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PART II

Philosopher Kings and Tragic Heroes

Essays on Images and Ideas from Western Greece

edited by
Heather L. Reid
Davide Tanasi

Parnassos Press
2016

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First Printing: 2016

ISBN 978-1-942495-07-9 (paperback)

ISBN 978-1-942495-10-9 (e-book)

Parnassos Press

Fonte Aretusa Organization

1628 W. Willis Ave.

Sioux City, Iowa 51103

www.fontearetusa.org

Cover illustration:

Terracotta plaque with the Gorgon, Siracusa, Athenaion, 575 BCE, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Siracusa.

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Epigraph

*Tell them to remember Syracuse and Ortygia,
which Hieron rules with his pure scepter and with good counsels,
while he attends on the worship of Demeter of the red feet,
and on the festival of her daughter with her white horses,
and on the might of Aetnaean Zeus*

(Pindar, Olympian 6, 93-96)

Acknowledgments

The editors are grateful to all the participants of the first Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Hellenic Heritage of Southern Italy, especially Kathryn Morgan of the University of California Los Angeles, who delivered the keynote address, and Anthony Preus of Binghamton University and the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, who offered wise counsel and invaluable support.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge Gioconda Lamagna, director of the Museo Archeologico Regionale “Paolo Orsi” of Siracusa, who kindly hosted one session of the symposium at the auditorium of the museum. We would also like to thank Susi Kimbell and Franca Lupo of the Sicily Center for International Education and Stephan Hassam and Paolo Trapani for their help in the organization of the symposium at Siracusa and Sherry Swan and Abby Hoy for their help formatting the manuscript.

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Reincarnation and Salvation in Magna Graecia and Plato

Orphic ideas about reincarnation, the divinity of the soul, and a blissful afterlife for the purified appear in the early Pythagoreans, Empedocles, the Gold Leaves, and Plato. Challenging questions remain to be addressed about the eschatological details in each case.

1. Do we find a belief in a cycle of births and deaths?
2. Why does the soul descend into embodiment?
3. What is the structure and duration of the rebirth cycle?
4. What is the nature of the transmigrating agent? Is it mortal or immortal?
5. Is the character of a given birth determined or influenced by previous births? Is the rebirth cycle ethically determined?
6. Does the rebirth cycle come to an end? If so, what is the nature of salvation?

E.R. Dodds argued that in archaic Greece religious virtuosos – Dodds called them shamans – like Orpheus, Zalmoxis, Epimenides, Hermotimus, Pythagoras, and Empedocles “diffused the belief in a detachable soul or self, which by suitable techniques can be withdrawn from the body even during life, a self which is older than the body and will outlast it.”² This occult self was “the carrier of man’s potential divinity”³ and also of his guilt, which originally led to embodiment. In Dodds’s formulation the soul’s eschatological trajectory depends on a metaphysical bifurcation of the self and involves the idea of moral responsibility, both of which features are articulated in significantly different ways in archaic and classical Greece. My aim here is to understand these rebirth eschatologies as holistically as possible in the face of piecemeal evidence and the ambiguous mythopoeic imagery.

Orphic Eschatology

I begin with Plato’s outline of the Orphic eschatology that appears in the Gold Leaves and Empedocles. In *Cratylus* 400c we learn that Orphics believed “that the soul is being punished for

something, and that the body is an enclosure or prison in which the soul is securely kept... until the penalty is paid." This famous account in the *Meno* contains only a cryptic mythic explanation for a soul's punishment. Socrates quotes Pindar Fr. 133 and invokes priests and priestesses (i.e. Orphic-Pythagoreans⁴) for the beliefs that the soul is immortal, that it must pay a penalty for wrongdoing, and that it is reborn many times.

They say that the human soul is immortal; at times it comes to an end, which they call dying, at times it is reborn, but it is never destroyed, and one must therefore live one's life as piously as possible:

Persephone will return to the sun above in the ninth year the souls of those from whom she will exact punishment for old miseries, and from these come noble kings, mighty in strength and greatest in wisdom, and for the rest of time men will call them sacred heroes (Pindar Fr. 133 Snell).

