

Cretan *Paiawones*

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IN THE HOMERIC *Hymn to Apollo* the god leads the Knossians up from the harbour of Krisa to Pytho. He steps high, with his lyre in his hands, and the Cretans follow, beating time (516–19)—

καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βιβάσ' οἱ δὲ ῥήσσοντες ἔποντο
Κρήτες πρὸς Πυθῶ καὶ ἰηπαίηον' ἄειδον,
οἰοί τε Κρητῶν παιήονες οἰοί τε Μοῦσα
ἐν στήθεσσιν ἔθηκε θεὰ μελίγηρυν ἀοιδήν.

LSJ *s.v.* παιάν II list παιήονες in line 518 under ‘*paean* i.e. *choral song*’, and the same meaning of παιήονες is assumed here by Allen, Halliday and Sykes in their comment “the *paean* was pre-Dorian. It was sung by the Achaeans to Apollo (A 472) and as a general triumphal hymn (X 391).”¹ παιήονες cannot, however, mean ‘choral songs’ here; the reference in both parts of the construction οἰοί τε . . . οἰοί τε is to persons, and in line 518 παιήονες can only be singers.² H. G. Evelyn-White was therefore correct to give the translation “. . . he stepped high and featly. So the Cretans followed him to Pytho, marching in time as they chanted the *Ie Paean* after the manner of the Cretan *paean-singers* and of those in whose hearts the heavenly Muse has put sweet-voiced song.”³ To the various meanings of παιάν, παιηών and παιών (respectively the Doric,⁴ epic-Ionic and older Attic⁵ forms of the original παιᾶ(φ)ων) listed by LSJ under the general headings of *Paian* the physician of the gods, *paean* the choral song, and *paeon* in prosody must be added ‘singer of *paean*s’.

In the *Hymn to Apollo* the Cretans who march to Pytho with the god are compared with Cretan παιήονες, singers of *paean*s. Now it has long been recognized that the *paemonic* metre (υυυ– or υ–υυ or υυ–υ or

¹ *The Homeric Hymns*² (Oxford 1936) 264.

² A. von Blumenthal, *RE* 18 (1943) 2341.

³ *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homerica* (LCL, London/Cambridge [Mass.] 1950) 361.

⁴ W. S. Barrett on Euripides, *Hippolytos* 1371–73.

⁵ J. Wackernagel, *Glotta* 14 (1925) 61–64.

–υυυ) is of Cretan origin;⁶ it takes its name from the paeon-song, and a special instance of it was the *creticus* or ‘two-limbed’ *paeon* –υ– (παιῶν διάγνιος). Paeonic and Cretan rhythms were closely associated with the seventh-century poet Thaletas,⁷ and hyporchemes were adapted to the Cretan pyrrhic-dance also by Thaletas.⁸ Sosibios the Laconian antiquary even declared that all hyporchematic songs were Cretan.⁹ Hyporchemes and paeans were so closely connected that they could not easily be distinguished.¹⁰ Paean-singers therefore may be supposed originally to have sung in Crete in a Cretan metre—the *paeon* or *creticus*, and to have performed hyporchemes, also in Crete. In myth one such Cretan paean-singer was, as his name shows, the Koures or Idaian Daktyl Paion(a)ios.¹¹ The earliest paean-singers would have been distinguished by the use of the simple refrain ἢ παιᾶφον, and although the paeon-song is at the very beginning of extant Greek literature already associated with Apollo (*Iliad* 1.472–73), the god in whose honour the refrain was originally uttered would have been the healer god Παιᾶφων. παιᾶφονες have the same name as the god they serve, and similar functions to the god himself—namely to heal wounds and to banish plagues. Such was the rôle of the Cretan singer of paeans Thaletas, who by means of his music cured the Spartans of a plague in accordance with the instructions of a Pythian oracle.¹²

That the god Paiawon, whose name became a title of Apollo and of other gods, was anciently a distinct divinity, was argued by Hermann Usener.¹³ It is true, as Farnell pointed out,¹⁴ that Homer does not explicitly distinguish Paieon from Apollo, but neither does the poet identify them. The idea that Paiawon was originally a distinct deity was confirmed by a Knossian Linear B text: here *pa-ja-wo-[ne?* appears

⁶ L. Deubner, *Njbb* 43 (1919) 395–97; see further Wilamowitz, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin 1921) 330 n.1.

⁷ Glaucos of Rhegion in [Plut.] *De mus.* 10 (1134DE): see *RE* 5A (1934) 1213 s.n. THALETAS 1.

⁸ Schol. *ad* Pind. *Pyth.* 2.127 (2.52–53 Drachmann).

⁹ *FGrHist* 595 F 23.

¹⁰ [Plut.] *De mus.* 1134c. See also A. E. Harvey, *CQ* 5 (1955) 173.

¹¹ Pausanias 5.7.6.

¹² Pratinas in [Plut.] *De mus.* 42 (1146BC). Paus. 1.14.4 (who calls Thaletas Θάλητς). Thaletas is also said to have cured discord at Sparta: Philodemos, *De mus.* 18–19 (pp. 85–86 Kemke). Cf. Boethius, *Inst. Mus.* 1.1 (p.181, 23–26 Friedlein). For military uses of the Paian see W. K. Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Military Practices I* (*UCalPub ClStud* 7, Berkeley 1971) 105–08.

