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Plato's Orpheus: The Philosophical Appropriation of Orphic Formulae

Dannu Hütwohl

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Dannu J. Hutwohl

Candidate

Foreign Languages and Literatures

Department

This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Thesis Committee:

Professor Lorenzo F. Garcia Jr.

, Chairperson

Professor Monica S. Cyrino

Professor Osman Umurhan

by

THESIS

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Plato's Orpheus: The Philosophical Appropriation of Orphic Formulae

By
Dannu J. Hütwohl

B.A., Classical Studies, University of New Mexico, 2012
M.A., Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, University of New Mexico, 2016

Abstract

In this project I explore Plato's deployment and transposition of Orphic eschatological ideas through his incorporation of Orphic formulae, based on the Olbian Tablets and Orphic Gold Tablets, into his philosophical settings throughout his dialogues. I show how Plato deploys Orphic formulae throughout his dialogues in order to promote his philosophy, which points to Plato's knowledge of Orphic doctrine.

First I analyze Plato's use of specific terminology and formulae in eschatological contexts. Then I look specifically at the Orphic term *poinë* in terms of the Orphic myth of Dionysus. I contend with the arguments of Edmonds who redefines the Greek word *poinë* as *time* in order to discredit the existence of an Orphic doctrine. I survey the use of the Greek word *poinë* in Homer, Pindar, Plato, the Derveni Papyrus and the Gurôb Papyrus in order to demonstrate that *poinë* points to the cohesiveness and integrity of the Orphic doctrine.

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Plato's Orpheus: The Philosophical Appropriation of Orphic Formulae

Introduction: Orphic Mythology and Sources

The mythological biography of the legendary figure Orpheus unfolds in several Greek myths. Orpheus was the son of Apollo, and was famed for his music (Pindar, *Pythian* 4.176-177; Euripides, *Alcestis* 357-362). Orpheus provided his harmonious sounds to protect the Argonauts from the Sirens (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.890-920), and was a magician with mystical powers over nature (Simonides fr. 567 *PMG*). With these gifts Orpheus descended into the realm of Hades to retrieve his dead wife (Plato, *Symposium* 179d), but he was subsequently dismembered at the hands of Bacchic women (Pseudo-Eratosthenes, *Katasterismi* 24). This elusive biography of the culture hero Orpheus provided the background for an initiatory cult dedicated to death, rebirth and the salvation of the soul, but the identity of Orpheus as man or myth continues to elude scholars.

Orphic literature consists of a substantial collection of extant and fragmentary texts—the *Hymns*, *Krater*, *Lithica*, and *Argonautica*—as well as *testimonia* concerning a broad range of themes associated with the mythical Orpheus or Mystery rites in general. Gottfried Hermann first published both the extant Orphic texts and fragments in his *Orphica*, “Orphic references” (1805), but when the debate over Orphism became the subject of philology, Otto Kern then exclusively assembled the Orphic fragments under the name *Orphicorum fragmenta* (1922), which included both Classical and Hellenistic

authors, such as Plato's *Orphica* as well as references to Orpheus in the Neo-Platonic scholia. These fragments include references to the mythological biography of Orpheus, his *Katabasis* and return from the dead, Neo-Platonic scholia on the myth of Dionysus-Zagreus, and references to the origin and fate of the soul.

The most contentious issue surrounding Orphic scholarship is the question of whether this collection of fragments and complete Orphic texts can be considered reliable evidence for an Orphic cult of community defined by a certain set of beliefs and practices. The designation of the Orphic texts as representing a "system" of thought has been argued through the appearance of various eschatological doctrines evident in the texts, including discussions of the topography of an afterlife world (Hades, Elysium) and the consequent punishment for uninitiated or reward for initiates, depending on a person's conduct during life. In addition, the Orphic system contained soteriological doctrines, such as ideas about the immortality of the soul, reincarnation, and the divine origin of humankind through the savior god Dionysus. Moreover, Orphic texts promote cultivation of the soul over the body through ritual purifications and vegetarianism and other dietary restrictions. Although scholarship on the Orphic texts is vast, the spectrum of Orphic scholarship can be separated into two methodically opposed camps: the minimalists (including Wilamowitz, Linforth, West, and Edmonds III) who deny the existence of an Orphic cult because they believe the evidence for such a historical cult is unreliable; and the maximalists (including Kern, Rohde, Guthrie, and Bernabé) who believe the evidence for a historical cult of Orpheus is reliable and substantiates the existence of an initiatory cult whose practices and tenets can be traced and identified. With such a broad range of texts attributed to the Orphic movement, one general problem

in Orphic scholarship is how to define Orphism: either as a collection of texts associated with the name Orpheus or as a collection of texts testifying to an established cult.

The Orphic debate has been transformed in recent years by archeological discoveries such as the Gold Tablets,¹ the Derveni Papyrus,² the Gûrob Papyrus,³ and an Olbian bone tablet,⁴ which appear to be some of the oldest “Orphic” remains. The Orphic *Hymns*, the Orphic *Argonautica*, and cosmological treatises such as the *Rhapsodies* are typically considered to be later Hellenistic and Imperial creations. Bernabé’s Teubner edition (2004, 2005) of the *Orphicorum fragmenta* includes the most recent archeological discoveries dating back to the beginnings of Orphic scholarship in the late nineteenth century. This new evidence offers insight into the scheme and geography of the Orphic underworld, the interview with Persephone, and even Orphic allegorizing and ritual. In my thesis (see overview of Chapter 1 below), I will argue that these recent archaeological discoveries, unavailable to the earlier skeptics like Wilamowitz and Linforth, support the claim that the Orphic texts testify to an established cult with a definite body of beliefs and doctrines. My thesis will be concerned with the influence of this body of “Orphic” beliefs and doctrines had upon the thought and writings of Plato.

¹ See Graf and Johnston 2007: 52-56 for a history of discovery and publication of the Gold Tablets. Our earliest information about the tablets dates to 1834, but some tablets did not receive publication until 1999: e.g., Graf and Johnston 2007: 42 (Tablet 33, Pella/Dion 3).

² The Derveni Papyrus was discovered in 1962, but not officially published until 2006: see Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006, and the review by R. Janko *BMCR* 2006.10.29 (<http://bmc.brynmawr.edu/2006/2006-10-29.html>).

³ Originally published in 1921: Graf and Johnston 2007: 150-155, 211n90 with bibliography.

⁴ A number of bone tablets were discovered in Olbia in 1951, but not published until 1978: See West 1982, Zhmud’ 1992.

Plato's *Orphica*: An Introduction

Plato's *Orphica* comprise a critical portion of the *Orphicorum fragmenta*, which has long led scholars to debate Plato's role in disseminating Orphic beliefs. Plato's *Orphica* consists of explicit and implicit references to Orpheus as a mythological character and his Mystery rites. The perplexing question concerning scholars who study Plato's *Orphica* is: why does Plato often represent Orpheus in a negative light, but then elsewhere champion Orphic beliefs? For instance, Plato praises "the Orphic life" and its abstention from eating meat (*Laws* 782c), yet he rebukes the traveling priests who promise knowledge by providing a "bushel of Orphic books" (*Republic* 364e). Plato speaks of souls passing through cycles of incarnation and judgment (*Republic* 615b, *Phaedrus* 249)—an idea attributed to Orphic beliefs in the salvation of the soul. But in his Myth of Er the soul of Orpheus chooses to incarnate as a swan because of his animosity for the women who killed him (*Republic* 620a), which suggests Orpheus himself was not free from the cycle of incarnations his cult promised. Elsewhere, Plato alludes to the Orphic *Katabasis* (*Symposium* 179d) and remarks on Orpheus' cowardice. Nevertheless he includes Orpheus among poets famed for song (*Ion* 533b-c), and honors him along with Homer and Hesiod (*Protagoras* 316d). The dichotomy between esteem and criticism is a prevalent theme with Plato's representation of Orpheus and Orphism.

The question of Plato's view of Orpheus and Orphism is significant, for Plato does indeed make reference to specific Orphic doctrines. In one dialogue, he reveals an Orphic belief that the soul is prisoner to the body, engages in etymological speculation about the meaning of the word *sōma* "body/tomb" (*Cratylus* 400b-c), and goes on to quote two lines from an Orphic poem (*Cratylus* 402b). As I will argue, Plato's critical

engagement with original Orphic texts suggests he is employing his philosophical method to reading Orphic doctrine. A fragment of Pindar preserved in Plato's *Meno* (81b-c), which describes Persephone immortalizing the souls of men, has been considered by some scholars to be a reference to the Orphic aitiological myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus-Zagreus. After recounting the myth of Persephone, Plato affirms τὸ μανθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν, "learning is absolutely recollection" (*Phaedo* 82d).⁵ In other words, once again Plato seems to be referring to a piece of Orphic eschatological thought, and connects it to a theory of *anamnesis* that is fundamental for his own philosophical thought about memory and knowledge (detailed, for instance, in the *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*). John Palmer, a scholar who has worked extensively on Plato and the Pre-Socratic philosophical tradition, associates the idea of Plato's *anamnesis* with the function of memory on the Gold Tablets when he argues that both *Phaedrus* and *Republic* have a common source in the Orphic afterlife depicted on the Tablets.⁶ Both the Orphic and Platonic afterlives offer similar views in which memory plays the key role in achieving communion with the divine or access to the afterlife. Plato's ἀνάμνησις "recollection" (*Phaedrus* 249b-d) for the philosopher is a development of the mnemonic devices used by the Orphic initiates to ensure their blessings in the afterlife.⁷ Plato's interest can be investigated through a comparison of the views of the afterlife and eschatology in both Plato's writings and the surviving Orphic texts.

Eschatology is the study of beliefs in an afterlife: death, judgment, and the destiny of the soul. The Gold Tablets are the most insightful evidence for Orphic eschatology,

⁵ All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

⁶ Palmer 1999: 22-23.

⁷ Graf and Johnson 2007: 94.

and Plato's views are represented in *Republic*, *Gorgias*, and *Phaedo*. Both the Orphic and Platonic viewpoints draw upon and adopt from a stock of cultural and ritual beliefs.⁸ The debate over the origins of Plato's eschatology has fascinated scholars since the nineteenth century. In his fundamental study of Greek and Christian apocalyptic religions, Albrecht Dieterich (1893) argued that Plato reproduced an authentic Orphic eschatology, a position taken up more recently by Peter Kingsley (1996).⁹ But E. R. Dodds (1951, rpt. 2002) and Alberto Bernabé and Anna Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008) favored the idea that Plato created his own eschatology, borrowing elements from a variety of sources.¹⁰ W. K. C. Guthrie, a historian of Greek philosophy and religion, moderately argued that Plato merely "supplemented" Orphic religion.¹¹ The American scholar Ivan Linforth doubted that Plato borrowed from a single pre-existing "Orphic" belief system, and instead proposed that Plato attributed to the single personage of Orpheus works belonging to a larger group of poets and prophets associated with rites.¹² In any case, as Erwin Rohde, one of the great German Classical scholars of the nineteenth century, explained, we must conclude that "Plato is following in the track of the theologians of earlier times."¹³

Auguste Diès, a celebrated scholar of Plato's life and works, first acknowledged the influence of Orphic thought on Plato's philosophy in contrast with the originality of Plato's philosophy.¹⁴ He argued that Plato transposed the religious and initiatory doctrines of Orphism into the pursuit of philosophical perfection. Bernabé (2011) has since inherited this position and further developed the theory of "transposition" (Diès'

⁸ Graf and Johnston 2007: 94.

⁹ Dieterich 1893: 113ff; Kingsley 1996: 115.

¹⁰ Dodds 2002: 373; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 54.

¹¹ Guthrie 1993: 243.

¹² Linforth 1941: 281.

¹³ Rohde 1925: 468.

¹⁴ Diès 1927: 444. On Diès' stature in Platonic studies, see P. Shorey's review of his *Platon* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1930) in *Classical Philology* 25 (1930) 203.

term) of religious language. Bernabé (2011, 2013) argues that Plato replaces the Orphic life with the philosophic life. Instead of initiatory rights and purifications, Plato proclaims moral obligations and philosophic perfection. The historian of philosophy Giovanni Reale (1987) pointed out, “Without Orphism, we cannot explain Pythagoras, nor Heraclitus, nor Empedocles, and naturally not Plato and whatever was derived from him.”¹⁵ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008) recently elucidated how Plato “takes concepts from Orphic doctrines and re-elaborates them in agreement with his own theories, equating philosophical with mystery initiation.”¹⁶ While some scholars have argued that Plato reproduced Orphic ideas of the afterlife or supplemented his dialogues with *Orphica*, other scholars have focused on Plato’s Orphic criticism and argued that Plato borrowed his eschatological themes from a variety of sources. For my part, I argue in this thesis that Plato is not simply emulating and re-elaborating Orphic myths through “transposition,” but rather that Plato’s dialogues are a direct continuation of the Orphic mysteries and rites through the revised methodology of philosophy. Furthermore, I explain Plato’s Orphic criticism to be a natural and expected outcome of the transposition process. Therefore, I conclude that we can better read Plato with an understanding of Orphism.

I answer the problem of Plato’s duplicitous *Orphica* by pointing out the harmony between Plato’s eschatology and the afterlife depicted on the Gold Tablets. I demonstrate how the Platonic doctrine of the soul was a philosophical development rooted in the Orphic *Mysteria*. By comparing Orphic and Platonic eschatology, I indicate a direct line of descent from the origins of Orphic *Mysteria* to the revolution of Platonic philosophy. I

¹⁵ Reale 1987: 15.

¹⁶ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 76.

build upon Diès' theory of "transposition," as well as Dieterich's argument that Plato reproduced Orphic myths. I argue that Plato critically engaged the mythological discourse of Orpheus with his rational methods of dialectic because he adopted some Orphic beliefs and disregarded others; consequently Plato reshaped the Orphic *mythos* as a way to explain phenomenal and noumenal questions, such as the nature and fate of the soul. Plato's speculation of an immortal soul reuniting with the divine Forms was contrasted with the shadowy Homeric soul dwelling in the eternal darkness of Hades. Orphism provided Plato with a theoretical and mythological prerogative for disseminating his new philosophy. Because Plato's "immortal soul" exhibits similar traits to beliefs of the Orphic movement, his *Orphica* is critical for defining and investigating Orphism. Ultimately, I argue the eschatological system developed by Plato represents a theoretical explication of the "metaphysical" doctrines of the Orphic Mysteries, which instructed its initiates (μύσται) in the *arrheton* "the unspeakable," such as the myth of Chthonian Dionysus-Zagreus and the immortality of the soul.¹⁷ Plato analyzed the teachings of the Mysteries, systematically demonstrated Orphic eschatology through his dialogues, and thereby continued the rites of Orphic initiation through philosophical dialectic.

Orphic Eschatology and Platonic Philosophy: An Introduction

In this project I explore Plato's borrowing of Orphic themes and terminology within eschatological contexts. In order to investigate Orphic eschatology it is necessary to establish when Orphic belief in the afterlife emerged by first distinguishing between the mythical Orpheus and the Orphic movement. Orpheus, as a mythico-historical figure,

¹⁷ Burkert 1985: 276.

occupies a position in myth; his travels with the Argonauts (Pindar, *Pyth.* iv) established him in the Heroic Age around the time of the Trojan War. Homer himself was silent about Orpheus, yet the historian Hellanicus claimed Homer to be the genetic descendent of Orpheus (*FGrHist* 4 F 5 Jacoby). By the sixth century BCE, the mythical Orpheus was already ὀνομακλυτός, “famous in name,” according to Ibycus of Thegium (fr. 25 *PMG*). Orphism as a cult appeared as early as the fifth century BCE when Herodotus (ii.81) first attested to an Orphic ritual, associated the ritual with Pythagoras, and publicized the Egyptian origins of the Orphic and Bacchic rites. The oldest Gold Tablet from Hipponion, and the Olbian bone tablet, both date to the early fifth century BCE and assert the genesis of an Orphic cult.

Orpheus’ historicity has always been contentious and confusing even for the ancients. But the study of the Orphic cult, or “Orphism,” and specifically Plato’s *Orphica* is not concerned entirely with Orpheus. The focus of my thesis is on the texts attributed to Orpheus such as the *Katabasis*, the *Hymns*, and the *Orphicorum fragmenta*. I suggest that the study of Orphism is the study of a collection of texts attached to the mythology of Orpheus, rather than the study of a mythical personage. Although Martin West defined Orphism as “the fashion for claiming Orpheus as an authority,”¹⁸ my investigation relies on Linforth’s insightful definition:

If we must call something Orphism, it must be the entire religion of *teletae* and mysteries with their magical ritual, the poems of Orpheus and others in which their sacred myths are told, and the ideas concerning god and man which were inherent in poems and ritual.¹⁹

¹⁸ West 1983: 3.

¹⁹ Linforth 1941: 173.

Linforth's definition suggests that the legendary figure known as Orpheus simply represents the genesis of the Mysteries and its institutions within Greek culture, just as Homer is not necessarily meant to be understood as a single personage, but rather as a metonymic representation for the oral tradition which produced the Homeric epics.²⁰ From this point of view I argue that Orphism is less about Orpheus as a mythological figure, but rather that Orpheus and his mythology represent the Orphic tradition and its specific doctrine. Orphism is the tradition of the *teletae* "the Mysteries," and the extant Orphic fragments testify to that tradition. Although Linforth was skeptical of Orphism as an organized cult and he disregarded the Gold Tablets as evidence for Orphism, these important archeological finds validate his definition of Orphism. As Rohde argued, "The Orphic sect had a fixed and definite set of doctrines," suggesting the Tablets would have been part of such defined doctrine.²¹

I read the eschatological scheme of the Gold Tablets as reliable evidence for the defined doctrine of Orphic thought. Because the eschatology of the Tablets associates Eleusinian and Bacchic mysteries, I speak about Orphism as a reform of pre-existing Eleusinian and Bacchic cults. Therefore I speak about the eschatology of Orphism as including the beliefs of these other cults. In his magisterial study of Greek Religion, Walter Burkert (1985) identified three schools within "the sphere of *Orphica*"²²—the Eleusinian, Bacchic, and Pythagorean—and in a later work suggested that Bacchic mysteries could have been a substitute for Eleusinian mysteries in some places.²³ Burkert

²⁰ Nagy 1999: 79.

²¹ Rohde 1925: 338.

²² Burkert 1985: 300.

²³ Burkert 1987: 38.

even identified the extant Orphic hymns as part of the Bacchic mysteries,²⁴ of which Orpheus himself was thought to be the founder.²⁵ This integration of Bacchic, Eleusinian, and Orphic mysteries was made clear by the Gold Tablets, such as the lamella from Hipponion, which addresses both μύσται καὶ βάκχοι, “Mystics and Bacchants!” (L1-6 Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal), as well as the beautiful Pelinna leaf which declares, εἰπεῖν Περσεφόνῃ σ’ ὅτι Βάκχος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε, “Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself released you!” (L7a-b Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal). The Tablets are evidence for the association between Bacchic and Eleusinian mysteries and their links to Orphism. This association is also supported by the literary record. Euripides portrayed Hippolytus as an Orphic hero who ascends the ranks of the Mysteries when he first sees the holy rites at Eleusis (*Hippolytus* 24-25), and then becomes an Orphic-Bacchant (cf. 953-955).²⁶ The ancients believed Orpheus instituted the Mysteries, and both the archeological and literary evidence verify Orphism in the context with other known mystery cults (Bacchic and Eleusinian). Therefore, I claim “Orphism” to be the designation for the entire system of Mystery religions in the Greek world, whether it be the branch of Eleusinian, Bacchic, or Pythagorean.

Scholars have long noticed the striking similarities between views of the afterlife in the Orphic remains and the eschatology mapped out in the Platonic dialogues. While some scholars²⁷ have suggested that Plato directly borrowed from lost Orphic poems such

²⁴ Burkert 1987: 18.

²⁵ Cf. Rohde 1925: 335.

²⁶ Barrett’s argument (1964: 342-343) that we should not take Hippolytus to be an actual Orphic in the play does not vitiate my claim that Euripides’ rhetorical association between the Eleusinian mysteries and Orphism points toward a real-life connection between the two cults.

²⁷ Dieterich 1893: 72-83; Guthrie 1993: 176; West 1983: 11; Kingsley 1996: 115.

as the *Krater* or *Katabasis*, other scholars²⁸ have focused on the differences between the Orphic and Platonic viewpoints in order to suggest that Plato borrowed from a variety of sources that are not necessarily Orphic. The brilliant philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff ushered in an age of skepticism by affirming there was no such thing as Orphism when he declared: “*Orpheus ist darum noch kein Religionsstifter*” [“Orpheus therefore is not a religious founder”],²⁹ and he argued against Dieterich’s comparisons between Orphic and Platonic eschatology. Although Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal pointed out the geographical similarity of the afterlife on the Gold Tablets and in Plato’s dialogues,³⁰ they rejected Guthrie’s conclusion that Plato relied on an Orphic *κατάβασις* schematic for the afterlife,³¹ a view that was held by Dieterich³² and followed by Harrison.³³ Burkert proposed that the Orphic *Katabasis* would have been contemporary with Homer’s *Nekyia* as an alternate mythological schematic for the afterlife.³⁴ Most recently, Kingsley argued against Wilamowitz that in fact the underworld myth in the *Phaedo* “allows us to reconstruct a whole prehistory of Platonic myth.”³⁵ Kingsley argued that the original outline for Plato’s underworld must be based on a poem ascribed to Orpheus.³⁶ Kingsley suggested that if the motif of lying in the mud is Orphic, then the entire geography of the *Phaedo* is also Orphic in origin.³⁷ This argument is enhanced by

²⁸ Wilamowitz 1931-1932: I.329; Thomas 1938; Dodds 1959: 373; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 54.

²⁹ Wilamowitz 1931-1932: II.195.

³⁰ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 54.

³¹ Cf. Guthrie 1993: 177.

³² Dietrich 1893: 72-83.

³³ Harrison 1922: 599.

³⁴ Burkert 1985: 296. It has also been argued, however (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 86-87, followed by Johnston 1999) that Homer’s *Nekyia* was a sixth-century BCE interpolation by a commentator in the tradition of Orphic mythopoeia. The *Nekyia* may have been based on a *katabasis* of Herakles, and thus coincided with the appearance of Herakles’ apotheosis in the sixth century.

³⁵ Kingsley 1996: 171, against Wilamowitz 1931-1932: I.329.

³⁶ Kingsley 1996: 115.

³⁷ Kingsley 1996: 119.

Proclus' testimony that the four rivers in the underworld of the *Phaedo* were interpreted allegorically (Damascius, *In Phaedonem* 1.497.3-5 and 541.1-6). Furthermore, according to Guthrie,³⁸ “allegorical philology” was a key component of Orphism, as demonstrated by the Derveni papyrus.

I propose that while Plato can appear critical of Orphism, he still uses an Orphic schematic for his eschatology. Archaeology can help vindicate this claim. Although the skeptical tradition was carried on by Linforth (1941) and still lingers, Wilamowitz (1931-1932) was hardly acquainted with all the evidence we possess today. In 1879 Domenico Comparetti excavated the burial mounds of Thurii in southern Italy, which yielded the first Gold Tablets.³⁹ Since Comparetti, further Tablets have been discovered throughout southern Italy and Greece.⁴⁰ The Derveni Papyrus was discovered in a grave near Thessaloniki in 1962 and finally published in 2006 (Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006). The papyrus is a fifth-century BCE allegorical commentary on an Orphic cosmological poem written in hexameter. The discovery of the Derveni Papyrus clearly demonstrated that allegorizing Orphic poetry was extant long before Plato's era and was not merely a Neo-Platonic creation.⁴¹ Critics who are opposed to Plato's direct borrowing of an Orphic schematic often draw attention to the Orphic initiators described negatively in the *Republic* (364b-c). But some scholars, such as Peter Kingsley, have demonstrated how they are indistinguishable from the priests depicted in the Derveni

³⁸ Cf. Guthrie 1993: 191n4.

³⁹ See Graf and Johnston 2007: 50-65 for a history of the discovery, publication, and scholarly reception of the Gold Tablets.

⁴⁰ The fourth-century BCE lamellae from Thurii (L10a, b Bernabé) ask Persephone to set free the initiate. The ivy shaped Pelinna lamellae (L7a, b Bernabé) dictate, “tell Persephone that Bacchus released you” (L7a.2 Bernabé). The oldest and most complete is the fifth-century BCE Hipponion tablet (L1 Bernabé), which associates “Mystics and Bacchants” (L1.16 Bernabé).

⁴¹ See Kingsley 1996: 102, 122 for discussion.

Papyrus (cols. 18.3-20.12),⁴² which suggests that allegorizing of Orphic poems can exist simultaneously with distrust for peddlers of “secrets.”⁴³ The archeological evidence attests to organized communities following a specific eschatological scheme that can be identified as Orphic.

I argue that Plato developed his eschatological myths described in *Gorgias* (523-527), *Republic* (Book X), and *Phaedo* (109-114) from a now lost Orphic *κατάβασις* poem, and contend with Wilamowitz that Plato is in fact utilizing an eschatological scheme developed from an Orphic source and modifying it to fit his philosophical agenda. Plato’s goal was to dispel the orthodox Homeric views of the afterlife, and replace the realm of shades with his own view of the immortal life of the soul. But this view was only achievable by the select few—namely, the philosophers. Thus Plato transposed the Orphic idea of salvation for religious initiates with his own view of salvation through knowledge available only to philosophical initiates. The transposition theory of Bernabé and Diès is based on the premise that Plato may have had a negative view of Orpheus, yet adopted Orphic material to suit his philosophical needs and purged the undesirable aspects of the Orphic doctrines.⁴⁴ I hope to prove that the evolution of Platonic eschatology had its roots in Orphism, and confirm Kingsley’s conclusion of “Plato’s role as a mere link in the chain of transmission of earlier Pythagorean and Orphic tradition.”⁴⁵

⁴² Unless indicated otherwise, all citations of the Derveni Papyrus are to the edition by Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006.

⁴³ Cf. Kingsley 1996: 164.

⁴⁴ See Baracat 2013 for discussion of Bernabé and Diès.

⁴⁵ Kingsley 1996: 305.

Scholars have begun to speak about Plato's eschatology as an "esoteric network,"⁴⁶ and Radcliffe Edmonds III has recently identified a system of *topoi*, which is evident in the literature of Empedocles, Plato, and the Gold Tablets.⁴⁷ This system suggests the use of mystical formulae in order to indicate a specific eschatology, which would have been utilized by an author who was expressing Orphic beliefs. The four narrative themes identified by Edmonds are: TI. the dichotomy between initiated (pure) and uninitiated (un-pure); TII. the divine lineage of mankind that provides release of the soul after death (*Phaedo* 82.d6, Zagreus myth); TIII. the journey of the soul to the afterlife and the fountain of memory from which the soul may drink to recall what it knows from its previous state of existence; and TIV. the rewards (dwelling with gods/heroization) or punishment (rebirth) meted out to the souls of the dead. I argue after Kingsley that Plato developed his eschatological myths described in *Phaedo* (109-114), *Gorgias* (523-527), and *Republic* (Book X) from a now lost Orphic *κατάβασις* poem, and that we can identify the features of such a *Katabasis* from these *topoi* identified by Edmonds. For instance, consider the *topos* of the dichotomy between the initiated who dwell with the gods and behold the true reality of the Platonic Forms, and the uninitiated who sit in the *pelos* "filth" (*Republic* 363c-365a; cf. Aristophanes *Frogs* 145-150). According to Kingsley, the dichotomy between the uninitiated lying in the mud and the initiated freeing himself to live with the gods is a uniquely Orphic belief, and therefore the dichotomy as presented in the *Republic* is a *topos* derived specifically from Orphic beliefs.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Pender 2013: 4.

⁴⁷ Edmonds 2004: 29-110.

⁴⁸ Kingsley 1996: 119.

Soteriology and the Cycle of Rebirth: An Introduction

The goal of the Mysteries was the release of the soul from the cycle of rebirths. This was accomplished by *teletai* “initiations” and *katharmoi* “purifications.”⁴⁹ Likewise, Plato asserts (*Phaedo* 69bc) that philosophical truth is a καθαρός or release from the cycle of rebirth, and that those who die uninitiated lie in the πηλός “filth.” Plato’s commentator Olympiodorus says that Plato here is referring to an Orphic myth (*OF* 235 Kern). In the *Republic*, Plato contrasts the uninitiated who lie in the πηλός “filth” with those initiates who dwell at an eternal drinking party (*Republic* 363d). When the soul ceases from the grief of incarnation in the physical body and comes into communion with its divine source, it forms a union with the divine that Plato calls φρόνησις “wisdom” (*Phaedrus* 79d). The καθαρός “purification” which leads to φρόνησις is performed through the Mysteries, and Plato spells out the dichotomy between the uninitiated and initiated and its intimate relation to the Mysteries in the *Phaedo*:

οἱ τὰς τελετὰς ἡμῖν οὗτοι καταστήσαντες οὐ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι πάλαι αἰνίττεσθαι ὅτι ὅς ἂν ἀμύητος καὶ ἀτέλεστος εἰς Ἅιδου ἀφίκηται ἐν βορβόρῳ κείσεται, ὁ δὲ κεκαθαρμένος τε καὶ τετελεσμένος ἐκεῖσε ἀφικόμενος μετὰ θεῶν οἰκήσει. εἰσὶν γὰρ δὴ, ὡς φασιν οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετὰς, “ναρθηγοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δὲ τε παῦροι.”

Those who established the Mysteries for us were not thoughtless, but in reality by speaking in ancient riddles that whosoever arrives in Hades uninitiated and unperfected, he will lie in the filth, but whosoever arriving there after having purified and initiated himself, he will dwell with the gods. “For there certainly are,” as they say in the Mysteries, “many thrysus-bearers, but few Bacchae.”

(Plato *Phaedo* 69c1-d1)

This passage highlights how Plato assimilates the teachings of the Mysteries into his philosophy. Plato’s dichotomy between the uninitiated and the initiated points to Plato’s

⁴⁹ Burkert 1985: 292.

assimilation of Orphic doctrine. The term πηλός “filth” seems to be a specifically Orphic term, which may indicate Plato’s familiarity with the Orphic underworld and his eventual adoption of the Orphic afterlife scheme. The idea evoked by πηλός “filth”(or βόρβορος⁵⁰) is contrasted with the idea of blessedness achieved by initiation, which suggests Plato is making reference to a specific Orphic text.

Plato deploys a subtle description of the Underworld that affirms his association with the Mysteries and an Orphic *Katabasis* schematic. Kingsley remarked how “Orphic literature itself was focused to a very large degree on the figure and fate of Persephone,” and how ritual fasting depicted in the *Hymn to Demeter* is similar to the Gold Tablets.⁵¹ The points of contact between Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries is explicitly evident not only from the Tablets, but also from the Orphic literary production at the important Eleusinian center of Syracuse,⁵² which produced Orpheus of Camarina’s *Descent to Hades*. Kingsley examined similarities between the seasons represented in the *Hymn to Demeter* and the Platonic underworld in the *Phaedo*.⁵³ Plato describes the underworld with the color κτανός (*Phaedo* 113b8-c1), which is intimately associated with the mourning of the Mysteries of Persephone and Demeter.⁵⁴ In the *Hymn*, Demeter’s mourning veil is night-dark: κυάνεον δὲ κάλυμμα (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 42), and the epithet κτανόπεπλον “dark-veiled” occurs frequently in the hymn, as well as appearing in an Orphic hymn (35.1 Athanassakis). I suggest that Plato’s use of this word indicates his Eleusinian coloring of the Orphic-Pythagorean underworld, suggesting a

⁵⁰ See *Phaedo* 69c (above), and *Republic* 533d: ἐν βορβόρῳ βαρβαρικῶ τιτι τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμμα κατορωυγμένον, “when the eye of the soul has been buried in a certain barbaric filth.” Plato then describes how dialectic is able to lift the soul from the “filth.”

⁵¹ Kingsley 1996: 115, 351.

⁵² Graf 1974: 143-144.

⁵³ Kingsley 1996: 357.

⁵⁴ Kingsley 1996: 97.

kind of cohesiveness between the Mysteries, as well as Plato’s in-depth knowledge of the Mysteries’ secrets.

The “secret” knowledge bestowed on its initiates in the Mysteries was chiefly concerned with the experience of death—and the salvation promised through initiation. According to Plutarch, the soul’s experience through initiation was similar to the experience of death:

Οὕτω κατὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ ὅλον μεταβολὴν καὶ μετακόσμησιν ὀλωλέναι τὴν ψυχὴν λέγομεν ἐκεῖ γενομένην· ἐνταῦθα δ' ἀγνοεῖ, πλὴν ὅταν ἐν τῷ τελευτᾶν ἤδη γένηται· τότε δὲ πάσχει πάθος οἷον οἱ τελεταῖς μεγάλας κατοργιαζόμενοι. διὸ καὶ τὸ ῥῆμα τῷ ῥήματι καὶ τὸ ἔργον τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ τελευτᾶν καὶ τελείσθαι προσέοικε.

Thus we say that the soul that has passed thither (ἐκεῖ) is dead, having regard to its complete change and conversion. In this world (ἐνταῦθα) it is without knowledge, except when it is already at the point of death; but when that time comes, it has an experience like that of men who are undergoing initiation into great mysteries; and so the verbs *teleitân* (die) and *telesthai* (be initiated), and the actions they denote, have a similarity.

(Plutarch fr. 178.5-7, trans. Sandbach)

Plutarch relates *τελευτή*, a word for death, with *τελεταί*, the word for the institution of the Mysteries, thereby highlighting the Mysteries as an institution for investigating the mystery of death.⁵⁵ The *τέλος*, “ultimate goal” or the promise of salvation of the Mysteries was to lead its initiates back to the divine origins from which they were believed to descend.⁵⁶ In a similar way, Socrates explains the true manner of studying philosophy as the study of death (*Phaedo* 64a). Plato later elaborates on this idea when he explains how true philosophers ἀποθνήσκουν μελετῶσι, “practice dying,” in order to be more prepared for the experience (*Phaedo* 67e). I argue that Plato’s philosophical way of life replaces the Orphic way of life. Plato’s philosophical practice of living as if dead to

⁵⁵ Schuddeboom 2009: 4.

⁵⁶ Rohde 1925: 345.

corruptions of the flesh is the transposition of the Orphic life of vegetarianism and initiations. In these passages Plato declares philosophy to be the practice of learning how to die well. Plato, I argue, is expounding the same teaching as the Mysteries reconfigured through philosophy.

The Mysteries unilaterally claimed this “special knowledge,” of death and rebirth. The culminating arguments of the *Phaedo* (75cd-79c), *Symposium* (211-212), *Republic* (479, 490a-b, 500b-d, 508d, 514ff), *Phaedrus* (249e-250c, 247d), and *Meno* (81c-d) also claim such special knowledge. Two of these passages (*Symposium* and *Phaedo*) are represented with mystical knowledge acquired during an inspired state. Plato attributes the *telestic* or inspired madness connected with the Mysteries to Dionysus (*Phaedrus* 265b), and he represents Socrates as an Orpheus-like figure in the *Republic* (327a) when Socrates begins the dialogue with the subtext of mystery initiation: Κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραιᾶ, “I went down to Peiraeus yesterday.” According to Jacob Howland, a scholar of Platonic philosophy and Greek religion, “the structure of the *Republic* imitates that of initiation into the Mysteries.”⁵⁷ I suggest this portrayal indicates that Socrates functions as an Orphic initiator within the Platonic dialogues. Throughout his corpus, Plato portrays Socrates as a charismatic personality with mystical insights into nature and a loyal following of admirers. But Plato’s “Orphic” Socrates also downplays the credibility of Orphic initiators, thus elevating his own philosophy when he declares, εἰμὶ δὴ οὖν μάντις μὲν, οὐ πάνυ δὲ σπουδαῖος, “Certainly, I am a seer, but not a very serious one!” (*Phaedrus* 242c). I will argue that Plato adopts the tradition of

⁵⁷ Howland 2004: 32.

disseminating special “mystical knowledge” concerning the cycle of death and rebirth and uses it as a platform for his pursuit of philosophical perfection.