As the soul is immortal, has been born often and has seen all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing which it has not learned; so it is in no way surprising that it can recollect the things it knew before, both about virtue and other things.⁵ (*Meno* 81b3-c9)

Several aspects of this anthropogony, which Plato appropriates for his own purposes, are found in the Gold Leaves. "Persephone's ancient grief" appears to refer to the murder and eating of her son Dionysus by the Titans. After being incinerated by Zeus's thunderbolt, their ashes gave birth to humanity. The idea that humans share Dionysus's nature, because of the Titans' eating him before they were incinerated, may have been added later.⁶ This myth is the foundation for the Gold Leaves eschatology. Upon arrival in the underworld the dead initiate self-identifies: "I am a child of Earth and starry Sky, but my race is heavenly" (B1 = 2 Petelia GJ)⁷ – indicating that humans were originally immortal beings through their descent from the Titans. Like the Titans, who were thrust beneath the earth, humans were imprisoned in bodies and suffer "the dire cycle of deep grief" (A1 = GJ 5), from which they can be freed by ritual purification and restored to their original divine status. The Orphic account of the primal crime is mythic, beginning with an act of revolt in primordial time before humans existed. Paradoxically, it

is the claim that human nature was originally divine that condemns humans to suffering. However, strictly speaking, human wrongdoing was not responsible for the original fall, a fact that deepens the psychological tension evident in some Gold Leaves. An initiate says to the Queen of the underworld: "I have paid the penalty for unrighteous deeds. Either Moira overcame me or the star-flinger with lightning" (A3 Thuri = GJ 6). Here the idea of moral responsibility is ambiguous: blaming the gods recalls Agamemnon's apology in the *Iliad*, where he holds the gods responsible for taking away his senses, causing him to steal Achilles's concubine.

The initiate's salvation is adumbrated in several Gold Leaves – promissory notes for apotheosis after death.

I have flown out of the dire cycle of deep grief,
I have approached the longed-for crown with swift feet,
I have sunk beneath the breast of the Lady, the Chthonian Queen...
"Happy and blessed, you will be a god instead of a mortal."
(A1 = GJ 5)

"You have become a god instead of a mortal. A kid I fell into milk."
(A4 = GJ 3)

I come, pure from the pure, o queen of the chthonians...
But now I have come a suppliant to reverend Persephone,
so that she may send me with favour to the abode of the pure.
(A 2 = GJ 6)

It is important to note that escape from the cycle of grief and rebirth to a blissful afterlife need not involve being freed from a cycle of births and deaths. Yet most scholars believe that the Gold Leaves are committed to reincarnation. However, the evidence is very thin, as Edmunds has argued recently.⁸ Also lacking is evidence for the idea that a soul's present suffering is the result of wrongdoing in previous lives. Inherited guilt is linked genetically with the fate of the Titans, making reincarnation otiose.

Empedocles's Escatology

Empedocles's eschatological perspective is highly complex, including elements of the Orphic myth of inherited guilt, the

Pythagorean concept of immortality, reincarnation across species-boundaries, and opposition to animal sacrifice – all expressed in the distinctive voice of a religious visionary.⁹ However, unlike the Orphic anthropogony, Empedocles presents himself as a *daimon* whose guilt and fall into embodiment depends not on a pre-human, Titanic deed but on himself. In the famous Fr. 115 he cites “an oracle of Necessity”:

when anyone sins and pollutes his own limbs with bloodshed, who by his error makes false the oath he swore – for 10,000 years he wanders apart from the blessed, being born throughout that time in all manner of forms of mortal things, exchanging one hard path of life for another.

