Egyptian Stories

A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd
on the Occasion of His Retirement.

Edited by
Thomas Schneider and Kasia Szpakowska

Alter Orient und Altes Testament
Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients
und des Alten Testaments

Band 347

[AOAT EDITORIAL DETAILS HERE]

Egyptian Stories

A British Egyptological Tribute to Alan B. Lloyd
on the Occasion of His Retirement.

Edited by
Thomas Schneider and Kasia Szpakowska

2007
Ugarit-Verlag
Münster

[AOAT RIGHTS/ISBN INFO HERE]

Foreword

> *"But concerning Egypt, I am going to speak at length, because it has the most wonders, and everywhere presents works beyond description"*

Egyptian Stories as the title for the Festschrift to honour Alan Lloyd's achievements is particularly apt because it encapsulates the main strands of his interests and academic tenets, and is equally pertinent to the character of this gathering of papers. It is an obvious reference to the histories of Herodotus, and to Alan's seminal commentary on the Greek historian's Egyptian *logos* as a scholar dedicated to both the Classical Civilizations of the Mediterranean and Egypt. It also emphasizes Alan's interest in the past, his insistence on scientific scrutiny (the basic meaning of history), and his profound love of (hi)stories, of literature. Following Herodotus' motto, the present volume of *Egyptian Stories* wishes to speak at length about Egypt, and to present modern inquiries into its wonders and works beyond description. It explores Egypt from the Saqqara Necropolis to the Red Sea, from Sais in the Western Delta to festive Thebes, and reaches to the Greek Mainland and the Levant. It offers to the recipient water, honey, flint, amethyst and gold. It investigates the belief in Amun, in the jackal god, in the gods of the Western and Eastern deserts, and sacred animals. It unfolds stories about women, goddesses and queens, about priests and kings, and reflects about the acquisition of knowledge, the prediction of dreams, erotic gestures, and the purchase of arms. It also writes in new facets on the page of how Ancient Egypt was recreated in modern Britain.

Thus, it is fitting that this be a British tribute to Alan, as he has always been a champion of Egyptology in this country. For years he has dedicated himself as Chairman of the Egypt Exploration Society, engaged in expanding the scope of our knowledge of Ancient Egypt through the Society's excavations and publications. He has made Ancient Egypt come alive for the British public as well, through the numerous lectures he generously gives for societies and universities throughout the UK. The University of Wales Swansea has particularly benefited from Alan's expertise for over four decades. As Pro-Vice-Chancellor he helped shape the profile of the university as a whole, and as Head of Department of Classics and Ancient History for many years, Alan cultivated the Egyptological component by teaching undergraduate courses and supervising research students. As a teacher, Alan has always emphasised the importance of teaching and the transmission of knowledge, and this is

clearly recognised by his students who flock to his lectures. Building on the work of J. Gwyn Griffiths and Kate Bosse-Griffiths, he helped to establish a campus Museum of Egyptian Antiquities: The Egypt Centre. Finally, it was largely through the foresight and endeavours of Alan Lloyd that the field of Egyptology was established as an integral component of the department that now is formally called 'Classics, Ancient History, and Egyptology'. Through all his efforts, Wales is now home to a thriving Egyptological community that is composed of large numbers of local and international students, scholars and researchers. Alan's devotion to British Egyptology is reflected by the willingness and alacrity with which his colleagues have contributed here.

This collection of articles would not have been possible without the most generous financial support of the Egypt Exploration Society (to whom we are also grateful for permission to use the photograph of Alan as our frontispiece), and a contribution by the School of Humanities of The University of Wales Swansea. We are grateful to the series editors of *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* for agreeing to publish the Festschrift, and to Steven Snape and Rutherford Press Limited for facilitating the production of the volume. A note concerning style: as Egyptologists approach their subject through a variety of sub-disciplines, in this volume each contributor's individual and appropriate transliteration and citation style has been retained. The editors and the contributors hope that Alan accepts this tome as a sincere token of recognition and esteem for his achievements as a scholar and a promoter of British Egyptology.

Contents

Foreword ... vii

C. A. R. Andrews, Eponymous Priests Old and New in Unpublished Fragmentary Demotic British Museum Papyri (P. BM EA 76271, 76269A, 10992 and 10540) ... 1

D. A. Aston, A Taste of Honey: *mnt*- and *mḏqt*-Vessels in the Late Eighteenth Dynasty ... 13

M. Collier, Facts, Situations and Knowledge Acquisition: *gmỉ* with *ỉw* and *r-ḏd* in Late Egyptian ... 33

A. M. Dodson, Legends of a Sarcophagus ... 47

T. DuQuesne, Private Devotion and Public Practice: aspects of Egyptian art and religion as revealed by the Salakhana stelae ... 55

R. Enmarch, What the Ancestors Foretold: Some References to Prediction in Middle Egyptian Texts ... 75

D. W. J. Gill, Arsinoe in the Peloponnese: the Ptolemaic base on the Methana peninsula ... 87

C. Graves-Brown, Flint and the Northern Sky ... 111

K. Griffin, An *ꜣḫ ỉḳr n Rꜥ* Stela from the collection of the Egypt Centre, Swansea ... 137

K. A. Kitchen, Festivity in Ramesside Thebes and Devotion to Amun and his City ... 149

I. Mathieson, Recent Results of Geophysical Survey in the Saqqara Necropolis 155

R. G. Morkot, War and the Economy: the International ‘arms trade’ in the Late Bronze Age and after ... 169

E. F. Morris, Sacred and Obscene Laughter in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, in Egyptian Inversions of Everyday Life, and in the Context of Cultic Competition ... 197

G. Mumford, Egypto-Levantine relations during the Iron Age to early Persian periods (Dynasties late 20 to 26) 225

E. J. Owens, The Waters of Alexandria 289

R. B. Parkinson, 'Une cantilène de Pentaour': Marguerite Yourcenar and Middle Kingdom Literature 301

T. Schneider, Contextualising the Tale of the Herdsman 309

I. Shaw, Late Roman Amethyst and Gold Mining at Wadi el-Hudi 319

H. S. Smith and S. Davies, The Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara yet again! Some Late Period inscribed offering-tables from the site 329

K. Spence, Topography, Architecture and Legitimacy: Hatshepsut's foundation deposits at Deir el-Bahri 353

N. Spencer, A Theban Statue Base from the reign of Nekhtnebef 373

K. Szpakowska, Flesh for Fantasy: Reflections of Women in Two Ancient Egyptian Dream Manuals 393

J. H. Taylor, The earliest Egyptian hippocampus 405

A. P. Thomas, The Barefoot Aristocrats and the Making of an Egyptian Collection 417

P. Wilson, A Cult of Amasis and 'The Procession of Two Gods' at Saïs 437

Sacred and Obscene Laughter in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, in Egyptian Inversions of Everyday Life, and in the Context of Cultic Competition

E. F. Morris

"Different things delight different people."
— Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 8.43.

Introduction

The eminent historian Robert Darnton has spent much of his career investigating episodes in French social history that no longer readily make sense, such as why violent and obscene fairy tales were so popular in the French countryside during the Enlightenment and why a mass cat-lynching would have proved so hilarious that a mere allusion to it was enough to dispatch the perpetrators into thigh-slapping bouts of laughter for weeks on end. To Darnton's mind, historians have been far too apt to view eighteenth century France as comfortingly familiar terrain, where men and women thought and behaved much as they do today. Much enjoyed narrative events such as pre-pubescent Little Red Riding Hood's strip-tease before the wolf just prior to being eaten, however, force an acknowledgment of the distance between now and then, between us and them. "When we cannot get a proverb, or a joke, or a ritual, or a poem," Darnton maintains, "we know we are on to something."[1]

Despite the fact that millennia rather than centuries separate ancient Egypt from its historians, Egyptologists, too, have imposed their own worldviews upon the peoples they study. The many instances in which the Egyptian sense of decorum and humor did not match those of the keepers of their legacy has led over the past couple of centuries to the unabashedly sexual elements of their material culture and literature routinely being sequestered under lock and key or tastefully rephrased in Latin. While such censure has eroded markedly in the wake of the western sexual revolution and gay rights movement, it still persists in many of the visions of ancient Egypt conjured up for public consumption. Alan Lloyd, one of the most accomplished and insightful of Egypt's historians, has never been guilty of the twin sins of boorish cultural imperialism and humourless prudery. It is to him, then, with hopes that he

[1] Darnton 1985: 5.

will enjoy it, that I dedicate this study exploring the conundrum of just why the sun-god, Pre-Harakhti, should have found the unexpected sight of his daughter's genitals refreshingly funny. This seemingly gratuitous interlude in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* defies a modern common sense approach to understanding it. If viewed from a more structural and etiological perspective, however, I hope to show that Hathor's flash—like Darnton's cat massacre—is capable of providing unexpected insight.

