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Physiology and Mysticism at Pherai. The Funerary Epigram for Lykophron*

*To the starry heaven,
where my soul will live.*

For historians of religion, a funerary epigram from Pherai dated to the early Hellenistic period¹ has special interest. The text is as follows:

Ζηνὸς ἀπὸ ρίζης μεγάλου Λυκόφρων ὁ Φιλίσκου
δόξῃ, ἀληθεῖαι δὲ ἐκ πυρὸς ἀθανάτου·
καὶ ζῶ ἐν οὐρανίοις ἄστροις ὑπὸ πατρὸς ἀερεῖς·
σῶμα δὲ μητρὸς ἐμῆς μητέρα γῆν κατέχει.

I, Lykophron, the son of Philiskos, seem sprung from the root of great Zeus, but in truth am from the immortal fire; and I live among the heavenly stars uplifted by my father; but the body born of my mother occupies mother-earth.

The main idea of the epigram, that the soul of the dead goes to the astral heaven while the body returns to the earth, that is, the mother, is easy to grasp and it could be argued that this notion is a *standard expression* in funerary epigrams. The purpose of my paper, however, is to show that this idea expresses a specific conception of the nature of the cosmos and of the human soul with its own specific vocabulary.

A full analysis of the text requires examination of the following aspects: 1) the Presocratic physiology-cosmogony underlying it and its function in the context of the epigram; 2) the religious tendencies which emerge and their place in contemporary mystic trends; 3) the language and the techniques used to reinforce the twofold message of the epigram.

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¹ Ed. pr. D.P. THEOCHARIS, *AD* 22 (1967), Chron., p. 297 and ill. 196. *BullEpigr* (1970), 337 and (1974), 309. Also, R. MERKELBACH, "Epigram auf Lykophron von Pherai", *ZPE* 11 (1973), p. 156. Republished by W. PEEK, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften aus Thessalien*, Sitz. Ber. Heidelberger Akad. Wiss., Ph.-Hist. Kl., 1974, Abh. 3, no. 25, p. 27-28 (ill.); *SEG* 28 (1978), 528; B. HELLY, *RPh* (1978), p. 130.

A. Δόξα : Ἀλήθεια = Seeming : Truth

Ἐκ πυρός ἀθανάτου = The Origin of the Soul

Orphic poetry adapted language to fit Orphic mysticism, especially for the purpose of revealing doctrine.² The linguistic style and mode of presentation derived apparently not only from writings on physiology but also from the language of the mysteries and its content was analogous to contemporary mystic doctrine.³ In reconstructing the cosmogony, we have to take into account the role of language, as well as the structure of the epigram, which is based on the principles of dualism and opposition.

δόξηι : ἀληθείαι

Ζηνὸς ἀπὸ ῥίξης μεγάλου : ἐκ πυρὸς ἀθανάτου

ἐν οὐρανίοις ἄστροις : μητέρα γῆν κατέχει

πατρὸς : μητρὸς

ζῶ ἐν οὐρανίοις ἄστροις ὑπὸ πατρὸς ἀερεθείς : σῶμα δὲ μητρὸς ἐμῆς μητέρα γῆν κατέχει

The text contrasts δόξα : ἀλήθεια (*doxa* : *aletheia*), a contrast paralleled in the following texts:

a) The first (the Prooemium) and second part of Parmenides' poem *Περὶ Φύσεως*;⁴ Parmenides' poem which might be titled *The Way of Being* or *The Way of Truth* is divided into three parts: A Prooemium (Fragment 1), that sets the famous contrast between Truth and Opinion (Being and Seeming), a section referred to as *The Way of Truth* or *Aletheia* and a section *The Way of Seeming*;⁵ b) The same contrast is expressed by Xenophanes in the

² See D. GAMBARRA, *Alle fonti della filosofia del linguaggio. 'Lingua' e 'nomi' nella cultura greca arcaica*, Rome, 1984, p. 168-180. Also, A. BERNABÉ, "Una forma ebrionaria de reflexión sobre el lenguaje: la etimología de nombres divinos en los órficos", *Revista española de lingüística* 22 (1992), p. 26-54.

³ W. Burkert has pointed out the important role the commentator of Papyrus Derveni assigned to language by assimilating cosmogony to onomatogony: W. BURKERT, "La Genèse des choses et des mots. Le papyrus de Derveni entre Anaxagore et Cratyle", *EPH* 25 (1970), p. 443-455.

⁴ D-K 1, l. 28-31: *χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι / ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμέος ἦτορ / ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθῆς*. Translation by B. SANDYWELL, *Presocratic Reflexivity: The Construction of Philosophical Discourse c. 600-450 B.C.*, vol. 3, London / New York, 1996, p. 305: "You will learn everything: both the immoveable heart of well-rounded Truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no truly convincing force" and D-K 2: *ἢ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, / πειθοῦς ἔστι κέλευθος (Ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπιθεῖ)*. Translation by B. SANDYWELL, *o.c.*, p. 305: "The first, that says that [It] is, and that it is not possible for [It] not to be – this is the path of true persuasion, for it follows Truth". (G.S. KIRK, J.E. RAVEN, M. SCHOFIELD, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983², p. 288 and 291).

⁵ See SANDYWELL, *o.c.* (n. 4), p. 300 sq.

Fragment on the limitations of human knowledge,⁶ and c) the insistence on ἀλήθεια in the Olbia tablets.⁷ Ἀλήθεια is a catchword for the Orphics of Olbia. It is engraved on the tablets in contrast to Ψεῦδος, but the insistence lies in the Ἀλήθεια, because of its presence three times in these. This emphasis on “the truth” represents the novel doctrine, the truth revealed to the initiates, contrasted with the error in which the rest people live.⁸

In the Pherai-epigram the opposition between *doxa-aletheia* is applicable to the fatherhood of Lykophron. If two fatherhoods, one divine, the other human, have to be matched together, it is often said that the human origin was only believed.⁹ In the Greek literature, this opposition is manifest by the expressions λεγόμενος – γενόμενος,¹⁰ λόγος – γόνος,¹¹ ὁ δοκῶν πατήρ – τὸ ἄψευδές,¹² ταῖς δ’ ἀληθείαις,¹³ and the late, but closest to the Pherai-epigram, τῷ δοκεῖν – τῇ δ’ ἀληθείᾳ.¹⁴

The dual conception of a celestial royal Father and of an earthly great Mother is the religious and pre-philosophical expression, in physical terms, of the primal distinction between incorporeal light and substantial darkness, the opposition between definiteness and indeterminacy.¹⁵ Besides, the Greek

⁶ D-K B 34: καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφές οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἶδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται / εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων· / εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών, / αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται. Translation by SANDYWELL (p. 294): “But as for certain truth, no man has seen it; nor will there ever be a man who knows about the gods and about the things of which I speak. And even if by chance he were to speak the final truth, he himself would nevertheless be aware of it; opinion (seeming) is fixed by fate upon all things” (KIRK-RAVEN-SCHOFIELD, p. 186).

⁷ Olbia tablets, text: L. DUBOIS, *Inscriptions grecques dialectales d’Olbia du Pont*, Genève, 1996, no. 94 with bibliography.