He recounts the *daimon*’s buffeting by the elements, concluding with the lament that he too is an “exile from the gods, having put my trust in raving Strife,” having put on “an alien garment of flesh” (B126). The nature of the *daimon* and its offence are obscure and much disputed.¹⁰ Also in doubt is whether all humans are fallen *daimones* or only special souls like Empedocles. Despite the complexity of his scheme, Empedocles appears to share the fallen god idea with the Gold Leaves, a view which should be distinguished from the Pythagorean (and Platonic) idea that one can be transformed into a *daimon* through virtuous behavior and philosophical purification.¹¹

Inasmuch as stages in the soul’s trajectory correspond to phases of the cosmic cycle, a double fall of the soul is likely. (1) Both the soul and the heavens consist of the element of *aithēr*. When the etheric soul mixes with the sub-lunar elements, it generates bodies of flesh through the action of Love (B98). (2) When embodied, the soul trusts in Strife and engages in killing and eating other beings (B136-7).¹² The first fall is the result of necessity, the second adds voluntary choice and moral responsibility. Trust in raving Strife ties the *daimon*’s will to necessary phases in the cosmic cycle. Instead of deriving guilt from the Orphic anthropogony’s primal sin, for Empedocles personal guilt arises from bloodshed and ignorance after the *daimon* enters the rebirth cycle.

Empedocles’s preaching of non-violence and moral purification as antidotes for this guilt must be seen in the context of an elaborate rebirth cycle. He vividly describes his experiences: “I have already been once a boy and a girl, a bush and a bird and a leaping

journeying fish" (B117). But passage through the cycle is not random, since there appears to be a hierarchy within each class of living being. B127 indicates that the lion is the highest animal species and the laurel the best among trees. Human types are ranked in B146-147: "But at the end they come among men on earth as prophets, bards, doctors and princes; and thence they arise as gods highest in honor." This suggests the possibility of a teleological cycle in which "in each successive life a *daimon* might ascend through ever higher realms of creation (plants, beasts, man), undergo the best form of incarnation possible within each, and finally regain his original status as a god."¹³ Some scholars believe that the scheme also reflects a full-blown karmic ethics, on which one's actions determine the next incarnation.¹⁴ This is not implausible – otherwise, why follow a strict way of life? – but there is no explicit evidence for it either in Empedocles or in Pythagorean *testimonia*. Moreover, doubts remain about a teleological cycle in light of the karmic retrogression indicated in Xenophanes' report about Pythagoras: "Stop beating that dog! From his cries I recognize the soul of a friend (B7)." Why would a *philos* end up as a dog?

Whatever pattern it takes, spiritual progress over lifetimes is achieved through purification and increase in wisdom. But Empedoclean purification involves asceticism, proper behavior, and meditative practice rather than the rituals prominent in the Gold Leaves.¹⁵ More importantly, the centrality of wisdom distinguishes his path of salvation from the popular Orphism of the Gold Leaves and Pindar. Empedocles B129, probably referring to Pythagoras, makes the point: "And there was a man of surpassing knowledge, master especially of all kinds of wise works, who had acquired the utmost wealth of understanding (*prapidōn*): For whenever he reached out with all his understanding. Easily he sought each of all the things that are, and 10 and even 20 generations of men." Like his master Pythagoras,¹⁶ Empedocles achieved continuity of consciousness through recollection. Most humans are dismissed as *ephēmerioi* (B3.4, B131.1), because they lack such continuity.

Empedocles's dramatic announcement of divinization echoes those found in the Gold Leaves. "I come before you an immortal god, mortal no longer" (B112). Ultimately, "They arise as gods highest in honour, sharing with the other immortals their hearth and table,

without part in human sorrows or weariness" (B147). The use of worldly and sensuous images to describe celestial existence is a common trope in archaic religious poetry. In Hesiod gods and men feasted together before the rupture between them (*Eoiae*, Fr. 1.6-7) and the golden race of men become *daimones* after death (*Works and Days*, 108, 122, 167ff.).¹⁷ Pindar describes the blissful afterlife of those dwelling on the Isles of Blessed (*Ol.* II.71-77) and Pelinna 1 mentions the symposium of the blessed, where wine is a "happy honor" – a feature of Orphic eschatology mocked by Plato (*R.* 363c) – and the sacred rites (*telea*) which are still celebrated (GJ 26a).¹⁸ While he employs some of this traditional imagery, Empedocles conceives of divinization in a more spiritual way, i.e. without the body,¹⁹ and as comprising divine wisdom. In this vein B132 refers to "the wealth of divine thinking" and B134 to a god who "is mind alone (*phrēn*), holy and beyond description, darting through the whole cosmos with swift thoughts."

