



# **Metamorphoses of Myth**

**A Study of the "Orphic" Gold Tablets and the Derveni Papyrus**

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Moss, September 2008

# Abbreviations

All abbreviations used in this thesis are taken from *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*<sup>3</sup>, except the following:

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Damascius <i>In Plat. Phaed.</i>    | Westerink, L. G. (1977), <i>The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo. Volume II: Damascius</i> . North-Holland Publishing Company: Amsterdam, Oxford, New York   |
| OF                                  | Orphicorum fragmenta   |
| Olympiodorus <i>In Plat. Phaed.</i> | Westerink, L. G. (1976), <i>The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo. Volume I: Olympiodorus</i> . North-Holland Publishing Company: Amsterdam, Oxford, New York |
| OT                                  | Orphicorum testimonia  |
| OV                                  | Orphicorum vestigia  |
| P Derv.                             | Papyrus Derveni  |
| P Gurôb                             | Papyrus Gurôb  |





# Introduction

Oswyn Murray, taking his lead from Bertrand Russell, has pointed out the importance of the scholar's geographical context for his or her understanding of the ancient Greek *polis*:

To the Germans the *polis* can only be described in a handbook of constitutional law; the French *polis* is a form of Holy Communion; the English *polis* is an historical accident; while the American *polis* combines the practices of a Mafia convention with the principles of justice and individual freedom.<sup>1</sup>

The statement is of course exaggerated, but it nevertheless shows how the approach of a scholar, or what the scholar is looking for in the chosen material, is shaped by context. The chronological context is perhaps of even greater importance as we are all influenced by various contemporary trends within the different fields of research.

As will become clear in the course of the first chapter, this holds true also for the study of Orphism. The scholar's context and approach have played a major role for past and present understandings and definitions of Orphism, and it is therefore important to acknowledge these past stages in the historiography in order to maintain a critical approach to the subject. This does not, of course, mean that a critical approach is a purely objective one. We will always be influenced by our contexts even when we are in opposition to them since this opposition in itself is a product of its contexts.<sup>2</sup> One of the reasons why it is important to acknowledge the various contexts a scholar is influenced by is the fragmented and often contradictory state of

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<sup>1</sup> Murray 1990:3.

<sup>2</sup> See Lakoff and Johnson 2003[1982]:210 ff. on what they call the "Myth of Objectivism".

the Orphic material.<sup>3</sup> The evidence, preserved in fragments scattered in the texts of various writers from the whole of Antiquity, leads to a situation where the scholar's interpretative approach becomes extremely important. This is illustrated by the questions posed by Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston in their recent treatment of what they call "the bacchic gold tablets":

how far is it legitimate to explain isolated pieces of information from the late archaic and classical age by means of the full picture provided only by Neoplatonic sources? Or, to put it differently: should we choose the most economical hypothesis that combines all the facts we have at our disposition, or should we choose other explanations, or even prefer to leave isolated details unexplained because there is no continuity between Greece of the fifth century BCE and that of the third century CE?<sup>4</sup>

These questions will be addressed through the study of the gold tablets in this thesis.

A review of a field's historiography is therefore not only practical for the reader, but in some cases necessary in order to understand the current approaches within the field and the reasons behind the current trends in a particular field of research. Furthermore, by presenting previous work on Orphism I hope to show how the corpus of Orphic fragments, the sources most scholars in this field have been tackling, has changed and grown over the years, especially during the last two centuries as new evidence has been made available. Despite this increase in available material there has been a tendency to disregard the consequences of these finds, or rather the multitude of possible interpretations that such a vast collection of material entails. I am thinking here of the tendency among earlier scholars, but also in some present works, to present Orphism as a complete, coherent system which we catch glimpses of through the numerous Orphic fragments. This assumption has prevailed even though the descriptions of this coherent system have changed over the years. Seen in light of the citation taken from Graf and Johnson this approach would appear as the "most economical", also known as the "maximalist" position which stands in opposition to the "minimalist" position.<sup>5</sup>

Considering the vast number of sources relating to Orphism, some selection is inevitable. In this thesis I have chosen to concentrate on the sources which during the

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<sup>3</sup> I will refer to the recent collection of Orphic fragments by Bernabé 2004, 2005a, 2007a throughout the thesis.

<sup>4</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:57.

<sup>5</sup> The terms "maximalist" and "minimalist" is taken from Prümmer 1956.

history of research on Orphism have been seen as the most "Orphic", namely the "Orphic" gold tablets and, following its discovery in 1962, the Derveni papyrus. The following study of these sources and their importance to the study of Orphism, will be seen as closer to a "minimalist" than a "maximalist" position. I hope that my arguments for taking this position will become clear in the following chapters. It would, however, be highly problematic to disregard the importance of other material which has also influenced the construction of Orphism over the years. Here fragments found in the texts of ancient authors ranging from Plato in the Classical period, via Cicero and Virgil in the Roman period, to the Neoplatonic philosopher Damascius in the fifth and sixth centuries AD are of major importance. Some of these will be introduced in my overview of previous research in Chapter One, while others, such as Cicero and Virgil, will be discussed in Chapter Five.

A survey of new finds, starting with the publication of two gold tablets from Crete in the beginning of the 1950s, will be presented in Chapter Two. As mentioned above I have chosen to concentrate on the gold tablets, but we will also take a brief look at the discoveries at Derveni and Olbia. It is interesting to see the increase in gold tablets finds, especially following the Hipponion find in 1969 (published in 1974).<sup>6</sup> Surely, the impact of new and improved archaeological methods is seen here. The chapter will also address the question of the tablets' religious backgrounds, a question which has been hotly debated since the 1940s following Wilamowitz' and Linforth's attacks on the Orphic categorization. Some previous suggestions will be considered before my views on how to approach the tablets, which follow the *bricoleur* theory advocated by Edmonds and Graf and Johnston, will be presented.<sup>7</sup> It will be argued that all the gold tablets need not be traced back to a single, unified religious movement, but rather that they were the products of itinerant, eclectic *manteis*.

Connected to the question of the religious background of the tablets is the so-called "cardinal myth" of Orphism, the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos, which will be analysed in Chapter Three. According to this myth, as it was recounted in some Neoplatonic texts, the infant Dionysos was killed and eaten by the Titans, an

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<sup>6</sup> Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974. Some gold tablets still await publication. Cf. the 15 gold tablets from Pella, Pariente 1990:787, and the tablet from Lesvos, Catling 1988-89:93, (numbered 8.1 in the appendix).

<sup>7</sup> Edmonds 2004a; Graf and Johnston 2007.

action which led to their downfall and subsequently the creation of mankind. The fact that man was created from the remains of the Titans meant that he also inherited their crime. The Orphic myth has thus been seen as a precursor to the Christian doctrine of original sin. This myth is attested in the texts of the Neoplatonists who claim that the myth was known to Plato. The antiquity and the actual contents of the myth have, however, been hotly debated. While some, such as Bernabé, date the myth, including the anthropogony and idea of original sin, to the fifth century BC, others, such as Edmonds, argue against this and even claim that the doctrine of original sin was not part of the myth until the interpretations of Comparetti in 1879.<sup>8</sup> Since the gold tablets and the Derveni papyrus both have been interpreted in light of this myth, our understanding of the myth is of great importance. A close analysis of the relevant sources that are normally invoked to support the antiquity of the myth shows that the myth might not be older than the third century BC. This early version of the myth seems, furthermore, to be a different version from the one we have in the Neoplatonic texts, since it does not mention anthropogony or any doctrine of original sin. Analyses of the relevant sources and the consequences of these will be presented in Chapter Three.

Having discarded the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos as an explanation of the gold tablet texts, Chapter Four seeks to interpret these texts in light of other material. I will focus on the ritual references found in the texts and show how parallels to the verses can be found in contemporary sources, especially funerary inscriptions. It will be shown how the verses, and my reading of them, support the suggestion that the tablets were the products of itinerant *manteis* who were not necessarily members of the same religious cult, but that they tried to attract potential initiates through a mixture of secrecy and more familiar concepts such as the origin of the soul in their texts.

Chapter Five will consider some other sources which have been relevant for the study of Orphism: The Apulian vases, in particular the Toledo krater, and the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*. I will discuss to what degree we might find traces of Orphic doctrines, or Orphic influence, in these sources, and use these case-studies to take a critical look at how Orphism have been used to explain these sources and vice versa.

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<sup>8</sup> Examples of the debate are Edmonds 1999 and the response by Bernabé 2002a.

The last chapter takes a closer look at the Derveni papyrus, found in 1962 and now finally published in 2006.<sup>9</sup> Drawing on conclusions from Chapter Three I will analyse this important text, with special emphasis on the deities and the connection between the "ritual" and the theogonic parts of the text, leaving the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos out of the discussion. One reason for this is chronology, since the Derveni text is older than our first reference to the myth, another is the fact that the text itself leaves no room for a successor after Zeus. We do not have to look to later texts in order to interpret the Derveni papyrus.

Finally, at the end is a catalogue of the corpus of gold tablets. Here I have provided the texts, dates, bibliography, archaeological finds, and contexts of each published tablet. A concordance is found at the end of the catalogue for easy reference.

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<sup>9</sup> Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a.



# Chapter 1

## The Study of Orphism

definierbar ist nur Das, was keine Geschichte hat  
*Friedrich Nietzsche*<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss how some scholars from the late eighteenth century and onwards interpreted the Orphic material and how their views on the subject were influenced by current trends. A selection of scholars is necessary given the vast number of books and articles which have been written on the subject. I will concentrate on the chronological context since I find that this has been the more important factor behind the various shifts, and hence present the history of research in a mostly chronological fashion. This does not mean, however, that I will disregard the geographical context, I will point to this where I find it to be of particular importance.

My focus in the first section on Orphic research is concentrated on two authors from the late eighteenth century, namely Dieterich Tiedemann (1748 – 1803) and Thomas Taylor (1758 – 1835), and some of their successors. This period saw the birth of modern scholarship on Orphism and the picture which was drawn then is of major importance for later presentations. Even though Lobeck's *Aglaophamus*, published in 1829, is considered by most to be the starting point of the modern scholarship on Orphism I have chosen to start my survey almost fifty years earlier.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this is that it will show how Orphism was debated in the late eighteenth century,

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Marie-Theres Federhofer for this quote.

<sup>2</sup> Prümm 1956:4; Alderink 1981:7; Edmonds 2004a:37. It should be noted that since Lobeck's work has been the subject of many studies I have chosen not to concentrate on this.



revealing views which are illuminating for our understanding of later work on the subject, and because I believe it is hard to pinpoint when "modern scholarship" on the subject started. For example, I can see no major differences in the methodology of Tiedemann in the eighteenth century and Müller in the nineteenth century.

A second stage in the study of Orphism was initiated by the discoveries of the "Orphic" gold tablets in southern Italy and Domenico Comparetti's treatment of them, and also by the specific approach to Orphism which now became increasingly "Christian" both in how scholars interpreted their material and also concerning the language they used, the latter being a major influence on the former. This period lasted until the critical reactions of Wilamowitz and Linforth during the 1930s and 1940s. These reactions initiated a third period, which, to a great extent, was characterized by uncertainty and a reluctance to write anything on Orphism. The beginning of the fourth period, which will be treated briefly in the next chapter, can roughly be dated to the 1970s which saw the publication of the Hipponion gold tablet in 1974 and the publication of the Olbia tablets four years later. The availability of this new material in turn reopened the field to new approaches.<sup>3</sup> It is within this period that I see today's research, and hence where I will try to locate my own work.

It is always dangerous to conjure up a coherent picture of a research field's historiography. Although I will present and concentrate on the major changes and argue that we can identify some of the major forces behind the development within the study of Orphism, I remain fully aware that I will never be able to account for all the reasons underlying the different changes nor do I wish to claim that my presentation is the only correct one.

## **1.2 The role of philosophy: Orphism from Tiedemann to Müller, 1780 – 1841**

Philip Smith remarked in 1867 that previous scholars had assumed for a long time, wrongly in his opinion, that Orpheus had been an historical person who at one specific time in history wrote the religious literature which later became the *hieroi logoi* of the Orphic communities.<sup>4</sup> However, reading the works of Taylor and Tiedemann we see that there was some disagreement on the matter at the end of the eighteenth century. Taylor fits Smith's description somewhat when he argues that

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<sup>3</sup> Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974; Rusjaeva 1978.

<sup>4</sup> Smith 1867:62.

Orpheus was an historical, or rather pre-historical, person whose father was king Oeagrus of Thrace. According to Taylor Orpheus was "the founder of theology, among the Greeks" and he considered him even to be "the first of prophets".<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Orpheus had taught the Greeks the mysteries and their sacred rites.<sup>6</sup> Basing his account on ancient mythographers Taylor assumed that Orpheus had lived approximately two-hundred years prior to Homer, which meant sometime in the tenth or ninth century BC, and that he died at the age of 63.<sup>7</sup> As we shall see, the historicity of Orpheus was quite important for the Renaissance scholars who studied Orphism. Tiedemann, on the other hand, was sceptical and even though he was ready to accept that Orpheus lived about two-hundred years prior to Homer he argued that the works which according to the *Suda* had been written by Orpheus most probably had been written by several people at different times and that the name "Orpheus" in the *Suda* was a convenient label, more than an actual reference to an historical person.<sup>8</sup> Both Plato and Aristotle, writes Tiedemann, referred to the Orphic poems as a genre.<sup>9</sup>

Both Taylor and Tiedemann, despite their different opinions on Orpheus, agreed that most of the Orphic material was written in the sixth century and that the author, or rather editor, of some of these texts could be identified as Onomakritos of Athens.<sup>10</sup> There is nothing in their works which indicate any form of contact between them, nor do they, as far as I know, refer to each other either. According to

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<sup>5</sup> Taylor 1792:2. See Diod. Sic. 3.65 ff. = OT 502 Bernabé who claims the same.

<sup>6</sup> Claimed by Diod. Sic. 5.64.4 = OT 519 Bernabé. See also Ps-Demosthenes 25.11 = OF 33 Bernabé; Eur. *Rhesos* 943-4 = OT 511 Bernabé; Ar. *Ran.* 1032 = OT 510 Bernabé.

<sup>7</sup> Taylor 1792:11. See Pl. *Ap.* 41a = OT 1076 (I) Bernabé where Orpheus is mentioned first in the series of poets (Musaeus, Hesiod, Homer) Socrates looks forward to meet in Hades. The same list is repeated by Hippias 86 B 6 DK, quoted by Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.15.2 Stählin = OT 1146 Bernabé. Cp. also Pl. *Ion* 536a-b = OT 1140 Bernabé although Hesiod is missing here. Procl. *Life of Homer* 26.14 Wilamowitz = OT 871 (I) Bernabé claims that Orpheus lived ten generations prior to Homer. See also Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 402f. = OT 1021 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>8</sup> Tiedemann 1780:39; see also Graf and Johnston 2007:50 who see the works of Gottfried Hermann (1772-1848) as an example of this. The *Suda* or *Suidas* is a lexicon containing not only titles of works from ancient authors but in some cases also a short summary and sometimes quotations from works, most of which are lost. The *Suda* was compiled sometime in the tenth century AD.

<sup>9</sup> Tiedemann 1780:36; Pl. *Ion* 536b = OT 1140 Bernabé.

<sup>10</sup> Recorded by Tatianus *Ad Gr.* 41, p. 42.4 Schwartz = OT 1110 (I) Bernabé; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131 Stählin = OT 1018 (III) Bernabé; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.30 = OF 108 (I) Bernabé; see Linforth 1941:351. Onomakritos was ascribed authorship of the Orphic texts no earlier than the second century AD. Before that there seems to have been a debate regarding the authenticity of the texts. Aristotle (Philoponus, in *Aristot. de anima* A 5.410b27 = OT 1115 Bernabé) recorded that critics doubted that Orpheus had written any poetry, a view he seems to agree with (see also Cic. *De natura deorum* 1.107 = OT 889 (I) Bernabé). Aelian *Var. Hist.* 8.6 = OT 1028 Bernabé reports that the Athenian historian Androtios, in the fourth century BC, dismissed Orpheus as the author since he was from Thrace and therefore must have been illiterate. For Taylor, Onomakritos was the author of all Orphic texts, Taylor 1792:85f.

Herodotus, Onomakritos, together with Orpheus of Croton, Zopyrus of Heraclea and a fourth unknown poet, was commissioned by the family of the tyrant Peisistratos, who ruled Athens in the late sixth century BC, to collect the oracles of Musaeus, the famed son of Orpheus. Onomakritos was, however, caught in an act of forgery when he tried to insert a false oracle into the collection and was exiled for this around 500 BC, but he was later pardoned for this.<sup>11</sup> According to Pausanias he was also the author of several works connected to the orgies of Dionysos, most notably one on the myth where the god was killed and torn asunder by the Titans.<sup>12</sup>

Tiedemann's view, that Orpheus was used as a pseudonym since Orpheus already in the sixth century BC was considered a religious authority, was echoed by Otto Kern more than a century later. Kern argued that since the Orphic communities were scattered all over the Greco-Roman world the use of an established religious authority was needed.<sup>13</sup> This is still more or less the dominant view.<sup>14</sup> Taylor considered Onomakritos as the editor of the Orphic texts referred to in the *Suda*, a conjecture which was later supported by Auguste Bouché-Leclercq, and to some extent by Philip Smith who argued that among the numerous texts written under the name of Orpheus in antiquity only those by Onomakritos and Pherekydes of Syros could be considered pure, since later, post-sixth century, Orphic thought merged with Pythagorean philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Remains of this pure Orphic system is found, according to Smith, in the Orphic Theogony known by the Neoplatonists as the Rhapsodic Theogony, the fullest Orphic Theogony which has survived. Both Tiedemann and Taylor considered this a genuine Orphic work, but disagreed on the question of authorship. Tiedemann favoured Theognetes or Kerkops the Pythagorean while Taylor ascribed it, together with all other Orphic texts, to Onomakritos.<sup>16</sup> Smith also

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<sup>11</sup> Hdt. 7.6. See also Paus. 1.22.7 who has read a poem by Musaeus which in his opinion was written by Onomakritos.

<sup>12</sup> Paus. 8.37.5.

<sup>13</sup> Kern 1890:10 n2.

<sup>14</sup> See West 1983:3, following the conclusions of Linforth 1941:291 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Smith 1867:62; Bouché-Leclercq 1879 II:114. Müller 1875 [1841] I:391 is more cautious and is content to conclude that the writings of Pherekydes had more in common with the Orphic writings than with Hesiod. The *Suda* claims that it was Pherekydes of Syros (or Athens?) that collected the works of Orpheus (*Suda* s.v. Φερεκύδης = 1127 T Bernabé). On Onomakritos Smith is following Müller 1875[1841] I:392 who claims that he had nothing to do with the Pythagorean movement, *contra* Tiedemann and Taylor who, as we shall see, considered him a Pythagorean. It is not easy to see why they referred to Onomakritos' writings as "pure" Orphic since they both considered him a Pythagorean.

<sup>16</sup> Tiedemann 1780:40, referring to Cic. *de N. D.* 1.36. Taylor 1792:85 f.

dated this theogony back to the sixth century BC even though our earliest surviving source which speaks of and quotes from it is from the fourth century AD.<sup>17</sup>

The other great work which received the attention of both scholars was a collection of 88 Orphic Hymns which is not mentioned in the *Suda*. The first reference to a collection of Orphic hymns is found in a commentary on Hesiod's *Theogony* from the twelfth century by Ioannes Galenos. However, we cannot be sure that the collection Galenos mentions is the same as the collection of Orphic hymns we have today. An edition of the collection was found in Constantinople and brought to Venice by Giovanni Aurispa in 1423. In 1427, another collection of Orphic hymns was brought to Italy by Franciscus Philadelphus and some time later another four copies were in circulation. All these copies have been lost, but by 1500 an *editio princeps* of the Orphic hymns was published in Florence. We do not know how closely this edition resembles the Aurispa copy, or any of the other codices which circulated at that time, but we can suspect that there were some differences.<sup>18</sup> This *editio princeps* contains eighty-seven hymns to various gods introduced by an additional hymn from Orpheus to Musaeos. Most of the hymns are dedicated to a god, most of whom are known from the Greek pantheon. Some are also directed towards various aspects of nature such as the winds Boreas (80), Zephyros (81), and Notos (82), the Clouds<sup>19</sup> (21), the Stars (7) as well as Nature (10) itself. Three of the gods, Mise<sup>20</sup> (42), Hipta (49), and Melinoe<sup>21</sup> (71), are only known from inscriptions in Asia Minor, a fact that made Kern suggest that the hymns were originally collected and used by a Dionysiac *thiasos* at the sanctuary of Demeter in Pergamon.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The idea that the Rhapsodic Theogony was a product from sixth century BC was also argued for by Lobeck 1829 and later scholars, see Nilsson 1921:242, Kern 1890:5. Kern 1890:10 argues for the theogony's Attic origin, as does Rohde 1903 [1893] II:106, and others. Rohde 1903 [1893] II:415-16, however, dates the Rhapsodic Theogony to the time of the Hieronyman Theogony. We will return to this theogony and the problems of dating later in this chapter, and more thoroughly again in the analysis of the Derveni papyrus in Chapter Six.

<sup>18</sup> The Orphic hymns must have been quite popular when they appeared. According to Athanassakis thirty-six codices, all with their differences, were produced between 1450 and 1550. For a brief history of the hymns see Athanassakis 1977:xiii. The hymns have recently been translated into Italian, see Ricciardelli 2000. The most recent edition of the hymns is found in Morand 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ar. *Nub.* where the Clouds play a significant role as teachers of wisdom.

<sup>20</sup> Presented in the hymn as the hermaphroditic "sister" of Dionysos.

<sup>21</sup> This is in fact the only reference we have to this goddess. Melinoe is otherwise used as an epithet to Hecate.

<sup>22</sup> Kern 1911:435 f. Wilamowitz 1931 II:516 and Linforth 1941:185 are reluctant to ascribe the hymns to Pergamon but nevertheless suggest Asia Minor. The exact place where the hymns were produced and used is not known. See Athanassakis 1977:viii f.

Taylor believed that the Orphic hymns were written by Onomakritos.<sup>23</sup> Tiedemann, however, was more cautious and argued that while most of them were by Onomakritos, some were written at a later date by other Pythagoreans and some even by Neoplatonists. Onomakritos was believed to be the author since some of the hymns were directed to typically "Orphic" gods such as Protogonos and Nyx, but also because of the dominance of Dionysos, who is the addressee of seven hymns while Zeus, by comparison, receives only three. Onomakritos, it will be remembered, was said to have authored a series of writings on the Dionysiac rites. Taylor found further evidence for dating the collection to the sixth century in in the first five lines of the hymn to Dike which he translates (rather freely):

The piercing eye of Justice bright, I sing,  
Plac'd by the throne of heav'n's almighty king,  
Perceiving thence, with vision unconfin'd,  
The life and conduct of the human kind  
To thee, revenge and punishment belong,<sup>24</sup>

Taylor found an echo of these lines in Demosthenes' first speech against Aristogiton:

Let us, says the orator overlooking all custom, judge righteous judgment; let us reverence Eunomia that loves equity, and preserves states; and inexorable Dike right or justice whom Orpheus our instructor, in the most holy initiations, places by the throne of Jove, inspecting the affairs of men. Let each of us imagine her piercing eye is now upon us, and think and vote so as not to dishonour *her* from whom every judge has his name.<sup>25</sup>

This was enough for Taylor to ascribe the whole collection of hymns to a period prior to the fourth century BC, and what better candidate for authorship existed in that

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<sup>23</sup> Taylor 1792:85.

<sup>24</sup> Ὀμμα Δίκης μέλπω πανδερκέος, ἀγλαομόρφου, | ἥ καὶ Ζηνὸς ἄνακτος ἐπὶ θρόνον ἱερὸν ἵζει  
| οὐρανόθεν καθορώσα βίον θνητῶν πολυφύλων, | τοῖς ἀδίκοις τιμωρὸς ἐπιβρίθουσα δικάια.

<sup>25</sup> τὴν τὰ δίκαι' ἀγαπῶσαν Εὐνομίαν περὶ πλείστου ποιησαμένους, ἥ πάσας καὶ πόλεις καὶ  
χώρας σώζει· καὶ τὴν ἀπαραίτητον καὶ σεμνὴν Δίκην, ἣν ὁ τὰς ἀγιωτάτας ἡμῖν τελετὰς  
καταδείξας Ὀρφεὺς παρὰ τὸν τοῦ Διὸς θρόνον φησὶ καθημένην πάντα τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
ἐφορᾶν, εἰς αὐτὸν ἕκαστον νομίσαντα βλέπειν οὕτω ψηφίζεσθαι, φυλαττόμενον καὶ  
προορώμενον μὴ καταισχύναι ταύτην. (pseudo-)Demosthenes 25.11 = OF 33 Bernabé. Taylor  
1792:192f. Demosthenes (384 – 322 BC) is considered the greatest orator of Athens. The comparison  
of Demosthenes' speech and the Orphic Hymn to Dike was repeated a hundred years later by Dieterich  
1969[1893]:139, although Dieterich, and later scholars, have doubts on the authorship of the speech  
(Dieterich suggests the author is an Orphic), the reference is sorted under pseudo-Demosthenes in  
Bernabé's collection. The speech is normally dated to the time of Demosthenes. See Gruppe 1902:1096  
and Linforth 1941:100 for a discussion on the teletai mentioned in the speech. It is curious that the  
author of the speech refers to Orpheus since Hes. *WD* 255-264 claims the same, see Linforth 1941:144-  
146 for a brief discussion.

period than Onomakritos?<sup>26</sup> Taylor also argued that the collection of hymns had been written by one person based on the ordering of the hymns, since the first hymn was addressed to Prothyraea, an epithet of Artemis as the protector of life, and the last to Thanatos, death, thus forming a nice metaphor for human life.<sup>27</sup>

The date of these hymns has been widely debated.<sup>28</sup> Tiedemann, for example, did not share Taylor's view, but argued instead that it is impossible to give a precise date to the whole collection since the individual hymns most probably had been written by different people at different stages in history. While most of the hymns, Tiedemann argued, were probably from the time of Peisistratos and from the Orphic school ("Orphischen Schule"), some were considerably later. The first hymn, from Orpheus to Musaeus, he argued, was most probably written by a Neoplatonist since it (in line 15) calls upon Pan the great (Πᾶνα μέγιστον). Pan was known as a "Hirten-Gott" in the Classical period and only become "great" as the symbol of All (pan), or the universe, in the centuries following the birth of Christ.<sup>29</sup> Tiedemann gives more examples of the same sort and traces the ideas behind a number of hymns back to various philosophical schools such as the Stoics, Pythagoreans, Neoplatonists, in addition to the Orphics.

But while Taylor and Tiedemann disagreed on the date and authorship of the hymns, they nevertheless agreed in seeing Onomakritos as a Pythagorean writing under the name of Orpheus.<sup>30</sup> The thought that a Pythagorean had written most of the Orphic texts did not surprise them as a close connection between Orphic and Pythagorean texts, rites, and theology was suggested not only by the similarities in the surviving material, but also by ancient authors such as Herodotus.<sup>31</sup> Ion of Chios, writing in the fifth century BC, even maintained that Pythagoras wrote some texts

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<sup>26</sup> Taylor 1792:85f.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor 1792:114. We have no idea if today's collection(s), or the one Taylor read, resemble the ancient edition(s). Athanassakis' edition has the hymn to Hecate as the first, a hymn not found in Taylor's edition. According to Athanassakis 1977:113 Prothyraia is also an epithet to Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth, and Hecate, often identified with Artemis.

<sup>28</sup> Dates from the sixth century BC to the third century AD have been suggested. Most scholars today agrees with Wilamowitz 1931 II:514 who argued that the hymns, based on an analysis of language and styles, should be dated to the end of the second century AD at the earliest.

<sup>29</sup> Tiedemann 1780:83. See also hymn 11 Athanassakis where, in the first line, Pan is referred to as both a pastoral god and the universe (κόσμοιο τὸ σύμπαν), having the sky, sea, land and the immortal fire as his realm (lines 2-3).

<sup>30</sup> Tiedemann 1780:70; Taylor 1792:92.

<sup>31</sup> Hdt. 2.81.

under Orpheus' name.<sup>32</sup> A link between Orpheus and philosophy in general was further strengthened by the connection between Pythagoras and Plato, and Taylor argued that Platonic philosophy contained the key to understanding the Orphic material since it had been transmitted first from Orpheus to Pythagoras and then from Pythagoras to Plato and heavily influenced the latter's philosophy.<sup>33</sup> It was also agreed that Orphism merged more or less completely with Pythagoreanism sometime during the fifth century, presumably in the second half of it, as a result of the persecution of Pythagoreans in southern Italy around 450 BC.<sup>34</sup> Taylor saw the "Orphic theology", a term used extensively in his edition of the Orphic hymns, as belonging to the philosophical sphere, transcending the "creed of the ancients", i.e. the more base polis-religion of the common people.<sup>35</sup>

For Taylor, then, it was through philosophical texts, Platonic and especially Neoplatonic, that an interpretation and complete understanding of Orphic theology was to be sought.<sup>36</sup> The same approach and emphasis on Neoplatonic texts, although for different reasons, is found in Tiedemann's work. Neither the Orphic fragments nor the Orphic hymns, argued Tiedemann, could be used to reconstruct the Orphic system.<sup>37</sup> For him, the material prior to the second century AD was for the most part a contradictory and confused mix of ideas from several theological and philosophical schools which only became transparent through the writings and quotations of the

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<sup>32</sup> Ion of Chios 36 B 2 DK. From his work Τριγαμοί according to Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131 Stählin = OT 1018 (III) Bernabé, and Diog. Laert. 8.8 = OT 1144 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>33</sup> "[W]e should derive all our information concerning the Orphic theology, from the writings of the Platonists; not indeed without reason. For this sublime theology descended from Orpheus to Pythagoras, and from Pythagoras to Plato;", Taylor 1792:90. See also Taylor 1792:24 where "the Orphic and Platonic theology" is considered one, and Taylor 1792:162 where the same is done with "the Orphic and Pythagorean doctrine". According to Iambli. *VP* 28.146 = OT 508 (I) Bernabé and Procl. *In Ti.* 3.168.9 = OT 1144 (IV) Bernabé Plato learned the idea that the structure of reality is based on numerical proportions from Orpheus through Pythagoras (and Aglaophemus), Walker 1953:100.

<sup>34</sup> Apollonius *FGrHist* 1064 F 2.257-60; Aristox. frg. 18 Wehrli; on dating see Riedweg 2005:105. Müller 1875[1841] I:391f.; Taylor 1792:91f. From around 400 BC authors sometimes ascribe Orphic texts to Pythagoreans, e.g. Brontinus who is supposed to have written two Orphic texts, the Φυσικά and Πέπλος καὶ δίκτυον. These two texts, together with the Ἰερός λόγος and the Εἰς Ἄιδου κατὰ βᾶσις was considered Orphic by Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* 1.21.131 Stählin = OT 1018 (III) Bernabé and Pythagorean by Epigenes, who ascribed them to Cercops, otherwise unknown to us, West 1983:9.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor 1792:83.

<sup>36</sup> Taylor 1792:13; Taylor 1969 [1791]:411. The latter work was published in either 1790 or 1791. I have chosen to use 1791 while referring to it. Taylor's approach to the mysteries through philosophy partly agrees with Aristotle's view on the early poets as θεολόγοι "who were only darkly aware of the truths later to be unambiguously stated by philosophy.", Hardie 1992:4745. See also Pl. *Phd.* 69c-d where participants in the mysteries are described as "true philosophers".

<sup>37</sup> Tiedemann 1780:85.

Neoplatonists. Furthermore, it is in the Neoplatonic texts, by Proclus, Damascius and Olympiodorus, that the longest surviving treatments of and quotations from Orphic texts are found (such as the Rhapsodic Theogony). Tiedemann also expanded this, in his view, reliable material to include the polemic writings of the early Christian church-fathers, especially those by Athenagoras and Clement of Alexandria.<sup>38</sup> But whereas Tiedemann's choice was more concerned with the state and reliability of the individual text, Taylor had a more esoteric approach, claiming that the Neoplatonists had understood the real meaning of the Orphic theology. In fact, in his treatment of Orphism and philosophy, Taylor argued that the myths of Plato, e.g. the myth of Er in the *Republic*, were directly inspired by Orphic theology and eschatology, a view which many scholars today subscribe to.<sup>39</sup> We come then to Taylor's construction of "the Orphic theology".

In Plato's myth, Er, a Pamphylian warrior who has died on the battlefield but returns to life after twelve days, gives an account of what he saw while wandering from the realm of the living on his way to Hades. He relates how, after a long journey, he came to a crossroad where two roads led upwards to heaven while two led down into the earth. Gathered in front of these roads were numerous people, in different attires, some fresh and happy, others gloomy and sad, discussing with each other the pains they had endured below the earth and what happiness had awaited those that went up to the heavens. The newly dead arriving at the crossroads, together with Er, awaited judgement and thus either penalties or rewards based on their actions in life. After spending the allotted time either on earth or in the heavens the souls, Er tells us, are sent back to the crossroads where they spend seven days before heading off to Ananke's wheel where their next lives will be determined. Plato thus finishes the *Republic* with an eschatological myth where moral judgement is passed on each soul based on how it had led its life. Regardless of their crimes or virtues all souls, excluding the notorious and unforgivable sinners such as the tyrant Ardiaeus the Great who had, among other things, murdered both his father and brother, were eventually reborn after having chosen a new life for themselves at Ananke's wheel. The choices were based on experiences drawn from their previous lives and thus the jester

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<sup>38</sup> Tiedemann 1780: 85, 64.

<sup>39</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 10.614b ff. = OV 641 Bernabé.



Thersites chose to be reborn as a monkey, while Orpheus was reborn as a swan since his hatred towards women made him refuse to be born from one ever again.<sup>40</sup>

This myth, which is Plato's own creation, fits with his eschatology and moral philosophy where the idea of metempsychosis was well embedded.<sup>41</sup> The theory of metempsychosis also presupposes the idea that the soul is immortal.<sup>42</sup> According to Taylor this myth was taken from Orphic theology, where the idea of metempsychosis was first formulated, through Pythagoras.<sup>43</sup> According to Plato, the souls needed to be purified in order to transcend this cycle of births. Such a process would take several lives to be fulfilled, each with a more pure and wise way of living, until the soul lived its last life as a philosopher and was able to escape the body, which was seen as a prison for the soul. This particular doctrine, that the body is the prison of the soul (the *soma-sema* doctrine) is related in the *Cratylus* and there ascribed by Plato to "the Orphic poets" (οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα).<sup>44</sup> According to them, Plato relates, the soul is kept in the body as a punishment for something until the penalty has been paid. The way out of this prison was, for Plato, through wisdom and philosophy. For the Orphics, according to Taylor, it was through initiation into the mysteries of Orpheus.

The *soma-sema* doctrine is particularly interesting and can serve as starting point for Taylor's view of "the Orphic theology". In his commentary on the *Phaedo* the Neoplatonist Olympiodorus (sixth century AD) makes use of the passage in order to explain Plato's prohibition against suicide.<sup>45</sup> According to Olympiodorus Plato employed two arguments against suicide, one mystic, Orphic, and forbidden (μυθικοῦ

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<sup>40</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 10.620a = OT 1077 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>41</sup> Metempsychosis in Plato is also connected to his theory of the origin of knowledge. In dialogues such as the *Phaedo* he argues that as man grows up the soul starts to remember things from previous lives (a theory that explains the ability to speak and learn languages for example). Knowledge is thus latent in every soul and is uncovered as we grow up.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Pl. *Phdr.* 245c. That souls are immortal was, according to one tradition, first formulated by Pherekydes of Syros, Cic. *Tusc.* 1.16.38. According to Diogenes Laertius (11 A 1 (24) DK) the idea was put forward already by Thales of Milet.

<sup>43</sup> That Pythagoras taught his students about metempsychosis is well attested. One of the most famous is the passage in Xenophanes 21 B 7 DK where Pythagoras is supposed to have put an end to the beating of a dog by claiming that he recognized the barking as the voice of a friend he used to have which now had been reborn into the dog.

<sup>44</sup> Pl. *Cra.* 400c. Plato returns to the *soma-sema* doctrine in *Phd.* 62b. See also *Phdr.* 250c where he describes souls as entombed in the body, "imprisoned like an oyster in its shell." (tr. H. N. Fowler). We will return to this particular doctrine later in the thesis, but for now it will suffice to point out that it is actually different from the eschatology presented in the Myth of Er. The *soma-sema* doctrine which Plato attributes to the Orphic poets focus on punishment *in life*, meaning that the soul is already being punished. In the myth of Er, by contrast, punishments, or rewards, take place in *after death*.

<sup>45</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 61c ff.

καὶ Ὀρφικοῦ καὶ ἀπορρήτου), the other dialectic and philosophical.<sup>46</sup> It is the first of these which is of interest here.

The Orphic argument, according to Olympiodorus, was based on the Rhapsodic Theogony. Here a sequence of four divine kingdoms are related, the first being the rule of Ouranos who was then followed by Kronos (who castrated his father), Zeus (who sent his father to Tartaros), and finally Dionysos, which takes us beyond Hesiod's *Theogonia* which ended with the establishment of Zeus' kingdom.<sup>47</sup> While still an infant Dionysos received the sceptre of power from his father Zeus and thus became the new ruler of the gods. Hera, Zeus' jealous wife, then plotted against the newborn ruler and convinced the Titans to lure him away from the throne with various toys.<sup>48</sup> When the Titans were alone with Dionysus they attacked him, tore him apart and ate him. This act of rebellion was not taken lightly by Zeus who immediately blasted the Titans with his thunderbolt. Athena managed to save the heart of Dionysos, from which Zeus was able to resurrect him. From the ashes of the Titans Zeus created mankind. Suicide, Olympiodorus continues, is therefore forbidden, not only because our bodies are prisons (which is obvious) but because we are a part of Dionysos and our souls belong to him.<sup>49</sup> This myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos served as both an explanation for the imprisonment of the soul in the body and, for Taylor, as a prototype for subsequent myths of *katabaseis* such as the Rape of Persephone<sup>50</sup> and Virgil's account of Aeneas' descent into Dis as told in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, since the real meaning behind these *katabaseis* was to show how the soul descended into the body.<sup>51</sup>

The emphasis on philosophy as the key to understanding the Orphic theology was essential for Taylor and it was therefore natural for him to base many of his

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<sup>46</sup> Olympiodorus *In Plat. Phaed.* I § 1 Westerink.

<sup>47</sup> The four kingdoms correspond to the four gradations of virtue: theoretical, cathartical, political, and ethical. Taylor 1969 [1791]:362 hails this as "beautifully" observed.

<sup>48</sup> According to Clement of Alexandria *Protr.* 2.17.2-18.1 = OF 306 Bernabé these toys were used in Dionysiac rites. He lists them as being a spinning-top, pine nut, apples, mirror, fleece of wool, and an ankle-bone. See Taylor 1969 [1791]:414-6.

<sup>49</sup> Olympiodorus *In Plat. Phaed.* I § 3 Westerink. See also Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* I § 1 Westerink. This myth and its importance for Orphism will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>50</sup> Taylor 1969 [1791]:382.

<sup>51</sup> Taylor 1969 [1791]:373. See also Molyviati-Toptsis 1994 for a renewed attempt of connecting Virgil's account of Aeneas' *katabasis* to "Orphic-Pythagorean ideas of the after-life." According to her Virgil's Elysium was influenced by descriptions found in Homer and on the gold tablets from Thurii which she describes as "Orphic-Pythagorean". Her theory will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

interpretations on the Neoplatonists. Another example of this is found in his examination of the Orphic pantheon. Here Taylor argues against the view, which he ascribes to William Warburton, that the mysteries, in general, saw the different gods in their pantheon as merely different aspects of one God.<sup>52</sup> This view is supported by a passage by Macrobius (early fifth century AD) who wrote that all gods, according to Orpheus, are just aspects of one deity: The Sun.<sup>53</sup> Taylor dismisses this as a mistake on Macrobius' part because "it is sufficiently evident to those who are skilled in the Orphic theology, that Orpheus was a polytheist as well as a monarchist."<sup>54</sup> By this he meant that the Orphic Theology saw one God as the ruler, the monarch, and that the other gods held their individual posts in the maintenance of the world, but that they all answered to this one god. The meaning behind this polytheism, he continues, is of course philosophical in the sense that the universe, according to Orpheus, has one soul which is common and unites everything. This soul is God or Intellect, under which everything is subordinated.<sup>55</sup> This paradoxical idea, Taylor argued, that God is united with everything and at the same time separated from it, was taught to Orpheus on his legendary travels to Egypt.<sup>56</sup>

This Platonic interpretation employed by Taylor followed closely in the footsteps of the Neoplatonists. The ties to Egypt are also telling since it was seen as a source of ancient wisdom by many of Plato's contemporaries and also by subsequent generations for many centuries to come. Especially the Neoplatonic idea of "the One", an abstract "being" or "entity" from which everything had originated and were therefore united with and at the same time separated from, was thought to have been formulated by Plotinus under the influence of Philo of Alexandria and Egyptian theology and philosophy.<sup>57</sup> One could thus see a common place of origin for the

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<sup>52</sup> William Warburton (1698-1779) is most commonly connected with Alexander Pope (1688-1744) on whose *Essay on Man* he wrote a commentary in 1742. Warburton also worked on the Greek mysteries, most notably the Eleusinian. On Warburton and his influence, see Cherpak 1955.

<sup>53</sup> The "Sun" referred to by Macrobius could very well be Phanes, which means light. See Orphic hymn 6.8 Athanassakis: λαμπρὸν ἄγων φῶς ἄγνόν, ἄφ' οὗ σε Φάνητα κικλήσκω ("you brought light. For this I call you Phanes" tr. Athanassakis).

<sup>54</sup> Taylor 1792:174. See also Taylor 1792:29. We will return to the question of polytheism and gods as aspects of one major God in the analysis of the Derveni papyrus in Chapter Six.

<sup>55</sup> Taylor 1792:25.

<sup>56</sup> Taylor 1792:33-4. Hdt. 2.81 connects Orphic rites with Egyptian rites. There was also a tradition that told of Orpheus' travel to Egypt prior to Argo's expedition, Diod. Sic. 1.96 = OT 55 Bernabé, 4.25.

<sup>57</sup> Dodds 1928:129-30. Georg Friedrich Creuzer, the author of *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1810-12), argued that Neoplatonists were "mystics" and that their philosophy was therefore incomprehensible for the common man or philosopher. Dodds 1928:129 refers to this as "the least pardonable of Creuzer's many sins."

Orphic theology which later also influenced the Neoplatonists: Egypt. The close connection between philosophy and theology, or rather mystery-cults, whose origins were also frequently placed in Egypt, is apparent in one interpretation which proposes that Plotinus received knowledge and insight to write his doctrine of “the One”, which transcends our intellect, after experiencing a *unio mystica* with it.<sup>58</sup> Whether we believe this or not the doctrine of “the One” is, in Dodds’ opinion, older than Plotinus; in fact it can be traced back to Plato and his dialogue the *Parmenides*.<sup>59</sup> At the end of the *Parmenides* Plato explains how existence can be unified and One and still contain different parts which are separate from each other. The importance of this doctrine made Iamblichus claim the *Parmenides* together with *Timaeus* as indispensable tools in order to obtain salvation.<sup>60</sup> Dodds sees this doctrine as influential also for the Neopythagoreans who adopted the idea in their cosmology.<sup>61</sup> We see then a close connection between philosophy and initiation which is not just emphasized by Taylor and later scholars but also by writers in antiquity from Plato to Plotinus.

The emphasis on philosophy in Taylor’s interpretations was not limited to the texts but also to his analyses of Orphic rites. Following the idea that the universe in Orphic theology was both unified and separated Taylor argues that the followers, or initiates in the Orphic mysteries, distinguished between the many gods which were part of creation and the supreme God which was its source. Taylor maintained that this supreme Orphic God was evidence “that [the Christian] God has not left himself without a witness among the wise and learned of the heathens.”<sup>62</sup> This is also the opinion of many of the early church fathers, and we find the same idea expressed in several works by Hellenized Jews from the second century BC who tried to reconcile their own beliefs with Greek religion. Artapanus provides the most striking example in his identification of Musaeus with Moses, claiming that Orpheus had been his disciple.<sup>63</sup> Through its association with philosophy Orphic theology was elevated

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<sup>58</sup> Dodds 1928:140n7. The connection between philosophy and initiation can also be traced back to Plato, see *Phd.* 69d and *Phdr.* 250c. On Plotinus’ *unio mystica* see *Enn.* 4.8.1.1-11.

<sup>59</sup> *Prm.* 137d-146a. The idea of the universe as a unified *continuum* is found among the Stoics and in particular in Poseidonius’ commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*. However, Poseidonius does not mention “the One”. See Dodds 1928:131. See also Dodds 1928:132-3 for a comparison between Plato and Plotinus on “the One”.

<sup>60</sup> Dodds 1928:133.

<sup>61</sup> Dodds 1928:138f. *Contra* Taylor who saw the line of influence thus: Orpheus – Pythagoras – Plato.

<sup>62</sup> Taylor 1792:45.

<sup>63</sup> *FGrHist* 726 F 3.3f.; West 1983:33. Thus inverting the traditional view of Musaeus as a son or pupil of Orpheus.

from the realm of "common" Greek religion already from the Hellenistic period and onwards, a trend which is continued in Taylor's work.

This way of understanding Orphism in light of the revelation of Christianity was quite common among the scholars of the Renaissance. According to Walker, in his work on this period, this approach was dominant in the works of scholars such as Ficino, Gian-Francesco Pico, La Boderie, Ralph Cudworth, and Thomas Taylor thanks to the influence of the Neoplatonists and especially Proclus.<sup>64</sup> Most of these scholars considered Orpheus to be a real person who was the author of the Orphic texts. According to Proclus, the polytheism of these texts could be interpreted as allusions to metaphysical entities which in turn could be reconciled with the Christian concepts of the Holy Ghost and the Trinity. The Orphic knowledge was either seen as a tradition, if interpreted in the right way, on par with the Jewish and Christian one, or as a filtered and slightly altered version of the Jewish revelation. Truths also revealed to Moses were distorted or clothed in a mythological guise which meant that the truth was hidden but accessible to those who were "pure in hearing" through the use of allegorical interpretation.<sup>65</sup> It is here that the historicity of Orpheus became important since he was seen as a prophet of an ancient tradition which eventually could be traced back to Moses who had been in Egypt and presumably left some of his scriptures and teachings there. According to Walker's list, which is based on a generalized schema from the Renaissance scholars, the wisdom of Moses was taken up by Hermes Trismegistus, and from him to Orpheus, Pythagoras, and finally Plato. Thus Orphism as a botched or incomplete version of, and thus a forerunner to, Christianity was dominant already in the Renaissance. It is therefore not especially surprising that interpretations of the Orphic material in light of Christianity was dominant also in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. We note also that Egypt is once more given an important role as a source for the mysteries, a tradition which can be traced back at least to Herodotus.

Similarities to Christianity led to the idea of the superiority of Orphism compared to its contemporary religious traditions, especially the official religion of the *poleis*, whose function it was to please the ignorant masses. The Orphic, Taylor argued, distinguished between a normal offering directed towards the lower gods (sacrifice of animals, cakes, or libations), and what Porphyrius termed an intellectual

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<sup>64</sup> Walker 1953:104-105.

<sup>65</sup> Walker 1953:106-107.

offering directed towards the supreme God (hymns, prayers, contemplation and silence).<sup>66</sup> Porphyrius developed these thoughts from Theophrastus who associated the idea of bloodless sacrifices with the Pythagoreans. This again is connected to vegetarianism, advocated by both authors, which again is connected to metempsychosis (because of the fear of eating a deceased friend). Vegetarianism is also attested for the Orphics already by Euripides in the fifth century BC in a passage from his tragedy *Hippolytos* where Theseus scorns his son Hippolytus and calls him a plant-eater and follower of Orpheus.<sup>67</sup> Plato too connects "the Orphic lives" (Ὀρφικοί βίοι) to abstinence, vegetarianism, and bloodless sacrifices, so I think it is safe to say that this was practiced in at least one Orphic community or cult.<sup>68</sup> For Taylor this was a sign of the high standard and moral superiority of the Orphic theology compared to the more general and base "creed of the ancients", i.e. of the commons. This dichotomy was further developed less than a century later by scholars such as Karl Otfried Müller and Walter Pater who envisioned the Orphics as attending their rites wearing white cloth, singing lamentations, purified by their way of life which was distinguished by its ascetic character. Central to this life and ritual practice was (again) the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos which Müller and Pater argued was enacted in the initiation ritual where the initiands were forced to eat raw meat, in commemoration of the Titanic crime, and then abstain from meat for the rest of their lives.<sup>69</sup> The ascetic picture conjured by Taylor, Müller and Pater is in accordance with some of the sources, such as the passages from Euripides and Plato, but to link this to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos is much more problematic, as we shall see later on.<sup>70</sup> But for Taylor (and Müller and Pater) it served as evidence for the superiority of Orphic theology and rites compared to Greek religion in general. We have seen how Taylor saw in this a seed of the Christian God and the same perspective is given by Pater in his discussion of the Orphics and their way of life which he compared to Christian mendicants of the Middle Ages whose romantic

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<sup>66</sup> Taylor 1792:46ff. Porph. *Abst.* 2.36 = OT 635 Bernabé. Porphyrius claims that the custom of sacrificing to the gods came from Egypt. In the beginning, he continues, the Egyptians only sacrificed plants, but as the Greeks adopted the custom they misunderstood it, linguistically, and thus started to sacrifice animals.

<sup>67</sup> *Hipp.* 952 ff. = 627 T Bernabé.

<sup>68</sup> *Leg.* 6.782c = 625 (I) T Bernabé.

<sup>69</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:383f.; Pater 1910 [1876]:50. Müller 1875[1841] I:393 also argues that this particular myth was written by Onomakritos.

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter Three.

theology was "beyond the bounds of orthodox tradition, giving so much new matter to art and poetry."<sup>71</sup> We will return to comparisons of Orphism and Christianity later in this chapter, but for now it is important to note that the privileged position of the Orphics and their theology was given through a philosophical reading of their texts, influenced as it was by Taylor's (and others') preference for philosophy over pagan religion, and the power of philosophy to see Christian truths in the Orphic material. One sees here a somewhat (Frazerian) evolutionary view on Western thought from Greek Religion through philosophy and the mystery cults (Orphic and Pythagorean) to Christianity, which we will consider later.

Tiedemann is more subtle in his approach and concentrates more on the question of the sources' reliability. As I have shown Tiedemann argued that a safe conclusion on the nature of Orphic theology is impossible prior to the writings of the Neoplatonists, and whereas Taylor turned to philosophy because of its ability to explain the real meaning behind the texts, Tiedemann did the same as a result of source criticism. He ascribes the *soma-sema* doctrine, for example, to the Orphics and Pythagoreans, but he is also quick to show that the idea of the soul as imprisoned in the body as a penalty for some crime was wide-spread and that it can be found especially in Asiatic countries and elsewhere, in high- or low-cultures with a warm or cold climate.<sup>72</sup> The main point of Tiedemann's work is to show how closely connected the Orphic and Pythagorean systems were already by Plato's time even though one can still find some differences. One of these differences was the Orphic reliance on water as their first principle while the Pythagoreans held the fiery Aether as the origin of the gods. Thus the theogony referred to by Plato and Aristotle in which Okeanos and Tethys are presented as the first gods was seen by Tiedemann as an example of pure Orphism, both being gods of the sea.<sup>73</sup> The problem, however, with the Orphic system was the inconsistencies found in the surviving material. For while Aristotle claimed that Okeanos and Tethys were the first gods in the Orphic theogony, rival testimonies claimed that Nyx was first.<sup>74</sup> According to the *Suda*, the

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<sup>71</sup> Pater 1910 [1867]:50.

<sup>72</sup> Tiedemann 1780:50.

<sup>73</sup> Tiedemann 1780:47f. Pl. *Cra.* 402b = OF 22 (I) Bernabé; Arist. *Metaph.* 1.983b27 = OF 22 (III) Bernabé. The Orphic Theogony recorded by Athenagoras, which Tiedemann relied heavily upon, also starts with water. This line of reasoning would make Hom. *Il.* 14.201 Orphic since Okeanos here is described as the forefather of all the gods.

<sup>74</sup> Tiedemann 1780:53. Nyx as the first god in the Orphic theogony is recorded by Eudemus, a successor of Aristotle.

Orphic theogony told that in the beginning there were three gods surrounding each other as three concentric circles with Aether (Pythagorean?) in the center, followed by Chaos and Nyx. Here the three gods are interpreted as different aspects of one god and Tiedemann wonders if this could be the theogony that Plato had read? His answer is no, and this is an important point, since by giving a negative answer to this question he assumes that there were more than one Orphic version of the creation of the universe and its gods.<sup>75</sup> The most comprehensive and Orphic version was to be found in the Rhapsodic Theogony, a theogony which was extensively quoted and paraphrased by the Neoplatonists.<sup>76</sup> Although it shares many features with Hesiod's *Theogony* it nevertheless has some important differences. Here the first gods were not, as in Hesiod, Chaos, Gaia, Eros and Tartaros, but an hitherto unknown deity shaped like a winged snake called Chronos Ageraos (Unaging Time) who coupled with Ananke to produce Nyx, Chasm or Chaos and Aether.<sup>77</sup> Then Chaos and Aether together with Chronos Ageraos produced an Egg. Out of this Egg emerged a hermaphroditic creature called by many names, but most often referred to as Phanes.<sup>78</sup> Although the beginning was different in the version recorded by Athenagoras, the Egg was also included here. Tiedemann regrets that Athenagoras does not reveal his source, but he believes it to be of great antiquity. He could therefore conclude that various versions of the Orphic theogony existed and that the Neoplatonists, most notably Damascius, tried to collect and reconcile them with each other. However, of the theogonies preserved in this way it was the one known as the the Rhapsodic Theogony which was considered the most important. It was therefore in the

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<sup>75</sup> Tiedemann 1780:57. Tiedemann believes that the theogony referred to in the *Suda* is Pythagorean and most probably written by Onomakritos. He infers from this that Plato did not quote Onomakritos. I will return to the question of multiple Orphic theogonies later in this thesis.

<sup>76</sup> The date of this theogony has been much debated. We will return to this question later, but for now it will suffice to say that most scholars from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century regarded it to the sixth, fifth or fourth century BC. Müller 1875[1841] I:392 ascribes it to the Pythagorean Kerkops in the first half of the fourth century BC.

<sup>77</sup> I follow here West's reconstruction of the theogony, West 1983:70-75.

<sup>78</sup> Phanes was also known as Metis, Erikepaios, Protogonos, Eros, Bromios, and Zeus. Some of these names, such as Erikepaios and Protogonos, are mentioned in other Orphic material such as the hymns (hymn 6 to Protogonos) and possibly in the Gurôb papyrus, see line 22: ]λευ Πικεπαίγε σωισομ με which is reconstructed to be βασι]λεϋ'Ηρικεπαίε by E. H. Alton. For the Gurôb text see Smyly 1921:6 (*ed. pr.*) and Hordern 2000:135 for a new reading: (]λευ ιρικεπαίγε σωισομ με). OF 578 Bernabé has Εύβου]λεϋ'Ιρικεπαίγε σωισόν με [. Phanes is described as having four heads (ram, bull, lion, and serpent), four horns and four eyes. The earliest literary evidence where Phanes is mentioned is on one of tablets from Thurii, 1.3 Thurii 2, line 3, dated to the middle of the fourth century BC, to which we shall return in the analysis of the corpus of gold tablets.



Neoplatonic texts discussing this theogony that Tiedemann believed he could find the best account of the Orphic system.

What, then, do these early works on Orphism reveal to us? In what way did the works of two so different scholars as Taylor and Tiedemann influence the later study of Orphism? In my opinion these two scholars represent first of all an emphasis on (Neoplatonic) philosophy which would continue to dominate the study of Orphism, although in two different ways. Taylor approached their works as a way of gaining insight into the real and hidden meaning of Orphic theology while Tiedemann's motive was based on a careful analysis of earlier works which in his eyes were close to worthless as witnesses to one specific Orphic system. This emphasis on philosophers and philosophy as *the* way to understand earlier esoteric texts paved the way for a philosophical interpretation of the Orphic texts which sought, and therefore found, philosophical features in this mystery cult. This way of using philosophy as a key in the understanding of esoteric texts, in fact all kinds of historical documents, was prevalent in the nineteenth century and my goal here has been to show that this also holds true within the study of Orphism. Perhaps even more here than in the study of e.g. Greek polis-religion since it was believed that it was easier to understand and explain this type of religious behaviour.

Central to the cult's rites and theology was Dionysos, whose death and subsequent resurrection played a major role in the initiands' quest for release from the cycle of rebirth. The dismemberment of Dionysos was seen as the dismemberment of divinity into many parts, including humans, whose goal was therefore to be reunited with their divine origin and escape the bodily prison into which their souls had descended. Orphism was therefore connected to Dionysiac mystery cults and by many seen as a specific version of it.<sup>79</sup> In his article on "Orpheus" from 1867 Philip Smith sums up the current view on Orphism by quoting Karl Otfried Müller at length.<sup>80</sup> In short, Müller describes the Orphics ("die Orphiker") as a society ("Genossenschaft") of people worshipping Dionysos. Under the guidance of Orpheus' teachings they hoped to attain purification from the sins ("Sünden") of their forefathers and attain immortality.<sup>81</sup> Central to their worship was Dionysos in his chthonic aspect known as

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<sup>79</sup> Smith 1867:60; Bouché-Leclercq 1879 I:365. See also Bouché-Leclercq 1879 II:115 who believes that Orpheus perhaps founded Dionysiac cults, or at least introduced it to Greece.

<sup>80</sup> Smith 1867:61-62.

<sup>81</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:393.

Dionysos Zagreus, whom Müller describes as the personification of "not just an elevated form of lust and ecstasy, but also a deep sadness over the misery of human existence".<sup>82</sup> The Orphics, believing that they had been created from the soot of the Titans, saw their being as made up of a Dionysiac and a Titanic nature, the latter which could be purged through purificatory rites.<sup>83</sup> Orphic rites were, Müller continues, quite different from those used in the ordinary worship of Dionysos as they refrained from the "unrestrained lust and wild behaviour" ("ausgelassener Lust und schwärmender Wildheit"), which he believed characterized "common Bacchus worship" ("gewöhnlichen Bacchusdienste"), and rather strived for an ascetic life with emphasis on purity.<sup>84</sup> Central for the Orphics was the theogony containing the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos written down by the Pythagorean Kerkops in the fourth century BC in his theogony ἑρποῖ λόγοι. According to Müller, this theogony, referred to above as the Rhapsodic Theogony, followed to some extent the Hesiodic Theogony, but had two new features. First, it contained a planned creation of the world, by Phanes, contrary to the Hesiodic in which the universe expands and takes shape more organically.<sup>85</sup> Second, the anthropogony led to a negative view of the world, a world the followers wanted to escape from (through the help of Dionysos).<sup>86</sup> This, in short, was Müller's summary and the general opinion on Orphism at the middle of the nineteenth century.

Müller's account of Orphism has more in common with Taylor's than with Tiedemann's. While Tiedemann stressed the plurality of authors that used Orpheus as an authority, Taylor advocated a more coherent picture which was accessible through the Neoplatonists. Taylor belongs also to the list of Renaissance scholars who saw the Orphic doctrines and texts as bearers of a tradition which started with Abraham, Adam or Moses and which culminated in the New Testament.<sup>87</sup> The joint emphases of

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<sup>82</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:387: "nicht bloss die höchste Lust und Entzückung, sondern auch eine tiefergreifende Wehmuth über das Elend des menschlichen Daseins". Edmonds points out that Zagreus as an epithet for Dionysos appears in a fragment of Kallimachos (frg. 43.117 P) and possibly (but unlikely I would say) in Euripides' *Cretans* (frg. 472 Nauck), but that most earlier sources connects Zagreus with other deities. In modern scholarship Dionysos Zagreus appeared for the first time in Lobeck 1829. See Edmonds 1999:37 n6 with a reference to Linforth 1941:311.

<sup>83</sup> These rites were offered by itinerant *Orpheotelestes* who were heavily criticized by Plato, *Resp.* 2.364e. Lobeck 1829:565 who also calls attention to the Orphic Hymn to the Titans (37) where they are described as the forefathers of "all toiling mortals", Athanassakis 1977:52-3.

<sup>84</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:387f.

<sup>85</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:395.

<sup>86</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:396.

<sup>87</sup> Walker 1953:105.

both authors on the Neoplatonic interpretations, however, in many ways defined the approach of most scholars during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The elevation of Orphism through philosophy had a great impact on the dominant interpretations around 1900 with its mainly Christian way of understanding Greek Religion. This approach was reached by applying philosophy to the texts and thus give the texts a higher status. This status was then seen in contrast with common Greek polis religion, which in turn meant that the later comparison of Orphism with (protestant) Christianity became easier. The "Christian seed" that Taylor found in the Orphic texts serves as an illustration of the Renaissance legacy upon future scholars of Orphism.

### **1.3 Orphic original sin: The early gold tablets and their interpretations**

Interest in Orphism grew steadily during the nineteenth century especially following Lobeck's work.<sup>88</sup> It was, however, the publications of the gold tablets, later identified as Orphic, that led to the enormous interest in Orphism seen in the works of several scholars at the end of the nineteenth century. For even if the first gold tablet had been published already in 1836 it was not until the last two decades of the century that it and the other gold tablets that had been discovered were connected with Orphism.<sup>89</sup>

The exact find place and dating of the Petelia tablet is unknown since the tablet was handed over to the British Museum from a private collection in 1843, but it is believed, based on the style of writing and shape of letters on the tablet, that it hails from the middle of the fourth century BC.<sup>90</sup> Despite its small size (4,5 x 2,7 cm) it

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<sup>88</sup> Lobeck 1829. Eugen Abel's collection of Orphic fragments was published in 1885 (Abel 1885). Abel's edition received poor reviews and is described by Prümm 1956:4, in his survey of the study of Orphism, as a step backwards from the careful source criticism which was established by Lobeck. The first collection of Orphic fragments was published (posthumously) by Johann Mathias Gesner in 1764.

<sup>89</sup> Tablet 1.2 Petelia. Text, transcription and translation of the gold tablets discussed are found in Appendix 1 of the current thesis.

<sup>90</sup> Franz 1836. British Museum Jewellery 3155, Marshall 1911:380-381. For a drawing of the tablet see Smith and Comparetti 1882:112; Marshall 1911:380; Harrison 1991[1922]:659; and Pugliese Carratelli 2001:67 and cover for a colour photograph. An excellent photo can also be found in Buxton 2004:212. See also Guthrie 1993[1952], plate 9; and Zuntz 1971, plate 29 for photo, and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:338, 2008:325 for a drawing, of the cylinder and its chain. The grave in which the gold tablet was originally put was probably the victim of graverobbers during the second or third century AD when the tablet was used as an amulet. The wearer of the amulet was probably oblivious to its message, or did not consider the text itself to be of any importance, since the gold tablet was first folded four times and then cut in one of the corners, thus creating two large lacunae in the last lines of text, in order to fit inside a cylinder which was to be worn around the owner's neck. The use of magical or "gnostic" texts in cylinders was not unusual in the Roman period, Marshall 1911:381; Bernabé and

contains thirteen lines of writing, lack of space forcing the engraver to write the last line vertically on the right side of the tablet. Briefly stated, the text warns the reader not to approach the spring of water on the left side of the House of Hades, marked by the presence of a white cypress tree, but rather proceed to the next one on the right described as the water of Mnemosyne. Mnemosyne's water is guarded by unnamed beings who demand the correct passwords in order if the wanderer is to receive the water. The wanderer must say that he is the son of the Earth and starry Heaven, but emphasize that his race is of Heaven. Thereafter he will be given access to the cold water and, subsequently, be given lordship among the other heroes.

The text's emphasis on the cold, desirable water of Mnemosyne (τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης), which is contrasted with another, unnamed, pool which was to be avoided (ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐμπελάσειας) made scholars suggest that the text had something to do with the oracle of Trophonios in Lebadeia.<sup>91</sup> According to Pausanias, this oracle served as the seat of a mystery cult, in underground caves the initiates went through a series of purifications lasting several days, where the water of Lethe and Mnemosyne played an important role.<sup>92</sup>

A new approach to the text was given in 1879, first by Bouché-Leclercq who, after a short review of the Trophonios suggestion, argued that the text more probably had something to do with a journey to the underworld and was used in some kind of mystery cult.<sup>93</sup> Domenico Comparetti agreed with Bouché-Leclercq's suggestion and proceeded to interpret the Petelia tablet in light of five gold tablets which had been found in three large tumulus graves at the necropolis in Thurii during 1879-1880.<sup>94</sup> The tablets, dating from the middle of the fourth century BC, were of approximately the same size and contained about the same number of lines as the Petelia tablet, but

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Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:340-341, 2008:324-326. Hence we do not know anything about the tablet's original owner or original place of interment. Joubin 1893:124 suggested that the gold tablets (from Petelia, Thurii and Eleutherna) had been sold by wandering *orpheotelestes* as amulets to the initiates.

<sup>91</sup> Franz 1836:150 refrained from suggesting a specific origin of the tablet, but drew attention to a funerary inscription from Ficoroni (Mus. Veron. p.318; *I. G.* 1.1842): Ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ δοίη σοι ἀναξ ἐνέρων Ἀιδωνεύς | ὦ Μέλαν· ἦβης γάρ σοι ἀπώλετο φίλτατον ἄνθος. "You, master of those beneath in Hades, give me cold water | oh Melan: for you release the most beloved bloom of youth".

<sup>92</sup> Paus. 9.39.8. For more references describing the *Trophonion* in Lebadeia as a seat of mystery cult see Bonnechere 2003:169n2. On the Petelia tablet and its connection with the Trophonios oracle, see e.g. Kaibel 1878:453-4.

<sup>93</sup> Bouché-Leclercq 1879 III:330n3.

<sup>94</sup> The excavations were initially led by Cavallari, who later was succeeded by L. Fulvio in early 1880. According to Günther Zuntz this led to a diminished quality in the excavation reports. For a description of the excavations at Thurii see Zuntz 1971:288-293. For a map over the tombs see Bottini 1992:29.

their contents were different.<sup>95</sup> Three of them (1.3 Thuri 3-5) relate how the deceased, addressing first Persephone then Eukles, Eubouleus and all the other immortal gods, claimed to have been "subdued" by "Fate" and the "star-flunged Thunderbolt" (1.3 Thuri 3, line 4; 1.3 Thuri 4 line 5), but that he or she had "flown out of the grievous, troublesome circle" (1.3 Thuri 3, line 5), "passed with swift feet to the desired wreath" (1.3 Thuri 3, lines 6 and 8), and entered "the holy, grassy meadow of Persephone" (1.3 Thuri 1, line 6).<sup>96</sup> The gold tablets also state that the deceased had "suffered the Suffering" (1.3 Thuri 1, line 3) and "paid the price with respect to unjust deeds" (1.3 Thuri 4, line 4). They also express a hope for immortality, or even apotheosis, by claiming that "I too long to be (one) of your blessed kind" (1.3 Thuri 3, line 3; 1.3 Thuri 4, line 3; 1.3 Thuri 5, line 3) and "you shall become god, the opposite of mortal" (1.3 Thuri 3, line 9), and even "You have become (a) god from human" (1.3 Thuri 1, line 4). The fifth gold tablet, 1.3 Thuri 2, is yet to be satisfactorily deciphered.<sup>97</sup> Pressed in among a seemingly chaotic jumble of characters we can read the names of some deities, Protogonos, Ge, Cybele, Demeter, Tyche, Phanes, Moirai, Zeus, Kore, but also other words like air (ἀέρ), fire (πῦρ), victory (νικῶν) and daimon (δαίμων) to name but a few.<sup>98</sup> Much work remains to be done on the C-tablet and we will be content for the time being to include it among the other gold tablets although its function and meaning remain obscure.<sup>99</sup>

Although their content were somewhat different from the Petelia tablet they were eventually all seen as documents describing an underworld journey connected to an Orphic mystery cult.<sup>100</sup> This corpus could be divided into three parts, each deriving

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<sup>95</sup> Tablets 1.3 Thuri 1-2 were published in Cavallari 1879 (see p. 157 for the text of 1.3 Thuri 1), while 1.3 Thuri 3-5 were published in Comparetti 1880 (p. 155 (1.3 Thuri 3), p. 156 (1.3 Thuri 4-5)).

<sup>96</sup> The first two lines of tablet 1.3 Thuri 1 is different from the others. Here the soul is said to have left the light of the sun and is then told to proceed with caution. After this, the text, resembles the first three. See Appendix.

<sup>97</sup> This tablet, also known as the "C tablet", was also found in 1879, not in 1897 as Zuntz 1971:344 wrote, a typo (cf. Zuntz 1971:289 f.) repeated by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:184, 2008:138.

<sup>98</sup> The tablet is mentioned in Cavallari 1879:157 For a drawing of the tablet see Kern 1922:117 or Harrison 1991 [1922]:664. See especially lines 5 and the beginning of lines 8 and 9. There are ten lines distributed on 23 mm. making the letters extremely small. In addition the tablet was folded nine times. Regarding Phanes, Zuntz 1971:346 suggests τ'εφωνῆς as an alternative to τε Φωνης.

<sup>99</sup> We will return to this tablet in the next chapter.

<sup>100</sup> Comparetti, in Cavallari 1879:157, mentions a "Theogonia orfica" when referring to the C tablet and its listing of deities such as Phanes and Protogonos. He nevertheless saw gold tablet A4 as a document from an unspecified mystery cult, perhaps Eleusis. A year later, with the discovery of the other three tablets from Thuri, the tablets, and the Petelia tablet, were seen as documents of an Orphic

from different Orphic poems, the first containing tablets 1.3 Thurii 3-5, the second 1.3 Thurii 1-2, and the third tablet 1.2 Petelia. Comparetti connected the poems to the *orpheotelestes*, a group of wandering priests criticized for their practice by Plato, and described as "apostoli greci".<sup>101</sup> The main reason why the tablets were labelled Orphic was the *soma-sema* doctrine, known from Plato, which according to Smith and Comparetti was the reason behind the tablets' claim to purity and the deceased's preferred escape from the troublesome, weary circle (which was interpreted as the cycle of rebirth).<sup>102</sup> The appearance of the Orphic deities, Phanes and Protogonos, on tablet 1.3 Thurii 2 also suggested an Orphic origin.<sup>103</sup>

But I think there might also been another, additional reason for this Orphic interpretation of the gold tablets. As I hope I have shown earlier in this chapter there was an agreement among scholars in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century that Plato had been inspired by Orphic doctrines, especially those connected to metempsychosis. Mnemosyne, so prominent in the Petelia tablet, was one of the most important deities for Plato, connected as she was to his theory of recollection as the source of truth which in turn was connected to his ideas of metempsychosis.<sup>104</sup> In the *Meno*, Plato argues that what men call research and learning in reality is recollection of things known from previous lives and things seen in the underworld while dead.<sup>105</sup> The soul is immortal and the only thing that hinders our knowledge from passing beyond the boundaries of birth and death is forgetfulness. Plato claims to have learned this from wise men and women (ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν σοφῶν) who are learned in these things. He then proceeds to quote a verse from Pindar, whom he reckons as one of the poets of heavenly gifts who relate such things:

Those from whom Persephone receives the penalty for ancient grief, in the ninth year she sends back their souls to the sun above, and from them grow

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and Bacchic mystery cult taken from "the various books of the Orphic canon", Smith and Comparetti 1882:117; Comparetti 1880:160.

<sup>101</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 2.364b; Comparetti 1880:162; Smith and Comparetti 1882:117; see also Joubin 1893:123: "ces apôtres de l'orphisme". One of the three Orphic texts was said to be εἰς ἄδου Κατάβασις, which unfortunately is lost but is ascribed by the *Suda* to Prodikos of Samos; Comparetti 1880:160, see also Smith and Comparetti 1882:117, echoing Lobeck 1829 I:360.

<sup>102</sup> Smith and Comparetti 1882:114.

<sup>103</sup> Also Comparetti 1910:36 read τοδ' ἔγραψ[ε in the last line (12) which he meant must have referred to Orpheus.

<sup>104</sup> See Pl. *Criti.* 108d where Critias claims that our ability to speak and remember (truthfully) relies on Mnemosyne.

<sup>105</sup> Pl. *Meno* 80d-86c.

glorious kings and men swift with strength and great in wisdom; at the last they are called sacred heroes among men<sup>106</sup>

The belief in metempsychosis and the immortality of the soul is attested in Pythagorean sources and is also seen as a defining attribute of Orphism. The appearance, then, of Mnemosyne on the Petelia tablet would seem to strengthen the notion that Orphic poems containing eschatological doctrines on metempsychosis, especially Prodikos of Samos' εἰς ἄδου Κατάβασις, was the common source for both Plato's theory of recollection and the text on the Petelia tablet as well as the gold tablets from Thurii.<sup>107</sup> The idea of Orphism as a philosophical-minded religion, and even the background or origin of philosophy, was thus further strengthened in the eyes of late nineteenth century scholars.

Yet another step was taken in Comparetti's interpretation of the gold tablets' religious background which came in an article a few years later in 1882. The Orphic eschatology referred to in the tablets claimed, according to Comparetti, that since the immortal human soul is trapped in the body (*soma-sema*), the tablets' function was to free the initiate's soul from its bodily prison. The reason for the soul's imprisonment was related, he argued, in the myth of Dionysos Zagreus and his death at the hands of the Titans. Since mankind was created from the ashes of the Titans, man was composed of two opposing forces, a Titanic, irrational side, and a divine Dionysiac side.<sup>108</sup> From Dionysos man has thus inherited the divine spark which he should try to rekindle through purification rituals, initiations, and by living a life "the Orphic way". This means fighting the Titanic nature, represented by incarnation, through purifications from the original sin inherited by us from the Titans. A direct reference to Dionysos Zagreus is lacking in the gold tablets, but Comparetti argued that Eukles, who appears in three of the tablets from Thurii, was in fact another name for "the infernal Dionysos or Zagreus of the Orphics".<sup>109</sup> Additionally, the claim of the deceased in the Petelia tablet to be a son of Heaven and Earth could be seen to reflect

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<sup>106</sup> Tr. Edmonds, Pl. *Meno* 81bc (frg. 133 Snell/Maehler) = OF 443 Bernabé: οἰσί κε Φερσεφόνα ποινάν παλαιού πένθεος δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερβεν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτωι ἔτει ἀντιδοῖ ψυχᾶς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίαν τε μέγιστοι ἄνδρες αὖξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦροες ἀγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται. For more on this fragment see Chapter Three.

<sup>107</sup> The connection between the gold tablets and Plato was argued by Dieterich 1969 [1893]:122, 124-5. See also Harrison 1905:62.

<sup>108</sup> Comparetti relied on the version of the myth as told by Olympiodoros in his sixth century AD commentary on Plato's *Phaedo*.

<sup>109</sup> Comparetti 1880:158; Smith and Comparetti 1882:116.

the myth of the Titans as they were the offspring of Ouranos and Gaia. Everything seemed to fall into place, and the Pindar fragment quoted by Plato was later interpreted as referring to Orphic doctrines since Persephone's grief was interpreted as her lamenting the death of her son, Dionysos Zagreus, a murderous act which demanded recompensation through initiation into the Orphic mystery cult.<sup>110</sup> The myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos was subsequently seen as the undisputable main myth of the Orphic religion by scholars such as Erwin Rohde, Salomon Reinach, Martin P. Nilsson, and W. K. C. Guthrie, to name but a few.<sup>111</sup>

Wilamowitz, Linforth, and Edmonds have all criticized this interpretation. Edmonds claims that the idea of Orphic original sin in the gold tablets was nothing more than an invention of Comparetti.<sup>112</sup> While it is true that Comparetti's interpretation was new at the time, we should not be surprised by it. The view of Orphism as connected with philosophy in contrast to the "ordinary", official religion of the Greek poleis, was, as we have seen, advocated by both Taylor and Tiedemann more than a century prior to Comparetti. In addition, tight bonds connecting Orphism and Christianity had been wrought already in the Renaissance, as Walker has pointed out. Because of this Orphism enjoyed an increasingly elevated status throughout the nineteenth century. Returning briefly to Müller and his discussion of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos (Zagreus) he says nothing directly of an Orphic original sin, but nevertheless, using the *Rhapsodies* as his main source, sees Dionysos Zagreus as the main deity in the initiates' quest for release.<sup>113</sup> Release from what? The bodily prison into which mankind had been sentenced on account of the Titans' murder of Dionysos.<sup>114</sup> The purifications every Orphic underwent was explained by Müller as a way of freeing one's soul from sin, not only one's own, but also the sins of the forefathers.<sup>115</sup> This is not too different from Comparetti's interpretation, although an

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<sup>110</sup> Tannery 1899:128-129.

<sup>111</sup> "[the myth of the dismemberment of Zagreus] blieb der Zielpunkt, auf den die orphischen Lehrdichtungen ausliefen", Rohde 1903 [1893]:117; "La légende sacrée de la naissance, du meurtre et de la résurrection de Zagreus, qui fait le fond de l'orphisme", Reinach 1997 [1922]:555; "The nucleus of Orphism was the myth of Zagreus", Macchioro 1928:341, see also Macchioro 1930:76; "the cardinal myth of Orphism", Nilsson 1935:202, 221; "the central point of [the] Orphic story", Guthrie 1993 [1952]:107. See also Detienne 1979:69, 72, and more recently Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:146, 2008:187 f.

<sup>112</sup> Edmonds 1999:39.

<sup>113</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:393.

<sup>114</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:396.

<sup>115</sup> Müller 1875 [1841] I:393. Müller makes it clear that neither Plato in *Resp.* 2.364ff. nor he is referring to "original sin" in the Christian sense.



explicit mention of "original sin" is absent. Orphism as it was presented by Rohde in 1893 is in fact quite similar to Müller's presentation and it seems that Comparetti's interpretation, wedged chronologically between the two, served as an elaboration, or rather the next logical step in the continuing elevation of Orphism. Having reached a high status as a philosophical religion during the first half of the nineteenth century, scholars after the Thurii excavations began to see Orphism as the Greek equivalent to early Christianity, thus making it an even more attractive object of study. This process also made it easier to identify Orphic trends or hints to the Orphic tradition and doctrines among the most respectable authors of the Classical period and later. It is of course true that many of the authors mention "the Orphics" and their ways, but it is often hard to determine whether the term "Orphics" is used as a catchphrase for abnormal religious activities in general or whether it refers to something more specific.<sup>116</sup>

The use of Christian terms, such as original sin, Bible, Church, etc. when talking about non-Christian religion is also problematic since it brings powerful connotations with it. However, this was hardly new at the time of Comparetti, as illustrated by Taylor who saw a seed of the Christian god in some of the Orphic texts and had no problems with using words such as "baptized"<sup>117</sup>, or describing Orpheus as "the first of the prophets"<sup>118</sup>. Even the use of "Theology" in conjunction with Orphic tends to lead to a Christian image of Orphism as a coherent, scripture-based religion, regardless of the author's intention.<sup>119</sup> This use of Christian terms to describe another religion was not unique since Christianity was considered to be the most highly evolved religion on earth and thus more than capable of describing the different aspects of other, lesser religions.

However, the years following the Thurii find are also marked by a cautious approach to the potential similarities between Orphism and Christianity. Cecil Smith, for example, compares the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos with the story of

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<sup>116</sup> This was pointed out by Linforth 1941. On the use of "Orphism" as a way to designate abnormal religious behaviour, for both Ancient and Modern scholars, see e.g. Edmonds 2004a:41 ff. who sees Orphism as "one example of a type of countercultural religious movement that sets itself in opposition to the mainstream religion in ancient Greece."

<sup>117</sup> Taylor 1969 [1791]:348.

<sup>118</sup> Taylor 1792:2, he does not say, however, which other prophets followed him. See also Bouché-Leclercq 1879 II:113.

<sup>119</sup> Used throughout Tiedemann 1780 and Taylor 1792. Further examples: "dogmatisch", Tiedemann 1780:47. "king of hell [Hades]", Taylor 1792:3.

Christ, but adds that the Greek version of the myth, as it was recorded by the Neoplatonists, probably was written in the Christian era, making it hard to trace it back to the Greek Classical period, or the sixth century BC which was the generally accepted date of most Orphic writings at the time.<sup>120</sup> He also maintained that even though one speaks of *the* Orphic religion there probably existed many variants of it where each polis had its own local character.<sup>121</sup>

We find the same reluctance to compare Orphism with Christianity in Rohde's *Psyche*.<sup>122</sup> Instead Rohde draws frequent attention to Islam, especially the dervishes, when he describes the ecstasy which was so prominent in ancient descriptions of Dionysiac cults.<sup>123</sup> Most importantly, Rohde pointed to what he considered to be a major difference between Orphic and Christian purification by emphasizing the latter's moral and ethic character, qualities which he thought absent in the former.<sup>124</sup> For the Orphic, Rohde argued, purification did not originate simply as a way to cleanse one's soul from an ancient guilt related in the myth of Dionysos Zagreus, but from the natural need of ritual purity.<sup>125</sup> With the introduction of the Orphic cult from Thrace, Rohde argued, came an answer to that need which ordinary polis religion, and ordinary Dionysiac worship, could not satisfy. Thus, Orphism for Rohde was a religion introduced from Thrace sometime in the sixth century BC which was established in Athens and elaborated through the writings of Onomakritos and others.<sup>126</sup> Rohde also emphasized a development in the doctrines which for him culminated in the Rhapsodic Theogony, which he dated to the second century BC, and the cult's emphasis on the individual which made it probable that several local

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<sup>120</sup> Smith 1890:346-7.

<sup>121</sup> Smith 1890:347, this was also recognized by Rohde 1903 [1893] II:113.

<sup>122</sup> Rohde 1903 [1893] I:x.

<sup>123</sup> e.g. in Eur. *Bacch.* Rohde 1903 [1893] II:9 n4, 27, 36, a view shared by Harrison 1894:166. Rohde also compared the Dionysiac ecstasy with the "dance disease" that swept across Europe in lieu of the Black Plague in the fourteenth century, Rohde 1903 [1893] II:42, and with the Tarantella dance which in his opinion is especially seductive for women, Rohde 1903 [1893] II:8-10. Nilsson 1921:234 has similar views on the weak nature of women when discussing the ecstasy of the maenads. Considering the famous passage in Pl. *Phd.* 69c Rohde believed that it was the ability to enter ecstasy that marked the real *bakchoi* from mere thysrus-bearers, Rohde 1903 [1893] II:32. See also Dieterich 1969 [1893]:125 who argues that Plato distinguished between what he considered the wise Orphics and the wandering *orpheotelestes*, who he must have considered quacks. Gruppe 1902:1103-1104 also distinguishes between "Öffentliche Mysterien" and "Privatmysterien".

<sup>124</sup> Rohde 1903 [1893] II:71-72.

<sup>125</sup> Rohde did see this myth as central to Orphism though and believed that it had been part of the Orphic tradition since the time of Onomakritos.

<sup>126</sup> See also Harrison 1905:58.

variants of the cult existed from the sixth to the second century BC.<sup>127</sup> As for the relationship between Orphism and Pythagoreanism he followed Tiedemann in his reluctance to separate writers from the two cults.<sup>128</sup> Dieterich did the same although he regarded the Orphic doctrines as older and closer to their Thracian roots than Pythagoreanism was.<sup>129</sup>

Also in his interpretation of the myth of Dionysos Zagreus, Rohde is careful to avoid a comparative perspective and rather claims that the myth is about the creation and constitution of the world and the composition of man as part body part soul rather than man's original sin.<sup>130</sup> However, when reading Rohde's interpretations there seems to be only small differences between him and Comparetti, the main difference being his reluctance to call the reason behind the anthropogony "original sin". The Orphics, Rohde argued, believed that the myth of Dionysos Zagreus, told in full in the Rhapsodic Theogony, was an attempt to solve the old One-Many problem, i.e. how could one thing be the origin of the world and all the things in it.<sup>131</sup> By dismembering Dionysos, the Titans were responsible of not only the entrapment of man's soul into the body, but also the creation of the world. Thus the ritual purifications offered through the Orphic cults and by the itinerant *orpheotelestes* was also seen as a way to escape the cycle of rebirths and return to our divine origin.<sup>132</sup>

We see, then, an increasing, and at the same time cautious, interest in seeing Orphism and its sources in light of early Christianity in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, even among scholars who tried to avoid that perspective. Also important in this period is how scholarship established Orphism as a religion, quite distinct from ordinary Greek polis religion, which served as an inspiration not only for several Greek philosophers and writers from the Archaic and Classical periods (Euripides, Empedokles, Pindar, Platon), but also for writers in the Roman period (Plutarch, Philo of Alexandria, Seneca, Virgil) and early Christianity (*The Apocalypse*

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<sup>127</sup> Rohde 1903 [1893] II:115. Gomperz 1901 [1896] I:84, 93 agrees. For his dating of the Rhapsodic Theogony see Rohde 1903 [1893] II:416 *contra* Lobeck 1829:716 who dated it to the sixth century BC. Dieterich 1969 [1893]:106 agrees with Rohde.

<sup>128</sup> Rohde 1903 [1893] II:109 n1.

<sup>129</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:85-85, 228 describes Athens as the center of Orphism.

<sup>130</sup> Rohde constantly uses "Schuld" rather than "Sünde" and explains this as the reason why man's soul has been trapped in the body, Rohde 1903 [1893] II:127-128. Dieterich 1969 [1893]:89, however, sees the incarnation of man's soul as "Sündenfall".

<sup>131</sup> Rohde 1903 [1893] II:119.

<sup>132</sup> Rohde 1903 [1893] II:124.

of Peter, Egyptian gnosticism).<sup>133</sup> The roots of early Christianity were increasingly sought in Greek mystery religions and particularly in Orphism.<sup>134</sup> Dieterich saw a close connection between Orphism and early Christianity in general and emphasized this by comparing early Christian epigrams with the text of the gold tablets. Focussing on the cold water mentioned in the Petelia tablet, Dieterich called attention to the close resemblance between ψυχή (soul) and ψυχρόν (cold water). The idea, he claimed, that cold water is good for the soul was later adopted by several Roman cults and was also found in early Christian epigrams and literature (*refrigerare, refrigerium*).<sup>135</sup> This "undeniable" line of influence, as he called it, from Orphism to early Catholicism could also be seen in the latter's reference to the cold in the Catholic funerary sermon: *locum refrigerii ut indulgeas deprecamur*.<sup>136</sup>

In his concluding remarks on Orphism, Dieterich arrived at three characterizing points. First, that Orphism was a book religion, i.e. that the written word was held in high esteem, witnessed in his opinion by the gold tablets and the Rhapsodic Theogony.<sup>137</sup> Second, that Orphism by nature was more philosophical than its contemporary religions. And third, that it was the many similarities between Orphism, and mystery cults in general, and Christianity which made the early Church Fathers attack it so relentlessly.<sup>138</sup> All three points are connected with each other, and I believe I have shown how the connection between Orphism and philosophy in academic studies had been established at least one hundred years prior to Dieterich's work. It is also interesting to note that the origins of Orphism were placed outside of

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<sup>133</sup> Euripides, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:103. Aristophanes *Frogs* 420, Cornford 1903:436. Epicharmos frg. 23 (Clem. Al. *Strom.* 4.541c, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:104. Empedokles frg, rec. Stein 77, 55.369ff, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:108-109, 158. Pindar frg. 133 Bergk, *Ol.* 2.2, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:109, 158, *Ol.* 2.75ff, Norlin 1908:94. Pl. *Phdr., Phd., Gorg., Resp.* Dieterich 1969 [1893]:112, 158, Norlin 1908:94, Cornford 1903, Macchioro 1930:39, 44, 176. Plut. *de occulte viv.* 1130c, *de sera numinum vindicta* 22, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:120, 145, 158, Norlin 1908:97, Macchioro 1930:44. Alexander Polyhistor, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:143. Philo of Alexandria, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:144. Seneca, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:144. Virgil, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:150-158, Norlin 1908:95. *The Apocalypse of Peter*, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:149, 227. Egyptian gnosticism, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:228. Early Christianity, Dieterich 1969 [1893]:228-231.

<sup>134</sup> E. g. Wobbermin 1896 who claims that gnosticism in general can be seen as Christian Orphism. See also Anrich 1894:235 who sees an influence, but denies a direct relationship.

<sup>135</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:96-97.

<sup>136</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:98. See also Stewart 1903:118. "locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur" ("grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and peace"). The problem here is not the tracing of a continuity from pagan to Christian motifs, but the exclusive labelling of these as Orphic. For a more nuanced, and recent, treatment of this motif see Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:333-337, 2008:319-323.

<sup>137</sup> That books were connected with followers of Orpheus is supported by Eur. *Hipp.* 943-957 = 627 T Bernabé, and Pl. *Resp.* 364e-365a = 573 (I) T Bernabé.

<sup>138</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:228.

Greece, in Thrace, the home of Orpheus, or in Egypt.<sup>139</sup> Some combined them by referring to myths which told that Orpheus had travelled from Thrace to Egypt and there learned the secrets which he later shared with his initiates in Greece, most notably in Athens.<sup>140</sup> Central in these speculations was the island of Crete, which was seen as the bridge between Egypt and Greece.<sup>141</sup> The publication of three more gold tablets found in graves at Eleutherna, Crete, strengthened this notion and gave rise to more speculations on the Egyptian roots of Orphism.<sup>142</sup> The sacred Orphic knowledge was then recorded by Onomakritos, Prodikos of Samos, and others in a series of sacred books which later served as a model for the production of the gold tablets from southern Italy and Crete.

In 1903 another gold tablet was published, this time from Rome.<sup>143</sup> It was of the same small size as the others, but dated from the middle of the third century AD,

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<sup>139</sup> A reason for this might be that already the Classical authors saw *hieroi logoi* as something foreign connected to Egypt, Phoenicia, or Persia. They were frequently associated with mystic figures such as Orpheus, Linos, and Pythagoras, see Henrichs 2003:238. Egypt as a place of mystery and esoteric knowledge is also reflected in the works of Renaissance scholars who believed that Moses might have "left" some of the wisdom he had received there, Walker 1953:105.

<sup>140</sup> E.g. Sikes 1895:474. Hdt, 2.81 is the best known example supporting this idea. Here, Herodotus claims that the burial rites forbidding anyone to enter the temple or being buried wearing wool, which we know as Orphic and Bacchic, in reality are Egyptian and Pythagorean. See also Hdt. 2.123 where he claims that the theory of metempsychosis is Egyptian, although some Greeks claim it as their own invention. Unfortunately Herodotus refuses to name them even though he claims to know them.

<sup>141</sup> In her review of Foucart's book on Eleusis, Harrison 1903:84 agrees with Foucart that the mystery religions, and especially the Eleusinian, came from Egypt via Crete and adds that their influence had a lasting impact on the island's religious traditions. See also Harrison 1905:26, 51, and Gruppe 1906 II:1032. The Egyptian (and Oriental) origin of Greek mystery cults was proposed by Creuzer in his *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen* (1810-12). Gomperz 1901 [1896] I:94 locates the origin of the Orphic religion in Babylon. Eisler 1910 II:404-5 see Persian influence on Orphism as certain, as does Harrison 1927 [1912]:462. Harrison thus see Orphism as made up by various elements from several Eastern religions. This eastward turn, as we shall see in the chapter on the Derveni Papyrus, has later been adopted, albeit in different forms, by more recent scholars such as Burkert and West.

<sup>142</sup> Joubin 1893. The three tablets are practically identical, measuring 5,7 cm. times 1 cm. The characters are sometimes only 1,5 mm. high. The texts, four lines long, are compressed versions of the Petelia tablet saying: δῖψαι αὔτος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι. ἀλλὰ πῖέ μοι | κράνας αἰειρῶ ἐπὶ δεξιά τῆ κυφάρισος. | τίς δ' εἶσί; πῶ δ' εἶσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ | ἀστερόεντος. (I am parched with thirst and I perish. But give me to | drink of the ever-flowing spring on the right with the cypress. | Who are you? Where do you come from? I am a son of Earth and | starry Heaven). The approximate date of the tablets is the second century BC, Joubin 1893:122; Graf 1993:258. Riedweg 1998:397 dates them to the third/second century BC. Following Comparetti, Joubin 1893:123 ascribed the text to the tradition of Prodikos of Samos. See tablets 3.1 Eleutherna 1-3 in Appendix. Harrison 1905:52 agrees with Diod. 1.96 and claims that it was Orpheus that brought the "mythology of Hades" to Greece from Egypt.

<sup>143</sup> Tablet 2.1 Rome, published by Comparetti 1903, now in the British Museum, Jewellery 3154, Marshall 1911:380. The text is a compressed version of tablets 1.3 Thurii 3-5 and is the only one which has the name of the deceased, Caecilia Secundida, inscribed upon it. The text reads: Ἐρχεται ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ, χθονίων βασιλεία, | Εὐκλεες Εὐβουλεῦ τε, Διὸς τέκος ἀγλάα· ἔχω δὲ | Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον αἰίδιμον ἀνθρώποισιν. | Καικιλία Σεκουνδείνα, νόμωι ἴθι δῖα

thus serving as evidence for the longevity of the Orphic religion. Its location also meant that evidence for the secret mysteries of Orpheus had been found in three different corners of the Greco-Roman world. The new discoveries also suggested that their sources, among them the poem by Prodikos of Samos, could be reconstructed.<sup>144</sup> This optimism strengthened the idea of Orphism as a coherent, literary religion whose main object was the salvation of its initiates through purification rituals and a specific life style.

The Rome tablet also had a major impact upon how the relationship between Orphism and Christianity was understood to be since there now was evidence that the written Orphic tradition continued well into the earliest period of Christianity. It is therefore not surprising that it is during the first three decades of the twentieth century that scholars are most interested in Orphism as a Greek pre-Christian version of Christianity. This is especially evident in the application of Christian terms and beliefs to the Orphic material, especially the gold tablets and the Rhapsodic Theogony, from Harrison's 1903 edition of the *Prolegomena* to Watmough's *Orphism* in 1934. I have argued that one of the reasons for this was the connection between Orphism and philosophy, and the Renaissance emphasis on Orpheus as a possible receiver of Jewish wisdom which he clothed in the allegorical language of mythology, which later made Orphism into a more evolved religion compared to "ordinary" Greek religion, and thus a predecessor for Christianity. Such an evaluation of religion was made possible through the application of evolutionary theories, based on the evolutionary philosophy of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), on the study of Greek religion.

#### **1.4. Orpheus the Protestant: Evolutionary perspectives on Orphism**

Spencer's work on the evolution of the human mind actually predates Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859).<sup>145</sup> One could sum up Spencer's main thesis

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γἑγῶσα. (Pure she come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld | Eukles and Eubouleus, fair child of Zeus: I receive | the gift of Mnemosyne, famous among men. | Caecilia Secundina, forward, by law, to become godlike).

<sup>144</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:135, Gruppe 1902:1125. See however Gruppe 1906 II:1034 where he is sceptical to the idea of reconstructing Orphic poems. For more recent attempts at reconstructing the "archetype" behind the various gold tablets see West 1975; Janko 1984; and Riedweg 2002.

<sup>145</sup> Spencer's ideas were first formulated in his *Social Statics* (1851), then elaborated in his *Principles of Psychology* (1855), and finally in *First Principles* (1861) which summed up his theories on the

in two points. First, that human civilization is not driven forward because of human-made artefacts or the like, but rather on account of mankind's social evolution. Second, the human mind should not be seen as something alien to the body, but rather as a biological counterpart to it, meaning that the mind is also evolving in much the same manner as the body.

Spencer's theories had a tremendous impact on late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars.<sup>146</sup> His ideas on the evolution of society and civilization were seen as axioms, and the tracing of a religion's evolution was seen as a possible endeavour. One of the most important tools in this search was the study of contemporary, "primitive" tribes and societies who were thought to be on the same evolutionary level as our pre-historic forefathers. Especially the study of the Aborigines of Australia, uniformly seen as specimens of the most primitive mentality, was thought to bring insight into the pre-historic religion of ancient Greece. All this meant that it was thought possible to divide the history of, say Greek religion, into stages where an evolutionary movement from a primitive, nature worship towards the highest evolutionary stage: monotheism could be traced.

Some of the work by Gilbert Murray will serve as an illustration of the evolutionary approach to Orphism, and Greek religion in general, during the first three decades of the twentieth century. In his *Four Stages of Greek Religion* from 1913, Murray sets out to explain the various stages the Greek religion had gone through, from the pre-historic period to the advent of Christianity.<sup>147</sup> Such a survey was, according to Murray, not only of great importance for the classical scholar, but should be taken as a point of departure for the study of the origin and development of religion in itself, a very popular subject at the time.<sup>148</sup> By tracing a religion's development it was thought that one could, by applying psychology, social anthropology, and comparative religious studies, reach back into the pre-historic era

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evolution of the mind. Because of the radical nature of his ideas, Spencer was forced to finance the first two his publications himself.

<sup>146</sup> Some of the most important includes J. J. Bachofen's *Das Mutterrecht* (1861), J. F. McLennan's *Studies in Ancient History* (1876), L. H. Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877), and J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890 1. ed.).