⁸ See M.L. WEST, “The Orphics of Olbia”, *ZPE* 45 (1982), p. 20.

⁹ Cf. *Gospel of Luke*, 3, 23. I would like to express my appreciation to Prof. Dr. D. Zeller, for his kindness to provide me the literary references concerning *doxa-aletheia*.

¹⁰ ISOC., *Hel.*, 18: Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν Θησεύς, ὁ λεγόμενος μὲν Αἰγέως, γενόμενος δ’ ἐκ Ποσειδῶνος.

¹¹ PORPH., *V. Pyth.*, 2: Τινὰς δ’ Ἀπόλλωνος αὐτὸν ἰστορεῖν καὶ Πυθαῖδος τῷ γόνῳ, λόγῳ δὲ Μνησάρχου φησὶν Ἀπολλώνιος; cf. PLUT., *Alex.*, 28, 2: “καὶ πατὴρ δ’ ἐμοῦ προσαγορευομένου”, λέγων τὸν Φίλιππον.

¹² HELIOD., *Aeth.* III, 14, 19-20: πατήρ δὲ τῷ μὲν δοκεῖν προφήτης, τὸ δὲ ἄψευδές Ἑρμῆς.

¹³ STOB., 4, 20b, 74: <Ἀριστῶνος> Ἐφέσιος τῷ γένει νεανίας τῶν ἐπισήμων, υἱὸς Δημοστράτου, ταῖς δ’ ἀληθείαις Ἀρεῶς; *ibid.* 4, 20b, 75: Θησεύς καὶ Αἰθρας παῖς, ταῖς δ’ ἀληθείαις Ποσειδῶνος.

¹⁴ MEN. RHET., III, 370, 21 sq. Spengel: πολλοὶ τῷ μὲν δοκεῖν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰσὶ, τῇ δ’ ἀληθείᾳ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πέμπονται καὶ εἰσὶν ἀπόρροιαὶ ὄντως τοῦ κρείττονος.

¹⁵ See G.E.R. LLOYD, *Polarity and Analogy*, Cambridge, 1966, esp. ch. II: “The analysis of different modes of opposition”, p. 86 sq. and “Imagery in Cosmological Theories”, p. 232-247. In general, P.F.M. FONTAINE, *The Light and the Dark. A Cultural History of Dualism*. Vol 1. *Dualism in the Archaic and Early Classical Periods of Greek History*, Amsterdam, 1986; *id.*, *The Light and the Dark. A Cultural History of Dualism*. Vol IV. *Dualism in the Ancient Middle East*, Amsterdam, 1989, p. 46-50, concerning the life after

view of death is essentially dualistic, as revealed in Greek epitaphs: the *body* (σῶμα) is separated from the *soul* (ψυχή) by death.¹⁶

In this epigram, the deceased Lykophron emphasizes his paternal origin, in particular the divine one, corresponding to the immortal fire. The dead man confesses that his real origin is from πῦρ ἀθάνατον (immortal fire), which functions as his father, as a natural person, and not Ζηνὸς ἀπὸ ῥίξης (Zeus); this sounds rationalistic.¹⁷ Zeus is the effective principle. The fire comes from him, and this element represents spiritual-material substance, generally and specifically. Merkelbach saw a change in traditional beliefs in both of the two couplets. He thinks that this Lykophron was likely from the family of the tyrants of Pherai, Jason and Lykophron, and therefore διογενής. In Greek mythology, many heroes are named after their human fathers, but are actually sons of Zeus. In this funerary epigram, Lykophron, the son of Philiskos,¹⁸ a "heroized" mortal,¹⁹ is δόξει [διογενής];²⁰ in reality, he takes his origin from the ἀθάνατον πῦρ, that is the Aether. Merkelbach is basically right as to the δόξα: there was some family genealogy, where Zeus was regarded as ancestor, which is replaced by the "true", the physical-mystical interpretation.

Pherecydes of Syros, the reputed teacher of Pythagoras and the first person to write a prose treatise περὶ φύσεως, is one of the μεμιγμένοι θεολόγοι,²¹ who employed "physiological" conceptual apparatus and argumentation: Chronos, Zas and Chthonie = Earth. In Pherecydes, Zas for Zeus is the aethereal warmth, the principle of light and life.

death in Egypt. Cf. A.L. PIERRIS, "Origin and Nature of Early Pythagorean Cosmogony", in K.I. BOUDOURIS (ed.), *Pythagorean Philosophy*, Athens, International Center for Greek Philosophy and Culture, 1992, p. 133 sq.

¹⁶ R. LATTIMORE, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*, Urbana Ill., 1942, p. 21. See F.D. MILLER Jr., "Philosophical Themes in Early Greek Grave Inscriptions", in *XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina, Roma, 18-24 Settembre 1997, Atti I*, Roma, 1999, p. 191-198, who considers the epitaph epigram for the Athenian dead at Poteidaia in 432 as the earliest statement of metaphysical dualism. On this epitaph epigram see *infra*.

¹⁷ See PEEK, *o.c.* (n. 1).

¹⁸ The name Philiskos is evidenced at Demetrias, see B. HELLY, *Gonnoi II*, Amsterdam, 1973, no. 11; also, at Gyrtion (inscription from Thaumakoi), *BullEpigr* (1973), 235 and at Echinos, *BullEpigr* (1973), 238.

¹⁹ On the heroization of a dead (ἀφρωῖεν) during the Hellenistic period, see L. FARNELL, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Oxford, 1921, p. 343-344; W. BURKERT, *Greek Religion*, Oxford, 1985, p. 206; F. GRAF, *Nordionische Kulte*, Rome, 1985, p. 127 sq.; W. SPEYER, "Herös", *RAC* 14 (1988), p. 868-869.

²⁰ The divine fatherhood is not a necessary condition for a mortal's heroizing: BURKERT, *o.c.*, n. 43, of p. 207 and GRAF, *o.c.*, n. 43, of p. 128 and n. 55.

²¹ ARIST., *Metaph.*, 1091 b 8 (A 7).

Ζᾶς (Ζῆς) emphasizes the connection with ζῶ, ζῶω, ζάω, ζήω. Ζάντος evokes ζῶντος.²² Noteworthy in the epigram for Lykophron is the verb ζῶ, clearly referring to Zeus etymologically but also denoting the rebirth of the dead in its semantic context. The author clearly found it congenial to use etymology as a hermeneutic tool to reveal the nature of the divine (Zeus), instead of employing the noun ψυχή. The use of the genitive Ζηνὸς by the writer of the epigram, instead of Διός, reinforces our argument. This is paralleled to the genitive Ζηνὸς used by Heraclitus, fr. 32 D-K. The connection, substantial and etymological, of Zeus with life was widespread in philosophical authors.²³ Ζᾶς, as life spirit and celestial king, is the aethereal principle.²⁴

According to Hippocrates, what is called *hot*, θερμόν, is *immortal*, ἄθνατον, and this is the *aether*-αἰθέρα.²⁵ The idea that the soul may be fire or aether must have helped to determine the choice of fire as the controlling form of matter. Fire is an archetypal form of matter and in the early fifth century Heraclitus provided an exemplary description of the deity: it is the πῦρ αἰζῶον, "fire that lives for all eternity."²⁶ The pure cosmic fire was identified by Heraclitus with αἰθήρ (aether), the brilliant fiery stuff which fills the shining sky and surrounds the world; this aether was widely regarded both as divine and as a place of souls.

