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Poets as Initiates in the Mysteries: Euphorion, Philicus and Posidippus

For Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones
on his 75th birthday

Introduction

The subject-matter of this paper is the initiation into a mystery-cult of three poets of the Early Hellenistic Period and what that initiation meant for them personally.¹ Two of the poets were contemporaries of Callimachus and Theocritus, while the third belongs to the succeeding generation. The implications of their initiation and the weight they set upon it are considerable for what religion meant to poets active in the first half of the 3rd century B.C. I shall argue that what is to be learned about the initiation of the three poets goes some way towards correcting the received image of the Hellenistic poet. He tends to be imagined as a deracinated individual who has no real part to play in the life of the community and to whom traditional religious observances mean nothing. Such a conception of the Hellenistic poet leads to his poetry being interpreted as primarily literary in function with perhaps an antiquarian tinge to it. He is supposed to write primarily for the edification of other poets like himself and to have no interest in addressing a larger public.

Alan Cameron has recently delivered a sustained and damaging attack to the belief that the poets of the Early Hellenistic Period withdrew from the world into an ivory tower, where they amused themselves by composing poetry of an erudite and allusive nature intended only to be read in private by members of the select coterie of which they themselves were a part.² Cameron has demonstrated that such a view of Callimachus and his contemporaries cannot easily be sustained. He has shown that Callimachus and his fellow-poets in Alexandria and elsewhere played an important and recognized rôle *qua* poets in public life. One of the great merits of Cameron's work has been to show that the subjects tackled by Hellenistic poets reflect the interests of the wider world in which they lived and that furthermore their poems were composed to be performed in public.

Those who subscribe to the view that the poetry of the Hellenistic Age is a set of purely literary exercises detached from any concern with the real world extend that mode of interpretation to poems with an ostensibly religious subject-matter: they are interpreted as

¹ This paper was originally given in May 1995 at the University of Chicago to a seminar on mystery-cult conducted by H.-D. Betz and E. R. Gebhard. I am indebted to A. S. Hardie of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office for his criticisms of a first draft of this paper and to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones for cleansing a later version of an embarrassingly large number of mistakes. I am under a deep obligation to Christoph Riedweg for his criticism of the paper and for the many pertinent parallels that he so generously provided.

² *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton 1995) 24–70.

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literary performances or as antiquarian essays or a combination of both. It is generally taken for granted that such poems are devoid of religious feeling. The possibility that piety can co-exist with literary sophistication and an enthusiasm for the antiquarian is not very often contemplated. There are two further factors which contribute to the feeling that Hellenistic poetry is devoid of religious sentiment: there is the assumption that in the Hellenistic Age the cults of the city-states are empty husks and that their rituals are mere charades; and there is an assumption, which is never stated or articulated, but is easily enough divined, that since the Hellenistic poets were learned and sophisticated, they could not conceivably feel any sympathy for traditional Greek cult. The effects of such an attitude are to be seen in the verdict that is passed on the six hymns composed by Callimachus: they are generally written off as purely literary concoctions with no connections to cult, created to be recited to a highly-cultivated group or to be read and savoured for their learning in private.³ It has to be conceded that a rather smaller number of scholars have come to a radically different conclusion: Callimachus' ability to capture the excitement and tension of a religious festival must be evidence of the intensity of his own religious feelings.⁴

The assumptions on which the current consensus about the lack of religious feeling in Hellenistic poetry rests need to be examined. This is not the place to perform that task in any detail, but it is appropriate to touch on some of the problems inherent in the assumptions. We should first of all beware of making Callimachus and his contemporaries in our own image, just because we imagine that they are sophisticates like ourselves. They did not necessarily share the agnosticism that many modern intellectuals take for granted. We should not, furthermore, assume that intellectual sophistication precludes a deeply-felt piety and that it cannot be placed with a deft and light touch at the service of such a piety. This brings us to the question of what constitutes the sincere expression of religious feeling. We tend to assume that it has to take the form of a ponderous and emotional declaration of faith; anything less than that or anything humorous is thought to be incompatible with real depth of feeling. It should not be necessary at this juncture to point out the obvious: it is extraordinarily difficult to fathom from their literary creations what the feelings of men and women of whose world we have a very imperfect understanding are about religion.

The idea that the public cults of the Greek city-states no longer answered the emotional and religious needs of men is a widely-shared belief, although it would be difficult to find many historians of religion who would now assent to it. It circulates amongst those who are not primarily concerned with the history of religion. Its adherents believe that in the Hellenistic Period the religious longings of men were met by the mystery-cults, which were, as it were, the precursors of Christianity. That mystery-cult had a bearing on the way in which Christianity developed is not to be denied. It does not follow that a wedge should be driven between the cults of the state and the mystery-cults: initiation into a mystery-cult does not mean that the initiate neither participated in nor had any feelings about the public

³ So H. Herter, *RE Suppl.* 5 (1931) s. v. Kallimachos 433–34: «Die sechs Hymnen ... sind rein literarische Erzeugnisse: sie sind nicht für den wirklichen Kultus bestimmt, sondern für die Rezitation im Kreise gelehrter Kunstverständiger, vor allem am Hof, und für die Lektüre; darüber kann heute kein Zweifel mehr herrschen.»

⁴ H. Staehelin, *Die Religion des Kallimachos* (Diss. Basel 1934) 55, 58; P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* 1 (Oxford 1972) 662–63. This position is criticized by H. Kleinknecht, «Λοιπὰ τῆς Παλλὰδος», *Hermes* 74 (1939) 348 n. 1.

cults of the state. The relationship between the Athenian state and the cult at Eleusis is well-documented. There were mystery-cults elsewhere that enjoyed the official sanction of the states in which they took place. Foreigners initiated into the mysteries at Eleusis may have seen their initiation as primarily a private religious experience, but that can hardly have been how Athenian initiates saw it: they were not only initiated, but took part in a major Athenian public occasion. Something similar may have been true in other cities such as Olbia in which there was an officially-sanctioned cult of Demeter, Kore and Iacchos. Finally, it is not at all clear that the Hellenistic Age saw a new and deepened interest in mystery-cult. Mystery-cults had been in existence since at least the late 6th century B.C. and were widely dispersed throughout the Greek-speaking world. Initiation into a mystery-cult is, accordingly, not an expression of dissatisfaction with traditional religious forms. Those who were initiated did not have to forswear any previous religious allegiances that they may have had: initiation into a mystery-cult was entirely compatible with public religious observance. It had nothing in common with the exclusive character of modern cults. Nor were those who were initiated into a mystery-cult taking a new and revolutionary step. By the Hellenistic Age mystery-cult was itself sanctified by tradition.

The initiation of three poets of the Early Hellenistic Age is, accordingly, presumptive evidence that the poets in question were not alienated from traditional religion, but that it still had meaning for them. The evidence for their initiation is to be found in three poems of very different character. A correct understanding of two of the poems has only become possible in the past few years with the discovery of additional examples of the gold lamellae that initiates bore with them to the grave. The lamellae were placed on the chests or in the mouths or perhaps in the hands of dead initiates in the mysteries when they were laid in the grave.⁵ The new lamellae that have been published come from Sicily, Southern Italy, Thessaly and Macedonia.⁶ A lamella is also known to have been found on Lesbos. Its publication is most eagerly awaited. The lamellae span a period of time that stretches from the late 5th century B.C. to the Hellenistic Period. Some of the lamellae function as passports explicitly testifying to the credentials of the bearer as an initiate. Others record no more than the name of the initiate. That was presumably thought to be enough, if the lamellae took the form of a leaf signifying initiation into the mysteries, to convince Persephone that the bearer should be allowed entrance to that part of the Underworld set aside for pious initiates. One of the most recently published of the lamellae comes from Pherae in Thessaly and has on it secret mystical terms that are referred to as *σμήβωλα*.⁷ It was no doubt meant to let Persephone, who goes under the name of Brimo on the tablet, know that the bearer had been initiated into the

⁵ I cite the older texts according to the arrangement of Günther Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford 1971) and the more recent texts from Hipponium and Pella from SEG, since I do not have access to G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Le laminae d'oro orfiche* (Milan 1993). The Orphic fragments collected by Otto Kern in *Orphicorum fragmenta* (Berlin 1922) will be referred to as OF.

⁶ The two most recently published lamellae with substantial texts on them are from a grave of the 2nd half of the 4th century B.C. excavated in 1970 in the south cemetery at Pherae (Pavlos Chrysostomou, *Ἡ Θροαστικὴ Θρὰ Ἐν(ν)οδία ἢ Φεραία Θρὰ* [Diss. Thessalonica 1991] 375–77) and from south-central Sicily (Jiri Frel, «Una nuova laminella orfica», *Eirene* 30 [1994] 183–84). For a text of the Thessalian lamella, see Sarah Iles Johnston and Timothy J. McNiven, «Dionysos and the Underworld in Toledo», *MH* 53 (1996) 33 n. 31.

⁷ The lamella from Sicily, belonging to the same tradition as B 1–8 Zuntz, published by Frel (n. 6) has *σμήβωλα* at the beginning of a line (5) in the second column.

innermost secrets of the mysteries.⁸ Those lamellae with more extensive texts inscribed on them served not only as passports, but gave the deceased instructions on how he should make his way through the Underworld.

While the gold tablets help illuminate the meaning of the three poems, the poems for their part enable us to answer some of the questions that the tablets raise. One of the questions raised is who the initiates were. More specifically, we should like to know whether initiation was a mark of social distinction, what the cultural level was of the persons initiated, whether the initiates felt that initiation gave them a certain moral tone, where they were initiated, why they were initiated and what benefits they felt they received from initiation. It is, accordingly, a matter of some consequence to demonstrate that three poets, prominent in the 3rd century B.C., not only were initiated into the mysteries, but apparently received spiritual sustenance from the knowledge that they had been initiated. Their example helps immeasurably to illustrate the religious life of one not insignificant section of the public in the Hellenistic Period.

Posidippus, Philicus and Euphorion are on the face of it a motley crew: Philicus and Posidippus were both drawn to the Alexandria of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Philicus from Corcyra and Posidippus from his native Pella. The former is known primarily as a tragic poet; the fame of the latter rests on his epigrams. Euphorion belongs to the next generation and comes from Chalcis in Euboea. His production, so far as we can understand it, is reminiscent of Callimachus: learned epyllia, at least one curse-poem and some epigrams. He has no known connections with Alexandria. He enjoyed the patronage of Antiochus III at Antioch. He was granted Athenian citizenship and died in Athens, where he was buried. At first glance, accordingly, the trio seem to have little in common beyond being poets. That might encourage the supposition that it was because they were poets that they were initiated into the mysteries. There is probably something to this, but their initiation was almost certainly part of a much wider social phenomenon.

By way of preface to what will be said about Euphorion, Philicus and Posidippus as initiates and to set it in a somewhat wider literary context, it is worth remarking that the mysteries were of more than passing interest to the three best-known poets of the Early Hellenistic Period, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius and Theocritus. Not much can be made of Callimachus' reproaching his *θυμός* for beginning to tell the story of Zeus' and Hera's anticipating their marriage and of his remarking that in the circumstances it is as well he had not seen the holy rites of the dread goddess (i. e. Demeter), else he had blurted them out also (*Aet.* 3 fr. 75.4–8 Pfeiffer). Cameron has made a persuasive case for a visit on Callimachus' part to Thrace and probably the island of Samothrace also.⁹ There are three known poems by Callimachus whose subject-matter is the Samothracian Mysteries or the Saviour Gods worshipped there.¹⁰ One of them appears to have given an aetiological explanation for the establishment of the mysteries in Samothrace (fr. 115 Pfeiffer). It is true that part of the impetus for Callimachus' interest in this particular set of mysteries is

⁸ For *σμβόλα* used of the secret expressions taught initiates, cf. *P. Gurob* 1.23 = *OF* 31.23; *Plut. Cons. ad uxor.* 611d.

⁹ Cameron (n. 2) 211–12.

¹⁰ *Frs.* 115, 199, 723 Pfeiffer, *A.P.* 6.301. For a succinct account of the history of the sanctuary in Samothrace down to the Hellenistic Period, see Walter Burkert, «Concordia discors: the literary and the archaeological evidence on the sanctuary of Samothrace,» in *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, eds. Nanno Marinatos and Robin Hägg (London and New York 1993) 178–91.

probably to be found in the close ties that existed between Samothrace and Arsinoë, the consort of Ptolemy, but that is not necessarily the whole story. There is no reason to think that his choice of the Samothracian Mysteries as a subject for poetry was dictated by a desire to please Arsinoë. Callimachus was after all a Cyrenaean aristocrat, presumably capable of displaying a certain independence of mind.¹¹ Nor again should we imagine that if he wrote on a religious topic, his interest in it was purely intellectual or literary. He should not be cast in the image of a modern agnostic intellectual. We must also be careful to avoid confusing what looks to us to be literary innovation and a departure from traditional hymnodic forms with a changed attitude towards the divine. The chances are that it was as an initiate he wrote the aetiological poem on the Samothracian Mysteries and that it represents an expression of his devotion to the cult. Philicus and possibly also Euphorion seem to have given similar expression to their devotion.

