

# Heracles at Olympia and the Exclusion of Women from the Ancient Olympic Games†

John Mouratidis\*

The purpose of this paper is to accomplish the following goals: a) to examine a question which has been ignored: that Heracles was the hero-athlete in Olympia in whose honour games were held before Zeus took over the Olympic festival in the sixth century, b) to discuss the exclusion of women from the ancient Olympic Games. We believe that this particular problem is closely connected with the presence of Heracles at Olympia.

The overwhelming majority of traditional testimony in the ancient Greek authors connected the founding of the Olympic Games with Heracles son of Alcmena.<sup>1</sup> Pindar's testimony on the founding of the games was the most ancient and ascribed the foundation of the games to Heracles. Pindar said that Heracles returning from his victory over the Elean King Augeas founded the games at the ancient tomb of Pelops.<sup>2</sup> The story of Heracles' founding the games probably had its roots in the Dorian Peloponnese. It was just natural. Gardiner said "that the great athletic hero of the Dorians should be regarded as the founder of the greatest athletic festival."<sup>3</sup> The Dorians claimed Heracles as their ancestor long before they came to the Peloponnese. They had a special reason to claim that they were descended from Heracles: he was the most popular hero of the Greeks, known as strong and great, an averter of evils, a great athlete, and a helper in all difficulties. Heracles was not only a Dorian; but in fact he was more Mycenaean than Dorian. He was a Panhellenic figure worshipped and honoured in almost all Hellenic communities. He was mentioned by Homer<sup>4</sup> several times in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and tradition made him a beloved hero both among the Mycenaeans and Dori-

† The author is grateful for the comments and criticism from the anonymous reviewers of the *Journal of Sport History*.

\* Mr. Mouratidis is a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Physical Education at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3N 2K5.

1. Pindar, *OI* 10.5.26-85; 2.3-4; 6.67-70; Lysias, *Olymp.* 33.1-2. For more on the founding of the Games see: Polybios 12.26.2; Paus. 5.7.9; Apollodoros 2.7.2; Diodoros Sic. 4.53.4-5, 4.14.1-3; 5.64.6, Pausanias 5.7.6; 5.8.1 as well as Diodoros Sic. 5.64.6 presented the theory of the antiquarians of Elis that the Idaeans Daktyls or Couretes, among them Heracles, who came from Crete instituted the Olympic Games. This view was supported by J. Harrison (*Themis*, p. 372) and rejected, on good grounds by Farnell (*Greek Hero Cults...* pp. 130, 131, 134-5). Some of these ideas about Heracles expressed in this paper have been advanced in my dissertation.

2. Pindar *OI* 10.23-31. For references concerning the story of Augeas and Heracles see: J. Balcer "The Mycenaean Dam at Tiryns." *AJA* 78 (1974), p. 149.

3. Gardiner, *Olympia...* p. 51.

4. *Iliad* 2.653, 658, 659, 679; 14.324; 18.115-117; *Odyssey* 8.224; 11.268, 60-604; 21.26.

ans. With the destruction of the Mycenaean centers and the coming of the Dorians, he became the exclusive Dorian hero. The choice of Heracles by the Dorians as their preferred hero was after all an appropriate choice. The hero was connected with athletic contests,<sup>5</sup> as it becomes known from many characteristics of the hero-athlete legend that are "scattered throughout the Heracles cycle."<sup>6</sup> In the *Odyssey* while Odysseus was boasting of his athletic skill before the men of his generation in a contest in archery, he admitted the superiority in archery of former men like Heracles and Eurytos.<sup>7</sup> Consequently the Dorians would have had little difficulty making their popular hero the likely founder of the Olympic festival. After all Heracles was, among other things, an especially strong man and fine athlete.<sup>8</sup>

If it was indeed just natural that the great athletic hero of the Dorians should be widely regarded as the founder of the greatest athletic festival<sup>9</sup> then another question arises: was Heracles also the hero in whose honour the games were held? At this point one further line of reasoning should be considered: heroes were honoured in both prehistoric and historic Greece with festivals and games. So it is very likely that the Dorians held games in honour of their great hero. It is probable that some time during the Dark Ages Heracles was gradually introduced at Olympia as the hero athlete.

It is generally believed that the worship of Zeus was introduced at Olympia in the early 8th century B.C. when the games, according to tradition, started. This view, which downplays the role of Heracles as the founder of the games, seems arbitrary since there is nothing in the material remains to indicate that Zeus was worshipped at Olympia and games were held there in his honour at that early date. The evidence that will follow, shows that Zeus came to Olympia much later, probably after the 50th Olympiad when, as we know, important changes took place at Olympia. The coming of Zeus to Olympia and the departure of Heracles coincided with some noteworthy events: at ca. 576 B.C. (the year of the 50th Olympiad) the Eleans, who according to tradition, disliked Heracles, gained a decisive success over Pisa, the city which up to that time held the presidency of the games. It is probable that some myths about the founding of the games by Heracles the Dactyl<sup>10</sup> from Crete (not the Greek hero) were also introduced at that time. The presence of Zeus is evident after

5. For references see: Birgitta Bergquist, *Heracles on Thasos* (Uppsala, 1973), p. 86; Susan Woodford, "Cults of Heracles in Attica" in D. G. Mitten (ed.) *Studies Presented George Hanfmann* (Mainz, 1971), pp. 211-220. In the Victor List of Julius Africanus there are references to Heracles competing at Olympia.

6. J. Fontenrose, "The Hero as Athlete," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 1 (1968), p. 86. 7. *Odyssey* 8.223, Eurytos was Heracles' archery teacher See Diod Sic. 3.67.2; 4.10.2; Theokr. 24.103-140; Paus 9.29.9; Athen. 164b-d; Plaut. *Bacch.* 155; Apollod. 2.63.

8. For Heracles' wrestling with Acheloo see: Sophocles *Trachin.* 15-21; Ovid *Met* 9.1.82-88; Dio Crys. 5.7; Apollod. 1.18; 1.52; 1.148; 2.5.7; 3.88; 3.93; Prop. 2.34.33; Hygin. *Fab* 30; Diodor. Sic. 4.35.3. For Heracles' wrestling with Antaios see Apollod. 2.5.2. See Theokritos 24.111 and Apollod. 2.49, who mentioned that Heracles was taught boxing and wrestling. Apollodoros (2.63) also said that Heracles was taught chariot driving by Amphitryon, armed fighting by Castor, and the cithara by Linos. This tradition certainly had its roots in Mycenaean Greece. Nilsson (*The Mycenaean Origin...* p. 220) believed that the myths of Heracles developed in the Mycenaean age.