In Meijer's view, the ordering *archè* (principle) fire constitutes for Heraclitus what is called the *ontic prius*, i.e. that principle or principles which *precede* all else either cosmogonically or cosmologically. Heraclitus calls Zeus "the one Wise" (in fr. 32 D-K) and seems to mean that fire can be called Zeus in a certain sense, thereby momentarily giving the concept of god

²² EM s.v. ζῶη (413. 37) gives ζάω-ζῶ, ζάντος-ζῶντος. Comp. also the epigram on Zeus' tomb ascribed to Pythagoras: PORPH., V. *Pyth.*, 17: "Πυθαγόρας τῷ Διί" / ὧδε θανὼν κεῖται Ζάν, ὃν Δία κυκλήσκουσιν. See H. THESLEFF (ed.), *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic period*, Åbo, 1965, p. 174.

²³ E.g. PLATO, *Crat.*, 396a-b; the Stoics, DIOG. LAERT., VII, 147; AR. DID., fr. 29 Diels; DOX. GR., 464. 28; CORNUTUS, *Theol. Graec.*, 2, p. 3. 3 Lang.

²⁴ HERMEIAS, *Irrisio Gent. Phil.*, 6, p. 18 Otto; PROBUS ad VERGIL., *Bucol.* VI, 31.

²⁵ HIPPOCR., *de carnib.*, 2 (*Opera Omnia* Littré, VIII, 584) = apud DIOG. OF APOLLONIA, in: H. DIELS - W. KRANZ, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, II, C 3 (VS): δοκέει δέ μοι ὁ καλέομεν θερμόν, ἄθνατόν τε εἶναι καὶ νοέειν πάντα καὶ ὄρῃν καὶ ἀκούειν καὶ εἰδέναι πάντα, ἔοντα τε καὶ ἐσόμενα. τοῦτο οὖν τὸ πλεῖστον, ὅτε ἐταράχθη ἅπαντα, ἐξεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν ἀνωτάτω περιφορὴν καὶ αὐτὸ μοι δοκέει αἰθέρα τοῖς παλαιοῖς εἰρῆσθαι, "What we call 'hot' seems to me to be immortal and to apprehend all things and to see and hear and know all things, both present and future. This, then, the most of all, when all things became confused, went out to the furthestmost sphere, and seems to me to have been what was called aether by the men of old". Cf. also EUR., fr. 839, 9 sq.; fr. 941 (Nauck²); *id.*, *Hel.*, 1014 sq.; AR., *Pax*, 832 sq.

²⁶ FR. 30 D-K = KIRK-RAVEN-SCHOFIELD, o.c. (n. 4), 220 of p. 498: κόσμον τόνδε τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπάντων οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἦν αἰεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται πῦρ αἰζῶον, ἀπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.

physical form and placing it on the same level as the *ontic prius*.²⁷ Physiology and mystical vision appear to be integrated in Heraclitus. It has been argued by Seaford that the content of Heraclitus' philosophy was related to and derived from the Orphic mysteries, on the basis mainly of its link with the Olbia bone plate, as far as the soul-death-immortality conception is concerned.²⁸

Diogenes of Apollonia held that the soul was warm air, which seems related to the view of soul as aether or fire: ἀήρ... μόνιον τοῦ θεοῦ: "air... is a small portion of the god".²⁹ Diogenes of Apollonia turned the νοῦς into ἀήρ, thus elevating it into a deity (fr. 5 D-K). In this way, the concept of god is simply adapted to the materialistic theory by giving it physical form. The *ontic prius* and the deity come here very close to one another, closer than we shall find again in Greek philosophy for many years to come. Even Heraclitus had dared to tread the same path, that of giving the deity physical form. In the νόησις (intellect) we find a personalized element which makes it perfectly suitable to call the ἀήρ θεός. Aether is identified with fire in Anaxagoras, too.³⁰

Scholars have noted that a funerary epigram for the Athenian dead at Poteidaia (432/1 B. C.), found near the entrance to the Academy, now in the British Museum I 37, which contains the striking verse L. 6: αἰθέρ μ' ἐμ' φουχᾶς ὑπεδέχσατο, σόμ[ατα δὲ χθόν]: "Aether received their souls, earth their bodies", is the first monument to use this eschatological motive, highly significant in subsequent decades.³¹

When in funerary epigrams appears the statement "the soul of the deceased dwells in the sky", it does not only mean spiritual ascension, but also the continuation of "real" life by the soul after the death of the body. The opposition between the place of the body's rest (earth, tomb) and that of the soul (sky, stars, Isles of Blessed, the Elysian Fields) is a recurring motif in funerary epigrams.³²

²⁷ P.A. MEIJER, "Philosophers, Intellectuals and Religion in Hellas", in H.S. VERSNEL (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship*, Leiden, Brill, 1981, p. 225.

²⁸ See R. SEAFORD, "Immortality, Salvation, and the Elements", *HSPb* 90 (1986), p. 14-15 sq. and notes 58, 59 for bibliography.

²⁹ DIOG. OF APOLLONIA, in THEOPHR., *de sensu*, 39 sq. (D-K 64 A 19) and in KIRK-RAVEN-SCHOFIELD, *o.c.* (n. 4), p. 444 sq.

³⁰ Fr. 15 D-K = ARIST., *de caelo* A 3, 270 b 24: Ἀναξαγόρας δὲ καταχρῆται τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ οὐ καλῶς· ὀνομάζει γὰρ αἰθέρα ἀντὶ πυρός (= he speaks of aether in place of fire).

³¹ *IG* I³, 1179; also, *IG* I², 945; W. PEEK, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften*, I. *Grab-Epigramme*, Berlin, 1955 (= *GV*, I) 20; *GG*, 12; D.W. BRADDEEN, *The Athenian Agora* XVII, no. 16; Ch. CLAIRMONT, *ZPE* 36 (1979), p. 126-129; *id.*, *Patrios Nomos*, I, 1983, no. 41 and p. 177. See also MILLER, *l.c.* (n. 16), p. 191-198.

³² See the funerary epigram from Corcyra, (3rd or 2nd c. B. C.), PEEK, *GV*, 1978: τεσσαρακονταέτης δὲ πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα / ἤλυθον, ἐν γαίῃ σώμ' ἐμὸν ἐνθεμένη.