Apollonius in his *Argonautica* has Jason and his companions, while on their way to Colchis, stop in Samothrace to be initiated in the mysteries, so that they may sail safely across the sea. The poet breaks off his account at this point to speak in his own voice to say that he will say nothing more about the mysteries and to express the wish that the island itself and the gods dwelling in it, to whom responsibility for the mysteries has fallen and about whom it is not right for him to sing, may rejoice (1.915–21). It is certainly true that Apollonius interjects a first-person voice into the epic much more frequently than does Homer and in ways that are very different from those of Homer. From that it does not follow that Apollonius' refusal to say more about the gods of Samothrace is a purely literary artifice. Nor again is his praying that no one should be cognizant of what Medea did in performing a sacrifice to Hecate in Paphlagonia and that he should not be moved to sing of it of the same order as his declining to say more about the mysteries on Samothrace (4.246–50).¹² In the former case he interjects his own voice into the narrative to create the suggestion that Medea is performing the illicit form of sacrifice characteristic of sorceresses, whereas in the latter case he speaks as though he knew but was sworn to secrecy (*τὰ μὲν οἱ θέμις ἄμυν ἀείδειν* 1.921).¹³ In other words, he speaks as though he were himself an initiate. I cannot see why this should not be taken at face-value.

Finally, there is Theocritus' affirmation in his 26th Idyll that he feels no concern (*οἷ' ἀλέγω* 27) over the fate of Pentheus, of which he has just told: how he was torn limb from limb, after being caught by Autonoe spying on herself, Ino and Agave when they were taking the holy objects of Dionysus on which the profane may not gaze from the mystic chest. The expression of approval over Pentheus' fate is followed by an exhortation not to be troubled over the lot of whoever is hateful to Dionysus, though the suffering of that person be still worse than that of Pentheus (27–28). The interpretation of a good deal of what Theocritus now proceeds to say presents formidable difficulties, but not his wish that he may himself be ritually pure and that he may be pleasing in the eyes of the pure (*αἰτὸς δ' εὐαγέτοιμι καὶ εὐαγέεσσιν ἄδοιμι* 30) and the statement that matters go better for the children

¹¹ For a discussion of freedom of speech in the courts of Hellenistic monarchs and of independence of mind on Callimachus' part, see Cameron (n. 2) 11–23.

¹² Treated as of the same order by Enrico Livrea, *Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticon Liber IV* (Florence 1973) 84 and Guido Paduano and Massimo Fusillo, *Apollonio Rodio, Le Argonautiche* (Milan 1986) 559.

¹³ Cf. Σ ad 4.247–52: *ἐκ τούτων βεβαίεται δηλῶσαι, οὐ τισιτὴν θυσίαν ἐβούλετο τελεῖσαι ὅποιαν φαρμακίδες ... κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνοσιώτησιν ἐμφάσει κέχρηται, τὴν τὰς φαρμακίας τελομένην θυσίαν μὴ ἐξεργαζόμενος.*

of the *εὐαεβής* than they do for those of the *δυοαεβής* (32). The 26th Idyll is best regarded as a hymn celebrating Dionysus and his mother Semele and her sisters.¹⁴ It was in all likelihood composed for performance at a festival in honour of Dionysus.¹⁵ In the context of a hymn in honour of Dionysus celebrating the punishment of one who violated the secrecy of the mysteries *εὐαεβής* and *εὐοαεβής* are loaded terms and do not just denote the pious and the pure, but pious initiates in the mysteries.¹⁶ It looks then as if Theocritus speaks from within the circle of initiates in the mysteries to affirm his belief in the sanctity of the mysteries and in the appropriateness of severe punishment for those who violate their secrecy.¹⁷

To conclude this section of the argument: it can at the very least be confidently asserted that Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius and Theocritus have more than a passing interest in mystery-cult and are in fact deeply engaged with it. Both Apollonius and Theocritus write as though they belong to the inner circle of initiates. There is no very good reason to suppose that they have adopted a fictitious *persona* and do not speak *in propria persona*. As for Callimachus, it is very likely that he was initiated into the Samothracian Mysteries when he was in Thrace.

Euphorion

The case for Euphorion as initiate into the mysteries is on the face of it the easiest. There is a poem on him in the *Anthologia Palatina* that purports to be a funerary epigram:

Εὐφορίων, ὁ περὶ πολλὸν ἐπιστάμενός τι ποιῆσαι.
 Πειραϊκοῖς κείται τοιοῦδε παρὰ σκέλεσιν.
 ἀλλὰ σὸ τῷ μύσῃ ροιὴν ἢ μῆλον ἀπαρξάει
 ἢ μέριον· καὶ γὰρ ζῶντος ἔκιν' ἐφύλαξε (Gow-Page, *HE* 3558–61 = *A.P.* 7.406).

It is ascribed to Theodoridas, a poet about whom not much can be safely said other than that Meleager included him in his anthology. Two turns of phrase reminiscent of Callimachus and the use of a combination of metres found only in that poet have persuaded the most recent editors that there is little question about his *floruit*, which they would place in the second half of the 3rd century B.C.¹⁸ They may be correct, but it would be wiser to suspend judgment. The epigram says that Euphorion who knew how to compose poetry that was *sans pareil* lies dead here by the Peiraic legs, and then, addressing the passer-by, calls on that person to make an offering to the initiate of a pomegranate, an apple or myrtle-berry, on the ground that while he was alive Euphorion took delight in these fruits.¹⁹ That is to say, that

¹⁴ So F. Cairns, 'Theocritus, Idyll 26,' *PCPS* n. s. 38 (1992) 2–4; cf. R. L. Hunter, *Theocritus and the archaeology of Greek poetry* (Cambridge 1996) 46: 'at least para-hymnal.'

¹⁵ Cairns (n. 14) 17–21 suggests the trieteric festival of Dionysus at Thebes, the Agrionia.

¹⁶ *εὐοαεβής* is regularly coupled with *μύστης* in inscriptions; for *εὐαεβής* meaning 'initiates,' cf. A2–3.6–7 Zuntz: *τῶν δ' ἡμέτερος παρ' ἀγγλὴν Φεραγομένησαν / ὡς με πρόβατον νέμω φέρος ἔς εὐαεβῶν.*

¹⁷ It should be noted here that Cairns (n. 14) 10–13 suggests the speaker is not Theocritus but a chorus of young boys.

¹⁸ A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* II (Cambridge 1965) 537.

¹⁹ As a parallel for *περὶ πολλὸν ἐπιστάμενός τι ποιῆσαι* used in a positive sense of a poet of superlative ability A. S. Hardie compares Thgn. 769–70: *χρὴ Μουσῶν Θεράποντα καὶ ἀγγελον, εἴ τι περὶ πολλὸν / εἰδέειν*. For *περὶ πολλός* predicated of poets endowed by nature with superlative ability, cf. Simylus *SH* 728.

at Euphorion's grave somewhere in the vicinity of the Long Walls, which ran down from Athens to the Peiraeus, in memory of the pleasure which Euphorion derived from being an initiate there are to be laid fruits symbolic of the mysteries.

That is the straightforward explanation of the poem. Gow and Page, who follow the interpretation of the epigram given by Susemihl in his *Griechische Literatur in der Alexandrinerzeit* and endorsed by Maas, suppose that the poem is an attack on Euphorion and that the Peiraic legs, the apple, myrtle-berry and pomegranate are all to be taken in an obscene sense.²⁰ They also would have us believe that the poem was a lampoon written while Euphorion was alive. The vexed problem of where Euphorion was buried is thus in the view of Gow and Page disposed of, since it is irrelevant, if the poem is a lampoon, whether Euphorion was buried in Attica or as the Souda would have it in Syria, in either Apameia or Antioch. Finally, we are told that *περισσόν τι νοῆσαι* could be taken to mean «behave extravagantly, overdo things,» though this is not insisted upon. On this reading of the epigram the mysteries in which Euphorion is an initiate have to be those of Aphrodite. Two further pieces of information are held to support an obscene interpretation of the epigram: 1) there is an epigram ascribed to a certain Crates that makes perfectly good sense as criticism of Euphorion for being too dependent in his vocabulary on the epic poet Choerilus (*ἀλλ' ἐνὶ νῆσιν Χοιρίλον Εὐφωρίων εἶχε διὰ σόματος*), but that can be construed as an attack on Euphorion as a *cunnilingus* (Gow-Page, *HE* 1371–74 = *A.P.* 11.218); 2) evidence of a feud between Theodoridas and Euphorion has been found in the mention in the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria of a work by Euphorion called the *ἀντιγραφαὶ πρὸς Θεωρίδαν*, since that title might easily be a corruption of *πρὸς Θεωφρίδαν* (5.5.47 p. 351 Stählin).

It is certainly true that the mysteries of Aphrodite is a common enough figure for love-making.²¹ There can also be no question that *μηλα* may be used of the female breasts and *μύρτον* of the clitoris.²² The interpreters have been able to find no instance of *ροπή* used *sensu obscaeno*, although they do rather desperately suggest it may be a play on *ροιά* «flux.» To interpret the epigram in this way presents a number of difficulties. In the first place, such an interpretation has to ignore the clear intent of the demonstrative *τοιοῦδε*, which is that the imagined passer-by is standing beside Euphorion's grave in the immediate vicinity of the Long Walls.²³ It may well be that lampoons in the form of funerary epigrams were directed at the living, but in none of the somewhat uncertain examples of the supposed genre collected by Maas is the place of burial specified.²⁴ Secondly, if Euphorion had in life been an eager

²⁰ Gow & Page II.545–46; F. Susemihl, *Griechische Literatur in der Alexandrinerzeit* II (Leipzig 1892) 541; P. Maas, *RE* 5 A (1934) s. v. Theodoridas 1804, idem, «Zu einigen hellenistischen Spottepigrammen,» *SIFC* n. s. 15 (1938) 80 = *Kleine Schriften* (Munich 1973) 98. Further literature in W. Seelbach, *Die Epigramme des Mnasilkes von Sikyon und des Theodoridas von Syrakus*, *Klass.-Phil. Stud.* 28 (Wiesbaden 1964) 83.

²¹ *A.P.* 5.191, 6.162, 7.219.

²² *μηλα*: Ar. *Lys.* 155, *Eccl.* 903, fr. 924; Cratin. fr. 116.3 K.-A.; *A.P.* 5.60, 258, 290, 6.211; Nonn. *Dionys.* 42.312; *μύρτον*: Ar. *Av.* 1100, *Lys.* 632, 1004; Pl. *Com.* 174.14 K.-A.; Ruf. *Onom.* 112; Poll. 2.174. Further on *μηλα*, see B. O. Foster, «Notes on the Symbolism of the Apple in Classical Antiquity,» *HSCP* 10 (1899) 51–55; A. Willems, *Aristophane I* (Paris and Brussels 1919) 403–10; on *μύρτον*, see J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New York 1991²) 134–35.

²³ A difficulty acknowledged by Gow and Page II.546: «It should however be said that *τοιοῦδε*, suitable to the epitaph, is less so to the lampoon.»

²⁴ (n. 20) 81 = 99. To the examples collected by Maas may be added the mocking epitaph that Seneca says he was wont to utter when he passed the Campanian villa in which the ex-praetor Vatia had buried himself in seclusion: *Vatia, hic situs est* (*Ep.* 55.4). I owe the reference to Christoph Riedweg.

initiate into the mysteries of Aphrodite, then what is there that is particularly shame-making or insulting about giving him symbols of these activities? There is no suggestion in the Greek of anything untoward in Euphorion's supposed sexual practices, despite Maas' attempt at pinning a charge of *cunnilingio* on Euphorion by asserting that Crates' *Χοιρίλον εἶχε διὰ σόματος* is a periphrasis for an expression that is not in Theodoridas' epigram, namely, *μύριον ἐφίλει*.²⁵ It can readily be granted that in antiquity to charge a man with being a *cunnilingus* was to subject him to the coarsest form of sexual abuse, but the clear run of sense in Theodoridas has to be altered to extract the practice of *cunnilingio* from the Greek.²⁶ Thirdly, as Laura Rossi has recently pointed out, when the terms *μοσικός*, *μύσις*, *μοσιήριον* and related terms are used in a metaphorical sense, there is always a clear marker of their metaphorical meaning.²⁷ Thus Meleager, addressing Aphrodite, speaks of his being an initiate in *her* mysteries (*Κύνρι, οὐ Μελέαγρος, ὁ μύσις / σὺν κώμῳ, σιτοργῆς σκῆλα τὰδ' ἐκρέμασθαι* A.P. 5.191.7–8).²⁸ Finally, when the word *μηλον* is used of women's breasts, it is not used as here in the singular, but, not surprisingly, in the plural. It would be wrong to say that the sum of these objections amounts to an insuperable obstacle to taking the epigram *sensu obscaeno*, but they do present formidable difficulties in the way of such an interpretation.