<sup>147</sup> Murray later changed the title to *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (1925), the five stages being: 1. "Urdummheit" (a term taken from the anthropologist Konrad Theodor Preuss' *Der Ursprung der Religion und Kunst*, 1904-5), 2. Olympian gods, 3. New approaches of the fourth century (philosophy's contribution to the development of religion), 4. Late Hellenistic (up to Paul and early gnosticism), 5. Early Christianity. All references to Murray are from the 1946 edition of his book.

<sup>148</sup> Murray 1946 [1925]:1.

where religious thought must have originated. This early stage in the development was referred to as a period of “Primal Stupidity” or “Urdummheit” by Murray, and this stage is found, Murray argued, in the pre-historic period of Greek religion as well. In this stage, the gods had not yet been fully anthropomorphised, a development belonging to the next stage. Instead people worshipped natural phenomena such as lightning, the sun, the moon, rock formations of special importance, rivers and so on. Evidence for this, it was further argued, could be found among the primitive people of today, people who represented a religious thinking similar to those of pre-historic man, or among children, or in the logic of dreamers.

In the development of religion, Murray argued, monotheism could only be reached by leaving superstition behind, something the Greeks were never able to do. However, Murray saw the seed of this development in Greek religion and argued that if it was not for superstition the Greeks would have developed a monotheism which would have been better and purer than the monotheism of the Hebrews.<sup>149</sup>

A similar line of thought is found in the works of Murray’s close colleague Jane Ellen Harrison and later in the works of Vittorio Macchioro. The latter claimed that the development of human thought went through several stages from fantasy to rationality, a development that also he likened to that of the development of a child’s mind.<sup>150</sup> These ideas were further elaborated through the establishment of the *mythos-logos* theory, which held that Greek rational thought had developed from an irrational, mythical to a rational, logical way of thinking, sometime in the fifth century BC.<sup>151</sup> Orphism, as we shall see, was believed to stand in the front of this evolution of thought.

Harrison sought an historical explanation of the evolution of Greek religion argued by Murray. Greek religion, she argued, was “fairly complete” in the ninth century BC and consisted of three elements: 1. Primitive Pelasgian nature worship, 2.

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<sup>149</sup> Murray 1946 [1925]:70.

<sup>150</sup> Macchioro 1930:73. See also Macchioro 1930:78 where he claims that the Greeks were unable to distinguish between history and myth.

<sup>151</sup> The seminal work on the mythos-logos dichotomy is Nestle 1966 [1942]:1, 6 who also sees the Arian race as especially suited to bring forth this development. The connection between mythos-logos, evolution, philosophy, and racism was quite strong in the pre-World War II period. An example is Macchioro 1930:84 who regards gesticulation as “a privilege of lower classes and races.” A few pages later he explains the gesticulation of the south-Italians by referring to their lower stage of logical thought, Macchioro 1930:87. See also Harrison 1927[1912]:461 who sees it as an axiom that philosophy developed from religion. For a recent discussion and critique of the mythos-logos dichotomy, see the various contributions in Buxton 1999.



Oriental elements, and, 3. A more sophisticated religion brought to Greece from the outside, more specifically the North. In Harrison's opinion it was the invading religion of a Germanic tribe that "blended with the small, dark, indigenous peoples" of the south and thus saved Greek religion from being "submerged in the great ocean of the East."<sup>152</sup>

Within this complex, sometime during the sixth century BC, Orphism, Harrison argued, came from the outside and developed from a primitive religion, with its wild, uncontrolled and ecstatic worship of Dionysos, to a more sophisticated form of religion, i.e. at a higher evolutionary stage than Greek religion in general. The primitive remains were seen as evident in the gold tablets where the deceased identified him- or herself with nature deities such as Earth and Heaven.<sup>153</sup> But despite this primitive strand, Orphism evolved and reformed the ordinary worship of Dionysos, turning it into a theology which emphasized *worship of* rather than mere *identification with* the deity.<sup>154</sup> Worship then evolved into prayer, examples of which Harrison found in some of the odes of Pindar, whom she considered Orphic.<sup>155</sup>

Orphism was thus seen as taking a step beyond Greek religion, forming the vanguard of the Greeks evolutionary path towards monotheism. The first steps on this road were, as Macchioro argued, taken by the philosophers, especially Plato, who, deeply influenced by Orphic thought and doctrines, developed a system of thought which ultimately laid the foundations for Christianity.<sup>156</sup> Thus, by using evidence from philosophers, the ties between Orphism and early Christianity became closer and closer since, as Edmonds puts it, Orphism had to "be given the familiar features of an advanced, enlightened religion."<sup>157</sup> We can see this in Harrison's vocabulary,

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<sup>152</sup> Harrison 1905:28-9, 45. Cook 1925 II:114 argued that some mythic elements had been brought to Greece from Germany through "Orphic channels" in Thrace.

<sup>153</sup> Harrison 1921:1. See also Macchioro 1928:341, 367; Macchioro 1930:29, 51-2. Further arguments for the primitive origins of Orphism was that Orpheus himself worshipped the Sun (Soph. frg. 523), and that the cult of Helios was strong in Thrace, Harrison 1927 [1912]:464.

<sup>154</sup> Harrison 1921:28. Worship was the hallmark of theology for Harrison. Primitive religion, she argued, lacked this aspect. Harrison therefore argued that Orphism was a purer and more moral religion than the Dionysiac cults, Harrison 1927 [1912]:466.

<sup>155</sup> Harrison 1921:30. Pind. *Ol.* 5.58, *Pyth.* 3.59. On the Orphic prayer, see also Kuhnert 1895:195 who argued, probably based on Pl. *Resp.* 364e-365a = OT 573 (I) Bernabé, that the Orphics prayed for their dead in order to help in their salvation, a trait he called Catholic.

<sup>156</sup> Plato was seen as a philosophical pupil of Orpheus, see Macchioro 1930:202, and 176: "On careful analysis, Plato's philosophy appears to be a purified and enlarged Orphism".

<sup>157</sup> Edmonds 1999:62. See Edmonds 1999:57 ff. for a survey of the Christian interpretations of Orphism in this period, esp. p. 61: "The point of all these comparisons is that Orphism is higher up on the scale of religions than the other forms of Greek religion (be it Dionysism, Homeric cult or the other

especially in her *Prolegomena* where she compared Orpheus with Martin Luther claiming that Orpheus was "a reformer, a protestant"<sup>158</sup> and that "[t]he blood of some real martyr may have been the seed of the new Orphic Church".<sup>159</sup> That the words are not used as metaphors by Harrison, is suggested by her previous (and subsequent) attitude towards the import of English words when she refuses to use the word "spirit", preferring the greek *daimon* since "*daimon* has connotations unknown to our English 'spirit'".<sup>160</sup> The gap between Orphism and Christianity was narrowing and later taken to its extremes by the works of Macchioro and Watmough.

Macchioro saw a straight line of development, or evolution, from Orphism to Paulinism, as he named the new religion formed by Paul in the first century AD. For Macchioro, as for Harrison, Orphism was something alien to the Greek spirit.<sup>161</sup> Described as a doctrinal (meaning more evolved) rather than a spontaneous religion (such as Greek polis religion) it was inevitable that Orphism came into conflict with the gods and worshippers of the *poleis*.<sup>162</sup> But, in the end, Macchioro claimed, Orphism still triumphed since the coming of Christianity could be seen as a direct result of Orphic philosophy and eschatology.<sup>163</sup> This is evident, he argues, in not only early gnostic sects of the first and second century AD, but also in the sect of the Essenes, which Macchioro described as a variant of Orphism based on similarities in eschatology and way of life. He also found evidence for Orphic cults all over the

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mystery cults), just as, *for the same reasons*, Protestantism (or a reformed version of modern Catholicism) is higher than medieval Catholicism." (italics in original). Some further examples are found in Nilsson 1921:244, regarding Orpheus as a prophet, and Nilsson 1921:246 comparing Plato's discussion of man's Titanic nature to our understanding of Adam and the original sin. See also Fiske 1916:231 on the Orphic influence on Christianity.

<sup>158</sup> Harrison 1991 [1922]:461.

<sup>159</sup> Harrison 1991 [1922]:468. See also p. 469 where she states that "Orpheus was a real man, a mighty singer, a prophet and a teacher, bringing with him a new religion, seeking to reform an old one. He was martyred and after his death his tomb became a mantic shrine." See also Watmough 1934:41 ff. Linforth 1941:xvi n2 refers to Harrison's "learned but fanciful and sentimental chapters on Orpheus [as] an extreme example of uncritical hospitality. The reader is soon aware that his feet are off the ground, and he finds himself floating, giddy and dizzy, amidst shifting and dissolving shapes."

<sup>160</sup> Harrison 1927 [1912]:xvii.

<sup>161</sup> Macchioro 1930:130. See also Macchioro 1930:129 where he states that Orphism, in contrast to ordinary Greek religion, had no mythology of its own (with a few exceptions). The strength of the Orphics, Macchioro continues, was rather their endeavours within the fields of philosophy and theological speculations.

<sup>162</sup> Macchioro 1930:123-4. As further evidence for the distinction between the two types of religion Macchioro 1930:123-4 argued that while the spontaneous religion led to art, the doctrinal led to something higher – philosophy.

<sup>163</sup> E. g. E. S. 1926:258 in his/her review of Eisler's *Orphisch-Dionysische Mysteriengedanken in der Christlichen Antike*: "It [the book] renews the impression of Orphism as the greatest and purest of the Mediterranean religions previous to the advent of Christianity."

Mediterranean sea, mainly based on the distribution of theatres which had been built in honour of Dionysos, and thus he could argue that Palestine was virtually surrounded by Orphic cults.<sup>164</sup> After reviewing the similarities between Orphism and Paulinism, Macchioro concluded that he was "quite confident that Pauline theology had an Orphic origin".<sup>165</sup> He is even tempted to ask if Paul might have been initiated into the Orphic mysteries before his conversion. This would, in Macchioro's view, explain the similarities and prove that the next step in the evolution of ancient religious thought was towards the monotheism of Christianity.<sup>166</sup>

A few years later, J. R. Watmough, in the conclusion of his treatment of Orphism, advocated a return to Orphic values in contemporary Christianity. It seems that the presentation of Orphism as a timeless and abstract forerunner of Christianity had gone too far.<sup>167</sup> It is hard to see what the next step could have been except the one taken first by Wilamowitz and then by Linforth in the early 1930s and -40s, which started what can be referred to as the third period in the study of Orphism. Although the years following the critique of Wilamowitz and Linforth shows a completely different, and in most cases reluctant, approach to Orphism, the period which was now inaugurated, marked by its scepticism, followed logically from the previous, optimistic, period. The Kuhnian paradigm shift which occurred during these years within the study of Orphism, then, is to be regarded as a logical discontinuity. The optimism, of having discovered the roots of Christianity and the belief that one could somehow discover the origin of a religion (Christianity or Orphism) by simply

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<sup>164</sup> Macchioro 1928:358-9. Taking Dionysos theaters as evidence for Orphic cults was of course criticized by many of his contemporaries, see e.g. Cadbury 1930:597 who criticizes Macchioro's "pan-orphism" or ability to see Orphism at every turn.

<sup>165</sup> Macchioro 1930:201. Macchioro gives a list of five features found in Orphism which are also found in Christianity: 1. Zagreus is the son of god (Zeus), 2. The Titans (forefathers of man) kills him, 3. Zagreus is resurrected by his father (Zeus), 4. Zagreus ascends to heaven, 5. His father grants him a kingdom in heaven (based on the *Rhapsodies*), Macchioro 1928:341-3.

<sup>166</sup> Macchioro 1930:203. Paulinism was for Macchioro the next step from both Judaism and Orphism, stating that "Orphism and Judaism completed and explained each other, and the product was Christianity". Miller 1932:469 calls this a "futile attempt to derive St. Paul's theology from Orphism, and to a regrettable plea for undogmatic Christianity." Boulanger 1925:67 concludes against Macchioro.

<sup>167</sup> Watmough 1934:75: "It might be well, therefore, before we close, to sit as it were with half-closed eyes, and contemplate 'Orphism' as an idea in all time: straining to free it, as far as may be, from the fetters which bind it to a particular place at a particular moment in antiquity; trying to raise it out of the realm of the merely historical to the higher realm of thought and poetry." Elsewhere in his book (part two) Watmough compares Orphism with the Medieval Church.

analysing the sources, went too far and the following critique was therefore inevitable.<sup>168</sup>

### 1.5 Reaction. Wilamowitz, Linforth, and beyond

The shift that occurred after the critique of Wilamowitz has been described extensively by others and will therefore be given only a short overview here.<sup>169</sup> It was in his *Der Glaube der Hellenen* that Wilamowitz asked what it was that made the gold tablets Orphic.<sup>170</sup> By doing this he questioned what had previously been taken for granted by most scholars since Comparetti, namely that the gold tablets reflected Orphic doctrines which could be explained in light of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos. His initial scepticism, uttered over just a few pages, led to a focussed study by Ivan M. Linforth ten years later, whose aim it was to show that terms such as "Orphic church", "Orphic religion", "Orphic doctrines" and so on, were merely scholarly constructs without any reference to reality. Devoting a whole chapter to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus Zagreus he concluded that the myth, based on literary evidence, could not be dated earlier than the third century BC about two-three hundred years after the gold tablets. Therefore the myth could not be used to explain the contents of the gold tablets.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, he could find no coherence in the material and concluded that "all the things that are said about the mysteries with which Orpheus' name is connected cannot be added together to produce a sum that would have any tolerable or credible unity".<sup>172</sup> Rather than seeing Orphism as a coherent religious system or church the term could only be applied to "the things to which the name Orpheus is constantly attached".<sup>173</sup>

Linforth dismantled the category "Orphism" because he found it impossible to identify the essence of Orphism. In the introduction to his *The Arts of Orpheus* he concludes (rightly) that "not two persons would agree upon what belongs essentially

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<sup>168</sup> Consider e.g. Macchiore 1930:8-9 where he announces his wish to reconstruct the history and pre-history of Orphism through the use of mainly comparative studies (with contemporary primitive societies), and his optimism in his success in the following quote: "In the light of this endeavour to set in relief what I call the permanent primitive background of Greek consciousness, it will, I hope, be an easy task to understand the essence of Orphism and its survival in Greek history.", Macchiore 1930:28.

<sup>169</sup> E. g. Prümm 1956:10 ff. and Alderink 1981:8 ff.

<sup>170</sup> "Warum denn orphisch?", Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931 II:202.

<sup>171</sup> Linforth's arguments, which are contested today, will be discussed further Chapter Three.

<sup>172</sup> Linforth 1941:266.

<sup>173</sup> Linforth 1941:288 f. See also West 1983:3 for a similar conclusion.

to [Orphism].”<sup>174</sup> Thus Orphism, in Linforth’s view, is something that escapes definition in contrast to other movements or religions such as Christianity. This conclusion could be seen as a result of essentialism which leads to either a conclusion that Orphism is impossible to define (in contrast to other terms), or that the word itself should be considered obsolete.<sup>175</sup> The problem with this is of course that one assumes that other terms or concepts can be defined based on their essence, which is believed to be its static, unchanging, and *real* identity. Following this line of logic one would have to dismantle ”Christianity” as a term since no one would be able to agree on its defining essence. Should Christianity be defined based on doctrines or the way Christians identify themselves? We need not consider all the local differences in Christianity to see that a definition of what Christianity *really is* is an impossibility and that in the strict sense we should speak of Christianities rather than Christianity.<sup>176</sup>

In any case, Linforth’s critique led to an important turning point in the study of Orphism. Rather than interpreting the evidence in light of a defined unified Orphic church, scholars were now forced to consider the question of whether the Orphic church had ever existed or had just been a fanciful construct.

Another important result of this critique was that since the ”Orphic religion” was called into question the similarities between this and Christianity became more difficult to see.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff’s and Linforth’s views, often described as the ”minimalist” approach, stand in contrast to the views of W. K. C. Guthrie, who

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<sup>174</sup> Linforth 1941:x.

<sup>175</sup> Janicki 1990:64, 2006:3-10, 19. On Essentialism and the critique against it see the works of Karl Popper, especially Popper 2003[1945] II:9-21.

<sup>176</sup> The essence of ”Christianity” has always been subject of much debate. On the doctrinal level consider e.g. the various Gnostic movements who flourished (in some sense) during the second to the fourth century A. D. which was seen as heretic. No doubt groups like the Valentinians or the Sethians considered themselves as righteous followers of Christ even though they were considered heretics by the orthodox Church. The debate on the true essence of Christianity recurs in the wake of the Reformation where Protestant writers attacked Catholicism for its role in the paganizing of Christ’s simple but sublime message. For an overview of the Protestant critique of the Catholic Church from the eighteenth century and onwards (seeing the latter as full of pagan rituals and doctrines, sometimes even describing the Pope as the Anti-Christ) see Smith 1990. Keeping to Early Christianity, consider the debate during the 1990s on the definition of Gnosticism. Scholars such as Williams 1996 argued that since there is no common essence which unites the various Gnostic sects, such as the Valentinians and the Sethians, the whole term should be abandoned and replaced by more precise terms which keep the various sects apart in academic analyses.

represents the "maximalist" approach.<sup>177</sup> Although confronted with the same material, Guthrie argued that there was an Orphic religious system or rather a reforming religion which made its impact on, first of all, the Dionysiac mysteries, but also other areas such as Pythagoreanism and the ideas of great men such as Plato, Pindar, Empedokles and others.<sup>178</sup> Hidden behind the fragmentary texts delivered to us from antiquity Guthrie therefore sought and found coherence and stability held together by a series of holy texts written under the name of Orpheus.<sup>179</sup> Guthrie maintained that Orphism was an ever-changing entity which changed and continued to change its religious environment. Still the central doctrine of Orphism remained its promise of individual salvation for its initiates. Guthrie's views were formulated in the first edition of his *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, published in 1935. When the second edition came out in 1952 he maintained that his view on Orphism was still unchanged.<sup>180</sup>

But most of all, the period was marked by uncertainty and reluctance to enter the debate.<sup>181</sup> The study of Orphism had turned from a topic whose sources had been used to support the most outrageous theories into a field reserved for the boldest scholars. E. R. Dodds summed up the common attitude among post-Linforth scholars to anything "Orphic" with these often quoted words:

I must confess I know very little about early Orphism, and the more I read about it the more my knowledge diminishes. Twenty years ago, I could have said quite a lot about it (we all could at the time).<sup>182</sup>

Dodds wrote this the same year as the bone tablets from Olbia were excavated. This find marks the beginning of a series of discoveries which all have had their implications not only on the debate concerning the nature and definition of Orphism, but also other areas of Greek religion such as eschatology, presocratic philosophy, and ritual practices in general. With the old construct of the monolithic Orphic religion or church out of the way, or at least debated, these sources were, and still are, ready to be

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<sup>177</sup> Edmonds 2007 *contra* Alderink 1981:8 who sees Guthrie as a representative "of a "moderate" position". The terms "maximalists" and "minimalists" are taken from Prümm 1956. For Guthrie's views see Guthrie 1950, Chapter 11 and Guthrie 1993 [1952].

<sup>178</sup> Guthrie 1993 [1952]:9; Guthrie 1950:309, 318.

<sup>179</sup> Guthrie 1993 [1952]:10-11. "These *logoi* must have been a "Bible" in a very real sense.", Guthrie 1950:310.

<sup>180</sup> Guthrie 1993 [1952]:xxxix.

<sup>181</sup> Observed already by Rose 1936:96 n1 in the wake of Wilamowitz' critique.

<sup>182</sup> Dodds 1951:147.

dealt with from alternative angles. It will be the aim of this thesis to approach some of this material in light of geography, chronology and ritual rather than a specific cult or religion. But before this can be done, a presentation of the sources in question is necessary. The next chapter will therefore present the new finds and some of the new approaches on the material which are still prevalent today.

# Chapter 2

## New Gold Tablets and Itinerant *Manteis*

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will serve as a brief overview over some of the most important finds within the study of Orphism, chronologically ranging from Linforth's critique via the Hipponion publication in 1974 up till today. It is in this period that some of the most spectacular and important finds relevant to the study of Orphism have taken place. In the present chapter I have chosen to focus primarily on the gold tablets and the discussions which the various finds led to, especially regarding the tablets' religious background. This means that a presentation and discussion of the Derveni papyrus, undoubtedly the most important Orphic find in this period, will be reserved for a later chapter devoted to this text. Another important find, the bone plates of Olbia, will be discussed only briefly in connection with their impact on the discussion of the gold tablets' religious background in this chapter. A question which will guide the following presentation is whether it is possible to identify a religious background for the tablets? That is, can we trace the various themes and doctrines reflected in the tablets back to a specific cult or religious environment?

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, W. K. C. Guthrie saw no reason to change his views on Orphism even after Linforth's critique. I presented his main arguments for this view in the last chapter. He had, however, another reason for upholding his views. According to Guthrie there had been no major new finds in the years between the two editions (1935 and 1952) nor did he find it likely that any new finds would appear.<sup>1</sup> Whether one agrees with Guthrie about the nature of Orphism or

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<sup>1</sup> Guthrie 1993[1952]:xxxix.



not, on this point one can safely say that he was wrong. As we shall see new finds resulted in new approaches to the study of the gold tablets and of Orphism in general.

## 2.2 Categorizing the new gold tablets

In the summer of 1950 a gold tablet was found in a pit-grave in Pharsalos, Thessaly.<sup>2</sup> The tablet was found inside a bronze hydria together with the cremated remains of a woman.<sup>3</sup> Based on the hydria and the letter forms on the tablet, the grave (with its contents) was dated to c. 350-320 BC. Verdelis described the Pharsalos tablet as Orphic-Pythagorean, and considered it related to the gold tablets from Petelia and Eleutherna.<sup>4</sup> Three years later Verdelis published two more texts from the Statathos collection.<sup>5</sup> These tablets had both been found in graves on Crete and can be considered almost identical to the already existing gold tablets from Eleutherna. Therefore, when discussing the two Statathos tablets (3.3 Statathos 1-2), Verdelis described them as Orphic.<sup>6</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapter, the most immediate result of Linforth's study was a reluctance and an uncertainty, aptly described by Dodds, about how to handle Orphism as a phenomenon and concerning the use of the term itself. As we shall see below, the new tablets which continued to be discovered were variably defined as Orphic, Dionysiac, Pythagorean, or something else through a combination of these terms. What is interesting, however, is that the terms themselves are seldom explained or defined. Verdelis in the publications mentioned above is an example of this. In other scholars one can detect a certain caution when dealing with the tablets, something that is made clear in the number of cases where scholars either put quotation marks around the preferred term or adopted a more uncertain approach by attaching a "so-called" to the term.

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<sup>2</sup> Verdelis 1951.

<sup>3</sup> The gold tablet measures 49 x 16 mm and is filled with nine lines of writing, making the letters just under 2 mm in height. The bronze hydria (49 cm high, 32 cm diameter at the thickest) depicts how Boreas seizes Oreithya, the young daughter of King Erechtheus. For pictures of the vase see Verdelis 1951. For a discussion of the vase see Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:310-313, 2008:297-301 who argues that the abduction refers to Hades' rape of Persephone and that it symbolizes the violence and suddenness of death.

<sup>4</sup> Verdelis 1951:100 f. Zuntz labeled the tablet B2.

<sup>5</sup> Verdelis 1954.

<sup>6</sup> Verdelis 1954:56: "δύο χρυσᾶ ὀρφικὰ ἐλάσματα".

Sometimes, as was the case with the publication of another gold tablet from Thessaly, this declared uncertainty is only a thin veil covering what was in fact a belief in the tablet's Orphic background. The Thessalian tablet, which had been handed over as a gift to the J. Paul Getty Museum by Lenore Barozzi in 1975, was published two years later by Joseph Breslin.<sup>7</sup> The tablet revealed a text quite similar to the Cretan tablets, although in a slightly longer version.<sup>8</sup> In a short discussion of the religious background of the gold tablets corpus, Breslin concludes that while an Orphic background cannot be proven, there are no other options available.<sup>9</sup> Curiously, this was written just three years after the publication of the Hipponion tablet had initiated a renewed discussion concerning the religious background of the tablets.

The Hipponion tablet was excavated in a cemetery near modern Vibo Valentia by Giuseppe Foti in 1969, and later published by Foti and Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli in 1974. The text resembles the longer tablets from Petelia and Pharsalos and was therefore grouped together with these and the shorter tablets from Crete and referred to as B10 by Zuntz.<sup>10</sup> Most spectacular was the last two of the sixteen lines in this hitherto oldest (from c. 400 BC) and longest gold tablet text, which read: καὶ δὴ καὶ σὺ πῶν ὁδὸν ἔρχεα<ι> ἄν τε καὶ ἄλλοι | μύσται καὶ βᾶχχοι ἱεράν στείχουσι κλεινοί.<sup>11</sup> The presence of *bakkhoi* suggests that the owner, in whose grave the tablet was found, was a member of a Bacchic cult and that she believed she would meet other members of the same group in the afterlife.<sup>12</sup> Still, in the following debate the tablet was repeatedly referred to as Orphic.<sup>13</sup> The occurrence of the

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<sup>7</sup> Breslin 1977. The tablet is sometimes referred to as the "Malibu" tablet because of its current location.

<sup>8</sup> Adding αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον as the tablet's last line.

<sup>9</sup> Breslin 1977:22. Merkelbach 1977 uses quotation marks around the term when he refers to the tablet ("orphisches"). Breslin's attitude is similar to Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:242, 2008:205 who conclude that it is more logical to call the gold tablets Orphic "than to maintain an excessively skeptical attitude and imagine that we may have to deal with yet "another religious movement" that we can neither qualify nor situate."

<sup>10</sup> See tablet 1.1 Hipponion in the Appendix.

<sup>11</sup> Versnel 1990:151 points out that the pairing of *mystes* and *bakkhos* is also found in Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472 N(2) (= 79 Austin), and in Heraclitus B 14 DK (= 87 Marcovich).

<sup>12</sup> Even though Zuntz 1976:130 n4 had doubts about the gender based on the masculine form used throughout the lamella the excavation report states that the deceased was probably a woman, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:96-97, 109, repeated with more certainty in Pugliese Carratelli 2001:44. On the gold tablets and gender see Graf 1993:255 f. and Edmonds 2004a:65 ff. who both support the editors.

<sup>13</sup> See title of the *ed. pr.* and Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:108 where the other gold tablets are described as Orphic. Lloyd-Jones 1975 called the tablet Orphic as did Russo 1992 and Tortorelli Ghidini 1992:178, 180 f.

*bakkhoi* was explained by references to Olympiodorus and Herodotus who both saw *bakkhoi* as a term which was interchangeable with *orphikoi* in the Classical period. Thus, Pugliese Carratelli, and others after him, referred to the Hipponion tablet as an example of Bacchic Orphism.<sup>14</sup> Besides the reference in Herodotus, Pugliese Carratelli cited Plato's description of the *true bakkhoi* as distinguished from ordinary thyrsos bearers and followed Olympiodoros' interpretation of the *true bakkhoi* as Orphics.<sup>15</sup> This statement, made by a Neoplatonist almost a millenium after the Hipponion tablet was interred seems hardly sufficient to see all references to the *bakkhoi* as a reference to *orphikoi*. On the other end of the scale, Martin L. West denied that the tablet had anything to do with Dionysos since the term *bakkhos* prior to the fourth century did not denote adherence to Dionysos, but was rather used as a reference to initiates who had "undergone a certain kind of ritual purification."<sup>16</sup> Susan G. Cole has, convincingly, argued against this interpretation and showed that while *bakkhos* or *bakkhios* could refer metaphorically to gods other than Dionysos, *bakkhos* when applied to humans is always used in reference to a worshipper of Dionysos.<sup>17</sup> Not even Zuntz argued against a Dionysiac influence on the Hipponion tablet, even though he preferred to see the tablet as Pythagorean.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, following the Hipponion publication, later publications or discussions usually refer to the whole gold tablet corpus as Dionysiac combined with either Orphic or Pythagorean. Combinations of these terms, however, are normally used with

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<sup>14</sup> Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:122, 126; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:65 f. See also Merkelbach 1975:8 "ein neues orphisch-bakchisches Goldtäfelchen", although he calls it Bacchic in the title. Guarducci 1975 calls the tablet Orphic in the title but ends by claiming that it originated from a Dionysiac cult which was influenced by "la teologia orfico-pitagorica", Guarducci 1975:24.

<sup>15</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 69c; Olympiodorus in *Plat. Phaed.* 8.7 Westerink = OF 320 (III) Bernabé.

<sup>16</sup> West 1975:234 f. referring to West 1974:24, repeated in West 1983:159 n68. See also Ferrari 2007 (note 5).

<sup>17</sup> Cole 1980:230, and discussion pp. 226-231.

<sup>18</sup> Zuntz 1976:135, 146 f.

caution.<sup>19</sup> Still others have chosen to bypass the problem and concentrate exclusively on the text.<sup>20</sup>

This brief overview of terms used to classify the gold tablets is not exhaustive and it has not been my intention to present it as such. Further terms will appear in other parts of this thesis where this is considered relevant. However, I wish to concentrate a bit more on two major theories concerning the gold tablets' religious background before making some observations myself.

The first to be considered is the idea that the doctrines represented by texts on the gold tablets have their origin in Egypt. Using Richard Janko's reconstruction of what he called "the long archetype", Reinhold Merkelbach quite recently attempted to show the close dependence of the contents of the gold tablets on the eschatology found in ancient Egyptian material, most notably in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.<sup>21</sup> That religious rites (especially Dionysiac rites) and myths were transferred from Egypt to Greece was maintained already by Herodotus, a theory supported later by Diodorus Siculus who also credited Orpheus for doing this.<sup>22</sup> As Merkelbach and others have pointed out there are some interesting parallels between the thirsty soul in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and the narrative describing how the thirsty soul desiring water should seek water from Mnemosyne's spring in the mnemonic tablets.<sup>23</sup> The Cretan tablets mark Mnemosyne's spring by a cypress tree, a detail that can be paralleled in Egyptian inscriptions which display a similar eschatology, which

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<sup>19</sup> A few examples will suffice; Burkert 1975:88 refers to the tablets as "orfico-pitagorico". In their discussion on the Pelinna tablets Segal 1990:412 refer to them as "Dionysiac-Orphic", Henrichs 2003:250 n153 writes "the "Orphic-Dionysiac" gold tablets" and "Orphic" gold tablets" (p. 208, 215), while Parker 1983:300 and Graf 1993:242 labels them "Orphic". Watkins 1995:277 refers to them as both "Orphic" and "Dionysiac-Orphic". Another version is found in Chrysostomou 1998:72 who argues that the tablets' background is to be found in "the 'orphico-dionysiac' (i. e. bacchic) mysteries". Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998 who writes "Orphic-Dionysiac" in the title and later refer to the "so-called Orphic-Dionysiac" gold tablets, p. 348. In the publication of the Entella tablet, Frel 1994, calls it "[u]na nuova laminella "orfica".

<sup>20</sup> E. g. Marcovich 1976 and Luppe 1978 on the Hipponion tablet.

<sup>21</sup> Janko 1984; Merkelbach 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Hdt. 2.48-49. Later, writers such as Hecataeus of Abdera wrote that the Orphic-Dionysiac mysteries were introduced to the Greeks from Egypt by Orpheus and that their content were modelled on the worship of Isis and Osiris. See also Diod. Sic. 1.96 = OT 55 Bernabé. We saw also in the previous chapter that this hypothesis was maintained by some of the Renaissance scholars and also by scholars from the turn of last century, Sikes 1895:474; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1931 II:202.

<sup>23</sup> The term "mnemonic tablets" is taken from Graf and Johnston 2007 and includes tablets 1.1 Hipponion, 1.2 Petelia, 1.4 Entella, 3.1 Eleutherna 1-3, 5-6, 3.2 Mylopotamos, 3.3 Sfakaki 2, 5.1 Pharsalos, 5.2 "Malibu", collectively labelled the B tablets by Zuntz. See also Breslin 1977:22 f. who points to these in his publication of the "Malibu" tablet.

could have served as a model for the ones on the gold tablets.<sup>24</sup> Such claims, especially concerning Orphism, would seem to be supported by Herodotus' report on Orphic and Bacchic rites which he believes are actually Pythagorean and Egyptian.<sup>25</sup>

Although interesting in itself, the search for the origin of the gold tablet texts in other cultures such as the Egyptian is extremely difficult since we are so sparsely informed of the lines of contact between Egypt, (Crete,) and Greece.<sup>26</sup> It is of course possible to see some parallels and sometimes the similarities may seem to more than suggest that a borrowing of some kind has taken place, but, as Burkert has shown, the cultural connections over which such borrowings take place are extremely complex.<sup>27</sup> Even if a direct borrowing from Egypt to the cults that produced the various gold tablets could be proven it would not explain the function or meaning the imagery attained or was given in the Greek context. That the soul of a dead man is thirsty, for example, is not reserved to the Egyptian or Greek cultures but is found all over the world.<sup>28</sup> Cultural features which are transferred from one culture must be compatible with, or at least serve a purpose in, the culture into which they are introduced. It is, nevertheless, inevitable that they acquire new meanings since these features are now embedded in a new cultural context. These objections also apply to parallels found in other cultures such as the Hittite.<sup>29</sup> An interesting example where the same image is applied in a very different context is found in the gnostic, second century AD text *The First Apocalypse of James*, from Nag Hammadi. Here, Jesus tells his brother

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<sup>24</sup> See Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:323-327, 251 n623, 2008:, 207-208, 310-315; Dieterich 1969:95. For pictures from the Egyptian context see Merkelbach 1999:3-5. Thom 1995:226 n576 gives a list of Egyptian parallels where the deceased claim for immortality is similar to the ones found in the gold tablets, especially from the A group: "For the expression "immortal, no longer mortal," cf. the following grave inscription from somewhere in Egypt: ἄφθιτος, οὐ θνητή. – θαυμά[ζω.] τίς δ'; – Ἰσιδώρα (ed. W. Peek, "Griechische Epigramme aus Ägypten," *Bulletin de la Société royale d'archéologie d'Alexandrie* 27 [1932] 53-54); also *Corp. Herm.* 4.5: ἀθάνατοι ἀντὶ θνητῶν εἶσι; Lucian *Dial. D.* 4.3, 5: Ganymede is οὐκέτι ἄνθρωπος ἀλλ' ἀθάνατος."

<sup>25</sup> Hdt. 2.81. See also Zuntz 1971:370 ff.

<sup>26</sup> Edmonds 2004a:32-33; Graf and Johnston 2007:116.

<sup>27</sup> Burkert 1987a. Acknowledged by Merkelbach 1999:6.

<sup>28</sup> Burkert 1987a, especially p. 17. This idea is not connected to the culture's climate since the belief is also found among Eskimos in Arctic regions, see Fienup-Riordan 1994:65 f. and in other cultures, see Zuntz 1971:374; Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:49 ff., 2008:29 ff. Other differences between the gold tablets and the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* is that the latter mention only one spring, there are no guardians by it and the water is given to the dead by the tree, or the goddess inside the tree. Edmonds 2004a:48 n56 refers to an unpublished paper by Tom Dousa which shows that after c. 1000 BC the Egyptian analogy in the *Book of the Dead* emphasized the tree while the water became less important. This is the opposite of what we find the gold tablets. As Sarah Iles Johnston has pointed out, "[c]ultures do not borrow from one another randomly", Johnston 1999b:89.

<sup>29</sup> Watkins 1995:284 ff. (text on p. 286) and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:252, 2008:209-217.

James that when he dies his soul will begin a journey and eventually be confronted by a guardian who will ask him who he is and what the purpose of his journey is.<sup>30</sup> Jesus' advice to James serves as a *vademecum* for this journey, in much the same way as the gold tablets do, since it is necessary to give the correct answers in order to attain salvation. We see that the same overall meaning is conveyed; the soul's journey after death will be difficult and only the correct knowledge will be helpful. This does not mean, however, that the gold tablets and the gnostic text belong to the same religious tradition. It merely shows that the image of a guardian in the afterlife and the importance of identity, attained through initiation, was an important eschatological feature in these texts. The Egyptian hypothesis thus remains a conjecture which, no matter how convincing, will not help us in identifying the gold tablets' religious background.

The foremost spokesperson, although not the first or last, for the Pythagorean hypothesis has been Zuntz. In his work on the corpus of gold tablets Zuntz suggested that the texts from Thurii and Petelia most probably contained important passages taken directly from a work by Pythagoras himself.<sup>31</sup> He identified several Pythagorean doctrines in the gold tablet texts and the archaeological contexts in which they had been found. And indeed there are similarities. Important in both the Thurii tablets and Pythagorean texts is the emphasis on purity which had to be attained in order for the initiate to attain immortality.<sup>32</sup> Several scholars have suggested that the idea of immortality as presented in the gold tablets from Thurii is the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis. Zuntz believed that this doctrine could be found in one of the tablets from Thurii (1.3 Thurii 3) where κύκλος in line 5 can be interpreted as a metaphor for the series of lives the initiate had experienced.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Thurii, Petelia and Hipponion, are all located in an area where Pythagorean ideas and doctrines originated only a century or so prior to the interment of the Hipponion tablet.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *The First Apocalypse of James* 19:24 ff. The text is found in the Nag Hammadi codex V, Thomassen 2008:3. On the problems of defining "gnosticism", see Williams 1996.

<sup>31</sup> Zuntz 1971:383 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Porph. *VP* 12.45; Iambli. *VP* 31, 68, 70, 74-8, 228; D. L. 8.31; Diod. 10.9.6. The Pythagorean text *Hypomnemata*, preserved by Alexander Polyhistor, claims that everything in the aether is immortal and holy and that this is true also for the soul since it is part of the aether. See also Parker 1983:297.

<sup>33</sup> Comparetti 1880:159.

<sup>34</sup> Zuntz 1971:337 n6 points out that the dead in Timpone Grande was found covered by a white sheet (which disintegrated when touched by the excavators) – reflecting a Pythagorean burial custom. Zuntz 1971:380 f. also argued that the Pythagoreans developed a well-known folklore motif – the well of life – and combined it with their own conception of metempsychosis.

Harrison also pursued the Pythagorean hypothesis, but combined this, as we saw in chapter 1, with the Egyptian alternative when assuming that all Greek mysteries had originated from Egypt through Crete, and that Pythagoras had adapted some of these by being initiated on Crete during his stay on the island, before travelling to southern Italy. There he established Pythagorean mysteries whose doctrines, Harrison argued, are reflected in the gold tablets found in "the tombs of the disciples of Pythagoras".<sup>35</sup> On a more specific level, Thom has pointed out the close similarities between some of the Pythagorean *Golden Verses* and the Thurii tablets which both stress the attainment of immortality.<sup>36</sup>

However, to point out similarities between Pythagorean ideas and some of the content of the gold tablets is something quite different from claiming that all the tablets are Pythagorean. This is not the place to discuss Pythagoreanism and the various associated traditions which most probably interpreted the words of Pythagoras, the orally transmitted *akousmata*, in a number of ways.<sup>37</sup> In southern Italy Pythagoreanism became differentiated and marginal following the persecution of the cult in the middle of the fifth century BC. Passages in the gold tablets which have been compared to and defined as Pythagorean have more of a general eschatological character which is also found in other texts or inscriptions. The hope and claim for immortality is particularly striking in this respect. This was hardly unique to Pythagoreans from the late fifth century BC onwards. We find this, coupled with the idea that man is composed of two opposing materials, body and soul, on a number of funerary inscriptions in the period when the gold tablets of Petelia, Hipponion, Entella and Thurii were inscribed.<sup>38</sup> As for metempsychosis, Pythagoras is usually seen as the

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<sup>35</sup> Harrison 1903:86. Harrison later described the gold tablets as Orphic and saw them as evidence for how Orphism broke free of the raw, barbaric forms of Dionysos worship, Harrison 1991[1922]:476.

<sup>36</sup> Thom 1995:209 ff. Consider especially line 63 ἀλλὰ σὺ θάρσει, ἐπεὶ θεῖον γένος ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν ("But take courage, for mortals have a divine origin", tr. Thom) compared with 1.3 Thurii 3-5.3 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὐχομαι εἶμεν ("For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind,"), and 71 ἔσσει ἀθάνατος, θεὸς ἀμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός ("you will be immortal, an undying god, no longer mortal", tr. Thom), compared with 1.3 Thurii 3.9 ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ θεὸς δ' ἔση ἀντὶ βροτοῖο ("Happy and Blessed, you shall become god, the opposite of mortal") and 1.3 Thurii 1, line 4: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ {ε} ἀνθρώπου ("You have become (a) god from human"). See also Pugliese Carratelli 2001:19 who argues for an original Pythagorean background for the gold tablets containing Mnemosyne.

<sup>37</sup> See e.g. Burkert 1972:53 ff., 277 ff. on the differences between the earlier and later Pythagorean traditions.

<sup>38</sup> The fourth and third century BC. Lattimore 1962:31 ff. has collected some of these. We will return to these inscriptions in chapter 4.

first Greek who taught this and I see no reason to doubt this.<sup>39</sup> However, not only Pythagoras but Parmenides and Empedokles, both from southern Italy were also known to have believed in and taught metempsychosis in the fifth century BC.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, it is far from certain that it is a doctrine of metempsychosis which is reflected by the word κύκλος in one of the Thurii tablet.<sup>41</sup> That the gold tablets from Thurii and Petelia originated in a Pythagorean area is of course something that should be considered. However, in the period the gold tablets from this area was written, Pythagoreanism was, as Burkert has concluded, "a marginal phenomenon, an undercurrent that manifested itself in changing forms."<sup>42</sup> The followers of Pythagoras were driven out of Croton sometime in the fifth century BC under quite dramatic circumstances.<sup>43</sup> This does not, of course, mean that Pythagoreanism had no influence on the philosophical and religious thoughts in Magna Grecia in the fourth century, but it is hard to imagine that the inhabitants of Thurii, where the offensive against Pythagoreans was especially aggressive, chose to honour dead Pythagoreans with tumulus graves.<sup>44</sup> At the time when the tablets from southern Italy were interred metempsychosis must have been adopted by other cults, philosophers, and movements, as represented by the writings of Empedokles and perhaps one of the gold tablets in Thurii. Pythagoreanism was only one of many movements which influenced the religio-philosophical thoughts in the area. Several accounts tell us that Dionysos, whom Sophokles called the protector of Italy, had an important place in this region, not only in the fourth century (see the Hipponion tablet), but long into the Roman period as well.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, while one cannot deny that Pythagoreans or ideas

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<sup>39</sup> The Suda reports that Pherekydes of Syros, the teacher of Pythagoras, was the first to teach metempsychosis. Since the Suda was written more than 1500 years after Pherekydes' time and since it is the only source to claim this, we should most probably disregard this statement, see Pherekydes 7 A 5 DK = Posidonius *ap. Cic. Tusc.* 1.16.38 and Aponius *In Canticum canticorum* 3.5; Long 1948:13; Schibli 1990:104 ff. On Pythagoras and metempsychosis, see Xenophanes B 7 DK; Arist. *De an.* 407b20; Porph. *Plot.* 19; Hdt. 4.95-6. According to tradition, Pythagoras learned this doctrine on his travels to the East. West 2007:22 f. argues that the doctrine derived from Mesopotamia where it is attested as early as the middle of the second millenium BC.

<sup>40</sup> Parmenides B 13 DK; Empedokles B 115, 117 DK.

<sup>41</sup> We will return to this question in chapter 4.5.

<sup>42</sup> Burkert 1985:304.

<sup>43</sup> The exact date of the attacks in Croton is uncertain but they are presumed to have taken place between 450 and 415 BC, Riedweg 2005:105.

<sup>44</sup> Riedweg 2005:106, see Apollon. *FGrH* 1064 F 2.263s. Furthermore, the deceased in Timpone Grande was cremated, a burial practice which was forbidden at least among some of the Pythagoreans, if not all, according to Iambl. *VP* 154.

<sup>45</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 1119, the play was performed at the time when Thurii was founded. On Dionysos in Italy, see Cole 1980:234 ff. with references, especially Diod. 12.10.7 who relates that when Thurii was



that originally were Pythagorean could have had an influence on the gold tablet texts, it is impossible to determine the degree of this influence.<sup>46</sup>

### 2.3 From Olbia to Hipponion. Orphic-Dionysiac gold tablets?

The publication of the Hipponion tablet introduced Dionysiac cult as a serious candidate in the question of the gold tablets' religious background. The Bacchic hypothesis was further strengthened by the publication of two, nearly identical, gold tablets found in a grave in Pelinna, Thessaly, in 1987. The Pelinna tablets, found two years prior to their publication, had been placed on the chest of a wealthy woman buried in a marble sarcophagus. Also in the grave were found the remains of a child of unknown sex.<sup>47</sup> The tablets were probably interred at the beginning of the second quarter of the third century BC.<sup>48</sup>

Dionysos plays an important eschatological role in the Pelinna texts since he is given the power to grant his followers release and a blissful afterlife. This is seen in the second line of both tablets: εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνα ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε ("Tell Persephone that Bakkhios himself has released you").<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in both tablets the deceased's afterlife is somehow connected to wine which will be received as an honour, οἶν[ο]ν ἔχεις εὐδ<α>ι<μ>ονα τιμ<ή>ν ("You will have wine as your honoured gift").<sup>50</sup> Inserted between these lines we find the "immersion-in-milk" formula, known also from two of the Thuri tablets, repeated three and two times

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founded (as a Locrian colony) a street was named after Dionysos. Livy 39.8-19 considered Magna Grecia a center of origin for the Bacchic cult which shocked the Roman Senate into banning them in 186 BC. Burkert 1987b:22 writes that "Dionysiac mysteries are seen to develop especially in Italy as a kind of analogue to the Eleusinian mysteries."

<sup>46</sup> See Burkert 1972:113: "there is nothing distinctively Pythagorean in the the famous gold tablets", and n21 on the same page: "specifically Pythagorean elements [in the gold tablets] cannot be demonstrated".

<sup>47</sup> Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:4 suggest that the grave was reopened towards the end of the third century in order to bury the child as well. Parker and Stamatopoulou 2006:20, referring to the report given by the excavators of the tomb Karapanou and Katakouta, find no evidence to support this suggestion. According to Parker and Stamatopoulou 2006:19 n63 the child was not found in a bronze kados, as reported by Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:3, but a bronze lebes.

<sup>48</sup> Parker and Stamatopoulou 2006:20, based especially on a bronze coin, from the reign of Antigonos Gonatas (c. 277/6-239 B.C.) and the pottery found in the grave *contra* Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:4 who dated the tablets to the last quarter of the fourth century on palaeographical grounds.

<sup>49</sup> 5.3 Pelinna 1. 5.3 Pelinna 2 is almost identical: "[εἰπεῖ]ν Φερ|σεφό<να>ι σ' > ὅτι Βα<κ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε".

<sup>50</sup> 5.3 Pelinna 1. 6. This is the last line on the other Pelinna tablet. The reading and meaning of this passage is highly debated, see Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:14; Luppe 1989:13; Merkelbach 1989; Segal 1990:411, 416; Graf 1993:241; Riedweg 1998:392 for different readings and translations.

respectively. Both wine and milk were associated with Dionysos. In addition, the ivy-shape of the tablets indicates a Dionysiac context. It is for these reasons quite clear that the religious background of these particular texts is Dionysiac/Bacchic.<sup>51</sup>

The importance of the Pelinna find cannot be underestimated. As was made clear from their initial publication, these texts share characteristics and elements with tablets from both of Zuntz' groups A and B.<sup>52</sup> On the basis of both the Hipponion and the Pelinna tablets it has therefore been argued that the religious background for all the tablets now had to be considered Bacchic.<sup>53</sup> This assumption, that all gold tablets must come from a single religious background, led in turn to attempts to reconstruct an hypothetical archetype from which the various gold tablets were supposed to have originated. This has been done especially with the mnemonic tablets, first by West (Petelia, Pharsalos, Hipponion), and later by Janko (adding the tablets from Eleutherna), Merkelbach (Petelia, Pharsalos, Hipponion, Entella), and most recently Riedweg.<sup>54</sup>

An alternative to reconstructing the original text is to establish the ideas and eschatological world-views of the groups in whose service the actual texts on the gold tablets were used. By this I mean that the owners of the various gold tablets most likely belonged to groups whose emphasis on the idea of (eternal?) bliss in the afterlife made them consult various traditions and texts. Now, these traditions are as difficult to reconstruct as an original text. One of the reasons for this is the contents of the tablets which, despite a number of similarities, also have a lot of differences, some of which will be explored further in this chapter. To assume, as a starting point, that the tablets derive from a common religious background or a single religious text, then, is to underestimate the importance of these differences. Cole and Edmonds have recently reminded us that the gold tablets should be considered products of

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<sup>51</sup> According to Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:4 two statuettes, one depicting a maenad and the other destroyed beyond recognition, were found in the grave. Parker and Stamatopoulou 2006:20 n64 point out that this has been repeated in every subsequent description of the find even though the archaeological report only mentions one terracotta statuette depicting an actor, Tziafalias 1992:135, fig. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Pointed out by Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:5. See Riedweg 1998:364, 375-376 for a more detailed comparison between the Pelinna tablets and the two groups.

<sup>53</sup> Henrichs 1983:156 treats the gold tablets as bacchic as does Graf 1993:93; Burkert 1993:259 and Cole 1993:276. Cole is however more cautious and rightfully stresses that "the individuals who practiced what we call Bacchic mysteries may not always have shared the same expectations.", Cole 1993:281.

<sup>54</sup> West 1975:230; Janko 1984:99-100; Merkelbach 1999:2; Riedweg 2002:469 ff. See also Lloyd-Jones 1975:225; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:249 ff.; Bernabé 2002a:422.

independent groups rather than adherents of the same religious persuasion.<sup>55</sup> This does not mean that I consider it impossible to identify the religious background in all instances. I consider, for example, both the Hipponion and the Pelinna tablets as products of Bacchic cults. Rather, it works to remind us that we should concentrate on the individual tablets in order to elucidate (if possible) their religious backgrounds instead of assuming one in advance and using our knowledge of this to reconstruct meanings that find no support in the texts. Before I pursue this further, however, it will be necessary to examine why many scholars see the tablets as Orphic or Orphic-Dionysiac.

It would seem that many scholars continue to describe the gold tablets in general as Orphic because it is seen as a convenient way to describe them. Others believe that they can in fact be seen as evidence for Orphic doctrines and eschatology. This is demonstrated by a number of new works on the tablets which have appeared, especially after the publication of the bone tablets from Olbia in 1978.<sup>56</sup> On one of the three bone tablets published by Rusjaeva a common local abbreviation for Dionysos, Dio, is coupled with either ΟΡΦΙΚΟΙ or, as West suggests, ΟΡΦΙΚΩΝ/ΟΡΦΙΚΩΙ.<sup>57</sup> Despite uncertainty regarding the case ending of this word, most scholars agree that the tablets bear witness to a cult where Dionysos was worshipped, that this worship was either directed to the Orphic Dionysos or that the worshippers considered themselves as Orphics or both<sup>58</sup>, and that they adhered to a doctrine concerning the

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<sup>55</sup> Cole 2003:207; Edmonds 2004a:30.

<sup>56</sup> Rusjaeva 1978. See Tinnefeld 1980 for a resumé in German. The tablets were found at the northern end of the Olbia agora near an altar dedicated to Zeus or Athena. They measure about 5 times 4 cm. with a thickness of about 0,5 cm. Based on the archaeological context and palaeographical analyses they have been dated to the first half of the fifth century BC, Tinnefeld 1980:67; Vinogradov 1991:78.

<sup>57</sup> West 1982:21. The drawings of the tablets reproduced by Rusjaeva have several differences from those found in West 1982 and 1983, especially in this case. Zhmud 1992:159 is critical to West's reading. Bernabé 2002a:429 reads 'Ορφικοί, Graf and Johnston 2007:185 suggest "'Ορφικοί or 'Ορφικόν".

<sup>58</sup> On tablet 2 and 3 ΔΙΟ is followed by what Rusjaeva, and Vinogradov 1991:78 read as a Zeta. Rusjaeva interpreted these Zetas as Zagreus or possibly the number 7, believing it to be connected to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos since he, according to some sources, was tore apart in seven pieces. West 1982:19 has pointed out, however, that Zeta in the Classical period should have the form Ι and therefore see it as a zigzag symbol possibly symbolizing a snake or a thunderbolt (Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:154 f., 2008:114, following West, see a possible link between this symbol and the lightning bolt on gold tablets 1.3 Thurii 3, line 4, 1.3 Thurii 4-5, line 5). Bilde 2007:2-3 argues that the symbol is a key, making the whole bone plate a key to Hades. She bases this on its similarity to the depictions of keys found on vases from Magna Graecia and on terracotta discs found in the same region from the Classical and Hellenistic period. The number seven is sometimes connected to the Pythagorean theory of the harmony of the spheres where the distance between the planets corresponds to seven notes. It is tempting to see this in connection with the drawing on the reverse side of tablet 2 Rusjaeva where seven oval dots are found on what could be interpreted as a musical

afterlife, possibly a belief in metempsychosis.<sup>59</sup> Suggestive evidence for this doctrine is found on bone tablet 1 where we find the sequence ΒΙΟΣΘΑΝΑΤΟΣΒΙΟΣ. There are also other examples of words with opposite meanings being coupled in the two other tablets from the temenos, but in this case the inscriber, as West has observed, has been careful to include the three words on the same line.<sup>60</sup> This makes it probable that the sequence has either something to do with the cycle of life and death or with a belief in a new, and final, life after death. These tablets place the Orphics together with Dionysos and contain also an allusion to what could be a doctrine of metempsychosis. This coupling of Orphics and Dionysos has given support to Burkert's idea, proposed one year prior to the publication of these tablets, that Orphism, Pythagoreanism, Bacchic mysteries, and Eleusinian mysteries are all concepts and terms which merged into and influenced one another from the Archaic period onwards.<sup>61</sup> Burkert proposed to position these four categories in a Venn-diagram where Orphism was presented as influenced and indeed made up of elements from the other three.<sup>62</sup> In this way, an exclusive, monothetic definition of Orphism was avoided and thus allowed a definition where Orphism shared characteristics with Pythagoreanism, Bacchic mysteries, and Eleusis, a relationship which worked both ways. Of course, the debate on what these shared characteristics were is still ongoing.

Just as the Hipponion and Pelinna tablets were seen as evidence that the entire corpus of gold tablets could be ascribed to Dionysiac cults, the Olbia tablets have been interpreted as confirming evidence that Orphic cults worshipped Dionysos.<sup>63</sup> For Hans Dieter Betz, for example, this meant that the entire corpus of gold tablets had

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instrument. West 1982:23 suggests that it is a drawing of a ritual instrument designed for sacrifice, Bottini 1992:154 suggests either a flute or a row of eggs. Pythagoras is reported to have said that "souls cannot ascend without music", Burkert 1972:357. Cp. also Verg. *Aen.* 6.876-877. However, such a conjecture is dangerous since the number seven could be made to fit in various cosmological speculations not only restricted to the Pythagorean Harmony of the spheres, and since, as Burkert 1972:355 points out, the number of harmonious planetary notes varied from three to nine. Bilde 2007:3 points out "that other symbols may be suggested too, for example a ladder or an *abacus*."

<sup>59</sup> West 1982:18; Zhmud 1992:168; Bernabé 2002a:414.

<sup>60</sup> The other examples include only two words, tablet 2: ΕΙΡΗΝΗΠΟΛΕΜΟΣ; ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΨΕΥΔΟΣ. According to the reconstruction of Vinogradov 1991:79, which I, unlike Gordon 1993:310, find convincing, another two examples are found on tablet 3: [ΨΕΥΔΟΣ]ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ, and ΣΩΜΑΨΥΧΗ (where West and Rusjaeva only saw ΙΑΨΥΧΗ).

<sup>61</sup> That Dionysos played an important role in Orphism had been argued by modern scholars since Comparetti's time, but, as Linforth 1941:53 showed, there is no pre-300 BC evidence to support such a connection, except Aischylos' *Bassarai* where the relationship is marked by hostility.

<sup>62</sup> Burkert 1977:7.

<sup>63</sup> Zhmud 1992:162 f.; Bernabé 2002a:414.

thus sprung from an Orphic-Dionysiac context.<sup>64</sup> Another example is given by Aphrodite Avagianou who sees parallels between the opposition-pairs (war-peace, body-soul etc.) in the Olbia bone tablets, the deceased's self-representation in the gold tablets of the mnemonic tablets (child of Earth and Heaven), and a funerary epigram from Pherai whose oppositions between *doxa* and *aletheia*, Heaven and Earth, also spring from the same "Orphic-Bacchic" tradition.<sup>65</sup> These conclusions are based on a willingness to find a homogenous Orphic-Bacchic tradition in the material. There are certainly similarities between the material Avagianou cites, but these similarities need not be traced back to one specific doctrine from one specific religious movement. The opposition of body and soul is found in numerous inscriptions all over the Graeco-Roman world, from the Classical to the Roman period.<sup>66</sup> To trace all these back to an Orphic-Bacchic mystery cult is methodologically untenable since this can hardly be considered a trait exclusive for one cult, but rather as an idea found not only in the inscriptions referred to by Lattimore, but also in Ancient Greek literature in general.<sup>67</sup> For the same reason it seems untenable to draw the conclusions Betz does. Betz is probably right when he claims that the Olbia bone tablets show a relationship between Orphics and Dionysos in Olbia. This does not mean, however, that the same conclusion should be applied to all material which seems to refer to Dionysiac mysteries. Such a conclusion would mean that all Orphic and Dionysiac communities across the Graeco-Roman world were static entities whose members behaved exactly as their fellow initiates in Olbia. Consequently, even if some of the gold tablets in the corpus are Dionysiac, in the sense that their owners worshipped Dionysos, they should not be considered Orphic based on the deity's occurrence on the Olbia tablets. Furthermore, as Henrichs has reminded us, a worship of Dionysos took on several forms, all with their local differences.<sup>68</sup> For these reasons I find it necessary to ask whether it is possible to detect a worship of Dionysos, or any other deity, in the gold

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<sup>64</sup> Betz 1998:408 ff.; Vinogradov 1991:83 also sees the gold tablets as Orphic.

<sup>65</sup> Avagianou 2002:88 f.

<sup>66</sup> See Lattimore 1962:31 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Both Plato and Aristotle wrote on the relationship between body and soul. See Garland 2001:1 ff.; Bremmer 2002:1 ff., and especially p. 4: "This meaning of *psychê* as 'soul of the dead' will remain present all through antiquity, although it is relatively rare in lyric and elegiac poets and in tragedy." In Homer the *psychai* in Hades are separated from their bodies, lacks wit and thus wanders around aimlessly, e.g. Hom. *Od.* 11.

<sup>68</sup> Henrichs 1983.

tablets besides the Hipponion and Pelinna tablets? If not, what other alternatives do we have?

#### 2.4 Itinerant *manteis* and the gold tablets

We find obvious similarities when we compare the Hipponion tablet with the Petelia, Pharsalos, Entella, Thessalia ("Malibu"), and Eleutherna tablets. Does this mean that the rituals accompanying the tablets belonged to the same cult, in Eleutherna as in Hipponion? Should all these tablets be considered Bacchic on the basis of the last two verses of the Hipponion tablet? If so, why was the reference to the *bakkhoi* left out in all of them except the Hipponion tablet? Or why is not Dionysos given a more prominent role, as he has in the Pelinna tablets? How should we understand the fact that there are differences in emphasis, both regarding deities and the specific directions given for the underworld journey when everything else is so similar?

Based on the Thurii tablets, where we find several differences among texts from the same necropolis interred at more or less the same time, we should allow for differences from tablet to tablet without having to ascribe them to different cults. However, this does not explain the different directions given to the deceased in some of the tablets since this information must have been considered very important (taking a wrong turn in Hades had, according to the tablets, disastrous effects). While most of these tablets locate the Mnemosyne's spring on the right side of Hades, others tell the deceased to keep clear of the first spring and "proceed further" until he or she reaches Mnemosyne's spring, and a newly published tablet from Eleutherna emphasizes the left when positioning the spring.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the unnamed spring (almost certainly Lethe) which is to be avoided is sometimes on the left side, sometimes on the right. The mnemonic tablets from Crete, however, do not mention this spring at all, but focus exclusively on Mnemosyne's spring. These discrepancies have troubled scholars ever since the Eleutherna tablets were published in 1893, contradicting the advice found on the Petelia tablet which tells us to avoid the spring by the cypress. Martin West has suggested that the original text only contained one spring, located on the right, and that the longer texts sometimes added another spring in order to make a

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<sup>69</sup> Right: The Eleutherna tablets (3.1 Eleutherna 1-3), Thessaly (5.2 "Malibu"), and the only Thurii tablet which gives directions (although not to Mnemosyne's lake) (1.3 Thurii 1). Avoid right and proceed: The Pharsalos (5.1 Pharsalos) and Hipponion (1.1 Hipponion) tablets. Avoid left and proceed: The Petelia tablet. Turn left: Eleutherna (3.4 Sfakaki 2, OF 484a Bernabé; Tzifopoulos 2007).

further distinction between the initiated and the other dead.<sup>70</sup> In response to this suggestion, and *contra* Zuntz's proposal that the shorter tablets from Eleutherna which mention only one spring are the oldest, Richard Janko proposed two archetypes where the longest, containing both springs, was the original, while the shorter archetype was an abbreviated version of this.<sup>71</sup> Graf and Johnston are also troubled since one should expect that right is associated with good and left with evil as it is in Greek texts from the early Classical period and onwards.<sup>72</sup> In order to explain these differences, Johnston<sup>73</sup> turns to Pindar and Plato since she believes the eschatological scheme behind the tablets must also have inspired these authors. Johnston identifies three types of dead souls in the eschatology of Plato's and Pindar's works, and although their characterization varies, Johnston believes that this division reflects the eschatology behind the gold tablets. To substantiate her claim, Johnston argues that the deceased has already started down the right-hand path and that it is along this path that he or she first encounters the spring which is to be avoided. At the first crossroads, then, the incurably evil souls take the road to the left, while the souls of the good take right hand path. Then as the souls approach the first spring, the good are further subdivided and the "good", who will drink here, are separated from the "good plus", as Johnston calls them<sup>74</sup>, who proceed to Mnemosyne's spring. These "good plus" are the initiated owners of the gold tablets. Thus by assuming the first crossroads separating the evil from the good and the good plus, Johnston finds a tripartite division of souls in the eschatology behind the gold tablets, just as we find it in Plato and Pindar. This shows how the gold tablet eschatology follows, not only the notion that right equals good, and left equals evil, but can be used as evidence for a connection between Orphic texts and Plato (and Pindar).

The main problem with this reading is that the initial crossroad proposed by Johnston is not mentioned in any of the tablets. This, argues Johnston, can be explained by the fact that the material on which the texts were inscribed, gold, was so

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<sup>70</sup> West 1975:229.

<sup>71</sup> Janko 1984:100 has a stemma of the texts and their relations to the archetypes.

<sup>72</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:99-100; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:42, 2008:23 refer to Aristotle frg. 200 Rose where it is said that the Pythagoreans associated left with the bad and right with the good. On left and right in early Greek literature and its influence on philosophy see Lloyd 1962 with references to ancient sources from Homer to Aristotle. See also Torjussen 2008a:30.

<sup>73</sup> Johnston is the author of the chapter that deals with this issue.

<sup>74</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:100.

expensive that brevity was of the essence.<sup>75</sup> This explanation is unconvincing. There is no evidence that the eschatology behind the mnemonic tablets advocated three different destinies for dead souls. The longest of these tablets, such as the Petelia tablet, explicitly focus on a choice between two springs. This choice suggests a two-fold eschatology, you either know where to go and what to say or you do not, which is similar to what Plato ascribes to the itinerant *manteis* in his critique of them in the *Republic*.<sup>76</sup> The same two-fold division is found in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, and it is this distinction, I believe, which lies behind the gold tablets; between initiate and non-initiate. I see no need to introduce a hypothetical third alternative here. Johnston's explanation must therefore be discarded, even if it means that the hope of finding a coherent and single religious, eschatological background for the tablets diminishes. Are there any alternative explanations for the right/left problem? I believe an explanation to these differences may be found by seeing the tablets as products of eclectic, religious experts, both local and itinerant. This has been suggested before, but the consequences of this, in my view convincing, proposal have not been fully considered.<sup>77</sup>

Important in this respect is the passage in Plato's *Republic*, referred to briefly above, in which he rebukes the shameless conduct of *agyrtai* (begging priests) and *manteis* (seers):

Begging priests and seers go to rich men's doors and make them believe that they, by means of sacrifices and incantations, have accumulated a treasure of power from the gods that can expiate and cure with pleasurable festivals any misdeeds of a man or his ancestors, and that if a man wishes to harm an enemy, at slight cost he will be enabled to injure just and unjust alike, since they are masters of spells and enchantments that constrain the gods to serve their end. And for all these sayings they cite the poets as witnesses, with regard to the ease and plentifulness of vice, quoting: "Evil-doing in plenty a man shall find for the seeking; Smooth is the way and it lies near at hand and is easy to enter; But on the pathway of virtue the gods put sweat from the first step," and a certain long and uphill road. And others cite Homer as a witness to the beguiling of gods by men, since he too said: "The gods themselves are moved by prayers, and men by sacrifice and soothing vows, and incense and libation turn their wills, praying, whenever they have sinned and made transgression." And they produce a bushel of books of Musaeus and Orpheus, the offspring of the Moon and of the Muses, as they affirm, and these books they use in their ritual, and make not only ordinary men but states believe that

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<sup>75</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:102.

<sup>76</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 2.365a.

<sup>77</sup> Most recently in Graf and Johnston 2007.



there really are remissions of sins and purifications for deeds of injustice, by means of sacrifice and pleasant sport for the living, and that there are also special rites for the defunct, which they call functions, that deliver us from evils in that other world, while terrible things await those who have neglected to sacrifice.<sup>78</sup>

We hear nothing of the gold tablets here, but there are nevertheless reasons to believe that the targets of Plato's criticism could be identified as users and producers of such charms and amulets.<sup>79</sup> That the gold tablets are not mentioned is, in any case, not surprising since they are never mentioned by ancient writers except perhaps, a late reference in Pausanias.<sup>80</sup> A connection between the gold tablets and itinerant *manteis* such as those criticized by Plato was suggested already by Comparetti, who, based on the testimonies of Theophrastus and Plutarch, named them "*orfeotelesti*" and "*apostoli greci*".<sup>81</sup> This theory was later repeated and somewhat expanded by Joubin, who identified the authors of the gold tablets as "*ces apôtres de l'orphisme*" who travelled the world teaching the Orphic mysteries, selling the gold tablets as amulets to initiates.<sup>82</sup> More recent proponents for this theory are Burkert, Graf and Johnston, and Henrichs. Henrichs has argued that the gold plates originated in southern Italy, Hipponion being the oldest of the plates, then spread to Thessaly, where the tablets

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<sup>78</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 2.364b-365a = OT 573 (I) Bernabé, tr. Paul Shorey: ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντιες ἐπὶ πλουσίων θύρας ἰόντες πείθουσιν ὡς ἔστι παρὰ σφίσι δύναμις ἐκ θεῶν ποριζομένη θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπωιδαῖς, εἴτε τι ἀδίκημά του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ ἢ προγόνων, ἀκείσθαι μεθ' ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἑορτῶν, ἔάν τε τινα ἐχθρὸν πημῆναι ἐθέληι, μετὰ σμικρῶν δαπανῶν ὁμοίως δίκαιον ἀδίκῳ βλάψειν ἐπαγωγαῖς τισιν καὶ καταδέσμοις, τοὺς θεοὺς, ὡς φασιν, πείθοντες σφίσι ὑπηρετεῖν. τούτοις δὲ πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις μάρτυρας ποιητὰς ἐπάγονται οἱ μὲν κακίας πέρι, εὐπετείας διδόντες, ὡς τὴν μὲν κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι ῥηϊδίως· λείη μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει· τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρώτα θεοὶ προπάροισιν ἐθήκαν καὶ τινα ὁδὸν μακρὰν τε καὶ τραχείαν καὶ ἀνάντη· οἱ δὲ τῆς τῶν θεῶν ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων παραγωγῆς τὸν Ὀμηρον μαρτύρονται, ὅτι καὶ ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν λιστοὶ δέ τε καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοί, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θυσίαισι καὶ εὐχολαῖς ἀγαναῖσιν λοιβῆ τε κνίση τε παρατρῶπῶσ' ἀνθρώποι λισσόμενοι, ὅτε κέν τις ὑπερβῆ καὶ ἀμάρτη. βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως, Σελήνης τε καὶ Μουσῶν ἐκγόνων, ὡς φασι, καθ' ἃς θυηπολοῦσιν, πείθοντες οὐ μόνον ἰδιώτας ἀλλὰ καὶ πόλεις, ὡς ἄρα λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων διὰ θυσιῶν καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν εἰσι μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσι δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν, ἃς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, αἱ τῶν ἐκεῖ κακῶν ἀπολύουσιν ἡμᾶς, μὴ θύσαντας δὲ δεινὰ περιμένει.

<sup>79</sup> See also Pl. *Resp.* 10.909b and 11.933a-e where he argues for the imprisonment of these itinerant *manteis*. Cp. also P Derv. col. 20 where rites of the city and religious expert are criticized, a similarity pointed out by Laks 1997:125.

<sup>80</sup> Paus. 2.37.2-3 where he writes that the *legomena* of the Lernaean mysteries are inscribed on "a heart made of orichalc" (ἐπὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ γεγράφθαι τῇ πεποιημένῃ τοῦ ὀρειχάλκου), orichalc being a copper alloy "much like gold in appearance", Jordan 2004:262 n39. Eur. *Alc.* 965-969 = OT 812 Bernabé, is not a secure reference to the gold tablets but rather to spells of an undisclosed kind, cf. Graf and Johnston 2007:170.

<sup>81</sup> Comparetti 1880, p. 161 and 162 respectively; Smith and Comparetti 1882:117. Theophr. *Char.* 16.11a1; Plut. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 224e.

<sup>82</sup> Joubin 1893:123-124.

are slightly younger, until they finally reached Crete, where we find the youngest and most abbreviated versions.<sup>83</sup>

While I believe that Plato's critique against the *manteis* is illuminating regarding the religious background of the gold tablets, and agree that the gold tablets most probably were distributed by such itinerant *manteis*, I think that there are at least two aspects of the passage which need to be emphasized more. First of all I would like to concentrate on how Plato sees the *manteis* as occupied with not only purification rites, like those we find references to in some of the gold tablets, but also with incantations and spells, especially *καταδέσμοι*, known as curse tablets.<sup>84</sup> This coupling of purification rites, *manteis*, *magoi* and their *epôidai* (spells) is quite common amongst ancient writers, from Heraklitos to Diodorus Siculus.<sup>85</sup> A separation of religion from magic in ancient texts became clear only in later Roman texts, especially in various laws starting with the Roman *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* which was passed during Sulla's dictatorship in 82/81 BC.<sup>86</sup> Thus Plato's description of *manteis* offering both purification rites and ways to control the gods is not surprising since these practices did not necessarily contradict each other. This suggests that some *manteis* offered initiations which would secure a safe passage to a better fate after death (through the use of gold tablets) as well as ways to affect one's lot in this life (through the use of "magic" and curse tablets). As Johnston has pointed out, the combination of these practices is logical considering that both "services" depended upon knowledge of the Underworld and rituals connected to it and its inhabitants.<sup>87</sup> In light of this I believe the passage suggests that Plato is referring to a variety of *manteis* rather than one specific type, such as the *orpheotelestai*, especially

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<sup>83</sup> Henrichs 1983:154; Burkert 1987b:33-34; Graf and Johnston 2007:130.

<sup>84</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 364c. Definition of curse tablets: "Defixiones, more commonly known as curse tablets, are inscribed sheets of lead, usually in the form of small, thin sheets, intended to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or welfare of persons or animals against their will." taken from Jordan 2000:5.

<sup>85</sup> Herakleitos B 14 DK connects *magoi* with *bakchoi*, *lênai*, and *mystai*. It is not certain, however, how much is Heraklitos' and how much is Clement of Alexandria's words here, see Graf 1997:21 f. Eur. *Bacch.* 233-234; Soph. *Oedipus Rex* 387 f.; Gorg. *Hel.* 10; Pl. *Symp.* 202e; Diod. Sic. 5.64.4 citing the fourth century BC writer Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F 104. See Graf 1997:23 f., and Johnston 1999a:105 ff.; Dickie 2001:60 ff. for more references. This is hardly an exhaustive list. I will return more thoroughly to some of these terms later.

<sup>86</sup> See however Pl. *Leg.* 933a-e where *manteis* using *φάρμακεία*, which can mean either medicine or incantation or both, should, according to Plato, be put to death. For more on the interchangeability of "medicine" (poison) and magic and their mutual connection to "hidden forces" see Phillips 1991:264.

<sup>87</sup> Johnston 1999a:106, 108, 1999b:84-88, *contra* Zuntz 1971:279 who claimed that the gold and curse tablets were products of different mentalities.

since the use of *katadesmoi* cannot be pinpointed to one specific religious background but rather to a general belief in the possibility of manipulating or "asking" the gods for their favours. This does not necessarily mean that the use of gold tablets should be seen as devoid of references to a specific set of doctrines. However, it does emphasize the diversity of religious and "magic" tools which were employed by the *manteis*.<sup>88</sup>

The second aspect we need to consider is related to the identity of the targets of Plato's criticism and their relation to the gold tablets. One figure which in ancient literature is especially connected to both magic and initiation is Orpheus, known as a *mantis* and the inventor of *teletae*.<sup>89</sup> He is also mentioned by Plato in the passage quoted above which has led scholars to identify the targets of Plato's criticism as *orpheotelestai*.<sup>90</sup> Does this mean that all gold tablets, conceived as instruments for purification, and curse tablets, were distributed solely by wandering *orpheotelestai*, as scholars from Comparetti to Graf and Johnston have argued? I am not convinced. The *orpheotelestai*<sup>91</sup> were not the only wandering priests in the Classical period. Burkert treats itinerant *manteis* and charismatics as one of three major forms of religious organization, the other two being the priests and priestesses of a sanctuary, and the *thiasos*.<sup>92</sup> These wandering religious experts, *agyrtai*, *manteis*, *goês*, did not adhere to one specific deity, but must rather have been a rather heterogeneous group. Euripides alludes to one type associated with Dionysos in the *Bacchae*, who represents the introduction of a new cult to Thebes through the agency of what a disgusted Pentheus calls a *goês epôidos*.<sup>93</sup> Another type is referred to by Isokrates who briefly describes the career of Thrasyllus of Aegina and how he, after having inherited sacred texts (περὶ τῆς μαντικῆς) from his friend Polemaenetus, wandered from city to city not only earning vast sums of money from his trade but also meeting scores of women

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<sup>88</sup> We will return to the curse tablets later in this chapter.

<sup>89</sup> On Orpheus as a *mantis* and *goês* see Livy 39.8.4; Philochorus *FGrH* 328 FF 76, 77; Strabon 7.330 frg. 18; Philostr. *VA* 4.14; schol. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.684; Plat. *Prt.* 316d; Ov. *Met.* 11.8; Paus. 6.20.18 cp. with 9.30.4; OF 804-830 Bernabé; Graf and Johnston 2007:169-171. Orphics as magicians, see Eur. *Alc.* 967; Burkert 1983a:5. Orpheus as an initiator and inventor of *teletae* see Linforth 1941:262-263.

<sup>90</sup> Dickie 2001:65 n65 suggests that the subjects of Plato's criticism are not the *orpheotelestes* but "officially sanctioned mystery-cults such as those at Eleusis, while the seers whom he has in mind are major figures such as Abaris, Mopsus, Epimenides and Onomacritus.", *contra* e.g. Burkert 1983a:5, 1987b:33 and Graf and Johnston 2007:145.

<sup>91</sup> *Orpheotelestai* is only mentioned three times in ancient texts: Theophr. *Char.* 16.11.1 connects them to superstitions; Phld. frg. 181; and Plut. *Apophthegmata Laconica* 224e where they are sarcastically described as destined for a better afterlife, cp. Diog. Laert. 6.4.

<sup>92</sup> Burkert 1987b:31 ff.

<sup>93</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 234.

with whom he fathered numerous children, whom he later abandoned.<sup>94</sup> To inherit mantic scriptures from someone other than one's father seems to have been an exception. An edict, usually ascribed to Ptolemy IV Philopater, dated to sometime in the last half of the third century BC, confirms that a number of such texts circulated among "the persons who initiate to Dionysus all over the countryside" and that their texts were inherited, presumably by sons from their fathers.<sup>95</sup> Also connected to Dionysos and the spread of his cults is Livy's account of the Bacchanalia scandal in 186 BC and how this particular cult was spread through itinerant Dionysian priests.<sup>96</sup> This short survey gives the impression that most of the itinerant *manteis* adhered to Dionysos, but many were also dedicated to Meter or to other gods, such as the recently published gold tablet from Pherae shows.<sup>97</sup> Burkert has furthermore argued that itinerant priests were responsible for much of the cultural and religious exchange which took place between Greece and the East already in the Archaic period.<sup>98</sup> All this suggest that *manteis* hardly can be considered adherents of a specific deity or cult.<sup>99</sup> To see Plato's *manteis* as an heterogeneous group is consistent with the aim of his critique; to juxtapose his ordered ideal society, where religious matters were in the hands of the Guardians of the State and the priests and priestesses of Delphi, with unwanted elements present in his day, a category which, when it came to religion and religious experts, was hardly restricted to wandering Orphics.<sup>100</sup>

A situation where different experts offer different ways to attain a blissful afterlife (as well as a better life in the here and now) means that there must have been some kind of competition between the various practioners, competition which in turn led to criticism of their activities. Plato's passage in the *Republic* should be seen as an example of this where he attacks not only the *manteis* themselves but also some of the authorities that were used in order to give additional weight to their claims.<sup>101</sup> Plato's reference to the texts of Orpheus and Musaeus confirms that these figures were

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<sup>94</sup> Isoc. *Orationes* 19.5-7.

<sup>95</sup> P Berol. 11774 verso, line 2-3, 10-12 tr. Graf.

<sup>96</sup> Livy 39.8-19.

<sup>97</sup> Burkert 1987b:33. See Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 407c where *manteis* are connected to "the shrines of the Great Mother and of Sarapis", tr. F. C. Babbitt. The gold tablet from Pherae (5.4 Pherae 2) mentions Demeter Chthonia and the Mountain Mother.

<sup>98</sup> Burkert 1983b:115 ff.

<sup>99</sup> Dickie 2001:65 f.

<sup>100</sup> On religion in the ideal state see e.g. Pl. *Resp.* 4.427b, 7.740d-e.

<sup>101</sup> See Graf 1997:35.

connected to purifications and magic and that texts were ascribed to them. However, in addition to these two names, a number of other authorities were used to give credit to theogonies and other, perhaps eschatological, texts such as Epimenides, Linos, Olen, Pamphos, Abaris, Aristetas, Tamiris, Palaephatos.<sup>102</sup> Again, Plato's critique was probably not reserved for just the two authors, but rather for their followers. The reason Plato chose Orpheus and Musaeus could be that they were the best known authorities amongst his readers or that they were the authorities most commonly referred to by the *manteis*.<sup>103</sup> In sum, even though Plato only criticizes those using texts attributed to Orpheus and Musaeus additional evidence shows that these were not the only authorities employed by itinerant *manteis*. After all, the only religion tolerated in Plato's ideal state emanated from the Good, all else was to be shunned.

Needless to say Plato had his own agenda since itinerant *manteis* were not always frowned upon.<sup>104</sup> Philosophers in Classical Greece were, just as the *manteis*, a heterogeneous, peripheral group whose aim it was to convince others to see the world as they did. The modern distinction between magic, religion, and philosophy does not apply to this situation since the authors in question constantly crossed the boundaries set by modern scholarship.<sup>105</sup> Plato's otherwise high regard for Orpheus, as seen in the *Apology*, and in his mention of Orphic poets, with whom he agrees in the *Cratylus*, could also imply that the *manteis* in the passage from the *Republic*, in his opinion, had misunderstood or misused these texts, or it could mean that he became less tolerant of poetry in his later texts.<sup>106</sup> Plato's critique is quite similar to what we find in column 20 of the Derveni papyrus, to which we will return later in this thesis. A consequence of this is that Plato's critique in the *Republic*, as well as the critique found in the Derveni Papyrus and elsewhere, need not be seen as directed against a

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<sup>102</sup> Graf 1974:9 ff.; West 1983:37-61; Johnston 1999a:106. Another possibility, which does not contradict the first, is that his mention of Orpheus and Musaeus should be seen as a "figure of speech", similar to what we see in the *Apology* where the same names occur, Pl. *Ap.* 41a = OT 1076 (I) Bernabé, *Prot.* 316d = OT 549 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>103</sup> See also Pl. *Ion* 536b where Orpheus and Musaeus are used similarly. Cp. Ar. *Ran.* 1032-3.

<sup>104</sup> Epimenides is a good example, Pl. *Leg.* 1.642d, 3.677d. Also important is Pl. *Plt.* 290d. See also the edict which has been ascribed to Ptolemy IV Philopater presumably because of his interest in Dionysiac mysteries. The purpose of collecting these texts would, if the attribution is correct, then be to enhance his knowledge from people he considered to be experts. See also Hom. *Od.* 17.384-385; Thuc. 3.2; Hdt. book 9; Flower 2008:12-14.

<sup>105</sup> In Plato's case, consider *Phd.* 69c-d and his comparison of philosophy with an initiation into the mysteries, or the whole dialogue where he argues, philosophically, that the soul is immortal. Interesting is also Pl. *Men.* 80b where Meno advises Socrates to stay in Athens since he would most likely have been persecuted as a *goês* if he had held his speeches as a stranger in another city.

<sup>106</sup> οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα, Pl. *Cra.* 400c = OF 430 (I) Bernabé.

single target or group, but rather at "all the others", in this case the wandering *manteis* with whom Plato disagreed.

Consequently, to return to the question about the relationship between the itinerant *manteis* and the gold tablets, not necessarily everyone offered rites of initiation *and* aid through the use of *katadesmoi*, but there is a probability that some did since these arts are grouped together by Plato. And what are the gold tablets but aids against the terrors in the next world, terrors that await those who do not perform the right sacrifices?<sup>107</sup> The main point to be extracted from Plato's passage is that the *manteis*, since they probably drew inspiration from various sources, and offered a wide array of services, were eclectic.

Further arguments suggesting eclecticism are found in Thurii, where the context of the notorious "C tablet" (1.3 Thurii 2) suggests that both the *mantis* responsible for its text and interment, and the owner of said text were eclectic in their approach to eschatology. As we saw in the previous chapter Domenico Comparetti saw the text as an Orphic Theogony, owing to the occurrence of the typical Orphic deities Protogonos, Tyche and Phanes.<sup>108</sup> Zuntz argued against an Orphic label and saw the text as a prayer by Kore addressed to her mother Demeter.<sup>109</sup> The tablet, he continues, "is completely unrelated" to the other tablets, but Zuntz nevertheless felt compelled to include it in his collection.<sup>110</sup> I believe that its inclusion is crucial for our understanding of the gold tablets since it points towards the eclecticism which I believe explains the differences between the various gold tablets.

Various interpretations of the text have been suggested by previous scholars.<sup>111</sup> Already Gilbert Murray believed that the text had something to do with curses in which "the writing is deliberately confused by transpositions and the like, so as to be unintelligible."<sup>112</sup> He distinguished this from the "abracadabra-like syllables" of the magical papyri with which he found no similarities.<sup>113</sup> I have, however, failed

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<sup>107</sup> The tablets are filled with ritual references. I will explore these later in chapter 4.

<sup>108</sup> For more on the "C tablet" and its excavation see Comparetti 1879, 1880:156; Cavallari 1879; Zuntz 1971:287-293; and the previous chapter. On Phanes as an Orphic deity see West 1983:34. Comparetti also hinted at a connection to Eleusis.

<sup>109</sup> Zuntz 1971:344, 351-53, a prayer in response to Hades' rape, though he refuses to call it a hymn as Diels 1902 did.

<sup>110</sup> The tablet is also found in other collections of the gold tablets, the exception being Riedweg 1998.

<sup>111</sup> For an overview see Bernabé and Jiménez san Cristóbal 2001:184-188, 2008:138 ff. and Betegh 2004:332 ff.

<sup>112</sup> Murray in Harrison 1991 [1922]:665.

<sup>113</sup> See Zuntz 1971:345, see also Bernabé and Jiménez san Cristóbal 2001:185.

to find similar texts in the curse tablets corpus.<sup>114</sup> I find more convincing the suggestion put forward separately by Burkert, Kotansky, and Pugliese Carratelli that the tablet functioned as a *phylakterion* which was wrapped protectively around the other gold tablet.<sup>115</sup> Kotansky points to similarities in the way the "C tablet" was folded, nine times from right to left, a practice which he describes as "in the manner of amulets".<sup>116</sup> In addition, gold tablets with protective texts are known, although their texts have nothing to do with the gold tablets considered here.<sup>117</sup> Suggestive is also the fact that the Petelia tablet was found inside a small case attached to a chain to be worn as a necklace from the second century AD, presumably for protective purposes.<sup>118</sup> Peter Kingsley has even suggested that the Roma tablet was rolled up in order to fit into a similar container.<sup>119</sup> Thus it is possible that the "C tablet" functioned as a prayer directed towards a number of deities asking them to protect the valuable information on the other gold tablet stored within.

Whatever the reason for its interment together with the other tablet, the coupling itself of the two tablets in the grave at Timpone Grande points towards an eclectic approach to eschatology which is unlike what we find in the other tumuli. A look at the tablet which was found inside the "C tablet" might give us some further clues:

ἀλλ' ὀπόταμ ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος ἀελίοιο  
 δεξιόν †Ε.ΟΙΑΣ† δ' ἐξ<ι>έναι πεφυλαγμένον εἰς ὕμᾶ μάλα πάντα  
 χαῖρε παθῶν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις·  
 4 θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ {ε} ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες  
 χαῖρ<ε> χαῖρε· δεξιὰν ὁδοιπόρ<ει>  
 λειμῶνάς τε ἱεροὺς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας

But whenever the soul leaves the light of the sun,  
 To the right ... I am well cautious more than any thing else.  
 Hail you who have suffered the Suffering, but this you have never suffered  
 before:

4 You have become (a) god from human: A kid has fallen into milk.

<sup>114</sup> Some curse tablets deliberately rearrange the letters of names, see plate 16 in Jordan and Rotroff 1999:151 and plate 50 in Curbera and Jordan 1998:35 for examples. This phenomenon is not found, as far as I can see, in our gold tablet.

<sup>115</sup> Burkert 1974:326; Kotansky 1991:114-116, 122; Pugliese Carratelli 1993:67, 2001:126.

<sup>116</sup> Kotansky 1991:115.

<sup>117</sup> E.g. Bonner 1944.

<sup>118</sup> See Guthrie 1993[1952], plate 9; Zuntz 1971, plate 29; Bottini 1992, picture 3 for a picture of the case.

<sup>119</sup> Kingsley 1995:310.

Hail, hail: You travel to the right  
To the holy, grassy meadow of Persephone.

This text is interesting for a number of reasons, but for now it will suffice to note how different it is compared to the other three tablets from the same necropolis in Thurii. The other three Thurii tablets were found in the Timpone Piccolo (1.3 Thurii 3-5), while the two considered here were found in the nearby Timpone Grande (1.3 Thurii 1-2). The tablets found in both burial mounds have been dated to the middle of the fourth century BC. Finds from the layers above the tomb in Timpone Grande suggested to Cavallari that the person buried there had received multiple offerings and had probably been worshipped as a hero.<sup>120</sup> The burial custom also seems different since the deceased in Timpone Grande had been cremated while the others were inhumed. Unfortunately, none of the coffins in the Timpone Piccolo are described. One peculiar detail mentioned in the excavation report of this mound is the small Lucanian tablet found outside the grave in which tablet 1.3 Thurii 5 was found, decorated with a winged hermaphrodite holding a crown in his hand, painted red on a black background. It is also interesting to note that the bodies of more than ten people were found outside the three tombs, but still in the various layers, in the Timpone Piccolo. These had been buried in such a careless manner that scholars have speculated that they were the victims of a sudden catastrophe such as a plague or perhaps an invasion.<sup>121</sup> Regardless of the reason, their interment in the Timpone Piccolo adds to the number of differences found between the two timponi.

The differences are peculiar. A model for understanding the gold tablets and the differences between them which have been recently suggested by Edmonds, and Graf and Johnston, is the *bricoleur* theory. This theory understands the producers of the gold tablets, the *bricoleurs*, as "drawing upon and adapting myths and rituals that already existed; the tablets' use of epic diction underscores the extent to which they drew on large reservoir of shared cultural forms."<sup>122</sup> The producers and the initiates need not be seen as members of one specific cult or religious movement who felt obliged to consult the same, specific texts. Instead they combined elements from

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<sup>120</sup> Comparetti 1879:157 saw him as an initiate, cp. Smith and Comparetti 1882:114. Zuntz 1971:289 f.

<sup>121</sup> Comparetti 1910:3 suggested that the deceased were victims of the war against Hannibal. Zuntz 1971:291.

<sup>122</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:94; Edmonds 2004a:4: "Each of these texts [texts about the Underworld journey] employs elements from a pool of traditional motifs, the limited ragbag of the *bricoleur*, in a narrative of the journey to the realm of the dead;"



different texts with ideas and formulas employed in local cults. This is why the geographical context of each tablet needs to be considered in an analysis. In Thurii, it seems clear from this that the dead buried together with the gold tablets in Timpone Piccolo were treated differently from the owner of the two tablets in Timpone Grande. Furthermore, the differences in the texts accompanying the dead in the two timponi, together with the fact that the tablets are dated to the same period, in fact the same decade, strongly suggest that the eschatology of the person or people who produced the tablets was not fixed. The Thurii tablets thus seem to confirm the *bricoleur* theory.

I believe that an answer to the left/right problem might be found here. Judging from the differences found on tablets from Thurii we should not be surprised that the producers and owners of the gold tablets found elsewhere used different and multiple strategies in order to secure a better afterlife. The initiations at Thurii were possibly adjusted so as to meet the customer's demand, in a way similar to how the producers of the leaden curse tablets had to tailor-make their products. The itinerant *manteis* who we must assume spread the custom of writing valuable eschatological information on golden tablets had more than one tradition or text at their disposal, thus explaining the tablets' various contents. Drawing upon both well-known imagery, such as the water of Lethe and the cypress tree, and more secret elements, such as the immersion-in-milk formula and deities like Eukles and Eubouleus, whatever became the *bricoleur's* choice of text was bound to be both compellingly mysterious to the potential client, and at the same time oddly familiar enough to make it interesting. This can explain why some details were transmitted as important, such as the monologue on some of the tablets, while other details were left to whim, such as the direction in which to walk while in the underworld. The power, and magic, of the written word was probably the most potent symbol to bring into the Underworld, regardless of its content.<sup>123</sup> Such an approach to the gold tablets makes it hard to argue that one religious cult or conviction was responsible for the production of the tablets. Further indications of this are found in the other tablets of the corpus, most of all in the shorter tablets to which we now turn.

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<sup>123</sup> This would explain why anyone would mangle the text on the Petelia tablet but still consider it valuable.

## 2.5 The shorter gold tablets as further evidence for eclectism

The shorter gold tablets have, just as the longer ones, been found all over the Greco-Roman world, from Crete to Macedonia, Lesvos to Posidonia, southern Italy.<sup>124</sup> Considering the distances between many of the sites I also find it best to group them together on the basis of geography since the religious situation and environment in for instance Macedonia was different from what we find on Crete.<sup>125</sup> These two geographical areas form different groups together with a third containing the tablets of Thessaly and a fourth containing the short gold tablets from Peloponnese.<sup>126</sup>

### 2.5.1 Macedonia

The inscribed gold tablets found in this region, except the ones from Hagios Athanassios (tablets 6.6 Hagios Athanassios 1-2) whose dates are unknown, can be dated to the beginning of the Hellenistic period. The tablets are all very brief and contain no narratives or descriptions from the Underworld. Still they are usually considered Dionysiac for various reasons, one being the shape of the tablets to which we shall return. The most discussed in that connection is the Poseidippos tablet which was found in a cist-grave in Pella in 1989. The publisher, Maria Lilibaki-Akamati, dated the tablet to the end of the fourth century.<sup>127</sup> The text reveals the name of the owner coupled with what Dickie explains as a greeting to Persephone: Φερσεφόνη | Ποσειδιππός μύστης | εὐσεβής. Three other gold tablets from Pella are inscribed only with names: Ἐπιγένης<sup>128</sup>, Ἡγησίσκα<sup>129</sup>, and Φιλόξενα.<sup>130</sup> According to the excavators the tablets are all laurel-shaped. In addition, fifteen gold tablets, shapes undisclosed, bearing only the name of the deceased, have been excavated from cist-

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<sup>124</sup> By shorter gold tablets I mean those where the text is limited to the name of the deceased, his or her title, the name of a deity, or a combination of these. Thus a longer narrative as those we find in the tablets from Hipponion, Petelia, Crete, Thessaly, and Rome are not included here. There have also been found several uninscribed gold tablets which I have chosen not to include in the following survey. See Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998:348 n20 for references to some of these.

<sup>125</sup> Cole 2003:200 points out, rightly, that the tablets' content not always correlate with their geographical contexts and that sometimes a more fruitful approach will be to compare tablets regardless of their site of origin. I nevertheless see the geographical context as a good starting point.

<sup>126</sup> These geographical regions are also separated in the appended catalogue.

<sup>127</sup> Lilibaki-Akamati 1992:96.

<sup>128</sup> *SEG* 49.703; Graf and Johnston 2007:42-43.

<sup>129</sup> Lilibaki-Akamati 1995:127-128.

<sup>130</sup> Lilibaki-Akamati 1992:95.

graves also dating to the fourth century BC in Pella.<sup>131</sup> Moving out of Pella, one tablet has been found at Methone, near Thessaloniki, bearing only the name of the owner, Φυλομάγα. Again, we have no information on the tablet's shape.<sup>132</sup> The Vergina tablet, described only as leaf-shaped, has a slightly longer text than the Methone tablet: φιλίστη Φερσεφόνη χάρειν.<sup>133</sup> Here we have Persephone in dative coupled with χάρειν, a greeting which is only found on one of the tablets from Eleutherna (3.1 Eleutherna 4), dated to the Hellenistic period. The Paionia tablet, dated to the fourth or third century BC, is rectangular and has only the name of its owner, Βόττακος, inscribed on it.<sup>134</sup> The two tablets found near Hagios Athanassios, bear the inscription Φιλωτήρα τῶι Δεσπατεα ΧΕΡΓ (the last word reconstructed to χέρε<ιν> by Bernabé), and the other inscription where the only secure word is Ἄιδος. Finally, a rectangular tablet from Amphipolis is quite straightforward when it comes to the owner's cultic adherence: εὐαγῆς ἱερὰ Διονύσου Βαχχίου εἰμὶ | Ἄρχέβου ...η Ἄντιδῶρου.<sup>135</sup> This tablet is clearly Dionysiac, but what about the others?

According to Matthew Dickie the Pella texts have to be read in the light of the Pelinna gold tablets for their religious background to be understood and identified. In the second line of both tablets from Pelinna the deceased is told, as we have seen, to εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόναι [σ'] ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε. Dickie argues that this is also the essential function of the gold tablets found in Pella since, in the Poseidippos tablet at least, Persephone is addressed in the dative coupled with the verb εἰπεῖν, which means that the deceased, or rather the gold tablet, addresses Persephone, not only in a dedicative way, but primarily in order to get Persephone's attention.<sup>136</sup> To see the tablets as conveyers of messages addressed to the rulers of the Underworld would explain, writes Dickie, why the gold tablet from Methone as well as some tablets from other regions have been found close to the head of their owners, suggesting that the

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<sup>131</sup> Pariente 1990:787. These tablets are not included in the catalogue since they have not yet been published.

<sup>132</sup> The excavation report describe it only as "ένα χρυσό έλασμα με το όνομα της νεκρής", Besios 1986:142-143.

<sup>133</sup> Petsas 1961-62:259.

<sup>134</sup> Savvopoulou 1995:427.

<sup>135</sup> Málama 2001:118. See also OF 496 a-b, f-h, k-l, n Bernabé, and OF 495a Bernabé (added in the addenda et corrigenda of Bernabé 2007a); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:267 (L 15a) for the Macedonian tablets.

<sup>136</sup> Dickie 1995:82.

tablets originally were laid in the deceased's mouth like a obol for Charon.<sup>137</sup> The lamellas were meant to speak on behalf of the deceased.<sup>138</sup> Thus, by comparing the Pella tablet with the Pelinna tablets, Dickie sees the former as an abbreviated version of the latter.

