strength and courage of Theseus, Pirithous desired to put them to the test. Accordingly he drove away from Marathon some cows which belonged to Theseus. The latter pursued, but, when he came up with the robber, the two heroes were so filled with admiration of each other that they swore brotherhood. At the marriage of Pirithous to Hippodamia (or Deidamia) a fight broke out between the Lapiths and Centaurs, in which the Lapiths, assisted by Theseus, were victorious, and drove the Centaurs out of the country. Theseus and Pirithous now carried off Helen from Sparta, and when they drew lots for her she fell to the lot of Theseus, who took her to Aphidnæ, and left her in charge of his mother Æthra and his friend Aphidnus. He now descended to the lower world with Pirithous, to help his friend to carry off Proserpine. But the two were caught, and confined in Hades till Hercules came and released Theseus. Meantime Castor and Pollux had captured Aphidnæ, and carried off their sister Helen and Æthra. When Theseus returned to Athens, he found that a sedition had been stirred up by Menestheus, a descendant of Erechtheus, one of the old kings of Athens. Failing to quell the outbreak, Theseus in despair sent his children to Euboea, and, after solemnly cursing the Athenians, sailed away to the island of Scyrus, where he had ancestral estates. But Lycomedes, king of Scyrus, took him up to a high place, and cast him into the sea, that he died. Others said that he fell of himself over the cliff as he was taking his evening walk. Menestheus reigned at Athens, but, when he died before Troy, the sons of Theseus recovered the kingdom. Long afterwards, at the battle of Marathon (490 B.c.), many of the Athenians thought they saw the phantom of Theseus, in full armour, charging at their head against the Persians. When the Persian war was over, the Delphic oracle bade the Athenians fetch the bones of Theseus from Scyrus, and lay them in Attic earth. It fell to Cimon’s lot in 469 b.c. to discover the hero’s grave at Scyrus, and bring back his bones to Athens. They were deposited in the heart of Athens, and henceforth escaped slaves and all persons in peril sought and found sanctuary at the grave of him who in his life had been a champion of the oppressed. His chief festival was on the 8th of the month Pyanepsion (October 21st), but the 8th day of every month was also sacred to him.

Whatever we may think of the historical reality of Theseus, his legend seems to contain recollections of historical events, e.g., the συνοικισμóς, whether by this we understand the political central­ization of Attica at Athens or a local union of previously separate settlements on the site of Athens. The birth of Theseus at Trœzen points to the immigration of an Ionian family or tribe from the south. With this agrees the legend of the contest between Athene and Poseidon for supremacy on the acropolis of Athens, for Theseus is intimately connected with Poseidon, the great Ionian god. Ægeus, the father of Theseus, has been iden­tified by some modern scholars with Poseidon.

The Athenian festival in October, popularly supposed to com­memorate the return of Theseus from Crete, is interesting, as some of its features are identical with those of harvest-festivals still observed in the north of Europe. Thus the eiresione, a branch of olive wreathed with wool and decked with fruits, bread, &c., which was carried in procession and hung over the door of the house, where it was kept for a year, is the Erntemai (Harvest-may) of Germany.@@1

The well-preserved Doric temple to the north of the acropolis at Athens, commonly known as the Theseum, was long supposed to be the sanctuary in which the bones of Theseus reposed. But archæologists are now much divided on this question. It is agreed, however, that the temple is of the 5th century b.c., and that the date of its construction cannot differ widely from that of the Parthenon.@@2 There were several (according to Philochorus, four) temples or shrines of Theseus at Athens. Milchhofer thinks he has found one of them in the neighbourhood of Piraeus.@@3

Our chief authority for the legend of Theseus is the life by Plutarch, which is a compilation from earlier writers. G. Gilbert, who has investigated the sources from which Plutarch drew for his life of Theseus, believes that his chief authority was the *Atthis* of Ister, and that Ister mainly followed Philochorus. See *Philologus,* xxxiii., 1874, p. 46 *sq.*

There is a modern Greek folk-tale which preserves some features of the legend of Theseus and the Minotaur, but for the Minotaur has been substituted a seven­headed snake. See Bernard Schmidt, *Griechische Mährchen. Sagen, und Volks­lieder,* p. 118 *sq.* (J. G. FR.)

