

---

The Dance of the Owl and Its Significance in the History of Greek Religion and the Drama

Author(s): Lillian B. Lawler

Source: *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 1939, Vol. 70 (1939), pp. 482-502

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/283103>

#### REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

[http://www.jstor.com/stable/283103?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.com/stable/283103?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents)

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



The Johns Hopkins University Press and are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*

JSTOR

### XXXIV.—The Dance of the Owl and Its Significance in the History of Greek Religion and the Drama

LILLIAN B. LAWLER

HUNTER COLLEGE

By "the dance of the owl" Greek writers may mean one of seven different things, or a combination of two or more of them. Purely mimetic owl-dances, which are of great antiquity, seem to have originated in the Mycenaean Age, probably in or near Corinth. They must have been chthonic in origin, and they may have fused somewhat with cult-dances at tombs, in honor of heroes. There is very little evidence of the existence of owl-dances to Athena, at Athens or elsewhere. There may, however, have been nocturnal owl-dances, not connected with Athena, at the chthonic festival of the Chytroi in Athens. In later times mimetic owl-*schemata* came to form a part of the humorous *morphasmos*, or general animal-dance. The peering-motif which becomes a part of the owl-dance probably developed from Peloponnesian dances in honor of the god Pan. It entered the Dionysiac cult, and became associated with the satyr-play. It led to the introduction of a new plot-motif into the satyr-play,—the motif of a search. It is possible that a satyr-play on the Glaucus-Polyidus theme, perhaps by Aeschylus, united strikingly the peering- and the owl-motifs in the dance. A similar peering-motif appears now and then in tragedy and in comedy. Accompaniment for the various owl-dances was furnished by rhythmic chanting, by cries imitating those of the bird, by the flute, the cithara, cymbala, and tympana.

In the field of the Greek dance there is much that is difficult of interpretation. Some aspects of the ancient dance will probably never be clarified; on the other hand, some aspects do yield to searching investigation, and in the process occasionally shed unexpected light upon other and apparently remote phases of Greek civilization as well. Such is the case with what ancient writers call "the dance of the owl."

Here and there in Greek literature, from the early fifth century B.C. down through the Middle Ages, we find scattering and often casual references to an owl-dance. When we study them, however, we discover an odd fact: the authors are not all discussing the same thing—yet each of them is talking about what was called, at one time or another in antiquity, the owl-

dance. That dance, then, is not one homogeneous unit. By "the dance of the owl" a Greek writer may mean:

1. The dance of the bird itself <sup>1</sup>

Students of the dance are quite familiar with the fact that certain birds and animals do, at times, actually dance.<sup>2</sup> The owl often goes through dance-like motions, partly for the luring of prey, partly from a playful desire to imitate. Aelian (*Hist. Nat.* 1.29) gives a particularly good picture of the hypnotic effect which the solemn strutting and twisting of the big-eyed little birds have upon their prospective victims. The Athenians would have had ample opportunity to observe this curious dance; and it must have been a more or less familiar sight over the whole mainland of Greece.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the genuine dance of the bird itself we must include here the involuntary 'dancing' of the owl mentioned by Suidas in his comment on Callimachus, fr. 3 (43). This is of two sorts: the uncertain steps of the bird when caught and led around in daylight; and its twisting in agony when it is injured and about to die. Both of these are of importance in our discussion as forming a basis for certain imitative owl-dances to be considered later.

2. A dance imitating the dance of the bird itself, and used by bird-catchers <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle *Hist. Animal.* viii.12; Aelian *Hist. Nat.* i.29 and xv.28; Athenaeus *Deipnos.* ix.391 a; Pliny *Hist. Nat.* x.23(33).68; Callimachus *Hecale* fr. 3(43), and Suidas citing it: see A. W. Mair, *Callimachus and Lycophron* (London, Heinemann; New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 254.

<sup>2</sup> Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance* (New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1937), 9-11; D'Arcy W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (London, Humphrey Milford, 1936), 264; Max von Böhn, *Der Tanz* (Berlin, Wegweiser Verlag, 1925), 7-8; W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance* (New York, Macmillan, 1932), 18.

<sup>3</sup> See remarks on the distribution of the owl in Greece in Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), *passim*, and M. Wellmann, "Eule," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, herausgegeben von Georg Wissowa* (Stuttgart, Metzler, 1909), *s.v.* σκῶψ.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle *Hist. Animal.* viii.12; Pollux iv.103; Aelian *Hist. Nat.* xv.28; Athenaeus *Deipnos.* ix.391 a, d; Eustathius *ad Od.* v.66.

This dance was performed by one man, while a companion crept behind the bird to seize it as it gazed entranced upon its imitator. Our sources agree that this particular dance took the form of strutting, bobbing the head up and down, and twisting the neck and head into grotesque and surprising positions. In general effect it would seem to have been suggestive of the movements of a puppet.

### 3. A dance imitating the ordinary movements of the bird <sup>5</sup>

Pollux calls such a dance both *σκῶψ* and *σκωπίας*, and mentions as its characteristics a twisting of the neck and a portrayal of fear. Aelian, too, calls the dance *σκῶψ*; he does not specifically describe it, but he implies that it was a humorous dance. Athenaeus speaks of the same humorous dance, and calls it *γλαύξ*. In another passage he speaks of the *σκῶψ*, a dance which he says is characterized by a great variety of movements imitative of those of the bird. Incidentally, he derives *σκῶπτειν*, 'to mimic', from *σκῶψ*.

It is probable that all these references are to one dance, called *σκῶψ* or *σκωπίας* or *γλαύξ* (*γλαυῖξ*) interchangeably. It is probable also that it could be done as either a solo or a group performance,<sup>6</sup> while amused spectators looked on. Apparently it varied according to the whim and skill of the dancer, but in general effect it seems to have been humorous. In it the dancer portrayed the bird's attempts to see in daylight, its uncertain steps, its strutting and bobbing, the twisting of its neck, and its twitching when caught, or wounded, or dying. In this connection it should be remembered that the ancient Greek was sometimes cruel in his laughter.