While I agree with Dickie as to the function of the tablets I have some difficulties accepting the connection he argues between the tablets of Pelinna and Pella. To encounter Persephone's name on a text interred in a grave is not surprising and this alone cannot be used as evidence for cultic adherence, regardless of the case in which the name appears.<sup>139</sup> While there is undoubtedly a strong connection between Persephone and Dionysos in the Pelinna tablets, we do not find this in the other tablets. It seems that the main function of the Poseidippos tablet is to make Persephone aware of the deceased's status as initiated, and we can, I believe, safely assume that this would secure him a better afterlife. But his initiation need not have been into a Dionysiac mystery cult. As the newly published gold tablet from Pherae confirms, there were other mystery cults which made use of written texts on gold tablets, at least if we accept the reading of the editors.<sup>140</sup>

Dickie argues that there have been Dionysiac mysteries at Pella at least two generations after the Poseidippos tablet was interred, suggesting that the famous epigrammatist Poseidippos of Pella (third century BC) was a descendent of the owner of the tablet since they shared names and both were initiated.<sup>141</sup> He bases this on a poem by Poseidippos the epigrammatist stating that he will soon be departing on the mystic path (μυστικὸν οἶμον) to Rhadamanthys, whose role in the Underworld is well attested.<sup>142</sup> I include the relevant lines:

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<sup>137</sup> Dickie 1995:83. Two gold coins from Kitros, in Pieria not far from Vergina, inscribed with the names of their owners ΧΕΝΑΡΙΣΤΕ and ΑΝΔΡΟΝ, have also been found in the mouth of the deceased. The Sfakaki tablets (3.4 Sfakaki 1-2) could also be included here since they are described as *epistomion* meant to be worn over the mouth of the deceased.

<sup>138</sup> See Riedweg 1998:370 for a similar interpretation of the Rome tablet which is written in second person; Cole 2003:208 for the short gold tablets.

<sup>139</sup> Lilibaki-Akamati 1992:97 see the tablet as possible evidence for a cult for Persephone in Pella.

<sup>140</sup> See tablet 5.4 Pherae 2, published by Parker and Stamatopolou 2006 where Demeter Chthonia and the Mountain Mother is read. Graf and Johnston 2007:38-39 fill the lacuna in the first line with Βόκχου, a suggestion which is rejected by the editors and Ferrari 2007.

<sup>141</sup> Dickie 1995:84. (*IG* 9.1(2).17.24.); Gutzwiller 2005:317-318.

<sup>142</sup> Poseidippos refers to Rhadamanthys in an interesting epitaph for Nicostrate, 7.14-19 Austin and Bastianini = 43 Gutzwiller/Nisetich, who is described as an initiate who has gone to the place of the blest. Both Rhadamanthys and Aiakos are mentioned, but the fragmented text makes it difficult to determine their role. In any case, the mention of Triptolemos suggests that Nicostrate was initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries.

μηδέ τις οὔν χεύαι δάκρυον. αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ  
γήραι μυστικὸν οἶμον ἐπὶ Ῥαδάμανθυν ἰκοίμην  
δήμῳ καὶ λαῶι παντὶ ποθεινὸς ἔών

and not a tear for me, from anyone: but may I make  
my way along the mystical path to Rhadamanthys  
through old age – missed by the people, missed by them all<sup>143</sup>

But are these lines evidence that Poseidippos the epigrammatist was initiated into the Dionysiac mysteries in Pella? Lloyd-Jones argues that the context of the poem suggests that the author simply considered himself to be one of the elect, addressing Apollo in hope of becoming heroized and remembered by a statue.<sup>144</sup> Another epitaph written by Poseidippos, commemorating a female "handmaiden of Dionysos" from Pella, does in fact suggest that there was a Dionysiac cult here, but evidence for a connection between this epitaph and the gold tablets from Pella are not overwhelming.<sup>145</sup> It is more than likely that the owners of the gold tablets were initiated, but, based on the text and the lack of supplementing evidence from Pella, we cannot say with certainty into what cult.

Dickie also stressed the shape of many of the tablets as an important clue to their religious background. Two of the tablets from Pella are leaf-shaped (6.1 Pella 1-2). Given the strong symbolic potential, one would assume that ivy, myrtle or sarsaparilla (smilax) shapes would dominate if they originated from a Dionysiac cult.<sup>146</sup> However, the leaf-shaped tablets are described in the excavation report as laurel leaves, which are normally connected to Apollo. There are, however, some instances where Dionysos is connected to laurel, once as a creator of the laurel tree itself. Laurel was also used decoratively on Dionysiac sarcophagi, and on early

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<sup>143</sup> Poseidippos *SH* 705.21-23, tr. Frank Nisetich. While it is likely that Poseidippos envisioned his arrival at the Isle of the Blest as a hero he could also be referring to his forthcoming judgement in Hades by the judges in the Underworld, Minos, Aiakos and Rhadamanthys (cf. the images on some of the Apulian Underworld vases, e.g. *LIMC* Hades 126, 132, 133, 156). For the poem see Dickie 1995:83; Lloyd-Jones 1963:78-79. Rossi 1996:65 also consider Poseidippos as a worshipper of Dionysos, and perhaps, she speculates, even an Orphic? On Rhadamanthys, see Hom. *Od.* 4.564; Pind. *Ol.* 2.75 ff.; Pind. *Pyth.* 2.73 ff.; Pl. *Ap.* 41a.

<sup>144</sup> Apollo is mentioned in the beginning of the poem, *SH* 705.2; Lloyd-Jones 1963:93-94. Helène Whittaker has suggested to me, through personal communication, that the lines may simply be a poetic way for Poseidippos to portray his imminent death.

<sup>145</sup> 7.20-23 Austin and Bastianini = 44 Gutzwiller/Nisetich.

<sup>146</sup> Blech 1982:185ff., 213-16. For myrtle associated with initiation and Dionysos: Ar. *Ran.* 156-58; 323-31; The scholiast on Arist. *Ran.* 320 tells us that initiates in the mysteries wore a wreath of myrtle, not ivy as is commonly thought. Smilax: Eur. *Bacch.* 108; 703. Ivy: Eur. *Bacch.* 106; 177; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 365e, just some of many examples. Consider also the *thyrsos*, made by narthex crowned with ivy, used as a staff by the worshippers.

Etruscan monuments we find that Dionysos often wears a laurel wreath.<sup>147</sup> Dickie also points out that the tablets could just as well be myrtle leaf shaped since their form is almost interchangeable with laurel leaves.<sup>148</sup> This would be more fitting since myrtle was associated with death and grave-decoration, even though it is uncertain how widespread this custom was.<sup>149</sup>

The question is whether the shape alone is enough to ascribe the tablets to a Dionysiac cult. Given the uncertainty surrounding their shape I am reluctant to draw the same conclusions as Dickie does. Not all tablets are leaf-shaped, the fourth tablet from Pella (6.1 Pella 4) for example, is described as a gold disk. This discrepancy is important for the same reasons as in Thurii. If the Pella tablets come from the same cult then shape was not considered to be important by their members. Alternatively, Epigenes, the owner of the gold disk, was initiated into another cult, or rather by another *mantis*. This possibility would explain the differences not only among the Pella tablets, but also the other tablets from Macedonia. Of the Macedonian tablets outside Pella only the Vergina tablet is described as leaf-shaped. This is a further indication that the shape of the tablet was not considered important for all owners. The reason why the shape appears in Vergina could be either that (a) the purchaser insisted upon it, (b) the *mantis* who sold it insisted upon it, (c) that the cult to which the deceased belonged, was somehow connected to the one in Pella (but not the one Epigenes was initiated into), or (d) that some of the inscribed leaves were taken from a gold wreath while others were inscribed on whatever gold sheet which was available.<sup>150</sup> The text on the tablet, which is quite different from the ones in Pella, speaks against alternative (c). Based on the shapes and text of the Macedonian tablets I believe that at least two *manteis* operated in Pella, and most probably a number of

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<sup>147</sup> Dickie 1995:81. Creation of laurel, see Diod. 1.17.4; see also Euripides frg. 477 Nauck; Paus. 8.39.6; on Dionysiac sarcophagi, see Lehmann-Hartleben and Olsen 1942:31 for a discussion. See also Graf and Johnston 2007:149 who argues that an Attic black-figured pelike (500 BC) where two youths are wearing laurel wreaths should be considered Bacchic because of the wine-skin present in the imagery (thus contradicting the usual interpretation that the scene depicts the drinking of *kykeon* in the Eleusinian mysteries).

<sup>148</sup> Dickie 1995:85 f.

<sup>149</sup> Blech 1982:94 draws attention to the use of myrtle at Agamemnon's grave in Eur. *El.* 323; 512. It should also be noted that the myrtle, ivy and laurel leaves are evergreen, making its longevity a strong eschatological symbol in itself. The shape could also be intentionally ambiguous, imitating an unspecified leaf, as Helène Whittaker has suggested to me.

<sup>150</sup> See tablet 4.1 Aigion 3 which was found together with 12 uninscribed gold leaves, Papakosta 1987:153, and the still unpublished "gold sheet" 7.1 Lesvos, which was found together with "gold olive leaves", Catling 1988-89:93. Chrysostomou 1998:64 speculates whether some of the uninscribed gold leaves originally were inscribed with ink.

others spread their trade at the other sites in the same region. Common to the tablets is their function as "passports for the dead". We are, however, not able to trace the tablets back to a single deity, cult, or *mantis*, but should rather acknowledge the strong possibility of multiple and, probably competing *manteis*.

Yet, most scholars today argue that the gold tablets were connected to the Dionysiac cults. In the most recent treatment of the tablets, Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston advocate the Bacchic character of all the tablets, despite the fact that, as Graf himself puts it, "[n]ot much in the ritual of Bacchic mystery cults can be traced back to the Gold Tablets".<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, Graf claims that "[e]ven when focusing on the Gold Tablets alone, there is no uniformity either of text or of burial custom throughout the Greek world."<sup>152</sup> Why, then, must all gold tablets be connected to Bacchic mystery cults? While this may be a possibility I wish to stress the fact that there is nothing in the Macedonian tablets that indicate that this must be the case.<sup>153</sup> What about the other short tablets in the corpus?

### 2.5.2 Peloponnese and Crete

From Peloponnese we have three tablets from Aigion (4.1 Aigion 1-3), two from Elis (4.2 Elis 1-2), and one from Daphniotissa (4.3 Daphniotissa), 10 kilometers southeast of Elis. The Aigion tablets all belonged to initiates (either *μύστας* or *μύστις*), one bearing only the title, one combining it with a personal name *Δεξιίλος*, and the third combining the title with *φίλων*. They are described as leaf-shaped (laurel/olive, leaf, and almond respectively).<sup>154</sup> The Elean tablets are inscribed only with their owners' names, *Ευξέννα* (4.2 Elis 1) and *Φιλημήνα* (4.2 Elis 2). The shape of the first tablet is undisclosed, but the second resembles a myrtle leaf.<sup>155</sup> The Daphniotissa tablet, published by Lazaridis in 1981 but curiously left out of all subsequent gold tablet

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<sup>151</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:157.

<sup>152</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:161.

<sup>153</sup> Even if we accept the Bacchic label to the Macedonian tablets this does not help us much since. As Henrichs 1983:151 stresses, "Dionysus had no central priesthood, no canonical books, and not even a panhellenic shrine of his own. His cults were regional and emphasized different aspects of the god." See also Cole 1993:281: "the individuals who practiced what we call Bacchic mysteries may not always have shared the same expectations."

<sup>154</sup> Papapostolou 1977:94 and Papakosta 1987:153.

<sup>155</sup> Papathanasopoulos 1969, pl. 153 and Themelis 1994:148.

catalogues, is olive shaped and inscribed with the name Παλάθα.<sup>156</sup> All the Peloponnesian tablets are dated to the beginning of the Hellenistic period. Their shape might suggest a Dionysiac context, an assumption which is supported by the fact that Dionysos was especially revered and celebrated in this part of the Peloponnese.<sup>157</sup> However this may be, the texts seem, in any case, to be more uniform than what we saw in Macedonia.

In Crete two gold *epistomions* (3.4 Sfakaki 1-2) has been found in a grave in the Roman cemetery at Sfakaki near Rethymno, together with three uninscribed gold lamellas.<sup>158</sup> We will take a closer look at one of these. Irina Gavrilaki, the excavation leader, dates the *epistomion* to c. 25 BC – 40 AD. The text reads Πλούτωνι | Φερσεφόνη. Also of interest is a rectangular strip from Eleutherna (3.1 Eleutherna 4) dated to the second or first century BC, which conveys the same message, albeit in a more fragmentary state: Πλού]τωνι καὶ Φ[ερσο]πόνει χάριεν.<sup>159</sup> It seems here that the owner wished to praise the chthonic couple in order to obtain a more favourable afterlife.<sup>160</sup> In addition, a number of tablets and flattened gold coins bearing personal names have been unearthed from Cretan graves.<sup>161</sup>

All these tablets should be compared and analysed together with the slightly longer texts on the tablets from Eleutherna, Mylopotamos, Rethymnon, and Sfakaki. These tablets are so similar that they often are presented in one version:

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<sup>156</sup> Lazaridis 1981, 1982; *SEG* 38.363; Catling 1984-85:25; French 1989-90:29, 1990-91:31; Torjussen 2008b. The name appear also on a third century BC inscription from Lipara, Sicily, *SEG* 41.809.

<sup>157</sup> One myth of the god tells how Dionysos was born by the river Alpherios, near Elis, and that it was here that the first vine grew, *Hom. Hymn Dion.* 1.3; *Ath.* 1.61a; *FGrH* 115 F Jacoby (Theopompus). Paus. 6.26.1-2 relates how Dionysos was celebrated by the Eleans during the *Thuia* and that it was he who received the most revered attention of all the gods. On the ritual see Detienne 1989:54-56 and the critique by Seaford 1990:174. Semele, Dionysos' mother, was called Thuone while mortal. She became the first bacchae when she entered the sanctuary at Olympia with Dionysos in her womb. In Argos the Archaic Dionysos cult of Lerna was celebrated, on this cult and the myths of Dionysos descent into Lerna/Hades see *Hom. Il.* 6.135-136; *schol. Hom. Il.* 14.319; *FGrH* 310.2; *Plut. De Is. et Os.* 364f; Paus. 2.23.7-8, 2.37.5; *Clem. Al. Protr.* 2.34.3-4. See also Vanderpool 1954:236 on a Roman tomb near Aigion whose internal walls were decorated with garlands, boukrania, and ivy-leaves. This could be the grave of a follower of Dionysos, but note that this kind of imagery was quite popular in the Roman period also amongst people who had no known connection to the Dionysiac mysteries, Henrichs 1983:157.

<sup>158</sup> Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998.

<sup>159</sup> Myres 1893:629. Zuntz 1971:384 was reluctant to consider this tablet, which he calls "for completeness' sake" B9, a part of the corpus formed by the other gold tablets from Crete.

<sup>160</sup> On χάριε and its use in hymns and prayers, see Porta 1999:176-177. Cp. *Hom. Od.* 11.47 where Odysseus prays to the chthonic couple (in dative) in order to achieve his own goal.

<sup>161</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:28; Tzifopoulos 2007.





### 2.5.3 *Temporary conclusion*

The main reasons why the tablets from Macedonia, Peloponnese, and Crete have been labelled Dionysiac are their shape, text, and presumed association with the Dionysiac tablets from Pelinna and Hipponion. I have argued against connecting the Pella tablets to the Pelinna tablets based on the use of dative and the existence of a Dionysiac mystery cult there. The shape of a particular gold tablet may point towards a Dionysiac context, but we have no proof of this. Furthermore, the fact that e.g. the Amphipolis tablet is rectangular and Dionysiac shows that there were apparently many, and probably competing, traditions in this region, some of which were Dionysiac, which emphasized different aspects of a general eschatological belief in a better afterlife. Thus, some tablets have clear references to Dionysiac cult, others suggest this (through shape), and others again reveal no such clues. To assume that all tablets should be treated collectively would contradict the *bricoleur* theory, a theory I think can explain the differences in some of the tablets. I believe the same can be seen among the Cretan tablets despite the similarities they share with the Hipponion tablet. That one of the tablets advocates taking the left turn in Hades is further indication that we should see these tablets as eschatological texts which cannot be easily reduced to a single tradition or cult, but rather as local adaptations of an eschatological theme or text.

This uncertainty regarding the tablets' religious background is comparable to the situation of the curse tablets which were also written in accordance with certain models.<sup>164</sup> Common to both groups is of course the idea that a message was supposed to be carried on to another world, either to the deities concerned with the dead, or as some sort of passport for the dead. While the gold tablets have all been found in graves, the curse tablets have been found in wells, baths, graves, arenas, etc.<sup>165</sup> The distribution of both gold and curse tablets all over the Greco-Roman world attests to the mobility of their producers, even though the number of surviving curse tablets (more than 1600) far exceeds that of gold tablets.<sup>166</sup>

With the discovery of the fifteen tablets with names at the cemetery in Pella, one might wonder if there was some kind of mass production of gold tablets here. By comparison, evidence for mass production of curse tablets is restricted to the Roman

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<sup>164</sup> Jordan 1994:328 ff.; Dickie 1999:63, and 73-74.

<sup>165</sup> On distribution see Jordan 1985:206-207.

<sup>166</sup> Numbers (curse tablets) taken from Faraone 1991:3; Gager 1992:3. The number is higher now.

period, but there are certain indications, such as the repetition of formulas with scribal errors, that this existed already in the Hellenistic period.<sup>167</sup> Curse tablets inscribed with only names have also been found in the same regions and period as we are discussing here, but they all contain more than one name.<sup>168</sup> Their popularity seems to have declined during the Classical and early Hellenistic period.<sup>169</sup> Among some of the curse tablets we encounter several deities, and a fixed set of verbs and formulas. Yet, no one would proclaim a single religious background for the whole corpus. Instead, most scholars see the curse tablets as products of both professionals, as those described by Plato, and private persons who was associated to a wide range of cults but nevertheless shared a common belief that one was able to manipulate reality through the agency of curses which were carried out by the chthonic gods or the souls of the dead (to whom the curses were addressed). That professionals traded in curses as well as rites of purifications makes it even harder to pinpoint a specific religious background.<sup>170</sup> The gold tablets should primarily be seen as ways designed to better one's afterlife, in the same way as curse tablets offered to do the same to the living.

## 2.6 The religious background of the longer gold tablets

So far, the analysis has focussed on the shorter gold tablets. What can we say about the longer tablets? On what basis can we assume that the texts from the various tombs are related? Central to this discussion are the Pelinna tablets which combine elements from the mnemonic tablets and the tablets from Thurii and Rome.

As may be recalled, two of the Thurii tablets shares the enigmatic "immersion-in-milk" formula with the Pelinna tablets.<sup>171</sup> Does this point to some sort of relationship between the two groups of texts? Does this mean that the dead in Thurii,

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<sup>167</sup> Indicated by curse tablets from Athens, see Faraone 1991:4 and Jordan 1997:216; On mass produced curse tablets from the Roman period see tablets 18-35, 37 in Audollent 1904.

<sup>168</sup> E.g. Jordan 2000, tablets 36, 37, 43 from Macedonia, and 27, 30, 47, 50, 54-56, 58, 67, 72-73, 117, 120 from other regions, all dated between the fifth and third century BC. Faraone 1991:5 speculates whether the verb (e.g. "bind", "blind" etc.) were uttered orally during the interment of the curse tablet. The same may be asked regarding the gold tablets considered here.

<sup>169</sup> Jordan and Rotroff 1999:150.

<sup>170</sup> Some curses call upon the souls of *atelestos*, most probably to enhance the curses' effect. Further on magic and the mysteries, see Johnston 1999a:105-108.

<sup>171</sup> Watkins 1995:278 suggests that ἐγένου in the Pelinna tablets refer to a rebirth as a god, based on tablet 3 Thurii 1 line 4: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες.

as the buried woman in Pelinna, were initiates in a Dionysiac cult? A comparative analysis of these tablets shows that they differ on at least four important accounts.

First, the Thurii tablets reveal a markedly negative view on life.<sup>172</sup> Although we do find the same negativity in the first line on the Pelinna tablets, where death is not seen as the end, but rather as a new and better beginning for the initiated, we hear nothing more of the former life. In tablet 1.3 Thurii 3, by contrast, no less than five of the ten lines are considering the life just left and the following arrival in the Underworld. Starting in line four we learn that "Fate subdued me, and all the other immortal gods and star-flung thunderbolt".<sup>173</sup> This line, also found in 1.3 Thurii 4, line 5, and probably in 1.3 Thurii 5, line 5, has previously been interpreted as a reference to the episode when Zeus threw the thunderbolt upon the Titans known from the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos.<sup>174</sup> This would mean that the myth was known at this time, an assumption I will argue against in the next chapter. Zuntz, on the other hand argued that the dead in Thurii were actually killed by lightning and thus considered holy.<sup>175</sup> This theory, of course, can neither be disproved nor confirmed.<sup>176</sup> Edmonds has argued that a reference to the apotheosis of heroes like Herakles, Asklepios and even Semele is more likely than to an actual event or the myth of Dionysos and the Titans. The deceased must have held lightning to be a symbol of the imminent apotheosis he would attain in death.<sup>177</sup> I would rather follow Riedweg who argues that the line refers to life rather than death and that it reflects a negative experience rather than a positive one.<sup>178</sup> At one time Fate subdued the soul of the gold tablet's owner who was then forced to be incarnated. This interpretation is made even more probable when taken together with the following lines in 1.3 Thurii 3 where the deceased has "flown out of the grievous, troublesome circle", "passed with swift feet to the desired wreath" and "entered under the bosom of the lady of the

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<sup>172</sup> I do not include tablet 1.3 Thurii 2 (the "C tablet") in the following analysis.

<sup>173</sup> ἀλ<λ>ά με μο<ι>ρα ἐδάμασ<σ>ε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι καὶ ἀστεροβλήτα κεραυνόν.

<sup>174</sup> See also more recently Merkelbach 1999:9.

<sup>175</sup> Zuntz 1971:316, considered by Rohde 1903 II:218 n4; Artem. 2.9; Burkert 1975:94, 1985:295; Seaford 1986:6 n17; see Dodds 1986 [1960]:62-64 for further references. People struck dead by lightning were called *dioblētoi*, see Garland 2001:99-100.

<sup>176</sup> Graf 1993:253; Edmonds 2004a:74.

<sup>177</sup> Edmonds 2004a:74-75. Edmonds also refers to Kingsley 1995:257 who has shown that the cult of Herakles had a strong presence in Thurii. Edmonds, 2004a:74, furthermore stresses that the heroization of Herakles and Asklepios was used as an analogy in the gold tablets of Thurii rather than direct models. On the connection between lightning and paradise see Burkert 1961.

<sup>178</sup> Riedweg 1998:384.

house, the Queen of the Underworld”.<sup>179</sup> In these lines we can see how death is anticipated and how the lines complement the preceding line where the deceased is lamenting her bad fate in life. Whether the circle (κύκλος) refers to life on earth or a doctrine of metempsychosis, it refers in any event to a pitiful existence from which the deceased escapes in order to arrive in the safe haven of Persephone. The contrast between life and death is also stressed in 1.3 Thuri 4, lines 4-6 where the deceased claims first to have ”paid the price with respect to the unjust deeds” then suffered the penalty of the unnamed offence by being ”subdued by Fate and the thrower of the thunderbolt”, but who finally arrives as a ”fugitive to pure Persephone”.<sup>180</sup> The suffering is made even more explicit in 1.3 Thuri 1, line 3 where the deceased is hailed as ”you who has suffered the Suffering” before experiencing the apotheosis in the following line; ”You have become (a) god from human”.<sup>181</sup> Thus a clearly negative view of life is expressed in the Thuri tablets in contrast to the Pelinna tablets in which life is simply regarded as over.

Such a negative view on life is referred to by Plato in his explanation of the famous *soma-sema* doctrine.<sup>182</sup> According to the Orphic version of this doctrine, the soul is kept safe in the body as in a prison as a punishment for some undisclosed transgression. Plato does not tell us anything more, but judging from the few details he gives it seems that the Orphic poets, to whom Plato ascribes this doctrine, had a similar negative view on life as is seen on the Thuri tablets, where life is seen as a penance which is pardoned at the time of death. This means that punishment in death is not necessary and that the worst is over when you die. Also in the same passage of the *Cratylus* Plato refers to some who consider the body to be the tomb of the soul. Although punishment is not mentioned these people probably also saw life as something negative.<sup>183</sup> This suggest that the producers and user of the Thuri tablets adhered to the same general eschatology concerning life, death, and punishment of the

<sup>179</sup> 1.3 Thuri 3, lines 5-7: κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο | ἡμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν  
στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι | δεσποίνας δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας.

<sup>180</sup> πο<ι>νὰ<ν> δ' ἀνταπέτε<ι>σ' ἔργω<ν> ἔνεκα οὔτι δικα<ί>ων | εἴτε με μο<ι>ρα ἑδαμάσατο  
εἴτε ἀστεροπή<α> κ<ε>ραυνῶν | νῦν δ' ἰκέτι<ς> ἤ<κ>ω πα<ρ>' ἀγνή<ν> Φε<ρ>σεφόνεαν.

<sup>181</sup> χαῖρε παθῶν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὔπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις· | θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος  
ἔς γάλα ἔπετες.

<sup>182</sup> Pl. *Cra.* 400c.

<sup>183</sup> Plato refers to certain wise men who also believes that life in reality is death and that the body is a tomb for the soul in *Gorg.* 493a.

soul as Plato's Orphic poets. This does not necessarily mean that the gold tablets came from the same religious background as the Orphic poets Plato refers to.

Second, while the Pelinna tablets concentrate on Bakkhios and Persephone, the Thurii tablets address several deities in addition to Persephone. Most importantly, Dionysos, or Bakkhios, seems to be absent in the Thurii tablets.<sup>184</sup> Eukles in the second line of tablets 1.3 Thurii 3-5 is probably a reference to Hades.<sup>185</sup> The presence of Hades is not surprising considering the deceased's destination. Eubouleus, however, is more difficult to identify with certainty. Plutarch equates Eubouleus with Dionysos, an identification also found in the Orphic Hymns and in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.<sup>186</sup> However, these sources are late and by no means unanimous. In the eighteenth Orphic Hymn Eubouleus is identified as Pluto, in the fifty-sixth as Adonis, in the seventy-second as Artemis and Tyche and in the forty-second as the father of Dionysos. Zuntz argued against the presence of Dionysos as Eubouleus claiming that the first instance of Dionysos Eubouleus comes from a, now lost, dedication to him from the third century AD. Prior to this, Zuntz continued, Eubouleus was worshipped as a distinct chthonic god together with Demeter and Kore, especially in connection with the Eleusinian mysteries, although he is not mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.<sup>187</sup> He was also identified with Plouton, the god of plenty.<sup>188</sup> At other times

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<sup>184</sup> The Queen of the Underworld (Persephone) (1.3 Thurii 3-5, line 1, 1.3 Thurii 3, line 7), Eukles, and Eubouleus (1.3 Thurii 3-5, lines 1-2; 2.1 Rome, lines 1-2 with minor variations), Persephone (1.3 Thurii 4, line 6). Among the confusing jumble of letters on the "C tablet" (1.3 Thurii 2) we find the following deities, line 1: Protogonos, Kybele, Kore, Demeter, line 2: Zeus, line 3: Tyche, Phanes, and the Moirai, 6: Hestia, Zeus, Pan, Mater, line 8: Demeter, Kore Chthonia, Zeus. Both Protogonos and Phanes, normally described as Orphic, were seen by Comparetti as further evidence for the Orphic character of all Thurii tablets. However, as the rest of the text is impossible to comprehend we cannot with certainty say anything about its religious background or how it is related to the other Thurii tablets. We do find some familiar words in the tablet 1.3 Thurii 2, see line 8, Κόρη Χθονία, which recalls the opening line in 1.3 Thurii 3-5, line 5: χθονίων βασίλεια, also in 1.3 Thurii 3, line 7, but ironically not in 1.3 Thurii 1 which was found inside tablet 1.3 Thurii 2. See however 1.3 Thurii 1, line 6: ἱερούς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας, and line 9, ἥρως, trailing our thoughts to the promise in the last lines of 1.1 Hipponion: καὶ τότ' ἔπειτ' ἄλλοισι μεθ' ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξεις. It must be stressed however that these examples in no way are sufficient evidence for any connection between the above-mentioned gold tablets and tablet 1.3 Thurii 2 (the "C tablet"). Betegh 2004:332 ff. see the tablet in connection with the Derveni papyrus, more on that later.

<sup>185</sup> According to the lexicographer Hesychius Eukles was equated with Hades, Edmonds 2004a:59 n86. Zuntz 1971:310 further strengthens this equation by referring to the Agnone tablet on which the god Euklúi pateri is hailed and who, according to Zuntz, is equivalent to Dis Pater, Lord of the Dead, i.e. Pluton/Hades. See also Pugliese Carratelli 2001:104.

<sup>186</sup> Edmonds 2004a:59 n87. Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 7.9.714c; *Orphic Hymns* 29.8, 30.6, 52.4 Athanassakis; Macrobius *Sat.* 1.18.12 (= OF 540 Bernabé). See also Zuntz 1971:310-11; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:104.

<sup>187</sup> *IG* 1.78.37-40; Paus. 1.14.2 knew a myth where Eubouleus was Triptolemos' brother, see Clinton 1992:58, 61, tells how Eubouleus was swallowed by the earth when Hades abducted Persephone, schol.

he was referred to as Zeus Eubouleus, the name then used as an euphemism.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, in the Gurôb papyrus, a fragmented text containing what appears to be a ritual description connected to Dionysos, dated to the third century BC, Eubouleus appears as a distinct deity alongside Dionysos.<sup>190</sup> It is therefore difficult to know exactly who is meant by Eubouleus in the gold tablets of Thurii and Rome. Regardless of the identification of Eubouleus there is a marked difference in the way the deceased addresses the chthonic gods. In the Pelinna tablets the deceased approaches Persephone and makes it clear that she has been released by Bakkhios himself, certain that this will allow her to join the other revellers in the final *telea* beneath the earth. In the Thurii tablets, by contrast, the deceased addresses Persephone first, and only in passing, it seems, refers to Eukles, Eubouleus, "and all the other immortal gods".<sup>191</sup> In the Pelinna tablets, Persephone is only to receive a message from the deceased. In some of the Thurii tablets (1.3 Thurii 3, line 7; 1.3 Thurii 4-5, line 6) the deceased submits himself to her care. Thus Persephone is ascribed different roles in the Thurii and Pelinna tablets. Emphasis on the Queen of the Underworld seems quite natural in an eschatological text. Instead of being an indication of cultic background it indicates only it seems only that the deceased in both Thurii and Pelinna have been well prepared for death and that the arrival in Hades is seen as an event in the release of the soul. This brings us to the third difference.

The buried woman in Pelinna is, according to the gold tablets, supposed to confront Persephone directly and deliver the message about her fate in the afterlife. Here the message is the main focus of the text in contrast to the Thurii texts where the deceased merely greets Persephone (and some other gods) and then goes on to explain all the hardships endured in life ("the grievous, troublesome circle"), giving hints about an initiation ritual which has secured the dead a blissful afterlife, expressed

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Lucian *Dial. meretr.* 275.23 Rabe = OF 390 (II) Bernabé. *Orphic Hymn* 41.5-8 says Eubouleus went to the underworld together with Demeter. On Eubouleus see also Graf 1974:171-174.

<sup>188</sup> Hsch. s.v. Εὐβουλεύς; Clinton 1992:59.

<sup>189</sup> See Clinton 1992:60 on the cult of Zeus Eubouleus.

<sup>190</sup> P Gurôb line 18 (Euboulea) and 23 (Dionysos), see Smyly 1921:2ff. Zuntz 1971:311. Zuntz refers here to Rohde 1903 II:207, 210. We will return to the Gurôb papyrus in the next chapter.

<sup>191</sup> The ending of line two, referring to "the other gods" or "daimones", is, according to Porta 1999:169, who has studied the liturgical style in Greek prayers, a typical way of ensuring that none of the gods in the region one is addressing is forgotten and thus enraged. Porta refers to Xenophon, *Anab* 4.8.25; Xenophon *Cyr.* 1.6.1, 8.7.3; *SIG*(3) 1150), as typical examples.

poetically as passing "with swift feet to the desired wreath".<sup>192</sup> Thus, in the Thurii tablets, we find no instruction as to what the deceased should say or do. Instead the text takes it for granted that the deceased will join the other holy ones in Persephone's meadow and even experience apotheosis.

The fourth difference between the Thurii and Pelinna tablets is the description of the initiate. The Pelinna woman no doubt considers herself one of the happy ones revelling beneath the earth, but there is a difference between being *trisolbion* and becoming, as the Thurii tablets claim, "god, the opposite of mortal".<sup>193</sup>

Although the general eschatology is the same, both expect to enjoy a better afterlife thanks to the initiation the tablets refer to, the common goal is reached in different ways. In Pelinna the role of Dionysos as the releaser was the main focus of the group and the texts found there should therefore be considered Dionysiac. Because of the absence of Dionysos in the Thurii tablets it seems harder to draw the same conclusion there. But then we have the puzzling ritualistic "immersion-in-milk" formula. It has been suggested that the gold tablet texts were taken from different parts of the same *hieros logos*, a theory which would explain the occurrence of this formula in two otherwise quite different sets of tablets.<sup>194</sup> An alternative, but not necessarily competing, interpretation is to see the formula as one of many ritualistic elements utilized by some of the itinerant *manteis*, most of all because of its symbolic meaning which must have been recognized by the owners. This possibility will be explored later in the thesis. The differences between the tablets show that the eschatology behind them varied from place to place, thus making it somewhat irrelevant whether we consider the Thurii tablets to be Dionysiac or not. Therefore, while we cannot assume a common religious background for all the tablets, we should rather see the tablets as different instruments to attain the same goal, a better afterlife.

Before we continue with an examination of the possible ritual meanings and references in the gold tablet texts, and how this may affect our understanding of the corpus, we need to consider what is currently the most dominating hypothesis

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<sup>192</sup> 1.3 Thurii 3, lines 5-6: κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο | ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι.

<sup>193</sup> 1.3 Thurii 3, line 9: ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῦ. See also 1.3 Thurii 1, line 4, cp. 1.3 Thurii 4-5, lines 2-3; 2.1 Rome, line 4. The emphasis on the attainment of immortality in the Italian tablets will be discussed later in chapter 5.

<sup>194</sup> Riedweg 2002 and most recently Graf and Johnston 2007:175 ff.



regarding the tablets' religious background, namely the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos.

# Chapter 3

## The Myth of the Dismemberment of Dionysos Revisited

### 3.1 Introduction

The myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos plays a crucial part in the discussion of Orphism and the Orphic material. As we have seen, this myth has long been considered the cornerstone of Orphic theology, the foundation upon which the Orphic anthropogony and soteriology has been laid. Connected to the Orphic anthropogony were the doctrines of metempsychosis and, ultimately, the concept of original sin which made Orphism into a sophisticated fore-runner of Christianity. Until now I have only mentioned this myth in passing while discussing the early interpretations of the gold tablets from Petelia and Thurii. We have seen how Comparetti, and numerous scholars after him, saw in this myth an explanation for some of the tablets' more enigmatic lines such as "I am a son of Earth and Starry Heaven" which has been seen as a reference to the creation of man from the Titans, and "I have paid the price for unjust deeds" reflecting the initiates' purification from the past sins of his or her Titanic forefathers.<sup>1</sup> The most extensive version of the myth survives in the texts of the Neoplatonists from the fifth and sixth century AD who ascribed its content to a much earlier age, seeing the myth, and its originator Orpheus, as one of Plato's main sources of inspiration. This view has been, as we have seen, more or less dominant in modern scholarship since the Renaissance. However, the dating of this myth has been surrounded by controversy ever since the reactions of Wilamowitz and Linforth in the previous century.

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<sup>1</sup> Most recently Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:187-188.

A few words on the concept of original sin in Greek religion seems appropriate before we start the analysis. In his examination of the concept of original sin in Greek thought, Ugo Bianchi argues that there are three versions of this in the ancient period. First, the "non-mystical Greek thought" of Homer, Hesiod, and Aischylos. Here, a hardship in human lives is explained by referring to a mythical incident which led to today's situation. The inherited guilt of the tragedies also belongs to this category. Perhaps the best example is found in the Prometheus myths, especially when Prometheus manipulated the sacrificial portions allotted to men and gods, leaving men the meat, while the Gods were left with the bones and sinews. The result of this trickery was that humans were punished and continue to be punished. We can do nothing about this and have no choice but to endure the hardships which will eventually end with death. Second, we have mysticism represented by the thoughts of Empedokles and Orphism where the idea of an original sin, or *péché antécédent* as Bianchi calls it, is attached to the idea of the divine nature of the soul. Accordingly, man is provided with a way of escaping the unfortunate condition he or she is currently suffering. The third alternative is a combination of these versions, most clearly articulated through the Christian doctrine of original sin as it was formulated by Augustine at the very beginning of the fifth century AD. As Bianchi writes, this last version has nothing to do with the other two.<sup>2</sup> That a myth was used by the Greeks to explain how we suffer today is therefore no new development in itself.

Before we take a closer look at the current debate, and before I present my own views on the matter, I find it necessary to present the myth as it is told in the writings of our main source, the Neoplatonist Olympiodorus. While discussing the prohibition against suicide in the *Phaedo* Olympiodorus explains that Plato employs two arguments against suicide. It is the "mythical and Orphic" (μυθικοῦ καὶ Ὀρφικοῦ)<sup>3</sup> argument which interests us here:

in the Orphic tradition we hear of four reigns. The first is that of Ouranus, to which Kronos succeed after castrating his father; after Kronos Zeus becomes king having hurled down his father into Tartaros; then Zeus is succeeded by Dionysos, whom, they say, his retainers the Titans tear to pieces through Hera's plotting, and they eat his flesh. Zeus, incensed, strikes them with his

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<sup>2</sup> Bianchi 1966:124-126.

<sup>3</sup> Olympiodorus *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.1, all translations from this text is from Westerink's edition unless otherwise noted.

thunderbolts, and the soot of the vapors that rise from them becomes the matter from which men are created. Therefore suicide is forbidden, not because, as the text appears to say, we wear the body as a kind of shackle, for that is clear, and Socrates would not call it an esoteric doctrine; but it is forbidden because our bodies belong to Dionysos; we are, in fact, a part of him, being made of the soot of the Titans who ate his flesh.<sup>4</sup>

Olympiodorus lays forth a number of statements which all have been debated among scholars. Chief among these is the idea that mankind was created from the soot of the Titans, that Dionysos is part of us since we are created from the remains of the Titans that had eaten him, and that our bodies belongs to Dionysos.

Olympiodorus' account has traditionally been seen as the most complete version of the myth.<sup>5</sup> But, how old is it? Taking Olympiodorus' lead, the earliest scholars, from Thomas Taylor in the eighteenth century and onwards, dated this myth to the end of the sixth/beginning of the fifth century BC.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, scholars such as Comparetti, Rohde, Reinach, Harrison and others, found new evidence for dating the myth to the beginning of the Classical period through the discoveries of the gold tablets of southern Italy, Crete and Rome.<sup>7</sup> One of the main problems with this is that the gold tablets are used as evidence for the myth and at the same time are being interpreted in light of it. There are, however, no conclusive evidence in the gold tablet texts themselves which can confirm the hypothesis that they reflect upon and refer to this myth. It is therefore necessary to see if the myth is referred to in sources contemporary or older than the gold tablets. Olympiodorus' claim that Plato used this myth cannot be trusted without supplementary evidence.

A myth describing how Dionysos was killed by the Titans most probably did exist at an early date. However, as Edmonds has pointed out, this does not mean that

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<sup>4</sup> Olympiodorus *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.3: παρὰ τῶ Ὀρφεῖ τέσσαρες βασιλείται παραδίδονται. πρώτη μὲν ἡ τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ, ἣν ὁ Κρόνος διεδέξατο ἐκτεμῶν τὰ αἰδοῖα τοῦ πατρός· μετὰ δὲ τὸν Κρόνον ὁ Ζεὺς ἐβασίλευσεν καταταρταρώσας τὸν πατέρα· εἶτα τὸν Δία διεδέξατο ὁ Διόνυσος, ὃν φασὶ κατ' ἐπιβουλήν τῆς Ἥρας τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν Τιτᾶνας σπαράττειν καὶ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ ἀπογεύεσθαι. καὶ τούτους ὀργισθεὶς ὁ Ζεὺς ἐκεραύνωσε, καὶ ἐκ τῆς αἰθάλης τῶν ἀτμῶν τῶν ἀναδοθέντων ἐξ αὐτῶν ὕλης γενομένης γενέσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. οὐ δεῖ οὖν ἐξάγειν ἡμᾶς ἑαυτούς, οὐχ ὅτι, ὡς δοκεῖ λέγειν ἡ λεξις, διότι ἐν τινι δεσμῶ ἔσμεν τῶ σώματι (τούτο γὰρ δηλὸν ἔστι, καὶ οὐκ ἂν τούτο ἀπόρρητον ἔλεγεν), ἀλλ' ὅτι οὐ δεῖ ἐξάγειν ἡμᾶς ἑαυτούς ὡς τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν Διονυσιακοῦ ὄντος· μέρος γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἔσμεν, εἰ γε ἐκ τῆς αἰθάλης τῶν Τιτᾶνων συγκείμεθα γευαμένων τῶν σαρκῶν τούτου. = OF 227 (IV), 299 (VII), 313 (II), 320 Bernabé.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Graf and Johnston 2007:66.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor 1792:85f.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 1.

the version told by Olympiodorus, including the anthropogony and the idea that that we belong to Dionysos, is as old. The belief that the myth remained unchanged throughout Antiquity is, as we shall see, demonstrably incorrect. Edmonds has separated the various elements taken from Olympiodorus' account and tried to trace these in earlier sources. He argues that although the dismemberment of Dionysos, Zeus' punishment of the Titans, and anthropogony can be found in the ancient sources, possibly as early as Xenokrates at the beginning of the fourth century BC, these ideas are not found together in the same account before Olympiodorus.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the doctrine of original sin, he argues, is nothing more than an invention by modern scholars which can only be traced back to Comparetti's "christianized" interpretation of the gold tablets.<sup>9</sup> This interpretation is in opposition to the one fronted by Bernabé who argues that the myth, including all elements found in Olympiodorus' account, in fact can be traced back to at least the fifth century BC and the writings of Pindar.<sup>10</sup> Bernabé's view has been supported by Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston in their recent book on the gold tablets. These opposing views have led to an intensive debate which is still ongoing.<sup>11</sup>

Edmonds has rightly pointed out that Olympiodorus, even though he is normally considered the most important source for the Orphic myth, its anthropogony, and doctrine of original sin, actually does not say anything about a doctrine of original sin in his commentary. However, if we turn to other Neoplatonists, especially Proclus (412 – 485 AD) and Damascius (c. 458 – c. 538 AD), it seems that we can find these concepts formulated and connected to the myth.

In his commentary on Plato's *Republic*, Proclus writes that Orpheus the theologian taught a doctrine of three races of men where the first, golden race was fashioned by Phanes, the second, silver race lived under the reign of Kronos, and the third, titanic race was created by Zeus from the fragments of the Titans.<sup>12</sup> Damascius, too, relates, in his commentary on Plato's *Phaedo*, how mankind has been created

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<sup>8</sup> Xenokrates frg. 20; Edmonds 1999:47.

<sup>9</sup> Edmonds 1999:37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:143-145, 2008:105-109; Bernabé 2002a:416; Graf and Johnston 2007:66-93. See also Detienne 1979:69, 83-84.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the authors, generally favourable, reviews of each other's books: Edmonds 2004b: "Bernabé's approach is very much like Guthrie's in his *Orpheus and Greek Religion*: erudite, nuanced, and at least 50 years out of date.", cp. Bernabé 2002b:206 where Bernabé praises the work of Nilsson and Guthrie; and Bernabé 2006:6 who sees Edmonds' attitude towards the sources as "hypercritical" and states that "Edmonds, as crusaders do, prefers the extremes".

<sup>12</sup> ἐκ τῶν Τιτανικῶν μελῶν τὸν Δία συστήσασθαι. Procl. *In R.* 2.74.26 Kroll.

from fragments (θρυμμάτων) of the Titans, and that we will behave irrationally as Titans until our unity with Dionysos is attained. Furthermore, Dionysos is presented as the loosener (Διόνυσος λύσεώς) who has the capacity to release us from the punishment decreed by the "gods".<sup>13</sup> Damascius treats this myth allegorically as an account where mankind has to get rid of the Titanic nature, the irrational mode of behaviour, in order to be free of the φρουρά. This does not necessarily mean that the irrational nature originated with the deeds of the Titans. Rather, it seems that their behaviour is irrational in the first place and that the myth, as Damascius interprets it, reveals how they are punished for transgressing against unity (Dionysos), but are later purified from this nature through the agency of Zeus' thunderbolts. Damascius does not treat the myth as an *aition* on how mankind came to be incarnated, but as an allegory for how the Many should struggle to be united with the One, the great mystical force in Neoplatonic thought, a struggle between rationality and irrationality, allegorized through the myth where the Titans tear apart (=divide) Dionysos.

However, Damascius also tells us how the Titans plotted against Dionysos, were punished for their actions, were reduced to the fragments from which mankind was created and how we are affected by this, even in Damascius' time, since, as Damascius writes, our own irrational modes of behaviour were thereby "wrought in us by the Titans".<sup>14</sup> Consider also his statement that the custody "has befallen us of necessity as an act of justice". Justice is acted out and man is incarnated as a result of "actualizing her own separate existence" which is caused by our Titanic nature.<sup>15</sup> The human soul is imprisoned or kept in the body as a result of the soul's rebellion against unity in the same way that the Titans rebelled against unity, allegorically represented by Dionysos. Incarnation is inherited from generation to generation since it is our destiny to behave irrationally, and escape from our bodily prison, from that which is "wrought in us by the Titans", is only possible through the goodwill of Dionysos Lyseos.<sup>16</sup> This shows that there is a connection between the anthropogony found in the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos and a doctrine of original guilt from which we could be released, at least according to the interpretation of Damascius. In what way this kind of guilt is similar to the Christian doctrine as it was eventually

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<sup>13</sup> Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.8-13 Westerink.

<sup>14</sup> Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.4-9 Westerink, especially 1.9.

<sup>15</sup> Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.10 Westerink.

<sup>16</sup> Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.9-12 Westerink.

formulated by Augustine of Hippo in the fifth century AD is a complex issue which I cannot elaborate on here. It is, furthermore somewhat beside the point of this chapter since my aim here is to examine whether the concept of original sin, meaning that mankind has to pay for the sins of their mythic forefathers, was part of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos prior to the works of the Neoplatonists.

So, even if the works of the Neoplatonists can be seen as sources which confirm that a form of inherited guilt was connected to the dismemberment of Dionysos and the subsequent creation of man does not mean that the myth contained these elements in all the earlier versions. A survey and interpretation of the sources in which this myth occur or is alluded to is important in order to see other material such as the gold tablets and the Derveni papyrus in the right perspective. If the myth, with all its elements of anthropogony and original sin, can be traced back to a period prior to these sources, it could have significant impact on our interpretation of them. On the other hand, if we do not find these elements until the writings of the Neoplatonists we have to take this into consideration when interpreting the gold tablets and the papyrus. The present chapter will therefore try to take a new look at the sources and see whether some of its crucial elements can be given a new secure date.

## **3.2 Before 400 BC**

### *3.2.1 Onomakritos*

I start with a reference in Pausanias which, although of a late date, has been seen as evidence that the myth should be dated back to the sixth century BC. During his travels through Arcadia Pausanias arrives at a sanctuary dedicated to Despoina and Demeter where he takes the time to describe the statues adorning the temple. Among these is the statue of Despoina's foster-father, the Titan Anytus. This statue prompts Pausanias to, in his well-known style, break off from his description to tell us something about the Titans:

The first to introduce Titans into poetry was Homer, representing them as gods down in what is called Tartarus; the lines are in the passage about Hera's oath. From Homer, Onomakritos seized the name of the Titans, and having

both put together in the rites of Dionysos also made the Titans (to be) the authors behind Dionysos' sufferings.<sup>17</sup>

Pausanias obviously knew a myth where Dionysos was attacked by the Titans, in fact it seems he knew more than one version of it.<sup>18</sup> Onomakritos, to whom one version of the myth is ascribed, was, according to Herodotus, exposed as a forger of the oracles of Musaeus during the reign of Peisistratos, i.e. at the end of the sixth century B.C.<sup>19</sup> For this he was sent into exile by Hipparchos, son of Peisistratos, but was later pardoned. Writers also connect Onomakritos to Orpheus, especially since Musaeus was considered by most to be either the son or a follower of Orpheus.<sup>20</sup> Onomakritos was also believed to have written texts using Orpheus' name, as was Pythagoras, Zopyros of Heraklea, Prodikos of Samos and others.<sup>21</sup> Besides this we know very little about Onomakritos and it is important to keep in mind that almost 700 years separate him from Pausanias and the other sources mentioned here.<sup>22</sup> Can Pausanias' attribution of the myth, or at least one version of it, to Onomakritos be trusted?

Many scholars, including Martin P. Nilsson, believed so.<sup>23</sup> Linforth and Edmonds have both argued against this view. The latter's arguments are basically the same; ancient authors, among them Pausanias, and many of his contemporaries, saw Onomakritos as the forger of Orphic texts *par excellence* and therefore attributed many of the Orphic works they considered forgeries to his hand even though they might have been of a much later date. Thus, when Pausanias writes Onomakritos he really means pseudo-Orpheus, and therefore the myth he refers to is probably taken from a much later text.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> παρὰ δὲ Ὀμήρου Ὀνομάκριτος παραλαβὼν τῶν Τιτάνων τὸ ὄνομα Διούσῳ τε συνέθηκεν ὄργια καὶ εἶναι τοὺς Τιτάνας τῶι Διούσῳ τῶν παθημάτων ἐποίησεν αὐτουργός, Paus. 8.37.5 = OT 39 Bernabé, tr. Jones and Ormerod.

<sup>18</sup> See Paus. 7.18.4 where he refers to a story told by the people of Patrai in which Dionysos grew up in Mesatis and how the Titans plotted against him. Pausanias dismisses this version as false.

<sup>19</sup> Hdt. 7.6 = OT 1109 Bernabé; Tatianus, *Ad Gr.* 41 = Musaeus 4 T (V) Bernabé; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131 = OT 1110 (II) Bernabé.

<sup>20</sup> Diod. Sic. 4.25.1 = OT 514 Bernabé; Tatianus, *Ad Gr.* 41. See Chapter 1 for further references. The relationship between Orpheus and Musaeus was sometimes inverted, see Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131.

<sup>21</sup> Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131 ff. See also Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 3.30.12 = OF 108 Bernabé; Under *Orpheus* in the *Suda* (e.g. OT 1111 Bernabé) Onomakritos is credited as the author of *Χρησμούς* (*Oracles*), and *Τελετάς* (*Rites*). In the same passage, a number of other authors of Orphic texts are also mentioned

<sup>22</sup> See OT 1109-1119 Bernabé.

<sup>23</sup> Nilsson 1935:202 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Wilamowitz 1931 II:200 n2; Linforth 1941:352-353; Dodds 1951:155; Edmonds 1999:42-43. See also West 1983:221 n141, and p. 249 where he speculates whether Onomakritos might have been seen as the author of the interpolation in Hom. *Od.* 11.604 because of his reputation as a forger of Musaeus' oracles.



There can be no doubt that Onomakritos had a shady reputation according to some writers.<sup>25</sup> Pausanias refers, in another passage, to the poems of Musaeus, but explicitly notes that they were, in his opinion, in reality written by Onomakritos.<sup>26</sup> This is the only place he refers to Onomakritos as somebody who wrote under the name of others.<sup>27</sup> We do not know what source Pausanias consulted when he refers to Onomakritos since not all ancient writers who refer to Onomakritos call him a forger or treat all subsequent anonymous Orphic texts as written by “Onomakritos”. This means that although it is hard to take Pausanias’ testimony seriously the reasons for not trusting him are not overwhelming. It is difficult to know what texts Pausanias referred to when he used the name Onomakritos, but contemporary testimonies, especially those of the church fathers, do suggest that they were forgeries from a much later date than the sixth century BC. Moreover, the chronological gap between Pausanias and Onomakritos suggests that I disregard his testimony.

Still, even if we choose to trust Pausanias this does not help us very much. All Pausanias says is that Onomakritos (or someone at a later date) was the first who connected Dionysos to the Titans in a ritual and that in the course of this ritual Dionysos somehow suffered. It is tempting to see an allusion to his dismemberment here, and in all probability this is what Pausanias had in mind. However, there is no mention of an anthropogony or any doctrine of original sin. The problem would be easier to settle if other sources from the late sixth/early fifth century could confirm the existence of such a myth at that time. We turn therefore to Herodotus who has been seen by Bernabé as another source to the myth.

### 3.2.2 Herodotus

The relevant passages are taken from Herodotus’ book on Egypt. In 2.61 he notes that after a sacrifice held during the festival of Isis in Busiris all the participating men and women went into mourning, but he refuses to reveal who it is they lament on grounds that it would be blasphemous of him to do so.<sup>28</sup> Still the god in question can be no

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<sup>25</sup> Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 407b = OT 808 Bernabé; Schol. *In Ael.* 165.4.7. For a more favorable description see Arist. *Pol.* 1274a26, if this is the same Onomakritos.

<sup>26</sup> Paus. 1.14.3 = OT 382 Bernabé, Musaeus 60 F Bernabé; Paus. 1.22.7 = OT 1119 Bernabé.

<sup>27</sup> Other references to Onomakritos: 8.31.3 = OF 351 Bernabé; 9.35.5 = OF 255 Bernabé.

<sup>28</sup> τύπτονται μὲν γὰρ δὴ μετὰ τὴν θυσίην πάντες καὶ πᾶσαι, μυριάδες κάρτα πολλὰ ἀνθρώπων· τὸν δὲ τύπτονται, οὗ μοι ὅσιον ἐστὶ λέγειν = OT 57 (I) Bernabé.

other than Isis' brother and husband Osiris, and the reason for mourning has to be related to Osiris' death.<sup>29</sup> The myth of Osiris and Isis is well attested in several Egyptian sources as far back as the Pyramid texts (roughly dated to the second half of the third millennium BC), but the most comprehensive account is found in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris*. According to this version Osiris is tricked by Typhon (i.e. Set) into lying down in a coffin, which Typhon and his companions then quickly seal and throw into the Nile. With her brother lost Isis mourns and searches the land for him. Her travels eventually takes her to Byblos where the coffin has been found by the king and is used as one of the pillars to his palace. Isis retrieves the coffin and hides it. Typhon, however, while out on a nightly hunt, discovers the coffin by chance, opens it and proceeds to tear Osiris into fourteen parts which are then distributed all over Egypt.<sup>30</sup> Isis again travels through Egypt and collects all the pieces of her beloved brother.<sup>31</sup>

Why did Herodotus keep the name of the mourned God in Busiris secret? In Egyptian religion, the mourning of Osiris was not considered a secret rite. On the contrary it is well attested in several sources. Bernabé's explanation of Herodotus' silence is that since he equates Osiris with Dionysos elsewhere, the rites he saw at Busiris reminded him of Dionysiac rites which he knew were secret.<sup>32</sup> According to Linforth and Bernabé this ritual most probably included a *sparagmos* commemorating the manner in which Set tricked and dismembered Osiris.<sup>33</sup> The Herodotus passage is therefore seen as evidence that the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos (=Osiris) was acted out in a secret ritual in Greece in the beginning of the fifth century BC and probably even earlier.

However, when we turn to the text and the Egyptian material, we see that there are alternative explanations which are just as, if not even more, likely. First of all, Herodotus does not mention a *sparagmos* rite in the passage. In fact, Herodotus does

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<sup>29</sup> Hdt. 2.42 states that Isis and Osiris are the only Egyptian deities that are worshipped together. Plutarch reports that Busiris was considered by Eudoxus as both the birth- and burial place of Osiris, *De Is. et Os.* 359c.

<sup>30</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 356a-357d, 354a. Diod. Sic. 1.21 reports that Osiris was divided into sixteen parts.

<sup>31</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 357f-358b.

<sup>32</sup> Osiris = Dionysos: Hdt. 2.42; 2.144; 2.156. See also Diod. Sic. 4.1.6. Bernabé 2002a:414, also suggested by Harrison 1927:342 f.

<sup>33</sup> Linforth 1941:206.

not associate *sparagmos* with Osiris or Dionysos at all in the book.<sup>34</sup> The existence of such a rite at the Isis festival in Busiris is therefore based on other sources, most notably Plutarch, who also states that the rites celebrated at night in honour of Osiris agree with the tales regarding the Titans.<sup>35</sup> There are at least two problems with this. First, Plutarch is writing his piece on Isis and Osiris almost five centuries after Herodotus visited Egypt. During that time, Isis had been imported to Greece and Rome and inevitably changed in order to conform to the respective religious systems. The Isis we meet in Plutarch is therefore a syncretistic rather than a purely Egyptian goddess. The most obvious example of this is when Plutarch relates how Isis, after searching far and wide for her beloved brother, finds herself by a well in Byblos.<sup>36</sup> Here her tears and lamenting attract the attention of the local king's maidservants who take her back to their king. Isis, disguised as a mortal, is given the task of nursing the royal couple's child. This she does, in a manner which recalls the actions of Demeter and her efforts to make Demophoon immortal as they are told in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.<sup>37</sup> Imitating Demeter, Isis aims to make the child an immortal and proceeds to do this by holding the baby over the fire in order to burn away the mortal parts of his body. Isis is interrupted by the Queen, however, and the child's chance for immortality is thus gone forever. This episode is not known in the Egyptian material and should therefore be considered to be a Greek version of the myth or possibly Plutarch's own invention. Plutarch's testimony to the performance of *sparagmos* at Busiris could likewise be seen as an interpolation based on either a Hellenistic syncretistic view on Osiris or Plutarch's own reflections.

The second problem is that the version Plutarch relates about Osiris' death is just one of many.<sup>38</sup> Usually the Egyptian sources are vague when it comes to the manner of his death, but two of the most recurring versions, which can be combined, is that Osiris was slain, usually by Set although the killer is not always named, and

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<sup>34</sup> The closest is the rite held at a festival of Zeus (=Amun) where a goat is cut to pieces (κατακόψαντες) and flayed (ἀποδείραντες), Hdt. 2.42.

<sup>35</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 364f-365a.

<sup>36</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 357a-c.

<sup>37</sup> *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 98-274.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Pyramid texts 617 and 1514, thanks to Pål Steiner for these and several other references to, as well as good advice on, the Egyptian material. Steiner also informs me, through personal communication, that some Egyptologists believe that a dismemberment of Osiris was re-enacted during *funerary* rites, a theory that is supported by some archaeological finds.

that Osiris was drowned.<sup>39</sup> It seems that the focus in many of these myths is on the lamentations of Isis and her sister Nephthys rather than the death of Osiris.<sup>40</sup> Their lamentation is, in turn, probably related to vegetation since Osiris was considered to be, amongst other things, a vegetation deity. His death is in many sources connected to the agricultural cycle, placing his time of death to the time when the water level of the Nile diminished and the harvest had started. Based on the scarce information given to us by Herodotus it is thus impossible to reconstruct how Osiris' death was lamented at the Isis festival in Busiris. Furthermore, while Herodotus may have seen the rites at Busiris, he does not consider the rites themselves to be secret and he says nothing of a *sparagmos* ritual, most likely because it was not acted out there.

So why does Herodotus consider it unholy to reveal the name of the deity in Busiris? In order to answer this it will be necessary to take a look at Herodotus' policy of silence on religious matters in general. Both Linforth and Donald Lateiner agree that one of the reasons for his silence in religious matters is simply that he often considered the information irrelevant to his story.<sup>41</sup> Herodotus explains this himself in the beginning of his Egyptian account where he says that he will not tell stories about the gods, secret or not, except mention their names according to what fits his story.<sup>42</sup> He also makes it clear that he considers most of the stories told about the gods to be untrustworthy and therefore irrelevant. This probably holds true for most of the passages, but not necessarily in 2.61 where he actually describes the main feature of the festival but refrains from telling us the name of the god.<sup>43</sup> The answer to his silence in this passage may be found in another passage where Herodotus probably refers to the same god.<sup>44</sup> Here Herodotus deems it unholy (οὐκ ὄσιον) to reveal the name of the god buried in Sais. Furthermore he says that his rites are considered by the Egyptians to be mysteries (μυστήρια) and therefore secret. Linforth is sceptical

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<sup>39</sup> Osiris drowned, was later found by Isis and Nephthys and then buried according to the texts on the Schabako rock given by Sethe 1928: 16c-18c, 19, 62 Sethe. Dismemberment is not mentioned. Osiris' death is not described but alluded to on a memorial stone of I-cher-nofret. In the Osiris hymn Isis searches for and finds Osiris, who is dead but whole. In the text of Schabaka Osiris is drowned with Isis and Nephthys as witnesses, Osiris' body is saved thanks to Horus. A reason for the sparse information is probably that it was a secret, see Diod. Sic. 1.22. For a discussion of some of these sources see Bleeker 1958.

<sup>40</sup> Bleeker 1958:9-11.

<sup>41</sup> Linforth 1924:287; Lateiner 1989:65.

<sup>42</sup> Hdt. 2.3.

<sup>43</sup> As Linforth 1924:282 remarked, Herodotus "was affected at times by religious scruples, especially in matters about which any Greek would have been reserved."

<sup>44</sup> Hdt. 2.170-171.

about whether Herodotus, who was a foreigner, could have learned these secrets, but Herodotus nevertheless explains his silence as a pious act motivated by a respect for Egyptian religious laws.<sup>45</sup> There is no hint in this passage that the reason for his silence is reverence for Greek mysteries but this is probably an underlying motive since he has made it clear that most of the Greek deities are identical to the Egyptian ones, and had been transferred to the Greek *poleis* by the Pelasgians.<sup>46</sup> He gives a few examples of equation by claiming that Bubastis is Artemis<sup>47</sup>, Isis is Demeter<sup>48</sup>, Horus is Apollo<sup>49</sup>, Amun is Zeus<sup>50</sup>, Mendes is Pan, and Apis is Epaphos.<sup>51</sup> Other passages make it clear that Herodotus believed the gods originally had many different Egyptian names and that the Greeks had simply adopted some of them.<sup>52</sup> This is made especially clear in his passage on how Melampous taught the Greeks not only how to sacrifice to Dionysos but also the phallic procession and the deity's name.<sup>53</sup> Knowledge of the gods' appearance, eponyms, genealogies, arts, and honours, however, was given to the Greeks by Homer and Hesiod, who Herodotus believed to have lived four hundred years before his own time.<sup>54</sup>

In the description of the Osiris/Dionysos rites there is nothing in Melampous' sacrifice which hints at a *sparagmos* ritual. This is perhaps to be expected if Herodotus considered it to be secret, but in the crucial passage, 2.61, it is not the sacrifice or the rite which it is blasphemous for him to reveal, but the name of the deity which is mourned.<sup>55</sup> The phallic procession described in 2.48 even speaks against such an interpretation. In this ceremony certain puppets (ἀγάλματα) with

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<sup>45</sup> Linforth 1924:278.

<sup>46</sup> Hdt. 2.50; 2.52; see also 2.171.

<sup>47</sup> Hdt. 2.59; 2.137; 2.156.

<sup>48</sup> Hdt. 2.59; 2.156.

<sup>49</sup> Hdt. 2.156.

<sup>50</sup> Hdt. 2.42.

<sup>51</sup> Linforth 1924:274.

<sup>52</sup> Lattimore 1939:364 *contra* Linforth 1924:285; 1926:5 f.; 1940:300 who argued that Herodotus explained the use of two different names as a difference in language. It is true that Herodotus specifies that Osiris is Dionysos in the Greek language (κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλώσσαν), 2.144, but the origin of this use is still explained as Egyptian, perhaps communicated through the Pelasgians and subsequently the epic poets Homer and Hesiod, see Hdt. 2.4; 2.50; 2.53. The exceptions, Poseidon, Dioskouroi, Here, Hestia, Themis, Charites, and the Nereids, are listed in 2.50.

<sup>53</sup> Hdt. 2.48-49. Later, writers such as Hecataeus of Abdera believed that the Orphic-Dionysiac mysteries were introduced to the Greeks from Egypt by Orpheus and that their content were modelled on the worship of Isis and Osiris. See also Diod. Sic. 1.96 = OT 55 Bernabé, 4.25.4 = OT 1011 (III), 984 Bernabé.

<sup>54</sup> Hdt. 2.53.

<sup>55</sup> Linforth 1924:281. Herodotus repeats this in 2.170.

attached phalloi were, according to Herodotus, carried around by women. He says there is a sacred tale which explains this rite, but neglects to tell us more.<sup>56</sup> However, Herodotus explicitly states that this part of the ritual was different among the Greek worshippers. There is, therefore, nothing that suggests that the ritual Herodotus saw in Busiris contained a *sparagmos* ritual, nor that this was the reason he identified the two.<sup>57</sup> It is also uncertain whether this rite was actually carried out in rituals or if it was merely mythical.<sup>58</sup> The identification of the two deities was probably based on their role in their respective pantheons. Both Osiris and Dionysos were connected to vegetation and crops and therefore to the agricultural cycle and even to wine.<sup>59</sup> They were both connected to the underworld, and they were also seen as culture heroes, bringers of civilization. Thus the dismemberment of both gods could be the reason, or one of the reasons, why Dionysos equals Osiris, but it could just as well be their general similarities. The possibility that Herodotus kept quiet about the *sparagmos* in Busiris because it was secret does not seem probable.<sup>60</sup> It is hard to pinpoint the exact reason for Herodotus' silence in this matter, but based on this analysis I must conclude that Herodotus 2.61 cannot be used as evidence for the existence in the fifth century of a Greek myth or ritual in which Dionysos was torn apart and killed by the Titans.

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<sup>56</sup> The puppets described here makes me think of the puppets described by Clement of Alexandria which according to him were used to commemorate how the Titans tricked the infant Dionysos to come with them, Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.17.2-18.1 = OF 306 Bernabé.

<sup>57</sup> *Contra* Graf and Johnston 2007:76.

<sup>58</sup> Dodds 1986 [1960]:xxii claims that *sparagmos* was not part of any official Athenian cult. According to Henrichs 1978:148 "[n]othing in the available evidence suggests that historical maenads indulged in *sparagmos* or *omophagia*." See also Kraemer 1979:67 on the difficulties of reconstructing the ritual of the Hellenistic maenads.

<sup>59</sup> Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 363a, d-e. Henrichs 1972:60. Frazer classified Osiris as a dying and arising vegetation god together with Dionysos and Jesus Christ. West 1983:141 n5 calls attention to Pyramid text 1524a where Osiris is connected to wine. The Phallos also played an important part in both cults, Hdt. 2.48.

<sup>60</sup> *Sparagmos* as a ritual was openly associated with Dionysos in Eur. *Bacch.* see also Ael. *VH.* 3.42 on the daughters of Minyas and how Leukippe tore her son apart, a myth connected to the Dionysian Agrionia festival, Burkert 1985:164 f. have more examples, but evidence for *sparagmos* in ritual is sparse, see n57 above.

### 3.2.3 Pindar and Plato

The last passage to be considered from the period before 400 BC is a famous fragment by Pindar which is quoted by Plato in the *Meno*:<sup>61</sup>

Those from whom Persephone receives recompense for the ancient grief, in the ninth year she sends back their souls to the sun above, and from them grow glorious kings and men swift with strength and great in wisdom; at the last they are called sacred heroes among men.<sup>62</sup>

Starting with Paul Tannery's analysis in 1899, this fragment has been interpreted by most scholars as evidence that an Orphic doctrine of original sin can be dated to the beginning of the fifth century BC.<sup>63</sup> According to this interpretation it was the dismemberment and murder of her son, Dionysos, which caused the ancient grief. Man thus has to pay recompense for this since we are descendants of the Titans. Even the highly skeptical Linforth reluctantly accepted this suggestion, although he called attention to another possible reading where the "ancient grief" is not Persephone's, but rather the soul's, a reading which has been supported by Edmonds.<sup>64</sup> Richard Seaford has suggested that the guilt referred to is that of the Titans and it is therefore their rebellion against the gods in the Titanomachy which is meant.<sup>65</sup> The best interpretation of this fragment, however, has been recently proposed by Jens Holzhausen who convincingly interpreted the grief in this passage in light of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. According to Holzhausen the grief is Persephone's but the reason for her grief is not the murder of her son, a grief which is not attested in sources contemporary with Pindar, but rather her abduction by Hades, a grief attested to in several texts from this period.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the fragment may be seen as a reference to the Eleusinian mysteries, or perhaps a cult in Sicily or southern Italy, where initiation

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<sup>61</sup> Pind. frg. 133 Snell/Maehler = OF 443 Bernabé; Pl. *Meno* 81b-c.

<sup>62</sup> Tr. Edmonds, οἷσι κε Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτωι ἔτει ἀνδιδῶι ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ καὶ σθένει κραίπνοι σοφίαν τε μέγιστοι ἄνδρες αὔξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦροες ἀγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

<sup>63</sup> Tannery 1899:128 f.; Rose 1936, 1943; Dodds 1951:155 f.; Graf 1974:75 n54 ("vielleicht"), 100; Burkert 1975:90; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:143 ff., 2008:105 ff.; Bernabé 2002a:416, 2006:8; Graf and Johnston 2007:68 f. The fragment was not included in Kern's collection of Orphic fragments, only referred to, OF 232 Kern.

<sup>64</sup> Linforth 1941:347; Edmonds 1999:48.

<sup>65</sup> Seaford 1986:8 f.

<sup>66</sup> Holzhausen 2004:33 ff., *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 433. Rose 1936:85 considered this possibility, but dismissed it on the grounds that mankind had nothing to do with her abduction. According to Edmonds 2008a:11 Persephone's grief for the murder of her son, Dionysos, is not attested until the sixth century AD in Nonnus, *Dion.* 31.32-70.

into the cult required a period of grief for the initiand as well as a payment in sacrifices and gifts to the goddess.<sup>67</sup> Pindar's statement about recompense can therefore be seen as a reference to an appeasement rite, where a ritual is performed in order to secure the good-will of a deity by grieving his or her misfortune even if the performer(s) is without blame.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the "ancient grief" in the Pindar fragment could refer to her abduction by Hades and the "recompense" paid by her worshippers is in accordance with what was promised her by Hades in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Pindar's text is a fragment, and therefore open to more than one plausible reading; Holzhausen's reading demonstrates that convincingly. Therefore it cannot be used as a safe source for the reconstruction of the myth of Dionysos' dismemberment as most scholars have claimed.

Additional support for the hypothesis that the passage probably has nothing to do with Dionysos, his dismemberment, anthropogony, or original sin is found in the text in which the fragment is found, the *Meno*. An attractive proposal as to why Plato quoted this passage was presented by Zuntz who saw a possible connection to some of Empedokles' fragments in which he relates how souls lost their divinity and were incarnated into human or animal bodies as a result of, as West puts it, either "perjury or bloodshed".<sup>69</sup> According to Plato, then, the ancient grief in Pindar's passage referred to an incident which eventually led to incarnation. Whether Plato had Empedokles in mind or not, I believe that neither Pindar or Plato is referring to Dionysos here. Pindar's theory of metempsychosis agrees to a large extent with Plato's and I think this is the reason why Pindar was quoted; in order to give additional authority to his own theory that knowledge equals recollection by proving that people are reincarnated. It is not necessarily Pindar's theory on why we are reincarnated that interests Plato here, but the fact that we are reincarnated. The context of the fragment is Plato's theory that knowledge is recollection, i.e. that everything we "learn" is already latent in our minds and the process of learning is therefore only a process of recollection, or remembering things we have seen in previous lives.<sup>70</sup> This theory is dependant upon metempsychosis and an idea of the immortality of the soul, doctrines

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<sup>67</sup> *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 367-369, 273-274.

<sup>68</sup> Examples of such rites, given by Edmonds 2008a, include PDerv. col. 6, the Pelinna gold tablets, the Pherae gold tablet (5.4 Pherae 1), as well as rituals performed at the Anthesterian Aiora, and Eleusis.

<sup>69</sup> Especially B 115 DK; Zuntz 1971:86; West 1983:110 n83, a possibility which is also considered by Seaford 1986:8.

<sup>70</sup> τὸ γὰρ ζητεῖν ἄρα καὶ τὸ μαθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν, *Meno* 81d. See also *Phdr.* 249b ff.



that Plato claims to have heard from certain priests and priestesses and even some poets such as Pindar.<sup>71</sup> Plato furthermore quotes the Pindar fragment as a reason for living as good and just lives as possible since Persephone will force the souls to pay the penalty for their past crimes. Bernabé explains this as the crimes of the Titans from which mankind has originated with an inborn original sin which needs atonement directed to the victim's mother Persephone.<sup>72</sup> But the context suggests that the penalty which needs to be paid is individual since Plato uses this fragment to support his advice that everyone should act and behave piously.<sup>73</sup> This is also in accordance with what Plato says about the immortality of the soul, judgement after death, and metempsychosis elsewhere. There are some differences from dialogue to dialogue, but the general theme seems to be that the soul is immortal, that it will be judged in the afterlife, and that it might be reborn as a punishment for past sins or behaviour if proper action is not taken.<sup>74</sup> The Pindar fragment quoted by Plato corresponds especially with the eschatology in the *Phaedrus* where the souls are said to go through ten incarnations, three if the soul lives its life as a philosopher, since Persephone, according to Pindar, sends the soul to its last incarnation as kings and wise men after the ninth year, and after that they become "sacred heroes".<sup>75</sup> In the second Olympian ode Pindar claims that souls who have lived righteously on either side (of the grave) three times, will be sent to the Isle of the Blessed.<sup>76</sup> We see here that Pindar, just as Plato in the *Phaedrus*, distinguishes between those who have to go through ten incarnations before they are free of the cycle of rebirths and those who, by leading a good life (a life guided by philosophy according to Plato), need only suffer

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<sup>71</sup> According to Plato's seventh Epistle 326b he visited Italy when he was forty. Long 1948:70 ff. argues that he made this trip between writing *Gorg.* and *Meno*. The authenticity of the Epistles, however, is disputed.

<sup>72</sup> It is interesting to note that Pindar described Semele as Dionysos' mother in *Ol.* 2.25-27. This could, however, be explained either as Pindar adapting his speech to the beliefs of the ode's addressee, Theron. Alternatively, although nothing points towards this, is that he considered both Persephone and Semele as mothers of Dionysos since the god was said to have been born several times in later sources.

<sup>73</sup> See his introduction to the passage (81b): "And the moral is, that a man ought to live always in perfect holiness" (δεῖν δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ὡς ὀσιώτατα διαβιῶναι τὸν βίον) = OF 424 Bernabé. Cp. *Resp.* 10.618c ff.

<sup>74</sup> That the eschatology of Plato is "essentially consistent" was also argued by Long 1948:77. On the immortality of the soul: *Phd.* 105e, *Resp.* 10.621c, *Phdr.* 245c, *Tim.* 41e. Judgement after death: *Gorg.* 523e-524a, *Phd.* 63c, 107d, 113d, *Resp.* 10.614a ff., *Phdr.* 249a-b, *Leg.* 9.870d. On metempsychosis: *Phd.* 70a ff., 80d-81b, 114c, *Resp.* 10.617d ff., *Phdr.* 248c ff., *Tim.* 41e ff., 76d-e, *Leg.* 9.870d, 10.903d ff. See also Long 1948:63-86. Zuntz 1971:86 proposed that the judge referred to in Pind. *Ol.* 2.63 ff. could be Persephone, which would fit with the fragment quoted by Plato.

<sup>75</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 248e-249a. A year (ἔτερι) in this context should be understood as an existence or incarnation.

<sup>76</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.68-70.

three incarnations. Furthermore, we find in this ode the same three-fold scheme as in Plato's general eschatology.<sup>77</sup>

There are also several similarities between the eschatologies of Plato and Pindar on the one hand and Empedokles' eschatology on the other.<sup>78</sup> Like Pindar and Plato, Empedokles believed in the immortality of the soul and metempsychosis.<sup>79</sup> None of these authors mention anything about an original sin which can be traced to a single mythical event responsible for the sufferings of humanity. Instead, they all hold the individual soul responsible for their initial incarnation and also for the way in which they are to return to their origin.<sup>80</sup> I see therefore no reason why this fragment in itself or Plato's use of it should be interpreted in the light of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos or as proof for a doctrine of original sin.

### 3.2.4 Conclusion

This short survey shows that there are no conclusive evidence for the existence of a myth where Dionysos is torn apart and eaten by the Titans whose punishment by Zeus results in an anthropogony and a doctrine of original sin before 400 BC. Pausanias' reference is too vague and late to have any strength on its own. Sources from Onomakritos' own time, Herodotus and Pindar, does not support Pausanias in this matter. The closest Herodotus comes to a *omophagia* is in an Egyptian rite to Zeus (Amun) where a goat was cut to pieces.<sup>81</sup> Even if we allow that Herodotus in 2.61 is referring to Dionysos, the only safe conclusion is that a myth or rite regarding the mourning of Dionysos was known to Herodotus. The existence of a myth of Dionysos and the Titans as it is told in the texts of the Neoplatonists prior to the fourth century thus cannot be proven.

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<sup>77</sup> Bowra 1964:90.

<sup>78</sup> Long 1948:85 n66-75.

<sup>79</sup> On the immortality of the soul: B 8-9, 11, 147 DK. On metempsychosis: B 26, 115, 117, 125-127, 146, 147 DK. Note, however, that Empedokles believed in the transmigration of *daimones*, which, by some authors, are considered to be different from souls, see Picot 2007 for some references.

<sup>80</sup> This seems clear regarding Pindar and Empedokles, but also, I will argue below, regarding Plato.

<sup>81</sup> *Omophagia* is also connected to Zeus in Eur. *Cretans* frg. 377 M = OT 567 Bernabé. On this fragment and the use of *bacchos* see West 1974:24, 1975:234, 1983:159, 170; Cole 1980:230 n25; Dodds 1986 [1960]:85; Ferrari 2007 (note 5). There was no worship of Dionysos on Crete at this time according to Nilsson 1971:579 and Henrichs 1972:59 believes that Zagreus in the passage from Euripides refers to an independent Cretan god who later merged with Dionysos. Burkert 1985:280 believes the passage to be a product of Euripides' imagination and maintains that "[t]he facts of cult can scarcely be discovered through such imaginative descriptions." See also n57 above.

### 3.3 Fourth century

#### 3.3.1 Plato (continued)

As with the Pindar fragment considered above, the next passage, taken from Plato's *Laws*, has been seen as evidence for dating our myth with its anthropogony and original sin to the fourth century BC at the latest.<sup>82</sup> The passage goes as follows:

Next on this path to liberty would be the wish not to submit to the rulers; and, following this, to flee the service and authority of father and mother and the elders; and, near the end, to seek not to obey the laws, and, at the end itself, to pay no mind to oaths and promises and the entirety of the gods, displaying and imitating the fabled ancient Titanic nature, wherein they return to the same things, experiencing a savage time, never to cease from evils.<sup>83</sup>

The crucial element here is the "Titanic nature" which, imitated by man, has been interpreted as a reference to a Titanic nature in man, inherited as a result of the Titans' crime against Dionysos. There is, however, little to suggest that the reader would think of the dismemberment of Dionysos when reading this passage. Instead, the passage should be seen, as has been argued by Linforth, Moulinier, West and Edmonds, as a reference to the well-known Titanomachy described by Hesiod.<sup>84</sup> In book ten of the *Laws* Plato defines soul as "the motion that moves itself", seeing it as something responsible for both good and bad deeds, a definition which agrees with his descriptions of the soul in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>85</sup> Man also has a free will to do either good or bad.<sup>86</sup> Irrational thoughts leads to evil deeds while rational thought leads to good.<sup>87</sup> This leads, according to Robinson, up to Plato's main thesis that the gods equals souls that are dominated by pure rational thought, in contrast to man.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the gods are

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<sup>82</sup> Nilsson 1921:246, 1935:202 f.; more recently: Bernabé 2002a; Henrichs 2003:234 n94.

<sup>83</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 3.701b-c, tr. Edmonds: ἐφεξῆς δὴ ταύτη τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ ἢ τοῦ μὴ ἐθέλειν τοῖς ἄρχουσι δουλεύειν γίγνεται ἄν, καὶ ἐπομένη ταύτη φεύγειν πατρὸς καὶ πρεσβυτέρων δουλείαν καὶ νομοθέτησιν, καὶ ἐγγύς τοῦ τέλους οὖσιν νόμων ζητεῖν μὴ ὑποκόοις εἶναι, πρὸς αὐτῶ δὲ ἤδη τῶ τέλει ὄρκων καὶ τὸ παράπαν θεῶν μὴ φροντίζειν, τὴν λεγομένην παλαιὰν Τιτανικὴν φύσιν ἐπιδεικνύσι καὶ μιμουμένοις, ἐπὶ τὰ αὐτὰ πάλιν ἐκεῖνα ἀφικομένους, χαλεπὸν αἰῶνα διάγοντας μὴ λήξαι ποτε κακῶν = OV 37 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>84</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 687 ff.; Linforth 1941:339-345; Moulinier 1955:50 f.; West 1983:165 n88; Edmonds 1999:44. According to Edmonds, this was recognized by Cicero *Leg.* 3.2.5 (see the abstract "That Old Titanic Nature: Orphism and Plato *Laws* 701bc":

[www.apaclassics.org/AnnualMeeting/07mtg/abstracts/EDMONDS.pdf](http://www.apaclassics.org/AnnualMeeting/07mtg/abstracts/EDMONDS.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 245e-246a.

<sup>86</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 10.904a-e, cp. *Resp.* 617e.

<sup>87</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 10.897b.

<sup>88</sup> Robinson 1970:154.

only capable of doing good, a fact that only the impious denies.<sup>89</sup> Now, there is plenty of evidence in the *Laws* that Plato compared the structure of the soul to the structure of the state. In this case the pure rational souls (gods) should be the leaders of the state, while lesser men (lesser races such as Titans, and mankind) should be ruled and perform other duties. Hence, evil actions are described as irrational in the *Laws*, a result of what happens when the irrational (the unruly citizens who should be subordinate to the leaders) rebels against the rational. The reference to the Titans in the passage above makes perfect sense if Plato was referring to the Titanomachy, as has been argued by Linforth, Moulinier, West, and Edmonds. The passage does not mean that the soul itself *is* titanic, but that it *imitates* the Titans of old. A vivid picture of the Titanomachy must have come into the reader's mind, especially in light of Plato's treatment of the soul in book ten. The use of μιμουμένοις (imitating) between man and Titan indicates that there is not necessarily any link between the two races but that Plato displays, yet again, his liking for metaphors when discussing matters of the soul.<sup>90</sup>

We turn now to another passage in the *Laws* which Ugo Bianchi, and later Bernabé, have seen as a reference to the Orphic anthropogony.<sup>91</sup> Here Plato discusses the evil desire (ἐπιθυμία κακή) which leads men to sacrilegious acts:

My good man, the evil force that now moves you and prompts you to go temple-robbing is neither of human origin nor of divine, but it is some impulse bred of old in men from ancient wrongs unexpiated, which courses round wreaking ruin; and it you must guard against with all your strength.<sup>92</sup>

The proper way to guard against this, Plato tells us, is through "rites of guilt-averting" in the sanctuaries of "the curse-lifting deities". Is this passage related to the Titans and their crimes against Dionysos? The fact that they are not mentioned suggests not, but even if we allow for them to have anything to do with this it still seems probable that, again, it would be Hesiod's Titanomachy which would come to the reader's mind.

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<sup>89</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 10.898c, cp. *Pol.* 269e, *Tim.* 36e

<sup>90</sup> See Pl. *Phdr.* 246a.

<sup>91</sup> Bianchi 1966:118; Bernabé 2002a:419 f.; Bernabé sorts these fragments together in his collection of Orphic fragments.

<sup>92</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 9.854b, tr. R. G. Bury: ὦ θαυμάστε, οὐκ ἀνθρώπινόν σε κακὸν οὐδὲ θεῖον κινεῖ τὸ νῦν ἐπὶ τὴν ἱερολυσίαν προτρέπον ἵέναι, οἴστρος δέ σέ τις ἐμφυόμενος ἐκ παλαιῶν καὶ ἀκαθάρτων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀδικημάτων, περιφερόμενος ἀλιτηριώδης, ὃν εὐλαβεῖσθαι χρεῶν σθένει. = OV 37 (II) Bernabé.

In the *Phaedo* Plato says that the soul is one and undivided while in the *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*, and the *Republic* it is composed of two main parts.<sup>93</sup> In the *Timaeus* these two main parts are described as opposites, mortal and immortal, beastly and divine, while in the *Republic* the soul consists of a rational and an irrational part, the latter of which is divided into two sub-groups. These conceptions do not contradict but instead supplement each other. The unified soul in the *Phaedo*, having cast aside its mortal remains, is different from the soul which inhabits the body, but this difference is not necessarily one of essence but rather that the soul, while in the mortal body, is divided into different parts by the physical body.<sup>94</sup> What these parts are called is beside the point here. Plato made it clear that when discussing the soul one has to use similes and metaphors since it would be impossible to speak truthfully about the soul in any other way.<sup>95</sup> That is why the soul and its different parts are described metaphorically as a charioteer trying to control two horses, one white and rational, the other black and irrational in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>96</sup> For the same reason the irrational part of the soul, when described in the tenth book of the *Republic*, is seen as a monster, while in *Laws* it is described as Titanic (see above).

Furthermore, the references to purifying rites held at shrines of curse-lifting deities does not mean that we see a glimpse of a doctrine of original sin. Plato's concept of sin and irrational behaviour in the *Republic* and the *Laws* is connected to impious beliefs originating in the irrational soul, or part of the soul, which lead to participations in private cults and which eventually would lead to atheism. Temple-robbing is used as an example of a type of behaviour which violates the divine order and threatens the polis, the source of which is identified by Plato as the private cults which are spread by itinerant *manteis*.<sup>97</sup> Impious, irrational thoughts are thus a threat to the soul and the city.

Also, in the passage in the *Laws*, we see that the part of the soul responsible for evil deeds is neither human nor divine. It has been suggested that this is a

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<sup>93</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 80a-b; *Tim.* 69c-d, see also 70e where the human soul equals a divine soul with a beastly part, Rist 1992:116; *Phdr.* 246a; *Resp.* 439d.

<sup>94</sup> In *Tim.* Plato explains that the different parts of the soul are separated in the body by physical features such as the neck in order to keep the bad part of the soul from influencing the good (70e) or mixing with it (69d-e), see Robinson 1970:120 f. E.g. the divine part, θεῖον, which is placed in the head and which is stressed as not being the origin of the evil deeds in the *Laws*.

<sup>95</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 246a; Robinson 1970:119.

<sup>96</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 246a ff.

<sup>97</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 4.716a-b, *Resp.* 364b-365a = OT 573 (I) Bernabé. See Frede 2007:16-20.

reference to the Titans, but why should we assume that? Is there anything in other sources that indicate that this would be a likely inference made by the potential reader of the work? Radcliffe Edmonds suggests that the Erinyes would be more fitting as the source, which is neither divine or human and lies behind irrational behaviour such as temple-robbing.<sup>98</sup> And indeed, this seems to be more likely since the Erinyes were well known through their roles as avenging daimones punishing a particular blood-line for the wrong-doings of ancestors in mythology and especially the tragedies. The Erinyes also fit as "neither of human origin nor of divine" since they are daimones who, according to Plato in the *Symposium*, are "between divine and mortal".<sup>99</sup> It is, however, perhaps better to see the daimones as more likely candidates. While the Erinyes are normally seen as avenging spirits, the daimones, although a more general category which include the Erinyes, are credited with powers to influence and control humans. Turning to the Derveni Papyrus we see that daimones, in general, are seen as "hindering" and "vengeful souls" who must be appeased through the rites of the *magoi*. "This is why", the papyrus continues, "the magi perform the sacrifice, just as if they are paying a retribution."<sup>100</sup> Further down in the same column the Eumenides are introduced as souls who receive the same sacrifices from the initiates for the same reasons.<sup>101</sup> The Erinyes are mentioned at the beginning of the papyrus as receivers of libations and as agents of Dike, sent to punish "pernicious men".<sup>102</sup> The daimones, then, a general category to which the Erinyes belong, were seen as beings between mortals and gods who were occupied with the affairs of men, either as vengeful spirits, or as forces which could lead men to perform irrational actions, such as Eros in Plato's *Symposium* or the Erinyes in Homer.<sup>103</sup> The retribution referred to in connection with the daimones in the Derveni Papyrus corresponds to the exhortation in the *Laws* to perform guilt-averting rites at the shrines of curse-lifting deities in order to guard against evil impulses.<sup>104</sup> It is, obviously, impossible to determine with certainty what Plato referred to in the cited passage, but based on corresponding texts

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<sup>98</sup> See Edmonds 2008a who refers to Lobeck 1829:635, note t, who in his commentary on the passage explored this possibility.

<sup>99</sup> Pl. *Symp.* 202e; Burkert 1985:331 f.

<sup>100</sup> P Derv. 6.1-5.

<sup>101</sup> P Derv. 6.8-10.

<sup>102</sup> P Derv. 3.5.

<sup>103</sup> Hom. *Il.* 19.87, *Od.* 15.234. See Burkert 1985:180 f., 331 f. with references.

<sup>104</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 9.854b. The laws themselves serve as a way to control these evil impulses, just as education is given the same role in the *Republic*, Rist 1992:122.

and contemporary views, the daimones (perhaps the Erinyes) seem a much more probable alternative than the Titans.

I find no reasons to assume that Plato, in the *Laws*, referred to a doctrine of original sin which he had taken from an Orphic text. The passages considered above can therefore not be seen as references to a myth, as it is retold by Neoplatonists, where the Titans, through a bestial act against Dionysos, become not only the forefathers of mankind but also the originators of man's original sin and subsequent punishment.

### 3.3.2 *Xenokrates*

While Plato saw the soul as capable of both good and evil acts, the body was described as a mere "container" or "prison".<sup>105</sup> In his commentary on the *Phaedo* Damascius mentions those he believes to be wrong about the nature of this custody, the body, and ends up supporting Xenokrates who believed that the *phroura* "is of the Titanic order and culminates in Dionysus."<sup>106</sup> What is Xenokrates saying here? West has argued that it is only the first part of the quote which is taken from Xenokrates.<sup>107</sup> If this is correct, it would leave us with the statement that Xenokrates saw the *phroura*, in this case the body, as belonging to the Titanic order. This should not surprise us since Xenokrates was a pupil of Plato and might easily have picked up the Titanic metaphor as used by his teacher. Be that as it may, even if we allow that the fragment is a reference to a myth about Dionysos and the Titans, there are no traces of an anthropogony or the idea that the *phroura* was assigned to us as a punishment for some original sin committed by the Titans. Furthermore, another fragment by the same author contradicts any connection between the "Titanic order" and an anthropogony since it reports that according to Xenokrates mankind had not been created at all, but had always existed.<sup>108</sup> I can therefore see no reason why Xenokrates' fragment should be considered a reference to the myth of Dionysos and the Titans, much less an anthropogony or a doctrine of original sin.

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<sup>105</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 62b: ὡς ἔν τινι φρουρᾷ ἔσμεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, cp. *Cra.* 400c where this doctrine is ascribed to οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα.

<sup>106</sup> Damascius *In. Plat. Phaed.* 1.2 Westerink = Xenokrates frg. 20 Heinze, tr. Westerink: ἡ φρουρά [...] Τιτανική ἐστὶν καὶ εἰς Διόνυσον ἀποκορυφούται = OV 38 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>107</sup> West 1983:21 n53.

<sup>108</sup> Xenokrates frg. 59 Heinze; see Linforth 1941:339; Edmonds 1999:46.

### 3.3.3 *The Derveni papyrus*

The Derveni papyrus, dated roughly to the last half of the fourth century BC, contains a commentary on a theogony ascribed to Orpheus as well as quoted fragments of the theogony itself. Unfortunately this important source breaks off at the crucial moment where many scholars believe it continued with an account of the theogony as it is known from the Rhapsodies.<sup>109</sup> The papyrus, and the question of whether Dionysos was part of the Derveni Theogony, will be treated more thoroughly in a later chapter of this thesis but for now I wish only point out that Dionysos is not mentioned in the surviving sections of the papyrus. Furthermore, the authors' emphases (both that of the author of the theogony and the commentator) are focused on Zeus as the ultimate ruler of the gods and the universe, leaving no room for a successor. This will be discussed in more detail later.<sup>110</sup>

### 3.3.4 *Conclusion*

There are sources from the fourth century considered by some scholars to shed light on this discussion which have not been considered here. Common to all these is that they are so vague that a strong case for them as references to the myth or a variant of it must be considered weak and only a slight possibility.<sup>111</sup> Graf and Johnston for example argue that the Pelinna tablets, written sometime around 320 BC, are the earliest references to the anthropogony. The relevant passage occurs in both tablets where "Tell Persephone that Bacchios himself has released you" is seen as related to Damascius' statement that Dionysos is *Lusios* according to Orpheus.<sup>112</sup> There is, however, plenty of evidence to prove that Dionysos Lysios was worshipped in a variety of *poleis* as an official polis deity. There is also nothing to suggest that he had to be connected to an anthropogony in order to "release" the worshipper. Dionysos as

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<sup>109</sup> This opinion has been expressed most recently in Graf and Johnston 2007.

<sup>110</sup> See chapter 6.

<sup>111</sup> This includes Theophr. frg. 121.1 = Ath. 11.465: "the vine emits the most moisture when it is cut, it really weeps in nature too.", tr. Braarvig, which Braarvig 2007:16 suggests might be a reference to the dismemberment of Dionysos.

<sup>112</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:132. 5.3 Pelinna 1, line 2 = OF 485 Bernabé: εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε. Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.11 Westerink = OF 350 Bernabé: "Ὅτι ὁ Διόνυσος λύσεώς ἐστιν αἴτιος· διὸ καὶ Λυσεὺς ὁ θεός, καὶ ὁ Ὀρφεύς φησιν· ἄνθρωποι δὲ τεληέσσας ἑκατόμβας πέμπουσιν πάσησιν ἐν ὥραις ἀμφιέτησιν ὄργιά τ' ἐκτελέσουσι λύσιν προγόνων ἀθεμίστων μαϊόμενοι· σὺ δὲ τοῖσιν ἔχων κράτος, οὕς κε θέλησθα λύσεις ἐκ τε πόνων χαλεπῶν καὶ ἀπείρονος οἴστρου".



*lysios* was a popular image and idea used in various ways throughout antiquity, from the writings of Aristophanes and Plato to the sarcophagi of the dead in late antiquity.<sup>113</sup> Dionysos was known as a privileged god in Hades, and many relied on his powers and connections with the infernal couple to help them to a better afterlife. Such beliefs, as illustrated on the Pelinna tablets, do not demand a myth where Dionysos was torn asunder and eaten by Titans, an anthropogony, or a doctrine of original sin to have strength.<sup>114</sup> It can therefore be concluded that there is no secure evidence for references to the myth, or to a variant of it, in the fourth century BC.

### 3.4 Third century

#### 3.4.1 *Euphorion, Kallimakhos, and the Gurôb papyrus*

It is in the third century that the first certain references to the myth are found. We find them in fragments from works of Euphorion and Kallimakhos and in the ritual text which is partially preserved in the Gurôb papyrus.<sup>115</sup> Of the latter text, a Greek mid-third century papyrus found together with the Petrie papyri in a Ptolemaic cemetery in Gurôb, near the eastern entrance to the Fayyum province, only the second half of one column and the first half of the next is preserved, leading to numerous lacunae.<sup>116</sup> It seems that the papyrus contains a description of a ritual of some sort. The reason why it is important for us here is that parts of the text are echoed in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, almost five hundred years later, in his description of the *symbolae* used in the rite commemorating the dismemberment of Dionysos by the Titans. Clement's version of this myth is quite similar to the one found in the writings of the Neoplatonists; The Titans sneaked past Dionysos' guardians and lured the infant god to follow them by displaying toys whereupon they devoured him. In listing the toys used as lures by the Titans Clement quotes a list provided by Orpheus the Thracian: "Cone, and spinning-top, and limb-moving rattles, and fair golden apples from the

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<sup>113</sup> Ar. *Ran.*; Pl. *Symp.*; Horn 1972; Graf and Johnston 2007:74.

<sup>114</sup> Cp. *Hom. Hymn Dem.* where a blissful afterlife requires cultic performance rather than the knowledge of a specific anthropogony.

<sup>115</sup> Callim. frg. 43.117 Pfeiffer = OV 34 Bernabé; Euphorion frg. 13 Gomperz = OV 36 Bernabé. On the Gurôb papyrus as a ritual text, see Tierney 1922:80 and Henrichs 2003:233.

<sup>116</sup> The Petrie papyri, a collection of letters, taxes, and histories, are named after their discoverer, the Egyptologist Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie. Smyly 1921:2 and Hordern 2000:131 agree on the date. The Gurôb papyrus is currently located in the Trinity College in Dublin.

clear-toned Hesperides.”<sup>117</sup> Some of these toys appear at the end of the papyrus’ first column: ”C]one, spinning-top, dice | ].. mirror”.<sup>118</sup> We also find the Kouretes (col. 1.7), and Dionysos (col. 1.23), as well as ritual references such as *teletes* (col. 1.3), *symbola* (col. 1.23), *synthema* (col. 1.26), and sacrificial animals (ram; col. 1.10, and goat: col. 1.10, 13) in the papyrus, all which are mentioned in the myth as retold by Clement of Alexandria, the Neoplatonists, and others.<sup>119</sup> This makes it quite probable that the papyrus contained some kind of ritual description and that this ritual is connected to a myth where Dionysos was at least tricked and subsequently dismembered and eaten by the Titans, although the Titans, admittedly, are not mentioned in the surviving parts of the papyrus.

