



## CHAPTER 9

### PRECLASSICAL ORPHISM

Eudemus knew a single Orphic theology positing Night alone at the absolute beginning of things; Damascius' testimony is definitive: *Ἡ δὲ παρὰ τῷ περιπατητικῷ Εὐδήμῳ ἀναγεγραμμένη ὡς τοῦ Ὀρφέως οὐσα θεολογία πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἐσιώπησεν, ὡς παντάπασιν ἄρρητόν τε καὶ ἄγνωστον τρόπον <τῷ> κατὰ διέξοδόν τε καὶ ἀπαγγελίαν· ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Νυκτὸς ἐποιήσατο τὴν ἀρχήν.* (In *Primis Principiis* 124, I p. 319.8 Ruelle = OF 28). The reservation implied in the Damascian formulation (*ἀναγεγραμμένη ὡς τοῦ Ὀρφέως οὐσα*) may naturally be his own; it is quite understandable that it should be voiced given the canonic character of Rhapsodic theology in late Neoplatonism and its superior adaptability to the Neoplatonic structure of reality. (Rhapsodic Orphism did not begin its cosmic theogonies with Night). Early Orphic theology, to the contrary, could be made to symbolize that structure only by the assumption of a respectful silence regarding the foremost orders of subsistence (*τὸ νοητόν*). It is however also possible that Eudemus himself qualified the ascription of the Orphic poems to Orpheus in the belief that somebody else (say, Onomacritus) was their real author<sup>1</sup>. Yet the context, the drift of Damascius' reasoning and the formulation itself favour the former alternative.

Aristotle in all likelihood refers to specifically Orphic doctrine with his *οἱ θεολόγοι οἱ ἐκ Νυκτὸς γεννῶντες* (*Metaphysica* Λ, 1071b27). The context there requires the supposition of a single first principle of things. The philosopher argues for the necessity of an ultimate cause of change and criticizes those who assume a primal material principle alone; for how could it produce anything else without an independent actual mover? *Καίτοι εἰ ὡς λέγουσιν οἱ θεολόγοι οἱ ἐκ Νυκτὸς*

γεννῶντες, ἢ ὡς οἱ φυσικοὶ ὁμοῦ πάντα χρήματά φασι, τὸ αὐτὸ ἀδύνατον. πῶς γὰρ κινήσεται, εἰ μὴ ἔσται ἐνεργεία τι αἷτιον; οὐ γὰρ ἢ γε ὕλη κινήσει αὐτὴ ἑαυτήν, ἀλλὰ τεκτονική, οὐδὲ τὰ ἐπιμήνια οὐδ' ἢ γῆ, ἀλλὰ τὰ σπέρματα καὶ ἢ γονή. By the side of the female (material), there must needs be a male (originator) principle in order for something to come out of the former. The point is clearly made, and in a theological context, in *Metaphysica* A, 984a23: ὑποπτεύσειε δ' ἂν τις Ἑσίοδον πρῶτον ζητῆσαι τὸ τοιοῦτον (sc. the cause and principle ὅθεν ἢ κίνησις ὑπάρχει τοῖς οὐσιν), κἂν εἴ τις ἄλλος Ἐρωτα ἢ ἐπιθυμίαν ἐν τοῖς οὐσιν ἔθηκεν ὡς ἀρχήν, οἷον καὶ Παρμενίδης (B13)..., Ἑσίοδος δὲ “πάντων μὲν πρώτιστα Χάος γένητ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, ἧδ' ἔρος, ὃς πάντεσσι μεταπρέπει ἀθανάτοισιν”, ὡς δέον ἐν τοῖς οὐσιν ὑπάρχειν τιν' αἰτίαν ἣτις κινήσει καὶ συνάξει τὰ πράγματα.

Aristotle continues in the *Metaphysics* Λ passage by disposing of the idea that the two distinct, necessarily required prime moments of World-formation could somehow coalesce or combine into one ultimate entity: διὸ ἔνιοι ποιοῦσιν ἀεὶ ἐνεργείαν, οἷον Λεύκιππος καὶ Πλάτων· ἀεὶ γὰρ εἶναι φασι κίνησιν. ἀλλὰ διὰ τί καὶ τίνα οὐ λέγουσιν, οὐδ', εἰ ὠδὶ <ἦ> ὠδί, τὴν αἰτίαν. “They” do not clearly explain why there should be an eternal movement as first principle, nor are they clear about its nature (as Aristotle is with his divine noetic activity, we are by implication led to understand), nor, finally, do they tell the reason why their active principle acts in this rather than in that way.

Aristotle is thus thinking of theologians (θεολόγοι) who posit Night as an exclusive first principle of things. They have also to be pure theologians in his terminology, neither physical philosophers (φυσιολόγοι) nor mixed theologians utilizing simultaneously myth and reason, symbolism and ratiocination (like Pherecydes). He cannot therefore refer to accounts which start with a combination of principles one of which is Night; for in such dualism there is always explicitly or implicitly involved the recognition of the necessity for the existence (according to his terminology) of both material and (form-imposing) effective causality, and the failure to appreciate this is precisely what he is criticizing in the Night-single-originator theory. Furthermore, he may not review here speculations that begin world-formation processes with chaos for according to his view, cosmogonic

Chaos is space as a location for (bodily) being. So *Physica* 208b29: δόξειε δ' ἂν καὶ Ἡσίοδος ὀρθῶς λέγειν ποιήσας πρῶτον τὸ Χάος. Λέγει γοῦν “πάντων μὲν πρῶτιστα χάος γένητ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος”, ὡς δέον πρῶτον ὑπάρξαι χώραν τοῖς οὔσι etc. In *Metaphysica* A, 989a10 he considers the Hesiodic Earth to be the first corporeal entity (φησὶ δὲ καὶ Ἡσίοδος τὴν γῆν πρῶτην γενέσθαι τῶν σωμάτων) which presupposes the notion that Chaos is (non-bodily) space as place for bodies. And so it is put explicitly in *de Melisso, Xenophane, Gorgia* 976b15: ἀλλ' οἶον καὶ ὁ Ἡσίοδος ἐν τῇ γενέσει πρῶτον τὸ Χάος φησὶ γενέσθαι, ὡς δέον χώραν πρῶτον ὑπάρχειν τοῖς οὔσι<sup>2</sup>. Thus Νύξ in Λ 1071b27 cannot cover Χάος as well and all the more so as they are explicitly distinguished from each other immediately afterwards (1072a8), where both are consistent with the requirements of the argument. On the whole, the entire passage is the clearest proof that, for Aristotle, Chaos and Night are alternative beginnings.

Having consequently excluded Chaos-Cosmogonies (Hesiod, Acusilaus) and dualistic Night-Cosmogonies (Musaeus, Epimenides), we are left with early Orphism alone as the known appropriate referent for the Aristotelian phrase in *Metaphysics* Λ, 1071b27, with its nocturnal monism. Certainly the expression may well cover other unknown speculators; but in the circumstances it is more than likely that they would follow Orphic precedent, if not actually belonging to wider Orphic circles. The breadth thereby allowed to the θεολόγοι in the plural does not cancel the unequivocal, essential pointing to Orpheus, the θεολόγος in the singular and par excellence; just as the φυσικοί who uphold the doctrine “ὁμοῦ πάντα χρήματα” are just Anaxagoras<sup>3</sup>.

Aristotle, furthermore, knew only one Orphic tradition, one doctrine and one body of poetry. In *De Anima* A, 1, 410b28 he mentions a view about ensouling and the origin of individual souls as ὁ ἐν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς καλουμένοις ἔπεισι λόγος. With a similar expression (ἐν τοῖς καλουμένοις Ὀρφέως ἔπεσιν) he makes an embryological point in *De Generatione Animalium* 734a18: ἢ ἐφεξῆς (sc. γίγνεται τὰ μόρια, the members of an organism) ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς καλουμένοις Ὀρφέως ἔπεσιν· ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὁμοίως φησὶ γίγνεσθαι τὸ ζῶον τῇ τοῦ δικτύου πλοκῇ. These ἔπη were a single work, or, at least, a unified corpus of hexametre poetry. For Aristotle's possible

reservation (*ἐν τοῖς καλουμένοις ἔπεσιν*) refers at most only to the question of authorship: who was the single author of a single work, or of a unified body of verses. In fact, the very phrase (*ἐν τοῖς καλουμένοις Ὀρφείως* or *Ὀρφικοῖς ἔπεσιν*) implies in any case a single poetic corpus<sup>4</sup>. As to the question of its author, Aristotle in fact believed that the doctrines contained in that work were really Orpheus' own, but according to the common opinion it was Onomacritus who expounded them in poetic form. We are informed about this by Philoponus *In De Anima Comm.* 186.24 Hayduck (in the commentary to the above quoted passage): *λεγομένοις* (*≈καλουμένοις*) *εἶπεν* (sc. Ἀριστοτέλης) *ἐπειδὴ μὴ δοκεῖ Ὀρφείως εἶναι τὰ ἔπη, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖς Περὶ Φιλοσοφίας* (Fr. 7 Rose = Fr. 7 Ross) *λέγει· αὐτοῦ* (sc. Ὀρφείως) *μὲν γάρ εἰσι τὰ δόγματα, ταῦτα δέ φασιν Ὀνομάκριτον ἐν ἔπεσιν κατατεῖναι* (OF test. 188)<sup>5</sup>. And so the scholia to Aelius Aristeides (p. 206 Dindorf [Lobeck *Aglaophamus* I p. 351]): *πρὸ αὐτοῦ* (sc. τοῦ Ὀμήρου) *κμὲν* *γένεονε* (sc. ὁ Ὀρφεύς), *τὰ δὲ δόγματα Ὀρφείως Ὀνομάκριτος μετέβαλε (!) δι' ἐπῶν* (the sense must clearly be that he dressed them in verses).