### 4. The twisting-of-the-neck *schema* <sup>7</sup>

Often ancient writers are found to be discussing not whole dances, but distinctive figures or motifs, which are properly called *schemata*, but which are sometimes loosely designated

<sup>5</sup> Pollux iv.103; Aelian *Hist. Nat.* xv.28; Athenaeus *Deipnos.* ix.391 a; Eustathius *ad Od.* v.66.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hesychius' use of the plural: *σκῶπες*—*εἶδος ὀρνέων* . . . *καὶ εἶδος ὀρχήσεως*

<sup>7</sup> Pollux iv.103.

by such words as *ὄρχησις*, *εἶδος ὄρχήσεως*, *ὄρχημα*, etc. The *schema* of the twisting of the neck was evidently one of the most distinctive elements of the owl-dance. To it are applied the terms *σκάψ*, *σκωπίας*, and *σκάπτωμα*.

5. A motif which we may call the 'peering'-*schema* <sup>8</sup>

This was a figure in which the dancer shaded his eyes with his hand and looked off as if into the distance. Specific words used for this *schema* are *ὑπόσκοπος χεῖρ* (Aeschylus, Hesychius), *σκάπτωμα*, *σκοπός* (Hesychius), *σκάψ*, *σκάπτωμα*, *σκοπός* (Athenaeus), *σκάπτωμα*, *σκωπός* (Photius). The significance of this rather surprising *schema* in an owl-dance will be discussed below.

6. The dance of the owlish dwarfs <sup>9</sup>

The luxury-loving Sybarites, we are told by Athenaeus, used to keep *ἀνθρωπάκια μικρά καὶ τοὺς σκωπαῖους*. These *σκωπαῖοι* have long been a problem to readers of Athenaeus. The best interpretation that has been offered, it seems to me, is "owlsh-faced dwarfs." In explaining the word, some scholars have assumed an etymological association with *σκάψ*, some with *σκάπτειν*, 'to mock.'<sup>10</sup> Perhaps a fusion of the two ideas is present in *σκωπαῖοι*. I should like to offer the theory that the *σκωπαῖοι* were solemn-looking, big-eyed owlsh dwarfs, who amused their masters with a variant of the owl-dance, in which they made considerable use of buffoonery and mimicry.

7. A dance only vaguely suggestive of the actions of the bird

The fact that ancient writers are at times a little indefinite with respect to the owl-dance, and that many of them speak avowedly from hearsay about the genuinely imitative dance, although they seem familiar enough with the name of the

<sup>8</sup> Athenaeus *Deipnos*. xiv.629f; Photius *Lexicon*, p. 527, 7, citing Aeschylus *Theoroi*: Johann August Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, Teubner, 1856), 20, fr. 74; Hesychius, s.v. *σκωπευμάτων*, citing the *Theoroi*: also Hesychius, s.v. *ὑπόσκοπον χέρα*, commenting on an unknown play of Aeschylus.

<sup>9</sup> Athenaeus *Deipnos*. xii.518f.

<sup>10</sup> See Charles B. Gulick, *Athenaeus, the Deipnosophists* (London, Heinemann; Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1930-37), v.334-335 and note d.

dance, suggests the possibility that the imitative owl-dance, like so many other Greek dances, may have become by the time of the Roman Empire merely a stylized and weakened reminiscence of its earlier form, a mere sequence of formalized steps and postures, with perhaps one or two *schemata* recalling the more robust buffoonery of the earlier dance. One is tempted here to adduce such parallels as the very weakly imitative 'turkey trot'; but any attempt to parallel ancient and modern dances is necessarily fraught with hazard. Suffice it to say that such a weakly imitative dance would suit very well the taste of the Graeco-Roman period; and any religious or mythological associations of the older dance would by that time have become scarcely significant.

It is entirely possible that in addition to the seven aspects of the owl-dance mentioned above there may have been others, a description of which has not come down to us. Several authors mention a relevant dance or *schema* by name only. Among these names are *παλαιὰ σκωπέματα*, used by Aeschylus,<sup>11</sup> cited and associated with the *σκωπός* by Photius, and with the peering-*schema*, specifically, by Hesychius and Athenaeus; *σκοπός*, found in Eupolis<sup>12</sup> and Photius; *σκώψ* and *σκώπειμα*, used by Phrynichus the Sophist<sup>13</sup>; *γλαύξ* and *σκώπες*, cited by Hesychius; *σκώψ*, cited by Eustathius.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of further information, however, we may regard all of these as variants of the types given above.

Occasionally a scholar has come forward with an entirely new and sometimes rather surprising theory of the nature of the owl-dance. Scaliger,<sup>15</sup> for instance, evidently confused

<sup>11</sup> Nauck, *op. cit.* (see note 8), 20, fr. 74.

<sup>12</sup> Augustus Meineke, *Fragmenta Comicorum Graecorum* (Berlin, G. Reimer, 1839), II, Pars I, 575, fr. 131.

<sup>13</sup> Chr. August Lobeck, *Phrynichi Eclogae Nominum et Verborum Atticorum cum Notis* (Lipsiae, in Libraria Weidmannia, 1820), 613.

<sup>14</sup> *Ad Od.* v.66.

<sup>15</sup> Julius Caesar Scaliger, "De Comoedia et Tragoedia," in Vol. VIII of Jacobus Gronovius' *Thesaurus Graecarum Antiquitatum* (Venice, Typis Bartholomaei Javarina, 1732-37), column 1535.

the *σκώψ*, *σκιπίας*, and *γλαύξ* with the dance of the *ὑπογύπωνες*, a sort of stilt-dance imitative of the gait of old men. It is known that mediaeval jugglers sometimes performed animal-dances on stilts.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Scaliger, because of some knowledge of the mediaeval dances, misunderstood his sources, and confused Greek dances of essentially different types.<sup>17</sup> In more recent times, Cook<sup>18</sup> thought the owl-dance was portrayed on the famous astragalos from Aegina (Brit. Mus. E 783); but while the women shown upon it may very probably be engaged in a bird-dance of some sort, there is not a shred of evidence that the light, airy, flitting figures are owl-dancers.

We come now to a consideration of the antiquity of the owl-dances and owl-*schemata*. In the nature of things we should expect the mimetic owl-dance (No. 3 above) to be the oldest of the various types. Accordingly we may consider this type first.

It is odd, but nevertheless true, that we have no sure representation of a mimetic owl-dance in the whole body of Greek art, nor in that of the Mycenaean, as these arts have come down to us. Furthermore, even the word *σκώψ*, for some inexplicable reason, is slow to appear in Greek literature. In the Homeric poems it occurs only once—in *Odyssey* v.66—and then in a context that has nothing to do with dancing. Hesiod and other early writers do not use the word. In view of the lack of information in these two sources, we must seek evidence for the early owl-dance in other directions.