9. Gardiner, *Olympia...* p. 51.

10. Dactyloi were little "culture-daimones of Minoan Crete. They were medicine men and inventors of all arts of life. The metal-working side of these figures comes out best in the kindred Dactyls and Telchines (see Harrison, *Themis...* p. 26).

the 50th Olympiad in some artifacts and on coins which the Eleans had issued. With the coming of Zeus to Olympia Heracles was no longer the hero-athlete; instead he became a god. The hero was so popular among the Greeks that his displacement by his father would not have happened without compensation. In this case a promotion to godly status. The evidence that we have from Greek art supports the hypothesis that the apotheosis of the hero took place at this time.<sup>11</sup> Heracles also, according to tradition<sup>12</sup> founded at Olympia six double altars one of which was dedicated to Zeus and Poseidon. It is probable that it has been the custom for Olympian victors to celebrate their victory by sacrificing upon them.<sup>13</sup> This group of six double altars is certainly not primitive, since the conception of a group of Twelve Gods even though widely spread, was a comparatively late development of the Greek religion.<sup>14</sup> Weniger assigned the founding of these six double altars to the 50th Olympiad and Gardiner believed that no time seems more probable.<sup>15</sup>

Those who accepted the introduction of Zeus at Olympia in 776 B.C. must confront a major problem: the Olympic festival during the 8th and part of the 7th century was an unimportant local festival, as becomes clear from the material remains as well as from literary evidence. To that extent it is unlikely that the Greeks dedicated an insignificant local festival to their greatest god, assuming that Zeus was regarded as such at that time. It is rather possible that Zeus and Olympia grew in importance during the same period in the minds of the Greeks. The evidence indicates that Zeus of Homer did not have any sanctuary at Olympia in the 8th or 7th century. During this period Olympia was the seat of a hero cult. Geometric vases from many parts of the Greek mainland dated 760 B.C. represent funeral ceremonies and games in honour of heroes.<sup>16</sup> The apparently sudden emergence of these geometric vases representing agonistic contests and other funeral ceremonies surprised the archaeologists who in trying to explain the impulse to this "epoch-making development" turn their eyes "almost automatically to Olympia, its funerary games and hero cults."<sup>17</sup> The evidence is such that we cannot escape the conclusion that during the 8th and 7th centuries Zeus was not honored at Olympia. Thus, long before the arrival of Zeus at Olympia we have the presence at Olympia of Heracles, the son of Alcmena. Many of the bronzes found at Olympia represent warriors armed with large helmets and small shields and spears. It is possible that these helmeted statues represent Heracles. The archaic types of

11. H. Metzger, *Les Représentations dans la Céramique Attique du IV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Pans. 1951), p. 216. According to Diodoros Sic. the Athenians believed that they were the first among the Greeks to honour Heracles as a god, and that the other Greeks followed their example. According to Arrian (*Anab.* 4.11.7) however, it was a Delphic oracle that confirmed the apotheosis of Heracles.

12. Pindar *OI 5*. These altars were dedicated to the following pairs of deities: Zeus and Poseidon. Hera and Athena, Hermes and Apollo, Dionysos and the Charites, Artemis and Alpheios, Kronos and Rhea

13. Gardiner, *Olympia*... p. 198.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. P. Kahane, "The Cesnola Krater from Kourion in the Metropolitan Museum of Arts: An Iconological Study in Greek Geometric Art." in Noel Robertson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Cyprus: Recent Developments*, (N. Jersey, 1975), p. 181.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

Heracles represent an active, fighting Heracles and not until classical times do we have the type of passive Heracles standing in repose.<sup>18</sup> Farnell emphasized the same point of view when he stated:

General Evidence convinces us that the heroic and warlike is his aboriginal aspect. We should therefore expect to find him worshipped as a warrior, as a power that gave aid in war. And there is sufficient record to prove that this side of his character was recognized in actual cult. especially in such warlike communities as Thebes and Sparta.<sup>19</sup>

There is enough evidence to show that Heracles' aboriginal aspect was indeed warlike and heroic: he was the protector of the brave soldiers and co-warriors never won the sympathy of the hero. Pindar sings and praises Heracles as the founder of the Olympic Games out of spoils of his warfare.<sup>20</sup> Archaic cult practices in the shrines of Heracles in Thasos included, among other ceremonies, military contests.<sup>21</sup> In Hesiod the hero appears with full panoply in his struggle with Cyknos.<sup>22</sup> An archaic amphora, now in the Louvre Museum, represents Heracles as a warrior with shield and spear.<sup>23</sup> In addition a Mycenaean vase, found at Enkomi shows Heracles with a conical helmet.<sup>24</sup> Pausanias<sup>25</sup> mentioned a sanctuary of Heracles in Sparta with an armed statue of the hero; the explanatory legend attached to this statue is a pre-Dorian event of the battle of Heracles with Hippokoon and his sons. Heracles was also known to the poets as "the leader of armies and the taker of cities."<sup>26</sup> The Olympian hymn, which was the triumphal song of Heracles. written by Archilochos of Paros (ca. 714-676) represents the hero as soldier.<sup>27</sup> Two helmeted athletes depicted on a leg found at Olympia, dated late 8th century B.C.. are interpreted as Heracles and Apollo claiming a tripod as their prize.<sup>28</sup> Both material and literary sources, as has been shown. indicate that Heracles originally appeared as a warrior. So it is reasonable to conclude that these bronze primitive

18. Birgitta Bergquist, *Heracles on Thasos*, p. 60.

19. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults...* p. 146. An interesting point of view has been expressed by W. Burkert who says, "...Heracles is basically, not a heroic figure in the Homeric sense; he is not a warrior fighting warriors. he is mainly concerned with animals, just as he is a savage clad in a skin; and his main job is to tame and bring back the animals which are eaten by man." (see Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Berkeley, Los Angeles-London. 1979. p. 94.)

20. Pindar *Ol.* 2.1.4.

21. Birgitta Bergquist, *Heracles on Thasos*, p. 41.

22. Hesiod, *The Shield Heracles passim*.

23. R. Flaceliere et P. Devambez, *Heracles Images et Recits* (Paris, 1966), Plate XII.

24. See V. Karageorgis, "Myth and Epic in Mycenaean Vase Painting." *AJA* 62 (1958), p. 386. Karageorgis discussed with Webster the possibility that the figure may be Heracles in the Garden of the Hesperides. They concluded that this is probable and that this myth probably existed in Mycenaean times.