THESMOPHORIA, an ancient Greek festival, cele­brated by women only in honour of Demeter

Θϵ*σμoφóρoς.* At Athens, Abdera, and perhaps Sparta, it lasted three days. At Athens the festival took place on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of the month Pyanepsion (24th, 25th, and 26th October), the first day being called Anodos (ascent), or, according to others, Kathodos (descent), the second Nesteia (fast), and the third Kalligeneia (fair- born).@@4 If to these days we add the Thesmophoria, which were celebrated on the 10th at Halimus, a township on the coast near Athens, the festival lasted four days.@@5 If further we add the festival of the Stenia, which took place on the 9th, the whole festival lasted five days.@@6 The Stenia are said by Photius to have celebrated the return of Demeter from the lower world (Anodos), and the women railed at each other by night.@@7 The Thesmophoria at Halimus seem to have included dances on the beach.@@8 The great feature of the next day (the Anodos) is gene­rally assumed to have been a procession from Halimus to Athens, but this assumption seems to rest entirely on an interpretation of the name Anodos, and it loses all pro­bability when we observe that the day was by others called Kathodos.@@9 Probably both names referred to the descent of Demeter or Proserpine to the nether world, and her ascent from it.@@10 The next day, Nesteia, was a day of sorrow, the women sitting on the ground and fasting.@@11 As to what took place on the Kalligeneia we have no information. Nor can we define the time or nature of the secret ceremony called the “ pursuit,” or the “ Chalcidian pursuit,” and the sacrifice called the “penalty.”@@12

During the Thesmophoria (and for nine days previously, if Ovid, *Met.,* x. 434, is right, and refers to the Thesmo­phoria) the women abstained from intercourse with their

@@@1 See W. Mannhardt, Antike Wald- und Feld-Kulte, p. 212 sq.

@@@2 For the literature on the subject, see Milchhofer, in Baumeister’s Denkmäler des classischen Alterthums, i. p. 170.

@@@3 See Erläuternder Text to the Karten von Attika (Berlin, 1881), i. p. 37 sq.

@@@4 Schol. on Aristoph., Thesmophoriazusæ, 80 and 585 ; Diog. Laer., ix. 43 ; Hesychius, s.v. τριήμερos (the reading here is uncertain) and άvoδoς; Alciphron, iii. 39; Athenæus, 307f. Plutarch (Vit. Demosth., 30) states that the Nesteia took place on the 16th of Pyanepsion, but in this he stands alone.

@@@5 Schob on Aristoph., Thesm., 80; Photius, Lex., s.v. Θεσμοφορίων ήμέρaι δ' (where Naber should not have altered the MS. reading δ' into ιδ'); Hesychius, s.v. τρίτη Θεσμοφορίων.

@@@6 Schol. on Aristoph., Thesm., 834.

@@@7 Photius, Lex., s.v. στήνιa; cf. Apollodorus, i. 5, 1.

@@@8 Plut., Solon, 8 ; for this passage probably refers to the Thesmo­phoria, the CapeColias mentioned being near Halimus (see Erläuternder Text to the Karten von Attika, ii. 1 sq.). The Thesmophorium at Halimus is mentioned by Pausanias (i. 31, 1).

@@@9 Hesychius (s.v. άvoδoς) and the Schol. on Arist., Thesm., 585, suppose that the day was so called because the women ascended to the Thesmophorium, which (according to the scholiast) stood on a height. But no ancient writer mentions a procession from Halimus. For the name Kathodos, see Schol., loc. cit.; Photius, Lex., s.v. Θεσμοφορίων ήμέρaι δ'. For the statement that at one part of the festival (commonly assumed, by the writers who accept the statement, to be the Anodos) the women carried on their heads the “ books of the law,” we have only the authority of the scholiast on Theocritus, iv. 25, who displays his ignorance by describing the women as virgins (see below), and saying that they went in procession to Eleusis. The statement may therefore be dismissed as an etymological fiction. Aristophanes, Eccles., 222, is no evidence for the book-carrying.

@@@10 The Boeotian festival of Demeter, which was held at about the same time as the Athenian Thesmophoria, and at which the megara (see below) were opened, is distinctly stated by Plutarch (De Is. et Osir., 69) to have been a mourning for the descent (Kathodos) of Proserpine.

@@@11 Plut., Dem., 30; Id., De Is. et Osir., 69.

@@@12 Hesychius, s.v. δίωγμa; Suidas, s.v. χaλκιδικòv δίωγμa; Hesy­chius, s.v. ζημία. For flight and pursuit as parts of religious cere­monies, cf. Plutarch, Quæst. Græc., 38; Id., Quæst. Rom., 63; Id., De Def. Orac., 15; Ælian, Nat. An., xii. 34; Pausanias, i. 24, 4; Id., viii. 53, 3; Diodorus, i. 91 ; Lobeck, Aglaophamus, p. 676; Mar­quardt, Staatsverwaltung, 2d ed., iii. 323.