

Dear friends and colleagues,

I must apologize for this unorthodox way that I am addressing you. I believe you know the reason. In Menander's *Monosticha*, a saying is recorded in two different versions: Τίμα τὸ γῆρας, οὐ γὰρ ἔρχεται μόνον and Φοβοῦ τὸ γῆρας οὐ γὰρ ἔρχεται μόνον. The second hemistich is common — and unequivocal. You may choose between the two for the first hemistich. As far as I am concerned, I've chosen the φοβοῦ version.

I am greatly indebted to Gregory Nagy and our younger colleagues, especially Antonios Rengakos and Evina Sistakou, for making this communication possible. In the handout, I have printed some long Greek papyrus texts, which are not easy to read, but also some short Greek phrases, for making my non-Erasmian pronunciation understandable.

Speaking of desiderata in the Derveni papyrus study, there can be no doubt that integrating or even augmenting the text by putting together as many pieces as possible from the group of the unplaced ones, but also supplementing the gaps or improving the supplements proposed, is one of the primary requisites for the papyrus research. Personally, I still persist in attempting to spot new readings with my elderly eyes, and have experienced quite a few eureka moments — no matter if most of them eventually proved to be wishful dreams. I have already sent to our kind host, the Center for Hellenic Studies, for its Derveni Online Website, a number of these new readings and proposals. Needless to say that even these readings and proposals are liable to reassessment even by myself. I was glad to hear that Prof. Janko has made a fairly large number of new joinings, especially in the opening columns, and a friend was kind enough to send me the handout of a relevant lecture he gave in Edinburgh and London. Though I do not agree with all his proposals — I mean the ones found on the handout — I must congratulate him on some felicitous joinings and readings. For instance, his discovery of one more reference to the magi, prior to col. VI, is certainly correct.

Modern technical contrivances may elucidate some points, but problems, I fear, will still remain. Just a short example, to elucidate what I mean. A relatively clear group of letters in G 11, which we had placed in col. III, but Prof. Janko in col. II, was successively read (no. 1 on the handout):

- (a) τo]ῦδε χοῦ[
- (b) o]ῦδ' ἔχου[σι
- (c) o]ῦδέξοτ[ε
- (d) o]ῦδ' ἴσοτ[ιμ-
- (e) ]υδιχοτ[εοι[ (Janko)
- (f) o]ῦδ' ἐξότ[ε οἱ [

The first two readings are George Parássoglou's and mine, the next ones, with the exception of Janko's (e), are only mine. I had connected (a) "(under) this soil" (τo]ῦδε χοῦ[) with the infernal or chthonic daimones, of whom there was question in the opening columns; (b) o]ῦδ' ἔχου[σι might refer to just any property the daimones lacked; (c) o]ῦδέξοτ[ε, the only example of Ionic κοτε for ποτε in the papyrus, was also connected with the daimones, who did never observe, say, sleep or rest; (d) o]ῦδ' ἴσοτ[ιμ- had to do with the fact that not all daimones deserved the same hon-

ours. After Janko's joining of G 11 with G 5 in col. II, instead of the puzzling (e) ]υδιχοτ|ειοι[, we may read, I suppose, (f) ο]ύδ' ἐξότ|ε οί, "and not from the time when the ...". No doubt, more factors are involved in the preference of one reading over another, but it is remarkable how so different readings may, with the help of a bit of imagination, be connected with the topic of the column or what we think the topic of the column is.

I mentioned Prof. Janko's proposals for the opening columns of the Derveni papyrus. I do not know if it is proper to refer to an unpublished handout, but I cannot resist the temptation to show you, *exempli gratia*, a small portion of the current research on the papyrus. Prof. Janko notes "not for citation without acknowledgment", and I obviously fully acknowledge my debt. After all it is *my* errors that I am highlighting. For instance, Prof. Janko's transposal of pieces G 15 + G 6 from our col. II to col. III was excellent. On the basis of Janko's new reading with his translation (no. 2 on the handout), I shall then attempt some minor proposals:

**Col. 3 (F9 + F8 + G15 + G6 + G5a + F7)**

.....(.)]ων· [.....  
 .... θυ]ηλαί, ὥς [.....(.)] Ἐριν[υ.....(.)  
 .....(.)]ωγ γίνεται[ι .....(.)] τιμῶσιγ [.(.)]ιρηλ[.....(.)]ρη  
 5 τοὺς ἦ]δη ἐξώλεας [....(.)] χ]οαὶ σταγόσιν Ἐρινύω[ιν. οἱ] δὲ  
 δ]αίμονες, οἱ κατὰ [τοὺς μ]άγ ους τιμὰς [τ]ηροῦσι [τῶν]  
 θεῶν, ὑπηρεταὶ δ[ί]κης ..]. ἐκάστοις, ορ[.....]ι  
 εἰσιν, ὅπωςπερ α[.....(.)] . οστο[.]στο[.....]νοι·  
 αἰτίην [δ' ἔ]χουσι[.....(.)] .c τ[οιο]ύτο[.....],  
 οἴους γ[. .]ε[.....(.)]γε[.....]  
 10 ..]υστ[.....]

... divinations from burnt-offerings, as ... Eriny(e)s ... (*singular subject missing*) becomes a *daimon* (?) ... libations of the Erinyes in drops honour ... those people who are already annihilated. But (?) the *daimones*, who according to the *magoi* observe the honours of the gods, are servants of justice (?) ... for every (*plural noun missing*) ..., just as (*plural participle missing*) ... But (?) they are responsible ... such persons ... as ... later/initiate (?) ...

And here are my proposals, with a few different readings, here and there (no. 3 on the handout):

.....]ωι [.....  
 .. μυσ]τικαὶ ὥς [.....(.)] Ἐριν[υ  
 δαίμ]ωγ γίνεται[ι. οὐ γὰρ] τιμῶσι π[οιν]ηλά[τους οὐ]δὲ  
 5 ἀγέα]ς ἢ ἐξώλεας, [ἀλλ' αἱ χ]οαὶ σταγόσιν [ἐ]π' Ἐρινύσ[ιν. οἱ] δὲ  
 δ]αίμονες, οἱ κατὰ [τοὺς μ]άγους τιμὰς [φέρ]ουσι  
 θεῶν ὑπηρεταὶ δ[ρῶντε]ς ἐκάστοις, ο[.....]μενο]ι  
 εἰσιν ὅπωςπερ α[....] ἔκασ]τος τοῖς στο[.....]με]νοι·  
 αἰτίην [δ' ἔ]χουσι[.....(.)] .c τ[οιο]ύτο[υ]ς  
 οἴουςπ[ερ] ε[.....(.)]ηπ[.....]  
 10 ..]υστ[.....]

My translation is:

... mystic (?) as ... Eriny(e)s ... becomes a *daimon*. For they do not honour those pursued by the furies nor the polluted or the doomed ones, but the drop-libations are for the Erinyes. As for the *daimones*, who according to the *magoi* carry the offerings to the gods labouring as servants to each of them, they are ... how each shall ... to the ... . And they bear responsibility ... such ... just as ...

Let me be forgiven for not appending an *apparatus criticus*; Prof. Janko offers a long one in his handout. Obviously the question is of the soul of the ἀγαθός, a person distinguished in his or her lifetime for piety, righteousness, bravery, or other virtues, and who, according to Plato in the *Cratylus* 398b, among other sources, of course, is greatly esteemed and honoured after death and becomes a *daimon* (καὶ γίγνεται δαίμων). Though, I suspect that the sentence is negative; something like (handout no. 4): ἀλλ' οὐ πᾶς (or πᾶσα, for ψυχή) δαίμων γίνεται, 'not everybody becomes a *daimon*'. Such respected souls are distinguished from the sinful or polluted ones, which are not honoured (I suppose by the initiates). The strange ἀγέας in line 4 is a proposal of necessity. What we need is a synonym of ἐναγής, 'polluted', to go with ποιήλατοι and ἐξώλεις, only shorter by two letters. The form occurs uniquely in Hipponax fr. 95a (handout no. 5; ἀγεῖ Βουπάλωι; Tzetz.: ἀγής ὁ μυσσάρος ... Ἴππῶναξ φησίν). ἀγίους would also suit, again in the sense of ἐναγής, and again occurring uniquely in Cratinus fr. 402 K.-A. (handout no. 6; Phot. α 174 = Lex. Bachm. 22.23 λέγοιτο δ' ἄν καὶ ἅγιος ὁ μιαρὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγους ὡς Κρατῖνος; Eust. in Il. 1356.59). At line 6 δρῶντες in the sense 'labouring' is not uncommon, and the grammarian Philoxenus repeatedly (handout no. 7; fr. 1, 42 Theod.) explains δρῶ, τὸ ὑπηρετῶ. At line 7 τοῖς στο[ is uncertain and may involve an ancient correction on the papyrus (I added later).