Finally, I turn to the question of whether Empedocles accepts an end to the cycle of births and deaths. His emphatic declaration of himself as a realized god would seem to eliminate the possibility of any further incarnations. However, Inwood has argued that the soul/*daimon* can not be immortal "since *daimones* are compounds subject to dissolution like everything else, and thus will be limited to rebirth within one turn of the cosmic cycle."²⁰ Thus, certainty on this question is difficult to achieve.

Plato's Response

Because Plato's eschatology is far too complex to provide a comprehensive account in this short space, I shall review his responses to the central questions noted above, tracing his borrowings and innovations as we proceed. Plato's anthropogony is multi-faceted and, some would say, even contradictory. The passages from the *Cratylus* and *Meno* cited above indicate some allegiance to the Orphic anthropogony, viz. humans' Titanic nature and "Persephone's ancient grief." Citing the teachings of the mysteries, Socrates states that we are in a kind of prison (*Phd.* 62a). But even in this, the most Orphic-Pythagorean of the dialogues, Plato does not rely primarily on mythic accounts of primeval crimes and guilt. Later in the dialogue, humanity's titanic nature symbolizes one's character:

“imprisonment is...due to desires” and “the prisoner himself is contributing to his own incarceration most of all” (82e5-7). Personal guilt is demythologized and individuated.

What is perhaps the clearest statement in the dialogues about the origin of the soul occurs in the *Timaeus*, albeit in quasi-mythic form. Unlike Orphic-Pythagorean traditions, the *Timaeus* presents a positive account of the soul’s original embodiment. The Demiurge instructs the young gods “to weave what is mortal to what is immortal” (41d1-2) and assigns each soul to a star and then to its first birth (41d8-42a3). No crime or guilt is indicated. After its first incarnation, a virtuous soul returns “to his dwelling place in his companion star, to live a life of happiness that agreed with his character,” the less virtuous fall into lesser incarnations in accordance with their characters.

But if he failed in this, he would be born a second time, now as a woman. And if even then he still could not refrain from wickedness, he would be changed once again, this time into some wild animal that resembled the wicked character he had acquired. And he would have no rest from these toilsome transformations until he had dragged that massive accretion of fire-water-air-earth into conformity with the revolution of the Same and uniform within him, and so subdued that turbulent, irrational mass by means of reason. This would return him to his original condition of excellence. (42b3-d2)

This scheme transforms the Orphic fallen god motif by omitting an original crime, either by an ancestral divinity or by the individual soul itself. It is remarkably optimistic in advancing the possibility of a soul’s return to the heavens after only one virtuous incarnation! The innate divinity of the soul is emphasized later in the statement that *nous* is a *daimon* given to us by god (*Tim.* 90a), which has descended from heaven. Souls compelled to reincarnate thereafter do so only as a result of their own wrongdoing, which stems from the mortal parts of the soul binding it to recurring embodied existences in the rebirth cycle.

Plato’s most detailed account of the descent of the soul appears in the *Phaedrus* myth, which is strongly influenced by Empedocles. What is depicted is not, however, the original descent, but ones contingent on earlier incarnations within the cosmic cycle, accentuating the tension between necessity and voluntary choice. The

contrast between celestial-disembodied life and embodied existence is inspired by both the mythic theological distinction between divinities and humans but also the new metaphysical distinction between Being and its imperfect images. The divine banquet (from Hesiod and Empedocles) is refigured as feasting on the Forms (*Phdr.* 247c-e). The contrast between the purity of the pre-natal celestial vision and the soul's imprisonment in a body, "locked in it like an oyster in its shell" (250c5-6), recalls the Sicilian's description of embodiment as coming "under this roofed cave" (B120) and being "clothed in an alien garment of flesh" (B126).

The whimsical optimism of the *Timaeus* anthropogony may be anomalous. In all other accounts, the soul is represented as deeply embedded in a rebirth cycle of interminable length. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato borrows Empedocles' three times 10,000 seasons of exile to specify the duration of the cosmic cycle, subdividing it to fit his own cycle of ten incarnations, one for each millennium, progressing through a hierarchy of eight human types (from philosopher down to tyrant, 248de). Plato's other accounts of the rebirth cycle focus on (1) posthumous rewards and punishments; (2) souls' choices of their next incarnation; (3) a comprehensive rebirth ethics; and (4) intimations of exceptional souls' exit from the cycle.