The episode in question

The Contendings of Horus and Seth belongs to the genre of the mythic folk-tale, exceedingly popular in a great many cultures, in which gods routinely behave badly. Indeed, although the portion of the myth that we will focus upon was written down in the reign of Ramesses V (*c.* 1147–1143 BC), the often sexual and/or violent events that it details remained in popular consciousness well into Plutarch's day (*c.* 46–127 AD). In *De Iside et Osiride*, when relating the epic narrative of Osiris' murder and the subsequent battle between the god's son and his brother for his kingdom, Plutarch [20] preferred to pointedly pass over the naughty bits in silence, stating only,

> *The foregoing are pretty well the main points of the myth with the exception of the most outrageous episodes, such as those concerning the dismemberment of Horus and the decapitation of Isis. For if they believe and say these things about the blessed and incorruptible nature through which we mainly form our idea of the divine, as though they were really enacted and actually happened, there is no need to tell you that 'one needs must spit and purify the mouth,' as Aeschylus has it.*

The narrative sequence involving Hathor and her father comes at a point in the story at which despair and depression had set in amongst the gods. Not only had Horus and Seth been contending with one another in the courts and by feats of strength for eighty years without the divine assembly being able to agree who should inherit Osiris' kingdom, but now the sun-god, whose input was crucial in resolving the matter, had withdrawn in a sulk to his tent like great Achilles. The provocation in this instance was an insult ("Your shrine is vacant!"[2]) hurled at the sun-god by Bebon, a disruptive minor deity closely connected with male sexuality.[3]

> *Pre-Harakhti took offense at the insult which was said to him and lay down on his back very much saddened. And so the Ennead went*

[2] This and the following quote are taken from the English translation of P. Chester Beatty I 3.10–4.3 by Wente 2003: 94.

[3] Derchain 1952.

> *outside and let out a loud cry before the face of Bebon, the god. They told him, "Get out! This offence that you have committed is exceedingly great!" And they departed to their tents. And so the great god spent a day lying on his back in his pavilion very much saddened and alone by himself. After a long while, Hathor, Lady of the Southern Sycamore, came and stood before her father, the Universal Lord, and she exposed her private parts before his very eyes. Thereupon the great god laughed at her. Then he got up and sat down with the Great Ennead. He said to Horus and Seth, "Speak for yourselves!"*

With respect to Hathor's genital exposure, there are, I would propose, two primary questions to be asked. First, why did it strike her father as funny? And, second, what function does the action serve within the story as a whole? To address both questions, it is useful to consider two other myths in which *anasyrmenê*—or the act of skirt-raising, as Alan Lloyd's own Herodotus coined it—plays a both pivotal and riotous role. I relate the pertinent portions of the myths below and then turn back to the questions posed above with a wider frame of reference.

The Shinto myth of the sun

In Japanese mythology, as in Egyptian and Greek mythology, the gods are seldom distant or dignified, which is exactly what provides this tradition with its narrative richness. One of the best-known Shinto myths details the escalating sibling rivalry between the sun-goddess, Amaterasu, and her brother, the wind-god, Susanowo. In the myth, Susanowo, who was renowned for his reckless behavior, had been causing a great deal of trouble for his sister, destroying her carefully laid out rice paddies, defecating in the hall where the first fruits were tasted at harvest time, and even throwing a flayed horse into her sacred weaving hall.

The version of the myth recorded in the *Kojiki* states that Amaterasu became afraid at this final act of her brother's, which caused the accidental death of one of her maids.[4] According to the *Nihongi*, however, the goddess was less afraid than "indignant."[5] Both narratives agree that in response to these affronts she retreated to a rocky hideaway (sometimes interpreted as a cave and sometimes as a sarcophagus) and dwelt there in seclusion, thereby depriving the earth of her light and causing all manner of calamities.

The myth then details the numerous and varied stratagems adopted by the deities who had gathered together in order to lure her out again—all of which were employed, of course, to no avail. Finally, a goddess known as the Dread Female of Heaven, Uzume, took action.

---

[4] Philippe 1969: 80.

[5] Aston 1985: 41.

> *[She] bound up her sleeves with a cord of heavenly* PI-KAGË *vine, tied around her head a head-band of the heavenly* MA-SAKI *vine, bound together bundles of* SASA *leaves to hold in her hands, and overturning a bucket before the heavenly rock-cave door, stamped resoundingly upon it. She became divinely possessed, exposed her breasts, and pushed her skirt-band down to her genitals. Then* TAKAMA-NÖ-PARA *shook as the eight-hundred myriad deities laughed at once."*[6]

The earth-quaking laugh erupting from outside her door surprised and puzzled Amaterasu, who had assumed that the world would be in mourning with her departure, and prompted her to peek outside her cave. The two versions of the myth diverge at this point as to whether the assembled deities then simply prevailed upon Amaterasu to remain outside (*Nihongi*) or whether she was, instead, further lured out and prevented from re-entering the cave by a clever ruse (*Kojiki*). Following this, the wind-god was officially chastised and light returned to the world.

The myth of Demeter (and Baubo)

In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess, stricken with grief over the abduction of her daughter, adopted the form of an old woman and entered the service of a wealthy household in Eleusis. Unable to emerge from her depression, however, "she sat voiceless with grief on the stool and responded to no one with word or gesture. Unsmiling, tasting neither food nor drink, she sat wasting with desire for her deep-girt daughter, until knowing Iambe jested with her and mocking with many a joke moved the holy goddess to smile and laugh and keep a gracious heart—Iambe, who later pleased her moods as well."[7] Coaxed out of her misery by the servant's antics, Demeter is persuaded to accept a sip of *kykeôn*, the first nourishment she has taken since her daughter's disappearance.

The nature of the joking that so restored Demeter is not specified in the Homeric hymn, though it is revealing that the little known character of Iambe gave her name to (or perhaps took it from) *iambos*—the poetic meter of choice for obscenities and bawdy jests.[8] In most other narratives of the myth, however, the personage who cheered up Demeter was Baubo, a minor deity[9] whose name the Greek philosopher Empedocles (490–430 BC) equated with the word *koilia*, i.e. "body cavity" or "vagina"![10] Demeter's encounter with Baubo differs slightly according to who is narrating it, but all seem to agree that (in the words

6 Philippi 1969: 84.

7 Foley 1994: 12; lines 98–205.

8 Foley 1994: 45.

9 Picard 1927: 231; Oleander 1985: 5. Two dedicatory inscriptions mention Baubo as a goddess in the august company of Zeus, Demeter, and Korê. The inscription at Naxos dates to the fourth century BC, while that at Paros dates to the first century BC.

10 Oleander 1985: 6; see also Mylonas 1961: 293.

of Orpheus), "[Baubo] drew aside her robes, and showed a sight of shame."[11] Following Baubo's *anasyrmenê*, Demeter was cheered somewhat, drank a sip of *kykeôn*, and thereby initiated her slow emergence from mourning.

What's so funny about *anasyrmenê*?

Were one to focus solely upon the Hathor episode in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth*, the temptation would be to look for a quintessentially Egyptian reason that the goddess' skirt-raising would cause her father to laugh. One potential avenue for exploration in such an approach might be the norms and notions of divine incest. In the realm of the kings and of the gods, after all, fathers and daughters were potential sex partners, and because Hathor was the goddess of physical love and beauty, her flash could have delighted her father by reminding him of his potency in realms both sexual and political.[12]

Alternatively, or perhaps additionally, Hathor's gesture could have been intended to consciously evoke the ritual exposure of women before the future Apis bull. According to Diodorus Siculus [1.85], once chosen, the bullock that would become the Apis bull remained in seclusion for forty days at Nilopolis prior to his induction into the temple at Memphis. "During these forty days only women may look at it; these stand facing it and pulling up their garments show their genitals." If Diodorus Siculus, who visited Egypt c. 60 BC, was reporting on a rite hallowed by antiquity, then perhaps Hathor's gesture was meant to infuse her dormant father with divine power in the same way as the gestures of the women helped to transform an earthly calf (whose shrine was vacant) into a divine bull.[13] Or, perhaps, the joke was that Pre-Harakhti *wasn't* a budding Apis, yet here Hathor treated him as if he were.

These are only two of the possible ways in which this episode could be interpreted from an Egyptocentric perspective. Certainly many other equally valid scenarios could be advanced and successfully defended. Given the fact that the gesture of *anasyrmenê* elicited belly laughs from a whole host of very different deities in three distinct myths, however, it is worthwhile to look at the episode from a structuralist standpoint and explore the dual questions of why the gesture evoked divine laughter and, further, what purpose it served within the larger narratives in which it was embedded. Let us address the first query first.

---

[11] Quoted in Clement of Alexandria 2.17–18.

[12] For such an interpretation and for the popular belief that Hathor was not only the sun-god's daughter, but also his consort, see Pinch 1993: 158, 243; Bleeker 1973: 65; Broze 1996: 44, 238.

[13] The newly enthroned Apis appears never to have been younger than nine months, before which time the animal would not have been sexually potent. Thus the actions of the women before the bull would have worked to excite and hasten the animal's latent sexual powers (Burton 1972: 245). As Perdrizet (1921: 55) and Montserrat (1996: 168–9) have suggested, the relationship would have been of mutual benefit if ancient Egyptian women believed that exposure to the bull might help render sterile wombs fertile.