Students of Greek have always been intrigued by the Orphic traces in Plato’s dialogues. Yet scholars have often been troubled about how to account for the persistent and mysterious citations of Orphic testimony, as well as any possible influence of Orphic ritual on Plato’s philosophy. According to Plato’s commentator Proclus: ἅπαντα γὰρ ἢ παρ’ Ἑλληνσι θεολογία τῆς Ὀρφικῆς ἐστὶ μυσταγωγίας ἔκγονος, “For the entire theology among the Greeks is the offspring of Orphic mystagogy” (*Theologia Platonica* 1.25.26-7). Proclus then attributes Plato’s knowledge directly to Pythagoras and Orpheus. But even if we are unwilling to give Proclus’ late testimony much authority, Aristophanes (*Frogs* 1030-1036) includes Orpheus as the founder of the τελεταί “mysteries” before Homer and Hesiod in his canon of Greek theologians, and in the *Protagoras* (316d), Plato himself specifically associates Orpheus with the τελεταί “mysteries,” and represents Orpheus as a theologian who disguises his wisdom like the sophists.

Modern scholars have alluded to the connections between Orphic and Platonic beliefs in immortality. Rohde referred to Platonic ideas such as the immortal soul and *Katharsis* without directly implicating Orphism, whereas Burkert suggested Platonism was firmly established on the foundations of Orphism, and Kingsley discussed the similarities between Orphic and Platonic eschatology at large.⁵⁸ In this thesis, I focus on the similarities between Orphic and Platonic beliefs in the immortality of the soul. I equate soteriology with the doctrines of belief in the soul’s divine and immortal condition. These beliefs provide the theoretical basis for savior religion. Soteriology

⁵⁸ Rohde 1925: 463-489, Burkert 1985: 322, Kingsley 1996: 79-132.

investigates the Orphic belief in the promise of salvation for the soul by performing initiations and purifications. This thesis will be concerned with the Orphic and Platonic doctrines that promise salvation and heroization to the initiate or philosopher.

Orphic fragment 229 (Kern) depicts “the cycle of birth,” and an Olbian bone tablet preserves the soteriological formula *bios—thanatos—bios*, “life—death—life,” as well as the name Dionysus.⁵⁹ This simultaneously demonstrates an Orphic belief in reincarnation and firmly establishes Bacchic Mysteries within the context of Orphism in the 5th century BCE. This view of life as a cycle is distinctively Orphic. The Gold Tablet from Thurii says: *κύκλω δ’ ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο*, “I flew forth from the painful **cycle** of deep sorrow” (L9 Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal). The cycle is typically interpreted as the cycle of birth and death. In the *Phaedo* (70c), Plato speaks of an ancient tradition that souls reincarnate into new bodies. This begins the “cyclical” argument (70c-72) of how opposites are generated from opposites, such as night from day, just from unjust, and the living from the dead. Plato uses terminology similar to that found in the Gold Tablet when he says ἡ γένεσις “generation” occurs in κύκλω “in a cycle.” It was an Orphic idea of the cycle that Plato clearly adopts. He also discusses this Orphic idea of reincarnation in the *Meno* (81c5). I argue that Plato’s description of the cycle of souls in the *Republic* (615a), *Phaedrus* (249a), and the *Phaedo* (107e) was influenced by the Orphic idea of the cycle of rebirth. I aim to demonstrate how the Platonic doctrine of reincarnation is a direct development of Orphic teachings by comparing Plato’s arguments for the immortality of the soul with the known Orphic evidence.

⁵⁹ West 1982, Graf and Johnson 2007: 185.

Overview: Chapter One

In the first chapter I analyze Plato's borrowing of an Orphic *Hieros Logos* in order to give an authoritative framework to his philosophical arguments for the immortality of the soul, and I examine Plato's deployment of formulaic language pertaining to the dualities life/death and body/soul also found on Orphic bone and Gold Tablets.

The goal of Orphism was the release of the soul from the body, and its reunion with the divine after it is "freed from the necessity of rebirth."⁶⁰ Plato's frequent references to the "release of the soul" indicate his knowledge of Orphic Mysteries. In the *Gorgias* (524b) Plato describes death: ὁ θάνατος τυγχάνει ὄν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ δυοῖν πραγμάτων διάλυσιν, τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, "Death happens to be, as it seems to me, nothing other than the separation of two things, the soul and the body." Plato's use of the dual form δυοῖν πραγμάτων suggests the soul and body are a naturally bonded pair. The body cannot live without the soul, but for the Orphic initiate, the soul's true home without the body was in the afterlife. Death is described as a release in the *Phaedo*: διάλυσιν τοῦ σώματος ἢ τῆ ψυχῆ, "release from the body for the soul" (88b). The idea of διάλυσιν "release" is similar to the view expressed on the Tablets that instruct the initiate: εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Βακχίος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε, "Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself **released** you" (L7a, b Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal). Although the connection of release between body and soul is not as explicit on the Tablet

⁶⁰ Rohde 1925: 345.

as it is in Plato, the ritual context of the Tablets implies death and a separation from the body.

I hope to prove the connection between Plato's *διάλυσις* and the Gold Tablet's *ἔλυσε* suggests that Plato inherited the parlance of the Mysteries and developed his own system for instructing the Orphic rites. I compare the Orphic doctrine of the immortality of the soul expressed in the Orphic fragments and Gold Tablets with the Platonic views of the soul in the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Meno*, and *Republic* in order to argue that Plato has revealed a comprehensive Orphic psychology within his dialogues. I read the Platonic doctrine of the soul as a philosophized representation of the Orphic doctrine of the soul in order to demonstrate how Plato applied methods of systematic thought to ancient knowledge, and developed a scientific methodology expounding the Orphic mysteries by means of the Socratic dialectic method.

Overview: Chapter Two

The soul not only regenerates, but as the *Republic* (611e) and *Phaedrus* (246d-e) tell us, the soul partakes of the divine, which is the pivotal justification for the soul's salvation, and the central tenet of Orphism. Kingsley says the Gold Tablets "ascribe a fundamental role to the process of heroization."⁶¹ This unique heroization of an initiate was modeled on Herakles as the archetypal spiritual hero, whose cult center at Thurii has produced the highest concentration of Orphic Gold Tablets. Pindar's "Orphic" *Olympian* 2 begins with Herakles, and Empedocles claimed that purified souls become ἦρωες ἀγνοί "pure heroes" (B146 DK). The Orphic Tablets from Thurii depict the initiate's

⁶¹ Kingsley 1996: 257.

death as a result from being struck by lightning (300-1.5, 302-3.5, 304-5.5 Zuntz). Heroization and immortalization by lightning, which was thought to be the purest form of fire, was a fundamental Greek theme.⁶² Herakles was immortalized by lightning (Theocritus, *Idyll* 24.82-3; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 9.250-5. 262-5), as was Semele, the mother of Dionysus (Pindar, *Olympian* 2.27) and even Pythagoras (Lucian, *Alexander* 40). Rohde explored the connections between lightning and immortality, but it was Burkert who ascertained a suitable and illuminating etymology for the word *Elysian*, from *enelysios* “struck by lightning” through the verb *eleusomai* “I will go.”⁶³ Burkert’s argument firmly associated heroization with immortalization. The schema for apotheosis by fire occurs earliest when Demeter attempted to immortalize Demophon (*Homeric hymn to Demeter* 239-45).⁶⁴ Empedocles’ supposed death in the crater of Etna highlights the important association between death by descent or fire and initiation. Kingsley situates Empedocles’ death within the ritual context of the Mysteries, whereby an initiate dramatically descends into the underworld.⁶⁵ The ritualistic effect of fire resulting in heroization/immortalization is described by Empedocles as he became “an immortal god, no longer mortal” (B112.4 DK). This recalls the tablets from Thurii: “happy and most blessed, you will be a god instead of a mortal,” or “from a man you have become a god.”⁶⁶

The aitiological Orphic myth of Chthonian Dionysus explains the necessity and justification for heroization. The obscure myth whereby humans were thought to be composed of a portion inherited from Dionysus and a portion from the Titans later came

⁶² Rohde 1995: 581.

⁶³ Burkert 1961: 208-213.

⁶⁴ See Richardson 1974: 231-242 for discussion.

⁶⁵ Kingsley 1996: 251.

⁶⁶ Kingsley 1996: 251.

to be known as the Neo-Platonic “Zagreus” myth. The myth of the dismemberment was described in detail by the Damascius and Olympiodorus in their commentaries on Plato’s *Phaedo*. The infant Dionysus roused the wrath of Hera. She incited the Titans to distract the infant with toys and a mirror after which the Titans killed Dionysus, dismembered him, and fed upon his flesh. The Titans were subsequently blasted by a bolt of Zeus, and from their ashes sprung the human race, which contained a portion of Dionysus and a portion of the Titans. This myth formed an “original sin” story. The Titanic portion constitutes the human body and its “sin,” whereas the portion that originally was Dionysus constitutes the human soul and offers the possibility of “salvation.” The goal of Orphism was to purify the Titanic portion through a series of incarnations by refraining from the *παλαιὰν Τιτανικήν φύσιν* “ancient Titanic nature” (Plato *Laws* 701c) or carnal appetite, where the ultimate goal was to be saved from the cycle of incarnations. Zagreus was already associated with Dionysus by Euripides in a fragment of his *Cretans* quoted by Porphyry of Tyre (*De Abstinencia* 4.19). Pausanias informs us that Onomacritus “organized the Mysteries and made the Titans the authors of Dionysus’ suffering” (συνέθηκεν ὄργια καὶ εἶναι τοὺς Τιτᾶνας τῷ Διονύσῳ τῶν παθημάτων ἐποίησεν αὐτουργούς, 8.37.6). Yet like everything else Orphic, scholars are still divided as to whether the Zagreus myth was an authentic ancient doctrine⁶⁷ or rather a Neo-Platonic fabrication in response to the rise of Christianity.⁶⁸

In the second chapter I focus on the authenticity of the Zagreus myth as constituting fundamental Orphic doctrine. In particular, I survey the word *ποινή* “blood-payment (*Wergeld*), recompense” and its role in the Orphic Zagreus myth as well as in its

⁶⁷ Linforth 1941: 350, Burkert 1985: 298, Dodds 2004: 155-156, West 1983: 166.

⁶⁸ Edmonds 1999.

various manifestations in Plato's *Meno*, Homer, Pindar, and the Derveni and Gurôb papyri, and I explore the etymological connections between ποινή and τιμή in order to demonstrate Plato's use of Orphic terminology. I go on to argue that this Dionysus-Titan myth circulated as part of an original secret Orphic initiate myth, as Burkert concludes: "the dismemberment of Dionysos was an unspeakable doctrine of the mysteries,"⁶⁹ and "Herodotus [2.171] considered it a secret although he has several allusions to it."⁷⁰ In order to argue for the antiquity of the myth, I draw attention to the obscure references to the Zagreus myth in the classical sources.

First, I demonstrate how Plato's Orphic phrase *sōma sēma* "the body is the tomb/sign [of the soul]" suggesting the idea of imprisonment is a reference to the myth of Dionysus-Zagreus. In the Zagreus myth, the Titans represent the prison for the immortal soul or Dionysus. According to R. S. Bluck, a respected commentator on Plato's works, Plato's pupil "Xenocrates associated the body-prison idea with the Titans and with Dionysus."⁷¹ In the *Cratylus* Plato refers specifically to an Orphic belief that the soul is imprisoned in the body (400c). In the *Phaedo* (62b), Plato reveals how the myth that the soul is imprisoned in the body (ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ ἐσμεν, "we are in a certain **prison**") is a part of secret literature (ὁ ἐν ἀπορρητοῖς λεγόμενος περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος, "the doctrine about these things that is taught in **secret**"). The word *aporrheton* is a word used specifically in the Mysteries,⁷² which suggests that Plato is alluding to the "secret" Zagreus myth. This is strengthened by Xenocrates' remark that the φρουρά is Titanic, and its meaning is hidden in the myth of Dionysus (Xenocrates fr. 20 Heinze). Plato

⁶⁹ Burkert 1985: 298.

⁷⁰ Burkert 1987: 73.

⁷¹ Bluck 1961: 279.

⁷² Burkert 1985: 276.

refers to the φρουρά in the *Gorgias* (525a), as the place where the soul endures πάθη “sufferings.” The word for the soul’s “sufferings,” πάθη is related to the word πένθος, the “grief” of Persephone from the “Orphic” fragment of Pindar quoted in the *Meno* (81b7). This fragment of Pindar says Persephone will immortalize those who pay the price for the ancient πένθος “grief.” Tannery and Rose both argued that the πένθος of Persephone (*Meno* 81b7) is a reference to the Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans.⁷³

⁷³ Tannery 1899: 126, Rose 1943: 247.

Chapter One: Life-Death-Life Formula

Introduction

Scholars typically assign certain eschatological beliefs in Plato's dialogues as being derived from Orphic sources without providing much clarification or even original Orphic textual evidence. On the one hand, a specific belief of Plato's can seem vaguely Orphic, which may lead a commentator to qualify it as such without further evidence. On the other hand, scholars may dismiss one of Plato's eschatological beliefs as an Orphic idea based on Plato's infamous declaration of the beggar priests who present a "hubbub" of Orphic books and spells and other negative connotations of Orphism (*Republic* 364c-e).⁷⁴ The latter argue for the entire incompatibility between the two eschatological systems by pointing out isolated discrepancies such as Plato's elaborate descriptions of judges in the afterlife compared to the apparent lack of judges represented in the extant Orphic texts.⁷⁵ Several of these problematic discrepancies in Plato's *Orphica* have been pointed out in the introduction. My thesis attempts to dispel these discrepancies by using a philological approach in order to point out the ways in which Plato made use of Orphic discourse as evidenced by his use of specific terminology and formulae. I argue in this thesis that Plato is not simply emulating and re-imagining Orphic myths through

⁷⁴ Edmonds (2013: 99) argues that the Greek word ὄμαδον ("hubbub") refers specifically to the competition for authority among authors of books.

⁷⁵ Edmonds (2013: 359) points out that the Gold Tablets do not mention Titans or the dismemberment of Dionysus; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008: 36) mention that the Platonic conception of punishment is not found in the Gold Tablets. I will respond to Edmonds argument in Chapter Two of my thesis by arguing that the dismemberment myth is in fact evoked in Plato's use of the word ποινή, and I allege that the conception of punishment is implied by the eschatological context, whereby punishment is conceived of as reincarnation.

“transposition,”⁷⁶ but rather that Plato’s dialogues are a direct continuation of the Orphic mysteries and rites through the revised methodology of philosophy. Furthermore, I explain Plato’s Orphic criticism to be a natural and expected outcome of the transposition process. Moreover, I claim, we can better read Plato with an understanding of Orphism.

My methodology for reading Plato’s Orphica relies on Diès’ (1927) original theory of Plato’s “transposition” of Orphic texts, an idea that Bernabé (2007, 2011, 2013) has developed extensively, particularly in *Platon é el Orfismo* (2011). The theory argues that Plato transposed traditional Orphic motifs into a new philosophical setting and so redefined Orphic themes. Traditional Orphic myths become re-imagined within Plato’s thought as a result of the process of transposition, which accounts for perceived differences between Orphic and Platonic eschatology. In this chapter I will pursue Diès’ insight in an attempt to reconstruct the authentic Orphic doctrine by comparing Orphic elements in Plato’s writings with other Orphic fragments that have not undergone such transposition, such as the Gold lamellae, Olbian bone tablets, the Derveni Papyrus, and the Gurôb Papyrus.

In my attempt to read Plato’s transposition process as a part of his reception of Orphic beliefs, I make use of the approach laid out by John Palmer in his illuminating study, *Plato’s Reception of Parmenides* (1999). Palmer argues: “we must try to understand Parmenides as Plato did if we are to be in any position to speak meaningfully about Parmenides’ influence on Plato.”⁷⁷ I apply the same view to understanding the Orphic influence on Plato by reading Plato’s works as a reception of the Orphic tradition. As a corollary, transposition and reception of Orphic myths involves John Bussanich’s

⁷⁶ A term coined by Auguste Diès 1927: 432 ff. For discussion, see Bernabé 2007: 41-44, 2013: 135.

⁷⁷ Palmer 1999: 13.

theory of the process of “ethicization,” whereby Plato invokes the religious authority of Orpheus in order to inject “eschatological themes into the dialogues.”⁷⁸ The original Orphic idea of reincarnation and salvation is developed by moral logic and philosophic dialectic.

My reading of Platonic texts consists in identifying a constellation of Orphic elements and their associated terminology. These terms are always introduced within the context of a *Hieros Logos* “sacred story,” a term which will be introduced in Part I below. The elements ascribed to the *Hieros Logos* include the belief in the immortality of the soul, the soul’s release from the body, its judgment in the afterlife, and the payment of a penalty in order to achieve a blessed afterlife. I aim to demonstrate how the concordant occurrence of these elements implies an Orphic eschatological model. The central Orphic myth of Zagreus functions as an eschatological syntagm because it both collects and organizes the entire manifold of ideas in Plato: (1) that the soul is immortal; (2) that death is a release of the soul from the body; (3) that the soul owes a primordial “debt”; (4) that salvation is possible for the soul. These themes and their specific terminology formulate the Orphic eschatological system and they are discussed at length in the following two chapters. Chapter One is further divided into Part I, which introduces Plato’s transposition of the Orphic *Hieros Logos* and his use of the soteriological formula life/death/life derived from the Olbian bone tablets; and Part II, which focuses on Plato’s use of the body/soul formula and his ideas of the release from the body/soul duality. Chapter Two will approach ideas of the soul’s primordial debt and the Orphic Zagreus myth.

⁷⁸ Bussanich 2013: 248. Bussanich summarizes his argument in terms of Plato’s aim to ‘ethicize’ Orphic/Pythagorean theories of the immortality of the soul and its transmigration into other bodies: “I shall delineate, first, the basic elements in Plato’s rebirth eschatology, focusing briefly on its sources and then more critically on his program to *ethicize* the phases of the rebirth cycle” (244, emphasis added).

I.1 The Orphic *Hieros Logos*: Platonic *ta legomena* (*Apology* 41c7)⁷⁹

Plato's Socrates presents a positive view of death and the afterlife in the *Apology* (40b-42a),⁸⁰ a view of death that Socrates elaborates in the *Phaedo* (63b5-c8).⁸¹ In the *Apology*, Socrates famously professes the benefit of dying if he is able to meet and cross-examine famous Greek heroes and poets who dwell in Hades, such as Orpheus (Ὀρφεὶ συγγενέσθαι, *Apology* 41a6). Plato engages with ideas of the immortality of the soul and a blissful afterlife in order to promote his own philosophical agenda. In both the *Apology* and *Phaedo* Socrates proclaims his belief in the immortality of the soul as way to comfort his friends about the fear of death and in order to promote a life dedicated to philosophical inquiry. Socrates argues that philosophy is the means to prepare for death and achieve a blissful afterlife, and he frames his own "blissful" afterlife of perpetual philosophical examination and establishes his eschatological beliefs within an elusive tradition referred to only as τὰ λεγόμενα "what is said": εἶπερ γε τὰ λεγόμενα ἀληθῆ, "if indeed the things which are said are true" (*Apology* 41c7). Although Socrates does not

⁷⁹ I cite the texts of Plato from the most recent available OCT editions (e.g., Duke et al. 1995, Slings 2003). Editions of Orphic texts cited below are identified by editors' names. I refer to the most recent editions of Orphic texts (Graf and Johnston 2007, Bernabé and San Cristobál 2008, and Bernabé 2004). I choose to refer to a variety of editions in order to not be beholden to a specific interpretation of the Orphic sources. All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

⁸⁰ See especially *Apology* 40b7-c1: "For it may be the case that this thing that has happened to me [i.e., being condemned to death] is a good thing, and that however many of us think death to be an evil thing, surely we do not suppose correctly" (κινδυνεύει γάρ μοι τὸ συμβεβηκὸς τοῦτο ἀγαθὸν γεγόνεναί, καὶ οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ἡμεῖς ὀρθῶς ὑπολαμβάνομεν, ὅσοι οἰόμεθα κακὸν εἶναι τὸ τεθνήσκειν).

⁸¹ Socrates frames his positive view of death as the εὐελπίς "hope" that he will achieve a blessed afterlife, namely because he is philosopher. Socrates uses the word "hope" to describe death or as he calls it "going out of town" (67b11). The philosophers alone achieve the βέλτιστον τόπον "best place" in the afterlife (*Phaedo* 82a10). Philosophers purify themselves by living apart from the body and thus come to the more beautiful part of the afterlife (*Phaedo* 114c5).

explicitly identify the origin of these beliefs, I argue we can establish that his beliefs in the immortality of the soul and the possibility of a blissful afterlife are derived from Orphic dogma by observing how Plato's specific vocabulary, phraseology, formulaic constructions, and thematic choices coincide with surviving Orphic texts.

In the *Apology*, Socrates proclaims death to be either one of two possibilities: either death is like a pleasant dream (40d),⁸² or it is a transition or transmigration for the soul from one place to another (40e-41d). Although Socrates endorses the second possibility, he affirms that both possibilities would be a *κερδός* "benefit, profit" (40e2), an evaluative term which demonstrates that Plato's Socrates has a positive view of death:

ἢ γὰρ οἶον μηδὲν εἶναι μηδὲ αἰσθησιν μηδεμίαν μηδενὸς ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μεταβολή τις τυγχάνει οὐσα **καὶ μετοίκησις** τῆ ψυχῆ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον.

For either it is nothing, nor does the man who has died have any perception of anything, or according to what is said, (death) happens to be a certain **change and transmigration** for the soul from the place here to another place.

(Plato *Apology* 40c 7-11)

The idea that death consists in the soul's departure from one place to another implies the concept of the immortality of the soul. Plato uses the phrase *κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα* to introduce this idea of transmigration of the soul, which is a central Orphic belief.⁸³ I argue

⁸² We first see the association between sleep and death expressed in Homer with the motif ὕπνος καὶ θάνατος διδυμάονε (cf. *Iliad* 16.672). Albinus (2000: 121) argues that this affinity between sleep and death "carried the meaning potential of *immortality* in the context of mystery initiation, which, in contrast to the epics, made it an immediate consequence of ritual imitation." Death is also described as a sleep which frees the soul from the body in the Orphic hymn to Death (87.3 Athanassakis), and as the brother of death (85.8 Athanassakis).

⁸³ For the Orphic belief in transmigration, see Burkert 1985: 299. For the eastern origin of beliefs in transmigration and metempsychosis, see West 1983: 19. The apparently distinct ideas of transmigration and metempsychosis are semantically no different, and scholars tend to use the terms interchangeably. West (1983: 222) attributes the doctrine of reincarnation preserved in later neo-Platonic theogonies to the prototype of the Derveni Papyrus, the Protogonos Theogony. Column 16 and 17 of the Derveni Papyrus (Betegh 2004) explains that beings are generated from things that already subsist, suggesting that new beings are "reborn." Some scholars also interpret the Pelinna leaf as depicting the idea of metempsychosis (see Graf and Johnston 2007: 132). The Thurian tablet (3.3 Graf 2007) says that the initiate has endured a

Plato's *ta legomena* is a specific borrowing from Orphic dogma, since the phrase is found in Orphic texts in specific contexts dealing with Orphic eschatological beliefs.

The phrase τὰ λεγόμενα⁸⁴ is used in Orphic texts such as the Derveni Papyrus when speaking about “secret” or “hidden” knowledge. The Derveni Papyrus, a commentary on a hexameter poem attributed to Orpheus, was discovered in 1962, but not officially published until 2006.⁸⁵ The Papyrus it is not a simple “bible” or sourcebook of Orphic dogma, but rather a kind of commentary on Greek religious thought by a later “rationalist.”⁸⁶ Papyrologists assign the date of the Derveni Papyrus to the second half of the fourth century BCE, and the editors of the most recent edition of the Papyrus, Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou (2006), date the manuscript between 340-320 BC.⁸⁷ Although the date of the Papyrus is a little later than the traditional dates given for Plato's life (ca. 428-347 BCE), there is little doubt that Plato had access to the original Orphic texts that are the subject of the commentary of the Derveni Papyrus. Indeed, the Papyrus comments on a verse from the opening of an Orphic theogony, noting “for by ordering them to put doors to their ears [θύρας γὰρ ἐπιθέσθαι κελεύσας

painful thing before, but is now a god instead of a mortal, a claim that implies the initiate has him- or herself been reborn. Albinus (2000: 117) attributes the belief in metempsychosis to the Orphic discourse citing as evidence Orphic fragments 226, 229, and 230 (Kern 1922), although he agrees with Burkert (1972: 126 n.32) that an Orphic doctrinal notion of metempsychosis is not directly attested by any ancient source. Nevertheless Albinus (2000: 124) points to the Olbian bone tablets as evidence for metempsychosis. Some scholars also attempt to reconstruct the idea of metempsychosis from Pindar fr. 133 (Race 1997 which I will discuss in Chapter Two below. For Plato's beliefs in reincarnation, see also Guthrie 1993: 164-171. For the definitive study on Orphic and Pythagorean doctrines of metempsychosis, see Casadio 1991. On the difference between metempsychosis and reincarnation, see Edmonds 2013: 280-283.

⁸⁴ It is important to note that the Greek term τὰ λεγόμενα does not refer to a specific “tradition,” but rather the term is used within various genres to refer to a given “tradition.” For my part, I argue that Plato's use of the term refers to the Orphic tradition when τὰ λεγόμενα makes reference to eschatological beliefs. Furthermore, τὰ λεγόμενα can refer to specific ritual passwords: Bernabé and San Cristobál 2007: 234, 236, 238; Albinus 2000: 148; Graf 1993: 247.

⁸⁵ Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006.

⁸⁶ See Janko's review of Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou in *BMCR* 2006.10.29

⁸⁷ Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006: 8-9; cf. Betegh 2004: 61.

τοῖς ὤσιν he [sc. Orpheus] says that he does not legislate for the multitude, but that he teaches those whose hearing is pure [...]” (Col. 7.9-11). At *Symposium* 218b Alcibiades quotes this same formula as he begins to speak only to those initiated in the “Bacchic frenzy of philosophy”; to all other profane and vulgar non-initiates he commands, “close the great doors of your ears [πύλας πάνυ μεγάλας τοῖς ὤσιν ἐπίθεσθε].”⁸⁸ The Papyrus has demonstrated that philological speculation of Orphic texts goes back to the early fifth century BCE, and, along with the Gold tablets, has helped propel Orphic studies into new areas. In particular, the Derveni Papyrus provides evidence of Plato’s knowledge of Orphic texts.

On column 18 of the Papyrus, the Orphic commentator reveals the ‘secret’ interpretation of the goddess Moira and concludes: [. ἄ]νθρωπ[οι οὐ γινώσκοντ]ες τὰ λεγόμενα, “humans [not understand]ing what is said” (18.14 Betegh). Although the text is fragmentary, the commentator uses the phrase to refer to a previously revealed ‘secret’ Orphic interpretation of the text. On column 20, the commentator declares: θαυμάζω μὴ γινωσκειν. οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε ἀκοῦσαι ὁμοῦ καὶ μαθεῖν τὰ λεγόμενα, “I wonder less that they do not have knowledge. For it is not possible to hear and at the same time to understand what is being said” (20.2-3 Betegh). Here again the commentator uses the phrase to describe ‘secret’ knowledge or interpretations of the text.

Both Graf and Johnston (2007) and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008) associate the phrase τὰ λεγόμενα with an Orphic *Hieros Logos* “sacred story”—that is, an explanatory account either of proper ritual procedure, a god’s true nature, or even the

⁸⁸ For discussion, see Tsantsanoglou 1997: 124-126.

origin of the world.⁸⁹ Herodotus is our earliest source for a specifically Orphic *Hieros Logos* when he describes the Bacchic and Orphic rituals as Egyptian and Pythagorean in origin and affirms the existence of a *Hieros Logos* treating the ritual practices of the cults (*Histories* ii.81). Scholars conjecture that the Orphic *Hieros Logos* depicted the birth, death, and rebirth of Dionysus, along with descriptions of the toys used in the ritual.⁹⁰ Orpheus is associated with a *Hieros Logos* at column 7 of the Derveni Papyrus when the Orphic commentator states that Orpheus “recounts a *Hieros Logos* [ἱερολογεῖται] from the first to the last word” (7.7 Betegh).

The question of what constitutes a *Hieros Logos* is complicated by the diversity of the subject matter attributed to so-called *Hieroi Logoi*.⁹¹ Graf and Johnston (2007) observe that “virtually any narration that explained or described the nature of ‘divine things’ was a candidate for hieratic status.”⁹² Albert Henrichs (2002) argued that a *Hieros Logos* is characterized by its “secret” status.⁹³ This secrecy is attested by the edict of Ptolemy IV, dated between 250-200 BCE, which ordered all Dionysiac initiators to deposit their *Hieroi Logoi* sealed and signed for safe-keeping at the Great Library of Alexandria.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Graf and Johnston 2007: 177, 182; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 232; Albinus 2000: 101; Bernabé 1998, Bernabé 2003: 37.

⁹⁰ Henrichs 2002: 27-29. The Gurôb Papyrus is the best evidence for an Orphic *Hieros Logos* depicting the myth of Chthonic Dionysus. The fragmentary text calls itself a *Hieros Logos* and describes a ritual involving Dionysus and using specific toys.

⁹¹ The question of authorship of the Orphic *Hieros Logos* is even more complicated, according to West, who notes: “The Suda, which gives us our most accurate bibliographical description of the poem (*Hieroi Logoi* in 24 rhapsodies), reports that it was said to be the work of Theognetus the Thessalian, or alternatively of Cercops the Pythagorean” (West 1983: 248). The *Hieros Logos* along with the Εἰς Ἅιδου κατάβασις, “Descent into Hades” were attributed to Orpheus by the elusive fourth-century BCE figure Epigenes (West 1983: 9). Linforth (1957: 117-118) argued that this Epigenes was in fact the Pythagorean friend of Socrates mentioned in *Apology* (33e) and *Phaedo* (59b).

⁹² Graf and Johnston 2007: 178.

⁹³ Henrichs 2002: 31.

⁹⁴ Graf and Johnston 2007: 190.

Graf and Johnston best define a *Hieros Logos* as a supplementary religious text, which disseminates ritual instructions and stories from a Mystery cult.⁹⁵ The “hieratic-status”—to use Graf and Johnston’s term—of a text is often determined by its ‘secrecy’: a cult might disseminate two levels of cultic beliefs, well-known stories and secret ‘hieratic’ stories, to distinguish between non-initiates and those initiated in the cult. Furthermore, Graf and Johnston suggest the *Hieros Logos* comprised ‘ritual prescriptions’—what I call formulae—such as the repeated phrases “I come pure from the pure” or “now you are dead now you are born,” which are now known from the Gold Tablets.⁹⁶ They conclude that a *Hieros Logos* had a performative function that helped those initiates who possessed them to win a blessed afterlife.⁹⁷ According to Bernabé, the Orphic lamellae provide us the opportunity to reconstruct an original Orphic *Hieros Logos*;⁹⁸ Graf and Johnston likewise believe both the gold lamellae and the Gurôb Papyrus contain excerpts from an Orphic *Hieros Logos*.⁹⁹

I.2 The Orphic *Hieros Logos*: Plato’s Seventh Letter

I argue that Plato’s use of the phrase τὰ λεγόμενα in the *Apology* within the context of death and the afterlife refers to Orphic texts known to Plato, specifically a lost Orphic text known as a ἱερός λόγος, a “sacred story.” We may perhaps find evidence of

⁹⁵ Graf and Johnston 2007: 180-184.

⁹⁶ Graf and Johnston 2007: 182.

⁹⁷ Graf and Johnston 2007: 183.

⁹⁸ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 189; Riedweg 2002.

⁹⁹ Graf and Johnston 2007: 183.

Plato's knowledge of Orphic *Hieros Logos* in his *Seventh Letter* where he makes explicit reference to such a doctrinal text and precisely defines its subject matter:

πείθεσθαι δὲ ὄντως ἀεὶ χρὴ τοῖς παλαιοῖς τε καὶ ἱεροῖς λόγοις, οἳ δὴ μὴνύουσιν ἡμῖν ἀθάνατον ψυχὴν εἶναι δικαστὰς τε ἴσχειν καὶ τίνειν τὰς μεγίστας τιμωρίας, ὅταν τις ἀπαλλαχθῆ τοῦ σώματος.

But truly one ought always to obey the ancient and sacred stories, which certainly **reveal** to us that our soul is immortal and that it is both judged and pays the greatest penalties, whenever one is released from the body.

(Plato *Letter 7*, 335a2-5)

Some scholars claim that Plato's *Seventh Letter* is not genuine.¹⁰⁰ But even if the letter is spurious, I argue that it still provides proof of the existence of Orphic *Hieroi Logoi*. Moreover, I maintain that since ideas attributed to the *Hieros Logos* appear in other Platonic texts, it is at least plausible that Plato himself was aware of an Orphic *Hieros Logos* and transposed some of it into his own thought in various dialogues.

The author of the *Seventh Letter* defines the contents of a specific *Hieros Logos* as the belief in the immortality of the soul, and its judgment and payment of penalties (τίνειν τιμωρίας)¹⁰¹ once it has been “released” from the body (ἀπαλλαχθῆ).¹⁰² These ideas are central Orphic beliefs,¹⁰³ and their attribution to *Hieroi Logoi* indicates that Plato is referring to a specifically Orphic *Hieros Logos*. Furthermore, the *Seventh Letter* uses the verb μὴνύουσιν (μὴνύω), which conveys that the *Hieros Logos* “reveals a secret”;¹⁰⁴ this verb elsewhere appears in contexts describing of mystery religion.¹⁰⁵ Plato uses the verb in the *Republic* (366b) when he says that that the poets and prophets

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, Edelstein 1966 and Burnyeat and Frede 2015.

¹⁰¹ I provide full discussion of these terms in Chapter Two below.

¹⁰² A full discussion of these terms is given at section I.3.

¹⁰³ We find the same ideas expressed in the Gold Tablets: the belief in the payment of a penalty (e.g. 6.4 Graf and Johnston), and the belief in “release” of the soul from the body (e.g. 26a, b.2 Graf and Johnston).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Homeric Hymn to Hermes 254, 373.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Euripides *Bacchae* 1029: ἐκ βακχῶν τι μὴνύεις νέον.

“reveal” (μηνύσουσιν) that the mysteries (τελευταί) and the liberating gods (λύσιοι θεοί) possess the power to judge human sins in Hades. Plato frequently refers to the elements mentioned in the *Seventh Letter* when speaking about death—namely the immortality of the soul, its judgment, the payment of penalties, and its release or separation from the body. The following sections will analyze Plato’s use of eschatological terminology defined within the context of a *Hieros Logos*.

I.3 The Orphic *Hieros Logos*: Plato’s *Apology*

The idea of the soul’s “release” from the body and its “judgment” in the afterlife are assigned to a *Hieros Logos* in the *Apology*. After Plato’s Socrates introduces the “beneficial,” albeit fallacious, description of death (see *Apology* 40c above), he proceeds to describe what he believes is a “true” account of death:

εἰ οὖν τοιοῦτον ὁ θάνατός ἐστιν, κέρδος ἔγωγε λέγω· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν πλείων ὁ πᾶς χρόνος φαίνεται οὕτω δὴ εἶναι ἢ μία νύξ. εἰ δ' αὖ οἷον ἀποδημῆσαι ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον, καὶ ἀληθῆ ἐστὶν τὰ λεγόμενα, ὡς ἄρα ἐκεῖ εἰσι πάντες οἱ τεθνεώτες, τί μείζον ἀγαθὸν τούτου εἴη ἂν, ὃ ἄνδρες δικασταί; εἰ γὰρ τις ἀφικόμενος εἰς Ἄιδου, ἀπαλλαγεῖς τούτων τῶν φασκόντων δικαστῶν εἶναι, εὐρήσει τοὺς ὡς ἀληθῶς δικαστάς, οἵπερ καὶ λέγονται ἐκεῖ δικάζειν, Μίνως τε καὶ Ῥαδάμανθους καὶ Αἰακὸς καὶ Τριπτόλεμος καὶ ἄλλοι ὅσοι τῶν ἡμιθέων δίκαιοι ἐγένοντο ἐν τῷ ἑαυτῶν βίῳ, ἄρα φαύλη ἂν εἴη ἡ ἀποδημία; ἢ αὖ Ὀρφεὶ συγγενέσθαι καὶ Μουσαίῳ καὶ Ἡσιόδῳ καὶ Ὀμήρῳ ἐπὶ πόσῳ ἂν τις δέξαιτ' ἂν ὑμῶν;

Therefore, if death is like this (a dream), I say it is a benefit. For indeed all time seems to be nothing more in this way than a single night. But if in turn **death is like going out of town from here to another place** and the things that are said are true, namely that all those who have died are **there**, then what would be a greater good than this, jury men? For if someone, upon arriving in Hades **after being freed** from those here who claim to be judges, he will discover **the true judges**, which very ones indeed are said **to judge there**, both Minos and Rhadamanthos and Ajax and Triptolemos and however many others of the demi-

gods who became judges in their own life—would going out of town (i.e., death) be horrible then? Or in turn, how much would any of you pay **to associate with Orpheus** and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer?

