RELIGIONS IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

Instructions for the Netherworld

The Orphic Gold Tablets

ALBERTO BERNABÉ
AND
ANA ISABEL JIMÉNEZ SAN CRISTÓBAL

BRILL

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The Orphic Gold Tablets

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QVAESITORI ACERRIMO, SODALI, AMICO
καὶ γὰρ ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὔχομαι εἶμεν

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The Spanish edition of this book was published in 2001. Many changes and additions have been made for the English translation. Firstly, it includes new gold tablets found or published after the release of the Spanish edition and new readings or interpretations about all texts. Secondly, the authors have rewritten some chapters, taking new research into account. The preparation of a collective work on Orpheus and the Orphic tradition, edited by Alberto Bernabé and Francesc Casadesús, has had an important influence in this undertaking.

The edition of the texts has been revised according Bernabé's edition of the gold tablets for *Poetae Epici Graeci*, Testimonia et Fragmenta Pars II, Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta fasc. 2, Monachii et Lipsiae, Saur 2005. Indexes have been added in order to facilitate the use of the book.

We are grateful to our colleagues Gábor Betegh, David Jordan, Richard Janko, Dirk Obbink, Robert Parker and Christoph Riedweg for having allowed us to use their suggestions and/or unpublished papers. We are particularly grateful to Yannis Tzifopoulos for having sent us his excellent monograph about Cretan Gold Tablets before its publication and for allowing us to publish the text of the new gold tablet from Sfakaki.

We would also like to thank Ephtychia Stavrianopoulou for providing us with many papers published in Greek reviews, which are difficult to find in Spain, and Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli for having sent us a copy of his first editon of the Orphic Gold Tablets, as magnificent as it is impossible to obtain.

Luc Brisson and Radcliffe Edmonds have discused with us many topics. Their valuable comments and skeptical attitude towards the Orphic interpretation of the Gold Tablets have forced us to refine our arguments. Michael Chase has made a careful translation of the original and Sarah Burges Watson and Susana Torres have offered us many interesting suggestions. To all of them, many thanks.

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Madrid June MMVII

INTRODUCTION

0.1. *The gold tablets*

The Orphic gold tablets, despite the brevity of the texts they contain and the difficulties which their analysis presents, are fundamental documents for our understanding of Greek religion, since they give us direct access to the most ancient stages of Orphic religion and literature, and present a very significant panorama of the rituals and beliefs of this religious group, which exerted a powerful influence on other Greek authors and thinkers: some Pre-Socratic philosophers, lyric poets like Pindar, Plato, and then the Neoplatonists. The considerable list of titles presented in our bibliography, which collects the studies that have been dedicated to them by a growing number of the best specialists in philology, philosophy, or the religions and history of Greece is, we believe, a good indication of their importance.

The study of these texts is in a state of genuine flux, since new documents continue to appear, which oblige us to continually alter our assumptions about particular cases. There are even some tablets that have not yet even been published. However, this prolonged effort on the part of many eminent philologists has enabled us to make considerable advances in analysis, and to reach some reasonably certain conclusions. This is why it has seemed to us opportune to offer here a complete edition of the texts so far known, together with a translation and commentaries in which the principal findings of this investigation are synthesized.

The text presented is very similar to that published by Alberto Bernabé in the Bibliotheca Teubneriana.

We also present a series of iconographical notes, which include reproductions (with drawings by Sara Olmos) of a few artistic representations that are related to the universe of the tablets, selected and commented upon by Ricardo Olmos.

0.2. *External aspects of the tablets*

Let us begin with the least debatable aspects of these documents, the external ones: their formal characteristics, the places in which they came to light, and the form of the language in which they are written.[1]

The objects in question are a series of gold tablets of very small dimension (they vary between 8 and 4 cm. wide and 3 to 1 cm long). The use of gold no doubt corresponds to the search for a material intended to be noble and long-lasting, useful for avoiding malign influences and a symbol of the durability of the life that the deceased hoped for. By contrast lead, which was used in *defixiones*, symbolized the destruction and death that these were intended to bring about.

The writing that appears on them is minuscule in size and very careless in its *ductus*. The people who wrote, or rather scribbled these tablets were obviously not highly literate. Often, the letters appear to be traced so summarily that a ρ or a γ is reduced to a vertical line. Spelling mistakes are innumerable. In addition, the gold surface, thin and shiny, has tended to curl up and form wrinkles, which are sometimes hard to distinguish from letters. All this makes their reading and interpretation extraordinarily difficult.

They are found in graves, but the limited number of graves that have yielded documents of this type, compared to the thousands that have been excavated, indicates that the users of the tablets were a minority group, with a certain unity of beliefs, probably initiates, or followers of a religious movement which, after several years of doubt, we must now, without hesitation, call "Orphic",[2] and convinced that a special destiny was reserved for them in the beyond.

They have come to light only in a few places, and differ widely in date, with almost six hundred years between the oldest, the one from Hipponion, c. 400 B.C., and the most recent, which appeared at Rome and is datable to 260 A.D. The majority of them, however, date from between the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.[3]

A group came to light in Magna Graecia. The oldest one, although it was among the latest to appear, is the Hipponion tablet, found in Vibo

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[1] On archaeological questions, which we shall not go into in detail, cf. Zuntz (1971) 287 ff., Guzzo (1991) 123 ff., and above all Bottini (1992).

[2] Despite the reticence of some researchers, who today are in the minority, cf., for instance, Edmonds (1999), (2004). See the discussion in § 10.

[3] For a very complete survey, cf. Cole (2003) 200 ff. pl. 8.1.

Valentia, Calabria, ancient Hipponion, city of Persephone, a colony of the Epizephrian Locrians. As we said, it is dated with complete certainty, for epigraphical and archeological reasons, to around 400 B.C. Later by half a century than the first is a tablet that appeared in Petelia, also in Calabria, to the north of Crotona. It was the first of the entire collection to be found. Very similar in its text is another copy, apparently found in Sicily, and in rather poor condition. Since this piece is in the possession of an unknown private collector, we know nothing of its archaeological context (although it seems it must have appeared in Petraro, near Entella). The first editor dated it to the 3rd century B.C., but in our opinion we must raise its date to the 4th century B.C. In the so-called *timpone* or tombs at Thurii, five tablets were found, including three that are very similar to one another, another somewhat different, and a fifth very large one, showing significant differences from all the others. All of them date from the mid-4th century B.C.

Also in Magna Graecia, in San Vito di Luzzi in Cosenza, some curious inscribed earrings or pendants were found, which we must place chronologically between the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Despite not being gold tablets, it seems they had similar eschatological functions.

The second region to offer finds of this kind has been Thessaly. We have a tablet from Pharsalus, from the 4th century B.C., and two found in Pelinna, now Paleoyardiki, one of the most recently published finds. In all probability, another one, now in the Paul Getty Museum of Malibu, California, also comes from Thessaly. Yet another two have been found in Pherai.

In addition, eight tablets have come to light in Crete, all in the same places, at Eleutherna in Milopotamus and in Rethymno, but at varying intervals of time. They are highly uniform in content, and are datable to the 3rd century B.C.; there are also two brief greetings to the underworld gods.

In Macedonian Pella and Amphipolis, specimens with very brief texts have been found, dating from the 4th century B.C., to which we must add some very brief texts from Paeonia, also in Macedonia, from Methone and Aegion in Achaia, which go back to Hellenistic times, two tablets, one of them almost illegible, found at Hagios Athanassios near Thessalonica (of indeterminate period).

The most recent tablet is one found at Rome, dating from around 260 of our era, which is extremely interesting as a proof of the persistence of this type of documents, more than seven hundred years after the first one we possess.

Finally, we know nothing, other than the news of its discovery,[4] about another tablet, found in Lesbos and preserved in the Museum of Mitilini.

It is odd that none have appeared in Attica. The reason may be that this region was dominated by Eleusis, and the Eleusinian mysteries did not make use of this kind of text,[5] or else that the Orphics were buried elsewhere than average citizens,[6] and their cemetery has not been either found or excavated.

In some cases, the tablets appear in open form, in others folded. In the former case, they were placed in the hand of the deceased; in the latter, they could be placed on the deceased's chest or in his mouth, like the obol for Charon. Some of the Cretan ones may have been used as *epistomia*, or coverings for the lips of the deceased.[7] The two tablets from Pelinna, which have the exceptional form of an ivy leaf (or a heart)[8] and contain nearly identical texts, were deposited on the dead woman's chest, one on each side. The one from Petelia appeared rolled up and stored in a cylinder held fast with a tiny gold chain; but this was not its original position, since the cylinder is much later, probably from the 2nd century A.D., which indicates that the tablet must have been re-used as an amulet in the Roman period (cf. App. II, n. 15). The tablet from Pharsalus was placed inside a sumptuous hydria (cf. App. II, n. 8).[9]

0.3. *The texts: a brief approximation of their contents*

The leaves contain brief texts in verse, mainly dactylic hexameters, although there are considerable metrical problems, which we cannot

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[4] News of the find appeared in the *AD* 43 B 2 1998 [1993], 459. Our attempts to obtain a photograph or transcription of this document, more than ten years after its discovery, have been completely unfruitful.

[5] This is the view of Burkert (1999) 64.

[6] As is made evident by a stele found in Cumae in which it is prohibited to bury anyone who has not achieved the Bacchic experience, which has been interpreted, with very solid arguments, by Turcan (1986) as Orphic.

[7] Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998).

[8] Cf. Paus. 2, 37, 2–3 on a "heart of copper-ore", referred to the mysteries of Lerna. We thank David Jordan for calling our attention to this passage.

[9] See the bibliography cited at App. II n. 8.

go into here. Suffice it to say that there are occasional heptameters and pentameters, with various instances of metrical license.[10]

It is, however, curious to observe that on more than one occasion prose sequences are introduced (or perhaps other rhythmic structures, not of course hexametric), which seem to correspond to mystical formulas, passwords, or other phrases of a ritual character. In general, these phrases are difficult to interpret, and in many cases they have given rise to long scholarly discussions. A fundamental cause of this variety of interpretation is, in our opinion, that the expressions in question are suggestive and ambivalent; when they give rise to diverse interpretations we must ask ourselves not whether they mean A *or* B, but whether they might not mean *both* A *and* B.

With regard to the dialect in which they are written, it is a kind of mixture. For the most part, they are in the epic dialect, but with abundant Dorianisms. There are even occasional linguistic "monsters" produced by mixtures between different dialects.[11]

As far as the content of these documents is concerned, if we leave aside a few divergent specimens (the shortest ones—containing a proper name and/or the word *mystes*, or not even that—, and the long one from Thurii, which has very peculiar characteristics), they display considerable unity. In general, they contain references to the other world: either indications about its "geography", greetings to the infernal gods, wishes that the soul of the deceased may find happiness in the Beyond, or else suggestions for help in finding it. They often include elements of dialogue, and the people who used them quite clearly hoped to obtain a special position in the other world, not so much thanks to the tablets themselves (although a gold object always possessed a certain value as a talisman or as a marker of identity), but because through them they are reminded what to do or say.

The substantive question most debated with regard to the tablets is the religious movement that sustained them, the ensemble of beliefs shared by those who bore them, and above all the question of whether or not we can consider it certain that this religious movement was identical with that which we know as Orphism.

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[10] For instance, there is a heptameter en **L 1**, 2; a pentameter, in **L 10ab**, 7 (in which, moreover, we must measure ἕδρας with a short -α). On the metrics of the tablets, cf. Gallavotti (1978–1979), Tessier (1987), Giangrande (1993) 235 ff.

[11] On the linguistic aspects, cf. Iacobacci (1993) 249 ff., and above all Cassio (1994) and (1996).

Since we will return to this question in chapter 10, suffice it to say here that they were first described unequivocally as Orphic, until Wilamowitz adopted a position of extreme scepticism with regard to the existence of Orphism as a religious movement, in which he was followed by other authors. However, the subsequent appearance of various documents, such as other tablets, the bone tablets from Olbia, or the *Derveni Papyrus*, cast doubt on this hypercritical attitude. In the last few years, a number of highly regarded scholars have advanced more nuanced opinions on the subject.

Other problems have also arisen, such as the precise interpretation of the mystical formulas and the way in which such interpretation can illuminate the beliefs to which they make reference, what specific destiny the believers in this religion expected after death; whether or not the tablets go back to one and the same religious scheme and even, on the formal level, to the same original text of which they might be *excerpta*, or to a kind of archetype.

Furthermore, as we shall see, iconographical evidence can shed important light on certain aspects of what is narrated in these texts.

0.4. *Sketch of a typology of the tablets. Our grouping*

It is worth adding a few words on the arrangement we have adopted for the texts, and on the organization of the commentary. The tablets may be structured thematically in various groups, based on the fact that some of them present texts that are very similar and even identical to each other.

We will structure these groups following what we might call the soul's transition toward the other world, since most of the tablets refer to various stages of its journey.

In the first group (which consists of the tablets from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia, and Pharsalus), the subject is the soul's arrival in the subterranean world, and what it must do to confront the trials which face it there, including the question of the guardians that watch over the fountain of Memory. An ample set of tablets from Crete is grouped together thematically with these, although they feature a greatly reduced text, limited to the guardians' question and the answer that must be given. The tablet conserved in the J. Paul Getty Museum, probably of Thessalian origin, has a very similar content (all of these are included

in the first chapter). In the second chapter, we analyse the two nearly identical tablets from Pelinna, which present us with what we might call a "ritual of the dead": here, someone addresses the deceased, congratulating him because his death is a new birth. It is announced to him that he has the privilege of wine, and that he will share the happy destiny of the other initiates. In Chapter III, we will study a tablet from Thurii in which the soul is guided in its path to the other world by a series of good wishes. There is no question of giving instructions to the deceased, but an external perspective is adopted, as if the soul's passage to Hades were seen from this world, and it were taken for granted that the deceased has achieved his objective. In chapter IV, we collect the tablets in which the soul presents itself before the goddess Persephone and, in its request to be received by her, refers to a large number of questions related to Orphic ritual and to the beliefs of the adepts of this religion. In chapter V, the tablet from Rome is examined, which we may consider as a variant of the preceding group, although, because it is much later, it presents some atypical features. Even more atypical is the "great" tablet from Thurii, studied in chapter VI, which we have called somewhat humorously (although without falsifying its nature overmuch) a "word search" for deceiving non-initiates. It seems to contain a series of significant terms from the Orphic message, surrounded by meaningless letters. In chapter VII we encounter two brief texts, discovered in Pherai, one of them containing passwords for acceding to the meadow of the blessed, and the other including a prayer, probably addressed to Persephone by a *mystes*, who declares that he has been initiated in several mysteries. In chapter VIII, we examine other, shorter tablets: two Cretan ones, with greetings to Pluto and Persephone, and others, found in various locations, which contain the name of a *mystes* and/or the word μύστης, or some other indication of belonging to the god. We dedicate chapter IX to synthesizing what is said in the tablets on the souls' ultimate destiny, chapter X to the question of whether or not they are Orphic, chapter XI to non-Greek texts, earlier or later than the tablets, which feature typological coincidences with them, and chapter XII to problems of a literary nature that affect our documents. Two appendices are devoted to the edition of the texts and to significant iconographic references.

0.5. *Editions*

Editions of the ensemble of the tablets have continued to be carried out, but have grown obsolete with the appearance of new specimens. The first edition was by Diels in 1908, followed by another by Murray in the same year (both of them also offered later editions), followed by two very notable works, both Italian and with ample commentary, one by Comparetti in 1910 and another by Olivieri in 1915. After the editions of Wieten in 1915, and of Kern in 1922, many years passed until, in 1971, Zuntz carried out the first modern edition of these texts, with very ample commentary, deeply marked by the scepticism that characterized references to Orphism at the time. Very shortly afterwards, the Hipponion tablet appeared, which gave rise to new editions: that by Pugliese Carratelli in 1974, that by Colli in 1977 (1981[3]), and that by Gallavotti in 1978–1979. More complete, because it already included the tablets from Pelinna, and was accompanied by very interesting notes, is the edition by Pugliese Carratelli in 1993, after which came that by Riedweg in 1998, which also presented the tablets from Entella and Pherai. In 2001 Pugliese Carratelli made a new edition (2001a, there was a French translation in 2003), and the Spanish edition of the present work was also published. Bernabé's edition appeared in 2005, in the context of the complete text of the Orphic fragments. In 2006 a new edition was published by Tortorelli Ghidini and in 2007 another one by Graf-Johnston appeared.

CHAPTER ONE

ARRIVAL IN THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD
(The Tablets from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia and Pharsalus and the Reduced Versions, L 1–6)

Translation of Tablets L 1–6

Let us begin with the tablets from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia and Pharsalus, which constitute a very coherent group with a fairly similar text. Here, a character addresses the deceased in the second person, to describe to him, in the future tense, the places he will encounter upon his arrival in the Beyond, and to exhort him to carry out or avoid specific actions, and to pronounce specific words before some guardians that will come to meet him. In Crete and Thessaly, we find a more reduced version. First of all, let us see the translation of the tablets.

L 1 Tablet from Hipponion (c. 400 B.C.), Museo Archeologico Statale di Vibo. First edition, Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 108 f.

This is the work of Mnemosyne. When he is on the point of dying
toward the well-built abode of Hades, on the right there is a fountain
and near it, erect, a white cypress tree.
There the souls, when they go down, refresh themselves.
Don't come anywhere near this fountain! 5
But further on you will find, from the lake of Mnemosyne,
water freshly flowing. On its banks there are guardians.
They will ask you, with sagacious discernment,
why you are investigating the darkness of gloomy Hades.
Say: "I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven; 10
I am dry with thirst and dying. Give me, then, right away,
fresh water to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne".
And to be sure, they will consult with the subterranean queen,
and they will give you water to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne,

So that, once you have drunk, you too will go along the
sacred way 15
by which the other *mystai* and bacchoi advance, glorious.

L 2 Tablet from Entella (probably 4th cent. B.C.), in a private collection. First edition, Frel (1994) 183 f.

col. I when he is] on the point of dying
]hero let him recall
the murk cover [him[1]
on the] right a lake
and nearby to it, erect, a white] cypress. 5
There, when they go down, the so]uls of the dead refresh
themselves.
Don't] come anywhere near [this fountain!
] from the lake of Mnemosyne
water flowing fresh.] And on its banks there are guardians.
They will ask you,] with sagacious discernment, 10
why you are investigating the darkness of] gloomy [Hades.
"I am the son of Earth] and starry Heaven
and I am dy]ing, so give me
cool water to drink] from the lake of Mnemosyne
col. II but my ra[ce is heavenly, know this you too". 15
And to be sure, they [will consult with the subterranean queen,
and they will [give you to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne.
And then [
Passwords [
and [[2]

L 3 Tablet from Petelia (mid-forth cent. B.C.), British Museum of London. First edition, Franz (1836) 149 f. Cf. App. II n. 15.

You will find, to the left of the mansion of Hades, a fountain,
And next to it, a white cypress erect.
You must not approach this fountain, not even a little!

---

[1] Probably we must read "[let him] recall and get this grav[ed on gold,/lest] the murk cover [him] and lead [him] down in dread" according to **L 3**, 13 f.

[2] The name of Persephone and the adjective "venerable" may perhaps be reconstructed in the scanty remains of the two following lines.

But on the other side, from the lake of Mnemosyne, you will find
water flowing fresh. And very nearby there are some guardians. 5
Say: "I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven,
but my race is heavenly; know this you too.
I am dry with thirst and dying. Give me quickly then
water from that which flows fresh from the lake of Mnemosyne".
And they will give you water to drink from the sacred fountain 10
and afterwards you will reign with the other heroes.
This is the wo[rk of Mnemosy]ne. [When a hero is on the point
of] dying,
[let him] recall and get this grav[ed on gold,
lest] the murk cover [him] and lead [him] down in dread.[3]

L 4 Tablet from Pharsalus (c. 350–330 B.C.), National Museum of Athens. First edition, Verdelis (1950–1951) 99 ff. On the hydria in which it was found, cf. App. II n. 8.

You will find in the mansion of Hades, on the right, a fountain
and next to it, a white cypress erect.
Don't get anywhere near that fountain!
Further on you will find, from the lake of Mnemosyne,
water freshly flowing. On its banks there are guardians 5
who will ask you what necessity brings you to them.
And you will tell them absolutely all the truth;
say: "I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven.
My name is Asterius. I am dry with thirst; give me, then,
to drink from the fountain".

L 5 a–f Tablets from Eleutherna and Milopotamus, 3rd cent. B.C., National Museum of Athens.[4]

"From thirst I am[5] dry and am dying; give me, then, to drink
from the fountain of eternal flow,[6] on the right, where the
cypress is".

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[3] We accept the proposals of Janko (ined.).

[4] The details of the differences in readings and the editions of each one may be seen in the critical edition in Appendix I.

[5] **L 5c, d, e** and **f** omit "I am".

[6] In **L 5c** we read αἰενάω instead of ἀειρόω, but the meaning of both adjectives is the same.

"Who are you? Where do you come from?"
"I am the son of Earth[7] and starry Heaven".

L 6 Tablet, perhaps from Thessaly, 4th cent. B.C., Paul Getty Museum of Malibu, California. First edition, Breslin (1977).

"From thirst I am dry and am dying; give me, then, to drink
from the fountain of eternal flow. On the right, a white cypress".
"Who are you? Where do you come from?"
"I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven.
But my race is heavenly".

L 6a Tablet from Sfakaki, near Rethymno (Crete), 2nd cent. B.C. 1st edition by Tzifopoulos, in press.[8]

Dry from thirst, he is dying, "give me, then, to drink
from the fountain of eternal flow,[9] to the left of the cypress".
"Who are you? or From where do you come?" "I am the mother[10]
of Earth and of starry Heaven".

Commentaries

1.1. *A textual problem*

The tablet of Hipponion (**L 1**) begins with the declaration "this is the work of Mnemosyne" which was certainly also present in the one from Entella (**L 2**) at the lost beginning of line 1, and appears on the one from Petelia (**L 3**), at the end. The translation 'work' is based on

[7] In **L 5c** it seems we must read "daughter", although other suggestions have been made: Zuntz (1971) 362 read τυμτηρ (which lacks meaning) and Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 43 γενετήρ = γενέτης "son".
[8] We are deeply grateful to Prof. Tzifopoulos for allowing us access to his edition prior to its publication.
[9] Or "of the lizard", following the reading of Tzifopoulos, cf. § 1.11.
[10] Cf. § 1.11.

our acceptance of the reading ἔργον.[11] The reading in the first edition was ERION, which was interpreted as ἠρίον 'tomb'.[12] This proposal presents various difficulties:

a) ἠρίον means 'tumulus', and the tomb in which the tablet came to light is not a tumulus, which gave rise to intricate interpretations by Merkelbach and by Pugliese Carratelli himself;[13]
b) a phrase like "this sepulcher remains under the field of influence of Mnemosyne, when he (the bearer) is about to die" seems very unlikely;
c) this type of reference would be appropriate for an epitaph that could be read by passers-by as they came upon the tomb, not for a gold tablet of minimal size, folded and hidden in the mouth of the dead person and buried along with him, and which therefore no one could read; and
d) the reference to the tomb has no meaning, since it is supposed that the initiate, or rather his soul, leaves its sepulcher to head toward the infernal realm; the believer hoped for a better fate for his soul than the return to a corporeal prison, appropriate for non-believers.[14]

There have been other suggestions for correcting the text, such as θρῖον 'tablet', or, with the same meaning, σρῖον.[15] Such conjectures are not acceptable, for several reasons:

a) we must discard σρῖον, because in the Tarentine dialect, or in that from Heraclea, the unvoiced aspirate becomes a sibilant only before a vowel, never before a group consisting of voiced consonant and vowel;

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[11] Suggested by Burkert (in Pugliese Carratelli [1975] 227), Gil (1978) 84, Ebert (in Luppe [1978] 24), and confirmed as possible by the revision of Guarducci (1985) 386 f. This reading is perfectly acceptable from a metrical viewpoint, if we understand that τόδε conserves its final -ε before ἔργον in hiatus, because this word bore an initial digamma, and we then read ἐπεὶ ἄν as ἐπᾶν.

[12] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111.

[13] Merkelbach (1975) 8 f., Pugliese Carratelli (1975) 228 f.

[14] Cf. Bernabé (1991) 223 f. It is significant that we know very few epitaphs we can consider truly "Orphic". On the differences between tablets and epitaphs, cf. Bañuls Oller (1997).

[15] θρῖον suggested by West (1975) 230, σρῖον by Marcovich (1976) 221 f.

b) θρῖον means 'leaf, petal', and not a gold tablet; and
c) it would be fitting to accept that "this" refers to the tablet itself if we were to believe that it served only as a kind of magical object, apotropaic and intended to divert any malevolent influence from the subject or else as a kind of passport or password, valid by itself, by its mere presentation. Yet the text of the tablet does not point in the direction of this type of interpretation, since it is focused on giving the deceased precise instructions for his journey through the world of the dead, where he must and must not go, who will come to meet him, and what he must say to them. Everything in it indicates that what is important is not the tablet itself, as a specific object, but that which the tablet helps to remember.

Luppe suggested, with hesitation, ἔριον,[16] with the meaning "woolen thread". This would be a figurative use, the idea being that the text would metaphorically be a kind of "thread" to guide oneself through the other world, similar to the one Ariadne have to Theseus so that he could get out of the labyrinth. In our opinion, this suggestion is too metaphorical for a text that claims to be clear and unequivocal. Moreover, the Orphics were prohibited from being buried with wool.[17]

There are further alternative readings to report, such as ἱερόν[18] 'consecrated' and others.[19] We consider that, ἔργον gives a perfectly clear sense, similar to that of such examples as the first verse of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, in which the poet invokes the Muse, so that she may sing "the works of Aphrodite",[20] that is, what today we would call "what is under the responsibility of", "what forms part of the capac-

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[16] Luppe (1978) 24, also defended by Musti (1984) 79 f. The suggestion εἴριον 'spun, woven' by Gallavotti (1978–1979) 340 is similar.

[17] As observed by Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 23. Cf. Hdt. 2, 81 (*OF* 650, where the abundant bibliography on this passage is cited).

[18] The translation would then be "this is consecrated to Mnemosyne". This suggestion is by Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 23 f., and has been defended by Tortorelli Ghidini (1995b) 473 f. However, the translation "this is devoted to Mnemosyne" cannot be easily reconciled either with the metrics or with the vestiges of the word in the tablet of Petelia (**L 3**). Di Benedetto (2004) 304 f. reads ἱρόν.

[19] ἐπιόν 'that which comes later', by Ricciardelli Apicella (1987) 501 f. presents difficulties. In the first place, such a meaning is already expressed sufficiently by "this", and in addition, this reading does not fit with the meter either. The suggestion δῶρον 'gift' by Lloyd-Jones (1975) 225 met with justified criticisms from Pugliese Carratelli himself (1975) 228.

[20] *h. Ven.* 1 ἔργα Ἀφροδίτης.

ity of action of". We understand, then, that "this" (the text itself, the following *dictum*) is possible thanks to the capacities of Mnemosyne.

1.2. *Mnemosyne*

This leads us to ask why the text of the tablets is the work of Mnemosyne, who is none other than a personification of Memory. In the first place, it is clear that the text of the tablet ("this") is the work of the goddess because it is something that must be remembered. This is one of the reasons why it is in verse; to facilitate its memorization. The goddess takes care that the initiate recalls what he must do, and the instructions that have been revealed to him while alive (probably in the course of initiation), thus becoming the protectress of souls and the guide of his journey.

Mnemosyne presides over the poetic function, insofar as her daughters, the Muses, as responsible for poets' "recalling" the contents of their poetry.[21] The σοφία that Mnemosyne dispenses to her chosen ones is an "omniscience" of a divinatory kind.[22] However, just as the fact that the poet sings through the inspiration by the Muses does not exclude him from a difficult preparation and learning of the art of a seer, so a similar preparation is demanded of the initiate who invokes the divinity at the entrance to Hades.

Yet there is something more. The coincidences between Mnemosyne and Orphism are clear. In the domain of myth, Mnemosyne is related to Orpheus—concretely, she is his grandmother—since her daughter, the Muse Calliope, was Orpheus' mother. Like the mythic bard, she is a native of Pieria, and like him she is related to poetry and music, since she is the mother of the Muses.

It would not be outlandish to think[23] that for Mnemosyne, the daughter of Earth and Heaven, it is almost a sacred duty to help her

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[21] Gallavotti (1978–1979) 339 f. denies the identification of the Mnemosyne of the tablets with the divinity who is mother of the Muses. In his opinion, it is rather the noun "memory", that is, the soul's ability to remember a notion acquired during initiation. We cannot share his view, since it is clear that not only is the memory of initiation the means of salvation, but that the deceased trusts in Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, to help him not to forget his experiences as an initiate during his infernal pilgrimage.

[22] Vernant (1965 [= 1955]) 81 f.

[23] Cf. Marcovich (1990) 77, (1991) 142.

sister/brother, the fellow initiate, to achieve the happiness of the Elysian field. Yet in addition to this mythic relation, which we might consider superficial, there is a deeper one, of a religious character, which affects a system of beliefs. In an Orphic hymn, dedicated precisely to this goddess, the function we are supposing for Mnemosyne in the tablets is made explicit (*Orph. Hymn.* 77, 9–10):[24]

> Awaken in the initiates the memory of the pious ritual
> and send forgetfulness far from them.

What is hoped for from Mnemosyne is that she may make the initiates remember the ritual, probably that of initiation. At an elementary level, one has recourse to Mnemosyne in order to prevent an unexpected lapse of memory in a moment that is crucial for the initiate: that is, when he presents himself before the guardians and confronts their obligatory interrogation. It is possible, however, that the predominance of Mnemosyne in the tablets is related to the role that some philosophers attribute to memory as an instrument of salvation. The Pythagoreans laid great importance on exercising it, and created systems intended to improve it.[25] Pythagoras is said to have claimed to remember the persons in whom his soul had become incarnate in existences previous to his own, among them that of Euphorbus.[26] It is probably to Pythagoras' wisdom that Empedocles alludes (*fr.* 99 Wright = B 129 D.-K.) when he refers to a man's ability to

> Embrace with his gaze what there is in ten or even twenty generations of men.[27]

For Empedocles as for the Pythagoreans, remembering one's previous lives is a fundamental exercise for knowing who one is and getting to know one's soul. Anamnesis constitutes a purification of the soul.[28]

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[24] See Ricciardelli (2000a) *ad loc.*, Morand (2001) 223.

[25] As we are informed by Iambl. *Vit. Pyth.* 164 (58 D 1 D.-K.). See also Arist. *Phys.* 222b 17, Simpl. *in Aristot. Phys.* 754, 6 Diels (= Eudem. *fr.* 90 Wehrli), and Burkert (1972) 170.

[26] Iambl. *Vit. Pyth.* 63.

[27] Cf. Burkert (1972) 137f., Zuntz (1971) 208 f., Giangiulio (1994) 17.

[28] Thus, in the formulation of Procl. *in Tim.* I 124, 4: "to me, at any rate, it seems that the Pythagorean tale imitates a similar Egyptian story, which prepares souls to remember their previous lives as well". Cf. Delatte (1915) 69.

According to an interesting suggestion by Pugliese Carratelli,[29] the unnamed goddess who appears as Parmenides' interlocutor in the prooemium to his philosophical poem (*fr.* B 1 D.-K.) may be Mnemosyne. Even Plato speaks of how he prefers a soul with a good memory.[30] For him (*Republic* 621ab), to drink from Lethe means to lose the memory of eternal truths.

A further meaning may also be found for the reference to Mnemosyne. Given that the concept of truth in Greek (ἀλήθεια) means etymologically the "absence of forgetting",[31] to remember therefore also means "to know".[32] Memory breaks down the barrier between present and past, thus extending a bridge between the world of the living and the Beyond, to which all who have abandoned the light of the sun return.[33] Whereas Forgetfulness is the water of death, because no one can approach the realm of shadows without having lost memory and consciousness, Memory, by contrast, is the fount of immortality, since he who conserves the memory of things in Hades transcends the mortal condition.[34]

To remember in the other world also means to overcome the divisions of time that mark this brief mortal life. In its mnemonic faculty, the intellect recognizes its ability to overcome what is limited, sensible and mortal, in such a way that the soul becomes aware of its identity by means of memory, that is, by means of the knowledge of its own experience, its responsibility for its actions, and their consequences after death. With the memory of the entire series of his previous lives and the faults that he may have committed therein, man can pay the price of his injustices in full, and bring the cycle of his individual destiny to a close. The exercise of memory is thus transformed into a means of salvation and liberation with regard to the world of becoming and death.

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[29] Pugliese Carratelli (1988b) 336 ff. (= [1990b] 421 ff.), (1993) 25 f., (2003) 45 ff.; cf. Sassi (1988) 393.

[30] Plat. *Resp.* 486d; cf. Plot. 4, 3, 26.

[31] For a detailed analysis of this concept, see § 1. 6.

[32] Pugliese Carratelli (1990b) 379 f., cf. (1988) 164 f.

[33] Cf. Vernant (1965 [= 1955]) 81 f.

[34] On Memory in general and among the Orphics in particular, see also Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 117 f., (1983) 71 f. ([= 1990b, 379 f.]), (1993) 14 f., 25 f., Guarducci (1978) 263, Cole (1980) 238, Simondon (1982) 141 f. (although the tablet of Hipponion is, curiously, not mentioned), Díez de Velasco (1995) 136. Differences in the consideration of Memory and Forgetfulness between the tablets and epitaphs have been pointed out by Bañuls Oller (1997).

In Orphic eschatology, ancient themes and symbols are transformed. The image of Hades as a desolate region and world of forgetfulness is now applied to terrestrial life, conceived as a place of trials and punishments.[35] Contempt for temporal existence can be deduced from the central role that Mnemosyne occupies in eschatological myths, since she represents the power to leave time behind and return to the divine. To drink from the water of Mnemosyne is not only a remedy against eventual loss of memory on the initiate's part, but it also facilitates his achievement of the immortality proper to numina, in contrast to the traditional image of death as the annihilation of consciousness.[36]

Once personified, moreover, Mnemosyne is not simply the other face of Forgetfulness, but an active reality with a sacral dimension. Not everyone can reach her water, since even for initiates the ultimate decision is in the hands of the sovereign of the nether regions, Persephone. Mnemosyne is a religious power that guarantees the initiate's soul, after its death, the remembrance of its original condition, which means the possibility of not living once again, thereby removing itself from the dimension of time and becoming.[37]

We may possibly have a late iconographic testimony to these beliefs. It has been suggested that Mnemosyne is the divinity who appears next to a fountain in a wall painting from a Roman hypogeum found beneath the Viale Manzoni and dating from 250 A.D. (cf. App. II,

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[35] On the death that is life, cf. § 2.2. Turcan (1956) 140 f. points out the use of a term like κρυερός, which is normally applied to Hades (Hes. *Op.* 153) to designate the terrestrial world in the Orphic κατάβασις of the Bologna papyrus (*OF* 717, 1 f.): τοῦ δὲ ἀπὸ μ[ὲ]ν κρυερῶ[ν θα]λάμων ἕπτατο δακρυχέων "And from his frozen beds…he flew away, weeping".

[36] Musti (1984) 73 f. proposes that the Mnemosyne of the tablets is, in the first instance, "active individual memory", that is, a synonym for culture and conscience, but also "passive memory": the permanence within μνήμη of the survivors, since the initiate seems able to remember, after his death, the identity of other μύσται καὶ βάκχοι who are said to be glorious. This κλέος may perhaps be merely the echo of an epic, or perhaps an allusion to a community among which the memory and fame of the deceased remains, as might be suggested by the expression Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον on the Roman tablet (**L 11**), which refers to the survival (and future divinization) of a personage whose mundane name is recalled. The problem is the late date of this tablet, which does not allow us to consider it a reliable support, since we are not sure that one and the same scheme of beliefs could have been maintained for almost six hundred years.

[37] Giangiulio (1994) 16 f.

n. 13).[38] If this is true, then we would have traces of the survival of similar beliefs in the Roman world.

1.3. *Crossing over to the other world*

In this group of tablets (excluding the one from Pharsalus), we find a series of references to the moment when the deceased will cross over to the Beyond. In the tablet from Hipponion, the phrase "when he is on the point of dying"[39] serves as a *mise en scène* before introducing indications concerning infernal geography. Death is conceived as a passing, so that in the tablet from Hipponion the verb "to die" is construed as a verb of motion, "to die towards Hades".[40] The subject to be supplied is probably "the initiate"[41] or, rather, "a hero", according **L 2**, 2, **L 3**, 13.

In the tablet from Petelia, the sentence "when he is on the point of dying"[42] also seems readable at the end of the text, and we find similar expressions at the beginning of the tablets from Entella (**L 2**), where the words are in a very damaged part of the text, and Hipponion (**L 1**). If Janko's reconstruction is correct, there were further indications both in the Petelia and the Entella tablets:

> [let him] recall and get this grav[ed on gold[43]
> lest] the murk cover [him] and lead [him] down in dread.

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[38] In the wall there is a Latin inscription in which the word *refrig<eri>um* can be read. Cf. Chicoteau (1997) 81 f. and the bibliography cited in App. II, n. 13. For other representations of Mnemosyne, less relevant for their relation with the Orphic environment, see Ghiandoni (1992) 628 ff.

[39] μέλλησι (which can be restored with great likelihood in the tablet from Entella [**L 2**, 1] and probably in the lacuna of v. 12 in the one from Petelia [**L 3**]) must be interpreted as the third person, as is held by Zuntz (1976) 135, Gallavotti (1978–1979) 340, Guarducci (1985) 386 and Peters (1998) 586 n. 5 (cf. Chantraine [1958] 461) and not as the second person, as was claimed by Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 112, and, initially, Guarducci (1975) 21, (1978), 263.

[40] As has been very well explained by Luppe (1978) 24; cf. Bernabé (1991) 235. For this reason, the ingenious correction of Gil (1978) 84 μέλλησθα νέεσθαι is not necessary, nor is it necessary to read a form of the verb "to go" instead of the preposition εἰς, as suggested by Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 f., (1993), 20, 24 (εἶς), and Zuntz (1976) 135 (εἶσ').

[41] Janko (1984) 99, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 21.

[42] Reconstructed from the parallel passage from Hipponion (**L 1**, 1).

[43] Comparetti (1910) 36 f. reads "he wrote" and suggests that the subject is Orpheus.

"Hero" is a term that could in all likelihood refer to the deceased, or more precisely to the condition acquired by certain dead individuals who succeed in the trials they have to undergo in the other world. We find it in the tablet from Petelia (**L 3**, 11):

> you will reign with the other heroes.[44]

In a fragment from Pindar (*fr.* 133, 5 Maehl.),[45] often interpreted as an expression of Orphic ideas, we also hear of souls which, after the final reincarnation,

> Until the end of times are called "immaculate heroes" by men.[46]

Moreover, the expression "he who remembers" (μεμνημένος) must refer to the necessary precondition for becoming one of these "heroes", or these beings with a special destiny in the other world, namely, that of remembering one's initiation in order to know what to say and do. The expression seems to be equivalent to the one we encounter in tablet **L 8**, 2: "keeping everything very well present".[47]

Everything seems to indicate that the condition of being a ἥρως is acquired precisely by having the ability to remember one's initiation, and probably previous lives and transitions as well, which enables the soul not to make the mistake of drinking from the fountain to which all the other souls flock. The gold tablet helps the hero to remember.

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[44] "Hero" also appears, apparently with the same meaning, in the great tablet from Thurii (**L 12**), cf. Bernabé (2002c).

[45] Cf. Cannatà Fera (1990) 94 f. and n. 65 (see also the commentary, 218–231). Interpretations of this interesting passage also may be found in Rose (1936) 79–96, Linforth (1941) 345–355, Bluck (1961) 275–286, Bernabé (1999b).

[46] Cf. also a magical papyrus (*P. Mag.* IV 1226, [I 120 Preisendanz-Henrichs]), in which we hear of the "beings of the lower world and pure heroes", or a passage from Diogenes Laertius (8, 32 = Pythagorici 58 B 1 D.-K.) "they believe that the entire air is filled with souls, and that they are considered demons and heroes, and that it is through them that dreams and the symptoms of illnesses come to men…", etc. From a much more ancient period, we find a fragment of Asius (14, 4 West; 1, 4 Adrados), in which a personage is spoken of "as a hero ("a phantom", in Adrados' translation), come forth from the mud", which seems to be a way of saying "a man who appears to have come from the other world". On mud in the beyond, cf. Plat. *Phd.* 69c: "he who arrives in Hades without having been initiated and without having celebrated the rites, will lie in the mud", Aristoph. *Ran.* 145 (in a description of Hades), "and then a lot of mud"; cf. 273 "shit and mud", Plut. *fr.* 178 Sandbach "in the midst of a great deal of mud and the thick atmosphere"; cf. also Plot. 1, 6, 6, Ael. Arist. 22, 10, as well as Graf (1974), 103 f., Kingsley (1995), 118 f., Casadesús (1995) 60 f., Watkins (1995) 289 f., West (1997) 162 and n. 257.

[47] Cf. Bernabé (1999c) 57.

In epic language, the covering of murk alludes to the darkness of death.[48] Thus, a formulaic Homeric expression:[49]

> And the murk covered his eyes.[50]

refers precisely to the moment of a warrior's death. In another similar expression,[51] the covering of the eyes is explicitly related to death:

> And death covered him.[52]

In the gold tablets the Homeric words have a new meaning. The murk covers the eyes of the non-initiated, like the Homeric men. The text must be written, then, just "when he (the hero) is on the point of dying" (Hipponion **L 1**, 1, this reading is also supplied at verse 12 from Petelia **L 3**), so he will avoid the terrors of Hades and the confusion.

We see that the instructions in this group of tablets refer to the moment when the soul enters Hades, or to the passage of death, when it is most necessary for the soul of the deceased to bear in mind where it must go and what it must say. This is a crucial moment, in which it is faced by options, some of them undesirable and others desirable, although the text limits itself to indicating which are desirable and which are not, and does not, in general, clarify the reasons for the choice, just as it indicates what must be said, but not why. Knowledge of the reasons for these instructions is clearly presupposed in the initiates. It is natural that our ignorance of such presuppositions contributes to the difficulty of interpreting these texts.

The Orphic version of the location and the overall vision of Hades are not fundamentally very different from what we find in other authors. It is a subterranean place (souls "go down" to it **L 1**, 4 and probably in **L 2**, 6, and its queen is "the subterranean queen" **L 1**, 13; **L 2**, 16). It is consequently dark and shadowy (**L 1**, 9; **L 2**, 11).[53] In a tablet from

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[48] Guarducci (1985) 391 f.

[49] *Il.* 4, 461, 503, 526; 6, 11; 13, 575; 14, 519; 15, 578; 16, 316; 20, 393, 471; 23, 181; cf. *h. Ap.* 370.

[50] Cf. Hesych. *s. vv.* σκότος· ὄλεθρος, θάνατος and σκότος ὄσσε κάλυψε· θάνατος κατέσχεν.

[51] *Il.* 5, 68; cf. 12, 116; 16, 350; 2, 417; *Od.* 4, 180.

[52] This type of expression is frequent in Greek literature. To cite an example, Theog. 1, 707: "Once the black cloud of death wrapped him in its veil, and he arrived in the somber land of the dead".

[53] The texts refers to "the darkness of Hades" with an adjective whose reading is debated. In the tablet from Hipponion, we read OPOEENTOS. Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 100 f. read ὀλοέεντος 'destructive', Russo (1992) 181 f. rejected this reading

Thurii (**L 8**, 1) we are told that in order to reach it one abandons the light of day. Yet except for these circumstances, it seems similar to the world of the living: there are fountains, trees, and meadows in it. In the tablets from Petelia and Pharsalus we even read of the "mansion of Hades" (**L 3**, 1; **L 4**, 1), which in the tablet from Hipponion is presented as a well-built dwelling (**L 1**, 2).[54] We are reminded of the figurative representations in which the deceased is situated in the other world in a kind of aediculum with columns.[55]

The deceased is informed of the location of two fountains, one of which is unnamed and whose position is indicated by a white cypress, where the souls of the dead refresh themselves, but which he must avoid, and another one further on, called that "of Mnemosyne", from which he must drink. There are a few differences at this point between some of the texts. In the ones from Hipponion (**L 1**, 2), Entella (**L 2**, 4) and Pharsalus (**L 4**, 1) we hear of a fountain on the right which must be avoided,[56] but the one from which he must drink is not found on the left, but "further on". In **L 3**, 1 the fountain that must be avoided is situated "to the left of the mansion of Hades". It is not explicitly stated that the good fountain is on the right, but this is implicit in the expression "you will find, on the other side…" (**L 3**, 4). There are, then, two models: one in which we find a path on the right with two fountains,

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for phonetic and semantic reasons, and conjectured οὖρου{ε} (sic) ἐντός, 'inside the boundary'. Cassio (in Lazzarini and Cassio [1987] 333 f.) proposed ἠερόεντος 'nebulous', a conjecture that met with great success, see, for example, Calame (2006) 245 f. Ebert (cited by Luppe [1978] 25) preferred ὀρφνήεντος 'obscure, somber', a term which, although it is attested in very late authors like Quint. Smyr. 3, 657 or Man. 4, 53 f., seems to correspond well with what is read in the tablet from Entella (σκότο]ς ὀρφ{ο}νήεντο<ς> according to Riedweg [1998] 396, Frel [1994] 183 f. reads μου φονηεντά [sic], which is meaningless). This is why we accept ὀρφνήεντος in our edition, as was also done by Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) and (2003). Graf-Johnston (2007) 17 suggest: "ὀρφονήεντος spoken variation of ὀρφνήεντος?".

[54] However, a debate has arisen concerning εὐήρεας. Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 points out the possibility that the text may be corrupted from εὑρήσεις, and Zuntz (1976) 137 thinks of a confusion between ἠερόεις 'nebulous' and εὐρώεις 'mossy', applied to the infernal world at *Il.* 20, 65, etc. For his part, Gil (1978) 85 suggests hesitantly that one should read εὕρηις δ', a form of the verb "to find", whereas Galavotti (1978–1979) 341 f. defends the transmitted text, translating it by *bene ordinato*. More radical are the positions of Marcovich (1976) 222 f., who establishes a lacuna after εὐήρεας and reconstructs two half-verses: <ὡς ἀφικάνεις,/εὑρήσεις μελάνυδρον ἐκεῖθ'> {ἐστ'}, and of Lloyd-Jones (1990) 96 n. 43, who also believes two verses have been confused into one. See also Di Benedetto (2004) 303 ff.

[55] Cf. § 10.7.1 and App. II n. 2.

[56] We will discuss the fountain to be avoided and the one that the deceased must approach in § 1. 5.

one further ahead than the other, and another, from Petelia, with one path on the left and another on the right.[57] In the Cretan tablets (**L 5** a–f) we do not hear of two fountains, but it is specified that the water that must be drunk is on the right.[58] The cypress marks the location of the fountain that is to be used. Finally, in one of the tablets from Thurii (**L 8**, 2, 5) there are two references to the right-hand side: in the first place, when the soul leaves the light of the sun behind, it must head in this direction. Then, the initiate is congratulated for having chosen the correct path: the one on the right.[59]

Various attempts have been made to explain this divergence, which, in any case, is minor. It has been supposed, either that the writers of both texts had a different reference point for the indication of the correct side, and the writer from Petelia will have written "on the left" in reference to the side of the palace of Hades corresponding to the right-hand side of a person observing it from directly in front,[60] or else that the infernal references might be tinged with euphemism and antiphrasis, so that the texts from Hipponion and Pharsalus avoided saying "left" because of a linguistic taboo, and said "on the right" instead.[61] In any case, the initiate must always head towards the right.[62] In the remaining testimonies (Eleutherna, Thessaly and Thurii) there is no confusion, and what is "on the right" is what is good: the fountain from which one must drink, the correct path or the cypress that indicates the desirable fountain. We also encounter an echo of the same motif in Pythagorean beliefs, according to the testimony of Aristotle (*fr.* 200 Rose):

> The Pythagoreans called right, above, and in front "good", and they called left, below and behind "bad".

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[57] Zuntz (1971) 368.

[58] In **L 6**a, which is atypical in almost every respect, one reads "to the left of the cypress", for reasons we cannot explain. Cf. § 1.12.

[59] On the theme of right and left in Hades, cf. Verdelis (1950–1951) 101 f., Zuntz (1971) 369, Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 119, West (1975) 229 f., Musso (1977) 175, Gallavotti (1978–1979) 341, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 27, Giangrande (1995) 54 f.

[60] Verdelis (1950–1951) 101 f., cf. Giangrande (1995) 54 f.

[61] Musso (1977) 172 f. Gallavotti (1978–1979) 341 tends in the same direction: for him, the left, as a word of bad omen, will have been avoided euphemistically, taking into account the fact that in addition, "right" and "left" are ambivalent expressions according to one's viewpoint.

[62] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 120, (1993) 27, West (1975) 229.

In some infernal descriptions by Plato we find a development of the motif of the crossroads and the road towards the right.[63] At *Phaedo* 108a, Socrates tells us that

> The road to Hades has many ramifications and crossroads.

While at *Gorgias* 524a, he informs us of how the infernal judges

> …shall give their judgments in the meadow at the crossroads whence the two paths leave, one of which leads to the Islands of the Blessed, and the other to Tartarus.

Finally, at *Republic* 614c the road which the just take after the judgment goes to the right, and that of the unjust to the left. We find the same idea in Hegesippus *fr.* 5 G.-P. (*Anthologia Palatina* 7, 545) where we are told:

> By the road that goes from the pyre towards the right, they say
> that Hermes leads the good towards Rhadamanthys.[64]
> Here Aristonous too, son of Khairestratos, who was not lacking
> in tears, went down to the dwelling of Hades, leader of peoples.

We even encounter the same motif in Virgil's *Aeneid* (6, 540 ff.):

> This is the place where the road splits into two:
> the right, which leads to the walls of great Dis,
> is our path to Elysium: the left exacts punishment
> from the cursed, and sends them to impious Tartarus.

The theme may be of Egyptian origin.[65] However, we encounter an interesting difference between the last texts we have adduced and the tablets we have been analyzing. Plato, Hegesippus and Virgil point out that what determines whether the soul follows one or the other path is the moral conduct of the deceased (the good go to the right, the bad to the left), but this aspect is never specified in the tablets. We will have occasion to return to this point (§ 1.10).

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[63] Guthrie (1935) 177, Edmonds (2004) 1 ff.

[64] An infernal judge, cf. Posidipp. *fr.* 118, 24–25 Austin-Bastianini (= *fr.* 37, 21 f. Fernández-Galiano) "but I in my old age, may I make my way along the sacred path towards Rhadamanthys" (with commentary at § 8. 3), cf. Bastianini-Gallazzi-Austin (2001), Zanetto (2002), Dignas (2004).

[65] Cf. West (1975) 225 f., with bibliography.

1.4. *The cypress of the underworld*

In all the tablets of this group (including the brief ones from Crete), it is emphasized that the location of the fountain is indicated by a cypress.

The presence of the cypress is not surprising. In the first place, it had been since ancient times a funerary tree, connected with Hades.[66] We find it adorning cemeteries in the most diverse cultures and in all periods, perhaps because of its evergreen leaves, its highly resistant wood, and the fact that once cut down, it does not bloom again, as one might expect of the dead. It is, moreover, a symbol of mourning, and an emblem or attribute of the underworld divinities in Oriental cults, Greece, Etruria, and later Rome.[67]

What is new in the tablets is not so much the cypress, as the adjective by which it is qualified, λευκή, which means 'shining' or 'white'. Some authors have defended the translation 'shining',[68] but the choice between 'white' and 'shining' is in reality a problem of our translations, not of the Greek term, which includes both notions simultaneously.[69]

Since the cypresses common in Greece and the neighboring Mediterranean (*cupressus sempervivens [pyramidalis]*) are not white, but of a dark green tone, the interpretation of this adjective has given rise to a long discussion. One interpretative line, already old and today abandoned, is based on the hypothesis that white alludes to some real characteristic of the tree, so that either an attempt is made to identify the infernal tree with some other different species, like the white poplar,[70] which

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[66] Cf. the passages cited by Guarducci (1972) 324 n. 5. See also Murr (1890) 124 ff., Olck (1901) col. 1909 ff.

[67] Gruppe (1906) 789. 1 cites a series of passages from Latin authors underlining its value as a chthonic element, albeit at a time much later than that of the tablets: Hor. *Carm.* 2, 14, 23 f. "we must leave the earth and our home and pleasant wife, and none of these trees you cultivate, except for the abhorred cypresses, will follow you, ephemeral owner"; Petron. *Sat.* 120, 75 "but chaos and rough rocks of pumice stone are pleased to be crowned with the funereal cypress", cf. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 16, 139, *Myth. Vat.* III 6, 28.

[68] So Guarducci (1972) 323 f., (1974) 18 f. Cf. Zuntz (1971) 373, Marcovich (1976) 221, Garzya (in Bernabé [1991] 235).

[69] We must recall that Greek color terminology was rather sparse and imperfect, and was limited to pointing out the difference between the presence and absence of color and, above all, between abundance and poverty of light. Cf. Weise (1888) 593–605, Platnauer (1921) 153–162, Irvin (1974), Pajón (1993).

[70] Goettling (1851) 168, approved by Comparetti (1910) 34.

both Greeks and Romans considered as a tree of the afterlife, or else it is thought to be an allusion to the color of the bark.[71]

A second approach attempts instead to explain the designation by various symbolic associations.

a) The cypress is white by association with the peculiar clothing of the deceased. This interpretation would be supported by various ritual dispositions like a sacred law from Keos from the 5th century B.C., prescribing that the dead were to be wrapped in three white mantles,[72] another one of the Delphic phratry of Lebadeia from the end of the same century, ordaining that a dead brother is to be wrapped in a grey mantle,[73] or the custom of the Messenians, which must have been very ancient, of burying their dead in white clothing.[74] Finally, a law found in the sanctuary of the Despoina at Lykosoura and datable to the third century B.C.[75] prohibits the faithful from appearing in the sanctuary in black clothing, and orders them to offer white poppies and white victims to the goddess.

b) It is 'white' by association with the vestments of the initiates.[76]

c) It is white because it is phantasmatic, like an apparition in the other world.[77]

d) It is a designation *a contrario*,[78] as if the infernal world were a kind of "upside-down world".

In sum, the adjective evokes both the ideas of the whiteness proper to objects of the afterlife and mourning clothes, and of the shining which, in the midst of the darkness supposed to permeate the afterlife, must make it appear as kind of beacon, or a genuinely deceptive signpost of life (or false life) that attracts the souls of non-initiates to the light and, ultimately, to the fountain of Lethe and forgetfulness of all they have learned.

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[71] Gruppe (1912) col. 105 f.

[72] *IG* XII 5, 593 (Sokolowski [1969], n. 97 A) 11, 2 f.

[73] Sokolowski (1969) n. 77 C 6.

[74] Paus. 4, 13, 3.

[75] Sokolowski (1969) n. 68.

[76] In the words of Gigante (1975) 223: "as white as dress of the initiate". Cf. Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472, 16 Kannicht.

[77] Janko (1984) 99 translates "ghostly" (cf. Scalera McClintock [1991] 398 "spettrale"). The color white is also connected with the other world in the *Odyssey* 24, 11, when the suitors encounter a white rock (Λευκάδα πέτρην) in their path to the other world; cf. Tortorelli Ghidini (1995b) 482.

[78] κατ' ἐναντίον according to Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 120. Musso (1977) 173 f. develops the related idea of a euphemistic expression.

It is interesting, moreover, to note the findings of Zuntz who has analyzed the similarities and differences between this cypress and the mentions of a tree of life in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*[79] and in other texts (cf. App. II, n. 12). The deceased asks permission to take refreshment at a fountain near a tree, but the latter is always a sycamore, situated in a place to which one accedes after passing through many others, whereas the Greek cypress is found right at the entrance to the other world. Finally, the Egyptian dead man draws water from among the trees, or else it is offered to him by an arm that bursts forth from the tree, or a goddess located inside it—Nut, Nphthys or Hathor—; he does not have to choose between two fountains as in some of the Orphic tablets. Zuntz concludes that the motif of thirst is universal, and that it is therefore unnecessary to postulate an Egyptian model for the texts of the tablets. In his opinion,[80] the cypress is more than a mere local place marker or picturesque detail: it seems to possess magical or mystical qualities, emphasized by its description as "shining-white".[81] He considers that this "Tree of Life" is not necessarily identifiable in botanical terms.[82] It embodies the idea of immortality and the guarantee of abundance on earth and, simultaneously, it is a symbol of the water that grants life. Tree and water are sought by mortals like Gilgamesh, Adapa, Aeneas (the Golden Bough), and the deceased in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and those of the tablets, but they are guarded by gods, demons, or monsters, which proves the concept of infinite vitality they

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[79] Zuntz (1971) 371 f., with the approval of Burkert (1975) 91 f. and the criticisms of Guarducci (1974) 19 f. Cf. Merkelbach (1999).

[80] Zuntz (1971) 385 ff. See also Graf-Johnston (2007) 108f.

[81] *Od.* 6, 45 λευκὴ αἴγλη in reference to the shine on the mansions of the gods; *Il.* 14, 185 λευκὸν (v. l. λαμπρὸν) ἠέλιος ὥς; Soph. *Ai.* 708 "brilliant light", Eur. *Andr.* 1228 "brilliant ether", Aesch. *Pers.* 301 "brilliant day after the black night", "brilliant water" frequent in Homer and later. According to Zuntz, the Egyptians are not the only ones to offer an elixir of life, since these features are also found in the Ancient Near East, in such texts as *Genesis*, where the tree of good and evil appears, in Sumerian tablets, which speak of the tree of Kiskanu, or in the poem of Gilgamesh, who at the end of his long journey through the darkness contemplates the magic tree, black and shining with precious stones (end of tablet IX).

[82] Under the appearance of a cypress, we find it on an Elamite seal, and probably also on another Akkadian one. Cf. Van Buren (1945) 22 ff., for a discussion of sacred trees as objects of cult. In the tablets, however, there is no cult of trees. More interesting seems to us to be Van Buren's alternative (1945) 29 on the evolution of the meaning of trees, from sacred object to symbol of fecundity and fertility. If this were so, the cypress of the tablets might represent the return to terrestrial life in the tablets, where it indicates the pernicious fountain, or, on the contrary, the rebirth to eternal life in the Cretan series, where it indicates the favorable fountain.

contain within themselves. This symbolism extends from Zoroastrianism, where the tree of life is called "white Hôm", and the Greek garden of the Hesperides, to Celtic and German mythology; its ramifications reach Persian poetry, medieval literature, and folklore, and it is even reflected in some stories by the Grimm brothers.

A final clue to the symbolism of the cypress is provided by the reports of Iamblichus and Hermippus,[83] according to which in Orphico-Pythagorean ritual, attendants of funeral ceremonies dressed in white, and it was not legitimate to build coffins of cypress-wood. The explanation these authors offer for such prohibitions is either that Zeus' scepter was made of cypress-wood, or that it obeys a "mystic tale".[84] The religious cause could well be that proposed by Burkert,[85] who agrees with Zuntz that the white cypress represents the tree of life, but whereas it is possible to eat from this tree (*Genesis* 3, 22) the cypress gives no edible fruit whatsoever. The white cypress, adapted to the color of the white rock of hell, is a tree of corrupt life, a symbol of duration on earth and cyclic regeneration, for which reasons it was associated with resurrection to terrestrial life, which the initiate seeks to avoid, and therefore he must not touch the body of those who wished to remain in the other world and not return to life.

Finally, it is worth noting that although direct allusions to obscurity and darkness are scarce in the texts of the tablets, nevertheless particular emphasis is given to contrasts between light and shadow: opposite the dark obscurity of the ultraterrestrial world rises the white cypress. For similar reasons, the relatives of the dead woman from Hipponion deposited a small lamp in the tomb, and one initiate was buried in the *Timpone Grande* of Thurii wrapped in a white sheet.[86]

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[83] Iamb. *Vit. Pyth.* 155, Hermipp. *fr.* 23 Wehrli. Cf. Guarducci (1974) 21.

[84] The priests who make up the chorus of Euripides' *Cretans* (*fr.* 472, 4 ff. Kannicht) also allude to the fact that Zeus' sacred temple is made of cypress.

[85] Burkert (1975) 91 f. and n. 21.

[86] A testimony from Plutarch, although late, gives a good illustration of this antagonism: Plut. *fr.* 178 Sandbach (cf. § 3.3). Cf. the beginning of tablet **L 8** from Thurii: "but when the soul leaves the light of the sun behind", in § 3.

1.5. *The thirst of the dead and the two fountains*

The motif of the thirst felt by the dead in the Beyond is a universal belief that is still maintained in popular traditions.[87] Libations and the custom of depositing recipients with water on tombs were often intended to assuage the thirst of the dead. The deceased is given drink and food for his posthumous existence, as Lucian tells us (*On mourning* 9):

> Those who have led a mediocre existence, who are the majority, wander through the meadow without their bodies, transformed into shadows, imperceptible to the touch, like smoke. They feed on the libations we make to them here, and on the offerings we consecrate before the graves. Thus, unless some friend or relative on earth remembers him, this dead man would remain without eating and would live hungry among the other shadows.[88]

In the Myth of Er in the *Republic* (621 ab), Plato, who in many details seems to have taken Orphic sources as his models, speaks in his description of the underworld path that leads to the plain of Lethe, which goes

> through terrible and suffocating heat, since it is bare of trees and of all fruits of the earth.

Other testimonies to this belief could be cited, among them a significant number of Greek inscriptions[89] in which it is hoped for the deceased

> that Osiris may give you cold water.[90]

not to mention infernal torture like that of Tantalus, who suffers eternal thirst in the other world as a punishment.[91]

However, thirst can lead the deceased into an authentic trap, and he is therefore informed of the existence of two fountains:[92] one, which

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[87] This theme has been amply studied by Deonna (1939). See also Zuntz (1971) 370 f., Vermeule (1979) 57 ff., Díez de Velasco (1995) 135, Most (1997) 132 f.

[88] Cf. Johnston (1999) 42 f.

[89] *IG* XIV 1075, 1488, 1782.

[90] The mention of Osiris reveals an influence from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, where similar expressions appear, which are also highly interesting for the study of the Oriental antecedents of the Christian concept of the *refrigerium*, which denotes the soul's "refreshment" in Paradise. For the bibliography, Zuntz (1971) 370 and Merkelbach (1999).

[91] Cf. Lucian. *Luct.* 8, and § 1.6.

[92] In the tablets, the terms κρήνη 'fountain' and λίμνη 'lake' are used indifferently. There does not seem to be a substantial difference in meaning between both words (*pace*

remains unnamed in all the texts, and another, called "the fountain of Mnemosyne" (that is, of Memory), and he is warned most emphatically to keep away from the first of them, towards where the dead arrive.

Most scholars[93] agree that the unnamed fountain must be that of Lethe, that is, the fountain of Forgetfulness. Indeed, in the myth of Er, to which we have just referred, Plato tells us (*Republic* 621 ab) that the souls that return to earth go to the field of Forgetfulness (Λήθη) and drink water from the river of Lack of Worry (Ἀμελής), which leads them to forget everything.[94] The "water of forgetfulness" is also mentioned by an inscription of the 1st century B.C., in which a dead spouse consoles her widower (*IKnidos* 303, 11):

> I did not drink the last water of the forgetfulness of Hades,

which means that she still preserves her identity and still remembers her husband. Lucian, for his part, after describing the place where dead arrive, in which there are also a lake and a meadow, specifies in his *On mourning* 5:

> The drink that is memory's enemy; that is why it is called "of Forgetfulness".

We are given the following explanation in a scholium to the *Odyssey*:[95]

> The soul of Elpenor, since it had not yet arrived at the plain of Forgetfulness and had not yet drunk, recognizes Odysseus,

which presupposes that if he had drunk, he would have lost his memory and his capacity of discernment. The "plain of Forgetfulness" is also mentioned by Aristophanes in his parody of the underworld journey in the *Frogs* (186). Dionysius of Halicarnassus also mentions it (8, 52, 4):

> And if there exists a place that receives human souls, once they have become separated from the body, no mute and subterranean place, in

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Tortorelli Ghidini [2006] 117 ff., who distinguishes between a κρήνη of the water of Forgetfulness and the stable waters of the λίμνη of Mnemosyne, in which she notices a pun with λειμών).

[93] Cf., among others, Nilsson (1943) 1 ff., (1961²) 238 ff., Wagenvoort (1971) 130 ff. *Contra* Calame (2006) 241 f.

[94] The Classical period knew no fountain of Lethe, but the country or house of Lethe. Wagenvoort (1971) 130 f. believes that the plain of forgetfulness (τὸ Λήθης πεδίον) that constantly appears in the texts cannot be anything other than a plain traversed by the river Lethe.

[95] Schol. *Od.* 11, 51. On forgetfulness in the tablets, cf. Bañuls Oller (1997).

> which they say the wicked live, will receive mine, nor the so-called lake of Forgetfulness.

This interpretation is also supported by a text from Pausanias (9, 39, 7) on the cave of Trophonius.[96] When a person came to visit the oracle, which was located in an underground place, he had to satisfy certain prerequisites beforehand, one of which was the following:

> Then the priests take him…to the sources of the river, which are very close to one another. There he must drink from the water called Forgetfulness, in order to forget what he had thought until then. Then he must drink from another water, that of Mnemosyne, by which he remembers what he saw when he went down.

It is the clear that the "scenography" of the mystical sanctuary is configured as a kind of imitation or correlate "to scale" of the entrance to the underworld.

Propp,[97] however, suggested a different interpretation of the formula of the tablet from Petelia (**L 3**, the only one known in his time), when he compared it with the theme of "living and dead water" of Russian tales, for instance Afanasiev 102:

> She sprinkled Prince Ivan with the dead water, and his body was put back together; she sprinkled him with living water and Prince Ivan got to his feet.

Propp believes that the water being guarded is "dead water", which gives the person who has just died a definitive death and the right to live in Hades for ever; the other, which is drunk by the deceased who do not know what they must do when they get to Hades, is "water of life", which prevents them from entering Hades and leads them to a new life on earth.[98]

Tortorelli Ghidini[99] even suggests that the verb we have translated by "refresh themselves" (ψύχονται) means 'they receive life',[100] since

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[96] Cf. Bonnechere (2003) 169 ff.

[97] Propp (1974) 287 f. (and much earlier, Comparetti [1910] 35 n. 1), followed by Scalera McClintock (1991) 400 f. Cf. Lincoln (1982) 19 f. (= [1991] 49 f.), who thinks the theme is of Indo-European origin; Tortorelli Ghidini (1992) 178, Poccetti (1996) 234.

[98] Comparetti (1910) 34 f. understands that dead water flows forth from this fountain, as opposed to the fresh, and therefore living water of Mnemosyne.

[99] Tortorelli Ghidini (1992) 180 f.

[100] Cf. Et. M. *s. v.* ψύχω "has two meanings, 'to give life', whence also 'soul' (ψυχή) and 'to blow'". Tortorelli Ghidini even suggests that we should read ψυχοῦνται, since

the root ψυχ- would be related to ψυχή 'soul' as well as 'life', rather than to ψυχρός 'cold'.

It would not be at all strange if the text were playing on both meanings, etymological puns on words, both explicit or suggested, and double-meaning expressions are characteristic of this type of text.[101] It is clear that the verb has the meaning 'they refresh themselves'. The thirsty souls approach the unnamed fountain to drink because they are thirsty and hot. Cold water (ψυχρόν) is then mentioned, and we may recall the Latin inscription with the word *refrig<eri>um* in the Roman hypogeum from 250 A.D. beneath the Viale Manzoni, to which we referred,[102] as well as the Christian *refrigerium* (App. II n. 14). However, since it is water of forgetfulness, when they drink it they forget everything they have learned during the initiation or in the experience of previous incarnations, and they no longer know what to do in order to be accepted into Hades. This implies that they will have to confront once more the κύκλος γενέσεων that returns them to life in a body: they condemn themselves to returning to the world, and to living once more. In one way or another, in the prohibition of approaching the first fountain there is a reference to the fate of reincarnation.[103]

Even in this case, however, we can suppose, adopting Tortorelli Ghidini's suggestion, that the anonymous poet has taken advantage of the similarity between ψυχρός 'cold' and ψυχή 'soul' so that the word ψύχονται 'they refresh themselves' can simultaneously connote etymologically the idea of 'receiving life'. The allusion to reincarnation, which

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the -ο- in the Hipponion tablet can stand for either ο or ου. In the tablet from Entella, however, ο is distinct from ου, and this same verb clearly exhibits ο, not ου. Cf. Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 62, 121 where she reads ψύχονται.

[101] Cf., for the *Orphic hymns*, Morand (2001) 61ff. Compare the etymological play between ψυχή and ψύχω in Aesch., *Prom.* 693 ἀμφήκει κέντρωι ψύχειν ψυχὰν ἐμάν (cf. Lloyd-Jones [1975] 226). Zuntz (1976) 138 f. has rightly observed that the meaning is completely different in the two expressions, although both are characterized by the same etymological figure (cf. also Plat. *Crat.* 399 d–e, Arist. *de Anim.* 405b 27 f., Philol. in Timpanaro *Pitag.* 2, p. 186 f.). On puns with this verb, cf. Watkins (1995) 282, Bernabé (1999a). On ψύχω, cf. Jouanna (1987). Prontera (1978) 48 and 56 ff. offers an ample list of parallels, and points out that we are in the presence of a connotation of ψυχή as 'life', more than as 'soul', with a value that is particularly negative for initiates, who understand that this revivifying (*refrigerium*) of non-initiates is in fact an 'eternal dying'.

[102] Cf. *supra* § 1.2, n. 38 and App. II n. 13. Gallavotti (1978–1979) 342 maintains that ψύχεσθαι contains the notion of cooling and cold, not of relief or refrigeration: the souls grow cold, but are not refreshed. This hypothesis was refuted by Guarducci (1985) 393, who prefers the more usual sense of 'to refresh oneself'.

[103] Scalera McClintock (1991) 401.

scholars until now had assumed by means of external comparisons or interpretations of certain expressions from other tablets,[104] would thus receive textual confirmation. In this way, the souls, at the same time as they 'refresh themselves', also 'receive life' (false life, naturally, or mortal life).

What is clear, moreover, is that the classical image of Hades has been altered.[105] In the Homeric imagery, the souls entering Hades forget their previous existence, and remain there forever as mere ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα (*Od.* 10, 521, etc.), as specters without memory or knowledge. For the Orphics, by contrast, what the person who drinks the water of Forgetfulness forgets is initiation and previous experiences, and when he does so he erases his memory of the world and of the celestial realities, to which the soul is related. As a consequence, it must return to earth for a new incarnation. The water of Forgetfulness is now a symbol of the return to life, and to existence within time; this is the real exile of the soul, and the worse thing that can happen.

On the other hand, in order to remember their experiences as initiates in due time and place—which represents precisely remaining in Hades—they must drink from the fountain of Memory, and for this they must be authorized by Persephone. However, keeping memories alive is not the only function of this salutary fountain. It is an indispensable element in the process of purification and liberation from all forms of terrestrial life (human, animal, or vegetable).[106] In short, cold water presupposes the definitive death of the corporeal element, whose defining feature is heat.[107] Memory is also the source of immortality. Precisely because death is defined as the domain of Forgetfulness, he who, in Hades, conserves the memory of things, transcends the mortal condition, as we have already said.[108] To drink from the fountain of Mnemosyne is the indispensable prerequisite for the initiate's salvation,[109]

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[104] Concretely, on the Platonic Myth of Er (*Resp.* 614c, 621a) or on the verse from Thurii (**L 9**, 5) "I flew out of the painful cycle of deep sorrow", which alludes to the cycle of metempsychosis from which the initiate has succeeded in escaping.

[105] Vernant (1965 [= 1955]) 88 f.

[106] Pugliese Carratelli (1975) 230.

[107] Cf. also Gallavotti (1978–1979) 347.

[108] Vernant (1965 [= 1955]) 88 f. Cf. § 1. 2.

[109] In the words of Giangiulio (1994) 16. In the tablet from Petelia (**L 3**, 10) the fountain is called "sacred", which, according to Velasco López (1990–1991) 180, can be considered as an anticipation of the becoming of a hero refered to in the following verse: since it is a divine fountain, it is logical that whoever drinks from it should share in such a nature. However, it seems instead that its divine character explains why it

since the soul thus concludes its pilgrimage and achieves definitive death, enabling it to free itself from the cycle of reincarnations, and to participate in the privileged destiny enjoyed by the *beati*, among whom it henceforth belongs.

We find no mention of the fountain of Mnemosyne outside of the tablets, except for the text from Pausanias we have cited, which refers to the cave of Trophonius. It would therefore not be odd to suppose that the Orphics, in search of a different and better destiny for their adepts, should have imagined a Beyond with a fountain whose waters would bring about a definitive death, that is, the end of the cycle of reincarnations. Its diffusion will therefore not have been as great as that of the fountain of Forgetfulness. The new mythical elaboration might have been an adaptation of an old myth of the two fountains, to which it gave a new meaning,[110] or else may simply involved the creation of a new fountain of Mnemosyne, as a counterpoint to the fountain of Lethe.[111] In this new mythical elaboration, some influence may be attributed to the traditional motif of the ingestion of a pomegranate seed, which makes it impossible to return to the world of the living.[112]

It has also been suggested that an Egyptian myth found in the *Book of the Dead* was used as a model.[113] Some chapters begin with phrases like "To drink water in the divine region down below", "Oh sycamore of Nut, give me your water", or "Let me reach your water" (cf. App. II

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is prohibited to "just any" mortal. It is more of a precondition than an anticipation of the effect.

[110] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 118. For his part, Lincoln (1982) 19 f. (= [1991] 49 f.) believes that we have to do with an ancient Indo-European motif.

[111] The hypothesis of Nilsson (1943) 4 ff. must be corrected in so far as the author attributes the innovation to the Hellenistic period, but the discoveries of the new tablets, such for instance as the one from Hipponion, force us to advance it at least until the 4th century B.C.

[112] Cf. *h. Cer.* 393 f. Scalera McClintock (1984) 132 f. reminds us that in his journey to the Beyond in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus must keep the thirsty souls away from the blood until the seer Teiresias has instructed him (*Od.* 10, 536 ff.). Thanks to this physiological fluid, the indispensable precondition for human life, the seer can recover its memory and ratiocination and thus speak the truth (νημερτέα *Od.* 11, 96). Like Teiresias, the initiate is faithful to the truth, but before he drinks the water. In the tablets, blood, the immediate image of life, is substituted by water, which presupposes a more abstract and rationalized metaphor, suppressing all relations with earth. For Scalera McClintock, the initiate will receive true initiation after death, and only then will he drink the water of memory, which may represent the dissolution of the individual in the cosmos, the return to a kind of *anima mundi*, under the supposition that the Monad is named Mnemosyne.

[113] Cf. Merkelbach (1999).

n. 12). The possibility of an influence should not be ruled out, although this influence is not unequivocal, given that the motif of thirst and the search for water are universal and are found in many cultures, from Antiquity down to our times.[114] If there was such an influence, therefore, there has been a profound adaptation of the motif: the Egyptian dead solicit water because it is thought that they will be hungry and thirsty if they are not given the offerings due to them, and in the *Book of the Dead* there is no reference to the disappearance or the conservation of memory.

In the Hellenistic period, Leonidas seems to have the model of the gold tablets in mind in an epigram that could be an interesting variation of the topic of the two fountains in Hades (*A. P.* 16, 230).

> Drink not here, traveler, from this warm pool in the brook,
> full of mud stirred by the sheep at pasture;
> but go a very little way over the ridge where the heifers are grazing;
> for thereby yonder pastoral pine you will find (εὑρήσεις)
> bubbling through the fountained rock a spring
> colder (ψυχρότερον) than northern snow.

The importance of drinking the water of Mnemosyne for the initiate's salvation explains why the fountain is watched over by guardians, and this will be another test to which the deceased must submit, and from which they will have to figure out how to emerge successfully.

1.6. *The soul faced by the guardians*

In its journey, the soul encounters guardians (φύλακες). The idea that guardians watch over the entrance in a secret place that only certain souls can reach is recurrent in Antiquity, and survived into Christianity.[115] Other authors mention φύλακες associated with souls. For instance, Heraclitus[116] speaks of certain souls which

> Rise once again and become guardians watching over the living and the dead.

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[114] Cf. Deonna (1939) 53 ff. Nilsson (1943) 6 denies this explicitly, and Zuntz (1971) 370 f. considers it highly dubious.

[115] On the Christian testimonies, cf. Festugière (1972) 37, 62 n. 1.

[116] Heraclit. *fr.* 73 Marcovich (= B 63 D.-K.).

Plato also mentions guardian demons (φύλακες) of souls,[117] and in the Derveni papyrus we are told that "the demons, enemies of souls, turn out to be an obstacle"; according to Most,[118] they are to be placed in relation with the φύλακες.

There are also a few Egyptian texts[119] that mention a guardian of the gates who interrogates the deceased.

In the tablets, the guardians restrict themselves to asking whoever appears before them a question, which must be answered correctly. Naturally, the model here is that of the "password" uttered before sentinels, by whom the speaker is authorized to pass, provided that he knows information reserved for a concrete group. Here, the information proceeds, in all probability, from the initiation.

The guardians of whom we are speaking seem to be represented on an amphora discovered at Vulci, dating perhaps from the 4th–3rd centuries B.C. Unfortunately, the piece has been lost, and all that remains to us is a description from the 1920's:[120]

> In a flowery meadow, separated from the region of the condemned by trees with birds in their branches, there appear on a grassy hillock from which a spring flows forth two naked young men, crowned with ivy and carrying a thyrsus, behind each of the trees, where a kneeling Oriental archer is in the act of shooting an arrow.

The young men with thyrsi and crowned with ivy are obviously initiates, and the archer could be the guardian who prevents them from passing if they do not answer his question correctly. The idea that this is an underworld scene is corroborated by the fact that on the other side a demon was represented tormenting a woman with a torch, which could be interpreted as a stereotype of infernal punishment.

Punishments in Hades are never mentioned in the tablets, since a situation never arises that the soul makes a mistake and fails to say what it should. In Platonic texts,[121] we are informed that non-initiates (and

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[117] Plat. *Resp.* 620d. Not much can be inferred from the mention of guardians (φύλαξιν) in a badly deteriorated part of the *Bologna Papyrus* (*OF* 717, 176), which contains an Orphic katabasis. Cf. also Plat. *Phd.* 107d–108c, and Calame (2006) 242, and Graf-Johnston (2007) 111 ff. who quote other similar texts about guardians in the underworld.

[118] Cf. *P. Derveni* col. VI 2–3, and Most (1997) 131 f.

[119] Dieterich (1893 = [1913²]) 95 f., Guthrie (1935) 177 f., 193 n. 22, Zuntz (1971) 374, Burkert (1975) 86, Merkelbach (1999).

[120] Albizzatti (1921) 260. Cf. Pairault-Massa (1975) 198 f.

[121] *Resp.* 363c, *Gorg.* 493b.

whoever fails to demonstrate that he is one would no doubt have to suffer the same fate) suffer punishments such as lying in mud or carrying water in a sieve,[122] which makes it likely that this type of punishment was part of Orphic eschatology. Most probably, in the context of consolation for the dead represented by the tablets, it is not appropriate to speak of anything other than salvation.

The concrete form of the guardians' question varies from one tablet to another, and may even be omitted. In the one from Hipponion (**L 1**, 9), it is expressed in indirect style in the following form:

> Why are you investigating the darkness of gloomy Hades?[123]

The vestiges of the tablet from Entella (**L 2**, 11) seem to coincide with this same text. In the one from Pharsalus (**L 4**, 6) the guards ask:

> What necessity brings you to them.

In the tablet from Petelia (**L 3**), the guards do not even formulate the question. Obviously, what is important is not that the deceased recall the question, but the answer. In the tablet from Pharsalus (**L 4**, 7) an interesting specification is added, which does not appear in any of the others in the series. The deceased is urged:

> And you will tell them absolutely all the truth.

However, the response is the same, or very similar, to the one that appears in the other tablets. Why is the deceased's answer called "the truth"?

Formally, the phrase is a *topos* found already in Homer. Thus, for instance, the elderly Priam urges the messenger Argeiphontes, servant of Achilles (*Il.* 24, 407):

> Come, then, tell me all the truth.

In the Homeric expression, however, there are no religious connotations. All that is desired is that the interlocutor begin at the beginning and proceed point by point until the end. By contrast, such connotations *are* present in our text,[124] and once again have an etymological

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[122] Cf. Bernabé (1998a) 76, (2002d).

[123] At v. 9, we must accept the correction ὀρφνήεντος, on the basis of a text reading ΟΡΟΕΕΝΤΟΣ, rather than ΟΛΟΕΕΝΤΟΣ. Cf. § 1. 3.

[124] In contrast, Tortorelli Ghidini (1990) 73 f. points out that in the tablet, "to speak the truth" and "to drink from the fountain of Mnemosyne" are one and the same

foundation (which, in this case, is correct). Etymologically, ἀλήθεια 'truth' is a privative compound of λήθη 'forgetfulness', which means that 'truth' is conceived as 'non-forgetfulness'.[125] Whereas in Homer, what is requested is that the interlocutor 'not forget' anything and tell all that has happened, in the universe of the tablets, given the connotations exhibited by forgetfulness, we are entitled to suppose that the truth is none other than that which must not be forgotten: again, the truth that has been learned during initiation or in previous lives. When the initiate is asked to tell exactly all the truth to the guardians of the lake of Mnemosyne, so that they may allow him to drink, he is asked to remember the truth that was revealed to him during his life, that is, the password indicating that he belongs to a group of initiates, who are the only ones to know certain doctrines.

The truth implies a total memory that excludes λήθη, or forgetfulness, from the soul, just as the water of Memory excludes the water of forgetfulness in eschatological geography. Once again, we find an allusion to the contrast underlying the image of the two fountains.

One of the most interesting parallels to this reference to the truth is the one provided by the bone tablets found in a *temenos* of Olbia Pontica, the ancient Borysthenes.[126] These are three brief texts in which the word 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) appears in conjunction with mystical doctrines, occupying an outstanding position.

The texts are as follows:[127]

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thing: the truth associated with cosmic Memory is transformed into a fundamental religious virtue, whence we witness the formation of a link between religious and logical truth. The concept of ἀλήθεια would also be related to that which appears in the ideal voyage of Parmenides, where Ἀλήθεια is a divine personification, or the revelation conceded to the man who knows. In his judgment, an Orphic influence can be detected in the intimate experience undergone by the εἰδὼς φώς of the knowledge of Ἀλήθεια and of overcoming the limits of his mortal nature. The relation between the prooemium of Parmenides and the tablets is even more clear if one accepts the suggestion of Pugliese Carratelli cited above (§ 1. 2.), who sees in the goddess Mnemosyne the revealer of truth.

[125] Cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1988a) 165, Bernabé (1999a) 459 f.

[126] This is also the city in which Herodotus (4, 77–79) situates the initiation of the Scythian king Scylas into the mysteries of Bacchic Dionysus. Now, thanks to the finds of the bone tablets in this same city, we can affirm that what Herodotus describes was an Orphic cult.

[127] Cf. Dubois (1996) 154 f. n. 94 abc. *Editio princeps* by Rus'ajeva (1978) 87–104 (German summary by Tinnefeld [1980] 68–71). Cf. SEG XXVIII (1978) 192 f. n. 659–661, Burkert (1980) 36 ff., West (1982) 17 ff., SEG XXXII (1982) 221 n. 796, West (1983) 17 ff., Velasco López (1990–1991) 735 ff., Erhardt (1983) 169 n. 836, Graf (1985) 590, Casadio (1986) 295 ff., Vinogradov (1991) 77 ff., SEG XLI (1991), 211 n. 621,

a) Life-death-life / truth / (a) Dionysus, Orphics.
b) Peace-war / truth-lie / Dion(ysus).
c) Dion(ysus) / lie[128]-truth / body-soul.

In this context, ἀλήθεια acquires a pregnant value. It may refer[129] to the doctrine itself, which would be the truth, as opposed to the error in which the rest of humanity lives. Yet it also alludes to the truth of the soul, as opposed to the lie of the body, which situates us in the atmosphere of the σῶμα-σῆμα doctrine.[130] Above all, however, we are dealing with mystical items of knowledge that must not be forgotten, and in this sense represent ἀλήθεια.

The emphasis on the truth of a new doctrine was not exclusive to Orphism. Such presocratic philosophers as Parmenides, Empedocles and Heraclitus,[131] or even, later on, Christian authors also insisted on this point.[132]

However, let us continue. The deceased must answer the guardians' question with a password, which always begins in the same way:

I am the son of Earth[133] and starry Heaven.

Bottini (1992) 15 ff., Zhmud' (1992) 159 ff., Rus'ajeva (1992) 16 ff., Di Marco (1993) 109, Vegetti (1994) 73 ff., Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 84, Bernabé (1995a) 219, (1995b) 24 ff., Burkert (1999) 70 f., Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 149–161, Graf-Johnston (2007) 185–187. On the 'truth' in these texts, see Scalera McClintock (1990) 78 ff.

[128] [ψεῦδος] is a conjecture by Vinogradov (1991) 78 f. On the reason why Dionysus is abbreviated as Dion. in these texts, cf. Bernabé (1999a) 463 f.

[129] West (1982) 20.

[130] Plat. *Crat.* 400c. Cf. Bernabé (1995a).

[131] These philosophers use the term together with terms proper to geography, all of which, curiously enough, are attested in the tablets: Parm. *fr.* B 8, 18 D.-K. "the path of Truth" (cf. *fr.* B 1, 2–3 D.-K.), Emped. *fr.* 113 Wright (= B 121 D.-K.) "the meadow of Truth", contrasted with a "meadow of Delirium", cf. Emped. *fr.* 103, 1 Wright (= B 114, 1 D.-K.). The concrete presence of the term ἀλήθεια—and no other—in the Orphic documents cited would agree with the tendency of the mid-5th century B.C., at which time the lexical group ἀληθής-ἀλήθεια began to be generalized to the detriment of its semantic equivalents, the groups ἐτεός-ἔτυμος-ἐτήτυμος; νημερτής; ἀτρεκής, which expressed the notion of true in Archaic Greek (cf. Levet [1976]). This tendency was to continue later with Plato and Aristotle, cf. Bernabé (2004b) 69 ff.

[132] The concept of truth was to be of great importance in Christianity, especially from the time of St. Augustine, for whom the Truth is of God, cf. Weinstock (1958) 1551 ff. Outside of the tablets, Ἀλήθεια was the personification of the Truth in Greek as well, and as such was associated with various divinities, such as Zeus or Kronos, whose daughter it becomes, cf. Wernicke (1893) 1371.

[133] Pugliese Carratelli (1976) 460 f. reads <h>υὸς Βαρέας at verse 10 of the Hipponion tablet (**L 1**). Following the autopsy by Sacco (2001), Pugliese Carratelli (2002) and (2003) 41 accepts the reading Γῆς παῖ<ς> εἰμι.

The interpretation of this phrase has given rise to a certain polemic, although the positions adopted are, in general, less opposed than may appear. In what follows, we will try to provide an integrated vision of some of them, and present some alternative opinions.

We must start from the basis that this phrase, like all the other mystical declarations that appear in the tablets, is dense with meaning and, in its ambiguity, can express several meanings at the same time.

In the first place, this is a belief that plunges its roots into very traditional ideas, already expressed by very ancient authors. At *Theogony* 106, Hesiod refers to Earth and Heaven as a primordial couple, with very similar phraseology:

> Those who were born from Earth and starry Heaven.

While at *Works and Days* 108, he provides a complementary viewpoint:

> As the gods and mortal men had a single origin.

Pindar begins the 6th *Nemean* with a very similar declaration:

> One is the race of men, one that of the gods,
> Since we both breathe through a single mother (Earth).[134]

While Porphyry (*De abstinentia* 3, 25 [222, 3 N.]) also attributes to Euripides (*fr.* 1004 Kannicht) the phrase:

> Earth and Heaven, common parents of all.[135]

Naturally, this traditional idea is not sufficient to explain why the deceased would declare a filiation as distant as this one precisely at this crucial moment. If this were an innocuous affirmation, or an allusion to an admitted truth, it would scarcely be adequate for a particularly solemn moment in which the initiate must demonstrate his condition, that is, the fact that he is in possession of a knowledge that is not accessible to everyone, but only to the group to which he belongs. Hence in the first commentaries on the tablets, those who took for granted that they were Orphic considered that the deceased was alluding to

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[134] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 120 f., (1976) 40 reduces to this comparison his suggestion that the initiate demonstrates that he has knowledge of a special dignity deriving from his awareness of a divine origin.

[135] It is maybe only an echo of Eur. *Melan. fr.* 484, 2 Kannicht "Heaven and earth had one form", cf. Kannicht *ad loc.*

the central myth of Orphism, that of Dionysus and the Titans. This was the interpretation maintained by such authors as Rohde, Harrison, and Olivieri.[136]

According to this myth, Dionysus was the son of Zeus and Persephone. When he was still a child, Zeus delegated sovereignty over the gods to Dionysus. Inspired by jealousy that was probably provoked by Hera (it should be recalled that Dionysus is her stepson), the Titans, first-born divinities and prototypes of violence, decide to put him to death and devour him, which they do. Zeus punishes them by striking them with lightning, and Dionysus, in one way or another, recovers his integrity.[137] The Titans' being struck by lightning is placed in relation with human nature, the idea being that we have something of Dionysus within us, namely the part that had been ingested by the Titans. This is our positive, divine part, which desires to reintegrate itself with its originary nature. On the other hand, we have within us the remains of the Titans themselves. This is our sinful, proud, and wicked part, from which we must liberate ourselves. To expiate the abomination it has inherited from the Titans, the soul must suffer various punishments in Hades and a lengthy series of reincarnations. With time, and by means both of initiation into the knowledge of what enables it to save itself and of a life of purity and the observance of ritual taboos, the soul is able to purify itself of its crime and liberate itself from the eternal cycle of reincarnations, to achieve a state of beatitude in Hades.