The general consensus among those who study the nature of humor, as any foray into encyclopedia entries on the subject will reveal, is that most stimuli that provoke laughter can be fitted into one of three broad categories of theories: superiority theories, incongruity theories, and relief theories. The first of these, championed by Thomas Hobbes among others, does not seem particularly applicable to the Egyptian and the Japanese myths. Its premise is that the person who laughs does so because he or she feels a sense of superiority towards the person who prompted the laugh.[14] If Baubo is indeed envisioned as the wizened crone she is portrayed as in some sources,[15] then it is possible that the undignified act of an undignified creature is what caused Demeter's mirth. And, indeed, such humor would truly have been "Homeric." The laughter of the Olympian deities in *The Iliad* at the sight of an injured Hephaistos hobbling about the palace to pour them wine is much discussed as a quintessential example of the superiority theory of laughter, as are other episodes of humor in Homer's works.[16] The laughter evoked by the act of *anasyrmenê* in these myths as a whole, however, is perhaps better explained by the incongruity and the tension-relief theories.

Incongruity theories, most famously advocated by Aristotle and Immanuel Kant, postulate that much humor is based on a disjuncture between what is expected and perfectly appropriate, on the one hand, and what in fact happens, on the other.[17] Laughter that erupts due to surprise—a witty punch line or a rabbit pulled out of a hat—falls into this category, as does irony and the absurd. George Bataille and Annette Michelson write,

> *We laugh, in short, in passing very abruptly, all of a sudden, from a world in which everything is firmly qualified, in which everything is given as stable within a generally stable order, into a world in which our assurance is overwhelmed, in which we perceive that this assurance was deceptive. Where everything had seemed totally provided for, suddenly the unexpected arises, something unforeseeable and overwhelming, revelatory of an ultimate truth; the surface of appearances conceals a perfect absence of response to our expectation.*[18]

Laughter upon on recognizing the incongruous appears already in infancy and is therefore one of humankind's most instinctual and basic forms of humor.[19]

---

14 Munro 1981: 356–7.

15 See Olender 1985 for a comprehensive review of sources pertaining to Baubo. For a more specific discussion of the connection between ugliness, obscenity, and old women, see Olender 1985: 44–8; 1990: 100–3.

16 Rapp 1948: 276; Levine 1982: 97.

17 Munro 1981: 357.

18 Bataille and Michelson 1986: 90.

19 Haig 1988: 27.

In the *anasyrmenê* discussed here, we find incongruity operating on two levels. First, we have the contrast between how one might expect a mourning, or sulking, or depressed deity to be treated (with supplication and sacrifice, with trepidation, with emphatic sympathy, with tenderness and blandishments, etc.) and how they were treated (to a sudden flash of the genitals). Second, we have the incongruity of a goddess, worthy of worship in her own right, purposefully playing the clown and exposing her most private of parts for the express purpose of cheering up another deity—meaning that in each of these cases who was doing the flashing may have been even funnier than the act in its own right. Finally, as will be discussed below, we may in the case of the Greek and Egyptian myths, at least, have encoded in the flash just the sort of surprising revelatory truth of which Bataille and Michelson speak.

Before these points may be addressed further, the question of why the flash *would* cheer up another deity must be answered. Because I am only qualified to speak to the Egyptian example, I will focus on it alone, though some of what is true in Egypt may have been valid in Japan and Greece as well. In Egypt, the incongruity of a goddess raising her skirts may have rested in the shock value of the pubic triangle. If the innumerable nipples found on two and three-dimensional representations of women and goddesses is any indication, the sight of bared breasts in pharaonic Egypt was somewhat commonplace—as might be expected in a society where most children were weaned from the breast at age three. Vaginas, however, were a far rarer sight with respect to both populations. The exceptions to this rule are mostly New Kingdom in date, consisting of foreign goddesses, serving girls and musicians (often serving and entertaining an all female audience), and the ever popular "fertility figurines."[20] Even though Hathor is virtually never depicted in the nude, the fact that she was the goddess most likely to be fused with her often unclad foreign counterparts, the fact that she held primacy of place as a goddess of physical love and pleasure, and the fact that she bore the epithet "mistress of the vulva" (*nebet-hetepet*) may have made this manner of surprising the sun-god—her sometimes father, sometimes consort—particularly apt.

Many theorists have weighed in on the subject of why exposure is often a laughing matter. Sigmund Freud viewed brevity and shock as integral to humor, and suggested that "a chance exposure has a comic effect on us because we compare the ease with which we have enjoyed the sight with the great expenditure which would otherwise be required for reaching this end."[21] Others view the very origin of comedy itself in improvisation and in the ancient Greek phallic song and its attendant revels. Wylie Sypher writes, "Comic action is a saturnalia, an orgy, an association of the unruliness of the flesh and its vitality…triumph over mortality by some absurd faith in rebirth, restoration

[20] For discussions of Egyptian nudity and the evident reluctance to depict the vagina in most circumstances, see Goelet 1995 and Robins 1996.

[21] Freud 1960: 275.

and salvation…comedy is sacred and secular."[22]

In the tradition of Zen Buddhism, laughter often accompanies enlightenment—the recognition of an ultimate truth—and it is worthwhile to briefly consider that in the flashes performed by Hathor and Baubo, the sight of their vulvas may have provided Pre-Harakhti and Demeter with the sudden revelation that life, in effect, goes on. Certainly, the Christian polemicists who discussed the Baubo episode in the Demeter myth seem to have been as puzzled as modern audiences as to why the act should have struck the goddess as funny. In their explanations, then, what caused the mirth was that underneath Baubo's skirts Demeter saw her own grandson (or son)—in the peculiar shape of Baubo's genitals, according to one rationale, or in person laughing and waving, in the other.[23] According to the Christian polemicists and their unlikely bedmates—modern feminist writers[24]—the humor of Baubo's gesture resided in part in its blunt visual reminder of what is most elemental about the human experience: the pleasures of vibrant sexuality and/or the joy of creating new life.

This transcendental laugh of surprised delight at the recognition of a sacred truth is common to many cultures and is often consciously incorporated into both myth and ritual. In his article, "La Rire Ritual," Salomon Reinach has discussed myths throughout the world in which the laugh of a divinity is used to signal a new beginning, a sacred rebirth. Further, he suggests that when such a laugh is provoked by the obscene, the taboos thereby broken imbue it with extra potency.[25] In Egypt, it is certainly of great interest that while the tears of the sun-god are said to have created mankind, the deities were created by his laugh—a laugh perhaps erupting at the obscene.[26] Moreover, the link between the sacred, the overtly sexual, and the side-splitting is perhaps nowhere so blatant as in the Shinto "laughing festivals" in which people laugh at shrines to please the gods. It will come to the reader as little surprise that the shrines that provoke such laughter contain, at their heart, three-dimensional models of male and female genitalia.[27]

If we return to the perspective of the incongruity theorists, disregarding revelations of ultimate truths for a moment, it is remarkable that Hathor's act would have worked on so many levels. The goddess jolts her father out of his brooding stupor by performing a brief, unexpected, and perhaps brashly bawdy act. The incongruity of this sort of rude humor would have been thrown into even starker relief given her own status as his daughter and one of Egypt's most

[22] Sypher 1956: 220–1.

[23] See Olender's (1987: 83) discussion of the views of Clement of Alexandria and Euseibius of Caesarea. A perceived etymological relationship between the name of the child, Iakkhos, and *khoiros*, a word for female genitalia, may have factored into their interpretations (Olender 1990: 104).

[24] Lubell 1994: 11; Blackledge 2004: 39–40.

[25] Reinach 1912: 112–121; for the sacred nature of the Zen laugh, see Hyers 1973.

[26] See Broze 1996: 244–6.

[27] Baruma 1984: 9.

esteemed deities. Finally, the difference between how Pre-Harakhti might have expected that his daughter would have chosen to console him in his sullen and smarting state and how she, in fact, did must have been tremendous.

The incongruity of the act of *anasyrmenê* with the state of crisis engendered by the withdrawal of the sun's light from the world is also strongly brought out in the Shinto myth, where Amaterasu's emergence from her cave is prompted by her bafflement and curiosity at the abrupt change of atmosphere outside. According to the *Nihongi*, she thought to herself, "Since I have shut myself up in the Rock-cave, there ought surely to be continual night in the Central Land of fertile reed-plains. How then can Ama no Uzume no Mikoto be so jolly?"[28] The transformation in Amaterasu herself, from indignation to inquisitiveness, however, is what ultimately allows the other deities an opportunity to convince her to emerge completely. According to Frank MacHovec's compendium of strategies typically employed by humorists, a favorite is the "deliberate tangent: to outwit, distract, circumvent, to use humor to lead other person(s) astray, off on a tangent, to another subject or into absurdity."[29] This tactic would presumably be most crucial if the individual targeted were to some extent rendered immobile by anger or depression—for in following even a tangent he or she might be led to the road of recovery.