(Plato *Apology* 40e-41a)

In this passage, Plato's Socrates likens death to the Greek word ἡ ἀποδημία “going out of town.” The word conveys the idea of the soul migrating to another place (εἰς ἄλλον τόπον), and evokes the idea of the soul's immortality with the implication of continued existence in a new location. Plato frames the idea of death as ἡ ἀποδημία in order to suggest that death is a foreign experience, and that the afterlife is a foreign land. This implies that one must prepare for the journey during life. Socrates claims this doctrine or *Hieros Logos* concerning the mystery of death is *true* (ἀληθῆ ἐστὶν τὰ λεγόμενα). The designation of “true words” in opposition to a false doctrine recalls the formulae of Olbian tablet A (Graf 2007), which proclaims the Orphic soteriological doctrine to be “true.”

Furthermore, I argue that Plato emphatically positions Orpheus as the first poet Socrates would associate with in the afterlife as a rhetorical move to hint to the reader that he is building upon Orphic beliefs from the *Hieros Logos*. Plato describes death with the participle ἀπαλλαγείς, “being set free,” which, due to its ultimate derivation from the adjective ἄλλος “another,” carries the connotations of migration to another place.¹⁰⁶ Plato also says we face judgment in the afterlife (δικαστάς). As in the passage quoted from the *Seventh Letter*, Plato refers to a *Hieros Logos* and conveys the idea of immortality with ἡ ἀποδημία “being out of town,” and includes the terminology ἀπαλλαγείς and δικαστάς in the *Apology*. Socrates also equates dying to being released from troubles (ἀπηλλάχθαι

¹⁰⁶ See Beekes 2010: I.71-72, s.v. ἀλλάσσω on the etymological derivation from ἄλλός.

πραγμάτων, *Apology* 41d) and invests the judges of the *Apology* with the power “to punish” (τιμωρήσασθε, 41e). This verb is related to the noun τιμωρίας used in the *Seventh Letter*, and will be discussed at length in Chapter Two below.

In the *Apology* Plato strategically incorporates all the elements of an Orphic eschatological syntagm (the Orphic *Hieros Logos*, the immortality of soul, the soul’s post-mortem judgment, and its payment of penalties) with the rhetorical purpose of promoting philosophy as the only means to achieving a blessed afterlife. Plato describes death as ἡ ἀποδημία in order to give comfort to the audience and his friends and to promote the philosophical life. By incorporating and redefining Orphic elements such as a *Hieros Logos* about the soul’s immortality, Plato effectively elevates his own philosophical system of cross-examination to the level of a sacred text.

I.4 The Orphic *Hieros Logos*: Orphic Soteriological Formulae in the *Apology*

In the previous sections I have claimed that we can identify Plato’s use of Orphic ideas by his specific diction, namely by his introduction of an eschatological belief within a tradition of a *Hieros Logos* and by his incorporation of specific Orphic terminology and repeated phraseology. In particular, Plato refers to specific Orphic ideas with specific terminology arranged in what I identify as “formulae,” which I argue have their basis in the Orphic cult. I use the term *formula* to describe the repeated pattern of a specific set of words such as life/death or body/soul that are used in the context of a *Hieros Logos*.

Orphic theology engaged in “allegorical philology.”¹⁰⁷ I argue that the cult established soteriological formulae such as “life/death/life” in the form of dichotomies between basic concepts such as life/death.¹⁰⁸ The use of ritual formulae as passwords (*synthemata* or *symbola*) was a common feature of Greek mysteries in general for initiates to recognize one another.¹⁰⁹ In this way, the formulaic dichotomy life/death is answered by life to represent a “soteriological” point of view.

Three tiny bone tablets discovered together in 1952 in Olbia, published in 1978 and dated to the fifth century BCE provide evidence for an Orphic cult, which celebrated Dionysus and believed their doctrine of soteriology to be the “true” doctrine.¹¹⁰ These Orphic Olbian bone tablets attest to the formulae pairing of life/death/life and body/soul; moreover, these formulae are significant because they inform the eschatological contexts of Plato’s dialogues.

εἰρήνη πόλεμος | ἀλήθεια ψεῦδος | Διόν(υσος)
 Peace/War | Truth/Lie | Dion(ysus)
 (Tablet B, Recto)

Διό(νυσος)¹¹¹ | ἀλήθεια | σῶμα ψυχῆ
 Dio(nysus) | truth | body/soul
 (Tablet C)

βίος θάνατος βίος | ἀλήθεια

¹⁰⁷ “[A]llegorical philology was a feature of Orphic speculation. Το σῶμα = σῆμα we have now to add Ἄϊδης = unseen. . .” (Guthrie 1993: 191n4), a conclusion supported by Bremmer 2002: 4.

¹⁰⁸ Graf and Johnston 2007: 182.

¹⁰⁹ Graf and Johnston 2007: 152. I will use the term *symbolon* to refer to a ritual password or formula, following Graf and Johnston 2007: 154. Plutarch tells us that σύμβολα “passwords” were used in the mysteries (*Cons. Ad ux.* 10.611d), and Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008: 153) argue that *symbola* function as “bearers of doctrine, a kind of slogans that were easy to recall, and synthesized religious contents.”

¹¹⁰ See West 1982.

¹¹¹ Graf and Johnston (2007: 187) give Διό(νυσος) for Tablets A and B. West (1982: 23) reads tablet 3 (Tablet C Graf and Johnston) as ΔΙΟ plus the zig-zag pattern (which appears on each of the tablets), and he conjectures the abbreviation is in the dative case as in a ritual dedication to the god (21).

Life/Death/Life | Truth
(Tablet A)

Διό(νυσος) Ὀρφικοί [or Ὀρφικόν] (the edge is damaged)

Dio(nysus) Orphics [or Orphic]
(Graf and Johnston 2007:187)

Despite the numeration of the Olbian tablets, I conjecture we can read the inscriptions as building a rhetorical argument for Orphic soteriology. Furthermore, I argue we can read the physical tablets as a type of *Hieros Logos*. First, on Tablet B the author depicts two straightforward dichotomies: war and peace, and truth and lie. Then he associates Dionysus with this mode of thinking in dichotomies. Tablet C takes this reasoning further to propose the dichotomy between the body and the soul, which according to the Tablet is a true doctrine of the Dionysian cult. Finally, tablet A associates this Dionysian doctrine with the Orphic cult,¹¹² and proposes the dichotomy of life and death expressed in the formula “life/death/life.” The presumably Orphic author indicates “life” a second time in order to emphasize the repeated or cyclical pattern of the dichotomy, and thereby portrays not only the idea of a second life or afterlife but also the idea of the immortality of the soul and the cycle of incarnations. I designate this repeated pattern “life/death” a *symbolon*-like formula, which the initiate in the cult would know is to be answered by “life.” The rhetorical effect of adding “life” after “life/death” not only implies a future life of the soul after the death of the body, but also a continuous pattern between life and death as a cycle.¹¹³ I read the oscillation between life and death and between body and

¹¹² This tablet definitively established the conjunction of Orphic and Bacchic cult in the fifth century BCE: cf. West 1983: 18.

¹¹³ There is also a mysterious symbol inscribed on the tablet in the shape of a “Z.” West (1982: 19) conjectured that it is “a symbol of the principle of the cyclical alternation which guarantees a future life. It might be a snake, symbolizing rebirth. Or it might represent lightning (though this is usually represented in

soul as central Orphic soteriological formulae that may well have functioned as passwords indicating identity and membership in the cult. It is my claim that we can identify these same formulae not only in the Olbian tablets, but also in the Orphic Gold lamellae, and all throughout Plato's corpus.

I argue the formulae attested by the Olbian tablets are also expressed on the Orphic Gold lamellae. These lamellae or tablets have been discovered throughout the sphere of known Orphic influence including southern Italy, Sicily, Thessaly, and Crete and are found exclusively in funerary contexts.¹¹⁴ In 1882 Domenico Comparetti published the first tablets, which were discovered with the deceased during the excavations of the tombs at Thurii in Calabria in 1879. The emphasis on purity, the mention of Persephone and the allusion to the cycle of rebirths convinced Comparetti to identify them as Orphic. These tablets first comprised the A group of Zuntz, who argued that the tablets were Pythagorean and not Orphic.¹¹⁵ The lamella from Timpone Grande in Thurii offers the reward for an initiate: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου “you have become a god instead of a human” (3.4 Graf); and the lamella from Timpone Piccolo states θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῖο “you will be a god instead of a mortal” (5.9 Graf). These ivy-shaped lamellae were discovered in the grave at Pelinna in Thessaly along with a statue of a

Greek art as a stylized bundle of flames, with prongs at both ends). Dionysus was born in lightning, and Orpheus according to one account died by it. It is associated with heroization, and Walter Burkert has stressed its connection with the name of Elysium.” See further Burkert 1960-1961: 208-213, Burkert 1985: 198, 427n36.

¹¹⁴ Scholars point out the crucial relationship between the funeral context and the direct textual testimony of cult practices in eschatology of the Tablets suggests that the Tablets had a liturgical function (cf. Albinus 2000: 141; Graf 1993: 248; Guthrie 1993: 172).

¹¹⁵ Zuntz' argument in his *Persephone* (1971) was discredited after the Hipponion tablet was discovered and published by Pugliese Carratelli in 1974. The Hipponion tablet incorporates the same eschatology as the other tablets (including mention of underworld deities and release from cycle of reincarnation) but also situated the initiate among other mystics and *Bacchoi*. See further Graf and Johnston 2007: 62. Graf (1993: 243) has argued that the use of the hexameter in parts of the tablets is an indication of its association with the Orphic *Hieros Logos*.

Maenad and they express the dichotomy immortality/mortality, which I argue is a variation of the formulaic life/death. The Pelinna tablets' request that Bacchus set free the initiate decisively confirmed all the previously discovered tablets as belonging to Bacchic mysteries. The Pelinna lamellae begin: Νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου "you just died, and now you have been born" (26a.1 Graf).¹¹⁶ The gold lamellae from Thessaly depict the same soteriological formulae life-death as the Olbian bone tablets, demonstrating that the life/death formula was a central Orphic belief. The ritualistic maxim "I am a son of earth and starry sky" (1.10 Graf) is formulaically repeated on tablets from Calabria (1 Graf), Thessaly (29 Graf) and Crete (10, 12, 14 Graf). This formula conveys the cosmological dichotomy between earth and sky as well as the self-proclaimed Heavenly and Titanic origins of Orphic initiates. The Orphic gold and bone tablets depict soteriological formulae with the dichotomies death and birth, divinity and mortality, and even the cosmological dichotomy earth and sky.

I read these formulae as depicting a cyclical relationship because the view of life as a cycle is distinctively Orphic. In addition to the Olbian bone tablet which preserves the soteriological formula *bios/thanatos/bios*, "life/death/life,"¹¹⁷ Orphic fragment 229 (Kern) depicts "the cycle of birth," and the Gold Tablet from Thurii proclaims: κύκλο δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλείοιο, "I flew forth from the painful cycle of deep sorrow"

¹¹⁶ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008: 66) translate Νῦν ἔθανες as "you have just died," which emphasizes the continuity between life and death.

¹¹⁷ According to Albinus (2000: 124), "The tripartite structure . . . seems to suggest a continuity of life through death that breaks with the cycle of opposites changing into each other. The inscription may thus indicate, and confirm the initiatory release from the process of metempsychosis that took place in Orphic mystery cults." Edmonds (2013: 289) disagrees that the Olbian tablets express the idea of metempsychosis or reincarnation.

(5 Graf = L9 Bernabé). The symbol of the cycle is typically interpreted as the cycle of birth and death.¹¹⁸

Plato expresses these cyclical dichotomies in the *Apology* and *Phaedo*.¹¹⁹ In the *Phaedo* (70c), Plato speaks of an “ancient tradition” that souls reincarnate into new bodies. This begins the “cyclical” argument (70c-72) of how opposites are generated from opposites, such as night from day, just from unjust, and the living from the dead. This cyclical belief is explicitly introduced as a *Hieros Logos* at 70c6. Plato uses terminology similar to that found in the Gold Tablet when he says at *Phaedo* 72b2 that γιγνόμενα “generation” occurs in κύκλω “in a cycle.” I conjecture that Plato adopts the Orphic idea of the cycle of rebirth in order to provide a mythological authority for his philosophical agenda, and that Plato’s descriptions of the cycle of souls in the *Republic* (615a), *Phaedrus* (249a), and the *Phaedo* (107e) were influenced by the Orphic idea of the cycle. The Platonic doctrine of reincarnation redefines the Orphic tenets and transposes the elements and terms. In the *Apology*, Socrates concludes his speech to the jury men by employing the Orphic soteriological formula life/death in order to demonstrate that the philosopher exclusively achieves a blessed afterlife:

τά τε γὰρ ἄλλα εὐδαιμονέστεροί εἰσιν οἱ ἐκεῖ τῶν ἐνθάδε, καὶ ἤδη τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἀθάνατοὶ εἰσιν, εἴπερ γε τὰ λεγόμενα ἀληθῆ. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑμᾶς χρῆ, ὡς ἄνδρες δικασταί, εὐέλπιδας εἶναι πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, καὶ ἐν τι τοῦτο διανοεῖσθαι ἀληθές, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ κακὸν οὐδὲν οὔτε ζῶντι οὔτε τελευτήσαντι, οὐδὲ ἀμελείται ὑπὸ θεῶν τὰ τούτου πράγματα.

For those ones there (the dead) are more blessed with respect to other things than those here, and already **for all future time they are immortal**, if indeed the things that are said are true, at any rate. But indeed, jury men, you ought to be very hopeful for death, and you ought to consider this single truth, that there is

¹¹⁸ For the Orphic concept of the cycle, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 117-122.

¹¹⁹ The Orphic evidence indicates a specific method of reasoning in dichotomies. Plato also utilizes a similar method of reasoning by engaging in the oscillation between questioning and answering called philosophical dialectic: cf. *Phaedo* 78d2.

nothing bad for a good man, neither while he is living nor after he has died, nor are his sufferings uncared for by the gods.
(Plato *Apology* 41c-d)

In these concluding statements, Plato's Socrates emphasizes the inherent immortality of those who have died (τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἀθάνατοι) and once again invokes an Orphic *Hieros Logos* (τὰ λεγόμενα ἀληθῆ) as the true doctrine. Bluck (1961) suggests the phrase τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἀθάνατοι is a "technical expression associated with the Mysteries."¹²⁰ The phrase is also reminiscent of Pindar's description of the heroization of initiates after paying the ποινή of Persephone: ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥρωες ἀγνοί, "pure heroes for all future time" (Pindar fr. 133 Race). I argue Plato in the *Apology* is referring to the same Orphic *Hieros Logos* as Pindar does.¹²¹ From what we know about surviving Orphic texts, the sacred Orphic doctrine contained ritual formulae such as Plato's οὔτε ζῶντι οὔτε τελευτήσαντι, "neither for one living nor after he is dead."

The Orphic soteriological formula life/death is expressed variously in the extant texts, such as on the Pelinna leaf where we read, νῦν ἔθανες καὶ ἐγένου, "now you have died, now you were born" (26a/b.1 Graf), and the Olbian bone tablet cited above: *bios/thanatos/bios*, "life/death/life." Although the ritual formulae differ in word choice and grammatical form, the message is consistently a cyclical pattern between life and death.¹²² I suggest that Plato's use of the present participle ζῶντι in contrast with the

¹²⁰ Bluck 1961: 285. Cf. *Phaedo* 81a: ὅσπερ δὲ λέγεται κατὰ τῶν μεμνημένων ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον μετὰ τῶν θεῶν διαγούση; and *Republic* 469a: καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν δὴ χρόνον ὡς δαιμόνων θεραπεύσομεν αὐτῶν τὰς θήκας.

¹²¹ It is significant that Pindar's fr. 133 (Race) is preserved by Plato himself (at *Meno* 80c). I will discuss the fragment of Pindar at length in Chapter Two below.

¹²² Plato's use of these ritual and soteriological formulae extend to the *Symposium* where Diotima informs Socrates that the ultimate Beauty is ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, "always being and is neither becoming nor perishing" (211a). John Palmer (1999: 4) brilliantly pointed out the parallel between Diotima's description of Beauty and Parmenides' first proposition, ὡς ἀγέωητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν, "that Being is ungenerated and imperishable" (B8.3 D-K). Palmer's reading of Plato

aorist participle τελευτήσαντι (in the phrase οὔτε ζῶντι οὔτε τελευτήσαντι at *Apology* 41d) expresses Plato’s own conceptualization of life as cyclical and continuing after death as found in Orphic theology. This soteriological belief is succinctly expressed in the finale of the *Apology* with a poignant μὲν/δὲ clause by Plato’s Socrates: ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἤδη ὥρα ἀπιέναι, ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀποθανομένῳ, ὑμῖν δὲ βιωσομένοις: “But indeed now is the departing hour, for me who is going to die, and for you who are going to live” (41e). Here Plato uses future participles to convey the same idea conveyed by τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον of 41c, and his use of future time emphasizes the Orphic belief in the hereafter and an existence beyond the present time. In other words, the dichotomy between life and death in this world and a future life in the next is suggested again in the temporal aspect of the participle βιωσομένοις (*Apology* 41e).

In the *Apology*, Plato employs a characteristically Orphic way of speaking about death and its cyclical partner, life. This oscillation between life and death that the soul endures is uniquely Orphic. Rohde (1925) eloquently described an Orphic initiate’s soul as “perpetually alternating between an unfettered separate existence, and an ever-renewed incarnation—traversing the great ‘Circle of Necessity’ in which it becomes the life companion of many bodies both of men and beasts.”¹²³ But the Orphic cult believed there

substantiated the long held claims of Parmenides’ influence on Plato, and he recognized “the parallels between the proem and Orphic accounts of the initiate’s experience of the afterlife” (1999: 18). But Palmer’s conjecture ends with only the hint of an earlier Orphic influence on Parmenides, whereas Guthrie felt that Parmenides’ “language contains expressions which had their origin in the Orphic writings” (1993: 231). For Orphic influence on Parmenides see the following: Dieterich 1911: 413 on *Dikē* as an Orphic goddess; Pfeiffer 1916: 126 for the *Daimōn*; and Cornford 1933: 100n2 for Parmenides’ address to mortals paralleled by Orphic fragments. Parmenides describes the goddess Δίκη “Justice” as πολῦποινος “punishing severely” (1.37). According to Proclus, Orpheus first assigned Justice with the epithet πολῦποινος and quotes a hexameter line from an Orphic poem with the same formulaic diction as found in Parmenides (Orph. fr. 158 Kern). This epithet is used by Parmenides only once and exclusively with Δίκη. I suggest the epithet can be identified as Orphic based on the epithet’s derivative from ποινή, “blood-guilt.” The epithet relates Justice to the sphere of Orphic gods such as Persephone who receive the ποινή. I will argue this point in Chapter Two below.

¹²³ Rohde 1925: 342.

was a “release” from this perpetual cycle of life and death, which was accomplished by initiation and ritual purifications.

I have pointed out the way in which Plato invokes a *Hieros Logos* and then uses key terms and formulae to create a systematic eschatological doctrine. Plato effectively builds his eschatological program on the Orphic doctrine in order to give his philosophical agenda a mythologically authoritative framework. In the *Apology* Socrates depicts the benefit of “going out of town” as a metaphor for dying by explaining that a blessed afterlife awaits him. His belief is not only structured upon the Orphic belief in the immortality of the soul, and its release and judgment in the afterlife, but Socrates also uses the Orphic soteriological formula in order to depict the cyclical nature of life and death.¹²⁴

I.5 The Orphic *Hieros Logos*: Plato’s *Phaedo*

Plato’s Socrates also presents a positive view of the afterlife in the *Phaedo* and frames the eschatological view expressed in that dialogue within the tradition of a *Hieros Logos*. The *Phaedo* primarily deals with the immortality of the soul, although Socrates does not explicitly conclude that the soul is immortal until he has made an elaborate succession of arguments for its proof.¹²⁵ At the beginning of the dialogue Socrates once

¹²⁴ It is significant that Plato even incorporates the soteriological formula life/death in his infamous passage concerning a “hubbub” of Orphic books: λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων διὰ θυσίων καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν εἰσι μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν, ἃς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, “Liberation and purification through sacrifices and enjoyable games, for those who are still **living** and for those who have **died**” (*Republic* 364e- 365a). I argue that by including the Orphic formula life/death in a passage referring specifically to Orphic books implies that the formula was alluding to authentic Orphic belief.

¹²⁵ *Phaedo* 105d-e: Τί οὖν; τὸ μὴ δεχόμενον τὴν τοῦ ἀρτίου ἰδέαν τί νυνδὴ ὠνομάζομεν; Ἀνάσσειον, ἔφη. Τὸ δὲ δίκαιον μὴ δεχόμενον καὶ ὃ ἂν μουσικὸν μὴ δέχηται; Ἄμουσον, ἔφη, τὸ δὲ ἄδικον. Εἶεν·

again uses the word ἡ ἀποδημία to describe death as merely “going out of town” (*Phaedo* 61e). Phrasing death in this way suggests the soul’s immortality and thereby offers a comfort to his friends. Socrates then proclaims that he is going “to mythologize about going out of town” (μυθολογεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀποδημίας τῆς ἐκεῖ, *Phaedo* 61e). This is Plato’s first allusion in the *Phaedo* to a *Hieros Logos* concerning death. Plato goes on to establish three other beliefs within the frame of a *Hieros Logos*: that we humans are in a sort of corporeal prison (62b), but that there is a hope for a better afterlife for the good over the bad (63c), and that the living are reborn from the dead (70c). The ideas of the body as a prison, the blissful afterlife, and the cyclical argument for life/death/life all feature into what we know of Orphic beliefs.¹²⁶

Socrates explains that the soul’s immortality hinges on an “ancient belief” that men are imprisoned in bodies. This belief is explicitly presented as a *Hieros Logos* at 62b:

ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος, ὡς ἔν τινι φρουρᾷ
 ἐσμεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ οὐ δεῖ δὴ ἑαυτὸν ἐκ ταύτης λύειν οὐδ'
 ἀποδιδράσκειν, μέγας τέ τις μοι φαίνεται καὶ οὐ ῥάδιος διδεῖν·

The story told about these things which is told in secret, that we humans are **in sort of prison** and we certainly must not release oneself from it nor run away from it, seems to be both great and not easy to understand.

(Plato *Phaedo* 62b)

ὁ δ' ἂν θάνατον μὴ δέχεται τί καλοῦμεν; Ἀθάνατον, ἔφη. Οὐκοῦν ψυχὴ οὐ δέχεται θάνατον; Οὐ. Ἀθάνατον ἄρα ψυχὴ. “Then what do we call that which does not admit the idea of the even? ‘Uneven’ he said, Well then, what do we call that which does not admit justice and that which does not admit music? ‘Unmusical, and unjust’ he said. Well then, what do we call that which does not receive death? ‘Immortal’ he said. Therefore the soul does not receive death? ‘No.’ Then the soul is immortal.”

¹²⁶ The idea of the body as the place of suffering which must be escaped in order for the soul to become like a god and enjoy a blessed afterlife is expressed on the Thurian tablet (3 Graf and Johnston); see my discussion of the Orphic idea of the cycle life/death/life in section I.4 above.

Plato’s word ἀπόρρητος “secret” is used elsewhere specifically to refer to the Mysteries,¹²⁷ which suggests that Plato is alluding to a “secret” story known only to initiates, and that Socrates is using the authority of this “secret story” to explain why it is not right to kill oneself. The story explains that humans are in a sort of prison (ἐν τινι φρουρῶ); while Socrates explains that humans are possessions of the gods (ἐν τῶν κτημάτων τοῖς θεοῖς, 62b). Socrates then poses a rhetorical question:

Οὐκοῦν, ἦ δ' ὅς, καὶ σὺ ἂν τῶν σαυτοῦ κτημάτων εἴ τι αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἀποκτεινύοι, μὴ σημήναντός σου ὅτι βούλει αὐτὸ τεθνάναι, χαλεπαίνεις ἂν αὐτῷ καί, εἴ τινα ἔχοις τιμωρίαν, τιμωροῖο ἄν;

If one of your possessions killed itself when you did not indicate that you wish it to die, would you not be angry at it, and would you not punish it, if you had some punishment?

(Plato *Phaedo* 62c)

Here Plato uses another key Orphic term τιμωρίαν, one of the elements included in the *Seventh Letter*, which will be discussed in due course in Chapter Two below.

Socrates invokes the *Hieros Logos* again at *Phaedo* 63c and gives a positive outlook of the afterlife: εὐελπίς εἰμι εἶναί τι τοῖς τετελευτηκόσι καί, ὥσπερ γε καὶ πάλαι λέγεται, πολὺ ἄμεινον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ἢ τοῖς κακοῖς, “I am hopeful that there is something for the dead, just as has been said even long ago, something much better for the good than the bad” (*Phaedo* 63c). Then at *Phaedo* 64a, Socrates assigns the hope for a blessed afterlife exclusively to those who practice dying—namely philosophers. Plato builds his philosophical program upon the existing Mystery tradition by framing his philosophical beliefs within the tradition of a *Hieros Logos*. Continuing within this

¹²⁷ Burkert 1985: 276. Albinus (2000: 156) argues the *aporrheton* was a taboo on divulging or imitating the Mysteries “outside the proper frame of ritual.” The rites of Dionysus are called ὄργιον ἄρρητον “a secret rite” at *Orphic Hymn* 52.5 (Athanasakis 1977). See Edmonds 2013: 129 for a different argument, namely that the use of terminology like “secrets” in the context of mystery rites is part of a rhetorical device employed to enhance a speaker’s expertise in arcane matters.

authoritative tradition Plato argues that death is a “release” of the soul from the body (τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγὴν, *Phaedo* 64c), making use of the same terminology as he does in the *Seventh Letter* and *Apology* (40e), as discussed above. The concept of death as a release of the soul from the body depends on the soul’s immortality because its very survival away from the body entails its inherent immortality.¹²⁸

According to Plato, the philosopher’s soul releases from the body easier because of his disassociation with bodily pleasures (*Phaedo* 65a, d). Socrates argues further that the body is considered to be an evil thing that must necessarily be avoided in order to reach the truth (66b). Plato thereby develops the Orphic idea of “release” within a framework of philosophical morality, and simultaneously replaces the Orphic life of asceticism with a philosophical life of moral logic.

Plato’s final recruitment of the *Hieros Logos* occurs at *Phaedo* 70c, where

Socrates affirms that that souls who have died are born again:

παλαιὸς μὲν οὖν ἔστι τις λόγος οὗ μεμνήμεθα, ὡς εἰσὶν ἐνθένδε ἀφικόμενοι ἐκεῖ, καὶ πάλιν γε δεῦρο ἀφικνοῦνται καὶ γίνονται ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων.

Therefore there is an ancient story which we have remembered, that (souls) are over there after arriving from here, and they come back here once again and are generated from dead.

(Plato *Phaedo* 70c)

It is significant that here Plato uses the verb μεμνήμεθα (from the verb μμνήσκω “to remember”) to recall the ancient story because memory also plays a key role in distinguishing initiates in the eschatology of the Gold Tablets and thereby securing their salvation.¹²⁹ The Orphic cyclical argument appears again here: the fact that the souls of

¹²⁸ Plato’s various uses of “release” are discussed at length in Part II below.

¹²⁹ The connections between Memory and truth are brilliantly pointed out by Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008:17. Plato also argues that it is the “exercise in death” (*Phaedo* 81a, 67a) by way of

living beings are reborn from the dead necessitates a belief that souls must exist apart from the body, as they continue to exist in the afterlife even after they depart this world of the living (εἰσὶν ἐνθὲνδε ἀφικόμενα ἐκεῖ, 70c).

Beginning at *Phaedo* 108e Plato concludes his argument for the soul's immortality with an elaborate description of the regions of Hades and the fate awaiting souls corrupted by the senses of the body. These ghastly regions of Hades are contrasted with the higher realms, which are described as pure (ἄνω δὲ εἰς τὴν καθαρὰν οἴκησιν) and more beautiful (114c). According to Socrates, the philosopher achieves these higher realms by purifying his soul and living apart from the body. Purity also plays a key role in sending the initiate to the groves of Persephone in the eschatology of the Gold Tablets.¹³⁰ Plato transposes the prerequisites for achieving a blessed afterlife (purity) and redefines the Orphic suppliant as the philosopher. Socrates concludes both the dialogue and his life by demonstrating why he approaches death with cheer—because he is a philosopher and he will attain these pure regions of the afterlife.

Peter Kingsley (1996) demonstrates that the original outline for Plato's underworld in the *Phaedo* must be based on a poem ascribed to Orpheus,¹³¹ and argued that if the motif of lying in the mud is Orphic, then the entire geography of the *Phaedo* is also Orphic in origin.¹³² My argument in this chapter, however, focuses on Plato's specific diction and his use of terminology in the *Phaedo*. Plato compares the escape

philosophical “recollection” that wins the soul's salvation—in other words, the soul must *remember* its divine origins in order to be saved. Therefore, reincarnation for Plato is dependent on whether the initiate/philosopher drinks of the river *Lēthē* and returns to a mortal body (cf. *Republic* 621a). As Albinus (2000: 129) points out, the rivers *Lēthē* and *Mnemosyne* “had a ritual function of demarcation between ‘this’ world and ‘the other,’ or between the ‘profane’ and the ‘sacred.’”

¹³⁰ The Thurian tablets use the terminology in their ritual prescription: ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρά ... ὡς με πρόφρων πέμψη ἔδρας ἐς εὐαγέων, “I come **pure from the pure** ... so that (Persephone) may send me to the seats **of the pure**” (6.1-7, 7. 1-7 Graf).

¹³¹ Kingsley 1996: 115.

¹³² Kingsley 1996: 119.

from the regions of Tartarus as a release from prison (ἀπαλλαπτόμενοι ὥσπερ δεσμοτηρίων 114c) and uses the verb ἀπαλλάσσω, whose forms we have already seen in the eschatological contexts of the *Apology* and the *Seventh Letter*. The verb and its forms feature prominently in the eschatology of the *Phaedo* and are discussed in the following sections.

I.6 The Body/Soul Formula: The Corruption of the Human Soul

As I have argued in Part I above, Plato's Socrates makes several rhetorical claims for the soul's immortality. Plato sets up these eschatological arguments in a way similar to that found in the Orphic texts. I argue that we can identify the beliefs expressed by Socrates as derived from such Orphic texts based on Plato's rhetorical use of Orphic formulae and incorporation of Orphic themes. In one of his arguments for the immortality of the soul, Plato proposes that opposites are generated from opposites (*Phaedo* 71d), and because the living are generated from the dead (*Phaedo* 72a) Plato makes a case for the soul's previous and future existence. Martin West (1982) connects Plato's idea of opposites with the Olbian tablets, yet he doubts whether reincarnation was what the *bios/thanatos/bios* formula was expressing.¹³³ Nevertheless, the Orphic formula still preserves a soteriological point of view.

The soul's immortality is defined by its relation to the body. Plato's Socrates expresses that humans are composed of both body and soul: τὸ μὲν σῶμα ἐστὶ, τὸ δὲ ψυχή (*Phaedo* 79b). He goes on to conclude that because the body is mortal, then its

¹³³ West 1982: 18.

guiding force, the soul, must resemble that which naturally rules—the divine (ἡ μὲν ψυχὴ τῷ θεῷ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τῷ θνητῷ, *Phaedo* 80a). Olbian tablet C (Graf) expresses another important Orphic formula: σῶμα/ψυχὴ “body/soul.” I argue that Plato’s opposition of body and soul in the *Phaedo* is a specific echo of the Orphic formula expressed on Olbian bone tablet C (Graf), and that Plato employs a μὲν/δὲ construction not only to show the contrast between body and soul, but also to show their natural affinity.¹³⁴ The two Orphic dichotomies life/death and body/soul are also intertwined in their meaning; these formulae are an important way of speaking about eschatological concepts for Plato. Throughout the *Phaedo*, Plato often compares the body to something dead, namely a corpse (80c), or a mortal construct such as a prison (62b, 67d, 81e, 82e-83, 114c). The body is defined as an evil thing from which the soul ought to free itself, whereas the soul is defined by its immortality and its association with the divine.

This Orphic method of speaking in dichotomies is also exercised in the *Gorgias*, where I argue Plato expresses both the Orphic soteriological formulae “life/death” and “body/soul”:¹³⁵

{ΣΩ.} Ἀλλὰ μὲν δὴ καὶ ὥς γε σὺ λέγεις δεινὸς ὁ βίος. οὐ γάρ τοι θαυμάζοιμ' ἂν εἰ Εὐριπίδης ἀληθῆ ἐν τοῖσδε λέγει, λέγων –
τίς δ' οἶδεν, εἰ τὸ ζῆν μὲν ἐστὶ κατθανεῖν,
τὸ κατθανεῖν δὲ ζῆν;
καὶ ἡμεῖς τῷ ὄντι ἴσως τέθναμεν· ἤδη γάρ του ἔγωγε καὶ ἤκουσα τῶν σοφῶν ὥς νῦν ἡμεῖς τέθναμεν καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμά ἐστὶν ἡμῖν σῆμα, τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἐπιθυμία εἰσὶ τυγχάνει ὄν οἷον ἀναπειθεσθαι καὶ μεταπίπτειν ἄνω κάτω, καὶ τοῦτο ἄρα τις μυθολογῶν κομπὸς ἀνήρ, ἴσως Σικελὸς τις ἢ Ἰταλικὸς, παρὰ γὰρ τῷ ὀνόματι διὰ τὸ πιθανόν τε καὶ πειστικὸν ὠνόμασε Πίθον, τοὺς δὲ ἀνοήτους ἀμυήτους.

¹³⁴ Plato explains in the *Phaedo* that when the body and soul are joined, nature commands that one should rule and the other should follow, which suggests that since the soul rules the body, then the soul is necessarily immortal and the body mortal (*Phaedo* 80a).

¹³⁵ See Edmonds 2013: 249 for a different argument. He views the body/soul dualism as an idea found throughout Greek tradition (i.e., not specific to Orphic eschatology), and furthermore contends that the idea of a “lively afterlife” is the rule in Greek tradition, not the exception (255).

But certainly as you say, life is strange. For indeed I would not be amazed if Euripides speaks the truth in the following, by saying:

“Who knows, if living is dying,
and dying is living?”

Indeed perhaps in reality we are dead; For already I have heard of this from the wise men, that now we are dead and **the body** is our grave, and this part of **the soul** in which the desires are happens to be able to persuade and to change position up and down, and someone mythologizing this, a clever man, perhaps a certain Sicilian or Italian, by portraying it by name he called it a “jar” [πίθον] because it is both plausible [πιθανόν] and persuasive, and he called the senseless ones uninitiated.

(Plato *Gorgias* 492e-493a)

In line with his previous eschatological arguments, Plato sets up this passage as a *Hieros Logos* with the phrase λέγει ἀληθῆ “he speaks the truth” and attributes the soteriological formula life/death to Euripides in order to give the belief more authority. In the *Gorgias* Plato utilizes the construction σῶμα/σῆμα attributed to the Orphics in *Cratylus* 400c in order to explain the belief that living is really dying, and dying is really living. However, Dodds¹³⁶ and others¹³⁷ reject that the phrase τὸ μὲν σῶμά ἐστιν ἡμῶν σῆμα “the body is our grave” is Orphic in origin. Dodds’ argument rests on his critical interpretation of *Cratylus* 400c. In the *Cratylus*, Plato attributes to the Orphics the belief in the dichotomy between body and soul, and the philological speculation that the body (σῶμα) can be represented as the grave or sign (σῆμα) of the soul.