This Aristotelian statement sounds like a correction also of the Herodotean view that Orphic observances and corresponding *ἱεροὶ λόγοι* are really Pythagorean and, ultimately, of Egyptian provenance (II, 81): *ὁμολογέουσι δὲ ταῦτα* (sc. Egyptian taboos relating to woolen dress) *τοῖσι Ὀρφικοῖσι καλεομένοισι καὶ Βακχικοῖσι, εὐοῦσι δὲ Αἰγυπτίοισι καὶ Πυθαγορείοισι. οὐδὲ γὰρ τούτων τῶν ὀργίων μετέχοντα ὄσιόν ἐστι ἐν εἰρινέοισι εἴμασι θαφθῆναι. Ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος*. Ion of Chios maintained accordingly that some Orphic poetic texts were authored by Pythagoras (36B2 DK). The *ὄργια* with their accompanying *ἱερὸς λόγος* of the Herodotean passage refer clearly to the Orphic *δρώμενα* and *λεγόμενα*. It was a crucial characteristic of Orphism that ritual observances (*τελεταί*), symbolically conceived, were accounted and sustained by speculative explanations or sacred reasons (*ἱεροὶ λόγοι*)<sup>6</sup>. An excellent example of such a mixture of sacred observances, ritual handling of symbols and prayers or hymns is given, albeit in miserable fragmentation, by the Gurob papyrus, OF 31.

Herodotus couples *Ὀρφικά* with *Βακχικά*, because the *Διονύσου Πάθη* and their soteriological significance was a fundamental feature of earliest Orphism. The close connection between Orphism and

Bacchism is implied in Plutarch, *Alexander* 2: *πᾶσαι μὲν αἱ τῆδε γυναικες* (sc. in Macedonia) *ἔνοχοι τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς οὔσαι καὶ τοῖς περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον ὀργιασμοῖς* etc. *Βαχκικά* would actually be that part of Ὀρφικά which relates to chthonic Dionysus and his fate. Here probably belongs what Hippolytus *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* V, 20, 4 (OF 243) relates in connection with the Sethianic Gnostic sect: *ὁ γὰρ περὶ τῆς μήτρας αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ ὄφειος λόγος καὶ <ὁ> ὀμφαλός, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀνδρεία* (i.e. φαλλός), *διαρρήδην οὕτως ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς Βαχκικοῖς τοῦ Ὀρφείως*. The reference will be to the well-known complex (ritualistic, symbolic, mythological) of θεὸς διὰ κόλπου (Gurob papyrus 1 = OF 31, I 24); v. *Ἕμνη Οἰρηκί* 52.11 *ὑποκόλπιε* (*Βακχεῦ, Εὐβουλεῦ, Ἑρικεπαῖε* sc. *Τριητερικὲ Διόνυσε*); in the golden leaf from Thuri OF 32c8: *Δεσποίνης δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας*.

The awesome obscenity of the symbol alluded to is evidenced by Lucian *Alexander* 38 with reference to the prophet Alexander's imitation of Eleusinian proceedings: *εἰ δὲ μὴ πολλαὶ ἦσαν αἱ δᾶδες τάχ' ἄν τι καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ κόλπον ἐπράττετο*. Clemens Alexandrinus testifies to the explicit ritual corresponding to the serpent-womb complex; *Protrepticus* II, 16, 2: *Σαβαζίων γοῦν μυστηρίων σύμβολον τοῖς μνουμένοις ὁ διὰ κόλπου θεός· δράκων δὲ ἐστὶν οὗτος, διελκόμενος τοῦ κόλπου τῶν μνουμένων, ἔλεγχος ἀκρασίας Διός*. He indeed refers the ritual to the mysteries of Sabazius, but the context concerns the Eleusinian mysteries (15.1: *Δηοῦς δὲ μυστήρια* etc.), and part of his point is furthermore to illustrate the august Hellenic mystery cult by identical observances in barbaric worship (*ibid.*: *ταῦτ' αἱ Φρύγες τελίσκουσιν Ἄττιδι καὶ Κυβέλλῃ καὶ Κορύβασι*). Besides, in the passage quoted regarding the mysteric handling of the real or idoloc snake, he mentions the ἀκρασία Διός which he had explained just before; 16.1: *κτεῖ μὲν ἢ Δημήτηρ, ἀνατρέφεται δὲ ἢ Κόρη, μίγνυται δ' αἰθις ὁ γεννήσας οὗτος ἢ Ζεὺς τῇ Φερεφάττῃ, τῇ ἰδία θυγατρὶ, μετὰ τὴν μητέρα τὴν Δηώ, ἐκλαθόμενος τοῦ προτέρου μύσου, πατὴρ καὶ φθορεὺς κόρης ὁ Ζεὺς, καὶ μίγνυται δράκων γενόμενος, ὃς ἦν, ἔλεγχθεῖς. Σαβαζίων γοῦν μυστηρίων* etc. as above. The mythology involved is characteristically Orphic (also in that it makes Demeter mother, and not sister, of Zeus). Cf. Arnobius *Adversus Nationes* V, 21 p. 193.4 Reifferscheid: *ipsa novissime sacra et ritus imitationis ipsius, quibus Sebadiis nomen est, testimonio esse*

potuerunt veritati: in quibus aureus coluber in sinum demittitur consecratis et eximitur rursus ab inferioribus partibus atque imis. Firmicus Maternus *De errore profanarum Religionum* X p. 27.1 Ziegler: Sebazium colentes Iovem, anguem cum initiant per sinum ducunt. Sebazium is also precisely the chthonic Dionysus or Zagreus; Diodorus IV, 4, 1: *φασὶ γὰρ ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Περσεφόνης Διόνυσον γενέσθαι, τὸν ὑπὸ τινῶν Σαβάζιον ὀνομαζόμενον.* (This Dionysus was particularly involuted in obscenity). Cf. Nonnus *Dionysiaca* VI, 164:

*αἰθερίων δὲ δρακοντείων ὑμεναίων  
Περσεφόνης γονόεντι τόκῳ κυμαίνεται γαστήρ,  
Ζαγρέα γειναμένη, κερόεν βρέφος, ὃς Διὸς ἔδρης  
μοῦνος ἐπουρανίης ἐπεβήσατο etc. (sc. as the sixth divine King).*

So Ioannes Lydus *de Mensibus* IV, 51 p. 106.20 Wunsch: *Τέρπανδρός γε μὴν ὁ Λέσβιος Νύσσαν λέγει τετιθηγηκέναι τὸν Διόνυσον τὸν ὑπὸ τινῶν Σαβάζιον ὀνομαζόμενον, ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Περσεφόνης γενόμενον, εἶτα ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων σπαραχθέντα.* Parentage by Zeus and Persephone, the name Zagreus and the Titanic dismemberment of the royal child-god go together.

Above of all - the mysteric Eleusinian *σύνθημα*: *ἐνήστευσα, ἔπιον τὸν κυκεῶνα, ἔλαβον ἐκ κίστης, ἐργασάμενος ἀπεθέμην εἰς κάλαθον καὶ ἐκ καλάθου εἰς κίστην*, is correctly connected by Clemens, *Protrepticus* II, 21, 1-2 to the Baubo incident in the Orphic tradition (OF 52), and the indecent handling (*ἐργασάμενος*) involved<sup>7</sup>. Once more ritual, myth and doctrine are organically connected in Orphism. In the mystic ciste, among other symbols, there was preeminently included the *δράκων, ὄργιον Διονύσου Βασσάρου* (*op.cit.* II, 22, 4). The pious and exact Pausanias testifies to the affinity of Orphism to the Athenian Bean-Hero (*Κναμίτης*) as embodied in a definite body of verses (*τὰ καλούμενα Ὀρφικά*) on the one hand and the Eleusinian mysteries on the other; I, 37, 4: *ὅτι τῶν κυάμων ἀνενεγκεῖν οὐκ ἔστι σφίσι (sc. Ἀθηναίοις) ἐς Δήμητρα τὴν εὐρεσιν. Ὅστις δὲ ἤδη τελετὴν Ἐλευσίνοι εἶδεν ἢ τὰ καλούμενα Ὀρφικά ἐπελέξατο οἶδεν ὃ λέγω.*