Additional support is given by the fact that different versions of a myth where Dionysos is torn apart were known to Euphorion and Kallimakhos in the third century BC who say that the Titans ”threw the divine Bacchus into the fire.”<sup>120</sup> The works of Euphorion (born c. 275 BC) survives only in fragments. Only three works are mentioned in the *Suda*, but other sources mention as many as twenty titles.<sup>121</sup> The contents of these works are unknown, although some of the titles suggests that he wrote curse-poems, myths, and aitiological tales. According to an Euphorion fragment preserved by Philodemus, the Titans tore Dionysos apart, but he was reborn after Rhea had collected his limbs.<sup>122</sup> Dionysos is also given the name Zagreus here, at least according to the *Etymologicum Magnum*.<sup>123</sup> Kallimakhos, a third century poet/scholar who according to the *Suda* was the author of more than 800 works, identifies Delphi as the place where Apollo received Dionysos’ limbs which he then proceeded to bury there.<sup>124</sup> Combining these fragments with the Gurōb papyrus

<sup>117</sup> Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.17.2: κῶνος καὶ ῥόμβος καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγμα, μῆλά τε χρύσεια καλὰ παρ’ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων = OF 306 Bernabé.

<sup>118</sup> P Gurōb Col. 1.29-30: κ]ῶνος ῥόμβος ἀστράγαλοι | ]η ἔσοπτρος = OF 306, 578 Bernabé. The reconstruction was first proposed by Smyly 1921:3. See also Hordern 2000:135; Bernabé 2002a:415.

<sup>119</sup> Bernabé 2002a:415 also argues that a reference to Pallas in col. 1.21, παλλάδος, should be considered a reference to Athena who, according to Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.17-18 = OF 588 (I) Bernabé, received her eponym Pallas when she saved the palpitating (from πάλλω) heart of Dionysos.

<sup>120</sup> Schol. Lycophron 207 Scheer, tr. Braarvig, Linforth 1941:310.

<sup>121</sup> The *Suda* mentions the works *Hesiod*, *Mopsopia*, and *Chiliades*.

<sup>122</sup> Phld. *De pietate* 16, 47 Gomperz = OF 59 (I, II) Bernabé.

<sup>123</sup> *EM* 406.46. This source is quite late, ninth century AD at the earliest.

<sup>124</sup> Today, only six hymns, c. sixty epigrams, parts of a work called *Paradoxa*, and fragments survive. On Delphi and Dionysos’ limbs see Callim. frg. 643 Pfeiffer, Euphorion frg. 14 van Groningen. A tradition locating Dionysos’ grave at Delphi is known from the fourth century BC but it is far from certain that his death there was caused by the Titans. According to Dinarchus of Delos Dionysos died

reveals that there were myths in the third century BC where Dionysos were lured away from his protectors, torn apart, and boiled by the Titans. Whether these different elements formed parts of a larger narrative is uncertain but not improbable given that they are combined in later versions.

I find it difficult, however, to follow Bernabé who sees these fragments as evidence that a myth, as it is told in later (Neoplatonic) sources, including elements such as the anthropogony and a doctrine of original sin, was known in the third century BC.<sup>125</sup> Myths usually develop specific variations dictated by local preferences. A retelling of a myth is also, as Bruce Lincoln points out, a way to promote ideology, which in turn is, to a large degree, determined by geographical and chronological contexts.<sup>126</sup> We should therefore always be careful when supplementing one version with details from another, especially if these versions are separated, not only chronologically but also philosophically. The authors behind these retellings had specific reasons for recounting a myth and were of course free to add to the "original" content in order to make it prove their points. That this happens to a myth over the course of six or seven centuries is inevitable.<sup>127</sup> That we are dealing with several versions already in the third century BC is suggested by the different deities mentioned in the Gurôb papyrus; Brimô (col. 1.5) and Irikepaios (1.22), none of which are found in any of the other versions of the same date or later. Bernabé argues that the papyrus' plea to be saved coupled with references to the myth of Dionysos supplies evidence that the anthropogony and the subsequent doctrine of original sin are found in the papyrus and the myth its ritual relied upon.<sup>128</sup> The problem is, however, that both times this formula appears in the papyrus (σῶισόν με), it is coupled with deities other than Dionysos, in fact the very two deities which are not found in subsequent versions of the myth; Brimô and Irikepaios.<sup>129</sup> This does not mean that we do not see glimpses of a myth where Dionysos was lured away from the Kouretes by the Titans which then is commemorated in a rite, but rather that it is not necessarily

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here while fleeing from Lykourgos, *FGrH* 399 F 1 = *SH* 379b; West 1983:151. See also Plut. *De E apud Delphos* 389a = OT 613 (II) Bernabé; Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 364f-365a.

<sup>125</sup> Bernabé 2002a:416.

<sup>126</sup> "Myth, then, is not just taxonomy, but *ideology* in narrative form.", Lincoln 1999:147, 2002:216 italics in original.

<sup>127</sup> This point has been pressed by several scholars, e. g. Lincoln 1999:147 ff., 2002:218.

<sup>128</sup> P Gurôb 1.5, 1.22, Bernabé 2006:9.

<sup>129</sup> P Gurôb 1.5: ]σῶισόμ με Βριμῶ με |, 1.22: ]λευ ἰρικεπαίγε σῶισόμ με |.

the same version as we find later. Instead Dionysos seems to be invoked as one of several gods in an initiation ritual where the initiate aims to be "saved".<sup>130</sup>

### 3.4.2 Conclusion

There were most probably several versions of a myth which told how Dionysos was torn apart and killed by the Titans in circulation in the third century BC. This is suggested by the various deities mentioned and emphasised in the Gurôb papyrus in contrast to what we see in the fragments of Euphorion, Kallimakhos, and in later sources. There are, however, no traces of an anthropogony nor a doctrine of original sin in any of these sources. Interestingly these elements are also absent in the version described by Clement of Alexandria, as Edmonds has pointed out. If we accept that there were at least two versions of the myth in circulation in the middle of the third century, then it is possible that the myth can be traced further back into the fourth century. The evidence for this, however, is, as I have argued above, not overwhelming. Of importance for our investigation now is to see when the anthropogony and the doctrine of original sin are introduced as parts of the myth of Dionysos and the Titans.

## 3.5 Second century

### 3.5.1 The Perinthos inscription

This second century BC inscription has been suggested by Bernabé as a reference to a myth where an anthropogony was as a result of the Titans' murder of Dionysos.<sup>131</sup> Inscribed is a Sibylline Oracle. Important for Bernabé's purpose is the second and third line which can be read as: "When Bakkhos, after having shouted euai, is beaten, then blood, fire, and ash will be united" and the fourth, and last, line with its reference

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<sup>130</sup> Whether the papyrus should be considered Orphic or not is a complex issue. Smyly identified different parts of the text as "Eleusinian" (col. 1,5: "save me Brimo", Smyly 1921:1) and "Orphic" (col. 1.23, Smyly 1921:2) but hesitated to characterise the papyrus as a whole. Kern included it in his collection of Orphic fragments, OF 31 Kern. Tierney 1922:77 f. labeled the papyrus Orphic and saw the different references observed by Smyly as evidence for the eclectic character of Orphism. The appearance of Irikepaïos (or Erikepaïos) has been seen as one of the main arguments to label the papyrus Orphic since this has been considered an alternative name for the Orphic Phanes. However, Erikepaïos is a non-greek name taken from an Asiatic Dionysos-cult and is not exclusively connected to an Orphic divinity, see West 1983:171, 205 f., 263; Hordern 2000:138. See also Colli 1978 I:188-191 (4[A 69]) for the text.

<sup>131</sup> Bernabé 2002a:412 f.; Kaibel *Epigr. Gr. Suppl.* 1036a = OF 320 (XI) Bernabé.

to a *archiboukolos*.<sup>132</sup> By interpreting this as an oracle text referring to the creation of mankind Bernabé is following the opinions of Dieterich and Casadio among others.<sup>133</sup> According to these scholars, the fire is seen as Zeus' thunderbolt, the blood as the blood of Dionysos, and the ash as the remains of the Titans from which mankind arose. As additional support Bernabé draws attention to parallels found in Mesopotamian myths where humans were created from a mixture of mud and the blood of rebellious gods.<sup>134</sup> This is an interesting parallel which nevertheless cannot be used to prove anything in the Greek context. There is also a discrepancy between the inscription itself and the anthropogony as it is retold in the myth of Dionysos and the Titans in later sources. The Perinthos text contains three elements, fire, blood, and ash, while in the anthropogony as we know it from the Neoplatonists, only lightning and ash are mentioned. While it seems important to point to the presence of blood as a component in the inscription, it is not even mentioned in later sources. True, the blood of Titans plays, as we shall see, a large role in certain traditions that trace the creation of mankind to the Titans, but it plays no role in any of the variants of the myth we are trying to trace here. Of course, it is possible that the inscription hints to an anthropogony where Dionysos' blood, the Titans' ashes and the lightning of Zeus are the main ingredients, but as Bernabé himself points out it seems that the blood most probably belongs to the Titans.<sup>135</sup> Where, then, is the Dionysiac component? This seems to me to be the most decisive argument. Besides, an anthropogony is not mentioned in the inscription. Edmonds suggests that the inscription could be seen as a reference to a Dionysiac ritual where a sacrificial animal was first cut and then burnt on a fire, producing the ashes surrounding the altar.<sup>136</sup> These elements were perhaps seen as united during the ritual led by the *archiboukolos* mentioned in the concluding line of the inscription.

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<sup>132</sup> ἐπὶ δ' ὁ Βάκχος εὐάσας πλη<γή>σ<ε>τα<ι> | τότε αἷμα καὶ πῦρ καὶ κόνις μιγῆσεται.  
Bernabé's translation: "Lorsque Bacchus, après avoir crié *euai*, sera battu, alors le sang, le feu et la cendre se mêleront." (p. 412).

<sup>133</sup> Bernabé 2002a:412 n31.

<sup>134</sup> Bernabé 2002a:412.

<sup>135</sup> Edmonds 2008a:57. Cp. e.g. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 30.10, 26 = OF 320 (VII-VIII) Bernabé, a passage which will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>136</sup> Edmonds 2008a:57 and n205.

### 3.6 First century and beyond

#### 3.6.1 *Diodorus Siculus*

The myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos is known from various sources from the first century BC. Different elements of it have, as we have seen, in fact been known since at least the third century BC but the main question remains; are there any hints of either an anthropogony or a doctrine of original sin in the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos in the first century BC? Consulting the Rhapsodic Theogony provides us with little help. Even though this is the source used by the Neoplatonists, it is uncertain when the collection was compiled. While Neoplatonists saw the Rhapsodic Theogony as the work of Orpheus, and thus a product of a mythic age, modern scholars, at least after the first three decades of the twentieth century, have debated whether it should be dated to the first century BC or later.<sup>137</sup> Suspending that question I would rather take a closer look at the other sources in which the myth appears.

From the first century BC and onwards texts were written in an increasingly syncretistic climate where beliefs and ideas from different cultures around the Mediterranean and beyond met and influenced each other, and when exotic cults were imported to Rome and made to fit into Roman society. Theological and philosophical speculation had by this time led to numerous narratives and myths, all contesting for validity. Thus, while Cicero announces that he knows of four different Dionysoi, Diodorus admits that the task of unravelling the truth about Dionysos has become increasingly hard because of the multitude of myths told about him. According to some, Diodorus continues, there are three different Dionysoi, while others swear there is only one.<sup>138</sup> Diodorus also wrote about how Dionysos and his rites were imported from Egypt to Greece by Orpheus.<sup>139</sup> Linforth interpreted this passage as a reference to the *sparagmos* ritual and saw Diodorus as the earliest clear reference to the myth of the god's dismemberment.<sup>140</sup> Elsewhere, Diodorus tells us how Dionysos was the son of Zeus and Persephone and that he was torn to pieces by the Titans.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, he connects this myth and its accompanying rites to Orpheus. Returning to his third

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<sup>137</sup> There are, of course, exceptions, see e.g. Merkelbach 1967:22 who finds a sixth century date possible.

<sup>138</sup> Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.58 = OT 497 (I) Bernabé; Diod. Sic. 3.62.1 ff. = OF 59 (III) Bernabé.

<sup>139</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.96 = OT 48 (II) Bernabé. Following Herodotus he equates Dionysos with Osiris.

<sup>140</sup> Linforth 1941:206, 313, 353.

<sup>141</sup> Diod. Sic. 5.75.4 = OF 283 (I) Bernabé.

book we find the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos told in more detail.<sup>142</sup> According to Diodorus not only the myth but also the rites connected to it should be explained metaphorically. The name Dionysos, he starts, is derived from οἴνου δόσιν "the gift of wine", or, as some mythographers will have it, "the fruit of the vine". Because of this some call him Dimetor (twice-born) since he is "born" when the vine breaks through the earth, and then again when the grape itself is formed. There are also those, Diodorus continues, who say that the Titans tore him to pieces but that Demeter brought his limbs back together so that he could be born a third time. His parentage in this myth, Zeus and Demeter, is explained by the fact that the vine grows out of the earth which has received nourishment from the rain falling from heaven. Furthermore, when they (i.e. the mythographers) say that the "earth-born" (τῶν γεωργῶν, i.e. Titans, sons of Gaia) tore him apart, what they really mean is that the farmers harvest the grape, crush and boil it in order to make wine.<sup>143</sup> When the farmers see that the vine bears fruit again the next year they say that the god is resurrected. Diodorus ends his interpretation by noting that the same mythographers call Demeter Ge Meter and that this is in accordance with the teachings set forth in the Orphic poems and rites (διὰ τῶν Ὀρφικῶν ποιημάτων καὶ τὰ παρεισαγόμενα κατὰ τὰς τελετάς), teachings which it is forbidden to pass on to the uninitiated.

A myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos is clearly attested but there is still no hint of the anthropogony. This should perhaps not surprise us since an anthropogony according to Diodorus' allegorical interpretation would force him to explain how the farmers (i.e. Titans) were punished. It is therefore possible that this part of the myth was conciously left out since it did not serve his purpose, although we cannot take this for granted. Diodorus compares the version he has read and the equation of Demeter with Ge Meter with the ones found in Orphic texts, but he does not equate them. It is hard to say to what degree his version agrees with the Orphic he refers to, but we can nevertheless say that Diodorus did not consider the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos a secret even though the Orphic teachings associated with the myth were. Although Diodorus connects the myth to Orphic texts and we know that the myth can be traced back to the third century, it is impossible to say how

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<sup>142</sup> The following is taken from Diod. Sic. 3.62.3-8.

<sup>143</sup> Cornutus *Theol. Graec.* 62 has the same interpretation in the first century AD. See also Procl. *in Crat.* 108.13 Pasquali = OF 303 Bernabé. Harrison 1927:16 argued against this "orthodox explanation", as she called it, of the Zagreus-myth and believed instead that both the myth and ritual could be explained by analogy to primitive initiation rites.

old Diodorus' source was since the myth also appears in the Rhapsodic Theogony, believed, at least by some scholars, to be contemporary with Diodorus.<sup>144</sup> That Demeter is equated with Ge Meter, in addition to other deities, in the Derveni papyrus does not help us since the rest of the papyrus contains no traces of Dionysos.<sup>145</sup> On another note, it follows from Diodorus' claim that this myth was known to the "ancient mythographers" as well as in Orphic texts that there were different versions of the myth, or at least different interpretations of it, and that Diodorus provides the earliest evidence that the myth appeared in Orphic texts.<sup>146</sup>

### 3.6.2 Plutarch and Dio Chrysostomos on anthropogony and original sin

Moving on from the works of Diodorus Siculus we come to the end of the first century AD and the works of Dio Chrysostomos and Plutarch. Particularly Plutarch's *De esu carnium* has been important in the debate surrounding the myth of Dionysos and the Titans. The relevant passage from this work will also be given a prominent place in this analysis while Dio Chrysostomos will be discussed briefly at the end of this section.

I start by quoting the relevant passage in Plutarch in full:

It would perhaps not be wrong to begin and quote lines of Empedokles as a preface... [lacuna] For here he says allegorically that souls, paying the penalty for murders and the eating of flesh and cannibalism, are imprisoned in mortal bodies. However, it seems that this account is even older, for the legendary suffering of dismemberment told about Dionysos and the outrages of the Titans on him, and their punishment and their being blasted with lightning after having tasted of the blood, this is all a myth, in its inner hidden meaning, about reincarnation. For that in us which is irrational and disorderly and violent and not divine but demonic, the ancients used the name, "Titans," and the myth is about being punished and paying the penalty.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>144</sup> See West 1983:69, 246-251 and Janko 1986:155 who agrees with him. Richardson 1985:89-90 is open for an even earlier dating.

<sup>145</sup> Demeter is not only Ge Meter but also Rhea, Hera and Deio in the Orphic Derveni papyrus, see col. 22.7-16.

<sup>146</sup> Diod. Sic. 3.62.8 = OF 58 Bernabé, 5.75.4 = OF 283 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>147</sup> Plut. *De esu carn.* 1.996b-c = OF 318 (II) Bernabé: οὐ χεῖρον δ' ἴσως καὶ προανακρούσασθα καὶ προαναφωνῆσαι τὰ τοῦ Ἐμπεδοκλέους· ἀλληγορεῖ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα τὰς ψυχὰς, ὅτι φόνων καὶ βρώσεως σαρκῶν καὶ ἀλληλοφαγίας δίκην τίνουσαι σώμασι θνητοῖς ἐνδέδεται. καίτοι δοκεῖ παλαιότερος οὗτος ὁ λόγος εἶναι. τὰ γὰρ δὴ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον μεμυθευμένα πάθη τοῦ διαμελισμοῦ καὶ τὰ Τιτάνων ἐπ' αὐτῶι τολμήματα γευσαμένων τοῦ φόνου κολάσεις τε τούτων καὶ κεραυνώσεις, ἠνιγμένος ἐστὶ μῦθος εἰς τὴν παλιγγενεσίαν· τὸ γὰρ ἐν ἡμῖν ἄλογον καὶ ἄτακτον καὶ βίαιον οὐ θεῖον ἀλλὰ δαιμονικὸν οἱ παλαιοὶ Τιτᾶνας ὠνόμασαν, καὶ τοῦτ' ἐστὶ κολαζομένους καὶ δίκην δίδοντας, Tr. Edmonds.



As we can see, Plutarch mentions not only the myth of Dionysos and the Titans, but seemingly also links the latter's subsequent punishment to our own punishment. How this is connected to Empedokles, the quote of whom is regrettably lost, is far from obvious. For the sake of convenience the passage itself can be divided into three parts; the first being the (lost) quotation of Empedokles and Plutarch's interpretation of this, the second being the reference to the myth of Dionysos and the Titans, and the third being Plutarch's explanation of what this means for us. Once again the two opposing interpretations concerning this passage as a reference to the content of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos can be summed up by relating the views of Bernabé and Edmonds.

Bernabé argues that the second part, the myth of the Titans, is seen by Plutarch as an *aition* which explains how mankind was created. Plutarch does not say this explicitly, but the connection between the second and third part more than suggests this. There is also, Bernabé continues, an etymological point to be found in the passage where the Titans are derived from the verb *tinein* ("to punish") in the first part. This means, according to Bernabé, that the myth known to Plutarch is connected to the "Titanic" elements in mankind because of the anthropogony, and that mankind is continually punished for this original sin by being imprisoned in mortal bodies.<sup>148</sup>

Edmonds, on the other hand, argues that the whole passage should be understood allegorically. This is indeed stated explicitly in the passage, not only in the first part where Empedokles is interpreted allegorically, but also in the second part where Plutarch reveals to us the hidden meaning of the myth; that it is a myth about reincarnation.<sup>149</sup> The key words are found in the first two parts of the passage, first ἀλληγορεῖ, then ἠνιγμένος.<sup>150</sup> Plutarch's use of these words makes it explicitly clear, Edmonds argues, that the myth cited was not seen by Plutarch as an *aition*, but rather an allegory.<sup>151</sup> Edmonds finds neither an anthropogony nor any doctrine of original sin in this passage and argues that if Plutarch had known about this he would have included it since it would have improved his argument.<sup>152</sup> The myth, then,

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<sup>148</sup> Bernabé 2002a:408-409.

<sup>149</sup> Edmonds 2008a:31 ff.

<sup>150</sup> For Aristotle an enigma is the same as a metaphor, Arist. *Poet.* 22.1458a.26. Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.52 defined enigma as allegory; Stroumsa 1996:272.

<sup>151</sup> Edmonds 2008a:35.

<sup>152</sup> Edmonds 1999:47.

should be seen as not an explanation for our punishment as Empedokles saw it, but rather as an allegory for it.

It is of great importance for our understanding of this passage to determine whether Plutarch saw the myth as an allegory or an *aition*. I agree with Edmonds in this respect since, as he points out, Plutarch is making this explicitly clear himself. The fact that the hidden meaning of the myth of Dionysos and the Titans was that it concerned reincarnation means that this was not the obvious meaning of the myth as Plutarch knew it. Instead, Plutarch uses the myth and explains it as an allegory in support of the main argument not only in the passage, but in the whole text itself: We should abstain from eating meat. A closer look at the other parts of the passage in relation to the rest of the text is revealing and they conform, as I will try to show, to Plutarch's main aim of the text without having to insert neither an anthropogony nor a doctrine of original sin.<sup>153</sup> In order to see this more clearly we need to take a brief look at the rest of the text.

The text has unfortunately a few lacunae and interpolations.<sup>154</sup> Despite this, the aim of the text is quite clear from the beginning. First of all, to eat meat is unnatural for Plutarch. This, he claims, is evident from the fact that humans are not equipped with neither sharp teeth or claws. Furthermore, we need to prepare the meat before we can eat it, a process which is unnatural since no animal needs to do this. Thus the whole process of killing animals and eating their meat is actually against our nature since we can do neither without the help of man-made (and thus unnatural) accessories.<sup>155</sup> Second, to eat meat is also impious since we, by doing this, neglect the gifts which are given to us by Demeter and Dionysos.<sup>156</sup> Third, it is also bad for our soul since it becomes bound to our bodies through the eating of meat. It is at this point in the argumentation that the passage quoted above is situated. The soul, being bound the body, is wont to suffer reincarnation as a result of a carnivorous diet. The dire consequences of eating meat do not end with death. To substantiate this claim Plutarch calls upon the testimony of Empedokles, a well-known believer in reincarnation, and the ancient authority given by the myth of Dionysos and the Titans. Philip Hardie sees this strategy as typical for Plutarch in other texts as well; first, he

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<sup>153</sup> This is pointed out by Edmonds 2008a:30 ff.

<sup>154</sup> There is an interpolation in 994b-d. For lacunae see 994f, 996b, 996c, and of course at 999b where the text prematurely breaks off.

<sup>155</sup> *De esu carn.* 994e-995a.

<sup>156</sup> *De esu carn.* 994a.

cites a philosopher (very often this is Empedokles who he quotes or refers to over eighty times in his texts<sup>157</sup>) in favour of his argument, second, the quotation is followed by a reference to a myth, third, both the philosopher and the myth are interpreted by Plutarch in favour of his main argument.<sup>158</sup> As one of many examples Hardie refers to Plutarch's *De facie quae in orbe lunae apparet*, 926e, where Empedokles and the Titans (and Giants) are employed in order to further his own view on cosmology.<sup>159</sup> Another example can be seen in *De amicorum multitudine* where Empedokles (and others) and the myth of Theseus are combined in a similar manner.<sup>160</sup>

Returning to *De esu carniū*, "Plutarch", in the words of Edmonds, "introduces Empedocles to show the ultimate consequence of the soul's unhealthy relation to the body, reincarnation."<sup>161</sup> Whether Plutarch himself believed in reincarnation at this time is uncertain since he later in *De esu carniū* states that he does not agree with Empedokles that the souls of humans could end up reincarnated as animals or plants.<sup>162</sup> He nevertheless sees the existence of such a doctrine as a warning to be heeded, a doctrine which should make people pause and reconsider their unnatural habit of eating meat.<sup>163</sup> An interesting point is provided by Jackson P. Hershbell who concludes from his analysis of Plutarch's use of Empedokles that Plutarch sometimes used the latter's work in order to promote his own views regardless of what Empedokles meant or the context in which he claims it.<sup>164</sup> Plutarch's introduction of reincarnation in the passage under consideration has led to some speculations about what fragment of Empedokles was actually cited by Plutarch.<sup>165</sup> He is, however, reluctant to reveal the underlying reasons for his views on the grounds that these are incredible and mysterious (μυστηριώδη).<sup>166</sup> Plutarch's

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<sup>157</sup> Hershbell 1971:157.

<sup>158</sup> Hardie 1992:4772, 4783. Edmonds 2008a:34-35 sees the same strategy at work in frg. 200 where Plutarch treats Homer allegorically.

<sup>159</sup> Hardie 1992:4772.

<sup>160</sup> *De amic. mult.* 95a-b, 96c-d.

<sup>161</sup> Edmonds 2008a:31.

<sup>162</sup> *De esu carn.* 997e.

<sup>163</sup> *De esu carn.* 998d-f.

<sup>164</sup> Hershbell 1971:169, 172, 183.

<sup>165</sup> The lacuna at *De esu carn.* 996b is usually believed to be frg. 115 DK. However, Arve O. Berntzen at the University of Oslo, has suggested to me, through personal communication, that frg. 139 DK, where Empedokles discusses cannibalism, also should be considered.

<sup>166</sup> *De esu carn.* 996b. As Brenk 1977:70 points out Plutarch is here citing the words of Plato's *Phaedrus*, τὴν δὲ μεγάλην καὶ μυστηριώδη καὶ ἄπιστον ἀνδράσι δεινοῖς.

reference to Plato in the same sentence could suggest that Plutarch considered the soul to be immortal and that reincarnation for him was restricted to human bodies.<sup>167</sup>

Now, if Plutarch dealt allegorically with both the myth and the quotation from Empedokles, chances are that he did the same with the reference to the Titanic nature. This is supported by the way he describes the effects of meat-eating later in the text. To eat meat, Plutarch argues, is irrational and thus leads to increasingly irrational behaviour, ultimately to violence and war. The reason for this is that a line has been crossed where lack of respect for animal lives soon becomes a lack of respect also for human lives.<sup>168</sup> In this connection it is quite understandable that the Titans' irrational behaviour against Dionysos, which included eating him, are invoked to serve as an allegory on the irrational, meat-eating part of the human soul. To describe our soul as "Titanic" takes us back to Plato and his comments on the Titanic element in our soul in the *Laws*. Plato might have been one of "the ancients" (οἱ παλαιοὶ) Plutarch had in mind.<sup>169</sup> Plutarch's point is that the irrational, "Titanic", part of our soul, the part that urges us to eat meat, should be regarded as a punishment since the consequences of its actions is that our souls are bound closer to the body. It is here that reincarnation also should be understood allegorically since reincarnation was not part of the version of the myth which he knew. Thus, the punishment of the Titans in the myth of Dionysos is an allegory of how the soul suffers the consequences of eating meat, which is how Plutarch understands the meaning of the quotation of Empedokles (regardless of what fragment he actually quoted).<sup>170</sup> My conclusion in this matter is therefore in agreement with Edmonds' interpretation of the passage in Plutarch's *De esu carniū*.

The question regarding original sin and whether a doctrine concerning this was inherent in the version of the myth known by Plutarch is tied up to this conclusion. The absence of reincarnation in the myth itself suggests that any theory of original sin was also absent. His reference to the punishment of humans should not be taken as meaning that mankind is in a state of punishment because of the actions of

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<sup>167</sup> Hershbell 1971:171 argues against this possibility, but see now Plut. frg. 200 where the immortality of the soul is discussed, cf. Edmonds 2008a:34-35.

<sup>168</sup> *De esu carn.* 997c, 998c.

<sup>169</sup> See section 3.3.1 above. See also Plut. *Terrestriane an aquatilia sint callidiora* 975b-c, and Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.9 Westerink.

<sup>170</sup> There is a possibility that the reincarnation Plutarch refers to should be understood as the rebirth of Dionysos. In *De Is. et Os.* 364f-365a Plutarch uses the same word, παλιγγενεσίαν, in connection with the rites and myths concerning Osiris, who he equates with Dionysos, and his rebirth.

the Titans. Such an interpretation would, as Edmonds argues, mean that Plutarch saw the myth as an *aition*. That this was not the case has hopefully become clear in the discussion above.

Another passage seen by Bernabé as a reference to a version of the myth of Dionysos and the Titans which includes an anthropogony and subsequent original sin is found in Dio Chrysostomos' thirtieth discourse, in the section called "The Dying Words of Charidemus", which he wrote during or right after his exile from Rome in 82 which lasted until Nerva pardoned him in 96 AD.<sup>171</sup> During his monologue, Charidemus claims that according to some, whom he disagrees with, mankind was created from the blood of the Titans. Furthermore, the same people claim that the Titans were punished since they had waged war on the Gods and that we shared in this punishment since we are their descendants. Life, and the world, is therefore seen as a prison from which only rational thought or death may release us.<sup>172</sup> Dio's thoughts on the soul as imprisoned in life and the world is quite similar to Plato's words on this in the *Cratylus* and the *Phaedo*, the latter which, according to Philostratus, was Dio's favourite text and the one text he is supposed to have brought with him on his wanderings during the exile.<sup>173</sup> Plato ascribed the belief that the body was a safe or prison (φρουρᾶ) to the Orphics, which means that Dio probably based his ideas on Plato's text and thereby might have had Orphics in mind, or that he himself had read Orphic texts where these thoughts were found. There is also the possibility that he read or heard of it from elsewhere.<sup>174</sup> This, as Edmonds points out, "merely reinforces the argument that such doctrines have no particular connection to the myth of dismemberment."<sup>175</sup>

Regardless of the origins of Dio's, or rather Charidemus', thoughts on the subject, it can be debated whether this passage is of relevance to the myth of Dionysos and the Titans. Linforth, Brisson, and Edmonds all see this fragment as a reference to the Titans' rebellion against the gods related by Hesiod in the Titanomachy which led

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<sup>171</sup> Dio Chrys. *Or.* 30.8-46.

<sup>172</sup> Dio Chrys. *Or.* 30.10, 26 = OF 320 (VII-VIII) Bernabé.

<sup>173</sup> φρουρᾶ is used in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 30.10 and in Pl. *Phd.* 62b. See also δεσμωτήριον in Dio Chrys. *Or.* 30.10-11 and in Pl. *Cra.* 400c. Philostr. *V S* 488.

<sup>174</sup> Dio writes that he heard the tale of the Titans as the forefathers of mankind from a wandering *agyrtes*, *Or.* 30.20. The identity of this person is of course uncertain. Some suggest he heard it from a Cynic such as Antisthenes during his travels while others, such as Cohoon, in the introduction to the Loeb edition, suggests that Dio is referring to his own beliefs which he entertained while being a Cynic, a philosophical tradition he later renounced.

<sup>175</sup> Edmonds 2008a:56.

to their punishment and imprisonment in Tartaros.<sup>176</sup> Bernabé's main objection to this is that according to Hesiod and in the Rhapsodic Theogony the Titans were merely imprisoned in Tartaros and after the Titanomachy and that we do not hear of their blood. Therefore, Bernabé argues, Dio must refer to some other incident, namely the dismemberment.<sup>177</sup> However, when we read Hesiod's account of the war between the Olympian gods and the Titans he describes how Zeus hurled his lightning bolts at the Titans and even though Hesiod does not say outright that he drew blood or reduced some of them to ashes it seems improbable that later authors believed that the Titans had escaped this onslaught without casualties, or at least bloodshed.<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, Dio presents the Titans' blood as the main ingredient in the anthropogony, an element which is not mentioned in any of the versions of the myth we are dealing with here. Edmonds points out that the verb used by Dio in his description of the Titans' rebellion against the gods, πολεμέω, cannot refer to dismemberment.<sup>179</sup> Instead we find a parallel to Dio's account in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* where Plutarch saw the creation of man from the blood of Titans as one of several anthropogonies, but he does not connect it to the Titans' assault on Dionysos but to the Titanomachy. Also, in the late second century AD work *Haliutica*, Oppian mentions several alternative anthropogonies including the creation of man from the blood of the Titans.<sup>180</sup> A scholiast on this particular passage notes that some held that mankind had been created from the blood the Titans shed during their war against the Olympians.<sup>181</sup> Interestingly, this creation is not seen as negative, but is instead presented as an opportunity because man is second in status only to the gods. This, in turn, means that if the testimonies of Dio, Plutarch, and Oppian belong to the same tradition, as Bernabé has suggested, then it can hardly be seen as evidence for a doctrine of original sin since nothing bad is said to have been inherited from the Titans.<sup>182</sup> The similarities between the three testimonies nevertheless suggest that they should be grouped together. What they do show is that there were several traditions connecting

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<sup>176</sup> Linforth 1941:334; Brisson 1992:495; Edmonds 1999:56 n65.

<sup>177</sup> Bernabé 2002a:411. Lobeck 1829:565 compromised somewhat and proposed that the Titans were burned while in Tartaros.

<sup>178</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 687-712, see also 713-720 where the three hundred-handed Giants Cottus, Briareos, and Gyes "launched [three hundred rocks] from their strong hands and overshadowed the Titans with their missiles", tr. Evelyn-White.

<sup>179</sup> Edmonds 2008a:55.

<sup>180</sup> Oppian *Haliutica* 5.4-6 = OF 320 (XIV) Bernabé.

<sup>181</sup> Linforth 1941:332. The scholiast could be referring to Plutarch here.

<sup>182</sup> Bernabé 2002a:412.

the Titans to the creation of men, and that not all of them considered this to be a bad thing.

The anthropogony related by Dio shows that there were people in his time that believed the reasons for mankind's suffering, why men live in the world like a criminal lives in his cell, why the anger of the gods is inherited, are all connected to a pre-human incident related to the Titans. It can be argued that this is a reference to original sin. In order to answer this question we need to take a closer look at the concept of original sin in itself. The testimony of Dio Chrysostomos should be seen as an example of original sin similar to what Bianchi saw as the result of "non-mystical Greek thought" such as mankind's fate in lieu of Prometheus' sacrificial trickery discussed at the start of the chapter, and there is no need to connect his account to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos.

### 3.7 The diversity of myth

The myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos was a myth in constant change which was used for various purposes by various authors. Interwoven in its various versions we find other mythical elements which are also known from other myths. One of these is the idea that human beings are descendants of the Titans and for that reason have inherited either something good or something bad from them. Linforth has provided some examples of this starting already with the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* where both gods and men are said to have sprung from the Titans.<sup>183</sup> This idea belongs clearly to another tradition than our myth.<sup>184</sup> Other examples include Nicander's *Theriaca*, written in Asia Minor in the second century BC, where creatures such as spiders and snakes are created from the Titans' blood.<sup>185</sup> Here the generative power of divine blood, also exploited in Hesiod especially in the castration of Ouranos, is combined with the idea of the Titans as forefathers for a species. In the Orphic *Argonautika*, written sometime between the fourth and sixth centuries AD, it is the Titans', or possibly the Giants', semen which leads to the creation of man as it hits the earth.<sup>186</sup> In the Orphic Hymn written in their honour the Titans are described

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<sup>183</sup> Linforth 1941:331 ff.; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 334-336.

<sup>184</sup> West 1983:165 n88.

<sup>185</sup> Nic. *Ther.* 8 ff. See also Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.7 Westerink.

<sup>186</sup> *Orphic Argonautika* 17 ff.

as the forefathers not only of man, but also of all "the creatures of the sea and of the land, the birds, and all generations of this world".<sup>187</sup> Here neither the dismemberment nor Dionysos are mentioned.

All these different variations show that the mythic tradition concerning the generative power of Titans is complex and varied. An attempt to see all these snippets and fragments as part of the same mythical narrative and thus force them into the same framework will lead to false conclusions. This is true also when it comes to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos. New elements were added and subtracted from author to author. It is interesting to note for example that the anthropogony is absent in all Christian retellings of the myth and that it is only Firmicus Maternus who includes an account of how the Titans ate the flesh of Dionysos.<sup>188</sup> Especially the detail that the Titans ate the infant Dionysos would have fitted well in these writers' polemical writings against the pagan religion. Other differences abound.<sup>189</sup>

Thus instead of seeing all these variations as glimpses of the same myth, we should instead see them as glimpses of different versions which were in constant change and development over time.<sup>190</sup> Myths are products of both their past and their immediate context and both Plutarch and Olympiodorus had their reasons for retelling the myth the way they did.<sup>191</sup> The common element in these myths is the dismemberment of Dionysos and it was probably such a myth Pausanias had in mind

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<sup>187</sup> *Orphic Hymn to the Titans* 37, tr. Athanassakis. See also *Ov. Met.* 1.151-162 where the blood of either Titans or Giants led to the creation of men (although not the first), animals, and even nations. See West 1983:165 n87.

<sup>188</sup> Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.18.2 = OF 318 (I) Bernabé; Origen *C. Cels.* 4.17 = OF 326 (IV) Bernabé; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 5.19 = OF 306 (II) Bernabé; Alexander of Lycopolis *Contra Mani* 5 = OF 311 (XI) Bernabé; Firm. *Mat. Err. prof. rel.* 6.1-5. The anthropogony and the eating of flesh is not mentioned in Macrobius *In Somn.* 1.12.11 or Julian *Adv. christian.* 1.167.7.

<sup>189</sup> Linforth 1941:315. Euphorion and Kallimakhos say that the Titans gave the remains of Dionysos to Apollo, Olympiodorus, *In Phd.* 7.10 (113 Westerink) = OF 322 (III) Bernabé, and Damascius, *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.129 (81 Westerink) = OF 289 (III) Bernabé, report that Apollo himself gathered the parts, Philodemus says Rhea did this, some say that Athena collected the heart and that this is the reason she received her eponym Pallas (palpatating), while others believed that Dionysos was reassembled on his own accord, Macr. *In Somn.* 1.12.11; *Myth. Vat.* 3.12.5; Nonnus *Dion.* 24.28-49; Origen *C. Cels.* 4.17, all collected in 326 F Bernabé; Himer. *Or.* 45.4 (fourth century AD) where the young Dionysos is attacked by the Titans who wanted to tear the god apart. It seems, however, that they were not successful since Dionysos is described as wounded and moaning, unable to stand as his ankle was seriously injured until helped to his feet by Zeus. Neither ashes, anthropogony or rebirth are mentioned. Henrichs 1972:67 points out that one (presumably Egyptian) version had the Titans use a knife in the dismemberment, Nonnus *Dion.* 6.174. See also West 1983:160; Graf and Johnston 2007:70 ff. for an overview of variants.

<sup>190</sup> Edmonds 1999:49; Graf and Johnston 2007:67 n9.

<sup>191</sup> For an attempt to explain Olympiodorus' motivation see Brisson 1992. See Plut. *De Ei* 9.388e where Plutarch gives an allegorical explanation where the dismemberment of Dionysos is seen as the dispersion and plurality of elements in the universe.



when he made Onomakritos the author of it. It is, however, impossible to say whether this myth, if Onomakritos even wrote it down, shared the same elements as the ones we find in Plutarch. The silence of contemporary sources suggests that it did not.

Another question connected with this is whether the myth should be considered Orphic or not. The Neoplatonists, Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, and Macrobius all ascribed the myth to Orpheus.<sup>192</sup> However, not all sources do so. Kallimakhos, as we saw, connects the myth rather to Delphi and says nothing of Orpheus.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, a scholiast on Clement of Alexandria sees it as a reference to the Lenaia festival in Athens.<sup>194</sup> Thus I agree with West that the myth appeared in both Orphic and other texts, at least from the third century BC. However, it seems that these two traditions, in West's eyes, remained static since he compares "the Orphic version" with the non-Orphic.<sup>195</sup> I would rather see the two traditions as interchangeable with the use of Orpheus as the author of the myth being the only difference between them. The myth should be seen as one of many myths which at a certain point in time was ascribed to Orpheus and suited to fit with the different authors' agendas. That these agendas varied is very probable, and therefore not only the interpretation but also the elements the author chose to include must have varied. These variations must have led to debates or polemics, not unlike, perhaps, what we see in column 20 of the Derveni papyrus.

### 3.8 Conclusions

The purpose of this analysis was to see how far back in time we could trace the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos. Several things appear to be confirmed through the sources.

First, the earliest appearance of the myth is through preserved fragments of Euphorion and Kallimakhos in the third century BC. References to the myth before

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<sup>192</sup> Olympiodorus *In Phd.* 1.3 Westerink = OF 175 (VIII) Bernabé; cp. Damascius *In. Phd.* 1.1-13 Westerink; Clem Al. *Protr.* 2.17.2; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 5.19; Macr. *In Somn.* 1.12.11. West 1983:175 suggests that the myth appeared in the Eudemian Theogony. This view is based on his reconstruction of the stemma of Orphic theogonies which has been criticized, see e.g. Richardson 1985:88 ff., Betegh 2004:151 f., Torjussen 2005:12. This issue will be further treated in chapter 6 of this thesis.

<sup>193</sup> Holzhausen 2004:21 n7; cp. West 1983:151-152.

<sup>194</sup> Schol. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.4, Braarvig 2007:22. See also West 1983:151, 161 who argues that Diod. 3.62.8, Cornutus, and Philodemus are all consulting a non-Orphic source.

<sup>195</sup> West 1983:162.

this are uncertain and cannot count toward its dating. That the myth appears in these two sources might suggest that the myth is older, but we have no evidence to support this.

Second, the idea that mankind suffers because of the sins of someone else, be they Titans who rebelled against the Olympic gods, or because of Prometheus' trickery, is known in many myths from the Classical period and onwards. Even though the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos was told in the third century it is not connected to the anthropogony and doctrine of original sin as it seems to be in the Neoplatonic texts.

Third, that mankind was created from the Titans was not restricted to this myth, but must be considered a well known idea since it appears already in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. Creation of men from Titans is thus a mythical element which found its way into several myths and eventually also into the myth about Dionysos. The variety of sources which exploit this element are too diverse to consider it exclusively or even primarily Orphic. In fact, in the Orphic hymn to the Titans, written in the second century AD, the Titans are praised as the forefathers of all living things and we hear nothing of original sin or Dionysos here.

Fourth, there is nothing in the sources to suggest that the myth, its variants or the elements discussed above, belong exclusively to any Orphic tradition. We have seen that it is found frequently in some of them and that the myth is described as Orphic by some authors. But, on the other hand, we see that it is also found in non-Orphic texts and, what is more, that it is absent in the longest surviving Orphic texts, namely the Derveni papyrus and the Orphic Hymns.

These points all have consequences for the further analysis of the material that has traditionally been labelled Orphic, especially the gold tablets and the Derveni papyrus. The major bulk of the gold tablets can be dated to the late Classical, early Hellenistic period, with some exceptions.<sup>196</sup> The myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos must therefore be discarded as a way of explaining the enigmatic phrases of the tablets. The possibility that a link exists between some version of the myth and the narratives of the gold tablets is of course there, but since we lack any confirming proof supporting this idea the best thing would be to look for other parallels. This is what I aim to do in this thesis' analyses of the gold tablets, a task to which I now turn.

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<sup>196</sup> I am thinking here of the gold tablets from Rome (2.1 Rome) and Sfakaki (3.4 Sfakaki 1-2).



# Chapter 4

## Ritual References in the Gold Tablets

### 4.1 Introduction

The gold tablets are still referred to as Orphic by many scholars, usually either with quotation marks or combined with terms like Dionysiac or Pythagorean. This is based on the wish to connect the vague doctrines or ideas found in these tablets to a single construct in order to make it all seem more convenient and easy to handle. One of the main reasons why the gold tablets have been identified as Orphic is that most scholars have interpreted the gold tablets in light of the so-called Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos Zagreus. However, as we saw in the last chapter, there are serious chronological problems which speaks against such an interpretation, since the earliest mentions of a myth with Dionysos and the Titans are found in the third century BC. There are also several other problems with such an interpretation, as I hope to have shown in the previous chapter.

In light of the *bricoleur* theory which states that the gold tablets are products of several itinerant *manteis* who did not necessarily have anything to do with each other and whose religious backgrounds were diverse, I believe that the gold tablets should be approached from a different angle. There are many similarities between the gold tablets, but they are also filled with ritual references which suggest both common backgrounds and specifically local variants. By focussing on a selection of these ritual references I wish, in the present chapter, to show how some of them can be traced back to other eschatological beliefs that are not necessarily connected or associated with one specific group with a specific Orphic eschatology but rather several groups who utilized a set of ideas and beliefs connected to the Underworld.

Ritual references in the gold tablets have been studied before.<sup>1</sup> While most of the early speculations on the gold tablets concentrated on their mythical references (usually the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos) and religious background, Harrison sought, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, to reconstruct the rites of the Orphic cult in which environment she believed the texts had been made. Warning the reader that her suggestions might be a bit speculative she suggested for example that the wheel (κύκλου) in gold tablet 1.3 Thurii 3, line 5, referred to a wheel which was used in an Orphic ritual, presumably an initiation. Evidence for the use of wheels in Orphic cults, she argued, could be found on the Apulian vases depicting Orpheus in the Underworld conversing with Persephone and Hades. Two wheels can be seen hanging from the roof of the chthonic couple's house which were interpreted by Harrison as instruments used in the Orphic rite referred to in the gold tablet from Thurii.<sup>2</sup> The following lines of the tablet were often interpreted in the same literal manner, not only by Harrison, but also by many of her successors.<sup>3</sup> There has also been a discussion concerning whether the ritual references can be traced back to a funerary or an initiatory context. In more recent times Cristoph Riedweg has concluded that most of the texts combine references to both a funerary and an initiatory ritual and that the local preferences of the cult or priest decided to which kind of ritual the text should be adapted.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Already Comparetti (in Cavallari 1879:158) saw the Thurii tablets as connected to mystery initiation.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison 1991[1922]:588 ff., and 596 f. who connects the ritual to baptism, and her speculation at p. 590 n1: "The κύκλος of the rites was probably a real wheel, but it is also possible that it was a circle drawn round the neophyte out of which he escaped." Cook 1925 II:124 suggested that "the Orphic initiate actually mounted a ladder in order to ensure his entrance to the Elysian soul-path". Harrison stresses that her suggestions are mere conjectures and that we will perhaps never know the true nature of these rites. For the vases see *LIMC* Hades 132, 154. Schauenburg 2000:253 notes that wheels on vase-paintings are "common attributes in South Italy, often represented in connection with temples, palaces [...] or grave monuments". Olmos, in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:302, 2008:288 see the wheels as references to the chariot Hades used to abduct Persephone.

<sup>3</sup> Another example of a ritual reconstruction based on tablet 1.3 Thurii 3, lines 5-6, κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπνευθῆος ἀργαλείοιο | ἴμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι is given in Cook 1925 II:120 n3: "Reiske [...] suggests that the initiate in Thouroi was placed in a circle of fires or surrounded by torch-bearing dancers and expected to leap over the fiery ring. He further contends (*ib.* p. 100 ff.) that, having leapt out of the ring, the initiate next stepped quickly into a garland lying on the ground." See also Eitrem 1915:53 ff. A more recent example is found in Mendelsohn 1992:123 who interprets the reference to lightning in gold tablets 1.3 Thurii 3, line 4, 1.3 Thurii 4, line 5, and possibly in 1.3 Thurii 5, line 5, as a visual ritual device where lightning was artificially reproduced so as to strike fear into the hearts of the initiands, employed in the same manner as in the rites of Eleusis (described by Plutarch frg. 178). On such attempts Graf 1993:245 has remarked: "The formula triggered an immense scholarly literature that now seems quite obsolete."

<sup>4</sup> Riedweg 1998:367, 387, 2002:469. See also Dickie 1998:59-60 and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:124 f.

In the following chapter I will argue that most of the ritual references refer to an initiation rather than a funeral ritual.<sup>5</sup> I will also argue that the deceased's claim regarding his or her divine lineage or ritual purity is found in all the longer gold tablets and that this claim must refer to a ritual initiation. The analyses will not have a proposed cultic background as their starting point, but their aim is nevertheless to make a contribution to the debate on the tablets' cultic background. In order to do this I start with an analysis of the various ritual references found in the tablets. A reason for doing this is to identify both the differences and the similarities between the tablets, and to assess on what level these differences/similarities exist (whether on a general or a more specific level).

#### 4.2 "Pure I come out of the pure"

Tablet 1.3 Thuri 3<sup>6</sup> will serve as a starting point:

ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρ<ῶν> καθάρᾳ, χθονί<ων> βασιλείᾳ  
 Εὐκλῆς Εὐβουλεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι  
 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὐχομαι εἶμεν  
 4 ἀλ<λ>ᾶ με μο<ι>ρα ἐδάμασ<σ>ε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι καὶ  
 ἄστεροβλήτα κεραυνὸν  
 κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο  
 ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι  
 δεσποίνης δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας  
 8 ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἀπέβαν στεμάνου ποσὶ καρπασίμοισι  
 ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ θεὸς δ' ἔσηι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο  
 ἔριφος ἔς γάλ' ἔπετον

Pure I come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld,  
 And both Eukles and Eubouleus and all the other immortal Gods:  
 For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind,  
 4 But Fate subdued me, and all the other immortal gods with star-flunged  
 Thunderbolt.  
 And I have flown out of the grievous, troublesome circle,  
 I have passed with swift feet to the desired wreath,  
 I have entered under the bosom of the lady of the house, the Queen of the  
 Underworld,  
 8 I have passed with swift feet from the desired wreath  
 Happy and Blessed, you shall become god, the opposite of mortal.  
 A kid I have fallen into milk.

<sup>5</sup> Also argued by Graf 1991, and Calame 2006. Graf later changed his mind regarding this, see Graf 1993; and then again in Graf and Johnston 2007, see p. 208 n13.

<sup>6</sup> In the following discussion I will refer to the Thuri tablets as Thuri 1-5.

The first three lines in this tablet are almost identical to the first three lines in the other tablets found in the same tumulus at Thurii (Thurii 4-5). If we concentrate on the first line we see that the deceased, confronted with the Queen of the Underworld, Persephone, is claiming to come pure out of the pure. Judging from the attitude displayed later in the text I believe that "the pure" from which the deceased has emerged is not the life he or she has departed from, but rather refers to something concerning the deceased's fate in Hades. A person might have considered himself pure if he had followed a specific way of life governed by certain rules, such as vegetarianism or asceticism, but there are no clues in the text that this was emphasized by the owners of the Thurii tablets. The reference of the first line, then, is not to the life of the owner, but to some kind of ritual purity.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that the line is taken directly from the owner's initiation, but I find it more probable that the initiation is hinted at and that it serves to remind Persephone of the owner's privileged status as ritually pure, in contrast to the other, ordinary dead.<sup>8</sup> Such display of special status recurs throughout the text, especially in lines 3 and 9 where the owner's divine status is emphasized. Thus, while the line in itself may have been written down especially for the funeral ritual, since the deceased is greeting Persephone, it refers back to the moment of initiation when the deceased became pure.

The line is echoed in the first line of the gold tablet from Rome (2.1 Rome) almost 600 years later, with one difference. In contrast to the use of first person singular in the Thurii tablets (Thurii 3-5), where the deceased himself talks, the first verse in the Rome tablet is written in the second person singular. It is important to consider the geographical and, especially, the chronological gap between tablets 2.1

<sup>7</sup> Also argued by Harrison 1991[1922]:588; Graf 1993:252; Graf and Johnston 2007:105.

<sup>8</sup> See Graf and Johnston 2007:120 ff. for a discussion of purity. Cf. Demosthenes' speech against Aiskhines where he connects purification with a ritual utterance most probably taken from an initiation rite: "after the purification you made them rise and told them to intone 'I escaped from evil, I found the better'." (tr. Rice and Stambaugh), καὶ ἀνιστάς ἀπὸ τοῦ καθαρμοῦ κελεύων λέγειν ἔφυγον κακόν, εὖρον ἄμεινον'. Initiation as purification, Theon of Smyrna *Expos.* 22 Hiller. Porta 1999:36 believes that Theon is referring to a typical mystery initiation based on the initiation at Eleusis. Cf. the initiation in Eleusis and the preliminary purifications involving dietary regulations, fasting, bathing and a day when the neophyte was to stay in the house the whole day. On purification and Eleusis see Parker 1983:283 ff. Riedweg 1998:375 also argues that the line refers to a purification ritual and he furthermore connects it to the second line in the Pelinna tablets, as does Graf 1993:252 and Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:12. We will return to this and other similarities between the tablets later on. See Parker 1983:286 who also connects purifications with initiation: "Those not initiated were condemned to lie in the underworld in mud; this might have been because they were 'unpurified'." The image of the uninitiated lying in the mud in Hades is taken from Pl. *Resp.* 533d, 363c-d, *Phd.* 69c.

Rome and Thurii 3-5. If the Rome tablet is evidence for the longevity of the cult in Thurii, then the difference could reflect changes which had been made in the liturgical practices of this cult. However, we cannot be sure whether the tablets refer to the same cult or if the deceased in Rome only copied the same text as the cult in Thurii. One could argue, as Calvert Watkins does, that the use of second person in the Rome tablet suggests that a priest or priestess recited the text and that these words were then repeated.<sup>9</sup> But that alone does not help us in determining the nature of the ritual.

In the next line of Thurii 3, Eukles, Eubouleus and all the other immortal gods are hailed. The ending of line two is a way of ensuring that none of the gods in the Underworld are forgotten and thus become enraged.<sup>10</sup> Line three forms a unit together with the two preceding lines. The deceased claims to be initiated, hails Persephone as the main deity in the Underworld, but is sure to include the other gods as well, and then, in line three, expresses that he has attained the goal of the initiation, to become a god. In the following lines, 4-8, the deceased relates how he has escaped life and its cruelties (and who knows more about the cruelties of life than one who is guaranteed to be saved from it?). Then comes the important lines 9-10 which contain the promise of fulfillment for the deceased, he will indeed become a god, the opposite of mortal. It all ends with the enigmatic "a kid I have fallen into milk", a verse which from now on will be referred to as the "immersion-in-milk" formula.

The use of the future case in the last two lines suggests that the deceased has not yet become a god, but that the initiation has ensured that this will be attained. Based on line 9 we cannot tell whether the tablet is referring to an initiation or a funeral since both moments can be considered as having taken place prior to the deceased's immortalisation. However, turning to the last line we can observe something which hints at an initiation. The line, written in prose, breaks an otherwise strictly observed hexameter, a very effective way to call attention to the verse. I think we can safely assume that the line was of great importance to the deceased and that it refers to initiation. This would conform with the rest of the tablet's message: Hail, Persephone and all the other gods of the Underworld. I am initiated and have therefore escaped the sorrowful circle of life.<sup>11</sup> Because of this I will become a god

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<sup>9</sup> Watkins 1995:283.

<sup>10</sup> Porta 1999:169, Porta refers to Xenophon, *Anab* 4.8.25; Xenophon *Cyr.* 1.6.1, 8.7.3; *SIG*(3) 1150).

<sup>11</sup> κύκλος in this context is not necessarily a reference to a doctrine of metempsychosis, even though this interpretation is dominant in Neoplatonic and other texts (e.g. Procl. *In. Ti.* 3.296.7; Simpl. *In Cael.*



instead of mortal. The tablet then ends with a ritual formula, most probably taken from the initiation. This reading is supported by the three other gold tablets in which the formula appears, Thuri 1, and both Pelinna tablets, to which we shall turn shortly. But before we do that I find it interesting to consider tablets Thuri 4-5 which come from the same tumulus grave, the timpone piccolo. First, the texts, Thuri 4:

ἔρχομα<ι> ἐ<κ> καθαρώ<ν> {ισχονων} καθαρὰ χ<θ>ονίων  
 βασίλ<η>ει<α>  
 Εὐκλε καὶ Εὐβουλεῦ {ι} καὶ θεοὶ δαίμο<ν>ε<ς> ἄλλοι  
 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶ<ν> γένο<ς> εὐχομαι ὄλβιοι εἶναι  
 4 πο<ι>νὰ<ν> δ' ἀνταπέ<ι>τε<σε>ι<ς>' {ι} ἔργω<ν> ἔνεκα οὐτι  
 δικα<ί>ων  
 εἴτε με Μο<ι>ρα ἐδάμασ<σ>ατο εἴτε ἀστεροπῆτι κ<ε>ραυνῶν  
 νῦν δ' ἰκέτι<ς> ἦκω {ι} πα<ρα> ἄγνη<ν> Φε<ρ>σεφόνειαν  
 ὥς με {ι} πρόφ<ρ>ω<ν> πέ<μ>ψη<ι> ἔδρα {ι} εἰς εὐαγέ<ι>ω<ν>

Pure I come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld  
 Eukles and Eubouleus and all the other gods:  
 For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind:  
 4 And I have paid the price with respect to the unjust deeds...  
 Whether I have been subdued by Fate or the thrower of the Thunderbolt.  
 And now I have come as a fugitive to pure Persephone  
 Who kindly will send me to the seat of the holy.

And Thuri 5:

ἔ<ι>ρχομαι ἐ<κ> καθαρώ<ν> καθ<α>ρά χ<θ>ο<νίων> βασίλ<ει>α<  
 {\*ρ} Εὐκλε {υα} κα<ι> Εὐβουλεῦ καὶ θεοὶ ὅσοι δ<αί>μονες ἄλλο<ι>  
 καὶ γὰρ ἐ<γ>ώ<ν> ὑ<μῶν> γένο<ς> εὐχομαι<ι> ε<ι>να<ι> ὄλβιο<ν>  
 4 ποινὰν {ν} ἀ<ν>ταπέ<τε>ι<ς> ἔργω<ν> ἔνεκ' οὐτι δικα<ί>ων  
 εἴτ<ε> με Μοῖρα <ἐδάμασ>' εἴτε <ἀστε>ροπητι {κη} κεραυνῶ<ν>  
 νῦν δὲ <ι>κέτι<ς> ἦκω {ικω} παρὰ Φε<ρ>σε<φόνει>α<ν>  
 ὥς {λ} με <π>ρόφ<ρων> πέ<μ>ψει {μ} ἔδρας εἰς εὐ<αγέων>

Pure I come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld,  
 Eukles and Eubouleus and all the other gods and great daimones:  
 For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind:  
 4 And I have paid the price with respect to the unjust deeds...  
 Whether I have been subdued by...  
 And now I have come as a fugitive to pure Persephone  
 Who kindly will send me to the seat of the holy.

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377.12 Heiberg; see also Diog. Laert. 8.14). The circle or wheel was also used as a metaphor for the ups and downs of life, the continuing movement, growth and decay of things in the universe, and for the relentless wheel of fortune or necessity (Ananke), Nock 1940:305. It is not important for us here to determine how the metaphor was used in this context. It is, however, quite clear that it refers to something which the deceased is glad to have escaped (whether a single life or a cycle of lives).

As we can see, the "immersion-in-milk" formula is absent in these two tablets. Nevertheless we find that the text revolves around the same theme as in tablet Thuri 3; immortality as a way of attaining a blissful afterlife. Except for some textual corruptions in Thuri 5, lines 5-6, the tablets are virtually identical. As in Thuri 3 the first three lines form a whole which refers back to the deceased's initiation. The next two lines allude to the horrors of the existence left behind, and the final two end with the deceased approaching Persephone who will send him to his promised paradise. These texts are all centered around that crucial moment of initiation, referred to in line three of all the tablets where immortality is attained or at least promised. That this was enough to attain a happy afterlife is confirmed in the last line where we see the deceased wander off towards the *ἑυαγέων* without having said or done anything specific other than approaching Persephone, who surely would recognize the deceased's identity and ritual status.

The similarities of the three Thuri tablets considered above, combined with the fact that they were interred within a ten year period in the same tumulus, show that they are products of the same cult. Still, differences between the tablets exist, but these were probably due to individual preferences and they nevertheless seem to convey the same message. The same general message is conveyed in the last lines of the gold tablets from Thuri (including Thuri 1 to which we will turn soon, but excluding Thuri 2). If we combine line three in tablets Thuri 3-5, where the deceased claims to be a deity, with the last two lines of the same tablets we see that the meaning is the same, the deceased, being a god, will enjoy the afterlife together with the other gods (or men-turned-gods, *ἑυαγέων*) in a place where ordinary mortals are not allowed. In Thuri 4-5 this place is mentioned explicitly, but the same meaning is found in Thuri 3 where mortal and god is contrasted. An emphasis on the separation between the initiates and non-initiates conveys the same meaning as the reference to the deceased's access to Persephone's grove. Thus, Thuri 4-5, line 7 is an allusion to the deceased's initiation and subsequent transformation from mortal to god.

We turn now to the last tablet from Thuri, Thuri 1. This tablet, which had been folded nine times, was found in another tumulus, the *timpone grande*, inside tablet Thuri 2 which enclosed it like an envelope. Although the dating is the same as the other tablets from Thuri the text itself is somewhat different:

4 ἄλλ' ὀπότεαμ ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος ἀελίοιο  
 δεξιόν †Ε.ΟΙΑΣ† δ' ἐξ<ι>έναί πεφυλαγμένον εἰς ἕμᾶ μάλα πάντα  
 χαίρε παθῶν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις·  
 θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔρ<ι>φος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες  
 χαίρ<ε> χαίρε· δεξιὰν ὁδοιπόρ<ει>  
 λειμώνας τε ἱερούς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας

But whenever the soul leaves the light of the sun,  
 To the right ... I am well cautious more than any thing else.  
 Hail you who have suffered the Suffering, but this has never happened to you  
 before:

4 You have become (a) god from human: A kid has fallen into milk.  
 Hail, hail: You travel to the right  
 To the holy, grassy meadow of Persephone.

The first two lines are different compared to the other Thurii tablets. In addition, line two is very corrupt.<sup>12</sup> Line three, however, has a familiar ring to it as it resembles line four in Thurii 4-5, and, arguably, lines four to eight in Thurii 3: the deceased has experienced something bad. If we take this line as a somewhat different version of the above-mentioned lines in Thurii 3-5, we may conclude that "the Suffering" (τὸ πάθημα), in this context, means life. The second part of the verse sets this "Suffering" in contrast to something else. What this "something else" is, is revealed in the next line where the deceased is hailed as no longer a mortal, but a god. We see also that the change in the deceased's status is followed by the "immersion-in-milk" formula, a formula which, I believe, stems from an initiation ritual.<sup>13</sup> As one of the initiated the deceased is able to find his way through the darkness of Hades (line 5) and enter the "holy, grassy meadow of Persephone." Thus, even though the first two lines are rather difficult to decipher, the meaning of the text, after line two, seems to be: You (the deceased) have suffered, but now you will experience something else (initiation) which will lead you to immortality or a transition from mortal to god – the effect being that the deceased is able to access the desired areas in Hades and thus

<sup>12</sup> See Comparetti 1879:157-8; Dieterich 1969 [1893]:85 n2; Harrison 1903:85; Murray in Harrison 1991 [1922]:662; Zuntz 1971:328-9; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:113; *IG* 1.642 for some suggestions. See also the reconstruction of line 2 by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:258-259, 95-96 (L8) who suggest: δεξιὸν ἐς θίασ<ον> δεῖ {ξ} <σ> ἰ<έ>ναί μεφυλαγμένον εἰς μάλα πάντα· translated on p. 95 as "you must go to the right thiasos, keeping everything very well". Riedweg 1998:386 argues that the first two lines was taken from an Orphic *hieros logos*, and refers to OF 61 Kern = OF 127 (I) Bernabé and Hes. *Op.* 491 as parallels. However, the passage in Hesiod has a very different context since Hesiod is talking about agriculture, not eschatology.

<sup>13</sup> This positioning of the "immersion-in-milk" formula was first noted by Harrison 1991 [1922]:594. See also Zuntz 1971:326 for references; Graf 1993:246; and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:113 ff.

arrive at Persephone's holy grove. We might note that the deceased's goal is articulated in a more straightforward manner in Thuri 1 than in Thuri 3-5. Nevertheless, they all share the goal of a better "life" after death, a goal which is reached through an initiation ritual.

In Burkert's view, lines 3-4 of Thuri 1 are derived from an initiation where  $\chi\alpha\hat{\iota}\rho\epsilon\ \pi\alpha\theta\omega\acute{\nu}\ \tau\acute{o}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\mu\alpha$  was perhaps recited to the initiate during the ritual.<sup>14</sup> Riedweg, on the other hand, sees traces of a funerary rite, especially with the thrice occurrence of  $\chi\alpha\hat{\iota}\rho\epsilon$  (lines 3 and 5), which he identifies as part of a typical funerary lament. According to Riedweg lines 3-6 were taken from a *legomena* which was read aloud at the owner's funeral.<sup>15</sup> The text, then, Riedweg argues, is a farewell to the deceased whose sufferings (life or cycle of lives) are over.

Judging from the Thuri tablets alone it seems that both interpretations can be argued for. It is important to note that I am not trying to determine if the text was read aloud at the funeral or not, but rather if the texts, or certain passages therein, refer to or were composed by utterances, formulas, etc. taken from an initiation rite. Burkert's and Riedweg's opposing views on Thuri 1, lines 3-4 and the role of  $\chi\alpha\hat{\iota}\rho\epsilon$  are good examples that it is not always possible to determine this. One of the reasons for this ambiguity is that death, as such, was readily used as a metaphor for a new life during initiation rituals. By being initiated one had to suffer "death" in order to be reborn in a new and purified life.<sup>16</sup> I believe, nevertheless, that the majority of the lines in the Thuri tablets are taken from or refer to an initiation ritual.<sup>17</sup> The important verse in this respect is the enigmatic "immersion-in-milk" formula which also occurs in both tablets from Pelinna. Therefore, in order to get a more thorough understanding of the formula and its function, we need to consult the Pelinna tablets and see how it relates to the other lines in the texts.

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<sup>14</sup> Burkert 1985:295. Burkert calls attention to a parallel in Athenag. 32.1 = OF 89 (II) Bernabé.

<sup>15</sup> Riedweg 1998:388. See also Dickie 1998:61.

<sup>16</sup> See Seaford 1981:262 on mock death in initiations into Dionysiac mysteries. See Plutarch's equation of initiation (from  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\hat{\iota}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ) and death (from  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu$ ) in frg. 178, Apuleius' description (*Met.* 11.21) of initiation into the mysteries of Isis as a "voluntary death" (*Accessi confinium mortis; et calcato Proserpinae limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi*), and Themistius (Cornford 1903:439) who writes that initiation rites "in fact, as well as in name, resemble death", Them. *On souls* ap. Stob. *Flor.* 120.28 tr. F. M. Cornford. See also Edmonds 2004a:18 for additional references.

<sup>17</sup> Cp. Harrison 1991[1922]:572 ff.

### 4.3 "Immersion-in-milk" and initiation in the Pelinna tablets

The Pelinna tablets are nearly identical, one being two lines shorter than the other, 5.3

Pelinna 1:

νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τῶιδε  
εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε  
τα{ι}ῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες  
4 αἶψα εἰς γ<ά>λα ἔθορες  
<κ>ριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσ<ες>  
οἶν[ο]ν ἔχεις εὐδ<α>ι<μ>ονα τιμ<ή>ν  
κάπυμένει σ' ὑπὸ γῆν τέλεα ἄσ<σ>απερ ὄλ<β>ιοι ἄλλοι

Now you have died and now you have been born, thriceblessed, on this day  
Tell Persephone that Bakkhios himself has released you  
An ox you leaped into milk  
4 Quickly you leaped into milk  
A ram you cast yourself into milk  
You, happy one, will have wine as your honoured gift.  
And waiting beneath the earth the rewards the other blessed ones (have)

And 5.3 Pelinna 2:

νῦν εθανε<ς> | καὶ νῦν ἐ|γένου, τρισόλ|βιε, ἄματι | [τῶι]δε  
[εἰπεῖ]ν Φερ|σεφό<ναι σ'> ὅτι Βα<κ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε  
ταῦρος εἰ<ς> γάλα ἔθορ<ε>ς  
4 κριὸς ε<ί>ς γάλ<α> | ἔπεσε<ς>  
οἶνον ε|χεις ευδα|μον | τιμ|<η>ν

Now you have died and now you have been born, thriceblessed, on this day  
Tell Persephone that Bakkhios himself has released you  
An ox you leaped into milk  
4 A ram you cast yourself into milk  
You, happy one, will have wine as your honoured gift

In tablets 1.3 Thuri 1 and 3 the "immersion-in-milk" formula was, as we saw, placed directly after the deceased's claim for divine status (1.3 Thuri 3, line 9: ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ θεὸς δ' ἔση ἀντὶ βροτοῦ, 1.3 Thuri 1, line 4: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ {ε} ἀνθρώπου). In the Pelinna tablets, too, the formula occurs after the line which seems to be most important in the texts, three and two times respectively; The verse where the deceased is advised to tell Persephone that she has been released by Bakkhios himself. The deceased is then promised wine as her fortunate honour, and, in Pelinna 1 only, a place among the other blessed (=initiated) ones under the earth. The promise

of wine for the blessed in the afterlife seems like an echo of Plato's description of the eternal symposium awaiting the blessed (τῶν ὀσίων) in Hades.<sup>18</sup> Graf has argued that wine in this respect was a fulfillment of initiation.<sup>19</sup> He has found support for this theory in a wall painting from Farnesina, Rome, depicting a young boy, presumably at the end of an initiation, being given a cup of wine from a satyr.<sup>20</sup>

Turning to the first line in both tablets we find a direct reference to death (νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τῶιδε), which, according to Riedweg and others, suggests a funerary context.<sup>21</sup> Charles Segal, although a bit more cautious, was of the same opinion, and furthermore suggested a funerary context for the whole Pelinna text (or texts) based on the repetitive and rhythmic occurrence of the "immersion-in-milk" formula. Such repetition and rhythm, Segal argued, was a typical trait of funerary liturgy and could hardly have been made *ad hoc*, but must have been planned or written down beforehand.<sup>22</sup> This does not settle whether the planned text was meant to be read at an initiation or a funeral. Instead we ought to go back to the first line of the texts and see if we can find a clue there. In the following we will therefore focus our attention on this line as well as the "immersion-in-milk" formula.

Both Calame and Graf have argued that the first line, with its reference to the moment of death, actually refers to an initiation. The main reason for this is the emphasis on the specific moment, "now" (νῦν), which occurs twice, and "on this day" (ἄματι τῶιδε), when the owner of the tablet is said to have both died and been born again. Since this is supposed to have happened on the same day, even at the same moment, a reference to a funeral becomes improbable since the transition from life to death, in the fifth century onwards, normally could not be pinpointed to a specific moment, but was considered a process lasting at least three days, or for as long as the funeral ceremony lasted. During this ceremony, the soul of the dead was most

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<sup>18</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 364c ff. See Graf 1991:92 and Graf 1993:246. According to Plutarch *Comp. Cim. et Lucull.* 44.521b, Plato learned this doctrine from "the Orphics" (i.e. οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα, Pl. *Cra.* 400c). Linforth 1941:87 ff. argues that Plutarch, as all post-classical writers, gives "a blunted and mistaken report of what Plato said." See Graf 1974:98-103 for further references.

<sup>19</sup> The promise of a certain reward through initiation was a general trait of mystery cults. Graf 1991:100 calls attention to *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 479-480 where bliss is promised the initiated. See also Calame 2006:283.

<sup>20</sup> Graf 1991:100, supported by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:119, 2008:85-86.

<sup>21</sup> Riedweg 1998:372; Graf 1993:249-250.

<sup>22</sup> Segal 1990:413.

probably believed to be present.<sup>23</sup> This is supported by the interment of grave goods (such as the gold tablets) which was supposed to accompany the deceased on his or her journey to the other world, the idea being that he or she did not depart to the other world, with the goods, until the funeral was fulfilled. In Athens, the final transition from life to death was not even fulfilled by the act of burial, but demanded an additional funeral feast (περίδειπνον) celebrated three days after the burial. This was a banquet shared by the relatives where the deceased was believed to be present.<sup>24</sup> It seems, then, that the soul of the dead was believed to still be in a state of transition for several days after the moment of death. During that period the soul was thought to be neither alive nor fully dead, or at least not to have fully entered the realm of the dead.

The first line in the Pelinna tablets refers to a specific moment, on the same day, when both the moment of death and a new birth is supposed to have happened. Based on what we know about Greek burial customs in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, it seems unlikely that the line is referring to a burial ceremony which lasted for several days. It is also unlikely that the deceased's new existence in this transitional state is referred to as a new birth since evidence from this period suggest that this state was only a step on the way to the soul's new existence in Hades.

Of course, we cannot assume that every Greek and every cult in the fifth and fourth centuries BC adhered to the same funeral customs. In fact we know from ancient authors that for example the Pythagoreans had their own burial customs, although the exact contents of these rites are unknown.<sup>25</sup> We know also, from the Homeric material, and the later interpolations in the *Odyssey*, that beliefs about burials and the soul's transition to the Underworld underwent changes over time and

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<sup>23</sup> Graf 1991:93 f.; Calame 2006:269, 284; Betz 1998:414-415. Garland calls attention to a black-figure vase by the Sappho painter depicting a deceased dressed in a funeral garment (ὄθόνη) wearing a chin-strap "fitted around the jaw". The chin-strap was meant to shut the mouth of the deceased so that the spirit should be able to enter Hades. For the same reason the eyes of the deceased were closed. The same chin-strap is seen on the red-figure *Nekyia* vase (c. 450 BC.) "which depicts a young girl arriving in Hades with her chin-strap still tied around her head", Garland 2001:13, 23-24. That the girl appears in Hades wearing her chin-strap suggests that she did not enter Hades at the moment of her death, but rather sometime during or directly after the funeral ceremony. See also Rohde 1903 I:164; Garland 2001:31. On some rare occasions, the act of burial is represented on vases. On some lekhytoi we see the winged Hypnos and his brother Thanatos burying the dead, Garland 2001:35 f. The presence of Death at this late stage in the burial ceremony also suggests that the dead soul on the vase was not taken to the land of the dead until he or she was buried.

<sup>24</sup> Artem. 5.82 T; Garland 2001:39.

<sup>25</sup> Hdt. 2.81; Iamblichus *VP* 85; Plut. *De genio socr.* 585e. Zuntz connected the gold tablets from Thurii, and all gold tablets in general, to the Pythagoreans and argued that most of the tablets referred to Pythagorean burial rituals, see e.g. Zuntz 1971:343.

that different cults had different eschatological beliefs.<sup>26</sup> Could the first line in the Pelinna texts refer to a movement or cult whose eschatology allowed for the initiated's soul to die and be reborn in the Underworld at the exact same moment? Certainly, but since we have no indication of such a belief in neither the text nor from the archaeological evidence, such as the grave goods, I find no reason to assume that this was the case in our grave, nor in any of the other graves in which a gold tablet has been found. We must therefore assume that the woman found in the Pelinna grave was buried according to "normal" burial practices concerning the time it took to complete a soul's transition from life to death, namely that such a transition took several days to be completed and that the soul was somehow present during the ceremony.

As I have mentioned, Graf later changed his mind as to what the first line of the Pelinna tablets refers to. In his article from 1993 he acknowledges the fact that death was most likely not conceived as an instantaneous happening, but nevertheless sees the line as a reference to a funeral rite. Initiation, he argued, can play with the idea of symbolic death and new life, but in the case of the Pelinna tablets one must acknowledge the difference between physical and ritual death.<sup>27</sup> The person about to be buried is not considered properly dead before the burial, and therefore the moment of death (burial) coincides with the moment of rebirth, even in a funeral. Furthermore, Graf continues, especially wine but also milk, referred to later in the texts, were widely used in funeral libations to the dead.<sup>28</sup> This is supported by Riedweg who also interprets the reference to wine in the texts as connected to the funeral libations. However, Riedweg sees the Pelinna tablets as comprised of verses and references taken from both an initiatory and a funerary ritual context. Line one, for example, is seen as a fulfillment of the initiation ritual. Line two, because of the use of past tense (ἐλυσε), is looking back on the initiation and the promise made to the deceased as an

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<sup>26</sup> Consider e.g. the death of Patroklos and Hector described, identically, in Hom. *Il.* 16.855-857 and 22.361-363 respectively, where their dead souls leave immediately for Hades. In book 11 of the *Odyssey* the ghost of Elpenor begs Odysseus to bury him so that he will be able to enter Hades since only the buried were allowed to enter Charon's boat. Then, in book 24, a fifth century interpolation, the dead souls of the slain suitors are taken directly to Hades by Hermes without any funeral ceremony.

<sup>27</sup> Graf 1993:248.

<sup>28</sup> Graf 1993:249-250. Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 164. According to Graf 1980:216 milk together with honey, water and oil libations were associated with the beginning or end of time as well as barbarians and Pythagoreans. On milk as libations to the dead see Hom. *Od.* 10.516-520, 11.23-28; Aesch. *Pers.* 609-622; Eur. *Or.* 114-118; Plut. *Aristid.* 21(3); Verg. *Aen.* 3.66-68. See also Ov. *Met.* 7.240-250 where Medea performs a libation of milk and wine to the chthonic gods.



initiate.<sup>29</sup> The same, Riedweg continues, is the case with lines 3-5 (3-4 in 5.3 Pelinna 2) while the last two lines (the last in 5.3 Pelinna 2) is referring to then funeral where mention is made of the libation and the future life of the deceased.<sup>30</sup>

Graf certainly has a point about the fulfillment of death at a specific time in a funeral. However, since we do not know if the text was read aloud at the funeral or not I find it fruitful to follow another line of investigation to see if that can yield some more satisfying results. As for wine and funeral libations, we have seen that wine is also connected to initiation as a promise of the rewards awaiting the initiated in the Underworld.<sup>31</sup> The same can also be said of milk, as we shall see in the following analysis of the "immersion-in-milk" formula. Also, in the first line, we find "thrice-blessed" (τρισόλβιε), an adjective which ruins the hexameter of the line. This has led some to believe that the "original" word in this verse was either ὀλβιος or μάκαρ, either of which would convey the same meaning and keep the hexameter intact.<sup>32</sup> But, regardless of what the "original" text might have said, I find the use of an "unmetrical" word in this context to be of some importance. Its function, by ruining the hexameter, is to draw attention to itself, just as the "immersion-in-milk" formula does.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, it is a *makarismos*. This makes sense if the rest of the text, with which it forms a whole, is centered around an initiation. Support for an initiatory context is also found in the first line's playful opposition of life and death. In Plato's *Gorgias* we find the same opposing pair life – death discussed as a *symbola* or *synthemata*. Further on, Plato discusses two other *symbolae* which are also connected to initiation into the mysteries, the famous *soma-sema* formula and the up – down opposition. After this Plato recounts the fate of the uninitiated *par excellence*, the Danaides, and their endless water-filling quest in Hades.<sup>34</sup> According to Porta all these *symbolae* are thus connected to initiation. Walter Müri agrees with this when he describes *symbola* as passwords or sentences whose meaning was reserved for the initiated.<sup>35</sup> The simultaneous life-death experience in the first line of the Pelinna

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<sup>29</sup> Cp. Pl. *Resp.* 2.364e-365a = OF 232 Kern; Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:12.

<sup>30</sup> Riedweg 1998:372-374, supported by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:124 f., 2008:89.

<sup>31</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 364c ff. See n24 above.

<sup>32</sup> Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:10-11; Graf 1991:88; Jordan 2004:262 n39.

<sup>33</sup> See Graf and Johnston 2007:139.

<sup>34</sup> The equation of life and death is a citation of Eur. frg. 638 N. found in Pl. *Gorg.* 492c ff. A similar sequence is found on the Olbia tablets, life-death-life, which will be discussed later in chapter 5, see Rusjaeva 1978:88 and tablet 1 and Tinnefeld 1980 for a resumé of the article in German.

<sup>35</sup> Porta 1999:119 ff.; Müri 1976:37-44.

tablets thus seems more firmly connected to initiation. Line two, where Bakkhios himself *has* released the dead woman, must also be taken from an initiation.<sup>36</sup> The release referred to here is not only connected with the symbolic death and rebirth of the first line, but also the future of the initiate as laid out in the concluding lines of the texts. But before that, three prose-verses are inserted.

Before we take a closer look at these verses a temporary conclusion is in place. The first line of the Pelinna tablets most probably refers to an initiation ritual. This was argued, as noted before, by Graf, who in fact saw the entire text as a *makarismos* meaning that it was recited in order to bless the initiate, pronounced by the priest at the time of initiation.<sup>37</sup> An instruction which then is repeated for future reference on a golden tablet.<sup>38</sup> Thus, death and rebirth should be understood symbolically and taken as a reference to a ritual we know, from ancient authors, was connected to death and rebirth, and where the two, as symbols, could happen simultaneously: an initiation.<sup>39</sup>

Further indications for this is found, as argued above, in the enigmatic "immersion-in-milk" formula, which we now will take a closer look at. Disregarding, for the time being, the possible meaning of its content the formula itself meets all the requirements of a typical *synthemata*, defined by Porta as small "statements or catch-words which in some way attempt to sum up what an initiate into a mystery has undergone."<sup>40</sup> Most of the *synthemata* studied by Porta follow a fixed grammatical structure, for example that each sentence starts with the subject and/or ends with a verb or that every verse starts and/or ends with the same letter etc. In the gold tablets we can observe a certain regularity in both the tablets from Thuri and Pelinna. With one exception in tablet 5.3 Pelinna 1 the "immersion-in-milk" formula starts with an animal with which the initiate might have been identified – ἔριφος (1.3 Thuri 1, line 4; 1.3 Thuri 3, line 10), ταῦρος (5.3 Pelinna 1-2, line 3), and κριὸς (5.3 Pelinna 1, line 5; 5.3 Pelinna 2, line 4). Typical for *synthemata* is the repetition of words and formation of patterns. This is seen in 5.3 Pelinna 1 where lines 3-7, as Watkins has observed, form a specific pattern:

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<sup>36</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:33.

<sup>37</sup> Porta 1999:344; Seaford 1981:260.

<sup>38</sup> Graf 1991:98. See also Seaford 1994:277 and Jordan 2004:261. Graf see the ritual referred to on the tablets as initiations in his latest treatment of these texts, see Graf and Johnston 2007:164.

<sup>39</sup> On symbolic death in initiation on a more general level see Eliade 1958:62.

<sup>40</sup> Porta 1999:87.

4        ”ταῦρος εἶς...  
           ἀἶψα εἶς...  
           κρίος εἶς...  
           οἶνον ἔχεις...  
           κάπιμεναι σ’...”<sup>41</sup>

I am not sure whether it is necessary to extend the occurrence of -εἶς beyond the fifth line, but one can easily see a pattern, at least in lines 3-5. Another pattern is seen in the verbs at the end of the verses. They are all in the past tense and thus start with an epsilon. Furthermore, all verbs have the same ending -εῖς, with one exception, ἔπετον in 1.3 Thuri 3, line 10. Turning to the first word of every verse containing the formula we see that they all end in the same way -ος, again with one exception; ἀἶψα in 5.3 Pelinna 1, line 4.<sup>42</sup>

In tablet 1.3 Thuri 3 the formula is written in the first person, while it occurs in the second person elsewhere in the tablets. Watkins suggests, as noted above, that this means that a priest recited the verse, in the second person, and that the initiate repeated the same text later in the same (initiation) ceremony, this time in the first person. Fate, or perhaps local cult regulations, then, decided whether the formula should occur in the first or second person in the text.<sup>43</sup> Based on the available evidence, however, this suggestion must remain a conjecture. What we can say is that the use of the second person makes the formula quite different from other *synthemata* who exclusively use the first person.<sup>44</sup> In his interpretation of the Pelinna tablets Porta therefore suggested that instead of classifying the formula as a *synthemata* it could have had a *synthemata* as a model.<sup>45</sup> The use of the second person could also be seen as the result of the practical use of the formula in ritual. In either case, having a *synthemata* as a model, or being so closely related to the *synthemata* strongly suggests an initiatory context for the formula.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Watkins 1995:279.

<sup>42</sup> This word, which breaks the "animal pattern" has made scholars suggest other readings such as ἀἶγος (Merkelbach 1989:15, 1999:11) or ἀἶξ (Lloyd-Jones 1990b:107). According to Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:14, and based on drawings of both tablets, ἀἶψα is clearly inscribed on the tablet.

<sup>43</sup> Watkins 1995:283.

<sup>44</sup> Porta 1999:339-340.

<sup>45</sup> Porta 1999:340.

<sup>46</sup> This was also suggested by Comparetti 1880:159. See also Burkert 1985:295.

Keeping to the Pelinna tablets, I will argue that the lines are linked together and that they therefore refer to the same ritual as the "immersion-in-milk" formula. Common in all the tablets where this formula occurs is that it follows directly after a new status for the owner has been established. In tablets 1.3 Thuri 1 and 3 this new status is the attainment of divinity. If we look more closely at the formula in the Pelinna tablets a reference to divinity, or at least immortality, could be argued. Crucial for this reading is the word which occurs in all instances of the formula, and which therefore must be imbued with a certain importance for the owners of the tablets. This word, γάλα, have long traditions of symbolic meanings in antiquity. It will be necessary to investigate these traditions and the possible meanings of milk in this context further, since this might give us a clue as to the nature of the new status the formula signals.

Zuntz settled with the explanation that the formula was a pastoral saying or proverb, thus following the interpretation of Martin P. Nilsson before him.<sup>47</sup> Other scholars have suggested other possible meanings for the formula.<sup>48</sup> Jordan interprets the act of falling or jumping into milk as a metaphor for the initiates' willingness to undergo initiation and, in the process, a symbolic death acted out in the ritual.<sup>49</sup> In the following I would like to expand Jordan's interpretation a bit. In the Thuri tablets the formula follows, as I have called attention to repeatedly above, the status-changing statement where the owner of the gold tablet is promised immortality. Here the formula, then, seems to act as a metaphor for the owner's attainment of that immortality. I believe that the same can be argued for in the Pelinna tablets. That is to say that the "immersion-in-milk" formula might be seen as a proverb which acts as a metaphor for the deification or release of the initiated soul. This possibility needs to be explored further.

A connection between milk and the stars, heaven, and especially the Milky Way, is confirmed in a number of written sources from the seventh century BC onwards. This connection goes all the way back to the Presocratics, an example being

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<sup>47</sup> Zuntz 1971:323; Nilsson 1955 II:225. See Burkert 1975:99 n45 for further references.

<sup>48</sup> Velasco Lopez 1992:210 sees the formula as a password to be spoken in Hades which would make it a confirmation of the release in line 2. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:77 argue against this.

<sup>49</sup> Jordan 2004:263-4. See also Graf 1991:94 who also connects it to initiation, but who is quick to point out that the thrice repetition of the formula in 5.3 Pelinna 1 (twice in 5.3 Pelinna 2), each time with a new animal (or action), cannot be explained as a reference to various grades of initiation since a person is unlikely to hold three degrees at the same time. The same objection is echoed in Graf 1993:245.

Parmenides who wrote about τὸ γάλα οὐράνιον (heavenly milk) when describing the Milky Way.<sup>50</sup> The Milky Way was also called γάλακτος κύκλος<sup>51</sup> or γαλάκτιος κύκλος<sup>52</sup>, depending on the author, since it was seen as surrounding the earth in a circle. Also used was γαλάξιος<sup>53</sup> and sometimes authors just wrote τὸ γάλα<sup>54</sup> confident that the context conveyed to the reader that it was the Milky Way that was meant. Through the Milky Way, milk became connected also to man, since, according to some accounts, the Milky Way was seen as the final destination for the souls of the righteous. The idea that a few select people of a higher morale or birth, were destined to go somewhere other than Hades after their death, was used by Homer in the *Odyssey* and was further developed during the fifth century.<sup>55</sup> The souls of the privileged went along the road which Pindar referred to as "Zeus' way" (Διὸς ὁδόν), which Poseidippos, a few centuries later, referred to as "the mystic way" (μυστικὸν οἶμον) to the Isles of the Blessed.<sup>56</sup> But these roads led, as Herbert S. Long points out, exclusively to the Isles, not the heavens.<sup>57</sup> The idea that one could avoid Hades was at one point combined with the idea that certain people of great lineage or status were destined to rise high above the souls of other humans. The result was that some writers located the equivalent of the Isle of the Blessed in heaven and argued that the souls of righteous men would there be reunited with their heavenly origin and eventually become stars.<sup>58</sup> The souls of these righteous men would therefore wander

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<sup>50</sup> Gundel 1910:565. Parmenides 18 B 11.2 DK. On the Milky Way in a Greek context, see Gundel 1910.

<sup>51</sup> Arist. *Mete.* 1.8.

<sup>52</sup> Ptol. *Alm.* 8.2.1. See also DK s.v. γάλα and γαλαξίας who interpreted the στέφανος in the Thurii tablets as a reference to the Milky Way, τὸν γαλαξίαν κύκλον, Parmenides 28 A 37 DK.

<sup>53</sup> Plut. *Plac. Phil.* 3.1; Alex. in Arist. *Mete.* 1.8.37.

<sup>54</sup> Arist. *Mete.* 1.8; Aratus *Phaen.* 459.474; Ptolem. *Alm.* 8.2.3; Achill. *Isag.* 24.55.

<sup>55</sup> See the Menelaos episode in Hom. *Od.* 4.561-564. See also Hes. *Op.* 161-169.

<sup>56</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.57; Poseidippos *SH* 705.22.

<sup>57</sup> Long 1948:37; see also Gundel 1910:563.

<sup>58</sup> Herakleitos; Pl. *Tim.* 41d ff.; Macrobius. *In Somn.* 1.12.13; Cic. *Somn.* 1.14 according to whom this privilege was reserved for great men of the state such as generals and political leaders; Gundel 1910:564. Cf. the funerary epigram commemorating the slain Athenians at the battle of Poteidaia, 432/1 BC: "Aether received their souls, earth their bodies" (*I. G.* 1.3.6, British Museum I 37), cf. also Hom. *Il.* 6.128-130. Lattimore 1962:31-35 has collected and translated funerary epigrams confirming the same ideas. A funeral epigram from the fifth century BC says that "Air has taken their souls, and earth their bodies" *E. G.* 21b.1, cf. Thuc. 1.63. See also inscription from Sakkara (*Samm.* 4229.1.4, Lattimore 1962:33): "I, a godlike man, leaving my body to earth, my mother... He has gone to the circle of the sky, to the company of the blessed."; and an inscription from Athens, probably fourth century BC: "Earth keeps the body and bones of the sweet boy, but his soul has gone to the house of the blessed." (*E. G.* 90). More explicit is an inscription from Miletus, Lattimore 1962:34, saying: "Stand before the tomb and behold young Choro, unwedded daughter of Diognetus. Hades has set her in the seventh circle" and in this late Roman inscription from Megalopolis (*IG.* 5.2.472.12-13): "As she

to the ends of the world and from there ascend on the Milky Way to their new home among the stars.<sup>59</sup> Soon this home was identified as the Milky Way itself.<sup>60</sup> By some ancient authors, the Milky Way was not only seen as the final goal of a few, fortunate souls, but also as the origin of all souls, a fact that according to some helped to explain why newborn babies were dependent upon milk from their mother to survive the first months.<sup>61</sup>

The connection between the human soul and heaven is also widely attested in literature although most of the examples was, as Burkert has shown, from the early Hellenistic period and onwards.<sup>62</sup> However, we do find some references in literary works from the fifth and fourth centuries as well, for, as Burkert argues, "the notion of divine origin and of return to heaven was widespread, at least in germ, before the time of Pythagoras."<sup>63</sup> Plato's account in the *Timaeus* is perhaps the most striking example. Here Plato argues that there is one star for each soul and that the demiurge places each soul inside its designated star. After a while, each star/soul is forced to descend to earth in order to be incarnated there, but after a certain period the soul is allowed to return.<sup>64</sup>

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approached the altar and was paying her vows, she went, respected by all, to the stars. Thus without enduring sickness she joined the demigods." A last example from first century BC Arcesine (*JG*. 12.7.123.5-6): "Mother, do not weep for me. What is the use? You ought rather to reverence me, for I have become an evening star, among the gods". See also the funerary epigram for Lykophron at Pherae, early Hellenistic period: "I, Lykophron, the son of Philiskos, seem sprung from the root of great Zeus, but in truth am from the immortal fire; and I live among the heavenly stars uplifted by my father; but the body born of my mother occupies mother-earth." tr. A. A. Avagianou.

<sup>59</sup> According to Heraclid. Pont. in his *Empedotimos*, cosmos was divided into three parts, the first being Hades' realm which includes the moon and the elements, the second being the Milky Way, the road the souls used in order to arrive to or depart from the earth, and the third being the stars, the realm of Zeus, to which the Milky Way led. For more on this see also Philopon in Arist. *Mete.* 8.117; Stob. *Anth.* 1.906. See also Rohde 1903 II:94 and Burkert 1972:367 f.

<sup>60</sup> According to Procl. *In R.* 2.129.24 Kr. the soul went to the Milky Way and after twelve days sought entrance through the Capricorn. If granted entrance the soul would enjoy divinity and immortality; Porph. *De antr. nymph.* 28.75 N.

<sup>61</sup> Burkert 1972:367 n94. See also Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:111, 2008:79-80 (esp. n82) who discusses the bull and the ram mentioned in the Pelinna tablets as possible references to the zodiac in the Milky Way. According to Plin. *HN.* 2.9 the comets were called "goats" (τράγοι), see Eisler 1921:7 n2. A closer parallel, both linguistically and chronologically, is found in Arist. *Mete.* 1.4.341b1 who recall that a comet is sometimes referred to as αἴγες, cp. Merkelbach 1989, 1999 and his suggestion αἴγος in 5.3 Pelinna 1, line 4. I owe the Aristotle reference to Arve O. Berntzen.

<sup>62</sup> Burkert 1972:358; Avagianou 2002:82 ff. Burkert mentions Verg. *Aen.* 6.23 ff.; Plut. *De sera* 563 ff., *De gen.* 589 ff.; *De fac.* 942 ff. as examples.

<sup>63</sup> Burkert 1972:360. E.g. Ar. *Peace* 832-37; Eur. *Or.* 1683-1690. Eur. *Supp.* 531-534, 1140, *Hel.* 1014-1016. Already Anaximenes connected the soul (ψυχή) was to the divine ἄερ, Burkert 1972:362.

<sup>64</sup> Pl. *Tim.* 41d ff. Burkert 1972:360 believes that the idea of the immortality of the stars themselves "gained in significance through contact with Babylon."

We see, then, that milk, through its association with heaven as the abode of blessed souls, attained a certain eschatological meaning during the Classical period. Thus, in his analysis of the "immersion-in-milk" formula on the Thurii tablets, Albrecht Dieterich could equate the ἔριφος with a *bakkhos* and γάλα with the Milky Way and later envisioned some kind of baptism ritual in which the initiate were actually immersed in milk and through that obtained future access to the Milky Way together with the other blessed ones.<sup>65</sup> Although I cannot follow Dieterich's speculations about a Dionysiac baptism I share his belief that the formula refers to an initiation through which a future blissful state in the afterlife is obtained. This does not mean that the goal of the initiate was necessarily to be found in the Milky Way, among the stars in heaven. That could certainly be the meaning in the Thurii tablets, but probably not in the Pelinna tablets.<sup>66</sup> It will be remembered that in the last line of both Pelinna tablets the deceased is promised certain rewards "below the earth" (ὑπὸ γῆν).<sup>67</sup> I believe, therefore, that milk, through its eschatological association with a blissful afterlife, could be used to symbolize not only the Milky Way, but also Elysion, located below the earth. The common feature, or symbolic meaning, of milk would then be that it refers to a blissful afterlife regardless of where this was enjoyed.<sup>68</sup> This interpretation is supported by various literary references from the fifth and fourth century BC. Interestingly many of these references also connect milk and paradise with Dionysos, the most famous of which is of course Euripides' *Bacchae*. In Euripides' play, the maenads are portrayed as being in such a close

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<sup>65</sup> Dieterich 1969[1893]:96 f. For a similar, and far more recent, interpretation see Jordan 2004:251. On the parallels between the "immersion-in-milk" formula and baptism in the Roman mysteries of Mithras, see Dieterich 1962:171 ff. Harrison 1991[1922]:594-596 also argued for a rite of baptism in milk in the "Orphic church". Remnants of this rite, she argued, could be found in the Coptic Christian church where the drinking of milk and eating of honey were part of the ancient baptism.

<sup>66</sup> See however Diog. Laert. 2.3 who states that according to Anaximenes the stars moved *around* the earth, not below it - suggesting that there were authors in Antiquity who believed that the stars, and the Milky Way, went under the earth during the day, thus making the Milky Way a feature which also could be found in the Underworld. See also Pind. *Ol.* 2.62-67, frg. 129 Snell; Arist. *Mete.* B1.354a28; Verg. *Aen.* 6.641-642; and Hipp. *Ref.* 1.7.6.

<sup>67</sup> Also pointed out by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:112, 2008:80 who also refers to 1.1 Hipponion, line 15; 1.2 Petelia, line 11; 1.3 Thurii 1, line 2 (see below), and Graf and Johnston 2007:129. For this reason I cannot follow Janda 2005:328-330 who sees milk in the "immersion-in-milk" formula as exclusively referring to the Milky Way (thus following Dieterich).

<sup>68</sup> *Contra* Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:112, 2008:80 who, because of the last lines in the Pelinna tablet and the Hipponion tablet, locating the way to bliss below ground, and 1.3 Thurii 1, line 2 with its advice on taking the right turn (which they therefore interpret as being directions for a journey below ground), and the fact that all the deities mentioned in the tablets are subterranean (except Ouranos, but he is only mentioned when referring to the deceased's divine origin), dismisses any connection between milk and a future paradise for the initiate.

relationship with their deity, Dionysos, that his powers are made manifest through them during one of their rituals. By striking her thyrsus against a rock one of the maenads produces a fountain of milk.<sup>69</sup> The image of fountains of milk, or even wine, is connected not only to Dionysos but also to Elysion, the Isle of Blessed or simply the idea of abundance and paradise.<sup>70</sup> The occurrence of Dionysos (as Bakkhios) in the Pelinna tablets thus strengthens this connection.