Thus, to return to our tablets, the declaration: "I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven" may be an allusion to the myth we have just related, as the first interpreters thought, since the Titans were sons of Earth and Heaven, and human beings, as descendants of the Titans, could refer to the same lineage.

The criticisms of this line of approach are not consistent: neither the claim that it would seem to be difficult for an initiate to wish to rank equally with beings of such baneful destiny, nor the claim that

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[136] Rohde (1898[2]) I 116 ff., Harrison (1922[3]) 575, Olivieri (1915) 13 f. Cf. Guthrie (1935) 174. This is an old interpretation, but that does not make it worthless, despite the attempts of Edmonds (1999). Cf. in addition Merkelbach (1999) 7, Morand (2001) 220 ff.

[137] On this myth, cf. Susemihl (1890), Guthrie (1935) 175 ff., Burkert (1972a) 249 ff., Henrichs (1972) 56 ff., West (1983) 74 f., 140 f., 245 f., Bettini (1993) 103 ff., Ellinger (1993) 147–195, Scalera McClintock (1995), Bernabé (1998c), (2002b); Graf-Johnston (2007) 66–93. Brisson (1992) 481–499 (= [1995] VII) and Edmonds (1999) take a stand against the antiquity of this myth.

the ideology of the tablets would exclude the possibility that at the entrance to Hades the soul could present itself as a god, are weighty objections.[138] However, we think that the deceased does not identify himself in the tablets with the Titans, but simply points out that he descends from them, and therefore has a divine origin. It may seem illogical to present oneself before Persephone, declaring oneself to be a descendant of the assassins of her son, but not if one also declares oneself to be a descendant of Dionysus[139] himself, and, moreover, if one also makes it very clear that he has liberated himself from blame (that is, the "titanic" part).

Man can base some pretension to divinity upon the Titans' crime, which enabled human beings to have something of the Dionysiac (and therefore divine) nature within them, but the mention of this lineage has a different meaning in the mouth of the initiate: all mortals are sons of Earth and starry Heaven, but only the initiates, who have lived the Orphic life, suffocating the Titanic aspect and cultivating the Dionysiac, can seek to claim special treatment in the Beyond, which probably consists in recovering their divine nature.[140]

Man's recognition of his Titanic origin has additional implications: the first is that the deceased initiate acquires brotherhood with the goddess Mnemosyne herself, since she herself[141] is the daughter of Earth and Heaven. The second is that he admits his dual essence, earthly and heavenly.[142] We know of other texts that speak of how man's body is of terrestrial origin, whereas his soul is related to the celestial ether. We find it, for instance, in the inscription of a tomb from Pherai:[143]

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[138] Argument of Zuntz (1971) 364 f.

[139] The Titans ingested him, and in the ashes of his "combustion" there are remains of Dionysus' body; therefore, mortals also descend from him.

[140] Guthrie (1935) 176.

[141] Hes. *Theog.* 135. Cf. Marcovich (1990) 77.

[142] The belief in mankind's double origin is the only implication accepted by Festugière (1972) 62, who in turn bases himself on Dieterich (1925³) 69, although he does not go into the matter in detail. Zuntz (1971) 366 gives rather more specifications when he proclaims man's dual potentiality: man feels himself tied on the one hand to the earth, suffering and loving, yet, on the other hand, he is aware of his heavenly element.

[143] Datable to the 3rd century B.C., the first edition is due to Theocharis (1967) 297. See also Robert (1970) 403 n. 337, Merkelbach (1973) 156, Peek (1974) 27 f. and n. 25, Helly (1978) 130 nº 25, SEG XXVIII (1978) p. 162 n. 528, Mickey (1981) 162, Avagianou (2002), Calame (2006) 22, and *OF* 466.

> Lycophron, son of Philiscus, of the root of great Zeus,
> in appearance, but really of eternal fire.
> And I live in the stars of the heavens, raised by my father,
> but my body, which came from my mother, is sheltered in my mother, the earth.

Attention has also been directed[144] to the Pythagorean character of the image of the divine fatherland as οὐρανὸς ἀστερόεις which also occurs in Plato's *Timaeus* 42b:

> He who should live during the assigned period, when he returns to the star that was attributed to him, would have the happy life that corresponds.[145]

We believe, however, that although the liberated soul expresses its nature with this formula in the tablets, this does not seem to presuppose the soul's sojourn in celestial places. This celestial eschatology seems instead to be Pythagorean (and this would be a feature that separates the Pythagoreans from the Orphics, since the latter postulated an eschatology in Hades). The beliefs of the users of the tablets and those expressed by Lycophron, for instance, coincide with regard to the origin of the soul, but not with regard to its destiny. They share the idea of body/soul dualism, but the Orphic initiates buried with our tablets do not seem to believe that their optimal destiny is located in the stars. On the contrary, the initiate is told in the tablet from Petelia (**L 7a**, 7):

> you will go underground, once the same rites have been accomplished as the other happy ones.

in addition to the fact that the path described in the texts of this group is always one that leads downwards (**L 1**, 4 "when going down", and in all the others, the path passes through Hades and only through it).

Other authors have studied in detail the meaning of the phrase "I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven", making observations that seem highly interesting. Burkert[146] points out that some of the tablets insist on the heavenly part,[147] for which reason the expression does not seem to stress the dual character of mankind, but the original unity, expressed by a kind of polar utterance. The marriage between Heaven

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[144] Pugliese Carratelli (1975) 231.
[145] See Cumont (1942) 116 and 282, (1949) 146 f.
[146] Burkert (1975) 89.
[147] Cf. **L 4**, 9,"my name is Asterius", **L 2**, 15, **L 3**, 7 "yet my race is heavenly". We shall give a more detailed analysis of both expressions below.

and Earth took place in primaeval times, before the separation of the limits of our world. When he declares such an origin, the deceased initiate adopts a primordial and cosmic position, and asserts that he belongs to the universe. His consciousness is transformed: he is no longer a puny man in progress, but the "son of Heaven and Earth", with all the rights of primogeniture.[148]

For his part, Sabatucci[149] insists that the phrase distinguishes the condition of the dead from that of the living, the idea being that the genuine human condition is only acquired at death. Human life is not real as compared to the reality represented by the divinity, because man's life is ephemeral, whereas the gods are eternal. When he is alive, the human being belongs occasionally to a lineage (γένος). Once he dies, the soul enters the eternal world of the gods, and therefore renounces its earthly γένος and considers itself to participate in another general and universal lineage.[150]

Both interpretations are not only compatible, but completely reconcilable with an Orphic vision.

In some of the tablets an additional reference may be added to the basic declaration:

> **L 4**, 9 my name is Asterius,
> **L 2**, 15, **L 3**, 7 but my race is heavenly, know this, you too.

Theoretically, one might think that Asterius was the name of the deceased, since it is well attested epigraphically as an anthroponym,[151] but the name of the deceased man or woman is not included in any

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[148] According to Cosi (1975) 398, by this reply the initiate (μύστης) manifests his awareness that he possesses a special dignity, owing to his divine origin and to the fact that he belongs by birth to Ouranian lineage, which allows him free access to the water of Mnemosyne, and therefore to a happy destiny. Marcovich (1991) 142 offers a series of parallels, where remembering one's heavenly origins is indispensable for achieving eternal life: *Od.* 24, 1–2, Emped. *fr.* 111 Wright (= B 119 D.-K.), Hippol. *Haer.* 5, 7, 30; *Gospel of Maria, P. Berol.* 8502, I 16, (*Nag Hammadi Studies*, Vol. 11, Leiden 1979, p. 465). According to Calame (2006) there is a reminiscence in the password of the four Cosmic elements.

[149] Sabbatucci (1975) 45.

[150] In the Egyptian Pyramid texts (890) we read "he does not belong to the earth, he belongs to the heaven" cf. Hornung (1989) 14, Betz (1998) 401, who adds interesting considerations on the expression.

[151] Frazer-Matthews (1987) *s. v.* Ἀστερίων. Cf. Pape-Benseler (1969) *s. v.* Ἀστερίων, *DGE s. v.* Ἀστέριος, and especially Decourt (1995) 130.

of the "long" tablets.[152] Nor does it seem that we should search for a relation with the mythological Cretan name,[153] or with Thessalian topography.[154] Instead, it seems to be a mystical name of initiates, a *nom parlant* "Starry" (derived from ἀστήρ 'star'), which was equivalent to the declaration "my race is heavenly".[155] With this declaration, the substantial change the initiate's soul is experiencing is made manifest. When he renounces his personal name, the initiate renounces the sign of mundane living and assumes a new name, not as a physical distinguishing feature, but as an indicator of the substance of a liberated soul.[156] Coincidentally, this renunciation is accompanied by an almost complete absence of funerary furniture in these tombs. Both the expression "my race is heavenly" and "my name is Asterius" are additions necessary for eliminating any doubt that the guardians might have on the heavenly origin of the soul that is addressing them.[157] It is the same certainty that the bearer of the tablet from Thurii tries to convey (**L 9**, 3 and 10, 3) when he confesses:

> Since I, too, boast that I belong to your blessed lineage.

As far as this ideology is concerned, there are a couple of iconographical representations that exhibit striking coincidences with the phraseology of the tablets we have just seen. The first one comes from Ripacandida, a center inhabited by people of "North Lucanian" culture, near the Bradano valley, through which there was a path of communication with Metapontum. The find consisted of a jar found in a burial from the first part of the 5th century B.C., in which we find a human personage

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[152] Only in the tablet from Rome, which is much later and which, as we shall see in chapter V, exhibits very different characteristics. Also in the tablets that limit themselves to pointing out the name of the *mystes* and/or his condition as such, examined in chapter VIII.

[153] A son of Tectamus, married to Europa, who ruled in Crete, cf. Diod. 4, 60, Apollod. 3, 1, 4 etc. (cf. Willets [1962] 110, 166 f.). Zuntz (1971) 367 had already rejected the suggestion that Asterius was a human name, as well as any relation with mythical personages of the same name, and he defended this expression's equivalence with verse 7 from Petelia (**L 3**), ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον.

[154] Decourt (1995) 130 recalls that a few kilometers from Pharsalus, where the tablet was found, was the city of Piresia, called Asterion in Homeric times, according to Strabo (1, 3, 18; 10, 2, 16), whose eponymous hero was a certain Asterios, cf. Decourt (1990) 162 f.

[155] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 3 notes that "for the Orphics, Asterius must have immediately evoked the starry heaven (οὐρανὸς ἀστερόεις)".

[156] Pugliese Carratelli (1975) 230 f.

[157] Verdelis (1950–1951) 103 f.

with one foot resting on a sphere, which seems to be traversed by a lightning bolt (represented by a zigzag line, ending in three points at each end). Seven stars are drawn around the sphere.

The second is a gold denarius coined for a daughter of Domitian, who died young, on which a child is represented sitting on a globe surrounded by seven stars.

The similarity between these two pieces, although they are widely separated in time and in style, indicates the survival of a consistent model, perhaps transmitted in an "esoteric" environment. For these reasons, Tagliente[158] has placed them in relation with the Metapontine Pythagorean environment, and with the tablets we are studying.

The text continues with the deceased declaring his thirst,[159] and asking to be given water from the fountain[160] of Mnemosyne:

> I am dry with thirst and dying. Give me, then, right away,
> fresh water to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne.

The formula recurs in almost all the tablets, with slight variations.[161] The adjective we have translated as 'dry' (αὖος) is generally applied to the earth, to trees, or to fruit, that require water to live. This is the meaning that comes closest to the value it has in the tablets, since the initiate must accede to the water of Mnemosyne if he wants to save himself and begin to live a genuine life. We also find the same adjective applied to Tantalus in a parodic tone, in Lucian, *On mourning* 8:

> And Tantalus was in the lake itself, dry, running the risk of dying of thirst, the poor thing.

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[158] Tagliente (1997) 266 f.

[159] On the thirst of the dead, see § 1.5.

[160] At v. 12 of the tablet from Hipponion (**L 1**), instead of Π[ΡΟ]ΡΕΟΝΤΕΣ, interpreted as π[ρο]ρέον τῆς in the first edition (Pugliese Carratelli [1974] 111), Guarducci (1985) 389 reads ΠΙΕΝΑΥΤΕΣ, and Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20, 25 πιέναι τῆς, convincingly explained by Cassio (1994) 185 ff. and (1996) 15 ff.

[161] For instance, the presence or absence of the verb εἰμι, the more notable lack of ἀπόλλυμαι in the text from Pharsalus, and the change of masculine or feminine gender of αὖος, on which cf. § 1.14. For the variations in the formula, see also the well-documented study of Velasco (1994) 455 ff. The most divergent case is the tablet from Sfakaki (**L 6a**, 1–2): Δίψαι{τοι} <α>ῦος. παρα̲π<ό>λλυται. ἀλλὰ̲ π{α}ιέν μοι/ κράνας αἰ̲<ει>ρ<ό>ου: Dry from thirst, he is dying: "give, me, then, to drink from the fountain of eternal flow (Tzifopoulos in press, n. 9 prefers to read <Σ>αύρου 'of the lizard', cf. Theophr. *Hist. Plant.* 3, 3, 4). For a possible mention of the phrase in a Belgian tablet, cf. Lambert (2002) L 109 and § 11.7.

What is more curious, we find the same adjective, applied to the soul, in an enigmatic fragment of Heraclitus (68 Marcovich = B 118 D.-K.):

> The dry soul, the wisest and the best,

as if there was a deliberate effort on the part of the philosopher from Ephesus to carry out a polemic against these beliefs.

As far as the verb ἀπόλλυμαι is concerned, it is used in the general sense of 'being lost'.[162] The initiate says "I am dying", understood not as the definitive death desired by the Orphics, but as expressing his fear of suffering again one of the deaths with rebirth to the mortal condition. The verb is in the present tense, which indicates that he has not yet died (which would be expressed in the perfect), so that he can save himself if he succeeds in drinking from the salutary fountain.

What is interesting about this entreaty is that through it the deceased person demonstrates that he has been initiated in two ways: the first because he is still thirsty (which indicates that he has not drunk from the other fountain), the second because he knows he must drink from the fountain of Mnemosyne. The ensemble of his words is thus a kind of "password", which enables the soul of the deceased to identify itself as an initiate.

A very similar scene can be read in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*,[163] where we read:

> Who are you, and whence did you come to the Beyond?
> (And the dead man replies:)
> I am one of you.

The parallel is obvious, although the *Book of the Dead* includes a formula to remind the dead man of his name, which is alien to the conceptual world of the tablets.

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[162] A very frequent meaning in theater, cf. Aristoph. *Pax* 354; *Nub.* 1077. In Christian literature, the term was to acquire the meaning of 'to be lost, to condemn oneself'; cf., for example, *Eu. Io.* 3, 16, *Ep. Cor.* 1, 18, *Ep. Clem.* 2, 5.

[163] 58, 3 p. 128 Hornung. Cf. Foucart (1895) 71, Diels (1907) 43 n. 4, Zuntz (1971) 370 f., West (1971) 64 f., Burkert (1975) 86, with bibliography at n. 11, Merkelbach (1999) 2.

1.7. *Continuing journey*

The tablet from Pharsalus (**L 4**) ends with a request for water. The tablets from Hipponion (**L 1**,13–14), Entella (**L 2**, 16–17) and Petelia (**L 3**, 11) specify that the guards allow the souls to drink. The tablet from Hipponion (and probably the one from Entella, although it is located in a lost part of the tablet) even adds an indispensable step to be taken after an adequate answer is given: (**L 1**, 13, **L 2**, 16):

> And to be sure, they will consult with the subterranean queen.

This translation, which is that of our text, is based on two controversial readings.

a) We read ἐρέουσιν 'they will consult',[164] instead of ἐλεοῦσιν 'they will take pity', as was read previously.[165] The dative case referred to the subterranean queen (or king, as we shall see has been read by others) makes it very difficult to accept ἐλεοῦσιν. It obliges us to divide ὑποχθονίωι into the two words ὑπὸ χθονίωι, and to force the sense of the phrase into a difficult "and they will take pity, for the sake of (ὑπό) the earthly monarch (or queen)". ὑποχθονίωι 'subterranean' is infinitely more adequate to the context, whereas a "pity by delegation" on the part of the guardians seems difficult to believe. On the other hand, it is rather more logical to understand that the guards must "ask" or "consult with" the divinity, since they are not the ones who decide on the fate of the deceased person, but they refer the matter to the authority on which they depend, and in whose hands the ultimate decision lies.

b) We read ὑποχθονίωι βασιλεί<αι>,[166] identifying the divinity consulted as Persephone, as opposed to ὑποχθονίωι (ὑπὸ χθονίωι) βασιλῆϊ 'the subterranean monarch', which would imply that the dead person is handed over to the presence of a masculine god. If this latter reading were to be accepted, it would then be appropriate to discuss[167] whether this god is Hades, Persephone's companion[168] (who, on this hypothesis, would be the most adequate candidate), or else Hades-Dionysus, mentioned by Heraclitus (*fr.* 50 Marcovich [= B 15 D.-K.]):

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[164] With Lazzarini (1987) 330.

[165] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 and (1993) 20, 24, who in (2002) and (2003) 41 accepts ἐρέουσιν, following Sacco (2001).

[166] Proposed by West (1975) 233 and accepted by Riedweg (1998).

[167] Cf. Gigante (1975) 224, Calame (2006) 246.

[168] Cf. Namia (1977) 288 f.

Hades and Dionysus are the same,

or else it is the god whom Aeschylus (*Suppl.* 230 f.) calls the "other Zeus", or even Kronos, mentioned by Pindar (*Ol.* 2, 76). However, the ensemble of the tablets and iconography suggest that it is the goddess Persephone, and not Hades, who has in her hands the decision over the fate of the dead in this religious context. To be rejected utterly is the suggestion[169] to read ἐλεοῦσιν and ὑποχθονίωι βασιλῆϊ, and translate "will take pity on the king of the subterranean world", with the idea that "king" refers to the dead person. The dead initiate may indeed acquire the condition of θεός,[170] yet he is not transformed into the king of the subterranean world. Such a title can only correspond to Hades. In sum, it seems much better to read βασιλεί<αι> "queen", and think that it applies to Persephone, whose role in this eschatology we shall return to discuss in more detail (§ 2.3).

The consequences for the soul of the initiate of his success in the tests to which he has been submitted are, one supposes, good. This is no doubt a happy situation, far from the dark destiny that awaits souls in the Homeric vision. The guardians allow it to drink, but the tablets we have read tell us very little about the continuation of the path and the achievement of the goal.

> **L 1**, 14–15
> So that, once you have drunk,[171] you too will go along the sacred way
> by which the other *mystai* and bacchoi advance, glorious
> **L 3**, 11
> and afterwards you will reign with the other heroes.

In the tablet from Pharsalus (**L 4**) all indications are omitted at the end. In the one from Entella (**L 2**, 18 f.) there was a continuation, but it is in a broken part of the tablet. It refers to the recitation of passwords, perhaps in the presence of Persephone,[172] since in l. 19 one reads σύμβολα φ[(which could be the beginning of the goddess' name) and

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[169] Merkelbach (1975) 8 f., followed by Marcovich (1976) 222 f.

[170] On this subject, cf. § 9.4. Besides, the deceased does not even seem to enjoy the condition of θεός yet, in this section of the ultramundane passage.

[171] At v. 15 the reading σὺ πιών solves some difficulties raised by the former συχνόν.

[172] Cf. Bernabé (1999c) 59. We shall come back to discuss passwords in our study of one tablet from Pherai (**L 13**), where they also appear, albeit in a context that is more clear.

in l. 20 καὶ φε[, where the same theonym could be read.[173] At l. 21, moreover, the initial letters σεμ̣[may remain, representing the beginning of σεμ̣[νη-, a characteristic epithet of the goddess.[174]

Since there is some mention (which is not, however, very explicit) concerning the final destiny of souls in other tablets, we prefer to leave the analysis of this question for later (specifically, for chapter IX), when we will have all the elements of judgment that are available. For the moment, we shall devote a few lines to the mention in the tablet from Hipponion of the "sacred way".

1.8. *The sacred way*

The meaning of the reference to the sacred way has been much discussed. One interpretative approach[175] considers that the allusion is to a real sacred way. The three most famous sacred ways in Greece were those of Eleusis, of Delphi, and of Elis, but the only one that could be traveled by both *mystai* and bacchoi was the Eleusinian one, which led from Athens to the sanctuary of Eleusis. Although the idea of a real road may seem suggestive, we do not believe that the ἱερὰ ὁδός of the tablets can be identified with any concrete path; the mythico-religious solidity of the mention of the path in the text from Hipponion does not seem to have been determined by the concrete experience of a local ritual context.[176] In addition, if privilege in the Beyond is a reiteration of the privilege represented by initiation, we shall have to look at the Bacchic mysteries more than the Eleusinian ones.

In any case, it can be accepted as a projection of the terrestrial model, that is, as a model of inspiration for the ideological configuration of that other sacred way,[177] conceived as a repetition of the initiatory path

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[173] Bernabé (1999c) suggests the reading Φε[ρσεφόνηι?· Chaniotis in Chaniotis-Mylonopoulos (2000) 21 suggests Φε[ρσέφασσα. Pugliese Carratelli (2001) 302 prefers to see in l. 20 the beginning of φυλάσσω or of φημί.

[174] Cf. *Orph. Hymn.* 24, 10; 29, 10; 71, 2. Chaniotis-Mylonopoulos (2000) 172 believes that the end of ἔλυσε can be read (cf. **L 7**, 2 Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε), but this would interrupt the usual disposition of beginning verses at the left of the tablet.

[175] Cf. Musti (1984) 65 ff. and Guarducci (1985) 394 ff.

[176] Cf. Giangiulio (1994) 16.

[177] Cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1990b) 412. On sacred ways in antiquity, cf. Rosenberg (1920) and above all Caerols (1995).

in this world.[178] In the same vein, we must recall[179] that the ecstatic festival of the Eleusinian initiates took place in a procession along the "sacred way", which was long and tortuous but on which one felt no fatigue, thanks to the miraculous powers of the god.[180]

Moreover, we can find some points of coincidence between this sacred way and the road to the Elysium,[181] in a passage from Pindar that speaks of the way of Zeus, which leads to the island of the blessed, in the presence of Rhadamanthys (Pindar, *Olympics* 2, 68 ff.):

> And all those who have dared to keep their soul, in this and the other world, completely free from injustice, travel the road of Zeus as far as the tower of Kronos. There, the Ocean breezes blow about the Isles of the Blessed, golden flowers shine, some on the ground, on the branches of splendid trees, while others are nourished by water. With them they weave hands and crowns in garlands, under the right counsels of Rhadamanthys.

Another link between the *mystes* and Rhadamanthys is found in a verse by Posidippus of Pella (*fr.* 118, 24–25 Austin-Bastianini = *fr.* 37, 21 ff. Fernández-Galiano):

> May I travel the mystic way towards Rhadamanthys.[182]

In a passage we have already cited in § 1.3 (Hegesippus, *fr.* 5 G.-P. = *Anthologia Palatina* 7, 545), Hegesippus, a slightly younger contemporary, tells us:

> By the road that goes from the pyre towards the right, they say
> that Hermes leads the good towards Rhadamanthys.

In this last case, it is "the good" that reach Elysium, rather than the *mystes*.

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[178] Feyerabend (1984) 1 ff., who in this context also takes into consideration the prooemium to the poem of Parmenides, which, he claims, derives from two different traditions: the poetic and secular one of Homer and Hesiod, and that of the mystery cults. The relation between ritual practices and the itineraries of the souls of initiates is already shown by Plato (*Phd.* 108a) "He (Aeschylus) says that the path that leads to Hades is simple, but it seems to me that it is neither simple nor unique…unless it is because it presents many bifurcations and crossroads. I say this by conjecture on the basis of funeral rites and usual ceremonies of that place".

[179] As does Burkert (1975) 91.

[180] Cf. Eur. *Bac.* 194 "The god will guide us effortlessly to both of them", Aristoph. *Ran.* 402 ff. "Show how effortlessly you travel a long road". Cf. Lada-Richards (1999) 88.

[181] As was already observed by Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 122.

[182] Cf. Rossi (1996) 394 f., Burkert (1998), Dickie (1998) 49 ff.

Various other resemblances to this sacred way can be pointed out, like the way of Pluto-Hades, where the initiates live, situated near the gate of Pluto, according to Aristophanes (*Ran.* 158 ff.)[183] or the way of wisdom along which Parmenides travels in the prooemium of his philosophical poem.[184]

In sum, the ἱερὰ ὁδός of Hipponion is the sacred way that leads to eternal happiness, similar to other roads of the Beyond, and perhaps conceived as a repetition of the path of initiation in this world, or perhaps as a projection of one or more terrestrial models, like the ways of Eleusis or Athens, along which the procession of initiates traveled.

1.9. Mystai *and bacchoi*

Mystai and bacchoi are mentioned in **L 1**, 16. The meaning of the first word is clear: the *mystai* are initiates into a mystery religion. We encounter the term again in other tablets (e.g. **L 16** b–e). With regard to βάκχος, it is in reality an epithet of Dionysus. The term corresponding to a believer would be βάκχιος, but there is an inversion in the use of both qualifiers.[185] It is worthwhile asking why both are mentioned.[186] Μύστης is the generic term for designating an initiate with no concrete reference to a particular cult, whereas βάκχος is more restricted to the Dionysiac environment.

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[183] Cf. Namia (1977) 289.

[184] Cf. Parm. *fr.* B 1, 2–3 D.-K.: "the mares that carry me . . . escorted me, once they had come and fetched me onto the wide-renowned road of the divinity that carries the man who knows through all the cities". This Parmenidean way, far from the roads of men, is open only to the person who is willing to travel the path of wisdom and salvation: cf. ibid., v. 27: "this road for in truth, it is far from what is walked by men". On the comparison of Parmenidean poem with the tablets, cf. Namia (1977) 289. Pugliese Carratelli (1990b) 412 also points out Parmenides' insistence on the way that leads to wisdom and salvation. It should be recalled that this author even proposes that Parmenides' unnamed goddess is Mnemosyne, cf. § 1.2 and note 29.

[185] Cf. **L 7**, 2 Βάκχιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε "Bacchus himself liberated you", where the derivative refers to the god, as it does in **L 16n** Διονύσου Βακχίου. This corresponds to the identification of the believer with the god, on which cf. § 10.6.4.

[186] Both also appear together at Heraclit. *fr.* 87 Marcovich (= B 14 D.-K.), (*OF* 587) and in Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472, 10 ff. Kannicht (*OF* 567). On Βάκχος, cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal (forthcoming 1).

In Orphism, however, the term βάκχος specifies[187] μύσται; they are a special group that stands out among the latter.[188] Initiates and bacchoi do not constitute two grades of initiation, but βάκχος qualifies the μύστης who has achieved the state of perfection that enables a permanent distance from the "corporeal spoils".[189] Those μύσται succeed in becoming βάκχοι who have behaved in accordance with the ascetic and ritual prescriptions of the Orphic life,[190] that is, those who have striven to βακχεύειν in a continuous and constant way, and have successfully carried out the passage through Hades. For the Orphic bacchos, ecstasy consists in seeing the fulfillment of one's aspirations of being identified, albeit nominally, with the divinity whose enthusiastic devotee he is. The difference[191] between the Dionysiac and the Orphic βάκχος resides, therefore, in the fact that the non-Orphic Dionysiac bacchos seeks a transitory ecstasy, that ends when the collective celebration ends, whereas the Orphic bacchos pursues a lasting condition, such as is expressed by the perfect participle βεβαχχευμένος of an inscription from Cumai;[192] βάκχος is the result obtained by the person who, by dint of βακχεύειν, has succeeded in becoming an exemplary μύστης.

1.10. *The Orphic model and the Platonic model*

After observing the similarities than can be found between the infernal scene described by the tablets and that appearing in some Platonic texts (particularly at the end of the *Republic*) Guthrie thinks that both religious schemes can be identified,[193] and therefore attributes to the

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[187] For Burkert (1975) 90 f the μύσται καὶ βάκχοι are the initiates, especially those who have entered into authentic ecstasy. In this meaning, καί would be used in the function of adding an expression that restricts or delimits, cf. *LSJ, s. v.* καί. Cf., in the same sense, Burkert (1987) 46 f. Graf-Johnston (2000) 120f. consider the words synonymous.

[188] Burkert (1987) 46 f.

[189] Pugliese Carratelli (1988a) 166.

[190] The ritual meaning of the phrase μύσται καὶ βάκχοι was pointed out by Bernabé (1991) 229 in the light of a similar testimony in *h. Cer.* 48 ff.: "Yet he who is not initiated into the rites, and has not taken part in them, will never have such a destiny, once he is dead beneath the somber darkness".

[191] See already Rohde (1898[2]) II 128 n. 6, Guthrie (1935) 197, Dodds (1944) 79 (v. 115), Bernabé (1998a) 82 and n. 164, and above all Turcan (1986) 237 and Jiménez San Cristóbal (forthcoming, 1).

[192] *OF* 652: "It is not permitted for he who has not been transformed into a bacchant to lie here".

[193] Guthrie (1935) 177 f., following Harrison (1922[3]) 599.

Orphics the idea that after the death of the body the souls go to Hades, where they are led into the presence of infernal judges, who examine their lives and send them to a destiny in accordance with their merits, so that the wicked suffer punishment and the good achieve happiness. The souls destined to be reincarnated drink from Lethe, return to a mortal body, and are born again.

We do not believe that the parallel can be sustained in the extreme form it assumes in Guthrie. His reconstruction is based too much on the Platonic scheme, as if the Athenian philosopher had faithfully followed the Orphic model and were therefore a reliable source for reconstructing Orphism.

On the contrary, everything indicates that the parallelism between Plato and the situation alluded to (if not described) by the tablets is not quite so strict. The "geography" coincides, but only in part: the fount of Lethe, the paths on both sides, the plain in which one experiences great thirst. Yet there are profound differences. Plato tells us nothing of the deceptive cypress tree, and, on the other hand, neither in our tablet nor in any other are any judges mentioned in this description. Above all, however, there are two distinct schemes. In Plato, we hear of a judgment, after which the soul, completely passive, is judged, rewarded or condemned, and is taken to its corresponding place. Its fate is decided, for the sins or good deeds of its past life will be its only credentials. The person who is judged and "approved" goes to Elysium for his merits. Plato speaks[194] of guides, who are not mentioned in the tablets (although Guthrie[195] thinks he can find them in the person who pronounces some of the words in the tablets, which is unlikely). If the deceased is condemned to reincarnation, he is given water from Lethe to drink.

On the other hand, in the scheme described in the tablets, the soul, which is active, finds itself faced by a test it must overcome. This is the behavior demanded from the soul in the moment of its transition to the other world: that it should not take the wrong path. Everything depends on it, and on the fact that it remembers what it must do: this is why it has recourse only to Mnemosyne, so that she may help it to remember the teachings it has received. If it does what it should do, it will be successful. If it makes a mistake, it will be reincarnated. In the

[194] *Phd.* 108a.
[195] Guthrie (1935) 178.

Platonic text, a higher authority evaluates the soul's moral behavior during its terrestrial sojourn, while in the tablets a ritual declaration on the past of the deceased seems to suffice. Only in the "great" tablet from Thurii (**L 12**) can we find any reference to behavior and retribution in accordance with it.

It is clear, then, that Plato freely reelaborated on Orphic motifs in the service of his own philosophical and literary interests.[196]

1.11. *Instructions for use?*

In a broken part of tablet **L 3**, 13, one reads]τόδε γραψ[. Some authors consider that this sequence (together with the reference to the moment in which the deceased has just died and been covered by the veil of darkness) could refer to the occasion in which the tablet itself was fashioned or used. Thus, West[197] suggests [ἐν πίνακι χρυσέωι] τόδε γραψ[άτω ἠδὲ φορείτω "let this be written on a gold tablet and be worn". Riedweg[198] points out that "the self-referential verses give the impression of being something like an instruction manual". Janko (ined.) has combined the readable parts of **L 3**, 13–14 and **L 2**, 2–3 and offered a reconstruction of these "instructions for use":

> [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδ<ε> ἔρ[γον· ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλλησι] θανεῖσθ[αι
> [ἐν χρυσίωι] τόδε γραψ[άσθω μεμνημένος ἥρως,
> [μή μίν γ' ἐκ]π̣ά̣γλως ὑ̣π̣ά̣[γ]ο̣ι σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας.
>
> This is the wo[rk of Mnemosy]ne. [When a hero is on the point of] dying,
> [let him] recall and get this grav[ed on gold
> lest] the murk cover [him] and lead [him] down in dread.

The function of these gold tablets is thus clearly shown: writing the instructions in order to avoid the initiate's (i. e. hero's) confusion, fear, and oblivion of what he had learnt in *teletais*, at the moment he has to start his underworld journey.

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[196] As, moreover, is his usual procedure, cf. Bernabé (1998a) 38 ff. and (forthcoming, 3).
[197] West (1975) 232.
[198] Riedweg (2002) 476.

1.12. *Short versions: the Cretan tablets*

We find a series of tablets (five at Eleutherna and one in Milopotamus) with a text that is practically identical, with minimal variants[199] and various insignificant graphic errors (**L 5a–f**). Another one, with a slightly longer text, is at Malibu, California (**L 6**). Recently, another tablet from Sfakaki with a similar text (but with some strange readings) has been found (**L 6a**).

In this group of brief tablets, the theme we have seen in the longer ones from the same group has been reduced to its minimal expression. Only the soul's request to drink "from the fountain of eternal flow" is taken up.[200] The fountain that always pours forth and is never exhausted evokes the eternity that, in the tablets from Hipponion, Petelia, Pharsalus and Entella, is represented by the lake of Mnemosyne. The fountain is near the cypress tree. We see, then, that the motif of the cypress tree has been reversed: from being an indication of the fountain from which one must not drink, it becomes the indication of that from which one must drink. The guardians' question[201] is included, and the standard reply:

> I am the son of Earth and of starry Heaven.

The tablet from Malibu (**L 6**) is a kind of intermedial stage of the text between the first four and the seven Cretan ones. It is almost identical to the latter, but with two significant differences: one is that the cypress is not explicitly associated with the fountain (**L 6**, 2):

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[199] Particularly in the formula of the request for water, studied in detail by Velasco (1994) 455 ff.

[200] Comparetti (1910) 39 maintained that αἰέναος was more noble and poetic than αἰείροος, Kern (1922 [= 1972]) 106 considered αἰέναος preferable because it was less common, Olivieri (1915) 15 affirmed that αἰείροος was a gloss on αἰέναος. The term αἰέναος is better adapted to the dactylic meter, for which reason some scholars, like Velasco López (1990–1991) 282, consider it to be older than αἰείροος, whose appearance may be related to a word from the same root, προρέον, which is present in other tablets, like those from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia and Pharsalus. In any case, this is a traditional epithet (cf. Hes. *Op.* 595, Apoll. Rhod. 3, 222, etc.). We find it in relation with the world of the dead and the Beyond in Plato (*Phd.* 111d), who speaks of "rivers of eternal flow", in Apollonius Rhodius (3, 860), who refers to the perennial waters in which the magician Medea bathes as she invokes Brimo, whom she qualifies as "sovereign of the dead", and in Aristophanes' parody of the Beyond (*Ran.* 146), where we read of "mud and shit of eternal flow".

[201] As was already noted by Guarducci (1939b) 169, and not from the fountain itself, as was thought by some of the first interpreters.

On the right, a white cypress.

Whereas in the majority of the Cretan tablets (**L 5**, 2), this does take place:

On the right, where the cypress is.

Note that the whiteness of the cypress has also disappeared.

The second significant difference is the addition at **L 6**, 4:

but my race is heavenly

which coincides exactly with an expression contained in the tablet from Petelia (**L 3**, 7) and the one from Entella (**L 2**, 15). This links the short tablets from Crete even more closely to the longer tablets from the same group.

The tablet from Sfakaki (**L 6a**) is rather anomalous. In the first verse, the verb ἀπόλλυμαι changes to παραπόλλυται, in the third person, as if it did not form a part of the soul's speech. Consequently, the rest of the verse is restructured.

In the second verse, which refers to the fountain, one reads αυρου, which sequence we may interpret as "of eternal flow" (αἰ<ει>ρ<ό>ου), just as in other tablets of the series, or "of the lizard" (<Σ>αύρου);[202] in addition, the fountain is located "on the left of the cypress".

In the third verse, there appears the strange reply:

I am the mother of Earth and starry Heaven.

which does not have much meaning. It is likely that there has been a contamination between the better-known formula "I am the son of Earth and of starry Heaven" with an alternative "The Earth is my mother and the starry Heaven, my father".

The last verse is followed by a line with a meaningless sequence of letters, which "seem to be a repetition by confusion of the beginning of the text, or perhaps a new formula of the process of question and answer".[203] In our opinion, the capricious sequence of letters might obey the desire to cover the surface of the tablet completely with writing.

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[202] If this were the case, we would have here an allusion to the Lizard Fountain, cited by Theophr. *Hist. Plant.* 3, 3, 4: "In Crete…there is a fountain called 'of the Lizard'"; cf. Tzifopoulos forthcoming, *ad loc*. See also Graf-Johnston (2007) 109 ff.

[203] Tzifopoulos, forthcoming, *ad loc*.

1.13. *The relation between the long and the shorter tablets*

In our opinion, the Cretan tablets and the Thessalian one from the Malibu museum are the result of changing the ancient freedom of the longer tablets into a more schematic and formalized model. The most obvious case is that of the Cretan tablets. In view of the itinerant character of the Orphics—whom we may call "missionaries"—they will probably have transplanted these new religious beliefs, originating in Magna Graecia, to Crete, bearing with them a model of tablet than was highly stereotyped and schematized. Even the tablet that preserved at Malibu (found in Thessaly, **L 6**) is shorter than the first four ones, but somewhat longer than the ones from Crete. It preserves the phrase "but my race is heavenly". In it, the cypress, which is still white, still remains on the right, but it should be understood that we must interpret, by paraphrasing

> on the right (where the soul must not go, there remains) a white cypress.

The tree's change of situation and the loss of the symbolic value of its whiteness, whatever it was, take place in the adaptation of this Thessalian model (represented in the one from Malibu), to the tablets of Crete, through a misunderstanding due to the syntactic ambiguity of the Thessalian original. The phrase we have just cited is transformed to

> on the right, where the cypress is.[204]

The contrary has been proposed:[205] that the short tablets are not the result of the abbreviation of the long ones, but, on the contrary, are the more primitive form of those documents in which there would be only one fountain for cooling off the thirst of the dead, pointed out by a cypress. Later on, as a consequence of the adaptation of this image to Orphic beliefs, this scene of the fountain and the cypress, almost a perfect *locus amoenus*, would be relegated to the deceased in general, with a new fountain being created exclusively for the initiates. Several

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[204] Also, from other points of view, Burkert (1975) 91 f. and n. 21 considers that the symbolism of the white cypress would be lost in the version from Crete, where the cypress marks the good fountain, with the result being a similar confusion between right and left.

[205] For instance, Velasco López (1990–1991) 52 ff. Also Calame (2006) 255 f. thinks that the short text is addressed to the common mortals.

motives prevent us from accepting this viewpoint: a) The long tablets are a century older than the Cretan ones. b) They are distributed throughout a wider area (Magna Graecia, Thessaly, and Sicily), whereas the brief ones are concentrated in a smaller area. c) As we have just seen, the passage of the text from the longer ones to the Cretan ones, through the model of the one from Malibu, which will have been misunderstood, can easily be explained. This is not the case for the inverse process. It therefore seems more likely and more in accordance with the chronology and distribution of the documents to think that the long documents are older, and that a reduced model that was later "exported" to Crete, where it became stereotyped.

1.14. *Gender hesitations*

Some hesitations are found in the tablets in the use of grammatical gender. In **L 1** and **L 4** the deceased confesses that he is "dry" (in the masculine), and in all cases, except for some of the brief tablets in which one speaks of a "daughter",[206] declares himself "son (in the masculine) of Earth and of starry Heaven". This is curious, since the cadaver that wore the tablet from Hipponion was a woman. Nevertheless, in **L 3** the adjective "dry" appears in the feminine gender, although in this case, our very poor information on the archaeological context of the find prevents us from knowing the sex of the believer. These hesitations on gender can be explained by the factors encountered: on the one hand, the formulary character of these phrases brings it about that a deceased woman can utter a stereotyped formula in the masculine. On the other hand, there is always considerable ambiguity surrounding the determination of whether the speaker is the deceased person (who, if he is a male, would speak in the masculine) or his soul (which would speak of itself in the feminine, since ψυχή is feminine in Greek.[207] In view of this situation, hesitations are not surprising.

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[206] Cf. the material in Graf (1993) 257 ff.; see also Betz (1998) 402 n. 11. There is a different interpretation in Edmonds (2004) 65–69, who believes that there was a predominance of female over male initiates. Calame (2006) 248–250 compares the gender hesitation in gold tablets with those present in Pindar and other Archaic and Classic lyric poets.

[207] Cf. Comparetti (1910) 40, yet it should be recalled that ψυχή is only mentioned in Hipponion, Petelia and Thurii.

CHAPTER TWO

A RITUAL FOR THE DEAD: THE TABLETS FROM PELINNA (L 7AB)

Translation of tablets L 7ab from Pelinna

The two tablets from Pelinna (**L 7a** and **7b**) were found in Thessaly in 1985, on the site of ancient Pelinna or Pelinnaion. They were placed on the breast of a dead female, in a tomb where a small statue of a maenad was also found (cf. a similar figure in App. II n. 7). Published in 1987, they revolutionized what had been known and said until then about these texts, and contributed new and extremely important viewpoints.[1] They are in the shape of an ivy leaf, as they are represented on vase paintings,[2] although it cannot be ruled out that they may represent a heart, in the light of a text by Pausanias that speaks of a "heart of orichalcum" in relation to the mysteries of Lerna.[3] Everything in the grave, then, including the very form of the text's support, suggests a clearly Dionysiac atmosphere, since both the ivy and the heart evoke the presence of the power of Dionysus. The text of one of the tablets is longer than that of the other. It has been suggested[4] that the text of the shorter tablet was written first, and since the entire text did not fit, the longer one was written. We present the text of the latter:[5]

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[1] These tablets were studied in depth by their first editors Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 3 ff., and then by Luppe (1989), Segal (1990) 411 ff., Graf (1991) 87 ff., (1993) 239 ff., Ricciardelli (1992) 27 ff., and Riedweg (1998).

[2] For the relation of ivy with Dionysus, cf. Eur. *Bac.* 81, where the initiates, crowned with ivy, honor Bacchus; Aristoph. *Thesm.* 988, where Dionysus is invoked as κισσοφόρε βακχεῖε, and *Orph. Hymn* 30, 4 where Dionysus is qualified as κισσόβρυον (cited by Ricciardelli [1992] 27. Cf. also Segal [1990] 414 n. 14). For ivy crowns in the cult of Dionysus, cf. Blech (1982) 212 ff.

[3] Paus. 2, 37, 2–3. Let us not forget that the heart was the part of Dionysus that was not ingested, and from which he was reborn, according to the Orphic myth (*OF* 314 f. and 327). We owe this suggestion to David Jordan. The possible form of heart has been also proposed by Theodossiev (1996) 224 and Martín Hernández (2006) 448 ff.

[4] Ricciardelli (1992) 27.

[5] The shorter one exhibits the same text, without lines 4 and 7.

L 7a–b Two tablets from Pelinna, 4th cent. B.C., 1st edition Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou (1987) 3 ff.

You have just died and have just been born, thrice happy, on this day.
Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you.
A bull, you leapt into the milk.
Swift, you leapt into the milk.
A ram, you fell into the milk.
You have wine, a happy privilege
and you will go under the earth,[6] once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones.

Commentaries

2.1. *Structure of the text*

An unnamed person addresses the deceased in the second person. He refers to the present ("you have wine"), to the past, both immediate ("you have just died and have just been born") and distant ("Bacchus himself has liberated you"), and to the future ("you will go under the earth"), and he urges the soul to say something in the presence of the goddess of the underworld (which implies a reference to the immediate future). The possibilities for the speaker's identity are set forth by Riedweg:[7] it is either someone talking in the underworld, or the tablet itself, or the initiating priest, or someone taking part in the funerary rites.[8]

The reference to a concrete day ("on this day") on which the deceased has just died probably situates us at the funeral. It is therefore most likely that the person speaking is the one officiating over the funerary rites. And the expressions that are pronounced are probably part of this rite. Milk and wine are mentioned, which, in the form of offerings

[6] We have opted for the reading of Luppe (1989) 14 καὶ σὺ μὲν εἶς. The first editors Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 15, read κἀπμένει σ' (so also Pugliese Carratelli [1993] 62), for other variants, cf. § 2.6 and the Greek text in Appendix I.

[7] Riedweg (1996) 478, (1998) 369, to whom the observation on the references to time is also due.

[8] Guarducci (1990) 14 already understood that the speaker was a μύστης.

or libations, can accompany the utterance of the formulas. However, it is doubted whether the formulas mentioned are those of the funeral or of the initiation.

The metrical form is also strange. The first verse has an almost hexametric form, although it is broken by the word τρισόλβιε 'thrice happy'. Whatever the explanation one may give for this phenomenon,[9] the fact is that the author has preferred to use a word that surely has strong ritual implications and alters the meter, rather than using another less significant one to maintain a metrically correct sequence. There follows a perfect hexameter with the indication to the *mystes* that he should declare to Persephone that Bacchus has liberated him. One supposes that such a declaration must take place in an immediate future. The following three lines are not hexametric. They are probably in prose, with a rhythmic, but not metrical structure.[10] Line 4 consists of four dactyls (perhaps the end of a hexameter), and finally, a perfect hexameter.

It is possible that the changes in metric structure and the intrusion of prose result from a different origin and/or a different function of the parts. We will have occasion to return to this question.

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[9] Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 11 suggested that in the model μάκαρ or θεός, which could be adapted to the verse, were read instead of τρισόλβιε. In the first case, it would have been substituted because μάκαρ cannot be used to address the deceased of both sexes, while in the second, it was to mitigate the notion of deification. These reasons are criticized by Ricciardelli (1992) 29, since deification is clear in other parallel expressions of the tablets, which we cite further on. Graf (1991) 88 and 99 suggests that τρισόλβιε could be substituted for μάκαρ because the former is more emphatic and could be better adjusted to the oral situation of ritual macarism, in which he suggests the text would be represented. He cites in support the testimony of Lucian, *Nīgr.* 1, in which the word τρισόλβιος is mentioned, and qualified as τὸ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς ὄνομα 'theater-word', which is therefore used in an eminently oral situation (cf. [1993] 247 ff., where he shows himself more skeptical with regard to the possibility that the tablets may have formed part of a ritual λεγόμενον). Giangrande (1991a) 82 f. opts for another explanatory approach, and thinks the verse is a dactylic heptameter with τρῖς measured long by nature. The truth is that it is useless to worry about meter in this tablet, where there is more rhythm than meter. What seems clear is that τρισόλβιε, with the references to number three and to happiness, which links up well with εὐδαίμονα in l. 6, is perfectly framed here. Respect for meter is no doubt secondary in this type of document.

[10] Cf. Watkins (1995). On the conjunction of metric and rhythmic structure in the tablet, cf. Riedweg (2002) 461 f.

2.2. *A death that is life*[11]

In the beginning, *ex abrupto* the unnamed first-person narrator greets the deceased, whom he considers happy, or, better yet, thrice happy. This is known as a μακαρισμός. The consideration of the deceased as happy, the mention of the fact that death and birth have occurred in unison, and the use of the verb "to liberate" in the following line imply that the speaker is convinced that the deceased has not simply suffered a death from which a new human life has been reborn, but has definitively abandoned the human sphere[12] to accede to the place of the blessed. The macarism formulas of the other tablets express the initiate's newly acquired status with greater clarity:

L 8, 4 You have been born a god, from the man that you were.
L 9, 8 Happy and fortunate, you will be god, from mortal that you were.
L 11, 4 Come, Caecilia Secundina, legitimately changed into a goddess.

In Pindar (*fr.* 137 Maehl.), we find a reference that seems to allude to a similar doctrine, albeit in an Eleusinian environment:

> Happy is he who, having contemplated that,[13] goes beneath the earth!
> For he knows the end of life, and knows the beginning given by Zeus.

We no doubt have to do with a mystery ritual, in which happiness after death is promised. We shall have occasion to offer more specifications on this point.

The word τρισόλβιε 'thrice happy', like the simple form ὄλβιος 'happy', is used to refer to whomever has achieved a particular knowledge, generally (not always) proceeding from initiation. Let a few examples suffice:

> Sophocles *fr.* 837 Radt (with regard to the mysteries)
> thrice happy
> those mortals who, having carried out the initiatory rites
> head for Hades, since life is reserved for them,
> whereas the others suffer great evils.
> *h. Cer.* 480
> Happy he who has seen them, among earthly men!

[11] Cf. Bernabé (2007b).
[12] Ricciardelli (1992) 28.
[13] The reference is to the mysteries.

Some verses from Hesiod (*Op.* 826 ff.), foreign to the mystery context, but laden with religious connotations, describe as "happy" he who knows the properties of the days and carrying out his labors guided by his knowledge and without offending the immortals.[14] For Empedocles (*fr.* 95 Wright [= B 132 D.-K.]),[15] it is the approximation to the divinity by means of the knowledge one has of it that constitutes the most important wisdom, which leads to happiness:

> Happy is he who has obtained a treasure of divine thoughts
> and unfortunate he who is interested only in an obscure opinion on the gods.

Empedocles' testimony is fundamental for understanding the meaning of τρισόλβιε in the tablets: the deceased is blessed through his knowledge, which derives from initiation, but also through having completed the full cycle of mortal rebirths (evoked by τρισ-) and thus achieved eternal happiness.[16] "Thrice" may have a mere intensifying value (something like "particularly blessed"), but it does not seem to be purely accidental[17] that in other passages in which reference is made to mystery doctrines, references appear to cycles that are multiples of three. In Pindar (*Ol.* 2, 75 f.), there is a distinction between the good, who after their death lead an existence without pain, and the souls of superior quality, who are able to complete the full cycle of existence three times without stain, and who, following the path of Zeus, go to the bastion of Kronos, in the island of the Blessed.[18] Empedocles (*fr.* 107, 6 Wright [= B 115, 6 D.-K.]) speaks of a penalty that will last for times that are thrice uncountable,[19] and Herodotus informs us about the avatars of the human body when it separates itself from the body, according to the Egyptians:[20] man's soul suffers reincarnations in various animals and human beings, in a process that lasts three thousand years, and this doctrine, according to him, "was followed by the ancient Greeks". Plato also tells (*Phdr.* 249a) how the soul of the

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[14] Cf. Lévêque (1982) 113 ff.
[15] Cf. Bernabé (1988) 205 for the commentary; *fr.* 95, p. 233 for the translation.
[16] Merkelbach (1989) 15 f., Guarducci (1990) 14.
[17] Farnell (1921) 380 already pointed out, quite rightly, that threefold reincarnation must have been in vogue in Orphic circles.
[18] Cf. Von Fritz (1957) 85 ff., Ricciardelli (1992) 29 f., n. 16.
[19] Cf. Rashed (2001), Primavesi (2001).
[20] It is now known that the reference to the Egyptians is false. Cf. Lloyd (1975) 57 ff. and his commentary on this passage.

person who has loved wisdom, if it chooses the philosophical life for three periods of a millennium, is separated from the body at the end of the third one: obviously, the philosopher has translated a religious belief into philosophical terms.[21]

We do not know whether the Orphics believed in a cycle of three reincarnations, but it is clear that this number is related in some way to this type of belief, and therefore its presence in the tablets could be related to a similar doctrine, especially when the context favors such a hypothesis. It may also be for the same reason that the formula involving the fall into the milk is uttered three times, albeit with variations.

The macarism is pronounced at a precise moment (now, on this day). The insistence on the element of time has been pointed out,[22] as has the particular urgency that characterizes this tablet, as it does other Orphic tablets.[23] One gets the impression that everything must be decided in little time. This impression of urgency is corroborated by the verbs of the central lines: ἔθορες 'you leapt', and ἔπεσες 'you fell'. Even ἔθανες 'you have just died' instead of the expected τέθνηκας 'you have died/are dead'[24] insists on this instantaneous character, and the punctual condition of passage of death. Everything supports the interpretation that the text of the tablet reflects the precise moment of the funeral, which is also conceived as that of the deceased's passage to another kind of life, this one happy and durable. It has been suggested that the occasion could be that of initiation,[25] but this is a false problem, since for the Orphics both are one and the same thing.[26]

2.3. *The soul liberated by Dionysus*

In the light of what is narrated in the tablets from the previous group (**L 1–6**), we suppose that the soul of the deceased, in order to arrive in the presence of Persephone, must pass the test of the guardians beforehand, and answer their question correctly, but this circumstance

[21] Macrob. *Somn. Scip.* 1, 11, 8 ff. informs us that according to some Platonists, the soul descends into the body from Elysium, undergoing three deaths.
[22] Ricciardelli (1992) 28.
[23] Cf. Hipponion (**L 1**, 11) δότ' ὦ[κα] Petelia (**L 2**, 8) δότ' αἶψα.
[24] Segal (1990) 414.
[25] Cf. Graf (1991) 98, (1993) 249 f.
[26] Cf. § 3.3.

does not seem relevant at this moment. The tablet is limited to the following phrase:

> Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you.[27]

This is a phrase laden with meaning, which requires a thorough commentary, both with regard to the role played by Persephone and Bacchus in this eschatology, and to the meaning of the "liberation" that is mentioned.

Let us begin with Persephone. In reality, the goddess had already been alluded to in the first group we studied, since she is the "subterranean queen" before whose presence the deceased had to present himself, after correctly answering the guardians' question, but here she is called by her name.

In other tablets, she also appears as the queen of the underworld, in whose dominion the paradise promised to the initiates is located:

L 8, 5–6	Hail, hail, when you take the path to the right towards the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.
L 10, 6	Now I come as a suppliant before the chaste Persephone.

We also find her in the short tablets from Milopotamus (**L 15**), and Pella (**L 16b**). Although her name does not appear in one tablet from Pherai (**L 13**), the presence of Brimo (one of her invocations) and the allusion to the "sacred meadow" evoke "the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone" cited in the tablet from Thurii (**L 8**, 6). She is also, no doubt, the "queen of the underworld beings"[28] mentioned in the tablets from Thurii and Rome, and she appears as such in the *Orphic Hymns* (29, 6):

> Mother of the Eumenides, queen of the underworld beings.

Likewise, she is mentioned several times in the "great" tablet from Thurii (**L 12**), according to our interpretation:

L 12, 1	To Cybelea, daughter of Demeter
L 12, 5	Nestis

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[27] The same formula may have been in **L 2**, 20 f., cf. Chaniotis-Mylonopoulos (2000) 172.

[28] We have preferred to interpret χθονίων βασίλεια as "queen of the underworld beings", that is, we take χθονίων to be a masculine genitive plural, referring to the inhabitants of this world, rather than as a neuter that would include the entire set of everything subterranean.

L 12, 8 The Underground Girl (Kore)
L 12, 9 The Girl (Kore)

In the religion most widespread among the Greeks, Persephone is also the subterranean goddess,[29] her parents are the same, and she is also the wife of Hades, who abducts her and obliges her to spend part of the year beneath the earth, whereas she returns to the earth for the rest of it.[30] This myth corresponds to the generation of the grain, which, like Persephone, reappears once a year. Perhaps this is why the hopes for a life in the Beyond could be placed in the goddess, which must have promoted the extension of her cult through Magna Graecia and Hellas.[31] In the *Orphic Hymn* to this goddess, one also finds reflected her generative and destructive ability, and she is begged to send the fruits of the earth to mortals (*Orph. Hymn.* 29, 15 ff.):

> Life and death you alone are for long-suffering mortals,
> Persephone, since you always feed everything and destroy everything.
> Listen to me, happy goddess, and send us the fruits of the earth.

Persephone plays an important role in all the Eleusinian rites, for which reason some authors have supposed a connection of these tablets with the Eleusinian world rather than the Orphic one. Further on,[32] we shall offer the reasons that make us prefer the relation with Orphism.

According to Orphic tradition, Persephone is born as the result of the rape of Demeter by Zeus. Zeus in turn violates her as well, and she gives birth to Dionysus Bacchus.[33] As the mother of Dionysus, Persephone can also be considered the mother of mortals, who, according to the Orphic myth, descend from the Titans who had devoured her son.[34] Indeed, according to our interpretation of the "great" tablet of Thurii, it is she that the deceased addresses, calling her "mother":

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[29] Hdt. 6, 134; 7, 153 calls Demeter and Persephone "underground goddesses". The use of βασίλεια (cf. Zuntz [1971] 308) is a highly original expression, non-Homeric, and closer to Hesiod's references to Ζεὺς βασιλεύς than to the application of βασίλεια to Hera in the *Homeric Hymn* to that goddess (*Hom. Hymn.* 12, 2).

[30] This was the best-known episode, which was to give rise to the Eleusinian mysteries. Cf. the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter.*

[31] Cf. Grimal (1965) 425 *s. v.* Persephone, Bräuninger (1937), Mavleev (1994) 1, 329 ff., 2, 271 (with further bibliography), and Cabrera-Bernabé (2007).

[32] Cf. § 10.6.3.

[33] Cf. *OF* 276 and 283.

[34] This interpretation would be in agreement with the interpretation proposed by the formula δεσποίνας δ' ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας "and I plunged beneath the lap of my mistress, the subterranean queen" (**L 9**, 7), according to which the

L 12, 6–7 mother, hear my prayer.

The goddess fulfills a salvific function, and the initiate confides in her. In this sense, the information provided by Cavallari,[35] the archaeologist who excavated the tumulus of Timpone Grande at the end of the 19th century, is highly interesting. He mentions among the objects found, like the tablets, on the torso of the deceased:

> due solidissime pistrelle di argento coll'impronta ognuna di una teste muliebre con capelli radianti ed ornamento al collo.

This description is similar to that of many Apulian vases, in which the woman is Persephone.[36] Indeed, Dionysus and Persephone appear side by side in Apulian iconography to ensure the deceased's passage and reception in the Beyond. On an Apulian vase[37] there appear Persephone, with her torch, representing her infernal function, held crossways, and Hades seated opposite, greeting Dionysus. Dionysus is accompanied by two maenads with torch, thyrsus and tambourine, and the satyr Oenope ('wine-face'). Finally, the presence of Hermes in a position symmetrical to that of Dionysus favors its interpretation as a scene of passage. The familiarity of the gesture of shaking hands indicates Dionysus' influence among the infernal gods and is a sign of his salvific function.

It cannot be a coincidence that the portrait of the goddess is situated in the same place, over the torso, as the tablets that allude to her, which indicates that if the deceased has had himself buried either with a gold tablet inscribed with a message for Persephone, or else with a silver plaque with a portrait of the divinity, it is because he has confidence in her protective power. The Locrian iconography also offers us various representations in pinakes where Bacchus and Persephone appear together[38] (cf. App. II n. 3).

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mother receives her dying son into her bosom, thus symbolizing birth to eternal life, cf. § 4.5.b.

[35] Cavallari (1878–1879) 246 ff.

[36] As is observed by Graf (1993) 254 f.

[37] A volute crater from the museum of Toledo (Ohio). Cf. the interpretation of this piece in Orphic terms by Johnston and McNiven (1996), with further information in App. II n. 6.

[38] Cf. Prückner (1968) tab. 23–30, 4, Sourvinou-Inwood (1978) 105 f., Torelli (1977) 163 ff., Giangiulio (1994) 32 f. This type of representation also appears on a series of Southern Italian vases, cf. Guthrie (1935) 187 ff., Schmidt (1975) 108 ff., and App. II n. 5.

Persephone is the judge in the ultimate decision over the soul's destiny, as seems to be deducible from the expression we find in two Thurian tablets:

> **L 10a–b**, 6 f. Now I come as a suppliant before chaste Persephone, to see if, benevolent, she may send me to the dwelling of the limpid ones.

And it is to her that the initiate's declarations of purification and liberation are addressed:

> **L 9–10**, 1 I come from among the pure, pure, queen of the subterranean beings.

This is why, in the tablet to which we are referring, she is the one who must be informed that Dionysus has liberated the soul of the deceased.

In the tablets from Hipponion and Entella (**L 1–2**), the soul must confront the questions of the guardians, but their function does not go beyond that of mere transmitters of the correct answer to the goddess, who must make the ultimate decision. In the tablet from Pella (**L 16b**), her name appears in the dative, which is to be understood in the same sense as in the texts from Pelinna: the goddess' attention is attracted, and Posidippus' condition as an initiate in the mysteries is communicated to her, so that she may guarantee him a favorable position in the Beyond.[39]

The various mentions of Persephone in the tablets show her as a divinity who protects the initiates, and plays a fundamental role in their salvation,[40] since she is the judge who ultimately determines their

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[39] Cf. Dickie (1995) 82, Rossi (1996) 59 ff., and the commentary on the tablet from Milopotamus (**L 15**) in § 8. 2.

[40] Di Filippo Balestrazzi (1991) 75 f. has studied the similarity between Persephone and other goddesses of the Mediterranean area, and wonders whether the personage hidden beneath the epithet of the tablet from Thurii might be Kore, daughter of Cybele, according to the view expressed in the chorus of Euripides' *Helen* (v. 1301–1365), or some kind of identification of the latter, who is no doubt Persephone, with the Anatolian goddess. He postulates that there is a single religious system behind the Cybele of the Sards, the Orphic Baubo, the divinity of the Thurian tablet, the mask of a Locrian idol, and the *protomoi* from throughout the Mediterranean, as well as behind the faceless (ἀπρόσωπος) goddess of Cyrene. This is deduced from the funerary value acquired by the "lap", or the earth, into which man sinks, according to a ritual whose model is handed down to us, albeit in sketchy form, by the verse from the Thurian tablets in which the initiate asks to plunge into the sovereign's lap (cf. Thimme [1985] 72 ff.).

destiny, although, as we have seen, her decision seems to be united to that of Bacchus.

As far as Bacchus is concerned, this is the only occasion when we find an unequivocal mention of Dionysus in the "long" tablets.[41] It presupposes a direct allusion to the Bacchic mysteries, and confirms the tablets' relation with the Dionysiac sphere. It must be specified that the word that appears is not Bacchus, but βάκχιος, the epiclesis of the god of the βάκχοι, or ecstatic adorers, a situation one achieves through personal initiation.[42] The deceased, one of Bacchus' faithful, is himself a βάκχος[43] (cf. **L 1**, 16), whereas the god, in turn, is βάκχιος like his worshipper.[44] An interesting parallel[45] is the Dionysus βάκχιος of Olbia, cited by Herodotus as the god into whose cult the Scythian king Scylas[46] was initiated, which is connected with the eschatology of the bone tablets found in the same city and dated to a very proximate period: the bone tablets also associate the Orphics with Dionysus, whose name appears several times in abbreviated form.[47] The text from Pelinna has the same characteristics: Dionysus is present under the name βάκχιος, but is also symbolized in the ivy form of the tablets, and closely related to the statue of a maenad found outside the sarcophagus (cf. another figure of a maenad in App. II n. 7).

The myth of the Orphic Dionysus can be reconstructed from the fragments of the Orphic theogonies, especially the *Rhapsodies*,[48] in the terms we have set out in § 1.6. Since human beings issue forth from the ashes of the Titans, united with the earth, we have within us residues of the Titanic nature, but also of the Dionysiac nature, since the Titans had eaten the flesh of the god. Consequently, Bacchus, the very victim of the Titanic crime, is the only one who can liberate the human race from the guilt of their ancestors. This is why the tablets from Pelinna say explicitly:

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[41] Dionysus is also meant in **L 16n** "I am a limpid one, consecrated to Dionysus Bacchus" and Βάκχου can be read in the lacuna of **L 13a**, 1.

[42] Graf (1985) 285 ff. Cf. § 10.6.4.a.

[43] Cf. Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472 Kannicht.

[44] Ricciardelli (1992) 30, Casadio (1999) 106 ff. The same name appears in **L 16n**, as it does in other sources: Eur. *Bac.* 67, *Cycl.* 519, 521, Antiph. *fr.* 234 K.-A., Aristoph. *Acharn.* 263, *Thesm.* 988. In the *Orphic Hymns*, it is one of the names with which Apollo is invoked: Orph. *Hymn.* 34, 7 Βάκχιε καὶ Διδυμεῦ Cf. Casadio (1999) 106 ff.

[45] Cf. Graf (1993) 243.

[46] Hdt. 4, 79, cf. § 1.6 n. 126.

[47] Cf. Bernabé (1999a) and § 1.6 p. 29 ff.

[48] Cf. the translation by Bernabé (2003a).

> Bacchus himself has liberated me.

That is, the principal figure affected by the crime of mankind's ancestors, the god, considers that the initiate has now expiated the crime inherited from his Titanic lineage, for which reason Persephone, the victim's mother, will be able to consent to accept the soul that arrives before her. This is the same situation alluded to in a Pindaric fragment (133 Maehl.), in which[49] we are told of

> the souls of those from whom Persephone accepts compensation for their ancient sorrow.[50]

The role played by the god in the liberation and definitive absolution of the soul is therefore fundamental; not for nothing is Λυσεύς 'Liberator' one of Dionysus' epithets, a liberation that cannot mean only the liberation of the soul from the body, for then we could not understand the role of Dionysus and the relevance this fact has for Persephone. The absolution of Dionysus, the victim of the Titanic crime, is indispensable for obtaining the forgiveness of the god's mother, the queen of the underworld.[51]

Hence the purificatory function of the Bacchic mysteries can be deduced. Before the discovery of the tablets from Pelinna, it was believed[52] that liberation on the part of Dionysus was obtained thanks to initiation into the mysteries during life, without the god intervening once the initiate had died. There was no evidence for Dionysus leading his initiates in the Beyond, as he had led them in this world. Despite his partially chthonic character, his function with regard to the μύσται καὶ βάκχοι concluded as soon as they were laid down in their tombs. That is, the initiate would already have done what was most difficult, and all that remained for him was the ultramundane passage, carrying his tablet like a reminder. Nevertheless, as result of the new discoveries, we can affirm[53] that in the beliefs reflected by the Pelinna tablet, Dionysus fulfills a purificatory function in a personal and eschatological sense: he assists the initiate at the junction of the limit between life and death, between the human and the divine. Liberation after death is a consequence of initiation in the mysteries, carried out during life.

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[49] Cf. Cannatà Fera (1990) 94 f. (as in n. 65; commentary on pp. 219–231).

[50] Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1990) 106, Bernabé (1999b), despite the unfounded hesitations of Holzhausen (2004).

[51] As is noted by Guarducci (1990) 14; see also Lloyd-Jones (1990) 106.

[52] Thus, for instance, Feyerabend (1984) 2.

[53] Cf. Segal (1990) 413 ff.

Thus, the tablets can help us to understand other passages of Greek literature where the role of the god is diluted between the world of the living and that of the dead, as, for example, in a Heraclitean fragment:[54]

> If they did not celebrate the procession in honor of Dionysus and did not sing the hymn to the pudenda, they would do what is most shameful. But Hades is the same as Dionysus, for whom they go mad and hold bacchanals,

or in Herodotus' story of the initiation of the Scythian king Scylas into the Dionysiac-Orphic mysteries of Olbia (Hdt. 4, 79), or the reference to the gold amphora, a present of Dionysus, in which the bones of Achilles and Patroclus (*Il.* 24, 73 ff.) are mixed, or the episode of a poem of Stesichorus, in which Dionysus offers an amphora to Thetis when she receives him under the sea, and she, in turn, gives it to Achilles, so that his bones may rest there after his death (Stesich. *PMG* 234 Page).

The importance of Dionysus the Liberator appears in other testimonies.[55] In addition to the *Orphic hymns* where he receives the same epithet,[56] we may cite a text from Pausanias (2, 2, 6), which tells us that two wooden statues of Dionysus were exhibited in the agora of Corinth, one with the epithet of *Lysios* 'liberator', another that of *Baccheios*.[57] In Sicyon, too, the statues of Dionysus Baccheios and Dionysus the Liberator were carried to the sanctuary in a nocturnal procession.[58] It is clear that Bacchic liberation was associated in funerary ritual with liberation through death: the first one often constitutes the indispensable preamble for the second.

In the fragments of the *Theogonies*, we find references to this same liberation. Here, Proclus tells us:[59]

> Taking the soul to the happy life, after the wanderings around the world of becoming, which those who in Orpheus are initiated into Dionysus and Kore, pray to obtain (*OF* 348)
>
> "liberation from the cycle and a respite from disgrace".

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[54] Heraclit. *fr.* 50 Marcovich (= B 15 D.-K.).

[55] Cf. Calame (1996) 24 ff.

[56] Orph. *Hymn.* 50, 2; 52, 2. Outside of them, he is also called Λύσιος, Λύσειος, and Λυσεύς.

[57] See also Plut. *Adul. amic.* 27 p. 68D (= Pind. *fr.* 248 Maehl.).

[58] Cf. Kruse (1928) 41 f., Drexler (1894–1897) 2210 f., Höfer (1894–1897) 2212.

[59] Procl. *in Tim.* III 297, 3.

A passage in Damascius,[60] in which verses from the Orphic *Theogony* called the *Rhapsodies* are cited, also shows this aspect of Dionysus as a liberator from post-mortem punishment:[61]

> Dionysus is responsible for liberation, and this is why the god is a "Liberator". And Orpheus says (*OF* 350):
>
> "men send perfect hecatombs
> in any season throughout the whole year, and they carry out
> rites, striving for the realization of their impious
> ancestors. But you,[62] possessor of power over them, will free
> whom you choose from the hard sufferings of the eternal goad of passion".

We can reconstitute the religious context of the tablets by seeing how a salvific function is attributed to a divine mother-son couple, typical of the pre-Olympian conception of the Aegean-Anatolian world. It has been pointed out[63] that the association between the mystery god and the subterranean goddess, who is the mother of Dionysus in the Cretan tradition, evokes the existence of an archaic religious model that could reinforce the hypothesis of a Cretan origin of Dionysism: the original link between Dionysus and Persephone and with the chthonic world might have arisen as a result of the literary tradition in which Semele and Ariadne, mortals, mother and wife of the god in his terrestrial vicissitudes, obtain from him the prize of immortality. The mystical role of the two numina places the Cretan Dionysus in relation with the Orphic Dionysus: the Orphic Dionysus was also born of Persephone, with whom Zeus unites in the form of a serpent. In any case, we cannot go into detail here on the complicated question of the origins of the Orphic Bacchus and his presence in various cultural contexts.[64] We have tried to profile his mythic story in Orphic contexts, and fix his

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[60] Damasc. *in Phaed.* 1, 11 (35 Westerink).

[61] Drexler (1894–1897) 2210 defines him as a divinity that liberates from torments and endless misfortunes.

[62] The reference is obviously to Dionysus.

[63] Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 80 ff.

[64] Burkert (1975) 91 claims the affinity of the Orphic story with Egyptian parallels. The identification of Dionysus with Osiris was obvious for Herodotus (Hdt. 2, 132 ff.), and probably also for Hecataeus. According to Murray (1911²) 342 ff., the clearest common element is the myth of laceration. The Egyptian parallels have been studied by Casadio (1996) and Bernabé (1996b), (1998a) 36 ff. Moreover, several passages from Sophocles' *Antigone* (1119 f., 1150 f.) demonstrate the presence of Bacchus in Eleusis already in the mid-5th century B.C. (cf. Musti [1984] 65 ff.).

role in the tablets. Here, Bacchus is situated midway between the world of the living and that of the dead, because initiation in the mysteries carried out during life obtains its recompense after death, with liberation from the painful cycle of reincarnations.

Finally, it is appropriate to ask ourselves about two aspects of Dionysus' "liberation": from what does he liberate, and to what does liberation lead, that is, what new situation does the liberated soul achieve?

The mention of liberation in the moment in which it is stated that the deceased has died and, at the same time, been born, suggests, as we have seen, that what the soul has achieved is liberation from its corporeal bonds, the definitive abandonment of the corporeal prison, in which it had been incarcerated because of the misdeed committed by the Titans.

No doubt the liberation granted to the deceased by Dionysus-Bacchus requires first of all initiation, and second it is necessary that one lead a life that is subject to specific norms of purity (cf. the initial declaration of tablets **L 9–11**), and, finally, that one submit oneself to the god's judgment. It might be thought that Bacchus' liberation would refer to misdeeds committed during life. However, the majority of authors[65] prefer to see here a reference to liberation from the crime committed by the Titans,[66] which, moreover, is congruent with other mentions in the tablets, where the soul declares

> I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts (**L 10**, 4),

or admits having been subjugated by the Moira, or by him who wounds from the stars with the lightning-bolt (**L 9**, 4; **10**, 5), having left the painful cycle (**L 9**, 5) and arrived as a suppliant before Persephone (**10**, 5). However, the longest of the tablets from Pelinna ends with a verse that is rather significant in this regard:

> And you will go under the earth, once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones.

The answer to the question of whether the mysteries had the soul's liberation as their goal is found within the tablet itself: once the rites

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[65] Cf. Ricciardelli (1992) 30 f., Graf (1993) 243 ff.
[66] Cf. the fragment of Pindar (133 Maehl.) cited previously (p. 72).

that others have already accomplished have been completed, the initiate will be reunited with them. We shall return to this theme in § 2.6.

Plato uses this same mystery terminology, applying it to philosophical concepts. He recommends the purification of the body during life, in order to obtain wisdom at the moment of death, that is, when the divinity frees us from the bonds of the body (*Phd.* 67a); he insists on the idea that the ultimate purification (κάθαρσις) is the separation and liberation of the soul from the body; and he intimately links liberation (λύσις) not only with death (*Phd.* 67d), but also with philosophy (*Phd.* 82d). In this last detail, we can easily appreciate how Plato takes concepts from Orphic doctrines and re-elaborates them in agreement with his own theories, equating philosophical with mystery initiation.

In short, the role of Dionysus and the relevance this fact has for Persephone give us the key for interpreting the expression we are analyzing: the soul has succeeded in liberating itself from its Titanic crime, the primordial guilt for which it has had to go through its sojourn in the mortal world. This expiation presupposes the soul's liberation from its corporeal bonds. This trial is surmounted by means of initiation, rites of purification, and the way of life to which the initiates are subject during their earthly existence. And it is the god Bacchus, Dionysus Lysios, the victim of the crime himself, who must ultimately approve this liberation.

2.4. *The formulas of the animal fallen in the milk*

After the announcement of the soul's liberation by Dionysus, three phrases appear in the tablets from Pelinna (**L 7a**, 3–5):

> A bull, you leapt into the milk.
> Swift, you leapt into the milk.
> A ram, you fell into the milk,

which present a great similarity with others that were already known previously, in the tablets from Thurii:

> **L 8**, 4 A kid, you fell into the milk.
> **L 9**, 9 A kid, I fell into the milk.

In none of the variants does the formula appear forming part of hexameters. We have to do instead with expressions in rhythmic prose,

which might reveal a ritual origin.[67] On the other hand, unlike other expressions we have seen, these are not passwords so that the soul may be admitted to the seat of the fortunate ones, but a formula pronounced once happiness has been achieved.[68] It is, moreover, a mystic formula, and therefore enigmatic, accessible only to initiates.[69] Since well before the tablets from Pelinna were found—when only the variants of those from Thurii were known—its interpretation has excited the imagination of scholars, who have proposed the most various interpretations, some of which do not find much confirmation in the new testimonies.

1. A first way of approach to the problem was to think that the expression had its own meaning, and that it alluded to a concrete ritual in which milk played a part. Three variants have been suggested along these lines:

a) According to the first one,[70] this would be an allusion to a rite in the Orphic religion consisting in the immersion (or aspersion) of the initiate in milk, so that, given the expense supposed by a bath in milk, it was thought that milk could be substituted by water, either alone or mixed with some substance that would give it that appearance (the substitution of elements of the ritual is attested in antiquity). The problem[71] is that there is no documentation of any such practice.
b) Other authors[72] have preferred to relate the reference to the kid fallen into the milk to an Oriental ritual of the sacrifice of a nanny goat, which was then cooked in the milk, described in a mythologico-ritual text from Ugarit in a ceremony of initiation and expressly

[67] On the phonic sequences, cf. Watkins (1995) 278 f. According to Riedweg (2002) 164, the formulas appear to be hymnic acclamations, which might be part of a ritual confirmation.
[68] Ricciardelli (1992) 31 ff., Graf (1991) 94 f.
[69] Burkert (1975) 99 f.
[70] Maintained by Reinach (1901) 204 ff. and Pichon (1910) 60.
[71] As is admitted by Reinach himself (1901) 211.
[72] Reinach (1901) 211 f., Wieten (1915) 44 and 149 n. 2, Cook (1914) 676 ff., Burkert (1975) 99 f. (cf. also Burkert [1985] 295), Kerényi (1976) 203 ff., Lloyd-Jones (1990) 107.

prohibited in the Old Testament.[73] Yet there are no similar parallels for the other animals.

c) It could also be that the ritual included the ingestion of milk, and the initiate pretends to be an unweaned child. Thus, Apuleius[74] describes for us a procession of Isis (also a specialization of Mother Earth), one of whose participants

> carried a glass of gold molded in the form of a nipple, with which he made libations of milk.

The philosopher Sallustius[75] informs us that food consisting of milk was also known in the mysteries of Attis:

> after this, feeding by milk like the newborn, which is followed by manifestations of joy, crowns, and something similar to an ascent towards the gods.

A "milk-carrier" (γαλακτοφόρος) is mentioned in Thessalonica.[76] Even the Maenads suckled the young of wild animals.[77] In the famous fresco of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompei, in a clearly mystical context, a panisca appears offering her breast to a fawn (cf. App. II n. 10).

Thus we read in some ἐπωιδαί, written on lead leaves, dated to different times and found in several places, sentences such as "at milking time", "he drives the goat from Persephone's garden by necessity", and "for suckling from the endless spring of flowering milk."[78] There are many symbols in these ἐπωιδαί very similar to those referred to in the gold tablets. They have been found, furthermore, in the same areas (Magna Graecia and Crete) in which the gold tablets were found.

Milk is an extremely important element in the ritual of Dionysus: when the Bacchants struck the rocks and earth, springs of wine and

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[73] The one called šḥr and šlm, cf. Driver (1956) 120 f., Gaster (1961) 97, 407 ff., Xella (1973) 54 f., Haran (1979) 23 ff., (1985) 135 ff., Keel (1980), Del Olmo (1981) 440. Cf. also references in the Old Testament like *Ex.* 23, 19; 34, 26, *Deut.* 14, 21.

[74] Apul. *Met.* 11, 10. Cf. Dieterich (1925³) 84, Festugière (1972) 63.

[75] Sallust. *De diis* 4.

[76] Cf. *IG* X 2, 65 (*BCH* 37, 1913, p. 97 n. 7), Robert (1934) II 793 ff. = *OF* 664.

[77] Eur. *Bac.* 699–702, cf. Segal (1990) 415.

[78] Edition: Bernabé (2005) *OF* 830, with references to former editions; Jordan and Kotansky are preparing a new edition of these documents. Studies: Jordan (1988), (1992), (2000a), (2000b), Daniel-Maltomini (1990) n. 49, p. 193 ff., Bernabé (2003b).

milk leapt forth, and the furrows dripped honey, all of which are fundamental ingredients in funerary libations.[79]

We find a highly similar context in Aelian:[80]

> They say that Cimon of Cleonas perfected the art of painting, which was still in development, practiced by his predecessors in an unprofessional and inexperienced way and which was, in a way, in swaddling-clothes and milk.

Here the reference to being in milk may metaphorically designate a rebirth of art in the hands of this particularly gifted artist.

This last possibility (which is most likely) would provide an external revelation, in ritual practice, of a deeper meaning of the expression, to which we shall refer later, according to which there would be an allusion to a rebirth of the initiate, who would thus return to the state of a nursling (cf. App. II n. 11).

2. A second line of investigation[81] prefers to start from the assumption that in this text, γάλα signifies "the Milky Way". According to this proposal, the deceased would return to the fields of milk of the happy life, that is, the Milky Way, seat of the blessed. This would associate this expression with the following declarations:

> **L 1**, 10 etc. I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven.
> **L 4**, 9 My name is Asterius.

And it would lead to interpreting the mention of the kid and the bull as related to the zodiacal signs of Aries and Taurus. The choice will have been made to use Γάλα (a name that is none too common for the Milky Way) instead of other more frequent ones, such as γαλαξίας, because in that way, the association with milk, the food of the newborn, is almost automatic, and therefore especially indicated for souls that are reborn to celestial life.[82]

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[79] Cf. Eur. *Bac.* 705 ff. On the symbolism of milk, see Durand (1981 [= 1963]) 245 ff., Graf (1980) 209 ff. On the fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries, cf. Simon (1998) and the bibliography cited in App. II n. 10.

[80] Ael. *Var. hist.* 8, 8.

[81] This hypothesis, initially proposed by Dieterich (1891) 36s (= [1911] 96s), received numerous criticisms, but has been re-argued by Giangrande (1991b) 87 ff. and by Ricciardelli (1992) 31 ff.

[82] Ricciardelli (1992) 36 recalls a tradition handed down by Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 2, 9, and Lyd. *Ost.* 10 (cf. Eisler [1921] 7 ff. and n. 2), mentioning comets called τράγοι that pass through the galaxy as if they were drinking celestial milk: they would be the souls of the dead, returning to their heavenly home. In addition, milk was indispensable for

In the same vein, an attempt has been made to relate γάλα with the "crown" (στέφανος) of Thurii (**L 9**, 10), already interpreted by Diels-Kranz as the Milky Way (τὸν γαλαξίαν κύκλον), also called Γάλα.[83]

Although the arguments seem convincing, the fact is that an interpretation such as this, which would lead us to believe that the initiates hoped to lead a happy life in the heavens, next to the Milky Way, is in flagrant contradiction with the insistent mentions of the fact that the destiny of the initiates is beneath the earth, both in the last line of this very tablet:

> **7a**, 7 and you will go under the earth,[84] once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones.

and in others: in **L 1**, 15 the sacred way of the initiates is beneath the earth (previously, the souls have descended [κατερχόμεναι]); in **L 3**, 11 we read that the soul "will reign with the other heroes", and it is not mentioned that this will be in another place different from the place he already is, that is, in Hades. Likewise, in **L 8**, 2 one reaches the path on the right that leads to the meadows of Persephone when one leaves behind the light of the sun, that is, when one enters into Hades. The gods mentioned are all subterranean, while the heavenly indications (the declaration that one is a son of Earth and of starry Heaven, the name Asterius) refer to the divine race to which the initiate declares himself to belong, which does not prejudge his final destiny.

3. Another analytical approach interprets the phrase as a proverbial expression for manifesting the satisfaction produced by the fulfillment of an ardent desire,[85] as in the expression "like a fish in water",[86] which passed into mystical language, where it assumed the dignity and esoteric meaning of a religious formula. The problem is that this kind of phrase would be applicable to a young ram, as in the examples from Thurii,

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conquering death: without the milk of Hera, the source of the Milky Way, none of the sons of Zeus could aspire to the honor of the heavens (cf. Pellizer [1989] 280).

[83] Giangrande (1991b) 87 ff., Diels-Kranz (1903) I 224, and Index, *s. vv.* γάλα and γαλαξίας.

[84] This argumentation is valid, even if one accepts the variant "and they await you beneath the earth" (cf. n. 6).

[85] Nilsson (1961²) 236 thinks we have to do with an expression proper to the popular speech of herdsmen, but Zuntz (1971) 326 f. argues that those who erected the great tumuli at Thurii could not have been herdsmen, and defends the view that it is some kind of proverb.

[86] Zuntz (1971) 326 cites such Greek examples as "like rain for a frog", among others.

but less probably to a bull or a ram, adult animals that are mentioned in the tablet from Pelinna.[87] In spite of everything, an attempt has been made to save the hypothesis by thinking that the expression from Thurii is the original one.[88] The truth is that it is hard to think that a trivial phrase like "like a fish in water" could be adequate in a ritual context in which an attempt is being made to enunciate a profound experience on the part of the initiate at the moment of his death.

4. We must, therefore, seek for explanations for the enigmatic phrase in the context in which it is enunciated, and in the sphere of the beliefs that we are studying. Thus, we see that the formula, in any one of its variants, is always expressed after a reference to a rebirth as a god after death:

L 7, 1–2	You have just died and have just been born, thrice happy, on this day. Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you.
L 8, 4	You have been born a god, from the man that you were.
L 9, 8	Happy and fortunate one, you will be a god, from the mortal that you were.

Whatever interpretation we are to give this phrase must therefore move between the coordinates of rebirth and identification with a god, both of which conditions produce a great happiness, all of this without leaving the framework of Hades.

a) Associated with the idea of rebirth are the suggestions[89] that consider that the kid, as a symbol of purity[90] and innocence, like the *agnus* for the ancient Christians, represents the initiate, who, at death, would be reborn like a nursling kid. Now the verbs that are used in this ritual expression, namely πίπτω, which usually means "to fall",[91]

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[87] Graf (1991) 94.

[88] The *editores principes* of the tablet from Pelinna, Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou (1987) 13, had already suggested the possibility that the new formulas of the bull and the ram were hyperbolic and grotesque variations on the initial phrase concerning the kid. Guarducci (1990) 17 believes that later on, milk was identified with delight, and was applied to other animals.

[89] Comparetti (1910) 9 n. 2. Cf. Zuntz (1971) 325 f., Guarducci (1974) 23, (1978) 267 f., (1990) 16.

[90] A quality that distinguishes the initiate, as is clear from the initial verse of two tablets from Thurii (**L 9, 10a–b**) "Pure, I come from the pure", or the variant from Rome (**L 11**): "pure, she comes from among the pure".

[91] Although at *Il.* 19, 110 one finds πέσηι μετὰ ποσσὶ γυναικός "may fall between the feet of a woman" with the meaning "to be born". Cf. the parallel of the Hittite *Great voyage of the soul* in § 11.3.

and θρώισκω, which in addition to its usual meaning "to leap" refers in ancient literature to the "leap" one gives at birth,[92] express violent movements, which indicates that the transition to the new life is not exactly easy. Moreover, θρώισκω implies (and πίπτω does not exclude) an intervention of the will.

b) On the other hand, the possibility that the mention of the animal implies that the initiate in his new birth has been identified with the god has been maintained a number of times, with good arguments:[93] Ἔριφος was an epithet of Dionysus, as is attested by some citations from ancient lexicographers:

> *Eriphios*: Dionysus; *Eiraphiotes*: Dionysus. Also Eriphios, among the Laconians.[94]
> Dionysus: *Eriphios*, among those of Metapontum.[95]

The epithet *Eiraphiotes*, cited by Hesychius, appears in literature in a text as old as the fragmentary *Homeric Hymn* 1. A passage from Apollodorus can also be adduced, in which it is told how Dionysus was metamorphosed into a kid in order to shield him from the wrath of Hera.[96]

As far as the relation of Dionysus and the bull in cult and poetry is concerned, it is well attested. Thus, for instance, in Euripides' *Bacchants* he is called "the god with the bull's horns", and it is as a bull that Pentheus sees him in his hallucination and that the chorus acclaims

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[92] *h. Ap.* 119 ἐκ δ' ἔθορε πρὸ φόωσδε, *h. Merc.* 20 ὃς καὶ ἐπεὶ δὴ μητρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτων θόρε γυίων. On the verb, cf. Faraone (forthcoming).

[93] Already by Dieterich (1891) 37s (= [1911, 96 f.]), cf. Turchi (1923) 48 f., Albinus (2000) 147.

[94] Hesych. *s. vv.* The participants in the rites of Adonis are also called ἔριφοι 'kids' (Hesych. *s. v.* Ἀδωνίτης· ἔριφος), who, according to Ricciardelli (1992) 31, is identical with the Cretan Zeus who returns to life as Zagreus (cf. Cook [1914] 647 ff. and 675).

[95] Stephanus of Byzantium *s. v.* Ἀκρώρεια. Lampugnani (1967) 137 f. (cf. Ferri [1929] 59 f.) thinks that in the funerary conception of Magna Graecia, the dead are ἔριφοι at a given moment of their terrestrial journey, and that this would be the origin of the cult of Dionysus Ἐρίφιος, proper to Metapontum, and the reason why the dead are divinized in Dionysus. For Dionysus Eriphios in Metapontum cf. Gianelli (1963[2]) 76, Casadio (1994a) 92 ff., Camassa (1994) 171 ff. Zuntz's objection (1971) 324 n. 1 that the epithet Εἰραφιώτης, sometimes applied to Dionysus, would correspond better to a bull than a kid, no longer has any *raison d'être* after the discovery of the texts from Pelinna and the possible identification of Dionysus with the bull.

