Kernos

Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion
grecque antique

29 | 2016
Varia

Life, Death, and a Lokrian Goddess

Revisiting the Nature of Persephone in the Gold Leaves of Magna Graecia

Hanne Eisenfeld

Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/kernos/2388>

DOI: 10.4000/kernos.2388

ISSN: 2034-7871

Publisher

Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 October 2016

Number of pages: 41-72

ISSN: 0776-3824

Electronic reference

Hanne Eisenfeld, « Life, Death, and a Lokrian Goddess », *Kernos* [Online], 29 | 2016, Online since 01 October 2019, connection on 10 December 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/kernos/2388> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/kernos.2388>

This text was automatically generated on 10 December 2020.

Kernos

Life, Death, and a Lokrian Goddess

Revisiting the Nature of Persephone in the Gold Leaves of Magna Graecia

Hanne Eisenfeld

*This article begins its life in an Ohio State University seminar taught by Dr. Ilinca Tanaseanu-Dobler in 2008 and had its first public airing at the 11th International Spring School on Ancient Religions in Erfurt, Germany in 2010. Appreciation and recognition are due to the leaders and participants of both the seminar and the conference for their questions and suggestions, to Sarah Iles Johnston, Fritz Graf, and Mark Thatcher for generous readings and responses, and to the anonymous reviewer for Kernos for their valuable insights. Many thanks are owed to the Società Magna Graecia for permission to use images from their magisterial publication on the Lokrian pinakes: *I Pinakes di Locri Epizefiri. Musei di Reggio Calabria e di Locri, Atti e Memorie della Società Magna Grecia*, s. IV, vol. 1-3 (henceforth PLE).*

Introduction

- 1 “Pure I come from the pure, Queen of the Chthonian Ones.” This is the opening line of a gold leaf — one element of a geographically and chronologically disparate corpus that has variously been described as ‘Orphic,’ ‘Pythagorean,’ and ‘Bacchic’ — from the site of Thurii in northern Calabria.¹ The speaker is the soul of the initiate who presents the credentials that guarantee her a privileged status in the afterlife. The text goes on to identify the Chthonian Queen as Persephone and to characterize the initiate addressing her as a suppliant. A similar relationship can be glimpsed between Persephone and her worshippers in her cult at Epizephyrian Lokri in southern Calabria which Diodorus in his own time knew as the most illustrious in Italy.² We lack the written evidence to know how this Persephone was addressed by her worshippers, but the visual evidence depicts her as a majestic goddess presiding over the lands of the dead, yet approachable by worshippers who came to seek help with the crises of the living, especially marriage and childbirth.³ I propose that the similarities between the goddesses expressed in these two media are neither superficial nor incidental.
- 2 In the gold leaf from Thurii Persephone enjoys an unusually prominent status compared to her representation in other texts across the corpus, and an unusually

intimate relationship with the initiate. Her prominence is evident in other leaves from Magna Graecia as well (all five from Thurii, one from Hipponion and one from Entella),⁴ but this Persephone-phenomenon has received scant attention, largely because work on the leaves has tended to seek a unifying context across their broad geographical and chronological extent.⁵ The prominence of Persephone in this geographically defined sub-corpus, I argue, is owed to the influence of the local Lokrian cult upon the itinerant traditions expressed in the texts of the gold leaves. By importing the familiar Lokrian Persephone into the conceptual world of the gold leaves, the purveyors of these objects created a docking point for their innovative practices within established systems of religious experience.

- 3 Created for deposition in graves and inscribed with ritual instructions, the leaves are self-evidently eschatological. They contain information necessary to guide their bearers to an afterlife status that is somehow privileged, distinguished from the fate awaiting those without special connections or instructions. The first scholars of the leaves identified them with a religious movement they designated Orphism and which Wilamowitz and others attacked as little more than a modern construction.⁶ The debate has continued into the 21st century with one camp emphatically asserting the place of the leaves in an Orphic practice while others have compromised with the hybrid designation “Orphic-Bacchic,” though not to universal satisfaction.⁷ With a growing *communis opinio* I identify Dionysiac mystery cult, probably informed by texts attributed to Orpheus, as the primary source of such expectations: through initiation the initiate achieves the promise of a better fate after death, distinct from that of the uninitiated and unredeemed.⁸ In conjunction with or in addition to other offerings, the practitioners who created the leaves were offering their customers new or enhanced identities as Bacchic initiates.
- 4 Already in the fourth century we hear of ‘orpheotelestai,’ apparently itinerant figures who offered initiatory and other ritual experiences to their customers on an individual basis and for a price.⁹ Without endorsing the potential implication of the term, namely that Orphism was a reified religious movement or ‘church,’ it is reasonable to speak of practitioners who drew in part on traditions gathered under the authority of Orpheus, just as other texts could be collected under the name of Homer or Anakreon.¹⁰ As Graf argues, the attribution to Orpheus, a quintessential poet with access to privileged knowledge, points to the cosmological and eschatological orientation of the writings gathered under this heading, qualities unsurprising in texts associated with Dionysiac mysteries.¹¹ These practitioners were not, missionary-like, creating Orphic communities. Instead they were offering personalized religious expression and experiences to individuals and groups already integrated into other modes of religious practice.¹²
- 5 The gold leaves are now usually considered as a corpus¹³ and a single interpretative framework is constructed to explain their diverse contents, a method Graf terms a maximalist approach.¹⁴ On this model, Persephone’s presence across the corpus should be explained by a single mythological or ritual context. At a very basic level, the presence of an underworld goddess in eschatological texts is hardly surprising, but these maximalist readings attempt to identify a single cultic and mythological pedigree for the Persephone who appears in the leaves.¹⁵ Bernabé and Jiménez recognize that the initiatory milieu of the leaves could lead us to think of the Kore of Eleusinian cult, but they are dissuaded from this conclusion by the dearth of gold leaves found in

Attica. Instead, with a majority of other interpreters of the last several decades, they understand Persephone's presence in the leaves as dependent upon her status as the mother of Dionysos.¹⁶

- 6 Here we return again to the troublesome role of Orphic tradition since Persephone's maternal status is constructed from Orphic eschatologies recorded in the *Orphic Hymns* which, in their current forms, probably date to the early centuries of the common era.¹⁷ Moreover, Persephone's personal interest in the fate of the initiate is derived from the controversial myth of the Orphic anthropogony.¹⁸ According to this myth the titans, motivated by jealousy, tore Dionysos limb from limb. As descendants of the titans, humans inherited the guilt for this crime and must individually pay the penalty to assuage Persephone's anger.¹⁹ Within this mythic context, Persephone's power in the leaves and her relationship to humans is informed by her role as mother to Dionysos, just as her Eleusinian power is conditioned by the status of missing daughter opposite her grieving mother, Demeter. She is, in other words, fitted neatly into a mythological familial role that preordains and preexplains her attitude toward the initiates who seek a welcome to the privileged reaches of the afterlife.
- 7 Pindar fr. 133 (ed. Maehler) is often cited in support of the antiquity of this tradition, but, being both fragmentary and Pindaric, the text is hardly self-explanatory. Persephone is depicted as receiving a penalty from souls who are subsequently elevated to a different status, but what that status is or why a penalty is owed remains unclear. Quoted in Plato's *Meno* with reference to the immortality of the soul, it is not evident that the lines describe the same privileged status envisioned by the leaves or whether they are better linked to another (Pythagorean?) milieu.²⁰ Moreover, as the text stands we have no mention of Dionysos and are thus confronted once again with the problem of influences and origins.²¹
- 8 If we take Pindar's fragment not as early evidence for the influence of Orphic writings, but, instead, as an independent data point for the importance of Persephone as powerful underworld goddess interested in the fate of the soul, an alternate picture begins to emerge. Perhaps Persephone's association with the underworld — an aspect of her cultic personae across the Greek world and already clearly attested in the imaginative underworld of *Odyssey* 10 — was sufficient motivation for a number of different *bricoleurs*, to use Sarah Iles Johnston's term, to integrate her into their diverse schemata.²² On this model her status as the mother of Dionysos reflects one way of integrating the underworld goddess par excellence into a myth focused on the soteriological power of Dionysos. This is, in fact, exactly how Johnston envisions the development of the myth of the Orphic anthropogony. One of the questions I wish to raise here is whether this myth was firmly established in the fourth century BCE when the first gold leaves were created and whether it should be used as the dominant model for understanding the presence of the goddess within these ritual texts. Alternately, since the leaves from Magna Graecia are among the earliest in the corpus, it could be that it was precisely because of the goddess' prominence at Lokri that our practitioners integrated her into the landscape of their Dionysiac initiatory practices.
- 9 Whether or not the mother-son relationship between Persephone and Dionysos was understood as a foundational element of the universe expressed in the gold leaves, too much emphasis on any single mythological framework runs the danger of limiting the questions that we ask about the relationship between individual leaves and their individual contexts. Edmonds has expressed the eloquent desire "that we read the

leaves as the intimate documents that they are, reflecting the values of those buried with them.”²³ By examining how leaves draw on shared narratives and imagery while expressing their own emphases, we can better understand the influence of local belief systems on the reception and development of the gold leaf texts. Such contextualized readings can enrich and deepen our understanding of the appeal that the initiatory concepts expressed within the leaves exerted at different places and in different times. The prominence of Persephone in the leaves found throughout Magna Graecia functions as a test case for this nuanced approach to the corpus. By reading her prominence in the leaves as a direct result of the influence of local Lokrian cult it becomes possible to glimpse the malleability of the traditions behind the leaves and the points of contact with local practice that allowed productive engagement between the two.