To the Orphic *Βακχικά* probably also belong the archetypes for the fragments and testimonies preserved in Macrobius *Saturnalia* I, 18, 12-22 (cf. also I, 17, 42 and 23, 22), OF 237-9, 242 (236 may

come from an Orphic hymn, but could also be incorporated in the *Βακχικά*). The Orphic *Βακχικά* was a definite poetic corpus. Diodorus I, 11, 3 (transcribed by Eusebius Praeparatio Evangelica I, 9, 27d, both in OF 237) distinguishes between the *Βακχικά ἔπη* by Eumolpus and by Orpheus. And indeed Orphic and Eumolpic poetry on Eleusinian matters (the latter putatively an arrangement of the work by Musaeus) are explicitly separated by the Chronicon Parium eps. 14 and 15. The emphasis in the Macrobian passages<sup>8</sup> on religious Heliocentrism must have been after a fashion a feature of early Orphism; it is found in the Derveni papyrus, as early, that is, as the 5th century B.C. (edition by R. Merkelbach, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 47, 1982, separate numeration after p. 300). Thus in Col. IX.9 the *Πρωτόγονος (Φάνης)* is equated to the Sun, considered as cosmic phallus (*αἰδοίου* taken in apposition to *Βασιλέως* and *Πρωτογόνου* in the formulaic locution *βασιλέως πρωτογόνου αἰδοίου*, col. XII, 3) and primal cause of things as they are (v. also XXI, 9-10); in X 2 sqq. Saturn is born to the Sun and the Earth; cf. XI 3-5; XII, 1 and 3-6; it is the cosmic *Νοῦς*, X, 7; XII 8-11<sup>9</sup>.

Such emphasis on cosmogonic Helios creates an interpretative difficulty for the author of the Derveni commentary; for the generation of the Sun would be described rather late in the Orphic poem itself, together probably with the creation of the Moon (and the other astral bodies). On the other hand it is natural and necessary to employ heliac vocabulary in referring to the emergence of Phanes with his unspeakable splendour, and such must have been the case in the Orphic poem. The Derveni philosopher resolves the difficulty by appealing to the mystical aspect of the work: in the beginning the quantity, nature and function of the Sun's substance and activity was in effect determined (cf. Frgm. A.8-10, p1 Merkelbach = 7-9, p. 127 in K. Tsantsanoglou - G.M. Parassoglou, *Heraclitus in the Derveni papyrus*, Studi e Testi per il Corp. d. Papiri fil.gr. e lat. 3; cf. also V, 5-10; the text is in the new numeration Col. IV 4-9, K. Tsantsanoglou, *The First Columns of the Derveni Papyrus*, in A. Laks and G.W. Most (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 94); what followed in the work was put before the actual and explicit reference to the heliac creation because the poet did not want to divulge the mystery to the entire public; when he does mention the first appearance of the Sun, he means (the passage breaks

off); Col. XXI, 9 sqq. = Col. XXV of the new numeration: τὰ νῦν ἔοντα ὁ θεὸς εἰ μὴ ἤθελεν εἶναι, οὐκ ἂν ἐπόησεν ἥλιον. ἐποίησε δὲ τοιοῦτον καὶ τοσοῦτον γινόμενον οἶος ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ λόγου διηγείται· τὰ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐπίπροσθε ποιεῖται οὐ βουλόμενος πάντα γινώσκειν. ἐν δὲ τῷδε σημαίνει...

The occasion on which the Orphic poem would speak in a way that might be literally or allegorically taken to signify the Sun can be variously understood. *Firstly* it might be at the initial invocation of a resplendent divinity for inspiration; cf. *OF* 62 from a later text containing an aboriginal idea:

᾿Ωναξ, Λητοῦς υἱ', ἑκατηβόλε, Φοῖβε κραταίε,  
πανδερκές, θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνάσσων,  
Ἴηλιε, χρυσέαισιν ἀειρόμενε πτερύγεσσι etc.;

cf. further *OF* test. 113. Aeschylus already testified to the especial attachment and devotion of Orpheus to the Sun as the greatest divinity, and attributed his death to the consequent wrath of Dionysus (*Βασσάραι* p. 9 Tr.G.F. Nauck<sup>2</sup>); v. the narration in Eratosthenes *Catasterismi* XXIV pp. 140-1 Robert, e.g. from the Epitome: τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον οὐκ ἐτίμα (sc. Orpheus), τὸν δὲ Ἴηλιον μέγιστον τῶν θεῶν ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι, ὃν καὶ Ἀπόλλωνα προσηγόρευσεν· ἐπεγειρόμενός τε τῆς νυκτὸς κατὰ τὴν ἑωθινὴν ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τὸ καλούμενον Πάγγαιον ἀνιῶν προσέμενε τὰς ἀνατολάς, ἵνα ἴδῃ τὸν Ἴηλιον πρῶτον. ὅθεν ὁ Διόνυσος ὀργισθεὶς αὐτῷ ἔπεμψε τὰς Βασσαρίδας, ὡς φησὶν Αἰσχύλος ὁ ποιητής, αἵτινες αὐτὸν διέσπασαν καὶ τὰ μέλη διέρριψαν χωρὶς ἕκαστον. Naturally, Orpheus' dismemberment is sacrally potent and ambivalent: the punishment is simultaneously participation in the divine fate; the visitation of Dionysus' anger constitutes an assimilation to the bacchic nature, as in Pentheus' case. This is the full meaning of the salutation in the Thurian golden leaf *OF* 32f.3: χαῖρε παθὼν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὐπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις· / θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου (Zuntz A4 p. 329). Death, as the ultimate rending apart is, if absolute, salvation itself.

*Secondly*, the Orphic poem might use the solar imagery and symbolism at the manifestation of Phanes' refulgent, awesome grandeur (cf. *OF* 86; and *OF* 237; v. also *OF* 73 *Πρωτόγονος Φαέθων περιμήκεος Αἰθέρος υἱός*).



Elaborations like those in the Macrobian quotations referred to above, or the distinction of various orders of heliac reality (*νοητὸς Ἥλιος, νοερός Ἥλιος* etc.; cf. Emperor Julian *Εἰς τὸν Βασιλέα Ἥλιον*) presuppose a heliocentrism in Orphism which must have been present right from the beginning in the twin form previously explained. (Cf. the importance of the Sun's role in OF 47, a golden leaf from Thurii). V. the verses in Clemens *Protrepticus* II, 17, 2-18, 1 (transcribed in Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* II, 3, 23) = OF 34 (with the related material quoted there) where the symbolic toys of child-Dionysos are mentioned; cf. Clemens *Protrepticus* II, 18, 1-2 (also in Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* II, 3, 25) = OF 35; v. Philodemus *De pietate* 44 p. 16, 1 Gomperz = OF 36; Callimachus Fr. 43.117, 643 Pfeiffer with the notes; Euphorion Fr. 13 Powell. The story must have been as old as at least Alcmaeonis Fr. 3 Bernabé where Zagreus (-Dionysus) is mentioned as supremest God; he was the sixth king in the Orphic succession of Cosmic rulers. What was new in the 6th century was the soteriological significance of the old myth and (no doubt) corresponding ritual. The religious complex (myth - ritual - soteriological symbolism) as a complete mystery to be revealed to the initiates is presupposed in the sepulchral Orphic-Bacchic gold leaves (for an edition - but with a misleading commentary - of the main body of them v. Zuntz *Persephone* p. 286; 300-5; 328-9; 333; 358-62. Add for the gold plate of Hipponion (Vibo Valentia) v. G. Zuntz, *Die Goldlamelle von Hipponion*, Wiener Studien N.F. Bd. 10; for another from Thessaly v. J. Breslin, *A Greek Prayer* 1977; and for two new and important ones found near Trikala in the same district, v. K. Tsantsanoglou - G.M. Parassoglou, *Two gold lamellae from Thessaly*, *Ἑλληνικά*, τομ. 38, 1987). One more comes from Thessaly, at Pherae (SEG 45.646, v. now Π. Χρυσοστόμου, *Ἡ Θεσσαλικὴ Θεὰ Ἐν(ν)οδία ἢ Φεραία Θεά*, 1998, pp. 208-20 with photo fig. 32b). For the most recent complete edition v. now C. Riedweg, *Initiation-Tod-Unterwelt. Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und narrativen Technik der Orphischbakchischen Goldblättchen*, in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale Für Walter Burkert*, 1998, pp. 360-98.

Already in the classical period there existed a unified body of hexametre verses, an Orphic poem<sup>10</sup> whose composition was

attributed in the main to Onomacritus. The 5th century Derveni text presupposes such a unitary corpus. And so does Hippias' account of one of his own intellectual productions: taking from many poets and thinkers, Greek and Barbarians, the more important and cognate parts, he put together an argument (*λόγος*) novel and varied, 36B6DK = FGtH 6F4. One of those, whose work was so employed, was Orpheus. What exactly we should properly understand by composition cannot be known with precision. Onomacritus was *διαθέτης χρησμῶν τῶν Μουσαίου* (Herodotus VII, 6), he arranged, that is, Musaeic oracles. What such arrangement consisted of, what such composition chiefly introduced, is lucidly suggested by the remark in Plutarch, *De Pythiae Oraculis* 407B: *ἽΟνομάκριτοι δ' ἐκεῖνοι καὶ Πρόδικοι καὶ Κιναιθῶνες ὄσῃν αἰτίαν ἠνέγκαντο <ἐπὶ> τῶν χρησμῶν, ὡς τραγωδίαν αὐτοῖς καὶ ὄγκον οὐδὲν δεομένοις προσθέντες, ἐὼ λέγειν.* In general he there castigates the extreme sophistication of the form and poetic articulation of the oracles to the detriment of the natural colour and accompanying conviction of the divine responses themselves, *οἷον ἀγγεῖα τοῖς χρησμοῖς ἐκ τοῦ προστυχόντος περιπλέκοντες.* Onomacritus was apprehended nonetheless, according to the Herodotean report, for introducing into that corpus a prophecy of his own and was, as a result of such forgery, expelled from Athens by Hipparchus the Peisistratid. But that might have been a calumny by Lasus from Hermione (who reputedly caught him in the act), the important lyric poet celebrated as the founder of the Athenian school of dithyrambic poetry. A rivalry between the two men, partly professional, partly occasioned by Onomacritus' influence on the Peisistratids, may underlie the Herodotean story<sup>11</sup>. In any case, as Herodotus adds, the affair did not diminish the esteem in which Onomacritus was held by the Peisistratids who, having taken him with them in their flight to the Great King after their expulsion from Athens, greatly extolled him to His Majesty: *συναναβὰς ὄκως ἀπικοίτο ἐς ὄψιν τὴν βασιλέος, λεγόντων τῶν Πεισιστρατιδῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ σεμνοῦς λόγους, κατέλεγε τῶν χρησμῶν (ibid).* Herodotus' relation of the alleged forgery may be coloured and biased politically: he would be prone to defame friends of the tyrants and supporters of the tyranny. After all his account adduces one man's testimony, and, what is more, that of Lasus. In addition, what really could be meant precisely by the allegation that Onomacritus was caught in flagrante

delicto, forging an interpolated oracle? One is reminded of similar stories about nationally motivated interpolations in the Homeric corpus.

Onomacritus was also involved in the collection, arrangement and edition of what was circulating as Homer's works, that is, in the Peisistratid formation of the canonical Homeric corpus. Three other poets and early critics collaborated in that major enterprise besides Onomacritus, namely Orpheus from Croton, Zopyrus from Heracleia and Congylus or Epicongylus, an otherwise unknown figure and, in all probability, a corrupt name. Thus we read in the so-called Scholion Plautinum (first edited by Ritschl, *Die alexandrinischen Bibliotheken unter den ersten Ptolemäern und die Sammlung der homerischen Gedichte durch Pisistratus*, 1838, then repeatedly; v. e.g. *Scholia Graeca in Aristophanem* ed. Dübner p. XXII b): Ceterum Pisistratus sparsam prius Homeri poesim ante Ptolemaeum Philadelphum annis ducentis et eo etiam amplius sollerti cura in ea quae nunc extant redegit volumina, usus ad hoc opus divinum industria celeberrimorum et eruditissimorum hominum, videlicet Concyli, Onomacriti Atheniensis, Zopyri Heracleotae et Orphei Crotoniatae; nam carptim prius Homerus et non nisi difficillime legebatur. Cf. the Tzetizian report (in e.g. Kaibel FCG I 20 = OF test. 189), which though perturbed in its first part, is clear on the redactive activity of the literary quattuorvirate: ... οἱ δὲ τέσσαρσὶ τισὶ τὴν ἐπὶ Πεισιστράτου διόρθωσιν (sc. Homer's edition) ἀναφέρουσιν, Ὀρφεὶ Κρωτωνιάτῃ, Ζωπύρῳ Ἡρακλεώτῃ, Ὀνομακρίτῳ Ἀθηναίῳ καὶ Ἐπικογκύλῳ. Congylus and Epicongylus probably represent Κύκλιος and Ἐπικύκλιος sc. Homer, the Cyclic Homer or the one appended to the Epic Cycle. We are thus left with the three other identifiable names and persons as the redactors of the Peisistratid recension of a Homeric corpus, part or addition to the Cycle. The presence of Orpheus from Croton in the circle of Peisistratids was testified by Asclepiades (in all probability the Myrleensis who wrote on scholars, *Γραμματικοί*, FrGrH697F9, cf. F10 and 11); v. *Suda* s.v. Ὀρφεὺς Κρωτωνιάτης ἐποποιός<sup>12</sup>.

It is significant that Orpheus Crotoniates and Zopyrus Heracleota were considered as authors of Orphic works as well (OF test. 177 and 179), just as Onomacritus the Athenian was (OF test. 183, 184, 186, 187, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, in primis 188, the Aristotelian

testimony). The work and collaboration of the three known poets extended to both Orphic and Homeric ground; and their activity was directed to similar ends: they canonised a Homeric and an Orphic corpus from the dispersed members. And just as there existed specific titles for independent Homeric epic poems later incorporated within the unified cyclic body, so we find Orphic verses entitled *Δίκτυον*, *Τελευταί*, *Πέπλος*, *Κρατήρ*, *Ἱερὸς Λόγος*, *εἰς Ἰζδου Κατάβασις*, *Βακχικά*, *Περὶ Δήμητρος καὶ Κόρης*, *Ὕμνοι*. From such preexisting material the Peisistratean Orphic body was composed. Naturally very soon and especially from the Hellenistic era onwards, the contrary process commenced and developed, and works under these titles would have been written elaborating, enlarging, transforming the corresponding portions of the archaic epic. From lesser roots there sprang also the multitude of Hellenistic poems of varied content, astronomical and astrological (*σφαῖρα*, *δωδεκαετηρίς* - *οἱ δεκαετηρίς* -, *ἑφημερίδες*, *γεωργικά*, *περὶ ἐπεμβάσεων*, *περὶ καταρχῶν*, *περὶ σεισμῶν*), divinatory (*ἀμμοσκοπία* *οἱ ἀμνοκοπία* *οἱ ἀμνοσκοπία*, *θυηπολικόν*, *περὶ μαντείας*, *χρησμοί*, *ὠροθυτικά* *οἱ ὠροσκοπικά*), ritualistic (*θρονισμοὶ μητρῶοι*, *καθαρμοί*, *καταζωστικόν*, *κλήσεις κοσμικαί*, *κορυβαντικόν*, *νεωτευκτικά*, *ὄρκοι*, *σωτήρια*, *ἱεροστολικά*), pertaining to sacral natural science (*περὶ φυτῶν*, *βοτανῶν*, *ὄγδοηκοντάλιθος*, *λύρα*, *λιθικά*). (Cf. the list of works in *Suda* s.v. Ὀρφεύς). Seeds of all these, and some developments, were no doubt to be found in the archaic corpus itself. In general, the history of Orphic works parallels the Homeric pattern, in that from a multitude of dispersed pieces a composition emerged which, uniting the disjecta membra, produced a canonical body of poetry. But then the stories diverge. Homer remained unified, while the procreative activity of Orphism (as it was a religious and spiritual movement) continued to produce works of diverse value. In this there is a parallelism with the Pythagorean and Neopythagorean phenomena.

It was to the canonical Orphic corpus that Tatian's source referred; *Oratio ad Graecos* 41 p. 156-8 Otto (= OF test. 183): Ὀρφεύς δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον Ἡρακλεῖ γέγονεν, ἄλλως τε καὶ τὰ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπιφερόμενα φασιν ὑπὸ Ὀνομακρίτου τοῦ Ἀθηναίου συντετάχθαι, γενομένου κατὰ τὴν Πεισιστρατιδῶν ἀρχὴν περὶ τὴν πεντηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα. And so Clemens *Stromateis* I, 131, 1, II p. 81.1 Stählin: *Ναὶ μὴν Ὀνομάκριτος ὁ Ἀθηναῖος, οὐδ' αὖτε εἰς Ὀρφέα*

φερόμενα ποιήματα λέγεται εἶναι, κατὰ τὴν τῶν Πεισιστρατιδῶν ἀρχὴν περὶ τὴν πεντηκοστὴν Ὀλυμπιάδα εὑρίσκεται (repeated by Eusebius *Praep. Evang.* X 11, 30). The source followed by both writers keeps to the Aristotelian view regarding the authorship of the Orphic corpus. Since the transmitted text of all three authors has πεντηκοστὴν ὀλυμπιάδα (580/1 - 577/6 B.C.), this cannot be due to a manuscript error. If *γενομένου* means here the time of birth, the date may be right as it stands (Onomacritus would then be very old when joining the expelled Peisistratids in their visit to Xerxes) provided we accept in a loose sense the two temporal determinations (Diels Orpheus B11 corrects to <πέμπτην καὶ> πεντηκοστὴν (560 BC) to bring them into better congruence). If, however, *γενομένου* bears the more usual sense of floruit, and taking Πεισιστρατιδῶν to refer strictly to Peisistratus' sons, we should emend (for the text of Tatian's source) to, say, πέμπτην καὶ ἑξήκοστὴν (520/1 - 517/6 B.C.).

According to the combined evidence of the sources so far adduced, the archaic, canonical Orphic epic, formed by Onomacritus with the assistance of the two poets from Magna Graecia, Orpheus and Zopyrus<sup>13</sup>, included the following subjects:

*Theogony.* Night as the primal beginning, Eudemus, Aristotle OF 28; 24; - identity and parentage of Graces, Pausanias IX, 35, 5 (= OF test. 192) - Πρωτόγονος, Φάνης, Derveni papyrus (supra). V. the Aristophanic testimony in the Birds.

*Πάθη Διονύσου (Βακχικά).* Titanic dismemberment of chthonic Dionysus and related ritual. Pausanias VIII, 37, 5 (= OF test. 194); Diodorus V, 75, 4; gold lamellae; Gurob papyrus. The soteriological eschatology of liberation from the bonds of necessity, from the grievous cosmic cycle, fits in nicely here, and is well attested.

*Ἐλευσινιακά.* Abduction of Kore, grief and search of Demeter, final reconciliation, corresponding observances, mystery cult. Marm. Parium; Carmen Siculum from a golden leaf (OF 47); Tractatus in the Berlin papyrus 44 (OF 49); Pausanias I, 14, 3 (OF 51): ἔπη δὲ ἄδεται ... Ὀρφείως δέ, οὐδὲ ταῦτα Ὀρφείως ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν ὄντα (hence they belong to the Onomacritean corpus according to the Aristotelian view), Εὐβουλεί καὶ Τριπτολέμῳ Δυσσαύλην πατέρα εἶναι, μὴνύσαισι δὲ σφισι περὶ τῆς παιδὸς δοθῆναι παρὰ Δήμητρος σπείραι τοὺς καρπούς. Dysaulēs is a characteristically Orphic name in this context;

thus we should include in this Proto-Orphic corpus the Clemens-Arnobius Baubo story (OF 52); which again brings in OF 50 with its peculiar Thesmophorian ritual (Sch. Lucianus *Ἐταιρικοί Διάλογοι* 80, II p. 275.23 sqq. Rabe).

*Embryology and cosmogony.* The association of the two is best exemplified in the zoogonical cosmogonies of early Orphism and Pythagoreanism. For the latter v. Chapter 12 *infra*, esp. p. 182 with notes. Aristotle *De generatione Animalium* 734a16 (OF 26): (the organs, members and parts of the animal body either are generated simultaneously, or) ἐφεξῆς ὡσπερ ἐν τοῖς καλουμένοις Ὀρφείως ἔπαισιν ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὁμοίως φησὶ γίνεσθαι τὸ ζῶον τῇ τοῦ δικτύου πλοκῇ. This must have been the subject matter of the *Δίκτυον* (the Net) (OF p. 297), which work characteristically was assigned to Zopyrus, *Suda* s.v. Ὀρφεύς (OF test. 223d), where an alternative ascription to the Pythagorean Brontinus from Metapontion is also registered. - Besides the symbolism of the Net in zoogony, the symbolism of the Robe in cosmogony is further revealed; on this v. *infra*, p. 175 and pp. 288 sqq. n. 57. The work was again attributed to Zopyros (or Brontinus), *Suda*, *loc.cit.* - The force of both symbols resides in the function of intertwining, plaiting, weaving (of great significance in Orphism; cf. *infra loc.cit.*). Epigenes supplied an explanation of the potent symbolism, Clemens *Strom.* V, 8, 49, 3 (II 360, 10 Stählin) = OF 33: τί δ' οὐχὶ καὶ Ἐπιγένης ἐν τῷ περὶ τῆς Ὀρφείως ποιήσεως τὰ ἰδιόζοντα παρ' Ὀρφεῖ ἐκτιθέμενός φησι “κερκίσι καμπυλόχοισι” τοῖς ἀρότροις μὴνύεσθαι (cf. Moschion p. 813 Nauck<sup>2</sup> v. 9: οὐ μὴν ἀρότροις ἀγκύλοις ἐτέμνετο etc.) “στήμοσι” δὲ τοῖς αὐλαξί, “μίτον” (sc. the thread of the warp) δὲ τὸ σπέρμα ἀλληγορεῖσθαι etc.

Epigenes wrote on Orphic poetry; cf. also Clemens *Strom.* I, 131, 5 (=II, 81.11 Stählin): Ἐπιγένης δὲ ἐν τοῖς *Περὶ τῆς εἰς Ὀρφέα ἀναφερομένης* ποιήσεως etc. He explained it allegorically as in the former quotation; and he attributed various Orphic poems to those that he considered as their true authors. Clemens continues in the second passage: *Κέρκωπος εἶναι λέγει τοῦ Πυθαγορείου τὴν εἰς Ἰδοῦ κατάβασιν καὶ τὸν Ἱερὸν Λόγον, τὸν δὲ Πέπλον καὶ τὰ Φυσικὰ Βροντίνου.* As he is an early writer, it is important to notice the works he comments upon as representatively Orphic as well as his ascriptions. He seems to subscribe to the Herodotean view, that Orphism is of Pythagorean origin and nature. Against this, as noted

above, lies Aristotle's contention that Orphic doctrines are of great antiquity, but that they were put into a unified poetic form by Onomacritus. A third, and scholarly, theory was that Orphic poetry existed in a dispersed state, and was unified into corpus by the Peisistratidean triumvirate Onomacritus - Orpheus - Zopyrus.

Epigenes lived before Callimachus; Harpocration s.v. *Ἴων*: ἔγραψε (sc. *Ἴων*) δὲ καὶ μέλη πολλὰ καὶ τραγωδίας καὶ φιλόσοφόν τι σύγγραμμα τὸν Τριαγμὸν ἐπιγραφόμενον, ὅπερ Καλλίμαχος (Fr. 449 Pfeiffer) ἀντιλέγεσθαι φησιν ὡς Ἐπιγένους. That Callimachus testified to an apparently strong opinion attributing the authorship of *Τριαγμός* to Epigenes has been considered as questionable by some modern scholars on more or less flimsy grounds<sup>14</sup>. It should be noted that both Epigenes and the author of *Τριαγμός* ascribed chief parts of the Orphic corpus to specifically Pythagorean origin (the Herodotean theory); Clemens *Strom.* I, 131, 4 (II, 81.10 Stählin) joins the two in this view: *Ἴων* δὲ ὁ Χίος ἐν τοῖς Τριαγμοῖς καὶ Πυθαγόραν εἰς Ὀρφέα ἀνενεγκεῖν τινα ἱστορεῖ; the above-quoted passage about Epigenes follows. Cf. Diogenes Laertius VIII, 8: *Ἴων* δ' ὁ Χίος ἐν τοῖς Τριαγμοῖς φησιν αὐτὸν (sc. Pythagoras) ἔνια ποιήσαντα ἀνενεγκεῖν εἰς Ὀρφέα. These τινά must have been of considerable importance if Pythagoras wished to emphasise their descent from Orpheus himself.

Epigenes lived after Ion of Chius, or was at most a contemporary, as he commented on the use of ἔκπωμα δακτυλωτόν in the latter's *Agamemnon* (Fr. 1 Nauck<sup>2</sup>); Athenaeus XI, 468C. Since the distance between the floruit dates of Ion and Callimachus is less than two centuries of intense, open and fully documented literary activity, Epigenes must have flourished simultaneously or very shortly after Ion; otherwise the opinion regarding his possible authorship of *Τριαγμοί* could not have gained even the minimum of credence consistent with Callimachus taking proper notice of it. As Ion died shortly before 419 BC (Aristophanes, *Pax* 833-7 with *Scholía*), Epigenes should be located towards the end of the 5th century.

The relationship of this Epigenes with his namesake, the Byzantine astronomer and astrologer, is an intricate matter. Seneca in his VIIth book of *Naturales Quaestiones* treats comets. He remarks on the necessity of observations over long periods of time if a coherent theory of comets is to be formed and maintained, especially concerning their astral nature, periodicity and affinity to the other planets or otherwise.

He further considers that neither the Greeks, not even the Egyptians, possessed relevant information on comets on an adequately extended scale, and the tacit assumption is that only Babylonian astronomy might have registered appearances, courses and disappearances of comets sufficiently early and systematically. Yet (VIII, 3) duo certe, qui apud Chaldaeos studuisse se dicunt, Epigenes et Apollonius Myndius, peritissimus inspiciendorum naturalium (natalium Schottus), inter se dissident. Hic enim ait, Cometas in numero stellarum errantium poni a Chaldaeis, tenerique cursus eorum. Epigenes contra ait, Chaldaeos nihil de Cometis habere comprehensi, sed videri illos accendi turbine quodam aeris concitati et intorti. (The same double interpretation of the Chaldaean doctrine regarding the nature of comets is reported in Stobaeus, *Ecloga*, I, 28, 1b, I p. 228.15-229, 4 Wachsmuth. Separately, the second opinion is ascribed specifically to Epigenes *op.cit.* I, 28, 1a, I p. 228.4-5. This latter lemma is taken over by Diels in his construction of Aetius, *Doxographi Graeci*, p. 367 §6<sup>15</sup>).

We have here a major and radical difference of opinion on a question that is characteristically apt to be resolved by systematic celestial observations over long periods of time. As Apollonius' account represents very probably the view that Babylonian astronomers would have formed on the nature of comets after observations of sufficient length and quantity. Epigenes must be excused on the grounds of defective knowledge of Babylonian astronomy, especially in its details. It is important to notice that he gave a particularly incredible, long run for Babylonian astronomical observations: Plinius, *Historia Naturalis*, VII, 193, who calls him gravis auctor in primis. The very existence therefore of such a difference of opinion on such a subject, leads us in the case of Epigenes to a time when the treasures of the Babylonian priestly science of the Heavens was not yet wide open to Greek curiosity, i.e. before Alexander's conquest of the East. It was only then that Callisthenes made known to Greek astronomers the wealth of Chaldaean observations of celestial phaenomena thus supplying the means of more exact theories; Simplicius *In Aristoteles de caelo* p. 506 = p. 226b24 Karsten: ἐκείνων (sc. the preceding astronomers) μήτε τσαῦτα ἐπισταμένων φαινόμενα διὰ τὸ μήπω τὰς ὑπὸ Καλλισθένους ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἐκπεμφθείσας τηρήσεις ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἤκειν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Ἀριστοτέλους τοῦτο ἐπισκῆψαντος, ὡς ἱστορεῖ



*Πορφύριος* ἐτῶν εἶναι χιλίων καὶ μυριάδων τριῶν ἕως τῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνα σωζομένας χρόνων etc. The information is solid, despite Porphyry's uncritical acceptance of widespread rumours concerning the antiquity of Babylonian science [V. Appendix]. Ptolemy also speaks of observations, τῶν ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος διακομισθεισῶν, utilized by Hipparchus and himself, *Syntaxis* I1 p. 340.2. Epigenes' account, as reported (VII, 6; cf. 4) and criticized (VII, 7-10; cf. 5) by Seneca *op.cit.*, resembles Presocratic theorizing on celestial phenomena on the pattern of a Meteorological Astronomy, with the characteristic fusion of celestial and atmospheric processes.

On the whole, it is possible that Epigenes the Orphic Commentator and Epigenes the astronomer with firsthand, but early, knowledge of Chaldaean lore, are the same person. The Pythagorean origin of Orphism fits with knowledge of Babylonian lore and science via the Zoroastrian connection and the Persian Empire. On the other hand, Linforth's identification of him with Epigenes the companion of Socrates who appears in Plato and Xenophon (I.M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus*, pp. 114 sqq.) is a preposterous notion: the only thing we know of this member of the Socratic circle is that he was in bad bodily shape, having abandoned himself to this condition as a result of his total neglect of gymnastics (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* III, 12). He was a son of Crito according to Diogenes Laertius II, 121, but this appears to be contradicted by Plato, *Phaedo*, 59B (where he is said to have been present at the death of Socrates); elsewhere he was a son of Antiphon from Cephisia (Plato, *Apology*, 33e). A work by Stilpo was entitled after him (Diogenes Laertius, II, 120). All of which makes him hardly a credible candidate for our allegorising writer on Orphism.

## APPENDIX

There circulated even worse exaggerations as to the length of time during which astronomical observations of a systematic nature were made and registered; Simplicius *In Aristoteles De Caelo* p. 55b8 Karsten: ἤκουσα δὲ ἐγὼ τοὺς μὲν Αἰγυπτίους ἀστρώας τηρήσεις οὐκ ἐλαττόνων ἐξήκοντα τριῶν μυριάδων ἐτῶν ἀναγράφτους ἐσηκέναι, Βαβυλωνίους δὲ ἑκατὸν καὶ τεσσαράκοντα καὶ τεσσά-

ρων μυριάδων! Berosus spoke generally of various writings carefully preserved in Babylon which cover history extending to more than fifteen myriad years; Berosus' testimony is quoted by Alexander Polyhistor as transcribed by Syncellus *Chronographia* 28A-B = p. 28.17 sqq. Mosshammer: Ἐκ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Πολυίστορος... Βήρωσος δὲ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν Βαβυλωνιακῶν (FrGrH 680 F1 §1) φησι γενέσθαι μὲν αὐτὸν κατὰ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Φιλίππου τὴν ἡλικίαν, ἀναγραφὰς δὲ πολλῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι φυλάττεσθαι μετὰ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας ἀπὸ ἐτῶν που ὑπὲρ μυριάδων ἰε' περιχοῦσας χρόνον περιέχειν δὲ τὰς ἀναγραφὰς etc. (cf. op.cit. 14B = p. 14.26 Mosshamer: Ἐπειδὴ δὲ Βήρωσος... εὐρῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι πολλῶν ἀναγραφὰς φυλασσομένας ἐπιμελῶς, αἱ περιεῖχον ἐτῶν μυριάδας που δεκαπέντε καὶ μικρὸν πρὸς, ἱστορίας τινος etc.). In the extant Armenian version of Eusebius' chronography (I, 2) - if it is rendered correctly in the Latin translation - there occurs a misunderstanding of Berosus' text so that the period of time covered by the histories contained in the Babylonian writings preserved at the age of Berosus is taken to signify the actual dates of the writings themselves; the interval is also markedly exaggerated: Berosus narrat in primo Babylonicarum rerum libro se coetaneum fuisse Alexandro Philippi, compluriumque auctorum codices exscripsisse, qui magna cura Babylone adservabantur jam inde ab annorum myriadibus ducentis et quindecim; quibus codicibus continebantur etc. (Cf. also the German translation in FrGrH *loc.cit.*). What Berosus maintained was that Babylonian history extended back to myriads of years, including naturally mythological history (theogony, cosmogony, the heroic era and the succession of kings). In fact Berosus was remarkably accurate in his reports. He maintained that exact observations regarding astral movements were made and kept in Chaldea from the time of Nabonassar or at least explained why it was that existent observations begun with Nabonassar's reign; Syncellus *Chronogr.* 207B = p. 244.32 sqq. Mosshammer: ἀπὸ δὲ Ναβονασάρου τοὺς χρόνους τῆς τῶν ἀστέρων κινήσεως Χαλδαῖοι ἠκρίβωσαν, καὶ ἀπὸ Χαλδαίων οἱ παρ' Ἑλλησι μαθηματικοὶ λαβόντες, ἐπειδὴ, ὡς ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος (namely ὁ Πολυίστωρ) καὶ Βήρωσσός (FrGrH 680F16<sup>16</sup>) φασι οἱ τὰς Χαλδαϊκὰς ἀρχαιολογίας περιειληφότες, Ναβονάσαρος συναγαγὼν τὰς πράξεις τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ βασιλέων ἠφάνισεν, ὅπως ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ καταριθμησις γίνεται τῶν Χαλδαίων βασιλέων.

Disregarding the explanation of the fact provided, the fact itself is accurate, since all ancient astronomical (and, later, ecclesiastical) computations employ Nabonasar's era and exhibit the *κανὼν βασιλειῶν* starting with the beginning of that king's rule, in 747 B.C. (V. e.g. Ptolemy *Almag.* III, 7; cf. Kubitscek, *Grundriss der antiken Zeitrechnung*, 1927, pp. 57-63). The appreciation of Berossus' basic correctness in his reports aids our proper understanding of an important passage of disputable meaning in Pliny. *Nat.Hist.* VII, 56 (57) §193 (on the antiquity of letters): e diverso Epigenes apud Babylonios annorum observationes siderum coctilibus laterculis inscriptas docet, gravis auctor in primis; qui minimum, Berossus et Critodemus . ex quo apparet aeternus litterarum usus. The numbers, (720,000 and 490,000 respectively) are given assuming a dash over the entire configuration in Latin numerical notation. Nearest to Berossus' number in Pliny come the 480,000 years in Julius Africanus *Chronographia* fr. 1 = Migne PG X, 63 = Syncellus *Chronogr.* 17D = p. 18.4 Mosshammer (...ἢ τὸν τῶν Χαλδαίων λῆρον, τὸ τῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὀκτῶ μυριάδων, τί δεῖ λέγειν;). Also the 470,000 of Cicero *De divinatione* I, 36 (condemnemus, inquam, hos (Babylon has just before been mentioned) aut stultitiae aut vanitatis aut impudentiae, qui quadringenta septuaginta milia annorum, ut ipsi dicunt, monumentis comprehensa continent; cf. II, 97; Lactantius *Institutionum Divinarum* VI, 14, 4). Diodorus II, 31, 9 specifies 473,000 years to Alexander's crossing over to Asia: *περὶ δὲ τοῦ πληθους τῶν ἐτῶν ἐν οἷς φασι τὴν θεωρίαν τῶν κατὰ τὸν κόσμον πεποιῆσθαι τὸ σύστημα τῶν Χαλδαίων, οὐκ ἂν τις ραδίως πιστεύσειεν. Ἐτῶν γὰρ ἑπτὰ καὶ τετταράκοντα (v.l. τριάκοντα) μυριάδας καὶ τρεῖς ἐπὶ ταύταις χιλιάδας εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου διάβασιν γεγονέναι καταριθμοῦσιν, ἀφ' ὅτου τὸ παλαιὸν ἤρξαντο τῶν ἄστρον τὰς παρατηρήσεις ποιεῖσθαι* (cf. XIX, 55, 8). Berossus is also said to have set the interval to the Cataclysm at 120 saros (each saros consisting of 3,600 units of time), i.e., presumably, 432,000 years; Syncellus *Chronogr.* 30A = p. 30.22 sqq. Mosshammer: *ἐν δὲ τῇ δευτέρᾳ* (sc. book of Berossus' work, FrGrH 680F1 §9) *τοὺς δέκα βασιλεῖς τῶν Χαλδαίων καὶ τὸν χρόνον τῆς βασιλείας αὐτῶν, σάρους ἑκατὸν εἴκοσιν, ἧτοι ἐτῶν μυριάδας τεσσαράκοντα τρεῖς καὶ δύο χιλιάδας, ἕως τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ* (cf. op.cit. 38D = p. 39.3-15 Moss. from Abydenus (685 F2) and 39D = p. 40.5-25 Moss. from

Apollodorus (244F83) all drawing on Berosus). This last testimony, in whatever way it may be reconciled with the fifteen myriad years covered in official Babylonian *ἀναγραφαί* according to the same Berosus (Syncellus, 28A-B, as above quoted,<sup>17</sup>), is of the same nature with the latter information: it does not affirm the preservation and actual existence of observations during the entire interval. The formulation in Julius Africanus is loose. What Diodorus says is that Chaldaeans were thought to have started observing the sky and registering the movements of the stars 470,000 years ago, not necessarily that such observations reputedly existed and circulated at his time. In fact his very words entitle us to construe the passage so as to deny the latter assumption for he considers the former statement incredible, which it could not be if putative lists of actual observations for such remote times were really preserved. It is to the same conclusion that Cicero's evidence already leads us, especially in the second passage, illustrating the prior, from the *De Divinatione* (II, 97): *nam quod aiunt quadringenta septuaginta milia annorum in periclitandis experiundisque pueris quicumque essent nati Babylonios posuisse, fallunt; si enim esset factitatum, non esset desitum; neminem autem habemus autorem qui ita aut fieri dicat aut factum sciat.* (And notice also the monumentis comprehensa in the former Ciceronian passage, which implies, or, at least, admits, non-literary remains). The same scepticism is expressed by Favorinus (in the context of a general attack against Chaldaean genethliology) apud Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* XIV, 1, 2: *Disciplinam istam Chaldaeorum tantae vetustatis non esse quantae videri volunt. Sextus Empiricus gives a more definite objection, Adversus Mathematicos V, 105. (Cf. Hippolytus, Refutatio Omnium Haeresium, IV, 7, 2-3).*

The Babylonians claimed the extremest antiquity for their history; they also, naturally, affirmed their knowledge of at least the structuring events in that history. But once their royal and priestly archives were opened to Greek inspection, they could not maintain the availability in their own time of actual records, especially astronomical, from primeval ages. They could only uphold the claim of the past existence of such observations, subsequently lost for one reason or another. Abundant, systematic and more or less precise information on celestial phenomena appeared in Chaldaean fictile tablets from Nabonasar's time onwards. What Berosus and Alexander Polyhistor stated, and

what regular astronomical observation and chronological systematization in post-classical antiquity proves, is supported by modern archaeological discoveries, which include however earlier material from the pre-Assyrian period (cf. O. Neugebauer, *The exact sciences in antiquity*, 1957<sup>2</sup>, §44).

Confusion between what the Babylonians claimed to know about their remotest history (including sporadic information which they possessed on astral positions and movements at correspondingly remote ages in the past) on the one hand, and the actual existence of registered celestial observations on a regular basis (and, subsequently, with a demonstrable impact on chronological matters and astronomical theory) on the other, will account for many of the extravagant claims put forward by, and on behalf of, Chaldaeanism in later times. Pliny in the above quoted passage (VII, 56 (57) §193), or rather his source, succumbed to such impositions. That enormous temporal intervals are meant is shown by his remark: *ex quo apparet aeternus litterarum usus*. We must therefore really read CCCCXC just before, and not CCCCXC. But it is significant to notice that taking the latter figure and subtracting it from Nabonasar's era (747 BC) we arrive at 257 BC, which fits nicely into the reported time during which Berosus issued his influential work. In any case, as we have seen, Berosus confirmed (and attempted to explain the fact) that preserved, exact astral observations start with Nabonasars era in Babylon. Epigenes must belong to an age when one could not easily check the truthfulness of Chaldaean asseverations as to the enormous antiquity of their recorded celestial observations.

## NOTES

1. Cf. the Aristotelian view and expression *infra*.
2. Plutarch remains faithful to the Aristotelian interpretation in conscious opposition to both the Stoic (watery Chaos in perpetual flux) and the Roman-favoured (chaotic mixture or *Urmaterie*) understating of the term; *de Iside et Osiride* 374C: τὸ γὰρ Χάος δοκεῖ χώραν τινὰ καὶ τόπον τοῦ παντὸς ὑποτίθεσθαι (with reference to Hesiod). Sextus Empiricus, as well, preserves the old orthodoxy; *adversus Dogmaticos* IV 478.12 Bekker: οἱ τε παλαιοὶ καὶ τὰ ὅλα διακοσμήσαντες ἀρχὴν τῶν πάντων ὑπέθεντο τόπον, κἀντεῦθεν ὀρηθεῖς ὁ Ἡσίοδος ἀνεφώνησεν

ἦτοι μὲν πρότιστα χάος γένητ', ἀτὰρ ἔπειτα  
γαί' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί,

*Χάος λέγων τὸν χωρητικὸν τῶν ὄλων τόπον. Cf. Phyrthonianae Hyrotyposeis III §123.*

3. Neither Empedocles' cyclic world-processes, nor Anaximander's secretion out of the Indefinite of the basic elemental contrarities suit the argument. The point is different in Λ, 1069b20-24 where the comparison instituted of Anaxagoras with Empedocles, Anaximander and Democritus relates to their having pointed unawares (as Aristotle thinks) to the potentiality of their respective material causes.
4. The use of *καλούμενος* or *λεγόμενος* in such contexts as the one in question (*τὰ καλούμενα Ὀρφικὰ ἔπη*), does not bear the connotation of phrases in modern languages like so-called, sogenannt etc. On the contrary, the basic meaning is of an objective, commonly established and generally accepted, association of a name with a thing. Cf. for a perceptive treatment in connection with the Aristotelian phrase *τὰ λεγόμενα ἄγραφα δόγματα*, Th.A. Szlezák, *On the standard aversion to the Agrapha Dogmata*, in Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2001, pp. 149-50 and 158-60 (translation by L. Guzman and M. Meis). *Τὰ καλούμενα Ὀρφικὰ ἔπη, τὰ λεγόμενα ἄγραφα δόγματα, οἱ καλούμενοι Πυθαγόρειοι* mean the body of poetry called Orphic, the (Platonic) doctrines referred to as unwritten, the thinkers known under the appellation Pythagoreans respectively. Some reservation may or may not be implied in the neutral uses of such phrases. But, first, any such reservation does not impinge on the objective fact which forms the core-meaning of the phrase. And, secondly, what the reservation might be, if there is one, is to be determined separately in each case. For example, it may refer to the question of the real authorship of the poetic corpus in the first instance; to whether those doctrines are absolutely nonexistent in Plato's written works; or to the graduation of relationships that may exist between members of the group signified and Pythagoras as a real person, in other words to how closed and how strictly defined the group was.
5. What follows «λέγει» is Aristotle's testimony, not Philoponus'. Such would be the construal according to the general drift of the passage and its natural acceptance. The change from the *φασίν* of the mss. to the older vulgate *φασίν* is thus unnecessary and misleading; Aristotle recognized, on the one hand, an ancient Orphic doctrinal tradition accompanying the ritual practices clustered around a mythical holy and wise man Orpheus and, on the other, mentioned, and probably indirectly endorsed, the common

opinion (*φασίν*) which would ascribe the authorship of the relevant poetic texts to Onomacritus. As this then was common opinion already in the 4th century (at least in Athens), and supposing that it also received the explicit sanction of Aristotelian, and then Peripatetic, authority, its widespread and rather matter of course acceptance in later times becomes readily understood. Thus Pausanias credits Onomacritus with the institution of secret rituals (*ὄργια*) relating to Dionysus' dismemberment and the authorship of hexameter poetry (*ἐποίησεν*) in which the Titans were introduced as the actors (*αὐτουργούς*) in the Bacchic Passion; VIII, 37, 5: *παρὰ δὲ Ὀμήρου Ὀνομάκριτος παραλαβὸν τῶν Τιτάνων τὸ ὄνομα Διόνυσω τε συνέθηκεν ὄργια καὶ εἶναι τοὺς Τιτάνας τῷ Διόνυσω τῶν παθημάτων ἐποίησεν αὐτουργούς*. Pausanias may indulge for once in hypercriticism regarding the antiquity of rituals and myths connected to Dionysiac dismemberment and its symbolical value for man; but he leaves no doubt that he considered Onomacritus as the author of the *Ὀρφικά*, in which a central part was played by the titanic *Πάθη Διόνυσου*. The work was circulating as authored by Orpheus; Diodorus V, 75, 4: *τοῦτον δὲ τὸν θεὸν* (sc. *Διόνυσον*) *γεγονέναι φασὶν ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Φερσεφόνης κατὰ τὴν Κρήτην, ὃν Ὀρφεὺς κατὰ τὰς τελετὰς παρέδωκε διασπώμενον ὑπὸ τῶν Τιτάνων*. Those *Ὀρφικά* are the same with the *καλούμενα Ὀρφικά* containing Eleusinian material (I 37, 4; 14, 3), where the story concerning the two August Goddesses was related at some length; v. *Chronicum Parium* ep. 14 (Jacoby) = OF test. 221 (the reference to Orpheus is virtually certain). A passage from this (part of the) poem is preserved in the golden leaf from Thuri, OF 47; another, involving characteristic sacred obscenity, in Clemens *Protrepticus* II 20, 1 21, 1 (repeated in Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* II, 3, 30) and, probably independently, in Arnobius *Adversus Nationes* V, 25 (p. 196, 3 Reifferscheid), both quoted with supplementary material in OF 52; cf. also Clemens *Protrepticus* II, 17, 1 = OF50 and *Scholia in Lucianum* p. 275 Rabe). Cf. n. [7].

6. The strong and indispensable connection between sacrificial ritual and theogonic accounts is already attested for the Magian religion of the Persians by Herodotus, I, 132: *διαθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ* (sc. the sacrificer having disposed appropriately the offering) *μάγος ἀνὴρ παρεστῶς ἐπαίδει θεογονίην, οἴην δὴ ἐκείνοι λέγουσι εἶναι τὴν ἐπαιδίην ἄνευ γὰρ δὴ μάγος οὐ σφι νόμος ἐστὶ θυσίας ποιέεσθαι*. It is remarkable that a certain degree of allegorising or symbolic thinking may be presumed to be involved; for what is chanted by the Magus during the sacrifice, i.e. the hymn accompanying the rite (*ἐπαιδίη*), is a theogony according to what the Persians maintain, is a theogony "such as they claim the sacrificial hymn to be".

A closer relationship between Magian religion and Orphism (or Orphic interpretation, which, in view of the dogmatic nature of Orphism, comes to much the same thing) has been recovered in the Derveni papyrus; v. Col. VI of the new numeration, K. Tsantsanoglou, *The First Columns of the Derveni Papyrus*, in A. Laks and Glenn W. Most (eds.), *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 1997, p. 95.

On the more general issue cf. D. Obbink, *Cosmology as Initiation vs. the Critique of Orphic Mysteries*, in A. Laks and G. W. Most (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 39-54. On the typical mixture of cosmology and the ritual characteristic of Orphism cf. L.J. Alderink, *Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism*, *American Studies in Classical Philology*, 8 (Ann Arbor: Scholars Press), 1981. Cf. also R. Seaford, *Immortality, Salvation and the Elements* in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 90: 1-26.

7. V. Vol. I of this work, Ch. 7 and Appendix B.
8. For the ascription of the relevant Macrobian account to Porphyry, v. Fr. Altheim, *Porphyrios Schrift über den Sonnengott* in his *Aus Spätantike und Christentum*, 1951, pp. 1-58 and (the text) 138-52.
9. On the whole subject v. Ch. 11 below.
10. The 5th century commentary in the Derveni papyrus also presuppose such a single Orphic opus. The Homeric quotations (θ 335 and Ω 527-8) in Col. XXII, 4 and 6-7 are not considered Orphic; *δηλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖσδε τοῖς ἔπεσιν ὅτι ἀγαθὴν σημαίνει* means that the word *ἔή* (and not Orpheus) signifies good.
11. Lasus' antagonism to Simonides must have been proverbial, v. Aristophanes *Vespaie* 1410-1. His facetiousness is well illustrated by the stories in Athenaeus VIII, 338b-c. He introduced *ἔριστικούς λόγους* (*Suda s.v. Λᾶσος*).
12. On the whole subject of the Peisistratid recension v. Cauer, *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*<sup>2</sup> pp. 111-135. For the testimonia collected v. R. Merkelbach *Rhein. Mus.* 95 (1952) 23 sqq. For a perceptive handling of the whole issue v. R. Janko in Volume IV of *The Iliad: A Commentary* (general editor G.S. Kirk), pp. 29-32.
13. That Pherecydes the Athenian (*ὁ γενεαλόγος* as distinguished from Pherecydes of Syrus) collected the Orphic poems in one corpus (*Suda s.v. Φερεκύδης* = Fr.Gr.H. 3T2 = OF test. 228) was a rumour: *ὃν λόγος τὰ Ὀρφείως συναγαγεῖν*. He (together with Hellanicus, FrGrH 4F5, and Damastes, FrGrH 5F11) referred Homer's lineage back to Orpheus, OF test. 7 = FrGrH 3F167. That this one at least was the *γενεαλόγος* is shown by the fact that the lineage is detailed (cf. *Suda s.v. Ὀρφεύς*, the full lineage from Atlas downwards according to Charax, with some change in the names). Pherecydes from Athens' acme is put at Olympiad 81, 1 = 456/5



B.C. (3T6): this is too late for the rumoured feat, the composition of a single Orphic text. Maybe some confusion has somewhere been introduced into the accounts. The much earlier Pherecydes from Syrus might have been supposed to have undertaken the collection of Orphic works, by reason of the affinity of his logicomythical, mixed thinking to Orphism's theogony = cosmogony. Significantly the Suda lemma with the information in question puts the Athenian chronologically before the Syrian, reversing the true order. All such claims are rather inferences of presumed connections from noticed similarities.

14. Bergk emended *ὡς Ἐπιγένους* to *ὕπὸ Ἐπιγένους*, Diels wrote *ὡς καὶ Ἐπιγένης*, Jacoby wanted *καὶ Ἐπιγένης* - all unfounded miscorrections. Callimachus reported on Ion's many and multifarious writings in his Choliamb, Suda s.v. *διθυραμβοδιδάσκαλοι*; *Sch. Aristophanes*, *Pax* 835. In the latter passage we read: *ἔγραψε δὲ ... καὶ καταλογάδην τὸν πρεσβευτικὸν λεγόμενον, ὃν νόθον ἀξιοῦσιν εἶναί τινες καὶ οὐχὶ αὐτοῦ*. It is attractive to correct *τριαγμόν* in place of *πρεσβευτικόν*; but the scholium continues: *φέρεται δὲ αὐτοῦ καὶ κτίσις καὶ κοσμολογικός καὶ ὑπομνήματα καὶ ἄλλα τινα; κοσμολογικός* would seem to refer to *τριαγμός*.
15. Further on this subject and on that Epigenes v. P. Schnabel, *Berosos und die Babylonisch-Hellenistische Literatur*, 1923, pp.109-118.
16. Jacoby has posited one (Pseudo-)Berossos von Kos as a different personage for no cogent reasons. We have to do with the same person, the Berossos.
17. One way is e.g. Schnabel's, *op.cit.* p. 251 Fr. 1. Taking the lead from the Armenian Eusebius (where a period of two hundred and fifteen myriad years is mentioned), he reads: *ἀναγραφὰς δὲ πολλῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι φυλάσσεσθαι μετὰ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας ἀπὸ ἐτῶν που <ν,π> ὑπὲρ μυριάδων <σ>ιε περιεχούσας χρόνον*. But this removes the possibility of understanding Berossus so as not to commit him to the view that records of some kind were actually kept in Babylon for 480,000 years. It is far better, if need be, to suspect *ιέ'* but drop *ν,π*, keeping to the Synkellus text as transmitted. After all we do not know how many years, Berossus posited, before the first prediluvian king according to the Chaldaean cosmogony and anthropology narrated in his first book. But if we take into account the passage from Chronographia Barberini (FrGrH 680F3 p. 378 n. 1-12 = Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die Byzantinische Chronographie*, III, p. 199), we may project a number of years equal to 158 time a power of ten. For it reads: *πρώτην πασῶν ἀναγράφουσι τὴν Χαλδαίων βασιλείαν ἄνδρες ἐν παιδείῃ γινώριμοι, Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Πολυίστωρ, Βηρωσσὸς καὶ ὁ Ἀβυδηγὸς καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος* (the scholars we know from Synkellus), *οἱ πρῶτον μὲν ἱστοροῦσιν ἀβασίλευτα ἔτη .ανη'*. (There follows a Christian rationale for this number related to Adam's presumed

930 years and Seth's 128, which make 1058). After these kingless years comes the list of the ten Babylonian antediluvian kings with 432,000 years' duration. The disparity is dissolved by Panodorus' brilliant idea to make an antediluvian year equal to one day. But, reversing the idea, we might assume 1,058,000 kingless years. Adding to all this the time from the Cataclysm to Alexander the Great (of the order of 35,000 years, cf. 680 F5) we arrive at some  $1,058,000 + 432,000 + 35,000 \approx 1,525,000$  years. Something like this could then be the required number in the text under investigation: ἀπὸ ἐτῶν που ὑπὲρ μυριάδων <αφ' αἰε' περιεχούσας χρόνον.