[96] *Hom. Hymn.* 1A3 West, Apollod. 3, 4, 3 (cited by Comparetti [1910] 9). See also Tzet. *ad Lyc.* 229, p. 104 Scheer and Camassa (1994) 173.

him.[97] In a hymn preserved by Plutarch, the Elean women invoke the god as an "illustrious bull" (ἄξιε ταῦρε), while among the Argives the god-bull Dionysus plays a prominent role, as he does in other Greek localities such as Cyzicus, Athens, or Tenedos.[98]

The identification of the god with a ram seems more complicated.[99] We can recall a passage from the *Dionysalexandros* of Cratinus[100] or the *Gurôb Papyrus*,[101] where a ram's meat is mentioned, and it could be thought that the flesh used is those of the animals with which Dionysus is identified.[102] Likewise, new interpretations have been proposed for ambiguous iconographical images in which rams appear in relation to Dionysus in the sense of an identification of the animal with the god. The situation could be summarized as follows, in the words of Camassa:[103]

> Dionysus' katabasis in search of his mother represents, in a sense, the paradigm of the *mystes*' experience.... The believer who, as a kid, bull, or ram, plunges into the milk, then had to repeat the sacral act of which the numen had been the protagonist. Dismembered and then regenerated. In milk and with (maternal) milk.

The expression thus concentrates the concepts of identification with the god, of rebirth to a new life, and the well being that this causes for the newborn, greeted by his mother the goddess.

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[97] Eur. *Bac.* 100, 922 (cf. verse 618 with the commentary by Dodds [1960² = 1944] XVIII–XIX), 1017.

[98] Plut. *Aet. Gr.* 36 p. 299B (= *Carm. Pop. PMG* 871 Page), cf. Camassa (1994) 172 f., with further bibliography, Plut. *De Isid.* 35 p. 364E, cf. Merkelbach (1988) 13.

[99] Graf (1991) 94 emphasizes this point to display his skepticism with regard to an identification of the deceased with Dionysus.

[100] *PCG* IV K.-A., p. 140, 31 f. ἑαυτὸν δ' εἰς κριὸ(ν) μ(ε)τ(α)σκευάσας, cf. Luppe (1989) 13, but according to Segal (1990) 415 the context of Cratinus is comical, since it would appear comical (because it was strange) to the spectators to identify the god with a ram. We might think that the comical aspect would consist in alluding to Orphic beliefs that the audience might know and consider strange.

[101] Smyly (1921) 2, Hordern (2000), *OF* 578, 10.

[102] Ricciardelli (1992) 33 n. 37. A syncretism with Ammon was proposed by Bottini (1992) 132 ff.

[103] Camassa (1994) 180. On the iconography, cf. 179 n. 44. See also Faraone (forthcoming).

2.5. *Wine*

The formulas of the animal fallen into the milk are followed by a reference to wine (the only one found in the tablets). Aside from some textual difficulties,[104] it seems we can now translate with relative certainty:

L 7, 5 You have wine, a happy privilege,

understanding the last two words as in apposition or predicative of "wine". The qualification of εὐδαίμων 'happy' is frequent for persons, but not for things or abstractions; however, it is not rare in the Dionysiac sphere.[105] Its use in this context can be understood as a kind of enallage, as when we say "a happy event", when what is happy is not the event, but those who participate in it.[106]

In the *Gurôb Papyrus* there is an explicit mention of the fact that the initiate drinks to ease his thirst during the τελετή, and wine is even mentioned,[107] also in a context of liberation in which Dionysus appears as a savior god.

As far as 'privilege' is concerned, it translates τιμή, a word we also find referring to the privileges of a deceased person who receives special treatment in the Beyond in a funerary epigram (*Carm. Epigr.* n. 571 Hansen):

> I know that beneath the earth, if there is reward for the good,
> the highest privileges await you, father, next to Persephone and Pluto.[108]

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[104] Apart from the fact that the text is complete and is not a hexameter, in tablet **A** we read ΕΥΔΙΜΟΝΑΤΙΜΗ, and in **B** ΕΥΔΜΟΝΤΙΜḢΝ, that is, εὐδαίμονα τιμήν as a predicate of "wine". For other proposals, cf. the edition in Appendix I.

[105] Cf. for instance Festugière (1956) 79 ff., who analyzes a passage from the *Bacchae* (72 ff.) where the initiate is so called because he has entered into communion with Bacchus and enjoys the gifts granted by the gods.

[106] Cf. Plat. *Phil.* 11d, where one speaks of βίον εὐδαίμονα 'happy life'.

[107] *P. Gurôb* (*OF* 578) col. I 20: "(…) after having assuaged his thirst" (on the suggestion of interpreting ἀπαυάναις as the aorist participle of ἀπαυαίνω with this meaning, cf. Smyly [1921] 6, Hordern [2000] 138); col. I 25 (…) "I have drunk wine" (ο]ἶν[ο]ν is the reading of Hordern [2000] 139, as opposed to the older proposals ψυχ]ρ[ὸ]ν and ἔφαγο]ν, see Smyly [1921] 6, Tierney [1922] 87). Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 262 reads also οἶ]νον πι[ών in col. II 12.

[108] Cf. also Emped. *fr.* 111 Wright (= B 119 D.-K.), *h. Cer.* 261, 263.

Less acceptable is the suggestion[109] that τιμή has the value of a specific 'trade' of wine steward at the symposium of the blessed,[110] the idea being that recent arrivals would serve for some time as wine stewards in Elysium.

In sum, the phrase is obscure, and has been the subject of various interpretations, from those that consider it to be the echo of an initiatory ritual, through those who believe there is a reference to a funerary ritual with a libation of wine, to those who see in it the expression of the post-mortem happiness which the deceased will enjoy.

In support of the interpretation of seeing in our text an echo of initiatory practices, we may mention several texts and figurative representations that inform us on the use of wine in this type of rite.[111] Here, wine drinking was no simple pastime or pleasure, but a solemn sacrament, in the course which the wine was converted into a liquor of immortality. One of the most significant texts in this regard is a passage from Demosthenes (*De cor.* 259) in which Aeschines is presented as participating as an auxiliary in initiatory rites, who has wine-mixing as one of his functions. In a sense, drinking wine entails drinking the god: thus, Cicero (*Nat. deor.* 3, 41) does not consider it an exaggeration that some should believe they were drinking the god when they brought the cup to their lips, given that the wine was called Liber. Among figurative representations, we may cite an Italic vase in which Dionysus is carrying out a miracle: without human intervention, the wine pours from the grapes to the cups.[112] A woman, probably an initiate, approaches from the right to collect the wine in a large crater. A mortal appears on the other side. Schmidt believes they are beings destined for blessedness, since participation in the mysteries of Dionysus includes a quasi-paradisiacal state already on earth.[113] Another representation that deserves to be mentioned in this context is a relief from the Farnesina in Rome, in which wine plays an eschatological and mystical role. The

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[109] Graf (1991) 92.

[110] The expression νέκταρ ἔχειν designates a wine-waiter in a funerary epigram from the Imperial period (cf. Cole [1984] 39).

[111] Cf. Velasco López (1992) 216 ff. The god himself is called "Wine" in the texts from the *Rhapsodies* (*OF* 303; 321 and 331). Turcan (2003) 41 ff. collect many exemples of this use of wine in Dionysiac environment.

[112] Schmidt (1975) 134 ff., pl. XVI.

[113] Velasco López (1992) 214 believes that the image which the Dionysiac adepts had of terrestrial well-being, forged on the basis of another one of the Beyond, corresponds to the idea of the destiny awaiting them there.

scene represents the Bacchic initiation of a boy; on the initiate's right, a satyr pours wine into a crater and begins to drink: integration within the new group is manifested by the feast of wine.[114]

Outside of Greece, we find parallels for the initiatory use of wine and the belief that access to spiritual intoxication, that causes forgetfulness of self and engenders true knowledge, begins with physical intoxication.[115] The Irish *Samain* think they get closer to the world of the gods by means of intoxication.

It cannot be excluded, moreover, that there may be a reference to libations offered to the deceased in the moment of the burial.[116]

Although we lack other testimonies on offerings of wine to the dead in the Orphic sphere, this practice was current in the Greek world. Basically, pure wine was used in funerary libations, as opposed to that, always mixed, which was used in banquets (a symbol of civilization, as opposed to the pure wine drunk by the barbarians). The bones of incinerated bodies were washed with wine; wine was present at the funerary banquets, and an amphora with its bottom filled with holes often figured next to graves.[117] Libations of mixed wine, which were most customary, presuppose a relation with the here and now, whereas neat wine appears in marginal contexts, especially when contact with the Beyond and the dead are sought.[118]

There are literary testimonies of Bacchic rituals carried out next to the tomb of deceased persons belonging to various groups. In addition, grapes, wine, drums, including *thyrsi* or satyrs are painted on Apulian funerary vases,[119] as if mourning and ecstasy were somehow fused together.[120] The idea of life is associated with neat wine: wine is an elixir of life,[121] or wine itself, on the words of Trimalchio: *vita vinum est*,[122]

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[114] Cited by Graf (1991) 100, who considers that the texts engraved on the tablets were also used in an initiatory ritual that staged death and resurrection, which was followed by the *makarismos* with vital instructions and the promise of future blessedness.

[115] Velasco López (1992) 215.

[116] Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 14, Graf (1991) 99 ff., (1993) 247 ff., Riedweg (1998) 373 f.

[117] Onians (1954²) 282 ff. and 296ff.

[118] Cf. Burkert (1983) 54 f., Graf (1980) 217 f.

[119] Dioscor. *A. P.* 7, 485, an inscription of the 3rd cent. A.D., *SEG* 33 n. 563, Nonn. *D.* 19, 167–197, Schmidt (1972).

[120] As was pointed out by Burkert (1987) 23.

[121] Durand (1981 [= 1963]), Velasco López (1992) 218 f.

[122] Petron. *Sat.* 34, 7. At the Roman festival of Anna Perenna, one asked for as many years of divine favor as the number to cups of wine consumed (Ovid. *Fast.* 3, 523 ff.). Inscriptions on cups of the type *Vivas*, *Bibe multos annos*, Πίε, Ζέσες, Ζήσαις,

and also, as much as water, with the idea of freedom.[123] A fragment of Attic comedy[124] speaks of "drinking the wine of freedom and dying", and already in the *Iliad*, Hector expresses the desire to place a crater of wine in his home once the Achaeans have been driven away.[125] We must not forget that Dionysus himself, the god of wine, receives the epithets of Λυσεύς and Ἐλεύθερος (-εύς).[126] It is not surprising, therefore, if it appears in our tablets associated with the "liberation" on the part of the god of the deceased's soul.[127]

There are data that support the possibility that the formula was pronounced during the celebration of a ritual next to the grave at the moment of burial. For instance, the emphasis placed in the tablets on the temporal expressions "now", and "on this day".[128]

However, alongside the testimonies that relate wine to initiatory rites or, in any case, to practices of life, or to funerary rituals, we also have others that show that this wine that the initiate has already enjoyed in life, is that which he hopes to enjoy in the Beyond. A crown and a state of eternal intoxication were the rewards promised to Orphic and Dionysiac initiates in a famous Platonic passage in which the philosopher mocks the image of the paradise promised by Musaeus and his son:[129]

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are frequent. According to Onians (1954[2]) 217 ff., wine is identified with life on the basis of the relation between man and plants: this liquid would be for the human being what sap is for vegetables, and this is why, dying of thirst, he needs a liquid that contains life and strength. Likewise, he relates this theme to the thirst of the dead, but as was rightly noted by Segal (1990) 413, the initiate always drinks water, never wine, even in the tablet from Hipponion where the initiates are informed of their quality as βάκχοι.

[123] Onians (1954[2]) 478 ff.

[124] Xenarch. *fr.* 5.

[125] *Il.* 6, 526 ff. "we shall raise the free (ἐλεύθερον) cup in the palace".

[126] Λυσεύς: *Orph. Hymn.* 42, 4; 52, 2, cf. Ricciardelli (2002a) *ad loc.*, Ἐλεύθερος (-εύς): Paus. 1, 20, 3; 1, 29, 2; Plut. *Aet. Rom.* 104 p. 289A; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 4, 53, 3; Nonn. *D.* 27, 307.

[127] For other symbolic connotations of wine, cf. Velasco López (1992) 216 ff. According to the interpretation of Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 84, there is a direct reference to Dionysus-Oinos, an echo of the mystic experience that leads the μύστης to the liberation of the πάθημα. Wine, an ancient attribute of Dionysus, but the name of the god himself, has a metaphoric value. At the culmination of his ecstasy, the initiate obtains the desired prize.

[128] Ricciardelli (1992) 28, Graf (1991) 97 ff., (1993) 247 ff., Riedweg (1998) 373 f.

[129] Plat. *Resp.* 363cd, cf. Plut. *Comp. Cimon. et Luc.* 1, 2: "Plato mocks the followers of Orpheus, who promise eternal drunkenness to those who live uprightly as a reward in Hades", on which see Casadesús (1999).

> Musaeus and his son concede to the just on the part of the gods gifts that are even more splendid than the ones mentioned, since they transport them in imagination to Hades, and there they seat them at the table and organize a banquet of the just, in which they make them spend their whole lives crowned and inebriated, as if there were no better reward for virtue than perpetual intoxication. [...] On the other hand, the impious and the unjust they plunge into a kind of mud in Hades, or force them to carry water in a sieve.

Other passages illustrate the delights of the Beyond like a banquet in which wine cannot be lacking at the heroes' table: for instance, Aristophanes alludes at *Frogs* 85 to the "feast of the happy" in the other world, and a fragment speaks of the need to go down soon to Hades to drink, because that is why those who are there are called happy. Pherecrates tells how in the Beyond, young maidens offer cups filled with wine. And an epigram from Smyrna describes the fate of the deceased:

> and next to the tripods and the immortal tables, while I enjoy the banquet, the gods look upon me as their friend.[130]

Passages like this have led Pugliese Carratelli[131] to consider that Orphism, which had originally been a purely mystical theology, became debased by a materialist vision diffused subsequently, and despised by Plato. Yet the situation could be precisely the opposite: that the more ancient view was precisely that somewhat crude one, and that the mystical theology was a later elaboration to which such authors as Pindar, Plato, and the 4th-century interpreters in general will not have been foreign.

Whatever interpretation we give the phrase must be integrated within the general context: the celebration of achieved blessedness. Bacchus has liberated the initiate who is now already thrice fortunate (an expression echoed by the "happy" of the final formula), ready to arrive before Persephone, and to go beneath the earth with the other happy ones. The two verses of the beginning and the two at the end (one in **L 7b**) refer, then, to the initiate's happiness, and they frame the central formulas of the bull and the kid that fall into the milk. Note the contrast between the two liquids, milk and wine, and the temporal difference between past (milk) and present (wine). Initiation (the past), death (the present), and life in the Beyond (the future) appear as closely

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[130] Aristoph. *fr.* 504, 6 ff. K.-A., Pherecr. *fr.* 113, 30 ff. K.-A., *Epigr. Smyrn.* 05/01/64 Merkelbach-Stauber. Cf. also Aristoph. *fr.* 12 K.-A.

[131] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 64.

linked in this text.[132] What is more, as we shall have occasion to reiterate, initiation and death are two acts that are completely correlative in this religious atmosphere.

Wine, a drink related *par excellence* to the mysteries of Dionysus, must have formed an essential part of the initiatory ceremonies that the deceased carried out during his life. The use of the present tense, and the references to the now and the present day, together with the very presence of the text in a grave, authorize us to think that libations were made to the dead person at the moment of burial. However, it is also clear that wine appears as the finest of the excellent things the initiate would enjoy in the Beyond, as an essential component of post-mortem happiness. This association of wine with eternal happiness could be forged thanks to the pleasant connotations the drink had for initiates from the ritual activities carried out during life.

In sum, it appears that the various hypotheses proposed for our phrase (an echo of ritual practices, a reference to a libation in funeral ceremonies, an expression of post-mortem happiness) not only are not mutually exclusive, but may be complementary.[133] Even the text's curious structure can be adequately explained in this way. In this sense, Riedweg has made an extremely likely suggestion:[134] verses 2 and 7, the only correct hexameters, are the only ones that deal with the soul's path to the underworld and its destiny there, and as such hexameters, they may derive from a more extensive poem.[135] Verse 1, which is an altered hexameter, and 6, which is part of another, are completely centered on the funerary ritual next to the tomb, and we can perceive in them the reflection of a libation of wine or the offering of a recipient of wine. In lines 3 to 5, which are in rhythmic prose, our attention is directed towards the ritual past of initiation, in which they were certainly inserted.[136]

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[132] Riedweg (1998). Cf. already Burkert (1975) 96, and the text from Plutarch (*fr.* 178 Sandbach) we cited with regard to παθὼν τὸ πάθημα, § 3.3.

[133] Cf. Segal (1990) 413 ff. Ricciardelli (1992) 33 and 37 thinks they must be considered rites that take place next to the grave, possibly as the repetition of an initiatory rite carried out during life.

[134] Riedweg (1998) 367 indicates that "we must consider the possibility that the perspective may change within the same text once, or even more often", cf. Riedweg (2002) 461 ff.

[135] Riedweg (1998) 374 f. On this poem, cf. already Bernabé (1991) 232 ff., with bibliography.

[136] Segal (1990) 413 had observed the rhythmic effects of the verse beginnings (the texts are not metrical, but they are rhythmic), which are adequate for an "oral

2.6. *The rites completed*

The last line presents two textual problems. We have chosen to read, with Luppe, καὶ σὺ μὲν εἶς 'and you will go', instead of the reading κἀπιμένει σ' 'they await you' of the *editores principes*,[137] since the entire tablet (except for the phrase in the imperative) features the second person as a subject (which is, moreover, the usual scheme of these texts), but above all because the second interpretation cited depends on one's reading a subject for the verb 'to await'. This leads us to the second textual problem, in which we have preferred to read τελέσας ἅπερ[138] instead of τελέα ἄσ(σ)απερ,[139] understanding τελέα as 'prizes' or 'honors'. According to the *editores principes*, the verse reads:

> beneath the earth there await you the same honors as the other fortunate ones.[140]

The reasons why we prefer to read καὶ σὺ μὲν εἶς ὑπὸ γῆν τελέσας ἅπερ ὄλβιοι ἄλλοι are as follows: a) τιμή already means 'prize', whereas τέλεα in the sense of 'prizes' occurs only in epinicia,[141] in metaphors referring to athletes. b) ἄσσαπερ is not to be found in the texts.[142] c) The phrase ὄλβιοι ἄλλοι lacks a verb, since it is not the same as the one from the previous phrase, nor can εἰσί be understood. The defenders of this reading add a verb after ὄλβιοι ἄλλοι,[143] but the hexameter is complete, and the words ὄλβιοι ἄλλοι represent the end of the text. d) the poet wishes to indicate that the deceased will go below the earth (εἶς ὑπὸ γῆν), that is, that he will not return to another mortal life, but

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performance", and he suggests a "funerary performance", a written copy of a pre-existing oral ritual, rather than a specific creation for this burial.

[137] Luppe (1989) 14, Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 15.

[138] Suggested as a less probable reading by Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 16, but accepted by Luppe (1989) 14, Follet (1990) 450. In the tablet one reads τελεαασαπερ.

[139] The reading preferred by Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 15.

[140] This reading is also accepted by Gigante (1989) 28, who adduces the parallel of Catull. 76, 5 *multa parata manent tum in longa aetate, Catulle*, and Segal (1990) 411. This is rightly doubted by Guarducci (1990) 19 n. 15.

[141] For instance, Pind. *Isth.* 1, 27, *Pyth.* 9, 118, Bacchyl. 10, 6.

[142] We find the sing. ὅστισπερ (Xenoph. *Cyr.* 2, 2, 21) ἐφ' ὅτου περ (Demosth. *in Meid.* 225) and above all the neut. sing. ὅτιπερ (Aristoph. *Eccl.* 53, Plat. *Resp.* 92e, etc.). We would expect ὅσσαπερ or ἄσσα or ἅπερ (this is why Jordan [1989] hesitantly suggests τέλε' ὅσ<σ>απερ).

[143] Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 16 ἔχουσι or τελοῦνται or ἐτελέσθησαν, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 62 (= [2001] 115 = [2003] 118) reads τελέονται and interprets τέλεα as a synonym of τελεταί.

will achieve the happiness that awaits initiates (cf. chap. IX), that is, those who have carried out the same rites as he (τελέσας ἅπερ ὅλβιοι ἄλλοι [sc. ἐτέλεσαν]),[144] the idea being that only the initiates will be happy in the Beyond.

In what these practices consisted we cannot know, because of their secret nature, but we can, at least, approach the question on the basis of some testimonies of Orphic ritual practices and the comparison with other mystery spheres, particularly the Dionysiac one.[145]

The *locus classicus* for Orphic τελεταί is a famous passage in Plato:[146]

> They adduce a hubbub of books by Musaeus and Orpheus, descendants, as they say, of the Moon and of the Muses, according to which they arrange their rites, convincing not only individuals but also cities that liberation and purification from injustice is possible, both during life and after death, by means of sacrifices and enjoyable games, to those which they indeed call "initiations", which free us from the evils of the Beyond, whereas something horrible awaits those who have not celebrated sacrifices.

This passage mentions books of Musaeus and Orpheus, that is, written literature supposedly used in initiations intended to liberate the soul from its sins. Those who are charged with carrying out these rituals, obviously the same as those whom other sources call "Orpheotelests", depend on the holiness of the written word; in other words, it is the possession and control of Orphic writings that confers on them their authority (cf. App. II n. 1).

We are also told that initiations could be applied to individuals and to entire cities,[147] which implies that their value was recognized and was not exclusive to one sect: the seers and reciters of oracles were specialists that could be hired by whoever needed them. The practices of the Orpheotelests were not secret, and to Plato they seemed to be a game, and therefore contemptible for a serious person.

We must interpret the expression "both in life and once we are dead", in the sense that that these rites claimed to project their validity to the Beyond.

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[144] ἐτέλεσαν can be supplied if one reads τελέσας, because it is the same verb that has already been expressed.

[145] Cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal (2005).

[146] Plat. *Resp.* 364e.

[147] Cf. the priests mentioned in *P. Derveni* col. XX.

The accomplishment of the rites of the mysteries marks the separations between initiates and non initiates, and determines the happy destiny of the former, who will live next to the gods, compared to the suffering that awaits the latter:[148]

> It could be that those who instituted the initiations for us were not inept, but that in reality it has long been indicated in symbolic form that whoever arrives in Hades uninitiated and without having carried out the rites "will lie in the mud", but that he who arrives purified and having accomplished the rites, will live there with the gods . . . and these are none other than the true philosophers.

By means of a symbolic interpretation (which we must consider biased and invented by the philosopher), Plato seeks to modify a more elementary scheme, in which a better life is simply promised to whoever is initiated. Another testimony, likewise Platonic, also tends in the same direction:[149]

> "In Hades, however, we will pay the penalty for whatever crimes we may have committed here, either we ourselves, or else the sons of our sons". "But my friend", he will say in a calculating way, "also very great is the power of the initiations and of the liberating gods, as it said by the most important cities and the sons of gods who have become poets and prophets of the gods, who attest for us to the reality of these facts".

"The sons of gods who have become poets and prophets of the gods" are obviously Orpheus, Musaeus, and other poets like them. Plato seems to imply that these poets and their followers (the Orpheotelests) promise liberation from the punishments of Hades without any other prerequisite than the celebration of specific practices.

The definition of τελετή as a religious act, the promise of a better fate after death, and the differentiation between initiates and non-initiates are also characteristic of the mysteries of Dionysus. We have literary testimonies beginning with the 4th century B.C. that attest the realization of Bacchic τελεταί and other kinds of initiatory ceremonies carried out by small organizations of a local or familial character.[150] Plato (*Leg.* 815b–d) mentions Bacchic dances associated with τελεταί and καθαρμοί, unconnected with the polis (οὐκ ἔστι πολιτικόν). Demosthenes (*De cor.* 259) describes how Aeschines helped his mother

[148] Plat. *Phd.* 69c.
[149] Plat. *Resp.* 366a.
[150] Cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal (2002a).

in initiatory ceremonies, when he was only a child. He dressed the initiates in deerskins, assisted them while they carried out καθαρμοί or purifications with clay, taught them to say "I have left behind evil, I have found the good", and read texts to them while his mother carried out the ceremony. This passage is generally attributed to the rites of Sabazius, but Harpocration tells us that the same crowns of white poplar that, according to Demosthenes, the initiates wore the day after the ceremony, were worn by those who were initiated into the Bacchic rites. In any case, the passage shows that specific initiatory ceremonies depended on written texts, and that, by their means, the participants were helped to flee from unhappiness and find something better. The texts of the tablets point in the same direction, where the choice between something better and something worse is inherent in the instructions from Hipponion ("do not approach that fountain, [...] further on you will find...water"), and the expressions from Thurii "I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow, I launched myself with agile feet for the longed-for crown", and from Pelinna "tell Persephone that Bacchus has liberated you [...] you have wine, a happy privilege". Plutarch consoles his wife for the loss of her young daughter with the hope that Bacchic initiations have taught her not to fear death (Plut. *Cons. ad Ux.* 10 p. 611D–E).[151] A series of Dionysiac τελεταί are engraved upon epitaphs,[152] the idea being that the ceremony marks the difference between his followers and the others after death. Archaeological data indicate that such beliefs were already current in the 4th century B.C. Many of the vases found in graves of Apulia, Campania or Lucania are decorated with Dionysiac themes, and exhibit specific characters connected with the later mysteries[153] (cf. App. II nn. 5 and 6). Two terracotta maenads have also been found, one in the hand of a dead female[154] (App. II n. 7), and the other next to the tablets from Pelinna. Without being aware of this last discovery, Cole conjectured that the deceased might perhaps have hoped to unite with his *thiasos* after death, a proposal corroborated by **L 13a**, 1 and the new readings of **L 8**, 2. Like the tablets, the maenad may have been a kind of reminder of the reward guaranteed by initiation. The new tablets from Pelinna are therefore an extremely important written document that confirms the

[151] Cf. Turcan (1959), Bernabé (1996b) 76, 81, 89.
[152] *IG* II^2 11674; XIV 889, 1449.
[153] Schmidt (1972); further bibliography in Cole (1980) 237, n. 47.
[154] Langlotz (1963) 87 XI with the bibliography cited at App. II n. 6.

realization, already in the 4th century B.C., and on the part of the Orphics, of a type of mystery practice which, like the parallels adduced, had as its primary axis Dionysus, the victim whose death we had to redeem, because of our Titanic nature.[155]

In sum, the comparison with other literary and epigraphical evidence allows us to affirm that the followers of the Orphic doctrines carried out initiatory rites connected with the Dionysiac environment, whose goal was to achieve a better fate after the death of the body.

[155] There is no lack of critical testimonies against such ritual practices. Plato (*Resp.* 366a) mocks the "power" of these "initiations", and he somehow places them on the same level as the remedies against evil used by the delirious and the possessed (*Phdr.* 244e).

CHAPTER THREE

BEST WISHES FOR ACCOMPANYING THE SOUL TO THE OTHER WORLD: A TABLET FROM THURII (L 8)

Translation of tablet 8 from thurii

Tablet **L 8** is somewhat different from the ones we have just seen, since although it takes its place within the same thematic area, the point of view differs even more widely in it. Unlike what occurs in the tablets from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia, and Pharsalus, the point is not only to give instructions to the deceased. The perspective opted from v. 3 on is external, as if the soul's transit to Hades were seen from this world, and it were taken for granted that the initiate will have done what he should have done and achieved his objective. This is why the past tense is used, compared to the future perspective in another tablet from Thurii (**L 9**, 9). In a way, the condition the deceased's soul will enjoy is anticipated, its definitive abandonment of the human sphere and its access to the realm of the happy.

L 8 Tablet from Thurii, 4th cent. B.C., Naples Museum; 1st. ed. Fiorelli (1879) 329 f.

Yet when the soul leaves the light of the soul behind,
you must go to the right thiasos, keeping everything very well.
Hail, after having had an experience such as you never had before.
You have been born a god, from the man that you were. A kid, you fell into the milk.
Hail, hail; take the path to the right
towards the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.

Commentaries

3.1. *The difficult reading of verse 2*

The beginning of the tablet is clear. Like those from the first group, this tablet begins with a reference to the situation, or the moment when the soul leaves the light of the sun, that is, when it abandons its body in its passage to Hades.

On the other hand, verse 2 is unfortunately difficult to read. There seems to be a reference to the path towards the right, as in the tablets from the first group. There follows something illegible, and then the expression "keeping everything very well", which seems to have the same meaning as the "hero who remembers" of the tablet from Entella (**L 2**), and as the "light to the intelligence" of the "Great" tablet from Thurii (**L 12**), that is, the deceased must remember what he learned in his initiation. Attempts to heal the verse have so far been in vain.[1] It is therefore perhaps advisable to accept an ingenious suggestion, according to which between the *incipit* "Yet when the soul leaves the light of the soul behind" and the *explicit* "maintaining it all quite present", the engraver will have implied the complete *Hieros Logos* in which the soul's entire passage up to its arrival in the other world was related, and intentionally intercalated a pair of fragmented words and letters with more or less meaning, by way of filler.[2]

Another reading is however better:[3] δεξιὸν ἐς θ̣ίασ<ον> δεῖ {ξ} <σ'> ἰ̣<έ>ναι 'go to right thiasos', 'go to the thiasos that is on the right' (i.e. the initiates' thiasos). θίασος can be read now in L **13a**, 2. Although it is not a hexameter, dactylic sequences are recognizable.

3.2. *The formula of salutation*

The fact is that from verse 3 on, another personage (a μύστης?) greets the soul of the deceased, as if he had already reached his objective. The use of χαῖρε is quite customary in contexts where the deceased

[1] For details, cf. the critical apparatus of the edition of this tablet in App. I.
[2] Riedweg (1998) 386.
[3] We owe this proposal to Santamaría Álvarez *per litt.*

achieves a privileged situation, such as heroicization or immortality, as Sourvinou-Inwood has pointed out.[4] Reciprocally, the *mystes* can use the same formula of salutations to address the gods of the Beyond, such as Persephone or Pluto (**L 15, L 15a** and **L 16k**).

3.3. *The great experience*

The narrator then refers to "the experience you never had before". This is not just any experience, but, as indicated by the definite article, it is "*the*" experience.[5] Taking the context into consideration (the reference to being converted into a god and the new mention of the mystical phrase of the kid fallen into the milk, which, as we have already seen, evoke rebirth and the happiness of the new of identification with the god),[6] the experience alluded to may be death or initiation, or better yet, as Burkert would have it,[7] both at the same time.[8] In making this affirmation, he bases himself on an interesting text by Plutarch:[9]

> In this world [*sc.* the soul] has no knowledge, except when it reaches the moment of death. It then undergoes an experience like that of those who participate in the great initiations. This is why they resemble each other so much, both in word [*sc.* τελευτᾶν 'to die' and τελεῖσθαι 'to be initiated') and in action. First there is a wandering without direction, the tiring turns and running about in the darkness with the suspicion that they are never going to end, and then, before one reaches the actual end, all the terrors, shudders, trembling, sweat, and confusion. From here, however, a wonderful light comes to greet him, and he is received by pure places and meadows, full of sounds, dances, and the solemnity of sacred words and sacred visions. Once he has had his fill of this and has been initiated, he becomes free and walks as a free man. Crowned,

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[4] Cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 195 ff., where a good number of examples of this use may be found.

[5] Velasco López (1990–1991) 559 ff. points out that πάθημα very cleverly includes the twofold meaning of the word: negative (death) and positive (true life). This is the same paradox as in verse 1 from Pelinna (**L 7a** and **7b**), νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, or in the bone tablets from Olbia, βίος, θάνατος βίος (cf. § 1. 6).

[6] On this, cf. § 2. 4.

[7] Burkert (1975) 96.

[8] Comparetti (1910) 8 f. had already interpreted the phrase as a reference to the initiate's transformation into a god. Delatte (1913) 127 f. believes that the experience is the voyage itself, and Alline (1912) 99 interprets it as drinking the water of Mnemosyne. Other suggestions may be found in Olivieri (1915) 17.

[9] Plut. *Fr.* 178 Sandbach. On this passage, cf. Burkert (1975) 96, Brillante (1987) 39, Díez de Velasco (1997) 413 ff., Riedweg (1998) 367 n. 33, Bernabé (2001) 10 ff.

> he celebrates the mysteries and in the company of holy and pure men, he sees from there the uninitiated, impure crowd of living beings, in the midst of the mud and the darkness, trampling and pushing one another, persisting in the fear of death and the union of the malevolent, for lack of faith in the good things that are there.

The initiatory experience prepares us for death, and in death there is a repetition of what was experienced in initiation. The result for the initiate, both in initiation and in death, is the passage to a state of felicity, coinciding with identification with the god.

The soul's final destiny is alluded to by the expression "the meadows and groves of Persephone". As in the previous cases, we shall leave the study of the reference to final destiny for consideration in conjunction with the others in chapter IX.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEFORE PERSEPHONE: MORE TABLETS FROM THURII (L 9–10AB)

Translation of tablets 9 and 10ab from Thurii

A different group consists of three tablets from Thurii, from the so-called *Timpone piccolo* (**L 9–10a–b**), two of which (**L 10a, 10b**) present the same text.

All three begin in all almost identical way:[1] someone makes a solemn declaration in the first person, addressing Persephone, Eucles and Eubouleus and the other gods, that she is pure[2] and belongs to the race of the gods. The fact that the verb's subject is qualified by a feminine adjective raises the question to which we have already alluded,[3] of whether this is a reference to the soul,[4] or whether the tablets accompanied a deceased female.[5]

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[1] The differences are minor. **L 9** presents the forms κοθαρῶν and κοθαρά, with the vocalization in ο characteristic of Doric and Aeolian, the names of gods in the nominative Εὐκλῆς (stem in sigma) and Εὐβουλεύς, followed by ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι, as opposed to forms in α, καθαρῶν and καθαρά and the names of the gods in the vocative Εὖκλε (stem in ο) and Εὐβουλεῦ from **L 10a** and **10b** and the formula καὶ θεοὶ καὶ δαίμονες ἄλλοι. In the third verse, there is variation in the form of the infinitive of the verb 'to be' (εἶμεν/εἶναι) and the order of ὄλβιον and εὔχομαι. The meaning is practically identical.

[2] The adjective καθαρά is a predicative referring to the subject, as was established by Zuntz (1971) 306 ff., and not to the goddess, as is the view of those who place the comma after the genitive: "I come from among the pure, pure queen of the subterranean beings". Kotansky (1994) 109 points out that καθαρά is appropriate for describing those who have experienced ritual purifications, but not a goddess, who would be qualified as ἁγνή or ἁγία.

[3] Cf. § 1. 14.

[4] As was proposed by Comparetti (1910) 40 for the feminine αὕη of the tablet from Petelia (**L 3**) (cf. Zuntz [1971] 306). This interpretation would agree with the tablet from Thurii (**L 8**) in which the subject of discussion is the soul, and not the deceased.

[5] Unfortunately, we lack sufficient archaeological information on the bodies found in the graves at Thurii. Cf. Bottini (1992) 38 ff. The skeletons on which the *lamellae* from Hipponion and Pelinna were found (**L 1, L 7a** and **7b**) belonged to women, and it is likely that one of the Cretan texts was also on a female cadaver (**L 5d**), if we can judge by θυγάτηρ.

L 9 Tablet from Thurii, 4th cent. B.C. Naples Museum, 1st ed. Fiorelli (1880) 403 ff.

I come from among the pure, pure, queen of the subterranean beings,
Eucles, Eubouleus, and the other immortal gods.
Since I, too, boast that I belong to your blessed race,
but fate subdued me, and he that wounds from the stars with lightning.
I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow,
I launched myself with agile feet after the longed-for crown,
and I plunged beneath the lap of my lady, the subterranean queen:
"Happy and fortunate, you will be a god, from the mortal you were".
A kid, I fell into the milk.

L 10a–b id. (two with the same text)

I come from among the pure, pure, queen of the subterranean beings,
Eucles, Eubouleus, and the other demons,
since I too boast that I belong to your blessed race,
and I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts.
Either fate subdued me, or else he who makes the lightning blaze forth.
Now I come as a suppliant before chaste Persephone,
to see if, benevolent, she may send me to the dwelling of the limpid ones.

Commentaries

4.1. *The introductory formula*

These tablets begin with a formula containing the exact words that are to be pronounced by the *mystes*, not in the presence of mere intermediaries, like the words he or she declared before the guardians in **L 1–7**, but before the very infernal divinities themselves in whose presence he or she has arrived: ἔρχομαι is also the verb used in the tablet from Hipponion (**L 1**) to refer to the initiate who is to go by the sacred way of the *mystes* and bacchoi.

We should ask ourselves the kind of purity to which the speaker is referring. We most probably have to do with a ritual purity that results from having experienced initiation (which seems to be an indispensable

prerequisite) and having maintained a life that observes the precepts of this religious group, which renders the initiate deserving of a new life in the Beyond.[6] It has been thought that καθαρός is synonym of ὅσιος,[7] the name given by Plato[8] to those who have deserved the eternal banquet in the Beyond. However, it has rightly been objected[9] that whereas ὅσιος designates the state of mental and ritual purity required for the initiate to appear before the divinity, καθαρός denotes purity in a particular aspect, and from a concrete stain.[10]

Despite this observation, we believe that in our case the use of the term is justified, since the initiate refers to the fact that he has expiated a concrete penalty, the penalty for unjust acts, to which he refers in **L 10**, 4. According to what we know of the Orphics, expiatory purification included the observance of a series of precepts,[11] such as a vegetarian diet, abstinence from beans and eggs, and the prohibition of wearing wool, as well as a certain degree of sexual renunciation. It was probably also indispensable to participate in some ritual, although we are particularly poorly informed with regard to this aspect. Plato contrasts the "uninitiated" and "non-participants in the rites", who are condemned to the mud once they have died, with the κεκαθαρμένος 'he who is purified',[12] and τετελεσμένος 'he who has participated in the rites', who will dwell with the gods.[13]

The use of the syntagma "pure among the pure"[14] implies that the speaker defines himself/herself as belonging to a group characterized by solidarity and the maintenance of a similar ritual situation, but

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[6] Cf. Comparetti (1903) 168.

[7] Olivieri (1915) 5.

[8] Plat. *Resp.* (363c–d); cf. the passage cited *supra* § 2. 5.

[9] Zuntz (1971) 307.

[10] In a study of the adjective in the Homeric poems, Hesiod, Tyrtaeus and Archilochus, Leonor de Bock Cano (1982) 121 ff. considers καθαρός as the nucleus of the positive level of the semantic field of adjectives designating purity. The meaning of the term evolves from "lacking any physical stain" (its inherent trait) to "free from blame", and finally "pure", a process that occurs on the basis of semantic neutralization with ἀεικής or, as a final stage, through metaphor.

[11] Cf. Parker (1983) 302; Jiménez San Cristóbal (2005) 100–115.

[12] The perfect participle indicates a state acquired after having carried out the prerequisites alluded to.

[13] Plat. *Phd.* 69c.

[14] This syntactic construction is frequent in Greek: cf. Plat. *Phdr.* 246a, 274a (in the dative) ἀγαθοί καὶ ἐξ ἀγαθῶν, 249e ἀρίστη τε καὶ ἐξ ἀρίστων, Soph. *Phil.* 324 κακίστου κἀκ κακῶν, 874 εὐγενὴς κἀξ εὐγενῶν (more examples may be found in Zuntz [1971] 307).

he/she also characterizes himself/herself individually, the idea beings that she displays it in a particular way.[15]

Finally, it is interesting that in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* we find the declaration "I am purified".[16]

The declaration of purity is addressed to a series of gods. In the first place, no doubt, to Persephone, since she is none other than the "queen of the subterranean beings".[17] Eucles and Eubouleus are the next ones addressed, and finally, with a vague formula of politeness, the remaining gods. We must linger over Eucles and Eubouleus, since there has been discussion with regard to their identity.

Eucles is not a name in the strict sense, but an epithet meaning 'famous, of good reputation'. It is most probably a euphemistic designation of Hades,[18] similar to the other, more common one of Κλύμενος. In all probability, the same name is to be found in the Etruscan *Evklúi*.[19] This interpretation is, moreover, adequate for the place occupied by the name in the text, immediately after the queen of the underworld.[20]

As far as Eubouleus is concerned, it is also an epithet meaning 'the good counselor'. In various texts it refers to Dionysus:[21] thus, in line 2 of the tablet from Rome (**L 11**), we read:

> Eucles and Eubouleus, son of Zeus.

It is also an epithet of Dionysus in various Orphic hymns:

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[15] In the *P. Gurôb*, col. II 22 one reads θε̣ εκ κ̣α[, and as one of the alternatives for this sequence Hordern (2000) proposes -θ' (perhaps αὐτόθι?) ἐκ κα[θαρῶν.

[16] 86, 23 p. 176 Hornung, cf. Merkelbach (1999) 8 n. 1.

[17] Cf. § 1.7, 2.3.

[18] Cf. Hesychius' gloss: "Eucles: Hades". A euphemism is postulated by Comparetti (1910) 25 n. 2 and Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 56. Diels (1907) 47, on the other hand, suggested that the figure in question is Ζεὺς χθόνιος. Olivieri (1915) 5 already pointed out the difficulty of identification, noting both possibilities.

[19] As can be read on the Oscan tablet from Agnone; cf. Zuntz (1971) 310, Burkert (1975) 100, Kotansky (1994) 110. Schwyzer (1935) 110 n. 5 indicated the possibility of relating it to another gloss by Hesychius: Εὔκολος· Ἑρμῆς παρὰ Μεταποντίνοις, which, in the view of Zuntz (1971) 310 n. 3, is reminiscent of the Ἑρμῆς χθόνιος of the tablet. See Bücheler (1881) 331 ff. and Poccetti (1994) 121, (1996) 219 ff.

[20] On the possible relation to the Orphic religion of the epitaph of Philocydis (*Carm. Epigr.* n. 52 Hansen) in which a certain Εὔκλεια is mentioned, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 204 f.

[21] Diels (1907) 47 thinks that Eubouleus is Dionysus Iacchus, son of Persephone and (chthonic) Zeus, that is, of Eucles, according to his interpretation, in Orphic nomenclature.

> *Orphic hymn to Persephone* (29, 6 ff.)
> Mother of the Eumenides, queen of the subterranean beings,
> whom Zeus engendered as his daughter in secret procreation,
> mother of the stentorian and multiform Eubouleus.
>
> *Hymn to Dionysus* (30, 6 f.)
> Eubouleus, of multiple designations, engendered by Zeus and Persephone
> in secret wedding beds, immortal demon.
>
> *Triennial hymn to Bacchus* (52, 4 f.)
> Nocturnal one, Eubouleus, bearer of the mitre, who waves the thyrsus,
> celebrator of orgies, secret, triform one, secret offspring of Zeus.[22]

We find the denominations of Dionysus and Eubouleus united once again and syncretized with the god Helios in an Orphic hymn cited by Macrobius.[23]

> he whom they call Phanes and Dionysus
> and sovereign Eubouleus…

Eubouleus is likewise mentioned in the *Gurôb Papyrus*, where the term may also be a name of Dionysus.[24]

Outside of the properly Orphic sphere, Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 7, 9 p. 714C) informs us that in very ancient times, Dionysus was called Eubouleus:

> and the very ancient ones called Dionysus himself, to say nothing of Hermes, Eubouleus.

And in an epigraph[25] (now lost) from the third century of our era, a cult of Dionysus Eubouleus is documented.

However, Eubouleus is a name of great versatility. It was also the denomination of a very important personage in Eleusinian spheres, a swineherd who witnessed the rape of Persephone and informed Demeter thereof, in return for which she taught him the cultivation of grain.[26]

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[22] The personages to whom this term is applied in the *Orphic hymns* also include Adonis (56, 3), the father of Dionysus (42, 2) or of Tyche (Fortune, 72, 3), and others (41, 8, etc.), but none of them is acceptable in this context.

[23] Macrob. *Sat.* 1, 18, 12 (*OF* 540, 3 f.).

[24] *P. Gurôb* I 22a, *pace* Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 82 n. 23.

[25] *CIG* II 1948.

[26] Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, 17, 1, Schol. *ad Luc.* 205b. The variant Eubulus already appears in a document from 423/2 B.C. (*IG* I³ 78a, 36–39; Sokolowski [1969] n. 5. Cf. Schwarz [1988] 43 f.) in which the Athenians invite all the Greeks to give a part of their collection of grain to Eleusis, in gratitude for the gift Demeter gave to the

In addition, the name appears associated with a strange cult at Eleusis,[27] and he is sometimes even identified with Zeus, thus forming a triad with Demeter and Kore.[28] For this reason, some authors[29] prefer to see Zeus Chthonius, who is invoked under diverse euphemistic names in various regions, in the Eubouleus of the tablets.

Eubouleus was also identified with Hades,[30] even in an *Orphic Hymn* (18, 12). For this reason as well, some authors prefer to see in the Thurian Eubouleus an epithet of Hades; but this would only be possible if we understand that Eucles and Eubouleus are two epithets of the same god, which is hard to believe. Schwarz,[31] for his part, denies the identification of Eubouleus with Hades, on the basis of the representation of both figures on the dedicatory relief of Lacretiades. From the viewpoint of cult, Pluto and Eubouleus are also separate, since one has a priest, and the other a priestess.[32] For Schwarz, Eubouleus was originally the name of an underworld divinity in Eleusis, who now appears as a hero, alongside the chthonic divinities.

In view of the data, it seems the most probable interpretation that Eubouleus is an epithet of Dionysus, so that we would have, in the tablets, an invocation of the "infernal trinity" of Persephone, Hades and Dionysus, none of them called by their name. As Tortorelli Ghidini[33]

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city according to the myth. See also the reference to Bouleus in Sokolowski (1969) n. 96, 17, which is interpreted as a variant of the same name.

[27] Cf. Burkert (1975) 100 f.

[28] So in Mykonos, Delos, Amorgos, Paros, Thasos, or Naxos (cf. Usener [1903] 25 ff.). For Sfameni Gasparro (1986) 103, the Zeus of this triad is a personage of the type of the chthonic Zeus invoked in Hesiod (*Op.* 465 ff.) together with Demeter, fundamentally analogous to the Pluto or Clymenus who, in other Greek centers, including Eleusis, accompanies the two goddesses. That this figure belongs specifically to a religious sphere in which a Demetriac character and agrarian and chthonic allusions are predominant can be deduced from the fact that this Zeus, now forming a couple with Demeter, is called Damatrios in an inscription from Rhodes (cf. Nilsson [1952] 552 n. 33, Morelli [1959] 36).

[29] Cf. Zuntz (1971) 311.

[30] Cf. the gloss by Hesychius: "Eubouleus: Pluto for most people, but also Zeus in Cyrene". Apollodorus (*FGH* 244 F 102 f) says that Euboulus and Eubouleus are names for Hades that reflect a benevolent attitude in relations with mankind, thanks to his capacity to put an end to pain and worries; Nicander (*Alexiph.* 14) describes Hades as the abyss of Eubouleus, from which it is hard to escape (cf. Comparetti [1882] 116, Sfameni Gasparro [1986] 102l, Kotansky [1994] 110).

[31] Schwarz (1897²) 1, 43 ff., 2, 20 ff.

[32] *IG* II² 1363.

[33] Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 82 f.

points out, this triad is also attested in iconography, and specifically in the Locrian *pinakes*.[34]

Alongside the gods, tablet **L 10a–b** mentions "the other daimones", but it is hard to know whether or not to relate them to the demons mentioned in the first columns of the *Derveni papyrus*.[35]

There follows the formula: "since I, too, boast that I belong to your blessed race", which is heir to an old Homeric expression in which a noble declared his lineage,[36] but which, in the Orphic sphere, is equivalent to the declaration "I am the son of Earth and of starry Heaven", although here it is addressed directly to the gods, rather than to the guardians.

4.2. *The reference to punishment*

At **L 10**, 4 the deceased makes a declaration (missing in **L 9**):

> I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts.

The expression makes it clear that in the system of beliefs that serves as a basis for these texts, it was necessary to expiate a fault, in order to arrive purified before Persephone and expect a destiny of blessedness. We should ask ourselves what impious actions are being referred to, and what punishment must be paid. The formulaic character of the expression encourages us to exclude the possibility that we are dealing with faults committed by the deceased during his lifetime, that is, with a particular blameworthy act.[37] It is either a fault that goes back to a previous existence,[38] or else it refers to a general, primordial fault, that was part of Orphic beliefs.

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[34] Cf. Rohde (1898²) I 207, 210, Schwarz (1988) 44 with bibliography. See App. II nn. 3–4.

[35] Betegh (2004) 85 ff.

[36] *Il.* 6, 211; 14, 113; 20, 241; 21, 187; *Od.* 1, 406; 14, 204; 21, 335; *h. Merc.* 378 (etc.).

[37] Burkert (1975) 94 f.

[38] Vernant (1965 [= 1955]) 92 ff. thinks that the notion of an ancient fault includes: 1) the crime of an ancestor, which weighs like a curse on his descendants; 2) the fault committed in a previous life; 3) the fault committed by the human race with regard to the gods, and for which each human being must pay a ransom. The unity of the various cases resides in the central theme of a sacrilegious fault, conceived as the action of a contagious stain, transmitted from generation to generation, and from which one must

A text from Pindar seems clearly to allude to the same scheme as the one found in the tablets:[39]

> the souls of those from whom Persephone accepts compensation for her ancient sorrow.

After a lengthy discussion, which has given rise to a considerable number of studies,[40] it seems clear that Pindar is referring to the Orphic myth, to which we alluded in § 1.6, according to which the Titans killed Dionysus and devoured him. Zeus, angered, struck them with lightning, and the human race was generated from the ashes of the Titans. Mankind is thus born stained by guilt, that of murdering and devouring the god, yet, at the same time, it has community with the divine, since it derives from the Titans, who were gods, and from Dionysus, who was ingested by the gods. Given that in Orphic tradition Dionysus is the son of Persephone, the "ancient sorrow" would be a mother's pain over the death of her son. Human beings are thus obliged to expiate the guilt they inherit from the Titans, until they have paid their compensation.

We find a similar conceptual universe in other Orphic texts. Thus, in the *Gurôb Papyrus* (*OF* 578) col. I 14, we read:

> Accept my gift, in expiation (ποινάς) of the impieties of my fathers (πατ[έρων ἀθεμίστων).

And in the *Derveni Papyrus*, col. VI 4–5:

> This is why the mages make sacrifice, the idea being they are expiating a punishment (ποινὴν ἀποδιδόντες).

As well as in col. III 8 (*OF* 472):

> In the same way as the unjust men (ἄ̣δικοι) condemned to death (θ̣α̣[νάτωι ζημιούμε]νοι).[41]

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liberate oneself by means of purificatory rites or by a rule of life (cf. the rituals cited by Plato, *Resp.* 364b–e, to expiate one's own crimes or those of one's ancestors).

[39] Pind. *fr.* 133 Maehl.

[40] Cf. Bernabé (1999b), Santamaría (2004) 271 ff.; *contra* unconvincingly Holzhausen (2004). See also Graf-Johnston (2007) 118 ff.

[41] This is the reading proposed by West in Tsantsanoglou (1997) 96; cf. also a fragment of the *Rhapsodies, OF* 350, 3 λύσιν προγόνων ἀθεμίστων "liberation from the unjust ancestors". Tsantsanoglou in Kouremenos-Parássoglou-Tsantsanoglou (2006) reads θ̣.[ ]νοι. On ποινή cf. Santamaría (2005). On the relation between the passage from *P. Derveni* and the tablets, cf. Most (1997) 131 f.

It is clear, moreover, that the "punishment" or "compensation" consists in living in this world. Expiation of the penalty must be made through the soul's enclosure in a body, which is thereby converted into a kind of prison or even a "tomb", since human life is not genuine life, but a period of purification and trials, until one achieves the genuine life that begins after death. In this sense, some very revealing texts may be compared:

> Indeed, some affirm that the latter [sc. the body] is the tomb of the soul, as if it were buried in its current situation…However, it seems to me that Orpheus and his followers gave it this name above all because the soul, which pays the price for that for which the price must be paid, holds it in a kind of enclosure, like a prison, where it can see itself as safe and sound, and that, consequently, it is the "salvation" (σῶμα)[42] of the soul, as is indicated by its very name.[43]
>
> Well, what is stated in the secret writings on this point, that people are in a kind of custody and above all that we must not free ourselves from it or escape, seems to me to be something great and not easy to divine.[44]

An interesting specification is introduced in this last passage. Suicide as a means for freeing oneself from this life is prohibited. In the Orphic conception, whoever commits suicide is guilty of a fault similar to that of someone escaping from jail before serving his appointed sentence.

It remains for us to cite a fragment by Aristotle:[45]

> By nature, we all find ourselves, as is said by those who recount initiations in the mysteries, subject to a kind of punishment, for the ancients say that it is divine to say that the soul is expiating a penalty, and that we are alive in order to be punished for certain grave misdeeds.

In view of these texts, the most logical approach is to think that under the mention of impious actions there lies a reference to the dismemberment of Dionysus at the hands of the Titans, the central myth of

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[42] Here, Plato no doubt expresses this word as if it were the action noun in -μα of σώιζω.

[43] Plat. *Cra.* 400c. Cf. Bernabé (1995a), with references to the huge previous bibliography.

[44] Plat. *Phd.* 62b. A scholium (Schol. Plat. *Phd.* 62b, 10 Greene) refers this testimony explicitly to Orpheus. See also Xenocr. *fr.* 219 Isnardi Parente, Plut. *De esu carn.* 1, 7 p. 996A–C (cf. Linforth [1941] 334 ff.).

[45] Arist. *fr.* 60 Rose.

Orphism and a version of the origin of man, which, like others, includes a doctrine of "antecedent sin".[46]

In all probability, this expiation was not fulfilled in a single life, but the soul had to pass from one body to another in successive reincarnations (what is called the "cycle" in **L 9**, 5) before achieving it.

Some authors have tried to study this question more precisely. Thus, it has been pointed out[47] that this belief in mankind's punishment, without any reference to original and terrestrial human guilt, implies dualistic presuppositions. In other words, the origin of the world and human existence are due to an inferior but superhuman agent, opposed to the divinity. Dualism presupposes an absolute gap, inherent in the very roots of human existence, which is therefore established in existence by an "antecedent" sin. This sin is neither human nor terrestrial, and it is brought about either by the damage inflicted by a supreme entity or, conjointly, the egoistic intervention and sacrilegious pride of a demiurge.[48] Alternatively, one may speak[49] of an active guilt extending to all mankind, as a kind of "guilt of existence".

Be this as it may, we are obviously not dealing with a purely passive expiation. The soul did not recuperate its original situation simply through the passage of time. The first indispensable precondition for the soul's salvation is initiation. Through it, the soul knows the sacred history through which it finds itself in its current situation, and the way it should conduct itself is revealed to it. Highly significant in this sense is one tablet from Pherai (**L 13**), in which the soul is invited to enter the meadows of Persephone "since the initiate is free of punishment". Being a *mystes* is the *conditio sine qua non* for freeing oneself from the cycle of reincarnations. The non-initiate appears to suffer a double punishment. In the first place, he suffers pains in the beyond (we hear of being immersed in mud or of carrying water in a sieve),[50] and, in

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[46] However, "sin" must be understood *mutatis mutandis*, since the reference in Orphic belief is to an original impurity that is rather physical, without the moral charge implied by the Christian term "sin".

[47] Bianchi (1966) 119.

[48] For Bianchi (1966) 120 ff., the pre-existent nature of this guilt, and its insertion within a prologue in the sky or in a cosmic-ontological drama, justify the idea's lack of precision, and there is no need to have recourse to any particular sin, such, for instance, as the dismemberment of Dionysus in the case of the tablets.

[49] Cosi (1987) 223 f., following the approach sketched by Burkert (1975) 95 with regard to a general guilt.

[50] Plat., *Resp.* 363d–e, *Gorg.* 493b, cf. also *Resp.* 364e. The punishments in the Beyond also appear in Apulian iconography. For instance, ΠΟΙΝΑΙ appear on the "Altamura" vase, cf. Aellen (1994) n. 2.

addition, he is condemned to return to spend other existences until he completes the necessary requirements.

In addition, purification is required. Every dismemberment implies the spilling of blood, which, for Orphic dogma, was one of the greatest impurities.[51] The myth of the sacrifice of Dionysus becomes a kind of archetype of sacrifice in general. This explains why the Orphics were vegetarians, and why they prohibited the spilling of blood, as an indispensable condition for maintaining purity. Similarly, other precepts had to be observed, such as abstaining from woolen clothing, among others.[52] This is why some authors speak of "puritanism" in referring to the Orphics.

In sum, the Orphic acceded to awareness of his soul by means of initiation, and then acted by celebrating a series of rites and observing various precepts in order to keep it pure. Once this had been accomplished, and guilt had been expiated, the soul, returned to its original purity, could finally escape the cycle of rebirths, free itself from generation and death, and have access to that immutable and permanent form of existence that was proper to the gods.

4.3. *Fate and the lightning of Zeus*

In **L 9**, 4 and **L 10**, 5 we encountered almost the same expression, with minimal variants:

L 9, 4	but fate[53] subdued me, and he that wounds from the stars with lightning.
L 10, 5	either fate subdued me, or else he who makes the lightning blaze forth.

[51] Empedocles stresses the relations between this prohibition and the doctrine of metempsychosis that permeates the poetry of his *Purifications*. Cf. for instance, *fr.* 107 Wright (= B 115 D.–K.) "when one, by the errors of his mind, contaminates his members and thereby violates the oath he swore—I mean demons who have been granted a long life—he must wander for times that are thrice uncountable, far from the Happy ones". On the relations between Orphism and Empedocles, see Riedweg (1997 [= 1995]) and Megino (2005).

[52] Cf. § 4. 1.

[53] The scribe has erroneously repeated "and the other immortal gods" from verse 2 (cf. App. I). This negligence, and others like it, give the impression that these documents were engraved in a great hurry.

'Fate' is our translation of the Greek Μοῖρα. Traditionally, Moira is the divine personification of destiny and death. We find an expression parallel to that of the tablets in Homer; cf., for instance:

> *Il.* 18, 119: but fate subdued him, and the terrible wrath of Hera.

The reference is to Heracles, for even he was unable to free himself from death. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus speaks to Euryclea about the death of the suitors:

> *Od.* 22, 413: but fate subdued them, and their cruel acts.

We note that in the Homeric passages as well, the expression for referring to death is duplicated, from two points of view: a general one, "fate subdued them" (that is, the hour of death arrived for them), and another specific one, indicating the mediate or immediate cause (the wrath of Hera, who has sought Heracles' downfall, or the acts of the suitors, which have provoked the vengeance of Odysseus).

However, as is almost always the case, the Orphics adapt a traditional phraseology to alter its meaning, forcing it to fit the context of their beliefs.

Indeed, according to another Orphic text, the theogony of the *Derveni Papyrus*,[54] Moira is a divine name that can be assigned to Zeus. The poet identifies Zeus with Moira[55] because the Moirai are divinities of fate, and for the Orphic poet as well, Zeus becomes the lord of destinies, as he governs the world and determines the course of events. Moira is the thought of Zeus, as Ocean is his power, the two characteristics that render him fit to carry out his role as ruler. The same identification with Zeus can also be seen in the Orphic hymn dedicated to the Moirai:[56]

> For all that happens to us, Fate and the mind of Zeus know fully.

Thus, we may consider that in whichever of the two forms it appears in the tablets (whether with a copulative or a disjunctive conjunction), the double reference to Moira and Zeus is a mere hendiadys, or two

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[54] *P. Derveni.* col. XVIII f. Cf. Funghi (1995), Laks-Most (1997), Bernabé (2002e), Betegh (2004) 200–202, 332.

[55] Cf. Alderink (1981) 28 ff., Casadesús (1995) 381 ff. Cf. also Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 56, according to whom it would be harmonious to evoke Zeus alongside Moira to signify its relation as a minister of the supreme numen.

[56] *Orph. Hymn.* 59, 13 ff. Cf. already Olivieri (1915) 6, Ricciardelli (2000a) *ad loc.*

ways of referring to the same fact: the death of the *mystes*, brought about by Zeus-destiny.

Zeus is not mentioned by name, but by an epithet that alludes to lightning: ἀστεροβλῆτα 'he who wounds from the stars with the lightning' (**L 9,** 4), a term documented only here, or else ἀστεροπῆτα 'he who makes lightning blaze forth' for which we have other testimonies in the variant form ἀστεροπετής, always referring to Zeus.[57] Both terms are probably cultic epicleseis of this divinity,[58] to judge by Ζηνὸς Ἀστραπάτα read in a dedication of an altar in the agora of the gods at Kameiros on Rhodes,[59] a region where extremely ancient institutions and traditions are preserved.

Why is the reference to Zeus so insistent on the use of lightning? Various interpretations have been offered. According to one, which is nowadays utterly rejected, the passage should be placed in parallel with another one by Plato:[60]

> and there was thunder and an earthquake, and suddenly the souls were hurled from there—some to one side, some to another—upwards, like shooting stars, for their birth.

According to this interpretation, Zeus projects the souls into space like sudden bolts of lightning or like shooting stars, the idea being that the souls pass through a kind of "celestial purgatory". As we have seen, however, there is nothing in the tablets that alludes to the souls' destiny, whether final or transitory, in the heavens. All that is mentioned is the souls' passage from this world to Hades.[61]

A second possibility is that the expression should be taken literally,[62] that is, we are to believe that the men buried in the *Timpone piccolo*, all of whom were initiates, died from being struck by lightning. This would explain the peculiarities of the *Timpone piccolo*: three burials carried out at distinct times, and the traces of ashes and coal that testify to a burial

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[57] *Il.* 1, 580, 609; 7, 443; 12, 275; Hes. *Theog.* 390, Soph. *Phil.* 1198, *Orac. Sib.* 2, 16.

[58] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 56 f.

[59] *Tituli Camirenses* 142.

[60] Plat. *Resp.* 621b. Cf. Alline (1912) 98.

[61] The proposal by Kerényi (1928) 326 has also been rejected: based on Plat. *Resp.* 621b, it suggests that fulmination brings about a fall into reality that manifests itself in each human being with birth.

[62] Rohde (1898²) II, 218, 4, Zuntz (1971) 316, Burkert (1975) 93 f.

cult of lesser extent than that of the *Timpone grande*.[63] A man struck by lightning would be considered sacred, and a special burial would be reserved for him.[64]

The idea may be suggestive, but the majority of scholars reject it, with the objection that the fact that the people struck by lightning in Thurii happened to be initiates would be an unlikely coincidence. In addition, the rather formulaic character of the expression in the tablets, which seems to be part of a stable tradition (which could therefore hardly be reserved for a phenomenon so extremely exceptional as being struck by lightning), points, in our opinion, rather in the direction of the expression of a mystical content.

In the search for an interpretation along these lines, we find that Zeus' thunderbolt appears in various mythic themes that are intimately related to the Orphics:

a) First, we should recall that it was with the lightning that Zeus struck the Titans who had dismembered Dionysus,[65] and that it was from their ashes that mankind was born. If there is an allusion to this episode, we would think that mankind, in solidarity with his ancestors the Titans, feels himself to be wounded by a thunderbolt at the moment of his passage to the other world: once he goes through the trial of the thunderbolt, he is liberated and purified of his Titanic nature. Such an interpretation would also coincide with the expression uttered by the initiate in the previous verse of the two tablets from Thurii:

L 10, 4 I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts.

There is, then, an ambiguity or ambivalence implicit in the concept of being struck by lightning,[66] which may be understood as a divine

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[63] Musti (1984) 63 f. raises the possibility of a common burial for the members of an Orphic community.

[64] Burkert (1975) 103 f. even suggests that the personage buried in the tomb in which **L 8** and **L 12** appeared was the seer Lampon.

[65] Cf. § 1.6.

[66] Pointed out by Burkert (1975) 93 ff., who, without ruling out the possibility that we may be dealing with dead people who really were struck by lightning, thinks there is a reference here to the Titans. By this kind of compromise, he tries to transcend the rigid alternatives of previous interpretations, where the reference to the myth seemed incompatible with death by being struck by lightning. Burkert (1960–1961) 208 ff. had already observed the same ambiguity in the term ἐνελύσιος 'wounded by the thunderbolt'. Whoever is struck by lightning is not a normal dead person, but is invested with a special force, and enters into a superior existence, acquiring a heroic status, as is demonstrated by the cases of Asclepius or Capaneus. This special force is even attributed to the very places where the lightning strike took place, or to the

punishment, as in the case of the Titans, or as a reward consisting in an elevation of rank, or even in *apotheosis*. The vicissitudes of the Titans,[67] the founding myth of Orphic doctrine, ritualize the faithfuls' being struck by lightning. Since mankind is conceived according to the anthropological dualism that considers the soul to be divine, but to have fallen into the body as a result of guilt, being struck by lightning reveals the doctrinal premises that justify the positive evaluation of a special death in which the body is immediately dissolved and negated by destructive fire.

b) It has been objected, however,[68] that an allusion to the Titans, who are a source of disgrace for mortals, would contrast with the mystic tone of the tablets, because it would not be logical for the initiate to evoke once again the terrestrial experience he wishes above all to forget. However, this objection is, in our view, invalid, since the initiate has just declared that he has paid the price, and has thereby liberated himself and is ritually pure upon his arrival in Hades. Moreover, the mention of Zeus as hurler of lightning would enable the thunderbolt of the tablets to be interpreted as an instrument and sign of the passage from a mortal state to another divine one. Relatively close examples would be the myth of Semele's being struck by lightning,[69] and the birth of Dionysus, tutelary numen of all kinds of μύησις, whether Orphic or not, and the guide for the initiates' rebirth to a true and eternal life.[70]

c) There are still further examples of episodes of death by being struck by lightning in relation to the Orphics: thus, we know of a secondary version of the death of Orpheus, in which he is burned to a cinder by Zeus' thunderbolt,[71] and another tale,[72] according to which Zeus

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graves of those struck by lightning, like the pyre of Heracles or the tombs of Lycurgus or Euripides. Cf. also Riedweg (1998) 381.

[67] Cosi (1987) 223.

[68] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 56.

[69] Cf. for instance, Diod. 5, 52, 2, Nonn. *D.* 9, 204 f. (with the commentary by Chrétien, p. 118). On Semele, cf. Casadio (1991a) and Bernabé (1998c) 34 ff. On Semele in the *Orphic Hymns*, see Rudhardt (2002).

[70] Díez de Velasco (1995) 135 also saw in this expression a transposition of the episode of Semele: in the Beyond, the initiate will suffer a trial in which he will be carbonized, in order to be reborn in a divinized form. Graf-Johnston (2007) 126 ff. defend the view that an initiate might undergo the same lightning as the Titans and emerge from it quite differently.

[71] Alcid. *Ulix.* 24, Paus. 9, 30, 5 (as a punishment for having divulged the secrets of the mysteries among mankind, but the tale also concludes with the protagonist's divinization), Diog. Laert. 1, 5.

[72] Clearch. *fr.* 48 Wehrli.

struck down certain Tarentines for their obscene behavior in a sanctuary of Carbina Iapygia. After the lightning strike, their fellow citizens established the annual celebration of a sacrifice to Zeus Kataibates, so that the punishment appears to be transformed into a motive for offerings or a rite destined for the god. There are no data allowing us to ascertain that the protagonists belonged to Orphic circles, although the localization in Tarentum and Iapygia situates them in areas that are topographically close to such circles.

d) For his part, Porphyry tells how Pythagoras himself, who came to Crete to be initiated, was purified by the "lightning stone".[73]

e) We can also mention West's observation concerning a curious design in the form of a zigzag that appears on the bone tablets of Olbia, which could, among other interpretations, represent a bolt of lightning.[74]

f) Finally, this expression has also been placed in relation with the episode narrated by Herodotus,[75] according to which the house of the Scythian king Scylas, who was initiated into the mysteries of Bacchic Dionysus at Olbia, was struck by a thunderbolt.[76]

We therefore consider that the expression

> but fate subdued me, and he that wounds from the stars with lightning

alludes to the initiate's death, conceived as a purifying passage symbolized by the thunderbolt, which evokes the fate of the Titans or Semele. Being struck by lightning allows him to be liberated from his last Titanic vestiges, in order to be re-united with the gods. He can thus affirm that he has paid the penalty, and hopes to be rewarded with the prize for his life as an initiate and for the purification he has undergone at the moment of death.

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[73] Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 17.

[74] West (1982) 19 points out that the important cosmic role assigned to Keraunos (the thunderbolt) is also attested by Heraclit. *fr.* 79 Marcovich (= B 64 D.-K.) "And the thunderbolt guides all things". A zigzag design that might be a thunderbolt traverses a spherical earth on a jug from Ripacandida of the 5th cent. B.C.; cf. § 1.6.

[75] Hdt. 4, 79, 2.

[76] Ricciardelli (1992) 30 n. 22 notes the possibility that it is Διόνυσος Βακχεῖος who strikes Scylas' house with lightning, which could have some relation with the ἀστεροβλῆτα/ἀστεροπῆτα of the tablets. In the text of Herodotus, however, it is not specified that it is any particular god who hurls the lightning, but only that a natural phenomenon is here considered as a divine prodigy.

4.4. *Two variants at the end: a) the supplication to Persephone*

At its end, tablet **L 9** differs considerably from **L 10a** and **b**. In **L 10**, the soul declares itself to be a suppliant before Persephone, so that she may send it to the dwelling-place of the pure. In **L 9**, the deceased makes a few metaphorical references that are not easy to interpret, and ends with a *makarismos* similar to those we have already encountered. Let us first consider the simplest variant (**L 10**, 6 f.):

> Now I come as a suppliant before chaste Persephone,
> to see whether, benevolent, she may send me to the dwelling of the limpid ones.

The soul of the deceased is practically at the end of its path: all that is missing is for Persephone to authorize it to join with other pure souls in a special, reserved place. The goddess is qualified as ἁγνή, an epithet we translate as 'chaste', but which includes a constellation of connotations that are impossible to reflect in translation.

In ancient epic, ἁγνή, frequently applied to goddesses, includes a notion of veneration and fear,[77] as does the verb from the same root, ἅζομαι. It indicates a negative respect felt in the presence of a god or a divine personage, which consists in avoiding or abstaining from something.[78] In the *Odyssey*,[79] we encounter ἁγνὴ Περσεφόνεια, in a passage clearly imbued with death, where the sovereign of Hades disperses the souls of the women. The epithet also reappears in an underworld context in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*.[80]

In the tragedians, the word comes to be applied to a human being as "ritually pure, fulfilling the state required for a ceremony". In the tablets, this nuance of the fear experienced by the μύστης in the presence of Persephone can probably still be appreciated.[81] In a fragment of Euripides' *Cretans*,[82] we find the phrase ἁγνὸν δὲ βίον τείνομεν 'we lead a pure life' as the synthesis of a form of life that corresponds

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[77] Cf. De Bock Cano (1982) 126 ff.
[78] Benveniste (1983) 359 ff.
[79] *Od.* 11, 386.
[80] *h. Cer.* 337. These examples, and others in which Artemis is qualified as ἁγνή when she puts Orion to death (*Od.* 5, 123), or when Penelope invokes her in order that she may grant death to her (*Od.* 18, 202), lead de Bock Cano (1982) 129 to conclude that ἁγνός in the time of Homer, the *Homeric Hymns*, Tyrtaeus and Archilochus does not belong to the semantic field of the pure, but to that of the sacred.
[81] Velasco López (1990–1991) 484.
[82] Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472 Kannicht, cf. Bernabé (2004c).

closely to the one we know as proper to the Orphics. In Euripides,[83] the term refers to purity in sexual matters, but also to the ascetic life, and the verb τείνομεν, in the present tense, indicates that we are dealing with a permanent practice rather than a transitory one, so that we can conclude that ἁγνός in the fragment from the *Cretans* refers to a purity that is the fruit of ritual observance and a fairly rigorous style of life, which may perhaps include sexual abstinence.

As far as the "domain of the limpid ones" is concerned, the term "limpid" (εὐαγής) reappears in a tablet from Amphipolis (**L 16n**), in which an initiate declares herself to be "limpid and consecrated to Bacchic Dionysus".

The aspects we have seen—sacred character, often in relation to death and the infernal, and purity—appear together in later testimonies. For instance, Pausanias[84] speaks of the sacred grove of Carnasius in Messenia, particularly full of cypresses and presided over by an image of Kore Hagne next to a fountain, in the place where the mysteries of the Great Goddesses are celebrated. The author regards them as second in rank after those of Eleusis as to their venerability. Eustathius[85] associates purification with liberation, precisely one of the key aspects of the goddess Persephone. The epithet is often found applied to the same goddess in epigraphical sources.[86] Finally, the same appellative applied to the goddess[87] reappears in hymns within ritual contexts or in sacred Orphic ceremonies, in reference to other personages related to the goddess of the infernal depths,[88] including Demeter herself.[89]

In the light of all these testimonies, we see that the Orphic poet has used a traditional epithet of the goddess, already Homeric, maintaining

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[83] Cf. Casadio (1990) 282.

[84] Paus. 4, 33, 4 ff.

[85] Eust. 1691, 47 "calls Persephone 'pure' because, given that the dead require purification, the body is purified by fire". Cf., however, the warnings by Ebeling (1885) *s. v.* ἁγνή.

[86] Collected by Zuntz (1971) 317 n. 1: a *defixio* of 475–450 B.C., found at Gaggera (Ferri [1944–1945] 171), a dedication from Acras (*IG* XIV 204), and another from Tauromenia in Sicily (*IG* XIV 431).

[87] *Orph. Hymn. ad Mus.* 6; 24, 11; 29, 5; 43, 7. In the hymn dedicated to Pluto (18, 12), in the context of underworld depths and of death, it is said that he seduced "the daughter of pure Demeter". Cf. Ricciardelli (2000a) *ad loc*.

[88] The infernal and pure Zeus with whom Persephone celebrated her wedding (*Orph. Hymn.* 41, 7); Corybant, son of Persephone, conceived without the help of a male, who exchanged his chaste body for that of a terrible black serpent (*ibid.* 39, 7); Sabus or Sabazius, son of Zeus and Persephone (*ibid.* 49, 2).

[89] *h. Cer.* 203; 409.

its traditional meaning which referred to veneration, but enriching it in an Orphic context. The adjective now summarizes the values of the Orphic life: chastity and asceticism, as expressed in the fragment from the *Cretenses*. The *mystes* who presents himself as a suppliant before Persephone because he wishes to be accepted for his purity among the pure, addresses the goddess as pure herself. In addition, the role of Persephone in liberation is fundamental, and liberation and purification cooperate in the Eustathius' interpretation of ἁγνή. The *mystes* knows that the ultimate decision depends on Persephone, and trusts in her benevolence to be accepted into the dwelling of those who, like him, are initiates and have led a life of purity.

4.5. *b) The second variant: the cycle, the crown, and the lap of the goddess*

The second variant is more complicated, for it alludes to various beliefs that configured a framework of references that the initiate knew, but we can only guess.

Let us begin with the first of these cryptic phrases (**L 9**, 5):

> I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow.

The Greek word κύκλος (which we must translate by 'cycle') has various meanings, which do not contribute to clarifying its interpretation. It can mean 'circle' or 'ring' (that is, a geometrical figure), with a wide variety of concrete uses, such as 'cycle' (a series of events that repeat themselves) or 'wheel'. The interpretations of the meaning of this phrase have been multiple.

An initial explanation is that κύκλος refers to a real circle,[90] formed in an initiatory rite carried out during one's life. It might be a wheel, or else a circle drawn around the neophyte, from which he had to escape.[91] Such a hypothesis can neither be confirmed nor denied. In any case, the partisans of this idea understand that another kind of "wheel" or "cycle" is represented symbolically in the rite, so that the suggestion does not contradict other interpretations.

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[90] Harrison (1922³) 588 ff., as could have been expected from a representative of the Cambridge ritualist school. Cf. also Wieten (1915) 97 and 104.

[91] Cf. Psell. p. 41 Boissonade τίνα περὶ δαιμόνων δοξάζουσιν Ἕλληνες, who recalls an ancient Bacchic rite in which the demons were expelled by the act of leaping out of a circle of fire.

We can also start out from the fact that a cyclical model of events had been developed since ancient times in Greece, based naturally on the succession of the seasons.[92] Already Herodotus tells us:

> There is a cycle of human affairs, and in its revolution it does not permit the same people to always have good luck.[93]

This would be a kind of precedent of the medieval wheel of fortune. We find a similar affirmation in Aristotle:

> It is customarily said that human affairs are a kind of circle . . . and it also appears that time itself is a kind of circle.[94]

The expression "it is customarily said" indicates that such an idea was current in the Stagirite's time. In the light of this principle, it can be supposed that the believer considers that his individual destiny is not clearly distinguished from the cosmic "circle". Indeed, we find that in some Orphic texts the presence of Necessity (Ἀνάγκη) is mentioned at the very origins of the world, as a principle that surrounds and unites it, the companion of time (Χρόνος), conceived in its turn as a twisted (ἑλικτός)[95] serpent with wings. The world of births and deaths of mortals seems to be united and dominated by the "circle" of the heavens, identified with the κύκλος ζωιδιακός, the solar ellipse, the κύκλος γαλαξίας or αἰθὴρ σφίγγων περὶ κύκλον ἅπαντα (Emped. *fr.* 28, 4 Wright [B 38, 4 D.–K.]). On the other hand, the ideal, eternal world to which the soul aspires is outside the "circle", as Plato indicates in a tale that is not Orphic, but is inspired by its imagery:[96]

> The (souls) called immortal, once they reach the summit, heading outside, rise above the back of the heavens, and as they rise the circular movement carries them along.

We find an image in Empedocles that is probably closer to what we have here. The philosopher also speaks of an eternal κύκλος of the conversion of the multiple into one and the one into the multiple.[97] Specifically, *fr.* 47, 10 Wright (B 35, 10 D.–K.) mentions the ultimate

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[92] Cf. Onians (1954²) 451 ff., Bernabé (1990).
[93] Hdt. 1, 207, 2.
[94] Arist. *Phys.* 223b 24.
[95] *OF* 77 and 82. Cf. Onians (1954²) 332.
[96] Plat. *Phdr.* 247b ff., cf. Bernabé (1998a) 79 and n. 152, 153.
[97] Emped. *fr.* 8, 13 Wright (= B 17, 13 D.–K.); *fr.* 16, 1 Wright (= B 26, 1 D.–K.). Cf. Bernabé (1988) 189 ff., Betegh (2001), Megino (2005) 37 ff.

confines of the κύκλου to refer to the world, or the globe. This last example is interesting because, as we shall see, the ideal reflected in the tablets is that of escaping from this world to move on to another better one.

However, there are a few questions that are important for interpreting what κύκλος refers to. The first is that it is defined in an absolutely negative form, "painful" and "of deep sorrow". It is significant that Empedocles uses the same adjective ἀργαλέος with reference to human life in a fragment which mentions precisely a "Decree of Necessity":[98]

> while he keeps alternating the painful directions of life.

It is, then a painful cycle, and escaping from it presupposes a liberation and a triumph. Proclus, a great connoisseur of Orphism, speaks along the same lines:[99]

> Given that the human soul, alternating with the cycles of time, moves from one living being to the other.

This is not the only testimony to the Orphic idea of a "cycle". In other Orphic fragments and in the texts of the Neoplatonic philosophers who present them, we find the word κύκλος to refer to the cycle of the metempsychosis of the soul, because of which it must become incarnate again and again until, once its faults have been expiated, it can enjoy its sojourn alongside the other happy ones.

Thus, for instance, Proclus, after affirming that

> This is the soul's only salvation, which liberates it from the cycle of generation and from long wanderings,

he ends his explanation by presenting a verse from the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, in the following terms:

> The happy (…) life, far from the roaming of generation, that is desired by those who, in Orpheus, are initiated in Dionysus and Kore:
> "To cease from the cycle and enjoy respite from disgrace".[100]

Simplicius also includes the same verse, with the following explanation:

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[98] Emped. *fr.* 187 Wright (= B 115 D.–K.), v. 8.
[99] Procl. *in R.* II 338 (*OF* 338, 1).
[100] Procl. *in Tim.* III 296, 7 (*OF* 348). Here and in the following citation, the phrase in quotation marks includes the literal one in verse.

> and (the soul) is chained up by the demiurgic god, who assigns to all what is just, to the wheel of necessity and of birth, from which it is impossible to escape, according to Orpheus, unless one attracts to oneself the favor of the gods.
>
> "whom Zeus charged to cease from the cycle and enjoy respite from disgrace".[101]

We even find the same idea in a Pythagorean context. Thus, Diogenes Laertius reports a notice on Pythagoras:[102]

> They say he was the first to affirm that the soul, following the changing cycle of necessity (κύκλον ἀνάγκης ἀμείβουσαν), sometimes finds itself united to one animal, and at other times to another.

Scholars usually maintain that the idea gestated in a Pythagorean environment, and that this is where the Orphics took it.[103] However, there is no proof for this affirmation: it could have happened in the reverse way, or else both Orphics and Pythagoreans could have adapted a concept that was already known—albeit not widespread—in the Greek world.

In addition, the use of the verb ἐξέπταν 'I flew forth' in the tablet under examination recalls the metaphor of the soul as a bird that flies forth from the body when it is freed from its prison, to which Plutarch refers in the work he wrote to consoles his wife over the death of their daughter.[104] This is consistent with liberation from the circle of births.

Yet we can be even more specific. The image contained in κύκλος can be more complex. Thus, some scholars[105] have seen in it a metaphor for the well-known torture of the wheel. For the Orphics, on this view, the series of reincarnations is not seen merely as an abstract circle, but as a metaphor of the wheel of torture. Clement of Alexandria offers a highly interesting text:[106]

> By means of symbols, like the wheel that turns in the sanctuaries of the gods, taken from the Egyptians.

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[101] Simpl. *in Aristot. Cael.* 377, 12 Heiberg (*OF* 348). On the presence of this theme in Virgil's underworld description (*Aen.* 6, 745 ff.), cf. Clark (1975).

[102] Diog. Laert. 8, 14.

[103] Olivieri (1915) 6 ff., Zuntz (1971) 320 ff., Lloyd-Jones (1984) 275 f., Giangiulio (1994) 25. Cf. already Lobeck (1839) 789 ff., Delatte (1915) 20.

[104] Plut. *Cons. ad ux.* 10 p. 611D. Cf. Turcan (1959), Casadio (1991b) 135 f.

[105] Cf. Harrison (1922³) 592 f., Thomson (1945) 9.

[106] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5, 8, 45, 4.

Simplicius[107] also uses τροχός (clearly "wheel", instead of the more ambiguous term κύκλος), and speaks of the "wheel of births". In addition, wheels formed part of the sacred furniture of certain sanctuaries, and on some vases from South Italy we even find wheels hanging next to the deceased who appears next to Orpheus.[108]

We can conclude that by the expression

> I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow,

the initiate manifests above all that his soul has abandoned the cycle of reincarnations in this world; that is, he has succeeded in liberating himself from the mortal life to which he was condemned for the fault committed by his ancestors the Titans. The expression reveals or implies that the initiate conceives of life, or better, the succession of the lives through which the soul must pass, both as a cycle—within a cyclical conception of the universe,[109] in whose process of becoming one series of events succeeds another in an ordered, necessary way—and as a wheel, understood as a repeated, terrible punishment, as terrible as the tomb we find as a metaphor for life in other allusions to the Orphics in Plato.[110]

There follows the phrase:

> **L 9**, 6 I launched myself with agile feet after the longed-for crown.[111]

Formally, we find traditional echoes in our verse,[112] but in the context of the tablets, the expression, as always, acquires a new meaning. The

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[107] Simpl. *in Aristot. Cael.* 377, 12 Heiberg.

[108] Cf. Harrison (1922[3]) 601 f., fig. 161–162. For another interpretation, see Olmos, App. II n. 2.

[109] *OF* 438, cf. Bernabé (2003a) 240.

[110] Plat. *Gorg.* 493a, *Crat.* 400a. Softened by Plato into a "prison" in *Phd.* 62b, *Crat.* 400a.

[111] After v. 7, the tablet presents a text that is practically identical to that of v. 6, the only difference being that ἀπέβαν appears instead of ἐπέβαν. Some authors (Eitrem [1915] 54 f., Kern [1922] 106 f., and Pugliese Carratelli [1993] 56, [2003] 106 defend the text as it is, the idea being that it is a repetition referring to a ritual motion of coming and going, and the crown is a physical space, or a place from which one may enter and leave. Since we do not share this interpretation of the crown, we prefer to follow the opinion of other editors, such as Kaibel (1890) n. 641, 1, Olivieri (1915) 6 f., Zuntz (1971) 301, who suppose that verse 8 is a dittography or repetition of verse 6, introduced by error, and consequently suggest suppressing it.

[112] ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι at *Il.* 16, 342, 809; *h. Merc.* 225, Apoll. Rhod. 3, 280. For the crowns: Hes. *Theog.* 576 f. For the value of ἐπιβαίνω with abstract terms, cf. Apoll. Rhod. 3, 1165. The verb seems to have the meaning of ἐμβατεύω, which acquires a technical meaning in the language of the mysteries (cf. *CIG* 3538 = *SEG* 4. 597 μυ]ηθέντες καὶ

question is: what kind of crown we are dealing with, and what is its meaning in the religious context to which our texts belong?

The first scholars gave the crown a local interpretation: it is a concrete place at which the deceased arrives. On the basis of the fact that στέφανος can sometimes mean 'a crown of fortifications',[113] it was thought that it could be a kind of fence that protected the seat of the blessed,[114] or the kingdom of Persephone.[115] However, the local interpretation is ultimately hardly acceptable: first, because this value of "crown" is very occasional and unexpected in our context. Second, because the crown is qualified as "longed-for", and one would have to understand it as a metonymy, in the sense that the deceased manifests a desire for the fence in order to refer to the desire for the happy place that is enclosed behind it. Above all, however, because there are no indications of an enclosed space in the meadows and groves of Persephone, but the *loca beatorum* are always imagined as being in regions that are remote and isolated, but not fenced in.[116] For all these reasons, we can consider this interpretation as completely rejected.

Another interpretation, likewise local, is also unacceptable. According to it, στέφανος should be given the meaning, also local, of 'orbit'.[117] On the basis of this interpretation, two moments are to be distinguished in the soul's path towards liberation from the cycle. An initial moment is represented by the cycle of rebirths on earth, followed by a second one in which the soul is bound to a new cycle, this time astral, which means that the stars are the seat of the souls in this second moment. Only once the soul had also freed itself from this second cycle will it have concluded the path of purification, and have open before it the

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ἐμβα[τεύσαντες, denoting the physical act of entering the ἀνάκτορον or the new status achieved by the initiate after a stage of his initiation. Both terms would have the same meaning as the Latin *initiari* (cf. Ellendt [1872], *s. v.* ἐπιβαίνω).

[113] *Orph. Arg.* 761 πόλιος στέφανος, Anacr. *fr.* 72, Pind. *Ol.* 8, 42, Eur. *Herc. fur.* 839.

[114] Dieterich (1891) 35 (= [1911] 95). See also Olivieri (1915) 7.

[115] Rohde (1898²) II 219.

[116] Comparetti (1910) 27 n. 2.

[117] Lampugnani (1967) 134 f., on the basis of the ritualist explanation by Harrison (1922³) 593, according to whom the initiate, in the course of a ritual performed during his lifetime, enters a large room decorated with garlands, as seems to be implied by the meaning of ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι.

road towards assimilation with the divinity. Another proposal,[118] which takes its place in a very proximate domain, goes hand in hand with the interpretation of γάλα as 'milky way', according to which κύκλος is ὁ γαλαξίας κύκλος, a name which is sometimes given to the Milky Way. For these interpretations, the same argument holds that we have already presented with regard to other interpretative proposals of the soul's sojourn in the heavens:[119] there is nothing in the tablets that indicates that the soul leaves the infernal world for a heavenly journey.[120]

If we start out from the basis that στέφανος here has the meaning of 'crown', it will be best to orient our explanations towards the value that Greeks of the time attributed to crowns.[121] Basically, we find crowns in relation to various realities: banquets, the funerary world, triumph in athletic competitions, certain rituals, and an ensemble of mystical symbols.

Crowns are related to banquets because the participants in symposia had the custom of wearing crowns. For instance, we may cite a passage from Xenophanes,[122] in which the preparations for a banquet are described:

> Now the ground is clean, and the hands of all,
> and the cups: one dons woven crowns…, etc.

Crowns were also used in funerary rituals. A couple of examples may suffice. In Euripides' *Phoenician women*, Creon proclaims, with regard to the corpse of Polyneices (1632 f.):

> Whoever is caught trying to place a crown on this corpse
> or to cover it with earth, will pay for it by death.

In Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, the protagonist offers a crown and a honey cake to the counselor, when suggesting that he die (600 ff.):

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[118] Giangrande (1991b) 87 ff., salvaging an interpretation by Diels-Kranz (1903) I 224 and index, *s. vv.* γάλα and γαλαξίας.

[119] Cf. § 2. 4.

[120] See also the interpretation by Onians (1954²) 451, who tries to differentiate between κύκλος, understood as the invisible "circle" of destiny from which the initiate has escaped, and στέφανος as the visible "crown", inside which he has placed himself.

[121] On the functions of crowns, cf. Blech (1982).

[122] Xenophan. *fr.* 1 Gent.-Prat.

