HEIDEGGER AND THE FESTIVAL OF BEING:
FROM THE BRIDAL FESTIVAL TO THE ROUND DANCE

by

Mathias Warnes

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This dissertation consists in a hermeneutical-phenomenological and being-historical investigation of the time-play-space of “the festival” in the Collected Works of the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). After introducing the scope and limits of the research within the primary and secondary literatures, followed by an interpretation of the festival in the 1920s, I show how the festival becomes prominent in the mid-1930s by way of Heidegger’s first sustained reading of Hölderlin, where the theme of the “bridal festival” of humans and gods first emerges, and next in “The Origin of the Work of Art” essay, which mentions “the festival of thinking.” From these two texts the festival then extends its resonances throughout the later writings, and culminates after 1946 in a thinking of the “round dance.” I focus on the bridal festival as a) the initiatory event of tragic being; b) the fissuring clasping of unbound demigods; and, c) the central thought of Heidegger’s being-historical thinking of the Greek gods and possible future for Hesperia.
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Abbreviations

HEIDEGGER

All “GA” references are cited from Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976-). Citations usually include the GA pagination and the available English translation, with modifications noted. Where only the GA pagination appears, the translations are my own, except the citations from GA 39 which are from William McNeill and Julia Ireland’s in progress work. Throughout WS is used as an abbreviation for Winter Semester and SS for Summer Semester.


Trans.: SOJ.


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Citations of Hölderlin have consulted the following English translations noted where modified. In most cases, where the German is not given, the translations have been interpreted against a standard version of the German text: Friedrich Hölderlin Sämtliche Werke und Briefe (I-III). Ed. Jochen Schmidt. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992. Citations from Hölderlin in translated Gesamtausgabe volumes generally retain the word choices of translators.


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Dedication

for Kyrstyn

The Event
With light and sound
The world is dared in promises.
Who names the bride?
Who knows and looks into love,
how love endures?

& for my Parents

The Mortals
We are advent,
world-game’s gear,
prone to sound,
song’s ferment,
return; blind, sheer,
scared in the Round.

ἐκφανέστατον
tὸ καλὸν
ἐρασμιώτατον
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

ON THE WAY TO HEIDEGGER’S FESTIVAL OF THINKING (BEING)

Abstract: This chapter begins with a discussion of the festival in continental philosophy. Suggesting the “bridal festival” and “round dance” as the twin stars of Heidegger’s philosophy of Being, I then account for the convergent/divergent paths of art (poetry) and metaphysics (thinking) in “the festival of thinking,” which I situate in relation to the absent-presence of the festival in Being and Time. After providing a road map of the festival across the Gesamtausgabe, I focus briefly on the emergence of this topic in the later 1920s via the remarks on transcendental play. This is followed by a review of the prominent secondary literatures. I conclude with a few situators in relation to: 1) Nietzsche’s “festival of festival”; 2) Alfred Knödler’s dissertation; 3) Feast/festival with respect to the question of meaning; 4) Gender and sexual difference in the bridal festival; 5) The background role in this dissertation of Derridean deconstruction, and the figure of double chiasmus in Giorgio Agamben.
1.1 The Time of the Festival in Heidegger Studies and Continental Philosophy

Heidegger recalls in the WS 1941/2 that “the calendar is properly a *Festkalender*” (GA 52, 64-5), i.e. an evolving organizational template that marks seasonal and biocultural rhythms of memory and forgetting, life and death, work and leisure, play and war, love and strife, order and excess, myth and ritual, music and dance, law and chaos, taboo and drive, and so on.¹ As opening time-play-spaces for event-complexes that periodically recur holidays tend to enact liminal and cyclical intensifications of everyday time into time-points, pleats or singularities, giving passage from the past to future, in and as a crystallizations of a present. What is at issue in the festival is time itself, and the implications of this thesis have not gone unexplored in philosophical hermeneutics.

In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer points to the “highly puzzling temporal structure” of festivals, arguing that the time of the festival cannot be thought in the binary of sacred or profane time, since this misses the kind of time that is proper to the festival (and to art).

> It is the nature of periodic festivals, at least, to be repeated. We call that the return of the festival. But the festival that comes round again is neither another festival nor a mere remembrance of the one that was originally celebrated. (trans. 2006, 120-122)

Gadamer solves this paradox by noting how “an entity that exists only by always being something different is temporal in a more radical sense than anything belonging to history [...] It has its being only in becoming and return.” (Ibid., 134-5) When compared with “the usual experience of time and its dimensions,” the festival appears as “historical temporality.” But when thought in relation to the becoming and returning of its horizons, the festival is better described as “a pure time phenomenon”: “The temporal experience of the festival is thus to be located not in reference to the entities that exist in time but in

¹ See Alfred Knödler’s *Das Denken des Festes, das Fest des Denkens: Heideggers seinsgeschichtliche Wesensbestimmung des Festes im Ausgang und Abstoss von der Tradition* (2001) which, other than this work, seems to be the only dissertation on this topic.
reference to their *celebration*, a present time sui generis.”

The formal study of the holiday may begin from the “chiasmic sutures” generated by the everyday/holiday distinction as a tear (‘/’) or salve (‘\’) within the polarities of insistence and eksistence, ceremony and celebration. In Latin, the language we invariably speak when we say ‘festival’ and ‘holiday,’ there are two basic roots. First, *feria* (pl. *feriae*) which means abstinence from work in honour of the gods, and is semantically nearer to the English holy-day (Hebrew *Shabbat*). Second, *festum* (pl. *festa*) meaning shared joy, revelry, or feasting, and which is closer to ‘festival.’ These roots carry over into the German *Feier und Fest*, Spanish *ferias y fiesta*, Italian *feria e festa*.

As Alejandro Falassi has pointed out, despite semantic overlap, words related to the root *feria* tend towards the “semantic implication of lack, intermission, and absence,” while the words deriving from *festa* are more positive, denoting events that fill in empty time. (1987, 1-13) Another key term for thinking the festival is ‘celebration,’ from *celeber*, frequented, populous, renowned, and *celebrare*, to honour by gathering together, and is likely related to *celer*, swift or quickening. Celebration in its etymological and anthropological senses and ‘ceremony’ are close, but far from identical. For while celebrations invariably include ceremonial components, to the ceremonial belongs ritual, which in the case of many festivals, may be contrasted with celebratory effervescence.

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2 Gadamer clarifies this solution in a footnote on Aristotle *Physics III* on Anaximander’s ἀπειρον (B.6, 206a20), which refers to “the mode of being of the day, and of the Olympic games, and hence of the festival.” (Ibid., 134-5) This is also where Heidegger’s influence is indicated via the “ontological character of the »While« (Weile)” in the texts of Holzwege. (1950) See Ch. 4.2.3.
3 On the “suture” see Alain Badiou’s “Sutures” (*Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. 1999, 61-9), and Lacoue-Labarthe’s discussion in *Heidegger and the Politics of Poetry*. (trans. 2007, 17-38)
4 On “insistence” (Inständigkeit) and “eksistence” (ekstasis), or “captivation” (Berückung) and “rapture” (Entrückung), see SS 1928 (MFL, §10-11), “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and the 1936/7 *Contributions*. I explore this language most in Ch. 3.1-3.2 and Ch. 4.1.
5 See the entry on ‘celebration’ in Valpy’s *Etymological Dictionary of the Latin Language*. (1828, 77) Combining structure and antistructure, traditional and ludic elements into an inchoate “shining language in which a society formulates its conception of the universe and its cultural philosophy,” celebration exemplifies for the social sciences the culmination of the social process. See Victor W. Turner “Introduction” to *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual*. (1984, 16)
6 *Caerimonia* is another much debated term among Latinists. Johann Georg Wachter in his 1737 *Glossarium Germanicum* expresses the opinion of 18th and 19th century philology when he connects it to “German *her*, sacred; from ἱερός, whence cerus, and *ceremonia.*” Hans-Friedrich Müller follows the tracks of Livy and Valerius in deriving *caerimonia* from the Etruscan place name *Caere* to which are conveyed the *sacra* (ritual implements) for sakekeeping. (*Roman Religion in Valerius Maximus*, 2002, 64) The word *caerimonia* on Valerius’s etymology would
The holiday festival’s most basic temporal structures are thus empty time versus fulfilled time, a time that is pleated in ceremony, and a time that is freed in celebration. As event-complexes that periodically recur, holidays and festivals reveal the sited unfolding of human life to be measured within the rhythms of love and strife, growth and decay, work and play, power and vulnerability, sacrifice and the gift, measure and excess, joy and mourning, and the other polarities of Dasein. In Heidegger’s analysis the threefold of birth, marriage, and death, and its threefold sites of self-emergent nature (natura naturans, φύσις), the Memory of the gods (fourfold hierogamy), and the Being of truth (Seyn des Wahrheit, ἀ-λήθεια), discloses the essence of festival most clearly.

This is the cliché teaching of all romanticism: divine-mortal life as a festival of the “One and All.”7 Dividing festivals into festivals of natality (birthdays), festivals of mortality (funerals), and wedding festivals (peak events) is already suggested in Being and Time’s account of “destinal repetition” (schicksalhaft Wiederholung) as an “essential modification” that raises Dasein’s thrown everydayness (Geworfenheit, Alltäglichkeit), out of mere being-born (Gebürtigkeit) and habituality (Gewöhnlichkeit), and into the time-play-spaces of the inhabitual, the immemorial, and the gift that is given ever as essential Nature, original Memory, and primordial Spirit.

This recalls the Cistercians tripartite division of the human being into corpus, anima, and animus.8 But Heidegger tends to bracket out body, soul, and spirit in order to focus

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7 The ἕν καὶ πᾶν of gods and mortals, earth and world (HS, 112-3) means everything to the Tübingen Three, as David Farrell Krell notes in a note to his translation of Hölderlin’s The Death of Empedocles: “(On July 14th, 1792, Hölderlin and his friends, among them Hegel and Schelling, had celebrated a Bundesfest around a “freedom tree” on a meadow near Tübingen; they sang the Marseillaise, which Schelling had translated into German.)[...]” (DE, 238)
8 See Robert Bernasconi’s illuminating discussion of this topic in “Race and Earth in Heidegger’s Thinking During the Late 1930s.” (2010) I return to this article in Ch. 3.1.2.
on time and history. Thus in §14 of the SS 1934, he limits the significance of “folk songs, folk festivals and folk customs, [as that wherein] the emotional life of the Volk shows itself,” nothing more than “the allegorical form of the fundamental bearing of its Dasein.” Even the “communitary Dasein in the alternation of its temporal events of birth, marriage, death, and the change of the seasons” is for the most part this allegorical form. (LEL, 57) What proves interesting to Heidegger is not the anthropological festival, not the Volk’s festival as body, soul, or spirit, but the “primal knowing-fulfillments” of temporality and historicity that are unfolded as the gifts of Being (in Hölderlin’s poetry).

Gilles Deleuze defines a related threefold of the festival in *Difference and Repetition*:

To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. *This is the apparent paradox of festivals:* ‘they repeat an unrepeatable.’ They do not add a second and a third time to the first, but carry the first time to the ‘nth’ power. (*Difference and Repetition*, trans. 1997, 1-2)

On the basis of Deleuze’s artistic festival as “internal repetition” and the “singularity without concept” which carries the “first time” to the “‘nth’ power,” an important book could be written on Deleuze and the festival, especially with respect to the second and third syntheses of time: Mnemosyne and Eros-Thanatos. I will not pursue this connection here, but it is noteworthy that Deleuze’s thinking of “internal repetition” as a virtual-actual topology traversing habit, memory, and recurrence-affirmation bears a familial resemblance to Heidegger’s festival as an initiatory event the singularity of which no concept in the history of metaphysics from the Greeks to Nietzsche, neither

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9 See *Dialogues 2* where Deleuze responds to critiques of *Anti-Oedipus*’s tri-machinic syntheses: “They say to us that we are returning to an old cult of pleasure, to a pleasure principle, or to a notion of festival (the revolution will be a festival...). By way of objection they hold up those who are stopped from sleeping, whether for internal or external reasons, and who have neither the means nor the time for a festival; or who have neither the time nor the culture to listen to music; nor the ability to walk, nor to go into a catatonic state except in hospital; or who are suddenly struck by a horrible old age or death, in short all those who suffer; don’t they ‘lack’ something? And above all, it is claimed that by releasing desire from lack and law, the only thing we have left to refer to is a state of nature, a desire which would be natural and spontaneous reality. We say quite the opposite: *desire only exists when assembled or machined.*” (trans. 2002, 95-6)
“pure difference” nor “eternal recurrence,” can fully fathom. On the level of a politics Heidegger’s threefold of birth, the wedding, and death leads to dire horizons. Deleuze writes (with Félix Guattari): “from the very beginning the Nazis announced to Germany what they were bringing, wedding bells and death, including their own death, and the death of the Germans.” (trans. 1994, 230) This characterization of Nazi thought as stretched between death and the wedding, Strömen and Quellen, fatalism and autochthony haunts Heidegger’s insistence “on the inner truth and greatness of this movement,” as it haunts many of his other statements and texts. (IM, 213) But while this dissertation will address Heidegger’s thinking in its political contexts, it will not give his thinking to ideological Nazism, rather to the unthought in Mnemosyne and Αλήθεια.

Not only in thinkers as divergent in their methods and styles as Gadamer and Deleuze, but also in Georges Bataille, Eugen Fink, Jacques Derrida, Jan Patočka, Luce Irigaray, Giorgio Agamben, and innumerable others in many disciplines, the festival comes into focus as a matter for thinking.\(^{11}\) Given that Heidegger is a decisive inspiration for many of these thinkers, and precisely on this topic, as can be readily demonstrated, the relative neglect of »das Fest« in Heidegger studies is surprising. For while readers new to Heidegger might not guess it from the majority of studies, to read across the Gesamtausgabe is also to discover that Heidegger has, perhaps most of all twentieth century continental philosophers, unfolded a thinking of the festival, and a thinking that, in the long run, may fundamentally alter our understanding of continental philosophy.

Besides philosophy, the philological, cultural, and comparative discussions of festival are extensive in the academic literatures on Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hebraic, Iranian,

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\(^{10}\) The WS 1934/5 demonstrates Heidegger’s flirtation with some version of this terrible dual injunction (see Ch. 3.1). Even worse, in the 1946 “Letter on Humanism,” we hear of the “young Germans” who when “confronted with death” “knew about Hölderlin,” and thus “lived and thought something other than what the public held to be the typical German attitude.” (PM, 258)

\(^{11}\) Very influential texts on festival in continental philosophy include but are far from limited to: 1) Georges Bataille’s The Accursed Share (trans. 1991-3) and Theory of Religion (trans. 1989); 2) Eugen Fink’s Spiel als Weltsymbol (1960) and Nietzsche’s Philosophy (trans. 2003); 3) Jacques Derrida on Rousseau’s festival in Of Grammatology (trans. 1976), and Artaud’s festival in Writing and Difference (trans. 1978); 4) Giorgio Agamben’s “In Playland” (Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience, trans. 1993), and “The Feast” (The State of Exception, trans. 2005); 5) Luce Irigaray’s An Ethics of Sexual Difference in which we read: “The cries and words of the last philosophers, of Nietzsche and Heidegger about ‘the death of god’ are a summons for the divine to return as festival, grace, love, thought.” (trans. 2005, 118)
Greek, Roman, Indic, Islamic, Slavic, Far Eastern, Late Antique, Germano-Celtic, Medieval, Anglo-Saxon, Renaissance, Occitanian, African, Polynesian, Asian, Eurasian, Australian, North and South American studies, and so on. And most academic discourses on the festival today owe a genealogical debt to the birth of the modern human and social sciences in the 19th century as influenced by Rousseau and the French Revolution (see Mona Ozouf’s *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. 1988), the German University (the festival in German Classicism and Romanticism), and then in the eras of industrialization and post-industrialization. In the twentieth century pioneering studies of the festival can be found in sociology and anthropology, folkloristic studies, psychoanalysis and archetypal psychology, comparative religion, radical theology, political theory, literary and critical theory, comparative literature and cultural studies.

The scope of this dissertation on the festival will not be so wide-ranging, but will limit itself to articulating a double path: summarizing how the festival unfolds across Heidegger’s thinking, and interpreting its most esoteric aspect, the bridal festival.
With respect to Heidegger’s biography the festival has some deeply rooted cultural and religious resonances. One text among several is the 1954 retrospective “Vom Geheimnis des Glockenturms” which recounts the philosopher’s childhood sense of being-at-home in the earth and world of the small village of Messkirch. Heidegger recalls not only the pleasure of boyhood “games in the belfry, or the highest rafters of the tower by the dials of the clock,” but the resonance produced:

 [...] the hammer strikes the hour [Stundenhammer schlägt], the last tone the greatest. With her full, heavy, vast, and all-bearing sound awakening to the high festival-day and hearkening to the morning’s own singular ringing. Immediately began ringing of the angels [Läuten zum Engelamt]. Such ringing always also took place on the pre-festive day, the day of the vigil of evening. (GA 13, 114)

Was it in relation to this ringing temporalization of village life that the young Heidegger first gained insight into the festival as a thought-provoking phenomenon of temporal jointure and historical transition throughout “the wonders of the house, the inhabitudal blink of an eye, the anticipation of the ringing, and of the festival-day itself”?

This mysterious joining in which the church festivals, the vigil days, the passage of the seasons, the early morning, midday, and evening hours, every day all joined together in one another [ineinanderfügten], so that always one ringing went through our young hearts, dreams, prayers, and games—so it seems that enchantment, healing, and protection lies concealed in the mystery of the tower, around which is given the transformation of the irrepeateable, unto the last peal in the mountains of being. (GA 13, 115)

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Also important for thinking the festival in the context of the search for the meaning of Being, even as the answer that Being gives to Dasein in response to its search, are the poetic writings, particularly the 1947-9 “The Thinker as Poet” and “The Fieldpath.”

When the early morning light quietly
Grows above the mountains...

The world’s darkening never reaches
To the light of Being.

We are too late for the gods and too
early for Being. Being’s inceptual poem
is the human being.

To head toward one star, this only...

To think is to confine oneself to a
Single thought that one day stands
still like a star in the world’s sky. (PLT, trans. mod., 4; GA 13, 76)

Certainly the most cited line of his poetry, Heidegger’s one star is Being.13 Who could doubt it? But there have been other constellations in the “stellar course of the mystery”: “Φύσις, Λόγος, Ἐν, Ἰδέα, Ἐνέργεια, Substantiality, Objectivity, Subjectivity, the Will, the Will to Power, the Will to Will.” (QCT, 33 / ID, 66) Yet the guiding star and measure of Heidegger’s thinking sojourn is Being, first as “meaning” (Sein-Sinn), then “truth” (ἀλήθεια), and finally, “time-place” (topology).14 This dissertation pursues the idea that the bridal festival and its round dance are the Janus faces of the deepest and most futural star in Heidegger’s thinking path and poem to Being.15

13 See Heinrich W. Petzet’s Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger, 1929-1976 (trans. 1993) for one among several accounts of Heidegger’s philosophy centered on the einen Stern.
14 See the 1969 Seminar in Le Thor on “MEANING-TRUTH-PLACE (τόπος).” (FS, 47-8)
15 Also in “The Thinker as Poet”: “All heart’s courage [Mut des Gemüts] is the / echoing response [Widerklang] to the / first call [Anmutung] of Being which / gathers our thinking into / the play of the world [das Spiel der Welt]. (PLT, trans. mod., 9; GA 13, 81) There has been much criticism
In another prose poem from the end of the 1940s, “The Fieldpath,” we read that just as thinking goes over the same writings “time and again,” so the thinker walks to “the trail where the Fieldpath passes through the field.” (FP) But the field is also passed through by riddles, memories of Father and Mother, of “early plays and first choices,” and of “the tower clock and the bell, which keep their own relation to time and temporality.” Passing-through all these playspaces of Mnemosyne, green fields recall ways back from the “expanse of barren land” (λήθης πεδίον), and into the “wanderings in which all shores remain behind.” These are the “seasonally changing winds of the Field-path” on which the patient thinker might become messenger of the Field itself, an advocate of its favourable places in which even heaviness and melancholy leap over into “knowing serenity” (gewissende Heiterkeit).

This knowing serenity is a gate to the eternal. Its doors swing on hinges that were once forged from the riddles of existence by a skillful smith. (FP)

Here we find an allusion to the craft-character of thinking—even Schelling’s Samothracian Hephaistus or Plato’s technoscientific demiurge—a crafty motif that begins early on, and which permeates Heidegger’s later thinking on that destinal ἀληθεύειν which is τέχνη. Are we to think the unity of metaphysics and art, thinking and poetry, Being and its festivals on the Fieldpath? Do the Greek celebrations of ποίησις and πόλις, and the Hesperian circuits of Gestell and global politics, therein greet one another?

Near the outset of the 1936 “The Origin of the Work of Art” essay we read:

The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nonetheless, neither is the sole support of the other [...] What art is we should be able to gather from the work. What the work is, we can only find out from the nature of art [...] So we must move in a circle. This is neither ad hoc nor deficient. To enter upon this path is the strength, and to remain on it the festival of thought [das Fest des Denkens]—assuming that thinking is a craft [ein Handwerk ist]. (OBT, 2; GA 5, 2)

of what follows as lame excuse: “He who thinks greatly, must err greatly.” Yet the meaning of the only repeated word “great” is empty except for the preceding line, “patience (langmut) nurtures magnanimity (Großmut),” i.e. the festive, solitary, and most tree-like virtue.
While in *Being and Time* the method of hermeneutical circling moves from Dasein’s pre-understanding of Being to the question concerning the meaning of its Being, i.e. it surpasses the ontic insofar as “Beings (*Seiendes*) can be determined in their Being without the explicit concept of the meaning of Being having to be already available,”ś in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” on the contrary, it is the hyletic-formal medium of all questioning-circling between beings and Being that is underlined, and such that even thinking, traditionally, the most noetic and substanceless activity in the world, is now to be thought in its strict materiality as a craft. “Essential thinking,” here distanced from all residual configurations of a transcendental intelligence, νοῦς of intuitional self-presence, is rather to be defined in terms of its creative involvedness in the circling of work-craft and truth, τέχνη and oriri. Whoever enters into this interplay of sojourn and destination, craft and work, matter and thought, discovers the “strength” (*die Stärke*) of that “other tonality of thinking” that has been preserved and communicated in art. Perseverance in relating to the rhythms of this strength is then what brings forth “the festival of thinking.”

How is the festival to be thought in the phrase *das Fest des Denkens*? Is this merely a metaphor for solid thinking, a banquet or a feast of thinking? The nearly verbatim repetition of the phrase in the WS 1936/7 *Nietzsche* lectures suggests more: “For many, abstract thinking is hard work; for me, on good days, it is a festival and an intoxication (*ein Fest und ein Rausch*).” Heidegger quotes this saying at the inaugural moment of his entire interpretation of Nietzsche, and remarks:

> Festivals require long and painstaking preparation. This semester we want to prepare ourselves for the festival, even if we do not make it as far as the celebration, even if we only catch a glimpse of the preliminary festivities at the festival of thinking [*Festes des Denken*]—experiencing what meditative thought [Besinnung] is and what it means to be at home [Heimischsein] in genuine questioning. (NI, 5-6; GA 6, 2)

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16 On the hermeneutical circle see BT, 5-7, 147-9, 300-302; GA 2, 7-8, 152-3, 314-315.
17 “The festival of thinking” derives not only from Nietzsche (1885, KSA 11, 34 [130]), but from Plato’s feast of λόγος. (*Phaedrus* 227b, *Timaeus* 20c) After 1936 it returns to both the 1946 dialogues, and the 1962 *Aufenthalte: The Journey to Greece*, at the moment when Heidegger chides the camera happy tourists: “They abandon without clue an unknown feast of thinking.” (SOJ, 53-4) Peter Köster interprets this phrase in “Das Fest des Denkens: Ein polemisches Motto Heideggers und seine ursprüngliche Bedeutung in Nietzsches Philosophie.” (1975)
These are the two 1936 mentions of the phrase “the festival of thinking.” And both are incidental, even passing in character. And they speak of different festivals: an artistic festival, and a metaphysical festival. What is common to these festivals is that they both depend for their “inception” on the preparatory path (Vorbereitungsweg) that leads to them, a path in which the craft sets truth to work. The coming to fulfillment of the time of art (poetry) and the time of metaphysics (philosophy), both demand of Dasein its most intense, constant, and mindful efforts towards a great labor of apprenticeship that can as a whole be named Dasein’s “being-in-betrothal” (Verlobung). To what uncanny passing-by (Vorbeigang) is Dasein betrothed?

An occasional speech indicating a preliminary sense of this betrothal, just prior to Being and Time, is “On the Essence of Truth” (Pentecost Monday, 1926). (BH, 275-89)

Pentecost, the festival of the Spirit, the Power, and the Truth, demands for its celebration that we not act arbitrarily and discuss whatever we like. Not doing whatever we please is in an original sense that urgent issue toward which Dasein of itself necessitates us. Dasein possesses an intrinsic pull that draws us to truth. But truth is an aim that most properly belongs to science. This requires that we get a better sense of the interchange of question and answer in the scientific conversation. The frigid air of cold deliberation and contemplation, the hardness and necessity of the concept are one thing. The sunny gaiety of play and dance, the free approximations and tentative moves of finding and giving oneself are another. Both are our Dasein. Both re-cover and secure [bergen] this festival and both sustain its celebration. Both must continue to be held in trust [verwahrt] and safekeeping by you as a symbol of your academic community.

Our considerations are concerned with the essence of truth. (BH, 275-89)

As Heidegger used occasional speeches as opportunities to explore the rhetorical καιροὶ of his thinking,18 so in this address, given on the occasion of a festival, occasionality itself—Jeweiligkeit in Being and Time becoming Jemeinigkeit—comes to be in question. The main point of the passage posits a necessity in Dasein that limits contingency and

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18 The first appearance of a festive speech that performs its own “occasionality,” still at the time of Heidegger’s school-funded commitment to the Catholic Church, is the 1910 “Abraham A Sancta Clara.” (GA 13, 1) The most well known example is probably the 1955 “Gelassenheit” for the composer Conradin Kreutzer, again to the citizens of Messkirch about one of their own. (DT, 43-58) I will occasionally extract from such festive speeches the basic concepts of festivity.
frivolity, an “intrinsic pull” (Zug) towards truth as world-openness. Although the “exchange of question and answer in the scientific conversation” belongs to the pursuit of truth, science cannot by itself claim ownership of the world-openness that Dasein is, and towards which it tends. On the one side, Dasein is the knower of the world, the θεωρία, science or scientific conscience, whose outlook is care for the truth. But Dasein is also the world itself: “play and dance,” finding and giving, feast and celebration. The Dasein who is both the world-opening and the world-knowing, such a Dasein “recovers and secures” play and science as mutual symbols of the academic community of truth, i.e. the community that is concerned with the ‘essence’ and ‘essential prevailing’ of truth.

No speech can substitute, however, for a discussion of the place of the festival in Being and Time. But that book never mentions the festival: not even once, as it mentions “the friend” once, yet still in such a way that a reader like Jacques Derrida might hope to build a reading on this “once.” While Being and Time does once mention the “Totenfeier,” funerary rites in the sense of “the cult of graves,” it addresses the ‘care’ that the dead receive in the funerary rites, not the festival itself. To be sure a reading like Derrida’s might be elaborated on this basis, and such a reading would have to begin from the care, mourning, and celebration that is owed to the death of others, and the meaning of the Other’s death for the death that can only be my own. This is not the most obvious route to the festival in Being and Time, however, and I begin instead with the title itself. For this title, Being and Time, has everything to do an occasional-historical transition from everyday facticity, Zeitlichkeit in the sense of the facticity of Dasein, to ‘authentic time,’ the Temporalität of Being as “the highest time” (Hochzeit). We can thus begin by underlining with Julian Young two senses of the word ‘festival’: ontic and ontological. (2002, 58) While the ontic festival would be the existentiell occasion that passes in time, the ontological festival is, perhaps, the existentiale event-complex, i.e. what has-been and might-yet-be the extraordinary temporal playing-field which “clears the There primordially,” or “the primordial ‘outside of itself’ in and for itself” that discloses “the essential existential structures of Da-sein.” (SZ, 329)

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19 See Derrida’s “Heidegger’s Ear: Philopolemology (Geschlecht IV).” (trans. 1993, 163-221)
A second sense of the festival in *Being and Time* arises in the discourse on attunement (*Befindlichkeit, Grundstimmung*), i.e. on Dasein’s thrown having-been as open to the future. With respect to attunement *Being and Time* demonstrates how Dasein relates itself to the possibility of the impossibility of its existence not in “holding death for true,” but in *Angst*: “In *Angst*, Dasein finds itself faced with the nothingness of the possible impossibility of its existence. [...] Being-toward-death is essentially *Angst*. (SZ, 266) *Angst* does not, however, exclude other fundamental attunements their access to Being:

[For] together with the sober *Angst* that brings us before our individualized potentiality-of-being, goes the unshakable joy in this possibility [...] However, the analysis of these fundamental moods goes beyond the limits drawn for our present inquiry by aiming toward fundamental ontology. (BT 358; SZ, 310)

To what extent are such suggestions plausible if, in the fourth to sixth chapters—from “Temporality and Everydayness” through “Temporality and History” and into the final *Auseinandersetzung* with Hegel’s Aristotelian “vulgar notion of time”—the festival does not come into focus at all? Although clock time and calendrical regularity are, as can be read twice in the WS 1941/2, festive structures, *Being and Time* does not develop an analysis of “understanding, attunement, entanglement, and discourse” as bound to the festival site (*ἑορτή*). The transition from the analysis of Dasein’s temporal occasionality or everydayness (*Jeweiligkeit*) to authentic totality, from Division I to II, is not defined as a transition from non-festive to festive time. And thus the temporal particularity, the *jeweilig* or *jemeinig* “Being-in-the-world” that Da-sein is—and which is determined by the existentiale structures of worldliness and disclosedness, equipmentality and spatiality, readiness and presence, attunement, understanding, entanglement, and discourse, being-with and being-away, factual dispersion, thrownness, fallenness and projection, that is, the whole of being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in as the situation of *Sorge*, this cannot be opposed in *Being and Time* to the time of the festival, a time that is presumably as much determined by everydayness as the everyday itself. Yet we cannot thus conclude that in this soberest entry into the academic conversation, the festival is not still *there*. 
1.3 Primary and Secondary Sources: Heidegger’s Holiday and Festival

I will now review the early primary and secondary literatures on Heidegger’s festival. Most intensively Heidegger thinks Hölderlin’s festival as the “bridal festival of humans and gods” in a few quite astonishing pages of the 1943 “Andenken” essay.²⁰

To encapsulate the basic idea of this festival we can cite Otto Pöggeler’s 1963 Martin Heidegger’s Path of Thinking, the chapter “Hölderlin and the Other Beginning”:

In the founding the origin is founded in its own essential ground so that—as the source—it goes back into its own ground in arising and flowing and thus imparts the enduring as the enduring seminal element. The holy is what approaches as it withdraws, what has been and endures futurally, what must be secured in its enduring by means of a poetic founding. The festival to which the gods come as guests and at which the true element upon which humans can depend occurs and is grounded in the distance of its nearness. The festival sent by the holy is the origin of history. The poet grounds history when, by naming the holy, he founds that enduring upon which a historical humanity dwells as its “ground.” […]

The truth as appropriative event and as the While of the shining forth of the holy, and destiny as the mediating center bring humans and the god, earth, and world (the “sky”) into the intimacy of their togetherness […] Thus he awaits this drawing near as the return of the “spiritual Greece.” […] Heidegger expects that Hölderlin would like to let the seminality of the Western element be seen in every decline and danger. Western history could thus open itself by its seminality to the “few other great beginnings” which have occurred upon this earth and which allow the earth to be “earth,” the region of a possible becoming-at-home.

(Hölde rlins Erde und Himmel, 27, 36) (trans. 1991, 185-6, trans. mod.)²¹

²⁰ GA 4, 102-7. This essay is a condensation of the lectures given in the WS 1941/2, Hölderlins Hymne »Andenken.« (GA 52), the second of three lectures courses devoted to Hölderlin’s poetry. The first is the WS 1934/5 Hölderlins Hymne »Germanien« und »Der Rhein« (GA 39), and the last, the SS 1942 Hölderlins Hymne »Der Ister« (GA 53). Only the last lecture has been translated into English (1996), and other two are in preparation also by William McNeill and Julia Ireland.

²¹ Pöggeler also cites the SS 1942 on Hölderlin’s hymns as “songs of festivity and celebration,” and he mentions the “wedding festival of gods and men which Hölderlin thinks of as the While, as the true which occurs appropriatively.” (Ibid., 187) Pöggeler does not think the festival further than this in either of his two translated books on Heidegger, but perhaps he does elsewhere.
In the English scholarship the earliest discussion of the Heidegger/festival nexus I have found is in Vincent Vycinas’s *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, the section “Festivity.” (1961, 288-96)

A poet opens a world by responding to the divine *logos*. The birth of a world is *eo ipso* the birth of a language. The first words are the names of the gods. The naming of the gods cannot be accredited to the poet but rather to the gods themselves, who approach the poet with their demands. “The word which names the gods is always an answer to such demands.” [GA 4, 42] A poet’s answer is not merely words but an existential entering into a destiny made possible by the demands of the gods. (Ibid., 288)

The origin of language is the festival of poetry that brings mortals to earth and establishes their dwelling in the clearing of a divine measure: “To be exposed to the lightning of gods is to be exposed to the shudder of Being. Being in its shudder or dynamism makes use of gods and men to sustain itself in its shudder [...]” (Ibid., 192) Accordingly, “the poet-priest, as mediator between gods and men, brings gods and men together. Such a coming together of gods and men is festivity, and the center of festivity is cult.”

The god of the cult of festivity is Dionysos:

Dionysos is a god of drunkenness and ecstasy. Ecstasy means the stepping out of all restrictions and boundaries. The spirit of Dionysos “glows in the intoxicating drink, which has been called the blood of the earth. The joy of the primeval world, ecstasy, dissolution of consciousness into boundlessness come stormily upon his companions, and the kingdom of the earth opens its riches for them in their trance.” (Ibid.)

Vycinas’s citation is from Walter F. Otto’s *Die Götter Greichenlands* (trans. 1965, 208), and as we shall see, it does not touch the essential in Heidegger’s thinking of Dionysos. What is there to say on the publication history of Heidegger’s remarks on the festival?

Throughout the 1930s, Heidegger’s only widely read work on Hölderlin was the 1936 “Hölderlin and Essence of Poetry.” In 1944 the first edition of the *Erläuterungen zur Hölderlins Dichtung* appeared, containing only the 1943 “Homecoming,” and the 1936 Rome presentation. But the two essays that address these themes—the 1939 “As When
on a Holiday...” (published with Niemeyer in 1941), and the Andenken essay (appearing in a festschrift for Hölderlin’s death in 1943)—became widely available only in the second edition of 1951. Yet even there only the 1943 essay ‘thinks’ the festival, something it does intensively only in a few pages tucked away in the middle. The 1939 As When on a Holiday... essay is more indirect in its treatment: the holiday functions as the bare occasion for a meditation on concepts of nature and the holy. The 1963 third edition of the Erläuterungen sees the addition of another significant text: “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” (addressed to the Hölderlin-Gesellschaft in 1959). But while central, the theme of the festival in the middle of the essay is still easily overlooked.

Given this publication history it becomes more understandable why the festival receives scant attention in Heidegger studies prior to 1951, and then only a limited or underground reception during the 1950s and 1960s. The lack of a book length study by this time is surprising, however, given that almost all of Heidegger’s postwar publications indeed contain important remarks on play and festival—for example, the 1950 Holzwege (“Der Ursprung der Kunstwerke” and “Wozu Dichter?”), the 1954 Vorträge und Aufsätze (“Das Ding”), the 1955/6 lectures Der Satz vom Grunde (1957), and the Nietzsche lectures (1961). These and other works published during Heidegger’s life time, together with either the 1951 or 1963 Erläuterungen, might have formed the basis of a book study. But this was not forthcoming, despite Hans-Georg Gadamer and Eugen Fink unfolding the topic impressively in their own projects around this time.

This situation was bound to change with the 1977 undertaking by Vittorio Klostermann and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann of the Gesamtausgabe. While the Erläuterungen, three Hölderlin lectures, and one volume of Hölderlin-Nachlaß—GA 39, GA 52, GA 53, and GA 75—are the main texts, many GA volumes with important remarks on festival have been released during the last thirty years. With the increasing

22 Beda Allemann thinks the bridal festival in Hölderlin und Heidegger (1954, 143-4, 180-81), a text that elicits highly favorable remarks from Heidegger (LHA, 117), and which is still not translated into English. I return to Allemann’s reading in the margins of Ch. 3.2.2.

23 Appearances of the festival in the GA includes: GA 1 (Frühe Schriften 1912-16, “The Concept of Time in the Science of History” on festivals of Christianity in relation to the “beginning” of a historical time reckoning); GA 60 (Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens on pagan “feast-times” in relation to the joy/suffering of the παρουσία); GA 19 (Platon: Sophistes on festivals of θεωρία in relation to the genesis of σοφία in Greek Dasein); GA 80 (Vorträge 1915-1967, “Wahrsein und Dasein...” on the θεορος as diplomatic envoy and witness to the festival, and on the time of
availability of Heidegger’s writings, mentions and short treatments of the festival become more common. But it was not until Alfred Knödler’s 2001 dissertation under von Herrmann, *Das Festes des Denkens, Das Denkens des Festes: Heideggers seinskgeschichtliche Wesenbestimmung des Festes im Ausgang und Abstoß von der Tradition*, that the first and until now only full length study was published.\(^\text{24}\)

What can be said concerning the history of the secondary reception on this topic? The theme of festival and festivity was on the radar of first and second wave Heidegger scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, making important appearances in Beda Allemann, William J. Richardson, Otto Pöggeler, John Sallis, David Farrell Krell, Joan Stambaugh, and many others. In the early French reception there are many brief discussions of *la fête et le jeu, la fête de la pensée* in Jean Beaufret, François Fédier, and Kostas Axelos, that is, in the circle surrounding the “festival[s] of Heidegger” or postwar visits to France.\(^\text{25}\)

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\(^{24}\) German studies with focus on this topic include: Susanne Ziegler’s *Heidegger, Hölderlin, und die Alētheia* (1991), Holger Helting’s *Heideggers Auslegung von Hölderlins Dichtung des Heiligen: ein Beitrag zur Grundlagenforschung der Daseinsanalyse* (1999), and Peter Trawny’s *Heidegger und Hölderlin, oder, Der Europäische Morgen* (2004). Play-studies forms a slightly distinct field of investigations in Heidegger. See Martina Roesner’s *Metaphysica Ludens: Das Spiel als phänomenologische Grundfigur im Denken Martin Heideggers* (2003), and below.

\(^{25}\) Ethan Kleinberg’s *Generation Existential: Heidegger’s Philosophy in France 1927-61* (2007, 157-209) gives an account of these “festivals of Heidegger” in France. Fédier translated several
In the continental philosophical discussion of the festival there a bifurcation between, on the one hand, Heidegger’s thinking of festival and its influence on both Gadamerian hermeneutics and Derridean deconstruction, and the many post-Nietzschean discussions of play and festival as occur (mediated through Heidegger) in Eugen Fink, or (mediated by the social sciences) in Caillois and Bataille, or in Foucault and Deleuze.\(^{26}\)

Since at the outset I broached the question of the festival in *Truth and Method* as temporality and historicity, I will now account for how the concepts of play and festival are unfolded in Fink, and more specifically, in David Farrell Krell’s 1972 book review of Fink’s 1960 *Spiel als Weltsymbol*. This will be followed by an account of Heidegger on play in the later 1920s.\(^{27}\) I choose Krell’s early book review to guide my summary of Fink’s ontology of play because it is perhaps most in Krell’s work that the rift between the hermeneutical-Gadamerian, post-phenomenological (Nietzschean or Derridean), and viscerally empirical accounts of festival are sutured. For this reason, and because Krell thinks the festival insightfully and intensively, the debt this study owes him is significant.

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\(^{26}\) See Roger Caillois’s lecture “The Festival.” (*The College of Sociology* 1937-9, trans. 1988) In *Accursed Share II* Bataille fuses elements of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* and Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* to posit twin festive drives, a Dionysian principle of “drunkenness, chaos, or sexual orgy” that “drowns everything in immanence,” and the Apollonian “ritual movements” that “slip back into the world of immanence.” While the elemental immediacy of the former are overwhelmed at the “limits of the hybrid world of the spirits,” the ritual gestures of Apollo unfolds the “mediation of the spirits” or mediumistic communion as emergent homogeneity or resonance in shared form. In the 1948 *Theory of Religion*, “Sacrifice, The Festival, and Principles of the Sacred World,” Bataille gives a more Kojevin-paleoethnological extension of his theory of religion in terms of the “[economical] misunderstanding of sacrifice” as a response to the problem of “lost intimacy.” Bataille’s and Caillois’s reflections on play and festival then permeate the intellectual milieu of the later twentieth century continental thinkers.

\(^{27}\) See Krell’s “Towards an Ontology of Play: Eugen Fink’s Notion of Spiel” (1972, 63-93), and also “The End of Metaphysics: Hegel and Nietzsche on Holiday.” (1983, 175-82)
Both in the 1960 *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, and the 1957 “Oase des Glücks: Gedanken zu einer Ontologie des Spiels” (trans. 1968), Fink argues that play is one of the “essential element[s] of the human being’s ontological makeup, a basic existential phenomena” as primordial as “love, death, work, power.” (Ibid., 19-21) Denying the opposition of play and work, play and struggle, for one plays at all these things even as we “play play” itself, Fink defines play as the “vital impulse” of “existence centered in itself,” not non-purposive activity, but an immanent transcendence whose purposiveness is internally “characterized by calm timeless presence and autonomous self-sufficient meaning.” Playing-forth in ontic situations, but retaining the prerogative of finite transcendence as an onto-genetic power, play enjoins “the symbolic representation or reenactment of [the structure of] Being.” As children’s play is the enactment of the creative divisiveness (*Zweispältigkeit*) of the finite imagination throughout the equivocity of its world totality, so the cult rituals of the poet-mythologists, and originary thoughts of the early thinkers are the “historical vehicles” wherein the truths of multiplicity as unity are expressed. This is because “Cult is older than philosophy,” and stands as the “most real” and even “shamanic” origin of art and thought. “Only when Dionysus,” the god of festivals, “is interpreted as the god of play,” as Krell cites from Fink, “can the divine play of the world, in the open space between heaven and earth, be essentially understood.” World play is “a name for the identity and difference [in play] of intramundane entities and the totality of being.”28 The basic player of world play is the earth, Zarathustra’s earth as the festival that blesses itself from out of superabundance and in which, in Krell’s gloss on Heidegger, “man and world are enclosed together, zusammengeschlossen, and disclosed together, zusammenerschlossen, belong and listen to one another within the play of their *Zusammengehörigkeit.*” (Ibid., 42) This space of belonging is ritual play as world play:

R ritual play approximates the ruling totality, at least prior to the epoch of metaphysics and its optics of disenchantment. What Fink proposes, however, stands in contrast to metaphysics’ repression of the cosmic significance of play and ritual’s confusion of

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28 On world play as a Dionysian *Alētheia* see Fink’s *Nietzsche’s Philosophy*: “There is a non-metaphysical originality in [Nietzsche’s] cosmological philosophy of ‘play’” since play is “the *Alētheia* of a cosmically open existence.” (trans. 2003, 169-73) In the 1966/7 *Heraclitus Seminar* where Fink explores the interconnectedness of mortality, community, and festivity in the Heraclitean homology of bow and lyre. (HS, 159) See Ch. 2.2.2.
demonic play and world play. He considers play a cosmic symbol which realizes the ontological difference between beings and Being. The symbol says: *the world is play without a player* [...] The broken coin is never perfectly joined. Perfect identity is broken by the play of truth and illusion in human play. This is because men are themselves broken, and are forever themselves to a world. Merleau-Ponty says that mortals are a flaw in the cosmic diamond. This flaw gives play-space for what is called ‘thinking.’ (Ibid., 44)

But if ‘world-play’ is flawed, first by the hyphen that demands mortal players, second, by the scare quotes of metaphysics, are we not thrown back into the guiding question: “Can thinking and play coincide in a world where, in the fault which offers playspace, the shadow of nothingness is cast over all human projects?” Perhaps the clearest text that answers to this in Heidegger, a text Krell cites, is the 1955/6 *The Principle of Reason*:

> Does the essence of play let itself comply and be determined out of Being as Ground, or must we think Being and Ground, Being as Abyss, out of the essence of play; precisely that play into which we mortals, and we alone, are brought, insofar as we dwell in nearness to death; which as the most radical possibility of existence [äußerste Möglichkeit des Daseins] is capable of bringing what is most elevated [das Höchste] to the clearing of Being and its truth? Death is the still unthought measure-giving of the immeasurable [ungedachte Maßgabe des Unermeßlichen], that is, of the highest play [höchsten Spiels] in which humans are engaged on earth, a play in which they are at stake [er gesetzt ist].

(PR, 111-2, trans. mod.; Der Satz vom Grund, 186-7).

In this passage it is the relation of highest play—*das Höchste, die Hochzeit*—and death that flashes. Endless chasm and pristine ground, mortality and divine immeasurability, a god’s play and the world’s becoming, these are what transpire in *das Höchste* as a “clearing of Being and its truth.” It is well known that Fink’s development of an ontological concept of play owes its greatest debt to his attendance at Heidegger’s post-

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29 Compare the oft celebrated-critiqued passage in the 1952 “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” but in the moment of a playful substitution: “The mortals are human beings. They are called mortals because they fest. To fest means to be capable of the festival as festival. Only the human being fests. The animal only feasts. It has the festival neither ahead of itself nor behind it. The festival is the shrine of Being, that is, of that which in every respect always exists, but which nevertheless absences, even as the mystery of Nothingness itself [...]” (PLT, 178-9, substitutions in italics)
Being and Time seminars in Freiburg, the WS 1928/9 Introduction to Philosophy and the WS 1929/30 Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, and Solitude. Between these two seminars stands Heidegger’s second book Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics (1929). In all three of these works, and in the last Marburg seminars—the WS 1927/8 Phenomenological Interpretations of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and the SS 1928 The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic—Heidegger unfolds the play concept.

In especially §23 and §36 of the WS 1928/9 Introduction to Philosophy, Heidegger speaks of the βίος θεωρητικός of Greek philosophy in the terms of the “play of life” and “Olympian play” conceived as the “transcendental play of the world” (κόσμον) that is preserved and transmitted into historicity through the creative accomplishments of thinking and poetry. In §36 the Greek roots of world play are brought into connection with Immanuel Kant’s concept of the world. To understand this play from the Greeks to Kant, and Kant back to the play of the Greeks, I will review Schiller’s concept of play. In the twenty-seventh Letter on the Aesthetic Education of Humanity, Schiller writes:

In the midst of the fearful kingdom of forces, in the midst of the sacred kingdom of laws, the aesthetic impulse to form is at work, unnoticed, on the building of a third joyous kingdom of play and of semblance, in which the human being is relieved of the shackles of circumstance, and released from all that might be called constraint, alike in the physical and in the moral sphere. (trans. 2004, trans. mod., 27th letter, 8th para.)

This image of a “third joyous kingdom of play,” beyond both physics and morality, develops the 14th and 15th letters in which Schiller defines the “play-drive” (Spieltrieb) as the between of a “sense-drive” (sinnliche Treib) which becomes in time (aorganic, Dionysian), and a “form-drive” (Formtrieb) as will to eternity (organic, Apollonian). This “oscillation” or “play” between sense and form is for Schiller either insistent (“energizing beauty”) or ecstatic (“releasing sensuality”), sensuous (“melting beauty”) or intellectual (“tensing intelligence”): “Only in this interplay do both »keep both at their full strength« and so generate the most perfect possible union and equilibrium of reality and form.”

30 While Schiller’s Spieltrieb is metaphysically defined as the “annulment of time within time, reconciling becoming with being and change with identity,” its outcome is the “living form” or “beauty” as “third joyous kingdom,” a perpetual holiday that Heidegger will concur with in the
To understand the play between Greek play, Hölderlin’s Kant and Heidegger’s Hölderlin, we may now look to Heidegger’s own concept of play in the 1929 Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, and the WS 1927-8 Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. In both texts Heidegger charts an alternative to German idealism’s positum of the infinite identity in the process of dialectical synthesis of intuitions and concepts. Foregoing all such speculatively infinite positions as were opened up by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, Heidegger returns to the stages of Kant’s transcendental self-conversation as the manifold “syntheses” that delineate both in essence and form the “unified whole of the inner essential structures of transcendence,” i.e. the true position of “metaphysics as the fundamental knowledge of beings as such as whole.” Heidegger’s radicalization of the Kantian metaphysics seeks a “productive appropriation” (Aneignung) of metaphysic’s “field of origin,” which is to say, it seeks the authentic existence of Dasein as the Spielraum of its transcendental finitude.

Heidegger’s “festival of thinking” is also a transcription of Kant’s “play of thoughts” (Spiel von Gedanken), which he deploys in the Third Critique to describe the effect of art’s play upon the “body.”

31 Heidegger’s das Fest des Denkens and Kant’s das Spiel von Gedanken come together and fall apart on the question of “strength,” Kant’s strengthening of the mental powers in oscillatory interplay, Heidegger’s fortitude for

aspective of the medial. But Heidegger will resist the utopianism of the classical as strongly as he will resist the optimism or pessimism of idealism. Nonetheless, Schiller remains important to Heidegger’s margins, as we read in the WS 1936/7 (NI, 107-14): “One may say that Kant’s Critique of Judgment, the work in which he presents his aesthetics has been influential up to now only on the basis of misunderstanding, a happenstance of no small significance for the history of philosophy. Schiller alone grasped something essential in relation to Kant’s doctrine of the beautiful; but his insight too is buried in the debris of nineteenth-century aesthetic doctrines.”

31 Rodolphe Gasché writes in The Idea of Form: Re-thinking Kant’s Aesthetics: “According to Kant, in laughter the organs of the body are put into an oscillation (Schwingung) “which promotes the restoration of equilibrium” [...] the animation of the mind in what Kant calls the “free swing [Schwung] of the mental powers. It is in his definition of Spirit (Geist) that a principle of the animation of the mind by the faculties in play is spelled out: “Spirit, in an aesthetical sense, is the name given to the animating principle of the mind. But that by means of which this principle animates the soul, the material which it applies to that [purpose], is what puts the mental powers purposively into swing, i.e. into such a play as maintains itself and strengthens the mental powers in their exercise [welches sich von selbst erhält und selbst die Kräfte dazu stärkt].” (2003, 157) Recognizable here is not only Heidegger’s use of this same autotelic language of rhythmic oscillation or “over-arching resonance” (Schwungsgeschehen), but in addition to the story that could be spun on the migration of influence within this “free oscillation”—from Kant through Schiller to Hölderlin and Heidegger—there is more simply Hölderlin’s own dyad of “Kant and the Greeks,” which leads to Heidegger’s own Third Critique, i.e. “The Origin of the Work of Art.”
thinking’s festivities in the configurations of art. Where the Third Critique will continue to haunt “The Origin of the Work of Art,” however, is in its weakness. For in weakness a sublime play will lay thinking fallow, in an abyss that fathoms the transcendental imagination. Just as play will be, in Fink, the cosmic mechanism of the transcendental itself coming into play (im Spiel setzen), so in post-Being and Time works, Heidegger reframes Kant’s critical project in Dasein as a wavering transcendental imagination.

Finite creatures need this basic faculty of a turning-towards [...] which lets-[something]-stand-in-opposition. In this original turning-toward, the finite creature first allows a space for play [Spielraum] within which something can “correspond” to it. To hold oneself in advance in such a play-space, to form it originally, is none other than the transcendence which marks all finite comportment of beings. (KPM, 50)

This a priori unified whole made up of pure intuition and pure understanding “forms” the Spielraum for the letting-stand-against in which all beings can be encountered. (KPM, 54)

And because pure knowledge in this way first opens up the Spielraum necessary for a finite creature and in which ‘all relation of Being or Not-Being take place,’ this [knowledge] must be termed ontological. (KPM, 59)

Kant’s critical project is re-articulated by Heidegger as a being-born of and into the medial third realm as synthesizing “power of the imagination (Einzahlungskraft).” Heidegger’s history of Being thus preserves, at its weakest point, Kant’s strength of thinking as the “seeds of ontology” which “bring metaphysics to the ground and soil (Grund und Boden) in which it is rooted as a ‘haunting’ (Heimsuchung) of human nature.” (KPM, 29) 32 However, in the subsequent lectures of the WS 1929/30, the

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32 Such haunting taking-root occurs for Heidegger in Fichte’s play of absolute knowing as the I=I, in the deep metaphysics of Schelling’s Identity-philosophy, Naturphilosophie, and Philosophy of Mythology, and in the high metaphysical circlings of Hegel’s Phenomenology, Logic, and Encyclopedia, but also in Hölderlin’s (and Novalis’s) poetico-theoretical writings. Heidegger continues to be criticized by interpreters for his “violent” interpretations of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction in terms of the schematizing power of the imagination which he calls the condition of possibility that binds not only intuition and sense in every act of synthesis, but brings all faculties into the interplaying “unifying middle” that Heidegger calls “ontological transcendence,” i.e. the middle in which “pure thinking is called into its serving appointment (Dienststellung)” (KPM, 50)
publication of which Heidegger dedicates to Fink on his 60th birthday (FCM, 377-9), the language of play is largely suspended, and in its place we find Heidegger defining Dasein as “world-forming.” This should not be interpreted as Heidegger’s abandonment of the role given to play and festivity in 1928, but it does point to a subsidiary role given to play after 1930, i.e. as a preparatory path en route to world-openness itself, i.e. to the festival.

In emphasizing the festival as the opening of truth itself, over and against both art as an ins-Werk-setzen of truth, and play as a playing-forth (Zu-spiel) in the between of the world-forming and the world-inception, the following dissertation will not side step the exceptional importance of ‘play’ and ‘art’ in Heidegger’s thinking. But it will recast their significance in light of the erdenklich architectonic of the 1936/7 Contributions to Philosophy: From the Event in which play appears as the second jointure or fugue, after echo or onset (Anklang), but before leap (Sprung), grounding (Gründung), and so on.33

Also situating his work in the intertwining chiasmata of elemental world play and the post-Kantian transcendental imagination, a second major figure in the North American reception of Heidegger’s festival is John Sallis. His 1991 Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy argues that Nietzsche’s Bacchic ecstasy (Ausser-sich-sein) should not be defined only metaphysically as an immediate art energy of nature (or φαίνεσθαι of the primal unity, Ur-Eine), but must be interpreted as opening a nonmetaphysical excess (Übermaß) as space or freedom to play in an Abyss of elemental becoming. Sallis writes:

Metaphysics will seldom, if at all, ask about what exceeds Being, about what would be epekeina tēs ousias, about the Dionysian abyss which exceeds metaphysics. In this respect, Nietzsche’s text, broaching the abyss in the figure of Dionysus, exceeds metaphysics, transgresses it. (Ibid., 6-7)

33 Play is surpassed in the leap (Sprung), grounding (Gründung), and gathering of the futural (Zukünftigen) as those who belong to the last god (Letzte Gott). Drawing on the argument set-forth in the Contributions, play might then be interpreted, much as Gadamer interprets it in “The Relevance of the Beautiful: Art as Play, Symbol, and Festival” (trans. 1987, 1-57), as “playing-forth” or “the pass” (Zuspiel), a setting-into-motion (das Ginnen) that meets up with the withdrawing refusal of Being by itself passing into the time-play-space that in passing withdraws. The Geschick des Seins is then a game between players who shelter the concealing of truth, and so pass it on as a spur to unconcealing in the form of tidings (ἑρµενευς, Kunde) in the playspace.
In his latter *Force of the Imagination: Sense of the Elemental*, the chapters “The Elemental” and “Temporalities” (2000, 147-97), Sallis deepens Heidegger’s own path back from any given metaphysics of Nature to Hölderlin’s *Natur* (Presocratic φύσις). While Sallis does not here discuss the holiday festival, he does opens the transport (μεταφόρα) of Dasein into *Ereignis* as a “gift of the elemental imagination.” (Ibid., 172) The holiday καιρός would then be to mortal Dasein just what φύσις is to elemental Being, namely, a “self-unfolding emergence” that is “inherently a going-back-into-itself,” and a passing “kind of holding-sway.” (Ibid., 151) Opening the “monstrous depth” of the abyssal “retreat” of things and horizons, and therein fathoming the *Urgrund* of “the elements that will always already have encompassed them”—ultimately, as the marriage of highest and deepest elementals, sky and earth, gods and mortals—the holiday festivals will ever have sheltered the elemental gods and their Α-λήθεια into the sendings that, by way of the “enchorial things,” shine-forth in “the ambiance of the mythical.”

Beyond the surface of the otherwise ordinary elemental phenomena, as the very depths of the elemental, there is harbored what is least ordinary, the monstrosity as which the mythical gods can—and to the Greek did—appear [Sallis here cites in a footnote GA 55, *Heraklit*, 8]. From this depth they shine forth with (or in or as—none of these prepositions quite suffices) the elemental: Zeus with the thunderbolt, Poseidon with the sea. (Ibid., 159)

Dionysos with the wine. Moving on to the more explicit reception of Heidegger’s festival during 1980s and 1990s, just following the release of the three Hölderlin lectures, intensive short treatments of Heidegger on holiday and festival begin to appear in texts by David M. Kleinberg-Levin, Véronique M. Fóti, Timothy Torno, William McNeill, and a little later Julian Young, James Phillips, Robert Mugerauer, Kevin Aho, and others.34

I will return to each of these and other contributions to this topic as my reading proceeds across the Gesamtausgabe. Closing this section it is incumbent to focus on the general debt this study owes to Alfred Knödler’s Das Denken des Festes, Das Festes des Denkens: Heideggers seinsgeschichtliche Wesensbestimmung des Festes im Ausgang und Abstoß von der Tradition. (2001) I found Knödler’s book about a year after embarking on this project, and it I found confirmed my initial intuition on the importance of the phrase, deriving from Plato and Nietzsche, and appearing in the third version of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” the “festival of thinking,” as performing a formal hermeneutic function. Read in the objective genitive “das Fest des Denkens” says that thinking achieves its consummation, bliss, or truth in and as thinking’s festival. Read in the subjective genitive it says that the activity of thinking is ever in approach to the festival that is there to be thought. Knödler highlights not only the festive character of all hermeneutical thinking, but the hermeneuticsl character of all approaches to the festival.

How is this phrase at work Heidegger’s philosophy? Just as the early Greek “festivals of thinking” derive from archaic “festivals of poesy,” so the modern poesy of the festival (Hölderlin) is supposed to rejuvenate itself, beyond the demise of romanticism, in the project of originary thinking (Heidegger). In the wake of the disappearance of “the holy as origin of the festival” (Greece), being-historical thinking is to prepare a leap into the festival of thinking (Being) as the “origin of the holy.” Following from this first chiasmus between Greece and Hesperia, a second arises at the moment when Knödler looks to the Contributions to Philosophy: From the Event for clues as to how the Greek festival was grounded in Greek philosophical conceptuality, and how Heidegger’s retrieval of the Greek beginning is now to surpass the Greek limitations in an other history.

2009, 127-43, first published as “Recovering Play: On the Relationship of Leisure and Authenticity in Heidegger’s Thought,” 2007). I return to Aho briefly in Ch. 2.2.1 and Ch. 4.1.2.

Knödler’s way of addressing the influence of Hölderlin’s festival on Heidegger’s seynsgeschichtliches Denken is elegant. In the first part he speaks of the “Festival in History” (»Das Fest in der Geschichte«), defining it as the coming-to-pass (Geschehen) of Being in that beginning which has not yet arrived at its other, at which point it would have to become “The Festival as History” (»Das Fest als die Geschichte«), i.e. the differential repetition of those events that are, as highest possibilities of deepest necessity, to be commemorated and relinquished into the grounding and the jointures beyond the ground. Between the festival in history and the festival as history, Dasein is thrown into the between as echo, resonance, or onset, playing-forth or the pass, leap, grounding, and finally, the futural who arrive/depart within “the innermost celebration of the last god.”

At this point Knödler models his exposition after the Gefüge of the Contributions as articulating the phases wherein “the festival” as “das Ereignis, der Anfang” (GA 52, 70) is to be en-thought. After a first discussion of the onset of the holiday as a transitional whiling that opens the inhabitual—Andenken in the resonating midst of Seinsverlassenheit and Seinsvergessenheit—Knödler articulates in three phases the inner historicity of the second jointure of playing-forth: first, the myth of the bridal festival wherein the holy is sent; second, the relation of concealing and unconcealing, play and φύσις in early Greek thinking; and third, the political metaphysics of festival in Plato’s well-ordered πόλις as a marionette theater for the gods. We can also read the second part of Knödler’s study as paralleling the “leap,” “grounding,” “the ones to come,” and “last god” jointures, i.e. the festival as history. In “four circling-questions of the leap,” the spring and the fissure, being and nothingness, being and life, and being-towards-death, we are to move from a recollective engagement with the poet’s language towards a courageous entering into the passing reopening of the “essential realm of the event-complex” (Wesungsbereich des Ereignisses), i.e. wherein the one conversation that we are endures all the epochalities as memories of the mirror-playing sphericity of Being. The result is an impressive study that situates itself in the between of two festivals, first and other beginning, in which between Knödler draws us out beyond the festival-less time of the oblivion of Being, and into possibility of festivals of the future.
So much for the framework that this study shares with Knödler’s. My approach differs in that, while we both situate the WS 1941/2 within the jointures of seynsgeschichtliches Denken, I focus almost entirely on the bridal festival itself, and let it guide a (mostly) chronological unfolding of the festival across the Gesamtausgabe. This is not a criticism of Knödler who rightly emphasizes the festival as recollection (Andenken), but it is a bringing forth of the bridal festival, which has so far remained in the background.
1.4 Neither Feasts nor Weddings: Χαίρειν to Nietzsche, Derrida, and Agamben

It is important to outline, at least partially, Nietzsche’s contribution and spectral presence in Heidegger’s festival of thinking. Initially this project was planned to track a triple focus: *The Festival of Thinking: Heidegger, Hölderlin, Nietzsche.* I soon found the motto of that project in Babette Babich’s magisterial 2006 *Words in Blood, Like Flowers: Philosophy and Poetry, Music and Eros in Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger.*

Where Hölderlin and Nietzsche and Heidegger invoke the ideals of feast, celebration, and joy in precise connection with thinking or philosophy, Nietzsche’s transfiguration of philosophy as a festival of thought (or art) plays between Hölderlin and Heidegger. (122)

Perhaps the most significant lines that reveal how Nietzsche’s festival plays in Heidegger’s, lines that Heidegger cites in the WS 1944 shortly before being drafted to emergency labor service, can be found in the aftersongs to *Beyond Good and Evil:*

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Nun feiern wir, vereinten
Siegs gewiß
Das Fest der Feste:
Freund Zarathustra kam,
Der Gast der Gäste!
Nun lacht die Welt, der grause
Vorhang riß,
Die Hochzeit kam für licht
und Finsternis
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Now we are celebrating,
certain of victory,
the festival of festivals:
Friend Zarathustra came,
the guest of guests!
Now the world laughs,
the dread curtain tore,
The marriage came for light
and darkness. (IPT, 34; GA 50, 125)

These words are from the concluding stanza of the poem “From High Mountains,” itself the “Afterword” to *Beyond Good and Evil.* This song which begins “O noon of life! O time to celebrate!” ends with an exalted call to Zarathustra’s “festival of festivals,” which forms the literary conclusion of *BGE* as a whole, a book that otherwise says nothing at all
about festivals. The stanza in which it occurs is dense in allusions and imagery. Its purpose is to resolve the tensions in the poem as a whole as an extended call (Ruf) to the friends of the wilderness retreat, and to set out the conflict of this call with the poet’s loneliness, and the friends unpreparedness for the retreat’s austerities and loftiness. The poet here is Prince Vogelfrei, one of Nietzsche’s aliases, cast as a wizard, friend, and disciple of Dionysos Philosophos. Vogelfrei’s “honey” is too pure and icy for his friends to taste, his banquet table set too high for them to reach, his dwelling place and its realm are too close to “stars” and “abysses.” His friends hesitate awestruck. The poet wishes they would at least be angry with him, but the chasm between them widens. Meanwhile, the friends inability to celebrate in the feasts of wild wisdom lead to waxing doubts. Thinking back to the trials his wild wisdom had to undergo, Vogelfrei recalls the unsuitedness of his path to all but extreme wayfarers, and so has a change of heart, beyond the estrangement, and attempts to playfully relieve the conscience of his friends, advising them to go their own way, and even scattering them like game, if only so that from high mountains he may practice on them the “wicked” art of archery. But even though his arrows only “kiss,” soon all the friends are gone. Looking day and night for friends closer akin, the poet’s call finds no response. This closes the song which consists of a call, a disappointment, a sending away, a descent, a visitation, and another call.

The song in its character as a call is over at this point, but it has an afterword in which the narrator apologizes for the song, which he attributes to the wizard, a “friend of Noon.” And it is here that the mysterious part of the song begins. For although the initial world of friendship has been lost, it returns in transfigured form. The image of “the festival of festivals” here emerges not as the unity of a multiplicity, or the unifying of a community, but as the Eins zu Zwei, unity as self-division, and so a festival of the double, and of the play of doubles, i.e. an incipit parodia of the masked god who has sent a treasured guest into the noon of life, a guest who in dividing the guests brings about their united victory in the future. In fact “the festival of festivals” is only possible at the poetic resolution of the poem because one guest did not absent himself: “Friend Zarathustra came, the guest of guests.” In the afterword of an aftersong, a guest of guests arrives, who is a host of hosts, and now the festival of festivals begins. These metonymies paint an
uncanny picture of this festival as an event of munificence, universal friendship, and affirmative celebration, but also of icy solitude, radical disappointment, and haunting.

We may turn from Prince Vogelfrei’s mountain retreat to the SS 1935 Introduction to Metaphysics which explores Nietzsche’s claim that the philosopher is the human being “who constantly experiences, sees, hears, suspects, hopes, dreams extraordinary things”:

Philosophizing is questioning about the extraordinary [...] This questioning is itself out-of-order. It is completely voluntary, fully and especially based on the mysterious ground of freedom, on what we have called the leap. The same Nietzsche says: “Philosophy... means living voluntarily amid ice and mountain ranges” (XV, 2). Philosophizing, we can now say, is extra-ordinary questioning about the extraordinary. (IM, 14)

The uncanny solitariness of Nietzsche’s thinking has its homestead in mountains of ice. But when thinking descends from these mountains to the sultry lowlands, it will also tend to take on a more festive disposition and ‘rosy’ attire. The festival is thus, for Nietzsche, at once the counter-site to the extraordinary labor and isolation of philosophy, the anti-solitary and un-philosophical site, yet it is also the place of the most extraordinary leap into the extraordinary, a primordial play in the valleys of Zarathustra’s dancing star.

In the WS 1944 Introduction to Philosophy—Thinking and Poetizing, the section “The Creation of the New Home out of the Will to Power,” the subsection “The Homeless Ones as the Conquerors and Discoverers of the New Home,” Heidegger cites this afterword from BGE, but leaves it uninterpreted. Fusing his own thinking of Ereignis-Enteignis to Hölderlin’s bridal festival from 1934-46 and beyond, Zarathustra’s Hochzeit of light with the shadows will not at this time modify Heidegger’s critique of Nietzsche as “the last metaphysician of the West.” For in his conceptions of self-overcoming subjectivity (Zarathustra, overhuman, will to power), and repetition as an approximation of Being (nihilism, individuation, recurrence), the metaphysical and poietic site of Nietzsche’s thinking will continue to be diagnosed by Heidegger as “the essence of willing, out of which the homeless ones will the open space (das Freie),” i.e. wills the metaphysical Spielraum wherein “being itself appears” in the double “metaphysical sites” of “the will to power” and “the eternal recurrence festival.” And so, while Nietzsche thinks the festival as “ultimate parable of time and becoming,” a wedding ring of rings as
round dance in the eternal return of the same, he does not think the Being of this festival. By despite this criticism, and certainly by the 1950/1 What is Called Thinking?, Nietzsche’s own will, beyond his taught doctrines and their willfulness, is above all a futural will, i.e. a will of one of those who are to come (das Kommenden).

In limiting the scope of this work to Heidegger’s festival in relation to Hölderlin, my aim has been to test one of Heidegger’s own hermeneutical hypotheses. We often hear in the mid-1920s that access to what comes earlier, and is determinative for the tradition, is blocked by what comes later. Aristotle blocks access to Plato, for instance, just as Plato/Aristotle block access to early Greek thinking. In this sense this work wonders at its limits at what Nietzsche’s festival might be like after thinking with the Gesamtausgabe.

The wedding festival is festive, and awakens celebration, only when the essence of the demigod [das Wesen des Halbgottes, i.e. “the metaphysical essence”], who originates from the wedding day [der dem Brauttag entstammt], lives and moves in the feast [rein in seiner Bestimmung schwingt]. (EHP, 128; GA 4, 105)

This we read in the 1943 “Andenken” essay. Keith Hoeller’s translations unfolds the sentence’s first half, the difference between the festive and celebratory, into a temporal-historical difference between the wedding day as origin of the demigods, and their moving in the feast which celebrates a return to origin. What this translation lacks in literality it makes up for in understanding. Heidegger’s definition of the festival reads: “the bridal festival is the encounter of those human beings and gods from which there issues the birth of those who stand between humans and gods and endure this »between«. These are the demigods, the rivers, who must be signs.” (EHP, 126; GA 4, 104)

Heidegger can thus be seen to define the wedding in terms of what it is not: not the demigods, though this ‘not’ still attests to the wedding, as children attest to their parents, namely, by moving away from them, yet only rarely surpassing them in the ground of history. Weddings can be neither festive nor celebratory without prodigious offspring who, through their movement (schwingt) pass-on, but are not the wedding itself. This
introduces a frightful paradox into the wedding, a paradox that I will now approach provisionally as the difference between stream and source, feast and the festival.

To be sure festivals are also feast-times that transgress everyday limits in the direction of maximization and expenditure, consummation and conflagration. This is a familiar feature of carnivals. Feasting and the arts of conviviality are invariably festive. But we hesitate to say that the feast exhausts or consummates the essence of the festival. For in excess of the feast, even when made possible only on the basis of the feast’s circulation of energy, the festival finds its ἀρχή and ἔσχατον in something other.

While metaphysics in the phase of its closure, we learn from the SS 1937 Nietzsche lectures, ever tends to devolve upon a metaphysics of incorporation (Einverleibung), i.e. of feasting in the sense of a perspectival assimilation of the will to power, a key question is whether appropriation (Ereignis) as ex-appropriation (Enteignis) does or does not name an existential dimension of Dasein more originary than metaphysical incorporation with its doctrine of analogia entis, and its measuring rod of substantialist metaphysics?36

From the feast which liberates shackled time there is invariably an end point in satiation or impasse, and hence the feast is ever thinkable within a logic of enjoyment and death. But the feast survives as symbol of immorality, the banquet table at which gods and mortals celebrate, not because of the sumptuous dishes or divine taste of the nectar and ambrosia that was served there. But the comestibles of the feast are commemorated because they are material signs of the imperishable world of the festival that the feast releases into an all too temporary event. The feast is successful or unsuccessful insofar as it appropriates within appropriation, only to pass us by and come to an end, leaving mortals outside it, and therein setting a limit to enjoyment, the limits of sobriety (Nüchternheit). The festival, however much it is induced by feasting, is never merely

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36 See Stambaugh’s brilliant but probably misleading use of “incorporation” to translate Verwindung in Heidegger’s 1936-46 notes “Overcoming Metaphysics”: “Overcoming metaphysics is thought in the manner of the history of Being [seinsgeschichtlich gedacht]. It is the preliminary sign of the primal incorporation of the oblivion of Being [Sie ist das Vorzeichen der anfänglichen Verwindung der Vergessenheit des Seins].” (EP, 91) More conventional translations of Verwindung include reckoning, coming-to-terms-with, twisting, or torsion. On incorporation (Einverleibung) in connection with overcoming (Überwindung) metaphysics through the “incorporation” of thought of eternal recurrence, see Heidegger’s Nietzsche II “The Eternal Recurrence of the Same” (NII, 74-7, 143-45), and in the secondary commentary, David Farrell Krell’s “Eternal Recurrence—of the Same?” (Infectious Nietzsche, 1996, 158-177)
sensuous or supersensuous, ecstatic or sober. It is the draw and recession, exfoliation and decay, or breathing Dionysian nature that enters the life that has given up, or been forced to give up feasting, whether on account of satiation or fulfillment, poverty of resources or a superabundance of conviviality. Though the festival is released into its ultimacy thanks to the feast, it is never simply another feast, now brought to a spiritual or transcendental level. For the festival opens up something other than the individuating σώματα, in the maximum of intermixing transmutations and configurations, can in no way anticipate.

This is the wellspring at the origin of desire, and prior to the impasses of ethical life: it is the Ursprungen as Erspringen, the bridal festival of demigods as those streaming historicies who, hovering for a moment between presencing-absencing and absencing-presence, clasp motion back into an Augenblick. Not the kobold who disturbs the host and the guests with its ever too much and never enough, the festival is life’s beneficent genie, its consoling and advising, preserving and initiating friend. In contrast to the dizzyingly vortex of consummation and its turba, the festival gives completion, wholeness (τὸ πᾶν), and then, a life lived in the memory of truth. The feast makes high demands on those who prepare it. But the festival simply happens. It is the “flower of the mouth” that the poet sings, and which is gladly given over to its journey across its being-historical topology.\(^{37}\)

This is what proves most decisive in Heidegger’s overcoming of metaphysics, but more on that further on. First, a more basic question: how does this dissertation intend the language of the “bridal festival” or “wedding festival” to be heard? What are the dangers of this language? As Marcel Detienne points out with respect to the founding myths of Greek marriage, “there is no gamos before that of Ouranos and Gaia.” (trans. 2003, 158-9) Nor is there any end to the Greek’s celebration of this most violent coupling, even if the generations of mortals model their marriages more on the marriage (still distraught

\(^{37}\)“Die Blume des Mundes” in the Germanien is thus the unscathed origin, Mittag or Mittnacht, and Fülle der goldenen Worte throughout the dream as temporal sojourn mit den Strömen. (PF, 495) On this theme see Annette Hornbacher’s Die Blume des Mundes: Zu Hölderlins poetologisch-poetischem Sprachdenken (1993), and Babette Babich’s Words in Blood, Like Flowers: Philosophy and Poetry, Music and Eros in Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. (2006)
Looking to the incest theme in Orphic salvific theogony according to which Zeus couples with his sister-mother Rhea-Demeter to engender a daughter Persephone, who he then couples with in the form of Hades to engender a son, feast- and orgy-loving Dionysos Διθύραμβος, then absorbed into Zeus’s body and born-twine (Δι-μήτωρ) or thrice, Detienne comments: “The reign of the Golden Age begins inside a masculine body, a matrix alien to femininity, in accordance with the same logic that, conversely, foisted upon marriage and sexuality all the problems of differentiation.” (Ibid.) “Marriage and sacrifice” are the “two institutions that support a whole section of Greek symbolic thought.” (trans. 1979, 10) The coupling of Zeus and Themis at the outset of the Olympian world order, the swallowing (καταπίνειν) of Metis as birth of Athena, the myth of Dionysos as “the last king of the gods [who] is also the first” are all in this sense marked by the mythic attempts to belie or incorporate feminine alterity.

As Luce Irigaray remarks in her Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche:

An earth covered with fertile birthing is intolerable to the father of the gods. He alone may give the day. He alone may procreate and foster growth according to his light. And wrap the whole in productions of dreams. The lightning is his. And henceforward it will sire all genesis. And what once was seen will be seen no more, but will appear only as the result of a celestial illumination. And the festival of the flowers and the festival of the dead women are commemorated as one. Triumphal mourning for natural blossoming. From heaven comes down so great a cloud that every earthly shoot is covered in a veil in which it (elle) is/is no more. Housed in a tomb of godly aspect. (trans. 1991, 131)

Irigaray also comments on Heidegger’s wedding which cannot, pace Derrida, be thought in the abstract sky of Dasein’s gender-neutrality in the SS 1928 lectures. Yet in The Ethics of Sexual Difference, Irigaray is sympathetic to the plight of the gender neutral, since “the neuter might signify an alchemical site of the sublimation of ‘genitality,’ and

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38 See Aphrodite Avagianou’s dissertation (under Walter Burkert) Sacred Marriage in the Rituals of Greek Religion (1991) on the mimesis and methexis of the Greek myths of marriage, and which posits two θεογαμία (weddings of gods with gods), Hera/Zeus and Hades/Persephone, leaving to genealogy the other couplings (Gaia/Ouranos), and to metaxology such puzzling unions as are celebrated by Jason/Demeter, or Dionysos and the Ariadne Basilinna (wife of Athenian ἄρχων).
the possibility of generation, of the creation of and between different genders and genres.” (trans. 1993, 14) Here she mentions her debt and negotiation with Heidegger’s wedding:

Generally the phrase there is [il y a] upholds the present but defers celebration. There is not, there will not be the moment of wonder of the wedding, an ekstacy that remains instant [Instance]. The there is remains a present that maybe subject to pressure by the god, but it does not form the foundation for the triumph of sexual fecundity. [....]

The link uniting or reuniting masculine and feminine must be horizontal and vertical, terrestrial and heavenly. As Heidegger, among others, has written, it must forge an alliance between the divine and the mortal, such that the sexual encounter would be a festive celebration and not a disguised or polemical form of the master-slave relationship. Nor a meeting in the shadow or orbit of a Father-God who alone lays down the law, who is the immutable spokesman of a single sex. (Ibid., 13/17)

Irigaray insists, with singularly Heideggerian force, on the question of sexual difference, namely, as the withdrawing In-stance of the wedding, which in Heidegger appears to be insufficiently thought with respect to sexuality and gender, and thus tends to fall back into the “shadow or orbit of the Father-God” (“the last god”). Tracing the wedding into the precincts of the history of Being, it is imperative to acknowledge at the outset the gendered limitations of Heidegger’s language. But the chiasmus of this language is such that in and for it, or this is how I read it, each god is also a goddess, each life a being-in-between, each chthonic custom both veiled and priapian. Hölderlin’s Hesperian heavens are Urania before they are Ouranos. Juno’s sacred sobriety is no longer Zeus’s mania. “The bride” is gender-neutral and gender-complex, and both at the same time.39

39 The majority of readings of the sacred marriage, i.e. those stemming from Carl G. Jung or Mircea Eliade, are more traditionally gendered. See Jung’s 1954 Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy. Jung’s concept of hierogamy is there drawn from late antique to later Occult treatises: androgyne as syzygy, the “huge machine” as daimonic, the scintilla and quaternio, the hermetic vessel and aqua mirifica, the φάρµακον, the anima mundi, lapis philosophicum (Ur-gestein), and coincidentia oppositorum or “nuptial coniunctio” itself. Jung underlines the heortological background of his Mysterium in the “Foreword” (1963, xiii), where he notes that its two inspirations were Kerényi’s “essay on the Aegean festival in Goethe’s Faust” and “The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz.”
Consider the name that, through Renaissance poetic convention, Hölderlin gives to Germany and to the modern post-Greek world: *Hesperia*. From the Greek *Hesperus*, Latin *Vesper*, evening or morning star, Venus or Eos, the three or four Hesperides are sweet-singing nymphs, Hesiod calls them “clear-voiced,” who preside over the transitional time of evening, which is to say, the passing of the wedding day at sunset, wherein they herald the bridal night of Zeus and Hera. Beside the Hesperides is Ladon, the ever wakeful hundred headed dragon, and together they guard the tree of the golden apples in which resides the ripening of the wedding’s fruits. Sometimes figured in the western Iberian peninsula, or in Northern Africa, the land of the Hyperboreans, or even as an isle “beyond glorious Oceanus,” Hesperia is a nymph’s paradise given to Hera on her wedding day by Gaia, and what it protects in perpetuity are the claims and the justice of the Junonian. Hölderlin’s most significant evocation of Hesperia is in the closing stanzas of the elegy “Bread and Wine,” which sings of Hesperia as the great promise and challenge egressed into history through the wine-god (Dionysos), and the Syrian (Christ):

Yes, and rightly they say he [Bacchus] reconciles Day with our Night,  
Leads the stars of the sky upward and on without end,  
Always glad, like the living boughs of the evergreen pine tree  
Which he loves, and wreaths wound of ivy for choice  
Since it lasts and conveys the trace of the gods now departed  
Down to the godless below, and into the midst of their gloom.  
What of the children of God was foretold in the songs of the ancients,  
Look, we are it, ourselves; fruit of Hesperia it is! (PF, 329)

The question of the elision of the question of sexual difference in Heidegger’s wedding\(^40\) raises the question of the other cultural and historical elisions that are operative here. The enormous literature on Heidegger’s dialogue with the Japanese and Chinese philosophy,

\(^{40}\) On Heideggerian feminism see Nancy J. Holland and Patricia J. Huntington’s edited volume *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*. (2001) On sexism in the (Greek) history of philosophy see Vigdis Songe-Møller’s *Philosophy without Women: The Birth of Sexism in Western Thought*. (trans. 2002) Many texts could be cited here by Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Catherine Clément, Catherine Malabou, Judith Butler, Kelly Oliver, Tina Chanter.
and through Medard Boss with Indian Philosophy, might have contributed a great deal to this study. As not everything can be accomplished in one dissertation, this will not be my focus. But because of the exceptional richness of the history of Judaism on the theme of the festival, and because the year of Heidegger’s most involved thinking of Hölderlin’s festival, 1943, is the most deeply evil in German history, for both these reason his Hölderlinian romanticism is haunted by the holocaust, and suffers from its lack of dialogue with the Hebraic and Jewish messianic traditions.

Marlène Zarader begins this work in her *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Tradition* (trans. 2006), and Derrida opens its futurity in *Acts of Religion* (trans. 2002), *Monolingualism of the Other* (trans. 1998), and *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (trans. 2008), where he further thinks Joyce’s the “Jewgreek is Greekjew” from *Acts of Literature* (trans. 1991), and hopes thereby to relate in friendship the houses of Cadmus and Abraham. The richness of the festival theme in Gershom Scholem, Franz Rosenzweig, Jacob Taubes, Emmanuel Levinas, and many others is deeply significant for situating anew in continental philosophy what Damascius, already in the Fifth to Sixth century A.D., identified as the irreducibly Hellenic and Hebraic roots of Western civilization. This elision in Heidegger’s work is a serious one, and Heidegger’s thinking of Greek background of the festival might have offered opportunity to reconsider it.

Leaving aside revisionism (officious Heideggerianism), and moral outrage (the de-nazification response), I have looked to Heidegger’s exilic-androgynous, and his Greek-German standing with Antigone, against “the men of the paternal earth.” Heidegger’s mourning and shame (αιδώς) are perhaps more redemptive than we tend to believe. And it is here that I have again highlighted the bond of Heidegger and Derrida, and asked what it means faithfully to be unfaithful to Derrida’s play of the undeconstructible.

In “Istrice 2: Ick bünn all hier,” we hear on Heidegger’s Hölderlinian sacrifice:

That is to invest every kind of accident with a destinal meaning. The death of the “poematic” hedgehog, if one distinguishes it from the poet hedgehog, from the total fragment (Schlegel) or from the setting-to-work of truth (Heidegger), may not even be a sacrifice. Sacrifice always becomes meaningful within the truth of a historical destiny, within an epochal super-teleology. It is never accidental. When there is sacrifice, the ritual victim is not run over by history in an accidental way, as on the highway. Even if he agrees
to declare that he was “stupid” [bête], that what he did at the moment of the advent of Nazism was a “stupidity” (Dummheit) [bêtise], Heidegger still believes in the sacrificial greatness of his error or erring. This is the sense of his letter to Kommerell on the subject of Hölderlin, at the very moment when, all the same, Heidegger distinguishes himself from Hölderlin. The disaster of the accident is still magnified or sublimated, in a movement of denegation, by thought and as a disaster of thought:

[Heidegger replying to Kommerell:] You are right. This writing [that of Heidegger on the subject of Hölderlin] is a disaster (Unglück). Being and Time was also a disastrous accident. And every immediate presentation of my thought would be today the greatest of disasters. Perhaps that is a first testimony to the fact that my attempts sometimes reach into the vicinity of a true thinking. All straight thinking is, unlike that of poets, a disastrous accident in its immediate effect. In this way you see how I can not identify with Hölderlin, not at any point. Here the exposition of a thinking to a poet is under way where the ex-position goes so far as to first of all pose what is opposed. Is this arbitrary or a supreme liberty?

[Derrida remarking on Heidegger’s reply] This propensity to magnify the disastrous accident is foreign to what I called the humility of the poematic hedgehog: low, very low, close to the earth, humble (humilis).


Derrida’s analysis is irrefutable. But it would be (as Derrida also shows) uncharitable to simply oppose a poematic hedgehog to the Seinsgeschichte as only a sublimated or denegated contingency. For however unglücklich on account of “posing of what is opposed,” Heidegger’s Hölderlin also thinks humility, and in a very Derridean way as bearing with Others a world, i.e. carrying the world and passing on with it, in the manner of a round dance. (EHP, 196) Derridean Destrüktion on the question of Heidegger’s Hölderlin thus seemed to me to call for a measure of unfaithlessness. And since fidelity by unfaithfulness is not only Derrida’s or Heidegger’s method, but Hölderlin’s own in the “Remarks on the Oedipus,” I wondered whether the wedding is not the undeconstructible.
Thus in the choruses of *Oedipus*: sorrow, tranquility, religion and the pious lie (‘If I am a soothsayer’ etc), and pity to the point of complete exhaustion towards a dialogue that in its angry hyper-sensitivity will rend the hearts of precisely those listeners; the terrifying ceremoniousness of the scenes; drama like an inquisition, as right language for a world in which, amid plague and confusion of the sense and the spirit of prophecy flaring up everywhere, in an idle time God and human beings, so that the course of the world shall have no gap in it and the Immortals shall not fade from memory, participate in one another in the all-forgetting form of an infidelity; for divine infidelity can be retained the best.

At such a moment the human being forgets itself and the God, and like a traitor, but in the manner of holiness, turns about. –For at the furthest frontier of suffering nothing else stands but the conditions of time and place.

At this frontier the human being forgets itself because it is wholly in the moment; and the God forgets itself because it is nothing but time; and both are unfaithful, time because in such a moment it is a categorical turning-point in which beginning and end cannot at all be made to fit; and the human being because at that moment of categorical turning he must follow but in what follows cannot at all match what was there in the beginning.

*(OE, 67-8, trans. mod.)*

This work may be criticized for too much Heideggerian hermeneutics. But throughout it also attempts to dismantle the enterprise of a day-time metaphysics of Being in light of the nocturnal festivities of Being, which I argue bring out something surpassing in Heidegger, and this is the deconstruction of the absent-present as the inapparent harmony.

Finally, I must acknowledge the debt this study owes to Giorgio Agamben. For several of my arguments—see Ch. 2.1.2, 3.3.2, and 4.1.2—might not have been possible were it not for early impressions made by Agamben’s works. My account of the festival in the figure of intertwining chiasmus, for example, owes much to *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. *(trans. 1998)*  *Homo sacer* is famously defined by Agamben, in a peculiar twist of Roman jurisprudence, as someone who is proscribed from being the object of a *sacratio* or *devotio* that offers him to the gods in accord with the methods proscribed for ritual killing, though also, and this is the tricky point, anyone at all may kill him with impunity. Agamben’s analysis of this peculiar legal status of the *homo sacer* draws out its
chiasmic logic of double exclusion, excluding both the *ius humanum* (prohibition against murder), and the *ius divinum* (law of sacrifice), as double inclusion, since *homo sacer* continues to be included in divine law “in the form of unsacrificeability,” while also being included in the human community “in the form of being able to be killed.” Discovering that the “topological structure drawn by this double exception is that of double exclusion and a double capture,” Agamben thinks the more than “mere analogy” that relates the figure of *homo sacer* to the structure of sovereignty, as the sovereign is also included in divine and human law as excluded, from the law of God, since he is a *fiat* upon the earth, and from the humanity, since he is not bound by the law he posits.

Here the structural analogy between the sovereign exception and *sacratio* shows its full sense. At two extreme limits of the order, the sovereign and *homo sacer* present two symmetrical figures that have the same structure and are correlative: the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially *hominis sacrī*, and the *homo sacer* is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns.

The sovereign and *homo sacer* are joined in the figure of an action that, excepting itself from both divine and human law, from both *nomos* and *physis*, nevertheless delimits what is, in a certain sense, the first properly political space of the West distinct from both the religious and profane sphere, from both the natural order and the regular juridical order.

(Ibid., 84)

In the companion volume, *The State of Exception*, the chapter “Feast, Mourning, Anomie” (trans. 2005, 65-74), Agamben relates this double chiasmus to the *Iustitium* or period of public mourning, anomia and tumult, that occurs after the death of a sovereign. Focusing on the satyric significance of Augustus’s dying question—asking if he has “played the farce of life” (*mimus vitae*) well, and thus whether “there was now some sacred tumult outside that might concern him”—Agamben asks if this scene of the death of the sovereign as “living law” is not the sacred disequilibrium of the state of exception. It is at this point that Agamben makes the critical link to the idea of the festival, writing:

The secret solidarity between anomie and law comes to light in another phenomenon, which represents a symmetrical and in some way inverse figure to the imperial *iustitium*.
Folklorists and anthropologists have long been familiar with those periodic feasts (such as the Anthesteria and Saturnalias of the classical world, and charivari and carnival of the medieval and modern world) that are characterized by unbridled license and the suspension and overturning of normal legal and social hierarchies. [...]

If Meuli’s hypothesis is correct, the “legal anarchy” of the anomic feast does not refer back to ancient agrarian rites, which in themselves explain nothing; rather, it brings to light in parodic form the anomie within the law, the state of emergency as the anomic drive contained in the very heart of nomos.

