There is the temple of Artemis Alpheonia and sanctuaries of all sorts of gods and goddesses, a brilliant scene, which through its vividness has always attracted the attention of students of Greek religion when trying to recall the environment of Greek religious life.<sup>67</sup> The cult of Artemis Alpheonia is certainly not connected with the hot springs of Skourochorio; this is geographically impossible. And yet it does not stand outside the cults of the hot springs altogether. For there are, apart from the environment of Thermopylae, no regions in Greece where hot springs occur so frequently as on the Western coast of the Peloponnese: Cyllene, Chelonatas, Letrini, Lepreum, and the 'Anigris' cave (modern Kaiapha) are the best known, but there are still others.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, this countryside was the home of Artemis Limnatis, the 'Lady of the Lake', as Farnell has called her,<sup>69</sup> an appropriate title for a deity who is often found presiding

<sup>57</sup> Bölte, *RE* XIX, 1971 *sqq.* This element occurs more often near Hades entrances, *cf.* *The Herdsman*, pp. 30, 82.

<sup>58</sup> VIII, 14, 9. <sup>59</sup> *Mnemosyne* IV, 6 (1953), 288 ff.

<sup>60</sup> With hot springs; *cf.* Philippson, *Peloponnes* 97; Gell, *Itinerary of the Morea*, p. 112. The story in Paus. VIII, 27, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Oaths were often taken very solemnly by the gods of the underworld or by the Styx; *cf.* the author's article on the Sicel Palici in *Mnemosyne* IV, 5 (1952), 116 *sqq.*

<sup>62</sup> This is beyond doubt; the Homeric *Necyia* and the later localization in the West are evidence enough for that.

<sup>63</sup> On petrification through horror in popular beliefs, superstition, and customs see Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus* III, 120 *sqq.*

<sup>64</sup> They do not attract attention nowadays; on a visit to Pyrgos I could find no one who could tell me where exactly the site was, although everybody knows Skourochorio, as the railway line from Patras to Pyrgos passes just East of these hills;

but the hot springs are mentioned by Curtius, *Pelop.* II, 73; Boblaye, *Recherches* 130 *sqq.*; Pouqueville, *Voyage* V, 383.

<sup>65</sup> No doubt the 'Αλφειοῖο πόρος of Hom. *Hymn.* in *Herm.* 398.

<sup>66</sup> Strabo VIII, 3, 12, p. 343: πρὸς δὲ τῇ ἐκβολῇ τὸ τῆς Ἀλφειονίας Ἀρτέμιδος ἢ Ἀλφειούσης ἄσος ἐστίν . . . . ταύτη δὲ τῇ θεῶ καὶ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ κατ' ἔτος συντελεῖται πανηγυρίς (*N.B.* Artemis and Alpheus had a common altar in Olympia: Paus. V, 14, 6; Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 5, 10), καθάπερ καὶ τῇ Ἐλαφίᾳ καὶ τῇ Δαφνίᾳ. μεσθὶ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ γῆ πᾶσα Ἀρτεμισίων καὶ Ἀφροδισίων καὶ Νυμφαίων ἐν ἄλλοις ἀνθέων πλέως τὸ πολὺ διὰ τὴν εὐδρίαν, συχὰ δὲ καὶ Ἑρμεία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς, Ποσειδεῖα δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀκραις.

<sup>67</sup> *E.g.* Nilsson, *Greek Piety* 9.

<sup>68</sup> *E.g.* near Heraea, about which see *supra*, note 60, and probably at Heraclaea near Olympia (this spring is nowadays cold), *cf.* Paus. VI, 22, 7; Strabo VIII, 3, 22, p. 356; Frazer, *Paus.* IV, 100; Curtius-Adler, *Olympia und Umgegend* 9.

<sup>69</sup> Farnell, *Cults* II, 427; *cf.* Nilsson, *GF* 210 *sqq.*

over lakes, waters, brooks, and springs. As Artemis Eurynome she was worshipped at the hot springs of Phigalia.<sup>70</sup> And in this way she, the dominating deity of this region, is the dominating figure in the whole complex of popular cults which centres around these places where hot springs rise from the ground. So the cult of Artemis Alpheonia formed part of that primitive religious substratum which we find in so many places in the Peloponnese, and which in this backward region of the West coast persisted to the times of Strabo and Pausanias.

For Pausanias, too, gives us information about Artemis Alpheonia. He tells us how Alpheus fell in love with her and attempted violence against her when she was dancing with her nymph-attendants; but Artemis, aware of his plans, smeared her face and the faces of the nymphs with mud, so that he did not know her from the others, and went away frustrated.<sup>71</sup> Frazer<sup>72</sup> remarks that this myth might point to a practice of smearing the faces with mud in ritual. I think there is no doubt. The story certainly sounds like an aetiological myth. Frazer quotes some parallels in Greece and elsewhere; the story of the Titans smearing their faces with gypsum in order not to be recognised by Dionysus is well known.<sup>73</sup> But if this is true, the ritual dance must correspond to the 'Aition', *i.e.* the dancers with their mud-smeared faces actually *represented* the goddess and her attendants, and therefore, in smearing mud on their faces they enhanced their personalities; this is nothing else but a primitive form of a masked dance.