I shall summarize the key aspects of (1) and (2), which have been extensively discussed by scholars. The crucial point about the first, which is not emphasized enough, is that Plato's heaven and hell, depicted in traditional terms, is relativized and subordinated to the ultimate soteriological goal of total liberation from the rebirth cycle.²¹ The *Gorgias* employs the simplest scheme. Invoking Homer and Hesiod, Socrates recounts a "true tale" that the virtuous go to the Isles of the Blessed, the abode of Hesiod's golden race and the vicious to Tartarus (523b1, 524a3, 526c5). In the *Phaedo* the exceptionally virtuous (114b6-c2) dwell in an earthly paradise—on the surface of the earth in the myth's terms – whereas the bulk of humanity lives in the hollows – analogous to the *Republic's* cave-dwellers. Socrates paints a Pythagorean picture of this true earth (110c-111c3), whose inhabitants breathe ether instead of air and live on islands, evoking the Isles of the Blessed, which has become a celestial way-station for the virtuous en route to divinization.

The lesser status of hell and heaven states in Plato also entails that although they provide ethical compensation for embodied deeds, neither rewards nor punishment evidently lead to moral improvement. In the *Phaedo* myth, average souls “are purified by penalties for any wrongdoing...and suitably rewarded for their good deeds” (113e1-2). But in the myth of Er those who have “come down from heaven” (R. 619cd) make bad choices. Significantly, the determining factor in choices is “the character (*sunētheia*) of their former life” (R. 620a2-3), a key point ignored by scholars who critique the pessimism of the myth.²²

Complementary to rewards and punishments in the afterlife is the impact of previous lives on the present one. Here Plato’s rebirth ethics breaks new ground. Empedocles emphasized the deleterious effects of bloodshed, but no comprehensive rebirth ethics is evident in the surviving texts in contrast to Plato’s illustrations of the principle that “the doer shall suffer.”

“Won’t we also agree,” Socrates asks Glaucon, “that everything that comes to someone who is loved by gods, insofar as it comes from the gods themselves, is the best possible, unless it is the inevitable punishment for some mistake he made in a former life” (R. 612e8-613a2)

Vengeance [*tisis*] is exacted for these crimes in the after-life [Hades], and when a man returns to this world again he is ineluctably obliged to pay the penalty prescribed by the law of nature—to undergo the same treatment as he himself meted out to his victim, and to conclude his earthly existence by encountering a similar fate (*moira*) at the hands of someone else. (*Laws* 870d7-e3)

a man [a murderer] who has done something of this kind *is obliged to suffer precisely what he has inflicted...no other purification is available when common blood has been polluted*; the pollution resists cleansing until, murder for murder, the guilty soul has paid the penalty and by this appeasement has soothed the anger of the deceased’s entire line. (*Laws* 872e-873a)

The myth in *Laws* X weaves together the elements of individual punishment and personal responsibility treated in Book IX into the perspective of cosmic providence. Everything, “down to the smallest details” of the individual parts of the universe – including punishments and rewards, births and deaths of individual souls – is

under the control of “the supervisor of the universe” and various “ruling powers” (903b). The Stranger expounds the principles that the individual “exists for the sake of the universe” (903c5), not vice versa, and that one’s present position “contributes to the good of the whole” (d2). Thus,

since a soul is allied with different bodies at different times, and perpetually undergoes all sorts of changes, either self-imposed or produced by some other soul, the divine checkers-player has nothing else to do except promote a soul with a promising character to a better situation, and relegate one that is deteriorating to an inferior, as is appropriate in each case, so that they all meet the fate they deserveWith this grand purpose in view *he has worked out what sort of position, in what regions, should be assigned to a soul to match its changes of character; but he left it to the individual’s acts of will to determine the direction of these changes.* You see, *the way we react to particular circumstances is almost invariably determined by our desires and our psychological state...* So all things that contain soul change, the cause of their change lying within themselves, and *as they change they move according to the ordinance and law of destiny.* Small changes in unimportant aspects of character entail small horizontal changes of position in space, while a substantial decline into injustice sets the soul on the path to the depths of the so-called underworld, which men call Hades and similar names, and which haunts and terrifies them both during their lives and when they have been sundered from their bodies. *Take a soul that becomes particularly full of vice or virtue as a result of its own acts of will and the powerful influence of social intercourse. If companionship with divine virtue has made it exceptionally divine, it experiences an exceptional change of location, being conducted by a holy path to some superior place elsewhere.* Alternatively, opposite characteristics will send it off to live in the opposite region (903d3-e1, 904b3-e3).