¹³ *Götternamen* (Bonn 1896) 153.

¹⁴ *The Cults of the Greek States IV* (Oxford 1907) 234–35.

as a name, not as a title, in a list of divinities including Lady Athena, Enyalios and Poseidon.¹⁵ Thus Paiawon was already being worshipped in Crete in Late Minoan II/III A Knossos. He was still recognized as a distinct divinity, not identical with Apollo, by 'Hesiod' in the seventh or sixth century B.C. (fr.307 M.-W.):

εἰ μὴ Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος ὑπέκ θανάτοιο καῶσαι
ἢ αὐτὸς Παιήων, ὃς ἀπάντων φάρμακα οἶδεν,

and in Solon's opinion it is Apollo who makes a man a *μάντις* (fr.13, 53 W.), but healers do the work of Paion (fr.13, 57–58 W.),

ἄλλοι Παιῶνος πολυφαρμάκου ἔργον ἔχοντες
ἰητροί . . .

In the *Iliad* Paieon heals gods by sprinkling drugs upon their wounds (Hades: 5.401; Ares: 5.900). In the *Odyssey* (4.231–32) each Egyptian healer is of the *γενέθλη* of Paieon; thus Paieon, like Asklepios, had kinsfolk who were healers amongst mankind. One of their functions would have been the chant of incantation (*ἐπωδή*) *ἰηπαιῶνον* when healing wounds or driving away plague.

The fact that Paiawon was worshipped in Late Minoan Knossos does not of itself prove him to have been a Minoan god; his worship could have been introduced by the Mycenaean conquerors of Knossos. The name, however, has no obviously Greek etymology, and it may well therefore have been taken over from a pre-Greek substratum of speech and religion by the first Greek-speaking invaders of Crete. The hypothesis of a Minoan origin for Paiawon and his songs is strengthened by the observation that the *creticus* and *paeon* do not fit easily into the schemes of earliest Greek metres; in the classification by Professor M. L. West¹⁶ the Cretan metres fit neither the six, seven or eight syllable acatalectic series ending in $\cup-\cup-$ nor the five to eight

¹⁵ Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*¹ (Cambridge 1956) 311, no.208. The supplement has subsequently been shown to be correct (*DMG*² [Cambridge 1973] 473). The useful study of Minoan divinities by A. Furumark, "Gods of Ancient Crete," *OpuscAthen* 6 (1965) 85–98, discusses the evidence of Minoan representational art and takes into account divinities in Linear B (and even A) texts; Paiawon, however, is only mentioned in passing as an epithet of Apollo.

¹⁶ *CQ* 23 (1973) 184–85. Note, however, that West considers the possibility that anapaests, dactyls and cretics might be explained without having recourse to the assumption of borrowing from some Aegean people (*Glotta* 51 [1973] 169).

syllable catalectic series ending in $\cup - -$. Paroemiac and hemiepes are equally remote from the Cretan metres. The likelihood therefore is that Paiawon was an Aegean, or specifically Minoan, god, whose ministers, the *παιάφρονες*, used a metre of pre-Greek origin. Their song, the paean, early became associated with Apollo, as we see from *Iliad* 1; with places other than Crete, as *Λέκβιον παιήονα* in Archilochos shows (fr.121 W.); and with activities other than healing, as in the exultant song at *Iliad* 22.391.

The question arises, where was the identification of Paiawon and Apollo first made? Not, I think, in Ionia, since the identification is not explicit in Homer. More probably at Delphi, for if the (Delphic) *Hymn to Apollo* conveys a historical message, it is above all that there were once Cretan priests at Delphi. Evidence of their activity there is to be seen in the sending of Thaletas to cure the plague at Sparta *κατά τι πυθόχρηστον*.¹⁷ To them too we may trace the myth of purification by the priest Karmanor at Tarrha in Crete¹⁸—a story clearly intended to rival the myth of the god's visit to Tempe after the killing of Python. A Cretan interest is also served by the story of Chrysothemis, who was the first to sing a prizewinning hymn to Apollo at Delphi, for he was a Cretan and the son of Karmanor.¹⁹ Apollo's connexions with Tarrha and its neighbourhood in south-western Crete were close. The people of Elyros near Tarrha, who sent a bronze goat to Delphi, declared that a goat had given milk to the babes Phylakides and Philandros. According to the Elyrians the children were born to the Cretan nymph Akakallis, with whom Apollo had intercourse at the house of Karmanor at Tarrha.²⁰ Karmanor, it is clear, was an important figure in local Cretan lore; he was a priest capable of purifying a god.²¹ His venerable antiquity is

¹⁷ See n.12 *supra*.

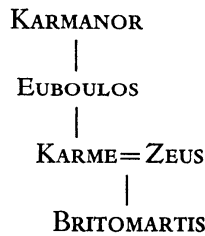
¹⁸ Paus. 2.7.7 (Apollo visits Karmanor with Artemis); 2.30.3; 10.7.2; 10.16.5.