This last point provides a fitting segue to the final "relief" theory of humor, namely that what makes a joke or an action funny is a sudden attendant release of tension. Of all three theories, this one in particular helps to explain why the deities exposed to the genital flashes in Egypt, Greece, and Japan may have been especially primed to enjoy them despite—or indeed precisely because of—their dark moods. The tension-relief theories, articulated by scholars such as Herbert Spencer, Sigmund Freud, and Mikhail Bakhtin, recognize as their fundamental premise that laughter can serve as a valve to release built up tension occasioned by danger, repression, depression, or any number of other inhibiting factors.[30] A quintessential example of this type of laughter was noted by a war correspondent and commented upon by Charles Darwin, "namely that the German soldiers after strong excitement from exposure to extreme danger were particularly apt to burst into loud laughter at the smallest joke. So again when young children are just beginning to cry, an unexpected event will sometimes suddenly turn their crying into laughter."[31] As E. B. White similarly noted in an adult context, "A thing gets so bad and you feel so terrible that at last you go to pieces and it's funny."[32]

In describing his sketch "Allegory of Pleasure and Pain," Leonardo Da Vinci wrote, "Pleasure and Pain are represented as twins, as though they were joined

---

28 Aston 1985: 45.

29 MacHovec 1988: 21.

30 Munro 1981: 357–8.

31 Darwin 1899: 81.

32 Quoted in MacHovec 1988: 3.

together, for there is never one without the other."[33] His view can be traced as far back as Socrates' two-headed monster in western thought[34] but no doubt boasts an even longer lineage. Existing in tandem with the idea that pleasure and pain are to some degree inextricable is the notion that what is so potent and so powerful about humor is that it possesses the almost mystical power to transform one into the other. Indeed, this notion had been taken up already in the fourteenth century by the French doctor Henri de Mondeville, who prescribed laughter as a remedy for suffering. His advice: "Let the surgeon take care to regulate the whole regimen of the patient's life for joy and happiness…by allowing his relatives and special friends to cheer him, and by having some one to tell him jokes."[35] De Mondeville's modern avatar is Dr. Norman Cousins, who in 1979 published a book outlining a "humor therapy" to alleviate physical pain and promote healing. Whether rooted in the physical or the metaphysical, however, the belief that humor can heal—and indeed is especially equipped to do so—is an old one.

The narrative purpose of *anasyrmenê*

As set out in the introduction, this discussion of Hathor's flash has two main purposes—first, to explain why this action might have caused her father to laugh, and, second, to discuss the reasons why the narrative would have been included in *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* in the first place. The time has come, then, to address this second question, with regard to which I will put forth two basic arguments, one narratological and the other etiological. I shall address the former, and simpler, first.

In the case of the Egyptian myth, but also its Japanese and Greek counterparts, the act of *anasyrmenê* served to resolve a crisis and to move the plot forward. In the Shinto myth, Uzume's flash succeeds in luring the sun-goddess out of her cave—and thus restoring light to the world—whereas potential solutions advocated by the other assembled deities had failed. Once Amaterasu emerged, her dangerously disruptive brother could be formally punished, and the world could be restored to normalcy.

In the Greek myth as well, the laugh provoked by Iambe's words and Baubo's act is what begins Demeter's journey back from the depths of depression. According to the version of the hymn to Demeter composed by the Hellenic poet Philikos, Iambe was well aware of the potential effect of her "humor therapy" and had primed the goddess, with the words, "If you are willing to loosen the bonds of your mourning, I can set you free."[36] Demeter bears the epithet "giver of seasons"[37] in the Homeric hymn and was widely revered as a

[33] From *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, quoted in Morris 1991: 87.
[34] Plato, *Phaedo*, 60b–c.
[35] Quoted in Walsh 1928: 147–8.
[36] Olender 1990: 86.
[37] Foley 1994: 4; line 54.

grain goddess, thus the transition between her state of desolate inertia and her reawakening to the world—as signalled by the laugh and subsequent acceptance of nourishment—likely had direct repercussions for those on earth, who could begin, with the goddess' sip of *kykeôn*, to observe the first slight signs of nature's renewal.

In *The Contendings of Horus and Seth* too, the sun's choice to sequester himself in his tent constituted a crisis that needed to be resolved, both in order to enable the eventual settlement of the lawsuit between Horus and Seth and, presumably, also for the world to emerge again from darkness. All of this explains why the Ennead, who themselves were "furious to the nth degree"[38] with the sun-god at the time of Bebon's insult, would rebuke the minor deity so vehemently and expel him from the proceedings altogether. Pre-Harakhti's disappearance, like that of Amaterasu and like the slow starvation of Demeter, threatened to mire the terrestrial and cosmic worlds alike in darkness, stasis, and hunger.

The choice of laughter as the means to resolve the crisis and to restore light, movement, happiness, and fertility to the universe again worked on a number of different levels. In transforming pain into pleasure, in revitalizing the life-force, and in unfreezing the frozen (or breaking the ice), the alchemy of the laugh is not only appropriate but it is extremely economical. No long redemptive journeys are necessary, just a short moment of (en)lightenment. Moreover, as a method to *elicit* the laugh, the choice of *anasyrmenê* was doubly expedient, for in these myths the action and the re-action took place almost instantaneously; yet, as discussed above, the act also alluded to deeper truths and lessons that would have lost their force if pedantically explained. One final advantage in drawing upon humor to heal, whether in an Egyptian myth or a Shakespearian tragedy, is that a comic relief from suffering offered to the protagonist(s) in a story simultaneously provides comic relief to members of its audience, who each no doubt harbor their own private sorrows. It is precisely this potentially performative aspect of the myths, and indeed of the act of *anasyrmenê*, that I would like to address in the final portion of the paper.

The etiological function of *anasyrmenê* in a mythological context

If the Egyptian, Greek, and Shinto gods were envisioned as experiencing dramatic highs and lows, these emotions are in their origin deeply human. Moreover, just as individuals suffered due to the death of a loved one, an illness, or any number of other personal tragedies, so too could whole communities grieve together. Communal suffering followed natural disasters, epidemics, crop failures, and military losses—as the *Lamentations of Ur*[39] so poignantly illustrate. Catastrophic events are, by their nature, unpredictable, and for this reason communities have always needed to develop a means to cope with them—to

---

38 Wente 2003; 94.

39 See Jacobsen 1987: 447–474.

give themselves hope in times of trouble. Venting sorrow, as did the citizens of Ur, supplicating the gods, and performing rituals are all coping mechanisms, but coupled with these, in certain societies at least, is the a final affirmative act of sending in the clowns.

A passage from *Black Elk Speaks* will illustrate my point aptly. By way of preface, the sorrow that had come to Black Elk's Sioux community had been occasioned by numerous losses in battle and by a bitter winter in which his people were hungry, cold, and forced from their homes by soldiers of the U.S. government. He writes, "After the long winter of waiting, it was my first duty to go out lamenting. So after the first rainstorm I began to get ready."[40] Black Elk's lamentation consisted of purification, fasting, singing, weeping, praying, and seeking visions. When he returned to his community, he discussed his experience with the tribal elders.

> *I told it all to them, and they said that I must perform the dog vision on earth to help the people, and because the people were discouraged and sad, I should do this with heyokas, who are sacred fools, doing everything wrong or backwards to make the people laugh.… In the heyoka ceremony everything is backwards, and it is planned that the people shall be made to feel jolly and happy first, so that it may be easier for the power to come to them. You have noticed that the truth comes into this world with two faces. One is sad with suffering, and the other laughs; but it is the same face, laughing or weeping. When people are already in despair, maybe the laughing face is better for them; and when they feel too good and are too sure of being safe, maybe the weeping face is better for them to see. And so I think that is what the heyoka ceremony is for."*[41]

Black Elk then describes how he and a few other men performed the ceremony, literally clowning around with numerous antics, and states "When the ceremony was over, everybody felt a great deal better, for it had been a day of fun. They were better able now to see the greenness of the world, the wideness of the sacred day, the colors of the earth, and to set these in their minds."[42] Black Elk, in my view, describes more eloquently than any anthropologist or theorist I have read the communal catharsis humor has the power to engender.

Particularly difficult and dangerous periods, during which people are in the greatest need of cheering up, often occur with little or no warning. For many societies, however, periods of crisis or potential crisis made their rounds on a yearly basis during, for example, the inevitable weeks when the earth is at its darkest, coldest or most barren. Anticipating hardship and propitiating the

[40] Black Elk 1979: 180–1.
[41] Black Elk 1979: 187–9.
[42] Black Elk 1979: 193.

divine in order to avert the worst-case scenario is commonly viewed as the etiology of many rituals and attendant festivals worldwide. Further, this type of rite has its mirror in the joyful ceremonies that give thanks to divine entities—once the danger has passed and the harvest is reaped.

Anthropologists who study the festival as their main focus of concern have noted that such communal celebrations freely intermix elements that modern scholars, following Emile Durkheim, tend to divide into the rather suspect categories of "sacred" and "secular." Among the most frequent "secular" elements of festivals is socially sanctioned clowning. In the context of such celebrations, a special cadre of clowns or, even more frequently, large segments of society at large, break the rules that ordinarily dictate their conduct, ensuring a general air of hilarity as participants enthusiastically reverse their social or sexual roles and bawdy acts abound.[43] Enthusiastic consumption of alcohol at such festivals, while not obligatory, typically provides the social lubrication needed to effect and sanction such a radical change from the day-to-day.