That the Greeks did have numerous animal- and bird-dances in and before their classical period is fairly evident. Titles derived from names of animals and birds often appear among the lists of comedies;<sup>19</sup> and the *Lion* and the *Sphinx* appear

<sup>16</sup> A. B. Cook, "Animal Worship in the Mycenaean Age," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* xiv (1894), 163.

<sup>17</sup> Pollux (iv.103–104) discusses the *μορφασμός*, *λέων*, *σκώψ*, and the dance of the *ὑπογύπωνες* in consecutive sections.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 16), 163.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the *Sphinx* and the *Sirens*, and possibly also the *Ape* (*Πίθων*) of Epicharmus; the *Gall-Flies* (*Ψήγες*), the *Birds*, and the *Frogs* of Magnes; the

among the satyr-plays attributed to Aeschylus. Vase-paintings<sup>20</sup> merely strengthen our certainty that the Greeks were from early times quite familiar with dramatic dancers who posed as animals and birds. That they had such dances even before the development of the drama is assumed by most scholars.<sup>21</sup> This assumption would be confirmed by anthropologists, ethnologists, and students of the dance, who find similar dances among practically all primitive tribes, in all parts of the world.<sup>22</sup> Such dances are usually performed (often with the aid of masks or pelts or substitutes therefor) to secure to the dancer some characteristic of the animal; to insure success in the hunt, by sympathetic magic; to influence the weather, which certain animals are believed to control; to lay the ghost of a slain animal; to invoke, please, or win the support of a divinity or daimon to which the animal is sacred; to ward off the evil eye; to appease a theriomorphic god; as a means of ecstatic communion with animal-gods; as a disguise for rough revelry; as outright animal worship; or as a totemic ritual.

But have we any evidence for an *owl*-dance in prehistoric Greece? The earliest extant literary reference to an owl-dance

*Beasts* (Θηρία) and probably the *Birds* of Crates; the *Goats* of Eupolis; the *Griffins* of Plato; the *Ants* and the *Nightingales* of Cantharus; the *Frogs* of Callias; the *Fishes* and the *Ass* of Archippus; the *Bees* of Diocles; the *Swine* of Cephisodorus; and, of Aristophanes, the *Centaur*, the *Frogs*, the *Wasps*, the *Storks*, the *Birds*, and even the *Knights*, probably, as staged with imitation horses. It will be recalled, incidentally, that an owl appears as one of the chorus in the *Birds* (line 301) of Aristophanes.

<sup>20</sup> See Roy C. Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and Its Drama*<sup>3</sup> (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926), 38–44, and especially figure 13. Cf. also the Aegina astragalos mentioned above and discussed by Cook, *op. cit.* (see note 16), 103.

<sup>21</sup> Wilhelm Schmid and Otto Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, Vol. VII of *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, ed., Walter Otto (Munich, Beck, 1934), Teil I, Band I, 630–631; A. E. Haigh, *The Attic Theatre* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1898), 331; Flickinger, *op. cit.* (see note 20), 43–44; William Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy with Special Reference to the Greek Tragedians* (Cambridge University Press, 1910), 34.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Sachs, *op. cit.* (see note 2), *passim*; von Böhn, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 12–14; Oesterley, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 18.

is the fragment of the *Theoroi* or *Isthmiasts* of Aeschylus.<sup>11</sup> Here the words used are: *καὶ μὴν παλαιῶν τῶνδὲ σοι σκωπευμάτων.*— This fragment, I believe, offers convincing testimony that some form of owl-dance was very old as early as the time of Aeschylus. We might go further still. The play probably<sup>23</sup> told the story of Melicertes and Sisyphus, and the establishment of the Isthmian Games at Corinth.<sup>24</sup> It was laid in a period of remote antiquity even from the point of view of Aeschylus. Very possibly the implication is that owl-dances of some sort were ancient even in the days of such legendary figures as Sisyphus and Melicertes—in other words, that they go back to the early Mycenaean period.

Forty-five years ago, Cook<sup>25</sup> made a study of art representations of animal-dances in the Mycenaean period, and came to the conclusion that such dances antedate the Hellenic and Geometric periods completely, are Mycenaean in ultimate origin, and are the outgrowth of earlier totemism and zoölatry. Subsequent discoveries have rendered Cook's work less useful than it appeared upon publication; but his conclusions are nevertheless interesting. He definitely mentions the *σκῶψ* dance (p. 167) as one which he believes was developed in the Mycenaean period.

If there were mimetic owl-dances as early as the Mycenaean period, an understanding of the purpose of those dances will necessarily turn upon the significance of the owl in that period. Here we must proceed warily, using such evidence as we have.

In the Mycenaean period, as in later ages, the owl was probably an object of much interest to the inhabitants of Greece.<sup>26</sup> This would be the natural result of its wide dis-

<sup>11</sup> Cf. p. 486 of this article.

<sup>23</sup> Friedrich G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien*, Supplementband 2, Abteilung 2 of *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* (Bonn, Eduard Weber, 1839), 1.30, puts the play with those which deal with the story of Athamas.

<sup>24</sup> Pausanias I.44.11; II.1.3; II.2.21; Apollodorus III.4.3.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 16), 81–169.

<sup>26</sup> *The Encyclopedia Americana* (New York and Chicago, Encyclopedia Americana Corporation, 1932), s.v. "Owls," points out that owls have been objects of superstition among all peoples and in all ages. For further discussions

tribution, its striking appearance, its large eyes, its blood-curdling cry (in the case of certain species, at least), its liking for deserted spots, and its eery nocturnal habits. The great eyes of the bird would naturally suggest to the Mycenaeans the motif of warding off the evil eye<sup>27</sup> or the influences of darkness and death. One possibility is, then, that the earliest owl-dances may have been apotropaic, or perhaps propitiatory. It would be an easy thing for the owl, with its dark feathers, to become an incarnation of death and night, a chthonic daimon, in the imagination of the Mycenaeans.<sup>28</sup> In this connection we may note the legend of Ascalaphus, son of Acheron, who was turned into an owl.<sup>29</sup> The fact that the deserted spots chosen by owls for their dwelling-places were often tombs would accentuate this belief. Incidentally, Greek and Latin writers later adopted the motif of the owl sitting on or near a tomb almost as a commonplace;<sup>30</sup> and in the Glaucus-Polyidus legend, to which we shall refer again later, the seer finds the owl sitting on or near the jar which contains the dead body of the young Cretan prince.<sup>31</sup>

If our hypothesis is correct, the Mycenaean owl-dancers probably wore crude owl-masks.<sup>32</sup> It is likely that they danced at night, partly because at that time the owl itself would be present and able to see them, partly because such an action

of the owl in classical antiquity see Arthur Stanley Pease, *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1935), 375-377; and Otto Keller, *Die Antike Tierwelt* (Leipzig, Wilhelm Engelmann, 1913), II.37-45.