That is to say, the anomic feasts point towards a zone in which life’s maximum subjection to the law is reversed into freedom and license, and the most unbridled anomic shows its parodic connection with nomos. In other words, they point toward the real state of exception as the threshold of indifference between anomic and law. (Ibid., 72-3)

Crossing Homo Sacer with The State of Exception we have, on the one hand, the deconstruction of sovereignty as an “inclusive exclusion” or “capture” of bare life in the sphere of decision, and on the other hand, the festival as a real state of emergency or parody of law in which the exception is the rule, life’s maximum subjection to νόμος now being reversed into freedom and license. Agamben thus concludes the chapter “Feast, Mourning, Anomie” with the claim that “anomic feasts dramatize this irreducible ambiguity of juridical systems,” i.e. they tend to reveal the fundamental relation between law and life according to which “law […] applies itself to chaos and to life only on condition of making itself, in the state of exception, a life and a living chaos.” (Ibid.)

In several respects this dissertation is an attempt to re-cross the second chiasmus, the festival as state of exception that determines a new living law, with the first chiasmus, the juridical order that unites bare life (Heidegger’s) to sovereign power (in the Gestell). Homo sacer discovers the festival in a state of exception where “the city appears for an instant,” each citizen emerging unscathed from the turba in which, despite every democratic advance, we are all still “virtually homines sacrī.” Can the “sacred sovereignty” or “crowned anarchy” of the festival still be such a bio-political horizon? Is a future festival site a zone for the transport of βιος and ζωή in a “coming community”?41

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41 Homo Sacer begins with Aristotle’s Politics on the three major forms of life (βίος): the life of pleasure, politics, and leisure or contemplation (θεωρία). Does the life of the festival venture
Although it does not answer these questions, Agamben’s 1978 paper “In Playland: Reflections on History and Play” (trans. 1993, 65-88) unfolds his most sustained treatment of play and festival. Departing from the idea that ritual “fixes and structures the calendar,” whereas play “changes and destroys it,” Agamben reiterates the post-structuralist thesis that play, spontaneously destructive of tradition, also has a tendency to become ritualized in new traditions. Just as all rituals, however time-honoured and stable, retain a trace of the volatility of their origins: “we can regard ritual and play not as two distinct machines but as a single machine, a single binary system, which is articulated across two categories which cannot be isolated and across whose correlation and difference the very functioning of the system is based.” (Ibid., 84; italics in original)

Drawing out this premise from Levi-Strauss’s distinction between hot (volatile, play-oriented) and cold (traditional, ritual-centered) societies, Agamben summarizes: “while rites transform events into structures, play transforms structures into events.” Turning to Émile Benveniste, Agamben goes on to preview the ways in which play and ritual are united in the sacred, and its founding gestures, which are myths. His argument is that while ritual without play reifies and so loses contact with the sacred, play without ritual produces a broken image or “topsy-turvy sacred,” both distorting and forgetting the fundamental myths. For Agamben, then, as for Heidegger, what counts is the play of myth and ritual in thinking, giving, and historicity, and since neither play, which is a σύμβολον always at risk, nor myth which is dependent on play for its fabulation, are able to accomplish history without rituals (festivals) of thought. As the “temporalizing essence of the human being,” play is thus defined by Agamben, much as in Heidegger, as vital chrono-genesis via Heraclitus’s Fragment 52 where the αἰών itself is a “child that plays.” Etymologically, Agamben writes, αἰω, vital force, is a “duration” of time yet never a time of eternity. (Ibid., 82) “The differential margin between synchrony and diachrony” is the αἰών itself, i.e. that history inaugurating and history preserving play which is more enduring than the “absolute myth” of a present perfect intersection of synchrony and

across these ways of life? Festive life is pleasurable (a munificent sharing of goods and things), political (a relation between peoples who share in a fusional horizon), and theoretic (a site of leisurely contemplation as rapt participation in chiasmic horizons). In the SS 1931 Heidegger says: “ ‘Life is understood in many ways’ [...] So, for example, neither plants nor animals, defined by ζοι, have any βίος, life in the sense of history…” (GA 33, 105) See Ch. 3.2.1.
diachrony, the myth of an absolute presence. This does not mean that myth is futureless. For the revocation of every possible vocation in the mythical is precisely what becomes in Agamben the question of Collodi’s novel *Pinnochio, Playland,* which is to say, the problem of “Hades, or even, the society of the gods.” For just as the “calendrical alternation and repetition of holiday time” only occasionally gives rise to an abolition of time, namely, to “pandemonium,” “uproar,” or “bedlam,” so too in “Sacred Life” does Agamben turn to the popular myth, or rule of conduct in war, which tells of how Latin jurists define lovers as sacred, beyond the law and exempt from harm. Sanctions will be brought against “sacros qui ledat amantes,” “whoever harms the sacred lovers” (Propertius, 3/ 6.2), and this because “quisque amore teneatur, eat tutusque sacerque,” “May whoever is in love be safe and sacred” [Tibullus, 1/ 2.27]. (*Homo Sacer,* 86) This status of lovers in military poetics and juridicy constellates a higher chiasmus: Play-land. Separating from law, lovers are the divine origin of a law of life that includes each other as excluding and including every other, in manner of a dance. From Agamben’s thinking of the chiasmus to Heidegger’s wedding/demigod relation, the leap is not very great.\(^42\)

Finally, it is important to acknowledge a few topics that this dissertation might have undertaken but does not with respect to Heidegger’s own influences. For example, my account of the 1920s gives little attention to the influence on Heidegger’s thinking of Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Emil Lask, and the neo-Kantianism of Windelband, Natorp, or Rickert. Nor do I explore the influence of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Count Yorck von Wartenburg. As to the “Christian theologian” Heidegger, while I discuss the WS 1920/1 on Saint Paul, I make no exploration of the medievalist Heidegger, disciple of Augustine, Aquinas, Scotus, and Eckhart, and I only marginally touch on the Christian bridal metaphor from Christ’s miracles at the Canaan wedding through to Augustine’s Christ as the bridegroom of the world, and so on. Nor is the Heidegger constellated here in close dialogue with Rudolf Otto, Martin Buber, Karl Jaspers, Ernst Jünger, or Oswald Spengler. But focused on is the Heidegger of Hölderlin and the Greeks. The decision to read this Heidegger, not the most popular today, should not be confused with what historian Jacob Burkhardt observes (in his gentle sarcasm):

\(^{42}\) On Heidegger’s influence on Agamben, through the occasional late seminars in France, see Leland de la Durantaye’s excellent *Giorgio Agamben: A Critical Introduction.* (2009)
From the time of Winckelmann and Lessing, and of Voss’s translations of Homer, a feeling has grown up of the existence of a ‘sacred marriage’ (*hieros gamos*) between the spirit of Greece and the spirit of Germany, a special relationship and sympathy shared by no other people in modern times. Goethe and Schiller were classical in spirit.

(*The Greeks and Greek Civilization*, trans. 1998, 10-11)

Yet for many, and perhaps for us, the German, the Hesperian, is more foreign than we think. Consider one of the most famous passages in the 1949/50 “Letter on Humanism”:

 [...] even the West is not thought [by Hölderlin] regionally as the Occident in contrast to the Orient, nor merely as Europe, but rather world-historically out of nearness to the source. We have still scarcely begun to think the mysterious relation to the East that have come to word in Hölderlin’s poetry (cf. “The Ister”; also the “The Journey,” third strophe, ff.) “German” is not spoken to the world so that the world might be reformed through the German essence; rather it is spoken to the Germans so that from destinal belongingness to other peoples they might become world-historical along with them (see remarks on Hölderlin’s poem “Remembrance” [“Andenken”] (*Tübinger Gedenkschrift* [1943], p. 322) The homeland of this historical dwelling is nearness to being.” (*PM*, 257-8)

In pointing to “Remembrance,” and before to “As When on a Holiday....,” Heidegger thinks of the East. Yet his own journey moves through “Remembrance” to the West, and beyond the Pillars of Hercules, to Hesperia. In this work I will seek one thing only: the “event-complexes” (*Ereignisses*) or “festivities” of Being as an “other beginning” of “the history of humanity (*Menschentums*)” in and for Hesperia. (*EHP*, 130) But it is joy in festivities in a strange tongue (Greek) that gives Heidegger, despite all *Heimatlosigkeit* and ethnocentrism, his uncanny belonging to an unsaid wealth, and this is what we may yet learn from Heidegger’s festival of thinking: the recollective thinking of the sojourn.

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43 Rather than follow a course from pantheon to monotheism, Hölderlin transposes, in the words of Krell, “Olympian gods back to their more Titantic origins—perhaps even to their Oriental origins. Zeus is “the father of time and of the earth,” Aphrodite “divine beauty,” Hades “the future site of the dead,” Persephone “furiously compassionate—a light,” and her mother Demeter “that which is impenetrable.”” See Krell’s “A Note on Hölderlin-Translation.” (2012, 81)
CHAPTER 2:

INTIMATIONS OF THE FESTIVAL BEGINNING IN THE EARLY HEIDEGGER

Abstract: This chapter unfolds Heidegger’s festival in its cameo appearances from 1915-24, and in its “absent-presence” in Being and Time. Ch. 2.1 explores the festival: 1) in the birth of scientific phenomenology in the 1919 KNS schema, as the more originary historicity of phenomenology; 2) in the epochality of the calendar, as the καιρός and παρουσία of Pauline Ur-Christianity; 3) in the return, within historical phenomenology, to Greek philosophy, sophistics, and rhetoric, as the festivals of σοφία in Plato and Aristotle; 4) in the turn to a hermeneutics of factical dailiness, as the playfulness of a leap into an extraordinary unbound sea of elemental forces. Establishing in all these engagements an exoteric and esoteric significance for the festival from 1915-24, Ch. 2.2 investigates the absent-presence of the festival in Being and Time: 1) in Division I, where the scenes of the γίγαντομαχία and Care-fable suggest the festival as the moment of victory/defeat in the opening up of temporal-ontological horizons; 2) in the movement from victory/defeat in the opening up of Division I to II, i.e. from the whole of the Care-structure to authentic totality, where natality and mortality together generate an interplaying Hochzeit; 3) at the end of and beyond Division II, where the occasionality of world-time, myth and freedom, spatiality and δαμόνιος point to the festival in later works.
2.1 Festivals of Interpretation: Phenomenology, Parousiology, Θεωρία, Rhetoric

2.1.1 The Festival of Theory: Historical Origins of Phainomenology

The years of Heidegger’s first appearance on a university stage, the early Freiburg period (1919-23), have been very carefully investigated. As John van Buren explains, Heidegger’s “evaluation of his youthful thought-paths is richly ambivalent. He often referred to them as mere byways (Umwege), errant ways (Abwege), blind alleys (Irrgänge), and a trace of a way (Wegspur) that showed the genuine way to his topic only directly or mediately (mittelbar).”¹ What is at stake in Heidegger’s early writings are thus hints (Winke) and way-traces, “fieldpaths and forestpaths” (Feldwege and Holzwege).

This is true also for the references to festival in the 1920s, references which, despite their undetailed character, are highly significant. Reading the festival in the early Heidegger confirms the sageness of Heidegger’s advice in the “Letter to Father William J. Richardson”: “Only by way of what Heidegger I has thought, does one gain access to what is to be thought by Heidegger II. But Heidegger I only become possible if it is contained in Heidegger II.” (HR, 304) This chapter says: only on the basis of the festival in early writings can we gain access to the festival in the later writings. But the festival in Being and Time becomes accessible only as contained in the gift of “Time and Being.”

Although it does not mention the festival directly, it would be hard not to begin with Heidegger’s first course as a university phenomenologist, the famous “war-emergency seminar (Kriegsnotsemester = KNS)” of 1919.² This course is highly relevant to

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¹ van Buren, John. The Young Heidegger: Rumor of a Hidden King. (1994, 6-7)
² GA 56/7 (Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie, trans. as “The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview” in TDP). This course is also an injunction to university reform. For the university will not be ready for a renewal of “scientific consciousness and life-contexts” (Bewußteins-zusammenhang) until “life-relations renew themselves by returning to the genuine origins of the spirit.” The awakening and heightening of pre-theoretical life in the theoretical qualification of university life occurs in an “exemplary pre-living” (Vorleben) that Heidegger calls “the effect of
Heidegger’s project, as Theodore J. Kisiel has carefully detailed. For it is here that Heidegger turns the science of phenomenology towards facticity—hermeneutics of existence or life—as that pre-theoretical indifference within which the theoretical consciousness of categorial Being as knowledge of the difference first becomes possible.

I reproduce the diagram of the basic renovation as Kisiel transcribes it:

I. The pretheoretical something (Das vortheoretische Etwas)

A. preworldly something (Das vorweltliche Etwas)
   (basic moment of life as such)
   primal something (Ur-Etwas)

B. world-laden something (Welthaftes Etwas)
   (basic moment of particular spheres of experience)
   genuine lifeworld (Genuine Erlebniswelt)

II. The theoretical something (Das theoretische Etwas)

A. formal-logical objective something
   (motivated in the primal something)

B. object-type something
   (motivated in a genuine lifeworld) (Ibid, 22)

What this diagram delineates, according to Kisiel, is Heidegger’s rewriting of the constitutive and reflexive categories of Emil Lask’s special brand of neo-Kantian phenomenology which also is based on this twofold of facticity and theoreticity.³ This is, primordially motivated personal and nonpersonal Being.” But this pre-living, midway between the personal and impersonal voice, will not be only theoretical representation and pragmatic rule-giving; it will delineate the essential character and comportment of the researcher, the scientist “as genuine archontic life-form” who shares in “the habitual element of nonscientific lifeworlds” while “living absolutely in the pertinent content and origins of their problematica.” (TDP, 7)

³ Kisiel, Theodore J. The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time. (1993, 21-2) As Kisiel explains: “The [latter] distinction coincides between the unique universality of being and the stepwise hierarchical generality of beings (see SZ 2), Husserl’s distinction (Ideen 1, 13) between formalization and generalization, corresponds to the one in the KNS-Schema between two kinds of “theoretical something.” (Ibid., 34) The constitutive category is, accordingly, synonymous with the form-matter relation, and retains in itself the history of hylomorphism, the encompassing of matters that are “embraced (umgriffen), surrounded or environed (umgeben), borderered (verbramt) by form; it is enveloped (umhult), enclosed (umschlossen) in the form,” where it is this abstract materiality and logical formality that together constitute the meaning, Bedeutung, that is at stake in the virtual constitution of the reflexive category. Kisiel writes regarding the virtual constitution of the reflexive category: “The very first reflexive category is “persistent being” (Bestand), sheer presence. Out of this indifferent identity arises the categorical pair of identity and difference, which belong together in relation of heterothesis (Rickert’s term for it) or the transcendental unum. It is at this point that an object clearly becomes an object: “there is (es gibt) no object, no object is given, when the One and Other is not given.”” (Ibid, 36)
on the one hand, the concrete matter (Sache) of life or Dasein in life-world situations, on
the other, life’s ‘transcendental formality’ and “formal indication” (formale Anzeige). ⁴

The renovation of the KNS-schema is to posit, in Kisiel’s account, “A Categorically
Charged Facticity and Haccetas” as overarching meta-idea and historical determination
(Bestimmung) of that phenomenology which might yet dissolve the impasses of thinking
that result in mere having-views (Weltanschauungproblem, as Heidegger diagnoses it).
(TDF, 26) Heidegger hopes that the problems of abstract logic (Formallogisches
gegenständliches Etwas) will recover their phenomenological roots by way of a
transcendental a priori exposition of a primal, pre-worldly, and pre-theoretical something
(Ur-etwas). At the same time he hopes that each consciousness, as uniquely world-laden
(Welthaftes), will recover the singularity of its concrete historical givenness.

What does this schema have to do with the idea or event of a festival? To answer this
requires some ingenuity, but no major leaps. Recall how the schema, at the cusp of the
 genesis of theory as facticity’s categorial immersion not only provides a pictorial anchor
of the Idea of philosophy, but the schema represents this methodological and regulative
Idea from out of the destinal assignment (Bestimmung) proper to philosophical reflection.
What the schema gives to read is the double nature of the primal-something and its life-
world as prior to yet simultaneous with the genesis of its theoretical relation (Verhältnis).
In this sense, the vor-means not only before, but on-the-way, fated or destined, to theory.
That the pre-theoretical has this propensity (Verhängnis als Schicksal) towards theory
means that this drive and goal are both the guiding-tendency and originary-motivation—
thrown-project and projecting-throw—of its originary being.⁵

⁴ On “formal indication” much has been written (Pöggeler, Sheehan, van Buren). Gadamer
encapsulates “formal indication” in GA 61: “‘Formal’ renders the initiatory character of carrying
out the temporal fruition of the original fulfillment of the thing we are given an indication of”
(“Martin Heidegger’s One Path” in Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest
Thought, 1994, 34). See the WS 1920/1 (GA 60, 58-65), and the SS 1921 (GA 61, 33).
⁵ Heidegger addresses the substantialist moment in which categorical intuition is motivated by a
primal something as “tending-motivation,” and the hylomorphic moment in which formal
constitution is motivated by world-laden involvements, as a “motivated-tendency.” This
terminological vitalism, soon to drop from the lexicon, leaves its traces in the thrown-project and
projecting-throw of Sein und Zeit, as Kisiel shows. (Ibid, 54) It is later repeated in the 1938
difference in Aristotle between ἀρχή-φύσεως and φύσεως-ἀρχή—origin of movement and
movement of origin—a twofold that hearkens back to the pre-metaphysical conceptuality of early
Greek thinking, and forward to Hölderlin’s holiday retrieval of archaic φύσις (see Ch. 4.2.2).
As van Buren also shows, Heidegger thinks Ereignisses in 1919 in a twofold way: “the temporal sense of comportment-to-the-primal-something (it-worlds-for-me) and as the temporalizing of situation.” (Ibid., 1994, 272) This appears in the lectures as the difference between the sunrise experienced by astronomy as process, and as experienced in the first choral ode of the Antigone. In both horizons the anteriority (-vor) of pretheoretical existence is given over to the always-already of categorial truth (-trans). The KNS-diagram is, at this point, already readable as Heidegger’s lapis philosophicus, darkly radiant in the rifted markings both of futural phenomenology and of its archaic beginnings, a two- and four-fold torquing of facticity as theoreticity into an indefinite ellipse around a darkly articulated center of gravity (Faktizität, Jeweiligkeit), and even as a diagrammatic fulgurite or ekschematic conduit for the clearing of an ontological sun.  

Regarding this moment in which a pre-theoretical something becomes a theoretical something, Kisiel remarks on the convention of using impersonals like “It” or “something” or “Da-sein” as ways to talk about the impersonal sense of Being as happening. From Fichte through to the neo-Kantians and Husserl, the German impersonals function as technical terms providing linguistic access to a non-objectified phenomenality, in Heidegger’s terminology, as Being’s sudden flashing (es blitzt), historical relationality (es gilt, es soll, es wertet), or adventures in eventuation (es gibt, es weltet, es er-eignet sich). (Ibid. 23) The ‘It gives,’ ‘It worlds,’ and ‘It appropriates’ express the theoretical epigenesis as a blitzing exposure of facticity to its illuminated abyss, running through the rolodex of ontological-phenomenological categoriality. Alongside the epigenesis, facticity is always already fulgurized within its life-world configurations into the various intentional relations of holding, signifying, and valuing.

In the KNS-schema, in other words, Heidegger has broached not only the question of the proper philosophical vision and attitude, schema in the etymological sense of gestural orientation or stance, but the fiat lux as transformation of life’s pre-theoretical indifference into its theoretical qualification. We may concur in the main with Kisiel who, thinking the formally indicative and kairological implications of the KNS-diagram concludes that “kairology [i.e. existentiell Dasein] and formal indication [i.e. existentiale

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6 Ereignisses as the fiat lux or Lichtung is at issue also in Being and Time in two other myths that, according to Heidegger, circumscribe Dasein’s emergence into ontological wholeness: the γιγαντομαχία over Being, and the sundered anthropotheogonic unity of Care. See Ch. 2.2.1.
structures] together constitute the most essential, but largely unspoken, core of the book published in 1927.” The next three sections will explore these kairological-historical roots of the genesis of theory in both its historico-religious (Pauline-Lutheran) and sophianic-metaphysical (Greek ekphanestic, theoretic, and rhetoric) variations, which both then intertwine in Being and Time as disclosure and temporality, ἀλήθεια and παρουσία.

The curtains are drawn, events take place, and things are shown for which the plot (μῦθος) is known. It is the scene of the splitting of the ray of light (Da-sein), an epiphany of factual life as that “pre-theoretical something” which becomes a “theoretical something” not all at once, but in a fullness of time that points back to the καιρός of religious epiphany in Ur-Christianity, and to the φαίνεσθαι of the βίος θεωρητικός.

As Károly Kerényi has pointed out in a different, yet I would suggest intimately related context, “No Drama was Presented At Eleusis.” Yet the having-seen (ἐπόπτεια) of the mysteriological disclosure was communicated at Eleusis, nevertheless, in a figure, “—σχήμα—[which] rose above the ground.” (Sopatros qtd. in Kerényi, 94) The σχήμα in Ancient Greek, and also New Testament Greek, means not only shape, but gesture, stance, bearing, or comportment. The antique sense of the σχήμα as stance or bearing is richly cited by Heidegger in reference to both Plato/Aristotle and Paul, and in the modern sense of the σχήμα as representational rules (Kant). The σχήμα is in this polysemy an important site for the confrontation in Western philosophy between alternate modes of ethicality and of theory, that is, ever a conflict between the comportments and figurations, images and research results, formations and educations (Gestalten, Bildung), or sudden flashings of insight, that are or are not to be countenanced. In comparison to Heidegger’s

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7 For a condensation of this argument see Kisiel’s “Heidegger (1920-21) on Becoming a Christian: A Conceptual Picture Show.” (1994, 177-8) Being and Time retrospect on the courses from 1919-24 in specially Division II, §69b: “The Temporal Meaning of the Way in which Circumspect Taking Care Becomes Modified into the Theoretical Discovery of that Which is Present Within the World.” Addressing “the ontological genesis of the theoretical mode of behavior” and “existential concept of science” as determined by theory and praxis, Heidegger thinks the phenomenological “transformation” (Umschlag) of Dasein as indebted to both the Greek tradition as an intuition of truth (ἀλήθεια), and the Ur-Christian tradition as a kairological temporality in the sense of παρουσία (absencing-presencing). See BT, 340-6; SZ 356-64.


9 Liddel and Scott’s Greek Lexicon (1745) give over ten senses of σχήμα, roughly reducible as follows: 1. Form, shape, posture, or position, a figure in dancing, speech, or geometry; 2. Atom, differing from other atoms, the typical individual; 3. Bearing, air, mien, gesture, fashion, manner, character or role; 4. Appearance as opposed to reality; 5. Configuration of birds in augury.
multivalent use of the language of σχήμα throughout the 1920s, the sense of σχήμα coming from Sopatros, and used in reference to the φάσματα of Demeter-Kore, which Kerényi calls the “Eleusinian version of the Visio Beatifica” (Ibid., 101-2), is obscure enough. It refers to the vision of the goddess in the mysteries. But exactly this enigmatic clarity harbors a depth that comes to light only gradually, and which bears on the sensibility of Heidegger’s own schemas as epagogic practices in philosophical pedagogy.

Looking to Kérenyi’s hermeneutics of the epoptic vision I here suggest the relevance to Heidegger’s pedagogy of Aristotle’s lost treatise “On Philosophy” in which, by the testimony of the Byzantine scholar Psellos, the phenomenology of mystery initiation is depicted according to “the progress of instruction in philosophy.” For pseudo-Aristotle, no less than for the initiates at Eleusis, the “total experience” (εμπειρία) is “unavailable,” and not even a “testing” can be conducted in full transparency (διαφάνεια). For initiates of mysteries have “not so much to learn but παθεῖ καὶ διατεθήναι, ‘to be passive,’ ‘to be put into a state.’” (Kerényi, 113) In this respect the initiates are not unlike novices to in Heidegger’s philosophy classrooms: both seek a moment of understanding vision (ἐπόπτεια, θεωρία). The term Aristotle is said, via Epiktetos, to have employed is “εἰς φαντασίαν,” a passivity leading to ἐλλάμψις (flaring-up) and ἀυτοψία (self-seeing).

Heidegger evokes ἐλλάμψις not only in the 1920s in his thinking of the sunrise in the first choral of the Antigone, and other flares of un-concealing, but in later writings, in the 1937 draft “The Question of Truth.” There, Heidegger begins and ends explicitly in archaic ἐλλάμψις as a temporal-historical essencing of truth: “The history of flaming up, and expiring from Anaximander to Aristotle,” “unexpressed flaming up of ἀλήθεια in the pronouncements of Anaximander.” (BQ, 167-88) In centering his later thinking of ἀλήθεια in an ἐλλάμψις Heidegger once again does not cite the ancient mysteries. But

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10 See F 15 (Synesius, Dio 48A) in The Complete Works of Aristotle V.II. (“Fragments,” 2392)
11 May we look to Richard Reitzenstein for clues as to Heidegger’s missed engagement with archaic to late antique mystery religion? Did the young Heidegger’s criticisms of Reitzenstein’s Hellenistic Mystery Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance (1920, trans. 1978) as an auditing student, about to transfer out of theology into mathematics in the WS 1911-12 (SUP, 19), criticisms expressed in the WS 1920/1 (GA 60, 49, 88-9), condition a more general neglect of Greek and Hellenistic mystery religion in general, and this despite his interest in Neo-Platonism, and the gods of Greek religion? WS 1920/1 criticizes Reitzenstein in a twofold way: philologically, he disparages his reliance on the hermetic writings in his interpretation of Paul, and ethically, as sober Lutheran, he attacks “the Mystic” tendency in general. (PRL, 49, 88-9)
this encounter is full of matters as yet unthought. For example, the having-seen (ἐπόπτεια) denotes in the mysteries of Eleusis and Samothrace a second stage beyond the initial μυστήρια. The word μύσται (initiates) comes from μύω meaning closed, and is related to μύησις (purificatory ritual). The μύσται are put into a state of πάθος by the guidance of the μυσταγγοί. On account of its relation to mystery rites, the word μυστήρια (secret) can be translated as initia (beginning), giving our English ‘initiation,’ which I will sometimes use to render Heidegger’s Anfang (inception, beginning) or anfänglich (initially, inceptually). Reiner Schürmann explores how Heidegger’s later terminologies of Beginn and Anfang (start and inception), anfänglich (inceptive, initial, incipient), springen or Sprung (source, leap, or spring), Ursprung (origin, source), ursprünglich (originary, primordial) go deeper than the substantialist-metaphysical legacies of ἀρχή and principium to abolish “the patterns of command rule that accompany Classical Greek and Latin representations of origin.” (trans. 1987, 123) The anfängliches Denken that Heidegger finds in history of great art, for example, is less a seizing, catching, grasping, or taking hold (fängt), than a responsorial relation of Dasein to Being that clears beings in truth. Dasein is itself the “answering” (Antworten) or “inceptive word (an-fangen) that listeningly ac-cepts (ent-fangen)” the “aletheiological constellation” or “free inchoation” as “primordial saying” of that which “emerges into presence while remaining in absence (φύσις).” Just as the truth of Being is “only in initiating” (nur im an-fangen) Dasein, so Dasein itself is “originary compliance” (Fügsamkeit) with Being as Ereignis. On my argument, Heidegger’s anfängliches Denken can be indeed thought in the primal image (σχήμα) of Greek mystery festivals.

By the end of this dissertation I will have shown that Heidegger’s thinking is, from start to finish, more Schellingian with respect to the significance of mystery religion than is generally believed. Heidegger II might well concur with the 1802 dialogue Bruno: Or on the Divine and Natural Principle of Things where, after citing Plato’s Ion on the poets as divine interpreters—also Heidegger’s move at the start of GA 63—Schelling writes:

Now since philosophy’s lofty position is based on its cognition of the eternal and the unchangeable, it is evident that the mysteries teachings are philosophy—the most sublime, sacred, and excellent philosophy, passed down to us from remote antiquity. Thus the mysteries are actually related to mythology in the way we surmised, the very same way
philosophy is related to poetry. There was good reason, then, behind our decision that mythology ought to be left to the poets, while philosophers establish and conduct the mystery rites. (trans. 1984, 132)

Assuming we do not reduce Heidegger to either deconstructing or establishing the claims of metaphysics or the poets, I will show in this work how philosophers, aided by the mythologies of the poets and deeds of the “futural ones,” are to be bearers of this same Platonic-Schellingian hermeneutical task to “establish and conduct the mystery rites.” This is perhaps the hermeneutical radix of the Hesperian commission as such, also Hegel’s and Hölderlin’s in “Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus,” and it is what Heidegger, in a diversity of guises early to late, succeeds in enacting.

But in the earlier 1920s, and not yet focused on Presocratic thinking, Heidegger leaves Aristotle’s apocryphal texts out of account, honing in rather on the main texts of the canon: Nichomachean Ethics and De Interpretatione, Physics and Metaphysics, Politics and Poetics, and Rhetoric. But in his configuration of Aristotle as the last proto-phenomenologist of ancient Greek Dasein, and thus as the last consummate thinker of the wonder-struck θεωρεῖν of the Dionysian/Olympian festival, now on the metaphysical terrain of the leisurely/sophianic θεωρία of beings and Being, Heidegger’s Aristotle circles back into the esoteric Aristotle, an Aristotle we never got to know in his own language in the Oxford Aristotle, but who, if we listen to Heidegger’s hermeneutics of the Greek tongue is there: a master initiatrix into the festival of thinking (Being and beings).

Before accounting for the role that the θεωρία of Being comes to play in Heidegger’s overall interpretation of Greek religion, philosophy, and art, I will turn to what is still in the hermeneutical spotlight at the beginning of the 1920s: Ur-Christianity.
2.1.2 The Festival of Everyday: Καιρός and Παρουσία in Ur-Christian Life

The 1915 Habilitation-thesis on Duns Scotus’s principle of individuation, and the test lecture on “The Concept of Time in the Science of History” both bear witness to Heidegger’s entry into the career of a Catholic philosopher, a medievalist and, as will prove fatal to both career paths, as a philosopher of time and history. (SUP, 49-61, 61-9) 

The conclusion of the thesis already gestured towards “a certain historical shaping of the problem of categories,” and so to the notion of a “cosmos of categories” to be elaborated on the basis of the Scotian hacceitas as “principle of immanence,” and with this, a philosophy of “Living spirit” which “is as such essentially historical spirit in the widest sense of the word.” (SUP, 62, 66-7) The test lecture approaches these same questions by way of a close deconstructive examination of historiographical theory, and its concept of “the stamp of history”: i.e. the “malleable expression” through which historical facticity gains hermeneutic access to the “qualitative otherness of past times.”

Heidegger’s word for the way facticity gains access to its historical sources, which are always texts of some sort, is Urquellen (resourcing). The re-sourcing of historical sources, not only texts but artifacts of every kind, is what enables the supervenience of qualitative-historical elements opposed to both the unconscious mechanisms of ‘natural’ life, and to the legal-critical apparatus of scientific historiography. For it is only historical source texts that provide “the qualitative element in which the historical concept of time means nothing other than the condensation—crystallization—of an objectification of life given in history.” (SUP, 59) No crystallizations of historical facticity without hermeneutical re-sourcing, but no Urquellen without the remains and the stamps of the times, not only the trace monuments of chrono-kairological decision, but the birth-certificates meted out by the legal-critical apparatus of the science of historiography.

Framed in this meditation on the facts and facticities of epochality, Heidegger closes with the aporia according to which historical time is both related to, and yet other than, the sequencing of a historical chronology: “Historical chronology, an auxiliary discipline, in the science of history is of significance for the theory of the historical concept of time only from the point of the view of the beginning [Ursprung] of its time-reckoning.”
(SUP, 60) Heidegger concludes by examining the concept of “the beginning” of history:

For example, it is said that establishing the beginning of the year on January 1st was at first displeasing to the Christians, “because January 1st had no relation to the Christian religion whatsoever.” Therefore, the Church moved the Feast of the Circumcision to this day in order to give it a religious significance. It was always on significant holidays—Easter, Christmas—that the beginning of the year was established. This shows that in the science of history anything to do with numbers and counting regarding time is determined qualitatively through the way in which the beginning of the counting is established. (Ibid.)

The distinction of Ursprung and Urquellen is here re-thought as a difference between the festival beginning and its calendrical repetitions. This hermeneutic couplet consisting of ‘inception’ and ‘resource’ is framed, moreover, as a review of controversies in the Christian heortological discussions. This section will explore this role played by Christian heortology (from ἔορτη, festival) in Heidegger’s hermeneutics of historical temporality.

In the WS 1920/1 lectures The Phenomenology of Religious Life, Heidegger approaches methodological questions in the title “Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religious Life,” on which he remarks: “introduction, “phenomenology”—which for us will have the same meaning as “philosophy”—and “religion.” (PRL, 4; GA 60, 4-5) But this larger project “of situating methodologically the idea of a phenomenology of religion within the disciplines of Philosophy and Religion is broken off part-way into the course, we are informed by Oskar Becker’s notes, “Owing to uncalled-for objections (Einwänden Unberufener)” from the students, at which point Heidegger leaps directly into the “Phenomenological Explication of the Concrete Religious Experience,” i.e. into the reading of the Pauline kerygma. In accordance with these shifts of emphasis the WS 1920 finds itself divided between and accomplishing two objectives. On the one hand, in the words of the editors, “nowhere else [in Heidegger] has the uniqueness of the philosophical fore-conception [Vorgriff] been established as decisively in contrast to the scientific method.” On the other, nowhere else “are religious questions taken up with such extension and exegetical exactitude.” (PRL, 257)
My engagement with this course will be extremely limited, focusing only on how the festival can be excavated in the second part of the course, and how this links up with the basic concepts of the festival in later texts. My engagement with the secondary literatures that speak to this course, and the hermeneutical situation of the course itself will also be limited. Suffice it to say that Heidegger’s return to Paul can be situated broadly within his 1915-20 project for a Luther-inspired Destrüktion (destruere) of the metaphysico-transcendentalist presuppositions of the history of philosophy from Plato and Aristotle through the Scholastics, Kant and German idealism, and finally to contemporary phenomenology and neo-Kantianism. Looking over this terrain, the young Heidegger finds himself in the position of wishing to twist-free from Luther’s theological standpoint, and for the sake of gaining grounding access to the phenomenon (Grunderfahrung) of “primordial Christian experience” (urchristliche Erfahrung).

Heidegger’s debt to Luther is clearest in the Foreword of SS 1923 (OHF, 4): “Companions in my searching were the young Luther and the paragon Aristotle, whom Luther hated. Impulses were given by Kierkegaard, and Husserl opened my eyes.” The WS 1920/1 contain the following statement regarding Heidegger’s Auseinandersetzung with Luther: “Luther and Paul are, religiously speaking, the most radical opposites. There is a commentary by Luther on the letter to Galatians. Yet we must free ourselves from Luther’s standpoint. Luther sees Paul from out of Augustine.” (PRL, 47-8) But despite this separation from Luther in his approach to Pauline Ur-Christianity, Heidegger also follows Luther who “did understand [the] basic experience of temporality [in Paul] and for that reason opposed Aristotelian philosophy so polemically.” (PRL, 322)

A few of these “grounding phenomena” that Heidegger, through Luther, finds in Paul are indicated in “§15 Some Remarks on the Text.” First, the historical situation of the Pauline kerygma is defined via the word αἰών from Galatians 1:5. Heidegger comments: “The present time has already reached its end and a new αἰών has begun since the death of Christ. The present world is opposed to the world of eternity.” (PRL, 48-50) Saint Paul enacts his evangelism as a “running-towards” (τρέχειν, from Galatians 2:2) the ‘edge’ (ἔσχατον) and new beginning of human history that occurs through the birth, death, and παρουσία of the Χριστός (Hebrew mashiach), i.e. the kerygma opens up the
eschatological now-time or ὁ νῦν καιρός\(^\text{12}\) of an eternal Christic παρουσία—the literal meaning of which is not resurrection but being-along-side the initial presencing, παρά-
οσία. (PRL, 71-2) Paul’s parousiology is distinguished by Heidegger from prophetic eschatology with its predictions concerning the end-point as atemporal Judgment Day.\(^\text{13}\) Paul’s παρουσία is rather the intimate/ultimate suffering/celebrating wherein the other world enters into this one, the αἰών (vital time) remerging with χρόνος (historical time), but only for that mortal καιρός which strives to approach the ἔσχατον of the new Christian era. Less prediction concerning a Second Coming beyond the resurrection, but a witnessing of the original messianic revelation that has already taken place, and which has now to be taken up in a community of followers, messianic time is what must now be “accomplished” in the time that remains (Corinthians 7:20, μένειν, remaining). (PRL, 84)

Temporally speaking, the situation of the Pauline proclamation finds itself in relation to a past occurrence whose most futural possibility is realized only for a present (Gegenwart), but a present that never ceases re-experiencing the παρουσία as both always-already and not-yet. Not the chronological time that only ever moves from creation to the messianic event, and not the eschatological time that continues to exist after the last days, and in which the dead do not experience the παρουσία, Paul’s messianic time is the moment-to-moment contraction—effected through the three virtues or arches of faith, hope, love—of the chronological time of creation into the kairological

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\(^{12}\) On καιρός see GA 62 (383); GA 63 (57); GA 22 (312); GA 19 (52, 364). On kairologish, GA 61 (137, 139); GA 63 (101). On παρουσία: GA 60 (60, 98-110); GA 19 (334, 463-87); GA 22, (200). See Vishwa Adluri’s “A Theological Deconstruction of Metaphysics: Heidegger, Luther, and Aristotle” (2011) for these references and general discussion of Heidegger on Luther.

\(^{13}\) Jacob Taubes underlines Paul’s place in the history of Jewish apostasy: “This paradoxical faith is what I’ve tried to explain to you from the point of view of religious history with respect to the messianic logic in the history of Jewish mysticism, as a logic that is repeated in history. Whoever understands what Scholem presents in the eighth chapter of Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism can penetrate more deeply into Paul’s messianic logic than by reading the entire exegetical literature.” (The Political Theology of Paul, 49) Heidegger’s Paul appears to be more rooted in the exegetical literature, which perhaps has important consequences for his elision of the Hebraic tradition. See Marlène Zarader’s The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage. (trans. 2006) See also Eleanor Kaufmann’s “The Saturday of Messianic Time: Agamben and Badiou on the Apostle Paul.” (2008, 47) A prospective or retrospective interlocutor for Taubes’s and Heidegger’s apocalyptic messianism is Carl Schmitt’s katechontic foundationalism in Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty. (first pub. 1922, trans. 1985) Much could be said on Taubes/Heidegger or Heidegger/Benjamin in relation to Saint Paul and Jewish messianism. See Taubes’s doctoral dissertation Occidental Eschatology. (trans. 2009, 4)
time of the new Christian era. It is, in Agamben’s words, not “the end of time, but the
time of the end,” which is to say, “the time that contracts itself and begins to finish—or, if
you prefer, the time that is left between time and its ending.” (trans. 2005, 2) Regarding
the co-implication of these two times, and returning to the threefold of content-sense
(Gehaltsinn), relational-sense (Bezugsinn), and enactment-sense (Vollzugsinn) from the
methodological portion of the lecture course (PRL, 37-45), Heidegger remarks:

We never get to the relational sense of the παρουσία by merely analyzing the
consciousness of a future event. The structure of Christian hope, which in truth is the
relational sense of the Parousia, is radically different from all expectation. “Time and
moment” (5:1: “περὶ τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν” [...]) offer a special problem for
explication. The “When” is already not originally grasped in the sense of an attitudinal
“objective” time. The time of “factual life” in its falling, unemphasized, non-Christian
sense is also not meant. Paul does not say “When,” because this expression is inadequate to
what is to be expressed, because it does not suffice. (PRL, 70-71)

But what would suffice for understanding the factual awaiting of the παρουσία? And in
what sense do the arches of hope, faith, love help human beings no longer postpone the
messianic event, but instead bring the transitional time itself to a final end (Letzte)?
Heidegger’s answer, and the basis of his Lutheran-Pauline parousiological kairolgy, is
given in the formula “Christian religiosity lives temporality.” (PRL, 73)

The living of temporality is the “day” (ἡμέρα) of the παρουσία which arrives “like a
thief in the night” of the pre-Christian world. What the day removes from the remains
in the ancient world is just the naïve attitude to the eschatological now, and in the
kairollogical call “to awaken and to be sober” to the immanence of a this-worldly
(Diesseitigkeit) ἔσχατον in and as the temporality of the παρουσία.

Heidegger’s “phenomenological destruction” as “formal indications” of the παρουσία,
however, “renounce the last understanding (die letzte Ver-stehen) that can only be given
in genuine religious experience.” (PRL, 70) Still, the relation of the two times, the time
of καιρός (αἰών, ἔσχατον), and the time of χρόνος (παρουσία, πλήρωμα), is concretely
indicated in Heidegger’s citation from Galatians 4:3-4.
This is the moment in which Paul exhorts that the peoples of the earth come out from under their bondage to the elemental spirits of the world (ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου), that is, come out from under the lawful heimarmene of Hebraic or Hellenistic gods of earth and sky, and enter instead into a faith, rather than law, based relationship to the perpetuity of the παρουσία, and with this, a new festival calendar that breaks with all calendars so far known. Paul describes this new era in terms of the “fullness of time” (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, Galatians 4:12), and this is indeed comparable to Ephesians 1:10, where πλήρωμα is said in reference not to χρόνος, but to καιρός: “for the economy (οἰκονομία) of the plenitude of time (τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν καιρῶν), all things, both in heaven and on earth, recapitulate themselves in the messiah.”

How to account for this difference between these two pleroma, the one of chronological time, the other of kairological time? Heidegger’s commentary does not venture a direct answer. Agamben suggests that the kairological pleroma concerns “messianic kairoi [that] are then eventually full of chronos, but of a specific summary chronos that anticipates the eschatological pleroma at the end of time.” The chronological pleroma is wider, however, encompassing the ground of time as coming to be fulfilled through such messianic kairoi (moments of the times). (trans. 2005, 9-10) And something like Agamben’s suggestion can perhaps be found in Heidegger’s hermeneutics of the Pauline concept of “plerophory,” traditionally the “overburdened nature of the

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14 Heidegger comments on Galatians “4:3: ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου [to the elemental spirits of the world]: under the elements of the world. In the Stoics στοιχεῖον indicates element, as already in Empedocles. Philo Judas (around the same time as Paul) designates the pagan as τὰ στοιχεῖα τιμῶντες [elemental spirits]. Compare with [Gal.] 4:9 and 10: stars count as world-elements, the feast-times are arranged according to the stars. / 4:8: φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς [by nature are not gods]. The στοιχεῖα are divine beings. Compare with V.1: The stages [?] under [?] the guardians are compared to the stage of the star-priests.” (PRL, 49-50, trans. mod.) What Heidegger does not explore is how deeply these citations of Empedocles and Philo of Alexandria go into the question of ancient festivals, and how they are appropriated or remain inappropriable to historical Christianity. Philo, for example, uproots the sense of στοιχεῖα as elemental spirits or star constellations while still allegorizing Greek festivals in a Christian context, thus redeeming what he sees as worthwhile in those festivals, precisely in order to delimit the “festivals which are not festivals” (ἐορτὰς ἀνευορτοὺς, Spec. Leg. III, 135) from ‘true’ festivals as given by and to God, spiritual not material festivals, and ultimately as the celebrations of Christ’s self-sacrificial παρουσία, i.e. Christianity’s new “Festival of the Everyday” (ὕπαιθα ἡμέρα ἐορτή). On the theme of festival in Philo of Alexandria see Jutta Leonhardt’s Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria. (2001, 18-51, 283-292) On στοιχεῖα in this passage that Heidegger is analyzing, and in relation to Philo, see Martinus C. De Boer’s account in Galatians: A Commentary. (2011, 249-268)
expression,” or full assurance of faith, which he uses to define the situation of “existential enactment” as a condensation of relational παρουσία into its fulfillment-sense (Vollzugsinn), χρόνος condensing into καρός, as αιών enters the life of χρόνος. This Heidegger names plerophory (PRL, 77, 109), and it is not unrelated to historical temporality. Speaking to both the urgencies and lacunae of kerygmatic enactment, we hear in the section “The Relational Sense of Primordial Christian Religiosity”:

Καιρός συνεσταλμένος [the appointed time has grown short]. There remains only yet a little time, the Christian living incessantly in the only-yet, which intensifies his distress. The compressed temporality is constitutive for Christian religiosity: an “only-yet,” there is no time for postponement […]

Τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου [the present form of this world]: the form of the world passes away; σχῆμα is not mean so very objectively, rather as ordered towards self-comportment. Rom. 12:2 shows how σχῆμα [form] should be understood: καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζοντες τὸ αἰῶνι τοῦτο [and do not be conformed to this world]. Here one can gather the enactment-character of σχῆμα. (PRL, 120)

Here the injunction from Galatians 4:3 to come out from under the ancient orbis (ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου), shattering the old festival calendar, and inaugurating a new world, is structurally repeated, now as the injunction to discard the σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου in (Corinthians I, 7:29-32), the present shape or bearing of world, and enter into an other world that is born of a play in world that finds itself in the αἰών of the festival.

This new world of Christ’s παρουσία is taken up again by Heidegger in the second part of his Paul interpretation, the “Phenomenological Explication of the First Letter to the Thessalonians.” (PRL, §23-30) Here the kerygma is tackled in terms of the schema of the decisive moment (καρός) for the enactamental “genesis” of “seeing” (γενέσθαι of εἰδέναι) that is taken-up from out of the relational-stance (Bezugsinn, Paul’s σχήμα as stance) of a coming-to-share in a repetition (Wiederholung, Rückkehr) of the παρουσία.

15 See the 1929 “On the Essence of Ground” for Heidegger’s most considered retrospective statements on the concept of world in archaic Greek and New Testament sources. (PM, 97-136)
Recall that Paul’s τρέχειν in Galatians 2.2 was an explicit running-out of the old eras, theologies, and dramaturgies of the Hellenic and Hebraic festivals, a running-towards the metanoic ἐπιστρέφειν, and with this a turning-around in the ἔσχατον, away from idol-images and towards the face of God (ἐπιστρέφειν πρὸς τὸν θεόν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων). Such turning-towards the enactment of the παρουσία is explicated in two directions: “δουλεύειν [serving] and ἄναμένειν [abiding], a transformation before God and an obstinate awaiting.” These relations are pondered by Heidegger in “a formal schematic of the phenomenon” of religious life. I reproduce the diagram (PRL, 96):

This second schema, though it cannot grant “the [authentic] enactment of phenomenological understanding,” is relevant as a “formal indication” of the having-become of Christian religiosity as “expectation of the Parousia.” The schema tracks three ecstasies, figured by the three horizontal lines: 1) the factical ‘having-been’ of the historical Jesus, also the ‘having-become’ of his followers as accepting and serving through the works of faith; 2) the ‘presencing-absencing’ of the running-out of time and turning towards the new Christian era as a suffering of love before God, figured as the middle line; 3) the ‘futural’ coming to see, receive, await, endure, and hope in a new arrival of the παρουσία. On the basis of this diagram, Heidegger thus confirms his thesis that “Christian religiosity lives temporality as such.” (PRL, 80)

Now this schema is highly reminiscent of the KNS diagram, as has been explored by Pöggeler, Sheehan, Kisiel, van Buren, and others. The main difference is that while the schema of religious enactment is kairological-parousiological, the schema of phenomenological viewing is transcendental-methodological. Accordingly, 2) the religious viewing is more temporal-historical, i.e. it concerns the “immanent explication” of a “more original conceptuality.” (PRL, 62) But the premise of both is the same, as we
hear in the drafted course on Medieval Mysticism: It is to arrive “at the primordial-theoretical, a new destruction of the situation (Situationszerstörung)—within the theoretical itself—is required—modification to original seeing (Ursprung-Sehen).” (PRL, 232) Can this schema assist in understanding Ur-Christian life experience as an everyday festival between καιρός and χρόνος?

On this question we can look to Heidegger’s reading of Thessalonians, I.6-10:

The γενέσθαι is a δέχεσθαι, an “acceptance of the proclamation”—τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς—“in great despair.” The δέχεσθαι brought the despair with it, which also continues, yet at the same time a “joy” (μετὰ χαρᾶς) which comes from the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα τὸ ἁγιόν) is alive—a joy which is a gift, thus not motivated from out of one’s own experience. This all belongs to the character of the γενέσθαι. (Ibid.)

Proper to the acceptance of the kerygma is thus joyous-festive blessedness, yet a blessedness never far from the assuagement of being ἐν θλίψει, deep affliction, anguish, or despair. In this joy as anguish what is accepted is not only Christ’s παρουσία, but the ethical “how of self-conduct” proper to living the Christian life.

To be sure joy/anguish and new life are universal features of religious conversion narrative and point to its festive character. The temporal formulas of having-become (γενέσθαι, Gewordensein) and having-seen (οἴδατε, εἶδέναι), remembering (μνημονεύσατε) as a relation of the memorial to the immemorial, are common to Pauline and Hellenic myteriology: “Having-become is not, in life, [just] any incident you like. Rather, it is incessantly co-experienced, and indeed such that their Being [Sein] now is their having-become [Gewordensein].” Such observations are not irrelevant to the attuned temporality of these experiences. Compare Plutarch’s and Plato’s description of mystery initiation as death and new life, a suffering “that celebrates great initiations.”

Wanderings astray in the beginning, tiresome walkings in circles, some frightening paths in darkness that lead nowhere; then immediately before the end all the terrible things, panic and shivering and sweat, and amazement. And then some wonderful light comes to meet you, pure regions and meadows are there to greet you, with sounds and dances and solemn sacred words and holy views; and there the initiate, perfect by now, set free and loose from
all bondage, walks about, crowned with a wreath, celebrating the festival together with the
other sacred and pure people, and he looks down on the uninitiated, unpurified crowd in
this world in mud and fog beneath his feet.

(Plutarch qtd. by Walter Burkert in *Ancient Mystery Cults*, trans. 1987, 91-2)

[...] along with the glorious chorus (we [philosophers] were with Zeus, while others
followed other gods), saw that blessed and spectacular vision and were ushered into the
mystery that we may rightly call the most blessed of all. And we who celebrated it were
wholly perfect and free of all the troubles that awaited us in time to come, and we gazed in
rapture at the sacred revealed objects that were perfect, and simple, and unshakable and
blissful. That was the ultimate vision, and we saw it in pure light because we were pure
ourselves, not buried in this thing we are carrying around now, which we call a body,
locked in it like an oyster in its shell. (*Phaedrus*, 250c)

But the Heidegger of the WS 1920/1 excoriates the mystic as “removed from the life-
complex; in an enraptured state God and the universe are possessed. The Christian knows
no such ‘enthusiasm,’ rather he says: let us awaken and sober. Here precisely is shown to
him the terrible difficulty of Christian life.” (PRL, 89) But while this preference for the
lucidity of Paul does not endure far beyond 1920/1, the mournful-celebratory attunements
of religious temporality do endure, and continue to hint the Heideggerian eschatology:

Always again the absolute end [das Letzte]: Parousia! Stands *ominously* in its *place*. How
is this *standing* phenomenological? Or articulation of enactment! And that
phenomenologically back to existential fundamental concern! *Life* &* death*. Not to
become ἄθέτων τὸν θεόν, not to eliminate God, that is to say, the ἁγιασμός—a calling!”
2.1.3 The Festival of Σοφία: The Festive Θεωρός as Proto-Phenomenologist

In Heidegger’s Paul-interpretation the festival was thought in Galatians at the moment that Paul denounces the astrologically overdetermined feast days of Hellenic and Hebraic antiquity, and in order to call forth new Christian life to awake and be sober, and thus to be re-founded in the celebrations and festival calendars of Christ’s παρουσία.

In Heidegger’s Aristotle-interpretation the accent on festival emerges in two forms: first, in a meditation on the origins of theory in “Greek Dasein”; and second, in the communal experience of rhetoric as unfolding three shared relationships to time. It is well known from the WS 1924/5 lectures on Plato’s Sophist, and works by Gadamer and McNeill, how Heidegger encouraged his students to understand the lived background of metaphysical thinking by way of an etymological exercise, tracing θεωρία back to the θεωρεῖν of the θεωρός, the diplomat or envoy who is sent from one community to another in order to be there at a festival, to witness its proceedings or spectacles, and to bring this participation home from the foreign to the home community. In the WS 1924/5, we read:

Σοφία is carried out in pure knowledge, pure seeing, θεωρεῖν—in the βίος θεωρητικός. The word θεωρεῖν was already known prior to Aristotle. But Aristotle himself coined the term θεωρητικός. The word θεωρεῖν, θεωρία, comes from θεωρός, which is composed of θέα, “look,” “sight,” and ὁράω, “to see.” Θεά, “sight,” which allows the look of something to be seen is similar in meaning to εἶδος. Θεωρός then means the one who looks upon something as it shows itself, who sees what is given to see. The θεωρός is one who goes to the festival, the one who is present as a spectator at the great dramas and festivals—whence our word “theater.” (PS, 44)

This hints towards the proto-phenomenological significance of theoretic activity and institutions of archaic to classical Greece, and thus not only the etymological but genealogical relevance of the Greek festivals for the history of philosophy, rhetoric, and art. Specifically, it points to ways in which archaic to classical Greek oratory, poetry, and philosophy, i.e. sophistics, tragedy, and academic life, unfold a rich saga of θεωρία that
often refers to and appropriates the theorc outlook of real festivals. All this is at stake in Heidegger’s glance to the θεωρία of tragic theater as witnessing φαίνεσθαι in the θέατρον as originary viewing-place, and this ethology is indeed related to the θεωρία of Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus and Alexander of Aphrodisias, before being buried in the Latin translation of θεωρία by speculatio, theologia speculativa, finally, Hegel’s speculative. But these issues are left in the realm of speculation, rather than worked out reading, where this frustrating allusiveness is also characteristic of Heidegger’s other mention of the θεωρός in the early 1920s, in the 1924 “Being-Open and Being-True According to Aristotle.” Here, defining θεωρία as a mode of disclosure characterized by the priority of σοφία (theoretical wisdom) over φρόνησις (practical reason), we read:

As to the etymology of θεωρεῖν: a θεωρός is a guest at a festival. He goes to the festival and is all eyes. I can only show you this by way of some very rough strokes, not with the finesse of a conceptual and categorical analysis. Aristotle speaks of Βαδίζειν [to walk] and νοεῖν [to see], and [in the perfective aspect of the verb] Βεβάικα, νενόνκα. Βαδίζειν: I make my way to somewhere, I take a walk to a destination. [In the present perfect] Βεβάδικα: I have made my way somewhere [...] I’ve finished walking. By contrast: νοεῖ—he sees; νενόνκα—he ‘has seen,’ he is only now really and truly seeing. Again, in the case of walking, when I have finished taking my walk because I have made my way to my destination, I stop walking. By contrast, only when I “have seen” do I see correctly. (BH, 230)

The θεωρός “goes to the festival,” and is all eyes, there acquiring a fullness of sight that becomes in itself the sojourning locale wherein an originary “relation to things” (Sachverhalt) and the world takes place, i.e. a relation wherein truth in the sense of openness can be “rooted” (bodenständig). (BH, 219) These are the two pre-Being and Time passages that link θεωρία to the institution of the θεωρός, and hence to the festival.

The first passage is commonplace, showing only that Heidegger chose to relate a well known etymology (θεωρεῖν from θεωρός), given further basis in the Eudemian Ethics, Protrepticus, and indeed throughout ancient philosophy. The second passage further thinks the theoric as a “relation to things” (Sachverhalt) rooted in the openness of truth, and grammatically distinguishes between the present perfect νόησις of sophianic seeing, and the sensuously disclosive activity of φρόνησις. Implicitly combining both activities of σοφία and φρόνησις in a worldly involvement and kairological playing field of ancient Greek Dasein, the second reference to θεωρός relates the definition of θεωρεῖν to the initiatory grammar of sojourning/seeing, and thus to the παθεῖν and περιπατείν of the βίος θεωρητικός—namely, as the historical life that leads through the path of wonders (θαυμάζειν), therein finding its τελεία (end or accomplishment, ἐντελέχεια).

The possible philosophical significance of the festival-going θεωρός has been taken up by Hans-Georg Gadamer, and more thoroughly in connection with Heidegger, by William McNeill in his 1999 The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory. I will therefore review McNeill’s contribution to this discussion in some detail. Latently present throughout his study of Heidegger on the Augenblick, the issue of the festive θεωρός is addressed most intensively in the fourth and final part “Originary Theoria,” the chapter “In the Presence of the Sensible: Vision and Ecstasis,” sections

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17 See Protrepticus (B44): “As we go to the Olympian festival for the sake of the spectacle [θεᾶς], even if nothing more should come of it—for the θεωρία itself is more precious than money; and just as we go to theorize [θεωροῦμεν] at the festival of Dionysus not so that we will gain anything from the actors (indeed we pay to see them) […] so too the θεωρία of the universe must be honoured above all things that are considered to be useful. For surely we would not go to such trouble to see men imitating women and slaves, or athletes fighting and running, and not consider it right to theorize without payment [θεωρεῖν ἐμισθί] the nature and truth of reality.”

“Theoria and Divinity: The Philosophical Turn,” and “The Theoria of the Ancients.” (Ibid., 239-279) This last section finds McNeill taking up the contributions of Hannelore Rausch on the relation of festivity, θεωρία, and divinity in the ancient contexts.19

McNeill begins his account by reviewing the basic senses of the word θεωρός. First, the θεωρός is the suppliant at an oracle, i.e. one who receives the divine decrees of the priest or priestess as an absolute measure and directive of his ethico-religious being. This meaning is attested in Theognis, Sophocles, and Euripides. Second, more prevalently, the θεωρός is the official envoy or delegate (θεωροὶ) who is “sent” (θεωρεῖν) to the festival on a sacred journey from the home community to the foreign community, and in order to participate in the “sacrifices, dances, games” of the foreign community as a representative of the home community. This sense is attested in Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Demosthenes, and perhaps also in Pindar. The third meaning is an appointed local official vested with the task of enforcing sacred protocols. The fourth is simply that of being a beholder or spectator (Zuschauer), viewing in being viewed by the divine.20

McNeill here cites Rausch who argues that the “dominant and unifying connotation” of all these usages is that of a particular “relation to the divine […] a relation that calls for an ethical stance on the part of human being,” and which is “bound to a particular place and time, and thus implies in each case the experience of a singular and finite event.” (Ibid., 262) Contrary to the modern tendency to spectacular tourism, the meaning of θεωρός is as someone who, by their attuned and attuning presence, acts as a sacred or political witness, a task that may also involve extensive participatory and administrative ethicality. The θεωροὶ are the envoys sent from home community to a foreign festival as delegates ensuring the continuance of such sacro-political relations as unite communities in “peace, friendship, and common cult” or in “community, order, and the divine.” The intrinsic ethicality of the theoric is perceptively underlined by McNeill when he writes:

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20 This usage occurs in Aeschylus’s Prometheus Bound, where Prometheus greets the Oceanids by asking if they have come “to stare upon his sufferings” (πόνων εµίων θεωρός), and in Euripides’s Ion where the night-watchman beholds the god himself “the beholder of the torchlight procession among a sea of dance on the sixth day of the great Eleusinian […].” (Ibid., 265, n. 34)
Ancient *theôria* entailed [...] an involved participation in the disclosure of other beings, a seeing oneself as addressed, invited, called upon to disclose oneself in response, if only in the manner of reticence and awe. As such ancient *theôria* not only had fundamental ethical and political significance, it was also inextricably associated with the experience of the divine and sacred presence of other beings. (Ibid., 255)

Furthermore, as McNeill cites Rausch, “*The form of manifestation of this divine is the festival*, which is bound to a particular time and a particular place, and whose significance is expressed through the sending of *theôroi*.” Thus connecting θέα to θεός, sight to divinity not in terms of the etymology, but “on the basis of the underlying context of all these usages, which refer to the phenomenon of divine epiphany,” McNeill suggests:

> The appearance of the divine as an event finds its proper context in the phenomenon of the festival [...] The festival marks a special, yet recurrent time, a sacred time distinguished from the profane time of the “everyday” in which human beings become so absorbed that they risk losing themselves, their proper singularity, altogether. The time of the festival is distinguished by a distinctive presence: that of the divine. (Ibid., 266-7)

As ultimate “form of manifestation” of mortals to immortals and vice versa, the time of the festival fulfills the “ancient desire” for unstinting presence and majesty of sight at the origins of the ontotheological tradition, a desire for sapience and seeing, soon to be in Heidegger’s thinking, for φύσις in the sense of φαίνεσθαι as a self-concealing radiance of appearing, or “attentive tarrying with that which is present in the epiphany of its enigmatic shining.” (Ibid.) This epiphany is “neither simply human nor purely divine.” But it is an in-between vision called-forth by the approach of a god, an approach made possible by mortal readiness for the event of divine disclosure. McNeill thus concludes:

> Thought in terms of the issue of divine disclosure embodied most tangibly in the phenomenon of the festival, the close connection between the *theôros* as envoy to a festival and as someone who is witness to a “spectacular” event, who beholds and is looked upon by the divine, is thus concretely indicated in Rausch’s account. In the Greek festival, she

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21 There is also an etymological argument that connects ἐορτή to the stem *wor* in ὀρός, ὀράω, a connotation that perhaps remains in the German *wara*, *wahren*, *Wahrheit*. (Ibid., 165, fn. 34, McNeill on Otfrid Becker’s *Plotin und das Problem der geistigen Aneignung*, 1940, 65, n. 1)
concludes, “this situation of théa, of a beholding, to which the gods and humans come together is repeated time and again.” (Ibid., 266-7)

In the 1953 “Science and Reflection,” Heidegger again thinks θεωρία etymologically in terms of θέα-ὁράω, a “beholding that watches over truth (das hüttende Schauen der Wahrheit).” In addition to again finding in θεωρία, θέα-ὁράω, i.e. a double reference to sight, Heidegger now gives the primary etymology as Θεά-ὁράω, paying respects (ὁράω, Rücksicht) to a goddess (Θεά). This etymology in terms of a goddess is supposed to be even more elementally phenomenological: a “pure relation to those views proffered by whatever presences, those views which, through their shining (Scheinen), concern and affect human beings in bringing the presence of the gods to shine.” (QCT, 163) Thirty years has done little to modify Heidegger’s account of originary θεωρία, except that in ‘Heidegger II,’ θεωρία is thought not only onto-tautologically (i.e. as a recovery of seeing of things in themselves), but also in terms of a being-given revelability in the divine.

While ‘Heidegger I’ does not unfold the festive θεωρός thematically, ‘Heidegger I’ is nevertheless contained in the thinking sojourn (μέθοδος) of ‘Heidegger II’ who is himself out on a θεωρός to the festival. In any case, in the terrain of the 1920s, there is no more significant conceptual personae indicating the roots of σοφία in the “ancient Greek Dasein” than the figure of the θεωρός. Not yet a pure thinking (νοῦς) of beings qua Being (first philosophy), nor of the primary causes and principles (τα πρώτα αίτια και τὰς ἄρχας, Metaphysics, 981b) wherein the metaphysician becomes akin to what is most divine (τὸ θεῖον, onto-theology), and certainly not yet Plato’s “festival of λόγος” which contemplates each ἑιδός as the shining-forth of its transcendent Ἰδέα, earlier than all this, Heidegger’s θεωρός ventures the festival ground of Being as the playing field of highest transformations (Umschlagen) for Dasein as a site of truth: φρόνησις and σοφία joining-in-the-dance of primal seeing (Ur-Sehen), especially into the theatrical ventures of Dionysian tragic song, and later, the dianoetic consummations of classical metaphysics.23

22 See the 1922 essay “Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutic Situation” (SUP, 11-47) on the stages of θεωρία as modalities in which the soul is true—ἡ ψυχή ἀληθεύσαι, from Nicomachean Ethics VI and X, and Metaphysics I—namely, επιστήμη, σοφία, τέχνη, φρόνησις, νοῦς. Though crucial for a complete interpretation of the sophianic as inherently festive, this subject is too complicated to unfold here.

23 As Andrea Nightingale notes in her “Inventing Philosophic Theoria” (2004, 72-93): “Scholars
In the 1973 *Seminar in Zähringen* Heidegger remembers back to Parmenides, i.e. to the teachings of the goddess Ἀλήθεια who shows mortals how the hiddenness of Being, the inapparency (withdrawal) of the gods, remains in presencing (ἐον ἐμεναι, *Anwesende Anwesen*), namely, through the signs or indications (σήμα) wherein an originary θεωρία—Dasein, thinking, χρη το λέγειν τε νοεῖν—might yet enter the circle of onto-tautology, the σφαιρος of Ἀλήθεια where Being is (ἐστι γὰρ εἶναι). (FS, 78-81) Having fully become a *Phänomenologie des Unscheinbaren*, ’Heidegger II’ thus reverts back to ’Heidegger I,’ to hermeneutical phenomenology, *out on a theoria to the festival.*

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have generally treated Plato’s comparisons of philosophic ‘spectating’ to ‘theoria’ at panhellenic festivals (including the Eleusinian Festival of the Mysteries) as superficial metaphors. For this reason, they have not examined the vital link between philosophic theorizing and the traditional practice of *theoria.*” See *Phaedo* (58, 109-11), *Symposium* (174-75, 210-12, 220), *Phaedrus* (247), *Republic* (327, V-VII), *Timaeus* and *Laws* which unfold θεωρία in proximity to festivals and mysteries, especially the myth of Ἑρ, where eschatological θεωρία complements the theory of justice “in some sort of daimonic region,” “as at a festival” (ἐν πανηγύρει, 614d–e).
2.1.4 A Speaking that Festively Flows: Contributions of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*

Something like a festival of poetry (speaking), both prior to and determinative for the first beginnings of metaphysical philosophy, is also suggested in the 1920s meditation on rhetoric. The 1924 Marburg presentation “Being-there and Being-True According to Aristotle (*Dasein und Wahrsein nach Aristoteles*)” not only contains the second reference to the θεωρός, but it begins by announcing Heidegger’s mission with respect to the Greeks, which is to find truth’s “native ground” (*Boden*): “where is truth?” (BH, 214-238) The answer: “truth is not a characteristic of judgment but instead is a fundamental determination of the Dasein [openness] of human beings themselves.” Being-true or being-open is thus “not at all primarily rooted (*bodenständig*) in discourse [λόγος] as such,” but in Da-sein. “Discursive speech” is itself a “ἐρμηνεία,” “making something known” as fundamental determinant (*existentiale*) of Dasein as being-together-with-others (*Miteinandersein*) in a community, and in such a way that can be either disclosive (*ἀποφαντικός*), or merely signifying, of that which it makes known. The Greeks came to experience the problem of sophistry because they “lived in oratory” (*in der Rede lebten*). Interpreting the Greek λόγος as speaking-with-one-another (*Miteinanderreden*), rather than reason or word, Heidegger looks to the Gorgian strains in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* to clarify “the basic phenomena of discursive speech” seen as “fundamental ways of being-with-one-another.” In the *Rhetoric* there are discussed three “distinctive occasions for speaking”: “political speech, speech before the court, and festive (celebratory) speech.”

These three ways of discursive speech relate themselves to events of everyday life and to things that human beings have to do with in their everyday being-with-one-another [...]

political speech is occupied with something to come in the future; legal speech is concerned with a past deed; and festive speech involves the present. (Ibid.)

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24 See BH, 235-6 for a second summary of the threefold of rhetorical speeches: “What do these speeches deal with? 1) The assembly speech speaks of what could be conducive (συμφέρον) or detrimental to the commonweal and thus to every individual, something that is not yet there but is to be brought about or guarded against. This speech gives counsel on future matters. 2) The judicial speech is concerned with the right and wrong of something that has already happened (δίκαιον). It concludes in a judgmental position of evaluation in regard to something past. 3) The
How do these threefold forms of rhetorical disclosivity relate to Being and Time’s existential-ontological analysis of ekstatic temporality? The three modes of rhetorically discursive “speaking-with-one-another” in the first instance have little to do with the essence of temporality as a threefold ekstasis rooted in the future dimension, but they do crystallize the three arenas of dailiness (Alltäglich) as being-with-one-another into three realms of occasional rhetorical disclosiveness, i.e. three unfoldings of the λόγος of communal existence in which “Dasein is somehow constantly affected.” (BH, 236)

First, in political speaking what is determined and decided in the discourse of the assembly, and what remains fatefully indeterminate, places limits on Dasein’s horizon of future activity, often concerning its most basic possibilities, the how of Dasein’s existence and possible non-existence as demise in war, for instance. This is Dasein considered from the perspective of conductivity to the conditions of its individual and communal decision. Second, in the juridical speaking of law and its courts, what is concluded concerning the rightness or wrongness of past events has a powerful influence on the perception of truth, as well as a communally vested authority that retributes past events in terms of their consequences as still present and bearing of a future. This is Dasein considered in the aspect of its justice as accord with the Dasein of others. Finally, as being together with others, as living and dying together in a shared locale, and as undergoing significant events and transitions, rhetorical Mitdasein is concerned not only with self-determination and justice, but also with an authentic present (Gegenwart).

This last point associates the epideictic speaking of the festival not only with the noble past, and hence with a commemorative celebration (Andenken), but with the present in the moment of its celebratory presencing (Anwesenheit). And it is here that Heidegger discusses festal speaking as using λόγος not only for the sake of past or future decisions or judgments, but as bringing a memorable (or immemorial) past into the present, thus

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25 See Graeme Nicholson’s Plato’s Phaedrus: The Philosophy of Love which posits a fourth and overarching mode of rhetoric, the rhetoric of Eros, and its cultural currency, which is sympherein (advantage). This “does not fit immediately into the traditional three division of rhetoric—the legal, the deliberative, and epideictic—for it is expressly dramatic in character.” (1999, 41) We shall see how this fourth and elemental time of rhetoric is the one at work in Hölderlin’s poetry.
renewing its presence. This is not to say that politics and juridicy, and the various other modes of speaking-together, do not also concern iterability, and the presence of the present. But only the epideictic speaking inherently concerns the present in its sharedness as presence, and Heidegger’s discussion reflects this privilege precisely. That in *Being and Time* the privilege of the present (*Gegenwart, οὐσία*) is suspended, the priority now being assigned to Daesin’s futurity as a being of “pure possibility,” does not elide the basis of comparison of ekstatic temporality with rhetorical discursivity. But it points to what Greek ontology, beholden to its metaphysics of presence, had to leave unthought.

In accordance with their derivative status as discourse (*λέγειν*) “*the festivals*” of epideictic disclosure appear as both appropriated to and dis-mantled in classical philosophy as a truth-reifying institution. This is indeed the project of Socrates/Plato in their struggle for differentiation from sophistics. But even in such higher festivals of speaking as are supposedly inscribed in the Socratic dialogues, whether in the midwifery of the elenchus, or the symposiastic or politico-utopian philosophizing, Plato’s thought continues to be determined and to inscribe ousiological criteria of evidence as presence. This is where Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* makes an important return to a position of prominence for Heidegger. Actualizing the being of language in justice as jointure, memorial presence, and collective decision, all rhetoric is concerned with iterability qua timefulness (*καιρός*) and appropriateness (*µέσον*) of Dasein’s temporal particularity (*Jeweiligkeit*), and as rooted in and emerging from the vital background dimension of Dasein’s dailiness (*Alltäglichkeit*). Set against this backdrop, Heidegger, on the one hand, furthers the philosopher’s ancient critique of rhetoric in its inauthentic dimension: insofar as its practitioners tend to place the τελός not in the “letting be seen of things as they really are,” but in the “good” kind of “talking-into” or “persuasion,” what is mediumized in rhetorical disclosiveness is an inauthentic state of conviction whose three main vehicles (*πίστεις*) are “the πάθος or mood of the audience, the ἔθος of the speaker, and the manner of demonstration (*δεικνύναι*) of the speech (*λόγος*) itself.” (Ibid, 222, 235)

But despite these inauthentic possibilities, the ‘temporalizing’ of rhetoric can still be understood as bringing forth into Dasein, in the moment of secondary determination by discourse, those higher possibilities that have-been and may-yet-be, but still yet as possibilities. The disclosure in speaking Mitsein of truth and dissemblance thus continues
to ‘rhetorize’ the historical constellations of disclosure as communal ὄρισμος λόγος οὐσίας, openings and settlements that trace the limits of the presence of the present. Rhetoric, ever speaking the priority of absencing and flow to the face of presencing thus preserves the glimmers of a thinking beyond the reifying conclusions of traditional ontology. Festive speaking thus leads Dasein to a more philosophical understanding of the temporal-historical disclosiveness of rhetoric, which is to bring forth and found the memory of an immemorial, a speaking that festively flows (ἐπιδείχεις), and in this respect, the sayings of Greek poetry are also rhetorical sites wherein the existential structures of ek-schematic temporality appear in their hermeneutical decipherability.
2.1.5 Occasional Leaps into the Elemental: Hermes in Plato’s Hermeneutics

Heidegger’s starting point in Being and Time, as critics of the later Heidegger seldom tire of pointing out, is the Lutheran-Diltheyian-Kierkegaardian facticity since Alltäglichkeit, and not das Ungewöhnliche, is the less sedimented/encrusted, and thus more accessible starting point for the existential analysis of Dasein. But while the Spielraum of Dasein’s dailiness is where existential questioning invariably begins, it is not where it winds up. Does Division II’s venturing of a possible authentic totality for Dasein as temporality and historicity not access another hermeneutical understanding, one beyond dailiness?

The logos of the phenomenology of Da-sein has the character of a ἑρμηνεύειν, through which the proper meaning of being and the basic structures of the very being of Da-sein are made known to the understanding of being that belongs to Da-sein itself. Phenomenology of Da-sein is hermeneutics in the original signification of that word, which designates the work of interpretation. (BT, 330; GA 1, 37)

This is the definition of hermeneutics in the “Introduction” to Being and Time. It can be interpreted in terms of Uneigentlichkeit or Eigentlichkeit, a hermeneutic phenomenology of factual dailiness, or a hermeneutic phenomenology of temporal-historical authenticity (Division II and beyond). In the SS 1923 Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity, we read: “The expression “hermeneutics” is used here to indicate the unified manner of the engaging, approaching, accessing, interrogating, and explicating of facticity.” (OHF, 6)

“Facticity” is the designation we will use for the character of being of “our” “own” Dasein. More precisely, this expression means: in each case “this” Dasein in its being-there for a while at a particular time (the phenomenon of the “awhileness” of temporal particularity, see “whiling,” tarrying for a while, not running away, being-there-at-home-in [...] being-there-involved-in [...] the being-there of Dasein) insofar as it is, in the character of its being, “there” in the manner of Being. (OHF, 5, italics in original)

Facticity is thus Dasein, and in two senses: 1) as ownness, thisness (Jemeinigkeit, Diesseitigkeit); and 2) as temporal particularity (Jeweiligkeit) in the sense of the
clearedness for a while at a particular time. But while the primary sense of the hermeneutical vocation in Heidegger is as the investigation of facticity in its ordinary whiling, there are other, and more extraordinary durations to consider. For example, the WS 1921/2 *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research* had already approached factical dailiness in terms of the injunction that it learn “anticipatory leaping” into the limits and “limit-situations” of Dasein’s ownmost “being-possible.” (PIA, 16-7) And we know from the 1919/21 “Comments on Karl Jasper’s *Psychology of Worldviews*” that “Limit-situations” include for Heidegger situations of “Struggle, death, chance, and guilt,” and in general, oppositional “processes of destruction,” and therefore also of construction: harmony, natality, destiny, courage. For Jaspers limit-situations encompass both poles of every oppositional, and are such that in them human beings ever go beyond finite situations to glimpse Existenz through the irreducibly unique ways in which “infinity, limit, and antinomy belong together” in a “mystical and vital unity.” (PM, 1-39)

In the WS 1921/2 we hear of the hermeneutical-phenomenological priority of “ontic questionableness: caring, unrest, anxiety, temporality.” Heidegger here demands that factical Jeweiligkeit “awaken and be sober” to the *a priori* structures of Being-in (*in-Sein*). But it is only as a turning towards an excess of Being that presses in upon Dasein that Dasein in turn ventures the leap into the full scope of its hermeneutical situation:

> The situation in question does not correspond to a safe harbor but to a leap into a drifting boat, and it all depends on getting the mainsheet in hand and looking to the wind. It is precisely the difficulties that we must see; clarification in that regard first discloses the proper horizon towards factical life. (PIA, 29; GA 61, 36-7)

Being-in is exposure to turbulence (*Wirbel*), a transport and entrance into Being as the elemental sea. Sobriety is needed not because Being is sober, but because it is an ecstatic elemental excess. *Being and Time* does not begin in dailiness to stay there, in other words, but to escape. The fallenness of Dasein is the result of excessive forces that crowd-in upon transitional beings, forcing Dasein to take shelter in beings beyond Being.

In Part III of the WS 1921/2, “Basic Categories of Life,” Heidegger attempts a jailbreak. Thinking factical life as an intensive historical “*unity of succession and
maturation,” articulating and bearing highest possibilities in the sense both of lapsing into their opacity, as well as realizing their possibility as its “fate” (PIA, 84-5), the life of Dasein is ever a worried (Besorgen) proclivity, and thus a hyperbolic tendency towards ever new “possibilities of being transported, the ways of gratification,” and hence a tendency “to disperse its relationality into [the] self-distantiation” of a multiplicity of objects and modalities of concern. Against this tendency, factical decision must, in the third constitutive moment, “sequestrate” itself, and so that the “ambiguity of becoming lost—larvant” can be relucently appropriated as ““before,” by “living” in the “before” (“vor”); maturation of a genuine occurrence (Vor-kommen) of life.” (PIA, 105-6) Yet such relucence of life’s hyperbolic excess proves elliptical: “factical life places itself on a certain track and does so specifically by inclining, suppressing distance, sequestering itself within a directionality towards the easy (Leichten).” (PIA, 108-9)

Carefreeness then shapes the world and, in order to be satisfying, must increase; it becomes hyperbolic and grants an easier concern and fulfillment, i.e., the conserving and preserving of existence. At the same time hyperbolic existence proves to be elliptical: it eludes that which is difficult, that which can be attained only μοναχῶς, in only one way (not haphazardly), it recognizes no fixed limits, and it is unwilling to be posed upon by a primal decision and in it (repeating it). (Ibid.)

Perhaps nowhere in the Gesamtausgabe is the solitary character of factical life, its Odyssean fate as a travelling remnant, and need for many-faceted craftiness (πολύμητς), and thus for Hermes, more clearly defined—perhaps not even in the WS 1943/44 which tells of Odysseus’s mourning as concealing itself at the feast from those present. What is μοναχῶς, singular and not to repeated, is the factual journey itself, definable in Heidegger as life’s Odyssean paradox, and unique festivities of interpretation: not only an easy rest on Calypso’s island, but a Hermes-given mandrake root, saving us at Circe’s banquet of metamorphoses, and leading beyond Helios’s island to Scylla and Charybdis.

Yet the time of playful carefreeness, and the lightness of Being, turns most easily into the most weighty and terrible enigma that there is: Ruinanz. This Ruinanz of the figure of Odysseus is already not Greek, however, but Hesperian in perpetuity. Its facticity is outside the moment of festivity, lost on the open sea, lost even to memory. But here
Heidegger calls for sobriety, for Juno, and in this sense the wine of the ancient cellar is preserved. First, to the mast, the wind, and homecoming. What is “hermeneutics”? Heidegger underlines how the word comes from the Greek ἑρμηνευτική and ἑρμηνεύειν. The god who holds sway in all flowing passage and static mediation, transition and transformation, between oppositions and across thresholds, is Ἐρμης, “the messenger of the gods,” and Hermes comes to presence, mischievously, in everything: laws, art, crafts, rhetoric, statecraft, love, everything. The most basic characteristic of Hermes is as a god who presides over the truth of transitions in the night. But his daytime meaning is as the wily one who makes illusions look like truth. How is Hermes related to hermeneutics?

In the SS 1923 lectures, Heidegger evokes both the “original meaning of this word [‘hermeneutics’] as well as the way its meaning has changed.” (OHF, 6) He follows closely these changes/dissemblances of the ‘original’ meaning from the ἑρμηνεύς in Aristotle’s logical-grammatical hermeneutics, and onto Byzantinian commentary and exegesis, Augustinian grand hermeneutics and later Hermeneutica Sacra, and finally Schleiermacher’s hermeneutical circle as “art of the understanding,” or Dilthey’s “technique of interpreting written records.” (OHF, 6-11) But at the outset of this long history “the original meaning” of hermeneutics is still to be discovered in Plato’s Ion (534e): “the poets are but the heralds of the gods” (οἱ δὲ ποιηταὶ οὐδὲν ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ἑρμηνῆς εἰσιν τῶν θεῶν), the rhapsodes being a step removed from the poets, and so only “the heralds of heralds.” This last sense of the hermeneutical vocation, its task of heralding festivals of poetry presided over by the flight-arrival of the gods, hovers uncannily in the background of Heidegger’s project and anticipates the poetic tenor of his later thinking. This may seem strange to us, schooled in the separation of poetry and thought, but it is what Heidegger reflects from the perspective of the 1953/4 “A Dialogue on Language”:

The expression “hermeneutics” derives from the Greek verb ἑρμηνεύειν. That verb is related to the noun ἑρμηνεύς, which is referable to the name of the god Ἐρμηνής by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science. Hermes is the divine messenger. He brings the message of destiny; ἑρμηνεύειν is that exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message. Such exposition becomes an interpretation of what has been said earlier by the poets who, according to Socrates in Plato’s Ion (534e), ἑρμηνῆς εἰσιν τῶν θεῶν —“are interpreters of the gods.” (OWL, 29)
These reflections on Plato’s own hermeneutics of the playful god Hermes emerge in the context of discussing what philosophical methodology has come to since Being and Time. Clearly, Being and Time’s definition of “phenomenological description” as “hermeneutic interpretation” of Dasein, although it refers to the “original signification,” defers almost entirely to Aristotle’s Περὶ Ἐρμηνείας, and not Plato’s Ion. Moreover, the starting point of existential analysis in Dasein’s everydayness would tend to eclipse, rather than evoke, Plato’s extraordinary sensibility to the mythic speech of Hermes. And yet the originary hermeneutics is precisely the one that circles between Dasein’s pre-understanding and understanding, between Dasein and Being, and this is what Plato’s rhapsodes accomplish inasmuch as they are themselves the having-holding-inhabiting-betrothing (ἔχο) festivals of language that are linked-suspended-joined into the rings (δακτυλίον) of the Muses:

And you know that this spectator [ὁ θεατὴς] is the last of these rings don’t you—the ones that I said take their power [δύναμιν] from each other by virtue of the Heraclean stone? The middle ring [ὁ δὲ μέσος] is you, the rhapsode or actor, and the first one is the poet himself [ὁ ποιητής]. The god pulls people’s souls through all these wherever he wants, linking [ἀνακρεաνύς] the power down from one to another. And just as if it hung [ἐξήρτηται] from that stone, there’s an enormous chain of choral dancers and dance teachers and assistant teachers hanging off to the sides of the rings that are suspended from the Muse. One poet is attached to the one Muse, another to another (we say he is “possessed” [δὲ αὐτὸ κατέχεται] and that’s near enough, for he is held [ἔχεται γάρ]) From these first rings, from the poets, they are attached in their turn and inspired, some from one poets, some from another: some from Orpheus, some from Musaeus, and many are possessed and held from Homer. (Ion, 535e-536b)

The question of being-moved into the circle is already in the WS 1920/1 a question of the movedness (Bewegtheit) of factical life: the “κίνησις-problem” which seeks the truth of that elemental motion (or wind) that flutters throughout life’s a priori time-determinations as Being-In. In its most basic form the question of the “time” of Dasein in motion concerns the transformation of Dasein’s “peculiar weight” into its celebratory clearing, a transition from thrown dispersion (Zerstreungung) into an appropriating relucence of the
dispersing as such. (PIA, 116-20) Thus beyond the counter-festive tendency of existence as its Spinozist conatus towards security and “positively creative work,” the WS 1921/2 lectures summon dailiness back from the brink of “ruinance, ossification,” and in order to expose Dasein to the “insecurity resident in factical life.”

This is the elemental phenomenon of “unrest” (Unruhe) which will haunt all facticity and all setting-into-motion (das Ginnen). And so in the chapter “Ruinance,” Heidegger begins his phenomenology of unrest in terms of the collapse (ruina) of all enframing structures responsible for the equilibrium and automation of facticity. For while ruinanz tends to devolve into worry (Besorgtsein) and to be determined as preoccupation (Besörgnis), while it falls into larvance as dissimulation (larva, Maskenspiel) of originary concern, it also uncovers on occasion life’s facility for a higher temporal σύνθησις;

Now, every mode of occurrence, has, as such its determinate (factical) kairological character, its determinate relation to time i.e., to its time, and this relation lies in the sense of the nexus of actualization of facticity. [...] Factual, ruinant life, “has no time,” because its basic movedness, ruinance, itself, takes away “time.” That is a time which can be taken away, and factically ruinant life, for itself and in itself does take it away. Ruinance takes time away; i.e., it seems to abolish the historicity in facticity. The ruinance of factical life possesses this sense of actualization: abolition of time. In this peculiar mode historicity is always still present in life; it is always factically present in all ruinance (the historicity as constitutivum of facticity. (Ibid, 139-40)

The four characteristics of Ruinanz are thus: “1. The secluding (temptative), 2. The soothing (quietive), 3. The estranging (alienative), 4. The annihilating (negative—in an active, transitive sense).” But alongside these temptations of ruinance, there are also the opposite situational attunements, the moments of a more fulfilled temporality: the communifying, the excitative, belonging, and the creative. In the chiasmus of these extremes, ruinance is what the festival needs, and that from which it begins. Ruinanz is both lost time and the fund of creative time, what festivities modify to regain, beyond the “abolition of time,” a granting of time in motion. As we shall see, this is the round dance.
2.2 Myth, Death, Time, Festival in the Playspace of *Being and Time* and Beyond

### 2.2.1 Festivals of Dasein in Division I: Victory/Defeat as Γιγαντομαχία & Care-Fable

In the above section, I outlined both the implicit and explicit roles given to the festival in pre-*Being and Time* works, and under five basic headings: 1) as the genesis of theory qua historical phenomenology of Dasein prior to phenomenological science, and remembering of its ancient mysteries; 2) as the καιρός of Ur-Christianity in the suffering/celebrating παρουσία as new fundamental experience of pres-absential time; 3) as the uncanny homecoming into a playing field of aletheic θεωρία underlying the wonders of classical metaphysics; 4) as the ekstatically flowing currents of absencing-presencing passed-on in rhetorical-rhapsodic festivities of speech; and 5) as the countermovements of ruinant facticity, i.e. occasional leaps into the playful thinking of Hermes.

Now I will look to *Being and Time* to understand better where these festivals might lead in later works. I cannot follow through the fully cautious reading of *Being and Time* that would be mandated by all that has been said so far. It would be an enormous task to re-construct what Heidegger almost said, might have said, didn’t say, or can be inferred to have ‘thought’ concerning the festival as a pure historical temporalization horizon. Nevertheless, a close reading of the mythic and mysteriological elements across *Being and Time* reveals a hidden backdrop and stage against which the subsequent entry of Hölderlin’s festival into the heart of Heidegger’s philosophical concerns makes sense.

Take the start of the “Introduction” in which readers are enjoined into the possibility of rekindling the greatest of all battles, the γιγαντομαχία περί τῆς οὐσίας or “Battle of Giants concerning Being.” (BT, 2; SZ, 1) But all great battles end in victory or defeat, truces or treaties, festivals of remembrance or mourning, sacrifice or pride. In all these forms and outcomes, battles are not unrelated to festivities. Indirectly, therefore, festivals are intimated at the outset of *Being and Time*, as soon as the battle over Being is named.
Is this significant or insignificant? In the *Theogony* there is not only a Γιγαντομαχία, but a Τιτανομαχία in which three giants—Briareus and Cottus and Gyges—aid the Olympians to victory.\(^{26}\) In his recommendation that there be a Γιγαντομαχία, that there is no way out of Γιγαντομαχία, and that victory consists of entering into the Γιγαντομαχία in the right way, Heidegger would appear, on the one hand, to draw his thinking of the Γιγαντομαχία into resonance with the Τιτανομαχία, not the Hesiodic myth of the permanent vanquishment of the Titans in Tartaros, but the myth of the perpetual renewal as displacement of one form of temporality (Titanic) by another (Olympian).

But what Heidegger has in mind in the Γιγαντομαχία image is not overtly, it might be objected, either of these ancient struggles of Olympian gods with Giants or Titans, but it is, as Reiner Schürmann and many others have pointed out, “the gigantomachia between the Academy and the Sophists on behalf of ‘Being.’” (trans. 1987, 133)

Heidegger several times clarifies the metaphysical background of his use of the Γιγαντομαχία image, for example, in his 1929 *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*:

> The fundamental-ontological laying of the ground for metaphysics in *Being and Time* must be understood as a retrieval. The passage from Plato’s *Sophist* which opens the study serves not as a decoration, but rather as an indication of the fact that in ancient metaphysics the gigantomachy over the Being of beings had already broken out. (KPM, 168)

But more than just breaking-out in one or two “ancient metaphysics,” that of say Plato or Aristotle, the battle of the giants concerning Being is older. In the SS 1928 *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger clarifies: “In fact, ancient philosophy is a

\(^{26}\) *Theogony*, 617: “But the son of Cronos and the other deathless gods whom rich-haired Rhea bore from union with Cronos, brought them up again to the light at Gaia’s advising. For she herself recounted all things to the gods fully, how that with these [the giants] they would gain victory and a glorious cause to vaunt themselves.” There are several Indo-European parallels to the Greek Γιγαντομαχία, especially the Mesopotamian-Sumerian *Enuma Elish* in which Tiamat hears the plaints of the other gods against Marduk, and raises up a brood of monsters to go to war against the gods. See also the Norse-Icelandic *Poetic Eddas*, the Völuspá saga, in which the first battle of gods and giants in the Ginnungagap (abyssal gap) forges Miðgarð as the realm between heaven and earth, ice and fire, a battle that ends in Ragnarök as conflagration and twilight of gods.
gigantic beginning, and as such it contains within itself a wealth of truly undeveloped and in part completely hidden possibilities.” Aristotle’s philosophy testifies to this “gigantic beginning” from which both ancient poetry and philosophy set out, and Aristotle turns the future history of metaphysics towards the “truly undeveloped and in part completely hidden possibilities” of this beginning. (MFL, 9; GA 26, 10-11) This is the “field becoming] visible upon which the γιγαντομαχία περὶ τοῦ ὅντος, takes place.”