In the Pythagorean *Hypomnemata*, as they are transmitted by Alexander Anonymous ("Polyhistor"), a Pythagorean philosopher of the late Hellenistic period, everything existing in the aether is immortal and divine; therefore, since the soul is part of the aether, it is immortal.³³

The Derveni Papyrus,³⁴ although is less close to the Pherai-epigram, deserves attention because it constitutes an important text for the history of Presocratic culture, where the theme of mixture of the primordial cosmogonic elements and their reciprocal relation in the mystery texts of Orphism, like lamella C of Thurii, has already been emphasized by scholars.³⁵ M.L. West has persuasively argued that the commentator of Papyrus Derveni had a vision of the world influenced by Ionic philosophy, as was Diogenes of Apollonia.³⁶ Thus, in Papyrus Derveni Zeus is presented as follows:³⁷

- 1) A) Col. V = B) Col. IX: L. 3 and 5: Ζεύς - πῦρ (Zeus - fire)
- 2) A) Col. IX = B) Col. XIII: L. 1 and 4: Ζεύς - αἰθήρ (Zeus - Aether)
- 3) A) Col. X = B) Col. XIV: L. 1 τὸν λαμπρότατόν τε [καὶ λευκό(τ)ατον (αἰθήρ) (the brightest and whitest aether)
- 4) A) Col. XIII = B) Col. XVII: L. 3- 4, 12: ἄήρ = Ζεύς. (air - Zeus)
Ζεὺς κεφα[λή, Ζεὺς μέσσω]α (Zeus the head, Zeus the middle).
- 5) A) Col. XV = B) Col. XIX: ἄήρ = Ζεύς. (air- Zeus)

The commentary on Orphism in the Derveni Papyrus interprets Zeus as the all-pervading, all-subduing Air; his intelligence (φρόνησις), conceived as

³³ ALEX. POLYH., 273 F 93 Jacoby: (24) φησὶ δὲ ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἐν ταῖς τῶν Φιλοσόφων Διαδοχαῖς καὶ ταῦτα εὐρηκέναι ἐν Πυθαγορικοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν... (26) τὸν τε περὶ τὴν γῆν αἰθέρα... τὸν δὲ ἀνωτάτω ἀεικίνητόν τ' εἶναι καὶ καθαρὸν καὶ ὑγιᾶ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ ἄθανάτα καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θεῖα. (27) ἥλιόν τε καὶ σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀστέρας εἶναι θεοὺς· ἐπικρατεῖ γὰρ τὸ θερμόν ἐν αὐτοῖς, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ζωῆς αἴτιον· καὶ ἀνθρώπων εἶναι πρὸς θεοὺς συγγένειαν κατὰ τὸ μετέχειν ἀνθρώπων θερμοῦ· (28) εἶναι δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπόσπασμα αἰθέρος καὶ τοῦ θερμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ψυχροῦ, ... ἄθανάτον τε εἶναι αὐτήν, ἐπειδήπερ καὶ τὸ ἄφ' οὗπερ ἀπέσπασται ἄθανάτον ἐστὶ.

³⁴ On the Derveni Papyrus see the edition by S.G. KAPSOMENOS, "Ο Ὀρφικός Πάπυρος τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *AD* 19 (1964), p. 17-25 and its translation in German by W. BURKERT, "Orpheus und die Vorsokratiker: Bemerkungen zum Derveni-Papyrus und zur pythagoreischen Zahlenlehre", *A & A* 14 (1968), p. 93-114; also, R. MERKELBACH, "Der orphische Papyrus von Derveni", *ZPE* 1 (1967), p. 77-80; an English translation by L.J. ALDERINK, "Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism", *American Classical Studies* 8 (1981), p. 117-120. Also, the text is published by an anonymous in *ZPE* 47 (1982), p. 1-12. A. LAKS, G.W. MOST (eds.), *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, Oxford, 1997, esp. M.S. FUNGHI, "The Derveni Papyrus", p. 25-37 and D. OBBINK, "Cosmology as Initiation vs. the Critique of Orphic Mysteries", p. 39-54.

³⁵ So e.g. ALDERINK, *l.c.* (n. 34), esp. ch. II: "Cosmological origins in the Orphic myths", p. 25-53; cf. SEAFORD, *l.c.* (n. 28), n. 28.

³⁶ M.L. WEST, *The Orphic Poems*, Oxford, 1983, p. 80-81.

³⁷ A) column of text in: *ZPE* 47 (1982), p. 1-12; B) column of text in LAKS-MOST, *o.c.* (n. 34).

spirit, air in movement, is identified with Orphic Μοῖρα. In Diogenes of Apollonia B 4,³⁸ life, breathing and soul go together.

In Orphism, Aether is identified with the impersonal cosmogonic Zeus. This Zeus-Aether is distinct from the personal Olympian Zeus.³⁹ On this basis, the epigram's phrase Ζηνὸς ἀπὸ ῥίζης μεγάλου must represent the Olympian Zeus, and the expression corresponding ἐκ πυρὸς ἀθανάτου the Zeus-Aether, the immortal fire.

I am inclined to believe that the main concept expressed in this funerary epigram for Lykophron is that the deceased 'Orphic' initiate believes in the astral immortality of the soul.⁴⁰ The ἀλήθεια (= truth) in the epigram for Lykophron means that the soul is immortal fire cognate with the stars of heaven. But the fact remains that the natural philosophers had no atheist intentions. We see this confirmed by the Stoa. Aether is the πῦρ τεχνικόν.⁴¹ But despite the fact that according to the Stoics fire is the first principle and all else comes from it and is carried along by it, the Stoa is full of religious feeling.

B. Ζῶ ἐν οὐρανίοις ἄστροις = The Fate of the Soul

Now, I wish to show how the author of this epigram has combined physiology with a context of eschatology-mystery initiation.

The belief that the soul of the dead is connected with the stars is well established in Greece by the late 5th century;⁴² the "astral eschatology" is first found in Egypt, where the dead are connected with the stars of Orion and Sirius.⁴³ The notion that the Beyond is in the dominion of the stars and that

³⁸ SIMPL., *In Phys.*, 151, 28 sq.

³⁹ OF 21, 21 a, 168, 297; IOANNIS GALENOS, diac. HES., *Theog.* 943 (Gaisford II 604, 3 sq.); PROCLUS, at PLATO, *Tim.* E 41 a (III 208, 29-209, 6 Diehl). See S.G. ANEMOIANI-SINANIDI, *Χῶρος καὶ Χρόνος εἰς τὰ Ὀρφικὰ Ἀποσπάσματα*, Athens, 1978, p. 51-62.

⁴⁰ See W. BURKERT, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1972, ch. IV: "Astronomy and Pythagoreanism, 4. Harmony of the Spheres and Astral Immortality".

⁴¹ The Stoics inherited this theory from Heraclitus and it was typical of their system: KERN, OF 226: ἐκ τοῦ δὴ ψυχὴ ὅλον αἰθέρα ἀλλάσσουσα; OF 228 a: ψυχὴ δ' ἀνθρώποισιν ἀπ' αἰθέρος ἐρρίζωται; OF 228 b: αἶρα δ' ἔλκοντες ψυχὴν θεῖαν δρεπόμεσθα. See M.L. WEST, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, Oxford, 1971, p. 132 sq., p. 150 sq.; id., *Orphic Poems*, cit. (n. 36), p. 222-223. AR. DID., fr. 39. 4 von Arnim (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Leipzig 1903-1905 (SVF), ii 225. 18) = POSEIDONIUS, fr. 351 Theiler; cf. SVF i. iii. 8, ii 191. 39, 217. 17. CHRYSIPP., *Stoic.*, 2, 168 sq. Cf. ARIST., *Mu.*, 392a 5. PEEK, o.c. (n. 1), thinks that this epigram echoes a Stoic doctrine.