> What reason do you have not to die?
> There's room; buy yourself a coffin,
> I'll knead you the honey cake;
> take this and wear it as a crown.[123]

Just as numerous are the testimonies that corroborate the image of the souls of the blessed as crowned and adorned with garlands in the Beyond. To give a couple of examples, Pindar tells us that those who have led a spotless existence weave crowns in the kingdom of Rhadamanthys.[124] Virgil also gives an account of the representation of the souls crowned in the Beyond:

> They all bound their temples with a snow-white band.[125]

Crowns of gold or gilded metal also seem to have played a role in the funerary rites of Magna Graecia.[126]

In addition, the relation of crowns to triumphs in athletic competitions is particularly well known. Even a rapid reading of Pindar's epinician poems would provide us with a dozen examples.[127] The metaphor of the crown as the symbol of the believer's victory after a life of struggle is not foreign to Greek literature, whether in pagan (as in the case of Eleusis) or in Christian contexts.[128]

The crown is part of many rituals that are close to the Orphic world. For instance, Demosthenes testifies to the cultic use of the crown when he describes[129] the Bacchic *thiasoi* guided by the officiant Aeschines:

> In the daytime, guiding the beautiful revels, those crowned by fennel and poplar.

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[123] The crowns, wheels, or ribbons placed on the deceased's head probably symbolized a happy destiny on earth. Cf. Onians (1954²) 450 ff., 367 and 376 f.

[124] Pind. *Ol.* 2, 74 ff.

[125] Verg. *Aen.* 6, 665. Cf. also Synes. *Hymn.* 3, 394 ff.

[126] Pugliese Carratelli (1986²) 711.

[127] Thomson (1945) 9 ff. offers this as the only interpretation of the reference to the crown in our texts, on which point he is refuted by Pickard-Cambridge (1945) 53, who rejects the translation "crown" and prefers to consider the term as the "circle" of the fortunate, into which the Orphic initiate is now entering.

[128] Plat. *Phd.* 114c, Porph. *Abst.* 1, 30, Plut. *Ser. num. vind.* 18 p. 561A, Clem. Alex. *Quis diu. sal.* 3 (937 P.), *Ep. Col.* 2, 18; eternal life is the laurel crown, or the prize of the victor (βραβεῖον, 1 *Ep. Cor.* 9, 24, *Ep. Phil.* 3, 14).

[129] Demosth. *De cor.* 260 (*OF* 577 I).

According to Harpocration, crowns made from poplar leaves were worn because of their relation with the world of the dead,[130] with which Dionysus is also associated, because of his dismemberment at the hands of the Titans and his subsequent rebirth:

> Those who carry out the Bacchic rites crown themselves with white poplar because the tree is chthonic and Dionysus, son of Persephone, is chthonic.

In the text of Demosthenes, on the one hand, the crown serves as a sign of identity for the members of the *thiasos*, and, on the other, the faithful roam the streets wearing crowns as a sign of their victory over death. Even from the relation established by the lexicographer between wearing crowns and the chthonic character of Dionysus, we may assume that crowns would occupy a preferred place in a hypothetical representation of the god's suffering and triumph over death. In this case, the crown's importance in the funerary ritual and in the representations of the practices of the *mystes* in the Beyond, which we shall see later on, would go back to a rite celebrated on earth that pivots around the god's death and rebirth.

Plutarch[131] mentions *thiasoi* of women who wore crowns, among other attributes peculiar to these rites.

> And in the *thiasoi* she (*sc*. Olympias) lifted up great tamed serpents, which would often lift their heads from out the ivy and the mystic winnowing-baskets, or coil themselves about the wands and garlands of the women, thus terrifying the men.

While Clement of Alexandria[132] points out the relations between τελετή, crowns, and ritual ecstasy.

The crown is, moreover, a mystical symbol. A passage from the *Frogs* presents the *mystes* as crowned:[133]

> O most glorious Iacchus, dwelling there in thine abode,
> (…)
> come dancing along this meadow

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[130] Harp. *s. v.* λεύκη (163 Keaney, *OF* 577 VIII). The white poplar is one of the trees that traditionally populate the Greek Hades, cf. Comparetti (1910) 34.

[131] Plut. *Alex.* 2, 9 (*OF* 579).

[132] Clem. Alex. *Paed.* 2, 8, 73, 1: "Those who celebrate Bacchus do not carry out the rites without crowns, but as soon as they place the flowers around their temples, they burn with anticipation of the τελετή".

[133] Aristoph. *Ran.* 329 ff.

> approach these holy members of your *thiasos*,
> brandishing about your head
> a many-fruited crown
> full of myrtle.

Myrtle seems to be the paradigmatic crown of initiates in the mysteries, and this is closely associated with its place in the cult of the dead, and of Demeter and Kore.[134] However, they could also be made of ivy. In the description of an amphora from Vulci from the 4th/3rd cent. B.C., now lost, to which we alluded in § 1.6, the initiates were described as crowned with ivy and bearing *thyrsoi*.[135] It should be recalled, moreover, that the tablets from Pelinna (**L 7a–b**) have the form of an ivy leaf. For all these reasons, it is not surprising to learn that an enormous mystical gold crown appeared in the Dionysiac procession of Ptolemy II, above the door of the Bereniceion, the sanctuary of the divinized queen.[136]

The ceremonial result of the initiation concludes with a coronation.[137] The crown, as a symbol of triumph and metaphor of the laurel wreath that was offered as a prize for the victors in games, would give symbolic expression to the fact of having been initiated, and having ensured oneself the prize of glory.[138] However, we consider it very risky to attribute the creation of such an extended metaphor to the Orphics. It seems more logical to think that they used a term whose evolution from a concrete to an abstract meaning had already taken place. All these values of the crown: symposiacal, funerary, as a sign of triumph in a competition, and mystical, although they seem highly diverse, can nevertheless appear together in our context.

We are therefore dealing with a concrete object, desired and received as a prize (ἱμερτός), as a proof of success in the passage through Hades, like wine in the tablets from Pelinna.[139] The initiate's liberation from the cycle of rebirths is conceived as a triumph, and the achievement of a goal obtained after many efforts. In this sense, the crown is a symbol

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[134] Cf. the interesting book by Blech (1982) 212 ff., for crowns of ivy in the cult of Dionysus; 94 (n. 15), dealing on the relation of myrtle with the cult of Demeter and Kore. Cf. Eur. *Alc.* 172, *Elect.* 324, 512, Ister *FGH* 334 F 29, Apollod. *FGH* 244 F 140.

[135] See also the scholium to Pind. *Ol.* 2, 132b 1: "flowers of the trees: olive, myrtle, ivy; underground flowers: violets, saffron".

[136] Callixen. Rhod. *FGH* 627 F 2, 34 = Athen. 202d. Cf. Burkert (1975) 96.

[137] Cf. Theon Sm. *Math.* p. 14 Hiller.

[138] Cf. the critiques by Pickard-Cambridge (1945) 53.

[139] Cf. § 2.5.

of his victory over reincarnations. It is also a funerary symbol, insofar as the triumph does not take place in this world, but in the Beyond, since the victors do not have to return to a mortal life, but will remain as eternal residents in the other world. Likewise, it has a mystical basis, since it is a kind of sign of identity for the initiate, as on the vase from Vulci, where initiates are recognized precisely by this external feature. Finally, it is associated with banquets, since a perpetual banquet is promised to the good *mystes*.

Several passages allow us to see how some concepts overlap with one another, even outside our text. A poem by an unknown author, datable to the mid-3rd cent. B.C., is addressed to the tragic poet Philicus, whose head is crowned with ivy at the moment of his departure towards the places of the happy and the island of the Blessed:[140]

> Go, happy traveler, go to see
> the beautiful choruses of the pious, O Philicus,
> tossing forth auspicious words from your ivy-crowned
> head, and go in festive procession to the islands of the happy.

The poem echoes the language and the ideology of the tablets of the initiated dead. Philicus' ivy-crowned head seems to be a sign of his initiation into the mysteries. Funerary and initiatory aspects are united. Still more significant is another text from Plato, in which he mocks the benefits promised by Musaeus and his son (that is, Orpheus) to the just in the Beyond, which we have seen and commented with regard to the use of wine.[141]

> They transport them in imagination to Hades, and there they set them at the table and organize a banquet of the just, in which they have them spend their entire lives crowned and drunk, as if there were no better reward for virtue than perpetual inebriation.

We find the same panorama in a fragment of Aristophanes,[142] which, although corrupt, allows us to glimpse that there is a reference to some initiates who participate, crowned, in a banquet in the Beyond. A character is comically singing of the excellent aspects of being dead:

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[140] *Suppl. Hell* 980; cf. the interpretation by Dickie (1995) 84 ff.
[141] Plat. *Resp*. 363c.
[142] Aristoph. *fr.* 504, 6 ff. K.-A. Cf. Bernabé (2004d) 42 ff.

And where do you think Pluto gets his name (i.e. "Rich"),
if not because he took the best portion?[143]
...
How much better are things below that what Zeus possesses!
When you use the balance, the pan that is heavy
goes downwards, and the empty one, towards Zeus.
...
And we would not be crowned, or anointed (?)[144]
if we were not going to drink as soon as we go down.
That's why they're called "happy",
since everybody says: "He has gone away, the happy one".
"He fell asleep, the fortunate one, for he will no longer suffer".
And we celebrate sacrifices in their honor,
...
as if to gods, and offering them libations,
we ask them to send us good things up here above.

It is therefore not surprising that on a vase found in the grave next to one of the tablets from Thurii, a hermaphrodite genius is represented with a crown in its hand.[145]

Moreover, we know from a Rhodian inscription[146] that associations of *thiasoi* offered crowns as a prize or reward during life, which continued to be recognized after death. The philosopher Theo of Smyrna describes the stages of an initiatory ritual that consists first in purification, followed by the performance of a ritual, contemplation, and the initiate's coronation, all of which produced a state of happiness in him.[147] Once again, the initiatory ritual, the world of death and the soul's destiny are implicated in the metaphor of the crown, simultaneously mystical, triumphal and symposiacal, a rich combination of aspects, woven together like the leaves and flowers that compose it.

The parody of initiation in the *Clouds*[148] can also be remembered, where Socrates gives the initiand a crown and explains to him the procedure followed by all the initiates.

There follows a new expression, which is difficult to interpret:

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[143] In the distribution of powers among the gods.

[144] In burial. The text is doubtful here.

[145] Cf. Velasco López (1990–1991) 376.

[146] *IG* XII 1, 155, D II 63 ff. Cf. Foucart (1873) 33 ff., Nilsson (1957) 9 and 64, Casadio (1994b) 249, and Morand (2001) 78.

[147] Theon Sm. *Math.* p. 18 Hiller. Initiation is felt to be a change in destiny, reminiscent of the religious *symbolon* noted by Demosthenes in the *De Corona* 259: ἔφυγον κακὸν, εὗρον ἄμεινον.

[148] Aristoph. *Nub.* 254 ff., cf. Bernabé (2004d) 47 f.

> I plunged beneath the lap of my lady, the subterranean queen.

There can be no doubt that the lady in question is Persephone, and that the initiate establishes a special relation with her. After liberating himself from the cycle of births, and surging forth to obtain the crown, thanks to this intimate relation with the goddess, the initiate achieves his goal absolutely, is transformed, and reappears, happy, deified and compared to a kid fallen into the milk. The subject of debate is in what such a special relation consists concretely. An older line of interpretation seeks a parallel in a passage from Clement of Alexandria, describing the mysteries of Sabazius:[149]

> The symbol of the Sabazian mysteries for those who are initiated into them is "the god through the lap". It is a snake that slides through the initiates' lap, a proof of Zeus' sexual incontinence.

The tone of Clement's description suggests that the ritual in which a snake (real or fictitious) was made to pass beneath the initiates' clothing was a kind of commemoration of Zeus' sexual union with Persephone in the form of a serpent. In this perspective, the initiate would unite mystically with the god in a kind of correlate of sexual union, whose result, according to some authors, was adoption by the goddess.[150]

There are some obstacles to accepting this suggestion: the act described in the tablet does not seem to be a rite (which would take place in a τελετή), but something that occurs in Hades.[151] Other arguments can be added to this objection: first, the sexual atmosphere seems particularly far removed from the Orphic rituals and from Orphic life in general, which is characterized by unadulterated puritanism.[152] The second argument is that sexual union does not seem to be the most adequate ritual means for an adoption. The third is that in this context, the initiate's conversion into a suckling kid would be rather shocking.

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[149] Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, 16, 2.

[150] Dieterich (1891) 37 ff. (= [1911] 97 ff.) interprets it as an act of symbolic adoption of the *mystes*; cf. Harrison (1922[3]) 593 ff. Festugière (1932) 137 f. prefers to see in it a ἱερὸς γάμος. Colli (1981[3]) 402 saw in it a reminiscence of obscene elements. Bacchus is born through the violation Zeus commits in Persephone's lap in the guise of a snake, according to the passage cited by Clement of Alexandria.

[151] As is argued by Rohde (1898[2]) II 421.

[152] Burkert (1975) 97 rejects the possibility of an obscene allusion such as τῶν ὑπὸ κόλπον τι, as in the adulterated mysteries of Alexander of Abonouticus, or the symbol ὑπὸ τὸν παστὸν ὑπέδυν of those of Attis.

A second, more acceptable line of interpretation sees in the reception in the goddess' bosom an everyday image: that of the child who finds peace, well-being, security and refuge beneath the lap of his mother or nursemaid.[153]

The expression ὑπὸ κόλπον is already present in the Homeric poems: Demeter holds the child Demophoon in her lap; Thetis receives Dionysus in her lap to protect him, and even when the divine Eidothea enters the sea, she also plunges into her lap. Dionysus himself is called ὑποκόλπιε 'he who is in the lap' in an *Orphic Hymn*.[154]

In the light of these texts, the initiate takes refuge in the protective lap of the goddess. However, although this connotation is acceptable, it still remains insufficient for understanding why the transformation takes place. It therefore seems necessary to have recourse to an interpretation that goes further.

Here, too, a starting point is Dieterich,[155] who sees in the formula an allusion to a kind of second birth from the divine mother after death. Burkert,[156] who comes out in favor of this line of interpretation, relates the phrase to a passage from the end of Plato's *Republic* (621a), where the souls, once they have chosen their destiny, must "pass beneath the throne of Necessity". Burkert considers that the phrase we are studying and the Platonic one are illustrations of the same ritual sphere: we have clearly to do with a ritual of birth, which, in myth, leads to rebirth. He even presents as a parallel the Lady of Baza, a seated statue of an Iberian goddess with a hollow beneath her lap, in which the ashes of a dead person were deposited.[157] In a similar light, a series of female idols from Anatolia, the Cyclades, and Asia Minor, have been studied as goddesses of life and death.[158] Likewise an Etruscan figure, rather late,[159] which represents Gorgo, the mistress of animals, with her legs open, may be mentioned. Still more interesting, since they are closer

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[153] Zuntz (1971) 319. Cf. already Rohde (1898²) II 421, Nilsson (1961²) 236, Comparetti (1910) 27 n. 3 gives examples of this usage (a funerary epigram, *Epigr. gr.* 237 Kaibel Ἀίδεω κόλπος, and a citation from the Gospels, *Luc.* 16, 22 κόλπος Ἀβραάμ), and even cites Dante, *Inf.* 12, 119 "in grembo a Dio". Farnell (1921) 378 considers the verse to be a poetic-religious expression peculiar to burial.

[154] *h. Cer.* 187, *Il.* 6, 136 and 18, 398, *Od.* 4, 435, *Orph. Hymn.* 52, 11.

[155] Dieterich (1925³) 55.

[156] Burkert (1975) 97 ff. Cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal (forthcoming 2).

[157] Presedo (1973).

[158] Thimme (1985).

[159] From San Mariano, now in Munich. Cf. Von Vacano (1955) plate 94.

in space and time, are a series of votive terracotta figurines,[160] dated between the 4th and 2nd centuries B.C., and found in temples in South Etruria and Latium. They represent goddesses with a child, half of whose body appears beneath her clothing, sometimes accompanied by a bird.[161] Such images have been interpreted as a symbol of the initiate's penetration within the goddess' bosom in order to be born again. Other similar figures show the goddess suckling a child.[162]

In the light of these figures, it is appropriate to interpret that when the initiate says ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν 'I plunged beneath the lap', it means that he penetrates inside the goddess' womb in order to be born again, converted into a god.[163] His falling into the milk would imply that he is transformed into a nursling of the goddess' milk (cf. the sarcophagus of Tarquinia, discussed in App. II n. 9).

This belief has been compared with various Oriental myths and rituals[164] in which the dead person returns to the uterus of the mother, particularly a myth involving Enki, the Mesopotamian god of fresh water, and Ninhursag.[165]

Although we lack sufficient data to confirm that we are dealing with a rite,[166] and even if neither the Oriental nor specific philosophical explanations are accepted, the fact is that we seem to have reasons to suppose that the Orphic initiate, re-creating very ancient beliefs of the Mediterranean world, believed that after having been born from his mother's womb, he is received at his death by the womb of Mother Earth, from which he is reborn, but to a new, higher, and divine life. Let us recall, in this respect, that the ancient Great Mother of the Aegean was later adored by the Greeks in the figures of Aphrodite, Demeter,

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[160] Fridh-Haneson (1987).

[161] A similar motif appears on a mirror from Perugia, conserved in National Library of Paris, cf. Fridh-Haneson (1987) 70, with bibliography, and App. II n. 11.

[162] Cf. App. II n. 11.

[163] Cf. also § 7.3 on the possible reading ὑπέδυν in **L 13**.

[164] Di Filippo Balestrazzi (1991) 73 ff. links this verse to various sculptures in which goddesses and their laps are represented.

[165] Di Filippo Balestrazzi (1991) 73 ff. cannot decide whether the formula reflects a rite, and has recourse to the explanation of Adorno (1975) 10 f., according to which Orphism solves man's tragic position by means of a purification that lets him rise towards primordial, ultimate unity, insofar as it reproduces the divine essence held prisoner in the soul to the heavenly fatherland from whence it comes, thus repeating the drama of the Universe and becoming one with the god. He wonders whether becoming one with the god means returning to the unity of the cosmic egg.

[166] Cf. Guthrie (1935) 183.

and Persephone,[167] and also that death, for the Orphic initiate, is the beginning of eternal life, and that both, life and death, are not always antithetical, as is demonstrated by the Olbian expressions life/death/life.[168] In sum, the womb of Persephone is simultaneously the womb of the earth, also used as a reference to the innermost part of the underworld regions, the protective womb of the mother or nursemaid in which the child takes refuge, and the maternal womb from which the initiate hopes to be reborn, transfigured and divinized.[169]

The tablet concludes with a verse and a rhythmic phrase. Taken up in the verse is a μακαρισμός, probably placed in the mouth of the goddess herself, greeting the mortal who has succeeded in achieving a divine status (we shall return to this point when we come to discuss final destiny in chapter IX), and the *mystes* himself responds with the mention of the kid fallen into the milk, with which we have already dealt.

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[167] This twofold aspect of the goddess who gives life to men or takes it away can be seen in the *Homeric Hymn to Gaia*, a goddess who receives practically no cult anywhere in Greece, owing to the fact that she was substituted in her chthonic aspect by other, more specialized divinities such as Demeter, Themis or Persephone: *h. hom.* 30, 6 f. "mistress, on you it depends to give life to men or take it away from them".

[168] Cf. the plays on words by Plato: *Phd.* 71d: "Do you not affirm that the contrary of living is being dead? (…) And that they are born from one another? (…) Then it is from the dead, O Cebes, that living things and living beings are born?", ibid. 77c–d: "All that is alive is born from what is dead. Then if the soul exists beforehand, and if it is necessary for it when it goes to live and to be born, not to be born from any other thing but from death and from being dead, then how can it fail to be necessary for it to exist once it as died, given that it is inevitable for it to be born again?" Then there are the verses by Euripides placed in the mouth of Socrates, Plat. *Gorg.* 492f (Eur. *Polyid. fr.* 638 Kannicht): "who knows if to live is to be dead, and to be dead, to live?". Cf. Bernabé (2007b).

[169] According to Festugière (1972) 62 f., the κόλπος is the womb of Mother Earth, which might explain the presence of γάλα in εἰς γάλ' ἔπετον. Cf. § 2. 4 and the parallel with Apuleius (*Met.* 11, 10). Graf-Johnston (2007) 128 consider this interpretation unlikely.

CHAPTER FIVE

A TABLET IN IMPERIAL ROME (L 11)

Translation of tablet 11 from Rome

At first glance, the tablet found at Rome is rather similar to the ones from Thurii, which we have just seen. It begins with an almost identical formula, referring to the fact that the soul comes pure from among the pure, and with an invocation to the subterranean Queen, to Eucles and to Eubouleus, and the deceased woman is told that she will be transformed into a goddess. However, as we shall see, it presents some significant differences.

L 11 Tablet from Rome c. 260 A.D., British Museum, first ed. Comparetti (1903).

She comes from among the pure, pure, queen of the subterranean beings,
Eucles and Eubouleus, son of Zeus. Accept, therefore,
this gift of Mnemosyne, celebrated by men.
"Come, Caecilia Secundina, legitimately transformed into a goddess".

Commentaries

5.1. *Change of person in the sacred formula*

It is curious to find in Rome, almost six centuries after the tablets from Thurii, a text as similar to them as this one. However, these six centuries have not passed in vain, and we find differences between the texts that are significant. In the first place, the initial formula has changed. In contrast to the "I come" declared by the soul itself in the tablets from Thurii, here we find "comes". The speaker is not, therefore, the dead woman, but a third person. It could be a guardian

of the infernal regions,[1] or else an "intermediary from this world", or else the tablet itself.[2]

Whoever he may be, the speaker himself requests in the imperative mode that the gods invoked accept a gift from Mnemosyne. The translation we offer is based on the conjecture ἀλλὰ δέχεσθε,[3] which enables the text to be understood with a certain clarity: Eubouleus, son of Zeus, is none other than Dionysus, who is likewise a son of Persephone,[4] and Eucles is Zeus, identified with the infernal god.

Curiously in a tablet containing the formula of presentation before Persephone, such as those from Thurii, we find a mention of Mnemosyne in what follows, such as in those from the first group we examined, which constitutes a proof that at least at this time—and we believe it was always that way—Mnemosyne and Persephone belonged to one and the same religious scheme.

We can then ask ourselves what the poet is referring to when he speaks of "this gift of Mnemosyne". Some authors believe it is the poem,[5] but

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[1] As suggested by Zuntz (1971) 334.

[2] As in the proposal of Riedweg (1996) 479.

[3] Suggested by West (1975) 231, in opposition to that of Diels (1907) 46 f. ἀγλαά, ἔχω δὲ. If we were to accept Diels' conjecture, the translation would be "splendid offspring of Zeus. I have this gift from Mnemosyne, etc." Yet this text (accepted by the majority of modern editors) seems unacceptable to us, for several reasons: a) to whom does "splendid offspring of Zeus" refer?—as Kotansky wonders (1994) 110–, since it cannot be Caecilia Secundina herself, as Marshall (1911) 380 would have it. b) Who is the subject of "I have"? Not much is solved by the suggestion by Colli (1981[3]) 236 f. who punctuates after τέκος and interprets as "splendid (viz. I, the soul), I have…". It does not seem adequate to suppose that the soul that arrives in the other world to be received should do so by bragging about its splendor. The only more acceptable solution would be if the subject were the tablet itself. c) Above all, however, τέκος is neuter, and we should expect ἀγλαόν (cf. the question by Lagrange [1937] 140, n. 2, as to whether the engraver could have allowed himself to write ἀγλαέ for ἀγλαόν). Tortorelli Ghidini (2006), following Comparetti (1903) reads τέκος, ἀγλαά and explains ἀγλαά as an epithet of Caecilia Secundina ("Viene pura…, prole di Zeus, splendente"), but syntactic difficulties remain; if Διὸς τέκος cannot be Caecilia Secundina, the word order is very strange, with Διὸς τέκος in the vocative as an apposition to Εὐβουλεῦ and ἀγλαά in the nominative as a predicative of the subject of ἔρχεται. ἔχω is also very odd with δέ if the author of this text has changed the former ἔρχομαι into ἔρχεται. We would expect ἔχει.

[4] Cf. *Orph. Hymn.* 30, 1 ff.: "I invoke Dionysus…(6) Eubouleus, engendered by Zeus and Persephone", or 29, 6: "queen of the subterranean beings, whom Zeus engendered as his daughter, the mother of Eubouleus".

[5] Zuntz (1971) 335, with the approval of Kotansky (1994) 112. Still less probably, fresh water, as Marshall (1911) 379 would have it. For her part, Tortorelli Ghidini (1995b) 478 f. considers it a "metaphorical" usage.

it seems to us more likely that it refers to the sacred formula that begins the tablet, or, more generally, to the remembrance of initiation.[6]

5.2. *The deceased woman called by name*

However, the most unusual feature of this tablet is the one we encounter in the last verse, where the reference to the initiate's deification is accompanied by her name, Caecilia Secundina.[7] In contrast to the belief maintained in the tablet from Hipponion and in other similar ones (**L 1–4**), in which the initiate renounces his earthly race and proclaims himself to belong to a cosmic race, this Roman woman, like the *mystes* in the ones with a brief text (**L 16b–d, f–k, n**), proclaims her own name and her own identity. It is probable that ancient hexametric formulas have been adopted for use as an amulet.[8] In any case, we must recall the recent find at Rome of a hypogeum of the second century A.D.,[9] with a wall painting in which Mnemosyne may be represented, and in which one may read *refrig<eri>um*, which might indicate that our tablet does not constitute an isolated testimony of the presence of these beliefs in imperial Rome.

We suppose that the last verse is the reply given by the goddess, who assents to the initiate's entry into the realm of the happy, and her divinization.

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[6] Cf. Comparetti (1910) 45.
[7] On whom cf. Kotansky (1994) 112.
[8] Kotansky (1994) 107; cf. already Zuntz (1971) 334 and Kotansky (1991) 115; see also Martín Hernández (forthcoming).
[9] Cf. § 1.2. and App. II n. 13.

CHAPTER SIX

A "WORD SEARCH PUZZLE" FOR DECEIVING NON-INITIATES: THE "GREAT" TABLET FROM THURII (L 12)

Translation of tablet 12 from Thurii

The "great" tablet from Thurii is completely atypical. For years, it has defied the attempts at interpretation of various philologists, who tried to read in it a continuous text. We offer an alternative interpretation of the text, based on the idea that it contains only a few significant elements (those we translate later on), surrounded by meaningless letters.

L 12 Tablet from Thurii, s. IV/III B.C., Naples Museum, first. ed. Diels (1902).[1]

To the First-Born, to Mother Earth, to Cybelea, daughter of Demeter.
Zeus, Air, Sun. Fire conquers all.
Avatars of fortune and Phanes. Moirai that remember all. You, O illustrious demon.
Father who subdues all. Compensation.
Air, fire, Mother, Nestis, night, day
Fasting for seven days. Zeus who sees all. Always. Mother, hear my prayer. Fine sacrifices.
Sacrifices. Demeter. Fire. Zeus, the Underground Girl.
Hero. Light to the intelligence. The adviser seized the Girl.
Earth. Air. To the intelligence.

[1] We translate only the readable parts of the text, cf. the commentaries § 6.2.

Commentaries

6.1. *A disconcerting discovery*

The so-called "great tablet" (81 × 23 mm.) from Thurii was discovered in the large grave called *Timpone grande*, in 1897. It had been folded nine times, and served as a wrapper for **L 8**. Also dated to the turn of the 4th and the 3rd centuries B.C., it has remained largely incomprehensible for many years, and has been a genuine enigma for scholars.

After the initial perplexity brought about by its discovery[2] (since the tablet turned out to be unintelligible), a copy of the text reached an extremely competent philologist, Hermann Diels, who, in 1902, by applying his enormous knowledge of Greek and no less enormous doses of imagination, reconstructed, or, as one might more accurately say, invented the first six lines of the text.[3] According to him, it was a Sicilian Orphic poem on Demeter, supposedly copied again and again, which generated a great accumulation of mistakes. Diels' well-deserved prestige immediately made this reconstruction acceptable and the model for other subsequent proposals,[4] in which the attempt continued to be made to obtain a coherent text from the tablet. In contrast, Comparetti[5] criticized Diels' hypothesis of an accumulation of errors, given that South Italian scribes spoke and wrote Greek fluently, and that there is an infinitely lower proportion of errors in the other tablets from Thurii. He reached the conclusion that the text was deliberately incomprehensible, arcane, and linked with mysteries, as divine names are masked among meaningless letters, and that it may have been read as an exhortation to the divinity for the soul of a dead initiate in funeral ceremonies (since it does not, in fact, contain any unpronounceable sequences). Consequently, he considers it naive to try to understand a text that was created precisely in order not to be understood.

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[2] When the tablets were discovered, Barnabei took charge of them, but was unable to make sense of the large one, and therefore sent a facsimile of it to Comparetti, who was also unable to read it, but published some notes in which he recognized a few words (cf. Comparetti [1878–1879] 329).

[3] Diels (1902), later included in the edition of the Presocratics (1954[15] [= 1903]) I b 21).

[4] Murray (1908) 664 ff.

[5] Comparetti (1910) 12 ff.

Some authors have tried to elaborate on the idea that we might be dealing with a magical text.[6] In particular, the very fact that it was used as a wrapper for another tablet has been interpreted in the sense that it served as a kind of phylactery to safeguard the other text,[7] or even as a kind of amulet,[8] related to enchantments, such as those we find in the magical papyri to be used in the other world, which also contain incomprehensible formulas. However, others have rightly emphasized the fact that our text does not follow the familiar pattern of the magical texts.[9] It does not feature the phonic sequences that are usual in this type of text, and in addition, we might add, in the other magical texts the abracadabra's are preceded by indications on their powers or their effects, on the manner of pronouncing them, or on the gestures that must accompany them. Consequently, most editors have maintained the hypothesis of a text filled with errors by an extraordinarily incompetent scribe.[10] The textual situation is ultimately so desperate that Pugliese Carratelli restricted himself to transcribing the capital letters in order, giving up on obtaining a continuous text in his successive editions of the tablets,[11] and is open to the possibility that we may have to do with a kind of magical phylactery. To conclude the catalogue of proposals, we must cite the old idea that we might be in the presence of a text in another language, distinct from Greek, which preserved only the names of the gods.[12]

6.2. *A proposal for a new reading*

We cannot share the interpretation that the "great tablet" is written in a language other than Greek. Neither does the text resemble, even distantly, that of any known Italic dialect, nor can we expect its appearance

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[6] Murray (1908) 665, Burkert (1974) 326, Kingsley (1995) 310.
[7] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 67.
[8] Kotansky (1991) 114 ff., 121.
[9] Murray (1908) 665, Olivieri (1915) 22 ff., Zuntz (1971) 345.
[10] Olivieri (1915) 22 ff. presents a reconstruction of the text with very little conviction while Zuntz (1971) 346 ff. resigns himself to recuperating only a few segments. For his part, Colli (1995 [= 1977]) 190 ff. tries to recuperate all he can (which is, in fact, not very much), and concludes that Diels' interpretative approach (1971[15] [= 1903]) was the most acceptable.
[11] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 66 f., (2001a) 125 f., (2003) 129 ff. Riedweg (1998) 361 also omits it and considers it incomprehensible and perhaps magical.
[12] Gruppe (1912) 103 ff., Zuntz (1971) 349 rightly rejects this hypothesis.

in an environment such as this, which is rigorously Greek-speaking. Nor can we accept that we have to do with a text that is simply corrupt, copied very badly by a deliriously incompetent scribe. We ought to recall that it was written on a expensive gold tablet, which accompanies on her path to the other world a socially prestigious individual, with a comfortable economic situation and apparently a higher than average level of culture, who could be more demanding with her suppliers. There are other tablets in the area (one of them in the same grave) which are much more comprehensible.

Nor can we consider it a mixture of meaningless letters in which sequences that correspond to extant words might have appeared by chance. In the legible sections, we find words that are clear and have a meaning, a logic, and a relation with one another that exclude the possibility that their presence may be due to chance, and in them the number of errors is minimal.

In brief, the situation is as follows. We can read more than fifty words in the text (either isolated words or syntagmas), connected to each other by logical relations, which form part of one and the same ideological and religious scheme. Around them, we find sequences of letters that are inevitably meaningless and resist any attempt to reconstitute a continuous text. One of the authors of this book[13] has suggested accepting the idea that this duplicity is deliberate, that various divine names and mystical formulas have been gathered together in the tablet, which constitute a significant system, and have been surrounded by sequences that can be pronounced, but are voluntarily meaningless from the outset, for which reason it is absurd to try to form from them a coherent text, which never existed. We would thus be dealing with a message that is similar (*mutatis mutandis*) to a world search puzzle: that is, columns of letters, a determinate number of which form words, which have a relation among themselves (in word search puzzles, one searches, for instance, for rivers or movie actors, and they can also be related to a series of drawings which accompany the mysterious text). Both in the aforementioned pastime and in our tablet, the point is that the person who sets out to read the text knows what to search for in

[13] Cf. Bernabé (2002c), which served as the basis for this chapter, and where more details may be found. For his part, Betegh (2004) 332 ff. utilizes this reconstruction and compares it with some passages from the *Derveni Papyrus* and Heraclitus, and Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) and Graf-Johnston (2007) present it, although Tortorelli Ghidini and Betegh (forthcoming) include some different proposals regarding details.

the mishmash of meaningless letters, and this gives him the key to set aside some letter sequences as the products of chance, and accept only those that refer to what he is searching for. This is what Comparetti,[14] in a curious turn of phrase, calls 'cryptosemasia', or 'hidden signification', whereas Betegh prefers to speaks of "encryption".[15]

We understand, then, that the text is not awfully corrupt, but that it was written for people who knew what to look for in it (divine names, mystical formulas), and that there were other letters without value, which were not to be taken into consideration. The basic difference that exists between a "word search puzzle" and our text is the purpose of the text. The tablet is not an amusement, but has mystical intentions, on which its user's salvation depends. Only the initiate is able to find the holy words in the sequence of letters and discern what is significant from what is not, and this knowledge is useful to him in the other world, where the tablet accompanies him. In contrast, if the text were to fall into the hands of a non-initiate, it would be completely useless to him, because he could not read it.[16]

6.3. *Sacred formulas among meaningless letters. Some parallels*

Let us consider, then, the words we believe may be read.[17] Naturally, in a work of this nature it is not always easy to decide whether we are

[14] Comparetti (1910) 15 n. 3.

[15] Betegh (forthcoming).

[16] A magical use of the text can be neither confirmed nor denied, but the same could be said, with equal justification, of the other gold tablets, which are simultaneously the proof that their bearer belongs to the group of initiates, an aid for remembering what one must say or do in the other world, and perhaps, at the same time, a kind of magical protection, like the scapularies, medals, and other elements of popular religiosity, which for some people have a function that is identifying, salvific, and—why not call a spade a spade?—magical. However, the cryptic text does not, in and of itself, add any magical element to the pure use of the tablet, but the letters that apparently derive from abracadabras have their own function: to hide the message and make it apt only for the initiates able to interpret it. Other similar texts dated in 5th–4th B.C. have been found in places near Thurii, cf. Martín Hernández (forthcoming).

[17] The heterogeneous character of these mentions, which stem from various origins, explains why they lack dialectal unity. The most striking aspect is the coexistence of South Italic Doric (which probably derives from the σύμβολα of the ritual) with the Ionic of the poetic tradition.

in the presence of an intentional word or the result of chance.[18] It is necessary, in addition to distinguishing what is significant from what is not, constantly to consider the possibility of errors in the text which we might call "significant", which complicates our task a great deal more, obliging us to be prudent and demand that the text we accept be justified within the context. As a second requirement, we must base our reconstructions on parallels from texts that derive from the same religious environment: viz., Orphism.[19]

In line 1, we can separate the significant words:

> To the First-Born, to Mother Earth, to the Cybelean, daughter of Demeter.

In the *Derveni Papyrus*, somewhat prior to our text, the First-Born is Heaven;[20] in Euripides it appears to be Eros, and in the *Rhapsodies*[21] it is Phanes, a god whose name means 'who appears' or 'the resplendent one', described as a being with four heads, winged and serpentine, the first demiurge of the world prior to the re-creation carried out by Zeus, after having devoured it. The appearance of this god, the First-Born Phanes, in literature and iconography goes back to a much later date,[22] for which reason it seems highly unlikely that we should find him in a text from the end of the fourth century B.C. Since in what follows there is a mention of Mother Earth, who is the partner of Heaven, and taking into account the Orphic password we gave already analyzed (**L 1,** 10, etc.):

> I am the son of Earth and of starry Heaven,

it is most likely that the First-Born here, as in the *Derveni Papyrus*, is Heaven, the first child of Night. The Girl, daughter of Demeter,[23] is

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[18] It should be borne in mind, moreover, that when a text with the characteristics we postulate, that is, in which meaningless sequences are mixed with others which do have meaning, is copied, it is easy to make mistakes, because the person making the copy does not have the support of a definite logic of the text.

[19] The details concerning the text may be found in the critical apparatus (see App. 1), as well as in Bernabé (2002c), where a discussion of other suggestions will be found.

[20] The question is highly debated, and we cannot enter into it here. We refer the reader to Bernabé (2002e), (2003a), (2004b), where the relevant discussion may be found.

[21] Eur. *Hyps. fr.* 758a, 1103 ff. Kannicht (*OF* 65), *OF* 109 IX, 123 and 143.

[22] Cf. Bernabé (1997).

[23] Cybelea, or "daughter of Cybele", is a tautology, underlining the identification of Demeter with Cybele.

Persephone, normally called Κόρη. The name of Demeter is interpreted in Orphic texts as Mother Earth (Γῆ μήτηρ),[24] which is why, moreover, Persephone is the daughter of Earth. The deceased thus addresses his ultimate ancestors, Heaven, Earth, and Persephone, the divinity of the dead, who decides his fate in the other world.

In line 2, we find three vocatives and a brief phrase:

> Zeus, Air, Sun. Fire conquers all.[25]

The identification of the god with the air already occurs in *Derveni Papyrus*;[26] for the phrase on the cosmic power of fire (we recall the idea of the initiate as transformed by Zeus' purifying lightning-bolt in **L 9–10**) we find parallels in Heraclitus:[27]

> Upon its arrival, fire will discern and subdue all things.
> Night-wanderers, magoi, bacchoi, Lenai, mystai: they are threatened by what comes after death; fire is predicted for them.

As far as the Sun is concerned, it is an important divinity among the Orphics. In a late Hellenistic *Hymn to the Sun*, attributed to Orpheus and cited by Macrobius, we find it identified with Dionysus:[28]

> The sun, whom they call by the epithet Dionysus.

As we shall see immediately, there are reasons to think that this syncretism had already taken place in the time of our tablet. Thus, in line 3 we read:

> Fortune, Phanes. Moirai that remember all. Illustrious demon.

Fortune (Τύχη) is a goddess who appears identified with Artemis in Orphic literature.[29] As far as Phanes is concerned, as we have already said, we do not think it likely that he should be the god cited in the

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[24] Cf., for instance, the *Hymn to Demeter* in the *Derveni Papyrus*, 4th cent. B.C., col. XXII 12: Δῄμητερ [Ῥ]έα Γῆ Μῆτερ <τε καὶ> Ἑστία Δηιοῖ.

[25] Betegh (forthcoming) reads also "hero" (ἥρως) after "fire" but it is difficult for us to integrate it in the context.

[26] Col. XVII 3–4: "the reason why he (sc. Zeus) is called air is explained beforehand".

[27] Heraclit. *fr.* 82 and 87 Marcovich (= B 66 and 14 D.-K.). The attribution of the second of them to Heraclitus has been debated, but the appearance of *magoi* in col. VI of the *Derveni Papyrus* makes it much more likely.

[28] Macrob. *Sat.* 1, 18, 17 (*OF* 542).

[29] Cf. Simpl. *in Aristot. Phys.* 333, 15 Diels, Ioa. Diacon. *ad Hes. Theog.* 411 (576 Gaisford = *OF* 356), *Orph. Hymn.* 72, 3.

Rhapsodies here. A more likely alternative is offered by Diodorus (1, 11, 2) who, with regard to the Sun, which he identifies with the Egyptian god Osiris, tells us that some Greek mythologists call Dionysus Osiris, and cites a verse he attributes to Orpheus:[30]

> and that is what they call him (sc. Sun-Osiris) Phanes and also Dionysus.

Judging by this parallel, we would have in our tablet, approximately contemporary with the text cited by Diodorus, a new case of the use of the epithet Phanes to refer to Dionysus, identified with the Sun. And this would support the hypothesis we have advanced for the preceding line. With regard to the allusion to the Moirai, it seems to be due to a desire to insist on the fact that these divinities of the other world take each one of the events in the deceased's life into consideration, in order to know what his destiny will be after death.[31]

We can only speculate on the god alluded to by the last expression "illustrious demon", since in the *Rhapsodies* we find that Phanes (*OF* 140), Kronos (*OF* 239), and Zeus (*OF* 243) are all called δαίμων. Zeus' candidacy would be more likely if we were to understand that the same god is being referred to as in the following line.

Indeed, in line 4 we read:

> Father who subdues all. Compensation.

The "Father who subdues all" is very probably a reference to Zeus. Together with the vigilance of the Moirai, allusion is made to the supreme power of Zeus. With regard to the term ἀνταμοιβή, which we have translated 'compensation', we also find it in a cosmic sense as 'exchange' in Heraclitus:[32]

> Exchange of fire are all things and of all things, fire, as merchandise is of gold and gold of merchandise.

We do not believe that it is a coincidence that this term is also found in our text, two lines after the affirmation that "fire conquers all". In addition, we find the simple term ἀμοιβή, meaning 'compensation' in

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[30] Probably taken from the so-called *Sacred Egyptian Discourse*, cf. Bernabé (2000a).

[31] Betegh (2004) 336 prefers to read πάμμηστοι (Murray) or παμμήστο<ρ>ι (Diels) 'full of inventiveness', and relate the epithet of the Moira with μητίετα, the epithet of Zeus, and with the verb μήσατο in the *Derveni theogony* (*OF* 16 and 18).

[32] Heraclit. *fr.* 54 Marcovich (= B 90 D.–K.).

the other world for the injustices committed in this one in a descent to the Orphic underworld.[33]

An extremely interesting sequence is concealed in line 5:

> Air, fire, Mother, Nestis, night, day,

which takes on all its meaning in the light of a fragment from Empedocles:[34]

> The four roots of all things, first listen to what they are:
> Splendid Zeus, Hera dispenser of life, as well as Aidoneus
> and Nestis, who with her tears soaks the mortal wellhead.

In the verses from Empedocles, the four basic elements are alluded to by divine names: Zeus, divinity of the lightning, is fire; Hera, the dispenser of life, is the air (insofar as whoever fails to breathe, dies). Aidoneus (that is, Hades) is the earth, while water is identified with Nestis, a little-known Sicilian divinity[35] who is probably nothing other than an epithet of Persephone.[36]

There is also an allusion to the four elements in our tablet, but it is in the vocative: the first two by their name, air and fire. The third, mother, is obviously a reference to the earth, habitually called "mother earth" in an infinite number of texts, among others line 1 of this very tablet. The last one, water, appears with the same divine name Nestis that Empedocles mentions. It seems suggestive to see in the air and fire of the tablet's author invocations to Zeus and to Sun-Dionysus (cf. line 2), whereas the mother would refer to Demeter as mother earth, and Nestis to her daughter Persephone. There are two masculine divinities, a god of the upper region and of the light, of the world of the living, and two feminine ones, of below and the darkness, of the world of the dead. In any case, it seems obvious that we are in the presence of the four elements, followed by night and day. With these six words, we

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[33] *OF* 717, 124. Cf. Solmsen (1968–1969) 631 f.

[34] Emped. *fr.* 7 Wright (= B 6 D.–K.).

[35] Cf. Photius *s. v. Nestis*: "a Sicilian goddess. Alexis (*sc.* "quotes her" = Alexis *fr.* 323 K.–A.)". One may consult Arnott's commentary on this fragment of Alexis, which is not very revealing. Eustathius 1180, 14 also informs us that Nestis is a Sicilian goddess.

[36] Cf. Sturz in Wright's edition, p. 166, as well as the suggestive interpretation by Gallavotti (1975) 173 ff.: "the weeping of Nestis is the water that flows over the earth (Aidoneus); but in the myth it might also be the tears of Persephone abducted on the banks of the Acheron".

have an allusion to the entire cosmic order, the four elements, the gods of above and the gods of below, identified with them, and finally the basic components of temporal sequence, night and day; moreover, the first one, Night, is a first-born goddess in the Orphic traditions.[37]

Highly similar sequences appear in other works of Orphic literature, which supports our reconstruction. The most interesting parallel is constituted by two verses from a *Hymn to Zeus* contained in the *Rhapsodies* (*OF* 243), in which, to assert that Zeus contains the totality of the Universe within himself, the poet mentions the four elements and the elemental temporal sequence: night-day, that is, the same six referents mentioned in our line:

> unique sovereign body, in which all things complete their cycle,
> fire, water, earth and ether; night and day.

We do not consider it possible that such a close coincidence could be the result of chance. If all this were not sufficient, we can adduce yet another text for comparison, the so-called Orphic oath:[38]

> Yea, by the ancestors of the immortals, who exist forever,
> Fire, Water, Earth, Heaven, Moon,
> Sun and the great Phanes, as well as black Night.

Here, three elements reappear, called by their habitual name: fire, water, earth. Heaven is mentioned next (which, as in Empedocles,[39] substitutes for air), followed by the two principal celestial bodies, Moon and Sun (which is nothing but another way of expressing the sequence night-day), followed by Phanes and Night, a duplication in divine terms of the light of day and of Night. This is basically the same idea of the structure of the universe as we see in our text.

In lines 6 and 7, we read:

> Fasts for seven days. Zeus who sees all. Always. Mother, hear my prayer, Beautiful sacrifices.

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[37] Cf. Bernabé (1998b) 71 ff.
[38] *OF* 619.
[39] Emped. *fr.* 25, 2 Wright (= B 22, 2 D.–K.).

The "Fasts for seven days" are a reference to a characteristic prerequisite of a lot of initiatory ceremonies.[40] As far as "Zeus who sees all" is concerned, we read in an Orphic fragment:[41]

> The First-Born one, the great Bromius and Zeus who sees all.[42]

"Always" inevitably recalls another Orphic concept, that of αἰών 'eternity',[43] which alludes to the eternal character of the cycles of this world, and the happy life the initiate achieves in the other world. With regard to the mother, she is, for the initiated believer, none other than Persephone, the mother of Dionysus, whom the Titans dismembered and devoured according to the Orphic myth. Since the human beings derive from the ashes of the Titans, whom Zeus struck by lightning, there is a part of Dionysus in them, and to this extent they can consider Persephone their own mother. The prayer is addressed to her because, as we have seen, she is responsible for the fate of the Orphic believer in the lower world.

Finally, we find a reference to the "beautiful rites" like that which appears in the *Gurôb Papyrus*, a text which also comes from Egypt and is dated to the 3rd century B.C., that is, a chronological environment that is very close to that of our text, although it is unfortunately in a rather poor state.[44] Here an Orphic ritual is described whose elements present a considerable coincidence with some of those we have seen in our tablet:

> Save me, great Brimo (l. 5)
> Demeter and Rhea (l. 6)
> we shall celebrate beautiful sacrifices (l. 8)
> prayer (l. 16)

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[40] For instance, the fast at Eleusis; cf. Plut. *Dem.* 30, *h. Cer.* 47 ff., Ovid. *Met.* 10, 73 f., *Orph. Hymn.* 41, 4. It cannot be excluded (for we know a great deal about the Orphics' love of plays on words) that in νήστιας there is a play on the etymology of the goddess Νῆστις, who has just been mentioned. In fact, Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7, 29, 4, interprets the name Νῆστις precisely on the basis of νῆστις 'fast', so that it is not surprising that our unknown author should have done so before him.

[41] *OF* 141.

[42] The same epithet is also applied to Zeus in a verse from Aeschylus, *Eum.* 1045.

[43] Cf. Brillante (1987) 42.

[44] *OF* 578, cf. Smyly (1921), Hordern (2000).

We are dealing with the same frame of reference: a request for assistance from Persephone (called Brimo, as in one tablet from Pherai [**L 13**]), the appearance of Demeter-Rhea and the "beautiful sacrifices", and prayer as a recourse used by the initiate to obtain the protection of the goddesses in the other world.

In line 8 of the gold tablet, we read:

> Sacrifices, Demeter, Fire, Zeus, the Subterranean Girl.

After the repetition of the reference to sacrifices, the four elemental gods are mentioned once again: Demeter (earth), Fire (Sun-Dionysus), Zeus (air) and the Subterranean Girl, obviously Persephone, as the personification of water, which supports our idea that Nestis was Persephone.

In line 9, we extract the following sequence from the context of meaningless letters:

> Hero. Light to intelligence. The Counselor seized the Girl.

The key to the interpretation of this conceptual sequence is given by line 2 of the tablet from Entella, in which there was mention of a "hero who remembers". In both texts, the term "hero" refers to the condition acquired by certain dead persons who successfully undergo the trials to which they are subjected in the other world, and achieve a happy life. What he remembers is no doubt his initiation, for only by remembering what it has learned during initiation can the soul of the deceased do what needs to be done in the other world, thereby achieving its condition as a hero, or an eternally happy deceased person. In our tablet, the phrase "light for intelligence" would be a clear reference to the illumination of the believer's mind, probably by means of initiation.

The phrase "the counselor seized the girl" can be clarified because Μήστωρ 'counselor' is an epithet of Zeus in some texts, already in Homer.[45] The Girl can only be Persephone, so that we have a clear allusion to Zeus' union with his daughter, precisely in order to give birth to Dionysus, a myth that is well-known in the Orphic theogonies.[46]

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[45] *Il.* 8, 22; 17, 339: "Zeus, supreme counselor".

[46] Cf. the *Theogony of Hieronymus and Hellanicus*, in Athenag. *Pro Christ.* 20, 3 (*OF* 89) "and they even (say) that he mated with Persephone, his daughter, after having violated her, too, in the form of a serpent, and that he had a son by her, Dionysus", *ibid.* 32, 1 (*OF* 89) "they would hate Zeus (who had children by his mother, Rhea; and by his daughter, the Girl, thus having his own sister as his wife), or his poet Orpheus, the creator of these stories", Tatian. *Or. ad Graec.* 8, 6 "Zeus even copulates with his

In line 10, we may perhaps read

Earth. Air. To intelligence.

These concepts are well known, and do not contribute anything new.

6.4. *Reconstruction of the religious background*

We see how, once the gibberish of letters has been set aside, a series of terms emerge that show an intimate link among them. This conceptual union gives them meaning, as does the fact that they belong to a coherent scheme of religious reference, which we can synthesize as follows:

I. The fundamental gods mentioned are the first couple, Heaven (= First-Born [of Night]) and Mother Earth (= Demeter = Cybele); Zeus, the supreme god of the new order, who unites with Demeter to produce Persephone (= the Girl) and who, uniting with Persephone, produces Dionysus (identified with the Sun).
II. The structure of the Universe. The universe is constituted by four god-elements: Air (= Zeus), Fire (= Sun = Phanes [Dionysus]), who conquers all, Earth (= Demeter = Cybele), and Water (= Nestis [Persephone]). It also has a temporal structure, based on night and day, as well as a power structure, based on Zeus' domination in the world (almost shared with Dionysus), and with that of Persephone in the infernal world. This structure is eternal ("always").
III. Man's situation in the Universe. Each person has a personal destiny (ruled by Tyche), and is subject to the constant vigilance of Zeus, who sees all. All his actions are taken into consideration by the Moirai, who forget nothing. He will have to pay compensation for all he does on earth in the other world. However, he can propitiate the infernal goddess (the Mother of Dionysus, also alluded to as a mother by the speaker of the prayer, because he aspires to be identified with the god).

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daughter, and she becomes pregnant by him. My witness shall be…Orpheus". In the *Rhapsodies* as well, Procl. *Theol. Plat.* VI 11 (*OF* 281 and 289): "for which reason it would be strange how the Girl is related to Zeus and Pluto, one of whom violates her, as the myths recount, while the other carries the goddess off".

IV. The rite as an instrument of salvation. Initiation is thought to offer the initiate the possibility of coming to know the features defined in I to III, and this initiation is like an illumination of the mind. Subsequently, other instruments of mediation are possible, such as fasting, supplication, and the "beautiful" sacrifice.
V. The happy result of the entire preceding process is to obtain the status of "hero" and a happy life in the other world.

We have found the same schemes, or very similar ones, in reference to a literature related to Egypt (the Egyptian *Hieros logos* and the *Gurôb Papyrus*), in other ancient Orphic texts like the *Derveni Papyrus*[47] and in later Orphic poems. The schematic phraseology reminds us of the *Gurôb Papyrus*, and well as those of the bone tablets from Olbia. We have also seen interesting coincidences with Heraclitus, present in the *Derveni Papyrus* and in the tablets from Olbia. This is a complex of references whose relations we shall be able to illuminate only gradually.

[47] Cf. Betegh (2004) 332 ff.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PASSWORDS TO ACCEDE TO THE MEADOW OF THE BLESSED AND A PRAYER TO PERSEPHONE: THE TABLETS FROM PHERAI (L 13 AND 13A)

Translation of the tablets from Pherai (L 13 and 13a)

The tablets from Pherai present us with two completely different models. **L 13** is written in prose, and apparently concerns a shorter password, which gives direct access to the meadow of the blessed. A considerable problem is to whom the soul is speaking, since the tablet does not say. One possibility might be that it is addressing the first guardians, with a change in the formula. Another, that the soul is speaking to some second guardians, who, in the last stage, would give access to the meadow. However, it seems to us more likely[1] that the soul is speaking to Persephone herself.

L 13a consists of two hexameters and contains a prayer, probably addressed to Persephone.

L 13 Tablet from Pherai (Thessaly) s. IV B.C., Mus. of Volos, 1st ed. Chrysostomou (1991) 376.

Passwords: Andricepaedothyrsus. Andricepaedothyrsus Brimo, Brimo. Enter into the sacred meadow, since the initiate is free from punishment.

L 13a Tablet from Pherai (Thessaly) s. IV/III B.C., National Museum, Athens, 1st ed. Parker-Stamatopoulou (2004 [2007]).

Send me to the thiasoi of the initiates; I have the sacred symbola of Bacchus
and the rites of Demeter Chthonia and the Mountain Mother.

[1] Bernabé (1999c) thinks that behind the reference to the passwords, Persephone can be read at the end of the tablet from Entella, which would support this interpretation.

Commentaries

7.1. *The passwords*

The first tablet begins *ex abrupto* with the word σύμβολα 'passwords', which introduces the text and qualifies it. Everything that follows is, therefore, a password. We should ask ourselves what we should understand by this. In the first place, we have to do with words the *mystes* must utter in order to be recognized as an initiate, in the way soldiers know passwords that let them identify themselves as friends before others from the same army. In the *Gurôb Papyrus*,[2] where a ritual is recorded that is very probably Orphic, we also hear of passwords, in a context which, although it is in a very fragmentary state, exhibits great similarities with this tablet, since Brimo is also invoked, and Ericepaeus is mentioned:

> save me, great Brimo . . . Eubouleus, Ericepaeus . . . passwords . . .

Firmicus Maternus[3] speaks of the use of such passwords for mutual recognition among initiates, and so that they may be given access to places where the profane cannot enter:

> We must explain what signs or symbols this miserable crowd of men use in such superstitions to recognize one another. They have their own signs, their own replies; which, when they are heard, they are accepted into recondite places, from which the profane are excluded.[4]

We find references to σύμβολα in the mysteries in other authors, which increase our knowledge of the value of such expressions. For instance, Plutarch tries to console his wife over the death of their daughter by reminding her:[5]

> Concerning what you have heard from others, who try to convince many people that for the person who has passed away there is nowhere any evil nor sadness,[6] I know that you are prevented from believing this by the doctrine of our fathers and the mystic passwords (τὰ μυστικὰ σύμβολα)

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[2] Cf. § 6, p. 147 n. 44.

[3] Firm. *Err.* 18, 1. Like the Christian author he is, he refers to the followers of the pagan mysteries with obvious contempt.

[4] Cf. also Celsus in Orig. *contra Cels.* 6, 22, with reference to the mysteries of Mithra.

[5] Plut. *Cons. ad ux.* 10, p. 611D. Cf. Bernabé (1996b) 81, (2001).

[6] A veiled criticism of the Epicureans.

> of the celebrations in honor of Dionysus, of which we who take part in them share the knowledge.

The interest of this passage from Plutarch, apart from what it contributes to our knowledge about the author himself, since he admits having participated in Bacchic rites, is that the σύμβολα, in addition to serving for mutual recognition, were the bearers of doctrine, a kind of slogans that were easy to recall, and synthesized religious contents.

The use of σύμβολα among the Pythagoreans is well known:[7] these were a motley conglomeration of precepts, often interpretable in more than one sense. Bit by bit, σύμβολα acquired the meaning of 'symbolic reference', or of hidden allusions ("symbolic" in our current meaning) to profound beliefs, with phrases that superficially seem to mean something else. A passage from Proclus[8] is revealing in this sense, where the barbarity of the ancients' theogonic stories is interpreted as a mere symbolic expression of profound truths:

> Of the ancient poets who thought it well to compose, in a way that is only too reminiscent of tragedies, the secret theologies, and therefore converted the gods' wanderings, castrations, wars, dismemberments, robberies, and adulteries and so on into symbols of the truth about the divine that was hidden within them.

On the other hand, since the tablet records the password that must be spoken, it itself, in its turn, is a password that identifies the *mystes*. It is not surprising that in some later authors σύμβολα also designates the objects used in the ritual.[9]

In sum, the "symbols" in our context seem to be brief expressions that synthesize aspects of the initiate's doctrine (although in such a concentrated form that they would be incomprehensible to the profane, owing to their ignorance of the context in which they are uttered), and they have the added value of serving the followers of the same doctrine as identifying marks.

In § 1.7, we saw that the word σύμβολα also appears in the tablet from Entella (**L 2**, 19), indicating that it also mentioned passwords, but

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[7] Boehm (1905), Burkert (1972) 166 ff., Parker (1983) 294 f. and n. 64. On symbols, see also Smyly (1921) 7 f., Müri (1976) 37 ff., Turcan's note to Firm. *Err.* 18, 1, p. 286 f., Burkert (1987) 46, Chrysostomou (1991) 377 ff., (1994b) 127 ff.

[8] Procl. *Theol. Plat.* I 4.

[9] Cf. for instance, Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, 17, 2, as well as Riedweg (1987) 82 ff., Burkert (1987) 45 ff., Turcan (2003) 27 ff., Calame (2006) 259 ff.

unfortunately we do not know which ones, since after σύμβολα the tablet appears to be broken, and the rest of the line has been lost.[10]

7.2. *The names used as passwords*

The passwords mentioned in the first tablet from Pherai are the two words Andricepaedothyrsus and Brimo, both of which are repeated.[11] The first one, Ἀνδρικεπαιδόθυρσον, seems to by made up of two names that are closely related in the Orphic tradition, Ἠρικεπαῖος and θύρσος.[12]

Ἠρικεπαῖος is found documented many times in the theogony of the *Rhapsodies* as one of the names of Phanes,[13] a serpentine being, with the heads of a bull, a lion, and a serpent; however, this does not seem to be its most ancient use. It appears in the *Gurôb Papyrus*, probably in reference to Dionysus. Proclus mentions the epithet as an appellation of Dionysus:[14]

> Dionysus is often also called Phanes and Ericepaeus.

as does the lexicographer Hesychius:

> Ericepaeus: Dionysus.

and an inscription from Selendus in Asia Minor:[15]

> To Dionysus Ericepaeus.

In our context, it is more likely that we are dealing with an allusion to Dionysus-Bacchus (as in the case of Phanes in the tablet from Thurii, **L 12**, 3, cf. § 6.3), which accompanies the reference to Persephone

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[10] Cf., however, 50f. n. 172.

[11] We find the same procedure in an Olbian inscription from 300 B.C., engraved on the base of an Attic vase from the 5th century B.C. (cf. Dubois [1996], n. 95), where we read "Life, life, Apollo, Apollo, Helios, Helios, Cosmos, Cosmos, Light, Light". Cf. Burkert (1999) 69, Lévêque (2000).

[12] Chrysostomou (1991) 383; cf., in the same sense, Bernabé (2000b).

[13] *OF* 135; 139; 143, 4; 162; 167, 2; 170; 241, 1. Cf. also *OF* 134, with commentary.

[14] Procl. *in Tim.* I 336, 15 (*OF* 140 XI).

[15] *TAM* V 2 1256, 5–6, II A.D. (*OF* 662). Morand (2001) 193 f. points out that the community to which the deceased man alluded in the inscription belongs seems to have clear points of contact with the *Orphic Hymns*.

(hidden beneath the epithet Brimo) in the formula that definitively opens the gates of the meadow of the Blessed.

Probably this mystic name was shaped as a composite of ἀνήρ 'adult male' and παῖς 'child', thus resulting in a hybrid suitable for referring to Dionysus as an "adult male-child";[16] afterwards the original name was probably altered in several forms as Ἠρικεπαῖος *OF* 139; 143, 4; 170 etc.), Ἠρικαπαῖος (*OF* 135; 162) or Ἰρικεπαῖγε (578, 22a). The reverse process is, of course, possible, that is a name Ericepaeus (whose meaning was certainly already unknown even to the faithful) being deformed, by a kind of popular etymology, but the Pherai tablet is the oldest attestation of this name, for which reason we consider the first explanation more plausible.

The thyrsus, which forms the second part of the epithet, is the emblem of the followers of Dionysus. Several passages relate it to the Dionysiac cult.[17] We should recall the famous verse already transmitted by Plato:

> Many are those who bear the thyrsus, but few are the bacchoi.[18]

As far as Brimo, "the terrible one" is concerned, it is usually an epithet of Persephone, Rhea, Demeter and Hecate. It is most reasonable to think that in the tablet it refers to Persephone, or at least would evoke her for the initiate. In the passage from the *Gurôb Papyrus* we referred to earlier, the *mystes* begs the goddess:

> Save me, great Brimo, and Demeter-Rhea.

Here, we obviously have to do with a female divinity, with the ability to "save" the initiate, who in the immediately preceding line declares that he has "paid the penalties of his fathers". This is a religious conceptual universe that takes us back to the series from Thurii.

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[16] The correction ἀνδρικὲ παῖ δὸ<ς> (or δοῦ written δῶ) θύρσον due to Tsantsanoglou (1997) 116 'manly child, give the thyrsus' (or the variant Ἀνδρικεπαῖ, δὸ<ς> θύρσον accepted by Tortorelli Ghidini [2006] 88), which leaves the following redefinition of Brimo without a parallel, seems unacceptable.

[17] It was also called νάρθηξ. Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 2, 9, Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, 16, 3. On the other hand, Procl. *in Hes. Op.* 52 (33, 20 Pertusi) and Damasc. *in Phaed.* 1, 170 (103 Westerink) indicate that the thyrsus was one of the elements with which the Titans deceived Dionysus.

[18] Plat. *Phd.* 69c (*OF* 576). Cf. a detailed analysis of this verse in Jiménez San Cristóbal (forthcoming 1). Cf. also Dionysus' epithets Ἀγάθυρσος in an inscription from Halicarnassus (*GIMB* 902) and Ναρθακοφόρος in another from the Rhodian Peraia (IV–III cent. B.C.), see Blünel (1991) 6, n. 4.

Brimo is probably originally a goddess of the dead,[19] worshipped in Pherai. Lucian gives a burlesque presentation of her in his *Necromancy* 20, howling her approval of a decree in an assembly in the other world. It then changes into an epithet applied to various goddesses associated with the chthonic or infernal world, such as Demeter, Rhea, Hecate, or Persephone.[20] We can also cite the existence of a (masculine) Brimo, nickname of Iacchus, the son of Persephone who appears in a text, whose recitation accompanied part of the sacred drama performed in the Eleusinian mysteries.[21]

Our epithet appears applied to Persephone in an Orphic context in the *Argonautica* attributed to Orpheus. It is placed in the mouth of Orpheus himself, among the themes he dealt with (17):

> The race of powerful[22] Brimo and the destructive works of the sons of the Earth.

If we identify Brimo with Persephone in this passage, the "race of Brimo" is a reference to Dionysus,[23] whereas the "destructive works of the sons of the Earth" would allude to the crime of the Titans.[24] In our tablet, it is most likely that we should identify Brimo too with Persephone, to whose sacred meadows the *mystes* arrives free of punishment, exactly as is declared in the tablets from Thurii before the infernal goddess (**L 10**, 4):

> I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts,

in the hope that she will send him to the seat of the pure, that is, save him definitively.

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[19] Kern (1897) 853 f. Cf. also Chrysostomou (1991) 375 ff.

[20] Demeter, in Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, 15, 1. Rhea in Theodoret. *Affect.* 1, 22 (109, 4 Canivet). Hecate in Apoll. Rhod. 3, 861 f. Both the *Etymologicum Magnum* and a scholium to Lycophron (Tzet. *ad Lyc.* 1176) allude to Persephone, identified with Hecate, by this appellation, whereas elsewhere Tzetzes (*ad Lyc.* 698) simply attributes it to Persephone. Propertius, 2, 2, 11, also knows a Brimo, companion of Hermes.

[21] Hippol. *Haer.* 5, 8. Cf. also *Carm. Pop. PMG* 16 Page. Dieterich (1903) 213 n. II, records it in his chapter dedicated to the remains of ancient liturgies. Bremmer (1994) 88 also thinks that the mention of Brimo reveals Eleusinian influences.

[22] The feminine form of the epithet is enough to make us reject the hypothesis of Colli (1981[3]) 387 f., who proposes to identify Brimo with Dionysus.

[23] We find the same word (γονάς) in *Orph. Hymn* 29, 7, to refer to Dionysus. Cf. Sánchez Ortiz de Landaluce (1996) 256, (2005) 49 f., Ricciardelli (2000a) *ad loc.*

[24] A similar allusion is found in verse 427 ff., where Orpheus tells us: "I sung…the destructive undertakings of Brimo, Bacchus and the Giants", a verse which Vian (1987) *ad loc.* qualifies as a "clumsy summary of verses 17–18". Cf. Bernabé (2002b) 409 f.

This hypothesis would be corroborated by the interpretation of Andricepaedothyrsus as an appellation of Dionysus. The formula that gives access to the sacred meadows and woods of the subterranean goddess contains a coded version of the names of two of the most important divinities of the Orphic creed: Dionysus, victim of the Titanic crime which the initiate must have redeemed, and his own mother Persephone.

7.3. *The effects of the passwords*

One supposes that once the *mystes* utters the key words, the password "Andricepaedothyrsus, Andricepaedothyrsus, Brimo, Brimo" is recognized as such and is judged worthy of being accepted. Therefore, someone (the goddess herself? or a priest from this world?) invites him to enter the "sacred meadow". We shall return to speak of the meadow in the chapter dedicated to the initiate's final destiny in the beyond (§ 9.3).

The final phrase,

> since the initiate is free from punishment

contains the idea that the initiate and practitioner of the Orphic religion does not receive the ποινή or punishment he owes for the death of Dionysus. However, the expression may mean several things:

In the first place, it could mean that by virtue of being initiated, he does not have to expiate his guilt. It does not seem that we should accept this possibility. In the religious scheme with which we are familiar, the *mystes* declares that he has paid a punishment (**L 10**, 4):

> I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts.

Second, it may refer to the fact that he does not need to pay more punishments (on earth) because he has already paid them. Initiation would not be the procedure that automatically concedes salvation, but the means used by man to accede to the knowledge of his situation, and of what he must do to save himself. This second interpretation seems more congruent with the remaining texts.

Finally (and without contradicting the previous interpretation), it might mean that the *mystes* need not pay punishment in the other world, which would imply the existence of infernal punishments for whomever has not been initiated. This interpretation is consistent with the Platonic

allusions to the fact that whoever has not been initiated will lie in the mud or suffer punishments like carrying water in a sieve.[25]

In the light of this tablet one can, we believe, more clearly explain the mere passwords from Pella and other places noted on **L 16**, in which a person is identified by his name or/and by his condition as μύστης. It is understood that the bearer of this kind of tablet considered himself to be ἄποινος, and claimed to demonstrate this fact.

At the end of the tablet, there is a word in inverted letters that seems to read ΑΠΕΔΟΝ,[26] which should perhaps be read ὑπέδυν 'I plunged',[27] which would place our tablet in relation with the one from Thurii (**L 9**, 7):

> I plunged beneath the lap of my Lady.

Hence, the word would be a kind of declaration that the *mystes* has returned to the womb of the goddess in order to be reborn.

7.4. *A prayer: ὄργια and τέλη*

L 13a contains a prayer. The *mystes* addresses an unknown divinity, but the parallels of the other gold tablets suggest strongly that she is Persephone. He prays:

> Send me to the thiasoi of the initiates.

This mention of the thiasos supports the interpretation of **L 8**, 2 (cf. § 3.1.). The thiasos is the reunion of initiates in the Beyond, and the *mystes* makes "a claim of membership",[28] arguing that he is initiated in several different mysteries, because the place of initiates is the privileged abode, the *locus amoenus* in Hades. We find other proof that the reward for initiates is imagined as a collective one; the *mystes* belongs to a group during his life and after death belongs again to a group.[29]

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[25] Cf. Bernabé (1998a) 76. See also § 4.2.

[26] Read, with hesitations, as δάπεδον or γάπεδον by Chrysostomou (1994b), cf. Burkert (1998) 391 n. 24.

[27] Hordern (2000) 133 n. 7.

[28] Graf-Johnston (2007) 95.

[29] Cf. **L 1**, 16 "by which the other mystai and bacchoi advance, glorious", **L 3**, 11 "you will reign with the other heroes", **L 7**, 7 "and you will go under the earth, once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones" **L 9**, 1, etc., "I come from among the pure, pure".

The ὄργια mentioned in v. 1 are sacred symbols such as the ὄργια Βάκχω we find in Theocr. *Idyll.* 26, 13.[30] As Turcan points out,[31] the word ὄργια achieves in Hellenistic times the meaning we find after in the Latin poets, and in the Greco-Roman epigraphy and literature of the Imperial era. The τέλη allude probably to mystic initiations. The presence of Demeter and the Mountain Mother caused surprise to the first editors and fed the traditional British tendency to doubt the Orphic character of the gold tablets. It is hightly significant that Parker's information about the tablet[32] was entitled "A new unorphic gold tablet" and that it concluded: "There is nothing Orphic here…by the second half of the third century B.C. (the provisional date for the tablet) the possible routes to salvation had apparently multiplied". But, as Graf and Johnston point out,[33] Orpheus was associated with the foundation of many mysteries.

7.5. *The goddesses*

A word must be dedicated to divinities mentioned in the tablet, especially in their relationship with Orpheus and *Orphica*. The name of Bacchos is not sure, because it has been restored in a lost part of the tablet. Demeter Chthonia is related with Orpheus in a text of Pausanias:[34]

> The Laconian claim they were taught to worship Underground Demeter by Orpheus.

Also Μητὴρ ὀρεία is related with an Orphic context, in a fragment by Euripides and in an *Orphic hymn*.[35] The Mother is frequently identified with Rhea and Cybele, and in **L 12**, 1 we read: "to Mother Earth, to

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[30] Cf. Henrichs (1969) 228 n. 15. Cf. also Catull. 64, 259, Seneca *Herc. Oet.* 594 f., Propert. 3, 1, 4, Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2, 22, 4.

[31] Turcan (1992) 220.

[32] British Epigraphy Society, Newsletter N.S. no 9 spring 2003 (http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/BES/newsletters/besnews9.pdf).

[33] Graf-Johnston (2007) 121.

[34] Paus. 3, 14, 5 (*OF* 533).

[35] Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472, 13 Kannicht (*OF* 567, 13), cf. Casadio (1990), Bernabé (2004c); *Orph. Hymn.* 31, 5, cf. Ricciardelli (2000a) *ad loc.* We can find the distant origin of the association Kore-Demeter Chthonia-Meter Oreia in the Mycenaean tablets from Thebes, cf. TH Fq (1) 126.1–2, (1) 130.1–2, where *ma-ka* (i.e. Μᾶι Γᾶι), *o-po-re-i* (i.e. ὀπορέhι, a composite ex ὀπί-ἐπί and ὄρος) and *ko-wa* (i.e. Κόρϝᾱι) appear together, cf. Bernabé (forthcoming, 4).

Cybelea, daughter of Demeter", considering Kore Cybele's daughter and identifying Mother Earth, Cybele and Demeter. Furthermore, the entire group recalls the Gurôb pantheon.[36] To sum up, nothing in the new tablet contradicts an Orphic interpretation.

[36] Graf-Johnston (2007) 155.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OTHER TABLETS (L 14–16)

Translation of tablets L 14–16

In this section, we note other tablets (**L 14–16**) which, because of their brevity, contribute data of less interest for our reconstruction of Orphic beliefs.

L 14 Tablet from Sfakaki, near Rethymno (Crete) 1st cent. B.C.–1st cent. A.D., 1st ed. Gavrilaki—Tzifopoulos (1998), cf. *SEG* 48, 1998, 1227 (p. 386).

To Pluto . . . Persephone.[1]

L 15 Tablet from Milopotamus (Crete), 2nd cent. A.D., preserved in the National Archaeological Museum, 1st ed. Myres (1893).

Greetings to Pluto and Persephone.

L 15a Tablet from Heraclea, near Hagios Athanassios, period unknown, drawn in Petsas (1967) 400 fig. 21, 1st. ed. Hatzopoulos (2002) 28, cf. *SEG* 52, 2002, 607 (p. 193).

Philotera greets Lord.

L 16a–b Tablets from Pella, end of the 4th cent. B.C., 1st ed. Lilibaki-Akamati1(1989)

a Philoxena.
b Posidippus, a pious *mystes* (greets) Persephone.

[1] The tablet is fractured. It is not certain that "and" can be read after Pluto's name.

L 16c–d Tablets from Aegion in Achaia, Hellenistic period, 1st ed. Papakosta (1987 [1992]), B 1, 153, cf. *SEG* 41, 1991, 401 (p. 151).

c Dexilaos *mystes*.
d Philo *mystes*.

L 16e Tablet from Aegion (Achaia), Hellenistic period, 1st ed. Papapostolou (1977 [1984]) B 1, 94, cf. *SEG* 34, 1984, 338 (p. 116).

e *Mystes*.

L 16f Tablet from Pella, end of the 4th cent. B.C., 1st. ed. Lilibaki-Akamati (1992)

f Hegesisca.

L 16g Tablet from Paeonia (Macedonia), unknown period, 1st ed. Savvopoulou (1992)

g Botacus.

L 16h Tablet from Methone, ca. 350–300 B.C., 1st ed. Besios (1986 [1990]), cf. *SEG* 40, 1990, 541 (p. 171), 45, 1995, 777 (p. 196).

h Philomaga.[2]

L 16i Tablet from Elis, 4th–3rd cent. B.C., 1st ed. Papathanasopoulos (1969), cf. *SEG* 31, 1981, 354 (p. 82 f.), 52, 2002, 471 (p. 133).

i Euxena.

L16j Tablet from Elis, 3rd cent. B.C., 1st ed. Themelis (1994) 148; 158, cf. *SEG* 46, 1996, 456 (p. 14), 52, 2002, 470 (p. 133).

j Philemena.

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[2] That is, the Macedonian name that would correspond to the Greek Φιλομάχη, cf. Masson (1984) 136, *Bulletin épigraphique* 1991 n. 385.

L 16k Tablet from Aegae (Vergina), Hellenistic period, 1st ed. Petsas (1961–1962), A 259, cf. *SEG* 52, 2002, 649 (p. 210).

k Philiste greets Persephone.

L 16 l Tablet from Hagios Athanassios (near Thessalonica), period unknown, drawn in Petsas (1969) 168, fig. 75b, 1st ed. Riedweg (2002), 480, cf. *SEG* 52, 2002, 626 (p. 203).

l From Hades ?? good ?? soul.[3]

L 16m Silver tablet from Posidonia (Paestum), ca. 550–500 B.C., ed. Kaibel, *IG* XIV 665

m I am of the goddess Girl.

L 16n Tablet from Amphipolis, 4th–3rd cent. B.C., 1st ed. Malama (2001) 118, cf. *SEG* 51, 2001, 788 (p. 233).

n I am a limpid one, consecrated to Dionysus Bacchus, I, Archeboule, the one of Antidorus.

Commentaries

8.1. *Greetings to Pluto and Persephone: tablets from Milopotamus (L 15), Rethymno (L 14), and Heraclea (L 15a)*

Our translation of **L 15** is based on the interpretation of the text given by Guarducci.[4] According to an alternative interpretation (which we find less probable),[5] the verse would express greetings addressed to the soul of

[3] It is possible to read ε<ὐ>αγεῖ, which is attested in other texts in relation to Orphism, cf. Dickie (2005) 31 ff., Jiménez San Cristóbal (2007). For the rest, we follow the readings suggested by Riedweg (2002) 480, although at the end we may perhaps restore ψ<υχῆι> dat. instead of the nominative. If this were so, the translation would be "good ? from Hades for the limpid soul", cf. **L 16n**.

[4] Guarducci (1939b) 170 f., XII 31 bis.

[5] Gallavotti (1978–1979) 348 n. 16, cf. (1988) 28 ff., and Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 65, (2001) 121f., (2003) 125 f.

the deceased since it will enjoy the company of Pluto and Persephone, so that one would have to translate "enjoy Pluto and Persephone". Comparison with other tablets (like **L 16k** "Philiste greets Persephone" and **16b** "Posidippus, a pious *mystes*, [greets] Persephone") seems to favour the interpretation we have adopted. The deceased would be trying to propitiate the infernal gods by using a greeting that identifies him as a *mystes*.[6] Once again, Persephone—this time accompanied by her husband—is depicted as the goddess who guarantees the initiate's happiness in the other world and must be propitiated accordingly.

L 14, found in Sfakaki, is similar, and it is limited to the names of Pluto and Persephone in the dative case.

L 15a, found in Heraclea, is also similar, because contains greetings, but in these instance addressed to a Lord (Δεσπότει). Hatzopoulos[7] considers Δεσπότει a name of Dionysus, to whom the soul requests her acceptance among the blessed. However, this epithet is never applied to Dionysus in the gold tablets. The comparison with **L 14, 15** and **16k**), in which we read the names of Pluto and Persephone in the dative case, makes it preferable to identify the Δεσπότης from Heraclea with Hades, the Lord of the subterranean world. This god is not so called in the gold tablets, but her wife Persephone has the name Δέσποινα, "Lady" in **L 9**, 7.[8]

8.2. *Identifications of the* mystai; *tablets from Pella and other places*

In **L 16**, we collected a series of tablets with shorter texts, which seem to belong to this same religious atmosphere, although they are less explicit than the preceding ones. Several of them (**a, b, c, e**) are shaped like a laurel or an olive leaf, and extend over a period of time which runs from the end of the 4th cent. B.C. to the end of the Hellenistic period.[9]

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[6] On the use of χαίρειν to greet a person about to be heroicized or divinized, cf. § 3.2. Just as the greeting identifies the *mystes* in his new heroic status, the greeting to the gods presents the initiate as equal to the divinity.

[7] Hatzopoulos (2002) 28.

[8] See also Jiménez San Cristóbal (2007). Hades is called δεσπότης in Diph. *fr.* 136 K.-A., in an escathological context.

[9] On the shape of the tablets from Pella, and on the mysteries said to have been celebrated there, cf. Dickie (1995); Martín Hernández (2006) 453 ff. proposes that the collocation of the tablets in the mouth of the defunct would suggest their interpretation as tongues with which the dead speak to Persephone. There are an indeterminate number of other tablets from the 4th cent. B.C., either with names or even without

When examined together,[10] it seems clear that both the tablets which have a name followed by the word *mystes*, and those with *mystes* alone or with the name alone, have a similar function to those where a text is somewhat longer. The identificatory function of the *mystes* predominates in them over the other characteristics of the tablets, such as that of reminding the bearer of what he must do in the other world. Some of them were worn by the bearer on the forehead, which makes their identification function all the more obvious.

The most interesting one is **L 16b**, in which a certain Posidippus presents himself before Persephone. We know a Hellenistic poet of the same name, and the possibility cannot be excluded that we may be dealing with someone from his family (if the dating of the tomb is correct, he would be of the generation of the poet's grandfather).[11] It is nevertheless curious that certain extant verses of the poet contain references to the mysteries:[12]

> In my old age, may I travel the mystic road to Rhadamanthys.[13]

This "mystic road" is reminiscent of the sacred way at the end of the tablet from Hipponion (**L 1**), since Rhadamanthys is an infernal judge.

As far as **L 16m**[14] is concerned, its nature is uncertain. It is made of silver, and some authors classify it with the Orphic gold tablets.[15] However, it is not clear whether the Girl (Παῖς) refers to Hera, following a parallel in Pausanias:[16]

> In ancient Stymphalos, they say that Hera was raised by Temenos, who called her by three surnames (*among which is that of* Girl).

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an inscription, found in Pella, cf. Pariente (1990) 787, Chrysostomou (1992) 137 ff., Rossi (1996) 59 n. 1.

[10] Cf. Dickie (1995) 81 ff., Rossi (1996) 59 ff., Riedweg (1998) 378 and n. 89; 391, Bernabé (2000b) 51 f., Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 22 f.

[11] Cf. Dickie (1998) 74, who adds that it is highly likely that the poet himself was an initiate.

[12] Posidipp. fr. 118, 24 ff. Austin-Bastianini (= 37, 21 ff. Fernández-Galiano).

[13] Cf. the commentary by Fernández-Galiano, 196, Dickie (1995) 84, (1998) 65 ff., (2005) 19 ff., Rossi (1996) 60 ff.

[14] Jeffery (1961) 252 n. 4, Burkert (1972) 113 n. 21, Guarducci (1978) 269.

[15] Guarducci (1978) 269 f.

[16] Paus. 8, 22, 2.

or Persephone, understanding Παῖς as a synonym of Κόρη, the goddess' habitual epithet.[17]

Little can be said of **L 16 l**, given the doubtful state of its reading. Perhaps something (presumably positive) is promised to the undefiled soul (cf. **L 16n**). In contrast, **L 16n** is highly interesting. In this tablet a female initiate, who provides her name and her ancestry, declares herself to be consecrated to Dionysus Bacchus, and to be "undefiled" (εὐαγής), the same word that identifies those that are admitted by Persephone to a privileged seat in **L 10**, 7.

Another tablet was found on Lesbos, but so far we have only the report of the find, which took place in 1988.[18] Twenty years later, the tablet remains unpublished, and our efforts to obtain a copy or a photograph from the representatives of the Museum of Lesbos have been in vain.

We can also mention a set of gold earrings, probably from the 4th cent. B.C., found at San Vito di Luzzi (Cosenza),[19] on one of which we read ΚΟΡ and on the other ΛΥΣ. This suggests they be interpreted as abbreviations of Κόρη and Λύσιος, or better yet Κόρης and Λυσίου, in the genitive, understanding ἱερός/-ά,[20] that is '(consecrated) to the Girl' and 'to the Liberator'.

8.3. *The tablet from Manisa and other documents that cannot be attributed to the Orphics*

In the Spanish edition of this book, we included a gold tablet of unknown origin, preserved in the Turkish Museum at Manisa (1st ed. Malay [1994] 139 n. 488), in very poor condition, on which we read:

all ?... guardians... death... simple... city... day... divine.[21]

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[17] Cf. Friedländer-Hoffleit (1948) n. 178; see also Giannelli (1963²) 128, n. 4, Di Bello (1975) 186.

[18] A.D. 43 B 2, 1988 [1993] 459.

[19] Cf. Ferri (1957) 181 ff., who dates them to 400 B.C.; Guzzo (1975) 371, who situates them more vaguely in the Hellenistic or Roman period. See also Bottini (1992) 57 and Casadio (1994a) 98, who suggests a date around 388 B.C.

[20] As Casadio (1994a) 98 suggests.

[21] Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 213; 278, see also (Bernabé 2000b), 52 f.

Although the presence of the guardians (which is reminiscent of the tablets from the first group, **L 1** ff.) might suggest an Orphic origin, David Jordan has examined the tablet and found clear traces of *voces magicae*,[22] for which reason he concluded that it was a magical tablet. We have therefore eliminated it from the catalogue, and it is not published in the Teubner edition.

Other tablets that cannot be considered Orphic include one found in Brindisi,[23] another found in Lisos and preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Chania,[24] and a lead tablet from Basilicata, which Bottini labelled as Orphic.[25]

On similar tablets in Lucanian and Gallic environments, as well as other external parallels, cf. chap. XI.

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[22] Jordan *per litt.* For example, in l. 4 he reads Σαβαωθ Αδ[ωναι and *voces magicae* in 5–6. Graf-Johnston (2007) edit this tablet with the number *39.

[23] First ed. Comparetti (1923) 207, cf. Zuntz (1971) 283, Bottini (1992) 171.

[24] M 264, on which cf. Platon (1958) 466. Interpreted as Orphic by Bultrighini (1993) 107 ff., cf. *SEG* 45, 1995, 1319. Its Orphic character has been rejected, correctly, by Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 348 n. 20, Martínez Fernández (2003) 131.

[25] Bottini (1988) 12. Likewise, we do not know whether a gold tablet of unknown provenance and probably from the 4th cent. B.C., now in the Museum of the Flagellation at Jerusalem (cf. *SEG* 29, 1979, 1615 [p. 408]), is Orphic or not.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SOUL'S FINAL DESTINY. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1. *Recapitulation. Mentions of the soul's destiny*

In the preceding chapters, we have postponed the question of what initiates hoped to achieve as their souls' final destiny. The tablets in fact do not elaborate on this subject but instead focus on the more urgent question of how the soul is to overcome the trials that separate it from this destiny. Everything seems to indicate that the final destiny is to be taken for granted. Nevertheless by looking collectively at all the scarce references to this question we may put together a partial but coherent picture of what the initiates believed.

We will begin by assembling all the mentions of the soul's final destiny:

a) In the tablet from Hipponion, once the soul has answered the guardians and drunk the water of Mnemosyne, it is prophesied (**L 1**, 15 f.)

> So that, once you have drunk, you too will go by the sacred way
> by which the other *mystai* and bacchoi advance, glorious.

b) In the tablet from Entella, once the same conditions have been established, there is mention of "passwords" (**L 2**, 19) followed by a portion of the text that is practically destroyed. On the basis both of the remains of the letters in the last lines, and of the parallel references to passwords in one tablet from Pherai (**L 13**), where they are uttered in the presence of Brimo (that is, before Persephone), we have suggested that it may also allude to Persephone.

c) In the tablet from Petelia, after mention of the same conditions, we find the affirmation (**L 3**, 11):

> and afterwards you will reign with the other heroes.

d) In two instances a thiasos in the netherworld is mentioned: in **L 8**, 2 the thiasos is on the right side; in **L 13a**, 1 the reference is to an initiates' thiasos.

e) In the tablet from Pelinna, after the soul has been informed that it has just been born as it dies and that Bacchus has liberated it, and once the formula of the animal fallen into the milk has been reiterated, we find the statement (**L 7a**, 7):

> You have wine, happy privilege,
> and you will go under the earth, once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones.

f) In one of the tablets from Thurii, after the soul has been congratulated for having undergone a great experience (**L 8**, 3), it is assured (**L 8**, 5):

> You have been born a god, from the man that you were.

Once the formula of the kid fallen into the milk has been mentioned, we find the following conclusion (**L 8**, 5 f.):

> Hail, hail, take the path to the right
> towards the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.

g) In another tablet from Thurii, once the soul has declared, in the presence of Persephone and the other gods, that it is arriving in a pure state and that it belongs to the race of the gods, there is mention of exit from the circle, achieving the crown, and reaching the lap of the goddess. We then encounter the prophecy (**L 9**, 9):

> Happy and fortunate one, you will be a god, from the mortal you were.

The tablet closes with the formula of the kid fallen into the milk.

h) In two other tablets from Thurii, once the same declaration of purity and belonging to the lineage of the gods has been set forth before Persephone and the other gods, the soul affirms that it has paid the punishment for its impious acts, and adds (**L 10a,b**, 6 f.):

> Now I come as a suppliant before chaste Persephone
> to see if, benevolent, she may send me to the dwelling of the limpid ones.

This phrase agrees with the tablet from Amphipolis (**L 16n**), in which the initiate declares herself to be "limpid".

i) In the tablet from Rome (**L 11**, 3), when only the declaration of purity has been reiterated, someone personally assures the believer:

Come, Caecilia Secundina, legitimately transformed into a goddess.

j) Finally, in one from Pherai, once the initiate has uttered the password

Andricepaedothyrsus. Andricepaedothyrsus Brimo, Brimo,

he is urged to (**L 13**)

Enter the sacred meadow, since the initiate is free from punishment.

We should ask whether it is possible to reconstruct a common scheme on the basis of all these mentions.[1] Before doing so, however, we should review the conditions which the *mystes* must meet in order to accede to his new condition.

9.2. *Previous conditions*

The tablets require that the *mystes* fulfill certain conditions, some during life, before the soul arrives in the underworld, and others in the course of his post mortem voyage.

Among the conditions that must be fulfilled during life, first and foremost is that of belonging to a select group, to which one is admitted through initiation. This admission constitutes a determinate experience, probably ecstatic, which transforms the subject into a "bacchos" (cf. **L 1**, 16 "the other *mystai* and bacchoi"). Correlatively, as we shall see, the initiate is also integrated into a select group in the other world (cf. **L 3**, 11, "with the other heroes").[2] Both the initiation and the ecstatic experience seem to imply a knowledge of the soul's situation—in reality, it is the daughter of Earth and of starry Heaven—as well as an awareness of its prior guilt, for which a punishment has been paid (cf. **L 10**, 4 "I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious acts").

Participation in specific rites also seems to have been a necessary prerequisite (cf. **L 7a**, 8 "once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones"). It is never made explicit in what such rites consisted, but it seems likely that in addition to initiatory rites, the soul

[1] *Pace* Edmonds (2004), who considers that every tablet belongs to a different religious group, but cf. Bernabé (2006).