- 10 I am not the first to perceive the Lokrian Persephone in the gold leaves, but earlier interpretations of her presence have been hedged in by another enduring tendency in scholarship on the leaves: the desire to categorize and divide them into subgroups drawn from distinct traditions. Zuntz, in his magisterial *Persephone*, identified two groups of leaves that developed what he saw as Pythagorean traditions quite independently of each other: his group B comprised tablets focused on Memory while his group A (including the metrical leaves from Thurii) was characterized by the centrality of Persephone and the motif of ‘falling into milk.’²⁴ He sees this Persephone as a Magna Graecian figure (he points to the Lokrian evidence) who is associated with life as well as death.²⁵ Edmonds maintains the same divisions in his 2004 study of afterlife journeys in a chapter entitled “Roadmaps of *Déviance*: the ‘Orphic’ gold tablets” in which he identifies the Persephone who appears in the Thurian gold leaves with the Lokrian goddess, arguing that her nature in that cult as the queen of the dead should frame the way we interpret the Thurian tablets and the aspirations of their bearers.²⁶ This interpretation takes the first and important step of seeing the Lokrian goddess in the leaves, but then uses that insight as a wall separating these leaves from the others rather than as a productive site for understanding the integration of local tradition into personalized initiatory practice.
- 11 In this spirit I suggest that Persephone as she appears in the gold leaves of Magna Graecia should not be understood primarily as the angry, grieving mother deprived of her son, nor as a dread and distant goddess. Instead, for the initiates buried with these leaves, Persephone was the powerful goddess of Lokrian cult, defined by her own status as proud ruler of the lands of the dead and by her intimacy with the communities around her sanctuary. If we recognize the Lokrian goddess within these texts we can come a little closer to understanding the hopes of those who carried them into the grave while better appreciating the interaction between modes of religious practice.
- 12 To this end I will first survey the corpus of the gold leaves to establish that in the subcorpus from Magna Graecia Persephone appears more frequently, enjoys a more pronounced status, and engages more intimately with the leaf-bearers than she does in the rest of the corpus. I will then turn to Persephone at Lokri, focusing on the spheres of competence that make this goddess a relevant figure for the initiatory practices promoted by ritual specialists. Finally I will consider other connections that have been drawn between the Lokrian cult, especially its famous pinakes, and the practices associated with the gold leaves, particularly in order to question why the Bacchic context has more often been seen as a source rather than a recipient of influence.

A Jaunt Through the Leaves

- 13 Persephone plays an important, even central, role in many of the leaves across the far-flung corpus, but her nature is uniquely characterized in the texts from Magna Graecia. These leaves include the five found in two ‘timpone’ tombs at Thurii (fourth century BCE), and the single leaves from Hipponion (c. 400 BCE) and Entella (third century BCE).²⁷ The most striking presence among these tablets is a *χθονίων βασίλεια*, a queen of the underworld and its denizens. She appears in the three leaves from the ‘timpone piccolo’ at Thurii, probably in the leaf from Hipponion, and possibly in the one from Entella. She is also present in a leaf from Rome, but it is much later than the others (third century CE) and is most useful as an indication that its creator still recognized the Queen of the Underworld as a central figure in the context he was evoking.²⁸ Her presence in the Thurii leaves is particularly prominent: the leaf-bearer speaks directly to her, and claims both a common descent and an ongoing relationship with the goddess.

Pure I come from the pure, Queen of the Chthonian Ones,
Eukles, Eubouleus and the other deathless gods,
for I claim that I am of your blessed race
but fate subdued me, and the other deathless gods,
and the star-thrower with lightning.
And I escaped out of the painful circle of heavy grief,
I reached the longed-for crown with swift feet
I descended beneath the lap of the Lady, the Chthonian Queen,
I reached the longed-for crown with swift feet.
Blessed and fortunate, you are a god instead of a mortal,
a kid you fell into milk.

(5, Thurii 3)²⁹

Pure I come from the pure, Queen of the Chthonian Ones,
Eukles and Eubouleus and other divinities, as many *daimones* (as there are).
(Eukles and Eubouleus and other divinities and *daimones*.)³⁰
For I claim that I am of your blessed race.
I have paid the penalty for unjust deeds
either Moira subdued me or lightning thrown by the thunderer.
I have come as a suppliant, I have come to Persephone,
(now I have come as a suppliant to holy Persephone)³⁰
me, kindly she will send me to the seats of the pure.
(6 and 7, Thurii tablets 4 and 5)

- 14 The goddess is front and center, in the texts of the leaves as well, apparently, as in her place within the realms of the dead. There is no infernal consort here, or at least no equal partner.³¹ Other divinities are addressed, but their secondary position suggests the queen’s primacy and the fact that two masculine names occupy this secondary position makes it hard to think that one of the two should be understood as the queen’s consort and equal. The notion of hierarchy is intensified by the tacked-on inclusion of ‘the other immortal gods’ and, even more emphatically, ‘the other gods and the other *daimones*.’ Whoever Eukles and Eubouleus are — and the suggestions that these might be cult titles for Dionysos or euphemistic references to Hades deserve consideration³² — the queen stands first. She is not only the most authoritative figure in the underworld landscape — she is also the one with whom the leaf-bearer claims the closest relationship. In the second text the human speaker approaches Persephone as a

suppliant. If we think about the nature of supplication elsewhere in Greek thought this implies a relationship of mutual responsibility according to which the one of whom something is asked is bound to the one asking.³³ The desired outcome is access to ‘the seats of the pure,’ a place or state of being apart from the lot of most of the dead.

- 15 More intimate yet is the expression in the first text above: “I have descended beneath the lap (κόλπον) of the Lady (Δεσποίνης), the Chthonian Queen”. This expression is pretty clearly integrated into a broader complex of initiatory experience and should not be separated from it, but the repetition of lines 6 and 8 is intriguing: could it be that the escape from the circle is somehow paralleled to the experience in the lap of the goddess? Even that they are two ways of alluding to the single (ritual?) experience that permitted the approach to the longed-for crown? The kid falling into milk is clearly echoed in the parallel animal imagery in leaves from Pelinna where Persephone is once again present, but no reference there is made to intimate interaction between her and the *mystes*.³⁴ Instead, those leaves emphasize the centrality of Bacchos to the initiatory context and attribute to Persephone the (passive?) role of receiving the initiated.³⁵

- 16 The other metrical text from Thurii shares elements with the texts just discussed, but also with the leaves from Hipponion and Entella.

But when the soul leaves the light of the sun
continue (straight on) to the right watching everything closely,
rejoice! For you have experienced the experience which you never experienced
before.
A god you became from a man, a kid into milk you fell.
Rejoice, rejoice! Walk on to the right
to the holy meadows and groves of Persephone.
(3, Thurii 1)

- 17 As in the first of the Thurii texts, an unidentified speaker hails the leaf-bearer as becoming a god instead of a man and a kid fallen into milk. The speaker then encourages the leaf-bearer to rejoice and to continue on to the desired destination: the holy meadows and groves of Persephone. The continuing path that the soul must follow looks back to the first lines of the leaf which, like those from Entella, Hipponion, and Petelia, offers directions for the navigation of the underworld, though in far less detail than those other texts. Though she is not addressed as queen in this leaf, Persephone holds a position of power within the underworld landscape. Specifically attributed to her is that region to which the initiate aspires, somehow set apart from the open-entry section and presumably the referent also of ‘the seats of the pure.’ In this leaf, at least, Persephone is not only the gatekeeper who allows the initiated to pass through her realm to a better, more selective place, but the deity (or one of the deities) to whom that place belongs. The Homeric tone of the last line encourages us to think of the powerful and feared Persephone of the *Odyssey*.³⁶

- 18 The importance of Persephone for the individual buried in the ‘timpone grande’ is further indicated by the contents of a leaf that enclosed the one just addressed: this ‘envelope leaf’ consists of a dense table of letters from which editors have been excavating sense since its discovery.³⁷ While the text is still debated, some words have been consistently recognized. Among these are three apparent references to Persephone: the Kore of Demeter (Κόρρα<ι> [...] Δήμητρος, line 2), the chthonic Kore (Κόρη Χθονία, line 8), and simply Kore (κούρην, line 9) who is snatched by someone described as μήστωρ. Whether or not we credit these descriptions to Orphic or other traditions, the Kore thus obscurely evoked is to be identified by her status as daughter,

as an underworld presence, and (apparently) as the object of an abduction.³⁸ Kore as daughter of Demeter could be fit neatly into the ‘Orphic anthropogony,’ or she could be associated with the two goddesses as they were worshipped at Eleusis; Chthonian Kore, too, conforms to both Orphic and Eleusinian traditions, but she also resonates with the Chthonian Queen who is unique to this region.³⁹ This mysterious leaf may demonstrate the cooperative interaction that I am suggesting between the traditions imported with the leaves and the existing practices in the landscape of Magna Graecia. The ‘Kore’s of this puzzle, if we recognize the text as significant and not primarily intended as a hindrance to the uninitiated, look to a goddess of central importance to the initiate and allude to her several aspects which converge in the envisioned afterlife encounter.

- 19 The situation in the Hipponion and Entella leaves is less straightforward in that neither of them, in their current states, actually mentions Persephone. I say ‘actually’, because the Hipponion leaf comes very close and the Entella leaf might well have done so — once. These leaves offer detailed guidance through an underworld landscape that has clear affinities with underworld spaces described in leaves from Thessaly and Crete.⁴⁰

This is the work of memory. When you are about to die
to the well-built house of Hades. There is a spring on the right,
a white cypress standing near it,
gathering there the souls of the dead refresh themselves.
These springs, do not come anywhere near them.
Farther on you will find cold water flowing forth
from the pool of Memory. There are guardians before it.
Then they will ask you in swift, sure speech
why you are seeking the dark of dusky Hades.
Say: I am the son of Ge and Starry Ouranos.
I am parched with thirst and am dying, swiftly give
cold water to drink from the pool of Memory.
And then they will speak to the Underworld Queen
and they will allow you to drink from the pool of Memory.
And indeed when you have drunk you will go along the road, which also the other
famous mystoi and bacchoi have taken, the holy road.