⁴² On the astral immortality after death, see: P. CAPELLE, *De luna stellis lacteo orbe animarum sedibus*, Diss. Halle, 1917; E. RHODE, *Psyche. The cult of souls and belief of immortality among the Greeks*. Transl. from the 8th ed. by W. B. HILLIS, London, 1925.

⁴³ R. BAUVAL, A. GILBERT, *The Orion Mystery: Unlocking the Secrets of the Pyramids*, London, 1994: "I fly upwards; I am not of the earth, I am of the sky. I am the essence of a god. My soul is a star of gold" quoted by M.R. WRIGHT, *Cosmology in Antiquity*,

the soul of man came from the sky and will return there some day was widespread before Pythagoras, and it is explicit in the texts particularly in funerary inscriptions, where Pythagorean influence can be seen.⁴⁴

The close relationship of the human soul with the sky and the stars on the one hand and on the other that, on the basis of this notion, the soul comes from the sky and returns to it, is characteristic of Ionian physiology, at least from Heraclitus' and Anaxagoras' time.⁴⁵ For Heraclitus, the soul is composed of fire and survives death. The immortality of the soul is associated in some way with its fiery nature. Moreover, all the various and contradictory ideas about this subject (i.e. of Epicharmus, Alcmeon, Diogenes of Apollonia, Anaxagoras, Parmenides,⁴⁶ Hippasus, Anaximenes) are ascribed by Iamblichus, Aëtius, Maximus Tyrius, and Hippolytus to Pythagoras.⁴⁷

The texts on gold lamellae clearly indicate that, already in the 5th c. B.C., cosmogonic speculation was related to concern about the soul's fate after death. This explains much about the comprehensive world-view of Heraclitus in particular.⁴⁸ The phraseology of some Orphic gold lamellae suggests that the initiate had it in his power to become a god. In lamella C from Thurii (Timpone Grande), where Ls. 5 and 8 refer to fire, earth (Demeter), Zeus, the conception of the next world derives partly from mystic ritual, combining an eschatological myth associated with mysteries with three of the divine elements.⁴⁹ The Orphic initiate becomes by virtue of his knowledge god through his death, signifying not total annihilation but transformation through rebirth, into another level of being. The genealogy of all versions reflects the status of the soul, an advantage for initiates

London/New York, 1995, esp. p. 109-125. Also, FONTAINE, *o.c.* (n. 15), vol. IV, p. 46-50. For the conflation of Egyptian and Orphic elements see R. MERKELBACH, "Die goldenen Totenpässe: ägyptisch, orphisch, bakchisch", *ZPE* 128 (1999), p. 1-13.

⁴⁴ PEEK, *o.c.* (n. 31), 648 (also, in *AE*, 1953-54, B, p. 294-296), with a Pythagorean influence, and 1097, 1776, 1829.

⁴⁵ According to E. PFEIFFER, *Studien zum antiken Sternglauben*, Leipzig, 1916, p. 114, Heraclitus' theory about cosmos owes much to Pythagoras. See also, K.P. MICHAELIDIS, *Mensch und Kosmos in ihrer Zusammengehörigkeit bei den frühen griechischen Denkern*, Nicosia, Cyprus, 1979, p. 69 sq.

⁴⁶ See A.C. CASSIO, "Da Elea a Hipponion e Leontinoi: Lingua di Parmenide e Testi Epigrafici", *ZPE* 113 (1996), p. 14-20.

⁴⁷ The immortality of the soul was one of the basic axioms of the Pythagoreans: DICAERCHUS apud PORPH., *V. Pyth.*, 19 (= 14 A 8a D-K). Cf. also IAMBL., *VP*, 173, 219; AËT., IV. 7, 1; MAXIM. TYRIUS X, 2; HIPPOL., *Haer.* VI, 25. 4. F. CUMONT, *Lux Perpetua*, Paris, 1949, ch. III: "L'immortalité céleste, Les origines orientales et les Pythagoriciens", p. 143 sq. Also, L. ROUGIER, *La religion astrale des Pythagoriciens*, Paris, 1959. For the bibliography on this, J.C. THOM, *The Pythagorean Golden Verses*, Leiden, Brill, 1995, p. 228 and n. 584.

⁴⁸ KIRK-RAVEN-SCHOFIELD, *o.c.* (n. 4), p. 33.

⁴⁹ See ZUNTZ, *Persephone*, Tablet C 5, 8, p. 347-348. R. SEAFORD, "Dionysiac Drama and the Dionysiac Mysteries", *CQ* 31 (1981), p. 254.

demanding special treatment from the gods.⁵⁰ The notion that the dead's soul becomes a star influenced Plato's thought.⁵¹

Initiation connected with knowledge of the fate of the soul occurs particularly in Plato's *Phaedo*. Plato and the Hippocratic tradition, though critical of initiatory technicians, did embrace the language and imagery of initiation as a vehicle for describing philosophical enlightenment.⁵² Plato argued for the immortality of the soul more than any other philosopher. The *Phaedo* 62b attributes the doctrine that men are in a kind of prison to mystic rites, and in the *Cratylus* 400c Plato calls Orphic the view that the body is the soul's prison (φρουρά). At the end of the *Phaedo*, the soul divorced from the demands of the body, will go "to a pure home that is above".⁵³ The destiny of the souls at the end of the *Republic* also receives a cosmic setting, linked with the Pythagorean theory of the "harmony of the spheres". In the *Timaeus*, too, the souls were linked to the sky, each one allotted a "consort star".⁵⁴ These myths which specify a celestial origin and destiny for humanity linked themes from Plato's own philosophy with the more widespread belief that souls, made of air, breath or *pneuma* make their last journey on the death of the body to the upper aether.⁵⁵ In the *Menon*, 81b the rebirth and immortality of the soul echoes an ancient Orphic belief covered by a late Platonic dogma about the soul. The eschatological myths in Plato are certainly "Pythagorean". Shamanistic "knowledge" (γνώσις) about the world and the soul is traced in the most ancient phase of the Pythagorean tradition, the ἀκούσματα.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ ZUNTZ, A 1. 8 (Timpone Piccolo), p. 303: ὀλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔστι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο; A 4. 4 (Timpone Grande), p. 329: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου; esp. A 5. 4 (Rome), p. 333: δῖα γεγῶσα.

⁵¹ In PLATO, *Phdr.*, as it is shown by J. STENZEL, *Kleine Schriften zur griechischen Philosophie*, Darmstadt, 1956, esp. "Über zwei Begriffe der platonischen Mystik: ζῶον und κίνησις" (1914), p. 1 sq., where there is a comparison between PLATO, *Resp.*, 621b with PLUT., *De gen.*, (*Moralia*), 591c-f.

⁵² See OBBINK, *l.c.* (n. 34), p. 53.

⁵³ PLATO, *Phd.*, 62 b: ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐν ἀπορρήτοις λεγόμενος περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος, ὥς ἐν τινὶ φρουρᾷ ἔσμεν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ οὐ δεῖ δὴ ἑαυτὸν ἐκ ταύτης λύειν οὐδ' ἀποδιδράσκειν; *ibid.*, 81a; 114b-c. *Crat.*, 400c. See W. WILI, "The Orphic Mysteries and the Greek Spirit, The Mysteries", in *Papers from The Eranos Yearbooks, Bollingen Series XXX-2*, vol. 2, Pantheon Books, 1955, p. 87-92.

