THE ENTRY OF ORPHEUS INTO ARCHAIC GREEK SOCIETY

Submitted by Kevin Lester, to the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Ancient Myth and Society, March 2013

SUMMARY

Although absent from early Archaic sources by the sixth century BCE Orpheus the poet had become synonymous with poetry and inspiration. This work will examine the emergence of the myths of Orpheus in Archaic Greece with a view to understanding his place in society.

This will entail the exploration of the relationship between poetry and the evolving role of the individual in Archaic society in order to clarify the context in which Orpheus came to prominence. By examining the changing role of the poet within society one can understand ways in which the evolution of Archaic society, including the development of the *polis* and what has been termed 'the rise of the individual,' may have influenced the creation and performance of poetry. These factors, together with the absorption of new cultural influences into Greek society and the development of new attitudes to the afterlife created the social context in which the Orpheus myths took form. This work will clarify the extent to which changing values found expression in the figure of Orpheus and the ways in which the elements of the myths reflected contemporary social concerns.

Consideration will be given to claims of exotic influence made by modern scholars and the extent to which Orpheus' mythology made him a suitable vehicle for the importation of exotic ideas such as reincarnation and metempsychosis and whether these myths expressed the concerns of a society increasingly preoccupied with the fate of the individual soul after death. Orpheus' perceived otherness made him a liminal figure who crossed boundaries in transcending and uniting the divisions between the animal, human and divine worlds. This work will highlight ways in which the mythical Orpheus was essentially a construct of Archaic Greek society and reflected notions concerned with poetry, heroic identity and immortality inherent in this culture.

DECLARATION PAGE WITH SIGNATURES IN HARD COPY VERSIONS

For completion by the External Examiner: Comments: Proposed Mark: Signature of External Examiner:
Final Agreed Mark:
Comments (to indicate how the final agreed mark has been arrived at):

List of illustrations

(see Appendix)

Abbreviations

Beazley, A. R. V. *Attic Red-Figure Vase Painters*, ed. J. D. Beazley, Oxford 1942.

C. V. A.	*Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*
D.	*Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*, ed. E. Diehl. Leipzig, 1925.
DK	*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, eds. H. Diels and W. Kranz, 6th ed. 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1952.
FGrH	*Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby, Leiden: Brill, 1923.
GENT. –PR.	*Poetarum elegiacorum testimonia et fragmenta*, ed. B. Gentili-C, Prato, I, Leipzig, 1970; II, Leipzig, 1985.
L.-P.	*Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, eds. E. Lobel and D. Page, Oxford, 1955.
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, eds. Ackermann, H. C. and Gisler, J. R. Zurich, 1981-99.
P.	*Poetae melici Graeci*, ed. D. L. Page. Oxford, 1962.
PMG	*Poetae melici Graeci*, ed. D. Page. Oxford, 1962.
SLG	*Supplement lyricis Graecis*, ed. D. L Page. Oxford, 1974.
S-M.	*Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*, ed. B. Snell and H. Maehler. Leipzig, 1970.
SN. -MAEHL.	*Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*, ed. D. L Page. Oxford, 1974.
TrGF	*Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. Göttingen, eds. Snell, B., Kannicht, R. and Radt, S. 1971-86.
V.	*Sappho et Alcaeus*. Fragments, ed. E. M. Voigt. Amsterdam, 1975.
WEST	*Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, I-II, ed. M. L West. Oxford, 1971-72.

THE ENTRY OF ORPHEUS INTO ARCHAIC GREEK SOCIETY

Orpheus the poet was not mentioned in early Archaic sources, but it will be shown that by the sixth century BCE he had become synonymous with poetry and inspiration and by the Classical era Orpheus had come to embody concepts regarding mankind's relationship with nature, love and death. As the archetypal artist and tragic lover of the Augustan poets Orpheus went on to influence the tradition of Western poetry. [1] This work will examine the emergence of the myths of Orpheus in Archaic Greece with a view to understanding his place in society. This process will entail an examination of the relationship between poetry and the evolving role of the individual in Archaic society in order to clarify the context in which Orpheus came to prominence.

The fragmentary and ambiguous nature of the evidence regarding the Orpheus myths raises the problem that the interpreter's preconceptions may lead to distortion based on culturally determined assumptions. It will be necessary to consider the cultural milieu of Archaic Greece in which the myths of Orpheus came to prominence including economic, cultural, religious and philosophical developments in society. This will help to guard against the intrusion of modern assumptions that arise from considering the evidence without regard to its social context and will ultimately serve to clarify the perceptions that articulated the myths.[2]

For Orpheus to become a celebrated figure there must have been themes expressed in his story that resonated with contemporary Greek audiences in order for those myths to have meaning. It will be necessary to evaluate these themes and identify the concepts expressed in them before exploring their origins in epic literature. After outlining the principle form of the Orpheus myths we will examine the changing role of the poet within society from the epic bards to the lyric poets in order to understand ways in which the evolution of Archaic society including the development of the *polis* and what has been termed 'the rise of the individual,' may have influenced the creation and performance of poetry.[3] We shall see how these factors, together with the absorption of new cultural influences into Greek society created the social context in which the Orpheus myths took form.

---

[1] Eg. Virgil *Georgics* 4.453*ff*; Ovid *Met*. 10.1-154.
[2] See Sourvinou-Inwood (1991: 3*ff*) evaluates the problems in interpreting fragmentary evidence.
[3] As coined by Snell 1982: 43-70.

It will be seen that changing values found expression in the figure of Orpheus and the elements of the myths surrounding him reflected contemporary social concerns. We shall see that the sixth century in particular was a time when boundaries became increasingly reinforced on a social and religious level and the exotic poet as a figure who was able to transcend these boundaries became a figurehead for certain religious concepts. This will entail a consideration of claims of exotic influence made by modern scholars including the importation of ideas such as reincarnation and metempsychosis into Greek culture. [4] It will be necessary to examine Orpheus' relationship to religion and to what extent this expressed the concerns of a society increasingly preoccupied with the fate of the individual soul after death. This process will help to clarify the influence of Orpheus' religious identity on his mythology.

Finally, an evaluation will be made of the main aspects of the Orpheus myths and how they related to developments in society, literature and eschatology from a socio-historical perspective. As Graf states, myth is given meaning by the social context in which it is used.[5] An examination of the social function of the Orpheus myths will highlight the tension between polarities of thought as expressed in Greek myth and in the figure of Orpheus in particular.[6] We shall see that Orpheus was essentially a construct of Greek society whose liminal position as the Thracian poet gave him a privileged role in transcending and uniting the divisions between the animal, human and divine worlds.

The key elements of the Orpheus myths

In order understand how Orpheus was perceived in the Archaic period it will be necessary to identify the key aspects of the myths bearing in mind the possibilities of authorial distortion and that evidence is often limited to chance survivals or brief allusions in works chiefly concerned with other themes. Neither Homer, Hesiod, nor the Homeric Hymns mention the poet but the earliest evidence records Orpheus' role as an Argonaut. The early to mid sixth-century treasury of the Sicyonians at Delphi featured the Argo with two figures holding lyres, one of which is identified as

[4] As proposed by Dodds 1951: 147*ff*; Eliade 1964: 387*ff*; West 1983: 259.
[5] Graf 1993: 4.
[6] For the structuralist view of myth as a means of resolving social tensions produced by cultural contradictions (Csapo 2005: 220-229, citing Levi-Strauss (1958)) Cf. Vernant (1980: 226*ff*) on the importance of narrative function and historical context.

'Orphas' (Orp6 *LIMC*).[7] Orpheus first emerges in the literature of the sixth century BCE when the lyric poet Ibycus, mentions 'famous Orpheus,' suggesting that he had already attained a considerable reputation at this time (F22, Schneidewin No. 9). A fragment of Simonides records the power of Orpheus' song in the setting of a sea voyage that suggests an Argonautic context (F27 D). In the 460s BCE, Pindar speaks of 'Orpheus with his golden lyre, father of lays' including the poet among the crew of the Argo and also implies that he is a son of Apollo and therefore a demigod (*Pyth*. 4. 315ff).[8] In the lost *Hypsipyle* Euripides portrays the Argonauts rowing to the tune of Orpheus' Thracian lyre (*TrGF* F752g.1-17). Orpheus' role as an Argonaut places him in mythic chronology as belonging to the heroic era in the generation preceding the Trojan War. Homer mentions an Argonautic myth and the characters of Jason and Medea but that no source prior to Ibycus mentions Orpheus suggests that he was a later addition to the story (*Od*. 12.69-70; cf. *Il*. 7.467-9, 20.40-1, 23.746-7).[9] Moreover, as West notes, Orpheus is unconnected to other mythical figures of the same heroic generation by blood relation or shared myth.[10] We can conclude that although Orpheus appeared late in Greek history after the era of Homeric epic, his importance as an archetypal musician was such that he became ranked retrospectively among the most ancient heroes and demigods.

We shall see that Orpheus' inclusion among the Argonauts and his heroic status stems directly from his ability as a musician and it is this aspect of his identity that is emphasised in Classical sources.

In *Agamemnon* Aeschylus identifies the charming effect of Orpheus' song:

> 'Your voice is most unlike the voice of Orpheus: he bound all who heard him with delight [*chara*]; your childish yelps annoy us, and will fasten bonds on you yourselves. With hard words you will prove more amenable.'
>
> (*Agamemnon* 1629-32, trans. Vellacott)

[7] The other figure may be the Thracian poet Philammon who was listed as an Argonaut in Scholia on AR, *Argonautica*, 1. 23 see Gantz 1996: 721. Pherecydes lists Philammon as an Argonaut instead of Orpheus (*FGrHist* 3 F 26). This inconsistency supports the late inclusion of Orpheus in the story.
[8] Braswell (1988: 1, 256) concludes that in *Pyth*. 4 Pindar raises Orpheus to the status of the other demigods among the Argonauts. Elsewhere Pindar records the alternative descent from the Thracian king Oiagros (F128c S-M).
[9] West (2005: 35*ff*) argues for an oral version of the myth as anterior to Homer. Cf. Knight (1995: 122*ff*).
[10] West 1983: 4.

Orpheus' song is synonymous with the civilised values that are negated by the regicide Aegistus in his address to the Argive elders. Euripides also describes Orpheus' song in brief allusions across different works. For instance, Iphigenia describes the power of his song over nature in her doomed plea to her father:

> 'If I had the song of Orpheus, father, with the power to persuade by my song so that I could make rocks follow me and charm all those I wished to with my eloquence, I would have used it.'
>
> (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 1211-14, trans. Morwood)

In the *Bacchae* the chorus of Maenads give tribute to his ability 'with the music of his strings,' to unite the rocks and trees on the slopes of Olympus (*Bacchae* 561, trans. Morwood). The power of his poetry is equated by Jason to a king's eloquence (*Medea* 543) and a chorus of satyrs in the *Cyclopes* speaks of an incantation of Orpheus that will make Odysseus' firebrand bury itself in Polyphemus' eye (*Cyclopes* 646*ff*). The use of charms would seem to reflect a contemporary Athenian use of 'Orphic' poetry for such magical means suggesting that these texts had influenced the mythology by this time.[11]

Orpheus' Thracian ancestry is noted in *Hypsipyle*: in her lament for Rhesus the Muse relates Orpheus' ancestry as a Thracian related to the Muses and his founding of Athenian mysteries (*Rhesus* 944, 946). She implores Persephone to release her son from death due to her obligations to Orpheus although these are unspecified. The earliest record of Orpheus' *Katabasis* is from the third century account of Psuedo-Eratosthenes who writes of his journey to Hades 'because of his wife' and quotes Aeschylus that the Bassarides tore him apart for renouncing Dionysus for the sun whom he addressed as Apollo (*Katast*. 24).[12]

The *katabasis* is also referred to in *Alcestis*, where Euripides has Admetus recount Orpheus' success in charming the gods of Hades into returning his wife:

> 'If I had the song of Orpheus, music to beguile Pluto or Persephone, I would descend now and bring you back from the dead; Charon should not bar me, nor the watch-dog of hell, but I should raise you living to the light! … It cannot be. Look for me there when I die.'
>
> (*Alcestis* 357-59, trans. Vellacott)

[11] Linforth 1941: 138.
[12] Gantz 1996: 722. Seaford (2005) follows West (1990: 1983) in attributing the whole passage to Aeschylus citing Pythagorean influence in the connection between Apollo and the sun.

In *Alcestis*, both Orpheus' attempt to retrieve his wife from Hades and Asclepius' punishment for attempting to raise Hippolytus are contrasted with Heracles' successful rescue of Alcestis. Both Aeschylus and Euripides use Orpheus as a distant figure whose magical powers cannot hope to be effective against the harsh realities represented in the plays. The underlying futility of Iphigenia's plea and Admetus' self-serving hopelessness portrays Orpheus as a remote figure in contrast to Herakles, also of the same heroic generation, who affects a successful rescue through brute force. Aeschylus' and Euripides' invocation of Orpheus as a mythic archetype shows that the themes of his myth were an established tradition in the minds of his audience. Moreover, it is primarily the supernatural power of Orpheus' song that contextualises him within the ancient generation of heroes. Orpheus' attempt to rescue his wife was to become a major theme with the Augustan poets and the earliest mention of Eurydice's name is not until Moschos' *Lament for Bion*, (3.123-24) where he says Persephone granted his wish to restore Eurydice.[13] The Classical authors gave prominence to Orpheus' success in charming the gods of Hades rather than the love story that motivated his *katabasis*, it was apparently the transformative power of his song rather than his role as tragic lover that inspired them.[14]

Orpheus is also mentioned by Aristophanes (*Frogs* 1032), who has Aeschylus enumerate, as the oldest poets, Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod, and Homer, and makes Orpheus the teacher of religious initiations and of abstinence from murder. The perceived anteriority of Orpheus to Homer and Hesiod is shared by Plato and may indicate the influence of cosmogonies written in his name and his connections with mystery cults (*Apology* 41a). We have seen that Euripides records a belief that Orpheus taught sacred mysteries to the Athenians (*Rhesus* 945). In *Hippolytus* Orpheus is the inspiration for individuals who practice an ascetic lifestyle although there is no evidence of a communal sect of followers. Theseus connects Orpheus with cultic excesses when he berates his unworldly son for taking Orpheus

[13] 2nd century BCE: Gantz 1996: 723. The earliest attested name of Orpheus' wife is Agriope (Hermesianax cited in Athenaeus *Deipn*. 597b-599b = fr. 7), the late introduction of her name suggests the love story element of the myth was of little consequence at this time.
[14] For the idea of a success see Linforth 1941: 17; Warden 1982: 16 citing the Alexandrian Hermesianax. Heath 1994 and Hanesworth (2009: 142-45) discuss proposed 'successful' versions of the *katabasis* myth and the lack of evidence thereof including the unreliability of Hermesianax as a source and the absence of any myth concerning Orpheus and his wife after their supposed reunion.

as his 'word and prophet,' adopting a vegetarian diet and wallowing in his 'wordy vapourings' (*Hippolytus* 953-57). Euripides anticipates Plato when he has Theseus caution: 'of such men let the world take warning and beware! They pursue their prey with lofty words and low cunning.' Plato critiques the itinerant practitioners of Orphic texts who quote from a 'hubbub' of books (*Republic* 364B-E) However, he also shows Socrates quoting Orpheus as an authority on cosmogony along with Homer and looking forward to meeting famous historical poets including Orpheus after his death, suggesting that despite his distaste for 'Orphic' texts Plato was acknowledging a tradition that placed Orpheus among the senior rank of poets (*Cratylus* 400c, 402b, *Apology* 41b). Evidence of Orphic cult consists of poetry written in Orpheus' name including cosmogonies and commentaries on them such as the Derveni papyrus, apparently written by an Orphic initiator.[15] Orpheus was regarded as a founder of mysteries and *teletae,* rites connected with purification and administered by practitioners and various prohibitions such as abstinence from blood sacrifice and meat eating.[16] As discussed below, there was no evidence of a unified 'Orphic' cult with fixed traditions but rather a series of observances practiced in his name by diverse groups.[17] Moreover, Orpheus' religious connections stemmed from the magical nature of his poetry and the extension of the harmony and order of his music into the religious sphere.