This important passage exhibits the essential features of Plato’s rebirth ethics, whose basic principles are consistent with the details of the earlier eschatological myths. While it interweaves the forces of necessity and free will, the weight of moral responsibility falls on individual souls as they suffer births and deaths extending through millennia.

That Plato’s eschatology has an ultimate goal is often denied.²³ One reason for this dubious conclusion is the atomistic approach to motifs in Plato’s thought, exemplified on this subject by Edmonds:

the idea of reincarnation and the idea of endless disembodiment in torment or bliss are meant to be considered separately rather than as parts of a coherent system. Both the idea of the cycle of reincarnations and the images of torment or bliss without end have their significance within the myth.²⁴

The fact that Plato does present individual aspects of the rebirth cycle and rewards and punishments in isolation from one another does not justify ignoring implicit connections between them. Also, Edmonds misrepresents Plato as absolutizing heaven and hell states. This supposition is refuted in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus* myths, as well as in the *Laws*.

The trajectory of the soul as a fallen god returning to heaven appears often enough – and as complementing the overall structure of the rebirth cycle – for us to conclude with confidence that the philosopher ultimately is liberated from the cycle of births and death. She attains “the place beyond the heavens” (*Phdr.* 247c3-4), the realm of supreme blessedness in “beautiful dwelling places” which are beyond description (*Phaedo* 114c).²⁵ In the *Republic*, those who have lived a complete philosophical life and served the *kallipolis* “should now be led to the final goal, and required to direct the radiant light of the soul towards the vision of that which itself gives light to everything” (*R.* 540a6-8). At death they “will depart for the Isles of the Blessed and dwell there” (540b5-7)²⁶ and be honored as *daimones* or divinely happy men.²⁷ This blissful discarnate state is anticipated in the vision of the Forms outside the cave at 519c5-6: philosophers think they have gone to the Isles of the Blessed while embodied. The same, or a similar, state is ascribed to the disembodied in glowing terms: “wholly perfect and free of all troubles...gaz[ing] in rapture at sacred revealed objects that were perfect, and simple, and unshakeable and blissful” (*Phdr.* 250b9-c5). This ultimate transcendent experience begins at the end of the rebirth cycle in the *Phaedrus* myth, where those who have chosen philosophical lives three consecutive times escape from the cycle (*Phdr.* 249a1-5). The *Timaeus* makes the same point in the more general reference to the soul returning to its original condition of excellence (*Tim.* 42d1-2).

Plato has woven together popular eschatological destinations (Hades, Isles of the Blessed) with the Orphic themes of imprisonment and purification and with Pythagorean immortality and

reincarnation. His crowning touch was to embed these ideas in an overarching scheme of karmic ethics that emphasizes human responsibility and an ultimate escape from the rebirth cycle. Finally, he provides a dazzling vision of the liberated state in the great ascent passages.

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² E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 146-47.

³ Dodds *Irrational*, 153.

⁴ The identity of these priests and priestesses is hotly debated. They are members of the mystery cults according to Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (London: Routledge, 2007), 118. Kingsley argues that they are Pythagoreans, who practiced rituals in the Bacchic mysteries and for Persephone: Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 160-65.

⁵ Plato translations are from John M. Cooper, ed. *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997).

⁶ For this view see Radcliffe G. Edmonds, "Tearing Apart the Zagreus Myth: A Few Disparaging Remarks on Orphism and Original Sin," *Classical Antiquity* 18.1 (1999): 35-73.