In his seminal article on "rituals of rebellion," Max Gluckman describes the behavior of Zulu women at a festival held at planting time in honor of the main agricultural goddess. What interested Gluckman was that this rite "required obscene behavior by women and girls. The girls donned men's garments, and herded and milked the cattle, which were normally taboo to them. Their mothers planted a garden for the goddess far out in the veld, and poured a libation of beer to her. Thereafter this garden was neglected. At various stages of the ceremonies women and girls went naked and sang lewd songs. Men and boys hid and might not go near."[44]

Gluckman argued that this festival provided an outlet for Zulu women, who throughout the rest of the year were compelled to act in a modest and socially subordinate manner. Gluckman's argument has been critiqued for ignoring the fact that festivals also typically provide outlets for men to defy social norms by acting in a lewd, overtly feminine, insulting, or generally undignified manner.[45] The point is, however, that in encouraging people to behave in ways that dramatically contradict their normal persona, festivals provide abundant comic relief for witnesses as well as a welcome release from the tensions of everyday life for their most direct participants. Moreover, one may assume along with Gluckman that such release would be experienced most profoundly by those individuals whose conduct was ordinarily subject to the severest stricture.

In such transgressive rites of reversal, *anasyrmenê* no doubt often played a prominent role—as we will explore with reference to our case studies below. *Anasyrmenê* revealed what was normally hidden. It also brought attention in a bold and brassy manner to female sexuality, which in many, if not most, ancient societies was purposefully veiled due to its perceived potential to disrupt

---

43 Falassi 1987: 2–7.

44 Gluckman 1963: 113.

45 Norbeck 1963: 1256–60.

the social fabric. So in both of these ways, the act of *anasyrmenê* was perfectly suited to a performance of the inversion of everyday life.

Also in consort with the transgressive character of the carnival is the vagina's well-attested power to insult and to alarm. In her book, *The Story of V: A Natural History of Female Sexuality,* Catherine Blackledge devotes an entire chapter to the various meanings of female genital exposure cross-culturally. Blackledge details evidence of *anasyrmenê* employed as an insult—most commonly by a group of women, who would lift up their skirts and make lewd comments and gestures in order to publicly humiliate a particular man—among the Ilahita and Arapesh people of Papua New Guinea and the Bakweri, Azande, Balong, Kikuyu, Pokot, Khoisan, and Kom communities in Africa.[46] Such group female action for the purpose of insulting or shaming is noted also in Plutarch's tale of how Cyrus' soldiers were discouraged from retreating behind city walls after a bad turn in battle by their own womenfolk, who stood before the gate with raised skirts and foul mouths. Abashed at this visual and aural rebuke to their manhood, the Persians returned to battle and routed their foes.[47]

The vagina's power when brandished against wrongdoers leant it special utility also in practical and apotropaic rituals against evil forces. Numerous cross-cultural examples of this type of *anasyrmenê* are also detailed by Blackledge.[48] As festivals are often enacted during periods when societies are most vulnerable to the forces of nature, this act of driving away evil—including agricultural pests, according to Pliny—would certainly here find an appropriate venue. Interestingly, in one admittedly mythological Japanese example, a goddess advised two women, who were being pursued by a group of demons, to save themselves by raising their skirts and revealing their genitals. The goddess' advice worked wonders and the demons abruptly gave up the chase, convulsed as they were by fits of uproarious laughter.[49]

If laughter, insult, and inversion are frequent guests at festivals, so too are retellings, re-enactments, or direct allusions to religious or mythological narratives. Indeed, these ritual dramas were viewed by Victor Turner[50] as one of the primary constituent ingredients of festivals worldwide. So in this regard, it is especially interesting that the *anasyrmenê* practiced by Hathor, Uzume, and Baubo in the celestial realm was performed again in the terrestrial world during festivals. This leads us, then, to ponder the question of whether women lifted their skirts in such contexts to mimic a mythic act, or whether the goddesses in these myths were themselves taking their cue on how to cheer up their depressed counterparts by performing an act that would have been riotous in a festival setting.

---

[46] Blackledge 2004: 17–18.

[47] Plutarch, *Bravery of Women*, section 5.

[48] Blackledge 2004: 8–9, 11–12, 28, 31–3. See also Murray 1934 and Rabelais's [4.47] tale of "How an old woman of Popefigerry fooled the Devil."

[49] Lesoualc'h 1978: 34.

[50] Turner 1987 (a posthumous collection of essays). The importance of Turner's ideas have been explored in volumes that he (Turner 1982) and others (Falassi 1987) have edited.

Analogously, one might ask if Cherokees traditionally danced at festivals because they believed this act once cheered up their grieving sun-goddess or whether, conversely, the people in the myth had chosen to cheer her up in this manner because it was a well known fact that dances made everyone feel better.[51]

In this last portion of the paper, I will trace the evidence for the ritual performance of *anasyrmenê* in Japan, Greece, and Egypt. While I do not believe it is possible to settle the issue of whether myth engendered ritual or whether a particularly bawdy folkway found its way into the fabric of these myths, the problem is nonetheless important to address. For if the custom of *anasyrmenê* preceded the narratives that dramatized it, its presence within the myths would not only serve as a handy plot device but might also provide an etiological explanation for popular practice.

***Anasyrmenê* and the Shinto myth**

The commentaries to the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* versions of the myth of Amaterasu and Uzume are extremely useful in decoding the deeper significance of the narrative. At root, it seems, the myth preserved practical instructions on what was to be done when the strength of the sun was at its weakest, either due to an eclipse or to the cyclical crisis of the winter solstice.[52] What is fascinating, however, is that the proper procedure for such a rite was apparently not unanimously agreed upon throughout the country and that different lineages or ancestral groups each held priestly authority over competing methods to restore the sun's power.

The divine assembly of the myriad deities, who came together in order to solve the crisis of the sun's disappearance, had an earthly counterpart in the periodic assembly of the leading families associated with the Yamatö court.[53] The myth's long list of failed experiments to extract the sun from her cave, then, may not simply have constituted a narrative device intended to build up suspense before the final successful act of *anasyrmenê*. Instead, commentators suggest it was likely a calculated move to discredit the rites associated with the lineages who were rivals to the Sarume family in a courtly world where the possession of sacred and secular power were closely bound. Notably, in certain other versions of the myth, the sun-goddess emerges from her lair as the direct result of actions sacred to the ancestors of the Imube or of the Nakatömi lineages. And in these versions, Uzume's genital exposure is entirely omitted from the story![54]

The ritual advocated by the Sarume lineage combined elements of the spirit-pacification ceremony and also of the "ritual laugh" ceremony, and Matsumura suggests that the act of *anasyrmenê* would likely have been performed by a

---

51 Erdoes et al. 1984: 152–4.

52 Philipi 1969: 81, n. 3.

53 Philipi 1969: 82, n. 6.

54 Philipi 1969: 83, n. 10.

Sarume priestess, who had worked herself into a shamanistic trance.[55] Matsumura likens this use of *anasyrmenê* to other examples of the practice utilized elsewhere in order "not only to drive away undesirable influences, but also to amuse, entertain, and impart vitality to the deities."[56] The motivations behind rites, festivals, and spectacles are often indistinguishable, and the rivalry over efficacious rites witnessed at the Yamatö court brings to mind the rivalries between various temples in Roman Egypt, as discussed by David Frankfurter under the subheading "Spectacle Culture" in his *Religion in Roman Egypt*.

According to Frankfurter, in late Roman Egypt, religious pressure and declining funds rendered traditional Egyptian temples and the patrons who hoped to gain prestige from association with them, considerably more crass in their attempts to draw in pilgrims and casual visitors. The hosting of athletic events, in a conscious hearkening back to Hellenistic traditions, was one way to ensure an audience drawn even from among those who did not pray to the temple's patron deities. The notion that sex sells, however, was also taken to heart. Indeed, the excesses of such "religious" spectacles prompted the fourth century church father Epiphanius to declare:

> *If I described the orgies of Memphis and Heliopolis, where the tambourine and the flute capture hearts, and the dancing girls, and the triennial festivals of Batheia and Menouthis where women abandon their modesty and their customary state, to what verbal pretensions and to what drawn-out style should I resort to express the number that is truly inexpressible? If even I were to make an extraordinary effort I would not reach the end of this enumeration—as it is said, "young girls innumerable!"*[57]

I quote this passage, which should perhaps be more properly saved for the section pertaining to Egyptian festivals, because I imagine that certain court families in Japan may similarly have recognized the competitive—and no doubt lucrative—potential of combining worldly pleasures with celestial concerns.

Uzume's dance is claimed as the origin of one of the Kagura (or "that which pleases the gods") dances still held to entertain the gods at Shinto festivals, though "it is now in essence a strip tease, as a dancing priestess playing the part of Ama-no-Usume displays her vagina in front of the faithful temple visitors (the audience)."[58] Lifted from Shinto ritual, Uzume's *anasyrmenê* has since been taken over both by Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, and by exotic dancers. In the Floating World, the *tokudashi*—a curious and highly stylized ritual wherein women in a crab-like posture reveal their genitals to an audience of men wielding magnifying glasses and flashlights—still constitutes

[55] Discussed in Philipi 1969: 81, no. 3; 84, n. 17.

[56] Discussed in Philipi 1969: 84, n. 19.

[57] Epiphanius, *De fides* 12; quoted in Frankfurter 1998: 59–60.

[58] Blackledge 2004: 21.

the main event in many strip-clubs. According to Ian Buruma, "The tension of this remarkable ceremony is broken in the end by wild applause, and loud, liberating laughter. Several men produce handkerchiefs to wipe the sweat off their heated brows."[59] Concerning this outburst, Freud and other adherents of the tension-relief theories of humor would no doubt have much to say.