<sup>27</sup> The owl attacking the 'evil eye' is not unfamiliar as an art motif in classical times. See Keller, *op. cit.* (note 26), 39.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. E. Pottier, "La chouette d' Athéné," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* xxxii (1908), 536; also, Hipponax, fr. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Ovid *Met.* v.539; Aristotle, *Hist. Animal.* II.17.90.

<sup>30</sup> *Anth. Pal.* VII.716; Sophocles, *ap.* Athenaeus *Deipnos.* XIII.61; Isidorus *Etym.* XII.7.39; Vergil *Aen.* XII.863-864; Pliny *Hist. Nat.* X.12(16)34; cf. Henry Schliemann, *Ilios* (New York, Harper and Bros., 1880), 289.

<sup>31</sup> Hyginus *Fab.* 136.

<sup>32</sup> Cook, *op. cit.* (see note 16), 162; 164-165. Cf. the Cyprus figures of dancers or votaries wearing masks; John L. Myres, *Handbook of the Cesnola Collection of Antiquities from Cyprus* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1914), 150-151, 340; and the masks, 342.

would be in itself mimetic of the habits of the owl. The logical place for the dances would be near the dwelling-place of the bird, or near the place best suited to its chthonic functions; and that would usually be near a tomb.<sup>33</sup>

There has been a great deal of discussion of the pre-Hellenic dances at the tombs of heroes (particularly those in the Peloponnesus), and of the significance of those dances in the development of tragedy.<sup>34</sup> It is entirely possible that at any given tomb the dances to the spirit of the dead hero may have become confused with dances to the chthonic spirit manifested in a living owl. In this connection we should not fail to note that Ino, mother of Melicertes, was definitely a chthonic heroine at Corinth;<sup>35</sup> that the Isthmian Games were chthonic in many important details;<sup>36</sup> and that the grave of Sisyphus himself was on the Isthmus.<sup>37</sup> It may be but an accident that our oldest extant mention of an owl-dance comes in a play the plot of which must have touched upon Sisyphus, Ino's son, and the Isthmian Games; but it is at least a curious coincidence, and indicates that a theory of a fusion of chthonic owl-dances with hero-dances at a tomb in southern Greece during Mycenaean times might not be altogether untenable.

Could the mimetic owl-dances be even older than we have supposed? Might they possibly be of Cretan origin? There was a persistent belief among the Greeks that dancing as an

<sup>33</sup> It is significant that Scaliger, *op. cit.* (see note 15), column 1533, speaks of *sikinnis* dancers *qui ad tumulos modos facerent*, and says they were called *τυμβαῖλοι*.

<sup>34</sup> To cite but two items from the great mass of literature on the subject: Flickinger, *op. cit.* (see note 20), Introduction, *passim*; and Ridgeway, *op. cit.* (see note 21), *passim*. Cf. Martin P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion* (London, Oxford University Press, 1927), 492; 515-538. See Herodotus v.67; also, Plato *Minos* 321 a, which contains mention of a very ancient form of "tragedy" in Attica long before the time of Thespis and Phrynichus; this may be a reference to hero-dances at tombs.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1921), 36-40.

<sup>36</sup> Farnell, *op. cit.* (see note 35), 41-42.

<sup>37</sup> Pausanias II.2.2.

art originated in Crete.<sup>38</sup> In ancient literature, however, there is the definite tradition that there were no owls in Crete<sup>39</sup>—this in spite of the Glaucus-Polyidus story, in which an owl leads Polyidus to the body of the lost son of Minos. Furthermore, there appears to be only scant and indecisive evidence for hero-cults in ancient Crete.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, such cults seem definitely to have been a feature of the Mycenaean Age, and to have continued thence down into Hellenic times. Accordingly, in the present state of our knowledge, we could hardly hazard a conjecture that either mimetic owl-dances or hero-dances at tombs go back any farther than the Mycenaean period.

We have noted that in classical times the mimetic owl-dance seems to have been thought of essentially as a humorous dance. If our reasoning has been correct, the mimetic owl-dances of Mycenaean times were not humorous, but very serious indeed. This might indicate a change in the essential purpose of the dances, or, more probably, a gradual forgetting of that original purpose, as time passed by.

It may have struck the reader as odd that so far there has been in this paper no mention of the goddess Athena. During the classical period the owl is, of course, the bird of Athena. Such an association is a very strange one, apparently, and has caused scholars much speculation. What has Athena in common with the bird of darkness and night? Strangely enough, Athenaeus<sup>41</sup> tells us that a person who was slow-witted and easily duped was sometimes called an owl; how can this be consistent with the concept of the owl as the bird of wisdom, symbol of Athena, goddess of intelligence?<sup>42</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>38</sup> Lucian *De Salt.* 8; Diodorus Siculus v.65; Athenaeus *Deipnos.* v.181 b; Strabo 481.18; 480.16; Euripides *Bacch.* 120–134; Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* II.127; Proclus 246.

<sup>39</sup> Aelian *Hist. Nat.* v.2; Pliny *Hist. Nat.* x.29 (41).76.

<sup>40</sup> Farnell, *op. cit.* (see note 35), 3–5; Nilsson, *op. cit.* (see note 34), 43–46; 414; 537.

<sup>41</sup> *Deipnos.* IX.391 a.