If the epigram is taken at face-value, the passer-by is asked to place on Euphorion's grave fruits that are tokens of his initiation into the mysteries. The association with mystery-cult of two of the fruits to be deposited on Euphorion's grave, the pomegranate and the myrtle-berry, need not be dwelt on at any length, since there is nothing problematic about their association. The pomegranate is closely linked with Persephone, and she is very often represented holding that fruit. The myrtle provides the wreath that is most often worn by initiates in the mysteries. Representations on vases of scenes of initiation from the 4th century portray the initiand and the *mystagogos*-figure wearing what are generally taken to be myrtle-wreaths,²⁹ while in the Niinnion-tablet, which belongs to the first half of the 4th century, not only do figures in the three scenes of initiation represented on the plaque wear myrtle-wreaths, but some of them also carry what are conspicuously sprays of myrtle.³⁰

It is not so straightforward a matter to account for the presence of the apple or quince. Quite what its connection with mystery-cult is eludes easy explanation, but it unquestionably had some part to play. There are two pieces of evidence that testify to apples or quinces playing a rôle in the mysteries. Clement of Alexandria, after quoting two verses from an Orphic poem which speak of the fair gold apples of the shrill-voiced Hesperids as one of the playthings with which the Titans tricked Dionysus into going off with them, goes on to give a list of objects, amongst them apples, that are symbols of the mysteries.³¹ To judge from the prohibition against eating pomegranates and apples along with domestic fowl, fish and beans that Porphyry in the *De Abstinencia* says was imposed on initiates in the Eleusinian

²⁵ (n. 20) 80 = 98.

²⁶ Henderson (n. 22) 185; J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London 1982) 81, 135.

²⁷ «Il testamento di Posidippo e le laminette di Pella», *ZPE* 112 (1996) 62.

²⁸ Cf. A.P. 6.162.

²⁹ G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961) figs. 78, 81, 85.

³⁰ Mylonas (n. 29) fig. 88.

³¹ *Protr.* 2.17.2–18.1 = OF 34. M. L. West, *The Orphic Hymns* (Oxford 1983) 155–59 has a commentary on the passage.

Mysteries, apples had some significance in Orphic-Bacchic mystery-cult.³² A *scholium* on Lucian's *Dialogi meretricii* containing a discussion of what happened at the Haloa confirms the existence of these particular prohibitions for the Eleusinian Mysteries and says that they applied also to the women who took part in the Haloa at Eleusis.³³ Also relevant in this connection is the deity found at Selinous, Demeter Malophoros. We may conclude that apples or quinces along with pomegranates played a part in Orphic-Bacchic mystery-cult. Just what it was must remain obscure.

A perfectly coherent account can, accordingly, be given of the funerary epigram for Euphorion based on the assumption that it is a poem about a poet who was an initiate in the mysteries. We cannot be altogether certain that the epigram was not inscribed on a stele surmounting Euphorion's grave, but a literary exercise written sometime after the death of the poet. Even if we grant that the poem was not a real epitaph, it does nonetheless provide the best testimony about where Euphorion was buried.³⁴ The Souda's Apameia or Antioch is likely to be a guess based on Euphorion's presence at the court of Antiochus III.

Besides the epigram we have one other piece of information that makes Athens the most likely place in which Euphorion was buried. Helladius, a grammarian of the 4th century A.D. from Antinopolis in Egypt, says in introducing instances of the *κακοζήλεια* of Euphorion that the poet was by birth a Chalcidian, but by adoption an Athenian (*τῷ ψύσει μὲν Χαλκιδεῖ. θέσει δὲ Ἀθηναίῳ* Phot. *Bibl.* 279 p. 532b).³⁵ Meleager provides a parallel for this usage: in an autobiographical epigram he speaks of his having grown up in Gadara and of his having been taken care of in old age by Cos as a citizen by adoption of the Coans (*κάμῃ θετὸν Μερόπων ἀσπὸν ἐγηγοῦρόφει* Gow-Page, *HE* 3997 = *A.P.* 7.418.4).³⁶ There is every reason to suppose that Helladius preserves a genuine tradition and no apparent reason to think that the story was concocted. The tradition that Euphorion was an Athenian by adoption must mean that Euphorion was granted Athenian citizenship. Such a grant of citizenship was in the time of Demosthenes no small matter.³⁷ So far as we know, it was a privilege equally jealously guarded a century later and basically confined to benefactors of the Athenian state. In Euphorion's case, it is likely it was the credit accruing to Athens in acquiring so important a poet as one of their own that encouraged the Athenians to make him a citizen. The motives of the Coans in making Meleager a citizen of their state will have been similar. The bronze statue set up in honour of Philetas by his fellow-Coans and the

³² Porph. *De abst.* 4.16. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.19.3 attributes the care that women participating in the Thesmophoria take not to eat the seeds of the pomegranate to the belief that pomegranates sprang from the blood of Dionysus when it fell to the ground. The prohibition against destroying and consuming apples as symbols of mystic and secret struggles (*τῶν ἀρρήτων ὄθλων καὶ τελεστικῶν εἰκόνων*) that Julian (*Or.* 8.16 Rochefort) says the Mother of the Gods imposed and the worship and reverence he says was accorded them is likely to be a reflection of Bacchic-Orphic practice. In virtually the same breath, Julian mentions a prohibition against using pomegranates. West's suggestion (n. 31) 159 that «apples were taboo in certain Bacchic mysteries on the ground that Dionysus had been led to destruction by them» is plausible.

³³ Σ in Lucian *Dial. meretr.* 7.4.

³⁴ Cf. Ernst Maass, *Orpheus: Untersuchungen zur griechischen römischen altchristlichen Jenseitsdichtung und Religion* (Munich 1895) 115: «Den älteren Erklärern wird man es nicht zu sehr verübeln, wenn sie Suidas über das authentische Wort der Inschrift stellten und ihm folgend annahmen, der Dichter Euphorion sei in Apameia oder in dem syrischen Antiocheia begraben.»

³⁵ On Helladius, see A. Gudeman, *RE* 8 (1913) s. v. Helladios (2) 98–102.

³⁶ Cf. A. Meineke, *De Euphorionis Chalcidensis vita et scriptis* (Gedan 1823) 5–6.

³⁷ See Philippe Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs*, *BCH Suppl.* 12 (Paris 1985) 151.

statue that Posidippus expected to be awarded in the agora of his native-Pella are a reminder of how much weight cities at this time placed on being the birthplaces of well-known poets: poets might be given the same honours as major civic benefactors.³⁸

The chances are, if Euphorion was an Athenian citizen, that the mysteries in which he was an initiate were those of Eleusis. A further indication that Euphorion was an Eleusinian initiate is perhaps to be seen in the apple and the pomegranate that are to be bestowed on his grave, but it may be that apples and pomegranates were associated with mystery-cults elsewhere. It is more significant that Euphorion's initiation in the mysteries was a sufficiently important element in the life of the poet for an epigrammatist trying in a brief compass to capture something of the essence of the man to single it out for special mention. We have, accordingly, a poet at the centre of whose being was his initiation into the mysteries. The obvious objection to such an interpretation of the poem is that it is not Euphorion himself who bears witness to his religious feelings but someone else. Theodoridas may have misinterpreted the depth of the devotion that Euphorion felt to the mystery-cult of which he was a member, but the notion of a poet devoted to mystery-cult is unlikely to have been a fantasy with no roots in reality.

It is proper at this point to inquire how Theodoridas could have known that the mysteries meant so much to Euphorion. Possible solutions are that Theodoridas knew Euphorion personally or that Euphorion's devotion was widely known. There is also the very real possibility that Euphorion had written a poem in celebration of the mysteries and that the poem is the source of information on which the epigrammatist draws. Euphorion's long epic poem on Dionysus may, for example, have had something to say about the mysteries (frs. 13–15 CA). If that were so, we would have an instance of a very common pattern in the way in which in ancient times the lives of poets were reconstructed from their writings: it was assumed that what the poet had written about in some sense held good for him.³⁹ In the case of a dramatic or epic poet this procedure invariably yields ludicrous results. Theodoridas is less likely to have gone seriously astray in inferring from the poetry of Euphorion devotion to the mysteries.

Philicus

*ἔρχεο δὴ μακάριστος ὁδοιπόρος, ἔρχεο καλοῖς
χώροις εὐσεβέων ὀψόμενος. Φίλικε,
ἐκ κροσσηρεπείας κεφαλῆς εὐνῆμα κυλίων
ρήματα. καὶ νήσοις κώμασον εἰς μακάρων,
εὖ μὲν γῆρας ἰδὼν εὐέσιον Ἀλκινόοιο
Φαίηκος, ὥσιν ἀνδρὸς ἐπισταμένον (SH 980 1–6).*

The next poet to be considered is Philicus, who belongs to the group of tragic poets active in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus known as the Pleiad.⁴⁰ His place of birth was Corcyra, which its inhabitants, probably from at least the first half of the 5th century B.C., identified

³⁸ See Cameron (n. 2) 41, 68; M. W. Dickie, 'Which Posidippus,' *GRBS* 35 (1994) 373–83.

³⁹ See Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Poets* (London 1981) *passim*.

⁴⁰ Stoessl, *RE* 19 (1938) s. v. Philiskos (4) 2379–82; Fraser (n. 4) 11.871–72.

with Homer's Phaeacia or Scheria.⁴¹ The identification seems to have been universally accepted: in the Hellenistic Period, for example, Apollonius Rhodius subscribed to it.⁴² Philicus had left Corcyra for Alexandria, where we meet him in 275/4 B.C. as priest of Dionysus, leading the *τεχνίται* of Dionysus in the Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus (*FGrH* 627 F 2 = Athen. 198b–c). That he was a priest of Dionysus the *Souda* also tells us.⁴³ If the organization of the other guilds of Dionysus is anything to go by, as priest of Dionysus Philicus was president of the guild of *τεχνίται* in Alexandria.⁴⁴

Whether the *τεχνίται* of Dionysus were regularly initiated into the mysteries in which that god played a part we cannot say, but the poem that sends Philicus on his way into the Underworld very strongly suggests he at least was. The poem, addressing Philicus in the 2nd person, bids him *bon voyage* on his journey to see the Lands of the Pious and the Isles of the Blest, after he has had a good view of the happy old age of Alcinous the Phaeacian. What the elegiacs go on to say after this is lost. The poem is preserved in a papyrus now in Hamburg (*P. Hamb.* inv. no. 312 recto. col. ii) to be dated to the middle of the 3rd century B.C. and written out apparently from memory on a piece of papyrus that was later to be used as cartonnage.⁴⁵ The papyrus must have been written very shortly after Philicus' death. Who its tolerably, though not completely, competent author was we do not know.

The poem does not fall under any obvious classificatory rubric. Fraser calls it a lament and takes it to describe the «civilized and easy sympotic life» in which Philicus had as a true Phaeacian participated in Alexandria.⁴⁶ The poem is on this view essentially backward-looking: it laments the death of Philicus by recalling regretfully the good times that he had once experienced in emulating his pleasure-loving Phaeacian ancestor Alcinous. It is natural enough that a poem addressing the deceased in the 2nd person and recalling the pleasures he had once enjoyed should be treated as a lament. Yet lament is hardly the term that suggests itself for a poem in which there is little or no hint of regret or sadness and which seems on the contrary to look forward to a happy and privileged afterlife for Philicus.

Although literary texts afford little help in the classification of the poem, the gold lamellae that dead initiates took with them to the grave do throw some light on how the poem should be classified and what its meaning is. The poem is suffused by the language and ideas that inform the lamellae. I shall argue that the poem has many of the same sources of inspiration as the lamellae and comes out of the same intellectual and cultural matrix. It is very likely that what is inscribed on the lamellae has its origins a) in the words pronounced in the ritual of initiation, b) in the *ἱερὸς λόγος* imparted to initiates during the initiation-ritual and finally c) in what was said at funeral-ceremonies for dead initiates.⁴⁷ It is possible that there was

⁴¹ Thuc. 1.25.4, 3.70.4.

⁴² *Argon.* 4.982–92.

⁴³ s. v. Φίλικος.

⁴⁴ E. E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford 1983) 55–56.

⁴⁵ So U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, «Neues von Kallimachos», *SBAW* (1912) 547.

⁴⁶ (n. 4) 1.608–9.

⁴⁷ I am greatly indebted to Christoph Riedweg for letting me see in advance of publication his careful examination of what is inscribed on the Orphic-Bacchic lamellae. He has succeeded in demonstrating to my satisfaction which sentences have their origins in ritual-contexts and what these contexts are and what sentences or verses are likely to come from an Orphic poem recited as part of the process of instruction (*ναπαίδευσις*) in the ceremony of initiation. His study of the lamellae is to be published in 1998 by Teubner under the title of «Initiation – Tod – Unterwelt: Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und

repetition in the funeral-ceremony of what had been said in the ritual of initiation. However that may be, the hypothesis that what is inscribed on the gold lamellae derives from ritual-contexts throws new light on what is going on in the elegiacs bidding Philicus godspeed.

The first word in the poem is the imperative *ἔρχεο*, which is repeated after the bucolic diaeresis. It is proper to ask what the repetition means. Repetition is a device that performs a variety of functions. Ritual is especially fond of it. The repetition of the imperative might then reflect the language of ritual.⁴⁸ On the other hand, it is the case that anaphora after the bucolic diaeresis is characteristic of pastoral poetry.⁴⁹ There is, however, nothing bucolic about the anonymous poem, nor does Philicus have any known associations with pastoral that would account for the anaphora after the bucolic diaeresis. It is worth noting that anaphora after the bucolic diaeresis is by no means the only metrical configuration in which repetition occurs in pastoral poetry. Furthermore, a pastoral poet may in a non-pastoral poem repeat a proper name after the bucolic diaeresis to give the impression of the language of magical ritual.⁵⁰ In the refrain of an incantation an imperative may be repeated after the bucolic diaeresis to achieve the same effect.⁵¹ Certainty here is unobtainable, but on balance it looks as if the repeated *ἔρχεο* reflects the language of ritual.