Already in the WS 1924/5 lectures on Plato’s Sophist, Heidegger had analyzed the γιγαντομαχία over Being in Plato’s text in some detail. Here the two positions that are at war are not the Olympian gods and the Giants or Titans, but two philosophical factions in opposition within ancient metaphysics, two schools of thought: “The ones, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀοράτου πάντα ἐλκουσί, drag down εἰς γῆν, to earth.” (Sophist, 246a) For them everything must be tangible, touchable (ἔπαφη), material, “σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ταύτων ὀριζόμενοι, “they delimit body, material thing, and genuine Being, presence, οὐσία as the same.” (PS, 321) In their struggle with materialism “those who are in conflict with them draw their defense from above” (Sophist, 245b), from “what is invisible”: “They posit as existing, in the sense of unconcealed Being, the εἰδή, the εἰδος, the ‘outward look’ of beings, as that which can be seen in νοεῖν” and in λόγος. (PS, 322) These two are not only materialists and transcendentalists, Sophists and Academicians, but historically, they are the Heracliteans and the Parmenideans. What Plato wants is a third position between the two, true philosophers who “have to be like a child begging for ‘both,’ and who thus say that which is—everything—is both the unchanging and that which changes.” (Sophist, 249c) Already for Plato, in other words, victory in the γιγαντομαχία is unwinnable by any party. The struggle does not lead to outcomes, but only to uncovering a playful bastion of harmony in the strife. Heidegger says as much at the close of Being and Time:

The conflict with respect to the interpretation of being cannot be settled because it has not yet even been kindled. In the end, one cannot just “rush into” this conflict; rather, igniting this conflict already requires a preparation. It cannot be “jumped into,” but the beginning of the strife [Streit] already needs preparation. This investigation is solely underway to that. Where does it stand? (BT, 414; SZ, 437)
Where *Being and Time* stands within the gigantomachian history of metaphysics is in the contention and split between those who locate Being in the presence of a present, and those who think Being *as* Being, and who thus stand in Dasein as site (ἐορτή) of the ontico-ontological difference: between chthonic and ouranian, gods and mortals. Within these manifold counter-turning conflicts the uncanny duplicity of the human being means it is an essence not at home in any one side. For the being whose essence is unrest and strife, the human being is relentlessly inserted into the in-between space of that non-belonging that leads to highest belonging. Accordingly, what the γιγαντομαχία uproots is the ancient privilege assigned to the homestead and possessions (ὁσία), and in general to Being as presence. Instead of permanent presence Dasein now ventures the open sea:

What genuinely is at issue in this γιγαντομαχία περὶ τῆς ὁσίας? This issue is the disclosure of beings, the ones that genuinely satisfy the meaning of Being, and consequently the issue is the demonstration of the meaning of ὁσία itself. The way to demonstrate the meaning of ὁσία is to produce the beings which satisfy the meaning of Being [Grk. ποιεῖσθαι] [...] And indeed the Greeks drew their implicit sense of Being out of the natural immediate interpretation of Being by factual Dasein, where Being means to be there already at the very outset as possession, household, property [Anwesen]—put more sharply: as presence [Anwesenheit]. We will make use of this meaning of Being (which we ourselves first make visible, although of course we cannot discuss it further in this context), namely Being = presence, because it includes the whole problem of time and consequently the problem of the ontology of Dasein [...]. (PS, 323)

The lived immediacy of the homestead and its possessions, at its limits and their transgression becomes the great-souled citizen-patron who brings presencing-absencing to fruition for the human community of the festival. And thus we hear of festive magnanimity as the crowning virtue of Aristotle’s ethico-theology in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1122b): “The magnificent man is like an artist; for he can see what is fitting and spend large sums tastefully.”27 In contrast with osiology, however, Heidegger posits *abousiology*, a radical new priority of absencing over presencing, and in general, a poetic faith in and knowing of the superior strength and harmony of the absent present.

27 On magnaminity and *theória* in Aristotle see René A. Gauthier’s *Magnanimité: L’Ideal de la Grandeur dans la Philosophie Patienne et dans la Theologie Chretienne*. (1951)
Looking more closely into the methodological parameters of the quest for a “fundamental ontology,” as a path that leads through the “existential analysis of Dasein,” Heidegger begins with the claim that “the roots of the existential analysis, for their part, are ultimately existentiell— they are ontic.” (SZ, 12-13) The pre-ontological priority of Dasein as a being of Seinsverständnis, an existentiell facticity that in its pre-ontological coherency (Zusammengang) learns to uncover ontological structures, this factical existence must now, in the context of the existential analysis, grapple with its relation (Verhältnis) to Being which Heidegger, drawing from Jaspers, calls its Existenz.

This mode of approach is warranted since the being that each of us is, and to which we are ontically nearest, is ontologically the furthest away, and yet is not pre-ontologically unknown to itself. But in pursuing this preontological-ontological elucidation of the Existenz of Dasein, its formal name being the hermeneutical circle, Heidegger is cautious not to admit any anthropological evidence-complexes that might obfuscate Dasein’s immediacy. This theoretical embargo is justified since we cannot leap forthwith into an existential analysis of anthropological phenomenon, our sedimented self-understanding of these phenomenon being what hermeneutical elucidation must first of all dis-mantle (Ab-bauen). The embargo against philosophical anthropology is just one of many moments when Being and Time extends Husserl’s method of transcendental-phenomenological ἐποχή in order to clear Dasein’s Existenz as its immediate relation to Being. This clearing begins by bracketing everything that does not arise from Dasein’s temporal determination (seine temporale Bestimmtheit). (BT, 18; SZ, 19)

Not in the hypostatized eternity of a presence, but in the existential-historical passage through Zeitlichkeit to Temporalität, Dasein, as the being that understands Being, gains access to its ontological coherency (Existentialität), and so to the more re-sourceful, horizonal, ontico-ontologically differentiating Existenz that is “old enough to enable us to learn to comprehend the possibilites prepared by the ancients,” yet young enough to re-open the ancient γυγαντομαχία to its thinking and poetic futurity. As a later note indicates, Dasein is itself the temporal-historical ekstaticity that “plays to and with Being—brings it into the play of resonance.” (BT, 6; SZ, 7) The gigantic book Being and Time can, already in this resonance between the archaic and the futural, be read as the site of a
revolutionary instability, a quivering and shaking of all one sided approaches to earth or heaven, matter or spirit. For only after following the path of *Being and Time* does the future of philosophy begin to recognize that even in the most gigantic efforts of Western metaphysics and poetic art, the original γιγαντομορφία is present only as “camouflaged,” i.e. as glimmering in the settlements of the givenness (*Gegebenheit*). But behind the epochality of Western conceptuality and art, as diverse settlements and diffusions of one singular γιγαντομορφία, there also remains the pre-ontological coherency of temporality and historicity that Dasein suffers and celebrates insofar as it engages in a thoughtful immersion into the “φαίνομενον from φαίνεσθαι, meaning “to show itself.”

Φαίνεσθαι itself a “middle voice” construction of φαίνω, to bring into daylight, to place in brightness. Φαίνω belongs to the root φά, like φῶς, light or brightness, that is that within which something can become manifest, visible in itself. (BT, 27-8; SZ 28-9)

This middle voiced definition of Φαίνεσθαι as what shows itself in the light of day. The task of Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenology is to provide a λέγειν τα φαίνομενα, a speaking from and to phenomenal day, furthermore as ἀποφαίνεσθαι, letting phenomenon be seen from themselves. But even this rarified task for λόγος as providing an ἀληθεύειν of φαίνομενον, while basically Platonic-Aristotelian, derives in essence from the everyday way of understanding the world as the open or manifest (δηλούν, φαίνεσθαι), and by way of the voice in and for which something is sighted (φωνή μετα φαντασίας), speaking-out (λέγειν) with a view to what is spoken (λέγόμενον). Are such festivals of rhetorical ἔθος speakings in and to the manifestation of the Being of beings? Is the festival of Being even the authentic “wellspring” (*Ursprung*) of Dasein as the *Horizont* for *Temporalität*? What role does the night and the inapparent, the nocturnal Dionysian festivities and Pythagorean midnight sun play here? Is the Φαίνεσθαι already the festival?

On the nonhorizontal wellspring we read a later marginal comment on *Being and Time* (BT, 6, note V): “The difference bound to transcendence (*tranzendentliche Differenz*). The overcoming of the horizon as such. The return to the source (*Herkunft*). The presencing out of this source.” As we shall see, the later project of “Time and Being” as an “overcoming of the horizon as such” and “return to the source” is already suggested as the unwritten Second Part of *Being and Time* (not to be confused with the Third Division,
a draft of which was destroyed). There Heidegger was to have completed in three further divisions his de-structuring of the history of metaphysics in light of the phenomenology of time. This was to have involved: 1) a radicalization of Kant’s doctrine of the temporal schematism, for despite Kant’s misinterpretation, according to Heidegger, of the concept of Being as the most universal, indefinable, self-evident concept, Kant’s analysis of temporal schematism recalls glimmers of the self-showing of Being in the phenomena of Time; 2) a destruction of the subjectivist foundations of modern metaphysics in Descartes’ res cogitans as still derivative from the Greek understanding of Being as presence (οὐσία) of the underlying (ὑποκειμένον); 3) a deconstruction of the reifying tendencies of the Aristotelian time-analysis and thus an opening up of four dimensional time as essential to both historicity and meaning.

I will not give a close reading of the first five chapters of Division I with their interpretations of the “essential existentials” of Being-in-the-world as mineness and wholeness (Chapter I-II), the worldliness of the world (Chapter III), being-with (Chapter IV), and being-in (Chapter V). Furthermore, as I examine the holiday as καιρός and possibility of finding-oneself-disposed (Befindlichkeit) in attunement (Stimmung) further on, I will skip that topic here to focus on the historical ontology of myth at the close of Division I, Chapter 6, “Care as the Being of Dasein.” I will focus the rest of this section on the Care-Fable (§42, BT, 189-3; SZ, 197-201) as a second image of the γιγαντομαχία, pointing not only to the Dionysian endowment and victory of thinking, but to the inevitability of defeat (death), and thus the strength of weakness as what brings victory.

Once when “Care” was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took a piece and began to shape it. While she was thinking about what she had made, Jupiter came by. “Care asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, Jupiter forbade this and demanded that it be given his name instead. While “Care” and Jupiter were arguing, Earth (Tellus) arose, and desired that her...

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28 There are, however, moments in these analyses of Dasein’s dailiness that ostensibly touch on the thinking of festival. For example, insofar as the festival can be understood as the playing field of authentic Mitsein, it constellates a counterpoint to inauthentic Mitsein as determined by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity, and thus by “distantiality, averageness, and leveling down, as ways of being of the they, constitut[ing] what we know as “publicness.”” (BT, 123; SZ, 127)
name be conferred upon the creature, since she had offered it part of her body. They asked Saturn to be the judge. And Saturn gave them the following decision, which seemed to be just. “Since you, Jupiter, have given its spirit, you should receive that spirit at death; and since you, Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since “Care” first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called ‘homo,’ for it is made out of humus (earth).” (BT, 190; SZ, 198)

This story is from Hyginus’s *Fabulae*, and it is cited by Heidegger as “a document that is pre-ontological in character,” but in which “Dasein expresses itself about itself “primordially” and “historically.” So providing antique though only “preontological testimony” that corroborates the existential-ontological “self-interpretation of Dasein as care” (*cura, Sorge*), Heidegger says little on the fable’s philological background, pointing out in a footnote only how he found the fable in Konrad Burdock’s 1923 essay “Faust und die Sorge,” and how Goethe took the fable over from a poem by Herder (“Das Kind der Sorge”), and worked it into his *Faust* II. Hyginus’s *Fabulae* are generally studied by scholars for the glimpses they afford into the Roman curriculum of Greek myth. The figure of Care as a goddess survives only in this fable, and so the question of what resources Hyginus was drawing from is significant, if difficult to answer.

Let us review the mythic scene of the Care-fable in which there is the crossing of a river, a younger goddess Care who shapes some clay from the river bed, and then enters into relation with three gods, all spoken in their Roman names and attributes. First, Jupiter or Iovis (*Σεύς*) who intervenes as providing *spiritus* to the shaped clay, and finally, as accepting this *spiritus* back at death. Second, Tellus (*Γαῖα*) who arises to give and then claim its *corpus*. And third, Saturn (*Κρόνος*) who is called upon to resolve the dispute over ownership, which he does by granting victory to Care, but only for the mortal sojourn. Now Saturn is the god who ruled prior to Jupiter, and is now, in golden age mythology, the great jurist still ruling in Elysium. Tellus is a deity older than both Saturn and Jupiter. It would thus seem that the Care-fable is actually about how the three arch-gods of the three most major strata of Greco-Roman cosmotheophany, the generations of Gaia and Ouranos, the Titans, and the Olympians, are related to each other in the moment of anthropogenesis. Heidegger does not interpret the fable. Remarking
only its most basic features, Heidegger’s one paragraph of actual commentary reads:

*Cura prima finxit.* This being has the “origin” of its being in care. *Cura teneat, quamdiu vixerit:* this being is not released from its origins, but retained, dominated by it as long as this being “is in the world.” “Being-in-the-world” has the character of being of “care.” It does not get its name (*homo*) with regard to its being, but in relation to that of which it consists (*humus*). The decision as to wherein the “primordial being of this creature is to be seen is left to Saturn, “time.” The pre-ontological characterization of the essence of the human being expressed in this fable thus has envisaged from the very beginning the mode of being which rules its *temporal sojourn in the world.* (BT, 191; SZ, 199)

As Heidegger is the first to admit this interpretation, while brilliant and incisive, leaves much out of the account.29 Above all, it leaves out the way in which four intertwining forms of time are here co-staked—the mortal time of Care, Olympian time, Tellurian time, and Titanic time—all interwoven in the dispute. How does this myth compare to that other myth, the *γιγαντομαχία* περὶ τῆς ούσίας with which the book *Being and Time* begins? It would appear that both myths involve struggles for sovereign power and divine succession, royalty and property. And yet in the fable there is no actual battle, only a verbal dispute, just as there is no universal enemy (the Giants), but only a dispute over property and the name. The most striking difference is that whereas in the *γιγαντομαχία* the Olympians, with Zeus at the head, are predictably victorious in their claim against both Titans and Giants, in the Care fable a younger and virtually unknown goddess, here vulnerable and requiring legal counsel, is victorious, within the limits of the mortal sojourn, in her claims against both Jupiter and Tellus—but only with the help of Saturn.

This is the most peculiar feature of the fable: Care, an otherwise unknown goddess, yet the very goddess responsible for the formation of the human being from *humus*, earth, manages to win a legal dispute against both Olympian and Chthonic divine powers—these being the very parties in dispute in Plato’s *γιγαντομαχία*—but only with the help of a golden age Titan. Significantly, Care’s victory is ambiguous: it charts a third solution

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29 Perhaps also present in the fable is the idea of contingency, Aristotle’s fourth sense of being as *συμβεβεβεκός*, what lies as it falls. For there would be no worldly sojourn for human beings if Care had not by chance been distracted when crossing the river bed, or if the clay of Earth had not been there, or if Zeus had not intervened, or finally, if Saturn had decided a less favorable judgment.
that mediates between rival claimants, and in this respect it is comparable both to Plato’s third path and Heidegger’s temporal-ontological horizons.

Beyond these parallels there is a deeper mystery that unfolds across these two founding myths of *Being and Time*, namely, the animation *ex humu* of the creature named *homo*, the infusion of the shaped clay with *spiritus* on the model of Dionysian ritual initiation. There is much to think in the Care-fable that connects it with the myth of the “fulgurating sovereign” and the ritual animation of fulgurites.\(^3\) In order to substantiate these connections I will zero in a little further on the piece of clay itself, in the riverbed, and its cultic significance. Whether the clay is pre-formed in any sense, or is homogeneous to the river, must be left to the wiles of the imagination. In any case, Care discovers the clay in the moment of crossing (*transiret*) a river, a piece of clay that the river itself in its onrushing flow (*fluvium*) creates. Moreover, this discovery is almost instantaneously an active shaping, even before the hands, with the eyes, a plastic shaping and articulation of the clay into the shape formed by Care, the shape of Care herself.

The fable remarks at this point that “Jupiter came by” or “intervenes.” More precisely, it is Care’s thinking, her thought for and on the shape she creates that *interests* Jupiter, enticing the god to arrive, and not only as a friend who is out on a walk, but as an answer to Care’s desire that the clay come to life. Jove, having endowed the clay with *spiritus*, Greek \(\pi\nu\varepsilon\omicron\mu\alpha\), then forbids to let the shaped clay take the name of Care, demanding that the creature be called, and not simply called, by the name of Iovis. Is the Care-fable perhaps in dialogue here with the myth of the birth of Dionysos where, through a ruse of Hera, Zeus swears by the river Styx to grant Semele a wish, and is loath to grant it when, desiring to see the god naked, the lightning bolt destroys her life, and provokes the premature birth of Dionysos, then stowed in the god’s thigh? While *Curæ* is certainly other than Semele, the two myths are not, perhaps, unrelated. For both involve misadventures of the fulgurating sovereign involving births and rivers. And Semele’s name (\(\Sigma\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varepsilon\lambda\eta\)) is often traced by nineteenth century philology to the Thraco-Phrygian and Phoenician words for Earth in the specific sense of clay, *humus*. Might we interpret the encounter of Iovis and Cura at the river bed, prior to the claims of Earth and Saturn,

\(^3\) On fulguration in the Etruscan religions of Jupiter, see the appendix to Georges Dumézil’s *Archaic Roman Religion: with an appendix on the Religion of the Etruscans*. (trans. 1996)
yet subsequent to the formation of the living human shape, as a re-inscription of the arch-telestic scene of Bacchic cult, an interpretation of it in which Semele does not die, but wins the dispute? Heidegger does not explore this connection in Being and Time. The Care-fable functions only as a transition within the analytic from everydayness as Zeitlichkeit to authentic totality and ekstatic temporality (Temporalität). But when Heidegger returns, in the WS 1934/5 for instance, to the theme of divine-mortal fulguration as a clearing-lighting of the whole of Dasein, the mythic relations, here set aside, of Zeus, Dionysos, Semele, the chthonic and saturnian, will all be underlined.

Thinking fulgurational poetics in the 1801 As When On a Holiday..., Heidegger remarks:

> The poet harnesses [zwingt und bannt] the lightning flashes of the god [Blitzes des Gottes], compelling them into the word, and places this lightning-charged word into the language of his people. The poet does not process the lived experiences of his psyche, but stands “under god’s thunderstorms”—“with naked head,” exposed without protection and delivered from himself. Dasein is nothing other than exposure to the overwhelming power of beyng [Ausgesetztheit in die Übermacht des Seyns] [...] Those who are up there on the remotest and supreme peaks of time are indeed most harshly exposed to the lightning-flashes of the gods, but the god himself is “time.” (GA 39, 54-5)

The lightning bolt strikes clay by the river, or in the bark inscription over the cabin at Todtnauberg, Heraclitus’s Fragment 64: Τά δέ πάντα οίκαίζει κεραυνός, “lightning steers all things.” Where the lightning strikes sand, the glassy crystal formed is the fulgurite, in proto-magical terms, a thing suffused with the immanent porosity of the Ἑν-Πάντα relation; in Hegelian terms, a subjectivity concreteness crystallized in the abstract; in Hölderlinian terms, a poet’s being transfixed by the other side of the mortal, the immortal. Straddling the boundaries of divine and mortal, worldly petrifact and elemental flux, the process of fulguration is the exemplary metaphor of what Leibniz thinks as time:

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31 There is another possible connection of the late antique Care-fable that traces it all the way back to the archaic Pherekydes of Syros (6th century B.C.E), for Pherekydean myth indeed posits three arch-gods, Ζας (Zeus), Χρόνος (Time), and Χθονίη (Earth). See Hermann S. Schibli’s Pherekydes of Syros (1986) on the implications of this doctrine. While there is no way to know for certain the background of Hyginus’s Care-fable, some connection with the Greek Semele is possible also in connection with the Roman Stimula (Semele), whose cult rituals were imported to Rome with Bacchic rites around 180-70 B.C.E. See Ovid’s Fasti, 6.503. (trans. 1995)
“the fulguration from moment to moment of the divinity.”

As Heidegger comments in the 1941 “Metaphysics as History of Being”:

In accordance with that range of view (perspective), the capability is determined of mirroring the universe in such and such a manner, that is, of allowing it to shine. For this reason, the created substances, too, originate so to speak »par des Fulgurations continuelles de la Divinité de moment à moment.« (Monadologie, section 47) In this continual fulguration from moment to moment of the divinity of the godhead, sparks originate strivingly toward the light, and correspondingly let the light of the divinity continue to shine, and copy it. Everything real is monadical in its reality: not, however, in the same way, but in gradations.” (EP, 39)

In light of these meditations to follow, we can look back to the citation of the Care-fable in Being and Time as attesting to the later Heidegger’s ekstatic fulgurational thinking. Human beings will have been born and reborn in the plighting betrothal, clearing wedding, and sundering dispute of these four, and of their meeting in the river bed, in the moment of a crossing. And it is within the eddies and whirls of this telestic scene that Heidegger’s Dasein will have to retreive its cosmotheophanic festival of Temporalität which can never be a stable presencing in the bourne of an Olympian world-order of permanent presence. But it is by the banks, in the shallow bed, muddy or dry, of a river.

32 On the theme of fulguration as Lichtung and Augenblick in relatio to Leibniz, Heidegger, Fink, see Renato Cristin’s excellent Leibniz and Heidegger: Reason and the Path. (trans. 1998, 28)
2.2.2 Festivals of Temporality in Division II: Natality, Mortality, and the *Hochzeit*

As commentators have often pointed out, the theme of festival in the 1930s dovetails with the discussion of authentic temporality and historicity in Division II. William Richardson was among the first to underline how the existential structure of Heidegger’s later thinking of the festive greeting (*heilige Grüße*) mirrors closely what was called “resoluteness” (*Entschlossenheit*) in *Being and Time*. (1963, 454-72) Kevin Aho more recently formulates this insight when he points to the relation between, on the one hand, *Being and Time*’s account of authenticity as resolute being-towards-death, and on the other, the Hölderlinian account of authenticity from the 1930s and early 1940s, which he interprets as being-towards-beginnings accessible through the composed letting-be (*Gelassenheit*) and leisurely wonder of the holiday festival. (2007, 217-238)

Picking up from Hannah Arendt’s discussion of birth and death, natality and mortality in *Being and Time*, Reiner Schürmann’s *Broken Hegemonies* has made an important contribution that bears on our understanding of the inner connection between natality, mortality, and festivity. Speaking of the “thrusts of pure natality” as beginnings through which living beings annul and evade mortifying influences, maximizing their living being into absolute positions, Schürmann defines natality as follows: “Natality is the thetic fervor in us that, if it could rule alone (or if it could subsume under itself the counter-strategy of death), it would produce an ideal frenzy. It would affirm the figures of an unrestrained, all-encompassing holding together.” (trans. 2003, 123) While Schürmann does not here use the word, this is clearly the moment of life’s festivity now configured as its limitless fervor, autoeroticism, and all-encompassing involvent drive. But death intervenes to limit and shape the forces of natality, curbing the “metaphysical megalomania” of finite life into festive sites. Thus Parmenides’s goddess Ἀλήθεια does not exalt natality, but reminds the journeyman of his “mortal condition.”

The terms of this “temporal difference” between natality and mortality is clearly formulated in Division II where “end” and “beginning,” death and birth, are the two poles within which “Dasein’s totality is closed around.” (BT, 425; SZ, 373) The ἔσχατον stands in the way of every possible retrieval of the ἄρχη; death blocks access to Dasein’s
self-understanding in the extremes of End and Whole. Yet in the equally natal and mortal between of birth and death what occurs when the constant dying that Dasein is opens the chiasmic interplay of having-been and futurity, what falls out as a possible being-whole (Ganzseins) of Dasein, is the ever incomsummate ‘wedding’ of mortal and natal forces, that as death and as care “presence out of the truth of being.” (BT, 242*; SZ, 252*)

Natality, mortality, and the Hochzeit. Their relation, in the famous turn of phrase, “flashes up before us, but remains still unthought.” (OWL, 107) Take the case of this adage in Nietzsche’s festivities of death which, beyond the ancient identity of being as life, wants to open the dead world of an infinite becoming of inorganic nature, the eternal womb of being as inverted Platonic realm in which each singular becomes one and all, celebrating itself, and all things in this passage and return.33

In Heidegger’s “being-towards-death” there is no parallel affirmation of death’s returns. Nor does Heidegger rehearse Socrates’s journey at the end of the Phaedo. But the emphasis is on death itself as the most nocturnal possibility of Dasein’s authentic wholeness. Heidegger’s is not a romanticism of death: “For the most part, it ends in unfulfillment, or else disintegrated and used up.” (BT, 235; SZ 244) Being-towards-death claims not to rely on a metaphysics of death, but to ask what death “means”? How can death (Nothingness) be for Dasein, since Dasein’s Being is what death removes? Where and how is death? Heidegger’s answer is that death is in being-towards-death as an anxious anticipatory being-towards the possibility of an impossibility, i.e. towards the nonbeing of Dasein as what is most outstanding, nonrelational, insuperable, and certain.

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33 See The Gay Science (§109): “—Let us be on our guard against saying that death is contrary to life. The living being is only a species of the dead being, and a very rare species.” In “Of Free Death,” Zarathustra says: “Everyone treats death as an important event: but as yet death is not a festival [...] one should learn to die, and there should be no festivals at which such a dying man does not consecrate the oaths of the living!” On death as festival in Nietzsche see Keith Ansell-Pearson’s “Dead or Alive” (Viriod Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition, 1997, 57-85), and David Farrell Krell’s Infectious Nietzsche (1996, 160, fn. 3), which cite notebook M III I: “To be redeemed from life and to become dead nature nature again can be sensed as feast—by one who wishes to die [vom Sterbenwollen] [...].” Those incapable of thinking eternal recurrence are already “passing over to the feast they will never have enjoyed.” Nietzsche’s “life, suffering, the circle [or round dance]” affirms the ouroboros, since we return in any case, and thus shares in Hölderlin’s and Heidegger’s responsibility to time’s tragic linearity.
Although this is not the place for an extended review of Heidegger’s analysis of being-towards-death, three topics are worth underlining in connection with the theme of the festival. First, despite its sober emphasis on the “individualized being of Dasein” in “anxiety” as the Grunbfindlichkeit of Dasein’s being, Heidegger, does not preclude “unshakable joy in this possibility.” (BT, 296; SZ, 310) (See Ch. 1.2 and Ch 4.2.1)

A second topic is the contrast Heidegger establishes between Dasein’s inauthentic relationship to death as an awaiting or expecting (Gewärtigen, Erwarten), and Dasein’s authentic “anticipation” (Vorlaufen) of death as entering the Moment (Augenblick) of approaching nearness (Näherung, Nähe). (BT, 249, 322-3; SZ 261-2, 337-8) We may compare here the WS 1941/2 on expectation or awaiting (Erwartung) as the everyday’s way of relating to the holiday. But in the work of preparing the festival, and in the onset of the holiday’s inhabitual possibilities, awaiting gives way to authentic anticipation: Erwartung des Eigentlichen, that is, of das eigentliche Fest. (GA 52, 65-6; see Ch. 4.1.1).

A third issue is the petitio principi, admitting his ontological analysis of death demands not only an existentiell attestation, but presumes that an authentic being-towards-death has already granted the meaning of Being. This would be the festival of Being (in death).

The task of adequately carrying out the ontological analysis of end and wholeness gets stranded not only because the theme is so far-reaching, but because there is a difficulty in principle: in order to master this task, we must presuppose that precisely what we are seeking in this inquiry (the meaning of being in general) is something we have found already and with which we are quite familiar. (BT, 232; SZ, 241)

In this emphasis on a prior initiation into the meaning of Being, Heidegger’s analysis of being-toward-death suggests possible alliances with the myths and mysteries of more traditional thanatologies. The edge of life, the defeat of joy, the impossibility of Dasein: these nonhorizons have ever been temporalizations of the most august mysteries: Dasein is that natality-mortality that passingly grounds its Being in a fourfold Hochzeit.

34 See BT, 300; SZ, 313: “The formal indication of the idea of existence was guided by the understanding of being in Dasein itself [...] Dasein is not just objectively present, but has always already understood itself, however mythical or magical its interpretations may be. For otherwise, Dasein would not “live” in a myth and would not take heed of its magic in rites and cults.”
In order to ground this suggestions, I will look to two further texts, first, to the 1936/7 Contributions to Philosophy: From the Event, which reflects importantly on Being and Time’s existential analysis of “being-towards-death.”

Being-towards-death, in the most veiled forms, is the goad of the highest historicality and is the secret ground of the decidedness toward the shortest path [...] 

[...] The uniqueness of death in human Da-sein belongs to the most original determination of Da-sein, namely, to be ap-propriated by beyng itself in order to ground this latter in its truth (openness of self-concealing). In the unusualness and uniqueness of death, what opens up is the most unusual amid all beings, beyng itself, which essentially occurs as estrangement. Yet in order to surmise anything at all of this most original nexus [...] what had to be made visible first and in all sharpness and uniqueness is the relation of Da-sein to death itself, i.e. the connection between resoluteness (openness) and death, i.e., the running-ahead [Vorlaufen]. Yet this running ahead toward death is not to be made visible for the sake of attaining mere “nothingness,” but just the opposite, so that openness for being might be disclosed—fully and out of what is most extreme. (CPII, 22-3; §160-1)

Here the uniqueness of Dasein shelters the veiled belonging as hearkening (zugehörig) to the truth event in Being (φύσις-ἀλήθεια). As we learn in the grounding of the Contributions, Being’s singularity requires Dasein’s uniqueness as unique playspace for its “openness of self-concealing” (Lichtung), i.e. as the momentary site for the fissuring collision in Being of possibility and necessity, the possible “belonging of the ‘not’ to being,” and “the unfathomable fullness of the essence of ‘necessity.’” (CP II, §160)

Granting Dasein access to a free playing field of φύσις-ἀλήθεια, beyng-towards-death does not “deny ‘beyng,’” but becomes the “ground of [beyng’s] complete and essential affirmability.” However, this deepest correspondence of possibility and necessity in the fissuring of Abyss, and its “mostly unrecognized mirror-image in the ‘Da,’” is no less

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35 The compound φύσις-ἀλήθεια, prevalent in the treatises of the 1930s, brings together within the first beginning of the history of philosophy the twofold of Heraclitus’s φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεί, the nature that [playfully] loves to hide, and Parmenides’s Αλήθείς εὐκυκλέος ἄτρεμες ἕτορ, the untrembling well-rounded heart of truth, in order to make an important argument concerning what Greek thought both accomplishes (a playful-mortal thinking in Being as φύσις), and what it leaves unthought (the relation of concealing to un-concealing in Dasein as Temporality). Insofar as Being and Time asks the question of concealing in the moment of death, and moves this question towards un-concealing, it is on the way to the other beginning as return of the wedding.
elusive in the *Contributions* than it was *Being and Time*, a “secret ground.” But the *Contributions* do go further in no longer bracketing the sister attunement of anxiety in the face of death, which is “unshakable joy.” Moving through beyng-towards-death into the greeting of the futural ones as celebrating the passing god, the *Contributions* can be seen to pick up the theme of being-towards-death where *Being and Time* leaves off, i.e. at the extreme limits where “Being might be disclosed—fully and out of what is most extreme.”

The thread (or wire) that leads from *Being and Time*’s vision of Dasein as an in-between playspace for natality and mortality, to the *Contributions* leads by way of a non-metaphysical thinking of Heraclitus’s aphorisms on thanatological interchange. Heraclitus, an obscure and mournful thinker, is pervasively absent-present in *Being and Time*, i.e. he is mentioned once. Yet this once stages him (alongside Parmenides) in a crucial role. In §44 “Dasein, Disclosedness, and Truth,” in connection with Aristotle’s λόγος as ἀπόφασις and ἀληθεύειν of πρᾶγμα and φανόμενο, Heidegger asks:

> And is it a coincidence that in one of the fragments of Heraclitus—the oldest fragment of philosophical doctrine which *explicitly* treats the λόγος—the phenomena of truth in the sense of discoveredness (unconcealment), as we have set it forth, shows through? (BT, 210-1; SZ, 219) (See “Ἀλήθεια: Heraclitus, Fragment B 16” in EGT, 102-123)

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36 See the SS 1926 *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy* on Heidegger’s accord with Heraclitus in: 1) the Ἐν-Πάντα as circular harmony and oppositional strife; 2) λόγος as common gathering principle of the Being of beings articulated in λέγειν (discourse); 3) the ψυχή (Dasein) as a vast “understanding, insight,” augmenting and unfolding the richness and ambiguity of meaning; 4) in thinking ἀλήθεια, except insofar as Heraclitus reduces nonbeing to the ontic; 5) in the Hegelian abstraction of Heraclitus, which Heidegger opposes, and for which “Being and nonbeing are abstractions. Becoming is the first ‘truth,’ the true essence, time itself.” (GA 22, 51) Heraclitus’s stronger weakness permeates Division II: 1) as being-towards-death in the sense of mortal temporality, a φύσις that loves to conceal itself; 2) as hearing and hearkening in relation to the call of conscience, λόγος as sigetic hearkening ground for λέγειν (see 1944/5 “Αλόγος: Heraclitus, Fragment B 50.” EGT, 59-78); 3) as temporality in the ontological meaning of Care as anticipatory resoluteness, or “single common κόσμος for those who are awake, but each sleeper retires into a private understanding” (see the 1929 “On the Essence of Ground” in PM, 112); 4) as shared historicity in the eventful stretch between natality and mortality, and thus the ξύνων, yoke of play and death as what is κοινόν; and finally, 5) as the idea of time itself as horizon of Being, not “becoming,” but Αἰών. In all six sections of Division II, then, Heraclitus is in play.
In the concluding seminar of the 1966/7 Heraclitus Seminar, Heidegger in attendance, Eugen Fink closes with a re-interpretation of Fragment 48, τὸ οὖν τὸξο ὤνομα, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος, “the name of the bow is life, but its work is death.” The fragment which is doing the work of Fink’s interpretation here, relating the bow of life/death to the lyre of the community festival, is Fragment 51: “They do not understand how what is born part agrees with itself, struggling union, like that of the bow and the lyre.” Τὸ ἀντίζον, “what struggles against each other,” and the συμφέρον, what coheres, “harmonizing,” play together the transformations (ἀλλοίωσις) of all worldly qualities or states of affair into one another (παλιντροπος): cold and warmth, beauty and ugliness, concord and conflict, treasure and trash, mortal death and divine life, mortal life and the gods’ dying, Hades and Dionysos, the road up and the road down, night and day, fire and all things, all things and fire, and in general, the invisible harmony and the visible one.

These are just some of the oppositions that are co-thought as One (Ἐν) struggle (πόλεμος) in multiplicity (Πάντα), ἀντίζον as συμφέρον, a bow of life whose work is death. Fink’s closing contribution to this ancient discussion is thought-provoking:

The bow unites itself in the contraries of striving and the domain of death. The lyre is the instrument which celebrates the festival. It is the unifying of what is at first struggling in opposition. It unifies the community of the festival. Fr. 51 views not only the relationship of the lyre and the community festival, but also the relationship of the dead. The work of the bow is death, a fundamental situation distinguished from the festival. Death and festival are linked together, but not only as the bow ends are tautened by the string, but in the manner of manifold counter-relationships. Still, we must break off here, because these fragments require a more fundamental consideration. (HS, 159)

I argue that Fink’s conception of the bow and lyre as oppositionality and community, the strife related to death, and the harmony of the community festival, are indistinguishable here from Heidegger’s own views. Not only is Being and Time’s analysis of anticipation (Vorlaufen) situtable within this Heraclitean metaphorology: i.e. being-towards-death is a precise taking-aim (προαίρεσις) at death, only perhaps hitting the mark of Dasein’s finite totality. But what is more, in the relation of natality and mortality in post-Being and Time works Heidegger can be seen to take up the lyre beginning with his remarks on
Life’s transcendent play in GA 27, §36 (Fink in attendance). Finally, and more clearly, Heidegger’s most sustained discussion of Heraclitus in the WS 1944/5 (GA 55), thinks Ἀρτεμίς as the goddess of Bogen und Leier: not only the life of harmony and play of φύσις, but strife (Ἔρις) and death (Θάνατος), and the transformations of the whole.

Life and death run counter to one another. To be sure. Yet at the extreme point of opposition things that run counter turn most intimately towards one another. (GA 55, 18)

The Huntress, who seeks the most living force, finds it in death, and carries the signs of play and death—lyre and bow. (GA 55, 25-6)

Fink’s remarks at the close of the 1967/8 Heraclitus Seminar can thus be seen to draw what is most Heraclitean in all Heidegger’s meditation on time, being, oppositionality, death, and the work of community (“first struggling in opposition”), beginning with the classic analysis of Dasein’s finitude in Division II in Being and Time. Death and the festival are related. First, as “the bow’s ends are tautened by the string,” at the one end, the festivities of mortality and totality, and at the other, festivities of natality and possibility. But more importantly, this tautening of the string is also the sounding of the community’s lyre, plucked between natality and fatality, a unifying center and sounding onset that brings the strife of the oppositional into the resonances of Ereignis-Enteignis (Hochzeit). Perhaps already in Division II and certainly in the 1930s and beyond, these are the darting melodies of the gods Apollo/Artemis and Dionysos/Hades, gods who arrest mortal Dasein at all aporetic thresholds and daimonic places, and in order to initiate Dasein into the ways of death, which are also the ways of the bow and lyre of life (βίος).
2.2.3 Ekstatic Time and Daimonic Playspace: Myth and Freedom as Being-History

This unified phenomenon of the future that makes present in the process of having-been is what we call *temporality*. Only because Dasein is determined as temporality does it make possible for itself the authentic potentiality-of-being-a-whole of anticipatory resoluteness which we characterized. *Temporality reveals itself as the meaning of authentic care.*

(BT, 311)

In resoluteness, the present is not only brought back from the dispersion in what is taken care of closest at hand, but is held in the future and having-been. We call the *present* that is held in authentic temporality, and is thus *authentic*, the *Moment* [Augenblick]. The term must be understood in the active sense of an ekstasy. (BT, 323; SZ, 338)

Not just any event that passes in the flow of time, the festival is the most time-like of events (*Zeithaft*), and in the specific sense of being a finite temporalization of temporality. Drawing its occurrence from out of the future, the Dasein of the festival must resolve itself, i.e. decide in favor of the extraordinary disclosure that the festival is supposed to be, a fulfilled time that, for a while, is held in the between of history and time, held in the Moment “understood in the active sense of an ekstasy” (*praesens*).

Let us summarize the analysis of primordial temporality in the following theses. Time is primordial as the temporalizing of temporality, and makes possible the constitution of the structure of care. Temporality is essentially ecstatic. Temporality temporalizes itself primordially out of the future. Primordial time is finite. (BT, 316; SZ, 331)

The festival concerns each of these theses. First, it is the time of a temporalization of temporality that is disclosive of world and things. Second, it is a time of rapture (*Entrückung*), a transport out of everydayness into the prevailing of Dasein’s ownmost inhabitable possibilities. Third, the festival temporalizes itself not only as a memorializing repetition of the immemorial, but it is the memory’s own futurity. Finally, the time of the festival as opening to the un-limited (ἄπειρον) is delimited, closed off by its temporal boundaries, and so isolated as an event that occurs occasionally, and which also returns.
Understanding is primarily grounded in the future; *attunement*, on the other hand temporalizes itself primarily in having-been. Mood temporalizes itself, that is, its specific ecstasy belongs to a future and a present, but in such a way that having-been modifies the equiprimordial ecstasies. (BT, 325; SZ, 340)

This analysis of attunement as fundamental to the futurity of understanding and thus to Dasein’s understanding of Being is developed throughout Heidegger’s later thinking of those most “fundamental attunements” (*Grundstimmungen*) in which Dasein “brings itself forth again [holt sich ... wieder ... vor] to its ownmost potentiality-of-being. We call authentic having-been repetition [*Wiederholung*] (BT, 324; SZ, 339). We hear in §74:

> Repetition is explicitly handing down [*Überlieferung*], that is, going back to the possibilities of the Dasein that has been there [...] [it] responds to the possibility of existence that has-been there. But responding [Erwiderung] to this possibility in a resolution is at the same time, *as a response belonging to the Moment*, the renunciation [Widerruf] of that which is working itself out in the today as “past.” (BT, 367; SZ, 385-6)

The festival is nothing if not the temporality of an originary repetition that receives and renounces the traditional (*überlieferten*) in responding understandingly, and as belonging to this beginning’s hidden transformation in the future. But this as yet tells us nothing of what it is, from *Being and Time* to the later writings, that most bears repeating, and which thus belongs to the carrying-through (*Austrag*). There are two passages in *Being and Time* that define the stance (or schema) in which authentic repetition learns to hold itself.

What is characteristic about authentic, existentially projected being-towards-death can thus be summarized as follows: *anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility to be itself in passionate, anxious freedom towards death, which is free of the illusions of the they, factical, and certain of itself.*

(BT 255; SZ, 267)

*Only a being that is essentially futural in its being so that it can let itself be thrown back upon its factical there, free for its death and shattering itself on it, that is, only a being that, as futural, is equiprimordially having-been, can hand down to itself its inherited*
possibility, take over its own thrownness and be in the Moment for “its time.” Only authentic temporality that is at the same time finite makes something like fate, that is, authentic historicality possible. (BT 366; SZ, 367)

Among the strangest and most difficult passages in Being and Time, let us imagine a transposition of their content into the time-play-space of the festival in which, for a Moment, in a reserved festivity as freedom towards the beginning, Dasein enjoins an illusionless Mitsein to overcome its existential fallenness into idle talk, and in the thrown project of anticipatory resoluteness, escorts Mitsein into the irruptive between of the as-structure, there (Da) learning the affirmative celebration of inter-playing φαίνομενον.

Reciprocally intertwining death and life, certainty and ambiguity, shattering against the end, and gathering into beginning, Dasein’s festival of authenticity would thus enact an ‘essential modification’ of memory into the Moment, necessity into freedom, history into historicity, and fate into destiny. It is here, moreover, that we can touch on the difficult question, also leading beyond Being and Time, of how the three schemas of ekstatic temporality—1) the returning to itself out of the future, 2) the disclosure to itself in attunement of anticipatory having-been as thrown, and 3) the extraordinary “making present as being-together-with” other beings in the “in-order-to”—altogether open up the abyss as Dasein’s transcendence unto world, i.e. Being-in-the-world as transcendence.

The world is disclosed with the factical existence of Dasein, if indeed Dasein essentially exists as being-in-the-world. And if the being of Dasein is completely grounded in temporality, temporality must make possible being-in-the-world and thus the transcendence of Dasein [...] The existential and temporal condition of the possibility of the world lies in the fact that temporality, as an ecstatical unity, has something like a horizon.

(BT 346-7; SZ, 364-5)

The festival will soon become the horizonal site (ὁρισμός, ὁρίζειν) for authentic temporalization. First, the festival is the scission-point (ὁριζω, to cut, divide, separate) of the everyday and the extraordinary, the habitual and the inhabitual, Being and beings. As scission-point the festival is also the ὁρος, boundary or space that opens into new relation what it divides, inaugurating a region of leeway or field of play (Spielraum). As bounding
the festival is also “ἐκστατικόν par excellence” (BT, 314; SZ, 329), the ὀρισμός of the meaning of Being as place (τόπος), i.e. what “clears the there primordially” (BT, 334; SZ 351), by opening transcendence to the coupling of space and time, and thus to the Time wherein it “becomes possible for Dasein to break into space.” (BT, 350/1; SZ, 368/369)

Compare §19 “Time & Temporality” in the SS 1927 Basic Problems of Phenomenology:

What we are commonly familiar with as time originates with respect to its time character from ecstatic-horizontal temporality; therefore, that from which the derivative time stems must be called time in the primary sense: the time that temporalizes itself, and as such, temporalizes world-time [Weltzeit]. If original time qua temporality makes possible the Dasein’s ontological constitution, and this being, the Dasein, is in such a way that it temporalizes itself, then this being with the mode of being of existent Dasein must be called originally and fitly the temporal entity as such. (BPP, 271; GA 24, 383-4)

We may compare this passage to another in the 1929 “On the Essence of Ground,” where temporalizing of Temporality” is “a preliminary name for the truth of being.”

Beings, such as nature in the broadest sense, could in no way become manifest unless they found occasion [Gelegenheit] to enter into a world. This is why we speak of their possible and occasional entry into world. [Welteingang] [...] Only if, amid beings in their totality, beings come to be “more in being” in the manner of the temporalizing of Dasein are there the hours and days of beings’ entry into world. And only if this primordial history, namely, transcendence, occurs, i.e., only if beings having the character of being-in-the-world irrupt [einbricht] into beings, is there the possibility of beings manifesting themselves [sich offenbart]. (PM, 123; GA 9, 58-9)

As Being and Time had focused on the ekstatico-horizontal structures inherent to Dasein’s transition from Zeitlichkeit to Temporalität, so the SS 1927 The Basic Problems of Phenomenology do likewise, now as the existentiell opening of “world-time” (Weltzeit).

Following from this the 1929 “On the Essence of Ground” goes further in thinking the occasionality of Dasein’s entry into world time as a creative between, i.e. world-forming relation, between transcendence and its ontic horizons. These shifts are too subtle to speak of a change of position. But it does appear that in texts subsequent to Being and Time, Heidegger thinks Temporalität more in its temporal occasionality as a ποίησις.
This occasionality of world time is already present in Being and Time: for instance, in the transition from Ch. 5 to 6, “The Temporal Meaning of the Everdayness of Dasein” to “The Existential and Ontological Exposition of the Problem of History,” where we read:

Only if we bring the everyday “occurrence” of Dasein and the heedful calculation of “time” in this occurrence [i.e. “the calendar”] into the interpretation of the temporality of Dasein, will our orientation be comprehensive enough to enable us to make the ontological meaning of everydayness as such problematic. However, since basically nothing other is meant by the term everydayness than temporality, and since temporality makes the being of Dasein possible, an adequate conceptual delineation of everydayness can succeed only in the framework of a fundamental discussion of the meaning of being in general and its possible variations. (BT, 353-4; SZ, 371-2)

This says that only by entering into an “exceptional domain” (ausgezeichneten Bezirk) beyond everydayness does Being-in-the-world open its transcendence ‘authentically.’ Being and Time approaches the question of authentic “historicality” (Geschichtlichkeit). 37

The question of the “connectedness” of Gebürtigsein and Sein-zum-Tode thus names the ontological problem of occurrence (Geschehen). Geschehen is certainly a precursor of Ereignis: natality and mortality, being-born and dying, inceptuality and finality, all are intertwined in the “essential occurrence” of Dasein as a temporal sojourn.

To engage the structures of Dasein’s sojourn in ‘existentiell truth’ and ‘existential possibility’ requires first an “ontological understanding of historicity.” For just as “Within timeliness has its source in temporality” (BT, 359; SZ, 377), so everyday time and its understanding of historicity is, qua Geschichtlichkeit, to open the Eigentum of Dasein’s “primordial rootedness” (ursprünglich Verwurzelung), and “autochthony” (Bödenstandigkeit) in the occasional sojourns of primordial time as horizental for Being.

37 See BT, 357-8; SZ, 374-5: “Understood existentially, birth is never something past in the sense of what is no longer present, and death is just as far from having the kind of being of something outstanding that is not yet present but will come. Factual Dasein exists as being born [gebürtig], and in being born it is also already dying [stirbt es] in the sense of being-toward-death. [...] In the unity of thrownness and the fleeting, or else anticipatory, being-toward-death birth and death “are connected” in the way appropriate to Dasein. As care, Dasein is the “between.” But the constitutional totality of care has the possible ground of its unity in temporality [...] The specific movement of the stretched out stretching itself along, we call Dasein’s occurrence [Geschehen].”
The key text for this development is probably the SS 1928 *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Part II, “The Metaphysics of the Principle of Reason as the Foundational Problem of Logic.” I focus on §10 “The problem of transcendence and the problem of *Being and Time*,” and its “Appendix.” (MFL, 136-159: GA 26, 171-202)

Heidegger here frames a movement beyond fundamental ontology in the very cautious terms of a transformational repetition of fundamental ontology from out of its “ancient, early [manifestation]” and “elemental force.” This is explained, moreover, in terms of the “*metaphysica naturalis*” and history of “*humanitas*” that can be found “in Dasein itself.” Access (*Zugang*) to this new project beyond the “temporal science” of Being, but still forged in the workshop of a phenomenological hermeneutics of Dasein, is to be given in a new spatial science, the science of meta-ontology. This possibility of a “metontology of spatiality” is mentioned only in passing, however, in the course of a discussion of dispersiveness (*Zerstreuheit*) as a *constitutivum* of Dasein. (MFL, 136-7)

Although Dasein is, in its “primordial positivity” and “peculiar neutrality,” “neither of the two sexes,” it is always as factically “disunited (*Zwiespaltig*) in a particular sexuality.” Dasein’s spatial manifoldedness is not in this sense “a large primal being in its simplicity becoming ontically split into many individuals,” but it is the spatial bestrewal (*Streuung*) and dissemination (*Zerstreuung*) of those unique temporalities that can recover a horizonal unity of sense only by temporalizing their spatial intersections:

The phenomenon of Dasein’s dissemination in space is seen, for example, in the fact that all languages are shaped primarily by spatial meanings. This phenomenon can be first explained only when the metaphysical problem of space is posed, a problem that first becomes visible after we have gone through the problem of temporality, (radically put, this is the metontology of spatiality, see the Appendix.). (MFL, 138; GA 26, 173)

In the “Appendix” what defines the new spatial science of meta-ontology, in which suffix μετά names the between (μεταξύ), not the beyond (*trans*), is that it gives a metaphysical yet still phenomenological description of the between that Dasein itself is “as a whole”

[...] we need a special problematic which has for its proper theme beings as a whole [das Seiende im Ganzen]. This new investigation resides in the essence of ontology itself and
is the result of its overturning [Umschlag], its μεταβολή. I designate this set of questions 
metontology. And here also in the domain of metontological-existentiell questioning, is 
the domain of the metaphysics of existence (here the question of ethics may properly be 
raised for the first time). [.....]

Fundamental ontology is this whole of founding and developing ontology; the former 
is 1) the analysis of Dasein, and 2) the analysis of the temporality of being. But the 
temporal analysis is at the same time the turning-around [Kehre], where ontology itself 
expressly runs back into the metaphysical ontic in which it implicitly always remains. 
Through the movement of radicalizing and universalizing, the aim is to bring ontology to 
its latent overturning [Umschlag]. Here the turn-around [Kehre] is carried out, and it is 
turned over into metontology.

In their unity, fundamental ontology and metontology constitute the concept of 
metaphysics. [...] (MFL, 157-8; GA 26, 200-2)

In this passage, at both the origin and end of fundamental ontology, stands metontology: 
“The intrinsic necessity for ontology to turn back to its point of origin can be clarified by 
reference to the primal phenomenon of human existence.” (MFL, 156) Fundamental 
onontology is thus to develop itself beyond its founding in Being and Time, and to do this, it 
must overturn—metabolize, metaphorize—ontology, venturing out into the time-space of 
the between as disclosive of the Being of beings in the whole. This is Dasein considered 
as an originary ethics and ποίησις of existence. The question of temporality and temporal 
science is not abandoned in the new turn to spatiality as daimonic ἐθος of Being, rather, 
Dasein’s modification from Zeitlichkeit into Temporalität is to be engaged as finite 
transcendence undergoing its disseminative captivation (Berückung) in the playspace.

In an important footnote to §11, Heidegger explicates this concept of finite 
transcendence not as the (Kantian) “primordial constitution of the subjectivity of the 
subject,” but as the finite playspace of Dasein’s passage into Being’s originary excess:

The problem of transcendence must be drawn back into the inquiry about temporality and 
freedom, and only from there can it be shown to what extent the understanding of being 
quà superior power [Übermachtig], qua holiness, belongs to transcendence itself as 
essentially ontologically different. The point is not to prove the divine ontically, in its 
“existence,” but to clarify the origin of this understanding-of being by means of the
transcendence of Dasein, i.e. to clarify how this idea of being belongs to the understanding-of-being as such. [...] The idea of being as a superior power can only be understood out of the essence of “being” and transcendence, only in and from the full dispersal belonging to the essence of transcendence [...] (Still remaining for consideration is being and δαιμόνιον, the understanding of being and δαιμόνιον. Being qua ground! Being and nothingness—Angst. (MFL, 165; GA 26, 210-11)

This footnote is important because it is a juncture between the early and later thinking of Being as the holy in the double sense of the overpowering power of Naturmacht (Φύσις, myth) and freedom’s transcendence of myth as its transfiguration in unconcealment (Αλήθεια). What is most significant in this passage is not power or truth, metaphysics or its beyond, but the δαιμόνιον itself which names the relation of Dasein’s transcendence to what is “essentially ontologically different.” In this passage we are to think Being itself as δαιμόνιον in a double sense: Being as Abyss, Being as Ground. This is Heidegger’s elemental-historical thought: that Being in its ἔθος (Da-sein) is something daimonic.

Dasein is in itself excessive [Überschüßig], i.e. defined by a primary insatiability [Ungenügsamkeit] for beings—both metaphysically and as such and also existentielly, in factic individuation [...] Only on the basis of insatiability can there be any settling-down-with, any existentiell peace-of-mind or dissatisfaction. The latter dissatisfaction should not be confused with insatiability, in a metaphysical sense. The essence of freedom, which surpasses every particular factic and factual being, its surpassive character can also be seen particularly in despair [Verzweiflung], where one’s own lack of freedom engulfs a Dasein absorbed in itself. This completely factical lack of freedom is itself an elemental testimony to transcendence, for despair lies in the despairing person’s vision of the impossibility of something possible. [...]

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38 See on overpoweringness in the holy Benjamin Crowe’s Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Religion: Realism and Cultural Criticism (2008), and also Andre Schuwer’s “Nature and the Holy: On Heidegger’s Interpretation of Hölderlin’s Hymn »Wie Wenn am Feiertage«” (1977), and Ben Vedder’s Heidegger’s Philosophy of Religion: From God to the gods. (2006)

39 This will be the subject of Ch. 3-4 where the sense of Being as δαιμόνιον will open the truth of Being as the bridal festival to origin. The δαιμόνιον is what surges up and through all of Dasein’s spatializing as temporalizing transcendence, an existentielli reality that permeates the center of what finite transcendence is. What has yet to be fathomed in Heidegger studies is this thinking of Hölderlin’s demigods as beings of insatiable excess in oscillatory interplay, in extrema, as the despair (Verzweiflung) and twainlessness (Zweiféllos) of Dasein as the thrown basis of a nullity.
The surpassing of factic beings that is peculiar to the world as such, and thereby to transcendence and freedom corresponds to the ἐπέκεινα [beyond]. In other words, the world itself is surpassive [übertrifftig]; beings of Dasein’s character are distinguished by the upswing [Überschwung] [...]

[...] towards the possible, the occasion [...] Thus factically existent Dasein is nothing other than [...] the existent possibility for beings to gain entry into world.

(MFL, 192; GA 26, 248-9)

But this freedom as transcendence is only the oscillatory overswing (Überschwung) of the nearness of an origin, that is to say, it is an extraordinary occasion (first beginning) which arises in returning to its interplay (other beginning) in the world in truth (ἀλήθεια):

World-entry is based on the temporalization [i.e. free oscillation] of temporality. The primal fact, in the metaphysical sense, is that there is anything like temporality at all. The entrance into world by beings is primal history [Urgeschichte] pure and simple. From this primal history a region of problems must be developed which we are today beginning to approach with greater clarity, the region of the mythic.[40] The metaphysics of myth must come to be understood out of this primal history, and it can be done with the aid of a metaphysical construct of primal time, i.e. the time with which primal history itself begins.

(MFL, 209; GA 26, 270)

Myth and freedom constellate the in-between (µεταξύ, In-zwischen) of temporality. They are the basic intertwined possibilities of its “existentiell involvement” in and as the “ontological-metaphysical project” of world. Thus developing fundamental ontology, meta-ontological questioning radicalizes the problematic of temporality by analyzing: 1) the basic existentiell possibilities of Dasein (myth, the isolation of Gewesenheit), and 2) “the domain of a metaphysics of existence” (freedom, being-with as futurity, ethics as

[40] See §10 of SS 1928 on myth as both sister and counter-concept to freedom, i.e. unfreedom: “Only what is essentially thrown and entangled in something can be governed and surrounded by it. This also holds true for the emergence in nature of primitive, mythic Dasein. In being governed by nature, mythic Dasein has the peculiarity of not being conscious of itself with regard to its mode of being (which is not to say that mythic Dasein lacks self-awareness). But it also belongs essentially to factical dissemination that thrownness and captivation remain deeply hidden from it, and in this way the simplicity and “care-lessness” of an absolute sustenance from nature arises in Dasein.” (MFL, 138) This view of myth is intensively reevaluated in the WS 1942/3 (GA 54).
second philosophy). Between these two poles of space’s temporalizing and time’s spatializing, Dasein is to engage its originary “passage across” (Übergang).

I close this chapter with a glance to these relations in the 1928 book-review of V. 2 of Ernst Cassirer’s Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Mythical Thought, Heidegger’s remark:

*Time* is still more originally constitutive for mythical Dasein than space. Cassirer grounds the characterization of these connections in the vulgar concept of time and understands by the “temporal” character of myth “being-within-time”—for example, of the gods. The “sacredness” of the mythically actual is determined by its origin. The past as such shows itself as the genuine and last ‘why’ of all beings. In the periodicity of the seasons, in the rhythm of the phases of life and age, the power of time is made evident. The individual sections of time are “sacred times.” The comportment toward them, far from being a mere calculation, is regulated by particular cults and rites (for example, initiation rites). The order of time, as an order of destiny, is a cosmic power and thus makes manifest in its regularity a binding obligation that pervades all human practice. Calendrical regulation and ethical obligation are welded to the power of time. The basic mythical-religious relation to time can then especially accentuate an individual time orientation. (KPM, 183; GA 3, 259)

The twin poles of “calendrical regulation” and “ethical obligation,” metontology’s couplet of myth and ethics, are associated here with the “sacred times” (i.e. the festivals). But while in the book-review on Cassirer it is the “mana-representation” that does the work of the deduction of mythic categories, in Heidegger’s own later phenomenology of religion, it will be the festival in its triple onto-historical sense as temporality, truth, and place. Having now examined »das Fest« from 1915-29, I will turn to the beginning of Heidegger’s intensive thinking of Hölderlin’s festival, which occurs in the WS 1934/5.
CHAPTER 3:

DEMIGODS AT THE WEDDING:
THE TRAGIC HISTORICITIES OF PHÚSIS

Abstract: Setting apart Plato’s Greece, Hölderin’s Hesperia, and National Socialist Germania, Ch. 3.1 examines Heidegger’s first articulation of the holiday/festival in the WS 1934/5, and goes on to think how the festival is the hidden playspace of the fourfold as initialized and sheltered in art. After examining the relationship of Dionysian and Junonian in Greek and Hesperian Dasein, Ch. 3.2 then looks to the work of Eugen Fink on Heraclitean theology and David Farrell Krell on daimonic ethics, work I then extend within Heidegger’s chiasmus of the bridal festival as a clasping into the holy of unbound demigods. I then account for Heidegger’s enduring stance with respect to political theology by unfolding his thinking of Dionysos and Christ as demigods. Ch. 3.3 looks ahead from the SS 1935 to the SS 1942 where the notion of turbulence is used to define the essence of Greek tragedy as an exilic initiation into the aletheic πόλις of Being. Exploring the wedding dance as turbulent center of Hölderlin’s Oedipus and Antigone, I look to Heidegger’s thinking of Hestia in her elemental significance for the history of Greek and Hesperian ontology, religion, and politics.
3.1 Understanding the Homology of War and Festival in the 1934 Germanien

3.1.1 Germania on Holiday: Becoming the Homeland in Play and Strife

Alongside the reductive exclusion of Dionysian festival from the well-ordered πόλις, it is clear that Plato also tends to evoke festival imagery, in the Symposium and the Phaedrus, Politeia and Nomoi, Timaeus and Phaedo as privileged metaphor for the unity of the metaphysical and the theopolitical. And this Platonic transposition of the festive life of the Greeks into the terrain of the εἶδος as Ιδέα broadly echoes the ethico-theological heritage of Greek festival life. Taking up the Sophoclean conception of the human being as venturing all and coming to nothing in the context of re-telling Plato’s myth of an aletheic πόλις, Heidegger’s middle-period thinking will appear to have embraced Plato’s approach to the festival, at least to that festival which “nourishes human beings in festive companionship with the gods, that they should again be renewed in their foundations and stand upright.” (Nomoi II, 653d)¹ The festival to be expunged is the one from which no good can come, the apolitical orgy. (Nomoi VII, 815d) For Heidegger, on the contrary, the festival as daimonic ἔθος of a rooted historical community is to be honored in all its

¹ See Nomoi II where the Muses, Apollo, and Dionysos are the gods who join-in-the-festival (συνεορτστάτικα), re-awakening the child-like spontaneity of an equally rhythmic and harmonic choral play: “But, by the same gods who are our companions in dancing [συγχορευτάκ], we have been granted a rhythmic and harmonic [ἐνρυθμόν τε και ἐναρμόνιον] pleasurable sensation οἴσθησιν μεθ’ ἡδονής, through which the gods cause us to move [κινεῖν] and lead our chorus [χορηγεῖν], joining one dancer with the next with choral songs that have been given their name from the charms [χαρᾶς] that are implanted [ἐμφοτον] in them.” (Nomoi II, 654a) Bringing these choral charms in language to fruition distinguishes for Plato the uneducated as danceless (ἀπαίδευτος ἀχόρευτος) from those who have learned to sing and dance well. This is “the next quarry we have to track down, like hounds on the track, what constitutes a beautiful gesture and melody (σχημά τε καλόν και μέλος) in dance and song.” (Ibid., 654d) The aesthetic regulation of gesture and tone proves necessary because of the dark-side of the gift of possession by the Muses “which takes a tender fledging soul and awakens it to a Bacchic frenzy of songs and poetry that glorifies the achievements of the past and teaches them to future generations.” (Phaedrus, 245a)
forms—from essential πόλεμος to essential φιλείν—but at the heart of the festive Ereignis, of the festival as Ereignis, Heidegger will still insist on a parting of ways between the metaphysical enactment of limitation in the form of an originary politics, and the nonmetaphysical letting-be of the limit, including the unlimited, that Being grants to Dasein as the Sabbath of its historical dys-limitation (Hesperia).

But the Greek approach to Heidegger’s festival must reckon with the other influence on Heidegger’s politico-philosophical reflections, the National Socialist revolution. These were unbearable years for Germany, and on account of Germany, for almost everyone in the world, and especially for Jews, soldiers, the ill, the elderly, gypsies, homosexuals, etc. The festival is “necessary, for it answers to a hidden need,” Heidegger writes in 1943, the same year in which the Hölderlin-Gesellschaft is founded under Goebbels’s patronage, and in which Hitler pays a visit to Hölderlin’s grave. (EHP, “Appendix”) In this same year Heidegger’s completes the “Andenken” essay and publishes it as part of a centenary Festschrift commemorating the death of Hölderlin, and inaugurating the Hölderlin society, an edition that is favorably received by official National Socialism. Such details are horrific in themselves. How is Heidegger’s call to Hölderlin’s festival different from Nazi ideology, for example, from Alfred Bäumler’s summons to “the communal rites of the festival as the experience of the fundamental rhythm of the life of a people.”

Intoning political, cultural, eschatological, biological, and ecological motifs, the myth of the communal festival is clearly among a small number of basic Nazi myths, forming in the 1930s a shared horizon of collective reverie, and becoming the subject of much political vociferousness. And on this level, from 1933 through the texts surrounding the Beiträge, and intensifying until the end of the war, the language and rhetoric, the

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philosophical, political, and poetic programatics of Heidegger’s “festival,” according to at least one of its faces, is never dissociable from an inner engagement with and espousal of the some version of “inner truth and greatness of National Socialism” as a project.

With this warning I turn first to the absence of the festival from the 1933 rectorship address, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität” (HR, 108-17), with its triad of labor service, military service, and knowledge service. This contrasts with the 1927 “On the Essence of Truth” speech (see Ch. 1.2) where play must exist as the Janus-face of knowledge. But the rhetoric of the Greek theoric beginning as insurgence or breakthrough (Aufbruch) appears in the rectorship address more in line with the martial than festive rhetoric. The Promethean-Aeschylean tragic wisdom that guides the address, “knowledge (προφητεία) is far less powerful than necessity,” is itself addressed more to the overpowering than to impower, i.e. to the political possibilities of science but not the apolitical abyss. This alliance of Science and State from the perspective of a liberated but politicized University leads to what is worst in the address, its Gleichschaltung with the new Nazi αρχή. But in the exposure of the Greek beginning to wonder as “to the mercy of what is concealed and uncertain [...] what is worthy of question,” and in its emphasis on radical questioning as what “will ground science once again directly in the fruitfulness and blessing of the world-shaping forces of the human being’s historical existence, such as: nature, history, language; the Volk, custom, the state; poetry, thought, belief; sickness, madness, death; law, economy, and technology”—in all this “the festival” will soon, and in the retreat from politics, find a place. The festival appears as such not in 1933, but in the WS 1934/5. After a starting point that is ontological and political, and after some preliminary remarks on Hölderlin’s “revelation of beyng” in the new-old “struggle concerning the arrival or flight of the gods,” and on the difference between “commencement” (Anfang) and start (Beginn), the “lucid seriousness” of poetry in contrast to the dispersive frivolity of play, and after, finally, some contextualizing remarks on the Germanien in its poetic content (“heralding the arrival of new gods”), “overarching resonance” (Schwingungsgefuge), and attunement (Grundstimmung), the first exegesis of hymn is focused on the final stanza, the image of Germania on holiday.
Yet at the center of time
in peace with sacred
with virginal Earth lives Aether
And gladly, for remembrance, they
the never needy dwell
Hospitably amid the never needy,
Amid your holidays, Germania,
where you are priestess and
Defenseless proffer all round
Advice to kings and peoples. (PF, 497; GA 39, 13)

Heidegger’s sardonic commentary on these lines makes no secret of his hesitation to follow them in their literality, and he warns against any pacifist embracing, in Weltanschauung, of a poet who, in his estimation, is beyond Weltanschauung.

Hölderlin’s “worldview,” if the use of this fateful word in conjunction with Hölderlin’s name is permitted for a moment, is expressed unmistakably in a manner “internal” to the poem in its final lines. For there we read that Germania is to “defenselessly give counsel” to the peoples (line 111). Hölderlin is thus manifestly a “pacifist,” and stands for the defenselessness of Germania, and indeed for unilateral disarmament. (GA 39, 17)

Heidegger goes on to mock readings that trace Hölderlin’s “pacifism” and “femininity” to his poetic vocation, beleaguered personality, and frustrated life experiences, and which would thereby suggest that his vision in Germanien is “altogether out of season for our rough times.” (GA 39, 26) But this game of allegiances is perilous on all sides. On the one hand, Heidegger avoids the impression of timeliness with his turn to Hölderlin, a poet he avoided teaching during his time in public office, and yet he continues to suggest that the highest talent of the German revolution might still be brought “under the measure” of the poet. Clearly disillusioned with the direction taken by the revolution in 1934, Heidegger removes Hölderlin from party-line interpreters, while also offering him back to the cause. Nowhere is this perilous walk along the edge of a knife—the place, Ort of Germania—more perilous than when, attempting to rebuke “pacifist” interpreters of
Hölderlin, Heidegger cites diverse passages from Hölderlin’s novel, letters, and poetry all illustrating the poet’s willingness, clear from the second half of Hyperion, to counter violence with violence, i.e. to do what is needed for the sake of the Fatherland: “fine sacrifice,” and even the “refreshment of battle” (Labsaal / Schlacht). (GA 39, 18-20)

A little further on Heidegger infamously speaks of Kameradschaft of the Front experience in approving, even heroizing terms, that will send chills not only through pacifist sensibilities. (GA 39, 72-3) In light of such passages, not infrequent in writings from this period, it is imperative to ask whether the transformation of everyday time into the authentic temporality, historicity, and truth that Heidegger proposes as the political horizon of the Hesperian West—preliminary to and co-extensive with its capacity to engage in ontological, meta-ontological, and onto-historical horizons—is itself indifferent to such factors as whether it is war time or peace time, crisis and emergency or well-being and celebration, that serve to bring about the turning and clearing of Dasein?

Are war and peace, πόλεμος and ἁρμονία, strife and accord, no more than extreme polarities or inclusive disjunctions of the festival recommended by Heidegger? If so then what is promoted in its Machtbereich alongside politics and thinking, under the name of the poietic founding (stiften) of the Volk, would be no less Volk and no less poietic whether what is dictated in the poem is martial heroism leading to reclaimed Fatherlands, or holiday feasts of superabundant (unbedürftig) reconciliation (Versöhnung). The rhetoric of celebration would then have to be situated in complicity with the rhetorics of Kampf, Schlacht, πόλεμος, and Kriegsführung. An ethical indifferentiation of violence and festival, strife and celebration indeed appears to be present in Heidegger’s tendency to valorize the Fronterlebnis as disclosure of finitude in communal being-towards-death, which here exists alongside, apparently in no conflict with the call to völkische solidarity, in which he finds the grandeur and gaiety of being-towards-the-beginning.³

This is the knife in Heidegger’s elucidations (*Erläuterungen*) which “seek to “point out” (*weisen*) and “heed” (*beachten*) the site (*Ort*) of its violence (βία). But aside from this there is also, as the 1953 essay “Language in the Poem” reflects, the *Ort* in the sense of “place where everything comes together, is concentrated, i.e. the *Erörterungen* of the ἐορτή that gathers into itself “supremely and in the extreme [...] shining through the gathered, lighting it up, and thus releasing it into its *Wesen.*” (OWL, 33) As *Erläuterung* answers to *Erörterungen*, so the ἐορτή itself gathers all vested knowing into *Wesen*.

Such an ἐορτή begins in the WS 1934/5 lectures already in §3, “Entering the Domain in which Poetry Unfolds its Power (*Machtbereich,*” which attempt to enter “a thoughtful encounter with the *revelation of beyng* (Offenbarung des Seyns) that is achieved in poetry” by going beyond the reduction of poetry to frivolous play, and instead opening poetry’s “lucid seriousness” (*helle Ernst, §1*) as “rhythmic configurations” (*Schwingungsgefüge*) of force (*Gewalt*) and power (*Macht*), and the “prevailing (*Walten*) of poetry in the Dasein of a people.” (GA 39, 6) This is where Heidegger most explores the in general German Classical and Romantic myth that “the Dasein of the peoples in each case originates from poetry.” (GA 39, 20)4 This *Sprechgesang* appears in Hölderlin’s *Hyperion* as the earliest and highest artistic *Anfang* of the Heraclitean ἐν διαφέρον εαυτῷ, the one-differentiated-in-itself that is beauty (*τὸ καλὸν*)—an “infinite, divine way of being” that renews the tone-poem of its uttermost fidelity only at the origin (“Minerva springing from Jupiter’s head”) and decline (tragedies, wars) of a people.

Beneath the innocence of poetry is the cunning, the *Machtbereich* of poetry which with “weapons of thought” entrances human life into its creatively self-resonating realm. The Germans, from out of their destinal assignment to Hölderlin are to hold out in the “storm (*den Wettern*) of this poetry.” For only then will they belong and gain admittance, along with other being-historical peoples, to the “mother of all” who “carries the abyss” (*den Abgrund trägt, “Germanien,” Stanza 5*)—i.e. the earth revealed by the poetry that

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4 On *Sprechgesang* see David E. Wellberry’s “Primordial Orality” and “Primordial Song.” (*The Specular Moment: Goethe’s Early Lyric and the Beginnings of Romanticism*, 1996, 187-287) There are on this subject texts by Rousseau, Lessing, Herder, Humboldt, Goethe, Schiller, the Schlegel’s, Novalis, and even Fichte, through to the early Nietzsche. In connection with Hölderlin see the Ossian Poems, and Howard Gaskill’s *The Reception of Ossian in Europe.* (2004) Heidegger’s skirts the Ossian-influence in his citation of “Das Belebende” at GA 39, 92-3.
with “charm, enchantment, and therein unapproachable dignity” (χάρις) sings “the beckonings of the gods—the founding of beyng.” (GA 39, 25)

What follows are the passages that have attracted the most critical commentary, and which concern the essence of poetry (Dichten, ποίησις) as a showing or indicating (Aufzeichnen, dicere, δείκνυμι), founding (Stiftung, Gestiften), hinting (Winke, Weiterwinke), and clearing (Blitz, Lichtung). A scintillant divine-mortal saying of what is in-between, the essence of poetry is supposed to be a searing exposure, yet tenderly intimate—festival of song—stretched between life and death, mortality and immortality, homecoming as dwelling in the Being of foreignness as uncanny homecoming.

An important analysis is devoted here to the “I” of the eagle who takes flight, refusing “the gods of old” for the sake of the “We” of historical futurity, and its gods still to come. (GA 39, 49-53) It is as the contiguous (Nacheinander) decline of the “peaks of time” (Gipfel der Zeit)—in both Patmos and Germanien—that Heidegger finds in Hölderlin less stricture and separation than partaking (Teilnehmen), witnessing (Zeugnis), sacrificing (Opfer), conversation (Gespräch), all in an awaiting of the event (Ereignis). Heidegger cites the “Mnemosyne” hymn: in the passing of the long time of the everyday “truth itself will come to pass,” a temporalizing truth whose reverberative withdrawal into its own free openness does not preclude a fastening into alliance or league (Angebunden) and sharedness (Teilnehmen).5 Between the sharing and creating is May Day, Walpurgis Nacht, or the festival of Flora, as we hear in Hyperion: “If, like May Day in the artist’s workshop, the sun of beauty shines into his work, he does not go into raptures or abandon the necessity of his work, but fondly contemplates the feast-day when he will walk in the rejuvenating light of spring.” (HSP, 68; GA 39, 20-2)

While the worker seeks freedom from labor, returning to the play of summer light, the poet keeps indoors, withheld from summer’s light, but bearing its beauty into the conflictual site of art. For beyond the everyday lack of communion (untheilnehmende), the human being is, through poetry, to become a temporalizing/speaking, chthonic/ouranian “witness of being,” thus recovering torrential time, and at its center, a new Hesperian festival. I must pass over other topics in the first eight lectures only

5 The language of Teilnehmen (sharing, distribution, communion, partaking) and Wirbel/Streit (turbulence/strife) point back to the twofold of communication (Mitteilung) and struggle (Kampf) in Being and Time, Division II, Ch. 5. (BT, 252, SZ, 384) See Ch. 3.3.
indirectly relevant to the theme of festival. After the mention of Germania on holiday at the hymn’s closing, and the citation of Hölderlin’s artistic “May Day,” the next such mention arises in “§9. Historical Time and Fundamental Attunement,” under the subtitle “The Experience of Homely Earth in the Brightness of a Questioning Knowing Concerning the Historical Dispensation (Sendung) of a People.” (GA 39, 104-13)

Heidegger here cites from the middle of the Germanien hymn, and comments:

Already nurtured from them, the field grows verdant,
Prelude to a harsher time, the gift is readied
For the votive feast [Opfermahl] and valley and rivers lie
Open wide around prophetic mountains [...] 

The poet tells of the field’s growing verdant, of the valley and flowing of the rivers that are open wide around prophetic mountains. A strange geography, a description of the earth that we barely understand at first, granted that we are concerned with a description at all here. Here the Earth is experienced in advance in the lucidity of a questioning knowing concerning the historical dispensation [geschichtliche Sendung] of a people. The Earth of the homeland here is not a mere space delimited by external borders [äußere Grenzen], a realm of nature, a locality [Örtlichkeit] constituting a possible arena for this or that event to be played out there. The earth, as this Earth of the homeland [heimatliche Erde], is nurtured [erzogen] for the gods. Through such nurturing [Erziehung] it first becomes homeland, yet as such it can once again fall into decline and sink to the level of a mere place of residence [Wohnsitz], which accordingly goes hand in hand with the advent of godlessness. The coming to be of homeland thus does not happen through mere settlement [Ansiedlung], either, unless it is accompanied by a nurturing of the Earth for the gods, in which the Earth is held open for an encounter with the prevailing of the gods in the course of the changing seasons of the year and their festivals [im Wandel der Jahreszeiten und ihrer Feste dem Walten der Götter entgegengehalten wird].

(GA 39, 104-5)

See Ch. 4.2.1 on GA 39, §8 on the fundamental attunements of love and mourning. The arguments of §1-7 are condensed into the 1936 Rome presentation “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry.” (EHP, 50-65; HR, 151-177) The 1939 essay “As When on a Holiday...” develops the esoteric ground of the 1936 essay, much as §9 develops §1-7. This leads to GA 52, Part IV.
Heidegger here distances the “becoming of the homeland” (*Werden von Heimat*) from all clamor over land settlement (*Ansiedlung*) so as to highlight what he takes to be the homeland’s originary ground. The becoming homeland is the homeland that cultivates dwelling on the basis of its festivals. It is the homeland of a nurturing earth of and for the gods. The earth-sited/sky-open dwelling (*Örtlichkeit*) of mortals is here defined not, as it was in the rectorship address and the preceding lectures (GA 38),\(^7\) in the solidarity of shared social tasks and residence (*Wohnsitz*), i.e. in a rhetoric of building and dwelling, service and sacrifice, or even formation (*Bildung*). But prior to all that earth-sited dwelling is possible *in truth* only insofar as Dasein endures its unity along with the heavens, and in “the transformation of the seasons and their festivals through which the prevailing of the gods comes to be encountered.” The festival here names the condition without which the homeland, not yet being opened up, cannot be settled or dwelled upon.

The homeland is to be opened in the chthonic Dasein of a festive Olympian clearing of the world. This occurs only in the fulfilling celebration of a world year that passes through the play of the earth and its brightening sky, the blessed gods and much suffering mortals, prevailing in encountering opposition and perceptive esteeming or measuring of each another, all of which is said in the *Entgegengehalten*. Any number of serious criticisms of Heidegger’s geopolitical biases could be deployed here, especially with respect what has tended to be taken for granted by commentators, namely, that Heidegger’s autochthonic conceptions disqualify him from being a thinker of the nomadic, the cosmopolitan, the exilic, while delimiting him as at best a pastoral conservative, and at worst a typical Nazi, and these are indeed serious charges. In order to arrive at a position to critically evaluate them, and the case will often look bad for Heidegger, it is necessary to first understand what Heidegger is actually saying, and how what is unsaid informs it. Where else at this stage does Heidegger explore the uncanny fourfold sitedness of Dasein? The answer is in “The Origin of the Work of Art Essay.”

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\(^7\) The SS 1934 was translated in 2009 as *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*. Other than Heidegger’s 1955/6 letter to Ernst Jünger “On the Question of Being,” which speak to Jünger’s book *The Worker* (PM, 291-322), the SS 1934 contain Heidegger’s most involved discussions/definitions of work. See §24b. & §27b., and my discussion in Ch. 4.1.2.
I begin my discussion of “The Origin of the Work of Art Essay” essay with the Greek “temple-work” at Paestum, “a certain temple of Zeus.” (HR, 132/4) Reminding that the temple serves a purpose, beyond its logic of representation, i.e. to become a “holy precinct” (heiligen Bezirk), built into the cliff of stone and elementals, Heidegger looks to the situatedness of the temple as an emerging and arising (Herauskommen, Aufgehen), clearing and sheltering of beings as such in the whole, which whole the Greeks called Φύσις, and Germans, die Erde. As the OWA essay tells it, the temple-work and its festivities are an extraordinary “all-governing expanse” (waltende Weite) or “open relational context” (Bezüge) in which the unifying presence of the divine, and the paths of mortals, arrive into mutual presence, and therein attuned one another to the opening “world” (Welt), the “harmony (Einklang) of the mountain and sea, of storms and air, of day and night, of trees and grass, of eagle and horse” (HR, 137), and within all this fulfilling the “vocation” of a historical people (Volk). (PLT, 41-3; OBT, 20-22)

Architecture, sculpture, athletic games, tragedy, and what distinguished all of these are arts that clear and pass-along a world. But the festival is absent from the list of ways in which truth is established (Einrichtung): the work of art, originary politics, the nearness of being, essential sacrifice, and ontological thought. What does this absence imply? Heidegger says that “presenting a tragedy at a holy festival” is a truth-founding event, a way in which truth essentially happens. Here the festival traverses all five ways in which truth is established. For the Festfeier of Greek tragedy is all at once: the work of art, originary politics, the nearness of being, essential sacrifice, and ontological thought. The omission of the festival from the five-fold list is thus deliberate, and opens in the 1935 essay a fracture in its discourse that reserves a place of importance for the festival. For although the “clearing of openness and establishment in the Open belong together,” the

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8 In what follows I cite from the first version of the essay (HR, 130-51), and the third version. (PLT, 17-87; OBT, 1-57) I have also consulted Markus Zisselsberger’s translation of the first version. (Epoché, 2008, V.12, I.2) The secondary literature on every aspect of the OWA essay is massive but slim on the topic of festival. See, for a start, Jeff Malpas’s Heidegger’s Topology (2006, 275-6), and Ingrid Scheibler’s “Art as Festival in Heidegger and Gadamer.” (2001)
OWA essays will not yet have accounted for, as the Addendum insists (PLT, 82), the difference of ekstatic clearing and insistent founding, releasement and willing, event and institution. But festival as pure time and historicity answers precisely to the origin that must be at once anarchic displacement (γάος) and evanescent institution (νόµος).

What does the OWA essay say that points explicitly to the festival? As opening sites wherein “the battle of the new gods against the old is being fought,” art’s unconcealing gives rise to laudation as a liberation of the work’s and the world’s divine splendor (Glanz) (HR, 43-4, 23), a worlding of the world wherein is “gathered that spaciousness (Geraümmigkeit) out of which the protective grace of the gods is granted or withheld.”

Contrasting the originary “setting-up” of art with the “set up” (aufgestellt) of an exhibition in a modern gallery or museum, this is where Heidegger looks to “presenting (Darstellung) a tragedy at a celebratory-festival” as involving this twofold comportment of “dedication” (Weihen) and “praise” (Rühmen). (PLT, 43-4)

A “projecting Saying” that opens up the world in its temple site, the art-work keeps the fourfold “abidingly in force” (waltenden Verbleib) by sheltering it back (zurückbirgt) into the matter of Earth as sheltering agent (Bergende, Sich-Verschleißende). The first version of the OWA essay already describes the site of this agonic yet reciprocal accord (wechselweisen Einklang) as the “playspace” of the center, a “field of the proximity and distance of the gods.”

The word Spielraum, appearing in all three versions, and usually translated by sphere, region, space, or field, names the zone of strife and intimacy of earth and world, mortals and gods. These translations are more elegant and philosophical than the mundane meanings of Spielraum as space to play in the sense of elbow-room, clearance, leeway, latitude, margin, range, scope, or tether. But it is these latter meanings that are first to be thought in the Spielraum. As Michael J. Inwood puts it in A Heidegger Dictionary: “to encounter entities Dasein needs Spielraum, space to move.” (1999, 91)

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9 This is an example of what the WS 1934/5 calls an “attuning-attuned” (stimmend-gestimmte), or double movement between creator and preserver that liberates a “reciprocal, and thus primordial movedness (ureigene Bewegtheit).” See GA 39, 150.

10 The Spielraum is to be distinguished from what the WS 1934/5 lectures call “a temporal space” (Zeitraum). The latter denotes, linguistically, a realm of past time, a “storeroom, as it were, in which everything that has expired or passed away (Weg-geganene) collects.” (GA 39, 108) Time does not play, but Dasein plays in space, thus moving into or out of four-dimensional time.
The playspace is the “cleared” (lichtet) realm wherein extraordinary things “more actual” than the actual “appear,” such as the brilliancy of the Greek temple-work as embedded in the manifold of φύσις-άλθεια, or the “poesy of Hölderlin” which rests in that “still untouched center” where the “battle between earth and world” gives way to the “intimacy of a mutual belonging.” The art-work is within the playspace ever a gathering of rifts, striations, decisions, battles, jointures, all of which scintillates in the work itself as a play between closure and openness, gaian context and cosmic form.

In close proximity to the discourse on form in the OWA essay, the WS 1936 lectures Nietzsche I, will attribute to Nietzsche’s aesthetic morphology of the will to power a concept of µορφή that runs deeper than the forma-materia distinction into the finite festivites of “form-engendering force” as “enclosing configuration”:

Form, as what allows that which we encounter to radiant appearance, first brings the behavior that it determines into the immediacy of a relation to beings. Form displays the relation itself as the state of original comportment towards beings, the festive state in which the being itself in its essence is celebrated and thus for the first time placed into the open.

(NI, 19)

Nietzschean ‘physiological aesthetics’ enters the morphological realm of Dasein’s enraptured comportment towards the openness of beings as a whole (κόσμος as ὅλον). What is revealed in this festive state of openness is the shape (µορφή) of beings as such, the truth of beings, what the 1938 essay on Aristotle’s Physics B understands as shape in the sense of image and γένεσις. (PM, 227) The OWA essay, however, thinks it can open up, beyond the concept and essence of φύσις, the essence and Being of φύσις in art.

Because it makes the ordinary appear as extraordinary, art brings forth the “uncanniness of Being” that here “arrives to itself, that is, into the forming power of its god,” and thus into the “stretchable and grounded center” of Dasein’s “historical heritage and belongingness” to the “building, and saying, and forming” of its There. (HR, 139)

World and earth, in the conflict of clearing and concealing, are supposed to find in the art-work the playing field for their more halcyon coincidence and mutual belonging.
For the more purely the work is itself transported [entrückt] into the self-enopening openness of beings, the more simply does it transport [rückt es uns] us into this openness out of the realm of the ordinary [dem Gewöhnlichen heraus]. To submit to this displacement [Verrückung] means to transform [verwandeln] our accustomed relations [die gewohnten Bezüge] to the world and to earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay [verweilen] with the truth that is happening [geschehenden] in the work. (PLT, 66; GA 5, 55)

All versions of the OWA essay conclude with a threefold analysis of the “founding of beyng” as a bestowing (Schenken), grounding (Gründen), and beginning (Anfangen). This threefold picks up the “conjunction of truth, ground, and transcendence” in the 1928 “On the Essence of Ground.” (PM, 106) In the OWA essays, however, we are no longer moving from a hermeneutics of facticity through existential analysis towards “Transcendence [as] the Domain of the Question Concerning the Essence of Ground.” (PM, 107) For that towards which transcendence over-reaches is not Ground but Abyss, and in Abyss, Being (τὸ ἔον) in the sense of the prevailing whole (κόσμος): “how beings, and indeed beings as a whole are.” Threefold “founding” repeats in the playspace as Seynsgeschichte this relation of transcendence, ground, and truth. (PM, 136-53)

The moment of bestowing begins as the freeing project (Entwurf) of an overflow (Überfluß) that “thrusts up the unfamiliar and extraordinary and at same time, thrusts down the ordinary [...].” (PLT, 75) This overflow is, as we shall see, the gift of Being or thrown excess that “comes from nothingness,” and what it throws open is the highest possibilities of fathoming (Erdenken) and founding the passing truth-event in Being.

The transition from Überfluß to fathoming playspace is made possible, in the Germanien hymn, because of “holy mourning” and “ready distress” that together endure “the non-essential (Unwesen) essence of time and therein open up the “authentic time of poetizing.” The OWA essay centers its account of the fourfold in the historical project:

Genuinely poetic projection is the opening up or disclosure of that into which the human being as historical is already thrown. This is the earth, for a historical people, its earth, the self-closing ground on which it rests together with everything that it already is, though still hidden from itself. It is, however, its world, which prevails in virtue of the relation of human being to the unconcealedness of Being. For this reason, everything with which the
human is endowed [Mitgegebene] must, in the projection, be drawn up from the closed ground and expressly set upon this ground. In this way the ground is first grounded as the bearing ground [So wird er als der tragende Grund erst gegründet]. (PLT, 73; GA 5, 63)

The language of carrying (Tragen, Ertragen, Austragen) names the temporal-historical relation of bearing Dasein, as founding project, to the truth of Being, and is ever in proximity with Ereignis and Scheidung (rift, parting, Unterschied). As the Contributions will soon define: truth “receives Ereignis and, bearing it (es tragend), lets its oscillation echo through the Open. In thus bearing it and letting it echo through (Tragend-tragendlassen), truth is the ground of the Being.” (CPI, §242)

Thinking Dasein as the bearing ground of history, the conclusion of the OWA essay asks after the beginning that occurs when Dasein makes a Sprung into Ursprung: “To make something rise up with a leap, to bring it into being from provenance in an enabling leap: that is what the word origination means.”

Wherever art happens [geschieht]—that is, whenever there is a beginning [wenn ein Anfang ist]—a thrust [ein Stoß] enters history, history either begins or starts over again [fängt Geschichte erst oder wieder an]. History means not a sequence of events in time of whatever sort, however important. History is a transporting of a people [Entrückung eines Volkes] into its appointed task [Aufgegebenes] as entrance [Einrückung] into that people’s historical endowment [Mitgegebenes]. (PLT, 77; GA 5, 79)

The transporting-escorting of the art-work grants temporal-historical access to the truth of Being as transmitted through the founding project. But the founding project is itself compassed between the “appointed task” and the “historical endowment,” and such that only through taking up its Aufgegebenes does a people enter into its Mitgegebenes at all.