25. Paus. 3.15.3

26. Athen. 12.512e quoted Megacleides.

27. Archilochos *Frag.* 119. Martin L. West commenting on the hymn said: "...the metre and dialect of the piece, and its lack of content. are against Archilochus' authorship." In West's opinion the hymn had "religious associations" and "played a part in some cultic happening." (see Martin L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*, Berlin-New York, 1974. p. 139.)

28. For references see Gardiner, *Olympia...*p. 94. fig. 24. There are not less than 89 existing works of ancient art on which the subject of the contest between Heracles and Apollo is depicted. They include 58 black-figured vases; 18 red-figured vases; 8 marble reliefs; 3 terracottas; and 2 engraved gems. For more references see Frazer *Pausanias* 5.13.7. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (New York 1979), p. 8 says that "...that story that Heracles tried to carry off the tripod from the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, a story illustrated by more than 150 vases and by some important sculpture."

figurines of warriors armed with large helmets, small round shields, and spears, found at Olympia, represent Heracles. These were votive offerings of the victorious athletes dedicated to him and took the form of the hero. In a later age, the votive offerings at Olympia often took the form of Zeus in whose honour then the games were held. Even though the classical Greeks regarded Heracles as the divine and invincible helper of life, as the “good comrade and guardian angel,” it is also true that he was regarded sometimes as a warrior too.<sup>29</sup> Modern authors rightly call Heracles “The Greek happy warrior.”<sup>30</sup>

The presence of Heracles at Olympia is particularly noticeable during and after the second half of the seventh century. One early relief possibly represents Heracles “offering sacrifice at the founding of the Olympic Games.”<sup>31</sup> The hero also may “be recognized in the figure of an archer cut out of a sheet of bronze, a technique common at Olympia but rare elsewhere.”<sup>32</sup> Heracles also appears on a relief shooting at a wounded centaur, as well as on another relief representing him and the Old Man of the Sea.<sup>33</sup> This last representation of Heracles seems rather interesting because the inscription in early Argive characters written from right to left indicates that it came from Argos.<sup>34</sup>

In the ninth *Olympian Ode* Pindar<sup>35</sup> mentioned the famous Kallinikos or victory song in honour of Heracles, attributed to Archilochos:

Tenella Kallinike!  
Hail Lord Heracles!  
You and Iolaos, soldiers Two,  
Tenella Kallinike!  
Hail Lord Heracles.<sup>36</sup>

This hymn was sung by the Olympic victor’s friends celebrating his success in the games. It was not itself an epinician ode; it was rather a hymn to Heracles.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting that this song of Heracles was written by a poet who lived at the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 7th century. The existence

29. In a figured lekythos dated early 5th century. Heracles appears as a hoplite armed with helmet and shield (see R. Flacelière et P. Devambez, *Heracles Images et Recits* (Paris, 1966), p. 57, fig. VII). At Thebes we hear from Pausanias (9.11.1) of his statue called *Promachos* (the champion of the city) and when the Thebans had defeated the Phokians in the sacred war, they set up a dedication in the temple of Heracles (see Paus. 10.13.6). In Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (6.5.25; 6.2.18), Heracles is called Hegemon (army leader) in the battle of the ten thousand Greeks against the Bithynians. Heracles was known in Macedonia as *Arytos* (the warlike). From Herodotos (6. 108 and 1 16) we learn that in 490 B. C. the Athenian troops, in order to meet the Persians at Marathon, took up their position in the sanctuary of Heracles and stayed there for a few days before the battle. After their decisive victory they honoured Heracles, their protector, by placing much more importance to his cult and festival at Marathon For references regarding Heracles’ sanctuary at Marathon see Eugene Vanderpool *Hesperia* 11, (1942), p. 336 n. 13. The festival of Heracles at Marathon, according to an inscription found there, became Pan-Attic and its games even attained a Panhellenic character since athletes from many Greek states participated in the games. (See Vanderpool *Hesperia*. 11, 1942. p. 336)

30. For references of “The Greek Happy Warrior” as well as for his shrines and temples, see: David M. Robinson “A New Heracles Relief,” *Hesperia* 17, (1948), pp. 138-139.

31. For references see Gardiner, *Olympia*.... p. 94, fig. 24.

32. *Ibid.*, fig. 20.

33. *Ibid.*, fig. 19.

34. *Ibid.*, fig. 94.

35. Pindar, *Ol.* 9.1.

36. *Archilochos Sappho Alkman*. Trans. by Guy Davenport (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London. 1980). p. 42

37. Lilian Lawler, “Orchosis Kallinikos,” *TAPA* 79, 1948, p. 255.

of this hymn can only be explained by the very fact that the hero had something to do with contests and the place. Heracles was mentioned by Archilochos as Kallinikos (splendidly victorious<sup>38</sup> or handsome in triumph<sup>39</sup>), an epithet which connected the hero with games and fair victory. The adjective Kallinikos, it is believed, is actually a cult title of Heracles from earliest times.<sup>40</sup> According to Diogenes Laertios<sup>41</sup> the name of Heracles with the epithet Kallinikos was inscribed over doorways to avert evil. The adjective Kallinikos has an explicit and unequivocal connection with Heracles as it becomes known from literary and archaeological evidence.<sup>42</sup> In the *Heracles* of Euripides<sup>43</sup> the chorus of men avowedly singing and dancing the Kallinikos in honour of Heracles like the Delian maidens who dance in honour of Apollo.<sup>44</sup> It was during Apollo's athletic festival that the Delian maidens hymned the god with song and dance. The only other hymn that we can remember is Apollo's hymn sung to the lyre in the Pythian games rehearsing the god's victorious struggle over Pytho.<sup>45</sup> One should always remember that for the games at Delphi, Olympia served as a model and that the games were held in honour of Apollo in order to commemorate his victory. It is reasonable to assume that the hymn written by Archilochos was sung from the beginning for the hero athlete of Olympia in whose honour the games were held, and later when Heracles was displaced by Zeus, the hymn was sung for the victor by his friends.

An interesting suggestion has been made by C. Kerényi regarding the introduction of Zeus at Olympia. He said:

Not till the middle of the eighth century at the earliest did Zeus take his place in the series which began with these rudely masculine representations. Indeed, it is possible that Zeus only did so by displacing the Kourete-like young god, Hera's original cult associate, who took time to achieve this promotion. It is possible, too, that a bearded Zeus was substituted for the Heracles standing beside the enthroned goddess, particularly when Zeus's nature began to change in this direction. A "Daktyl Heracles" was the partner of the great moon goddess Hera in Olympia almost to the middle of the eighth century. At this time it was that Homer's poetry made its contribution to the final shaping of the two religions, the Hera cult and the Zeus religion.<sup>46</sup>

Kerényi's first statement that Zeus was introduced at Olympia in the middle

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38. *Lexikon to Pindar*, edited by W. I. Slater (Berlin, 1960), p. 263.