<sup>42</sup> Aesop *Fab.* 106. Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*<sup>11</sup> (Cambridge University Press, 1911), s.v. "Owl": ". . . a few words must be said, ere we leave the

there is a persistent tradition that the owl was not always the bird of Athena—that the crow originally held that honored position.<sup>43</sup> In the Homeric poems,<sup>44</sup> Athena often takes the form of a bird, but never specifically that of an owl. Although some scholars, notably Schliemann,<sup>45</sup> would associate the owl with Athena from earliest times, and, pointing to the so-called “owl-vases” from Troy, translate *γλαυκῶπις* as “owl-faced”, many others<sup>46</sup> note her connection with birds in general,<sup>47</sup> look upon *γλαυκῶπις* as meaning “of the flashing eyes”,<sup>48</sup> and put the first association of Athena with the owl not earlier than the end of the seventh century. Some writers<sup>49</sup> think that Athena, originally a goddess “of flashing eyes”, was later

owls of this section, on the species which has associations of a very different kind—the bird of Pallas Athene, the emblem of the city to which science and art were so welcome. There can be no doubt, from the many representations on coins and sculptures, as to their subject being the *Carine noctua* of modern ornithologists, but those who know the grotesque actions and ludicrous expression of this veritable buffoon of birds can never cease to wonder at its being seriously selected as a symbol of learning, and can hardly divest themselves of a suspicion that the choice must have been made in the spirit of sarcasm.” Dr. Eugene S. McCartney has suggested to me that perhaps the bird was associated with Athena because the Greeks thought it *looked* wise.

<sup>43</sup> Callimachus *Hecale* 1.2–4; Ovid *Met.* II.542–595. Cf., also, Aelian *Hist. Nat.* III.9; Aristotle *Hist. Animal.* IX.1.16; Plutarch *Inv. et Od.* IV.

<sup>44</sup> *Od.* I.319–320; III.371; XXII.239. *Il.* V.778; VII.58; XIX.350.

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 30), 217, 225, 247, 281–283; 286–291; 329–344; *Troja* (New York, Harper and Bros., 1884), XVIII, 31, 151, 186–187; 191. Cf. Lewis R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1896), I.261–321; Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 79; F. Imhoof-Blumer and O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums* (Leipzig, Teubner, 1889), on Taf. V, 16; E. M. Douglas, “The Owl of Athena,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* XXXII (1912), 176.

<sup>46</sup> Notably Nilsson, *op. cit.* (see note 34), 421–424; 292.

<sup>47</sup> See Pauly-Wissowa, *op. cit.* (note 3), s.v. “Athena,” 1994; Pottier, *op. cit.* (note 28), 536–540; Farnell, *op. cit.* (note 45), I.16; Pausanias I.5.3; Hesychius, s.v. *ἐνδαρβία*.

<sup>48</sup> Farnell, *op. cit.* (see note 45), I.279; Émile Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Heidelberg and Paris, C. Klincksieck, 1923), s.v. *γλαυκός*; but cf. Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 76. There was a cult of Athena *Ἰοξυδερκής* at Argos, and of Athena *Ἰοφθαλμίτις* at Sparta; Solon (*Hypothekai* 4) called Athena the “Watcher (*ἐπισκοπος*) of the City.”

<sup>49</sup> E.g. Wellmann, *op. cit.* (see note 3), *passim*.

associated with the owl because it, too, had distinctive eyes; and, in fact, some regard γλαύξ as a hypocoristic form of γλαυκῶπις.<sup>50</sup> Others<sup>51</sup> think the association between the goddess of Athens and the owl merely the result of the great number of owls in that city. Incidentally, it is on Corinthian vases that we find many of the earliest examples of the association;<sup>52</sup> and owls were numerous in Corinth, just as they were in Athens.<sup>53</sup> Still other scholars believe the association is the result of a confusion of γλαυκός and γλαύξ in the popular mind—a sort of mental pun—and imply a belief that Athena, goddess of intelligence, sees into problems as the owl sees into darkness.<sup>54</sup>

If the owl had from earliest times been the bird of Athena, we should expect to find owl-dances somewhere in Athena's ritual. Yet nowhere in Greek literature as we have it is there a sure reference to owl-dances in honor of Athena. In Euripides' *Heracleidae* 770–783, and in an inscription (*C.I.A.* II.163), a dance is mentioned, done throughout the night by maidens in honor of Athena at the time of Panathenaea. It is just barely possible that this is the same dance hinted at in Callimachus, *Hecale*, fr. 3(43), where the thing addressed is an owl: αἴθ' ὄφελος θανείν ἢ πάννυχον ὀρχήσασθαι.<sup>55</sup> During these dances the maidens uttered loud cries, ὀλολύγματα; and ὀλολύγματα is akin to ὀλολυγών, a word used by Theocritus (VII.139) and Aratus (948) as the name of an unidentified animal or bird, interpreted by some writers as a small owl.<sup>56</sup> This,

<sup>50</sup> Boisacq, *op. cit.* (see note 48), *s.v.* γλαυκός.

<sup>51</sup> Nilsson, *op. cit.* (see note 34), 425; Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 79; Farnell, *op. cit.* (see note 45), 1.342; Jane Ellen Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*<sup>2</sup> (Cambridge University Press, 1908), 304; Pauly-Wissowa, *op. cit.* (see note 3), *s.v.* "Athena," 1994.

<sup>52</sup> Pottier, *op. cit.* (see note 28), 533, 537; Harrison, *op. cit.* (see note 51), 303 and fig. 81.

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 79; Pottier, *op. cit.* (see note 28), 536.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. the summaries in Pottier, *op. cit.* (note 28), 545.

<sup>55</sup> Editors usually emend πάννυχον to ὕστατον. See Mair, *op. cit.* (see note 1), 250.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Herbert Kynaston, *The Idylls and Epigrams Commonly Attributed to Theocritus* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892), 153–154; H. G. Liddell and R.

meager as it is, is all the evidence we have for owl-dances to Athena; and much even of this evidence loses its force when we remember that we meet similar conditions in connection with dances to other deities—a nocturnal setting,<sup>57</sup> loud cries called *ὄλολυγαί*,<sup>58</sup> and even the specific word *γλαύξ* applied to a dancer.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, for the present, at least, we must continue to regard the existence of any owl-dance in honor of Athena as not yet satisfactorily attested.