⁵⁴ PLATO, *Tim.*, 41-42b.

⁵⁵ The popular belief that the place of the pre-existence and post-existence of the soul is a star is expressed in later sources: PLIN., II, 8; EUS. ALEX., *de astr.*, 1; ARTEM., V, 23. Comp. CIC., *Somnium Scipionis*, 23, 25; 24, 26; *id.*, *Seneca*, 6, 7, suggested that "humans have been endowed with souls made out of the everlasting fires called stars and constellations" and the way that leads back to these fires, the circuleus lacteus, Milky Way, where a habitation for all eternity". Cf. RHODE, *o.c.* (n. 42), p. 363 sq., p. 463 sq.

⁵⁶ E.g. τί ἐστιν αἱ μακάρων νῆσοι; ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη: ARIST. apud IAMB., *VP*, 82. See SANDYWELL, *o.c.* (n. 4), p. 214 sq.: *The Pythagorean Soul and Metempsychosis*. See also I.G. KALOGERAKOS, *Seele und Unsterblichkeit, Untersuchungen zur Vorsokratik bis Embedokles*,

Euripides offers further evidence for a tradition of astral eschatology. In his *Suppliant Women*, 531-534, read “Let the dead be covered by the earth and whence each part came to light, there let it return – pneuma to aether, the body to earth” and at 1140 the chorus says that “the aether holds now the dead children of Iphis”. Also, in the *Helen*, 1014-1016 say “The mind – nous – of the dead has lived its life, but an immortal power is preserved, once it has entered immortal aether”.⁵⁷ The notion that “when one dies, he becomes a star” is expressed in Aristophanes’ *Pax*, 832-833.⁵⁸

The same conception pervades the funerary epigram for Lykophron. The deceased initiate proclaims that after his death he dwells in the starry sky, uplifted there by his father. In this way, the mortal Lykophron crosses the boundary of the human sphere and is heroized.⁵⁹ This belief about the soul is expressed in a funerary inscription from Phrygia (2nd/3rd c. A.D.): the body of the dead is in his tomb, but his soul lives in the aether of the immortals.⁶⁰ In an epigram about Apollonius of Tyana, a student of Pythagorean doctrines, dated to the 3rd c. A.D., the same notion is expressed: while the body of the deceased (i.e. Apollonius) lay in his tomb at Tyana, in reality, the sky received him.⁶¹ Also, in Greek funerary epigrams as well as in Latin ones,

Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1996, p. 99 sq.: *Pythagoras und die Pythagoreer: Die Seelenwanderungslehre*; also, p. 144 sq.: *Exkurs i: Die Seelenwanderungslehre in Pythagoreismus und Orphik*.

⁵⁷ EUR., *Supp.*, 531-534: ἑάσατ' ἤδη γῇ καλυφθῆναι νεκρούς, / ὅθεν δ' ἕκαστον ἐς τὸ φῶς ἀφίκετο, / ἔνταυθ' ἀπελθεῖν, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα, / τὸ σῶμα δ' ἐς γῆν; 1139-1140: βεβῶσιν, οὐκέτ' εἰσὶν· οἴμοι πάτερ / βεβῶσιν· αἰθὴρ ἔχει νιν ἤδη; *Hel.*, 1014-1016: ὁ νοῦς / τῶν κατθανόντων ζῇ μὲν οὐ, γνῶμην δ' ἔχει / ἀθάνατον εἰς ἀθάνατον αἰθέρ' ἔμπεσών.

⁵⁸ AR., *Pax*, 832-833: οὐκ ἦν ἄρ' οὐδ' ὁ λέγουσι, κατὰ τὸν ἄερα / ὥς ἀστέρες γιγνόμεθ', ὅταν τις ἀποθάνῃ. According to F. CUMONT, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, New Haven, 1922, p. 95, Aristophanes' passage is the most exactly dated Greek evidence about the astral immortality. For other examples see THOM, *o.c.* (n. 47), n. 48, of p. 225 and n. 572.

⁵⁹ Cp. the epitaph epigram from Marseilles, ca. 250 A.D., now in the Museum at Aix, *CIG*, Sic. It., 2461 (KAIBEL, *Epigrammata Graeca*, 650. JACOBS, *AP*, Parart., no. 219), where the dead is self-declared at l. 2: ἐγὼ καλέω σε θεῷ φίλος, οὐκέτι θνητός, “a friend of the god, and not being more a mortal”; and l. 9-12: ἐν δέ [τε] τεθνε[ιω]σιν ὀμηγύρι[ές] γε πέλουσιν/δοιαί, τῶν ἑτέρῃ μὲν ἐπιχθονίη πεφόρηται, / ἡ δ' [ἐτ]έρ[η] τείρεσσι σὺν αἰθερίοισι[ι] χορεύει, / ἥς στρατιῆς εἰς εἰμ[ι], λαχὼν θεὸν ἡγεμονῆα. Two groups of dead-ghosts are differentiated: the first flies around the earth and the second participates in the chorus of the sky-stars; the dead “is member of the second group, driven there by god”. Kaibel rightly discerns an initiation to the Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine (*Phaedrus*). Also, the gold lamella from Petelia, ZUNTZ, *B1*, 11, p. 359: καὶ τότ' ἔπειτ' ἄλλοισι μεθ' ἡρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[ς].

⁶⁰ PEEK, *o.c.* (n. 31), 250: οὐνομά μοι Μενέλαος· ἀτὰρ δέμας ἐνθάδε κεῖται· ψυχὴ δ' ἀθανάτων αἰθέρα ναιετάει.

⁶¹ I thank Prof. Dr. W. Burkert for this information. See C.P. JONES, “An Epigram on Apollonius of Tyana”, *JHS* 100 (1980), 190-194 and plate Ib: [σῶμα τά]φος Τυάνων, τὸ δ' ἐτήτυμον οὐρανὸς αὐτόν/ [δέξασθ' ὅ]πως θνητῶν ἐξελάσιε πόνους. According to PHILOSTRATUS, *V. Apol. Tyana*. VIII 30, Apollonius disappeared from the earth at the temple of Artemis Diktynna in Crete, while a chorus of virgins was singing within: “στεῖχε γὰς, στεῖχε ἐς οὐρανόν, στεῖχε”. οἶον· ἴθι ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἄνω.

the sky is often the residence of the dead, a point of great significance for understanding the second couplet of our epigram.⁶²

In Burkert's view, the notion that "Homeric religion" was followed by a "Pythagorean revolution" is a dangerous over-simplification; but, granted that the mystery cults gave men the hope of escaping death and being joined with the gods, the belief that humans have a divine origin and that with their death they return to the place of their origin easily follows. The initiate aims at τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον μετὰ θεῶν διάγειν.⁶³ The same perception is also expressed in the gold lamellae: θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπων,⁶⁴ as well as καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὖχομαι εἶμεν.⁶⁵ The relationship between gods and sky (θεοὶ οὐρανίωνες - Ζεὺς, *deus, dies*) is, of course, very ancient and obvious. Dionysus, too, and Bacchus are related to the stars. The catchword in the gold lamellae, group B: "son of earth and starry heaven" refers possibly to Dionysus and the stars.⁶⁶