The Orphic idea that the body is a transitory representation of the immortal soul is an inversion of the traditional Greek religious belief that the soul is the image (*eidolon*) of the mortal body.¹³⁸ At *Cratylus* 399d, Socrates proposes to analyze the etymology of two Greek words, soul and body—the formula that we have seen on Olbian tablet C (Graf

¹³⁶ Dodds 2004: 170 n87.

¹³⁷ Wilamowitz 1931-1932: II.199; Thomas 1938: 51-52; Linforth 1941: 147-148.

¹³⁸ Bremmer 2002: 3, 23; Albinus 2000:16

and Johnston). Socrates explains the word ψυχή to be derived from ἀναψύχον “to revive,” a compound from the verb ψύχειν “to refresh/revive,” because ψυχή revives the body when it is incarnate, and the body decays when the soul leaves it (399e). This etymological connection was also expressed by the author of the Hipponion tablet, who explains that souls in the Underworld are able to perform two forms of “refreshment.” The common souls of the dead refresh themselves (ψύχονται) at the first spring (1.4 Graf and Johnston), but the initiated soul passes beyond this first spring and gives a password in order to drink the cold water (ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ) from the spring of Memory (1.12 Graf and Johnston). The word ψυχρὸν “cold,” cognate with ψύχειν,¹³⁹ here functions as part of the ritual password the initiate’s soul must present to the guardians of the spring of Memory in the afterlife. Therefore we see on the Hipponion tablet the sort of etymological speculation and philological word play that we have seen is characteristic of Orphic thought. I argue, therefore, that Plato is adopting this Orphic etymology and transposing it into his own scientific doctrine of etymology in the *Cratylus*. Then at 400b Plato takes this idea further by creating his own more scientific (τεχνικώτερον) derivation of the word ψυχή from ἔχει and φύσιν, because the soul holds the nature of the body. Here we see the transposition process in full force: Plato begins by relying on an Orphic etymology, but then expands into a more rational explanation of the idea by redefining the word in his own terms. Then Socrates explains the etymology of the word “body” and he explicitly identifies it as an Orphic etymology:

{ΣΩ.} Τὸ σῶμα λέγεις; {ΕΡΜ.} Ναί. {ΣΩ.} Πολλαχῆ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε· ἂν μὲν καὶ σμικρὸν τις παρακλίνη, καὶ πάνυ. καὶ γὰρ <σῆμά> τινές φασιν αὐτὸ εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς τεθαμμένης ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι· καὶ διότι αὐτὸ τοῦτω <σημαίνει> ἃ ἂν σημαίνει ἡ ψυχή, καὶ ταύτη “σῆμα” ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι.

¹³⁹ Beekes 2010: 1672.

δοκοῦσι μέντοι μοι μάλιστα θέσθαι οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα, ὡς δίκην διδούσης τῆς ψυχῆς ὧν δὴ ἔνεκα δίδωσιν, τοῦτον δὲ περιβόλον ἔχειν, ἵνα <σῶζηται>, δεσμοτηρίου εἰκόνα· εἶναι οὖν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦτο, ὥσπερ αὐτὸ ὀνομάζεται, ἕως ἂν ἐκτεῖσθαι τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, [τὸ] “σῶμα,” καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖν παρὰγειν οὐδ' ἐν γράμμα.

[Socrates:] Do you mean the body? [Hermogenes:] Yes. [Socrates:] For many reasons this seems best to me at any rate; if someone alters it a little, even very (little). For indeed some say it is the tomb of the soul, as if (the soul) is buried in the present moment; and furthermore for this reason by means of this thing [i.e., the body] the soul indicates whatever it indicates, and for this reason (the body) is called correctly “sign.” However, the Orphics¹⁴⁰ seem to me to especially apply this name, since the soul is paying the penalty on account of the things which it pays, and (the soul) has this (the body) as its enclosure, just like a prison, in order that it is kept safe (or saved); and therefore that this is the “body” of the soul, just as the thing itself is called, until (the soul) can pay off what it owes in full, and it is not even necessary to change a single letter.

(Plato *Cratylus* 400c)

Dodds' argument that the σῶμα/σημα idea is not Orphic¹⁴¹ rests on three critical premises. First, he claims that what is attributed to the Orphics is a derivation of σῶμα from σῶζηται, which is confirmed by the last phrase καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖν παρὰγειν οὐδ' ἐν γράμμα, and not a derivation of σημα from σῶμα, which he claims would conflict with the last phrase (οὐδὲν δεῖν παρὰγειν οὐδ' ἐν γράμμα). But this argument disregards the deliberate phrase “σημα” ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι “it is correctly called “tomb/sign.” Plato is clearly speaking about the body here (τὸ σῶμα λέγεις), and therefore, I argue, he must be referring to the σῶμα as σημα. However, Dodds' argument is still useful, and his emphasis on the connection between σῶμα and σῶζηται strengthens the σῶμα/σημα idea as an authentic Orphic belief because the phrase ἵνα σῶζηται has ἡ ψυχὴ as its

¹⁴⁰ Edmonds (2013:198) argues that the term “Orphics” is first applied to people in the second century CE.

¹⁴¹ It is noteworthy that Edmonds (2013:270) identifies the σῶμα/σημα idea as an authentic “Orphic” belief. Albinus (2000: 137) notes that the σῶμα/σημα idea is “repeatedly referred by Plato,” which perhaps suggests that the formula has ritual significance.

implied subject, which denotes that the soul has the possibility of salvation—a central Orphic belief.¹⁴²

Dodds' second contention that σώμα/σήμα is not Orphic in origin is that it is attributed to τινές “without further specification.”¹⁴³ I argue, rather, that οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφεία is the further specification of the σώμα/σήμα idea because of the adverb μάλιστα which helps explain τινές. As I read it, Plato says some people hold the σώμα/σήμα idea, *especially* the Orphics. Lastly Dodds argues, “we cannot suppose ‘the Orphic poets’ to be either identical with, or included among, ‘some persons.’”¹⁴⁴ But I argue that τινές must be the same as the οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφεία because of the phrase “σήμα” ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι, “called correctly ‘a tomb/sign,’” where once again the adverb μάλιστα further qualifies the Orphics as claiming this belief.

Lastly, I argue we can identify the belief as Orphic based on the verb ἐκτείσῃ, the aorist subjunctive of ἐκτίνω “to pay in full.” The verb is related to a family of words that express economic ideas of exchange and debt such as τιμή/τίω and ποινή/τίνω, and as I argue the entire family can refer specifically to the Orphic belief of salvation for the soul

¹⁴² For discussion of σώμα/σήμα and salvation, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 107-108. On the eschatology of the Gold Tablets, the initiate receives salvation by drinking from the waters of Mnemosyne (cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 35). The goddess Persephone also plays a role in the initiates' salvation on the Thurian tablets, such as tablet 6.6-7 Graf and Johnston (recto):

1 Ἐρχομαι ἐκ <κ>αθαρώ<ν> καθα<ρά>, χθ<λο>κ<νίων> Βασίλ<ει>α,
2 Εὐκλε<υα> κα<ι> Εὐβολεὺ καὶ θεοὶ ὅσοι δ<αί>μοινες ἄλλοι
3 καὶ γὰρ ἐ<γ>ω ὑ<ι>μῶν> γένος εὐχομα<ι> ε<ί>να<ι> Ἰ ὄλβιο<ν>
4 ποινὰν {ν} ἀ<ν>ταπέτε<ισ> ἔργω<ν ἔνεκ> ὅτι δικήν verso α<ί>ων.
5 ἔτ<ε> με Μοῖρα <ἐδάμασ> ἔ<τε> ἀσ<τεροπῆτα {κη} κερ<α>υ<ινῶ<ι>
6 νῦν δὲ <ι>κ<έτις> ἦκω, Ἰ ἦκω παρὰ Φ<εργ>σεφ<όνειαν>.
7 ὡς {λ} με <π>ρόφ<ρων> πέ[μ]ψει {μ} ἔδρας ἐς εὐ<α>γ<έων>

Mystic passwords also play a role and “unlock” the initiates' salvation, such as on the Thurian tablets (6.3-4 Graf); cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 157. The Orphic Gurōb Papyrus also deals with salvation from afflictions; cf. Graf and Johnston 2007: 152.

¹⁴³ Dodds 2004: 170.

¹⁴⁴ Dodds 2004: 170.

by paying a penalty or debt.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, I argue the occurrence of the word ἐκτίνω within this Orphic context of *Cratylus* 400c adds to the evidence of the σῶμα/σῆμα idea as an authentic Orphic belief.

I.7 The Body/Soul Formula: Pythagorean Beliefs in σῶμα/σῆμα

The Orphic belief that the soul is imprisoned in the body and must pay a penalty for its “release” was also proclaimed by the Pythagoreans, whose beliefs and ideas Plato expressed.¹⁴⁶ Although scholars typically consider Pythagoreanism and Orphism to be distinct cults, their fundamental doctrine of the soul was identical.¹⁴⁷ In fact according to Proclus, Plato inherited the Orphic teachings from Pythagoras, who was initiated by Aglaophamus;¹⁴⁸ Iamblichos proclaimed Pythagoras was another link in the chain of initiates in the line of Orpheus.¹⁴⁹ According to Clement of Alexandria,¹⁵⁰ the Socratic grammarian Epigenes studied the symbolism and authorship of the Orphic poems known as the *Εἰς Ἅιδου κατάβασις* “Descent into Hades” and the *Ἱερός λόγος* “Sacred story,” which Epigenes maintained were written by Pythagoreans.¹⁵¹ As early as the fifth century BCE, Ion of Chios attributed Orphic poems and beliefs about the afterlife to Pythagoras, and Herodotus stated that the Orphic rites were associated with the Pythagoreans.¹⁵² The fact that our ancient sources inform us that Orphic and Pythagorean

¹⁴⁵ These connections are discussed in Chapter Two.

¹⁴⁶ Horky 2013.

¹⁴⁷ Guthrie 1993: 216-220.

¹⁴⁸ *Theology of Plato* 1.25.25.

¹⁴⁹ *Vita Pythagorae* 146; cf. Graf 1987: 90.

¹⁵⁰ *Stromateis* 1.131 = T 222 (Kern).

¹⁵¹ For a full discussion on the identity of Epigenes, see Linforth 1941: 114.

¹⁵² Fragment 36B2 DK; *Histories* ii.81

doctrines overlapped not only affirms the intimate connections between the various mystery sects, but also suggests that we can make use of Pythagorean doctrines to help explain features of Orphism.¹⁵³ According to Philolaus, the first Pythagorean to write down the Pythagorean doctrine (as reported by Clement of Alexandria):

μαρτυρέονται δὲ καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ θεολόγοι τε καὶ μάντιες, ὡς διὰ τινος τιμωρίας ἃ ψυχὰ τῷ σώματι συνέζευκται καὶ καθάπερ ἐν σήματι τούτῳ τέθραπται.

The ancient theologians and priests testify that **the soul is yoked to the body** because of some punishments and for that reason **has been buried in this tomb**.
(Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 3.3.17)

Here we have evidence of a Pythagorean belief that the soul was buried in the body, and that the body is specifically the “sign/tomb” of the soul (ἐν σήματι τούτῳ τέθραπται).

This belief is expressed with the same formula σῶμα/σήμα as in Plato’s *Cratylus*.

Philolaus also uses the term τιμωρίας, which we have already seen in Plato’s *Seventh*

Letter. The noun τιμωρία is related to the verb ἐκτίση of *Cratylus* 400c (ἕως ἂν

ἐκτίση τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, “until [the soul] can pay off what it owes in full”) through their

common Proto Indo-European root.¹⁵⁴ Although this citation of Philolaus comes from a

late source (Clement of Alexandria = Titus Flavius Clemens, ca. 150 CE), I suggest it can

inform our reading of the σῶμα/σήμα idea in Plato’s *Cratylus* and help confirm it as

Orphic in origin.¹⁵⁵ Because the Pythagorean theory of the soul and the group’s way of

life was identical to the Orphic belief system, I argue this passage of Philolaus helps to

¹⁵³ Riedweg (2005) makes the argument that Pythagoras developed his theories from Orphic poems, which he suggests makes “many details in the tradition become easier to understand” (74-75).

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter Two below.

¹⁵⁵ Clement of Alexandria remarks elsewhere: “Plato derived the immortality of the soul from Pythagoras; and he from the Egyptians.” (*Stromata* 6.2.27). In turn Proclus affirms: “The whole theology of the Greeks is the child of Orphic mystagogy; Pythagoras being first taught the rites of the gods by Aglaophamus, and next Plato receiving the perfect science concerning such things from the Pythagorean and Orphic writings” (*Theology of Plato* 1. 25. 25). Both arguments point to Herodotus’ statement that the rites known as Bacchic and Orphic are really Pythagorean and Egyptian (ii.81).

demonstrate that Plato was attributing the σώμα/σῆμα idea to the Orphics. Furthermore, Philolaus, as a Pythagorean, attributes this idea to ancient theologians (οἱ παλαιοὶ θεολόγοι), who could be none other than the disseminators of Orphic doctrine.

Returning to the passage of the *Gorgias* (492e-493a) quoted above, I argue we can identify the belief as Orphic not only based on the σώμα/σῆμα idea, but also on Plato's use of Orphic formulae. The oscillation¹⁵⁶ between living and dying is an Orphic idea, as Olbian bone tablet A attests. Plato suggests that this idea is ἀληθῆ "true," which we also find on the bone tablet. Furthermore, the attribution of these ideas (life/death, σώμα/σῆμα) to wise men and Plato's reference to "a certain Sicilian or Italian" (ἴσως Σικελὸς τις ἢ Ἰταλικός, *Gorgias* 493a) strongly suggest that he is referring to a Pythagorean or Orphic source, since both Sicily and southern Italy were epicenters of early Orphic and Pythagorean development. Moreover, the Pythagorean evidence quoted above adds to this conclusion because it records the same use of terminology (i.e., σώμα/σῆμα).

I.8 The Body/Soul Formula: Plato's ἀπαλλαγὴ "Release" of the Soul from the Body

Now that we have outlined the corresponding Platonic and Orphic beliefs in the dichotomy between body and soul, it is possible to understand why the soul must pay a penalty for its bondage, why it has the possibility of salvation, and why it can be

¹⁵⁶ As Albinus (2000: 144) notes, "the semantics of 'life' and 'death' had the potential of being turned into 'their' opposites, so that the allusions of life became a metaphor for death, and *vice versa*." Perhaps we even see this idea in Homer's *Nekuia* whereby "blood is a vehicle of death *as life* and therefore of life *as death*" (Albinus 2000: 145).

“released” from both the body and ultimately from the cycle of (re)incarnation. Socrates defines death in the *Phaedo* as a release of the soul from the body, such that death is not evil but rather a *kerdos/agathon* “profitable/beneficial thing.” Plato emphatically describes death as a “release” at *Phaedo* 64c5 with ἀπαλλαγὴν, and he echoes the verbs again in a tricolon construction at 64c6 (ἀπαλλαγέν) and 64c7 (ἀπαλλαγεῖσαν) in order to establish the standard terminology for speaking about death—namely, as a release of the soul from body. This is significant because ritual language often occurs in a tripartite structure.¹⁵⁷ I argue that Plato here is transposing ritual language and redefining it to suit his goal of showing that Philosophy is the correct means to achieve a better release from the body and thus a better afterlife.

We have already seen that the author of Plato’s *Seventh Letter* was aware of an Orphic *Hieros Logos* in the specific diction pertaining to the soul’s “release” from the body, and now we see the same concept and terminology used in the *Apology* and *Phaedo*. The noun ἀπαλλαγὴ “release” is derived from the verb ἀπαλλάσσω “to set free,” a compound of the preposition ἀπὸ “away from” and the verb ἀλλάσσω “to change, alter.” This is the verbal form of the adjective ἄλλος “another,” as in the soul’s

¹⁵⁷ See Lease 1919. Furthermore, the ritualistic repetition of the number 3 may allude to metempsychosis and the cycle of incarnations: Empedocles relates that he must pass through mortal incarnations in 30,000 seasons (B 115 DK); Pindar expresses the idea of 3 incarnations in his Orphic-tinged eschatology (*Olympian* 2.68); Plato says the soul will reach the realm of the divine after 3,000 years (*Phaedrus* 249a); Proclus attributed this idea of incarnating in cycles of 3 to Orpheus (*In Platonis Rempublicam commentarii* 173 = *OF* 231 Kern). Albinus (2000: 128) argues the significance of the number 3 is related to “a common numerology that dealt with the final release from metempsychosis.” We may perhaps find evidence of this in the first line of the Pelinna tablet (26a.1-2 Graf = L7a.1-2 Bernabé): Νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου τρισόλβιε, ἅματι τῷδε. εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ’ ὅτι Βακχίος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε, “You have just died, and now you are born, thrice-blessed, on this day. Tell Persephone that the Bacchic one himself released you.” The idea of reincarnation seems to be implied in the tablet, and this belief is associated with Persephone and Dionysus. Furthermore, the Orphic Dionysus represented in the Orphic hymns is known as τρίγονον “thrice born” (30.2 Athanassakis), and in the hymn dedicated to the god of the Triennial Feasts (Dionysus), he is dubbed τρίφυές “threefold” (52.5 Athanassakis) and λυσεῦ “liberator” (52.2 Athanassakis).

departure from here to another place (see my discussion in Part I above on *Apology* 40c11).

The verb ἀλλάσσω also yields economic terms such as the noun ἀλλαγὴ “to exchange, barter,” and the verb καταλλάσσω “to change money.”¹⁵⁸ The verb καταλλάσσω figures into Socrates’ argument at *Phaedo* 69b that pleasure and pain should not be *exchanged* with pleasure and pain, but rather that wisdom is the correct coinage to obtain truth. Socrates then asserts at 69c that truth is a purification for the pleasures and pains of the body. This extended simile demonstrates the semantic range of the root verb ἀλλάσσω because it conveys both the idea of the release of the soul from the body—namely death—as well as the idea that the soul is corruptible by the body’s purchase or exchange of pleasure for pleasure. Plato asserts that only wisdom (φρόνησις, 69b1) ought to purchase pleasures. He then equates the idea of philosophical truth with καθαρσις “purification” as a release from the cycle of rebirth. Plato goes on to invoke the tradition of the mysteries whose teachings proclaim that those who die unpurified will lie in the βορβόρω “filth,”¹⁵⁹ but that those who are κεκαθαρμένος “purified” will dwell with the gods. In the *Republic*, Plato contrasts the uninitiated who lie in the πηλός “mud” with those initiates who dwell at an eternal drinking party (363d). When the soul ceases from the grief of incarnation in the physical body and comes in communion with

¹⁵⁸ For an excellent summary of the connections between the economic terms produced by ἀλλάσσω, see Pender 2013: 11.

¹⁵⁹ Plato’s commentator Olympiodorus says that Plato here is referring to an Orphic myth (*OF* 235 Kern). Plato refers to the “filth” and “mud” repeatedly (*Rep.* 330d; *Gorg.* 493a-c; *Phd.* 69c); cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 213. Apparently in Orphic initiation rites, it was customary that the initiate was rubbed with mud; cf. Albinus 2000: 135. Aristophanes also makes use of the Orphic mud trope in *Frogs* (145-151; 274), and he even pokes fun at Euripides’ use of the life/death formula (cf. Edmonds 2013: 272). It is interesting that the word “mud” in both Greek (βορβόρος) and Hittite (*mirmirrus*) is onomatopoeic, and we even find similarities between the Orphic myth of Persephone and Dionysus in the Hittite myth of the voyage of the soul of the Sun goddess of the earth and her son “the desired one”; cf. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal: 214.

its divine source, it forms a union with the divine that Plato calls φρόνησις “wisdom” (*Phaedrus* 79d). The καθαρός “purification” which leads to φρόνησις was a special element of initiation into the Mysteries, as Plato explains in terms of the dichotomy between the afterlife for those uninitiated and those initiated in Mysteries:

οἱ τὰς τελετὰς ἡμῖν οὗτοι καταστήσαντες οὐ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι **πάσαι ἀνίπτεισθαι** ὅτι ὃς ἂν ἀμύητος καὶ ἀτέλεστος εἰς Ἄιδου ἀφίκηται ἐν βορβόρῳ κείσεται, ὁ δὲ **κεκαθαρμένος** τε καὶ **τετελεσμένος** ἐκείσε ἀφικόμενος μετὰ θεῶν οἰκήσει. εἰσὶν γὰρ δὴ, ὡς φασὶν οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετὰς, “ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δὲ τε παῦροι.” οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἄλλοι ἢ οἱ πεφιλοσοφηκότες ὀρθῶς.

Those who established the Mysteries for us were not thoughtless, but in reality by speaking in **ancient riddles** that whosoever arrives in Hades uninitiated and ignorant of the rites will lie in filth, but whosoever arriving there after having both **purified** and **initiated** himself will dwell with the gods. “For there certainly are,” as they say in the Mysteries, “many thrusus-bearers, but few Bacchae.” These (mystics), in my opinion, are none other than those who have practiced philosophy correctly.

(Plato *Phaedo* 69c1-d2)¹⁶⁰

Plato quotes from a poem attributed to the Mysteries and marks the beginning of Cebes’ questioning on the soul as material derived from the Mysteries. Cebes begins with another ritualistic tripartite repetition by using the verb ἀπαλλάσσω at 70a2 (ἀπαλλαγῆ τοῦ σώματος), 70a4 (ἀπαλλαττομένη τοῦ σώματος), and 70a7 (ἀπηλλαγμένη τούτων τῶν κακῶν). Here again Plato asserts his philosophical agenda by redefining ritual language within the framework of philosophical inquiry, such that those who practice philosophy become equated with mystery cult initiates.

¹⁶⁰ Albinus (2000: 139) notes, “although Plato himself often clothed his thoughts in a veil of myth, he clearly condemned the automatic solution of ritual. The only way ‘initiation’ (τελετή) and ‘purification’ (καθαρός) could be regarded as processes of improvement was in the sense of being philosophical practices.” Albinus’ point is that Platonic discourse transposes Orphic rites of purification into an exercise in death (μελέτη θανάτου, *Phaedo* 81a); in other words, for Plato rites of purification are equated with philosophical practice.

I.9 The Body/Soul Formula: Orphic Fragments Referring to “Release”

The noun ἀπαλλαγή is typically used in tragedy as a release from something undesirable,¹⁶¹ such as the body at *Phaedo* 64c and 70c, but the noun ἀπαλλαγή is not found in any surviving Orphic fragments. However, the verb ἀλλάσσω does occur once in an Orphic fragment describing transmigration of the soul. In Orphic fragment 437 F Bernabé (= 226 Kern), Clement of Alexandria quotes a few hexameter lines from an Orphic poem which describe the soul’s cyclical journey through the elements:

ἔστιν ὕδωρ ψυχῆ θάνατος, χυδάτεσσι δὲ γαῖα
ἐκ δ’ ὕδατος <πέλε> γαῖα, τὸ δ’ ἐκ γαίας πάλιν ὕδωρ,
ἐκ τοῦ δὴ ψυχῆ ὅλον αἰθέρα ἀλλάσσουσα.

Water is death for the soul, and earth is (death) for liquids,
but from water <comes> earth, and from earth, water once again,
from that indeed soul is (continuously) transferring to the entire aether.

Although the first line is corrupt, a fragment of Heraclitus (fr. 66(a) Marcovich = B 36 DK) is almost identical and describes a cyclical conversion of the elements. The Orphic fragment also describes a cyclical transformation of the soul through various elements. Although Martin West and Madayo Kahle¹⁶² argue that this fragment does not fit with reincarnation doctrine, nevertheless I suggest the cyclical idea of reincarnation is implied in line 2 in the exchange between earth and water. Furthermore, the cyclical idea is evident in the grammar of the adverb πάλιν, which evokes the idea of palingenesis as well as by the aspect of the present participle ἀλλάσσουσα which gives the sense of a continuous, and hence cyclical, transformation.

¹⁶¹ Rowe 1993: 137.

¹⁶² West 1983: 223, Kahle 2011.

Simplicius also cites a line from an Orphic poem in reference to the word “release” (Orphic fragment 348 F Bernabé = 230 Kern). He ascribes the belief in “release” to the Orphics by explaining the cyclical relationship of generation and he uses the infinitive form of ἀπαλλάσσω:

γενέσεως τροχῷ, οὐπερ ἀδύνατον ἀπαλλαγήναι κατὰ τὸν Ὀρφέα μὴ τοὺς
θεοὺς ἐκείνους ἰλεωσάμενον
“οἷς ἐπέταξεν”
ὁ Ζεὺς
“κύκλου τ' ἀλλήξει καὶ ἀμψύξει κακότητος”
τὰς ἀνθρωπίνας ψυχάς.

In the wheel of generation, the very one from which it is impossible to be released, according to the Orphics, unless one has propitiated those gods: Zeus “commanded” the human souls “for them both to cease from the cycle and to be relieved from evil.”

(Simplicius *In Aristotelis de Caelo Comentariorum* 7.377.14 Heiberg)

From this fragment we learn there was an Orphic belief that humans could be released from the cycle of generation by propitiating certain gods. The fragments use the terminology ἀπαλλαγήναι and ἀλλήξει, both forms of ἀλλάσσω and its derivatives. Furthermore, we also see forms of the verb ἀλλάσσω used in the description of Zeus mingling the cosmic elements in the Derveni Papyrus (IX.7, 9 Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006), although here the word seems to mean “alter” or “change”.¹⁶³ The Orphic sources seem to incorporate forms of the verb ἀλλάσσω within descriptions of primordial generation, and the word appears to signify a change at the elemental level. I argue Plato transposes this verb into his descriptions of the soul’s “release” from the body—that is a change between elements. In Plato’s use of the word, the soul is imagined

¹⁶³ Cf. Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006: 179-180, Laks and Most 1997: 13.

as changing or “releasing” from its incorporeal condition to its original, and pure condition.

1.10 The Body/Soul Formula: Forms of Release (ἀπαλλαγή) in the *Phaedo*

Plato’s uses of ἀπαλλάσσω and its derivatives appear exclusively in arguments concerning the immortality of the soul (*Phaedo* 70a, 84b, 107c; cf. [sc. ψυχή] ἀπαλλαχθῆ τοῦ σώματος, *Letter 7*, 335a5, quoted above). To my knowledge the only other attested uses of ἀπαλλαγή or ἀλλάσσω within the context of a soul’s immortality are Orphic fragment 437 F (Bernabé) with its use of the participle ἀλλάσσουσα, and fragment 348 F (Bernabé) quoted above. Plato frequently uses the verb ἀπαλλάσσω “to set free,” “to separate,” or “to release” in descriptions of death. Plato defines death as a “release” from the body and employs the grammatical construction of a genitive of separation or the use of the preposition ἀπό plus the genitive of the body.

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates describes death as a release of the soul from the body:

Ἄρα μὴ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγὴν; καὶ εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ τεθνάναι, χωρὶς μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπαλλαγὴν αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα γεγονέναι, χωρὶς δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν [ἀπὸ] τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγεῖσαν αὐτὴν καθ’ αὐτὴν εἶναι; ἄρα μὴ ἄλλο τι ἢ ὁ θάνατος ἢ τοῦτο;

Don’t (we believe that death) is nothing other than **the release of the soul from the body**? And (we think that) being dead is this, the body’s having come to be **apart, separated from the soul**, just by itself, and the soul’s being **apart**, just by itself, **separated from the body**? Death can’t be anything other than this?

(Plato *Phaedo* 64c)¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Plato uses ἀπαλλαγή frequently in *Phaedo* to describe death: ἐπειδὴν ἀπαλλαγῆ τοῦ σώματος, “since at the release from the body (70a); ἐν τῇ ἀπαλλαγῇ τοῦ σώματος, “at the release from the body” (84b); εἰ

This idea of death as a release from the body is framed within the tradition of the *Hieros Logos*, which Plato established at *Phaedo* 62b and 63c. I argue that Plato uses the word ἀπαλλάσσω and its derivatives as an Orphic term for death because of the word's association with the immortality of the soul.

I.11 The Body/Soul Formula: *Dialysis* and Other Forms of Release in *Phaedo*

In addition to the word family of ἀπαλλαγή and its verbal forms, Plato also uses the word family of λύω and its nominal forms to express the idea of death as a release of the soul from the body. In the passage from the *Phaedo* quoted above (62b), Plato uses the verb λύω to describe death as a release. The goal of Orphism was the release of the soul from the body, and its reunion with the divine after it is “freed from the necessity of rebirth.”¹⁶⁵ Plato's frequent use of specific vocabulary expressing the idea of the “release of the soul” (λύω and ἀπαλλαγή) strongly suggests his familiarity with Orphic Mysteries. In the *Gorgias* (524b) Plato describes death as a release: ὁ θάνατος τυγχάνει ὧν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ δυοῖν πραγμάτων **διάλυσις**, τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, “Death happens to be, as it seems to me, nothing other than the **release** of two things, the soul and the body.” Plato's use of the dual form δυοῖν πραγμάτων suggests

μὲν γὰρ ἦν ὁ θάνατος τοῦ παντὸς ἀπαλλαγή, ἔρμαιον ἂν ἦν τοῖς κακοῖς ἀποθανοῦσι τοῦ τε σώματος ἅμ' ἀπηλλάχθαι καὶ τῆς αὐτῶν κακίας μετὰ τῆς ψυχῆς, “for if death were a release from everything, then it would be a god-send for the wicked, who, when they died, would be freed at the same time from both the their body and the wickedness with their soul” (107c).

¹⁶⁵ Rohde 1925: 345.

the soul and body are a naturally bonded pair. The body cannot live without the soul, but for the Orphic initiate, the soul's true home without the body was in the afterlife.

In the *Phaedo* Plato's Socrates first asserts with a present participle that the philosopher frees his soul from the body: δῆλός ἐστιν ὁ φιλόσοφος ἀπολύων ὅτι μάλιστα τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ σώματος κοινωνίας “it is clear that the Philosopher is the one who especially **releases** the soul from its communion with the body” (*Phaedo* 64e-65a). Plato establishes that it is the philosopher over and above other men who has the capacity to release the soul from the body, and he goes on to affirm at 65d that the philosopher also despises the body because of its corruption of the soul. Plato uses the noun λύσις again to describe death as a release from body (θάνατος ὀνομάζεται, λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, 67d5), and the phrase is formulaically repeated at 67d9. Socrates goes on to explain that the philosophers are the ones who practice this state of release or dying during life in order to be prepared for the experience, which illustrates Socrates' hope for the afterlife. Furthermore, the practice of λύσις “release” is directly tied to the practice of philosophy throughout the *Phaedo* (τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ. . . τῇ ἐκείνης λύσει, *Phaedo* 82d7; ἡ φιλοσοφία ... τὴν ψυχὴν ... λύειν ἐπιχειρεῖ, 83a4; τῇ λύσει ... ἡ τοῦ ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλοσόφου ψυχῆ, 83b6; τὴν μὲν φιλοσοφίαν ... λύειν, 84a4).¹⁶⁶ Plato thereby refashions the Orphic ritual practice of release into a philosophical goal.

¹⁶⁶ Plato uses many creative ways to speak of death as a separation in the *Phaedo*, such as a διάλυσις “release” as we saw in the *Gorgias* quoted above: διάλυσιν τοῦ σώματος ἢ τῇ ψυχῇ, “release from the body for the soul” (*Phaedo* 88b), as well as with the separation preposition “χωρῖς” and its derivatives. Death is described as separation and is related to cathartic practices and release (λύσις): ἡ ψυχὴ ἔσται χωρῖς τοῦ σώματος (*Phaedo* 67a). Purity is equated to freeing oneself from the body: οὕτω μὲν καθαροὶ ἀπαλλαττόμενοι τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἀφροσύνης (*Phaedo* 67a). Purification consists in separating the soul from the body: Κάθαροις ... τὸ χωρίζειν ... ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος τὴν ψυχὴν (*Phaedo* 67c). Death is therefore a release or separation from the body: λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος (*Phaedo* 67d5).

The idea of λύσις as a separation of body and soul is similar to the view expressed on the Pelinna tablet, which instructs the initiate: εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Βακχίος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε, “Tell Persephone that Bacchus himself released you” (26a, b Graf = L7a, b Bernabé).¹⁶⁷ Although the connection of release between body and soul is not as explicit on the Tablet as it is with Plato, the ritual funerary context of the Tablets implies that the release referred to is specifically death and the soul’s release from the body.¹⁶⁸ The connection between Plato’s λύσις and the Tablet’s ἔλυσε suggests that Plato inherited the parlance of the Mysteries and developed his own system for instructing the Orphic rites. I argue the Platonic doctrine of the soul’s release from the body is the same Orphic doctrine of the soul represented on the Gold Tablets, but reworked and represented within a philosophical context. Plato transposed the ritual language of the Orphic mysteries and developed a scientific methodology for expounding the Orphic doctrine by means of the Socratic dialectic method. Instead of Bacchus releasing the soul from the body, Plato elevates philosophy as the correct way to release the soul from the body. Plato thereby effectively redefines the mystical terminology and simultaneously promotes his philosophical agenda.

¹⁶⁷ Compare ὁ Διόνυσος **λύσεώς** “Dionysus the liberator” (OF 350 Bernabé = OF 232 Kern) and the Orphic hymn addressed to Dionysus the Liberator: **λύσει** δαίμον “liberating *daimōn*” (*Orphic Hymn* 50.2 Athanassakis). Graf (1993: 243) points out: “The term *lusis* cannot just mean death as the freeing of the soul from the body: why should that be the work of Dionysus, and why should that be relevant to Persephone? It has to be more, namely, release from punishment after death that would otherwise be in store for humankind.”

¹⁶⁸ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008: 96) demonstrate that the situation of tablet L8 (3 Graf) is “the moment when the soul leaves the light of the sun, that is, when it abandons its body in its passage to Hades.”

I.12 The Body/Soul Formula: The Soul's Imprisonment and Its Possibility of Salvation Expressed in the Zagreus Myth

As I have pointed out, Socrates describes death as a release of the soul from the body at *Phaedo* 64c. This philosophical speculation concerning death is introduced at 62b (see section I.5 above) when Socrates explains the reason for the unlawfulness of suicide. As I have argued, Plato sets up this belief as a *Hieros Logos* with the phrase ὁ ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος λόγος. The noun λόγος “story” is emphasized by the participle form λεγόμενος, which is qualified as ἀπορρήτοις “in secret.” Here the secret doctrine is literally “speaking” (λεγόμενος), which expresses the performative function of the *Hieros Logos* argued by Graf and Johnston.¹⁶⁹ In this passage, I argue that Plato introduces the secret Orphic doctrine concerning the soul's imprisonment in the body (φρουρά).¹⁷⁰ The idea that the soul needs to be released from the body is dependent on the body's inherent evil or corruption (see *Phaedo* 66b) and the soul's potential corruptibility through its attachment to the body. This is why the body is compared to a φρουρά “prison” in the *Phaedo* or as the σῆμα “tomb/sign” in the *Cratylus*. According to Platonic and Orphic beliefs, the body corrupts and is therefore the prison for the soul.

Plato's pupil Xenocrates remarked that the φρουρά is Titanic, and that its interpretation culminates in the myth of Dionysus (Xenocrates fr. 20 Heinze).¹⁷¹ If we

¹⁶⁹ See Graf and Johnston 2007: 183. Furthermore, Albinus (2000: 111) points out the performative function of Orphic texts: “Orphic discourse invited its participants to *act* out the past according to a certain frame of myth, whereas the Homeric discourse invited its participants to *listen* to the past according to a certain frame of ritual.”

¹⁷⁰ Even Edmonds (2013:275) remarks that the scholiast identifies the word φρουρά in this section of the *Phaedo* as an Orphic term.