[2] Cf. μ]εμνημέ<ν>ος ἥρως in **L 2**, 2.

must have gone through rites of purification.[3] Whatever they may have been, their consequence is the expiation of blame (cf. **L 10**, 4 "I have paid the punishment…"), and the achievement of ritual purity. Purity must be maintained, and the initiate was probably subject to specific taboos or prohibitions throughout his or her life. In solidarity with the group to which it belongs, the initiate's soul therefore declares that it has kept itself pure (cf. verse 1 of **L 9–10** "I come, pure from among the pure, pure"), and that it aspires to be part in the other world of a select group of souls, which are also pure (**L 10**, 7 "to see if, benevolent, she may send me to the dwelling of the limpid ones").

So much for the conditions that must be carried out during one's lifetime. Regarding those that must be carried out during the eschatological journey, we can list the following:

In the first place, one must have traveled the right road when arriving in the underworld (on the right, avoiding the temptations of the shining cypress tree and the lake of Forgetfulness).

In the second place, one must have given the correct answer to the guardians that keep watch over the fountain of Mnemosyne. "I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven": an answer that serves to identify the *mystes*, and a demonstration that he knows the sacred story that sustains his belief. The mention of the new mystical name for the initiate, Asterius in **L 4**, 9, which implies his separation from his earthly race, refers to the same divine ancestry.

In the third place, and as a consequence, one must have drunk the water of Mnemosyne (**L 1–4**), by means of which one is supposed to maintain knowledge of initiation in the other world, and perhaps the memory of past experiences in previous lives as well.

In the fourth place, the soul must travel the sacred way (**L 1**, 16) that brings it before Persephone. This goddess has the last word concerning the soul's destiny in the other world, but there is another god who plays an important role in this decision: Dionysus, since the soul must previously have been liberated by Bacchus (**L 7a** 2), hence in **L 16n** the dead woman from Amphipolis declares herself consecrated to Dionysus Bacchius.

[3] Martín Hernández (2006) 477 suggests that the Orphic rite described in *P. Derveni* col. VI is a cleansing of a *miasma*.

Finally, in the presence of Persephone, the deceased must undergo a new test. The tablets from Thurii and Pherai differ on this point. We will therefore examine them separately.

In the tablets from Thurii, the soul refers in the presence of Persephone to its conditions of purity (**L 9–10**), and alludes to aspects of what we could call the soul's great experience, and its mystic history (cf. **L 8**, 3):

a) Acknowledgement of a divine origin (**L 9**, 3: "Since I, too, boast that I belong to your blessed race").
b) Awareness of the existence of prior guilt and of the punishment that must be paid for it, namely, a painful cycle of reincarnations. The soul declares itself to be finally at the end of this process, and therefore liberated (**L 10**, 4: "I have paid the punishment corresponding to impious acts"; **L 9**, 5: "I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow"; cf. **L 7**, 2: "Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you").
c) Experience of a rite of passage, defined as being struck by lightning (**L 9**, 4: "but fate subdued me, and he that wounds from the stars with lightning", and **10**, 5: "either fate subdued me, or else he who makes the lightning blaze forth").
d) The belief that if Persephone yields to the prayer, and victory has been achieved in a difficult trial, symbolized by the "crown" (**L 9**, 6: "I launched myself with agile feet after the longed-for crown").[4]
e) The interpretation of the passage to the underworld as a rebirth in the bosom of the mother goddess (**L 9**, 7: "I plunged beneath the lap of my lady, the subterranean queen"), which signifies the achievement of a divine status (**L 9**, 9: "happy and fortunate, you will be a god, from the mortal that you were").[5] The formula of the animal fallen into the milk emphasizes the *mystes*' identification with the god, and his rebirth to a new, happy life.

We understand that the entire process of the passage post mortem (that is, death and underworld journey) is alluded to in **L 8**, 3, in the phrase

[4] The crown has, however, manifold symbolic values, cf. § 4.5.b.
[5] Similar declarations appear in the *Carmen aureum* 71 and in Emped. *fr.* 102 Wright (= B 112 D.–K.).

"after having had an experience such as you never had before", the great experience of liberation and the transfer to a new life.

In contrast, in one tablet from Pherai (**L 13**), the encounter with Persephone seems to have been reduced to the passwords (σύμβολα), consisting in a couple of mystical phrases (cf. also the obscure reference to the σύμβολα in the tablet from Entella **L 2**, 19), and in the other (**L 13a**) the *mystes* addresses a prayer to the goddess. We do not know whether both schemes coincide, that is, if the passwords from Pherai and Entella correspond to be the last stage before accession to the meadow of the blessed, or if, on the contrary, both schemes correspond to substantial variants in beliefs about the soul's itinerary.

9.3. *The scenario of the happy life*

The ultimate destination of the soul is clearly a sacred place in the underworld; cf. above all **L 7**, 7:

> and you will go under the earth, once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones.

It is imagined as a meadow:

> **L 8**, 5–6: Hail, hail, take the path to the right
> towards the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.
> **L 13**: Enter into the sacred meadow, since the initiate is free from punishment.

This place is reserved for habitation by those who are in a state of ritual purity:

> **L 10**, 7: to see if, benevolent (*sc.* Persephone), she may send me to the dwelling of the limpid ones.

Synesius also speaks of a meadow of the pure (*Hymn.* 3, 394 ff.):

> weaving you this crown[6] from the meadows of the pure.

There are other passages in which the blessed are presented as living in a meadow in the other world:

[6] On crowns, cf. § 4.5.

> Pind. *fr.* 129, 3 Maehl.:[7] in meadows of purple roses.
> Pherecr. *fr.* 114 Kassel-Austin: in a meadow fruitful with lotus flowers.
> Aristoph. *Ran.* 449: flowering meadows, filled with roses.
> Plut. *fr.* 178 Sandbach:[8] he is received by pure places and meadows filled with sounds.
> *OF* 340: in a lovely meadow, on the shores of the deep-flowing Acheron.

For his part, Diodorus tells us that Orpheus was the one who introduced the image of the meadow of the blessed, having borrowed it from Egypt:

> Diod. 1, 96, 5: And the punishments of the impious in Hades, the meadows of the blessed, and the imaginary scenes represented by so many authors, he introduced them in imitation of Egyptian funerary rites.[9]

The image of the meadow is not foreign to Platonic eschatology. In a series of passages possibly influenced by Orphism, we are told that the judges pronounce their definitive sentence in the meadow from which two paths leave, one towards the Island of the Blessed, the other to Tartarus;[10] or that the souls must remain in a meadow for seven days, before they march towards Necessity and the Parcae to learn their destiny;[11] or else the enclosure of the pious is described,[12] full of crystalline fountains and flowering meadows; the initiates participate in sacred ceremonies and philosophical symposia; they celebrate plays, choruses, musical performances, and banquets. Nevertheless, the philosopher has innovated[13] by transforming the meadow into the place where the judgment of the souls is held, which as we have already indicated does not seem to be an originally Orphic theme.[14]

Many texts associate the meadow with the underworld goddess,[15] so that the mention of the meadow evokes an encouraging picture, whose relation with Persephone is obvious.

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[7] A fragment that is probably of Orphic ancestry (*OF* 439).

[8] Quoted *in extenso* in § 3.3.

[9] On this question, cf. Díez de Velasco-Molinero Polo (1994), Díez de Velasco (1995) 44 with note 106 (p. 151), Bernabé (2002 f.).

[10] Plat. *Gorg.* 524a, quoted in § 1.3.

[11] Plat. *Resp.* 616b.

[12] Plat. *Ax.* 371c ff., cf. Violante (1981).

[13] As is pointed out by García Teijeiro (1985) 141. From another viewpoint, cf. Bañuls Oller (1997) 10 ff.

[14] Cf. § 1.10.

[15] We find her in a funerary epigram dedicated to a certain Aristodicus of Rhodes (*AP.* 7, 189, 3 ff.), in the Orphic hymn dedicated to Persephone, who is reborn in the spring and is abducted in the autumn (*Orph. Hymn.* 29, 12 ff., cf. 18, 1–2). A derivative

In **L 8**, 6, "the groves" appear associated with the mention of the meadow; ἄλσεα is a term already applied since Homer to an underworld sacred wood dedicated to Persephone.[16] The echoes of this image can even be found in as late as Claudian (3rd cent. A.D.). This author, highly influenced by Orphism, describes the happy realm of the goddess as a pleasant place with woods and meadows:[17]

> Nor will tender meadows
> be lacking ; there, beneath softer zephyrs,
> immortal flowers, which even your Etna
> did not produce, exhale their fragrance.
> In the dense woods, there is even a wealthy tree
> with boughs resplendent, bent by the green metal.

Comparison with other testimonies from Greek literature helps us to identify where the meadows and woods to which the initiates aspire might be situated.[18] In the *Odyssey*, Proteus predicts the destiny of Menelaus in Elysium, at the ends of the earth. Hesiod also places the heroes of Troy in the Isles of the Blessed, a place to which Plato also refers.[19] To these testimonies we can also add those concerning the "sacred way".[20] However, the equivalence between these places and the meadows and woods of Persephone is not absolute. The free and purified souls arrive at a happy spot, but it is no longer situated beneath the earth, like the Homeric Elysium, but in the realm of spirits, alongside the subterranean divinities.

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of λειμών, Λειμωνιάδες, qualifies the Horai as "playmates of chaste Persephone", in Orph. *hymn*. 43, 3. Cf. also 51, 4; 81, 3. Another similar epithet, Λειμωνία, is attributed to Persephone in an inscription from Amphipolis from the mid-4th century B.C. (cf. Feyel [1935] 67) Φιλωτέρα/Ἀπολλοδώρου/Κόρηι/λειμνίαι, cf. Ricciardelli (2000a) note to 29, 12.

[16] Cf. *Od.* 10, 509 "groves of Persephone"; cf. also E. *HF* 615, *AP* 7, 189, 3 ff. On the meadow of the Beyond, cf. Puhvel (1969)l, Motte (1973), García Teijeiro (1985), Velasco López (2001), and note to *OF* 61.

[17] Claudian. *Rap. Pros.* 2, 287 ff.

[18] On identification of the destination of the souls of the dead with concrete historical places of the Greek world, see Wagenvoort (1971).

[19] *Od.* 4, 563 ff., Hes. *Op.* 169 ff., Pl. *Grg.* 523 a–b: "Now in the time of Kronos there was a law concerning mankind, and it holds to this very day among the gods, that every man who has passed a just and holy life departs after his death to the Isles of the Blessed, and dwells in all happiness far from harm; but whoever has lived unjustly and impiously goes to the dungeon of requital and penance which, you know, they call Tartarus".

[20] They were presented in § 1.8.

We may conclude that the fields and groves together with the water (fountain and lake) conjure up an idealized image, a perfect *locus amoenus*, which evokes rest, tranquility, and happiness, and provides a paradigm for earthly *loci amoeni*.[21] Meadows and woods are sacred places, as is indicated by the fact that they belong to the infernal sovereign. They may be compared, although they are not identical, with the Isles of the Blessed, the Elysian Fields, or the dominions of Kronos, the final resting-place of the fortunate in other landscapes of Greek literature. This will be the final place where the initiate will enjoy eternal blessedness.

9.4. *Characteristics of the afterlife*

The tablets mention a series of benefits which the souls of initiates enjoy:

1) In the first place, the initiate is free from punishment, the implication being that the non-initiate is not (cf. **L 1**, 16).
2) Secondly, the possession of wine as a privilege. This comes close to the situation ridiculed by Plato (*Resp.* 363cd) as "perpetual intoxication".
3) There is also mention of the achievement of "happiness" (ὄλβιος, **L 7a**, 7, **L 9**, 9), a complex concept that we do not know whether to define as a kind of "material well-being" or as a deeper feeling.
4) Finally, the achievement of glory is also mentioned (cf. **L 1**, 16 "they advance, glorious"). All these conditions are coherent with the sense of "triumph" that underlies the mention of the crown (**L 9**, 6 "I launched myself with agile feet after the long-desired crown"). Once the hard trial of life or lives in this world has been endured, and after the constant training of the man who leads an ascetic life, the soul achieves the crown of triumph. After his victory in the final trial, it is glorious and happy and celebrates in an eternal banquet.
5) As far as the condition acquired by the soul is concerned, it is defined in various ways. Sometimes the soul is assured that it will be transformed into a "hero" (**L 2**, 2; **L 3**, 11), a transformation of the traditional heroic status, which belonged to those who had

[21] On the iconography of the garden of the Beyond, cf. Cabrera (1998).

distinguished themselves by their wartime deeds.[22] At other times, it is foretold that the soul "will reign" (**L 3**, 11), so that, since it is a reign that is shared with a group ("you will reign with the other heroes, **L 3**, 11), we suppose that nothing is meant other than that the soul has freed itself from all subjugation. Finally, the soul's new state is defined alternatively as "being transformed into a god" (cf. **L 8**, 5: "You have been born a god, from the mortal that you were", **L 9**, 9: "Happy and fortunate, you will be a god, from the mortal that you were",[23] and **L 11**, 3: "Come, Caecilia Secundina, legitimately transformed into a goddess"). However, we may doubt that this phrase is to be taken literally, since divinization was exceptional in the Greek religious world,[24] and only in the Hellenistic period was the deification of the dead integrated into the framework of the official religion, but as a privilege reserved for sovereigns. We must imagine that the situation achieved by the initiate after his liberation and definitive death, variously represented as a rebirth in the bosom of the chthonic goddess (**L 9**, 7), as a divine kid suckled by her in its happy new life (**L 7a**, 5; **L 9–10**) and as an identification with Dionysus,[25] is a glorious new life in the other world, which although it is not perhaps completely equal to that of the gods, implies a stage above the human condition and the acquisition of a superhuman status.[26] This status is synonymous with that of "hero". The group of privileged is defined as a thiasos in the underworld (**L 8**, 2 and **L 13a**, 1).

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[22] Di Benedetto (2004) 294 considers that ἀνάσσω with μετά and dative in **L 3**, 11 does not indicate *status* of ἄναξ, but dominance over the other ἥρωες, cf. Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 126 f.

[23] Scarpi (1987) 200 ff. has pointed out the difference in the use of tenses: "you will be a god" projects deification into the future, as opposed to "you are already a god" right now, as a consummated fact, perhaps the result of an experience never before undergone.

[24] Cf. the reference in Hdt. 4, 94 to the followers of Zalmoxis.

[25] We recall that the initiated are βάκχοι in **L 1**, 16, whereas the god is βάκχιος in **L 7a**, 2. Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 127 considers that ἥρωες and βάχχοι are equivalent because both epithets go from the initiate to Dionysus, and so the god is ἥρως in the chorus of the woman from Elis (*PMG* 871, 1 [= Plut. *Aet. Gr.* 36 p. 299B]) and βάκχιος in the Pelinna tablet.

[26] Scarpi (1987) compares it to the situation of men of the race of gold in Hesiod (*Op.* 109–126), who, when the earth hides their bodies, become demons that are guardians of justice and givers of wealth.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CENTRAL QUESTION: ARE THE GOLD LEAVES ORPHIC?

10.1. *Discussions of the religious atmosphere of the tablets*

In 1836, when the first gold leaf, the one from Petelia, was published, scholars of the history of religions considered the existence of Orphism to be an indubitable fact, which is why the tablet was interpreted as Orphic.[1] The same thing happened with those that appeared in subsequent periods.[2]

The skeptical and hypercritical reaction initiated by Wilamowitz[3] cast doubt on the Orphic character of the tablets, and due to his prestige the question was set aside for years.[4]

In spite of everything, not even in the times of the greatest skepticism about the existence of Orphics have the tablets been attributed in a convincing way to any other known religious movement, and the usual solution has been to write "Orphic" in quotation marks.

There has, however, been an effort, on the part of Pugliese Carratelli,[5] to separate two types of tablets that supposedly derive from two distinct religious environments:

a) Those in which Mnemosyne gives instructions based on memory and in the formula of recognition "I am the son of Earth and of starry Heaven", and whose goal is to travel "the sacred way by which the other *mystai* and bacchoi advance, glorious". There is no allusion

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[1] Franz (1836) 149 f. Comparetti (1910) 36 thinks that one should read "wrote this" at the end of the tablet, and that the subject would be Orpheus.

[2] Dieterich (1893) and Harrison (1922[3]) considered them Orphic, and they were edited as such by Comparetti (1910) and Olivieri (1915).

[3] Particularly Wilamowitz (1931).

[4] It is significant that Linforth (1941) does not even mention them, although he gives a meticulous analysis of the Orphic testimonies. Cf., in the same sense, Dodds (1951) and Zuntz (1971). In West's entire book on the Orphic poems, they scarcely receive more than a couple of allusions, and the comment "we have no warrant for calling the gold leaves themselves Orphic" (West [1983] 26).

[5] Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 11 ff., (2001) 17 ff., (2003) 10 ff.

in them to a divine state, nor, it is claimed, is there any mention of Persephone, Eucles, Eubouleus or the other immortal gods, but only of the "king of the underworld".[6] Pugliese Carratelli calls them "Mnemosynian", and thinks they are Pythagorean.

b) Those that deal with Persephone and other chthonic gods, and whose formula is more generic: "I come from among the pure, pure". Here, the initiate insists on the fact that he has overcome terrible trials and on expiation, but there is no allusion to the fountain of Mnemosyne. The goal of the soul's passage is its transformation into a god. These tablets are considered Orphic.

In our opinion, it is not possible to separate the religious scheme of different tablets, since there is overlap between the two groups. "*Mystes* and bacchoi" are mentioned in **L 1**, 16, but they have little to do with the Pythagoreans, whose god is Apollo, and a great deal to do with the Bacchic mysteries of the Orphics. Bacchus and Persephone appear together in **L 7**, 2,[7] while in **L 11** we find the queen of the subterranean beings (that is, Persephone), and Eucles and Eubouleus, mentioned in the tablets from Thurii, together with Mnemosyne, the protagonist of the "Mnemosynians".[8] At the end of **L 2**, 19–21 some letters are read that could be interpreted as part of a reference to Persephone by name.[9]

For all these reasons, it seems most likely that although the various types of text refer to different moments of the soul's journey (on which cf. § 10.3) and to various functions, the authors of the tablets and their users belong to the same religious movement, characterized by the belief in a special destiny for the initiate's soul.[10] Riedweg gives

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[6] His argument is based on a reading of **L 1**, 11 ὑπὸ χθονίωι βασιλῆϊ, that differs from the one we have followed, ὑποχθονίωι βασιλεί<αι>, proposed by West (1975) 233 and also accepted by Riedweg (1998).

[7] Musti (1984) 63 ff., Scalera McClintock (1991) 397, Tortorelli Ghidini (1995b) 472 f., Riedweg (1996) 447, (1998) 387, Bernabé (2000b) 56, Morand (2001) 224; cf. the excellent study by Graf (1993) 250 f., who distinguishes the tablets only from a formal viewpoint; cf. in the same sense Albinus (2000) 141.

[8] Nor is Mnemosyne alien to the Orphics, since she is mentioned in *Orph. Hymn.* 77, 9 f. precisely as the guarantor of memory of initiation, cf. § 1.2.

[9] Cf. § 1.7.

[10] Edmonds (2004) situates the tablets within a tendency towards "separation from mainstream society", which he hesitates to call Orphic, but he places more emphasis on the differences that exist between the tablets than among their similarities, considering that "the different ways in which these 'Orphic' tablets make use of traditional mythic elements to depict the journey to the underworld reveals the various modes of protest

a highly convincing reconstruction of the *Hieros logos* that underlay all the texts we have conserved.[11]

The type of text (hexameters mixed with other meters or non-metrical formulas), the theme of the Beyond, the repetition of *topoi*, the consistent use of gold and their great dispersion in space and time (which precludes the possibility that we have to do with a local phenomenon), indicate that these tablets come from one and the same movement, which lasted for centuries and in various places of Greece. We maintain that the users of the tablets are Orphic,[12] and we consider it most likely that they attributed the texts from which the tablets derive to Orpheus.[13] In the following paragraphs, we shall advance various types of arguments to support our conclusion: authorship (§ 10.2), geography (§ 10.3), mystical environment (§ 10.4), references to purity and justice (§ 10.5), the characteristics of the gods cited (§ 10.6), and iconography (§ 10.7).

10.2. *Argument from authorship*

We have seen that the fundamental nucleus of the tablets consists either in revelations addressed to the deceased or to his soul, in the future or the present tense about what he will encounter in the afterlife,[14] or instructions in the imperative (or the infinitive-imperative),[15] or prohibitions in subjunctive with a negation.[16] We should ask ourselves who provides this information and gives the orders or, to state the matter in more simple terms, who is talking. The narrator[17] not only knows precise details of the geography of the Beyond, but he is also in a position to tell the deceased authoritatively what he must and must not do, and

they are expressing against the world from which they came" (p. 109), at cf. Bernabé (2006). Calame (2006) 271 ff., 279 ff. doubts the Orphic character of the gold tablets and emphasizes the parallelism with the Eleusinian Mysteries.

[11] Riedweg (2002) cf. § 10.4.5.

[12] Cf. Bernabé (1991) 234 and Riedweg (1998).

[13] Cf. Tortorelli Ghidini (1995b) 474: "with the acquisition of new Orphic documents, the possibility [*sc.* that the author may be Orpheus] becomes less fantastic".

[14] For instance, the future "you will find" (εὑρήσεις) in **L 1**, 6, **L 3**, 1 and 4, **L 4**, 1 and 4, "you will reign" (ἀνάξει[ς]) **L 3**, 11. In the present, "there is" (ἔστ') in **L 1**, 2.

[15] Imper. "say" (εἶπον) **L 1**, 10, (inf. imper. εἶπεῖν **L 3**, 6, **L 4**, 7, **L 7**, 2).

[16] Hortatory subjunctive "don't approach" (μηδὲ…ἔλθῃς) in **L 1**, 5 (cf. μηδὲ πελάσησθα **L 4**, 3).

[17] Cf. Riedweg (2002) 478, Calame (2006) 236 f.

words he must pronounce. Such knowledge and authority could only be attributed to someone who has visited Hades.

We must exclude the possibility of an infernal divinity, because the most important ones are mentioned in the tablets in the third person. If it were Persephone, for instance, who was speaking, we would expect such expressions as "tell me that Bacchus liberated you", rather than "tell Persephone that Bacchus has liberated you" (**L 7**, 2).

With regard to the possibility that it may be someone who has visited the underworld, the most adequate framework is a type of eschatological poetry, which usually assumes the form of a Κατάβασις, spoken in the first person by someone who is said to have gone down to Hades. The subjects of this poetry are the geography of Hades, the soul's liberation from the cycle of metempsychosis and the special destiny reserved for initiates.[18] Various personages in the Greek mythic tradition undertook a journey to the subterranean realm: the best known are Odysseus, Theseus, Pythagoras, Heracles, and Orpheus. Of these, however, Orpheus was the only poet, and the only katabatic hero to whom poetry on the theme of the afterlife was ascribed. In particular a hexametric poem was transmitted under his name entitled *Descent to Hades*.[19]

At an early date scholars suggested that these texts be attributed to Orpheus.[20] The period of Orpheo-scepticism led to the question's being set aside for many years. Recently, however, several authors[21] have once again defended the view that the speaker is none other than the mythical Orpheus.

The fact that the name of Orpheus never appears in the tablets is not a sufficient argument to deny that the texts were attributed to the

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[18] Cf. Riedweg (2002).

[19] The author of *Orph. Arg.* 40–42 refers to a work of this type attributed to Orpheus. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1, 21, 131, 3, citing Epigenes, discusses Orpheus' genuine authorship of a poem entitled *Descent to Hades*, which indicates that the attribution to Orpheus was the most common. Suda *s. v.* Ὀρφεύς (III 565, 20 Adler) and Const. Lascaris Προλεγόμενα τοῦ σοφοῦ Ὀρφέως 103 (36 Martínez Manzano) believe that it is by Orpheus of Camarina, which seems to be an attempt to reconcile the attribution to Orpheus with the post-Homeric appearance of the poems in question (cf. Bernabé [2002a]). On the Orphic katabasis, cf. Lobeck (1839) 373 f., 810 ff., Gruppe (1897–1902) 1130 ff., Dieterich (1913) 72 ff., 128 and *passim*, Norden (1926) 5, 168 ff., Guthrie (1935), 193 n. 22; Ziegler (1942) 1391 ff., Turcan (1956) 137, Burkert (1972) 130, Schilling (1982) 369, West (1983) 6, 9 f., 12, Brisson (1990) 2915, Kingsley (1995) 115, 135 ff., 282 f., 287.

[20] Cf. § 1.3 p. 19 n. 43.

[21] Cf. Tortorelli Ghidini (1995b) 474, Bernabé (1991) 234, and Riedweg (1998), (2002) 478.

mythical bard. To cite better-known parallels, neither Parmenides nor Empedocles mention their names in poems that have many points of contact, above all formal, with the katabatic literature. In these conditions, then, who could be a better candidate for authorship of the tablets than Orpheus, the mythical Thracian bard, visitor of the infernal regions, revealer of matters of the Beyond, presumed author of a corpus of literature on these themes, and transmitter of the τελεταί in which information useful for confronting death is offered?

10.3. *The Geography of the tablets*

A second argument concerns the places in which tablets have been found, including South Italy, Thessaly-Macedonia, Crete, Achaia and Lesbos.[22] The majority of these places have a specific connection with Orpheus or with Orphism, either because some episode of the myth of Orpheus was situated there, or because other documents of an Orphic character have appeared there. We shall cite only a few examples.

In south Italy, numerous Apulian ceramics portray Orpheus in the infernal world (cf. § 10.7).

Several places in Macedonia have specific connections with Orpheus.[23] These include one of the most important Orphic documents, the *Derveni Papyrus*. According to Conon, Orpheus denied women access to the mysteries he had instituted in the Macedonian town of Libethra,[24] which was his home, according to the *Orphic Argonautica*[25] and other sources. There was an image of Orpheus in that city.[26] Another Macedonian city, Dion, claimed to be the scene of the poet's death.[27]

Orpheus' connections with Crete are numerous and explicit.[28] Thus, Diodorus maintains that the Orphic τελεταί have their origin there,[29]

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[22] Cf. § 0.2. The one from Rome is exceptional, and has characteristics that are somewhat different from the others, as we saw in § 5.

[23] Cf. Hatzopoulos (2002).

[24] Conon *FGH* 26 F 1, 45 (*OF* 1039).

[25] *Orph. Arg.* 50–53, 1373–1376.

[26] Plut. *Alex*. 14, 8.

[27] Diog. Laert. 1, 5 (*OF* 1046 II), Paus. 9, 30, 7 (*OF* 934 II).

[28] Cf. Kern (1916), Linforth (1941) 215; 232, West (1983) 50; 95 f.; 131 ff.; 153 f.; 166 ff.; 172 ff. (who points out that the authors of Orphic theogonies took many themes from Cretan myths), Casadio (1990) 284 f., Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 46 ff., (2001) 86 ff. (2003) 87 ff., Martínez Fernández (2006) n. 23, pl. 38.

[29] Diod. 5, 77, 3 and 5, 75, 4 (*OF* 529–530), and Bernabé (2000a) 48 f.

and an epigram from the 2nd cent. B.C., which comes from a temple of the Magna Mater,[30] has clear Orphic resonances, as do a few verses from the *Cretenses* of Euripides, in which priests appear with all the characteristic features of the Orphics.[31]

As far as Lesbos is concerned, several authors who deal with the myth of Orpheus from the Hellenistic period on, such as Phanocles, Virgil, Ovid, Conon, and Lucian,[32] told how the head of Orpheus was cast into the Thracian river Hebros or into the sea, and journeyed to Lesbos, where it received honors and continued to dictate poems or oracles. We also find the theme in figurative representations.[33] In addition, archaic poetry testifies to relations between Lesbos and Thrace, the mythical homeland of Orpheus: Alcaeus, in a fragment of a poem that may perhaps have dealt with Orpheus,[34] praised the river Hebros as the most beautiful of rivers and mentioned the location of its mouth next to the town of Aenus. It is possible that Aenus, a colony of Mytilene, was the starting point for Orpheus' connection with Lesbos.

Finally it must be remembered that in addition to these coincidences between the location of the tablets and myths about Orpheus, the tablets show thematic continuity despite their wide separation in space and time. This excludes the possibility that we are dealing with local religious movements. Instead, they suggest a coherent, albeit dispersed, religious orientation, persistent in time and not integrated with official religion. All these features are congruent with Orphism and not with any other known movement.

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[30] Guarducci (1939) I XXIII 3, Colli (1981[3]) 4 [B 20] p. 216 ff., Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 46, (2001) 86 ff., (2003) 87 ff., Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 40 f., Tzifopoulos (2002) 164 ff., Martínez Fernández (2006) n. 23, pl. 38.

[31] Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472 Kannicht, cf. Casadio (1990), Bernabé (2004c).

[32] Phanocl. *Fr.* 1, 11–20 Powell (*OF* 1004, 1038 and 1054), Verg. *Georg.* 4, 523–527 and Servius *ad loc.* (*OF* 1054 III and VIII), Ovid. *Met.* 11, 50–60 (*OF* 1054 IV), Conon *FGH* 26 F 1, 45, 4–6 (*OF* 1039 and 1061), Lucian. *Ind.* 11 (*OF* 1052), *P. Berol.* 13426, 16–19.

[33] Garezou (1994) 88, nn. 68 ff.

[34] Alc. *fr.* 45 Voigt.

10.4. *Belonging to a mystery ambience*

10.4.1. *References to initiation*

The religious movement to which the tablets belong is mystical, as is made evident by the direct and indirect references to initiation. In **L 1**, 16, we read that the initiates (μύσται) and bacchoi advance in their glory along a path that leads to happiness in the afterlife. The knowledge of certain "passwords" (σύμβολα) enables the initiate of **L 13** to accede to a meadow that represents eternal well-being. In **L 16b–e**, the deceased identifies himself as a μύστης, certainly in order to be identified by Persephone. There are various Orphic passages[35] where μύστης or the middle-passive participles μυόμενος, μυηθείς or μεμυημένος appear in a similar context, in which initiation is connected with a way of life subject to rigid prescriptions and the fulfillment of rituals that provide access to a happy existence after death. It is, moreover, significant that in some of these examples[36] the terms μύστης and βάκχος appear together, as they do in **L 1**, 16.[37]

The mention of the sacred way in **L 1**, 15–16 constitutes an indirect reference to initiation, which confirms the mystical character of these texts, since this path can be conceived as a repetition of the path of initiation in this world, or perhaps as a projection of the terrestrial model.[38] We ought not to forget that in the Hipponion tablet the sacred way is reserved for μύσται καὶ βάκχοι, since it is initiation that guarantees the promise of happiness in the Beyond.

The "experience" mentioned in **L 8**, 3 may be considered another indirect reference to initiation. As we saw in § 3.3, the experience alluded to is the preparation for death that is acquired with initiation, and its result is the initiate's state of blessedness, which consists in his identification with the god. As far as we know, such a conception of initiation is found only in Orphism.[39]

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[35] Heraclit. *fr.* 87 Marcovich (= B 14 D.-K.) (*OF* 587), Eur. *Cret. fr.* 472 Kannicht (*OF* 567), *P. Derveni* col. VI 8 f. (*OF* 471), *Orph. Hymn.* 43, 10; 84, 3, Diod. 1, 23, 7 (*OF* 327 IV), 5.49.5 (*OF* 521), Harp. *Lex. s. v.* ἀπομάττων (36 Keaney), Plut. *Fr.* 178 Sandbach (*OF* 594), Clem. Al. *Prot.* 2.16.2 (*OF* 589 I).

[36] Heraclit. *Fr.* 87 Marc. (*OF* 587), E. fr. 472, 10 ff. Kannicht (*OF* 567).

[37] Cf. § 1.9.

[38] See § 1. 8 and p. 50 n. 177.

[39] Jiménez San Cristóbal (2002a). Cf. also the reference to initiation that underlies the mention of "truth" in **L 4**, 7 (§ 1.6.), as the indication of an initiatory truth.

10.4.2. *The importance of doctrinal knowledge*

Why should the tablets be ascribed precisely to Orphism, when it is not the only mystical movement in Greece, although it is one of the most important ones we know? In the Dionysiac and Eleusinian cults, the initiate participates in an initiatory rite that familiarizes him with the divinity and its vicissitudes, but he does not acquire knowledge that transforms him. On the other hand, Orphism can be defined as a mysteriosophic religion,[40] since the Orphic τελεταί are oriented towards the acquisition of eschatological knowledge that enables initiates, and only initiates, to know the nature of the soul, its situation in the world, and how to liberate it from its mortal condition. This practice is summed up in the introductory verse to the Orphic *Hieroi logoi*, of which we know two variants:[41]

a) I will sing for those of understanding: close your doors, ye profane.
b) I will speak for those entitled: close your doors, ye profane.

Only the initiates know what is necessary for salvation. And only it is permitted to them to acquire the knowledge offered by Orphic poetry and its interpretation.

In the tablets, the emphasis on knowledge can be noted in various details: a) Mnemosyne is the divinity who presides over the universe of the tablets; b) the insistence on the truth; c) the questions of the guardians, whose mission is to prevent those who cannot answer them from approaching the place of blessedness; and d) the passwords (σύμβολα) the *mystai* must give as a proof that they know the truth.[42]

a) In the tablets, Mnemosyne[43] is profiled as the divinity who protects souls and guides them on their journey: through her agency the initiate is able to keep the initiatory ritual present in his mind. By merely remembering what he has learned in the initiation, the soul of the deceased will be able to get through the test to which it is subjected in the other world with flying colors and achieve a happy life with the status of a ἥρως.

b) When, in **L 4**, 7, the initiate is asked to tell precisely the entire truth to the guardians of the lake of Mnemosyne so that they may let

[40] Bianchi (1965) 154 f., 167 f.
[41] *OF* 1ab. These expressions become converted into *topoi*; cf. Bernabé (1996a).
[42] **L 2**, 19; **L** 13.
[43] Cf. § 1.2.

him drink, the *mystes*' answers consist in passwords that indicate his belonging to a group that knows certain doctrines. The insistence on the truth presupposes the existence of an initiatory revelation: they must have acquired the knowledge of this truth previously, during life, and it is not shared by everyone, but is possessed only by initiates.

c) The various passwords consigned to the tablets, and the phraseology that alludes to the condition of the soul of the deceased and the circumstances of the passage to the Beyond are a clear example of the fact that the teachings of the initiation are indispensable for overcoming the underworld passage. It seems logical that the faithful should be indoctrinated in these teachings during their ritual experiences, where they will learn and repeat them. Most of them acquire their full meaning in the light of other Orphic fragments, and only in that light. Let us briefly recall the phrases that mark the various stages of the initiate's infernal journey. Before the guardians, he must, in order that they may grant him access to the lake of Mnemosyne, declare

> I am the son of Earth and starry Heaven,

which presupposes the declaration of belonging to a mystical γένος, and recalls man's Titanic origin.[44] Added to this in some tablets is an additional reference, by which the initiate renounces his personal name, a symbol of life in this world, and eliminates any doubt concerning the soul's heavenly origin.[45]

The initiate faces still more trials. First, he declares his thirst, and requests the water of Mnemosyne:[46]

> I am dry with thirst and dying. Give me, then, right away,
> fresh water to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne.

He thus demonstrates that he has been initiated, for two reasons: because he is still thirsty (which indicates that he has not drunk from the other fountain), and because he knows he must drink from the fountain of Mnemosyne.

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[44] Cf. § 1.6.

[45] "My name is Asterius", **L 4**, 9, "my race is heavenly"; **L 2**, 15; **L 3**, 7; "I too boast to belong to your blessed race", **L 9–10a**, 3. Cf. § 1.6.

[46] Cf. § 1.5.

After that, the deceased must present himself before the underworld divinities. In the tablets from Thurii, and, with some variations, in that of Rome,[47] someone solemnly declares:

> I come from among the pure, pure.[48]

Ritual purity turns out to be indispensable. For it enables the divinities to recognize the deceased as an initiate, and thus is allowed the domain of the pure.[49]

In **L 9**, 5 the deceased declares before the infernal divinities:

> I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow.

The interpretation of the κύκλος as the cycle of births and deaths not only has parallels in the Orphic fragments, but also helps us to understand the phraseology of guilt and punishment that follows a consistent scheme in other tablets.[50] According to the tablets, human beings carry along with them a guilt that must be paid in order for one to be liberated:

> I have paid the punishment (ποινή) that corresponds to impious acts (ἔργω̲ν ἕνεκα οὔτι δικα<ί>ων).[51]

Payment and liberation are achieved by means of the τελετή, since in **L 13** it is specified that the initiate in the mysteries (μύστης) is free from punishment (ἄποινος), which in turn implies that those who are not initiated will be punished. We must suppose that this is a general punishment of the entire human species, which the tablet **L 9**, 5 defines as a terrible cycle from which only the initiates are able to liberate themselves. The only relation known between guilt and the punishment paid through τελετή and exit from a cycle is that connected with Orphic τελετή, in which the guilt is caused by the Titanic sin, the punishment (among others) is metempsychosis, and the cycle from which one must liberate oneself is that of births. Once again, the phraseology of the tablets is similar to that of the other Orphic texts, cf. § 4.2.

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[47] Cf. § 4.1.

[48] On the possibility of reading ἐκ κα[θαρῶν in the *Gurôb Papyrus* col. II 22, cf. § 4.1.

[49] **L 10**, 7, **L 16n**; cf. § 4.4.

[50] See § 4.5.b). **L 10**, 4.

[51] **L 10**, 4. Cf. Santamaría (2005).

In **L 9**, 6 there is a reference to the "cycle of deep sorrow", followed by the declaration

> I launched myself with agile feet for the long-desired crown.

As we saw in § 4.5.b, achieving the crown after death indicates the culmination of the initiate's triumph over the cycle of reincarnations. In the Orphic testimonies, the ritual, the world of death, and the destiny of the soul are implied in the metaphor of the crown, which is simultaneously mystical, triumphant, and sympotic. Thus, Orphism provides a solid context for a coherent interpretation of the crown in the tablet from Thurii.

At the end of **L 7**, we read:

> You have wine, a happy privilege.[52]

The image illustrating the delights of the Beyond as a banquet in which wine cannot be lacking is not exclusive to Orphism,[53] nor are the ritual use of wine and funeral libations. Yet Orphism is the mystery religion that offers the best parallels for an adequate interpretation of the mention of wine in the tablets. The particular connotations for the Orphics of the wine used in the ritual would explain its use in funeral libations, as well as its presence in descriptions of post-mortem blessedness.[54] Wine transcends the limits of ritual practice, to become a key symbol of the Orphic doctrine of salvation.

10.4.3. *Reconstruction of a* hieros logos

The underlying structure of the texts in the tablets also reflects the importance of the doctrinal knowledge contained in them. In § 12.3, we will see how, on the basis of the totality of the text of the tablets, it is possible to reconstruct a *hieros logos*. We know that books played an important role in Orphic ritual, providing the mythical and theological

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[52] The text presents difficulties; for the various suggestions, cf. the edition in App. II.

[53] Aristoph. *Ran.* 85, *fr.* 12; 504, 6 ff. K.-A. (*OF* 432 I), Pherecr. *fr.* 113. 30 ff. K.-A. (*OF* 432 II), an epigram from Smyrna from the 1st–2nd cent. A.D. (*GVI* 1765, 13 ff.). On banquets in the Beyond, cf. Graf (1974) 98–103.

[54] Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 363c, who alludes to wine as a central element of Orphic eschatology, cf. Casadesús (1999) and § 2.5.

underpinning for doctrines and rites.[55] Orphism has been rightly defined as a religion of the book.[56]

The relevance of the knowledge and doctrinal instruction that is inferred from the tablets makes it difficult to ascribe them to Dionysiac circles, precisely because constant recourse to the text is one of the key differences between Orphism and Dionysism. As we have seen, the concept of knowledge is intrinsic to the nature of the Orphic τελεταί, whereas in Dionysiac cult the initiate participates in rites that familiarize him with the god and his vicissitudes, but he does not acquire knowledge that transforms him. In the Classical period, no extant literature is ascribed to the Dionysiac religion; Euripides' *Bacchai* may reflect cultic reality, but it is not a book created to accompany rituals.[57] Some of the later testimonies that are adduced as examples of Bacchic literature are linked in one way or another to Orpheus or to Orphism. This is the case for the sacred tale mentioned in the *Papyrus of Ptolemy Philopator*[58] or for the titles *Bacchica* and *Teletai of Dionysus* attributed to Arignote,[59] of which we know only passages that in some case are connected with Orphic rites.

10.5. *Purity and justice*

The initiates who seek a place in the *locus amoenus* declare that they are in a special state of purity.[60] We find this same demand for purity as the condition of a better destiny in the Beyond in texts that are unquestionably Orphic, such as the *Rhapsodies*, where it is contrasted with the state of those who have worked against justice:[61]

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[55] Jiménez San Cristóbal (2002b).

[56] The definition is that of Bianchi (1974) 131 (= [1977] 189); cf. Bernabé (1996a) 18 n. 15, (1996b) 67.

[57] See Festugière (1956), Dodds (1944 [1960²]) XI ff., Daraki (1985) 63, Casadio (1994b) 98 and n. 75, 119 and n. 12, Versnel (1990) 137 ff.

[58] *BGU* 5, 1211 (*ca.* 210 B.C.), cf. Burkert (1987) 70, Lenger (1980²) 69 f. For the discussion, see *OF* 44.

[59] *Pyth. Hell.* p. 51 Thesleff, cf. Burkert (1987) 155 n. 32, Harp. *s. v.* εὐοῖ σαβοῖ (117 Keaney) "The *evohé* is a Bacchic cry. Arignota [...] declares that the Titans said '*evohé*' instead of 'good for you', in praise of the discovery of the mirror"; Harp. *s. v.* νεβρίζων (181 Keaney) "And 'to dress oneself in the skin of a fawn' exists in *On the teletai* by Arignota (p. 51, 8 Thesleff)".

[60] **L 9–10**, 1: "I come from among pure, pure".

[61] *OF* 340.

> Those who have been pure[62] beneath the rays of the sun,
> Once they have died, achieve a more pleasant destiny
> in the pleasant meadow, on the shores of deep-flowing Acheron [...]
> Those who have worked against justice beneath the rays of the sun,
> reprobates, have gone down to the plain of Cocytus,
> and frozen Tartarus.

In the contrast between "those who have been pure" and "those who have worked against justice" it is clearly implied that the pure have worked in accord with justice, and that to work against justice is an impurity. The same association and contraposition of concepts is found well before in Plato, who affirms ironically that Musaeus and his son (i.e. Orpheus) reward the just (δίκαιος) with a banquet of the pious (ὁσίων), crowned and inebriated, the same prize which, as we have seen, awaits the initiates of **L 7**. In contrast, the impious and the unjust (τοὺς δὲ ἀνοσίους αὖ καὶ ἀδίκους) are plunged in the mud and forced to carry water in a sieve.[63]

Justice also appears in Apulian infernal iconography, sometimes associated with Victory (Nikê), cf. § 10.7.6.

Justice (Dikê) is a well-known divinity in Orphic religion. In an ancient Orphic theogony, she appears as a goddess, the companion of Zeus who watches over the injustices of men so that Zeus may punish them,[64] while in a passage from a judicial speech, one of the litigants quoting Orpheus tries to influence the jury's vote by referring the decision to the vigilance of Justice over the unjust.[65]

The scheme presented by the tablets also reflects a link between ritual purity and justice (δίκη) and the cultic practice we find clearly developed in Orphism.[66] To be just is equivalent to being without punishment, ἄποινος, as the initiate declares in **L 13**. From other Orphic passages, we know that paying the penalty implies being initiated and living purely and in an upright way, for the profane will not succeed

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[62] εὐαγέωσιν. The word εὐαγής is a term used in the tablets, cf. **L 10**, 7 ἕδρας ἐς εὐαγέων, **L 16n** εὐαγὴς ἱερὰ Διονύσου Βακχίου... εἰμί. For other parallels see § 8.2.

[63] Plat. *Resp.* 363cd. Cf. Plut. *Comp. Cim. et Luc.* 1.2 (see § 2.5); cf. also Plat. *Resp.* 330d, *Phd.* 69c, *Gorg.* 493a–c.

[64] Plat. *Leg.* 716a (*OF* 32). Burkert (1969) 11 n. 25 correctly pointed out that the Platonic passage seems to paraphrase a verse similar to another one from the *Rhapsodies* (*OF* 233).

[65] Ps.-Demosth. *in Aristog.* 11 (*OF* 33).

[66] Jiménez San Cristóbal (2005).

in escaping his condition of impiety, and will have to purge his guilt once again.[67]

10.6. *The gods in the tablets and in other Orphic texts*

The presentation of the gods in the tablets shows a number of similarities to that found in other Orphic texts.[68]

10.6.1. *First-born gods and elements*

In the Great Tablet from Thurii, the First-Born (Heaven), Mother Earth, and the daughter of Demeter are mentioned; then Zeus, Dionysus, Demeter and Nestis-Kore are identified with the four elements, and in what follows, Night and Day appear as the basic components of the temporal sequence. We have seen how all this is also found in other works of the Orphic tradition,[69] and that the tablet can be understood only in this light.

10.6.2. *Moira*

In **L 9** and **10**, we find a reference to Moira, who is practically identified with Zeus, and in § 4.3 we commented that such an identification was found in such Orphic texts as the *Derveni Papyrus*, col. XVIII f. or in *Orphic Hymn* 59, 13.

10.6.3. *Persephone*

For Homer, the principal authority on the Olympic religion, Persephone is a divinity characterized by the vagueness of her features, habitually described only as terrible and unpleasant. He mentions her seven times,[70] in six of which he characterizes her as "awful" (ἐπαινή), while in the other[71] he simply mentions the "groves of Persephone". In Hesiod, she appears in four passages. One of these seems to be an

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[67] Plat. *Phd.* 69c, *Gorg.* 493a, *Resp.* 364e, Iulian. *Or.* 7, 25, Plut. *fr.* 178 Sandbach.
[68] For *Derveni Papyrus*, cf. Most (1997) and Betegh (2004), esp. 331–338.
[69] Cf. § 6 and Bernabé (2002c).
[70] *Il.* 9, 457; 569, *Od.* 10, 491; 534; 566; 11, 47.
[71] *Od.* 10, 509.

interpolation.[72] Of the other three none attributes special significance to her position.[73] Her role in the formative poets of the Olympic tradition is thus insignificant.

In contrast, the goddess has a fundamental role in the tablets. She appears (*passim*) as the Mistress of the underworld. No doubt, she is the "queen of the subterranean beings" (**L 1**, 13, **L 9**, 7, **L 11**, 1 etc.), the same title she receives in *Orphic Hymn* 29, 6.[74] She inhabits the meadow of the blessed (**L 8**, 6, **L 13**, in this case with the epithet Βριμώ), and it is to her that the initiate comes as a suppliant (**L 10**, 6), and to whom his declarations of purity and liberation are addressed (**L 9–10**, 1). The guardians submit the initiates' fate to her decision (**L 1**, 13).[75] In **L 7**, 2 we read:

> Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself has liberated you.

In this declaration, the goddess clearly aligns herself with Dionysus. She decides the fate of the deceased, but Dionysus acts as mediator. In a fragment that is unequivocally Orphic,[76] we find that both are mentioned as liberating gods, with the same function as the one attributed to her in **L 7**:

> …the happy life, that after having wandered, those who in Orpheus are initiated in Dionysus and Kore, pray to obtain:
> "to be freed from the cycle and find refuge from misfortune".

The same ideas appear in Pindar,[77] who speaks of the liberation of certain souls by Persephone, after having accepted compensation for her "ancient pain" (the death of Dionysus).

None of this resembles the "atrocious goddess" of Homer and Hesiod. It would be appropriate to think of relating the tablets with the

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[72] Hes. *Theog.* 768, which also qualifies her as "awful".

[73] Hes. *Theog.* 913, in an account of the wives and daughters of Zeus, *fr.* 185, 4 M.-W. of the *Eoiai*, too destroyed to provide information, and in a papyrus fr. which may belong to the Hesiodic Peirithous' *Descent to the underworld*, or to the *Minyad* (Hes. *fr.* 280, 19 M.-W. = *Minyas fr.* 7 Bernabé).

[74] Cf. similarly, other mentions at **L 12**, 1 "the Cybelean one, daughter of Demeter", 5 (Nestis), 8 (The Subterranean Girl [Κόρη]), 9 (Κόρη).

[75] In **L 16b**, the goddess' attention is attracted, and Posidippus' condition as an initiate in the mysteries is communicated to her, so that she may guarantee him a favorable position in the Beyond.

[76] Procl. *in Tim.* III 297, 3, citing *OF* 398, cf. Simplic. *in Aristot. Cael.* 377, 12 Heiberg, who cites the same fragment.

[77] Pind. *fr.* 133 Maehl. (*OF* 443), cf. Bernabé (1999b), Santamaría (2005).

Eleusinian world,[78] where Persephone holds the role of a protagonist and also decides about future destiny after death.[79] However, there are powerful reasons for preferring to relate the tablets to the Orphic rather than the Eleusinian world. The principle ones are:

a) The association of Persephone with Dionysus, her son in the Orphic tradition, who, as we shall see (§ 10.7.3), is also associated with her in Apulian iconography.
b) The fact that the tablets emphasize "liberation" more than the initiate's visual experience,[80] which is characteristic of the Eleusinian rites.
c) The fact that the deceased addresses her as "mother"[81] in the "great" tablet from Thurii (**L 12**). We find the same form of address in the *Gurôb Papyrus* (*OF* 578),[82] which has as its background the Orphic myth of the Dionysiac part of human beings.
d) The striking absence of tablets at Athens, the place most intimately related with Eleusis.

10.6.4. *Dionysus*

Dionysus appears in the tablets with various epithets.

a) In **L 7**, 2 Dionysus appears mentioned as Βάκχιος. In **L 16n**, the deceased proclaims that she is consecrated to the same god. It is curious that the divinity is called by the name that should be proper to the worshipper, the appropriate name for him ought to be Βάκχος. In **L 1**, 16, in contrast, it is the initiates that are called βάκχοι. There is thus an identification between the worshipper and the god, so that their appellations become interchangeable.[83] He is the one that intercedes before Persephone so that she may liberate the soul of the believer in the tablet from Pelinna. There could be no one more fitting than Dionysus for the task of indicating to his mother the moment at which a person should be liberated.

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[78] Cf. Merkelbach (1989) 15, Calame (1996) 20 n. 15 and pp. 23 ff.
[79] As is pointed out by Graf (1993) 242.
[80] Cf. Segal (1990) 416 ff.
[81] **L 12**, 6–7 "mother, hear my prayer".
[82] In which she is invoked so that she may save the initiate, Demeter is mentioned as identified with Rhea, and a prayer is mentioned: col. I 5 σῶισόν με Βριμὼ με[γάλη, 6 Δημήτηρ τε Ῥέα, 17 εὐχή.
[83] Cf. § 2.3 and n. 44.

b) In **L 9–10**, 2, **L 11**, 2, Eubouleus is mentioned alongside Persephone. Dionysus receives this epithet in various *Orphic hymns* and in other sources.[84] In the Roman tablet[85] he is mentioned as the "son of Zeus", while in the *Gurôb Papyrus*[86] we read:

l. 18 let us invoke Eubouleus
l.22a Eubou]leus, Ericepaeus…save me
l. 23b One alone is Dionysus

Obviously, the god invoked as Eubouleus is identified with Ericepaeus, and must be Dionysus, mentioned in what follows; a god with many names, but who is only one. His condition as a god of salvation and liberation coincides with the role of Βάκχιος in **L 7**.

c) Ericepaeus is a characteristically Orphic epithet, applied to Dionysus, or, later on, to Phanes.[87] In **L 13**, we find it, distorted by a popular etymology (or, more likely, being the original form of the epithet), as ἀνδρικεπαιδόθυρσον (that it, as ἀνὴρ καὶ παῖς, θύρσος).

The presence of Dionysus, referred to with the epithets we have mentioned, and above all his relation with Persephone, is characteristic of the Orphic religion, and is explained by the well-known myth according to which Dionysus is the son of Persephone, the Titans dismember him, and mankind is born from his remains (cf. § 1.6).

10.7. *Iconography*

A substantial argument can be made from the iconographical representations, especially from Apulian pottery, whose relations with the Orphic world seem to be increasingly clear.[88] In this section, we shall

[84] Cf. § 4.1.

[85] **L 11**, 2 Εὐβουλεῦ τε Διὸς τέκος.

[86] *PGurôb.* col. I 18 and 22a, are citations of a text in verse, whereas 23b is a ritual declaration in prose. Cf. Hordern (2000).

[87] Cf. § 7.2.

[88] Guthrie (1935) 187 denies them, while Schmidt (1975) considers that the Apulian vases that represent Hades must be interpreted in an Orphic context, although she does not believe they coincide with the world of the tablets. Cf. Pensa (1977). Giangiulio (1994) also takes into consideration the *pinakes* of Locri, and presents a very fair survey of the question. Johnston-McNiven (1996) analyze the fundamental testimony of a piece conserved at Toledo (Ohio). Contra (unconvincing and with remarkable lack of bibliography) Torjussen (internet). Bernabé (forthcoming 1) criticizes the reservations of Schmidt, and tries to demonstrate that the infernal imaginary of the tablets and that presented by Apulian and Locrian iconography point to the same religious

analyze the extent to which the features that shape the imaginary of the Beyond described by the tablets coincide with or diverge from those that characterize the traditional view (represented in the first instance by Homer), and to what degree both are comparable with that found in South Italian iconography. It will be found that the universe of the tablets is much closer to that of South Italian iconography than it is to the Homeric one. This relation is relevant because, as is well known, Orpheus forms an important part of the Apulian netherworld imagery.

10.7.1. *Localization: the abode of the Beyond*

The tablets locate Hades, the seat of the dead, in a subterranean world, which they describe as obscure, but also as a building (δόμοι, δῶμα).[89] Homer also presents Hades as a subterranean building,[90] but there is an essential difference between the "musty and horrible dwelling, which even the gods abhor", described by Homer,[91] and the "well-built" house alluded to in **L 1**, 2. Apulian ceramics coincide better with the description of the tablets, since, as we shall see, they present us with a Hades that is dark (the infernal gods wear torches), but which boasts buildings with elegant columns, an abode worthy of its divine inhabitants.

10.7.2. *A uniform Hades vs. a dual Hades*

Another basic difference between the imagery of the tablets and that of Homer is that Homer's Beyond is unequivocally unpleasant, whereas the one described by the tablets contains two paths, or two destinies for its inhabitants. There are two springs, that of Mnemosyne, which is frequented only by those who have assimilated the warning given by the author of the sacred text—that is, the initiates—, while the other souls of the dead come to the other spring, which is unnamed

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environment, which is in all probability Orphic. The arguments developed in this section may be found adduced there.

[89] A subterranean place: souls "go down" to it (**L 1**, 4, and probably **L 2**, 6) and it is inhabited by "the subterranean queen" (**L 1**, 13). It is "gloomy" (**L 1**, 9, **L 2**, 11) and one reaches it "after abandoning the light of the sun" (**L 8**, 1). It is described as a building: "dwelling (δόμοι) of Hades" in **L 3**, 1, **L 4**, 1. For its part, **L 1**, 2 adds an epithet of disputed meaning εὐήρεας, but which seems to mean "well-built".

[90] Cf., for instance, *Il.* 8, 477–481; 22, 482 f.; *Od.* 24, 203 f.

[91] *Od.* 20, 64 f.

but must be that of Forgetfulness.[92] There is also a privileged space in Hades, a sacred meadow[93] separated from a much more unpleasant and gloomy place, often identified with Tartarus. However, access to the *locus amoenus* is controlled by various personages, guardians and Persephone successively. A similar situation may have applied in Italian vase paintings. In an amphora from Vulci, which has now disappeared, the souls of the initiates may have been represented guarding the fountain of Mnemosyne.[94]

Apulian iconography represents this duality, within the proper limits of iconographical language. On a volute crater from St. Petersburg,[95] we see a sumptuous edifice, seat of the infernal monarchs Persephone and Hades. Below it, the Danaids are represented carrying jars of water (presumably in order to try to fill vessels that can never be filled). In the upper part of the vase, Ixion, tied to the wheel and accompanied by a fury,[96] again represents those who are punished in the Beyond. In two other examples, we find Hades and Persephone, outside their *naiskos*. In one from Saint Petersburg they appear with a fury on the right, whereas the Danaids are represented in the center, below. On another one from Ruvo,[97] a fury punished a condemned man, terrified by the "terrors of Hades" before the underworld divinities. The tablets refer to a privileged space, reserved for initiates. Located underground in Hades, it is imagined as a meadow.[98] Apulian pottery does not furnish clear images of a happy place, which we could identify with the one referred to in the text. A series of pieces, however, evoke a paradisiacal atmosphere related to Dionysus.[99]

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[92] Cf. § 1.5.

[93] **L 8**, 6: "the sacred meadows and the groves of Persephone", **L 10**a, 7: "to see if, benevolent, she may send me to the domain of the limpid ones"; **L 13**: "enter the sacred meadow, for the initiate is free from punishment".

[94] Cf. § 1.6, n. 120.

[95] B 1717 (325–310 B.C.)

[96] On the furies in Apulian ceramics, cf. Aellen (1994) *passim*.

[97] Saint Petersburg B 1716 (330–310 B.C.), Ruvo 1094 (360–350 B.C.).

[98] Cf. § 9.3.

[99] We refer to the images studied by Cabrera (1998). Of course, other works from the immense Dionysiac iconography are not incompatible with this universe, as for instance the amphora from Basel (S 29), in which we find the miracle of the "automatic" wine (which reminds us of the "wine, fortunate honor" of **L 7**). On this piece, which came to light in the same tomb as the Orpheus amphora and the dead man with the papyrus roll commented on in App. II n. 2, cf. Schmidt-Trendall-Cambitoglou (1976) 6 and 35 ff., fig. 8e, 10a. Other examples might include a crater from Tarentum (61.602) on which a woman receives a satyr in a *naiskos*, as well as the numerous symposiac scenes which may allude to a banquet in the Beyond, including the ones that decorate

Furthermore, we may consider the presence of Orpheus or the door opened by Nikê (of which we shall speak later) as symbols of the accession of the initiates to the happy place.

10.7.3. *Divinities presiding over the Beyond*

Another point of contact between the tablets and Apulian ceramics is the image of the gods of the Beyond, very different from the Homeric one. In § 10.6.3, we saw the crucial role of Persephone, who is responsible for the ultimate decision concerning the destiny of those who arrive in the underworld. Alongside her, mention is made of Eucles, a name for Hades. This god does not seem to participate directly in the souls' destiny; he is mentioned only occasionally. We have also seen (§ 10.6.4) that Dionysus, mentioned by various names, appeared as a divine mediator who authorizes the liberation of the deceased's soul in **L 7**.

It was likewise clear that both Dionysus' role as a mediator in the liberation of souls, and that of an amenable Persephone, are foreign to the Homeric world and to that of Hesiod. Nevertheless, both features of this vision of the Beyond also appear in the South Italian imaginary.

Persephone is the protagonist of the netherworld imagery in most of the Apulian pieces we are studying in this section. She is also the most frequent presence in the *pinakes* from Locri from the second quarter of the 5th cent. B.C.[100] In several of these images, Dionysus is the mediator who substitutes symbolically for the suppliant believer in his arrival at the kingdom of death, when he presents himself before the god's mother.

Dionysus also acts as a divine mediator on an Apulian volute crater in the Museum of Art of Toledo (Ohio).[101] Its message is clear: the initiates in the mysteries of Dionysus, the *mystai*, will obtain special treatment and will find rest from their evils in Hades. This is the same message we encounter in the Orphic tablets.

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the well-known sarcophagus of the Tuffatore (cf. Warland [1999]). It is obviously hard to demonstrate an Orphic presence in these works, but given the virtual absence of information about a Dionysiac Beyond, it seems much more probable to relate them to the Orphic atmosphere.

[100] Two of them are studied in the iconographical appendix, cf. App. II n. 3.

[101] 340–330 B.C., also included in App. II n. 6.

10.7.4. *Orpheus, the human mediator*

Alongside Dionysus, the divine mediator, we often find in Apulian ceramics the presence in Hades of a human mediator, Orpheus. On an Apulian volute crater from the Munich Museum,[102] he accompanies a family of initiates before Pluto and Persephone. This crater represents the cosmic order, in which Justice punishes the impious acts of the non-initiates. In accordance with this cosmic configuration Queen Persephone and her spouse preside over the subterranean sphere.

We find a very similar model in other Apulian craters, such as one from Matera and another from Karlsruhe.[103] In another from Naples,[104] the same themes are repeated, but without the characteristic representation of a building. Orpheus arrives before Hades and Persephone, and leads a woman by the hand. In the light of the other examples, it seems clear that we must infer that Orpheus is introducing a dead woman to the gods of the Beyond, rather than considering that she is Eurydice.

On another crater from Naples,[105] we find other characters and personifications along with Orpheus, such as Megara, the Poinai, Ananke, Sisyphus, Hermes, Triptolemus, Aeacus or Rhadamanthys. The presence of the ΠΟΙΝΑΙ is interesting, in view of the importance of the concept of ποινή in the tablets and in other texts that are Orphic or related to Orphism.[106]

We find a different type on a calyx crater of the British Museum in London.[107] At the entrance to Hades, marked by a herm, Orpheus leads Cerberus by a chain, for he has tamed him by his music. He thus assumes the function of a protector who defends a young man standing before him, no doubt an initiate, from the terrors of Hades.

10.7.5. *Orpheus and the texts*

Alongside this fairly widespread type, in which we find scenes of rewards and punishments, divine kings, and the mediator, there is another type

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[102] 3297 (end of the 4th cent. B.C.); see the detailed description in App. II n. 5.
[103] Matera n. 336 (320 B.C.); Karlsruhe B 4 (350–340 B.C.).
[104] SA 709 (330–310 B.C.).
[105] "Cratera Altamura" 3222 (350–340 B.C.).
[106] Santamaría (2005). On the Poinai, cf. Aellen (1994) n. 2, Lochin (1994) 422 f. (n. 1).
[107] F 270, cf. Schmidt (1975) 120–122 and fig. XIV.

with different variants that also shows us Orpheus as a mediator, but without the presence of the condemned or of Persephone. On a red-figured Apulian amphora attributed to the Ganymedes painter,[108] we see, inside a little white temple or *naiskos*, very similar to the palace of Persephone represented on other pieces, an old man (the deceased) seated on a portable chair who is visited by Orpheus.[109] The most interesting point is that the dead man is holding a papyrus roll in his hand. As to its content, we cannot imagine anything more appropriate than a text of the type we encounter in the tablets. The image makes explicit the value of the text as the depository of the knowledge that Orpheus transmits to the initiates.

Similar in many respects, but without the presence of the text, is a Sicilian piece from Leontini,[110] on which Orpheus and Hermes appear in a *naiskos* with a dead woman.

This complex of representations seems to reaffirm the hypothesis that the text of the tablets was considered a work of Orpheus, as would be the papyrus carried by the dead man on the Basel amphora, so that the Thracian bard would be considered by the users of the tablets as a human mediator who, through initiation, explains the path the souls must follow in order to achieve their salvation. The numerous texts that attribute to Orpheus the τελεταί, or ideas on the Beyond that are related to them, insist on the same idea.[111]

10.7.6. *Nikê and Dikê*

An interesting variant is offered by a crater from Ruvo,[112] on which are represented, alongside Persephone, Hecate and Orpheus, Nikê opening a door, and Dikê or justice. The door opened by Nikê seems to open the way for a dead follower of Orpheus towards a more pleasant place, or towards his own triumph.

Nikê and Dikê do not appear mentioned explicitly in the tablets, but their presence is completely coherent within an Orphic atmosphere, and in the tablets there are reflections of the same imagery, especially

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[108] 330–320 B.C., cf. App. II n. 2, with bibliography.
[109] Cf. App. II n. 2, n. 5.
[110] Trendall (1967) 589 n. 28, cf. Schmidt (1975) 177 f.
[111] For instance, the already cited passages: Plat. *Resp.* 364e, Ps.-Demosth. *in Aristog.* 11, Diod. 1, 96, 2–5, Procl. *in Tim.* III 297, 3, Simpl. *in Aristot. Cael.* 377, 12 Heiberg.
[112] The former Fenicia collection (c. 350 B.C.).

in relation to the idea of entering and leaving. In **L 9**, 5–6, the soul proclaims that it has liberated itself from the painful cycle, and has launched itself with rapid feet for the much-desired crown.[113] In **L 13**, the initiate, free from punishment, is invited as follows:

> Enter (εἴσιθ<ι>) into the sacred meadow.

What is the meaning of Nikê opening the door, other than that of symbolizing the *mystes*' victory as he is granted access to the *locus amoenus*?

In addition, as we saw in §10.5, Justice (Dikê) is an important divinity in the Orphic worldview.

The combination in one infernal image of Orpheus, Justice and Victory cannot be coincidental.

10.7.7. *The reservations of Margot Schmidt*

We ought, however to consider the arguments of Margot Schmidt, a great specialist of Apulian iconography, who expresses reservations about connecting this iconography with the world of the tablets:[114]

> The original inspiration of the netherworld images in Apulian art perhaps must be sought in an epic of religious coloring, or better in religious poetry belonging to a certain cultural level. This poetic background is not necessarily Orphic.

Nevertheless, the presence of Orpheus and that of the amphora by the Ganymedes painter lead this scholar to add:

> We could suppose that the figurative creation derived from these sources would have been reused also by followers of some Orphic ideas…in the…image of the new amphora by the Ganymedes painter…we could see an "Orphization" of a more generic prototype.

Neither of these two arguments is persuasive. Rather they are perhaps dictated by two prejudices concerning Orphism which now seem to have been superseded, or should be:

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[113] Although the image of the crown is polyvalent in the tablets, simultaneously a funeral crown, a mystical crown, and a crown of banquets and of triumph. Cf. § 4.5.

[114] Schmidt (1975) 129.

a) That the tablets reflect a "popular" religion (that seems to be the meaning of "specific cultural level"). Yet it does not seem appropriate to attribute the character of "popular religion" to the subject of belief for people who could afford highly expensive gold tablets, deposited in wealthy tombs, a belief which seems to have been shared by the Sicilian tyrants who hired Pindar.
b) That the verses of the tablet are a sub-literature. Riedweg has made an extremely plausible case[115] that there is a *hieros logos* behind them, which would no doubt belong to "an epic of religious tonality" or to a "religious poetry belonging to a specific cultural level", rather than to a "sub-literature".

There is still a third equivocation that must be argued against. Schmidt considers that the representation of the birth of Dionysus from the thigh of Zeus which we find in Apulian iconography is not Orphic either, since the son of Semele is not Orphic.[116] Bernabé has demonstrated that this theme was dealt with in the *Rhapsodies* and probably before, and it is therefore reflected in the corresponding fragments of his edition. Rudhardt has also argued convincingly for the presence of Semele in the *Orphic hymns*.[117]

10.7.8. *Recapitulation of Apulian iconography*

We see that basic features of the Beyond represented in Apulian iconography suggest a conceptual universe that is practically identical with the one presented to us by the tablets and other Orphic textual fragments:

a) The Beyond is a dark and subterranean place, but well-constructed.
b) It is presided over by Persephone, a welcoming and affable goddess, accompanied by Hades.
c) It is a dual space, with rewards for the initiates and punishments for those who are not.
d) For the punishments, the painters select as paradigms the most notorious punished sinners of the mythic tradition, such as Sisyphus, Ixion,

[115] Riedweg (2002) cf. § 4.5.
[116] Schmidt (1975) 133.
[117] Bernabé (1998c), cf. *OF* 327–328, Rudhardt (2002).

or the Danaids. The punishments are meted out by the Erinyes or the Furies.

e) The rewards are based on proximity to the divine, symbolized by the presence of the mediators.
f) There is a divine mediator, Dionysus, and a human one, Orpheus (represented on the frontier between the palace and the rest of the space, sometimes with the believer).
g) On one occasion, we find a representation of the text as evidence for written transmission of Orphic revelations.
h) The personification of Dikê alludes to the fact that the faithful must respect her, for she is the one that gives to each person the retribution he/she deserves. The personification of Victory represents the triumph that the *mystes* obtains in the Beyond in the form of a privileged status.
i) The presence of Orpheus in ceramics, especially in the case of the Basel amphora, in which he appears before an initiate who carries a text, gives particular reinforcement to the hypothesis that the text of the tablets was attributed to Orpheus.

The only possible doubt is whether we are justified in calling "Orphic" this religious continuum we have reconstructed, which might present differences in detail from one place to another. It is obvious, however, that if we do not do so, the explanation becomes more complicated. What other movement could we reconstruct that unites Persephone and Dionysus, with Orpheus as mediator, that has recourse to sacred texts, that presents a Beyond with the possibility of rewards and punishments? It is more plausible to think that the texts on which the painters based their imaginary landscape are those used in the τελεταί, which might include representations of the sacred mystery in the form of a κατάβασις, in a kind of *imitatio mortis* that prepared the believer for the great experience.

The reasons for the discordances—there are few—between the texts and the representations must be seen in the very nature of each medium, one discursive, the other a visual representation, which obliges the painter to represent, condensed within one scene, that to which the texts allude in several episodes, and to visualize some concepts that are hard to translate into images.

10.8. *Colophon*

Compilation of a series of different arguments results in an ensemble that cannot be associated with any other known religious movement, nor can it be arbitrarily segmented, and which, on the other hand, coincides in every point with the image we have today of Orphism: a) the features of the possible author of the tablets, b) their geographical distribution, c) the references to an initiation associated with doctrinal knowledge, d) the phraseology, symbols, and details that other texts relate to Orphism, e) the *hieros logos* whence they seem to derive, f) the identification of purity and justice, g) the relation between Persephone and Dionysus, h) the idea of liberation from a cycle, and i) the coincidences with south Italian iconography, in which Orpheus is the protagonist.

This accumulation of data can, of course, be debated, and we can find similar references to isolated parts of it in other religious environments. On this point, however, we can point out that the problem of the tablets is basically the same as that of Orphism in its totality. Almost none of the features of this religious movement belongs to Orphism alone. The figure of Orpheus appears in contexts that are not Orphic; abstinence and transmigration are shared with Pythagoreanism, Bacchic ecstasy with Dionysism, the idea of Zeus as principle and end of all may be found in such non-Orphic authors as Aeschylus, and there are coincidences with the Eleusinian environment. Yet what seems to us significant is that although each of these features may perhaps be found in other environments, there exists no other religious movement in which they all coincide. Even at the risk of simplifying matters, it could be said that what does belong to Orphism is the combination of all those elements, or of a large number of them. By accepting this principle as a starting-point, we see that there is a combination of Dionysiac, Pythagorean, and Eleusinian elements in the tablets. The Dionysiac features would include the repeated allusion to Dionysus and the mention of bacchoi and initiates. Well-known elements of Pythagorean beliefs that appear in the tablets include purity, metempsychosis, and the cycle of reincarnations. The predominance of Persephone resembles the Eleusinian world. The factors mentioned are found, then, both within Orphism and outside it, but as far as we know the combination of all of them is present only in Orphism. The religious scheme of the tablets presents us with the soul of a dead person who, thanks to a life of purity, has liberated himself from a painful cycle of births. It is Dionysus who liberates the soul, but it is Persephone who

must give her ultimate permission for it to reach the happy meadow, in which it is reborn, reintegrated, to a divine or semi-divine state which was its original state.

To attribute the imagery of the tablets to the Orphics (with whatever vagueness one wishes to bestow on the term, including Nilsson's expression[118] "Orphism and kindred religious movements"), is more logical 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.

Therefore, the idea seems gradually to be gaining ground that the tablets are Orphic, and it is once again becoming customary to call them so, without restrictions.[119]

[118] Nilsson (1935).

[119] For example, in the two recent editions of the texts, Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) and Graf-Johnston (2007).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PARALLELS TO THE TABLETS IN OTHER CULTURES

11.1. *Introduction*

Outside Greece, we find documents with characteristics similar to those of the Orphic tablets. In some cases, they may be distant models; in others, influence may run in the opposite direction, or we may be dealing with parallel developments. The most ancient ones stem from Egypt, India, and Iran, while the most recent are found in Gallic area and, much later, in Western Europe.

11.2. *The Egyptian "Book of the Dead"*

Various scholars have pointed out similarities between the gold tablets and the *Book of the Dead*,[1] the fundamental repository of Egyptian beliefs about the Beyond. In both works, the soul travels to the Beyond, there are paths to the right and the left,[2] and the dead man is thirsty. In some chapters of the *Book of the Dead*, the dead man asks to be refreshed at a fountain close to a tree, and we find such phrases as "To drink water in the divine region below", "O sycamore of Nut, give me your water", or "Let me reach your water". In addition, many Egyptian images offer the representation of a goddess in the form of a tree, suckling a dead man or allowing him to eat and drink at a rest stop on the road to the afterlife.[3]

In the *Book of the Dead*, as in the tablets, we find a guardian who interrogates the dead man. The latter must reply with some specific passwords. For example, we read the following dialogue (ch. 122):

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[1] Cf. Foucart (1895) 71, Diels (1907) 43 n. 4, Dieterich (1913²) 95 f., Guthrie (1935) 177 f., Zuntz (1971) 370 ff., 389 ff., West (1971) 64 f., (1975), 229 f. (with bibliography), Burkert (1975) 86, with bibliography at n. 11, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 45, (2001) 85 f., Betz (1998) 401 (with bibliography), Merkelbach (1999), Dousa (forthcoming). See also § 1.4 and 1.5.

[2] West (1975) 229 f., citing Morenz (1957).

[3] Cf. Keel (1992) ch. II, 62–138, figs. 40 and 57, App. II n. 12.

> Who are you, what are you, whence do you come to the Beyond?
> (and the dead man answers:)
> I am one of you.

In *Pyramid Texts* 890 it is said of the deceased:

> He does not belong to the earth, he belongs to the heaven.[4]

Finally, in the *Book of the Dead* the dead Egyptian declares, in the presence of supernatural beings, that he has been purified,[5] as does the soul in the tablets.

Despite the notable similarity between the Egyptian scene and that of the initiates in the gold tablets, there are also very significant differences. Thus, as pointed out by Zuntz,[6] the tree in the Egyptian texts is almost always a sycamore, situated in a place which one reaches after passing through many others, whereas the cypress we find in the gold tablets is found right at the entrance to the other world. In addition, the dead Egyptian draws water from among the trees, and it is offered to him by an arm that sprouts from the tree or a goddess inside it, so that he does not have to choose between two springs, as in the Orphic tablets. Zuntz concludes that the motif of thirst is universal, and that it is not therefore necessary to suppose the existence of an Egyptian model for the texts of the tablets.[7]

The *Book of the Dead* also includes a formula enabling the dead man to remember his name. This is alien to the conceptual world of the tablets. On the other hand, the idea of guardians who guard the entrance to an exclusive place, to which only certain souls may gain access, is a motif that is repeated in Antiquity and extends as far as Christianity,[8] so that it is not certain that there were direct influences.

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[4] Hornung (1989) 14, Betz (1998) 401.

[5] 86, 23 (p. 176 Hornung), cf. Merkelbach (1999) 8.

[6] Zuntz (1971) 371 f., with the approval by Burkert (1975) 91 f. and the critique by Guarducci (1974) 19 f.

[7] On the motif of thirst, cf. also Deonna (1939) 53 ff. For his part, Nilsson (1943) 6 denies an Egyptian influence.

[8] Cf. Festugière (1972) 37; 62 n. 1.

11.3. *A Hittite parallel: the "Great voyage of the soul"*

We know of a Hittite text on the voyage of the soul through the other world,[9] whose considerable thematic similarities with the Orphic tablets were noted right from the start, despite their highly fragmentary state. All of nature is described as in a dreaming state,[10] apparently because "growth" has left its place. There follows a reference to the human soul, which is conceived as something that survives the body,[11] and we then encounter imperatives, which indicate that someone is trying to change the situation:

> [Wher]e did it come for it? If it is in the mountain, let the bee bring it and put it in its place. If, however, it is in the plain, let the bee bring it and put it in its place. That which is towards the plowed field, let the bees bring and put it in its place. Let the bees go a journey of three days, of four days and bring my Growth. If it is towards the sea, let the *lahanza*-duck (*loon*?) bring it and put it in its place. But if it is towards the river, let the *huwalas*-bird (*owl*?) bring it and put it in its place.
>
> But whatever is towards the sky, let the *tapakaliya*-eagle bring it in his talons.

The "growth" belongs to the speaker, who seems to be a divinity, who tries to have it brought to his place, and into his control. Since the human soul appears in this context, and since this soul's path towards the Beyond is then described, it is tempting to think that the restitution of order has something to do with guiding the soul under discussion to its correct location in the underworld. The text then continues:

> Let the Desired One be struck with their talons. Let the goat strike him with its horns. Let the ram strike him with his horns. Let the mother sheep strike him with her nose. The *Mother Goddess* is tearful. She is struck with tears. What things are dear to her are "opened" upon the nine body parts. They must be struck. But the soul is thriving with (all) its parts (?). Let there be no oracle for it.

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[9] KBo 22. 178 + KUB 43.109, cf. Hoffner (1988), Watkins (1995), Bernabé (2005b), and (forthcoming 2).

[10] Both the description of the sleeping lethargy of nature (which also has parallels in Alcm. *fr.* 89 Page = 159 Calame), and the sending of the bee and the eagle are found in the Hittite myths of the disappearing god, such as that of Telipinu, cf. Bernabé (1987[2]) 39 ff. and 47 ff.

[11] Watkins (1995) 284.

The affliction of the mother goddess indicates that she has an emotional relation with the Desired One, who is "what things are dear to her", and very probably her son.

In the face of the destruction of the Desired One, the soul appears to be in full possession of its faculties. It is not necessary to consult any oracle on it, because in its optimal situation it does not need it. The soul thus benefits from the destruction of the Desired One, which seems to be the precondition of its safety and the guarantee that it can undertake its great voyage. There follows a dialogue in direct style, which has even been said to have the structure of a catechism,[12] between the soul and another character, who may be the officiant of a rite "of the dead" at the moment when the soul is about to undertake its journey, or the divinity who has been speaking previously.[13]

> "The soul is great. The soul is great."
> "Whose soul is great?"
> "The mortal('s) soul is great."
> "And what road does it travel?"
> "It travels the Great Road. It travels the Invisible (?) road."
> "The Guide(-deity) has himself/herself prepared it for the road."
> "A holy thing is the soul of the Sun Goddess (of the Earth?). To the gods belongs the soul. Why must I, a mortal, go into the *sea*? (Why must) I go into the *place of punishment*? I will fall into the river. I will fall into the pool. Let me not go to the *tenawas*, I go [ ] The *tenawas* is evil [ ]...the meadow no...to a god..."

The path is the one that the soul must traverse at the death of its host body, towards the Beyond; this is why it is "great" and "Invisible".[14] The phrase "The Guide(-deity) has himself/herself prepared it for the road" indicates that there is a divinity who acts as the soul's guide in the underworld, so that it may reach the right place.

With the declaration "Something sacred of the Solar Goddess of the Earth is the soul", the soul proclaims its own divine origin. This may

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[12] Cf. Watkins (1995) 288. The direct style is revealed by the presence of the particle *-wa-* (which indicates precisely this circumstance in Hittite) at the beginning of the phrases of lines 26–27 and the questions and answers, as well as the repeated verbs in the first person.

[13] The two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. The officiant may be representing the divinity in the ritual. And if the text were a ritual of the dead, the dead man's answers would also be given by someone playing his part.

[14] "Invisible" strongly evokes Greek Hades and its etymology as τὸ ἀιδές (Plat. *Gorg.* 493b).

explain the relation of the Desired One with the human soul. The text has a remarkable coherence if the Desired One is interpreted as the first-born man and son of the Sun Goddess of the Earth. Such a myth would be very appropriate for recitation in a ritual of the dead, providing a paradigm *in illo tempore* for explaining both man's position in the cosmos, with a mortal body but a divine soul, and the conditions that propitiated his journey to the Beyond in mythical time. According to this interpretation, the mortal body of the first-born man, the Desired One, had to be destroyed in order for his soul, now liberated, to go to its place in the other world. The cosmic conflict bought about by his death may arise from the fact that the Desired One has a divine part (his soul) and a mortal part. The solution of the conflict is to take the divine part to the Divine, and destroy the mortal part. The order of the world thus requires that man die and like the first man, every man, after death, must reach a happy place in the Beyond.[15] In addition, the theme of the Desired One has parallels in the human son whom Demeter tries to divinize in the *Hymn to Demeter* (164 f.):

> A very dear son, in the well-built dwelling
> is raised, late, highly desired and received with affection.

The boy is not Demeter's son, but the goddess, who has lost her daughter Persephone, tries to make the child immortal as if he were hers, giving him ambrosia as food and placing him in the fire to eliminate the mortal part from him. She fails, however, since she is caught in the act by the child's mother. In the Homeric version, the child survives, but in the Orphic version[16] he is burned alive. Both in the Greek and in the Hittite myth, then, we find the related, but distinct themes of the termination of life on earth and the existence of the semi-divine child (in the Greek myth, only an attempt at existence).[17]

In what follows in the Hittite text, the soul expresses its desire not to fall into the *tenawas*, and perhaps not to undergo physical harm: it

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[15] Watkins (1995) 288 rightly points out the relations of this terminology with that which appears in the road to the divine land of the tomb of Suppiluliuma II.

[16] Transmitted by the *P. Berol.* 44, 100 f. (*OF* 396).

[17] The plot of the *Hymn to Demeter* is complicated by the rape of Persephone, but it is revealing that it is not the loss of her daughter that provokes the anger of the goddess and the stoppage of life, but her failure to convert the child into a divinity. In the Hittite myth, the stoppage of life seems to be a consequence of the birth of the semi-divine child, not of his death. The same elements are combined in a different way and with a different meaning.

thus refers to a vision of the Beyond in which there are two alternatives. There is a good path (into which one "falls"), which leads to a meadow, a river and a pool, and a bad path (to which one "goes"),[18] defined as a *tenawas*, and conceived as a sea and as a place of punishment, where the soul may be attacked by a god. In a later fragment we see the effects of the *tenawas*:

> The evil *tenawas* [holds (?) him (?), so that] he does not recognize [them]. One doesn't recognize the other. Sisters having the same mother do [not] recognize (each other). Brothers having the same father do [not] recognize (each other). A mother does [not] recognize [her] own child. [A child] does [not] recognize [its own] mother. [...] does [not] recognize [...] does [not] recognize [...]

The *tenawas* produces forgetfulness in souls, like the river Lethe or the fountain of Forgetfulness in Orphic literature.[19] Yet it seems that in the Hittite version, the *tenawas* is a sea of the Beyond, and its effect (causing forgetfulness) is not produced by drinking its waters; instead, it seems that the soul is "devoured" by a sea of forgetfulness. Let us continue, however:

> From a fine table they do not eat. From a fine stool they do not eat. From a fine cup they do not drink. They do not eat [good] food. They do not drink my good drink. They eat bits of mud. They drink waste waters (?) (*a few lines below one may read* drink! *and the prohibitory negation* do not...).

It is most probable that this is the destiny of those who are in the *tenawas.*[20] The use of the possessive in the expression "my good drink" indicates that the speaker is the divinity who administers it, and decides which souls must end up in the *tenawas*, drink swampy water and eat clay, and which souls can enjoy good food and good drink, invited by

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[18] This phraseology recalls the use of "to fall" (πίπτω) in the Orphic tablets, cf. Watkins (1995) 289. The fact that one "falls" into the good path and one "goes" to the bad one may be due to the fact that in the first case the divinity intervenes in order to "place him there", whereas if it does not intervene, the traveler will be lost and will "go" to the bad path.

[19] Hoffner (1988).

[20] Hoffner (1988) 193 and n. 9 points out that the situation once again reminds us of what occurs when a god disappears but even more so of the Mesopotamian texts that refer to the situation of the dead. Likewise, others point out the parallels with the Hittite texts that reflect the funerary rites of kings.

him to his table, and one supposes they are ones who have followed the "good path" to the underworld.[21]

In short, there are two possibilities in the other world: good or bad food and drink, controlled by the divinity who recites the text. Some souls may enjoy the hospitality of the netherworld divinity, whereas others, through ignorance or through inadequate (ritual?) behavior, are brought face to face with muddy water. The function of the ritual would be to bring it about that the soul enjoys the divine banquet in the Beyond.

We find surprising analogies between the Voyage of the Soul and the Hittite text, but there are also notable differences. Both texts conceive the soul's passage to the underworld as a journey,[22] which can have two destinies, in two different locations, one good and the other bad.[23] The good place is a moist meadow, a desirable place in all Indo-European literature,[24] and banquets are celebrated in it.[25] The bad place is associated in the Voyage of the Soul with forgetfulness, punishment and the presence of mud. In the tablets there is a reference to a fountain from which the initiates must not drink, no doubt because it is the water of forgetfulness.[26] In the Hittite myth, the *tenawas* consists in a kind of sea of forgetfulness. Mud is not mentioned in the tablets, but it is in the Orphic texts we have just cited,[27] which refer to punishments. And it is not certain that the Voyage of the Soul mentions punishments; at any rate, it does not specify them.

In the Hittite text the privileged enjoy good food and good drink, contrary to the other people, who eat mud and drink swampy water, whereas the *tenawas* is described as a place. In the Orphic texts, there is mud in the place of condemned, but it is not eaten, whereas good

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[21] Watkins (1995) 289 considers that good food is proper to the fortunate soul, which may have been instructed or "initiated".

[22] In the tablets, it is specified that it is a journey to the subterranean world, a detail that does not appear in the Hittite text. However, the mention of the "Sun Goddess of the Earth" seems to indicate that here, too, the voyage is towards the lower world.

[23] In the tablets, the bad space is only suggested, but we know something more of it from other texts, for instance, Plat. *Resp.* 330d, *Phd.* 69c, *Gorg.* 493a–c. See Bernabé (2002d) and § 12.3.

[24] Cf. Puhvel (1969), Velasco López (2001).

[25] In the tablets, we only encounter one reference to wine, in **L 7**, but other texts indicate that the Orphics believed the blessed enjoyed an eternal banquet in the Beyond, cf. § 2.5.

[26] Cf. § 1.5.

[27] Cf. n. 23.

food for privileged people appears in association with wine. On the other hand, an opposition, absent from the Hittite text, is established between water of Forgetfulness and water of Memory.

In addition, in the imagery of the tablets some guardians ask the initiate for a password which will enable him to enter into the good place. To achieve or not to achieve the right path depends on the initiate, on his knowing what he must say and where he must go. In the Hittite tale, the fate of the soul depends on whether or not the divinity guides it (it "falls" into the good place, but "goes", if left on its own, to the bad one). One has the impression that the soul depends on the decision of the divinity, rather than on any process of initiation. Nor is it stated that the water of forgetfulness has a relation to reincarnation, as it does in the Orphic world. Again there is no figure similar to Mnemosyne. And whereas in the tablets it is the guardians that allow the soul to drink from the good fountain, in the Voyage of the Soul it is the divinity, narrator of the entire passage, who instructs or authorizes the soul to drink.

As far as the myths alluded to are concerned, in both texts the human soul stems from the destruction of a god, but in the Voyage of the Soul it is the destruction of the Desired One, who seems to be the first man, son of the Sun Goddess of the Earth, that makes possible the life of the soul, despite the pain it causes the mother goddess. In the Greek myth, the Titans' dismembering and consumption of Dionysus also causes pain for his mother, Persephone. Zeus strikes the Titans down with lightning, and men are born from their remains. The pain experienced by the Sun Goddess of the Earth at the laceration of the Desired One by a thousand wounds evokes that of Persephone, caused by the dismemberment of her son. It also evokes that of Demeter for the child she was unable to convert into a divinity.

Nevertheless, the differences are highly significant: in the Voyage of the Soul, the Desired One is dismembered by animals, his dismemberment is necessary for the reestablishment of order, and the soul even benefits from his destruction. In contrast, the Titans' crime of dismembering and consuming Dionysus leads to disorder. Men come from the destruction of the Titans, and must purge their prior guilt through purifications and reincarnations. Man's soul is harmed, rather than benefited, by the dismemberment of the primeval being.

It is clear that the Hittite Sun Goddess of the Earth has points of contact with the duo of Demeter and Persephone. She is a Sun Goddess from above who is found in the underworld, and therefore the guarantor of the souls' passage from this world to the Beyond. We can

also find a distant echo of the theme of the Voyage of the Soul in another detail from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. When Demeter fails in her attempt to create a divine son, she makes vegetation disappear. It is possible that in the Voyage of the Soul the responsibility for the disappearance of growth lies not with the Desired One, but with the operations of the Sun Goddess of the Earth to make her son immortal. There is, however, nothing in the text to indicate this.

As far as the soul is concerned, in both texts it manifests its divine origin as something separate from the mortal body, and in both texts mention is made of its purity (ritual, it must be understood), which seems to be a necessary prerequisite for a satisfactory destiny in the Beyond. On the one hand there are two themes in Orphic ideology, associated with each other, which are not to be found in the Hittite myth: the idea of a prior guilt, a reason why the human soul pays the penalty, and the necessity of being reincarnated until liberation is achieved. In addition, the foundational myth in the Hittite text seems to explain the relation between death and the cessation of growth. According to this myth the first man, the Desired One, son of a goddess, stops growth when his mother tries to turn him into an immortal; the myth offers the ritual solution for leading his soul to the Beyond and returning growth to its place. The same ritual procedure must be followed by any dead person, and there is a close relation between the soul's destiny and fertility. On the other hand, as we said, there is no connection with initiation. In the Orphic texts, the alteration produced *in illo tempore* is the death of a god, from whom men are born. The purpose of the ritual is to give instruction on the reasons for man's position in the world, and to accelerate the process of reintegration of his soul to its divine state.