We do not have positive evidence for what the ritual-situation was in which the deceased was bidden go on his way to the Underworld, but the notion that there was a ceremony by the graveside for dead initiates in which such a command was uttered is an attractive one. The twice-repeated command to go and Philicus' being called an *ὀδοιπόρος* are strongly reminiscent of the idea found principally in lamellae that the deceased initiate has a particular path to follow to reach his destination in the Underworld. The notion finds its clearest expression in the final two lines of the Hipponium-tablet in which the dead initiate is told that he will go, after being allowed to drink from the Lake of Memory, along the holy road that other initiates and *bacchoi* tread:

narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblättchen,» in: Fritz Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*, pp. 359–398. An abbreviated version in Latin of the study has already been published as «Poesia Orphica et Bacchicus ritus: Observationes quaedam ad lamellas aureas spectantes,» *Vox Latina* 32 (1996) 475–89. A very different interpretation of the lamellae that sees them as spells or incantations intended to influence the Goddess of the Underworld by virtue of their magical powers is to be found in Pierre Boyancé, *Le culte des Muses chez les philosophes grecs*, BEFAR 141 (Paris 1936) 77–80. Two things make Boyancé think the lamellae are designed to enchant: 1) Apollonius of Tyana says that if there were spells of Orpheus for bringing the dead back, he would have liked to have known them (Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* 8.7, p. 321 Kayser); 2) the lamella from Petelia (B2 Zuntz) was enclosed in a small cylinder to which was attached a gold chain. From the latter circumstance Boyancé draws the conclusion that it was an amulet and as such had magical force. Against these inferences it may be objected 1) that Philostratus does not say there were spells of Orpheus for bringing back the dead, and, even if he had said that, Orpheus' magical powers of song are not to be confused with the poems that went under his name, 2) that the Petelia-lamella was enclosed in the cylinder during the Roman Period (Zuntz [n. 5] 355–56) and only then used as a magical amulet and 3) that the lamellae were not hung around the neck, insofar as that has any significance, but placed in the hand or mouth of the deceased or on the chest.

⁴⁸ On repetition in ritual and in hymns and prayers, see Eduard Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis Buch VI* (repr. Darmstadt 1970) 136–37; F. Pfister, *Die Religion der Griechen und Römer* (Leipzig 1930) 199–200; A. W. Bulloch, *Callimachus: The Fifth Hymn* (Cambridge 1985) 112.

⁴⁹ Cf. Pfeiffer on Call. fr. 27 Pf.: «in anaphora post diaeresin bucolicam (pastorale) quiddam inest.»

⁵⁰ Cf. Theocr. 2.23 and its imitation at Verg. *Ecl.* 8.83: *Daphnis me malus urit, ego hanc in Daphnide laurum.*

⁵¹ Cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 8.68 etc.: *ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnin.*

καὶ δὴ καὶ οὐ πῶν ἡοδὸν ἔρχε(ι), ἡάν τε καὶ ἄλλοι
 μύσαι καὶ βάρχοι ἱερὰν στείχουσι κλεινοί (SEG 26.1139.15–16).⁵²

One of the lamellae from Thurii in fact uses a part of what must be the verb *ὁδοιπορεῖν* in bidding the initiate who has departed this life take the road to the right to the sacred meadows and the groves of Persephone:

χαῖρε παθὼν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὕτω πρόοθε ἐπεπόνθευ
 θεὸς ἐγένον ἐξ[.] ἀνθρώπων·
 ἔριπος ἐς γάλα ἔμετες.
 χαῖρ(ε) χαῖρε· δεξιὰν ὁδοιπόρ(ει)
 λιμῶνας τε ἱεροὺς καὶ ἄλλα Φεροφονείας (A 4.3–6 Zuntz).

Significantly the command in that tablet occurs after a thrice-repeated farewell to the dead person. The repeated *χαῖρε* is a clue to the ritual context reflected in the tablet: it will come from a ceremony by the graveside in which the departed is bidden farewell and then told to follow the path to the right to attain the holy meadows and groves of Persephone.⁵³

The idea that there was a special route in the Underworld to be followed by the elect is already present in Pindar's description in the Second Olympian of the blessings in store for those men who have throughout a cycle of three lives kept from all wickedness:⁵⁴ they complete *the way of Zeus* to the tower of Kronos (*ἔτελλαν Διὸς ὁδὸν παρὰ Κρόνου τύρῃσι* 70), where the Island of the Blest with all of its attendant delights is to be found (68–74).⁵⁵ Finally, there is in the poem in which Posidippus expresses his aspirations for this life and the next mention of the mystic way that he hopes may bring him into the presence of Rhadamanthys and that he hopes to traverse after reaching old age:

γῆραι μυσικὸν οἶμον ἐπὶ Παδάμανθην ἱκοίμην (SH 705.22).

The blessing pronounced on Philicus as a wayfarer on his way to the Lands of the Pious and the Islands of the Blest is related to the makarismoι that we find in one of the lamellae from Thurii and in both of the lamellae from Pelinna.⁵⁶ The first line of the Pelinna-tablets address-

⁵² Pugliese Carratelli (n. 5) publishes a substantially improved text of the Hipponium-tablet in which he reads the athematic Ionic infinitive *πνεῖν* in v. 12 instead of *πνέειν*. A. C. Cassio, «Πνεῖν e il modello ionico della laminetta di Hipponion», in *Forme di religiosità e tradizioni sapienziali in Magna Grecia*, Atti del Convegno Napoli, 14–15 dicembre 1993, eds. A. C. Cassio and P. Poccetti *A.I.O.N.* 16 (1994) 183–205 argues, principally on the basis of this form and from the use of aspiration, that the Hipponium-tablet and others of its class derive from an Eastern Ionic original.

⁵³ So Riedweg (n. 47) 486–87: *sed imprimis etiam ex eo quod ter repetitur χαῖρε concludendum est locum horum verborum fuisse in mortuorum ritu.*

⁵⁴ Pi. O. 3.41 (*τίοςφει γνάμψ φιλάσοοντες μακάρεων τελευτάς*) puts the interest of the man celebrated in O. 2, Theron of Acragas, a member of the family of the Emmenidae, in mystery-rites beyond reasonable doubt.

⁵⁵ Cf. Luigi Lehnus, *Pindaro, Olimpiche* (Milan 1981) 48: «Conviene anche ricordare che testi «orfici» italoti conoscono e descrivono varie «vie» per le anime degli iniziati.» The notion of the *Διὸς ὁδός* was not examined by Otfried Becker in the chapter on Pindar in his *Das Bild des Weges und verwandte Vorstellungen im frühgriechischen Denken* (Diss. Leipzig 1937), presumably because the expression is not figurative. The best treatment of O. 2 and of its relation to the Orphic lamellae is that of Hugh Lloyd-Jones, «Pindar and the Afterlife» in *Pindare*, Fondation Hardt, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 17 (Vandoeuvres-Geneva 1985) 245–83, reprinted with an important addendum that takes account of the lamella from Pelinna in *Greek Epic, Lyric and Tragedy: The Academic Papers of Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford 1990) 80–109.

⁵⁶ Cf. Ar. Ran. 352: *προβάδην ἔξαγ' ἐπὶ ἀντήρων ἑλκτον δάπεδον / χορονοδόν, μάκαρ, ἦβαν.*

ses the deceased as thrice-blessed declaring that in the very day in question she has both died and been born:

νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισάββιε, ἄμασι τῶδε.

The intent and significance of the makarismos on the tablet from Thurii is identical: the deceased woman is pronounced blessed and fortunate; she has become a god instead of a mortal:

ἄββιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῖο (A1.8 Zuntz).

The blessings pronounced over those who have been initiated into the mysteries ostensibly at the point at which they depart from this life for the Underworld have elements in common with the makarismoi that in literary texts are pronounced over initiates as a category. Makarismoi of this order pronounce the initiate happy precisely because his lot in the Underworld will be a happy one. The earliest instance is from the 6th century B.C. and is to be found in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter. There, the mortal who has looked on the mysteries is pronounced blessed; the man who has not been initiated, on the other hand, is said to have a lot in the Underworld that does not match that of the initiate (480–82). The implication of this is that the initiate in contrast to those who have not been initiated enjoys a happy dispensation in the Underworld. There is a fragment of Sophocles in which those who go down to Hades after having seen the mysteries are pronounced blessed, on the ground they alone have a life in Hades, while the others have nought but ill:

*ὥς τρισάββιοι
κεῖνοι βροτῶν οἱ τὰτα δερχθέντες τέλη
μάλω' ἐς Ἄϊδου· τοῖσδε γὰρ μόνοις ἐκεῖ
ζῆν ἔστι. τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις πάντι' ἔχει κακὰ* (fr. 837 Radt).

Finally, there is a fragment of Pindar quoted by Clement of Alexandria in which the poet pronounces blessed the man who goes down into the Underworld after having seen the mysteries; he knows both the end of life and a god-given beginning to life:

*ἄββιος ὅστις ἰδὼν κτεν' εἶς ὑπὸ χθρόν
οἶδε μὲν βίον τελευτάν.
οἶδεν δὲ διόδοισιν ἀρχάν* (fr. 137 Sn.)⁵⁷

Clement says that Pindar is specifically speaking here of initiates in the Eleusinian Mysteries. The Pindaric text bears a striking resemblance to the makarismos in the Pelinna-tablets, since in it also a makarismos is combined with the notions of death and birth.

The similarity between the generic makarismoi of the literary texts and the specific makarismoi of the Pelinna-tablets and the lamellae from Thurii suggests that they all look back to a formulaic makarismos. It has been suggested that there was such a makarismos at the conclusion of the ceremony of initiation at Eleusis.⁵⁸ That seems entirely possible. The closest, however, we come to proof that a makarismos was pronounced at the point of initiation is the blessing pronounced by the priest of Isis in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* on Lucius when Isis shows herself ready to accept him as an initiate (11.22.5).⁵⁹ Basically the same

⁵⁷ Cf. Lloyd-Jones (n. 55) 269 = 69 citing Alcmaeon DK 2 B 24 to illustrate the sentiments expressed.

⁵⁸ So N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1972) 313. Cf. Riedweg (n. 47) 488.

⁵⁹ *Luci, te felicem, te beatum, quem propitia voluntate numen augustum tantopere dignatur.*

makarismos adapted to fit the circumstances of death may have been repeated at a grave-side ceremony. Proof positive that such ceremonies took place is lacking. There is, nonetheless, the inscription from Cumae indicating either the existence of a burial area reserved for initiates or the existence of a burial area that initiates would have liked to reserve for themselves: οὐ θέμις ἐνιαῦθα κεῖσθαι [ε]ἰ μὲ τὸν βεβαχχευμένον (Schwyzer, *Dialect. Graec. exempla* no. 792 = Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées* 2 no. 120).⁶⁰ More evidence for burial plots for the exclusive use of initiates or in which a number of Orphic-Bacchic initiates were buried together may emerge when a plan of the fifteen cist-graves from Pella containing an undisclosed number of lamellae with the names of the deceased on them is published.⁶¹ That Orphic-Bacchic burials had a distinctive form in at least one respect is apparent from the prohibition against employing woollen grave-garments mentioned by Herodotus (2.81.2).⁶² There is also the enigmatic reference in Plutarch to a sacred ceremony peculiar to the burial of Pythagoreans, in the absence of which the dead Pythagorean cannot expect to attain the blessed end that he might otherwise expect (*De gen. Socr.* 585e).⁶³ Given the close ties between the Orphic-Bacchics and the Pythagoreans it would not be surprising, if there were an analogous ceremony performed at the grave-side for initiates of the former persuasion.⁶⁴

It is a tolerably safe inference from the tablets from Pelinna and Thurii that the reason for the makarismos pronounced over the deceased initiate is that he or she on death attains a new and better status, which may be described as that of a god or alternatively as a birth. The initiate is not only pronounced blessed, but is thought of as blessed and may even boast that he or she belongs to a blessed race. The dead woman from Pelinna is told in one of the two tablets she has with her in the grave that the same prizes below the earth await her as the other ὀλβιοί:

καὶ μενεῖ ὁ ἐνὸ γῆν τέλα αἰ(ο)ανεῖ ὀλβιοὶ ἄλλοι (7).

In three of the lamellae from Thurii the deceased declares that she is of the same blessed race as Eucles, Eubouleus and the other immortal gods she has just addressed:

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἱμῶν γένος ὀλβιον εἴχομαι θεοὶ ἄλλοι (A1; cp. 2–3.3 Zuntz).⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Cf. Robert Parker, «Early Orphism», in *The Greek World* ed. Anton Powell (London 1995) 485.

⁶¹ Reported by A. Pariente, *BCH* 14 (1990) 787. Whether the lamellae already published are from the cist-graves reported by Pariente or not is unclear.