¹⁷¹ οὔτε τὰγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἡ φρουρά, ὡς τινες, οὔτε ἡ ἡδονή, ὡς Νουμήνιος, οὔτε ὁ δημιουργός, ὡς Πατέριος, ἀλλ', ὡς Ξενοκράτης, Τιτανική ἐστὶν καὶ εἰς Διόνυσον ἀποκορυφούται, “The φρουρά

understand this elusive statement as a reference to an Orphic myth, then the φρουρά corresponds to the portion that must be expiated—the body, which would explain why Xenocrates says that the φρουρά is Titanic because according to the Zagreus myth the Titans represented the body.

The aitiological Orphic myth of Chthonian Dionysus-Zagreus explains the necessity and justification for the soul’s corruption by the body and its possibility for salvation. The obscure myth whereby humans were thought to be composed of a portion inherited from Dionysus and a portion from the Titans was described in detail by Damascius and Olympiodorus in their commentaries on Plato’s *Phaedo*. Yet, like everything else Orphic, scholars are still divided as to whether the Zagreus myth was an authentic ancient doctrine¹⁷² or rather a Neo-Platonic fabrication in response to the rise of Christianity.¹⁷³ But I point out that Zagreus was already associated with Dionysus by Euripides in a fragment of his *Cretans* quoted by Porphyry of Tyre (*De Abstinencia* 4.19). Pausanias informs us that Onomacritus “organized the Mysteries and made the Titans the authors of Dionysus’ suffering” (συνέθηκεν ὄργια καὶ εἶναι τοὺς Τιτᾶνας τῷ Διονύσῳ τῶν παθημάτων ἐποίησεν αὐτουργούς, 8.37.6).

According to the myth as preserved by Damascius and Olympiodorus,¹⁷⁴ the infant Dionysus roused the wrath of Hera. She incited the Titans to distract the infant

[prison] is not a good thing, as some claim: it is not pleasure, as Noumenios says, nor is it the *demiurge* as Paterios says, but rather, as Xenocrates claims, it is Titanic and culminates in Dionysus.”

¹⁷² Linforth 1941: 350, Burkert 1985: 298, Dodds 2004: 155-156, West 1983: 166.

¹⁷³ Edmonds 1999 and 2013. Edmonds argues that because none of the four “strands” (Edmonds’ term) of the Zagreus myth appear together, the myth must be a later fabrication. Furthermore, he argues that doctrinal Orphism is convenient and easy to accept for scholars from a Christian background (Edmonds 2013: 395).

¹⁷⁴ Edmonds (2013: 379) also contends that Olympiodorus’ story does not include inherited guilt (one of his strands of the Zagreus myth). But Parker (2014: no pagination) counters, “in speaking of a fragment of Dionysus within mankind, Olympiodorus was drawing out an implication of an existing story, not constructing a new narrative sequence in the way postulated by Edmonds for the anthropogony.”

with toys and a mirror, after which the Titans killed Dionysus, dismembered him, and fed upon his flesh. The Titans were subsequently blasted by Zeus, and from their ashes sprang the human race, which contained a portion of Dionysus and a portion of the Titans. This myth formed what some scholars identify as an “original sin” story. The Titanic portion constitutes the human body and its corruption, whereas the portion that was originally Dionysus constitutes the human soul and offers the possibility of its salvation. While we need not refer to the Titanic portion as “sin,” it can rather be designated in economic terms as a “debt.” The goal of Orphism was to purify the Titanic portion through a series of incarnations by refraining from the *παλαιὰν Τιτανικήν φύσιν* “ancient Titanic nature” (Plato *Laws* 701c) or carnal appetites, and by paying off the soul’s debt, with the ultimate goal of being saved from the cycle of incarnations.

For my thesis, I argue that Plato’s idea of the soul’s imprisonment at *Phaedo* 62b is a direct albeit veiled reference to the myth of Dionysus-Zagreus. In the Zagreus myth, the Titans represent the prison for the immortal soul or Dionysus and as Bluck points out, Plato’s pupil Xenocrates “associated the body-prison idea with the Titans and with Dionysus.”¹⁷⁵ Plato also refers to the *φρουρά* in the *Gorgias* (525a), as the place where the soul endures *πάθη* (“sufferings”) that correspond to Plato’s function of the body in the *Phaedo*. The word for the soul’s *πάθη* (“sufferings”) is related to the word *πένθος* (“grief”). The word *πένθος* occurs in a fragment of Pindar quoted in the *Meno* 81b7 (= Pindar fr. 133), and is usually considered to express Orphic belief. This fragment says Persephone will immortalize those who pay the price for the ancient *πένθος*. Tannery (1899) and Rose (1943) both argued that the *πένθος* of Persephone at *Meno* 81b7 is a

¹⁷⁵ Bluck 1961: 279.

reference to the Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus-Zagreus by the Titans.¹⁷⁶ I argue that the “grief of Persephone” in Plato is a reference to the Titanic portion of mankind¹⁷⁷ and suggest that the idea of the body as a prison where sufferings are endured is related to the “grief” of Persephone. If Pindar’s fragment of Persephone is evidence for the Zagreus myth, then Plato’s use of φρουρά is also evidence. Burkert (1985) argued that Plato’s repetitive use of the unusual word φρουρά indicates that this word was a *symbolon* used to indicate a secret interpretation for initiates in Orphic cult.¹⁷⁸

In the following chapter, I will argue that the φρουρά indicates the body or Titanic portion, and Plato’s use of τινι in the *Phaedo* (ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ, 62b) refers specifically to the Titans through the indefinite pronoun’s suggestion of a certain portion, i.e., the body. This argument follows Yates’ detailed investigation into the Titanic origins of men: “the Titans as the principle of separation are responsible for the world of plurality.”¹⁷⁹ The Titans as the Hesiodic strivers against the Olympians function as the principle of the separation of the soul from the gods and its banishment into a physical body. I argue that this Dionysus-Titan myth circulated as part of an original secret Orphic initiate myth or *Hieros Logos*, as Burkert concludes: “the dismemberment of Dionysos was an unspeakable doctrine of the mysteries,”¹⁸⁰ and “Herodotus [2.171] considered it a secret although he has several allusions to it.”¹⁸¹ The following chapter will focus on the myth of Zagreus and the use of key Orphic terminology related to the repayment of the soul’s “debt.” I will assimilate two opposing methods for investigating the Orphic

¹⁷⁶ Tannery 1899: 126; Rose 1943: 247.

¹⁷⁷ This fragment also seems to depict the rite concerning the descent of souls dramatized in the Eleusinian mysteries.

¹⁷⁸ Burkert 1985: 302. On φρουρά as an “unusual word” and therefore marked, see Rowe 1993: 128.

¹⁷⁹ Yates 2004: 190.

¹⁸⁰ Burkert 1985: 298.

¹⁸¹ Burkert 1987: 73.

discourse. On the one hand, following the work of Bernabé I will speak of Orphism as unified movement. On the other hand, following the work of Edmonds I will separate the Christian idea of original sin, and read the Orphic fragments within their literary and historical context. My approach will attempt to present a new understanding of doctrinal Orphism free from the influences of Christian and Neo-Platonic dogma.

Chapter Two: ποινή and the Zagreus Myth

Introduction

In Chapter One I argued that we could identify Plato’s formulaic transposition of Orphic discourse by his use of a constellation of terminology expressed within the context of death and the afterlife, a constellation that I have termed the Orphic eschatological syntagm. I discussed Plato’s use of the following terminology: forms of the words λέγω/λόγος as way to invoke a *Hieros Logos*; the framing of the immortality of the soul as a benefit; the use of formulae such as the duality between σῶμα/ψυχή (body/soul) and βίος/θάνατος (life/death); and derivations of the verbs ἀλλάσσω and λύω as ways to describe the soul’s “release” from the body.

I also pointed out several occurrences of the use of the verbs τίνω and τίω within the Orphic eschatological context such as the phrase τίνειν τιμωρίας (“to pay the penalty”) in the description of the *Hieros Logos* quoted in the Platonic *Seventh Letter*; the imperative form τιμωρήσασθε (“to punish”) in the *Apology* (41e); the compound form ἐκτίνω in the *Cratylus* (400c); and the use of the noun τιμωρίαν in the *Phaedo* within the explicit context of Mystery cults (62c). The word τιμωρία as a derivative of τιμή and τίω belongs to a semantic field of terms meaning “a penalty or debt” —including the verb τίνω (“to pay”) and its cognate ποινή (“blood-price”). The French linguist Emile Benveniste argued against a direct etymological connection between ποινή and τιμή

through their root verbs τίνω and τίω;¹⁸² however, he did thoroughly explain the connections between the forms:

In order to give the problem its full scope we shall first consider the etymological group with which *timé* is connected. It constitutes a vast family of words, so extensive and diversified that the connexions between the forms sometimes create difficulty. We list the chief members: besides *tíō*, *timáō*, *átimos* ‘deprived of *timé*’, we must cite the group of *tínō* (τίνω) ‘pay’, *tínūmai* (τίνυμαι), ‘cause to pay, cause to expiate’, *tísis* (τίσις) ‘punishment, vengeance’, *átitos* (ἄτιτος) ‘not paid, unpunished’, etc. As we see, the terms refer to the payment of a debt, compensation for some misdeed. Further relatives are *poiné*, (ποινή), debt which must be paid to atone for a crime . . . they can all be derived from a root **k^wei-*.¹⁸³

In addition to the overlapping semantics of the terms, these words and their verbal derivatives frequently occur in the same afterlife context. The terms ποινή, τιμή, and τιμωρία are the focus of Chapter Two. Whether or not the etymological connections between ποινή and τιμή can be proved, I argue Plato uses these terms formulaically in his transposition of the Orphic discourse. I maintain that Plato’s frequent use of τιμωρία and its relative ποινή within eschatological contexts points to the words’ usage as Orphic formulae.

II.1 *Meno* 80c and ποινή

The Greek word ποινή is used only once by Plato in his corpus when he quotes a fragment of Pindar in the *Meno* (80c).¹⁸⁴ Historically, scholars have assigned Pindar’s fragment (133 Race) to the Orphic discourse and interpreted it as a reference to the

¹⁸² Benveniste 1973: 344. A full discussion of the etymological connections is explored in section II.4 below.

¹⁸³ Benveniste 1973: 340.

¹⁸⁴ Pindar Fr. 133 Race (= *OF* 443 Bernabé).

foundational Orphic myth of Zagreus discussed by Olympiodorus.¹⁸⁵ But recently Radcliffe Edmonds III contended that scholars have taken the Orphic fragments out of their original context in order to fabricate a doctrinal Orphism based on the modern conception of the Zagreus myth.¹⁸⁶ Edmonds focuses his approach on the latest edition of the Orphic fragments edited by Alberto Bernabé (2004, 2005):

Building upon these recent studies, the evidence Bernabé has compiled in his collection of Orphica must be examined from a new perspective, with attention to the context of each fragment, both the context of the individual author's text in which the fragment is preserved and the broader historical context in which the author is writing.¹⁸⁷

I intend to examine Pindar fragment 133 Race (*OF* 443 Bernabé) within the guidelines set out by Edmonds in order to deduce the fragment's authenticity as an Orphic belief. My investigation takes a maximalist stance following Bernabé by arguing that the Zagreus myth does refer to a specific Orphic doctrine. However, I follow Edmonds in dispelling the Christian influenced notion of "original sin," which removes the evidence from its classical (i.e., Orphic) context. Rather than speaking of "original sin" I use the economic terms "debt" and "recompense," which I argue more accurately conveys the meaning of the Greek term ποινή as *Wergeld* or "recompense paid for murder of kin."¹⁸⁸ Therefore, this chapter attempts to assimilate both the arguments of Bernabé and Edmonds into a cohesive explanation for fragment 133 of Pindar quoted in Plato's *Meno*.

¹⁸⁵ See, for instance, Rose 1967: 88, Bremmer 2002: 20-23, Graf and Johnston 2007: 157, and especially Santamaría 2003: 397-405 and Santamaría 2008: 1161-1184.

¹⁸⁶ Edmonds 2013. This monumental work pursues the original argument in Edmonds 1999.

¹⁸⁷ Edmonds 2013: 68. See also Edmond III's comments at 2013: 77, "This context cannot be taken into account if the evidence is treated as a set of disjointed Orphic fragments, divorced from their context and grouped by theme."

¹⁸⁸ See Schmidt 2004: 1325.

Let's begin with the broader historical context of Plato's *Meno*. Although precise dating of the *Meno* is contentious, many scholars assign the dialogue's composition to about 386/5 BCE following the *Gorgias* at about 387 BCE.¹⁸⁹ The commentator Bluck followed Dodd's dating of the *Gorgias* after Plato's first visit to Sicily in about 380 BCE.¹⁹⁰ The area of Sicily and Southern Italy was the hub of Pythagorean and Orphic thought and is where the oldest Orphic Gold Tablets were discovered.¹⁹¹ It is reasonable to conjecture that Plato became acquainted with the doctrines of recollection and reincarnation from his travels in Sicily and afterward incorporated the doctrines into his philosophical dialogues.

In the *Meno* Socrates tackles Meno's paradox that posits we cannot learn what we do not already know by introducing the Platonic theory of ἀνάμνησις "recollection" and the belief in reincarnation.¹⁹² Plato cites Pindar in order to justify reincarnation as an ancient belief and thereby gives it mythological authority.¹⁹³ If the fragment refers to an Orphic belief, then Plato is providing specific Orphic authority for the belief in reincarnation.

Plato's Socrates begins by explaining that he has heard "divine things" from wise men and women, which sets up the religious authority of his following statements. Meno then asks Socrates what the *logos* is which he has heard from these *wise* men and women; this question, I argue, sets up the passage within the frame of a *Hieros Logos* as discussed in Chapter One:

¹⁸⁹ For discussion on the dating of Plato's *Meno* see: Bluck 1961: 108-120.

¹⁹⁰ Dodds 1959: 24-27.

¹⁹¹ See Graf and Johnston 2007: 4-16 on the location of Gold Tablets 1-8.

¹⁹² The theory of *anamnesis* was introduced in the *Phaedo* (72e) as one of the proofs for the soul's immortality.

¹⁹³ See, for instance, Latona 2004, on Plato's view of the authority of traditional mythology.

{ΣΩ.} Ἐγώ γε· ἀκήκοα γὰρ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν σοφῶν περὶ **τὰ θεῖα πράγματα** –
 {ΜΕΝ.} Τίνα **λόγον λεγόντων**;
 {ΣΩ.} Ἀληθῆ, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖν, καὶ καλόν.
 {ΜΕΝ.} Τίνα τοῦτον, καὶ τίνες **οἱ λέγοντες**;
 {ΣΩ.} **Οἱ μὲν λέγοντές** εἰσι τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ τῶν ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται **λόγον** οἷσις τ' εἶναι διδόναι· **λέγει** δὲ καὶ **Πίνδαρος** καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ὅσοι θεοὶ εἰσιν. ἃ δὲ **λέγουσιν**, ταυτί ἐστιν· ἀλλὰ σκόπει εἴ σοι δοκοῦσιν ἀληθῆ **λέγειν**. φασὶ γὰρ **τὴν ψυχὴν** τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι **ἀθάνατον**, καὶ τοτὲ **μὲν τελευτᾶν**—ὃ δὴ ἀποθνήσκειν καλοῦσι—τοτὲ **δὲ πάλιν γίγνεσθαι**, ἀπόλλυσθαι δ' οὐδέποτε· δεῖν δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ὡς ὀσιώτατα διαβιώναι τὸν βίον.

S: For I for my part have heard from both wise men and women concerning divine matters.

M: What is the **story** of those who were **speaking** it?

S: A **true story**, as it seems to me, and a fine one.

M: What is this and who are those who **speak** it?

S: Those **speaking** are among the priests and priestesses—of such as number and such a sort as are concerned with being able to give an account of their practices. But **Pindar** also **says** it and many other poets, as many who are god-like. And the things they **say** is this—consider if they seem to you to speak the truth. For they say that the **soul** of a human is **immortal** and **at one time it comes to an end**, which they call dying, and **at another time it is born again**, but it is never destroyed. Certainly on account of these things it is necessary to live life as piously as possible.

(Plato *Meno* 81b)

In this passage, I argue Plato uses the word λογός and its various derivatives in order to transpose the idea of a *Heiros Logos*.¹⁹⁴ This ‘sacred story’ is that the soul is immortal (**τὴν ψυχὴν** τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι **ἀθάνατον**). The soul’s immortality is one of the elements of a *Hieros Logos* defined by the *Seventh Letter*. Plato then, I argue, employs a variation of the Orphic soteriological formula: τοτὲ μὲν **τελευτᾶν**, τοτὲ δὲ **πάλιν γίγνεσθαι**. The second life or palingenesis is implied by the word **πάλιν** “back again.” I

¹⁹⁴ Rose (1967: 80) points to the use of the word λογός as way to refer to a specific Orphic doctrine: “What Plato does clearly imply is the agreement of the passage with some kind of organized and developed theology, the teaching of an enlightened clergy, whether belonging or not to any State cult, who are ready and willing to give a rational explanation, λόγον, of their practices. Our chief business will be to decide whether or not these theologians are Orphics.”

argue Plato’s use of the soteriological formula in this context underscores his argument for the soul’s immortality as a belief derived from the Orphic discourse. Furthermore, the idea of living as pure as possible (ὡς ὀσιώτατα διαβιώναι τὸν βίον) is reminiscent of the Orphic ascetic lifestyle that dictated strict purity, and reminiscent of the Orphic tablets from Thurii which begin with the formulaic claim to exceptional purity: “I come pure from the pure.”¹⁹⁵ Before citing the fragment of Pindar Plato gives several indications that he is transposing Orphic ideas, namely by setting up the passage in terms of a *Hieros Logos*, making a central argument for the soul’s immortality, including the soteriological formula life/death, and focusing on purity.

Within this context Plato then provides Pindar as a secondary source for the belief in the soul’s immortality:

οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα **ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος**
δέξεται, εἰς τὸν ὑπερθεὺν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳ ἔτει
ἀνδριδοὶ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὖξοντ’· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥρωες ἀγνοὶ
πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

Persephone will **receive** the **blood-payment** of the **ancient guilt**, the souls of those, she delivers back again into the upper sun in the ninth year, from them will arise as pure kings, men both swift in strength and the greatest in wisdom; and for all time they are called pure heroes by humans.

(Pindar fr. 133 Race *apud* Plato *Meno* 81c)

Plato calls upon this fragment of Pindar within the context of a *Hieros Logos* and specifically deploys it in order to support the belief in the soul’s immortality. Therefore, I

¹⁹⁵ Compare the description of the “Orphic life” in Plato *Laws* 782cd: ἀλλὰ Ὀρφικοὶ τινες λεγόμενοι βίοι ἐγίγνοντο ἡμῶν τοῖς τότε, ἀψύχων μὲν ἐχόμενοι πάντων, ἐμψύχων δὲ τοῦναντίον πάντων ἀπεχόμενοι. “But for the men at that time, some of us were to said to live **the Orphic Life**, on the one hand keeping all soul-less food, and on the other hand keeping away from all food with souls.” I contend that Plato’s “Orphic life” corresponds to the conception found in the Gold Tablets where we read Ἐρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶ<ν> καθαρὰ, “I come pure from the pure” (5.1 Graf). See also Thurian Tablets 5, 6, 7 (Graf and Johnston 2007: 12-15).

argue, Plato indicates that the fragment should be read within the context of Orphic eschatology. After quoting the fragment Plato's Socrates concludes:

Ἄτε οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός τε οὖσα καὶ πολλάκις γεγονυῖα, καὶ ἐωρακυῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πάντα χρήματα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι οὐ μεμάθηκεν· ὥστε οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ ἄλλων οἷόν τ' εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀναμνησθῆναι, ἅ γε καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο.

Therefore since **the soul** is both **immortal** and is born often, and has seen both the things here and the things in Hades and all things in fact, it is not possible that (the soul) has not learned; the result is that it is not surprising that the (the soul) is able to have **remembered** about virtue and about other things, the very things which (the soul) even formerly knew.

(Plato *Meno* 81c)

In his conclusion, Plato assimilates the doctrine expressed in Pindar's fragment 133. Plato explains the meaning of the myth represented in Pindar's fragment in his own terms: the soul is immortal, and, after "death," it is reincarnated, following the formulaic pattern life/death/life as indicated by the phrase *πολλάκις γεγονυῖα* (*Meno* 81b). Plato effectively frames Pindar's "pure heroes" (ἥρωες ἀγνοῖ) as his own philosophers who have the power of *anamnesis* (ἀναμνησθῆναι). The focus on memory as the means of salvation for the soul also appears in the Orphic Gold Tablets, where Memory distinguishes an initiate and grants his immortality.¹⁹⁶

For over a century fragment 133 of Pindar has been the epicenter of the debate over the authenticity of doctrinal Orphism as scholars from Herbert J. Rose (1943) to Alberto Bernabé and Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008) have defined it. In this fragment we learn that Persephone is the goddess who accepts the *ποινή* "the blood-payment" for the *παλαιού πένθεος* "ancient guilt," and then sends these pure heroes to a blessed afterlife. The debate revolves around the meaning of *ποινή* in conjunction with

¹⁹⁶ See, for instance, Hipponion Tablet 1 (Graf and Johnston 2007: 3-4) and my translation and discussion in section II.3 below.

πένθος. Following Bernabé¹⁹⁷ and Rose,¹⁹⁸ Fritz Graf and Sarah Johnston¹⁹⁹ have argued that the word ποινή “almost always refers to requital for a blood-crime.” The only known blood-crime related to Persephone is the murder of her son Dionysus, as narrated by Olympiodorus as part of the Orphic discourse.

Rose explains Pindar’s fragment as proof for the authenticity of the Zagreus myth. Scholars, including the minimalist Ivan Linforth,²⁰⁰ have tended to accept this conclusion. Edmonds has contended with the notion of doctrinal Orphism and argued that the Zagreus myth is a modern fabrication influenced by Christianity.²⁰¹ His argument focuses on the use of the word ποινή in Pindar’s fragment 133 quoted by Plato. Edmonds contends that Pindar never uses ποινή with the sense of “blood-price,” and so he proposes a radical redefinition of the Greek word ποινή as “reward” rather than its original meaning of “blood-price”:

I argue that, in both these texts, the ποινή Persephone accepts is not a blood-price, but rather ritual honors in recompense for her traumatic abduction to the Underworld by Hades.²⁰²

Edmonds argues that Pindar’s use of ποινή is a reference to cult honors paid to Persephone because of the sorrow (πένθος) of her traumatic rape by Hades.²⁰³ Edmonds’

¹⁹⁷ Bernabé 2002: 417.

¹⁹⁸ Rose 1967: 81 argues, “ποινάν is simple enough, for it always means a recompense of some sort in Pindar, though generally keeping close to its proper sense of *wergelt*.”

¹⁹⁹ Graf and Johnston 2007: 196.

²⁰⁰ Linforth 1941: 350: “One must acknowledge that there is a high degree of probability in Rose’s interpretation. The fragment may be accepted as at least plausible evidence that the story of the dismemberment was known to Pindar. The story as he knew it must have contained these features: Dionysus, the son of Persephone, was murdered by the Titans; men were somehow born from the Titans, inherited their guilt (not otherwise can men be held responsible for the sorrow of Persephone), and suffered punishment for it.” Linforth hesitantly restates the point: “If Rose is right, the Pindaric fragment which is preserved in the *Meno* gives evidence of the dismemberment, the birth of men from the Titans, their inheritance of guilt, and their punishment” (1941: 354).

²⁰¹ See Edmonds 1999, 2013: 296-391.

²⁰² Edmonds 2013: 305.

²⁰³ Edmonds 2013: 305.

interpretation of the word *ποινή* aims to dismantle the long-standing argument of Rose (1936, rpt. 1967), and severs the word's link to Orphic discourse. It is worth noting that Edmonds' interpretation of *πένθος* as a reference to the rape of Persephone was in fact first proposed by Rose, who dismissed it in favor of interpreting *πένθος* in conjunction with *ποινή*. Rose's interpretation points to the Orphic Dionysus-Zagreus myth because the word *πένθος* has the specific sense of grief over the death of a family member.²⁰⁴ Rose concludes this can only be Persephone's grief over Dionysus' dismemberment for which humans pay a *ποινή* "recompense."

Edmonds also claims that Pindar never uses the word *ποινή* in the sense of traditional *Wergeld*, or "blood price."²⁰⁵ However, Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1990) pointed out that Pindar's usage of *ποινή* in fragment 133 is similar to the eschatological use of *ποινή* in *Olympian 2*. Lloyd-Jones proposed Pindar was relating similar beliefs to the initiatory rites depicted on the Gold Tablets, and he demonstrated that *ποινάς ἔτεισαν* in *Olympian 2* (Line 58) is identical to the atonement of the *ποινή* accepted by Persephone in fragment 133.²⁰⁶ His argument was strengthened by Graf and Johnston (2007) who argue that the tripartite eschatological scheme of *Olympian 2* seems to coincide with the tripartite schematic of reincarnation depicted in fragment 133 and the Orphic Gold Tablets. I discuss these connections further in section II.3 on Pindar's use of *ποινή* below.

²⁰⁴ Rose 1967: 85-86: "But even if we allow that this would naturally be called a *πένθος*, no man had anything whatsoever to do with it from first to last; . . . No human soul could be expected to make requital to the goddess for what she underwent then. Remains therefore only one possibility, the death of her son, Dionysus or Zagreus, at the hands of the Titans. That this was a *πένθος* in the fullest possible sense, and also *παλαιόν*, are facts so evident as to need no proof."

²⁰⁵ Edmonds 2013: 307.

²⁰⁶ Lloyd-Jones 1990: 94.

In his review of Edmonds' book, Robert Parker (2014) responded to the contention that ποινή does not have the sense of *Wergeld* in Pindar's fragment 133:

In the particular fragment, however, the verb "accept" (δέχεσθαι) strongly suggests a relation between an offender and an offended party, who may or may not accept the proffered ποινά.²⁰⁷

I will proceed from Parker's argument and look at the earliest usage of ποινή in Homer in order to develop an accurate definition for ποινή. I will then return to the fragment of Pindar and investigate the use of ποινή in Pindar's poems. I maintain we should read fragment 133 in the context of an Orphic afterlife because of how Plato frames fragment 133, and I argue the reference to Persephone and the use of the word ποινή specifically identifies the fragment as Orphic.

II.2 ποινή in Homer

The *locus classicus* for ποινή as traditional *Wergeld* ("blood price") occurs in Ajax's powerful speech against Achilles' persistent refusal to accept Agamemnon's compensation for the seizure of his γέρας "gift of honor"—the κόρη "maiden" Briseis.²⁰⁸ Ajax argues that a man accepts a blood-price (ποινήν . . . ἐδέξατο, 9.633) for the murder of his brother or even a son, but Achilles refuses to accept compensation for the seizure of his *geras*. Ajax highlights Achilles' relentless and merciless position with the poignant contrast between a father's acceptance of money for a dead relative and Achilles' refusal of compensation for the seizure of a his girl:

²⁰⁷ Parker 2014: no pagination.

²⁰⁸ Treston 1923: 31.

. αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
 ἄγχιον ἐν στήθεσσι θέτο μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν
 σχέτλιος, οὐδὲ μετατρέπεται φιλότιτος ἑταίρων 630
 τῆς ἢ μιν παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτίομεν ἕξοχον ἄλλων
 νηλῆς· καὶ μὲν τίς τε κασιγνήτιο φονῆος
ποινήν ἢ οὐ παιδὸς ἐδέξατο τεθνηῶτος·
 καὶ ῥ' ὃ μὲν ἐν δήμῳ μένει αὐτοῦ πόλλ' ἀποτίσας,
 τοῦ δέ τ' ἐρητύεται κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ 635
ποινήν δεξαμένῳ· σοὶ δ' ἄληκτόν τε κακόν τε
 θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι θεοὶ θέσαν εἵνεκα κούρης
 οἴης· νῦν δέ τοι ἑπτὰ παρίσχομεν ἕξοχ' ἀρίστας.

Achilles however, has placed a fierce, great-hearted *thumos* in his chest, merciless Achilles! Neither does he show regard for the friendship of his companions, on account of which we have honored him by the ships above the others, ruthless Achilles! Someone even **accepts the blood-price** for the murder of his brother or of his own son after he has died! And then the man [= the murderer] remains among the people after he has paid back much for the crime, and the heart and strong *thumos* of the other man [= the surviving family member of the deceased] is checked **after receiving the blood-price**. But the gods placed a *thumos in your chest*, an implacable and evil *thumos* for the sake of a single girl, whereas now we offer you seven girls, and the best ones of all!

(Homer *Iliad* 9.628-638)²⁰⁹

In these lines we have the earliest literary reference to a traditional *Wergeld* system.²¹⁰

The importance of these lines for my study is in the vocabulary used to describe the blood-payment relationship between the two parties—the murderer and the next of kin who will receive payment. It is important to note the idea of fault or personal responsibility inherent in the term *ποινή*. From these lines we can deduce that the

²⁰⁹ This technical vocabulary is echoed in Thetis' request for Achilles to accept compensation for the death of Patroclus and return the body of Hektor to king Priam: "Ἐκτορ' ἔχεις παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν οὐδ' ἀπέλυσας. ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ λύσον, νεκροῖο δὲ δέξαι ἄποινα. "You hold Hector beside the curved ship, nor have you set him free. But come now, release him, and **accept ransom** for his corpse" (*Iliad*, 24.136-137). See Edwards 2001: 216 for discussion.

²¹⁰ In Homer's description of the shield of Achilles, Hephaestus has depicted a scene of justice in the world of men: λαοὶ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν ἀθρόοι· ἔνθα δὲ νείκος | ὠρώρει, δύο δ' ἄνδρες ἐνεΐκεον εἵνεκα **ποινήης** | ἄνδρος ἀποφθιμένου. "And the people were assembled in the market place. And there a quarrel had arisen, and two men were quarreling on account of a **blood-price** for a man who perished (*Iliad* 18. 497-499). Here the traditional sense of *Wergeld* is evident, although the technical term *δέχομαι* is not present, but Treston (1923), following Leaf's analysis, agrees that this scene depicts *Wergeld*: "this trial scene presents us with a genuine wergeld dispute, not within the Achaean caste, but amongst the Pelasgian tribal folk. We have seen that scholars are unanimous in holding that the Shield is of an essentially Mycenaean and therefore Pelasgian pattern" (Treston 1923:38).

technical term for receiving a blood-payment in the sense of *Wergeld* is articulated by the verb δέχομαι plus ποινή (cf. ποινήν. . . ἐδέξατο, *Il.* 9.633; ποινήν δεξαμένω, *Il.* 9.636). In Pindar’s fragment 133 the word ποινή is expressed formulaically with the same technical vocabulary as in Book 9 of *Iliad* (Φερσεφόνα **ποινὰν** . . . **δέξεται**, 133.1-2). This example confirms Parker’s observation, and, accordingly, I argue that in Pindar’s fragment 133 we have clear evidence for a traditional definition of *Wergeld* which points to the death of Persephone’s son Dionysus-Zagreus.

Edmonds, however, argues that ποινή does not have its original sense of *Wergeld* in Pindar’s fragment 133, but rather the sense of “ritual-honors.” Therefore Edmonds equates the meaning of ποινή with τιμή:

The mention of Persephone’s ancient grief and the compensation provided by human activity would be easily recognizable as a reference to her abduction and the τιμαί due to her as compensation.²¹¹

When Edmonds reads Pindar’s Φερσεφόνα **ποινὰν** . . . **δέξεται** as Persephone receiving *timai* “ritual-honors” in compensation for being abducted by Hades, he essentially claims that the meanings of ποινή with τιμή are indistinguishable. We find evidence in Homer to vitiate this claim of Edmonds, however. In Book 3 of the *Iliad* Homer describes an oath-sacrifice. Paris and Menelaus have agreed to single combat over the right to Helen and her treasure. The battle is to be divinely sanctified by an oath-sacrifice. After heralds have mixed wine with water and poured it over the hands of Odysseus and Agamemnon, the son of Atreus prays to Zeus, Helios, and unnamed Chthonic deities, who take vengeance (τίνυσθον) on those who swear false oaths.²¹²

²¹¹ Edmonds 2013: 311.

²¹² Persephone and Hades or the Erinyes, cf. Kirk 1985: 305. See also my discussion of the Erinyes in section II.5 below on Orphic Papyri.

Ζεὺ πάτερ Ἴδηθεν μεδέων κύδιστε μέγιστε,
 Ἥλιός θ', ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις,
 καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ γαῖα, καὶ οἱ ὑπένερθε καμόντας
 ἀνθρώπους **τίνυσθον** ὅτις κ' ἐπίορκον ὁμόσση, 280
 ὑμεῖς μάρτυροί ἐστε, φυλάσσετε δ' ὄρκια πιστά·
 εἰ μὲν κεν Μενέλαον Ἀλέξανδρος καταπέφνη
 αὐτὸς ἔπειθ' Ἑλένην ἐχέτω καὶ κτήματα πάντα,
 ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν νήεσσι νεώμεθα ποντοπόροισιν·
 εἰ δέ κ' Ἀλέξανδρον κτείνει ξανθὸς Μενέλαος,
 Τρωᾶς ἔπειθ' Ἑλένην καὶ κτήματα πάντ' ἀποδοῦναι, 285
τιμὴν δ' Ἀργείοις **ἀποτινέμεν** ἢν τιν' ἔοικεν,
 ἢ τε καὶ ἐσσομένοισι μετ' ἀνθρώποισι πέληται.
 εἰ δ' ἂν ἐμοὶ **τιμὴν** Πριάμος Πριάμοιό τε παῖδες
τίνειν οὐκ ἐθέλωσιν Ἀλεξάνδροιο πεσόντος,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ ἔπειτα μαχήσομαι εἵνεκα **ποινής** 290
 αὐτῆ μένων, ἥός κε τέλος πολέμοιο κίχαιω.
 Ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στομάχους ἀρνῶν τάμε νηλεῖ χαλκῶ·
 καὶ τοὺς μὲν κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὸς ἀσπαίροντας
 θυμοῦ δευομένους· ἀπὸ γὰρ μένος εἴλετο χαλκός.

“Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, most glorious and greatest, and Helios, who sees and hears all things, and the rivers and the earth, and those under the earth who **punish** men who have wasted way, whosoever swears a false oath: you all, be my witnesses and guard trustworthy oaths: On the one hand, if Alexander kills Menelaus, then let he himself have Helen and her belongings, and we will go back home in our sea-faring ships. On the other hand, if blonde Menelaus kills Alexander, then let the Trojans give back Helen and all her belongings, and **pay back** (ἀποτινέμεν) **a recompense** (τιμὴν), whichever one is seemly, and which will also be among men who are yet to come. But if Priam and his sons are not willing **to pay** (τίνειν) **recompense** (τιμὴν) to me when Alexander has fallen, nevertheless then indeed I shall fight for the sake of the **punishment and reparation due for the violation of the oath** (ποινής), remaining here, until I reach an end war.” He spoke, and he severed the throats of the lambs with the pitiless bronze, and he let them fall gasping on the ground, with their spirit failing. For bronze removed their strength.