Finally, there is a series of similar literary and discursive elements in both texts: in the first place, the reference to the path of the Voyage of the Soul recalls, as Watkins points out,[28] the sacred way from the tablet of Hipponion,[29] and the path of Zeus in Pindar.[30] Secondly, an allusion is made in both texts to swiftness,[31] as if the rite had to be carried

[28] Watkins (1995) 288.

[29] **L 1**, 15 f.: "So that, once you have drunk, you too will go along the sacred way / by which the other *mystai* and bacchoi advance, glorious".

[30] Pind. *Ol.* 2, 70. Cf. the μυστικὸν οἶμον of Posidipp. *fr.* 118, 24–25 Austin-Bastianini (= *fr.* 37, 21–22 Fernández Galiano).

[31] Twice in the *Voyage of the Soul*, and *passim* in the tablets; cf. for instance **L 7**: "on this day", and "swift", **L 1**, 11; **L 3**, 8, in which the soul asks that it be given to drink "in a hurry"; cf. Ricciardelli (1992) 28.

out urgently, which is consistent with a ritual for the dead. Third, the ritual schema of questions and answers to the soul in the Hittite myth is similar to that found in the Orphic tablets, where the soul declares its divine origin and does not refer to its "terrestrial" identity.

Nevertheless, the nature and function of the questions are not the same. In the Orphic tablets, the soul plays a more obviously leading role: it must utter a password to demonstrate that it has been initiated, and only thus can it continue its way towards the meadow, whereas in the Voyage of the Soul it is not subject to any examination. Neither are there any indications in the tablets that the soul fears for its destiny. The dead man is certain that since he knows the answers, he will achieve a happy outcome. In the Voyage of the Soul, by contrast, the soul expresses its fear of falling into the *tenawas*.

In addition, the text in the Voyage of the Soul always seems to be spoken by the god who hosts the underworld banquet, and no instructions are given to the deceased, whereas in the Orphic tablets the hosts would be Persephone and Hades, but the person who instructs the initiate's soul is not them, but a narrator who appears to be Orpheus. The latter knows what happens in the Beyond, but has no control over it.

Other points of similarity include verbal reiteration (although this is a generic ritualistic feature), and the use of the verb "to fall" to refer to the soul's arrival in its new state of blessedness.[32] Finally, there is yet another interesting connection, not with the tablets, but with other Orphic texts: the reference to mud by means of an onomatopoeic term, which in the Hittite text is *mirmirrus* and in the Greek ones,[33] βόρβορος.

In sum the Hittite text of the Voyage of the Soul shows noteworthy affinities with the Orphic tablets and other documents of the religious circle that took Orpheus as its guide. There are also significant differences between the two, especially with regard to the ritual context. The reason for the similarities could be that Orphism recuperates features of very ancient Mediterranean religion, which had remained somewhat hidden in Greek literature by the imposition of Olympian religion. The differences must reflect the cultural and ideological differences between Hittites and Greeks, and, above all, the fact that Orphic texts derive

[32] Watkins (1995) 289.

[33] For instance, in Plat. *Phd.* 69c, Plot. 1, 6, 6 and Aristoph. *Ran.* 145. Other passages are given in Watkins (1995) 289 f.

from a mystery religion, for initiates, unrelated to official religion (but not contrary to it), whereas the Voyage of the Soul, a text that was preserved in palace archives, was probably better integrated within the official religion.

11.4. *Indian Parallels*

We find some parallels between the tablets and religious texts from India.[34] The theme of the Path to the heavens is already central to Vedic eschatology, and the funerary ritual is intended to set the soul in the right direction by helping it to get by the Path guardians: the two dogs of Yama, who accept whoever deserves a blessed destiny, rejecting anyone else.[35] However, it is in later Vedic speculation that the problem of the destiny of the souls acquires fundamental importance. The criterion for the selection of souls changes then, since knowledge of the Vedic texts is an exclusive prerogative of the priestly class. The final development of this doctrine is to be found in the versions of the *Upanishads*, where the theory of reincarnation is formulated, and two paths are mentioned:[36] the Gods', the *devayāna* or ascending path, which traverses the luminous halves of the solar, lunar, and daily cycles, leading to liberation; and the Fathers', *pitṛyāna*, the descending path, which traverses the opposite halves of the aforementioned cycles, in which the light diminishes until it disappears, and leading back to a new birth.

The text in which we find most similarities with our tablets is the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (JB),[37] the most extensive of the *Brāhmaṇas*, ascribed to the *Sāma Veda*, which we still have. We can find in it a description of the soul's path to the Beyond,[38] from which we offer a few passages:

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[34] Studied by Mendoza (forthcoming), where many more details of the highest importance may be found. The present section is a summary of this study.

[35] On the exhortation to walk the right path, cf. RV X 15, 7 (1); on the two dogs of Yama, RV X 14, 11.

[36] Cf. *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 6.2.15 and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 5.10, with the commentary of González Reimann (1988) 43–47.

[37] There is only one edition of the complete text of the JB: Raghu Vira (1954); cf. translation by Bodewitz (1973).

[38] JB 1, 45–46 *init.* and JB 1, 49 *fin*-50.

(45)…And when he goes to the other world

(46) his fire[39] is Agni Vaiśvānara,…In this same Agni Vaiśvānara every day the gods make an offering of man. Once this offering has been made, man goes, coming into existence, the Yonder world. That is the world in which he is born once again.

…One of the Ṛtus,[40] holding a hammer in his hand, comes down towards him[41] on a ray of light, asks him "Who are you, man?". He, having partial knowledge, may hide it. Then he (the Ṛtu) strikes him. Once he is stopped, his good works disappear in three parts. The (Ṛtu) takes one third. One third is dispersed in the air. He, together with a third, descends toward this world. The world that is won by him due to his offerings is where he stops. Eventually, Death gets holds of him as well. Dying repeatedly is not overcome by he knows thus.[42]

(*After this passage instructions are given for the correct performance of the funeral ritual, in which details are provided to hold a correct incineration*).

(49)…From him, enveloped in flames, the smoke shakes off the body.… From the smoke he goes to the night, from the night to the day, from the day to the fortnight of the waning moon, from the fortnight of the waning moon to the fortnight of the waxing moon, from the fortnight of the waxing moon to the month. There, in the month, body and vital spirit are reunited. One of the Ṛtus, holding a hammer in his hand, comes down towards him on a ray of light, and asks him "Who are you, man?"

(50) To him he must answer

"Oh Ṛtus, from the Shining one, wrung out every fortnight, he who is intimately related to the Fathers, semen is born".

(For there[43]…they make an offering to the shining king Soma)[44]

"Thus, you hurl me as a man, your agent"

(For they send it here[45] as an agent)

"from this man, your agent, your spill me onto a mother"

(Since he (the father) introduces it into a mother)

"Consequently, I am produced, being added by the thirteenth as the additional month to the twelve".

(It is the thirteenth one that burns here)

"Thus I know this, I am sure of it. Therefore take me, Ṛtus, to immortality, through the twelfth or thirteenth father, through this mother, through this faith, through this nourishment, through this truth. The day

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[39] I.e. the funeral pyre.

[40] A personification of the seasons of the year.

[41] I. e., the spirit of the man who is being incinerated.

[42] The term *evaṁvit* "thus-knower" indicates the person whose knowledge reaches a certain limit, this limit being rated as sufficient or insufficient within context.

[43] The translation follows the interpretation of Bodewitz (1973) 116.

[44] The words in parentheses are not part of the soul's response, but are doctrinal justifications of the formulaic response.

[45] "Here", *etat* (i.e. on earth), opposed to the prior *adaḥ*.

> is my father, the night is my mother. I am the truth. Lead me, Ṛtus, to immortality".
>
> The Ṛtus take it with them.... They welcome him. It is not a human being who knows thus, it is one of the gods he who knows to that extent.

We find analogies and differences between this text and the tablets. In the JB, the spirit with the smoke takes an ascending path, climbing the units of temporal succession. It is, thus, a heavenly eschatology. In the Orphic eschatology, the soul's path towards the privileged seat is directed downward, towards Hades. In the first section of the path, we find a difference: in the Indian tradition, not all souls are capable of following the ascending path, only those of certain deceased, who have been granted a correct ritual of incineration. In the tablets, the path is common in the first section for all the souls, without previous conditions. In contrast, the Orphic itinerary has an initial bifurcation (the first spring), which the Brahmanic itinerary does not have.

In the JB, when the soul reaches the month, governed by the moon, it meets the body once again and restructures its personal identity, an encounter that is neither possible nor necessary in Orphism, where the principle of identity resides in the spirit (ψυχή) and the body lacks any value.

The closest coincidences occur in the process of selection of the fortunate souls. In both cases, the soul in its advance encounters a point at which it must stop, since it is halted by entities that play the role of guardians of the path and of "judges", who admit or reject those who reach them. In the JB, towards the month, and along a ray of light, a character belonging to the world of the gods, but not a god himself (a Ṛtus) descends, fulfilling the function of guardian of the entrance to the world of the gods. In both cases, the soul is asked a question (in the Indian text, "who are you, man?", in the tablets: "who are you and where do you come from?"), upon whose answer depends its acceptance or rejection. In both texts, we finds descriptions only of the sole further path of the chosen souls, but in the JB the same section must have been common for the rejected ones as well. The destiny of these souls is a return, in the descending direction, and, finally "dying again". The Orphic tablets are not concerned with the fate of the rejected ones, probably because of the very nature and purpose of the text, instructions given to the soul for achieving access.

The correct answer to the question in both texts requires a self-definition on the part of the deceased which has nothing to do with his

personal identity, but rather with the possession of specific knowledge that "transforms him into a god". The answer, which in both cases is formulaic, reveals that the deceased has acquired knowledge of the origin of human life on earth, derived from a metaphysical and mystical vision of life in the Cosmos. In the JB, it explains the human condition in its origins, according to the doctrine of the five fires; in the Orphic text, allusion is made to the Titanic origin of the human being. The theme is the same, but the religious environment is different.

The path for those who are accepted does not end at the point of selection. Accepted by the guardians, the Greek *mystes* and the Indian sage continue along a new section of the path which takes them to their definitive destiny. In the Indian text, the soul no longer walks in solitude, but takes along a guide, who accompanies it as a friend and an equal in the right direction. Finally, the soul is accepted by the gods and acquires a new nature: it is no longer a man, but becomes similar to the gods,[46] which enables him to live among them. Except for the enormous differences of various kinds, there is in both texts an atmosphere of connection and brotherhood, deriving from the feeling of belonging to a cast of chosen ones.

Many of the elements present in both stories belong to the inherited tradition, or appear in other eschatologies of Indo-European or Mesopotamian cultures: the idea of a Beyond with a guarded region reserved for a few privileged deceased, the figure of a "guide of the souls" who sets them on the right path towards their final destiny, the selection of the souls at an intermediary stage, and even the questioning of identity as a means for selection, are found in the two stories we have studied and in Iranian eschatological conceptions,[47] but in this case there is a coincidence of motifs rather than a parallelism in the narratives.

On the other hand, the idea that the final destiny of souls leads to a region of peace, in the company of a few gods and with those who deserve it likewise, does not have the same antiquity in the Greek world as it does in Indian thought. This idea is relatively recent in Greece, and it does not belong to the most ancient conception of the Greek

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[46] "You have been born a god, from the mortal you were", **L 8**, 4; "happy and fortunate, you will be a god from the mortal you were" **L 9**, 8; "it is not a human being that knows in this way, it is one of the gods who knows as far as this point", at the end of the text from the JB.

[47] Cf. *infra*. § 11.5.

Hades, but it is found in the most ancient Vedic tradition of the reign of Yama.

The similarities that become apparent after the comparison of the two itineraries cannot be explained by a mere coincidence of motifs, but are assembled into a common story line, with such a parallel structure, whose similarities are so close in the process of the selection of souls, that it exceeds what could be ascribed to casual coincidences, and allow us to think about the possibility of an influence of one tradition over the other.

11.5. *Parallels in the Iranian world*

Similarly, interesting parallels to the tablets have been found in Iranian texts.[48] Despite the absence of any narrative of the fate of the souls after death in the *Gāthās*, some elements, which were to be developed in later literature, are already present, such as the place of the souls' passage, the Cinvat Bridge, along which only the initiates will pass, whereas the evil will be confronted by the *daēnā*, who will not let them pass. In later texts, the details of the souls' path to Paradise or to Hell and the geography of the Beyond are amplified. Thus, in *Hadōxt Nask* 2, 7–8, aspects of the passage of the just man's soul are collected.

> When the sun comes up after the third night, the just man's soul has the impression of sticking up its head and traveling through perfumed vegetation; it seems to feel a wind blowing towards it from the regions of the south, laden with perfumes, more perfumed than other winds.

The fragrance allows us to suppose that the just man's soul walks through a garden, although it is only perceived by the sense of smell. Then in 2.9–14, we encounter the question "who are you?", but this time it is formulated by the soul.

> His own *daēnā* appears to him in the form of a beautiful damsel, radiant, white-armed, robust, attractive, upright, with firm breasts and well-proportioned body, of noble birth and glorious lineage, seeming to be fifteen years old, more beautiful than the most beautiful of creatures. The soul of the just man then says to her: "Young woman, the most beautiful I have ever seen, who are you?". The *daēnā* answers him: "Young man of good

[48] Cf. Álvarez Pedrosa (forthcoming).

> thought, good word, good deed, and good *daēnā*, I am your own *daēnā*". "And who has loved you for the grandeur, the goodness, the beauty, the perfume, the strength of victory and the defeat of hate with which you appear before me?" "Young man of good thought, good word, good deed, and good *daēnā*, it is you who love me for the grandeur, the goodness, the beauty, the perfume, the strength of victory and the defeat of hate with which I appear before you. Every time you saw someone burning (a cadaver?),[49] practicing idolatry, causing oppression, or cutting down trees, then you sat down reciting the *Gāthās* and sacrificing to the good waters and the fire of Ahura Mazdā and taking in the pious man who comes from near or from far. In this way, I who am pleasant, you have made me more pleasant; I, who am lovely, you have made me more lovely; I, who sit at the front, you have placed me still closer to the front".

The explanation of the reason why the soul has been chosen from among the blessed, which refers to the adequate ritual accomplishment it has followed during life, evokes such phrases from the tablets as "I come from among the pure, pure" (**L 9–10**), or "once you have accomplished the same rites as the other happy ones" (**L 7a**).

In other texts, the *daēnā* appears in successive personifications, as a cow, a maiden, or a garden, which differ according to whether the person contemplating them is a just man or a reprobate. A couple of very interesting parallels with the Iranian *daēnā* are found in the Orphic environment, aside from the tablets: one in the *Derveni Papyrus*, where mention is made of guardian demons and demons who impede the soul's passage (ἐμποδών);[50] both would be the Orphic parallels to the Iranian *daēnā* in its double manifestation as a beautiful damsel or a hideous witch, according to the condition of the dead man's soul. Another is the Ἔμπουσα who appears in Aristophanes (*Ran.* 293), and who transforms herself into a cow, a mule and a beautiful woman, similarly to the Zoroastrian *daēnā*, who transforms herself into a cow, a woman or a garden, which are beautiful or horrid according to the condition of the dead man's soul.[51] A fourth transformation, into a dog, relates the dogs that accompany the *daēnā* in the *Vidēvdāt* 19, 30.

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[49] On Zoroastrianism, the cremation of bodies is a contamination of fire, one of the sacred natural elements.

[50] *P. Derveni* col. VI 2, cf. Betegh (2004) 86–89.

[51] *Iranian Bundahišn* 30.

In addition, in such Pehlevi texts as the *Dādestān ī dēnīg*, we find allusions to an expiation of bad actions the just man may have committed, which will be experienced in the form of terrors after death. This is powerfully reminiscent of the affirmation made by the soul in **L 10a–b**: "I have paid the punishment that corresponds to impious actions", as well as the repeated allusions to the "terrors of Hades" in Orphic literature aside from the tablets.[52]

Yet there are also noteworthy differences between the religious conceptions of both texts. The major one is the complete absence of references to reincarnation in the Iranian tradition. Nor is the geography of the Beyond comparable in all its details. The Zoroastrianism of the Sassanid period affirms the existence of three places: a paradise, a hell and an intermediary place (*Hamistakān*), where those who have accumulated merits and sins in equal measure will end up. In addition, the soul's path towards its interrogation is described in the tablets as a descent, whereas in the Iranian texts it is an ascent to a heavenly eschatology. Furthermore, the formulaic question "Who are you?", asked by the guardians in the Greek tradition, is reversed, and in the Avestan tradition it is formulated by the soul of the deceased.

Among the parallels cited, some may go back to a common origin, as may be the case of the motif of the garden with trees and water, or the question "who are you?" (although it has undergone a reversal of actors in the Iranian texts), as well as, perhaps, the post-mortem maiden and the special food reserved for the blessed, which are also present in other Indo-European traditions. Others may have passed from a peripheral Western Iranian tradition to the Greek world, like the idea that the blessed experience rewards of a sensual nature in the Beyond, such as wonderful music or fragrant odors, the terrors experienced by the soul after its death, understood as a partial expiation, the two paths that bifurcate according to whether the souls are those of the condemned or the blessed. Above all, the double existence in the Beyond of demons and Eumenides, as described in the *Derveni Papyrus*, or alluded to by the Aristophanic Ἔμπουσα,[53] are very obvious proofs of an Iranian influence on the Orphic texts.

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[52] Cf. Bernabé (2002d).

[53] With transformations adjusted to the Avestic literary model, preserved in such texts as the *Tištrya Yašt*.

The importance of ritual fulfillment in giving the correct answer that enables the separation of the just man from the condemned, may perhaps be of Iranian origin, since it is already in the spirit of the *Gāthās*, but they may also have a common origin, given the ritualistic character of the Indo-Iranian religion. Nevertheless, ritual purity in the Orphic texts has a specific eschatological meaning.[54]

11.6. *"Tablets" in the Italian environment*

We find some documents in the Italian ambience whose characteristics are comparable to the Orphic gold tablets. This is the case of a Lucanian inscription of the 3rd–2nd cent. B.C. (Ve 185),[55] which can be translated into Latin as follows:

> (Proper name) *fio deus hic, salvus (sis) vale*,
> I, X, am here converted into a god. May you be safe: farewell.

We also preserve an inscription from Saepinum, of an uncertain date between the 3rd and the 1st cent. B.C., which may be translated into Latin as:

> *quis tu? ego X. cuia? Baeti Adii Aefini*
> Who are you? I am X. Of whom? Of X.

Both can be compared in some aspects to the Orphic tablets: firstly, the conversion of the mentioned individual into a god, as well as the salutation given to him by another character, equivalent to the Greek χαῖρε. Secondly, the dialogue in which the question of identity is raised. Documents such as these could reveal a certain penetration of the Greek religious world among South Italian peoples.[56] One should also recall in this respect, the image represented on the Ripacandida jar,[57] of North Lucanian culture, which seems to have been influenced by the Metapontine Orphico-Pythagorean world.

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[54] See Parker (1983) 300.

[55] [A?]λαπονις Πακϝηις Οπιες πιο αις εκο σαλαϝς ϝαλε.

[56] Cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 58 (= [2001] 110 f., [2003] 112, Poccetti (1994) 125 ff., (2000).

[57] Cf. § 1, 6.

11.7. *A tablet in Gallia*

In Baudecet (Gembloux, Belgium) a gold tablet came to light, which was initially interpreted as Gallic, without great success, and which seems to contain various formulas.[58] At line 3, one may perhaps read in Greek:

> a kid,[59] I submerge myself in milk.

At line 4, Lambert reads:

> pure (?) of the immortal,

a reading we consider doubtful. In contrast, Jordan thinks he can read the word "bull" in the second word, left undeciphered by Lambert. Finally, at line 5, Lambert understands (in Latin)

> I will go to the fountain of Memory

whereas Jordan prefers to understand the first word as "sheep".

The readings are doubtful, and the environment of the tablet is not, in any case, Orphic, so it would be attractive to think that a kind of itinerant mage turned up in Belgium in the 2nd cent. A.D., bearing a gold tablet that imitated the old Orphic tablets, now used as an amulet—as we suppose it happened with the one from Rome, **L 11**, somewhat later than this one—in which echoes of old formulas were contained, some translated into Latin, among a jumble of abracadabras that were incomprehensible for its "customers".

11.8. *The 'Punic' tablets*

In places of Phoenician influence such as Sardinia, Sicily, the North of Africa, the Balearics and the South of Spain, gold and silver tablets and papyri documents have been found, dated about 7th–5th B.C., that can be considered in some way parallel to Orphic gold tablets.[60] Some of these documents contain inscriptions in the Phoenician alphabet

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[58] Cf. Plumier-Torfs *et al.* (1993), Lambert (2002) n. L 109, 3–5. Jordan has communicated some suggestions to us *per litt.*

[59] Reading, with Lambert, RVFI. Jordan prefers RVTI.

[60] Studied by Martín Hernández (forthcoming), where many more details of great interest may be found.

and representations that show a possible eschatological function. For exam-ple, in some Phoenician gold tablets, similar scenes to that of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* are represented. It is not odd to consider these texts instructions for helping the deceased in his underworld journey and for asking protection to the gods.

11.9. *Echoes in modern times*

Finally, we shall limit ourselves to a mere allusion to parallels to the tablets, of very recent date, in which there is a voyage of the soul to a *locus amoenus* and questions and answers, but now in a Christian setting. There are examples from Mordovia,[61] at the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers, and Romania.[62] It seems that the ancient model refuses to disappear, and transforms itself by adopting new forms to respond to a different religion.

[61] Jordan (2001).
[62] Marian (2000) 79 and 304 ff., Poruciuc (2002).

CHAPTER TWELVE

LITERARY QUESTIONS: CHARACTERISTICS, MODELS AND ARCHETYPES

12.1. *Problems of a literary nature*

Another important series of questions is raised by the Orphic tablets, which do not concern as much their contents as issues of a philological and literary nature. The term "Orphic" is not only applied to a type of religion, but also to a concrete form of literature: an ample quantity of pseudo-epigraphic poetry attributed to Orpheus. If the tablets are representative of forms of Orphic literature, the basic questions are: What are they, from a literary viewpoint, and whence do these texts derive? Regarding these last questions, we might also ask ourselves whether the coincidences between certain tablets (as is primarily the case for those from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia and Pharsalus) are to be attributed to the fact that they derive from a common archetype, and if so, what kind of archetype was it, and what kind of transmission do they conceal.

Regarding the first question, as long as only a few tablets had appeared, the first interpretation provided was that they were extracts from an Orphic book of poems, either verses from a *Descent to Hades* (εἰς Ἅιδου κατάβασις) attributed to Orpheus,[1] or else passages from various works from the Orphic canon, "taken from here and there, without any other intention than to choose verses that refer specifically to future life".[2]

Clearly, there are pieces of information to support this interpretation. To cite just a few, **L 8** begins with the adversative ἀλλά, the first verse of **L 3** includes an adversative δέ, as does **L 5d**. In **L 9**, 2 Εὐκλῆς Εὐβουλεύς τε appear, invoked by means of the *nominativus pro vocativo*. If the contention is that these texts derive from another longer one, both the coordinating particles (which would link the phrase to

[1] Dieterich (1913²) 128, cf. Guthrie (1935) 172 f., who thinks they are extracts from a poem or book of poems, datable at least to the 5th cent. B.C.

[2] Comparetti (1882) 117.

the preceding one in the original work) and the *nominativus pro vocativo*, resulting from a poor adaptation of a context in which this sequence of gods was stated in the nominative, could be explained.

This explanation, however, was criticized from an early stage. Many oracles begin with ἀλλά and are complete,[3] while the *nominativus pro vocativo* is a habitual phenomenon. The weakest point of this interpretation is that if they were "a series of extracts", they would be unrelated texts, and this is not the case. In essence, this is not the correct hypothesis.

Edmonds has argued that a comparison of the gold tablets with other traditional verse oracles quoted in sources such as Herodotus and Pausanias reveals that all the features of the tablets that *might* make the tablet texts resemble a didactic poem are also features of traditional verse oracles.[4] According this scholar, the tablets could well be from a famous oracle response in answer to a question about the nature of the afterlife.

By contrast, others think that the tablets collect brief, complete poems. In the case of similar ones, like those of the first group we have studied, explanations provided concerning the kind of relation between them are either vague,[5] or else specifically considering it as a normal case of transmission from an archetype to its copies, an archetype that has even been the subject of attempted reconstructions, in whole or in part.[6] Thus, West sets off from the idea that the archetype is a brief Ionic poem, datable to the 5th cent. B.C.,[7] which has undergone changes and additions to its content, including the intrusion of Doric or semi-Doric forms. For his part, Janko[8] starts out on the basis that we are dealing with memorized and oral, not written texts. The author, who has broad experience in sub-epic stages and in formulaic adaptation,

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[3] As was pointed out by Zuntz (1971) 330.

[4] Edmonds (forthcoming).

[5] Lloyd-Jones (1975) limits himself to observing that they "appear in various forms and with various errors". Gallavotti (1978–1979) 337 thinks that they are the λόγιον of a sect, a popular text, transmitted in various redactions contaminated by each other, specifying that each one must be understood within itself, although related ones help to explain each other. Marcovich (1976) seems to be satisfied with stating that he does not think it possible to reconstruct an archetype of the versions.

[6] Merkelbach (1975) speaks of an *eigentlicher Text* of which he reconstructs a few verses. West (1975) and Janko (1984) attempt a reconstruction of the entire archetype.

[7] West (1975).

[8] Janko (1984).

tries to apply such methodology to the reconstruction of an archetype of the tablets.[9]

However, regardless of method employed, there is, nevertheless, an ample degree of arbitrariness,[10] which ends up giving the impression that an archetype is being reconstructed, once the kind of archetype one wishes to reconstruct has already been decided, thus making cuts, additions, or transformations in accordance with certain presuppositions. In the case of alternative forms, some are chosen, without any firm criteria upon which such selection should be based. Therefore, when one copy presents Ionian forms and another Dorian ones, what authorizes us to determine the dialect of the alleged archetype?[11] We might even point out that there is a basic prejudice according to which the archetype had to be a text that was of high poetic quality, which the scribes limited themselves to spoiling, forcing the choice of the variant in each case according to what seems to be more beautiful aesthetically, better constructed, or which "sounds better".

The position of Pugliese Carratelli seems to be more cautious.[12] He considers that it is obvious these texts derive with more or fewer alterations from a ἱερὸς λόγος, but he argues that the relations between the canonical model and the texts incised on the sepulchral tablets cannot be assimilated to the archetypes of a literary text and manuscripts. Alterations, which are well known, can occur in every manuscript tradition. Yet, regarding this type of esoteric text we may also have to take into consideration the lack of will to find meaning in expressions that are transcribed incorrectly, in a pious and mechanical way. Pugliese Carratelli concludes that there was a ἱερὸς λόγος (read? oral?), from which they preserve essential elements, and the copies recovered the

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[9] More recently, Cassio (1994) tries to reconstruct the language of the archetype.

[10] Cf. Bernabé (1992), (2000b).

[11] Why should one refer ἑστηκυῖαν etc. to the archetype—that is, an Ionic form rather than ἑστακῦαν, as in **L 1**? Why should one prefer the formulation of Pharsalus οἱ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ὅ τι χρέος εἰσαφικάνεις to the one from Hipponion (which, we should not forget, is more ancient) οἱ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐνὶ φρασὶ πευκαλίμαισι, etc.? No doubt because the ancient reading οὐλοέεντος of the following verse from Hipponion did not give a sufficiently clear sense. It is of no use when Janko, faced by this same situation, chooses to give both variants, as a "doublet", marked with an antisigma. αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον is referred to the archetype because it is also in the tablet from Malibu. Is this a good enough reason? Why is αἶψα better than ὦκα? Why does West, with a stroke of the pen, eliminate from his archetype the two final verses of the tablet from Hipponion? Many other questions of the same order could be raised.

[12] Pugliese Carratelli (1975) 227, Calame (2006) 234 f.

formulas as well as they could. According to him, these considerations invite us not to intervene too drastically in the texts, which are certainly related but not twin, and which reflect particular aspects of diverse milieus and moments.

12.2. *Functional texts*

Having reached this point, we must associate the literary problem with two important questions in order to try to solve it: the characteristics of their physical support, and the fact that we are dealing with functional texts.

Our texts' physical support consists of very small gold tablets. They have to be small, both because the price of gold dissuades people from using a very long text, and because the dead man or woman had to transport them into the other world. The size of the tablets does not allow for long, complete literary written texts, as might be the case for a poem, in which a more or less closed structure is created, where anything considered necessary is to be said.

Regarding their character as functional texts, the tablets are clearly intended to achieve an immediate end (some to help the dead man to remember fundamental details when he enters into the other world, others to accompany the dead man in his passage with words of good omen, perhaps with magical pretensions, and others, to put words into his mouth that are acceptable to the infernal deities). The text must therefore be reduced to the indispensable minima. Let us adduce an example that is vulgar and distant, but, we hope, valid. Just as no one writes down meticulously what he has to bring home from the supermarket, nor does he note down a telephone message with the totality of what has been said, so the deceased cannot take with him to Hades a flowery description of what awaits him. He takes along with him, noted down, the indispensable elements, for instance, in the case of the tablets from the first group, which fountain must be avoided, where he must go and what he must say. The rest—including the excellent destiny, eternal and happy, that awaits him—will be given to him in addition, and the initiate probably has some idea of all this. During his life, he has probably heard one or several Orphic poems in which what was awaiting him was described in detail, but he does not need to take this detailed written description with him to Hades. One takes along a kind of *aide-mémoire*, in which not everything is explicit, but whose complete oversight represents an irreparable error.

The consequence of this demand for brevity and its utilitarian character is that basic postulates of Orphic beliefs are included in these texts, selected due to their importance, probably ritual or informative, which created a closed ensemble in each document. In some cases (that of the Cretan tablets), a highly established, highly reiterated text has been set, leaving very little margin for improvisation. However, this is not the most general case. In the longer tablets of the first group, we see much greater room for maneuver.

The fixed and indispensable data to guide the soul through the Beyond coincide (the cypress tree, the fountains, the passwords, what must be said to the guardians), and refer to one and the same type of literature. However, each text has used the minimum of data necessary to configure a different unit, which is also conditioned by the size of the gold tablet available. Each poet strings together these well-known, formulaic utterances that derive from tradition, mixed with varied mortar of other verses from the Orphic corpus, Homeric formulas, etc., according to the greater or lesser competence of their author. This diverse origin also gives a satisfactory explanation of the dialectal mixtures we constantly find in our documents.

If this opinion is correct—and we believe it is at least likely—trying to make a *compositum* from several of them is an almost impossible undertaking. The tablets may not have a unique archetype. They derive from a variety of models, and each one configures an independent reality.

Nevertheless, we can go somewhat deeper into the study of this set of problems. Thus, it is appropriate to ask ourselves now from what literature the coincident elements might derive (§ 12.3), the relation of the tablets to ritual (§ 12.4), the possible uses of the tablets (§ 12.5), and the relation between use and thematic motifs (§ 12.6).

12.3. *The possible model of the tablets*

The model that was to provide the materials for the composition of the tablets could well have been a *Descent of Orpheus to the lower world*, of which we have several reports,[13] including fragments of a late version with great similarities to book VI of the *Aeneid*, the *Bologna Papyrus*.[14] We do not know whether this was a single poem, or a tradition as unstable

[13] Cf. *OF* 707–711. On this question, cf. Riedweg (1998).
[14] Cf. *OF* 717, with bibliography.

as that of the *Theogonies*. Since we lack fragments transmitted by another means of this or these works, we can only reconstruct hypothetically what may have been the order of the events narrated.

It would probably start with a reference to the beginning of the journey, at the moment when the initiate's death and his soul's voyage to Hades occur. It is at this moment that Mnemosyne, the goddess of Memory, plays an important role: she must help the initiate to remember what he must and must not do and say.

The tablets from Hipponion, Petelia, Pharsalus and those from Eleutherna relate to the first stage. Reference would be made to how the remaining dead drink from the fountain of Lethe and forget, whereas the initiate must resist the bait of the fountain situated beside the shining cypress tree and come, on the contrary, to the fountain of Mnemosyne, and how he will find himself there before guardians to whom he must pronounce the password: "I am a son of Earth and of starry Heaven".

This enables the initiate's soul to continue along the sacred path along which his fellow companions in initiation travel, a path that would bring them before Persephone and other infernal gods (in a scene that would not, in our opinion, be very different from the characteristic setting we find on the Apulian vases).[15] The dialogue between the soul and the goddess, recorded in the tablets from Thurii, would then be narrated. The soul declares its purity, and the fact that it belongs to a group of the pure ones, and manifests a series of mystical passwords that allude to the set of Orphic beliefs concerning the Beyond. After this exchange, the soul would accede to the meadow of the blessed, and would achieve its final happy state.

An account was probably given in this katabasis of the alternative possibility, that is, the destiny met by those who have not been initiated, who forget the password before the guardians or who are not accepted by Persephone. All the known poems narrating descents to the underworld of this type (from the *Bologna Papyrus* by way of Book VI of the *Aeneid*, to Dante's *Divine Comedy*) present both the fate of those who do achieve a better destiny and that of those who fail to achieve it. In the tablets, we lack information with regard to those who fail to achieve a better situation in the other world. And it is logical that things should be this way, for only the information that is immediately useful for the initiate has been selected, that which refers to what he must do and

[15] Cf. § 10.7.3.

say, therefore references to what he must not do or say are taken for granted. It might also be considered a bad omen to recall such a possibility of failure at the moment of death.

However, Platonic references to a *Sacred Tale* in which it is said that the non-initiates will lie in the mud or will be condemned to carry water in a sieve, the omnipresent references in other sources to those who have "fallen into the mud"[16] make feasible the supposition that in the poem or poems that served as a basis for tablets' references, there could have also been a mention of the punishment received by the non-initiated in similar terms.

Riedweg has made an interesting attempt to reconstruct, on the basis of the tablets, a ἱερὸς λόγος concerning the fate of the soul in the Beyond, which would have been transmitted to the faithful during the ritual.[17] Based of the text of the tablets, this scholar distinguishes six different scenes or moments in the story line: death and katabasis of the soul, description of the topography in the palace of Hades, meeting with Persephone and the other gods, exchange of passwords, situation of the blessed, and final exhortation of the initiate. To defend the ritual use of this ἱερὸς λόγος, Riedweg presents reasons of a formal nature such as the combination of verse and prose offered by the text of the tablets.[18] He and other researchers have applied modern methods of analysis to the narrative and dialogic models of the tablets, in an attempt to determine the structure of the story line (following structuralist methods such as those of Greimas and Propp), examining the actantial components and distinguishing the informative and descriptive acts from the performative ones, which tend towards the realization of what is said.[19]

12.4. *The tablets' relation to ritual*

The tablets' relation to the ritual world seems clear. It can even be said that they provide a perfect illustration of the relation between ritual

[16] Aristoph. *Ran.* 145; 273, Plat. *Phd.* 69, *Resp.* 533d, Plotin. 1, 6, 6, Plut. *fr.* 178 Sandbach, Ael. Arist. 22, 10, cf. Graf (1974) 103 ff., Kingsley (1995) 118 f., Casadesús (1995) 356 ff., Watkins (1995) 289 f., West (1997) 162 and n. 257.

[17] Riedweg (2002).

[18] Riedweg (2002) 463 ff.

[19] Cf. Segal (1990), Riedweg (1996) 484 f., (1998) 380 ff., Calame (1996), (2006) 232 f.

and death.[20] Many passages allude to specific rites,[21] to the point that an "archaeological" image of the ritual represented in the tablets can even be reconstructed,[22] specifying what corresponds to the δρώμενα and the λεγόμενα. Among the δρώμενα, we find mentions of fasting and sacrifice,[23] no doubt bloodless, allusions to the ingestion of milk or wine,[24] and mentions of other cultic elements, such as fire, thunderbolts, crowns, and, of course, references to the ritual purity of the believer.[25] In addition, the numerous references in the tablets to the ritual λεγόμενα include invocations and supplications to divinities,[26] puns on words and passwords. According to Graf,[27] the verses of **L 7** were used in a ritual that staged the death and resurrection of the initiate, after the god's image and likeness, which would be followed by the *makarismos* with vital instructions and the promise of future blessedness.

The size of the tablets made it necessary to reduce the references to the δρώμενα and the λεγόμενα to an indispensable minimum, but it is most likely that the dead initiate had previously learned the clues to decipher this synthetic content in the ritual.[28] It has been suggested[29] that the dactylic verses and the passages in rhythmic prose were recited by a *telestes* or by the initiates themselves during the ritual. Moreover, some dialogues[30] suggest that the teaching of this type of experience took place as a dramatic representation, in which a narrator, who

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[20] As is shown by the enigmatic expression (**L 8**, 3) "Hail, after having had the experience you never had before".

[21] **L 1**, 15–16 denotes the fact that the believer belongs to a select group of initiates: "you too will go along the sacred way / along which the other initiates and bacchoi advance, glorious". **L 7**, 7 speaks of rituals that have been completed.

[22] Riedweg (1998), (2002a), Graf-Johnston (2007) 137 ff.

[23] **L 12**, 6: "Fasts for seven days. Zeus who sees all", 7 f.: "Beautiful sacrifices/ Sacrifices".

[24] **L 7**, 3 ff.: "as a bull, you leapt into the milk", "as a ram, you fell into the milk" (cf. **L 8**, 4; **L 9**, 10), expressions of beatitude that probably refer to a ritual in which the initiate drank milk. **L 7**, 6: "You have wine, that happy privilege".

[25] **L 9–10**, 1: "I come from among the pure, pure", which reveals the fact of belonging to a group of initiates, characterized by its solidarity and its maintenance of a similar ritual situation.

[26] Such as the First-Born One, Mother Earth, the Cybelean One, the daughter of Demeter (that is, Persephone), or Zeus, among others; cf. **L 12**.

[27] Graf (1991) 98 ff.; cf. Graf-Johnston (2007) 138 f., Obbink (forthcoming).

[28] The symbolism, and the difficulty implied in knowing how to choose the right formula and the appropriate moment to pronounce it, especially in the ultraterrestrial passage, do not seem to leave room for improvisation.

[29] Riedweg (1998) 371 and n. 49.

[30] For Calame (1996) 12, the words of the tablets pronounced by the faithful often have the value of cultic acts.

might have represented the mythic Orpheus, and the faithful would take part. In accordance with all these factors, it might be argued that the faithful came to the ritual with their own tablets, in order to use them as a reminder of what they were to do and say. Some facts might point in the direction of this hypothesis. First, the ivy-leaf form of the tablets from Pelinna, a plant that played a prominent role in Dionysiac cults.[31] Secondly, the tablet from Pharsalus was placed inside a rich bronze hydria, a recipient which is associated with the symposiac and the funerary world, and with which libations were offered to the dead in the ritual that would later be known as ἀνάψυξις or *refrigerium*,[32] so that the fact that the tablet was placed there may have been dictated by ritual reasons. Finally, we must not reject out of hand the possibility that some tablets may have been folded as a ritual act. Contrary to these indications, the numbers of tablets that have appeared is small, probably because of the high price of gold. It may perhaps be preferable to think that another type of "book"—that is, of support—was generally used in the ritual, more economical and easy to handle, made of a perishable material, such as, for instance, papyrus.

We know that ritual books were used in the Orphic cult.[33] The *Gurôb Papyrus* (*OF* 578) no doubt constitutes the clearest and most complete testimony to what one of them must have been like: it is written on a an easy-to-handle support, and contains essential guidelines on what was to be done and said at various acts of the ritual. In a certain sense, the tablets may be considered the equivalent of the books the initiates used in the ritual: they are brief because they contain only the minimum indications necessary for helping the dead believer remember everything fundamental for mastering the passage through Hades, and they are made of gold, because, unlike ritual texts on papyrus, which can be replaced, the tablets are intended to last forever. In a belief-system in which the τελετή is conceived as a preparation for confronting corporeal death, it is logical to suppose that in it the believer was instructed on such aspects as the underworld geography or the soul's destiny in the other world, and it is not far fatched to think that believers and priests may have used texts similar to the contents of the tablets for

[31] Cf. Jiménez San Cristóbal (forthcoming 3) § 3.4.2. If the tablets have the form of a heart, they would allude to the ritual of the death and resurrection of Dionysus.

[32] Cf. App. II n. 8.

[33] Jiménez San Cristóbal (2002b). On Orphic *Hieroi logoi*, see also Baumgarten (1998), Riedweg (2002), Henrichs (2003).

their rites, although they were certainly inscribed on physical supports that were more economical and, unfortunately, perishable.[34] In any case, the *Gurôb Papyrus* and the Orphic tablets are two examples of fully functional texts, used at two moments that are transcendental for the believer: the τελετή and the death.

12.5. *Various uses of the tablets*

The text of the tablets and the form in which they appear presents us with some orientating pathways regarding the functions attributed to them. It seems clear that the answers concerning the use of the tablets can be various, and not necessarily mutually exclusive. Almost always, one and the same tablet may include different functions, although some may be predominant in some copies, while others in others. The fact that the same functions are encountered in different copies in various combinations, without any contradiction, indicates that the differences between the texts of the tablets are rather the result of a selection on the part of the poet (or the client) than of differences in religious context. As principal uses, we could indicate: the soul's instruction concerning its transmundane journey, the identification of the *mystes* or proof of initiation, the anticipation of final destiny (which is at the same time an attempt to propitiate it), the salutation to the underworld gods, their use as ritual λεγόμενα and their magical use. We shall say a few words about each of them.

12.5.1. *Instructions for the Beyond*

The tablets from Hipponion, Entella, Petelia, and Pharsalus, and more briefly those from Crete and Thessaly (**L 1–L 6**) are like a vademecum,[35] instructing the deceased on his passage to the Yonder World from earth. A personage describes to him the geography he will encounter upon his arrival in the Beyond, and exhorts him to carry out or avoid specific acts, and to utter specific words in the presence of guardians who

[34] On an Apulian representation of a dead man before Orpheus with a papyrus in his hand, and on the papyrus from Callatis, cf. App. II nn. 1–2.

[35] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 124 and (1975) 228.

will come forth to meet him. These tablets are like an *aide-mémoire*, in case he should, at the last moment, forget the words he was supposed to pronounce, the last stage before achieving the promised destiny of blessedness. The dead woman from Hipponion even bore a lamp in order to be able to read the text in the darkness of the Underworld.

12.5.2. *Identification of the* mystes

In addition to the password, one tablet from Pherai could itself be a password identifying the initiate. Yet this identificatory function is exclusive to those tablets (**L 16 a–j, m–n**) in which a person is identified by his or her name and condition of μύστης 'initiate'. It is understood that the bearer of this type of tablet claimed to demonstrate his condition as an ἄποινος, 'free of punishment'. The fact that this group of tablets has this function only does not exclude the possibility that other tablets may have also had, secondarily, this identificatory function. In fact, **L 1–L 6** do not identify the *mystes*, but they do denote that the bearer is an initiate, since through his answers he gives evidence that he knows what he must do and that he has participated in the rites.

12.5.3. *Anticipations of final destiny*

Many tablets contain an allusion to the souls' final destiny (**L 1**, 15–16, **L 3**, 11, **L 7** and **8**, **L 9**, 9, **L 10**, 7, **L 11**, 4). Yet **L 1**, 15–16 limits itself to alluding vaguely to the end of the road, although its main aim is in recalling the obstacles that must be mastered along the road itself. In contrast, **L 7** and **8** are salutations to the deceased made by another person. They speak for the soul, and we could say that they are the viewpoint from the world of the living, who salute the dead man, congratulating him on the happiness that awaits him. In **L 9–10ab** from Thurii, passwords must be uttered referring to its pure condition before Persephone herself. In this case, the tablets are not of the same nature. Not a single one seems to give instructions. One would say that it is the tablet that speaks for itself. The function in these last tablets is not only informative, but also performative, insofar as it is claimed that the promise of blessedness has an effect, like that of a magical enchantment.

12.5.4. *Ritual uses*

In § 12.4, we saw that the tablets seem to have a close relation to ritual, and that we can consider some of them (especially those in the Thurian series, which accumulates "enigmatic" phrases of a clearly ritual nature), as part of a *hieros logos*, or its λεγόμενα. The relevance of the tablets in a funerary environment may be indicative of their importance in earthly ritual, particularly for a cult that conceived ritual as an anticipatory experience preparing the initiated to confront the death of the body. Consequently, we may ask ourselves whether the holders of these beliefs did use texts in which the ritual theme was predominant in their celebrations, as they did at the moment of dying.

12.5.5. *Use or reuse as amulets*

Some scholars have suggested a magic function of the tablets, as an amulet or a talisman.[36] For our part, we are inclined to think that such a use can only be demonstrated—at least as predominant—in the post-classical period. In sum, a written gold object that is taken to the grave (and which in some cases was worn during life) cannot completely fail to acquire, in and of itself, an effective value, contributing to the instructive or performative value of the text. Furthermore, we could say that the performative function of the tablets from Pelinna and Thurii is very close to their magical use. Neither the future 'you will be a god' (**L 9**, 9) nor the aorist 'you became a god' (**L 8**, 4) or 'you have just been born' (to a new life, **L 7**, 1), nor the perfect 'you have been transformed into a goddess' (**L 11**, 4) express a desire, but the observation of a reality, whether imminent or already realized. There is only a step from expressing desires for the deceased's happiness to the idea that it is the declaration itself that produces its effect automatically. It is clear, finally, that the tablet from Petelia must have been reused as an amulet in the Roman period.[37]

As far as the Roman tablet is concerned (**L 11**), either Orphic beliefs had changed a great deal in the centuries intervening between it and the

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[36] Marshall (1911) Introd. XLVII; "phylacteries" according to Cumont (1949) 277; *eine Art Titel zum Talisman* according to West (1975) 232 (although Tortorelli Ghidini [1995b] 469 distinguishes between *amulet* and *talisman*), cf. also Guthrie (1935) 172 ("the magical was not foreign to Orphism"), Zuntz (1971) 282 ff., Kotansky (1991) 114 ff., Martín Hernández (forthcoming).

[37] Cf. App. II n. 15.

older ones, or we must accept the idea that some ancient hexametric formulas have been adopted in it so as to use it as an amulet.[38]

12.6. *The relation between use and appearance or thematic motifs*

There have been attempts to correlate different "uses" of the tablets with the form in which they have come to light: in some cases open, in others folded or rolled up. According to Pugliese Carratelli,[39] the tablets containing *mots de passe* appear folded, owing to the need to hide the instructions from the eyes of the profane. However, several of the tablets from Thurii,[40] which do not contain such instructions, appear folded, whereas one of the tablets from Crete including passwords and two from Thurii[41] with responses to be given to Persephone were found extended. In general, the extended tablets were placed in the dead man's hand, whereas the folded ones could be placed in the mouth of the deceased,[42] as was done with the obol for Charon, for which reason it has also been thought[43] that they were folded so that they could fit better. However, this hypothesis does not fit with the fact that the tablets from Pelinna, which were found extended, had been placed on the dead woman's chest,[44] but with signs of having been folded previously. The fact that the tablets were folded[45] as a ritual act intended to conceal the sacred words is an attractive hypothesis. The deceased wore some of them on the forehead,[46] a place which reveals their identifying function. Exceptional are the cases of the tablet from Petelia (which appeared rolled up and kept in a cylinder held shut by a chain, this not being, however, its original location, since the cylinder is probably from the 2nd cent. A.D., which indicates that the tablet

[38] Kotansky (1994) 107; cf. already Zuntz (1971) 334 and Kotansky (1991) 115. In any case, the ritual use of the tablets is not incompatible with their use as amulets.
[39] Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 124 f.
[40] **L 8, 10a, 12**.
[41] Crete (**L 5d**), Thurii (**L 9, 10b**).
[42] The tablet from Hipponion (**L 1**). Zuntz (1974) 335 f. n. 2 suggests that placing the tablet in the mouth of the deceased could respond to the desire of placing the correct words on his tongue.
[43] As was done by Guarducci (1974) 17 f.
[44] Cf. Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987) 4.
[45] In some cases, like the one from Hipponion, they were folded four times, cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 ff., (1996) 219.
[46] **L 16**, cf. § 8.2.

must have been re-used), and the one from Pharsalus, which was placed inside a rich bronze hydria that contained a cremation.[47]

Another question is why different moments of the soul's journey to the underworld are selected, even in tablets having the same predominant function.

L 1–6 refer to the initial moments of the great journey: the first obstacles, the deceptive fountain and the guardians. In contrast, **L 9** and **L 10** focus on the presentation before Persephone (which we might call the "second obstacle").

The tablets from the Thurian series and the ones from Pelinna describe the final destiny that awaits the initiate, anticipating the condition which the soul will enjoy, its definitive abandonment of the human nature and its accession to the realm of happiness. **L 7ab** and **L 8** are salutations to the dead, made by another person, and the tablets from Pelinna seem to have almost a rather magical, as an amulet (cf. *supra*). The greeting formulas to the underworld gods seem to refer to the moment at which the deceased enters the grove of the blessed. In general, the ones we have called "identificatory" would refer to any moment of the journey, insofar as they would serve for the *mystes* to be recognized anywhere.

It is, however, important to point out that no relation can be established between the various stages of the journey reflected by the tablets and the places in which they have come to light, since, as we have just seen, in Magna Graecia, for instance, we find tablets that are vademecums, others with an identifying function, and others that describe the initiate's final destiny. Nor can a relation be established between the various "types" and different religious contexts, since we have seen all kinds of combinations. Thus, among the tablets we have called "identifying", some contain what seems to be a formula of salutation to the infernal goddess (**L 16b**: "to Persephone, Posidippus, pious *mystes*"), which unites the Macedonian tablets to those from Crete. The identification as a *myste*s is also important in the tablets we have called vademecums. Finally, the ritual references appear anywhere, and nothing indicates that they contradict each other. Once again and again, we observe that the tablets belong to one and the same religious scheme, which we have no hesitation in considering as Orphic.

[47] Cf. App. II n. 8.

APPENDIX I

EDITION OF THE TABLETS

In this Appendix, we offer an edition of the tablets. It reproduces in part the edition published by Alberto Bernabé in the Bibliotheca Teubneriana, with some additions and corrections in the text. The critical apparatus is limited here to variants and conjectures, cited simply by the editor's name, whereas the Teubner edition also contains commentaries.

LAMELLARUM AUREAERUM EDITIONUM COMPARATIO NUMERORUM

locus	Ber.-Jim.	Bernabé	Compar.	Oliv.	Kern	Colli	Zuntz	Riedweg	Pugl.Carr. 1993	Pugl.Carr. 2001	Tortorelli	Tzifopoul.	Graf-John.
Hipponion	1	474				4 [A 62]		B 10	I A 1	I A 1	1		1
Entella	2	475						B 11		I A 4	13		8
Petelia	3	476	p. 32	ba'	32a	4 [A 63]	B 1	B 1	I A 2	I A 2	2		2
Pharsalus	4	477				4 [A 64]	B 2	B 2	I A 3	I A 3	8		25
Eleutherna	5a	478	p. 38	b'A'	32b I	4 [A 70]a	B 3	B 3	1 C 1	I B 1	14	1	10
Eleutherna	5b	479	p. 38	b'B'	32b II	4 [A 70]b	B 4	B 4	1 C 2	I B 2	15	2	11
Eleutherna	5c	480	p. 38	b'c'	32b III	4 [A 70]c	B 5	B 5	1 C 3	I B 3	16	3	12
Mylopot.	5d	481				4 [A 70]d	B 6	B 6	1 C 4	I B 4	17	4	16
Eleutherna	5e	482				4 [A 70]e	B 7	B 7	1 C 5	I B 5	18	5	13
Eleutherna	5f	483				4 [A 70]f	B 8	B 8	1 C 6	I B 6	19	6	14
Malibu	6	484				4 [A 72]		B 9	1 C 7	I B 7	9		29
Sfakaki	6a	484a						p. 480			21	9	18
Pelinna	7a	485						P 1	II B 3	II B 3	10		26a
Pelinna	7b	486						P 2	II B 4	II B 4	11		26b
Thurii	8	487	p. 6	cA^2	32f	4 [A 67]	A 4	A 4	II B 2	II B 2	4		3
Thurii	9	488	p. 17	aA	32c	4 [A 65]	A 1	A 1	II B 1	II B 1	5		5

Thurii	10a	489	p. 21	aB	32d	4 [A 66]a	A 2	A 2	II A 1	II A 1	6		7
Thurii	10b	490	p. 19	aC	32e	4 [A 66]b	A 3	A 3	II A 2	II A 2	7		6
Roma	11	491	p. 42	cB^2	32g	4 [B 31]	A 5	A 5	I B 1	I C 1	23		9
Thurii	12	492	p. 12	d (22)	47	4 [A 68]	C	C	III 1	III 1	3		4
Pherae	13	493						B 12		II C 2	12		27
Pherae	13a	493a											28
Sfakaki	14	494						p. 480			22	8	17
Mylop.	15	495	p. 41	p. 18			B 9	p. 391	II C 1	II C 1	20	7	15
Hag. Ath.	15a	495a											
Pella	16a	496a											32
Pella	16b	496b											31
Aegion	16c	496c											21
Aegion	16d	496d											22
Aegion	16e	496e											20
Pella	16f	496f											34
Paeonia	16g	496g											36
Methone	16h	496h										15	35

Table (*cont.*)

locus	Ber.-Jim.	Bernabé	Compar.	Oliv.	Kern	Colli	Zuntz	Riedweg	Pugl.Carr. 1993	Pugl.Carr. 2001	Tortorelli	Tzifopoul.	Graf-John.
Elis	16i	496i						p. 480					23
Elis	16j	496j						p. 480					24
Aegae	16k	496k											37
Hag. Ath.	16l	496l						p. 480					38
Posidonia	16m	496m											
Amphipol.	16n	496n											30
Lesbos	17												19
S. Vito	S 1a–b	496, pp. 77f											
Incertum	S 2												
Alyk. Kit	S 3a							p. 480				14	
Alyk. Kit	S 3 b							p. 480				13	
Luc.,Saep.	S 4a–b												
Dion	S 5												33
Baudecet	S 6							p. 481					

L 1 (*FR.* 474 B.)

lamella aurea c. a. 400 a. C. Hipponii reperta, nunc in Museo Archeologico Statale di Vibo, prim. ed. Pugliese Carratelli (1974); cf. et. Guarducci (1974) 7ss; (1975); Burkert (1975) 84ss; Gigante (1975); Lloyd-Jones (1975); Pugliese Carratelli (1975); Merkelbach (1975); West (1975); Marcovich (1976 = [1991] 138ss, cum 'Postscript' 141s); Zuntz (1976); Pugliese Carratelli (1976); Colli (1977) 172 (fr. 4 [A 62]); Musso (1977); Namia (1977); Gigante (1978); Gil (1978); Guarducci (1978) 261ss; Luppe (1978); Prontera (1978); Gallavotti (1978–1979); Cole (1980); Pugliese Carratelli (1983 = [1990] 379ss); Feyerabend (1984); Janko (1984); Lloyd-Jones (1984) 269ss (= [1990] 80ss); Musti (1984); Scalera McClintock (1984); Guarducci (1985); Cassio (1987); Lazzarini-Cassio (1987); Ricciardelli Apicella (1987); Marcovich (1990); Velasco (1990–1991) 8ss; Bernabé (1991); Tortorelli Ghidini (1992); Russo (1992); Giangrande (1993); Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20ss; Cassio (1994); Díez de Velasco (1995) 126s; Giangrande (1995); Robertson (1995) 289; Cassio (1996); Riedweg (1996) 475ss; Russo (1996); Bañuls (1997); Burkert (1998); Riedweg (1998) 395; Burkert (1999) 62ss; Merkelbach (1999); Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 23s; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 28ss; 258ss; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 39ss; Sacco (2001); Riedweg (2002) 465ss; Tzifopoulos (2002) 159s; Cole (2003) 200s; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 33ss; Robertson (2003); Edmonds (2004); Calame (2006) 233ss; Tortorelli Guidini (2006) 62ss; 113ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 4s, vid. et. SEG 26, 1976–1977 n. 1139 (p. 264s); 27, 1977 n. 674 (p. 170); 28, 1978 n. 775 bis (p. 224s); 34, 1984, n. 1002 (p. 261s); 37, 1987, n. 778 (p. 246); 40, 1990, n. 824 (p. 256s); 42, 1992, n. 903 (p. 259); 43, 1993, n. 647 (p. 218s); 44, 1994, n. 809 (p. 247); 45, 1995, n. 1440 (p. 380); 46, 1996, 1318 (p. 362s); 52, 2002, 951 (p. 322) | optimam imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies in Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20s; vid. et. Tortorelli Guidini (2006) CDRom | de re metrica cf. Gallavotti (1978–1979) 349; Tessier (1987); Giangrande (1993) 246s | de lingua cf. Iacobacci (1993); Cassio (1994 et 1996) | de rebus archaeologicis cf. Foti (1974); Bottini (1992) 51ss

Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἔρ̲γ̲ον. ἐπεὶ ἂν̲ μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι
εἰς Ἀίδαο δόμους εὐήρεας, ἔστ᾽ ἐπὶ δ‹ε›ξιὰ κρήνα,
πὰρ δ᾽ αὐτὰν ἑστακῦα λευκὰ κυπάρισ‹σ›ος·
ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχαὶ νεκύων ψύχονται.
ταύτας τᾶς̲ κράνας μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐ̲γ̲γύθ̲ε̲ν ἔλθηις. 5
πρόσθεν δὲ εὑρήσεις τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δὲ ἐπύπερθεν ἔασι.
οἳ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐν‹ὶ› φρασὶ πευκαλίμαισι
ὅτ‹τ› ι δὴ ἐξερέεις Ἄιδος σκότος ὀρφ‹ν›ήεντος.
εἶπον· Γῆς παῖ‹ς› εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος· 10
δίψαι δ᾽ εἰμ᾽ αὖος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλ‹λ›ὰ δότ᾽ ὦ̣κ̣α
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμ‹ν›η̣ς̣᾽.
καὶ δή τοι ἐρέουσιν {ι}ὑποχθονίωι βασιλεί‹αι›·
καὶ {δή τοι} δώσουσι πιεῖν τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπ[ὸ] λίμνας
καὶ δὴ καὶ σὺ πιὼν ὁδὸν ἔρχεα‹ι› ἅν τε καὶ ἄλλοι 15
μύσται καὶ βάκ̲χ̲οι ἱερὰν στείχουσι κλε‹ε›ινοί.

lamellae scalptor littera H pro h utitur (quamquam alibi h omittit, cf. 3 ἑστακῦα, 7; 12 ὕδωρ, 9 ὅττι), litt. ο pro ο, ω, ου, litt. ε pro ε, η, ει; litt. ω non utitur. textum autem nostro more scriptum praebemus; scribimus enim ο ω ου ε η ει, litteras geminatas κχ, γγ et spiritum asperum pro h. servamus autem α pro η et formas sine -ι- ἑστακῦα, ὑός et vocales elidendas in textu scriptas || **1** ἔργον Burkert (ap. Pugliese Carratelli [1975] 227), Gil 84, Ebert (ap. Luppe 24), Guarducci (1985) 386ss, Robertson : εριον lam. : unde ἠρίον legit Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111; 117 : '"eigentlicher" Text' sec. Merkelbach (1975) 9 σῆμ' : defenderunt Scalera McClintock 133; Giangrande (1993) 239ss et Russo (1996) 40s : ἱερόν Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 23s (= [2001] 45ss = [2003] 34) prob. Tortorelli Ghidini (2000), at ἱρόν Di Benedetto (2004) prob. Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) : ἔριον dub. prop. Luppe 24 : εἴριον Gallavotti 340 : ἐπιὸν Ricciardelli : θρῖον West 230ss, unde σρῖον Marcovich [1976] 221s : iure repugnavit Guarducci (1975) 20; 22 : δῶρον Lloyd-Jones (1975) 225 : iure contradixit Pugliese Carratelli (1975) 228 : {ε}ῥίον Gigante per litt. | ἐπεὶ ἂμ lam. : ἐπὴν in archetypo fuisse suspicatus est West 230 (quod metro aptius) | ἐπὴν μέλλησθα νέεσθαι Gil 84 | post θανεῖσθαι distinxerunt Merkelbach (1975) 8; Marcovich (1976) 221 (credens hoc inscriptionis titulum esse, coll. L 3, 12); Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001] 40 = [2003] 34) | in fin. ν pro ι scriptum esse videtur : unde θανεῖσθ' ἄν Gallavotti 338 : recte contradixit Guarducci (1985) 390 | '"eigentlicher" Text' vers. 1 sec. Merkelbach 9 sic legebatur Μνημοσύνης τόδε σῆμ' ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι : hunc versum inscriptionem archetypi fuisse aestimavit West 232 qui post v. 1 ἐν πίνακι χρυσέωι τόδε γραψάτω ἠδὲ φορείτω e L 3, 13 suppl.; cf. L 3, 13–14 || **2** εἰς Merkelbach (1975) 8, prob. Guarducci (1975) 20s; Gil 84 : εἷς Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111s (coll. Hes. Op. 208), id. (1993) 20; 24 (= [2001a] 40; 47 = [2003] 34; 41) : εἷσ' Zuntz 135 | εὐήρεας· ἔστ' Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 : fort. ex εὐρήσεις corrupt. suspicatus est Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 : εὐερέας ἐστ' Merkelbach (1975) 8 : εὐηρέας· ἔστ' Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40 = [2003] 34) : ἠερόεις et εὐρώεις (cf. Y 65 al.) fort. confusa sec. Zuntz 137 : εὕρηις δ' dub. Gil 85 : textum traditum def. Gallavotti 341s | post εὐήρεας lac. ind. Marcovich (1976) 222s, qui coll. frr. 2 et 3 e. g. tempt. ‹ὡς ἀφικάνεις, / εὑρήσεις μελάνυδρον ἐκεῖθ'› {ἐστ'} : similia secum deliberat Lloyd Jones (1990) 96 adn. 43 | δ‹ε›ξιὰ Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 : at 'lo Ξ di ΔΕΞΙΑ sembra sovrapposto ad un E' Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 39, cf. [2003] 34) (cui repugnavit Sacco 31) : ἐπιδ‹έ›ξια Gallavotti 341 | κράνα Gallavotti 338 : κρήνα‹ν› Marcovich (1976) 222 | '"eigentlicher" Text' sec. Merkelbach (1975) εὑρήσεις Ἀίδαο δόμοις εὐήρεσι κρήνην : in archetypo sec. West 230 εὑρήσεις δ' Ἀίδαο δόμων ἐπὶ δεξιὰ κρήνην, prob. Janko 92s; 99 : sic versus heptamet. est || **3** ἑστακῦα cum -α longa non ob productionem ante λ-, sed quia in huius versus priore forma -αν (accus.) legebatur : L 3, 2 textum pristinum fidelius servavit sec. Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226; Merkelbach (1975) 9 : ἑστακυ‹ῖ›α Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 | αὐτᾶι (-τῆι West, Janko) λευκὰ‹ν› (-ὴν West, Janko) ἑστακυ‹ῖ›α‹ν› (ἑστη- West, Janko) κυπάρισ‹σ›ον archetypo tribuerunt West 230; Janko 93; 99 et in L 1 rest. Marcovich (1976) 222 || **4** ψυχαὶ 'il graphéus ha prima inciso ΨΧ, poi ha corretto il X in Y, e quindi ha scritto KAI invece di XAI: tra Y e K si scorge

un piccolo X' Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 39, cf. [2003] 34), cf. Sacco 32 | ψυχοῦνται Tortorelli Ghidini (1992) : at cf. L 2, 6 || **5** τᾶς Sacco 32 : ταρ lam. | κρήνας per errorem Guarducci (1975) 20 | ενγυοεν lam. | ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐμπελάσησθα in archetypo fuerunt sec. West 230, prob. Janko 94; 99 || **6** '"eigentlicher" Text' sec. Merkelbach 9 πρόσσω δ' εὑρήσεις ἑτέραν· ταύτης δ' ἀπὸ λίμνης (vel ἐπὶ δεξιά· ἧς ἀπὸ λίμνης) : contradixit Janko 94, qui archetypum sic restituit πρόσθεν δ' εὑρήσεις τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης / ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δὲ ἐπύπερθεν ἔασιν || **7** δ' {ε} metri causa scribendum | ἐπ' ὕπερθεν ἔασι‹ν› West 230; Marcovich (1976) 221 || **8** οἳ δέ Zuntz 133, quod confirmaverunt Russo (1996) et Sacco : τοὶ δέ Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40 = [2003] 34) : τοίδε Guarducci (1985) 386 : τοὶ δή Luppe : [h]οι δέ Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 : dub. οἱ δή Merkelbach (1975) 9, Marcovich (1976) 221 | σε εἰρήσονται ἐν‹ὶ› (ἐν lam. Pugliese Carratelli [1974] 111) Merkelbach (1975) 9; Marcovich (1976) 223; cf. Zuntz 133 et 140 : σ' ἐ‹π›ειρήσονται ἐν‹ὶ› Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 : σ(ε) εἰρήσοντ' – ἀΐ̄ἐν (i.e. ἀΐειν infinit. pro imperat. iam Ebert) Luppe 24 || **9** ὅττι Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111: †...]ι (fort. τοῖσι) Zuntz 133 et 140 : π]ὸτ ‹τ›ί Luppe 25 | δὴ Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 : ΔΕ (δὲ vel δὴ) Zuntz 133 cf. 140 : δὲ Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40 = [2003] 34) | Ἀίδος Merkelbach (1975) 8 | σκότος Merkelbach (1975) 8 : dub. Zuntz 133, cf. 140s : σκότους Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 | ὀρφ‹ν›ήεντος coni. Ebert ap. Luppe 25 (quod confirmat ut vid. L 2, 11); prob. Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 40; 47 (= [2003] 34; 41) : ορφεεντος leg. Sacco : οροεεντος leg. Lazzarini 332 : unde ἠερόεντος Cassio (post Lazzarini) 334, prob. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20; 24 et Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) : οὖρου (sic) {ε} ἐντός Russo (1992) et (1996) : ὀλοέεντος leg. Pugliese Carratelli (1974) : unde οὐλ- Guarducci (1975) 20; Merkelbach (1975) 8; Marcovich (1976) 221 : ο[..]εεντος (fin. fort. ἐντός) leg. Zuntz 141 : ὀκρυόεντος dub. Lloyd-Jones (1984) 270: εὐρώεντος dub. Janko 95 | ὅτ‹τ›ι διεξερέων (coll. K 432)...εἰσαφικάνεις (ὀλόεντος confusum ex ἀστερόεντος ratus) in archetypo legebatur sec. Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 || **10** Γῆς παῖ‹ς› εἰμί Sacco (prob. Pugliese Carratelli [2003] 34; 40): ὑὸς Γᾶς εἰμ' Guarducci (1985) 386; 389 : ὑὸς Γαίας καὶ Zuntz 141 et 142s : ὑὸς Γαίας ‹τε› Luppe 23; 25 : ‹ὑ›ὸς Βαρέας Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111s; cf. eund. (1976) 460s; (1993) 10 (ubi animadvertit litterae unius spatium sequi); 29 (= [2001a] 39s; 62) : ‹γῆς› ὑὸς βαρέας Gallavotti 339; 346 || **11** εἰμὶ Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 : ἐμὶ Merkelbach (1975) 8 : ἡμὶ Zuntz 133 : εἰμ' accuratius leg. Guarducci (1975) 20, cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40, cf. [2003] 34) | δότ' ὦκα Sacco 32 quae verbum integrum vidit : δοτο[legit Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 11: δότω [τις] dub. West 233 : repugnavit Guarducci (1975) 21 : δότω [μοι] Gallavotti 339; 347 || **12** πιέναι τῆς Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20; 25 (= [2001a] 40; 51 = [2003] 34; 45) : πιεναυτες i.e. πιεῖν αὐτῆς leg. Guarducci (1985) 389 : πιὲν αὐτῆς Cassio (1987) prob. Russo (1996) : π[ρο]ρεοντες i.e. π[ρο]ρέον τῆς Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 : π[ροσ]τῆναι 'contaminato con π[ρο]ρέον' Gallavotti 347 | λιμ[leg. Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111, unde λίμ[νης] suppl. : at Russo (1996) 39 sigma vidit et Sacco 32 et. ης || **13** ἐρέουσιν leg. Lazzarini 330, prob. Russo (1996) 48; Sacco 32; Bernabé-Jiménez 75s; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 34; 40 : ἐλεοῦσιν

Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111, id. (1993) 20; 24 (= [2001a] 40; 47s), Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) : ἑλέουσιν dub. Luppe 25 : ‹τ›ελέουσιν (vel ‹στ›ελέουσιν vel potius ‹τ›ελέουσι σ') West 233 (quod maluerunt Tsants.-Paráss. [1987] 15) : ἐλεοῦσιν Pugliese Carratelli (1976) 461 : ‹σ'› ἐλεοῦσιν Janko 96 | {ι} deleverunt edd.; prob. ι erratum pro H, cf. Janko 96; Cassio (1994) 197 : ‹ο›ἰ Burkert ap. Riedweg (1998) 396 | ὑποχθονίωι βασιλεί‹αι› West 233, probantibus Tsants.-Paráss., loc. laud. 15; Riedweg (1998) 396; Bernabé-Jiménez 76s : repugnavit Pugliese Carratelli (1976) 461s : ὑποχθονίωι βασιλῆϊ Merkelbach (1975) 8s : lectionem defendit Lazzarini 331 : ὑπὸ χθονίωι βασιλῆϊ Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111ss (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40) : {ὑπὸ} χθόνιοι βασιλῆες Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226, qui init. rest. e.g. αἰ δ' αὐτοὶ ‹σ'› ἐλεήσουσιν : recte contradixit West 233 : ὑποχθόνιοι βασιλῆες Janko 99 : ιυποχθονιοιβασιλει lam. || **14** δή τοι lam. : secl. Gallavotti 348 : δή σοι Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 : καὐτοί σοι dub. Riedweg (1998) 396, coll. L 3, 10 | πιεῖν Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 (denuo [2003] 34) : πιὲν Cassio (1987) prob. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40) | post πιεῖν : θείης ἀπὸ κρήνης Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226, coll. L 3, 10 : καθαρᾶς ἀπὸ λίμνης '"eigentlicher" Text' sec. Merkelbach (1975) 9 : ‹ταύτας (possis et Μνάμας et Μνείας) ἀπὸ› {τᾶς Μναμοσύνας} λίμνας Marcovich (1976) 221; 224 : κείνας ἀπὸ λίμνας Lloyd-Jones (1984) 270 | 'le ultime tre lettere di ΛΙΜΝΑΣ sono incise lungo il margine destro della lamina' Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40, cf. [2003] 34) | ἀπ[ὸ] Guarducci, Zuntz 133, Luppe 25, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 : om. Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111; Merkelbach (1975) 8 || **15** καὶ γάρ τοι Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 | σὺ πιὼν Gil 85, Luppe 26, Gallavotti 348s, prob. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20; 30 (= [2001a] 40; 64s = [2003] 34) : συχνὸν Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111: συχνὴν Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 : συχνὰν Burkert ap. Zuntz 133, 145s et Pugliese Carratelli (1976) 462 : συχνῶν Merkelbach 8s, prob. Guarducci (1975) 21ss, Marcovich (1976) 221 : σὺ ‹τέ›κνον dub. prop. West 234 | ἔρχεα‹ι› Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 111 || **16** βαχχοι lam. | στειχοῦσι Gallavotti 339 | κλε‹ε›ινοί metri causa Burkert (ap. Pugliese Carratelli [1975] 227); Merkelbach (1975) 8s, cf. Watkins (1995) 281 adn. 8 : κλεεννοί Burkert (1998) 392 : κλεινοὶ Pugliese Carratelli (1974); Gallavotti 339 : κλ.[...Zuntz 133 : unde κ‹έ›λευθον dub. prop. Luppe 26 (cf. West 233, Luppe [1989] 14) : κλυτάν τε Feyerabend 7 | 'le ultime tre lettere di ΚΛΕΙΝΟΙ sono incise lungo il margine destro' Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 (= [2001a] 40, cf. [2003] 34) || dextro mg. iuxta lin. 2–3 leguntur TN et subter AO; has litteras Marcovich (1976) 224 interpretari temptavit (AO = τὸ πᾶν : melius rem explicavit Guarducci (1985) 389, quae admonuit 'il foglio d'oro...era stato ribattuto dopo un uso precedente'

L 2 (*FR.* 475 B.)

lamella aurea mutila in Sicilia, fort. prope Entellam (in vico quem sec. Frel Petro appellatur; sed non est in Sicilia vicus sic nominatus, Nenci per litt. nobis suggessit Petraro) reperta intra lucernam fictilem, in privatis thesauris servata; saec. III a. C. trib. Frel : fortasse saec. IV a. C. tribui potest (monente

Nenci per litt.) | lamellam prim. ed. Frel (1994); cf. Cassio (1994 [1995]) 184s.; Dettori (1996) 294ss.; Riedweg (1998) 396s.; Pleket, SEG 44, 1994, n. 750 (p. 225s.); Bernabé (1999c); (2000b) 47ss.; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 24ss; Chaniotis – Mylonopoulos (2000) 172; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 76s; (2001b) 297ss; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 261ss.; Riedweg (2002); Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 71ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 90ss; 44s; Graf-Johnston (2007) 16s; Janko (ined.); cf. et. SEG 48, 1998, n. 1236 bis (p. 390s); 51, 2001, n. 1186 (p. 375)

col. I ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλ]ληισι θανεῖσθαι
μ]εμνημέ‹ν›ος ἥρως
] σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας.
ἐπὶ] δεξιὰ λίμνην,
πὰρ δ' αὐτῆι λευκὴν ἑστη]κῦαν κυπάρισσον· 5
ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυ]χαὶ νεκύων ψύχονται.
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μη]δὲ σχεδὸν ἐ‹μ›πελάσ‹ασ›θαι.
τῆς] Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον·] φυλακοὶ δ' ἐπύπε‹ρ›θ‹εν ἔ›ασιν.
οἳ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐνὶ] φρασὶ πευκαλίμησιν, 10
ὅττι δὴ ἐξερέεις Ἄιδος σκότο]ς ὀρφ{ο}νήεντο‹ς›.
Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·
καὶ ἀπόλλ]υμαι· ἀλλὰ δότε μμοι
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι τῆς] Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης.
col. II αὐτὰρ ἐ[μοὶ γένος οὐράνιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί'. 15
καὶ τοι δὴ [ἐρέουσιν ὑποχθονίωι βασιλείαι·
καὶ τότε τ[οι δώσουσι πιεῖν τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
καὶ τότε δ[ὴ
σύμβολα φ[
καὶ φε[20
σεν[

1 in init. Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἔργον (coll. L 1, 1) legi possit | ἐπεὶ ἂμ (malim ἂν) μέλ]ληισι dub. Riedweg : επεὶ ἄμ' μελ]ηνίοιν Frel | θανεῖσθαι Riedweg : θανιῆσθαι (sic) leg. Frel (cf. 'θανιῆσθαι . . . a printing error for θανεῖσθαι?' Pleket) || **2** in init. [ἐν χρυσίωι τόδε γραψάσθω legere possis, quae in archetypo erant sec. Janko | μ]εμνημέ‹ν›ος dub. prop. Riedweg :]εμνημεος leg. Frel || **3** in init. fort. [μή μίν γ' ἐκπάγλως ὑπάγοι legebatur sec. Janko | ἀμφικαλύψας coll. L 3 in mg. dub. prop. Riedweg, prob. Pugliese Carratelli (2001a, 2001b, 2003): ἀμφικαλύψαι Frel || **4** εὑρήσεις δ' Ἀίδαο δόμων ἐπὶ] δεξιὰ suppl. Riedweg, coll. L 1, 2 et L 3, 1 : possis et εὑρήσεις Ἀίδαο δόμοις ἐν]δέξια coll. L 4, 1 : ἐστ' ἐπὶ] δεξιὰ Frel || **5** πὰρ δ' αὐτῆι λευκὴν ἑστη]κῦαν suppl. Riedweg :]κῦαι leg. Frel || **6** init. suppl. Frel || **7** ταύτης τῆς κρένης μὴ] δὲ (sic) Frel | ἐ‹μ›πελάσ‹ασ›θαι Riedweg : ἐπέλασθαι leg. Frel || **8** πρόσθεν δὲ εὑρήσεις τῆς] suppl. Frel : possis et πρόσσω δ' εὑρήσεις (coll. L 4, 4) vel εὑρήσεις δ' ἑτέραι (coll. L 3, 4) || **9** init. suppl. Frel | φυλακοὶ scripsimus (et archetypo trib. Janko) : φύλακοι Frel : φύλακες dub. Riedweg | δ' ἐπύπε‹ρ›θ‹εν ἔ›ασιν Riedweg, Cassio 195 : θ' ὑποπέθασιν leg. Frel || **10** τοὶ (malim οἳ coll. L 1, 8) δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐνὶ] suppl. Riedweg, Pleket : οἵ (sic) δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐν

Frel || **11** ὅττι δὴ ἐξερέεις Ἄιδος σκότο]ς ὀρφ{ο}νήεντο‹ς› Riedweg :]μου φονηεντά (sic) leg. Frel || **12** in init. εἶπον Riedweg (an εἰπεῖν?) | Ἐγὼ παῖ‹ς› εἰμι καὶ] (sic, coll. L 3, 6 et nova lectione L 1, 9 suppl. Pugliese Carratelli [2003] 71) : ὑὸς Γᾶς εἰμι καὶ] e priore lectione L 1, 9 suppl. Riedweg : Γῆς οἰὸς εἰμὶ (sic) καὶ] suppl. Frel || **13** δίψαι δ' εἰμὶ αὖος καὶ ἀπόλλ]υμαι Riedweg (at in init. possis et δίψηι δ' εἰμὶ αὔη coll. L 3, 8] vel δίψαι δ' αὖος ἐγὼ [coll. L 5, 1]) : δίψαι αὔος ἐγὼ κ' ἀπόλ]υμαι (sic) suppl. Frel | δότε μμοι Riedweg : δότε {μ}μοι Pleket : δοτεμμοὶ Frel || **14** ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι τῆς] suppl. Riedweg : ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πρόρεον (sic) τῆς] Frel | scalptor lineam transversam post v. 14 et alteram verticalem inter duas columnas delineavit || **15** αὐτὰρ ἐ[μοὶ – αὐτοί Riedweg (iam αὐτὰρ ἐ[μοὶ γενὸς οὐρανιόν [sic] Frel) || **16** καὶ τοι δὴ (possis et. καὶ τό‹τ›‹ε› δὴ) scripsimus : καὶ τοὶ ἂν Frel : at veri simillimum nobis videtur pro ΔΗ per errorem AN lectum esse | [ἐρέουσιν ὑποχθονίωι βασιλείαι Riedweg : [ἐρέουσιν ὑπὸ χθονίωι βασιλῆϊ Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 72 : [ἐλεοῦσιν ὑποχθονίωι βασιλῆϊ Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) : [ἐλεῶσιν ὑποχθονίοι βασιλεῖς Frel || **17** suppl. Riedweg (heptametrum est) : τ[οὶ πιεῖν ὕδωρ προρέον Frel || **18** δ[ὴ Riedweg (qui tempt. τότε δ[ὴ σὺ πιὼν ὁδὸν ἔρχεαι ἥν τε καὶ ἄλλοι…vel τότ' ἔπ[ειτ' ἄλλοισι μεθ' ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξεις) : δ[ώσωσιν τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης Frel || **19** Φ[ερσεφόνα(ι) et **20** καὶ Φε[ρσεφόνη(ι) legere possis (καὶ Φε[ρσέφασα Chaniotis) : forma verbi φυλάσσω vel φημί Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 302 || **21** fort. σεμ̣[νη-, coll. Orph. Hymn. 29, 10 σεμνή, παντοκράτειρα, κόρη καρποῖσι βρύουσα, 71, 2 ἣν παρὰ Κωκυτοῦ προχοαῖς ἐλοχεύσατο σεμνὴ / Φερσεφόνη λέκτροις ἱεροῖς Ζηνὸς Κρονίοιο, (et 24, 10 ὑμεῖς γὰρ πρῶται τελετὴν ἀνεδείξατε σεμνὴν / εὐιέρου Βάκχοιο καὶ ἁγνῆς Φερσεφονείης) : ἔλυ[σεν dub. Chaniotis coll. L 7, 2 Β‹άκ›χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε : σεμ̣ Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 72 : σεν Frel

L 3 (*FR.* 476 B.)

lamella aurea mutila saec. IV med. a. C. prope Peteliam reperta, nunc in Museo Britannico (3155), prim. ed. Franz (1836), denuo CIG III 5772, p. 691, cf. et. Göttling (1843); eund. (1851) 157ss; Kaibel (1878) n. 1037 (denuo IG XIV 638); Comparetti (1882) cum effigie accuratissime delineata et editione a Caecilio Smith curata; Cougny (1890) 485s; 542; Harrison (^{2}1908) 573ss (et Murray in appendice 659s); Comparetti (1910) 31ss; Marshall (1911) 380s (n. 3155 tab. LXXI); Dieterich (^{2}1913) 86ss; Olivieri (1915) 12ss; Kern (1916) 555; eund. (1922) fr. 32a; Diels-Kranz, Vorsokr. 1 B 17; Ziegler (1939); Guthrie (^{2}1952) 172s; Merkelbach (1967) 77s; Zuntz (1971) 358ss (B1); Festugière (1972) 62s; Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 113s; Guarducci (1974); Merkelbach (1975) 9 adn. 1; Pugliese Carratelli (1975); West (1975); Marcovich (1976) 223; Pugliese Carratelli (1976); Colli (1977) 174s (fr. 4 [A 63]); Guarducci (1978) 265; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 355; Janko (1984); Lloyd-Jones (1984) 269ss (= [1990] 96ss); Guarducci (1985) 388ss; Velasco (1990–1991) 142ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 32ss; Riedweg (1996); eund. (1998) 360ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 26s; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 67ss; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 263s; Hatzopoulos (2002) 27s; Riedweg (2002); Tzifopoulos (2002) 155s; Pugliese Carratelli (2003)

59ss; Di Benedetto (2004); Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 66s; 125ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 6s; Janko (ined.) | optimam imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies in Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 33; vid. et. Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) CDRom

Εὑρήσ{σ}εις δ' Ἀίδαο δόμων ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ κρήνην,
πὰρ δ' αὐτῆι λευκὴν ἑστηκυῖαν κυπάρισσον·
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐμπελάσειας.
εὑρήσεις δ' ἑτέραι, τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δ' ἐπίπροσθεν ἔασιν. 5
εἰπεῖν· 'Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος,
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί.
δίψηι δ' εἰμὶ αὔη καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι. ἀλλὰ δότ' αἶψα
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης'.
καὐτ[οί] σ[ο]ι δώσουσι πιεῖν θείης ἀπ[ὸ κρή]νης, 10
καὶ τότ' ἔπειτ' ἄ[λλοισι μεθ'] ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[ς].
[Μνημοσύ]νης τόδ‹ε› ἔρ[γον· ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλλησι] θανεῖσθ[αι]
[ἐν χρυσίωι] τόδε γραψ[άσθω μεμνημένος ἥρως,
in mg. dextro [μή μίν γ' ἐκ]πάγλως ὑπά[γ]οι σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας.

1 εὑρήσ{σ}εις Göttling, Kaibel : ευρησσεισ lam. | κρήνην] λίμνην Franz (1836) || **3** μὴ δὴ Göttling, Franz CIG || **4** ἑτέραι West : ἑτέραν lam. : ἕτερον Göttling, Franz CIG | ἑτέραν ‹ἐπὶ δεξιά· ἧς› ἀπὸ λίμνης coni. Merkelbach (1967) 78 | μνημοσύνης Gallavotti (et. in vv. 9 et 12) : recte contradixit Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 118 || **6** πάις Gallavotti fort. recte | εἰμι prim. leg. Smith, prob. Kaibel IG : εἶ σ[ὺ] Göttling, Franz CIG : εἰσι Franz (1836) || **7** ἐμοὶ prim. leg. Smith (vel ἐμὸν Kaibel) : ἐ[γὼ] Göttling, Franz CIG, Kaibel : εἶμι δὴ Franz (1836) || **8** εἰμ{ι} Olivieri, Kern, Diels-Kranz, Merkelbach (1967) 8 || **10** καὐ[τοί σο]ι δώσουσι Kaibel : at 'spatium non sufficit; σοι… a scalptore omissum' Zuntz 358 : καί [σοι ὑπε]νδώσουσι Franz : καὐ[το]ὶ δώσουσι Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 113 : fort. καὶ ‹δή› τ[ο]ι δώσουσι legendum coll. L 1, 14 | ἀπ[ὸ κρή]νης Göttling, Smith, Comparetti, Merkelbach (1967) 77, Zuntz 359, Colli : ἀπ[ὸ λίμ]νης Franz CIG III 5572, Kaibel, Murray, Gallavotti, Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) || **11** ἔπειτ' ἄ[λλοισι μεθ'] Kaibel : ἔπειτα [φίλοισι μεθ'] Franz CIG : ἔπειτά [σοι ἔστι παρ'] Göttling | ἀνάξει[ς] Franz : ἀνάξει[ν] Göttling || **12** Μνημοσύ]νης suppl. anon. in Brit. Mus. Cat. :]ιης leg. Smith | τόδ‹ε› ἔργ[ον Guard. (1985) 388 : τόδε ἠ[ρίον Pugliese Carratelli (1974), Colli : τόδε ι̣γ̣ Olivieri : τόδε ν Zuntz 359 : τόδε δ̲[ῶρον Marcovich : τοδει[unde τόδε ἱ[ερόν Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20; 23s (= [2001a] 40; 46s = [2003] 39ss; 60) : τόδε ἱ[ρόν Di Benedetto, prob. Tortorelli (2006) : τόδε ν[ᾶμα anon. ap. Brit. Mus. Cat. : το δειγ[Kern | ἐπεὶ ἂν (ἐπὴν Marcovich metro aptius) μέλλησι] Merkelbach (1975) 9, Marcovich 223, prob. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 32 (= [2001a] 68 = [2003] 60) | θανεῖσθ[αι] Kaibel, Smith | ex. gr. versum sic legit Gallavotti: μνημοσύ]νης τόδε ν[ῆμα καὶ οὔποτ' ἐᾶι σε] θανεῖσθ[αι] || **13** [ἐν χρυσίωι] τόδε γραψ[άσθω μεμνημένος ἥρως e L 2, 2 archetypo trib. Janko (ined.) : τόδ' ἔγραψ[εν? (litterae τοδεγραψ certae sunt; Kaibel autem hic legebat λλειμ) Smith : τόδ' ἔγραψ[εν (sc. Ὀρφεύς) Comparetti 36 : τόδ' ἔγραψ[α Diels, Kern : plura ex. gr. temptaverunt eruditi

[ἐν πίνακι χρυσέωι] τόδε γραψ[άτω ἠδὲ φορείτω West 232, coll. P. Mag. VII 215ss : [ἐν δέλτωι χρυσῆι] τόδε γράψ[αι χρὴ μάλ' ἀκριβῶς] Gallavotti : [ἐν χρυσίωι] τόδε γράψ[αι Guarducci (1985) 392 : τ]όδε γρά[μμα Di Benedetto 306 || **in mg.** [μή μίν γ' ἐκ]πάγλως ὑπά[γ]οι Janko (ined.) :]κ̣ο̣γ̣λ̣ω̣σ̣υ̣πα[ ]ω (fort. οι) lam. sec. Janko :]τ̣ο̣γ̣λ̣ω̣σ̣ε̣ι̣π̣α̣ lam. sec. Pugliese Carratelli : τὸ κλέος (i.e. notitia) εἶπα Olivieri : τογλως? εἰπα Kern : [ὡς *τἀρρη]τόγλω‹σ›σ' εἴπα[ις] ex. gr. Gallavotti

L 4 (*FR.* 477 B.)

lamella aurea c. a. 350–330 a. C. Pharsali reperta in hydria aenea in qua Orithyia a Borea rapta repraesentatur, nunc Mus. oppidi Volos (lam. M 65; hydr. X 18775), prim. ed. Verdelis (1950–1951, vid. imaginem lucis ope confectam in p. 99), cf. et. Robert, Bull. Epigr., REG 65, 1952, 152s n. 70; Béquignon (1970) 1081; Zuntz (1971) 360ss (B 2); Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 114; (1975); (1976); Guarducci (1974) 11ss; Lloyd-Jones (1975); West (1975); Lorenz (1976) 132s, n. 23; Colli (1977) 176s (fr. 4 [A 64]); Guarducci (1978) 265s; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 355; Janko (1984); Lloyd-Jones (1984) 269ss (= [1990] 96ss); Cassio (1987); Tortorelli Ghidini (1990); Velasco (1990–1991) 203ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 36ss; Decourt (1995) 128ss n. 115; Cassio (1996); Riedweg (1996); eund. (1998); SEG 40, 1990, n. 824 (p. 257); 46, 1996, n. 656 (p. 186); Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 30; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 73ss; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 264s; Riedweg (2002); Tzifopoulos (2002) 157; Pugliese Caratelli (2003) 67ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 80s; 137s (vid. imaginem ope lucis confectam in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 34s

Εὑρήσεις Ἀίδαο δόμοις ἐνδέξια κρήνην,
πὰρ δ' αὐτῆι λευκὴν ἐστηκυῖαν κυπάρισσον·
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδόθεν πελάσηισθα·
πρόσσω δ' εὑρήσεις τὸ Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προ‹ρέον›· φύλακες δ' ἐπύπερθεν ἔασιν· 5
οἳ δέ σ‹ε› εἰρήσονται ὅ τι χρέος εἰσαφικάνεις·
τοῖς δὲ σὺ εὖ μάλα πᾶσαν ἀληθείην καταλέξαι·
εἰπεῖν· Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ‹ερόεντος›·
Ἀστέριος ὄνομα· δίψηι δ' εἰμ' αὖος· ἀλλὰ δότε μοι πιέν' ἀπὸ τῆς κρήνης'.