⁶² The Pythagoreans forbade cremation, required that the dead be buried in white garments and also banned the use of coffins made of cypress (Iambl. *Vit. Pyth.* 154–55). Pliny reports that Varro was buried in the Pythagorean fashion with leaves of myrtle, olive and black poplar (*NH* 35.160).

⁶³ ἔστι γὰρ τι γινόμενον ἰδίᾳ περὶ τὰς ταφὰς τῶν Πυθαγορικῶν ὅσον. οἳ μὴ τηχόντες οἱ δοκοῦμεν ἀπέχτειν τὸ μακαριστὸν καὶ αἰκρίον τέλος. These are presumably the burial-rites mentioned in the Pythagorean ἀκοίσματα (Iambl. *Vit. Pyth.* 85). So Marcel Detienne, «Sur la démonologie de l'ancien Pythagorisme», *Rev. Hist. Rel.* 155 (1959) 21. The Pythagoreans also prescribed silence and the taking of omens as the appropriate behaviour for the final moments of life (Iambl. *Vit. Pyth.* 257), on which see Boyancé (n. 47) 136–44, who is perhaps too ready to give credence to the explanation that Olympiodorus (in *Plat. Phaed.* p. 171 Norvin) offers for the silence, which is that noise is a distraction to the process of elevation and attracts a gathering of demons, who, because of their attachment to the physical, weigh the spirit down. These would seem to be the concerns of a theurgist from Late Antiquity and not a Pythagorean of the 5th or 4th centuries B.C. On the danger of demons pulling the soul down to Hades at death or earthwards during a theurgic elevation, see Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Paris 1978²) 235–38.

⁶⁴ For a succinct account of the similarities and differences between the two groups, see Parker (n. 60) 501–502.

⁶⁵ Cf. B3–8.4–5 Zuntz: Γὰρ τίός ἡμι καὶ Ἰφρανῶ ἀστερόεντος. / αἰτῶν ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον.

None of the lamellae so far discovered describes the destination of the deceased initiate as either the Land of the Pious or the Isles of the Blest, although two of the tablets from Thurii as good as do so: they call on Persephone to send the initiate to the Seats of the Pious:

ὥς με πρόφρων πέμψῃ ἔδρας ἐς εὐαγέων (A2–3.7 Zuntz).

There is nonetheless hardly room for doubt that Philicus' destination is the same as that of the dead initiates from Thurii and Pelinna. It does not require any great insight to see that in the context of a poem such as that bidding Philicus godspeed the *εὐοεβείς* of the Lands of the Pious and the *μάκαρες* of the Isles of the Blest will mean initiates in the mysteries. In epigraphical texts *εὐοεβείς* is the epithet regularly applied to *μύσται*. That initiates should continue to be so described in the Underworld and that the special spot marked out for them should be called the Lands of the Pious should occasion no surprise.

Philicus is imagined to go on his journey to the Underworld as on a festive passage (*κῶμος*) rolling out words that form fair songs from his ivy-garlanded head. We know from Demosthenes' description of the conduct of the persons whom Aeschines' mother is supposed to have inducted into the mysteries that initiates took part in festive processions through the streets of Athens.⁶⁶ The Chorus of Sufferers from Gout in Lucian's *Podagra* are conceived of as initiates in the mysteries of the illness (*μύσται* *τελοῦμεν οἰκτιροῦς* 44); their appearance leads the Sufferer from Gout to ask of what deity they are a *κωμαστῆς χορός* (75), whether of Paean Apollo or Bacchus.⁶⁷ The festive routs in which initiates participate on earth continue in the afterlife: the Chorus of *μύσται* in Aristophanes' *Frogs* go on their way to the meadows, filled with roses and fragrant with flowers, marked off for pious initiates, dancing and singing as they go (448–59); in other words, they progress as a *κῶμος* to that happy sunlit spot in the Underworld set aside for initiates.

As a priest of Dionysus it is appropriate that Philicus should carry one of the symbols of that deity and that no doubt is part of the reason for his wearing a wreath of ivy.⁶⁸ It is not the whole reason. In the mystery-cults in which Persephone is the principal actor Dionysus also has a part to play. What this means is that the symbols of Dionysus are found alongside those of Persephone or Demeter. The lamellae, for example, from Pelinna were both cut in the shape of an ivy-leaf. Other lamellae for initiates in the mysteries seem to take the form of a myrtle-leaf.⁶⁹

It is as a poet that Philicus is imagined making his festive progress to the Isles of the Blest: he lets roll out of his mouth words that form fair hymns. The question that these words prompt is the following: had Philicus composed a poem that would have led our anonymous author to picture Philicus making his way singing in a suitable fashion? If Philicus had only written tragedies, there would be no very good reason to think that our anonymous poet had any particular poem in mind. As it is, Philicus seems to have written a hymn in honour of Demeter and Persephone, of which we have what is probably the first verse. It is cited by the metrical writer Hephaestion as an instance of a choriambic hexameter (*Encheir.* 9.4, p. 30 Consbruch):

⁶⁶ Dem. 18.260.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Pod.* 78–79: ἢ μή τις ὕμνος βαρυγῆς κωμάζεται; / ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔπεισι κακότη ἀφραγὶς κῶμος.

⁶⁸ On wreaths of ivy in the cult of Dionysus, see M. Blech, *Studien zum Kranz bei den Griechen*, RGVI 38 (Berlin and New York 1982) 212–16.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that Varro was said to be buried (*more Pythagoreio*) with myrtle-, olive- and black poplar-leaves (Plin. *NH* 35.155).

τῇ χθονίῃ μουσικᾷ Δήμητρί τε καὶ Φερσεφόνῃ καὶ Κλυμένῳ τὰ δῶρα (SH 676)

Philicus' own description of his poem as a mystic gift to Demeter, Persephone and Clymenos suggests very strongly that he saw the gift as a celebration of the mysteries, which in its turn is *prima facie* evidence that Philicus himself was an initiate. Now there are three fragments, one of them substantial, of a hymn in honour of Demeter and Persephone in choriambics that come from a papyrus belonging to the 3rd century B.C. (SH 678–680). They are in all likelihood Philicus' hymn and could easily have encouraged a poet composing an epigram on Philicus' death to conjure up an image of the tragedian proceeding towards the Isles of the Blest singing appropriate hymns. We may make the further inference that, if he did not know this independently, which he may well have done, the hymn gave our anonymous poet warrant for supposing that Philicus was an initiate in the mysteries. The supposition, if that is what it is, was surely correct.

It is the cult of Demeter and Persephone in its Eleusinian version that is celebrated in the hymn of Philicus. The hymn in fact describes some of the topographical features that the participants in the mysteries passed on their way to Eleusis and the ritual cry of «Iacchos» they uttered (SH 680.36–41). Since it is the Eleusinian form of the myth that is rehearsed, we may conclude that Philicus' initiation is most likely to have taken place at Eleusis. The inference is, however, by no means secure. That Philicus should have written such a hymn in an unusual metre to display his gratitude and devotion to the gods gives us a certain degree of insight into what initiation into the mysteries could mean for a man. Any assumptions that we may make about Philicus' spirituality should be tempered by an awareness that in what looks to be the proem to the poem he addresses persons he calls *γραμματικοί* telling them he has brought them as a present a composition done in an entirely novel fashion:⁷⁰

καινογράφου συνθέσεως τῆς Φιλίκου, γραμματικοί, δῶρα φέρω πρὸς ὑμᾶς (SH 677).

If this is the proem to the hymn, we might be inclined to think that technical virtuosity rather than piety was the main motivating factor in its composition. But this would be a simplistic conclusion. It assumes that a consciousness of virtuosity cannot go hand-in-hand with a deeply religious attitude and that a poet cannot expect literary scholars, amongst whom some at least of Philicus' fellow-poets in Alexandria were certainly to be numbered, both to have shared his religious feelings and to have been interested in the poem on its technical merits.⁷¹ We have already remarked on the interest in mystery-cult that Philicus' Alexandrian contemporaries display.

Posidippus

εἴ τι καλόν, Μοῦσαι πολίητιδες, ἢ παρὰ Φοῖβον
 χρυσολύρεω καθαροῖς οὔσιν ἐκλ[ύ]ψιτε
 Παρνησοῦ νιφόεντος ἀγὰ πτόχ[α]ς ἢ παρ' Ὀλύμπου
 Βάκχῳ τὰς κριτε[ι]ς ἀρχόμεναι θυμέλας,

⁷⁰ For the view that it is the proem, see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford 1968) 157.

⁷¹ On *γραμματικοί*, see Pfeiffer (n. 70) 157–58.

νῆν δὲ Ποσειδῖππῳ συγγερὸν φηγαίσατε γῆρας 5
 γραψάμενοι δέλιων ἐν χρυσάσις φελίσιν.
 λιμπάνετε σκοπιὰς, Ἑλικωνίδες, εἰς δὲ τὰ Θήβης
 ἱεῖχτα Πιρ[]...ς βαίνετε...αλαδὲς
 κτεῖ σὺ Ποσειδῖππὸν ποτ' ἐφίλα(ο), Κύνθιε, Ληϊοῦς
 ῥ'..... 10
 [...]..... 10A
 ἥ γημητρινιφιντιοικεῖα[†] τοῦ Παρίου
 ἰοῖην ἐκχρή(α)ς τε καὶ ἐξ ἀδύτων κραιναῖ(α)ς
 φωνὴν ἀθα(νά)ζην, ὦ ἄγα, καὶ κατ' ἐμοῦ,
 ὄφρα με τιμήσῃ Μακροδόνες οἱ τ' ἐπὶ γῆσιν
 οἱ τ' Ἀσίης πάσης γ(ε)ῖτονες ἡῖόνος. 15
 Πελλασίον γένος ἄμῳ· ξοῖμι δὲ βίβλον ἐλίσσων
 ἄμφω[†] λαοφόρῳ κείμενος εἰν ἀγορῇ.
 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μὲν Παρ(ί)ῃ δὸς ἀηδόνι λεγρὸν ἐφ' [
 νᾶμα κατὰ γληνέων δάκρυα κελῖνα χῆα[
 καὶ στενάχων, φῖ ἐμὸν δὲ φίλον σῶμα [20
 ...[].....[20A
 [...].....[20B
 μηδέ τις οἶν χεῖρα δάκρυον, αἰτάρ ἐγὼ
 γῆρα[†] μιστικὸν οἶμον ἐπὶ Παδάμανθιν ἰκοίμην
 δῆμωι καὶ λαῷ παντὶ νοθεῖνός ἐών,
 ἀσκήπων ἐν ποσσὶ καὶ ὀρθοεπῆς ἀν' ὄμιλον
 καὶ Λεῖων τέκνοισι δῶμα καὶ ὄλβον ἐμὸν 25 (SH 705)

Our third poet who is an initiate in the mysteries is the epigrammatist Posidippus. A poem that he himself composed as he contemplated the approach or onset of old age tells us that he hoped to follow the mystic way to Rhadamanthys. The poem is preserved inscribed on wax on two wooden tablets found in Egypt that belong to the 1st century A.D. The transcription was careless and seems to have been put down from memory. The tablet itself has deteriorated seriously. Much even that was legible at the beginning of the century can no longer be read. The reconstruction of the text and the related task of interpreting it both present formidable difficulties. The daunting endeavour of re-editing the poem was undertaken some thirty years ago now by H. Lloyd-Jones and accomplished with notable success.⁷² All subsequent work on the poem rests on this edition and the materials collected in it. There would have been little or nothing of consequence to add to the results that Lloyd-Jones had achieved, had not our understanding of the eschatology of mystery-cult and of the terms in which it was couched been greatly increased by the gold tablets found at Hipponium and Pelinna. Recent excavations in a cemetery in Posidippus' birthplace, Pella, have produced further lamellae, which, while they do not tell us a great deal about the eschatology of the mysteries, do show that there were a substantial number of persons in that city who went to their graves bearing tokens telling Persephone that they were initiates. These discoveries make a re-consideration of the intent of the poem necessary. It now becomes more likely that what had tentatively been given a metaphorical interpretation should be taken literally.

⁷² H. Lloyd-Jones, 'The Seal of Posidippus,' *JHS* 83 (1963) 74–98 = *Greek Comedy, Hellenistic Literature, Greek Religion and Miscellanea: The Academic Papers of Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford 1990) 158–95.

The poem was in Lloyd-Jones' view a *σφρηγίς* composed by Posidippus for a collection of his epigrams.⁷³ For Barigazzi it was a poetic testament.⁷⁴ The two interpretations of the poem are by no means incompatible: they merely look at the poem from different stand-points. A seal-poem can perfectly easily be a poetic testament or some other kind of testament and is as likely as not to perform that rôle. Yet a poetic testament does not now seem the most apt description of a poem in which the poet expresses his desire for worldly recognition and at the same time voices the rather specific aspirations that initiates in the mysteries had for this life and the next. It is understandable that the poem should have been taken as a poetic testament when so much in it could best be interpreted as a metaphor for literary activity.⁷⁵ Exactly how a poem in which the poet expresses his worldly ambitions and his personal hopes for his old age and for the afterlife is to be characterized is another matter. There is no recognized category into which such a poem would fall.