⁷ GJ = Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife*. The same fragments are placed in A and B groups by Günther Zuntz, *Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

⁸ Orthodox opinion is well stated by Graf and Johnston *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife*, 118-19. I share the caution of Radcliffe G. Edmonds *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the "Orphic" Gold Tablets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 94-96.

⁹ Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 300 states that the purifications of

Orphics and Empedocles differ from Eleusinian and Pythagorean because the former promised release from personal or inherited guilt.

- ¹⁰ Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles: A Text with an Introduction*. Revised second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 57n136: "It is impossible to determine what causes the fall of the daimon, since the textual corruption in lines 3-5 makes it unclear whose perjury and bloodshed (or fear, in the MSS), precipitate the exile; similarly, we are not told which oaths are broken or how, or what is the object of the bloodshed or fear."
- ¹¹ Cf. Marcel Detienne, *La Notion de Daimon dan le Pythagorisme ancien* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963), 99 and Edmonds, *Myths of the Underworld Journey*, 92-94.
- ¹² See Laura Gemelli Marciano, *Die Vorsokratiker 2: Band 2* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), 358.
- ¹³ G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven and M. Schofield. *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 317. Translations of Empedocles are cited from this edition.
- ¹⁴ Inwood *The Poem of Empedocles*, 56 "one's behaviour in this life will affect the fate of the *daimon* in the next life." Pythagoreans "must have allowed some scope for the individual's conduct in this life to influence the form of his next incarnation" (Parker *Miasma*, 291).
- ¹⁵ Parker *Miasma*, 301 mistakenly thinks we know little of Empedocles's way of salvation except for vegetarianism and sexual moderation. On meditative practices in Empedocles see Peter Kingsley *Reality* (Inverness, CA: The Golden Sufi Center, 2003), 402-4 on B110.
- ¹⁶ According to *DL* 8.4-5, Pythagoras remembered that he had been Aetheliades, Euphorbus, Hermotimus, and Pyrrhus.
- ¹⁷ Hesiod's statement that the golden race become *daimones* was explained by Pythagoreans as resulting from virtuous behavior. Cf. Edmonds *Underworld Journey*, 93 and Detienne *Daimon*, 115.
- ¹⁸ Edmonds *Underworld Journey*, 99 points out that in the Gold Leaves' two different options – purification and divinization – are available for initiates. He believes that they "need be neither two tracks within a single systematic conception nor two successive stages of a single evolving eschatology." I am inclined to see purification as the means to divinization.
- ¹⁹ Denis O'Brien "Empedocles Revisited," *Ancient Philosophy* 15 (1995) 452: "Hippolytus tells us that Pythagoras believed that souls were 'mortal when they are in a body, as though buried in a tomb, but that we rise up and become immortal, when we are freed from our bodies'."
- ²⁰ Inwood *Empedocles*, 53.

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- ²¹ For a comprehensive discussion see my "Rebirth Eschatology in Plato and Plotinus," in *Philosophy and Salvation in Greek Religion* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), ed. Vishwa Adluri, 243-88.
- ²² For claims that Plato is a pessimist and that his eschatology is contradictory or self-refuting see Julia Annas, "Plato's Myths of Judgment," *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 119-43 and Mark McPherran, "Virtue, Luck, and Choice at the End of the *Republic*," in *Plato's Republic. A Critical Guide*, ed. Mark McPherran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 132-46.
- ²³ See Annas, "Myths of Judgment" and, recently, Edmonds, "Myths of the Underworld Journey," 216-20.
- ²⁴ Edmonds *ibid.* 218n179.
- ²⁵ This blissful fate is anticipated earlier in the dialogue by reference to "dwelling with the gods" (*Phd.* 69c, 81a4-6, 82b10).
- ²⁶ Stephen Halliwell, *Plato: Republic 10*, edited with Translation and Commentary (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988), 22 implausibly claims that "even the philosophical soul will have in each incarnation to start afresh the process of recollection and learning, and so, it seems, will be unable to carry over knowledge and goodness previously attained." Passages in *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*, and *Laws* discussed above cast doubt on this claim.
- ²⁷ Here I think that the traditional Isles of the Blessed may symbolically refer to the state of blissful liberation not to an intermediate state of reward.