

EURIPIDES FR. 912 N<sup>2</sup> (INC. FAB.)\*

σοὶ τῷ πάντων μεδέοντι χλόην  
 πελανόν τε φέρω, Ζεὺς εἴθ' Ἄδης  
 ὀνομαζόμενος στέργεις· σὺ δέ μοι  
 θυσίαν ἄπυρον παγκαρπείας  
 5 δέξαι πλήρη προχυταίαν.  
 σὺ γὰρ ἔν τε θεοῖς τοῖς οὐρανίδαῖς  
 σχῆπτρον τὸ Διὸς μεταχειρίζεις  
 χθονίων θ' Ἄδη μετέχεις ἀρχῆς.  
 πέμψον δ' ἐς φῶς ψυχὰς ἐνέρων  
 10 τοῖς βουλομένοις ἄθλους προμαθεῖν  
 πόθεν ἔβλαστον, τίς ῥίζα κακῶν,  
 τίνι δεῖ μακάρων ἐκθυσάμενους  
 εὐρεῖν μόχθων ἀνάπαυλαν.

[1-13] Clem. Alex. Strom. V 70,2 πάνυ θαυμαστῶς ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς φιλόσοφος Εὐριπίδης τοῖς προειρημένοις ἡμῖν συνωδὸς διὰ τούτων εὐρίσκεται, πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἅμα οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως αἰνισσόμενος· σοὶ — προχυταίαν. ὀλοκάρπωμα γὰρ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἄπορον (ἄπυρον Valckenaer Diatr. [1767] p. 44 B) θῦμα ὁ Χριστός. καὶ ὅτι τὸν σωτῆρα αὐτὸν οὐκ εἰδῶς λέγει, σαφές ποιήσει ἐπάγων· σὺ γὰρ — ἀρχῆς. ἔπειτα ἀντικρυς λέγει· πέμψον — ἀνάπαυλαν. [1-3] Sat. Vit. Eur. fr. 37 col. iii 9 σο[ι] — ὀνομ[ά]ζην, ἀκριβῶς ὄλως περιεῖληφεν τὸν Ἀναξ[α]γόρειον [Διά]κοσμον (59 A 20c D. - K.) [ἔπεσι] τρισὶν περι[ιών] (suppl. Diels). καὶ ἄλλη κτλ. (sequitur Eur. Tr. 886).

1 χλόην Sat. (coniecera Bergk): χοήν Clem. 2 φέρ[ω] Sat. (coniecera Grotius Exc. [1626] p. 431):-ων Clem. εἴθ' Dindorf: εἴτ' Clem.: εἰ[.] Sat. 3 ὀνομαζόμενος στέργεις; Clem.: ὀνομ[.]ζην Sat. 4 ἄπυρον Abresch, Animadv. ad Aesch. [1743] p. 256: ἄπορον cod. παγκαρπείας Grotius:-πίας cod. cf. Soph. fr. 398.3 R. 5 προχυταίαν Heath, Notae...ad Eur. [1762] p. 185: ἄ-ταίαν cod.: προχυθεῖσαν Valkenaer p. 42 C ('paulo forsan audacius') vid. LSJ s.v. προχυταῖος et H. - R. Schwyzer, Gnom. 37 (1965) 486<sup>b</sup> 7 μεταχειρίζεις Herwerden, Exerc. crit. [1862] p. 67: -ζων cod. 8 θ' Sylburg [1592] p. 248, 31: δ' cod. 9 δ' ἐς Nauck, Eur. Stud. ii (1862) p. 151 (cf. Mél. Gr.-R. 3, 1874, 337 sq.): μὲν cod. ἐνέρων Nauck: ἀν- cod. 10 προμαθεῖν Grotius: προσμ- cod. 12 τίνι δεῖ Grotius: τίνα δὴ cod. cf. Strab. VI 2,11 ἐκθύσασθαι...καταχθονίοις θεοῖς ἐκθυσάμενους Valckenaer ad Hdt. VI 91 (ed. Wesseling [1763] p. 480): -οις cod.

\* I present a new text with apparatus. I am grateful to Dr. Colin Austin for his generous help.



The fragment quoted above has come down to us through Clement; the first three lines are also quoted by Satyrus in his *Life of Euripides*<sup>1</sup>. It describes a ritual act by which appeal is made to an unnamed god to send up the souls of the departed to give information and advice to those on earth who are experiencing conflicts and distress.

Clement and Satyrus quote the fragment in order to support different arguments: the former argues that Euripides was a precursor of Christian religion as he is identifying the Father with the Son, the Saviour; the latter argues for the influence of Anaxagoras upon Euripides and he quotes the beginning of *fr.* 912 N<sup>2</sup> along with *E. fr.* 593 N<sup>2</sup> (*Pirithous*)<sup>2</sup> and *Tr.* 866. These quotations comprise, in Satyrus' opinion, the Anaxagorean cosmic system.

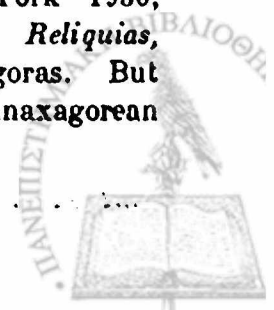
The influence of Anaxagoras upon Euripides has been discussed by several scholars who reached the conclusion that we find little evidence of it in his existing plays and fragments<sup>3</sup>. Satyrus apparently connected the universal deity addressed in this fragment with Anaxagoras' Mind which governs the Universe. In the quotation which precedes *fr.* 912 in the Papyrus (*fr.* 593) we probably find an echo of Anaxagoras' theory of Mind<sup>4</sup>. But the *Pirithous* is generally considered a spurious play. In what follows *fr.* 912 in the Papyrus Satyrus states that the poet *καὶ ἄλλη γέ / πη διαπορεῖ / τί πότ' ἐστὶ / τὸ*

1. *P. Oxy.* IX, 1912, no. 1176; see also the latest edition by G. Arrighetti, *Satiro. Vita di Euripide (Studi Classici e Orientali 13)* Pisa 1964.