(Homer *Iliad* 3.276-294)

This passage from Homer subtly highlights the issue of the precise definitions for τιμή and ποινή, and makes it possible to determine that τιμή and ποινή cannot be used interchangeably as synonyms. In the passage Agamemnon demands that, should Menelaus kills Paris/Alexander in hand to hand combat, the Trojans will not only return

Helen and her possessions, but will pay additional “recompense” (ἀποτινέμεν/τίνειν τιμήν). Should they refuse to pay “recompense,” however, then Agamemnon will seek “punishment” (ποινή)—specifically because of their failure to pay “recompense.” Hence I translate ποινή as “punishment and reparation due for the violation of the oath,” following Emile Benveniste’s elucidation of the differences between τιμή and ποινή apparent in this scene:

It has been proposed to read into this passage an etymological link between *tíno*, *apotínō* ‘pay’ and *timē* on the one hand and an equivalence between *timē* and *poínē* on the other. In fact neither relation stands up to examination. The pact envisages in the case of a victory by Menelaus that Trojans will give back Helen and all the treasures and that they will pay in addition the *timē* to Agamemnon and to the Argives. This is a tribute which goes beyond the simple restitution of the property; it implies a recognition of royal power and the accordance of the honour which accompanies such recognition. This being so in the conditions in which the pact is concluded, the *timē* takes the form of a payment which the Trojans will make over and above the property which they are to return. It is only chance and in this single example that *timē* comes to be associated with the verb ‘pay in return’. It follows that the poet did not conceive of *timē* as a morphological correlative of *apotíno*. On the contrary this text clearly brings out the gap separating *timē* and *poínē*. If the Trojans refuse the *timē*, then Agamemnon will have the right to fight to obtain a *poínē*. That is quite a different matter: *poínē* is the punishment and the reparation due for violation of an oath.²¹³

Although some scholars may attempt to read ποινή and τιμή as synonymous through a proposed etymological link between the two terms, as Benveniste points out ποινή and τιμή must be understood as distinct terms. The noun τιμή can mean “payment,” but it doesn’t imply the concepts of “fault” or “responsibility” like ποινή does: in this passage ποινή clearly refers to the retribution/punishment for a personal fault for which the Trojans will be responsible if they don’t pay τιμή “recompense.” Instead of reading τιμή and ποινή as synonyms in this passage, the ποινή refers specifically to the violation of

²¹³ Benveniste 1976: 344.

the oath and the refusal of the Trojans to pay the τιμή.²¹⁴ There may also be a connection between this use of ποινή and a more original sense of “blood price” in this passage because this ποινή is discussed in the context of a blood sacrifice for the sake of oath making (‘cutting oaths’) in which a slain animal stands in for party who breaks the oath. Furthermore, the word ποινή is etymologically linked to the word τίνυσθον through the verb τίνω, which highlights the association between ποινή and the gods who protect blood-oaths (the Erinyes).²¹⁵

Following Benveniste I argue that ποινή cannot have an interchangeable meaning with τιμή in the way Edmonds redefines the term. However, I do affirm that the words are semantically and etymologically overlapping, yet individually retain very specific meanings: ποινή has the sense of a debt within a community of those at fault/responsible for failing to abide by an oath and hence can be understood as a punishment, whereas τιμή is a divinely bestowed honor and does not infer a personal fault/responsibility.²¹⁶ As Homer established in Book 9 of the *Iliad*, the word ποινή in conjunction with the technical verb δέχομαι indicates a reading of traditional *Wergeld* (“blood price”) in Pindar’s fragment 133. Therefore, I argue the word ποινή in Pindar’s fragment 133 points to the Orphic myth of Dionysus’ dismemberment.

²¹⁴ Within this context there is a causal relationship between τιμή and ποινή, such that ποινή only occurs as a result of refusing proper τιμή. This relationship may point to an etymological connection between the words (see section II.4 below).

²¹⁵ For oath sacrifices in general, see Burkert 1985: 250-254. For Homeric sacrificial killing and oath-sacrifice, see Kitts 2005: 159-160, Faraone 1993: 74. Hesiod tells us that an oath is born with the Erinyes. (*Works and Days* 803).

²¹⁶ Treston 1923: 45: “Wergeld was essentially a ‘diffused’ penalty, involving a large number of debtors, any one of whom could, equally with the murderer, be sold as a slave at the command of the tribal authorities.” Benveniste 1973: 342-342: τιμή “is conferred by destiny: it forms part of one’s personal lot” and “is of divine origin.”

II.3: ποιινή in Pindar

Scholars have long debated Pindar's involvement with the Orphic movement. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1922)²¹⁷ and W. K. C. Guthrie (1993)²¹⁸ both argued that Pindar was catering to the Orphic beliefs of his patron Theron when he composed *Olympian 2*. Erwin Rhode (1925)²¹⁹ suggested Pindar learned Orphic doctrine directly from his repeated visits to Sicily, and, more recently, Jan N. Bremmer (2002)²²⁰ pointed out the influence of Orphic thought on Pindar's poetry. Domenico Comparetti first remarked at the striking similarities between the Orphic Gold Tablets and Pindar's *Olympian 2*.²²¹ Fritz Graf and Sarah Johnston (2007)²²² and Dirk Obbink (2014)²²³ have argued Pindar's representation of the afterlife was based on a similar eschatological scheme as the Gold Tablets. Pindar describes a tripartite division of souls in the afterlife,²²⁴ and he even designates Chronos as "the father of all."²²⁵ Martin West (1983)²²⁶ questioned whether Pindar's Orphic themed eschatology and cosmology was

²¹⁷ Wilamowitz 1922: 251.

²¹⁸ Guthrie 1993: 236: "We must not forget that the second *Olympian* ode, which is our chief Pindaric source for transmigration and the life of the blessed, was written for recital before a Sicilian audience, who might be supposed to be more interested than others in Orphico-Pythagorean beliefs."

²¹⁹ Rhode 1925: 417: "From what particular direction Pindar's theological interests may have come to him we cannot say with precision or certainty. Orphic as well as Pythagorean doctrines may have come to his notice in Sicily whither he made repeated visits after 477 BC."

²²⁰ Bremmer 2002: 21, 23, 91.

²²¹ Graf and Johnston 2007: 54.

²²² Graf and Johnston 2007: 101: "In both Pindar and the tablets, the bad, the good, and the good-plus are geographically and experientially separated in the Underworld."

²²³ Obbink 2014: 308-309: "Pindar could also be seen as offering in the epilogue of the sixth *Isthmian* an exegesis of the sacred doctrine (as he similarly treats other aspects of Orphic eschatology in *Olympian 2*."

²²⁴ Willcock 1995: 137.

²²⁵ Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατήρ, *Ol.* 2.17 (Race).

²²⁶ West 1983: 110n82: "The eschatology of this ode is indeed close to that of the Orphic poem. There is judgment of the dead (56-60), a pleasant existence for the good with those gods who have not perjured themselves (61-7), a hell for the wicked, presumably with the perjurer gods (67), repeated reincarnations with the possibility of final escape to the Isle of the Blessed where the heroes live (68 ff.). . . Is it coincidence that in the same poem (17) Pindar refers to 'Chronos, the father of all'?"

merely a coincidence. Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1990)²²⁷ responded that Pindar could invoke Time without implying Chronos as the primordial Orphic god, yet he catalogued compelling observations between the afterlife depicted in *Olympian 2* and the Gold Tablets. Most recently Marco Santamaría (2008) has argued that in Pindar’s poetry, “there are as many typically Orphic doctrines as there are images.”²²⁸

I claim that Pindar’s poetry contains ideas fundamental to Orphic belief, namely the Zagreus myth, which do not survive in a complete form before Olympiodorus’ 6th century CE commentary on Plato’s *Phaedo* (*OF* 220 Kern = 304 F, 318 F, 320 F Bernabé), but are reflected in older texts—including, I argue, Pindar’s *Odes* and *Threnoi*.²²⁹ According to Olympiodorus’ narrative, Hera, in her hatred of Dionysus, the son of Zeus and Persephone, incited the Titans to kill Dionysus, dismember him, and feed upon his flesh. In punishment Zeus blasted the Titans with lightning, and from their ashes sprung the human race, composed of both Dionysus and the Titans. The Orphic Zagreus myth can be considered fundamental because it contains specific assumptions that resonate throughout Orphic thought: that the human soul is immortal because of its divine origins; that it faces judgment in the afterlife; that there is a reward of heroization for the initiate; but also that there is a need for salvation because of an “ancient transgression” such that initiation functions as a kind of *poine* (“blood price/penalty”) for the murder of

²²⁷ Lloyd-Jones 1990: 83: “Pindar could, I think, speak of Time the father of all things without having in mind the special importance of Time in Orphic theogonies.”

²²⁸ Santamaría 2008: 1184. Santamaría (2008: 1183) argues “In various passages of Pindar (especially in *Olympian 2* and in different fragment of the *Threnoi* and *Dithyrambos*) numerous passages of Pindar are perceived, as well as features of the style and literary expression that these beliefs had received in a homogeneous series of writings.”

²²⁹ For *poine* in Orphism and fragment 133 of Pindar see Santamaría 2003: 397-405 and 2008: 1161-1184. For the antiquity of the myth of Dionysus Zagreus see Graf and Johnston 2007: 66-93. There is evidence from Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca* 44.255–57, Dio’s *Charidemus* (*OF* 320vii), and the Smyrna inscription (*OF* 582.15–16) that the Zagreus myth was known earlier. For the antiquity of the myth of the Titans see Bernabé 2002: 401-433.

Dionysus implicit in mankind because of our Titanic portions; and, finally, that initiation offers a better afterlife and distinguishes the soul based on her memory of this ancient transgression. I contend that Pindar’s poetry contains ideas inherent in the Zagreus myth, organized according its mythico-religious belief system, and, most importantly, expressed in the same terminology as we find in Orphic texts, such as the Gold Tablets. I specifically draw attention to the term ποινή, “penalty” or “blood-payment,” used in the *Threnoi* and *Olympian 2* and its corresponding use on the Gold Tablets. I suggest ποινή functioned as an Orphic *symbolon*, or password exchanged between fellow initiates that established their identity as initiates with one another through their knowledge of the myth of the cannibalism of Dionysus by the Titans alluded to by the word. Hence, Pindar’s use of the word signals his intimate knowledge of Orphic ritual. Following the work of Graf, Johnston, and Obbink, I argue that the tripartite division of souls in *Olympian 2* and the depiction of the waters of Memory imparting immortality in *Isthmian 6* are parallel to the tripartite scheme and the mnemonic function of immortalization on the Gold Tablets. I read this as evidence that Pindar was not simply catering to a specific audience, but that he was also working within the literary tradition that produced the tablets. I propose Pindar learned Orphic doctrine by being initiated into its Mysteries, after which he integrated Orphic myth into his poetry.

The poetry of Pindar is filled with ideas and imagery reminiscent of Orphic belief and the Orphic Gold Tablets in particular. In the *Threnoi*, Pindar describes Orpheus as “Orpheus of the golden lyre,”²³⁰ and in his description of the Isles of the Blessed,

²³⁰ Ὀρφέα χρυσόλοα (*Thren.* 3.12 Race = Pindar fr. 139 Snell).

“flowers of gold are blazing,”²³¹ and even Memory is “golden-robed.”²³² Pindar’s golden imagery and golden-robed Memory seem to recall the Orphic Gold Tablets, where Memory plays a key role in heroization as she distinguishes an initiate and grants his immortality. The Gold Tablets themselves functioned as a ritual mnemonic device for the initiate in the afterlife, and they contained passwords to help the initiate enjoy his blessed immortality. Immortality was promised to an initiate by his claim to divine lineage. This belief provided a theoretical justification for salvation and was a central belief of the Orphic cult. The Petelia tablet commands the initiate articulate a secret password in order to gain access to the blessed afterlife: εἰπεῖν· Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος | αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ **γένος οὐράνιον**, “Say: I am a child of Earth and starry Sky, but my race is heavenly” (2.6-7 Graf/Johnston = B1 Zuntz, L3 Bernabé). The **γένος οὐράνιον** of the Petelia tablet is echoed in Pindar’s *Nemean* 6 where he, too, expresses the idea of divine lineage of mankind. Ἐν ἀνδρῶν, ἐν **θεῶν γένος**· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν | ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· “One is the race of men, one is the race of gods, and from one mother do we both derive our breath” (*Nem.* 6.1-2, Race).

An Orphic initiate claimed divine lineage from Dionysus and his mother Persephone. This aetiological myth of an ancient transgression formed the basis of the Orphic cult. Although the antiquity of the myth has been questioned, Paul Tannery (1899), who was followed by Herbert J. Rose (1943), developed the argument that Pindar’s fragment 133 referred to the Orphic myth of Dionysus, and that, therefore, Pindar and Plato knew about the myth before its Hellenistic elaboration. Martin West

²³¹ ἔνθα μακάρων | νᾶσον ὠκεανίδες | αὐραὶ περιπνέουσιν· ἄνθεμα δὲ **χρυσοῦ** χρυσοῦμακάρων *Ol.* 2.70-72 Race).

²³² **χρυσοπέλου** Μναμοσύνας (*Isthm.* 6.75 Race).

(1983),²³³ Walter Burkert (1985),²³⁴ E. R. Dodds (2004),²³⁵ Fritz Graf and Sarah Johnston (2007),²³⁶ and even Ivan Linforth (1941)²³⁷ have all supported the myth's antiquity; Alberto Bernabé and Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008)²³⁸ situated Pindar within the same system of beliefs that produced the tablets, and Maria Cannatà Fera (1990) likewise argues that fragment 133 (fr. 65 in her edition) is a reference to the Zagreus myth. I contend that Pindar was himself an Orphic initiate as revealed by his intimate knowledge of the method by which an initiate could atone for this primordial blood crime—namely, through ποινή, “blood price, penalty,” by which the initiate expiated the Titanic crime through initiation and ritual purifications.

²³³ West notes: “Let us recall the details of the story of Dionysus as it was told in the Rhapsodies, or rather, of that part of the story which we attribute to the Eudemian Theogony because of its connections with a preceding episode in that poem. Dionysus is born in Crete to Zeus and Kore. He is guarded by the dancing Kouretes, as Zeus was. This probably lasts for five years. Zeus installs him on his own throne and tells the gods that this is their new king. But the Titans, whitening their faces with gypsum, lure him away with a mirror, apples, a bull-roarer, and other articles. They kill him and cut him into seven pieces, which they first boil, then roast and proceed to eat. But Athena preserves the still living heart and takes it to Zeus in a casket. The gods grieve. Zeus discharges his thunderbolt at the Titans and removes them from the face of the earth. The residual smoke contains a soot from which mankind is created. The remnants of the Titans’ feast are given to Apollo, who takes them to Parnassus (that is, to Delphi) and inters them. But from the heart a new Dionysus is made” (West 1983: 140). He also observes, “The Eudemian Theogony was current at Athens in the fourth century BC; the earliest reference to it, in Plato’s *Cratylus*, takes us back to the 380s” (West 1983: 174).

²³⁴ “One should therefore concede that the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus is relatively old and well known among the Greeks but was consciously kept secret as a doctrine of mysteries” (Burkert 1985: 298).

²³⁵ “Several considerations combine to persuade me that the myth is nevertheless old. The first is its archaic character: it is founded on the ancient Dionysiac ritual of *Sparagmos* and *Omophagia*, and it implies the archaic belief in inherited guilt, which in the Hellenistic Age had begun to be a discredited superstition. The second is the Pindar quotation in Plato’s *Meno* where ‘the penalty of an ancient grief’ is most naturally explained as referring to human responsibility for the slaying of Dionysus. Thirdly, in one passage of the *Laws* Plato refers to people who ‘show off the old Titan nature,’ and in another to sacrilegious impulses which are ‘neither of man nor of god’ but arise ‘from old misdeeds un purgeable by man.’ And fourthly, we are told that Plato’s pupil Xenocrates somehow connected the notion of the body as a ‘prison’ with Dionysus and the Titans. Individually, these apparent references to the myth can at a pinch be explained away; but taking them together, I find it hard to resist the conclusion that the complete story was known to Plato and his public” (Dodds 2004: 155-156).

²³⁶ Graf and Johnston 2007: 127.

²³⁷ “But after all, and in spite of these objections, one must acknowledge that there is a high degree of probability in Rose’s interpretation. The fragment may be accepted as at least plausible evidence that the story of the dismemberment was known to Pindar” (Linforth 1941: 350).

²³⁸ Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal observe (2008: 72): “This is the same situation alluded to in a Pindaric fragment (133 Maehl.),” and again, “A text from Pindar seems clearly to allude to the same scheme as the one found in the tablets” (106).

The goal of Orphism for the initiate was to atone for the ancient blood crime throughout a cycle of rebirths until, upon paying the *ποινή*, he may once again become a god instead of a mortal.²³⁹ In Pindar fragment 133, Persephone will receive “the *requital* of the ancient sorrow”:

οἷσι δὲ **Φερσεφόνα ποιάν παλαιοῦ πένθεος**
δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτω ἔτει
ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰν πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοί
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὔξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον **ἥρωες ἀ-**
γνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται.

But for those from whom **Persephone accepts requital for the ancient grief**, in the ninth year she returns their souls to the upper sunlight; from them arise proud kings and men who are swift of strength and greatest in wisdom, and for the rest of time they are called **sacred heroes** by men.

(Pindar fr. 133, trans. Race 1997: 369)

Rose argued this fragment must refer to the Orphic myth of Dionysus based on the conjunction of the words *Φερσεφόνα*, *ποιάν*, and *πένθεος*. With regards to the *ποινή*, which by its traditional definition of “blood-price” suggests the murder of Persephone’s son Dionysus by the Titans, Rose argued “*ποιάν* is simple enough, for it always means a recompense of some sort in Pindar, though generally keeping close to its proper sense of *wergelt*.”²⁴⁰ Rose’s argument that Pindar is expressing an Orphic eschatology hinges on the word *πένθεος*, for which only two events seem likely, the rape of Persephone by Hades or the death of her son Dionysus Zagreus.

The passage from the oath sacrifice in Book 3 of Homer’s *Iliad* demonstrated the difference between the two words *τιμή* and *ποινή* in terms of personal responsibility. The word *ποινή* implies a fault or responsibility such that it is impossible to owe a *ποινή*

²³⁹ For discussion of reincarnation and Pindar 133 see Nilsson 1935: 214, McGibbon 1964: 5-11, Bianchi 1976: 117-126.

²⁴⁰ Rose 1967: 81.

without personal responsibility, whereas τιμή does not require responsibility of suffering such that it is possible to owe a τιμή without personal responsibility, as in Demeter's request that the citizens pay τιμή to the goddess.²⁴¹ In terms of the question of human responsibility toward Persephone in Pindar fr. 133, Rose emphasized, "No human soul could be expected to make requital to the goddess for what she underwent then. Remains therefore only one possibility, the death of her son, Dionysus or Zagreus, at the hands of the Titans."²⁴² Rose called attention to the fact that if the ποινή "blood-price/penalty" is owed for the παλαιού πένθεος "ancient grief," then it implies punishment for some kind of fault for which mankind is personally responsible. In this context, the term ποινή points to the myth of Dionysus in which humans are personally implicated in his murder due to our relation with the Titans, as opposed to any connection to Persephone's abduction at the hands of Hades, for which, as Rose notes, "No human soul could be expected to make requital to the goddess for what she underwent then."

Edmonds disputes the meaning of ποινή as *Wergeld*, and he proposes a redefinition of the term as "ritual honors." In the previous section I have shown that ποινή indicates "blood-price/penalty" and not "honor" in Homer, and that ποινή cannot be a direct equivalent to τίμη. Edmonds claimed that in Pindar fragment 133 ποινή means "reward" rather than its original meaning of *Wergeld*, and Pindar's use of ποινή is instead a reference to cult honors paid to Persephone because of the sorrow (πένθος) of her traumatic rape by Hades.²⁴³ Edmonds asserts that Pindar never uses ποινή with the

²⁴¹ *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 327-328, 443 with Richardson 1974: 263-264, 296.

²⁴² Rose 1967: 85.

²⁴³ Edmonds 2013: 305.

sense of *Wergeld*, and he points to Odes *Pythian* 4.63 and *Nemean* 1.70 for evidence.²⁴⁴

However, the Scholia vetera at *Pythian* 4.63 clearly define Pindar’s use of ποινή in that ode as “penalty”:

τίς ἔσται τῆς φωνῆς **ποινή**, τουτέστιν **ἀπόλυσις**· ἐπεὶ ἡ ποινή ἀπολύσεως ἔνεκεν γίνεται.

What will be the **penalty** for speaking, this is the **release**, since the penalty comes about for the sake of release.

(Schol. Vet. *Pyth.* 4.111, Drachmann)

The Pindaric Scholia vindicate the use of ποινή in its traditional sense of *Wergeld* in Pindar through its gloss of ποινή with ἀπόλυσις “release.” Therefore I argue that it is possible to find instances of ποινή as “penalty” in Pindar’s poetry. However I do concede that Pindar’s use of ποινή as “penalty” is limited and therefore marked in its usage.

I propose that Pindar’s use of ποινή as “requit” in fragment 133 and *Olympian* 2 indicates that it is a marked term and has a specific usage within the particular eschatological contexts shared by both poems. Furthermore, it is significant to recall that Plato cites Pindar’s fragment 133 in the context of Socrates’ argument that *anamnesis* “recollection” as a proof of the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of reincarnation (*Meno* 81b-e). Plato is quoting Pindar as an authority for the belief in reincarnation and the fragment informs Plato’s eschatological context. Therefore, I contend, we must interpret fragment 133 within this specific context of reincarnation and the soul’s immortality rather than within the context of Persephone’s rape by Hades.

We see a very similar eschatological description to Pindar’s fragment 133 on Orphic tablet 6 from Thurii:

²⁴⁴ Edmonds 2013: 307. *LSJ*, s.v. ποινή, note these same passages, along with Pindar *Pythian* 1.59, as examples in their definition 3: “in a good sense, *recompense*, *reward* for a thing, τεθρίππων, καμάτων, Pi. P. 1.59, N. 1.70; εὐχὰς ἀγαθὰς ἀγαθῶν ποινὰς A. *Supp.* 626 (anap.); ποινήν εὐσεβείης IG 14.1437.”

4 **ποινὰν** ἀνταπέτεισ' ἔργων ἔνεκ' οὔτι δικαίων.
[...]
6 νῦν δὲ ἰκέτις ἦκω, ἦκω παρὰ **Φερσεφόνειαν**.
7 ὥς με πρόφρων πέμψει ἔδρας ἐς **εὐαγέων** .

I have paid the **penalty** for unrighteous deeds . . . Now I come as a suppliant to Persephone, so that she may kindly send me to the seats of the **pure**.

(Thurii tablet 6.4-7, trans. Graf and Johnston 2007: 15)²⁴⁵

Note the use of the phrase *ποινὰν ἀνταπέτεισ(α)* “to pay the penalty,” which is an example of the *ποινή + τίνω* pattern (*ἀντί-ἀποτίνω*) and demonstrates the Orphic formulaic use of the word *ποινή* and its verbal derivative.²⁴⁶

On another tablet from Thurii the idea of paying the *penalty* is equated with escaping the painful cycle of incarnations and achieving the crown of immortality:

5 κύκλο δ' ἐξέπταν **βαρυπενθέος** ἀργαλέοιο
6 ἱμερτῷ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνῳ ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι·
7 **Δεσσοίνας** δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας Βασιλείας.

I have flown out of the painful, **grief** causing circle, I have approached the longed-for crown with swift feet, I have sunk beneath the breast of the **Lady**, the Chthonian Queen.

(Thurii tablet 5.5-7, trans. Graf and Johnston 2007: 13)

The tablets from Thurii and Pindar fragment 133 both use *ποινή* when speaking about the cycle of incarnations. Pindar associates the two ideas of *ποινή* and *πένθος* in fragment 133. In turn, I connect *ποινή* with *πένθος* on the Thurian tablets since the idea of retribution, or blood-payment, is a result of Persephone's grief. The epithet **Δεσσοίνας** on tablet 5 gives anaphoric resonance since Persephone is the goddess who receives the *ποινή*; the resonance may suggest a folk-etymology associating Persephone with “blood-

²⁴⁵ The text I reproduce here is shown without editorial marks for the sake of clarity; for original see Graf and Johnston 2007: 14, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbol 2008: 261 (their text L10_B).

²⁴⁶ We see the same diction of *ἀποτίνω* in the context of avenging Patroclus' death: Πατρόκλοιο δ' ἔλωρα Μενoitιάδεω ἀποτίση (*Iliad* 18.93).

price/penalty.”²⁴⁷ On tablet 5 the initiate “sinks into the breast of the Chthonian queen,” and becomes a god instead of a mortal.²⁴⁸ Likewise on tablet 6 we read, “I have come beside Persephone in order that she may willingly send me to the seats of the pure.” I argue the word *ποινή* is used by both Pindar and the tablets as a technical term referring to the specific Orphic belief known to initiates. In Pindar fragment 133, after souls have atoned for the *ποινή* of Persephone they become ἥρωες ἄγνοϊ. The association between *purity* and heroization is consistent with tablet 6 as Persephone sends the initiate to the seats of the pure (ἔδρας ἐς εὐαγέων).

Pindar’s use of *ποινή* extends to *Olympian 2*, which scholars focus on when speaking of Pindar’s Orphica.²⁴⁹ Pindar describes a marked division of souls by designating separate destinations for the bad, the good, and the heroic souls. But scholars have long disagreed on how to interpret the syntax of the eschatological scheme described by Pindar beginning at lines 56-60. The ὅτι clause at verse 57 introduces the afterlife as an explanation and expansion of τὸ μέλλον “the future,” and the destinations in the Underworld are marked by an elaborate succession of μὲν and δὲ. The problem with reading the eschatological scheme of *Olympian 2* is how to make sense of the complicated sequence of μὲν and δὲ:

εἰ δέ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον,

²⁴⁷ I do not suggest a direct etymological relation between *ποινή* and *Δεσποίνας*, since “*δεσποινα* is from *δεσ-ποτ-νια. The first part, IE **dems* (whence Gr. δεσ-, Skt. *dam-*), is the genitive of a word for ‘house’” (Beekes 2010: 319). But the anaphoric resonance of *Δεσποίνας* in conjunction with *βαρουπενθέος* in Thuri tablet 5 is striking nonetheless.

²⁴⁸ This line (ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν) is similar to the oldest description of Dionysus at *Iliad* 6.136 where Dionysus leaps into the sea to avoid the crazed Lycurgus and is received beneath Thetis’s bosom (δύσεθ’ ἄλως κατὰ κύμα, Θέτις δ’ ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ): collocation of δύω (δύσεθ’ = δύσετο) + κόλπος (and even δέχομαι). Perhaps there is connection between Dionysus and the ideas of sinking into or sinking and being nurtured by a motherly bosom, then the initiate in a way becomes a substitute child for Persephone, in the place of Dionysus himself. This idea of sinking is also synonymous with the *katabasis* or the ritual descent into the Underworld.

²⁴⁹ For Pindar’s *Orphica*, see Nisetich 1988: 1-19, Lloyd-Jones 1990: 80-109, Santamaría 2008: 1161-1184.

ὅτι θανόντων μὲν ἐν-
 θάδ' αὐτίκ' ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες
 ποινὰς ἔτεισαν—τὰ δ' ἐν τῷδε Διὸς ἀρχῇ
 ἀλιτρώα κατὰ γᾶς δικάζει τις ἐχθρῶ
 λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκη·

If one has it and knows the future, **that** the helpless spirits **of those who have died** on earth immediately **pay the penalty**—and upon sins committed here **in Zeus' realm**, a judge beneath the earth pronounces sentence with hateful necessity.

(Pindar *Olympian* 2.56-60, trans. Race 1997: 69)

Willcock (1995) in his commentary describes two prevailing scholarly interpretations of these lines.²⁵⁰ Rohde and Wilamowitz explained the corresponding μὲν and δὲ of lines 56-60 of *Olympian* 2 as two separate points of view, that of the deceased and that of the living.²⁵¹ Rohde argued that the μὲν at line 57 (θανόντων μὲν) is coordinated with the δὲ at line 75 (ὅσοι δ' ἐτόλμασαν ἐστρώς), which contrasts those who are punished with those who live a painless life.²⁵² Wilamowitz argued that the contrast is between the world of the living (the realm of Zeus) and Hades, i.e., κατὰ γᾶς.²⁵³

However, the scholiast Aristarchus understood these lines as an indication of the idea of rebirth. Willcock notes that recent scholars side with the interpretation of Wilamowitz, but Dieterich and others accepted the view of rebirth argued by the Scholia. The Scholia vetera at these verses of Pindar *Olympian* 2.56-60 reads:²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Willcock 1995: 154-155.

²⁵¹ Rohde 1925: 442n35, Wilamowitz 1922: 248n1.

²⁵² Rohde (1925: 443n35) notes: “The θανόντων μὲν of 63 is not answered till ὅσοι δ' ἐτόλμασαν ... 75, just as the αὐτίκα of 63 does not receive its contrast till we come to what happens much later—after the life on earth has been thrice repeated—described in 75 ff. The δὲ of 64 and 67 are subordinate (not adversative) to what is introduced by the μὲν of 63 and they continue the thought.”

²⁵³ Wilamowitz (1922: 248 n.1) notes: ἐν τῷδε Διὸς ἀρχῇ ... ist die Oberwelt ... im Gegensatz zu κατὰ γᾶς [“in the world of Zeus ... is the world of the living ... in antithesis is under the earth”]. Wilamowitz follows Rohde and also argues against Deubner (1908: 638-642), whose position is similar to the Scholia I cite below. Deubner cites Aristophanes *Frogs* 82 as parallel: μὲν ἐνθάδ' ... δ' ἐκεῖ.

²⁵⁴ See Willcock 1995: 155.

<ὅτι θανόντων μὲν> ἕως <ἐχθρᾶ λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκᾳ:> ἐγκρίνει τὴν **παλιγγενεσίαν**. λέγει οὖν· εἴ τις οἶδε τὸ μέλλον, ὅτι οἱ μὲν ἐν τῷ ζῆν ἁμαρτάνοντες, ἐν Ἄιδου κολάζονται, οἱ δὲ ἐν Ἄιδου, ἐν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ βίῳ ἐν τῇ τοῦ Διὸς ἀρχῇ· ταύτην γὰρ εἶπε τὸν ὑποκείμενον τῷ οὐρανῷ τόπον· καὶ ἐάν τις ἐν ταῖς τρισὶν ἀναβιώσεσιν αἷς ὑφίσταται ἀναμάρτητος εἰς τρεῖς ἐκατέρωθεν μένη, τοῦτόν φησιν εἰς τὰς τῶν μακάρων νήσους προπέμπεσθαι.

“That of the dead ...” up to “with hateful necessity”: [Pindar] judges it to be a **rebirth**. He means it like this: If someone knew the future, namely that those who do wrong while they are living will be punished in Hades, and that those in Hades [who do wrong], in our life here in the realm of Zeus [they will be punished]. For he said that it [= Zeus’s realm] is the place lying beneath heaven. And if someone in the third return to life in which he keeps up without doing wrong should remain so to the third return from the world beyond, he says this very person will be sent forth to the islands of the blessed.

(Scholia vetera at Pindar *Olympian* 2.104 Drachmann)²⁵⁵

The idea explained by the Scholia is that there are two moments of punishment: those who sin in this world are punished in the next (the afterlife), and those who sin in the afterlife are punished in this world through reincarnation—presumably into an undesirable life or the like. The souls of good people who can maintain a “blameless life” for three cycles (however they are to be counted: life-death-life or perhaps even life-death/life-death/life-death) are freed from the punishment/reincarnation cycle altogether and dwell in the Isles of the Blessed.

Following the scholiast Aristarchus I read these lines in Pindar *Olympian* 2.55-60 as representing two corresponding and cyclical ideas—death and rebirth. I interpret Διὸς ἀρχῆ not only as “here on earth” as suggested by Willcock,²⁵⁶ but also as a subtextual reference to Pindar’s διόσδοτον ἀρχάν “Zeus-given beginning” from his fragment 137 (Race) on the Eleusinian mysteries which expresses the soteriological dichotomy between

²⁵⁵ Drachmann’s edition of the Scholia vetera of Pindar’s odes follows a different numbering scheme that can be followed in Snell’s edition of Pindar.

²⁵⁶ Willcock 1995: 155.

life and death, in the same terms as an Orphic Olbian bone tablet does in its formula:

bios-thanatos-bios.²⁵⁷

ὄλβιος ὅστις ἰδὼν κείν' εἰς' ὑπὸ χθόν'·
οἶδε μὲν βίου τελευτάν,
οἶδε δὲ διόσδοτον ἀρχάν.

Blessed is he who sees them (the mysteries) and goes beneath the earth; he knows **the end of life** and knows **the Zeus-given beginning**.

(Pindar fr. 137, trans. Race 1997: 371)

The contrasting μὲν and δὲ in Pindar's fragment 137 separate the idea of βίου τελευτάν “the end of life,” and διόσδοτον ἀρχάν, “the Zeus-given beginning.” Here Pindar depicts the contrast between the end of life—namely *death*—and the Zeus-given beginning—namely *life*. This formula functions as a *symbolon* in the Orphic cult as we have seen on the Olbian bone tablets, and the Gold Tablets:

Νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε ἅματι τωίδε.
εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνηαι σ' ὅτι Β<ακ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.

Now you have died and now you have come into being, O thrice happy one, on this same day. Tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released you.

(Tablet 26a Pelinna, trans. Graf and Johnston 2007: 36-37)

The problem with reading the eschatological scheme of *Olympian 2* is how to make sense of the elaborate sequence of μὲν and δὲ. I argue that the first μὲν and δὲ can be read by relying on the Orphic formula contrasting beginning and end (life-death) in Pindar's fragment 137. Note also the complimentary use of οἶδεν in *Olympian 2* and οἶδε in fragment 137. Based on my reading of fragment 137 as a life-death dichotomy, I argue that in *Olympian 2* we see the same elaboration of this dichotomy marked by the contrasting μὲν and δὲ: θανόντων μὲν ... τὰ δ' ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχᾷ. The similiar syntax

²⁵⁷ The top of tablet A (Graf and Johnston 2007: 185) reads βίος θάνατος βίος | ἀλήθεια; the bottom of the tablet reads: Διόνυσος Ὀρφικοί (or Ὀρφικόν).

between fragment 137 and lines 56-60 of *Olympian 2* gives the reader false syntactical signals, and what we would expect as functioning as the contrast instead recalls the life-death formula and thereby commences the Orphic themed afterlife represented in the poem.

εἰ δέ νιν ἔχων τις οἶδεν τὸ μέλλον,
ὅτι θανόντων μὲν ἐν-
 θάδ' αὐτίκ' ἀπάλαμνοι φρένες
ποινάς ἔτεισαν—τὰ δ' ἐν τῷδε **Διὸς ἀρχῇ**
 ἄλιτροῦ κατὰ γὰρ δικάζει τις ἐχθροῦ
 λόγον φράσαις ἀνάγκη·

If one has it and knows the future, **that** the helpless spirits **of those who have died** on earth immediately **pay the penalty**—and upon sins committed here in **Zeus' realm**, a judge beneath the earth pronounces sentence with hateful necessity.

(Pindar *Olympian 2*.56-60, trans. Race 1997: 69)

Furthermore, I suggest Pindar's use of *ποινή* in addition to the Orphic formula life-death indicates his intimate knowledge of Orphic mysteries. Pindar tells us at line 58 of the second *Olympian* that for the category of bad souls, “when men have died here on earth, wicked minds immediately *pay the penalty* (*ποινάς ἔτεισαν*). Lloyd-Jones argued Pindar was relating similar beliefs behind the initiatory rites depicted on the Gold Tablets, and he first proposed that *ποινάς ἔτεισαν* in *Olympian 2* is identical to the atonement of the *ποινή* accepted by Persephone in fragment 133.²⁵⁸ Following Lloyd-Jones, I read the eschatological scheme of *Olympian 2* as an elaboration of fragment 133, both of which correspond to the scheme depicted on the tablets. In other words, I contend that Pindar's usage of *ποινή* in *Olympian 2* and fragment 133 is employed identically as the term

²⁵⁸ Lloyd-Jones 1990: 94.

appears in the Orphic tablets and Pindar's use of a marked Orphic term in eschatological contexts affirms his Orphic status.

Pindar's second category of souls (the good) is delineated by the δὲ at line 61.

This is the truer contrast with the souls marked by μὲν at line 57:

ἴσαις δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,
ἴσαις δ' ἀμέραις ἄλιον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον
ἔσλοὶ δέκονται βίοντον ...

But forever having sunshine in equal nights and in equal days, **good men receive a life of less toil** ...

(Pindar *Olympian* 2.61-63, trans. Race 1997: 69)

These good souls “receive a life of less toil” (*Ol.* 2.62-63). The contrast with the bad souls is implied by the force of the comparative ἀπονέστερον, but also emphasized by a subordinated μὲν/δὲ clause:

. . . ἀλλὰ παρὰ μὲν τιμίαις
θεῶν οἵτινες ἔχαιρον εὐορκίαις,
ἄδακρυν νέμονται
αἰῶνα, τοὶ δ' ἀπροσόρατον ὀκχέοντι πόνον.

No, in company with the honored gods,
those who joyfully kept their oaths
spend a tearless existence,
whereas the others endure pain too terrible to behold.