39. *Pindar's Victory Songs*, trans. by F. J. Nisetich (Baltimore, 1980), p. 125.

40. See Apollodoros *Bibl.* 2.64; I. G. 12.5.234; Farnell *Cults of the Greek States* I. ref. 137b and IV ref. 4.

41. Diog. Laert. 6.50.

42. See Euripides *Heracles* 180, 570, 582, 673-681; Apollod. 2.135; Pollus 4.100; Athen. 14.618c; I. G. 12.5.234 (inscription from Paros); *BCH* 4.1880, p. 159 (inscription from Eretria), *BCH* 59, 1935 (inscription from Thasos); Aristoph. *Achar.* 1230; *Birds* 1764; Artemidoros 2.37; *JHS* 1901, pp. 290-291; *Revue Archéologique* 1877 p. 107. Similar epithets given to Heracles were: *Aniketos* (invincible) (see *Priene Insc.* 194; I.G. 3.3817; *JHS* 1887, p. 505), *epinikios* (of victory, victorious) and *nikephoros* (victorious). (See Farnell *Greek Hero Cults...* p. 149).

43. Eurip. *Heracles*, 687-690.

44. Lillian Lawler, "Orchesis...". *TAPA* 1948, p. 265.

45. On Apollo and Python see: Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 1235-1252; Apoll. Rhod. 2.705.173; Callim. *Hymn* 3.297-104; Lucian, *Dial. Mar* 10; Claudian 2.1-16; Hyg. *Fab* 53, 140, *Hom. Hymn* 3.356-74; Ovid *Met.* 1.438-451; Paus. 2.7.7-9; 10.6.5-7; Plut. *Mor.* 293c, *Stat. Theb.* 1.557-668; Strabo 9.3.5.

46. C. Kerényi, *Zeus and Heru*, Trans. by C. Holme (New Jersey, 1975), p. 138.

of the eighth century is not in agreement with the archaeological, or literary evidence presented here. Kerényi's statement that Zeus displaced a "Daktyl Heracles" who was the partner of Hera is also a matter of dispute. The young partner or consort or son was always associated with the Earth Goddess of fertility and vegetation throughout the Aegian and Anatolian world. The evidence does not connect the worship of Hera with any young partner. Farnell showed with strong arguments that Hera's credentials as Earth Goddess are very poor.<sup>47</sup> The concept of "Daktyl Heracles" whose origin was Crete is also a matter of argument. Farnell called the identification of Heracles with the Cretan Idaean Daktyls "the most incongruous confusion in Greek mythology"<sup>48</sup> and he explained why:

... for these latter were a daimonistic company of dwarfs, ministers or attendants of the great goddess of Crete. semi-hieratic beings much connected with mysteries having no secular tradition but devoted to the arts of metallurgy: ... but not for the robust Hellenic hero of high epic achievement who was no mystic devotee. had no natural affinity with orgiastic earth-mother, no interest in the arts. and who, if not a giant, was certainly no dwarf and whose career was on the whole human and secular.<sup>49</sup>

The story of the Idaean Heracles was a fabrication of late birth since neither Pindar nor Herodotos, both interested in the Hellenic hero, mentioned anything about a Cretan Heracles.<sup>50</sup> The earliest author who supported the theory for Heracles the Daktyl appears to have been Onomakritos, an Athenian poet of the 6th century B.C., who has been called "an oracle-monger and a forger of spurious literature."<sup>51</sup> The above opinion is supported by literary evidence since we learn that Onomakritos edited the oracles of Musaeus and was expelled from Athens by his friend Hipparchos for forging one of the oracles.<sup>52</sup> Herodotos mentioned that Onomakritos was caught in the very act of the forgery by a certain Lasos of Hetmione.<sup>53</sup> In Persia. where he fled, he continued his career as forger of oracles with remarkable success.<sup>54</sup> We also learn from Clement of Alexandria that he forged poems in the name of Orpheus.<sup>55</sup> But Onomakritos was not alone in making the Daktyl Heracles at home in Olympia. The Eleans themselves, as tradition made clear, had good reasons to work

47. Farnell, *The Cults of The Greek States*, I. 180-94. Farnell I. 180 said "The worship of Hera. as it is presented to us in Homer and in the cults, has become divested of the physical meaning or symbolism, whatever that was but we cannot award to Hera any particular province of nature."

48. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults...* p. 125.

49. *Ibid.* It has also been pointed out that "No plausible connection between the hero and this gnome-like being has ever been suggested," (see *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Second Ed., Edited by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, Oxford, 1978, p. 499)

50. *Ibid.*, 130-131 Pindar, as Farnell said, was interested in Thebes, Olympia, Heracles and the Great Mother but he did not mention the Daktyl Heracles. Herodotos, who described in detail the Egyptian theory of the origin of Heracles (see 2.43-45) and made a distinction between the Egyptian, the Tyrian and the Thasian Heracles, nowhere mentioned the Cretan Daktyl. Farnell made it clear that neither the legend nor the cult of the great Hellenic hero was of vital force in Crete.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 126. The story of the Idaean Heracles was told by other authors as well but their source was Onomakritos. See Paus. 1.22.7; 8.31.3; 8.37.5; 9.35.5; Cicero *De Nat. Deor.* 3.16; Diodor, Sic. 5.5.65.

52. Herod. 7.6.

53. *Ibid.*

54. See Herod. 7.6.

55. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.21.131.

up the personality of the Idaeian Heracles, proclaiming him as a Cretan Daktyl, and utilizing him in rivalry to the son of Alcmena.<sup>56</sup> It becomes evident from Pausanias<sup>57</sup> that in his time the old Eleians strongly disliked Heracles, the son of Alcmena because the latter had killed the Elean king Augeas, the Elean heroes Molionides, the Minyan Neleus and his sons who had deep roots in Elis.<sup>58</sup> Pausanias said that it was Iphitos the Aetolian who persuaded the Eleians to sacrifice to Heracles who was, until then, an enemy of the Eleians.<sup>59</sup> It appears from the evidence that the Cretan Heracles' connection with Olympia and the founding of the games is questionable and should be regarded as a fabrication.