As Robert Bernasconi and others have pointed out the language of commission (Aufgegebenes) and endowment (Mitgegebenes), which here anchors Heidegger’s account of founding as beginning, first emerge into the WS 1934/5—GA 39, 292—via Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin’s most famous letter to Böhlendorff, written on eve of his departure for Bordeaux (Dec. 4th, 1801). Bernasconi summarizes:
Hölderlin had written that what is most difficult for a people is the free use of the das Nationelle. Das Nationelle, we are told, is not to be understood as evoking a people’s nationality in the modern sense, but as that which is natural to it, that which is innate (angeboren) [...] What is proper to the Greeks, their endowment, is, according to Hölderlin, nearness to the fire of heaven, which Heidegger glossed as becoming perplexed through the violence of Being. The Greeks also have their commission: the binding of the unbound in the struggling of the work, seizing, bringing to a stand. The endowment of the Germans, by contrast, is ordering. Their commission is to become perplexed through Being. (2010, 60)

Not only is a people’s historical endowment to be restituted through its appointed task, but the task is creatively to take up and transform the endowment itself. If the Greek’s innateness is “nearness to fire of heaven,” in other words, then what is transformed through the Greek’s perplexedness at “the violence of Being” is the violence itself. The commission of the Greeks is, accordingly, not only to bind “the unbound [...] in work, seizing, and bringing to stand,” but to liberate the tenderly popular festival of Being. Correlatively, if the endowment of the Germans is clarity of presentation, the shadow of that endowment, produced by failure to access the endowment in the commission, is a yet more terrible violence. What the Germans need to learn from the Greek fire of heaven is thus not at all its violence, which already haunts them, but the gentle beauty of the Greek festivities. In this way, the Hesperian Aufgegebenes of the Germans has a chance to open up the Mitgegebenes, which is their capacity for Junonian clarity of presentation.

All this is readable in Hölderlin’s 1799 epistolary novel Hyperion, or the Hermit in Greece where, under the aegis of protection for those who, if they are let dream long enough, will uncover new ways to the sun’s under- and over-arching course, Hölderlin introduces the need for an appropriation of Greek antiquity: “What sent me back to Greece was wishing to live nearer the places where I played in my youth.” Rejecting the imitation of the Greeks—“whenever I hear myself called a Greek, it is as if I were being bound with a dog collar”—Hyperion looks to antiquity’s free play and golden dream as still bearing of a Hesperian future. The work of history corresponds to a double dilemma. In a world where human beings are everywhere enjoined into the cursed wedding, how to maintain the golden dream long enough, so that the creative world child might yet know the “eternal labyrinth,” and not be startled when the “jackal’s cry” starts up its “wild
threnody over the rubble of antiquity.” (HSP, 65) Beside Adamas (Schiller), Hyperion’s task is first that of “scraping the moss from a demigod’s pedestal, digging a marble’s hero’s shoulder out of the rubble, cutting the brambles and heather from the half-buried architraves.” These and other researches culminate in graduation on the day when:

I stood beside him on heights of Delos, what a day it was that dawned on me [...] Here once the Sun God lived, amid the divine festivals at which all Greece shone round him like a sky of golden clouds. Here the youth of Hellas plunged into the full tides of joy and exaltation, as Achilles lunged into Styx, and came forth invincible as the demigod. In the groves, in the temples, their souls awoke and echoed musically in one another, and every youth faithfully guarded the treasure of that enchanting harmony. (HSP, 29)

The Greeks are here symbols of those who can be inspired demigods of the archaic future because they have a festival site (ἑορτή), not on account of their agonic violence (βία). Conversely, if the Hesperian gift is the clarity of presentation, ordering, and bringing to a stand, all the more so will Hesperia’s appointed task be to regain that truly heavenly fire which, more innately than the Greeks, they will know how to transform into sobriety.
3.1.3 Beyond War and Play: Gardens of Ἐρως, Festivals of Φύσις-Αλήθεια

This [i.e. Earth as “held open for an encounter with the prevailing of the gods in the course of the changing seasons of the year and their festivals”] occurs in “prelude” of a harsher time, so that the Earth then first comes fully and properly into play, i.e., history and historical time. History is the monumental play that the gods play with the peoples and with a people; for the great times and eras of world time are a play, according to the word of an ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, whom they call the obscure one, and whose most profound thoughts were thought anew precisely by Hölderlin. Fragment 52:

αἰὼν παῖς ἐστι παῖζων πεσσεύων. παιδὸς ἦ Βασιλῆῃ

“The time of the world—a child it is, a player, moving the board pieces [die Brettstein] to and fro, of [such] a child is sovereignty [Herrschaft] [over being].” In such play of the gods stands the Earth. (GA 39, 105)

This passage follows Heidegger’s discussion of Germania’s “strange geography,” its “feast and valley and rivers” as “Open wide around prophetic mountains.” Thinking “the prevailing of the gods in the course of the changing seasons of the year and their festivals,” Heidegger defines the festival as the αἰὼν that opens a possible “lucidity of a questioning knowing concerning the historical dispensation.” It is a “prelude” that sends the possibility of history (Geschichte) to futurity, i.e. a game that gods play with mortals.

In §9b “The Provenance [Herkunft] of the Pivotal Times [Wendeszeiten] of Peoples from out of the Abyss,” we hear: “In the earth’s becoming homeland, it opens itself to the power of the gods. The two are the same and include within themselves a third element: that in the storm (Sturm) of the divine the earth itself comes to be torn open in its grounds and abysses.” (GA 39, 105) In §9b Heidegger calls “storm” what, in §9a, he had called play and festival. Sturms is importantly a word with which he concludes the rectorship address, there mistranslating Plato’s τὰ ... μεγάλα πάντα ἐπισφαλῆ... (Politeia, 497d9) as “All that is great stands in the storm...” (HR, 116) Is the festival, then, the abyssal-earthly opening in which all the powers of Dasein “come together primordially into one
formative force”? (GA 39, 115) If so then the festival is certainly ἐπισφαλής in the usual sense as precarious, prone to fall, unstable, dangerous. The manner in which Heidegger evokes Hölderlinian poetry in the horizons of “Heraclitean thought,” the hardly innocent definitions of struggle as engenderer and lord (Erzeuger, Herr) that he elicits in a Greco-German geo-political arena certainly betrays his complicity with a National Socialist, if not specifically Hitlerian Ur-macht, not yet the impotence (Ohnmacht) that will be privileged after 1936, but even the superpower (Übermacht) born of the agonistic, and in a peculiar evocation of the phrase “right is conflict” (Recht ist Streit).\footnote{Compare the equally disturbing statements in the rectorship address: “All capacities of will and thought, all strengths of heart, and all capabilities of the body must be developed through struggle [Kampf], must be intensified in struggle, and must remain preserved as struggle. / We choose the knowing struggle [wissende Kampf] of those who question, and declare with Carl von Clausewitz: “I renounce the foolish hope in salvation at the hand of chance.” (HR, 116)} (GA 39, 241)

This is ontological polemodicy at its worst in Heidegger, a thinking of the metaphysical struggle and prevailing rule (Walten) that must include not only the festival as the flower of homeland in communication or sharing, or gathering (Versammlung) and accord (Gunst), but valid warfare. Completely unforgivable for most is the rhetoric itself, for Heidegger greets the fascists where they stand, and says to them: look I am one you, a struggling German. Perhaps the worst published moment in this Gleichschaltung of thinking to the rhetoric of Mein Kampf is in the SS 1933 where, at a Schmittian-Hitlerian lowest point, Heidegger speaks of the “internal enemy” who is greater than the external, and who is to be sought out, exposed, or even ‘created’ in conflict perhaps with “the goal of total annihilation” (Vernichtung). (BTr, 73) The fact of having used a language and a rhetoric like this will be enough to condemn Heidegger, beyond redemption, for many: and writers like Victor Farias and Emmanuel Faye will agree this is well and good.\footnote{See Emmanuel Faye’s Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy. (2009, 151-73) If Faye’s interpretation of this and other passages are correct then Heidegger’s philosophy is irrevocably tainted even by a flirtation with genocide. For dismantlings of Faye’s argumentation which do not exonerate but raise the bar of complexity see Sonia Sikka’s “Heidegger’s Ambiguous Nazism” (2008), and Richard Polt’s “Beyond Struggle and Power: Heidegger’s Secret Resistance.” (2007, http://site.xavier.edu/polt/poltbeyondstruggleandpower.pdf)} But πόλεμος against an enemy (πολέμιος) and ἀρχή-πόλεμος, the struggle prior to all opponents and all oppositionality, prior to gods and humans and determinative of both
their revelation and revealability to one another, are not the same in Heidegger.\(^\text{13}\) For the “authentic struggle” (eigentlich Kampf) that Heidegger recommends is not nearly so ambiguous between strife, and fighting or battle as a superifical reading tends to assume. For the being of struggle is defined by Heidegger in an exceptionally uncanny way, not at all as domination or right (Recht), but as “intimacy” (Innigkeit), “the originarily unitary nexus of the farthest-reaching conflicts.” (GA 39, 117) Reared on war and festival, struggle and celebration, the Greeks in Hölderlin’s elegy Der Archipelagos are “the fervent people (innige Volk),” the ones who endure the counter-striving of what is “harmoniously opposed” as the “supreme force of existence” (Kraft des Daseins).

But if the Hesperian future is supposed to be nonviolent, it is necessary to get to the bottom of these proximities of war and festival, heimatliche Grund and Frontgemeinschaft, that seem to taint the WS 1934/5 lectures as a whole. So far I have given a reading only of the outset of the lectures in which we find Germania on holiday defended in its defenselessness, which is perhaps to say armed. And second, I have discussed how the festival of nature and its gods founds Germania in the ἀρχή-unity of play and struggle—Fr. 51 and Fr. 53—the αἰών which enters into the history of Being as φύσις and πόλεμος but ends up as a historically-commissioned ἀλήθεια. Certainly, all this must be heard in its dubious sociopolitical momentum: a people elected by withdrawn re-arriving gods to strife and harmony, to the combative chaos sive natura of warfare, no less than to the granting accordance of festivals in common. Such a dual gesture and hearing is indeed evoked by Heidegger with historical consistency insofar as both heortology and polemology, the unifying-unity and the primal struggle that differentiates and discloses, are admitted into the Same, to say the Same. Yet the same is never in Heidegger the identical, but what admits of the most extreme differences. And on this note there is perhaps a dif-ference, or a contrariety (Widerspruch) in the interplay of war and festival in GA 39. For though they remain near to each other, and even the subjects of many commensurate anthropologies and cosmotheologies, war and festival are also separated by an abyss, an abyss whose outer cliffs are marked as will and releasement, strife and accordance, or technology and gifting. For with respect to the movement of

\(^{13}\) On the correspondence/separation of Heidegger and Carl Schmitt in the πόλεμος-fragment of Heraclitus and Pindar’s “The Highest” see Radloff’s “Heidegger and Carl Schmitt.” (2007, 284)
ontico-ontological differentiation the argument could be made that warfare is derivative, beings-directed and beings-emergent, never a pure natality, but only an illuminating fatality. We can compare here Plato’s martial dance and the dance of peace in *Nomoi* VII:

The dance of war differs fundamentally from the dance of peace, and the correct name for it will be the “Pyrrhic.” It depicts the motions executed to avoid blows and shots of all kinds (dodging, retreating, jumping into the air, crouching); and it also tries to represent the opposite kind of motion, the more aggressive postures adopted for shooting and discharging javelins and delivering various kind of blows [...] As for the dance of peace, the point we have to watch in every chorus-performer is this: how successfully—or how disastrously—does he keep up the fine style of dancing expected from men who have been brought up under good laws. (*Nomoi* VII, 815a-b)

Both dances are ‘rhythmmed,’ by blows or laws, and ‘rhythming,’ in attacks or virtues, but the dances of peace are the more inwardly self-rhythming, since they are not merely “kept in a state of vigorous tension.” The peace dances are, in other words, aligned with Ἐρως in its natality as an ureigene Bewegtheit; the dances of war, with Ἐρις in its fatality as scission, tear, or blow (*Schlag*). That the festival is other than war would not mean that it unfolds without conflict, but only that once struggle falls into bloody combat, the first and final condition of the festival are already lost. And this appears to be Heidegger’s exact point in drawing Heraclitus Fragment 51 on ἄιών, which he cites first, into proximity with Fragment 53 on πόλεμος. The ἄιὼν is a child at play, the father is πόλεμος, and the mother is Zeit. Is this Chthonie as a Zeitigung underlying the historical vitality of the ἄιὼν, a sense not absent from Hölderlin’s *Erde*, “upholder of the abyss.”

Here it becomes important to note how Heidegger’s mytho-political festival, close to nature’s seasons and its gods, as well as to the struggles and celebrations of a people, attempts to unfold a Hesperian variant on the Platonic myth of Ἐρως. Consider Hesiod’s *Theogony* (lines 116-22) where Ἐρως is one of the three earliest gods without parentage, after Χαός and Γαία, not only the “fairest of immortals,” but the basis of all subsequent unions. This is related over the centuries to Plato’s *Symposium*, where Ἐρως is not even a god, but merely a δαίμον μέγας, great spirit (τὸ δαίμόνιον) of the between (μεταξύ).
They are the messengers [ἐρμηνεῦοι] who shuttle back and forth [διαπορθεύον] between the two, conveying prayer and sacrifice from men to gods, while to men they bring commands from the god and gifts in return for sacrifices [δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας]. Being in the middle of the two, they round out the whole and bind fast the all to all. Through them all divination [μαντική] passes [πᾶσα χορεῖ], through them the arts of the priests [ἰερέων τέχνη] in sacrifice and ritual [καὶ τελετὰς], in enchantment, prophecy, and sorcery. Gods do not mix [οὐ μείγνωται] with men; they mingle and converse [ὁμιλία καὶ ή διάλεκτος] with us through spirits instead, whether we are awake or asleep. He who is wise [σοφός] in any of these ways is a man of spirit [δαιμόνιος ἄνήρ], but he who is wise in any other way, in a profession or any manual work [χειρουργίας], is merely a mechanic [βάναυσος]. These spirits are many and various, and then, one of them is Love [ὁ Ἔρως]. (Symposium, 203a)

"Ἔρως is the demigod born of Πόρος (Wayful Wealth) and Πενία (Need) at a “festival of Aphrodite,” and in the “garden of Zeus” (Symposium, 203b-d). This medial "Ἔρως contrasts with the ancient "Ἔρως and difficult childhood of “the fervent people.” Carried through the playspaces of historicity, reared by agonistics and celebrations, the Hesiodic-Heraclitean "Ἔρως, arch-god and world-child has, by the time of the flourishing of Dionysian tragedy and Plato’s metaphysics, learnt a great deal more resourcefulness in love—ἄπορος παντοπόρος, reversing the Sophoclean expression, or, as the third choral ode of the Antigone will sing, "Ἔρως ἄνικατε μάχαν...,” “Desire, invincible in battle...” (line 781) While the violent "Ἔρως is the Greek’s endowment, the medial "Ἔρως is their commission. Ἀρχη-πόλεμος is in "Ἔρως, as Heidegger say, “the Ereignis has Love.”14

Such a reading goes beyond what is given in the brief references to festival in GA 39, Part I. But it is not unmotivated by that text. For not only do all Heidegger’s remarks on festival in GA 39 recollect Plato’s nomic hope that the festival that might “make humans whole again in their foundations,” but at the same time, they place Germania’s festivals in relation to that passing ground which is not only the φύσις that hides and makes war, but the goddess Ἀλήθεια who loves the festival more. That the festival spoken in GA 39 is a festival of φύσις-ἄληθεια is demonstrated by several mentions of φύσις and Ἀλήθεια. The first names φύσις in reference to Sophoclean dramatic poetry as a speaking of the

14 “Das Ereignis hat die Liebe.” (GA 81, 269) For a discussion of love in Heidegger’s life and works see Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback’s excellent “Heideggerian Love.” (2012, 129-152)
“primal glancing of nature, φύσις.” (GA 39, 216) The second links Hölderlin’s Natur to the Greek φύσις in the opening stanza of the hymn As When On a Holiday..., and is a clear prefiguration of the 1939 essay. (GA 39, 255) The dyad of φύσις and ἀλήθεια makes a third (indirect) appearance in two of the four terms, from Der Rhein, of Geburt, Lichtstral, Not, and Zucht. (GA 39, 240-7) Geburt is to Lichtstral as φύσις is to ἀλήθεια.

In this section I have read the festival in GA 39, Part I, and in the “The Origin of the Work of Art” essays. I explored how Heidegger’s first thinking of the festival configures the festival as a fourfold playspace for art, and as grounded in a Heraclitean polemology that traverses the history of Being, while also pointing beyond all the polemological names of Being. The goal has been to draw close by more notorious passages, and to question their hermeneutical decisions. It is too early to make critical conclusions, but the difficult questions have now been posed. To answer these questions requires engaging Heidegger’s views on the phenomenology of religion and the essence of Greek tragedy.
3.2 Bridal Festival as Essence of the Raging Demigods in the 1935 Der Rhein

3.2.1 The Unity of the Counter-Possibilities of the Between as Daimonic Destiny

The festival in GA 39, Part I is discussed in a manner that is allusive, passing, and these discussions offer little immunity against a National Socialist hearing of the struggle and celebration they evoke. But if this is how matters appear in the Germanien part of the WS 1934/5, it is the concluding pages of Part II on Der Rhein that clarify the basic points: political and ontological. Near the end of the semester, §21 “Thinking the Being of the Demigods Starting From the Gods and From Humans,” we hear for the first time of the bridal festival in Strophe XIII of Der Rhein. The strophe had begun with the lines:

Then human beings and gods celebrate their bridal festival [Brautfest]
All the living celebrate [Es feiern die Lebenden all],
And evened-out [Und ausgeglichen]
for a while is Destiny. [Ist eine Weile das Schicksal] (PF, 509, trans. mod.; GA 39, 283)

These lines are cited in the middle of lecture notes that attempt to settle accounts with much of what was not and now will not be addressed. They are cited therefore at the virtual outset of a new lecture that was not given. These lines will inform and haunt Heidegger’s Hölderlin for the next seven years until in the WS 1941/2 he returns to them, even if they are then only indirectly relevant to the hymn being discussed (“Andenken”). Already the WS 1934/5 definition of the bridal festival gives an indication of the stakes:

Yet this magnificence – ‘the bridal festival of human beings and gods’ – that unity of the counter-possibilities of the between [jene Einheit der Gegenmöglichen des Zwischen], this is nothing, merely a fugitive while [nur eine flüchtige Weile],
Before the friendly light
Goes down and the night arrives. (GA 39, 282-3)

Highest “grandeur”? Is this the same masterfulness (Herrschaft) that earlier gave cause for suspicion in relation to Heidegger’s translation of Fragment 53, where it was said war (Krieg) is the lord (Herr) of all? It would appear so. Yet now the grandness, glory, magnificence, or loveliness (Herrlichkeiten) is spoken not in reference to the strife of the German Dasein, but to its bridal festival. But what is that? Heidegger’s definition points to little, almost nothing, except the passingness, allusiveness, or fugitivity (flüchtige) of this festival: for though it may be everything, and even the elemental experience of being as such in a whole, the festival comes to nothing, almost nothing, a withdrawing duration of infinite loveliness in the midst of an ever impending tragedy and decline.

Consigned to the dis-apparition of the friendly light, the light of Φιλεῖν no less than of ἔρως, the festival passes and goes under. In terms of positive content we hear only one phrase: the bridal festival is “the unity of the counter-possibilities of the between.” But these words—Einheit, Gegenmöglichkeiten, Zwischen—say in essence what and how the bridal festival is, i.e. they provide a metaphysical and Heraclitean-Platonic definition. The bridal festival is as the unifying-unity ("Ev) of the counter-possibilities (coincidentia oppositorum, Πάντα) of the between (μεταξύ). Gegenmöglichkeiten suggests also the specter of Hegel who was not, according to Heidegger, and despite the influence of Hölderlin, transported into the truth of Innigkeit. Accordingly, the “unity of the counter-possibilities of the between” becomes in Hegel’s dialectical metaphysics “a difficult and great labor of thought” or path of infinite reconciliation that passes through Zerrissenheit, and onto the victorious παρουσία of Spirit. Hegel’s thinking is here the terrifying strength of an understanding beyond the beauty of life, an infinite understanding that tarries with the negative. And Hegelian metaphysics, a philosophy of labor as dialectical progress, installs itself in the devastated place left vacant by Hölderlin, the poet of festival.

“The unity of the counter-possibilities of the between,” that is nothing, or almost nothing, merely speculative dialectics, beyond the chalice of the fugitive while. But Hegel is not where the bridal festival is coming from in Heidegger’s lectures nor where it is going. Heidegger’s use of the pivotal word Gegenmöglichkeiten refers not to
reconciliation but to the “counterplay” (Widerspiel) and “interplay” (Gegenspiel) of gods and mortals that unfolds the turbulent (wirbeln) playing field or kingdom (Reichtum) of demigods. In §11 the demigods exigency poses a geocosmic politico-theological enigma:

Insofar as the gods thoroughly govern historical Dasein and beings as a whole, however, the attunement at the same time, from out of this transport, transports us specifically into those relations that have evolved toward the Earth, the countryside, and the homeland. The fundamental attunement is accordingly a transporting out towards the gods and a transporting into the Earth at the same time. (GA 39, 140)

To be transported out towards the gods and at the same time into the Earth is to open the attuned-attuning playspace of a “bi-directional transport” wherein daimonic forces preside. To exist within this playing field for a while at a particular time is by necessity to undergo a clasping back into the bridal festival as the essencing (Wesung) of the ἐν διάφερον εαυτό. This is the uncompleted project of Heidegger’s lecture course on Hölderlin’s hymn Der Rhein, a lecture course that, departing from the thematic middle of the hymn—“It’s demigods I think of now”—attempts to show how in Hölderlin’s poetry as a “scarcely being able to disclose the mystery” “the beyng of the demigods—destiny (Schicksal)—has been poetically founded.” (GA 39, §22) All too easily dismissible as the weirdest mythopolitical aberration, the figure of the demigod is among the most difficult topics to reckon with in Heidegger’s thinking. For the demigods are not only or even primarily essential images (Wesengestalten) of will, power, and presence, but they are clasping guardians of all such exposures, turbulences, and alterities as are borne through Care into an abysmal thinking and poetizing vom Ereignis. Hölderlin sings:

It’s demigods I think of now,  
And there must be a way in which  
I know them, so often has their life  
stirred my breast with longings. (PF, 507)
The poet “thinks of” demigods. The “so often” may be confirmed for Hölderlin poetizes a multitude of demigods, a pandemonium, but as “The Only One” sings: “They stand forever, as at an abyss, one next to the other.” These are the forms as forums of the Schicksaal, the Dasein of the poets and the poets of Dasein, the “first-born [who] must be sacrificed,” and “the metaphysical locale of our futural historical beyng.” (GA 39, 146-7)

But they are, you say, like the wine god’s holy priests
Who traveled from land to land in holy night. (“Bread and Wine,” lines 117-8)

At the borders of hopelessness and despair, “holy mourning” opens the “most profound turnaround (Umschlag)” of courage (Mut): “to hold out in the storms of the gods and to await the lightning flash.” The lightning that strikes mournful poets is the midnight sun of tragic beyng. Beyond all praise-worthy labor it is the free yet fugitive gift that says the most joyful. The intimate expanse of joy and mourning moves from Germanien to Der Rhein, from the endowment to commission, and back to the endowment, and from the decline of beyng’s truth to the gods’ re-arrival in the future. For in the depth, and even as the origin’s most intimate/ultimate finite incipience, is the new world of destiny: “‘Destiny’ [»Schicksal«]—this is the name for the beyng of the demigods.” (GA 39, 172)

In order to understand how Hölderlin’s Schiksaal (Swabian) opens a realm that is “broad and deep enough to be able to think both the beyng of gods and that of humans,” it is useful to establish a counterpoint here with the ninth lecture of the 1966/7 Heraclitus Seminar where Fink interprets Heraclitus’s Fragment 62: ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνον θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείων Βίον τεθνεῶτες, in an English version of Diels’s translation, “Immortals mortals, mortals immortals, the life of these is the death of those, and the life of those is the death of these.”15 Pointing out how these translation may be “too free,” Fink suggests a deepening of these relations insofar as “with immortals and mortals the greatest innerworldly distance is named between innerworldly beings, the taut bow stretching between gods and humans who, however,

15 Perhaps ζῶντες names the life of the gods as emergent to mortal θάνατον, while Βίον names the life of mortals in which the gods die or are dead, τεθνεῶτες. On divine life as ζῶη see the “Logos” essay (EGT, 59-79), and Krell’s Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life Philosophy (1992), and Intimations of Mortality: Time, Truth, and Finitude in Heidegger’s Thinking of Being. (1986)
are nevertheless referred to one another in their self-understanding and understanding of being.” (HS, 97-8) What the fragment says is not only that “humans know themselves as transient [mortal] in view of and in reference to the everlasting gods who are removed from death,” but also that “the gods understand themselves in their own everlasting being in express reference to mortal humans.” (HS, 100) As Heidegger responds in the next seminar, Fink thus imputes an “existenz-ontology” to the gods insofar as “the gods are not only distinguished from humans, but because they distinguish themselves in their own being from humans by holding themselves understandably toward the death of mortals.” (HS, 110-1) In Heidegger’s thinking of Dasein as a “standing-open” of gods and mortals, earth and world in the sense of a “being-addressed-by” (Angegangensein von) by things and world he shares Fink’s existenz-ontology, but with the qualification that he begins not in πῦρ as cosmological principle but in ἄληθεια and its λόγος as hermeneutical disclosures of Dasein’s existentiale structures, such as mortality and immortality. The shared pivot of Heidegger’s and Fink’s thinking of ἄθανατοι θνητοί, θνητοί ἄθανατοι, however, is Hölderlin’s ἐν διαφέρον ἐκβόλι, the ἐν καὶ πᾶν of Hölderlin, Schelling, and Hegel. Looking to Hölderlin’s theoretical writings Fink suggests that the chiasmic intertwining (χωρισμός/χιασμός) of gods and mortals is not yet thought in “Hyperion’s Song of Fate,” where the gods live in a blissful and dreamy indifference, separated off from mortal insufficiency. In counter-point Fink cites “Mnemosyne” in which the gods are able to do everything except initiate, beyond the anesthetic echo, a reaching of mortals into the abyss. This is Dasein’s authentic being-towards-death, an extremely rare thing, but the only thing that initiates a full inception of the fourfold.

While taking issue with Fink’s analysis insofar as “both poems of Hölderlin stand close by one another,” Heidegger concurs that in “ »Mnemosyne« and »Der Rhein« a different thought from Hyperion is expressed, for now “immortals have need of immortals.” (HS, 112) But while agreeing that “gods and humans in their intertwining relationship have a mirroring function in reference to ἐν and πάντα,” neither Heidegger nor Fink venture a complete interpretation of what the “standing-open” of gods and mortals is and how it occurs, namely, in the abyssal horizon of the daimonic.

Heidegger’s own elucidation of the phenomenon of δαιμόνιον and δαίμονες is clearest in the WS 1942/3, and begins from Aristotle’s definition of philosophy (in Nicomachean
Ethics Z7) as concerning matters that are “excessive, and thus astounding, and thereby difficult, and hence in general ‘daimonic’ [καὶ δαίμόνιον].” (GA 53, 100) The daimonic is for Heidegger both what surrounds and encompasses and what lies outside the habitual, both what is most comforting, the essence of comfort, and what is most uncanny, interruptive, and discontinuous. (GA 53, 148-9) Granting the continuity of life in a well-ordered homestead (οὐσία), the δαίμόνιον is that abyss wherein the ordinary emerges, in which it is suspended, and back into which it falls. Three words come together in Heidegger’s treatment of δαίμόνιον that are decisive: the δαίμόνιον is the “essentialization” (Wesung) of “the uncanny” (das Unheimliche) as “clearing-concealing” (Ἀλήθεια). Heidegger is also careful not to understand this domain as removed, strange, frightful, or alienating. In eschewing the Christian thought of the daimons as minions of evil, he is no more sympathetic to cults of the daimons as dispensers of blessing or fate. No, in the 1946 “Letter on Humanism” Heidegger sides with the reserved sobriety of Heraclitus’s ἰθος ἀνθρώπωι δαίμων, the abode or character of a human being is its δαίμων, or “The (familiar) abode for humans is the open region for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar one),” or “Human beings dwell, insofar as they are human, in the nearness of god (in der Nähe Gottes).” (PM, 269-71) The Ephesian philosopher warming himself by the kitchen fire teaches an originary ethics of the daimonic in the most ordinary place (the private kitchen fire, τα ἱδία) because there the philosopher remains in contact with the extra-ordinary (the common hearth, κοινὴ ἐστία), and thus with the παρά-οὐσία.

As David Farrell Krell points out in Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life Philosophy (1992), Heidegger’s “aurospecular” understanding of the δαίμων in the WS 1942/3 lectures as a triune phenomena of ψυχή, φύσις, and τὸ θεῖον attempts to find in the kairological Augenblick “the lifedeath of daimon life.” It is remarkable in this regard that “ΒΙΟΣ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ,” followed by “ἈΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΖΑΙ(ΡΕΥΣ) ΔΙΟΝ(ΥΣΟΣ)” appear on the 5th to 6th century B.C.E. bone fragments discovered at Olbia, alongwith “ΟΡΦΙΚ, ΔΙΟΝ,” and a zigzag symbol “ץ,” likely meaning cyclical alternation, a snake, and lightning bolt. Martin L. West follows Walter Burkert in arguing that the symbol “א,” appearing on several fragments, suggests a horse’s mane in the sense of new beginning, Pindar’s διόσδοτος ἀρχά. (1982) Heidegger’s interest in the Heraclitean δαίμων does not, however, take up the worldview of the mystery rites. Reading the “light in the night” in
Fragment 26, when a participant of the WS 1966/7 *Heraclitus* seminar suggests keeping the word ἀποθανόν (stricken by Wilamowitz) as testament to Heraclitus’s closeness to the “orphic-eleusinian world outlook,” Heidegger drops the suggestion. (HS, 131) Not so Clement of Alexandria who writes in the *Protrepticus*: “For whom does Heraclitus prophesy? ‘Night-wanderers, magi, Bacchants, Lenaeans, initiate.’ These he threatens with things after death; for these he prophesizes fire. For ‘the mysteries’ traditionally practiced by men ‘are celebrated in an unholy manner.’” (Qtd. in Graham, 2010, 179)

The Olbian bone-fragment which reads “ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΨΕΥΔΟΣ ΔΙΟΝ(ΥΣΟΣ)” would seem to confirm that such cults took Heraclitus seriously enough to appropriate him to their tradition. The Ephesian philosopher’s claim that “Hades and Dionysos are the same,” his praise for the oracle at Delphi in its μαινομένων (151-2, F106-7), and remark that the drink of Demeter, the “κυκεόν keeps still by moving (ισταται κινούμενος)” (83, F53), would all tend to suggest Heraclitus not only as sardonic critic, but as mystery reformer.

What is the etymology of the daimonic? On this topic Krell’s “Introduction to Zao-ology” reads:

Liddell-Scott [...] informs us that δαιώ is in fact two verbs. The first means to kindle a fire, to burn, presumably with the fire of life, the ever-living ardor of ζάπυρος, “most fiery.” The second, in the active voice, means to divide; in the passive voice, to be torn asunder or (when used figuratively) to be distracted (the German word *zerstreut*); in the middle voice, to distribute or allot, in the aorist, to feast on what has been distributed, to consume in celebration. It is clearly the middle voice form of the second verb that both Heidegger and Liddell-Scott emphasize when they suggest that δαιώ constitutes the root of δαιμόν, preferring this etymology to Plato’s in *Cratylus* (298b), which takes δαιμόν to be δαίμον, “knowing” or “skilled.” Liddell-Scott does not speculate on the connection of δαιώ with ζα-, and thus to διά and δίς, nor does Heidegger comment on the possibility, even though the sense of allotment or distribution of destinies—δαιμόνες as divine powers of dispensation—makes the inference plausible. In other words, Heidegger spurns the difference implied in the daimonic, the emphatic differing or differentiating that opens the expanse of space-time. He is more intent on showing that the root of δαιώ is identical to that of θεάω, “to look” in the middle voice to offer something to the gaze, or better, “to offer itself to a sighting.” (*Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life Philosophy*, 1992, 20)
In the WS 1942/3 Heidegger thinks the Greek δαίμονες as the showing or indicative ones, from the Greek δαίω: δαίοντες, δαίμονες. Their essential sight (θέα) is the gazing contemplation (θεάον), middle-voiced (θεάομαι), originally indistinguishable from the divine sight of the goddess truth (ὁ θεός, θεά). The δαίμονες are searching/gazing ones, mediators of divine sight, and even “the self-disclosing of being itself.” Human beings “are “only” the looked upon.” (PA, 110-11; GA 54, 164-5) Krell is correct to point out that, in cleaving to the middle voice in the WS 1942/3, Heidegger “holds to Platonic theory, theater, and theism,” and thus his δαίμονες is eerily reminiscent of the “εἶδος as Anblick, the viewed profile or envisaged silhouette of being.” Yet there is an aspect of the daimonic in Heidegger that goes deeper than Plato’s marionette theater with its strings stretched from a mortal to a god. This is the demigod which the WS 1942/3 mentions:

Θεοί, so-called “gods,” are the ones who look into the unconcealed, and thereby give a sign, are θεάοντες, are by essence δαίοντες-δαίμονες [...] Both words, θεάοντες and δαίοντες express the same thing, if thought of essentially [...] The Greeks neither humanized the gods nor divinized man; quite to the contrary, they experienced the gods and men in their distinct essence, and in their reciprocal relation [...] That is why only the Greeks have a clear knowledge of the essence of the “demigods,” ἐμιθεόσι, who dwell in the between, between gods and men. (PA, 159-2)

Heidegger’s preference for the middle voice comes undone in the demigods who are emphatically defined in the WS 1934/5 as a “differing or differentiating that opens the expanse of space-time.” In the 1943 “Andenken” we read “the essence of the demigods is to express what is unlike,” bringing about a “letting reign of what is different in its difference.” (EHP, 128) And so, although it is true that Heidegger emphasizes the middle voice in the WS 1942/3 Parmenides— “to distribute or allot, in the aorist, to feast on what has been distributed, to consume in celebration”—it is not the case that Heidegger passes over lightly the connection of the daimonic demigods with “ζα-, and thus to διά and δίς.” For the excessive life of the demigods is the Schicksal of mediality because it moves through everything and delimits everything. As theoric outlook of that Dasein suspended in the world of the between, the απόδειξίς of the Greek gods as δαίμονες are thus said by Heidegger to “determine every essential affective disposition from respect
and joy to mourning and terror”: “We are thinking of the essence of the Greek gods more originally if we call them the attuning ones (das Stimmenden).” Nor does Heidegger in the WS 1934/5 spurn the “sense of allotment or distribution of destinies—Δαίμονες as divine powers of dispensation,” but he says that Hölderlin’s demigods point back to “the Greeks’ knowing of μοῖρα and δίκη,” a knowing that stands not in darkness, but in the light of an eschatological depth, an extraordinary “apportioning that determines and sets limits”: “The fundamental experience in this is the experience of death and the knowing of death.” (GA 39, 173-4) The thinking of the demigods is arche-eschatological thinking, a thinking of the uncanny gazing of the daimonic gods as being-historical guardians of the “ones to come” (Zukünftigen), a gaze which is not jarring but “so pure in measure and in mildness that when they appear αἰώνες and χάρις—awe and favor of being—shine everywhere in advance, pointing while shining, and attuning while pointing.”

Consider in this connection a passage from Hyperion, yet not one that Heidegger cites here. Praising and lamenting the mythical friendship cum tyrannicidal pact of Harmodius and Aristogiton, heroes and restorers of Athenian ἴσονομία, Hyperion exclaims:

But, by the Ether! One must be Aristogiton to have a sense of how Aristogiton loved, and surely he must not fear lightning who would be loved with Harmodius’s love, for I am mistaken in everything if the terrible youth did not love with all the sternness of Minos. Few have come off successfully in such a test, and it is not easier to be the friend of a demigod than, like Tantalus, to sit at the table of the gods. [...] This is my hope, too my longing and my joy in solitary hours, that such noble tones, yes, and nobler, must yet sound again in the symphony of the world’s course. Love brought to birth millenniums filled with living men; friendship shall give birth to them again. Once upon a time the people set forth from the harmony of childhood; the harmony of spirits will be the beginning of another history of humanity. (HSP, 51)

16 Consider also Parmenides’s initiation to the daimonic at the beginning of his Proem where the way of the Δαίμονες is a πολύφωνον ἀγοῦσαι (many-voiced) carrying (φέρει) of mortals, as by bearing steeds, “straight through the appearances of things (φέρει εἰδότα φοτα).” By this way, says Parmenides, “was I born” (τειφερόµεν). The language of φέρει, φέρουσιν, φέρων, Austragen, wends its way into Plato’s myth of Er with its bearing (φέρεσθαι) shooting star souls, who are perhaps versions of Parmenides’s sojourning chorus of steeds, the Heliades. Again, the daimonic sojourn from birth to death leads at its excentric center through life/death/life as thanatological opening up of horizon of Time as Being, and insofar as, as we hear in the Derveni document Column 12, “Olympus and time are the same” (Ολύμπ[ος και χρόνος τὸ αὐτο).”
Going further than the first beginning as the world of love, Hölderlin’s “new world of destiny” calls for an other beginning as the world of friendship. But this is the thinking that will have to weather what is most difficult: for “it is not easier to be the friend of a demigod than, like Tantalus, to sit at the table of the gods.” Hölderlin never ceases to think the errancy of demigods as their uncanny ability and inability for friendship, which is bound up with the passionate suffering (Leidenschaft) love of the wedding as origin. Tragically, the world of the demigods’ friendship suffers fatal futility as its ἀοῖρα and δίκη, demigods often acting as Tantalus did in his mad quest for participation in the banquet of the gods, recklessly sharing divine ambrosia with a people destined to its misuse. And Hölderlin’s Greeks here seem to understand something that Heidegger’s Germans do not: that the sacrifice of the first-born, Pelops, is too terrible a price to pay for admission to the feast, revealing not only the demigods’ half-belonging to the divine, half to the human realm, but their being thrown beyond what either gods and mortals can compass or accept, not a glory but a nefas that casts the festival day into deepest horror.

Yet even in their terrible duplicity and uncanniness, the demigods remain “an intimating directness (ahnende Ausrichtung) toward the gods,” and at the same time, an “arousal of human being (Aufruhr des Menschlichen Seyns),” an arousal in which and through which human being is first awakened in its impassioned character and placed into the possibilities that provide measure.” (GA 39, 180) In uproar as arousal and impassionment Heidegger indeed limits the demigods much as Heraclitus limits the orgiastic mysteries. The root word ὀργή Krell underlines as “natural impulse or propensity, temperament, disposition, mood,” ὀργάω, “I become ready to bear, grow ripe; of men, to swell with lust, wax wonton [...]” ὀρέγω, I reach out, stretch out, yearn for,” and ὀρὲξις, “being Aristotle’s word for conation and one of Heidegger’s words for care, Sorge.” (1992, 9) Krell suggests: “Heidegger himself never enters the ὀργάς, never frequents ‘any well-watered, fertile spot of land, meadow-land, partially wooded, with or without cultivated field,’ where daimons are sure to dwell.” To be sure Heidegger’s demigods unfold beyond their Entrückung (transport) as an Ergreifen (grasping). But this is the way in which the demigods become responsible to and for the festival: “Questioning concerning the Demigods” is “de-cisive questioning (das ent-scheidene Fragen) in the strictest sense of the word, because in it [...] distinction, first takes hold
The irresponsibility of fury or orgiasticism cannot be bracketed out of the demigod’s limit-founding since it is what the demigods limit. Heidegger cites “There was a time...”:

For over the Earth wander [wandeln]
Powerful forces [Gewaltige Mächte]
And their destiny seizes [ergreift ihr Schicksal]
The one who suffers and looks on [leidet und zusieht]
And seizes [ergriff] the heart of the peoples.

For everything must [Denn alles fassen muss]
A demigod grasp or [Ein Halbgott oder]
A human being, in accordance with his suffering [Leiden],
As he hears, alone, or himself
Is transformed [Verwandelt], intimating from afar the steed of the sovereign
[fernahnen die Rosse des Herrn]. (GA 39, 180)

Here we find another Heraclitean reference to “hearing” (Erhören) as the manner in which earth and world, the forces of destiny and the love of a people, demigods and mortals, and the choral cavalry of a god, are co-attuned within the intimate agonic play-spaces of the Schiksaal as a seizing-tranporting-initiating-suffering-transforming-passing-listening. Heidegger asks in response to this passage of Hölderlin’s hymnal fragments four telling questions: “1. In what sphere does the thinking of demigods move in general? 2. By what is this thinking compelled [“occasioned, in what situation does it occur’’]? 3. In what respect are the demigods being thought? [“Which beyng is founded here?’’] [and 4.] Which fundamental attunement holds sway in this thinking?” (GA 39, 180 [164])

By 1941-3 the answer to all four has been gathered unequivocally into one: it is the wedding day of Being and Dasein within which the thinking of demigods moves in general; it is the desire/longing to return to that festival of origin which compels the thinking demigods; the demigods are thus thought in respect of the double Schicksal wherein they emerge as limit-founding historicities (Geschichtlichkeiten), a Φύσις that opens Ἀλήθεια; lastly, the attunement that brings the demigods into the passing of all the
new(old) returning(departing) gods is festivity, not only a “suffering of being,” but “celebration,” not only a holy mourning as readied distress, but a “jubilant word.” As “reciprocal relatedness” of “human and divine being” the demigod is thus thought as both Übermenschen and Untergötten (GA 39, 166), a “being transported out into divine and human being itself,” and a being entranced into a horizon of divine-mortal entanglement.

Being entranced [Einrückung] in this way does not, however, arise from just some arbitrary appreciation for the homeland and for autochthony [Heimatlichen und Bodenständigen] that just happens to suggest itself. Rather, this being enjoined back [Rückfugung] into the Earth of his homeland, and thereby into the poetic founding and freeing of the powers that prevail there [der dort waltenden Mächte], happens precisely in and from out of this beyng transported [Entrückung] into the beyng of the demigods, and that means: into the middle of divine-human beyng [die Mitte des göttlich-menschlichen Seyns]. (GA 39, 181-2)

Following from this we may return to Heraclitus’s Fragment 62—ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοί ἀθάνατοι—in which mortals are named twice in the middle, immortals twice in the extremes. Interpreted in terms of the chiasmic intertwining in which all daimonic powers transitionally prevail, we infer that for Heidegger the daimonic is the region surrounding and penetrating the uncanny human being, transporting fourfold Dasein into the life/death/life that, at the outermost edges of time and space, surrenders Dasein to its divine ζωή. Conversely, it is the daimonic elementals of the in-between of earth and world which entrance/escort such mortal βίος throughout the wondrous θεωρία of an immortal region, only then to let gods’ own being fall into a dying or being-dead (τεθνεῶτες) which is experienced, from the perspective of mortals, as their nefas.

In accordance with the plausibility of these difficult interpretations, the δαίμονες or demigods name the matrix of the reciprocal relatedness of “human and divine being” throughout the initiatory matrix of arche-eschatology. Or, as Hölderlin’s theoretical writings will have defined the tragic, all daimonic forces prevail in the transitional period as unbounded unity of an unbounded differentiation, what Der Rhein poeticizes as “bridal festival,” and what Heidegger thinks as a “unity of counter-possibilities in the between.”
3.2.2 Heidegger’s Paratheology: Dionysos, Christ, and all the Brides of History

It would seem that Der Rhein is privileged alongside Germanien in the WS 1934/5 because they sing, respectively, the challenge and the homestead. What the choice of these two hymns amounts to in GA 39 is a hermeneutical phenomenology of religion beyond all residues of traditional onto-theology. Heidegger here attempts to think the sites and divinities of Being beyond the unique faith and attributes of any one divinity. The blind demigod the Rhine, knowing not where to turn, but driven by impassioned excess, and possessing the noblest of voices, is a primal atheism that forces both poet and thinker to break the categorical distinction of divine and mortal being. The demigod is a mediating melding of the angelic, living, and elemental—overhuman and undergod—in Da-sein. But the significance of this natal-fatal tumult at the forest’s gates, in the golden light of noon is not, without its strict mediation, to be countenanced. There in “coldest abyss” Hölderlin hears the freeborn “young man,” the German river, “moan for deliverance” (Erlösung), hurl blame at Earth and Zeus, and generally scare off other mortals from the site (Flohn von dem Ort) with his “excess of will” (Überwillen). But what these qualities reveal—desire, impatience, royalty, foolishness, blindness, inexperience—is not just the terrors they lead to, but what they suggest as still possible.

An enigma is that which has purely sprung forth. Even
The song may scarcely unveil it. For
As you commence, so you shall remain,
However much necessity achieveth,
And discipline, of most indeed
Is capable the birth,
And the ray of light, that,
Meets the newly born. (GA 39, 239)

These lines are central to Heidegger’s interpretation and describe not a biological fatalism, but the possibility that there may be, beyond the rage and ravings of the day, an other beginning of the ἀλήθεια of φύσις, and with this, a nationelle rebirth. Hölderlin’s
Rhine flows “quietly” “through German lands, his longings stilled in fruitful commerce.” Yet he does not “forget his origin, the pure voice of his youth.” What Heidegger finds deconstructed in Der Rhein is the mortal presumption to seek equality with gods. In the place of all theological identifications, Hölderlin’s poetry seeks divine-mortal difference.

But their own immortality
Suffices the gods. If there be
One thing they need
It is heroes and men
And mortals in general. Since
The gods feels nothing
Of themselves, if to speak so
Be permitted, they need
Someone else to share and feel
In their name. (PF, 505)

With these lines “Hölderlin knows he’s skirting blasphemy,” as Julia Davis remarks in her excellent “Need Delimited: the Creative Otherness of Heidegger’s Demigods.” (2005) Locating her analysis of the river motif in relation to Hölderlin’s “Voice of the People,” and a version of the poem “Heidelberg,” Davis (now Ireland) reads Heidegger’s use of two variants of Strophe 8 in which the fecundating κατάβασις of the rivers provokes both a self-withdrawal of gods into their own divine sufficiency (κένωςις), and the self-sacrifice of gods for the sake of divine-mortal mediation (φαίνεσθαι).

Having had enough of always being enough, the gods’ excessive sufficiency paradoxically becomes for Heidegger the locus of the creation of difference as the gods are driven into relation with “an other” (“The Rhine” VIII: 113)—this will be the demigod—to mediate their own self-relation. From out of the paradox of this reflexive excess, the gods’ blessedness literally recoils onto itself in order to ground itself through the insufficiency of mortal existence where it undergoes a movement of differentiation as the demigods turn against the gods’ blessedness in an act of hostility. [....]

[....] Because it excludes all relation, the gods’ self-completion amounts for Hölderlin to the self-enclosure of an unbounded surplus. What the gods lack is precisely the experience
of lack, which would open them up to feeling themselves through the insertion of self-difference and otherness. In this inversion, the gods’ needlessness becomes the very basis of need, which is understood by Heidegger not as insufficiency but as excessive sufficiency; the gods’ lack is their excess. This, I believe, marks what Heidegger takes to be Hölderlin’s radical departure from the conceptual framework of metaphysics inaugurated by such texts as the *Symposium*: The gods’ need is the articulation of excess as it turns against itself in order to ground—or better, *to gift*—its overfullness through the mediation of finite Being (*endliches Seyn*). (Julia Davis, 2005, 226)

Perhaps more than departing from the metaphysics of the demigod in the *Symposium*, Heidegger’s thinking of the play of demigods uncovers something that is Plato’s own, a gift or celebration of finite beyng that is first thought by Heidegger in §13 of the WS 1934/5 as Dionysos, “son of Zeus and Semele,” and thus “the demigod par excellence.” Heidegger indeed goes to lengths to situate Dionysos in *Der Rhein*, in the opening lines:

> Im dunkeln Epheu saß ich, an der Pforte  In dark ivy I sat, at the gate  
> Des Waldes [...]  Of the forest [...] (GA 39, 186; PF, 499)

The dark ivy is the “chosen favorite” of Dionysos (Greek κισσός), Pindar’s the “ivy-bearing” god (ὁ κισσοφόρος in *Olympian* V.31), and which is the counter-epithet of ὁ φωσφόρος, the light-bearer, used several times by Heidegger to describe both Apollo/Artemis and Plato’s philosopher returning to the cave from the light above. Ivy and the vine are dark: the errant, maze-like, darkly-driven plants of the life that grows in the green of the foliage, “obscure and entangled,” “constantly choking life yet serene.”

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17 Ivy and vine are related, Walter F. Otto suggests in *Mythos und Kultus des Dionysos*, as summer and winter. The vine “needs as much heat and light from the sun as it can get,” and is used by mortals to produce the sweetness or bring on the madness of wine. The ivy, however, grows abundantly even “in the middle of winter when the riotous festivals are celebrated.” (trans. 1965, 153-4) Heidegger says: “And still today the farmers in the Black Forest have in their cabins the ever-fresh shoots of ivy that convey life and growth, and they take silent pleasure in the force of life when outside nature is petrified in snow and ice and long nights.” (GA 39, 187-8) In myth (Euripides, *Phoen.* 65), “the ivy appeared simultaneously with the birth of Dionysos in order to protect the boy from the flames of lightning which consumed his mother.” (Ibid., 153) In Heidegger: “the father protected him from this inferno with cooling stalks of ivy.” (GA 39, 189)
Otto’s “fine and valuable” book on Dionysos draws principally on the Dionysian metaphysics in Hölderlin, Schelling, Hegel, and Nietzsche in order, via a critique of philology, to return to Homer’s epithets μαμόμενος Δίόνυσος (II. 6.132) and χάρμα βροτοῖσιν (II. 14.325), “the raging Dionysos” yet “a delight to mortals.” Throughout Otto sees the intimate association of Dionysos with “spirits of the underworld: Erinyes, Sphinx, and Hades, and thus with the mediation of all extremes: appearance and disappearance, fire and water, life and death, ecstasy and terror, creation and destruction, growth and decay, division and reconstitution, storm and perpetuity, pandemonium and silence, intoxication and trance, the mask and being, in midst of all, a festival of “the most blessed ecstasy and most enraptured love.” (Ibid., 49/65) Heidegger, for his part, cites Hölderlin’s Dionysos from Bread and Wine and As When on a Holiday... Dionysos is “not one demigod among others,” but the exemplary demigod for Heidegger’s Hölderlin. The story of the birth of this god, as death of its mortal mother—ἀθάνατον θνητή (Theogony, 940)—is the model or sign (Zeugnis) of the tragic destiny of “finite beyng” in its most primordial singularity (ureigene Einheit) and mortal παρουσία as presencing (Anwesenheit) and absencing (Abwesenheit). Heidegger writes, reading Otto:

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18 Otto names the epithets of Dionysos: Ζαγρεύς (hunter/hunted), Πυριγενής (fire-born), Νυκτέλιος (nocturnal-one), Λύσιος (liberator), Χθόνιος (chthonic), Χορεῖος (dance-leader), Εὔιος (joy-shouting), Μοσαγέτης (Muse-leader), and Διθύραμβος (triumphalis): “primal salvation and primal pain—and in both—the primal wildness of being.” (Ibid., 143) According to Otto’s argument: “The primal mystery is itself mad—the matrix of the duality and unity of disunity [...] The rapture and terror of life are so profound because they are intoxicated with death [...] but love and death have welcomed and clung to one another passionately from the beginning. / The eternal bond of existence is the reason for the noteworthy fact that peoples from time immemorial have been aware that the dead and the powers of the underworld are present at life’s central moments and festivities—that is to say, at birth and puberty. [...] it was the stirring up of life’s depths which summoned Deaths’ dancing choruses and called his spirits and his horror to attend the primordial process of a change in life’s rhythm.” (Ibid., 135-8) These are views that Heidegger engages with and learns from, but not that he endorses, as we will shall see below.

19 In Bread and Wine the poets are the “priests of the wine god,” wandering “from land to land in the holy night,” with “praise for the ancient one” who grants “the wreath (der Kranz), wound out of ivy felicitous,” “because he remains (Weil er bliebt), and himself brings the traces of the gods that have fled / Down to the godless below.” (PF, 318, 39) Heidegger comments: “Dionysos brings the trace [Spur] of the fled gods [entflohenen Götter] back to the godless. To bring the trace—imparting the hints [Winke] of gods to human beings, a beyng-in-the-middle [In-der-Mitte-sein] between the beyng [Seyn] of humans and of the gods. From this beyng-in-the-middle—beyng in the sense of demigods—Hölderlin comprehends the essence [Wesen] and the calling [Berufung] of the poets.” (GA 39, 188) The deepest Zusammenhang of the tragic destiny of Dionysos is, however, broached only in As When on a Holiday... (PF, 465) See Ch. 4.2.2.
He is the Yes that belongs to life at its wildest, inexhaustible in its creative urge, and he is the No that belongs to the most terrifying death and annihilation. He is the bliss of magical enchantment [Seligkeit zauberischer Berückung] and the horror of a crazed terror [Grauen eines wirren Entsetzens]. He is the one [das Eine] in being the other [das Andere], that is, in being, he at the same time is not; in not being [nicht ist], he is [er ist]. Being, however, for the Greeks means “presence”—παρουσία. In presencing this demigod is absent, and in being absent he is present. The symbol [Sinnbild] of one who is absent in presencing [des anwesenden Abwesenden] and present in absencing [des abwesenden Anwesenden] is the mask. The mask is the distinctive symbol of Dionysos, that is, understood metaphysically in a Greek way: the originary relatedness to one another of being and non-being (presence and absence). Conversely, precisely this symbol, as Dionysos, is decisive evidence for the truth of our interpretation of the Greek experience of being. (GA 39, 189-90)

After suggesting himself as the collegial source for this “interpretation of Dionysos as the being of the mask,” Heidegger goes on to draw out the thread that connects the dark ivy at the beginning of Der Rhein through the pivotal lines “It’s demigods I think of now,” and into the “wine-god” in connection with Rousseau as demigod, and finally, into the hymn’s concluding “Or by night, when everything blends / into confusion and primeval / Chaos reigns once more (wiederkehrt / Uralte Verwirrung).” (PF, 511) As masked god of nocturnal festivities, the day-in-night and night-in-day, Heidegger’s Dionysos is the potentiate and enigmatic lord of the labyrinth (Herrschaft der Wirrnis) whose comings and goings to the poet priests of the Occident, among whom Heidegger names Hölderlin and Nietzsche (later Rilke and Trakl), carry in their bourne (λίκνος) the initiatory event of “tragic beyng” that the name Dionysos names, and of which Hölderlin’s poetry sings.

But Heidegger is not quite a reveler in Otto’s Bacchic cult, for there is a reserved tone, a holding at arm’s length, and even a suspicion, not only against the nocturnal horrors of

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20 At the close of “Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?” we hear: “That Nietzsche interpreted and experienced his most abysmal thought in terms of the Dionysian only speaks for the fact that he still thought it metaphysically, and had to think it solely in this way. Yet it says nothing against the fact that this most abysmal thought conceals something unthought, something which at the same time remains a sealed door to metaphysical thinking.” (NII, 233) In another inserted note (NII, 203-4), Heidegger replies to a question from students who point to Nietzsche’s sketched plans for an opus titled “Dionysos Philosophos,” to which Heidegger admits: “our lecture course up till now has said nothing about this god.” Heidegger explains that this is not an oversight since to understand Nietzsche’s Dionysos demands thinking “the coherence of will to power and the eternal return of the same” as together constellating the “genuine metaphysical connections.”
Dionysos in the form of “sinister violence and fury” (düsteren Gewaltsamkeit und Raserei), but also against the metaphysical idea of Dionysian salvation as expressed by Otto. Heidegger avers, critiquing Otto, how easy it is to think Dionysos metaphysically but “without touching on the genuine metaphysical connections,” i.e. without truly awakening “the last Western interpretation of beyng by Nietzsche.” (GA 39, 190-91) Yet Heidegger also holds open the door for a new interpretation of Dionysos to arise in the vicinity of Hölderlin’s poietic and Nietzsche’s metaphysical experience of tragic beyng.

These issues can be framed in the question: Is Hölderlin’s Christ a demigod? Heidegger’s answer is yes. One of Hölderlin’s contributions to humanistic scholarship, in Heidegger’s day as in our own, is his redrafting of the kinship, in Nietzsche becoming the conflict, of Dionysos and Christ, the bridal festival of gods and human, and the wedding feast at Cana. (John 2: 1-11) And because Hölderlin’s demigods of history are multiple, no Christian poet wrestles more with the question of Christ’s unicity, most of all in the poems after “Der Rhein”: “Versöhnender...,” “The Only One,” “Patmos,” “The Vatican,” and “To the Madonna.” Jean-François Courtine writes concerning “Hölderlin’s Christ”:

[...] Christ indeed marks an end or a completion in the ‘Day’ of the gods, this is so because he modifies the course of time in opening it to another scansion—because despite his precipitated passage, he gathers the chorus of the gods around himself and even into himself through the gifts he leaves behind him. (trans. 1999, 123)

What the Syrian torch-bearer (Fackelschwinger) gives is a total “eucharistic and/or scriptural presence” not unrelated to Demeter and Dionysos who gave bread and wine, and the mysteries, but also going beyond the mysteries. Courtine gives a spirited defense of Hölderlin as christological poet against Allemann’s account of Christ as the

21 On Hölderlin’s Christ see every major study from the past half century, i.e. after Friedenfeier was published by Friedrich Beißner in 1954. For careful text-based analyses see Mark Ogden’s The Problem of Christ in the Works of Friedrich Hölderlin (1991), and Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy “A Foretaste of Heaven”: Friedrich Hölderlin in Context of Württemburg Pietism. (1994)

22 On the Eucharist see the Last Supper in the Patmos hymn: “...and the attentive man saw / Gods’ face exactly / As, by the secret of the vine, they / Sat together at the banquet hour / and in his great soul, calmly foreboding, / The Lord pronounced death and the final love / [....] There would be much / To say about that ....” That Christ in Der Einzige is Das Ende as ander Natur, i.e. a self-renunciation into self-sacrificial trust (fiducia) as futurity, does not lead Heidegger back to the trans-substantiation of Christ’s unicity (mass Platonism), but to a multiplicity of the singular.
“demigod who uproots and consumes,” not merely another mediator on the model of the Empedoclean principle of a return to the One, but the most “abducting and devouring demigod” of all, “he who returns abruptly to the Father according to the short route forbidden to the Hesperians.” (Ibid., 125) For Courtine the thought of Christ as demigod misses Christ’s unicity as a “complementarity between mediateness and the withdrawal (retrait).” Hölderlin’s Christ is not only a mediator of “Heaven and earth, man and God,” but the “last mediator,” “the mediator who fulfills mediation to its most extreme limit”: “Christ, is the last hero, the last god after whom no other god can appear.” (Ibid., 140)

This argument comes down to the point that while two of the three leaves of Hölderlin’s demigod clover—Heracles and Evius (Dionysos)—incarnate as “men of the world” (weltliche Männer), they remain uncommitted to the world. As divine-mortal mediators, in the analysis of Detlev Lüder’s that Courtine cites, Heracles and Dionysos do not surpass the status of being ectypes of an Olympian beyond, back to which they depart, as ἀποθέωσις out of or σπαραγμός into time. Such demigods, the one taking on strongest form, and the other giving up form in fire, both conform to the “will of the Master of storm (Donnerer), to don the external signs of the terrestrial condition, while intending to remain ‘celestial.’” On the other hand, the excess of Christ’s retreat is the κένωσις that gives itself infinitely to World and Earth (Tageswerk), thus totally assuming in the demigod’s person “the humanity and the anxiety of finitude.” (Ibid., 138, 135)

This is supposed to be what constitutes Christ’s incomparable unicity in and as the festival of the everyday, giving rise to the archetype of the Cross as bridal bed, and thus to the Christian tradition of bridal mysticism from Saint Paul to Augustine and beyond. I do not deny the plausibility of Courtine’s reading, for I agree that Courtine’s and other christological resolutions must exist as one side of Hölderlin’s christological questioning. But underlying this concession, I agree more with Beda Allemann’s reading of Hölderlin’s Christ as a great and devouring demigod. Also in Heidegger’s writings of the later 1930s, especially the 1936/7 Contributions, the excessive mediation of Christ cannot be thought as founding an epochal status that removes him from the forum of demigods.23

23 In a 1954 letter to Arendt, Heidegger remarks on Allemann: “A student of E. Staiger has now had an excellent work on Hölderlin and Heidegger published by Atlantis. He introduces an entirely new interpretation, which I find wholly convincing, of the late Hölderlin, above all of the ‘patriotic reversal’ (vaterländische Umkehr). Previous interpretations—even mine—are
Christ is no longer a last god consubstantial with the Father for Heidegger, but “the last god” will have passed through Christ, as through the other gods and demigods. That the passing of Christ is Hesperia’s epochal scansion means that Christ is a “prince,” but daimonic destiny intercedes in every move towards coronation. The chorus of clasped demigods is not Christ’s to lead. Heidegger remarks with sardonic subtlety on the necessity of thinking Christ as demigod in “The Only One...”:

Yet Love clings [hänget]
To One [an Einem]. This time
Too much from my own heart
The song has come,
Yet I want to make good
The lack [Den Fehl], with what lies nearest [mit nächstem]
When I sing others still.
Never do I hit [treff], as I wish [wünsche],
The measure [Das Maas].

The poet here tells of the God of the Christians, and tells of him as though he were “The Only One” (as the title says). Yet he is not, and the poet in keeping with his vocation [Bestimmung], must “sing others still” and in this way make good the lack.

It has recently become the fashion to portray Hölderlin’s apparent turn away from Greece along the lines of a turning toward the homeland as a turn to Christendom. This is completely erroneous, as this excerpt alone already attests, and belongs within apologetics, which today has become so adept that it now speaks only in the language of Nietzsche. Thus there is talk in the pulpits today of Christ as the Führer, which is not only an untruth, but worse still, a blasphemy toward Christ. The true and in each case sole Führer [wahre und je einzige Führer] in his being [Seyn] indeed points into the realm [Bereich] of the untenable.” (LHA, 117) If this judgment stands beyond its initial enthusiasm then the 1959 “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” ought to reflect a transformation in Heidegger’s view of the vaterländische Umkehr, which I find to be only partially the case. If we look to the role played by Dionysos in the Greek turning in the Antigone, and then to the poet’s still Dionysian vocation for Hesperia, both in the SS 1942, then I do not believe we can speak of untenability, but Heidegger’s comments do point to an essential ambiguity in his Hölderlin elucidations which, starting out from a strongly Dionysian reading in the WS 1934/5, becomes ambiguously christological and devalues Dionysos in the 1939 essay “As When on a Holiday...” only then to revert back by the end of Andenken period to Hölderlin’s Dionysos as the beyond of metaphysics. See Ch. 4.2.2-3.
demigods. To be a Führer is a destiny [ein Schicksal], and therefore finite beyng [endliches Seyn]. For the ecclesiastical dogmatics, however, in keeping with the decision by the Council of Nicaea, Christ is *deus verus ex deo vero—consubstantialis patri—όμο ούσιος τῷ πατρί,* equal in essence to the Father, not ὁμοούσιος, similar in essence. This is just a passing remark in order to orient the increasing conceptual confusion to be found amid the contemporary thoughtlessness. (GA 39, 210)

First, although he opposes all Führer-theologians and Christologies, still for Heidegger the “true and in each case sole Führer” is the “destiny” that “points into the realm of the demigods.” Second, although Heidegger thinks it a “blasphemy” to name Christ as Führer of demigods since, in accordance with the verdict of Nicaea, he is “equal in essence to the Father,” still the poet sings the other gods and demigods to make good Christ’s absence and the God’s lack. “To tell only of the God of the Christians is, according to the poet, a lack, lack in the sense of not hitting the measure, due to excess and an excess of will.” (Ibid.) Where in these subtle positionings are Heidegger’s own views to be found? Does Heidegger still share in the ecclesiastical struggle to assert Christ’s unicity and irrepeateable world-historical absolution? No. Heidegger has here gone to the school of Nietzschean genealogy, and left behind the Christian dogma of consubstantialism, which he gives back to the theologians, and in the spirit, if not the letter of Hölderlin, he thus places the historical Jesus back into the realm of demigods, as a prince. Read in this way Heidegger’s use of the Greco-Christian language of παρά-οὐσία—absent-presencing and present-absencing—applied to the demigod Dionysos, and in relation to *Der Rhein,* is highly significant. For it suggests that Heidegger’s thinking of the demigods is no longer *ontotheological,* having to do with a λόγος-based hermeneutics of God. But the thinking of demigods is an atheological response to the dis-apparition of the holy, and withdrawal of the godhead, in and as the παρά-οὐσία of the demigods all the way through to a last demigod capable of gathering all demigods together, passing-by and after all of them.  

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24 I will not here take up the challenge of situating Heidegger’s ‘paratheology’ against Oskar Becker’s notion of *Para-Existenz.* Suffice it to say that Becker’s emphasis in *Para-Existenz* on human Dasein as Dawesen, a spatializing Getragenheit (being-carried) along by blood and soil, race, Volk, and State is what he uses to critique Heidegger’s thinking as too absorbed in the transports of temporality (Dasein as transcendance), and thus as not adequately engaged in what Becker proposes to call para-transcendence, in other words, the Getragenheit and Dawesen
If these suggestions are correct then Heidegger’s middle period thinking is indeed atheological and anti-Christian but only insofar as mainstream philosophical theology, whether in the Platonizing history of Greek-Scholastic metaphysics, or the Pauline insistence on an unsurpassable epochal caesura, exiles itself from the being-historical chiasmus wherein the thinking of demigods becomes possible. What Heidegger underlines in 1930s is his refusal to name the demigods of withdrawn or arriving gods as either Dionysos reborn or Christ recidivus. And thus the “last god” of the 1936/7 Contributions to Philosophy: From the Event is “The totally over against gods who have been, especially over against the Christian God.” (CP, 283; GA 65, 403) Heidegger’s “last god” is not Being, not Ereignis, and not the Father at One with the Son. But the last god is a passing through the daimonic constellations in view of their other, and thus a salvation of finite beying in the “letting reign of what is different in its difference.”

It is not that Heidegger would have doubted the identity of the “prince of the feast-day” in “Friedenfeier.” The language of “a different clarity,” recognition (erkennen) through “the Father” who inspires human beings “to keep holidays,” and the “Syrian palm tree” are enshrined in “Conciliator, you that no longer believed in...,” which Heidegger cited often. But Heidegger’s doubts regarding the meaning of Christ were of another kind, and they were doubt that Hölderlin shared. I will conclude this discussion of Hölderlin’s christological poetics, and Heidegger’s paratheology, with a passage from “Friedenfeier,” the one that draws “Conciliator...” to the limits of its thinking chorus:

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25 In the opening of the Nietzsche I, Heidegger is too sweeping in his rejection of the possibility a philosophically valid ontotheology in the wake of the “death of God” that Nietzsche proclaims: “Christian philosophy,” the last two millennia of metaphysical theology have floundered in the withdrawal of its mandates, a trend that Heidegger had hoped to reverse in the early 1920s Ur-Christianity, a project long abandoned. Paratheology cannot, in my view, be adequately translated back into a Christian theology that insists on Christ’s unicity in the form of an epochal ὕβρις. But perhaps Heidegger’s thinking of demigods is compatible with Christian theism, contra Hans Jonas’s “Heidegger and Theology,” if this theism becomes being-historical. (1964) See Benjamin Crowe’s “On the Track of Fugitive Gods: Heidegger, Luther, Hölderlin.” (2007, 185)
Yet ultimately, you holy powers [heiligen Mächte], our token
Of love for you [Liebenszeichen], and the proof [das Zeugniß]
That still you are sacred to us, is the feast-day [der Festtag].

The all-assembling [Allversammelnde], where the heavenly are
Not manifest in miracles, nor unseen in thunderstorms,
But where in hymns hospitably [gastfreudlich] conjoined
And present in choirs, a holy number [eine heilige Zahl],
The blessed [Seeligen] in every way
Meet and forgather [Beisammen], and their best-beloved,
To whom they are attached, is not missing; for that is why
You to the banquet now prepared I called,
The unforgettable, you, at the Evening of Time,
O youth, called you to the prince of the feast-day; nor shall
Our nation lie down to sleep until
All you that were prophesied,
Every one of you Immortals,
To tell us about your Heaven
Are here with us in our house. (PF, trans. mod. 531)

By the end of “Friedenfeier” the celebrants are called to Christ why? Because of the
*nationelle*, the irreducible memory that needs its sign/proof of the coming feast-day in
which not only Christ, but all the gods and demigods of history, are together a destiny:
“That all might have knowledge of all, and when the / The silence returns, there might be
a language among / The living.” After the WS 1934/5 Heidegger will look backwards and
forwards from “Der Versöhnender...” with its “beautifully equalizing” “prince of the
feast-day.” Backwards towards Greece he will seek the tragic festival. But forward he
will also look to Hesperia, in the hope that human beings might yet learn to endure the
stranger as a demigod: For “It’s demigods I think of now, like you Rousseau, / Whose
soul had the strength to endure and grow invincible.” By a bizarre twist of the *Schicksal*,
and in a most untimely way, Heidegger perhaps becomes less Socrates, than Rousseau.
3.3 Daimonic Turbulences of the Πόλις-Festival in the Hearth: SS 1942

3.3.1 Heidegger’s Wirbel: Between Fervency and Excentricity

The demigods as springing-forth (Entspringen) from origin cannot ground themselves in the festival wherein they emerge as limit-founding. This principle might even be thought as a political apology for Heidegger’s seynsgeschichtliches Denken from its hidden site, also an apology for the political stupidity of the philosopher’s belonging, as thinking demigod, to a homeland in crisis. In the last part of this chapter, I will focus on an important yet neglected characteristic of demigods in the WS 1934/5 on Der Rhein and the SS 1942 on Der Ister—their turbulence (Wirbel: eddy, curl, swirl, vortex, or maze).

In Being and Time “the movement of falling prey is characterized by turbulence.” (BT 223; SZ, 179) Such “turbulence reveals the character of throwing and the movement of thrownness which can force itself upon Dasein in its attunement.” (Ibid.) This definition is unfolded, however, only with reference to the facticity of Dasein as a being “tossed about (im Wurf) and sucked into the turbulence of das Man’s inauthenticity.” (Ibid.)

In the WS 1929-30 Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics the fullness of turbulence is the throwing-thrownness of Dasein, not only falling-prey, and is thought with respect to the definition of philosophy itself as a turbulence, or homesickness that opens up, through its thinking, that turbulence wherein “the human being is spun so as in this way alone to comprehend Dasein without illusion.” (FCM, 19) Already in the 1929 essay “What is Metaphysics?” we hear that the traditional “idea of ‘logic’ itself disintegrates in the turbulence of a more originary questioning.” (PM, 90) In the early 1930s a subtle thinking of turbulence is unfolded in the interpretations of Plato’s cave allegory and Parmenides’s journey as involving a turbulent strife between the ψευδὴς δόξα and light-bearers of ἀλήθεια (GA 34), and turbulence is also at stake in the Δύναμις or conversant
force underlying the traditional priority Aristotle gives to Ἑνέργεια. (GA 33) The WS 1934/5 lectures go on to define language itself as a creative configuration of turbulence. The poetic language of the Germanien hymn is especially turbulent insofar “each strophe” in its inner turning “first creates the turbulence and its various points, if one can speak at all of ‘points’ within a turbulence.” (GA 39, §5c) Heidegger’s first Nietzsche lectures in turn speak of halcyonische composure, not as a repression or diffusion of turbulence, but its endurance in the grand style. (NI, 148) But it is in the SS 1942 lectures on the hymn Der Ister (GA 53) in which Heidegger most raises the stakes of his philosophical discussion of turbulence, now locating in Wirbel an account of “the essence of Greek tragedy,” and vicariously, of the essence of the entire “Greek world.” (HHI, 57)

We saw the outset of this chapter how insofar as Plato both embraces the festival as a renewal of human beings in their upright standing (ὀρθότης) with the gods, while also rejecting the Bacchic festival since it misses the measures of justice and virtue, his

26 Heidegger’s first engagements with Schelling’s 1809 Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom—GA 28 and GA 31—do not cite the Boehmian roots of Schelling’s idea turbulence in the notion, a kind of γιγαντομαχία meets apocalypticism, of the turba gentium. Jacob Boehme outlines many senses of the turba in his Mysterium Pansophicum (appended to the Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom, trans. 2006, 85-99): 1. The turba “in the craving” of every essence as the disruption of imagination and breaking of its mirror of desire, “a dying of the seized life,” “since eternal nature falls into turba as into dying, yet this is not a dying but rather a spewing out into the mysterium, since malice with its life should reside separately as in a darkness”; 2. As the “desire for purity in the other being without turba, but itself possesses the turba in itself and is also the loathing of the other,” and thus is the “violence” that grows out of turba; 3. As the “miracles of the turba [which] remain at the end, a lord is born who governs the whole world but with many functions”; 4. the turba as fiducia, the “fury of all creatures” that may be transformed through turba into arcanum, languages, spirits, and attributes of the mysterium; 5. Within the arcanum, the “purity” that “will drive out the turba for a time until the beginning enters the end”; 6. Failing this, the divided mind of Babel, “mouth of a confounded being,” that falls through the impurity of arcanum back into the turba, and after Babel into the Überwillen of the primal hordes; 6. And thus, finally, as the barbaric history of the turba gentium, “And when the turba could not advance further because of force, it thus became furious and started strife and war, and from this originates war as from the arrogance and covetousness of the multiplicity. And it belongs with its number to the mysterium of fury.” This turba which Schelling encapsulates in the Philosophical Investigations (Ibid., 46) resonates powerfully with Heidegger’s thinking of Wirbel. See the SS 1935 Introduction to Metaphysics and the SS 1936 Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom where Heidegger substantially adopts the Schellingian turba and its Manichaemism inasmuch as every turba is attuned by either Überwillen or Gelassenheit, malice or blessing, non-being or being, strife or equanimity. Furthermore, as Boehme’s “elementa always thrust the astral-craving into will for them,” so too do Heidegger’s godly mortals (die Göttlichen) thrust gods and humans into turbulent-harmonic relation (Verhältnis). On the question and problem of evil in the turba, see Bret W. Davis’s Heidegger and the Will: On the Way to Gelassenheit. (2007)
attitude is basically reformist. Heidegger’s attempts instead to recover, before the Ideas, a turbulent zone of Heraclitean transformations. But in this ontological polemodicy he also maintains a strongly ethical principle of limit-founding. And in giving both a metaphysical and being-historical priority to the bridal festival as origin and end of the demigods, Heidegger does not celebrate their “hostile blessedness” (Feindseligkeit) but insists that demigods learn Hölderlin’s “balancing While for destiny” and Nietzsche’s halcyon composure. Against Teutonizing ideology, but admitting that the onto-history of originary strife is, he recommends, more or less consistently, the cultivation of a “gentle and peaceful ludicity, in which humans can accomplish their Dasein.” (GA 39, 283-4)

I would liken Heidegger in Germania to a halycon bird. As we hear in pseudo-Plato’s *Halcyon* this sea bird is much given to lamenting and weeping, being a daughter of Aeolus, turned into a bird so that she might search for her lost husband at sea:

*Chaerophon:* [...] Anyway, the creature certainly does produce a mournful sound. About how big is it, Socrates?

*Socrates:* Not very large. Yet great is the honour she has been given by the gods because of her love for her husband. For it’s when the halcyons are nesting that the cosmos brings what are called the ‘halcyon days’ in mid-winter, days distinguished for their fair weather—today is an especially good example. Don’t you see how bright the sky above is and how the whole sea if calm and tranquil, like a mirror, so to speak?

*Chaerophon:* You’re right; today does seem to be a halycon day, and yesterday was much like it. But by the Socrates! How can we actually believe those ancient talks, that once upon a time birds turned into women, or women into birds? All that sort of thing seems utterly impossible. (*Halcyon, 2*) (Plato, *Complete Works*, 1715)

As unknowability of divine and natural power, as perpetual interchange of terrible storm and fair weather, and as the immensity of elemental transition which makes even theriomorphs seem like slight anomalies, Heidegger as thinking demigod is the halycon bird who sings the bridal festival, and echoes the judgment of Socrates: “My good friend, how could people who know nothing about the powers of the gods and divinities, or of the nature as a whole, possibly tell whether something like this is possible or not?” (Ibid.)
Whether such a Heidegger exists or not is a question that has often been addressed to the SS 1942, with mixed results. For these are the lectures that contain many of Heidegger’s most unnerving political asides, earning him many enemies—remarks on America’s resolve to “annihilate Europe” and the “homeland” (Heimat) as a “renunciation of commencement,” laudations of the Wehrmacht’s spiritual strength, attacks on Bolshevism as a derivative kind of Americanism, remarks on the “historical singularity of National Socialism,” and the “blond beast” as one metaphysical consequence of the definition of human being as the uncanniest (unheimlichste) of beings (HHI, 54, 70, 86, 90)—all this has tended to predominate in the critical reception of these lectures, and there is certainly a way of reading its unsaid which reflects very badly on Heidegger. My interpretation will focus on more neglected statements in GA 53, especially its theory of Greek tragic festival as a “round dance” (χορός) through and around an aletheic πόλις.

Some remarks are necessary as to why I turn to the SS 1942 now, after engaging with the WS 1934/5, but before the center of my project, which is the festival in the WS 1941/2. I pursue this order for the important reason that the three Hölderlin lectures are related to each another in the threefold sense of Aufhebung that Heidegger defines in the WS 1930/1 as a “tollere, removing and eliminating the mere, initial illusion; conservare, preserving and including in the experience; but as elevare a lifting up to a higher level of knowing itself and its known.” (HPS, 28) What must be tolerated is the exigency of what Germania as yet believes it is, and what the raging river, Der Rhein, might yet unfold beyond the initial fides. What is to be conserved is Andenken, and at its center, the initiatory event of tragic being that is to be commemorated/retrieved: the bridal festival. Beyond this, however, there is the step-back (zurückschritt) into the archaic as futural, the Hesperia that is already Greek, and this is what the SS 1942 attempts to accomplish.

27 The trinity of Hölderlin lectures is also thinkable in the three etymological senses of the word Sein that Heidegger discusses in the SS 1935 Introduction to Metaphysics (IM, 75-6): “living, emerging, abiding.” First, es, Sankrit asus (life), Greek ἐιναι, ἐστιν, German sind, sein. In the WS 1934/5 “We” who are in flight/arrival with the gods, a turbulent onrushing conversation of demigods, are thus ‘alive,’ ‘exigent.’ Second, the Indo-European bhū, φύειν as emerging/growing, φα-, φαίνεσθαι as self-showing, illuminating. This is, in the 1939 essay ‘the shining-forth of nature,’ by the WS 1941/2, the festival of φύς-ἀλήθεια as ‘carrying’ into ‘difference,’ Latin fui, fio, German bin, bist. Third, Sein, wes, Germanic wesen, to abide/sojourn, “westia, wastu, Vesta, vestibulum,” for instance, in gewesen (having-been), anwesend/abwesend (present or absent). In the SS 1942 this becomes the dwelling of mortals in proximity to Ἑστία.
The role played in Heidegger’s thinking by Greek tragic festival may first be situated in relation to Hölderlin’s elegy Der Archipelagus. (GA 39, §10; GA 53, §13) This elegy begins with the Greeks as maritime autochthons, agonistic harmonies of love/strife in the ring-dance of islands, “armed with the spirit of the gods,” their “ancient playmates” (alten Gespielen). (PF, 273-4) Their dream became a “golden dream,” close to the mysteries of the Sea-God, and to the “voice of the people” (Stanza 3-4). The elegy soon turns from the struggle to holy peace (Stanzas 8-10), to festlichen Helden, and die Freien, their “boldly holy thought” and “communal” feast-days, wherein the “Olympion rises to Aether,” and “from mourning,” and libations poured “on a site all green again now and all budding.” These were “children of bliss” who in festivals remembered the ancestors on “the far side of Lethe,” and thus gathered the “One spirit” and its “loving people” into a new origin that yet remained wildly close to the “sorrowing waves of the Sea-God,” to Orcus, and the “deafening noise” of the workshop. Yet still, the Greeks converge in a homeland, and, by the end of the elegy, they sing the spring of Classical Athens:

Not a moment longer! Already I hear on far foothills
Choric song, the feast-day’s, and hear the green groves all echo,
Where the young breasts more deeply breathe, where the soul of the people
Quietly gathers in freer singing in praise of that god [...] (PF, 287)

Heidegger’s interest in Der Archipelagus, as we saw already in the WS 1934/5, focuses on the Greeks as “the fervent people” (innige Volk), fervency being defined as the “force of existence” that withstands “the most extreme conflicts of being from the ground up,” and therein becomes an “attuned, knowing standing within and sustaining” of the “deepest intimacy that expresses itself in the tragic-dramatic poem.” (GA 39, §10)

In the SS 1942, therefore, Der Archipelagos arises in the context of approaching the question of Greek tragedy, this time in Sophocles’s saying “Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing / more uncannily looms or stirs (πέλει, ragend sich regt) beyond the human being.” The word πέλει denotes for Heidegger the “concealed presencing of stillness and tranquility [...] amid the appearing of change.” This is originary playing-forth (ἀρχη-
Heidegger’s interpretation of Hölderlin’s Der Ister, and his interpretation of Sophocles’s second choral ode at its center, begins, however, not in originary Zuspiel but in its ἔσχατον as a promise to Hesperia. It begins in Antigone’s lost bridal festival.

This lecture course attempts to draw attention to several of Hölderlin’s poetic works known as “hymns.” The term hymn, in German Hymne, is formed from the Greek word ὕμνος, meaning song of praise, ode, more specifically a song in praise of the gods, to glory [Ruhme] of the heroes, and in honor of those victorious in contests. ὑμνέω: to sing, to praise, to glorify, to celebrate and to consecrate, and so to prepare the festival. (HHI, 1)

Setting-out from a discussion of Hölderlin and Antigone, Heidegger looks to the noun- and verb-form of the hymn (ὑμνεῖν, ὕμνος) as they come together in tragic language to form the turn of phrase ὕμνος ὑμνεῖν, which Heidegger cites in “the most beautiful example,” “the words of Antigone, in Sophocles’s tragedy, which begin at line 806”:

ὁρᾶτ ἐμ’, ὦ γὰς πατρίας πολίται,
“Seht mich, ihr der väterlichen Erde Männer...”

“Behold me, you men of the paternal earth...”

and which then close:

Οὔτ᾽ ἐπὶ νομφείοις πώ μέ τις ὕμνος ὑμνησε
“auch nicht als Bereitung des Festes feiert mich je ein Feiersang”

“nor in preparation of the festival will ever a celebratory song sing me.” (HHI, 1; GA 53, 1)

28 HHI, 74: “The word πέλειν is old and means to stir, to come forth, to find and abide in one’s locale and site. In Homer and Hesiod, πέλειν is the usual word for εἶναι, which we translate as “being.” [...] / Πέλειν: to emerge to come forth of its own accord, and thus to presence. ὁ πέλας is the neighbor who has his presence in the immediate vicinity, which is to say, however, that he is not present at hand before us as fixed or motionless but rather actively stirs in presencing, goes back and forth. Πέλαγος: that which stirs itself of its own accord and thus does not flow away but remains and abides within itself in its surging. Πέλαγος is thus the word for “the sea.” Hölderlin’s most sublime elegy bears the title “The Archipelagus (IV, 88-101), meaning the Aegean Sea.[...] The elegy closes with the following appeal: / Yet you, immortally, though even the Greek song itself / No longer celebrates you as before, from your waves, Ο god of sea! [...]”
Heidegger, in other words, begins these lectures by speaking directly to “the men of the paternal earth.” He asks them to witness Antigone’s lost wedding. This point has not been sufficiently explored in its crucial importance for Heidegger’s theory of tragic ethicality. Hölderlin translates these lines as “und nicht zu Hymenäen / Berufen bin ich, noch ein bräutlicher singt / Mich, irgend ein Lobgesang, dagegen / Dem Acheron bin ich vermählt.” (OA, 13) In a few pages, Heidegger translates a literal “nor in preparation of the bridal festival (Bereitung des Brautfestes)...” (HHI, 13) In remarking on Antigone’s bridal festival Heidegger recalls not only Hölderlin on Antigone’s superlativity that can only lead to “the god, [who] in the shape of death, is present,” but also Reinhardt’s Sophocles which speaks of Antigone’s “sober nature” and “authentic tone” to be distinguished from all “eccentric enthusiasm.”

Heidegger moves his discussion of Antigone’s lost wedding into the Dionysian playspace of Hölderlin’s hymnal vocation:

The ὕμνος is not the “means” to some event, it does not provide the “framework” [»Umrahmunger] for the celebration. Rather, the celebrating and festiveness lie in the telling itself. We thus find an essential turn of phrase in which the noun ὕμνος and the verb ὑµνεῖν emerge from a singular unity: ὕμνος ὑµνεῖ, the festive song celebrates.

Whether Hölderlin’s poetic works are such [celebrations] in essence, and if they are, what the singular fundamental trait [einzigen Grundzug] is that distinguishes them as festive songs, when and where the festival of song “is” [wo dann dies gesungene Fest ist]—all these are questions we leave open. Instead, we shall attempt the wholly “precursory” task of becoming attentive to Hölderlin’s poetry. (HHI, 1/13; GA 53, 1/13)

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29 See Karl Reinhardt’s chapter on “Antigone” in Sophocles (trans. 1979, 80-1): “What are the celestial ecstasies, glories descending from heaven, deathbed visions, compared with this attitude to death? The images are melodious but simple: the shore of Acheron, Hades who puts all to sleep... The burial chamber as bridal chamber and Acheron as bridegroom are scarcely even metaphors: it all grows to such an extent out of the living popular tradition in which the world of death was depicted. It was an attic custom to place wedding vessels on the graves of the unmarried dead. / But death becomes dramatic, that is, it becomes not just the drama of a person dying, but of death itself, represented, it is true, by the case of one girl—only when life breaks in upon the inevitability of a fate she has already voluntarily accepted, and the two realms, life and death, struggle against each other. As in the German song where death the enemy suddenly turns into death the friend, death here finally changes from being the force that separates and tears a person abruptly from existence, and becomes something obscenely protective and welcoming.”

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Heidegger goes on to cite the earlier ode *The Poet’s Calling* where those who are eager to see the Day are carried into Day’s self-emergent shining, having come under the influence of the “all-conquering, rousing journey of Bacchus.” Hölderlin’s Dionysos, Bacchus, Evius, or Eleuthereus reminds Heidegger of the natal origins of the *Ister* poet who likewise “sings from the Indus / Arrived from afar / and from Alpheus.” Seeking the “spirit” of Hölderlin’s river hymns, the opening lectures turn not only to *Der Ister* (Greek Ἴστρος, Latin Danubius, German Donau), but the rivers Main, Neckar, and the Rhine, in order to deepen Hölderlin’s poetics of rivers as enigmatic (rätselhaft) phenomenon, intrinsically related to a singing source and its flow. Hearing Dionysos at the outset of *Der Ister* (“Now, come fire!”), and in the καιρός of *As When on a Holiday...* (“Now day breaks!”), Heidegger suggests that what Hesperians lack is a streaming/sourcing relation to the rivers that are, as Heidegger cites from “The Voice of the People,” “vanishing” (Schwindende) yet “full of intimation” (Ahnungsvolle). These terms “present an enigma” in the obscure connection they suggest between “what is coming and close to being intimated,” and what is “going away into what has been.” Carrying their origins through the terrestrial journey and seaward, the rivers are “bearers’ (Träger) of an as yet veiled ‘meaning’ (Bedeutung)” (GA 53, 16; HHI, 15) What is this meaning? The rivers are “of time and are time itself,” a passage within precincts and a headlong plunge into the

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30 “From the god of joy Ganges’ banks heard / Triumph, when all-conquering from the Indus / Young Bacchus came, with holy / Wine rousing the peoples from sleep. (HHI, 7; GA 53, 7)
31 The epithet *Eleuthereus* Hölderlin finds in Pausanias’s *Descriptions of Greece* (1.20.3, 1.38.8), and it also informs the third stanza of the Mnemosyne hymn. See the *Descriptions* on chthonic Dionysos, Sophocles’s death, Aeschylean origins of tragedy, and many other Hölderlinian topics.
32 See HHI, 8-9; GA 53, 8-9: “This “Now” stands at the beginning of the poem like a star that has suddenly risen and that shines over everything. […] Its “points in time” (»Zeitpunkte«) cannot be established in accordance with the calendar; they cannot be “dated.” […] Nor is any date needed here at all. For this “now” that is called and is itself calling is, in a more originary sense, itself a date—that is to say, something given, a gift; namely, given via the calling of this vocation. […] “Now”—this tells us: something has already been decided. And precisely the appropriation that has already “occurred” (sich »ereignete«) alone sustains all relation to whatever is coming. The “Now” names an appropriative event (Ereignis).” Heidegger’s Dionysian Ereignis is not the “hysteria, rapture, trance, enthusiasm, frenzy, ecstasy” that occurs in Aryan solar cult, and Heidegger was deeply critical of the Dionysian rhetorics and philosophies he found in Spengler’s historicism, Klages’s orgiasticism, Bäumler’s irrationalism, and even Nietzsche’s metaphysics. See *Nietzsche II*, 203-4, 233. Noting these differences does not make Heidegger’s Dionysos immune to criticism, but rather, worthy of thought. See on the date and gift, Datum as donation, Derrida on Heidegger and Celan in *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan* (trans. 2005, 194-5), and “The Time of the King.” (in *Given Time: Counterfeit Money*, trans. 1994)
unbound. As in-between temporalities that spatialize the landscape they rush-through the rivers signify for human beings favorable sites of building and dwelling: “Here, however, we wish to build.”33 While river-precincts are sites for “rootedness” or asylum of beings, their “steadfastly standing by” (ständigen Beistand) is exilic. Yet still there develops:

[...] a belonging to the rivers, a going along with them. For it is precisely that which tears onward more surely in the rivers’ own path that tears human beings out of the habitual midst [gewöhnlichen Mitte] of their lives, so that they may be in a center outside of themselves, that is, be excentric [exzentrisch]. The prelude to inhering in the excentric midst of human existence, this “centric” and “central” abode in the excentric, is love [Liebe]. The sphere proper [eigentliche Sphäre] to standing in the excentric middle of life is death [Tod]. The vanishing rivers, full of intimation, do not take the path [die Bahn] of human beings. [...] yet, in this separation there is announced something of the prodigious way “in which god and human are paired [sich paart], and boundless, the power of nature (the holy) [die Naturmacht (das Heilige)] and what is most intrinsic [Innerstes] to human beings becoming One in anger [im Zorn Eins wird].”34 (HHI, 28, trans. mod.; GA 53, 32-3)

Comparing the self-cancellation of the drama’s “ever-oppositional dialogue” to the river’s onrushing course as an “intimative vanishing,” Heidegger cites the “Remarks on the Oedipus,” thus projecting the demigod rivers as protagonists onto Hölderlin’s tragic stage. Playing the part of rageful “unfaithfulness towards the landscape it rushes through,” the Ister is, like the Rhine, the stuff of tragedies, passing streams of mortal-

33 §3 clarifies that Hölderlin’s river is not a “symbolic image” (Sinnbild) in the modern sense, nor an ἀλλο-ἀγορέων (saying something by means of something, in the public space of the ἀγορά), nor a σύμ-βαλλειν or σύμ-βολον (bringing-together of disparate halves, for example, of a ring as in the “gathering of friends in friendship”). But beyond the metaphysico-literary “framework” of symbol and allegory, the rivers are the διάφορα of time—ekstatic differing as transport (µεταφορά). This insight is crucial for understanding the rätselhaftigkeit nature of, for example, Der Rhein: “Yet what that one does, that river, / No one knows.” According to their elemental-historical core “meaning,” Hölderlin’s rivers are shatterings of the distinction of the sensuous (αίσθητόν, Sinnbild), and supersensuous (Vorbild, παράδειγμα) upon which the metaphysical interpretation of art and symbol (τέχνη, ars poetica) has been based from Plato to Hegel and Nietzsche. And this is why there is not ‘one’ ideal river in Heidegger’s Hölderlin, but each river arises and is poetized and thought in its own “locality of the locale” (Ortschaft des Ortes).