Orpheus was a popular figure in the Athenian iconographic tradition including a Black-figured Attic vase dating from the mid sixth century showing Orpheus mounting a platform with a kithara (CVA 303344). The figure is inscribed *xaire Orpheu*, 'rejoice, Orpheus.' Athenian Red-figure vases of the mid fifth century typically show Orpheus as a Greek in a Thracian setting (eg. *Figure 1*). His death at the hands of Thracian women remained the most commonly represented scene from his myth in Greek vases of the fifth and fourth centuries (*Figure 2*).[18] The women are depicted in Thracian dress with characteristic tattoos and armed with regular weapons and household tools, and are not represented as Bassarids or Maenads suggesting that the iconography is following a tradition not represented in literature. Isocrates follows Aeschylus in stating that Orpheus was torn to pieces adding that

[15] The Derveni papyrus dates to the fourth century but has elements dating to c. 500 BCE: Nagy 2009: 253; West 1983: 18.
[16] Burkert 1985 301, citing Plutarch *Quaestiones Convivales* 635e and Macrobius *Saturnalia* 7.16.8.
[17] Linforth 1941: 171.
[18] See Segal 1989: 157.

this was for telling discreditable stories about the gods (*Busiris* 9, 38). In Plato's rationalising interpretation, Orpheus' death at the hands of women was punishment for his cowardice in refusing to share the fate of his wife (*Symposium* 179D). The differing accounts of the motivation for his killing and the question of a Dionysian context suggest there was no clearly established myth of the circumstances of his death as late as the fifth century. However, Athenian Red-figure vases show Orpheus' disembodied head that in one example appears to be inspiring a poet and in another dictating to an assistant, which demonstrates that the myth of his dismemberment and post-mortem singing head were integral to his myth by the mid fifth century (*Figure 3*; *Figure 4*).

Scholars have noted the increasing tendency of fifth century vases to depict Orpheus in Thracian garb contrasting with earlier depictions of the poet in Greek dress in Thracian surroundings (*Figure 1*; Cf. CVA 22904).[19] As Linforth notes, Greek dress is also given to Trojan heroes at this time and need not indicate that Orpheus was seen as Greek.[20] Pausanias records Polygnotos' fifth century painting of Hades at Delphi, which depicts Odysseus' descent to Hades and includes Orpheus among other musicians (Paus. 10.30.6). Orpheus is seated in the grove of Persephone, grasping his harp with his left hand while touching a willow branch with his right in what may be a devout gesture. Pausanias' emphasis on Orpheus' Greek clothing and headgear suggests that Orpheus was most commonly represented as Thracian by his day. During the fifth century Orpheus' exoticism became increasingly prominent and was consistent with his liminal position between barbarian and Greek culture.

To sum up this brief survey, the main elements of Orpheus' myth were in place by the Classical era. In spite of the welter of cosmogonies and other sacred texts written in his name the core of his myth up to his death remained consistent throughout antiquity and can be summarised as follows: [21] Orpheus was born to the Muse Calliope and the Thracian king Oiagros, or by some accounts, Apollo.[22] He practiced the lyre and set rocks and trees in motion by his singing. Orpheus accompanied the Argonauts and saved them from the song of the sirens. When his

[19] Linforth 1941: 13; Guthrie 1952: 45; Archibald 1998: 208-10.
[20] Linforth 1941: 13.
[21] These texts are discussed in West 1983: 259; Parker 2011: 255-58 *et al*. See Apollodorus, *Library,* 1.3.2, 1.9.25 for the consistency of the myth into late antiquity.
[22] Pausanias 9.30.4 records his mother as a daughter of Pieros.

wife died he descended to Hades and persuaded the gods to allow him to fetch her back to the upper world. Orpheus was killed by the Maenads/Thracian women and his head continued to sing after his death.

As we have seen, Orpheus' heroic nature stems from the supernatural power of his song. The Hellenistic *Argonautica* features Orpheus spreading peace among the crew with a song on the origins of the cosmos, keeping time for the oarsmen with his lyre and saving the crew from the sirens (Ap. Rhod. *Argo* 1.494-1.515, 1.540-47, 4.891-911). The cosmogonies and other texts written under Orpheus' name noted above had apparently influenced his mythical persona by this time. It was also through this musical ability that Orpheus inspired others as the perceived originator of cosmogonies and mystery rites. This aspect of his myth inspired the late *Orphic Argonautica of* the fourth century AD that contains the first overt reference to his acquisition of sacred insight as a direct consequence of his journey to Hades (*Orph. Argo.* 42).[23] We shall see that it was primarily the magical power of his singing from which the other themes of his story developed including the heroic journeys undertaken with the Argo, the *katabasis* and his later wanderings in Thrace. An examination of the enchanting power of song will help to trace the roots of this concept in Greek epic poetry.

The magical power of poetry

Plato has Socrates differentiate between the different forms of poetry listing Orpheus, Musaios, Homer and Hesiod in order of antiquity with Orpheus represented as the *kitharode* who both plays and sings as opposed to the *rhapsode* Phemius who recites epic and the *kitharist* Thamyras who plays instrumental music (*Theaetetus* 179e-180d).[24] Aeschylus and Euripides both refer to Orpheus singing to the accompaniment of the lyre; Orpheus' ability is expressed in the union of words and music through the medium of song whose incantatory rhythms can hold even birds, beasts, trees and stones with its spell.

As we have seen, Euripides credits Orpheus' song with the ability to move rocks and overcome Charon, Cerberus and the gods of Hades (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 1211, *Alcestis* 357). The supernatural power of song can be seen in early representations of poets and sirens. An Athenian Black-figure c. 570BCE vase shows

[23] Dated fourth century CE: West 1983: 37.
[24] Nagy 2009: 371.

a lyre-playing musician flanked by sirens (*Figure 5*). Whether the figure is Orpheus or not the juxtaposition of the musician between sirens is suggestive of the magical power of music. The power of the sirens whose sweet song lures the unwary to their deaths is extended by inference to the musician and hints at the power of song to transcend the boundary between life and death. The seductive power of song is inextricably linked to the concept of enchantment. Pindar describes songs as the wise daughters of the Muses who have the power to 'lay hold of weary limbs' and 'charm away' (*Nemean* 4, 1-9). He also describes the sirens that adorned Apollo's temple at Delphi as *keledones*, 'charmers,' enchanting passers-by with their song until they forget to return to their families.[25] In some accounts, the sirens, like Orpheus, are children of a Muse and as creatures that bring death provide a complementary to the singer who crosses the boundary of Hades (Ap. Rhod. *Argo* 4.893, Apol. *Lib* 1. 3.4). Another Black-figure Athenian vase shows an unidentified lyre-playing youth surrounded by birds and animals (CVA 332192). As with the previous example the scene suggests that the capacity to transcend boundaries of life and death was inherent in the nature of song and that this was not necessarily connected with Orpheus alone. A further example shows Herakles playing to a seated Athena who extends a supplicating hand to the hero showing music as one of the divinely sanctioned arts of civilisation and the lyre as the instrument of the hero (*Figure 6*). The contest with the sirens appears to form the earliest feat in Orpheus' life.[26] As Orpheus appears to be a late addition to the Argonautic myth this suggests that the power over death exemplified by the sirens' song was already a part of the poetic tradition and that Orpheus' ability to overcome death was an original part of his myth and the reason for his inclusion. Orpheus' *katabasis* forms the ultimate example of the charming force of Orpheus' song. Orpheus beguiles (*keléo*) all whom he wishes and the gods of Hades in particular (Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1213; *Alcestis* 359). That the same term is used by Pindar to describe the sirens demonstrates a magical force of enchantment beyond ordinary eloquence or musical ability.[27]

The concept of words exercising a supernatural power over the natural world is present in Homeric sources and, therefore, predates the arrival of Orpheus in

[25] Segal 1989: 11.
[26] Herodorus states that Orpheus was recruited for this purpose, *FGrH* 31 F 43a.
[27] Hanesworth 2009: 146.

Greek myth. Segal observes that the word *thelgein*, to enchant, is used to describe both the sirens' song and Circe's seductive power and also for Calypso's attempts to charm Odysseus into forgetting Ithaca (*Od*. 10.213, 90. 1.56).[28] In Homer the power of the poet's song is described as *thelxis*, a form of incantation that magically binds the hearer to the poet's will and is used to describe the effect of the recitations of Phemius and Odysseus on their audience (*Od*. 1.337, 11.367-9). The power of the bard's song can be seen to move heroes to tears (*Od*. 8.52, 537-541, 1.336-44). As we have seen the in *Pythian* 4 Orpheus is sent by Apollo to join the crew of the Argo in his capacity as the father of poetry (*Pyth*. 4.213). Euripides later combines the Odyssean image of the poet tied to the mast and the siren's seductive song into a powerful evocation of the poet's skill:

> 'At the mast in the ship's middle Orpheus' Thracian lyric sang out the boatswain's orders of far-moving strokes to the oarsmen, now for swift motion, now for rest from the pine-wood oar.'
>
> (*Hypsipyle, TrGF* F752g.1-17 trans. Segal)

An earlier fragment of Simonides describes what also appears to be the song of Orpheus in an Argonautic context:

> 'Over head flew innumerable birds, and to his beautiful song fish leapt straight out of the blue sea.'
>
> (F27 D.)

A further passage may be from the same poem and may refer to either Orpheus or the Sirens:

> 'For then not even a breath of wind arose to stir the leaves, which would by its quivering movement prevent the honey-sweet voice from being fixed in the ears of men.'
>
> (F40 D.)

Simonides' description is an eloquent depiction of poetry's power over nature that is a common theme in lyric poetry. He sang of a divine wind in *The sea-fight of Salamis* that favoured the Greeks that is thought to have been composed for a

[28] Segal 1989: 10-14. As Segal notes, the magic of poetry is particularly effective in a culture that depends on the public utterance of the spoken word for the expression and preservation of its values.

commemoration of the battle.[29] Himerius later credited Simonides with this power when, like Orpheus, he summons the wind with his song:

> 'The wind, doubtless recognizing the Cean song which Simonides sang to it after the sea, comes straightaway at the call of the music, and blowing strong and full astern drives on the bark with its breath.'
> (*Orationes* 47.14 Colonna trans. Bowra)

The passage gives an illuminating example of how the supernatural motif expressed in a myth can become transferred to the poet who articulates it. Therefore the magical aspect of the poet's song can transform the historical poet into a mythical hero. That this was said as late as the fourth century is testament to the persistence of idea of the poet as a magical figure into the late Classical era. The theme of poet as hero and the cults this inspired are explored further below. The following section will explore ways in which the nature of poetry conferred a privileged status on the poet as mediator between mankind, nature and the divine realm.

The transformative act of singing to the audience with a musical accompaniment automatically rendered the lyrics into a medium that transcended mundane reality. The lyre that was Orpheus' key attribute served to identify him in iconography but was also a badge of his divine ability. The poet's golden lyre is first attested in Homer at the feast of the gods where Apollo plays accompanied by the Muses (*Il.* 1.600-605). The lyric poets referred to the golden lyre as a god-given instrument: 'Golden lyre, rightful joint possession of Apollo and the violet-haired Muses,' (Pin. *Pythian* 1.1) and Sappho refers to her lyre as 'divine' (F118). As the instrument of the Muses and Apollo's harmonies the lyre was the vehicle for the supernatural ability of song to connect the mortal and divine worlds. The Homeric Hymn to Apollo describes the god's first words, 'May the lyre and the curved bow be dear to me, and I shall reveal to mortals the infallible will of Zeus' (*Hom. Hymn Apollo* 130-32). The myth of Marsyas records the superior place given to Apollo's lyre as a vehicle for song and divine order above the purely instrumental flute that was associated with Dionysian ecstasy. When the satyr challenges Apollo to a contest Apollo wins after challenging him to play upside down (Apol. *Lib*. 1.24). On

[29] Bowra 1961: 343.

a mundane level the lyre was a badge of the poet's status but on a religious level it represented his or her role as a mediator between worlds.

Pindar begins the 1st Pythian with a tribute to the golden lyre of the poet, the joint gift of Apollo and the Muses as that:

> '…to which the dance-step listens, the beginning of splendid festivity; and singers obey your notes, whenever, with your quivering strings, you prepare to strike up chorus-leading preludes. You quench even the warlike thunderbolt of everlasting fire. And the eagle sleeps on the scepter of Zeus, relaxing his swift wings on either side, the king of birds; and you pour down a dark mist over his curved head, a sweet seal on his eyelids. Slumbering, he ripples his liquid back, under the spell of your pulsing notes. Even powerful Ares, setting aside the rough spear-point, warms his heart in repose; your shafts charm the minds even of the gods, by virtue of the skill of Leto's son and the deep-bosomed Muses.'
>
> (*Pythian* 1.1-12)

By the fifth century the poet's song is seen as having the power to quell the violent impulse of wild animals and gods alike and to tame the monsters that dwell in Tartarus. The magical sound of the lyre creates a divine harmony throughout nature in a manner that recalls the images of Orpheus performing to birds, trees and animals with his lyre found in contemporary Athenian drama (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 1211-14; *Bacchae* 561). However, the power of song in uniting nature was never seen as exclusive to Orpheus but part of a wider tradition inherited from the Homeric era. The ability to express an underlying harmony in nature was seen as a revelatory capacity that derived from music's power to enchant. This idea in turn created the concept of the poet as possessing a supernatural ability equated with the hero.

A key aspect of Orpheus' myth is the poet's relationship with nature as in *Argonautica* in which his song relates the whole of nature to the divine order of the cosmos (Apol. Rhod. *Argo*. 1.496-504). Some scholars have interpreted representations of Orpheus in communion with animals or compelling the trees, rocks and stones to move to his song as representations of metempsychosis, the belief in the transmigration of a soul into another body or a practice of communicating with souls in animal form derived from exotic shamanistic beliefs.[30] We will now turn to other representations of nature in Greek literature that suggest an alternative reading.

[30] West 1983: 4-7 citing Dodds 1951: 140-7 as discussed below.

Poetry and the natural world

The bond between poet and nature can be seen to be a universal theme of Archaic Greek poetry, extending from the Homeric nature simile to the celebrations of nature found in lyric poetry. Poetry was seen as a mimetic art involving the imitation of nature and human action.[31] Both Alcaeus and Pindar describe poetry as a process of composition in which the divinely inspired words of the muses are translated for the audience in the same way that an oracle must be rendered into intelligible words (Alcman F204 V.; Pindar *Ol*. 3.8). The poem recreates the world through a combination of music, voice and sometimes dance – a magical act that transcends everyday reality. The ability of poetry to present the world of mankind against the wider context of the cosmic order whether represented by gods or nature remains a consistent function of poetry from epic to the tragedians. By creating an illusionistic spell the poet is united with the spectator in the same emotional relationship as the audience responds to the illusion as to real life and by so doing integrates the individual into their social context.[32] Alcman claimed to have learnt the art of poetry by imitating the call of partridges. Alcman sings, 'I know the tunes of all birds,' (F93 D.) and therefore makes claim to an intimate knowledge of nature as well as to his own versatility. He is even said to have learned to sing from the birds themselves:

> 'Alcman found words and tune by giving heed to the tongued speech of partridges.'
>
> (F92 D.)

This need not suggest that Alcman was familiar with 'shamanistic' ideas of poets who know the speech of birds, but rather that Alcman may have consciously referred to a myth that the first music was made in imitation of bird-song (Plutarch *De Soll, Anim*. 20 quoting Democritus). [33] Alcman wrote often in the first person and expressed his personal reflections on love and nature.

[31] Gentili 1988: 50-51. Nagy 2009: 398-423 observes that Plato compares the mimetic quality of epic verse favourably to 'Orphic' mysticism: *Theaetetus* 179e-180d.
[32] Gentili 1988: 55.
[33] As noted by Bowra 1961: 30.

> '…no longer, maidens with honey tones and voices of desire, can my limbs carry me. Would, ah, that I were a kingfisher, who flies with the halcyons over the flower of the wave, having a fearless heart, the sea-blue sprightly bird!'
>
> (F94 D.)