477 scriba utitur forma Σ bis (1 ευηρήσ-, 9 τῆς), C alibi || **5** προ‹ρέον› Verdelis : προ lam. | post φύλακες directam lineolam duxit scalptor proprio errore ut vid. || **6** οἵδε σ' Verdelis : at σε metri causa restituendum est et οἳ δέ potius quam οἵδε | σ' ἐ‹π›ειρήσονται Lloyd-Jones (1975) 226 || **7** τοῖς δὲ Zuntz 361 : τοῖσδε Verdelis | ἀληθείην Verdelis (quamquam ἀληθείηι in lam. legi posse credebat : rectius 'on voit la haste gauche du nu' Decourt) | post καταλέξαι 'φέρονται δύο πλάγιαι γραμμαί' Verdelis 100 || **8** ἀστ‹ερόεντος› Verdelis : αστ lam. : 'τὸ μοὶ φαίνεται ὡς βραχυγραφικὸν σημεῖον' Verdelis 100 || **9** πιέν' (i. e. πιέναι) ἀπὸ scripsimus monente Cassio (1996) 16 : πιεναπο lam. :

unde πιῆν ἀπὸ Verdelis; Dubois 129 : πιὲν ἀπὸ Cassio (1987) 314ss, prob. Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 74 = (2003) 68 : πιεῖν ἀπὸ cett. edd.

L 5A–C (*FRR.* 478–480 B.)

lamellae aureae tres saec. II/I a. C. prope Eleuthernam in sepulcreto aliquo repertae, nunc Eleuthernae Arch. Mus. (Συλλογὴ Ἀγγείων 632–634) adservatae, prim. ed. Joubin (1893); cf. et. Foucart (1895) 427; Harrison ([2]1908) 574ss (et Murray in appendice 660s); GDI III n. 4959a, p. 245; Comparetti (1910) 38ss; Dieterich (1913[2]) 107; Olivieri (1915) 14s; Kern (1916) 560ss; Levi (1922) 363ss (n. 8); Kern (1922) fr. 32 b I–III; Diels-Kranz, Vorsokr. 1 B 17a; Wilamowitz (1931) II, 200ss; Ziegler (1939) 1386ss; Deonna (1939) 64s; Guarducci (1939) II XII 31a–c., p. 168ss; Guthrie ([2]1952) 173ss; Zuntz (1971) 362 (B 3–5); Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 114s; Guarducci (1974) 13ss; West (1975) 235s; Colli (1977) 190–192 (fr. 4 [A 70]a–f), 196 (fr. 4 [A 72]); Guarducci (1978) 266; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 356s; West (1983) 25s; Janko (1984) 100; Cassio (1987); Velasco (1990–1991) 253ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 40ss (cf. imagines lucis ope confectas in pp. 40; 41; 42); Velasco (1994) 455ss; Riedweg (1998) 397s; Tzifopoulos (1998) 93; Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349 adn. 31; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 82ss; 265s; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 78ss; Riedweg (2002); Tzifopoulos (2002) 154s (cum imaginibus lucis ope confectis); Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 75ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 96ss; 145s (cum imaginibus lucis ope confectis in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 21ss; Tzifopoulos (ined.) nn. 1–3 (cum imaginibus lucis ope confectis); cf. et. SEG 37, 1987, n. 820 (p. 255s); 41, 1991, n. 887 (p. 291) | scribae utuntur C pro σ, at Σ (vel Z) pro σσ; nostro more textus praebemus

L 5A

Δίψαι αὖος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πιέ‹ν› μοι
κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιά, τῆ‹ι› κυφάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ἐσσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἠμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.

1 δίψαι ‹δ'› in carmine de quo versus manare videntur, sec. Gomperz, prob. Gallavotti | πιέ‹ν› (sc. δότε) Cassio 314ss (iam πιέμ Comparetti : πιέ‹μ› Pugliese Carratelli [1974] 114) : πιέ Kern : πίε Joubin, Colli, Blass, GDI II 1654, p. 161; prob., πίε ut imperat. interpretatum, cf. Velasco (1994) 456ss : πί' (et ἀμοῦ νάματος) in carmine pristino, sec. Gomperz | μου Blass : μ' ὃν Gallavotti || **2** αἰε{ι}ρόω Comparetti, Olivieri : αἰεὶ ῥέω Joubin, Gomperz, Blass | τῆ‹ι› Comparetti, Olivieri || **3** πῶ δ' ἐσσί; secl. Comparetti | Οὐρανῶ Blass | πῶ δ' ἐσσί pro τίνος υἱὸς εἶ Skias ap. Kern (1916) 560 adn. 1

L 5B

Δίψαι αὖος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυ{μα}μαι· ἀλλὰ πιέ‹ν› μοι
κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιά, τῆ‹ι› κυφάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ἐσσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἠμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.

1 απολλυμαμαι lam. : corr. edd. || **3** αcτεροcντοc lam. : corr. edd.

L 5C

Δίψαι αὖος {λαυσς} ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πιέν μου
κράνας αἰενάω ἐπὶ δε[ξ]ιά, τῆ‹ι› κυφάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ἐσσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἠμ‹ι› καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντ[ο]ς.

1 inter αὖος et ἐγὼ adverbium ἅλισ agnoscere maluerunt Comparetti 40, Levi 364 : recte locum explanavit Guarducci (1939) p. 168 | πιεμμου lam. || **2** ιρανασλιεν . . . κυφαρισζοσ lam. || **3** ημκαι lam. : sed fortasse K litterarum id. atque I et K compendium est sec. Guarducci (1939) p. 168

L 5D (*FR.* 481 B.)

lamella aurea saec. III a. C. in Cretae regione Mylopotamos appellata reperta, nunc in Museo Candiensi, prim. ed. Guarducci (1939) II XXX 4 p. 314s; cf. Zuntz (1971) 362ss (B 6); Colli (1977) 192 (fr. 4 [A 70]d); Gallavotti (1978–1979) 356; Velasco (1990–1991) 257; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 43; Riedweg (1998) 397s; Tzifopoulos (1998) 94; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 266; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 82s; Riedweg (2002); Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 82s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 100s; 145s (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 26s; Tzifopoulos (ined.) n. 4 (cum imagine lucis ope confecta)

Δίψα‹ι› δ' ἠμ' αὖος καὶ ἀπόλ‹λ›υμαι· ἀλ‹λ›ὰ πιέν μοι
κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιά, τῆ‹ι› κυπάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ἐσσί; Γᾶς ἠμι θυ‹γ›ά̣τηρ καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.

omnia corr. Guarducci || **1** απολομαιαλα lam. || **2** αιγιδοω lam. : fort. Ἀίδαο Gallavotti 356 | τε lam. || **3** γυατηρ lam. (unde γυήτηρ Gallavotti) : τυμτηρ leg. Zuntz 362, qui dub. θυγάτηρ prop. : γενετήρ = γενέτης dub. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 43 (= [2001a] 83 = [2003] 83), coll. Soph. Oed. Tyr. 472; Eur. Ion. 916 : κυητὴρ Gallavotti 356 : an {γυ} ‹μ›ά̣τηρ (coll. fr. 484a)? Tzifopoulos (ined.) ad loc.

L 5E–F (*FRR.* 482–483 B.)

lamellae aureae duae saec. III a. C. prope Eleuthernam repertae hodie Athenis in collectione Stathatos, prim. ed. Verdelis (1953–1954), cf. et. eund. (1963); Picard (1961); Zuntz (1971) 362ss; Colli (1977) 192 (fr. 4 [A 70]e–f); Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 44s; Riedweg (1998) 397s; Tzifopoulos (1998) 95s; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 266s; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 84ss; Riedweg (2002); Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 84ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 102s; 145s; Graf-Johnston (2007) 12ss; Tzifopoulos (ined.) nn. 5–6 | imagines lucis ope confectas invenies in Verdelis (1953–1954) 57s; Velasco (1990–1991) 258s; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 44s; Tortorelli (2006) in CDRom; Tzifopoulos (ined.)

L 5E

Δίψαι αὖος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλ‹λ›ὰ πιέν̲ {ε} μοι
κράνας ‹α›ἰ‹ε›ιρ‹ό›ω ἐπ‹ὶ› δεξιά, τῆ‹ι› κυφάρισσος.
τίς δ' {εδ} ἐσσ‹ί›; πῶ δ' ἐσσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι κα‹ὶ Ὠ›ρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.

1 πιἐμ{ε} μοι Verdelis 57: correximus: cetera corr. Verdelis || **2** κρανιιιρωεπδεξιατη lam. || **3** τισδεδεζι lam. | κα‹ὶ Ὠ›ρανῶ Zuntz : καρανω lam., unde κἀρανῶ Verdelis: at 'καρανω…is hardly indicative of a krasis in pronouncing καὶ ὠρ-…more likely the engraver skipped two letters' Zuntz 363 adn. 6

L 5F

Δίψα‹ι› {α} αὖος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλ‹λ›υμαι· ἀλλὰ π‹ι›έν̲ μο‹ι›
κράνας αἰενάω ἐπὶ δ‹ε›ξιά, τῆ‹ι› κυφάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἐσσί; πῶ δ' ‹ἐ›σσί; Γᾶς υἱός ἡ̲μι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντο{σ}ς.

1 πεμμο lam.: π‹ι›εμ μ‹οι› Verdelis : correximus : cetera corr. Verdelis || **2** δξια lam. ut vid. 'but there seems to be one letter-space…where the epsilon could have been inscribed, although this would have violated word-division' Tzifopoulos (ined.) ad loc. || **3** ιμι lam.

L 6 (*FR.* 484 B.)

lamella aurea saec. IV a. C. in Thessalia ut vid. reperta, in J. Paul Getty Mus. (Malibu) servata, prim. ed. Breslin (1977); cf. et. Colli (1977) 196 (fr. 4 [A 72]); Merkelbach (1977); Gallavotti (1978–1979) 357; Casio (1987); Velasco (1990–1991) 233; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 49 (ubi optimam imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies); Riedweg (1998) 397s; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 267; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 94s; Riedweg (2002); Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 94s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 82s; 139 (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 40s; vid. et. SEG 27, 1977, n. 226 bis (p. 58)

Δίψαι αὖος ἐγὼ κ‹αὶ› ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πίε μου
κράνας αἰειρόω. ἐπὶ δεξιὰ λευκὴ κυπάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἐσί; πῶ δ' ἐσί; Γᾶς υἱός εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον'.

1 πιέ‹ν› : alii alia proposuerunt, vid. ad L 5, 1 || **2** ἐπιδέξια Gallavotti

L 6A (*FR.* 484A B.)

lamella aurea saec. II-I a. C. prope Rethymnon in Romano coemeterio, in loco qui Sfakaki vocatur, reperta, in Mus. Rethymn. (M 2891) servata, prim. ed. Tzifopoulos (ined.) n. 9 (cum imagine ope lucis confecta), Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 106s; 147 (id. in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 28s

Δίψαι {τοι} ‹α›ὖος παρα̲π‹ό›λλυται· ἀλλὰ̲ π{α}ιέν μοι
κράνας αἰ̲‹ει›ρ‹ό›ου ἐπ' {α} ἀρι‹σ›τερὰ τᾶς κυφα{σ}ρίσσω.
τί̲ς δ' εἶ ἢ πῶ δ' εἶ; Γᾶς ἡμ{ο}ι μάτηρ {πωταετ} ‹κ›αὶ ‹Ο›ὐρανῶ
‹ἀ›στε‹ρόεντος›
{τισδιψαιτοιατοιιυτοοπασρατανηο}

1 τοι secludimus : dat. pron. sec. Tzifopoulos | post ‹α›ὖος dist. Tzifopoulos 'creating two sentences uttered by different speakers' | prob. restituendum Δίψαι ‹α›ὖος ‹ἐγὼ› παρα̲π‹ό›λλυμαι Tzifopoulos | ἀλλὰ̲ Tzifopoulos : αλλλ lam. || **2** αἰ̲‹ει›ρ‹ό›ου scripsimus ('the genitive ending in OY is inexplicable' Tzifopoulos) : αυρου lam. : unde ‹Σ›αύρου Tzifopoulos (coll. Theophr. Hist. Plant. 3, 3, 4 ἐν Κρήτηι... κρήνην Σαύρου καλουμένην) | ἐπ' {α} ἀρι‹σ›τερὰ Tzifopoulos: επααριτερα lam. | κυφα{σ}ρίζω Tzifopoulos (quod nostro more scriptum praebemus) : κυφασριζω lam. || **3** τί̲ς scripsimus : της lam. | ἡμ{ο}ι – ‹ἀ›στε‹ρόεντος› Tzifopoulos: ημοιματηρπωταετλιυρανωστε lam.; fort. duae sententiae contaminatae sunt: Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος et Γᾶ δ' ἐμοὶ (vel δή μοι) μάτηρ (iam 'it can also be read: Γᾶ{ς} ‹ἐ›μοὶ μάτηρ· πῶ; τί δ̲' ετ' Tzifopoulos), πατὴρ δ' Ὠρανός || **4** 'the string of letters appears to be a repetition by confusion of the beginning or the text, or perhaps another new formula of the question and answer process (τίς; δίψαι τοι αὖος παραπόλλυται)' Tzifopoulos

L 7A–B (*FRR.* 485–486 B.)

lamellae aureae duae, hederae folii figura, saec. IV a. C. Pelinnae (Palaiogardíki) repertae supra pectus mulieris in sepulcro marmoreo (in quo et. Maenadis figura invenitur) prim. ed. Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (1987); vid. et. Luppe (1989); Merkelbach (1989); Jordan (1989); Gigante (1989); eund. (1990); Lloyd-Jones (1990) 105ss; Guarducci (1990); Segal (1990); Follet (1990) n. 50, p. 450; Velasco (1990–1991) 676; Giangrande (1991a–b); Graf (1991); Bottini (1992) 129ss; Ricciardelli Apicella (1992); Velasco (1992);

Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 62ss; Graf (1993); Bremmer (1994) 87s; Camassa (1994) 176ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a–b); Robertson (1995); Dickie (1995); Pailler (1995) 124ss; Calame (1996) 16ss; Riedweg (1996); eund. (1998) 371ss; Burkert (1998) 392; Merkelbach (1999); Casadio (1999) 32s; Lada-Richards (1999) 104s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 31ss; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 87ss; 267s; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 114ss; Bremmer (2002) 21s; Calame (2002, 390s); Hatzopoulos (2002) 26; Riedweg (2002) 461ss; Tzifopoulos (2002) 160; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 117ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 84ss; 139ss (cum imaginibus lucis ope confectis in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 3s; vid. et. SEG 37, 1987, n. 497 (p. 160s); 39, 1989, n. 505 (p. 170); 40, 1990, n. 485 (p. 152); 42, 1992, n. 530 (p. 143); 43, 1993, n. 1305 (p. 486); 45, 1995, n. 632 (p. 156); 46, 1996, n. 654 (p. 185)

L 7A

Νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τῶιδε.
εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόναι σ' ὅτι Β‹άκ›χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.
τα{ι}ῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες.
αἶψα εἰς γ‹ά›λα ἔθορες.
κριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσ‹ες›. 5
οἶνον ἔχεις εὐδ‹α›ίμονα τιμὴ‹ν›
καὶ σὺ μὲν εἶς ὑπὸ γῆν τελέσας ἅπερ ὅλβιοι ἄλλοι.

1 τρισόλβιε contra metrum : μάκαρ vel θεός in archetypo legebatur sec. Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou 10s : μάκαρ maluit Graf (1991) 99, cf. eund. (1993) 241 adn. 7 : aliter rem metricam explanavit Giangrande 82s ('dactylischer Heptameter' et 'τρῖς lang natura') || **3** γαλδ lam. || **4** pro αἶψα fortasse in archetypo legebatur δίψαι (dat.) sec. Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou 14 : αἴξ Lloyd-Jones 107 (prob. Robertson 289s) : αἰγὸς Merkelbach (1999) : text. trad. def. Segal 414, Ricciardelli 28, quae cf. L 3, 8 δὸτ' αἶψα, L 1, 11 δότ' ὦ[κα] || **5** χριος lam. : unde dub. χοῖρος Lloyd-Jones 108 || **6** οἶνον] ‹τ›οίνυν tempt. Tortorelli (2006) | ευδιμονατιμν in lam. legerunt Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou 14, dubitantes utrum εὐδ‹α›ίμονα τιμ‹ὰ›ν an εὔδαιμον, ἄτιμον legendum sit : εὔδ‹α›ιμον{α} τιμ‹ή›ν vel τιμ‹ά›ν Gigante (1989) 28 : εὔδ‹α›ιμον, ἀπὸ μν[ήμης τινὰ λίμνης audacter temptavit Lloyd-Jones 109 : εὔδ‹α›ιμον τὴμ μνείαν dub. prop. Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 84 adn. 36 et εὔδ‹α›ιμον τὴμ μν‹είην› vel τὴμ μν‹ήμην› ead. (2006) : at ευδιμονατιμη rectius in lam. leg. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 62 (= [2001a] 114s = [2003] 118), unde εὐδ‹α›ίμονα τιμὴ‹ν› legendum (cf. iam Segal 411) potius quam εὔδ‹α›ιμον {α} τιμῆ‹ν› || **7** καὶ σὺ μὲν εἶς Luppe 14 : καπυμενεις lam. : κἀπιμένει σ' potius quam κἀπομένει σ' Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou 15 (et. quam κἀπιμένεις vel κἀπιμενεῖς p. 16, quod prob. Follet 450) : κἀπιμενεῖς praeferunt Jordan 130 et Follet 450 | τελέσας (vel τελέσασ') ἅπερ Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou 16, prob. Luppe 14 et Follet 450: τελεασαπερ lam. : τέλεα ἅσσαπερ praeferunt Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou 15, prob. Gigante (1989) 28 et Segal 411 : quod dubitavit Guard. 19 adn. 15, iure ut opinamur : τέλεα 'σ‹σ›απερ dub. prop. Jordan

L 7B

Νῦν ἔθανε‹ς› καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἅματι ‹τῶι›δε.
‹ε›ἰπ[ε]ῖν Φερσφό‹ναι σ'› ὅτι Βά‹κ›χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.
ταῦρος ἐ‹ς› γάλα ἔθορ‹ε›ς.
κριὸς ἐς γάλα ἔπεσε‹ς›.
οἶνον ἔχεις εὐδ‹αί›μον‹α› τιμήν. 5

cf. L 7a

L 8 (*FR.* 487 B.)

lamella aurea saec. IV a. C. Thuriis reperta in sepulcro ('Timpone grande'), nunc Neapoli (Museo Nazionale 111463) servata, prim. ed. Fiorelli (1879) 156ss (ex Barnabei apographo), cum adnotatione Comparetti (1882) 114s; Kaibel, IG XIV 642; Rohde (²1897) 220s, adn. 4; Harrison (²1908) 583ss (et Murray in appendice 662s); Comparetti (1910) 6ss; Alline (1912); Dieterich (²1913) 85 adn. 2; Olivieri (1915) 15ss; Kern (1922) fr. 32 f; Diels-Kranz, Vorsokr. 1 B 20; Ziegler (1939) 1386ss; Guthrie (²1952) 173ss; Zuntz (1971) 328s (A 4); Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 116s; Guarducci (1974) 24s; Colli (1977) 184 (fr. 4 [A 67]); Guarducci (1978) 268; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 357; Lloyd-Jones (1984) 272ss (= [1990] 98ss); Velasco (1990–1991) 538ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 60s (optimam imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies in p. 61); Camassa (1994) 174ss; Riedweg (1996) 479s; eund. (1998) 368ss; Merkelbach (1999) 9s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 35; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 131ss; 268ss; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 112s; Riedweg (2002); Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 114s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 72s; 129ss (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 8s; Santamaría Álvarez (nondum ed.)

Ἀλλ' ὁπόταν ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος ἀελίοιο,
δεξιὸν ἐς θίασ‹ον› δεῖ {ξ} ‹σ'› ἰ‹έ›ναι πεφυλαγμένον εὖ μάλα πάντα·
χαῖρε παθὼν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὔπω πρόσθ'{ε} ἐπεπόνθεις·
θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες.
χαῖρ‹ε› χαῖρε· δεξιὰν ὁδοιπόρ‹ει› 5
λειμῶνάς θ'{ε} ἱεροὺς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας.

lamella novies plicata erat, qua de causa rugis cooperta est et lectori plurimas difficultates affert || **1** οποταμ lam. || **2** ἐς θίασ‹ον› δεῖ {ξ} ‹σ'› ἰ‹έ›ναι Santamaría (coll. L 13a, 1 πέμπε με πρὸς μυστῶν θιάσους : ε*θίασδεξιναι leg. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 60 (= [2001a] 112s = [2003] 115), unde ε‹ὐ?›θείας δ' ἐξι‹έ›ναι temptavit : δεξιὸν †εσοιασδεετ† ‹ἰέ›ναι Zuntz 329 : δεξιὸν ε...οιας (fort. ῥοίας?) δεῖ τινα Dieterich 85 adn. 2 : δεξιὸν ἐννοίας δεῖ τινα Comparetti (1882) : δεξιὸν ε‹ἰ›σι‹έ›ναι {δεῖ τινα} Rohde : δεξιὸν εὐοδιᾶι {δεῖ τινα} Diels, Vorksokr.[1] : δεξιὸν ἔνθ' ἃς δεῖ {τινα} Diels, Vorsokr.[3] : δεξιὸν ε‹ὖ›σ‹ι›θι ἃς δεῖ τινα Diels-Kranz, Vorsokr.[5] : ε‹ἰ›ς ὁ‹σ›ίας (vel ἐξ οἴας) διέναι Gallavotti : versum ex duobus coaluisse putat Kaibel (qui δεξιὸν ε‹ὖ›σ‹ι›θι, ὧς

δε‹ῖ› . . . / . . . τ‹ι›να legit), prob. Alline, Kranz (qui ἃς pro ὡς prop.), Olivieri (qui tempt. ε‹ἰ›ς οἴ‹μ›ας δ' ἐ‹νέρων› . . . / . . . εἶ›{ε}ναι) et Murray (qui prop. δεξιόν, Ἐννοίας [Εὐνοίας iam Harrison] ἀεί τινα ‹ποσσὶ φέρεσθαι / χριμπτόμενον κρανᾶς›, quamquam et. in δεῖ τινα compendium quoque Δε‹σπο›ί‹νας ὕδα›τι ‹λίμ›να‹ς abditum esse coniecit) : aliter rem explicavit Riedweg (1998) 386; vid. § 3.1 | πεφυλαγμένος Rohde | post πεφυλαγμένον dist. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 60 | εἰ‹δ›υ‹ῖα› Colli 182 | versus heptam. est || **3** τό τ' οὔπω Kaibel, qui post πάθημα dist. | πρόσθ'{ε} Kaibel : τόδ' οὔπω Murray || **4** versus metro dactylico repugnat, ut opinamur, quia formula in ritu pronuntiabatur | ερυφος lam. (Olivieri ι ex υ ut videtur) || **5** itidem contra metrum dactylicum | ὁδοιπόρ‹ει› Zuntz 329 : ὁδοιπορ‹ῶν› Comparetti (1910) prob. Olivieri, Kern, Diels-Kranz : οδοιπορ lam. || **6** λειμῶνάς θ'{ε} Comparetti (1910) 10 : λειμῶνάς τε lam. | κατ' ἄλσεα ortum ex κατὰ δ' ἄλσεα sec. Comparetti (1910) 10 : κατά ‹τ'› ἄλσεα Kaibel, Diels : at καὶ ἄλσεα def. Rohde

L 9–10A-B (*FRR.* 488–490 B.)

lamellae aureae tres saec. IV a. C. Thuriis repertae in sepulcro ('Timpone piccolo'), nunc Neapoli in Museo Nazionale (111625, 111623, 111624) servatae, prim. ed. Fiorelli (1879) 155ss (ex Barnabei apographo), cum adnotatione Comparetti; cf. et. Bücheler (1881) 331ss; Comparetti (1882) 115ss; IG XIV 641; GDI II 1654 (p. 161); Dieterich (1891) 30ss (= [1911] 91ss); Rohde (^{2}1897) 217ss; Diels (1907); Harrison (^{2}1908) 585ss (et Murray in appendice 667s); Comparetti (1910) 17ss; Radermacher (1912); Eitrem (1915) 54s; Olivieri (1915) 4ss (facs. p. 26s); Pfeiffer (1916) 129s; Kern (1916) 556; eund. (1922) frr. 32c–e; Diels-Kranz, Vorsokr. I B 18s; Ziegler (1939) 1386ss; Guthrie (^{2}1952) 173ss; Reinhardt (^{2}1959) 198s; Lampugnani (1967); Zuntz (1971) 300ss; Festugière (1972) 37; 48ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 115s; Guarducci (1974) 12ss; Burkert (1975) 93ss; Colli (1977) 180ss (fr. 4 [A 66]ab); Guarducci (1978) 267; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 358; Lloyd-Jones (1984) 272ss (= [1990] 98ss); Velasco (1990–1991) 313ss; Casadio (1991b) 135s; di Filippo Balestrazzi (1991); Giangrande (1991b); Bottini (1992) 27ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 50ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (1995a) 82s; Camassa (1994), 174ss; Calame (1996) 20; Riedweg (1996) 483ss; eund. (1998) 392s; Burkert (1999) 67s; Merkelbach (1999) 7ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 34; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 135ss; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 98ss; 270s; Riedweg (2002); Tzifopoulos (2002) 156s; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 98ss; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 74ss; 132ss (cum imaginibus lucis ope confectis in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 12ss | optimas imagines lucis ope confectas invenies in Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 51; 53; 55

L 9

Ἔρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῶ‹ν› κοθαρά, χθονί‹ων› βασίλεια,
Εὐκλῆς Εὐβο‹υ›λεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὔχομαι εἶμεν.

ἀλ‹λ›ά με Μο‹ῖ›ρ'{α} ἐδάμασ‹σ›ε {καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι} καὶ
ἀσ{σ}τεροβλῆτα κ‹ε›ραυνῶι.
κύκλο‹υ› δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο, 5
ἱμερτο‹ῦ› δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνο‹υ› ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι,
δεσ{σ}ποίνας δ'{ε} ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας·
{ιμερτοδαπέβανστεμανουποσικαρπασιμοισι}
'ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔσηι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο'.
ἔριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον. 10

litteram O pro OY scalptor semper scripsit || **1** κοθαρο lam. : corr. edd. | post κοθαρῶν distinxerunt GDI; Murray 667; Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 115s; iterum (1993) 50ss (= [2001a] 99 = [2003] 99) : post κοθαρά potius Bücheler 334; Rohde 218 adn.1; Diels 46; Olivieri 5; Festugière 51 adn. 8 et al. || **4** {καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι} ut dittographiam ex v. 2 del. Kaibel, prob. Olivieri 4; Zuntz 301; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 54 (= [2001a] 103 = [2003] 106); duos versus efficere conati sunt Comparetti 17; Murray 669 (qui et. unum textum e tribus lamellis conficiendum putat); Diels-Kranz 16; Colli 178 | καὶ] κατ' Bücheler | ἀστεροπητὰ Weil | κεραυνῶι Zuntz 301 : κεραυνόν lam. : textum traditum defenderunt Comparetti, Kern, Diels-Kranz : κεραυνός Kaibel : κεραυνῶν Dieterich, Olivieri, Weil, Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 116; iterum (1993) 54 (= [2001a] 103 = [2003] 106) || **6** ἱμερτο‹ῦ›...στεφάνο‹υ› Comparetti : ιμερτο...στεφανο lam. : ἱμερτὸ‹ν›...στεφανὸ‹ν› GDI (iterum v. 10) | καρπασιμοισι lam. || **8** ut dittographiam ex v. 6 recte del. Kaibel prob. Olivieri, Zuntz 301 : textum traditum (corr. ἱμερτο‹ῦ›...στεφάνο‹υ› et καρπαλίμοισι) def. Eitrem, prob. Kern, Colli 178 et Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 56 (= [2001a] 103s = [2003] 106)

L 10A

Ἔρχομα‹ι› ἐ‹κ› κα‹θα›ρῶν {σχονων} καθαρά, χ‹θ›ονίων βασίλ{η}ει‹α›,
Εὖκλε καὶ Εὐβουλεῦ {ι} καὶ θεοὶ ‹καὶ› δαίμο‹ν›ε‹ς› ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένο‹ς› εὔχομαι ὄλβιον εἶναι
πο‹ι›νὰν δ' ἀνταπέ{ι}τε{σε}ι‹σ›' ἔργων ἕνεκ'{α} οὔτι δικα‹ί›ων.
εἴτε με Μο‹ῖ›ρ'{α} ἐδάμασ‹σ›' {ατο} εἴτ'{ε} ἀστεροπῆτα κ‹ε›ραυνῶν. 5
νῦν δ' ἱκέτι‹ς› ἥκω πα‹ρα›ὶ ἁγνὴ‹ν› Φε‹ρ›σεφόνε‹ι›αν,
ὥς με{ι} πρόφ‹ρ›ω‹ν› πέμψη‹ι› ἕδρας ἐς εὐαγέ{ι}ων.

1 Ἔρχομα‹ι› ἐ‹κ› κα‹θα›ρῶν {σχονων} Olivieri (χονων recte pro dittogr. ex χθονίων habens) : ερχομαεκαροισχονων lam. : Ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν, χθονίων (versum heptametrum interpretans) Giangrande 86 | de interpunctione vid. adn. ad L 9, 1 | χ‹θ›ονίων βασίλ{η}ει‹α› Olivieri : χονιωνβασιληει lam. || **2** Εὖκλε] formam pro Εὖκλες defendit Bücheler 332 [412] | Εὐβουλεῦ {ι} Olivieri : Εὐβουλεὺς leg. Comparetti | καὶ θεοὶ ‹καὶ› δαίμονες ἄλλοι Murray 668, prob. Colli : καιθεοιδαιμονεαλλοι lam. : καὶ ‹ὅσοι› θεοὶ δαίμονες Radermacher 472, prob. Diels et Kern : iure repugnavit Zuntz 309 || **3** γὰρ edd. : γρα lam. | ὄλβιον Comparetti : ὄλβιοι lam. || **4** πο‹ι›νὰν δ' ἀνταέ{ι}τε{σε}ι‹σ'›

Olivieri, Kern : ποναιδανταπειτεσειεργωι lam. || **4–5** ἕνεκ'{α} et Μο‹ῖ›ρ'{α} metri causa correximus || **5** εὗτε Weil | 'post μο litt. ι ruga hausta esse potest' Zuntz 302 | ἐδάμασ‹σ›'{ατο} εἴτε (εἴτ'{ε} scripsimus) Kaibel, Olivieri : εδαμασατοειτε lam. : ἐδάμασ‹σ›ατο εἴτε Kern, Gallavotti : ἐδάμασ‹σ›ατο εἰ {τε} Colli 180 (qui et. secl. α sequens) : ἐδάμασ‹σ›ατ'{ο} ὅ τ' Weil : at verbum medium difficile : ἐδάμασ‹σ'› ἆτο‹ς› εἴτε Reinhardt 199: ἐδάμασ‹σ'› αὖον ειτε Comparetti : ἐδάμασατο (?) Diels, qui post hoc verbum lacunam statuit (monente Murray) | ἀστεροπῆτα (ἀστεροπητὰ Weil) κ‹ε›ραυνῶν Weil, Kaibel, Olivieri, Gallavotti (cf. Tit. Camir. 142 Ζηνὸς Ἀστραπάτα) : αστεροπητικραυνων litt. ν in fine supra lineam scripta lam. : ἀστεροπῆτι κ‹ε›ραυνῶν Zuntz 302 : ἀστεροπῆτι ‹καὶ› κεραυνῶ Murray : στεροπῆτι (iam Radermacher 475) κ‹ε›ραυνῶι Gruppe, Diels, Reinhardt 199 | στεροπή τε κ‹ε›ραυνῶ[ν Comparetti, Colli 180 at ut trip enh interpretavit Gallavotti 358 || **6** ἱκέτι‹ς› ἥκω Kern, Diels-Kranz, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 50 (= [2001a] 99 = [2003] 99) : ικετιικω lam. : ἱκέτι‹ς› ἵκω Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 116, Colli, Gallavotti : ἱκέτη‹ς› ἥκω Olivieri | πα‹ρα›ὶ ἁγνὴ‹ν› Gallavotti quod metro melius consentit : παρ‹ὰ› ἁγνὴ‹ν› Colli 180 : παρ' ἁγνὴ‹ν› Comparetti : παιαγνη lam. : παρ' ἁγ‹αυ›ὴ‹ν› Diels-Kranz, Kern | Φε‹ρ›σεφόνε[ι]αν Comparetti : Φε‹ρ›σεφόνεαν Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 50 (= [2001a] 99 = [2003] 99) : φεσεφονεαν lam. || **7** ὥς με{ι} πρόφ‹ρ›ω‹ν› πέμψη‹ι› Olivieri : ὥς με{ι} πρόφ‹ρ›ω‹ν› πέμψει‹εν› Gallavotti : ωσμειπρόφωπειψη lam. | ἕδρας leg. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 50 (= [2001a] 99 = [2003] 99) : ἕδραις (corrigendum in ἕδρας) cet. edd. | ἐς εὐαγέ{ι}ων Olivieri : εσευαγειωι lam. : ε‹ὶ›ς εὐαγέων Kern : ε‹ὶ›ς εὐαγε‹όν›τω‹ν› Diels-Kranz | versus vitiosus : pentametrum (leg. ἕδρᾰς) agn. Kaibel, Epigr. 702, Radermacher 473 : angel. sec. Gallavotti

L 10B

Ἔρχομαι ἐ‹κ› καθαρῶ‹ν› καθ‹αρά, χθ›ο‹νίων› βασίλ‹ει›α
Εὖκλε {υα} κα‹ὶ› Εὐβο‹υ›λεῦ καὶ θεοὶ ‹καὶ› {ὅσοι} δ‹αί›μονες ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐ‹γ›ὼ‹ν› ὑ‹μῶν› γένος εὔχομα‹ι› ‹ὄλβιον› ε‹ἶ›ν‹α›ι {ὄλβιο}
ποινὰν ‹δ'› ἀνταπέτε‹ισ'› ἔργω‹ν ἕνεκ'› ο‹ὕ›τι δικα‹ί›ων.
ε‹ἴ›τ‹ε› με Μοῖρ'{α} ‹ἐδάμασσ'› ε‹ἴτε' ἀσ›τεροπῆτα {κη} κεραυνῶ‹ν›. 5
νῦν δ'{ε} ‹ἱ›κ‹έτις› ἥκω {ιικω} παρ‹αὶ› ἁ‹γνὴν› Φ‹ερ›σε‹φόνειαν›,
ὥς {λ} με ‹π›ρόφ‹ρων› πέ[μ]ψ‹ηι› {μ} ἕδρας ἐς εὐ‹α›γ‹έων›.

scriba lamell. rect. (v. 1–4 δι-) et vers. (v. 4 α‹ί›ων – 7) scripsit, qua de causa litterarum haud parva confusio est || **1** Ἔρχομαι ἐκ ‹κ›αθαρῶ‹ν› καθ‹αρά, χθ›ο‹νίων› βασίλ‹ει›α Comparetti : ερχομαιεκαθαρωκαθοβασιλ*α lam. || **2** {να} del. edd. : υρ leg. Olivieri : unde ‹Κο›ύρ‹η› supplendum dub. prop. | κα‹ὶ› Εὐβο‹υ›λεῦ Comparetti : καευβολευ lam. | καὶ θεοὶ ‹καὶ› Murray | recte οσοι del. Zuntz 309s pro dittographia e θεοι habens | δ‹αί›μονες ἄλλοι Comparetti : δμονεσαλλοι lam. || **3** ἐ‹γ›ὼ‹ν› Olivieri, Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 116, Zuntz 305, Colli : ἐ‹γ›ὼ Comparetti, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 52 (= [2001a] 101 = [2003] 102) : εω lam. | ὑ‹μῶν›...εὔχομα‹ι› Comparetti : υ...ευχομα lam. | ὄλβιον ante ε‹ἶ›ν‹α›ι iure transposuit Zuntz 305; 310s | ε‹ἶ›ν‹α›ι Comparetti :

ενα lam. || **4** ποινὰν – δικα‹ί›ων Comparetti (ἕνεκα om. Pugliese Carratelli [1993] 52 = [2001a] 101 = [2003] 102) : ποιανναταπετεεργωοτιδικα̣ων lam. || **5** de versu restituendo vid. app. crit. L 10a, 5 : ετμεμοιραετεροπητι κηκεραυνο lam. || **6** de versu sanando vid. app. crit. L 10a, 6 | νῦν δὲ ‹ἰ›κ‹έτις› Colli 182 (potius δ'{ε} metri causa) : νῦν δ' ἐ‹π›ήκ‹οον› Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 52 (= [2001a] 101 = [2003] 102) : νυνδεκ lam. | ἥκω παρὰ Φ‹ερ›σεφ‹όνειαν› Colli 182, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 52 (= [2001a] 101 = [2003] 102) : ηκωιικωπαραφσε* lam. || **7** de versu restituendo vid. app. crit. L 10a, 7 : ωσλμεροφπε[.] ψεμεδρασεσευγ lam.

L 11 (*FR.* 491 B.)

lamella aurea c. a. 260 p. C. Romae reperta (fort. in sepulcreto viae Ostiensis), nunc in Museo Britannico (3154) servata, prim. ed. Comparetti (1903); cf. et. Diels (1907) 39ss; Harrison (^{2}1908) 585ss (et Murray in appendice 672s); Comparetti (1910) 42ss; Marshall (1911) 380s (n. 3154); Olivieri (1915) 18; Kern (1916) 555s; eund. (1922) fr. 32g; Diels-Kranz, Vorsokr. 1 B 19a; Lagrange (1937) 140ss; Zuntz (1971) 333ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 117; Guarducci (1974) 13ss; West (1975) 231; Marcovich (1976) 222s; Guarducci (1978) 269; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 359; Lloyd-Jones (1984) 273ss (= [1990] 99ss); Kotansky (1991) 114; Velasco (1990–1991) 637; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 38s; Kotansky (1994) 107ss; Riedweg (1996) 479; Chicoteau (1997) 81ss; Riedweg (1998) 370; 394; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 96s; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 179ss; 273; Riedweg (2002) 466; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 96s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 110s; 147s (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 18s | optimam imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies in Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 39

> Ἔρχεται ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρά, χθονίων βασίλεια,
> Εὔκλεες Εὐβουλεῦ τε Διὸς τέκος· ἀλλὰ <u>δέχεσθε</u>
> Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον ἀοίδιμον ἀνθρώποισιν.
> 'Καικιλία Σεκουνδεῖνα, νόμωι ἴθι δ̣ῖα γεγῶσα.'

1 de interpunctione vid. app. crit. L 8, 1 || **2** ἀλλὰ <u>δέχεσθε</u> West 231, prob. Graf-Johnston (at repugnante Marcovich 223) : αλ(vel γ?)λαaεχωδε lam. : unde ἀπα‹λ›ά. ἔχω δὲ ed. pr. : ἀγλαά· ἔχω δὲ Diels, prob. Kotansky (1994), Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 38 (= [2001a] 96 = [2003] 97) et Tortorelli Ghidini, interpungens τέκος, ἀγλαά. «ἔχω δὲ…ἀνθρώποισιν» (unde ἀγλά' {α}· ἔχω δὲ Olivieri), at haec nostra sententia vix sana, vid. § 5.1 : ὅπλα δ' ἔχ' ὧδε Murray (interpungens post Μνημοσύνης) || **4** Σεκουνδεῖνα 'scanned, apparently, Σ'κουνδεῖνα' Murray (Σκουνδ- scripsit Diels 1 B 19a) | ἴθι δ̣ῖα ('oder θια [= θείᾰ] = δῖα' in app. crit.) γεγῶσα Diels 1 B 19a : ἴθι θία (i.e. θεία) γεγῶσα Diels (1907) (cui repugnavit Comparetti [1910] 44 adn. 1 ad p. 43) : ἀεὶ διαγεγῶσα ed. pr. : ἴδ' ἰδία γεγῶσα Gallavotti 359

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lamella aurea saec. IV–III a. C. Thuriis reperta in sepulcro ('Timpone grande'), plicata ut involucrum alterius lamellae Thurinae (L 8), hodie Neapoli Mus. Nazionale (111464) servata; notulas tantum edidit Comparetti (1878–1879) 329; Bücheler (1881); prim. ed. Diels (1902); iterum Diels-Kranz 1 B 21, textum ita restitutum repetit Kern (1922) 47, cf. et Comparetti (1910) 12ss; denuo interpretari conati sunt Murray (1908) 664ss; Olivieri (1915) 22ss; Zuntz (1971) 344ss (cf. Burkert [1974] 326); Colli (1977) 184s (fr. 4 [A 68]); Velasco (1990–1991) 592; Bottini (1992) 36; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 66s (optimam imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies in p. 67); Riedweg (1998); Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 183ss; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 125ss; 273ss; Bernabé (2002c); Riedweg (2002) 460s; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 129ss; Betegh (2004); eund. (ined.) Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 68ss; 128s (cum imaginibus lucis ope confectis in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 10s

Πρωτογόνω‹ι› ΤΗΜΑΙΤΙΕΤΗ Γᾶι̲ ματρί ΕΠΑ Κυβελεία‹ι› Κόρρα‹ι›
ΟΣΕΝΤΑΙΗ Δήμητρος ΗΤ
ΤΑ̇ΤΑΙΤΤΑΤΑΠΤΑ Ζεῦ ΙΑΤΗΤΥ ἀέρ ΣΑΠ̣Τ̣Α Ἥλιε, πῦρ δὴ π̣άντα
ΣΤΗΙΝΤΑΣΤΗΡΩΣΑΤΟΠΕ νικᾶι Μ̣
ΣΗΔΕ Τύχα ΙΤΕ Φάνης, πάμ̲νηστοι Μοῖρα ΣΣΤΗΤΟΙΓ̣ΑΝΝΥΑ-
ΠΙΑΝΤΗ σὺ κλ̲υτὲ δαῖμον ΔΕ̇ΥΧΙ
Σ πάτερ ΑΤΙΚ παντο̲δαμάστα ΠΑΝΤΗΡΝΥΝΤΑΙΣΕΛΑΒΔΟΝΤΑΔΕΠ
ἀντα̲μοιβή ΣΤΛΗΤΕΑΣΤΛ
ΤΗΜΗ ἀέρ Ι πῦρ ΜΕΜ Μᾶτερ ΛΥΕΣΤΙΣΟ̣Ι̣ΔΕΝΤΑΤΟ Νῆστι̲ Ν
νύξ ΙΝΗΜΕΦ ἡμέρ̣α ΜΕΡΑΝΕΓΛΧ̣ΥΕΣ 5
ἐπ̲τῆμαρ ΤΙ νήστιας ΤΑΝ Ζεῦ ἐνορύττιε(?) καὶ πανόπτα. αἰέν
Α̣ΙΜΙΥ* Μᾶτερ, ἐμᾶς ἐπ-
ά̲κο̲υσον ΕΟ εὐχᾶς ΤΑΚΤΑΠΥΑ̣ΡΣΥΟ̣ΛΚΑΠΕΔΙΩΧΑΜΑ̣ΤΕΜΑΝ
καλ{η}ὰ Δ ἱερά ΔΑΜΝΕΥΔΑΜΝΟΙ
Ω̣ΤΑΚΤΗΡ ἱερά ΜΑΡ Δημῆτερ, πῦρ, Ζεῦ, Κόρη Χθ̲ονία
ΤΡΑΒΔΑ̣Η̣ΤΡΟΣΗΡΩΣΤΗΟΙΣΤΝ
ἥρως ΝΗ̇ΓΑΥΝΗ φ̲άος ἐς φρένα ΜΑΤ̣Α̣ΙΜΗΤΝΝΤΗΣΝΥΣΧΑ̣
μ̲ήστωρ εἶλε Κο̲ύρην
αἶα ΦΗΡΤΟΝΟΣΣΜΜΟ̣ΕΣΤΟΝ ἀέρ ΤΑΙΠΛΝΙΛ̣ΛΥ̣ ἐς φρένα
ΜΑΡ*ΤΩΣ̣ 10

nostra sententia deorum nomina epithetaque et quaedam formulae mysticae consulto inter litteras nihil significantes et verba sensum non conformantes collocatae sunt, non magico sed mystico modo, ut haud initiati illas legere nequirent; initiati autem formulas et nomina illis nota legere poterant discernentes significantia a non significantibus, simili modo atque nos hodie legimus ludicra quae Anglice 'word searching' vocantur, cf. Bernabé-Jiménez 183ss; Bernabé 55ss | verba quae significationem habent nec carmen nec textum prosaicum efficiunt, neque effecerunt; immo sunt verba singula vel frustula orationis: Πρωτογόνω̲‹ι› (an -ος?), Γᾶι̲ ματρί, Κυβελεία‹ι› Κόρρα‹ι› Δήμητρος | Ζεῦ ἀέρ,

Ἥλιε | πῦρ δὴ πάντα νικᾶι | Τύχα, Φάνης, πάμνηστοι Μοῖραι | σὺ κλυτὲ δαῖμον, πάτερ πάντοδαμάστα | ἀνταμοιβή | ἀέρ, πῦρ, Μᾶτερ, Νῆστι, νύξ, ἡμέρα | ἑπτῆμαρ νήστιας | Ζεῦ ἐνορύττιε (?) καὶ πανόπτα | αἰέν | Μᾶτερ, ἐμᾶς ἐπάκουσον εὐχᾶς | καλ{η}ὰ ἱερά | ἱερά, (an ἱερὰ?) Δημῆτερ, πῦρ, Ζεῦ, Κόρη Χθονία | ἥρως | φάος ἐς φρένα | μήστωρ εἶλε Κούρην | αἶα, ἀέρ | ἐς φρένα, sed haec inter se valde congruentia, quia de carminibus vel de sententiis in ritu dictis fluxerunt et ad unam tantum religionem attinent || **1** Πρωτογόνω‹ι› Diels (1902) : Πρωτόγονο‹ς› Olivieri fort. rectius (quod et. praefert Riedweg per litt.) : Πρατογόνωι Diels, Vorsokr. : Πρωτόγονε Murray : ΠΡΩΤΟΓΟΝΟ lam. | ΤΗΜΑΙΤΙΕΤΗ] Γῆ‹ι› μα{ι}τ‹ρ›ὶ ἔφη Diels : τῆ‹ι› vel Γῆ‹ι›…Zuntz : Γῆ Μητίετα Murray : Γῆ Μητιέτη‹ς› Olivieri : τε Μῆ{ι}τίς τε Colli | Γᾶι ματρί – scripsimus : Γᾶ‹ι› (vel τᾶ‹ι›) ματρὶ ἔφα Zuntz : παμματρ{ι}εία dub. Murray : παμματριέπα Olivieri : παμμάτ‹ω›ρι ἔφα Colli : πάμματρι i. e. Rheae dub. leg. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 67 (= [2001a] 126 = [2003] 131), prob. Tortorelli Ghidini : ΓΑΜΜΑΤΡΙΕΠΑ lam. : pro dittographia habuit Diels | Κυβελεία‹ι› Κόρρα‹ι› scripsimus : Κυβελήια Κόρρα Diels : Κυβελεία Κόρρα Murray : Κυβέλεια κόρρα Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 67 (= [2001a] 127 = [2003] 131) : ΚΥΒΕΛΕΙΑΚΟΡΡΑ lam. | ΟΣΕΝΤΑΙΗ] ὀσ‹ί›η {ν} παῖς dub. Murray : ὅσ' ἐν ταῖς Colli : ὃς ἐν τᾶι – dub. Riedweg per litteras | Δήμητρος – Diels || **1–2** ΗΤ/ΤΑΤΑΙ] ἠττᾶται ‹σοι› Olivieri (cf. Riedweg [2002] 460 adn. 7) || **2** ΤΤΑΤΑΠΤΑ] πανόπτα Diels : πα‹ν›τόπτα dub. Murray : πά‹ν›τα ‹τὰ› π‹άν›τα Olivieri | Ζεῦ Diels | ΙΑΤΗ] ἰατὴ‹ρ› Olivieri : ἰατὴ‹ρ› vel πατὴ‹ρ› Zuntz : Ἰάτη Murray |– ἀέρ – scripsimus : τυ αερ – Zuntz : τὺ δὲ {ρ} Σα‹ρά›πι {α} dub. Murray : τὺ ἀερσάπ‹αν›τα Olivieri : ΤΥΑΕΡΣΑΠΤΑ lam. | Ἥλιε Diels | πῦρ δὴ πάντα – scripsimus : πῦρ δὴ πάντ' ἄστη (vel πάντας τὴν) – Zuntz : πῦρ διὰ πάντ' ἄστη {ινταστη} νίσ‹ε›αι ὅτε Diels : πυραύη φανταστὴ φανταστὴ ἑκατο…ιε Murray : Πῦρ δηιανταστὴ{ι}ς ‹δηιαν›ταστής, ἰσότ‹ρ›οπε Olivieri : ΠΥΡΔΗΠΑΝΤΑΣΤΗΙΝΤΑΣΤΗΡΩΣ (ΗΡΩΣ Betegh ined. ΗΝΙΣ cet.) : Α ΤΟΠΕ lam. || **2–3** νικᾶι – Τύχα – Φάνης scripsimus : Νίκαι{μ}ς ἠδὲ Τύχαις ἐφάνης Diels qui add. ‹καὶ ὁμοῦ› : Νίκα ἴ{μ}ση δὲ Τύχα· ἴτε Φάνης Murray (qui et. lect. Dielsianam possibilem habet) : ε)νικαι(· σ)ἠδὲ τύχαι τ' εφανῆς (vel τε Φάνης) Zuntz : ΝΙΚΑΙΜ/ΣΗΔΕΤΥΧΑΙΤΕΦΑΝΗΣ lam. || **3** πάμνηστοι Μοῖραι Colli : πάμμηστοι Μοῖραι vel παμμήδεσι Μοίραις Murray : παμμήστο‹ρ›ι Μοίραι{σσ} (vel Μοίραις Zuntz) Diels, Zuntz : ΠΑΜΜΗΣΤΟΙΜΟΙΡΑΙΣΣ lam. | – σὺ κλυτὲ δαῖμον Colli :…(ἀ)πάν(τη) τῆ‹ι› (vel σὺ κλυτὲ) δαῖμον Zuntz : τῆ‹ι› τοι γάννυα (= γάνεα Bücheler) πια‹ί›ν‹εις› τῆ‹ι› σῆι κλυτὲ δαῖμον Diels, Vorsokr. : σή τοι πάντ' ἀνύει, τηλύκλυτε δαῖμον Diels (1902) : στῆτοι (?) παντανυσταὶ (?) ‹ε›ὕκλητε Δαῖμον Murray : – γάννυα πιαντὴς ‹ε›ὕκλητε Δαῖμον Olivieri : ΤΗΤ ΟΙΓΑΝΝΥΑΠΙΑΝΤΗΣΥΚΛΗΤΕΔΑΡΜΟΝ lam. || **3–4** – πάτερ – scripsimus : – εὐχῇς (vel δ' εὐχῇ‹ι›) πατερ(α) – Zuntz : δε{υ}ξι‹ὸν› Σ πάτερ ΑΤΙΚ Tortorelli Ghidini : δε{υχι}σποτεία‹ι› τὶν Diels, Vorsokr. : δε{υχι}σποεία· τὶν Diels (1902) : δέ{υχι}σποτα Ἰάτη (?) Murray : Ζεὺ{χι}ς πατὴρ ‹κρ›άτι‹στος› κ‹αὶ› Olivieri : ΔΕΥΧΙ/ΣΠΑΤΕΡΑΤΙΚ lam. || **4** παντοδαμάστα Olivieri : παντοδάμαστα Murray : πάντα δαμαστά, ‹τὰ› Diels : πάντ' ἀδάμαστα (vel πάντα δάμα‹ι›ς τὰ) Zuntz : ΠΑΝΤΑΔΑΜΑΣΤΑ lam. | ΠΑΝΤΗΡΝΥΝΤΑ] παντήρνυντα (= παντοκράτυνα?) Murray : παντηρνύντα Olivieri : πάντ(η) vel πάντ' – -ντα (vel -νταις cum seq. ΙΣ) Zuntz : πάντα κρατυντά Diels | ΙΣΕΛΑΒΔΟΝΤΑ] {ισ}ἐμβρόντ‹ητ›α Diels :

{ισ}ἐλα‹σί›βροντα Murray, quod dub. prob. Zuntz (tamen et. tempt. ἐλαβον(τα) vel -οντα) : ἴσ' ἐμβρόντα Olivieri (cf. ἐμβροντάω) | – ἀντα̲μοιβή – scripsimus : ‹ἠ›δὲ πανταμοιβὴς Olivieri : δὲ πάντ' ἐμοὶ – vel δὲ πάντ' ἐ‹π'ἀ›μοιβῆς Zuntz : δὲ πάντα̲ ‹τὰ› Μοίρης Diels : δ‹ρ›επάνι̲ε (?) – Murray : ΕΠΑΝΤΕΜΟΙΒΗΣ lam. | ΤΛΗΤΕΑ] τλητέα Diels || **4–5** ΣΤΛ/ΤΗ] πάντη Diels : σύνιτε̲ dub. Olivieri || **5** – ἀέρ – scripsimus : μητέρι Diels : μὴ ἀέρι Murray : μὴ ἀέρι‹ε› Olivieri : ΜΗΑΕΡΙ lam. | πῦρ – Μᾶτερ – Νῆστι̲ – scripsimus : πῦρ – μᾶτερ – ἐστί (vel λύες τι) σοι – ἐπτὰ – (vel ε̲πτατο) νῆστιν (vel ε̲πτατονηι̲σιν) Zuntz : πῦρ μὲν μ' ἆχ{ε} εἰ νέστις οἰδ' ‹ὑπομεῖναι› ἑπτά τε νῆστιν Diels : πύωμ' ἔμ μοι ἐπαύης, (?) τίσω̲ – ἐπτατόνηστιν Murray : Πῦρ με, μμᾶτερ, α̲ὖε †στισο† ἰδέ· ἑπτὰ τὸ νηστ‹εύε›ιν (vel τὸ νῆσ{σ}‹τ›ιν ‹εἶναι› Olivieri : ΠΥΡΜΕΜΜΑΤΕΡΛΥΕΣΤΙΣΟΙΛ-ΕΝΤΑΤΟΝΗΣΣΙΝ lam. | νύξ – ἡμέρα – scripsimus : νυξὶν ἢ μεθ' ἡμέραν Diels (ipse dub. in Vorsokr.) : ΝΥΞΙΝΗΜΕΦΗΜΕΡΑΝ lam. | ΕΓΛΧΥΕΣ] ἐλινύεν Diels, Vorsokr. : εἶναι Diels (1902) : ἐγῶ – Murray : ἐκ‹έ›λευες Olivieri || **6** ἐπτῆμαρ Diels : an ἐννῆμαρ? Zuntz : ΕΠΠΗΜΑΡ lam. | – νήστιας Zuntz : τὶν ‹ν›ῆστις ἔην Diels : τὴν ‹ν›ηστιαστὺν (?) Murray : τὴ‹ν› νηστιαστάν, vel τὴ‹ν› νηστ‹ε›ί{αστ}αν Olivieri : ΤΙΝΗΣΤΙΑΣΤΑΝ lam. | Ζεῦ Diels | ἐνορύττιε Murray : ἐνορύττιε vel ἐριούνιε Olivieri : Ὀλύμπιε Diels | καὶ πανόπτα Diels | αἰέν Colli : Ἅ‹λ›ιε Diels : δῖε Murray prob. Olivieri : Ἅ‹λ›ιε vel αἴε vel δι̲ε Zuntz | – μᾶτερ (Μᾶ- ηος), ἐμᾶς Zuntz : iam ‹ὅμ›νυμι {υ}· μᾶτερ, ἐμᾶς Olivieri : να{ιμιυ}ματιαῖε (?) – Murray : ΑΙΜΙΥ*ΜΑΤΕΡΕΜΑΣ lam. || **6–7** ἐπ‹άκ›ουσον {εο} εὐχᾶς ‹ἀσ›τάκτα πυρὸς (πυρᾶς Zuntz) Olivieri, Zuntz : – δυσσεβέων ἄστακτα πυρὸς Diels, Vorsokr. in app. crit. : ἐκπ‹ι›δύσετε ῥεῦ‹μ'› ἄστακτα πυρὸς Murray : ΕΠ/ΩΥΣΟΝΕΟΕΥΧΑΣΤΑΚΤΑΠΥΑΡΣ lam. || **7** ΥΟΛΚΑΠΕΔΙΩ] – πεδίου Diels, Vorsokr. in app. crit. : – πεδίω Zuntz : – κα‹π› πεδον dub. Murray : ῥοὰ καπ‹π›εδίο‹ν› dub. Olivieri | – καλ{η}ὰ Δ ἱερά – scripsimus (an καλ{η}ὰ δ' ἱερά?) : χαμα‹ί› τε †μαν† καλὴ ἄδ' ἱερὰ {δαμν} εὐδα‹ί›μ‹ω›ν Olivieri : ἅμα τ' ἐμὰν καλὴν – Colli : χ' ἅμα τ' ἐμὰν καλὴ {α} δ' ἱερὰ (vel διερὰ)…εὐδα‹ι›μ‹ο›νοι- (vel…δαμνα̲ι) Zuntz : χαμᾶζε μα̲χι̲κὰ – Burkert : – ἡγεμὸν – δῖε Ῥαδάμ‹α›νθυ Murray (Ῥαδάμ‹α›νθυ iam Diels, Vorsokr. in app. crit.) : ΧΑΜΑΤΕΜΑΝ καλ{η}ὰ Δ ἱερά ΔΑΜΝ εὔδα‹ι›μ‹ο›ν ΟΙ Tortorelli Ghidini : ΧΑΜΑΤΕΜΑΝΚΑΛΗΑΔΙΕΡΑΔΜΝΕΥΑΜΝΟΙ lam. || **7–8** – ἱερά – scripsimus : οἰκτάκτὴρ ἱερ‹ὸν› ἆμαρ Olivieri : στακτὴρ ἱερὰ – vel στακτῆρι ἔραμα̲ι (ΟΙ/ ut prioribus litt. iunctum interpretans) Zuntz : – ἐξᾶμαρ – Murray : ΟΙ / ΩΤΑΚΤΗΡΙΕΡΑΜΑΡ lam. || **8** Δήμητερ Πῦρ Olivieri | Ζεῦ Murray | Κόρη (sic leg. Betegh ined. : ΚΑΡΗ cet.) χθονία : καὶ̲ ἡ χθονία Olivieri : ΚΟΡΗΧΦΟΝΙΑ lam. | in fine alii alia legere posse sibi persuaserunt auctores: ‹ἀ›τάρβακ{η}τ{ρ}ος – Olivieri : – Δά‹μα›τρα ‹ἰ›ητρὸς Ἥλι̲ε (?) – Murray : – ‹μ›ητρὸς – Zuntz : ΣΤΗΙΝΤΑΣΤ ἥρως ΑΤΟΠΕ Betegh ined., quod veri simile videtur : ΤΡΑΒΔΑΗΤΡΟΣΗΝΙΣΤΗΟΙΣΤΝ cett. edd. || **9** ἥρως – φάος (ΓΑΟΣ lam.) ἐς φρένα – Olivieri : – ἐς φρένα ματρὶ – Zuntz : – ὡς ‹ἂ›ν ἡ {γ} σύνναος πέντ' ἄματα{ι} μὴ – Murray | – μήστωρ εἶλε Κούρην scripsimus : ΣΧΑΜΕΣΤΩΡΕΙΛΕΚΟΙΡΗΝ lam. : συμμήστορα – Μοίρην Diels : συμμησυόρε – ωρην Murray : συμμήστωρ εἵλη{ι.} Σ‹ε›ιρὴν Olivieri || **10** αἶα – ἀέρ – ἐς φρένα – scripsimus : ‹γ›αῖα φήρχονος σύμμ{ι}εστον – φρέν' ἆμαρ . τως Olivieri : – ἐς τὸν ἀερ- – ἐς φρένα ματρί Zuntz

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lamella aurea saec. IV a. C. med., Pheris reperta, Mus. Βόλου servata (M 124), prim. ed. Chrysostomou (1991) 376; cf. eund. (1994a); eund. (1994b); Helly (1997) n. 285, p. 530; Bremmer (1994) 87; 96 n. 26; Tsantsanoglou (1997) 116; Burkert (1998) 391ss; Riedweg (1998) 378 et adn. 89; 391; Chaniotis – Mylonopoulos – Stavrianopoulou (1999) 232; Burkert (1999) 69s; Hordern (2000) 133 adn. 7; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 29; Bernabé (2000b) 49ss; Bernabé–Jiménez (2001) 201ss; 277s; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 123s; Bremmer (2002) 22; Calame (2002) 391; Riedweg (2002) 467; Tzifopoulos (2002) 157; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 127s; Struck (2004) 105s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 88s; 142ss (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 38s; cf. SEG 45, 1995 n. 646 (p. 162s); 47, 1997, n. 758 p. 212

σύμβολα· Ἀν‹δ›ρικεπαιδόθυρσον. Ἀνδρικεπαιδόθυρσον. Βριμώ. Βριμώ. εἴσιθ‹ι› ἱερὸν λειμῶνα. ἄποινος γὰρ ὁ μύστης.

1 ἀν‹δ›ρικὲ παῖ δὸ‹ς› (an δοῦ 'written δô'?) θύρσον interpretatus est Tsantsanoglou 116 : Ἀν‹δ›ρικεπαῖ, δὸ‹ς› θύρσον Tortorelli Ghidini, perperam Burkert (1999) lectionem tribuens || in fine, inversis litteris ΑΠΕΔΟΝ leg. ed. pr., cuius verbi interpretatio (an δάπεδον? γάπεδον?) valde incerta est : fort. ὑπέδυν Hordern, quod nobis veri simile videtur

L 13A (*FR.* 493A B.)[1]

lamella aurea Pheris reperta, saec. IV fin. III in. a. C. Athenis, Ἐθνικῶι Μουσέωι servata, prim. ed. Parker-Stamatopoulou (2004 [2007]), cf. et. Graf-Johnston (2007) 38s

πέμπε με πρὸς μυστῶν θιάσους· ἔχω ὄργια [Βάκχου
Δήμητρος Χθονίας ‹τε› τέλη καὶ Μητρος ὀρεί[ας.

1 μυστῶν ed. pr. : μυστωχ lam. | [Βάκχου dub. Parker-Stamatopoulou, qui praeferunt [ἰδοῦσα Bouraselis || **2** [τε] et ὀρεί[ας ed. pr.

L 14 (*FR.* 494 B.)[2]

lamella aurea saec. I a.-I p. C. prope Rethymnon, in loco Sfakaki qui vocatur, in Romano coemeterio reperta, in Mus. Rethymn. (M 896) servata, prim. ed. Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998); cf. et. Tzifopoulos (1998); SEG 48, 1998, n. 1227 p. 386; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Riedweg (2002) 480; Tzifopoulos (2002)

[1] Vid. addenda et corrigenda, vol. II fasc. 3.
[2] In editione Hispanica L 14 erat lamella origine ignota in Manisa Mus. servata, de qua vid. infra.

161; eund. (ined.) n. 8; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 108s; 147 (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 26s

Πλούτωνι . . . Φερσεφόνη‹ι›

post Πλούτωνι 'it is very difficult to decide if the traces on the lamella are letter-strokes of the conjunction καὶ, or simply creases' edd. prr.

L 15 (*FR.* 495 B.)

lamella aurea saec. II a. C. in Cretae regione Mylopótamos appellata reperta, Athenis Mus. Arch. servata, prim. ed. Myres (1893); cf. Comparetti (1910) 41; Vogliano (1913) 269s; Olivieri (1915) 18; Guarducci (1939) II XII 31bis p. 170s, eandem (1978) 266s; Zuntz (1971) 384; Pugliese Carratelli (1974) 124; Gallavotti (1978–1979) 348 adn. 16; Guarducci (1985) 395; Gallavotti (1988) 28ss; Velasco (1990–1991) 293ss; Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 65; Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349ss; Tzifopoulos (1998) 96; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 214; 278; Pugliese Carratelli (2001a) 121s; Tzifopoulos (2002) 160s; Pugliese Carratelli (2003) 125s; Tortorelli Ghidini (2006) 104s; 146 (cum imagine lucis ope confecta in CDRom); Graf-Johnston (2007) 24s; Tzifopoulos (ined.) n. 7 (cum imagine lucis ope confecta)

[Πλού]τωνι καὶ Φ[ερσ]οπόνει χαίρεν.

[Πλού]τωνι Guard. : [παρὰ Πλού]τωνι Vogliano : [Ἀρίσ]τωνι vel [Κρί]τωνι vel [Πλά]τωνι al. Comparetti defuncti nomen subesse errans opinatus | Φ[ερσ]οπόνει Guard. coll. Inscr. Cret. II XVI 10 θεᾶ Φ[ε]ρ̣σοπόνη εὐχή̣[ν: Φ[ερσεφόναι ἀπ]οπόνει Vogliano : Φ[ιλ]οπόνει e. g. Comparetti

L 15A (*FR.* 495A B.)[3]

lamella aurea incert. aet. in sepulcro in loco qui hodie Hagios Athanassios (prope Thessalonicam) vocatur inventa, cf. Hatzopoulos in: Avagianou (2002) 28, vid. et. Chaniotis-Mylonopoulos (2006) 365; SEG 52, 2002 n. 607 (p. 193)

Φιλωτήρα τῶι Δεσπότει χέρε(ιν)

χέρε(ιν)] l. χαί-

L 16A–N (*FR.* 496A–N B.)

a–b lamellae aureae duae myrtei (an laurei an oleganei?) folii figura saec. IV fin. a. C. Pellae repertae, prim. ed. Lilibaki-Akamati (1989) 91ss; cf. et.

[3] Vid. addenda et corrigenda, vol. II fasc. 3.

Hatzopoulos (1992) 482 n. 307; Dickie (1995); eund. (1998) 49ss; Rossi (1996); cf. et. SEG 45, 1995 n. 782 (p. 197); 46, 1996, n. 777 (p. 221); Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Tortorelli Ghidini (2000) 22s; Bernabé (2000b) 51; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 42s; imaginem ope lucis confectam invenies in Vokotopoulo (ed.) 1993, 251 fig. 316 (cf. et. Hatzopoulos [2002] 25) || **c–d** lamellae aureae duo Aegii (in Achaea) repertae Hell. aet. ut vid., altera folii forma, altera amygdali, prim. ed. Papakosta (1987 [1992]), B 1 153b; cf. SEG 41, 1991, n. 401 (p. 151); Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 30s || **e** lamella aurea laurei (an oleganei?) folii forma Hell. aet. ut vid. Aegii (in Achaea) reperta, prim. ed. Papapostolou (1977 [1984]) B 94, cf. SEG 34, 1984, n. 338 (p. 116) ubi errore Romanae aetati attribuitur; Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 30s || **f** lamella aurea saec. IV a. C. fin. Pellae reperta, prim. ed. Lilibaki-Akamati (1992) 127ss; cf. et. Rossi (1996) 59 adn. 1; Hatzopoulos (1996) n. 257; SEG 45, 1995 n. 783 (p. 198); Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 44s || **g** lamella aurea saec. IV a. C. fin. in tumba Paeonia in Macedonia prope Europon oppidum reperta prim. ed. Savvopoulou (1992) [1995], 425ss; cf. et. Rossi (1996) 59 adn. 1; Hatzopoulos (1996) n. 261; SEG 45, 1995 n. 762 (p. 191); Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 44s || **h** lamella aurea c. a. 350–300 a. C. Methonae reperta, in defunctae os inserta; prim. ed. Besios (1986) [1990] B 142s; cf. Hatzopoulos (1991) n. 385 (p. 500) cf. et. SEG 40, 1990, n. 541 (p. 171); 45, 1995 n. 777 (p. 196), Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 44s | de his lamellis cf. et. Riedweg (1998) 378 et adn. 89; 391; Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Hatzopoulos (2002) 24s || **i** lamella aurea saec. IV-III a. C. Elide reperta, prim. ed. Papathanasopoulos (1969), 153, cf. Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 32s || **j** lamella aurea saec. III a. C. Elide reperta, prim. ed. Themelis (1994) 148; 158, cf. Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Riedweg (2002) 480; SEG 46, 1996, n. 456 p. 144; Graf-Johnston (2007) 32s ; imaginem lucis ope confectam invenies in Yalouris (1996) 128s || **k** lamella aurea Hell. aet. Aegiis (Vergina) reperta, prim. ed. Petsas (1961–1962), A 259; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss; Graf-Johnston (2007) 46s || **l** Lamella aurea incert. aet. in loco qui hodie Hagios Athanassios (prope Thessalonicam) vocatur inventa, cf. Petsas (1967) B' 2 399s, fig. 21; (1969) 168; Riedweg (2002) 480; Graf-Johnston (2007) 46s || **m** lamella argentea Posidoniae (Paesti) reperta, IG XIV 665, cf. Jeffery (1961) 252 adn. 4; Burkert (1972) 113 adn. 21; Guarducci (1978) 269; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 279ss || **n** lamella aurea Amphipolitana saec. IV-III a. C. in sepulcro inventa, prim. ed. Malama (2001) 118, cf. Hatzopoulos (2002) 25 et adn. 44; Chaniotis, EBGR 2001 (2004) 225 n. 18; SEG 51, 2001, n. 788 (p. 233); Graf-Johnston (2007) 40s

a Φιλοξένα
b Φερσεφόνηι Ποσείδιππος μύστης εὐσεβής
c Δεξίλαος μύσταις

d Φίλων μύστας
e μύστης
f Ἡγησίσκα
g Βόττακος
h Φυλομάγα
i Εὐξένα
j Φιλημήνα
k Φιλίστη Φερσεφόνηι χαίρειν
l Ἄιδος ΑΡ | ΤΜΑ εὖ Π| ΕΝΕΙ (vel ΕΑΥΕΙ) ψ‹υχή›?
m τᾶς̣ θεῶ τ‹ᾶ›ς Παιδός ἔμι
n εὐαγὴς ἱερὰ Διονύσου Βακχίου εἰμὶ Ἀρχεβού[λη] ἡ Ἀντιδώρου

l sic leg. Riedweg || **n** Ἀρχεβού[λη] ἡ Chaniotis : Ἀρχεβου[...]η ed. pr. : Ἀρχέβου [γυν?]ὴ Hatzopoulos

L 17

alia lamella aurea in Lesbo (Οδός Ελ. Βενιζέλου) reperta est (Χρυσό ενεπίγραφο έλασμα με επιγραφή έξι στηλών με ορφικό κείμενο (BE 7849), at de ea inventionis tantum notitiam habemus (Ἀρχ. Δελτ. 43 B 2, 1988 [1993] 459); cf. Graf-Johnston (2007) 28; lamellam legere nequivimus, quia, quamquam ab eius curatoribus apographum vel imaginem ope lucis confectam rogavimus, neutrum obtinere potuimus

SIMILIA

cf. § 8.3

S 1A–B (P. 77s B.)

inaures aureae in loco qui hodie San Vito di Luzzi (Cosenza) nominatur repertae; cf. Ferri (1957) 181ss, qui eas c. 400 a. C. factas esse putat; vid. et. Guzzo (1975), 371, qui aet. Hell. vel Rom. eas adscr.; Bottini (1992) 57; Casadio (1994a) 98, qui originem c. 388 a. C. prop.; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 280; Gianferrari (2002) 399

a ΚΟΡ
b ΛΥΣ

a i.e. Κόρα/η? potius Κόρα/ης (scil. ἱερός /-ά) Casadio || **b** i.e. Λύσιος? potius Λυσίου (scil. ἱερός /-ά) Casadio

S 2

lamella aurea inscripta incerti originis saec. IV p. C. in Flagellationis Museo Ierosolimitano servata quam prim. ed. Manns (1979), cf. SEG 29, 1979, n. 1615 (p. 408); Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 280

τοὺς δύο συνκρείνων, Διονύσιον καὶ δὲ θανόντας, ἐκεῖνον ζητῶν, σὲ ποθῶ, Λιβανέ· ἀμφότεροι πιστοί, ὁ τάλ̲ας

2 τάλ̲ας Bingen : OTAAAC ed. pr. φ vac

S 3A–B

nummi aurei duo Philippi II in oribus hominis et mulieris inventos in loco prope Pieriam, hodie Alykes Kitros nominato, inscriptos, cf. Besios (1992) 247; Gavrilaki-Tzifopoulos (1998) 349; Riedweg (2002) 480; Tzifopoulos (nondum editum)

a Ξεναρίστη
b Ἄνδρων

S 4A–B

a titulus Lucanus saec. III-II a. C. (Ve 185) || **b** titulus Saepinius inc. aet. (III–I a. C.), de quibus cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 58 (= [2001a] 110s = [2003] 112); Poccetti (1994) 125ss; eund. (2000) 91ss, cum bibl.; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 281

a [A?]λαπονις Πακϝηις Οπιες πιο αις εκο σαλαϝς ϝαλε
b *pis. tiú/tív kúru/púiiu Baíteis/Aediieís Aíifineís*

titulos interpretari possis **a** 'A. P. O. fio deus hic, salvus (sis) vale', **b** 'quis tu? ego X. cuia? Baeti Adii Aefini'

S 5

discus aureus Hellenisticae aetatis, prim. ed. Pandermalis (1999) 271, cf. SEG 49, 1999, 703 (p. 214)

Ἐπιγένης

S 6

lamella aurea in loco hodie Baudecet nominato (Gembloux, Belgica) reperta, ed. pr. Plumier-Torfs et al. (1993) 797ss, cf. Lambert (2002) L 109, 3–5; Bernabé-Jiménez (2001) 281

RVTI DVO ES IALA
TARATN ÐANOV
OIB FONT MEM 5

3 RVTI Jordan per litt.: RVFI Lambert || textum Lambert sic interpretatus est ἔριφος δύω εἰς γάλα / καθαρ(ός) vel ἄταρος ἀθανάτου (quod nobis valde dubium videtur : 'TARA might represent ταῦρος' Jordan per litt.) / *ibo font(em) Mem(oriae)* (at 'OIB [might represent] ὄις' Jordan per litt.).

APPENDIX II

ICONOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE ORPHIC TABLETS

Selection of illustrations and commentaries by
Ricardo Olmos

Drawings by Sara Olmos

The following pages are approximations to the religious world of the Orphic tablets from the viewpoint of iconography. Each of the images collected here establishes a dialogue, sometimes necessarily conjectural and imprecise, with the contents of the texts. In general, the reader will not find a reproduction or faithful copy of literary quotations in these representations, for word and image are ruled by their own laws, and develop in their own environments and contexts. Not always coinciding interests canalize the realization of both aspects.

Since the 19th cent., researchers have tried to see in some images certain correlations to throw light upon the more obscure contents of Orphism. The modes of approximation have varied over the course of the years. Our vision, still uncertain, is today more rich and nuanced than it was then. The volume of documents has grown. Above all, viewpoints and readings have broadened.

In our text, the images will guide us along multiple paths towards the environment of Orphism. Some of them are mere thematic allusions. In other cases, we can see that the correspondence between world and figuration is more precise and direct.

The first two examples introduce us to the funerary meaning of reading, the psychological relation between the deceased and the written text. Thus, the woman reading, with the unrolled *uolumen*, in number 1 (according our numbering), which decorates a *lekythos*, a vase intended for the grave; or the man on the Apulian vase—number 2—who receives a visit from Orpheus the citharist. He listens to him, seated within the *naiskos*—his temple and, at the same time, his grave—with a roll in his hand. The initial moment of the passage is represented. Does the roll contain a text with Orphic instructions? We do not know for certain. However, a mediating Orpheus, dressed in the rich attire of an Oriental bard, knows the way towards the subterranean palace of Persephone and Pluto on the Apulian vase, which we describe in number 5.

We also include two *pinakes* or small votive pictures, in clay, from the southern Italian sanctuary of Locri. They allow us a glimpse into the reign of Persephone and Pluto, the solemn gods of the Beyond (n. 3); or else they describe Dionysus in his mediating visit to the infernal worlds (n. 4), a situation we will later encounter in another Apulian vase, n. 6, where the agreement between Dionysus and Pluto is narrated in the form of a *dextrarum iunctio*. The terracotta from Locri with a dancing maenad who brandishes a tambourine or a *tympanon* is

probably an initiate in the Bacchic mysteries, a βεβακχευμένη. Since the final decades of the 5th cent. B.C. at least, this representation of Bacchus as mediator in the infernal world overflows in numerous Italian images of death.

Our n. 8 is of a different nature: a bronze hydria from Pharsalus in Thessaly, the recipient both of the ashes of the deceased and of an Orphic tablet. The handle of this luxurious vase alludes to the mythical rape of Oreithyia by Boreas: a voluntary rape towards the Beyond by the divinity of the winds, assumed by the nymph.

The ninth document reproduces the lid of a sarcophagus from Tarquinia, and once again raises the much-debated problem of the adoption of Orphic beliefs on the part of some members of the Etruscan aristocracy. The image of the kid who comes to drink from the pitcher of the dead woman—a follower of Dionysus—has been associated with the enigmatic formula from the Orphic tablets: "A kid, you fell into the milk". Yet the precise content of this expression still remains an enigma. Other cases of mythical breast-feeding have been adduced in recent research: that of the female Pan who offers her young breast to a kid in the *Villa dei Misteri* at Pompei, if the decorative ensemble of the room is understood as the initiation of the *domina* or lady of the house into the mysteries (n. 10); or the numerous terracottas of *kourotrophoi* goddesses found in the Italian funerary surroundings (n. 11), but also in other areas of the Mediterranean, as well as within the Iberian region (Olmos 2000–2001). It is suggested that entry into the Beyond is a reception into the *kolpos* or womb of the feminine divinity, a role played by Persephone in the Orphic tablets.

The motif of the refreshing drink after a long, difficult journey such as death's, the *refrigerium*, is documented in various cultures of the ancient world, from the Near East and Egypt to Rome. The comparison enables us to extend the paradigm widening its borders in time and space. We have chosen a few examples from Egyptian eschatology (n. 12). The motif of living water persists in Christianity and in Gnostic beliefs (nn. 13 and 14). The meaning of some of these images is difficult to grasp and elusive, like the paintings from the late hypogeum of the Aurelii at Rome, where some authors have wished to see an amalgam of Homeric motifs and Orphic allusions.

We conclude our selection with a mention of the images and contexts of some Orphic tablets, such as the ivy leaf from Pelinna in Thessaly, and the gold sheath, with a filigree chain, which contained the folded tablet from Petelia at a later period (n. 15). We thereby wish to point

out the abundance of relations and possible readings that are hidden in the contexts in which the tablets were deposited, as well as the very avatars of their history.

Undoubtedly, the selection of images could have been different. Our choice has only the ambition of being a collection of samples, without any pretension of exhausting the theme. Instead, our text aims at formulating a mere suggestion of how word and image are related and how they interact. The content of this dialogue consists of the instructions of the Orphic tablets. These images would lead us back to the study by Alberto Bernabé and Ana Isabel Jiménez, since the chapters by these authors have constantly invited the reader to contrast the multiple perspectives and horizons of the problem in the world of images.

N. 1. Attic *lekythos* of a woman with a *volumen*

The *lekythos* is a perfume vase for offerings on the tombs of the dead. This example, from the Louvre, has the elegant tubular form of the *lekythoi* made at Athens in the mid-5th cent. perfumes B.C. (fig. 1). The shoulder is decorated with the usual palmettos in dark outline. On the cylindrical body, in red figures, a standing woman wearing a fine tunic with thick folds over her left shoulder constitutes the axis of the pictorial composition that centers our attention. She is framed on both sides by various objects, which situate the scene in a domestic interior. On the right hangs the wide ribbon, carefully folded, of the bonnet or *sakkós* with which virtuous women cover their hair. At her feet we see an open chest, probably wooden, with its lid open. The woman has just taken a papyrus roll from the chest, which unrolls before her eyes. Absorbed, her head inclines slightly towards the writing. There is a perfect harmony, characteristic of the classical moment, between the position of the body in light repose, and the intense inner attitude.

Gilles Sauron[1] has put forth a suggestive conjecture: the reader may be holding a book on the afterlife in her hands. Charles Picard[2] had already previously suggested that the little boxes represented next to the deceased in stelae from classical times (like the one of Hegesus at

[1] Cf. Sauron (1998) 77–78, fig. 11.
[2] Cf. Picard (1958) 458.

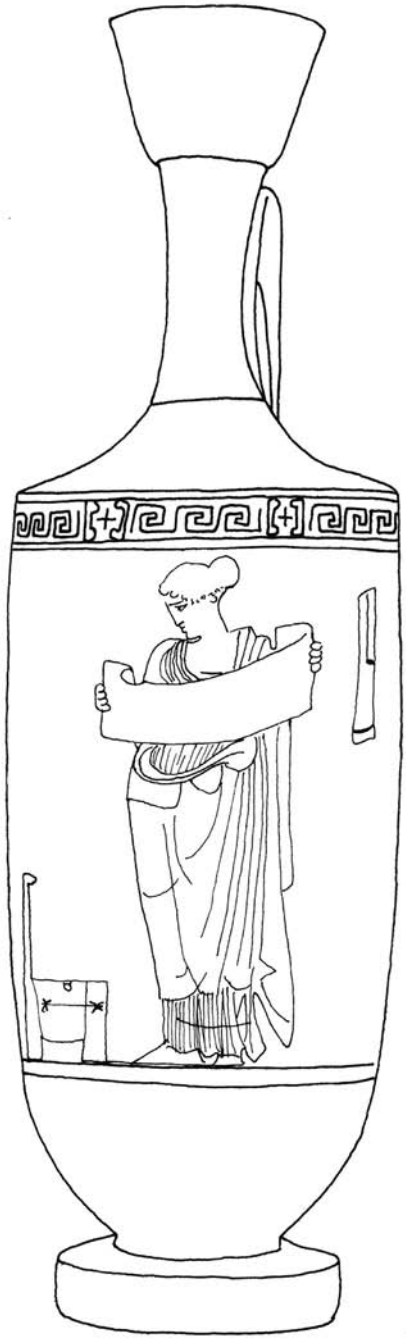

Fig. 1

Athens) might contain funeral rolls, although today we tend to accept the common opinion instead: that they are mere containers for jewels or toiletry objects. The precise meaning of the Louvre *lekythos* remains ambiguous. Here, it is clear that the precious object relating the woman to the chest is the *uolumen*. However, other Attic vases from the Classical period represent the *paideia* of a woman exercising herself in poetry and in music through the possession and reading of a papyrus roll.[3] On a hydria from a private collection in New York, a woman seated in a *klismos* on a *bema* or stool plays the lyre at the same time as she fixes her gaze on an open roll held by a companion on her right. At the musician's feet, a large open box indicates, on our *lekythos*, the rich chest that preserves and transports the *uolumen*. On another hydria, the absorbed reader is Sappho, accompanied by the Muses who offer her the lyre. "The world of women is not alien to the Muses", we read in Euripides' *Medea* (v. 1089). Various Attic vases of the Classical period emphasize this *paideia* of a woman of high rank, her mastery of singing and writing through mythical models (the environment of Helicon) and the idealized past (Sappho). There is a noteworthy temporal ambiguity in these representations: the woman within her home is, at the same time, the dead woman in the Beyond. The exercise of recitation linked both worlds together. She is simultaneously mortal and a Muse.

Our *lekythos* belongs to those vases that ennoble a woman's activity in death, her high rank and *paideia*. However, we must not discard the attractive proposal of Gilles Sauron: that it is indeed a funerary text that absorbs the reader's attention, like the Orphic papyrus found among the remains of an aristocrat's pyre at Derveni in Macedonia, or the tomb, from the mid-4th cent. B.C., erected on a tumulus of stones, from the Greek colony at Callatis on the Black Sea:[4] the right hand of a male skeleton held a written papyrus roll, scarcely decipherable. A patera with eggs—we recall the Orphic symbolism of the egg—accompanied the burial.

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[3] On women exercising in reading, cf. Kaufmann-Samaras (1997). Sappho as a reader among the Muses: red-figured hydria from Athens, MN 1260, ca. 460 B.C. (Kaufmann, fig. 6); a young reader of a *uolumen*: medallion of a red-figured cup from the Louvre by the Wedding Painter (Kaufmann, fig. 8); a reciter of poetry: hydria from a private collection in New York, ca. 460 B.C., by the Niobid Painter (Kaufmann, fig. 9).

[4] On the tomb at Calatis, cf. Preda (1961) 297, fig. 16 and 277 and fig. 1, Picard (1963) 188 ff. with the image pp. 190–191, Bottini (1992) 149–157.

Let us return to our *lekythos*. The fact that the figure is alone in her feminine environment—which in turn is a metaphor for her tomb—invites the hypothesis that the papyrus was for exclusively individual use, kept like a jewel. The figure gains access to a superior environment by means of the privilege and distinction of writing.

See n. 2.

N. 2. Apulian amphora with Orpheus and a man with a *volumen*

This large Apulian red-figured amphora[5] from the Basel Antikenmuseum, attributed to the Ganymedes painter, is dated to between 330 and 320 B.C., and attracts our attention because of the singular theme of its principal scene (figs. 2–3). Inside a small white temple or *naiskos*, framed by two slender Ionian columns, a seated male greets Orpheus. The temple is raised above a high podium decorated with a fret. It is crowned by a pediment, partially preserved. The beams of the ceiling and the red walls behind the columns suggest depth and perspective. This is a funerary monument: it is a noble building that exalts the deceased and establishes the limits of this world and the Beyond.[6] Before it, the entourage presents libations and offerings; one of them has even deposited an oblong shield, which leans on its base against the foot of the column.

The interior of the temple represents the dwelling-place of the deceased in the realm of the afterlife, the heroic space proper to the ἄριστοι or *meliores*. Its appearance is similar to the domain of the infernal gods, whom the man is emulating (cf. n. 5). Paradoxically, from the viewpoint of the external space of life, this is an environment of splendor and whiteness. The man's body stands out like a statue in white, like his tunic. Only the purple-colored mantle, gathered up on the lower half of his body, serves as a contrast and visual relief. The objects that hang from the roof and background of the *naiskos* are the man's belongings, which allude to his heroic condition: on the left, the conical cap or *pilos* (similar to that of heroes like Odysseus); the two

[5] Antikenmuseum and Ludwig Collection, Basel, inv. n. 540. The amphora measures 88 cms. in height. On this piece, cf. Schmidt-Trendall-Cambitoglou (1976) n. S 40, pp. 7–8, 32 ff. pl. 11, Pugliese Carratelli (1996) 453 and catalogue n. 214.

[6] On the significance of the *naiskos* in Apulian funerary vases, cf. Lohmann (1979) 176, Frielinghaus (1995) 93–103, esp. p. 96.