34 Heidegger cites only the middle of the sentence that begins §3 of “Remarks on the Oedipus,” i.e. he omits the beginning of the sentence, “The representation of the tragic depends primarily on this...,” and its conclusion, in which the tragic being of the between grasps itself in the catharsis.
immortal communion in the “all-forgetting form of an infidelity.” (EL, 324) “Swirling” (wirbelnde, HHI, 144) is relation between the locations the rivers open up, and the futurities into which they stream. Heidegger goes on to cite from a passage of Hölderlin’s tragic theory, this time from §2 of the “Remarks on the Antigone”:

It almost seems as though the spirit of the river could best be retained in the form of such vanishing, as though thoughtful remembrance proper [eigentliche Andenken] belonged to this enigmatic unfaithfulness. Here, strange perspectives are opened up into the essential and sole way in which it is possible to seize the “power of nature” and the “spirit of the river,” namely by going along with them, a going along with them, however, that in turn does not take their path and thus makes way for it. (Hölderlin, meditating on the essence of the tragic in Greek tragedy, on one occasion writes the following: “It is a great resource of the secret working of the soul that at the highest state of consciousness it makes way for consciousness and that, before the god that is present actually seizes it, the soul encounters this god with a bold, and often even blasphemous work, thus maintaining the sacred, living potential of spirit.” (V, 255.). (GA 53, 33; HHI, 28-9)

Not a word about demigods, but the demigod’s word is a blasphemy: a “sublime mockery,” or “sun [...] relative in the moral sphere,” closely related to aorgic madness, and to the “other Zeus.” The preceding paragraph of the “Remarks...” gives the context:

Probably the highest trait [der höchste Zug] in Antigone. The sublime mockery [erhabene Spott] surpasses all her other utterances, insofar as sacred madness [heiliger Wahnsinn] is the loftiest human phenomenon [Erscheinung] and is here more soul than language; and indeed it is necessary to speak of beauty in the superlative in this way, because her attitude also depends partly on the superlative of human spirit and of heroic virtuosity. (OE, 237)
3.3.2 The Tragic Caesurae and Bridal Festivities of Oedipus and Antigone

These two characteristics, the rage to know and divine derision, Zorn and Spott, are calling cards of the demigods Oedipus and Antigone, their most river-like traits and the ὄβρις that drives tragic action. Heidegger’s two citations from the “Remarks,” the one an allusion to Oedipus, the other to Antigone, therefore cannot be passed over lightly. This is not only because the SS 1942 will soon turn directly to the second choral ode of the Antigone, but also because what Heidegger already says here about Zorn and Spott goes to essence of tragic language. This is a worthy digression, and its relevance to Hölderlin’s poetics of the bridal festival and the daimonism of the round dance will become clear.

Recall how Hölderlin begins his “Remarks on the Oedipus” in a similar way as the “Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism” concludes: with a call to the social purpose of poets which is to initiate society into such primal appearances, rendered into a divinely mortal μηχανή (ars poetica) as bring-forth the shining of the beautiful. For beyond the many idiosyncratic professions to poetry, and the dispersions of the mortal condition in which poets live, “most important for humankind is to see with respect to everything that it is something (daß es Etwas ist), in other words, that it is knowable in the medium [moyen] of its appearance (Erscheinung).” (OA, 63) This is the task of poetry: to carry the medium in which appearances can be known, and in this respect, poetry is like phenomenology, except that it also makes its appearances (Dichten).

The carrying-forth of the play of appearances into repeatability—the performance—of the calculable law, Hölderlin uncovers in Greek tragic drama. His translation thus unfolds the calculable laws of the μηχανή into the “rhythmical succession” of representations (Vorstellung) which hold the manifold of appearances together into a transport (Transport). For in the transport, both the content and the form—what the Heidegger of the 1920s would have called the Gehaltsinn, and its element of appearance, the Vollzugsinn—are known in the ἔκπτασις, and in accordance with a νόμος. The tragic transport, however, is “properly empty” (eigentlich leer): the most unbounded (ungebundeste) medium of passage. What Hölderlin means by the term Transport, “the representation itself” (die Vorstellung selber erscheint), is difficult to come to terms with.
What he means by saying the tragic transport is ‘empty’ and ‘unbound,’ presents even more extreme challenges. But Hölderlin gathers his account of the medium of the tragic transport into a breaking-point: “what in prosody (Sylbenmaße) is known as a caesura (Zäsur); the pure word (das reine Wort), the counter-rhythmical interruption (die gegenrhythmische Unterbrechung).” (EL, 317-8 / OA) Hölderlin argues that the caesurae in Oedipus and Antigone, the one occurring near the beginning, a tearing of the rhythm onwards into its end, and the other near the end, a pulling of the rhythm back into its beginning—are constituted in both cases by the speeches of Tiresias.

He enters the path of fate as the overseer of the Naturmacht which, in tragedy, removes the human being from his own zone of life [Lebensphäre], from the midpoint [Mittelpunkt] of his own inner life, and tears him into the excentric order of the dead [exzentrischen Sphäre der Toten reißt]. (EL, 318 / OA trans. mod.)

Now Heidegger’s remarks on the excentric middle of life and death, beyond the centric and central abode of love, i.e. out in the tragic sphere, are allusions to the caesurae of Tiresias—Heidegger will prefer the Greek term καταστροφή—insofar as such caesurae reveal the laws that limit spiritual excentricity. But where does all this lead, and where is it coming from? Let us look to Heidegger’s own remarks on the Oedipus and Antigone.

The 1934 Germanien lectures had already defined Oedipus’s “wild search for consciousness” as a tendency “to interpret the oracle too infinitely,” and correspondingly, an “incredibly enraged lust for knowledge [...] [which] provokes itself to know more than it can bear or grasp.” (GA 39, §10d) The quest for the knowledge of the Delphic Oracle, beyond the first light of the “know thyself” with which Oedipus defeated the Sphinx, is the wrath of Apollo in which Oedipus is propelled into the excentric orbit of the blind seer. What is most tragic about Oedipus is how ragefully he warps sagacious

35 On moyen and Transport see Charles Lewis’s “Boileau and ‘Longinus’ in Hölderlin’s Sophokles-Anmerkungen.” (2011) A study of these themes in Hölderlin would require reviewing all the theoretical essays in detail, another worthy digression, but one I will not attempt here.

36 As Heidegger cites in the WS 1934/5 from the “Remarks on the Oedipus”: “Precisely this all-seeking, all-interpreting aspect is also the reason why his spirit ultimately succumbs to the raw
understanding into conformity with the accursed circumstances, the “tearing rapacity of
time,” in which he finds himself only as lost. The basic trait of Oedipus, fitting him to be
a tragic hero is, according to the SS 1935 Introduction to Metaphysics, versatility
(Vielwendigkeit) both within and beyond the counter-turning, and in this respect Oedipus
possesses supreme Odyssean πολύτροπος, which Heidegger glosses as “The violence-
doing that originally creates the routes, begets in itself its own un-essence, the versatility
of many twists and turns.” (IM, 167) The SS 1935 thinks this trait in a being-historical
account of the “eternal antagonism” between the forces of seeming and unconcealment.

Only by undergoing the struggle between Being and seeming did they [the Greeks] wrest
forth from beings, did they bring beings into constancy and unconcealment: the gods and
the state, the temples and the tragedies, athletic competitions and philosophy—all this in
the midst of seeming, besieged by it, but also taking it seriously, knowing its power.

(IM, 111; GA 40, 80)

Deeper even than “the thinking of the early Greek thinkers,” the “unity and antagonism
of Being and seeming” is “portrayed at its highest and purest in Greek tragic poetry.” The
dramas of Sophocles thus unfold to being-historical understanding the most prodigious
intelligence of Dasein as it grapples “step by step” with distortion, right down into the
terrible depth of Oedipus’s self-blinding or Antigone’s καταβάσις in the dark light of
the unconcealed. Tragic martyrs of the Dionysian eschatology, Oedipus, “murderer of his
father, and defiler of his mother,” falls from the sovereign heights of Zeus-Apollo into a

and simple language of his subordinants./ “Because such human beings stand under violent
conditions [gewaltsamen Verhältnissen], their language, too, speaks in a more violent order
[gewaltsamerem Zusammenhange], almost in the manner of furies [Furienart].” (GA 39, §7c)
Heidegger comments: “So far as a proper interpretation [zur Erklärung] is concerned, this word
replaces everything that has been written to this day in explanation of Sophocles’ tragedy.” A
little later in §7c, Heidegger only partly explains this comment: “These ‘violent conditions’
[»gewaltsamen Verhältnissen«] do not refer to arbitrary circumstances [Umstände] in which a
human being may become caught up, but to the unique, invariable fundamental orientations
[Grundstellungen] in which human beings stand towards beings as a whole [im Ganzen], and in
which their destiny [Geschick] unfolds. Language itself has this character of Seins, which it opens
up and brings to humans. In language as such there occurs the confrontational setting-apart [Auseinander-setzung] of being and non-being, the confrontational encounter of forces [der Gewalten]
and holding one’s ground or succumbing in this struggle, but also stultification into the
indifference of knowing it all and being capable of everything.” (GA 39, §7c)
maelstrom of Dionysian self-mutilation. Antigone, loyal to blood and earth, gathers her sober derision into a patriotic turning that ends at the gates of Athena-Persephone. In both the nefarious exposure of the human beings to the unmasterable element of fate, and in the defiant sheltering of the dead with its higher justice that arrives too late, tragic language unfolds the double “direction in which a human being in language exposes his Dasein, and the direction in which language carries his being.” (GA 39, §7d)

Heidegger concludes his discussion of Oedipus’s passion for sapience with a quote from the last choral ode, the meaning of which is impossible to glean without interpretation.

τίς γὰρ τίς ἀνήρ πλέον
τᾶς εὐδαιμονίας φέρει
η τοσοῦτον ὅσον δοκεῖν
καὶ δόξαντ᾽ ἀποκλῖναι.  (lines 1189)

Welcher denn, welcher Mann bringt mehr des gebändigt-gefügten Daseins bei
denn so viel, daß er im Shein steht
um dann—als ein scheinender—abzubiegen?
(nämlich aus dem Gerade-im-sich-dastehen)  (GA 40, 82)

Who then, which human, carries more controlled and fitting Dasein than what suffices to stand in seeming in order then—as one who seems—to decline?
(namely, from standing there-straight-in-himself) (IM, 114)
Unequivocally, or so we tend to imagine, εὐδαιμονίας means happiness, a prosperous good-fortune, Glück, nothing like des gebändigt-gefügten Daseins, a “controlled and fitting Dasein.” But despite, or rather because of, the association of εὐδαιμονίας with virtue and measure, to translate des gebändigt-gefügten Daseins as a “controlled and fitting Dasein” actually misses the transport that this translation was intended to convey, a transport into τὸν σὸν δαίμονα of Oedipus in which we find all the restrained exuberance, subdued or enjoined, entranced or enchained daimonic powers of existence. Heidegger’s thought of Oedipus would then read: “and what human being carries more daimonic spirits than this one who, standing in the play of seeming, as this player, falls down”? Such a translation of εὐδαιμονίας is completely excentric. But as an excentric translation of the excentric phenomena of the δαίμόνιον that is Oedipus, it hits the mark. For the rest of this tragedy is nothing if it is not a meditation on the former εὐδαιμονίας, and current dark fate of Oedipus, expressed, above all, in the truth about the cursed marriage with Jocasta: “Unwilling, time found you out / and set up the marriage that was always not / a marriage (die Eh,’ ehlos) because it coupled with itself,” “you who [are] howling (jammre) now who once / exulted (jauchze) from the mouth.” (OA, 53)

The former εὐδαιμονίας of Oedipus is sung in the second stanza:

οἵστις καθ᾽ ὑπερβολάν
τοξεύσας ἐκράτησε τοῦ πάντ᾽ εὐδαιμονος ὀλβου,
ὁ Ζεὺς, κατὰ μὲν φθίσας
τὰν γαμφώνυχα παρθένου
χρησμόδον, θανάτων δ᾽ ἐμὴ
χώρα πύργος ἀνέστα:
ἐξοὗ καὶ βασιλεὺς καλεῖ
ἐμὸς καὶ τὰ μέγιστ᾽ ἐτιμάθης,
ταῖς μεγάλαισιν ἐν Θήβαισιν ἀνάσσων.

37 A more modern translation, David Grene’s, reads: “What man, what man on earth wins more of happiness than seeming, and after that, turns away?” (1991, 64) Sir Richard Jebb in 1887 gives: “Where, where is the mortal who attains a happiness which is more than apparent and doomed to fall away to nothing?” Hölderlin’s translation concurs more with Heidegger’s interpretation: “Denn welcher, welcher Mann / Trägt mehr von Glück, / Als so weit, denn ihm scheint, / Und der im Schein lebt, abfällt.” As Constantine renders it: “For whoever, any man / Who carries more of happiness / Further than it seems he might / He lives in seeming and he falls away.” (OA, 53)
Over the measure [über die Maß] you had hit it
and won wealth of good fortune [glücklichen Reichtum] through and through,
Oh Zeus, and her with the crooked nails,
The prophesying virgin [Die wahrsagende Jungfrau], you undid her
Upstanding like a tower among my country’s deaths [Aufstehend in den Toden meines Landes ein Turm]
On which account you were called my king
And honoured highest [Und geehrt am höchsten]
in great Thebes ruling [regierend...]. (OA, 53)

To further understand the relation of τὰς εὐδαιμονίας to des gebändigt-gefügten Daseins,
let us look more deeply into the accursed sovereignty of Oedipus and the victorious
daimonic wisdom that its encounter with the Sphinx decides, and in deciding, declines.

For the glorious coronation of Oedipus is moreover the defeated Schicksal of Oedipus
as an “enklisis, a declining, falling over (casus)” (IM, 82) And this is why called by
“Apollo” (1329) to the “city’s gatherings,” to the holiday “festivities” (lines 1489-93),
and to the “peak of marriage,” Oedipus nonetheless discover that all his happiness must
come to nothing, become appearance, madness, fate. And all this, both the standing-
upright and the Abyss, the seeming and Being, we find from the very first lines (1-8):

ὄ τέκνα, Κάδμου τοῦ πάλαι νέα τροφή,
tίνας ποθ᾽ ἔδρας τάσονε μοι θεάζετε
ικτηρίοις κλάδοισιν ἔξεστεμένου;
πόλις δ᾽ όμοι μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει,
όμοι δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων:
ἀγὼ δικαιῶν μὴ παρ᾽ ἀγγέλων, τέκνα,
ἄλλων ἀκούειν αὐτὸς ὁδ᾽ ἑλήλυθα,
ὁ πάσι κλείνει Οἰδίπους καλούμενος.

O, you, old Cadmus’ children, new offspring,
In what posture do you assail me here
Crowned all around with begging sprigs of tree?
Also the city is filled with sacrifices,
With paeans and sighing prayers. Not wishing, 
Children, from any other messengers 
To hear why, I have come myself, myself 
with fame by all called Oedipus. (OA, 17)

The sovereign inclines to his decline, unknowing, with thirst to know more than he can bear or comprehend. Standing as king, in a variant on Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*, he opens, in Heidegger’s grammatology, the verbal form (ῥήμα) of the infinitive (εἶναι), and stands before his people as their rhetor and counselor. But as inclined towards the fate of Thebes, the sovereign’s name (ὄνομα) is already a falling (πτῶσις) and incline (ἐνκλίσις):

[…] a falling, tipping, or inclining […] a dropping-off from an upright, straight stance. But this standing-there, this taking and maintaining a *stand* that stands erected high in itself, is what the Greeks understood as Being. (IM, 60-3)

For the sagacious one who bands together (*gebändigt*), and who is himself disposed (*gefügt*) in accordance with all the daimonic thoughts of the Sphinx’s ritual presence and absence, and with this, the happiness or misery of a people, Oedipus in weakness is the scapegoat of Oedipus in strength, a “sign = O,” because the human being “in the moment of categorical reversal must follow, but in what follows he cannot at all match what was there in the beginning.” (OA, 68) Or, as Agamben comments, not on the outcome of the Oedipus tragedy, but in its thematic proximity: “In the city, the banishment of sacred life is more internal than every interiority and more external than every extraneousness.”

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38 On *des gebändigt-gefügten* in relation to the unbound as exilic, we can compare the Oedipus myth with remarks by Agamben in “The Wolf and the Ban” (*Homo Sacer: Soveriegn Power and Bare Life*, 104-12): 1) Oedipus’s birth and abandonment, “The relation of abandonment is so ambiguous that nothing could be harder than breaking from it […] What has been banned is delivered over to its own separate and, at the same time, consigned to the mercy of the one who abandoned it—at once excluded and included, removed and at same time captured”; 2) Oedipus’s journey and outcome, “what the ban holds together is precisely bare life and sovereign power”; 3) Oedipus’s fate at Colonus, from Festus on the *extrarius*, “whoever is outside the hearth, the sacrament, and the law,” “whoever is from another land, and almost extraneous”; 4) Oedipus’s daimonic sovereignty, “Because of this alone can the ban signify both the insignia of sovereignty […] and the expulsion from community”; 5) Oedipus’s early alliance with the Lycian Apollo (Λύκειος, wolf-killing Apollo, lines 203), i.e. the wolf as tearing rapacity, unity and omniscience.
Such is Oedipus: “savior and lord of the state, in the brilliance of glory and the grace of the gods [...] hurled out of this seeming.” (IM, 112) It is the myth of a sovereign knower (Zeus-Apollo) yet in the decisively un-sovereign sense as a “rescuer (σωτῆρα) from the old wild meaning,” a Dionysos Σωτηρία who “searched the dark that wanted solving.”

And I name him too, named after this land,
Bacchus in the rush of wine [berauschten Bacchus], the Evier [οἰνῶπα Βάκχον ἐὕιον]
With Maenads in the loneliness [Mit Maenads vereinsamt]; let him come
with the brilliantly shining torch burning
On him who is without honour before the gods, the god! (OA, 22)

This identification of Oedipus with the savior of gods and mortals, Dionysos, unifies the primal struggle of concealing and unconcealing in the soteriology, here doomed. Antigone, however, takes on and reverses this doom in the παρουσία itself, and Hölderlin appears to have had this in mind when he wrote in the “Remarks on the Antigone.”

Tragic representation [Darstellung] […] depends on this: “the immediate God who has become wholly One with man […] that infinite inspiration, sacredly separating itself, comprehends itself infinitely, which is to say in opposites, in a consciousness which cancels out [aufhebt] consciousness, and the God, in the form of death, is present. (EL, 329)

This is the moment of abysmal mirroring, Antigone’s self-sacrificial nefas as her indestructible wedding, as she herself sings: “O grave, O bridal chamber and home underground always awake” (ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφῆς οἴκησις αἰείφρουρος). The soteriological dimensions of Antigone’s fate cannot, of course, eclipse the pervasive ethico-political context of insurrection (Aufruhr) within which, as Kathrin H. Rosenfield has shown, Antigone’s Queenly status as ἐπικλήρος, heiress to the

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Labdacid’s throne, drives the action (or at least Creon’s edict which sets it up). Yet there is a singular Ανάγκη that folds the fates of Creon and Antigone into a shared matrix of Dionysian religiosity. For from the moment that Creon speaks of “my hearth,” as Hölderlin’s incorrect translation would have it (i.e. the hearth from which the Labdacids stand expelled), and Antigone of “my Zeus” (i.e. the Zeus who did not proclaim Creon’s law), it was never a question of πόλις versus οἶκος, but a war of autochthony and hearthlessness as a battle of claim against claim. “Dream-like and innocent” and “beautiful, in the superlative” Antigone’s patriotic fire soberly decides its death, and in so doing casts Creon’s cruel-dull decidedness into its Dionysian vortex, as the tyrant, would-be founder of a new hearth, is cast into ruin. Yet we would be reading Antigone still too secularly if, in marginal accord with Hegel’s theory of the tragic impasses of the ethical, we define its “epochal dys-limitation” as only a “nomic erosion of the patria.” No complete would a reading of the outcome which underlines the supra-tragic activation of Hölderlin’s “more essential Zeus,” i.e. the Zeus who reverses all “striving out this world into another into a striving out of another world into this one.” (EL, 328-30) But what Heidegger, if not the pious Greeks, seem to have understood concerning the tragedies of Haemon-Antigone as a νυμφείος in Hades is the Dionysian self-consciousness (ἀλήθεια) that, because it refers to the life of the indestructible (unzerstörbar), makes two things unsacrificeable: funeraries for the family and the bridal festival event. In this sense Antigone’s sacrifice is not just for her brother’s safe passage to Elysian, and she seems to care less for the loss of Haemon. But walking straight into Creon’s trap, “Let her go sing hymns among the dead, ”she performs the sober injunction “Behold me, you men of the paternal earth...,” and in so doing frees a revolutionary fire which reveals the god singing over Thebes: it is Zeus Herkeios (house-hold Zeus wedded to Hera) who is, at bottom, Hades (wedded to Persephone) who is, in truth, Dionysos.

For all its speculative precarity and unpractical surreality since, despite the many advances by Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and others, we still have no sure access to the deep

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41 See Véronique Fótí’s Epochal Discordance: Hölderlin’s Philosophy of Tragedy. (2006) In the conclusion Fótí reads Hölderlin’s “natal turning” in context of “Spinoza’s Theologico-Political Treatise” and Schürmann’s “legislative-trangressive fracture” in order to make an important argument regarding the limitations of the “sacrificial complex” for a contemporary politics.
heights of antiquity’s choral festivities, this last issue reopens the uncanniest moment of
the Antigone, the one on which Heidegger, in the SS 1942 lectures, also dwells. For in the
midst of the chorus’s wailing lamentations over Antigone’s sad fate (δύσμορος) as a
“living on [and] into the unlettered wilderness of the dead,” or “overstepping of daimonic
justice (δαιμόνων δίκην),” beyond which no heavenly destiny or singing allies can be
relied upon in the hour of need, there also begins to sound a persistent evocation of the
god Dionysos, and one which has often baffled commentators. It begins in the fourth
stasimon or choral ode, famous for its comparison of Antigone to Danaë. The invocation
of Dionysos intensifies, however, in the fifth choral ode, directly after the caesura
introduced by Antigone’s καταβάσις, and Teiresias’s terrible speech.

It sings, in part, and in Constantine’s rendering of Hölderlin’s translation:

Creator of names, glory of waters
That Cadmus loved [Καδμείας ἄγαλμα νύμφας]
[...] For you / Govern also at Eleusis, in the womb.
But here, O God of Joy,
In the mother city, in bacchantic
Thebes you are at home [...] 
By the smoke of sacrifices sweetly shaped
Over the shoulders of the rocks you have been seen on
Cocytus where the waters
Tumble drunkenly and by [ἐνθὰ Κωρύκιαι στείχουσι Νύμφαι Βακχίδες]
Castalia’s forest also.
[...] O you walker in the fire
Leader of the dance of the stars [χοράγ’ ἀστρων] and keeper
Of secret speech [νυχίων φθεγμάτων ἐπίσκοπε]
Son born of Zeus
Be manifest [προφάνηθ] with the wakeful
Thyiades [περιπόλοις Θυίαισιν]
Who mantically sing your choruses [μαντικῶς τάννυχοι χορεύσι]
Their reveling god [τὸν ταμίαν Ἰακχον]. (OA, 106-7, trans. mod.)

42 See Eric Csapo’s “Star-Choruses: Eleusis, Orphism, and New Musical Imagery and Dance.”
Hölderlin’s mistaking—deliberate?—of the Corycian nymphs with the waters of the underworld river, the Cocytus, at least highlight the Bacchic wellsprings (die Brunnzen), and sacrificial rituals related to them, performed here by choruses of Θυίας, whose name derives from θύω, θυσία, and whose arch-mythic representative is Θυία. That the wedding of Antigone-Haemon is sacrificed may make the Antigone myth seem a parallel to Goux’s telestic reading of Oedipus Rex as a drama of “irregular,” “failed or avoided” initiation.\textsuperscript{43} But applied in isolation this view misses the turbulent intensity of what Sophocles’s Oedipus and Antigone achieve: the return of theater to the festival of Being.

\textsuperscript{43} Goux’s Oedipus, Philosopher (trans. 1993, §3-4) argues that the over-arching “telestic itinerary” of tragic-Dionysian initiation in the Theban trilogy points to the “Rite of the Sphinx,” in which creature Goux discovers a protectress overseer for the esoteric “marriage” of the Kore, and attendant “sovereignty” of the tragic hero. Although Goux does not explore this connection in detail, his account, picking up from Jane Harrison on the Vagnonville bowl, lends empirical support to this section’s thinking of tragic unsacrificeability in the Antigone. For in the Vagnonville bowl we find an aetiological correlate of the exhumation scene of Act V. It is a vase painting in which a troupe of satyrs dance around, and break open with pickaxes a sepulchral mound (tumulus) upon which a Sphinx is perched, and in the center of which (presumably) a Kore is held captive. This is, on the other side of the bowl, also the scene of the ἄνοδος, ascent of the Kore. Goux writes: “Here we have both the satyric phase of the Dionysian drama and final phase of the young man’s initiation: the deliverance of the girl who is to be his bride.” (Ibid., 54) See Jane Harrison’s Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion. (1908, 211)
3.3.3 Ἑστία and Ἀλήθεια: The Uncanny Festival in the Four Choral Saying

I will now return from Heidegger’s implicit and explicit thinking of the Dionysian character of Oedipus and Antigone myths to the second major interpretation that Heidegger performs, after the SS 1935, of the “first stationary choral song” of the Antigone, a second choral ode in which is intimated “something of the range and oppositional nature of the truth within which this tragedy sways back and forth and yet stands.” (HHI, 52) In Part II of the SS 1942 Heidegger argues in favor of the strange claim that attentiveness to the turbulent unfolding of four of counter-turning lines of the choral ode can furnish us with elemental-historical grounds for “an interpretation of the Greek world that is essentially different from all interpretations hitherto.” (HHI, 57)

These sayings, which “extracted attune in their belonging together, the concealed lineaments of the songs,” are underscored over and again by Heidegger as turbulent plays, prodigious catastrophes of the human being as uncanniest (δεινότερον) bearer of the “language of the gods.” Following these plays back to the Greek root πέλειν as an ancient name of Being—a “concealed presencing of stillness and tranquility amid constant and unconcealed absencing and presencing”—Heidegger’s interpretations move both inwards to the hestial center of Greek thinking in its temporal-ontological unicity, and outwards “with a view to the poetic essence of the river,” to the isonomial-hesperian realm of tragic demigods. This is, moreover, the realm of what SS 1935 already thinks in Parmenides’s τὸ ἔον or Heraclitus’s ἐόντα ἐνάντια χυμόν, Being as sharing—beings in common, and as expressed in the true or hidden νόμοι of a πόλις, that is, as the unifying medium of “the beginning and end in the circumference of the circle.” (IM, 139) But before giving “the ordinance (positing as placing together)” (Satzung [setzen als zusammenstellen]) of the bridal as hestial-isonomial (or isonomial-hesperian), there must first be demi-divine straits of turbulence, and their manifold counter-turning πέλειν. And so the sayings read:
1. πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κοὐδὲν ἄνθρωπον δεινότερον πέλει

Vielfältig das Unheimliche, nichts doch
Über den Menschen hinaus Unheimlicheres ragend regt.

Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing
More uncannily looms or stirs beyond the human being.

2. παντοπόρος ἄπορος ἐπ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔρχεται

Überall hinausfahrend unterwegs erfahrunglos ohne Ausweg
Kommt er zum Nichts

Venturing forth in all directions, without experience he comes to nothing.

3. ὑψίπολις ἄπολις ὅτω τὸ μὴ καλὸν

Zúnesti τόλμας χάριν

Hochüberragend die Stätte, verlustig der Stätte
Ist er, dem immer das Unseiende seined
Der Wagnis zugunste.

Towerung high above the site, forfeiting the site, is he to whom nonbeings
are for the sake of risk.

4. μὴ ἕμοι παρέστιος

γένοιτο μὴ ἵσον φρονῶν ὃς τάδ᾽ ἔρδοι

Nicht werde dem Herde ein Trauter mir der,
Nicht auch teile mit mir sein Wählen mein Wissen,
Der dieses führet ins Werk.

Such shall not be entrusted to my hearth, nor share their delusion with my
knowing, who put such a thing to work.  (HHI, 66-7; GA 53, 81-2)
Although a full exposition of Heidegger’s exposition of these phrases is not possible here, I must say something to each saying as altogether they point to the uncanny festival.

Breaking-up the manifold meaning of Sophocles’s τὰ δεινά as “the fearful (Furchtbare), the powerful (Gewaltige), the habitual (Ungewöhnliche) including their counterturning character in each case,” Heidegger’s translation of τὰ δεινά is unified by a single word, das Unheimliche. First, just as the uncanny is “frightful” (Furchtbare) in both senses of what frightens and commands “admiration” (Ehrfurchtgebietende), “horror” (Entsetzen) or “awe” (Scheu), so too the holiday is a dislocation of everydayness, a frightful dream that in becoming actual opens Dasein to the Abyss in wonder or terror, horror or awe. The structure of attunement is unified as uncanniness or as festivity, and indeed as both. Compare the SS 1935 Introduction to Metaphysics:

The δεινόν is the terrible [Furchtbare] in the sense of the overwhelming sway [überwältigenden Waltens] which induces panicked fear [panischen Schrecken], true anxiety, as well as collected, inwardly reverberating awe [in sich schwingende, verschwiegene Scheu]. (IM, 159; GA 40, 114-5)

Clearly, Waltens means violence, Greek βία. But in all the Hölderlin elucidations of 1939-42, “the powerful” is ever twofold: “that which looms over us (Überragende), and that which is merely violent (Gewaltätige).” (HHI, 64; GA 53, 78) And it is only the earlier, the overwhelming (Überwältigenden) in which Being prevails as φύσις and κόσμος. The merely violence in the sense of the Naturmacht or Zeitgeist against which the tragic protagonist rages, is what is checked and delimited. The 1939 essay As when on a Holiday... will say that the truly “powerful” (gewaltiger) is the “Nature” that awakens on holidays “with a clang of arms.” Finally, the third definition of the uncanny as “the

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44 Heidegger’s three- and six-fold uncanniness, within a four- and eight-fold structure of counter-turning saying, also repeats and radicalizes the fugal structures of the 1936/7 Contributions to Philosophy. See Ch. 4.2.4. On uncanniness in GA 52 see for a start Rodolphe’s Gasché’s Europe, or the Infinite Task: A Study of the Philosophical Concept (2009, 95-211), Dennis J. Schmidt’s “Heidegger” (On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life, 2001, 225-71), Véronique M. Foti’s “Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Sophoclean Tragedy” (Heidegger Towards the Turn: Essays on the Works of the 1930s, 1999, 163-87), and William McNeill’s “Porosity: Violence and the Question of Politics in Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics” (Heidegger and the Political, 1991, 183-212), and Ch. 6-7 of The Time of Life: Heidegger and Éthos. (2006)
inhabitual” points not only to the festival as an “extraordinary” beyond of the everyday, but to an artistic festival that plays-forth the geniae locae “within the habitual governing all that is habitual and turning itself to everything with equal ease.” This also refers back, as we have seen above, to the daimonic-festive versatility of the tragic hero. (HHI, 60)

The founders of the gentle νόμοι of the holiday festival are here to open the versatility (Vielwendigkeit), capability (Vermöglichkeit), and skillfulness (Geschicklichkeit) of an inceptual knowing (τέχνη) along manifold paths. Yet this is ever a playful experimental knowing that, like the inessential holiday, skirmishes with the unfitting (ἀδικία, Unfug), and eventually falls into ruinanz. In all three- and six-fold meanings of τὸ δεῖνόν tragedy articulates, exactly like the holiday Open in the previous WS 1941/2, a manifold of attunement and its “counter-turning character in each case.” (HHI, 68)

As Katherine Withy puts it, “Heidegger takes the unifying ground and essence of the deinon to be the counter-turning itself” (die Gegenwendigkeit): “this does not mean that man is especially determined by one or the other senses of the ‘deinon,’ or that he is all three heaped together [...] Rather, that man is the most deinon creature means that in him the unifying ground of the senses is in itself displayed.” (2009, 208) The manifold counter-turning uncanniness reveals the unhomely as a pre-condition of belonging, and thus of festivity. The uncanny as counter-turning is what grants excess and stead to the counter-turned (Gegenwendige). The SS 1942 circles back to themes left hanging, i.e. to the elemental questions of these lectures, intimated already in §7c in the insight that “The river is at once locality and journeying in a concealed and originary unity.” (HHI, 39)

But how is Germania, which flees from the uncanny into only one side of every opposition, because it assumes that the homeland is granted, to undertake the uncanny as that which gives the “unity of locality and journeying,” and with it an exilic stead in “»space and time«”? This asks how not only Germania but all the world nations are to find a center that is no longer a hestial-isonomial configuration, but isonomial-hesperian?
Heidegger here moves to the second manifold enigma in the ode, the παντοπόρος ἀπορος:

What is counteringturning in the δεινόν is also enunciated purely and poetically. παντοπόρος ἀπορος—placed abruptly alongside one another [gegeneinandergestellt], and yet interwoven and admitted into one another [ineinandergefügt und eingelassen], these words name the essence of the δεινόν from the side of πόρος. Πόρος means that irruption of autonomous power [selbstmächtige Aufbruch] that ventures forth in all directions, everywhere finds its way through, reaches everywhere, and thus becomes acquainted with everything. παντοπόρος is a being that experiences everything and yet remains without experience, insofar as it is unable to transform that which it has made its way through into an experience that would let it attain any insight into its own essence. Instead, ἐπ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔρχεται—human beings come to nothing. (HHI, 75; GA 53, 92)

Πόρος, father of Ἕρως with Πενία in Plato’s Symposium, goes back to Sophocles’s Ἕρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν (Ch. 3.1.3), and forward to what is more Greek than the Greeks: Hesperia, a land of unimaginable resource, Reichthum or Überfluß in Schelling’s translations of Πόρος, the home of the golden apple, itself nearly destitute. Hölderlin’s “Remarks on the Oedipus” indeed note that equanimity, or the middle of godly existence, is a pure porosity or “originally abundant fertility,” ever in itself impossible to maintain. For the moment of ἀπορια intervenes and implies the desert and the death of the wild consciousness of the Muses, not only the organic clarity that is destroyed in the fire of the aorgic, but the “most extreme edge of suffering,” where “nothing exists besides the conditions of time or space.” (OA, 68) It is at this moment of highest inward counteringturning in the παντοπόρος ἀπορος that the gods interrupt all rage and derision, arresting “godly mortals” (die Göttlichen) in the uncanny liminality between concealing and unconcealing, and therein posing to them the riddles that, should they be answered, grant renewal for Hesperia in a new sending of Being and transformation of the excentric.

This is the mysterial (rätselhaftig) element of Sophocles’s παντοπόρος ἀπορος, a daimonic destitution wherein Dionysos strains to be heard by the Greek people. Hölderlin will render these lines “All-travelled / Untravelled. He comes to nothing” (Allbewandert, / Unbewandert. Zunichts kommt er). So to nothing and its beauty hurtles the West.
While the παντοπόρος-ἀπορος⁴⁵ names the prevailing of the uncanny being in respect of its wayfulness and impasse, the third choral saying, the ὑψίπολις-ἀπολαῖος, names this same relation as place (Ort, ἔορτή) and homelessness (Heimatlosigkeit), and in the insight that “the πόλις is the site within whose expansive realm every πόρος moves.” As this civilizing and uncivilizing alliance of πόλις and πόρος, the festival returns or departs.

To the πόλις there belongs gods and the temples, the festivals and games [die Feste und die Spiele], the governors and council of elders, the people’s assembly and the armed forces, the ships and field marshals, the poets and thinkers.⁴⁶ Yet we are never to think all these according to the according to the civil state of the nineteenth century. None of these are merely pieces of embellishment for some state ordinance that puts value on producing “cultural achievements.” Rather, from out of the relation to the gods [Bezug zu den Göttern], out of the kind of festivals [Art des Festen] and the possibility of celebration [der Möglichkeit des Feiern], out of the relationship of master and slave, out of a relation to sacrifice and battle, out of a relationship to honor and glory, out of the relationship between these relationships and from out of the grounds of their unity, there prevails [walten] what is called the πόλις. (HHI, 82; GA 53, 101)

All counter-turning catastrophes go back to this: that the πόλις is not an anthropological system separable from nature, but a continuity within the Naturmacht in the sense of a Geschick des Seyns or “fitting-destining” that clears/shelters all sojourns the human being as reaching-over beyond a sheltering locale, yet only possibly surrendering back to origin. This is the meaning of mortal transcendence as a Hochüberragnend (ὑψίπολις).⁴⁷

All mortal life as politico-historical (βίος) will reach over the site, surpass myth unto freedom, but in this surpassing will also risk forfeiture, becoming ἀ-πόλις. Once again the

⁴⁵ In the Contributions, παντοπόρος-ἀπορος is discernable in the first and second fugues as Anklang, what attunes and inducts, and Zuspiel, what counter-turn into Ereignis, what draws Dasein into the game, or leaves it out: unattuned, dissonant.

⁴⁶ Repeating structurally the modalities of truth in the OWA essays (Ch. 3.1.2), and the discussion of the second choral ode in the SS 1935, the Greek festival is here alongside “the gods and the temples [...] the governors and council of elders, the people’s assembly and the armed forces, the ships and field marshals, the poets and thinkers.” That such protopolitical scenes are close to the fantasies of Nazi state-craft sets up Heidegger’s criticisms of the State’s one-sided uncanniness.

⁴⁷ Hochüberragnend, ὑψίπολις are deepenings of what the Contributions’ third jointure, Sprung, “the leap” into Abyss as Being, and thus into the time-play-space of a possible Gründung.
lines that most concern Heidegger in the choral ode are an uncanny swirling and reversal, turbulence and catastrophe. Possibilizing the relation of passage and impasse Heidegger thinks the mortal capability of reaching-over, the ὑψί which opens through its overreaching volatile new pathways. Heidegger is quite clear to separate his thinking of the ὑψίπολις from all “research results”: nothing in the National Socialist orthodoxies remotely suffices. But to make good a historical relation to the Greeks means to become “more Greek than the Greeks themselves,” to learn an uncanny ‘perhaps’:

Perhaps the πόλις is that realm and locale [der Ort und der Bereich] around which everything question-worthy and uncanny turns in an exceptional sense [ausgezeichnete Sinne]. The πόλις is πόλος, that is, the pole [der Pol], the swirl [Wirbel] in which and around which everything turns. These two words name that essential moment that the verb πέλειν says in the second line of the choral ode: that which is constant, and change [das Beständige und der Wechsel]. The essentially “polar character of the πόλις concerns beings as a whole. The polar concerns beings in that around which such beings as manifest, themselves turn. The human being is then related in an exceptional sense to this pole, insofar as human beings, in understanding Being, stand in the midst of beings and here necessarily have a “status” [“status”] in each case, a stance in their instances and circumstances [Zuständen und Umständen]. The word “status” means the “state.” Therefore πόλις does indeed mean as much as “state.” We are already on a path of errancy once more, however, if, thinking πόλις as state, we knowingly or thoughtfully stick to ideas that have to do with modern state formation. [....]

[πόλις] is neither merely state, nor merely city, rather in the first instance, it is “the stead” [“die Stätte”]: the site [die Stätte] of the abode of human history that belongs to humans in the midst of being. [...] From this site and stead there springs forth whatever is granted stead [gestattet] and whatever is not, what is order and what is disorder, what is fitting and what is unfitting. For whatever is fitting [Schickliche] determines destiny [Geschick], and such destiny determines history [Geschichte]. (HHI, 81/2; GA 53, 100/1)

What is fitting? Only this: that mortal Dasein return from its daimonic destitution into the midst of φύσις-ἀλήθεια and thus find its way back to “the truth and the essence of Being.” For the πόλις was once, if only for a Moment, “the stead” (die Statt) and “open site (Stätte)” of a Geschick des Seins, i.e. a site wherein all human relations were allotted
and determined by Being. Heidegger’s account of the Occident’s daimonic destitution and hidden need for the festival is a re-inscription of Plato’s myth of the aletheic πόλις that, beyond all political metaphysics at the end of Plato’s Politeia, asks Mit-dasein to pass-through the τόπον τινά δαμόνον (uncanny site). At the heart of the myth of Er we find the description of a meadow where souls gather “like a crowd going to a festival”:

Then from down in the earth souls came up covered with dust and direct from the door in heaven souls came down [καταβαίνειν] pure [καθαράς]. And the souls who were arriving all the time seemed to have been on a long journey, so that they went gladly to the meadow [εκ τον λειμώνα], where they encamped as at a festival [πανέγυρια]. Those who knew each other embraced and conversed, and those who had come up from the earth asked those who came down from the heavens about the things there and were in turn questioned by them about the things below. (Politeia, 614e)

Weeping and rejoicing, greeting and farewell, conversing and celebrating in cycles of the great year, in the festival between earth and heaven, this is the scene that ends the Πολιτεία. Heidegger’s reading of the myth of Er appears in §6 and §7 of the WS 1942/3 course, “The Greeks’ final word concerning the hidden counter-essence of ἀλήθεια, λήθη (II).” Investigating in what ways “the essence of the Greek πόλις is grounded in the essence of ἀλήθεια,” these lectures look to Plato’s field of λήθη, and its oblivion-giving stream of Ἀμέλετη, and to Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar, all as auxiliary evidence in support of his being-historical interpretation of the goddess Ἀλήθεια in Parmenides.

On the question of the identity of Parmenides’s unnamed goddess beyond the gates of Dike/Themis, Heidegger follows Karl Reinhardt in thinking that she is Ἀλήθεια, and does not pause to consider other contenders that have been proposed such as Nyx, Ananke, Hemen, Moira, Mnemosyne, and Hestia. Yet other than Epimenides’s claim to have encountered both Ἀλήθεια and Δίκη in the incubatory dreaming in the Cretan cave, there is little archaic or classical testimony to corroborate the personification of truth as a

48 See Reinhardt’s Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosopie. (1916) Gadamer suggests that the unnamed goddess Mnemosyne. (trans. 2000, 98) Hestia is another candidate because she too exists “in the middle of the sphere,” as Philolaos of Croton says of her, and as Heidegger soon cites in the SS 1942. But the goddess is also said to live in the “house of Night,” which has often given rise to her identification with the Nyx of the Orphic Rhapsodies.
goddess, Θεά. This is a slim basis on which to ground a being-historical narrative of the “Greek experience of ἄ-λήθεια,” a paucity of evidence of which Heidegger is well aware. Nevertheless, Heidegger commits himself to the claim that Parmenides’s Proem “speaks by bring into language the word of this goddess,” Άλήθεια in propria persona in whose sphere and ritual presence the beginning and retreat of initiatory disclosure takes place: “The thinkers are begun by [this] beginning, “in-cepted” (An-gefangenen) by this incep tion (An-fang); they are taken up by it and are gathered into it.” (GA 54, 11-2) Because, through Parmenides, it stands under the guardianship of a goddess, Greek philosophy is already more Greek than the Greeks themselves: Άλήθεια sends the tidings (Kunde) that are already Hesperian, drawing futural Dasein into the Seynsgeschichte which open the mortal sojourn beyond its epochal dyslimitations to the “essence of places, their co-appurtenance and their sequence in the ‘there.’” (PA, 106; GA 54, 156-7)

The uncanny co-belonging of different places together in a single one is what it means to enter the turbulent πόλος, the exilic swirling of Being as Dasein, a Dasein that discovers a steady in Being. In the myth of Er this means passing-through the fourfold region (Gegend) not only of a festive meadow (λειμώνα), but a desolate field, a daimonic place of “burning, choking, terrible heat” (πνίγους δεινοῦ) in approach to which Dasein’s movements are “explicitly delimited stops and times.” And this is why, reading Plato’s aletheic glimmerings against metaphysics as de-cision, Heidegger looks to the Er-myth to name the field of λήθη as the gathering together of all that was disclosed into a “most extreme and ultimate place in this “demonic district (Ortschaft).” (PA, 117; GA 54, 174)

What we have in the Er-myth is, in other words, an ἀρχή-eschatology as hyperpoliticalapolitical sojourn through the ‘there’ (ἐξεῖ), a Da that Heidegger refuses to think as “the beyond,” but thinks as the historical life (βίος) and θανατο-φόρος that witnesses and is witnessed by the divine in the extraordinary place of the festival.49

49 In the 1930 “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” (PM, 1998), Heidegger argues that the Platonic dialogues reflect a transformation of the Greek experience of truth—Wesenwandel der Wahrheit—away from the Being of truth as not-yet-metaphysical and towards a metaphysical ὁρθότης (correctness) of propositions that dissembles emergence (φύσις-ἄληθεια) by way of a correspondence (δια-λέγεσθαι) with Ideas, eventually stabilized in the adaequatio intellectus ad rem. To object to Heidegger, as Paul Friedländer does, that άληθεία cannot be thought as unconcealing in Plato or earlier is correct, but this he readily admits in the 1964 (partial response to Friedländer) in “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking”: “In any case, one thing becomes clear: To raise the question of άληθεία, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as
These are the μόθοι of Ἀλήθεια’s festival that Heidegger wishes Hesperia would remember: 1) An eschatology of Being that is also a saying from the holy as event; 2) A moment of daimonic decision between two pathways, up and down, being and non-being, λήθη and ἀλήθεια, a decision full of dangers, yet which harbors soteriological possibility; 3) An Olympian temporality of Ereignis opposed to the Hadean temporalization of the ψυχή as evanescent departure, passing-by, or over-staying the daimonic site; 4) Access enigmas involving thresholds that grant or refuse wellsprings to sojourning mortals who learn the poric-aporetic measures of Memory and Truth.

Having articulated up until this point the uncanniness of the tragic festival in the turbulences of the πόλεις,” it remains to account for the fourth and most difficult saying of the second choral ode, to which Heidegger himself gives the most attention: the saying concerning the hearth as the place of a decision between what is fitting and what is raising the question of truth. For this reason, it was inadequate and misleading to call ἀλήθεια in the sense of opening, truth [...] The natural concept of truth does not mean unconcealment, not in the philosophy of the Greeks either. It is often and justifiably pointed out that the word ἀλήθεια is already used in Homer only in the verba dicendi, in statement and thus in the sense of correctness and reliability, not in the sense of unconcealment. But this reference means only that neither the poets nor everyday language usage, not even philosophers see themselves confronted with the task of asking how truth, that is, the correctness of statements, is granted only in the element of opening of presence. / In the scope of this question, we must acknowledge the fact that ἀλήθεια, unconcealment in the sense of opening of presence, was originally only experienced as ὀρθότης, as correctness of representation and statements. But then the assertion about the essential transformation of truth, that is, from unconcealment to correctness, is also untenable.” (TB, 70) See Friedländer’s critique, focusing on ἀλήθεια in the cave-allegory, and on its semantic ranges in the pre-Platonic literatures, in Plato: An Introduction. (1969, first pub., 1958)

50 Also stake in Heidegger’s thinking of πόλεις as πόλος and πέλειν is Aristotle’s Politics (ζῶν πολιτικόν as ξύνον λόγον ἔχον) and Physics (which takes its orientation from everyday φύσεως), and Poetics (in which poetry is closer to truth than history). For Greek tragic poetry is to φύσεως as the Seynsgeschichte is to Ἀλήθεια. This notion owes a debt to Hölderlin’s citation of pseudo-Aristotle, again in the “Anmerkungen zur Ōdipus” where, after defining the tragic as the catharsis of the divine-mortal disunity, he cites the Suda: Αριστοτέλης τῆς φύσεως γραμματέως, τῶν κάλαμον ἀποβρέχον εἰς νοῦν, “He was Nature’s scribe, dipping his pen in mind (sense or thought).” Hölderlin reads “good will” (ἔνοειν) in place of thought (νοεῖν). We know that Νοῦς is indelibly for Heidegger’s Aristotle, “the ἀλήθεων of the ἄρχαι” (Nic. Eth. VI.7), just as wisdom (Σοφία) is the “νοεῖ καὶ ἐπιστήμη,” which Heidegger re-interprets as mortal whining in the ἄρχαι as ἄρχαι in the double sense of Σοφία and Φρόνησις. This is what Hölderlin, on this analogy, calls ἔνοειν and makes the inkwell of writing. (PS, §9) In this sense grammatical phenomenology already in 1924 leads hermeneutics to the πέλειν of πόλος as the time-play-space in which Dasein emerges as having a “status” in each instance and circumstance. This, we can see in hindsight, is because Hölderlin’s good intentions (ἔνοειν) are the most the extreme ψυχολογικ-ἀπολείς, or, as Hölderlin renders these lines: “In high civility, uncivil he comes (Hochstädtisch kommt, unstädtisch) / to nowhere where beauty is (Zu nichts er, wo das Schöne).” (OA, 81-2)
unfitting, in Constantine’s Hölderlin: “May no one doing these things / Be by the hearth with me.” (OA, 82) This is Sophocles’s μὴ ’ ἐμοὶ παρέστιος / γένοιτο μὴ ’ ἵσον φρονῶν ὃς ταῦτ’ ἔρωτι, Heidegger’s “Such shall not be entrusted to my hearth, nor share their delusion with my / knowing, who put such a thing to work.”51 (HHI, 67)

The hearth is named in the SS 1942 already as the “terra mater,” Hertha or Nerthus over which the rivers journey, and also the love that is “central” and “centric.” (HHI, 28-9, 30-3) The hearth in Greek tragedy is, however, ever locked in a struggle between private and common hearth (ἑστία κοινή), in the case of the Theban trilogy, a struggle between the house of the Labdacids and the general good, expressed politically in the alliance as misalliance of sacred and sovereign power—Tiresias/Oedipus, Tiresias/Creon. It is the hearth that gives rise to Oedipus’s tragic becoming as exiled from the hearth—into a zone of άληθεία that mortality translates as delusion/madness (Wähnen). Antigone is the uncanniest because she undertakes a mission impossible (παθεῖν τὸ δεινόν, Austragen) to initiate a Vaterländische Umkehr with respect to the meaning of the hearth.

The uncanny is nothing other than this: the fact that she takes as her all-determinative point of departure that against which nothing can avail, because it is that appearing that is destined for her (ἐφάνη, I. 457), and of which no one knows when it has arisen. (HHI, 103)

Such an ἐφάνη is Antigone’s Zeus, i.e. her wedding which breaks the nomic which is merely apparent necessity (τὸ χρεών). Yet on account of her loving something indestructible, even to point of dying for it,52 and on account of her sacred derision in the turbulence of the common hearth, Antigone forfeits not only the hearth of her nuptials with Haemon, but the hearth of Thebes which is her right as ἐπικλήρος to claim. Such is the uncanny, fearful, all-powerful enormity of the hearth in Greek tragic religion.

Heidegger asks “What is meant by this word concerning the ‘hearth’?” The answer:

The hearth is the site of being-homely [die Stätte des Heimisch-seins]. Παρέστιος (from παρά and ἑστία): ἑστία is the hearth of the house, the locale at which there stands the gods

51 In the Contributions the hearth is present as in the post-Gründung jointures as exile of the grounded who altogether suffer homecoming into the intrusively solitary passage of the last god.
52 On Polyneices as cadaver in a centric/excentric bond of the dead back to living see Schmidt’s “What We Owe the Dead.” (Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays, 2006, 111-127)
of the hearth [die Herdgötter stehen]. What is essential to the hearth, however, is the fire in
the manifoldness of its essence, which essentially prevails as lightning, illuminating,
warmed, nourishing, purifying, refining, glowing. The word ἑστία is derived from a root
meaning “to radiate” and “to burn.” In all the temples of the gods and in all sites of human
habitation, this fire has its secure locale [seinen festen Ort], and as this locale, gathers
around it all that properly occur and is bestowed. (HHI, 105, GA 53, 130)

The hearth as a fixed resting place (festen Ort) is the “sphere of protection and intimacy
belonging to the homestead” without which the great feasts of the πόλις are not possible.
The earliest poetic document testifying to Hestia, which Heidegger cites, *The Homeric
Hymn to Hestia* begins uncannily by reminding how without Hestia it is impossible to
conduct feasts (εἰλαπίναι), since they can be neither started nor finished:

Hestia, in the lofty dwellings (ἐν δόμιασιν ὑψηλοῖσιν) of all,
both of immortal gods and of men who walk the earth,
you have attained an eternal abode and highest honour,
together with a fair and honorific prize: for without you
there can be no feasts for mortals, if at the beginning [ὑρχόμενος]
yours is not the first and last libation [σπένδει] of honey-sweet wine. (trans. 2006, 67)

As Jean-Joseph Goux points out “Hesiod, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Euripides, and Plato
are unanimous in indicating that every meal and every ritual should begin with a prayer
or a sacrifice to Hestia.” Heidegger also cites *The Homeric Hymn to Hestia*:

[*] in Hesiod and in the “Homeric hymns,” ἑστία is named the first-born daughter of
Chronos and Rhea (Hesiod, *Theogony* 454). Pindar likewise, at the beginning of the
eleventh Nemean ode, names ἑστία as Ζηνὸς ὑψίστου ἔστιν ἐγγείκεντα καὶ ὑμοτρόνου Ἡρας, as
sister of Zeus the highest and of Hera enthroned with him. ‘First-born’ of Kronos and
Rhea, “Sister” of Zeus and Hera. (HHI, 111; GA 53, 138-9)

53 See Goux’s “Vesta, or the Place of Being” which, picking up on Heidegger’s thinking of the
hearth via Plato’s *Cratylus* in the SS 1935, but just before the publication of the SS 1942, cites
Ovid’s observation that despite the iconophilia of ancient religion, in the precinct of Vesta “there
are no effigies of Vesta nor of the fire.” Goux explains this lack of figuration (simulacra) via a
conception of Hestia as primordial unrepresentable Being: ὡσια as unscathable perpetuity (ignis
Vestae), banded/controlled both in the laws on marriage, and isonomia in the political state.

In “Misognynous Hestia, or the City in its Autonomy” (trans. 2003, 59-70), Marcel Detienne points out how the festivals in which Zeus Polieus is paired with Hestia Hetaireia articulate an isonomy of the fraternal body-politic that claims for itself the mystery rites of πανσπερμία. (Ibid., 66) In the history of Greek social misogyny, in other words, there have ever been two Hestias, chthonic and ouranian, private and common, two poles of a center (μέσον). On the one hand, Hestia exists in the private hearth of an individual woman and her family, her main ritual being the bridal transfer led by the mother of the bride to the hearth of the husband, followed by maintenance of the hearth. But she also prevails in the political community of men. At the center of this conflict and its being-silenced in the age of classical tragedy stands Antigone—not her conflictual silence, since she is loquacious, but the conflict sparked in the silence of her death, a patriotic turning initiated by matyrdom for Thebes. What Antigone reveals by her actions through Heidegger is that she as Hestia is alongside everything, dwelling in everything. Παρουσία now reads Παρέστιος, entrusted or betrothed to the hearth: “παρέστιος” is “the one who, tarrying in the sphere of the hearth, belongs to those who are entrusted (vertraut) with the hearth, and so that everyone who belongs to the hearth is someone entrusted (ein Trauter), whether they are ‘living’ or ‘dead.’” (HHI, 114/5; GA 53, 143-4)

This becomes for Heidegger what is most δεινόν in the Antigone, what plays-forth (πέλειν) most uncannily, a Reinzentsprungenes that “the Greek otherwise call Φύσις,” but which at the perimeter the πόλις opens to Ἀλήθεια. It opens in poetic heralding (ἐρμηνεύεται) such uncanny sites of the Χυνόν as are able to say the unsaid, and thus break up the duplicity of the hearth. This is the most promising undertaking of Hermes-Hestia in Greek tragic religion and thought (Vernant), and which Heidegger also defines in terms of τόλμα, risk, an “experience and undertaking” of “the supreme action and proper history of humankind.” To understand the risk of Hestia, Heidegger looks to her meaning in Pythagorean cosmotheology, and in Plato’s myths. He cites Philolaos of Croton:
Das als der anfängliche Einklang Wesende, das Einigende Eine, in der Mitte der Kugel wird “Herd” genannt.

What essentially prevails as harmonious commencement, the unifying One in the middle of the sphere, is called “hearth.” (GA 53, 140; HHI, 112)

Not only in the middle of the house, Hestia is also in the middle of the σφαῖρας, the ovoid stone or umbilicus (ομφαλός) at Delphi symbolizing both city-state and divine-world, “a tomb, and a reservoir of souls and of life.” (Vernant, Ibid., 179-80) This is the isonomial dimension of chthonic Hestia, Hestia of many private μύχοι or θάλαμοι (caves, nooks, tombs), and expressing the “specific idea of an underworld hiding place; Danaé’s prison, Trophonios’s cavern […] the nuptial chambers or, more explicitly, the nuptial couch, and the meaning of the verb thalameuō is to lead to the bridal bed, to marry.” (Vernant, Ibid.)

But in both the cosmo-chthonic and bridal-isonomial configurations of her cultic rite, Hestia is the middle, as Heidegger says: “The hearth is [...] the middle of beings, to which all beings, because and insofar as they are beings, are drawn in the commencement (anfänglich bezogen bleibt). This hearth of the middle of beings is Being (Sein). Being is the hearth.” (HHI, 112) For in neither the cosmos that she centers, nor in the home that she protects or exposes, does Hestia suffer exclusion as she is herself all inclusion and all exclusion, in every way, the middle of beyng. Heidegger translates the classical passage on Hestia in Plato’s Phaedrus (246f), and every word of his translation is uncanny:

Der große Herrscher aber im Himmel, Zeus, fahrend den geflügelten Wagen, ist der erste im Aufbruch, durchwaltend alles und es mit seiner Sorge bedenkend, dem aber folgt die Streitschar der Götter und auch der holden-unholdigen Geister nach elf Zügen geordnet. Elf sind es nur, es bleibt beständig zurück Hestia in der Götter Heimstatt als einzige.
Yet the great ruler in the heavens, Zeus, driving a winged chariot, proceeds first, arranging all things and thoughtful caring for all things, but he is followed by an army of gods and fair yet fiendish spirits arrayed in eleven squadrons. There are eleven only, Hestia alone always remains steadfastly behind in the homestead of the gods. (GA 53, 141-2; HHI, 113)

Lord (Slave), Heaven (Earth), Uproar (Halcyon), Care (Murder), Gods’ Army (Pandemonium), Eleven (Twelve), Hestia (Zeus), Gods’ Homestead (Abyss). These are some of the capitalized words in Heidegger’s translation, with a few of their counter-turnings. And they are Capital words, callings to the capitulation, to the head, Behauptung, Zeus. But from the moment that we hear of der holden-unholdigen Geister, “all the fair yet fiendish Spirits,” a reference to the Jovian chorus also in Oedipus’s gebändigt-gefügten Daseins in the SS 1935, we must wonder if Heidegger is plying his translations of Hestia against the misogyny of Greek myth. With myth Heidegger says: “If the gods, dwelling in an inaccessible location beyond the heavens (überhimmlischen unzugänglichen Ort), are those who remain (Bleibenden), then among them the one who most remains and is most steadfast (die Bleibendste-Ständigste) is Hestia.” (Ibid.)

In this Heidegger inscribes a metaphysics of “constant presence,” not to mention an excessive love of the hearth. But it is not Heidegger’s wish that Hestia be so left, supposedly to bear the burden of being the “keeper of the gods’ homestead,” while the Jovian chorus flies forth from concealment. For in both the final eclipse of the “ouranian site” (ὑπερουράνιος τόπος), and the highest dawn of deepest Tartaros, and everywhere in-between, is Hestia. And this is why the Homeric Hymn to Hestia stipulates that without Hestia no festival can either begin or end. For the politic bards do not only attempt to secure the arrival of Hestia by propitiating her presence. They also have to diffuse the worry, the danger even, that once evoked, Hestia may never wish to leave. The danger is that the festival itself, in becoming unending, will uproot Dasein into a no-longer-knowing of its place, a no-longer-differentiating the household from the common hearth. Hestia must thus be propitiated in her arrival, and in her departure, propitiated to arrive as one not present, and propitiated to depart as one only now arriving, and thus granting a passage home. In all these counter-relations Hestia is a giver of respite and expulsion.

The end of the choral ode tells of an expulsion of errant self-delusion (ἰγών) from the knowing of the hearth (φρονεῖν from φρήν, the heart). Heidegger asks: “Who is expelled
here? From which hearth is the one rejected kept distant? Who is rejecting here? Who is by the hearth?” (HHI, 118) Is it the elders, the chorus, Tiresias, who are “by the hearth”?

What is the chorus in Greek tragedy? This question cannot be discussed at length here. There have been many debates and much careful academic work on the issue. The fact that Greek tragedy in general arose from the “chorus” says, when thought in an essential manner [wesentlich gedacht], nothing other than the fact that the chorus is the inner middle of the poetizing of tragedy as poetizing [die innere Mitte der Tragödiendichtung als Dichtung]. And the choral ode of the completed, tragic poetic work is in turn the middle of this middle [die Mitte dieser Mitte]. [...] The chorus is not simply the origin [der Ursprung] of tragedy in terms of its “developmental history”; rather, in the choral ode, the chorus becomes the essential middle of the tragedy in terms of the history of its essence [wesensgeschichtlich zu ihrer Wesensmitte]. The essential middle poetically gathers around it the whole of the poetic work; the chorus is that which is to be poetized [er ist das Zu-Dichtende]. (HHI, 118; GA 53, 148)

I look from here to §26—“Poetizing founding builds the stairs upon which the heavenly descend”—where we hear once more of the chorus of Hestia (Hertha of the Swabians).

“Hertha” is the Germanic name for “Mother Earth,” the Terra mater Nerthus, of which Tacitus in chapter 40 of his Germania reports:

“She is not honoured among all Germans, but only among a community of Swabian tribes [Stämme], who believe she cares for human things and has traveled to be among the peoples. On an island of Oceanus there is a sacred grove with sacrificial offerings arranged in it, a carriage deck with a cloth. Only the priest is allowed to touch it. He recognizes the presence of the goddess in the sacred realm and, harnessing the cattle, he escorts the goddess with supreme reverence. Happy then are the days, and festive the locales [Laetitiae tunc dies, festa loca, quaecumque adventu hospitioque dignatur; Froh sind dann die Tage und festlich die Orte] that the goddess everywhere honors by her coming and being a guest [quaecumque adventu hospitioque dignatur; die überall die Göttin durch ihr Kommen und Zugastsein würdigt]. No wars are then conducted. No weapons seized. Iron too is closed away; peace and quiet now alone prevail, now alone all find love [amata; die Liebe]—until the same priest, when the goddess has had enough of being together with mortals, returns to her sacred realm. The carriage and the cloths and, if you will believe it, the presencing
[numen ipsum; die Anwesung] of the goddess herself are then immediately washed in a concealed lake. This service is carried out by slaves, who are then swallowed up by this same lake [Servi ministrant’ quos statim idem lacus haurit; Sklaven tun den Dienst, die sogleich derselbe See verschlingt]. From this there stems the hidden terror and the sacred ignorance concerning what it is that is seen by those who are doomed to death. [Arcanus hinc terror sanctaque ignorantia; quid sit illud, quod tantum perituri vident; Von da stammt der geheime Schrecken und das heilige Nichtwissen, welchen Wesens dasjenige sei, was nur Todgeweihte zu Gesicht bekommen].” (HHI, 158; GA 53, 195-6)

I have found no passage on festival in Heidegger that bears a more terrible holocaustic complicity: 1) That Heidegger could cite this passage without comment on the persecution and deportations of those all around who were being consigned to such “hidden terror” and “sacred ignorance,” in cells, trams, and camps; 2) That he did not note here, desisted from comment on the murder by drowning of those Sklaven, themselves the sacrificial offering by Swabians to a goddess; 3) That he could draw from this foundational text in which Nazi thinkers exult,\(^\text{54}\) a primal illustration of the priority of Oblivion and Not-knowing with respect to Knowing and Remembrance; 4) That he could lend this brutality, without differentiation, a word that he imbues with sense, the hidden Terror (geheime Schrecken); 6) That he, who never ceased to think being-towards-death as a possibility of being whole, could name the death-consecrated, even as those who have a vision of the beyond. All this renders a bottomless horror to this locus classicus on the horror, and justifies the horror we must feel in Heidegger’s citation of it. Is the abyss of this revulsion made more acute, or is it transformed by what comes next?

Und das heilige Grün, der Zeuge des seeligen, tiefen Lebens der Welt, . . .

And holy green, witness of the blessed, profound Life of the world. . . . (“Der Wanderer,” IV, 103, I. 41f.)

\(^{54}\) For a general account of the Germania in historical context see Christopher B. Krebs’s *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus’s Germania: From the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*. (2011)
Is the holy green Er’s meadow in mourning for the Others who are forced to know in death, concealment, and the goddess, and even in the hostile-blessedness (Feindseligkeit) of a being-put-to-death, there in the darkest cavern, still, “the life of the world” on the “holy green”? If we read these pages as holocaustic memory then this much justice to Heidegger is due: that he knew the darkest evil could not be expunged or hidden from the festival beginning in the meadow of truth (τὸ ἀληθείας πεδίον, Phaedrus 248b), but must, as this evil, enter into its confrontation in Ereignis. So close by Heidegger’s hearth, we must suspect terrible delusion, madness. For how could we possibly share a hearth with a thinker who knows this? How could a thinker of Heidegger’s stature, and even tenderness, have spoken these things on Hölderlin, the way he did, and when he did? We cannot forgive Heidegger, but nor are we liberated from the tasks given in his thinking.55

The 1943 Andenken essay begins:

The poet’s preference [Die Vorliebe] for the northeast greets within this wind the opening-up of time-spaces in which the will to the essence be the will “of” the one who is to come [»des« Kommenden]. Yet here comes that which I will (Fr. No. 25, IV, 257). Here “will” does not at all mean the egotistically driven compulsion of a selfishly calculated desire. Will is the knowing readiness for belonging to one’s destiny [Zugehörigkeit in das Geschick]. The will wills only what is coming, for what is coming has already addressed this will, summoning it to know and to stand fast [zu stehen] in the wind of the promise [der Verheißung]. In this preference for the northeast there reigns the love [die Liebe] for the experience of fiery spirit in the strange land [des feurigen Geistes in der Fremde]. The love for what is not like home [Unheimischsein], purely for the sake of becoming at poem in what is one’s own [im Eigenen], is the essential law of destiny [Wesengesetz des Geschickes] by which the poet is sent into the grounding of the history of the “fatherland.”

(EHP, 111, trans. mod.; GA 4, 87)

55 Heidegger’s ambiguity forces us to refuse the oversympathetic reading (at its extreme, Ernst Nolte’s Heidegger: Politik und Geschichte im Leben und Denken, 1992), as well as the assured criticism of Friedrich Oehlkers who, writing to Jaspers, and functioning as a faculty member on Heidegger’s de-nazification committee, points to the 1943 Andenken essay as an example of the thinker’s “self-created vacuum” (luftleeren Raum), “easy to condemn, but very difficult to understand,” nonetheless assured of the “untold damage” (entsetzlichen Schaden) that this fantasy-world did. See Oehlkers letter 15th of December 1945 to Jaspers in Hugo Ott (trans. 1993), and Jaspers’ reply, also in The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader. (1993, 145-51)
Heidegger wills that we follow the fiery spirit into a strange land. This is not colonialism, but untimely thinking, an ἀπουσία beyond the παρουσία, and thus a migration of the spirit into a futural will. Where both the “will to power” and the “will to will” are clasped into the Wirbel of the “will of the ones who are to come,” there eschatology must dismantle archeology, as the divine-mortal chorus returns and passes-by the hearth. The fragment wherein Hölderlin most expresses this hope is “The Nearest the Best...”:

The windows of heaven are open,
The spirit of night is on the loose,
Who takes the sky by storm and has confounded
Our land with a babble of tongues [mit Sprachen viel], and
Stirred up rubble
To this very hour [diese Stunde].
But here comes that which I will [Doch kommt das, was ich will],
When
Like starlings [Staaren]
With shouts of joy [Mit Freudengeschrei], when above Gascogne, regions of countless gardens,
When fountains, where olives grow
On lovely foreign soil, when trees
By grassy paths
Unaware in the wild
Are stung by the sun,
And earth’s heart
Opens [thuet], where rivers
From the burning plain
Flow around hills
Of oak, where
Sundays, amid dancing,
Thresholds offer welcome. . .
[...]
Well, fine. There was a secret
Time when by nature I would have said
They were coming to Germany. But now, since the earth
Is like a sea, and the nations, like men who cannot
Cross to each other’s coasts, squabble
Among themselves, I speak as follows. To the west [...] 

[...] Barbarians also live where the sun and moon
Reign alone. But God sustains us, if indeed there be one, would that
He change my fatherland around [Umkehren mein Vaterland] [...] (HF, 178-9)

Hölderlin looks to the West, to the pillars of Hercules, and beyond, to the Isle of Hesperia. He prays that sun and moon return together will turn his Germania around. If the moon is the tragic clearing of the demigods, and the sun, their bridal beginning, then only where sun and moon flow and are clasped together, can there be a middle for the “heaven of song.” As Heidegger cites from Hölderlin and comments in §25 of SS 1942:

A sign is needed, [Ein Zeichen braucht es,]
. . . so that sun [. . . damit es Sonn’]
And moon may be borne in mind, in separable, [Und Mond trag’ im Gemüth...]
And pass on. . . [untrennbar, / Und fortgeh’ . . .]

According to this, the sign has a mind [Gemüt]: indeed the mind is manifestly not something added to the “sign” but is its proper essence [eigentliches Wesen]. Sun and moon, inseparable [untrennbar] — the star of the day and the star of the night — in their belonging together are supposed to be preserved and retained [bewahrt und behalten bleiben] in this mind of the sign. “And pass on” [»Und Fortgeh’«] — who or what is to pass on? The sign? And in what sense is it to “pass on” [»fortgehen«]? Is it to pass away [wegehen] or to proceed onward [weitergehen]? Yet how? What a remarkable [merkwürdiges] sign — a sign that has a mind. (HHI, 149; GA 53, 185-6)

It is the demigods “born of the bridal festival” “who must be signs,” but who as clasped pass-on as signal stars beyond the moon, into the Evian sun as midnight — for “the night retains the lights of spirit,” and passes them on as “the dawning rising of the holy is prepared.” (HHI, 151) What this is to say is that if the world conflagration engulfs the
deepest wound in fire, Dasein will still emerge into the decreation of this *orbis*, and thus into the turbulent *Gegenwendigkeit* of all the δαίµονες who trace the scars, and learn the hestial historicity of Dasein from birth to death. The chorus of Hestia bears this history as Ἀλήθεια gazes into the moon of language. But once in a while, the inapparent hidden in the sun itself appears. These are the bridal festivals of the endowment as *the* commission, signal-signs of the round dance that fissures and clasps all demigods’ hostile blessedness.
CHAPTER 4:

THE WEDDING THAT ARRIVES:
THE ROUND DANCE AS ALÊTHEIA

Abstract: This chapter unpacks the core of Heidegger’s festival of thinking in the WS 1941/2 Andenken lectures and 1943 essay, and from 1936-63. Ch. 4.1 examines: 1) the onset of the holiday as a prevailing of the inhabitual and playing in abyss; 2) the leap of the holiday into its counter-reference with the work-day, and in the chiasmata of work, fest, justice, and the nefas; 3) the grounding of the bridal festival and round dance as the “first beginning” and “other beginning” of Being in Heidegger’s later thinking. Ch. 4.2 then circles again within Anklang, Zuspiel, and Sprung of the festival of Being in terms of: 1) the grounding attunement of festivity as the most originary (ursprünglichste) attunement, attuning the flight and arrival of gods; 2) the holiday as καιρός in the 1939 essay “As When on a Holiday...” wherein we find the greeting of the holy as the Mnemosyne of a “mighty dawn”; 3) the dawn itself as the inapparent nocturnal bridal festivities from Presocratic philosophy to Hegel; 4) the futural ones and their “intimate celebration of the last god” in the 1936/7 Contributions.
4.1 The Holiday Chiasmus: From the Festival to the Bridal Festival

4.1.1 The *Anklang* of the Holiday: Deserting the Habitual, Playing in the Abyss

As the WS 1934 and the SS 1942 offer meditations on *Der Rhein* and *Der Ister* as “concealing the mystery of the origin,” the 1943 *Andenken* begins with a meditation—on (*denken-an*) source, river, stream. More than twenty pages have transpired, however, before Heidegger turns to the essay’s central topics: holiday and festival. Foreshadowed from the first words, the holiday arrives with a jolt since with this word “in one single mysterious arc (*geheimnisvoll gespannten*) the lines swing around to join in verse the singular thought of the one thing to which the greeting (*Gruß*) is extended.” (EHP, 125; GA 4, 101) This prefacing is overdetermined: it abruptly draws attention to Hölderlin’s abrupt word holiday, only to embark on a programmed discourse, a discourse that it would be difficult to convince reflects the necessities of a strict reading of the hymn.

As they bring everyday works to a halt, holidays give the appearance of having arrived out of place, abruptly, if not “by chance.” But while holidays may appear as a “pause which is taken finally for the sake of work itself,” seen more closely they are something in themselves. What this something is is condensed into a formula: “Feiertage sind Tage der Feier.” Left at that we are hardly further informed, and so Heidegger continues:

In the setting aside of work, there already appears that keeping-to-ourselves through which we come back to ourselves. It is not as though we were selfishly transposed back upon our own ‘I.’ Keeping-to-ourselves rather transposes us beyond ourselves into a rarely experienced realm, out of which our being is attuned. Out of such transposition [Versetzung] there begins astonishment [Erstaunen], terror [Erschrecken], or even awe [Scheu]. Out of this springs meditation [Besinnung]. Around human beings it becomes open. But the real [Wirkliche], that to which we become habituated in everyday life, is
incapable of keeping the Open open. Only the inhabitual can open up the Open, insofar as the inhabitual has its concealed measure in the rarity of the simple, in which the reality of the habitual real is concealed. The inhabitual cannot be immediately encountered or grasped. The inhabitual opens itself up and opens up the Open only in poeticizing (or, separated from it by an abyss and in its time, in “thinking”). Celebrating is a becoming-free for the inhabitual of the day, which, in its difference [Unter-schied] to the dull gloom of everydayness, is what is clear [der lichte ist] [...] (EHP, 126, trans. mod.; GA 4, 103)

This passage condenses three sections from the WS 1941/2. (GA 52, §24-7) A careful unpacking of the essay should therefore draw on these sections, paying attention to what editorial choices Heidegger makes. Absent from the essay are the references to expectancy (Erwartung) and awaiting (Erharren) as characterizing Dasein’s relation to holiday occasions. Also truncated are the discussion of the wonder and terror brought on by holidays. Missing are the references to the holiday’s co-constitutive inauthenticity as a possibility of Dasein’s disastrous fall into Unwesen. Finally, left out of account from the essay is the transformation of holiday celebrants into the “essence of play and dance.”

What is highlighted across both the essay and the lectures is the discussion of the holiday as a turning away from the familiar (das Gewöhnliche), and towards what is inhabitual (Ungewöhnliche): “The inhabitual” names for Heidegger “not the exotic, the sensational, the never-before-seen, but [...] the permanently, essential, simple, ownness of beings.” (GA 52, 65-6) As occasional site for Dasein’s recovery of its inhabituality, holidays open up the time-play-spaces wherein unrest (Unruhe) and its machinations may be summoned before the most “essential” (Wesenhaft) or proper (Eigentlichen) possibilities of Dasein which are always inhabitual. On holidays the inhabitual itself “emerges (appears or shines, erscheint).” (GA 52, 75) The holiday is “the inhabitual of the day” “in its difference from the night” of habit. But such a clearing happens only as Dasein’s “becoming free from the habitual as becoming free for the inhabitual.”

Who are the “founders” (Stifter) of the “gentle laws” (sanfte Gesetz) of the holiday? The WS 1941/2 tells us little on this, but we can infer that they are “the futurals” (Zukünftigen, Kommenden) who the poet wills, the “starlings.” Yet even singers such as these do not (yet) open up the inhabitual everyday. For left to their own locations/locutions, all beings inhabit one another, and are familiar with each other,
always in some way. Beings are ever discoverable and measurable in their habitus. Is there a Dasein that exists purely inhabitually, a pure prodigy or monster? Is there a place amidst the wondrous openness of beings, in the silences of a language perhaps, where Being’s own habitation is found? It does not appear that we human beings can fully know what we do when we inhabit one another, nor do we understand what dwelling in the light of Being in its most desolate and uninhabitable superabundance (ἄπειρον) might be like. Being is inhabitual, singular and unique, a fiery desert for beings, yet a desert that in every way remarks, and traces the life and habitus, in every way, the Being of beings.

This is where the discourse on the holiday Anklang opens up wide-reaching implications for phenomenology. Opening Dasein’s everydayness to the placeless place (χώρα) of place itself, the holiday grants Dasein a sojourn in the Open transition (Übergang) through all dis-location and trans-location (Erörterungen), an uncanny passage across the locus suspectus or problematic χώρα of all habitation and all usuality.

This is not to suggest that all or even a few holidays will carry Being as Ereignis in its full essential sway (Wesung). For just to declare a holiday is never a guarantee that the inhabitual, as the shining rift of Unterschied, Ereignis, and Austrag will come to predominate in human praxis, or that its celebratory grounding will ensue. The situation of the holiday is indeed perilous since:

It can be that in the vacation [Leere] of our holding-back from work, we do not know how to begin [nicht anzufangen wissen], and look for some assistance; so it happens that the times of holiday become opportunities of the escape from ourselves, and occasions for concealing our everyday stupefaction [...] holidays are either arranged like work or are abolished. The holiday then becomes another installation of human machination. The essence of this holiday is such as to come to ruin in its opposite. But this dreadfulness [Unwesen] of the holiday confirms only the essence [Wesen]. (GA 52, 65)

Even failed holidays testify to the possibilities they lose. What should be said regarding this essence of holidays in which even privation and nonessence find a place? The question asks after the holiday’s Wesung. For “holding-back from work” holidays might yet expose all “not knowing how to begin (nicht anzufangen wissen)” to the shadows and echoes of a most primordial beginning (ursprünglichste Anfang). (GA 52, 77-78)
Also left out of account in the 1943 essay is §25 of the lectures which go further to articulate how the holiday transforms inhabitation into the essence of play and dance:

[...] the resolution of the habitual into the inhabitable is not a reeling in the unbound [Ungebundene], rather a binding [Bindung] to what is essential and to the hidden pliancy [Fügsamkeit] and rule [Regel] of beings. The freely-moving binding in the rule out of whose oscillatory resonance [Schwingung] is unfolded the kingdom [Reichtum] of the free possibility of rule-measuring, that is the essence of play. When the human lets the controlled unity of its form [Gestalt] come into play, dance is born. (GA 52, 67)

In distinction to the everyday time of forced moves, the holiday liberates the game time of the free move. The free move is free-from the law in being free-for a more profound measure-taking, and thus a more stringent binding within a more vertiginous oscillation with the outlaw. Far from being a mindless escapade into the unknown, the free move is made only in the measure of the playing field as a whole. The measure-taking divines the higher law, opening the possibility of a revolutionary rule-making that might transform the situation as a whole. The “kingdom of the free possibility of rule-measuring,” the new clasping into the higher law, names the shining realm of the indeterminate, the field of play. Through playing humans come to realize that they themselves are a being played within the fourfold Ursprung, and are thus at stake in the world-game. Humans thereby learn to let the differential unity of their form (Gestalt), becoming visible as the Augenblick of situation, come more fully into play (Zuspiel). The world’s image (Gestalt) exfoliates as dance. Dance bodies-forth the images (gestures/figures) of the world. Both in the backwards glance into everyday from the peak of the dance, and in the being-cleared that accedes to the enjoining jointure of its play, at each moment, taking a measure and venturing a play, the holiday opens up Dasein to the dance and play of time.

From this liberation stems the knowing that “the brightness of the celebration as resplendency of the essential is not tied to the day-brightness of the day.” For “the day celebration can shine through the night”: 
The holiday can last not only until the night, but rather it can illuminate the night itself out of the brightness of the celebration. We here think ahead to the end of the fourth strophe of the poem “Andenken.” The poet of the sojourn there says,

\[\ldots\] where through the night does not gleam
the city’s holidays
Nor music of strings, nor indigenous dancing. (PF, 579)

Holidays never arise on account of mere dancing and playing, but rather where a genuine celebrating is granted and makes the day a holiday, there the dayness of the day is transformed [einschwingen] in that dance and play wherein the habitual as well as the lost brightness come together [festzuhalten]. (GA 52, 67)

Deepest night and highest day thus come into the habitual-inhabitual interplay, the day’s truth transforming in night’s play, and the night’s festival opening the hope of the day. At this moment the holiday becomes the pure threshold wherein all wonder and terror arise in Dasein, only then to be transformed into all awe, joy, mourning, and celebration. How is this intensification and transformation of Dasein’s attuneness to be understood?

The process of holiday re-attuning is thought by Heidegger in terms of transpositions or dislocations (Versetzen): “returning-to-oneself” (Ansichhalten) dislocates apathy, which leads to increased “watchfulness” (Aufmerken), and intensified “questioning” (Fragen) and “expectancy” (Erwartung), and to the attunements of wonder (Erstaunen oder Wunders), terror (Erschrecken), and then awe, shyness, or dread (Scheu). Such transpositions of attunement lead to an awakening mindfulness (Besinnung): a meditative (Besinnungen) “returning-to-oneself” (Zu-sich-selbst-kommens). (GA 52, 74)

The meditative self-return grants Dasein a split vision of the whole of beings: both a look back into its true abyss, i.e. the habits of concealment, and an expansive undergoing of unconcealing, a thoughtful entry into the inhabitual as Being. What does this last movement imply with respect to the thinking of the time-play-place of festival in the history of Being? We have seen how the holiday opens a χώρα that fissures/striates Dasein. This opening we might now call the onto-topological rift between the everyday and the festival-day, a yawning wherein the Open opens, and in which Dasein undergoes
its unity as dispersion. Torn between the anticipatory enactment of originary festivities, and the turbulent tugs of its everyday involvements and concerns, human beings experience the holiday opening as vertigo, and even as potential threat. But in the most enigmatic movement of the holiday Anklang, the irruptive and interruptive difference of Being and the χώρα carries Dasein into an invisible/stronger harmony, a more powerful nonpower, through the Gelassenheit of celebration (Feier). This is the most perplexing moment of Heidegger’s analysis of the holiday onset: To celebrate in the midst of the inhabitual opening frees a relation between what, most different and separated by an abyss, comes to rest on a common ground, existing simultaneously.

These are the everyday time of work and the time of the holiday, or the time of thinking, and the time of the poietic word, as mutually involved times, now freed into the Open of their simultaneity and rupture. The phrase “The inhabitual opens itself and opens the Open only in poietic saying (or, separated from it by an abyss and in its time, in “thinking”) [(oder abgründig davon verschieden und zu seiner Zeit im “Denken”)], warrants an even closer examination. (EHP, 126; GA 4, 102-3) The first half of this statement is emphatic: only in Dichten is there an Open prevailing of the inhabitual. But the syntax of the second half, its placing into parentheses of the chiasmus itself, makes the statement even more ambiguous, fragmenting and spiraling it into a mysterious quaternion. In the Other’s time, the time of poetizing, thinking thinks, and there encounters the separation and inclusion of itself, as thinking, from the Open as granted in the poietic word. How are we to think this spatial and topological exclusion of thinking from poetizing that is, at the same time, a temporal and aletheiological inclusion?

Perhaps Denken configures the time of Dichten from a silent vantage that, though exiled from the poietic, still grounds the rapture of the poietic, both before and after the saying, through a formally indicative pre-saying (Vorsagen)? If this is the case then the distinction of thinker and poet is even more tenuous than we take it to be, and would come down to nothing except which side of the Janus-faced Ereignis is being thought. There is no shortage of texts in the post-1920s writings that clarify the close relation of Dichten and Denken, the commentary being even more abundant. The relation of poietic song and thinking is richly defined by Heidegger in a short, but not precisely dated text, from either the later 1930s or early 1940s, “Das Wesen der Philosophie,” published in
To experience what is own to philosophy means that we enter into the relationship of philosophy to poetry. Philosophy is thinking in the element of thought. Poetry [Poesie] is singing in the element of song. [...] Joining and gathering the word and responding-to [nach-sagend] the hinting and ringing of stillness, the saying of thinking and singing foretells [vorsagt] the word of language and fulfills its opening-out.

Thus responding and foretelling, thinking and singing, in thought and song ‘dictates’ the word into language. Thinking and singing are—as wording-in-return [Ant-worten]—dictation of stillness. [...] Hidden and sheltered, what is own to thinking and singing is poetic saying [Dichtung]. Thought and song rest in it. The dynamic relation [Verhältnis] of both to each other rests in it. [...] Its enowning is twofold, as hinting and sounding [Klingen]. This twofold dwells [beruht] in the equanimity [leisure, Ruhe] of the onefold. As this onefold, enowning—in a one-time and unique way—turns [owns over, vereignet] the ache of dis-enowning into favor (the secret of the buoyant).¹

Thinking may separated off, protected from the abyss—Irigaray will say Heidegger has but to lose his footing on earth—but thinking is rhythmed from the Abyss, a sheltering granting of the χώρα. Thinking and singing are equally Dichtung, dictations of stillness, foretellings of the words of language that attempts to fulfill Being’s own opening-out. And together thinking and singing as Dichtung may occasionally turn-over (vereignet) “the ache of dis-owning into the favor (secret of the buoyant).” The festival of thinking and the festival of poetry are not the same festival, but they are both festive. What they celebrate as fathoming (Erdenken) and poeticizing (Dichten) is the festival itself.

A celebration confined to the mere cessation of work would have nothing to celebrate, and hence essentially would not be a celebration. The latter is defined through what it celebrates. That is the festival. (GA 4, 103)

¹ “Das Wesen der Philosophie” was originally published in the Jahresgabe der Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft (1987, 21-30), and translated as “Own to Philosophy” by Kenneth Maly in Heidegger’s Possibility: Language, Emergence –Saying Be-ing. (2008, 147-54)
That a celebration is attuned or delimited (bestimmt) by the essence or value of what it celebrates accords with everyone’s sense of measure and justice. But that all celebrations are limited not in themselves, but in accordance with the objects that they celebrate leads to a wholly different order of proposition, which few know how to enact. For the celebration without determinate object, or better, the celebration that celebrates everything, while making every distinction, in a kind of round, would not be so limited.

It is the duplicity in the Zusagen,² the pre-assent of Dasein to the world and things, that pushes the question of the Sein-Sinn towards the answer of Seyngeschichte as its only and most plausible response: Being happens as the festival of appropriation (Ereignis). The holiday can be this clearing co-belonging of Being and Dasein because it opens the field of play to the indetermination of all that is habitually determinate.

Thus Heidegger writes that the holiday first of all opens up the inhabitual of Dasein to the wondrous yet terrible premonition (Ahnen des Wunders) that “over our heads a world worlds, that beings are not rather nothing.” (GA 52, 64) The compactness of Heidegger’s exposition here verges on the incredible. All celebration is delimited by what it celebrates, but what all celebration celebrates, limiting but giving it everything, is the festival: the “celebration is celebrative (feierlicher) only insofar as it becomes anticipation of the authentic festival (das eigentliche Fest).” (GA 52, 66)

Das eigentliche Fest, but what is that?