C. Μητέρα γῆν = Mother Earth

Lykophron, in the last verse of the epigram, states that his body is coming from his mother earth and after his death goes back to her (l. 4: σῶμα δὲ μητρός ἐμῆς μητέρα γῆν κατέχει). "Ge Meter" may be taken together as a single entity, "Mother Earth".⁶⁷ This must not characterise his birth mother, but only express that the son receives his earthly existence from her, he is an earthly son from an earthly mother.⁶⁸

The claim that the dead Lykophron's soul makes - "I am the son of Earth and starry Sky" (the last by implication, since ζῶ-πατρός refer to πῦρ but πῦρ = ἄστρῳις) is puzzling in itself, but presupposes a link between the dead person and the early gods.⁶⁹

⁶² LATTIMORE, *o.c.* (n. 16), p. 27, 28, 34, 313-314. Examples cited in: PEEK, *GV*, I, 861, 1112, 1765, 1775, 1777, 1939, 1971, 1978, 1993 and 1031: ἀτὰρ δέμας / ἐνθάδε κείται // ψυχὴ / δ' ἀθανάτων αἰθέρα ναιετάει.

⁶³ PLATO, *Phd.*, 81a.

⁶⁴ ZUNTZ, A4. 4, p. 329 (Thurii, Timpone Grande).

⁶⁵ ZUNTZ, A1. 3, p. 301 (Thurii, Timpone Piccolo).

⁶⁶ SOPH., *Ant.*, 1147: ἰὼ πῦρ πνεόντων χώραγ' ἄστρων (Dionysus); DIOD. SIC., I, 11: Εὐμόλπος μὲν ἐν τοῖς βακχικοῖς ἔπεισι φησιν· ἀστροφαῖ Διόνυσον ἐν ἀκτίνεσσι πυρῶπόν. See ZUNTZ, p. 364.

⁶⁷ So WEST, *o.c.* (n. 36), p. 81; comp. EUR., *Bacch.*, 275-276, *Phoen.*, 685-686: Δαμάτῃ θεά, πάντων ἀνασσα πάντων δὲ Γᾶ τροφός. Also, the Mycenaean dedication KN F 51, in line 2, perhaps ma-ka, i.e. Mā Gā: F. AURA JORRO, F.R. ADRADOS, *Diccionario Micénico*, i, Madrid, 1985, 422; and cf. AESCH., *Supp.*, 890 sq., 899 sq.: μᾶ Γᾶ μᾶ Γᾶ, βοᾶν φοβερόν ἀπότηρεπτε, with the Σ's ὦ μήτηρ γῆ; HEROD., I, 85; THEOC., 15, 89 (Sicilian?).

⁶⁸ Comp. KAIBEL, *Epigrammata Graeca*, 606 (PEEK, *GV*, 441, 4), 2nd or 3rd c., from Roma: γῆς ὧν πρόσθε γόνος μητέρα γαῖαν ἔχω. Cf. AP VII, 371: γῆ μευ καὶ μήτηρ κυκλήσκειτο, γῆ με καλύπτει καὶ νέκυιν.

⁶⁹ KIRK-RAVEN-SCHOFIELD, *o.c.* (n. 4), p. 30.

In Papyrus Deryeni the same polyonymy is displayed: "Ge (Earth) and Meter (Mother) are one and the same".⁷⁰

On the Petelia Tablet and in the gold lamella from Pharsalos, as well as in that from Eleutherna of Crete, when the Orphic initiate appears before the guardians of Hades, he confesses that his origin refers to Ge and the starry Heaven, but emphasizes that his lineage is celestial.⁷¹ In the gold plaque from Hipponion the initiate (L. 16: μύσται καὶ βάχχοι) confesses that he is "ὕος Γαίας καὶ Ὀυρανὸς ἀστερόεντος".⁷² It is a password and a formula of self-presentation of the mystes for the immortality of his soul. This formula constitutes the anthropology of self-definition of the initiate, who, as a being, is partly earthly, partly divine.⁷³ Therefore, the initiate has a "dual potentiality"; the earthly and the heavenly are united in him, and this is his substance.⁷⁴ According to Zuntz, this self-definition of the initiate goes back to Pythagoras.⁷⁵ "Mother Earth" is common, but used in Orphism too.⁷⁶ The entire fourth verse of the epigram for Lykophron clearly echoes the initiate's confession of the Orphic texts "Γῆς παῖς εἰμί"; thus, Merkelbach's suggestion

⁷⁰ A) Col. XVIII-B) Col. XXII: L. 7-12: Γῆ δὲ καὶ Μήτηρ καὶ Ῥέα καὶ Ἥρα ἡ αὐτή. ἐκλήθη δὲ / Γῆ μὲν νόμῳ, Μήτηρ δ' ὅτι ἐκ ταύτης πάντα γίνεταί. / Γῆ καὶ Γαία κατὰ [γ]λῶσσαν ἑκάστοις. Δημήτηρ δὲ / ὠνομάσθη ὥσπερ [ρ] ἡ Γῆ Μήτηρ, ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων ἐ[ν] ὄνομα / τὸ αὐτὸ γὰρ ἦν. - ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς Ὑμνοῖς εἰρημένον / Δημήτηρ [Ῥ]έα Γῆ Μή[τ]ρη Ἑστία Δηιώ, "Earth (Ge), Mother (Meter), Rhea, and Hera are one and the same. She was called Earth (Ge) by custom; Mother, because all things are born from her; Ge and Gaia, according to each one's dialect. She was named Demeter, just like Ge-meter: one name from both, for it was the same. And it is said in the *Hymns* too: Demeter Rhea Ge Meter Hestia Deio".

⁷¹ Petelia: ZUNTZ, B 1, 6-7; Pharsalos: B 2. 6; Eleutherna: B 3-8. 4: Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος, αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον; J.E. HARRISON, *Themis*, 1912, repr. London, 1977, 464; *ead.*, *Prolegomena*, 1903, repr. London, 1980, p. 659, 661.

⁷² After G. PUGLIESE CARRATELLI, "Un sepolcro di Hipponion e un nuovo testo orfico", *PP* 29 (1974), p. 108-126, and *id.*, "Ancora sulla lamina orfica di Hipponion", *PP* 31 (1976), p. 458-466, p. 10-16.

⁷³ Cp. the stele from Eretria, of the 3rd c. B. C. (*IG* XII 9, 290): εἰ θεὸς ἐσθ' ἡ γῆ, καὶ γὰρ θεὸς εἰμι δικαίως· ἐκ γῆς γὰρ βλαστὼν γενόμεν νεκρός, ἐκ δὲ νεκροῦ γῆ.

⁷⁴ See H.D. BETZ, "'Der Erde Kind bin ich und des gestirnten Himmels'. Zur Lehre vom Menschen in den orphischen Goldplättchen", in Fr. GRAF (ed.), *Ansichten Geburstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert, Basel 15-18 März 1996*, Stuttgart/Leipzig, Teubner, 1998, p. 399-419.