(1, Hipponion)

[...] (about) to die
[...] mindful hero
[...] the darkness veiling
[...] the right a pool
[...] (standing) cypress
[...] (souls) of the dead refresh themselves.
[...] near approach.
[...] from the pool of Memory
[...] there are guardians before it.
[...] in swift, sure speech,
[...] dusky
[...] of starry Ouranos
[...] I...but give to me
[...] from the pool of Memory
but [...]
and then [...]
and at that time [...]
and at that time [...]
passwords [...]
and [...]
(8, Entella)

- 20 In contrast to these similar leaves from other regions, however, an unusual figure appears in the Hipponion text: the ὑποχθονίῳ βασιλῆϊ . Now, as the text stands this should be translated — as Graf and Johnston do, following Graf's edition — 'to the Chthonian King.' This is the epigraphically respectful thing to do, but I am inclined, to follow the edition of Bernabé and Jiménez in emending the text to read $\text{ὑποχθονίῳ βασιλείᾳ}$.⁴¹ The support for this reading is twofold: a) though the adjective appears with other masculine nouns in both early and late Greek texts, the mysterious 'Underworld King' makes no other appearance while b) in a later Orphic hymn Persephone herself is described by the emended phrase.⁴² Then too, as Bernabé and Jiménez point out, the context leads us to expect Persephone in the underworld, while the identity of the alleged Chthonian King is not immediately obvious — would he be Hades? Dionysos himself?⁴³ It is necessary here to balance the danger of stepsistering our reading of the leaves into shoes too small for them with the risk of missing significant patterns by respecting the orthography on the leaves (and certainly this is not always respected).⁴⁴
- 21 The leaf from Entella poses a different challenge: it remains in private hands and unavailable for a closer examination of the current lacunae. As seen in the translation above, the current edition shows three lines beginning $\text{καὶ τοῖ δὴ [...] καὶ τότε [...] καὶ τότε [...]}$ Graf and Johnston recognize the parallel to the Hipponion leaf and suggest — emphasizing that this must remain pure supplement until further investigation — the possibility that the line might once again have depicted the guards announcing the leaf-bearer's identity to the Chthonian Queen.⁴⁵ It has also been noted that the remnants of words beginning φ - and $\varphi\epsilon$ - in the last lines of the leaf could be the beginning of Persephone's name. The late tablet from Rome has the 'Queen of the Chthonian Ones' with the motif of purity familiar from Thurii as well as the Mnemosyne-motif, suggesting a familiarity (though at what distance one can only guess) with multiple components of the older leaves from the region.
- 22 In Magna Graecia, then, we have a powerful Persephone, a ruler of the underworld worthy of the title Βασίλεια . Is this situation fundamentally different from the other leaves? While Persephone is present in the rest of the corpus, she is less central and never referred to by any royal title. In the collection of leaves from Eleutherna on Crete in which the underworld landscape is described with clear parallels to the Hipponion leaf she is completely absent (as in the similar leaves from Rethymnon and Mylopotamos).⁴⁶ A single contemporary leaf from Eleutherna reads simply 'Greetings to Pluto and Persephone,' while another from Rhethymnon reads 'to Plouto, to Persephone.'⁴⁷ These texts suggest that her absence in the other leaves should not indicate her absence from the eschatological expectations of those buried with them. At the same time, Hades' presence here — possibly as the dominant figure — introduces an important variation from the leaves discussed above. The situation in Macedonia is somewhat similar to these final Cretan leaves. Among the nine leaves found in Macedonia, only four offer texts that are more than simply the name of the bearer. One of these (Amphipolis, late fourth century BCE) declares the bearer sacred to Dionysos Bacchios; the other three offer greeting formulae: two to Persephone (Φερσεφόνη), one to 'the lord' (τῷ Δεσπότει).⁴⁸ The remaining five leaves carry nothing but a name. If greetings are carried to Persephone it is reasonable to conclude that the leaf-bearer expected to encounter her in the underworld and the emphasis falls on her alone, without the Pluto-figure who preceded her in the Eleutherna leaf. Who, though, is the

male lord who also receives greeting? He could be her counterpart, Pluto/Hades, or he could be Dionysos himself. However the question is resolved, this male figure inhabits some authoritative role in this eschatological structure which is not equally evident in the leaves from Magna Graecia. Meanwhile, the leaves from mainland Greece carry only single names (Elis) or μύστας/μύστης with or without a name (Aigion). We can develop from these leaves a scenario in which the inscribed name or title serves to introduce the leaf-bearer to the powers they encounter, but who exactly these are — Hades, Persephone, Dionysos? All of them together? — and what relationship the initiate bears to them is not indicated in the leaves. So far then, leaves from these other regions suggest a mystery context in which Persephone, though present, does not require the same emphasis as she does in the leaves from Magna Graecia.

- 23 The Thessalian leaves present a more varied collection of texts within which Persephone is sometimes present, sometimes absent. A leaf from Pharsalus nearly parallels the Hipponion text, while a leaf from an unknown location in Thessaly bears a text very close to leaves from Eleutherna.⁴⁹ Persephone makes no appearance in either. In the two leaves from Pelinna, however, Persephone does appear, as do other appealing links to the Thuri leaves. The Pelinna leaves were found together in a single grave and are nearly identical to each other (with *b* lacking two lines that appear in *a*): I give the translation of *a*, with the lines missing from *b* in parentheses:

Now you have died, and now you are born, thrice-blessed one, on this day.
Tell Persephone that Bacchios himself released you
a bull into milk you leapt
(quickly into milk you leapt)
a ram into milk you fell
you possess wine as fortunate honour
(and beneath the earth await you those rites as also the other blessed ones).
(26 a,b, Pelinna)

- 24 It was the publication of these two ivy-shaped tablets in 1987 which ended the neat division of the tablets into A and B groups and established that the mystery rites which lay behind the leaves were Bacchic in nature. The connection was indicated by the role played by Βάκχιος in the second line as well as the shape of the leaves.⁵⁰ The deciding voice, in the fate of this leaf-bearer, belongs to the god. The bearer is instructed: 'tell Persephone that Bacchios himself released you.' All the authority belongs to Bacchios here, while Persephone appears as something like his agent in the underworld.⁵¹ She is still the one whom the dead encounter, but her judgment is subordinate to his decision, presumably enacted in the experience of initiation.⁵² Here Persephone's relationship to the initiate appears secondary: her function is to allow access based on Bacchios' decision.
- 25 Two further Thessalian finds from Pherae offer a unique range of divine names and references.

Passwords: ManChildThyrsos
ManChildThyrsos Brimo Brimo Enter
the holy meadow for the initiate
is redeemed.
(27, Pherae 1)
Send me to the *thiasoi* of the initiates, I possess the mysteries []
of Demeter Chthonia the rites and of the Mountain Mother
(28, Pherae 2)

- 26 The first text consists mostly of passwords which the leaf-bearer must utter upon his approach to the underworld: man-child-thyrsos, and Brimo. The first, particularly the inclusion of the *thyrsos*, clearly refers to the context of Bacchic mysteries, while Sarah Iles Johnston has argued that Brimo is here a reference to a cult name of Persephone, or the name of a local goddess with whom she was identified.⁵³ The second, apparently spoken in the leaf-bearer's voice, claims familiarity with the rites of Chthonian Demeter and the Mountain Mother.
- 27 Johnston has recently put forward an argument that partially parallels what I propose here for the effect of the cult of Lokrian Persephone on the gold leaves of Magna Graecia. She sees a process at work in Pherae by which one of the practitioners who disseminated the tradition reflected in the leaves drew together several disparate strands to offer a 'multi-generational' tale of Demeter, Persephone and Dionysos; one which drew on the "best parts of both the Bacchic and Eleusinian mysteries."⁵⁴ She suggests that Brimo's importance in this constellation results from "one or more ritual practitioners develop[ing] this strand of Bacchic mysteries in response to an already established importance of Brimo and her identification with Persephone in the area around Pherae."⁵⁵ According to this argument Persephone's local cult plays a constitutive role for these leaves as well. This argument also poses an important contrast to mine, though, in that the Brimo-model characterizes Persephone by emphasizing her place within a divine family. Following Johnston's argument, these two leaves can be read as witnesses for a single context in which each element (Demeter, the Mountain Mother, Persephone/Brimo, Dionysos) has a role in the establishment and practice of mysteries in which Persephone's role is inextricable from her status as daughter and mother. In contrast, in the leaves from Magna Graecia, Persephone's personal power over the fate of the initiates is emphasized and she is not defined by her place within the familial structures familiar from Dionysiac and Eleusinian mystery traditions.
- 28 In comparison to the rest of the corpus, then, Persephone claims a larger and more central role in the gold leaves of Magna Graecia. I propose that, like the unusual appearances of Brimo, Chthonian Demeter and the Mountain Mother in the Pherae leaves, this can be attributed to the creative work of practitioners who integrated the experiences they had on offer into existing frames of reference and belief of the communities they encountered. The Lokrian Persephone, as I argue next, was a powerful, independent goddess — not primarily daughter or mother — whose presence could anchor the novel status of the new initiate within established and trusted structures of local religious experience.

The Lokrian Maiden

- 29 The quantity and quality of votive dedications from the Persephoneion at Lokri join with the literary evidence to indicate an important Persephone cult whose fame reached beyond the boundaries of Lokri itself. The prominence of this sanctuary is one reason to believe that Lokrian Persephone enjoyed sufficient regional importance to influence developments and perceptions within other local cultic contexts. Founded around the same time as the colony itself, during the seventh century BCE, the cult endured into the Roman period where historical accounts of pillage offer a glimpse of its size and importance.⁵⁶ Livy recalls an attempt by the Lokrians to take the goddess'

treasure out of the extramural sanctuary and bring it into the city where it would be safe. The goddess, however, not only forbade it but also knocked down the defensive walls they tried to build around the sanctuary, insisting that she could take care of her own property.⁵⁷ This probably refers to the mid-sixth century battle of Sagra between Kroton and Lokri and is offered by Livy as a warning to men of his own time against menacing the sanctuary, thus indicating at least a perceived continuity of the cult from that time into Livy's own.

- 30 Until the end of the twentieth century modern scholarship only knew of the Lokrian Persephoneion through such literary sources. Orsi's excavations at Contrada Mannella outside the northwestern wall of the city revealed the site of the sanctuary including a pit filled with votive offerings from the seventh through the first half of the fifth century. These were apparently cleared from the existing sanctuary as part of a rebuilding campaign in the second half of the fifth century and buried under the newly constructed terrace. A treasury was then constructed there, as well as other small buildings in the course of the following centuries during which time votives continued to be deposited.⁵⁸ The archaeological material allows us to fill in the outlines of the shadowy Lokrian goddess, revealing a Persephone whose competencies resonate with the hopes enigmatically expressed in the gold leaves.
- 31 As a goddess of the underworld and wife of Hades, a maiden, a bride, and a guardian of children, the Lokrian Persephone presided over moments of transition, times of altered identity and potential danger. Marriage and death share overlapping conceptual space elsewhere in Greek thought: women who die unmarried can be designated 'brides of Hades' and wedding imagery is often included in their funerary apparatus, while the tragedians get a lot of mileage out of interweaving the two themes.⁵⁹ The myth of Persephone's abduction in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* — a myth closely related to Eleusinian cult — expresses and manages the anxiety attendant on these transitions by allowing the archetypal maiden to alternate eternally between her roles as daughter and wife. The Lokrian cult also deals with the abduction but expresses a different attitude to the experience of transition. Demeter is absent and the maiden Persephone does not return; she is permanently transformed and accepts her place and powers as Queen of the Underworld (*Fig. 1*).⁶⁰ Votives dedicated throughout centuries of cultic activity at the Persephoneion reflect concerns rooted in the experience of biological and social transitions.⁶¹ It was to Persephone that women turned for assistance at these times; as such, she was a goddess poised to resonate with the elective transitional experiences undertaken by initiates into the mystery practices reflected in the leaves.
- 32 The most famous — and most iconographically detailed — votive dedications are the pinakes: rectangular clay tablets depicting mythological and cultic scenes associated with the sanctuary, made from molds and dedicated in great quantities.⁶² These are local Lokrian creations which begin to be produced at the end of the sixth century with the latest examples continuing into the late fifth century. Often fragmentary and highly varied, the pinakes depict a wide range of scenes, both human and divine, and objects associated with the cult site.⁶³ Because of their detail and their potential to evoke a ritual or mythical narrative — characteristics they share, in a way, with the gold leaves themselves — I base my analysis of the goddess in the representations of the pinakes. I focus on a series of images which capture a single moment of experience crystallized from the thick weave of perception and activity that constituted the cult.⁶⁴

These images draw the goddess into a set of experiences that map a mortal woman's life, articulated in terms of childhood, marriage, and childbearing.