2. *Fr.* 912 has been attributed to the *Kretes* or to the *Pirithous*, see J.U. Powell - E. A. Barber, *New Chapters in the History of Greek Literature*, Oxford 1921, 149 f., R. Cantarella, *Euripide I Cretesi*, Milano 1964, 89f., Arrighetti, *op. cit.*, 109f. For the number of Satyrus' quotations in *fr.* 37 of the Papyrus see Arrighetti, *loc. cit.*

3. U. von Wilamowitz - Moellendorff, *Analecta Euripidea*, Berlin 1875, 163ff. and *Euripides Herakles I*, Göttingen 1895, 26, P. Decharme, *REG* 2 (1889) 234-44, L. Parmentier, *Euripide et Anaxagore, Mém. Couronnés et autres Mém.*, Acad. Roy. de Belgique 47 (1892-93), especially 4-5, 65, W. Nestle, *Euripides. Der Dichter der griechischen Aufklärung*, Stuttgart 1901, *passim*, E. Rohde, *Psyche* (trans. by W. B. Hillis), 1925, 435 f., P. Masqueray, *Euripide et ses idées*, Paris 1908, 197, W.N. Bates, *Euripides. A Student of Human Nature*, New York 1930, 7ff.; L. C. Valckenaer [*Diatribes in Euripidis Perditorum Dramatum Reliquias*, Lugd. Bat. 1767] had already regarded *fr.* 912 as influenced by Anaxagoras. But Parmentier, *op. cit.*, 3, found Valckenaer's investigation of the Anaxagorean tenets in Euripides rather oversimplified.

4. See Masqueray, *op. cit.*, 197 n. 1, Parmentier, *op. cit.*, 74.



προεστη- /κός τῶν οὐρα- /νίων and he quotes E. *Tr.* 886<sup>1</sup>. The biographer in regard to Euripides presents the poet sceptical towards the traditional Greek beliefs about the divinity<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, Euripides often applies a rational and philosophical meaning to the name of Zeus (mainly identical to the αἰθήρ)<sup>3</sup>. The unknown god addressed in our fragment might have been conceived of as the one God, the all-controlling power, the philosophical god of Euripides.

R. Wünsch<sup>4</sup> classified the fragment under examination among the anapaestic hymns of Euripides «mit philosophischem, namentlich physikalischem Einschlag»<sup>5</sup>. Evidently he regarded the god addressed as a unitary cosmic power; this is in accordance with Satyrus' philosophical interpretation of the passage. For the present, we may note that in the fragments cited by Wünsch (n. 5) we clearly discern a mention of some parts of the Universe, in particular of the *aither* which plays a central role in Pre-Socratic natural philosophy<sup>6</sup>. *Fr.* 912 lacks a similar mention.

Before we discuss Clement's view (see above p. 210) it is necessary to comment on the invocation to the god. In Greek prayers the correct invocation to the god (γνώσις ὀνόματος) was of specific importance<sup>7</sup>; this is also characteristic of magical invocations<sup>8</sup>. Sometimes the god is not mentioned by name but he is identified by epithets or by his parentage. Another way of addressing him is the use of a summarising term «ὅστις ποτ' εἴ σύ»<sup>9</sup>. In Hecuba's philosophical prayer to Zeus at *Tr.* 884 ff. we have various alternatives listed and we find the use of a summarising term<sup>10</sup>. Here Zeus is identical to the αἴθρ and

1. For the influence of Pre-Socratic speculation on Hecuba's prayer see K. H. Lee, *Euripides Troades* (1976) *ad loc.*, Parmentier, *op. cit.*, 72, Wilamowitz, *Analecta*, 163, Nestle, *op. cit.*, 50 with H. Diels, *RhM* 42 (1887) 12f., Masqueray, *op. cit.*, 188f.; here the αἴθρ of Diogenes of Apollonia is equated with Anaxagoras' Νοῦς. Diogenes applied the names god and Zeus to the air, this 'eternal and immortal body' which pervades everything and rules over everything, see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion. Archaic and Classical* (transl. by J. Raffan), 1985, 319.

2. See Arrighetti, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 210) 110.

3. See Parmentier, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 68f.

4. *RE* IX.1, s.v. *Hymnos*, 163.

5. These are *fr.* 593, 594, 839 and 1023 N<sup>2</sup>.

6. For the Pre-Socratic cosmic theology and its reproduction by Euripides see Burkert, *op. cit.*, 317-20.

7. See E. Fraenkel on A. A. 160 and Lee on E. *Tr.* 884-8.

8. See K. Keyssner, *Gottesvorstellung und Lebensauffassung im griechischen Hymnus*, Stuttgart 1932, 46.

9. See Fraenkel on A. A. *loc. cit.*

10. See Lee *ad loc.*



the Νοῦς; he is the supreme being who orders mortal affairs<sup>1</sup>. In *fr.* 912 the god is addressed as πάντων μεδέων, Ζεὺς εἴθ' Ἄδης / ὀνομαζόμενος στέργεις<sup>2</sup>; on this cf. Plato, *Crat.* 400e ὡσπερ ἐν εὐχαῖς νόμος ἐστὶν ἡμῖν εὐχεσθαι, οἵτινες τε καὶ ὀπόθεν χαίρουσιν ὀνομαζόμενοι... and P IV 1610 (*PGM* I, p. 124) ἐπικαλοῦμαι σου τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ μεγάλα καὶ κρυπτὰ ὀνόματα, οἷς χαίρεις ἀκούων. Cf. also E. *Ba.* 275f. Δημήτηρ θεά — / γῆ δ' ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ' ὀπότερον βούλῃ κάλει, with Dodds *ad loc.*<sup>3</sup>: «In cult Demeter and Ge were always distinct, though in many respects parallel. For the indifference as to names cf. Aesch. *PV.* 209f. Θέμις / καὶ Γαῖα, πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφή μία». The god addressed as Ζεὺς εἴθ' Ἄδης is strictly neither Zeus nor Hades<sup>4</sup>; nor is he the personification of any physical element. He is defined at ll. 6-8: he is the king among the gods of Heaven handling Zeus' sceptre and shares with Hades the kingdom of the nether powers. He is a supreme being. Clement speaks of the Father and the Son who are one God (this is how he interprets ll. 1-3), who was ὀλοκάρπωμα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν like Jesus (he refers to l. 4 where L's reading is θυσίαν ἄπορον); commenting, finally, on ll. 6-8 Clement believed that Euripides alludes to the Saviour.