With regard to the helmeted, unbearded bronze statues found at Olympia that we have already identified with Heracles, Kerényi stated that the epithet "Parastates" (one who stands beside) was brought to Olympia by Heracles and not by Zeus who was a "by-stander." So Kerényi continued, "were Heracles' role as Parastates not so emphatically connected with his quality of an Idaeian Daktyl, we might with more justification identify the helmeted, unbearded figurines with Heracles than with Zeus."<sup>60</sup> But the name Parastates had nothing to do with the Idaeian Daktyls, it was simply "a natural name for the Hellenic hero"<sup>61</sup> and the Greeks were deeply devoted to Heracles appealed to him as the divine helper, "as the typical Parastates, the good comrade and guardian angel..."<sup>62</sup> There is very little doubt that the helmeted bronze statues of Olympia represent Heracles, the son of Alcmena, the hero in whose honour the games were held almost up to the 50th Olympiad.

We have to accept Heracles "from very old times as an almost Panhellenic hero"<sup>63</sup> whom the Greeks considered their hero of heroes. On Heracles as a Panhellenic figure Guthrie wrote:

He was, for example, the only one to transcend completely the borders which divided the small communities of Greece. He was an exception to the rule that heroes were local and tied to a grave. So completely did he become the possession of the whole of Greece that no single city is recorded as having claimed to possess his tomb. The Greeks took him to their hearts and into their homes, which some of them sought to protect by writing this charm over the door: "The son of Zeus, the conqueror dwells here, Heracles. Let no evil thing come near."<sup>64</sup>

It is evident that a hero like Heracles would gather the rival Greeks together at Olympia to compete peacefully with one another. We have every reason to believe that Olympia served from the very beginning of the games as a place of peace and reconciliation. The rivalry between the Greeks was not only a

56. Fame", *Greek Hero Cults*.... p. 130.

57. Paus. 5.4.6.

58. For Heracles' slaying of the Molionides see Paus. 5.2.1-3. For the slaying of all Neleus's sons except Nestor see *Iliad* 11.689-694.

59. Fame", *Greek Hero Cults*.... p. 130. Also see Paus. 5.4.6.

60. Kerényi, *Zeus and Hera*, pp. 136-137.

61. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*.... p. 129.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-5.

64. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston, 1967), p. 239. Also see Diog. Laert. 6.50.

classical phenomenon; it definitely had its roots before historical times. Lysias, an Athenian orator of the fifth century B.C., said that Heracles founded the Olympic festival because he believed that the gathering of the Greeks at Olympia would be for them the beginning of mutual good fellowship and goodwill.<sup>65</sup> According to the historian Polybios, Heracles also founded the Olympic truce.<sup>66</sup> But Heracles could not play the role of harmonizer forever. This apparently was due to a number of reasons: a) Olympia and its festival gained in fame and power, attracting the attention of the whole Greek world; b) the acceptance of Zeus by the fighting Greeks as the father of gods and men and as their peacemaker; c) the overplaying by the Dorians in general and Sparta in particular of their Heracleid descent; and d) the appearance of Peisistratis in Athens. The last reason probably gave an impetus to the wide circulation of Theseus legends. It is believed that the development of Theseus as a Panhellenic hero with a number of labours<sup>67</sup> to compare with those of the Dorian Heracles took place during the time of Peisistratos and his sons.<sup>68</sup> who encouraged the growth of Theseus' popularity.<sup>69</sup> Theseus was not only a benevolent hero, but like his opponent Heracles he instituted games and festivals.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the Athenian hero's fame was extended beyond the borders of Attica by making him an all-Ionian hero to set against the Dorian hero Heracles.<sup>71</sup> The attempt of the Peisistratids to develop and spread the legend of Theseus is evident since there is no prehistoric origin in Theseus' legend.<sup>72</sup> Some argue that the worship of Heracles was much older, deeper and more widespread in Attica than that of Theseus.<sup>73</sup> The literary evidence also agrees that the Athenians were the first to grant divine honours to Heracles.<sup>74</sup>

The legend of Theseus, developed during the time of the Peisistratids, or immediately after them as some believe,<sup>75</sup> by no means promoted the cause of friendship and reconciliation among the Greeks. The time was ripe for the introduction of Zeus as a harmonizer of Hellas. The choice of Zeus was a necessity for the Greeks who saw that Zeus' acceptance as a Panhellenic god possessed a political importance. On this Farnell said: "But his worship has a

65. Lysias, *Olymp.* 33.1-2.

66. Polybios, 12.26.

67. For Theseus' labours see: Bacch. 17.16-30; Ovid *Met.* 7, Diod. Sic. 4.59. 2-5; Hyg. *Fab* 38, 41, 43; Astr. 2.5; Paus. 1.20.3.; 1.22.5; 1.39.2; 1.44.8; 2.1.3; 10.28.2; Plut. *Thes.* 6, 11, 15, 22.

68. A. Andrews, *The Greek Tyrants* (New York), 1963, p. 114. Theseus is mentioned in the Homeric Epics but, as A Ward (*The Quest for Theseus*, p. 144) said, some of these references have been suspected by ancient and modern authors as late additions by Peisistratos or by other Athenian. For an alternative point of view regarding the introduction of Theseus to Athens by Peisistratos see: Ruth Glynn, "Heracles, Nereus and Triton: A Study of Iconography in Sixth Century Athens," *AJA* 85 (1981), p. 130. The author believes that Heracles was the hero of Peisistratid Athens, and when the Peisistratids lost power and had been driven out of Athens, then Theseus became the hero of the new democracy.

69. Ward, *The Quest...* p. 145. Also see Nilsson, (*The Mycenaean Origin...who believed that Theseus gained ground from the days of the Peisistratidae.*

70. We are told by Plutarch (*Theseus* 22-25) and Thucydides (2.150 that Theseus founded the Isthmian games in honour of his father Poseidon. Theseus also instituted a contest in Delos and was the first to give a palm to victorious athletes. (see: Plut. *Theseus* 21; Call. *Del.* 312; Poll. 4.101.)