Anasyrmenê and the rites sacred to Demeter

Just as aspects of the Shinto myth of the sun were re-enacted ritually at certain times of the year, so too was the story of Demeter's quest for her abducted daughter. Indeed, the small female-only rites of the Thesmophoria and the mysteries held at Eleusis were extremely well known—the former constituting the single most widespread Greek festival and the latter one of its more famous and inclusive mystery cults. Significantly, at both gatherings ritual jesting, which almost certainly incorporated *anasyrmenê*, marked the transition from fasting to feasting.

The Thesmophoria occurred over the course of three days each October, right when the grain was being sown and humankind required assurance that Demeter's anger and grief over the wrong done to her daughter would not cause her to withhold her fruits. The aim of the rite, then, was for sexually mature women to mourn together with the goddess on the behalf of the community as a whole and then, like Iambe/Baubo, to coax the goddess out of her depression and back into a state of life-affirming joy. Given that the rituals performed by the women were swathed in secrecy and that virtually all of our reporters from ancient times were male, the events that took place at the Thesmophoria can only be reconstructed piecemeal. From what we can gather, the participants initiated the ceremonies by depositing sacrifices (especially pig sacrifices) deep inside the earth to commemorate Kore's descent. After this came a period of solemn fasting, during which the women proved their solidarity with Demeter by joining with her in grief. Finally, on the third day, the women offered sacrifices, feasted, and drank heavily. Taking the myth as a roadmap, then, the ritual joking for which the rites were most (in)famous almost certainly directly preceded and, indeed, prompted the feasting—which could not have taken place without it.

The *iambos* (jesting verse) and *aischrologia* (indecent speech) employed by the women at the festival were stated by Apollodorus to commemorate the time when "a certain old woman named Iambe made the goddess laugh with her raillery." Diodorus Siculus too asserted that the ritual jesting at the festival mimicked what "made Demeter laugh when she was grieving over the rape of Korê."[60] Although Apollodorus follows the Homeric hymn in referring to the author of Demeter's transformation as Iambe, the first century BC dedication at Paros "to Demeter Thesmophoros and Korê and Zeus Eubouleus and Babo

---

59 Buruma 1984: 13.

60 Both Apollodorus [*Bibliotheca* 1.5.1] and Diodorus Siculus [5.4.7] are quoted in Arthur 1994: 229.

(Baubo)"[61] suggests that the women who attended the Thesmophoria not only replicated the types of words that Iambe/Baubo might have said to Demeter but also the acts she performed.

The mysteries that took place at Eleusis—the locale wherein Demeter laughed for the first time after her daughter's abduction—also employed Demeter's transformative experience to script its ceremonies. Unlike the Thesmophoria, however, these were not restricted to women. For the first portion, at least, all Greek speakers who had never committed murder could take part—and thousands did over an eight-day period. In the most public portion of the festival crowds accompanied the sacred cult fetishes on their thirty-kilometre journey from Athens to Eleusis along the Sacred Way. Participants, it seems, would typically purify themselves in the sea and fast before this journey, and it is of great interest that their fast was not broken until they reached the boundary between Athens and Eleusis. Here, on the appropriately liminal structure of a bridge, masked figures entertained the crowd with obscene speech and perhaps with *anasyrmenê* also, in emulation of Baubo.[62]

Insofar as the more private and sacred rites held in the sanctuary at Eleusis are known—and they are better known than the vast majority of contemporary mystery cults—they consisted of a pig sacrifice, evoking Korê's abduction into the bowels of the earth, followed by a purification. Artistic depictions of this phase show that for this ceremony the initiate sat on a fleece-covered stool, silent and veiled, as Demeter had sat prior to her reawakening; acceptance of *kykeôn* was what presumably allowed the initiate to rise and resume movement. Next, in an act called *deiknymena* ("the displaying"), a ritual specialist revealed, manipulated, and replaced cult objects of the goddess, which seem to have included pomegranates, cakes, and items that bore a symbolic relationship with female genitalia. Finally the hierophant summoned Korê from the underworld and announced the joyous news that a sacred boy had been born, though to uninitiated scholars, it is unclear as to whether the child had been born to Demeter or Korê. The ceremonies are said to have ended with the cutting of an ear of grain in silence.[63]

Though the joking and display that prompted Demeter's first sip of *kykeôn* is not mentioned in the closed-door mysteries, as the catalyst to Demeter's re-emergence its presence in re-enactment or perhaps embodied in the form of one of the "unutterable" cult fetishes is virtually certain.[64] Indeed, according to the ancient sources consulted by the eleventh century Christian historian

---

[61] *Inscriptiones Graecae* 12.5.227, quoted in Arthur 1994: 229.

[62] For something of the festive atmosphere surrounding this portion of the Mysteries, see Aristophanes' dramatization of the procession along the Sacred Way and the jesting on the Cephisus bridge in *The Frogs* [lines 368–435].

[63] My description of these mysteries comes from those given in Mylonas 1961; Richardson 1974; Burkert 1985. Clement of Alexandria [2.19] alludes to the "unutterable symbols" of the earth-goddess.

[64] Picard 1927: 238; Olender 1985: 35.

Psellus, a different sort of "displaying" culminated the Eleusinian mysteries. He writes that after various aspects of the myth were re-enacted and various sacred dances were performed, a woman fulfilling the role of Baubo entered and "pulled up her gown revealing her thighs and pudenda (*gunaikeios kteis*). Thus they gave her a name which covered her with shame (*aido*). In this disgraceful manner the initiation ceremonies [at Eleusis] came to an end."[65]

The rites celebrated in the Thesmophoria and the mysteries at Eleusis closely and intentionally evoked and enacted the events in Demeter's myth; however, the socially sanctioned episodes of obscenity for which both festivals were famous almost certainly drew upon older and more widespread practices. Maurice Olender views the myth as an etiological narrative, providing a hallowed context for older fertility rites. Bruce Lincoln takes a similar view, but sees the prototype for such bawdy actions and words in female puberty initiations, which in many societies emphatically and enthusiastically celebrate the power of sexual maturity.[66] While both scholars may be correct, the bawdy behavior written into the myth of Demeter may simply draw upon the type of raucous sexuality celebrated in many other Mediterranean festival contexts. Indeed, in the words of one early scholar, "these indecent dances, sometimes also songs and dumb-show in the service of the maiden-goddess, are attested for a great part of the Greek world—Laconia, Elis, Sicily, Italy. Sexual life is introduced into the cult, coarse and undisguised."[67]

Anasyrmenê in Egypt

Because such "indecent dances" in the Aegean did not demonstrably include *anasyrmenê*, George Mylonas has argued that the act belongs more naturally to Egypt, where it is attested in a number of different sources. Although it seems that Mylonas' argument was partially motivated by his desire to purge the "real" Eleusinian mysteries of gross obscenities, he presents a plausible argument that the *anasyrmenê* that Clement of Alexandria reported on had taken place in the context of mysteries practiced in the *Alexandrian* suburb of Eleusis, Egypt, where a cult to Demeter is known to have existed.[68] In Greco-Roman Egypt, the cults of Demeter and the cults of Isis—with whom Demeter was equated as early as the time of Herodotus—underwent a great deal of cross-cultural fertilization.

In many respects, the cults of Isis and Demeter were a natural fit. Both goddesses had lost a loved one, undergone a long and mournful search, and eventu-

---

[65] Lubell 1994: 4.

[66] Olender 1987: 83; Lincoln 1981: 72–3, 80–1; Lubell 1994: 52–4.

[67] M.P. Nilsson, presumably from his *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion*, translated and quoted in Licht 1956: 120. Olender 1990: 94–6 provides examples of some of the bawdier festivals at which women are reported to have variously said indecent things, handled indecent symbols, and even consumed indecent cakes!

[68] Mylonas 1961: 293–300. According to Olender (1990: 93), Lobeck (1829, 2: 826) was the first to propose an Egyptian origin for the custom.

Figure 1 (left). Figurine from the public baths at Tell Atrib, Ptolemaic Period (3rd-2nd centuries BC). Reproduced from Mysliwiec 1994b: tafel III, with the kind permission of Prof. Mysliwiec.

Figure 2 (right). Figurine from a household context at Karanis, Roman Period—KM6488 (Late 2nd-early 4th century AD). Courtesy of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan.

ally managed to recover their beloved and to save him or her, at least partially, from eternal death. In both Egypt and Greece, these myths served as an explanation for the change of seasons and as a model for the eventual death and spiritual rebirth of their worshippers. Indeed, the creative melding of these cults is virtually the only way to explain the strange "Byblos" portion of Isis' travels, as told by Plutarch.[69] According to his narrative, Isis' search for Osiris led her to Byblos, where like Demeter she disguised herself as a mortal and sat down by a watersource, dejected and tearful, until she managed to enter the service of a wealthy household as a nursemaid. Both goddesses attempted to confer immortality to their charges but abandoned the project when the mother's scream of horror interrupted the child's apotheosis by flame. So, certainly, in this case at least, part of Demeter's tale had been incorporated into Isis' own life story.

To Herodotus' (2.171) mind, however, the similarities between the two cults of the goddesses were due not to Greek influence on Egyptian religious traditions but vice versa. He writes,

> *On this lake it is that the Egyptians represent by night his sufferings whose name I refrain from mentioning, and this representation they call their Mysteries. I know well the whole course of the proceedings in these ceremonies, but they shall not pass my lips. So too, with regard*

[69] Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 15–16.