So far, for this *exempli gratia*, as I said, approach to the research on the text.

Another desideratum has expectedly to do with trying to find out who the author of the book is. I have repeatedly fallen into this sin, not observing the remark of my good friend, colleague and co-author Theokritos Kouremenos, that "attempting to identify the Derveni author in the light of the available evidence seems to be an exercise of rather low epistemic value". Despite having made many false steps in my scholarly life, I continue to believe that conjecture and imagination remain practical tools in the search of truth. It is this conviction that led me to consider Charles Kahn's suggestion about Euthyphro a very likely possibility. Whoever reads Plato's *Cratylus* and *Euthyphro* cannot fail to perceive the similarities between the Euthyphro described and presumed in these dialogues and the author of the Derveni book. The question is not of precise affinities in his philosophical theories or his religious creeds, because it is clear that Plato does not take seriously these features of Euthyphro and, when he does not caricature them, he speaks of them with a flip-pant attitude. The question is rather of the image of the author that comes into sight after the subtle ironies or the grotesque exaggerations are removed. And this image is of a rather whimsical personage, coming from Prospalta, an Attic deme in Mesogaia, but whose family had connexions, possibly as cleruchs, with Naxos; who was contemporary of but younger than Socrates; who was a religious practitioner professing to be an expert authority in sacrifices and prayers; who distinguished himself from the many and the ignorant; who was especially a soothsayer, whose

fellow-citizens did not believe his prophecies and derided him as a lunatic; who was a follower of the then trendy practice of etymology of divine names, through which several thinkers claimed not only to decode the deeper sense (ὑπόνοια) of time-honoured texts, but also to figure out the fundamental truths about creation, reality and existence. This description is a faithful reproduction from Plato's dialogues, with only one exception. It was arbitrary on my part to employ the term 'author' for Euthyphro. Yet, it was Wilamowitz who observed, long before the discovery of the Derveni papyrus, that Socrates' hints about Euthyphro would have been unintelligible in the year of the writing of *Cratylus* (c. 360 B.C.), had the latter not put down on paper his idiosyncratic teachings.

Now, it seems that the etymological perversion was widely spread. Philodemus, *On Piety* (part 1, 19.518-541, in Dirk Obbink's edition), in an interesting passage mentioned also by Richard Janko, refers to the attack of Epicurus against those who by changing some letters in the names of gods do away with the divine from the world. They are named expressly: Prodicus, Diagoras, Critias, and others (καὶ ἄλλοι). There follows a special reference to Antisthenes. While there is hardly any evidence about Prodicus, Diagoras, and Critias with regard to etymology, Plato's *Cratylus* offers ample information about Euthyphro. Etymology, or rather weird etymology, is the δαιμονία σοφία that emanating from Euthyphro of Prospalta overtook Socrates. The latter decides (handout no. 8) περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπισκέψασθαι by making use of this wisdom today, but to drive it away tomorrow and find some priest or sophist to purify him and his collocutors. Of the thinkers named by Epicurus, it is to Antisthenes that the saying (handout no. 9) ἀρχὴ παιδείσεως ὀνομάτων ἐπίσκεψις is attributed (fr. 38 Declava Caizzi), no matter what meaning modern pedagogy attaches to it. As for the purification that Socrates feels he is in need of, it does not seem unrelated with the description of the etymologists by Epicurus as deranged, madmen, and frenzy-stricken (handout no. 10; παρακόπτειν καὶ μαίνεσθαι, καὶ βακχεύουσιν αὐτοὺς εἰκάζει) — but also with the initial impression of numerous modern scholars who faced the Derveni author as a raving lunatic.