- 33 Some of the images are usually read as mythological scenes, others as lived cultic practice. The distinction between these two categories should never be drawn too starkly, and in the pinakes it becomes particularly porous. An observation by the editors of *PLE* can be productively applied to a majority of these images: they simultaneously communicate meaning at the level of myth (the experience of the goddess), communal ritual (the festival activities carried out within and in direct reference to the sanctuary itself), and individual experience (offerings made on one's own behalf outside of a calendrically-determined, community-based context).⁶⁵ These levels cannot be fully extricated from each other, but participate in an ambiguity which I think existed already at the time of their dedications.
- 34 One of the most popular motifs is the abduction of a maiden by a man intent on carrying her away on his chariot.⁶⁶ These images have usually been read as the rape of Persephone, and I agree that this is its basic referent.⁶⁷ At the same time, they also assert a partial collapse of the experience of the goddess with that of her worshippers. The varied depictions of the maiden's emotional reaction, ranging from terror to active affection for her abductor, allow a glimpse of the complex reactions to marriage that worshippers brought to the cult. In one poignant example the maiden is carried away from a group of young women — a group to which she had very recently belonged.⁶⁸ This image exemplifies the experience of transition that I read in the Lokrian abduction scenes, an experience at once desired and feared.
- 35 The layering of natural and supernatural realities is not limited to the iconography of the abduction; the effect also frames representations of the worshipper's ritual encounters with the goddess, direct and mediated. The ritualized transition from girlhood to womanhood appears throughout the pinakes in scenes depicting the manipulation or dedication of objects relating to the nuptial preparations.⁶⁹ One subset of these includes a garment carried in procession or dedicated by a single female⁷⁰ while others depict the dedication of a ball, an act best understood as a *proteleia* sacrifice or the symbolic renunciation of childhood in preparation for marriage (Fig. 2).⁷¹ These scenes seem to take place in a sanctuary setting as identified by the ritual vessels — variously phiale, hydria, and oinochoe — on the walls and by the presence of a figure with cup and wand, usually identified as cult personnel, who either accompanies the dedicators or sits enthroned and receives the dedications, perhaps acting in *persona deae*. In a single pinax type, however, a larger-than-dedicator-sized, rooster-carrying figure appears in the throne usually occupied by the priestess. Whether this is meant as an epiphany or as a more symbolic assertion that Persephone herself will ultimately receive these offerings, the image suggests that the goddess will receive the dedications and enter into — or maintain? — a relationship with the dedicants.⁷²
- 36 However we parse the representations of dedication, the experience denoted by these images brought maidens at the cusp of change into contact with the goddess and that contact was of enough significance to be memorialized by the offering of a pinax. The potential for contact between goddess and worshipper is expressed even more emphatically in a series of scenes that bring a female worshipper, often accompanied by a male divinity, into the presence of Persephone enthroned.⁷³ In these scenes the female figure carries a ball or other offerings; the situation echoes a related group of

pinakes in which a variety of divinities stand before Persephone enthroned alone or with Hades and offer gifts.⁷⁴ The latter images are usually identified as mythical scenes in which divine well-wishers present wedding gifts to the newly married infernal rulers and greet Persephone in her new role as Underworld Queen.⁷⁵ The setting of the purely divine encounters, like the encounters between maiden and enthroned goddess, are somewhat ambiguous. Some of the pinakes depict columns while others have the hanging vessels that indicate interior space, still others lack ambient decoration. In terms of mythical logic, we might expect the gods to greet Persephone in her own kingdom, but the setting must remain undetermined.

- 37 If an intentional schematic parallel to the ‘wedding gift presentations’ is expressed in the scenes of mortal women making offerings to the enthroned goddess then a remarkable statement about the effects of worship is being made: the act of dedication transports a worshipper for a moment into the goddess’ own sphere, a place beyond the boundaries of usual lived human experience. Even without taking the necessarily shaky step of identifying the setting as the underworld, we can perceive a merging of the human/ritual experience of the sanctuary with the divine realm of the goddess. Through her association with Persephone the maiden achieves a fluidity in the boundaries of her experience, temporarily entering a decontextualized or mythologized space. Her encounter with the goddess has led her, briefly, beyond the world of human experience and allowed her to join in the company of the gods.⁷⁶ The visual transfer of the same ritual action from the sphere of the sanctuary to a scene dominated by Persephone herself highlights the worshipper’s expectation of a personal reception by the goddess.
- 38 It has been suggested that the approach to Persephone’s throne represents the experience of young women who died unmarried.⁷⁷ If this interpretation could be substantiated, the anticipated post-mortem reception would offer striking parallels to the reception into Persephone’s realm articulated in the gold leaves and draw a direct line between the transitional experiences of marriage and death, placing both firmly under Persephone’s care. As long as we are limited to the evidence available it is impossible to state with certainty whether the encounters with the goddess were accessible only to those worshippers who had died young — one dedicatory experience thereby supplanting another — or whether dedication during one’s life was also felt to effect this kind of intimate contact with the goddess.
- 39 In either case the importance of the goddess as partial model for her worshippers and as an enduring source of support is sufficient to motivate the conceptualization of such intimate encounters. There is no need to posit, as Mertens-Horn does, a central role for Bacchic mysteries within the rituals of the sanctuary, and to see the maidens as initiates, in order to explain these scenes.⁷⁸ While it is true that Dionysos appears in the *pinakes*, his presence need not be motivated by the mother-son relationship that Mertens-Horn reads between him and Persephone. She argues for Dionysos’ special status in the underworld predicated on this relationship, adducing the interaction between Hades, Persephone, and Dionysos on the fourth-century-BCE Toledo krater.⁷⁹ When Dionysos appears in the *pinakes* a century earlier, however, he fulfills the same roles as other divinities including Hermes and the Dioskouroi: he greets the enthroned goddess and accompanies the female dedicants. Like the Dioskouroi, Dionysos played an important role in the religious landscape of Lokri and — as is generally accepted of the Divine Twins — this regional importance is sufficient to explain his presence in the

corpus. Dionysos is no stranger to the sanctuary but Persephone remains the figure of central importance, the recipient of dedications and the source of hoped-for assistance.

- 40 The intimacy of the encounters between worshipper and goddess, whether perceived as mediated or unmediated, is reflected in the nature of the pinakes themselves. These were probably individual dedications, relatively cheaply made and acquired, chosen by a worshipper to hang within the sanctuary or in a few cases to take home or even bury in a grave.⁸⁰ Despite their mass-produced nature these dedications were personal, each one chosen by an individual worshipper to communicate her own relationship to her goddess. The balance of individual expression with formalized modes of interaction with the divine is evident in the gold leaves as well, and given the concerns reflected in each type of dedication this overlap is unsurprising. Whether we read the Lokrian dedications as expressive of a primarily nuptial context or explicitly associated with (premature) death as well, the individual dedications express the hopes of an individual and her dependence on Persephone as she approaches a personal moment of transition for which societal and ritual models had prepared her. The gold leaves, too, communicate the hopes of an individual expressed in terms of affiliation with a community to which they are bound by their chosen ritual commitments. As expressed in the pinakes, the Lokrian Persephone's accessibility to individual worshippers coupled with her powerful underworld status positions her as a figure with great potential resonance for the creators of the gold leaves.
- 41 We have seen that the concerns of the Lokrian goddess encompass nuptial preparations and the departure from childhood that precedes a marriage ceremony. Her purview also extends beyond the experience of marriage to the subsequent change when a bride becomes a mother. This kourotrophic aspect is visible in a series of pinakes depicting the goddess enthroned, holding on her lap a baby in a wicker basket (*Fig. 3*).⁸¹ The setting of these scenes, like the encounters between goddess and maiden, is loosely articulated: the context is not clearly cultic, but ritual vessels do appear. Multiple attempts to read the scene as a representation of myth have identified the child as Adonis, Dionysos, and even the Athenian Erichthonius.⁸² Each of these identifications can reasonably be argued, but none of them alone can satisfactorily explain the significance of the tableau. In the other scene identifiable from a single mythological context — that is the abduction of Persephone — the mythical action had a relevance for the dedicant, offering a metaphor or parallel for her own experience. On this model the babies, whichever mythological child they might also be, are the children of the recent Lokrian brides, now Lokrian wives. The protection of the goddess brings success in one of the primary goals of marriage — the creation of the next generation — and effects a safe transition to maternity.⁸³ One can imagine the dedications being offered at any of several stages — by brides hoping to conceive, by expectant mothers seeking a safe delivery, or as thanks after the birth of a child.
- 42 Sourvinou-Inwood suggested that the baby presentation scenes, rather than depicting a mythical parallel to the experience of Lokrian women, actually commemorated the dedication of Lokrian babies to the goddess.⁸⁴ If we pursue this ultimately unprovable reading, the unmediated reception of the baby by the goddess would point once more to the fluidity of experience between the worlds of life and death, mortals and immortals, evoked by the worship of Lokrian Persephone. Even if the dedication of the child to the goddess has no place in Lokrian ritual, the images could have been observed and radically reinterpreted for inclusion in the world of the gold leaves.

Specifically, as we saw in one of the leaves from Thurii (5, Thurii 3), the leaf-bearer claims to have descended beneath the lap of the goddess, an experience apparently associated with the special death that awaits the initiate. Mertens-Horn and Price have both suggested that the language from the leaf should be applied to the interpretation of other terracotta votives from Lokri and from Medma, a Lokrian foundation, which depict a seated female holding a diminutive winged figure on her lap; they take the text inscribed there as an excerpt from an earlier poem contemporary with the pinakes.⁸⁵ There is no solid evidence, however, that such a text — or any text — formed an interpretative core of the Lokrian cult. Moreover, an association with a single text limits the multivalence that characterizes the images on the pinakes and blurs the boundaries between the mythical experiences of the goddess and the mundane experiences of her worshippers.