² This Zusage, affirmative pre-attunement or agreement—French gage, pledge or grant—is underlined by Jacques Derrida in Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question. (trans. 1991, 129-33)
4.1.2 The Double Chiasmus of the Holiday: Work, Fest, Justice, and the Nefas

Before answering this question in Ch. 4.1.3, I will ask a more basic question. What is the relation between the holiday and workday? How has this relation been historically inscribed in different cultural and epochal configurations, and what is at stake in how we approach the factual-kairological difference, the difference of work and festival?

As is well known, ancient Greek calendars were kairological, πόλεις-specific, and lunar, intercalary months forming “the great year,” μέγας ἐνιαυτός of Panathenaia or Olympics. They were analyzable in terms of either gods or months, urban or rural cults, and tended to prioritize the festivals over the work worlds they divided and celebrated. In Timothy Torno’s *Finding Time: Reading for Temporality in Hölderlin and Heidegger* (1995, 165-87), the καιρός of the holiday within the Greek experience of time is defined in terms of: 1) the “recuperation of the memory of the struggle” that precedes the holiday; and 2) the return of “Nature [Φύσις] in the holy moment.”

The term kairós, which we have used frequently in this study, is usually translated as “exact or critical time, season, opportunity.” Recent scholarship, however, suggests that up to Pindar’s time, it was not primarily temporal, it was closer in meaning to “due measure.”[3] The kairós would belong to the whole constellation of warnings about “excess” or transgressing boundaries in Greek literature. Time was thus not uniform, as we think of it, but closer to the model of the fruit ripening “in the fullness of time.” It is interesting to note that even peoples like the ancient Greeks—who lacked calendars as we know them and such concepts as “week,” or a fixed chronology in “years” (measured by the revolutions of the sun), and whose “months” were irregular and inconsistent among the various city-states—distinguished carefully between favorable and inopportune times. Such discrimination could obviously be essential for survival in harsh terrain. With increased astronomical sophistication, people were later able to rationalize and even predict the arrival of these favorable times. They always remained essentially independent of man, however. [...] The Feiertage themselves, were the “gifts” of the gods, a representation of

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the original benefaction which they were intended to commemorate. The *Feiertag* marked the time in which god performed his work and thus it was dedicated, or “sacred,” to the god. By clearly distinguishing itself from ordinary time, which was given over to humans, it helped maintain the separate but related identities of men and gods. Often—as through sacrifice—it underlined the role of human beings in keeping the cosmic order in balance. 

[...]

It is through the *Feiertag* that the poem is able to address the issues that Heidegger finds so important. The place of the poet, the role of Nature, the danger of forgetting Being, all derive from the presence or absence of the *Feiertag*. The *Feiertag* is the day when the poet comes into his own, when he commemorates through the ritual enactment of the festival the acts of the god(s) and thus founds anew the time of the community. By affirming their relationship to the gods, the people identify themselves, they develop and maintain a sense of their origins and destiny. The *Feiertag* sets the parameters under which the people recognizes itself in its world. Burkert writes, “As the sanctuary articulates space, so the festival [i.e. *Feiertag*] articulates time.” To be allowed to take part in the *Feier* signifies acceptance into the community and the recognition of the community’s self-definition, its history. (Ibid., 167-8, 72)

Picking up from Torno here, a study of the Greek, Christian, or Celto-Germanic time calendars and festival historicites would seem appropriate to Heidegger’s treatment of the holiday. But this would take us too far afield, and is not the most obvious influence on Heidegger’s articulation of the *Feiertag-Arbeitstag* distinction. While not offering an etymological discussion of the Latin roots of his own vocabulary of *Feier* and *Fest*, not even at the moment that he is most concerned with formal definition (EHP, 125-6; GA 4, 102-3), the two- and four-fold analysis of the Latin *Fasti* is significant for Heidegger.\(^4\)

Exploring the etymological background of the Latin roots of *Feier* and *Fest*, I will in this section heed Heidegger’s warning that while essential thinking must not “feed on

\(^4\) Critiquing the Roman no less than the Christian calendrical experience, Heidegger tends to hear in *Feiertag* and *Fest* the German *Heilige* and *Ort*, which he traces back to the Greek ἱερός and ἑορτή. In *Hyperion*, for example, we find frequent allusions to the poetic formula ἱερόν ἡμῶρ (holy day), sung by early poets on occasion of a jubilant greeting of the sun. The Greek ἱερός or Gothic *hail* recalls to Heidegger, as it does to Émile Benveniste in *Indo-European and Society*, an fecund and ardent power, semantically distant from the Latin *sacer*, which conveys more what is “set apart and hedged round, an august and awful quality of divine origin, which separates it from all human relations.” (trans. 1973, 468) This creates insuperable difficulties in translating *das Heilige* into English since, as the O.E.D. entry on the holy also informs, “we cannot [even] in O.E. get behind the Christian sense in which the holy is equated with Latin *sanctus*, *sacer*."

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etymology,” still “etymology has the standing mandate first to give thought to the essential content involved in what dictionary words, as words, denote by implication.” (PLT, 175) With this caveat in mind, let us look to the work of comparative linguist Georges Dumézil who in his chapter “Sacra Publica” of *Archaic Roman Religion* insightfully condenses the semantic imbrications of the Latin vocabulary of *feriae* and *festi* as exemplified in the calendrical practice of classifying the days as either festive or nonfeste (feriae and profesti), but also as either favorable or unfavorable (fasti or nefasti) for the undertaking of ordinary work-related tasks and activities.5

For our culture which tends to schematize the days of the calendar as of two basic types, workdays or holidays, this fourfold schema of the days requires explanation. Its first moment understands the festival from the point of view of the divine in that the *feriae* are the days reserved for, and consecrated to the gods, in distinction from the days given over to the professions of mortal life in its self-securitization and secular business. The fixedness of our own calendrical experience makes the chiasmus’s second aspect, the duality of *dies fasti* and *dies nefasti*—opportune and inopportune days—appears as less a matter of public legislation, than happenstance. The Roman days are not only consecrated to the gods (*feriae*) or the professions of mortals, but they they are characterized as being

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5 See *Archaic Roman Religion*: Volume II (trans. 1970, 561, first published in 1966 as *La Religion Romaine Archaïque Suivi d’un Appendice sur la Religion des Etrusques*): “The days are classified in two categories, *dies festi* and *dies profesti*, and *dies fasti* and *nefasti*, in which the ideas of *feriae* and *fas* are operative. The second category, which is metaphysical, and has given rise to a number of controversies […] The *dies fasti* are those [days] which provide man’s secular activity with a mystical basis, *fas*, which assures him of the chance to be successful; the *dies nefasti* do not provide such a basis. The word *feriae* ['holidays'] is only descriptive and negative. In a broad sense, the *feriae* are the times in which man renounces his secular activities and which he reserves for the gods, with or without a stated cultic act; consequently the *dies festi* are consecrated to the gods, and the *profesti* are left to men for the conduct of private and public business (*Macrobius* 1.16.2). Such was the oldest teaching; later it was changed in various ways, for instance with *feriae* often receiving a positive content, typified by the “festival,” from which the *dies festus* remained exempt—or vice versa. / But these matters concerned only the theorist: in practice, almost all the *feriae*, and with them the *dies festi*, had religious content, involving ceremonies. Therefore the two categories are quite different in principle: one (*fasti-nefasti*) defines the days from the point of view of human activity, and with direct concept being favorable to such activity; the other (*festi-profesti*) defines them from the point of view of divine propriety, with the direct concept asserting such propriety. Thus, although all *dies festi* are *nefasti*, not all *dies nefasti* are *festi*: there are reasons other than respect for divine propriety which makes human activity on certain days inadvisable.” On the Roman festival see also H.H. Scullard’s *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (1981), W. Fowler Ward’s *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (1899, 2004), Ovid’s *Fasti* and Macrobius’s *Saturnalia.*
favorable or unfavorable, opportune or inopportune, full of jointure or disjointure. Deriving from the verb *fas*, to be “right, lawful,” and perhaps from “to do,” “to make,” “to speak” (*fari, facio*), *dies fasti* are defined by Dumézil in terms of their being favorable to the pursuit of an *opus*, “secular and especially juridical activity,” occasionally to the point of outlawing unnecessary political engagements, such as the gathering of the people in *comitia*. *Dies nefasti*, on the other hand, grant time and space on the calendar for those days that, characterized by their fleetingness or fatedness, fail to give humans a firm place to stand. They disturb and/or pass us by without offering clear sites on which to build, therein making our ordinary work related activities inadvisable.

Dumézil considers this later dimension of *fasti-nefasti* to be “metaphysical.” Why? Because more than articulating the need for work and rest, or the observance of sacred and profane obligations, naming the day as either *fasti* or *nefasti* decides upon the likelihood or unlikelihood, the opportunity and inopportunity, on the basis of signs and omens, of success or failure in these endeavors. Such decisions go beyond φύσις. They constellate not only a functional, but a theological matrix for human activity. But despite the temptation stemming from the legal or literary sources, to designate *fasti-nefasti* as metaphysical, if not originally so, perhaps a “more archaic” meaning of *fas* and *nefas* haunts these distinctions. Dumézil does not venture in this direction. Limiting his discussion of the *Fasti* to the pontifical practice of reserving, within the calendar of the *res publica*, days, portions of the day, intercessional or fissional periods, as *fasti* or *nefasti, festi* or *profesti*, with all the subdivisions that follow, Dumézil withholds speculation on the origins and ends of these practices within socio-religious experience. Yet he stresses that these ideas are surely among the “oldest teachings” discussed in his *Archaic Roman Religion*. Dumézil underlines the existence of a chiasmus here, in other words, only to pass it over as a chiasmus, and to treat each axis separately.6

While the basic equivalence of the *Feiertag-Arbeitstag* and *dies festi-dies profesti* is clear and unequivocal, the relation of the first to the second axis is more obscure. In its ancient Latin usage some relation or state of affairs is either proper (divinely sanctioned) or not (*fas est, fas non est*). Only on this basis, beyond “casuistry and analysis,” can the

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6 Dumézil undertakes another analysis of this chiasmus in *Camillus: A Study of Indo-European Religion as Roman History*. (trans., 1980, 211-220)
question of rightness as proper fit and eventually justice, *ius*, arise and be discussed. But phrased in this way, the duality *fas-nefas* starts to look a lot like the Greek δίκη and ἀδικία as Heidegger interprets them, namely, as the presencing of the “fitting” (*schicklich, Fug*) or the “un-fitting” (*unschicklich, Unfug*), and of both in Anaximander’s “joining-enjoining jointure” (*fügend-fügende Fug*). What Dumézil finds in *fas* is “the mystical, invisible basis without which *ius* is not possible, and which sustains all visible arrangements and relations defined by *ius*.” (Ibid., 130-1) Heidegger names this reck-giving jointure (δικαιοσύνη, *Fügsamkeit*) that is prior to the Roman *ius* as law or command, for within its ordering, ἀδικία, what the Romans on this comparison call *nefas*, is not effaced or sublimated, but set-out in the joining. We read in the WS 1941:

> Presencing is emergence as transition. What presences in this way is what is fit, δίκην. It fits itself into enjoinment. That means to say: presencing is the transition of emergence into elusion. However, beings themselves give what is fit to being, and as beings of such an essence, they also allow each respective being to be what it is of itself. Giving what is fit to being, every being mutually acknowledges every other. Each thus allows the other its appropriate regard (καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις). The full essential relation of what respectively presences to the unfit determines itself only through this duality in which the various moments belong together in themselves (διδόναι δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις). Giving what is fit and granting mutual acknowledgement—that is itself overcoming [Verwindung] the unfit. We do not say subduing [Überwindung] because that could mean the unfit would be eliminated. Indeed, the unfit belongs to the essence of presencing as non-essence. (BC, 102)

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7 On Heidegger’s interpretation of Δίκη see the SS 1935 (IM, 171-81), the SS 1941 (BC, Part II), and the 1946 “Anaximander’s Saying” in Holzwege. (OBT, 242-82; EGT, 13-58) In the SS 1935 Heidegger frames the uncanny thresholds of creative τέχνη, doing-violence in the sense of setting-beings-off, in terms of δίκη as overwhelming jointure that modifies τέχνη into a deeper accord with the needful (τὸ χρῆ) thresholds of reciprocal determination: i.e. in a λόγος that responds to the Riß (tear), Bezüge (draft), Gefüge (structure), and Fügung (arrangement). What is uncanniest about the uncanny human being is this “oppositional relation of δίκη and τέχνη,” since it is also a unifying and thus originary technicity that, because it is called to Dasein’s enjoining of Ursprung, also “must shatter against the most excessive violence of Being” (Φύσις). (IM, 173)
These relations (Verhältnisse) of jointure/disjointure are thought by Heidegger in the WS 1941/2, now from out of the basic definition of the bridal festival as sent by the holy:

This dispensation [Schickung] enjoins [fügt] the drawing [Bezüge] of the holy towards both human beings and gods, drawing gods and human beings to the holy, drawing gods and human beings to each other, and drawing their togetherness itself in the holy. / The unity and simplicity of this originary drafting of joining, in which all things are fastened [fügt] and individually attuned, is the fitting [der Fug]. This joining we name the Being [das Seyn], wherein all beings come to pass. This joining of fittingness is a releasing into essence [Wesen], but is also at the same time a letting-loose into the possibility of non-essence [Unwesens]. The freeing is thus an admission of the nefas [Unfugs]. (GA 52, 100)

Freely introducing the nefas into my translation of Unfug here, I note this passage not only because it connects Hölderlin’s “bridal festival” to the Anaximander fragment, but because it opens the discussion of the bridal festival to the horizons of justice. On holidays the nonessence or disjointure (nefas) of everyday τέχνη-related activities (dies profesti) are brought to a halt in being exposed to that abyss which opens up a possibility of δίκη, the overwhelming jointure. This is a possibility that begins in mutual regard, τίσιν, as a giving of recompense. The jointure of Dasein into the holy festival is thus an onto-political task, and its challenge is not only to let the nefas be seen, but to redress it.

Heidegger will not elaborate the Latin or Hebraic language of reck and justice, yet his critique of the Roman imperium on this point will be, for all its philogical insufficiency, a critique of modern political formations and statecraft, and thus a critique of Nazism:

*Imperium* is the territory [Gebiet] founded on commandments [Gebot], in which others are obedient [bôtmašig]. *Imperium* is the command in the sense of commandment. Command, thus understood, is the basis of the essence of domination, not the consequence of it and certainly not just a way of exercising dominion. The god of the Old Testament is a “commanding” God; His word is: “Thou Shalt not,” “Thou shalt.” This “shalt” is written down on tables of the law. The gods of the Greeks are not commanding gods but, rather, ones that gives signs, that point. The Roman gods, quite to the contrary, are designated by the Latin word numen, which means “bidding” and “will” and has the character of command. The “numinous,” strictly taken, does not at all touch the essence of the Greek
That the Roman Fasti explained by Dumézil suggests the chiasmic intertwining that interests Heidegger would likely not alter Heidegger’s depreciation of all things Roman as imperialistic-metaphysical in their provenance and aims, and in their misprisions of truth. But while this critique may well apply to the religious and juridical casuistry of the pontiffs and magistrates who governed imperial Rome’s calendrical codifications, it may also be, as Dumézil suggests, that here and over the course of centuries, “thought did nothing but refine practices and classifications, perhaps in a less precise form, that had preceded the calendar we know.” (Ibid., 565) These rapprochements raise more cultural-ethological questions than they resolve, however, questions I will not pursue here.

Instead, I will look to Heidegger’s (and Hölderlin’s) clarification of the four terms involved: work, fest, justice, and the nefas. I will first focus on Heidegger’s account of work, implicit in many of his texts, but finding its most explicit formulation in the SS 1934 Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache. (GA 38, LEL, 106-7, 127-8) In this controversial text, composed in the wake of Heidegger’s resignation as first Nazi Rector of Freiburg University, the phenomenon of work (Arbeit) is defined in terms of Dasein’s exposed attunedness to tradition (ausgeliefert in die Überlieferung), and as a “blasting” (Sprengung) of the “being-subject” (Subjektsein) to the mandates (Auftrag)

8 Herbert Marcuse gives a Marxist-Hegelian critique of what he takes to be the solipsistic occlusion of the intersubjective constitution of the world through work in Being and Time. See Marcuse’s 1932 Habilitation thesis Hegel’s Ontology and the Theory of Historicity (trans. 1987), and essays in Heideggerian Marxism. (trans. 2005) See Andrew Feenberg’s discussion in Heidegger and Marcuse: The Catastrophe and Redemption of History. (2005) To meet these objections we might return to Being and Time which can probably defend itself on its own terms here, or forward to later writings such as the 1950 “On the Question of Being.” (PM, 291-323)

and missions (Sendung) of a historical people (Volk). Far from being only the dutiful obligation to a collective subjectivity, the reciprocity of “being-with-and-for-another” in work is thought monistically by Heidegger as what “creates for itself every time its form, its breadth, and its limits through labor, which, according to its essence, transports us into the exposedness to the jointure of being liberated through work.” (LEL, 129)¹⁰

Τέχνη is, in this definition, essentially a putting-to-work in the sense of an entranced exposure to (ausgesetzheit) and making-present (Gegenwärtigung) of the finitude of Being in the mutual delimitations of beings, i.e. the way-of-being (Seinsart) defined by Care (Sorge) as inner historical structurality (Gefüge) for the Da- of Da-sein. Testifying to the present (Gegenwart) of those beings for whom it brings about presencing (Anwesenheit) and reality (Wirklichkeit), the confrontational setting-apart (entgegenwarten) and presence-making (Anwesendmachen) of work arises in the between of a people’s endowment and its commission, and therein enacts the historical moment of Being’s granting withdrawal as Dasein’s autarchic historical transmission.

As the absencing-presencing that permeates and exceeds Dasein’s making-present through work, Being itself is, according to Heidegger, involved in the attuning (Bestimmung) of Dasein’s attunedness (Bestimmtheit) as it unfolds throughout the imprinting (Prägung) and enjoining (Verfügung) of work’s creative impositions. But what most attunes Dasein to opening the playspace of its work is the commission itself, which is ever directed towards the “liberation of beings themselves.” (LEL, 127) Thus, while “great work” occasionally unfold in “the great mood of the battle (Kampf), of astonishment and of reverence” (LEL, 128), at the other extreme, Dasein endures the failure of its work to work. In its darkest form this is the suffering of unemployment as the leering emptiness, impotent exposedness, and profound pain of “a mental shattering” that, in depriving Dasein of an active relation to the limits of beings through work, induces forgetfulness (Vergessenheit) of the jointure (δίκη) that rules in Being as a whole.

¹⁰ See LQEL, 129: “Labor is not subsequently, for the purposes of a better execution, dependent on the labor of others, but conversely, labor as fundamental comportment of the human being is the ground for the possibility of being-with-one-another and being-for-one-another.”
Labor is correspondingly a transporting into the jointures and forms of beings that surround us. That is why the enjoyment of one’s labor is so important. It is not a mood that only accompanies our labor; it is not addition to labor, but joy as fundamental mood is the ground of genuine labor, which in its execution first makes human beings capable of existence. (LEL, 128)

While essential work is essentially festive joy for Heidegger, the fact remains that humans both tend and are forced to take up joyless work, i.e. work that insists on the primacy of the present over and against the temporal-historical exstaticity, and this tends to vitiate horizontal relatedness to Being, and so is obviating of work in the profound ontico-ontological sense that Heidegger wants to bring forward. For a work to work in this sense it must be concerned with a present (Gegenwart), but it cannot be entranced too forcefully by the present without blinding itself to the inheritance of its hidden vocation. Work that ceases to be in dialogue with the interplay of endowment and commission thus proves incapable of the Sendung, and ceases to be work, becoming instead what Marx would have called alienated labor. When the holiday festival is understood against this backdrop of the ontico-ontological significance of work, its chiasmic significance comes into sharper focus. There is, on the one hand, Dasein’s embodiment as ontico-ontological differentiation: a caring and augmentative being-towards-the-limits-of-beings through work. But there is also the turning-towards and exfoliation-of what precedes and exceeds the limits of beings: a fissuring in-between playspace for Being’s topological Ereignis, the utmost occurrence of which Heidegger proposes to call simply “the festival.” Beyond the life of Dasein as working being, which is to say for Heidegger as Volksein with its enactmental historicity of work in Gesellschaft or Gemeinschaft, the joyous truth of work is festive life as the being-historical ground of that Mitsein which accomplishes “The Highest” and so opens up Being to its festivals in the future. (GA 52, 92)
There is an interesting passage in Jan Patočka’s *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* that can clarify these relations of the holiday and the workday in terms of the question of “orgiastic responsibility,” which is to say as a grafting of holiday freedom (the holy) into the everyday responsibilities of work (the profane). It reads:

The opposition, authentic/inauthentic, is based on the recognition that we can never be not interested in our own being: our own responsibility always captivates us, occupies us: a decision has been made about us before “we have decided.” [...] There is, however also the distinction between the ordinary, the “everyday,” and the exceptional, the holiday. The exceptional, the holiday also unburdens, though not by escaping from responsibility but rather by revealing that dimension of life in which the point is not the burden of responsibility and the escape from it but where, rather we are enraptured, where something more powerful than our free possibility, our responsibility, seems to break into our life and bestow on it meaning which it would not know otherwise. It is the dimension of the demonic and of passion. [...] Face to face with this phenomenon we tend to forget the entire dimension of the struggle for ourselves, forget responsibility and escape, letting ourselves be drawn into a new, open dimension as if only now true life stood before us, as if “new life” had no need for care for the dimension of responsibility.

Thus the distinction of the sacred and the profane is distinct from that of authenticity-responsibility and escape. It has to be related to responsibility by means other than escape, it cannot be simply overpowered, it has to be grafted onto responsible life.

(trans. 1996, 99-100)

This passage can be read as modifying Being and Time’s organizational matrix of authenticity and inauthenticity—a responsibility that heeds the call of conscience or a false responsibility which is bonded to das Man in fallenness—a modification, that is, in terms of the holiday itself as the rapture wherein “something more powerful than our free possibility, our responsibility, seems to break into our life and bestow on it meaning.”

What is so far-reaching in Patočka’s remarks is responsibility’s own undecidability between the authentic and the inauthentic. This leads to a second axis, beyond duty or escape from responsibility, an axis defined by rapture as what breaks into captivation, and bestows on it a sense. As alternative to the desire for escape from responsibility, Patočka offers a holiday that is neither the pandemonium of the spirits, nor the passion of
the subject-substance, not the vortices of the irresponsible, and not the escape as such. But he offers, in what *Being and Time* will name a *Modifizierung*, a grafting of the pandemonic and of the passion into “responsible life.” This is the paradox of orgiastic responsibility. And what it offers in Patočka’s analysis is the chiasmus of the holiday.

But does this responsibility of the holiday not also render Patočka’s analysis, in which the workday is “forced labor,” “concern for oneself,” and “nonhistorical factor,” and the holiday, “demonic passion” and work’s “orgiastic pendant,” still too dialectical, and as such irresponsible to Heidegger’s version of the question of orgiastic responsibility? For Heidegger asks not how the irresponsibility of the holiday festival, and the responsibility of work, are both conciliable and unconciliable, but he asks how the onto-historical creativity of work, and the onto-historical spontaneity of the *Feiertag* are gathered together into a first festival that may yet be repeated in all festivals to come. We know the peril to which Heidegger’s quest for the Greek “beginning” would expose itself in the transports of the 1930s. But we have not yet taken the full measure of Heidegger’s questioning of orgiastic responsibility: “The celebration is limited by what it celebrates.” This principle now reads: the Being of work is limited by what it puts to work. In this four- and eight-fold between, the holiday festival must unfold responsibly.

I will now return to Dumézil’s *Fasti* at the limits of Heidegger’s chiasmus, and in order to articulate a transition from hermeneutic phenomenology to a phenomenology of the inapparent in terms of the double crossing of these terms. Though thinkable as so many forms of the social organization of work (for instance, in the so-called “division of labor”), the ontico-ontological significance of the profession—from the Latin *professio*, a public declaration on one’s occupation, skill, proficiency—is not exhausted within its functional-utilitarian significance. For although labors be they petty or Herculean may still be thought in terms of means/ends relationships, works possess a kind of being that hovers between labor’s more teleological orientation, and another more methodological one. Transporting the life of Dasein into a tradition, and as summons drawing the worker

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up into a ceaseless horizontal involvement now cast according to vocation or calling, the various productive activities of the professions are for Heidegger, and within the actuality of their histories, concretions of the Ereignis of Being itself, the same Ereignis that the holiday casts into common view. But insofar as they fall apart into means-ends relationships, and the business of securing mortal life, all of life’s productive activities, with their distinctive logics of fas and fugue, put human beings out of contact with the holy—the Naturmacht and its gods—and so serve to bring about their nefas.

Suspending the morbid repetition or nefas of works that disjoin and are disjoined by the inauthenticity of playing-forth, the holiday is a day of not-working. It is what the Romans would call a dies nefasti. But in this designation of the holiday (feriae) as intrinsically nefas the chiasmic sutures which encode the Roman calendar of the Fasti begin to burst their seams. For while in the cosmopolitan and mercantile culture of the early Republic, dies fasti indeed came to mean days of work so exclusively that even days devoted to the gods, such as festivals, were labeled on the calendars as dies nefasti, still, this designation could hardly belie that civic and religious occasions were supposed to be conducted under the imprimatur of divine sanction and propriety that is fas.

The double character of dies nefasti, in its earliest form a designation for days that are purely unsacred or accursed, thus became a double designation for days on which the regular order of work is displaced by a civic or religious responsibility, such as celebrating a festival, or conversely, as days of leisure or simple rest as returning to oneself and as reflection (holidays in the more modern sense). This latter sense of dies nefasti emerges as a matter of course from out of the need for rest within the work cycle. These restful days exist in the peculiar liminal zone between work and festivity. In a way it could be said that they are days in which everything is permitted, if only because nothing takes place. Consecrated neither to the world year, nor to the vestal fires that nurture and support it, dies nefasti might be understood, insofar as they continue have a quasi-sacred character, as consecrated to the nether region or underworld forever excentric because suspended within both the civic life of work, as well as the festively celebrated and celebrating world, the world that a life of dies fasti secures, and which the more restful or haunted dies nefasti only indirectly ensure. I would now like to proffer the hermeneutical speculation, without philological support necessary to make it an
ethological hypothesis, that while the days of simple rest are the balm of the indeterminate nefas (inauspiciousness and inability-to-do) of everyday dealings, festive days, on the other hand, tend to awaken the more terrifying sphere of the determining nefas, or festive revelation (φαίνεσθαι) of the nefas in its sophianic depth.

In the “Remarks on the Antigone,” Hölderlin describes the everyday intimation of this more primordial experience of the nefas as follows:

The boldest [kühnste] moment in the course of a day or a work of art comes when the spirit [Geist] of the times and of nature, the heavenly [das Himmlische] that are seizing [ergrieft] hold of a human being, and the object in which he is interested are at their most wildly opposed [wildesten gegeneinander stehen] because the sensuous object of his interest only reaches halfway [nur eine Hälfte] but the spirit to its greater power wakes [erwacht] beyond that half. At that moment the human being must keep the firmest hold on himself [am meisten festhalten], for which reason he stands most open in his character.

The tragically moderate weariness of the times [tragischmäßige Zeitmatter], whose object is of no real interest [nicht eigentlich] to the heart, follows the tearing spirit [reißenden Zeitgeist] of the times without the least moderation [unmäßigsten] and this spirit appears then as something wild [wild] and not, like a ghost in daylight, sparing man at all, but quite pitiless, as the spirit of the always alive unwritten wilderness and world of the dead [Geist der ewig lebenden ungeschriebenen Wildnis und der Totenwelt]. (OA, 113-4)

This is Hölderlin’s vision of the Greek πόλις in the uncanniest moment of its nefas, an elementally constant strife between the habitual or centric forces of life, and the confrontations with the daimonic and δίκη. It is again Antigone versus Creon, the one reaching for a greater power of the spirit beyond the half-way mark of the unfitting, and the other, the living king, Oedipus, who reigns over what is in truth excentric, and so is

12 While the word nefas—related in the tragic context to the Greek ὄβρις and ἁρµαρτία—does not appear here, the Anmerkungen zur Ὅδιπος use it to speak of the unspeakable crime and curse brought on by Oedipus’s epistemophilic drive to “interpret the oracle too infinitely,” and thus “to know more than [he] can bear or comprehend.” The nefas refers not only to the hero’s excentricity and/as unspeakable sacrilege, but to terror in the apparition of the realm of limits wherein there dwells a more daimonic seeing of the demigod’s more excessive intimacy. See the nefas in “The General Basis for “Empedocles.”” (DE, 259) For more on the “ultimate undedicability” of the nefas/destiny distinction in relation to Hölderlin’s Empedoclean drama, see David Farrell Krell’s “Analysis” in The Death of Empedocles: A Mourning-Play. (DE, 284-92)
torn along into the nefas. It is perhaps deliberate on Hölderlin’s part that taken out of context this passage speaks only generally of the course of the Day (Taglaufs) or art-work (Kunstwerks), a situation that concerns everyone, everyday, and the Day’s midpoint or caesura that can be the strongest moment or the weakest, but which, if endured, leads to a seizing by the divine at a moment of firmest focus. For sometimes the poet wakes to a greater power beyond the midpoint, and prior to what is torn, immeasurably, into its tragically moderate weariness. These are the two ‘paths’ and they denote in their co-passage in Hölderlin’s theoretical writings, the wilderness and the desert of Being. On the one hand, Hölderlin’s “Remarks on the Antigone” speak of a binding of the wildest opposition (wildesten gegeneinander) between the spirit of the gods and the finite object of a mortal’s interest. On the other hand, Hölderlin speaks of an unbound and thus unwritten desert as excentric world of the dead. The site of the wildest opposition is a prodigious Naturmacht; the site of the desert, a head-long plunge into a being-exiled from the hearth into the uncanny. Their chiasmic intertwining in the ordinary course of the days, at the interstice of activity and inactivity, occurs in the twofold of work and leisure. To harmonize the chiasmus from out of its horizontal centering requires not only a tragically heroic nefas to rejoin the whole and hale order (fas). But what is most needful, and superlatively unavailable, is a reversal of the tragic situation itself wherein human beings find themselves seduced by “the tragically moderate weariness of the times,” a weariness that absconds them all into a self-willed fatality, and thus withdraws from them all possibilities of a higher spirit. For at this juncture the Naturmacht has no patience for human beings, and the spirit of the lack of measure appears as something “wild,” not a “ghost in daylight,” but a fatum that weighs heavily. Nature is indeed “pitiless” and even immodest, at least “not sparing” of humans in this spirit of disjointure. Yet in provoking the revelation of the “always alive unwritten wilderness and world of the dead,” that terra absconditum of the nefas proper, human beings may also discover a capacity to own their death as the uncanniest moment of their being, to wit, as the moment of Nature’s “prodigious coupling” with itself as immortally undead, as human historical temporality. The initial apprehension of this determining nefas inspires terror or horror (Erschrecken, in Heidegger’s sense) and is at the origin of all mortal experience of the withdrawing, counter-turning gods. Revealing the human to itself from a divine point of
view that is united, and yet infinitely separated off, this *nefas* also reveals how far, and in what ways, the human world of self-grounding works, i.e. the metaphysical self-production of humanity must be considered as lacking mastery over its own foundations. The abyss of ‘not-working,’ the real *nefas* in the broadest sense yawns, and human beings suffer the crystallization of revelatory events that exceed their formidable capacities of mastery and jointure. But even here the nonessence of time appears in a dark radiance that signals the path of its rejoinder with the whole and hale jointure that is the *fas*. This enjoining of all disjointure or becoming-fas of all that is *nefas* prevails in Heidegger’s Hölderlin as the “evening-out of a while for destiny” that, following closely *Der Rhein*, Heidegger defines meticulously in the WS 1941/2 as the event of »das Fest.«

We have just seen how the equilibrium and disequilibrium of the interplay of work and festival, exemplified in the moments of justice and the *nefas*, appears in Hölderlin’s “Remarks to the Antigone” in terms of the “boldest moment” in the course of each day, or the point of utmost intensity and impending detumescence in the course of each work. Within this daily caesura wherein human beings open a turbulent, and only ever partial reconciliation with the spirit of nature and a mortal’s ordinary knowing of time. This moment of emergent strife/disequilibrium, the *nefas* as indeterminate disjointure, appears as the onset of unrest (*Unruhe, Streit*). The countervailing yet still indeterminate reconciliation appears as the phenomenon of leisure (*Ruhe, Muße*).

To solidify these insights, I will look briefly to the work of two scholars who are concerned with this same intertwining of festivity, work, leisure, and unrest. First, Kevin Aho in “Recovering Play: On the Relationship between Leisure and Authenticity in Heidegger’s Thought” (2007, 217-238) has noted glimmers of an “ancient relation between leisure and festivity,” a relation wherein leisure manifests an inner tendency towards the en-opening play (*Spiel*) of the wondrous time-play-space (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*) of the “in-between” (*In-zwischen*) in which beings manifest themselves as they essentially are. Situating Heidegger’s thought of restorative rest in relation to the Aristotelian tradition of leisurely wonder (*σχολή, θαυμάζειν*), and in distinction to the modern techno-scientific sphere, Aho underlines the caesura or inhabitual rupture that
occurs prior to the emergence of restorative rest and leisurely wonder as an intensified exposure to unrest. Opening further this concern Artemy Magun in “The Work of Leisure: The Figure of Empty Time in the Poetics of Hölderlin and Mandelshtam” (2004) has observed in Hölderlin’s unpublished poem “Leisure” (“Die Muße”), and in theoretical works, the terrifying law of leisure as that crisis of unrest wherein the project of leisure is thrown back upon nothing other than infinite agonic labor. Leisure is, according to this “epistemological” analysis, simply the “unfilled excess” of time that endures the “sign = 0” of the pure and “empty form of time” in which life is exposed and driven to the limits of its spontaneity as historicity. In this way Magun recognizes the antique unity of festivity and work as what originally opens the modern space of critique:

To abolish necessary labor and leave only the surplus is, of course, just as impossible as it is to abolish history in favor of perpetual revolution. However, the border between the necessary and supplementary is indeterminate and fluid. In this way, labor and leisure are one, and the task of the critique consists in exposing the free nature of labor and the destructive, infinite labor inherent in the moments of leisure and festivity. (Ibid., 1166)

Magun’s observation that “the project and fiction of accessing the ‘empty’ time wakes up the fury of destruction” can help to account for that peculiar ontologization of strife, struggle, and warfare that unfolds in Heidegger’s thought at the very threshold, as it were, of its own infinite leisure and unrest. For at this threshold we begin to understand why the private thinker who in the 1920s set out on the sojourning path towards the θεωρία of Being proved in 1933 unable to prevent the agonic unrest and Promethean Βία of knowledge from overwhelming, for a time, his view of the political sphere as well.

But the figure to which he held at the furthest reaches of this nefas was the uncanniest: Antigone, who in herself transforms all fury and disjointure into Juno’s holy sobriety. Before what falls out from the between (Zwischenfall) is the between itself (Zwischen selbst), the opening of a turbulence so uncanny that it can be salved only by that excess of leisure which became for Heidegger, around 1936-9, the troubled ground of his being-historical labor: a “free time” that is “paradoxically, a source or a spring (Quelle) of poetic labor” (Magun). This is what Heidegger reflects in 1941 in a letter to his wife:
Every day I gratefully submit to the inner law obeyed by the »work,« which of course is always a solemn celebration because the efforts involved are as nothing. (LW, 170)

This Heideggerian work is the “work of leisure.” Certainly in comparison to fighters of injustice and all those in real peril, it is no work at all. Yet it is a philosophy that works, and that puts itself to work, in a most untimely, and for sake of a future still to come. This whole structure consisting of work, leisure, unrest, and festivity, and “their counter-turning character in each case,” is Heidegger’s chiasmus of the holiday. I say it is a double chiasmus, XX, not just a fourfold crossing since beyond the discordant accord of workday and holiday as unfolding the rhythms of jointure and disjointure (fas and nefas), leisure and unrest have now emerged to accent the discordance (Streit) or accordance (Gunst) as such, therein generating a second chiasmus. Insofar as leisure constellates the moment of equilibrium, and unrest its disequilibrium, the chiasmus itself has been redoubled. So much, then, for the double chiasmus of the holiday.
4.1.3 From the Wedding to the Round Dance: An Initiatory Topology of Being

In this subsection I will summarize the most esoteric and far reaching claims that Heidegger makes regarding the meaning of the wedding festival and round dance in the 1941-3 Andenken lectures and essay, as well as in the 1959 address “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven,” and a few other texts on Hölderlin from 1939-60. I will not yet address the question of whether Heidegger’s elucidations are accurate to the poet they seek to elucidate, but I will outline Heidegger’s thinking of the wedding and its round dance as thought-provoking in their own right. This section will set the remaining cards on the table, so to speak, with a view to outstanding questions to be addressed in the Conclusion.

My provisional conclusion, aspects of which will be extended and supported in Ch. 4.2, is that the wedding and its round dance may be situated philosophically at the deepest level of Heidegger’s thinking path and poem to Being, and that these two notions together articulate a metaphysical and nonmetaphysical telestic archeo-eschatology and aletheic topology of Being. Locating in the wedding festival and round dance Heidegger’s most advanced account of that abyssal ground (Dasein) that traverses the historical epochality of Being, I prepare for the apex of this chapter, which situates the whole of the argument in the structural unfolding of the 1936/7 Contributions.

I begin this section with what Robert Mugerauer says on the wedding festival in Heidegger and Homecoming: The Leitmotif in the Later Writing: 1) its spatial-topological character as revealing the “temporal between”; and 2) its essencing as “the holy event.”

Hölderlin presents the between as the opened space for gods, humans, earth, and heavens by speaking of an inn and of the scenes of gathering, whereas the wedding festival shows the between as temporal. The wedding day is a balanced point, held between other times. First, the celebration is specified to take place in March, the transitional time at the end of winter—a time between. The coming forth of spring mediates between (seasons). The poet also speaks of the shift from night to day, from night as the time of the fled gods and as still the mother of day, when the divine comes [....] Second, the day of celebration is an extraordinary day, not merely because the ordinary round of work ceases, though that is in no way incidental, but because of the holy event. In addition to love, deeds are celebrated
because of the courage required to endure destiny and live historically.
(2008, 106, 118-137, 177-8, 364, 411-2)

An earlier reading of the wedding festival is found in Veronique M. Fóti’s “Textuality and the Question of Origin: Heidegger’s Reading of ‘Andenken’ and ‘Der Ister.’”

Embarking from Heidegger’s exchange with Detlev Lüders “who had expressed his puzzlement as to how a text “re-examined in accordance with the original drafts” could be said to “rest upon” an attempt at interpretation,” Fóti expresses her debt to Beda Allemann’s account of the “patriotic turning” (vaterländische Umkehr), which she applies to a critique Heidegger’s national/destinal mis-appropriations of Hölderlin.

On the wedding festival itself, Fóti writes:

Originary greeting [...] for Heidegger takes the form of what he calls, in the words of Hölderlin’s Rhine hymn, the bridal feast of divinities and mortals. As a mutual self-entrustment out of a shared essential origin, these nuptial festivities constitute Ereignis, opening up and configuring an epochal span of history (GA 52, 77). Since, as Heidegger insists, it was Greek poetry and thinking which prepared the “early festivities,” an anticipation of festivities still to come must take its bearings from a remembrance of ancient Greece, which cannot be allowed to degenerate into mere nostalgia or mimetic reversal. Such remembrance requires, rather, that the true character of the festive be first brought into view. (Ibid., 62-3)

Fóti’s basic criticism is expressed most clearly in her next chapter, “Mnemosyne’s Death and Failure of Mourning,” in which she sets out from a passage of Anselm Haverkamp:

Hölderlin interpretation, especially under Heidegger’s imprimatur, has seen the close relation of “Andenken” and “Mnemosyne” more in terms of celebration than of mourning and has consequently identified in “Mnemosyne” not the anticlimax (“regression”) of “Andenken” but its climax (“intensification”).” (Haverkamp, 1985, 246)

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[Fóti comments:] This deflection in favor of “celebration,” or, perhaps better, commemorative retrieval (reclaiming the Greek past for the Occidental future), leaves Heidegger in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, he is convinced that “Mnemosyne” belongs to a constellation of poems crucial for grasping Hölderlin’s poetic thought, and that its reading must be guided by that of “Andenken”; but on the other, he remains quite unable to undertake such a reading, which continues to be deferred with unfulfilled promissory notes. (Ibid., 62)

This view is both confirmed and rendered tenuous by the publication in 2000 of GA 76, *Zu Hölderlin: Griechenlandreisen*, containing a torso of the promised but never delivered essay on *Mnemosyne*. For in the 1939 draft “»Andenken« und »Mnemosyne«” Heidegger appears to be a Hamlet wavering on this very issue of whether the absencing of the festival means a dissolution of or a return to Mnemosyne. Critiquing the national-destinal implications of the *essentially* “Greek” festival in 1941-3, Fóti makes clear her preference for the geocosmic idea of the *Hochzeit* in the 1959 “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” in which she locates a purer kairological instant: “violet earth, in pure light, lies centered and firm, ‘clouds of song’ celebrate both knowledge and tenderness and the radiance of ‘the sky vast of pure raiment.’” (Ibid., 77) Alternative to the “project” of founding nationality as destiny, Fóti uncovers the promise of Heidegger’s Hölderlin as pointing to the Dasein who endures the “differentiation” of each φαίνεσθαι as an manifold enigma.

In this section I will explore this relationship between Heidegger’s two major texts on the bridal festival or wedding, not only as they appear in the 1963 edition of the *Elucidations*, but as they appear in all the other Hölderlin lectures, and relevant GA volumes. The remarks on festival in the WS 1941/2 *Andenken* lectures arise mainly in the second of four major parts. In the 1943 essay they appear somewhere in the middle. Both works make the image of the bridal festival central. But this is strange in itself since, unlike in the hymns *Der Rhein* and *The Nymph* (a version of the *Mnemosyne*) where the bridal festival or wedding day is mentioned, there is no wedding image in the *Andenken*.

In the second stanza Hölderlin does poeticize “An Feiertagen,” but what he poeticizes is the equinoctial time in Southern France: elm trees by the mill, fig trees in the
courtyards, brown women walking on silken soil, slow paths, golden dreams, and lulling breezes. Here in Stanza 2 the holiday is probably a real one, and Hölderlin tells something of its story. The fourth stanza then asks “Where are the Friends?” and ends again with the image of the holiday as the great time in absentia.

Thinking on the richness of the sea, his friend Bellarmin, and the shyness of those who go to the source—earth’s beauty, painted winds, winged war, and being-alone—this stanza ends with “the leafless mast, where through the night gleams (die Nacht durchglänzen) neither / The holidays of the town (Die Feiertage der Stadt), / Nor the lyre-music and indigenous dancing (Und Saitenspiel und eingeborener Tanz nicht).”

These are the only two images of the holiday in the Andenken. The first is a reminiscence of something the poet (presumably) saw during his travels in Southern France. The second is a lament for what the mariners—friends, demigods, or starlings—conspicuously lack. Neither holiday image supports the idea that the time of the vernal equinox in the Andenken names the time of the bridal festival in Der Rhein. But despite this lack of concrete evidence, Heidegger transplants the wedding day and evening images from Der Rhein into Andenken, situating them both within the horizon of the first and, for Heidegger, greatest of Hölderlin’s hymns, the 1801 As When on a Holiday...

From this point of view, articulated already in the WS 1934/5, Heidegger’s Hölderlin after 1936 addresses two questions: 1) What is Hölderlin’s poetic revelation, and how is it to be retrieved with a view to its futurity? and, 2) How do the poets of this revelation unfold it with others, in a poetic sustaining of otherness, and in accordance with the essence of their poietic vocation? In general, the 1939 essay “As When On a Holiday...” answers the second question (Ch. 4.2.2), and the WS 1941/2 lectures address the first (Ch. 4.2.3). Having just examined the holiday in its Anklang as a day of celebration, and in its chiasmic counter-turning with respect to the workday, it remains to define the core of Heidegger’s interest in the holiday, which is that it might come to be attuned by what is above all to be celebrated. For what all celebrations celebrate is “the festival” (das Fest). The festival cannot take place and return, however, without the holidays (Feiern) on which, through being celebrated it takes place (Ger. Ort, Grk. ἑορτή). Nevertheless sheltered in the heart of holidays, “the festival” goes beyond the holiday into the temporality of Dasein’s “most proper and most hidden essence.” But what is that?
At this point, in both the 1943 essay and WS 1941/2 lectures, Heidegger unfolds his most intensive definition of what the festival itself is: “The festival, in the poetic sense of this poet, is the bridal fest (Brautfest) of humans and gods.” This definition says that prior to and grounding a thinking experience of the essence of poetry, Hölderlin suffers and celebrates “the bridal festival of humans and gods,” where it is this event that determines him to be the poet that he is, and in the light of which his ways, while yet undetermined, are cleared. Combining the 1943 essay with the WS 1941/2 lectures, we can arrive at a general picture of what the bridal festival is said by Heidegger to involve.

First, the bridal festival is the ground of the holidays and celebrations in which it has a chance to awaken and unfold, as well as the birthday of the poets as divine-mortal messengers and monstrous signs (Zeichen) of the time-play-space that is in-between. As renewing the holy greeting (heilige Grüße, χαίρειν) the bridal festival arises as transporting and entrancing of dreaming conversants into the grounding attunements of sacrifice and celebration, shyness and affability, courage and love, joy and mourning, thankfulness and the festive. An Open time-play-space begins to surround the holiday celebrants who thus find themselves in the fissuring simultaneity of the habitual and the inhabitable, everyday temporality and the holiday temporalization, within which rift Dasein(s) learn to enact the thinking recollection, if not inspirational singing of the truth of Being as clearing-concealing itself within these temporalizing manifolds.

14 This definition of Hölderlin as “the poet of the festival,” the poet who poeticizes the festival is analogous with the WS 1934/5 definition as “poet of the Germans [...] not meant as a genitivus subjectivus, but as genitivus objectivus: poet who first poetizes the Germans.” (GA 39, §15)

15 We may also glance back to the Germanien and Der Rhein and forward to Der Ister. In 1934 Germany itself, its authentic time, is what is in absentia as the country is swept along in a violent rapacity of the Zeitgeist, its peoples and especially its thinkers, poets, and statesmen, have not at all learned to undergo and draw back into the clasping festivities of the demigods’ unbound Erspringen. In this sense Germania is too headstrong in its commission which is, according to Hölderlin’s hymn, to be the center of Mitteleuropa, and “Defenseless to proffer all round / Advice to the kings and the peoples.” Rushing too forcefully into its commission Germania not only fails to heed but uproots its endowment which is to be a nation of thinkers and poets. Having failed to cultivate its innate capacity for clear and comprehensive thinking, the errancy of “Germania” is palpably demonic. Faced with the image of Der Rhein and Der Ister Heidegger, impossibly, yet standing with Oedipus and Antigone, wills an apolitical hyperpolitical re-focusing on the holiday,
In the 1939 draft essay “»Andenken« und »Mnemosyne«” we find the second major discussion, after the WS 1934/5, of the “bridal festival” and “wedding day of Being” image, now cited from “The Nymph” or “The Sign.” It reads in part:¹⁶

A sign we are, senseless,
Painless we are, and have
almost lost our tongues in foreign lands.
For when there is a strife over mortals
Among the heavenly, and the stars
Proceed in force, then blind also is loyalty [die Treue]. But without doubt
There is One [Zweifellos / Ist aber Einer]. He
Daily can change it. Hardly he needs
Laws [Gesetz], that is, how
To be with mortals abiding as the holy writ sounds
and the leaf resound. Many men can be there
in the site of truth [Viel Männer möchten da / Seyn wahrer Sache].
Then oaks flutter beside
Pear trees. For the heavenly
cannot achieve [vermögen] all things. Namely,
Mortals reach sooner into the Abyss.
So then it turns
The Echo
With them. Beautiful is
the wedding day [Brauttag]
But weary we are on account of honor [Ehre].
Terribly it goes
Misshapen, when the One has been taken
From us in avarice [zu gierig]. Long is the time
But the truth will come to pass [Lange ist / Die Zeit, es ereignet sich aber /

and thus on the passing of the Volk’s wedding festivities. An intimate unifying beyond the terrifying duplicity of the aggressors, a powerful courage within the hesitant reserve of the oppressed, an anxious nobility of decisive action within the maze-like lostness of thinkers and poets, all this will prove unavailable, and thus the pursuit of it eminently assailable.

¹⁶ Published in 2000 in Zu Hölderlin: Greichenlanreisen. (GA 75)
Heidegger zeroes in here on the relation between the “coming-to-pass” (*es ereignet sich*) of truth and the “time-place” (*Zeit-Ort*) of the wedding, writing:

The “true site” [»wahre Sache«] is not the essencing [Wesung] of the divinities, the heavenly, and just as little the contrivances [Gemächte] of mortals, and not the daring [das wagen], but the “gathering together” in which the heavenly (in their twainlessness [Zweifel-lose]) and the abyssal ones [Abgründige] are brought together for their “wedding day” [»Brauttag«]. Then, what is “unformed” [»ungestalt«] abides and the too “avaricious” [»zugierig«] power, and the captivations of the frightful [das Furchtbare] are gathered by the heroes within the unity of truth in which the abyssal come to be ventured along with the twainless, and such that they proceed without law, thereby initiating themselves into the law that they posit. (GA 75, 30)

Deeper and higher than the anthropo-theological difference of divine sanction and mortal sovereignty, and thus harmonizing of the gods’ aetheric intactness with the abyssal dispersions of mortality, is the true site or singular moment of a “gathering naming” (*zusammennehmen*) of gods and mortals in their wedding day. For then what is most monstrous, misshapen (*Ungestalt*) and avaricious (*zugierig*) in the perspective of the bridal day, i.e. the erring demigods themselves, are clasped back into the beauty and loyalty of “the many who can be there in the site of truth.” Liberated from the demigod’s dissonant *Überwillen*, and also from the human being’s nihilistic “will to will,” the Daseins who are to come, i.e. who are destined to the wedding day, are as yet “senseless,” “painless,” and “have nearly lost their language in strange lands.” There is a strife that battles around and beyond human beings, and a tragically moderate weariness, a *nefas*, that casts them into hesitation or disrepute. But the steadfast mortals speak to the unbound in the open field, since it is these that it is their duty to clasp. Thus, insofar as the more godly mortals reach sooner into the abyss, the echo may yet turn, the wedding may yet arrive, with them: *Lange ist / Die Zeit, es ereignet sich aber / Das Wahre.*

Remaining within the unifying as counter-possibilizing interplay of the futural who arrive in the wedding are those who learn, in truth, to venture the law that they posit. This
autarky of the coming ones is totally other than the autarky of the raging unbound demigods. For whatever returns to the wedding day of Being as Dasein can in no way dispense with the encounteral correspondence of gods and mortals, earth and sky wherein the twainless endure ἀ-λῆθεια along with the divided, in the position, pact, clasp, or promise that recollects the original relation as that of the historical-mysterial inception.

This more originary accord of divine and mortal being ever goes up over the heads of mortals and down beneath their feet. Yet in essential poetry and thinking, it opens the greeting of what is “more originary” (Ursprünglicher) than the empty name of beyng: namely, “the truth of love (Wahre alles Liebe) in its purest integrity (reinsten Unversehrtheit) and illuminating fullness (leuchtenden Fülle)” as it “hearkens to the Mnemosyne of the heroes, and with them celebrates the wedding day of beyng in the singular moments of its beyng (gehört die Mnemosyne dem Helden, um mit ihm den Brauttag des Seyns zu feiern in den einzigen Augenblicken des Seyns).” (GA 75, 31)

The 1939 draft essay “»Andenken« und »Mnemosyne«” here thinks the uni-equivocity of beyng as the clasp of Dasein into the beyng-in-the-between, and such that all dispersion into doubtfulness, and the wedding to untruth (ψεύδος, falsity), may be restored to the certainty and twainlessness of a fourfold correspondence and its secret: the bridal festival event. Only within this event, as the 1943 essay goes on to say, is the poet’s departure into self-difference, as moment of scission and farewell (Abschied), transformed into a more intimate abiding in and expressing the unlike as unlike, the moment of reconciliation (Versöhnung). Lingering within this double destining as the being-historical interplay between self and other, all that is twainless and all that is divided, the wedding dances are what endure and carry the whiling between into the equalizing while for destiny (ausgleichende Weile für das Schicksal).

In the highest commission of this essential inter-play, poetry and thinking are to gather the chorus of the “four voices of destiny”—earth, heaven, gods, and mortals—into a clearing-balancing that passes-on a heavenly fire which is Junonian, and which thus clasps back into origin those capable of enduring a more fulgurating language, and therein remembering the history of humanity/Dasein in its natal and nationelle ground.

For just as Being is “the foundation that originally unifies and determines all the sendings of destiny,” so the singing and thinking of the festival is “the essential origin of the
history of a humanity [...] upon which a historical humanity dwells as upon its ground.” (EHP, 127) The bridal festival is thus thought as the most singular and unique, communal and universal Anfang and Ereignis wherein the history of Being as the history of Dasein/humanity originates and issues, inherits and traduces itself. Finally, as attuned to the wedding of the fourfold in the form of the Dasein alter to the poet, the beloved as muse of the poet’s song,17 the “demi-goddesses” as Graces or Seasons (GA 45, 161), the high goddesses Mnemosyne or Ἀλήθεια (GA 52-53), Artemis (GA 54), Woman still figures in Heidegger’s semiotically sexist text as saving the (male) poet both from an over-poetization of divinity (the poet’s fault), and from the thinker’s excess of divinity.

But in seeking from 1934 on the company of “starlings” who will futurally, and are only thus released into the storms and peace, footfalls of strangers and dance steps of celebrants, Heidegger also attempts to walk the silken path of tenderness, and even in the midst of ashes falling from the camps or the front, ashes that he will claim, questionably, not to have seen or known in the full extend of their blanketing of Europe in nefas, he speaks to clouds of the future that may yet poeticize, as he thinks the breezes/dreams over the cradles of time that may mature to become guest-friends in the conversation, if not heralds of an “emerging day festively tuned to the celebration of the wedding festival.”

Each of these points certainly requires further elaboration, textual citations, and critical commentary, as will be attempted in the rest of this chapter. Glancing ahead to the bridal festival leitmotif as it unfolds after the war, the 1946 “What are Poets For?” again names Dionysos as the god who preserves in wine “the essential mutuality (Zueinander) of earth and sky as the “site of the nuptials” (Stätte des Brautfestes) of gods and humans. Only within this site, if anywhere, can the tracks of the fugitive gods abide for godless humans.” (PLT, 93) The 1946 dialogue “The Occidental Conversation” also returns to the opening of Der Ister—“Now come, fire”—which it thinks as bridal day that hearkens to the traces of the forest cry (Waldengeschrei), and withstands the ordeal (Prüfung)

wherein the most joyful, the dislocating localization of the bridal festival is decided. (GA 75, 86-91, 173) Near the beginning of this dialogue we hear: “The festival of this marriage ceremony is the beginning (Das Fest dieser Trauung der Beginn ist).” (Ibid.) From these texts alone it becomes clear that the bridal festival continues into later writings, as I will explore in three texts: first, the 1959 “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven”; second, the 1949/51 “The Thing”; and third, the 1949 correspondence with Emil Staiger.

Framed as a meditation on the unfinished Greece hymn, and like Andenken, beginning with a discussion of the letter to Böhlendorff on the beauty and hardship undergone by the peoples of Southern France, the natal and foreign elements of North and South, and the relation of athleticism and reflection, tenderness and popularity in the Greek patriotic spirit and turning, the 1959 address before long turn to what ‘ought,’ perhaps, have drawn criticism to its welcoming reception: namely, the unmodified Heraclitean polemology.

The Greek verb ἀθλέω means: to fight, to struggle, to seize and to bear arms. In Greek thought, the athletic character both discloses and preserves everything that struggles together. The athletic character is the heroic, “warlike” element in the sense of πόλεμος, that battle which Heraclitus thinks as the movement in which and for which gods and men, the free and the servile, come forth into the shining appearance of their being. (EHP, 185)

But more so even than in earlier readings this war-like element is tempered “by the power of reflection” (Reflexionscraft) in which Hölderlin finds “tenderness” (Zärtlichkeit) and its unsentimental “popularity” (Popularität), virtues that condense the φύσις of Greek life into an art that comes to stand for them as poetic destiny. Such capacity to enter into a founding-opening of the all-present beauty and power that is φύσις is what is most philosophical in the Greek spirit, here speaking through Hölderlin “at the one place where his poetic wandering has found peace, in order to preserve everything there in remembrance.” Thus finding in the “Greece” hymn a poetic Mnemosyne of the essential element of the Greek poetico-religious world, Heidegger seeks this world’s memorial light around Hölderlin’s philosophical window:
Suggesting that mortal Dasein is exposed to the stronger existence of gods (Daseyn Gottes) in fulgurating flashes (Blitzen, Blicken), Heidegger admits that the poet does not name “the unity of the whole of earth and heaven, God and man.” But though “their number is not expressly said by Hölderlin,” still his poetry thinks the four’s “richer relation” (reichere Verhältnis). Citing the hymnal sketch “The Vatican” on the “really / Whole relation, including the center” (wirklich / Ganzem Verhältniß, samt der Mitt) in context of a remark from the first Hamburg period which names the “more tender infinite relation” (zartere unendliche Verhältniß), Heidegger again places Hölderlin’s poetry in a thinking proximity to the “speculative dialectics of Schelling and Hegel,” which is to say, under the speculative sign of the infinite as freeing all “one-sidedness and finitude,” thoroughly holding/clasping the four into the reddish-golden rest (Ruhe) of a center.

Such is the destinal work of Hölderlin’s “Greece,” which is, according to Heidegger, to say how “the four voices of destiny” sing. First, the voice of heaven, “the uproar of heaven, / Rings out [...] well / Tempered by the existence of God, by the thunderstorm.” Second, the voice of the earth beats as on a “calf’s hide,” “proceeding from devastations [...] / For in the beginning the work forms itself, / Pursues great laws (vóμοι), knowledge / And tenderness [...]” (EHP, 179, 188-9) Joining and conjoining “the width of heaven, pure covering of the all,” these two voices of destiny “sing clouds of song,” festivals of poetry, “heavenly-earthly” at the same time. But heartless and earless there would be no hearing of earth and heaven without “immortality and heroes,” without the “the love of

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18 A chroma-ontology appears here in the relations of the veiling/unveiling φύσις of the different characters of light: “The existence of God is not veiled in darkness. For even more veiling than this darkness is the brightest light. [...] The Greeks already knew that brightness is still more veiling than darkness.” Read alongside “Language in the Poem,” Trakl, the poet of apartness, and Hölderlin, the poet of the festival might be seen to share in the blue peace/dissolution of heaven, the silver/golden veins of sky, the reds and browns of autumn, or violet flowers of earth, flaming visions of green life/decay, and “yellower suns and moons.” As Trakl departs into the pain of estrangement, Hölderlin, prior his ‘acquiescence,’ sings the tumult of light-sound as colored winds that egress the round dance and its reflection in the poor place of the poet. See Lunar Voices: Of Tragedy, Poetry, Fiction, and Thought, where Krell develops a nuanced understanding of how Trakl/Hölderlin turn into and away from each other in the later Heidegger. (1995)
life,” mortals and immortals. These are, in the hymn, the “ways of the wanderer” as those mortals who “die the death in life. In death the mortals become immortal.” (EHP, 190)

But what do initiated mortals therein discover? Not only the “cloud’s serene mood,” the securum or “care-free stillness” that belongs exclusively to none of the four. But what they discover is the godhead that, invisible, “reconciles itself to the foreign” in works and at night, in rare moments, passing throughout the bridal earth as it sings the wedding song from heaven. The essay here circles back to the philosophical window around which “all the holy places of the earth are together around one place.” (EHP, 194-6) And it is here, at the middle that we hear the clearest definition of what the Hochzeit itself is:

The wedding is the whole of the intimacy [Innigkeit] of: earth and heaven, humans and gods. It is the festival and celebration [Fest und Feier] of the in-finite relation. The wedding comes only “then.” When is the time of this “then”? Of what kind is its time? (Ibid.)

In 1943 the wedding was defined negatively in terms of what issues from it: “The bridal-festival is the encounter of those men and gods from which there issues the birth of those who stand between men and gods and endure this »between.« They are the demigods, the rivers, who must be signs.” (EHP, 126) In 1959 the wedding is defined positively, however, as the infinite togetherness of the four voices, and with this, the gift of the great beginning that temporalizes itself in anticipatory searching, but discovers itself only in καιρός of “the historical moment” (geschichtliche Augenblick): a small, broken, quiet time, and precious, secret, humble place to which a great beginning may in the end arrive.

But like a round dance [Reigen]
to a wedding [Hochzeit],

Based on two lines from the 2nd draft of the “Greece” hymn, the wedding is named in relation to a round dance. The 3rd draft eliminates these words, but retains what follows:

A great beginning can come
Even to the humble.
This sounds strange. The round dance is supposed to be the great and the wedding the humble? One would expect the reverse! This becomes even stranger if we consider this “But like...” does not introduce a mere comparison, but says the very matter itself: namely, how a great beginning can come even to the humble. Then the wedding would be the humble after all. Insofar as it comes to it, the wedding remains within what comes, even belongs to the coming. The wedding is itself what comes. (EHP, 197)

As “The Vatican” had spoken of the reddish-golden “consummate peace” (Vollendruhe) and green night of the “really / Whole relation, including the center,” now we hear of the unbound clasped into a mortal immortality, a demigod poet who sings “the bridal song of heaven.” Heidegger’s reflections on the tragic loss and λόγος of the ἑορτή, festival site of Being, arises in the context of an unusually subtle account of Hölderlin’s theoretical writings, one which takes into regard the first sentence of ‘The meaning of tragedies’:

> For everything primal [Ursprüngliche], because all potential [Vermögen] is justly and equally divided, does not in fact manifest itself in its primal strength [ursprünglicher Stärke], actually in its weakness [Schwäche], so that really and essentially the light of life [Lebenslicht] and the manifestation [Erscheinung] of weakness are part of every whole.

(EL, 316)

This not only implies that the essencing of the tragic must suffer and celebrate the unbridgeable abyss of the sign = zero, the impossibly pure because empty form of time, but it also names the ever dirempted yet consummately achieved relation (Verhältnis) of the humble to the great, the singular to the whole, the bridal festival of the fourfold to the round dance of spirits. This is where Heidegger thinks the “humble” (Gering) as the “light, soft, pliant [...] small [...] fine, and precious,” and asks: “how can the completed-rest of the infinite relation be called the humble?” The humble is humble in:

> The great beginning, however, [which] comes in the manner of a round dance.

As little as we may represent what is called the humble in the draft as insignificant, to such a degree must we leave to the word “round dance” that richness through which it is able to name the same as the talk of the great beginning. The round dance is in Greek χορός, the festive singing dance that celebrates the god [den Gott feiernde]: χοροίς τιμᾶν
Διόνυσον (Euripides, *The Bacchae*, 220). Thus Hölderlin speaks of the “Maenadic Round Dance” in a variant to the ode “The Poet’s Courage” [...]. Nevertheless, such a dance corresponds to the god only because the heavenly are themselves in choruses a “holy number” (“Friedenfeier,” lines 105ff.). The round dance is the drunken togetherness of the gods themselves in the heavenly fire of joy. Only from this can the clouds, the serene and secure mood of the existence of God, be clouds of song. The hymn “The Titans” sings [...] But when the buzzing day
Has been kindled,
And pure is the light and drunk
Are the heavenly
On the truth, that each thing
Is, as it is,

Only as the round dance of the heavenly who come out of their fire onto the earth and the earthly [Irdischen] to dance in the song can the round-dance be great, and as great, be the rising of a great beginning. We are not capable of exhausting the richness/kingdom of this word “round dance,” uttered here in simple awe. For the word “round dance” names the proper abundance of what would like to come. (EHP, 199, trans. mod.; GA 4, 174)

But not only do the bridal festivals and round dances of the “infinite relation of earth and heaven, human being and God” “seem to have been destroyed” throughout the epochs of metaphysics, but Heidegger asks if the full unfolding of the festival in which all the heavenly are drunk on the truth of what is, and so engage the round dance, has ever “yet appeared within our history as this in-finite relation, purely joined together by the gathering of the four voices of destiny, ever yet become present, ever yet been founded as a whole within what is highest in art?” It is in accordance with this question that Heidegger asks if the absencing of the bridal festivals and their round dances can be heard in Heraclitus’s Fr. 54: Ἀρμονίη ἀφανής φανερῆς κρείσσων, “The jointure that denies its appearance is of a stronger ruling than the one that comes to appearance.” (GA 52, 101) As ἀρμονίη ἀφανής the festival is stronger in its weakness and evanescence than in its strength, and this is the humility that makes it “hard / To maintain the great in its greatness.” For the round dance can occur only as a Gering-Fügiges, a joining in a
humble way, close to the earth, *humilis*, a *communitas* that is not only “european-occidental-grecian,” but “oriental,” “when new life again comes back out of humanity.”

[For] the humble can no longer abide in its occidental isolation. It is opening itself up to those few other great beginnings which, with their own character, belong in the sameness of the beginning of the in-finite relation in which the earth is contained. (EHP, 201)

In the interest of understanding the being-historical and aletheic-topological significance of the round dance at the wedding in the 1959 “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven,” I will now turn back from 1959 to the 1949/51 “The Thing,” which begins, in all its versions, as a critique of the inability of modern tele-communications technology to bring about authentic nearness. Yet it soon turns to a (Rilkean) discussion of the invisibly rooted things of the everyday life (*Zuhandensein*), i.e. the pitcher (*der Krug*) as a thing, which is to say, both a self-standing materiality of an object of daily use, and a void of emptiness (*Leere*) that holds (*fassen, faßt, Gefäßes*) and offers something more obscure. And at this point the text moves, quite suddenly for many readers, from the prosaic everyday to a mythopoietic evocation of “the spring” (*Quelle*) that “stays on in the water of the gift.”

In the spring the stone dwells [weilt das Gestein], and in the stone dwells the dark slumber of the earth, which receives [empfängt] the rain and dew of the sky. In the water of the spring dwells the marriage of sky and earth [weilt die Hochzeit von Himmel und Erde]. It stays in the wine given by the fruit of the vine, the fruit in which the earth’s nourishment and sky’s sun are betrothed to one another [einander zugetraut sind]. In the gift of the water, in the gift of wine, sky and earth dwell [...]

The gift of the outpouring [Das Geschenk des Gusses] is the drink for mortals. It quenches their thirst. It refreshes their leisure. It enlivens [erheitert] their conviviality. But the jug’s gift is at times also given for consecration [Weihe]. If the pouring is for consecration, then it does not still a thirst. It stills and elevates the celebration of the

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festival [Er stillt die Feier des Festes ins Hohe]. Now the gift of the outpouring is neither simply given in a bar [in einer Schenke geschenkt], nor is the gift a drink for mortals. The outpouring [Der Guß] is the libation [gespendete] poured out for the immortal gods. The gift of the outpouring as libation is the authentic gift. In giving the consecrated libation [geweihten Trankes], the pouring jug occurs as the giving gift. The consecrated libation is what our word for a strong outpouring flow, “gush,” really designates: gift and sacrifice [Spende und Opfer]. “Gush,” “gushing,” χέειν in Greek, Indo-German, ghu. This means: the offering [opfern].

Sacrifice and gift are here the “simple oneness of the fourfold” (die einfalt der Vier). These come together in the outpouring libation that gushes and flows, quickening the “whiling” (weilen) togetherness in which each of the four discovers all the others as “betrothed, entrusted to one another (einander zugetraut).” (Ibid.) Here even the pitcher

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20 The theme of the festive libation or drink (Getränk) from “The Thing” is developed in the 1944/5 Feldweg-Gespräche (GA 77), translated as Country Path Conversations (2010, CPC), where we read: 1) “SCHOLAR: So perhaps we could venture to say: the drink offered [Trank] or, better, the drink received [Trunk], abides in the festival / SCIENTIST: The festival abides in the expanse [Weite] which brings the drink offered to abide in that wherein the emptiness of the jug abides; GUIDE: “The jug would then be something festive. And to that expanse in which earth and sky are named, belongs also the festival, which it seems to me, is itself an expanse that brings the human to abide. [...] SCHOLAR: I have a sense of how thinking itself could be a festival. / GUIDE: The festival of sobriety [das Fest der Nüchternheit] / SCIENTIST: “Thus, at the risk of not entirely understand what you mean. I maintain that a sober ascertainment [Feststellung] is now necessary, which may be of use to our conversation about thinking. Moreover, I cannot bear for long this reveling in inklings of the wonderful. I need exact determinations. / GUIDE: If this is how you take what is festive [das Festliche] of thinking, then probably even your will to exactness is not yet sober enough.” (CPC, 88-9); 2) “TOWER WARDEN: Yes. Only I don’t find anything arduous and circuitous on our path of thought; I agree much with »he who is far greater« than both of us combined, who said that thinking is a festival [das Denken sei ein Fest].” (CPC, 129) The translator Bret W. Davis suggests that “he who is far greater” is “presumably an allusion to John the Baptist’s reference to Jesus (see Matthew 3.11, Mark 1.7, Luke 3.15, and John 1.27).” Davis notes the influence of Plato’s feast of λόγος (Pheadrus, 227b & Timaeus, 20c), Hölderlin-elucidations, and the OWA essay. But the conversation that follows which speaks of the “guests” who belong to the festival and bring the festive points to Nietzsche as ‘he who is far greater’ since: a) the 1936 Nietzsche lectures cite Nietzsche’s “abstract thinking is [...] on good days, a festival and an intoxication” (N1, 5); b) the WS 1944 cite Zarathustra’s “festival of festival,” where the “guest of guests” is the “host of hosts” at a “festival of festivals.” (IPT, 34)

21 Another interlocutor for the Greek sacrifice/gift as libation is Hegel’s analysis of Opfer in the “Religion” chapter of the 1809 The Phenomenology of Spirit, especially §718: “The action of the cult itself begins with the pure dedication of a possession, which the owner, without any apparent advantage to himself, pours out or lets rise up in smoke. Standing before the essence of his pure consciousness, he thereby renounces all possession and right of property and consumption [...] and reflects the action off into the universal, that is, into the essence, rather than into himself.”
as thing moves against the categories of presence (*Vorhandenen*) and objecthood (*Gegenständlichkeit*) to reveal its mystery as something that, in its very emptying, gives the *Hochzeit*. By mirroring all relations in the interplay of the whole, things for Dasein gather (*versammelt*) and “thing” (*dingt*) the “singular time-space” that “stays” (*verweilt*) as the gathering mutual appropriation of the four in “this thing and in that.”

Throughout these bearing gestures as ring dances along-with the thinging things of the worlding world, Dasein is itself the “gathering-appropriating whiling of the fourfold (*versammlend-ereignenden Verweilen des Gevierts*).” (PLT, 174, GA 7, 176) Relations between Daseins, things and worlds, lead through everything, and ever to the *Abgrund*, “shrine of Nothing” as “mystery of Being itself,” for this is what opens the *Geviert* in its mortality as sheltered by the earth which is the “building bearer” (*bauend Tragende*), exposed to the sky as aetheric-turbulent expanse, calling out to and called by the divinities who pass-by as “beckoning messengers of the godhead” (*winkenden Boten der Gottheit*). The mystery of the “appropriating-expropriation” (*Ereignis-Enteignis*) of the “four voices of destiny” are together in the silent voice of the Dasein who carries thinging things into the worlding world of beyng in a manner that bears (quiveringly), shines (clearingly), messages (singly, thinking), and dies (as ζωή and βίος), throughout the fouring four as a mirroring-playing conversance between things and world (as Being).

The fouring holds sway as the appropriating mirror-play of those that are simply betrothed [Zugetrauten] to one another. The fouring holds sway as the worlding of the world. The mirror-play of the world is the round dance [Reigen] of appropriation [Ereignis]. For this reason, the round dance does not reach around the four like a hoop [ein Reif]. The round dance is the ring that joins while it plays as mirroring [das Spiegeln spielt]. Appropriating, it clears the four into the gleam of their simplicity. Gleaming, the ring everywhere and openly appropriates the four into the enigma [Rätsel] of their essence. The gathered essence of the mirror-play of the world that rings in this way is the ringing [das Gering]. In the ringing of the mirror-playing ring, the four nestle [schmiegen] into their united yet own essence. Pliant in this way, they obediently and worldingly ordain the world [Also schmiegsam fügen sie fügsam weltend die Welt]. (PLT, 180; HR, 265; GA 7; 181-2)
While I will save for the conclusion a discussion of the nuances of the (Rilkean) “mirror-play” as (Hölderlinian) “round dance of Ereignis,” suffice it for now to note how the fluidly resonant “gestures” (Gebärde) of the mirror-play/round-dance are, both in 1949/51 and 1959/60, “Nestling, malleable, pliant, compliant, nimble (Schmiegsam, schmiedbar, geschmeidig, fügsam)—in Old German these are ring and gering.” (PLT, 180) To ring means to be-thing (geringt = bedingt): “In the strict sense of the German word bedingt, we are bethinged, the conditioned ones. We have left behind us the presumption of unconditionedness.” (HR, 265) These remarks point back to the 1915 citation of a motto from Novalis: “We seek the unconditioned (Unbedingte) everywhere and only ever find conditioned things (Dinge).” (SUP, 62) In “The Thing” and “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven,” Heidegger still seeks the unconditioned, but finds it only in those mirror-playing round dances that turn all searching for the unconditioned into all such conditions as learn the event of das Höchste, “the bridal of gods and humans” as a “marriage of earth and sky”—spring, vine, pitcher, sacrifice, thanks, libation, drink.

I will look from here towards the third most significant unfolding of Heidegger’s round dance image and idea which occurs in the 1949/50 correspondence with Emil Staiger on Eduard Mörike’s poem, “Auf eine Lampe.” Here Mörike’s Ringelreihn finds itself at the center of a debate over the lines “Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst,” lines in which scheint can be interpreted twice, as either lucet or videtur.

Heidegger favors lucet, which he reads as the self-shining presence of the beautiful or blissful that shows itself from itself (φαίνεσθαι, τὸ ἐκφανέστατον). Staiger favors videtur, what appears to the observer beautiful and is as such blissful. The Ringelreihn is in any

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22 Compare Novalis’s mirror dance around a bridal center at the close of Henry von Ofterdingen, which poetizes the “metallic mirror” into which the “happy couple” of the divine wedding gazes, and in the mythic company of Fable, Sophie, Eros and Freya, and the rest. (trans. 1992, 132-48) That the metallic mirror “reflected everything in its true form, destroyed all illusion, and eternally held fast the primal design” refers it directly to Plato’s demiurgic mirror in Politeia X. But Novalis also speaks of the mirror of “the great mystery” that “is revealed to all yet remains unfathomable forever,” a “mighty springtime” that spreads “over the earth.” At this point the mirror is again associated with suppleness of a dance, for in its reflection “eyes flashed, and beautiful and meaningful as his form was, yet his whole body appeared to be a subtle, infinitely mobile fluid, which revealed every impression by the most varied and charming movements.”
case an ocular metaphor for the lamp’s rim in the lines “ringed by a wreath of ivy made of gold-green bronze, a band of children gaily hold hands in a circle dance.” And it appears twice, Der Efeutanz and den Ringelreihn. Heidegger leaps into the Dionysian:

Verses 4 to 6 let shine the look, the what, of the beautiful lamp which, in its decorating presence, has remained still undisturbed. The golden-green of the ivy garland points to the fervidly growing Dionysian. The round dance of the children radiates the luster of the love chamber. I do not understand the appearing of the group of children on the beautiful lamp psychologically-biographically, as you do, as a sign of remembrance of the past childhood of the poet. The ivy garland and the group of children belong to the aesthetic composition of the beautiful lamp insofar as this, lighting, grants the world of the love chamber. (SH, 3)

The lamp is beautiful because “lighting, [it] grants the world of the love chamber,” thus clearing the hearth of the Hochzeit into the golden-green, and so that the love-chamber might be separated off from “nature,” yet still admitted into the φύσις-ἄλληθεια that shines-forth in the image, the lamp, pointing to the fervent growth, the ring dance outside. Unsurprisingly, it is less Hegel’s aesthetics of beauty than Hegel’s and Hölderlin’s shared beginning in Plato’s “Phaedrus [which] calls τὸ ἐκφάνεστατον, that which shines forth most purely,” or τὸ ἔρασμωτατον in the Symposium, that underlies his reading. This is what Heidegger says to Staiger: he names the unity of τὸ ἐκφάνεστατον and τὸ ἔρασμωτατον, bridal festival and round dance, both as τὸ καλὸν in Mörike’s poem.23

Does Mörike’s ivy-woven ring-dance refer to dancing Bacchic choruses around a love-chamber? Likely not. Staiger’s criticisms have their validity and sobriety. But this is not what interests Heidegger insofar as he seeks the Hesperian fire. And if not in Mörike’s poem, it is at least possible ‘to think’ scheint as lucet not only in Plato on love and beauty, and Sophocles on Ἑρως and Διόνυσος, but also in the Reigentanz image in the third version of Hölderlin’s tragic drama The Death of Empedocles. Arthur Grugan,

23 A note in the Briefe bis 1925-1975 (LHA, 18) from Heidegger to Arendt translates the Ἐρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν from Antigone: “As a greeting in return, / ... τὸν μεγάλον πάρεδρον ἐν ἀρχάς / θεσμῶν. ἄμαχος γὰρ ἔμπαι— / ἵππας Ἄφροδίτα. Soph. Ant. / »... the great ones, staying through, made of beginning, the (bridely) customs; Unconquerable without struggle, for Aphrodite remains in the game, playing a God.« This is τὸ ἔρασμωτατον, and τὸ ἐκφάνεστατον can be found in the final chorus: “O you walker in the fire / Leader of the dance of the stars and keeper of secret speech, son born of Zeus. / Be manifest (προφάνηθ) with the wakeful Naxian Thyades who mantically sing your choruses / Their reveling Ἰακχον.” See Ch. 4.2.4.
the translator of the Heidegger-Staiger exchange, sets us on this track already in his prefatory remarks where he notes how for Friedrich Beißner “neither videtur nor lucet adequately translates scheint. Thinking scheinest in Der Tod des Empedokles (III, line 67), Beißner instead nominates apparet as the best translation of Mörike’s scheint. Nearby this moment in the Empedokles is, however, another instance of the round dance (Reigentanz) in which, not by name but conceptually, lucet, videtur, and apparet appear altogether. We read in Version III (174-80), in the parting advice to Pausanias:

Behold! the image of ecstatic earth, [O sieh! es glänzt der Erde trunknes Bild] Divinity itself, is present in you, boy, [Das göttliche, dir gegenwärtig, Jüngling] It rushes raging [Es rauscht und regt], sweeps through every land, Transforms raging, lithe, and pious [Und wechselt jung und leicht] Earnest forms, the energetic circle dance [Der geschäftge Reigentanz] in which The mortals celebrate the spirit of their ancient father [den alten Vater feiern]. (DE, 177)

The round dance is here a shining (glänzt) given to life, an inward energetic excess (geschäftge). Between these extremes of the intimate image and the excentric dance is the whole question of what Heidegger calls the grounding attunement, here moving from Empedocles as initiator to Pausanias as initiand, and passing-on in the manner of a θρόνωσις.24 Attuning Pausanias to the apparet (glänzt der Erde trunknes Bild), it asks of him a videtur so that, seeing, he might enter the lucet or divine present that rages and rules, and transforms all pious youths into the celerity of that buzzing, active, energetic round in which they celebrate the spirits of ancestral customs. The earth itself attunes this shining in the beholder as the beholder is drawn into the image, enjoined to enjoining, from glänzt to geschäftge: a chthonic-ekphanestic-energetic-telestic round dance. This is what Heidegger thinks in the “beautiful lamp” that “in its decorating presence” lets the “fervidly growing Dionysian,” the ring-dance of things and world outside appear.

Postponing further discussion of the round dance as a mirror-play in the precincts of Ἀλήθεια and Ἑστία to the Conclusion, we can already see how “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” extends the analyses of the round dance in “The Thing” and the “Letter to

24 On θρόνωσις in Plato’s Euthydemus (277d) and the Korybantic Socrates see the Conclusion.
Staiger,” and how all these texts are rooted in the bridal festival as discussed in 1934-46. In light of all these texts we are now justified in framing the hypothesis, to be proven in what follows, that with the two words, “bridal festival” (*Brautfest, Hochzeit*), and “round dance” (*Reigen, χορός*), the being-historical thinking of the first beginning and the other beginning is both inaugurated ‘archeologically’ and brought into its ‘eschatological’ limits. Perhaps it could even be said that if the 1943 *Andenken* seeks to awaken a memory, sense, and readiness for the *Hochzeit* as initiatory life/death/life of Dasein throughout the counter-plays of demigods, the 1959 address names the decisive proto-ethical role that the sheltering of this round dance must come play in a more communal, i.e. being-historical, retrieval of the wedding time. Insofar as the bridal festival is the humble being-historical (*seynsgeschichtlich*) name of the first beginning, and the round dance, the grand enactment-historical (*vollzuggeschichtlich*) name of an other beginning, a new constellation for thinking the works of the 1930s begins to open before our view. In Ch. 4.2 my goal will be to articulate this festival sitedness of Heidegger’s being-historical thinking in terms of these two moments of first and other beginning which, as bridal festival and round dance, mutually remember their complicated site and intimate correspondence in the festive chorology (*χορός*) of Being as *Ereignis.*
4.2 The Bridal Festival in the Passing of all the Gods to the Last

4.2.1 The Festive Attunement: Between Unfettered Abyss and Configuring Light

As we have seen in Ch. 2.2, Heidegger offers in *Being and Time* an existential ontology from Dasein’s temporality as rooted in the having-been of attunement (*Stimmung*), and in accordance with the principle of thrownness, which says that it is not humans who have moods, but moods that have us (*Befindlichkeit*). As we read in the WS 1937/8: “The disposition has us, we do not have it.” (*GA* 45, 162-3) *Being and Time* showed how *Angst* in the face of the impossibility of Dasein, also unshakable joy in this possibility, is the attunement of Dasein’s authentic being-towards-death. (BT 254-297) The attunement of boredom, extensively explored in the WS 1929/30 *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, was defined as an occasional opening of Dasein to time’s leering emptying-out and possible fulfillment. (FCM, 59-186) Homesickness and homecoming, melancholy and jubilation were also defined via Novalis and Aristotle as the fundamental attunements of philosophy. The earlier discussions of Aristotle from 1922 to 1932 contain many engagements with the forms of Dasein’s openness to the world characteristic of particular πάθει (see GA 18, GA 33, and GA 61). And we have seen how Antigone’s own and our vision of her παθεῖν τὸ δεινὸν emerges in a resolute encounter with that against which nothing can avail (τὰμῆχανα), gathering her story into an archē-destining (*Zu-geschickte*) wherein her attunement becomes free. (GA 53, 100)

The argument of this subsection on festivity as attunement is twofold. First, I will situate and extend the claim in the WS 1941/2 that festivity is most primordial of all the grounding attunements. Second, I argue that the time-play-space wherein Heidegger articulates his thinking of the festive can be seen to be the mythic open of an elemental-historical (or Titanic-Olympian) clearing of Dasein as a cosmotheophanic horizon. The argument will move from a discussion of attunment in *Being and Time* and the WS
1934/5, to the statements on festivity as attunement in the WS 1941/2, back through the WS 1937/8 on the attunement of wonder, and ends again with the WS 1934/5 on elementals of a cosmotheophanic clearing. My basic claim is that if we are to understand Heidegger’s thinking of festivity as the attunement, we must circle in the abyss of the mythical as what, also in its freedom, clears new paths to the beginning. Let us recall the passage in Being and Time on the limits of anxiety with respect to the Moment, §68b:

Although the present of anxiety is maintained, it does not as yet have the character of the Moment that temporalizes itself in resolution. Anxiety only brings one into the mood for a possible resolution. The present of anxiety holds the Moment in readiness [auf dem Sprung], as which it, and only it, is possible. (BT, 328; SZ, 344)

Anxiety is not yet the Moment, but only its wellspring, or basis for Dasein’s leap (Sprung). In this leap is held in reserve the later discourse on attunement as disclosive: “And how about the temporality of moods and affects such as hope, joy, enthusiasm, and gaiety? [...] [or] weariness, sadness melancholy, and despair.” (BT, 329; SZ, 345) Being and Time restricts itself to the analysis of temporality of “fear and anxiety.” It does not venture a leap into the transitional playing field that will concern the later writings on attunement. Correspondingly, its access to the “horizontal unity of temporality,” i.e. the “as-structure” of attuned understanding, is also limited.25

The better known discussion of attunement in connection with Hölderlin is found in the WS 1934/5 on “holy mourning” (heilige Trauer). Holy mourning is there defined in terms of the poet’s relationship to the gods in their flight. Mourning is both “the refusal (verweigerung) of the gods of old,” and “the renouncing (vernichten) of the gods.”

25 The 1929 “What is Metaphysics?” (PM, 82-96) is more detailed on the attunements attendant to anxiety that are all on the way to the open circle (εὐκυκλέος) of finding-onself [Sichbefinden] in the “transformation of the human being into the Da-sein,” a being-held out into the nothing beyond beings as a whole, and so into the surpassing (transcendence) of Dasein as selfhood and freedom. These are authentic boredom which manifests “beings as a whole” in the mode of a “remarkable indifference,” “joy in the presence of the Dasein—not simply of the person—of a human being whom we love,” “uncanniness” in the recession of beings and opening of the not-at-home that anxiety reveals. Then, instead of “nihilative comportments—forces in which Dasein bears its thrownness without mastering it” (antagonism, rebuke, failure, prohibition, privation), Dasein uncovers wonder as what arises out of the “clear night of the nothing of anxiety,” and responds to the “original openness of beings [...] that they are beings—and not rather nothing.”
poets who endure (Ertragen) this “opening up of a readiness for and an absence of fulfillment” are abandoned and at the same time renouncing. Such is Hölderlin’s divine infidelity that loves the flown gods and mourns their disappearance, but learns to let them be dead: “The enduring of such a conflict is pain (Schmerz), a suffering (Leiden), and the calling is therefore plaintive (Klagen): “originary mourning is the lucid superiority of the simple goodness of a grave pain—a fundamental attunement (Grundstimmung).” (GA 39, 81-2) Since the loss of the gods is experienced in the simple goodness of a grave pain, its mourning “is holy.” This mourning is love in the lines “The heart’s love has plaint”:

According to ancient wisdom, love [Liebe] is a desire [Wollen], namely, willing that the beloved, in his or her being, be such as they are, stand firm in their essence [seinem Wesen standhalte]. A willing—the heart’s love—“what else does it want [was will es anders] / the holy mourning one [Heiligtrauernde]?” (GA 39, 137-155)

The ancient desire of love is a desire both for the beloved to stand firm in their essence, and a desire for something else, something greater that moves between lover and beloved. This threefoldness of love is drawn back by Heidegger into a more general discussion of the threefold of attunement in general: 1) that which attunes (das Stimmende), the “inner ground” of the attunement, the desire of the lover; 2) that which is attuned (gestimmt ist) in the attuning, the standing firm of the beloved in response to the plaint; and, 3) their reciprocal relatedness (wechselweise Bezogensein) as an inter-play or attuned-attuning.

To be able to center a Mitsein in this medial realm of reciprocal attuning leads to Hölderlin’s “beautiful, holy, divine sentiment.” (GA 39, 85, bold in original) If the figures of the path-breaking Centaurs emerge here as life-bringers, besotted on “the power of honey-sweet wine,” as unbound forces of bewitchment that, like the rivers, “violently creates paths and limits the originally pathless Earth” (GA 39, §8f), less violently do the mourning poets poeticize the counter-turning to this desiring forcefulness (mächlerische) of the strong. Plaintively, yet in all humility, the mourning poets unravel the mystery of the divine infidelity, thus opening the daimonic playspace not only of a hostile renunciation that lets gods be dead, but of the players themselves who might yet hearken and respond to one another, and so learn to escort each other into new divine-mortal choruses that shelter the grounding attunements. Holy mourning, steadfastly
standing in the position of lover, appeals not only to one beloved, but to all lovers to learn “the power of the Earth upon which the human beings ‘dwells poetically.’” (GA 39, §8d)

In §26 and §27 of WS 1941/2, “The Essential Ties of Festival and History: The Bridal Festival of Human Beings and Gods” and “The Festive as the Origin of Attunement: Joy and Mourning: The Epigram »Sophokles«”, we find what is arguably one of the most important discussions of fundamental attunement, in which we hear:

The festive [das Festliche] is then the initiatory happening [anfänglich sich ereignet] in which all things are accommodated to each other [einander-entgegenkommen] in the response that bears [in seiner Entgegnung trägt] and is thoroughly attuned [durchstimmt]. The festive is the inceptual attuner [anfänglich Stimmende] [...] more originary [ursprünglicher] than all attunements and their counterparts otherwise known to us.