In this passage Alcman expresses the desire to escape the confines of the self in old age and identifies himself with the freedom of the kingfisher. The source of creativity is divine and external to the soul or mind of the poet. Alcman gives a description of nature in which mountains, forest, animals, birds, bees and fish are all sleeping at night the impression given is of a divine harmony uniting the whole of nature (F58 D. 72). Homeric nature imagery also suggests a divine order underlying and mirroring the chaotic world of mankind:

> 'As is the generation of leaves, so is humanity.
> As the wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber
> burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning.
> So one generation of men will grow while another
> dies.'
>
> (*Iliad* 6.146-50 trans. Lattimore)

Although the seasons change one is given the impression of a world that follows regular ordered cycles in contrast to the transience of human life. Iliadic nature simile provides a fixed constant against which human behaviour can be measured.[34] Natural phenomena are invested with the same universal forces as their human counterparts. In comparison the *Odyssey* presents us with a world in a constant state of change in which Odysseus, the man of many sorrows, must endure through repeated cycles of disaster often expressed in the image of the ocean in turmoil that is in one sense an expression of Poseidon's wrath but is also symptomatic of a world in constant flux. Snell argues that this change in world-view is symptomatic of the changing role of the individual in the Archaic era in which the perceptions of the individual become increasingly prominent in poetic expression.[35] Active in the mid-seventh century, Archilochus was the earliest lyric poet to directly refer to Homer in presenting mankind as at the mercy of a world in constant motion:

[34] Snell 1982: 201-2. Cf. Zeruneith 2007: 301, 306. Cf. *Iliad* 16.259-267.
[35] Snell 1982: 43-70.

> ‘For the spirit of men on the earth is as the day that comes upon them from the father of gods and men.’
>
> (*Od*. 18.136)

And in Archilochus’ advice to a friend:

> ‘Such a mind, Glaucus son of Leptines, do mortal men have as Zeus may usher in each day, and they think their thoughts in accord with their daily transactions.’
>
> (Archilochus F68).

The Iliadic equation of *kleos* with glorious deeds has been transformed in the *Odyssey* into heroic endurance against many troubles, achieved not through battle but through resourcefulness of the central protagonist.[36] As Segal argues, Odysseus appropriates the function of bard in order to promote his own *kleos*, and inverts the traditional hero-bard relationship (*Od*.9.19-20). Archilochus calls for endurance to overcome trials rather than divine intervention. He takes his cue from Odysseus in seeing endurance in a shifting world as the only means of survival when contemplating the destruction of his city:

> ‘…Such were the men overwhelmed by the hissing wave of the sea; and our hearts are swollen with groans. But my friend, the gods have ordained sturdy endurance as a remedy for incurable suffering. All men at one time or another suffer such woe. Now it has turned upon us, and we grieve at the bloody wound; but soon it will pass on to others. Quickly, therefore, put away your womanish mourning, and endure.’
>
> (Archilochus F7)

Snell argues that the law of eternal change formed a foil for the human experience in complementing the expression of individual feelings.[37] Both were perceived as an ebb and flow between the polarities of the individual and the universal producing enlightenment. The Lyric poets celebrated the senses as the ultimate insight into the flux of the world. Like other lyric poets, Simonides used nature as a means of framing human behaviour within a wider natural context. He made use of visual imagery derived from nature such as when comparing poetry to the bee or in his celebration of the sun’s radiant power in which Simonides, like Homer, sees nature as a revelation of divine order (F43, 52 D.).

[36] Segal 1994: 85-90.
[37] Snell 1982: 61*ff*.

However, Simonides also describes nature in terms that stresses a dynamic ever-changing flux that is in contrast to Iliadic simile where natural motifs are portrayed as unchanging archetypes that reflect an ordered world. Simonides critiqued the fixity of funerary monument in the face of 'ever-flowing' nature that he thought could only be replicated by the performance of oral poetry (581 PMG in Ford 2002: 108-12). This demonstrates a wider philosophical view of nature as a metaphor for an ever-changing world that characterises the late Archaic era. The influence of presocratic thinkers such as Pythagoras and Empedocles created an intellectual climate that was shared with contemporary poets.[38] Pythagoras saw visible nature as an expression of the dynamism of the cosmos (58 B 15 DK). During the sixth century, the circle of Pythagoras developed the concept of the divine aspect of music into an intellectual theory in which the divine harmony of the universe is replicated in Apollo's seven-stringed lyre.[39]

Heraclitus interpreted the cosmos as a constant interaction between complementary opposites in which reality is seen as a flowing river of 'ever-living' fire exemplified by his saying that 'no man steps in the same river twice,' (Heraclitus B 30 DK; Plato *Cratylus*, 402a).[40] As Snell argues, Hercalitus' image of the river is one of eternal universality as opposed to the Homeric cycles of death and rebirth.[41] Fame can only have meaning in such a world not as a permanent memorial but in the dynamic qualities of song that is 'ever-flowing' (Sim. 531 PMG).[42] The world-view of intellectuals such as Pythagoras and Heraclitus were to some extent anticipated by the early lyric poets, who themselves drew inspiration from the *Odyssey*, in expressing an the image of man as an individual thrown onto his own resources for his survival in a world governed by inscrutable gods and overpowering natural forces.

Pindar also makes extensive use of the dynamic qualities of natural imagery and as in epic he uses a simile to bring resonance to heroic action that locates it in

[38] Ford 2002: 71. Pythagoras was said to have been the first author to allegorise homer with a moral slant (*Iamblichus Life of Pyth*. 64, 110, 164).
[39] West (1983, 29) notes the theory of cosmic and musical harmony is found only in Hellenistic sources eg Aris. *Metaphysics* 986a 1-10. However, Zhmud (2012: 286) sees the link between cosmic and musical harmony as originating in Pythagorean thought. It was credited to the Pythagoreans by Plato *Rep*. 530d.
[40] Ford 2002: 108-12; Long 1948: 252.
[41] Snell 1982: 219.
[42] This suggests that they both products of a common intellectual climate. Seaford (1986: 14-20) also suggests the influence of Greek mysteries on Heraclitus, citing the texts of the Olbia bone tablets.

the real world. Pindar speaks of the inspired singer: 'stirred up to song like a dolphin of the seas when the lively tune of flutes moves in the deep of the waveless sea' (F140a). He speaks of poetry itself in terms of a constantly renewing, dynamic force; as a 'fountain of immortal song' (*Pyth.* 4.296). Pindar associates the ever-flowing force of spring water with immortality, purity and renewal and therefore, ascribes these qualities to poetry (*Isth.* 6.20-24; *Nem.* 4.2-9; *Nem.* 7.60-64). Like Homer, Pindar generally takes an objective view of nature using imagery as illustration for ideas rather than using sensation for its own sake. However, nature also replicates Heraclitus' concept of a universal pattern of inter-correlations in which all natural phenomena are united.

Pindar's concept of the poet echoes Hesiod in seeing music as the expression of cosmic harmony invoked by the Muses whose voices make manifest the divine order of Zeus (*Th.* 36-50). Pindar and Bacchylides also compare song to flame that, like water, is in a constant state of flux but is also connected with purity and immortality (Pin, *Isth.* 4.40-45, Bacc. 5.198-200). Their use of nature imagery suggests the dynamism of a world mirrored in the seemingly chaotic but divine agency of the bee as synonymous with the poet who confers the immortality of the Muses.

> 'He has stirred the clear-voiced bee into motion so as to make present an immortal report of the Muses, a joy to be shared among men as it proclaims your excellence on earth.'
>
> (Bacc. 10.10-14)[43]

As we have seen, Orpheus was by no means alone in being able to commune with nature. The historical Arion of Lesbos, who was credited with inventing the *dithyramb*, was said to have escaped pirates by being carried to safety on the back of a dolphin after allowing his request of a final performance (Hdt. 1.23-4). The mythical seer Melampus was gifted by Apollo to talk with animals including birds and worms and learned the art of prophecy from a snake (Apol. *Lib*. 1.9.11). Neither was Orpheus unique in being able to enchant inanimate nature. The Theban harpist Amphion was said to have been taught by Hermes, inventor of the lyre and credited by Pausanias with adding three strings to the original four and says that Amphion's

[43] Cf. Pindar (*Pyth*. 10.53-4) and Plato who cites this same metaphor in Simonides as example of the irrationality of the poets *Ion* 534b.

songs 'drew even stones and beasts after him' with which he built the walls of Thebes with his song although we cannot rule out inter-textual influence in these late accounts (Paus. 9.5.7-9, 6.20.18, 9.17.7; Apol. *Lib*. 3.43).

Orpheus as the poet who communes with all aspects of nature, persuading the mountains and trees to move to his song, embodies the idea of the dynamic nature of reality in which all aspects of creation are in ever-changing flux. The motif of Orpheus playing before animals and trees need not be seen as evidence of an exotic belief in metempsychosis but should rather be interpreted as an expression of the divine harmony of song attributed to all inspired poets, which gave them the ability to commune with nature and has as its basis the inherited tradition of epic poetry. A Mycenaean fresco from the throne room at Pylos shows a lyre-playing musician with an exotic bird taking flight (*Figure 7*). The fresco is thematically linked to images of procession, bull-sacrifice and banqueters suggesting a connection between music and temporal and religious power represented by the throne and images of religious ritual. [44] The close relationship between nature and music was not an exotic import into Archaic Greek culture but has roots extending back into the Mycenaean Bronze Age. In order to understand something of the context in which the Orpheus myth developed it will be necessary to further examine the social context both in terms of the changing society of Archaic Greece and the role of the poet within it. This in turn will reflect on the ways in which Orpheus embodied the functions and status of the Archaic poet and came to be celebrated as a hero.

The poet and the Muse

It should first be noted that no unified concept of poetry as a cohesive art form existed in the Archaic era.[45] Different types of song were performed for different occasions such as the *thrénos, paean, dithyramb, epinicion*, and the quality of the poet's inspiration was judged as a measure of the suitability of the song for the occasion. Moreover, this inspiration was divinely derived from the Muses rather than the individual ability of the poet. In epic poetry creative inspiration was seen as an external force that acted through the individual much like oracular prophecy; both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* begin with an invocation of the Muse who literally narrates

[44] Preziosi-Hitchcock 1999: 161-2.
[45] Ford 2002: 10.

the poem through the voice of the poet (*Il*. 1.1; *Od*. 1.1-12).[46] The poet expresses his humility as a conduit for the truth of the Muse, who 'taught all poets the paths of song' (*Od*. 8.479). The way in which the Muse sings through the poet makes creative inspiration an attribute of her divine prerogative. The poet is concerned with telling the truth of the gods and his success as a poet lies in the authenticity of his recollection. The poet's art traditionally consisted of three stages: composition, transmission and reception by the audience that all depended on memory to function.[47] Singing, performing and composing are aspects of the same act in traditional oral poetry.[48] The singer builds from ready-made formulas that enable him to construct verse in an act of spontaneous recreation in which composition and performance form a seamless continuum.[49] As the daughters of Mnemnosyne (Memory) the Muses reflect an oral tradition in which the memory is pre-eminent. Moreover the Muses act as a device that preserves the bardic tradition of authorial impartiality by crediting poetry with divine attribution.[50] Vernant notes that the bards constructed their songs from *formulae* as they recited them through the application of memory a process requiring a long period of training.[51] In this process remembering is seen as a religious act that allows the poet access to divine knowledge. As Vernant argues, the poet interprets the Muse in the same manner in which an inspired prophet interprets a god. They both receive their inspiration from Apollo, the difference between them being that the poet is concerned with the past and the prophet with the future. Hesiod characterises the Muses as the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne who speak of things 'that are, that were and will be,' and breathe their voice into the poet's mouth (*Th*. 30-65).[52] Through the function of memory the Muses speak the truth *alétheia* as an act of divine revelation (*Th*. 27-28). However, the Muses also have the capacity to make up 'lies' that sound convincing so that not only poetic truth but also falsehood has a divine provenance. The *alétheia* conferred by the Muses through memory contrasts with the antithetical idea of *lethe* or oblivion connoted with silence and death.[53] The Homeric bard endows *kleos* and

[46] Gentili 1988: 38.
[47] Gentili 1988: 4; Calame 1995: 78.
[48] Lord 1960: 13.
[49] Nagy 1990a: 43.
[50] Scodel 1998: 191-2.
[51] Vernant (1983: 75-7) cites the catalogue of ships of in *Iliad* 2.484*ff* as one use of mnemonic formula.
[52] Other traditions give varying numbers, eg Pausanias records three at Mt Helicon (Paus. 9.29.2-3).
[53] Detienne (1996: 47 n.63) notes Pindar equates oblivion with blame *Olym*. 2.105ff.

kudos on his subjects by singing of their heroic exploits and thus the Muses are responsible for the immortalisation of warriors' identities through the preservation of their deeds via collective memory.[54] The poet as a mortal agent of the Muses transmits *kleos* to his fellow men. In bestowing memory through praise he gives compensation for mortality in providing an 'eternal monument to the Muses' (Bacch. F10.9; Cf. Pin. *Pyth*. 5.46-49; *Isth*. 8.62-3). As a singer (*aidos)* Orpheus was simultaneously a poet, musician and prophet and in the latter role he became the focus of eschatological ideas that will be explored below.[55]

Calame interprets Hesiod's relationship to the Muses as a development of the poet's role as individual creator.[56] By crediting his speech with their authorship Hesiod is then free to innovate and claim the divine authority of the Muses for his own words. [57] Through the Muses' gift of the poet's staff on Mount Helicon, Hesiod legitimises his role as a creative agent rather than a mere conduit of divine revelation. The *Theogony* is thought to have been performed for a funerary festival competition appropriate for the recitation of the origins of the gods and mankind's place in the greater scheme.[58] Paradoxically, by choosing as his theme the most conservative of subject matter, the origins of the gods and heroes, the poet has used a traditional form to disseminate his own worldview to his audience.[59] Vernant has described the means in which cosmogony represents a projection of contemporary social structures onto the universal sphere and in this way new ideas are given a veneer of tradition personified in accounts of the origins of the cosmos.[60] In this way Hesiod anticipates the presocratics and various authors of later 'Orphic' cosmogonies who redeployed traditional mythic material to express new ideas concerning mankind's relationship with the divine world.[61] The traditional role of the oral poet in classifying events extended to ordering and affirming the

[54] See *Hom. Hymn to the Muses and Apollo, Hom. Hymn to Selene* 18-20. Detienne 1996: 46: *Kleos* is that which is heard and represents the concept of glory conferred by the poet while *kudos* represents the divine quality of heroism conferred by the gods on specific individuals.
[55] Linforth 1941: 166. Nagy (1990(b): 56-64) notes the close relationship between poetry and prophecy in the Archaic era.
[56] Calame 1995: 47, 65-74.
[57] As Zeruneith (2007: 286-98) puts it, the Muses become witnesses to his own didactic aspirations.
[58] West 1983, *xiii.* Elsewhere Hesiod boasts of winning a tripod at such a contest, which he sets up in honour of the Muses (*W&D* 655-59). The competitive nature of such events is one that encourages creative innovation in the Archaic era.
[59] See West 1983, *xi-xii* for Hesiod's innovative use of Near Eastern myth.
[60] Vernant 1983: 191-8.
[61] As summarised by Edmonds 2011(b): 79.

relationships between gods and men and their origins.[62] Orpheus' perceived antiquity and divine parentage made him uniquely suitable for this role. As a son of the eldest Muse, Calliope, Orpheus was an embodiment of cultural memory expressed by the Muses whose song actuates the cosmos in the *Theogony*. [63] As such Orpheus was credited as the author of cosmogonies and increasingly linked to eschatological ideas.