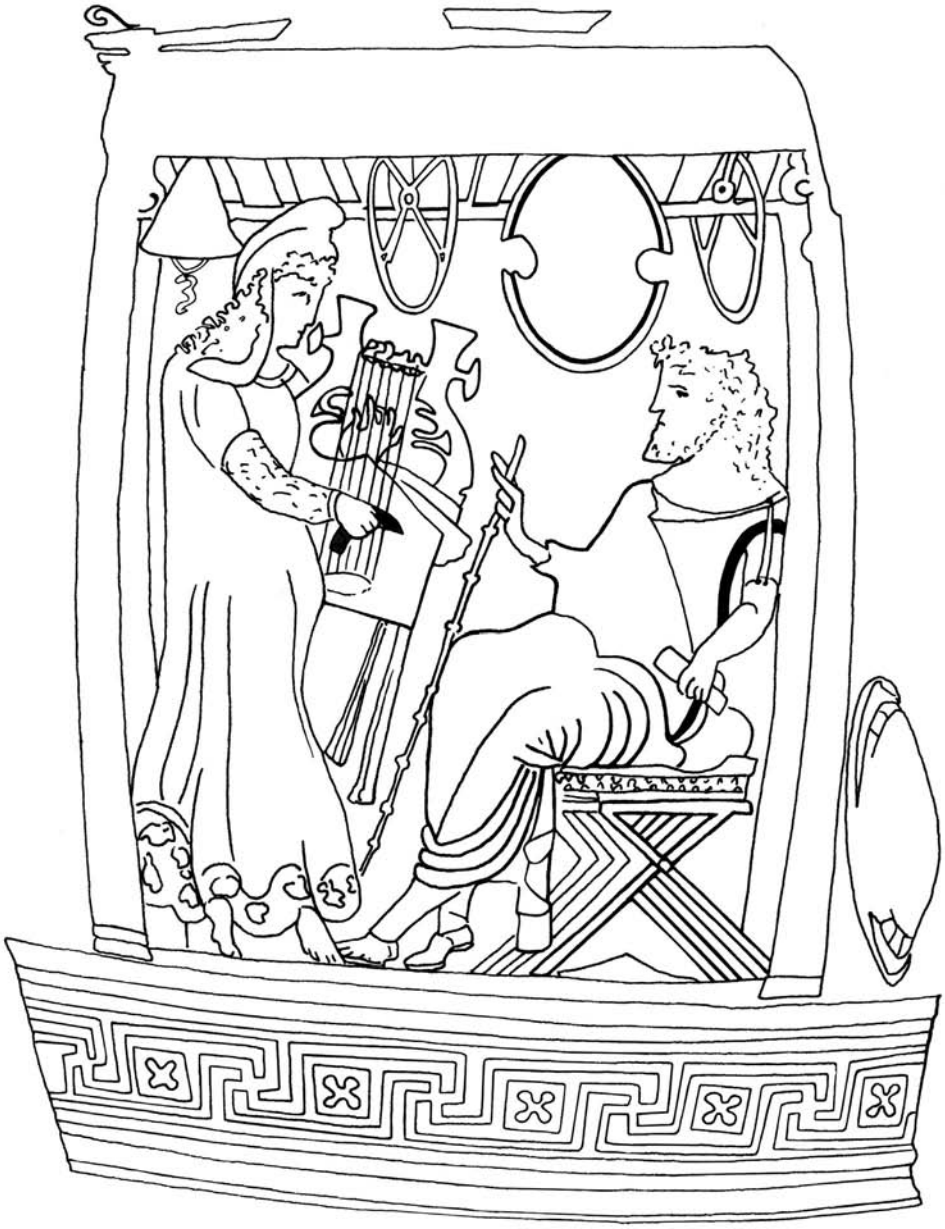

Fig. 2

wheels with four spokes, in perspective, which allude to his chariot and perhaps to his voyage to the Beyond, as a hero, or to the very chariot of Pluto (cf. n. 5); and the great shield with lateral grooves, which we call Boeotian, which has kept epic overtones throughout the centuries. The man, with long beard and long white curly hair that falls over his shoulders, is seated on a folding chair or *diphros okladias*, a portable chair suitable for a journey or a road.[7] Orpheus the priest is dressed in a rich Oriental outfit, with long sleeves, a red Phrygian cap and a flowing tunic, which suggests he is still walking, or has just arrived. His cithara, which he plays with a plectrum, is white and decorated.

An intense relation is established between both figures. The man may be holding a text of funerary initiation in his hands. He addresses Orpheus the priest with the extended fingers of his right hand, and asks him a question. On the tablet from Hipponion, it is Mnemosyne, the Muse of memory who probably reminds the deceased of the path to the afterlife (cf. § 1.2.). Here, it is Orpheus, a descendant of the Muse and connoisseur of the meanders of the underworld, who recalls with his song before the deceased the contents of the written papyrus, which the latter, on the threshold of death, keeps in his hand. He is certainly a devotee initiated into Orphism. He drinks up attentively the words of Orpheus, which will introduce him into the underworld. Whatever the contents of the text may have been, he receives from the Thracian bard the privilege of the sacred scripture, his condition as a *mystes*.

For the dwelling-place of Persephone and Pluto, see our n. 5, the great crater from Munich. Both the temple and the seated heroic figure of the man recall very closely the scene from Munich. One may, moreover, compare his expressive gesture with that of Pluto's fingers. The wheels of the chariot also evoke the infernal palace. Perhaps, as researchers on the vase propose, the deceased aspires to identify with the god, in his post-mortem repose. The initiate into the mysteries himself becomes a god. Orpheus' song could very well deal with the descent to the underworld, whose traces we find in the tablets, or perhaps, as in the charred papyrus from Derveni, with the re-encounter with his divine origins, or his own theogony.

See also n. 1.

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[7] On the reverse of one of the bone tablets from Olbia (which we translate as **c** in §1.6.) appears a schematic drawing which West (1982) 24 f. interprets tentatively as the representation of a chair such as this, comparing it with one from a skyphos from the 5th cent. B.C. preserved in the Louvre (G 146), in which another chair has been drawn, covered by something that may be a fleece.

Fig. 3

N. 3. The *pinakes* of Locri and the realm of Persephone

At the beginning of the last century, excavations at Locri brought to light a rich store of terracottas hidden in wells in the sacred area or sanctuary to Persephone, in the region or "contrada" of Mannella. These are votive deposits, in which offerings were accumulated after having been exposed for some time in the sacred enclosure of the goddess: they all display two openings in their upper part, from which they would be hung in a visible place in the sanctuary. The set is now preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Reggio. Although the sanctuary was used much later, all these tablets or *pinakes* are curiously dated to the second quarter of the 5th cent. B.C.

Their iconography is related to feminine rituals around Persephone: nuptial initiations, processions of girls, the preparation and care of the *peplos* and dresses for a bride, the presentation of a divine child (Adonis?) in a wicker basket, etc.[8] Scenes related to the telluric world and the afterlife are abundant. Some present the ritual of the *anthologia* or collection of flowers, and the *karpologia* or collection of fruit, which a nubile girl carries out with stylized gestures before Persephone: she collects pomegranates, a sacred fruit that introduces young women into the realm of death, in the ample *kolpos* or lap of her *peplos*. Various fruits are represented.

The infernal couple of Pluto and Persephone stand out, although this type of votive relief also presents this goddess in relation with Dionysus. On a *pinax* from Locri,[9] the god of the vine approaches with religious respect his mother Persephone—like a believer or a "bacchios"—, to whom he offers the attributes of wine: the *kantharos* and the branch over his shoulder, covered with heavy bunches of grapes (fig. 4). She holds a cock, an infernal animal of passage (on the cock, cf. n. 4) and a sprouting stalk of wheat, a display accompanied by the sacred, nuptial gesture of uncovering herself.

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[8] On these representations, cf. Langlotz-Hirmer (1965) plates 71–75; Pugliese Carratelli (1990a) 279, and figs. 431–437 on pp. 294–295; (1996) 700 f., n. 166. Sourvinou-Inwood (1978) defends a reading of these images in the sanctuary in relation to the feminine universe. Cf. a religious study of this iconography in Giangiulio (1994).

[9] *Pinax* with Persephone and Dionysus: height: 27 cms.; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria n. 58729.

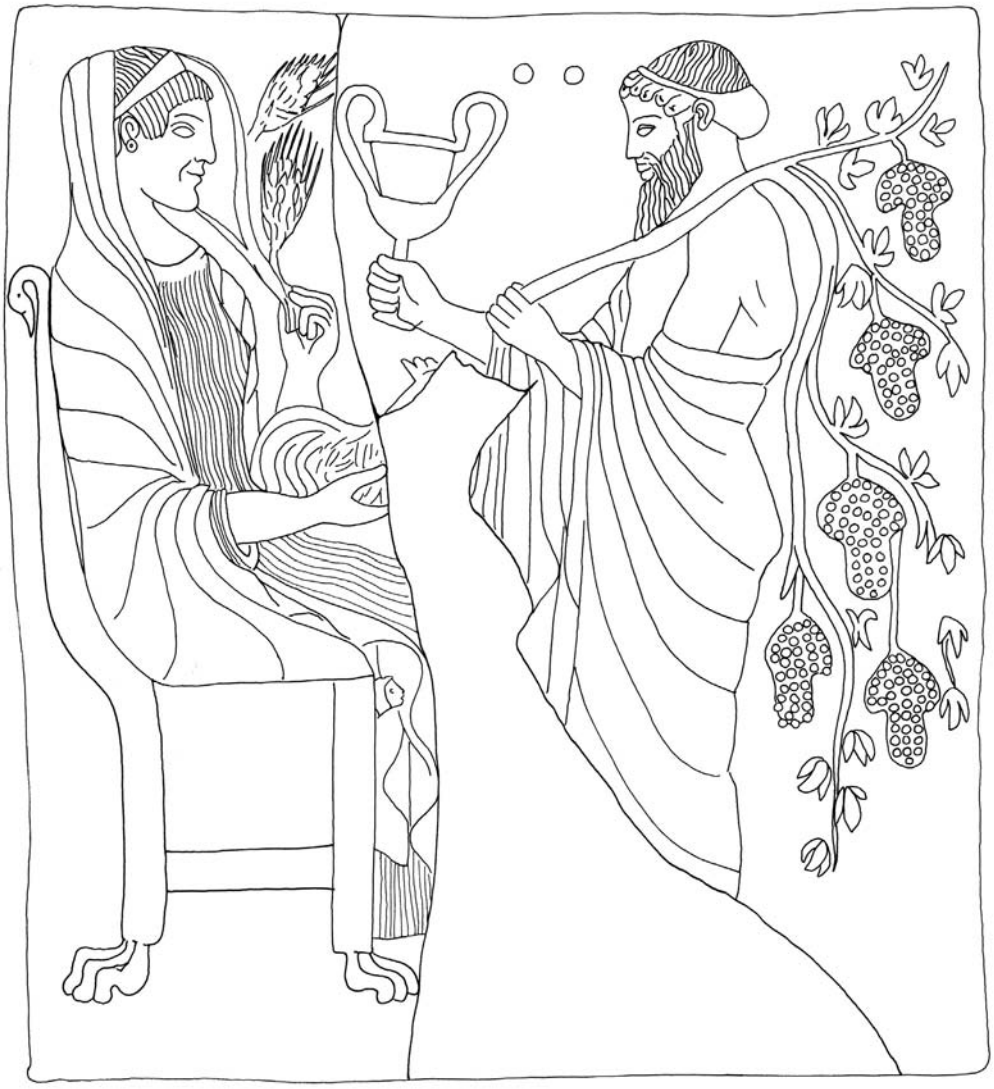

Fig. 4

In this image, Dionysus symbolically takes the place of the suppliant believer in his arrival before the mother, after crossing the limits of the realm of death. We recall the tablet from Pelinna (§ 2).

N. 4. *Pinax* from Locri with Persephone and Pluto enthroned

In the example we reproduce here,[10] Persephone, represented as the "queen of the subterranean beings" to whom the tablets from Thurii allude, is seated beside her *paredros* Hades on a rich throne with a soft cushion (fig. 5). Her bare feet rest on a shared footstool. The divine couple is solemnly portrayed in its twofold attitude of presenting their gifts and accepting offerings before an invisible donor, with whom they establish a silent, attentive relation.

Persephone is covered respectfully by a long nuptial veil: the tablets from Thurii call her "chaste" (cf. § 4). A diadem embraces her hair. We can distinguish her ear with an earring—she is a goddess who is *epekoos*, or ready to listen—as well as a collar with the edge of a long lock that falls over her breast. The tunic, with the finest of folds, reaches her feet. In her hands she holds a cock, and three ripe sprigs, her usual attribute, the "fruits of the earth" which she will send to men as sung in the *Orphic Hymn* 29, 17 (cf. the text in p. 68).

Hades, bearded and wearing a vegetal crown, presents a flowering branch and a patera or phiale decorated with an egg-and-dart motif, no doubt made of precious metal. In front of the throne rises a tall bronze perfume burner or *thymiaterion*. Burned perfume is appropriate for the goddess, who reigns among the pure. The oblong lid of the *thymiaterion* ends in a small cock, who faces the divine couple.[11] It is the animal that belongs to Persephone, since it appears for a third time, attentively flanking the throne of its mistress. Cocks allude to the world of the afterlife: as intermediaries between the soul and the Beyond, they intercede between the world of the dead and that of the living.

The *thymiaterion* and the offerings allow us to imagine the presence of the invisible believer who, by depositing the image in the temple, renders himself present before the infernal couple. The religious world

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[10] *Pinax* of Persephone and Hades: height 28 cms.; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria, n. 21016.

[11] On the cock as an animal of the afterlife, cf. Pontrandolfo-Rouveret-Cipriani (1997) 59 and 64: tomb 4, west wall in the necropolis of Vannullo, Paestum.

Fig. 5

of these clay images has been associated with the mysteries referred to in the tablets from Thurii: "Now I come as a suppliant before the chaste Persephone", we read in them (§ 4).

See fig. 4.

N. 5. Large Apulian crater with Persephone and Pluto in their underworld palace

The detail we note here belongs to a monumental South Italian volute crater from the Munich Museum.[12] The work of an Apulian workshop, of the so-called "Underworld Painter", the vase offers one of the most complete representations of the complex Greek eschatological universe of the last decades of the 4th cent. B.C. (fig. 6).

We are interested in the center and the upper zone of the large main panel. A white *aedicula* presides over the scene and attracts our gaze. It is the palace of Pluto and Persephone, sustained by six elegant Ionian columns. This building may be compared with the *naiskos* of the Orphic initiate described previously (figs. 2–3). It is conceived from a conventional perspective. Two wheels hang in the background, alluding to the chariot of the god in which *Kore*, the girl who now is queen, arrived one day, having been abducted by Hades or Pluto to this subterranean realm.

The god, in richly embroidered attire, is seated on a throne, and his shod feet rest on a footstool. In his left hand he holds the regal scepter, which ends in the shape of a bird. The goddess is walking towards the entrance, but turns towards Pluto and looks at him. He then addresses Persephone with an expressive hand gesture. Something is happening. The arrival of an unexpected visitor has caused expectation in the palace. It is Orpheus, before the royal threshold. Persephone, in a meditative attitude, listens to the announcement and instructions of her husband. Or is it Hades who, as a male, begins the dialogue directly with the newly arrived person? We recall the gesture of the male on the amphora from Basel, in our figure 3.

[12] Apulian volute crater, Munich n. 3297. Cf. Aellen (1994) n. 50, plates 64–66, Schmidt (1975) 120–121; on the figure of Orpheus and the "family of initiates", cf. Schmidt-Trendall-Cambitoglou (1976) 32–33 and n. 61.

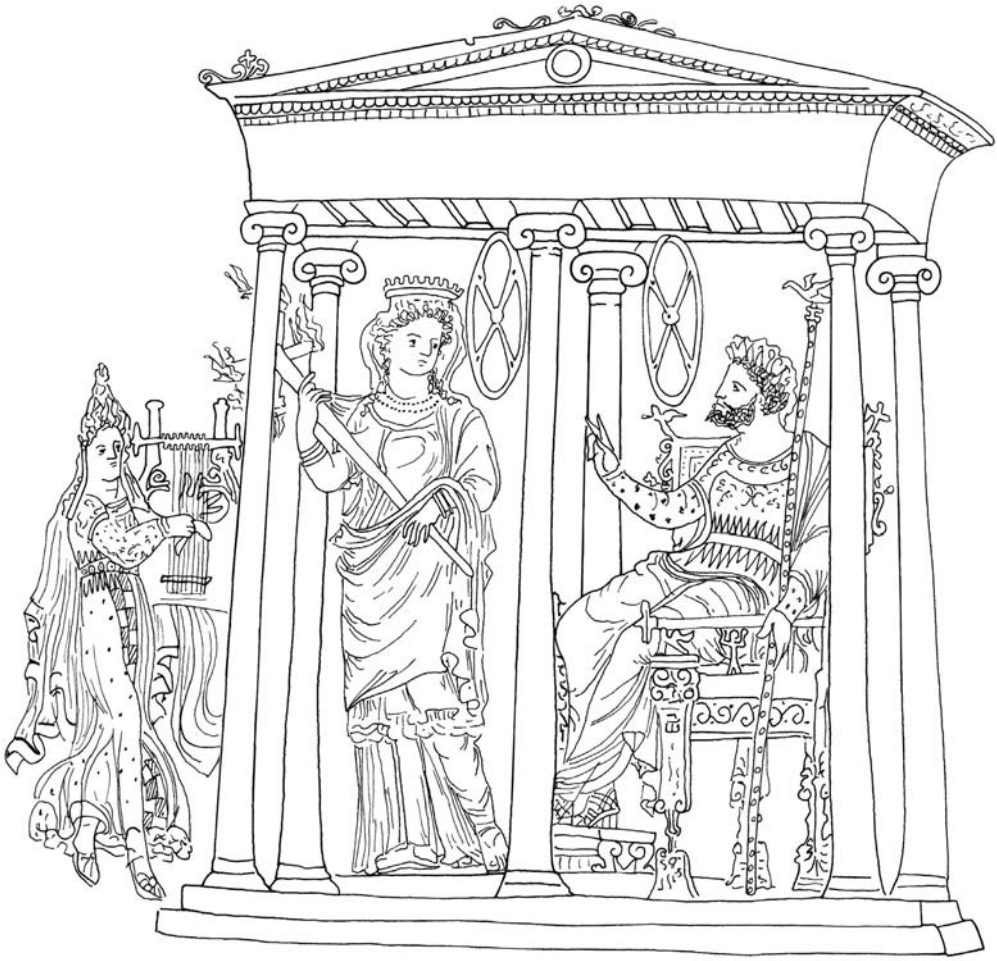

Fig. 6

The goddess is dressed in an extremely rich tunic with a long fold or *apoptygma* which falls amply over her knees and, above, is partially covered by a mantle. As is customary in these scenes, she holds a great flaming torch in the shape of a four-armed cross with both hands, with which she illuminates the infernal world. Yet the fingers of her right hand do not neglect to raise the edge of the veil, disposed beneath the white basket or *kalathos* that crowns her head, in a gesture appropriate to conjugal devotion. This is the *anakalypsis* or unveiling of the face before the husband, which can quickly turn into a modest concealment (*enkalypsis*) before the recently arrived figure. In the gold tablets, Persephone is called pure, chaste (cf. *supra*, the commentaries on § 4).

Orpheus is dressed in the Oriental manner, as a Thracian bard. His long sacerdotal vestment stirs to the rhythm of his dance steps. He strikes the earth with the tips of his toes, which he measures to the sounds of the seven-chorded cithara "which he now plucks with his fingers, now strikes with his marble plectrum" (Verg., *Aeneid* 6, 647), while he looks the gods in the eye in an attempt to seduce them with his song. He has arrived at the threshold of the underworld kingdom accompanied by a small family group, a male, a woman and a child, who follow his steps to the sound of the magical instrument.[13] This scene has generally been interpreted as Orpheus' introduction of a family of initiates, "free of punishment" as is said in one tablet from Pherai (**L 13**; cf. § 4.2.). Others doubt this, however, and propose that they must be three mythical personages, whose names we cannot specify.

Amongst the extremely rich decoration of the rest of the vase, numerous personifications and heroes populate this realm of the Beyond. Here *Dikê* or Justice appears alongside Theseus and Peirithous; here are the Judges of the Underworld, Aeacus, Minos and Rhadamanthys; here are the Erinyes and the Furies; here are such sinners as Sisyphus with his rock, and Tantalus; here is Hermes *psychopompos*. In this realm that depicts cosmic justice and punishment for the impious acts of non-initiates, a character who cannot be missing is the guardian of the infernal world, the three-headed dog Cerberus, tamed by Hercules, the liberator.

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[13] Orpheus' offering of a lyre to a dead man in the realm of Hades, represented on an Apulian crater by the Underworld Painter, is interpreted by M. Schmidt as a possible vademecum for the latter's eternal salvation. On initiation in the afterlife through dance, cf. our n. 7.

The great Apulian crater is a representation of cosmic justice and order.[14] Persephone the queen and her spouse preside over its re-establishment in the subterranean environment.

N. 6. Apulian funerary crater depicting the pact between Dionysus and Pluto in the afterlife

A volute crater preserved in the Museum of Art in Toledo (Ohio, U.S.A.), offers us the only extant representation of a pact in the infernal world between Dionysus and the god Hades (fig. 7). A suggestive study by Sarah Iles Johnston and Timothy J. McNiven sheds light on the relation between this scene and the beliefs of Orphism, and the role played by Dionysus as mediator.[15]

Our drawing focuses on the central detail of this vase, dominated by the palace of Hades, framed by Ionic columns and finished off with lovely floral acroteria which reproduce polychrome terracotta models. This is the type of building we encounter in many South Italian representations, as in the previous crater from the Munich Museum (n. 5).

Inside the *naiskos* are the spouses Hades and Persephone. The god of the infernal world is seated on a raised, decorated throne. His feet rest on a stool. He is dressed with an ample tunic, but as he is a god in majesty his torso is shown naked. His long curly hair falls over his shoulders, as a sign of extended time or the long duration of his reign. He holds a scepter topped with a bird in his left hand. Persephone is on his right, standing, wearing the tunic, mantle and veil of a married woman, and a *polos* or cylindrical cap, characteristic of goddesses. She holds the usual cross-shaped torch, which illuminates the realm of shadows. The spouses' gaze is focused on the recently arrived character, a young Dionysus wearing a decorated tunic, with an embroidered fringe, and high boots, which may be an evocation of a theatrical costume. He holds his scepter in his left hand, his *narthex* or flowering cane, with ritual ribbons tied to it. Standing before the threshold of the infernal palace, Dionysus meets Pluto's glance, and extends his hand to him. This is the gesture of the *dextrarum iunctio*, the interlaced right hands

[14] Cf. Aellen (1994).

[15] Johnston-McNiven (1996). It has been attributed to the Darius Painter, active around 340–330 B.C. Unconvincing Torjussen (internet).

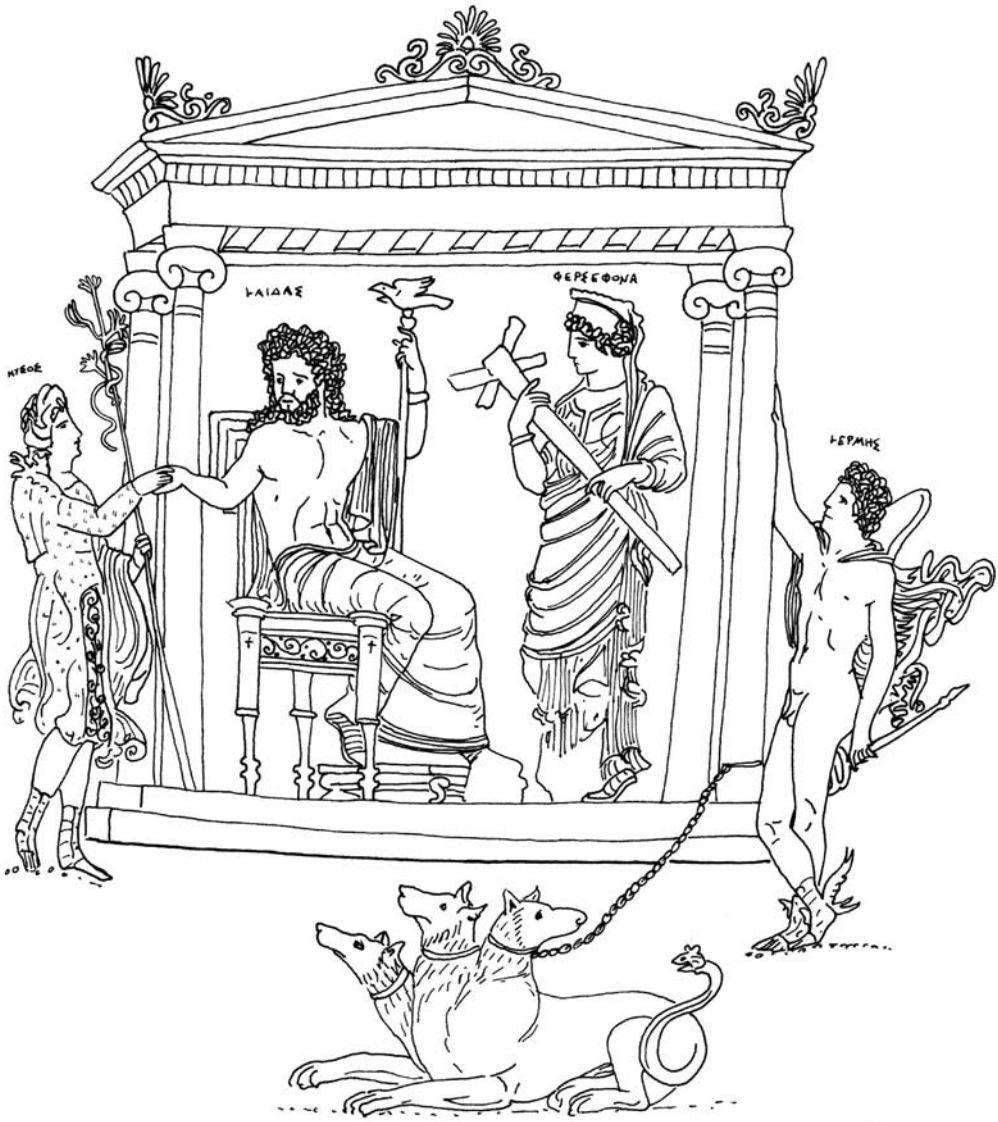

Fig. 7

that seal the pact. On the right, almost symmetrically to the figure of Dionysus, Hermes, another *psychopompos* god, leans against the temple column: he wears winged shoes, a caduceus, a wide-brimmed hat, a traveler's *petasus* and a tunic over his shoulder, fluttering in the wind, an indication of his recent movement. Hermes, the mediator between both worlds, is a witness to the unusual divine pact. The characters are named in respective inscriptions.

At the feet of the *naiskos*, tied to a column with a long chain, rests the three-headed dog Cerberus, two of whose heads are reposing in the presence of the pact between Dionysus and his master. The third turns backwards, still vigilant. A small Pan with a playful expression entertains the dog, announcing in his way the new agreement of the infernal world. He belongs to the entourage of Dionysus, since he carries a drum or a tambourine in his hand. He is not included in our image.

The rest of the vase, not reproduced in our drawing, is covered with scenes on both sides of this central group. Behind Dionysus are the personages of his retinue, the world of the *bebaccheumenoi* or initiates in Bacchus or Dionysus *Lysios*, the god who liberates the blessed after death. Among them, a maenad with thyrsus and tambourine dances bare-breasted. On the other side of the temple there is an allusion to the condemned, Actaeon and two mortals who did not receive Dionysus when they had the chance, Actaeon and Agave, the latter leaning on a *louterion*, or a white basin.

We are not witnessing this time a mere encounter of a hero, like Heracles or Orpheus, both travelers to the Beyond, with Hades and Persephone at the underworld palace This is a mediation by Dionysus in favor of his adepts. The authors of the aforementioned article place this image in relation with Orphic eschatology. They recall that in the tablets from Pelinna the soul is to tell Persephone that Dionysus has liberated it (cf. § 2.3.). The message of the pact is clear: the initiates in the mysteries of Dionysus, the *mystai*, will be freed from the wheel and find rest from evils. The vase sheds light on the representation of Dionysus as a divinity of Orphism. It expands and illuminates the presence of so many other Dionysiac images in the South Italic world.

N. 7. Terracotta from Locri with a dancing maenad

This lovely little polychrome figure found in a grave at Locri[16] represents a dancing maenad (fig. 8). She wears shoes, and her head is crowned. A collar with amulets protects her neck. It depicts the instant of the initiatory dance in which the figure, with both arms outspread and the torso cast slightly backward, directs her gesture and her attentive gaze towards the invisible companion who goes along with her and guides her steps. She imitates her initiator. Filled with Bacchus, the young woman lets her long hair fall freely over her shoulders. With her movement, her tunic or chiton slips from her shoulder, leaving her right breast bare. Her body achieves the freedom of Dionysiac ecstasy; in the mysteries, Bacchus is called *Lysios*, the Liberator. The sacred *nebris*—the mottled roe deerskin in which the maenads dress (Euripides, *Bacchantes*, 111)—hangs over her right arm, next to the *tympanon* or tambourine, decorated with a star: could this be an allusion to the one who is *asterios*, or as bright as a star?

The statuette was found in the dead woman's right hand. Her dearly beloved placed it there so that the woman might be initiated into the path of the Beyond as a maenad or follower of Dionysus. She has assumed the new name: she is a dancing Bacchant. Remains of a triple-lobed mouth—which we cannot see in the image—have been identified on her head: the statuette also served as a wine jug, the wine of the inebriation of Bacchus that accompanies the initiates into the Beyond. It is she herself who contains and offers the wine with her body, for the initiates of Dionysus enjoy an "eternal drunkenness" in the "banquet of the holy" (Plato, *Republic* 363c–d).

In a female tomb (perhaps of an infant) of a necropolis from Metapontum,[17] excavated in 1983, the statuette of a maenad seated on a rock, resting next to her tambourine or *tympanon* was found (fig. 9). Here, the attitude of rest has been chosen, the beatitude that follows the orgiastic dance. In this tomb too, next to the bracelet and a gold collar, a small bronze coin was found, with the image of the two Metapontine ears of grain. Coins of small value were generally deposited in the mouth of the deceased, as a symbol or passport for the path in the afterlife.

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[16] Locri Epizefirii, necropolis of Lucifero contrada (tomb n. 934). Height 18,5 cms.; Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria n. 4823. Cf. Langlotz-Hirmer (1965) 47, pl. XI; Pugliese Carratelli (1996) 706, n. 202.

[17] For the trousseau of tomb 1/83 at Metapontum cf. A. L. Tempesta, in Pugliese Carratelli (1996) 652.

Fig. 8

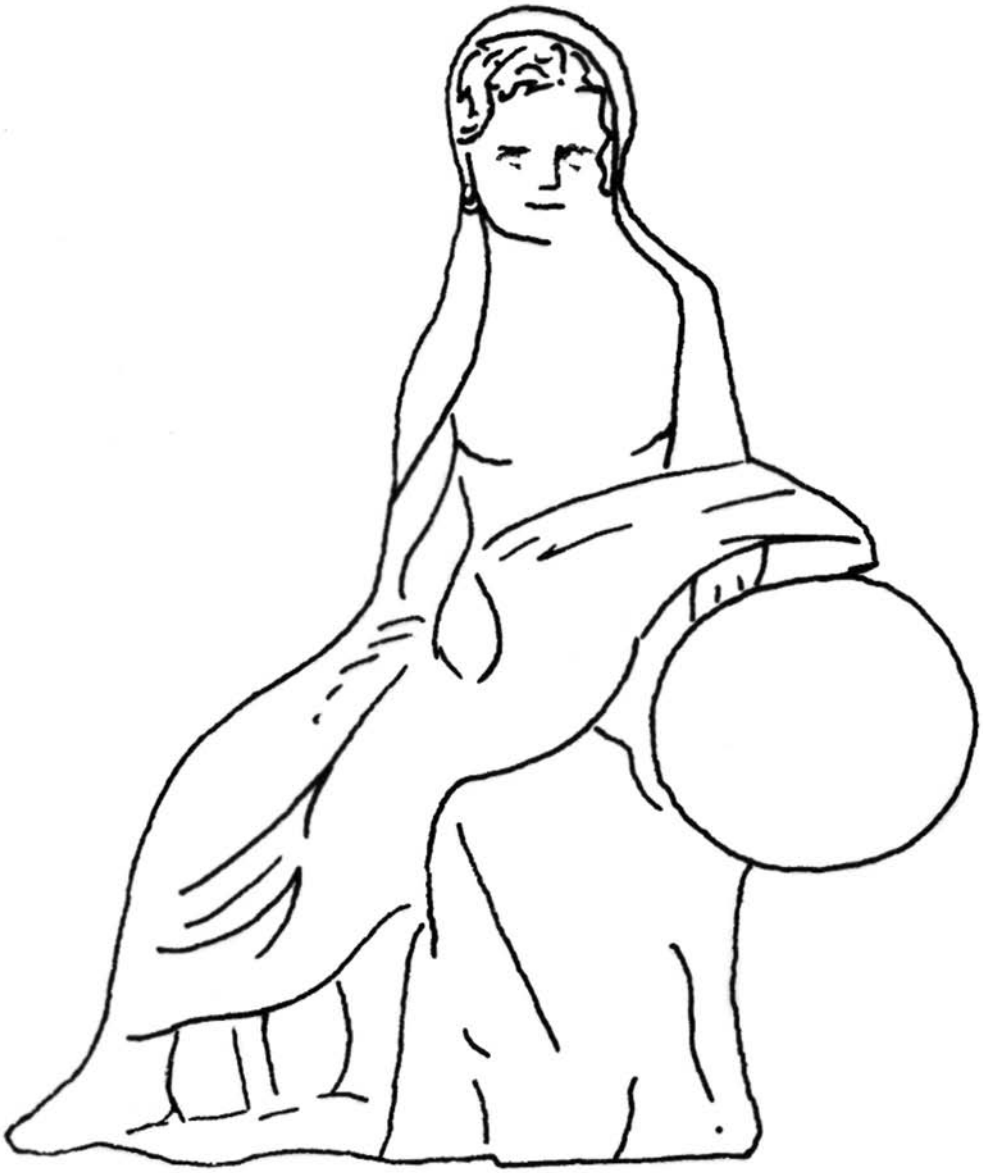

Fig. 9

Many images on South Italian vases, as well as terracottas from various areas, represent the Dionysiac *thiasos*, with satyrs and maenads dancing as funerary images: they represent the reign of subterranean Bacchus. It was a fashion particularly widespread in the 4th cent. B.C. Images of dancing satyrs and maenads are also documented as terracotta decorations on 4th cent. sarcophagi. The famous bronze crater of tomb B from Derveni, now in the Museum of Thessalonica, narrates the story of the person cremated there as a "bacchios", that is, the person who is identified and assimilated to Bacchus.[18] The signs of the great crater associating the pleasure of wine and the symposiac life with the initiate's mystical knowledge are repeated in Tomb A at Derveni, close to Tomb B described above. In this second case, however, the pyre in which the corpse was burned was also accompanied by an Orphic papyrus, which fortunately was saved from complete combustion.[19]

Let us return to the statuette from Locri, and associate it with the terracotta of the maenad that accompanies the trousseau of the tomb at Pelinna, in Thessaly, where the two ivy-shaped Orphic tablets that are studied in this book came to light (cf. *supra*, § 2). Dionysiac ivy, the figure of the maenad, and the Orphic text are associated symbolically in this burial.

N. 8. The hydria from Pharsalus, with Boreas and Oreithyia

This gilded bronze hydria that contained the remains of a cremation was found in the necropolis of Pharsalus, Thessaly,[20] in 1950, in a very simple tomb excavated in the rock. Mixed with the ashes, once they had cooled down, the diminutive Orphic tablet whose text is analyzed in this book had been deposited (ch. 1). The container can be dated to the mid-3rd cent. B.C. (figs. 10–11).

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[18] On followers of the Bacchic dance, who assume the names of the Dionysiac entourage in initiations and imitate its mimicry, as in our statuette, cf. Plato, *Leg.* 815c.

[19] There is a suggestive reading that associates Derveni tombs A and B in Bianchi Bandinelli (1974–1975). On relations between wine, initiation, and aristocratic culture, cf. Pontrandolfo (1995). On initiatory function of the dance in the Orphic mysteries of the afterlife, cf. Todisco (1999), esp. 452. Compare the dancing Orpheus of fig. 6.

[20] The burial from Pharsalus is on loan in the Archaeological Museum of Volos. The find was published by Verdelis (1950–1951). Cf. Rolley (1983) fig. 154, p. 166 ff. (is this the decoration, identical to ours, of another hydria found at Pharsalus and preserved in the National Museum of Athens? Or is it the same copy, cut out in the image? The date proposed by this author, the second quarter of the 5th cent. B.C., is unacceptably high); *LIMC*, III, 1986, p. 138, pl. 121, Kaltsas (1989) 84–85, n. 28, Bottini (1992) 126–128 and fig. 34.

Fig. 10

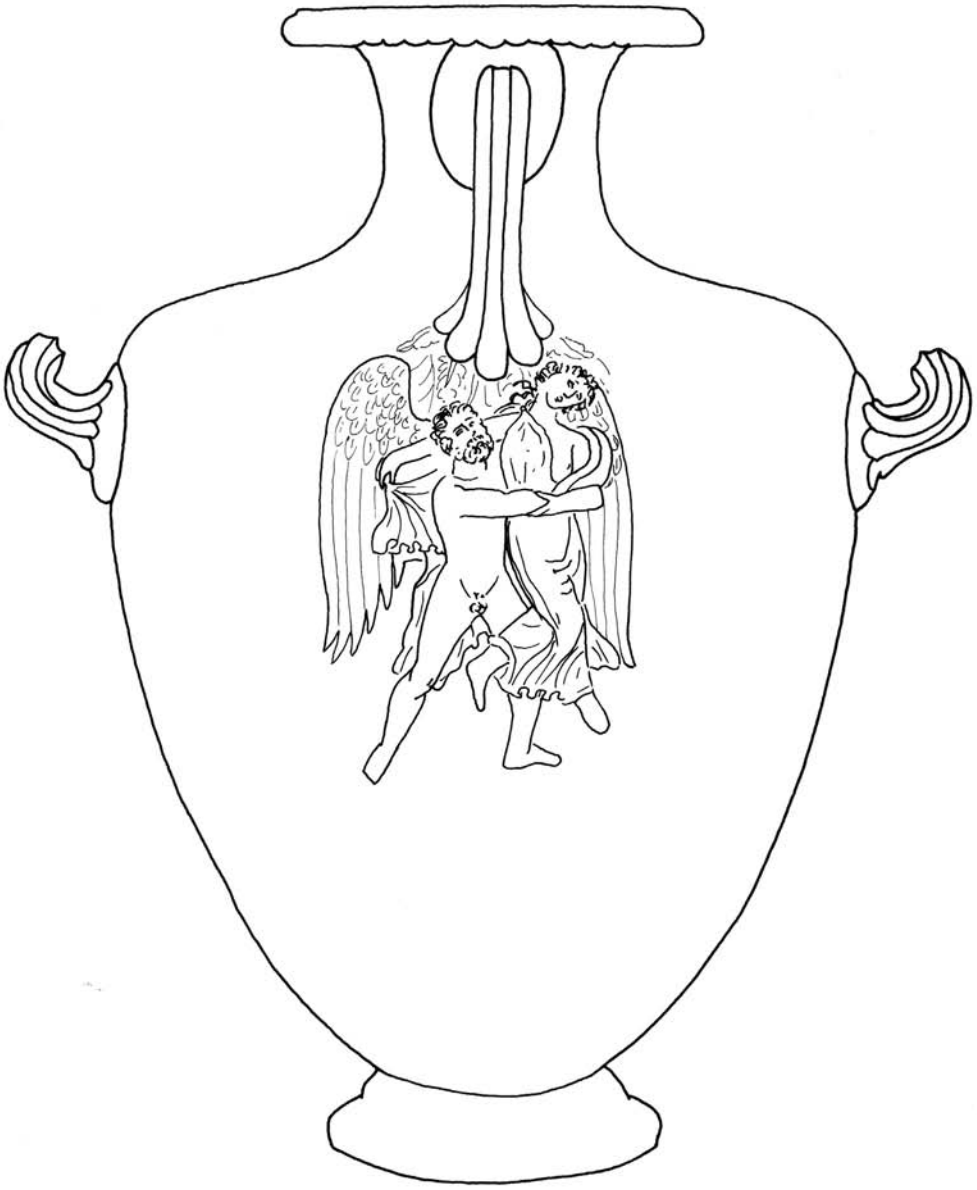

Fig. 11

The hydria is a vase for containing water, associated with the symposiac and the funerary world. With it, libations are offered to the dead, in the ritual that would later be known as the *anapsyxis* or *refrigerium*. Around the same date as the example from Pharsalus, we also find a hydria at the feet of the lovely Aphrodite by Praxiteles, alluding to the goddess' ritual bath, which grants her strength and renewed vitality.

Water and thirst, banquet, purification and renovation are some of the attributes that relate the hydria to the deceased who chooses its bronze walls as dwelling place. From the 5th cent. B.C.—and then throughout the 4th cent. into Hellenistic age—the metal or ceramic hydria was to be the favorite vase among the Greeks as a cinerary urn.

Often a watchful siren, guardian and protector of the tombs, decorates the beginning of the vertical handle on these hydrias. In this instance, instead of the siren the god Boreas, the North wind, is represented, abducting the Athenian nymph Oreithyia, daughter of Erechtheus, king of Athens. The god, bearded and naked, with broad wings outspread, one of which enfolds and protects the nymph, raises the girl into the air. She, her hair free and one breast bare, is dressed in a fine moving tunic, whose transparent cloth has been made to cling and fold over the curves of her body by the impulse of the wind. The god encircles Oreithyia in his arms, while she tries with her left arm to free herself—or, on the contrary, to hold on—while the fingers of her right hand still grip the veil, now useless, with which the maiden used to hide her modest face from men. The gesture now serves to suggest feminine display -*anakalypsis*-, and along with it her surrender to the god who is abducting her. The attitudes are full of pathos: the man's face is raised towards the sky, eager; the woman bends down in impotence and, at the same time, acceptance. "If they did not want it, they would not be abducted", as Herodotus affirmed (1, 4).[21]

This image adds a significant symbolic dimension to the burial, completing the text of the tablet. The person buried there remembers and experiences again the destiny of Persephone, abducted by Pluto and converted into an infernal spouse and queen (cf. n. 5). The motif of abduction expresses the violence of the approach to death and the new condition of the person abducted. Boreas is a demon of transition.

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[21] On the ambiguous *anakalypsis/enkalypsis*—unveiling/covering—see the attitude of Persephone in fig. 6. On feminine abduction in Herodotus, cf. Harrison (1997).

His wings are appropriate for transporting the deceased and crossing into the Beyond. Violence precedes the liberation the soul will find at the end of its pilgrimage as an initiate. Oreithyia's implied nudity, and her loose hair, are signs of this new condition, and of her surrender. In the words of Angelo Bottini:

> Divine intervention becomes a metaphor for the hope of achieving, through faith, a "new life" of the soul, free at last.

The image of the hydria, the resting-place of the ashes of the deceased, thus prepares and complements the text of the tablet.

The group of the abduction is repeated, with variations in costume and gestures, in other hydrias from this workshop, such as the one from Nesebar (Bulgaria).[22]

N. 9. Sarcophagus from Tarquinia with Bacchant and fawn

The lid of this stone sarcophagus comes from the so-called Tomb of the Triclinium at Tarquinia (Etruria) and is preserved in the British Museum. It is dated to the 3rd cent. B.C.[23] (fig. 12).

It represents a woman of serious and solemn expression, dressed as a Bacchant. She rests on a bed with her body slightly bent towards the left side and the right leg folded, indicating her readiness to move. Her head rests on a pillow, making conspicuous her matronly status. This is no idealized and generic figure, like the young maenad from Locri (n. 7), but the representation of a real, adult woman.

The woman is dressed in a long tunic, which reaches down to her bare feet. Around her breast, she wears the skin of a fawn or *nebris*, which she gathers up over her right shoulder. Various jewels adorn her, in particular a collar with five *bullae* or amulet holders, proper to an initiate. Her left hand holds the Bacchic *thyrsus*, ending in a pine cone, while her right arm, semi-naked and bent at the elbow, grasps Dionysus'

[22] Cf. *Los tracios* (2005) 157 n. 258. Direction of the *Starinen Nisebar* n. inv. 296.

[23] Cf. Sauron (1998) fig. 35, p. 135, Pailler (1988) fig. 5, p. 495; cf. Pfiffig (1975) fig. 1, pp. 375–380, Herbig (1952) n. 64, p. 37 and pls. 22 c-d, Horn (1972) n. 972, p. 82 and fig. 50, Peruzzi (1998) 97–108 and pl. X.

Fig. 12

drinking glass by its handle, a *kantharos* with vertical handles. A baby deer, or perhaps a kid, as some authors have proposed, is approaching. On other sarcophagi from Tarquinia, such as the one named "della Cerbita", or the little deer,[24] the young animal at the dead man's feet drinks the liquid—milk—from a *patera*. In that case, it is a man who offers the sustenance. In our example, it remains ambiguous whether the kid or the fawn has come to drink wine from the *kantharos*, or rather a Dionysiac liquid miraculously transformed into milk. The *kantharos'* proximity to the female breast opens the possibility that Dionysus' vase, in the hands of the maenad, contains indeed milk.

The scene has been placed in relation to the mystical nurslings of the Dionysiac world, and with the formula from the Orphic tablets: "a kid, you fell into the milk" (cf. *supra* § 2.4). In our example, the Orphic allusion is feasible, but is still far from providing a satisfactory explanation to the enigmatic formula, which expresses above all the instant and the final result of an impetuous act. On the contrary, the animal approaches cautiously to drink in the images on these sarcophagi, and it seems hard to imagine that it could hurl itself into a closed container much smaller than its body, such as a *kantharos*.

The protection of young animals by goddesses who take them into their lap is a widespread motif in Mediterranean plastic arts. The type of Artemis with a fawn is frequent in terracottas.[25]

A parallel to this motif from other cultural areas of the Mediterranean is offered by a large terracotta bust from a necropolis at Cadiz:[26] a strange infernal goddess, of superhuman looks, nurtures a young four-legged animal (a fawn?) from a vase she holds in her lap. We do not know if in the examples from Etruria or in this terracotta from Semitic Cadiz we have an echo of the Orphic formula, a mytheme of mystic nursing received and transformed in various cultures of the Mediterranean.

The presence of Orphic allusions in Etruscan religion has been much debated, on the basis of ambiguous iconographical support. The scene from the Tarquinia sarcophagus has been adduced as evidence of an Orphic penetration into privileged and Hellenizing layers of Etruscan

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[24] On the "sarcophagus of the Cerbita", in Tarquinia, cf. Sprenger-Bartoloni-Hirmer (1977) pl. 249 and p. 155, Pallottino (1937) col. 434 ff., I, 14, fig. 113, 126.

[25] Kahil (1984) nn. 564–589.

[26] On the terracotta from Cadiz (probably from the 5th cent. B.C.), cf. Álvarez Rojas-Corzo Sánchez (1993–1994) with figs. 1–2.

society. The woman from Tarquinia, a noble aristocrat, will have held Orphic-Dionysiac beliefs that were in full bloom at the time in Greek colonies of South Italy. Converted into a Bacchant, as in the terracotta from Locri (cf. n. 7), she carries out the functions of the followers of Dionysus in the Beyond.[27] According to this interpretation, the animal would be the image of a god-child, nursed after his birth, and the maenad his divine nursemaid, a veritable *kourotrophos* goddess, freed from her mortality, raised up to the sphere of the *dii animales.*

See also nos. 10 and 11.

N. 10. Female Pan nursing a kid in the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii

Many interpretations have been proposed for the great fresco that decorates the Villa dei Misteri in Pompeii. A suggestive reading by Gilles Sauron,[28] which we follow here, considers that we have in the pictorial ensemble of this feminine room the initiation of the *Domina* or Lady of the House into the mysteries of Dionysus and his mother Semele (fig. 13).

The detail reproduced in our image separates two different settings: that of the officiants at the mysteries, ordered and human, on the left, and the wild space of myth on the right. The pillar or "terma" on which the Silenus is leaning with his lyre would define this limit, as Erika Simon has suggested.[29] We already find ourselves in this second atmosphere, the mythical one. Old Silenus is an officiant of Apollo (he plucks the lyre and wears the crown of laurel around his head), while the couple of young *paniskoi*—a male and a female—belong to the wild, mountain realm of Pan. While the Silenus leans against the pillar carved by the hand of man and is dressed in the mantle of men, the two young *paniskoi*, with pointy, goat-like ears, are sitting on a rock. Over their tunics, the male wears the lank black fur skin and a long hairy wolf tail; the female the roe-deer skin of the maenads, or *nebris*, whose animal head we see vaguely over her bare right breast.

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[27] On the adoption of Dionysiac signs in Etruscan funerary iconography, especially on the part of women, cf., most recently, Steuernagel (1998) 145.

[28] Sauron (1998) 135–136, pl. on p. 26; cf. also Maiuri (1967[4]), Simon (1998).

[29] Simon (1998) 96 ff., particularly 105–106 and fig. 8.4.

Fig. 13

The bucolic atmosphere is appropriate for this little scene or idyll of Hellenistic flavor. The young male, whose shepherd's staff is hinted lying down, holds in his hands the instrument of his lord and master, the seven-reed flute. He has interrupted his melody to look sideways at his companion, who offers her adolescent breast to a kid which extends its muzzle to reach it, as if it were its mother's udder. The young *panisca*'s glance guides us towards the nursing scene. In front of them, another kid, the animal of Dionysus, has paused in its walk and turns its face to the front: with attentive ears, it perceives the singular quietness that envelops the moment.

The scene is interpreted as a mystic nursing, characteristic of the mysteries of Dionysus. Nature has become magically peaceful, and the kid fearlessly approaches shepherds who—in the case of the male—are dressed in the fearsome wolf-pelt. The power of Bacchus *Lysios*, the Liberator, does not intervene only in this communion with the animal world. From the breast of the childlike, adolescent shepherd, gushes milk, more fitting to a mother. In Euripides' *Bacchants* (vv. 699–702),[30] the maenads carry wild fawns or wolf cubs and nurse them with their snow-white milk. In the Villa of the Mysteries, the young *panisca* has been transformed into a maenad who suckles the young god, transforming herself into the nursemaid of Dionysus. The god's resurrection announces the concordance of contraries in nature, the coincidence of opposites, or *sympatheia*. It is an instant in which all is silent.

The image has been placed in relation to the enigmatic formula of the Orphic tablets: "a kid, you fell into the milk". However, as we have already seen in the Etruscan sarcophagus (n. 9), this scene remains a mere approximation, not succeeding in explaining the precise meaning of the Orphic text.

N. 11. Suckling beneath the divine mantle

Prominent among the terracotta statuettes offered as ex-votos in sanctuaries or found in graves are the types of the *kourotrophos* or nourishing divinity, sometimes standing but usually seated, who holds and suckles a child, whom she may also cover beneath her own mantle. This iconography is widespread in the Western Mediterranean from the 4th

[30] Cf. Dodds (1960²) 163.

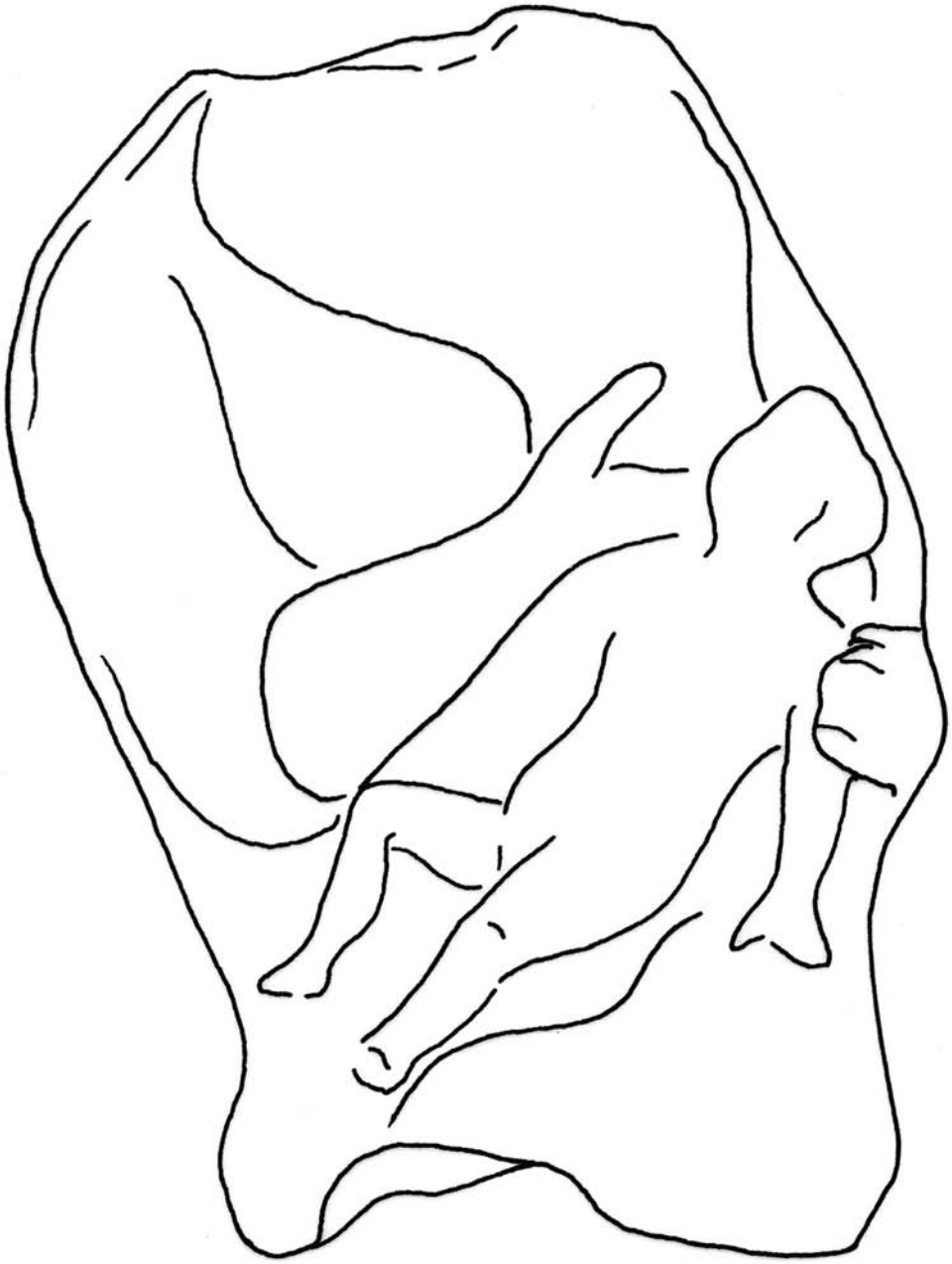

Fig. 14

cent. B.C. on, and is particularly frequent in Italy, as in the example we have shown from the sanctuary of Juno at Gabii (fig. 14),[31] although there are also examples from the Iberian world.[32] However, Egyptian and Near Eastern sources exist from much earlier with this motif of the divine nursemaid, as is the case of Nephthys and Isis suckling the divine child Horus or the pharaoh in the afterlife. In the Italian examples, it is sometimes not a child but an adult who nurses or sleeps in the female's lap. On other occasions, the child is represented as inert and lifeless beneath the goddess' nourishing breast. Britt Marie Friedh-Haneson has suggested the following interpretation for some of these examples: the suckling personage—whether adult or child—would represent the deceased as adopted by the goddess of the afterlife, who offers him the milk of immortality.[33] In sanctuaries and tombs, the offerings of these terracottas suggest the initiate's adoption of a new life through divine maternity: he is reborn, and through this rite of transition he changes his condition and status.

Friedh-Haneson associates these images with Orphic religion, which could have incorporated various influences from the Mediterranean, including those from Egypt. She takes up the enigmatic expression of the tablets from Thurii "like a kid I fell into the milk" (cf. **L 8**, 4; **L 9**, 8), which she associates with the suckling of Dionysus—and of the initiate as Dionysus—by the goddess Persephone. Likewise, she alludes to tablet **L 9** from Thurii, in which we find the expression ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν, "I plunged beneath the lap of my lady, the subterranean queen", which we can relate to those images in which the goddess' mantle receives the initiate.

We also reproduce here the drawing of an Etruscan mirror from Perugia, currently in the National Library at Paris, studied by Friedh-Haneson (fig. 15).[34] Some authors interpret the scene engraved on this mirror as the adoption of Heracles by Hera, as the adult hero's entry into his new, divine condition. The mythic episode takes place on a decorated bed, beneath the protective mantle of Hera and the offering of her bare breast. The image represents the hero's symbolic second birth. The figure standing next to the bed, who observes the reclining couple attentively, could be Athena, the Etruscan MENRVA or Minerva.

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[31] Aubet (1980) 77–78, pl. II 1.
[32] Olmos (1999) n. 71, 2, with various Iberian examples in terracotta and bronze.
[33] Friedh-Haneson (1987).
[34] Friedh-Haneson (1987) 70, fig. 4, Gerhard (1845) pl. CXXV.

Fig. 15 (From Gerhard [1845] pl. 125)

The adult sleeps during his passage. The image has been placed in relation to a story by Diodorus Siculus, 4, 39, 2:

> Hera got onto the bed and, placing Heracles next to her body, dropped him down to the ground through her clothing, thus imitating genuine birth.

Indirectly, the mirror associates the theme of the terracottas with the motifs indicated in the tablets, but it warns us about the fact that we may have to do with various adoptive goddesses in the images of suckling, of whom Persephone is only one. In each specific case, only the respective contexts will allow us to define whether we are in the presence of a possible initiate into the Orphic religion of Dionysus.

N. 12. The deceased drinking water under a palm tree or a sycamore tree in Egyptian eschatology

Many Egyptian images, in relief or wall paintings, in papyri of the *Book of the Dead*,[35] in sarcophagi, or in ushebtis boxes, show a representation of goddesses in the form of a tree that suckles the deceased or gives him a pause along the road to the afterlife (figs. 16 and 17).[36] The trees most often represented are, in the first place, the sycamore, whose thick, whitish sap resembles milk and, secondly, the palm tree, with its sweet fruit the date. Both species, but especially the sycamore, give good shade and shelter for those walking in the desert. Water is found near to it. In a consolatory way, the image of life is transferred to the landscape of death.

In the representations of these metamorphic trees, we see hands, breasts, and feminine arms sprouting, as if the plant were endowed with a force or power similar to that of humans. We are in the presence of a goddess who manifests herself as a sycamore, assuming its qualities and power. The texts that accompany these images often allow us to identify the goddess transformed into a tree (cf. § 1.5.). They are usually Nut, the goddess of the sky, or Isis, or Hathor. Yet the tree is also represented by itself, without human mutations. It is easy to suppose that we have in them a divine gift to men. Thus, the sycamore would

[35] Cf. Wallis Budge (1895 [1967]) 149, 105 and 315.

[36] Cf. Keel (1992) ch. II, pp. 62–138, figs. 40 and 57. I owe all the information on Egypt in this brief commentary to this work.

Fig. 16 (From Keel [1992] fig. 40)

Fig. 17 (From Keel [1992] fig. 57)

be a gift of the goddess Nut, who greets the soul of the deceased when he stops to rest beneath its shade on the journey towards the realm of the dead. From the protective tree of the goddess—or from the goddess herself—he receives shelter, food, and refreshing water. This, in synthesis, is the interpretation that Egyptologists, basing themselves on images and texts, have agreed to give to these images.

Let us look at two examples. The first is a well-known design painted on the tomb of Tutmose III (1479–1425 a. C.) (fig. 17). The goddess Isis lets the deceased suckle the milk of the sycamore, beneath which she manifests herself. This representation of the divine tree is very ancient, and may be the origin and inspiration of the innumerable later representations.

The second large-scale image comes from the tomb of Irunefer, of the Ramesid period, in the 19th Dynasty (fig. 18); however, we also find it in the vignettes of papyri in chapter 59 of the *Book of the Dead*. The deceased bends down to drink the water from a pool under a palm tree laden with dates that rises beside him. Vertical zigzag lines represent the icon of the water. Chapter 59 of the *Book of the Dead* is entitled "on the air that must be breathed and the access to water in the realm of the afterlife". The text goes on:

> Hail, sycamore tree of the goddess Nut ! Offer me the gift of water and of air that are within you.

In a vignette from the Ani papyrus, the goddess Nut appears inside the sycamore, pouring water from a long vase into the hands of Ani, who has knelt beside a pool.

This motif, with its successive variants, persists until the Roman epoch. On a situla,[37] the goddesses Isis and Nephthys, each of them behind a tree, the personification of a garden, offer fresh water to the dead Osiris.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, historians of religion have compared the *refrigerium* in the Beyond of some Orphic tablets with this eschatological development of ancient Egypt. The suckling by which the deceased is initiated into the Orphic-Dionysiac rituals may also have vague parallels in the funerary images of Egypt. Yet although the comparison is relevant and expands our horizons—either because similarities come from remote common mythemes, or because they can be

[37] Keel (1992) fig. 51c.

Fig. 18 (From Keel [1992] fig. 112)

explained as a human universal—it is no less true that the motifs of the Orphic *refrigerium* and suckling must be understood within themselves, as signs of their own system.

N. 13 Orphic allusions in the hypogeum of the Viale Manzoni?

The hypogeum of the Aurelii in the Viale Manzoni at Rome, discovered in 1919, is dated to slightly before the midpoint of the 3rd cent. A.D., between 210 and 240 A.D.[38] The paintings that decorate its interior are probably inspired by a pagan-Christian syncretism that juxtaposes motifs from various beliefs: a bearded personage—Christ?—reading a *uolumen*, sitting on a mountain at whose feet are various goats, an allegory of the Sermon on the Mount;[39] a personage haranguing the crowd in the market square, supposedly an image of the Celestial Jerusalem; another personage on horseback on a victorious *aduentus*, etc. Next to these scenes, for which no proper parallels are known in the Paleochristian world, we find other images of obscure pagan content.[40]

We shall focus on the fresco, beneath a decorated dome, that covers the east wall in the so-called room C, the subject of various and contradictory interpretations (fig. 19). The painting is arranged in two great friezes. Inside, with a great vertical loom that divides the scenes into two parts, one may read an allegorical motif inspired by the *Odyssey*. Suggestions have varied: it may be the loom of Penelope, identified in the standing feminine figure, who would be engaged in conversation with Odysseus, with his hair unkempt and sitting, in an expressive attitude, on the right.[41] The three naked men holding hands and in an almost frontal position could be the converted suitors. More convincing arguments[42] have been used to adduce the Odyssean episode of Circe, the famous weaver whose bucolic landscape would be completed by the

[38] *Editio princeps*, Bendinelli (1922–1923), fig. 30 and pl. XIII (watercolor by O. Ferreti), cf. Wilpert (1924) in particular, pp. 26–30 (a Christian interpretation of the three naked personages and the loom beneath the epigraph: "Vestire nudos") and pl. XVI (watercolor by C. Tabanelli), Cecchelli (1944), Chicoteau (1997). For a reading of the inscription as a *refrigerium*, cf. Carcopino (1956) 94 ff., considered as Orphic by Chicoteau (1997).

[39] According to Wilpert (1924).

[40] Grabar (1967) 108–110.

[41] Bendinelli (1922–1923).

[42] Cf. Picard (1945), Turcan (1979).

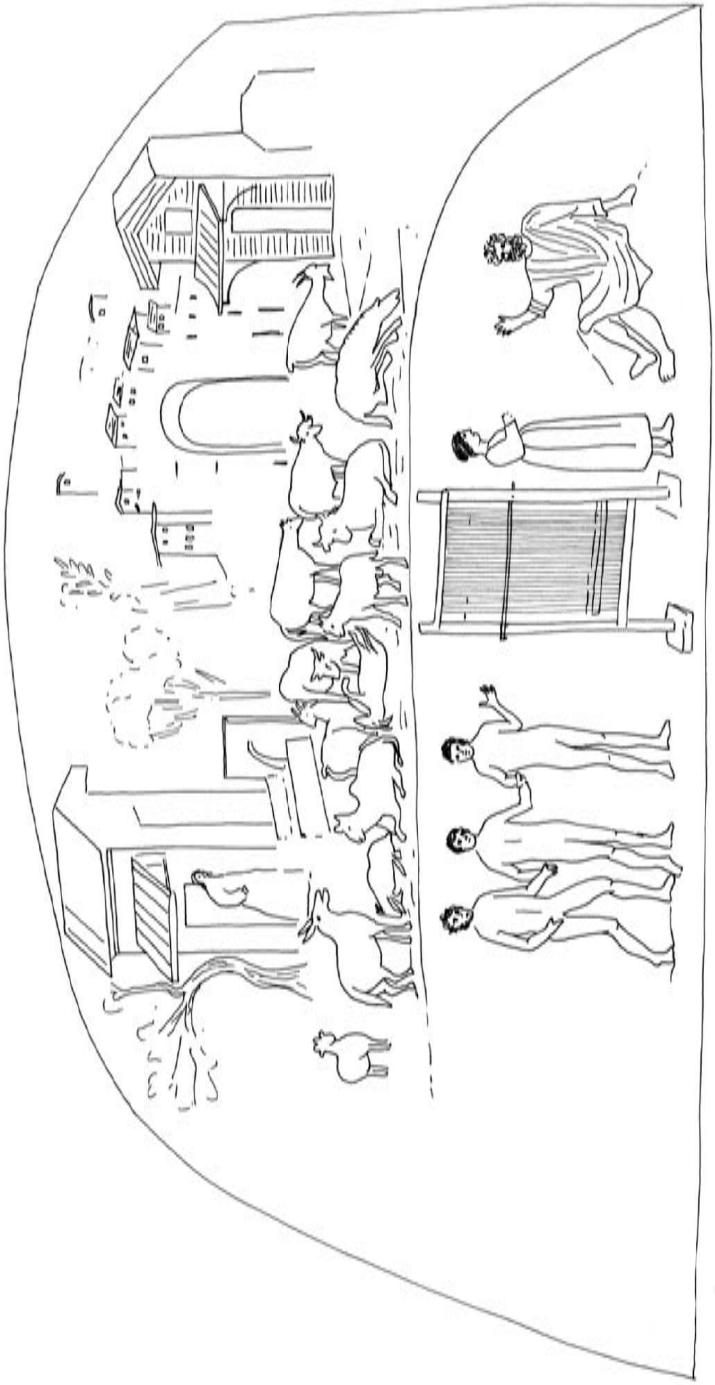

Fig. 19

flock grazing in the upper frieze, understood as the surroundings of the Circean Mount. Below, the seated personage and the three naked males would be none other than Odysseus and his companions after the episode of their freeing from enchantment.

To the allegorical obscurity acquired by these uncertain Odyssean interpretations in a possibly Gnostico-Christian environment—all suggestions fail if we wish to integrate the details into a coherent whole—is added the material obscurity of the image, in equivocal, evanescent traits. Today, our research is based primarily on the excellent watercolors made by the artist O. Ferreti, in 1920, or on those, slightly later, made by C. Tabanelli upon request from G. Wilpert in 1924. Since then, the paintings have seriously deteriorated, the reason why it is practically impossible to carry out a new and more precise examination of them.

A recent reading[43] associates the representation in the upper frieze with a wall inscription, beneath the painting, which mentions a certain Remius Celerinus and A…Epaphroditus. According to Chicoteau, the painted scene represents two fountains, with the motif of the *refrigerium* to which the inscription probably refers.

Let us try to situate ourselves in the difficult upper image. A scene of idyllic-pastoral content is portrayed with a *hortus suburbanus* before a city, sketched in the background, in accordance with the landscape tradition of Roman painting: over a great arched vaulted gate, houses can be discerned. In the foreground stretches a great meadow, populated by various and heterogeneous animals in various attitudes—cows and oxen, goats (one of them gamboling), a seated dromedary, a braying ass, two horses…one's attention is seized by the diversity of species, one of them as exotic and enigmatic as a dromedary. On either side, we see two rustic buildings, with a covered porch, a door, an upper window and a roof with two sloping roofs. The construction of a fountain stands before the left-hand building. From a vertical wall, a great stream of water flows into a kind of pool in front of which a woman slightly leans, standing next to the door. It is less obvious that the similar building on the right is a second fountain, as Chicoteau proposes. Two large trees, the one on the left with a twisted trunk, cover the background.

Chicoteau directs our attention to two signs: the woman in white, standing in front of the left-hand fountain; and a great white tree, on

[43] Chicoteau (1997).

the right of this fountain. The same author stresses the funeral symbolism of white, and relates these figures to the *refrigerium* or *anapsyxis* of the Orphic tablets (cf. § 1.5.). The scene would take place in the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone (**L 8**, from Thurii). Because of its greater spatial and chronological proximity to the hypogeum, Chicoteau reminds us of the late tablet of Caecilia Secundina at Rome, now in the British Museum (cf. § 5, **L 11**). It mentions the famous gift to men of Mnemosyne, the Muse of memory. Could this white woman, the nymph of the waters who is standing, vigilant, next to her nymphaeum (the fountain of forgetfulness or of memory?), from which the souls drink, also be Mnemosyne? The hypothetical duality of fountains to which Chicoteau alludes should correspond to the afterlife landscape of which the Orphic tablets, like the one from Petelia (cf. § 1), inform us, yet, I repeat, we cannot be sure that this second fountain really exists. Finally, the animals, who to a great extent stand out by their dark color, are the souls (Gnostic *psychikoi* or *sarkikoi*, as Chicoteau affirms) who wander through the infernal meadows of Persephone.

The second element is the supposed white tree to which Chicoteau alludes: a cypress—as this author affirms—"which shines even today" next to the fountain of life. The white tree, in contrast with the dark animals, would be an illuminating sign, an indication of the path to the afterlife, although here we can only manage to see a tree in an idyllic Roman landscape (cf. §1.4.). Let us add that in a syncretistic pagan-Christian interpretation, the central gate in the arch of the wall, in the background, could be the entry towards Hades or the Celestial Jerusalem, being therefore related, in a complex iconographical program, to the decoration alluded to on other walls.

A coherent reading of the details and of the whole and of the interrelation of both scenes, still remains to be offered. The three male figures holding hands could be three initiates who are advancing naked towards their new life. The mythical weaver, whether she is Penelope or Circe, may be allegorically weaving the destiny of those who are buried there, an ancient pagan metaphor.[44] Let us recall the

[44] On the theme of the *peplos* in the Orphic poems, cf. Porph., *Antr.*, 56, 10 (cf. *OF* 286) and *OF* 286 III (to weave the mantle of the world). On allegorico-religious interpretations of weaving in the *Odyssey*: Moret (1991) especially 238–240. On the funerary painting of the Viale Manzoni, cf. *ibidem*, 230, n. 13. On the fabric of the world, cf. Vonessen (1963).

Ouranian peplos of the Orphics, the tissue of the world to which the Neoplatonist Porphyry alludes in the *Cave of the Nymphs*, who, indeed, are other Odyssean weavers (*Odyssey*, 13, 96 ff.). We might also recall how Persephone, now queen of the infernal realm, was weaving a mantle that ordered heavenly things when she was abducted by Pluto (Proclus, *in Tim*. III 223). It is not hard to associate the activity of weaving with the eschatologies and initiations of the afterlife. Finally, if we are truly in the presence of an Odyssean theme, it is fitting to evoke the frequent association in the first centuries of Christianity of Odysseus, the *exemplum virtutis*, with the figure of Christ.[45] Let us not forget, however, that we are dealing with a chain of conjectures based on a unique monument, extremely complex and very precariously conserved. A coherent reading of the ensemble, which is undoubtedly of philosophical-religious content, is still lacking. At present, the questions are more open than the answers.

See, in addition, the commentary on n. 14. On the survival of Orphic beliefs in the Roman Imperial period, cf. the tablet of Caecilia Secundina, from Roma (**L 11**, § 5).

N. 14. The *refrigerium* of first Christians

The fresco painted above an *arcosolium* in the Roman catacomb of Callixtus, in whose central part a *loculus* or funerary niche was later carved out, represents the Good Shepherd (fig. 20).[46] Christ is an elegant adolescent in a short tunic and a mantle, holding a sheep over his shoulders. The scene takes place in the bucolic landscape of tree-filled meadows in which the flock gambols, with many fountains of fresh water that flow from a rock. The apostles Peter and Paul are drawing handfuls of water from them.

The scene from this tomb, from the 3rd cent. A.D., has a funerary meaning not very distant from the pagan motif of the *refrigerium* 'refreshment' of the souls in their path to the Beyond, to which the Orphic tablets also refer, and on which it is also possible to trace a long

[45] On the Christian allegories of Odysseus, see, in addition to Cechelli (1944) 53 ff., Pépin (1982). As an example of hypertextual readings of the *Odyssey* in Antiquity and the Christian appropriation of Odysseus and Orpheus, cf. MacDonald (1994).

[46] De Rossi (1872) 309 and pl. XVIII.

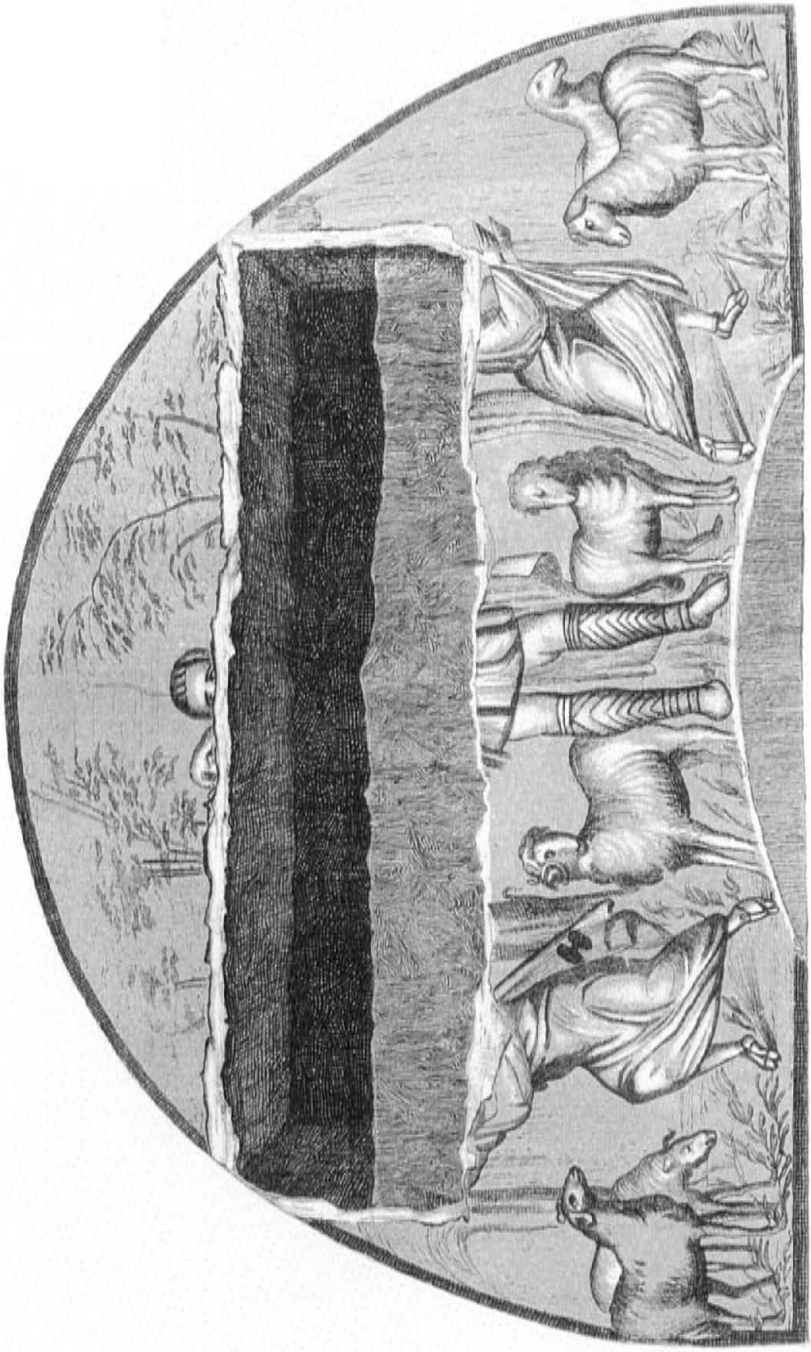

Fig. 20 (From De Rossi [1872] pl. XVIII)

iconographical tradition in the Mediterranean and the Near East in Antiquity. In Christianity, the pagan motif is endowed with renewed Christian meaning through the Biblical tradition: the water of life or the living water (ὕδωρ ζῶν) can take on an eschatological dimension. The *Gospel of John* (4, 13–14) places the following phrase in Jesus' mouth:

> whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

And a passage from the *Apocalypse* (7, 16–17) reads as follows:

> Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb (…) will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water (ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγὰς ὑδάτων).

Images of the Samaritan in the well of Jacob or the marvelous well of Moses in the desert abound in the catacombs of Rome.[47] Here, they are an expression of the *refrigerium*, a metaphor for the "fountain of eternal life".

Franz Cumont[48] had already sketched the long history of this extended *topos*, that was to relate the Orphic tablets with Christianity and the Egyptian religion (see the commentaries to our n. 12). The description is vivid, since it is based on experience:

> Beneath the blazing Egyptian sky, beside the arid sands in which the traveler succumbs, devoured by thirst, what one desires for the dead man in his posthumous peregrinations is that he may find a limpid fountain to quench the ardor that devours him (…). This water was soon transformed into the image of the fountain of life which pours forth immortality upon the thirsty souls. The metaphor was so widely accepted that the Latin *refrigerium* ended up as a synonym of well-being and beatitude. In this sense, the expression continued to be used in the liturgy of the church…

The great Belgian scholar of ancient religions (1868–1947) placed the tablet from Petelia in relation both with Egyptian ideas and with their survival in Christianity. In these examples, comparativism in the history of religions showed a more fruitful and enriching aspect.

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[47] On Paleochristian images of the Fountain of Moses and the Samaritan at the well of Jacob, cf. Wilpert (1903) pls. 36, 46, 49–50, 55, 57, 60, 98, etc. Likewise, vol. I, p. 266 "Moses in the desert"; pp. 423–426: "Das Refrigerium".

[48] Cumont (1909²) 152. On Christian *refrigerium*, cf. Neyton (1979) 136–139. On *refrigerium* in the Near East, cf. Parrot (1937). On Paleochristian symbolism of water, cf. Daniélou (1961) chap. III: "L'eau vive et le poisson".

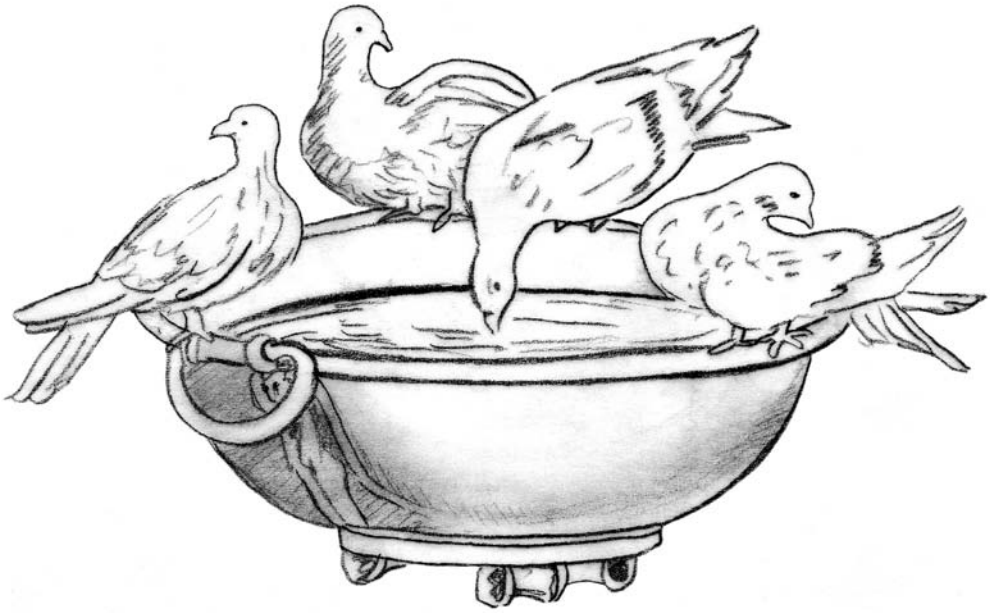

Fig. 21

After Franz Cumont, these Christian doubts and re-elaborations of Paganism were much debated. Allusion has been made to the parable of the rich Epulus and poor Lazarus (*Ev. Luc.* 16, 24). Now in the afterlife, the perverse rich man begs Abraham to allow Lazarus to moisten his finger in water and refresh his tongue: a fleeting refreshment, perhaps heard as a kind of prelude to paradise.

Whether or not these relations are true—we are surely in the presence of manifestations characteristic of each culture, which are interwoven and related alongside a vague common background, or even a general, if not universal mytheme—it is clear that Christianity adopts quite concrete motifs from pagan iconography, clothing them as Christian allegories. The same motif of the *refrigerium* finds another Hellenic formulation in the image of doves drinking from a vase. It reinterprets the *emblema* from the pavements of Hellenistic and Roman houses with doves perching on the edge of a basin, as described by Pliny (*Natural history*, 36, 184) (fig. 21). The brilliant artist Sosus of Pergamum had created it towards the second half of the 2nd cent. B.C.[49] In turn, Sosus may have had in mind the famous cup of Nestor described in the *Iliad* (11, 632–637). In early Christianity, the doves next to the vase are the souls, who drink the water of salvation of Christ.

The water that mitigates the heat of this world is translated to the imaginary of the Beyond. Throughout the Near East, in Asia Minor and Egypt, in Ugarit, Phoenicia and Carthage, many excavations have brought to light installations that guided water to the tombs. Drinking glasses are not lacking among funerary furniture. Let us recall once again that the initiate from Pharsalus deposited his ashes in a hydria (cf. n. 8).

[49] On the mosaic with doves by Sosus of Pergamum, cf. Havelock (1981[2]) 258, pl. XIV.

N. 15. Images and contexts of some Orphic tablets: Pelinna, Petelia, Hipponion, Rome

In this image, we reproduce the Orphic tablets from Pelinna and Petelia. Both examples from Pelinna (Thessaly)[50] have the shape of an ivy leaf (fig. 22). The link is clearly the symbolism of ivy, a leaf that is always verdant and fecund, with Dionysus: *hedera est gratissima Baccho* (Ovid. *Fast.* 3, 767, cf. § 2). In particular, one of the leaves contains an extremely closely-written text in which the corners of the heart-shaped outlines are used to maximum advantage. They speak of Bacchic liberation, and of the initiate's new birth. We recall that the terracotta of a maenad, whose image completed the mystical meaning of the Dionysiac initiation of the woman buried there, was also associated with this burial. The image (ivy), as well as the context support the meaning of the writing. Cf., in a similar sense, our n. 7, in the terracotta of the dancing maenad from Locri.

Let us consider the example from Petelia, which creates enormous difficulties from an archaeological viewpoint (fig. 23). Whereas other tablets were deposited in the hand or on the head of the deceased, this example, carefully folded, appeared in a sheath, a small pentagonal cylinder closed at one end. The sheath hung, by two tiny rings, from a filigree chain, with its links plaited into units forming figures of eight. It was entirely in gold. We must, then, suppose that it hung around the neck, which is exceptional in our case.

The set was found in 1836 "in the environs of Petelia" in Calabria, between Thurii and Crotona, and it is the first known example of our Orphic series. It has been in the British Museum since 1843. The facts concerning its provenance are extremely scarce. It might belong to an Italian tomb, that is, not a Greek one. Yet the major problem arose when it was determined that both the sheath and the chain date from well into the imperial Roman period.[51] Two possibilities may be considered: either the totality of the find is a modern manipulation, combining diverse ancient elements, which seems unlikely; or else the tablet, already in Antiquity, was extracted from a tomb and reused, at least five centuries later, as a magical amulet, carefully folded and kept in its new amulet-holding sheath. This is the option we prefer. In the Roman period, the placement of late tablets and Gnostic texts in cylin-

[50] Cf. Bottini (1992) 129 ff.

[51] Cf. Marshall (1911) 380, n. 3155, Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 33 ff., (1996) 497, Martín Hernández (forthocoming).

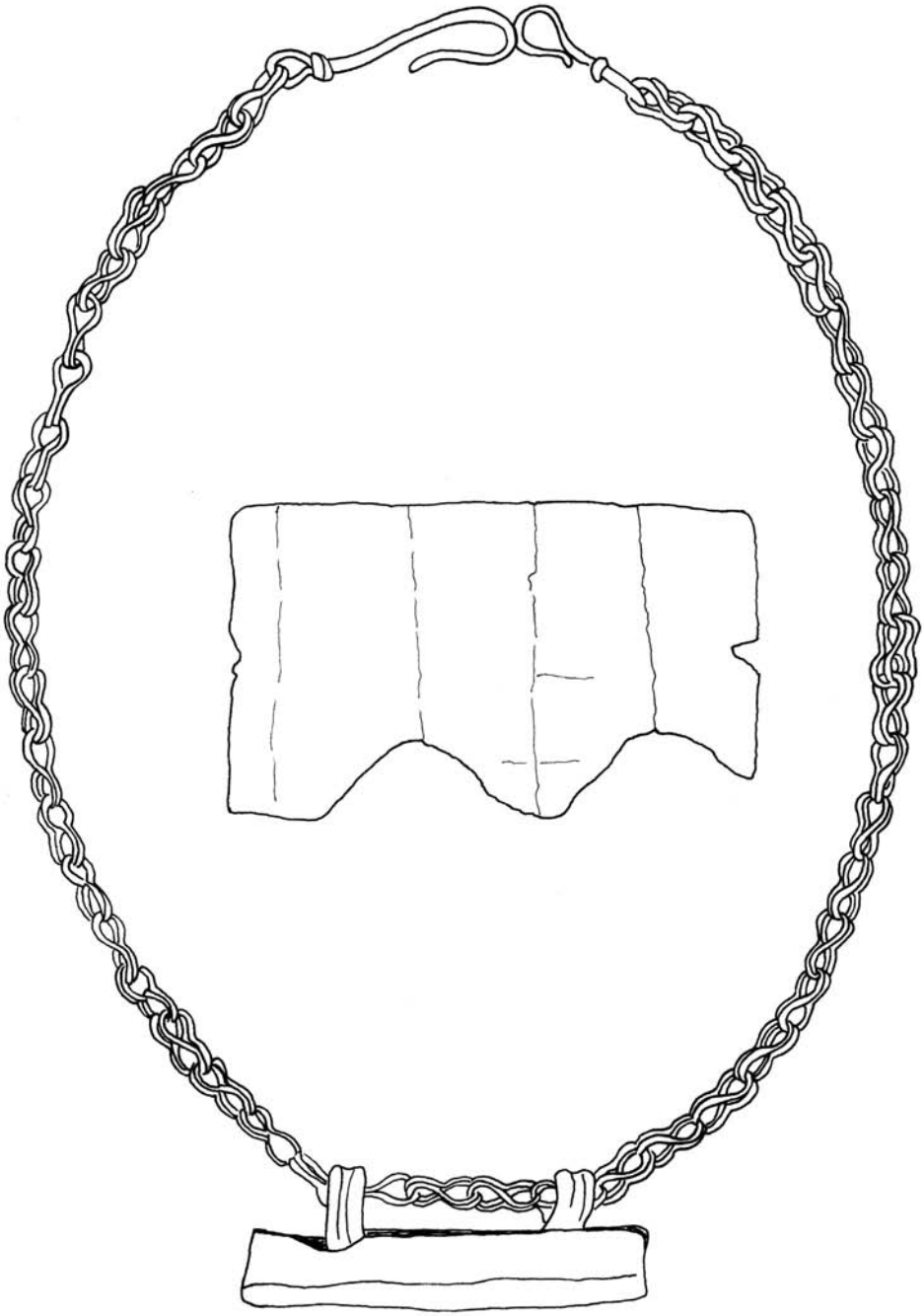

Fig. 22

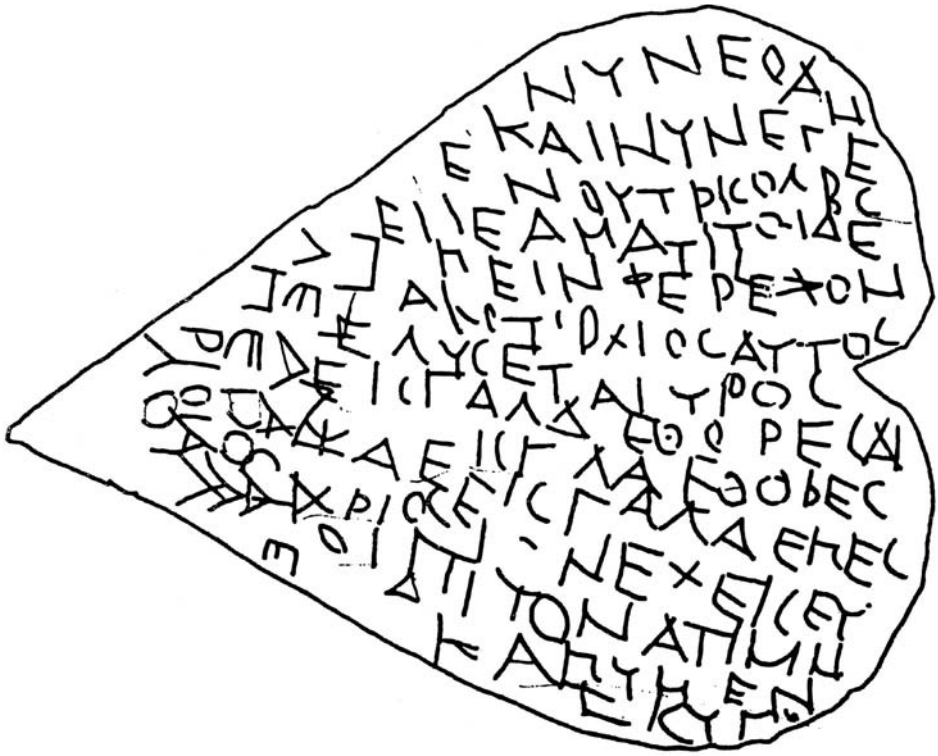

Fig. 23

drical sheaths is frequent. It has even been suspected[52] that the lower lines of the tablet from Petelia were cut off at this second stage, so that it could fit in the sheath. However its careful folding could already have been carried out in the 4th cent. B.C., since other tablets, like the one from Hipponion,[53] are folded four times, perhaps as a ritual act that hid the sacred words from profane eyes.

Reusing of Petelia tablet is linked by Bottini[54] with the survival (or rebirth) of Orphic tradition in Roman times. He reminds also the gold tablet of Caecilia Secundina found in Rome next to San Paolo fuori le mura (**L 11**).[55] In addition, the possible Orphico-Christian interpretation of the hypogeum of the Viale Manzoni (between 210 and 240 A.D.) must be brought up (cf. n. 14).

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[52] Zuntz (1971) 356.
[53] Cf. Pugliese Carratelli (1993) 20 ff., (1996) 219.
[54] Bottini (1992) 56–58.
[55] Cf. Marshall (1911) n. 3154.

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