> *to the mysteries of Demeter, which the Greeks term the Thesmophoria, I know them, but I shall not mention them, except so far as may be done without impiety. The daughters of Danaus brought these rites from Egypt, and taught them to the Pelasgic women of the Peloponese. Afterwards when the inhabitants of the peninsula were driven from their homes by the Dorians, the rites perished. Only in Arcadia, where the natives remained and were not compelled to migrate, their observance continued.*

Whether Herodotus' claim bears merit is beyond the scope of this essay, but the transfer of powerful rites (or spiritual capital) from one group to another, occasionally in return for more tangible items or land, is well documented cross-culturally.[70]

What is beyond dispute is that *anasyrmenê* played an important role in the Isis cult in Greco-Roman times, as is attested by scores of terracotta figurines, which typically depict a female, often wearing insignia identifying her either as Isis or as a priestess of the goddess, in the act of raising her skirts.[71] While most such figurines have long lost whatever provenience they once possessed, excavated examples from Tell Atrib and Karanis (see Figures 1 and 2, respectively) are particularly interesting. The former hail from a great trove of figurines discovered in workshops in the vicinity of public baths, which in the mid-second century BC appear to have been sacred to the partially fused cults of Osiris and Dionysus.[72] Isis would naturally have found a home in the baths due to her crucial role as Osiris' faithful wife and savior, while her immodest posture would presumably have arisen from her well-established syncretism with Hathor. To the Egyptians, then, "Isis-*anasyrmenê*"—as she is known in the art historical literature—would have been re-enacting the life-affirming and depression-vanquishing gesture with which she had restored order to the world. For the Greeks, however, who may have been more inclined to focus upon her intimate relationship with Demeter, the gesture surely referenced the bawdy ploy that awakened the goddess from misery and depression and brought about the beginnings of nature's renewal.[73]

The highly sexualized nature of the public baths themselves and the other artefacts found in close proximity—especially the very numerous figurines of a well endowed Harpokrates-Priapus—provide yet another slant on the purpose

---

70 Parsons 1996: 969.

71 A sample bibliography of such figurines may be found in Prof. Lloyd's (1976: 275) commentary on Herodotus' description of the boat trip to Bubastis.

72 See Mysliwiec 1994a; 2004: 62, 64–5.

73 Margaret Murray's (1934: 95) claim "that when Isis was mourning for Osiris, Baubo assumed the attitude represented in the figures, and thereby made Isis laugh and cease from lamenting," although completely unsubstantiated, is nonetheless interesting. Such an event would have fit seamlessly into the narrative, provided a home-grown etiology for the practice of *anasyrmenê* in her cult, and fit with the efforts discovered in Plutarch and other sources to fuse the legends of the two goddesses as much as possible.

of the *anasyrmenê* figurines. Diodorus [4.6.4.] writes of the ithyphallic Priapus that:

> *Honors are accorded him not only in the city, in the temples, but also throughout the countryside, where men set up his statue to watch over their vineyards and gardens, and introduce him as one who punishes any who cast a spell over some fair thing which they possess. And in the sacred rites, not only of Dionysus but of practically all other gods as well, this god receives honor to some extent, being introduced in the sacrifices to the accompaniment of laughter and sport.*

So here in the overly large phallus of the child-god Priapus (and presumably in the outsized member of his Egyptian counterpart Harpokrates as well) we again discover the power of exposed genitalia—this time male—to drive away evil. Further, the fact that Priapus' massive member provoked not only alarm but also laughter and excitement is reminiscent of the Japanese tale of the demons that ceased their pursuit and collapsed in laughter after being warded off with *anasyrmenê*.

The Isis-*anasyrmenê* discovered in a household context at Karanis,[74] then, could perhaps be viewed as having originally served, at least in part, to fend off the evil eye and to protect the inhabitants from malevolent spirits. If we take Clement of Alexandria to heart—which is always somewhat dangerous given the tendentiousness of his message—there is also the possibility that such images constituted fashionable décor. As Clement [4.53] states regarding Alexandria's pagan upper classes,

> *Casting off shame and fear, they have their homes decorated with pictures representing the unnatural lust of the daemons. In the lewdness to which their thoughts are given, they adorn their chambers with painted tablets hung on high like votive offerings, regarding licentiousness as piety; and, when lying upon the bed, while still in the midst of their own embraces, they fix their gaze upon that naked Aphrodite, who lies bound in her adultery.…Look, too, at other of your images,—little figures of pan, naked girls, drunken satyrs; and obscene emblems, plainly exhibited in pictures, and self-condemned by their indecency. More than that, you behold without a blush the postures of the whole art of licentiousness openly pictured in public. But when they are hung on high you treasure them still more, just as if they were actually the images of your gods; for you dedicate these monuments of shamelessness in your homes.*[75]

---

74 I am grateful to Terry Wilfong for providing me with the contextual information on this figurine.

75 See also the discussion of this quote in Montserrat 1996: 212–213.

That such materializations of divine sexuality may have been fashionable needn't override or contradict the importance to those that owned them of their perceived apotropaic and/or fertility-enhancing properties.

Before leaving the terracotta figurines depicting *anasyrmenê*, however, I want to explore one more notion—namely that such figurines were part of a concerted effort in Greco-Roman Egypt to promote cultic festivals. Such figurines, mass produced in workshops such as those found at Tell Atrib, may have earned extra income (and advertisement) for the local festivals at which they were sold. For those who bought them, on the other hand, the terracottas may have served not only as souvenirs, but also as the distillation of the essence of the festival itself. As David Frankfurter puts it, "Placed in a domestic space, an altar, a niche—these figures would bring the temple's procession and all it signified into a state of accessibility, a miniaturization that would articulate the relationship between domestic altar and temple altar throughout and beyond the festival."[76]

Figure 3. Bowl depicting a festive procession, Persian Period (*c.* 500-525 BC). © The Trustees of The British Museum

That Egyptian festivals were riotous affairs and involved a great deal of *anasyrmenê*, there is no question. A fascinating scene carved upon a steatite bowl, which had apparently been dedicated to the temple of the Lord of Coptos (Min) sometime around 525–500 B.C., depicts just such an affair (see Figure 3). Although the temple is shown from a side view, a gigantic face of Hathor and perhaps the presence of a sacred tree as well, mark it as belonging to the goddess. Entering the temple, is a procession that consisted first of two animals, an antelope or oryx followed by a bull, who were likely destined for sacrifice. Following behind these are five individuals, at least three of whom appear unambiguously female. Four of the participants play instruments—a tamborine, a lyre, clappers, and double pipes. The woman second to last, however, is by far the most interesting, for if T. G. H. James' interpretation is correct, she appears to be slapping her uncovered bottom along with the rhythm![77] More pertinent for our purposes, however, is the fact that with her other hand she holds high the hem of her dress, exposing her pubic triangle for all to see.

Hathor was a particularly fitting goddess to celebrate by means of *anasyrmenê* due, of course, to her role in restoring the power of the sun in *The Con-*

[76] Frankfurter (1998: 55) drawing inspiration from Dunand (1979: 100–2).

[77] James 1988: 179–80.

tendings of Horus and Seth. Indeed, it is quite possible that the festival depicted on the bowl would have culminated in a symbolic union between (the statue of) Hathor and the sun-god, incarnate in his rays, followed by the subsequent rejoicing of all gods and goddesses. We know that such a union, effected in an open courtyard or temple roof, was a part of a number of Hathor festivals.[78] Whether the statue would have been unveiled before the beams of her father is unknown, but perhaps likely. *Anasyrmenê* was also, of course, appropriate to Hathor's function as the "the mistress of jubilation, the queen of the dance, the mistress of music, the queen of the harp-playing, the lady of the choral dance, the queen of wreath-weaving, the mistress of inebriety without end," "she who by her fertility brings abundance in all Egypt," the "Lady of the vulva," and "the goddess (who) lets your wives bear sons and daughters, so that they may not be barren and you may not be impotent."[79] The gesture of *anasyrmenê* in the context of temple festivities, then, may have quite easily shifted from Hathor to Isis-Aphrodite as the later goddess gradually encompassed the persona and rites of the former.

That *anasyrmenê* could find a home in the festivals of virtually any goddess (and thereby in the cult of Isis, who encompassed all goddesses), however, is proven by Herodotus' [2.60] own account of the behavior of female pilgrims on their way to celebrate a festival at Bubastis. Especially in view of the steatite bowl just discussed, the passage is worth quoting at length:

> *The following are the proceedings on occasion of the assembly at Bubastis: Men and women come sailing all together, vast numbers in each boat, many of the women with castanets, which they strike, while some of the men pipe during the whole time of the voyage; the remainder of the voyagers, male and female, sing the while, and make a clapping with their hands. When they arrive opposite any of the towns upon the banks of the stream, they approach the shore, and, while some of the women continue to play and sing, others call aloud to the females of the place and load them with abuse, while a certain number dance, and some standing up expose themselves. After proceeding in this way all along the river-course, they reach Bubastis, where they celebrate the feast with abundant sacrifices. More grapewine is consumed at this festival than in all the rest of the year besides.*

Herodotus' words strongly evoke the scene on the bowl, complete with its male piper, the female playing the clapper, and the jubilant act of *anasyrmenê*. All we lack are the saucy insults and the tang of spilt wine. This surely would

[78] Sauneron 1962: 41–3; Bleeker 1973: 89–90.