As a son of a Muse, Orpheus exemplified the relationship between poet and the divine source of inspiration. Orpheus, like Asclepius, both known as sons of Apollo, became popular in the sixth century at a time when Apollo's cult rose to dominance with the Delphic oracle (Pin. *Pyth*. 4.176; *Pyth.* 3 16, 41).[64] The lyric poets saw Apollo as their divine patron and their social status developed in tandem with the development of the *polis* and changing attitudes to the afterlife.[65] Calame argues that the developing status of the lyric poets led them to replace the Muse with an aspect of their own selves when using the personal form of *I* to sing their song rather than the traditional identification of the authorial *I* with the Muses' divine authority.[66]

The Archaic period saw radical changes in society that were reflected in the changing forms and functions of poetry. The means by which aristocracies gave way to the city-state occurred from diverse factors including a move to agrarian economy, population growth and social stratification leading to the development of military and judicial institutions at local level.[67] The rise of the *polis* created the concept of the civic community and poets flourished under the patronage of tyrants who extended the traditional relationship between the epic bard and the aristocratic household into new forms.[68] The development of a shared culture between widespread communities gave poets new platforms to perform choral song at religious festivals.[69] Under the patronage of Delphic Apollo colonisation and

[62] Vernant 1983: 78-9.
[63] Hesiod *Th*eogony 78.
[64] Edelstein 1945: 69*ff*.
[65] Pindar *Pyth* 4.176 for Apollo as patron of epic poets Cf. *Od*. 8.489. Vernant (1983: 180-89) argues that cosmologies reflect a projection of the social organisation of the *polis*. He adds that the economy is a key factor in extending psychological space via trade and colonisation. Seaford (2012: 70) considers the *polis* economy to be central to the development of Pythagorean cosmology.
[66] For example, Alcman F7 D, F67D; Stesichorus F210, 28 Page, Alcaeus F308.2(b) in Calame 1995: 48-49.
[67] Seaford 1994: 193-5.
[68] Nagy 1990a: 10.
[69] Kurke 1991: 2.

increased trade brought new ideas and artistic forms from the Near East and other marginal regions.[70] Despite the introduction of writing memory remained vital to the performance and reception of poetry that circulated within what remained predominantly an oral culture until the mid fifth century.[71] In respect of Orpheus the spread of the textual transmission of poetry took the form of hymns and cosmogonies written in the poet's name. However, he remained the archetypal oral poet, both fifth century iconographic depictions and contemporary drama depict him dictating verse rather than writing in his own hand (eg *Figure 3*; *Alcestis* 962-971). This suggests that texts written under his name began to influence his myth and this image may even have served to validate texts written long after his supposed death.[72] Moreover, these depictions show Orpheus transmitting his verse orally to an *amanuensis* thereby maintaining the sacred bond between poet and Muse that combines recollection, composition, and performance in a single process.

As Archaic culture disseminated poetry among wider circles, both in terms of its human subjects and the circumstances in which it was performed, immortality came to be shared among a wider section of society than *encomia* offered to heroes and aristocratic patrons. Sappho evidently felt that the Muses provided hope for an honoured existence after death. She addresses a woman described as ignorant of the arts:

> 'But when you die you will lie there, and afterwards there will never be any recollection of you or any longing for you since you have no share in the roses of Pieria [birthplace of the Muses]; unseen in the house of Hades also, flown from our mist, you will go to and from among the shadowy corpses.'
>
> (Sappho in Stobaeus *Anthology* 3.4.12. trans. Bowra 1964).

The Muses, through the medium of cultural memory, confer fame on the living beyond epinician celebrations of athletic heroes. Those who disdain poetry will go to their death without the immortalising fame conferred by poets and will receive no honour in this world or the next. Memory is equated with poetry and

[70] See Dougherty (1993) for the contribution of the oracle of Delphic Apollo to the foundation new colonies in response to civic crisis. The colonising expedition becomes a religious act of purification authorised by Apollo.
[71] Gentili 1988: 19-20.
[72] Linforth 1941: 127-128. His assistant may be Musaeus whose name Linforth glosses as 'servant of the Muses.'

constitutes an eternal reality that Gentili notes is beyond space and time.[73] The kind of immortality conferred on heroes in Homeric verse is now accessible to the circle of the poet's audience as poetry spreads from the court of kings to wider parts of the community including private and public gatherings.[74] Pindar echoes Sappho when he observes that poetry is not only necessary for immortality within the *polis* but also for a privileged afterlife:

> 'When a man with fine achievements but no songs reaches the house of Hades, he has spent his strength and his breath in vain and gained only a short-lived delight with his effort. But on you the soft-singing lyre and the sweet flute scatter grace and the Pierian daughters of Zeus nurture your wide fame…'
>
> (Pindar *Ol*. 10.91-6).

The epinician poet consciously fulfills a social function of enabling men to achieve godlike status by praising virtuous actions and immortalising them in the minds of his audience. Poetry is the means of conferring fame and, therefore, immortality on his subjects and the poets take a share in the fame they award.[75] Epinician poetry gives compensation for death through immortality in the minds of the surviving kin, for:

> 'For those great acts of prowess dwell in deep darkness, if they lack songs, and we know of only one way to hold a mirror up to fine deeds: if, by the grace of Mnemosyne with her splendid headdress, one finds a recompense for toils in glorious song.'
>
> (Pindar *Nem*. 7.12-16)

> 'Your true renown shall be celebrated alongside the grace of the sweet poet who sings it – the nightingale of Ceos.'
>
> (Bacc. *Epin*. 3)

Funeral song provides a means for converting grief over human mortality into enduring poetry that transcends death. A fragment of Pindar enumerates the poetic forms that are addressed to gods followed by a series of laments (*threnoi*) for the doomed sons of the Muse Calliope:

[73] Gentili 1988: 84.
[74] Gentili (1988: 84) notes a cult of the Muses that was practiced among Sappho's *thíasos* where she refers to 'song of lamentation in the house of the servants of the Muses' (*moisopólon*) (F150 V).
[75] Gentili 1988: 131.

> ‘But [other songs] put to sleep three sons of Calliope, so that memorials
> of the dead might be set up for her:
> one sang “alas Linus” for the fair-haired Linus,
> another sang for Humenaios, whom the final song took when
> he first touched the skin of marriage,
> another was for the Ialemos when his strength was stopped by
> wasting disease.
> But the son of Oeagrus, Orpheus of the golden sword’ [ends]
> (F128c S-M trans. Ford 2002)

The Songs of the deathless gods are contrasted with laments for mortals while Orpheus is apparently placed in a different category, as he does not receive a ‘memorial’ of lament. Through the act of memory a bridge is formed between the present and the past, the living and the dead. The memorial song performs a function of eternalising the memory of the dead analogous to funerary monument and the identification of Orpheus as one who is not commemorated with *thrénos* hints at his role in transcending death.[76] In Vernant’s terms, *mnemosyne* confers on the poet the privilege of entering and returning freely from the otherworld.[77] We have seen how Euripides uses Orpheus’ *katabasis* as a paradigm for the reprieve from death sought by Admetus via the poet’s journey to retrieve his wife. A comparison can be made with Odysseus’ *katabasis* in which, in the role of *aidos*, he gives an account of his journey to Hades in order to consult the seer Teiresias who will enable him to return from the status of an anonymous itinerant to the land of the living and resume his societal role as king. Odysseus takes the role of poet and is praised for his skilful song (*Od.* 11.368).[78] The idea of a journey to the land of the dead as the causation for a metaphorical rebirth is thus Homeric and not an exotic sixth century arrival. As we shall see, Orpheus’ role as a religious figure derives from changing attitudes to death as concern for the post-mortem fate of the individual became more prominent in the Archaic era. Orpheus’ function as the archetypal poet included the function of memory to travel between present and past which in psycho-geographical terms becomes a journey into the underworld. At the oracle of Lebadeia a *katabasis* was enacted in the cavern of Trophonius after drinking from the springs of *lethe* and *mnemosyne*, the latter conferring knowledge of both past and future on the visitor. [79] Vernant notes that as death is equated with oblivion, one who retains memory of

[76] Ford 2002: 15-16.
[77] Vernant 1983: 80.
[78] Nagy 1990(a): 44-5.
[79] Vernant 1983: 81 citing Eur. *Ion* 300; Paus. 9.39.

Hades transcends mortality and can move freely between worlds, as illustrated by Orpheus' *katabasis*.

As the 'father of song' Orpheus provided a model through which the late Archaic poet could make claim to an honoured status. We have seen that as the son of Calliope and Apollo, Orpheus embodied the divine sanction of the Muses' gift to the poet. In *Pythian 4* Pindar gives a narrative of the Argonauts' expedition and enumerates the heroic qualifications of its crew: 'And from Apollo the lyre-player came, the father of songs, much-praised Orpheus' (*Pyth*. 4.176). Orpheus, the demi-god of royal lineage, seems to have presented an attractive archetype to Pindar who demonstrates a self-conscious awareness of the poet's role within society in conferring the fame that is given to heroes by the gods. Kurke notes that the epincian poet takes the role of *xenos* in relation to the host patron and becomes a social equal of the victor (see Pin. *Ol*. 1.103-5; *Pyth*. 10.63-68; *Nem* 7.61).[80] In extolling the virtues of aristocratic competition the epinician poet shares in the *kleos* of the victor (Pin. *Ol*. 1.116; *Nem*. 9.11; *Isth*. 2.36).

During the early Archaic era hero cult became widespread across the Greek world.[81] Currie notes that this articulated a general interest in traditional Bronze Age stories during the seventh-eighth centuries, which in time, became increasingly focused on the legends of Homeric heores. The first heroes were offspring of the gods and in the *Iliad* these values are also ascribed to the warriors of the heroic age (*Il*. 1.1-4). The *Odyssey* adds the categories of poet and kings to this group (Phemius: 1.336; Demodocus: 8.483; Alcinoos: 6.303).[82] The late seventh century law code of Dracon stipulated that Attic heroes be honoured 'according to custom' (Porphyry, *De Absentia* 4.22). By the late Archaic era the term 'hero' was extended to any mortal renowned for excellence in a particular field.[83] Poets came to be similarly honoured from the fourth century onwards – Homer at Chios and other sites across the Greek world; Archilocus, Sappho, Alcman, Stesichorus, Pindar and others also received divine honours after their death.[84] The hero cults of poets allowed the living to safeguard and perpetuate the memory of the poet and his or her work through

[80] Kurke 1991: 135-147. Pindar invokes Homeric values of social exchange in which bonds of *xenia* confirm aristocratic values.
[81] Currie 2005: 44-48.
[82] Jones 2010: 3-11. Currie 2005: 41.
[83] Currie (2005: 59) notes that Pindar commonly identifies the recipient of praise with the ancestral hero eg Pindar *Pyth*.11.17.
[84] Clay 2004: 3-5. Aristotle mentions cults of Archilocus, Homer, Sappho and Pythagoras (*Rh*. 2.23.11).

ritual while forming important role in enhancing regional identities through the renown of the poet's name.[85] Statues dedicated to poets were set up in the sanctuaries of gods, as divinely-inspired mortals, they were given heroic status by the living along with the epic warriors whom they made famous. Legendary figures including Thamyris and Orpheus were also honoured as historical figures; the latter having cult centres on Lesbos, Leibethra and Maroneia in Thrace (eg Paus. 9.30.9; Konon *FGrHist* 26 F 45).

Orpheus follows a tradition of the hero who is alternatively the son of a king or a god, as in the case of Herakles or Asclepius, and therefore has both divine and social sanction for his deeds (Apol. *Lib*. 2.4.8; 3.10.3). Orpheus combines these categories in that he is of divine parentage, an Argonaut of heroic myth, and an exemplar of the poet's art. Orpheus was synonymous with the transformative power of poetry and his myth expresses the social function of the poet as one who reveals the divine harmony underlying nature through his song. Orpheus' gift of song also made him a charismatic figure and a traveller between worlds as will be explored further in relation to religious innovation.

As noted above, the development of archaic lyric poetry was closely linked to the growth of the Greek *polis*. Lyric poetry was the ideal vehicle for affirming the status of individuals in the community and for establishing local identities.[86] The sense of dissatisfaction with the heroic ethos inherited from epic poetry reflected wider concerns of late Archaic society for new values of morality and divine justice.[87] In Archilochus' address to the soul he echoes Odysseus' famous speech to his angry heart (identified with *thymos*) and sees self-reliance as the only hope in adversity: [88]

> Soul, soul,
> Torn by perplexity,
> On your feet now!
> Throw forward your chest
> To the enemy;
> Keep close in the attack;
> Move back not an inch.

[85] Currie 2005: 69; Antonaccio 1995: 4-5.
[86] D'Alessio 2009: 137.
[87] See discussion of the resolution of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*: Dodds 1951, 44*ff*; Seaford 2012, 269*ff*. For the development of reward and punishment in the afterlife from the Archaic to Classical era see Burkert 2009, 147*ff*.
[88] Zeruneith 2007: 304. See *Od*. 20.9*ff* for Odysseus' internal dialogue.

> But never crow in victory,
> Nor mope hang-dog in loss.
> Overdo neither sorrow or joy;
> A measured motion governs man.
> (*Testimonia Vitae* 66; 72 trans. Edmonds 1931)

As Snell argues, the development of civic law and order placed the individual in context of the social body that prepared the way for the concern with the fate of the soul as expressed by Pythagoras and others.[89] Poets still see violent passions as motivated by the gods but the soul's distress becomes an increasingly private concern as in Archilochus' thirst for justice or Sappho's laments. Archilochus and Sappho both express the disunity of the soul and the body, the *thymos* through the use of nature simile is seen as anguished and in tension with the mortal world.[90] As we have seen, this was part of an intellectual climate shared but not anticipated by the presocratic philosophers.

It has widely been argued that social developments of the sixth century such as the growth of the *polis* led to the 'Rise of the individual' and that a related transformation of the soul took place in the sixth century.[91] The Archaic concept of the soul as a witless shade is said to have reflected a communal attitude to death in which successive generations give way to each other in an endless cycle as with the fallen leaves of the *Iliad* (6.146). Bremmer argues that in Archaic Greece the life of the community superseded the interests of the individual.[92] The Homeric era began the process of individualisation that gave way to concern for the fate of the individual after death. As shown by Patroklos in Homer, funerary rites were considered necessary for the soul's transition to the afterworld.[93] Those who were unburied lingered among the living. Those who offended the state were refused funeral rites raising fears of their souls tormenting the living. Concepts of a privileged afterlife Elysion and the Isle of the Blessed are only briefly alluded to in Homer but find fuller expression in the poems of the Epic Cycle which, although later in date, appear to follow popular tradition.[94] In the *Aethiopis* for example,

[89] Snell 1982: 68-9.
[90] Snell 1982: 88, 211 citing Archilochus F.67; Sappho F.50.
[91] Snell 1982: 59-61; Bremmer 1983: 20*ff*; Burkert 1985: 300.
[92] Bremmer 1983: 123.
[93] Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 60*ff*; Bremmer 1983: 89.
[94] Homer *Od*. 4, 563 *ff*., Hesiod *W&D*. 169 *ff*. Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) sees Elysion as a late development arguing that Menelaos was included in Elysion because he survived the Trojan War (*Od*. 4.570), however, this is surely a traditional theme related to his status as son-in-law of Zeus.

Achilles is whisked away from his funeral pyre to enjoy an eternity on the White Isle whereas in the *Odyssey* 11 he is allotted a dismal afterlife in Hades (Proclus, *Aethiopis: Chrestomathia, ii*). Poetry formed the means for conferring privilege on the heroic dead as part of a wider role of preserving the continuity of the social and divine order.[95] In Pindar a privileged elite can look forward to a paradise in the afterlife similar to Hesiod's Golden Age including Peleus, Cadmus and Achilles. In *Meno*, Plato quotes Pindar and other inspired poets with knowledge of the immortality of the soul:

> 'For from whomsoever Persephone shall accept requital for ancient wrong, the souls of these she restores in the ninth year to the upper sun again; from them arise glorious kings and men of splendid might and surpassing wisdom, and for all remaining time are they called holy heroes amongst mankind.'
>
> (Pindar F133 in *Meno* 81b).