But to this same complex of primitive Greek cults in the Peloponnese belonged also the worship of Artemis Orthia at Sparta. Now this offers an interesting parallel. For Bosanquet<sup>74</sup> has published a series of terra-cotta masks found in her temple; the striking thing from our point of view about them is, above all, that the first two types<sup>75</sup> hold a clear middle position between the archaic type of Gorgon-head and the theatre-mask. They belong to the first half of the sixth century B.C. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge<sup>76</sup> writes about them: 'They were doubtless votive copies of the actual masks worn by the performers of some ritual dance in honour of Artemis Orthia.' There could not be clearer evidence that the use of the Gorgoneion and the ritual dance at Sparta and Letrini are in principle the same.

But this being the case, we have still to ask, what was the meaning of the rape of Artemis in the myth. The obvious conclusion from the appearance of a violator in the myth would be that a person of the same kind played a rôle in the ritual too. Alpheus could not find his victim and went away again. Although there is no direct evidence, it seems probable to me that he was in fact *frightened* away by those ugly faces.<sup>77</sup>

Once more we return to Seriphos. Having established the relation between the Gorgoneion and the underworld religion, having considered that the Gorgon-head was originally an apotropaic mask, worn in ritual dances, and having treated the story of Perseus on Seriphos as an aetiological myth explaining such a masked ritual, we seem to have found a reason why the Argives could have 'dropped' a cult of Perseus and his legend on the island; this reason being that some sort of cult with a masked ritual existed on Seriphos, presumably connected with the hot springs there. But then these Argives must have been able to recognise in this cult something familiar, the central figure of the cult must have been identifiable with the Argive hero. So this still presupposes that Perseus had something to do with masks originally. If we can find evidence for this, we can safely assume that the localisation on the island and the further development of the myth, as we find it in Pindar, Pherecydes, and later, and as it is presupposed in the black-figured vase painting (*cf.* note 9), came about. I shall try to demonstrate that there is such evidence.

An Etruscan tomb-fresco at Corneto shows an interesting scene. It is a picture of a sort of gladiatorial games, no doubt performed at the funeral of the man buried here. One of the captives used in these games is held on a rope by a masked figure, above and beside whom is written the word 'persu'. We owe the interpretation of the scene to F. Altheim,<sup>78</sup> who, following Deecke, Friedländer, and Skutsch, takes the Latin 'persona' to be derived from this Etruscan word. This etymology is now fairly well accepted.<sup>79</sup> Then, examining the tomb-picture more closely, Altheim

<sup>70</sup> Paus. VIII, 41, 5, *cf.* *The Herdsman*, p. 81.

<sup>71</sup> Paus. VI, 22, 8 *sq.* Εἰ δὲ ἐθεῖν ἐς Ἥλιον διὰ τοῦ πεδίου θελήσεις, σταδίους μὲν εἰκοσι καὶ ἑκατὸν ἐς Λετρίνους ἐξεις, . . . τὸ μὲν δὴ ἐξ ἀρχῆς πόλισμα ἦν οἱ Λετρίνοι, καὶ Λετρεὺς ὁ Πέλοπος ἐγγεγόνει σφίσι οικιστής. (There was also a tradition about the bones of Pelops being preserved at Letrini, *cf.* Lycophr. *Alex.* 54, and Schol. Tzetzæe in vs. 158). ἐπ' ἐμοῦ δὲ οἰκῆματά τε ἐλείπετο ὀλίγα καὶ Ἀλφειάδας Ἀρτέμιδος ἀγαλαμὰ ἐν ναφῶ. γενέσθαι δὲ τὴν ἐπικλησιν τῆ θεῶ λέγουσιν ἐπὶ λόγῳ τοιῶδε: ἔρασεθῆναι τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τὸν Ἀλφειόν, ἔρασεθῆντα δὲ ὡς ἐπέγνω μὴ γενήσεσθαι οἱ διὰ πειθοῦς καὶ δεήσεως τὸν γάμον, ἐπιτολμᾶν ὡς βιασόμενον τὴν θεόν, καὶ αὐτὸν ἐς πανυχιδα ἐς Λετρίνους ἔλθειν ὑπὸ αὐτῆς τε ἀγομένην τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος καὶ νυμφῶν αἷς παίζουσα συνῆν τὴν δὲ—ἐν ὑπονοίᾳ γὰρ τοῦ Ἀλφειοῦ τὴν ἐπιβουλήν ἔχειν—ἀλείψασθαι τὸ πρόσωπον πηλῶ καὶ αὐτὴν καὶ ὄσα τῶν νυμφῶν παρήσαν, καὶ τὸν Ἀλφειόν ὡς εἰσῆλθεν, οὐκ ἔχειν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων διακρίνει τὴν Ἀρτέμιον. ἄτε δὲ οὐ διαγιγνώσκοντα ἀπελθεῖν ἐπὶ ἀπράκτω τῶ ἐγχειρήματι.