(GA 52, 69-70)²⁶

To understand why the festive is both the anfänglich Stimmende and the ursprünglichste Stimmung, Heidegger looks to Hölderlin’s »Sophokles« epigram in which the poet who “joyfully sought the most joyful” (Freudigste) finds it expressed at last, but only “in mourning” (Trauer). (PF, 109) What attunes all mourning to the joyfulness it suffers, and in turn, attunes all that is joyful to the measure it receives from the essence of mourning, is what is more originary and inceptual than both, namely, “the festive” (das Festliche). “The festive is the ground of joy and mourning [...] the ground of an originary intimacy and hearkening to one another of joy and mourning,” in which each discovers the destinial-fateful law of their co-belonging, “that always in mourning there is a joy, and in all joy a mourning also announces itself.” (GA 52, 71-2) What Hölderlin’s »Sophokles« epigram suggests is that the oscillation and unification of joy and mourning in Greek tragedy is unique, and points to a daimonic vocation that, born of the bridal festivals of Dionysos, unfolds “the relation of gods and human beings” into “the decision of art.” This is the decision “whether there will be a πόλις that comes to stand in the truth of the encounter of gods and human beings,” or whether humans will fall into a vortex of

²⁶ This is William McNeill’s translation in The Time of Life: Heidegger and Ėthos, “Ēthos and Poetic Dwelling: Inaugural Time in Heidegger’s Hölderlin,” “The Festival” (2007, 150-153), which also discusses the claim that festivity pervades/underlies anxiety and the other attunements.
untruth.” (GA 52, 72-3) Perilously close to an ontological aestheticism, Heidegger says that the authentic need affliction, or emergency (eigentliche Not) of Dasein, despite all anguish and hardship (Nöte) under the monstrous sign of WWII, is the need for new festivals where both mourning and joy might attune a people to the truth of Being in art. And he cites to this effect Hölderlin’s hymnal fragment “Do you think...”:

Do you think [meinst du] [zum Dämon]
Things will go [gehen]
as before? They wished to found [stiften]
a kingdom of art [Reich der Kunst]. But in the process
Neglected what was native to them [Das Vaterländische],
and Greece, fairest of all, went down.
Now the situation is completely different.
Indeed, the pious [die Frommen] should
    and everyday would be [und alle Tage wäre]
the festival [Das Fest]. (GA 52, 68-9; HSP, 278)

Heidegger includes the words zum Dämon, often excised by editors. The fragment is a question addressed by Hölderlin to his Dämon. What it asks after is the art that, beyond the decline of art, might yet become the festival of the everyday, but which does not become this festival insofar as its people neglects the development of what is innate. Recognizing the radical indeterminacy of these lines, Heidegger offers little commentary:

Here it suffices to hint [genüge der Hinweis] towards the inner connection [Zusammenhang] between the will to found [Willen der Stiftung] a kingdom of art, the decline [Untergang] of Greece, the “other transformation now” [»anderen Bewandtniss jetzt«], and the possibility of festivals of the future [des künftigen Festes]. Out of these relations [Zusammenhang] not too much is said, but in a clear and decisive way the sense [Sinn] of the festival is mentioned. (GA 52, 68-9)

Beyond “the cloister” which was of help (genüzet), futural festivals are to transform the meaning of human community. And the way to this transformation is art. This contrasts with Hegel’s thesis, discussed in the later “Epilogue” to “The Origin of the Work of Art,”
that the work of art is “a thing of the past” (ein Vergangenes). (PLT, 80) In place of Hegel’s claim that the world-gathering power of art is over, Heidegger hopes for an art where “fixing in place (Feststellen) of truth” might let itself be wholly guided by a “letting happen of the advent of truth.” (OBT, 50-6) In terms of Hölderlin’s “Do you think...[zum Dämon]” this possibility opens an uncanny perhaps: perhaps, given the Hesperian situation which is “completely different,” the gods might return in transfigured form to new festivals of poetic dwelling. Perhaps this is more possible than we think.

In accordance with this possibility of opening a new hesperian playing field for art, »das Fest« still names for Heidegger “something unconditioned (etwas Unbedingtes).” (GA 52, 69) Beyond human making (Machen der Menschen), and cast into the time-play-spaces of Dasein’s most “decisive renunciation (entscheidene Verzichten) and unconditional awaiting (unbedingte Erharren)” (GA 39, 117), »das Fest« opens playing field of Dasein as transforming into something other (anderen Bewandtniss jetzt).

The abyss as ‘possibilizer’ intimates this new scansion wherever the everyday of each common day is breached. For in this breach all relations are thrown into their transitional period, as each aspect of being struggles to orient itself in the whole. But both the initial accommodation of gods and mortals, earth and world in the settlements-sediments of the everyday, and the abyssally exposed elemental encounter, both the auguring of what has sprung-forth (Anfang, Φύσις), and the event that fulfills from the ground (Ursprung, Ἀλήθεια) are, understood futurally, moments of “the greeting.” As Heidegger sees it, the greeting of the holy is the attuned-attuning element of “das Ereignis, der Anfang.”

This attuner tunes through and attunes everything [durchstimmt und bestimmt] with its silent voice [lautlose Stimme]. It is the voice of a primordial greeting [anfänglichen Grüßen] through which gods and human beings are first greeted [zu Gegrüßten] by one another [...] The festiveness of the festival through which the festival is let to occur [ereignen läßt] is the primordial greeting of greetings [Grüßen des Grüßenden] that Hölderlin in his first hymn “As When on a Holiday...” names the “holy” [das Heilige]. The festival as bridal festival is the event of this most primordial greeting [das Ereignis des anfänglichen Grusses]. (GA 52, 69-70)
This says not only that “the festive character of the festival has its determinate ground in the holy,” but that “the holy lets the bridal festival be the festival that it is.” (Ibid.) How are we to think the bridal festival as “sent by the holy”? And how to understand the holy as higher and prior to the festival it sends? The answer lies in “the greeting” as a hello/farewell (χαίρειν) and as the between for fulfillment of hospitality for those who arrive: “Such a letting-be (Wesenlassen) of a being (Wesenden) in its being (Wesen) is the originary greeting (das ursprüngliche Grüßen).” (EHP, 128) Exposed to the abyss of what is unconditional (the Es gibt of Being), but turning towards all conditions and conditionality, the greeting is an originary ethicality that esteems/holds (Halten) and assists/sustains (Helfen) other beings in their otherness, and thus also in their afflictions, emergencies, and needs.27 This care for other Daseins is the most essential thing to the greeting, for it is only in a caring relation to finite beings that divine beings pass-by.

So far in this section the attunement of festivity has been discussed in the WS 1934/5 and WS 1941/2 with respect to joy and mourning, the decline of Greek art and artistic festivals of the future, and the festive greeting itself as the chiasmic intertwining. Yet in terms of outlining a topology of attunement the landmark years are not 1939-43, nor 1927-30, but more 1934-8, since these are the years in which Heidegger most defines the relationships between the fundamental attunements. Let us therefore look to the most important precursor analysis for Heidegger’s 1941-3 discussion of festivity, which I argue to be the discussion of wonder (Erstaunen) in the WS 1937/8 Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “Logic.” (GA 45)

In the section “The Need and Necessity of the First Beginning and the Need and Necessity of an Other Way to Question and Begin,” we hear that Dasein’s most acute distress/emergency (Not) is the urgency of the fact that it does not know the way into or out of the beginning. Enduring all ending but clueless regarding the way to begin, Dasein remains (bleibt): emergent, suspended, urgent in the unattuned χωρισμός wherein Being and non-Being are as yet “undifferentiated,” melded and “wandering” into each other.

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27 Heidegger cites “Columbus”: “For no one can bear the wealth of the heavens all alone (Denn einsam kann / Von Himmlischen den Reichtum tragen / Nicht eins).” (GA 52, 70-1; PF, 191)
This distress [die Not] hearkens [gehört] to the truth of Being itself. It possesses its highest gift [ihre höchste Schenkung] in being the ground of the necessity [Grund der Notwendigkeit] towards the highest possibilities [den höchsten Möglichkeiten], on the path of which the human being in creations surpasses itself and returns [zurückkommt] through beings to the truth of Being. (GA 45, 153; BQ, 133, trans. mod.)

“The festival is necessary for it answers to a hidden need.” What is this hidden need that necessitates the festival, the festival that is itself the “highest gift” and “ground of necessity” towards the “highest possibilities,” i.e. of the truth of Being in art? The most “compelling need” (τὸ χρεών) of Dasein is the need for the un-finite (ἄ-πειρον), i.e. the need for needlessness, and with this needlessness a compelling remembrance into the inception. This is, says Heidegger, what the planet as a whole needs most. (BC, §20-25)

Being has singularly burst open our human essence. We belong to being, and yet not. We reside in the realm of being and yet are not directly allowed in. We are, as it were, homeless in our ownmost homeland, assuming we may thus name our own essence. [...] Then the question would be whether the human being has ever been decisively given over into the realm of decision belonging to its own essence, so that he shares in the grounding of historical essence and does not merely busy himself with his “historical missions.”

(BC, 75, trans. mod.)

Factically trapped in the habituality of all subordinated activities and determining power-structures of das Man, the first liberation of Dasein into a revolutionary midst for beings in the whole is attuned in wonder. Wonder arises wherever the most habitual in everything becomes the most inhabitable (Gewöhnlichste selbst zum Ungewöhnlichste). Paradoxically, the most elemental characteristic of the extremest (Äußerste) wonder is its virulence which seeks the bounds of the whole, but forgets the way into (Einweg) or out (Ausweg) of this wonder, thus adhering excessively to the open of counter-turning beings.

In this way, wonder now opens up what alone is wondrous [Er-staunliches] in it: namely, the whole as the whole, the whole as beings, beings as a whole, that they are and what they are, beings as beings, ens qua ens, τὸ ὠν ἓ ὠν, what is meant here by the “as,” the qua, the ἓ, is the “between” that wonder separates out [auseinandergeworfene], the open of a
playspace [Spielraumes] hardly surmised and heeded, in which beings come into play [ins
Spiel kommt], namely, as the beings they are, in the play of their Being [das Spiel seines
Seins]. (BQ, 146, trans. mod.; GA 45, 168)

Wonder displaces [versetzt] the human being into and before beings as such. Such
displacing [Versetzung] is the authentic attuning of the fundamental attunement
[eigentliche Stimme der Grundstimmung]. We call it the fundamental attunement because
in attuning it displaces the human being into that on which word, work, and deed [Wort,
Werk, Tat] as happening [geschehenden] can be grounded, and history begin [und
Geschichte anfangen sein].” (BQ, 143-5, trans. mod.; GA 45, 170)

Attuning the milieu of early Greek thinking from Anaximander to Aristotle, or Thales to
Socrates, the wonder (θαυμάζειν) of the metaphysical beginning is played-forth within an
earlier, more originary wonder, the wonder of a poetry that poetizes a daimonic in-
between within the attunements of awe (αιδώς, Scheu) and grace (χάρις, Anmut). Both
before Homer and after the passage of Dionysos in Greek tragedy, ever in proximity to
Dionysian chaos and Junonian custom, αιδώς and χάρις are what limits ἐνθουσιασμός,
thus opening the playspace wherein the metaphysical beginning becomes possible at all.

In the WS 1937/8, Heidegger barely comments on these more ‘mythical,’ ‘irrational,’
and indeed ‘feminine’ forms of the wondering attunement. Though he does suggest that
αιδώς attunes “the risking ones (den Wagenden) and to them alone befalls,” and that
χάρις is “the giving and preserving graciousness that is in itself severity” (GA 45, 140),
though he does call them “goddesses” and even “demi-goddesses” (Halbgötinnen) of
attunement, this will not displace Heidegger’s phallogocentric narrative of the seven
sages and subsequent great metaphysicians (Plato and Aristotle). It will not lead him to
the importance of Sappho and her Aphrodite for the Heideggerian history of Being.

But by 1939 there is more to tell. Now the wonders—αιδώς and χάρις—have as
serious a claim to be rememberings and foundings of “the first beginning,” at least once
this beginning is understood as the initiatory event of the wedding festival. Within
Heidegger’s history of Being the earlier and thus inexhaustible wonders of poetry are
thought elliptically but decisively near the close of the WS 1934/5 as the “fissuring
abyss” in Der Rhein, and its “ray of light” that configures natality as Dasein:
Birth [Geburt]—this means: The origin [Ursprung] as the grounding abyss [Abgrund] is not altogether the origin, however, but only one power of the origin [nur die eine Macht des Ursprungs]; the other is the “ray of light” [Lichstral] (line 52). In it there reigns the opposite direction of provenance [die entgegengesetzte Herkunfrichtung], in its coming to meet the newly born [das Neugeborene]. The ray of light refers here not just to any light or brightness [Licht und Helle] in general, as opposed to darkness, but as “birth” corresponds to “Mother Earth” in strophe II, so “ray of light” corresponds to the “Thunderer.” The ray of light is the lightning flash [der Blitz]. Thunder, lightning, and storm are for Hölderlin not that wherein something divine announces itself, but that wherein the essence of gods manifests itself [das Wesen des Gottes sich offenbart]. [...] 

In the ray of light that which springs forth [das Entspringende] receives the possibility of the illuminating look [Lichtblickes], that is, of that look into essence [Wesenblick], in which the excessive fullness of a great willing [die Überfülle eines großen Wollens] presses towards the emergence of the figure [der Gestaltwerdung entgegengerückt]. Figure, however, is at once inner delimitation bringing itself to a stand [zum Stehen bringende Begrenzung], and entry into the dark [Eingang in das Dunkel], into which it closes itself off as into the gravity that has been overcome [in die überwundene Schwere verschleißt]. What is dark [das Dunkel], by contrast, itself does not lose its unfettered character [sein Ungebundenes] in the configuring light [Lichtgefüge] of delimitation [der Begrenzung], but lets it become conspicuous [aufmerken läßt]. See “The Titans” (IV, 210, line 68ff.):

And into the depths reaches [in die Tief greift]  
That it may come alive [lebendig werden]  
The almighty shaker [Der Allerschütterer], they say  
The heavenly one [der Himmlische] comes  
Down to the dead [Zu Todten] and mighty dawn arises [gewaltig dämmert]  
In the unfettered abyss [Im ungebundende Abgrund]  
That becomes aware of all [Im allesmerkenden auf]. (GA 39, 243)

I must renounce any possibility of a complete interpretation of this passage. A few provisional remarks will have to suffice: first, the passage indicates that there are “two directions of provenance,” an ἀρχή (birth or natality), and ἐσχατόν (mortality as configuring light), and that the relation between these directives, is the fourfold itself. Insofar as mortals are exposed to the Abgrund as Being, the revelation of the gods
proceeds in fulgurating flashes that unite the ἔσχατόν of mortality to the ἀρχή of natality. This reveals the dwelling of mortals in figures and limits, and thus shows-forth the directions of provenance as earth and sky. This is the willing and whiling endurance of demigods as fulgurating figures that, though they are unbound, are never unfettered since, proceeding back and forth into the dark, they are ever in need of a configuring light.

These remarks and the fragment they cite name the “mighty dawn [that] arises / In the unfettered abyss [ungebundene Abgrund],” and there “becomes aware of all [Im allesmerkenden auf].” This “mighty dawn” is, as we will now see, the wedding itself, and it bears a multiplicity of references to the µῦθοι early Greek and late Hesperian poetry.28

28 On the µῦθοι of the Greek gods in relation to “earth, day, night, and death,” as well as the grounding attunements of αἰῶν and χάρις, see the WS 1942/3 Parmenides. (GA 54)
4.2.2 “As When on a Holiday...”: Καιρός and Mnemosyne

As the 1934 Germanien lectures discuss “holy mourning” as the grounding attunement that initiates/sustains the relation of human beings to loss and finitude, not only their own, but the finitude of the divine as passing on and beyond, so the 1935 Der Rhein lectures think the attuned-attuning chiasmus of birth, the ray of light, urgency, and nurture/discipline (Geburt, Lichtstral, Not, and Zucht) as the fourfold playspace for the poet’s scarcely being able to disclose the mystery, and the people’s hardly knowing what it is they have received in the mystery of life. It remains, then, for Heidegger’s Hölderlin after 1936 to address two questions: 1) What is the poetic revelation? and, 2) How do the poets of this revelation unfold it with others in a poietic sustaining of otherness?

The 1939 “As When On a Holiday...” essay answers the second question, and the WS 1941/2 Andenken answers the first. With respect to Hölderlin himself, there is little that is arbitrary in this double approach, and it goes back to Hesiod’s project, which is to found two festivals of poetry, a Θεογονία that sings the turbulent union of Γαία and Ουρανός, and an Ἑργα καὶ Ημέραι that tells the story of suffering mortals doomed to wander over the dark earth. What is peculiar in Hölderlin is that, although he follows Hesiod’s two festivals of poetry, he categorically reverses the Hesiodic separation of the Theogony from the Works and Days. For Hölderlin’s Works and Days is the call that mortals come to know everyday As When on a Holiday... His Theogony is the summons that the loss of the fleeting festival at the evening become the “mighty dawn” of a midnight that fathoms every sign. Recall how at the close of the 1935 lectures, Heidegger understood the bridal festival as the evening-out of a while for destiny, and in the sense of the unifying of counter-possibilities of the between. But despite this lofty definition, because it is only one unfinite Moment, the festival passes-on in excess of the possibilities it opens up. What it passes into is not only the evening, but “daybreak in whose light the Open clears itself, so that the poet sees the coming of what his verses must say: the holy.” (EHP, 127)

That is why the first hymn of this poet which can call:

“But now day breaks!...
may the holy be my word"

Begins with the line:

“As When on a Holiday....” (EHP, 126-7)

This is how As When on a Holiday... is introduced in the 1943 Andenken essay,29 in terms of the holiday as the “day of the bridal festival, the wedding day, [which] determines the birthday of the poet, i.e. the daybreak [...].” Heidegger continues: “The holiday remains immediately (unmittelbar) related to the birth of the demigod and accordingly to the bridal festival.” But in order to arrive at this thesis, the “Wie Wenn” in the “Wie Wenn am Feiertage...” undergoes a limited erasure, for while it “seems to introduce a comparison (Vergleich),” “something other is thought (anderes gedacht).”

But it is of great significance that the 1801 hymn “As When on Holiday...” is not set during a holiday, but in a pastoral scene as when on a holiday, a scene in which a countryman (Landmann) sojourns out to a field that is waking after a passing storm. As Heidegger notes: “Here all work has ceased. And the god is nearer to man.” (EHP, 74) The Landmann is related to the poet who also “stands in favorable weather,” i.e. in the “light embrace” (leichtem Umfangen) wherein Nature “educates (erziehen) the poet,” and so that he might sing “the wonderfully all-present (die wunderbar / Allgegenwärtig).” But between these two figures there is an abyssal rupture (χάός), substantially the same gap between the Theogony and the Works and Days.

For with respect to the pastoral scene, we hear of the “sultry night (heisser Nacht),” and of the “cooling lightning” (kühlenden Blize), not of the “illuminated night” and the “holy lightning” itself. On the morning as when on a holiday we hear of the storm of the

29 Heidegger’s interpretation of As When on a Holiday... in 1939 is an extension of his account of this hymn already in the WS 1934/5. See the 1934 Germanien lectures (GA 39, I, §4c): “Yet us it behooves [gebührt], under God’s thunderstorms, / You poets! to stand with naked heads [entblösstem Haupte], / To grasp the Father’s ray [Des Vaters Stral], itself / With our own hands and shrouded [Gehüllt] in the song [Lied] / To pass on to the people the heavenly gift [Gabe zu reichen].” Also, see the 1935 Der Rhein lectures (GA 39, II, §13): “the thoughts of the communal spirit (Des gemeinsamen Geistes Gedanken),” and which again concerns the fulgurating “holy ray” (heiligem Stral) in which “the song” (Gesang) as “fruit born of love” and “the work of gods and humans” “testifies” (zeuge) to both and so succeeds (glükt). Here the festival of song is passed-on to those who undergo the ἀ-λήθεια that lies dormant in the etiological myth concerning the birth of Bacchus from Semele, whose sacrifice in giving birth to an immortal demigod makes good the gods’ lack, and enables that “heavenly fire” might be, that is, in the repetition of the myth, distributed “without danger (ohne Gefähr).”
elemental that passes into a peaceful καιρός, but not of “the jubilation of beyng” which is itself the storm. To be sure, the captivating (Berückende) and enraptured (entrückt), emerging and arising unity of Nature as wondrous omni-presence is what originally bestows all beauty, powerfulness, and protection, and is the holy.

But that does not make this holiness the unifying unity of all extreme counter-possibilities, for example, of highest and deepest gods—Aether and Abyss—nor is it yet the truth or peak of mortal life that must at once be peace and storm. This point is worth underlining. For while we may guess that the Landmann, secure that his crop has not been destroyed in the threatening night, subsequently returns to work, we know that the poet who emerges into the pastoral scene, discovers his vocation there, which is to poetize As When on a Holiday... Poetizing thus, the poet finds in one and all Die mächtige, die göttlichschöne Natur, i.e. “the holy” that his verses must say.

In greeting the morning as when on a holiday the poet is jubilant yet quiet, maintaining composure, and perhaps even putting on a happy face. Why? Because it is clear to poets of destitute times that the Works and Days of suffering mortals exceed in every dimension “The Highest” that his verses must attempt to say. Wakening to the passing of the holy in the pastoral field is then nothing other than wakening to the time when Nature “seems to be sleeping” (zu schlafen sie scheint), i.e. the time that the poets of the festival mourn (So trauert der Dichter Angesicht auch).

And here we find the immense work that is done by three little words: Now, But, Day.

Jezt aber tagts! Ich harrt und sah es kommen,
Und was ich sah, das heilige sei mein Wort.
Denn sie, sie selbst, die älter denn die Zeiten
Und über die Götter des Abends und Orients ist,
Die Natur ist jetzt mit Waffenklang erwacht,
Und hoch vom Äther bis zum Abgrund nieder
Nach westem Gesze, wie einst, aus heiligem Chaos gezeugt,
Fühlt neu die Begeisterung sich,
Die Allerschaffende wieder.
I leave these lines untranslated for the sake of memory. What does the poet remember and found? Simply the μῦθοι of what precedes and exceeds “the gods of Occident and Orient,” leading most deeply into φόσις and δαιμόνιος, and thus back into the χαός that is born through all such νόμοι as sing from the eldest and highest gods: Aether (the “all enlivening lightening air”), Abyss (“the all-enclosing which is borne by mother Earth”), and the Word (“awakening with a clang of arms from amidst sanctuaries that preserve the holy”). For these are the gods that most prevail and attune from chaos the “firm law,” or, as I here translate, the “bridal law” or “vested customs” (vestem Geseze).

These vested laws are related to the chthonic/festive vestment, i.e. the laws concerning the lock of Mnemosyne. Heidegger, for his part, thinks Mnemosyne often, for example, in the 1951/2 What is Called Thinking?: “Mnemosyne, daughter of Heaven and Earth, bride of Zeus, in nine nights becomes the mother of the nine Muses.” (WCT, 11) In the WS 1942/3 Parmenides lectures, we hear these words on Mnemosyne:

Without insight [Einblick] into the δαιμόνιον of λήθη, we will never be able to appreciate the astonishing fact that the “mother of the muses,” and consequently the essential beginning [der Wesenanfang] of poetry, is “Mnemosyne,” i.e., the primordial free salvation and preservation of being [die anfängliche freie Rettung und Wahrung des Seins], without which poetizing [Dichten] would even lack what is to be poetized [das zu Dichtenden]. (PA, 126-7; GA 54, 186-8).

These statements point to the third stanza of Hölderlin’s Mnemosyne hymn, where the goddess dwells on Mount Kithairon with her heroes in the city of Eleutherai, but where, after the God casts off his (festive) cloak, the Occidental (das abendliche) draws near and cut a lock of Mnemosyne’s hair. The lock of Mnemosyne becomes the symbol of what Hesperian poets carry in the night, a token for remembrance, if not a vesture that gathers them back into the beginning. An aside, but an important one, is to note that Hölderlin’s poetic vocation, looking high up to Aether and down to low Abyss, and asking for such vestem Geseze as are born from heiligem Chaos, also recalls Zarathustra’s equivalent gesture when, after descending from the mountains, he enters into the market-place in a Lucian mood of χαός-χορεία and with the law of the overman, only to discover that he is the tight-rope walker who falls to his death, and becomes his own undertaker.
Zarathustra’s χαός-χορεία and Hölderlin’s song *As When on a Holiday*... are equally indebted to the symbolic matrix of Greek cosmotheogonic reflection, and even to the traditions of Orpheus who, as the etymology of his name indicates, is the singer from darkness scaling the peaks of joy, and possessed by a Mnemosynian Muse that sings highest and eldest gods. Orpheus sings of the Egg between Aether and Abyss from which Φάνης is born, whose other names include Χρόνος-Ἀνάγκη (Time-Inevitability), Μήτις (the mother of Athena), Ηρικεπαιος (founder of Athens), Πρωτόγονος (the first-born who is sacrificed), Ἐρός, Βρόμιος (god of the mystery cry), Διόνυσος and Ζεύς.  

Heidegger, for his part, does not comment on the Orphic by name, and Nietzsche devalues it. Nonetheless, Hölderlin’s “three-in-one” bears much closer comparison to the Χαός, Αίθηρ, and Φάνης of the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, than to Hesiod’s Χαός, Γαία, and Ἐρός. In the 1943 essay “Homecoming” he does, however, cite a second Hölderlinian “three-in-one”: Aether, Earth, and Light. (EHP, 34-39) As Earth is the “all-creative” and “all-living” enclosed in the Abyss, so Aether is the “lighting-clearing” that gives passage to all “blazing and brightness.” Aether and Abyss are here and again the “highest” since, as the earliest, they are the most “thoroughly spiritualized by inspiration.” Now if the basic attunement of *As When on a Holiday*... is the mourning that transforms into joyfulness singing from Aether and Abyss into the Word, in the *Homecoming* elegy the basic attunement is a joyfulness (*das Freudige*) that moves up through gaiety (*das Heitere*), while also descending from mountains back to mourning.

That is why young Chaos ‘celebrates’ [feiert] ‘loving strife’ there ‘amidst the rocks,’ and ‘celebrates’ it ‘trembling with joy’ [freudigschauermd]. But the cloud, ‘a hill of heaven’ (IV, 71) dreams its way between the heights into the most joyful. While composing the cloud points up towards gaiety. (EHP, 36; GA 4, 18)

“Die Wolke dichtet”: such are the clouds that “attuned by joy into joy” become the heralds of gaiety (*Heitere*). The holy (*Heilige*) that ‘sends’ the festival is here understood by Heidegger in its most mythically free determination as the greeting of gaiety (*Grüß des Heiteren*) which transforms the terror of the immediate—all suffering, mourning, and

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love—into the beauty of the Highest, in the brightness of a trembling grace, χαός-χάρις.

What is highest [das Höchste], “above the light,” is the very opening for any stream of light [stralende Lichtung]. According to an old word of our mother tongue, this pure clearing [reine Lichtende] which first entrances “space” [einträum] into every “timespace” [Zeitraum] we call “gaiety” [die Heitere]. At one and same time, it is the clarity (claritas) in whose brightness everything clear rests, and the grandeur (serenitas) in whose strength everything high stands, and the merriment (hilaritas) in whose play everything liberated sways [schwingt]. Gaiety preserves and holds everything within what is safe and sound [Unverstört und Heilen]. Gaiety heals fundamentally [heilt ursprünglich]. It is the holy. “The highest” and “the holy” are the same for the poet: gaiety. As the source for everything joyful, it remains the most joyful [das Freudigste], and it lets the pure brightening come to pass [reine Aufheiterung]. (EHP, 37-39; GA 4, 18-20)

Ἀγλαία (Klarheit, Clarity), Εὐφροσύνη (Hoheit, serenity), Θαλία (Frohheit, hilarity) are the Graces concerning whom the poet asks “why do the Charities / come to barbarians?” What Hölderlin and Heidegger hope is that such tongueless signs as have nearly lost their Müttersprach, devoid of the midnight song of the wedding festival, might yet in the holy tumult of a mournful gaiety find “the essential ground of the greeting (Wesengrund des Grüßens), that is, of the angelic in which the being of gods consists.” The passage from χαός to νόμος finds the greeting ones, i.e. the gods who extend their offerings. The gods’ gaiety may seem most distant from destitute times, yet Heidegger avers, the gods remain nearer than the nearest things. And those who “linger” in gaiety “in its inconspicuous appearance” sometimes become their “messengers, ἄνγελλοι,” or “Angels” which is Hölderlin’s (and Rilke’s) purest word for gods. (EHP, 34) Earth and Light, and what is related to them in the greeting, are such Angels. What brings-forth the μῶθοι of Abyss and Aether in the Word are the angelic gods and their messengers. They are the “angels of the house” (joyous and mournful in homecoming), and the “angels of the year” (venturing into the everyday as when on a holiday...).

It is in this rupture (caesura) of house and year that we can speak anew to the workday and holiday as such, and say something concerning Heidegger’s festive spirit: not only his spiration which labors intensely, and often has difficulty breathing, but his inspiration
which rests in receiving “The Highest” from Hölderlin’s ghost through whom, both nobly and nefariously, he sees everything. Heidegger’s most important discussion of spirit (Geist) and inspiration (Begeisterung) occurs here in 1939, and at the moment of thinking temporality as historicity. Here the essay outlines the elemental three- and six-fold of Spirit, Nature, and the Holy. This is the middle of the middle of the 1939 essay, and the middle of Heidegger’s Hölderlin, at the cusp of the double chiasmus.

To enter Heidegger’s hearing of these three words—Geist, Natur, Heilige—we must engage both an Erhören (primal hearing) and an Überhören (over hearing) in the Ἑν-Πάντα. For each of these words says the same, twice: as Eingenden and Eigen. The metaphysical concept of Nature names the united whole of beings, but what illuminates the whole as whole is the non-metaphysical Being of nature, φύσις as the lumen naturale: “Φύσις is the opening of the clearing of what is cleared, and is thus the hearth and site of light.” Heidegger makes the claim that what natura and behind it φύσις name, the future history of the Occident must decide on the basis of what is thought in this singular hymn. Pointing out how in a pencil revision of the At the Source of the Danube hymn, Hölderlin crosses out the word nature in the lines “[...] we name you, compelled by the holy, we name you nature!”, Heidegger argues this erasure is the telling sign of an overcoming of the merely ontic sensibility inherent to the Latin word natura. It is a crossing-out that emerges as a consequence of a poeticizing which springs from a more primordial source.

The metaphysical concept of spirit is spiration in the sense of “strife” (Streit), what “reigns (waltet) as the sober but daring confrontation (Auseinandersetzung) that sets everything present (Anwesende) into the well-delineated boundaries and structures of its presence (Grenzen und Gefüge seiner Anwesung).” Spirit as Waffenklang in the Nature that awakes to the setting-apart. Such “setting apart is essential thinking. The unique element ‘of the spirit’ are the ‘thoughts’ through which everything [...] precisely belongs together.” (EHP, 82) But alongside the setting-part, there is also the nonmetaphysical horizontality of spirit, itself a pure porosity, inspiration (Begeisterung): “the appearing of unity that lets all that is present be together (einbezieht).” These are “the thoughts of the communal spirit” that As When on a Holiday... sings as it passes through the spiring or inspiring breath as individuation or transindividuation of Dasein.
Crucially, even christically, yet not in a trinitarian way, the greeting of the Holy breaks with Nature’s and Spirit’s counter-turning chiasmata. Exceeding every ambiguity of the differentiating-unifying, the holy is decisively not the sacred as the untouchable that, being touched, brings the scathing of the unbearable. Beyond every relation of creation and destruction in the demigods the holy is *The Highest* that remains indestructible (*Unverstörbar*). And thus the center of the triune demigod—Heracles, Dionysos, Christ—is neither edge, neither strength nor weakness, but it the midst and mediating withdrawal of both, bread and wine, that lets the holy be torn to pieces.

Here, at the middle of the 1939 essay, we find Heidegger attempting to think Hölderlin’s “the holy” beyond every self-sacrificial toleration, sustaining, or elevation, beyond every *Aufhebung*, and so beyond every mirror-doctrine at the end of metaphysics. For in thinking three caesurae, three lacunae as bound in one, Hölderlin’s ghost does not return to Christ, but opens to Pindar’s “Glancing into the depth of the all...”:

> νόμος ὁ πάντων βασίλευς  
> θανάτων τε καὶ ἀθανάτων  
> ἄγει δικαιὸν τὸ βιαιότατον  
> ύπερτάτα χειρὶ . . .

In the translation [Übersetzung] of Hölderlin’s (V2, 276):

> The law  
> Of all, the king, mortals and  
> Immortals; which for that very reason  
> Powerfully steer [gewaltig]  
> The most just right with the uppermost hand.  
> [Das gerechteste Recht mit allerhöchster Hand]

This is *The Highest*, Pindar’s βιαιότατον (*gewaltig*) in which we cannot hear neither Thrasymachus’s “justice of the strongest,” nor “Recht ist Streit.” (GA 39 I, §10) But what is *gewaltig* in Hölderlin—*ergo* Heidegger—is the gift of the immediate that is impossible except in accordance with the measure of a “heavenly goodness, [that] for its own sake, must be holy, unmixed (*weil himmlische Güte, ihret selber wegen, heilig seyn muss,*
unvermichtet).” Pindar says βιαιότατον, but Hölderlin thinks the gewaltig of “heavenly goodness,” a law that immortals most of all must follow, and which determines their relations to mortals. Whereas the µίξις of gods with evil mortals might, on the usual reading of Greek immorality, be right (Recht) and just (δικαίον), Hölderlin speaks of the divine unmixability (unvermicht) that is preserved and liberated by the υπερτάτα χείρ, mit allerhöchster Hand. And this he poeticizes as Das Höchste, the superior chierontic goodness that restores a Hochzeit to humble things. Philologically suspect, and as such futural, Hölderlin lets the Greeks be determined by a violent fire that is not Hesperian because it exceeds the measure of that Junonian sobriety which it only barely learns. But beyond the gods and mortals of the ancient piety is the highest that gives the vestal customs from chaos unconquerable. And around 1950 this is what Heidegger says to Hannah Arendt in a note that names the bridely-customs not only as νόμι, song-laws, but θεσµοί, from Θέµις, goddess of the nomic-oracular equity and equilibrium, and mother of both the Ὺραι and Μοῖραι (Theogony, 901), a goddess least understood.

In order to complete this discussion of the as when holiday as the Open playing field of Dasein, I will now reach back through traditional phenomenology, and forward towards the phenomenology of the inapparent, from Being and Time to Time and Being, both as gathered in 1939. The basic phenomenological question here is again the one that Heidegger inherits from German idealism, and puts to work in the context of re-thinking Husserl’s double methodology of transcendental ἐποχή coupled with categorial intuition. Take any situation of Dasein. It is enclosed, but never without a horizon of openness in which things and the world might appear for it. In any ὀρίζων, however small its aperture, there is always some immediacy as what is simply there for Dasein, the situation of present and absent beings in their immediate relations of presence and absence. And yet, examined more closely, this level of immediacy proves to be thoroughly mediated. For both in Dasein’s ready-to-hand involvements, and in its discovery of beings as present-to-hand, beings are always given to Dasein, but the Being of beings is never simply given, in fact, Being itself and the Being of beings are withdrawn, in the mildness of a light embrace. This is the situation that makes the method of transcendental ἐποχή seem not only appealing but necessary.
Now if the as if holiday can be understood as exemplifying the existential structures of removal (ent-setzend, Entrückung) into a being-moved (Einrückung), that is, by the lighting of the ὠλὸν which “first provides for mutuality and collectivity the realm in which they belong to each other,” then the holiday perhaps begins to look like the ἐποχή itself. Not the ἐποχή of transcendental egoity, however, but the ἐποχή that is intrinsic to the Dasein of the ὠλὸν. Transforming all Zeitlichkeit into all Temporalität des Seins, this deeper ἐποχή removes the movedness of Dasein into what proves inappropriable to ousiological settlement. Beyond every ‘logic’ of propriation and the proper, this holiday is the Enteignis that opens no doctrine, no firm law, but which mirrors-back a more heavenly fire into the round dance. The Enteignis as when on a holiday initializes the festival of Ereignis. For beyond the Being of Zeitlichkeit as a betrothal to Being in the hermeneutical circle is the festival of Being as Dasein’s expropriation into appropriation.

If Being and Time thinks the absencing of something present (Being), the 1962 lectures “Time and Being” think the presencing of something absent as a giving gift:

Being is not a thing, thus nothing temporal [nichts Zeitliches], and yet it is determined by time as presence [Anwesenheit].

Time is not a thing, thus nothing which is [nichts Seiendes], and yet it remains constant in its passing away without being something temporal [Zeitliches] like the beings in time.

(TB, 3; ZSD, 3)

In the approaching what is no longer present [im Ankommen des noch-nicht-Gegenwärtigen im Gewesen des nicht-mehr-Gegenwärtigen] and even in the present itself there always plays [in der Gegenwart selbst spielt jeweils] a kind of approach and bringing about, that is, a kind of presencing [Angang und Anbringen, d.h. Anwesen]. We cannot attribute the presencing to be thus thought to one of the three dimensions of time, to the present, which would seem obvious. Rather the unity of time’s three dimensions consists in the interplay [in dem Zuspiel] of each toward each. This interplay proves to be the true extending [das eigentliche], playing in the very heart of time [im Eigenen der Zeit spielende Reichen], the fourth dimension so to speak—not only so to speak, but in the nature of the matter. (TB, 15; ZSD, 11)
In the sending of the destiny of Being [im Schicken des Geschickes von Sein], in the extending of time, there becomes manifest a dedication [ein Zueignen], a delivering over [ein Übereignen] into what is their own, namely of Being as presence and of time as the realm of the open [als Bereich des Offenen in ihr Eigenes]. What determines both, time and Being, in their own, that is, in their belonging together [in ihr Zusammen gehören], we shall call: Ereignis, the event of Appropriation. [...] (TB, 19; ZSD, 13)

[...] Being proves to be destiny’s gift of presence, the gift granted by the giving of time [das Reichen von Zeit gewährte Gabe des Geschickes von Anwesenheit] [...but] to giving as sending [Geben als Schicken] there belongs keeping back [Ansichhalten gehört]—such that the denial of the present and withholding of the present, play within the giving of what has been and what will be [daß im Reichen von Gewesen und Ankommen Verweigerung von Gegenwart und Vorenthalten von Gegenwart spielen]. What we have mentioned just now—keeping back, denial, withholding—shows something like a self-withdrawing, something we might call for short: withdrawal [den Entzug]. But inasmuch as the modes of giving that are determined by withdrawal—sending and extending—lie in appropriation, withdrawal must belong to what is peculiar [zum Eigentümlichen] to the Appropriation. This, however, no longer belongs to the matter of the lecture. (TB, 22; ZSD 15)

As what is most withdrawn and ever in withdrawal (passing-on), Hölderlin’s holiday festival as bridal festival, the highest gift and play of Being as Ereignis, is what “Time and Being” bequeaths to the unsaid. The path back and forth into the bridal festival leads through the temporal-ontological difference of source and stream that is, according to the conclusion of “Time and Being,” the “ancient something which conceals itself in ἀ-λήθεια”: “That which is said before all else by this first source of all the leitmotifs of thinking gives voice to a bond that bind all thinking, providing that thinking submits to the call of what must be thought.” (TB, 24) What is to be thought is the festival of Being.

In the 1939 “As When on a Holiday...” ἀλήθεια as un-concealing names the site of selection of a clearing Nature and inspiring Spirit to guide Dasein into the withdrawing goodness of the Holy, thus opening the gentle-peaceful lucidity of destiny. But while the morning light, the hidden gods who work the fields, the fire that gleams in the eye that sees just enough, all make it appear as if the song succeeds in giving the halcyon, but in truth, the song is composed by a suffering demigod, down there in the abyss.
My shame! [Weh mir!]
And let me say once [Und sag ich gleich.]
That I draw near, the heavenly to see [die Himmlischen, zu schauen]
And they themselves threw me down deep below the living
[Sie selbst, sie werfen mich tief unter die Lebenden]
False priest, in darkness, that I am
To sing for the learners the warning song [Das warnende Lied]
There [Dort] (HSP, 194-7, trans. mod.)

Heidegger does not interpret these lines in 1939, lines which he certainly knew from the Zinkernagel edition. (EHP, 74) Nor does he at the end of the 1939 essay consider the aetiological myth of the birth of Bacchus to be important. In fact, Heidegger is positively dismissive of the importance of this myth in the hymn: “The recollection of Semele’s fate, spoken by Euripides (The Bacchae) and by Ovid (Metam. III, 293), is only introduced into the poem as a counter-theme.” (EHP, 92) In 1939 Bacchus disappears for a moment: “The word ‘drink’ does [...] remind one of the wine-god; yet it means the reception of the other fruit, the perception of the spirit that wafts within the successful song.” The hands of The Highest are the innocent hands that raise the drink of heavenly fire to mortal lips, so as to grasp “the father’s ray, itself, with our own hands.”

Heidegger’s hands let go with:

Des Vaters Strahl, der rein versengt es nicht
Und tieferschüttert, eines Gottes Leiden
Mitleidend, bleibt das ewige Herz doch fest. (GA 4, 74-7)

On this edit of the hymn, the myth of the birth of holy Dionysos (heilige Bacchus) and Semele’s tragic fate is only a “warning” myth against the desire for divinity that “forgets the holy.” Reading the final word with Norbert von Hellingrath as “the eternal heart” (Ewige Herz), Heidegger thus repeats the editorial decision to eliminate the incomplete final stanza (which admits the poet’s failure). But he does not miss thereby how this heart that “shares a god’s suffering” (Eines Gottes Leiden / Mitleidend) is also suggestive of a heart that, not wholly divine, is mortal, “deeply shaken” (tieferschüttert), suffering and
living, yet firm (fest). For what better demigod to be the owner of this heart than Dionysos, “fruit of the thunderstorm” from the previous stanza, whose heart in Orphic myth is saved from the devouring Titans by Athena and vested in Delphi?

So why in 1939 does Heidegger not find in the Vaters strahl and its Ewige Herz also a reference to “the other Zeus” who transforms Dionysian Zorn into the highest that is Juno’s holy sobriety? We must listen in this to what Heidegger readily admits at the beginning: “The text which shall serve here as the basis for the present lecture, and which has been repeatedly checked against the original manuscripts, rests upon the following attempt at an interpretation [auf dem folgenden Versuch einer Auslegung].” (EHP, 74) We would do well to heed the implications of Heidegger’s keeping this statement at the beginning, despite its “impossibility,” which he readily admits in his reply to the criticism of Detlev Lüders. For beginning from each common day, each καιρός in the common era, thinking does not have the luxury of poetry, which is to remain as vested out of holy chaos in every pursuit of its artistic May Day. But thinking must remain firm yet festive in replying to the historical unity of what the poet conceals in an extended simile.

We have now seen how Heidegger looks to Hölderlin to uncover the higher demigods of the Entgegensetzung as those beings in whom the highest performs its work of revealing/founding the vestal customs. For as rememberings that pass through the bridal center of Mnemosyne, the Muse of this poet speaks quietly to the ear that hears the most futural cunning: that a “strict mediation” of the demigod chorus might, despite everything, be possible. Torn and abandoned between the poles of wildest immediacy and uttermost mediation, χαός and νόμος, the highest remains in withdrawal. But the truly alive endure in the vestem Geseze, and as such are born of the “Chaos [...] the holy itself.”

In 1934-5 and 1942, Heidegger finds this chaos in Dionysos, “son of Zeus and Semele,” as the demigod witness and monstrous sign (Zeuge) that both “godly and mortal Being (Seyn)” are there, i.e. that Ereignis itself has entered the time of its παρουσία (absent-presence). (HHI, 159; GA 39, 187) And in the WS 1941/2, defining the time of the bridal festival as the morning of the vernal equinox, Heidegger will move back through Hegel’s thinking into Hölderlin’s poetics as revealing the hidden ground of early Greek thinking.
In the opening pages of his *Lives of the Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius informs us concerning Thales of Miletus, the first of the seven sages, that he is said to have written “two treatises (συνέγραψε), On the Solstice and On the Equinox (Περὶ τροπῆς καὶ Ἰσημερίας), since he judged everything else to be unknowable (τὰ ἄλλ᾽ ἀκατάληπτα εἶναι δοκιμᾶσας).” Translators of Diogenes have long stumbled on the enigma here. The semantic differences of translation are extreme. Charles D. Yonge gives us, in the 19th century, “thinking that everything else can be easily comprehended,” reading from Isaac Casaubon’s ἄλλα καταληπτά. Robert J. Hicks gives us the reverse in the Loeb edition, “regarding all other matters as incognizable,” reading εἶναι in reference to everything that can be regarded, all other matters of opinion or argument (δοκιμάσας). More recently, Daniel W. Grahm, in his *The Texts of the Early Greek Philosophers* (2010), gives us “considering the rest of his theory to be inaccessible.” What is at stake here? The opposite of ἀκατάληπτα is καταληπτίκος, a word going back to Homer’s καταλαβάνω which means to seize, overpower, lay-hold of (Latin occupare, capesso). In Herodotus and Thucydides it means to conquer or check, legally bind, or constrain, in the Sophists and Plato to apprehend and comprehend, at which time it becomes a term of rhetorico-political as well as logico-metaphysical art. The finer intellectual conscience of the Stoics and Skeptics will take up the word ἀ-καταληψία to register their heresy with respect to the canon of what earlier philosophers had considered καταληπτίκος. If Thales used this term at all, it was likely not in the sense that it had during the time of Diogenes.

What else does Diogenes tell us of this? Thales, first of the seven sages, is the philosopher credited with discovering the time calendar, and predicting an eclipse. Comically, he is the philosopher who is said to have fallen into a well because his gaze was fixed on the heavens. This we hear in Plato’s *Theatetus* as a jest against all philosophers from a Thracian maid. Of Thales’s actual doctrines all that survive are two sayings: that “water is the in-dwelling source of all things” (ἀρχή δὲ τῶ πάντων ὕδωρ ύπεστήσατο), and that “the world is animate and full of deities” (καὶ τὸν κόσμον ἐμψυχον καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη). The version of the second saying that we inherit from
Aristotle’s Περὶ Ψυχῆς reads differently: πάντα πλήρε θεῶν, “all things are full of gods.”

Diogenes has δαμόνων in place of θεῶν, and κόσμον in place of πάντα. And he adds the word ἐμψυχον. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield consider this juxtaposition of two versions of the statement to be without significance, and argue for an “unscrupulous” Stoic influence on what they characterize as a “recognizably fictitious opinion,” comparable to the “30000 daimons of Hesiod’s Works and Days 252ff.” (1983, 97) But this heavy-handed resolution of a semantic nexus that moves between daimons and gods, preferring Aristotle’s rarified theological language to that of the so-called ‘spiritualists,’ is itself unscrupulous with even a cursory glance to the language of the daimonic in and around the 6th to 5th B.C.E. In truth, we are no more able to reject Diogenes’s version of Thales words in the case of κόσμον, ἐμψυχον, and δαμόνων, than we were able to reject ἀκατάληπτα. It is everything else, everything other than the solstices and the equinoxes that are ἀκατάληπτα. So what is really being said here, and what is at stake?

The tradition of understanding early Greek philosophy as a cradle for science has long had a ready-made and plausible explanation. As Thales may or may not have observed in his books, which may or may not have existed, the solstices (τροπῆς) are times when the sun appears to ebb or stand still at the northern zenith or southern nadir of its heliacal journey across the inner zodiac. The solstices thus inaugurate the equalizing transition of the measures of dark and light, night and day which prevail as balancing up until the equinoxes (ἰσημερίας) when the balance of power is reversed in equanimity.

Between the solstices and equinoxes are the cross-quarter days. Given the Mediterranean climate the ancient Greeks knew only three seasons (.Utcατοι): summer, winter, and spring—agriculturally, sowing, spring, and harvest (Αυξώ, Θαλλώ, Καρπώ); mythologically, good-laws, peace, and justice (Ευνομία, Εινρήνη, Δίκη). In accordance with this information we stumble on an explanation that accords perfectly with scientific method and popular historiography, and which must therefore be ‘correct.’ Thales, if he is the discoverer of the true “seasons of the year” (ὥρας τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ), and division of the calendar into 365 days by heliacal analysis, must have discovered a knowledge that is supremely κατάληπτικος, an ἄστρολογία that proved itself in eclipse predication, and a star-chart for marine navigation, the Ναυτικῆς ἄστρολογίας which is, according to others, the title of Thales’s one book. Thus the remark in Diogenes is explained, as Diogenes
explained it, by way of astronomy. So explained, Thales’s statement is as quickly discarded. So speaks prudence, and here it leads to thoughtlessness. For everyone knows what the solstices and equinoxes are. But to move only by way of this general prejudice would be to give up the search for the lost continent of the Thalean cosmotheology. Our scientific belief indeed convinces that we know what the solstices and equinoxes are. But this stance appears to be much in contrast with Thales himself who likely did not know, and came to know that which, knowing supremely, he had to admit rendered all his other knowing mute. We know so little about this Thales that it amounts to almost nothing. This perhaps means that only a Socrates can approach this Thales with a question.

In this subsection I will explore the idea that Heidegger, in his approach to Hölderlin’s poetico-philosophical horizons in Andenken, attempts to be such a Socrates.

In the time of March [Zur Märzenzeit],
When night and day are equal [Wenn gleich ist Nacht und Tag]
And over slow paths [Un über landsamen Stegen],
Heavy with golden dreams [von goldenen Träumen schwer],
Lulling breezes drift [Einwiegende Lüfte ziehen]. (GA 52, 56, 62, 104)

The time of March is the time when the hours of the day, having steadily increased from their low ebb in the winter solstice, become equal to the hours of the night until, after the equinox, days become longer than nights. This is so obvious that one might wonder why Heidegger bothers to mention it, and what abysses are here concealed. March is the time of transition (Übergang) between dark and light, winter and summer. But such transitional times though they are experienced mostly as passing-by (Vorübergehende) may also be, if only for rare moments, times of “down-going” (Untergangs) into new “dawning” (Aufgangs), and even “transitions (Hinübergang) to the other side” (auf die andere Seite).” (GA 52, 85) From here in the WS 1941/2—from §29 “Transition as Reconciliation and Equalization (Übergang als Versöhnung und Ausgleich)” to §33 “The Festival as the Evening-Out of a While for Destiny” (Das Fest als ausgleichende Weile für das Schicksal)—Heidegger gives his involved account of the festival sent by the holy as a fourfold crossing that emerges from the other side and permeates mortal existence.
I cannot not treat all of Part II, §29-41, or Parts III and IV (to §65). But I will focus on §30, “The ‘Night’: The Time-Space of Thinking on the Gods who Have-Been...,” which I read in the horizon of §34, on “The Hidden Truth of Hölderlin’s Hymnal Poetry,” that is, with a view to the chiasmus Hegel/Hölderlin as those who, in transitional times, stand on “the bridge” (der Brücke), and there call out for, and are themselves, the demigods.

In §30 on “The ‘Night’...” we hear concerning the Greek gods that have-been (gewesener Götter) that they are “not past gods” (nicht vergangenen Götter), and this we might ourselves discover if we dare to venture into the transitional times wherein all down-going becomes new dawning, all withdrawal new arrival, and all that seems farthest, for a time, draws very near and passes-on. Everything in Heidegger’s analysis will hinge on the relationship between Dasein’s endowed having-been and its being-historical futurity. These are concerns on which, predictably, the avatars of poetry and the concept, Hegel and Hölderlin, have something to say. On the one hand, living up to the promise of what has-been means remembering and refounding the highest. On the other, it means undergoing a more futural relation as preparation for an other beginning.

To understand the stakes of these gestures let us return the first published mention of the bridal festival, which occurs in the 1943 Andenken essay. No sooner than Heidegger suggests the bridal festival to be “the encounter of gods and mortals,” and thus both the ‘memory and Golgotha’ (Schädelstätte), so to speak, of his dialogue with Hölderlin, he also moves on to speak of its fruit, what issues from it. The definition of the festival is, in other words, already the disruption and decline that sustains the festival: “The bridal festival is the encounter of those human beings and gods from which there issue the birth of those who stand between men and gods and endure this “between.” They are the demigods, who must be signs [...]” (EHP, 126-7)  In contrast to this definition of the festival in terms of what it is not, in the WS 1941/2 over thirty pages, more than half the section devoted to the festival, have transpired before the demigods are mentioned.

Now, when they do appear, it is in the context of coming-to-terms-with (Verwindung) Hegel’s metaphysics. We have seen how the close relation of Hölderlin and Hegel in Heraclitus was broached in the WS 1934/5, elliptically but decisively, in terms of the definition of the bridal festival as a “unity of the counter-possibilities of the between.” (GA 39, I.§21c) These three words—Einheit, Gegenmöglicherkeiten, Zwischen—indicated
how the festival is. In the WS 1941/2, and again based on a reading of the tenth stanza of Der Rhein, Heidegger returns to the chiasmus of Hegel/Hölderlin—the philosopher of work and the poet of the holiday—and in the context of adapting Hölderlin’s saying “All is inner” (alles ist innig) to read “All is transition” (Alles ist Übergang).31

At this moment the ghost of Hegel appears. Since “transition (Übergang) is reconciliation (Versöhnung), and reconciliation is equalization (Ausgleich).” This is “near to Hegel’s metaphysics” and is its “fundamental proposition” which Nietzsche merely “repeats.” But in Hegel the “grounding-presentation” of transition as reconciliation is “still metaphysical,” but in Hölderlin’s calling of those who are no longer last humans, but not yet in the futural chorus—the demigods—the elemental-historical ποίησις of transition as reconciliation has become “no longer metaphysical.” (GA 52, 96-9) Instead, it is animated by the intertwining chiasmus as co-attuning, co-greeting, and co-sacrificing of those who are in “the movement”32 of crossing, and so attend the festival. At this juncture Heidegger accords a privilege to Hölderlin from whom Hegel is said to have acquired his thinking of transition as reconciliation, and in the context of their shared stay in Frankfurt. This suggestion, the validity of which I will not question here, is relevant to the festival theme in connection with two texts Hegel composed around at this time.

First the “Eleusis” poem, which is dedicated to Hölderlin, and in which, donning the mantle of a Greek poet of the night, Hegel pledges himself to the infinite self-sacrificial movement of Spirit and its “festive life” as the only transitional solution to the problem of that irreducible remainder that “no oath seals,” but which leaves the indestructible night of the mysteries intact. Although the pledge of oneself as a finite spirit to Absolute Spirit’s self-sacrificial course cannot forthwith bring about a new festival of the mysteries, since it sojourns by way of the cinders, it can at least hold open to the future the possibility of a more gradual absolution.33

31 See “Gestalt und Geist”: “Alles ist innig / Das scheidet / So birgt der Dichter / Verwegner! möchtest von Angesicht zu Angesicht / Die Seele sehn / Du gehest in Flammen unter.” In Richard Sieburth’s translation: “Everything is inward / This is the distinction / The poet thus conceals / Reckless! wanting to see the soul / Face to face / You go down in flames.” (HF, 223)
32 On the ancient memory of a “setting-into-motion” see “Das Wesen des Menschen (Das Gedächtnis im Ereignis),” discussed below in Ch. 4.2.4. While Hegel/Hölderlin are co-celebrants in Gedächtnis, only Hölderlin, according to Heidegger, is oriented by the festivals of the future.
In a second Hölderlin influenced text, “Two Fragments on Love” (Ibid., 115-23), the betrothal of the evil of positivity with the concealed promise of the negative is sealed/breached by Hegel in relation to the definition of primal separation (Urtheilung) as the irremediable natural positivity of the demigod against whose mirror only the unifying-unity of love can become the equal. While Nature, ever destined to a ruling subject in Hegel, forcefully deals out the pandemonium of demigods, love countervails as reuniting “subject and object, freedom and nature, the actual and the possible.”

For the “object of every religion,” ever beyond the contingencies of “Founding a Religion,” is love: “only in love is one at one with the object, it does not command and is not commanded. This love, made by the imagination into an entity, is the divinity.” (Ibid.) But what Hegel, in closing with Plato’s Phaedrus on the manic/mantic sacrifices of the lover also suggests is that no amount of “grief” and “suffering/passion,” as erring mortal love, suffices to depetrify the godhead in nature. And so sacrifice remains other than love, for while infinite grief maybe the doorway to absolute knowledge, it is and is not as a solus ipse that we step inside. The cleft between Hegel and Hölderlin with respect to the futurity or lack of futurity vested in the night of the ancient mystery festival widens in the argument of the WS 1941/2, and this contrasts with the cleft of Hölderlin and Nietzsche who at least both arise to their commission within the festival, even if an abyss continues to separate, for Heidegger, the way they pursue its goals. (GA 52, 78-9)

In §30, “The ‘Night’...,” Heidegger again suggests the cleft of Hegel and Hölderlin in the sentence: “Night is nothing negative...” (ist nicht negativen Wesens...). Night cannot be thought within the apparatuses of dialectical negativity as a conversion of the unconscious into consciousness and self-consciousness, for example, the thief in the night who is converted into the day of the παρουσία. Although the world’s night as the “time of godlessness” precedes “the holy” that returns at “the break of day,” although this night that precedes the day is itself the “sheltering (bergende) yet undecided profusion (unentschiedene Überfluß des Tages) of the day. Night is the mother of day” (EHP, 133); nevertheless, this does not imply, and here we find the trenchancy of Heidegger’s critique of the metaphysics of presence, a preference for the day. For as strong, if not stronger than day, is “‘holy night’ (heilige Nacht) which has its own vast clarity and peacefulness (Klarheit und Ruhige) as a silent preparation (stille Bereitung) for something coming
This clarity and peacefulness of night is what reveals the essence of the human being in Pindar’s thought of the ἄνθρωπος as “the dream of a shadow” (σκιᾶς ὄναρ). (GA 52, §38; Pythian 8, 135)

Heidegger’s sympathy for night is clear again in §27 where he cites the first stanza of the elegy “Bread and Wine.” Reading also the transition from the first to the second stanza of this elegy, it would seem that Heidegger finds in Hölderlin’s night the “Shining wondrous one there” (Glänzt die Erstauende dort), giving marvels and care (Gunst) to those for whom day is less “dear,” the errant and the dead. Yet in herself, Night is free, and shares company with the “freest spirit” (freiestem Geist):

[...] so that in the wavering moment [in der zudernden Weile]
Deep in the dark there shall one thing that endures
And oblivion [Vergessenheit] and holy drunkenness [das Heiligtrunkenen] she gives
And she grants the streaming word [das strömenden Wort], and, like the lovers, she
Sleepless gives the full cup, and daring life,
Holy remembrance too [Heilig Gedächtniß], keeping us wakeful at night. (PF, 319-21)

Many scenes from the antique and hesperian thinking and poeticizing of night would be relevant to compare here, many of them concerning the midnight sun of the bridal mysteries. 34 All this would be relevant to the German romantic background of

34 Each major Hesperian thinker and poet has their night: 1) Nietzsche, where night is the growing wasteland of the uncanny guest who seeks shelter in evening, and the fountain in Venice where Zarathustra play in the beauty of a midnight abyss; 2) Rilke, where Night is the great unpersuaded landscape, and the mother of space; 3) Trakl, where the coming of night is the ghostly blue into which a strange thing goes under into noctural wing-beats of the soul; 4) Hegel’s Phenomenology, which speaks of the night of spiritual perception as a plant-like consciousness ever haunted by betrayal (verraten, §703), or the “satisfied night” of corporeal reflection (§721); 5) Schelling, not the night in which all cows are black, but the night that weaves together all The Ages of the World; 6) The ancient Νύξ, not only in Homer and Hesiod, Parmenides and Plato, but among the Orpheics, where Νύξ is successor to Chaos/Aither, their first and greatest daughter, prior to the light-god, Φάνης, and passing the torch of revelation down along the pantheon. Most surpassing in comprehension of the bridal night are Novalis’s Hymns to the Night, from which I will select a few representative passages: “More heavenly than those glittering stars we hold the eternal eyes which the night hath opened within us”: I) “Consume my body with the ardour of my soul, that I, turned to finer air, may mingle more closely with thee, that the bridal night shall endure forever”; II) “Must the morning always return? Will the despotism of the earthly never cease? Unholy activity consumes the angel-visit of the night. Will the time never come when love’s hidden sacrifice shall burn forever? To the light a season is set; but everlasting and
Heidegger’s Hölderlin interpretation. Let us look to the night itself in the WS 1941/2. Most uncanny, given the earlier sovereignty of night, and thus our mortal inability to privilege the day, is that Heidegger’s nevertheless thinks night in that equinoctial καιρός wherein night in fact loses this sovereignty, and becomes weaker, and what prevails in this is the Augenblick of the day. At this point Heidegger’s thinking of the night would have to be accused either of falling back into the privilege of presence, or of remaining within the horizons of the poet’s vocation in 1801, which is to sing not only the “mighty dawn” that arises in unfettered abyss, but to sing everyday “As When on a Holiday...” It is both, I argue, that concern Heidegger’s thinking of the night. For the basic question of the Heideggerian-Hölderlinian daimonic ethics is not only whether human beings will celebrate the festival everyday, but whether they will discover the mighty dawn at all. This is not a given. For as the Presocratic cosmotheogony is the most Hesperian treasure in the world for Heidegger, but undiscovered, so all suffering mortals of the present and future day, without the highest, will pass-by the night and its gifts which are unknown.

At this moment we can gain an insight from Heidegger’s daimonic ethics which insists that the holiday ἄπειρον and its truth of fourfold finitude is something that can help struggling mortals, and even is the only thing and the last resort that might turn a crazy world around. For if the ἀλήθεια of the wedding festival is the event of tragic beying, not a sentimental marriage among mortals, but a tragically broken alliance of mortals and gods that sends an excessive thinking into the Seynsgeschichte, then it would stand to reason that human beings are most capable of this event not during the day, but at night, not in the dawn of the vernal equinox, but at the midnight of the summer solstice. For in the night of the summer solstice it is the darkness that reclaims the upperhand, in a most concealed way, during the shortest night of the year. The day of the summer solstice is, boundless is the dominion of the night ...” ; III) “Never was such another dream, then first and ever since I hold fast an eternal, unchangeable faith in the heaven of the night, and its sun, the beloved.”; IV) “The crystal wave, which imperceptible to the ordinary sense, springs in the dark bosom of the hills against whose foot breaks the flood of the world, he who has tasted it ... verily, he turns not again to the tumult of the world, into the land where dwells the light in ceaseless unrest”: V) “In the crystal grottoes revelled a wanton folk. Rivers, trees, flowers, and beasts had human wits. Sweeter tasted the wine, poured out by youth itself; a god was in the grape-clusters; a loving, mothering goddess grew up in the full golden sheaves; love’s sacred carousel was a sweet worship of the fairest of the goddesses. Life revelled through the centuries like one spring-time, an ever-variegated festival of the children of heaven and the dwellers of the earth... The pleasure-garden of the young race withered away...” (Hymns to the Night, trans. 1992)
for all its strength, this decline towards night, and its night is accordingly the shortest route into the longest midnight. This is what makes the night of the summer solstice the most possibilizing καιρός or widest aperture for the deepest Augenblick that can be known by a mortal. Now these reflections seem strange. They are esoteric. They concern a transitional topology of time, a crossing of elemental-historical seasons, opening the gateway for the ἀ-λήθεια of Being as what passes-on from the other side into this one.

What relevance could any of this have in destitute times? For clearly, everything in these Zusammenhängen goes down first in times of need and strife. And who then cares for Hölderlin’s leibliches Leben, Pindar’s καὶ μείλιχος αἰών (GA 52, 116), when the immediate concern is survival. Mildness, tenderness, χάρις, these are the first things to be trampled. How in the times of the most horrifically violent patriotism could Heidegger have looked to Hölderlin to teach, and to the soldiers at the Front to hear the halcyon, and how could he have felt his role was still that of a hidden Socrates in all this terror?

There is no clear ethical answer to the failures of the ethical in Heidegger. But when it comes to his articulation of a daimonic ethics of festivity we should not for that reason, think he has nothing important to say. Heidegger wants Germany and Hesperia to hear Der Rhein, not only the stanza that names love and reconciliation at evening, but the following stanza which indicates how the festival occurs in its fullness only at night:

For some, however, all this
Quickly passes, others
Have a longer hold
The eternal gods are full
Of life [Leben] at all times, but until death [Tod]
A mortal too can in his,
mind [Gedächtniß] hold onto what is best, [das Beste behalten,]
And then is supremely favored [Und dann er das Höchste]
To each his measure [Nur hat ein jeder Maas]
For hard to bear [Denn schwer ist zu tragen]
Is misfortune [Unglück], but heavier is fortune [schwerer das Glük]
Socrates, who knows the noon of life, and loves most what is most alive, keeps the best in mind unto death, and measured unto the highest, he attempts to bear the weightier fortune of midday through the evening and midnight, and onto the break of day. This is Socrates at the end of the Symposium, if not also at the beginning of the Politeia when he comes back from the festival of Athena at Bendis to utter his word concerning justice.

But if Heidegger still wants to be, stupidly he will admit, the German Socrates, it is Hölderlin’s Empedocles to whom he looks as deepest guide, and here Heidegger’s thinking becomes more tenderly democratic than we surmise. In VIII.2, Diogenes re-tells the story of how Empedocles came to favor democracy, beginning his political career:

 [...] having been invited to dine with one of the magistrates, when the dinner had gone on some time and no wine was put on the table, though the other guests kept quiet, he, becoming indignant, ordered wine to be brought. Then the host confessed that he was waiting for the servant of the senate to appear. When he came he was made master of the revels, clearly by the arrangement of the host, whose design of making himself tyrant was but thinly veiled, for he ordered the guests either to drink wine or have it poured over their heads. For the time being Empedocles was reduced to silence; the next day he impeached both of them, the host and the master of the revels, and secured their condemnation and execution. This, then, was the beginning of his political career. (trans. 1958, 379)

Empedocles begins a campaign to “persuade the Agrigentines to put an end to their factions and cultivate equality in politics (ἰσότητα δὲ πολιτικήν ἀσκεῖν)” at the feast of tyranny. While the other citizens go off to rest after the feast Empedocles “stayed in the place where he had reclined for the meal.” He disappears into the middle of the feast, and is called by a voice in the middle of the night. This is the scene of the divine election of Empedocles to his political career, by day, a transformation of silence into impeachment,
and with this, a putting to death of the false magistrate host (ἄρχοντες) and false senator as master of the feast (συμποσίαρχος), and indeed, an application of the death penalty. On the basis of this story Hölderlin develops a rich democratic formalism grounded in an ethico-political principle of anarchic polyarchy as a critique of monarchism.

In a 1798 Christmas Eve letter to his friend, Isaak von Sinclair, he writes:

These past few days I’ve been reading your Diogenes Laertius. And I’ve experienced something I’ve come across before, which is that the transient and changeful nature of human thoughts and systems [das Vorübergehende und Abwechselnde der menschlichen Gedanken] has struck me as almost more tragic than the destinies [die Schicksale] which ordinarily we regard as the only real ones; and I think this is natural, for if a human being is dependent on outside influence even in his most proper and freest activity, in independent thought, and if even here he is always affected by circumstances and by the climate, as is incontrovertibly the case, then where is his dominion [Herrschaft]? But then it is a good thing, and even the first condition of all life and all forms of organization, that no force is monarchic in heaven and earth. Absolute monarchy will always cancel itself out, because it has no object; in the strict sense it has never even existed. Everything is interconnected, and suffers as soon as it is active, including the purest thought a human being can have [der reinste Gedanke des Menschen]. (EL, 117, trans. mod.)

Earlier in VIII.1, after analogizing the phases of life to the progress of the seasons, Diogenes had cited the *Timaeus* as attributing to Pythagoras the view that “Friends have all things in common” (κοινὰ τὰ φιλῶν εἶναι), that “Friendship is equality” (καὶ φιλίαν ἴσότητα). Then, in defining justice in terms of the force of the oath (Ὅρκιόν τ᾽ εἶναι τὸ δίκαιον), justice being traceable to Zeus as the god of oaths, Diogenes gives Pythagoras’s doctrine of cosmo-political harmony: “Virtue (ἀρετήν) is harmony, and so are health (ὑγίειαν) and all good (τὸ ἄγαθὸν) and the god itself (τὸν θεόν); this is why they say that the whole (τὰ ὅλα) is constructed (συνεστάναι) according to harmony (ὁῷ καὶ καθ’ ἀρμονίαν), and since the love of friends is just concord and equality (φιλίαν τ᾽ εἶναι ἑναρμόνιον ἴσότητα).” In the above letter to Sinclair, Hölderlin can be seen to adapt Pythagoras’s cosmo-political ἴσονομία into a yet more hesperian thinking on the smallness, transience, suffering, and tragedy not only of all human mastery, but of all
thinking action in the face of the overpowering (gewaltige, Bία) that is nature (Φύσις). This determination of the human being by elemental Being is almost “more tragic,” the poet uncannily yet sincerely avers, than the fatalities and tyrannies of human society, if only because it is all the more pervasively impossible to repeal. And the letter thus speaks of two tragic destines, each more and less tragic than the other: the destinies of isonomial politics and of polyarchic cosmotheophany, both as relations of Φιλία-Νείκος to the demigod, and both as double crossed hierogamies (Zeus/Hera, Aidoneus\Nestis). There is much in this that could be explored with respect to the festival as being-historical site of the elemental, and as opening in this ἄπειρον, of a possibility of healing and of justice.\footnote{A re-reading of Hölderlin’s Der Tod des Empedokles in the context of Heidegger’s Presocratic interpretations from 1941-6 is here mandated, but must be postponed. Such a reading would have to return to Gadamer’s understanding of the festival as historical temporality and as a pure time phenomenon, especially in “On Empty and Ful-Filled Time” which most opens up the thought of Being’s epochality with respect to the meaning of justice among the Presocratics.}
4.2.4 The Festival of the Last God as Other Beginning of a Chorus to Come

In Ch. 4.1 I accounted for the *Anklang* of the holiday, the counter-reference of the holiday to the workday, and the analysis of the festival as bridal festival and round dance. Going on to think the wedding festival as “the first beginning,” and the round dance as “the other beginning,” Ch. 4.2 examined how festivity as grounding attunement challenges and completes the thinking of attunement in general, what the being-historical role of the holiday might be in Hölderlin’s first hymn “As When on a Holiday...,” and how all these analyses concern the Bacchic night of the bridal mysteries underlying “Andenken.”

Now, in closing this chapter, I must address a topic that has been framing my analysis from the outset: the significance of festival for the 1936/7 manuscript *Contributions to Philosophy: From Ereignis*. In Ch. 1, I noted that a similarity of this dissertation to Alfred Knödler’s is its adaptation with respect to the festival leitmotif of the six-fold fugal structure (*Gefüge*) of the *Contributions*: onset (*Anklang*), playing-forth (*Zuspiel*), leap (*Sprung*), grounding (*Gründung*), the ones to come (*Zukünftigen*), and the last god (*Letzte Gott*). Throughout I then provisionally explored and intimated the relevance of my various analyses to the 1936/7 *Contributions*, and the key moments can now be reviewed: 1) Ch. 2.1.2 on παρουσία and das *Letzte*; 2) Ch. 2.2.2 on beyng-towards-death in the *Contributions*; 3) Ch. 3.2.2 on the excess of the suffering demigods with respect to their bridal-festal origin; 4) Ch. 3.3.3 on the second choral ode of the *Antigone* as transforming the fugal structure of the *Contributions*; 5) Ch. 4.1.1-3 and 4.2.1-3 which both unfold the phases of *Anklang, Zuspiel, Sprung*—1, 2, 3—in deepening spirals.

I will now focus on the final two jointures beyond grounding (*Gründung*), “The Ones to Come” and “The Last God.” In these jointures, which are perhaps the most somber-reserved yet festive-jubilant pieces of writing in the *Gesamtausgabe*, we again find the *turba* and labyrinth wherein the Hölderlinian wedding festival and its demigod chorus is inducted in the position of leading light. These final two jointures name the vocation/commission of the human being, which is to be one of those who are futural in gathering and distributing the origin, i.e. speaking to the origin in all that departs from it, and so emerging into the celebration of a divine-mortal finality that, despite all departure
and evanescence, remains and retains in force the vestal customs. Heidegger’s final two jointures of the Contributions are so bewildering, I argue in this section, in that they involve not only the matrix of an archeology, sigetic-saying born through the vestal customs of the earth, but the matrix of eschatology, an ἐσχατο-λόγος that suffers the abyssal formation of signs (Zeichen) in fulgurating “rays of light,” and in a parched quest to the river of life, turns the search for the unconditioned around into all such conditions and conditionality as learns the discrimination of a more heavenly fire. Gathering the matrices of archeology and eschatology together into the grounding of a people and the passing of its god, these two jointures name the essence of the human being as a formerly unbound (demigodly) now clasped (godly) participant in that festival chorus that endures all such intimate ultimacy as re-marks the unity of every counter-possibility into which gods depart (metaphysics). Divine departure thus sustains the goodness as ἵστορείν in Being that lets mortals’ infidelity be a mediation of endless unity as endless difference.

I will now pull back from these indications to give a more phased account of the finite festivities of beyng in the Contributions, and by following closely its discourse on attunement. The Contributions, like the holiday Anklang, begin in wonder. But as a text of the crossing en-thinking of an “other beginning,” wonder now proves insufficient, or rather, it shows that its counter-turning is the terror, shock, horror, foreboding, or startled dismay (Erschrecken) of a Dasein that endures the withdrawal of Being which casts Dasein into the midst of beings’ transitional metamorphoses. Beyond wonder or terror, however, Dasein retains its attuned Existenz in awe or diffidence (Scheu) as outset of an other attuning, more futural than wonder, more ancient than terror, and necessary to the onset of mourning, joy, and the festive. The Dasein of the Contributions can thus be argued to shift back and forth between the attunements of disorientation and belonging, emergency and emergence, anxiety and festivity, derangement and deep awe, shyness and affability, mourning and joy, but only insofar as “reservedness” and “offering,” “sacrifice” and “celebration” tunes the turning midpoint of Dasein to Ereignis.

We can begin to clarify these relations by way of the 1943 “Postscript to »What is Metaphysics?«” wherein the silent summons and gift of Being first opens the “wonder of all wonders: that beings are.” (PM, 231-9) But alongside wonder the “lucid courage” of saying Yes also opens a region “close by essential anxiety” where “the horror of the
abyss dwells [as] awe. Awe clears and cherishes that locality of the human essence within which humans remain at home in that which endures.” (Ibid.)

In the Contributions, awe also appears similarly at both the end and beginning of a sequence of inter-attuning. (GA 65, 11-22; CP, §5) Again distinguished from wonder as the grounding attunement of the first beginning, “dismayed shock” (Erschrecken) and “timid awe” (Scheu) are thought as, respectively, the “guiding” and “grounding” attunements of the “other beginning.”

Necessary to the onset of awe within dismay, however, Heidegger recommends “reservedness” (Verhaltenheit), which functions in much the same way as “mindfulness” (Besinnung) does in the 1943 Andenken essay, namely, as an “attuning midpoint of terror and deep awe.” Reservedness (or restraint, Verhaltenheit) is the “pre-attuning” between the appeal (Anklang) of the other beginning as startled dismay (Erschrecken) in the face of the “hesitating refusal” (Verweigerung) of Being, and the prescience (Ahnung) and exaltation of Dasein’s more fundamental “belongingness” (Zugehörigkeit) to Being.

Playing-forth (Zuspiel) within the trembling/jubilating χωρισμός between the refusal of Being and belonging to the withdrawal as new arrival, terror in the refusal and Dasein’s suspension in the abyssal metamorphoses, then gives way to “the delight (die Lust) that reciprocally surpasses the beginning in questioning.” (GA 65, 169; CP, §81)

Mutually surpassing in plays or passes (Zuspielen) of essential poetry and thinking Dasein learns courage for a leap (Sprung) into the fissuring playspace that then “releases belongingness to Being into the full essential occurrence of Being as Ereignis.” (GA 65, 227; CP, §115) The leap is what opens up, beyond the Zuspiel, the Abyss as Ground,

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36 By the end of the “Postscript...” such awe/dread in saying Yes to beings, inclusiveness even of the wayward paths of nonbeing, is further thought as the “freedom of sacrifice” that expressly offers itself in the gift of “thanks,” expending Dasein in the grounding of Being. Originary thanks (ursprüngliche Daniken), as the 1943 edition reads, is thus the same as “originary thinking” (anfängliche Denken), as the fifth edition reads. These discussions of the originary thankfulness of thinking prefigure not only “Die Fuge der Huld. Der Dank” (GA 75, 301-303), but also the thinking of Being as the Es gibt in “Time and Being.” See also above, Ch. 4.2.2.

37 Richard Rojcewicz and Daniella Vallega-Neu opt for “diffidence” for “die Scheu.” This is supported by the sense of scheu as timidity, shyness, or bashfulness, and by the nearness of Scheu to Verhaltenheit as dispositions of the onset and grounding of another beginning. I have kept Parvis’s and Emad’s “awe” or “deep awe,” however, since diffidence blunts the intense openness of Scheu in its function of salving Erschrecken and paralleling Erstaunen for an other beginning.
Being as daimonic, 38 and thus as a blessedness of unblessedness wherein Dasein is restored to the “jubilation of belongingness-to-Being,” wherein the passing-plays of the Da-grounders can be more fully received and re-gifted. It is this *Jubel der Seinzugehörigkeit* which shelters “the ground of the necessity of philosophy” by transforming Dasein’s exposure into “highest nobility of offering” (GA 65, 99; CP, §45) Thus is again the “in-between” into which Daseins play-forth as simultaneities in Being who together care and correspond with the “Being of beings as a whole.”

The “decision of sacrifice” here unfolds as the originary project (*ursprüngliche Entwurf*), originary because it projects no-thing and no-one, but offers only itself as free decision and authentic resoluteness to a “founding opening of the temporal field of the truth of Being.” (CPI, 4; GA 65, 5) In sacrifice Dasein indeed discovers itself to be the unifying-differentiating site of a fourfold settlement of earth, world, gods, and mortals, occurring always in and as the eightfold event-structure of enownment, decision, countering, setting-free, withdrawal, simplicity, uniqueness, and aloneness. (CPI, 330-1; GA 65, 470-2) But in what sense does “the leap” jointure think “the other beginning [in which] all beings are sacrificed to Being, from which beings as such first receive their truth”? (CPI, 163; GA 65, 230) For clearly, if beings are being sacrificed, there is danger of the worst. 39 Which are the beings to be sacrificed? Who decides the limits of this sacrifice? Otherwise reserved on the what-question, the *Contribution’s* answer to the who is manifestly elitist: “Only a few come to the leap, and these on various paths. They are always those who ground Da-sein in creating-sacrificing.” (CPI, 167; GA 65, 236) Does this mean that only “the futural ones” can define the nature and extent of that sacrifice which Being claims of Dasein? If we read the language of sacrifice in the *Contributions* as such a lawless investiture of sacrificial power in the “few and rare,” then this text

38 On Being as δαιμόνιον see again the SS 1928 (MFL, 210-11; Ch. 2.2.3): “The problem of transcendence must be drawn back into the inquiry about temporality and freedom, and only from there can it be shown to what extent the understanding of being qua superior power, qua holiness, belongs to transcendence itself as essentially ontologically different. The point is not to prove the divine ontically, in its “existence,” but to clarify the origin of this understanding-of-being by means of the transcendence of Dasein, i.e. to clarify how this idea of being belongs to the understanding-of-being as such. [...] (Still remaining for consideration is being and δαιμόνιον, the understanding of being and δαιμόνιον. Being qua ground! Being and nothingness—*Angst*.”

39 See CPI, *Preview* (37): “Whoever sacrifices himself to this preparation stands in the transition (*im Übergang*) and has grasped far ahead and thus ought not to expect any understanding—as immediately urgent as it might be—from those of today. Rather he ought to expect *resistance.*”
would certainly verge on the unspeakable nonessence of that sacrifice which Nazi Germany enacted so horrifically, and with such little reserve, to the point of forfeiting every possibility of calling such brute annihilations by the name of sacrifice. The 1938/9 Mindfulness is, however, unequivocal in its presentation of a non-violent, gift- and festival-centered account of sacrifice, first, in the prefatory poems which speak of the “sacrifice of gifting the highest distress from out of the jubilation of preserving the non-coercive transmission (des gewaltlosen Hinübertragens) into the domain of the nearness and remoteness of god.” (MI, 8) The point is reiterated in the section “Leaping Ahead Unto the Uniqueness of Be-ing”:

The essence of “sacrifice”—a word all too easily mis-interpretable in the context of the heretofore—consists in reticently inabiding [schweigenden Inständigkeit] in an awaiting that is bequeathed for the truth of Being, the truth which as such has the struggle between countering and strife [Entgegnung und Streit] as its ownmost. (MI, 29)

Does Heidegger’s “essential sacrifice” then differentiate itself from all models of sacrifice that highlight determinate negation as a violent sacrificial power over beings? If so, then Heidegger appears to perform this principle of selection without disavowing for essential sacrifice its ineliminable relation to struggle, strife, πόλεμος, since these are the agonal forces that properly inhere in Dasein’s courageous self-sacrificial suspension from Ereignis. In defining essential sacrifice as the self-surrender of Dasein to its own incalculable self-exposure in the Open of truth, Heidegger must be understood as renouncing all violence in this sacrifice. For “essential sacrifice” is only the exposure of Dasein to Being (i.e. Gelassenheit). What calls itself sacrifice, but performs Dasein’s claims are, in other words, hardly the effigies of sacrifice. “Essential sacrifice,” in contrast, is self-exiled into the Abyss of Being as a granting in refusal (Verweigerung).40

We can turn again to the 1943 “Postscript to »What is Called Metaphysics?«”, which clarifies the meaning of “essential sacrifice” in terms of expenditure and freedom, thanks and dignity, truth and the event, the unscathed and the incalculable, and most of all as the

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40 As Being and Time argues that Dasein may sacrifice itself for an Other, but never take on the Other’s death, so Contributions and Mindfulness say that the sacrifice ‘of’ Others is not sacrifice at all but goes against sacrifice’s non-coercive essence as inhering only in Dasein’s Eigentum.
claim (*Anspruch*) of Being upon Dasein. And here we find another passage at first difficult to reconcile with a weak or non-violent reading: “Sacrifice is necessary,” we read, in order that “the truth of Being be preserved, whatever may happen to human beings and to all beings (*was immer auch dem Menschen und allem Seienden zufallen möge*).” (PM, 236-7) This passage show that even in 1943 Heidegger does not hesitate to underline the incalculability of sacrifice as having possibly destructive consequences. Abstractly, and abstraction is the worst danger here, this states only what is obvious about the logic of sacrifice: that not its calculated, but its incalculable dimension is what counts.

The incalculable sacrifice that Heidegger hopes Dasein will perform is, however, *only* the sacrifice that has “taken upon itself the neighbourhood of the indestructible.” Instead of simply condemning this rhetoric, we must look to its implications in other writings. Not only the desolation by the mountain, but the mountain ranges themselves, the festivals as bridal festivals are what occurs as the realm beyond destructibility. For wherever essential sacrifice can neither complete itself nor exhaust itself, but can only offer itself endlessly, as sacrifice, there, an indestructible realm appears (*φαίνεσθαι*).

Two remarks on “the indestructible” clarify these ideas. First, in the SS 1942 lectures:

> We stand at the beginning of historicality proper, that is, of action in the realm of the essential, only when we are able to wait for what is to be destined of one’s own. Yet being able to wait [...] is a standing that has already leapt ahead, a standing within what is indestructible [Unzerstörbaren], to whose neighborhood desolation belongs like a valley to a mountain. Yet could such a thing ever happen without, through the pain of sacrifice, the historical humanity of this commencement first becoming ripe for whatever is of the commencement as it own. (GA 53, 54-55)

That the indestructible given in “the pain of sacrifice” refers directly to the bridal festival is an implication we find stated in the WS 1941/2 *Andenken*:

> If the holiday, in its anticipatory gathering [erwartende Sammlung] is, perhaps, even the primal appearing of an indestructible [Erglänzen einer unzerstörbaren] far beyond the long-suffering and the patience, then the essence of the holiday would consist in being but the pre-day of the festival itself [der Vortag des Festes zu sein]. (GA 52, 73) (See GA 55, 193)
Beyond the resonating, playing-forth, leap, and grounding jointures, all of which I have only cursively and inadequately sketched, the penultimate and ultimate jointures of the “original” manuscript of the *Contributions*—“The Futural Ones” and “The Last God”—go further in working out ungroundable beyond of the *Anklang, Zuspiel, Sprung*, and *Gründung* jointures in terms of a stronger weakness in the midpoint of reservedness, “particularly in mourning and joy,” “love and death,” which are ever in proximity to “the most terrifying rejoicing has to be the dying of a god.” (CPI, 163) On the theme of festival in the *Beiträge*, I quote §252, “Da-sein and the Ones to Come Who Belong to the Last God,” with its claim: “Reservedness and reticence in silence will be the innermost feast of the last god [die innigste Feier des letzten Gottes].” (CPI, 280; GA 65, 399)

This god will set up the simplest but utmost opposition over its people as the paths [die Bahnen] on which this people wanders beyond itself, in order to find once again what is ownmost and to exhaust the moment of its history [Augenblick seiner Geschichte].

World and earth, in their strife, will raise love and death into their highest level and will integrate them into fidelity [Treue] to the god and into a capacity to endure the confusion [Wirrnis], within a manifold mastery [vielfachen Bewältigung] of the truth of beings.

_The ones who are to come and belong to the last god_ will enstrife enowning in the strifing of this strife, and in the widest retrospect will remind themselves of the greatest thing created: the enfilled onceness and uniqueness of being. Next to it the massive [das Massenhafte] will release all rankings of its ravings and will carry away [abschwemmen] all that is insecure and half-way, all that consoles itself merely with the heretofore. Will then the time of gods be _up_ and the relapse into the mere living of beings who are world-poor begin, for whom earth remains only something to be exploited?

RestRAINT and reticence in silence [Verhaltenheit und Verschwiegenheit] will be the most intimate celebration of the last god and will attain for themselves the proper mode of

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41 For a critique of the editorial decisions in the German edition of the *Beiträge*, which opts to include the somewhat misplaced section “Being” after “The Last God,” see Babette Babich’s “Heidegger’s *Beiträge* as Will to Power.” (*Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, 2006, 243-64)

42 For an account of the scholarship on the last god see Richard Polt’s “Straits of Appropriation.” (*The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy*, 2006, 203-13) I was surprised not find careful exploration of _die innigste Feier des letzten Gottes_ in the secondary literature. My reading of the last god was therefore conducted in relative isolation, but I look forward to searching further for this leitmotif in works by Jacques Derrida, Cristina Ionescu, Gail Stenstad, Roberto Esposito, Paola-Ludovica Corlando, Holger Helting, Alfred Knödler, etc.
confidence [eigene Weise des Zutrauten] in the simplicity of things and the proper stream of the intimacy of the captivating transport in their works. Furthermore, the sheltering of truth will leave concealed what is most concealed [Verborgenste] and will thus lend it a unique presence [die einzige Gegenwart leihen]. (GA 65, 399; CPI/II, 280/316)

Here the “intimate celebration of the last god” is broached in the context of a meditation on Hölderlin’s motif of a festively enjoined fidelity (die Treue, Latin fides) or confidence (Zutrauten). This is the counter-effectuation of that divine infidelity wherein is preserved, as Hölderlin states in the “Remarks on the Oedipus,” the tragic condition in which human beings forget themselves and the god, as the god turns away. The moment of fidelity, in contrast, bears love and death, the beloved and the dead, together through a guiding world, and sheltering earth, thus enduring the labyrinth of intimacy as ultimacy, and contributing itself to the playing field of Being’s singularity as Dasein’s uniqueness.

Far from being idyllic and simply a gift, however, the singularity of these contributions are enowned in frightfulness (Entsetzlichkeit, Schrecklichkeit), for placed alongside their gift, the massive or gigantic that characterize the constellations of the present epoch (Gestell, as yet unnamed) release tidal surges of removal (abschwemmen) wherein the unprepared, determined by the heretofore and its ordering principles, are engulfed. Festive fidelity tuned by reservedness and confidence/courage (nearby, der Mut) does not bestow upon the futural ones special indemnity. But while they cannot hope to reverse forthwith the course of the world and its time, they can at least cultivate the more ethical horizonality of mourning and joy, sacrifice and celebration, greeting hospitality and granting farewell, attunements that increase capacity for enjoining the possibilities and necessities that are sent into the refusal of Being and the god’s flight.

Inextricable from thinking the last god as an intrusively solitary rite of passage is here the gifting celebration or round dance wherein mutually supportive Dasein(s), “shifting through all relations of remoteness and nearness,” reservedly steady themselves “by the deepest awe for the most singular space of resonance.” (GA 65, 400; CPI, 281) This is what, to the best of my knowledge, has yet to be established: that the phrase “die innigste Feier des letzten Gottes” passes-by in an Open time-play-space where restraint and festivity, the most immolated solitude and the most shared festivities, are co-attuned by a mirroring-back that suffers the presencing-absencing of all the gods and demigods, and
thus learns to celebrate the inner historicity of the divine-mortal-chthonic-ouranian crossing that has-been and may-yet-be in the fissuring encounter as passing *Augenblick-stätte* and historical-epochal configuration. For within this being-historical arena the last god passes-by not only mortals but the gods, not only earth but the heavens, not only beings but Being itself. It transits silently yet tunefully ever in accordance with that shy yet awed solicitude wherein Dasein endures or is exiled from the reciprocal intactness and mutual bearance of the fourfold as courting and countering, reliability or infidelity.43

Reviewing the argument so far, I conclude that while a more passively theoric wonder or distressed terror, leading through jubilating playing-forth and the leap into grounding and its courageous awe, are all weakly sufficient to bring about the openness of the *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* in the texts of 1934-8, by 1939-43 a fourfold *riposte* of greeting, bearing, granting, and thanking, not absent from the *Contributions*, is more fully articulated.

It is not, however, as though Heidegger has simply abandoned the six-fold structure of the *Contributions* with various attunements mediating between the jointures of resonating, playing-forth, leap, grounding, and so on.44 But in thinking the turbulent unrest of the fissuring (*Erklüftung*) encounter, and in defining festivity, and its greeting of the holy festival, as *the* fundamental “attunement of attunements,” “more originary than any other attunement otherwise known to us,” the 1941-3 texts do appear to have somewhat contradicted the claim that “every naming of the grounding-attunement with a single word rests on a false notion.” (GA 65, 21-2; CPI, §6) More accurately this is not a contradiction, but the apex of that attuned-attuning movement wherein the “grounding-

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43 On the role of Hölderlin in the last two jointures see CPII, §249, “The Basic Disposition of the Futural Ones”: “The unison of the guiding dispositions is fully attuned only through the basic disposition. In it are the future ones, and as so attuned they are determined [be-stimmmt] by the last god. (On disposition, see what is essential in the lecture courses on Hölderlin.)” In all three Hölderlin courses it is *das Festliche* that names what is most attuning of attunement, incepting and maturing (*Zeitigung*) the resonant reversals of the πάθει throughout their topology. A lengthy discourse on Hölderlin’s theoretical writings in relation the *Contributions* could here be unfolded.