Thus it seems that milk, especially in abundance, was not only associated with heaven, but also to a general idea of paradise as well as to Dionysos and his maenads. It seems natural, therefore, that milk, in an eschatological context such as in the gold tablets, points towards divinity, immortality and a blissful afterlife.<sup>71</sup> The "immersion-in-milk" *synthemata* found in some of the gold tablets, then, refers to the initiation ritual in which the deceased owner of the tablet had once taken part. This initiation led to the initiates' new life, expressed quite literary in the first lines of both Pelinna tablets.<sup>72</sup> Most probably the same "new life" is referred to in the beginning line of tablets 1.3 Thurii 3-5, with their emphases on purity (through initiation), as well.<sup>73</sup> There the deceased has been purified in an initiation ritual and hence is able to take his or her designated place among the gods and heroes destined for a blissful afterlife. Milk, a potent image associated with death (through libations), new life (mother's milk), and immortality (the Milky Way, abundance of milk in Elysion, "paradise"), is

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<sup>69</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 142 f., 696-711; Philostr. *Imag.* 1.14 (316 K), 1.18 (2.316 K); Hor. *Ode* 2.19.9-12; Graf 1980:217.

<sup>70</sup> On the connection between unnatural abundance of milk and honey with Dionysos see Eur. *Bacch.* 142; Pl. *Ion* 534a; Aeschin. frg. 11 Dittmer. For further references see Graf 1980:214. On milk in "paradise" see Hor. *Epod.* 16. Ov. *Met.* 1.111 f. associates milk and honey with the golden age. Milk is also connected to other deities, most notably as the nourishment of Zeus during his first years under the protection of the Kouretes, see Diod. Sic. 5.70.3; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.1.6; Strabo 8.7.5; Hyg. *Astronom.* 2.13; Second Vatican Mythographer 16. On milk as a symbol for abundance see Theoc. *Id.* 5.124 where milk, wine, and honey occur. The idyll describes, incidentally, the plains surrounding Thurii.

<sup>71</sup> Burkert 1975:99 is uncertain about the direct meaning of the formula, but nevertheless see milk as a reference to immortality. See also Porta 1999:335, and 342 where Porta draws our attention to a striking parallel in the Greek magical papyri (*PGM* 1.4-5) where we find instructions on how to drown a falcon in milk. The word for drowning used there, ἀποθέωσον, means literally "make into a god", suggesting a link between milk and immortality.

<sup>72</sup> Graf 1993:246 calls attention to a passage from Ael. *VH* 8.8 where "to be in milk" is understood as being born again. Porta 1999:342 follows this and adds an interesting passage from the Greek magical papyri (*PGM* 1.4-5). In this ritual there are instructions on how to drown a falcon in milk mixed with honey. The interesting thing about this passage, Porta notes, is that the word used for "drowning", ἀποθέωσον, means literally "deify".

<sup>73</sup> According to Watkins 1995:278 this new life is immortality, referred to explicitly in 1.3 Thurii 1 and 3, and indirectly with ἐγένου in the Pelinna tablets' first line, which means that the initiate has been reborn as a deity.



used in the gold tablets to signify the initiates' attainment of his or her new status.<sup>74</sup> Whether the formula also worked as a password to be used in the Underworld or just a reminder, a *synthemata*, of what happened in the initiation is not certain.<sup>75</sup>

The initiate's new status is thus of the utmost importance in both the Pelinna and in the Thurii tablets which mention the "immersion-in-milk" formula. This formula refers to an initiation ritual where this new status is attained. In the Thurii tablets lacking the formula, tablets 1.3 Thurii 4-5, we nevertheless find a reference to a ritual in the first line. Most probably, as I have argued above, this ritual was an initiation. As we shall see in the following, the same kind of self-representation, "I am deified through initiation", is also found in the mnemonic tablets from Petelia, Hipponion, Pharsalos, Thessaly, and Crete.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4.4 "I am a son of Earth and starry Heaven"

Common to the eleven mnemonic tablets is a short description on where to find the right spring of water, and a monologue or dialogue between the deceased and the guardians of this spring (Mnemosyne's) in order to be able to drink from it.<sup>77</sup> Although the tablets differ from one another in various ways, the overall similarities make it possible to present the text of the longest, and also the hitherto oldest (c. 400 BC), of the mnemonic tablets in order to give an example of the contents in these tablets, 1.1 Hipponion:

|   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 4 | Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἡρίον· ἐπεὶ ἄμ μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι<br>εἰς Ἀΐδαο δόμους εὐήρεας· ἔστ' ἐπὶ δεξιὰ κρήνα,<br>πὰρ δ' αὐτὰν ἔστακῦα λευκὰ κυπάρισ<σ>ος·<br>ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχὰὶ νεκύων ψύχονται.<br>ταύτας τὰς κράνας μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐγγύθεν ἔλθῃς | TN<br>AO |
|---|--|----------|

<sup>74</sup> See Edmonds 2004a:90 who argues the same for milk in regards to the apotheosis of Herakles, symbolized as it is with the hero receiving milk from Hera's breast.

<sup>75</sup> For two opposing interpretations see Graf 1991:95, arguing that the formula should not be seen as a password but rather as a metaphor for metamorphosis into a new existence, and Watkins 1995:278, 283, arguing that the formula is a metaphoric password or "tokens of identity of the addressee or speaker as an initiate".

<sup>76</sup> Edmonds 2004a:57 claims that the difference between the tablets from Thurii and Rome and the Pelinna tablets is that "[w]hile in the Thurii tablets the deceased needs to claim a special lineage, in the Pelinna tablets Dionysos trumps the authority of Persephone." What I have argued above is that the same claim for divine lineage could be seen in the Pelinna tablets, through the "immersion-in-milk" formula, as in the Thurii tablets.

<sup>77</sup> In the shorter gold tablets from Crete (3.1 Eleutherna 1-3, 5-6; 3.2 Mylopotamos) and 5.2 "Malibu" from Thessaly the guardians' questions are included in the text before the deceased's answer.

πρόσθεν δὲ εὐρήσεις τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας  
 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δὲ ἐπύπερθεν ἔασι,  
 8 τ]οὶ δὲ σε εἰρήσονται ἐν<ι> φρασὶ πευκαλίμασι  
 ὅτι δὲ ἐξερέεις Ἴδιδος σκότος ὀρφ<ν>έντος.  
 εἶπον Γῆς παῖ<ς> ἡμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος,  
 δίψαι δ'εἶμι αὔος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι ἀλ<λ>ὰ δὸτ' ὦ[κα  
 12 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ π[ρο]ρέον τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμ[νης]  
 καὶ δὲ τοὶ ἐλεούσιν{ι} ὑπὸ χθονίῳ βασιλεῖ·  
 καὶ δὲ τοὶ δώσουσι πῖν τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας.  
 καὶ δὲ καὶ σὺ πῖων ὁδὸν ἔρχεα<ι> ἄν τε καὶ ἄλλοι  
 16 μύσται καὶ βάρχοι ἱεράν στείχουσι κλεινοί.

This grave belongs to Mnemosyne, for the time when he shall die  
 On the right side of the well-fitted house of Hades is a spring,  
 and close to this stands a shining cypress:  
 4 Around this place the descending souls cool themselves.  
 Do not approach this spring.  
 But proceed to the lake of Mnemosyne  
 with cold water flowing forth: There are Guardians here:  
 8 And they will ask you with shrewd speech  
 what you are looking for in the darkness of deadly Hades.  
 Say: "I am a son of Earth and starry Heaven:  
 and I am parched with thirst and perishing: But give me  
 12 to drink from the cold water from Mnemosyne's lake."  
 And they will show you to the Chthonian king:  
 and give you to drink from Mnemosyne's lake:  
 And then having drunk you will walk on the holy path of the many, on which  
 16 also other renowned *mystai* and *bakkhoi* walk

The Hipponion tablet was found in 1969 in a grave belonging to a person of unknown sex (possibly a female) at Hipponion in southern Italy.<sup>78</sup> As we have seen earlier, Comparetti interpreted the monologue "I am a son of Earth and starry Heaven", which is found in all the mnemonic tablets, as a reference to the Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos.<sup>79</sup> We have also seen how Linforth and later Edmonds have argued against this hypothesis, mainly because we cannot date a version of the myth which includes an anthropogony and a doctrine of original sin, earlier than the Neoplatonic texts, especially those of Damascius.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, there is a more probable explanation for this passage, an explanation which shares common traits with the Thurii and Pelinna tablets, namely an emphasis on the importance of

<sup>78</sup> For excavation report and *ed. pr.* of the text see Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974.

<sup>79</sup> Smith and Comparetti 1882:116; repeated several times later, e.g. Graf 1993:244. Parker 1995:498 believes that the deceased is here speaking as either a Titan or an ex-Titan. Parker sees this, then, as a reference to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos and thus evidence for dating the myth to the late fifth century BC.

<sup>80</sup> Linforth 1941:307-364; Edmonds 1999, Edmonds 2004a:77; see chapter 3 for more details.

the deceased's identity and his or her proclamation of this. In the mnemonic tablets the deceased is also identifying himself with the deities, here through the monologue/dialogue addressed to the guardians (e.g. 1.1 Hipponion, line 10-12). It is to these verses we now turn.

It has been suggested before that through these lines the deceased is merely expressing that he or she, while still alive, was composed of two different and opposing elements, body and soul (*psyche*).<sup>81</sup> The former symbolized by the Earth, the latter by the more ethereal Heaven. In some of the mnemonic tablets this heavenly part is emphasized (1.2 Petelia, line 7; 5.1 Pharsalos, line 9; 5.2 "Malibu", line 6; and possibly 1.4 Entella col. 2, line 1, although, interestingly, not in 1.1 Hipponion). This is an instance of the same dichotomy which is expressed, as we saw earlier, on many grave epigrams from the same period.<sup>82</sup> The body belongs to the Earth, while the destined goal of the soul is Heaven. But, as becomes clear in the texts, the soul will not return to its origin automatically. Certain things have to be done and said for this to happen. Central in all this are two distinct concepts which are nevertheless connected; the role of memory (or Memory) and the deceased's (attainment of) special identity. The importance of these concepts, expressed already in the first line of the Hipponion tablet, indicates that the texts are taken from, or at least refer to, an initiation rather than a funeral rite. To support this theory I now turn to this first line, a line which received a lot of attention after the publication of the tablet in 1974.

Central in the first verse on the Hipponion tablet is the word ἡρίον (grave). The meaning adopted in the text reproduced above is that the grave in which the gold tablet was found is seen as Mnemosyne's grave, i.e. under her protection. However, different readings of the word have been proposed, most depending on the identification of the word's first letter. The editors wrote EPION and transcribed this to ἡρίον.<sup>83</sup> The letter in question is admittedly hard to identify. Miroslav Marcovich has suggested ΣPION (σπίον, "leaf"), since the letter resembled the sigma used in MEΛΛΕΙΣΙ in the same line and ΕΙΠΕΣΟΝΤΑΙ in line 9, thus being a reference to the

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<sup>81</sup> Zuntz 1971:365 ff. *Psyche* is an extremely complex term which is very difficult to translate out of context. Here *psyche* should be understood as simply the immaterial part of human beings believed to survive the death of the material body, or simply as the "soul of the dead" as Bremmer 2002:4 puts it. "Soul" will therefore be used throughout this analysis.

<sup>82</sup> Lattimore 1962:31-35. Although, as Cole 1993:292 points out, none of the surviving Dionysiac grave inscriptions claims explicitly that the body and the soul of the deceased are separated at the time of death.

<sup>83</sup> Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:110-111.

tablet itself containing the words the deceased had to remember in order to attain his or her goal in the afterlife.<sup>84</sup> Marcovich cites West's view that EPION is both "unmetrisch und widersinnig". Marcovich also supports West's suggestion that the archetypal text from which the Hipponion text was taken originally had ΘPION.<sup>85</sup> Marcovich cannot find the *theta*, but argues that ΣPION has the same meaning.

Whether an hypothetical original text originally had *thrion* or not is impossible to determine. As for the Hipponion tablet most scholars read an epsilon in the text. Photos of the tablet seem to support this reading.<sup>86</sup> The problem with this is that the epsilon can be read as either ει, η, or ε. Thus we have the suggestion by Wolfgang Luppe that ἔριον (thread) should be read.<sup>87</sup> The meaning of "Mnemosyne's thread", Luppe argues, is that the Underworld is a place where one easily gets lost, and therefore an equivalent to Ariadne's thread was supplied by Mnemosyne, the thread being a metaphor for the gold tablet itself. The problem is that we find no other parallels of this other than the one cited by Luppe.

It seems that the same verse occurred in the Petelia tablet. Unfortunately, this particular part of the tablet is damaged as it was cut in order to fit inside a gold cylinder in which it was carried. Line 12 of the Petelia tablet thus reads: ]νης τόδε ἦ[, which is reconstructed in my Appendix as [Μνημοσύν]νης τόδε ἦ[ρίον· ἐπεὶ ἄν μέλλησι]. Reconstructions of this line are often based on how one reads the equivalent line in the Hipponion tablet.<sup>88</sup> When I examined the Petelia tablet at the British Museum I had problems reading the letter following the epsilon. Scratches on the tablet could be read as either a nu, ]νης τόδ<ε> ε]ν[, or an iota.<sup>89</sup> It was difficult to identify a rho here, but it must be said that the tablet was very difficult to read at this point. Vincenzo di Benedetto has proposed that an iota was present in the original text

<sup>84</sup> Marcovich 1976:221 thus translates the first line to "This is the leaf of Remembrance for the time when one shall die." Porta 1999:324 follows Marcovich.

<sup>85</sup> Marcovich 1976:222; West 1975:231. West is concentrating on an hypothetical archetype. He notes that ΔΩPON is also probable, making the line somewhat similar to the one found in the Rome tablet, line 3. For this suggestion see also Lloyd-Jones 1975:225. Janko 1984:99 cautiously uses West's ΘPION in his own reconstruction of the "long archetype". Guarducci 1975:22 (rightly) objects to West's reconstruction since none of the surviving gold tablets has ΘPION, see also objections by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:29 n28, 2008:14.

<sup>86</sup> See Sassi 1996:516; Pugliese Carratelli 2001, picture 1; Sacco 2001, tafel XII.

<sup>87</sup> Luppe 1978:23-24.

<sup>88</sup> See OF 476 Bernabé (the Petelia tablet), line 12 which Bernabé reconstructs as follows: [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδ<ε> ἔρ[γον· ἐπεὶ ἄν μέλλησι] θανεῖσθ[αι, (cf. also Graf and Johnston 2007:6 (2).

<sup>89</sup> A nu was suggested by Kaibel 1878:454, and Marshall 1911:380 who suggested: Μνημοσύ(ν)νης τόδε (ν)[ἄμα πιῶν ἐπεὶ οὔτε] θανεῖσθα[ι] | μέλλεις, θνητὸς ἐών,] τόδε γράψ[ας, οὔτε---- | -----σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας, for the rest of the text.

behind the mnemonic tablets, making the original text run Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἱρόν, ἐπεὶ ἄμ μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι, where ἱρόν is a substantive with the meaning "sacred objects or rites".<sup>90</sup> This could be supported if we accept the iota in the Petelia tablet. However, the Hipponion tablet yields no iota in this position. The possible iota in the Petelia tablet, then, should rather be seen as one of many examples of individual differences among the generally similar tablets, suggesting either misspelling or local preferences.

For these reasons I support the proposal of the original editors, namely ἡρίον.<sup>91</sup> This would mean that the grave is marked out from other graves by receiving the special protection of Mnemosyne. That Mnemosyne plays the role of a protector is admittedly unique, but given her prominent status in all the mnemonic tablets the extension of her role here should not be too surprising. Foti and Pugliese Carratelli took this as evidence that it is the goddess Mnemosyne which is meant, not only in the Hipponion tablet, but in all tablets where she is mentioned.<sup>92</sup> This is supported by Guarducci and later Zuntz who described the Hipponion tablet as a talisman, a description also used by West.<sup>93</sup> It is possible, however, that Mnemosyne was meant to refer metaphorically to the memory the deceased had of his or her initiation, meaning that it was the deceased's memory, personified perhaps by Mnemosyne, who would lead to a blissful afterlife.<sup>94</sup> It is in any case not possible to read Burkert's ἔργον, nor can I accept Pugliese Carratelli's later suggestion that <h>ιερόν was meant in the original text but that the inscriber simply misspelled the word, since, judging from the photo of the tablet, it is only the first letter that is uncertain.<sup>95</sup> I

<sup>90</sup> di Benedetto 2004:305.

<sup>91</sup> Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:111 "sepulcro"; see also Zuntz 1976:132-133 and 134 where Zuntz agrees with West in that the word is ill-placed in the verse: "Unsinn, aber es steht da". See also Graf 1993:251; Calame 2006:235; and Ferrari 2007. ἡρίον is also supported by Giangrande who refers to a similar passage in Them. Or. 4.59d, see West 1995:468.

<sup>92</sup> Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:118, arguing against Wilamowitz 1931 II:200 n2 who interpreted the occurrence of Mnemosyne as a reference to the deceased's personal memory (of what to do in the Underworld).

<sup>93</sup> Guarducci 1975:20; Zuntz 1976:135; West 1975:232; Pugliese Carratelli 1976:459. The Hipponion tablet as a talisman is also argued by Kingsley 1995:311.

<sup>94</sup> Proposed by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:31 ff., 2008:15 ff. who refer to the *Orphic Hymn to Mnemosyne* 77.9-10 where the goddess' function is to make the initiates remember "the pious ritual".

<sup>95</sup> Burkert in Pugliese Carratelli 1995:227; Riedweg 1998:395; Sacco 2001:32 has ἔρ<γ>ον; see also Bernabé 1992:221, 1999:55; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:29 f, 258, 2008:12 ff., 245 ff. (L 1); Graf and Johnston 2007:4 (1); OF 474 Bernabé. For *hieron* see Pugliese Carratelli 2001:40; – see also Appendix. On the misspelling of IEPON in the Hipponion tablet see Pugliese Carratelli 2001:47. We can also rule out δῶρον, cf. Lloyd-Jones 1975; and Marcovich 1976:223 who argues for δ]ῶρον

refrain, in any case, from speculating on the contents of an hypothetical archetypal text. It seems, then, that the grave of the dead woman(?) in Hipponion was marked out, as being under the protection of Mnemosyne, in contrast to other graves.

Does this reference to the deceased's grave mean that the text was read aloud at a funeral? I would say no. The reason for this is found in the end of the line. We see here that through the use of the future tense (θανεῖσθαί) that the death of the initiate is seen as future event: "This grave belongs to Mnemosyne, for the time when he shall die", thus death has not occurred yet. We find this use of the future tense also elsewhere in the text, supporting the idea that the instructions described on the gold tablet refer to something that will happen in the future.<sup>96</sup> The future tense is used extensively in the longer tablets from Petelia, Pharsalos, and Entella as well.<sup>97</sup> One could argue that the use of future tense in these instances (1.1 Hipponion, 1.2 Petelia, 1.4 Entella) is not enough to determine the initiatory character of the ritual referred to. This is because death, as we have seen, was usually considered a lengthy process which sent the soul away to Hades only when he or she had been properly buried. For this reason, the instances of the future tense referred to above could have been derived from a moment during the funeral when death was not yet fulfilled. However, the word used here, θανεῖσθαί, does not indicate the process of transition from this world to the next, but rather the moment when the body exhales her last breath. The (lengthy) process of transition referred to in the first line has not started yet.

The instructions on the Hipponion tablet support the initiation theory. They must have been given to the initiate prior to his death, and must have been known to the other initiates as well, unless the cult operated with a strict hierarchy.<sup>98</sup> Central to these instructions is the knowledge of one's origin and identity. This is expressed in the tenth line of the Hipponion tablet, and consequently in all the other mnemonic

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in the Petelia tablet (1.2 Petelia), and West 1975:231 who refers to the use of δῶρον in the Roma tablet (2.1 Rome). Pugliese Carratelli 2001 finds the same line, as his reconstructed one, used in the Petelia tablet, 1.2 Petelia, line 12 (p. 68) and in the Entella tablet, 1.4 Entella, line 1 (p. 76).

<sup>96</sup> E.g. 1.1 Hipponion, line 6, εὐρήσεις, line 8, εἰρήσονται, line 14, δώσουσι. See also Calame 2006:236 who also points out the same in the tablets from Thurii and Rome (p. 270).

<sup>97</sup> E.g. εὐρήσεις (1.2 Petelia, lines 1 and 4; 5.1 Pharsalos, lines 1 and 4); θανέσθαι (1.4 Entella, line 1); ἐμπελάσεις (1.2 Petelia, line 3); ἐ<μ>πελάσ<ασ>θαί (1.4 Entella, line 7); εἰρήσονται (5.1 Pharsalos, line 6), καταλέξει (line 7); δώσουσι (1.2 Petelia, line 10). See Graf 1993:247; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:36, 2008:19. Graf's analysis does not include the Entella tablet since it was published a year later by Frel 1994.

<sup>98</sup> David Jordan has pointed out for me that this was also Joubin's opinion regarding the tablets from Petelia, Thurii, and Eleutherna. Joubin 1893:124 believed that these tablets had been given to the initiates as amulets.

tablets. This self-representation, with its emphasis on the dichotomy between heaven and earth, could be interpreted as a way of acknowledging one's dual nature, a composition of body and soul (see above), but this would hardly be enough to mark the initiate out from other humans since this thought was well-known in the Classical period. Therefore, this self-representation signals something more. In fact it seems that this is also a statement where the deceased proclaims his or her divine nature.<sup>99</sup> This is not so clear in the Hipponion tablet, but turning to the other tablets of the group we see that the longer ones (from Hipponion, Petelia, the "Malibu" tablet and most probably the Entella tablet) all point out that although the deceased is "a son of Earth and starry Heaven", it is pointed out immediately that his "race is of Heaven alone" (as for example in the Petelia tablet, line 7: αὐτὰρ ἐ[μ]οὶ γένος οὐρανίου).<sup>100</sup> This is expressed in an interesting way in the Pharsalos tablet. Here the deceased, addressing the guardians, is instructed to say:

8 εἰπεῖν· Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>·  
'Αστέριος ὄνομα·

8 Say: "I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven:  
A starry name:

If we see this as equivalent to the statement in the Petelia and "Malibu" tablets (and probably the Entella tablet), as I think we should, the starry name must be a reference to the deceased and have approximately the same meaning.<sup>101</sup>

This information, then, was probably given during an initiation, and was therefore known to all initiates of the cult. The self-representation of oneself as a child of Earth and Heaven, with a marked emphasis on the latter, could thus be seen as a way to ascend to a higher level in contrast to the uninitiated.<sup>102</sup> This is done more explicitly in the tablets from Thurii and Rome, with their emphases on the deceased's divinity and purity, but the same general idea is expressed also in these longer tablets.

<sup>99</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:100, who saw the gold tablets as Orphic; Rohde 1903 II:218. According to Betz 1998:404 the passage in the gold tablets shows that the deceased initiate saw him- or herself as part worldly (human), part god. Cp. Hes. *Theog.* 105-106: ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἔόντων, | οἱ Γῆς τ' ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.

<sup>100</sup> 1.2 Petelia, line 7; 1.4 Entella, col. 2, line 1; 5.1 Pharsalos, line 9; 5.2 "Malibu", line 6.

<sup>101</sup> Zuntz 1971:367.

<sup>102</sup> Burkert 1987b:76 f. has also argued that the line in question is the initiate's way to ensure him- or herself a privileged afterlife. Burkert provides some parallels to this idea of "privilege through genealogy".

We see here a development of the Homeric eschatology where only the heroes who escaped death altogether were destined to an afterlife on the Isle of the Blessed. As seen in the Menelaos passage in the *Odyssey* referred to above, genealogical ties to the deities, especially Zeus, led to a favorable eschatological outcome. In the gold tablets we have considered, this idea seems to underlie their function; by initiation one obtains the necessary knowledge about one's divine origin which will lead to an eternal (?) afterlife in bliss in a place like Elysion or the Isle of the Blessed.<sup>103</sup> The initiatory character of the self-representation is also indicated, as Porta has observed, by the meter. Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος is a well-known Homeric phrase whose position in the hexameter marks it out from other hexameters.<sup>104</sup> As Porta writes:

Lines which contains this phrase break both at the bucolic dieresis and, more importantly, at the mid-line dieresis. This second break is generally avoided. (It is quaintly called by Monro the "worst dieresis".) Because it breaks the verse equally in half, it gives the line a character and feel very different from that of those majority hexameters which do not have this break<sup>105</sup>

This use of the dieresis was common in ritual contexts where special emphasis was given to a specific verse.

Thus, both the purification in the Thurii tablets (1.3 Thurii 3-5), the self-representation in the mnemonic tablets, and the "immersion-in-milk" formula in the

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<sup>103</sup> Also observed by Calame 2006:265. Both Homer and Hesiod make it clear that members of the heroic race will only escape death and be transported to the Isle of the Blessed on special occasions. In *Op.* 161-69 Hesiod writes that most of the heroes of this age died during the battles of Thebes and Troy, but that all the other were transported to the Isle of the Blessed, καὶ τοὺς μὲν πόλεμος τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνή, | τοὺς μὲν ὑφ' ἑπταπύλῳ Θήβη, Καδμηίδι γαίῃ, | ὤλεσε μαρναμένους μήλων ἔνεκ' Οἰδιπόδαο, | τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐν νήεσσιν ὑπὲρ μέγα λαίτμα θαλάσσης | ἐς Τροίην ἀγαγῶν Ἐλένης ἔνεκ' ἠκύμοιο. | ἔνθ' ἦτοι τοὺς μὲν θανάτου τέλος ἀμφεκάλυψε, | τοῖς δὲ δίχ' ἀνθρώπων βίον καὶ ἦθε' ὀπάσας | Ζεὺς Κρονίδης κατένασσε πατῆρ ἐς πείρατα γαίης. *Contra* Wilamowitz 1928:60, West 1978:173 and Burkert 1985:198 who concluded that all heroes, dead or alive, were sent to the Isle of the Blessed. *Pro* Evelyn-White, and Glenn W. Most in the Loeb editions, Sourvinou-Inwood 1995:18 and Andersen 1999:55. In Hom. *Od.* 4.561-64 Menelaos is destined not to die, but go to Elysion instead, σοι δ' οὐ θεσφατόν ἐστι, διοτρεφὲς ὦ Μενέλαε, | Ἄργει ἐν ἵπποβοτῶ θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν, | ἀλλὰ σ' ἐς Ἥλυσιον πεδῖον καὶ πείρατα γαίης | ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν. The same happens in the case of Ganymedes who in Hom. *Il.* 20.232-35 is not killed by Zeus, but rather carried away in order to live together with the immortals. According to Sourvinou-Inwood 1995:54-5, the idea that someone could escape death altogether was quite new at the time the Homeric epics were recorded. See Burkert 1961 who connects Elysion with *enelysion*, i.e. the place struck by lightning, meaning that people struck by lightning not necessarily died, but was rather transported to the immortals (Asklepios, Orpheus in some versions of the myth (Paus. 9.30.5)). Lightning is also connected to fire which is used by Demeter in her attempt to make Demophoon immortal, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 239-45.

<sup>104</sup> Porta 1999:328. Porta notes that the phrase is used eight times by Hesiod and eleven times by Homer.

<sup>105</sup> Porta 1999:328.



Pelinna tablets (and in 1.3 Thuri 1 and 3) refer to a special identity, a new status, which was attained through initiation.<sup>106</sup> Peculiar to the Hipponion tablet is the mention of the *mystai* (initiates) and the *bakkhoi* in the last lines of the tablet. The deceased is clearly identifying himself with them. Common to these initiates is their self-representation which makes it clear that the initiates are *bakkhoi* who see themselves as more connected to Heaven than to Earth, i.e. they see themselves as special as they know of their divine origin as opposed to ordinary mortals. This does not necessarily mean that the cults behind the mnemonic tablets and the ones from Thuri and Rome were connected. What we can say is that the cults, from which the gold tablets considered until now originated, all strived to reach the same goal, a blissful afterlife, through more or less the same means, knowledge of one's true nature and identity as a god. This knowledge must have been passed on during an initiation.

#### 4.5 Ritual references through repetition

Until now I have argued that the ritual references found in the gold tablets derive from or refer to initiation rituals. Further evidence for this is found in the Thuri tablets, namely in tablet 1.3 Thuri 3, lines 5-8:

κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο  
 ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι  
 δεσποίνης δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας  
 8 ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἀπέβαν στεμάνου ποσὶ καρπασίμοισι

And I have flown out of the grievous, troublesome circle,  
 I have passed with swift feet to the desired wreath,  
 I have entered under the bosom of the lady of the house, the Queen of the  
 Underworld,  
 8 I have passed with swift feet from the desired wreath

As we saw earlier Harrison saw references to rites, which she then tried to reconstruct, in all these lines. She envisioned the ritual use of wheels and the initiate walking in and out of a circle, after which he or she would then, as Dieterich also argued, be

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<sup>106</sup> Edmonds 2004a:101 see the self-representation as the cults' way to distance themselves from mainstream society. While this may be true I believe that the eschatological function of the statement was even more important for the initiates. See also Edmonds 2004a:104 ff. Calame 2006:268 argues that the "immersion-in-milk" formula refers to the moment when the initiate attains immortality. Such a status change can only happen, Calame continues, through a *rite de passage*.

baptized in milk. In accordance with one of Harrison's general suggestions, that most of the Greek mystery cults were imported from Egypt, she saw this rite as containing Egyptian elements.<sup>107</sup> To reconstruct a ritual based on these lines, however, can only end up as conjecture (which Harrison also admitted). But even though I will refrain from a detailed reconstruction, I agree with Harrison, and others, that these lines refer to an initiation in which a future death is anticipated. Support for such a reading is found both in the lines themselves, and in the narrative context in which they are found.

One of the most important pieces of evidence used by Harrison to show that the lines refer to an Orphic initiation was a statement by Proclus referring to the κύκλος (which appear in the fifth line of the Thurii tablet): "This is what those who are initiated by Orpheus to Dionysos and Kore pray that they may attain, to "Cease from the Wheel and breathe again from ill.""<sup>108</sup> Moving on from a literal reconstruction of an initiation ritual, Harrison interpreted the "Wheel" as a reference to "a doctrine of metempsychosis".<sup>109</sup> This interpretation was already advocated by Comparetti and has been repeated several times since, although the religious background suggested for both the doctrine and the gold tablets differ from scholar to scholar.<sup>110</sup> Metaphorical uses of κύκλος in Ancient Greek literature do suggest that it is the Wheel of life or fortune which is meant, although it can also be a reference to reincarnation and a cycle of lives.<sup>111</sup> The question, then, remains whether the escape

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<sup>107</sup> Harrison 1991[1922]:590 f.

<sup>108</sup> Procl. *In Ti.* 330: ἦς καὶ οἱ παρ' Ὀρφεὶ τῶ Διονύσω καὶ τῇ Κόρῃ τελούμενοι τυχεῖν εὖχονται· Κύκλου τ' αὖ λῆξαι καὶ ἀναπνεῦσαι κακότητος. Harrison 1991[1922]:591. Harrison translates κύκλου as "Wheel" rather than "Circle" although she does not rule out the latter possibility, see Harrison 1991[1922]:590 n1. See Thomson 1945:9 who see κύκλος as an abstract reference to the cycle of life, but also, literally, to life as a "wheel of torture" to which the soul is bound.

<sup>109</sup> Harrison 1991[1922]:591.

<sup>110</sup> Smith and Comparetti 1882:116; see e.g. Zuntz 1971:321 saw the use of κύκλος as a hint to metempsychosis; Watkins 1995:284: "Whether the gold leaf texts presuppose it [metempsychosis] is not clear, but not excluded."; Edmonds 2004a:96-99 is uncertain; Calame 2006:266 argues for metempsychosis possibly inspired by Pythagoreanism. For more on the religious background of the tablets, see chapter 2.

<sup>111</sup> On the use of κύκλος as a metaphor for life, as in the "Wheel of fortune", see Robinson 1946 who refers to Hdt. 1.207; Pind. *Pyth.* 2.89, *Isthm.* 3.18; Soph. frg. 575, 871, *Trach.* 130 and others. It was, however, also used as a metaphor for a cycle of lives, Diog. Laert. 8.14 on Pythagoras, and in a Roman context in Verg. *Aen.* 6.745 *orbe*, and Robinson 1934:503 ff., especially 505, for an example of this in a mosaic from Olynthos. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:32-33, following Tortorelli Ghidini, argue that the similarity between ψυχρός in the Hipponion and other mnemonic tablets, ψυχρή, and ψύχονται means that the metempsychosis is meant since drinking from the cold water would mean to receive new life and thus be reincarnated. However, this would mean that drinking from the spring of Mnemosyne would also lead to reincarnation since this water is also described as "cold", 1.1 Hipponion, line 12; 1.2 Petelia, line 8.

from this wheel is achieved at the moment of initiation or death? Both possibilities could be argued based on an isolated reading of the line. However, if we consider the line in the context of its surrounding lines, and the text as a whole, the initiatory possibility becomes more probable.

Following κύκλος is a line that repeats itself, with some differences, in line 8. This repetition, with the difference that the deceased is said to have passed with swift feet *from* the desired wreath instead of into it, was seen by Zuntz as a scribal error, since it ruined the hexameter. He therefore put the line in brackets.<sup>112</sup> However, as Porta has argued, this kind of repetition is often an important and integral part of liturgical texts and might have been employed to highlight the verse inbetween the repeating lines where the initiate expresses his or her dependance upon Persephone to attain immortality. The repetition supports the overall impression of a text connected with, and perhaps copying lines recited during, a ritual through the use of *synthemata* and repetition.<sup>113</sup> Porta also argues that lines 5-8 resemble *synthemata* through their use of the first person, which consequently means that the lines resemble verses used in connection to an initiation, thus strengthening the possibility for the text's initiatory references.

The repetition of line 6 makes further sense when seen in the context of the whole text. Line 2 ends with the words καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι which are repeated in the middle of line 4. The two instances of this phrase surround the claim that the deceased is one of the gods even though he has been subdued by Fate: καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὐχομαι εἶμεν | ἀλ<λ>ά με μο<ι>ρα ἐδάμασ<σ>ε. The two claims, found within two repetitions, presupposes a change which most probably was attained during an initiation ritual. The deceased has been subdued by Fate, but since he in reality has a divine nature, or at least has become aware of it as an initiate, he will approach Persephone in his new life as a god instead of a mortal. The use of repetition in tablet 1.3 Thuri 3 seems to emphasize the main message of the text namely the apotheosis of the deceased.<sup>114</sup> This message is then emphasized further in the concluding “immersion-in-milk” formula.

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<sup>112</sup> Zuntz 1971:301. See also Olivieri 1915:4; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:270, 2008:260; Riedweg 1998:393; and OF 488 Bernabé where the second occurrence of the verse is also put in brackets.

<sup>113</sup> Porta 1999:328-330.

<sup>114</sup> On the use of repetition in liturgical texts, see Porta 1999:334.

Turning briefly to 1.3 Thurii 1 we find a similar repetition of the word χαῖρε in lines 3 and 5 enclosing the sentence παθὼν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις· | θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ {ε} ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες.<sup>115</sup> Thus we see that the same meaning is conveyed here as in tablet 1.3 Thurii 3 through the use of repetitions: The deceased has suffered, but will nevertheless prevail since he is destined to become one of the gods. Here the "immersion-in-milk" formula is included in the repetition. The repetitions in 1.3 Thurii 3, then, seem to highlight the most important message in the text, the deceased's attainment of a blissful afterlife, which must have been made available for the deceased through an initiation. It is to this initiation the first line, as well as the whole text, points.<sup>116</sup>

#### 4.6 References to initiation in other gold tablets

The emphasis on initiation in the gold tablets considered above is also found in some of the shorter gold tablets from Crete, Peloponnese, and Macedonia. The most obvious traces are found on the tablets where μύστης appears either on its own or together with the name of the deceased owner. This is the case with the gold tablets from Aigion (4.1 Aigion 1-3), all of which were found in cist graves dating to the Hellenistic period in the late 1970s and 80s.<sup>117</sup> These tablets, bearing the inscriptions μύστης (4.1 Aigion 1), Δεξίλαος μύστας (4.1 Aigion 2), and φίλων μύστας (4.1

<sup>115</sup> Also pointed out by Porta 1999:334.

<sup>116</sup> See also Riedweg 1998:382 who argues that 1.3 Thurii 3, lines 5-7 concern a rebirth which is attained through an initiation ritual. An explanation of the text's meaning is bound to be conjecture, but it is nevertheless tempting to advance one: The escape from the wheel is, perhaps, a reference to the deceased's escape from the wheel of birth, thus in accordance with the doctrines of metempsychosis, or the wheel of life. This escape indicates a new life, symbolized by the wreath which traditionally was laid on the deceased in funeral rites, Thuc. 2.46; Eur. *Tro.* 1223, 1247; Ar. *Lys.* 602, *Ekk.* 538; Plut. *Tim.* 26; Artem. *Oneirokr.* 1.77; Bion 1.75ff. see Garland 2001:26. See also the "rule of the Iobacchoi", a second century AD inscription where it is stated in line 159-163 that a dead Iobacchos should be honored by a wreath, see Meyer 1987:99 for the text. After death the deceased will be received by Persephone as a newborn child (cf. Edmonds 2004a:90 on the apotheosis of Herakles). The deceased (or rather initiate) will then be sent on to his final destination as referred to in 1.3 Thurii 4, line 7 and 1.3 Thurii 5, line 7 as "the seat of the holy". Being, then, one of the gods the deceased will never be reborn and thus never die again. The deceased has therefore "passed with swift feet from the desired wreath" since he will never be wreathed again. Another possibility is that the wreath desired in line 6 symbolizes the initiation itself. That wreaths are connected to mystery-cult initiations is attested in an inscription from Andania in Messenia from the first century BC. (*IG* 5.1.1390 A. 14-15), but it is difficult to see this as evidence for the same association in tablet 1.3 Thurii 3, see Dickie 1995:85-86). Calame 2006:267-8 has a similar interpretation of the text where he divides it into three tempi: past – the deceased has escaped the "wheel of rebirth", present – the deceased arrives in front of Persephone and is reborn into a new existence, future – the deceased will become a god. This last transition, argues Calame, presupposes a *rite de passage*.

<sup>117</sup> Papapostolou 1977:94; Papakosta 1987:153. See chapter 2.5 for more on the shorter gold tablets.

Aigion 3), make it quite clear that the people buried with these gold tablets were initiated in a specific cult of some kind, possibly the same one. This initiation must have been seen as the most important thing to convey to the gods of the Underworld. In two of the three Aigion tablets the ritual status has been considered more important than the deceased's name (4.1 Aigion 1 and 3). References to initiation are also found in the tablets from Pherae (5.4 Pherae 1), Pella (6.1 Pella 1), and Amphipolis (6.4). The text on one of the Pherae tablets, dated to the middle of the fourth century BC, runs thus: σύμβολα· Ἄν<δ>ρικε|παιδόθυρσον· Ἄνδρικεπα|ιδόθυρσον Βριμώ· Βριμώ· εἰσειθ<ι> | ἱερὸν λειμῶνα· ἄποινος | γὰρ ὁ μύστης.<sup>118</sup> The last six words in this text bear a resemblance to the concluding line on gold tablet 1.3 Thurii 1: λειμῶνάς τε ἱεροῦς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας. As I have argued in my analysis of the tablets from Thurii, a successful entrance to this meadow requires an initiation which marks the deceased's status as godlike. The same emphasis on initiation, although not on the godlike status, is given in the Pherae tablet. Also, in the Amphipolis tablet, dated to the end of the fourth/beginning of the third century BC, the deceased's status as a bacchic initiate is important: εὐαγῆς ἱερά Διονύσου Βαχχίου εἰμὶ Ἀρχέβου ...η Ἀντιδῶρου.<sup>119</sup> Here the deceased is not described as μύστης but as one of Dionysos Bakkhios' holy ones (εὐαγῆς), which means that he or she was initiated into a Dionysiac mystery cult, probably in Amphipolis where he or she was buried.

The combination of similarities and differences which are found when comparing the different gold tablets, both long and short, can be explained if the gold tablets were distributed by individual itinerant manteis. This possibility was explored in chapter 2 and provides, in my opinion, a good starting point for analyses of the tablets. The shorter tablets from Crete, Peloponnese, Macedonia and elsewhere, can be divided into at least three groups based on the texts. In the five tablets from Aigion, Pherae, and Amphipolis, emphasis is laid on the deceased's initiation and subsequent status as initiated. A second group of the shorter tablets, however, have only a name inscribed. A third group contains tablets containing a formal greeting to either one or both of the gods of the Underworld (3.1 Eleutherna 4, 3.3 Sfakaki 1, 6.5 Vergina). In two of these tablets (3.1 Eleutherna 4, 6.5 Vergina), the deities are coupled with

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<sup>118</sup> Chrysostomou 1994; *SEG* (1995) 45.646.

<sup>119</sup> See Málama 2001:118.

χαίρει. Although none of the tablets in these two groups contain any direct references to an initiation ritual, I think we can safely assume that they were acquired during one. The gold tablet itself seems to have been a token of membership into a special group of people. By applying a name to the tablet the deceased wanted to make sure that he or she was recognized in the darkness of Hades as one of the initiated. Similarly, the same call for attention is found in the tablets containing a greeting. That initiation seems to be a common feature in the shorter gold tablets does not necessarily mean that they come from the same religious background. Different ways of emphasizing the ritual status, identity, and dependence upon the powers of the Underworld, points towards the existence of various and diverse groups at different times in different parts of the Graeco-Roman world, who were guided by the requirements of specific cults, by itinerant *manteis*, or by both. The references to initiation itself are too general to give us any indications of specific cults. There are some exceptions to this where Dionysos seems to be prominent, such as on the tablet from Amphipolis. This does not mean, however, that all gold tablets belonged to the same religious background. What we can say, from this brief analysis of the shorter tablets, is that their owners were initiated into cults, or guided by *manteis*, and believed therefore that it was important to display one's status and identity in order to attain a better afterlife.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Analyzing the tablets according to ritual references is of course only one way of handling them. An analysis done according to geographical and/or chronological criteria will, as we shall see in the next chapter, yield other, complementing results. This chapter's focus on ritual has, in any case, demonstrated the diversity of the tablets. In the smallest tablets where space certainly was an issue, the choice between putting one's name or one's title must have been considered carefully. Different choices have been made leaving us with tablets containing only a name, only a title, a title and a name, and sometimes neither. This strongly suggests that the diversity of the gold tablets should serve as the methodological point of departure rather than an idea of the tablets as belonging to a homogenous group. Still, not only general but also specific similarities between the tablets, suggest some common background. How this background was utilized by the distributors of the gold tablets was, however,

different, dictated by local preferences of both the distributor and initiate, hence the seemingly minor differences. The *bricoleur* theory with its emphasis on itinerant manteis, seems once more to be a good explanation to both the differences and similarities in the gold tablets.

Instead of summing up all the conclusions reached in this chapter I choose to concentrate on three questions which were raised in the introduction to this chapter. First, what kind of ritual references predominates in the gold tablets? Initiation or funeral? Second, is it possible to say something about the general and specific differences and, in turn, what do they mean? Third, is it possible to handle the gold tablets as one group or should we treat them separately?

I believe I have shown how most of the ritual references found in the various tablets derive from or points back to an initiation rite rather than a funeral rite. I have shown this by concentrating on the passages which seem to me the most striking in this respect as well as the passages which generally have received most attention by scholars. The references are diverse, but I believe that a general statement about them can be formulated. Important in most of the tablets is the deceased's identity. This identity is reached, in many of the tablets, through initiation. This initiation is therefore emphasized in many of the long and short gold tablets considered above. It is important to note, however, that these references are not present in every tablet and that there are differences between them. This brings us over to the next point.

There are both differences and similarities of a specific and a general kind between the tablets. Examples of the specific similarities are the appearance of the "immersion-in-milk" formula in four of the tablets (1.3 Thurii 1 and 3, and both Pelinna tablets), transgressing the group boundaries, and the coupling of  $\chi\alpha\hat{\iota}\rho\epsilon$  with the deities of the Underworld (3.1 Eleutherna 4, 3.3 Sfakaki 1, 6.5 Vergina). Specific differences are found e.g. among the Thurii tablets where tablet 1.3 Thurii 1 has a completely different opening from the other three tablets from that area. At the same time we see that while gold tablet 1.3 Thurii 1 is different in this way, at the same time it shares a specific similarity with 1.3 Thurii 3 because of the "immersion-in-milk" formula. This formula also points towards a more general similarity which is also shared by tablets from Pelinna and the mnemonic tablets. This is the emphasis on identity which in the tablets from Thurii and Rome is present in the dominance of purity and divinity. These concepts are connected and they both point toward the initiation which is required. It is because of this ritual that the deceased in tablet 1.3

Thurii 3 can claim to come "pure out of the pure" and therefore ascend to the status of god, symbolized by the concluding "immersion-in-milk" formula. Initiation leads to purity which equals a divine status. Being a god the deceased no longer fears the terrors of Hades and can therefore consider himself "released" from the "grievous, troublesome circle" of life. This idea is expressed in the other tablets from Thurii and also in the mnemonic tablets. The key formula in these tablets is when the deceased, confronted by the guardians, proclaims his or her identity as son of Earth and Heaven, but most of all of Heaven. Thus ritual purity and divine lineage express the same thing – divinity.

I believe I have shown that despite several specific differences there are some general similarities uniting the tablets. Even among the Thurii tablets, which most probably derive from the same cult, there are differences. These differences could be the result of personal choice or the inscribers failed memory, but they are nevertheless united by some general similarities. The situation is quite different when comparing the Thurii tablets with the tablet from Hipponion or the ones from Eleutherna, Crete. Although the general similarities are there, one should not assume that the texts derive from the same cult. Instead, I see the gold tablet texts as different products of a general eschatology which claimed that initiation leads to a happy afterlife. Ideas of this kind start to emerge all over the Greco-Roman world in the fifth and fourth century BC, from Eleusis, to Samothrake, from Crete to Southern Italy. These ideas should not be reduced to the ideas of one single cult. While some tablets emphasized initiation, others focussed on their name, some relied on fixed passwords, while others again were confident that everything would be taken care of by addressing the chthonic deities with the proper respect.

The third question, regarding how one should approach the gold tablet corpus, as a homogenous group or as individual tablets, is therefore best answered by applying the *bricoleur* theory which allows for local differences in the texts. That does not mean that the tablets cannot be treated together. This is obviously an advantage when working with tablets from the same cemetery and period of time such as the tablets from Thurii, Pella, and Peloponnesos. What I would like to stress, however, is that as a methodological point of departure, one should not assume that they belong to the same cult or have the same religious background. The present analysis of ritual references in the gold tablets has hopefully served to argue this point.





# Chapter 5

## The Toledo Krater, Virgil, and Orphism

### 5.1 Introduction

The *bricoleur*-theory, the application of which I have argued for in the last few chapters, should not only be applied in the study of the gold tablets but also to other religious texts from the Greco-Roman world. The importance of local, and individual, adaptations and preferences in the shaping of a particular text should always, if possible, be emphasized. This focus on regionality is, in my opinion, a good starting point for any textual investigation. With regard to the gold tablets, the clearest example of regional uniformity is found in the Peloponnese.<sup>1</sup> Applied to the gold tablets it poses questions which we have, until now, considered only briefly: What is the relationship between the gold tablets and their immediate cultural context and to what extent is the immediate cultural context important for the reconstruction of the tablets' eschatologies? In order to take a closer look at this question I will in this chapter examine how the eschatology, of which the gold tablets are usually said to be a product, is connected to the unique image of Dionysos in the Underworld found on the Apulian Toledo krater. Is this image the product of the same eschatology as the gold tablets? In this particular case parallels have been drawn between the Toledo krater and the Pelinna tablets. Can we find parallels to some of the other tablets? If not, what does this particular case study tell us of the eschatology behind the gold tablets?

As I have tried to emphasize so far, the gold tablets should be treated as products of their own environment. However, since the gold tablets most probably

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Two.

were distributed by itinerant *manteis*, some of whom must have crossed the regional boundaries, an element of cross-regional influences must be taken into consideration. That is, the gold tablets were not only local texts, but also texts used in various places perhaps adjusted to fit specific local beliefs. This is where the *bricoleur* approach becomes important. If the gold tablets are balanced between local and Panhellenic contexts, the producers were eclectic when they used a text and adapted it to fit their own environment, sometimes by adding ideas and elements from other texts. But how much weight should the different contexts have in the search for the tablets function and meaning? Is it possible to separate local elements in the gold tablets from the panhellenic ones?<sup>2</sup> If not, how is it possible to describe the eschatology behind the gold tablets? And, finally, to what extent can the eschatology behind the gold tablets, either in general or from one specific region, be found in later texts? As an example to the latter question of how the eschatology behind the gold tablets, often described as Orphic-Dionysiac, is connected to later texts I have chosen to take a closer look at the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, a text where many scholars have found elements of an Orphic-Dionysiac eschatology. Some scholars have also found parallels in specific passages in the gold tablets. This needs to be examined more closely.

In this chapter, then, I will try to address these questions mainly through two studies, one on the relationship between the Toledo krater and the gold tablets, and one on Virgil's alleged use of Orphic-Pythagorean beliefs in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. I begin, however, with a brief survey of some of the eschatological beliefs of the region from which some of the longest and indeed the oldest gold tablets have been found, Magna Graecia, understood here as comprised of both the southern part of Italy and Sicily.<sup>3</sup> As will become clear in the two case studies following this survey, it is usually gold tablets from this region which are used to show parallels with other material. How does the gold tablets found in this region conform to the southern Italian eschatological context? To what degree do we recognize particular southern Italian features (given that they exist) in the tablets? Are they different from gold tablets from other regions? With these questions in mind we turn to the brief

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<sup>2</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:240 argue against this since the different "types" of texts found on the gold tablets, vademecums, proxies, etc., are not bound explicitly to any region but are found in "all kinds of combinations".

<sup>3</sup> That southern Italy and Sicily should be treated as one is stressed by Gigante 1996:499, 502, 505; Shapiro 2002:88. By southern Italy I mean everything south of, and including, Cumae, and Apulia.

survey of southern Italian eschatology in order to see what, if any, features can be described as typical for this region.

## 5.2 Eschatology in Magna Graecia

The Greek colonization of what was later referred to as Magna Graecia began with the founding of Cumae, primarily as a port of trade with the Etruscans, around 740 BC. Cumae was founded by Euboeans from Chalkis and Eretria, and in the second half of the eighth century BC other Greek poleis established colonies in the area. Among the most famous the Corinthians founded Syracuse in 733 BC while the Achaeans and Lokrians founded Sybaris, Croton, Metapontum, and Locri. These colonies were all seen as independent from the start although certain favours were expected by the mother polis. The relations between the mother polis and its colony were, however, not always amicable as the political governments of the two cities often followed separate lines of development.<sup>4</sup> This independence extended also to the religious sphere as we can see cult developments and emphases on deities which are different from what we find on mainland Greece, although the colonists originally brought their cults with them.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most famous example of this is the joint cult of Aphrodite and Persephone in Locri where the former was seen as a god of birth and the latter was worshipped as a Queen of the Underworld and a protector of fertility and marriage, an aspect of the goddess which is only found at Locri.<sup>6</sup> Pia Guldager Bilde sees religious developments, especially connected to eschatology, in Magna Graecia and other Greek colonies (especially the in the Black Sea region) as "an element of a diasporic consciousness."<sup>7</sup> Marianne Prohászka, who has worked on the excavation of the necropolis at Metapontum, seems to agree when she claims that various cults concerned with the chthonic sphere flourished because of the creativity

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<sup>4</sup> An example is provided by Thucydides where a polis and one of its (former) colonies end up on opposing sides of a struggle, e.g. 1.24 ff.

<sup>5</sup> "[D]ivinities only existed at two different levels of cultic reality: local and Panhellenic.", Sourvinou-Inwood 1978:102.

<sup>6</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1974:133, 136, 1978:104-105, 111, 120-121; Schmidt 1996:456. Diod. Sic. 27.4.3 described this sanctuary as the most remarkable of all in Italy.

<sup>7</sup> Bilde 2007:13.

and the identity of Magna Graecia as a region.<sup>8</sup> A closer look at some of these cults or movements seems to be in order.

Pythagoreans had a strong presence in Magna Graecia, especially at Croton, at least until their persecution in the middle of the fifth century BC.<sup>9</sup> As we have seen earlier in this thesis, Pythagoreanism was concerned with many of the doctrines or questions that are also associated with Orphism. This has led many scholars to conclude that Orphism originated in Magna Graecia, mingled with Pythagorean doctrines, and then spread to the rest of the Greco-Roman world.<sup>10</sup> One of the most important sources used to reconstruct this Orphic cult has been the gold tablets. Whether these should be considered Orphic or not has already been discussed earlier in this thesis.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of what we choose to call the gold tablets from Magna Graecia, their content is of an eschatological character where initiation into a specific cult was seen as important in order to attain a blissful afterlife. We find the same concern with the afterlife on the famous funerary inscription from a necropolis at Cumae which forbids anyone not initiated into the cult of Dionysos to be buried there.<sup>12</sup> Incidentally it is within sight of Cumae that Virgil has his hero Aeneas descend to the underworld in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. This journey has been interpreted by many as an allusion to an initiation, although the question of which cults Virgil refers to remains unclear.<sup>13</sup> Dionysos' strong position in the region is also attested by Diodorus Siculus who tells us that one of the four main streets of Thurii was named after him when this panhellenic colony was founded in 443 BC.<sup>14</sup> Also to be considered is the "Dionysiac atmosphere", as Burkert calls it, on several funeral

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<sup>8</sup> Prohászka 1995:217. Prohászka lists four major cults which she considers to be the most important in the region during the fifth and fourth century BC: 1. Dionysos, Orphism, and Pythagoreanism, 2. Cults of Demeter and Persephone, 3. Chthonic aspect of Hera, 4. Chthonic aspect of Aphrodite (also known from mainland Greece, see Farnell 1896-1909 II:652-653). The importance of Orphism is based upon the gold tablets found in Magna Graecia whom she considers to be Orphic.

<sup>9</sup> Iambl. *VP* 85.

<sup>10</sup> The list is long and I will only give a few examples here; Gruppe 1906 II:1033 believed that Orphism originated in Croton and thereafter mingled with Pythagoreanism; Guthrie 1950:314, 1993 [1952]:172; Nilsson and Croon in the *OCD*, 2nd ed.; Watkins 1995:277 on the overlap between Orphism and Pythagoreanism, see also the Venn-diagram in Burkert 1977:7.

<sup>11</sup> See chapter 2 and 3.

<sup>12</sup> οὐ θέμις ἐν|τοῦθα κείσθ|αι {1} μὴ τὸν βε|βαχχευμέ|νον, Bottini 1992:59. Dionysos was one of the most popular deities in the region, cf. Soph. *Ant.* 1119, imported to Cumae from Euboeia, Wilamowitz 1931 II:65. Moreover, according to Livy 39.8-19, it was in the southern parts of Italy, in Campania, that the Bacchic organization which the Roman senate outlawed in 186 BC had its roots. We do not know for certain, however, to what extent this cult emphasized eschatology. Sicily, on the other hand, seems to have had almost no Dionysos cults before the fourth century BC, Zuntz 1971:94 n1.

<sup>13</sup> Solmsen 1972:39; Luck 1973:150 ff. We will return to Aeneas' descent later in this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Diod. Sic. 12.10.7.

vases from this region.<sup>15</sup> Another important deity among the inhabitants of Magna Graecia was Persephone. Besides the role she played at Locri, she was also known as a releaser, *lysios*, a function normally ascribed to Dionysos.<sup>16</sup> Persephone's role as *lysios* in Magna Graecia might explain the earrings found in a tomb in San Vito di Luzzi, one inscribed with ΚΟΡ[Η the other ΛΥΣ[ΙΟΣ, and perhaps also the role she plays on four of the gold tablets from Thurii.<sup>17</sup> Returning to Locri, many of the *pinakes* retrieved from the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Persephone show the latter seated besides Hades in the Underworld as well as scenes from her abduction which emphasizes her chthonic aspect.<sup>18</sup> Such *pinakes*, also with scenes from the abduction, have also been found at other sites in Magna Graecia, among these Hipponion, Caulonia, Croton, Syracuse, Naxos, and Selinus.<sup>19</sup> The terracotta figurine found in a grave at Locri depicting a dancing woman with a *tympanon* attached to her left arm should also be noted.<sup>20</sup> Richard Olmos see this and a similar figurine excavated from a tomb in Metapontum, where the woman is seated brandishing a *tympanon* in her left hand, as depictions of maenads, female initiates in the Bacchic mysteries, the former representing the initiate's dance, the latter the eternal rest felt after initiation.<sup>21</sup>

Dionysiac cults were also present in the region, and for this reason a few words on these cults in general should be said. Although it is believed that the cults shared some beliefs the mere spread of cults, both geographically and chronologically, makes it probable that we will encounter differences in the way people related to Dionysos in eschatological matters. We should not take for granted that they shared any concrete beliefs or doctrines other than the fact that they relied, to

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<sup>15</sup> Burkert 1985:295. The vases will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Dieterich 1969 [1893]:110-111; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:97 ff., 2008:69 ff.; Edmonds 2004a:58.

<sup>17</sup> Dated to the late Hellenistic/early Roman period by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:16, 2008:3, and the fifth century BC by S. Ferri, in Bottini 1992:57. Drawings in Bottini 1992:57. Bottini believes the inscriptions refer to Persephone (Κόρη) and Dionysos (Λύσιος), both central figures of "salvation". On Persephone as "releaser" see Eur. *Rhes.* 970-971. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:216-217, 2008:166 propose to read Κόρης and Λυσίου meaning that the owner was consecrated to Kore and "the releaser".

<sup>18</sup> On the *pinakes* from Locri see Prückner 1968, e.g. abb. 11, 14, tafel 22.1, 25.5 (with Dionysos in the underworld, to which we shall return shortly). Roman writers located the place where Persephone was abducted by Hades to Enna, Sicily. Cicero described Sicily as the sacred to Demeter and Persephone, Diod. Sic. 5.32 and Cic. *Verr.* 4.106-107.

<sup>19</sup> Shapiro 2002:84.

<sup>20</sup> Museo Nazionale di Reggio Calabria 4823. Picture in Moret 1993:317, fig. 6. Drawing and discussion in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:307-310, 2008:294-297.

<sup>21</sup> Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:286, 308-310 (drawing of the Metapontum figurine p. 309), 2008:294-297 (drawing of the Metapontum figurine p. 296).

a greater or lesser degree, on Dionysos to make the transition from life to death as easy as possible. As Albert Henrichs stresses: "The so-called 'religion of Dionysus' is a convenient modern abstraction, the sum total of the god's numerous facets, symbols and cults. Dionysus had no central priesthood, no canonical books, and not even a panhellenic shrine of his own. His cults were regional and emphasized different aspects of the god."<sup>22</sup> This means that even though the local Dionysiac cults were very organized "[i]nformation about religious contacts between worshippers of Dionysus in different regions is scarce."<sup>23</sup> This can be illustrated by referring to the different emphases found in the bone tablets of Olbia (with their mention of Dionysos who is somehow connected with the cycle of life as well as with the *orphikoi* or at least something Orphic<sup>24</sup>, who are named as such for the first time in the ancient material), the gold tablets from Hipponion (which mentions the *bakkhoi*, but not Dionysos and there is certainly no mention of *orphikoi* or Orpheus but of Mnemosyne and the deceased as a son of Gaia and Ouranos), and the inscription in Cumae (belonging to a necropolis in which we have found no gold tablets or anything else that suggests that its inhabitants shared any concrete eschatological thoughts with the Hipponion cult).<sup>25</sup>

The differences in Dionysiac eschatology is seen when examining the evidence in a chronological perspective as well. Cole, through her examination of Dionysiac epitaphs, argues that "the definite promise of a special status for the Bacchic initiate in the afterlife are missing in the later Dionysiac material dated after the third century B. C."<sup>26</sup> It seems rather that most of the epigraphical material from the Hellenistic and Roman period concerns cult regulations, donations from private persons, budget, and various other practical issues.<sup>27</sup> In grave epitaphs Dionysos is more often seen as a deity connected to the joys of life, especially in the form of wine,

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<sup>22</sup> Henrichs 1983:151. This is also pointed out by Cole: "the individuals who practiced what we call Bacchic mysteries may not always have shared the same expectations.", Cole 1993:281.

<sup>23</sup> Henrichs 1983:152. According to H. S. Versnel this lack of contact between cults or clubs in the Hellenistic period is to be expected, Versnel 1990:142.

<sup>24</sup> Rusjaeva 1978:89. West 1982:21-22 reads ΟΡΦΙΚΩΝ instead. This debate is not important for us here, see Chapter Two.

<sup>25</sup> "There are, to my knowledge, no epitaphs saying that although earth hides the body of the Dionysiac initiate, the soul has found the special cypress tree, has drunk of the cool water of Memory, or has reached the road of the *bakkhoi*.", Cole 1993:292-3. Parker 1995:485 believes that the inscription at Cumae should be seen as Orphic.

<sup>26</sup> Cole 1993:278.

<sup>27</sup> Cole 1993:279.

rather than a deity securing a blissful afterlife for the dead soul.<sup>28</sup> Thus we see that Dionysos' power and sphere of influence are more related to life than to death in much of the later epigraphical evidence.<sup>29</sup> It is also striking that many of the epitaphs from the Hellenistic and Roman periods that actually relate the soul's journey to its rightful place among the blessed ones, the stars, in the heavens etc. do not mention Dionysos.<sup>30</sup> The exception to this is found in connection with children's graves. In the Roman period we see that the initiated dead child is promised a place among Dionysos' thiasos even after death, but this seems to be a phenomenon restricted to children.<sup>31</sup>

For the period before 300 BC, then, I believe we could agree with Versnel who concludes that the goal of the Dionysiac cults of the Classical period was "the posthumous bliss of those initiated into the secrets of the cult."<sup>32</sup> Dionysos appears thus as a *lysios*, as he is described by Damascius and Proclus several centuries later.<sup>33</sup> The main common denominator for the Dionysiac cults was, I think, their reliance, to a greater or lesser extent, on Dionysos to guide and protect their lives in this world and/or the next.

Closely connected to Magna Graecia's chthonic cults are their philosophers, many of who were also deeply concerned with eschatology and the fate of the soul. Their treatment of the subject shows us how fragile the boundary between philosophy and religion actually were. A good example of this would be the Pythagoreans who are described by ancient writers as everything from mathematicians to strict

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<sup>28</sup> Cole 1993:282, 293. The orator Himerius, devastated by the death of his son, blames Dionysos for not having protected him, *Or.* 8.7; 8.18.

<sup>29</sup> As Burkert points out Hellenistic ruler cults often used Dionysiac symbols when displaying their power and might before the people: "The experience of "epiphany" came to concentrate on the person of the ruler who had acted as a "saviour" and inaugurated an age of bliss and abundance—a process that easily assumed Dionysiac coloring. Royal display in the great parade took the form of a Dionysiac *pompe*.", Burkert 1993:268. The ruler, temporarily identified as Dionysos, thus acts as a protector of the people in life. Paus. 8.19.2 provides us with an example when he explains the meaning of Dionysos *Lysios* as "the one who liberates man from chafing bonds and *daily sorrows*" (Tr. Peter Levi, my emphasis).

<sup>30</sup> For examples see Lattimore 1962:31-43.

<sup>31</sup> At least to a certain degree. In the first century A. D. Plutarch writes that initiates of Dionysiac mysteries believed that there will be both rewards and punishments after death (*Cons. ad ux.* 611d), and we have several funerary inscriptions on children's graves from the Roman imperial period saying that the dead child will be at the head of a dionysiac *thiasos* in Hades, see Cole 1993:288 ff. These testimonies and that of Himerius contrast each other in this matter. There were probably no general or coherent dionysiac eschatology reserved for children, but rather several (or at least two) conflicting ones.

<sup>32</sup> Versnel 1990:152. "By the fifth century at the latest there are Bacchic mysteries which promise blessedness in the afterlife.", Burkert 1985:294.

<sup>33</sup> Damascius *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.11 = OF 350 Bernabé; Procl. *In Ti.* 3.297.3 = OF 348 (I) Bernabé.



vegetarian ascetics, all with an interest in the intersection of science and religion. Besides Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans (among them Alcmaeon of Croton), notable philosophers from the region include the Eleatic philosophers, with perhaps Parmenides as this “school’s” foremost representative, and Empedokles of Akragas, Sicily. A recurring theme among many of the region’s philosophers during the fifth and fourth century BC concerned the immortality of the soul. The soul, being immortal, was for that reason, according to Alcmaeon (fifth century BC), similar to the divine.<sup>34</sup> Empedokles (c. 492-432 BC) went further and argued that the soul was indeed of a divine origin and that everyone’s aim should be to return, through several stages of reincarnation, to this origin.<sup>35</sup> The belief in the divinity of the soul entails that our true potential can never be fulfilled while incarnated. This means that our lives on earth are something to be endured or even suffered, while we prepare ourselves for the final ascension. Thus, a negative view of life, in contrast to the positivity of death (seen as a new life), emerges, as can be observed in some of the other preserved fragments of Empedokles.<sup>36</sup> Life is described not just as something negative, but also as a punishment. A similar belief is reported on two occasions by Plato. In the *Gorgias* he ascribes the belief that the body is a tomb for the soul to certain “wise men”. Plato then tells us that this doctrine, which he also refers to in the *Cratylus*, was elaborated by a Sicilian or Italian who recalled a myth about the Danaides and their endless quest in Hades, a myth Plato sees as a metaphor for the fate of the soul.<sup>37</sup> Important for these philosophers, and the idea of life as a punishment, was reincarnation. The soul, then, had to go through several lives, and afterlives, in order to become pure enough to return to its divine origin.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> 24 A 12 DK.

<sup>35</sup> E.g. 31 B 112, verse 4-5: θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός, 117, 126, 146 DK.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. 31 B 115, 118, 119, 124, 145 DK.

<sup>37</sup> Pl. *Gorg.* 493a, *Cra.* 400c. The myth of the Danaides in the Underworld is normally connected to initiation as they were seen as the uninitiated *par excellence*, and thus punished for this. According to Sassi 1996:515 Plato could be referring to either Empedokles or Philolaos, but see the latter as more probable since Plato later in the *Gorg.* 493d refers to “the same school” as the Italian or Sicilian in 493a. Empedokles had no school as we know of, Philolaos, on the other hand, is normally described as a Pythagorean. Clem. Al. *Strom.* 3.17 ascribed this doctrine (wrongly according to Bremmer 2002:13) to Philolaos. This conclusion is, however, a bit uncertain since Empedokles was also associated to the Pythagoreans by many ancient authors, Timaeus *FGH* 566 F 14; Diog. Laert. 8.54. The doctrine is not the same as the one Plato ascribes to Orphic poets in the *Cra.* 400c.

<sup>38</sup> As described by Empedokles. On reincarnation see also Parmenides 28 B 13 DK. Cf. also an inscription from Posidonia, published in 1853, ΤΑΣΘΕΟΤΣΠΑΙΔΟΣΕΜΙ, which Wilamowitz transcribed as τᾶς θεοῦ τᾶς παιδός εἶμι, *IG* 15.665.

Some of these themes are found on the gold tablets from Magna Graecia. The parallels are evident especially if we compare the Thurii tablets, except the “C tablet” from Thurii, with Empedokles, especially in the claim of the soul’s divinity.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, although not much can be deduced from this, Empedokles is supposed to have lived for a period in Thurii right after it was founded.<sup>40</sup> As we have seen earlier, the general pessimism and negative view of life, contrasted with the belief in the immortality (and divinity) of the soul and death as something positive, is also dominant in the Thurii tablets.<sup>41</sup>

The same claim and hope for immortality and divinity is, as I have argued earlier, also found in the mnemonic tablets of this region in the deceased’s genealogical claim to be “a Son of Earth and Starry Heaven”.<sup>42</sup> There is, however, a difference since these tablets do not necessarily assume that the deceased will achieve his or her goal automatically through initiation, but is in need of a *vademecum* in order to navigate successfully through Hades. This might suggest an even more pessimistic view of the afterlife, but in the end it seems that a favorable result is expected. While the Thurii tablets do not even hint at a possible punishment in the afterlife, the mnemonic tablets are based on that possibility. An interesting exception to this might be glimpsed in tablet 1.3 Thurii 1 where the deceased is advised to keep to the right. This tablet, then, displays a curious combination of the claim for the immortality and divinity of the soul with the directional advice from the mnemonic tablets. It is difficult to know what this means other than we might see in this tablet a meeting of two different traditions. In general, however, the Thurii tablets emphasize the sufferings of life, while the Mnemonic tablets seem to concentrate fully on death and the transition between this and a blissful afterlife. Gold tablets of the latter type have also been found outside of Magna Graecia, in Thessaly and Crete, the latter being abbreviated versions of the longer southern Italian ones. The “Malibu” tablet from Thessaly is slightly longer than the Cretan ones, while the longest tablet found

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<sup>39</sup> Pointed out by Zuntz 1971:252, 257. Compare 1.3 Thurii 1, line 4: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, and 1.3 Thurii 3, line 9: θεὸς δ’ ἔση ἀντὶ βροτοῖο with Empedokles B 112 DK: θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός.

<sup>40</sup> Diog. Laert. 8.2.1. Diod. Sic. 12.9.2 reports that there at one point lived over 300 000 people in Thurii. Herodotos and Alexis count among these.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 2.6. The Rome tablet is a bit different, perhaps because of its late date, but it nevertheless retains a plea for immortality, although in a slightly more modest fashion, 2.1 Rome, line 4: Καικιλία Σεκουδεῖνα, νόμωι ἴθι δια γεγῶσα.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 4.4 for a discussion on this passage.

outside Magna Graecia was found in Pharsalos. The tablets from Hipponion, Petelia, and Entella seem to convey the same message and emphasize the same things as the other mnemonic tablets.<sup>43</sup>

A short survey, as the one attempted here, will never be able to present all aspects or representations of eschatology from such a complex region as Magna Graecia. The plurality of cults, both public and private, which are found in Magna Graecia are, however, not confined to this region. Especially when it comes to mystery cults mainland Greece also had its fair share. One need only mention the cults at Eleusis, Lebadeia, and also at Samothrake, although only the two former seem to have any connection to eschatology.<sup>44</sup> In addition there were numerous Dionysiac and other cults were widespread, not to mention the itinerant *manteis*.<sup>45</sup> Still, there seems to be certain trends and indications in the material we have just surveyed which are also identified by other scholars as typical of southern Italy. Bremmer singles out the belief in the immortality of the soul, while Bottini concentrates on the idea of salvation as typical for the region, although both are careful not to treat these ideas as exclusive to Magna Graecia.<sup>46</sup> Bilde sees some of the same tendencies in material from the Black Sea region, especially in Olbia. This has made her suggest that a development of an eschatology which emphasizes the immortality of the soul and its salvation might be the result of colonization, or rather “an element of a diasporic consciousness”.<sup>47</sup>

Regardless of the reasons behind this specific development, it seems that the gold tablet texts convey similar messages as many of the other texts from the region which are concerned with the afterlife. At least when it comes to the Thurii tablets. Consider for example Persephone’s role at Eleusis and the fact that Thurii was, ultimately, an Athenian colony. The emphases on Persephone and Eubouleus on the Thurii tablets make it tempting, in fact, to suggest a connection between the tablets

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<sup>43</sup> The only difference which might be of some importance is the absence of the *Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἥριον· ἐπεὶ ἄμ μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι* verse outside of Magna Graecia, 1.1 Hipponion, line 1; 1.2 Petelia, lines 12-13.

<sup>44</sup> The mysteries at Samothrake was connected to the well-being of sailors, wine-drinking, and metalworking, see Cole 1984:2.

<sup>45</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>46</sup> Bremmer 2002:13-14; Bottini 1992:104.

<sup>47</sup> Bilde 2007:13. See also p. 4: ” the two regions were both Greek satellites planted in non-Greek territories situated in the peripheries of the Greek world, and in both regions did the indigenous population represent challenges as well as sources of inspiration for the Greek settlers.”

and the Eleusinian mysteries.<sup>48</sup> Shapiro has argued that there is no evidence of any Mysteries of Demeter like the cult we find in Eleusis in Magna Graecia.<sup>49</sup> It can, however, be argued that the Demeter cult in Cumae was influenced by the Eleusinian mysteries.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, as Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal rightly point out, the absence of any gold tablets from Attica speaks against any direct connection.<sup>51</sup> The mnemonic tablets of which shorter versions are found outside Magna Graecia, show us that there are no clear-cut boundaries in the question of regional features in the gold tablets and that it is dangerous to generalize.<sup>52</sup> The Thurii tablets focus on Persephone, a deity who held a strong position in the region. However, her presence in eschatological texts, such as the gold tablets, should not be surprising since she was widely known as the Queen of the Underworld. This is probably the reason why we find her on two of the tablets from Crete, the Pelinna tablets, possibly in one of the tablets from Pherae in the form of Brimo, and on two of the Macedonian tablets.<sup>53</sup> Her presence need not mean that these tablets are connected to the same cult, but rather that Persephone, not surprisingly, was felt to be an obvious deity to address by the inscribers of these gold tablets. The tablets of Magna Graecia, then, seems to combine themes which are recurring in contemporary philosophical or religious works from this region (immortality of the soul, divinity) and, at the same time, themes that are not bound to any geographical boundaries.

That themes are recurring in some of the tablets regardless of geographical context leads to at least two possible interpretations of their religious background. One is to see this as evidence for a uniformity which can be traced back to one specific movement that, although clearly a minority based on the quantity of textual evidence (the gold tablets), exercised influence over vast areas from Sicily in the west

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<sup>48</sup> On this connection see Graf 1974:5, 90 f.; Calame 2006:271 ff., 279 ff.; Zuntz 1971:412 believes that some of the Apulian vases also had Eleusinian imagery, such as the fourth century Apulian krater from Canosa now in Munich depicting Orpheus in the underworld with what has been interpreted as a family of initiates behind him. According to Zuntz, they were probably initiated at Eleusis. Schmidt 1975:119 refrains from connecting this group to any specific mysteries.

<sup>49</sup> Shapiro 2002:93 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Helène Whittaker through personal communication.

<sup>51</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:194 for further arguments as well. To what extent, if any, the Eleusinian mysteries influenced other mystery cults such as the one in Thurii is, of course, impossible to determine. See however Leventi 2007 who argues for the presence of the Eleusinian mysteries combined with "Dionysiac-Orphic mysteries" on the Mondragone relief from Campania. See also de La Genière 1988:161 and the Eleusinian iconography on a stamnos vase, also from Campania.

<sup>52</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:240.

<sup>53</sup> 3.1 Eleutherna 5; 3.4 Sfakaki 1; 5.3 Pelinna 1-2; 5.4 Pherae 1; 6.1 Pella 1; 6.5 Vergina.

to Lesvos in the east. Earlier in this thesis I have argued against this view and opted for an approach where the producers of the gold tablets should, primarily, be seen as eclectic.<sup>54</sup> The obvious similarities between, say, the Hipponion and the Cretan tablets do, however, suggest a common written source. At the same time, it is obvious that this text was used differently in these places. At the same time, the obvious differences between, say, the tablet of Petelia and the Peloponnesian ones suggest that there were more than one movement who resorted to textual evidence for their initiation in order to attain a blissful afterlife. The *bricoleur* theory might explain both the similarities, as we know that some of the manteis travelled vast distances, and the differences, as many of the tablets address rather obvious themes (the chthonic powers, ritual status). This second possible interpretation takes both similarities and differences into account. Accordingly it is possible to see some of the gold tablets as connected to one cult, such as three of the Thurii tablets, or at least to have derived from a single text which then has been used differently from place to place, such as the mnemonic tablets. However, the different groups of Thurii, Peloponnesian, and the owners of the mnemonic tablets need not belong to the same religious movement only because they employed small gold tablets to write their messages on. Instead I believe they should be seen as different eschatologies, or rather different solutions to the question of how one is supposed to overcome the horrors of Hades described in the epics. The solutions to this problem were many, as is witnessed by the material from Magna Graecia, but also from the works of Plato, Pindar, and the ideas attributed to Pythagoras, to name but a few.

### **5.3 Orpheus on the Apulian Underworld vases**

The Underworld was a popular motif on southern Italian vases as well, especially on those from Apulia. Since most of the vases have been found in graves the motifs have often been seen as conveyers of eschatological meaning. For this reason they have played an important role in discussions regarding eschatology not only in Magna Graecia, but the entire Graeco-Roman world. Vases from this region are today categorized into at least five different styles: Apulian, Lucanian, Sicilian, Campanian,

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<sup>54</sup> See chapter 2.

and Paestan.<sup>55</sup> Among the approximately ten thousand Apulian vases recovered, which amounts to half the total amount of preserved south Italian vases, there are a wide variety of themes depicted. Prevalent among these are scenes taken from tragedies, the most popular being the ones by Euripides, or the myths on which many of these tragedies were based.<sup>56</sup> The painters seem to have combined, and sometimes even manipulated, several characters and scenes from one play into one synoptic composition in order to capture what the painter saw as the main point of the tragedy.<sup>57</sup> The guidelines are not clear, but, as Oliver Taplin remarks, it was probably done through a combination of the painter's stylistic preferences and the local reperformance of the tragedy.<sup>58</sup> An important factor in the choice of motif was probably also the preferences of the buyers, in most cases the family of the deceased in whose grave many of the vases were put since the majority of the Apulian vases probably were made especially as grave goods.<sup>59</sup>

Another popular motif was various funerary scenes, focusing on the deceased as situated in a *naiskos* and his or her transition to the Underworld, especially from the last half of the fourth century and on.<sup>60</sup> Many of these scenes contain ivy, thyrsi, tambourines, and plants, all hinting at Dionysiac symbolism. Connected to the *naiskos* scene were depictions of the Underworld, as is seen on many of the remarkable vases painted by the Darius painter and his circle, which includes his pupil the Underworld

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<sup>55</sup> Trendall 1989:7; Schmidt 1996:443, 447.

<sup>56</sup> Euripides' fame in Magna Graecia is illustrated by the anecdote known from Plut. *Nic.* 29.2-3 where it is said that the Syracusans, during the Peloponnesian war, were willing to spare the lives of those captured Athenians who were able to recite considerable portions from Euripides' plays, Trendall 1991:153.

<sup>57</sup> An example of the manipulation or changing of a scene is given by Taplin 1993:22 where he discusses a scene on an Apulian vase depicting Medea in a chariot while the bodies of her slain children are left behind, whereas in Euripides' tragedy the bodies are present in the chariot, Eur. *Med.* 1377-1388. This is also seen on a mid-fourth century Apulian vase (attributed to the Group of Oxford G269. Ruvo, Jatta Collection 1617) depicting Pentheus in his fight against the maenads where one of the latter is seen holding a sword contrary to the tragedy, and other vases, where the maenads tear him apart, see figure 126 in Shapiro 1994:8, 176. See also Trendall 1991:170; Trendall and Cambitoglou 1991-92 I:145; Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999:98.

<sup>58</sup> Taplin 1993:23. Thus "[t]he painters draw on the tragedy but do not adhere to it; they are free of the temporal sequentiality of the play.", Taplin 1993:27. Trendall 1991:176-177 remarks that although scenes from plays rarely include a stage, various "props" seems to influence theatrical influence.

<sup>59</sup> Schmidt 1996:448. However, this does not apply to all vases, and we do not know to what extent they were used prior to their interment. See Reusser 2002 I:48 ff., 204 who argues that many of the Attic vases found in Etruscan graves were originally used in sanctuaries or in ordinary households. Although Reusser treats Etruscan material, it is not unthinkable that the same might have occurred in Magna Grecia, and that motifs on vases previously used at symposia now acquired a new meaning in their new funerary context.

<sup>60</sup> Schmidt 1996:449.

painter, both active in the last half of the fourth century BC. These vases often had a *naiskos* situated in the center of the motif, representing either the tomb of the deceased or the house of Hades, with Hades and his wife Persephone inside.<sup>61</sup> Outside the *naiskos* are usually found various inhabitants from the Underworld such as the three judges, Kerberos, and Hermes Psychopompos, as well as famous visitors such as Herakles and Orpheus. The presence of the latter in many of the Underworld compositions has been the subject of debate since the late nineteenth century. Since most of the vases seems to have been produced for the grave, and since Orpheus is connected to eschatology through Orphic cults, it has been debated whether his presence is evidence of the deceased owner's Orphic beliefs, and, consequently, the presence of Orphic cult in Magna Graecia, or if he is just one of many persons associated with the Underworld, because he visited the underworld in order to bring his wife, later known as Eurydike, back from the dead, and was thus included by the painter without any reference to Orphic doctrines or initiations.<sup>62</sup> This debate is of interest to us since knowledge of the vases, in any case, is illuminating for our understanding of the cultural context of the gold tablets. Central in this debate has been a volute krater by the Underworld painter frequently referred to as the Munich krater, dated to 320 BC.<sup>63</sup>

The center of the Munich krater is dominated by the House of Hades wherein we find a seated Hades to the right holding a wand with a bird perched on top in his left hand. He makes a communicative gesture with his right hand towards his wife, Persephone.<sup>64</sup> Persephone, holding her characteristic torch, stands on the left side of

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<sup>61</sup> According to Trendall 1989:266 ff. the *naiskos* was one of three main types of funerary monuments depicted on South Italian vases (excluding Sicily), the other two being the stele and the grave column. An example of an Underworld scene similar to the ones by the Darius and the Underworld painter is seen on an amphora from Tarentum, LIMC Orpheus 78. Here there is no funerary monument present.

<sup>62</sup> Debated at least from the 1890s and onwards in Kuhnert 1895 and Milchhöfer 1894, 1895, see also Dieterich 1969 [1893]:128. Harrison 1991 [1922]:600 ff. saw the Apulian vases depicting Orpheus in the Underworld as evidence for a "lower faith or rather *unfaith* in the popular forms of Orphism" (italics in original, p. 600).

<sup>63</sup> Munich 3297, LIMC Hades 132.

<sup>64</sup> Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:302, 2008:288 connects this gesture to the arrival of Orpheus and speculates whether Hades is addressing Persephone or Orpheus. However, Hades is doing the same gesture on an almost identical composition (inside the *naiskos*) on a krater attributed to the Baltimore painter, dated to 320 BC (John Needles Chester krater, World Heritage Museum 82.6.1; LIMC Hades 134, see Oehlschlaeger-Garvey 1985). Here the gesture of Hades is clearly directed towards Persephone since no one outside the *naiskos* demands the attention of either of the chthonic couple. Cp. also the Underworld scene on an Apulian krater from Altamura now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli 3222 (inv. 81666) where Orpheus is present but neither Persephone or Hades pays him any attention. A similar gesture is seen on an Apulian Volute-krater attributed to a pupil of the Lykourgos painter (Karlsruhe B 4) where Orpheus is seen on the left side of the *naiskos*

the palace, her face turned towards Hades while her body is turned slightly towards Orpheus who is standing, wearing a Phrygian cap and playing his lyre, just outside the left side of the *naiskos*. Elsewhere on the vase famous inhabitants and visitors to the Underworld are portrayed. Sisyphos is seen pushing the rock, Herakles, threatened by Hekate and her torches, has just captured Kerberos and is given directions by Hermes. Flanking this scene are two of the arch-sinners; Sisyphos pushing a stone uphill on the left and Tantalos stretching his left hand up towards an overhanging rock. The three judges of the Underworld (Aiakos, Rhadamanthys, and Minos) are having a conversation immediately above Tantalos. The main reason why this vase, and other vases depicting Orpheus in the Underworld, has been seen by some as Orphic is the group of people standing behind Orpheus. This group is obviously a family consisting of a young boy on the far left accompanied by his mother and father, but the question is why they are depicted in the Underworld so close to Orpheus. Some have identified the family as Orphic initiates who are under the protection of Orpheus as he is about to secure them a happy afterlife by talking to the chthonic couple on their behalf.<sup>65</sup> Before we can reach any conclusions in this matter it will be necessary to take a closer look at two other vases where Orpheus has a clearer role as protector or rather as a benefactor of some kind in order to compare these with the image on the Munich krater.

The first motif, also by the Underworld Painter, is found on a krater in the British Museum in London (from now on referred to as the London krater).<sup>66</sup> The scene is somewhat puzzling, at least when it comes to the identification of one of the main characters on the vase. The vase has two rows of figures, the lowest of which is of interest to us. Here a herm dominates the centre with a figure on the right side, holding a chain attached to Kerberos in his left hand and a lyre in his right. The figure is leaning slightly forward in order to give the lyre to the person on the left side of the herm. This person, presumably the deceased, stretches his right arm towards the lyre in order to receive it. Schmidt first identified the person on the right as Herakles, on

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probably addressed by Hekate who is inside the *naiskos* while a standing Hades converses with a seated Persephone. See also the volute krater attributed to the Baltimore painter, Antikenmuseum Basel inv. BS 464, Schmidt, Trendall and Cambitoglou 1976, pl. 15, detail on pl. 17.

<sup>65</sup> Kuhnert 1895:195 f. portraying Orpheus in Catholic terms as an intermediary figure of salvation, 200; Prohászka 1995:218, denied by Milchhöfer 1894:387, 394. Zuntz 1971:412 saw them as initiates, not in an Orphic cult, but the Eleusinian mysteries. Moret 1993:322 see them as unspecified mythological persons.

<sup>66</sup> British Museum F 270, *LIMC* Orpheus 81, *RVAp* 18/318 (538). Schmidt 1960:22 n26, 58, plate 23.



account of Kerberos, but later changed her mind and identified him as Orpheus who tamed the ferocious guardian with his music.<sup>67</sup>

Why does Orpheus give his lyre to the young man on the left? A possibility, according to Schmidt, is that the scene reflects a reunion of the spouses, a theme she she believes might be represented by the family on the Munich krater as well.<sup>68</sup> This interpretation can be combined with another solution, also offered by Schmidt, which explains the scene in light of Orpheus' musical powers which he used to retrieve his wife from Hades.<sup>69</sup> With the power of Orpheus' music the young man will thus be able to conquer death, symbolized by the herm and Kerberos, and perhaps get his own wife, a figure which is seen on the right side of Orpheus, back from the dead.

The other motif, attributed to the Ganymedes painter, is found on an Apulian amphora dated to around 330-320 BC, now in the Basel Antikenmuseum (henceforth the Basel amphora).<sup>70</sup> The scene is set inside a *naiskos*, probably representing the deceased's grave. A bearded man, representing the deceased, sits on a stool on the right side, holding a wand in his right hand and a cylinder, normally interpreted as a rolled-up papyrus in his left. His right hand gesture is somewhat similar to the one Hades employs on many of the Underworld scenes and is probably meant to signify communication with the other person inside the *naiskos*, Orpheus. Orpheus is wearing his usual Phrygian cap and seems to be playing on his lyre. He is standing on the left side facing the seated man.

The presence of Orpheus and the papyrus in the deceased *naiskos*/tomb have led most scholars to interpret the dead man as an Orphic. The scroll in his left hand is seen as an Orphic text which the deceased wanted to bring with him to the Underworld, perhaps an initiatory or cosmological text like the Derveni papyrus as Olmos cautiously suggests.<sup>71</sup> The connection between the text and Orpheus is indeed suggestive and there is an actual possibility that the dead man was an Orphic in the

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<sup>67</sup> Schmidt 1960:90, 1975:120-121, 1991:35. Trendall and Cambitoglou 1978-82 = *RVAp* 18/318 (538) are uncertain.

<sup>68</sup> Schmidt 1991:36.

<sup>69</sup> Orpheus assumes the function as a "santo protettore", Schmidt 1975:121, 1991:35-36; Eur. *Alc.* 357-362.

<sup>70</sup> Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, inv. no. 540; *LIMC* Orpheus 88, picture in Schmidt, Trendall and Cambitoglou 1976 pl. 11, and description pp. 7-8; see also drawing in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:292, 294, 2008:281, 283.

<sup>71</sup> Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:295, 2008:282.

sense that he had read, or perhaps even written, Orphic texts and saw these as conveyers of eschatological truth.<sup>72</sup>

According to Schmidt's interpretation of the London krater it seems that it has the reunion as a theme and the presence of Orpheus and Kerberos in common with the Munich krater. The differences, however, are quite decisive. First of all, Orpheus is given an active role since he not only shares his own powers with the young man, but also seems to keep Kerberos at bay. Orpheus is also active towards a mortal on the Basel amphora and the relationship between the two is furthermore enhanced since there are no other people present on the vase. If we accept the suggestion that the papyrus on the Basel amphora is Orphic then a common trait between this and the London krater is that Orpheus is giving something of great value to a mortal being, the ability to transgress the borders of death by the gift of music on the London krater, and presumably secret information about initiation, cosmology, or the afterlife on the Basel amphora.

The situation is quite different on the Munich krater. The figure of Orpheus is in fact very similar to his other appearances on Apulian Underworld scenes, regardless of his various surroundings on these vases. Also, there seems to be no contact between the chthonic couple inside the *naiskos* and Orpheus on the outside. More importantly, there is no contact between Orpheus and the family behind him. Instead the family seems to be concentrating on each other and should most probably be interpreted, as Schmidt suggested, as a family reunion scene.<sup>73</sup> In that case the reason for Orpheus' presence in the Underworld on the Munich krater is probably the same as on the other Apulian vases where he is depicted; Orpheus was a popular figure, known for his travels to the Underworld and is therefore a natural choice for the Underworld painters. His presence alone does not imply any eschatological meaning.<sup>74</sup> In vases such as the London and Basel kraters considered above Orpheus is more active and connected to his surroundings, and more importantly the mortals portrayed with him, suggesting that he played more than a mere mythological role as one of the famous visitors to the Underworld known from the myths. The myth alluded to on the Munich krater, and in similar motifs, is most probably his attempt to retrieve his wife back from the realm of the dead. It has been objected that the

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<sup>72</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:65, 161.

<sup>73</sup> Schmidt 1991:34.

<sup>74</sup> Milchhöfer 1894:387; Guthrie 1993 [1952]:187; Zuntz 1971:411.

absence of his wife speaks against such an interpretation, but it is hard to find any other explanation for his presence.<sup>75</sup> Her absence could be explained as a stylistic choice followed by Apulian painters depicting the Underworld in the fourth century BC, or it could perhaps represent the moment when Orpheus pleads his case and thus has not yet been reunited with his wife.<sup>76</sup> This is supported by depictions on volute kraters attributed to the Underworld painter where Orpheus is seen guiding Eurydike through the Underworld at what could be interpreted as a later moment in the myth. Orpheus is depicted with his right hand linked with Eurydike's, the lyre in his left hand. An earlier episode in the myth might perhaps be represented on an Apulian amphora attributed to the Patera painter where Orpheus seems to plead his case to Hades while an unnamed woman is seated behind him observing the pair.<sup>77</sup>

Orpheus' role on the Apulian Underworld vases, then, was, in general, more of a mythological than an eschatological type. On some vases, such as the Basel and the London kraters, his more active role suggests that he had a more specific function than to just "set the stage", as it were, and remind the viewers of the myths connected to the Underworld, as was probably the case with e.g. the Munich krater. Thus for this reason I do not see any connection between these vases and the gold tablets whose function seem to be quite different. Furthermore, as I have repeatedly argued in previous chapters, I cannot see why the gold tablets should be treated as Orphic or have anything to do with Orpheus or Orphism. One recently published Apulian vase

<sup>75</sup> Milchhöfer 1894:394; Moret 1993:319 ff. *contra* Kuhnert 1895:200.

<sup>76</sup> See also Paus. 10.30.2 according to whom Orpheus was a part of Polygnotos' painting of the Underworld while Eurydike, or his wife, was not depicted.

<sup>77</sup> *LIMC* Hades 154, Museo Nazionale Napoli 709, and *LIMC* Hades 156, Hermitage St. Petersburg B 1701 respectively. The name Eurydike is actually present on a fragmentary Apulian vase, now in Karlsruhe, with what appears to be an Underworld scene similar to that depicted on the Munich krater (see Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe B 1550; *LIMC* Orpheus 84 = Antigone 16; *CVA* 2nd ed. pl. 64 (342) 5-6. Details in Moret 1993:320). On one of the fragments a woman is seen seated in a thoughtful position. Above her head one can clearly read ΕΥΡΥΔΙΚΗ. Below her, slightly to the right and left of two pillars which must be the left part of a *naiskos*, presumably belonging to Hades and Persephone since we can read ΦΕΡ[ inside the building, we can read ]ΦΕΥΣ, more than suggests the presence of Orpheus. The fragment most probably belonged to a vase showing the now familiar scene from the Underworld including Orpheus and Eurydike. But is this Orpheus' Eurydike? Moret 1993:321 believes this could be a reference to Eurydike the daughter of Amphiaraios rather than Orpheus' wife since she was not known under this name until the second half of the second century BC, in the anonymous *Epitaph for the poet Bion* 124, see Robbins 1982:16. Earlier stories or references about his katabasis, starting with the reference in Eur. *Alc.* 357-362, only claimed that he went there to retrieve his wife. See also *LIMC* Orpheus 83, a fragmented vase, where Orpheus stands outside the *naiskos* with his lyre. A winged woman stands behind him looking down towards his back. She is named ]ΔΙΚΑ on the vase, but there is a lacune before her name which made Harrison 1927 [1912]:522 suggested that the name should be reconstructed as Eurydike, the wings was explained by Harrison as attributes of Eurydike's *eidolon*. However, as Moret 1993:323 points out, an *eidolon* was usually depicted as much smaller than a human and not always with wings.

has, however, led to new speculations about the connection between these groups of evidence; this is the Toledo krater, to which we now turn.

#### 5.4 The Toledo krater and the eschatologies of the gold tablets

The Toledo krater, dated approximately to 340-330 BC and attributed to the Darius painter, was published in 1992.<sup>78</sup> On the obverse of the krater a young, beardless Dionysos is seen shaking hands with Hades who is seated inside a *naiskos* which is positioned in the centre of the motif. Together with Hades is Persephone, standing to the right of her husband holding her characteristic torch with both hands. Dionysos, wearing a fawnskin cloak and with a narthex staff in his left hand, is followed by his *thiasos*, comprised here of two maenads; Acheta, dancing while holding a tambourine and a *thyrsos*, and Persis, slowly approaching the house of Hades holding a torch and a *thyrsos*. Seated between Persis and the *naiskos* we find the satyr Oinops clutching a drinking horn. On the other side of the *naiskos* Hermes is occupying the space opposite of Dionysos in a casual manner, leaning towards one of the pillars with his right hand. Behind and above Hermes are seen three figures all of whom are known from myths concerning Dionysos: Pentheus engaged in conversation with a seated and horned Aktaion and Agave, leaning lightly against a fountain behind Hermes. Elsewhere on this side are depicted various inhabitants of Hades, such as Kerberos, lying peacefully on the ground directly underneath the *naiskos* to which he is chained. Kerberos is approached by a *paniskos* stretching his right hand out towards the dog while holding a tambourine in his left.<sup>79</sup> The reverse side, also important for the interpretation, shows a young man in the nude, holding a wand in his right hand, a mantle is draped over his left arm in which he also holds a libation bowl (*phiale*), inside a *naiskos*. This is presumably the deceased in whose grave the krater was found. Around the *naiskos* are seen four young people, two on each side, probably in

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<sup>78</sup> Toledo 1994.19 henceforth the Toledo krater; *LIMC* 7 (1994) 315 no. 70. Trendall and Cambitoglou 1991-1992 III:508. I attempted an interpretation of the Toledo krater in a previous article, Torjussen 2006. Since then I have had the chance to rethink a lot of things regarding this vase, some of which I hope will become evident in the following section. The Toledo krater derives its name from the Museum of Art in Toledo (Ohio, USA) where the vase is kept.

<sup>79</sup> See Moret 1993:294-297 and the cover of Edmonds 2004a for pictures of the obverse side. All figures on the obverse are named except Kerberos and the *paniskos*.

mourning and all holding various objects which might have been important for the deceased.<sup>80</sup>

The composition of the scene seems familiar, but this is the first time Dionysos is seen in the Underworld on an Apulian vase. On one of the *pinakes* found at the sanctuary of Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri, Dionysos is also present in the Underworld.<sup>81</sup> Most of these *pinakes* concern marriage, reflecting the main function of the sanctuary. In addition, the *pinakes* depicting Persephone can be divided into three series where one shows different variants of Hades' rape of Persephone, another shows Persephone and Hades seated in their realm, while the third shows various deities paying homage to the newly wed rulers of the Underworld. Two *pinakes* belonging to the latter series shows a seated Persephone on the left holding a cock in her right hand and a stalk of wheat in her left. She is approached by Dionysos who seems to offer her a *kantharos* with his right hand which is probably filled with wine as he is carrying a branch heavy with grapes over his left shoulder.<sup>82</sup> Comparing this scene with the the one on the Toledo krater, where Persephone plays a peripheral role and no offerings or gifts are given by Dionysos, shows, in my opinion, that Dionysos on the *pinakes* is visiting the Underworld for a different reason.<sup>83</sup>

Dionysos' position is similar to the one Orpheus usually has in the Underworld scenes. However, his gesture, the handshake with Hades, signals that he has a more active role in the Underworld than Orpheus had on similar Apulian vases.<sup>84</sup> His function, as has been argued by Johnston and McNiven, and followed by most scholars, is protective. That is, Dionysos is sealing a deal with Hades, visualized

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<sup>80</sup> Picture of the reverse, see Moret 1993:299.