¹⁹ Paus. 10.7.2. The connexion of the prizewinner with Crete would be secondary if the original form of the name was Krisothemis (Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* [Berlin 1922, repr. 1966] 71–72 n.4); but the conjecture is not compelling. Hypothesis C to Pind. *Pyth.* (p.4, 9–11 Drachmann) states that Apollo was purified of the dragon-killing in Crete *παρὰ Χρυσοθέμειδι* (not by Karmanor) before going to Tempe for the bay; this is evidently an attempt to harmonize rival versions of the purification.

²⁰ Paus. 10.16.5. The name Karmanor is also found at Aptera in Crete (*ICr* II iii 38.3).

²¹ For the cult of Apollo at Tarrha see Steph.Byz. s.v. *Τάρρα* and R. F. Willetts, *Cretan Cults and Festivals* (London 1962) 270–71. A Delphic oracle of uncertain date (Oinomaos *ap. Euseb. Praep. Evang.* 5.31 [Parke/Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* II² (Oxford 1956) no.339]) may allude to the cleansing of Apollo (M. Guarducci, *ICr* II p.306), though Parke and Wormell

evident from his being an ancestor of the Cretan goddess Britomartis according to a genealogy in Pausanias (2.30.3):



Diodoros gives the same line of descent from Euboulos to Britomartis (Diktyнна) and, though he does not mention Karmanor here, states that Euboulos was born to Demeter.²² It is possible therefore that in the lore of Hellenic Crete Karmanor became the father of Euboulos by Demeter. Karmanor was no ordinary priest of Apollo, and we may reasonably conjecture that he was originally a *παιάφων*, a minister or a manifestation of Paiawon, the Cretans' healing god. Indeed, he is a mythical precursor of the Cretan *paiawones* of the hymn, and of the professional healers, Thaletas, who cured Sparta of

suggest that it is "a cure for some public disaster." The hexameters are addressed to the Cretans of Phaistos, Tarrha and Dion:

*Φαιστοῦ καὶ Τάρρας ναέται, Δίου τε πολύρρου,
 Πυθῶν κέλομαι τελέειν Φοίβοιο καθαρόν
 εὐαγέοντας, ὅπως Κρήτην καταναιετῆτε
 †ἄλβον μὴ πατρίοις νόμοις,† καὶ Ζῆνα εἴβοντες.*

Others who went to Crete after killing were: Daidalos (e.g. Diod. 4.77.1); Sopatros after the first slaughter of an ox at Athens (Porph. *Abst.* 2.29–30; see also J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie* [Berlin 1889, repr. New York 1973] 154, and F. Jacoby on Androtion 324 F 16 with W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* [Berlin 1972] 153–61); and the murderers of Hesiod (Alkidamas in *Cert. Hom. et Hes.* p.42, 14 Wil.—but they were drowned on the way). These tales reflect the reputation of Crete as a place of purification: see also *GRBS* 10 (1969) 237 and Deubner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 394. A very early Cretan incantation is "The Exorcism of the Asiatics' Sickness in the Language of Crete" in the London Medical Papyrus, which dates from the 18th Egyptian dynasty (J. Friedrich, *Kleinasiatische Sprachdenkmäler* [Berlin 1932] 145–46).

²² Diod. 5.76.3 *Βριτόμαρτιν δὲ τὴν προσαγορευομένην Δίκτυνναν μυθολογοῦσι γενέσθαι μὲν ἐν Καινοῖ τῆς Κρήτης ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Κάρμης τῆς Εὐβούλου τοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐκ Δήμητρος*. Jacoby (*FGrHist* 468 F 1, *Komm.* n.132) suggests that Kaino lay near Knossos, but a position in the neighbourhood of Tarrha is possible, as R. Pashley maintained (*Travels in Crete II* [London 1837, repr. Amsterdam 1970] 270). Pashley also suggested a connexion of Karme with the Cretan mountain called Carma (*vel sim.*) in texts of Pliny (*NH* 21.79 [46]).

a plague, and Epimenides, who cleansed Athens from taint brought by the murder of Kylon.²³

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²³ Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 1; Plut. *Solon* 12; Diog. Laert. 1.110; *Suda s.v. 'Επιμενίδης*. I am obliged to Professor H. W. Parke for advice about Delphic problems. He writes: "For another translation of *Hymn Ap.* 518, which at least makes *παῖδες* singers, see Wade-Gery, *Essays in Greek History* (Oxford 1958) 27." Wade-Gery seems to treat the *οἰοί τε . . . οἰκί τε* as one class, because he gives the translation

"In step behind
The Kretans singing 'Paian' marched to Pytho
(As Kretans aye sing 'Paian', in whose breast
The heavenly Muse hath planted melody)."

I agree with Parke in supposing that there are two classes—Cretans and other inspired persons. The Dreros sanctuary had a triad of cult statues, two female and one male, dating from *ca* 675 B.C. If they are statues of Artemis, Leto and Apollo (as M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I*³ [Munich 1967] 305, suggests), then they give a *terminus ante quem* for the arrival of Apollo in Crete.