In discussing our fragment, J. Harrison refers to Clement's interpretation which she expands as follows<sup>5</sup>: before Euripides, Orpheus divined the same truth, only he gave to his Father and Son the name of Bacchos and to the Son in particular the title of Zagreus. This leads to the myth of the infant-god who was destined to be the successor of his Father Zeus and was dismembered by the Titans (cf. Clement's comment: ὀλοκάρπωμα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). In Harrison's opinion, the god invoked in this fragment is a monotheistic divinity, half Zeus, half Hades, wholly Ploutos. This, however, appears to be rather confusing. Evidently the unnamed god is not assimilated to Ploutos here who is only a chthonic god (cf. ll. 6-8). Apart from Harrison, several

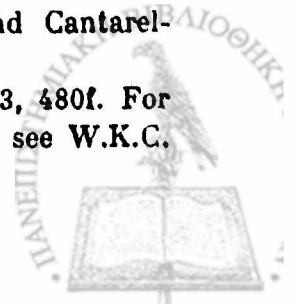
1. See Lee *ad loc.*

2. For the use of εἴτε...εἴτε or ὀπότερον ...ῆ in invocations see Keyssner, *op. cit.*, 47 (the γνῶσις ὀνόματος).

3. For a philosophical interpretation of *Ba.* 274-85 see Dodds *ad loc.*, Nestle, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 81f., Masqueray, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 198.

4. Nor Zeus=Hades as Mette, *Lustrum* 23-24 (1981-82) 168 and Cantarella, *op. cit.* (n. 2, p. 210) 89 believed.

5. *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Cambridge 1903, 480f. For the resemblances and differences between Christianity and Orphism see W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, London 1952, 267ff.





other scholars have regarded the fragment as Orphic. Masqueray<sup>1</sup> points out that we have a direct allusion to the Orphic mysteries and to the Orphic god Zagreus. Nevertheless, he did not furnish any evidence to advance his view. I.M. Linforth offers a good discussion of the Orphic mysteries and rites<sup>2</sup>: they were believed to procure remission of sins and to secure happiness after death, or to provide cures of disease and methods of averting divine wrath<sup>3</sup>. The ritual performed in our fragment is related to the souls of the deceased and the realm of the dead; it is a necromantic ritual (see below). Such a ritual is not attested in the Orphic tradition<sup>4</sup>.

Before we discuss the identity of the unnamed god in E. *fr.* 912, it should be noted that the name of Zagreus, whom the Orphics identified with Dionysus and the dismembered by the Titans Divine Child, does not appear in the Orphic Fragments or in the Orphic Hymns or in the references to the myth in the Neoplatonists<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, W. Fauth<sup>6</sup> identifies this unnamed god with Dionysus - Zagreus; in his opinion, he is not entirely identical either with Zeus or with Hades: he is the successor of Zeus (cf. ll. 6-7). Fauth relates E. *fr.* 912 to E. *fr.* 472 N<sup>2</sup> = *fr.* 79 Austin (*Kretes*) in which the chthonic Zeus, Zagreus and Dionysus Bacchos are joined. But opinions vary as to the interpretation of this fragment from the *Kretes*. Several scholars regard it as Orphic<sup>7</sup>. Dodds rejects such an interpretation<sup>8</sup>; in his opinion, this fragment shows Euripides' interest in or-

1. *Op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 196.

2. *The Arts of Orpheus*, Berkeley 1941 (*Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, Arno Press, New York 1973) 38-104, 262 ff., 273 f., 299 f.

3. Magic was not alien to Orphism, see Linforth, *op. cit.*, 137, Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 172, 17.

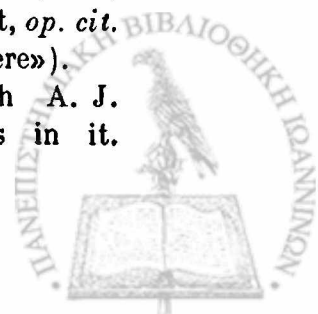
4. The author of the Derveni Papyrus writes about initiates rightly sacrificing to the Erinyes who are really souls, and he makes payment of a penalty a metaphor for the devotees' giving of offerings, which include *χοάς* consisting of *ὑδωρ* and *γάλα* and numerous ritual cakes (*ἀνάριθμα πόπανα*). But these sacrificial rites are concerned with the afterlife; see the publication of the full text in *ZPE* 47 (1982) after p. 300 (Columns I, II), M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems*, Oxford 1983, 78, 81, M. Henry, *TAPhA* 116 (1986) 152.

5. See West, *op. cit.*, 153, Guthrie, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 212) 113, Linforth, *op. cit.*, 310f.

6. *RE* IX A<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *Zagreus*, 2241f.

7. Harrison, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 212) 479f., Masqueray, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 195, L. Méridier, *BAGB* 18 (1928) 28, Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 16, 111 ff., 199, Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 301 («Orphic motifs are probably making themselves felt here»).

8. See *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley 1951, 169 n. 82 with A. J. Festugière, *REG* 49 (1936) 309 f. who distinguishes three separate cults in it.



giastic religion<sup>1</sup>. It describes nocturnal mysteries in Crete. West admits that there is an affinity between Dionysus and Zagreus in E. *fr.* 472, while the rites described must have seemed plausible to his Athenian audience<sup>2</sup>. At all events, the ritual described in it makes the comparison with E. *fr.* 912 rather unfounded. Nestle<sup>3</sup>, who identifies the god of *fr.* 912 with Zagreus, notes, however, that the text we possess does not offer any aid for the interpretation of *fr.* 472.

Euripides' acquaintance with «Orphism» has been discussed by several scholars<sup>4</sup>. West rightly warns<sup>5</sup>: «To say that an idea which we find stated in Pindar or Euripides is Orphic means nothing unless it means that it was derived from a poem or poems bearing Orpheus' name; and even if we know that a given idea occurred in an Orphic poem, we cannot always assume that it originated in or was peculiar to Orphic verse». Be that as it may, in what follows we shall attempt to trace Orphic traits in E. *fr.* 912.

The first three lines (notably τῷ πάντων μεδέοντι, Ζεὺς εἴθ' Ἄδης) point to a concept of monotheism, that is to a god of many functions and many names: this is a principal Orphic idea<sup>6</sup>. The «Orphic» god is generally considered to be Dionysus<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, there is no clear evidence before the third century B.C. that Dionysus was the principal divinity of Orphism<sup>8</sup>. West argues for the association of Orpheus with Dionysiac cult in the Classical Age; the evidence for this consists of literary allusions (Aeschylus, Herodotus, Euripides) and a fifth century bone tablet from Olbia<sup>9</sup>. To these

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Austin *ad loc.* remarks: «poeta varios cultus in unum contraxit». In Linforth's view, *op. cit.* (n. 2, p. 213) 311 n. 4, the name of Zagreus does not bring the fragment into association with Orpheus because it was not a characteristic feature of the Orphic story.

1. See *Euripides Bacchae*, (1960), xlii.

2. See *op. cit.* (n. 4, p. 213) 170.

3. *Op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 142 f.