<sup>81</sup> See p. 173 n18 above.

<sup>82</sup> Museo Nazionale di Reggio Calabria no. 58729, height 27 cm.; *LIMC* Hades 58 and 59 (the latter in a very fragmented state).

<sup>83</sup> *Contra* Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:286, 297, 299, 2008:275, 284, 286 who believes that Dionysos on the *pinakes* is approaching Persephone as her son, thus connecting the image to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos, and that they show Dionysos in his mediating role similar to the role he is given on the Toledo krater and in the Pelinna tablets. See Leventi 2007:132 ff. who sees Dionysos' presence on the mid-fourth century BC Mondragone relief (Museo Archeologico Nazionale) as Orphic-Dionysiac. Leventi compares Dionysos' presence here with the Toledo krater and argues that both are inspired by the same eschatology. I have trouble seeing the link and see his presence (if it really is Dionysos and not Iakkhos) on the Mondragone relief as one of at least three instances (including the Toledo krater and the *pinakes*) where Dionysos is in the Underworld, quite possibly on three different "missions". Dionysos/Iakkhos' presence on the relief could be seen as a representative for the initiate, either in general or the person who ordered the relief made.

<sup>84</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:36 argues that this suggests that Orpheus was depicted on the Underworld vases merely as a visitor; Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:306, 2008:293 agrees. This interpretation agrees with the active role Orpheus has on the Basel amphora and the Karlsruhe krater discussed above.

by the handshake, in order to protect the initiated *bakkhoi*, represented by the deceased man depicted on the reverse side of the krater. Dionysos' active role on the krater has made most scholars see the image as a reference to the same eschatology as that found in the Pelinna tablets where the deceased reminds Persephone of this prior arrangement.<sup>85</sup> The Toledo krater has therefore been seen as “the first artistic illustration of [the] eschatological doctrines referred to by the gold tablets”.<sup>86</sup> These eschatological doctrines are variously described by scholars as Orphic, Dionysiac, so-called Orphic, “Orphic”, and Orphic-Dionysiac.<sup>87</sup>

But how close are the connections between the Toledo krater and the Pelinna tablets and between the krater and the corpus of gold tablets in general? As I have argued earlier in this thesis I believe that the corpus of gold tablets represent a variety of ideas and doctrines which share a belief that initiation will lead to a better afterlife. Some tablets might be grouped closer together, such as the ones in Thurii or the ones from Petelia, Hipponion, and perhaps Entella, while others seem to be more unique, such as the Pherai tablets, and the long C tablet from Thurii. In what way does the Toledo krater illuminate the relationships between the tablets and their religious backgrounds? Does the krater provide evidence for Dionysos' role on all gold tablets or just some of them? By focusing on the geographical contexts of both the krater and some of the gold tablets, most notably from Pelinna, Hipponion, and Thurii, the Toledo krater might contribute to our understanding of the complexity and variety of the eschatological backgrounds behind the gold tablets.

Dionysos' active role, mentioned above, and the other characters depicted on both sides of the *naiskos* of Hades and Persephone, marks the Toledo krater as quite different from other Underworld Apulian vases from the same period which scenes include various characters with no apparent eschatological meaning.<sup>88</sup> This does not mean, however, that the other vases lack eschatological motifs or references. Schmidt, for example, interprets the decorations on the vases, especially the flowers inside the

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<sup>85</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 312 ff.; Graf 1993:256; Johnston and McNiven 1996:30; Schmidt 1996:449; Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:286, 305-307, 2008:275, 291-293; Graf and Johnston 2007:161. Moret 1993:304-305 suggested that Dionysos was departing from the Underworld and that the handshake was a farewell gesture. One of the women on the reverse is holding a cluster of grapes and another a tambourine, both symbols connected to Dionysos.

<sup>86</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:35.

<sup>87</sup> See discussion in Chapter Two. Graf 1991:97 although he acknowledges the differences between the tablets, followed by Johnston and McNiven 1996:30-31.

<sup>88</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:26.

central *naiskos* and the flowery ornaments surrounding the scene, as a reference to the belief that “even though we do not yet understand its nature, life exists beyond the grave.”<sup>89</sup> The problem is only that we lack any clear clues on these Apulian vases as to what kind of life awaited the dead beyond the grave. Here the Toledo krater, just like the Basel amphora and, perhaps, the London krater, is different. Key to our understanding of the image, and its relationship to the gold tablets and their eschatologies, lies in the interpretation of the handshake, *dextrarum iunctio* or *dexiosis* (δεξιῶσις), between Dionysos and Hades.

The iconographical meaning of the handshake was to a certain degree determined by the context, but on a general level most scholars agree that it symbolized unity, either between two parts in the making of a political alliance, agreement, through marriage, or the unity between the living and the dead.<sup>90</sup> The latter is seen on a number of Attic grave stelae from the Classical period where the unity is further emphasized by the fact that it is hard to distinguish the living from the dead.<sup>91</sup> Some Apulian vases show that the gesture might also symbolize the unification of relatives or friends in death.<sup>92</sup> Other meanings are also found.<sup>93</sup> On the Toledo krater the gesture refers, as most scholars believe, most probably to an agreement between the two deities.<sup>94</sup> The question is; what kind of agreement? Let us assume, together with Graf, Johnston and McNiven, and Bernabé and Jiménez San

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<sup>89</sup> Schmidt 1996:449. According to Horn 1972:20 f. flowers were often used as a symbol of the happy afterlife, but then often in connection with Eros and Psyche and not with Dionysos.

<sup>90</sup> Moret 1993:304; Johnston and McNiven 1996:27. Handshake in political alliances, see the decree stele depicting the political alliance between Athens and Samos, symbolized by a handshake between Athena and the Samian Hera, Johansen 1951:151 (fig. 76). Agreement see e.g. the Apulian krater (340 BC) depicting the agreement between Oinomaos and Pelops, St. Petersburg Hermitage ы 4323; *LIMC* Oinomaos 9; *RVAp* 2 487.18, pl. 173.2; and Davies 1985:628 for other examples. On the importance of context see Neumann 1965:49 ff.; Davies 1985:629-630, 637; Sourvinou-Inwood 1990:420, 423.

<sup>91</sup> Johansen 1951:54 ff., 149 f. Or it could, in this context, be interpreted as a farewell gesture, Johansen 1951:37, 46-47 on the Stele of Aristylla (National Archaeological Museum, Athens), see also figs. 19-20, 23-25; Davies 1985:628 n8.

<sup>92</sup> E.g. a volute krater attributed to the Ganymedes painter where two people are seen shaking hands inside a *naiskos*, Schmidt, Trendall and Cambitoglou 1976:4-5, pl. 3. Both are white, perhaps depicting the paleness of death, in contrast to the people outside the *naiskos*, most probably the mourners.

<sup>93</sup> An Attic red-figure vase shows Herakles grasping the hand of Peirithoos, probably in order to take him away from the Underworld (*ARV* 532.57, p. 136, fig. 85). As a greeting, Attic red-figure vase attributed to the Nekyia painter (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 08.258.21; *ARV* 1086.1. See further examples in Johnston and McNiven 1996:27 ff.

<sup>94</sup> Moret 1993:304; Johnston and McNiven 1996:27 ff. draws attention to two Attic parallels, one a kalyx krater attributed to the Kadmos painter depicting the agreement between Apollo and Dionysos on sharing the sanctuary at Delphi (St. Petersburg Hermitage St. 1807; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1185.7; *LIMC* Apollo 768a; for picture see Moret 1993:305 (fig. 3)), the other a bell krater attributed to the London painter depicting “a reconciliation of Apollo and Herakles” at Delphi, *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1420.6 (British Museum 1924.7-16.1).

Cristóbal, that the agreement concerns the dead person on the reverse. Even though the similarities with the Pelinna gold tablets would then be quite obvious, there are some differences which may be of some importance. First of all, as Olmos reminds us, it is always difficult to compare textual and iconographical material.<sup>95</sup> Images on Greek vases often combined various elements and myths in innovative ways. This is, furthermore, acknowledged by most scholars as a trait specific for the Darius and Underworld painters.<sup>96</sup> Thus, one should be cautious in drawing a direct line between the Toledo krater and the narrative on the Pelinna tablets. That the Toledo krater is not a direct reference to the Pelinna narrative is seen by the fact that Dionysos is present in the Underworld in the former, but not in the latter. Therefore, if the two sources refer to the same eschatology then they must refer to different moments in time, i.e. that the Pelinna tablets refer to the previous moment depicted on the Toledo krater.<sup>97</sup> Another difference, which is more difficult to explain, are the roles played by the other deities. On the Toledo krater Dionysos is approaching Hades while Persephone is portrayed as a spectator, while in the Pelinna texts the goddess plays a crucial role while Hades is not even mentioned. Again this can be explained as an innovation by the Darius painter, but it is peculiar that it is Hades who is chosen as the god in charge of these decisions when it is Persephone who, not only on the Pelinna tablets, but also on the tablets from Thurii, usually plays this role.<sup>98</sup> Johnston and McNiven explain the handshake between Hades and Dionysos as being dictated by a demand for formality. This formality, they argue, could not have been expressed figuratively between Dionysos and Persephone since they were considered to be mother and son according to “Orphic belief”.<sup>99</sup> But why should this formality only apply to the Pelinna tablets and not the Toledo krater? Furthermore, to assume that the Darius painter, or whoever commissioned the image, believed that Dionysos was the son of Persephone would be to assume that he knew a myth which told this, an assumption we have no evidence for. There are no reasons to assume that Dionysos is portrayed

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<sup>95</sup> Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:285, 2008:275. On the methodological problems see Sourvinou-Inwood 1990:398 ff., esp. conclusion p. 437.

<sup>96</sup> Schauenburg 2000:256-258, more on this later.

<sup>97</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:33.

<sup>98</sup> Persephone, 1.3 Thurii 2, lines 8-9; 5 Thurii 3.1, 7; 6 Thurii 4.1, 6; 7 Thurii 5.1, 6; 2.1 Rome.1; 6.1 Pella 1.1; 6.5 Vergina. There are, of course, some tablets where Hades is the prominent of the two, but they are not found in Magna Graecia but on Crete, see 3.1 Eleutherna 4.1, 3.3 Sfakaki 1.1.

<sup>99</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:34 f.



as the son of Persephone in the Pelinna tablets either.<sup>100</sup> That Persephone and Hades were emphasized differently, also within the same context, is seen, however, on some of the *pinakes* from Magna Graecia, which alternated between which god was depicted in the foreground.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the reason why Dionysos is approaching Hades on the Toledo krater could either be explained as an individual stylistic preference by the Darius painter with no real eschatological meaning, or it could be a reference to another myth in which Dionysos has journeyed to the Underworld.

In myth we are told that Dionysos once visited Hades in order to lead his mother, Semele, from the realm of the dead up to Olympos. The various sources to the myth are silent regarding who he is approaching in the Underworld.<sup>102</sup> In any case, Dionysos is granted his wish and brings Semele with him to Olympos where his mother is given a seat amongst the gods under the guise of her new name Thyone. Graf briefly considers that the scene on the vase may reflect the myth of Dionysos and Semele, but his main point is the eschatological connection between the image and the narrative on the Pelinna tablets. Moret argues that it is improbable that the scene has anything to do with this myth since Semele is absent.<sup>103</sup> This is, however, not necessarily a very strong argument since the same is seen on several Apulian vases with Underworld scenes where Orpheus, often occupying the same position as Dionysos on the Toledo krater, is seen but Eurydike, or his wife, is absent. Just as the Apulian vases depicting Orpheus in the Underworld, many of which have been attributed to the Darius painter's pupil the Underworld painter, might show us a moment prior to the arrangement has been made (for Orpheus to bring his wife back to life), the Toledo krater might show a moment where Semele has not yet been handed over to Dionysos.<sup>104</sup> If so, the handclasp could be interpreted as an agreement ultimately leading to the deification of a mortal. Such a motif would fit quite well on a vase

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<sup>100</sup> See discussion of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos in chapter 3.

<sup>101</sup> *LIMC* Hades 53, 55, 59, 61 all have Hades in the forefront.

<sup>102</sup> This myth is attested by several ancient authors: Diod. 4.25.4; Apollod. 3.5.3; Plut. *De sera* 566a, *Quaest. Graec.* 293c-d; Paus. 2.37.5; schol. *Ar. Ran.* 330, see Moret 1993:301 n21; Graf and Johnston 2007:197 n25. Dionysos descends also in *Ar. Ran.*, this time in order to bring his favourite author Euripides back from the dead. It is difficult to see that it is this episode which is depicted on the vase since the Dionysos in the play never actually meets Hades. Besides, the names engraved on the vase does not appear in the play. Dionysos also appears in the Underworld in the 53. Orphic hymn (Athanasakis). Here it is said that the chthonic Dionysos sleeps in Hades and puts to sleep the pure. The fact that Dionysos is wide awake on the vase speaks against any connection between the two.

<sup>103</sup> Graf 1993:256; Moret 1993:301.

<sup>104</sup> Also pointed out by Leventi 2007:133 n94.

destined for the grave, and would also fit with the eschatological theme of deification which, as we have seen, was popular in Magna Graecia.

But what about the other figures on the vase? Kerberos is self-explanatory as he is present on most Underworld scenes. The paniskos teasing him should be seen as part of Dionysos' *thiasos* together with those on the left side of the *naiskos*, Persis, Oinops, and Acheta. On the other side are found Pentheus, Aktaion, and Agave. Johnston and McNiven have suggested that the positioning of these three on the right side, away from Dionysos and his entourage on the left, refers to their punishment in Hades in contrast to Dionysos' *thiasos*.<sup>105</sup> However, as they point out themselves, the figures are not tortured or suffering. The reason for this, they argue, is that it "would have been representationally difficult and compositionally unpleasing for the painter, striving as he did for symmetry between the right and left sides of the scene."<sup>106</sup> There is certainly a harmony at play here since the same number of people is depicted on each side of the *naiskos*, a symmetry also seen on other Apulian Underworld scenes. The question is whether Johnston and McNiven's suggested reason for symmetry is the only one. According to this explanation, it would be hard to see what role Hermes is playing in the scene since he is positioned opposite Dionysos. Did the opposition-symmetry only apply to the sets of three people on either side of the *naiskos*? I believe Dionysos and Hermes are part of the symmetry and that it need not have any deeper eschatological reason behind it. Dionysos is placed on the left side of the *naiskos*, as is often Orpheus. Following him is his *thiasos*. Other vases also show that at times when the chthonic couple is approached in the Underworld scenes, it always takes place from the left.<sup>107</sup> The group on the right side, then is not necessarily placed there to symbolize the opposite of Dionysos and his *thiasos*, but rather to create the stylistic symmetry which is seen on other Apulian Underworld vases. Even if we assume that they symbolize a fate which is contrary to the followers of Dionysos, it seems odd that the Darius painter should choose three characters from the *Bacchae* to symbolize, as Johnston and McNiven argues, the uninitiated. It seems that the Danaides was usually used for this purpose. Instead the group on the right could be seen as a reference to the the most famous play by the most famous playwright,

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<sup>105</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:27, 34 f.

<sup>106</sup> Johnston and McNiven 1996:35 n33. See also Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:306, 2008:293.

<sup>107</sup> This is seen also on the two Orpheus vases discussed above, the Basel amphora and the London krater. In both cases the active person is placed to the left.

Euripides, an author who was, as we have seen, greatly admired and whose plays provided popular motifs for Apulian vases.

It is, of course, almost impossible to settle questions as to what motivation the painter had when he chose the motif and certain characters in it. It is also important to bear in mind that a motif such as the one on the Toledo krater, might have more than one meaning or reference. A possibility which might be considered is that the Darius painter combined two popular motifs, the Underworld with Dionysos and other characters from the *Bacchae*, in order to convey a more eschatological theme fitted for the grave; deification, here visualized as the deification of Semele.<sup>108</sup> We have many examples that the Darius painter combined themes in this way, and I believe that the same might have been done here.<sup>109</sup> As mentioned above, the Darius painter, and his pupil the Underworld painter, is seen by scholars as one of the most inventive and innovative painters from the Apulian tradition who often used unusual motifs and plays on his vases.<sup>110</sup> This means that, on the one hand, we should expect unusual motifs from these painters, and, on the other hand, we should not expect to understand their compositions. The interpretation of the Toledo krater proposed here cannot, of course, be absolutely confirmed. But neither can the connection between the krater and the same eschatology behind the gold tablets of Pelinna.

As we have seen, there are differences between the Toledo krater and the Pelinna narrative. The differences could be explained as local preferences and adaptations of the same eschatology. But, if we see the motif in light of some of the popular themes present in the region in which the vase was made, Magna Graecia, the motif can perhaps better be explained as visualizations of some of these themes; deification (through Dionysos' agreement with Hades), and Euripides' *Bacchae* (through the presence of four of the main characters from this play, including the young, unbearded Dionysos). The Toledo krater thus conforms with its geographical/cultural context.

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<sup>108</sup> Also suggested by Robertson 2003:233 n5. A possibility: One could argue that the *Bacchae* is about establishment of the cult of Dionysos, something which would have been impossible had he not been a god. Therefore, as the god himself declares in the opening speech, one of his goals are to convince the world of his mother's deification (which he ensured on his journey to the Underworld), see Torjussen 2006:98-99.

<sup>109</sup> Trendall 1991:172.

<sup>110</sup> Trendall 1991:178; Trendall and Cambitoglou 1991-92:149-150, 162 (on the Underworld painter); Schauenburg 2000:256-258

Dionysos is also present in the Pelinna tablets as *lysios*, and a case can be made that the “immersion-in-milk” formula is a reference to the deification of the deceased.<sup>111</sup> But since the Toledo krater portrays these themes in such a specific way, which nevertheless is coloured by the region’s fascination for Euripides, it seems that a direct line of influence is hard to draw. What we see in the gold tablets of Pelinna and possibly in the Toledo krater are different ways of expressing a hope for immortality and deification, ways which points towards a general eschatology which could be described as Dionysiac in the sense that Dionysos played an important role in it. Still, local preferences, trends, and beliefs played a crucial role in the different formations of these ideas, that is, their eschatologies. If we are forced to use other material to illuminate the meaning of another, as the case is in the Toledo krater, I would first look at the local material which in this case, I believe, helps us understand some general themes visualized on the Toledo krater.

### **5.5 The “Orphic-Pythagorean” eschatology of the gold tablets and the sixth book of Virgil’s *Aeneid***

The Toledo krater is an example of how a general hope for a better afterlife could have been visualized according to popular themes of a certain region (Magna Graecia) at a certain point in time (the fourth century BC). If we explain or interpret such sources in light of a general idea of a movement which we see as homogeneous in time and space then the sources themselves become ripped away from their own immediate cultural contexts. This does not mean that we should only focus on local parallels. It means rather that these local perimeters should be treated as a starting point of an analysis and furthermore have priority over possible parallels from other times or places. In this section we will take a closer look at how one such general category, in this case what has often been called “the Orphic-Pythagorean eschatology”, has been used to explain or illuminate features in later sources set in another cultural environment, in this case the sixth book of Virgil’s Roman epic the *Aeneid*.

The sixth book of the *Aeneid*, written sometime during the twenties of the first century BC, was inspired by many different works, both religious and philosophical. The book’s debt to Homer’s description of Odysseus’ *katabasis* in the eleventh book

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<sup>111</sup> See Chapter Four on the “immersion-in-milk” formula.

of the *Odyssey* has long been noted by scholars, not least because Virgil was quite open about this himself.<sup>112</sup> Besides Homer, Lucretius' *De rerum natura* is often mentioned as a source of inspiration for Virgil's description of the monsters in Dis, while Eduard Norden, argued that a now lost work by Posidonius also played an important role.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, a number of scholars, from Norden and Dieterich up till today have emphasized the Orphic-Pythagorean eschatology as perhaps the most important source of inspiration since this eschatology was believed to have influenced the works of most ancient authors from Pindar and Plato to Cicero and Virgil. Yet these Orphic and/or Pythagorean texts are seldom named, but only hinted at. The work of R. D. Williams seems typical in this respect as he claims that the second and third parts of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, where the purification of the souls is related and where death is presented as more favourable than in Homer, were inspired by "popular beliefs and folklore crystallized and organized by Orphic mystery religions and Pythagorean philosophy."<sup>114</sup> Williams repeats this a bit later when he argues that Aeneas' *katabasis* was inspired by both Homer's *Odyssey*, which he convincingly shows, and elements from Orphic *katabaseis*, which he unfortunately does not explain in detail.<sup>115</sup> More recently, the same arguments have been repeated by Molyviati-Toptsis who also introduced a few sources not considered by Williams; the Orphic-Pythagorean gold tablets from Thurii.<sup>116</sup>

Orphism is, as we have seen in earlier chapters of this study, an uncertain category at best. Still, when scholars identify Orphic influences in the *Aeneid* Orphism is usually understood as a set of doctrines that was formulated, or at least systematized in the sixth century and which influenced writers such as Plato and Pindar. Thus, behind Plato's myth of Er and Pindar's metempsychosis lurk the Orphic doctrines which, unfortunately, are only delivered to us through these and some other

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<sup>112</sup> The opening words of the *Aeneid*, "I sing of arms and of the man" (*arma virumque cano*) is a homage to Homer as it combines the main subjects of his two epics, arms (or war, the *Iliad*), and the man (Odysseus, the *Odyssey*), West 2003:xi. Details from the two *katabaseis* can also be compared – Virgil's Palinurus = Homer's Elpenor, Dido's silence = Ajax' silence, and so on. There are also philological similarities between the two descriptions, pointed out by Williams 1990 [1964]:195. Another example: Kraggerud 1986:50 compares how the dead flocks around Odysseus in *Od.* 11.36 ff. with how they flock around Charon in *Aen.* 6.305.

<sup>113</sup> Lucr. 4.732 ff., 5.26 ff., 5.890 ff.; Kraggerud 1986:49; Norden 1957 [1903]:4 (one of many examples); Williams 1990 [1964]:193; Gransden 2003:77.

<sup>114</sup> Williams 1990 [1964]:192.

<sup>115</sup> Williams 1990 [1964]:195.

<sup>116</sup> Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:35. Cp. Taylor 1969 [1791]:373.

writers, mostly many centuries later.<sup>117</sup> A passage from an article by James E. G. Zetzel might serve as an example. First, parallels to known works such as Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* and Plato's Myth of Er in the *Republic* are drawn. But at the same time Zetzel imagines that these ideas were influenced by an eschatological tradition which he identifies as Orphism.<sup>118</sup> This influence is explained in terms of the level of detail found in Virgil's description of the Underworld:

the elaborate geography of the underworld, with fixed places for different classes of soul, the ferry of Charon, the fork in the road between Tartaros to the left and Elysium to the right, the emphasis on judgment, the theory of metempsychosis and purification, all point to a far more developed eschatology with an Orphic-Pythagorean background.<sup>119</sup>

Williams, by contrast, argues that there are no Orphic elements in Plato's *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, or the tenth book of the *Republic*, but nevertheless identifies Orphic elements in the *Aeneid*.<sup>120</sup> The positions of Zetzel and Williams illustrate that although they are both confident that there are Orphic elements in the *Aeneid* they are far from in agreement about where these ideas came from. This also illustrates another danger with this endeavour, circular argumentation: Orphic ideas found in Virgil's texts are used to reconstruct Orphism. This problem is, of course, not restricted to Virgil but is also present in descriptions of Orphic elements in the works of Plato.

Among ancient writers, the idea that Plato was influenced by Orphism was perhaps most vigorously proclaimed by the Neoplatonists in late Antiquity.<sup>121</sup> In modern scholarship this idea can at least be traced back to the works of eighteenth century scholars such as Taylor and Tiedemann, who both argued that the majority of Orphic texts was written during the sixth century BC.<sup>122</sup> The main problem with dating the Orphic texts to the sixth century BC is twofold. First, none of these texts have survived except as titles of works referred to by later authors. As Linforth has

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<sup>117</sup> E.g. Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:35; Gransden 2003:76 who argued for a line of influence from Orphic mystery religions through the works of Pindar and Plato and thereby ending up in the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

<sup>118</sup> Zetzel 1989:276.

<sup>119</sup> Zetzel 1989:268. See however Kraggerud 1986:50 who argues that an exact topography in Hades was not important to neither Virgil or Homer. In the former, geographical features such as Styx and Cocytos are identified with each other, while in the latter most scholars would argue that Odysseus never actually entered the realm of the dead but rather positioned himself at its entrance.

<sup>120</sup> Williams 1990 [1964]:192.

<sup>121</sup> Olympiodorus and Damascius are discussed in Chapter Three, see also general discussion in Chapter One.

<sup>122</sup> Tiedemann 1780; Taylor 1792:85 f. See Chapter One.

shown, most of the more substantial references, which are of a much later date, give few and sometimes contradictory reports, leaving us with a wide array of ideas which have been lumped together, by both ancient and modern scholars, into the same category: Orphism. Second, since the evidence leaves us with such a scattered and contradictory picture, it is hard to understand what is meant by terms such as Orphic and Orphism. This is, in the end, a problem of definition, which need not concern us here, but if we follow the lead of Tiedemann and West we find that there were not necessarily any unifying doctrinal principles in the Orphic texts.

Plato refers to the Orphic poets and Orphic books only on a few occasions.<sup>123</sup> The most famous reference is the *soma-sema* doctrine in the *Cratylus* where certain Orphic poets (οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφεία) are credited with the belief that the soul is kept safe in the body, which functions "like a prison" (δεσμωτηρίου εἰκόνα), until the penalty for some undisclosed transgression has been paid.<sup>124</sup> In the *Laws* Plato explains that living life the "Orphic way" is to become a vegetarian.<sup>125</sup> Thus, to simply argue that Plato was influenced by this movement, or tradition, is not very helpful. Plato was certainly influenced by earlier as well as contemporary writers, but it is hard to pinpoint to what extent and, unless he says so himself or we find parallels in other works of the same period or earlier which should be seen as Orphic, which ideas we are talking about.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, instead of claiming an Orphic source which has influenced the sixth book of the *Aeneid* through the works of Plato, a suggestion which in my opinion does little to enlighten our understanding of the eschatologies at work, more focus should be given to Virgil's first century BC Roman cultural context. At this time, many of the ideas which ultimately can be traced back to Plato, among others, had, in many instances, acquired new meanings in their new, Roman, context. Examples of this are found in Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, a text which is very

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<sup>123</sup> There are also passages, for example the quote in *Leg.* 4.715e-716a: ἀρχὴν τε καὶ μέσσα τῶν ὄντων ὁπάντων ἔχων (see also OF 31 Bernabé), which are attributed elsewhere to Orpheus, in this case P Derv. 17.12 (in a slightly altered form): Ζεὺς κεφαλ[λή], Ζεὺς μέσ[σα], Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται]. Orphic texts, see *Resp.* 2.364e = OT 573 (I) Bernabé, *Prt.* 316d = OT 549 (I) Bernabé. Hymns, see *Leg.* 829d-e = OT 681 Bernabé where Orpheus' hymns are described, along with those of Thamyras, as sacred, wonderful, or both (ἱερά).

<sup>124</sup> Pl. *Cra.* 400c = OF 430 (I) Bernabé. Cp. *Phd.* 62b = OF 429 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>125</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 782c = OT 625 Bernabé, cp. Eur. *Hipp.* 952-953 = OT 627 Bernabé.

<sup>126</sup> An example which also will be of interest later in this section is found in *Gorg.* 524a-b = OV 460 Bernabé where Socrates is describing a fork in the road in the Underworld and the judges there, ideas he attributes simply to stories he has heard. See the Index Fontium in Bernabé 2007a:357 for other Orphic testimonies and fragments found in Plato, many of which I find difficult to attribute to Orphic texts and influences (or any other for that matter).

relevant to our discussion, where the doctrine of metempsychosis was adapted to fit with the Roman system.<sup>127</sup> Virgil, as we shall see, does the same thing. This does not mean, of course, that parallels or even citations from earlier works cannot be identified in Virgil's work. It means that if parallels are to have any meaning, or function in our analysis, then concrete examples and sources should be identified, rather than pointing at a vague "Orphic-Pythagorean" tradition and leaving it at that. Sources of influence can securely be traced back to writers such as Homer, Plato, Aristophanes, Empedokles, Hesiod, Cicero, Lucretius, and other texts such as the *katabasis* found in the Bologna papyrus.<sup>128</sup> Virgil mixed elements from all these sources with ideas from his own time in what became a patchwork of different eschatological ideas set to serve a specific purpose in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, the glorification of the Roman state.<sup>129</sup>

I will in the following take a closer look at how the gold tablets have been used as evidence for the Orphic-Pythagorean influence on the work of Virgil (comparable to how Plato's ideas have been used as evidence for Orphic-Pythagorean influences on Virgil). Earlier in this thesis I have argued that the gold tablets should not be treated as one homogenous group, but, as a starting point, as separate groups of texts. Molyviati-Toptsis concentrates in her article not on the gold tablets in general, but on the tablets from Thuri, excluding the C tablet. I will nevertheless argue that the similarities between the Thuri tablets and specific features in Virgil's description of the Underworld are few and unconvincing. By this I mean that the few similarities which are found there are superficial and of a very general character, meaning that they can be found in other sources, normally not seen as Orphic or Pythagorean.

It is easy to find elements from mystery religions in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. As many scholars have argued, the whole book can plausibly be interpreted as an allegory of initiation where Aeneas is initiated by the Sybil who guides him through the Underworld from which he emerges with knowledge of both his political and eschatological fate which makes him exercise more control over his life in the remaining six books of the epic. The fact that Augustus, to whom the work was dedicated, participated in the Eleusinian mysteries in two occasions in 31 and 19 BC

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<sup>127</sup> Cp. Pl. *Cra.* 400c with Cic. *Somn.* 14.

<sup>128</sup> Merkelbach 1951; Lloyd-Jones 1990a [1978]; Treu 1954:25-26 has pointed out a close similarity between fol. 3, recto 7 on the papyrus and *Aen.* 6.663.

<sup>129</sup> Virgil's eclectic method is pointed out by several scholars, e.g. Bailey 1935:243; Williams 1990 [1964]:192 ff.; Kraggerud 1986:67.



has lead to speculations of whether Virgil might have been so too, and that therefore most of the elements from the Underworld should be considered Eleusinian.<sup>130</sup> This proposal can neither be confirmed or rejected since we do not know whether Virgil was initiated before his death in 19 BC, and, since we know too little about the initiation at Eleusis to perform a comparison. Others have suggested that the words of the Sibyl at the beginning of the descent, *procul, o procul este, profani*, was an Orphic formula that signals to the reader that the sights in the Underworld agree with what is found in Orphic texts.<sup>131</sup> But what is Orphic about this formula? True, a similar exhortation, addressed to those who are not "pure in hearing", is found in the Derveni papyrus: "θ]ύρας" γὰρ "ἐπιθέ[σθαι" κελε]ύσας τοῖ[ς] | ["ὠσι]ν.<sup>132</sup> But similar statements are also associated with other cults and mysteries, which is not particularly surprising given the latter's emphasis on secrecy.<sup>133</sup> The passage, as it is found in Virgil, was probably a version of a known proverb which "belonged" to no cult in particular. I also believe Virgil's own remarks, where he asks for permission to reveal the secrets of the Underworld, should be interpreted in the same way.<sup>134</sup> He is not recounting the topography and secrets of the Underworld according to one specific cult, but uses this apology as a method to give the narrative more authority.<sup>135</sup> The apology fits well with the view that the sixth book is an allegory over initiation in general.

One of the features in Virgil's Underworld which is seen as Orphic-Pythagorean is the strict classifications of the souls according to their previous conduct in life, a classification which indicates a judgement of some sort. If we focus on the gold tablets in this respect we see that the situation there is quite different. True, almost all the longer, narrative gold tablets contain descriptions of geographical features, but they are all very limited in scope. Some tablets mention either one or two

<sup>130</sup> Cass. Dio 51.4, 54.9. West 1990 [1987]:234. Luck 1973:150 attributes this idea to Warburton.

<sup>131</sup> Gransden 2003:77.

<sup>132</sup> P Derv. col. 7.9-10. See OF 1a-b, 3, 19, 74, 101, 377.1, 378.1 Bernabé.

<sup>133</sup> Dyson 1999:163 calls attention to a parallel in Ov. *Met.* 10.300 where the myth of Orpheus and Eurydike is recounted. Luck 1973, on the other hand, compares the passage with Claudian's fourth century AD *De raptu Proserpina* 1.4 where he talks about Eleusis: *gressus, removete profani*. Zetzel 1989:277 n53 draws attention to Callimachus' third century BC hymn to Apollo where, in line 2, the profane is ushered away from his temple.

<sup>134</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 6.264-267.

<sup>135</sup> The same method, although slightly different, is seen in Hesiod's *Theogony* 1 when he, at the very beginning of the work, calls upon the Muses to give it authority. Cp. Heraklitos 22 B 78 DK: ἦθος γὰρ ἀνθρώπειον μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνῶμας, θεῶν δὲ ἔχει; and Hom. *Il.* 2.484 ff.

lakes, a white or shining cypress, while others refer to features such as "Persephone's grove", a "sacred road", "Hades", and "city". This can of course be explained by the limited space available on the tablets, but to argue that there would have been more elaborate descriptions had there been more room seems unconvincing. Furthermore, some of the tablets suggest that the geography in the Underworld was in fact very simple.<sup>136</sup> The longest texts present the deceased with a choice between two springs, which means a choice between a good or a bad fate for his soul. In one of the tablets from Thurii unnamed guardians in front of the good spring ask what the deceased is searching for in the darkness of Hades. Thus, even this spring seems engulfed in darkness and only after drinking its water will the dead be able to enter some sort of paradise. The tablets reveal a dualistic underworld where only a few features, marking the location of the two different springs, need to be described.

Just as some, but not all, of the gold tablets distinguish between two springs, they distinguish between two types of souls: The uninitiated, who, not knowing what is best for them, drink from the first spring, and the initiated who drink from the second or good spring and thus attain a better afterlife.<sup>137</sup> In this respect the categorization of souls in the gold tablets is similar to the one in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and what is reported in some of the texts by Plato.<sup>138</sup> The *Aeneid*, on the other hand, has a much more elaborate distribution of souls based on behaviour and a morale which is bound to the political life of Rome. Aeneas, after crossing the river Styx, is led through different parts of the Underworld. Here he sees lamenting lovers such as Dido in the Mourning Plains, those who have committed suicide are trapped in the mud of the river Styx, infant babies are heard wailing next to those condemned to death on false charges, courageous warriors occupy another place, and so on.<sup>139</sup> Even Elysium is divided between souls undergoing a final purification and those destined to be reborn. Based on this it seems that more obvious parallels to Virgil's geography and detailed distribution of souls are found in Plato's detailed descriptions of the souls' destinations in the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo* and the myth of Er in the *Republic*,

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<sup>136</sup> See Chapter Two, and Torjussen 2008a:30.

<sup>137</sup> The "Malibu" tablet and the tablets from Crete mention only the spring from which the deceased should drink.

<sup>138</sup> *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 480-482; *Pl. Phd.* 69c is the most famous where the uninitiated are destined to "lie in the mud", cp. *Resp.* 2.363d here attributed to Musaeus and his son (Eumolpos?).

<sup>139</sup> *Aen.* 6.426-547.

which is reflected also in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.<sup>140</sup> These various descriptions of the Underworld and the judgements seen there can hardly be traced back to a single tradition. Instead, as Edmonds has recently argued, they carry their own meanings which are not necessarily compatible with each other.<sup>141</sup> The important difference for us is that the gold tablets distinguish between initiates and non-initiates, while Virgil, and Plato and Aristophanes, categorized the dead souls in the Underworld according to sins, and fates, endured in their former life.

Another feature, seen by Zetzel as an Orphic-Pythagorean trait in Virgil's description of the Underworld, is the figure of Charon who, much against his will, ferries Aeneas across the infernal river Styx. According to Diodorus Siculus Charon was indeed introduced to Greece by Orpheus after he had returned there from Egypt.<sup>142</sup> However, Charon must have been part of the general topography of the Underworld already in the Classical period. His first literary appearance is in the *Minyas*, an epic known only from fragments, and he is later referred to repeatedly by writers such as Euripides and Aristophanes.<sup>143</sup> His first appearances in art are dated to c. 500 BC and he later became a popular motif on white Attic *lekythoi*. Evidence that knowledge of his existence in the Underworld was not reserved to secret cults is given by Pausanias in his description of Polygnotos' painting at Delphi where Charon was a part of Odysseus' katabasis in the *Odyssey*.<sup>144</sup> Charon, as an integrated part of the Underworld already at the end of the sixth century BC also shows that the concept of judgement in death was not restricted to mystery cults. Although Charon is never mentioned in Homer, the criterion of proper burial, found in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, points to a categorization of souls similar to that of infant babies and those condemned to death on false charges found in the *Aeneid*.<sup>145</sup> Such categorization borders on judgement of the dead even though it is not their morality or behaviour which decides the fate of the dead souls, but rather the actions (or rather lack of) of the living.

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<sup>140</sup> Pl. *Grg.* 523a ff., *Phd.* 107e-108a, 113d ff., *Resp.* 10.614b ff.; Ar. *Ran.* 145 ff. On the descriptions of the Underworld in these writings see Edmonds 2004a.

<sup>141</sup> Edmonds 2004a:221 ff.

<sup>142</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.92.2 = OT 48 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>143</sup> Eur. *Alc.* 252; Ar. *Ran.* 182 ff.

<sup>144</sup> Paus. 10.28.1. See Garland 2001:154-155 for more references.

<sup>145</sup> Elpenor in the *Odyssey*, Patroklos in the *Iliad*, and Palinurus in the *Aeneid* all ask for a proper burial in order to enter Hades and find some sort of peace. The payment of Charon's obol is well attested in literature, e.g. Ar. *Ran.* 117 ff., but is more rare in archaeological finds, see Stevens 1991.

Judgement in Hades based on behaviour in life is also known from the Classical period, perhaps first of all in the works of Plato, Pindar, and other, but also in artistic depictions of the Underworld known from many Apulian vases where the famous judges, Minos, Aiakos, and Rhadamanthys, were often depicted.<sup>146</sup> The passage containing the *soma-sema* doctrine in Plato's *Cratylus* plays a significant role here, and is usually seen as evidence that the idea that men were punished for crimes committed in previous lives, was Orphic.<sup>147</sup> But, a closer look at the passage reveals that the punishment referred to in this passage is enacted while alive, not in Hades, since the body is described as both a safe place and a prison for the soul. Still, Plato is concerned on several occasions with the punishment of the soul in Hades because of past crimes.<sup>148</sup> There is nothing in Plato's works, therefore, to indicate that his ideas of punishments in Hades was something he learned from Orphic texts or hymns.<sup>149</sup> Instead, the thought that a punishment awaited the wicked in death, seems to have been well-rooted in several eschatological beliefs of the Greek Classical period. Returning to Virgil we see that it is not necessary to see his elaborate descriptions of how the different souls are allocated in Dis as influenced by Orphic-Pythagorean ideas.

Connected to the idea of punishment is the doctrine of metempsychosis, as we have already seen in some of the works by Plato. This plays an extremely important part in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. After arriving in Elysium Aeneas and the Sibyl approach Musaeus. The Sibyl asks him if he knows where they can find Aeneas' father Anchises. Musaeus directs Aeneas and the Sybil to another part of Elysium, a valley beyond the *sedes beatae*. Here Aeneas finally meets his father and Anchises explains to his son how the souls of this place are destined to be reborn, but before that can happen they have to drink from the waters of the river Lethe. Aeneas is puzzled by why someone would drink from this spring and thereby be reborn since the joys of Elysium must be preferable to the hardships of ordinary life. Anchises explains that if a soul has behaved in a wicked manner while alive, then punishment

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<sup>146</sup> The judges in literature: Poseidonius *SH* 705.21-23; Hom. *Od.* 4.564; Pl. *Grg.* 523e-524, 526b; Pind. *Ol.* 2.63 ff. E.g. the Munich krater (Munich 3297, *LIMC* Hades 132) discussed above, and the Napoli vase, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli 3222 (inv. 81666).

<sup>147</sup> Pl. *Cra.* 400c.

<sup>148</sup> Pl. *Grg.* 523a, *Leg.* 9.870d, 10.904d, *Resp.* 2.363c-e, 10.614a, *Epistles* 7.335a. Also formulated in Aesch. *Supp.* 230; Eur. *HF* 740.

<sup>149</sup> See however Pl. *Phd.* 107d, 113d, *Tim.* 90e ff. where the soul is punished for past transgressions in their next life.

and purifications await in Dis. After a period of purification which lasts for a thousand years the soul is sent to Elysium where most souls will be reborn while the completely pure will either occupy a special place in Elysium or, as some have argued, transcend even Elysium to become one with their heavenly origin as a star.<sup>150</sup> To drink from the Lethe is here, as in Plato, considered to be the end of one's time in Hades/Dis and the beginning of a new life.<sup>151</sup> Virgil's Elysium is, then, divided into at least two regions. The parts that make up this divided Elysium can still be compared to other sources, most notably, again, Plato, but also Pindar.

Many scholars have sought parallels to the doctrine of metempsychosis explained by Anchises in the Orphic-Pythagorean material, especially as they were expressed in the gold tablets.<sup>152</sup> However, as we have seen in previous chapters, the only reference which could be interpreted as a reference to such doctrines in the gold tablets is found in one of the Thurian ones, in the form of a metaphor, *kyklos*.<sup>153</sup> Even if we interpret this as a reference to the circle of lives, which is not the only plausible interpretation, then it could hardly be said that this doctrine had a very important role for the cult in Thuri, or any of the other cults who produced the gold tablets.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, we find much clearer similarities in some of Plato's texts, especially in his myth of Er. An example is the amount of time allotted to the purification of the soul in Virgil, a thousand years, which is exactly the same as in Plato's *Republic* and the *Phaedrus*.<sup>155</sup> Virgil's descriptions of Tartaros and Lethe also corresponds to Plato's descriptions in the myth of Er.

Thus the parallels concerning metempsychosis are much more striking in Plato. We find metempsychosis also in Pindar although according to him the souls had to lead three righteous lives on both sides of the grave in order to escape the cycle of rebirth.<sup>156</sup> An even closer parallel is found in Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* where metempsychosis plays an important role and where "the road to the skies" is secured by pursuing a life dedicated to justice and duty, and where great leaders and statesmen

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<sup>150</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 6.669-751. Kraggerud 1986:60. To become one with the stars is argued as a final transcendence by Cicero in *Somn.* 13 ff. and by Virgil himself in *G.* 4.220-229.

<sup>151</sup> Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:35.

<sup>152</sup> Norlin 1908:97; Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:35.

<sup>153</sup> I have already argued against any references to Pind. frg. 133 in the gold tablets, see Chapter Three, and Holzhausen 2004.

<sup>154</sup> Another interpretation is to see *kyklos* as a reference to (one) life, see brief discussion in Chapter Four.

<sup>155</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 10.615a, *Phdr.* 248e-249a.

<sup>156</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2.61-72.

are the last chain in the cycle before the soul ascends to the stars.<sup>157</sup> By placing the future heroes of the Roman state at the banks of Lethe, Virgil is arguing that the former leaders of the state were the among the purest and most virtuous people since, according to Cicero's eschatology in the *Somnium Scipionis*, it is the great political leaders which are destined for the final reunion with the stars.<sup>158</sup> I can therefore see no reason to connect Virgil's description of metempsychosis to the gold tablets based on one uncertain reference in one of the texts from Thurii when other parallels seems far more obvious. This does not mean that Virgil had his ideas in this matter directly from Plato. When the latter discussed metempsychosis it was already so well-known that an explanation of the concept was unnecessary. Metempsychosis was associated with Pythagoras, who according to ancient writers was the one who introduced the doctrine to Greece.<sup>159</sup> Again, this does not mean that Virgil relied directly on Pythagoras' writings when he wrote Anchises' speech. Does it make Virgil's metempsychosis Pythagorean? I am not sure that such a conclusion would be very helpful for us. Instead, Virgil's metempsychosis should be seen as Roman in the sense that his conception of this doctrine was shaped by Roman writers such as Cicero, as we also shall see later. It should also be seen as Virgilian since it was used by Virgil for a specific literary purpose, to parade the (for Aeneas) future leaders of the Roman state in an epic which was set in a mythic time.

Another parallel which has been pointed out between the gold tablets and Virgil is the emphasis both lay on purification. In the *Aeneid* the purpose of Dis and subsequently the *nitentes campi* is, as we have seen, purification through punishment.<sup>160</sup> This corresponds to Plato's emphasis on the pure in the myth of Er, where the souls become pure (καθαρός) through punishment before they are reborn.<sup>161</sup> Norlin chose to concentrate on the parallels between Anchises' speech and the gold tablets from Thurii since three of these tablets have the same beginning,

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<sup>157</sup> Cic. *Somn.* 13 ff.; Habinek 1989:234-238; Zetzel 1989:284.

<sup>158</sup> Cic. *Somn.* 13: *omnibus, qui patriam conservaverint, adiuverint, auxerint, certum esse in caelo definitum locum, ubi beati aevo sempiterno fruuntur* ("all those who have preserved, aided, or enlarged their fatherland have a special place prepared for them in the heavens, where they may enjoy an eternal life of happiness.", tr. Clinton Walker Keyes).

<sup>159</sup> Bremmer 2002:11; see Xenophanes B 7 DK; Arist. *De an.* 407b20; Inscription from Ephesos *SEG* 31.951; Porph. *Vita Pythagorica* 19. Pherekydes of Syros is also associated with this doctrine, Bremmer 2002:12. He is supposed to have been the first that believed the soul to be immortal, and according to the *Suda* he was the first to talk about metempsychosis, Pherekydes A 2 DK (this is of course a very late and thus unreliable source in this matter).

<sup>160</sup> Explained by Anchises in Verg. *Aen.* 6.739-751.

<sup>161</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 10.614d.

emphasising the same words as Plato, ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρά, χθονίων βασίλεια. The same beginning is also found on the gold tablet from Rome. However, even though the words are similar, the gold tablets reflect a different eschatology concerning purification and punishment. The passage cited above emphasizes that the deceased has been purified and arrives in Hades in an already purified state, a purification which the deceased had attained through an initiation ritual.<sup>162</sup> Therefore, the deceased owner of the gold tablets from Thurii and Rome does not have to go through the purifications in Hades/Dis which are so important to Plato and Virgil. Molyviati-Toptsis is aware of this difference but argues that the purified souls of the Thurii and Rome tablets "hope to go to the place of *euageis*, the abode of those destined to return to life."<sup>163</sup> Whatever one wants to call the deceased owners of the Thurii gold tablets there is nothing to indicate that they expected to be reborn. In fact the opposite seems more likely since both tablets express the deceased's wish and anticipation of becoming one of the blessed and that he or she has paid the penalty, perhaps meaning that there will be no need of more. The dead awaiting rebirth in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* can therefore more easily be compared with Plato's *eudaimones*, and Pindar's *esloi*, than with the initiated owners of the Thurii tablets.<sup>164</sup>

An important episode in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* which is connected to purifications and Virgil's use of metempsychosis is when Aeneas and the Sibyl encounter the fork in the road. The road to the left, the Sibyl explains, leads to Tartaros, the place where the incurably evil are condemned to eternal punishment, while the road to the right leads to Elysium, their destination.<sup>165</sup> Molyviati-Toptsis identifies the fork as influenced by Plato's Myth of Er where the Pamphylian warrior Er recalls the crossroads where one road, on the left, led to punishment for past sins in the Underworld, while the other, on the right, led to the rewards of heaven.<sup>166</sup> This eschatological account Molyviati-Toptsis sees as "stemming from Orphic-Pythagorean sources".<sup>167</sup> In this connection she also invokes one of the gold tablets from Thurii where the same direction, the right turn, is urged twice:

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<sup>162</sup> See discussion in Chapter Four.

<sup>163</sup> Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:44. εὐαγέων appears twice on the Thurii tablets: 1.3 Thurii 4-5, line 7.

<sup>164</sup> Molyviati-Toptsis 1994:45. Pindar talks about punishment in frg. 133, connected to Eleusis by Holzhausen 2004, see Chapter Three on this.

<sup>165</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 6.535-547.

<sup>166</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 10.614c.

<sup>167</sup> Molyvati-Toptsis 1994:37.

ἀλλ' ὁπότεαμ ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος ἀελίοιο  
 δεξιόν †Ε.ΟΙΑΣ† δ' ἐξ<ι>έναι πεφυλαγμένον εὐ μάλα πάντα  
 4 χαίρε παθῶν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις·  
 θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες  
 χαίρ<ε> χαίρε· δεξιὰν ὁδοιπόρ<ει>  
 λειμῶνάς τε ἱεροὺς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας

But whenever the soul has left the light of the sun,  
 To the right ... I am well cautious more than any thing else.  
 Hail you who have suffered the Suffering, but this you have never suffered  
 before:

4 You have become (a) god from human: A kid has fallen into milk.  
 Hail, hail: You travel to the right  
 To the holy, grassy meadow of Persephone.

Since both the gold tablet and Plato saw the right turn as the favorable one, then both must have been inspired by a common source, a *katabasis* text, or tradition which in this case is identified as Orphic-Pythagorean. If we look at the other gold tablets from the same necropolis we see that neither of these mention a direction which the deceased is advised to take or even a fork in the road. As I have shown earlier in this thesis, there is little agreement among the other gold tablets in the corpus on which way to go in the Underworld.<sup>168</sup> The right turn in the Underworld should for these reasons not be considered a trait which is exclusive for the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition, but rather as a general trait in Greek eschatology since it appears in a wide array of sources from funerary epigrams to Plato.<sup>169</sup> The belief that the soul can enjoy a good or a bad afterlife can be traced back to Homer and is associated with roads as metaphors from an early age.<sup>170</sup> The belief in the superiority of the right over the left is also a general characteristic of Greek thought which cannot be attributed to one specific tradition or cult but rather influenced a wide array of these.<sup>171</sup> The directions given on the gold tablets, in Plato, and in Virgil can therefore not be traced back to an Orphic-Pythagorean eschatology but should be seen as the favored direction not only

<sup>168</sup> For the directions given on other gold tablets, which are not uniform, see Chapter Two.

<sup>169</sup> See inscription in *Ant. Pal.* 7.545: τὴν ἀπὸ πυραϊκῆς ἐνδέξια φασὶ κέλευθον | Ἐρμῆν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς εἰς Ῥαδάμανθυν ἄγειν, | ἢ καὶ Ἀριστόνοος, Χαίρεστράτου οὐκ ἀδάκρυτος | παῖς, ἠγησίλεω δῶμ' Ἄϊδος κατέβη, Dickie 1998:72.

<sup>170</sup> See Hom. *Od.* 4.562-569 where Menelaos escapes death since his marriage to Helen made him a son-in-law to Zeus. Roads as metaphors for a certain destiny in death, see Pl. *Grg.* 524a; Poseidippos *SH* 705.21-23 (see Chapter Two).

<sup>171</sup> Although Arist. frg. 200 Rose connects the idea to the Pythagoreans; Pl. *Phdr.* 266a. See also Lloyd 1962.



in Greek eschatological texts, where the Underworld was sometimes depicted as a chaotic place with many turns, but in other texts as well.<sup>172</sup>

Virgil was most of all eclectic when he described the Underworld in the *Aeneid*.<sup>173</sup> Much of the topography and the inhabitants are so well-known from earlier texts and traditions that their appearance is neither surprising or evidence for a specific influence. To trace influences back to a diffuse Orphic-Pythagorean movement is not only confusing but also unfounded based on the evidence available to us. The same must be said of concepts or ideas such as the idea of immortalization and reunion of the soul with the stars of the Milky Way, and the fork in the road discussed above.<sup>174</sup> As Linforth has shown, there is no evidence for a coherent Orphic system of thought in the pre-Platonic period making it difficult to argue that Plato was influenced by this. Furthermore, to see the gold tablets as products of this same vague movement is both unfounded and unnecessary. Most of these ideas can furthermore be found in contemporary, Roman texts and traditions which Virgil knew and which reflected contemporary Roman beliefs about the afterlife. This was mixed with ideas known from Stoicism, Platonism, Orphism (the *soma-sema* doctrine), and more traditional Greek mythology. In addition, Virgil used these elements to further the purpose of the book and in doing that he probably felt no obligation to pay strict attention to his various sources or to follow them directly.<sup>175</sup> Virgil's innovations, such as his division of the Elysium, should of course also be mentioned.

It is a tradition to define alternative eschatologies as Orphic or Orphic-Pythagorean, which has led to the belief that elements of this movement are reflected in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. The Underworld serves a specific function in the *Aeneid* which is first of all political. First, the whole book is an initiation of Aeneas into his role as the founder of the Roman state. Second, it aims to present the Roman leaders as the most splendid and pure humans, on the verge of their final apotheosis because of their (future) political accomplishments. The background to this book, the Underworld, was patched together from various sources which Virgil used as he saw

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<sup>172</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 107e-108a; Ar. *Ran.* describes the Underworld as a mirror image of Athens.

<sup>173</sup> Acknowledged already by Servius on *Aen.* 10.467: *Sectis philosophorum poetae pro qualitate negotiorum semper utuntur* ("poets invariably exploit philosophical sects as required by the essence of the contexts." tr. Braund). Williams 1990 [1964]:193 f.

<sup>174</sup> See Chapter Four on the Milky Way; for some inscriptions where souls are connected to the stars, see Lattimore 1962:33-35.

<sup>175</sup> E.g. Virgil ignores Theseus' apotheosis since he is still an inhabitant of Tartaros. He also mix the punishments of Ixion and Tantalos; see Zetzel 1989:268-269.

fit. As I have tried to show in this section, and as other scholars have pointed out before; to try to identify these sources, or to suggest that Virgil adhered to any specific religious or philosophical views based on a reading of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, is an unfruitful endeavour.<sup>176</sup>

## 5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to show how the context of a source needs to be taken into account and be given authority. The context of a source, such as the Toledo krater or Virgil's *Aeneid*, is made up of several factors such as the cultural, geographical, and chronological environment of the source as well as the intended function of the source itself. Other contexts, such as a belonging to a specific, pan-Hellenic movement, needs to be considered after these factors have been mapped as thoroughly as possible. In the cases I have discussed in this chapter, I believe the local contexts of both is more helpful to our understanding of their intended purpose and their sources of influence. The Greek eschatological traditions are, in any case, many and varied, and to reduce to them all to an abstract concept called Orphism does not, in my opinion, serve any real purpose.

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<sup>176</sup> See e.g. Solmsen 1972:32 f.; Braund 1997:206, 220.



# Chapter 6

## The Derveni Papyrus

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous five chapters have been devoted to the gold tablets in various ways, through analyses of either their texts or their cultural contexts. Important to my analyses has been the question of how one particular text or source (e.g. the Toledo krater) is connected, first of all, to their geographical and chronological contexts and then, on a secondary basis, through similar (gold tablet) texts from other places and/or periods. The last chapter took a closer look at two other types of material which have been connected to the gold tablets simply by referring to their shared "Orphic-Pythagorean" eschatological background, often without explaining what this category means. This category is, as we have seen, often understood in light of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos which has been seen as an important part of the various Orphic texts of the Classical period from which only fragments have survived. In my analysis of the strands of this myth I concluded that we have no secure evidence of this myth before the third century BC and, furthermore, that what have been seen as the key Orphic elements such as the doctrine of Original Sin, are not a part of this mythic tradition until the myth is treated by the Neoplatonists in Late Antiquity. During the analysis I referred to the Derveni papyrus and concluded briefly that there is no sign of the myth in this text simply because Dionysos and the Titans are not mentioned. Even so, the Derveni papyrus has been seen as important evidence for the antiquity of this particular myth. It is therefore appropriate that I take a closer look at the Derveni Papyrus in order to explain my views on this matter more clearly.

The Derveni Papyrus is of course important for other reasons as well.<sup>1</sup> It is invaluable to our understanding of not only Orphism but also Presocratic philosophy as well as the use of etymology and allegory in Classical texts. The fact that the author of the papyrus almost unanimously is described as an Orphic, and the text itself is seen as Orphic, makes its survival extremely valuable for us.<sup>2</sup> It makes it possible to compare the gold tablets with the Derveni papyrus, which it is hard to call anything other than Orphic. As I have argued in the previous chapters, I see the gold tablets as ritual texts revolving around traditions which have more in common with Dionysos than Orpheus, but that in any case are so riddled with variations and peculiarities that they are best treated on an individual level, at least as a starting point of an analysis, rather than as a homogenous set of texts which can be attributed to one specific religious cult or movement. This, I think, makes a comparison with the Derveni papyrus very intriguing since it will be interesting to see in what sense these sources differ from each other, and, of course, in what way they resemble one another. By comparing these sources one will end up with insights about the category of Orphism as the term will be scrutinized from multiple angles. It is also interesting to ask if the author of the Derveni papyrus might have been one of the itinerant manteis who we have discussed on several occasions.

## 6.2 Orphic texts and theogonies

The *Suda*, the tenth century AD encyclopedia, attributes a lot of texts to Orpheus. In most cases, however, these texts are only known to us by their titles. In some cases the titles might reveal at least the subject matter, such as the Εἰς Ἄιδου κατάβασιν (*Descent to Hades*), or at least lead to some speculations about the content, such as the Πέπλον (*The Robe*), the Δίκτυον (*The Net*), and the Κρατήρ (*The Mixing-bowl*), while in other cases, such as the Ἱερός Λόγος (*Sacred Discourse*) and the Φυσικά

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<sup>1</sup> Janko 2006, first paragraph, describes the Derveni papyrus as "the most important text relating to early Greek literature, science, religion and philosophy to have come to light since the Renaissance."

<sup>2</sup> Funghi 1997a:26. References to Orpheus are found throughout the text either by using his name or as verbs where Orpheus must have been the subject: 7.5, 8-10; 8.3; 9.10; 10; 11.1; 12.7-10; 13.3, 5-9; 14.3, 5, 8; 15.7; 16.2, 7, 9; 17.6; 18.3, 6; 19.8-9, 11; 21.1, 14; 22.1-3, 13; 23.7-8; 24.6-8; 25.12-13; 26.9-10. The Derveni author has also been described as "decidedly non-Orphic or even anti-Orphic", Henrichs 1984:255. See also Funghi 1997a:37.

(*Physics*), the titles are, to quote West, "too general to be informative".<sup>3</sup> According to Epigenes of Athens, a fourth century BC author, the *Robe* and the *Physics* were actually written by Brontinus (from Metapontum or Croton, associated with Pythagoras) while the *Descent to Hades* and the *Hieros Logos* were written by Cercops the Pythagorean.<sup>4</sup> This statement agrees with passages from Herodotos and Ion of Chios who both saw Orphic poetry as Pythagorean.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of how they should be categorized, as Orphic or Pythagorean, this reveals little about their contents.<sup>6</sup>

Turning to the Orphic theogonies we are more fortunate, first of all thanks to the testimonies of the Neoplatonists.<sup>7</sup> Damascius knew of three Orphic theogonies; the theogony according to Eudemus, a fourth century BC peripatetic philosopher and student of Aristotle, the theogony attributed to Hieronymus and/or Hellanikus, and the Rhapsodic Theogony (Ἱεροὶ Λόγοι ἐν Ῥαψωιδίαις). It is the latter of these which is best preserved.<sup>8</sup> Damascius tells us that according to this Orphic theogony it all started with the appearance of Chronos (Time). Chronos created the Aither and Chaos, or Chasma, and then proceeded to fashion an egg in the Aither.<sup>9</sup> Out of this egg emerged what has since been described as the Orphic god *par excellence*, Phanes, also known as Erikepaios, Metis, Eros, Zeus, Bromios, and Protogonos.<sup>10</sup> This god is recognized as the first ruler in heaven who nevertheless hands over the power to rule to his daughter Nyx, not to be confused with his mother or his wife who are also named Nyx. After Nyx the power goes to Ouranos, Kronos, and then to Zeus,

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<sup>3</sup> West 1983:13. For a general discussion of these and other works attributed to Orpheus see West 1983:9-14; Parker 1995:486; Janko 1997:70-71; fragments 403-420 Bernabé.

<sup>4</sup> Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.131 = OT 800 (I) Bernabé; West 1983:9 and n16.

<sup>5</sup> Hdt. 2.81; Diog. Laert. 8.8 = OT 506 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>6</sup> West 1983:10-11 speculates whether the *Robe* (OT 403, 800 (I) Bernabé) might have been a cosmogonical text where the weaving of a robe could be a metaphor for weaving the fabric of the universe. A parallel is drawn to Pherekydes of Syros who had Zas weave a robe for his bride Chthonie who then turned into Ge. The *Net*, West continues, might have been speculations on the soul, cf. Arist. *Gen. an.* 734a16 = OF 404 Bernabé, see also Arist. *De an.* 410b27 = OF 421 (I) Bernabé. The *Mixing-bowl* (OT 411 Bernabé) might have been a treatise on cosmic change, West 1983:11-12, supported by Parker 1995:486; see also Edwards 1992:56 ff.

<sup>7</sup> The following discussion of the Orphic theogonies is based on Torjussen 2005:9-12.

<sup>8</sup> Damascius *De princ.* 123-124 (I 316-319 Ruelle) = OT 90, 96 Bernabé, OF 20, 75-80, 109, 121, 139 Bernabé. The *Suda* mixes the Rhapsodic Theogony with the *Hieros logos* attributed to Cercops the Pythagorean, see West 1983:9. The following summary of the Rhapsodic Theogony is based on the reconstruction made by West 1983:70-75, where references to Kern's collection of fragments are also found. See fragments 90-359 Bernabé.

<sup>9</sup> For this reason it is believed that Ar. *Av.* 690 ff. = OV 64 Bernabé where Eros emerges from an egg was a parody of an Orphic theogony, see Parker 1995:491.

<sup>10</sup> Harrison 1991 [1922]:647-648; West 1983:70. See Chapter One.

following the Hesiodic schema. After hearing the advice of Nyx, Zeus swallows Phanes in order to reverse creation. This means that he is able to create the universe anew and thus become both the king and the creator of the world. However, instead of instituting an eternal reign, Zeus retires and hands over the sceptre of power to his son Dionysos born from the fruit of an incestuous union with his daughter (and granddaughter) Persephone. Being an infant, Dionysos is an easy target for the treacherous Titans, who dismember and eat the god. The rest of this myth, which ends with the resurrection of Dionysos and subsequently the creation of man, has been discussed earlier in this thesis.<sup>11</sup>

Exactly when this theogony was composed is debated, but a date around the first century BC or first century AD has been forcefully argued and is accepted here.<sup>12</sup> According to West's stemma over the Orphic theogonies the Rhapsodic Theogony was directly influenced by the theogony attributed to Hieronymus and/or Hellanikus, the Eudemian Theogony, and another Orphic theogony called the Cyclic Theogony, of which we have no evidence, but which West assumes must have existed.<sup>13</sup> Turning to the theogony of Hieronymus and/or Hellanikus (the Hieronyman Theogony), as told by Damascius, we see that Chronos, or Unaging Time (Χρόνος ἀγήραος), is preceded by both water and matter (ῥλη).<sup>14</sup> Damascius cuts the narrative short after the birth of Protogonos from the Egg which Chronos fashioned in the Aether.<sup>15</sup> It is quite possible, however, that the Church father Athenagoras provides us with an ending, where we notice that Phanes is succeeded not by Nyx but by Ouranos, who is formed from one of the halves of the egg from which Phanes emerged (the other half

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>12</sup> Earlier scholars usually dated the Rhapsodic to the sixth century BC, see chapter 1 for discussion. West 1983:229 proposes that the Rhapsodic Theogony was written some time after 100 BC based on the meter, prosody, style, and content. Brisson 1991:170, who I follow here, opts for a later date, around 100 AD, since Chronos first makes his appearance in this period and probably was introduced into the Orphic theogony through the Roman Mithras cult. The exact date is not important here.

<sup>13</sup> West 1983:264. West 1983:69, 121 insists on including the Cyclic Theogony which "stood at the beginning of the Epic Cycle" in Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*. However, Apollodorus never attributes this theogony to Orpheus. Allusions to other Orphic theogonies are also found, such as in Apollonios Rhodios' *Argonautica* 1.492-511 = OV 67 Bernabé where Orpheus sings of the creation of the world, in Pl. *Crat.* 402b where, according to Orpheus, Okeanos and Tethys were the first to marry, see also Pl. *Phlb.* 66c = OF 25 (I) Bernabé.

<sup>14</sup> Damascius *De princ.* 123 = OF 75 (I), 76 (I) Bernabé. See fragments 69-89 Bernabé for the theogony.

<sup>15</sup> Damascius *De princ.* 123 bis (III 162.15 Westerink) = OF 86 Bernabé. Also according to Damascius *De princ.* 123 bis (III 161.19 Westerink) Chronos, according to the Hieronyman version, created not only Aether and Chaos, but also Erebus (OF 78 Bernabé).

became Ge).<sup>16</sup> Then the Titan Kronos takes control by castrating his father Ouranos; he, in turn, is followed by Zeus and then by Dionysos. It is interesting to note that no mention is made of the Titans' attack and dismemberment of Dionysos, especially since this would have been a particularly useful part of the theogony for Athenagoras in his polemic attack on pagan religion.<sup>17</sup> We also see that Nyx is absent.<sup>18</sup>

This last piece of information makes the Hieronyman Theogony stand in stark contrast to the theogony known to Eudemos, the Eudemian Theogony. Our only witness to this theogony, Damascius, give us nothing more than the identity of the first god, Nyx.<sup>19</sup>

There seems to be little coherence between these theogonies. Nyx, an important deity in the Rhapsodic and Eudemian Theogonies, is not even present in the Hieronyman, nor in Athenagoras. Turning to (?pseudo-) Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* we find two genealogies, one on the birth of gods and one on the succession of kings among them, both attributed to Orpheus.<sup>20</sup> First Chaos existed, then Okeanos, Nyx, Ouranos, and Zeus, while the succession of kings were Erikepaios, Nyx, and Ouranos. Both Nyx the creator, from the Eudemian Theogony, and Chronos of the Hieronyman and Rhapsodic Theogonies, are absent. Olympiodorus mentions an Orphic theogony containing a succession of four kings: Ouranos, Kronos, Zeus, and Dionysos.<sup>21</sup> Here, neither Nyx, Chronos or Phanes/Protogonos is present.<sup>22</sup>

We can guess at the contents of the texts from which only the titles have survived, but judging from these conjectures it seems that they discussed various

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<sup>16</sup> Since the Hieronyman Theogony referred to by Damascius is more or less identical to the version known from Athenagoras, it is probable, but not certain, that Athenagoras and Damascius consulted the same Orphic theogony, see West 1983:179-180. It should be noted that Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1999:24-26 regard the Hieronyman Theogony and the one retold by Athenagoras as belonging to two different traditions.

<sup>17</sup> Noted by West 1983:181.

<sup>18</sup> Although West 1983:208, 234 includes Nyx in the Hieronyman Theogony.

<sup>19</sup> Damascius *De princ.* 124 (III 162.19 Westerink) = OF 20 (I) Bernabé. Although nothing more is certain, West 1983:117-119, 234 has reconstructed the theogony based on Pl. *Tim.* 40e = OF 24 Bernabé where Plato discusses a theogony which West assumes must have been told by either Orpheus or Musaeus. Although Nyx is not present in the text, West identifies her as the demiurge from whom all other gods have sprung. See also Alderink 1981:37 who assumes that Nyx, in this version, gave birth to Ouranos and Gaia.

<sup>20</sup> *In Metaph.* N 1091b4 = OF 367 Bernabé. Kern considered this commentary a testimony to the Rhapsodic Theogony, OF 107 Kern. Bernabé places it among the uncertain fragments.

<sup>21</sup> Olympiodorus *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.3 = OF 174 (VIII), 190 (II), 227 (IV), 299 (VII) Bernabé.

<sup>22</sup> There are other differences as well, for example, as Janko 1986:157 has pointed out, that while Apollodorus treats Okeanos and Tethys as Titans, Eudemos, according to West, see them as part of a prior generation.



topics. This does not necessarily mean that their contents in some way contradicted each other, but judging from what we know of the Orphic theogonies it seems that there was no agreement on how the world came to be and how the gods succeeded each other.<sup>23</sup> This means that the only things that binds these texts together are some of the reoccurring deities such as Phanes and Nyx, and, most importantly, that they are all attributed to Orpheus.<sup>24</sup> Thus, West's definition of Orphism as "the fashion for claiming Orpheus as an authority" seems to describe the situation perfectly.<sup>25</sup> This definition is suitable because it steers clear of any defining set of doctrines which we then need to find or reconstruct in texts attributed to Orpheus. It is therefore strange that West insists on arranging the Orphic theogonies in a stemma which aims to show how the texts influenced one another.<sup>26</sup> By doing this he is forced to reconstruct some of the theogonies, making conjectures as to their supposed contents, and even includes a hypothetical "Protogonos Theogony" in order to make the stemma more logical.<sup>27</sup> West's assumption that all Orphic theogonies are interrelated and dependent on each other exhibits, in my opinion, a disregard for his own definition. The fragments of the Orphic theogonies, with their numerous versions of the gods' genealogies and succession of kingship, not only shows us that it is impossible to establish a stemma of Orphic theogonies, but also that any reconstruction of a fragmented theogony based on other Orphic texts should be avoided.<sup>28</sup> For this reason I cannot agree with Brisson when he states that the Eudemian Theogony "in all probability" is identical to the

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<sup>23</sup> Aristotle *Metaph.* A3.983b29 compares the Orphic theogonies with other presocratic cosmogonies. One common factor for them is their attempts to solve the question of how the world, in all its multitude, was created out of one primordial principle, be it an element as according to Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, West 1963; Hussey 1972:16, 18-31, or a deity.

<sup>24</sup> That the world is created by a god, as in the Rhapsodic Theogony, is unlike what we find in Hes. *Theog.* 116 ff. where the world is already created when Chaos is introduced. This was seen by Guthrie 1993 [1952]:106 as unique for Orphic theogonies although it can be argued, as Parker 1995:492 suggests, that Zas, according to Pherekydes of Syros' account, creates the world by giving the robe to Chthonie. We do not know, however, if the world is created in the same fashion in, say, the Eudemian Theogony. The Orphic theogonies can be seen as "answers" to the Hesiodic version, according to Parker 1995:494; see also Brisson 1997:150 n4 "reaction"; and Rangos 2007:52 ff. In the Rhapsodic Theogony for example, it seems that Nyx in many ways has the same role as Ge has in Hesiod, the one who makes things happen.

<sup>25</sup> West 1983:3, see also Betegh 2004:151 for a similar definition.

<sup>26</sup> West 1983:69, 264. West introduces the stemma by quoting H. Schwabl's sound warning: "Es ist wohl überhaupt verkehrt, ein Stemma aller orphischen Theogonien aufstellen zu wollen.", West 1983:264.

<sup>27</sup> West 1983:96.

<sup>28</sup> West's stemma and his conjectured theogonies have been criticized by others, See Richardson 1985:88-90; Scalera McClintock 1998:322 f; Edmonds 1999:63, 70; Betegh 2004:151 f. For an excellent treatment of the problems of reconstructions see Brisson 1997.

Derveni Theogony.<sup>29</sup> True, both have Nyx as their primordial deity, but this is also found in other texts.<sup>30</sup> By naming Nyx the origin of all things, as Eudemus and probably the Derveni version do, the possibility of reconstructing their lacunae based on later theogonies such as the Rhapsodic or the Hieronyman becomes problematic. A reconstruction of that kind would entail a preconceived understanding of Orphism as a coherent religious unity with a fixed set of doctrines which adhered to only one version of the theogony existed. The sources suggest rather that there were a multitude of versions which not necessarily agreed with each other, but which nevertheless were attributed to Orpheus. This takes us back to West's definition. I believe that the application of West's definition is crucial in the interpretation of the Derveni Papyrus, and the Theogony quoted there, to which we now turn.

### 6.3 The Derveni papyrus

The Derveni Papyrus was found by accident during road constructions approximately 10 kilometers north east of Thessaloniki, northern Greece.<sup>31</sup> Six tombs from the late Classical and early Hellenistic period were gradually excavated under the supervision of Charalambos Makaronas and M. Karamanoli-Siganidou.<sup>32</sup> On March 16, 1962 the Greek newspaper *Kathemerini* reported that a carbonized roll of papyrus had been found on a funeral pyre, whose flames had helped preserve the papyrus. The remains of the pyre were located outside a cist grave labeled A by the excavators.<sup>33</sup> The flames

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<sup>29</sup> Brisson 2003:19 n2.

<sup>30</sup> In Phld. *de pietate* 47a (= Epimenides B 5 DK), we are told that Epimenides derived the creation of everything (πάντα συστήναι) from Aer and Night (Nyx). Later in the same work (9.137.5) he writes that in some versions, e.g. Musaeus, all things come from Night and Tartaros. Damascius, on quoting Eudemus, disagrees with his claim that Homer had Okeanos and Tethys as the original gods (see Hom. *Il.* 14.200 ff.; Pl. *Tht.* 152e) from whom all was created and argues instead that it was Nyx who Homer saw as the primordial deity, based on Hom. *Il.* 14.261 where Zeus is hindered from throwing Hypnos out of the aither by Nyx; "for he was in awe of doing what would be displeasing to swift Night", tr. Kirk, Raven and Schofield. See Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1999:17-20.

<sup>31</sup> The excavation was the subject of a series of articles printed in the Greek Newspaper *E Kathemerini*, see Hood 1961-62:15.

<sup>32</sup> On the the excavation, the tombs and the rich finds besides the papyrus, see Blake 1962; Hood 1961-62 with pictures; Daux 1962:792-794 with pictures of some of the finds including fragments of columns 5.1-11 and 22.1-13 (p. 794); Makaronas 1963; Ochsenschlager 1963; Kapsomenos 1964a:3; Themelis and Touratsoglou 1997; Sideris 2000; Betegh 2002:52-53; Betegh 2004:56-59; Kouremenos, Parásoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:1-4.

<sup>33</sup> The grave itself measured 2.07 x 0.90 meters and was found 4,5 meters away from tomb B, Kapsomenos 1964a:3. As Kapsomenos 1964a:3 writes: "the roll was carbonized by the fire of the funeral pyre and thus protected from the destructive effects of climatic conditions."

had, however, destroyed the lower part of the papyrus.<sup>34</sup> The grave goods which included iron and bronze weapons as well as golden wreaths, made Kapsomenos, who received the publication rights to the find, suggest that the deceased had been a warrior.<sup>35</sup> The remains of the deceased, who had been cremated, were found inside a fifth century bronze krater. News of this find was quickly broadcasted through several periodicals, as the date of the tombs, sometime in the fourth century based on the grave goods which included a beautiful bronze krater and a coin with an image of Alexander the Great in tomb B, contemporary with tomb A, indicated that the papyrus was the oldest ever found on Greek soil.<sup>36</sup>

The Derveni Papyrus has proved to be a sensational find spawning numerous articles on the text and its relationship to Orphism and Presocratic philosophy.<sup>37</sup> Two columns of the text were printed already in 1963, thanks to the restoration work undertaken by Anton Fackelmann of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.<sup>38</sup> Kapsomenos described these as a commentary on an Orphic Theogony consisting of at least seventeen columns.<sup>39</sup> Two years later parts of another six columns were published and it seemed that it would not take too long before the whole papyrus, on which Kapsomenos now could identify twenty-two columns, would follow suit.<sup>40</sup> No new columns appeared until an unofficial edition was published anonymously in the *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik (ZPE)* in 1982.<sup>41</sup> In response to this unauthorized publication, Tsantsanoglou, who was in charge of the papyrus after the death of Kapsomenos in 1978, Parássoglou, and E. G. Turner claimed that the *ZPE*-

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<sup>34</sup> Kapsomenos 1964a:6 suggested that up to 10 cm of the text could be lost in each column.

<sup>35</sup> Kapsomenos 1964a:3. See also Barr-Sharrar 2008:10 ff., 16-18 on the Derveni tombs

<sup>36</sup> The coin, Hood 1961-62:15; Kapsomenos 1964a:6. The bronze krater, Carpenter 2000; Barr-Sharrar 2008. Daux 1962:793 reported that the papyrus could be dated to the beginning of the Hellenistic period. Themelis and Touratsoglou 1997:185, 221 set the date of the tombs to late fourth, possibly beginning of the third century BC.

<sup>37</sup> Funghi 1997b includes over 150 studies up till 1995. See also Bernabé 2004:xxviii-xxxiv, 2005a:xiii, 2007a:171-181.

<sup>38</sup> Columns 21 and 26 according to the new numbering (all numbering follows the one in Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a), Kapsomenos 1963. Kapsomenos 1964a:13, picture of fragment of column 11 and 12, and p. 14, picture of fragment of column 17. Parts of Fackelmann's initial report is quoted in Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:4-5, see also Kapsomenos 1964a:4-5.

<sup>39</sup> Described as Orphic also in Makaronas 1963:194, and Ochsenschlager 1963:246.

<sup>40</sup> Columns 18-19, 21-26, see Kapsomenos 1963:222, 1964a:5, 1964b [1965]. The publication was very much anticipated as is shown in Merkelbach 1967:32: "Zweifellos wird uns der vollständige Text bedeutend mehr lehren", see also Welles in Kapsomenos 1964a:23: "we all shall wait with bated breath for the full evidence to appear in print."

<sup>41</sup> *ZPE* 47:\*1-\*12, separate pagination following p. 300, "Wir hoffen, dass bald eine gründliche, kritische Edition des Textes von ihrer [the Greek editors] Hand erscheinen wird." This text contained 24 columns. Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1999:31 claims the text was published by Merkelbach.

edition was full of errors and announced that an official version would appear in 1984.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the *ZPE* agreed not to publish anything on the papyrus in the next ten volumes.<sup>43</sup> It took, however, fifteen years before the next official publication, this time of the first seven columns.<sup>44</sup> These columns were initially presented by Tsantsanoglou at a conference on the papyrus at Princeton University in 1993, organized by André Laks and Glenn W. Most.<sup>45</sup> Richard Seaford, who attended the conference, reports that copies of the columns were shown to the participants of the conference but only on the condition that they were not to be copied and that they were to be returned after five minutes.<sup>46</sup> After Tsantsanoglou's publication, Richard Janko published an important edition based on the available material at the time, which provided the basis for many studies on the papyrus, most notably the first monograph on the papyrus by Gabor Betegh. A French translation by Fabienne Jourdan, a Spanish edition by Bernabé, and an Italian edition by Marisa Tortorelli have also been published.<sup>47</sup> Thus, scholars were very engaged in philological and interpretative questions regarding the papyrus and its text even though an official edition still had not emerged. The announcement of the official edition, which now counts twenty-six columns, was therefore celebrated when it came in 2006, forty-four years after its discovery.<sup>48</sup> In addition, Apostolos Pierris, from the University of Patras, and Dirk Obbink, Oxford University, are leading a project which aims to read

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<sup>42</sup> Turner, Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1982.

<sup>43</sup> Turner, Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1982:856; Merkelbach 1983.

<sup>44</sup> Tsantsanoglou 1997.

<sup>45</sup> On the conference see Laks and Most 1997a:1-3.

<sup>46</sup> Seaford 2006:102.

<sup>47</sup> Janko 2001 (translation), 2002; Jourdan 2003; Bernabé 2005b; Tortorelli 2006; Bernabé 2007a:169-269 with critical apparatus, 315-328 (index verborum). Betegh 2004:1 shows his dependence upon Janko's text. See also Betegh 2004:2 where he notes that some of his commentaries on cols. 10, 11, 13-26 was based on his own readings when he saw some of the fragments exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki in 1998. One should also mention the translation of the papyrus into English by Laks and Most 1997b.

<sup>48</sup> Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a. Article with interview in *E Kathimerini* October 21, 2006: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/news/content.asp?aid=75684> where Tsantsanoglou explains why it took so long to get the papyrus published: "Because we had to complete it, which included interpreting all of the legible surviving text on 26 scrolls," Tsantsanoglou told Kathimerini. "It was a difficult task, since we had to assemble that gigantic puzzle which would lead to its integrated form. The first, unauthorized publication in 1982, in a foreign scholarly journal, set us back, as it formed the basis of numerous studies on the Derveni Papyrus." See the critique of Janko 2006, paragraph 15, where he points out the lack of a critical apparatus. Answer by Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006b, paragraph 10.

even the most charred fragments through the use of multispectral imaging, a method used by NASA to measure the depths of the universe.<sup>49</sup>

Scholars agree, with few exceptions, that the papyrus itself should be dated to the latter half of the fourth century BC.<sup>50</sup> This coincides also with the dates of the tomb in which it was found and the contemporary graves surrounding it. But, since the text is, among other things, a philosophical treatise which never refers to or take into account Plato's work, it has been suggested that the Derveni papyrus is a copy of an original text which most probably can be dated to the years around 400 BC.<sup>51</sup> The text is, for the most part, a commentary and allegorical interpretation of an Orphic Theogony which is normally seen as even older.<sup>52</sup>

If the text is a copy of a slightly older text, as has been proposed, this means that it circulated at least to some extent. The question which many scholars ask regards the intended readership of the text. Was the text directed to initiates in an Orphic cult so that their understanding of Orphic texts may be enhanced through the proper use of allegorical interpretation?<sup>53</sup> Before we turn to this question through a textual analysis, a few things will be said about it here. The find spot of the papyrus led immediately to speculations about why it was burned in the first place. Kapsomenos wondered why the dead warrior, who most probably was the owner of the papyrus, had chosen to burn the papyrus.<sup>54</sup> Such a choice certainly indicates that

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<sup>49</sup> Dubuis 2006.

<sup>50</sup> Professor Youtie suggested in 1962, based on photographs of some of the columns in *E Kathemerini*, Blake 1962. A date around 340-320 was suggested by Kapsomenos 1963:223, 1964a:7-9; Henrichs 1984:255; Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:9. Note, however, the sound warnings of Professor Groningen in Kapsomenos 1964a:16. See also Turner 1971:92 who opts for a later date, 325-275 BC; and Frede 2007:10-12 who sets the date around 300, not later than 290-280 BC which is Themelis' view.

<sup>51</sup> Kapsomenos 1964a: 7-9; Burkert 1968:93 ff; West 1983:82; Janko 1997:61; Hussey 1999:304; Bernabé 2002c:94. Frede 2007:10-12, esp. p. 11, argues against the view that there are no Platonic features in the text and that, even if this is right, the text should be considered pre-Platonic. Kahn 1997 compares the etymological method to the one described in Plato's *Cratylus*. The use of *magoi* in a positive way in column 6 might, however, suggest that the original commentary was written sometime before 420 BC since this seems to be the approximate date set by Bremmer 1999:6 after which *magos* attained a uniformly negative meaning in Greek literature. Janko 1997:92 suggests a date between 430 and 420 BC for the original text.

<sup>52</sup> Merkelbach 1967:21; Burkert 1987b:22, *contra* West 1983:81-82 who argues that the theogony was written after 500 BC "for that is when the identification of Demeter with Rhea or the Mother of the Gods first appears", cp. P Derv. 22.7 ff. This is not necessarily a valid objection since the quote referred to by West is said by the commentator to be from a collection of hymns, "Υμνοίς, see Betegh 2004:98.

<sup>53</sup> In accordance with Rufinus *Recogn.* 10.30 (fourth century AD), referred to by Kapsomenos 1964a:9, who distinguished between Orphic texts taken literally which appealed to the masses, while allegory revealed the higher truths to the wise.

<sup>54</sup> Kapsomenos 1964a:4.

the item burned was not particularly important for the deceased, which in turn suggests that the text was distributed outside a circle of initiates. Martial reports how papyri were used to kindle funeral pyres, meaning that the burning of the Derveni papyrus could have been for purely practical reasons.<sup>55</sup> Another possibility could be argued based on the reports of Milligan who claimed that burned papyri emit a very special (and good) aroma, which might have served a purpose during the funeral rite.<sup>56</sup> If so, it is not unthinkable that the papyrus was chosen deliberately for this purpose. Glenn Most has argued for a connection between the contents of the papyrus, which, as we shall see, focusses to a great extent on fire and the properties of the sun, and the fact that it was burned.<sup>57</sup> Betegh suggests a connection between the burned Derveni papyrus and Euripides' *Hippolytus* where Theseus accuse his son of being an Orphic and therefore honouring "the smoke of many writings", and that the burning of the Derveni papyrus thus may have had a ritual function.<sup>58</sup> Another possibility, suggested to me by Helène Whittaker, is that the papyrus was destroyed intentionally in order to signal that it was meant to follow the deceased into the afterlife. There are many examples from Greek tombs where grave goods such as swords, vases, etc. have been intentionally destroyed for this purpose. But all these suggestions are bound to be conjectures which cannot be rejected or confirmed. Not much has been contributed to this discussion since Kapsomenos' first musings on the matter, nor is it likely that much will appear in the future. Still, the fact that the papyrus was not among the grave goods of the dead warrior could suggest that the text circulated outside a close circle of initiates since it was obviously not seen as important enough to be placed inside the tomb of the deceased.<sup>59</sup> However, even if the text, including the commentary, was

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<sup>55</sup> Mart. *Epigrammata* 10.97.1, Professor Walbank in discussion in Kapsomenos 1964a:22. See however Betegh 2002:54 who points out that there is no similar evidence from the Classical or Hellenistic period.

<sup>56</sup> Milligan 1909:153. See also Statius *Silv.* 3.3.31-39, cp. Ov. *M.* 15.871 f. on the offering of papyri in the Roman period.

<sup>57</sup> Most 1997; see also Hussey 1999:304; Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:4.

<sup>58</sup> Eur. *Hipp.* 953 f., Betegh 2002:55. However, Theseus's statement is not connected to a ritual, especially not a funeral ritual. Betegh, unconvincingly, also points to possible connections between the fire of the funeral pyre and the quotation of Heraklitus in col. 4 and a possible connection to the gold tablets of Thurii with their references to the thunderbolt.

<sup>59</sup> Obbink 1994:124-125, 1997:49 n16 has argued that the Derveni text was widely known based on Phld. *De pietate* 63 Gomperz = *PHerc.* 1428 fr. 3.14-18, *FGrH* 328 F 185, κἄν | τοῖς Ὑμνοῖς δ' Ὀρφ[εὺς | π]αρά Φιλοχόρῳ Γῆν [κ]αὶ Δῆμητρα τῆν | αὐτὴν Ἑστίαι, "in the *Hymns* Orpheus in Philochorus (says) that Earth and Demeter are the same as Hestia", tr. Obbink. I cannot see, however, how this can say anything about the Derveni text or the theogony it interprets since both Philodemus and the commentator explicitly refer to another text called the *Hymns*, see col. 22.11-12, ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐν

widely distributed this does not tell us whether the dead warrior was an initiate or not.<sup>60</sup> Determining the dialect of the author, of which there are differing opinions, will probably not help us in this respect either.<sup>61</sup> The answer to the question of distribution, or rather, the intended readership of the text, must be sought in the text.

### 6.3.1 *The Derveni theogony*

The Derveni papyrus is both an allegorical exegesis of a theogony, or a hymn, attributed to Orpheus, who the author of the papyrus quotes and paraphrases on numerous occasions, and a treatise on rituals.<sup>62</sup> We will see later how these two parts are connected. After the find the papyrus was quickly categorized as Orphic because of the commentator's use of Orpheus as an authority for the hymn. Furthermore, two citations known from Kern's collection of Orphic fragments have been found in in col. 17.12 of the papyrus where the commentator quotes from the theogony: Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται], and in col. 19.10: Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς δ' ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων ἀργικέραυτος.<sup>63</sup> Before we are able to answer the question of distribution it will be necessary to consider the contents of the text. In

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τοῖς Ὑμνοῖς εἰρ[η]μένον· | Ἐπιμήτηρ [Ῥ]έα Γῆ Μήτηρ Ἑστία Δηιώι” (*It is also said in the Hymns: "Demeter, Rhea, Ge, Meter, Hestia, Deio"*). It is therefore more likely that they both drew on the same source, see also Betegh 2004:98 n20 on this. The commentator himself does not mention Hestia. On Demeter as Ge Meter, see Henrichs 1968. Obbink also connects the Derveni text, on other grounds, to Homeric scholia, see his abstract:

<http://www.apaclassics.org/AnnualMeeting/06mtg/abstracts/Obbink.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> See discussion in Betegh 2004:68-73 who concludes that the "the archaeological evidence is not decisive either way", p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> Henrichs 1984:255 see it as mainly Attic with some Ionic features and compare it to Ionian inscriptions of the fourth century BC. Funghi 1997a:36 agrees. West 1983:77 n11; Burkert 1986:5; and Janko 1997:62-63, however, see the dialect as Ionic with Attic features. Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:11-14 are uncertain, but claims that the "overall impression is of an Ionic text liberally sprinkled with Attic features rather than the other way around."

<sup>62</sup> The poem has been described as an "allegorical commentary on an Orphic poem of cosmogenic and theogenic content", Kapsomenos 1964a:9, commentary: West 1983:78, 80; Burkert 1986:1; Henry 1986:150; "Theological cosmology", Alderink 1981:26; "ἱερὸς λόγος", Janko 1986:158, *contra* Henrichs 2003:232 who instead calls the text "a multi-layered, syncretistic, 'interdisciplinary' commentary on a verse theogony ascribed to Orpheus."; "excerpts from the oldest version of the Orphic cosmo-theogony known to us and, above all, a prose commentary on that poem.", Calame 2005:157; "eschatological doctrines, exposition of funeral rites, and an allegorical commentary on an Orphic theogony in terms of Presocratic physics", Most 1997:117; see also Robertson 2003:218; Rangos 2007:69-70. Most 1997:125 calls the theogony a hymn which is, as Bernabé 2002c:95 points out, how the commentator himself describes the text he is interpreting, col. 7.2. The commentator also calls it a "poem" (ποίησις), col. 7.4.

<sup>63</sup> Kapsomenos 1964a:10 who points to OF 21a Kern, ps.-Aristotle *De mund.* 401a25 = OF 31 (I) Bernabé. Citation in col. 19.10 = OF 31 Bernabé. Cp. Pl. *Leg.* 4.715e = OF 31 (III) Bernabé, "ὁ μὲν δὲ θεός, ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος, ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἀπάντων ἔχων" where the ancient tradition is explained as Orphic by the scholiast = OF 31 (IV) Bernabé.

the following sections we will therefore take a closer look at the contents of this theogony and the commentator's interpretation of it.

A reconstruction of the Derveni Theogony is dictated by which passages the commentator has chosen to interpret and in what order he quotes them.<sup>64</sup> Betegh's careful study of the lemmata, both direct quotations and prose paraphrases, is of great value for this reconstruction.<sup>65</sup> The allegorical exegesis begins at column 7.9 where Orpheus, according to the commentator, orders those who are not pure in hearing (=initiated), to "put doors to your ears" since what he has to say, according to the commentator, is not meant "for the many".<sup>66</sup> This is a strong indication that the theogony itself was addressed only to the initiates. Orpheus' statement, however, is used by the commentator to promote his own status as the only one who can interpret the poem successfully since Orpheus is saying "great things in riddles" (col. 7.6-7) and is "speaking mystically" (col. 7.8). The commentator could thus be explaining the need for an allegorical interpretation either to a band of initiates or to people who he considered to be potential initiates. The commentator tries to establish his own authority by presenting himself as the one who can decipher these riddles. I find it probable that the Derveni papyrus belonged to the same kind of books referred to by Plato in his critique of the itinerant *manteis* in the *Republic*, meaning that the public was aware of the existence of these books and that some might have read excerpts from them even though they remained uninitiated.<sup>67</sup> This remains a possibility which must be tested against the rest of the text.

In column 8.2 Zeus is described as the mighty king from whom someone or something was born.<sup>68</sup> This belongs most probably to the proem and sets in that case the main theme of the commentary: how Zeus came to power and how he, even

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<sup>64</sup> Bernabé 2002c:94-95 believes that the Derveni Theogony is less systematized than Hesiod's Theogony, and shorter as it seems to be concentrated on Zeus and his reign. However, we cannot know the actual length or content of the Derveni Theogony since a) it is the commentator, not necessarily "Orpheus" who concentrates on Zeus, and b) even though the papyrus seems to end after column 26 the whole papyrus is not conserved since a great deal of the lower part of each column is lost, see now West 1983:94-98; Janko 2001:32 n190; Bernabé 2002c:123-124 on the possibility of another papyrus. See also Betegh 2004:105.

<sup>65</sup> Betegh 2004:94-131, esp. pp. 130-131 for a "possible narrative structure of the poem". See also Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:21-28.

<sup>66</sup> All translations are taken from Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a unless otherwise stated, "doors to *your* ears" follows Laks 2007:158.

<sup>67</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 3.364e ff.

<sup>68</sup> [ο]ἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [ὑπερμεν]έος βασιλῆος.



though he is not the first-born or the first king, is the one who creates all things.<sup>69</sup> The next citation explains that Zeus took the power to rule from his father in accordance with a prophecy (col. 8.4-5). This prophecy came from Nyx (col. 11.10) who in all probability was the first deity in the Derveni Theogony.<sup>70</sup> The quote in col. 12.2 about Olympos, ὡς ἂν ἔ[χοι κά]τα καλὸν ἔδος νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου, probably marks the end of Zeus' seizing of power from his father. Zeus is now occupying "the fair seat on snow-clad Olympos". Next, Zeus hears prophecies from his father (col. 13.1). Although this is not clear, the prophecies are most probably connected to the next quote (col. 13.4) where he (Zeus) swallows the αἰδοῖον (meaning either the "reverend one" or the "penis").<sup>71</sup> Zeus is probably advised to do this in order to secure his position as the greatest god. Then the narrative goes back to the genealogy of god-kings, with a probable reference to Kronos in col. 14.5, and back to "Ouranos, son of Euphrone, who was the first to become king" (col. 14.6), Euphrone being an epithet normally applied to Nyx. Column 15.6 summarizes the succession of the god-kings; Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus. Metis is then mentioned at the end of the column, 15.13, but the context is uncertain. The commentator then introduces a rather long passage from Orpheus' poem where Zeus, on account of his swallowing, absorbs all creation into himself (col. 16.3-6). By doing this Zeus "became the sole one" and can therefore be proclaimed "king of all" later in the same column (16.14). This is also elaborated in the next column which is where we find the Orphic fragment mentioned above: "Zeus is the head, Zeus is the middle, and from Zeus are all things created" (col. 17.12)<sup>72</sup> where he is introduced as a creator-god, and in column 18.12-13 where Zeus is presented as the first born (πρῶτος | [γέν]ετο). The rest of the papyrus is concerned with Zeus' creation of the world. A new episode in the reign of Zeus is introduced in the last surviving column where the commentator is trying to explain an incestuous episode between Zeus and his mother as a philological misunderstanding. A number of episodes in this summary have been the subjects of intense debate. In the

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<sup>69</sup> Betegh 2004:130.

<sup>70</sup> Nyx is the mother of the first-born Ouranos (col. 14.6), see also Schibli 1990:45 ff; Bernabé 2007b:88 ff. who speculates whether Nyx conceived Ouranos on her own; Betegh 2004:153; Rangos 2007:55-56 who point to a parallel in Eudemos' theogony.

<sup>71</sup> West 1983:86; Calame 1997:66; Betegh 2004:112; Rangos 2007:54-55 believes Zeus is following the advice of Nyx here, and points to a parallel in the Rhapsodic Theogony OF 237 (I-III) Bernabé. Bernabé 2007b:98 argues that Zeus received this advice from both Nyx and his father, cols. 11.10, 13.1. We will return to this important and highly problematic column shortly.

<sup>72</sup> My translation.

following I will address the ones I find the most crucial for our understanding of how the commentator worked and how the Derveni Theogony might have been. This is of the utmost importance for our understanding of Orphic texts in general.

### 6.3.2 *Dionysos in the Derveni theogony*

If we compare this outline of the theogony as described above with what we know of the other Orphic theogonies we see that Nyx appears and seems to play an important role in the Derveni Theogony while Phanes, who is so important in the Rhapsodic Theogony seems to be absent.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Dionysos, who is normally seen as playing a decisive role in Orphic soteriology, is not mentioned. The discussion of Zeus' incestuous desire in column 26 has made scholars suggest that it introduced the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos as it is found in the Rhapsodic Theogony.<sup>74</sup> However, both the interpretations of the commentator and the theogony from which he quotes contradict the presence of Dionysos, and thus the myth of his dismemberment, in the Derveni Theogony.<sup>75</sup>

First of all, if we follow West's definition of Orphism, there is no need to assume that Dionysos played the same role in all Orphic theogonies as he did in the Rhapsodic Theogony.

Second, there is a general focus on Zeus throughout the text. More than half of the citations in the Derveni papyrus deal directly with Zeus, his ascension to power, and his creation of the world and the gods. In some of the citations where Zeus is absent, he is hinted at indirectly.<sup>76</sup>

Third, in column 17.3-6 the commentator equates Zeus with ἀἴρ (*air*).<sup>77</sup>

4 οὐ γὰρ ἐγένετο, ἀλλὰ ἦν. δι' ὅ τι δὲ  
ἀἴρ ἐκλήθε δεδήλωται ἐν τοῖς προτέροις. γενέσθαι δὲ  
ἐνομίσθη ἐπεὶ τ' ὠνομάσθη Ζεὺς, ὡσπερεὶ πρότερον  
μὴ ἔών.