- 43 The assimilation of individual human experience to the archetypal story of the goddess is re-individualized by the possibility of personal encounter between goddess and worshipper through the locus of the sanctuary. The Lokrian Persephone, as we can understand her through the pinakes, evokes a communication between the experiences of life and death even as her presence thins the boundary between the worlds of human and divine experience. A powerful underworld goddess, the Lokrian Persephone is also a beloved protector who accompanies her worshippers through the smaller deaths that accompany each self that is left behind. Associated with the experiences of change that mark ritualized moments of biological transition, this Persephone is poised to play a role in another narrative, one that underpins a chosen ritual transition to a chosen initiatory status. Her own story offers the paradoxical possibility of hope in death while her powerful underworld status and concern for moments of transition make her reception of the leaf-bearer after death a natural extension of her long-established place in the religious landscape of Magna Graecia.

Points of Contact

- 44 If we accept that shared conceptual models made the Lokrian Persephone a potent addition to the conceptual world of the gold tablets it nonetheless remains to ask how the creators of the leaves came into contact with this goddess and her cult. The cult, as described above, was famous and wealthy and this may have been sufficient to spread its influence across Magna Graecia.⁸⁶ The nature of the evidence is such that it is difficult to say whether the dedicants were primarily Lokrian women, but there is nothing to exclude the possibility of citizens of other cities coming to worship at Lokri and embracing elements of the cult.⁸⁷
- 45 The fame of the cult may be sufficient explanation for the dissemination of awareness of its goddess, but closer ties also exist between the sites of the leaves and the Lokrian cult. The Hipponion leaf offers the simplest explanation of all: a colony of Lokri, Hipponion had its own cult of Persephone with finds similar to those from La Mannella.⁸⁸ This is the oldest of the gold leaves discovered to date in Magna Graecia and it is potentially tempting to see here the entrance point of the Lokrian goddess into the universe of the gold leaves. In Sicily the Lokrian cult would have received increased attention after an allegiance was established between Lokri and Hieron in the early fifth century and again a century later when Dionysios I married a Lokrian woman.⁸⁹ The latter event is particularly rich in possibility, since it is easy to imagine that the

well-born wife insisted on continued intimacy with her local goddess and thereby spread familiarity with the cult within the Sicilian court.

- 46 For Thurii, the source of the remaining Magna Graecia tablets, the cultural connections are not equally evident. The city was only founded in the mid-fifth century and inhabited by Sybarites, Athenians, and settlers from elsewhere in Greece.⁹⁰ At the end of the fifth century the Athenians were expelled and this event might have precipitated a reemphasis on comparatively local tradition, like the worship of the great goddess of Lokri. In any case, three clay pinakes recently discovered at Thurii may show a technological link with the Lokrian cult.⁹¹ These pieces date to the mid-fourth century and are comparable in size, shape and production methods to the dedications found at Lokri and its colonies. These pinakes, like those at Lokri, seem to depict ritual scenes: Dionysos recumbent; a standing woman and a recumbent figure; a robed man offering a phiale. The cultic context of these images is highly uncertain, but it is possible that we have here another Thurian adaptation of Lokrian religious practice.

The Rooster or the Egg?

- 47 Earlier studies have often argued that, rather than there being a Lokrian Persephone in the gold leaves, there is actually a Dionysos in the Persephoneion. As described above, Dionysos is not absent from the pinakes, but his role is similar to that of Hermes or the Dioskouroi. It is due to the powerful gravitational pull exerted by decades of scholarship on the gold leaves that Dionysos has enjoyed outsized attention.⁹² Quagliati, one of the first to publish on the pinakes soon after their discovery, interpreted them as visual representations of the concepts expressed in what he terms the Orphic poems: death as the beginning of a journey followed by arrival in Hades where the initiates enjoy a blessed existence.⁹³ For him the Persephone of the pinakes is the great goddess of the underworld, defined by the eschatological system he imports as a key to interpret the images.⁹⁴ Following Quagliati, Oldfather emphasized the importance of Dionysos as a Chthonic deity whose presence in the pinakes marked them as belonging to the same increasingly influential 'Grabesreligion' indicated by the gold leaves.⁹⁵ These readings belong to the early twentieth century when the centrality of Dionysos for the communities associated with the leaves had not yet been established (though Oldfather and others had glimpsed it). The Pan-Orphic readings which underlie these interpretations focused on the Orphic doctrine as an eschatological stance that assured initiates a privileged status in the underworld as a result of their privileged knowledge. The link to the Persephone cult in these interpretations is her own nature as a 'chthonic' deity as well as her association with the 'chthonic' Dionysos. These readings recognize important points of contact but do not substantiate the claim that the nature of the Lokrian goddess adapted to the beliefs associated with the 'Orphic' traditions rather than the other way around.
- 48 As scholarship of the later twentieth century has shifted toward a consensus position that the gold leaves should be read in the context of Dionysiac initiation, ideas about the relationship between the leaves and Lokrian cult have not been dramatically revised. Looking to elements shared by the pinakes and the gold leaves, scholars continue to emphasize Dionysos' presence in the pinakes as proof of influence upon Persephone's Lokrian cult. None of these more recent arguments, however, analyzes the shared material in a way that proves priority in one direction or the other. In 1969

Price, as described above, hypothesized the existence of a longer poetic text from which the passages on the gold leaves were drawn and argued that votive dedications from Medma are actually evidence for the existence and popularity of these texts a century before the oldest gold leaf is attested.⁹⁶ In her subsequent work on kourotrophic deities from 1978, Price shows some of the thinking that influenced her earlier article when she conflates the two spheres of religious practice by calling Persephone “the deity *par excellence* of the Orphics” and identifying her consort as her ‘chthonic’ spouse “Plouto-Dionysos”.⁹⁷ More recently, Mertens-Horn has argued on similar lines that Persephone’s nature at Lokri, particularly her association with the underworld, is conditioned by the initiatory experience that maidens experience under the auspices of Dionysos as part of the ritual of the sanctuary.⁹⁸

- 49 There is no question that Dionysos played an important role in Lokrian religion but, like Demeter, his Lokrian presence was not primarily associated with the cult of Persephone. Dionysos appears with some regularity in the grave goods of the Lucifero cemetery as well as in the iconography of the Cave of the Nymphs.⁹⁹ In both cases the Dionysian imagery looks to contexts distinct from the cult of Persephone: the grave goods draw on the longstanding practice of including symposiastic material in male burials and the material associated with the nymphs contains theatrical referents. Dionysos’ presence in these ritual complexes does not substantiate a close affiliation with the cult of the Persephoneion. Gianelli argued that Lokri was a hotbed of Orphic activity in the 6th and 5th centuries and, at some point in this period, coopted the pre-existing Persephone cult as a manifestation of Orphic beliefs. In addition to the problematic nature of the designation ‘Orphic’, this position envisions a significant reorientation of a major Lokrian cult in response to *arriviste* religious practices. While cultic identity does change over the centuries, the wholesale reconfiguration of a major polis cult is a claim that requires more evidence than a confluence of iconography.¹⁰⁰ A more nuanced interpretation, a line that Giangiulio argues, is that the Dionysiac associations visible at Lokri point to a complicated wave of developments in personal eschatology and funerary representation throughout Magna Graecia.¹⁰¹
- 50 It is through such multifaceted eschatological and ritual contexts that we should understand the development of the gold leaves themselves as well as, perhaps, some of the interest in Dionysos at the Persephoneion. This aspect may be expressed in a very popular pinax type in which the atmosphere is emphatically Dionysiac, with the whole image wreathed in vines and grapes.¹⁰² This image belongs to the scenes of gods making offerings to Persephone or Persephone and Hades and may express a confluence of local religious beliefs which would make the meeting of these local deities simultaneously a natural and impressive occurrence. These images may well draw on the same strata of thought that would inspire the texts of the gold leaves. If this is the case, however, they are adapted and integrated into the existing cult of Persephone and do not fundamentally alter the longstanding nature or centrality of the goddess.
- 51 The evidence of the Dionysian pinax shows that Dionysian cult can be limitedly integrated into the mythological landscape of the Persephoneion. His presence in that cult, thus interpreted, provides a mirror image for the model proposed here of Lokrian Persephone’s influence on the gold leaves. Through her regional importance and presence in the mental landscape of potential initiates, Persephone offered a powerful mythological element to the ritual practitioners who created the gold leaves: a reference point which familiarized the novel ritual glimpsed in the texts of the leaves.

A vibrant, present goddess, she wove the universe of the leaves into the existing religious landscape of Magna Graecia. The leaves offer hints of ritual complexes which expressed individual hopes and depended on the emotional engagement of the initiates who bore them. By reading the Lokrian Persephone into the leaves I have endeavoured to complicate our perception of patterns of influence and to ask what help local religious landscapes can offer in our continuing explorations of the mysteries of the gold leaves.

Conclusion

- 52 In arguing for the inclusion of the Lokrian Persephone in the interpretive apparatus we bring to the gold leaves, I emphasize the cooperative rather than exclusive possibilities. The presence of Lokrian overtones in the initiatory texts enriches and familiarizes the goddess, binding the practices of the initiates into the fabric of their existing religious worlds. By populating their underworld landscape with a goddess familiar to and loved by her local worshippers, the purveyors of gold leaves in the Greek west could draw on a strain of religious sentiment that had for centuries offered worshippers a powerful protectress. By perceiving the Lokrian goddess in this subcorpus of leaves we can better understand the hopes encoded in their enigmatic lines.

Fig. 1. The goddess enthroned, regal and assured in the company of her consort. *PLE III.v*, Fig. 29 (type 8/31)

WITH THANKS TO THE SOCIETÀ MAGNA GRECIA FOR THEIR KIND PERMISSION.

Fig. 2. A maiden presents a ball and other objects to the priestess. *PLE II.v*, Fig. 36 (type 5/19)

WITH THANKS TO THE SOCIETÀ MAGNA GRECIA FOR THEIR KIND PERMISSION.