According to Sourvinou-Inwood Greek poetry was able to develop the view of the afterlife due to the lack of a dogma in Greek religion that gave them the flexibility to innovate and develop ideas.[96] She attributes changes in Archaic attitudes to death to drastic population growth and urbanisation: the rise of the *polis* affected the mentality of the elite and death began to be more feared after 700BCE. Sourvinou-Inwood reads into this an increase in the individual fear of death that provoked a corresponding desire for an attainable blessed afterlife. In contrast Morris argues that the changing attitude to death reflected underlying social changes rather than a new fear of death.[97] Morris sees change in burial practice reflecting increased concern over pollution and the sacred that required the dead, the living and the divine to become increasingly segregated into the cemetery, the *polis* and the sanctuary. However, an increased concern to strengthen boundaries and avoid the contagious *miasma* of pollution may well have reflected an increased consciousness

[95] For example, Hesiod uses poetry to confirm the divine order and looks back to a Golden Age when people lived a privileged life among the gods: *W&D* 167*ff*.
[96] Sourvinou-Inwood 1995. For Patroklos: *Il*. 23.71.
[97] However, Morris (1989(a): 258-303) finds no evidence that the rise of the individual disembodied death from its communal context. Sourvinou-Inwood's argument for an increased dread of death may be lacking in evidence but the growth of mystery cult argues for an increased concern over the fate of the soul and the literary examples cited above evidence a wider desire for an equitable distribution of divine justice in the afterlife.

of death experienced by social elites and the pressures of rising population.[98] These spatial phenomena did reflect the psychology of the *polis* that arose from the decline of aristocratic society and formalised the place of the citizen in the new social order.[99] The debate highlights the difficulty of drawing psychological conclusions from archeological evidence. Morris observes that epic poetry and tomb inscriptions could preserve the *kleos* of a few but after 700BCE the hero becomes steadily displaced by the citizen.[100] For instance, Solon's social reforms in seventh century Attica stratified the population into classes in service of the *polis* (Aristotle *Consitution of Athens* 2.2; Plutarch *Solon* 13.4-5). As the individual became increasingly defined by civic society concepts of immortality that were formerly limited to Homeric demigods and heroes became goals to which citizens could aspire. Seaford argues for a marked change from the late eighth century with an increase in public offerings in a communal context that effectively relocated the values of the Homeric warrior to the *polis*.[101] The hero-cult acted as an outlet for the formerly lavish aristocratic funerals that were now effectively embedded in the community.[102] We have seen how the values associated with the epic hero came to be extended to the reach of the individual citizen through public recognition in the form of epinician poetry. The separation between the divine and the mortal was also expressed in Archaic poetry. Hesiod divides gods, heroes and men into distinct groups with heroes occupying a middle ground as deceased mortals who shared honours with divinities (*W&D* 122, 141, 173). Pindar also categorises the three distinctive groups of gods, heroes and men: 'Hymns that rule the lyre, what god, what hero, what man shall we proclaim?'[103] Furthermore, Xenophanes and Heraclitus criticised Homer for endowing the gods with human frailties.[104] Other

[98] See Parker 1983 for the concept of miasma as spiritual pollution often caused by transgression against a god.
[99] Eg Solon's democratic reforms in early sixth-century Athens developed further under Cleisthenes (Aristot. *Const. Ath.* 9, 41).
[100] Morris 1989(a): 304.
[101] Seaford 1994: 195*ff* citing Snodgrass 1980. Bremmer (2006: 12) sees first evidence of her cult from sixth century.
[102] Morris 1989(b): 184-6 summarises the archaeological evidence for this decline across Greece.
[103] *Ol.* 2.1 in Clay 2004: 8. Cf. Bremmer 2006: 9-11.
[104] Snell 1982: 225. Zeruneith 2007: 316, 318 citing Xenophanes F169, 170; Heraclitus CK 21; DK 42.

poets including Pindar redacted myth in order to present the gods as virtuous and standing for principles that confirmed their divine status.[105]

The *polis* increasingly became the main mediator between the individual and death. This raises the question of why the myth of Orpheus became popular at a time when society is increasingly hardening the boundaries and definitions of the mortal, post-mortem and divine worlds. It is a basic principle in structural analysis that myths mediate social concerns and that mythical archetypes such as Orpheus help to personify this process.[106] As noted above, the interplay of opposites was a major theme in Archaic thought: male-female, life-death, culture-nature were all seen as complementary forces. As Morris argues, these polarities increased in the eighth-seventh centuries as society became more complex.[107] Orpheus was the singer who crossed numerous psychological boundaries being both mortal and divine, foreigner and Greek. In this way he mediated tensions between mankind and nature, Greek and foreign custom, male and female and the world of the living and the dead. Inevitably changes in society over time became reflected in poetry, which in turn, influenced society. Poetry conferred fame on selected heroes and connected living with the ancestors and also their successors. In time the award of a privileged afterlife to selected heroes came to be extended to the followers of mystery religion. The concepts of immortality expressed through poetry helped to endow society with the means of overcoming mortality and achieving a privileged afterlife. Consideration will now be given to the relationship between Orpheus and religious cult and how this influenced the mythic identity of the poet.

Orpheus and religion

Burkert's observation that the problem of Orphism remains one of the most contentious areas of Greek religion remains true today.[108] We shall see that from the sixth century Orpheus' name became linked to the foundation of rites and mysteries. The elements that gave rise to this phenomenon will be evaluated and related to

[105] Rutherford (2011: 109) an example being *Pythian* 3.40-45 where Pindar absolves Apollo from condemning Coronis to death as recorded in Apol *Lib*. 3.10.3.
[106] Csapo 1985: 226.
[107] Morris 1989(a): 315-19.
[108] Burkert 1985: 296.

concepts found in epic literature and the influence of new ideas that became incorporated into late Archaic ideology.

During the sixth century concepts of a blissful afterlife for heroes and those who shared kinship with the gods came to be disseminated among a wider population in the form of mystery cult. [109] Increasing interest in a personal relationship with the divine not provided by mainstream Olympian cult led to a concern for the fate of the individual after death.[110] As Vernant observes, the era saw the development of the soul into a divine being that could be influenced by actions in life via asceticism.[111] This arose from the idea that the mortal self can purify and liberate the soul via separation of soul and body. The objective development of the *psyché* accompanied the development of individual consciousness and the growth of mystery religion, which offered the prospect of a privileged afterlife to the initiated.[112] During the sixth-fifth-century enlightenment lyric poetry, drama and philosophy were all involved with elaborating the inner world of the self. Through the action of the Muses the poet recovers sacred truths from the past and the act of remembering becomes synonymous with divine inspiration.[113] Orpheus, as the poet who travels to and returns from the underworld would, therefore, naturally become associated with divine mysteries.

Orpheus became a religious archetype to Pythagoreans and others who saw music as an expression of the divine harmony of the cosmos.[114] A corpus of sacred writings grew in Orpheus' name that appear to have been part of a reaction against traditional religion personified by the poet who transcended the boundary between life and death. Followers of Orpheus, created cosmogonies in his name, evidence of which survives in the Derveni papyrus dated 340-320BCE but with elements thought to date back to c. 500BCE.[115] This forms a commentary on such a poem and shows influence from such diverse sources as Homeric verse, presocratic thought and the doctrine of metempsychosis.[116] Later examples of Athenian vases show Orpheus in the act of dictation show that these had become part of his persona by the fourth

[109] Vernant 1983: 326*ff*; Dowden 2011.
[110] Bowden 2010: 23.
[111] Vernant 1983: 330-33. See Bremmer 2010; 1983: 7*ff* for the development of the unified soul.
[112] Burkert 2009: 156-7.
[113] Vernant 1983: 80. See *Theogony* 39-50: The Muses speak of past and future as one oracular process. The epinician poets interpret the Muses to enlighten the present eg. Pin. *Ol.* 3.8.
[114] Riedweg 2005: 8-13.
[115] West 1983: 17.
[116] Nagy 2009, West 1983: 17, Burkert 1985: 296, Henrichs 2003: 213*ff*.

century (*Figure 4*).[117] The origination of Orphic texts appears to have been part of a wider move towards mystery religion such as practiced at Eleusis that expressed dissatisfaction with state polytheism. Vernant notes that the mystery cults together with the eschatological doctrines of the Pythagoreans and authors of *Orphica* disseminated notions of immortality from the sphere of the aristocratic elite to the wider populace.[118] These ideas were to remain outside the mainstream of Greek religion. For example, Euripides' Hippolytus is presented as an example of one who 'takes Orpheus for his lord' and the result of his separation from society is seen to make him into a figure of tragedy. Orpheus became linked to theological texts and modes of behaviour in terms of ritual and lifestyle that were outside of the religion of the *polis*.

Linforth evaluates the evidence for Orphic cult as consisting of poetry written in his name including cosmogonies, his reputation as a founder of mysteries and *teletae,* rites connected with purification, administered by itinerant practitioners (*Orpheotelestae*).[119] The gold tablets found in funerary contexts in Italy, Thessaly and Crete bear no mention of Orpheus' name and the concepts expressed in them are too diverse to belong to a single unified cult.[120] Some scholars consider the unnamed narrator of the texts to be Orpheus on account of his known connections with eschatology but this remains a speculative argument.[121] Inscribed bone fragments from Olbia on the Black Sea testify to the existence of a fifth-century sect connected with Dionysus and the word '*Orphikoi'* inscribed on one of tablets suggests at least some may indeed have adopted Orpheus as a figurehead, but this community remained marginal to mainstream Greek society.[122] Plato connects Orpheus with *teletae* and oracles and records the practice of itinerant Orphic initiators who promise the rich deliverance from evil in the afterlife with threat of punishment for those who refuse initiation (*Protag*. 315A-317 B, *Rep*. 364B-E). Even so, Orpheus' principal identity remained that of poet: Ephorus regarded him as famed for poetry

[117] The authenticity of such texts was doubted as early as the fifth century by Ion of Chios who attributed some to Pythagoras (Strom. 1, 21, 131 Stählin).
[118] Vernant 1983: 356.
[119] Edmonds (2011(a): 260*ff*) notes that no Ancient Greek source credits Orpheus with knowledge of the soul or its fate in the underworld. Cf. Burkert 2009: 149.
[120] Linforth 1941: 139*ff*. Cf. Bowden 2010: 153-5; West 1983: 26.
[121] Bernabé & Cristóbal 2007: 182. Riedweg 2011: 253.
[122] Burkert 1982: 12. West 1983: 3, 17.

and song before he learned and introduced *teletae* to Greece (Ephorus F65).[123] Linforth notes that there is no clear evidence of a unified cult with fixed traditions and there appear to have been many 'Orphic' institutions following texts written by various unconnected authors. Guthrie in contrast, considers Orphism to be a unified corpus of religious ideas inherited from the historical figure of Orpheus.[124] However, there is no evidence for a systematic set of teachings but rather a profusion of cult practices that were ascribed by followers to a mythical figure. Burkert compares Orphism, Eleusinian, Dionysian and Pythagorean beliefs to an interlocking Venn diagram which some shared similarity of eschatological beliefs.[125] In Burkert's view, all of these beliefs contain the principal that the soul is independent of the body and immortal and operate at level of *mythoi* rather than established dogmas. The nature of any cult surrounding Orpheus remains obscure, as Edmonds concludes: 'Orphism' is a modern term to describe a range of counter-cultural religious movements which frequently attributed their religious ideas to the authority of the mythical poet Orpheus.[126]

Foreign influence: Shamanism, Reincarnation and Metempsychosis

The theory that shamanism influenced early Greek religious thought became popular in the Twentieth Century due to the work of Meuli (1935) and Eliade (1961) and Dodds (1951). Eliade lists Orpheus' shamanic attributes as healing art, love for music and animals, magical charms and power of divination.[127] The shaman's journey to the afterlife to retrieve the soul of a sick or dead person, the ability to communicate with the souls of animal spirits, the initiatory practice of ritual death, dismemberment and reconstitution and the use of music and incantation to dissolve natural boundaries are all features of Eurasian shamanism.[128] We shall look at these themes below as they relate to the episodes of Orpheus' myths.

[123] Herodotus records prohibitions practiced by Orphic followers including burial in wool and other sources speak of abstinence from meat (Hdt 11.81; Diod. 5.64,4).
[124] Guthrie's (1952) treatment of Orphism as a systematic religion has also been challenged by others, notably Edmonds (2004; 2011(a); 2011(b)) who have questioned this methodology and accused scholars of projecting anachronistic Christian concepts onto fragmentary ancient evidence.
[125] Burkert 1985: 294-300. Zhmud (2012: 229) argues against shared content between Pythagorean and Bacchic circles unlike Orphic and Bacchic cult.
[126] Edmonds 1999: 70 Cf. West 1983: 3*ff.*
[127] Eliade 1964: 387*ff.*
[128] West 1983: 259; Eliade 1964: 387*ff*, Dodds 1951: 147*ff.*

In charting the influence of eastern elements of Greek thought, West argues that in seventh-sixth centuries BCE shamanistic influence spread from Thrace and Scythia and the idea of the soul's journey to the spirit world to converse with animal spirits fused around Orpheus and spread to cults of Bacchus and Pythagoras. [129] In time West argues that progressive rationalisation effaced Orpheus' 'shamanistic' character.[130] More recently, scholars have questioned the view that external shamanistic influence lay behind the origin of new eschatological ideas, arguing that these elements must have had meaning to contemporary Greeks to have been preserved.[131] We shall see that although foreign influence cannot be discounted altogether, the main tenets of religious innovation can be seen to have Greek precedents.

Scholars have interpreted the role of Orpheus the Argonaut as a shaman leading the crew to another world.[132] However, in the earliest surviving account of the myth, Pindar presents Orpheus as a poet and not a seer (*Pyth*. 4.176-200). This role is given to Mopsus who gives the crew the signal to depart after the preliminary prophesy: 'The seer shouted to them to throw themselves into the oars, announcing that their hopes were sweet; and the rowing sped on under their swift hands, insatiably.'[133] Here it seems that Segal is projecting later eschatological concepts on to the early fifth century Orpheus. It seems that Orpheus' role, like Pindar's, is to convey the divine honours on the heroes that will redound to their future glory and it is Orpheus as poet rather than shaman that Pindar is invoking in his verse.

Dodds sees Orpheus' *katabasis* as the archetypal shamanist journey to recover the soul of the dead.[134] However, as Vernant argues the poet's journey is analogous to the poet's privileged operation of memory that enables him to retrieve that which belongs to the remote past via divine inspiration.[135] For instance the seer, Tiresias, is able to retain his consciousness in Hades by virtue of his prophetic gift and the power of his memory (*Od*. 10.493-5). The shamanistic influence adduced by

[129] West 1983: 6-8, 259.
[130] West 1983: 7.
[131] Edmonds 1999: 51. Cf. Zhmud 2012.
[132] Eg Warden 1982, 5; Segal 1989: 190.
[133] Indeed Mopsus retains this role in later tradition: Ap. Rhod. *Argo*. 1.65, 78; Val. Flac. *Argo*. 205, 230ff.
[134] Dodds 1951: 140-7.
[135] Vernant 1983: 82.

Dodds can be put down to the tradition of Archaic poetry in which a hero journeys to and returns from the underworld in order to obtain a prize or information.

West regards the theme of Orpheus singing to birds and animals as derived from shamanic communication with souls in animal form.[136] However, animals are endowed with souls in early Archaic sources, for example the *psyché* of a sow is said to leave its body after being killed by Eumaios (*Od*. 14.426). The idea that the soul can take on animal form is also inherently Greek, for instance, the soul can at times take on the form of a snake.[137] Hesiod and Pindar both mention the *psyché* of snakes (Hes. F 204.139, Pindar *Ol*. 8.39). Therefore the image of Orpheus playing to rocks, trees and animals does not necessarily illustrate the concept of transmigration but may be seen to follow a poetic tradition, as discussed above, in which all nature is united in the harmony of the poet's song.

Another Orpheus myth associated with shamanism is his death and dismemberment followed by the survival of his singing head after death. The story is first attested on fifth-century pottery and is also cited by the Alexandrian Phanocles who records that the women of Thrace slew Orpheus and fastened his head to his lyre which they threw into the sea to be washed up on Lesbos which became the source of all poetry (*Figure 3*; *Figure 4*; Ap. Stobaeus 4, 20, 47).[138] Roman authors also recorded the motif of the singing head (Virgil *Georg*. 4, 523; Ovid *Met*. 11, 50; Conon 45. 25, 30; Lucian *Adv. Indoct*. 109-11). The myth is related to a historical cult on Lesbos and it seems to have been used by Archaic poets in order to make claim of poetic ascendancy for their island as the head was seen as the source of Lesbos' poetry (Aristides Hyginus 24, 55).[139] Philostratus further records that the head was housed in a cave and became the source of an oracle from the earth that rivaled Delphi in fame, until it was silenced by Apollo (Phil. *Heroic* 5, 3; *Vita Apollon. Tyan*. 4, 14). Ustinova accepts the existence of an Orpheus oracle and uses the examples of Rhesus and Zalmoxis to argue for a Thracian custom of chthonic oracles housed in caves; however she concludes that the question of whether the oracle was brought to Lesbos from Thrace, or was a local custom based on Greek popular opinions of Thracian customs, remains unanswered (Eur. *Rhesus* 971-2; Hdt.