<sup>73</sup> The following discussion on Dionysos is based on Torjussen 2005:15-17.

<sup>74</sup> West 1983:94; Parker 1995:496; Betegh 2002:61, 2004:340; Brisson 2003:20, 28.

<sup>75</sup> Also argued by Laks 1997:123 n9; Bernabé 2002c:123 is cautious; Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:25; Edmonds 2008b:33.

<sup>76</sup> Consider e.g. column 23.11 "and *he* placed therein the sinews of (i.e. the mighty; or the eddies of) silver-eddy Achelous" where Zeus is in the process of creating the world anew. See also cols. 11.10 and 12.2. "in a way the text itself is a prose hymn to Zeus", Frede 2007:31.

<sup>77</sup> Zeus as air is also found in Plut. *Qu. conv.* "The source is likely to be Stoic: the quote is introduced in the context of a pneuma model.", Hardie 1992:4772.

- 4 For it did not come to be, but existed. And why it  
 4 was called air has been made clear earlier in this book. But after  
 it had been named Zeus it was thought that it was born, as if it  
 not existed before

This point takes us to the allegorical methodology of the commentator and gives us a glimpse of how he interprets the Derveni theogony in light of Presocratic physics.<sup>78</sup> The commentator explains that this *air* was not born, but had always existed. This makes him conclude that Zeus also had always existed, or, more exactly, Nous (*Mind*), the main deity for the commentator, had always existed, but at a certain time during the creation of the world he changed and became *air*, receiving the name Zeus in the process. Zeus is thus, according to the commentator, an aspect of Nous, as is Ouranos and Kronos and all the other gods.<sup>79</sup> For the commentator the world was therefore created by Nous, but as the creation proceeded through various stages Nous assumed different roles. It is Nous appearing through these roles that have been misunderstood by people as different gods, claims the commentator. The same is claimed at the end of column 18.10-13, where we see how the commentator explains a specific passage from the theogony:<sup>80</sup>

- ἐπεὶ δ' ἐκλήθη  
 Ζεὺς, γενέσθαι αὐτὸν ἐ[νομ]ί[σθη]ν, ὄντα μὲν καὶ πρόσθεν  
 12 [ὄ]νομαζόμενον δ' οἴϛ. διὰ τοῦτο λέ]γει “Ζεὺς πρῶτος  
 [γέν]ετο”

- But after it had been called  
 Zeus it was thought that it was born, though it existed before too  
 12 but was not named. [This is why] he says: “Zeus was born  
 first”

The creation of the world is described etymologically through Aphrodite, Peitho, and Harmonia who are perceived by mankind as deities, but who in reality are aspects of Nous.<sup>81</sup> Their names are explained by the commentator on account of Nous' creative

<sup>78</sup> Most 1997:122.

<sup>79</sup> See e.g. cols. 13.3 behind which is the commentator's belief that Nyx is an aspect of Nous just as Zeus, see Rangos 2007:46-48, 14.7 where the name Kronos is explained etymologically as the "striking Mind" (κρούντα τὸν Νοῦν ≈ κρούων νοῦς ≈ Κρόνος), 21 see below, 23.3 where the commentator equates Okeanos with air and air with Zeus.

<sup>80</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the papyrus operates with different narratives, or levels as Laks 2007:157-158 has recently reminded us. The passage from column 18 shows the two voices at play.

<sup>81</sup> Kapsomenos 1964a:11 compared the etymological method of the commentator with that of Metrodorus of Lampsacus, see also Henrichs 1984:256. Kahn 1997:56 see similarities to the use of

actions as he in this stage put the different building blocks of the universe together by making these components “aphrodise”, as man and woman do, through persuasion and harmony (col. 21.5-12). This etymological interpretation of Aphrodite fits with the commentator’s general view that Orpheus used sexual metaphors in his theogony since he knew that “people consider all birth to depend on the genitals”.<sup>82</sup> The creation of the world as we know it therefore took place in the air, and we are told by the commentator that the air (=Zeus) dominates everything (col. 19.3-4).<sup>83</sup> The commentator explains this stage of creation as the final stage, an interpretation that is confirmed by two quotes from the theogony: “Zeus the head, Zeus the middle, and from Zeus are all things created” (col. 17.12),<sup>84</sup> and “But when the mind of Zeus devised all things” (col. 25.14). Turning back to column 17 the commentator states that “it [aspect of Nous] was named Zeus and it will continue to be its name until the things that are now have been put together in the same fashion as they were constructed beforehand” (col. 17.7-9).<sup>85</sup> Although this important passage is not a quotation it reveals the commentator’s reading of the theogony. Zeus will continue to be the king of gods as long as the world stays as it is. It is only after a major change in the cosmos that Zeus will lose his power.<sup>86</sup> Why should the commentator interpret the theogony like this if Dionysos was present? It would have been easy for him to consider Dionysos as yet another aspect of Nous, but he does not do this. In fact, he explicitly claims that Zeus is and will continue to be the king of gods until such time as the cosmos is changed. The commentator has Orpheus say this indirectly by claiming that “he [Orpheus] said that this will be the last, since it was named Zeus” (col. 17.6-7).<sup>87</sup> According to the commentator, Orpheus, in the Derveni Theogony, held Zeus to be the last god in the succession of god-kings. This reading is supported by the admittedly lacunic passage in column 16.14-15 where the commentator

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etymology in Pl. *Cra.* Calame 2005:158 points to a parallel in Hom. *Il.* where Hera is connected to fog (*eéra*), also Braarvig 2007:42 ff.

<sup>82</sup> Col. 13.7-8: ἐν τοῖς ἀ[ἰδοίο]ις ὄρων τὴν γένεσιν τοῦς ἀνθρώπου[ς] | νομίζο[ντας εἶ]ναι τούτῳ ἐχρήσατο.

<sup>83</sup> See Frede 2007:26 and Rangos 2007:60-61 on the possible heterogeneous composition of air.

<sup>84</sup> My translation.

<sup>85</sup> My translation, ὠνομάσθη Ζεὺς καὶ τοῦτο αὐτῷ διατελεῖ ὄνομα ὄν, | μέχρι εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ εἶδος τὰ νῦν ἔοντα συνεστάθη | ἐν ᾧ περ πρόσθεν ἔοντα ἠἰωρεῖτο.

<sup>86</sup> Betegh 2004:257-259 see this as evidence that the commentator’s cosmogony was cyclical. Cp. Vernant 1983:20 ff. who argues that the degeneration of races is believed to be reversed some time in the future.

<sup>87</sup> My translation, καὶ ᾿ύστατον ᾿φησεν ἔσεσθαι τοῦτον, ἐπεὶ τ’ | ὠνομάσθη Ζεὺς.

explains a quote from the theogony: “[And now he is] king of all [and will be] afterwards” | [It is clear that] “Mind” and [“king of all” are the] same thing”.<sup>88</sup> The commentator is discussing Nous, but it is likely that he means Zeus as an aspect of Nous. The quote from the theogony also probably refers Zeus as the king of the gods since Nous is a result of the commentator’s interpretation. This is also supported by the discussion of Zeus in the following column (17) and the description of Zeus as [ὑπερμεν]έος βασιλῆος in the quote in column 8.2.

There is an additional point to be made here. In column 17.7-9, considered above, the commentator expects the world to change once again sometime in the future. The change will present us with an entirely different world from the one we now know. However, because “the things that are now” is supposed to become what “they were before” there is no implication of a chronological step forward in the theogony, but rather a regression to the old order of the world. According to the commentator’s “genealogy” an old aspect of Nous will then take control of the world. Hence, according to the commentator there is no room for Dionysos in the Derveni Theogony. Based on these indications in the texts I think we can conclude that the Derveni theogony contained another version of an Orphic theogony than the one we find in Athenagoras and the Rhapsodic Theogony. This should not surprise us considering that these texts are separated by at least four centuries.<sup>89</sup>

### 6.3.3 αἰδοῖον and πρωτόγονος in the Derveni theogony

In column 14.6 the commentator cites a verse from the Derveni Theogony where Ouranos, son of Nyx, is presented as the first-born king, Οὐρανὸς Εὐφρονίδης, ὃς πρῶτιστος βασίλευσεν. The succession of ruling gods in the Derveni Theogony then seems follow the Hesiodic schema, as is seen in the citation in column 15.6: ἐκ τοῦ δὲ Κρόνος αὐτίς, ἔπειτα δὲ μητίετα Ζεὺς. The way the power is attained is, however, quite different from what we find in Hesiod, or in any other Greek text of the same period. Central in this respect is column 13.4 where we find a quote from the Derveni Theogony which is the subject of an intense, ongoing debate:

<sup>88</sup> “[νῦν δ’ ἐστὶν] βασιλεὺς πάντων καὶ τ’ ἔσσειτ’ ἔπειτα” | [δῆλον ὅτι] Νοῦς καὶ πάντων βασιλεὺς ἐστὶ ταῦτόν.

<sup>89</sup> Bernabé 2002c:123.

4 αἰδοῖον κατέπινεν, ὅς αἰθέρα ἔκθορε πρῶτος

Here, someone is swallowing something and since this quotation is taken from its context and since it does not form a semantic unit, the relative pronoun ὅς must point to something other than αἰδοῖον, a reconstruction of its meaning is dependent upon the commentator's remarks about this particular verse and how the verse fits with the rest of the Derveni text.<sup>90</sup> There are at least two differing views on this passage.

According to the Rhapsodic and possibly the Hieronyman theogonies, Zeus swallows Phanes in order to attain power and (re)create the universe. Since the Derveni Theogony also operates with a second creation by Zeus it has been suggested that the same narrative is reflected in the quoted passage. Based on this it has been suggested that αἰδοῖον should be understood as an adjective meaning “venerable” which refers to a god not mentioned in the passage. The main reason for treating αἰδοῖον as an adjective is the relative pronoun which is the subject of ἔκθορε and has θεόν or δαίμονα as its antecedent.<sup>91</sup> It is this god or daimon, being the direct object of κατέπινεν, referred to as αἰδοῖον, which is swallowed by Zeus. According to Brisson, Protogonos, who is seen as identical to Phanes, in the Derveni Theogony, emerged from the cosmic Egg, the same as in the Rhapsodic Theogony, and entered the aither in which the Egg had been fashioned.<sup>92</sup> Thus Brisson, following Laks and Most, translate the passage to “he swallowed down the reverend one (*aidoion*), who was the first to leap forth into aether.”<sup>93</sup> αἰδοῖον is therefore treated as an adjective also in the longer citation from the theogony in column 16.3-6 which refers to the same episode as the one in column 13:

4 πρωτογόνου βασιλέως αἰδοῖου· τῶι δ' ἄρα πάντες  
ἀθάνατοι προσέφυν μάκαρες θεοὶ ἠδὲ θεοὶ ἠδὲ θέαιναι  
καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ κρήναι ἐπήρατοι ἄλλα τε πάντα,  
ἄσσα τότ' ἦν γεγαῶτ', αὐτὸς δ' ἄρα μῦνος ἔγεντο

<sup>90</sup> Betegh 2004:111 argues against connecting this verse to the preceding verse quoted in column 13.1: Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ πατρὸς ἐοῦ πάρα [θ]έσφατ' ἀκούσα[ς], see also Betegh 2004:113 n49 on Janko 2001:24 (see also Janko 2002:27). West 1983:85-86, 114 believes that the commentator intentionally rearranged the verses from the Theogony and suggests that the verse in column 13.4 followed after the verse in column 8.5: [ἀ]λκὴν τ' ἐν χεῖρεσσι ἔ[λ]αβ[εν κ]α[ὶ] δαίμον[α] κυδρὸν. Betegh 2004:117-118 and Bernabé 2007b:90 argues against this.

<sup>91</sup> Brisson 2003:23.

<sup>92</sup> This would explain the prefix ἐκ in ἔκθορε, Brisson 2003:23. Rangos 2007:52 does not want to speculate who Protogonos was.

<sup>93</sup> Laks and Most 1997b:15 translation checked by Tsantsanoglou; Brisson 2003:22. Similar in Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:133: “the reverend one (αἰδοῖον) he swallowed, who first sprung out of the aither”.

- 4 Of the First-born king, the reverend one; and upon him all  
the immortals grew, blessed gods and goddesses  
and rivers and lovely springs and everything else  
that had then been born; and he himself became the sole one<sup>94</sup>

Thus, according to this interpretation, Phanes must have been the creator god in the Derveni Theogony, as in the Rhapsodic Theogony. Then, after the reigns of Ouranos and Kronos, Zeus seized power by swallowing Phanes, after advice from his father, Nyx, or both. By doing this all creation was absorbed into Zeus making him the only being in the universe. Then, Zeus was able to create the world anew, making himself not only the king amongst gods, but also the creator and thereby the first god through a reversal of the traditional genealogy.<sup>95</sup>

The other interpretation, to which I adhere, is based on a reading where αἰδοῖον is not understood as an adjective, but rather as a noun meaning “phallus” or “penis”. Again it will be necessary to see the passages from columns 13 and 16 in light of each other. To start with the latter column, and the πρωτόγονος, it is necessary to point out that this is not a title that is exclusive for Phanes, even though it is given to Phanes in the Rhapsodic Theogony, since it could be interpreted simply as a title for the first-born.<sup>96</sup> The commentator points this out for us in column 18.12-13 where “those who do not know” are accused of calling Zeus the first-born.<sup>97</sup> According to the Derveni Theogony Zeus was indeed born first since he reversed the genealogy of gods through his second creation, but according to the interpretation of the commentator, this is not what Orpheus really meant since Zeus, as an aspect of the eternal entity Nous, was never been born at all but had always existed. Nevertheless, the statement shows that the title was simply reserved for the god who was born first. Protogonos need not refer to Phanes then. Furthermore, αἰδοῖον need not be considered an adjective for the following reasons.

The relative pronoun in column 13.4 could just as easily refer to *Ouranou*, as Betegh has suggested, or a similar genitive construction preceding the cited passage

<sup>94</sup> Tr. Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:134.

<sup>95</sup> E. g. West 1983:85; Rusten 1985:125; Parker 1995:490; Brisson 2003:22 ff.; Rangos 2007:51 ff.

<sup>96</sup> Bernabé 2002c:107, 2007b:96. Betegh 2004:115 points to the “C-tablet” from Thurii on which both πρωτόγονος (line 1) and Φάνης (line 5) appear separated from each other, and it seems that the deity which is closest to the title is Ge.

<sup>97</sup> οἱ δ’ ἄγθρω[ποι οὐ γινώσκου]τες τὰ λεγόμενα | [ὡς π]ρωτόγονο[ν] ὄντα [θεὸν νομίζουσι] τὸν Ζῆνα [.

in which Ouranos is described as the first god to have leapt forth into the aither.<sup>98</sup> This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that πρωτόγονος simply refers to the first-born god. This is Ouranos according to the Derveni Theogony.<sup>99</sup> We see this from the citation in column 14.6 where Ouranos is described as the “son of Euphrone [Nyx], who was the first to become king.”<sup>100</sup> There are no indications in the Derveni Theogony or in the interpretations of the commentator that could suggest any generation of deities prior to Nyx, as Bernabé has convincingly argued.<sup>101</sup> The αἰδοῖον swallowed by Zeus in column 13.4, then, should be understood as a noun meaning “phallus” or “penis” which belongs to the one who was the first to leap forth into the aither. If we compare this with column 16.3-6 the αἰδοῖον belongs to the first-born king. This would make the αἰδοῖον swallowed by Zeus the phallus of Ouranos.<sup>102</sup> This is not as far-fetched as it might seem at first. Introducing the theogony in column 7 the commentator stresses that Orpheus’ poem

4 ἔστι δὲ ξ[ένη τις ἢ] πόησις  
 [κ]αὶ ἀνθρώ[ποις] αἰνι[γμ]ατώδης, [κε]ῖ [Ὀρφεύ]ς αὐτ[ὸ]ς  
 [ἐ]ρίστ’ αἰνι[γμ]ατα οὐκ ἤθελε λέγειν, [ἐν αἰνι]γμ[ασι]ν δὲ  
 [μεγ]άλᾳ.

4 This poem is strange and  
 riddling to people, though [Orpheus] himself did not intend  
 to say contentious riddles but rather great things in a riddling  
 way.<sup>103</sup>

Orpheus’ technique is revealed in column 13.5-9, just after the problematic passage:

ὅτι μὲν πάσαν τὴν πόησιν περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων  
 αἰνίζεται κ[α]θ’ ἕπος ἕκαστον ἀνάγκη λέγειν  
 ἐν τοῖς αἰ[δοῖο]ις ὁρῶν τὴν γένεσιν τοὺς ἀνθρώπου[ς]  
 8 νομίζον[τας] εἶναι τούτῳ ἐχρήσατο, ἄνευ δὲ τῶν  
 αἰδοίων [οὐ γίν]εσθαι, αἰδοίωι εἰκάσας τὸν ἥλιον[·]

Since he is speaking through the entire poem allegorically

<sup>98</sup> Betegh 2004:113 ff.; Bernabé 2007b:84.

<sup>99</sup> Bernabé and Jiménez 2001:189, 2008:142; Bernabé 2007a:216-223, 225.

<sup>100</sup> Οὐρανὸς Εὐφρονίδης, ὃς πρῶτιστος βασιλεύσεν.

<sup>101</sup> Bernabé 2002c:106-108, 2007b:89 ff; Brisson 2003:19 n2; Betegh 2004:148-149; Torjussen 2005:13-15. *contra* Rusten 1985:135 n31; Parker 1995:491.

<sup>102</sup> This view has been argued by several scholars including Burkert 1980:32, 1987a:22; Graf 1985:588; Bernabé 2002c:105, 110; Janko 2001:24 n124, 2002:27, 33; Betegh 2004:121 f.; Calame 2005:160. See also Torjussen 2005:13-15.

<sup>103</sup> My translation based on Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a.



about the real things, it is necessary to speak about each word  
in turn. Seeing that people consider all birth to depend on  
8 the genitals and that without the genitals there can be no birth,  
he used this (word) and likened the sun to a genital organ

The αἶδοῖον is explained as a way to describe the sun and it is explicitly described as a phallus. Turning to column 16, we the commentator points to the same equation: “[that] he called the sun a genital organ has been made clear”.<sup>104</sup> According to the commentator, then, Orpheus used sexual metaphors in the poem in order to illustrate generation. Why else, asks Bernabé, should the commentator explain Orpheus’ use of αἶδοῖον as a metaphor?<sup>105</sup> The commentator is convinced that Orpheus meant something different with this, namely that the “gods” have not succeeded each other as those who do not know believe, but that the “gods” in reality are aspects of the same god. In the same way that the names of these gods are explained etymologically from the different phases of Nous’ creation, the use of αἶδοῖον is used metaphorically to explain the development of creation from a period when the stuff of the universe (τὰ ὄντα) were striking aimlessly against each other (the reign of Kronos), to a reign of intelligent design and constellations (the reign of Zeus).<sup>106</sup> Instrumental in both phases was the sun, or fire, which can either cause or hinder the stuff (τὰ ὄντα) to be formed, which assumed different roles under the different phases.<sup>107</sup> Since the citation concerns how Zeus came to power and initiated the second creation, the commentator explains αἶδοῖον as a device to illustrate this. Hence, in Orpheus’ poem Zeus swallows a penis in order to attain both power and creativity. The commentator then interprets “penis” allegorically as the sun since both genitals and the sun are crucial for the creation of life.<sup>108</sup> The same technique is seen in column 21, as we saw above, where the birth of Aphrodite, Harmonia, and Peitho are interpreted etymologically by the commentator as processes in Nous’ creation of the world. That the commentator should understand αἶδοῖον as “phallus” when he read the theogony

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<sup>104</sup> Col. 16.1, [αἶδοῖ]ον τὸν ἥλιον ἔφ[η]σεν εἶναι δε[δῆλ]ωται.

<sup>105</sup> Bernabé 2002c:106, 2007b:81. ἔκθορε might also have sexual undertones, as we will see later.

<sup>106</sup> See col. 15.6, μητίετα Ζεύς (taken from a citation from the theogony).

<sup>107</sup> In col. 9.5-8 the commentator explains how Zeus placed the fire in a distant place so that the things that are was able to form new entities. Frede 2007:24 points out that the fire was also needed to warm things to such an extent that they would be able to form new entities. By placing the sun in the middle at the right distance from things, Zeus/Nous was able to finalize his creation.

<sup>108</sup> Bernabé 2002c:105-110, 2007b:82 ff., *contra* Brisson 2003:24; Jourdan 2003:61.

is supported by the fact this is the meaning which is most often given to the word in Greek literature.<sup>109</sup>

Further evidence that supports the equation of αἰδοῖον with “phallus/penis” is found in column 14 where we catch glimpses of episodes in the theogony which preceded the reign of Zeus. The column starts with a statement by the commentator, which is connected to the citation in column 13.4, who claims that something sprang “out of the brightest and hottest one (masc.) having been separated from itself.” (col. 14.1-2, [ἐ]κθόρηι τὸν λαμπρότατόν τε [καὶ θε]ρμό[τ]ατον | χωρισθὲν ἀφ’ ἑωυτοῦ). The answer to what is separated from itself is found in the quote in the same column which refers to Kronos’ “great deed”, a deed which in all probability must be the famous castration of his father Ouranos, also known from Hesiod’s *Theogony*.<sup>110</sup> According to this Kronos castrated Ouranos, but his penis did not fall into the ocean as in Hesiod, but was rather swallowed by Zeus. As we have seen, the commentator interpreted Kronos as the phase of creation when Nous made the things that are (τὰ ὄντα) strike against each other. The “great deed” which Orpheus talks about, then, is in reality the episode when Nous becomes the “striking Mind” (κρούων νοῦς, col. 14.7-14).<sup>111</sup> Again, the sun is of great importance in this new stage in the creation and that is why the commentator say that “Kronos was born from Helios to Ge, because it was account of the sun that (the εἶόντα) were induced to be struck against each other.” (col. 14.2-4, τοῦτον οὖν τὸν Κρόνον | γενέσθαι φησὶν ἐκ τοῦ Ἡλίου τῆι Γῆι, ὅτι αἰτίαν ἔσχε | διὰ τὸν ἥλιον κρούεσθαι ἀλληλα). Thus, according to Orpheus, Kronos was the son of Helios and Ge, but according to the commentator, the sun was also the same as Ouranos’ penis.<sup>112</sup>

To sum up the succession of kings among the gods as the commentator most probably read it in the theogony, Ouranos, the son of Nyx, was the first-born king from whose creative power (=his penis) all gods and goddesses, rivers and mountains have been created (col. 16.3-6). Ouranos was deprived of his reign through the “great deed” undertaken by Kronos, meaning that Kronos castrated Ouranos (col. 14.5).

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<sup>109</sup> Calame 2005:160; Bernabé 2007b:81 refers to Hdt. 2.30, Arist. *Gen. an.* 493a25; see also Brisson 2003:24. For the use of sexual metaphors in the Derveni Papyrus see Calame 1997.

<sup>110</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 178 ff.; P Derv. 14.5, διὰ τοῦτο λέγει ὄς [refers to Kronos in 14.2] μέγ’ ἔρεξεν”. Calame 2005:160-161.

<sup>111</sup> Kronos – “sated intelligence”, Olymp. *In Plat. Phaed.* 1.5; Plut. *Qu. Rom.* 266e: Kronos = Chronos.

<sup>112</sup> Unlike e.g. Rusten 1985:136 who believed that the commentator saw Ouranos as the same as the sun. See Bernabé 2002c:110, 2007b:88 with whom I agree.

Ouranos was therefore separated from his penis which, in turn, was swallowed by Zeus (cols. 14.1, 13.4).<sup>113</sup>

That a god swallows a penis in order to attain power is unique in a Greek context. Parallels in Hurrian and Hittite theogonies have been pointed out by Burkert.<sup>114</sup> According to accounts in the Hittite *Theogony* and *Kingship in Heaven* (also known as *The Song of Kumarbi*) Kumarbi, who can be compared with Kronos, fought against Anu in order to attain power. Kumarbi chased Anu up to the heavens, seized his ankles and bit his knees so that Anu's "manhood" became absorbed into the belly of Kumarbi. Anu, however, had managed to plant seeds in his penis of not only mountains and rivers (including Tigris) who Kumarbi then had to "create" but also deities including the storm-god (parallel to Hesiod's Zeus) who would eventually dethrone him.<sup>115</sup> Brisson and Rangos are both sceptical to this parallel and argue that it alone cannot be used as evidence for the same narrative in the Derveni Theogony.<sup>116</sup> However, when this parallel is seen together with other evidence supporting the proposed narrative, most of which are found in the papyrus itself, then evidence that a similar theogonic narrative existed in a nearby culture should be taken into account. That a myth like this was known to the Greeks has been suggested by Burkert by referring to Diogenes Laertius who ascribe tales where the gods perform fellatio to Orpheus.<sup>117</sup> We should be cautious, however, since, as Tsantsanoglou and Kouremenos point out, "swallowing a severed penis can hardly be described as fellatio".<sup>118</sup>

Even so, I believe that the case for translating αἰδοῖον as a noun meaning "phallus" or "penis" is stronger than seeing it as an adjective meaning "reverend". This leaves us with the rest of the Derveni Theogony which we are now ready to see in full.

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<sup>113</sup> Kirk, Raven and Schofield 1999:32; Bernabé 2002c:111, 2007b:83-84; Betegh 2004:119-120.

<sup>114</sup> Burkert 1983b:119; Bernabé 2002c:105-106, 2007b:82. West 1997:85, 89 is cautious.

<sup>115</sup> Line 18 ff. of the Hittite *Theogony*, see Güterbock 1948:124. There were also other versions of this myth.

<sup>116</sup> Brisson 2003:28; Rangos 2007:51

<sup>117</sup> Burkert 2004:91; Betegh 2004:120. Diog. Laert. 1.5, καὶ τὰ σπανίως ὑπὸ τινῶν ἀνθρώπων αἰσχροουργούμενα τῷ τῆς φωνῆς ὄργάνῳ.

<sup>118</sup> Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:26 n68.

#### 6.3.4 Phanes in the Derveni theogony

According to the Derveni Theogony Zeus is both the creator of the universe and the king of the gods. Through his reversal of the creation, and his second creation of everything, he is also the first-born. Hence, the quotations from column 18.12-13: Ζεὺς πρῶτος | [γέν]ετο (Zeus was born first), column 8.2: [ο]ἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [ὑπερμεν]έος βασιλῆος (who were born from Zeus, the mighty king), column 17.2: Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσ]σα, Διὸς δ' ἐκ [π]άντα τέτ[υκται] (Zeus is the head, Zeus the middle, and from Zeus is everything fashioned), and column 19.10: Ζεὺς βασιλεύς, Ζεὺς δ' ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων ἀργικέραυνος (Zeus the king, Zeus the ruler of all, he of the bright bolt).<sup>119</sup> The Derveni Theogony shares this emphasis on Zeus and the second creation with the Rhapsodic Theogony. This is not enough, however, to use the Rhapsodic Theogony to reconstruct the Derveni Theogony. As we have seen, it was not Phanes who was swallowed by Zeus in the Derveni Theogony. Furthermore, as has been argued by Bernabé, there seems to be no room for Phanes in the Derveni Theogony or in the cosmology of the commentator.<sup>120</sup> I will briefly go through the arguments against his presence in the papyrus and the theogony commented upon there.

First, there is no sign of him in the text itself. Brisson believes that this “can be explained by purely material reasons”, indicating that he was mentioned in the parts that are now lost.<sup>121</sup> This *argumentum ex silentio* cannot be given any weight unless logic dictates that he must have been in the theogony.<sup>122</sup>

Second, it has been suggested that not only πρωτόγονος is an alternative title for Phanes (discussed above), but that μῆτις, which appears in column 15, refers to the goddess Metis, who in the Rhapsodic Theogony equate with Phanes.<sup>123</sup> The fragmentary state of the papyrus makes it impossible to confirm this and I follow West's and Betegh's interpretation of μῆτις as a noun connected to Zeus as the “intelligent one” rather than a reference to the goddess Metis/Phanes.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Bernabé 2007b:96.

<sup>120</sup> Bernabé 2002c:106-107, 2007b:89 ff; Betegh 2004:148-149; Torjussen 2005:13-15.

<sup>121</sup> Brisson 2003:24 n39; Jourdan 2003:61.

<sup>122</sup> Betegh 2004:117.

<sup>123</sup> OT 96, 97, OF 139 Bernabé, see Betegh 2004:113 n52 with references to Kern. Calame 1997:70 ff., 2005:162 f. believes Metis is present but does not equate her with Phanes.

<sup>124</sup> See col. 15.13, μῆτιν κα.[ c. 13. ]εν βασιληίδα τιμ[ήν] which West 1983:114 reconstructed to Μῆτιν κα[ὶ μακάρων κατέχ]ων βασιληίδα τιμ[ήν.], seeing μῆτις as a title referring to Zeus, followed by Betegh 2004:32-33, 113-114; Bernabé 2007b:92. Bernabé 2002c:107,

Third, Ouranos is titled the first-born in the Derveni Theogony, meaning that there was only one generation preceding him. He is described as the son of Nyx while no mention is made of Phanes as his father. According to Bernabé it is uncommon not to mention the father in such circumstances, but in this instance it could well be that Ouranos did not have a father since Nyx probably was the primordial deity in the Theogony, meaning that she fashioned the Sky for herself.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, there is no place for Phanes in the theogony after Ouranos.<sup>126</sup>

Fourth, Brisson has proposed that the “glorious daimon” referred to in the quote in column 8.4-5 is Phanes, Ζεὺς μὲν ἐπεὶ δὴ πα[τρὸς ἐο]ῦ πάρα θέ[σ]φρατον ἄρχῆν | [ἀ]λκῆν τ’ ἐν χεῖρεσσι ἔ[λ]αβ[εν κ]α[ῖ] δαίμον[α] κυδρόν. Zeus takes the power from his father and the glorious daimon. This is a puzzling verse which occupies the commentator for the rest of the column and well into the next. However, I can see no reason why the daimon should be equated with Phanes. This is only possible if the daimon is seen as the antecedent to *aidoion* in column 13.4 and that these verses followed each other in the theogony.<sup>127</sup> We have no evidence for this.<sup>128</sup> Instead we might read column 8 and 9 as further evidence that the αἰδοῖον was Ouranos’ penis and it is this power he refers to here. In column 9.5 ff. the commentator starts to discuss how fire behaves and is instrumental in the creation of things. The commentator couples this discussion of fire with the power Zeus took from his father and the daimon because the power equals αἰδοῖον which in turn equals the sun.<sup>129</sup> Thus Zeus had to swallow the penis in order to get the power to create things. According to the commentator the penis, as we saw above, should be understood allegorically as the sun which became separated from Ouranos when he was castrated by his son Kronos. It is uncertain who the daimon is, based on this interpretation he might be understood, at least by the commentator, as Ouranos. In the Derveni Theogony, by contrast, the “glorious daimon” could have been Helios, the sun, since the commentator emphasize that the real meaning is not that Zeus took the

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2007b:90 adds that Phanes is a late deity, but his presence is attested on one of the gold tablets from Thuri (1.3 Thuri 2, the “C-tablet”) also from the middle of the fourth century BC.

<sup>125</sup> Bernabé 2002c:109-111, 2007b:89, refers to Arist. *Metaph.* 1091b4, see also brief discussion above.

<sup>126</sup> Col. 15.6, ἐκ τοῦ [Ouranos] δὴ Κρόνος αὐτίς, ἔπειτα δὲ μητίετα Ζεὺς. Betegh 2004:118-119.

<sup>127</sup> According to West’s *exempli gratia* reconstruction, 1983:114, see also 84 ff.

<sup>128</sup> Betegh 2004:117-118. See also Bernabé 2007b:91 on the meaning of “took in his hands” which, according to Bernabé, means that he took the power from his father, here Kronos.

<sup>129</sup> See also Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:198 on this.

power and the daimon from his father (Kronos). The power and the glorious daimon could thus have been seen as the same thing in the theogony.

Fifth since Phanes is called Eros in the Rhapsodic Theogony one could perhaps expect to see him appear under that guise.<sup>130</sup> However, as Bernabé has pointed out, Eros is not even present in column 21 where Aphrodite, Harmonia, and Peitho are explained by the commentator as metaphors for the creation of things in the air by Nous.

Based on these considerations I believe we can safely rule Phanes out of the Derveni Theogony. To sum up the theogony we have Nyx as the primordial deity who creates Ouranos on her own. Ouranos is therefore the first-born and he is also the first of the gods to rule. Next Kronos castrates Ouranos, leading to the creation of the sun, Helios, in the process. The commentator interprets the castration as a new stage in the creation of the world where the stuff things are made of started to strike against each other on account of the sun. For this reason Kronos is called son of Helios (since it was this activity that made things strike against each other). Next, Zeus swallows the sun and with it all creation. Then, he creates everything anew. A number of known gods and geographical features (such as the river Achelous) are created in the poem even though we do not see exactly at what stage this happens in the Derveni papyrus.<sup>131</sup>

Although the Derveni Theogony operated with a double creation, it seems that the commentator did not. This becomes clear, in my opinion, from the way he treats the sun and fire in the formation of the world. Again we return to the verse in column 13.4 since the αἶδοῖον is interpreted as the sun by the commentator. The commentator interprets the various gods, Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus, as aspects of Nous, the only deity in the universe, eternal and unborn. His different aspects attained different names based on what stage the creation of the world was (Ouranos as the determining mind (ὀρίζειν Νοῦς, col. 14.12-13), Kronos as the striking mind (col. 14.7)). Mind needs to manipulate and change fire and the sun in order to fulfill his creation. This becomes clear in column 9 where the power of fire is related, and column 15 where it is

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<sup>130</sup> Bernabé 2007b:91.

<sup>131</sup> See e.g. Bernabé 2002c:111 ff., 2007b:85 who based on Burkert 2004:93 argues that Aither is created through ejaculation in column 13.4, pointing to parallels in Egyptian material, see objections in Betegh 2004:155-156. Cf. also Aphrodite, Harmonia, Peitho in column 21, and the goddesses in column 22, Okeanos in column 23 and so on. The focus of the major part of the Derveni papyrus was on how Zeus attained his power and became the first-born creator-god.

said that the sun was “separated and confined in the middle” in order to prevent the things that are (έόντα) from striking against each other.<sup>132</sup> Thus, the placement of the sun in the middle (of the universe) holds things apart from each other, so that the stars and the sun, which are made out of the same material, do not strike against each other. As the commentator says “if the god did not wish the present έόντα to exist, he would not have made the sun” (col. 25.10, ό θεός ει μη ήθελεν είναι, ούκ άν έπόησεν ήλιον). The swallowing of the sun, or Ouranos’ penis, and everything in the universe is therefore seen as another stage in the creation of the universe where new constellations are made. The stuff the world is made of, however, is seen by the commentator to be uncreated and eternal.

In using the internal evidence in the text instead of turning to other Orphic theogonies we come closer, I think, to the intended narrative commented on in the Derveni papyrus.<sup>133</sup> Although the Derveni Theogony shared some features with later texts, such as the swallowing of something, a second creation which makes Zeus the creator and first-born king, there are also differences which need to be pointed out and emphasized, such as the absence of Phanes and Dionysos. The Derveni Theogony is therefore a good example of the variations which occurred in the Orphic texts. By using West’s definition of Orphism as “the fashion for using Orpheus as an authority” there is no need to make the text fit an “Orphic context” since this context is not fixed regarding specific episodes and the meanings which were attached to them. There is therefore no reason to use other Orphic theogonies as the starting point for any reconstruction of the Derveni Theogony.

#### 6.4 The Derveni commentator

The exegesis of Orpheus’ Theogony makes up the largest part of the papyrus. The other columns, mainly the first seven but also columns 10 and 20, serve other purposes which nevertheless are connected to the commentary. It is in these “other” columns, the “ritual part”, that we find the commentator’s views on sacrifice and

<sup>132</sup> Col. 9.5-10, γινώσκ[ω]ν οὖν τὸ πῦρ ἀγαμειγμένον τοῖς | ἄλλοις ὅτι ταράσσοι καὶ κ[ωλ]ύοι τὰ ὄντα συνίστασθαι | διὰ τὴν θάλψιν ἐξάλλασ[σει] τὰ ὄντα συμοαγῆναι. | ὅσα δ’ ἄ[ν] ἀφθῆι ἐπικρα[τεῖται], ἐπικ[ρα]τηθὲν δὲ μίσγεται | τοῖς ἀλ[λ]οῖς. Col. 15.1-5, κρούε<ι>ν αὐτὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλα κα[ὶ] προήση τὸ [πρώτ]ον | χωρισθέντα διαστήναι δίχ’ ἀλλήλων τὰ έόντα· | χωρ[ι]ζομένου γάρ τοῦ ήλίου καὶ ἀπολαμβανομένου | ἐν μέσῳ πήξας ἴσχει καὶ τάνωδε τοῦ ήλίου | καὶ τὰ κάτωθεν.

<sup>133</sup> Also argued by Betegh 2004:93.

cultic activities, performed by himself and others. These columns are therefore valuable if we want to learn more about the commentator, how he related to other cults, and also to what audience his text was intended.

#### 6.4.1 Ritual in the Derveni papyrus

Central in the first seven columns are the Erinyes and what appears to be a description of their role in the world and how one is to appease them through sacrifices. Even though it is difficult to reconstruct the ritual, there are many things in these columns that suggest that the ritual had an eschatological purpose.<sup>134</sup> In Archaic and Classical literature the Erinyes were seen as vengeful spirits often connected to family curses.<sup>135</sup> If we accept that the Eumenides were the same as the Erinyes, then it seems that Rohde was right in identifying the Erinyes as the souls of the dead.<sup>136</sup> In any case, the commentator emphasizes their importance by referring to them in the first four columns, while the Eumenides appear in columns 2 and 6. From the lacunic first columns, then, it seems that we need to perform sacrifices to the Erinyes (col. 2.6-7, 6.1-2) and Eumenides (col. 2.6-7, 6.1-2, 8-10), who both seems to be, as Betegh has argued, a sub-class of *daimones*.<sup>137</sup> The reason for this seems to be connected to what is said in column 4, where Herakleitos' words on the Erinyes are quoted, in column 5 where the terrors of Hades, but also to the rest of the Derveni papyrus and the Theogony which is commented upon there. I will start with column 4.

Column 4 is connected to the rest of the papyrus by its emphasis on the current order of the universe, what the commentator understands as the reign of Zeus where Zeus, as all other gods, is an aspect of Nous; "Is it not then because of him [Zeus] that the universe has order?"<sup>138</sup> We have seen that this order is connected to the sun and its placement in the middle of the universe, but here in column 4, the sun itself is said to be guarded by the Erinyes:

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<sup>134</sup> Tsantsanoglou 1997:98.

<sup>135</sup> Rohde 1903 II:229 ff. argued that the Erinyes were the souls of the dead, an interpretation supported by Harrison 1991 [1922]:213-239. On Erinyes as vengeful see Hom. *Il.* 6.200, 9.571; Aesch. *Eum.* 46 ff., 126; Eur. *Or.* 256; Pl. *Leg.* 9.865; Plut. *De exil.* 11

<sup>136</sup> As Betegh 2004:85-88 does, *contra* Henrichs 1984:264-265. See also Tsantsanoglou 1997:100. Rohde did not separate the Erinyes from the Eumenides.

<sup>137</sup> Betegh 2004:88. Frede 2007:30-31 suggests that the Erinyes are unplaced souls while the Eumenides are placated souls.

<sup>138</sup> Col. 4.4, ἄρ' οὐ τὰ[ξί]ν ἔχει διὰ τό[ν]δε κόσμος;



8 ἥλι[ος ...].ου κατὰ φύσιν ἀνθρω[πηίου] εὖρος ποδός [ἔστι,]  
 τὸ μέγεθος οὐχ ὑπερβάλλων εἰκ[ότας οὐ]ρους ε[ύρους]  
 [ἔου· εἰ δὲ μὴ, Ἐρινύε[ς] νιν ἐξευρήσου[σι, Δίκης ἐπίκουροι·]  
 [ὅπως δὲ μηδὲν ὑπερ]βατὸν ποῆι κ[

8 The sun in the nature of ... is a human foot in width,  
 not exceeding in size the proper limits of its width.  
 Or else the Erinyes, assistants of Dike, will find it out.  
 And [they will punish it?], so that it will not transgress ...

We are able to reconstruct these admittedly lacunic verses since they are citations from two previously known Herakleitos-fragments.<sup>139</sup> It seems that the Erinyes played an important role in the cosmology of the commentator.<sup>140</sup> David Sider has argued that according to the "ancient thinking" the sun was probably believed to transgress its boundaries every day since it became bigger during the day and then was extinguished by the Erinyes at night.<sup>141</sup> This appears to be what Herakleitos believed, and we can possibly see the same idea in Plato when he writes that Dike is set to control the passing of night and day.<sup>142</sup> However, this idea does not seem to have been held by the Derveni commentator since, as we have seen, he believed the sun to be constant and placed in the middle of the universe, even during the night.<sup>143</sup> This becomes clear in his discussion in column 25 on the stars which are kept from each other by the sun, even at night. For this reason he must have believed in the existence of the sun even when he could not see it (at night), just as he believed in the existence of the stars during daytime, since an extinguished sun would certainly lead to a new phase in the creation of the world.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Herakleitos 22 B 3 and 94 DK.

<sup>140</sup> This column has been hotly debated. In col. 4.7 Mouraviev 1985, followed by Sider 1987, read οὐ κατὰ φύσιν and thus he argued that the commentator quoted from Herakleitos because he disagreed with him. Schönbeck 1993:16 has argued against this reading. Tsantsanoglou 1997:94 read ἔου]τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, but Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a read ...].ου κατὰ φύσιν where ] is said to show traces of a δ. I will not concentrate on the size itself, but rather the fact that the sun had limits which seems to be the reason why the commentator included the quotation, see Sider 1997:143.

<sup>141</sup> Sider 1997:142, see Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:158 ff. for discussion.

<sup>142</sup> Herakleitos 22 B 6 DK, ὁ ἥλιος οὐ μόνον, καθάπερ ὁ Ἥ. φησι, νέος ἐφ' ἡμέρηι ἔστιν, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ νέος συνεχῶς, Cp. Xenophanes who, according to Hippol. *Haer.* 1.14.3, maintained that the sun was created every day by small lumps of fire that joined each other.

<sup>143</sup> If the commentator disagreed with Herakleitos, then it might be on this point.

<sup>144</sup> This is perhaps one of the reasons they are honoured in column 2?

The Erinyes are also said to punish the souls of unjust men (col. 3). It is here, I believe, that the connection between the two parts of the papyrus is made explicit.<sup>145</sup> Just as the Erinyes are important for the universe and everything in it, they are also a threat to this order, if the boundaries are crossed. The same applies to the fate of individuals if they cross their boundaries.<sup>146</sup> The Erinyes do not enforce these tasks on their own accord but are said to do this on orders from Dike.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, the Eumenides are described as souls (col. 6.9-10, Εὐμενίδες γὰρ | ψυχαί εἰσιν), which are the same as *daimones* (col. 6.3-4, δαίμονες ἔμπο[δῶν δ' εἰσὶ] | ψ[υχαῖς ἐχθ]ροί), who also exact vengeance on mankind (col. 6.1, εὐ]χαὶ καὶ θυσ[ί]αι μ[ε]ιλ[ί]σσο[υ]σι τὰ[ς ψυχάς]). It is therefore necessary to appease the Eumenides, whom the commentator at least associate with the Erinyes, through preliminary sacrifices of birds (col. 2.7, possibly 6.11) and “innumerable and many-knobbed cakes” (col. 6.6-9) as well as libations of water and milk.<sup>148</sup> Also of importance seems to be the recitation of hymns adapted to the music or poetry (col. 2.8, μουσ[ι]κῆ) which was probably a part of this ritual.<sup>149</sup> Although these rites are eschatological in the sense that they protect the soul from the fury of the Erinyes, I am not convinced that these rites were connected to a funerary context, as some scholars have suggested.<sup>150</sup> True, there are libations directed to the dead, but since these are identified as Eumenides it is more probable that they were part of the preliminary

<sup>145</sup> As Lask 1997:125; Most 1997:127; and Betegh 2004:329 also argues. Hussey 1999:319, 322-323 states that “the structure and history of the cosmos (or world-soul) was taken to be analogous to that of the individual soul”.

<sup>146</sup> Tsantsanoglou 1997:109 has argued that the Erinyes were only connected to the fate of the souls, not, as Herakleitos would have it, guardians of the sun.

<sup>147</sup> Both in cols. 3.5 and 4.9. Cp. the Pl. *Symp.* 202e where *daimones* are seen as intermediate between the gods and mankind, Henrichs 1984:258 n8. Cp. now Hussey 1972:49 who, based on Herakleitos B 94 DK, sees the Erinyes, in general, as personifications of strife, ἔρις.

<sup>148</sup> Henrichs 1984:258-259 has explored the ritual parallels to what we find in the first columns of P Derv. On the sacrifice of cakes, see Thuk. 1.126 where cakes were sacrificed to Zeus Meilichios in Athens, but also in preliminary sacrifices to other gods at the sanctuary of Asklepios in Athens, *IG 2/3*<sup>2</sup> 4962 (Piraeus, fourth century.), Ar. *Plut.* 660. Cakes with many knobs, *polyomfaloi*, are also mentioned in Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.22.4 where they are listed among the secret “ingredients” in the *cistae mysticae* used in the cults of Demeter and Dionysos, see also Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 2.3.39. Betegh 2004:84 also see the cakes as gifts of appeasement. According to Henrichs 1984:258-259 the wine-less libations fits with what we know of sacrifices to the Eumenids in Athens, see refs. n14-15. The sacrifice of birds was uncommon but not forbidden, see Bowie 1995:463 who refers to Paus. 2.11.7; Garland 2001:140 where it is connected to funerals, but see Lupu 2003:329 ff. on bird sacrifice at Oropos, not necessarily funerary.

<sup>149</sup> Paus. 9.30.5-6 tells us that the Lykomidai sang Orphic hymns, which he evidently had read, at their mysteries. See also Hdt. 1.132 who describes a Persian ritual which ends with a μάγος singing (ἐπαείδει) a theogony. Bernabé 2002c:99 points to col. 7.2: “For [a sacred rite was being performed] through the poem.”, see also Calame 2005:157.

<sup>150</sup> Laks 1997:124-125; Most 1997:117, 126.

sacrifice the overall aim of which was to appease them. There is a possibility that the rite was part of an initiation since there are references to *mystai* performing rites similar to those performed by the *magoi* (col. 6.8-9, μύσται | Εὐμεγίσσι προθύουσι κ[ατὰ τὰ] αὐτὰ μάγοις). The statement about the terrors in Hades strengthens this possibility since the failure of “those who do not know” (οὐ γινώσκοντες, col. 5.6) to understand these terrors are connected to knowledge and the ability to learn (μανηθ[άνο]υσιν, col. 5.9), two faculties connected to belief, which are hindered, according to the commentator, by error and pleasure (col. 5.6 ff.). Knowledge, and belief, about the “terrors of Hades” was needed before one could perform the rites (of initiation?) that could avert them.<sup>151</sup> In order to appease the forces that hinder and exact vengeance upon the souls, one needs to perform the proper ritual.<sup>152</sup> Knowledge of this is attained through initiation, which is what is discussed in the initial columns. The ability to learn is also brought up in column 20 where the commentator says that it is imperative to ask questions during the ritual in order to learn (μαθεῖν, col. 20.3). It is not necessarily the rites that are wrong, but the idea that seems prevalent among the performers that they can acquire knowledge about what they see and hear without reflecting upon the rites.<sup>153</sup> The need to explain the meaning of the rite is of the utmost importance according to column 20, as Frede also has pointed out recently.<sup>154</sup> It is exactly this we see in the first seven columns.<sup>155</sup> I believe, therefore, that the ritual referred to in the first columns are initiatory and that it is of the same kind as the rites referred to in column 20.

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<sup>151</sup> That the “terrors of Hades” awaits the uninitiated is a threat which is often connected to mystery cults for example by Plato, see Pl. *Leg.* 870d, *Phd.* 69c, *Resp.* 330d, 363c-d.

<sup>152</sup> Hes. *Op.* 121 ff. on the *daimones* as the souls of the Golden Race who maintain justice and punish crimes, Tsantsanoglou 1997:100.

<sup>153</sup> Pointed out by West 1983:81. Most 1997:128 concludes: “In other words, the Derveni author’s cosmological allegoresis is introduced in order to serve the purposes of his eschatological theology. [...] How can this expert free his pious but terrified flock from their dread of τὰ ἐν Ἄιδου δεινά? His answer is physics, his evidence is Orpheus, his method is allegoresis – and his goal is salvation”, and draws a parallel to how Empedokles mix physics and salvation, Most 1997:130. See also Rangos 2007:39-40 on the importance of attaining understanding through ritual, and p. 65 where he compares, on a slim basis, the Derveni papyrus with the “C tablet” of Thuri and finds that they seem “to stem from the same cluster of mythical ideas”.

<sup>154</sup> Frede 2007:29-32 has similar ideas on the role of the Erinyes in the connection of the two parts of the papyrus.

<sup>155</sup> Perhaps the *daimones* of the first columns became, as Tsantsanoglou 1997:100 f. has proposed, the guardians of the righteous souls after their initiation?

#### 6.4.2 *The Derveni commentator as an orphic mantis and his ritual polemics*

We will focus more on column 20 since it is important to our understanding of how the commentator related to the world, to other cults, and, most importantly, to other *manteis*.<sup>156</sup> The critique in the column is, as has been noted, directed against the rites performed in the cities and by private religious experts. It is important to note, however, that the commentator is not surprised that the participants in the civic rites have not learned anything, col. 20.1-3:

ἀνθρώπων ἐν πόλεσιν ἐπιτελέσαντες [τὰ ἱ]ερά εἶδον,  
ἔλασσόν σφας θαυμάζω μὴ γινώσκειν· οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε  
ἀκούσαι ὁμοῦ καὶ μαθεῖν τὰ λεγόμενα·

those men who, having seen the rites in the cities,  
I wonder less at that they do not know. For it is impossible  
to hear and at the same time learn what is being said.<sup>157</sup>

This is probably because the context of large rituals prevented interaction between the priests and the performers.<sup>158</sup> The commentator expresses pity and wonder, however, at those who undergo the rites under the guidance of religious experts who makes a living from this, since they are oblivious even to the importance of asking questions, col. 20.3 ff. It is not the rites of these private specialists that are criticized, but rather the indifferent and ignorant behaviour of the initiands and the other religious experts who do not know how to perform them.<sup>159</sup>

This means that the commentator sees himself as one of those religious specialists mentioned in column 20, who perform rites such as the one described in the initial seven columns, and who should be compared to the itinerant *manteis* described by Plato in the *Republic*.<sup>160</sup> The commentator is referring to rites out of experience, as is shown by the use of *πάρειμεν* (first person plural) when describing

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<sup>156</sup> I will not discuss the various suggestions as to who exactly the commentator was.

<sup>157</sup> My translation.

<sup>158</sup> The mysteries at Eleusis and Samothrake have been suggested as possible candidates for the civic rites, e.g. Hordern 2000:132. See also the similar expressions used by Pausanias 1.37.3 who describe the Eleusinian mysteries as something to be *seen* while the Orphic texts are to be read.

<sup>159</sup> Cp. Herakleitos B 17 DK, Clem. Al. *Protr.* 22, pointed out by West 1983:81, but see Herakleitos B 78 DK. See also Arist. frg. 15 Rose, Obbink 1997:45-46 and n11; Janko 1997:70; Most 1997:127; Hussey 1999:316-317; Hordern 2000:132; Edmonds 2008b:32, *contra* Rusten 1985:140 who believed that the secret knowledge could not be obtained through these rites. It has been questioned whether lines 1-10 are quoted from another text (as Rusten 1985:138-140 argues) or not (see Obbink 1997:44-45; Janko 1997:67 n52; Rangos 2007:68). I do not find this relevant since the lines would reflect the attitude of the commentator either way.

<sup>160</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 2.364b-365a.

one of the tasks the *manteis* perform and is thus identifying himself with them.<sup>161</sup> The commentator does not specifically state that it is *manteis* who consult the oracles, but based on how he treats the ritual in these columns, especially in column 6, and how he scorns rival religious specialists, both public and private, in column 20, I think it is reasonable to suggest that he considered himself to be one as well.<sup>162</sup> Even so, I think it is quite clear that he used the term *magoi* not in a negative, but rather in a positive sense, especially since he compares the rituals of the two.<sup>163</sup> The difference between him and others like him is that he can offer the correct interpretation and thus convey the correct knowledge not only about the cosmos and the creation of the world, but also about the individual soul and what needs to be done in order to escape the “terrors of Hades”. This is why, as Calame has pointed out, the commentator separates the *manteis* from οὐ γινώσκοντες, and between Orpheus and “the others” (τι).<sup>164</sup> Still, as we see in column 20, there is tension between the commentator and those with whom he identifies himself. It is, of course, difficult to identify the objects of his criticism in column 20, but if we consider the commentator as an Orphic, which I think we should, then it is reasonable to think that he polemized against non-Orphics and Orphics alike.<sup>165</sup> The commentator’s mention of money and payment for the service of a religious expert in col. 20.9 might suggest that the commentator

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<sup>161</sup> Burkert 1983a:5; Parker 1995:489; Laks 1997:125-126; Most 1997:120; Tsantsanoglou 1997:98-99; Betegh 2004:81-82; Edmonds 2008b:32. Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:53-55, 162 does not believe that these are the words of the commentator. The same use of first person is seen in column 20.2 where θαυμάζω *might* indicate that he knows what goes on at the civic festivals.

<sup>162</sup> Also argued by Tsantsanoglou 1997:98-99; Betegh 2004:82; Edmonds 2008b:35 n83, *contra* Janko 2001:6 who calls the commentator a sophist. The commentator also refers to the interpretation of dreams which he seems to take seriously, an activity connected to *manteis*, Hdt. 1.107-108, 120, 128, 7.19, see Bremmer 1999:5; Flower 2008:24. On *manteis* in public service see Flower 2008:69-71, 240 ff.

<sup>163</sup> Edmonds 2008b:26-27, 35. See Graf and Johnston 2007:149-150 who identify the *magoi* with the itinerant *manteis* criticized by Plato *Resp.* 2.364e-365a and Herakleitos B 14 DK = Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.22.2-3 although the attribution of this fragment to Herakleitos is disputed, see Dickie 2001:28-29 for discussion. Flower 2008:66 points out that the “Greeks had different conceptual categories for seer [*mantis*], on the one hand, and for magician/sorcerer/beggar priest [*magos/goes/agyrtes*], on the other.” and column 6 shows that the commentator treated *magoi* and *manteis* differently. Whether the commentator refers to Persian fire-priests (the word’s original meaning Dickie 2001:14) as Tsantsanoglou 1997:102-103 suggests is unlikely since the context is Greek, cf. Most 1997:120; Edmonds 2008b:35. *Magoi* as a negative category (although not necessarily Persian), see Graf 1997:21, 29. Bremmer 1999:6 in his excellent study of the term concludes that *magos* is hardly seen as negative except in the tragedies until after 420 BC. Might this indicate that the date of the original Derveni text is pre-420 BC?

<sup>164</sup> Calame 1997:77, 2005:167; Laks 1997:139 finds further indications of this in col. 10 and the formula “put doors to your ears” in col. 7.9.

<sup>165</sup> I agree here with the conclusion of Most 1997:121. See also Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou 2006a:54, 238-241.

swung out against all competitors who threatened his livelihood. The commentator would thus fit perfectly as one of the itinerant *manteis* discussed in chapter 2.

Does this mean that the Derveni papyrus, besides being an exegesis on an Orphic theogony, should also be considered a polemic text, a contribution to a debate on the correct interpretation of Orpheus' writings, or perhaps Orpheus' superiority compared to other religious authorities, or was it meant only to be read by a select group of initiates? Central to this question are the words of Orpheus quoted in column 7.9, "θ]ύρας" γὰρ "ἐπιθέ[σθαι (*put doors to your ears*), which functions as an introduction to the exegesis in the following columns. These words have been seen as a signal of the secret character of the Derveni Theogony, meaning that it was unlawful for the profane to read or hear it.<sup>166</sup> But the fact that a formula such as this was known to Plato, and used by him in what his readers would perhaps recognize as an appropriate setting suggests that such warnings were widely used in order to give a text more authority.<sup>167</sup> This is supported by the fact that in the same column the commentator claims that the hymn (the Derveni Theogony) is lawful (θεμ[ι]τῶ), as Tsantsanoglou has pointed out.<sup>168</sup> However, while the Theogony itself might have been well-known in certain circles the proper understanding of it, the key to unravel the riddled language of Orpheus, might still have been considered secret.<sup>169</sup> There are, however, some reasons to believe that the Derveni papyrus also was aimed at a broader audience.<sup>170</sup>

The polemic attitude employed in column 20 suggests that the commentator responded to previous criticism or at least that such criticism was anticipated.<sup>171</sup> This

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<sup>166</sup> Obbink 1997:40; Tsantsanoglou 1997:98-99; Calame 2005:158. Parallel in Pl. *Symp.* 218b = OF 1 (XVIII) Bernabé.

<sup>167</sup> This applies also to Ar. *Av.* 690-702 = OV 64 Bernabé where the theogonic egg in the birds' Theogony has been seen as a parody on an Orphic theogony where Phanes emerged from an egg. Perhaps also Ar. *Nub.*?

<sup>168</sup> Col. 7.2, Tsantsanoglou 1997:126-127 suggests that these two statements refer to two different texts. He refers to column 22.11 where other texts (Ἰμνοίς) are discussed and quoted from as well; Betegh 2004:362 n36 has suggested that the meaning of the quote in col. 7.9, which seems to contradict the 7.2, according to the commentator, was that the riddling style of Orpheus made the text impossible to understand unless one was, as the commentator, "pure in hearing". Both suggestions may be right.

<sup>169</sup> See now Kapsomenos 1964a:9 who refers to Rufinus *Recogn.* 10.30 who claimed that Orphic texts were taken literally by the masses while the elite seemed to rely on allegory in order to obtain the truth. Most 1997:123 argues that the Derveni Theogony excluded the uninitiated and that the commentator further distinguished between "complete Orphics who understand and deficient Orphics who do not."

<sup>170</sup> This is also the opinion of e.g. Hussey 1999:321; Bernabé 2002c:97. Hussey 1999:323 wonders, however, if perhaps the commentator chose an Orphic poem to comment on in order to promote his presocratic physics simply because people would know what he was talking about.

<sup>171</sup> Obbink 1997:52.

is not surprising considering how Plato and others treated *manteis*, such as the commentator. Laks also points out that allegory, as an interpretative method, is usually defensive.<sup>172</sup> This might suggest that the Derveni Theogony was known among some people, other than the initiates, and that they were shocked at the sexual contents of the poem.<sup>173</sup> The Derveni papyrus might be seen as a response to such a reaction. Furthermore, if the commentator was a *mantis*, perhaps one of those who wandered from polis to polis, then he had to have a way of attracting potential initiates. The Derveni papyrus, could be seen as a text which served such a purpose. This is supported by the text itself. The commentator emphasizes that the ability to learn and believe is attained through listening and asking questions (col. 5, 20), and by overcoming desires and errors (col. 5.8-9). According to the commentator, then, it is not enough to simply read or hear the theogony according to Orpheus, but it is necessary for someone to guide them through the riddling phrases in order to attain the real meaning. Since this is done in the Derveni papyrus it is highly probable, in my opinion, that the commentator addressed those who had not yet attained this understanding, people who in the commentator's mind must be considered uninitiated, but nevertheless potential initiates.<sup>174</sup> Also, the explanation of the ritual in the initial columns might suggest that the reader had not yet participated in it. Therefore, seeing the commentator as one of the itinerant *manteis* who travelled from polis to polis, I believe that the Derveni papyrus was used in order to attract potential initiates.

If this is correct, then it might tell us something about Orphic literature in general. We know that Orphic literature was in circulation already in the Classical period. Even though they have not survived, Orphic literature was discussed, to a greater or lesser degree, by Plato, Euripides, and other writers, including the Derveni commentator who at one point refers to the Orphic *Hymns*. When Epigenes is able to name the authors of some of these texts it means that they were somewhat widely read since information about the author had been lost in the transmission of the text and

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<sup>172</sup> Laks 1997:134 ff.; or to make the unacceptably acceptable, Tsantsanoglou 1997:119; Bernabé 2002c:99.

<sup>173</sup> An example of critique against poets is provided by Xenophanes B 11, 12 DK who criticizes Homer and Hesiod for attributing shameful acts to the gods. Other examples of critique against the poets are found in Pl. *Resp.* 2-3, *Ap.* 22a-c. Isoc. *Bus.* 38-40 mention Orpheus especially in his critique. See Janko 2001:12 f.

<sup>174</sup> Rangos 2007:43 argues that the text is aimed at the initiates who are criticized in column 20. It is possible that they were among his target group, but they were not necessarily the only ones.

perhaps that the identity of the author, Orpheus, was disputed.<sup>175</sup> Whether the content of the Derveni papyrus is comparable to the content of, say, the *Net*, *Krater*, or *Hieros Logos* is of course impossible to determine. However, since these texts were in fact discussed, at least their titles, it means that they had reached a broader audience than a select group of initiates who had sworn to keep them a secret. This might also support the theory that the papyrus was used simply to light the funeral pyre without having anything to do with the burial ritual.

### 6.5 The Derveni papyrus and orphism

The Derveni papyrus is an Orphic text. The commentator, or author of the papyrus, meets the criterion of West by claiming Orpheus as an authority.<sup>176</sup> It is through a proper understanding of what Orpheus really meant that men can attain salvation. Proper ritual behaviour and an understanding of the boundaries which govern the kosmos and all in it.<sup>177</sup> Some particular features of the theogony, the double creation, Zeus as the demiurge, and the importance given to Nyx, also shows that the theogony conforms to what we know from other Orphic theogonies such as the Rhapsodies and the Eudemian Theogony. There are, as we have seen, differences too, especially when in the genealogy of gods where, in the Derveni papyrus, Phanes and Dionysos are absent. This is important since it shows that the Orphic tradition was not homogeneous. The Derveni papyrus shows that an Orphic tradition was kept alive throughout Antiquity but also that this tradition was alive, dynamic, and constantly changing.

As a *mantis* who was in opposition to other *manteis* and civic cults (temporary or permanent), the Derveni commentator was in need to promote his understanding of Orpheus' poem as superior to other interpretations of Orpheus' texts and to other practices. This was of course important since only the proper understanding of the world and how it is governed by god could lead to salvation for the soul. To articulate this the commentator relied on different traditions besides the Orphic, especially the

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<sup>175</sup> Whether or not he was correct is irrelevant here.

<sup>176</sup> West 1983:3. See now Edmonds 2008b:32 ff. who believes that the commentator's claim to "special knowledge and expertise in religious matters pertaining to purification, initiation, and other practices" (p. 32) also should be seen as an Orphic trait. I cannot see why this should be a criterion since it would include every religious expert in the Greco-Roman world.

<sup>177</sup> Frede 2007:16 ff. has shown how these ideas are similar to the ones in Pl. *Leg.* and *Resp.*



Presocratic, which would help him understand the theogony better. He was, in other words, an eclectic.<sup>178</sup> We find echoes of many presocratic ideas in his interpretation of the Derveni Theogony. It is no wonder then that scholars have identified the commentator with so many different philosophers from the fifth century BC.<sup>179</sup> None of these proposals are very convincing and I think we should rather focus on the Derveni commentator as an eclectic even though it is not always easy to see what his immediate sources of inspiration were.<sup>180</sup> Be that as it may, it is nevertheless his understanding of the Orphic cosmology that is the main subject of his text. That is, he uses ideas from presocratic cosmology in order to promote the correct understanding of Orpheus' cosmology and eschatology and how these two concepts are related to each other. I doubt that whether this disqualifies him from being a Presocratic, but his Orphic stance is, in any case, pretty clear.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Laks 1997:127; Hussey 1999:320.

<sup>179</sup> A few examples will suffice: Euthyphro, Kahn 1997, see Hussey 1999:312-314; Stesimbrotus, Burkert 1986; Diogenes of Apollonia, Janko 1997; Diagoras of Melos, Janko 2001; see list over previous suggestions in Janko 1997:70 where also Epigenes (of Athens?), Prodikos of Theos, Anaximander, Glaukon, Metrodorus of Lampsacus are found.

<sup>180</sup> As Kapsomenos 1964a:12 wrote: "Nothing certain can be said about his identity". See also Bernabé 2002c:97 for a similar view. Regarding his philosophical influences, take for example the debate on the commentator's dependence on atomism, Burkert 1997:167 and n2, 171-172; Hussey 1999:306 who argued that atomist theories played an important role in the Derveni commentator's cosmology *contra* Bernabé 2002c:96 (Leukippos) and Betegh 2004:278. Herakleitos is also debated, see above, Hussey 1999:319-320, 322 see no influence outside column 4 *contra* Sider 1997; Rangos 2007:48-49. On Stoic influences (cp. Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 367c), see Betegh 2007. Most scholars agree, however, that the commentator's cosmology is similar in many ways to that of Anaxagoras (Simpl. *in Phys.* 155.23; Arist. *De Cael.* 270b24 ff., 302b4; B 11, especially 12, 15, 17 DK. It is debated whether Anaxagoras believed Nous was a God or not, discussion in Schofield 1980:13 ff. *contra* Hussey 1972:139; Leshner 1995:133, 136. See now Arist. *Ph.* 4.203b7 ff.) and Diogenes of Apollonia (A 5, 8, 19 DK, B 3, 4 DK), Merkelbach 1967:25; West 1983:80 f.; Burkert 1997:167; Janko 1997; Hussey 1999:310 f.; Rangos 2007:48, 70. For discussion see Laks 1997:128-134.

<sup>181</sup> Most 1997:122 concludes, "the Derveni author does not explain Presocratic physics in terms of Orpheus, but Orpheus in terms of Presocratic physics [...] He is not a Presocratic, but rather an Orphic who cannot ignore Presocratic thought.", cp. Laks 1997:137 who also argue that the commentator is not a Presocratic; Bernabé 2002c:97-98 see him as an Orphic.

# Conclusion

One of the aims of this thesis has been to explore alternative strategies and ways of reading what has been seen as two of the most important sources for Orphism; the gold tablets and the Derveni papyrus. Interpretations of these sources still vary greatly among scholars according to their various methodological approaches. The methodological problem might be summed up in the following questions posed by Graf and Johnston in their recent treatment of the gold tablets:

how far is it legitimate to explain isolated pieces of information from the late archaic and classical age by means of the full picture provided only by Neoplatonic sources? Or, to put it differently: should we choose the most economical hypothesis that combines all the facts we have at our disposition, or should we choose other explanations, or even prefer to leave isolated details unexplained because there is no continuity between Greece of the fifth century BCE and that of the third century CE?<sup>1</sup>

Different answers to these questions lead to different interpretations of the Orphic material, perhaps best exemplified by the recent studies of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos by Edmonds and Bernabé.<sup>2</sup> Even though, as I argued in chapter three, there is no evidence that this myth was known to those who produced the Derveni papyrus or the gold tablets, questions concerning the nature of the religious background of this material remain. Should they be seen as evidence for different aspects of a mystery cult associated with Orpheus, or should they be treated simply as religious, eschatological, and soteriological documents which did not necessarily have anything to do with each other? Since we have no evidence of the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos earlier than the third century BC, it cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Graf and Johnston 2007:57.

<sup>2</sup> Edmonds 1999, and reply by Bernabé 2002a. See also Edmonds 2004b and Bernabé 2006.

be used to explain the material which has been under consideration in this thesis. Alternative interpretations need to be considered. This conclusion regarding the "cardinal myth" of Orphism, also has serious implications for our understanding of Orphism and the Orphic material.

The main function of a definition of Orphism, as with any term or category, is that it should serve a methodological purpose. We should not try to find an essentialist, that is a definition which assumes an objective meaning, of the term. This is, of course, an impossible endeavour, not only concerning Orphism, but any term for that matter.<sup>3</sup> A definition can only have a heuristic purpose. They are useful in that they provide guidelines for connecting different texts in an analysis. Thus, as Parker has argued, Orphism could very well point to contradictory doctrines as long as the term itself serves a methodological and analytic purpose for the scholar and the reader.<sup>4</sup> It is, however, the use of such a term which leads to controversy and debate.

In this thesis I have argued that we should be cautious when we want to use other texts or material from other contexts, either culturally, chronologically, or both, in order to reconstruct a text. I believe that insight into the meaning of a difficult passage or text may be found in a contemporary source which conveys a similar, in our case eschatological, message. To return to the citation from Graf and Johnston above, to assume a continuity of an Orphic tradition seems, in my opinion, rather optimistic considering that the sources we are dealing with range well over a thousand years, from the sixth century BC to the sixth century AD, and derive from areas all over the Greco-Roman world, from Olbia, on the northern coast of the Black Sea (today's Ukraine), to Rome. Also, the Orphic fragments cover a great variety of source-types ranging from inscriptions, papyri, vase paintings, sculptures and mosaics, to philosophical and/or religious treatises. Every source-type and their producers have their own agendas which are influenced by the period and environment to which they belong, meaning that it is difficult to compare sources of different types with each other, especially when they were produced at different times. Myths and their meanings change over time, and, in addition, the medium on which they are reproduced determines what aspect of the myth is given priority. This is seen

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<sup>3</sup> The literature on objectivity, subjectivity, and problems of definition is vast. I cite only a few relevant references here: Popper 2003 II:13 ff.; Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]:185 ff.; Janicki 1990:24 ff., 65, 2006:3 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Parker 1995:486. See also Smith 1982:xi on "Religion".

on the Apulian vases briefly discussed in chapter 5 which had to comprise the contents of a tragedy or a myth into specific scenes deemed important by the painter. What the painter saw as important was again determined by the purpose of the vase, as well as the personal preferences of the painter or the buyer. If a Neoplatonist wrote about the same myth, he would probably emphasize it differently, adding a personal interpretation which would suit his main argument. Instead, I have focussed more on the actual contents of the relevant text and tried to see it in light of contemporary, similar texts. Rather than limiting the material according to an Orphic category I have used other eschatological texts where I found this appropriate.

The Derveni papyrus presents us with an innovative interpretation of a theogony which is quite different from the Orphic theogony recounted by the Neoplatonists several centuries later. What they had in common was a theogony attributed to Orpheus and a belief that the creation and composition of the universe were, in some way, connected to the fate of the individual soul. The authors tackled this differently and it is also evident from the texts themselves that the Orphic theogonies they used were not the same. Dionysos, for example, the most important deity in the Neoplatonic versions of the theogony, is not even mentioned in the Derveni papyrus. It is unlikely that they should operate with exactly the same version of a theogony considering the chronological gap, and the different aims behind the texts. The same problem was also discussed in chapters 3 and 4 where we saw that the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos, as it was told by the Neoplatonists, can not be used as an explanation for the different verses in the gold tablets. Instead other, equally plausible solutions may be found which conform to texts and material evidence of the same period as the gold tablets themselves. By focussing on the ritual dimensions of some of the gold tablet verses, we may catch glimpses of eschatological beliefs which are also found on some funerary inscriptions of the same period.

This does not mean that the knowledge and formulas found on the gold tablets were common knowledge. The format itself, gold tablets, their interment into the graves, the placement of some of them in the deceased's mouth, the enigmatic formulas, and so on, bear witness to cults which practiced initiation and which emphasized the importance of knowledge. The limited number of the tablets and the fact that they are not mentioned in contemporary sources, furthermore suggest that the cults practiced secrecy in their rites. There are also several similarities between tablets

which have been found at sites in different parts of the Greco-Roman world. Consider for example the southern Italian tablets from Hipponion and Petelia which might be compared to the "Malibu" tablet from Thessaly and some of the shorter tablets from Crete. The similarities suggest that they had the same origin, most probably in a text. But there are also differences between the tablets regarding the deities invoked in the texts, the formulas used in them, and the various emphases on different aspects of eschatological knowledge. The tablets from Pelinna for example, contain elements and even formulas which are found on tablets from Thurii and Hipponion, thus serving as a link between these otherwise dissimilar texts. It is important, however, to recognize that many of the verses on the gold tablets might be connected to more widespread eschatological ideas, such as the idea that man originated from the stars, and that these ideas are mixed with formulas which were taken from some kind of ritual. Chapter 4 is devoted to an analysis of some of these formulas, and I have tried to show how certain elements in these formulas may also be traced back to more widespread ideas. This is probably the case with the "immersion-in-milk" formula which appears in different forms on tablets from Thurii and Pelinna. I have argued that the formula signals the initiation of the deceased and that it might have been a formula that was available for some of the itinerant *manteis* who produced the tablets. The formula was used on only four occasions in the corpus of gold tablets, a fact that suggests that the *manteis* were eclectic and might have dipped into several traditions and cultic texts when they produced the gold tablets. The application of the *bricoleur* theory, which I have argued for in this thesis, therefore seems appropriate.

There are other examples which support the idea that some of the images and metaphors used in the gold tablets were used by other religious traditions, such as the Egyptian, long before the hitherto oldest gold tablet was interred in Hipponion in 400 BC, and were also used by other, later religious traditions, as is seen in the gnostic text *The First Apocalypse of James* from the second century AD. Based on the similarities in this text's description of the soul's journey to the next world, where it will be confronted by a guardian who demands the correct answers to their questions of the deceased's identity and intentions, Thomassen argues, as we saw in chapter two, that these texts belong to the same tradition as the gold tablets.<sup>5</sup> Similarities between the descriptions of the Underworld in the mnemonic tablets and Egyptian

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<sup>5</sup> Thomassen 2008:7.

material, discussed in chapter two, further illustrate this point: The same images or verses were used by different cults in order to convey similar eschatological ideas albeit in different religious contexts.<sup>6</sup> Common for the gold tablets in this respect is the idea that initiation leads to the necessary knowledge that is needed in order to attain a blissful afterlife, either under the earth together with the other *mystai* or possibly as a star in the heavens. This aim was probably common to most *manteis* and cults who offered a happy afterlife through initiation. I therefore see no reason to consider the gold tablets as products of one specific cult or set of doctrines.

The material considered in this thesis should in other words be seen as religious texts produced by various cults or individuals who saw themselves as possessing a knowledge about the individual soul's place in the cosmos. My answer to the questions posed by Graf and Johnston, then, would be to take a closer look at "other explanations, or even prefer to leave isolated details unexplained", meaning that the need to see the material in light of an overall picture of Orphism, where the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos plays an essential role, should be abandoned. There is a continuity between fifth century BC and third century AD in the sense that the same mythological material was utilized by authors of the Classical period and by the Neoplatonists of Late Antiquity. The difference lies in their treatment of this material, which were dictated by their own agendas. This means that the value of reconstructing the Derveni Theogony in light of the Rhapsodic Theogony for example, is limited, and that we should try to find relevant parallels in the text's own time instead. Thus, although the Derveni papyrus can be defined as Orphic, because of its frequent referring to Orpheus as a religious authority, there seems to be no reason to do the same with the gold tablets. The methodological purpose of such a categorization only serves to group the tablets together with other "Orphic" texts, a categorization which leads to the repeated constructions and reconstructions of Orphism which in turn are used to explain troublesome passages in, for example, the Derveni papyrus. By removing the Orphic label from the gold tablets, we may more freely compare their contents with other texts, such as the funerary inscriptions, which might yield more interesting solutions to some of the problems facing students of Greek religion.

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<sup>6</sup> A more modern variant is presented in Jordan 2001.



# Appendix

## The Gold Tablets

### Transcription and Translation

#### **Introduction**

The tablets are arranged geographically, starting with Italy and proceeding through southern-Italy and Sicily, Crete, Peloponnesos, Thessaly, Macedonia, and finally the Greek isles. Each of these regions has been given an initial number. Within each region each tablet is given an additional number as well as the name of the find place. This will make it easier to insert new tablets into the system as they are published.

My transcriptions follow drawings, photographs, other transcripts, and my own observations. I would like to thank the helpful staff at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Alex Truscott and Alexandra Villing at the British Museum, and the Director of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Dr. Nikolaos Kaltsas, for permitting me to consult the gold tablets at the respective museums.

#### **1.1 Hipponion**

Museo Archeologico di Vibo Valentia

49 – 59 x 32 mm. Folded four times. When found it measured 14 x 16 mm. All sixteen lines had been incised with a sharp tool. Variable space between the letters. The letters are of variable size, but seldom higher than 1 mm. The writer does not use Ω and Η (Η indicates rough breathing), Ο = ΟΥ or Ω, Ε = ΕΙ or Η. The alphabet is east Greek (Ψ = ps, Χ = kh, Ξ = ks). Lacuna on the bottom left side. Tablet placed on the upper part of the deceased's breast.

Photograph: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:110; Sassi 1996:516; Pugliese Carratelli 2001, picture 1; Sacco 2001, tafel XII-XIII.

TEXT



ΜΝΑΜΟΣΥΝΑΣΤΟΔΕΕΡΙΟΝΕΠΕΙΑΜΜΕΛΛΕΙΣΙΘΑΝΕΣΘΑΙ  
 ΕΙΣΑΙΔΑΟΔΟΜΟΣΕΥΕΡΕΑΣΕΣΤΕΠΙΔΞΙΑΚΡΕΝΑ ΤΝ  
 ΠΑΡΔΑΥΤΑΝΕΣΤΑΚΥΑΛΕΥΚΑΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΟΣ ΑΟ  
 4 ΕΝΘΑΚΑΤΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΑΙΨΥΧΑΙΝΕΚΥΟΝΨΥΧΟΝΤΑΙ  
 ΤΑΥΤΑΣΤΑΣΚΡΑΝΑΣΜΕΔΕΣΧΕΔΟΝΕΝΓΥΟΕΝΕΛΘΕΙΣ  
 ΠΡΟΣΘΕΝΔΕΗΕΥΡΕΣΕΙΣΤΑΣΜΝΑΜΟΣΥΝΑΣΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΑΣ  
 ΨΥΧΡΟΝΥΔΟΡΠΡΟΡΕΟΝΦΥΛΑΚΕΣΔΕΕΠΥΠΕΡΘΕΝΕΑΣΙ  
 8 [.]ΟΙΔΕΣΕΕΙΡΕΣΟΝΤΑΙΕΝΦΡΑΣΙΠΕΥΚΑΛΙΜΑΙΣΙ  
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 ΕΙΠΟΝΓΕΣΤΠΑΙΕΜΙΚΑΙΟΡΑΝΟΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ  
 ΔΙΨΑΙΔΕΜΙΑΥΟΣΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙΑΛΛΑΔΟΤΟ[  
 12 ΨΥΧΡΟΝΥΔΟΡΠΙΕΝΑΙΤΕΣΜΝΕΜΟΣΥΝΕΣΑΠΟΛΙΜ[  
 ΚΑΙΔΕΤΟΙΕΡΕΟΣΙΝΙΥΠΟΧΘΟΝΙΟΙΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ  
 ΚΑΙΔΕΤΟΙΔΟΣΟΣΙΠΙΕΝΤΑΣΜΝΑΜΟΣΥΝΑΣΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΑΣ  
 ΚΑΙΔΕΚΑΙΣΥΤΤΙΟΝΗΟΔΟΝΕΡΧΕΑΗΑΝΤΕΚΑΙΑΛΛΟΙ  
 16 ΜΥΣΤΑΙΚΑΙΒΑΧΧΟΙΗΙΕΡΑΝΣΤΕΙΧΟΣΙΚΛΕΙΝΟΙ

Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἤριον· ἐπεὶ ἄμ μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι  
 εἰς Ἄϊδαο δόμους εὐήρεας· ἔστ' ἐπὶ δ<ε>ξιὰ κρήνα, ΤΝ  
 πᾶρ δ' αὐτὰν ἔστακῦα λευκὰ κυπάρισ<σ>ος· ΑΟ  
 4 ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχὰὶ νεκῶν ψύχονται.  
 ταύτας τᾶς κράνας μῆδὲ σχεδὸν ἐγγύθεν ἔλθῃς  
 πρόσθεν δὲ εὐρήσεις τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας  
 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δὲ ἐπύπερθεν ἔασι,  
 8 τ]οὶ δὲ σε εἰρήσονται ἐν<ι> φρασί πευκαλίμαισι  
 ὅ τι δὲ ἐξερέεις Ἄϊδος σκότος ὀρφ<ν>έεντος.  
 εἶπον Γῆς παί<ς> εἶμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος,  
 δίψαι δ' εἶμ' αἴος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι ἀλ<λ>ὰ δὸτ' ὦ[κα  
 12 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμ[νης  
 καὶ δῆ τοὶ ἐρέουσιν{ι} ὑποχθονίω βασιλεῖ·  
 καὶ δῆ τοὶ δάσουςι πιέν τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας.  
 καὶ δῆ καὶ σὺ πῶν ὄδον ἔρχεα<ι> ἄν τε καὶ ἄλλοι  
 16 μύσται καὶ βᾶχχοι ἱεράν στείχουσι κλεινοί.

1. ΕΡΙΟΝ: σρίον: Marcovich, Cole, Porta; ?ῆριον: Merkelbach, Luppe; ἔργον: Burkert, Ebert, Riedweg, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; ἔρ<γ>ον: Sacco; <h>ιερόν: Pugliese Carratelli; ἱρόν: di Benedetto; δῶρον: Lloyd-Jones. ΕΠΕΙ: ἐπ(εἰ): Marcovich. ΑΜ: ἄγ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ΘΑΝΕΣΘΑΙ: θανεῖσθαι: Merkelbach, Luppe, Sacco, Graf and Johnston. 2. ΔΟΜΟΣ: δόμῶς: Merkelbach, Cole. ΕΥΕΡΕΑΣ: εὐερέας: Merkelbach. ΕΣΤ: {ἔστ'}: Marcovich. ΚΡΕΝΑ: κρένα: Merkelbach. κρήνα<ν>: Marcovich. 3. ΑΥΤΑΝΕΣΤΑΚΥΑΛΕΥΚΑ: αὐτᾶι λευκὰ<ν> ἔστακυ<ι>α<ν>: Marcovich. ΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΟΣ: κυπάρισσος: Colli. 4. ΨΥΧΑΙ: ψυ<χ>αῖ: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Sacco; ψυ{κ}αῖ: Guarducci. ψυ(χ)αῖ: Colli. ψυκαῖ: Graf and Johnston. 5. ΤΑΣ: τᾶ<ς>: Sacco. ΚΡΑΝΑΣ: κρήνας: Guarducci. ΕΝΓΥΟΕΝ: ἐγγύθεν: Riedweg, Zuntz, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. 7. ΕΠΥΠΕΡΘΕΝ: ἐπ' ὑπερθεν: Marcovich. 7. ΔΕΕΠΥΠΕΡΘΕΝ: δ(ἐ) ἐπ' ὑπερθεν: Marcovich. ΕΑΣΙ: ἔασι<ν>: Marcovich. 8. [.]ΟΙ: τοῖ : Bernabé 1999, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001, Graf and Johnston; h]οι/οῖ : Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Lloyd-Jones, Guarducci, Marcovich, Merkelbach, Colli, Cole, Porta, Pugliese Carratelli, Zuntz, Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008; τοῖδε: Bernabé 1992. ΕΙΡΕΣΟΝΤΑΙΕΝ: εἰρήσονται – ἄϊεν: Luppe. ΕΝ: ἐν: Guarducci, Zuntz, Colli. 9. ΟΤΙ: ὅτ<τ>ι: Merkelbach, Marcovich, Sacco, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; ὅττι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli; π]οτ <τ>: Luppe; ... ]ι: Zuntz; [h]ότ <τ>ι: Cole;

[h]ότι: Guarducci. ΔΕ: δῆ: Guarducci, Marcovich, Luppe, Colli; ΔΕ: Zuntz. ΣΚΟΤΟΣ: σκότους: Colli. ΟΡΦΕΕΝΤΟΣ: οὐλοέεντος: Guarducci, Marcovich; ὀλοέεντος: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Merkelbach, Colli, Cole; ο[...].]εεντος: Luppe, Riedweg, Zuntz; ὀρφ<ν>ήεντος: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; ὀρφέεντος: Graf and Johnston; ἠερόεντος: Bernabé 1992. **10.** ΓΕΣ: Γῆς παί<ς> ἔμι: Sacco; ὕος Γαίας: Zuntz; ὕος Γαίας <τε>: Luppe; Γᾶς εἶμι: Riedweg; ὕος Γᾶς: Bernabé 1992, 1999, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001. ὕος Βαρείας: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Merkelbach, Marcovich, Colli, Cole; ὕος Βαρείας: Guarducci. **11.** ΕΜΙ: ἐμί: Merkelbach, Cole; ἦμι(ι): Luppe; ἦμι: Zuntz. ΔΟΤΟ[...]: δότ' ὤκα: Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008. ὄκα: Merkelbach, Cole, Graf and Johnston. ὄκα: Sacco. **12.** ΠΙΕΝΑΙ: π[ρο]ρέον: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Guarducci, Marcovich, Luppe, Merkelbach, Zuntz, Colli, Cole, Porta; πιέν αὐτῆς: Bernabé 1992. ΤΕΣ: τῆς: Merkelbach. ΛΙΜ[...]: λίμ<ν>ης': Sacco, Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008. λίμ[ν]ῆς: Merkelbach, Cole. **13.** ΕΡΕΟΣΙΝΙ: ἐλεούσιν: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Guarducci, Marcovich, Zuntz, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli; ἑλέουσιν?: Luppe; ἐλεόσιν: Merkelbach, Cole; ἐλεώσιν: Porta. ΥΠΟΧΘΟΝΙΟΙ: (h)υπὸ χθονίωι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Guarducci, Colli. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ: βασιλῆι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Guarducci, Marcovich, Luppe, Colli, Bernabé 1992, Porta, Pugliese Carratelli; βασιλεί<αι>: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. **14.** ΔΟΣΩΣΙ: δώσωσι: Porta; δόσωσι: Merkelbach. ΠΙΕΝ: πιεῖν: Guarducci, Zuntz, Colli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal. ΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΑΣ: ἀπ[ὸ] λίμνας: Guarducci, Riedweg, Zuntz, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; ἀπὸ λίμνα[ς]: Cole; [ἀπὸ λίμνας: Zuntz. ΠΙΕΝΤΑΣΜΝΑΜΟΣΥΝΑΣΑΠΟ: πιεῖν <ταύτας ἀπὸ> {τᾶς Μναμοσύνας}: Marcovich; <ἀπὸ>: Luppe; Μναμοσύνας λίμνας: Merkelbach. **15.** ΣΥΠ[...]: συχνῶν: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Merkelbach, Colli, Cole; συχνῶν: Guarducci, Marcovich, Porta; συχνᾶν: Zuntz. **16.** ΒΑΧΧΟΙ: βᾶκχοι: Luppe, Zuntz, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. βᾶ(κ)χοι: Colli. ΚΛΕΙΝΟΙ: κλε<ε>ίνοί: Marcovich, Merkelbach, Cole, Porta, Riedweg, Sacco, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; ?κ<ε>λευθον: Luppe; ΚΛ[...]: Zuntz.

- This grave belongs to Mnemosyne, for the time when he shall die  
 On the right side of the well-fitted house of Hades is a spring,  
 and close to this stands a shining cypress:  
 4 Around this place the descending souls cool themselves.  
 Do not approach this spring.  
 But proceed to the lake of Mnemosyne  
 with cold water flowing forth: There are Guardians here:  
 8 And they will ask you with shrewd speech  
 what you are looking for in the darkness of deadly Hades.  
 Say: "I am a son of Earth and starry Heaven:  
 and I am parched with thirst and perishing: But give me  
 12 to drink from the cold water from Mnemosyne's lake."  
 And they will show you to the Chthonian king:  
 and give you to drink from Mnemosyne's lake:  
 And then you will walk on the holy path of the many, on which also other  
 16 renowned mystai and bakkhoi walk

#### *Date*

c. 400 BC, based on grave goods.

#### *Burial context*

Named "tomb 19" of c. 400 tombs excavated from a necropolis in ancient Hipponion (Vibo Valentia) 1969 – 1974. Tomb 19 was excavated on September 13, 1969. Measures: 197 cm long, 96 cm long, 63 cm wide. Two skyphoi and a monolychne oil lamp were found on the north-eastern side of the tomb. Skyphos 1 – clay borsal, 10.7 cm diameter, height: 5.2 cm. Graffiti under the base. Skyphos 2 – clay borsal, 9.4 cm diameter, height: 4.9 cm. Oil lamp – 12.8 cm long, 7.6 cm wide, height: 2.9 cm.

### *Grave contents*

1. Water container, clay. Height: 11 cm., width: 6.1 cm. (at the broadest), 2.6 cm. (at the opening). Location: Left side of the head. 2. Bronze fragments possibly from a ring or earring. Oval shape. Location: Right side of the head. 3. Bronze fragments possibly from a bell. Semicircular. Height: 1.9 cm., width: 3.2 cm. Location: Right side of right elbow. 4. Clay hydria. Height: 8.6 cm, width: 7.5 cm. Location: Left side of right elbow. 5. Clay hydria. Height: 7.8 cm., width: 6.9 cm. Location: Right side of left hand. 6. Clay bolsal skyphos. Diameter: 9.8 cm., height: 5.1 cm. Location: On the pelvis. 7. Gold ring. Diameter: 2.5 cm. (exterior), 1.8 cm. (interior). Location: Ring finger on left hand. 8. Clay oil lamp, monolychna. Length: 10.9 cm., width: 6.4 cm., height: 2.3 cm. Location: Left hand. 9. Clay lekythos. Height: 7.5 cm., width: 5.7 cm. Location: Between left hand and right leg. 10. Clay lekythos. Height: 6.7 cm., width: 5.5 cm. Location: Between the thigh bones.

### *The dead*

Inhumated. Young person, possibly female.

### *Bibliography*

OF 474 Bernabé; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974; Lloyd-Jones 1975; Guarducci 1975; Merkelbach 1975; West 1975; Marcovich 1976; Zuntz 1976; Colli 1978:172-74 (4[A 62]); Luppe 1978; Cole 1980:225; Bernabé 1992:221; Bottini 1992:51-58; Riedweg 1998:395-96; Bernabé 1999:55; Porta 1999:324-5; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:258-261, 2008:245-248; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:39-41; Sacco 2001; di Benedetto 2004; Graf and Johnston 2007:4-5 (1).

## **1.2 Petelia**

British Museum 3155

45 x 27 mm. Folded over four times, then cut in one of the corners in order to fit inside the gold case in which it was found. Originally rectangular in form.

Photograph: Guthrie 1991[1952] (plate 8, 9 (the gold case and chain)); Zuntz 1971 (plate 29); Bottini 1992, picture 3 (case and chain); Buxton 2004:212. Drawing: Smith and Comparetti 1882:112; Marshall 1911:380; *IG*; Harrison 1991:659.

### TEXT

ΕΥΡΗΣΣΕΙΣΔΑΙΔΑΟΔΟΜΩΝΕΠΑΡΙΣΤΕΡΑΚΡΗΝ  
ΗΝΠΑΡΔΑΥΤΗΙΛΕΥΚΗΝΕΣΤΗΚΥΙΑΝΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΣΟΝ  
ΤΑΥΤΗΣΤΗΣΚΡΗΝΗΣΜΗΔΕΣΧΕΔΟΝΕΜΠΕΛΑΣΕΙΑΣ  
4 ΕΥΡΗΣΕΙΣΔΕΤΕΡΑΝΤΗΣΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΗΣ  
ΨΥΧΡΟΝΥΔΩΡΠΡΟΡΕΟΝΦΥΛΑΚΕΣΔΕΠΙΠΡΟΣΘΕΝΕΑΣΙΝ  
ΕΙΠΕΙΝΓΗΣΠΑΙΣΕΙΜΙΚΑΙΟΥΡΑΝΟΥΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΑΥΤΑΡΕ[  
ΟΙΓΕΝΟΣΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΝΤΟΔΕΔΙΣΤΕΚΑΙΑΥΤΟΙΔΙΨΗΙΔΕΙΜΙΑ[  
8 ΗΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙΑΛΛΑΔΟΤΑΙΨΑΨΥΧΡΟΝΥΔΩΡΠΡΟΡΕ  
ΟΝΤΗΣΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΗΣΚΑΥ[.....]ΙΔΩΣΟΥΣ[  
ΠΙΕΙΝΘΕΙΗΣΑ[.....]ΗΣΚΑΙΤΟΤΕΠΕΙΤΑ[.....]ΗΡΩΕ  
ΣΣΙΝΑΝΑΞΕΙ[.....]ΙΗΣΤΟΔΕΗ[  
12 ΘΑΝΕ[.....]ΔΕΓΡΑ[

marg. ]...ΣΚΟΤΟΣ ΑΜΦΙΚΑΛΥΨΑΣ

εὐρήσ{σ}εις δ' Ἀίδαο δόμων ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ κρήνην  
πὰρ δ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἐστηκυῖαν κυπάρισσον·  
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἔμπελάσειας.  
4 εὐρήσεις δ' ἑτέραν, τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης  
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δ' ἐπίπροσθεν ἕασιν  
εἰπεῖν· Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος<ς>,·  
αὐτὰρ ἐ[μ]οὶ γένος οὐρανιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί.  
8 δίψῃ δ' εἰμὶ α[ῦ]η καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ δότ' αἴψα  
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης  
καύ[τοί σο]ί δώσουσι πιεῖν θεῆς α[πὸ κρή]νης  
καὶ τότ' ἔπειτ' ἄ[λλοισι μεθ'] ἠρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[ς]  
12 [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδε ἠ[ρίον· ἐπεὶ ἄν μέλλῃσι]  
θανεῖ[σθαι τό]δε γρα[

marg. ]... σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας

1. ΕΥΡΗΣΣΕΙΣ: εὐρήσεις: Smith and Comparetti, Marshall, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. ΚΡΗΝΗΝ: [κρήνην]: Kaibel; λ[ίμνην]: Franz. 3. ΕΜΠΕΛΑΣΕΙΑΣ: ἔμπελάσεια[ς]: Franz. 4. ΕΤΕΡΑΝ: ἑτέροι: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. 6. ΕΙΜΙ: εἶσι: Franz; εἶ σ[ύ]: Kaibel. ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ: ἀστερόεντος: Smith and Comparetti, Colli, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. 7. Ε[.ΙΟΙ]: ἐμοί: Smith and Comparetti, Marshall, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; ἐ[γὼ]: Kaibel; ἐγὼ: Franz. 8. ΔΙΨΗ: δίψαι: Graf and Johnston; Α[ΙΗ]: αἴη: Smith and Comparetti, Stewart, Marshall, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; [αῦ]η: Kaibel; δῆ: Franz. 9. ΛΙΜΝΗΣ: λί(μ)νης: Marshall. 10. ΚΑΥ[.....]Ι: ΥΤ[.]Ι, Zuntz; ΥΤ[.Σ.Ι, Olivieri; καύ[τοί] σ[ο]ι, Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; καύ[τοί] σ[ο]ι: Graf and Johnston. καύ[τοί σοί] δώσουσι: Kaibel; καύ[τοί] δώσουσι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli; καύ[το] (ί) <σοι>: Colli; καύ(τί)[κα σοι]: Marshall; καύ[σιν] ἀπαλλάσσουσι: Franz. Α[.....]ΗΣ: ἀπ[ὸ κρή]νης, Olivieri, Riedweg, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; ἀπ[ὸ κρή]νης: Smith and Comparetti, Stewart, Colli; ἀπ[ὸ κρή](ν)νης: Marshall; ΑΠ[.....]ΝΗΣ: Zuntz; ΑΠ<Ο ΛΙΜΝ>ΗΣ, Murray; ἀπ[ὸ δίψης·] 11. ΚΑΙΤΟΤΕΠΕΙΤΑ: καὶ τοι ἔπειτα: Franz. Α[.....]ΗΡΩΕ | ΣΣΙΝ: ἄ[λλοισι μεθ'] ἠρώεσσιν, Comparetti, Olivieri, Murray, Zuntz; ἄ[λλοισι μεθ'] ἠρώ[ε]σσιν: Kaibel. ΑΝΑΞΕΙ[.]: ἀνάξει[ν]: Franz. 12. ΤΟΔΕΗ: τόδε ἰ[ρόν]: di Benedetto; ἰ[ερόν, Pugliese Carratelli; τοδ<ε> ἔ[ργον]: Graf and Johnston; τόδ<ε> ἔρ[γον]: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; ..ης τόδε...: Smith and Comparetti; -ης τόδε (ν): Kaibel, Marshall with reconstruction: Μνημοσύ(ν)νης τόδε (ν)[ἄμα πιῶν ἐπεὶ οὔτε] θανεῖσθα[ι] | μέλλεις, θνητὸς ἑών,] τόδε γράψ[ας, οὔτε----- | ----- σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας. 13. ΘΑΝΕ: θανεῖσθ: Kaibel, Zuntz; θανεῖσθα[ι]: Olivieri, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; θανεῖ(σ)θα[ι], Smith and Comparetti; θανεῖ(σ)θ(α)[ι]: Marshall; φανεῖσθα[ι]: Franz; ]ΔΕΓΡΑ[.]: τόδε γρα(ψ): Marshall; τ]όδε γρα[.]: Zuntz, Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli. ]τόδε γραψ[.]: Olivieri, Murray, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. τόδε γραψ[άσθω μεμνημένος ἦρας: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008; τόδ' ἔγραψ[εν?]: Smith and Comparetti; τόδ' ἔγραψ[.]: Colli. ΟΔΕΓΡΑ[.]: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli; ΛΛΕΙΜ: Kaibel. **marg.:** ΓΟΓΛΩΣΕΙΠΟ----- σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας: Marshall; ΤΟΓΛΩΣΕΙΠΑΣΚΟΤΟΣΑΜΦΙΚΑΛΥΨΑΣ: Zuntz, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli, Riedweg, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. [μη μίν γ' ἐκ]πάγλωσ ὑπά[γ]οι σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008.