Even so, however, Euthyphro is but one out of several possible authors who practised etymology. The difference with the other thinkers, if we continue employing the Philodemus passage, is that the Derveni author (as well as the Euthyphro of Plato's dialogues) does not eliminate the divine element from nature — as we know from other sources too that the aforementioned thinkers did (handout no. 11; τοῖς τὸ θεῖον ἐκ τῶν ὄντων ἀναιροῦσιν) — but does exactly the opposite: he puts, that is, forward arguments that support the rôle of the divine in cosmogony and cosmology. Antisthenes — always according to Epicurus — stands also in opposition to this group of thinkers. The sentence that mentions him is important, though considerably obscure. Some trifling changes, though not altering much the whole image, may possibly illuminate the passage. The text, as published by Dirk Obbink and accepted by Janko, is (handout no. 12):

col. 19

		κα[ὶ γὰρ]
		παραγραμμίζ[ουσι]
535		τὰ τ[ῶ]ν θεῶν [ὄνομα-]
		τα, [κα]θάπερ Ἀγ[τισ-]
		θέ[νης] τὸ κοινό[τατον]
		ὑποτ<ε>ίνων ἀγ[αφέρει]
		τὰ κατὰ μέρος [τῆι θε-]



*On Piety*, on 25.701-708.) Similarly, no mention of the Derveni book seems also to have survived. I must say that I strongly doubt if the reference to the Hymns of Orpheus by Philochorus or the quotation of an Orphic verse in the Homeric Scholia, both quoted also in the Derveni book (XXII 11 and XXIII 11), can be considered citations from the latter. The Orphic Hymns and Theogonies must have enjoyed some circulation in antiquity, perhaps less as literary works and more as liturgical texts. Certainly, Philochorus, himself a seer and diviner and a prolific writer on religious topics, had no need of the Derveni book for citing an Orphic verse.

The lack of reference to the book may, of course, be coincidental. But the lack of reference to the author may possibly mean something. For instance, that he was not taken seriously enough by his contemporaries, just as the situation between Socrates and Euthyphro in Plato's dialogues seems to be. Understandably, it is not my intention to underestimate the Derveni author as regards the invaluable information he conveys about presocratic philosophy and mystery religion. But I cannot believe that anyone of his contemporary intellectuals, even if he agreed with his theological conclusions, would regard his interpretations of the Orphic hymn as worthy of attention.

And something more. In the surviving philosophical literature, naturally enough, there is a wide intertextual dialogue between philosophical treatises. Can, however, our book enter this class of composition — not to speak technically of genre —, so as to become a legitimate collocutor in this dialogue? Apart from the character of the author, scholars have occupied themselves with detecting the character of the book. Without further ado, I must say that I am convinced that, in spite of the personal touches here and there, the book is intended as a handbook or rather an instruction book or even better a vade mecum for prospective μύσται. Although the word is mentioned but once (handout no. 14; VI 8 μύσται Εὐμένισι προθύουσι κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ μάγοις), the sacrificial instructions and the allegorical interpretations are obviously addressed to them. And it is in their τελεταί that the hymn in question was sung. In which mystery cult, however, were the initiates involved, I do not know. I have a leaning to locate it in Eastern Attica, at the Phlya mysteries, at modern Khalandri, where Orphic hymns constituted a part of the λεγόμενα, but also for which, according to the tradition, Orpheus and Musaeus his pupil had written their hymns. I have also a leaning to identify the oracle mentioned in the Derveni book as the Amphiaraeion at Oropus. But I fear that in both leanings I am biased because of Euthyphro's origin from Prospalta in the Mesogaia area. On the other hand, if the book is really an initiate's vade mecum, the fact satisfactorily explains why the roll was burnt. The usual passports certifying that the travelling soul was καθαρά and ἄπινοος, purified and not owing a punishment, were the well-known Orphic gold leaves. But those leaves, with their text usually corrupt, full of errors and misspellings, attest to a popular production. The relatives of the deceased might easily order one or possibly buy a ready-made one outside the cemetery, thus cheating the immortals (handout no. 15) — ἡ τῶν θεῶν ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων παραγωγή, deceit of gods by humans, in the words of Plato, was an activity as usual in antiquity as it is today. But the personal vade mecum of the deceased, a book circulating in a small and closed circle of initiates, was no doubt the most authoritative passport, which, burnt together with the holder, would accompany him to the control gates of Hades.