4. Masqueray, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 193 ff., Nestle, *op. cit.* 13, 142f., Méridier, *art. cit.* (n. 7, p. 213), Guthrie, *op. cit.* 16 f., 199, 237, West, *op. cit.* 16, 112, 174.

5. *Op. cit.* (n. 4, p. 213) 3. The term «Orphic» is misleading; as Linforth points out «the Orphic religion still remains nebulous and ill defined. Perhaps no two persons would agree upon what belongs essentially to it», see *op. cit.*, X.

6. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 251, 207.

7. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 41, 251.

8. See Linforth, *op. cit.*, 53, 133, 207.

9. *Op. cit.*, 15 ff., 260. -



we may add the gold leaf from Hipponion<sup>1</sup>. As Burkert points out<sup>2</sup> «Orphic and Bacchic circles coincide in their concern for burial and the afterlife and probably also in the special myth of Dionysus Zagreus». In the Protogonos and Derveni Theogonies, however, which West dates to the Classical Age, Zeus is the ultimate king<sup>3</sup>. The Derveni Papyrus stops short of the birth of Dionysus.<sup>4</sup> West suggests that in the Derveni poem Kore and Dionysus received instruction about their future destinies as saviours of mankind<sup>5</sup>. But H. Jeanmaire<sup>6</sup> raises the following question: is the Son of Zeus, Dionysus, destined to reign with his Father or will he succeed him when order will be established? In Orphic literature the epithet πάντων μεδέων is applied to Zeus, as we see in the Orph. Fr. 245. 16 (Kern)<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, this epithet also points to a concept of universality, of a god who governs the Universe: this is also an Orphic idea<sup>8</sup>. In the Orphic hymnbook this concept applies to various deities<sup>9</sup>: Helios κοσμοκράτωρ, ἀθάνατος Ζεὺς (Orph. H. 8), Pan κοσμοκράτωρ, ἀληθῆς Ζεὺς (H. 11), Sabazios βασιλεύτατος πάντων (H. 48), Daimon παμβασιλεύς, Ζεὺς μέγας. Outside Orphic literature, the only god who could become an all-embracing god of the Universe, the all-powerful god was Zeus<sup>10</sup> (for magical texts see below). In B. *Dith.* 17(16) 66 he is ὁ πάντων[ν με]δ[έω]ν; in S. *OT* 904 Zeus is πάντ' ἀνάσσων. But Sophocles in the same play makes Helios τὸν πάντων θεῶν θεὸν πρόμον (*OT* 660); as Kamerbeek comments *ad loc.* «the deity invoked is often exalted among his peers».

For the indifference as to the name of the god addressed (Ζεὺς εἴθ' Ἀδης)<sup>11</sup> we may consider Orph. Fr. 239: εἷς Ζεὺς, εἷς Ἀδης, εἷς

1. See H. Lloyd-Jones, «Pindar and the Afterlife» in: *Greek Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy*, Oxford 1990, p. 82 = *Entretiens Hardt* 31 (1985) 249.

2. *Op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 300.

3. *Op. cit.*, 234, 264.

4. See Burkert, *op. cit.*, 298.

5. *Op. cit.*, 94, 100.

6. *Dionysos. Histoire du Culte de Bacchus*, Paris 1951, 414.

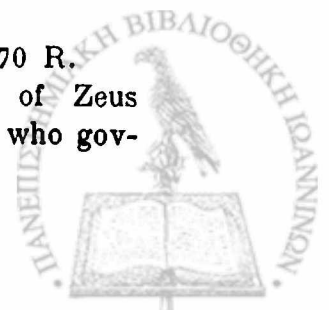
7. In the Derveni Papyrus (Col. XV l. 10) Zeus is called ἀρχὸς ἀπάντων.

8. See Guthrie, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 212) 251.

9. The author(s) of these hymns were probably familiar with earlier Orphic poetry, see Linforth, *op. cit.* (n. 2, p. 213) 188, Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 258, West, *op. cit.* (n. 4, p. 213) 29. Yet there is no reference in them to the Orphic belief in immortality, see Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 259.

10. See Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 131 with A. *Supp.* 524 ff., fr. 70 R.

11. Nestle, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 143, believes that the identification of Zeus with Hades here is Orphic and consequently the unnamed god is Zagreus who gov-



"Ἡλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος, / εἷς θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι; this is said of Helios. At ll. 6-7 of our fragment the god is defined as the king among the heavenly gods handling Zeus' symbol of kingly power, the sceptre. In Orphic literature the royal sceptre is the formal symbol of kingship<sup>1</sup>. In Orphic Theogonies we find a line of kingship running from Phanes or Protogonos, or some other deity, down to Zeus and finally to Dionysus, Zeus' son, see Orph. *Frr.* 101, 107 (Kern, p. 171), 207, 208, 218<sup>2</sup>. These gods held the government of the Universe. For σκῆπτρον μεταχειρίζεις (l. 7) cf. Orph. *Frr.* 101 σκῆπτρον δ' ἀριδείκετον εἶο χέρεσσιν / θῆκε θεῶς Νυκτός, 102 σκῆπτρον ἔχουσ' ἐν χερσὶν ἀριπρεπὲς Ἡρικεπαίου. In the Orphic hymnbook this notion of kingly power applies to various deities who bear the title σκηπτοῦχε, see Orph. *Hs.* 15 (Zeus), 18 (Plouton), 27 (The Mother of the Gods), 52 (Trieterikos = Dionysus), 55 (Aphrodite). Outside Orphic literature the sceptre of Zeus is mentioned at Pi. *fr.* 70b 7 (M.), A. *Pr.* 171, etc.; of particular interest for our investigation is Hes. *fr.* 144.3 (West) in which King Minos is handling Zeus' sceptre.

Before we draw any conclusions about the identity of this unnamed god, it is best to examine the remainder of the invocation. The successor of Zeus shares also with Hades the kingdom of the nether powers (l. 8). G. Zuntz<sup>3</sup> rejects the view that he is Dionysus: «This is a facet of the religious thought - not of some nebulous 'Orphic', but- of Euripides (cf. *Tro.* 886, etc.)». In his opinion the god addressed is a universal deity. He is sceptical about the chthonic connections of Dionysus in the religion and myth of the Classical Age<sup>4</sup> and his equation with Zagreus who was a chthonic deity<sup>5</sup>. In the myth of the Divine Child Dionysus was the son of Zeus and Persephone, the earth goddess, before she was ceded to Hades<sup>6</sup>. The evidence for an «infernal» Dionysus is non-existent; Dionysus is a giver of immor-

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erns the upper and the lower world. On this see below. In fact, the chthonic aspect of Zeus is well established outside Orphic texts, see Hom. *Il.* 9. 457, Hes. *Op.* 465, A. *Supp.* 231, S. *OC* 1606.