There may, nevertheless, have been owl-dances of another sort in Athens—very old owl-dances, not connected with Athena. Aristophanes (*Frogs* 215–220) definitely mentions a dance which was performed at the Chytroi or “the Pots”, a chthonic festival celebrated in the spring;<sup>60</sup> he also makes a somewhat obscure reference to what is apparently an association of the owl with the Chytroi (*Birds* 356–358). On numerous coins we see a large pot together with an owl<sup>61</sup>—probably a design inspired by the festival. It is curious in this connection to recall that a fragment from a lost comedy by Epicharmus<sup>62</sup> reads: *σκώπας, ἔποπας, γλαύκας*, and that a play entitled *Chytrai* is attributed to Epicharmus. It would be interesting if there should prove to be a connection between the fragment and the title. In any case, it would seem entirely possible that chthonic owl-dances may have formed part of the ritual of the Chytroi in earliest times, and may have persisted after the merging of the Chytroi with the Dionysiac Anthesteria.

Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1858 edition (Oxford, Clarendon Press), *s.v.* *ὄλολυγών*; Keller, *op. cit.* (see note 26), II.44.

<sup>57</sup> Callimachus *Hymns* iv.302–303; Alcman, fr. 1 in J. M. Edmonds, *Lyra Graeca* (London, Wm. Heinemann, 1922), 1.50–59, and especially line 60.

<sup>58</sup> *Hom. Hymn v (In Venerem)*. 19.

<sup>59</sup> Alcman, fr. 1 (Edmonds), line 87. The dance here described is probably not specifically an owl-dance, but a mimetic bird-dance of general type, descendant of a Cretan dance of invocation to the goddess who is both *πότνια θηρῶν* and a chthonic deity. Elsewhere in the poem the dancers call themselves “Doves.”

<sup>60</sup> Farnell, *op. cit.* (see note 45), v.214–223.

<sup>61</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 79.

<sup>62</sup> Preserved in Athenaeus *Deipnos*. ix.391 d.

We come now to the 'peering'-*schema* in the owl-dance, No. 5 in the list of types as given above. Pliny was perhaps the first, but by no means the only, scholar to be troubled by the presence of this satyric motif in owl-dances: *Nominantur ab Homero scopes avium genus; neque harum satyricos motus, quum insident, plerisque memoratos, facile conceperim mente; neque ipsae iam aves noscuntur* (*Hist. Nat.* x.49(70).138). At first glance one is inclined to think that the Greek writers who give us our information simply have been guilty of an etymological confusion. That they do confuse *σκῶψ* and *σκοπός* is perfectly clear. It is interesting to note, however, that while the root *σχωπ-* is used freely to designate the peering-*schema*, the root *σκοπ-* is not used for the twisting-of-the-neck-*schema*, nor for the mimetic owl-dance. In other words, the dancer who is an "owl" is also "one who peers"; but "one who peers" is not necessarily an "owl." Such confusion as there is would appear to have been present not only in the minds of the writers, but in those of the owl-dancers themselves, as well; and popular etymology may actually have had a part in the development of some forms of the dance.

The etymology of the word *σκῶψ* (or *κῶψ*, as it occasionally appears) is unknown.<sup>63</sup> Boisacq<sup>64</sup> associates it with *σκῶπτω*, "to mock"; the 1890 edition of the Liddell-Scott dictionary<sup>65</sup> assumes "to hoot" as the original meaning of the verb. If this association is correct, the linking of *σχωπαῖοι* with both *σκῶπτω* and *σκῶψ* would be entirely natural. Another suggestion<sup>66</sup> is that *σκῶψ* is derived from *σκέπτομαι* as *κῶψ* from *κλέπτω*, *φῶρ* from *φέρω*. If this theory is correct, the ancient confusion between *σκῶψ* and *σκοπός* would be understandable. In this connection we recall the sharpness of the glance of the owl, and

<sup>63</sup> H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon, A New Edition, Revised and Augmented Throughout, by Henry Stuart Jones* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925-36), *s.v.* *σκῶψ*; see also Thompson, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 262.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 48), *s.v.* *σκῶψ*.

<sup>65</sup> *Op. cit.* (see note 56), 7th edition, 1890, *s.v.* *σκῶψ*.

<sup>66</sup> Liddell-Scott, *op. cit.*, 1890 (see note 56), *s.v.* *σκῶψ*; also Wellmann, *op. cit.* (see note 3), *s.v.* *σκῶψ*, and Keller, *op. cit.* (see note 26), II.43.

also the difficulty which it experiences in trying to see in the daylight.<sup>67</sup>

In the classical and post-classical ages the peering-*schema*, as we are told repeatedly by Greek writers,<sup>68</sup> is distinctly satyric. What was its ultimate origin? In everyday life, of course, the gesture was one of ordinary utility. It must have been particularly useful among shepherd-folk from the earliest times. Beginning in the fifth century we find Pan himself, the divine shepherd, depicted on vases and coins in the pose of the *σκοπός*—standing on a rock (*σκοπία*, *σκόπελος*), shading his eyes with his hand, and peering out over the herd, or looking for signs of enemies or storms.<sup>69</sup> The portrayal of Pan in this pose becomes increasingly common, until in the Hellenistic and Roman periods it develops virtually into an artistic type, the Πάν ἀπόσκοπος or ἀποσκοπέων.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, we are not surprised to find the *σκοπός* motif in Greek dances in honor of Pan.<sup>71</sup> It must have been used in dances at religious festivals and on joyous occasions in general, from the earliest days of the Arcadian shepherds.

The cult of Pan spread from Arcadia throughout Greece and Crete; and with his name there came to be associated all sorts of epithets implying peering or seeing.<sup>72</sup> Soon Pan was

<sup>67</sup> Fritz Weege, *Der Tanz in der Antike* (Halle/Saale, Niemeyer, 1926), 6, connects the twisting of the neck in the owl-dance with the motif of trying to peer or to see; and the 1890 Liddell-Scott dictionary includes a blinking of the eyes along with the shading of the eyes with the hand in the peering *schema*.

<sup>68</sup> Photius *Lexicon*, p. 527, 7; Pliny *Hist. Nat.* xxxv.11(40).138; cf. Cl. Salmasius in *Historiae Augustae Scriptores VI, cum integris notis Isaaci Casauboni, Cl. Salmasii, & Jani Gruteri* (Lugduni Batav., Ex Officina Hackiana, 1671), II, 835–836.

<sup>69</sup> Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig, Teubner, 1897–1909), III.1401.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Pliny *Hist. Nat.* xxxv.11(40).138; Silius Italicus XIII.326–347; Roscher, *op. cit.* (see note 69), III.1401–1433.