[79] Bleeker 1973: 39–40, 83. The erotic nature of Hathor's dances is discussed by Bleeker on page 58 and illustrated in the many tomb scenes depicting scantily clad women exposing themselves in the process of high kicks and other strenuous moves.

have been a procession that whether staged in Japan, Greece, or Egypt could have lifted the spirits of any goddess, god, down-at-the-heels mortal, or temple treasurer once more into buoyancy. I sincerely hope that, if nothing else, this essay has done as much for Professor Lloyd—wise confidant of Herodotus and knower of a thousand good jokes. In honor of his retirement, I wish for Professor Lloyd all the blessings of Hathor: wine, a joyous house, music, and the occasional bawdy dance.

Bibliography

Aristophanes. 1993. *Aristopheanes Plays: Two*, trans. K. McLeish. London: Methuen Drama.

Arthur, Marylin. 1994. Politics and Pomegranates: An Interpretation of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. In *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, ed. H. P. Foley. Princeton: Princeton UP, 214–42.

Aston, W. G. (trans.). 1985. *Nihongi. Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*. Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company.

Aurelius, Marcus. 1945. *Meditations. In Marcus Aurelius and His Times*, ed. I. Edman. New York: Walter J. Black, 11–133.

Babcock, Barbara A. 1996. Arrange Me into Disorder: Fragments and Reflections on Ritual Clowning. In *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. R. L. Grimes. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1–21.

Bataille, Georges; Anette Michelson. 1986. Un-knowing: Laughter and Tears. *October* 36: 89–102.

Black Elk. 1988. *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux as told through John G. Neihardt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Reprint of a 1932 edition.

Blackledge, Catherine. 2004. *The Story of V: A Natural History of Female Sexuality*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP.

Bleeker, C.J. 1973. *Hathor and Thoth: Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Broze, Michèle. 1996. *Mythe et roman en Égypte ancienne. Les Aventures d'Horus et Seth dans le Papyrus Chester Beatty I*. Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters.

Burkert, Walter. 1985. *Greek Religion*, trans. J. Raffan. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Burton, Anne. 1972. *Diodorus Siculus Book I: A Commentary*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Buruma, Ian .1984. *Behind the Mask: On Sexual Demons, Sacred Mothers, Transvestites, Gangsters and other Japanese Cultural Heroes*. New York: Meridian Press.

Clement of Alexandria. 1953. The Exhortation to the Greeks. In *Clement of Alexandria*, trans. G. W. Butterworth. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2–263.

Cousins, Norman. 1979. *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration*. New York: Norton.

Darnton, Robert. 1985. *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History.* New York: Vintage Books.

Darwin, Charles. 1899. *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.

Derchain, Phillipe. 1952. Bébon, le dieu et les myths. *Revue d'Égyptologie* 9: 23–47.

Dunand, Francoise. 1979. *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Erdoes, Richard; and Alfonso Ortiz. 1984. *American Indian Myths and Legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Falassi, Alessandro. 1987. Festival: Definition and Morphology. In *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, ed. A. Falassi. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1–10.

Foley, Helene P. 1994. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter. Translation, Commentary, and Interpretive Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Frankfurter, David. 1998. *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Freud, Sigmund. 1960. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious.* Trans. and ed. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.

Gluckman, Max. 1963. Rituals of Rebellion in South East Africa. In *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa; Collected Essays with an Autobiographical Introduction*. London: Cohen and West, 110–37.

Goelet, Ogden. 1993. *Nudity in Ancient Egypt. Source Notes in the History of Art* 12,2: 20–31.

Haig, Robin Andrew. 1988. *The Anatomy of Humor: Biopsychosocial and the Theraputic Perspectives*. Springfield, Il.: Charles C. Thomas.

Herodotus. 1942. *The Persian Wars*, trans. G. Rawlinson. New York: Modern Library.

Hyers, Conrad. 1973. *Zen and the Comic Spirit*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Jacobsen, Thorkild. 1987. *The Harps that Once… Sumerian Poetry in Translation*. New Haven: Yale UP.

James, T.G.H.. 1988. *Ancient Egypt: The Land and its Legacy*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Lesoualc'h, Theo. 1978. *Érotique du Japon*. Paris.

Levine, Daniel B. 1982. *Homeric Laughter and the Unsmiling Suitors*. The Classical Journal 78,2: 97–104.

Licht, Hans (Pseudonym of Paul Brandt). 1956. *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece*. London:

Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Lincoln, Bruce. 1981. *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Studies in Rituals of Women's Initiation*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Lloyd, Alan B. 1976. *Herodotus Book II Commentary* 1–98. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Lobeck, C.A. 1829. *Aglaophamus sive de Theologiae Mysticae Graecorum Causis, vol II*. Königsberg.

Lubell, Winifred M. 1994. *The Metamorphosis of Baubo. Myths of Woman's Sexual Energy*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

MacHovec, Frank J. 1988. *Humor, Theory, Applications*. Springfield, Il.: Charles C. Thomas Publ.

Montserrat, Dominic. 1996. *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt*. New York: Kegan Paul International.

Morris, David B. 1991. *The Culture of Pain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Munro, D.H. 1981. Humor, Theories of. In *Collier's Encyclopedia vol. 12*, ed. W.D. Halsey et al. Macmillan Educational Co., 356–8.

Murray, Margaret A. 1934. Female Fertility Figurines. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 64: 93–100.

Mylonas, George. 1972. *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Mysliwiec, Karol. 1994a. Isis-Aphrodite "Anasyrménè" et le Culte de la Déesse Nue à Athribis Ptolémaïque. In *Hommages à Jean Leclant III: Études Isiaques*, ed. C. Berger et al. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 385–9.

Mysliwiec, Karol. 1994b. Un passage des Textes des Pyramides et la rencontre d'une tradition égyptienne avec une tradition grecque à l'époque ptolémaïque. In *Zwischen den beiden Ewigkeiten, Festschrift Gertrud Thausing*, ed. M. Bietak et al. Vienna: Institutes für Ägyptologie der Universität Wien, 154–8.

Mysliwiec, Karol. 2004. *Eros on the Nile*, trans. G.L. Packer. Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Norbeck, Edward. 1963. African Rituals of Conflict. *American Anthropologist* 65, 6: 1254–79.

Olender, Maurice. 1985. Aspects de Baubô: Textes et contextes antiques. *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 202: 3–55.

Olender, Maurice. 1987. Baubo. In *Encyclopedia of Religions v. II*, ed. Mircea Eliade et al. New York: Macmillan, 83–4.

Olender, Maurice. 1990. Aspects of Baubo: Ancient Texts and Contexts. In *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*. Ed. D.M. Halperin et al. Princeton: Princeton UP, 83–113.

Parsons, Elsie Clews. 1996. *Pueblo Indian Religion, vol. 2*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska.

Perdrizet, Paul. 1921. *Les Terres cuites Grecques de l'Égypte de la collection Fouquet*. Paris: Berger Levrault.

Pinch, Geraldine. 1993. *Votive Offerings to Hathor*. Oxford: Griffith Institute.

Philippi, Donald L. (trans. and ed.). 1969. *Kojiki*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Picard, C. 1927. L'Épisode de Baubô dans les Mystères d'Eleusis. *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 95: 220–55.

Plato. 1955. *Phaedo*, trans. R.S. Bluck. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Plutarch. 1970. *De Iside et Osiride*, ed. and trans. J. Gwyn Griffiths. Cambridge: University of Wales Press.

Plutarch. 1999. Bravery of Women. In *Moralia, vol. 3*, trans. F.C. Babbitt. Loeb Classical Library 245. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 471–581.

Rabelais, François. 1944. *The Complete Works of Rabelais; The Five Books of Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. Jacques LeClercq. New York: Modern Library.

Rapp, Albert. 1948. The Dawn of Humor. *The Classical Journal* 43,5: 275–80.

Reinach, Salomon. 1912. La Rire Ritual. In *Cultes, Mythes et Religions, vol. 4*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 109–29.

Richardson, N.J. 1974. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Oxford.

Robins, Gay. 1996. Dress, Undress, and the Representation of Fertility and Potency in New Kingdom Egyptian Art. In *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, ed. Natalie Boymel Kampen et al. New York: Cambridge UP, 27–40.

Sauneron, Serge. 1962. *Les fetes religieuses d'Esna aux derniers siecles du paganisme. Esna 5*. Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale.

Siculus, Diodorus. 1933a. Book I. In *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes, vol. 1: Books I and II, 1–34*, trans. C.H. Oldfather. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1–341.

Siculus, Diodorus. 1939. Book IV. In *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes, vol. 3: Books IV (continued) 59–VIII*, trans. C.H. Oldfather. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2–89.

Sypher, Wylie. 1956. The Meanings of Comedy. In *Comedy*, ed. W. Sypher. New York: Doubleday, 193–255.

Turner, Victor. 1982. *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Turner, Victor. 1987. *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York: PAJ Publications.

Walsh, James J. 1928. *Laughter and Health*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.

Wente, Edward F. 2003. The Contendings of Horus and Seth. In *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, ed. W.K.S. Simpson et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 91–103