1. See West, *op. cit.* (n. 4, p. 213) 231 ff.

2. For the successive generations in the divine dynasty of the Orphic Theogonies see Guthrie, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 212) 82, West, *op. cit.*, 207, 234.

3. *Persephone. Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*, Oxford 1971, 407.

4. *Op. cit.*, 311, 407f., 411.

5. *Op. cit.*, 81, 167. See also L. Moulinier, *Orphée et l'Orphisme à l'Époque Classique*, Paris 1955, 66.

6. See Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 81, 162.



tality and eternal bliss, not a god of the underworld<sup>1</sup>. In discussing the content of the Derveni poem West suggests that the future destiny of Dionysus was to rule in the upper world<sup>2</sup>. He has in fact chthonic connections in the Orphic hymnbook: in *H.* 53 he «sleeps by the house of Persephone», but as a god who returns to the earth every other year<sup>3</sup>; in *Hs.* 29, 30, 52 he is identified with Eubouleus.<sup>4</sup> In *Orph. Fr.* 237, though, Eubouleus is a name for the universal deity personified in the sun-god of late antiquity (cf. *Il.* 3f. ὄν δὴ νῦν καλέουσι Φάνητά τε καὶ Διόνυσον/ Εὐβουλῆά τ' ἄνακτα καὶ Ἀνταύγην ἀρίδηλον)<sup>5</sup>.

Be that as it may, we are not entitled to identify with Dionysus the unnamed god addressed in Euripides' fragment. On the other hand, as noticed above p. 215, the divine monarchs of Orphic Theogonies govern the Universe. This god is defined both as a heavenly and a chthonic god. It is not clear if the epithet πάντων μεδέων does imply that he governs the Universe (see also above p. 211). We are on safer ground if we consider him as a supreme god rather than as a universal one.

In his interpretation of *fr.* 912 Clement (see above p. 212) evidently thought of the Orphic doctrine of palingenesis (connected with the myth of the Divine Child)<sup>6</sup> and the identity of opposites which it implies: of life and death, of Father and Son<sup>7</sup>. The foregoing discussion, however, raises two questions of great importance: first, Has Clement's interpretation any foundation? second, Is the context of the fragment related to the Orphic doctrine about the souls? Let us now concentrate on this point. This fragment reveals a belief in the immortality of souls which was a common Greek speculation adopted by the Orphics, who turned it to their own use in their own way<sup>8</sup>. A prominent feature of Orphism is the concern about the

1. See Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 408 f., 411, Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 167, 293.

2. *Op. cit.* (n. 4, p. 213) 100.

3. See Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 408 and 167 n. 5: this presumably means that he lies there as dead.

4. See Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 310. Eubouleus is another name of the god of the Netherworld; sometimes he is called Zeus Eubouleus, see Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 311.

5. See Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 311.

6. In some form this myth must be as early as the sixth century B. C., see Linforth, *op. cit.* (n. 2, p. 213) 355, Burkert, *op. cit.*, 298, Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 398.

7. See further Guthrie, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 212) 227 f.

8. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 151, Zuntz, *op. cit.*, 271.





afterlife<sup>1</sup>; hence their rites were primarily intended to secure blessedness in life after death<sup>2</sup>.

The text which has come down to us through Clement, shows no hint of the Orphic eschatological beliefs which include the doctrine of the transmigration of souls and also the judgement of the dead, their punishments and rewards, their discrimination in initiated and not initiated, purified and unpurified, just and unjust<sup>3</sup>. In fact, Nestle noticed this<sup>4</sup> and argued that in this fragment we have a conjuration of the souls of the deceased, which dwell in the realm of Hades. Furthermore, in my opinion, this text reveals a common Greek belief that the dead are «blessed», free from worries of earthly life<sup>5</sup>, and also that they are capable of listening to the prayers of those on earth, of helping them and even of appearing as ghostly images before them<sup>6</sup>. In Greek tragedy we find many illustrations of these ideas. In Euripides see *Alc.* 937ff., *HF* 490 ff., *Hec.* 1ff., 534ff., *El.* 677ff., *Heracl.* 593ff., *Tr.* 607, 1304ff., *Or.* 119, 796f.<sup>7</sup> This fragment likewise reveals another Greek common belief that the dead were not entirely cut off from the affairs of the upper world<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, it becomes evident that the poet is here reproducing certain popular beliefs for which no evidence exists that they have been absorbed by the Orphics.

Let us now examine *fr.* 912 from a different point of view. The text we possess recalls the necromantic ritual<sup>9</sup> performed by Atossa

1. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 43.

2. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 159, Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 297, R. Parker, *Miasma*. Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion, Oxford 1983, 286f.

3. On these see Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 156f., 164, 183, Burkert, *op. cit.*, 299f., West, *op. cit.* (n. 4, p. 213) 98f., 100f., Lloyd-Jones, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 215) 86ff., 101f., Parker, *op. cit.*, 286, D.B. Claus, *Toward the Soul*. An Inquiry into the Meaning of ψυχή before Plato, (*Yale Classical Monographs*, 2), New Haven 1981, 120.

4. *Op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 143 n. 122.

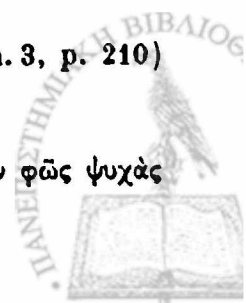
5. See Guthrie, *op. cit.*, 152 with *Ar. fr.* 504 K.-A. and [Plut.] *Mor.* p. 115B (*Arist. Eudem. fr.* 44 R<sup>3</sup>) μακαρίους καὶ εὐδαίμονας εἶναι τοὺς τετελευτηκότας νομίζου, P. Decharme, *Euripide et l'Esprit de son Théâtre*, Paris 1893, 127.

6. See Rohde, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) ch. IX n. 105, Burkert, *op. cit.*, 72, 194f., 199, 203, Claus, *op. cit.*, 66f., J. Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*, Princeton 1983, 73.