[136] West 1983: 6.
[137] Bremmer 1983: 63, 77.
[138] Linforth 1941: 128.
[139] Linforth 1941: 129.

495.3-5; Cf. Plato *Charmides* 156d).[140] However, as Linforth notes, the fact that the prophesying head is not mentioned in earlier sources suggests it is a later elaboration and does not prove the existence of an oracle on Lesbos.[141] In summary, vases showing Orpheus' singing head need not be seen as evidence of an oracle but may be associated with a myth propagated by the poets of Lesbos who sought Orpheus' authority as a founding figure.

Linforth further notes that stories of disembodied heads that miraculously speak to identify their murderers also occur in Aristotle (*De partibus animalium* 3. 10, 673a 17) and in a second century CE source (Phelgon of Tralles, *Miracula* F32, FHG 3.615). The idea of the disembodied head of Orpheus dictating poems appears in the fifth century and may have been used by authors to authenticate texts written in his name. The motif seems to have originated in the realm of traditional folkloric beliefs rather than imported shamanistic ideas. The idea of the poet who is the living conduit of memory achieving immortality for his song is made concrete in the image of the singing head and this relates to the traditional association between memory and immortality in Greek poetry.[142] As Bremmer argues, the prophesying head is a tradition found in many cultures and is not in itself evidence of influence from Eurasian shamanism.[143]

From a nuerotheological perspective Winkelman cites the use of ecstasy including soul-journeys undertaken through altered states of consciousness, the use of guardian spirits, communal ritual and animal totemism as the processes through which shamans mediate between the realms of the living and the dead. [144] Winkelman argues for the existence of a cross-cultural pan-shamanism dating to the Paleolithic era in which ecstasy and the journey of the soul are not exclusive to any one culture or time but are universal themes. As Graf notes, the acquisition of knowledge through ecstatic experience is not confined specifically to Eurasian shamans and these elements cannot be shown to be intrusive to Greece. [145] Zhmud further argues that historical and ethnographic research into Eurasian shamanism shows its development was influenced by new forms of religion that arose in Asia in

[140] Ustinova 2009: 105-7.
[141] Linforth 1941: 133*ff*.
[142] Vernant 1983: 73*ff*.
[143] Bremmer 1983: 46.
[144] Winkelman 2004.
[145] Graf 2009: 48.

the middle of the first millennium BCE.[146] Moreover, the direction of diffusion was from South Asia to North Asia, and not the reverse. This process makes the existence of Eurasian shamanism as far back as the Archaic period in Greece highly improbable. Moreover, similarity between some elements of Greek religious and folk tradition and shamanistic practices is not evidence of the importation of the latter, because widespread motifs such as the soul travelling into the underworld and so on are common to many ancient societies. [147] In summary, neither the Thracians nor the Scythians recognised a shamanistic soul journey as far as is known and there is no evidence to support the influx of Eurasian shamanism into Archaic Greece.

We have seen that the Archaic age saw a process of individualisation in which the communal approach to death was replaced by individual concerns. Bremmer argues that the supposedly shamanistic influence on the Greek view of the soul can be seen to originate in Archaic concepts of the unified soul in which the multiple Homeric soul came to be unified in the *psyché* which developed into a means of perpetuating the individual self into the afterlife.[148] The *psyché* as the breath, which was traditionally seen as necessary for life, was devoid of consciousness or emotion.[149] Bremmer notes that in Homer the unconscious breath-soul (*psyché*) became conflated with the conscious body soul (*thymos*) as the seat of emotion merged, forming a unified soul endowed with psychological attributes and that this was the product of literary influence and the development of political consciousness. The elaboration of the senseless soul into a conscious entity representing the individual, therefore, has its roots in Archaic poetry.

Having considered the evidence for shamanistic influence we now turn to the question of transmigration in this survey of exotic influence on the Orpheus myths. The doctrine of transmigration depended on the belief in a separate soul of unified life and spirit identified with the *psyché*. Whether this belief had an origin in eastern tradition is impossible to say but it can be shown to be a consistent development from the Homeric perception of the soul. As Currie argues, the development of the unified soul that persisted after death was a precondition for the belief in

[146] Zhmud 2012: 212-3.
[147] Winkelman 2004: 194.
[148] Bremmer 1983.
[149] Bremmer 1983: 7*ff.*

reincarnation, which, although possibly extrinsic to Greek tradition is consistent with Archaic concepts.[150]

This process can be seen at work in *Odyssey* 11 when the shades of the dead are summoned to drink the blood of sacrifice that enables them to be temporarily endowed with consciousness. The dead are nameless and interchangeable until the poet temporarily endows them with their identities in order that they may become protagonists in the story of Odysseus' quest for identity and homeland. The blood of sacrifice that endows them with *thymos* becomes a literary device that allows the dead souls to become protagonists in the story.[151] In the *Iliad*, Patroklos' soul is endowed with consciousness through the device of the dream (and the fact that his unburied status prevents his passing to Hades) just as the dead in the *Odyssey* are given life through sacrificial blood (*Il*. 23.65*ff*; *Od*. 11.35*ff*). In the same way that the treatment of the gods and heroes in Homeric literature influenced social concepts of the divine and the mortal worlds so the literary treatment of the dead can be seen to anticipate the development of the soul from a witless shade towards the preservation of individual consciousness after death.

Pindar was the earliest poet known to express a belief in reincarnation that formed part of his vision of a blessed afterlife:

> 'Those who have persevered three times, on either side, to keep their souls free from all wrongdoing, follow Zeus' road to the end, to the tower of Cronus, where ocean breezes blow around the island of the blessed, and flowers of gold are blazing, some from splendid trees on land, while water nurtures others…'
>
> (Pindar *Ol*. 2.69*ff*)

Although primarily addressed to an aristocratic audience in the context of a public religious festival, Pindar's tone suggests confidence that his audience understands the concept of reincarnation in that he does not feel the need to explain it.[152] This contrasts with the view of Anacreon of the preceding generation, who, like Homer, sees no respite from an eternity in Hades when he laments his old age.

[150] Currie 2005: 33-40.
[151] Sourvinou-Inwood (1995: 78) sees the conscious shades in *Odyssey* 11 as a Homeric innovation.
[152] Burkert (1985: 300) notes that Pindar may reflect the values of his patrons. Cf. (Long 1948: 151; Burkert 1985: 300; Currie 2005: 32) although Long notes that Pindar's view of the afterlife is not inconsistent with the quotation in *Meno* 81A.

> ‘Of sweet life not much time is left. Therefore I groan, shuddering at Tartarus. For the abyss of Hades is frightful, and the descent to it grievous. And once you have gone down there is no coming back.’
>
> (Anacreon F44 in Snell 1982)

The fear of eternal death expressed in Anacreon has become ameliorated by the eventual prospect of a blessed afterlife. Pindar expresses a belief in reincarnation that by the early fifth century has become widespread among the intellectual class.[153] Burkert sees this doctrine as evidence to the expression of individualism through the concept of the separation of a divine soul from the mortal body.[154] Significantly, Pindar does not make any connection between reincarnation and Orpheus who is not mentioned in his picture of a blessed afterlife.

Plato describes reincarnation as a ‘traditional’ doctrine (*Phaedo* 70c) not directly ascribed to the teachings of Orpheus. However, in the *Myth of Er*, in which Plato illustrates his own view of reincarnation, he uses Orpheus as one of his examples. He describes the ‘pitiful’ spectacle of Orpheus choosing the form of a swan for reincarnation because of his antipathy to women and Thamyris choosing the body of the nightingale (*Rep*. 620a). Although he does not credit Orpheus with reincarnation he appears to have borrowed an image of Orpheus’ rebirth as a swan from a pre-existing tradition. In the *Symposium*, Plato describes the failure of Orpheus’ mission to retrieve his wife as due to his moral cowardice at the poet’s own refusal to accept death. He makes no mention of Orpheus’ successful petition to the gods of Hades and only succeeds in being given an illusory phantom in the form of his wife (*Symp*. 179D-E). Plato ridicules Orpheus’ failure to win his wife back from Hades, representing his mission as an act of cowardly *hubris* (*Symp*. 179d-e). The mystical Orpheus was a baleful influence for Plato, as the poet who enthralls his audience compared to the *rhapsode* who appeals to the intellect. Although it should be noted that the Derveni papyrus does link metempsychosis with Orphic beliefs this cannot be separated from Pythagorean influence. As Long notes there is no evidence

[153] Cf. Plato *Meno* 81A.
[154] Burkert 1985: 300.

of any link crediting Orpheus as the originator of metempsychosis before the Christian era.[155]

Orpheus became linked to eschatological concepts that derived from his ability to charm the gods of the underworld. From earliest sources, Orpheus was a Thracian musician and his foreignness no doubt attracted 'exotic' beliefs to his name. While the themes of reincarnation and metempsychosis may have their roots in foreign cultures the eschatalogical elements of Orphic myth can be seen to have Greek precedents. The means through which poetry came to be seen as a way of mediating between life and death originated in the role of the Archaic oral poet. The idea of the animal soul occurs in Homer and therefore the theme of Orpheus singing to the animals, plants and stones is not necessarily connected with transmigration. Bremmer argues persuasively that reincarnation arose, not from eastern influence, but from a decline in power of Greeks elites resulting in increased social uncertainty that created a desire for the restitution of social advantage through religious cult. [156] This combined with the rise in the *polis* and the increased complexity of society that promoted greater individualism.

Edmonds notes that Orpheus was often invoked to denote foreign or exotic beliefs outside of the Greek tradition just as Dionysus is often portrayed as outside of Greek experience but was actually an ancient part of it.[157] Dionysus, as a traditional example of otherness in Greek religion, demonstrates that Orpheus' exoticism was not alien to Greek thought. Dionysus, like Orpheus, was perceived as an outsider, a quality that contributed to his panhellenic identity. Both Orpheus and Dionysus were thought to originate in Thrace, Orpheus' *katabasis* mirrors the myth of Dionysus' descent to Hades to recover Semele after which she was made a goddess.[158] The latter myth appears to have been connected to Dionysus own 'promotion' from demi-god status and may be of relatively late origin.[159] Both figures were seen to operate within the world of mankind, their human-divine origin mediated between

[155] Long 1948: 154; Zhmud 2012: 222; West 1983: 5, 14-20 consider that metempsychosis was adopted by Pythagoras and became associated with Orphism thereafter.
[156] Bremmer 2010: 12-15.
[157] Edmonds 2011b: 76-79.
[158] Diodorus 4.25.4 states that Orpheus acted like Dionysus vis-a-vis the return of Semele from Hades.
[159] Semele's deification appears in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*: *Theog*. 941-2. Cf. Pindar *Ol*. 2.26, *Pyth*. 11.1. Sourvinou-Inwood (2007: 74) cites sixth-fifth century vases showing Dionysus leading a woman in company with Hermes that may be Semele. Pausanias gives the myth of her return from Hades: Paus. 2.31.2.

the individual and the collective state religion of the *polis*.[160] In Euripides' *Bacchae*, for example, Dionysian cult unites the *polis* against the royal family, embedding the religion of the other within the civic community.[161] We have seen that Orpheus' *sparagmos* was occasioned in some sources by his renunciation of Dionysus for Apollo and carried out by the Bassarids.[162] His death is comparable to that of Pentheus in the *Bacchae* at the hands of Theban *Maenads* after insulting Dionysus and in late tradition Orpheus is credited as a founder of Dionysian mysteries (Eur. *Bacchae* 1110-48; Apol. *Lib*. 1.9.25, Diod. 1.96.4).[163] Eratosthenes suggests Pythagorean influence in Aeschylus' account of Orpheus' death: Orpheus renounced Dionysus for Apollo after his journey to Hades led him to identify Apollo with the sun and was killed by Dionysus' Bassarids as a consequence.[164] The Pythagoreans and the lyric poets recognised Apollo as their tutelary god and Orpheus appears to have embodied tensions between a Pythagorean tradition that associated enlightenment with personal purification and the collective ecstasy of traditional Dionysian religion.[165] In his mythic character Orpheus personified Apollonian reason in his role as poet whose music is an expression of divine order but also Dionysus as author of *teletae* and initiator into mysteries connected with the fate of the soul.[166] Orpheus bridges the schism between the rational objective and sensual subjective parts of the *psyché*. He is a 'Dionysian' figure who crosses the boundaries between the physical and metaphysical worlds. Yet he is 'Apollonian' in the sense that as poet/musician he enacts the harmony and order of the new age represented by Apollo. Orpheus as a bard and a prophet is a liminal figure who is at once embedded within civilised society and simultaneously beyond the religion of the *polis*.[167]

In conclusion, Orpheus' function as initiator of mysteries is an extension of his role as the bringer of divine harmony that extends from his music into prophecy

[160] Vernant 1983: 323-5.
[161] Seaford 2012: 95.
[162] Eratosthenes quotes Aeschylus' *Bassarae* (*Katast*. 24 in Gantz 1996: 722).
[163] Henry (1992: 154) notes the deaths of both Orpheus and Pentheus were popular motifs on fifth century Athenian vases.
[164] West (1990) sees Eratosthenes' account as wholly derived from Aeschylus but only Dionysus' role in Orpheus' death can be credited to Aeschylus with certainty. Seaford (2012) also proposes Pythagorean influence on Aeschylus citing the equation of the sun with Apollo.
[165] Seaford (2005: 602*ff*) argues that Orpheus was contested by diverse concepts of Dionysian and Apollonian mysticism.
[166] Burkert (1985: 302) notes followers of Dionysus practiced orgy and *teletae* while Pythagoreans preached salvation through purificatory asceticism.
[167] The use of sacred texts and ascetic practices were exotic to Greek culture: Henrichs 2003: 215.

and poetry.[168] Orpheus' *katabasis* must have served as the primary example that led him to be seen in this light together with the miraculous story of the preservation of his head that continued to sing after death. Dowden notes that there is no evidence that Orpheus' *katabasis* was originally soteriological.[169] Moreover, no Ancient Greek source explicitly credits Orpheus with knowledge of the fate of the soul arising from his descent to the underworld.[170] If Orpheus' descent was shamanistic one would have expected a successful outcome, instead of which, the traditional boundary between mortal and immortal worlds is reasserted by his failure. However, Euripides does use the myth as a paradigm for Alcestis' hoped-for salvation from death suggesting the possibility of a temporary liberation from death if not a blessed afterlife (Eur. *Alcestis* 357-59). There is no reference to reincarnation or metempsychosis in the story of Orpheus' descent and return. Indeed, his goal is to return his wife's soul to the mortal world in her original corporeal form, to give her a temporary reprieve from death rather than the permanent salvation of the soul. Successive reincarnation was precisely what Pythagorean doctrine sought to overcome through the purification of the soul over successive reincarnations until the soul achieves its divine potential and eternal union with the gods.[171] The Derveni papyrus dating from the fourth century does contain references to metempsychosis suggesting that this had become attached to Orpheus' name by this time.[172] It would appear then that reincarnation and metempsychosis became linked to Orpheus under the influence of Pythagorean and Dionysian texts and was not a traditional feature of his myth. As we have seen, Orpheus' religious persona derived from his *katabasis* - the important point was not the outcome of his mission but his success in persuading the infernal gods through his song and the prospect this offered to initiates. Exactly what the Orphic rites and *teletae* offered to their audience is a matter of mystery and there is no clear evidence that they ever observed a cohesive and consistent doctrine. As Parker notes, concepts imported from foreign cultures must be reinterpreted in local forms for them to be comprehensible to the host society.[173] Twentieth Century

[168] Linforth 1941: 166.
[169] Dowden 2011: 285.
[170] Edmonds 2011(b): 90. Contra West (1983: 6) who argues *ex silentio* for a missing myth in which Orpheus attains wisdom from his descent.
[171] Burkert (1985: 299) considers that Pythagoras combined elements of Ionian thought with Babylonian mathematics, Iranian religion and an eastern doctrine of metempsychosis into a complex belief system.
[172] West 1983: 17.
[173] Parker 1995: 502.

interpretations of Orpheus as a prototypical shaman have neglected his social function within Archaic society in which poetry is a means of confirming social concepts of heroism and mediating between life and death. As the *katabasis* myth shows, poetry has the power to temporarily dissolve boundaries between life and inert matter but must ultimately conform to the boundaries of life and death that express the cosmic order and both of these concepts are inherently Greek.