Fig. 3. The goddess lifts the lid of the basket to reveal a child. *PLE III.v*, Fig. 46 (type 9/1)

WITH THANKS TO THE SOCIETÀ MAGNA GRECIA FOR THEIR KIND PERMISSION.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A.N. ATHANASSAKIS and B.M. WOLKOW, *The Orphic Hymns*, Baltimore, 2013.
- A. BERNABÉ, A.I. JIMÉNEZ. "Are the 'Orphic' Gold Leaves Orphic?," in R.G. EDMONDS (ed.), *"Orphic" Gold Tablets and Greek Religion: Further along the Path*, Cambridge, 2011, p. 68–101.
- , *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets*, Leiden/Boston, 2008.
- , "La toile de Pénélope : a-t-il existé un mythe orphique sur Dionysos et les Titans ?" *RHR* 219.4 (2002), p. 401–433.
- G. BETEGH, "The 'Great Tablet' From Thurii (OF 492)," in M. HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI, A.I. JIMÉNEZ SAN CRISTÓBAL, E.R. LUJÁN MARTÍNEZ, R.M. HERNÁNDEZ, M.A. SANTAMARÍA ÁLVAREZ and S. TORALLAS TOVAR (eds.), *Tracing Orpheus: Studies of Orphic Fragments in Honour of Alberto Bernabé*, Berlin/Boston, 2011, p. 219–225.
- H.D. BETZ, "Der Erde Kind bin ich und des gestirnten Himmels': Zur Lehre vom Menschen in den orphischen Goldplättchen," in F. GRAF (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert, Castelen bei Basel, 15. bis 18. März 1996*, Stuttgart/Leipzig, 2008, p. 399–419.
- A. BOTTINI, *Archeologia Della Salvezza*, Milano, 1992.
- C. CALAME, "Les Lamelles funéraires d'or : textes pseudo-orphiques et pratiques rituelles," *Kernos* 21, (2008), p. 303–308.
- G. CAMASSA, "Passione e rigenerazione. Dioniso e Persefone nelle lamine 'orfiche'," in A.C. CASSIO, P. POCETTI (eds.), *Forme di religiosità e tradizioni sapienziali in Magna Grecia. Atti del Convegno: Napoli, 14-15 Dicembre 1993*, Pisa/Rome, 1995, p. 171–182.
- L. CERCHIAI, L. JANNELLI, F. LONGO, *The Greek Cities of Magna Graecia and Sicily*, Los Angeles, 2004.
- D. COMPARETTI and C. SMITH, "The Petelia Gold Tablet," *JHS* 3 (1882), p. 111–118.
- M. DILLON, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion*, London/New York, 2002.
- R.G. EDMONDS. *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the "Orphic" Gold Tablets*, New York, 2004.
- , "Tearing Apart the Zagreus Myth: A Few Disparaging Remarks on Orphism and Original Sin," *ClAnt* 18 (1999), p. 35–73.
- G. FERRARI, "What kind of rite of passage was the ancient Greek wedding?," in D. DODD and C. FARAONE (eds.), *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives*, London/New York, 2003, p. 27–42.
- M. GIANGIULIO, "Le laminette auree nella cultura religiosa della Calabria greca: continuità e innovazione," in S. SETTIS (ed.), *Storia della Calabria: la Calabria antica, II. Età italica e romana*, Rome, 1994, p. 9–53.
- G. GIANNELLI, *Culti e miti della Magna Grecia. Contributo alla storia più antica delle colonie greche in Occidente*, Firenze, 1963.
- J. GOULD, "Hiketeia," *JHS* 93 (1973), p. 74–103.
- F. GRAF, "Text and Ritual: The Corpus Eschatologicum of the Orphics," in R.G. EDMONDS (ed.), *"Orphic" Gold Tablets and Greek Religion: Further along the Path*, Cambridge, 2011, p. 53–67.

- , “Dionysian and Orphic Eschatology: New Texts and Old Questions,” in T. CARPENTER and C. FARAONE (eds.), *Masks of Dionysos*, Ithaca, 1993, p. 239–258.
- F. GRAF, S.I. JOHNSTON, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*, London/New York, 2013².
- A. HENRICHs, “Dionysos Dismembered and Restored to Life: The Earliest Evidence (OF 59 I–II),” in M. HERRERO DE JÁUREGUI, A.I. JIMÉNEZ SAN CRISTÓBAL, E.R. LUJÁN MARTÍNEZ, R.M. HERNÁNDEZ, M.A. SANTAMARÍA ÁLVAREZ and S. TORALLAS TOVAR (eds.), *Tracing Orpheus: Studies of Orphic Fragments in Honour of Alberto Bernabé*, Berlin/Boston, 2011, p. 61–68.
- V. HINZ, *Der Kult von Demeter und Kore auf Sizilien und in der Magna Graecia*, Wiesbaden, 1998.
- J. HOLZHAUSEN, “Pindar Und Die Orphik. Zu Frg. 133 Snell/Maehler,” *Hermes* 132 (2004), p. 20–36.
- S.I. JOHNSTON – T. MCNIVEN, “Dionysos and the Underworld in Toledo,” *MH* 53 (1996), p. 25–36.
- C. LÉVI-STRAUSS, *The Savage Mind*, Chicago, 1968 (originally published as *La pensée sauvage*, Paris, 1962).
- E. LISSI CARONNA, C. SABBIONE and L. VLAD BORRELLI (eds.), *I Pinakes di Locri Epizefiri. Musei di Reggio Calabria e di Locri. Atti e Memorie de la Società Magna Grecia*, ser. 4, vol. 1–3, Roma, Società Magna Grecia, 1996–2007.
- H. LLOYD-JONES, “Pindar and the After-Life,” in D.E. GERBER and A. HURST (eds.), *Pindare: huit exposés suivis de discussions*, Geneva, 1985, p. 245–283.
- B. MACLACHLAN, “Women and Nymphs at the Grotta Caruso,” in G. CASADIO and P.A. JOHNSTON (eds.), *Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia*, Austin, 2009, p. 204–216.
- M. MERTENS-HORN, “Initiation und Mädchenraub am Fest der lokrischen Persephone,” *MDAI(R)* 112 (2005/6), p. 7–77.
- F.S. NAIDEN, *Ancient Supplication*, New York, 2006.
- W.A. OLDFATHER, “Funde Aus Lokroi,” *Philologus* 69 (1910), p. 114–125.
- P. ORSI, “Locri Epizephyrii. Campagne di Scavo nella Necropoli Lucifero negli Anni 1914 e 1915,” *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* 14 (1917), p. 101–167.
- , “Locri Epizefiri: resoconto sulla terza campagna di scavi locresi,” *Bollettino d’Arte* 3 (1909), p. 1–42.
- R. PARKER, “Early Orphism,” in A. POWELL (ed.), *The Greek World*, New York, 1995, p. 483–510.
- M. PETROPOULOS, “Greek Excavations in Sibari,” in *Alle origini della Magna Grecia: mobilità, migrazioni, fondazioni: atti del cinquantesimo Convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto, 1–4 Ottobre 2010*, Taranto, 2012, p. 1453–1475.
- V.J. PLATT, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion*, Cambridge, UK/New York, 2011.
- T.H. PRICE, *Kourotrophos: Cults and Representations of the Greek Nursing Deities*, Leiden, 1978.
- , “‘To the Groves of Persephoneia...’ a Group of ‘Medma’ Figurines,” *AK* 12 (1969), p. 51–55.
- G. PUGLIESE CARRATELLI, “L’orfismo in Magna Grecia,” in G. PUGLIESE CARRATELLI (ed.), *Magna Grecia: vita religiosa e cultura letteraria, filosofica e scientifica*, Milan, 1988, p. 159–170.
- Q. QUAGLIATI, “Rilievi votivi arcaici in terracotta di Lokroi Epizephyrioi,” *Ausonia* 3 (1908), p. 136–234.

- J. REDFIELD, *The Locrian Maidens: Love and Death in Greek Italy*, Princeton, 2003.
- , “The Politics of Immortality,” in P. BORGEAUD (eds.), *Orphisme et Orphée, en l’honneur de Jean Rudhardt*, Geneva, 1991, p. 103–117.
- R. REHM, *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994.
- C. RIEDWEG, “Initiation-Death-Underworld. Narrative and Ritual in the Gold Leaves,” in R.G. EDMONDS (ed.), *The “Orphic” Gold Tablets and Greek Religion: Further along the Path*, Cambridge, 2011, p. 219–256.
- , “Poésie orphique et rituel initiatique. Éléments d’un « Discours sacré » dans les lamelles d’or,” *RHR* 219 (2002), p. 459–481.
- , “Initiation-Tod-Unterwelt: Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituationen und narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblättchen,” in F. GRAF (eds.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert, Castelen bei Basel, 15. bis 18. März 1996*, Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1998, p. 359–98.
- M. RUBINICH, “Stranieri e non cittadini nei Santuari di Locri Epizefiri e delle sue subcolonie,” in A. NASO (ed.), *Stranieri e non cittadini nei santuari greci*, Grassano (Firenze), 2006, p. 396–409.
- R. SCHENAL PILEGGI, *I pinakes di Locri Epizefiri*, Reggio Calabria, 2011.
- R. SEAFORD, “The Tragic Wedding,” *JHS* 107 (1987), p. 106–130.
- C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD, “Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri: A Model for Personality Definitions in Greek Religion,” *JHS* 98 (1978), p. 101–121 [republished in *‘Reading’ Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths*, Oxford, 1991, p. 58–98].
- , “A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings,” *JHS* 107 (1987), p. 131–153 [republished in *‘Reading’ Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths*, Oxford, 1991, p. 147–188].
- M. TORELLI, “I Culti,” in S. SETTIS (ed.), *Storia della Calabria Antica*, Roma/Reggio Calabria, 1987, p. 591–611.
- M. TORTORELLI GHIDINI, *Figli della terra e del cielo stellato: testi orfici con traduzione e commento*, Napoli, 2006.
- , “Visioni escatologiche in Magna Grecia,” in A.C. CASSIO, P. POCCETTI (eds.), *Forme di religiosità e tradizioni sapienziali in Magna Grecia. Atti del Convegno: Napoli, 14–15 Dicembre 1993*, Pisa/Rome, 1995, p. 207–217.
- Y. TZIFOPOULOS, *Paradise Earned: The Bacchic-Orphic Gold Lamellae of Crete*, Washington, D.C./Cambridge, Mass., 2010.
- M.L. WEST, *The Orphic Poems*, Oxford, 1983.
- , “Zum neuen Goldblättchen aus Hipponion,” *ZPE* 18 (1975), p. 229–236.
- P. ZANCANI MONTUORO, “Il Rapitore di Kore nel mito Locrese,” *Rendiconti della Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere ed Arti* 29 (new series) (1954a), p. 79–86.
- , “Note sui Soggetti e sulla Technica delle Tabelle di Locri,” *Atti e Memorie della Società Magna Grecia* n.s. 1, (1954b), p. 71–106.
- G. ZUNTZ, *Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*, Oxford, 1971.