The first part of the poem may be summarized as follows: the poet calls on the Muses, his fellow-citizens, if they have heard anything with pure ears (*καθαροῖς οὖσιν ἐκ[λ]ύετε* 2) as they attend Apollo with his golden lyre on Parnassus or from Olympus in the trieteric festival to Bacchus, to help him in singing of or supporting his old age by inscribing what they have heard in the golden columns or pages (*ἐν χρυσοῖς σελίσιν* 6) of tablets (1–8); it then calls on Apollo, asking him to utter a prophesy affecting Posidippus that will lead the Macedonians, those on the islands and those dwelling by the Asian shore to honour him (9–15); the topic of honours leads the poet to declare that he is of Pellaeon birth and that he would like to be set in the agora unrolling a papyrus-roll (16–17).

The invocation of the Muses has much in it that is unusual and not easily explained. I do not pretend to be able to make sense of everything contained in it, but would suggest it is worth considering the possibility that the invocation is not a straightforward appeal for literary help, but an appeal to the Muses to vouchsafe to the poet certain mystic teachings. The interpretation of the invocation turns in large measure on whether the poet appeals to the Muses for help in composing the poem or whether the appeal is for help with some larger body of work to which the autobiographical verses acted as a preface. If the latter is the case, we have a normal literary appeal; if the former is true, we have something quite different. What the Muses are asked to record on the golden columns or pages of tablets, which must be a hypallage for columns or pages in golden tablets, is what they have heard with pure ears.⁷⁶ One way of interpreting the *καθὰρὰ οὖρα* of the Muses is that the Muses have well-cleaned ears and so are quick on the uptake. In Greek, persons who are quick-witted have clean ears or ears that have had the wax drilled out of them, while the slow-witted have ears blocked with wax.⁷⁷ Quickness of uptake or acuteness of understanding makes perfectly good sense, although precisely what the point of speaking about the Muses in this way is remains unclear.

There is also the possibility that the Muses are imagined as initiates in the mysteries receiving the secret teachings vouchsafed only to those whose ears are pure; that is to say, to

⁷³ (n. 72) 95–96 = 190–91.

⁷⁴ A. Barigazzi, «Il testamento di Posidippo di Pella», *Hermes* 98 (1968) 213–16, followed by Rossi (n. 27) 65, who seems to feel that seal-poem and poetic testament are mutually exclusive alternatives.

⁷⁵ In these circumstances it is puzzling to find Rossi, who takes the references to the mysteries at face-value, declaring a preference for the poem as a poetic testament as against a seal-poem.

⁷⁶ Lloyd-Jones (n. 72) 84–85 = 173–74.

⁷⁷ See Lloyd-Jones (n. 72) 81 = 169 for examples of the idiom.

those who have undergone the initial ceremony of purification and whose ritual purity can be vouchsafed. There is no direct evidence that the expression *καθαροὶ τὰ ὦτα* or something akin to it belonged to the body of utterances employed in the ritual of the mysteries. There are, however, indications that point in that direction. Philo Judaeus does on three occasions use the expression *κεκαθαρμένοι τὰ ὦτα* of initiates in the mysteries (*Cher.* 48, *Gig.* 54, *Mos.* 2.114). One of the instances of the expression is found in a passage in the *De Cherubim* that has been inspired in part by Plato's *Symposium*. In it Philo gives an allegorical interpretation of *Genesis* 4.1–2 (40–50).⁷⁸ He introduces the fuller treatment of the allegory by asking those who are unduly fearful of the divine to block their ears or depart (*ἀκοὰς ἐμπραξάτωσαν οἱ δευσιδάμονες τὰ ἐναντῶν ἢ μεταστήσωσαν*).⁷⁹ His explanation for making that request is that the divine mysteries he is about to teach are worthy only of those initiated in the most holy of mysteries. That is followed by a definition of what constitutes an initiate and the declaration that he will not act as hierophant (*οὐχ ἱεροφάντησομεν*) to those possessed by incurable evil (42). Philo now proceeds to develop the allegory further, a task which he calls beginning the mystic rite (*τελετή*). He concludes his allegorical interpretation by asking that those with ears which have been purified should receive in their souls as holy mysteries what has been said and utter it to no one of those who have not been initiated (*ταῦτα, ὧς μύσαι κεκαθαρμένοι τὰ ὦτα, ὡς ἱερὰ ὄντως μυστήρια ψυχαῖς ταῖς ἐναντῶν παραδέχασθε καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν ἀμνητῶν ἐκλαλήσεται* 48).

The exhortation to block one's ears or depart ultimately derives from the announcement made at the Eleusinian Mysteries by the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes, although its immediate inspiration is to be found in Plato's *Symposium* (218b5–7).⁸⁰ We can see from the first verses of a Jewish imitation of an Orphic *ἱερὸς λόγος* in which Orpheus is imagined to speak revealing the mysteries to Musaeus that the profane were supposed to close the doors against themselves, specifically so that they might not hear the sacred teaching (*OF* 245.1–4).⁸¹ The verses must have been composed no later than the mid-2nd century B.C., since they were already known by that date to the Alexandrian Jew Aristobouleus.⁸² It was certainly the case that in the mysteries proper it was the hierophant who was responsible for conveying the secrets of the mysteries to the initiates. Philo himself plays the rôle of hierophant in revealing what the allegory is. To judge from Philo, it looks as if the initiates were at some stage in the proceedings called on to keep what they had heard to themselves.⁸³ Sopater, the rhetor of the 5th century A.D., attributes the adjuration to refrain from disclosing what had been said to the Hierokeryx (*Rhet. Gr.* 8.118.24–26 Walz). It is overwhelmingly likely that the initiates were also bade open their ears and receive the mystic learning and that it is this proclamation which is reflected in Philo, both in the *De Cherubim* and in the *Legum allegoriae*

⁷⁸ I am indebted in what follows to Christoph Riedweg's analysis of the passage in his *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, *Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte* 26 (Berlin and New York 1987) 70–115.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Fug.* 85: *ἐλατίνετε, σὺν, ἐλατίνετε, ὧς μύσαι καὶ ἱεροφάνται θεῶν ὁργίων, τὰς μυγὰδας ... δυοκαθάρτους καὶ δυοεκπλείτους ψυχὰς, αἱ δὲ κλεισταὶ μὲν ὦτα, ἀθύρον δὲ γλῶττιαν ... περιφέροντι.*

⁸⁰ Cf. *Isocr. Panegy.* 157 with *Ar. Ran.* 354–56, 369–70; *Lucian Alex.* 38.

⁸¹ For a commentary on the verses, see Christoph Riedweg, *Jüdisch-hellenistische Imitation eines orphischen Hieros Logos: Beobachtungen zu OF 245 und 247 (sog. Testament des Orpheus)*, *Classica Monacensia* 7 (Tübingen 1993) 28.

⁸² For discussion, see Riedweg (n. 81) 6–24.

⁸³ Riedweg (n. 78) 81–84.

(3.219).⁸⁴ The one phrase still to be accounted for is *κεκαθαρμένοι τὰ ὦτα*. It is hard to believe that it too is not rooted in the language of the mysteries.⁸⁵ In the proclamations in the *De Cherubim* it would be the only expression that does not echo the words employed in the pronouncements made at the mysteries. The same is true of a passage in the *De gigantibus* in which Philo makes Moses' encounter with God on the mountain into an initiation into the most holy of mysteries; Moses emerges from it not only as an initiate but as a hierophant of the rituals of the mysteries and a teacher of divine matters, which he will explain to those whose ears have been purified (*γίνεται οὐ μόνον μύστης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἱεροφάντης ὁργίων καὶ διδάσκαλος θεῶν. ᾧ τοῖς ὦτα κεκαθαρμένοις ὑφηγήσεται* 54).⁸⁶ Both tracts agree in assigning to the hierophant the task of teaching the mysteries to those whose ears have been purified. The notion that the teaching of the mysteries should not be heard by the profane (*βέβηλοι*) whose ears are to be closed against it certainly implies that only those whose ears have been cleansed should hear it. It would be a natural development of that idea to speak about broadcasting the mysteries only to those with cleansed ears. On balance, however, it is more likely that the figure is not Philo's invention and that it does have its origins in the language of the mysteries.

Philo, as an observant Jew living in Alexandria, is not perhaps the most obvious source of information about the terminology of the mysteries. He certainly makes frequent use of terms and expressions that derive or seem to derive from the mysteries, but is he a reliable informant? We can be fairly certain that he himself was not an initiate, if we can argue from the violence of his reaction to the idea and perhaps the reality of Jews being initiated into the mysteries.⁸⁷ His knowledge of the mysteries must have been primarily literary. That does not mean he did not have a pretty good idea of what went on there and what was said, although he had no doubt only a sketchy picture of the precise details of the ceremonial. There was in any case probably less that was secret and unknown about the mysteries than the initiates liked to imagine. Philo is in short a perfectly good witness to the terminology employed in the mysteries themselves.

The wisdom that the Muses have acquired from Apollo and Bacchus is rather surprisingly to be inscribed in the columns or pages of a golden tablet. This might be a somewhat contrived way of asking for the help of the Muses in composing immortal poetry. In favour of such an interpretation is the well-known association of gold with the divine.⁸⁸ Yet if it is mystic wisdom acquired either from Apollo or Bacchus that the Muses are asked to consign to writing, mention of gold tablets naturally recalls the gold lamellae containing Orpheo-dionysiac teachings carried by initiates in the mysteries to the Underworld. Philo's interpretation of the seal of Jahweh inscribed on a gold plate, made for the high-priest Aaron to wear on his headdress (*Exod.* 36.37–38), suggests that such an interpretation of Posidippus is not unlikely: the symbols on the gold plate are for Philo a set of four letters only to be

⁸⁴ Riedweg (n. 78) 80.

⁸⁵ So Paul Ziegert, «Über Ansätze zu einer Mysterienlehre, aufgebaut auf den antiken Mysterien bei Philo Judäus», *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 67 (1894) 714; Riedweg (n. 78) 80 n. 37 is more cautious: «Die Nennung der »gereinigten Ohren« (cher. 48) mag somit auch im Mysterienritual verankert sein.»

⁸⁶ For Moses as hierophant, cf. *Leg. alleg.* 3.151, 173, *Post. Cain.* 16, 174, *Mut. nom.* 156, *Somn.* 1.164, 2.3, 209, *Mos.* 153, *Spec. leg.* 1.41, 2.201, 4.176, *Virt.* 163, 174.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Spec.* 1.319–23 with Riedweg's discussion (n. 78) 99–100, in which it is argued that Philo's target is not civic mystery-cult, but private ceremonies of initiation.

⁸⁸ Lloyd-Jones (n. 72) 84–85 = 173–74.

heard and uttered in holy places by those whose ears and tongue have been purified (ὁ μόνους τοῖς ὦτα καὶ γλῶττιν ὁσφίᾳ κεκαθαρμένους θέμις ἀκούειν καὶ λέγειν ἐν ἁγίοις *Mos.* 2.114). Gold plates with secret symbols on them, in other words, make Philo think of the mysteries and the gold lamellae associated with them.

Exactly what honours Posidippus has in mind from the Macedonians and those on the islands is unclear, but the intent of his final wish is not in doubt: translated into slightly more concrete terms, it is to have a bronze statue of himself holding a papyrus-roll, probably seated, set up in the agora of his native city.⁸⁹ It was already known from a proxeny-decree of the Aetolian League of the year 263/2 B.C. found at Thermum that Posidippus remained technically a citizen of Pella and was not an Alexandrian (*IG* 9.1².17.24). When we take Posidippus' strong assertion of his Pellaean citizenship in conjunction with his wish that he be honoured with a statue in the agora of his native-city, there is not much room for dispute that the poet saw himself as a Pellaean and that Pella was where his loyalties lay. I shall argue later that Pella was where his house and possessions were and that it was there he expected to die and be buried. In the remaining part of the poem, the poet turns to the reader or hearer to address him and bid him shed tears for and groan over the Parian nightingale. In contrast to the tears that are to be shed over the most famous of poets from Paros, Archilochus, Posidippus asks that no one should shed a tear over himself (21). There are two lines missing in the poem at this point in which it may be surmised Posidippus exhorted his hearers to respond in a very different way to his death when it came. Then after asking that no tear be shed over him, Posidippus goes on to express the wish that, in an old age in which he is unsupported by a stick and still in full command of his tongue, he may go along the mystic path and come to Rhadamanthys, longed for by his community and people and leaving his children his house and his fortune (21–25).⁹⁰ In epitaphs the deceased very often bids the survivors shed no tears over him or her. The reason generally given is that nothing is to be gained by lamentation.⁹¹ Sometimes it is because the deceased has had a happy life.⁹² Sometimes again it is because the deceased has been translated to a happier existence.⁹³ Poets

⁸⁹ Cameron (n. 2) 45; Dickie (n. 38) 373–83.