The rise of the *polis* led to a hardening of boundaries between the mortal and divine worlds. The place of the citizen within society became formalised as space between gods, men and the ancestors became separately defined. The myth of Orpheus developed at a time when people began to speculate on the fate of the soul after death. Orpheus was a crosser of boundaries who offered the prospect of a privileged afterlife to an elite. Over time, a series of soteriological ideas coalesced around the mythical poet in the form of sacred texts written in his name and promulgated by professional practitioners. As Parker observes we do not know exactly what they advised their clients or to what extent they were followed.[174] Evidently the followers of Pythagoras and Orpheus were restricted to intellectual elites and remained outside the sphere of Greek religion. As scholars have noted, the name of Orpheus was used by writers of the sixth century as a convenient label that leant an antiquity and authenticity to their writings.[175] In Edmonds' terms, Orpheus' perceived antiquity and exoticism made him a suitable vehicle for innovators wanting to employ traditional mythic material to express new ideas.

Orpheus the outsider

Apart from his status as hero and demigod Orpheus was also a barbarian and a traveller and this outsider status was consonant with the poet's role both in spreading cultural values and transmitting poetic inspiration into society from the divine world. Orpheus' otherness can be seen as a metaphor for this process as his Thracian identity mirrors that of Dionysus, the arriving god.[176] Just as Dionysus' perceived exoticism was integral to his function as a Greek deity so Orpheus' role as outsider was important to Greek audiences. We shall see that Orpheus exemplifies the idea of poet as *xenos* that is traditional in Greek poetry.

[174] Parker 2011: 255-58.
[175] Linforth 1941: 171; Edmonds 2011(b): 91; West 1983: 3.
[176] See *Il*. 6.130-5 for Dionysus' Thracian connection.

In the Archaic era singers ceased to be employed specifically by a single court and instead become itinerant, serving the needs of host communities at festivals organized by an elite to meet the demands of the wider *polis*.[177] As such, poetry helped to integrate the classes of society into the cultural whole of the *polis*. In the Homeric epics, the Muse is said to have taught all poets the 'paths' of song and this theme continued as a poetic device into the Classical era (*Od*. 8.479; Pindar *Ol*. 1.110; *Ol*. 6.24-26; *Ol*. 9.46). As we have seen, Odysseus took the role of the wandering poet and the theme of itinerancy came to be associated with poetry from an early date and has its roots in the Homeric world. Orpheus fulfilled this concept in several ways: as an Argonaut who journeys to exotic lands, as the poet who journeys to Hades to retrieve his love and as a solitary figure on the fringes of the known world before his death at the hands of Thracian women and the final journey of his singing head to the island of Lesbos. Therefore, Orpheus' wanderings facilitated the main components of his myth from adventuring hero to traveller between worlds.

As we have seen, the notion of the wandering bard who enters society as a *xenos* dates from the Homeric era. The bard becomes a representative of otherness in that although he articulates the values of his host he comes from outside the aristocratic *oikos* and, later, the communal *polis*. As a stranger the poet would be welcomed under the divine laws of hospitality but he could also be a threatening presence. The ambivalence towards the *xenos* is also shown to the poet who not only has the capacity to articulate, but also to challenge his hosts' perceptions. We may note Penelope's upbraiding of Phemius whose doleful account of the *nostoi* is far from the joyful song requested by the suitors (*Od*. 1. 400-409) Therefore, it is not surprising that Orpheus, as the archetypal poet, should be represented as an outsider to Greek society. As Prauscello notes, the Greeks used this fluidity across boundaries of space and time as a useful process for establishing cultural identities.[178] The tension between tradition and innovation articulated by the poet provided a platform for the reception and exploration of new ideas.

Just as the bard as an outsider was in a position to frame and validate the social customs of his hosts on the level of the *polis*, so it seems that Orpheus, who came from the fringes of the known world, was a suitable figurehead for exploring the relationships between the mortal and divine worlds on the cosmic level. We have

[177] Gentili 1988: 156.
[178] Prauscello 2009: 169.

noted that Vernant sees cosmological models as a reflection of the social categories of the *polis*.[179] In this scheme 'vertical' space of the divine sphere consisting of the heavens, earth and underworld bisects the 'horizontal' sphere of geographic space and human society. The *polis*, centred on the communal hearth, becomes identified as the *omphalos* of both mortal and divine worlds in a synthesis of temporal and spatial values. Seaford further divides notions of space into cosmic, geographic and local areas relating to the world of the gods, the wider known world and the *polis*.[180] The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* expresses the sixth-century desire to rationalise and harmonise relationships between the divine and mortal worlds and anchor them in the socio-political context of the cult of Eleusis.[181] Cosmic and geographic space are united through the periodic descent and return of Persephone in an integration of cosmic forces with the social institutions of marriage and agriculture. Seaford argues that it was the foundation of the *polis* that required a new negotiation of the relationship between human and divine. Aristocratic households were absorbed into the greater community whose structure is projected on to the cosmos. In the hymn, socio-political values are sanctified by the imagined recreation of remote time and space.

Just as Demeter's journey made her a vehicle for soteriological ideas so also did Orpheus' *katabasis*. Whereas the goddess Demeter is portrayed as an agent of cosmic-social integration, this function is performed by the mortal Orpheus through the divine gift of song. Orpheus is a heroic type of solo bard who travels imaginatively on behalf of his audience. Through different journeys Orpheus, like Odysseus, crosses all three boundaries: divine, social and personal. Firstly, as an Argonaut, Orpheus unites the known social world of the *polis* with the unknown world that shades into a world of demi-gods and monsters through geographical space. Again, in his *katabasis*, Orpheus unites the divine and human worlds through a cosmic journey. This reconciliation between mortal and divine is achieved through the medium of song. Latterly, Orpheus wanders alone in Thrace, a marginal place in Greek perceptions, between the known world of the *polis* and the unknown divine world beyond Okeanos. The Hellenistic era saw Orpheus as the artist who had the power to unite the disparate elements of nature and human society into a civilised

[179] Vernant 1983: 191-8.
[180] Seaford 2012: 13.
[181] Seaford 2012: 24*ff*.

whole that reflects the divine order underlying creation.[182] The Augustan poets added a personal dimension to the cosmic and social dimension of Orpheus' journeys by developing the theme of his doomed love for Eurydice (Virgil *Georgics* 4.453*ff*; Ovid *Met*. 10.1-154, 11.1*ff*). Virgil recreated Orpheus as a personification of poetry as a creative force but also in its power to deceive; art aspires to immortality but cannot overcome death. Orpheus' quest to recover his wife is an act of artistic hubris that affronts the divine order and leads to his destruction. Ovid treats Orpheus as a practitioner of love through the medium of song; the poet becomes the lover who ultimately overcomes death in a final reunion with Eurydice in Hades (Ovid *Met*. 11.60-66). Through this union the divine, social and personal spheres are finally united. Underlying these different treatments, Orpheus remains the mediator between life and death as opposite poles of a single continuum.

Orpheus in social context

As noted above, the association of opposites became a major theme in Archaic thought: categories such as: male-female, life-death, culture-nature, Greek-foreign that form a continual interplay in Homeric poetry provided polarities that marked extreme positions between complementary concepts. [183] As Seaford argues, tensions in society were acted out and negotiated in myths.[184] At a time when divisions in society became more consolidated Orpheus played a role in this process in helping to reconcile these opposites.

These polarities became increasingly intransigent during the social evolution of the eighth-seventh centuries, chief of which was the decline of the aristocratic system and the ideological transformations of the *polis* as discussed above. The evolution of society is often reflected in the increased popularity of a mythical or divine figure who personifies that process. For instance, the development of the cults of Asclepius and Herakles may be said to mediate between the barriers of Greek society concerned with tensions between divine healing and medicine aristocratic

[182] Segal 1989: 16. See Orpheus' poetic cosmology in Ap. Rhod. *Argo* 1.494-1.515, 1.540-47, 4.891-911.
[183] Morris 1989(a): 319: Heraclitus conceptualised a theme already inherent in Homeric poetry, for instance Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus explores tensions between concepts of civilised-uncivilised; Greek-foreign; host-guest: *Odyssey* 9.
[184] Seaford 2012: 290.

freedom and slavery.[185] Orpheus is the crosser of boundaries *par excellence* who mediates increasing tensions between contrasting social categories produced during the Archaic era.

Orpheus can be summarised in structuralist terms using Vernant's system of assessing myth in its social context in order to understand the categories of thought that underlie it.[186] Firstly, we may consider Orpheus' ancestry. As the mortal son of either Apollo or Oiagros and the Muse, Orpheus contains both human and divine elements. Orpheus' hero status is confirmed by his role as Argonaut and becomes fully realised in his journey to Hades. As a hero Orpheus is both mortal and immortal in that his memory is preserved in myth after his death. Through the medium of song Orpheus creates unity between the mortal and divine worlds and his poetic ability is his prime heroic attribute.

The process of colonisation led to a new awareness of foreign cultures that helped form new mythic constructs that sought to define Greek identity in relation to other cultures.[187] Orpheus personifies the tension between poles of Greek and otherness that gained prominence under the social context of trade and colonisation. Although a Thracian barbarian, in his role as Argonaut Orpheus saves the crew from the sirens' song and enables them to progress from the known to the unknown world and transcend tensions between them. This geographic journey operates on a horizontal social plane between what is perceived as the Greek, civilised world and the barbarous, unknown lands that spawn magical monsters. Orpheus' exotic ethnicity enables him to mediate between the known and unknown.

Orpheus also journeys to and from the Underworld. In charming the gods of Hades he offers some hope for the possibility of a temporary release from death. This journey takes place on the cosmic vertical axis and unites the worlds of the dead and the living. The growth of the Archaic *polis* solidified boundaries between categories of the living, the ancestors and the divine worlds. As an ancestral figure of the heroic era Orpheus transcends these divisions.

After his return to Thrace, Orpheus lives alone in a society on the fringes of the known world that exists between civilised society and barbarian culture. As the

[185] Asclepius, see Hart 2000: 21; Herakles, see Csapo 1985: 314.
[186] Vernant 1980: 228*ff* in Csapo 1985: 247.
[187] Dougherty 1993.

archetypal wandering bard he is represented in Greek and later, Thracian dress (*Figure 1*; Cf. CVA 22904). Paradoxically, as an outsider to Greek culture and as an itinerant poet Orpheus was able to be become a pan-Hellenic figure in that he was not appropriated to the mythology of a particular state in the way that Theseus, for instance, became synonymous with Athenian identity.[188] Orpheus represents Greek cultural values such as the *xenos* who is both external to society and necessary for its function.

In Thrace Orpheus is said to renounce Dionysus for Apollo. In the Archaic era the divine order thought to be offered by Apollo's oracle at Delphi became increasingly dominant. As patron of poets and prophets Apollo came to be regarded as the father of Orpheus who expressed divine harmony through his music.[189] Orpheus was also a figure of Dionysian otherness who transcended boundaries between species and other natural phenomena by uniting them in song. In this way Orpheus embodies two contrasting strands of religious thought.

Orpheus' head continues to sing after death in a myth that illustrates the achievement of immortality through song. Through the miraculous survival of his voice Orpheus testifies to the enduring power of poetry that exists between mortal and immortal worlds. In a social context Orpheus becomes a paradigm for the hero cult of the poet whose music literally lives on after his death. The separation of head and its singing voice from the body itself mirrors the separation between body and soul that was a product of Archaic thought.

Conclusion

In summary, there is no evidence that 'Orphic' religion made any inroads into mainstream Greek thought beyond the intellectual circles of Pythagoras and his followers. A heterogeneous selection of sacred texts was composed in the poet's name and these were interpreted to a self-selective audience outside the mainstream of Greek society. The myth of Orpheus' descent even in later form did not make any reference to reincarnation or the attainment of a privileged afterlife. The myth of Orpheus' charming of the infernal gods did however establish him as a focus for

[188] Walker 1995: 14-15.
[189] Homer *Od*. 8.489; Pindar *Pyth*. 4. 315.

religious ideas. Orpheus as a crosser of boundaries and an exotic was a liminal figure who came to express a relationship between the individual and the divine that while outside the state religion was simultaneously a product of the *polis*-centred society. The equation of poetry with immortality goes back to Homeric epic but the extension of immortal fame to the citizen was a new phenomenon. Neither is there evidence that a pre-Homeric *Argonautica* portrayed Orpheus as pyschopomp leading the crew into the next world. The fact that Homer mentions the *Argonautica* but nowhere mentions Orpheus makes it more likely that he was a later addition to the story (*Od*. 12.69-70). Scenes of Orpheus playing to the animals, trees and rocks and so on are consonant to the view of music as an expression of divine order underlying nature and cannot be seen as a reference to metempsychosis. Moreover, all of these themes can be seen to have their origins in epic sources and their development can be traced through the work of the Lyric poets and in the wider concerns of Archaic society.

Orpheus embodied concepts related to the supernatural power of poetry in a single figure. Poetry was magical in operation and this quality was also attributed to historical and mythical poets other than Orpheus. The lyric poets articulated a view of nature as a constant dynamic force against which the poet as individual was thrown into relief. Both of these belief systems can be seen to have their roots in Homeric poetry and were reflected in contemporary philosophy. The social changes of the Archaic era developed these concepts further and allowed poets to express their own individual beliefs and feelings often on behalf of the community.

The development of the *polis* went hand-in-hand with a desire to establish a personal connection with the divine expressed in the growth of mystery cult and an emerging interest in the post-mortem fate of the individual. The Greek *polis* encouraged an emerging professional identity for poets increasingly conscious of their social status who formed a receptive audience for the myth of the semi-divine Orpheus. As the Greeks developed their own identity in opposition to foreign cultures ethnographic accounts inspired mythical constructs that defined aspects of Greek culture. The main themes of the Orpheus myths correspond to developments in sixth century Greece and can be seen to have their origins in earlier Archaic poetry. New ideas were absorbed into intellectual Greek society at this time and may also have provided impetus to the emerging figure of Orpheus but remained peripheral to mainstream Greek culture. The sixth century was a time when boundaries became increasingly reinforced. Orpheus was a figure who transcended

boundaries and helped to alleviate social tensions. His exotic nature made him acceptable as a transcendent figure to a *polis*-centred culture where social freedoms were subordinated to the values of the community. Orpheus can be seen to be the creation of Archaic Greek culture that made use of exotic elements drawn from neighbouring societies to create a mythic figure that resonated with Greek audiences.

Bibliography

Primary sources:

Aeschylus, *The Orestaia*, translated by P. Vellacott. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956.

Apollodorus, *The Library*, translated by R. Hard. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Apollonius Rhodos, *The Argonautica*, translated by W. F. Jackson-Knight. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959.

Aristophanes, *Frogs*, translated by J. Henderson. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by H. Tredennick. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. 1933.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, translated by J. H. Freese. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. 1926.

Bacchylides, *Epinician Odes (3, 5, 9, 11, 13)*, translated by D. L. Cairns. Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2010.

Diodorus, *Library*, translated by C. H. Oldfather. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Euripides, *Alcestis*, translated by P. Vellacott. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, translated by J. Morwood. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Euripides, *Cyclops*, translated by D. Kovacs. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Euripides, *Hippolytus*, translated by P. Vellacott. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953.