NOTES

1. .The tensions inherent in the adjectives ‘Orphic’ and ‘Bacchic’ are visible in the title of GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013): *Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*. The Pythagorean orientation advanced by ZUNTZ (1971), p. 335–343, 385–393 is now widely rejected, though see REDFIELD (1991). The relevance and relationships of the other adjectives are discussed below. This opening line appears on leaves 5–7. Numbering of the leaves throughout follows GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013).
2. .Diodorus Siculus, 27.4.2.
3. .A few dedications refer to her simply as ‘the goddess’: HINZ (1998), p. 205–206.
4. .Leaves 3–7, 1, 8.
5. .In support of a unified context for the tablets: RIEDWEG (2002); BETZ (2008); BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 179–205, and BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2011). RIEDWEG (1998) takes a narratological approach to situating individual leaves within an overarching narrative context. EDMONDS (2004), p. 36–46, remains a notable exception to this trend. TORTORELLI GHIDINI (1995), in a move related to what I suggest here, begins from the premise of a single model and asks how the effect of local contexts can account for variations within the texts.
6. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 50–65, provide a comprehensive overview of the history of scholarship.
7. .BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2011) consider the leaves expressions of Orphic practice and distinguish emphatically between Orphism as a ‘religion of the book’ and Dionysiac cult in which the initiate experiences ritual but does not acquire knowledge. TORTORELLI GHIDINI (2006) publishes them as part of a corpus of Orphic texts. RIEDWEG (2011) and TZIFOPOULOS (2010) use the term ‘Orphic-Bacchic’; CALAME (2008), p. 301, objects to this hybrid on the grounds that it establishes a category unknown to ancient experience.
8. .I use the phrase ‘Dionysiac mystery cult’ to differentiate the practices in question from public worship of Dionysos, e.g. the Attic Dionysia or Anthesteria. On the Bacchic orientation of the leaves see GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013); RIEDWEG (1998); CALAME (2008). BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), maintaining a distinction between Orphic and Dionysiac cult, nevertheless refer to the “Bacchic mysteries of the Orphics” (p. 181). PARKER (1995), p. 496–498, also recognizes the initiation referred to in the leaves as Dionysian but sees the leaves as “in some sense Orphic texts.” On the corpus of Orphic poems see WEST (1983).
9. .For near-contemporary usage of ‘orpheotelestai’ see Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.12; Plato, *Republic* 364b–365a for a (negative) depiction of these figures. PARKER (1995), e.g., employs the term with due caution while CALAME (2008), p. 308, argues that we should distinguish *bricoleurs* working in Dionysiac tradition from anyone affiliated with Orphic practices.
10. .Cf. REDFIELD (1991), p. 106: “For the Greeks «Orpheus» was most often a literary persona; Orpheus was a name, like Homer, Hesiod, or Theognis, to which certain kinds of poems could be attributed.”
11. .GRAF (2011).
12. .The appreciation of local influence also points to the non-exclusivity of these cultic affiliations (a point long accepted for polis cult, but less universally in terms of the gold leaves). The Hipponion tablet, for example, was found in a grave that had some idiosyncrasies but was broadly similar to those surrounding it (which did not contain leaves): BOTTINI (1992), p. 51–52. On potential glimpses of self-described Orphics see PARKER (1995), p. 484–485, *pace* CALAME (2008), p. 301.
13. .See *supra*, n. 5.
14. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 57, 65.
15. .Persephone has been variously conceptualized as the “protagonist” of the leaves (BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ [2011], p. 90–91) and as “a divinity who protects the initiates and plays a fundamental role

in their salvation” (BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ [2008], p. 70); she has been paralleled to Hades as “a ruler of the Underworld to whom a soul must present itself and its credentials for safe passage” (this in the majority of the leaves, contrasted with a leaf from Pherae (leaf 27) (GRAF – JOHNSTON [2013], p. 199) and interpreted as a figure in whom Orphic and Eleusinian conceptions come together: the “queen of Hades is the person who decides about the future destiny after death” (GRAF [1993], p. 242).

16. .BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2011).

17. .E.g. ATHANASSAKIS – WOLKOW (2013): *Hymn* 29. For models of the dating of these hymns and possible genetic relationships with earlier compositions see WEST (1983).

18. .How did this eschatological myth develop? In GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 70–73, Johnston develops the idea of an individual whom she terms the *bricoleur* crafting this cultic *aition*; that is, making independent artistic choices as would a Euripides or a Phidias. I see a related process occurring repeatedly as the core traditions are adapted to different local practices and expectations.

19. .First discussed in connection with the leaves by COMPARETTI – SMITH (1882). See GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 66–93 on this mythic complex, esp. p. 66–67 for the myth as told by Olympiodorus, *In Platonis Phaedonem*, 1.3 (6th c. AD) and an extended version integrating elements from other sources (on which see their notes *ad. loc.*). For a consideration of references in earlier literature, including Pindar, fr. 133 (ed. Maehler) = Plato, *Meno*, 81 b — on which more below —, Plato, *Laws*, 701 b and 854 b; *Phaedo*, 62 b; *Cratylus*, 400 c, and Xenokrates, fr. 219 (ed. Parente), see BERNABÉ (2002), p. 416–420. HENRICH (2011) emphasizes the importance of Philodemos (*OF* 59 I–II, ed. Bernabé) for the debate. All of this *pace* EDMONDS (1999) who rejects the idea of sinful humans with a Dionysiac divine spark as a creation of the 19th c. CE.

20. .Plato, *Meno*, 81 b. For potential ties to a Pythagorean milieu cf. Empedocles, fr. 115 (ed. Diels – Kranz).

21. .On this fragment and its potential representation of the Orphic mother/son relationship see LLOYD-JONES (1985) who posits a cautious connection and HOLZHAUSEN (2004) who roundly rejects the validity of the fragment as evidence for the early existence of this myth.

22. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 70–73. Johnston takes the term from LÉVI-STRAUSS (1962).

23. .For EDMONDS (2004), p. 64–82, this reading has gender and class implications which I would want to approach carefully: the grand tombs at Thurii, especially, do not seem to indicate poverty or the social marginalization he depicts. His point stands, though, that engagement with this religious community indicates an active choice on the part of the initiate. BETZ (2008), p. 400, uses the term *esoterisch* to highlight the inward-oriented direction of the texts as opposed to the *exoterisch* grave inscriptions which speak to whomever of the living encounters the grave.

24. .ZUNTZ (1971), p. 287–393.

25. .ZUNTZ (1971), p. 312–313.

26. .EDMONDS (2004), p. 57–61.

27. .The only leaf from Magna Graecia that does not fit this pattern is one from Petelia (2). Its provenance is in any case problematic — itself fourth century BCE, it was found tucked within an imperial amulet (which it had been cut to fit). The final lines of text are fragmentary and — uniquely — refer to writing as well as verbally addressing the guardians of the spring.

28. .Leaf 9. For this text see BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 133–135; PUGLIESE CARRATELLI (1988), p. 168–169, on its implications for the survival of these eschatological precepts.

29. .Translations are my own, but stand on more than a century of textual editions and interpretative traditions.

30. .The two leaves are very close but not identical: where variation exists I have included the differing text of leaf 7 in parentheses.

31. .By using ‘consort’ here to describe a hypothetical Hades I am highlighting Persephone’s regal status and independent power (without indicating that Hades himself is subservient). SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 103, uses the same language in dealing with Lokrian cult, as does SCHENAL PILEGGI (2011), p. 35 (“consorte”).
32. .For possible identifications see ZUNTZ (1971), p. 310–311; BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 102–110.
33. .Cf. GOULD (1973) who identified *xenia* as the outcome of supplication; NAIDEN (2006) recognizes the ties established between suppliant and *supplicandus* but emphasizes the potential for resulting asymmetrical relationships.
34. .Leaves 26 a and b.
35. .CAMASSA (1995) explains all instances of ‘falling into milk’ as the identification of the *mystes* with Dionysos, but does not offer a convincing explanation for Persephone’s primacy in the Thurii leaves (though it is noted).
36. .Homer, *Odyssey* 10.491, 534, 564; 11.47. *Odyssey* 10.508–512 seems to distinguish between Persephone’s groves and the house of Hades, but nothing is stated about which souls, if any, inhabit Persephone’s realm.
37. .Leaf 4. BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 139–141, argue for approaching the text as a kind of ‘word-search’; cf. BETEGH (2011), p. 221–222.
38. .BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 148: ‘counselor’ is an epithet of Zeus (*Il.* 8.22; 17.339) and functions as a reference to the Orphic context that has him impregnate Persephone.
39. .Until her appearance in the later *Orphic Hymn* 29 (line 6).
40. .Leaves 25, 29; 10–14, 16, 18.
41. .BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 245–248, as also WEST (1975), p. 233.
42. .*Hymn*, 29.6.
43. .BERNABÉ – JIMÉNEZ (2008), p. 48–49.
44. .Orthography in the leaves varies widely; or as ZUNTZ (1971), p. 291, puts it, “the writing on [one of the Thurii tablets] is, to say it in one word, a scandal.”
45. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 16–17.
46. .Eleutherna: leaves 10–14; Mylopatomos: 16; Rethymnon: 18. Both of these latter leaves contain the ‘earth and starry sky’ formula, but with intriguing additions: the Rethymnon leaf includes the vocative ‘μᾶτηρ’ (I am of earth, mother, and of starry sky) and the Mylopotamos leaf ‘θυγάτηρ’ (I am the daughter of earth and starry sky) — the presence of the mother/daughter imagery would be worth investigating — elsewhere.
47. .Leaves 15, 17.
48. .Amphipolis: leaf 30. One of the Persephone greetings is from Pella/Dion (31, late 4th century), the other from Aigai (37, Hellenistic); the greeting to ‘the Lord’ is also Hellenistic, from Hagios Athanasios (38).
49. .Leaf 25 (Pharsalus), 29 (unknown location in Thessaly).
50. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 36–37, translate Βάκχιος αὐτὸς as ‘the Bacchic one himself’ and understand this to refer to Bacchos/Dionysos.
51. .EDMONDS (2004), p. 57–61; GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 131–133.
52. .Cf. GRAF (1993), p. 251–253.
53. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 196–200.
54. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 204.
55. .GRAF – JOHNSTON (2013), p. 199. She points out that Brimo in conjunction with the other deities mentioned here appears as well in the Gurôb papyrus, suggesting that this complex of divinities resonated beyond Pherae.
56. .Dating: ceramics from as early as c. 700 BCE appear at the site with dedications increasing c. 600 BCE (HINZ [1998], p. 205). Pillaging: Pyrrhus: Livy, 29.18.3–6, Valerius Maximus, 1.1.ext. 1;

Pleminius: Diodorus Siculus, 27.4.1, Valerius Maximus, 1.1.21; Dionysius: Valerius Maximus, 1.1. ext. 3.