⁹⁰ I cannot agree with Rossi (n. 27) 63 with n. 21 that ὀρθοενης has a moral reference and means «colui che dice cose giuste», and that by implication Lloyd-Jones' suggestion (n. 72) 95 = 188 of an allusion to the slurred and incorrect speech of an old man is misguided. Posidippus wishes to avoid the distressing physical and mental debilities that come with old age. Theodoridas' epigram (Gow-Page, *HE* 3550–54 = *A.P.* 7.732), which Lloyd-Jones (n. 72) 94 = 188, cites, on Cinesias, who went off to pay his debt to Hades still without a stick (ἐν ἀσπίδι) and still, despite his old age, with everything in order (γῆρᾳ ἐν ἁρτίᾳ πάντα φέρων), is an excellent parallel. It shows, hardly surprisingly, that men wished to die with their limbs and mind in working order.

⁹¹ R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana 1962) 217–20. To the examples given in Lattimore may be added the following: I. Dekoulakou, «Ρωμαϊκὸ μνησιώλετο στήν Πάτρα», in ΣΤΗΛΗ (Athens 1980): 567 *Sex(ito) Aequ(ano) / Sex(iti) lib(erto) Astio A[fric]o / Nemo me lachrimet, [nemo] / pectora planigat / Anxius hic iaceo q[ui] nixi / annis [...]*; SEG 41 (1991) 1550.7–8: μνήμα δέ μοι κόσμητο πατήρ καὶ μήτηρ καὶ ἀδελφός / σὺς λίτομαι γοερὸν μηκέτι δάκρυ χέειν.

⁹² Cf. *A.P.* 7.260.

⁹³ SEG 31 (1981) 846.5–12: [μη]κέτι κλαίτε, πατέρ γλυκερώτατε, μηδ' ἐν λυπο[σ]θ[ι] / [σθ]περὸν ἐνι στέρνοισι νέκθος ἔλαστον ἔχων / [οὐ γὰρ] ὑποχθόνιος κατὰ γῆς Αἰδὸς με κέκευθε, / [ἀ]λλὰ Διὸς πάρεδρος ἀντὶς ἤρπασέ με / [νυρ]σῶ ὁμοῦ καὶ δαδῶ γεγηθότα, ἐνθα σίνεδρος / Φωσφόρῳ ἤδ' ἐκάλω' Ἑσπέρῳ θάρρα πέλω / [ιοθν]εκα καλλέψας τάδε δάκρυα θύε, πατέρ μοι / [ἔσ]μερα γὰρ μ' ἑσπερὸς ἵππου ἐπεζόμενον. Eur. frs. 638, 833 N² implies that death is a happier state than life. For the difficulties attendant upon the precise identification of the source for the

may ask that they not be mourned on the ground that their verses continue to live on in the mouths of men.⁹⁴ Two factors have to be kept in mind in deciding what Posidippus' reason for forbidding mourning is: 1) Posidippus makes a distinction marked by a μέν and δέ between the keen lamentation appropriate for Archilochus and his request that no tear be shed over him; 2) Posidippus' wish that after attaining old age he may come on the mystic way to Rhadamanthys. The lamentation thought appropriate for Archilochus pretty well rules out the possibility that what is at issue is the topic of the uselessness of mourning. That there should be lamentation in one case and not in the other might encourage us to suppose that Posidippus forbids mourning in his own case, because his life is marked contrast to that of Archilochus had been a happy one, did that interpretation not ignore the hopes that Posidippus goes on to express for his future in the afterlife.⁹⁵ That difficulty is avoided, if we grant that Posidippus' expectations of coming on the mystic way to Rhadamanthys are his reason for forbidding lamentation, since he hopes to be translated to a happier and better state, once he is dead. The happier and better state that he hopes to attain can hardly, however, be the immortality conferred by poetry on its creator, since if that were so, there would be no reason to lament Archilochus, a poet whose poetry Posidippus would surely acknowledge is still very much alive.

The run of sense in the poem suggests, accordingly, that no tears are to be shed over Posidippus because he expects to come following the mystic way, after a happy and prosperous old age, to the realm ruled by Rhadamanthys. If this is taken literally, it should mean that there is no call for lamentation for Posidippus, since he will enjoy the happy rebirth that death means for an initiate in the mysteries. It must be conceded that none of the lamellae found in the graves of initiates forbid weeping in as many words, but the makarismoi they contain and the assertions in them that death means rebirth or immortality all combine to suggest that in theory at any rate there is no place for tears when an initiate dies. The same conclusion is to be drawn from the verses in one of the tablets from Thurii in which the deceased initiate, addressing Persephone, tells her that he has flown from the harsh and grief-laden circle (κύκλον δ' ἐξέστην βαρυνενθέος ἀργαλείου) to take up his position on the lovely crown (A1.5–6 Zuntz). The initiate is, in other words, happy to escape from the care-laden course of life to the victory of a happier state.⁹⁶ Had we more epitaphs for initiates or were we better able to identify the epitaphs of initiates, we might be able to see whether lip-service was paid to the idea that death was rebirth. The closest we get is a verse-epigram from the 3rd century A.D. for a hierophant in the Eleusinian Mysteries, which, after telling us that the man had in the tenth year of his office gone to the immortals, exclaims that the mysteries teach a fair message which comes from the blessed gods: death for mortals is not only no ill but a good:

δεκάτῃ δ' ἦλθε πρὸς ἀθανάτους.
ἡ καλὸν ἐκ μακάρων μυστήριον. οὐ μόνον εἶναι
τὸν θάνατον θνητοῖς οὐ κακόν, ἀλλ' ἀγαθόν (IG 2².3661.4–6; GVI 879.4–6).

idea, see E. R. Dodds, *Plato, Gorgias* (Oxford 1959) 300. The notion that life was death and that a superior state was attained in death was in the 5th century B.C. probably embraced by a wider circle than those initiated in the Orphic-Bacchic mysteries.

⁹⁴ Enn. *Var.* 17 Vahlen = 46 Courtney; Prop. 2.13.18–26; Hor. *Carm.* 2.20.

⁹⁵ For the tradition that Archilochus was bitter in life and even in the grave thereafter, cf. Pi. *P.* 2.54–56; *A.P.* 7.69, 70, 71.

⁹⁶ So Zuntz (n. 5) 318–22.

In the 3rd century B.C. they might not have put matters in quite that form, but the sentiment expressed is entirely consonant with the idea that death for an initiate is a rebirth.

It looks, accordingly, as if Posidippus' reasoning is that there is no need for tears to be shed over him, since he, in contrast to Archilochus, by having been initiated into the mysteries hopes to enjoy a happy afterlife. This is, however, not the only interpretation possible of Posidippus' mystic way. It is possible that Posidippus hopes as an initiate into the cult of the Muses to attain immortality through the fame of his song.⁹⁷ The idea that the poet is an initiate in his calling is not a particularly common one and its known instances are some centuries later than Posidippus.⁹⁸ Those who have been exposed to poetry are sometimes compared to initiates who have seen the mysteries.⁹⁹ That figure gives rise in its turn to the figure of the poet as priest who brings the mysteries of poetry to the public.¹⁰⁰

There are a number of difficulties that such an interpretation has to confront. The first of these is that it does not explain why tears should be shed over Archilochus, whose poetic fame must, even on Posidippus' reckoning, have been at least as great as his own, and not over Posidippus. Secondly, to return to the point made by Rossi, since there is no marker showing that *μυστικὸς οἶμος* has a metaphorical sense, it is better to take the phrase literally.¹⁰¹ Thirdly, the objective that Posidippus hopes to reach by following the mystic way is not poetic fame but Rhadamanthys. There are two other poems that speak of following a special route that takes the traveller to a privileged section of the Underworld over which Rhadamanthys presides. The earlier of these is Pindar's Second Olympian written for Theron of Acragas. That poem portrays those who have refrained from unrighteousness for three lives making their way along the Road of Zeus to the Tower of Kronos in the Island of the Blest, where Rhadamanthys, as the ever-ready helper of Kronos, presides (66–78). The later poem is a funerary epigram by Hegesippus, a poet contemporary with Posidippus. It tells of a tradition (*ᾠδὴν*) that there is a road to the right from the funeral pyre by which Hermes brings the good (*οἱ ἀγαθοί*) to Rhadamanthys (Gow-Page, *HE* 1913–14 = *A.P.* 7.545.1–2). It is true that in neither Pindar's Second Olympian nor in Hegesippus' epigram is it initiates who make their way to the privileged section of the Underworld over which Rhadamanthys presides. It would, however, be perverse to maintain that Pindar's and Hegesippus' conception of the Underworld is unrelated to that found in the lamellae buried with initiates. One of the lamellae from Thurii indeed directs the deceased initiate to follow the road to the right.¹⁰² It looks then as if Posidippus' conception of the afterlife that he as a pious initiate may expect takes the same form that Pindar and Hegesippus give to the afterlife to be enjoyed by the morally-upright.

There is some evidence from a work that is certainly not older than Posidippus and may be somewhat later, the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*, that the morally-upright and initiates

⁹⁷ For the possibility that Posidippus is referring to himself as an initiate in the mysteries of the Muses, cf. Lloyd-Jones (n. 72) 93 = 186–87; W. Burkert, «Le laminette auree: Da Orfeo a Lampone», *Orfismo in Magna Grecia*, Atti del Quattordicesimo Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia (Naples 1975) 85.

⁹⁸ *Stat. Silv.* 3.3.3–4; *A.P.* 2.303.305.

⁹⁹ *Ar. Ran.* 346; *A.P.* 4.1.57–58 = Gow-Page, *HE* 3982–83 (Meleager).

¹⁰⁰ *Prop.* 3.1.1–4; *Hor. Carm.* 3.1.1–4.

¹⁰¹ See (n. 27) 62.

¹⁰² Cf. A4.5 Zuntz: *δεξιὰν ὁδοῦν ἄνθρωπον*.

share the same happy afterlife and that moral probity is presupposed in an initiate.¹⁰³ That suggests it would be unwise to draw too sharp a distinction between the *ἀγαθοί* and *ἐλοιοί* of whom Hegesippus and Pindar speak and initiates in the mysteries. Socrates in that dialogue encourages Axiochus not to succumb to fear of death by giving him an account of conditions in the Underworld that he says he had learned from Gobryes, a *magos*, whose grandfather, sent by Xerxes to Delos to prevent its being sacked, had found there two bronze tablets brought from the Hyperboreans by Opis and Hekaerge with a description of the Underworld on them (371a1–6).¹⁰⁴ Despite the curious provenance given the bronze tablets, what they purport to have had inscribed on them corresponds in large measure to the vision of the Underworld that we find in Orphic-Bacchic writing.¹⁰⁵ The tablets tell of a section of the Underworld reserved for those who have successfully passed muster by answering the questions posed by Minos and Rhadamanthys about their conduct in life; it is the Land of the Pious – (a land that possesses the same amenities that in Aristophanes' *Frogs* the area of the Underworld marked out for initiates enjoys); – in this happy land initiates have the privilege of front seats (371c1–d7).¹⁰⁶ Axiochus himself, according to Socrates, as a member of the *genos* of the gods has every reason to expect such a privilege;¹⁰⁷ there is indeed a

¹⁰³ For a date after or around 300 B.C.: O. Immisch, *Philologische Studien zu Plato I* (Leipzig 1896) 70–71; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *GGA* 2 (1895) 984; for the 1st century B.C.: P. Corssen, «Cicero's Quelle für das erste Buch der Tusculanen», *RhM* 36 (1881) 518–20; W. A. Heidel, *Pseudo-Platonica* (Baltimore 1896) 15–18; M. Meister, *De Axiocho dialogo* (Diss. Breslau 1915) 24–65; K. Ganshinetz, *RE* 10 (1919) s. v. Katabasis (C II) 2416.

¹⁰⁴ Wilamowitz (n. 103) 981 n. 1, quoting Eur. *Alc.* 967–69 (*Θρήσσαις ἐν σάνιον. τὰς / Ὀρφεῖα κατέγραψεν / γῆρας*) remarks that there really were such Orphic documents in bronze and that examples in gold still exist. Σ in Eur. *Alc.* 968 cites Heraclides Physicus as the authority for the existence of a temple of Dionysus on the Thracian Haemus that possessed a collection of *σανίδες* with the writings of Orpheus on them. A. M. Dale, *Euripides, Alcestis* (Oxford 1954) 121 assumes the Heraclides is Heraclides Ponticus. If so, the fragment may have come from his *περὶ χρησμῶν* (frs. 130–41 Wehrli). It may be that the author of the *Axiochus* or his source knows about the tradition of there being wooden boards in Thrace with the poems of Orpheus on them and has transmuted the wooden boards into bronze tablets brought to Delos from the North. The hypothesis of E. Maass, *Aratea*, *Philologische Untersuchungen* 12 (Berlin 1892) 127 n. 23, rejected first by Immisch (n. 103) 11 and, following him, by Wilamowitz (n. 103) 981 n. 1, that the bronze tablets are inspired by the golden stele set up by Zeus Triphylus which Euhemerus maintained he had seen in the temple of the god on the island of Panchaia (*FGrH* 63 F2) is implausible.

¹⁰⁵ Franz Cumont, «Les enfers selon l'*Axiochos*,» *CRAI* (1920) 272–85 argued that the two hemispheres into which the upper and lower world are divided (371b1–4) have their origins in Babylonian cosmography and astrology. G. Ettig's conclusion in his «*Acheruntica*,» *Leipziger Studien* 13 (1891) 314 that the main source of inspiration are Plato and the mysteries (*fontes igitur Plato et mysteria*) can, nonetheless, hardly be contested.