44 See Daniella Vallega-Neu’s “Heidegger’s Poietic Meditations in *Das Ereignis* (GA 71)” (2010, 183-95), and Richard Rocjewicz’s just released translation (*The Event*, trans. Dec. 31st, 2012) on how the jointures of the *Contributions* are modified as the being-historical works unfold, no longer positing staged transitions from resonance, playing-forth, to leap jointures, all as preludes of grounding, but tending to see all the jointures in the “self-resonating realm” of *Ereignis*.
The grounding festivity that bears their nuanced inter-attuning precisely “confirms [the] richness and strangeness” of each attunement considered individually.

In the last and most challenging jointure of the original manuscript of the _Contributions_ (§253-56), “The Last God,” Heidegger thinks the “deepest beginning, which reaches out the furthest and catches up with itself with the greatest of difficulty.” (GA 65, 405-417; CPI, §253-6) This is not only the first beginning of early Greek philosophy, a thinking of “φύσις—ἄληθεία—ἔν—πᾶν—λόγος—νοῦς—πόλεμος—μή ὁν—δίκε—άδικια,” as the “Preview” indicates, and as the emphasis, throughout the _Contributions_, on the first beginning as only the first beginning of metaphysics suggests, but it is also and more fundamentally, as later writings will argue, the first beginning of the Dasein/Sein reciprocity and bond. The “deepest beginning” of the final two jointures is earlier and later than metaphysics: it is the temporal-historical egress of the Da- of Dasein, i.e. the bridal festival in the sense of “das Ereignis, der Anfang.” (GA 52, 70)

But why, if this is the case, does the language of festivity and celebration, once mentioned in relation to the last god, not appear in the jointure entitled “The Last God”? The presencing-absencing of all the gods in “stillness of the passing” would appear to be “the estranging itself,” accessible as the “great individuation in Dasein, of the aloneness of the sacrifice, of the uniqueness of choosing the shortest and steepest path.” (CPI, §255) But the phrase itself—_die innigste Feier des letzten Gottes_—says considerably more than this. It ventures out beyond the ἀρχή-topology of the beginning into the most estranging and individuating ἔσχατο-topology that there could be, and in doing this it ventures the thought that this uttermost isolation which is the passing chorus of the last god is the innermost festival, i.e. the communitive or common (ξυνόν, κοινόν).

Heidegger writes: “the last god is not the event itself; rather, it needs the event as that to which the ones who found the _there_ can belong.” But in needing Ereignis, the last god needs the festival’s round dance as that to which the futural themselves can belong, and so as, through the round dance, to respond to all the brides and bridal festivals of history. What makes attuned-attuning accessible to the whole realm of the deep beginning from ἀρχή to ἔσχατον possible for the futural ones is readable in a hymnal fragment that Heidegger cites again in the WS 1937/8, and which “constitutes a—if not _the_—essential
determination of the entire domain of the later hymns.” (BQ, 152; GA 45, 176) We read this fragment already at a key moment in Ch. 3.2, but let us hear it again, in attunement:

For over the Earth wander
tremendous powers [Gewaltige Mächte]
And their destiny touches the one
Who suffers it and looks upon it [leidet und zusieht],
And it also seizes [ergriift] the hearts of the peoples.

Then all he must fasten  [Denn alles fassen muß],
A demigod or
A human being, in suffering [dem Leiden nach],
Insofar as he hears [höret], alone, or is himself
Transformed [Verwandelt], intimating from afar the steeds of the sovereign,
[fernahnen die Rosse des Herrn].  [Also cited at GA 39, 180]

Renouncing a full interpretation, we will provide a directive to the context. Hölderlin says either a demigod or a man—in suffering—must fasten everything. And this suffering is twofold: hearing, looking, perception [das Hören, Zusehen, das Vernehmen], and letting oneself be transformed [und das Sichverwandelnlassen], whereby is opened up the far divining steeds of the lord, the arrival of the god [Ankunft des Gottes].

(BQ, 152, trans. mod.; GA 45, 176-7)

This hymnal fragment which, according to the Hellingrathian capitulation that Heidegger cites arises “Out of the Range of Motives of the Titans” names in the 1936 “Hölderlin and Essence of Poetry” “the time that tears,” “torrential time” (“reißende Zeit,” Der Archipelagos). (EHP, 57; GA 4, 39) But what tears not only distributes what it sunders, in distributing, it levels or equalizes the originary-ekstatic unity of Temporalität into an “abiding” (Bleibendes) that settles for a time all the relations of present (Gegenwart), past (Vergangenheit), and future (Zukunft). Settling down into an illusory steadfastness the tearing rapacity of on-rushing time, Dasein as osiological still carries (trägt) in itself the ekstatic unity of Temporalität within which it is as the “one conversation” (eine Gespräch) that, since the beginning of time, we are. “One conversation we have been
since the time when there »is time«,” i.e. since “the moment (Augenblick) in which time itself opens up its dimensions (Erstreckungen sich öffnet).” (EHP, 57)

What is most extraordinary in this reading of Hölderlin’s reißende Zeit is the exilic demigod’s paraousiological capacity to abide in the tearing of time, and thus “to grasp everything” in the unified passing as being-torn-asunder, in galactic terms, becoming the center of time that endures the Wirbel which grants all sendings of ἀλήθεια. Because at one time, demigods sprung-forth from the origin, for this reason, mortals are able to clasp-back into Being, into the source. And only because mortals are this παρά-οὐσία of ekstatic time are they able to settle down in time, and occasionally to know Time itself.

Thus everything heavenly passes quickly [schnellvergänglich]. Yet not in vain.
And ever knowing the measure [Maases], with protective hand [schonender Hand],
A god touches the dwellings of humans,
Just for a moment [einen Augenblick nur]
And they know it not, yet long
They ponder it, and ask who it was [wer es gewesen].
But when a time has passed, they know it [aber eine Zeit vorbei ist, kennen sie es].

The passing character [Vergänglichkeit] of that which is eternal is not in vain. Rather, passing by [Vorbeigehen] is precisely the kind of presence belonging to the gods [die Art der Anwesenheit der Götter], the fleeting character [Flüchtigkeit] of scarcely graspable beckoning [eines kaum faßbaren Winkes] that in the flash of its passing over [des Vorüberganges] can indicate all bliss and all terror [alle Seligkeit und alle Schrecken]. The god has its own measures [eigene Maße], just for a moment, he lingers, scarcely touching the dwellings of humans, and the latter do not properly know what it is, nor indeed can they know it, so long as they cling [festhängen] to the kind of knowing by which they know things and circumstances and themselves all at once. Yet the passing over was not after all nothing, and “long / They ponder it, and ask who it was” (line 9f.)... (GA 39, I. §9d )

But alongside the many who know this fleetingly, are the few and rare, the “futural” who find their commission in grounding Dasein in the “all-consuming fire” of “unfettered abyss,” therein communicating the grounding attunements that transform into such far-divining steeds as pass-on throughout the poet’s fulgurations and the people’s dreams.
These suggestions must here suffice to contour the seynsgeschichtliche sense (Sinn) of the festival and its “mighty dawn” that seeps into the margins of the Contributions largely unannounced: first, via its discourse of grounding attunement; and second, as the proto-ethical mirroring of the futural as those who gather into the intimate/ultimate passing celebration of the last god wherein they seeks to restore conviviality, wonder, fulfillment, enthusiasm, jubilation, affirmation, thanksgiving, and storm throughout the countertenings of shyness, terror, emptiness, boredom, mourning, denegation, disavowal, and stillness. For the chorus of futural ones who celebrate the last god find there no end, but only the “oscillation of the beginning in itself and thus the highest form of refusal, since what is inceptual eludes every attempt to grasp onto it [...]” (GA 65, 416; CP, §256)

Just in the wings of the Contributions, in other words, festivity arises from reservedness as the only being-historically sufficient ground of all reservedness, namely, as the retrieval-in-passing of the bridal day of Being and Dasein, the day of the beginning, whose shy/reckless celebration suffers all the labyrinthic impasses and mirroring-playing choral passes as must be endured by a community of the future. While it impossible to explore and anchor all the implications of these difficult theses for the wedding festivals and round dances of Greece and Hesperia, I will still look in closing this chapter to a handful of understudied draft essays and poems that confirm, in an astonishing ways, the basics of this reading of Heidegger’s being-historical festival.

First, in the short and not precisely dated text, from either the later 1930s or early 1940s, “Das Wesen des Menschen (Das Gedächtnis im Ereignis),” we read:

Human answering originarily takes place in the rejoining that joins and embraces the breaking-through of the unique, the setting-into-motion [das Ginnen] of the one-time into enowning owning-up together. This rejoining is owned-over to the ones who are welcomed and then greet. They celebrate—mindfully, silently, saying, calling—the festival of the setting-into-motion. They celebrate the beginning.

The ones who greet one another in the word-in-return at the beginning are both [the welcoming be-ing and the greeting human, the welcome of be-ing and the human greeting], from within whose mutual countering the stillness emerges into the intimated word of the saying that says-after.

In the beginning mind [Gedächtnis] celebrates the festival of the uniqueness of Ereignis.
In the celebration there lights up the thanking for receiving the fiery darkness, whose sheltered/concealed light shelters the secret. This preserves the riddle, that the owning-up together of be-ing and of the human being emerges from the rift of truth and of the human in its ownness.\(^\text{45}\)

This is again the χαίρειν, the greeting-farewell of the source mystery as set-into-motion by guest-friends who throughout their mirror-playing passes may yet find the “inner beauty” that leads to a “gathering together of the pre-gleaming of the last god that then bestows it on the few and the rare by mirroring it back.” (GA 65, 400-1: CP, §252) Possible only within this withdrawing advent, the passage focuses its sight on the rift-structure of this mirroring as “enowning owning-up together,” what the later Heidegger calls the Reigen and Spiegel-Spiel wherein friends and strangers, mortals and divinities encounter each other as those who, in the obscure light of φύσις-ἀλήθεια, “set-each-other-into-motion” in the re-spontaneities of greeting in reply, festivity in reservedness, and granting in farewell. Insofar as this again configures “the festival of the setting-into-motion” as Seyn, Anfang, Ereignis, Geheimnis, Wahrheit, and Denken/Dichtung, the importance of the festival for Heidegger’s path of thinking cannot be overstated.

The meaning of “the bride” is thought in a later poem that Heidegger sent to Hannah Arendt in 1949 called “Ereignis” (LHA, 70), and of which another version, ὁ Κεραυνός, appears in Gedachtes (GA 81), in Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback’s “free translation”:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{With light and sound} & \quad \text{Aus Licht und Laut} \\
\text{the world is dared in promises.} & \quad \text{Ist Welt getraut} \\
\text{Who names the bride?} & \quad \text{Wer nennt die Braut?} \\
\text{Who knows and looks into love,} & \quad \text{Wer kennt und schaut} \\
\text{how love endures?} & \quad \text{die Liebe, wie sie währt?} \\
\text{The flash of a full bloom,} & \quad \text{Der Aufblitz einer höchsten Blüte,} \\
\text{incorporated} & \quad \text{die, ins Gedeihen} \\
\text{to growth,} & \quad \text{einverleibt,}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{45}\) “Das Wesen des Menschen (Das Gedächtnis im Ereignis)” was first published in the Jahreshgabe der Martin-Heidegger Gesellschaft (1993, 13-18), and translated by Kenneth Maly, with “Das Wesen der Philosophie” (Ch. 4.1.1 & Conclusion), as “Own to Humans (Mind in Enowning)” in Heidegger’s Possibility: Language, Emergence –Saying Be-ing. (2008, 155-62)
which in blossom Erblühen bleibt
remains aus Weihen,
consecrated, unverjährt,
un-perishable years, daß freyend sie die Blitze hüte
making the court
she guards the lightning. (“Heideggerian Love,” 2012, 134-5 )

What is poeticized here is the resonant, betrothing, calling, knowing, sighting, lasting, in vestem Geseze of a bride’s inexorable (in)finity. Another note found among Arendt’s papers, and appended to the Briefe 1925 bis 1975, again finds Heidegger citing and translating Sophocles’s choral odes, now from the third choral stasimon of the Antigone, the most tenderly popular ode which begins ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν. The dedication reads:

As a greeting in return.

. . . τῶν μεγάλων πάρεδρος ἐν ἀρχαῖς
θεσμόν. ἄμαχος γὰρ ἐμπαι—
ζει θεὸς Ἀφροditα. . . Soph. Ant.

»... the great ones, staying through, made of beginning, the (bridely) customs;
Unconquerable without struggle, for Aphrodite remains in the game, playing a God...« (LHA, 292)

Here τῶν μεγάλων (i.e. the demigods) are fully clapsed to ἔρως and Ἀφροditα since it is they who guide all whiling staying-through (Weilen, πάρεδρος, Austragen) within what is “made of beginning” (ἐν ἀρχαῖς).46 Heidegger relates the idea of “bridely customs,” again θεσμοί (Themis) also from Homer’s Odyssey, 23.296: “λέκτροιο παλαιώθεσιμων ἱκοντο / They sought out the customs of the ancient camp.” Παλαιώ are the ancient ones, who know the καιροί of times, and it also means in later times the obsolete. Λεκτρόν means

46 Sir Richard C. Jebb’s renders, with the preceding lines: “But victory belongs to radiant Desire swelling from the eyes of the sweet-bedded bride. Desire sits enthroned in power beside the mighty laws. For in all this divine Aphrodite plays her irresistible game.” (1888, lines 795-800)
less camp than couch or bed, in Homer, the marriage bed. Heidegger’s quest (ἵκοντο, from ἱκνέομαι) is again for Hesperian glory, and what it suffers is the impassable night.

As futural Dasein learns and risks the θεσμῶν of τῶν μεγάλων πάρεδρος ἐν ἀρχαῖς, for without them Hesperia will be no more. On this note it is possible to cite a third piece sent to Arendt, “The Mortals,” singing the eschatological play of origin as a round dance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We are advent:</th>
<th>Ankunft sind wir:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World-game’s gear,</td>
<td>Gang im Welt-Spiel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prone to sound,</td>
<td>Klang aus Neigen,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song’s ferment,</td>
<td>Sang, der einfiel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return; blind, sheer,</td>
<td>Rückkehr, blind schier,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared in the round.</td>
<td>Bang im Reigen. (GA 81, 121, 128)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gang im Welt-Spiel*: resonating, fermenting, singing, initiating, returning, seared in the *Reigen*. As the parentheses in the “Preface” to the Stuttgart presentation of the 1959 “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” reads: “The transformation into the thinking experience of the center of the infinite relation—out of the collected framework (*Ge-stell*) as self-dissimulating event (*Ereignis*) of the *Geviert*.” (EHP, 176: GA 4, 152-3) A network of correspondences emerges here between the wedding dance, gathered by “the thing in its thinging,” and the “circling besetting of what is assailable.” We who are advent, who emerge into the world game, return into *Gestell*: *Gang im Welt-Spiel = Bang im Reigen.*
Conclusion: On Being in the Mirror-Playing Round Dance

The journey has been long and arduous, out on a θεωρία to the festival. Now is the time to look backwards and forwards over the sojourn, and to say farewell to what has been greeted along the way. As Chapter 4 concluded the argument, the conclusion will extend a fourfold χαίρειν: 1) a return to the 1949/50 “The Thing” on the “mirror-playing round dance” in the chiasmus of poetry (Rilke-Hölderlin) and philosophy (Parmenides-Schelling), and with a view to what my interpretation of the round dance has left undone; 2) a discussion of the mirror-play in philosophy with a view to the “active essence of metaphysics” as between Gestell and Ereignis, and as expressed in the round dance image from Plato to the later Heidegger; 3) a review of the overall argument of the dissertation as patterned across the Gesamtausgabe; and 4) a look into the thinker’s own later sojourn and holiday to the festival sites of Ancient Greece in the 1962 Aufenthalte.

1) Framed as a meditation on Hölderlin’s question “and what are poets for in destitute times?” and concerned with Rainer Maria Rilke’s poetry and its “metaphysical site,” the 1946 “Wozu Dichter?” essay is the challenging watershed between Heidegger’s middle and later thinking on poetry and art, and hence also on the festival. Faced with turmoil in the wake of WWII, the near destruction of the occident and of the planet as such, and also in the proceedings of the de-nazification committee proceedings, the situation that gives rise to a turn to Rilke is a grim one. Hercules, Dionysos and Christ no longer gather all the gods and godhead “visibly and unequivocally” into the festival. For it is the nature of all gods and all demigods to depart, pass-by, default. The contemporary world-situation is, however, even grimmer and darker. For not only have all the gods disappeared, but the “holy radiance” that marked the divine-mortal passage, this radiance itself has all but expired. Heidegger cites often from Hölderlin’s “Bread and Wine” its nightingale call:
But the thrones [Thronen], where are they?
Where are the temples, the vessels,
Where, to delight the gods, brim-full with nectar, the songs? (PF, 323)

The answer: Erewhon. As Hölderlin sings again in “The Titans”: “They still are / Untethered (Unangebunden). / The godly do not strike the non-partakers (untheilnehmende). / Then let them reckon with Delphi. / Meanwhile in celebratory hours (Feierstunden), / And so that I may rest, / allow me to think of the dead.” (HF, 145)

Rilke may not give festivities back to the Titans, yet he shares in Hölderlin’s dream:

When everything we create is far in spirit from the festive,
in the midst of turbulence [mitten im Umzug], let us think of what festivals were.
Look, they still play for us also, all of the Villa d’Este’s
Playing fountains [spielende Brunnen], though some are no longer springing.

Still, we are heirs to those gardens that poets once praised in their songs;
Let us grasp our most urgent duty: to make them fully our own.
We perhaps are the last [als Letzten] to be given such god-favored things,
Their final chance to find an enduring home.

Let not one god pass away. We all need each of them now,
Let each be valid for us, each image forged in the depths.
Don’t speak with the slightest disdain of whatever the heart can know.

Though we are no longer the ones for whom great festivals thrived,
This accomplishing fountain-jet that surges to us as strength
Has traveled through aqueducts—in order, for our sake, to arrive.

(Unused draft of the Sonnets to Orpheus, in Ahead of all Parting..., trans. 1995)

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1 See Rilke’s dedicatory poem “An Hölderlin,” which is virtually Heidegger’s own: “For you, you masterful one [Herrlicher], you conjurer, / The urgent image was an entire life, when you pronounced it / The line locked shut like a destiny [Schicksal], a death was / Even in the mildest, and you entered it; but / The god ahead [vorgehende Gott] led you out and beyond.” (UC, 101)
Heidegger turns to Rainer Maria Rilke not as a poet of playing fountains, but as a poet of the time when “the destitution of the time is greatest.” For in the essence of their poetic vocation, Rilke and Hölderlin are trackers of the wine-god Dionysos who wanders from land to land in the holy night. Singing the essential travail of the mortal condition (Wesung) sooner than other poets, their poetry is a presencing (Anwesenheit) that cleaves to all-pervasive absencing (Abwesenheit). Such poeticizing is a fathoming of the abyss:

[...] the abyss holds and remarks everything [birgt und merkt der Abgrund alles]. In his hymn “The Titans” Hölderlin says of the “abyss” that it is “all-perceiving” [»allesmerken«]. He among mortals who must, sooner than other mortals and otherwise than they, reach into the abyss, comes to know the marks that the abyss remarks [die Merkmale, die der Abgrund vermerkt]. For the poet, these are the traces of the fugitive gods [Spuren der entflohenen Götter]. In Hölderlin’s experience, Dionysos the wine-god brings the traces down to the god-less amidst the darkness of their world’s night. For in the vine and in its fruit, the god of wine guards the being-towards-one-another [Zueinander] of earth and sky as the site of the bridal festivals [Stätte des Brautfestes] of human beings and gods. Only within this site, if anywhere, can the tracks of the fugitive gods abide for godless humans. (PLT, 91, trans. mod.; GA 5, 269)

Rilke and Hölderlin (and Trakl) are privileged by Heidegger because they suffer abyssal remarks, and play forth their signs in such festivities of language as may yet be passed-along and on to godless humans. But the veiling of the white abyss has today become so complete that even poets can no longer rely on a radiance to guide their sojourn to a field of Mnemosyne. And so the word that Rilke’s “valid poetry” sings, as Heidegger discovers in a dedicatory piece to Max Picard, is “Ballspiel für Götter / Spiegelspiel” (ball-game for the gods / Mirror-play). (Uncollected Poems, trans. 1996, 168)²

Heidegger does not cite this phrase in 1946 but in the 1949/51 “The Thing”:

The mirroring that binds into freedom is the play [Spiel] that betroths [zutraut] each of the four to each through the enfolding clasp of their mutual appropriation [aus dem faltenden Halt der Vereignung]. None of the four insists on its own separate particularity.

² That the “mirror-play” (Spiegel-Spiel) is a borrowing from Rilke we know for certain from Heinrich Petzet’s Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger (1929-76). (trans. 1993, 101)
Rather, each is expropriated [ent-eignet], within their mutual appropriation, into its own
being. This expropriative appropriating [enteignende Vereignen] is the mirror-play of the
fourfold [das Spiegel-Spiel des Gevierts]. Out of the fourfold, the simple onefold of the
four is ventured/betrothed [getraut].

This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of the earth and sky, divinities
and mortals, we call the world [die Welt]. (PLT, 178-9; HR, 264-5; GA 7, 180-181)

Thought forms such as these biographers like Rüdiger Safranski consider to be “playful,
obscure, and arabesque-like reflections that might give food for thought but hardly for seeing [...] like the tattoos on the body of Queequeg, the harpooner in Melville’s Moby Dick.” (1999, 431) But this advice to desist from seeking the “profound meaning” offers neither biography, philosophy, nor literary criticism any particular service. We would do better to heed the 1955/6 Principle of Reason which warns not to take the metaphors of essential thinking “too lightly” (PR, 48), indeed not to take them as metaphors at all.3

What is the mirror-play? Heidegger takes this word from Rilke, and considers it to be the fundamental word of his poetry, a word that sings the traces of the flown gods (entflohnenen Götter). The word that succeeds in doing this turns-around the flight of the demigod Dionysos, Rilke’s Orpheus, and thus finds in Dasein’s “all-perceiving” (alles-merken) exposure to the unfettered abyss the possibility of a “mighty dawn.” But despite uttering a “pristine word,” Rilke’s poetry remains enthralled, according to Heidegger, to a basically Nietzschean orientation to a particular “truth of beings.” Privileging the drafts and occasional verses, as he did in another way in his interpretation of Nietzsche, Heidegger wants to bring us closer to the precincts of Rilkean poetry as hinting beyond their own limits, and so passing the play along. While “Wozu Dichter?” will not name the mirror-play, it does speak of much of what surrounds it in The Uncollected Poems, i.e. of

3 “As the metaphorical exists only within metaphysics” (PR, 48), so metaphor itself is a mirror-playing round dance between vehicle and tenor, which is to say an un-finite interchange as emptying and filling to the point of literality, and leaving in its wake only the “enfolding clasp (faltenden Halt) of mutual appropriation,” or σύμβολον as ground of the διάφορα (Unterschied). What rifts semantic and apophantic sense in the Seynsgeschichte is each new φαίνεσθαι as gesture (Gebärde). Thus the “unifying element of the Διαφορά” as transference is a “carrying-out that carries-through” (des durchtragenden Austrags). This we hear in the 1950/1 “Die Sprache” (PLT, 202-3): “Thinging, [things] gestate world (gebärden sie Welt) [...] / “Things bear world. World grants (gönnt) things. [...] Thus the two traverse a middle (eine Mitte). In it, they are at one (einig). Thus at one they are intimate (innig) [...] in Latin, inter.” Innigkeit = Gebärde.
“your center” as to the eternal co-player in the world-game of Being (ewige Mitspielerin im Weltspiel des Seins), and “the inscrutable relation” (unbeschreiblichen Bezug) which points to “gods’ great bridge-system” (Gottes großen Brücken-Bau) in which “catching-ability [is] a proficiency,— / not yours, a world’s” (Fangen-Können ein Vermögen,— / nicht deines, einer Welt” (Uncollected Poems, 167). But to enter the world game we first become unshielded in the wager (Ungeschützte, Wagnis), “thrown-loose (Losgeworfen)” as “unprotected” ones hanging “in the balance retained in the venture,” and thus “upheld (getragen).” Juno’s blessing is for Heidegger this: that the unshielded be “entrusted to the protector, the shielor. Our older and richer language would have used words like verlaubt, verlobt—held dear (geliebt).” (PLT, 210) In nature, however, the unshielded are "no dearer."” Thus thinking the will to the venture not only in terms of the promises of Juno, but as the instability of self-assertion in the pure Open draft, a wavering loss of all equanimity (Gleichmut, Gelassenheit), Heidegger retains no illusions about what happens to those who are exposed unkindly to the many whose δαίμονες are unclasped:

For if the human being is the ventured being who goes with the venture by willing it, then those human beings who are at times more venturesome must also be more willful. Can there, however, be a heightening of willing beyond the unconditionality of purposeful self-assertion [vorsätzlichen Sichdurchsetzens]? No. Those, then who are at times more venturesome can will more strongly only if their willing is different in nature [Wesen]. Thus willing and willing would not be the same. Those who will more strongly by the nature of willing, remain more in accord with the will as the being of beings. They answer sooner to Being that shows itself as will. They will more strongly in that they are the more willing [wollender sind]. Who are these more willing ones who are more venturesome? To this question the poem, it seems, gives no explicit answer. (PLT, 119)

While the “more daring” are by definition more willful, if only by “a breath,” their willing is still of a different kind, not to be confused with a will to will or a will to power. Accordingly, the “unconditionality of purposeful self-assertion” as Selbstbehauptung for

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4 On the “unheard-of center” as the “eternal playmate” see The Sonnets to Orpheus, especially I.1, I.3, II.18, and II.28, which names the “unheard-of center” and the dance-figure of the “pure constellations” (Augenblick die Tanzfigur / zum reinen Sternbild). It says that “she was stirred / to total hearing (völlig hörend) just where Orpheus sang.”
example in Promethean “culture and civilization.” “modern science and the total state,” all this disregards the will that resides in Being, and wills rather the “formless formations of technological production interposed before the Open of the pure draft.” (PLT, 112)

The self-assertive human being, whether or not he knows and wills it as an individual is the functionary of technology [Funktionär der Technik]. Not only does she face the Open from outside it; she even turns her back upon the “pure draft” by objectifying the world. The human being sets itself apart from the draft. The human being of the age of technology, by this parting, opposes itself to the Open. This parting is not a parting from, it is a parting against [...] Technological production is the organization of this parting. The word for parting—Abschied—in the meaning just sketched, is another basic word in Rilke’s valid poetry [gültigen Dichtung]. (PLT, 116, trans. mod.; GA , 294)

Here “Wozu Dichter?” comes full circle, back to the bridal abyss and its poets who sing beyond all parting (Abschied) an other beginning of the festival of being. Yet the day of technology interposes a darkness that comes to light “only slowly.” “Technological day” is “shortest day” and “threatens a single endless winter.” What poets are for, therefore, is the “salvation (die Rettung) [that] must come from where there is a turn with mortals in their nature (in ihrem Wesen wendet).”

... when we saw it threatening, we turned it so into the Open that, in the widest orbit somewhere, where the Law touches us, we may affirm it. (PLT, 122)

This is the “widest orbit” in Rilke’s most venturesome draft, according to Heidegger. Its thinking name, moreover, is given in a letter, the one that ventures the “globe of Being”:

Yet Rilke himself, on one occasion, speaks of the “globe of Being,” and does so in a context which touches directly on the interpretation of the statement about the widest orbit. In a letter of January 6th, 1923 (see Insel-Almanach 1938, p. 109), Rilke writes:

»... like the moon, so life surely has a side that constantly turned away from us, and that is not its opposite but is completion to perfection [Vollkommenheit], to plenitude
Though we must not press the figurative reference to the celestial body represented as an object, it remains clear that Rilke is thinking of sphericity not in regard to Being in the sense of lightning-unifying presence [lichtend-einenden Anwesens], but in regard to beings in the sense of the plenitude of all their facets [Vollzähligkeit aller seiner Seiten]. The globe of Being of which he speaks here, the globe of all beings in the whole, is the Open as that closedness in which the pure forces boundlessly flow into one another and thus act towards one another. The widest orbit is the wholeness of the whole draft of attraction [ganzen Bezuges der Anziehung]. To this widest circle there corresponds the strongest center, the “unheard-of center” of pure gravity. (PLT, 123-4; GA 5, 301-2)

Heidegger looks to Rilke’s “sphere and globe of Being” in its unifying-differentiating as being-historical rupture with Parmenides’s εὐκυκλός σφαῖρη or Αλήθεις εὐκυκλέος ἀτρέμες ἔτορ. The latter names for Heidegger the being of beings (the ἔον of ἔοντα) as “encircling” (Umkreisen). Heidegger insists that we do not interpret encircling “superficially” (Oberfläche) but understand how Being “occurs inceptually” (anfänglich west) as a “rounded sphere” in the sense of a “fundamental draw” (Grundzug) in beings:

The spherical does not consist in a circuit [Umlauf] which then surrounds [umfaßt], but in the unconcealing center [entbergenden Mitte] that clearly safe-guards presencing beings [lichtend Anwesendes birgt]. The sphericity of the union, and the union itself, have the character of unconcealing clearing [entbergenden Lichtens], within which what is present can presence. This is why Parmenides (Fr. VIII, 42) calls the ἔον, the presence of what is present, the εὐκυκλός σφαῖρη [...]. This well-rounded globe should be thought as the Being of beings in the sense of the unconcealing-illuminating union. (Ibid.)

Rilke’s “globe of Being” in the “unheard-of center” as mirror-play must now revert to Parmenides’s well-rounded sphere (εὐκυκλός σφαῖρη). But as a constellation in the night of Ἀλήθεια, Rilke’s midnight is dangerously uncertain. And yet the value of Rilke’s poetry is that it helps to open a sphere of confidence, and even inviolability. Parmenides names the σφαῖρος “inviolate” (ἄσυλονοι), “equal to itself in every direction [and so]
equally meeting (κόρει) with its limits.” Such a σφαῖρος is the “common aether” (αιθήρ τε ξύνος), given always as withdrawn. All the more reason that Rilke’s catcher in the world game of being will have to drop the ball. Yet precisely in the danger this loss of the playing field itself, “Existence beyond number / wells up in my heart.” The heart space of Ἀλήθεια persists into the “inner space,” into the “depth dimensions of our inner being,” and there gives the inner world which converts consciousness into another draft.

Poeticizing the draw of this withdrawing attraction as excentric-centric betrothal, even as the πελείν of the πόλις as exilic (SS 1942, see Ch. 3.3), Rilke’s bridal abyss will still not discover, in Heidegger’s catch and throw, the truth of Being. While its Spiele-Räume as Atmens-Raum, and vertraute Raum, offering betrothed plays by the temples of Apollo and Artemis—plays of Φύσις, Life, and Being—still, Rilke cannot find a “pure draft” (reine Bezug) into the circle of Being, because the Grundzug of being is not a breath between inner or outer, but the “unconcealing-illuminating union.” Rilke’s center remains, according to Heidegger, a metaphysical center, an “including attraction” that ventures into the unbound (Schränkenlosen), but is itself in the dark, concealed from consciousness, “closed up, unlighted (Geschlossene, Ungelichtete),” like “the animal” in the 8th Duino Elegy who “sees the Open” only by being released into a small corner of it.

Heidegger comments: “The less ventured beings [...] are [for Rilke] debarred from admittance into the pure draft, the more they belong within the great whole of the Open.”

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5 See the SS 1928 discussion of Aristotle’s Σφάιρα αὐτή as Time or the “heavenly sphere [itself] which, rotating in a circle, embraces everything and contains everything within itself.” Insofar as “Time and the outermost heavenly sphere are identical” in Aristotle’s Physics, “number” is intra-temporality (Innerzeitigkeit) in the sense of kinetic metabolism (Umschlag). Aristotle’s development of a physics of sphericity is indebted to Parmenides in whom the stellar system consists of fiery rings or crowns (στέφαναι) and the central mixed ring of light and dark, truth and falsehood, which is the “governing divinity” (δαίμονα Κυβερνήτην) and “keeper of keys” (κληιδοῦχον) of Justice or Necessity. Also in Empedocles the “rounded Sphere” (Σφαῖρος κυκλοτερὴς) abides “in the strongest recess of Harmony,” “exultant in surrounding solitude” (μονή περιηγεί γαίων). For more on Parmenides’s στέφανοι see J. S. Morrison’s fascinating “Parmenides and Er.” (1955, 59-68) See also Anatolius’s On the Decad where the followers of both “Empedocles and Parmenides,” i.e. the Pythagoreans, are cited as believing that the “unitary nature [μοναδικῆ φύσις] is situated in the middle in the manner of a hearth [ἑστίας] and because of equilibrium [ισόρροπον] it keeps the same seat.” So thinking Ἑστία together with Σφαῖρος we arrive with Philolaos of Croton into “the middle around the center, which he calls the hearth of the totality and house of Zeus [...] The middle which is by nature first [πρῶτον δʼ εἶνα φύσι το μέσον], and around this ten divine bodies dance [χορεύειν...].” Thus Philolaos, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Plato all appear to think the round dance of being as circling a bridal center.
Yet insofar as human beings are excluded from the Open of the pure draft they are also included in the mobile mirror of consciousness and can in “fleeting moments” (höchste momentane, Rilke’s term) discover an “equivalent” (Äquivalente) of the dark, pre-conscious Open of the pure draft. This occurs in the “first moments of love (Liebes-augenblicken) when one human being sees his own vastness in the other, his beloved, and in exultation to God.” Such festivities of fleetingness in Rilke’s poetic experience fail to impress Heidegger’s critique of the Rilkean poetic metaphysics as one of constant presence, and he indicts Rilke for remaining “in the shadow of a tempered Nietzschean metaphysics,” which he diagnoses as excluded from the Open in the sense of “the essentially more inceptual clearing of being (wesenhaft anfänglicheren Lichtung des Seins).” (PLT, 108) But despite this criticism Rilke’s mirror-play is the midnight that exceeds metaphysics, a most futural play, passing-through the mirror’s tain:

. . . We plunge into the mirror’s gleam [Spiegel Glanz] as with some occult outpour of our being [Anfluß unseres Wesen]; but they find their being there: they read it.
They must be double—then they are whole
    [Sie müssen doppelt sein, dann sind sie ganz.]

So, step, love, before the lucid surface [das klare Glas]
That you may be [auf daß du seist]. (Uncollected Poems, 214-215)

The mirror’s surface restores the Angel to Orpheus “who lives in-finitely in the Open” as in the “balanced oneness of the two realms (gestillten Ruhe der ausgeglichenen Einheit) within the world’s inner space (Weltinnenraumes).” (PLT, 135; GA 7, 313) With this language we return not only to Zarathustra’s “festival of festivals” as a “marriage of light with the shadows,” but to Hölderlin’s ausgleichende Weile für das Schicksal:

»When from the merchant’s hand
the balance passes over [Die Wage übergeht]
to that Angel who, in the heavens,
stills it, appeases it by the equalizing of space [mit des Raumes Ausgleich]. . .«
The equalizing space [ausgleichende Raum] is the world’s inner space, in that it gives space [einräumt] to the worldly whole of the Open. Thus the space grants to the one and other draft the appearance [Ersheinen] of their unifying oneness. That oneness as the integral globe of being [heile Kugel des Seins], encircles all pure forces of what is by circling through all beings, infinitely unbouding them. All this becomes present [präsent], when the balance [die Wage] passes over. When does it pass over? Who makes the balance pass over from the merchant to the Angel? (PLT, 136; 314-5)

In the 1949/51 “The Thing” Heidegger defines the mirror-play as the round dance of Ereignis, and round dance as the mirror-play of the Geviert, and in so doing, he places Hölderlin and Rilke in close proximity, not only as the most futural and most contemporary of poets, but as poets who share in a history that goes back to Parmenides’s Ἀλήθεια and beyond to Nietzsche’s mirror-doctrines at the end of metaphysics.

The round dance is the most deeply buried truth in the history of metaphysics, and thus the most important thing for philosophers and poets to relearn. The full unfolding of Heidegger’s mirror-playing round dance of being as both retrieving the bridal festival and achieving the active essence of metaphysics would require another work, not only on the being of the bridal festival, but on the festival of Being in the round dance. And here it must be admitted that the subtitle of this dissertation, From the Bridal Festival to the Round Dance, remains a promise. For although we are now venturing into the excess of the bridal festival in the other beginning, we have not yet fathomed the extent to which the round dance itself opens new questions, topics, and sites.

This opens the question of what the mirror is doing in the history of metaphysics, and why Rilke’s evocation of the mirror-play, or Hölderlin’s round dance, are philosophical in the first place? Three moments in the history of metaphysics suffice to outline what Heidegger’s thinking of the mirror-play most works against in traditional philosophy: a) Plato’s account of the matter/form relation and its demiurgic mimetology (Politeia X); b) the speculative in the first completion of metaphysics in Leibniz’s monadology, and its consummation in Hegel’s dialectical phenomenology; c) the mirror of metaphysical thinking as a play from Heraclitus to Nietzsche in the 1955/6 The Principle of Reason.
A) Not only in the 1930 essay “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth” (which concerns Politeia Book VII), but also in the WS 1936/7 Nietzsche (containing a commentary on Politeia Book X), Heidegger attempts to account for the significance of the mirror-image in Plato’s metaphysics of the Idea. In the depths of the cave-dwelling human beings experience as their reality the shadow-play of puppets on the wall, and thus are twice-removed: first from the daimonic puppeteers, and second from the truth outside the cave. And so, by the end of the Politeia, is all poietic production, including all human-making, ποιεῖν and δημιουργός, twice-removed from the metaphysical Ideas that are reflected into material form: “For in no case does the craftsman produce the Idea itself.” (NI, 175) But it is not only human producers who produce mimetically; according to Plato, it is also the God as χειροτεχών or φυτουργός who produces everything that there is by way of mirroring: the sun, the heavens and underworld, earth and living creatures, implements and plants, everything. The world made to shine by the divine χειροτεχών is one of production (Her-stellen), and what is mirrored is an imagistic divine semblance (Shein).

That all appearances are produced leads to the uncanniest aspect of the cave-allegory, since it suggests that what the God does in mirroring Ideas into form, and what the philosopher does in learning from the god, the daimonic puppeteers also do when mirroring semblances into all the shadows of the world. These forms of making (ποίησις) as mirroring exist in a differentiated continuum in Plato’s analogy of the divided line, which tells us that even the reality outside the cave is, thinking in a Greek way with Heidegger, something that “show[s] itself (φαίνεται) in the mirror, and thus “looks like, but all the same is not, something present in unconcealment,” not the self-showing Ideas in themselves. But if the visible cosmos is the mirroring-play of a god, how are mortals to gain a non-distorted, non-semblant access to the Ideas, i.e. to the higher, stronger, pre-established, and hidden reality, from the perspective of their sensuous bodily compliance (Fügsamkeit)? This question marks the speculative inscription of metaphysics determined by the gesture of yoking the supersensuous into a mirroring relation with the sensuous.

B) We can move from here, the beginning of the speculative according to Heidegger, through to the case of Leibniz’s speculative monadology which is, for Heidegger, the first metaphysical completion of the Hesperian dream, since in it each ἐνελέχεσθαι or monad is a unifying representation of the whole as a “living mirror of the universe,” a speculative
letting-see (*Sehen-lassen*) of beings in that “Miroir actif indivisible” through which each monad reflects, to the degree of its capability, the essences and essence of being.⁶

But Leibniz’s monad, although it is “not [like Plato’s] a fixed copying, but drives as such to ever new predelineated possibilites of itself,” remains a world-forming play that does not play itself. (FS, 30-1) There remains in Leibniz a separation of the mirror and Being that keeps the ground of Reason both free-from and exposed-to dissolution in the sea of mirroring forces (κυβέρνησις).⁷ So enters Kant’s re-inscription of the principle of sufficient reason in a Transcendental Deduction that in essence wills to keep the drifting ship afloat by yoking the representations of Nature to the mirror of the “I think.” It is Hegel, however, who completes this gesture when he says: “The Absolute is to be reflected...” As Heidegger explains in 1968 at *Le Thor*, Hegel’s dictum means:

[...] that it [the Absolute] should show itself to consciousness, that is, that it should reflect (mirror) itself for itself. To mirror [Sich spiegeln], applied to the Absolute, says that “it brings itself to appearance.” This type of “mirroring” entitles one to name this conception of Reason “speculative.” With Leibniz (raised in this context by one of the participants), it is quite different: for him it is human Reason that is a mirror. (FS, 30)

In the 1959 “Hegel and Greeks,” Heidegger accounts for Hegel’s “Logic of Essence” as “the logic of reflection” as “self-reflecting shining or mirroring, speculari (speculum: mirror).” Speculative dialectics is not even a “transcendental, critically restrictive, or even polemical way of thinking,” but “the mirroring and uniting of opposites as the process of the production of spirit itself.” In this way Hegel remains close by Ἀλήθεια, i.e. within the bridal festival that the history of Spirit gives to thinking. But it is here that another fissure opens, one that goes by the name of Heraclitus. For while Heidegger admires and believes Hegel’s claim that there is not one proposition of Heraclitus that he does not take up into the *Logic*, in entering into the vicinity of Heraclitus’s αἰών (*Welt-

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⁶ On Heidegger’s Leibniz, see especially “Metaphysics as History of Being” (EP, 1-54), the SS 1928 (MFL, 29-109), and “From the Last Marburg Lecture Course.” (PM, 63-82)

⁷ On the nautical-speculative, see Plato’s *Parmenides* where the κυβέρνητης endures the oscillations of Nature and Being in the Idea. Nietzsche loved this daimonic sea, and decided to make for its exploration new instruments of metaphysical circumnavigation: mirror-doctrines.
Spiel), all positional-propositional restrictions of the Absolute dissolve into a yet more uncanny logical-circular mirror-play relation of Ἡν and Πάντα (Ξυνόν).

C) Everything will thus hinge, in the 1955/6 Principle of Reason, on how we are to read Heraclitus’s elemental words: “λόγος, φύσις, κόσμος, and αἰών.” Heidegger proposes prior and posterior to logic, the resonant plays of λόγος and λέγειν in hearing (Erhören); underlying the speculative metaphysics of nature, φύσις as hiding and accord (Gunst); making-possible the antinomies of cosmological reason, κόσμος as conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) and transformation (αμοιβήν); and opening the aporiae of the philosophy of time, the αἰών as Zeus or world-child on the steps of the temple of Artemis.

These are some of the mirror-playing thoughts at Heidegger’s festival of thinking, signs that the ἀρχή as “that which governs by instituting grounds, the Being of beings” has been and will be again: “The Geschick of Being: a child that plays.” (PR, 112-3)

A child that plays with mirrors to be sure, and a child who is born, who celebrates, and who dies. What has here become of the speculative ground of the mirror that is metaphysical reason, the nihil est sine rationis (“nothing is without reason”)? Tracing this principle throughout its history from Plato’s universal-hypothetical Ideas or Aristotle’s empirical-hermeneutical axioms, through to Leibniz’s principium reddendae rationis sufficientis, grounded already in Aristotle’s πρῶτερον τῇ φύσει as τὸ σαφὲς, that which precedes, the a priori as that which is clear and eventually “certain,” and taken up once more in Kant’s critical project as a systematic delineation of “a priori conditions for the possibility,” Hegel’s Science of Logic, Schelling’s will as free necessity, Schopenhauer’s fourfold root, Nietzsche’s will to power—all these Grundsätze guided by the principium magnum, grande et nobilissimum are humbled in the vicinity of an abyss without mirrors.

The Greek ontotheologic verisimilitude (the ὁμοίωσις θεός), the Scholastic adequatio intellectus ad rei, and finally, the Hesperian principium reddendae rationis sufficientis, all see themselves too vainly in the mirror, and thus become plays that do not play the “other tonality” of beyng, which Novalis calls the “highest paradox,” Silesius the “rose without a why,” and Mörike (Heidegger’s Mörike) the shining of beauty as Being.
The 1955/6 *The Principle of Reason* concludes that there is no why to Being’s play:

It plays, because it plays.

The “because” withers away in the play. The play is without “why” [...] Being, as what grounds, has no ground; as the abyss it plays the play that, as Geschick, passes [zuspielte] being and ground to us.

The question remains whether and how we, hearing [hörend] the movements [die Sätze] of this play, play along and accommodate ourselves to the play [mitspielen und uns in das Spiel fügen]. (PR, 113; *Der Satz vom Grund*, 188)

It is in its dialogue with poetic and religious experience that philosophy must learn to play, and so to transform its metaphysical mission into a thinking that fathoms and plays-forth the mystery of beyng. Heidegger thus begins and ends by saying to philosophers what Paul says to the Corinthians: “Now we see in an enigma by means of a mirror, but later we shall see face to face.” (I.13, *Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte: tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum; βλέποµεν γὰρ ἄρτι δὴ ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγµατι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον*).

Already in the WS 1920/1 this *per speculum in aenigmate* is cited by Heidegger in connection with Augustine’s *Sermones* in order to underline the point that just because faith in the mysteries, or faith in reason on this analogy, gives “access to an enigma by means of a mirror, that is no reason for you, in turn, to return ad istam faciem tuam [to that face of yours], to your own ‘making’ (that is, to what you have made of God for yourself, as an object). *Faciem cordis cogita* [Think of the face of the heart].” (PRL, 219) Heidegger hopes that philosophers will return to thinking beyng in its historical hearts-space. Beginning and ending in the love of being which ought to be the philosophers, we can ask a question, and perhaps pose an enigma. At *Corinthians* 1.13, Paul also remarks:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels [γλῶσσαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων], but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal [χαλκὸς ἠχῶν ἢ κόμβαλον ἄλαλάζων]. And if I have prophetic powers [προφητείαν], and understand all mysteries [μυστήρια] and all knowledge [γνῶσιν], and if I have all faith [πίστιν], so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
These remarks of Paul are not about poets as we understand them today, as writers of verses, but about poets in the sense of *poëtés* (ποίησις) as technicians of the rites of a holy greeting. The noisy gongs and clanging symbols, χαλκὸς and κόμβαλον, are played by practitioners who, in the specific rites Paul references, are likely called *Korybantes*. But what Korybantes *are* has everything to do with philosophy, and testifies to the great beginning of ethical thinking in Socrates, and so to the way of thinking that the West still has to learn. Now the Korybantes are an ancient caste of mystic initiators, and what they are best remembered for are their round dances, and even their mirror-plays which Plato loved to compare to philosophical rituals. In *Euthydemus* we hear in course of argument:

Perhaps you do not perceive what sort of thing the two guests are doing around you. They are doing the same thing that those at the *telete* of the Korybantes do when they perform the *θρόνωσις* [*θρόνοσιν ποιῶσιν*] around the person for whom they are going to perform the *telete*. For indeed there is dancing and playfulness there [*χορεία τίς ἐστι παιδία*], as you know if in fact you too have experienced the *telete*. And now these two are just performing a choral dance [*χορεύετον*] around you and as it were dancing playfully in order to perform the *telete* for you afterwards. (*Euthydemus*, 277d)

Θρόνωσις is here the mirror-playing relation that moves between initiator and initiand, and it is a relation in which something of *Ereignis* as *Eräugnis* and *Enteignis* shows itself. The practitioners of θρόνωσις are called Κουρήτες or Κορύβαντες. These are a special class of Greek δαιμόνες famous for their role as Rhea-appointed guardians of the infant Zeus in the cave on Mount Ida, a task that they perform by concealing the infant’s cries with the racket of their round dances. In Bacchic-Orphic mystery cult the Κουρήτες appear as dancing playful guardians of the infant, now the toddler Dionysos, but are infiltrated by the Titans who, disguising themselves as one of the team, whiten their faces with gypsum, and lure the toddler away with various toys, among which can be counted a mirror (crafted by Hephaestos and leading to Dionysos’s slaughter), a bull-roarer, spinning top, knucklebones, puppets, apples, ball, wool—all of these are what Clement of Alexandria calls “the tokens of the ritual” (*πῆς τελετῆς τὰ σύμβολα*). The young demigod is always dismembered by such players as these, feasted upon by Titans, and his
surviving body parts stowed in various sanctuaries. Now the Κοιρήτες or Κορύβαντες are also associated with the Κάβειροτ of the Samothracian mysteries. As Kevin Clinton remarks in “The Stages of the Mysteries” (2003), the sanctuary on the island of Samothrace, like that at Eleusis, had a large consecrated space for dancing in a huge marble building, usually referred to as the “Hall of Choral Dancers,” with an interior that measured 20m by 24m, and which was adorned with a frieze of approximately 800 dancers. As Clinton cites from Arthur D. Nock (1941), the preliminary μύησις at Samothrace took the form of a θρόνωσις overseen by Κορύβαντες of the Kabirian gods. The ἐπόπτεια or higher stage of initiation is associated more with the bridal mysteries, for example, as the initiates go into a dark cave in search of Harmonia, bride of Cadmus.8

As Aristotle defined the vocation of philosophy as concerning matters that are “excessive, and thus astounding, and thereby difficult, and hence in general ‘daimonic’ (καὶ δαιμόνιον)” (GA 53, 100), so we might look through the mirror of Samothrace to one last text where θρόνωσις is thought by one who, if we listen to Heidegger, is the deepest thinker of the West. This thinker is Friedrich W. Schelling, and the text I have in mind (Heidegger does not cite it to the best of my knowledge) is the 1815 Berlin lecture on The Deities of Samothrace. Speaking of the choruses at Samothrace as the elemental-historical μηχανή for the revelation of the Kabirian gods, Schelling writes:

This magic did not extend downwards into the visible world, but upwards. Through the consecrations received, the initiate himself became a link of that magical chain, himself a Kabir, taken up into the unbreakable relation [unzerreißbaren Zusammenhang] and joined [gesellt] to the army of higher gods, as the old inscription expresses it. In this sense the Cabiri or their servants might well be called inventors of magical singing, as Socrates says

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8 Karl and Phyllis W. Lehmann suggest that the enthronement dance of the Korybantes can be interpreted as a wedding dance in which all the gods participate, and they cite Diodorus Siculus (5.48.4-50.1): “And after this Cadmus […] came in the course of his quest for Europa to the Samothracians, and after having participated in the initiation he married Harmonia, who was the sister of Iasion and not, as the Greeks recount […], the daughter of Ares. / This wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia was the first, we are told, for which the gods provided the marriage feast, and Demeter (enamored of Iasion) presented the fruit of the grain, Hermes a lyre, Athena the renowned necklace and a robe and flutes, and Electra the sacred rites of the Great Mother of the gods, as she is called, together with cymbals and kettledrums and the ecstatic revellers of her ritual; and Apollo played on the cithara and Muses on their flutes, and the rest of the gods spoke them fair and gave the pair their aide in the celebration of the wedding.” (1973)
of the child in us must continually be exorcised and must be healed as with magical singing until it is free of the fear of death (*Phaedo*, 120). On the one hand directing itself wholly towards feeling and life, on the other hand, the actual teaching may be conveyed quite clearly, likely because the chorus of the gods was depicted by the round dance of the stars [den Chor der Götter durch den Reigen der Gestirne darstellte]. What nobler symbol of the basic idea can be found than the insolubly linked movement [unauflöslich verbundene Bewegung] of these heavenly lights, a choir in which no element can be lacking [kein Glied fehlen] without the whole crashing together [Zusammensturz des Ganzen]; of which the truest statement is that only together were they born, and only together can they die [zusammen geboren werden und nur zugleich miteinander sterben können]? In the course of time many things may be covered over [verhüllt], (though we know it now), much may be darkened and divested of significance (a fate [ein Schicksal] of many nobler and better teachings). But whatever concealment [Verhüllungen] it may have to endure, whatever turns it may have taken, the basic idea remains indestructible [unzerstörlich blieb der Grundgedanke], the whole of the original teaching [ursprünglichen Lehre] unmistakable, a saving belief [geretteter Glaube] from far primordial times [aus ferner Urzeit] which, of all paganism, is the purest and closet to the truth. (trans. 1977, 29)

This is the last thing I must postpone though it surely leads to new questions for Heidegger’s retrieval of an onto-historical γνα̣ντομαξία in the era of *Gestell* (Ἡφαιστος), i.e. a careful investigation of Schelling’s later Philosophy of Mythology wherein the demi-, third-, or final- god of the mysteries is itself a shout of joy (Ἴακχος), and a relation of the round dance to the wedding. Now if Heidegger’s *seynsgeschichtliches Denken* is to engage in the double gesture of pushing the “active essence of metaphysics” to its limits, while “leaving metaphysics to itself,” it should not come as a surprise if Schelling, the deepest and most inexhaustible of metaphysicians, despite the fall after 1809 into positive philosophy, opens up untapped resources and new possibilities of thinking.⁹

In pushing Heidegger in the direction of the mystico-poietic in Schelling, Nietzsche, Hölderlin, Novalis, and others, no sacrifice of thinking is involved, but rather the reverse. For as this dissertation has demonstrated, Heidegger’s festival of thinking the bridal

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⁹ Heidegger tells us that Schelling is “the truly creative and by far the deepest thinker of this whole period in German philosophy. He is this to such an extent that he pushes German idealism from within, to go beyond its own fundamental position.” (STE, 5)
festival and round dance is constantly, from early through to later writings, in the deepest conceptual dialogue with the history of philosophy. Not only does the festival emerge in the 1920s in both direct and indirect connection with the most challenging themes at the perimeter of Heidegger’s conceptualization, and not only did the festival in the 1930s generate conceptual confrontations at the limits of metaphysics, but in the postwar writings as well Heidegger’s thinking of the mirror-playing round dance permeates all his other thinking in a manner that can only be called philosophical. This thesis may be demonstrated by looking to how the round dance functions in Heidegger’s later account of technology and the hidden unity of Gestell and Ereignis that the round dance reveals.

2) In Heidegger’s Later Philosophy, Julian Young looks to how Heidegger’s holiday functions as a counter-thrust to the technological nihilism of our ever re-enframed everydayness. Citing the WS 1941/2 on the time of the holiday as a “stepping-out” of the everyday “in which things stand in the perspective of their usefulness [...] and not their essence,” Young goes on to suggest that “this stepping out is (for reasons we do not yet understand) the antidote to Gestell.” (2002, 55-63) Distinguishing the ontic festival in which such stepping-out may occur, though it occurs elsewhere, from the ontological festival as the ecstatic state of standing out from the ordinary, Young’s second move defines the festive in terms of two basic features: the inhabitual coming-to-ourselves and things (authenticity) as a coming-to-presence of radiance (essences). Opposing cultures like the Greeks which in cult practices were regularly “taken into the festive state,” with our own work and technology-governed society, Young thus looks to the ēthos of festivals as a promising way to protect humanity from technology’s “world-historical take-over,” reconnecting it to a dwelling not wholly determined by Gestell. (Ibid., 82)\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) James Phillips also explores this relation of festival and technology. Pointing to Heidegger’s WS 1934/5 mythopolitical narratives—“Germany is the priestess among nations only so long as she is ‘incompetent’ among the nations. Her hesitation before techne is the feast-day in which the other nations assemble around her” (“The Feast,” Heidegger’s Volk: Between Poetry and National Socialism, 2005, 133-169)—Phillips shows how the dis-enframing of Promethean technicity function within the darker light of a more festive advent of world, experienced acutely as the dis-abling de-fusion of Dasein’s everyday horizons. The shining/broken order of Zuhandensein is placed in stark relief on holidays as dysfunctional when set alongside the deeper possibilities that the festival discloses. The openness of impower (Ohnmacht) begins to surround
Answering the question—into what unearthly realm did Heidegger’s last god depart?—the last jointures of the Contributions, “The Ones to Come” and “The Last God” can be turned over into the 1949 presentation “Gestell” (HR, 253-84), and “The Question Concerning Technology.” (1955) For on the other side of the caesura of WWII, Heidegger still thinks the motions of Gestell-Bestand and Ereignis-Enteignis as inwardly opposed: Gestell-Bestand brings about a leveling equalization that forces everything into “the circling besetting” of a machine system, while Ereignis-Enteignis configures a free letting-free (Ge-lassen) of interplaying beings into the unassailable unpredictable midst of Being in which all are players of an isonomial world-game, not pieces on the board.

In Gestell and its Bestand human beings are “ordered into” (bestellt sind), becoming employees (Angestellte) of the besetting, which outmodes them and treats them like cogs in a wheel “set-aside” (abgestellt). So “assailed by and for the besetting” of machine technology, human beings are most in need of, and already on an “emergency route” to the festival as to the ἐνκώμια that ‘ought’ to limit οἰκονομία, and a “region of the indestructible” that might yet secure inviolability beyond the “region of the assailable.” Falling apart on these levels, Gestell and Ereignis nonetheless enact together the conflictual site of the universal predicament of mortal life. It is “the collection of work/drive (Treibens) that circles in itself [...] the driving mechanism of operation (Getriebe des Betriebes).” In both the 1949 “Gestell” and later “The Question Concerning Technology,” this relatedness of Gestell to Ereignis is further thought by Heidegger in the family of -Ge word: Gebirge (the mountains of Seynsgeschichte), Gemüt (the courage and attunement of Dasein), Gestell (the orderings of Bestand).

What differentiates social configurations, accordingly, is the way in which these Ge-processes are delimited with respect to each another. Inasmuch as ancient Dasein was occasionally pervaded by the original essence of τέχνη as a privileged “mode of ἀλήθευειν”—bringing-forth (Hervorbringen) and revealing (Entbergen), to this and only this extent, its “producing and presenting” (Her- und Darstellen) did not fall victim to the limitless challenging-forth (Herausfordern) of nature made possible by the modern

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those who in the festival-day come to terms with “the unsettling origins of the everyday,” and thus transforms the festival-day into a first and final site for art’s freedom from labor’s immersion in presence: a foundationless dystopian site wherein the revelations of the absence of presence bring vertigo, and the recognition that Dasein is as such “broken, missing, or inappropriate.”
sciences, and applied in the circling besetting of a prevailing order. Rather, a technicity still in communion with the “gathering sendings” (versammelde Schicken) attuned a people to the world-shaping significance of its art. Where Gestell has not yet dominated perhaps old-new forms of poetic dwelling are still possible, and it is in this sense that Heidegger commends Hebel’s die Weserei or city-center as a place where “the life of the community gathers and village existence is constantly in play, i.e. comes to presence.”

On my reading in Ch. 4.2.4, thinking the futural ones as the chorus of the last god requires us to think: 1) the futural ones as beyng-in-the-between of gods and mortals and therein enduring/celebrating the absencing-presencing of all the gods and demigods, brides and bridal festivals; 2) the passing celebration of the last god as the eschatological separation of Dasein and Being that heralds an other beginning of the bridal festival.

It is now possible to argue that Hölderlin’s saving power (das Rettende) at the end of “The Question Concerning Technology,” speaks indirectly to these possibilities:

The irresistibility of ordering and the restraint [das Verhaltene] of the saving power draw past each other like the paths of two stars in the course of the heavens. But precisely this, their passing-by [Vorbeigang], is the hidden side of nearness [das Verborgene ihrer Nähe].

When we look into the ambiguous essence of technology, we behold the constellation [der Konstellation], the stellar course of the mystery [den Sternengang des Geheimnisses].

The question concerning technology is the question concerning the constellation in which revealing and concealing [Entbergung und Verbergung], in which the coming to presence of truth, comes to pass [Wesende der Wahrheit ereignet].

But what help is it to us to look into the constellation of truth? We look into the danger and see the growth of the saving power. (QCT, 33)

This passage has been analyzed from many perspectives, but other than the excellent work on the round dance by David M. Levin, I have not found a discussion of “der Konstellation, den Sternengang des Geheimnisses” that explores the reference to Plato’s Timaeus on the round-dance (χορείας). But in looking “into the ambiguous essence of technology,” what Heidegger beholds is der Konstellation, den Sternengang des Geheimnisses, and this seem related to Plato’s Timaeus which speaks of the earth as a nurse and nurturing principle in the midst of a galactic sea as circle dance of star gods:
The earth, which is our nurse, circling around the pole [πόλον] that is extended through the universe, he framed [ἐμηχανήσατο] to be the guardian and artificer [φύλακα καὶ δημιουργόν] of night and day, first and eldest of gods that are in the interior of heaven [ἐντὸς οὐρανοῦ γεγόασιν]. Vain would be the attempt to tell all the figures of them circling as in a dance [χορείας], and their juxtapositions [προχωρήσεις], and the return of them in their revolutions upon themselves [τῶν κύκλων πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς], and their approximations [πανακυκλήσεις], and to say which of these deities in their conjunctions [συνάψεις] meet, and which of them are in opposition, and in what order they get behind and before one another, and when they are severally eclipsed [κατακαλύπτονται] to our sight and again reappear [ἀναφατομενοι], sending terrors [φόβους] and intimations [σημεῖα] of the future to those who cannot calculate their movements—to attempt to tell all this without a visible representation [μημήματων μάταιος] of the heavenly system would be labour in vain.

(Timaeus, 40c)

This passage shows the Platonic roots of Heidegger’s thinking of the round dance as the relation of Gestell and Ereignis which points to the “active essence of metaphysics” beyond the history of metaphysics as technoscience. For the Timaeus does not even attempt to find, as modern science is never through with finding, an astronomic-mimetic representation accurate enough to bring smooth calculability to the divine stellar dance. It speaks instead of the demiurge enframer (ἐμηχανήσατο) as a besetter of souls by invisible ordering principles. But in giving up calculation Plato retains, as both Laws and Republic show, an astronomic-mimetic axiology for a choral dance that is both nomic and exilic, chthonic and ouranian, a golden-stringed puppet outside and a spectator inside the cave. Hölderlin, Schelling, and Nietzsche¹¹ will all read this aspect of the Timaeus, and find in it a reference to a hidden order of the σφαίρας as the undanced dance in every Schicksal.

¹¹ On Nietzsche’s round dance see in Thus Spoke Zarathustra: 1) “The Seven Seals” (III.16), “If ever a breath came to me of that creative breath and heavenly necessity that compels even accidents to dance stellar round-dances”; 2) “Of Old and New Tablets”, where we find an allusion to the Timaeus round dance, “Where all Becoming seemed to me a Gods’-dancing and Gods’-willfulness, and the world released and unrestrained and fleeing back to itself:— as an eternal fleeing- and reseeking-themselves of many Gods, as the blissful self-contradicting, self-rehearing, self-rebelonging of many Gods.” Kaufmann renders “controverting”, “conversing”, “converging.” This is the Timaeus’s προχωρήσεις, τῶν κύκλων πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς, and πανακυκλήσεις, or perhaps its opening “One, two, three[...]”; 3) “On the Great Yearning” (III.14), “O my soul, I taught you to say ‘Today’ as well as ‘Someday’ and ‘Formerly’ and to dance your round-dance [Reigen] over
Plato’s world-soul, I recall only in passing, consists of being (οὐσίας, τής τε ταύτον), body (σώματα, τής του ἐπέρου), and essence (an in-between mixture of the two), altogether set in the σφαῖρας with “its extremes in every direction equidistant from the center” (ἐκ μέσου πάντη πρὸς τὰς τελευτάς ἵσον ἀπέχον). Thus suspended in the order of its perpetual revolutions to and fro in the outer circle of heterology, and the inner circle of tautology, “joined to one another at the center like the letter χ,” the world organism is the Moebius strip that feeds on its own excrement, “and needs no feet to follow its circular dance throughout the world plays of the many footed earth.” Now this and other hermeneutical scenes of Plato’s world entelechy are more intimately related to Heidegger’s round dance of a passing last god than we tend to imagine. For although relentless in his destruction of all mimetology, Heidegger ever thinks the daimonic middle of the cosmotheophanic σφαῖρας as silent passing saying of all the gods and demigods of the great beginning, and their “places of [artistic] mastery.” (CPI, §287) And it is here that Heidegger’s vision of Hölderlin as a leader of the choral orbis for the Hesperians draws as close as possible to Plato’s Timaeus discourse, and even to its metaphysical position, in particular to two claims: 1) that “time” is the “moving image of eternity,” and 2) that there is a priority of place (χώρα) over space and time. On the second claim, which leads to the significance of Plato’s χώρα for Heidegger’s round dance, I have space only to review Levin’s analysis in The Body’s Recollection of Being:

12 The Timaeus thinks a “singular solitary universe” that keeps “its own company,” autarchic except for the enframer who holds the mirror of Ideas to all shapes (σχήματα) as composed of the four elements in a balancing equilibrium, water and air (Nestis and Hera) which generate the “fairest bond” with fire and earth (Zeus and Hades), a “complete fusion” in symmetry with the proportions of the “universal frame.” This seems far from Heidegger’s jointure “The Last God.” But consider the definition of the soul: “The soul, interfused everywhere from the center [µέσου] to the circumference [ἐξαγωγὸς] of the heavens, of which she is also the external envelopment, herself turning in herself, began a divine beginning [θείαν ἀρχὴν] of never-ceasing and intelligent life enduring throughout all time.” (Timaeus, 36e) Souls in turn join into the world-soul’s chorus insofar as they learn to distinguish (ἀνόησις) the dimensions of sameness, otherness, and essence in a λόγος of “equal truth” (ταύτων ἤληθὴς) as it follows the “voiceless silence [ἀνεύ φθόγγου] holding her course through the sphere of the self-moving.” The choral movements of these wondrous/wonder-struck ψυχῆς cause Plato’s demiurge to rejoice: “When the father and creator saw the creature which he had made moving [κινήθηκεν] and living [ζωῆ] the created image [ἀνάλωμα] of eternal gods, he rejoiced, and in his joy determined to make the copy still more like [ὁμοιο] the original [τὸ παράδειγμα].” (Timaeus, 37c-e) Leaving aside τὸ παράδειγμα and the god of philosophy, Heidegger’s feierliches Schweigen will still rejoice in the choral passing itself.

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every here and there and yonder; 4) All these images go back to the “Prologue” where “overman” is defined as the one “who gives birth from chaos to a dancing-star.” (trans. 2005)
What set my own thinking in motion was a passage in Heidegger’s *Introduction to Metaphysics*, in which he ponders the Greek experience of place:

> For clarification of the meaning of *paremphainō*, let us consider what has been said. . . That wherein something becomes refers to what we call ‘space.’ The Greeks had no word for ‘space.’ This is no accident; for they experienced the spatial on the basis, not of extension, but of place (*topos*); they experienced it as *chora*, which signifies neither place nor space, but that which is occupied by what stands there. The place belongs to the thing itself. [...] Might *chora* not mean: that which abstracts itself from every particular, that which withdraws [into depth, the unbounded], and in such a way [as] precisely admits and ‘makes place’ for something else?

[Levin comments...] This last query is a natural one, since the Greek words for place (*chora*, *chōros*, *chōrē*) are related etymologically to their words *chorēo* and *chorēsomai*, which mean: ‘make room for,’ ‘give way to,’ ‘fall back,’ ‘withdraw,’ and ‘retire.’ But my question is, rather, this: does not the etymological kinship which binds together the Greek words for place (*chora*, *chōros*) and round-dance (*choros* and *choreia*) suggest that, for the earliest Greeks, and in a time immemorial, it was the *ring* of the gathering *Fourfold*, the *Fourfold gathering in the recollection of a round-dance*, which first cleared and defined a ‘real’ place? (We should also bear in mind here, that the Greek word for ‘separate,’ ‘differentiate,’ and ‘divide’ is *chorizō*. And that which they *chorismos* is a separated and differentiated place, a place of essential difference.) [...]) (1985, 331)

Levin underlines that the round dance unites what it separates. Even if it remains a principium for gathering beings, *chora* as “self-opening, yielding [entgegenkommende] expanse,” it is always already the *chorismos*, “a place of essential difference,” an anarchic-exilic-withdrawing mirror-play. And accordingly, in Heidegger’s thinking, *chora* is not a third thing betwixt and beyond the sensuous and the supersensuous, but it is the singularly uninhabitable, all-exiling yet by-all-inhabited site, the very τόπος of Being. Consider the implications of Heidegger’s chorology of Being for reading the most celebrated passage in the *Timaeus*, the passage on time as a “moving image of eternity.”
Wherefore he resolved to have a moving image of eternity [εἰκὼ δ᾽ ἐπενόει κινητὸν τινα αἰῶνος ποιῆσαι], and when he set in order the heaven, he made this image eternal but moving according to number [ἄριθμον], while eternity itself rests in unity; and this image we call time [Χρόνον]. For there were no days and nights and months and year before the heaven was created, but when he constructed [μηχανᾶται] the heaven he created them also. These are the parts of time, was [τ᾽ ἦν] and will-be [τ᾽ ἔσται] are forms [εἴδη] of time that have come-to-be. Such notions we obliviously [λανθάνωμεν] and incorrectly [οὐκ ὀρθῶς] carryover [φέροντες] into the eternal essence of being [ἐπὶ τὴν αἰῶνα οὐσίαν]. For we say [λέγομεν] it was and is and will be\(^\text{13}\), but according to the true account [ἂληθῆ λόγον] only ‘is’ [τὸ ἔστιν μόνον] is appropriately said of it.

[...] Time, then, and the heaven came into being at the same instant in order that, having been created together, if ever there was to be a dissolution of them, they might be dissolved together. (Timaeus, 38-9)

Temporalität is the horizon of Being. But the αἰῶνος of κινητόν is not thereby rendered out of account. But it is interpreted in the 1930s as a creative-poietic pres-absential grounding (ποιῆσαι, Dagründer). For the choral dance is still αἰῶνος, yet in Heraclitus’s sense of Ἀιών as a world child at the feet of Artemis, a numbering number within the dance, but not a being-numbered from the Archimedean point. This Heidegger says in the 1959 “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” when he cites Friedenfeier on the hope that all demigods of history should come together in choruses “a holy number” (ein heilige Zahl).

But in seeing the priority of time and history as disclosive sendings of the truth of Being, Heidegger does not overlook that mortals tend to become mirrored-images, or numbered-numberings of a stationary god, i.e. exilic choral members, falling into restiveness beyond the dance.\(^\text{14}\) Plato for his part skirts the daimonic implications of the

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\(^\text{13}\) Plato’s devaluation of past and future in favor of the present is also rejected often by Heidegger, most clearly in “Der Spruch Anaximander” (1946), where he read Homer’s elemental word of Being from the mouth of the prophet Calchas: “Calchas, Thestor’s son, the wisest bird-interpreter / Who knew what is, what will be or what once was (τ’ ἔόντα τά τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἔόντα).” This formula permeates the German romantic tradition mainly through Kant’s aesthetics of the genius in the Third Critique which cites the inscription on the temple of Isis: “I am all that is, was, and will be, and no mortal has lifted my veil.” This is again Heraclitus’s φύσις κρύπτει φιλεί. See “Time and Being” where Heidegger again shows how the proposition that only the present truly is proves unacceptable, since past and future have an equal claim to Being.

\(^\text{14}\) Because the god of metaphysics ejects himself from the strife of heaven and earth on account of a preference for transcendent Being, like the stationary demiurge of the Timaeus and the exilic
sense of Being as being-numbered in the *Timaeus* when he forgoes discussion of “all the spirits” (τῶν ἄλλων δαμόνων), trusting to tradition instead, and the ancestors to have given a true account of their names and numbers, and thus accepting as true the Orphic-Eudemian theogony. (40d-e) But Plato confronts this issue at 41d-e where the demiurge enframer makes “the number of souls equal to the number of stars and assigned each soul to a star. He mounted each soul in a carriage, and showed it the nature of the universe.”

In all these choral scenes, and in the discourse on the χώρα itself, the *Timaeus* is still the most basic text for what Heidegger advocates in 1957 as the “active essence of metaphysics,” i.e. as metaphysic’s own stepping-back “out of the oblivion (*Vergessenheit*) of the difference (*Differenz*) as such into the *Geschick* of the withdrawing concealment of perdurance (*entziehenden Verbergung des Austrag*).” (ID, 72)

The most profound exploration of the possibility that *Gestell* might bear a more actively creative metaphysics into its round dance of *Ereignis* is found in the 1957 “The Principle of Identity,” which makes clear that *Gestell* names not only the techno-scientific ordering of human life, but a placing (*zu-stellen*) relation of human beings in Being. The ontico-ontological unity of *Gestell* and *Ereignis* is here named, as in the 1973 *Seminar in Zähringen*, as a “belonging-together” (*Zusammen-gehören*) of Dasein and Being that unfolds “the question concerning access” to Being:

[...]

What we experience in the *Ge-stell* as the constellation of Being and human beings through the modern world of technology is only a *prelude* (*Vorspiel*) to what is called *Ereignis*. Yet the latter does not necessarily persist [verharrt] in the prelude. For in the *Ereignis*, the possibility exists that it might twist [verwindet] the mere reign of the *Ge-Stells* into a more originary appropriation. Such a warping [Verwindung] of *Ge-stells*, out of *Ereignis* and back into it, would effect the recovery of the technological world—a recovery that could never be made by human alone—from its dominance back to servitude in the realm through which the human reaches more truly into the *Er-eignis*. (ID, 36-7)

chorus, he falls out of dance. And here Heidegger concludes that the god of philosophy, because he is the *causa sui*, is a god before whom “the human being can neither pray nor sacrifice [...] neither fall to his knees in awe nor can play music and dance before this god.” (ID, 72)

15 Compare the less monadological solution in *Nomoi* X (897a) where the self-moving soul “by virtue of its own motions, stirs into movement everything in the heavens and on earth and in the sea.” This accords better with Heidegger’s πέλειν in the choral playing-forths (see Ch. 3.3.3).
In being owned-by and appropriated-to Ge-Stells we “glimpse an initial, oppressing flash of appropriation (bedrängendes Aufblitzen des Ereignisses),” and thus learn that Gestell is but the prelude (Vorspiel) to the recovery of “that realm, resonating in itself (in sich schwingenden Bereich), through which the human and Being find (erreichen) each other in their essence [...] To think the appropriating event as Ereignis means to help build this self-resonating realm.” (Ibid.) As occurs first in the 1941/2 Das Ereignis (GA 71), the conclusion of “The Principle of Identity” also modifies the fugal structure of the Contributions, no longer positing a staged transition between resonance, playing-forth, and leap jointures, all as preludes of grounding, but seeing all of these jointures together as resonating-playing-leap into the “self-resonating realm” of Ereignis.

This is exactly what the 1949/51 “The Thing” defines as the mirror-playing dance of the four who are betrothed unto a world. In the 1969 Seminar in Le Thor we learn further that Gestell is enjoined into the elemental excess (Übermaß) of Being’s giving over its givenness which reveals the χώρα as Being. As Parmenides says, τὸ γὰρ πλέον ἐστὶ νόημα, “for the excess is thought.” (FS, 38) Because of this withdrawing excess of Being in the Es gibt, thinking is able to enter the round dance of Being, and thus to know a Gestell that does not veil Ereignis, but rather returns Dasein to the scintillating flash—indicating, heralding, portending—the full epochality of the Seynsgeschichte. Gestell is thus virtually included in the festival of Ereignis as the coursing-stopping of its dancing constellations, a “hidden harmony” that sustains Dasein in the mountain ranges of beyng.

3) The argument is now fully complete. After a general account of Heidegger’s festival and with a view to the secondary literature and peripheral topics it moved through the many and complicated reservoirs of precursor analyses of the festival in the 1920s, which were subsequently revised and transformed in the 1930s in terms of Hölderlin’s festival. Throughout the dissertation, the WS 1934/5 has functioned as the organizing center. Heidegger’s first approach to the festival was there articulated in terms of the concepts of temporality and historicity, and even as the ἁλήθεια of φύσις. But in the moment of thinking Germania on holiday more exoterically Heidegger also turned, in early 1935, to an esoteric thinking of the festival itself: the wedding. Moving between thinking and
poetry, metaphysics and art, 1936 then became the pivotal year in which the “thinking of the festival” transformed into the “festival of thinking,” poetry and thinking folding into a singular vision of those conceptual personae who play different roles on the aletheic stage of the Seynsgeschichte. And on this stage it is Hölderlin who plays the greatest part:

Because Hölderlin is a poet [poi-et], he had to write Empedokles, who was himself a thinker and a singer. Because Hölderlin is a poet, he (in Hyperion, Part I, Book 2), under the title ‘Beauty’ and still thinking metaphysically, intimated the origin of philosophy—and therefore perhaps was not yet able to know the difference between poetry and thinking. It is for this same reason [thinking metaphysically] that what is own to art remains undetermined in Hölderlin.

With metaphysics still dominating in Hyperion, and the no-longer metaphysical onefold of singing and thinking in Empedocles not yet found, the dynamic relation that poi-etisch saying is for poetry and philosophy is more intimately experienced and said. ‘Philosophy’ does not disappear; and if it disappears into its shape up until then, in the Elegien- and Hymnendichtung, then ‘poetry’ disappears as well. And in dialogue with the poet, it is our task to experience poi-etisch saying in its saying and to bring it thinkingly to language.

(“Own to Philosophy,” trans. 2008, 150)\(^6\)

Hölderlin’s Der Rhein clarified for Heidegger not only the figure of the poet, Empedocles, but also Socrates, “the purest thinker of the West”:

All through his life and right into his death, Socrates did nothing else than place himself into this draft, this current, and maintain himself in it. This is why he is the purest thinker of the West. This is why he wrote nothing. For anyone who begins to write out of thoughtfulness must inevitably be like those people who run to seek refuge from any draft too strong for them. An as yet hidden history still keeps the secret why all great Western thinkers after Socrates, with all their greatness, had to be such fugitives. (WCT, 17-8)

This became Heidegger’s cipher: an uncannily inverted Socratic writing. What it here leaves unsaid is the bridal festival in Der Rhein which, as the hidden history of the

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\(^6\) Again “Das Wesen der Philosophie” (Jahresgabe der Martin-Heidegger-Gesellschaft, 1987, 21-30) translated as “Own to Philosophy” by Kenneth Maly. (2008, 147-54)
deepest *Ereignis*, also makes Heidegger a fugitive fallen beyond the chorus, yet one who is sometimes granted stead in the current. Though the homeland lies devastated, all passage into a more futural chorus withheld, the door, the threshold (*Tor*) remains open.

A note from 1939, “On the Political Misinterpretation of Hölderlin’s Fatherland,” reads:

> It is not the Fatherland, but the Angel in its holiness, in the primordial grounding bearing of its majesty, which is the decisive knowing of the hidden sending that first can be the founding essential ground of all Fatherlands. (GA 75, 277)

This sending is not only Heidegger’s *incipit tragoedia* in reference to Oedipus and Antigone, but it is his *incipit parodia*, a firm/festive standing with Socrates in advance of all trials against him, drinking the hemlock, and dying the death of a gadfly. The uncanny perhaps of Heidegger’s thinking is that rather than being the hemlock he avoided, his writings were the hemlock he knew he had to drink. We have now also seen how in the postwar years Heidegger, at times broken, at times proud, continues his round dance into a “thinking experience of the center of the infinite relation—out of the collected framework (*Ge-stell*) as self-dissimulating event (*Ereignis*) of the fourfold.” (GA 4, 176)

4) As a final farewell, I look to the 1962 *Sojourns: The Journey to Greece*, which ask:

> Where is your Delos, where your Olympia,
> For the celebration that would conjoin us all?
> [
> ...
> ]
> But the thrones, where are they?
> Where are the temples, the vessels,
> Where, to delight the gods, brim-full with nectar, the songs?
> (SOJ, 57: “Gesang des Deutschen” / “Bread and Wine”)

This “where” raised out of an immense abandonment, a painful cry—this question, what is it looking for? What does the poet see when he cries out? He sees the flight of the gods and along with that, the desolation of men’s dwellings, the emptiness of their work, the vanity of their deeds. He dares to turn his gaze towards the Greece that has-been, although he does
not find support in the actual experience of the world of the islands. Why did Hölderlin have no need of such an experience? Perhaps because his gaze was reaching farther, towards the arrival of the coming god [Ankunft des kommenden Gottes], so that only in the region of this fore-seeing that which has already been could reach its ownmost present [eigene Gegenwart erlangste]. (SOJ, 1)

In his gaze towards what is coming, Hölderlin is attuned by an inner certainty, “confidence,” and belonging to the poor place that addresses the withdrawing gods in the manner of an “insistent call” (ein inständiges Rufen). This is still the one thing needful for Heidegger: that a depth and intensity of calling and belonging to the flown gods open up “the field (der Bereich) [...] where the coming of god can be granted and vigil for the festival of his arrival (die Feier seiner Ankunft) can be prepared.” (Ibid.) The itinerary of Heidegger’s trip is, in this sense, set before leaving any port, and prior to the consultation of any map. Though the trip will pass through many islands, and see many sights, it is predestined as the way of a thinking-path (Denkweg, ὁδός) back to the “Greek element” in which sojourn the future Hesperians might still receive the hints of gods who may occasionally escort Dasein into the meadow of truth (the πεδίον τῆς ἀλήθειας).

For all its petite bourgeois tourism meets German phil-Hellenism, there is a disarming mixture of trepidation and confession in Heidegger’s approach to the world of the Greek islands. His pilgrimage, though it exists in a complete dependency on the tourism industry with its cruise-ships, museums, village economies, modes of transportation, and schedules, still gives itself over to a theoretical tourism, and one in which Heidegger becomes the θεωρός or modern-day Pausanias haunting the ruins of the Greek past.

Acutely aware of the perils of this gesture, his decision to undertake the voyage to Greece appears, after long hesitation, to have been motivated by intellectual conscience: “doubts that the thought dedicated to the land of the flown gods was nothing but a mere invention and thus the way of thinking (Denkweg) might be proved to be an errant way (Irrweg).” (SOJ, 5) Heidegger decides in favor of the journey so as to see for himself what Hölderlin did not need to see, i.e. to ask whether the “intimated region” of the gods of the Greeks, the festivals of φύσις-ἀλήθεια, are “invention” or not. The postulate that has guided Heidegger’s path, which is now to be tested, is this: that the “gods of Greece and their supreme god, if they ever come, will return only transformed (verwandelt) to a
world whose overthrow (Veränderung) is grounded in the land of the gods of ancient Greece.” (SOJ, 3) Was the trip successful? Did it bear fruit? “Yes and no.”

Did Olympia [i.e. “der Festort des Griechentums”] offer the insight that we have sought into what is proper to the Greek world? Yes and no. “Yes” insofar as its gentle emergence of its clearing distance spoke in an immediate way through the sculptures. But those were in the museums. Thus “no”—especially since the region of Olympia did not yet set free the Greek element of the land, of its sea and sky.

The Greek element [das Griechische] remained an expectation, something I was sensing in the poetry of the ancients, something that I intimated through Hölderlin’s Elegies and Hymns, something that I was thinking on the long paths of my own thought. (SOJ, 13, 19)

The “withered beauty of the festival in this place has concealed itself from us.” So thinks Heidegger on Olympus. The “agonistic severity and jointure of the Greek essence,” though dimly visible in the landscape around the valley of Alpheus, and in “the groundwork of the surprisingly great temple consecrated to Hera and Zeus,” is now barely a hint on an overgrown path, at best an exhibition, not a dedication, the lingerings of a present (Gegenwart) no longer presencing (Anwesenheit), and nothing that might unite a coming people into festivals of future gods. The holiday here takes a bad turn, and goes astray as Heidegger, in a grumpy ethnocentrism, resists “the pre-Hellenic world” in the regions of Mycenae, decrying the Oriental mixture of “labyrinth-luxury” at Knossos on Crete, and four times declining to disembark (on south Crete, Rhodes, Kos, and even on Patmos). Though the winds on Nemea still play for his ears “songs of mourning, inaudible to mortals—echoes of the flight of the gods,” and though on Argos “the thick layers of fragrant flowers” around the ruins of the Heraion still cheer with their “annually recurring loyal greeting to a sunken world,” and finally, while the theaters of Polykletus and temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus give hints of those solemn structures in which the gods grant healing, today, the fullness of their joy and pain is but a distant echo.

Yet Hölderlin’s question still resounds:
Wo ist dein Delos, wo dein Olympia
Daß wir uns alle finden am höchsten Fest? (SOJ, 57: “Gesang des Deutchen”)

The more the holiday of thinking asks this question the more “every visit to every place of [Greek] dwelling, work, and feast renders more perplexed.” While the festival site of Olympia was magnificent in nature and artifact, but only half open, “a dim sign of Pan’s hour,” it is on Delos, Apollo’s isle, that the thinker finds an unlabored response to his questioning search, and with it, the intimation of a “veiled great beginning.”

Δῆλος, the manifest [die Offenbare], the one that reveals and does not hide [die unverborgen Entbergende] but, at the same time, the one that conceals and hides [Verbergende und Bergende]: it hides the secret of the birth of Apollo and Artemis: Apollo, the one with great and luminous gaze, the glowing one, he who commands through splendor. Artemis, the archress, the one who finds her home in the shelter of the wilderness—the two of them are siblings. The way of their presencing [Anwesenheit] is together the powerful nearness and sudden disappearance into the farness.

It remains hard to describe, if it does not reject any description, the manifold and interrelated essence of the god and goddess.

The common birthplace for both, Δῆλος, the manifest, the signifying one [Zeigende], shows that she—the insignificant and humble center in the circle of the islands [die unscheinbar geringe Mitte des Inselkreises]—hides what is sacred and protects against every profane crush [Andrang]. One barely begins to think enough what the name of the islands contains, that which calls the whole of the Greek people to celebrate the festival [zur Festfeier ruft] that grants them the grace of divine favor [die Anmut der Huld des Göttlichen verschenkt] and demands from mortals the reticence of awe [das Verhaltene der Scheu verlangt]. (SOJ, 31-2)

Heidegger’s sojourns find the protection of Apollo and Artemis as presiding messengers of powerful nearness and sudden farness, sibling god and goddess whose birth is the humble center in the circle of islands which “calls the entirety of the Greek people to celebrate the festival.” Heidegger does not cite Pindar or the Homeric Hymns on Delos. But this is because Delos alone has been given to the Hesperian thinker as his Eigentum.
But soon enough, in the folds of Mount Parnassos, the sojourn jubilates in *Pythian 1*:

Golden lyre, rightful possession of Apollo

And the bright-haired Muses [Und der dunkelgelockten / Beistimmendes der Musen Eigentum],

To you the dancers listen [Welche höret der Tanz, ἀκούει μὲν βάσις]

As they begin the celebration [der Heiterkeit Anfang, ἀγλαίας ἀρχά],

And the singers [die Sänger den Zeichen, δ᾽ ἁοιδοὶ σάμασιν]

Follow the rhythm / round dance [Den reigenführenden, πείθονται]

Plucked on your trembling [erschüttert] strings

In prelude to the chorus; [ἄγησιχόρων ὀπόταν προοιμίων]...

What more festive tone could one sing for the homeland of the Pythian god, in what more glorious way could Delphi—the slumbering and awakening recollection—be awakened than by Pindar’s *Pythian Odes*?

During the hours we stayed at the holy place, the crowd of visitors increased significantly—everywhere people taking pictures. They throw their memories [Gedächtnis] in the technically produced picture. They abandon without clue [ahnunglos] an unknown feast of thinking [Fest des Denkens]. (SOJ, 53-4)

Drawn into the early endowment and unscathed invisibility in which the Greeks were granted an “exceptional gift of holding the wealth of the holy,” Heidegger’s “festival of thinking” searches among the darkest locks of the Muses’s hair, and what he finds are the listening dancers, the trembling lyre of a preluding chorus to come. Greece then can still be one of the homesteads for that futural world wherein “poetry” and “thinking are together recollection (Andenken) and as such thanksgiving (Danken).” (Ibid.) Though Apollo and Artemis withdraw as the relation of κόσμος and πῦρ becomes inscrutable, the πεδίον τῆς ἀλήθειας given at Delos now concealed, this removal goes ever by way of Hestia who is, after all, the “hearth [that] gathers together and watches over κόσμος,” and discovers again that she is and is not Ἀλήθεια, Ἐστία τοῦ κόσμου, »the hearth of the appearing that penetrates and enlightens All, the one that gives and declines measure«.”
Heidegger looks to the last temple which is the first, the temple of Ἀφαία on Salamis:

The joyful-peaceful element [Heiter-Ruhige] that surrounded the temple like a veil, as in every lightening of the Greek Dasein, covered and hid within itself the darkness of destiny [das Dunkel des Schicksals]. This encouraged my reflections regarding the simple relationships in which this great people founded its sojourn. It allowed them to understand and to celebrate [zu vernehmen un zu feiern] earth and sky as both homely and unhomely [heimische-unheimisch]. (SOJ, 49)

The goddess Ἀφαία (Disappearance) “shelters the enigma of Ἀλήθεια” which is the obscure connection between the “joyful-peaceful element” and “the darkness of destiny,” Ἑστία. Concealing-revealing this relation of dwelling to the uncanny, Ἀφαία gives to the holiday thinker, at the moment of his turning to the end of the holiday, and thus to Hesperian homecoming, the celebration of “earth and sky as both homely and unhomely.” The flight of Greek gods is concluded to be neither an article of “faith nor a religion in the Roman sense of the word religio,” but the Bestimmung and the Besinnung that plays “the last greeting” (der Letzte Gruß) of the festival, and its greatest demigod, Dionysos, depicted on Exekias’s cup. This is Heidegger’s χαίρειν to the Greek world, a χαίρειν to the last god of the Greek pantheon. Let the others, the disbelieving pirates, swim in the wine-dark sea, for as they leap overboard it is those dolphins they become.

As the cup of Exekias, where the dolphins with gliding leaps swim around Dionysus’ vessel, driven by the wind, rests within the boundaries of the most beautiful creation, so too the birthplace of the Occident and modern age, secure in its own island-like essence, remains in the recollective thinking [Andenken] of the sojourn. (SOJ, 57)
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