71. Ward, *The Quest...* p. 506.

72. See Nilsson, *The Mycenaean Origin...* p. 165.

73. Susan Woodford, "Cults of Heracles..." in Mitten (Ed), *Studies Presented...* p. 212.

74. See Isocrates 5.33; Paus. 1.15.3; 1.32.4; Diod. Sic. 5.4.39.

75. For reference see: Ruth Glynn, "Heracles, Nereus..." *AJA* 85 (1981), p. 103 n. 84.

political significance higher than any other, for he alone regarded the unity of Greece and his cult was pre-eminently Hellenic and not merely local or tribal."<sup>76</sup> Zeus' character as harmonizer and peace-maker is clearly exposed in Pheidias' work at Olympia: on one of the panels that ran between the legs and the throne of Zeus, Heracles and Theseus, the opponents, appear as allies fighting against the Amazons. The final attempt to reconcile the two heroes was to emphasize their common descent: both were great-grandsons of Pelops.<sup>77</sup>

Even after the introduction of Zeus at Olympia Heracles still remained a great hero not only in Olympia, but almost all over the Greek world. The twelve labours of the hero were sculptured in relief in twelve metopes on the temple of Zeus at Olympia. There were many sanctuaries of Heracles in Attica, most of them connected with a gymnasium, where games were regularly held in his honour.<sup>78</sup> In Euboea,<sup>79</sup> Thasos,<sup>80</sup> Marathon,<sup>81</sup> and Rhode<sup>82</sup> games were celebrated to honour Heracles who was regarded with Hermes as the patron of the gymnasiums.<sup>83</sup>

More research into the personality of the "hero-god"<sup>84</sup> Heracles will reveal other important connections that he had with games and festivals in general and the Olympic Games in particular. For example, one problem which still remains unsolved and which will be discussed in this paper is that of the exclusion of women from the ancient Olympic Games.

Pausanias<sup>85</sup> informs us that no women was allowed to watch the Olympic Games or even to cross the Alpheios river during the forbidden days. The

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76. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek...* I.61. Also see I.63.

77. For Heracles being the greatest-grandson of Pelops see Paus. 5.13.2. For Theseus see Paus. 5.10.8.

78. For references see: S. Woodford. "Cults of Heracles..." in Mitten (Ed), *Studies Presented...* pp. 212-217. In addition to Woodford's references see: Plut. *Them* 1; Herod. 5.63. Cynosarges included a gymnasium as well as a sanctuary of Heracles and was surrounded by a grave (see Livy 31.24.171). also see Frazer *Pausanias* 1.19.3.

79. See I. Ringwood. "Local Festivals of Euboea," *AJA* 33 (1929), pp. 389-390.

80. See Birgitta Bergquist. *Heracles on Thasos*, pp. 58-60.

81. See Pindar *Ol* 9.88; *Pyth* 8.79.

82. See I. Ringwood, "Festivals of Rhodes," *AJA* 40 (1936), pp. 433.

83. See Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults...* pp. 153-154. Woodford "The Cult of Heracles in Attica." in Mitten (Ed.) *Studies Presented...* p. 214; I. Ringwood *AJA* 33 (1929), p. 389. Also see Paus. 4.32.1, who said that the statues of Heracles, Hermes and Theseus were in all training-ground wrestling schools. We learn from an inscription that the boys and youths of Chios offered libation to Heracles and the Muses in connection with some state-games (see C.I.G. 2214). Also see Farnell *Greek Hero Cults* p. 154, who states that "His higher social function does not range beyond his protection of the Epheboi and his care for their physical development." It becomes also clear from Athenaeus, who quoted Pamphilos, saying that the Athenian Epheboi cut off their long hair and offered to Heracles a large cup which they have filled with wine. After a libation from it they gave it to their companions to drink from (see Athen. 494f). Sanctuaries of Heracles with gymnasias attached or at least in the vicinity have been found in many parts of mainland Greece. (see H. Payne "Archaeology in" Greece 1933-4" *JHS* 54, 1934, p. 188. Also see Woodford "Cults of Heracles..." in Mitten *Studies* ...p. 214) We learn from Pausanias (3.14.6) that at Sparta near the place called Dromos, the Epheboi sacrificed to Heracles in his temple, on reaching manhood Another temple of Heracles was recorded by the same writer near Platanistai where the annual combat between two groups of Spartan youth took place (see Paus. 3.14.8). The connection of Heracles with the Epheboi is clearly exposed on some vases where the hero appears with the Epheboi engaging in characteristic athletic activities. (see Lillian Lawler "Orchesis Kallinikos," *TAPA* 79 (1948), p. 264. In reference to Heracles' association and interest in the Epheboi, athletics and the palaestra, it has been emphasized that "this is the sole point at which the cult of Heracles touches the higher civilization of Hellas" (see Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults* pp. 153-154).

84. Pindar, *Nem.* 3.22.

85. Paus. 5.6.7.

penalty for the women detected entering the Olympic festival was death being thrown from a precipitous mountain with high rocks called Tupaion. The only recorded case of transgression of this law throughout the history of the games was that of Kallipateira or Pherenike as some people called her. The Hellanodicae saw that she was a woman but pardoned her out of respect for her father and her brothers and her son, all of whom won victories at the Olympic Games. The Hellanodicae then passed a decree that for the future all trainers should appear in the Games naked. Pausanias also said:

Opposite the Greek arbiters is a white stone altar. and on this altar a woman sits and watches the Olympic Games. the priestess of Demeter of the Ground, an office awarded by Elis to different women at different times. Virgin girls of course are not barred from watching.<sup>86</sup>

Demeter of the Ground, better known as Chamyne was a goddess of soil and vegetation, and the fact that her priestess was allowed to watch the Olympic Games, rather indicates a connection of the Goddess with some kind of contests and festivals held in her honour.

The presence of the Great Goddess of Earth is attested at Olympia by both literary and archaeological sources. Olympia was a sacred place. before the coming of the Greeks, due to her oracle and position. The cult of the Great Mother was in existence in Olympia as it becomes clear from two layers of ashes containing primitive votive offerings that have been found there.<sup>87</sup> The material evidence clearly indicates the existence of a primitive religion which definitely preceded that of the Olympian gods.<sup>88</sup> The great Goddess at Olympia bears the name *Gaia* (Earth) and her worship at Olympia goes back to very early times as is evident from her name, which indicates an early stage of religious thought and ritual.<sup>89</sup> In fact *Gaia* had functions similar to the "Mother Goddess" worshipped all over the Aegean world. She was goddess of the wild life. forest. mountains, fertility and all living things in the nature.<sup>90</sup> Such a goddess "we have in Artemis, whose shrines and graves were found throughout Elis."<sup>91</sup> Artemis' connections with Olympia are not in question. She was associated with the river Alpheios of Elis and received the name Artemis Alpheia or Alpheionia.<sup>92</sup> One of the six double altars that Heracles founded at Olympia was dedicated to Artemis and Alpheios. She had, in fact, eight altars in Olympia<sup>93</sup> and every year a festival was celebrated in her honour,<sup>94</sup> not to mention that she received monthly sacrifices as well.<sup>95</sup> The

86. Paus. 6.20.9 Trans. by Peter Levi (Great Britain, 1971).

87. Weniger, *Klio* 7. p. 145 in Gardiner. Olympia.... p. 123. For the existence of an oracle at Olympia see: Pindar *OI* 6.5; Paus. 5.14.10.