7. See Decharme, *op. cit.* (n. 5 above) 125, Masqueray, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 283ff.

8. See Rohde, *op. cit.*, 526.

9. Accepting Nauck's emendation at l. 9; L's reading is πέμψον μὲν φῶς ψυχᾶς ἀνέρω.



and the Chorus at A. *Pers.* 623ff.<sup>1</sup>: the Queen is pouring the libations to the chthonic powers and Darius<sup>2</sup>, while the Chorus are performing the evocation. The god addressed at fr. 912 is asked to send up<sup>3</sup> the spirits of the dead<sup>4</sup> (l. 9, cf. *Pers.* 628 ff. ἀλλά, χθόνιοι δαίμονες ἀγνοί, / Γῆ τε καὶ Ἑρμῆ, βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων, / πέμψατ' ἔνερθεν ψυχὴν ἐς φῶς), to reveal the reason for their conflicts<sup>5</sup> (ll. 10f.) and advise them to which god they must sacrifice<sup>6</sup> in order to secure remedy<sup>7</sup> (ll. 12f.). The necromantic ritual in the *Persae* has a successful outcome. The ghost of Darius appears and explains the reason of their misfortunes (ll. 725ff.) and also advises them about the future, answering the question put by the Chorus (πῶς ἂν ἐκ τούτων ἔτι / πράσσοιμεν ὡς ἄριστα Περσικὸς λεώς; ll. 788ff.). In the necromantic ritual in the *Persae* we have offerings and appeals to the dead, prayers to the mighty deities of the nether world and prophetic utterances<sup>8</sup>. In our fragment we have offerings and a prayer to an unnamed god only, performed by the same person(s)<sup>9</sup>; the offerings are made to him here to procure his favour, because it is under the competence of the

1. For a brief survey of Necromancy see H. D. Broadhead, *The Persae of Aeschylus*, Cambridge 1960, 302-309 (Appendix III); for this particular necromantic scene see also S. Eitrem, *SO* 6 (1928) 1-16.

2. See Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 307.

3. For πέμψον ἐς φῶς as synonymous of the usual expression ἀνιέναι or ἀνάγειν ἐς φῶς in relation to the Underworld see A. Henrichs, «Namenlosigkeit und Euphemismus: Zur Ambivalenz der chthonischen Mächte im attischen Drama» in: *Fragmenta Dramatica*, edited by H. Hofmann - A. Harder, Göttingen 1991, 189f.

4. Probably of the local heroes, see West on E. *Or.* 119-20 (Aris & Phillips 1987), Henrichs, *op. cit.*, 192, Eitrem, *art. cit.*, 14. In the *Persae* Darius himself would tell them the remedy (ll. 631f. εἰ γὰρ τι κακῶν ἄκος οἶδε πλέον, / μόνος ἂν θνητῶν πέρας εἴποι). As Broadhead remarks, *op. cit.*, XXIV «from him alone could salvation come, the ruler who was godlike in counsel and never brought ruinous war to the Persians». See also Eitrem, *art. cit.*, 6 n. 2, 13f.

5. A civil strife? Cf. *Pers.* 715 λοιμοῦ τις ἦλθε σκηπτὸς ἢ στάσις πόλει;

6. Cf. X. *An.* 3. I. 6-7 ἐλθὼν δ' ὁ Ξενοφῶν ἐπήρετο τὸν Ἀπόλλω τίνι ἂν θεῶν θύων καὶ εὐχόμενος κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ἔλθοι τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἐπινοεῖ καὶ καλῶς πράξας σωθεῖη. καὶ ἀνεῖλεν αὐτῶ ὁ Ἀπόλλων θεοῖς οἷς ἔδει θύειν.

7. In E. *Kresphontes* fr. 453 N<sup>2</sup> = 71 A Harder we have a prayer to Eirene on behalf of the city which lives under civil strife; cf. also fr. ad. 1018 (b) *PMG* which is a prayer to the Fates on behalf of the city to send Εὐνομίαν, Δίκαν and Εἰράναν. In both examples the prayer is for remedy.

8. See Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 303.

9. The normal necromantic practice was that the person pouring the libation should also make the appeals, see Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 306.



nether powers to grant that the spirits come up<sup>1</sup>. Thus, what we possess is only a part of a necromantic ritual since it lacks a direct evocation of the spirits<sup>2</sup>. A similar example is A. fr. 273a R (*Psychagogoi*)<sup>3</sup>: here we find an animal sacrifice and an invocation to Chthon, Hermes Chthonios and Zeus Chthonios; this ritual would be performed at an Oracle of the dead.

In the *Persae* ritual the offerings are the regular ones made at the tombs of deceased persons, i.e. drink-offerings and other gifts<sup>4</sup>. Offerings to the dead are also destined for the chthonic gods<sup>5</sup>. Atossa's *χοαί* consist of milk, honey, water and wine; she is also offering *ἐλαίας καρπὸν* (which is either olive oil or an olive branch with berries on it)<sup>6</sup> and *ἄνθη πλεκτά*. A rite of this kind is performed at S. OC 466-92<sup>7</sup>. In our fragment we have a fireless offering too consisting of *χλόη*, *πελανός*<sup>8</sup> and *παγκαρπεία*<sup>9</sup>. Although *χλόη* is the *lectio difficilior* (solid offering), *χοή* (liquid) is also a possible reading (see apparatus). *Χοή*, libation, is outpoured to the dead and the chthonic gods<sup>10</sup>. In A. Ch. 87ff. the offerings of Electra are described as *χοαί*, *πελανός*, *στέφη*. At *Pers.* 524 Atossa spoke of *πελανός* as *δώρημα* to *γῆ τε καὶ φθιτοῖς* in order to win their favour in the hope that things may be better in the future<sup>11</sup>. Finally, we might connect *χλόην* with the *ἄνθη πλεκτά* at A. *Pers.* 618 and the *κλῶνας ἐλαίας* at S. OC 483f. In this case the solid offerings are outpoured as though they had been a libation.

In a ritual as described in our fragment the audience would probably expect the appeal to be made to a chthonic god<sup>12</sup>. Since Zeus chthonios and Hades are excluded (see above p. 212) one naturally

1. See Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 303, Eitrem, *art. cit.* (n. 1, p. 219) 7.

2. Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 302 defines necromancy as the communication with and evocation of departed spirits under certain conditions. Nestle, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 142, 143 n. 122 remarks that in fr. 912 the context does imply «eine Totenbeschwörung».

3. See Henrichs, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 219) 187.

4. See Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 160.

5. See Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 71.

6. See Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 162.

7. See Burkert, *op. cit.*, 71f.

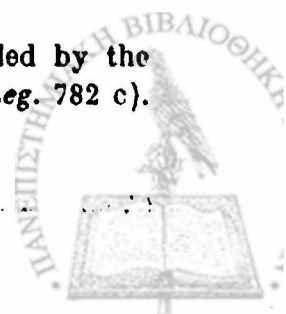
8. For the accentuation see Fraenkel on A. A. 96.

9. One might connect this sacrifice with the vegetarian life led by the Orphics, see Pearson on S. fr. 398 and Orph. *test.* 212 (Kern p. 61=Pl. *Leg.* 782 c).