57. .Livy, 29.18.16–17. As a side note, this defensive behavior suggests that this Persephone has a defensive aspect similar to that of Hera at Kroton or Athena at Sybaris (see HINZ [1998], p. 213–215).

58. .HINZ (1998), p. 204–205.

59. .SEAFORD (1987), p. 106–107, for an overview of the evidence; especially interesting is the *makarismos* which he identifies as a response to a maiden's transition to wife and which we also see in the transitions described in the gold leaves. REHM (1994) also deals with the appearance of marriage in tragedy, but argues that it was the resonances between marriage and death in external experience that rendered the tragic representations potent.

60. .Demeter's absence: REDFIELD (2003), p. 209, 368. There is exactly one pinax-type (PLE 10/6) — numbering of the pinakes throughout follows PLE — that seems to depict Demeter, but there are also plenty that show other divinities (PLE group 10) that do not play a central role in the sanctuary. A separate Demeter sanctuary has been identified at Contrada Parapezza: HINZ (1998), p. 206–208.

61. .These votives include fruit (especially pomegranates), flowers and buds, wreaths, roosters, and doves. Small standing figures holding attributes of fruit, flowers, wreaths, or small birds (especially roosters or doves) were frequent sixth century dedications. Clay models of these same fruits, flowers, etc. appear as late-fifth-century dedications, along with figurines of naked men and women and relief figures (successors to the pinakes?) carrying ritual apparatus: HINZ (1998), p. 205. The fruit and flowers clearly speak to fertility, but also to Persephone's abduction: see Strabo, 6.1.5 for Kore's flower gathering at Hipponion as model for ritual activity; the pomegranate is not connected to Persephone's entrapment by Hades (absent from this myth) but does appear at least once in the grave goods from the Lucifero cemetery, held by a female figure at the top of a bronze shaft: ZUNTZ (1971), p. 172, Fig. 3. For another connection of pomegranate and underworld cf. the Spartan Chrysaphe relief described by DILLON (2002), p. 34, as a hero-relief and by REDFIELD (2003), p. 377–378, as a representation of Persephone and Hades. On roosters see MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 17, who identifies the rooster as an initiatory symbol and points to the presence of rooster figurines in graves in other contexts and SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 108, who notes the rooster's representation of both male sexuality and death.

62. .SCHENAL PILEGGI (2011), p. 7–10: more than 5300 fragments which allow the reconstruction of more than 170 types of scenes.

63. .Debate continues over the correct interpretation of these scenes in terms of their individual content and the insights that can be gleaned from various relationships and combinations among them. This debate should only be fueled by the recent publication of the full corpus in PLE.

64. .Though it would be a worthy endeavour, it is not my purpose here to fully explicate the cultic acts of the Lokrian Persephoneion, nor to account for all of the many and varied images across the corpus. For one reconstruction of cult practice with a wealth of comparative material that is sometimes applied perhaps too readily see MERTENS-HORN (2005/6).

65. .PLE II.3 p. 242–243 n. 67: “Di questi tre livelli soltanto il primo ha una dimensione esclusivamente mitica, gli altri due prevedono una descrizione puntuale, ma pur sempre idealizzata, di eventi reali; tuttavia, essi sono probabilmente sempre compresenti e in nessuna scena è possibile disgiungerli decisamente fra loro.”

66. .PLE Group 2. MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 56–60, has recently argued that some variations on this motif (i.e. the abductor chasing the maiden on foot) are totally incompatible with the story of Hades emerging from the earth on his chariot and snatching the maiden (Kore, not yet Persephone) as she picks flowers. She bases this argument, however, on the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, a text that probably had little to do with the details of this cult or this marriage. I

cannot, for this and other reasons, agree with her (extraordinarily learned) argument that these images are primarily representations not of the Persephone myth at all, but reminiscences of the foundation of Lokri by aristocratic women carried off by lower-class men while their husbands were away at war. For further discussion of erotic pursuits — this time in an Athenian context — see SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1987).

67. This is what ZANCANI MONTUORO (1954a) argued with the belief that they were purely mythological scenes (she also identifies the snatcher as one of the *Dioskouroi*); SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 104–105, understood the scenes as reflecting myth (Persephone's marriage) and human experience (marriage for the Lokrian maidens). For QUAGLIATI (1908), p. 153–215, the abductions represent death metaphorically equated to marriage.

68. Terrified bride: PLE 2/2, 2/4, 2/5, 2/7–9, 2/16, 2/18–19, 2/22; willing bride: 2/12, 2/13, 2/15, 2/20, 2/28; departure from group of maidens: 2/3.

69. PLE Group 5.

70. SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 113–114, sees the processions as the presentation of Persephone's nuptial *peplos*, while the 'offering girls' scenes indicate their own nuptial rituals. MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 28–32, argues that the significance of the garment should be sought not in nuptial but in funerary rites. FERRARI (2003), p. 33, considers this garment another instance of the mantle in which the bride is commonly wrapped.

71. On *proteleia* see DILLON (2002), p. 213–217. These same goddesses appear as *kourotrophoi*, a role that Persephone plays at Lokri as well and which strengthens the internal logic of the *proteleia* sacrifice.

72. On these distinctions see PLATT (2011), esp. p. 36–37.

73. PLE 8/25, 8/26, 8/28, 8/29.

74. PLE Group 8.

75. ZANCANI MONTUORO (1954 a), p. 79–90, reads these scenes as mythological events; SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 106–107, agrees and extends the mythological significance to the human institution of marriage; see also SCHENAL PILEGGI (2011), p. 35.

76. SCHENAL PILEGGI (2011), p. 35, has suggested that the female figure is the bride-to-be with the heroic/divine figure projected in place of her human husband.

77. MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 117–118; REDFIELD (2003), p. 372 (specifically in reference to PLE 8/29) takes the same line.

78. MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 45–46.

79. On the krater and its iconography, see JOHNSTON – MCNIVEN (1996).

80. Equipped with one or two holes for hanging: ORSI (1909), p. 17. Homes and graves: ZUNTZ (1971), p. 165.

81. PLE Group 9.

82. PLE III.3 (2007), p. 556–559, offers an overview of the iconography and its difficulties. Identifications of the child include: Erichthonius: QUAGLIATI (1908), p. 195–196; Iakchos (by association with Persephone, drawn from an Eleusinian context): ORSI (1909), p. 31; Adonis: TORELLI (1987), p. 602; Dionysos: GIANNELLI (1963), p. 192–193, following OLDFATHER (1910), p. 121–122, MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 47.

83. The objection has been raised that these children are all male and so cannot represent the unique presentations of the individual women, but this concern discounts the idealized nature of the scenes. For the possibility that both sexes are represented: QUAGLIATI (1908), p. 195–196, also SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 114–115, who believes that at least one instance can be clearly identified as female. (And we should recall that even in-the-flesh babies are notoriously difficult to gender-identify unless they have been intentionally labeled.)

84. SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1978), p. 116–117.

85. MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 39–40; PRICE (196), p. 53–45 and (1978), p. 175.

86. .See *supra*, n. 56.
87. .RUBINICH (2006), p. 402–403, sees this as likely; REDFIELD (2003), p. 219, esp. n. 44 on Lokri's potential influence on its neighbors despite its very limited exports; these included two pieces of Lokrian art that might indicate external interest in the eschatology of the Persephoneion.
88. .HINZ (1998), p. 210–212.
89. .CERCHIAI – JANNELLI – LONGO (2004), p. 92.
90. .Diodorus Siculus, 12.10.3–4.
91. .PETROPOULOS (2012), p. 1458–1462.
92. .For a more extensive history of this scholarship see MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 36–37.
93. .QUAGLIATI (1908), p. 138–140; 208–211.
94. .QUAGLIATI (1908), p. 196–208.
95. .OLDFATHER (1910), esp. p. 115, 124–125: “Wir sehen ein ganzes Volk in tiefer Weise von orphisch-mystischen Gedanken durchdrungen.”
96. .PRICE (1969).
97. .PRICE (1978), p. 171–172; TORTORELLI GHIDINI (1995), in contrast, sees in the Lokrian iconography evidence of the ‘Zeus, Dionysos, Persephone’ triad.
98. .MERTENS-HORN (2005/6), p. 68–69.
99. .Lucifero: ORSI (1917), e.g. Fig. 1; 11; Grotto of the Nymphs: MACLACHLAN (2009), p. 212–214.
100. .GIANNELLI (1963).
101. .GIANGIULIO (1994); GIANNELLI (1963), p. 194–196, sees the late sixth and early fifth century votives at the Persephoneion as evidence for a flourishing Orphic practice at Lokri, though he argues that the Lokrian cult of Persephone developed outside of an Orphic context before being chosen by Orphics at Lokri as a manifestation of their beliefs.
102. .PLE 8/26.

ABSTRACTS

This article argues for a reevaluation of the goddess Persephone as she appears in a subcorpus of the funerary gold leaves. It is argued that the presence of the regionally powerful Lokrian Persephone shaped the representation of the goddess in the leaves crafted for consumption in Magna Graecia. Representations of myth and cult on the clay tablets (*pinakes*) dedicated to this goddess reveal not only a ‘Chthonian Queen,’ but also a deity concerned with the spheres of marriage and childbirth. These competencies evoked resonances with the concepts of transition and rebirth expressed in the texts of the gold leaves. Through her regional importance Lokrian Persephone functioned as a familiar figure, capable of anchoring the innovative and individualized initiatory experience expressed in the leaves within the existing fabric of local belief.

en

La présente étude entreprend de réévaluer la figure de la déesse Perséphone telle qu'elle apparaît dans une partie du corpus des lamelles funéraires en or. Il s'agit de montrer que l'importance régionale de la Perséphone de Locres a contribué à la représentation de la déesse dans les lamelles destinées à être utilisées en Grande Grèce. Des représentations mythiques et culturelles sur les tablettes en terre cuite (*pinakes*) dédiées à cette déesse révèlent non seulement une « reine

chtonienne », mais aussi une divinité concernée par les sphères du mariage et de la naissance. Ces compétences entrent en résonance avec les notions de transition et de renaissance attestées dans les textes des lamelles d'or. Grâce à son importance régionale, la Perséphone de Locres fonctionnait comme une figure familière, capable d'ancrer dans le terreau existant des croyances locales l'expérience nouvelle et individuelle de l'initiation exprimée sur les lamelles.

AUTHOR

HANNE EISENFELD

Boston College
Classical Studies Department
Stokes S260
140 Commonwealth Avenue
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467-3806
eisenfel@bc.edu