(Pindar *Olympian* 2.65-67, trans. Race 1997: 71)

The second division consists of the good souls (marked by μὲν), who “delighting in good oaths, live a life free from grief among the gods who have honor” (*Ol.* 2.65-66), whereas the first division consisting of bad souls (marked by δὲ) “endure toil not to be looked upon” (*Ol.* 2.67). Pindar clearly delineates the distinction between souls in *Olympian* 2 as does the author of the Hipponion tablet:

Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἔργον, ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλλεισι θανεῖσθαι

εἰς Αἴδαο δόμος εὐέρεας. ἔστ' ἐπὶ δ<ε>ξιὰ κρένα,
παρ δ' αὐτὰν ἔστακῦα λευκὰ κυπάρισσος·
 ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυκαὶ νεκύον ψύχονται.
 ταύτας τὰς κρένας μεδὲ σχεδὸν ἐγγύθεν ἔλθεις. [5]
πρόσθεν δὲ ἠευρέσεις τὰς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δὲ ἐπύπερθεν ἔασι.
 τοὶ δὲ σε εἰρέσσονται ἐν φρασὶ πευκαλίμαισι
 ὅ τι δὲ ἐξερέεις Ἄιδος σκότος ὀρφέεντος.
εἶπον· ὕος Γᾶς ἐμὶ καὶ Ὅρανο ἀστερόεντος. [10]
 δίψαι δ' ἐμὶ αὐὸς καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλὰ δότ' ο[κα
 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πέναι τες Μνεμοσύνες ἀπὸ λίμν[α]ς
 καὶ δὴ τοὶ ἐρέοσιν ἠυποχθονίῳ βασιλεῖ·
 καὶ δὲ τοθ δόσοσι πινεν τῆς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνα[ς].
 καὶ δὲ καὶ σὺ **πιὸν ὀδὸν** ἔρχεα<ι>, ἠάν τε καὶ ἄλλοι [15]
 μύσται καὶ βαχχοὶ ἠιεράν στείχοσι κλεινοί.

This is the work of Memory, when you are about to die down to the well-built house of Hades. **There is a spring at the right side, and standing by it a white cypress.** Descending to it, the souls of the dead refresh themselves. Do not even go near this spring! **Ahead you will find from the Lake of Memory,** cold water pouring forth; there are guards before it. They will ask you, with astute wisdom, what you are seeking in the darkness of murky Hades. **Say, “I am a son of Earth and starry Sky, I am parched with thirst and am dying; but quickly grant me cold water from the Lake of Memory to drink.”** And they will announce you to the Chthonian King, and they will grant you to drink from the Lake of Memory. And you, too, having drunk, will go along **the sacred road** on which other glorious initiates and *bacchoi* travel.

(Tablet 1 Hipponion, trans. Graf and Johnston 2007: 4)

On the Orphic tablet, “there is a spring on the right, and standing by it a white cypress” (1.2-3). The tablet firmly commands not to approach this direction, indicating a first division of souls (souls that don’t drink from the spring separated from those that do). On the other side is the lake of Memory, which delineates a second division of souls (souls that know the password and are granted access to the Lake of Memory separated from those that do not, presumably). These good souls may only drink and become immortalized if they know the correct password. Graf and Johnston argue that initiation in the Orphic Mysery cult specifically allowed for separation of good souls from heroic

souls (their good-plus).²⁵⁹ Knowing the password elevates the initiate from a good to a heroic soul. The initiated soul must proclaim, “I am a child of earth and starry heaven, grant me to drink from the lake of Memory” (1.10), then the soul passes down the sacred road with the other initiates. The initiate is distinguished by his memory of knowledge obtained through initiation, and the tablet thereby functions as a mnemonic tool for achieving immortality. Pindar equates these privileged souls with heroes both in *Olympian 2* and fragment 133. Pindar’s heroes attain a blessed immortality after completing the cycle of rebirths—a distinctly Orphic idea. Here at line 68 Pindar makes his third contrast with the first category of souls described at line 57, this was also the contrast that Rohde observed:

ὅσοι δ’ ἐτόλμασαν ἑστροῖς
ἐκατέρωθι μείναντες ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν
ψυχάν, ἔτειλαν Διὸς ὁδὸν παρὰ Κρό
νου τύρσιν· ἔνθα μακάρων
νᾶσον ὠκεανίδες
αὔραι περιπνέουσιν· ἄνθεμα δὲ χρυσοῦ φλέγει,
...
ὄρμοισι τῶν χέρας ἀναπλέκοντι καὶ στεφάνους

But those with the courage to have lived **three times** in either realm, while keeping their souls free from all unjust deeds, travel **the road of Zeus** to the tower of Kronos, where ocean breezes blow round **the Isle of the Blessed**, and **flowers of gold are ablaze**, some from radiant trees on land, while the water nurtures others; with these they weave garlands for their hands and **crowns** for their heads.

(Pindar *Olympian 2.68-74*, trans. Race 1997: 71)

Pindar’s heroic souls such as Peleus, Cadmus, and Achilles, after they have kept their soul pure during the tripartite cycle of incarnations, dwell in a blessed afterlife. Likewise, on the Petelia tablet after a soul pays the penalty: καὶ τότε ἔπειτ’ ἄ[λλοισι μεθ’]

²⁵⁹ Graf and Johnston 2007: 101.

ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[ς], “you will rule among the other heroes” (2.11, Graf and Johnston 2007: 7). Scholars have pointed out the similarity between Pindar’s Διὸς ὁδὸν (*Ol.* 2.70) and the Hipponion tablet’s πὸν ὁδὸν “sacred road” (1.15).²⁶⁰ In addition, I argue Pindar’s tripartite formula ἐστρίς (*Ol.* 2.68) corresponds to a *makarismos* formula, which grants heroization, such as on the Pelinna leaf (tablet 26a), which describes an initiate as τρισόλβιε “thrice-blessed.”²⁶¹ And on the Pherae leaf the initiate gives the tripartite password: ἀνδρικεπαιδόθυρσον, after which he becomes ἄποινος, “redeemed” or immortal.²⁶² Successfully paying the ποινή of the Titanic crime results in the initiate becoming ἄποινος. The alpha-privative of this adjective articulates the distinction between the initiated soul and other souls who have yet to pay a penalty.

Olympian 2 (line 74) and Thuri tablet 5 (line 6) both associate immortality with the *stephanos* “victory crown.” The initiate who escapes the cycle of incarnation is equated to a victorious and heroic athlete:

5 κύκλο δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο
 6 ἱμερτο δ' ἐπέβαν **στεφάνο ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι**
 7 Δεσποίνας δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας Βασιλείας.

I have flown out of the heavy, difficult circle, I have approached **the longed for crown with swift feet**, I have sunk beneath the breast of the Lady, the Chthonian Queen.

(Thuri tablet 5.5-7, trans. Graf and Johnston 2007: 13)

²⁶⁰ Willcock 1995: 159.

²⁶¹ On Pelinna 26a, see Graf and Johnston 2007: 36-37 and my discussion above.

²⁶² Pherae leaf: Σύμβολα: Ἄν<δ>ριζε- | παιδόθυρσον, ἀνδρικεπαι- | δόθυρσον· Βριμώ, Βριμώ. εἴσιθ<ι> | ἱερὸν λειμῶνα· ἄποινος | γὰρ ὁ μύστης. | ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ. “Passwords: Man-and-child-thyrsus. Man-and-child-thyrsus. Brimo, Brimo. Enter the holy meadow, for the initiate is redeemed. GAPEDON (apparently a nonsense word, written upside down)” (27 Graf and Johnston 2007: 39).

Tablet 5 equates achieving immortality with winning a prize in a footrace. The *stephanos* had ritualistic implications in Mystery cults since initiates were crowned like athletes.²⁶³

Likewise, in the epilogue of *Isthmian* 6, Pindar imparts immortality to the crowned hero:

φαίης κέ νιν ἄνδρ' ἐν ἀεθληταῖσιν ἔμμεν

...

πίσω σφε Δίρκας ἀγνὸν ὕδωρ, τὸ βαθύζωνοι κόρραι
χρυσοπέπλου Μναμοσύνας ἀνέτειλαν παρ' εὐτειχέσιν Κάδμου πύλαις.

Among **athletes** . . . I shall offer them a drink of Dirce's sacred water, which the deep-bosomed daughters of **golden-robed Mnemosyne** made to surge by the well-walled gates of Cadmus.

(Pindar *Isthmian* 6.72-75, trans. Race 1997: 193)

The Petelia tablet also imparts immortality to the crowned-initiate through Memory:

9 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον τῆς **Μνημοσύνης** ἀπὸ λίμνης

...

11 καὶ τότε ἔπειτ' ἄλλοισι μεθ' ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[ς].

12 [**Μνημοσύνης**] τὸδ<ε> ἔργον

Grant me cold water flowing from the Lake of **Memory**

...

And thereafter you will rule among the other **heroes**.

This is the work of **Memory**.

(Petelia tablet 2.9-12, trans. Graf and Johnston 2007: 7)

Obbink (2014) maintained Pindar was disseminating some of the sacred Orphic doctrine in *Isthmian* 6 as he does in *Olympian* 2, and, following Faraone (2002), Obbink argued, “Pindar is alluding to the same myth and performative pattern found in the gold leaves.”²⁶⁴ Perhaps it is only coincidence that Pindar's heroic souls use golden leaves to weave crowns in the afterlife, but the significance of Memory imparting and the use of *ποινή* are unique conjunctions between Orphic eschatology and Pindar's poetry, which

²⁶³ See Euripides *Bacchae* 81 and Plato *Republic* 363cd, with discussion at Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 123-124, and, more generally, Blech 1982.

²⁶⁴ Obbink 2014: 308.

suggest that Pindar performed a greater role in the development of the Orphic movement. As Bruno Currie (2005) recently argued in his seminal work on Pindar and hero cult, “Doctrines of rebirth and the immortality of the soul should be regarded as a development of the general picture, not a wild deviation from it.”²⁶⁵ I argue that Pindar, just as Plato, had access to Orphic texts, and he used his platform as an epinician poet in order to disseminate the new ideas of Orphic personal salvation on a Pan-Hellenic scale. Pindar’s wide assimilation of Orphic eschatology implies that his choice of themes and vocabulary was a deliberate integration and assimilation of Orphic beliefs within epinician poetry. In the following sections I explore the function of *ποινή* as an Orphic *symbolon*.

II.4 The Etymology of *ποινή* and *τιμή*

I have argued that the word *ποινή* used in Pindar’s fragment 133 retains its original meaning of “blood-price” and that *ποινή* cannot be used interchangeably with the word *τιμή*. In this section I explore the etymology of the two distinct terms. I have already discussed the position of Benveniste who argued against an etymological connection between the terms; however, Benveniste did point out that the terms are semantically related and often thought to be derived from the same PIE root **k^wei-*.²⁶⁶ According to the linguist Pierre Chantraine (1968), the semantic field of *τιμή* “penalty” is distinctly different from *ποινή*, although the words are often “contaminated.”²⁶⁷ But according to Robert Beekes’ (2010) recent etymological study, the word *ποινή* and its

²⁶⁵ Currie 2005: 40.

²⁶⁶ Benveniste 1973: 340.

²⁶⁷ Chantraine 1968-1980: 925, “Le champ sémantique de *ποινή* est nettement différent de celui de *τιμή*, bien que les deux familles de mots se soient parfois contaminées.”

Indo-European root **k^woi-neh₂-* is ultimately derived from the IE verbal root **k^wei-*.²⁶⁸ Both Beekes and Chantraine agree that the noun *ποινή* is etymologically related to the Greek verb *τίνω* “to pay, atone, punish, avenge” through the shared Indo-European root **k^wei-* “to punish, avenge.”²⁶⁹ However, they disagree on the connection between the verbs *τίνω* and the *τίω*. Thanks to the reconstruction of Proto Indo-European, Beekes gives evidence that *τίνω* is in fact cognate with *τίω*: “it is now customary to distinguish three roots **k^wei-*: 1. ‘to observe’ (whence probably Gr. > *τίω*), 2. ‘to gather, pile up’ (whence perhaps Gr. > *ποιέω*), and 3. ‘to punish, avenge’.”²⁷⁰ While these roots may be customarily distinguished, Beekes gives us good cause to believe that they are in fact one and the same, and he connects these semantically different verbs to the same Indo-European root **k^wei-*, which allows comparison of Indo-European cognates in Avestan, Sanskrit, Anatolian and Lithuanian.²⁷¹ Furthermore, Beekes points out that *ποινή* is identical with Old Church Slavonic *cena*, which he glosses as the Greek word *τιμή*.²⁷² Therefore, the noun *τιμή* “estimate, value, honor” but also “retribution” is derived from the same Indo-European verbal root **k^wei-* as *ποινή* and *τίνω*.²⁷³ The separate families *τίω/τιμή* and *τίνω/ποινή* are cognate from the same Indo-European root **k^wei-* and belong to the same semantic field of economic terms. In addition to their shared field and IE root, these words also appear in similar ritual and afterlife contexts in both Plato’s dialogues and Orphic texts.

²⁶⁸ Beekes 2010: 1218.

²⁶⁹ Beekes 2010: 1487; Chantraine 1968-1980: 925.

²⁷⁰ Beekes 2010: 1487.

²⁷¹ Av. *Kaēnā-* ‘punishment,’ Skt. *Cāyate* ‘avenge, punish,’ Anatolian: Lyc. A *ttiti*, B *kikiti* ‘to fine,’ Lith. *Kāina*, ‘price,’ (Beekes 2010: 1487).

²⁷² Beekes 2010: 1217-1218, s.v. *ποινή*.

²⁷³ See Beekes 2010: 1485-1486, 1490, s.v.v. *τιμή*, *τίνω*, and *τίω*. For *τίμη* as ‘penalty’ see Homer *Iliad* 1.159, 3.286, 288 and my discussion above (section II.2)

The words in the **k^wei-* family developed differently from one another, such that we can demonstrate distinct shades of meaning between terms like *ποινή* and *τιμή*. However, some basic connections underlie the words in the family, allowing a certain amount of semantic overlap. I suggest that the semantic overlap between both the *τίμη/τίω* and *ποινή/τίνω* word groups allowed for terms in both groups to be used as Orphic technical terms or *symbola* in specific eschatological and ritual contexts. I have in mind specifically the phrase *τίνειν τιμωρίας* “to pay the penalty” in the Platonic *Seventh Letter*, and suggest that this phrase refers specifically—albeit covertly—to the Orphic myth of Zagreus because the phrase occurs within the context of a *Hieros Logos* and speaks of the immortality of the soul. My argument is based on the semantic field conveyed by *τιμωρία*, “penalty” or “retribution” and its nominal root *τίμη* “honor” or “penalty” which has a shared meaning and is cognate with the term *ποινή* “blood-price” or “penalty.”²⁷⁴ This argument is explored further in the following sections where I show how the semantic field of the verbs *τίω* and *τίνω* function together in Orphic texts.

II.5 *ποινή* and Orphic Papyri

In the previous sections I have argued against the position of Edmonds regarding the use of *ποινή* in fragment 133 of Pindar. Instead I have proposed that Plato transposed the Orphic *symbolon* *ποινή* into his philosophical arguments for reincarnation and *anamnesis*. But Edmonds also argues against the use of *ποινή* in Greek Papyri and he

²⁷⁴ “In Homer the word *ποινή* nearly always means ‘punishment’ or ‘revenge’ rather than ‘compensation’. . . there are only two instances in all Homer in which *ποινή* can formally be interpreted as *wergeld*” (Treston 1923: 29). The first instance of *Wergeld* occurs in the speech of Ajax (*Iliad* 9.632-637): Treston 1923: 32.

exploits the earliest attested Orphic evidence of *ποινή* in the Derveni Papyrus and the Gurôb Papyrus in order to contend that *ποινή* does not have the sense of “blood-price/penalty,” and therefore that the word does not have a specific technical meaning within the Orphic discourse.

According to Edmonds, “the Derveni Papyrus provides an example of recompense paid, not to Persephone, but to the spirits of the dead,”²⁷⁵ and he argues, “Persephone’s ancient grief therefore belongs in this wider context of maiden stories which are resolved by ritual honors to appease the Kore and avert her potential wrath, to win her favor for the community and bring the benefits of fertility.”²⁷⁶ However, Edmonds does not analyze in detail the specific usage of the word *ποινή* within these maiden stories, and his best evidence concerning the use of *ποινή* within these stories is attested only by later sources such as Pausanias.²⁷⁷ But since I argue *ποινή* is a specifically Orphic term, it is necessary to analyze the usage of *ποινή* within the context of attested Orphic beliefs, such as Plato’s discussion of the immortality of the soul in *Meno*, as well as in cosmological and liturgical texts such as the Derveni Papyrus and Gurôb Papyrus, and in the Orphic tablets from Thurii. In these texts the use of *ποινή* occurs in specific contexts: belief in reincarnation relating to Persephone (*Meno* 81, Thurian tablets), ritual relating to chthonic deities (Derveni Papyrus, Col.VI), and chthonic Dionysus and Persephone (Gurôb Papyrus, Col. i.4). In other words the word *ποινή* occurs in characteristically Orphic eschatological contexts.

²⁷⁵ Edmonds 2013: 317.

²⁷⁶ Edmonds 2013: 316.

²⁷⁷ Edmonds 2013: 317n54.

Martin West argued that the Derveni Papyrus belonged to an Orphic discourse, which believed in salvation of the soul by Dionysus and he focused on the evidence of column VI:

In my book [= West 1983], by analysis of the different Orphic theogonies, I came to the conclusion that the Derveni poem belonged to that branch of Orphic tradition which embraced the theory of reincarnation and a message of salvation through Dionysus. In the Derveni text we see a man offering explanations of this theogony and also of certain rituals, performed by initiates, which he connects with the disembodied souls who are Eumenides; he speaks of Erinyes, of *daimons*, of gods below, and of paying penalties to other-worldly powers. We may guess that these things which he explains, the rituals and the theogony, belonged together. The initiates that he mentions are those of an Orphic-Bacchic cult society.²⁷⁸

I follow West's observations and respond to Edmonds that the ποιινή of column VI can be the Orphic recompense paid to Persephone because she is traditionally associated with "spirits of the dead" in her role as the Queen of the Underworld. I argue that column VI contains several significant references to both Persephone and Bacchic ritual characteristic of an Orphic milieu.

[εὐ]χαι καὶ θυσ[ί]αι μ[ε]ιλ[ί]σσοι τὰ[ς] ψυχάς,]	1
ἐπ[ω]ιδῆ δ]ὲ μάγων δύν[α]ται δαίμονας ἐμ[πο]δῶν]	
γι[νο]μένο]υς μεθιστάναι. δαίμονες ἐμπο[δ]ῶν ὄντες εἰσὶ]	
ψ[υχ]αὶ τιμω]ροί τὴν θυσ[ί]αν τούτου ἔνεκε[μ] π[ρο]ιούσ]ι[ν]	
οἱ μά[γο]ι, ὡσπερὶ ποινήν ἀποδιδόντες. τοῖ<ς> δὲ	5
ἱεροῖ[ς] ἐπισπένδουσιν ὕ[δ]ωρ καὶ γάλα, ἐξ ὧνπερ καὶ τὰς	
χοὰς ποιοῦσι. ἀνάριθμα [κα]ὶ πολυόμφαλα τὰ πόπανα	
θύουσιν, ὅτι καὶ αἱ ψυχα[ὶ] ἀν]άριθμοί εἰσι. μύσται	
Εὐμενῖσι προθύουσι κ[ατὰ τὰ] αὐτὰ μάγοις· Εὐμενίδες γὰρ	
ψυχαὶ εἰσιν.	10

Prayers and sacrifices **appease** souls. And the song of the Magoi is able to manipulate *daimons* which come into being on the path. Since *Daimons* on the path are **avenging souls**, on account of this the Magoi make sacrifice, just like atoning for **the penalty**. They pour water and milk on the offerings, from which very ones they also make 'chthonic libations.' They sacrifice numberless and

²⁷⁸ West 1997: 84.

many-knobbed cakes, because souls are also numberless. Initiates sacrifice first to the Eumenides according to the same things as the Magoi; For the Eumenides are souls.

(Derveni Papyrus, col. VI. 1-10 Betegh)

Several words set out the passage within the broader context of funeral rites. The verb *μειλίσσω* (line 1) “to appease” carries funerary connotations. Among the various ways of speaking of cremation or funeral rites, Homer once uses the phrase *πυρὸς μειλισσέμεν* “to appease (the dead) with fire” (*Iliad* 7.410). The word *τὰς χοὰς* (line 7) is specifically a libation made to the chthonic deities as we see in Homer’s *Nekyia*.²⁷⁹ In the Derveni Papyrus, the libation consists of *ὔ[δω]ρ καὶ γάλα*, “water and milk,” (line 6) which is similar to the libation in the *Odyssey*.²⁸⁰ It is within the broader context of funeral rites and the afterlife that column VI should be interpreted.²⁸¹ As West remarked, the rituals depicted in the Derveni Papyrus are specifically Orphic.

The Greek word *ἐπωδή* “song” (Line 2) is formally a song sung over a funeral sacrifice.²⁸² According to Plato the *ἐπωδή* is able to appease or persuade in the same way as a myth, it had the power to alleviate the fear of death, and it was also associated with mystery rites.²⁸³ But a *Magos* is not exclusively a Persian priest; Graf argued that the

²⁷⁹ Homer *Odyssey* 11. 26.

²⁸⁰ *πρῶτα μελικρήτω, μετέπειτα δὲ ἡδέϊ οἴνω, τὸ τρίτον αὐθ’ ὕδατι*, “the first with honey-milk, the next with sweet wine, and the third with water” (*Od.* 11.28-29).

²⁸¹ In Chthonic ritual, honey, wine, and milk are characteristic of placation of ghosts. cf. Aeschylus *Persae* 203, 220, 609-617.

²⁸² According to Herodotus (i.132.3), the *Magus* is the Persian priest who sings a song of the birth of the gods (*ἐπαείδει θεογονίην τὴν ἐπαιοιδίην*) over a funeral sacrifice.

²⁸³ Plato describes the persuasive power of myth as an enchantment: *ἐπάδειν* (*Phaedo* 114d7); *τοῦτον οὖν πειρῶ μεταπειθεῖν μὴ δεδιέναι τὸν θάνατον ὡσπερ τὰ μορμολύκεια*. Ἀλλὰ χορή, ἔφη ὁ Σωκράτης, *ἐπάδειν* αὐτῷ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἕως ἂν ἐξεπάσητε. “Therefore let me persuade him not to fear death just like goblins. ‘Then it is necessary,’ Socrates said, ‘to charm him each day until he is deceived’” (*Phaedo* 77e-78a); Plato describes how a *daimon*’s function as an intermediary spirit between gods and men allows priests to employ divinity through sacrifices, rites and chants: *διὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πάσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπωδὰς καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν*, “every prophesy and the skill of the priests and of those concerned with sacrifices and rites and spells and every mantic art and magic operates because of this (the function of *daimons*)” (*Symposium*

Magos in the Derveni Papyrus belongs to the group of Orphic initiators.²⁸⁴ Furthermore, Betegh pointed out that the *Magoi* sacrifice not simply τὰ πόπανα “cakes” (VI.7), but specifically ἀνάριθμα [κα]ὶ πολυόμφαλα “numberless and knobbed cakes,” which “were used in the mystic cults of Demeter and Dionysus.”²⁸⁵ Finally, the fact that in line 9 the μυσταί (“the initiates”) sacrifice in the same way as these *Magoi* implies the commentator of the text is speaking about a rite associated with a mystery cult.

Following West and Graf, I maintain column VI should be interpreted within the broader context of funeral rites characteristic of a Mystery cult. But more specifically column VI describes a ritual for the appeasement of impeding souls associated with the Eumenides, and, as Sarah Johnston (1999) explains, the column gives evidence for the Erinyes in an eschatological context.²⁸⁶ As Johnston elucidates, “the priests of this eschatologically oriented cult had to propitiate dangerous souls and perhaps also their agents (the Erinyes) on behalf of those whom they were initiating before those initiates could approach the gods.”²⁸⁷ Based on the eschatological function of the Eumenides in the mystery rites depicted in column VI, I propose that the specific Orphic terminology indicates these rites belong to an Orphic discourse.

The commentator of the Orphic text only identifies the Eumenides as souls at the end of the column: Εὐμενίδες γὰρ ψυχαὶ εἰσιν “For the Eumenides are souls” (line 10). The Eumenides were also known as the Erinyes, and by association with Hades and

202e-203a). The ἐπωδή is also referred to in Euripides’ *Cyclops* (645) as the “song of Orpheus” which has the power to automatically move the hot iron into the eye of the Cyclops.

²⁸⁴ Graf 1997: 32-33.

²⁸⁵ Betegh 2004: 76-79.

²⁸⁶ See Johnston 1999: 276-277. Sarah Johnston (1999: 252-253) says, “Crime between blood kin is by far their predominant interest in late archaic and classical myth.” But Johnston (1999: 257-258) points out that sometimes the Erinyes are invoked outside of these familial relationships such as in Agamemnon’s oath sacrifice in *Iliad* 3. 279 (τίτυσθον).

²⁸⁷ Johnston 1999: 278-279.

Persephone they also hear and answer the curses of parents.²⁸⁸ In the *Iliad*, the Erinyes replace Hades and Persephone in a prayer: Γῆ τε καὶ Ἥλιος καὶ Ἐρινύες, αἱ θ' ὑπὸ γαίαν, “Both earth and sun and Erinyes, who are under the earth” (*Iliad* 19. 259). This suggests the Erinyes could stand in for the chthonic functions of Persephone.²⁸⁹ In fact Homer identifies the Erinyes with the chthonic deities Hades and Persephone.²⁹⁰ The Eumenides were said to be the daughters of Hades and Persephone in the *Orphic Hymn to the Eumenides*, and they were again said to be the daughters of Persephone in the *Orphic Hymn to Persephone*.²⁹¹ Although Plato refers to Orphic Hymns in general, the antiquity of the specific collection of surviving Orphic Hymns is contentious.²⁹² Some scholars assign the Hymns to the 6th century BCE, and other scholars to the late Byzantine era.²⁹³

The interpretation of the avenging Eumenides hinges on the word ἐμ[ποδών] (VI. 2, 3), which is usually interpreted as “impeding.” But its literal meaning is “at the feet” and, I argue, metaphorically “on the path.” With this sense the phrase δαίμονες ἐμπο[δών] “Daimons on the path” (VI.2, 3) recalls Parmenides’ ὁδὸν δαίμονος, “the road of the goddess” (Parmenides fr. 1.3-4 Tarán). Peter Kingsley argued that the unnamed goddess who guides Parmenides is in fact the goddess Persephone.²⁹⁴ Parmenides’ goddess is even described as πρόφρων (fr. 1. 22 Tarán), an epithet used of Persephone in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* (494). Persephone is also described as

²⁸⁸ Richardson 1974: 272. On Eumenides as Erinyes in col. VI of the Derveni Papyrus, see Henrichs 1984. Tsantsanoglou agrees with Henrichs: “The papyrus seems to confirm the theory of Erwin Rhode that the Erinyes were the souls of the dead, as Albert Henrichs has pointed out” (Tsantsanoglou 1997: 99-100).

²⁸⁹ Burkert 1985: 198.

²⁹⁰ Homer *Iliad* 9.454-457.

²⁹¹ *Hymn to the Eumenides* 70 (Athanasakis), *Hymn to Persephone* 29 (Athanasakis).

²⁹² Plato *Laws* 829d-e.

²⁹³ See Athanasakis 1977. But nevertheless Athanasakis concedes, “the Hymns may have existed quite early and gone unnoticed on account of their literary mediocrity. After all, antiquity treated the much older and much more beautiful *Homeric Hymns* with astonishing indifference” (1977: vii-viii).

²⁹⁴ Kingsley 1999: 93-100.

πρόφρων (6.7 Graf) on an Orphic lamella from Thurii, which describes the initiate paying the ποινή (6.4 Graf).

Edmonds adopts the reconstruction τιμω]ροί in line 4 of the Derveni Papyrus²⁹⁵ and reads it as “avenging” which affirms the argument that the souls or Eumenides “need to be averted or appeased.”²⁹⁶ I also affirm this reconstruction but I argue that the word τιμωροί means more than simply “avenging,” and functions in conjunction with the word ποινή in the Papyrus. According to Beekes, “the word τιμωροί originally meant ‘to preserve or guard τιμή’ from τιμάσσορος, a univerbation of the words τιμή ‘penalty’ and ὄραω ‘to look over (protect).’”²⁹⁷ This definition of τιμή as a penalty is closer to the sense of its relative ποινή. In fact the substantive τιμωροί is used frequently in the Orphic Hymns to invoke the chthonic deities such as Dionysus, Persephone and the Eumenides.²⁹⁸ Therefore, I argue the word τιμωροί is used on the Derveni Papyrus as an epithet of specifically Orphic chthonic deities.

In Greek tragedy the Erinyes frequently identify themselves as Bacchic maenads.²⁹⁹ The word τιμωροί, used to describe the Eumenides in the papyrus, is intimately associated with Bacchic ritual *sparagmos*.³⁰⁰ The verbal derivative τιμωρέω

²⁹⁵ Edmonds follows Janko’s supplement, however Tsantsangalou reconstructs it as ἐχθ]ροί and Bernabé as μά]γοι. Betegh points out that τιμω]ροί clearly fits with the ritual context (Betegh 2004: 88). Furthermore, the association with ποινή “blood-guilt” implies the need for vengeance.

²⁹⁶ Edmonds 2013: 317.

²⁹⁷ Beekes 2010: 1486. The derivatives of τιμωρός most used by Plato are τιμωρέω, τιμωρία, and τιμώρημα.

²⁹⁸ *Orph. Hym.* 69.7 and 70.5 Athanassakis.

²⁹⁹ See Johnston 1999: 253-256. Aeschylus: *Th.* 699; *Eum.* 500. Euripides: *Or.* 411, 835. For the connections between the Erinyes and ποινή, see Treston 1923: 97-126.

³⁰⁰ For *sparagmos* in the *Bacchae*, see Dodds 1944: xiv. For *sparagmos* as the climax of Bacchic religions, see Burkert 1985: 292. Albinus (2000: 106-107) explains the role of *sparagmos*: “In the discourse of Orpheus, the relationship was rather the reverse in that it was the myth that was acted out and even, in some sense, replaced by ritual. An example of this, which points to the role of Orpheus as an initiate within the frame of his own discourse, may be the theme of ‘tearing asunder’ (σπαραγμός) as it appears in the myth, when Orpheus, mourning over his dead wife and wandering about in solitude, meets a band of raging Thracian women who tear him to pieces with their bare hands.”

occurs in Euripides' *Bacchae* (1081), and I suggest we can use this Bacchic usage of τιμωρέω to inform our reading of an Orphic-Bacchic ritual in the Derveni Papyrus. In the *Bacchae* Dionysus commands the Maenads "to punish" Pentheus:

Διώνυσος, ἀνεβόησεν· ὦ νεάνιδες,
ἄγω τὸν ὑμᾶς καὶ μὲ τὰ μὰ τ' ὄργια
γέλων τιθέμενον· ἀλλὰ **τιμωρεῖσθέ** νιν.

Dionysus shouted, "Young women!
I lead to you the one who set mockery
upon you and me and my rites!
Now **punish** him"

(Euripides *Bacchae* 1079-1081)

As the worshipers and agents of Dionysus, the Maenads punish Pentheus for his crimes against the Dionysus. Euripides uses the verb τιμωρέω to associate maenadic punishment, i.e. *sparagmos*, with the verb τιμωρέω, which is marked by its single usage in the play. In the Orphic Hymns the Erinyes are called τιμωροί and ἐρίβρομοι "loud roaring," an epithet otherwise used for Dionysus.³⁰¹ Because of the Orphic context of the Derveni Papyrus, I propose that the word τιμω]ροί (line 4) is informed by this Bacchic subtext of ritualized punishment in the form of *sparagmos*.³⁰² I argue that the Maenadic subtext of the word τιμωροί and the frequent associations with the Eumenides to Maenads suggests we can read the Eumenides in the Derveni Papyrus as performing an Orphic function similar to that of Persephone, namely of accepting the penalty for the murder of her son Dionysus. The connection between τιμωροί and the *sparagmos* of Dionysus is articulated in the Derveni Papyrus by the use of ποινή (line 6). The commentator of the Orphic text says that "Since Daimons on the path are avenging souls,

³⁰¹ Orphic Hymn 69 Athanassakis 1977: 91.

³⁰² Curiously, Dionysus is punishing Pentheus, whose name literally means "sorrow" and is the same word as in Pindar's fragment 133 concerning "the penalty of the ancient sorrow." Does Euripides here allude to the *Hieros Logos* about Dionysus?

the *Magoi* do the sacrifice as if they are paying the **blood-price**” (ὡσπερ εἰ **ποινήν** ἀποδιδόντες, VI.5).³⁰³ Here the commentator relates the word *ποινή* to the word *τιμωροί* in an Orphic ritual context.

I argue the Eumenides, as the daughters or agents of Persephone, function as a divine agent of vengeance on behalf of the goddess Persephone. I suggest the commentator of the Orphic text calls the Eumenides *daimones* because, as Plato claims, a *daimon* is an intermediary divinity, and therefore the Eumenides function as an intermediary between the world of the living and the world of the dead.³⁰⁴ The μάγος is able to manipulate (μεθιστάναι) these intermediary divinities through Bacchic-Orphic rites. The context of column VI is within funeral rites, and their proper practice and interpretation. These rites are Orphic because of the preliminary sacrifice to chthonic deities.³⁰⁵ Therefore, I argue that in column VI of the Derveni Papyrus the Eumenides function as *Bacchic* maenads who guard the *ποινή* on behalf of Persephone, and as ψυχὰι τιμωροί “vengeful souls” they perform Persephone’s Orphic function of accepting the *ποινή*. I maintain that the occurrence of the terms *ποινή* and *τιμωροί* indicate the author is referring to a specifically Orphic ritual.

The Gurôb papyrus provides some of the strongest evidence for the antiquity of the Zagreus myth and its connection to the word *ποινή*. The third century BCE liturgical text gives instructions for a ritual initiation (col. i.3) based around the death and rebirth of Dionysus. The text invokes Demeter (col. i.5-7) and her Eleusinian cult title Brimo, as

³⁰³ Tsantsanoglou argues: “It has little to do with ‘blood-money’, which is the original sense of *ποινή*, or with punishment for impiously shed blood, or even with the Poinai, deities associated or identified with the Erinyes. It has rather to do with sacrifices and other cult practices which function as retribution or ransom for the rescue of the souls from the bonds of sin” (Tsantsanoglou 1997: 113). Tsantsanoglou takes up a position similar to Edmonds.

³⁰⁴ Plato *Symposium* 202e.

³⁰⁵ Graf and Johnston 2007: 150.

well as Dionysus and his Orphic cult title Eubouleus (col. i.18).³⁰⁶ Burkert identified the Gurôb text as a *Hieros Logos*, and West pointed out the relevance to the Orphic poems of the rites described in column I.³⁰⁷ According to Graf and Johnston, “the Gurôb text seems to deal with ‘Orphic’ rites whose aim was salvation from afflictions.”³⁰⁸ The ritual described in the Papyrus is performed for Persephone and Dionysus in payment for the ποινή of lawless ancestors (col. i.4). I argue the use of the term **ποινάς** suggests we are dealing with the Orphic myth of Zagreus:

ἔκ]αστα ἔ[χ]ων ἄ εὔρηι	
τὰ] ὠμὰ δὲ συνλεγέ[τω	
]... διὰ τὴν τελετήν.	
δῶρον δέξ]ατ ’ ἐμὸν ποινάς πατ[έρων ἀθεμίστων.	
σῴσιόν με Βριμὸ με[γάλη	5
Δημήτηρ τε Ἴρεα [
Κούρητές τ’ {ε} ἔνοπλοι []ωμεν	7-8
]να ποιῶμεν ἱερὰ καλά	
] νηι κριός τε τράγος τε	10
] ἀπερείσια δῶρα.	
] ου καὶ ἐπὶ ποταμοῦ νομῶι	
λαμβ]άνων τοῦ τράγου	
] τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ κρέα ἐσθιέτω	
]ος μὴ ἐφοράτω	15
]χου ἀναθεῖς εἰς τὸ ἀνηριε	
]αλων εὐχή	
]νον καὶ Εὐβουλῆα καλῶμεν	
]... εὐρήας κικλήσκωμεν	
]... τε φίλους. Σὺ ἀπανάνας	20
Δ]ήμητρος καὶ Παλλάδος ἡμῖν	
Εὐβου]λεῦ Ἴρικπαίγε	22a
σῴσιόν με []ητα	22b/23a
] εἰς Διόνυσος . Σύμβολα	23b
]υρα θεὸς διὰ κόλπου	
ο]ῖν[ο]ν ἔπιον ὄνος βουκόλος	25
]...ιας σύνθεμα. ἄνα κάτω τοῖς	
] καὶ ὅ σοι ἐδόθη ἀνήλωσαι	
ε]ἰς τὸν κάλαθον ἐμβαλεῖν	
κ]ῶνος ῥόμβος ἀστράγαλοι,	

³⁰⁶ See Hordern 2000: 133.