¹⁰⁶ For the *ἡσυχία* enjoyed by initiates, cf. Diog. Laert. 6.39. Also relevant here are the seats of the pure mentioned in the concluding lines to two of the lamellae from Thurii as the destination which the dead initiate hopes to attain (A2 and 3.6–7 Zuntz): νῦν δ' ἐκείτης ἤκα παρ' ἀγνῆν Φερσεφόνηται / ὥς με πρόφρων νέμψῃ ἔδρας ἐς εἰσάγειν.

¹⁰⁷ E. Rohde, *Psyche* II (Tübingen 1907) 421–23, in an appendix written in 1897, produced a battery of arguments in favour of taking *ὅτι γεννήτη τῶν θεῶν* to mean that initiates were imagined to be adopted into the *genos* of the gods. In support of his thesis and defending himself against the scepticism and literalist interpretation of Wilamowitz (n. 103) 984 n. 1, he appealed to an expression in the lamellae from Thurii (*ἡμεῖσ' δ' ἐνέβαν σιεύανον ποσὶ καρναλέμοισι, / δεσποῖνας δ' ἐνὸς κάλλιον ἔδαν χθονίας βασιλείας* A1.6–7 Zuntz), which he explained with reference to Diod. Sic. 4.39.2 and took to refer to the adoption of the initiate. Wilamowitz, for his part, took the phrase to mean that Axiochus was of noble birth and a descendant of

tradition that Hercules and Dionysus were initiated into the mysteries at Eleusis and that fortified by that initiation took the road from Eleusis to the Underworld (371d7–e4). The implication of the passage is that the Land of the Pious can only be entered by those who pass moral scrutiny and that within the class of persons who are able to give a good account of themselves there is the still more privileged group of initiates in the mysteries.

As for the requirement that the initiate be pure and for the assertion made on a lamella from Thurii that the bearer is pure (*ἐρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθάρᾳ* (A1.1 Zuntz), it is a fair guess that the concept of purity was never precisely and legalistically defined but was loosely understood to include character as well as freedom from various forms of pollution, although interpretation of the notion will have varied depending on the point of view of the interpreter and what his particular preoccupation was.¹⁰⁸ The presumption that the purity of the initiate will extend to his character may be reflected in the proclamation issued by the Chorus in Aristophanes' *Frogs*: in a parody of the language of the mysteries they bid those who are not pure of mind (*γνώμην καθαρνεύειν*) to withdraw from their presence (354–55).¹⁰⁹

A fourth reason for taking Posidippus' talk of the mystic way at face-value is the recent discovery in a cemetery in Pella of a gold lamella taking the form of a myrtle-leaf. It was found in a grave said to belong to the end of the 4th century B.C.¹¹⁰ The lamella has the following legend written on it: ΦΕΡΣΕΦΟΝΗΙ· ΠΟΣΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΟΣ ΜΥΣΤΗΣ ΕΥΣΕΒΗΣ. If the dating of the grave is correct, this is not the epigrammatist Posidippus, but a citizen of Pella from the generation of the grandfather of the poet. The name Posidippus is common enough, but the likelihood is that Pella will not have had many men called Posidippus who were also persons of substance, as the inhabitant of the grave evidently was, and who were unrelated to each other. If there was one member of the family who was an initiate in the mysteries, it becomes more likely that the epigrammatist was also an initiate.

Finally, Posidippus' wish is not just that he may come by the mystic way to Rhadamanthys, but that he may attain an old age in which his physical and mental powers are unimpaired, that he may be missed by his community and that he may have a house and

the gods. It is not necessary to subscribe to Rohde's theory of adoption to acknowledge that there is a good deal to be said for the notion that Axiochus's membership of the *genos* of the gods is tantamount to his being reborn as divine. The following sentences in the lamellae are apposite here: 1) *Εἴκελ καὶ Εἰβουλεῖ καὶ θεοὶ δαίμονες ἄλλοι· / καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐμῶν γένος εἴχομαι ἄλφιον εἶναι* A1–3.2–3 Zuntz; 2) *Θεὸς ἐγόνον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων* (A4.4 Zuntz); 3) *Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστεράεντιος· / αἰνῶν ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον* B1–2.6–7 Zuntz). As Rohde points out, it is surely because Axiochus is an initiate that he too is to be accorded the privilege of a front seat.

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of the ceremonies of purification required of those who would be initiates in the Eleusinian Mysteries and for a sensitive treatment of the ambiguity inherent in the concept of purity in this context and with particular reference to the programme of moral ascesis that Socrates in the *Phaedo* insists is necessary for salvation in the afterlife, see Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford 1983) 281–85.

¹⁰⁹ LSJ^s s. v. *γνώμη* II.2 translates *γνώμην καθαρνεύειν* by «pure conscience,» and is corrected by Kenneth Dover, *Aristophanes Frogs* (Oxford 1993) 239, who maintains that what is entailed by the phrase is «patriotism, co-operation and appreciation of the important role of comedy in the life of the community.» I would prefer a more general characterization and take the phrase to mean «whoever does not conceive bad intentions.» The emphasis is forward-looking and not backward-looking.

¹¹⁰ Maria Lilimbake-Akamate, *Τὸ Ἀρχαιολογικὸ Ἔργον στὴ Μακεδονία καὶ Θράκη* 3 (1989) [1992] 101, pls. 8 & 9.

fortune to leave to his children. This is the wish not of someone who is an initiate in the mysteries of the Muses but of a man who has been initiated into one of those mystery-cults that held out the promise of concrete advantages in this life as well as the next. There is evidence that initiation into the mysteries was thought to provide an assurance not only of a happy afterlife, but of a prolonged and prosperous existence in this life. In Cicero's *De legibus* we are explicitly told that those initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries enjoy not only a joyful form of existence in this life, but look forward to a death that carries with it higher hopes (2.36).¹¹¹ Not only did initiates imagine that their lives were likely to be happy and prosperous, they were also led to believe that initiation would cure them of ill-health and all physical distress. Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* speaks of initiation and purification as a route to freedom from the sicknesses and pains inflicted on a family by the misdeeds of an ancestor (244d5–e5).¹¹² A poem by Antiphilus in the *Garland of Philip* has a blind man speaking of his having come to the temple of Demeter led by his stick and of his making his way back to the city after his initiation without his stick, proclaiming with his eyes rather than with his tongue the mysteries of Demeter (Gow-Page, *Garland of Philip* 1023–28 = *A.P.* 9.298).¹¹³ Seafarers who had been initiated into the Samothracian Mysteries certainly expected that any voyages they might undertake thereafter would be safe. More surprisingly, initiation was thought to provide the hope of emotional equilibrium: the epigrammatist Crinagoras, writing in the 2nd half of the 1st century B.C., holds out the promise of freedom from cares in this life and a lighter spirit in the next for those who have been inducted into the Eleusinian Mysteries (*A.P.* 11.42.5–6 = Gow-Page, *Garland of Philip* 1973–74).

The set of wishes that Posidippus expresses, namely, that he may reach old age, that in old age his mental faculties and his physical powers may remain unimpaired, that his old age may be blessed with prosperity and that he may have sons to whom to leave his worldly possessions represents the end of life to which Greeks had aspired at least from the time of Homer.¹¹⁴ They hoped that their prayers, sacrifices and services to the gods would win them such an end.¹¹⁵ Posidippus spells out in detail what he hoped his old age would be like. He wanted what the poets called a γῆρας λιπαρόν. There is direct evidence from a later period and indirect evidence from Posidippus' own time that such an end to one's life was precisely what some mystery-cults promised. The *Orphic Hymns* provide the later evidence: they conspicuously make little or no mention of a happy afterlife for the initiate, but among the advantages in this life for which they pray is a happy and prosperous old age in which death is deferred as long as possible or, what is almost certainly the same thing, a prosperous end to life.¹¹⁶ One prayer may be singled out for special mention here: Persephone is asked to provide fruits from the land, peace, health, a prosperous life that will bring down with it a hale and hearty old age to the Underworld:

καὶ βίη· εὐόλβη· λιπαρὸν γῆρας κατάγοντι
πρὸς σὸν χῶρον, ἄνασσα, καὶ εὐδύναιον Πλούτωνα (29.19–20).

¹¹¹ *neque solum cum laetitia vivendi rationem accepimus, sed etiam cum spe meliore moriendi.*

¹¹² Cf. Plat. *Resp.* 364e3–365a3.

¹¹³ For Demeter at Eleusis healing the blind, see O. Kern, *RE* 4 (1901) s. v. Demeter 2752–53; L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* III (Oxford 1906) 367 n. 258.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 4.207–11, 11.134–37, 19.367–68; Pi. *N.* 7.98–101; Hdt. 1.30.3–5.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 19.367–68; *Inscr. de Dél.* 5.2548.

¹¹⁶ 13.9–10, 20.6, 25.11, 28.11–12, 29.17–20, 67.8, 73.7–9, 87.10–12. On the concern of later mystery cult with the things of this world, see Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge 1986) 17–18, 89.

It has to be granted that the *Orphic Hymns* belong to an age long after that of Posidippus, although exactly when is probably not to be settled. If we assume that they form a coherent whole composed for the members of a particular mystery-cult somewhere in Asia Minor, then the absence of the influence of Neoplatonism might place them sometime before the middle of the 3rd century A.D., but there are very large assumptions at work here.¹¹⁷ Since they are the product of a very different world from that of Posidippus, it might reasonably be objected that they do not necessarily have any bearing on the interpretation of the poet from Pella. There is, however, the testimony of the poem bidding Philicus godspeed on his journey to the Lands of the Pious and the Isles of the Blest: Philicus is said to have had a particularly good view of the prosperous old age of Alcinous (*SH* 980.5). That is a clever way of saying that as a Corcyrean Philicus had enjoyed a prolonged and prosperous old age after the fashion of his forebear Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians. Given the context in which the clause occurs, it is appropriate to conclude that the reference to the happy old age enjoyed by Philicus does not just mean that Philicus had coincidentally experienced a pleasant old age, but that one of the promises held out for him by initiation into the mysteries had been fulfilled, an indication that there was every reason to expect that he might have high hopes for a happy and privileged afterlife.

Conclusion

Euphorion, Philicus and Posidippus may not be poets of the calibre of Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius and Theocritus, but the level of literary sophistication and wit of which they were capable is not too far distant from that of Callimachus. They are certainly not obscure poetasters resident in some distant corner of the Hellenistic world from which they never moved: they travelled in the same larger world as their more famous contemporaries. They cannot, accordingly, be dismissed as irrelevant on the ground that they stand on a different literary and intellectual plane from Callimachus. They are a warning to us not to make the assumption, as evidently many scholars do, that wit and sophistication are a bar to religious faith and that only the simple and naïve succumb to such belief. Posidippus is a particularly striking case in point. He can write epigrams that are those of an amused and detached observer of human foibles, but at the same time he gives open expression to his religious faith. Not only that, he does not hesitate to tell us what benefits he hopes or expects to receive from his initiation into the mysteries.

For all three poets their devotion to the mysteries seems to have been a central element in their existence. In the case of Euphorion and Philicus we have to rely on the testimony of others, but it would be very odd, if the poets who wrote about them had seriously misjudged their men. Posidippus in particular gives us an insight into what initiation into the mysteries might mean to a man. The expectations that he had about the benefits to be derived from initiation correspond in part to what can be inferred about men's hopes from the gold lamellae that initiates carried with them to the grave: initiation held out the promise of a happy afterlife in an especially privileged section of the Underworld, which Posidippus would reach after taking the path set aside for initiates. The elegiacs sending Philicus on his

¹¹⁷ K. Ziegler, *RE* 18 (1942) s. v. Orphische Dichtung 1321–33.

way into the Underworld bear witness to the same journey and to the same destination, though in one case the goal of the journey is said to be Rhadamanthys and in the other the Lands of the Pious and the Isles of the Blest. Did we not have Posidippus' personal testament we would not have known of the blessings in this life that the mysteries in the Hellenistic Period promised: an initiate could look forward to a hale and hearty old age, material prosperity and the prospect of leaving sons behind him to whom to pass that prosperity on. His hopes for this life matched exactly a vision of what constituted a well-rounded life that had been in existence in the Greek world at least from the time of Homer.

It is immediately apparent from the devotion of our three poets to one traditional form of religious cult that the curious notion, unsupported by any real evidence, that the major poets of the Hellenistic Age were rootless individuals at sea in a world that no longer had any familiar bearings is in need of serious qualification. Posidippus is as good a counter-example to that thesis as one could hope to get. He is a man whose main point of reference is his native Pella: it is in the agora of Pella that he hopes to have a bronze statue of himself set up, it rather looks as if he still has his family-house there, that his sons are there and that he hopes to die and be buried in a family-grave in Pella. It is possible that he expects to be longed for by his community and all his people (23), if he dies in Alexandria, but it would seem on the whole more likely it is the consciousness of absence and loss that dying in his native-land would create in those around him he has in mind. None of this is very surprising, if we remember that a poet in this era is likely to have been a person of some substance who owned property in his native-city, which he will not easily have given up, even if he moved to Alexandria for a time.