88. Gardiner, *GASF*. p. 38.

89. *Ibid.* Olympia.... p. 41. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* (I. p. 425) said that one of the cult places of Artemis in prehistoric times was Elis.

90. For references regarding the "Mother Goddess and her functions," see Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1979), p. 187 n. 3.

91. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* III. p. 11.

92. Pindar *Nem.* I. 1-6; Athen. 346b; Strabo 8.3.12; Paus. 6.22.8.

93. Paus. 5.14.4; 5.14.5; 5.14.6; 5.14.7; 5.15.8.

94. Strabo 8.3.12.

95. Paus. 5.14.5.

evidence shows that Artemis was more popular in Olympia than in any other place on the mainland Greece. It is almost impossible not to conclude that Artemis was a primitive goddess of fertility and vegetation worshipped at Olympia before and after the coming of the Greeks. That festivals, including dances, and games, were held to honour her is a reasonable suggestion to make, since the Goddess was worshipped in Minoan Crete and in Asia Minor with games and dances. Another indication that games were held in honour of this Great Goddess in mainland Greece is the fact that during the Olympic Games the priestess of Demeter Chamyne, who took over most of Artemis's functions as a fertility and vegetation goddess,<sup>96</sup> was the only woman allowed to watch the games.<sup>97</sup> This is also an indication that the Olympian religion which brought Zeus to power did not entirely abolish the pre-Hellenic cults and festivals. It is true that some of these cults of "the immemorial heritage ended by being incorporated into the Olympian religious system."<sup>98</sup> It is possible that the Olympic Games had some roots in prehistoric fertility cults which can be detected through not only the presence of the priestess of Demeter Chamyne in the games but also by the very fact that the victorious athletes were crowned with wreaths of wild olive. One, however, should always exercise caution about the origins of the Olympic Games because the games held in honour of the "Mother Goddess" were neither the only ones, nor the major sporting activities in prehistoric Greece. There is little doubt that when the Greeks invaded the mainland, they came in contact with this powerful goddess and adopted several aspects of her worship. As it has been said, "The religious ceremonies and ritual practices of the pre-Hellenes made a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of the Greeks."<sup>99</sup> The vegetation elements that we see in the later Pan-Hellenic games were due to the influences of the traditions of the original inhabitants, who worshipped their Goddess of nature with dances and games. What probably happened was a fusion and symbiosis of Greek and Prehellenic athletic traditions whereby the conquerors succeeded in imposing to a great extent their own athletic customs on the Prehellenes while maintaining some of the earlier customs which, in fact, were not in conflict with the Achaean tastes, beliefs and inclinations. Thus, the Greek hero cults connected with competitive games predominated and were superimposed on the Prehellenes, but the existence of some elements of ancient vegetation ritual in the later Greek athletic contests attests the influence on these contests of an old vegetarian and fertility cult. Thus, the presence of the

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96. In Acadia, where was found her oldest cult, she was associated with Demeter and her daughter Persephone (see Mircea Eliade, *A History...* p. 279). See Herodotos 2.156 for the connection of Artemis with Demeter. Also see Madeleine Jost "Les Grandes Déeses d'Arcadie," *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 72(197), p. 138, who said that Demeter and Persephone took over the functions of the Mother Goddess and her son. J. Chadwick, the *Mycenaean World*, p. 85 said that Demeter was in origin a realization of the Earth Goddess. Farnell *Cults of The Greek States* III, p. 28 said that "the brightest of all Gaia's emanations is Demeter."

97. See Paus. 6.20.9; 6.21.1. Also see Frazer, *Pausania* 4.21.1.

98. Mircea Eliade, *A History...* p. 251.

99. Gustave Glotz, *The Aegean Civilization*, Trans. by M. R. Dobie and E. M. Riley (London, 1925), p. 265.

priestess of Demeter Chamyne, the only woman allowed to watch the Olympic Games is not surprising.

Pausanias's second statement that unmarried women "of course are not barred from watching" has been challenged by both Gardiner and Harris. Gardiner found Pausanias's statement "at least doubtful"<sup>100</sup> because "we never hear of any unmarried women being present at the festival and Olympia can have afforded little or no accommodation for them."<sup>101</sup> In Harris' opinion, women generally were excluded from the games:

The statement in Pausanias, "they do not prevent unmarried women from watching," is certainly one of the many corrupt passages in the text of that author. It flatly contradicts Pausanias's own statement that any woman caught at the games or even on the opposite side of the Alpheus on the relevant days would be thrown down the cliffs of Mount Typaeum. Suctonius tells us that when Nero established games on the Greek pattern in Rome he invited the vestal virgins to be present because of the precedent of the priestess of Demeter at Olympia. This gesture would have been meaningless if all virgins had been admitted at Olympia. The probable explanation of the corruption in Pausanias is that a scholiast's note referring to the girls' races had made its way into the text.<sup>102</sup>

We can conclude that with the exception of the priestess of Demeter Chamyne, women were banned from the men's Olympic Games. The girls, as Pausanias said, had their own games, the Heraia, consisting of races for unmarried girls.<sup>103</sup> Gardiner tried to explain the exclusion of women from the Olympic Games and concluded that it was due "to some religious taboo rather than to any sense of modesty or decorum."<sup>104</sup> He believed such "a feeling cannot have existed in these times"<sup>105</sup> since women in Ionia attended the Delian Festival in honour of Apollo, and in Sparta they participated in athletic exercises with boys.<sup>106</sup> "They are excluded," he said, "from all military rites, the presence of married women especially being prejudicial to warriors on the warpath.... Their exclusion at Olympia was thus only natural if Zeus was a god of war."<sup>107</sup> That the presence of women in military rites was considered detrimental "to warriors on the warpath" has been emphasized by Farnell as well.<sup>108</sup> With regard to Gardiner's second statement about Zeus being a god war, we have to say that Zeus was not regarded at Olympia as such. He came to Olympia as a peace-keeper and reconciliator, as it becomes abundantly clear from literary and archaeological evidence. Since the presence of women in shrines of heroes or military rites was harmful to the warriors' power, then one should look for a warrior or hero whose power was af-

100. Gardiner, *GASF*, p. 47.

101. *Ibid.*

102. Harris, *GAA*, p. 183.

103. Paus., 5.16.1

104. Gardiner, *GASF*, p. 47.

105. *Ibid.*

106. *Ibid.*

107. *Ibid.*, *Olympia*, p. 76.

108. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults...* p. 163. Also see: Lawler "Orchesis..." *TAPA* 79 (1948), p. 262.

fectured by the presence of women. We found Farnell's argument about the exclusion of women from sanctuaries of heroes more convincing;

. . . ; it lay rather in the old religious feeling that the presence of women impairs the warriors' energy, and that it would therefore be detrimental in a hero's shrine which served to consecrate heroic valour; for this reason as we have noted, they were excluded from shrines of Agamemnon; and for this reason, as we may believe, rather than for any myth, was Heracles called "Miso-gynos" ("woman hater") in Phokis, and his priest was pledged to severe chastity during the tenure of his office.<sup>109</sup>

Phokis was not the only place where women were excluded from Heracles' shrine. An archaic inscription provides regulations for the cult of Heracles at Miletos. One of these regulations was that the women are forbidden to enter the sanctuary of Heracles.<sup>110</sup> It is evident from the inscription that the exclusion of women from this sanctuary was decided by an oracle of Apollo of Didyme, the one who used to give consultations about the cults of the other gods.<sup>111</sup> At Erythrae, there was a very old cult of Heracles as Kallinikos from whose shrines all women except of Thracian origin were debarred.<sup>112</sup> It has been pointed out that Thracian women being in their majority slaves, were considered as chattels.<sup>113</sup> Thracian women were rather admitted under the benefit of a regulation that slaves generally were permitted to enter. It is possible that the privileges of the slaves might have arisen under the influence of the tradition, predominant especially in Asia Minor, that Heracles himself suffered slavery.<sup>114</sup> This suggestion can be supported by a unique parallel in the cults of Attica, namely a regulation concerning the *nothoi* or bastards in Attic cults, that they should be engaged by some kind of religious initiation to Heracles in his shrine at Kynosarges; for which there is no other interpretation than that of being under the safeguard of a hero who was himself in some sense a bastard by tradition.<sup>115</sup> Another archaic inscription found in the island of Thasos provides a few rules for the sacrifices to the shrines of Heracles. It becomes clear from this inscription that women were forbidden to enter the sanctuaries of the Thasian Heracles.<sup>116</sup> According to the excavator the exclusion of women from the shrines of Heracles at Thasos was a primitive tradi-

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109. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*... p. 163. This information comes from Plutarch (*De Pyth. Or.* 20) who said that: "There is in Phocis a temple consecrated to Heracles the woman-hater, the chief priest of which is forbidden by the law and custom of the place to have private familiarity with his wife during the year that he officiates; for which reason they most commonly make choice of old men to perform that function."

110. See J. Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*, p. 419.

111. See *BCH*, 1923, p. 247.

112. Paus. 7.5.5-8.

113. Lawler "Orchesis. . . ". *TAPA* 79. (19481) p. 262.

114. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*... p. 164. Also see W. R. Halliday *Plutarch's Greek Questions*, p. 215 who found Farnell's explanation convincing.

115. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-5 According to tradition Heracles was the son of a god (Zeus) and a mortal woman (Alcmene).

116. Ch. Picard, "Un Rituel Archaïque du Culte de l'Heracles Thasien," *BCH* 47. (1923), p. 243.

tion of the cult.<sup>117</sup> An inscription from Cos makes it clear that women again were excluded from the rites of Heracles Diomedonteios.<sup>118</sup>

Greece was not the only place where women were forbidden to enter the sanctuaries of Heracles. Aulus Gellius said:

In our early writings neither do Roman women swear by Heracles nor the men by Castor. But why the women did not swear by Heracles is evident. since they abstain from sacrificing to Heracles.... Nowhere, then is it possible to find an instance. among good writers, either of a woman saying "by Heracles."<sup>119</sup>

Plutarch in his *Roman Questions*<sup>120</sup> said that in Italy women do not share in nor taste what is offered on the greater altar of Heracles. The same point of view was expressed by Sextus Aurelius Victor<sup>121</sup> and Macrobius.<sup>122</sup> Silius Italicus informs us that those who are permitted and privileged to have access to the inner shrine of Heracles at Gadeira, a city under Carthaginian influence where a famous temple of Heracles existed, "forbid the approach of women."<sup>123</sup>

It becomes evident from both literary and material evidence that women in Greece and Italy were not allowed to enter the sanctuaries of Heracles or participate in sacrifices offered to him. The ancient saying that "a woman does not frequent the shrine of Heracles"<sup>124</sup> was notorious and unquestioned. The reason was that the presence of women, it was believed, could harm and diminish the warriors' or heroes' power, and Heracles being by tradition the warrior *par excellence* and the hero of heroes. women had no place in his rites.

It is reasonable to conclude that since the Olympic Games was a festival in honour of Heracles. women were naturally excluded. This prohibition survived throughout the history of the Olympic Games, even after the coming of Zeus, as did the presence of the priestess of Demeter Chamyne in the Olympic Games.

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117 *Ibid.*, p. 255. While women were excluded from the rites of Heracles, they played an important role in other rituals. The Dionysiades in Sparta were maidens who ran a ritual-race in the public festival of Dionysos. The Thyiades were the sacred women who ascended the heights of mount Parnassos and "go mad in the service of Apollo and Dionysos." (see Paus. 10.4.3; 10.32.7; Plutarch *Quaest. Graec.* 12. Also see Farnell *Cults...* V pp. 150-239 for an account of rituals in which the prominence of women is evident.) Detailed and complete information available as to the ancient dedicators comes from the inventories of an Athenian shrine (ca. 341-317 B.C.) There the women are slightly in excess of the men (see CIA 2.835.836.839 in W. H. D. Rouse *Greek Votive Offerings*, Cambridge, 1902, p. 206).

118. *Ibid.*, p. 247, n. 6.

119. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 11.6.2. Trans. by J. C. Rolfe, London, 1927. On Heracles and the exclusion of women also see: Propertius 4.9.

120. Plutarch, *Roman Quest* 60.

121. Sextus Aurelius Victor, *De Origine Gentis Romanae*, 6.6.

122. Macrobius *Satur.* 1.12.28.

123. Silius Italicus *Punica* 3.22-26. Trans. by J. D. Duff. London, 1934.

124. *Paroemiographi Graeci*. Ed. Leutsch and Scheidwin 2.392 and 2.154.