³⁰⁷ Burkert 1987: 70ff, West 1983: 171.

³⁰⁸ Graf and Johnston 2007: 152.

...] having everything that he finds
 ...let him] collect the raw (meat)
 ...] on account of the ritual.
 “[**Receive** my gift] **as payment** for law[less ancestors...
]Save me, **Brimo**, gr[eat
]and Demeter [and] Rhea [
]and the armed Curetes [...]
]that we...
]so that we will perform beautiful rites
]...ram and he-goat
] immense gifts.”
] and along the river...
 ta]king of the he-goat
]...let him eat the rest of the meat
]...let him not watch
]..., dedicating the chosen
]...Prayer:
 “I call [Protogo]nos (?) and Eubouleus,
] I call the wide [Earth
]... the dear ones. You, having parched...
 of De]meter and Pallas to us
 Eu]bouleus, Irikepaios, save me
 Hurler of lightn]ing...one(?) **Dionysus**. Passwords:
]...god through the bosom
]...I drank [wine?], donkey, herdsman
]...token: above below for the...
] and what has been given to you for your consumption
 in]to **the basket**, and again
 c]one (or spinning-top), bull-roarer, knuckle-bones
]mirror

Gurôb Papyrus Col.i (*OF* 31 Kern = fr. 578 Bernabé)
 (trans. Graf and Johnston 1997: 188-190)

The fragmented column contains the technical term δέχομαι for receiving a ποινή
 “blood-price,” which we have seen used in Homer, Pindar’s fragment 133, and the Gold
 Tablets. The name Brimo was a common epithet of Persephone, and the name in
 conjunction with δέχομαι and ποινή is reminiscent of the formulation in Pindar’s

fragment 133.³⁰⁹ The ritual described in the Papyrus seems to offer salvation from the ποινή “blood-guilt” of the murder of Dionysus, or in symbolic terms the salvation for the soul from the body. In fact, the text also gives specific ritual *symbola* consisting of a basket, a cone, a spinning top, knucklebones, and a mirror. These items are precisely the toys used by the Titans to distract Dionysus before his dismemberment mentioned by Clement of Alexandria in his explication of the Zagreus myth.³¹⁰ The basket probably refers to the *cistae mysticae* used in the mysteries of Dionysus.³¹¹ I allege that the conjunction of Dionysus, Persephone, toys, and the accepting of ποινή is too specific not to be the same story as Clement’s. I argue that the reference to ποινή indicates that the Gurôb Papyrus is referring to Orphic rites related to Dionysus-Zagreus.

II.6 τίνειν τιμωρίας in Plato’s Dialogues

Plato uses many forms of the **kwei-* root when speaking about death and the afterlife, such as the marked usage of the term ποινή in the *Meno*, and the formula τίνειν τιμωρίας from the description of the *Hieros Logos* quoted in the *Seventh Letter*. Plato primarily uses the derivatives τιμωρία and τιμωρέω. The compound adjective τιμωρός

³⁰⁹ For Brimo as an Orphic cult title for Persephone, see Graf and Johnston 2007: 133, 155.

³¹⁰ ὡς ὁ τῆς Τελετῆς ποιητῆς Ὀρφεύς φησιν ὁ Θράκιος· **κῶνος καὶ ῥόμβος** καὶ παίγνια καμπεσίγνια, μῆλά τε χρύσεια καλὰ παρ’ Ἑσπερίδων λιγυφώνων. “As Orpheus the Thracian poet of the Mysteries says: **pine-cone, a spinning top**, and jointed dolls, and beautiful golden apples from the clear-voiced Hesperides” (Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2. 17. 2). Clement of Alexandria describes the toys or *symbola* of the Bacchic mysteries in fuller detail: ἀστράγαλος, σφαῖρα, στρόβιλος, μῆλα, ῥόμβος, ἔσοπτρον, πόκος, “a die, a ball, a spinning top, apples, a magic wheel, a mirror, a fleece” (*Protr.* 2. 18). For a full discussion of these toys, see Guthrie 1993: 121. As Albinus (2000: 112n2) explains “the ‘Titanic’ toys are clearly ritual instruments, and the dismemberment may, on the symbolic level, quite safely be regarded as an ordeal in the process of initiation.” For the use of the Titanic toys in Orphic mysteries, see Levaniouk 2007: 175.

³¹¹ For the κίστη in Orphic Mysteries, see Guthrie 1993: 122, Albinus 2000: 156; for the κίστη in Eleusinian Mysteries, see Richardson 1974: 23, Levaniouk 2007.

“protecting, protector, avenging, avenger” and its derivatives originally meant “to preserve or guard τιμή.”³¹² We saw the reconstructed form τιμωρός in column 6 of the Derveni Papyrus in conjunction with the word ποινή. According to Plato, the verb **τιμωρέω** “to take vengeance” is what Achilles does to Hector on behalf of his friend Patroclus.³¹³ In the *Phaedo* (62c), the verb is used of punishment for murder. Likewise, in the *Apology* (39c) we learn that the τιμωρία is more difficult for the murderer than the murdered, and τιμωρία is a response to the death of a loved one (Achilles and Patroclus), but death also follows the avenger (*Apology* 28c). Achilles’ vengeance for Patroclus brings a proportioned death for himself, and τιμωρία is equated with setting down δική. In Plato’s earlier works we learn that τιμωρία means specifically the penalty for the murder of a loved one, which manifests in the form of revenge. This definition is related to the meaning of ποινή.

In the *Laws*, Plato defines τιμωρία as the penalty for murder (853a), but specifically for the murder of kin (866b), and there are “punishments” in Hades (881a). These uses of τιμωρία are similar to ποινή. In Book 10 Plato says the penalties are paid to the gods (905a). The payment of a τιμωρία “penalty” to the gods is evocative of the payment of ποινή to the goddess Persephone in Pindar’s fragment 133. But Plato’s usage of the word τιμωρία is intimately connected with another deity: Dionysus.

In Book 2 of the *Laws* (672b), Plato proclaims that Dionysus established the Bacchic rites in vengeance (**τιμωρούμενος**) because of his stepmother Hera:

³¹² Beekes 2010: 1486.

³¹³ See Plato *Symposium* 180a, *Apology* 28c. In Homer, Achilles’ rage is unleashed after the death of Patroclus, and amid the murder he chooses Trojan youths to kill as a ποινή for the death of his companion: ζωούς ἐκ ποταμοῖο δώδεκα λέξατο κούρους | **ποινήν** Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιάδαο θανόντος. “He chose twelve living Trojan boys from the river as a **blood-price** for the death of Patroclus, son of Menoetius” (*Iliad* 21.27-28). Here the word **ποινήν** seems to have the sense of “revenge” equivalent with **τιμωρέω** rather than the traditional meaning of *Wergeld* exhibited in Books 9 and 18.

{ΑΘ.} Λόγος τις ἄμα καὶ φήμη ὑπορρεῖ πως ὡς ὁ θεὸς οὗτος ὑπὸ τῆς μητροῦς Ἥρας **διεφορήθη** τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν γνώμην, διὸ τὰς τε βακχείας καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν μανικὴν ἐμβάλλει χορείαν **τιμωρούμενος**.

[The Athenian:] A certain **story** and at the same time a tradition slips under in some way, namely that this god [= Dionysus] was **torn apart** with respect to the perception of his soul at the behest of his step-mother Hera; for this reason he establishes both the Bacchic rites and all the mad dancing, in **vengeance** (Plato *Laws* 672b)

The main verb of this sentence (διαφορέω) is traditionally translated as “robbed” or “deprived” of his wits.³¹⁴ The verb διαφορέω is the frequentative form of the more common verb διαφέρω. But because of the Bacchic context of this passage, I argue we can read the verb διαφορέω with a subtext of Bacchic ritual. In Euripides’ *Bacchae*, the Messenger uses the verb διαφορέω to report the ritual act of *sparagmos*: ἄλλαι δὲ δαμάλας **διεφόρουν** σπαράγμασιν. “And other Maenads **were tearing apart** young cows in acts of *sparagmos* (ritual dismemberment)” (739). Euripides uses the same verb in describing the act of ritual *sparagmos* at line 746 and 1210.³¹⁵ In the *Bacchae*, the verb διαφορέω appears to be a technical term for the ritual act of *sparagmos*. Plato frequently uses the noun διάφορος “different,” and the verb διαφέρω, but Plato rarely uses the verb διαφορέω.³¹⁶ Therefore, I argue this usage of the verb διαφορέω indicates that the term is highly marked. Due to the term’s technical usage in Bacchic ritual as indicated by the *Bacchae* and the Bacchic context in which Plato deploys the term, I argue that Plato is

³¹⁴ See Saunders 1970: 113: “There is a little-known current of story and tradition which says that Dionysus was robbed of his wits by his stepmother Hera, and that he gets his revenge by stimulating us to Bacchic frenzies.”

³¹⁵ θάσσον δὲ **διεφοροῦντο** σαρκὸς ἐνδυντὰ “the garments of flesh **were torn apart** quicker” (Euripides *Bacchae* 746); ἡμεῖς δὲ γ’ αὐτῆι χειρὶ τόνδε θ’ εἴλομεν | χωρὶς τε θηρὸς ἄρθρα **διεφορήσαμεν**. “But we at any rate with our own hand seized him and we **tore apart** the limbs of the beast” (ibid. 1209-1210).

³¹⁶ See *Lexicon Platonicum* 515. Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 85c, *Letter* 7, 351b, 337d.

referring to a “secret” alternative interpretation in the same way as he refers to the myth of Zagreus through the marked term ποιινή in the *Meno*.

Plato presents this Bacchic story in the *Laws* as a Λόγος, and in particular it is a Λόγος that “flows under,” which suggests Plato is alluding to a secret or *hieratic* tradition.³¹⁷ To describe the psychological result of Dionysus’ *sparagmos* conveyed in the verb διαφορέω, Plato uses the word τιμωρούμενος, a participle form of the verb τιμωρέω. In Euripides’ *Bacchae* Dionysus commands the Maenads “to punish” Pentheus via *sparagmos* using the verb τιμωρέω in the single marked usage of the word in the play. Likewise, Socrates in the *Apology* says the judges have the power “to punish” using the verb τιμωρέω in a single marked usage within the Orphic eschatological context of the dialogue, as I discussed in Chapter One above.³¹⁸ Because of the semantic and etymological connections between the verb τιμωρέω and ποιινή, I propose that within Orphic-Bacchic contexts both terms can refer to the Orphic Dionysus-Zagreus myth. I argue the marked status of these terms (τιμωρέω, ποιινή) points to the ritualistic importance of their interpretation, and if my reading of a Bacchic subtext of *sparagmos* in the passage quoted from the *Laws* is correct, then there can only be one possible story that Plato is alluding to—the myth of Dionysus-Zagreus.³¹⁹

Plato concludes this Bacchic passage by arguing that wine is in fact not a “punishment” to make humans mad but rather a remedy (φάρμακον) for the health of

³¹⁷ Herodotus at ii.61, 86, 132, 170 uses the formula “it is not pious for me to say” when referring to myth of dismemberment of Osiris (cf. Kahn 1997: 57); This suggests that there was also a certain degree of secrecy involved with the complementary myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus. Burkert (1987: 73) says: “Herodotus [ii.171] considered it a secret although he has several allusions to it.”

³¹⁸ **τιμωρείσθῃ** Euripides *Bacchae* 1081; **τιμωρήσασθε**, Plato *Apology* 41e. See the following sections for a full discussion.

³¹⁹ According to Obbink: “The rise of humankind from rebellion and guilt is re-enacted as an initiatory pattern embedded in the political order and the life-cycle. This pattern is paralleled in Mesopotamian anthropogony and reflected in the imagery of the gold leaves” (Obbink 1997: 51). Albinus (2000: 112) argues the Zagreus myth “alludes to a ritual process of initiation.”

the soul (*Laws* 672d). Plato’s phrasing here is evocative of the Orphic Pelinna leaves, which say, “you have wine as your fortunate honor,”³²⁰ as well as Plato’s Orphic description of the afterlife as an endless symposium.³²¹

II.7 τιμωρία and Underworld Geography

Plato frequently uses the word τιμωρία and its derivatives in eschatological arguments. This section deviates from my central argument in order to point out the ubiquity of Plato’s use of τιμωρία, as well as to point out some of Plato’s geographical descriptions. In Plato’s eschatological descriptions in *Republic* and *Gorgias* we learn that there are “punishments” for the unjust in Hades as well as in life. Glaucon’s brother Adeimantus uses the abstract noun form τιμωρήματα “penalties” (*Republic* 363e). A wrongdoer happens upon τιμωρίας “penalties” (*Gorgias* 472d), and although a wrongdoer is already wretched (ἄθλιος), he becomes more wretched by not paying the penalty (*Gorgias* 472e). But punishment also makes human souls better (*Gorgias* 525b), although that is not the case for Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Tityus: τοὺς ἐν Ἅϊδου τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον τιμωρουμένους, “they suffer punishments in Hades for all-time” (*Gorgias* 525e). In Book X of the *Republic* Plato describes the journey of the warrior Er to the Underworld. Using the words δίκας and τιμωρίας Er describes the “judgments and penalties” of those in Hades before they return to a second life.

³²⁰ Νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε ἄματι τωίδε.εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνεγ σ’ ὅτι Β<ακ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε...οἶνον ἔχεις εὐδαίμονα τιμήνν “Now you have died and now you have come into being, O thrice happy one, on this same day. Tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released you. . . you have wine as your fortunate honor” (Tablet 26a Pelinna Graf and Johnston 2007: 36-37).

³²¹ Plato *Republic* 363cd.

Plato's eschatological emphasis on δικάσιμος "judgement" in the afterlife is typically considered to be a unique fabrication of Plato, which has no Orphic precedent.³²² But the appearance of Minos as a judge in the Underworld is as old as Homer (*Odyssey* 11.568), and the notion of judgment was also a prevalent theme in Greek mystery cults.³²³ The Eleusinian goddess Persephone was understood to be a sort of judge in the afterlife. According to Nicholas Richardson in his masterful commentary on the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, "Either a failure to honour Persephone is classed as ἀδικία or the consequences of ἀδικία could be avoided by honouring Persephone," and "Homer shows traces of a belief in Hades and Persephone as guardians of justice."³²⁴ The fact that Plato innovated a new class of judges in the afterlife based on traditional themes (Minos, Rhadamanthus, *et al.*) is an outcome of the transposition process, but does not discredit Plato's borrowing of Orphic themes, as can be seen in the connection between Plato's geographical representation of judgment in the afterlife and that of the Orphic Gold Tablets.

In the *Gorgias* (524a), Plato says the judges of the Underworld make judgment at a meadow at a crossroads, one path leading to the Isles of the Blessed and the other to Tartarus. This eschatological scheme is similar to the scheme on the longer tablets from Hipponion, Petelia, and Entella (1, 2, 8 Graf and Johnston).³²⁵ The initiate is presented

³²² Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 54.

³²³ For a discussion on the analytical approaches to the authenticity of *Odyssey* 11, see Heubeck and Hoekstra 1989: 77. The dating of Homer's Nekyia is contested by some scholars; see, for instance, Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 84, Johnston 1999: 7n3. For Judgment and Punishment in Orphic cult, see Rohde 1925: 344, Guthrie 1993: 156.

³²⁴ Richardson 1974: 274, 272.

³²⁵ Compare the shorter tablets, which tell the initiate to drink at the Cypress. The cypress functions as a marker or landmark in the Underworld, and does not have an inherent right or wrong significance; the cypress can be used to mark the right or the wrong direction. See Edmonds 2010: 226 for discussion.

with two directions, one to the white Cypress, and the other to the spring of Memory.³²⁶ In the *Laws* (625b), Plato describes the road from Knossos to the temple of Zeus as full of groves of Cypress trees and meadows. Plato depicts the tree as an image of relief from the long road, and he perhaps alludes to the topography of the Underworld of the Tablets where the Cypress offers refreshment for souls. Likewise, scholars contest that there are no guides depicted on the tablets. I argue that the Gold Tablets themselves function as guides for the afterlife. Furthermore, the cypress serves as the guide, since the bright white of the cypress contrasts from the darkness of Hades, thus offering a guiding light in the Underworld.³²⁷ Perhaps we can compare this imagery to Plato's description of the tripartite soul in the *Phaedrus* (253d) where it is the white horse that guides the soul upward to gaze upon the Forms. The soul's horses are yoked in pair and fight with one another which direction to go—and the image of yoked horses moving in different directions recalls the forked path in the underworld depicted on the Gold Tablets. It is the initiated soul that knows the correct path in the Underworld just as Plato's white horse ascends to lead the soul to the banquet of the gods.

II.8 τιμωρία in Plato's *Apology*, *Cratylus*, and *Phaedo*

³²⁶ The tablets from Hipponion and Entella say the cypress is on the right, whereas the Petelia tablet says the cypress is on the left. Edmonds solved this problem by pointing out that “the actual choice (right or left) is less important than the fact that knowing the correct path is the key” (Edmonds 2010: 222).

³²⁷ Compare the *psychopomp* Hermes who leads the souls of the suitors past a white rock, which stands out from the gloom of Hades (*Odyssey* 24.11). Compare *Odyssey* 10.515 for a rock at the entrance to Hades; the “white island” Leuke is where heroes end up in the afterlife (cf. Proclus's epitome of the *Aethiopsis* 26-28). For White Rock in Hades, see Nagy 1990: 224-227. On the “white cyprus tree” in Hades, see Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008: 25-28.

In the previous sections I have pointed out the connections between ποινή and the related forms of τιμωρία, and Plato’s frequent deployment of this specific terminology that I argue can be characterized as Orphic. Finally let us return to Plato’s passages from the *Apology*, *Cratylus*, and *Phaedo* discussed in Chapter One. At the end of his defense speech Socrates equates dying to being released from troubles (ἀπηλλάχθαι πραγμάτων, *Apology* 41d), and he then describes the judges of the *Apology* with the power “to punish” (τιμωρήσασθε, *Apology* 41e). Plato only uses the aorist imperative τιμωρήσασθε once in the *Apology*; it is therefore a marked term, and I argue Plato is drawing attention to it in the same way as he draws attention to the word ποινή, which is only used once in his dialogues.³²⁸ Euripides also uses the present tense imperative τιμωρείσθῃ in the *Bacchae* in a marked usage.³²⁹ But as I have argued the word τιμωρήσασθε also has etymological and semantic connections with ποινή. I contend we can read a veiled reference to the Zagreus myth because of Plato’s use of this specific terminology (τιμωρήσασθε) within the Orphic context that he has established in the *Apology*. I argue Plato uses the word τιμωρήσασθε in order to frame the afterlife judges as Bacchic Maenads.

In the *Cratylus* (400c) Plato attests to the Orphic belief σώμα/σήμα and he incorporates the verbal root of ποινή (τίνω) in his deployment of the form ἐκτίση, the aorist of ἐκτίνω “to pay in full,” a compound of the verb τίνω. I conjecture we can confirm the σώμα/σήμα belief expressed in the *Cratylus* as an authentic Orphic doctrine based on Plato’s use of the verb τίνω. As I have argued the verb τίνω is related to a family of words that express economic ideas of exchange and debt that include

³²⁸ Euripides imbues the Maenads of the *Bacchae* with the same verb (τιμωρείσθῃ, 1081) and the poet also marks the term by its single usage in the play.

³²⁹ Euripides *Bacchae* 1081.

ποινή/τίνω and τιμή/τίω. I propose Plato created an eschatological system imbedded in this family of words that refers specifically to the Orphic central belief of salvation for the soul by paying a debt to Persephone. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates explains the etymology of the word “body” and he explicitly identifies it as an Orphic etymology:

{ΣΩ.} Τὸ σῶμα λέγεις; {ΕΡΜ.} Ναί. {ΣΩ.} Πολλαχῆ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε· ἂν μὲν καὶ σμικρόν τις παρακλίνῃ, καὶ πάνυ. καὶ γὰρ <σήμα> τινές φασιν αὐτὸ εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, ὡς τεθαμμένης ἐν τῷ νῦν παρόντι· καὶ διότι αὐτῷ τούτῳ <σημαίνει> ἂ ἂν σημαίνῃ ἢ ψυχῆ, καὶ ταύτῃ “σήμα” ὀρθῶς καλεῖσθαι. δοκοῦσι μέντοι μοι μάλιστα θέσθαι **οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα** τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα, ὡς δίκην διδούσης τῆς ψυχῆς ὧν δὴ ἔνεκα δίδωσιν, τοῦτον δὲ περίβολον ἔχειν, ἵνα <σφίζηται>, δεσμοτηρίου εἰκόνα· εἶναι οὖν τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦτο, ὡσπερ αὐτὸ ὀνομάζεται, ἕως ἂν **ἐκτείσῃ** τὰ ὀφειλόμενα, [τὸ] “σῶμα,” καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖν παραγῆναι οὐδ’ ἐν γράμμα.

[Socrates:] Do you mean the body? [Hermogenes:] Yes. [Socrates:] This name [*sōma* “body”] seems to me to work in many different ways, and if someone alters it a little, there would be even more. For indeed some say it is the tomb of the soul, as if (the soul) is buried in the present moment; and furthermore because the soul indicates whatever it indicates with it [i.e., the body], for this reason (the body) is also called correctly “sign.” However, **the Orphics**³³⁰ seem to me most likely to have given this thing [the body] its name, since the soul is paying the penalty which it pays, and it has this as its enclosure (i.e., the body), just like a prison, so that it is kept safe (or saved); and therefore that this is the “body” of the soul, just as the thing itself is called, until (the soul) can **pay off what it owes in full**, and it is not even necessary to change a single letter.

(Plato *Cratylus* 400c)

Scholars have long argued that the σῶμα/σήμα idea discussed here is a reference to a central Orphic belief.³³¹ I suggest that the occurrence of the word ἐκτίνω (ἐκτείσῃ) within this specifically Orphic context of *Cratylus* 400c adds to the evidence that the σῶμα/σήμα idea is an authentic Orphic belief. Because ἐκτίνω is cognate with ποινή, I argue that Plato is using the verb **ἐκτείσῃ** as a direct, albeit symbolic reference to the

³³⁰ I translate the phrase οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα, literally, “those men about Orpheus” as denoting a specific group that can be identified as “Orphics.” Edmonds (2013:198) argues that the term “Orphics” is first applied to people in the second century CE, but, as I have argued above, I view Orphism as an active cult with specific beliefs and customs dating as early as Pindar (mid-6th cent. BCE).

³³¹ Rhode 1925: 342, 355n43, 359n73, 484n44, Guthrie 1993: 156-157, Edmonds 2013: 291.

myth of Dionysus-Zagreus. Furthermore, Plato is alluding to three etymologies in this passage: (1) body is “tomb” of the soul, activating one meaning of *sōma*; (2) body is “sign” of the soul, activating a second meaning of *sōma*; (3) the body is what “securely keeps” (*sōzetai*) the soul, like a prisoner in a prison, until his penalty is paid. This third etymology is specifically marked as “Orphic” (οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα), and in that context the etymology is linked to the Orphic *Hieros Logos*. The phrases δίκην διδούσης ... ἕως ἂν ἐκτείσῃ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα indicate both legalistic (in which someone ‘pays a penalty’: implying judgment) and economic contexts (ἐκτείσῃ τὰ ὀφειλόμενα). If the body is a prison in which the soul is held fast until a penalty is paid—a penalty levied by a judge to make good for a specific debt—then, by extension, life in this world is a punishment that can only be escaped through initiation into cult mysteries. Here Plato transposes the Orphic ideas of debt and judgment by deploying an Orphic etymology, and using a form of the verb τίνω.

As introduced in Chapter One, in Plato’s *Phaedo* Socrates explains that the soul’s immortality hinges on an “ancient belief” that men are in a sort of prison. This belief is explicitly presented as a *Hieros Logos* at 62b:

ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος, ὡς ἔν τινι φρουρᾷ
 ἔσμεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ οὐ δεῖ δὴ ἑαυτὸν ἐκ ταύτης λύειν οὐδ'
 ἀποδιδράσκειν, μέγας τέ τις μοι φαίνεται καὶ οὐ ῥάδιος διδεῖν·

The story about these things which is told in secret, that we humans are **in sort of prison** and we certainly must not release oneself from it nor run away from it, seems to be both great and not easy to understand.

(Plato *Phaedo* 62b)

Plato's word ἀπόρρητος "secret" is used elsewhere specifically to refer to the Mysteries,³³² which suggests that Plato is alluding to a "secret" story known only to initiates, and that Socrates is using the authority of this "secret story" to explain why it is not right to kill oneself. The story explains that humans are in a sort of prison (ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ); Socrates then poses a rhetorical question:

Οὐκοῦν, ἦ δ' ὅς, καὶ σὺ ἂν τῶν σαυτοῦ κτημάτων εἴ τι αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἀποκτεινύοι, μὴ σημήναντός σου ὅτι βούλει αὐτὸ τεθνάναι, χαλεπαίνοις ἂν αὐτῷ καί, εἴ τινα ἔχοις **τιμωρίαν, τιμωροῖο** ἄν;

If one of your possessions killed itself when you did not indicate that you wish it to die, would you not be angry at it, and would you not **punish** it, if you had some **punishment**?

(Plato *Phaedo* 62c)

Here, I argue, Plato uses a key Orphic term τιμωρία emphatically within the context of a discussion on the body as a φρουρᾷ "prison." Burkert (1985) argued that Plato's repetitive use of the unusual word φρουρά indicates that this word was a *symbolon* used to indicate a secret interpretation for initiates in Orphic cult.³³³ In his commentary on Plato's *Meno*, R. S. Bluck pointed out that Plato's pupil Xenocrates "associated the body-prison idea with the Titans and with Dionysus."³³⁴ In turn, I contend that Plato's idea of the soul's imprisonment at *Phaedo* 62b is a reference to the myth of Dionysus-Zagreus because in the myth the Titans represent the *prison* for the immortal soul represented by Dionysus. I maintain that the φρουρᾷ indicates the body or Titanic portion following the interpretation of Plato's pupil Xenocrates, and Plato's use of τινι in the *Phaedo* (ἐν τινι

³³² Burkert 1985: 276. Albinus (2000: 156) argues the *aporrheton* was a taboo on divulging or imitating the Mysteries "outside the proper frame of ritual." The rites of Dionysus are called ὄργιον ἄρρητον "a secret rite" at *Orphic Hymn* 52.5 (Athanasakis 1977). See Edmonds 2013: 129 for a different argument, namely that the use of terminology like "secrets" in the context of mystery rites is part of a rhetorical device employed to enhance a speaker's expertise in arcane matters.

³³³ Burkert 1985: 302. On φρουρᾷ as an "unusual word" and therefore marked, see Rowe 1993: 128.

³³⁴ Bluck 1961: 279.

φρουρῶ, 62b) emphasizes the Titans through the indefinite pronoun's suggestion of a certain portion, i.e., the body. This argument follows Yates' detailed investigation into the Titanic origins of men: "the Titans as the principle of separation are responsible for the world of plurality."³³⁵ The Titans as the Hesiodic strivers against the Olympians function as the principle of the separation of the soul from the gods and its banishment into a physical body.

As Burkert affirmed: "the dismemberment of Dionysos was an unspeakable doctrine of the mysteries," I argue that this Dionysus-Titan myth circulated as part of an original secret Orphic initiate myth or *Hieros Logos*.³³⁶ Plato's use of the word τιμωρία within the context of mystery religion indicates that he is using it as an Orphic term. Plato's use of specific terminology (τιμωρία and ποινή) related to the repayment of the soul's "debt" is a philosophical transposition of the ritual function of *symbola* in the Orphic rites of Dionysus.

³³⁵ Yates 2004: 190.

³³⁶ Burkert 1985: 298.

Plato's Orpheus: Concluding Remarks

At the end I return to the beginning with the problem of Plato's *Orphica*. The question of how to read Plato's duplicitious *Orphica* can be read from a Minimalist perspective as Plato's incorporation of polemical or extra-ordinary rhetoric, or from a Maximalist perspective as Plato's reading and incorporation of the foundations of an authentic doctrine. In this thesis I have focused on a collection of Plato's Orphic fragments and followed the Maximalist stance in reading them as references to a unified Orphic doctrine. I have shown that throughout his dialogues Plato systematically borrows and transposes Orphic formulae within eschatological contexts in the pursuit of his own philosophical agenda.

A genuine reading of Plato shows that the philosopher was responding to the Orphic tradition in the eschatological branch of his philosophy. In my thesis I have shown how Plato appropriates Orphic formulae into his own philosophy but additionally I have confirmed the existence of a genuine Orphic discourse by reading Orphic texts in order to read Plato. Because of Plato's systematic deployment of Orphic formulae I have claimed that we can reconstruct a doctrine of the Orphic tradition, and moreover that the consistency in Plato's use of Orphic formulae points to the cohesiveness of the Orphic doctrine. This sacred doctrine or *Hieros Logos* included the belief in the immortality of the soul and its divine lineage, but also its corruption and punishment in the mortal body. This punishment of mortality or the cycle of rebirth, represented by the formula life/death/life, was symbolically represented as *ποινή*, a word which conveys both the

idea of the primordial blood-guilt of the death of Dionysus but also the basic sense of a debt that must be payed off until the initiate becomes redeemed (*apoinos*) and once again dwells among the gods. Plato transforms the elements of this sacred doctrine into the foundations of his own philosophy and as a result we can trace the Orphic tradition through his appropriation of formulae.

I have relied on a philological approach to read Plato's *Orphica* by first identifying specific terminology used formulaically in Orphic texts and then performing a close reading of Plato's frequent use of this same terminology. My approach has revealed a connection between form and function such that Plato's formulaic use of Orphic ritual *symbola* constitutes a ritualization of his philosophy. In Chapter One I set out the idea of a *Hieros Logos* and the use of passcodes or *symbola* in Orphic texts such as life/death/life or body/soul, which I identify as formulae. I showed how Plato invokes a *Hieros Logos* and uses formulae within eschatological contexts in order to promote his philosophical ideas. In Chapter Two I investigated the Zagreus myth and its connections to the Orphic *symbolon ποιινή* and its cognates and I worked specifically toward the arguments of Edmonds because his arguments represent the strongest opposition to the authenticity of a unified Orphic doctrine.

In response to Edmonds' argument I maintain that the word *ποιινή* must have the primary meaning of "blood-price" in Pindar's fragment quoted by Plato in the *Meno* that therefore points to the Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Persephone's son Dionysus. However, I also hypothesize that the word *ποιινή* could have the double meaning of a "blood-price/penalty" and "ritual honor" because the Orphic initiate receives the *ritual honor* of a blissful afterlife after paying the *blood-price*. From this perspective the word

ποινή functions as an Orphic *symbolon* as I have defined it in Chapter One. Orphic *symbola* in particular and Greek words in general often perform this broad semantic function. Both the payment of cultic honors to the goddess for her traumatic rape and recompense paid for the murder of kin involve a debt and payment between two parties. According to Sallustius, the Mysteries interpreted the myth of the rape of Persephone by Hades as the descent of the soul into the body.³³⁷ Therefore, I conjecture that the Eleusinian myth of the rape of Persephone could have been a complementary myth to the Orphic myth of the dismemberment of Dionysus evoked by the term ποινή. The soul represented by Dionysus descends into the body represented by the Titans, just as Persephone descends into Hades. According to this interpretation of the myth, these traumatic experiences (rape and murder of kin) both seem to depict a transformation from the divine into the corporeal. I suggest that the ποινή or “debt” can be interpreted as the Orphic “cult honor” paid to Persephone for both the traumatic crime of her rape and the murder of her son Dionysus. In this sense the Greek verb τελέω “to be initiated into the Mysteries” gains new meaning, since the verb at its earliest usage also meant, “to pay off what is owed,” and thus at its most basic form the Mysteries can be understood as an institution for paying off the primordial debt.

Finally I hypothesize that all of Edmonds’ required strands of the Dionysus-Zagreus myth can be interpreted from column VI of the Derveni Papyrus.³³⁸ The

³³⁷ Sallustius tells us the *Hymn to Demeter* was allegorically interpreted in the Mysteries as the descent of the soul represented by Persephone into matter represented by Hades: ἡ τῆς Κόρης ἀρπαγή μυθολογείται γενέσθαι, ὃ δὴ κάθοδος ἐστὶ τῶν ψυχῶν, “the rape of Κούρη is mythologized to become that which is certainly the descent of souls” (*De deis et mundo* 4.11.5).

³³⁸ Edmonds 2013: 297: “Scholars weave together four strands into this central mythic narrative: the dismemberment of Dionysus-Zagreus by the Titans, the punishment of the Titans by Zeus, the generation of human beings from the ashes of the lightning-blasted Titans, and the burden of guilt that human beings inherited from their Titanic ancestors because of original sin. I argue to the contrary that this ‘Zagreus myth’ (as I will refer to this construct of the four elements) is a modern fabrication.”

dismemberment of Dionysus and the punishment of the Titans are both evoked by the Maenadic subtext of ritualized *sparagmos* by τιμω]ροί (Column VI.4 Tsantsanoglou), and symbolized by the Mystery cult sacrifice of ἀνάριθμα τὰ πόπανα “numberless cakes,” a phrase which evokes the division of Dionysus by the Titans. The anthropogony of humans from the Titans is alluded to by the appearance of the Eumenides, who according to Hesiod were the offspring of the Titans Gaia and Kronos.³³⁹ The Dionysian aspect of the anthropogony is indicated by the use of *daimones* in the column because according to Plato, in the context of discussing the Bacchic afterlife in the *Phaedo*, a *daimon* is a personal soul; moreover, according to Euripides, Dionysus is called a δαίμων in Bacchic cult.³⁴⁰ I suggest a *daimon* as a personal soul in Plato’s terms can be interpreted as the microcosmic portion of the macrocosmic *daimon* Dionysus. In column VI the Eumenides are explicitly called divine through the designation *daimones*, but they also retain their Titanic origin. Finally, the inherited guilt can be inferred from the use of the Orphic term ποιινή.

I have demonstrated a view of Orphism independent from the historical Orpheus and a definition for Plato’s *Orphica* separate from Plato’s negative view of Orpheus. Plato was not only assimilating and transposing Orphic teachings, but he was actively participating in Orphic ritual through his use of formulae and thereby transmitting Orphic tradition through his philosophical writings. When all the archeological and literary evidence is brought into perspective, the Mysteries appear to have been a highly organized cult-system with branches spread throughout the ancient Greek world, from

³³⁹ Hesiod *Theogony* 176.

³⁴⁰ See Plato *Phaedo* 107d: “the *daimon* to whom each was allotted in life”; Euripides, *Bacchae* 417: ὁ δαίμων ὁ Διὸς παῖς “the *daimon* is the son of Zeus”; Euripides, *Bacchae* 498: λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός “the *daimon* himself will release you.”

Eleusinian, to Bacchic, and even Pythagorean practices. Scholars have demonstrated that Orphism was a reformation of other mystery cults, and in turn I claim Plato's philosophy was a reformation of Orphic ideas. I maintain that Plato was reproducing Orphic myths; the Platonic doctrine of the immortal and divine soul is an illumination of Orphic doctrine, and therefore investigating Plato's *Orphica* is a most reliable way of reconstructing Orphism.

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