On the left side in the House of Hades you shall find a spring,

And standing by it a white cypress:

Do not approach this spring.

4 But you shall find another by Mnemosyne's lake

Cold water flowing forth: But there are guards before it.  
 Say: "I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven:  
 However my race is of heaven: This you know yourselves.  
 8 I dry up and perish from thirst: But give me quickly  
 The cold water flowing forth from the lake of Mnemosyne."  
 And they themselves will give you to drink from the sacred spring  
 And thereafter you shall be lord amongst heroes  
 12 .....]...this.[.....][  
 .....][.....  
 .....]

marg. .... darkness will cover it all around.

*Date*

First half of the 4th. century BC.

*Burial context*

Unknown.

*Grave contents*

Gold case and chain (2nd. – 3rd. century AD) in which the gold plate was found.  
 Length of chain: 27,9 cm; case is 3,5 cm long.

*The dead*

Unknown.

*Bibliography*

OF 476 Bernabé; I.G. 14.638; Franz 1836; Kaibel 1878 (1037); Smith and Comparetti 1882:112; Stewart 1903; Marshall 1911:380 (3155); Olivieri 1915:12-14; OF 32a Kern; Harrison (Murray) 1922:659-660 (I); Orpheus 1 B 17 DK; Zuntz 1971:358-59; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:113-14 (P); Colli 1978:174-177 (4[A 63]); Bottini 1992:51-58; Riedweg 1998:394-95; Bernabé 1999:56; Porta 1999:325-6; Buxton 2004:212; Graf and Johnston 2007:6-7.

**1.3 Thurii 1**

Napoli, Museo Nazionale 111463

54 x 29 mm. Folded nine times and found inside plate C. Found beside the head of the deceased. Rectangular.

Photograph: Zuntz 1971, plate 27b; Gigante 1996:503. Drawing: Olivieri 1915:27; Harrison 1991:662; Bottini 1992:37; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:112.

TEXT

ΑΛΛΟΠΟΤΑΜΨΥΧΗΠΡΟΛΙΠΗΦΑΟΣΑΕΛΙΟΙΟ  
 ΔΕΞΙΟΝΕ.ΟΙΑΣΔΕΞΕΝΑΙΠΕΦΥΛΑΓΜΕΝΟΝ  
 ΕΙΥΜΑΛΑΠΑΝΤΑΧΑΙΡΕΠΑΘΩΝ ΤΟΠΑΘΗ  
 4 ΜΑΤΟΔΟΥΠΩΠΡΟΣΘΕΕΠΕΤΟΝΘΕΙΣΘΕΟΣΕΓ  
 ΕΝΟΥΕΞΕΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥΕΡΨΦΟΣΕΣΓΑΛΛΑ  
 ΕΠΕΤΕΣΧΑΙΡΧΑΙΡΕΔΕΞΙΑΝΟΔΟΙΠΟΡ

8 ΛΕΙΜΩΝΑΣΤΕΙΕΡΟΥΣΚΑΙ ΑΛΣΕΑ  
ΦΕΡΣΕΦΟΝΕΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ὅποταμ ψυχὴ προλίπη φάος ἀελίοιο  
δεξιόν †Ε.ΘΙΑΣ† δ' ἐξ<ι>έναί πεφυλαγμένον εἰς ἅ μάλ' α πάντα  
χαίρε παθῶν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις·  
4 θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔρ<ι>φος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες  
χαίρ<ε> χαίρε· δεξιὰν ὁδοίπορ<ει>  
λειμῶνάς τε ἱερούς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας

1. ἀελίοιο: ἠελίοιο: Kaibel. 2. †Ε.ΘΙΑΣ†: Ε.ΘΙΑΣ: Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; ε<ὐ?>θείας: Pugliese Carratelli; †ΕΞΘΙΑΣΔΕΕ†: Zuntz, Merkelbach; ε...οιαις δεῖ τινα: Dieterich; εἴσιθι ὡς δεῖ: Kaibel. εὐνοίας: Comparetti. Ε[ὐ]νοίας: Harrison. εγ'οιαις δειτινα: Murray. ἐς θίασ<ον>: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008; ἐ[ν]οίας: Cavallari, Smith and Comparetti; ΕΞΘΙΑΣΔΕΕ[.]ΝΑΙ: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli. ΔΕΞΕΝΑΙ: ἐξιέναι: Graf and Johnston. ἐξι<ε>ναί: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001, Bernabé. δεῖ {ξ} <σ'> ἰ<ε>ναί: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008; <ί>ναί: Merkelbach; δεῖ τινα: Cavallari, Smith and Comparetti. ΕΙΥ: εἰ<δ>υ<ί>α: Colli. ΠΑΝΤΑ: πάν[τ]α: Colli. 3. ΤΟΔ: τόδ': Smith and Comparetti. ΠΡΟΣΘΕ: π[ρ]όσθε: Cavallari. πρόσθ{ε}: Colli. 4. ΕΓΕΝΟΥ: εἰ [ἐλε]ε(ι)νοῦ: Cavallari; εἰ ἐ(λεει)νοῦ: Smith and Comparetti. ΕΡΨΦΟΣ: ἔρυφος: Murray. ἔριφος: Colli. 5. ΧΑΙΡ: χαίρε: Murray, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli. ΟΔΟΙΠΟΡ: ὁδοίπορ<ῶν>: Cavallari, Smith and Comparetti, Kaibel, Murray, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli, Pugliese Carratelli. 6. ΤΕ: θ' {ε}: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ΚΑΙΑΛΣΕΑ: κατ[ά τ'] ἄλσεα: Kaibel; κατὰ <τ'> ἄ<λ>σεα: Murray. ΦΕΡΣΕΦΟΝΕΙΑΣ: Φε[ρ]σε[φ]ονείας: Cavallari, Smith and Comparetti; Φεσε<φο>νείας: Murray.

But whenever the soul has left the light of the sun,  
To the right ... I am well cautious more than any thing else.  
Hail you who have suffered the Suffering, but this you have never suffered

before:

4 You have become (a) god from human: A kid has fallen into milk.  
Hail, hail: You travel to the right  
To the holy, grassy meadow of Persephone.

*Date*

c. 350 BC.

*Burial context*

Timpone Grande. Tumulus, diameter: 28 m., height: c. 9.5 m. Eight main strata, the grave was found in the last one, each containing a layers of earth, clay and pebbles, ashes and carbon. According to Cavallari's drawing the layers occurred in this order: Plant earth (Terra vegetale), carbon (50 cm.), earth, cobblestone and vase shards, earth, clay (Argilla, 60 cm.), carbon and vase shards (from the 5th. century AD), earth, clay, earth, clay, earth, clay and carbon, earth and vase shards, carbon and earth, the tomb, earth, gravel. Some shards found throughout the tumulus contained burn marks. Plant roots were found in the inner layers. The grave was located at ground level, built up by tufa blocks. Measurements: Height: 0.30 m., width: 1 m, length: 2.30 m. The roof of the tomb was slightly higher in the centre (26.5 cm) than at the sides (18 cm). The walls were 0.50 m. thick. Above the tomb was found a pyre. Inside the tomb: A coffin with bronze locks placed in a depression.

*Grave contents*

A few black vases outside the tomb. Two silver medallions depicting the head of a woman. A few, tiny pieces of gold. Two wooden boxes with palmettes. A white sheet had been laid over the corpse but it disintegrated when touched.

*The dead*

Partially cremated. Facing east.

*Bibliography*

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**1.3 Thurii 2**

Napoli, Museo Nazionale 111464

81 x 23 mm. Folded nine times containing plate A4. Found beside the head of the deceased. Rectangular.

Photograph: Zuntz 1971, plate 28b. Drawing: Olivieri 1915:28; Harrison 1991:664; Bottini 1992:37; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:125.

TEXT

ΠΡΩΤΟΤΟΝΟΘΗΜΑΙΤΙΕΤΗΤΑΜΜΑΤΡΙΕΠΑΚΥΒΕΛΕΙΑΚΟΡΡΑΨΕΝ  
ΤΑΙΗΔΗΜΗΤΡΟΣΗΤ  
ΤΑΤΑΙΤΤΑΤΑΠΤΑΖΕΥΙΑΤΗΤΥΑΕΡΣΑΠΤΑΗΛΙΕΠΥΡΔΗΠΑΝΤΑΣΤΗ  
ΝΤΑΣΤΗΝΙΣΑΤΟΠΕΝΙΚΑΙΜ  
ΣΗΔΕΤΥΧΑΙΤΕΦΑΝΗΣΠΑΜΜΗΣΤΟΙΜΟΙΡΑΙΣΣΤΗΤΟΙΓΑΝΝΥΑΠΙΑ  
ΝΤΗΣΥΚΛΥΤΕΔΑΡΜΟΝΔΕΥΧΙ  
4 ΣΠΑΤΕΡΑΤΙΚΠΑΝΤΟΔΑΜΑΣΤΑΠΑΝΤΗΡΝΥΝΤΑΙΣΕΛΑΒΔΟΝΤΑΔΕ  
ΠΑΝΤΕΜΟΙΒΗΣΤΛΗΤΕΑΣΖΛ  
ΤΗΜΗΑΕΡΙΠΥΡΜΕΜΜΑΤΕΡΛΥΕΣΤΙΣΟΙΛ[.]ΕΝΤΑΤΟΝΗΖΣΙΝΝΥΕΙΝΗ  
ΜΕΦΗΜΕΡΑΛΕΓΛΧΥΕΣ  
ΕΠΠΗΜΑΡΤΙΝΗΣΤΙΑΣΤΑΝΖΕΥΕΝΟΡΥΤΤΙΕΚΑΙΠΑΝΟΠΤΑΙΕΝΑΙΜ  
ΙΥ\*ΜΑΤΕΡΕΜΑΣΕΠ  
ΩΥΣΟΝΕΘΕΥΧΑΣΤΑΚΤΑΠΥΡΣΥΟΛΚΑΠΕΔΙΩΧΑΜΑΤΕΜΑΝΚΑΛ  
ΗΔΙΕΡΑΔΑΜΝΕΥΔΑΜΝΟΙ  
8 ΩΤΑΚΤΗΡΙΑΡΑΜΑΡΔΗΜΗΤΕΡΠΥΡΖΕΥΚΑΡΗΧΘΟΝΙΑΤΡΑΒΔΑΗΤΡΟ  
ΣΗΝΙΣΤΗΟΙΣΤΝ  
ΗΡΩΣΝΗΓΑΥΝΗΓΑΟΣΕΣΦΡΕΝΑΜΑΤΑΙΜΗΤΝΝΤΗΣΝΥΣΧΑΜΕΣΤΩ  
ΡΕΙΛΕΚΟΙΡΗΝ  
ΑΙΑΦΗΡΤΟΝΟΣΣΜΟ'ΕΣΤΟΝΑΕΡΤΑΙΠΑΝΙΛΛΥΕΣΦΡΕΝΑΜΑΡΤΤΩΣ

Πρωτο<γ>όνω ΤΗΜΑΙΤΙΕΤΗΤΑΜ ματρί ΕΠΑ Κυβελεία Κόρρα<ι>  
ΨΕΝΤΑΙΗ Δημητρος ΗΤ  
ΤΑΤΑΙΤΤΑΠΤΑ Ζεϋ ΙΑΤΗΤΥ άερ ΣΑΠΤΑ Ήλιε πϋρ δη πάντα  
ΣΤΗΝΙΝΤΑΣΤΗΝΙΣΑΤΟΠΕ νικαί Μ

ΣΗ δὲ Τύχα ἴτε Φάνης πάμ<ν>ηστοι Μοῖραι ΣΣΤΗΤΟΙΓΑΝΝΥΑΠΙΑΝΤ  
 Η σὺ κλυτὲ δα<ῖ>μον ΔΕΥΧΙ  
 4 Σ πάτερ ΑΤΙΚ παντοδαμάστα πάντη Ρ νῦνΤΑΙΣΕΛΑΒΔΟΝΤΑΔΕΠΤΑΝ  
 ΤΕΜΟΙΒΗΣΤΛΗΤΕΑΣΖΛ  
 ΤΗΜΗ ἄερ Ι πῦρ ΜΕΜ μάτερ ΛΥΕΣΤΙΣΟΙΛ[.]ΕΝΤΑΤΟ Νῆσ<τ>ι Ν Νύξ  
 ΙΝΗΜ ἐφήμερα ΛΕΓΛΧΥΕΣ  
 ἐπ<τ>ῆμαρ ΤΙ νήστιας ΤΑΝ Ζεῦ ἔνορύττιε καὶ πανόπτα αἶέν ΑΙΜΙΥ\*  
 μάτερ ἔμας ΕΠ  
 ΩΥΣΟΝΕΟ εὐχᾶς ΤΑΚΤΑΠΥΑΡΣΥΟΛΚΑΠΕΔΙΩΧΑΜΑΤΕΜΑΝ  
 καλ{η}α Δ ἱερά ΔΑΜΝΕΥΔΑΜΝΟΙ  
 8 ΩΤΑΚΤΗΡ ἱερά ΜΑΡ Δημήτερ, πῦρ, Ζεῦ, Κ<ό>ρη Χθονία ΤΡΑΒΔΑΗΤΡΟ  
 ΣΗΝΙΣΤΗΟΙΣΤΝ  
 ἦρωσ ΝΗΓΑΥΝΗΓΑΟΣ ἔς φρένα ΜΑΤΑΙΜΗΤΝΝΤΗΣΝΥΣΧΑ μήστωρ  
 εἶλε Κο<ύ>ρην  
 αἶα ΦΗΡΤΟΝΟΣΣΜΟ' ἔστο Ν ἄερ ΤΑΙΠΑΝΙΛΛΥ ἔς φρένα ΜΑΡΤΤΩΣ

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 ἀνταμοιβή: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. -οντα δε παντ'  
 εμοι/(ε)λαβον(τα)/ελα<σι>βροντα δε παντ' ε<π' α>μοιβης: Zuntz. ΕΛΑΒΔΟΝΤΑΔΕΠΙΑΝΤ  
 (ά)μοιβης: Colli. ΤΕΑΣΖΛ: ΤΕΑΣΤΛ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and  
 Johnston; ΤΕΑΣΤΩ: Pugliese Carratelli. ΤΕΑΠΛ: Zuntz. τλητέα ΠΛ: Colli. 5. ΤΗΜΗΑΕΡΙ: ΤΗ μη  
 ἄερι: Colli. τη μη αερι: Zuntz. ΕΣΤΙΣΟΙ: ἔστι σοι: Colli. Λ[.]ΕΝΤΑΤΟ: [...] ἐ(π)τά τ(ε): Colli.  
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 Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. μεθ' ημεραν: Zuntz, Colli. ΛΕΓΛΧΥΕΣ: ΝΕΓΛ. ΥΕΤ: Zuntz, Colli.  
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 ἐπτῆμαρ: Zuntz, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. εγγημαρ: Zuntz.  
 ΤΙΝΗΣΤΙΑΣ: τιν <ν>ῆστι{α}ς: Colli. ΤΑΝ: (ἔ)ν: Colli. ΕΝΟΥΥΤΤΙΕ: ΕΝ' Ὁ(λ)ύ(μ)πιε: Colli.  
 ΑΙΜΙΥ\*: ΑΙΜΙΛΟ: Colli. 6-7. ΕΠ|ΩΥΣΟΝ: ἐπ|ᾶκουσον: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal,  
 Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. επ|ακ|ουσον: Zuntz, Colli. 7. ΠΥΑΡΣΥΟΛΚΑ: ΠΥΡΑΣΗΟΛΚΑ: Colli.  
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 8. ΩΤΑΚΤΗΡ: στακτηρ/στακτηρι: Zuntz, Colli. ΚΑΡΗ: καὶ ἡ: Colli. ΝΙΣΤΗΟΙΣΤΝ: ΜΣΤΗΟΚΙΝ[  
 ]: Colli. 9. ΓΑΟΣ: φάος: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Betegh, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston.  
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 Colli. ΡΕΙΛΕ: ΡΕ[.]ΛΕ: Colli. ΚΟΙΡΗΝ: ΙΣΣΙΡΗΝ: Zuntz, Colli. 10. ΑΙΑ: ΔΙΑ: Zuntz, Colli. ΣΣΜΟ:  
 ΣΣΜΜ: Colli. ΕΣΤΟΝ: ες τον: Zuntz. ΝΙΛΛΥΕΣ: ΜΜ (έ)ς: Colli. ΜΑΡΤΤΩΣ: ΜΑΡ\*ΤΩΣ:  
 Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ματρι: Colli.

To Protoponos [-] mother [-] Kybele Kore [-] of Demeter  
 [-] Zeus [-] air [-] Helios – fire all [-] victories  
 [-] Fortunes and Phanes, All-remembering Moirai [-] you famous daimon [-]  
 4 [-] Father [-] master of all [-] now [-]  
 [-] air [-] fire [-] Mother [-] Fasting [-] Night [-] lasting a day [-]  
 seventh day [-] of a fast [-] Zeus Who-Digs-In (Graf and Johnston) Watcher-  
 Over-All always [-] my Mother [-]  
 [-] prayers [-] beautiful [-] holy [-]



- 8 [-] holy [-] Demeter, fire, Zeus, Kore Chthonia [-]  
heros [-] to the mind [-] the adviser seizes Kore  
land [-] was enwrapped [-] air [-] to the mind [-]

For information on date, the grave, grave contents and the dead see A4 Thurii above.

### *Bibliography*

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### **1.3 Thurii 3**

Napoli, Museo Nazionale 111625

51 x 36 mm. Found near the deceased's right hand. Rectangular.

Photograph: Zuntz 1971, plate 26a; Pugliese Carratelli 2001. Drawing: Olivieri 1915:16 (A); Harrison 1991:667; Bottini 1992:40; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:102.

### TEXT

ΕΡΧΟΜΑΙΕΚΚΟΘΑΡΟΚΟΘΑΡΑΧΘΟΝΙΒΑ  
ΣΙΛΕΙΑΕΥΚΛΗΣΕΥΒΟΛΕΥΣΤΕΚΑΙΑ  
ΘΑΝΑΤΟΙΘΕΟΙΑΛΛΟΙΚΑΙΓΑΡΕΓΩΝ  
4 ΥΜΩΝΓΕΝΟΣΟΛΒΙΟΝΕΥΧΟΜΑΙ  
ΕΙΜΕΝΑΛΛΑΜΕΜΟΡΑΕΔΑΜΑΣΕ  
ΚΑΙΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΙΘΕΟΙΑΛΛΟΙΚΑΙΑΣ  
ΣΤΕΡΟΒΛΗΤΑΚΕΡΑΥΝΟΝΚΥΚΛΟ  
8 ΔΕΞΕΠΤΑΝΒΑΡΥΠΕΝΘΕΟΣΑΡΓΑ  
ΛΕΟΙΟΙΜΕΡΤΟΔΕΠΕΒΑΝΣΤΕΦΑ  
ΝΟΠΟΣΙΚΑΡΠΑΛΙΜΟΪΣΙΔΕΣΣΠΟΙ  
ΝΑΣΔΕΥΠΟΚΟΛΠΟΝΕΔΥΝΧΘΟΝΙ  
12 ΑΣΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣΙΜΕΡΤΟΔΑΠΕΒΑΝ  
ΣΤΕΜΑΝΟΠΟΣΙΚΑΡΠΑΣΙΜΟΙ  
ΣΙΟΛΒΙΕΚΑΙΜΑΚΑΡΙΣΤΕΘΕΟΣΔΕ  
ΣΗΙΑΝΤΙΒΡΟΤΟΙΟΕΡΙΦΟΣΕΣΓΑΛΕΠΕΤΟ  
16 Ν

ἔρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῶ<ν> καθαρά, χθονί<ων> βασιλεία  
Εὐκλῆς Εὐβουλεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι  
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὐχομαι εἶμεν  
4 ἀλ<λ>ά με Μο<ι>ρα ἐδάμασ<σ>ε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι καὶ  
ἀσ{σ}τεροβλήτα κεραυνὸν  
κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο  
ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι  
Δεσ{σ}ποίνας δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας  
8 ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἀπέβαν στεμάνου ποσὶ καρπασίμοισι  
ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ θεὸς δ' ἔση ἀντὶ βροτοῖο  
ἐριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον

1. ΚΟΘΑΡΟ: κοθαρ(ῶ)<ν>: Colli. 4. ΑΣΣΤΕΡΟΒΛΗΤΑ: ἄσσηροβλήτα: Colli. ΚΕΡΑΥΝΟΝ: κεραυνῶν: Olivieri, Pugliese Carratelli; κεραυνῶι: Zuntz, Riedweg, Porta, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. 8. ΑΠΕΒΑΝ: ἐπέβαν: Zuntz, Graf and Johnston. ΣΤΕΜΑΝΟ: στε<φ>άνου: Pugliese Carratelli. στεφάνου: Riedweg, Graf and Johnston. ΚΑΡΤΑΣΙΜΟΙΣΙ: καρπαλίμοισι: Colli, Graf and Johnston.

Pure I come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld,  
And both Eukles and Eubouleus and all the other immortal Gods:  
For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind,  
4 But Fate subdued me, and all the other immortal gods and the star-flunged  
thunderbolt.  
And I have flown out of the grievous, troublesome circle,  
I have passed with swift feet to the desired wreath,  
I have entered under the bosom of the lady of the house, the Queen of the  
Underworld,  
8 I have passed with swift feet from the desired wreath  
Happy and Blessed, you shall become god, the opposite of mortal.  
A kid I have fallen into milk.

*Date*

c. 360 BC.

*Burial context*

Timpone Piccolo. Tumulus, circumference: c. 52 m. (diameter: 16.5 m.), height: c. 5 m. Several vase shards and terracotta remains were found in the tumulus. The grave, made up of tufa blocks, was located in the lowest of two main strata about 60 cm thick, at ground level. Several vase shards and terracotta remains were found in the tumulus. The interior of the grave, c. 1 meter high, was painted white.

*Grave contents*

Ashes of bones and plants found in each of the grave's four corners. No description of any coffin in the excavation report.

*The dead*

Inhumed. Facing east.

*Bibliography*

I.G. 14.641.1; Comparetti 1880:155; Olivieri 1915:4-8, 26 (A); Harrison (Murray) 1991:667 (V); OF 32c Kern; Orpheus 1 B 18 DK; Zuntz 1971:300-1; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115-16; Colli 1978:178-179 (4[A 65]); Bottini 1992:40 ff.; Riedweg 1998:392-93, Porta 1999:329; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:102-111 (II B 1); Graf and Johnston 2007:12-13 (5).

### 1.3 *Thurii 4*

Napoli, Museo Nazionale 111623

47 x 28 mm. Folded once. Found near the deceased's right hand. Rectangular.

Photograph: Zuntz 1971, plate 26b; Pugliese Carratelli 2001. Drawing: Olivieri 1915:26; Harrison 1991:668; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:98.

TEXT

ΕΡΧΟΜΑΕΚΑΡΩΙΣΧΟΝΩΝ  
 ΚΑΘΑΡΑΧΟΝΙΟΝΒΑΣΙΛΗΕΙ  
 ΕΥΚΛΕΚΑΙΕΥΒΟΥΛΕΥΙΚΑΙΘΕΟΙΔΑΙΜΟ  
 4 ΕΑΛΛΟΙΚΑΙΓΡΑΕΓΩΝΥΜΩΓΕΝΟΕΥΧΟΜΑ  
 ΙΟΛΒΙΟΙΕΙΝΑΙΠΟΝΑΙΔΑΝΤΑΠΕΙΤΕΣΕΙ  
 ΕΡΓΩΙΕΝΕΚΑΟΥΤΙΔΙΚΑΩΝ  
 ΕΙΤΕΜΕΜΟΡΑΕΔΑΜΑΣΑΤΟ  
 8 ΕΙΤΕΑΣΤΕΡΟΠΗΤΙΚΡΑΥΝΩΝ  
 ΝΥΝΔΙΚΕΤΙΚΩΙΠΑΙΑΓΝΗΦΕΣΕ  
 ΦΟΝΕΑΝΩΣΜΕΙΠΡΟΦΩΤΕΙΨΗ  
 ΕΔΡΑΙΣΕΣΕΥΑΓΕΙΩΙ

ἔρχομα<ι> ἔ<κ> κα<θα>ρῶ<ν> {ισχονων} καθαρὰ χ<θ>ονίων  
 βασίλ{η}ει<α>  
 Εὐκλε καὶ Εὐβουλεῦ {ι} καὶ θεοὶ δαίμο<ν>ε<ς> ἄλλοι  
 καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶ<ν> γένο<ς> εὐχομαι ὄλβιοι εἶναι  
 4 πο<ι>νὰ<ν> δ' ἀνταπέ{ι}τε{σε}ι<ς>' {ι} ἔργω<ν> ἔνεκα οὐτι  
 δικαί<ι>ων  
 εἴτε με Μο<ι>ρα ἑδαμάσ<σ>ατο εἴτε ἀστεροπῆτι κ<ε>ραυνῶν  
 νῦν δ' ἰκέτι<ς> ἦκω {ι} πα<ρα>ὶ ἀγνή<ν> Φε<ρ>σεφόνειαν  
 ὥς με {ι} πρόφ<ρ>ω<ν> πέ<μ>ψη<ι> ἔδρα {ι}ς ἐς εὐαγέ{ι}ω<ν>

1. ΙΣΧΟΝΩΝ: {σχονων}: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. χ<θ>ον<ι>ων: Olivieri. ΧΟΝΙΟΝ: χθονί<ων>: Graf and Johnston. {ΣΧΟΝ}: Colli. ΒΑΣΙΛΗΕΙ: βασι(ι)λ{η}ει<α>: Colli. 2. ΘΕΟΙΔΑΙΜΟΕ: θεοὶ <καὶ> δαίμονε<ς>: Colli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. 3. ΥΜΩ: ὑμῶν: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ΟΛΒΙΟΙ: ὄλβιο<ν>: Colli, Pugliese Carratelli. 4. ΑΝΤΑΠΕΙΤΕΣ: ἀνταπέ(τ)ε<ι>ς': Colli. 5. ΜΟΡΑ: μο<ι>ρ[α]: Olivieri. ΕΙΤΕ<sup>2</sup>: εἴτε[ε]: Olivieri, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008. εἰ {ΤΕΑ}: Colli. ΑΣΤΕΡΟΠΗΤΙ: ἀστεροπητῆ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. Ἀστεροπῆτ<α>: Pugliese Carratelli. στεροπη τ(ε): Colli. 6. ΙΚΕΤΙΚΩ: ἰκέτι<ς> ἦκω: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ἰκέτι<ς> ἦκω: Graf and Johnston; ἰκέτη<ς> ἦκω[ι]: Olivieri. ἰκέτι<ς> ἦκω: Colli. ΠΑΙ: παρ': Olivieri, Zuntz. πα(ρ)<α>: Colli. 7. ΠΡΟΦΩΤΕΙΨΗ: πρόφ<ρ>ω<ν> πέμψη<ι>: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. πρόφρων πέμψη<ι>: Graf and Johnston. ΕΔΡΑΙΣ: ἔδρας: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ΕΥΑΓΕΙΩΙ: εὐαγέω<ν>: Pugliese Carratelli.

Pure I come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld  
 Eukles and Eubouleus and all the other gods:  
 For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind:  
 4 And I have paid the price with respect to the unjust deeds...  
 Whether I have been subdued by Fate or the thrower of the Thunderbolt.  
 And now I have come as a fugitive to pure Persephone  
 Who kindly will send me to the seat of the holy.

*Date*  
 c. 350 BC.

*Burial context*  
 Timpone Piccolo. Tumulus, circumference: c. 52 m. (diameter: 16.5 m.), height: c. 5 m. Several vase shards and terracotta remains were found in the tumulus. Outside the

grave a plate of "fabbrica Lucana" was found. On the plate was a figure, red on black, of "un Genio alato, ermafrodito" with a crown in his hand. Location and description of grave: not recorded.

*Grave contents*

Gold tablet.

*The dead*

Inhumed. Facing east.

*Bibliography*

OF 489 Bernabé; I.G. 14.641.2; Comparetti 1880:156; Olivieri 1915:9-10, 26 (B); Harrison (Murray) 1991:668 (VI); OF 32d Kern; Orpheus 1 B 19 DK, Zuntz 1971:302-3, plate 26b; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115-16; Colli 1978:180-181 (4[A 66]a); Riedweg 1998:393; Porta 1999:331; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:271-272, 2008:260-261 (L 10a); Pugliese Carratelli 2001:98-99 (II A 1); Graf and Johnston 2007:14-15 (7).

### 1.3 Thurii 5

Napoli, Museo Nazionale 111624

46 x 25 mm. Found near the deceased's right hand. Rectangular. Inscribed on both sides.

Photograph: Zuntz 1971, plate 27a (verso). Drawing: Olivieri 1915:27; Harrison 1991:668; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:100.

#### TEXT

Recto ΕΙΡΧΟΜΑΙΕΚΑΘΑΡΩΚΑΘ  
ΟΒΑΣΙΛ\*ΡΕΥΚΛΕΥΑΚΑΕΥ  
ΒΟΛΕΥΚΑΙΘΕΟΙΟΣΟΙΔΜΟ  
4 ΝΕΣΑΛΛΟΚΑΙΓΑΡΕΝΥ  
.ΠΕΝΟΣΕΥΧΟΜΑΕΝΑ  
ΟΛΒΙΟΠΟΙΝΑΝΝΑΤΑΤ  
ΕΤΕΕΡΓΩΟΤΙΔΙΚ

Verso ΑΩΝΝΕΤΜΕΜΟΙΡΑ  
ΕΤΕΡΟΠΗΤΙΚΗΚΕΡΑ  
ΥΝΟΝΝΥΝΔΕΚ.ΚΩ  
4 ΙΙΚΩΠΑΡΑΦΣΕΑ  
ΩΣΔΜΕΡΟΦΠΕΝΨΕΜ  
ΕΔΡΑΣΕΣΕΥΤΙ

ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρώ<ν> καθ<αρά χθ>ο<νίων> βασίλ<εια>  
{\*ρ} Εὐκλε {υα} κα<ί> Εὐβουλεῦ καὶ θεοὶ ὅσοι δ<αί>μονες ἄλλο<ι>  
καὶ γὰρ ἐ<γ>ώ<ν> ὑ<μῶν γ>ένος εὐχομα<ι> ε<ί>να<ι> ὄλβιο<ν>  
4 ποιᾶν {ν} ἀ<ν>ταπέτε<ις> ἔργω<ν ἕνεκ'> οὐτι δικα<ί>ων  
εἴτ<ε> με Μοῖρα <ἐδάμασ'> εἴτε <ἀστε>ροπητι {κη} κεραυνῶ<ν>  
νῦν δὲ <ί>κ<έτις> ἦκω {ικω} παρὰ Φ<ερ>σε<φόνει>α<ν>  
ὥς {λ} με <π>ρόφ<ρων> πέ<μ>ψει {μ} ἔδρας ἐς εὐ<αγέων>

1. ΕΙΡΧΟΜΑΙ: ἔρχομαι: Zuntz, Colli, Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ΚΑΘ: καθ<α>ρ<ά>: Olivieri. καθα<ρά>: Colli. 2. \*Ρ: {ΥΡ}: Colli. ΕΥΚΛΕ: (Ε)ὕκλε: Colli. ΘΕΟΙΟΣΟΙ: θεοὶ <καὶ> {όσοι}: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ΑΛΛΟ: ἄ(λλ)ο<ι>: Colli. 3. ἐ<γ>ώ<ν>: ἐ<γ>ώ: Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. ΕΝΑΟΛΒΙΟ: <ι ὄλβιον> ε<ῖ>να<ι> {ὄλβιο}: Zuntz, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. 4. ΝΑΤΑΠΙΕΤΕ: <δ'> ἀνταπέτε<ισ'>: Olivieri, Colli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. <ἀν>ταπέτε<ισ'>: Pugliese Carratelli. ΕΡΓΩΤΙ: ἔργω<ν> ο<ῦ>τι: Pugliese Carratelli. 5. ΜΟΙΡΑΕΤΕΡΟΠΗΤΙ: Μοῖρα{α} <ἐδαμάσσατο> ε<ῖ> σ<τ>εροπή τ(ε): Colli. 6. ΔΕΚ: δ' ἐ<π>ήκ<οον>: Pugliese Carratelli. 7. ΚΩ: ἦκω: Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. [ἦκω]: Olivieri. ΠΑΡΑΦΣΕΑ: Φ<ερ>σεφ<όνειαν>: Colli, Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston; παρ' ἄ<γνῆν> Φ<ερ>σεφ<όνειαν>: Olivieri, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. 7. ΩΣ: ὤς>: Pugliese Carratelli. ΠΕΝΨΕΜ: πέ<μ>ψ<η>: Colli. πέ<μ>ψ<η> [ἐμ']: Olivieri. ΕΥΠ: εὐ<α>γ<έων>: Graf and Johnston; εὐ<α>γ<έω>: Olivieri. εὐ<α>(γ)<έω>: Colli.

Pure I come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld,  
Eukles and Eubouleus and all the other gods and great daimones:  
For I too maintain to be of your blessed kind:  
4 And I have paid the price for unjust deeds...  
Whether Fate has subdued me or ... lightning  
And now I have come ... to Persephone  
Who kindly will send me to the seat of the holy.

*Date*

c. 350 BC.

*Burial context*

Timpone Piccolo. Tumulus, circumference: c. 52 m. (diameter: 16.5 m.), height: c. 5 m. Several vase shards and terracotta remains were found in the tumulus. Tufa framework, nearly identical to the grave in which 1.3 Thurii 3 was found, but slightly higher, 1.22 m. White interior with a yellow base. The grave was located below grave 1.3 Thurii 3. No description of coffin.

*Grave contents*

Empty.

*The dead*

Inhumed. Facing east.

*Bibliography*

OF 490 Bernabé; I.G. 14.641.3; Comparetti 1880:156; Olivieri 1915:10-11, 27 (C); Harrison (Murray) 1991: 668-69 (VII); OF 32e Kern; Zuntz 1971:304-5 (A3); Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115-16; Colli 1978:180-83 (4[A 66]b); Riedweg 1998:393; Porta 1999:331; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:100-101 (II A 2); Graf and Johnston 2007:14-15 (6); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:261-262 (L 10b).

#### 1.4 Entella

Ginerva, Italy, private collection

42 – 81 x 7 – 36 mm. Found inside a terracotta lamp. The text is divided in two columns. The division is marked by a delicate vertical line visible to the left of the

second column's first two lines. The end of the first column is marked by a horizontal line. The height of the letters varies from 2 to 3 mm.

Since no transcript, photograph, or drawing is available, the transcription is largely based on Frel's reading. Reconstructions are recorded in the apparatus.

TEXT

Col. 1

|    |                      |
|----|----------------------|
|    | ]ΗΝΙΟΙΝΘΑΝΙΕΣΘΑΙ     |
|    | ]ΕΜΝΗΜΕΟΣΗΡΩΣ        |
| 4  | ]ΣΚΟΤΟΣΑΜΦΙΚΑΛΥΨΑΙ   |
|    | ]ΔΕΞΙΑΛΙΜΝΗΝ         |
|    | ]ΚΥΑΙΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΣΟΝ      |
|    | ]ΧΑΙΝΕΚΥΩΝΨΥΧΟΝΤΑΙ   |
| 8  | ]ΔΕΣΧΕΔΟΝΕΠΕΛΑΣΘΑΙ   |
|    | ]ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΗΣ |
|    | ]ΦΥΛΑΚΟΙΘΥΠΟΠΕΘΑΣΙΝ  |
|    | ]ΦΡΑΣΙΠΕΥΚΑΛΙΜΗΣΙΝ   |
| 12 | ]ΜΟΥΦΟΝΗΕΤΑ          |
|    | ]ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ  |
|    | ]ΥΜΑΙΑΛΛΑΔΟΤΕΜΜΟΙ    |
|    | ]ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣΑΠΟΛΙΜΝΗΣ |

Col. 2

|    |           |
|----|-----------|
| 16 | ΑΥΤΑΡΕ[   |
|    | ΚΑΙΤΟΙΑΝ[ |
|    | ΚΑΙΤΟΤΕΤ[ |
|    | ΚΑΙΤΟΤΕΔ[ |
|    | ΣΥΜΒΟΛΑΦ[ |
| 20 | ΚΑΙΦΕ[    |
|    | ΣΕΝ[      |

col. 1

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | ]ηνίοιν θανείσθαι                               |
|    | μ]εμνεμέ<v>ος ἥρως                              |
| 4  | ]σκότος ἀμφικαλύψαι                             |
|    | ἐπὶ] δεξιὰ λίμνην                               |
|    | πὰρ δ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἔστε]κῦα<v> κυπαρίσσου       |
|    | ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυ]αὶ νεκῶν ψύχονται          |
|    | ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μη]δὲ σχεδὸν ἐ<μ>πελάσ<ασ>θαι |
| 8  | ]Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης                          |
|    | ]φυλακοὶ θ ὑποπέθασιν                           |
|    | ]φρασὶ πευκαλίμησιν                             |
|    | ]μου φονηεντά                                   |
| 12 | Γῆς παῖς εἶμι καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·         |
|    | καὶ ἀπόλλ]υμαι ἀλλὰ δότε μοι                    |
|    | ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πῖναι τῆς] Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης    |

col. 2 αὐταρ ἐ[μοὶ γενὸς οὐράνιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοὶ  
 16 καὶ τοὶ ἄν [  
 καὶ τοτὲ τ[οι  
 καὶ τοτε δ[  
 σύμβολα φ[  
 20 καὶ φε[  
 σεν[

1. ]ΗΝΙΟΙΝ: ἐπεὶ ἄν μέλλ]ησι: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ἐπεὶ ἄμ' μελλ]ηνίον: Frel. ΘΑΝΙΕΣΘΑΙ: θανιῆσθαι: Frel. 2. ]ΕΜΝΗΜΕΟΣ: ]εμνήμεος: Frel. 4. ]ΔΕΞΙΑ: εὐρήσεις δ' Ἄϊδαο δόμων ἐπὶ] δεξιά: Riedweg. ἐστ' ἐπὶ] δεξιά: Frel. 5. ]ΚΥΑΙ: ]κύαι: Frel. 7. ΕΠΕΛΑΣΘΑΙ: ἐπέλασθαι: Frel. 8. ]ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ: τῆς] Μνημοσύνης: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; πρόσθεν δὲ εὐρήσεις τῆς] Μνημοσύνης: Frel, Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. 9. ]ΦΥΛΑΚΟΙΘΥΠΟΠΕΘΑΣΙΝ: ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον:] φυλακοὶ δ' ἐπύπε<ρ>θ<εν>᾿ασιν: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé. ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον:] φύλακες δ' ἐπύπε<ρ>θ<εν>᾿ασιν: Riedweg. ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον:] φυλακοὶ δ' ἐπύπε<ρ>θ<εν>᾿ασιν: Graf and Johnston. ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον] φυλακοὶ θ ὑποπέθασιν: Frel. 10. ]ΦΡΑΣΙ: οἱ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐνὶ] φρασί: Frel, Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008. τοὶ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐνὶ] φρασί: Riedweg, Bernabé 1999, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001, Graf and Johnston. 11. ]ΜΟΥΦΟΝΗΤΑ: ὅττι δὴ ἐξέρεις Ἄϊδος σκότο]ς. ὀρφ{ο}νήεντ<ρ>σ>: Riedweg, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. 12. ]ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ: εἰμὶ καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001. εἶπον· ἄς εἰμι καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ: Riedweg. εἶπον· ἄς εἰμι καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ: Graf and Johnston. Γῆς οἶος εἰμὶ καὶ] οὐρανοῦ: Frel. εἶπον· ἄς Βαρείας εἰμι καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ: Pugliese Carratelli. 13. ]ΥΜΑΙ: δίψαι δ' εἰμὶ αἴος καὶ ἀπόλλ]υμα: Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. δίψαι αἴος ἐγὼ κ' ἀπόλλ]υμα: Frel. 14. ]ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ: ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πρόρεον τῆς] Μνημοσύνης: Frel. 15. Ε[ : ἐ[μοὶ γένος οὐρανίον: Frel. 16. ΑΝ[ : ἄν [ἐλεῶσιν ὑποχθονίοι βασιλεῖς: Frel. δὴ [ἐρέουσιν ὑποχθονίω βασιλείαι: Riedweg, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. δὴ [ἐρέουσιν ὑπὸ χθονίω βασιλῆι: Pugliese Carratelli. δὴ [ἐρέουσι ὑποχθονίω βασιλῆι: Graf and Johnston. 17. Τ[ : τ[οι δώσουσι πιεῖν τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης: Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. τ[οὶ πιεῖν ὄδωρ προρέον: Frel. 18. Δ[ : δ[ῆ]: Riedweg, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. δ[ώσωσιν τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης: Frel. 21. ΣΕΝ[ : σεμ[ : Pugliese Carratelli.

col. 1 ] when you die  
 ] remembering hero  
 ] darkness enwrapping  
 4 ] spring on the right  
 and standing by it is a] white cypress  
 descending to it, the so]uls refresh themselves  
 do not approach] this spring  
 8 ] the lake of Mnemosyne  
 ] guardians  
 ] ask in a wise manner  
 ] murderously  
 12 I am a child of Earth and] starry Heaven  
 I am dying, ]but give me  
 cold water to drink from] the lake of Mnemosyne

col. 2 but m[y race is of heaven, this you know yourselves  
 16 and they[  
 and then t[hey  
 and then [

20 *symbola* [  
and  
-

#### *Date*

Beginning of 3rd century BC (Frel), 4th century BC (Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal), 5th – 4th century BC (Nenci in Bernabé 1999).

#### *Bibliography*

OF 475 Bernabé; Frel 1994; Riedweg 1998:396-97; Bernabé 1999:54-55; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:76-77 (I A 4); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:261-263, 2008:248-250 (L 2); Graf and Johnston 2007:16-17 (8).

### **1.5 Poseidonia**

Silver tablet, inscribed in a spiral from left to right. Found in a grave.

#### TEXT

τᾶς θεῶ τ<ᾰ>ς Παιδός ἔμι

I belong to the child goddess

#### *Date*

6. century BC since "theta is still crossed, and from evidence of other inscriptions." (Jeffery 1990:252).

#### *Bibliography*

OF 496m Bernabé; *IG* 14.665; Burkert 1972:113 n21; Jeffery 1990:252; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16m).

### **2.1 Rome**

British Museum 3154

65 x 24 mm. Rectangular.

Photograph: Guthrie 1993, plate 10; Zuntz 1971, plate 28a. Drawing: Marshall 1911:380; Harrison 1991:672; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:96.

#### TEXT

ΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ΕΚ ΚΑΘΑΡΩΝ ΚΑΘΑΡΑ  
ΧΘΟΝΙΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ ΕΥΚΛΕΕΣ ΕΥΒΟΥ  
ΛΕΥΤΕ ΔΙΟΣ ΤΕΚΟΣ ΑΓΓΛΑ ΑΕΧΩ ΔΕ ΜΝΗΜΟ  
4 ΣΥΝΗΣΤΟ ΔΕ ΔΩΡΟΝ ΑΟΙΔΙΜΟΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙΣΙΝ  
ΠΟΙΣΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΙΛΙΑΣ ΕΚΟΥΝ ΔΕ ΙΝ ΑΝΟΜΩΙ  
ΙΘΙ ΔΙΑΓΕΓΩΣΑ

"Ερχεται ἐκ καθαρῶν καθάρᾳ, χθονίων βασίλεια,  
Εὐκλεες Εὐβουλεύ τε, Διὸς τέκος ἄγλα: ἔχω δὲ  
Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον ἀοίδιμον ἀνθρώποισιν.



4 Καικιλία Σεκουνδεΐνα, νόμωι ἴθι διὰ γεγῶσα

2. ΑΓΛΑΑΕΧΩΔΕ: ἀγλά[ά] ἔχω δε: Olivieri. ἀλλὰ δέχε<σ>θε: West, Graf and Johnston. ἀλλὰ δέχεσθε: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ὄπλα δ' ἔχ' ὦδε: Murray. 3. ΤΩΔΕ: τὸ δε: Murray. 4. ΣΕΚΟΥΝΔΕΪΝΑ: Σ[ε]κουνδεΐνα: Olivieri, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Chicoteau. ΔΙΑ: (δ)ία: Marshall. θία: Murray.

Pure she come out of the pure, Queen of the Underworld  
Eukles and Eubouleus, fair child of Zeus: I have  
the gift of Mnemosyne, famous among men.

4 Caecilia Secundina, forward, by law, to become godlike

*Date*

c. 250 AD.

*Burial context*

Unknown.

*Grave contents*

Unknown.

*The dead*

Female.

*Bibliography*

OF 491 Bernabé; Comparetti 1903; Marshall 1911:380 (3154); Olivieri 1915:18-19; Harrison (Murray) 1991:672-73 (VIII); OF 32g Kern; Orpheus 1 B 19a DK; Zuntz 1971:333, plate 28a; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:117 (R); West 1975:231; Colli 1978:236 (4 [B 31]); Chicoteau 1997:82; Riedweg 1998:394, Porta 1999:330; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:273, 2008:262 (L 11); Graf and Johnston 2007:18-19 (9).

### 3.1 Eleutherna 1

National Museum, Athens – χρ. 633 (11040).

56/7 x 10 mm. Rectangular shape. Small letters, c. 1,5 mm. Four lines. Doric dialect with three lines in hexameter with expanded length (seven feet) in the third line. Local dialect: Ζ = σσ.

Drawing: Pugliese Carratelli 2001:78.

TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΙΑΥΟΣΕΓΩΚΑΙΑΠΟΜΥΜΑΙΑΛΛΑΠΙΕΜΟΙ  
ΚΡΑΝΑΣΑΙΕΙΡΩΝΕΠΙΔΕΞΙΑΤΗΚΥΦΑΡΙΖΟΣ  
ΤΙΣΔΕΖΙΠΩΔΕΖΙΓΑΣΥΙΟΣΗΜΙΚΑΙΩΡΑΝΩ  
4 ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

δίψαι αἴος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι. ἀλλὰ πιέ<ν> μοι  
κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιά, τῇ κυφάριζος.  
τίς δ' ἐξί; πῶ δ' ἐξί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ

4 ἄστερόεντος

1. ΠΙΕΜΟΙ: πίε μοι: Olivieri, Colli. πίε μου: Dieterich. 2. ΑΙΕΙΡΟΩ: αἰεὶ ῥέω, Gomperz (in Joubin). ΤΗΚΥΦΑΡΙΖΟΣ: τῆ{ς} κυφάριζος: Graf and Johnston. τῆς<ι> κυφάρισσος: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But allow me to  
drink of the ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress.  
Who are you? Where do you come from? I am a son of Earth and  
4 starry Heaven

*Date*

Based on the shape of the letters – roughly 2nd. century BC.

*Burial context*

Unknown

*Grave contents*

Unknown

*The dead*

Unknown

*Bibliography*

OF 478 Bernabé; Joubin 1893:122; Dieterich 1969 [1893]:107; Olivieri 1915:14-15 (b<sup>1</sup> A<sup>1</sup>); Harrison (Murray) 1991:661 (II.C); Orpheus 1 B 17a DK; *IC*<sup>2</sup> 12.31a; Zuntz 1971:362 (B3); Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:114 (K1); Colli 1978:190-191 (4[A 70]a); Riedweg 1998:397-98, Porta 1999:327-8; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:265, 2008:253 (L 5a); Pugliese Carratelli 2001:78-9 (I B.1); Graf and Johnston 2007:20-21 (10).

### 3.1 Eleutherna 2

National Museum, Athens

62 x 13 mm.

Drawing: Pugliese Carratelli 2001:80.

TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΙΑΥΟΣΕΓΩΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΜΑΙΑΛΛΑΠΙΕΜΟΙ  
ΚΡΑΝΑΣΑΙΕΙΡΟΩΕΠΙΔΕΞΙΑΤΗΚΥΦΑΡΙΖΟΣ  
ΤΙΣΔΕΖΙΠΩΔΕΖΙΓΑΣΥΙΟΣΗΜΙΚΑΙΩΡΑΝΩ  
4 ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

δίψαι αὐός ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυ{μα}μαι· ἀλλὰ πίε<ν> μοι  
κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιά, τῆ κυφάριζος  
τίς δ' ἐξί; πῶ δ' ἐξί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ  
4 ἄστερόεντος

1. ΔΙΨΑΙ: ΔΙΨΙΑΙ: Myres. ΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΜΑΙ: ΑΠΟΜΥΜΑΜΑΙ: Myres. ΠΙΕΜΟΙ: πῖέ μοι: Olivieri, Colli. 2. ΔΕΧΙΑ: ΑΕΞΙΑ: Myres. 4. ΑΣΤΕΡΟΣΝΤΟΣ: ΑΣΤΕΡΟΝΤΟΣ: Myres. ἀστερό(ε)ντος: Colli.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But allow me to  
drink of the ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress.  
Who are you? Where do you come from? I am a son of Earth and  
4 starry Heaven

### *Bibliography*

OF 479 Bernabé; Myres 1893:629 (1); Olivieri 1915:14 (b<sup>1</sup> B<sup>1</sup>); Harrison 1991 (Murray):660 (II.B); OF 32b III Kern; Orpheus 1 B 17a DK; Zuntz 1971:362 (B4); Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:114-115 (K2); Colli 1978:190-193 (4[A 70]b); Riedweg 1998:397-98; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:266, 2008:254 (L 5b); Pugliese Carratelli 2001:80 (I B.2); Graf and Johnston 2007:20-21 (11).

### **3.1 Eleutherna 3**

National Museum, Athens

55 x 7,5 mm.

Drawing: Harrison 1991:660; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:81.

### TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΙΑΥΟΣΑΑ[.]ΣΣΕΓΩΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙΑΛΛΑΠΙΕΜΜΟΥ  
ΙΡΑΝΑΣΛΙΕΝΑΩΕΠΙΔΕ[.]ΙΑΤΗΚΥΦΑΡΙΣΖΟΣ  
ΤΙΣΔΕΖΙΠΩΔΕΖΙΓΑΣΥΙΟΣΗΜΚΑΙΩΡΑΝΩ  
4 ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤ[.]Σ

δίψαι αὔος {ΑΑ[.]ΣΣ} ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πῖέμ μου  
<κ>ράνας <α>ἰενάω ἐπὶ δε[ξ]ιά, τῇ κυφარი {σ}ζος.  
τίς δ' ἐξί; πῶ δ' ἐξί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡμ<ι> καὶ Ὀρανῶ  
4 ἀστερόεντ[ο]ς

1. ΑΑ[.]ΣΣ: {λα.ος}: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001, Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. {λαυος}: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008, Bernabé. [αλ.σσ]: Olivieri. ΑΑΟΣ: Myres. {αουος}: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli. ΠΙΕΜΜΟΥ: πῖέμ μοι: Graf and Johnston. πῖέ μμο(ι): Colli. 2. ΙΡΑΝΑΣ: κράνας: Myres, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ΛΙΕΝΑΩ: αἰενάω: Myres, Olivieri, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. ΤΗ: ΤΗΙ: Myres. ΚΥΦΑΡΙΣΖΟΣ: κυφάρισσος: Olivieri, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But allow me to  
drink from ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress.  
Who are you? Where are you from? I am a son of Earth and  
starry Heaven

### *Bibliography*

OF 480 Bernabé; Myres 1893:629 (2); Olivieri 1915:14 (b<sup>1</sup> C<sup>1</sup>); Harrison 1991 (Murray):660 (II.A); OF 32b II Kern; Orpheus 1 B 17a DK; Zuntz 1971:362 (B5); Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115 (K3); Colli 1978:192-93 (4[A 70]c); Riedweg

1998:397-98; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:266, 2008:254 (L 5c);  
Pugliese Carratelli 2001:81 (I B 3); Graf and Johnston 2007:22-23 (12).

### 3.1 Eleutherna 4

Archaeological Museum Athens

40 x 11 mm.

Drawing: Pugliese Carratelli 2001:121.

#### TEXT

ἸΤΩΝΙΚΑΙΦ  
ἸΠΟΝΕΙΧΑΙΡΕΝ

Πλούῖτωνι καὶ Φ—  
ερσοῖπόνει χάρειν

1. ἸΤΩΝΙΚΑΙΦ: Γ ΩΝΙΚΑΦ: Myres. 2. ἸΠΟΝΕΙΧΑΙΡΕΝ: ἸΟΠΟΝΕΙΧΑΙΡΕΝ: Myres, Olivieri,  
Riedweg Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston.

To Pluton and  
Persephone, greetings

#### *Date*

Second or first century BC.

#### *Bibliography*

OF 495 Bernabé; Myres 1893:629 (3); Olivieri 1915:18; Guarducci 1939:170, XII.  
31; Zuntz 1971:384; Riedweg 1998:391; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal  
2001:278-279, 2008:267 (L 15); Pugliese Carratelli 2001:121-2 (II C 1); Graf and  
Johnston 2007:24-25 (15).

### 3.1 Eleutherna 5

Statathos collection. National Archaeological Museum of Athens.

48 x 12 mm. Rectangular shape, thickness as a leaf. Found inside a grave in  
Eleutherna, Crete.

#### TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΙΑΥΟΣΕΓΩΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙΑΛΑΤΤΙΕΜΕΜΟΙ  
ΚΡΑΝΑΙΙΠΡΩΠΔΕΞΙΑΤΗΚΥΦΑΡΙΖΟΣ  
ΤΙΣΔΕΔΕΖΤΩΔΕΖΙΓΑΣΥΙΟΣΗΜΙΚΑΡΑΝΩ  
4 ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

δίψαι αὔος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι ἀ<λ>λά πιέμ ἐμοὶ  
κράνα<ς α>ῖ<ε>ῖρ<ό>ω ἐπ<ῖ> δεξιά τῆ κυφάριζος  
τίς δ' {εδ} ἐξ<ῖ>; πῶ δ' ἐξί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι κα<ῖ> Ὠ>ρανῶ  
4 ἀστερόεντος

1. ΑΛΑ: ἄλλὰ: Graf and Johnston. ΠΙΕΜΕΜΟΙ: πίεγ {ε} μοι: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé. πίε μοι: Colli. 2. ΚΡΑΝΑΙ: κρᾶνας: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. κρᾶν<ας>: Colli. ΠΡ Ω: ἀί(ε)ιρ[ό]ω: Colli. 3. ΕΖ: ἔζι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli. 4. ΚΑΡΑΝΩ: κᾶρανῶ: Verdelis, Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But allow me to  
drink from the everflowing spring on the right, by the cypress.  
Who are you? Where are you from? I am a son of Earth and

4 Starry Heaven

### *Bibliography*

OF 482 Bernabé; Verdelis 1954:56-57; Zuntz 1971:362; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115 (K5); Colli 1978:192-193 (4[A 70]e); Riedweg 1998:397-98; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:84 (I B 5); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:266-267, 2008:255 (L 5e); Graf and Johnston 2007:22-23 (13).

### **3.1 Eleutherna 6**

Statathos collection. National Archaeological Museum of Athens.

48 x 11 mm. Rectangular shape. Found inside a grave in Eleutherna, Crete.

### TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΑΥΟΣΕΓΩΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΥΜΑΙΑΛ

ΛΑΠΕΜΜΟΚΡΑΝΑΣΑΙΕΝΑΩΕΠΙΔ

ΞΙΑΤΗΚΥΦΑΡΙΖΟΣΤΙΣΔΕΖΙΠΩ

4 ΔΖΙΓΑΣΣΥΙΟΣΙΜΙΚΑΙΩΡΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟ  
ΕΝΤΟΣΣ

δίψα<ι> {α} αῦος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπολ<λ>υμαι ἀλλὰ π<ι>έμ μο<ι>

κράνας αἰενάω ἐπὶ δε>ξιά τῆ κυφάριζος

τίς δ' ἔζι; πῶ δ' <ε>ζι; Γᾶς {ς} υἱός <ῆ>μι καὶ Ὀρανῶ

4 ἄστερόεντος {ς}

1. ΔΙΨΑΑ: Δίψα<ι> δ': Verdelis, Colli, Graf and Johnston. Δίψα δ': Foti and Pugliese Carratelli; ΑΠΟΛΥΜΑΙ: ἀπόλυμαι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli. ΠΕΜΜΟ: π<ι>ε μο<ι>: Colli. ΜΟ: μ<οι>: Verdelis. 3. ΙΜΙ: ἦμι: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But allow me to  
drink from the everflowing spring on the right, by the cypress.

Who are you? Where are you from? I am a son of Earth and

4 Starry Heaven

### *Bibliography*

OF 483 Bernabé; Verdelis 1954:58; Zuntz 1971:362; Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115 (K6); Colli 1978:192 (4 [A 70]f); Riedweg 1998:397-98; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:85 (I B 6); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:267, 2008:255 (L 5f); Graf and Johnston 2007:24-25 (14).

### 3.2 Mylopotamos

Archaeological Museum, Heraklion, Crete.

45 x 12 mm. Half-moon shaped (epistomion see D2) with bottom side slightly curved.

Drawing: Pugliese Carratelli 2001:82.

#### TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΔΗΜΑΥΟΣΚΑΙΑΠΟΛΟΜΑΙΑΛΛΑ  
ΠΙΕΝΜΟΙΚΡΑΝΑΣΑΙΓΙΔΔΩΕΠΙ  
ΔΕΞΙΑΤΕΚΥΠΑΡΙΖΟΣΤΙΣΔΕΖΙΠ  
4 ΩΔΕΖΙΓΑΣΗΜΙΠΥΜΤΗΡΚΑΙ  
ΩΡΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟΞΕΝΤΟΙ

δίψα<ι> δ' ἤμ' αὔος και ἀπόλ<λυ>μαι ἀλ<λ>ὰ πιέν μοι  
κράνας αἰ<ε>ι<ρό>ω ἐπὶ δεξιά τῆ κυπαρίζος.  
τίς δ' ἐξί; πῶ δ' ἐξί; Γᾶς ἤμι <θ>υ<γ>ά<τ>ηρ καὶ Ὀρανῶ  
4 ἄστερόεντος

1. ΔΙΨΑ: δίψα: Colli. ΑΠΟΛΟΜΑΙ: ἀπόλ<λυ>μαι: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ἀπόλυμαι: Graf and Johnston. ἀπόλομαι: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli. ΠΙΕΝΜΟΙ: πῖε (μ)μοι: Colli. 2. ΑΙΓΙΔΔΩ: αἰε<ρ>όω: Graf and Johnston. αἰεῖρόω: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli, Colli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008, Bernabé. ΤΕ: τ(ῆ): Colli. 4. ΠΥΜΤΗΡ: <θ>υ<γ>ά<τ>ηρ: Graf and Johnston. θυ<γ>ά<τ>ηρ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. (θ)υ<γ>(ά)τηρ: Colli. ΓΥΗΤΗΡ: Foti and Pugliese Carratelli. γ<ενε>τήρ (?): Pugliese Carratelli.

I am parched with thirst and I perish. But allow me to  
drink from the ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress.  
Who are you? Where are you from? I am a daughter of Earth and  
4 starry Heaven

#### *Date*

Third century BC.

#### *The Dead*

Female (?) (Graf 1993:255).

#### *Bibliography*

OF 481 Bernabé; Guarducci 1939:314-315 (XXX,4); Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:115 (K4); Colli 1978:192-193 (4[A 70]d); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:266, 2008:254 (L 5d); Pugliese Carratelli 2001:82-82 (I B 4); Graf and Johnston 2007:26-27 (16).

### 3.3 Sfakaki 1

Rethymno Museum M 896

75 x 12-18 mm. Eliptic shape. Unfolded. Found during rescue excavations dec. 1988 – june 1989. Found near the deceased's head.

Photograph: Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998:347. Drawing: Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998:347.

#### TEXT

ΠΛΟΥΤΩΝΙ  
ΦΕΡΣΕΦΩΝΗ

Πλούτωνι  
Φερσεφόνη<ι>

To Plouton  
to Persephone

*Date*

c. 25 BC – 40 AD, based on the grave goods.

*Burial context*

The grave was constructed of reused rectangular stone slabs. One of these had slid with the result that some earth had entered the tomb.

*Grave contents*

Two prochous were found, one of clay the other of bronze. Other goods included one clay ugentarium, one lekythion, two glass phialai, one bronze strigil, one obsidian flake, and one bronze coin (a rare diobolon minted in Alexandria c. 30-28 BC) placed on the deceased's chest.

*The dead*

Probably male, 25-35 years old. Inhumed. The head, leaning towards the north, was facing eastwards.

*Bibliography*

OF 494 Bernabé; Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:280 (L 16 l), 2008:266-267 (L 14); Graf and Johnston 2007:26-27 (17).

### 3.3 Sfakaki 2

Archaeological Museum of Rethymnon

Found during rescue excavations 1995-1996 in tile-grave I of the Roman cemetery at Sfakaki. Oblong, unfolded.

#### TEXT

Δίψαι {τοι} <α>ῦος παραπ<ό>λλυται· ἀλλὰ π{α}ιέν μοι  
κράνας ἀί<ει>ρ<ό>ου ἐπ' {α} ἄρι<σ>τερὰ τᾶς κυφα{σ}ρίσσω.  
τίς δ' εἶ ἢ πῶ δ' εἶ; Γᾶς ἡμ{ο}ὶ μάτηρ {πωτιαετ} <κ>αὶ <ο>ὔρανῶ  
<α>στε<ρόεν>τ<ο>{ι}ς

4 {δίψαι τοιατοιιυτοοπασρατανηο}

2. κυφα{σ}ρίσσω: κυφα{σ}ρίζω: Graf and Johnston. 3. <α>στε<ρόεν>τ<ο>{ι}ς:  
<ᾶ>στε<ρόεντος>: Bernabé; <α>στε<ρόεν>τ<ο>ς: Graf and Johnston. 4.  
τοιατοιιυτοοπασρατανηο: τοιΛΤΟΙΙΥΤΟΟΠΑΣΡΑΝΗΟ: Graf and Johnston.

He is parched with thirst and perish. But allow me to

drink from the ever-flowing spring on the left of the cypress  
Who are you and where are you from? I am of mother Earth and the starry sky  
4 thirst

*Date*

2. – 1. century BC.

*Grave context*

Disturbed grave.

*Bibliography*

OF 484a Bernabé; Graf and Johnston 2007:28-29 (18); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:256 (L 6a).

**4.1 Aigion 1**

Laurel or olive leaf shape.

TEXT

ΜΥΣΤΗΣ

μύστης

Initiate

*Date*

Hellenistic

*Burial context*

Cist grave 1.71 x 0.54 m.

*Grave contents*

Iron stlengida (στλεγγίδα), one gold danake, two gold rings, one gold ring with an egg-shaped amethyst, two gold earrings both shaped like Nike, fragments from a silver vase, and sherds from a large dark-blue silver plate.

*Bibliography*

OF 496e Bernabé; Papapostolou 1977:94; *SEG* 34.338; Dickie 1995:81; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16e); Graf and Johnston 2007:30-31 (20).

**4.1 Aigion 2**

Leaf shaped.

TEXT

ΔΕΞΙΛΑΟΣ ΜΥΣΤΑΣ



## Δεξίλαος μύστας

### *Date*

Hellenistic.

### *Burial context*

Cist grave 2.30 x 1 m.

### *Grave contents*

Skeleton from adult. Six clay vases, one iron stlengida (στλεγγίδα), two oblong copper objects, and two gold danakes.

### *Bibliography*

OF 496c Bernabé; Papakosta 1987:153, Dickie 1995:81; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16c); Graf and Johnston 2007:30-31 (21).

## **4.1 Aigion 3**

Almond shaped leaf.

### TEXT

ΦΙΛΩΝ ΜΥΣΤΑΣ

φίλων μύστας

### *Date*

Hellenistic

### *Burial context*

Cist grave.

### *Grave contents*

Three skulls and a lot of bones, 12 well-preserved uninscribed lance-shaped gold leaves, one gold danake, one gold ring on the deceased's finger, two δακρυδόχοι, and two silver bowls.

### *Bibliography*

OF 496d Bernabé; Papakosta 1987:153, Dickie 1995:82; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16d); Graf and Johnston 2007:30-31 (22).

## **4.2 Elis 1**

Shape undisclosed.

### TEXT

ΕΥΞΕΝΑ

Εύχένα

*Date*

4. – 3. century BC.

*Bibliography*

OF 496i Bernabé; Papathanasopoulos 1969:153; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16i); Graf and Johnston 2007:32-33 (23).

**4.2 Elis 2**

Myrtle leaf shape. Found under the deceased's cranium.

TEXT

ΦΙΛΗΜΗΝΑ

Φιλημήνα

*Date*

3rd century BC.

*Bibliography*

OF 496j Bernabé; Themelis 1994:148; *SEG* 46.456; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16j); Graf and Johnston 2007:32-33 (24 Elis 2).

**4.3 Daphniotissa**

Shaped like an olive leaf. Found in 1981.

TEXT

ΠΑΛΑΘΑ

Παλάθα

*Date*

Hellenistic, 4th – 3rd century BC.

*Burial context*

Rectangular cist grave near funerary monument.

*Grave contents*

Clay pots, bronze mirror, gold ring. Pine resin and bees' wax was found in one of the pots.

*Bibliography*

*SEG* 38.363; Lazaridis 1981:135; Lazaridis 1982:151; Catling 1984-85:25; French 1989-1990:29; French 1990-1991:31; Torjussen 2008b.

## 5.1 Pharsalos

Volos Museum

49 x 16 mm. Found in a grave in the summer of 1950, inside a bronze hydria also containing the remains of the deceased. 9 lines are cramped on the 16 mm high lamella, making the letters on the plate are extremely small, measuring just under 2 mm in height. Hexameter, epic dialect.

Photograph: Verdelis 1951:99. Drawing: Verdelis 1951:99; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:73.

### TEXT

ΕΥΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΑΪΔΑ ΟΔΟΜΟΙΣ ΕΝ ΔΕΞΙΑ ΚΡΗΝΗΝ ΠΑΡ ΔΑΥΤΗ  
ΛΕΥΚΗΝ ΕΣΤΗ ΚΥΙΑΝ ΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΣΟΝ ΤΑΥΤΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΡΗΝΗΣ  
ΜΗ ΔΕ ΣΧΕΔΟΘΕΝ ΠΕΛΑΣΗ ΣΘΑ ΠΡΟΣ ΣΩΔΕΥΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΝΗ  
4 ΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ ΑΠΟ ΛΙΜΝΗΣ ΨΥΧΡΟΝ ΥΔΩΡ ΠΡΟΦΥΛΑΚΕΣΙ  
ΔΕ ΠΥΠΕΡΘΕΝ ΕΑΣΙΝ ΟΙ ΔΕ ΣΕΙΡΗΣΟΝΤΑΙ ΟΤΙ ΧΡΕΟΣ  
ΕΙΣΑΦΙΚΑΝΕΙΣ ΤΟΙΣ ΔΕ ΣΥΕΥΜΑΛΑ ΠΑΣΑΝ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ  
ΚΑΤΑΛΕΞΑΙΙΙ ΕΙΠΕΙΝ ΓΗΣ ΠΑΙΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕ  
8 ΡΙΟΣ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΔΪΨΗ ΔΕΙΜΑΥΟΣ ΑΛΛΑ ΔΟΤΕ ΜΟΙ  
ΠΙΕΝ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΚΡΗΝΗΣ

εὐρήσεις Ἰΐδαο δόμοις ἐνδέξια κρήνην  
πάρ δ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἔστηκυΐαν κυπάρισσον·  
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδόθεν πελάσησθα.  
4 πρόσσω δ' εὐρήσεις τὸ Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης  
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προ<ρέον> φύλακες δ' ἐπύπερθεν ἔασιν·  
οἱ δὲ σ' εἰρήσονται ὅτι χρέος εἰσαφικάνεις.  
τοῖς δὲ σὺ εὖ μάλα πᾶσαν ἀληθείην<ν> καταλέξαι.  
8 εἰπεῖν· Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>·  
'Ἀστέριος ὄνομα· δίψη δ' εἰμ' αὔος· ἀλλὰ δότε μοι  
πιεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς κρήνης

5. ΠΡΟ: προ(ρρέον): Verdelis, Decourt. 6. ΟΙΔΕ: οἶδε: Verdelis, Decourt, Graf and Johnston. 7. ΤΟΙΣΔΕ: τοῖσδε: Verdelis, Decourt. ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ: ἀληθείην: Decourt, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston.

To the right in the House of Hades you will find a spring,  
And by it stands a white cypress:  
Do not approach this spring:  
4 Further on you shall find from the lake of Mnemosyne  
Cold water flowing forth: But there are guards defending it:  
And they will find out in what need you arrived:  
And you will recount the whole truth:  
8 Say: "I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven:  
A starry name: I am dried up with thirst: but give me  
To drink from the spring".

*Date*

c. 350-320 BC, based on the shape of letters and the bronze hydria.

### *Burial context*

Located in a small necropolis near Pharsalos. Pit-grave measuring 1.20 x 1.00 x 0.85 m. The grave contained a stone hydriatheke.

### *Grave contents*

A bronze hydria (or kalpis) containing the ashes and bones of the deceased and the gold plate. The vase, measuring 32 cm in diameter at the thickest (base 4 cm., neck 10 cm) and 49 cm in height, was probably made in Attica. It shows a scene from the myth of Oreithyia and Boreas, where Boreas is seizing the young daughter of king Erechtheus.

### *The dead*

Female. Cremated.

### *Bibliography*

OF 477 Bernabé; Verdelis 1951; Zuntz 1971:360-61 (B2); Foti and Pugliese Carratelli 1974:114 (Ph); Colli 1978:176-177 (4[A 64]); Decourt 1995:129; Riedweg 1998:395, Porta 1999:325-6; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:264-265, 2008:252-253 (L 4); Pugliese Carratelli 2001:73-75 (I A 3); Graf and Johnston 2007:34-35 (25).

## **5.2 Thessalia ("Malibu")**

J. Paul Getty Museum 75.AM.19

37 x 22 mm. Given anonymously to the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1975. Folded once, found in a bronze cinerary urn along with the ashes of the deceased. Rectangular. The text is composed in hexameters.

Photograph: Breslin 1977, cover, sleeve; Pugliese Carratelli 2001, plate 2; Graf and Johnston 2007:51.

### TEXT

ΔΙΨΑΙΑΥΟΣΕΓΩΚΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙ  
ΑΛΛΑΠΙΕΜΟΥΚΡΑΝΑΣΑΙΕΙΡΩΩ  
ΕΠΙΔΕΞΙΑΛΕΥΚΗΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΣΟΣ  
4 ΤΙΣΔΕΣΙΠΩΔΕΣΙΓΑΣΥΙΟΣΕΙΜΙ  
ΚΑΙΟΥΡΑΝΟΥΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ  
ΑΥΤΑΡΕΜΟΙΓΕΝΟΣΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΝ

Δίψαι αὔος ἐγὼ κ' ἀπόλλυμαι  
ἀλλὰ πῖε μου κράνας αἰειρόω  
ἐπὶ δεξιὰ λευκὴ κυπάρισσος  
4 τίς δ' εἶσί; πῶ δ' εἶσί; Γᾶς υἱός εἶμι  
καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος  
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον

1. ΚΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙ: κ<αῖ> ἀπόλλυμαι: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; κἀπόλλυμαι: Colli, Graf and Johnston. 2. ΠΙΕΜΟΥ: πῖεμ <μ>ου: Pugliese Carratelli, Graf and Johnston. πῖε μο(ι): Colli.

I am parched with thirst and I perish  
But drink of me, the everflowing spring  
Where on the right side is a shining cypress  
4 Who are you? Where are you from? I am a son of Earth  
and starry Heaven  
But my race is of Heaven alone

*Date*

Second half of the 4th century BC (based on the bronze vase in which the lamella was found and the shape of the letters).

*Burial context*

Unknown.

*Grave contents*

Unknown

*The dead*

Cremated.

*Bibliography*

OF 484 Bernabé; Breslin 1977; Merkelbach 1977; Colli 1978:196-197 (4[A 72]); Riedweg 1998:397-98; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:94-95 (I B 7); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:267, 2008:255-256 (L 6); Graf and Johnston 2007:40-41 (29).

### 5.3 Pelinna 1

40 x 31 mm. Shaped like an ivy leaf. Placed upon the breast of an adult female. Found in December 1985 during a salvage excavation led by Ath. Tzafalias.

Photograph: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:6. Drawing: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:7; Bremmer 1999:88; Merkelbach 1999:11; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:114.

#### TEXT

ΝΥΝΕΘΑΝΕΣ  
ΚΑΙΝΥΝΕΓ  
ΕΝΟΥΤΡΙΣΟΛΒ  
4 ΙΕΑΜΑΤΙΤΩΙΔΕ  
ΕΙΠΕΙΝΦΕΡΣΕΦΟΝ  
ΑΙΣΟΤΙΒΧΙΟΣΑΥΤΟΣ  
ΕΛΥΣΕΤΑΙΥΡΟΣ  
8 ΕΙΣΓΑΛΛΑΕΘΟΡΕΣΑΙ  
ΨΑΕΙΣΓΛΑΕΘΟΡΕΣ  
ΧΡΙΟΣΕΙΣΓΑΛΛΑΕΠΕΣ  
ΟΙΝΟΝΕΧΕΙΣΕΥ  
12 ΔΙΪΥΟΝΑΤΙΜΝ  
ΚΑΠΥΜΕΝ  
ΕΙΣΥΠ.

16 ΓΗΝΤΕ  
ΛΕΛΑΣΣΑ  
ΠΕΡΟΛ  
ΡΙΟΙΑΛ  
ΛΟΙ

νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἅματι τῶιδε  
εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε  
τα{ι}ῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες  
4 αἶψα εἰς γ<ά>λα ἔθορες  
<κ>ριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσ<ες>  
οἶνον ἔχεις εὐδ<α>ι<μ>ονα τιμ<ή>ν  
κάπ<ι>μένει σ' ὑπὸ γῆν τέλεα ἄσ<σ>απερ ὄλ<β>ιοι ἄλλοι

3. ΓΑΛΑ: γάλ<α>: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, Pugliese Carratelli. 4. ΑΙΨΑ: αἶγος: Merkelbach. αἶξ: Lloyd-Jones. ΓΛΑ: γάλ<α>: Pugliese Carratelli. 5. ΧΡΙΟΣ: κριὸς: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston. 6. ΕΥΔΙΙΥΟΝΑ: εὐδ<α>ίμονα: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston, εὐδ<α>ιμον: Pugliese Carratelli; εὐδαίμον: Merkelbach 1999. ΤΙΜΗ: τιμῆ<ν>: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; τιμ<ά>ν: Watkins; τιμάν: Merkelbach 1999. 7. ΚΑΠΥΜΕΝΕΙΣ: καὶ σὺ μὲν εἶς: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé. ΤΕΛΕΑΣΣΑΠΕΡ: τέλεα ἄσσαπερ: Watkins, Graf and Johnston. τελέσας ἄπερ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé.

Now you have died and now you have been born, thriceblessed, on this day  
Tell Persephone that Bakkhios himself has released you  
An ox you leaped into milk  
Quickly you leaped into milk  
A ram you cast yourself into milk  
You have wine as your honoured gift.  
And waiting beneath the earth the rewards the other blessed ones (have)

#### *Date*

Either the end of the 4th century BC, based on the shape of letters and the other objects found in the grave as suggested by Tsantsanoglou and Parassoglou 1987, or the 3rd century BC on the basis of the pottery and the coin of Antigonos Gonatas. According to Tsantsanoglou and Parassoglou 1987 the grave was probably reopened for the burial of a child during the first quarter of the third century. Parker 2006:20 argues against this by referring to Karapanou and Katakouta 2004.

#### *Burial context*

The grave, together with two other graves, was marked by an earth tumulus and surrounded by a peribolos. Close to the sarcophagus was found a terracotta statue depicting an actor. On top of the sarcophagus were found two clay bowls together with fragments of a third bowl and a clay feeder.

#### *Grave contents*

The marble sarcophagus in which the deceased was found had been placed upon a wooden stretcher. The inside of the sarcophagus was covered with white plaster and decorated with white and red bands. Some shattered remains of earthen vases were found, dates ranging from the last quarter of the fourth to the first quarter of the third century BC. Near the head were found a clay aryter and a clay bowl. Near the feet

were found another clay aryter with a lamp inside, a clay unguentarium, two bowls and a skyphos. A bronze lebes, containing the remains of a neonate, was found inside the sarcophagus. A gold danake, with a Gorgon face, had been placed upon the woman's lips. A bronze coin, from the reign of Antigonos Gonatas (c. 277/6-239 B.C.), was also found inside the sarcophagus. The deceased was found wearing a diadem-like wreath made of lead decorated with clay gilt berries, gilt bronze myrtle leaves and a gold ornament consisting of a pendant and three chains in the center. Near the skull were also found two gold hair spirals shaped like snakes.

*The dead*

Adult, female. Child, undisclosed.

*Bibliography*

OF 485 Bernabé; Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987; Jordan 1989; Luppe 1989; Merkelbach 1989; Lloyd-Jones 1990b; Segal 1990:411; Bottini 1992:130; Graf 1993; Watkins 1995:278; Riedweg 1998:392; Merkelbach 1999:11; Porta 1999:337; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:114-115 (II B 3); Graf and Johnston 2007:36-37 (26a).

**5.3 Pelinna 2**

35 x 30 mm. Shaped like an ivy leaf. Similar to P1, but missing lines 4 and 7.

Photograph: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:8. Drawing: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987:9; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:116.

TEXT

NYNEΘANE  
 KAINYNE  
 ΓENOYTPISOΛ  
 4 BIEAMATI  
 ΔEIIIIINΦEP  
 ΣEΦOOTIBAXIO  
 ΣAYTOΣEAYΣE  
 8 TAYPOCCEIΓAΛAE  
 ΘOPCKPIOCCECΓAΛ  
 EΠEΣEQINONE  
 XEICCEYΔAI  
 12 MON  
 TIM  
 MN

νῦν εθανε<ς> καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι [τῶι]δε  
 <ε>ἰ<πε>ῖν Φερσεφό<ναι σ'> ὅτι Βα<κ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε  
 ταῦρος εἰ<ς> γάλα ἔθορ<ε>ς  
 4 κριὸς εἰ<ς> γάλ<α> ἔπεσε<ς>  
 οἶνον ἔχεις εὐδα<ί>μον<α> τιμ<ή>ν

2. IIIIIN: <ε>ἰπεῖν: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé; <ε>ἰπεῖν: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, Graf and Johnston. 3. EI: εἰς: Graf and Johnston. EΘOPΣ: ἔθορες: Graf and Johnston. 4. ΓAΛ: γάλα: Pugliese Carratelli, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé,

Graf and Johnston. 5. ΕΥΔΑΙΜΟΝΤΙΜΜΝ: εὐδ<αί>μον<α> τιμήν: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal, Bernabé, Graf and Johnston; εὐδαίμον τιμμν: Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou. εὐδ<αί>μον τιμήν: Pugliese Carratelli.

Now you have died and now you have been born, thriceblessed, on this day  
Tell Persephone that Bakkhios himself has released you  
An ox you leaped into milk  
4 A ram you cast yourself into milk  
You have wine as your honoured gift

For information on date, the grave, grave contents, the dead and bibliography see 5.3 Pelinna 1 above.

#### *Bibliography*

OF 486 Bernabé; Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou 1987; Bottini 1992:130; Porta 1999:337-8; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:116-120 (II B 4); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:268, 2008:258 (L 7b); Graf and Johnston 2007:36-37 (26b).

#### **5.4 Pherai 1**

Volos Museum

Length: 58mm. Height: 16mm. Rectangular, originally rolled up in the shape of a cylinder. Found in the south cemetery in 1970. The last word, ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ, is written upside down.

#### TEXT

ΣΥΜΒΟΛΑ:ΑΝΡΙΚΕ  
ΠΑΙΔΟΘΥΡΣΟΝ·ΑΝΔΡΙΚΕΠΑ  
ΙΔΟΘΥΡΣΟΝ·ΒΡΙΜΩ·ΒΡΙΜΩ·ΕΙΣΙΘ  
4 ΙΕΡΟΝΛΕΙΜΩΝΑ·ΑΠΟΙΝΟΣ  
ΓΑΡΟΜΥΣΤΗΣ  
ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ

σύμβολα: Ἴ Αν<δ>ρικε|παιδόθυρσον· Ἴ Ανδρικεπα|ιδόθυρσον  
Βριμώ· Βριμώ· εἴσιθ<ι> | ἱερόν λειμῶνα· ἄποινος | γὰρ ὁ μύστης  
ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ

3. ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ: ΑΠΕΔΟΝ: Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal.

Symbol: Manchildthyrsos: Manchildthyrsos  
Brimo! Brimo! For the initiate, free from punishment, will enter the holy meadow

#### *Date*

350 – 300 BC.

#### *Bibliography*

OF 493 Bernabé; Chrysostomou 1994; *SEG* (1995) 45.646); Chrysostomou 1998:210-220; Bernabé 1999:56; Pugliese Carratelli 2001:123-4 (II C 2); Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:277-278, 2008:266 (L 13); Graf and Johnston 2007:38-39 (27).



## 5.4 Pherae 2

National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Length: 7cm. Width: 0.08 cm. Rectangular. Part of the right end is missing. Probably folded originally. Hexameter. Discovered in November 1904.

### TEXT

πέμπε με πρὸς μυστῶ<ν> θιάσους· ἔχω ὄργια [ ]  
Δήμητρος χθονίας +τέλη καὶ Μητρὸς ὀρεί[ας]

1. [ ]: [σεμνα]: Ferrari; [ιδουσα]: Bouraselis; [βαχχου]: Graf; [βάκχου]: Graf and Johnston. 2. +τέλη: τε <τέ>λη: Graf and Johnston.

Send me to the feast of the initiates: I have the rituals [  
Demeter Chthonia rites and of the Mountain Mother

### *Date*

Late 4th – early 3rd century BC, based on letter form.

### *Burial context*

Found in one of several graves excavated in a field near Magoula Mati hill or St. Mylia.

### *Grave content*

The gold plate was found inside a marble lidded osteotheke, 0.41 m in diameter and 0.18-0.20 m in depth, together with a few bones which suggests that the deceased was cremated.

### *The dead*

Probably cremated. Nothing more known.

### *Bibliography*

OF 493a Bernabé; Parker and Stamatopoulou 2006; Graf and Johnston 2007:38-39 (28); Ferrari 2007; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:266 (L 13a).

## 6.1 Pella 1

Pella Archaeological Museum

83 x 23.5 mm. Shaped like a laurel or myrtle leaf taken from a wreath. The letters have been punched carefully on the gold. Grave excavated by Maria Lilibaki-Akamati, autumn 1989.

### TEXT

ΦΕΡΣΕΦΟΝΗΙ  
ΠΟΣΕΙΔΙΠΠΟΣ ΜΥΣΤΗΣ  
ΕΥΣΕΒΗΣ

Φερσεφόνη  
Ποσειδίππος μύστης  
εὐσεβής

To Persephone  
Poseidippos pious initiate

*Date*

The end of the 4th century BC.

*Burial context*

Cist grave.

*Bibliography*

OF 496b Bernabé; Lilibaki-Akamati 1992:95; Dickie 1995:81; Rossi 1996:59;  
Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L 16b); Graf and  
Johnston 2007:42-43 (31).

**6.1 Pella 2**

Pella Archaeological Museum

82 x 28 mm. Shaped like a laurel or myrtle leaf taken from a wreath.

TEXT

ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΑ

Φιλόξενα

*Date*

The end of the 4th century BC.

*Burial context*

Cist grave. Excavated by Maria Lilimbaki-Amaki, autumn 1989. Grave is very similar  
to the one in which tablet 6.1 Pella 1 was found.

*Bibliography*

OF 496a Bernabé; Lilibaki-Akamati 1992:95; Dickie 1995:81; Rossi 1996:59;  
Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L16a); Graf and  
Johnston 2007:42-43 (32).

**6.1 Pella 3**

TEXT

ΗΓΗΣΙΣΚΑ

Ἡγησίσκα

*Date*

Second half of the 4th. century B.C.

*The dead*

A young girl.

*Bibliography*

OF 496f Bernabé; Lilibaki-Akamati 1995:127-128; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L16f); Graf and Johnston 2007:44-45 (34).

**6.1 Pella 4**

Gold disk.

TEXT

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΕΣ

Ἐπιγένης

*Date*

Hellenistic

*Bibliography*

SEG 49 (1999), no 703; Graf and Johnston 2007:42-43 (33); Ferrari 2007; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:270 (S 5).

**6.2 Methone**

Undisclosed shape.

TEXT

ΦΥΛΟΜΑΓΑ

Φυλομάγα

*Date*

4th century BC.

*Burial context*

Cist grave.

*Grave contents*

Two small gold plates near the deceased's head, three alabasters, one skyphos (σκύφος), two skyphidia, two murodocheia (μυροδοχεία), one copper vial, one gilded copper wreath, and one iron scissors (ψαλίδι). The gold tablet had probably been placed in the mouth of the deceased.

*Bibliography*

OF 496h Bernabé; Besios 1986:143. Dickie 1995:82; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L16h); Graf and Johnston 2007:44-45 (35).

### 6.3 Paionia

Rectangular

#### TEXT

ΒΟΤΤΑΚΟΣ

Βόττακος

#### *Date*

c. 4. – 3. century B.C.

#### *Burial context*

Tumulus β, ancient Gortynia (modern Toumba Paionias).

#### *Bibliography*

OF 496g Bernabé; Savvopoulou 1995; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L16g); Graf and Johnston 2007:44-45 (36).

### 6.4 Amphipolis

Rectangular shape.

#### TEXT

ΕΥΑΓΗΣΙΕΡΑΔΙΟΝΥ  
ΣΟΥΒΑΧΧΙΟΥΕΙΜΙ  
ΑΡΧΕΒΟΥ...Η  
ΑΝΤΙΔΩΡΟΥ

εὐαγῆς ἱερά Διονύσου Βαχχίου εἰμί  
'Αρχέβου ...ῆ 'Αντιδῶρου

1. ΒΑΧΧΙΟΥ: Βαχχίου: Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal. 2. ΑΡΧΕΒΟΥ...Η: 'Αρχεβού[λη]: Graf and Johnston. 'Αρχέβου [γυν?]: Bernabé. 'Αρχεβού[λη] ῆ: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal.

I am sacred and pure to Dionysos Bakkhios  
Archeboule ... (daughter) of Antidorus

#### *Date*

End of 4. – beginning of 3. century BC.

#### *Burial context*

Sarcophagus (T 45).

*Grave contents*

Gold ring, one silver coin with a man's head facing the left on one side and a lightning bolt on the other.

*Bibliography*

OF 496n Bernabé; Málaga 2001:118; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:268-269 (L16n); Graf and Johnston 2007:40-41 (30).

## 6.5 Vergina

Leaf-form.

TEXT

Φιλίστη Φερσεφόνη χαίρειν

Philiste greets Persephone

*Date*

Hellenistic

*Burial contexts*

Grave, 0.30 meters high

*Bibliography*

OF 496k Bernabé; Petsas 1961-62:259; Riedweg 1998:391; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:279-280, 2008:268-269 (L16k); Graf and Johnston 2007:46-47 (37).

## 6.6 Hagios Athanassios 1

TEXT

ΑΙΔΟΣΑΡ  
ΤΜΑΕΥΠ  
ΕΝΕΙΨ

Ἄιδος ΑΡ  
ΤΜΑ εὐ Π  
ΕΝΕΙΨ

2. ΕΥ: ΕΥ: Graf and Johnston. 3. Ψ: ψ<υχή>: Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal.

Hades ... happily ...

*Bibliography*

OF 496l Bernabé; Petsas 1967; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:268-269 (L16l); Graf and Johnston 2007:46-47 (38).

## 6.6 Hagios Athanassios 2

Rectangular.

Drawing: Petsas 1967:400 (fig. 21).

### TEXT

ΦΙΛΩΤΗΡΑ  
ΤΙΩΙΔΕΣΠΑ  
ΤΕΑΧΕΡΓ

Φιλωτήρα  
τῶι Δεσπατεα χερΓ

2. ΔΕΣΠΑΤΕΑΧΕΡΓ: Δεσπότει χέρε<ιν>: Bernabé, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal.

### *Bibliography*

OF 495a Bernabé; Petsas 1967:399-400; Riedweg 2002:480; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:267 (L15a).

## 7.1 Lesvos

### *Burial context*

Slab-lined cist grave.

### *Grave contents*

One gold diadem with Herakles' knot and stylized Aeolic capitals, parts of golden pendant with semi-precious stones, golden olive leaves, pendant with gold beads, silver coins, some statuettes of young men.

### *Bibliography*

Unpublished; Catling 1988-1989:93.

## 8.1 Manisa

The Manisa Museum, Turkey Inv. 5712.

2.5 x 3 cm.

Photograph: Malay 1994 (plate 75, fig. 197).

### TEXT

4 ]ς πάσαν ΠΕΡΙΟ[  
]α φύλακες ΚΟ[  
]ουσης θαν[ατ  
]ΣΑΚΑΩΟ.[  
]ΑΡΕΑΒΟ[  
]ΘΑΡΧΟΣ....ΥΕΟ[  
]ΝΕΣΡΕΙΩΩΘ[  
8 ]πὸ τὸν ἀν[  
]Ν τὸν εὐήθει [

12 ]ΕΤΑΣ πόλιν [  
 ] ΔΗ [  
 ]ΙΝΟΣ θ<ε>ίου[  
 ]Δ.ΕΠΑΝΣ[

1. ΠΕΡΙΟ[: περιω[πήν?: Malay. 4. ]ΣΑΚΑΩΟ[: ]ας κάω θο.[?: Malay. Σαβαωθ: Jordan. 5.  
 ]ΑΡΕΑΒΟ[: ]ΑΡΕΑΒΟΥΤΗΡ[: Rigsby. θυμ]αρέα?: Malay. 11. ΔΗ: δ' ή(μέρας) or δ' ή(μέρα):  
 Malay, Bernabé and Jiménez, Graf and Johnston.

4 ] all [  
 ] guards [  
 ] de[ath  
 ...  
 ...  
 ...  
 ...  
 8 ] straight [  
 ] city [  
 ...  
 12 ] divine [  
 ...

*Date*

Unknown

*Burial context*

Unknown

*Grave contents*

Unknown

*The dead*

Unknown

*Bibliography*

Malay 1994; Rigsby 1996; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001:278 (L14); Graf and Johnston 2007:48-49 (39).

## Concordance

The Riedweg column refers to two different articles, from 1998: "Initiation - Tod - Unterwelt. Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblättchen". In: F. Graf (ed.). *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*. Stuttgart & Leipzig, B. G. Teubner: 359-398, and from 2002: "Poésie orphique et rituel initiatique. Éléments d'un "Discours sacré" dans les lamelles d'or". *Rev. Hist. Rel.* 219(4): 459-481.

|             | Bern.<br>OF | Com<br>p. | Oliv.                         | Kern<br>OF | Zu<br>ntz | Colli    | Rie<br>d. | Pugl.<br>Carr. | B&J | Tor<br>t. | G&<br>J | Tzi<br>f |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------------|-----|-----------|---------|----------|
| 1.1 Hipp.   | 474         |           |                               |            |           | 4[A 62]  | B10       | I A 1          | 1   | 1         | 1       |          |
| 1.2 Petelia | 476         | p. 32     | b a <sup>1</sup>              | 32a        | B1        | 4[A 63]  | B1        | I A 2          | 3   | 2         | 2       |          |
| 1.3 Thur 1  | 487         | p. 6      | c A <sup>2</sup>              | 32f        | A4        | 4[A 67]  | A4        | II B 2         | 8   | 4         | 3       |          |
| 1.3 Thur 2  | 492         | p. 12     | d                             | 47         | C         | 4[A 68]  | C         | III 1          | 12  | 3         | 4       |          |
| 1.3 Thur 3  | 488         | p. 17     | a A                           | 32c        | A1        | 4[A 65]  | A1        | II B 1         | 9   | 5         | 5       |          |
| 1.3 Thur 4  | 489         | p. 21     | a B                           | 32d        | A2        | 4[A 66]a | A2        | II A 1         | 10a | 6         | 7       |          |
| 1.3 Thur 5  | 490         | p. 19     | a C                           | 32e        | A3        | 4[A 66]b | A3        | II A 2         | 10b | 7         | 6       |          |
| 1.4 Entell. | 475         |           |                               |            |           |          | B11       | I A 4          | 2   | 13        | 8       |          |
| 1.5 Posid.  | 496m        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16m |           |         |          |
| 2.1 Rome    | 491         | p. 42     | c B <sup>2</sup>              | 32g        | A5        | 4[B 31]  | A5        | I C 1          | 11  | 23        | 9       |          |
| 3.1 Eleu 1  | 478         | p. 38     | b <sup>1</sup> A <sup>1</sup> | 32b I      | B3        | 4[A 70]a | B3        | I B 1          | 5a  | 14        | 10      | 1        |
| 3.1 Eleu 2  | 479         | p. 38     | b <sup>1</sup> B <sup>1</sup> | 32b II     | B4        | 4[A 70]b | B4        | I B 2          | 5b  | 15        | 11      | 2        |
| 3.1 Eleu 3  | 480         | p. 38     | b <sup>1</sup> C <sup>1</sup> | 32b<br>III | B5        | 4[A 70]c | B5        | I B 3          | 5c  | 16        | 12      | 3        |
| 3.1 Eleu 4  | 495         | p. 41     | p. 18                         |            | B9        |          | p.<br>391 | II C 1         | 15  | 20        | 15      | 7        |
| 3.1 Eleu 5  | 482         |           |                               |            | B7        | 4[A 70]e | B7        | I B 5          | 5e  | 18        | 13      | 5        |
| 3.1 Eleu 6  | 483         |           |                               |            | B8        | 4[A 70]f | B8        | I B 6          | 5f  | 19        | 14      | 6        |
| 3.2 Mylo.   | 481         |           |                               |            | B6        | 4[A 70]d | B6        | I B 4          | 5d  | 17        | 16      | 4        |
| 3.3 Sfak.1  | 494         |           |                               |            |           |          | p.<br>480 |                | 14  | 22        | 17      | 8        |
| 3.3 Sfak.2  | 484a        |           |                               |            |           |          | p.<br>480 |                | 6a  | 21        | 18      | 9        |
| 4.1 Aig. 1  | 496e        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16e |           | 20      |          |
| 4.1 Aig. 2  | 496c        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16c |           | 21      |          |
| 4.1 Aig. 3  | 496d        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16d |           | 22      |          |
| 4.2 Elis 1  | 496i        |           |                               |            |           |          | p.<br>480 |                | 16i |           | 23      |          |
| 4.2 Elis 2  | 496j        |           |                               |            |           |          | p.<br>480 |                | 16j |           | 24      |          |
| 4.3 Daph.   |             |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                |     |           |         |          |
| 5.1 Phars.  | 477         |           |                               |            | B2        | 4[A 64]  | B2        | I A 3          | 4   | 8         | 25      |          |
| 5.2 "Mal."  | 484         |           |                               |            |           | 4[A 72]  | B9        | I B 7          | 6   | 9         | 29      |          |
| 5.3 Pel. 1  | 485         |           |                               |            |           |          | P1        | II B 3         | 7a  | 10        | 26a     |          |
| 5.3 Pel. 2  | 486         |           |                               |            |           |          | P2        | II B 4         | 7b  | 11        | 26b     |          |
| 5.4 Phr. 1  | 493         |           |                               |            |           |          | B12       | II C 2         | 13  | 12        | 27      |          |
| 5.4 Phr. 2  | 493a        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 13a |           | 28      |          |
| 6.1 Pella 1 | 496b        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16b |           | 31      |          |
| 6.1 Pella 2 | 496a        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16a |           | 32      |          |
| 6.1 Pella 3 | 496f        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16f |           | 34      |          |
| 6.1 Pella 4 |             |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | S 5 |           | 33      |          |
| 6.2 Meth.   | 496h        |           |                               |            |           |          |           |                | 16h |           | 35      | 15       |



|            |      |     |     |     |
|------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 6.3 Paion. | 496g |     | 16g | 36  |
| 6.4 Amph.  | 496n |     | 16n | 30  |
| 6.5 Verg.  | 496k |     | 16k | 37  |
| 6.6 Hag. 1 | 496l | p.  | 16l | 38  |
|            |      | 480 |     |     |
| 6.6 Hag. 2 | 495a |     | 15a |     |
| 7.1 Lesv.  |      |     | 17  | 19  |
| 8.1 Manis. |      |     |     | *39 |

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