10. See Burkert, *op. cit.*, 70.

11. See Broadhead, *op. cit.*, 307 n. 1.

12. See above n. 1.



thinks first of all of Hermes chthonios and πομπαῖος, cf. A. *Pers.* 629 Γῆ τε καὶ Ἑρμῆ, βασιλεῦ τ' ἐνέρων, *Ch.* 124a ff. κῆρυξ μέγιστε τῶν ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω / < > Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε, κηρύξας ἐμοὶ / τοὺς γῆς ἔνερθε δαίμονας κλύειν ἐμὰς/εὐχάς... Cf. also A. fr. 273a R, Hom. *Od.* 24.1ff. (the second *nekylia*)<sup>1</sup>. Hermes is a chthonic and a heavenly god, a god of boundaries and of the transgression of boundaries between the living and the dead; he escorts the souls to Hades, while the way back is known by him alone<sup>2</sup>. According to popular beliefs, Hermes is the leader (ἡγεμών) of the souls<sup>3</sup>. At the Anthesteria, during the All Souls' Day (Νύττροι) a service was offered to Hermes alone on behalf of the dead; the gods of the city were excluded, only Dionysus and Hermes were present. Hermes, along with the Earth - Mother, was the intercessor on behalf of the souls of the departed<sup>4</sup>. None the less, in official Greek religion he was never conceived of as a supreme god nor was he addressed as Ζεὺς ἄλλος or Ἄδης ἄλλος. But Hermes belongs to heaven and to the underworld; he might be conceived of as a supreme god according to poetic interests (cf. also Kamerbeek's comment on S. *OT* 660, p. 215 above). As we see in *Hymn. Mag.* 15/16 (*PGM* II, p. 249) this god is addressed as a universal deity: 1. 1 Ἑρμῆ κοσμοκράτωρ, 11. 15f. στοιχείων σὺ κρατεῖς, πυρός, ἀέρος, ὕδατος, αἴης / ἡνία, πηδαλιούχος ἔφυς κόσμοιο ἅπαντος. Harrison<sup>5</sup> associates Hermes with the Agathos Daimon and refers to Photius s.v. Ἑρμῆς πόσεως εἶδος where he is equated with the Agathos Daimon and Zeus Soter.

If one wished to identify the unnamed god addressed in our fragment with Hermes, then the sceptre which he handles might be the equivalent of his magical staff (the ῥάβδος, see e. g. Hom. *Od.* 5. 47) which causes men to sleep or wake<sup>6</sup>; in the Jena lekythos Hermes is illustrated with his magical staff and the kerykeion to summon the

1. See also Henrichs, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 219) 183, Eitrem, *art. cit.*, 9f., 12, Th. Hopfner, *RE* XVI<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *Nekromantie*, 2220.

2. See Burkert, *op. cit.*, 157f.

3. See Th. Hopfner, *OZ* I, Leipzig 1921, § 317-19 with Hom. *Od.* 24.9, Pl. *Phd.* 107d, A. fr. 273a R., Orph. *H.* 57.11.

4. See L.R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Oxford 1921, 345 f., Burkert, *op. cit.*, 240f.

5. See *Themis*. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion, Cambridge 1927, 294.

6. See Burkert, *op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 211) 157. It also secures wealth and protection, like the σκῆπτρον, see Stein, *RE* VIII<sup>1</sup>, s.v. *Hermes*, 760 with *h. Hom.* to Hermes l. 529.



souls from a grave - pithos<sup>1</sup>. It is worth noting here that at Pi. O. 9.33 we read that Hades rules the ghosts with his ῥάβδος. The sceptre which this unnamed god handles might also be taken literally to be the heraldic stick of Hermes, given to him by Zeus<sup>2</sup>; the σκῆπτρον was also borne by heralds, see e. g. Hom. *Il.* 7. 277. Finally, the epithet πάντων μεδέων in the case of Hermes might imply his function as ψυχαγωγός.

Before we close our investigation one further point needs to be made. Necromancy was an essential part of magic<sup>3</sup>. W. Headlam maintains that the necromantic rituals in the *Persae* and E. fr. 912 have the nature of a magical practice<sup>4</sup>. This is rejected by Broadhead<sup>5</sup>, following J.C. Lawson<sup>6</sup>, as far as the ritual in the *Persae* is concerned: there is no trace of magic in the ceremony; Aeschylus conceived of it as a purely religious and not as a magical rite. This is also true of our fragment, which is cast in the form of an ordinary prayer with an *actio sacra*. In E. *Ion* 1048ff. we have a prayer to Hecate which also bears no trace of magic; it has, however, a magical background as it accompanies Creusa's enterprise to kill Ion by magic poison. F. Graf, in surveying some prayers from the Magical Papyri, points out that there is no essential difference between the magical and religious prayer and ritual as far as general structure, content and context are concerned<sup>7</sup>. The main distinction of magic lies in the function of the ritual<sup>8</sup>.

In what follows we shall attempt to trace features from the Magical Papyri in our fragment. The avoidance of the god's name and his description as a supreme deity recall features of magical invocations, see *P XIII* (*PGM II*, p. 122) 762ff., *P XXI* (*PGM II*, p. 146)

1. See Harrison, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 221) 295.

2. It is the *symbolon* of the union of Zeus and Rhea, see C. Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, London 1951, 113.

3. See Hopfner, *RE XVI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *Nekromantie*, 2218 ff., Rhode, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 210) 298, ch. XIV, ii n. 90, Pl. *Leg.* 909 b, J.E. Lowe, *Magic in Greek and Latin Literature*, Oxford 1929, 52, 55f.

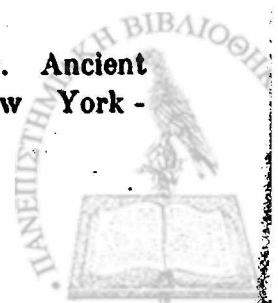
4. *CR* 16(1902) 55; see also Hopfner, *art. cit.* in preceding note, 2222, Lowe, *op. cit.*, 55f.

5. *Op. cit.* (n. 1, p. 219) 305f.

6. *CQ* 28(1934) 82.

7. See «Prayer in Magic and Religious Ritual» in: *Magika Hiera*. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion, edited by C. A. Faraone - D. Obbink, New York - Oxford 1991, 191.