Speaking of the character of the book, we might possibly speculate about its missing portions. In our edition, I conjectured that the surviving papyrus fragments speak of a 20-sheet roll, the standard size according to Pliny the Elder. Other schol-

ars believe that the sheets, and accordingly the columns, were somewhat more. In any case, the fact is that we possess, damaged or fragmented, a ten feet long roll, almost the whole of it. But though the end of the roll is complete, it does not coincide with the end of the book. In 1983 Martin West had shown, beyond doubt, I believe, that “in all probability the text continued in another roll, or several, which perhaps perished on the funeral pyre”. West continues trying to find out what the lost part of the book in the next roll or rolls would have contained. His study, however, concerned the Orphic poems, and so he limited his investigation to restoring the narrative of the Orphic Theogony. It was beyond the scope of his book to reconstruct the rest of the physical theory, something that would anyway be much too risky. Because, whereas the narrative of the Orphic Theogony is presented in the Derveni book in the order of the verses inside the poem, the unfolding of the cosmological system does not follow a logical sequence, is made with leaps and backward movements, depending on what allegory every time the quoted Orphic verse would offer to the author.

As regards the constituents of the Derveni book, let me remind that the first six columns deal with cultic particulars connected only or mainly with souls, Erinyes and Eumenides, who, according to the author, are also souls, Dike, Hades. A better look shows, however, that we are not dealing simply with cultic instructions, but with a system of eschatology or soteriology, which, among other things, contains some cultic practices, necessary for salvation. Among other things, of course, because cultic practices may, in the popular religious concept, be thought to be sufficient, but an intellectual preacher of soul salvation cannot content himself with them. The second chapter of soteriology or the second prerequisite for salvation is no doubt the special knowledge. Special knowledge in the area of soteriology is usually tantamount to mystic knowledge addressed to selected people, the *μύσται*. Here, however, it is not a mystic object, but a mystic method of approach and interpretation of a religious, probably a liturgical text, the Orphic theogonical hymn. The physical theory of cosmogony, set forth in the second part of the papyrus, would have nothing mystic or mysterious, if it came from the mouth of, say, Anaxagoras or Diogenes of Apollonia. It is the allegorical interpretation that affects to elevate the theory to higher levels than science and philosophy.

Is there a third prerequisite in the same context? As far as I know, every religious teaching on the salvation of souls presupposes a righteous life on this world. The surviving text mentions *ἀμαρτίη* and *ἡδονή*, but only en passant, within the context of the other soteriological references. We used to read also *ἄνδρες ἄδικοι*, but Prof. Janko does away with it, perhaps correctly. Nowhere is a life-style system described, what would constitute an *Ὀρφικὸς βίος*, such as is expressly mentioned by Plato, but is also alluded to by Herodotus and Euripides; a chapter on pragmatic anthropology or practical ethics is missing. I would like this chapter, whose size and contents cannot be estimated by any means, to be missing from the beginning of the book. Therefore, if these speculations could prove true, the book must have consisted of at least three papyrus rolls. Why from the beginning? I imagine that a soteriological teaching must proceed by elimination. A religious functionary should regularly start by demanding from his entire flock to follow in their life an inviolable ethical code of commandments. A first selection from the whole congregation would be those who perform certain cultic practices, rites, ceremonies, prayers, sacrifices. The last stage of selection would be the clearly mystical selection, the instruction in some sort of special and profound knowledge, the analogue of an Eleus-

inian epopteia. Here, it would coincide with the allegoric physical interpretation of the Orphic hymn.