<sup>71</sup> Longus *Pastoral.* II.37 and II.30.

<sup>72</sup> Roscher, *op. cit.* (see note 69), III.1401–1433, lists several of these, among them *μηλόσκοπος*, *όξεια δερκόμενος*, *πάνσκοπος*, *σκοπιήτης*, *ύλήσκοπος*, *εύσκοπος*. We find also that Pan is frequently addressed as lord of, or dweller in, the hills or crags, often with the connotation of watching from the heights—as in Nonnus *Dionysiaca* XIV.67; *Anthol. Gr.* VI.32, 34, 108, etc.

pluralized, and the Pans easily passed into association with the satyrs. A Dionysiac connection was rendered natural as a result of similarities in ritual; and before long Pans, satyrs, and silenes appeared in the Dionysiac thiasus.

As the satyr-play developed, it adopted as its distinguishing dance-step the lively, whirling, leaping *sikinnis* from Crete;<sup>73</sup> but along with the *sikinnis* it apparently made frequent use of the old motif of the Arcadian shepherds and the Peloponnesian Pan-dancers. The combined dance continued through Hellenic and Hellenistic times, and it remained significant down through the Roman period as well.<sup>74</sup> Now and then the peering-*schema* seems to be present in the dance of tragedy,<sup>75</sup> probably because the subject-matter and major characters of the satyr-play are also those of tragedy; but for the most part it seems to remain satyric.

We have observed how the peering-*schema* probably made its way into the dance of the satyr-play, and how an etymological association probably connected it with owl-dances. The question arises, were there any owl-motifs in the dance of the satyr-play before that association was complete? Do we, by any chance, have a record of a satyr-play called *The Owls*? In the present state of our knowledge, we do not. We do, however, have one arresting fact: there is in Greek mythology a story of a man who seeks for a lost prince, and finds him by the aid of an owl. The story is that of Polyidus and Glaucus—a story used in tragedy by Aeschylus in his *Cretan Women*,<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Pollux iv.14; Athenaeus *Deipnos.* i.20; xiv.28; Suidas, s.v. *σικιννίς*; Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* ii.127. Something very like the *σκοπός* gesture has been found in Crete, in figurines representing adoring or praying votaries, but with no dance connotation. If it was used in the Cretan dance, it is possible that the ideas of peering and of adoration of a deity fused when the dance was brought to Greece.

<sup>74</sup> Salmasius, *op. cit.* (see note 68), ii.819–847.

<sup>75</sup> Salmasius, *op. cit.* (see note 68), ii.836.

<sup>76</sup> Herbert Weir Smyth, *Aeschylus* (London, Wm. Heinemann, 1926), ii.419; Pauly-Wissowa, *op. cit.* (see note 3), s.v. "Glaukos," No. 23; Karl Höck, *Kreta* (Göttingen, Rosenbusch, 1823–29), iii.289; Welcker, *op. cit.* (see note 23), ii.768; Schmid and Stählin, *op. cit.* (see note 21), Teil I, Band II, 258, 432; Nauck, *op. cit.* (see note 8), 27–28.

by Sophocles in his *Seers* or *Polyidus*,<sup>77</sup> and by Euripides in his *Polyidus* or *Glaucus* <sup>78</sup>; in comedy by Aristophanes in his *Polyidus*,<sup>79</sup> and perhaps also by Anaxilaus, Antiphanes, and Eubulus.<sup>80</sup> It was a favorite theme with the Orphic writers <sup>81</sup>; and it formed the subject of a Roman pantomime.<sup>82</sup> It may not be too impossible a hypothesis that there may have been in early Greek drama one or more satyr-plays dealing with the Glaucus-Polyidus story; and that in those plays peering, searching *schemata* and mimetic owl-*schemata* may have been united so successfully that the two more or less fell together in subsequent satyr-plays.

One is tempted to speculate on the authorship of one of the hypothetical satyr-plays. To Aeschylus are attributed plays entitled *Glaucus Pontius*,<sup>83</sup> *Glaucus Potnieus*,<sup>84</sup> and simply *Glaucus*.<sup>85</sup> Whether this attribution means three plays or just two we do not know. It would be interesting indeed if there had been three, the third a satyr-play on the Glaucus-Polyidus theme, making use of a combined owl- and peering-dance. In this connection it is significant that Aeschylus was

<sup>77</sup> Smyth, *op. cit.* (see note 76), II.419; Höck, *op. cit.* (see note 76), III.289; Welcker, *op. cit.* (see note 23), I.57, 62, 416; II.767-777; Pauly-Wissowa, *op. cit.* (see note 3), s.v. "Glaukos," No. 23; Schmid and Stählin, *op. cit.* (see note 21), Teil I, Band II, 258, 432; Nauck, *op. cit.* (see note 8), 27, 171-174.

<sup>78</sup> Stobaeus *Flor.* 22.1; 45.3; 116.2; Nauck, *op. cit.* (see note 8), 439-443; Johann August Nauck, *Euripidis Perditarum Tragoediarum Fragmenta*<sup>2</sup> (Lipsiae, Teubner, 1908), III.169; see also Höck, Welcker, Pauly-Wissowa, and Schmid and Stählin, as cited in note 77.

<sup>79</sup> Meineke, *op. cit.* (see note 12), Vol. II, Pars II, 1132-1136; Schmid and Stählin, *op. cit.* (see note 21), Teil I, Band II, 433; Welcker, *op. cit.* (see note 23), II.776-777.

<sup>80</sup> Meineke, *op. cit.* (see note 12), I.325, 360.

<sup>81</sup> Höck, *op. cit.* (see note 76), III.288, 291, 293, 295. Keller, *op. cit.* (see note 26), II.42, describes a lekythos which depicts an owl showing Polyidus the body of Glaucus.

<sup>82</sup> Lucian *De Salt.* 49.

<sup>83</sup> Or *Glaucus Thalattios*. Nauck, *op. cit.* (see note 8), 8-10.

<sup>84</sup> Nauck, *op. cit.* (see note 8), 10-11.