8. See Graf, *op. cit.*, 196.





1ff. In these examples the god appealed to is described as a supreme deity but his name is κρυπτόν and ἄρρητον. Some further examples from the Magical Papyri might illustrate their relation to our fragment. In *Hymn. Mag.* 4 (*PGM* II, p. 239) Helios is addressed by an accumulation of epithets among which are τὸν οὐρανοῦ ἡγεμονῆα / γαίης τε χάεός τε καὶ "Αιδος, δέσποτα κόσμου. Helios is implored ἵν γαίης κευθμῶνα μόλης νεκύων ἐνὶ χώρῳ, / πέμψον δαίμονα τοῦτον <ἐμοί> μεσάταισιν ἐν ὥραις / ...καὶ φρασάτω μοι / ὅσσα θέλω γνώμῃσιν, ἀληθεῖν καταλέξας (ll. 11 ff.)<sup>1</sup>. In a necromantic rite (νεκυοαγωγή) described at P IV 223ff. (*PGM* I, pp.78-80) Typhon is involved<sup>2</sup> ὃν τρέμει γῆ, βυθός, "Αιδης, οὐρανός, ἥλιος, σελήνη, χορὸς ἄστρον ἐπιφανής, σύμπας κόσμος, ὕπερ ὄνομα ῥηθὲν θεοὺς καὶ δαίμονας ἐπ' αὐτὸ βίχ φέρει. In *Hymn. Mag.* 6 (*PGM* II, p. 242) Typhon is invoked as τῆς ἄνω σκηπτουχίας / σκηπτοῦχε καὶ δυνάστα, θεὲ θεῶν, ἄναξ, and in *Hymn. Mag.* 7 (*PGM* II, p. 243) he is addressed as τὸν ἐπουρανίων σκῆπτρον βασιλειον ἔχοντα... Likewise, in *Hymn. Mag.* 18 (*PGM* II, p. 253), ll. 38ff. Hecate, not Zeus, is the successor as lord of the universe<sup>3</sup>. Finally, in the address to a dead man at P LVIII 10ff. (*PGM* II, p. 186) we read: ἐπιτάσσοι σοι ὁ μέγας θεός, ὁ ἔχων ἄνω τὴν κατεξουσίαν καὶ τὸ βασιλειον τῶν νερτέρων θεῶν.

Parallels to the magical passages quoted above can easily be traced in our fragment. The chthonic god who is invoked, is described as a supreme god, but this needs not be taken literally, as the magical texts suggest. On the other hand, Hermes also belongs to the powers which are addressed in magical necromancy<sup>4</sup> (see above, p. 221).

In conclusion it might seem best to regard the fragment as above all a powerful poetic evocation, with magical, philosophical and Orphic connotations<sup>5</sup>.

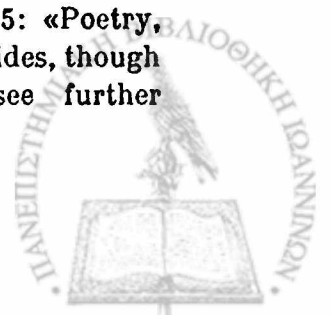
1. Helios is one of the powers which are addressed in magical necromancy, see Hopfner, *art. cit.* (n. 1, p. 221) 2220.

2. Seth - Typhon, the Egyptian god of the dead, is one of the powers which are addressed in magical necromancy, see Hopfner, *loc. cit.* in preceding note.

3. See Graf, *op. cit.*, 190 n. 18.

4. See Hopfner, *loc. cit.*, Lowe, *op. cit.* (n. 3, p. 222) 55.

5. A. M. Dale, *Euripides Alcestis*, Oxford <sup>2</sup>1961 comments on l. 245: «Poetry, old myth, new learning are already inextricably intertwined in Euripides, though here with a light enough touch to avoid noticeable incongruity»; see further Guthrie, *op. cit.* (n. 5, p. 212) 199.



## Π Ε Ρ Ι Λ Η Ψ Η

### ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ ΑΠΟΣΠ. 912 Ν<sup>2</sup>

Τὸ ἀπόσπασμα 912 τοῦ Εὐριπίδη, ἀπὸ ἀγνωστη τραγωδία του, διέσωσε ὁ Κλήμης ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρεια ὁ ὁποῖος ὑποστηρίζει ὅτι ὁ ποιητὴς γίνεται πρόδρομος τῆς Χριστιανικῆς θρησκείας, καθὼς ταυτίζει τὸν Πατέρα μὲ τὸν Υἱό, τὸ Σωτήρα. Τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους στίχους παραθέτει ἐπίσης ὁ Σάτυρος στὸ Βίο τοῦ Εὐριπίδη ὡς παράδειγμα τῆς ἐπίδρασης τοῦ Ἀναξαγόρα στὴ σκέψη τοῦ ποιητῆ. Μεταγενέστεροι μελετητὲς τὸ ἐρμήνευσαν ποικιλοτρόπως:

- α) Ἀπεικονίζει τὴ φιλοσοφικὴ σκέψη τοῦ Εὐριπίδη.
- β) Πρόκειται γιὰ ὀρφικὴ προσευχὴ στὸ Διόνυσο - Ζαγρέα.
- γ) Ἔχει μαγικὸ χαρακτήρα.

Στὴν ἐργασία αὐτὴ ἐπιχειρεῖται μιὰ διεξοδικὴ ἐξέταση τοῦ ἀποσπάσματος, μὲ ἀφετηρία τὶς παραπάνω ἐρμηνεῖες, καθὼς καὶ ἡ βελτίωση τοῦ κειμένου. Τὸ συμπέρασμα εἶναι ὅτι στὸ ἀπόσπασμα αὐτὸ μπορούμε νὰ διακρίνομε στοιχεῖα φιλοσοφίας, ὀρφικῆς διδασκαλίας καὶ μαγείας, ἐφόσον πρόκειται γιὰ ποιητικὴ προσευχὴ. Ὁ θεὸς στὸν ὁποῖο ἀπευθύνεται ἡ προσευχὴ δὲν εἶναι ὁ Διόνυσος - Ζαγρεύς· ἐξετάζεται ἡ περίπτωση τοῦ ψυχαγωγοῦ Ἑρμῆ. Τὸ ἀπόσπασμα περιγράφει μιὰ πράξη νεκρομαντείας μὲ κοινὰ στοιχεῖα ἀπὸ τὴν ἀντίστοιχη σκηνὴ στοὺς Πέρσες τοῦ Αἰσχύλου. Τέλος, οἱ Μαγικοὶ Πάπυροι προσφέρουν πλούσιο ὕλικὸ γιὰ τὴν κατανόηση τοῦ ἀποσπάσματος.

ΜΑΙΡΗ ΜΑΝΤΖΙΟΥ