I am well aware that all this is much too speculative and impossible to prove. Further, at least the order of the supposedly missing chapter, depends on the meaning of the sentence found in col. XXV 10-12: “The god made the sun of such a form and size as is related at the beginning of the λόγος.” If ‘logos’ is the present treatise, as we suggested based on the common usage of the word in Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle, the reference may have been to column IV, the Heraclitus column, where there is mention of the stability in the size of the sun as security for the preservation of cosmic order. If, however, ‘logos’ is the Orphic poem, often referred to as Ἱερός λόγος, as Gábor Betegh suggested, the reference may have been to columns VIII and IX, where god or air/Mind is said to have turned a sufficiently large amount of fire into the sun, for enabling the rest of the ἐόντα to condense and form the present world. Betegh’s approach would allow a further roll before the surviving one, ours would not. At any rate, I think that the existence of a missing chapter is more important than its position in the book.

Another issue for further investigation is the question of the magi. When we initially detected their presence, we were thrilled at finding Iranian priests involved in Greek religious affairs. But when we ventured to make the proposal about them, we were faced with suspicion. Was the reading correct? Were they Iranians, or rather Greek μάγοι, crooks, quacks, impostors, magicians? But how on earth could the author recommend and advertise a mystic worship, which, in *his* words, followed the practices of crooks and magicians? More influential voices than ours were needed to stabilize the view that the author really referred to the priestly caste of Persia. Now, as we have seen, Richard Janko has detected one more mention of them. All references to the magi have to do with souls; their reception in the Hereafter, the prayers and the offerings that secure a favourable treatment, their relation with certain daimones, who impede their entrance into the domain of eternal bliss. Now, is it prudent to limit the influence of Iranian religion on the mysteries promoted by the Derveni author only in some concepts about souls and the cultic details accompanying these concepts (hymns, libations, popana)? The last mention of the magi is found in column VI, with the libations and the offerings of the initiates, which are made in the same way the magi do. Column VII starts with a reference to the Orphic theogonic hymn apparently sung by the initiates. I have already attempted to associate the singing of the hymn with the information provided by Herodotus (1. 132), that Persian sacrifices had to be accompanied by an ἔπαιδιή sung by a Magus, and that this ἔπαιδιή was called a ‘theogony’. The similarity is striking, but again, is it prudent to limit ourselves to the outward resemblance of the cultic elements? From column VII on, the book deals with the allegoric interpretation of the Orphic hymn, and *this* is the focal point from now on. In the author’s words, the intention of Orpheus was not to say riddles but rather great things in riddles. What if these ‘great things’ were influenced by the teachings of the magi?

The gist of the Derveni author’s physical system (I mean the theory he exhibits; whether it is his own or not, I do not know), well, the gist of his physical system is a compromise between materialism and religion. The agent at the basis of this compromise is Nous, the center of the popular at the time Anaxagorean system. Nous in Anaxagoras is corporeal, yet the finest and purest of all things; he is also infinite and self-ruled. In the Derveni book Nous is aerial, like everything in the world, he prevails over all ἐόντα, as he is equivalent with the whole of them, but is also char-



acterized as φρόνησις τοῦ θεοῦ, the thought, the judgment, or the wisdom of god, which is also described as air. Elsewhere he is named 'mightiest' and is also compared to a king. It is he who decided and effected the creation, the turn, that is, from the πρὶν ἔόντα to the νῦν ἔόντα, by giving a principal rôle in the creative process to the sun. Is then this compromise between the Anaxagorean 'Mind' or 'Wit' and the ancestral 'almighty God', the meeting and fusion of religion and cosmology, unrelated to the Iranian omniscient creator Ahura Mazdā, which means no more than 'Lord Wisdom'? I admit that this is much too speculative, because the concept of the creative Mind or Wisdom, a thinking principle in cosmogony and cosmology, extends throughout the history of religions, from Hesiod's Metis down to the Intelligent Demiurge of modern theoreticians. In between, we may spot lots of stages, from the γνῶσις of the Gnostics, to the λόγος of the Gospel of John, to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity. I pose the question to the philosophically minded colleagues. It is not for me to answer.

Thank you.