THE "Orphic" Gold Tablets and Greek Religion

FURTHER ALONG THE PATH

EDITED BY
RADCLIFFE G. EDMONDS III

CAMBRIDGE

THE "ORPHIC" GOLD TABLETS AND GREEK RELIGION

The "Orphic" gold tablets, tiny scraps of gold foil found in graves throughout the ancient Greek world, are some of the most fascinating and baffling pieces of evidence for ancient Greek religion. This collection brings together a number of previously published and unpublished studies from scholars around the world, making accessible to a wider audience some of the new methodologies being applied to the study of these tablets. The volume also contains an updated edition of the tablet texts, reflecting the most recent discoveries and accompanied by English translations and critical apparatus. This survey of trends in the scholarship, with an up-to-date bibliography, not only provides an introduction to the serious study of the tablets, but also illuminates their place within scholarship on ancient Greek religion.

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Acknowledgements

In some sense, this volume represents the thoughts that emerged, not from a single conference, but from a series of conferences. The first was a conference, "Roads Not Taken: Explorations of the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets," which, under the guidance of our mentor, Christopher Faraone, I put together with Sarah Cohen in 1997 at the Franke Institute for the Humanities at the University of Chicago while we were both graduate students. At that conference, Hans Dieter Betz presented an English version of the paper he was preparing for the festschrift for Walter Burkert that was published the subsequent year. Fritz Graf presented an overview of the tablets and their place within Orphic eschatological literature, ideas which were subsequently adapted and published in an Italian collection. Thomas Dousa, then a graduate student at the Oriental Institute at Chicago, presented a version of the paper he has expanded and revised for this volume. The second conference was the Vergilian Society's Symposium Cumanum "The Cults of Magna Graecia," in June 2002, where I first met Alberto Bernabé and Ana Jiménez and began our long, stimulating, and fruitful dialogue about the nature of Orphic materials. The third conference was "Orfeo y el orfismo: nuevas perspectivas," organized by Bernabé and his colleague, Francesc Casadesús, in Mallorca, Spain, in February 2005. At this conference I met Christoph Riedweg and Miguel Herrero, and began to formulate the idea of putting together this volume, including the papers that Herrero and I presented at that conference.

Some additions have been made to the papers that grew out of these conferences, notably the seminal article of Claude Calame, which was so influential for subsequent scholarship, and the work of Yannis Tzifopoulos. Dirk Obbink's paper had been presented at the APA in 1992, but was never published, although it was cited several times by members of that original audience. Christopher Faraone, whose essay also appears in this volume, was the one who suggested that I try to get it published, and I thank him

and Dirk Obbink for their efforts in bringing this nearly lost text back into the light.

None of these essays has appeared in quite the same form before, but some have been translated or otherwise adapted from previously published pieces. Fritz Graf's chapter, "Text and Ritual: The Corpus Eschatologicum of the Orphics" was originally published as "Text and Ritual: The Corpus Eschatologicum of the Orphics," in *La letteratura pseudepigrafa nella cultura greca e romana, Atti di un incontro di studi Napoli, 15–17 gennaio 1998*, ed. Giovanni Cerri, Naples, 2000, pp. 59–77. "Are the 'Orphic' Gold Leaves Orphic?" by Alberto Bernabé and Ana I. Jiménez San Cristóbal is an adapted translation from their 2001 volume, *Instrucciones para el más allá. Las laminillas órficas de oro*, now published in English as A. Bernabé and A. I. Jiménez San Cristóbal (2008) *Instructions for the Netherworld. The Orphic Gold Tablets*, Leiden, Boston, MA and Cologne. "'A Child of Earth am I and of starry Heaven': Concerning the Anthropology of the Orphic Gold Tablets" by Hans Dieter Betz was originally published as "'Der Erde Kind bin ich und des gestirnten Himmels': Zur Lehre vom Menschen in den orphischen Goldplättchen," from *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*, ed. Fritz Graf, B. G. Teubner: Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998, pp. 399–419, and has been translated for this volume by Maria Sturm. Claude Calame's "'Orphic' Invocations and Commentaries: Funerary Transpositions of Religious Discourse" was originally published as "Invocations et commentaires 'orphiques': Transpositions funéraires de discours religieux," from *Discours religieux dans l'antiquité*, ed. Marie-Madeleine Mactoux and Evelyne Geny, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, no. 578, Les Belles Lettres: Paris, 1995, pp. 11–30, and has been translated for this volume by Sarah Melker. