



## PREFACE

The project, whose first fruits are presented here, has a quite simple history after its conception, but a complicated prehistory. In the beginning there was my committed involvement in philosophy as a self-determined discipline. That after a considerable while took me from so-called systematic philosophy (meaning philosophy in its current acceptance) to the history of philosophy, not as history but as different dimensions of philosophizing: and in this atemporal translation of time I was already unawares infused by the ancient spirit. And so I moved from the contemporary scene to the past, from modern philosophy to the ancient, from Neoplatonism to classical philosophy and then to the so-called Presocratic world-thought.

Then came an intense curiosity about religion and especially natural religion. I could not make myself explain the challenging phenomenon away either as mythological projection of (proto)history, or as a social function alone, or as curative objectivization of some psychological need for the irrational. There were representations there of the real in its totality – and a hidden coherence that bore the indices of truth.

These were the two basic threads that wove the robe of my mind. Yes, and a third, infatuation with the perfection of being. Excellence discloses at the other end as much the nature of a thing as (or even more, than) its origin. Dark beginnings and resplendent beauty as an end are (complementarily) revelatory of the essence of existence.

For a thinker who feels more at home with spatial structure than with temporal process, and with final perfection than with inchoate start, it was an irony that I was finally caught by the search for origins. Where philosophy and religion and art met in form and content, there was the question concerning the emergence of intellectual thought

and the birth of science. The rest followed automatically, i.e. as by the nature of things. The problem of rationality self-imposed itself in all its mystery. What is the nature of rationality? Is it a new start in the human mental make-up or a continuous development from the first intimations of what is there of order in the World to transparent knowledge of reality? And is rationality culture-conditioned (or culture-conditioning)?

‘Ο λόγος λέγει τὸ ὄν. Thought reveals the truth of being. And this is also what it does the sacred Word and Act of religion. Myth and rite say reality. In holy Mysteries in particular there is revelation of the hiddenness of being. Being’s intelligibility manifests itself: one sees the luminosity of things.

So the problem was posed for me: the Emergence of Reason from the Spirit of Mystery. The perennial quest for the key to understand the “Myth to Logos” complex. And to study the issue in the ancient Greek context – where a captivating mythology, a classical testament of beauty and an all-pervading, all-disclosing, all-subduing, unique way of thinking combined to create conditions of eternal return.

From the logic, power and efficacy of symbolism, to the logic, power and efficacy of reason – what was the essence of the transmutation? A momentous revolution it certainly happened, but was it the Advent of the totally New, or was it a bringing into the Light of what has fundamentally been operating already in the Dark? In-between houses, examples of “mixed theology” in Aristotle’s view, are naturally of particular interest in this connection.

The study of “mixed” thinking will occupy us in the second volume of this work. Here (volume I) the question is about the Logic of Religious Awareness and in particular about the Logic of Mystery. The purpose is to try to explain what makes religion a testament of truth, a revelation of being out of its hiddenness. In this sense, mystery forms the living core of religion.

In the sequel (volume II), it is precisely the connection between Mystery and Reason that will absorb us. On the one hand the illuminated articulation of mystery in a doctrinal disclosure of the origin, nature and destiny of things demands our undivided attention: Orphism as a repository of such lore and as a major 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. reformation of religion will be investigated. On the other hand the origins of archaic philosophy and its first forms (which still show

exposed their roots) will have to be analysed: early Pythagoreanism and its milieu is aptest object of inquiry to this end.

Getting clearer about ancient Greek rationality enlightens us also about modern European rationality. Comparing and contrasting the two with a view to understanding both better will be the task of the remaining part (volume II). And as our ideas of rationality reflect and express, directly or indirectly, (our perceptions of) the order of existence, that last volume will have to speak about the course of history at this momentous juncture we find ourselves in.

This is no real introduction to the work. Prologue and epilogue will appear in the third volume. Full indices of ancient sources and names will be included in the second volume and an analytical index of subjects in the third.

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The research has been sponsored by the HERACLES GENERAL CEMENT COMPANY S.A. It is a pleasure to thank the Company, and the then Chairman of its Board Mr. Petros Doukas, Deputy Minister of National Economy and Finance, for making this work possible. I hope it answers their expectations. And if they wonder at the scholarly, technical nature of the investigations conducted in this volume and its sequel, I believe they will be amply recompensed by the general and wide-spreading theory of order and rationality that will be expounded in the final volume on the basis of the detailed analyses pursued in the earlier parts of the work. My friend Mr. Petros Doukas knows best what I here intimate, being himself deeply immersed in the study of the “classical” functionality and most essential pragmatism of ancient Greek thought.

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My warmest thanks go to Dr. Christine Fowden for checking the English of this long text. Her mission was next to impossible: she had to preserve the idiosyncratic style while seeing to it that it is correct, if not quite readable, English. She discharged her errand immaculate professionalism, in so far at least as I am concerned. Let the readers impute whatever is awkward or unacceptable in the text to my own (singular) sense of Logos – and stubbornness.

The ancient Greek passages have been textually corrected in the final proof reading by Dr. Costas Makris. For this, and much more, help rendered I register my friendliest thanks to him.

For Mr. Antonis Papadonopoulos, our typesetter and printer, this volume, as well as all the other printed by him for the Institute, speak, I believe, for themselves.

My gratitude to my secretary, Mrs. Aleka Bertsoukli, for her capital expertise and unexampled committedness to our work (and it is ours by now really), cannot be expressed in words: they will sound either weak or hollow.

Patras, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ..... 7

### PART ONE THE LOGIC OF RELIGIOUS AWARENESS

CHAPTER 1  
***MIAΣMA AND ΚΑΘΑΡΣΙΣ***  
PURIFYING IMPURITY  
AND POLLUTED PURIFICATION ..... 15

CHAPTER 2  
**DEATH RITES OF DEFILEMENT** ..... 57

CHAPTER 3  
**DIVINATION AND THE DIVINE ORDER** ..... 68

CHAPTER 4  
**THE LAW OF INVIOLEABLE JUSTICE**  
MECHANISM  
OF SELF-SUSTAINABLE COSMIC ORDER..... 150

CHAPTER 5  
***ΑΡΧΗ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΥ***  
BEGINNINGS IN CYCLIC PROCESSES  
DAY START AND MONTHLY PERIOD ..... 204

CHAPTER 6  
**LUNAR MAGIC AND HECATEAN**  
**CHTHONICITY** ..... 228

PART TWO  
THE LOGIC OF MYSTERY

PRELIMINARY REMARKS .....	241
CHAPTER 7	
BAUBO AND IACCHUS .....	255
CHAPTER 8	
<i>Zeús, Ζαγρεύς, Ἄιδωνεύς</i> .....	393

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A'	
ANCIENT GRAMMATICALS ON <i>ἀλάστ-</i> .....	511
APPENDIX B'	
BAUBO: A CASE OF AMBIGUOUS GENITALIA IN THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES .....	535
APPENDIX C'	
ON DEPILATION: BODY COSMETICS IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY .....	543
APPENDIX D'	
ON MATURATION AND DECAY .....	601
APPENDIX E'	
ON THE PARASITION AND THE HIERON IN THE ROYAL LAW .....	610
APPENDIX F'	
ON THE PYTHION AND OTHER APOLLONIAN SACRED PLACES IN ATHENS ..	618