<sup>85</sup> *Argumentum* to the *Persians* of Aeschylus; Schol. on Theocritus IV.62.

noted for his skill in inventing dancing *schemata*,<sup>86</sup> as was also his dancer-actor Telestes.<sup>87</sup>

In all the versions of the Polyidus story the name of the Cretan prince is given as Glaucus; and the word that is used for 'owl' is γλαύξ (again a significant pun). Yet Glaucus is apparently not a Cretan name; and we have seen that the Greeks tell us there were no owls in Crete in ancient times. On the other hand, the owl was common in the Peloponnesus; and the names Glaucus, Glaucon, Glauce are often found in legends centering in and near Corinth. Polyidus is described as either Corinthian or Argive. I should like to suggest that the legend as it has come down to us is essentially not Cretan, but Corinthian; and that it was perpetuated as a hero-tale of old Corinth, rather than of Crete. If this is a true hypothesis, we are not surprised to observe that in the story Minos and his seers figure as a rather stupid lot in contrast to the great Corinthian Polyidus!

We have noted the possibility that dances at the tombs of heroes may have become fused with dances to owls as chthonic spirits. It is interesting to consider that this may have been eminently the case at the tomb of a Corinthian hero called Glaucus. If, later, a satyr-play made use of the name Glaucus, an owl-dance would have seemed entirely natural in it.

Incidentally, it is significant that throughout this inquiry we have been drawn again and again to southern Greece in general, and to Corinth in particular. It may be possible that it is in Corinth that we must seek the real beginnings of the mimetic owl-dance.

It has long been recognized that there appear in the satyr-play certain commonplaces of plot or motifs: parody, the outwitting of a barbarous or stupid person, efforts to surprise the satyrs,<sup>88</sup> possibly also the use of a magic plant.<sup>89</sup> I think that there was another: that from the use of the *σκοπός-schema* in the dances of the satyr-play there went a corresponding de-

<sup>86</sup> Athenaeus *Deipnos.* i.21 e.

<sup>87</sup> Athenaeus *Deipnos.* i.22 a; cf. Salmassius, *op. cit.* (see note 68), II, 836.

<sup>88</sup> Schmid and Stählin, *op. cit.* (see note 21), Teil I, Band I, 81-82.

<sup>89</sup> Schmid and Stählin, *op. cit.* (see note 21), Teil I, Band II, 433.

velopment of plots involving a searching, a peering, usually on the part of the chorus of satyrs, but sometimes on the part of Silenus or one of the characters. The *Cyclops* of Euripides, for instance, is full of references to searching, peering, seeing, eyes, etc.—especially in lines 11–14, 73–74, 85, 193. Probably the lost *Cyclops* of Aristias made similar use of the motif. In the *Ichneutae* or “Trackers”<sup>90</sup> of Sophocles the very title implies the seeking motif; and if my theory is correct this is probably no accident. In the play, the satyrs search for the cattle of Apollo and the thief who has stolen them. In the few extant lines of the *Diktyoulkoi* or “Net-Dragers”<sup>91</sup> of Aeschylus it is clear that Silenus and at least one other person are peering at something in the water. All three of our partly extant satyr-plays, then, definitely show the motif. It may also have been present in the *Marriage of Helen*, the *Heracles at Taenarus*, the *Cedalion*, and the *Pandora* of Sophocles; the *Orpheus* of Aristias; the *Autolycus* of Euripides; the *Amymone* and the *Glaucus Pontius* of Aeschylus; and the *Phorcides*, by an unknown writer of the fourth century. It is just possible that the motif may have appeared as well in the *Callisto*, the *Cercyon*, the *Circe*, the *Lion*, the *Lycurgus*, the *Proteus*, the *Sphinx*, the *Sisyphus Drapetes*, and others of Aeschylus; the *Inachus* and the *Hybris* of Sophocles; the *Sisyphus* and the *Sciron* of Euripides; the *Athamas* of Xenocles; and the *Palaestae* of Pratinas.<sup>92</sup>

It would not be within our scope to treat fully of a peering- or seeking-motif in comedy. That such a motif was sometimes used in comedy is proved by Aristophanes, *Thesmo.* 655–688. Whether the satyr-play ever influenced comedy to any appreciable extent is debatable. In this particular play, the influence is probably rather from the mystery-cults. At the Thesmophoria there were dramatic representations of the search of Demeter for Persephone, and also a pursuit of some sort.<sup>93</sup> Even more striking must have been the mystic searches in the ceremonies at Eleusis.

<sup>90</sup> *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* IX (1912), 30.

<sup>91</sup> Schmid and Stählin, *op. cit.* (see note 21), Teil I, Band II, 262.

<sup>92</sup> For conjectures on the plots of these plays see Nauck, *op. cit.* (note 8), *s.vv.*

In any case, the peering-motif must have been but a minor feature of comedy; and in tragedy its appearance would seem to have been virtually accidental. It continues in the drama as it began—a feature of the satyr-play.

It will be observed that three phases of the owl-dance have not been treated extensively in this paper: the twisting-of-the-neck *schema*, the dance of the owlish dwarfs, and the vaguely imitative owl-dance. Of the last two we have no details; the twisting-*schema*, strongly imitative of the actions of the bird as it tries to peer or see in the daylight, must certainly have been a part of the oldest mimetic dances. It probably was taken out and made an independent *schema* because of its possibilities for amusement; it became a feature of the *μορφασμός*, or general animal-dance,<sup>94</sup> which in the Graeco-Roman period at least was a humorous performance.

We have little information on the nature of the music or accompanying sounds which the Greeks associated with the various owl-dances. Presumably many of these dances would be performed to the background of rhythmic chanting of one sort or another. Further, we may reasonably assume that all forms of the mimetic owl-dance, and especially the early ones, were accompanied by imitations of the cries of various species of owls, made by the dancers or the spectators. Such cries are common among all primitive peoples who engage in mimetic animal-dances.<sup>95</sup> For owl-dances and owl-*schemata* which became part of the *sikinnis*, the accompaniment would, of course, be furnished by the flute, and often by the cithara as well. In scenes involving great excitement or revelry, the flute and the cithara were probably supplemented with cymbala and tympana.

The owl-dance, then, is a far more complicated phenomenon than scholars have supposed it to be. Much of our knowledge of it will probably remain conjectural; but it is hoped that this study may have shed some light upon a few of the obscurities.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> See Farnell, *op. cit.* (note 45), III.87.92.

<sup>94</sup> Pollux IV.103; Athenaeus *Deipnos.* XIV.629f.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Sachs, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 175.

<sup>96</sup> I am indebted to Dr. E. S. McCartney and Dr. Ernst Riess for helpful suggestions.