<sup>72</sup> In his note *ad loc.* (Frazer, *Paus.* IV, 101); *cf.* Nilsson, *GF*

214 *sqq.*; Farnell, *Cults* II, 428.

<sup>73</sup> Nonnus, *Dion.* VI, 169 *sqq.*; Harpocr. *s.v.* ἀπομόπττων, clearly pointing to an existing practice in mystic ritual.

<sup>74</sup> *BSA* XII (1905-6), 340 *sqq.*

<sup>75</sup> They will be found on Plates X and XI attached to Bosanquet's article.

<sup>76</sup> *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*, 254. For dances in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, *cf.* also Plut. *Thest.* 31.

<sup>77</sup> We may compare the well-known story in Herodotus (VIII, 27), where the Phocians attack the Thessalians by night, smeared with gypsum, a story, which so strikingly resembles the ritual described by Harpocraton (*cf.* note 73). The Thessalians fall into a panic, thinking it a supernatural phenomenon (ἄλλο τι τέρας).

<sup>78</sup> *Archiv f. Rel. Wiss.* XXVII (1929), 35 *sqq.*

<sup>79</sup> Altheim's further conclusion that 'persona' is a diminutive of *persu* has met with more opposition; but this is not immediately relevant for us.

points out that the figure called *persu* is a sort of manager of funeral performances; <sup>80</sup> but the most important observation is that the *word* *persu* is not written beside or above the mask itself, but clearly indicates the whole figure. This leads immediately to the conclusion that the word does not mean 'mask', but 'wearer of a mask', 'masked person in a funeral performance'. But then again, we come to the question, what was the function of the mask? If the mask is what we have said, a means to represent and to re-enact, it can, at funeral games, hardly mean anything else but a representation of the spirits of the dead, and the re-enactment of their appearance.<sup>81</sup> But then the mask in the Etruscan tomb-fresco must have a chthonic character, and the masked person as well. This point is elucidated by Altheim through an analysis of the etymology of the Etruscan word. He notes that Greek Persephone corresponds with Etruscan *persipnai* and Greek Perseus with Etruscan *perse*, *perse*; there is a constant element apparently which appears in Greek as 'perse-' and in Etruscan as 'perse-'. We find it in other Greek names such as *Peres* (one of the Titans), *Perso* (one of the Graiai <sup>82</sup>), *Perse* (a name of Hecate), etc.<sup>83</sup> Now all these names have one thing in common, namely a connexion with the underworld; Perseus, whose name is one of them, is therefore in Altheim's view equally an underworld figure;<sup>84</sup> another result of these reasonings is that the relation between the Greek names and the Etruscan root *perse-*, occurring in *persu*, and recurring in a number of Etruscan gentilicia,<sup>85</sup> points to a pre-Greek origin.<sup>86</sup>

Now our picture seems to become complete. Altheim has helped us to find a pre-Greek root *perse-*, which recurs in Etruria to indicate a person of chthonic character, wearing a mask. On the other hand, we found Perseus to be an Argive hero, originating probably (not certainly) in Mycenaean times, and whose name, like so many names related to the Mycenaean period, may well be of a pre-Greek origin. He was connected with a masked dance-ritual, which we traced back to Seriphos, and parallels to which we found in the Peloponnese. The chthonic mask used in this ritual was the Gorgoneion. On the other hand, we found that in the *Odyssey* this Gorgoneion was a weapon of terror in the hand of Persephone, who bears in her name the same root. She, of course, is a real underworld figure. Was Perseus one, too? I would rather put it otherwise: By virtue of his name and of the myth in which he is the hero, he is the bearer (or even wearer) of the mask of the underworld daemon.

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<sup>80</sup> Also that his costume reminds us of the Roman *Atellana* and *Mimus*: significantly enough the *Atellana* was always played by masked actors.

<sup>81</sup> So van der Leeuw, *l.c.* (see note 51).

<sup>82</sup> According to an uncommon tradition reconstructed by Robert, *Griech. Heldens.* I, 226, note 6.

<sup>83</sup> This root *pers(e)-* of the name Perseus is commonly derived from *πέρω*, to destroy (so *e.g.* Robert, *l.c.* 245). But Perseus is not a 'destroyer', and although it sometimes means 'to kill', this meaning applies in most of the cases to a whole population, an army, etc. (Liddell and Scott <sup>9</sup> *s.v.*). Only once it seems to mean 'to kill' a single person, Pind. *Pyth.* IX, 80, and this

instance is promptly referred to by Robert, *l.c.* note 4; but this poetical usage on one occasion does not justify a derivation of Perseus' name from his 'killing' of the Medusa; therefore I think Altheim is right in following Wilamowitz (*Pindaros* 148, note 1) and rejecting this view.

<sup>84</sup> This could be supported by a reference to Eurymedon as a name of Perseus in Apoll. Rhod. IV, 1514, *cf.* Eurynomos, Eurynome, Eurydice, etc.

<sup>85</sup> Which proves that it is not borrowed from the Greek.

<sup>86</sup> *Cf.* also R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (published since this article was written), pp. 114 n. 5, 429 n. 1, 446 n. 4.