⁷⁵ ZUNTZ, *Persephone*, p. 383-385.

⁷⁶ The Orphics (KERN, *OF* 301: DIOD., III, 62, 2-8) called Demeter μητέρα γῆ. Also, Kern, *OF* 302: DIOD., I, 12, 4; EUSEB., *Praep. evang.* III, 3, 5 (I 108, 6 Dind.); THEODORET., *Graecar. affect. cur.* III, 44, p. 80; 54 p. 83 Raeder: τὴν δὲ γῆν ὥσπερ ἀγγεῖόν τι τῶν φρυομένων ὑπολαμβάνοντας μητέρα προσαγορεύσαι· καὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας δὲ ταύτην παραπλησίως Δήμητραν καλεῖν, βραχὺ μεταθεῖσθαι διὰ τὸν χρόνον τῆς λέξεως· τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι γῆν μητέρα, καθάπερ καὶ τὸν Ὀρφέα προσημαρτυρεῖν λέγοντα· Γῆ μήτηρ πάντων, Δημήτηρ πλουτοδότειρα. Also, the Orphic Hymn for Rhea, no. 14, L. 9: μήτηρ μὲν τε θεῶν ἡδὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων. Cp. Homeric Hymn for Ge, L. 1: Γαῖαν παμμήτειραν and l. 17: θεῶν μήτηρ, ἄλοχ' Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.

that the ash of Lykophron covers the earth is wrong.⁷⁷ According to Burkert, the initiate's confession of his origin before the guardians of the Underworld is an indication that the mysteries used myths differently, that is, to establish privilege through genealogy. Origin is the decisive declaration made by the initiate in Hades, as witnessed by the texts of the 'Orphic'-Bacchic gold leaves and perhaps this is the reason why it was used as *the* password. The story of origin is a fact known only to the initiate, not to those outsiders who are ignorant of the secret.⁷⁸

D. Orphism at Pherai

Archaeological excavations have brought to light important evidence about the existence of local "Orphic-Dionysiac" ("Bacchic") mysteries at Pherai. Brimo, the Orphic Persephone, and Andrikepaidothyrsos, probably the Herikepaïos (Erikepaïos or Erikapaïos) of the Orphic texts, (an Orphic deity identified with Dionysus), are mentioned on the inscribed gold lamella (dated to the 2nd half of the 4th c. B.C.), found in the south cemetery of Pherai in 1970 and probably coming from the tomb of an Orphic initiate.⁷⁹ The 'Orphic' text from Pherai is new and decisive as to the relevance of 'Orphism' in that place. A couplet engraved on a gold lamella from a tomb of the same date is further evidence for "Orphic" activity at Pherai, because it names Demeter Chthonia, the mother of the Orphic Persephone.⁸⁰ P. Chrysostomou argues that the absence of such Orphic deities of the Underworld in similar inscriptions (lamellae) elsewhere in Thessaly suggests that their cult was limited to a small number of private gatherings at Pherai and that it was not an official cult. These local mystery cults are characterised as "Orphic- Bacchic", as is the case of those mentioned in the gold lamellae at Pelinna (end of the 4th c. B.C.), where Persephone and Bacchios, the Orphic Dionysus, are the gods of the mysteries.⁸¹

E. Conclusions

The funerary epigram for Lykophron brings another dimension of "Orphism" at Pherai to light: the initiate's belief in his origin from the immortal fire (sky) and in the astral immortality of his soul. Both of these

⁷⁷ See MERKELBACH, *o.c.* (n. 1).

⁷⁸ W. BURKERT, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Cambridge/London, 1987, p. 76.

⁷⁹ Publication by P. CHRYSOSTOMOU, *Η Θεσσαλική θεά Εν(ν)οδία ή Φεραία θεά*, Ph. D. Univ. of Thessaloniki, 1991, p. 371 *sq.*, published: Athens, 1998, p. 210 *sq.*; *BullEpigr* (1997), 285; *id.*, "Η λατρεία του Διόνυσου στη Θεσσαλία και ειδικότερα στις Φερές", *Hyperetia* 2 (1994), part A, p. 127 *sq.*; Σύμβολα. Ἀν<δ>ρικε / παιδόθυρσον. Ἀνδρικεπαι / δόθυρσον. Βριμώ. Βριμώ. Εἶσιθ<ι> ἱερὸν λειμῶνα. Ἀποινος / γὰρ ὁ μύστης.

⁸⁰ A. ARVANITOPOULOS, *PAAH* (1907), p. 160.

⁸¹ See K. TSANTSANOGLU, G.M. PARASSOGLU, "Two Gold Lamellae from Thessaly", *Hellenica* 38 (1987), p. 10.

elements are rooted in the Pythagorean tradition. At any rate, the content of the epigram belongs to the “Orphic” climate existed at Pherai. Lykophron, the heroized mortal, has ensured his immortality after his death, perhaps by being an initiate of the “Orphic”-“Bacchic”-“Pythagorean” doctrines. His immortality is elemental (fire) and personal (fiery soul). His “heroization” is gained thanks for the *post-mortem* blessedness of the survival of his soul in the starry heaven. Lykophron in this quality becomes one of those figures who remain close to everyday life but at the same time transgress the bounds of the chthonic realm to enter the divine sphere.

In my view, the main conceptual dualism and opposition lies in ΣΩΜΑ-ΨΥΧΗ (Body-Soul), – compare the graffiti ΣΩΜΑ-ΨΥΧΗ on the Olbia bones –, corresponding to the physiological elements Earth (Ge-Mother) and immortal fire (Zeus-Father), lower and upper worlds (underground and starry heaven). The contrast between ΔΟΞΑ-ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ (Seeming-Truth) in the epigram reveals the Presocratic reflexivity existing in the construction of philosophical discourse c. 600-450 B.C., especially in Parmenides and Xenophanes;⁸² the ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ (Truth) in the epigram means for Lykophron that the soul is immortal fire cognate with the stars of heaven, and ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ is a catchword for Orphism, as the graffiti ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ-ΨΕΥΔΟΣ on the Olbia tablets indicate, with ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ inscribed three times.

It is clear that the four verses of the Pherai-epigram presuppose and trace back to previous texts and beliefs; furthermore, we could argue that the axiom: “physiology should not be regarded as an odd, alien kind of instruction for mystic initiates”⁸³ is applicable to this epigram. It seems, finally, that these diffused ideas were “common possession” and perhaps the cogency of the argumentation about “local particularities”, because of differences in the details, has no effect.⁸⁴ As far as the identity of the poet of this funerary epigram is concerned, I can affirm only that he appears to have been an intellectual, well versed in Presocratic cosmogony interwoven with mystic doctrines of his time. Exactly who he was remains an open question.

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⁸² See SANDYWELL, *o.c.* (n. 4), p. 300 *sq.*

⁸³ SEAFORD, *l.c.* (n. 28), p. 20; OBBINK, *l.c.* (n. 44). Also, esp. Chr. SCHEFER, “Nur für Eingeweihte! Heraklit und die Mysterien”, *Antike und Abendland* 46 (2000), p. 46-75.

⁸⁴ My sincere thanks go to Prof. Y. Tzifopoulos, to whom I owe this remark *per litteras*.