Euripides, *Iphgenia at Aulis*, translated by J. Morwood. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Euripides, *Medea*, translated by D. Kovacs. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Euripides, *Rhesus*, translated by J. Morwood. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Galen: *Exhortation to the Study of the Arts especially Medicine: To Menodotus*, translated by J. Walsh. *Medical Life*, Vol. 37 1930, pp. 507-529.

Hermesianax, cited in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, translated by C. B. Gulick, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1937.

Herodotus, *Histories*, translated by G. Rawlinson. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1996.

Hesiod, *The Theogony*, *Works and Days*, translated by D. Wender. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.

Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by R. Lattimore. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by R. Lattimore. New York: Harper Collins, 1965.

Moschos, *The Lament for Bion*, translated by J. M. Edmonds. Loeb Classical Library Volume 28. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1912.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated by M. Innes. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1955.

Pausanias, Description of Greece, translated by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1918.

Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Translated by F.C. Conybeare. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge MA: Harvard Univserity Press, 1912.

Pindar, *Odes*, translated by D. Arnson Svarlien, Annenberg CPB/Project: 1990.

Plato, *Apology*, translated by H. N. Fowler. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Plato, *Meno*, translated by W. R. M. Lamb. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by H. N. Fowler. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Plato, *Republic*, translated by P. Shorey. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Plato, *Theatetus*, translated by H. N. Fowler. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Plutarch, *De Sollertia Animalium*, translated by H. Cherniss and W. C. Helmbold. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Proclus, 'Summary of the Aethiopis,' translated by Evelyn-White, in *Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homerica*. H G. Loeb Classical Library Vol. 57. London: William Heinemann, 1914.

Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, translated by J. H. Mozley. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.

Virgil, *Georgics*, translated by P. Fallon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

The Homeric Hymns, translated by N. Richardson. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2003.

Secondary sources:

Antonaccio, C. M. *An Archaeology of Ancestors: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Early Greece*. London: Roman and Littlefield, 1995.

Archibald, Z. H. *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace: Orpheus unmasked*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Bernabé and Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld: the Orphic Gold Tablets*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Bowden, H. *Mystery Cults in the Ancient World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Bowie, E. 'Wandering Poets, Archaic Style' in *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture.* Hunter, R and Rutherford, I. (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 105-136.

Bowra, C. M. *Greek Lyric Poetry From Alcman to Simonides*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.

Braswell, B. K. *A Commentary on the Fourth Pythian Ode of Pindar*. New York: De Gruyter, 1988.

Bremmer, J. *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Bremmer, J. 'The Rise of the Hero Cult and the New Simonides,' in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.* Vol. 158, 2006, pp. 15-26. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20191144

Bremmer, J. 'The Rise of the Unitary Soul and its Opposition to the Body: from Homer to Socrates,' in *Philosophische Anthropologie in der Antike.* Jansen L. and Jedan C. (eds.). Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2010, pp. 11-29. Available from: http://theol.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/root/2010/RiseoftheunitarySoul/?pLanguage=en&pFullItemRecord=ON

Budelmann, F. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Burkert, W. 'Craft versus Sect: the Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreans,' in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition.* Meyer B. F. and Sanders E. P. (eds.). London: SCM Press, 1982, pp. 1-25.

Burkert, W. *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, [Trans. J. Raffan French original: 1977] Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.

Burkert, W. *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Burkert, W. 'Pleading for Hell: Postulates, Fantasies, and the Senselessness of Punishment', in *Numen,* Vol. 56, 2009, pp. 141-160.

Buxton, R. 'Similes and Other Likenesses' in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer.* Fowler, R. (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 139-155.

Cairns, D. L. *Bacchylides: Five Epinician Odes (3, 5, 9, 11, 13)*. Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2010.

Calame, C. *The Craft of Poetic Speech in Ancient Greece*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Campbell, David A. *The Golden Lyre: the Themes of the Greek lyric poets*. London: Duckworth, 1983.

Chaniotis, A. 'Travelling Memories in the Hellenistic World' in *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture.* Hunter, R and Rutherford, I. (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 249-269.

Clay, Diskin. *Archilochos Heros: the Cult of Poets in the Greek Polis*. Washington D.C.: Harvard University, 2004.

Csapo, E. *Theories of Mythology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.

Currie, B. *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

D'Alessio, G. B. 'Defining Local Identities in Greek Lyric Poetry' in *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture.* Hunter, R and Rutherford, I. (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 137-167.

Detienne, M. *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*. [Trans. J. Lloyd French original: 1967] New York: Zone Books, 1996.

Detienne, M. *The Writing of Orpheus: Greek Myth in Cultural Contact*. London: John Hopkins University Press, 2002

Dodds, E. R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951.

Dougherty, C. *The Poetics of Colonization: from City to Text in Archaic Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Dougherty, C. and Kurke, L. (eds.). *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dowden, K. 'The Epic tradition in Greece,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*. Fowler, R. (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 188-205.

Dowden, K. 'The Myth that Saves: Mysteries and Mysteriosophies,' in *A Companion to Greek Mythology.* K. Dowden and N. Livingstone (eds.). Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2011, pp. 283-300.

Easterling, P. and Kenney, E. (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Greek Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Edelstein, E. J. & L. *Asclepius: a Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1945.

Edmonds, J. M. (ed.) *Greek Elegy and Iambus.* London: Heinemann, 1931.

Edmonds, R. G. 'Tearing Apart the Zagreus Myth: A Few Disparaging Remarks on Orphism and Original Sin,' *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1999, pp. 35-73.

Edmonds, R. G. *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato. Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Edmonds, R. G. (ed.), *The 'Orphic' Gold Tablets and Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011(a).

Edmonds, R. G. 'Orphic Mythology,' in *A Companion to Greek Mythology*. K. Dowden and N. Livingstone (eds.). Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2011(b), pp. 73-106.

Ekroth, G. *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods*. Liége: Kernos, 2002.

Eliade, M. *Shamanism*: *Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ford, A. L. *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Gantz, T. *Early Greek Myth: a Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources.* Vol. 2. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Gentili, B. *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece from Homer to the Fifth Century*, trans. A. T. Cole. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988.

Graf, F. *Greek Mythology: an Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Graf, F. *Apollo*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2009.

Granger, H. 'The Theologian Pherecydes of Syros and the Early Days of Natural Philosophy,' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 103, 2007, pp. 135-163.

Guthrie, W.K. C. *Orpheus and Greek Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952.

Hanesworth, P. *Heroic and Mortal Anodoi: Representations and Uses of a Mythical Motif Archaic and Classical Greece*. Dissertation. Exeter University, 2009.

Hart, G. D. *Asclepius the god of Medicine*. London: Royal Society of Medicine Press Ltd, 2000.

Heath, J. 'The Failure of Orpheus,' *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 124, 1994, pp. 163-196.

Henrichs, A. '*Hieroi Logoi* and *Hierai Bibloi*: The (Un)Written Margins of the Sacred in Ancient Greece,' in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 101, 2003, pp. 207-266.

Henry, E. *Orpheus with his Lute: Poetry and the Renewal of Life*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992.

Hornblower, S. 'Greek Lyric and the Politics and Sociologies of Archaic and Classical Greek Communities,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*. Budelmann, F. (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 39-57.

Hutchinson, G. O. *Greek lyric poetry: a commentary on selected larger pieces: Alcman, Stesichorus, Sappho, Alcaeus, Ibycus, Anacreon, Simonides, Bacchylides, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Jones, C. P. *New Heroes in Antiquity: from Achilles to Antinoos*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Knight, V. *The Renewal of Epic: Responses to Homer in the Argonautica of Apollonius*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Kowalzig, B. *Singing for the Gods: Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Kurke, L. *The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Linforth, I. M. *The Arts of Orpheus*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941.

Long, H. S. 'Plato's Doctrine of Metempsychosis and its Source,' *The Classical Weekly*, Vol. 41, No. 10, 1948, pp. 149-55.

Lord, A. B, *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition*. London, 1995.

Morris, I. 'Attitudes to Death in Archaic Greece,' *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1989(a), pp. 296-320.

Morris, I. *Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989(b)

Nagy, G. *Greek mythology and poetics*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1990(a).

Nagy, G. 'Ancient Greek Poetry, Prophecy and Concepts of Theory,' in *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition*. Kugel, J. L. (ed.). New York: Cornell University Press, 1990(b), pp. 56-64.

Nagy, G. *Homer the Classic*. Berkeley: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Nutton, V. *Ancient Medicine*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Osborne, R. 'Homer's Society,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*. Fowler, R. (ed.). Cambridge, 2004, pp. 206-219.

Parker, R. *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Parker, R. 'Early Orphism,' in Powell, A. (ed.), *The Greek World*. London 1995, pp. 483-510.

Parker, R. *On Greek Religion*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2011.

Prauscello, L. 'Wandering Poetry: Travelling Music' in *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture.* Hunter, R and Rutherford, I. (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 168-194.

Preziosi, D. and Hitchcock, L. A. *Aegean Art and Architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Riedweg, C. *Pythagoras*. [Trans. S. Rendall; German original: 2002] New York: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Rutherford, I. 'Singing the Myth: Pindar,' in *A Companion to Greek Mythology*. K. and Livingstone, N. (eds.). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 109-124.

Scodel, R. 'Bardic Performance and Oral Tradition in Homer,' *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 119, No. 2, 1998, pp. 171-194.

Scodel, R. 'The Story Teller and His Audience,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*. Fowler, R. (ed.). Cambridge, 2004, pp. 45-58.

Seaford, R. 'Immortality, Salvation and the Elements,' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 90, 1986, pp. 1-26.

Seaford, R. *Reciprocity and ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-state.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Seaford, R. 'Mystic Light in Aeschylus' Bassarai,' *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 2, 2005, pp. 602-606.

Seaford, R. *Cosmology and the Polis: the Social Construction of Space and Time in the Tragedies of Aeschylus.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Segal, G. *Orpheus: The Myth of the Poet*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Segal, G. *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the 'Odyssey.'* New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Snell, B. *The Discovery of the Mind: in Greek Philosophy and Literature*. [Trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer; German original: 1953] New York: Dover, 1982.

Sourvinou-Inwood, C. *'Reading' Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Sourvinou-Inwood, C. *'Reading' Greek Death To the End of the Classical Period*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Thomas, R. 'The Place of the Poet in Archaic Society,' in A. Powell (ed.) *The Greek World*. London, 1995, pp. 104-129.

Ustinova, Y. *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind: Descending Underground in the Search for Ultimate Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Vernant, J. P. *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*. [Trans. Janet Lloyd; French original: 1974] Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980.

Vernant, J. P. *Myth and Thought Among the Greeks*. [Trans. Routledge & Kegan Paul; French original: 1965] London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.

Walker, H. J. *Theseus and Athens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Warden, J. (ed.) *Orpheus: the Metamorphosis of a Myth*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

West, M. L. *The Orphic Poems*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1983.

West, M. L. *Theogony and Works and Days*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

West, M. L. *Studies in Aeschylus*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1990.

West, M. L. '*Odyssey* and *Argonautica*,' *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2005, pp. 39-64.

Wilson, P. 'Thamyris the Thracian: the Archetypal Wandering poet?' in *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture.* Hunter, R and Rutherford, I. (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 46-79.

Winkelman, M. 'Shamanism as the Original Nuerotheology,' in *Zygon,* Vol. 39, No. 1, 2004, pp. 193-217.

Zeruneith, K. *The Wooden Horse: the Liberation of the Western Mind from Odysseus to Socrates*. New York: The Overlook Press, 2007.

Zhmud, L., Windle, K., Ireland, R., *Pythagoras and the Early Pythagoreans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Appendix - Illustrations

Figure 1. Orpheus among Thracian men. Athenian Red-figure pelike. 450-400BCE, British Museum E390. CVA 215217.

Figure 2. Orpheus pursued by Thracian women. Athenian Red-figure pelike. 475-425BCE, British Museum E301. CVA 215217.

Figure 3. Head of Orpheus. Athenian Red-figure hydria. 475-425BCE, Basel, Antikenmuseum BS481. CVA 3735.

Figure 4. Head of Orpheus giving 'dictation.' Athenian Red-figure 450-400BCE, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College: 103.25. CVA 250142.

Figure 5. Lyre player and sirens. Athenian Black-figure 600-550BCE, Heidelberg, Ruprecht-Karls-Universitat: 68.1. CVA 2434.

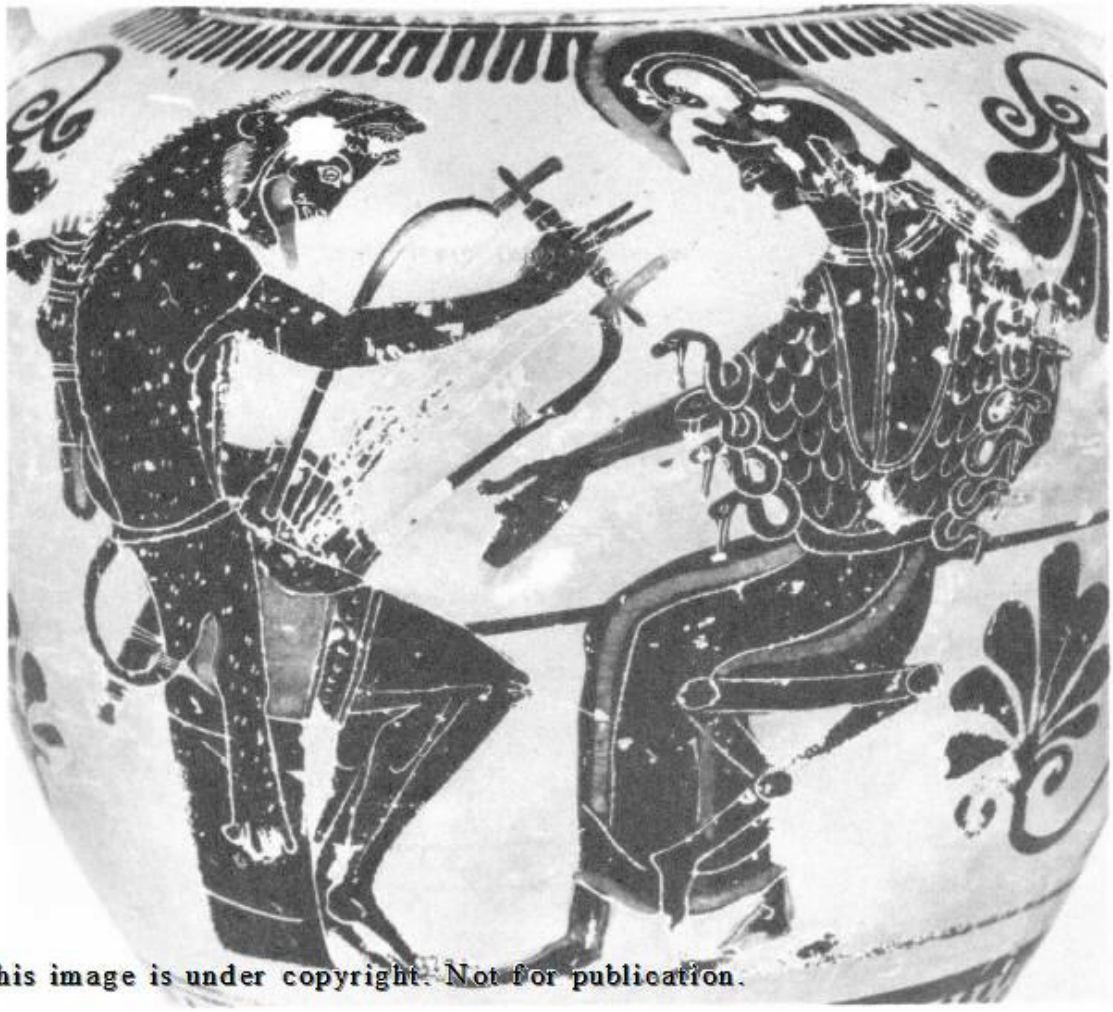

Figure 6. Herakles with lyre and Athena. Athenian Black-figure 550-500BCE, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum: V214. CVA 303469.

Figure 7. Lyre-player, Pylos throne room. Fresco 14-1200BCE. Trifilias Museum, Pylos.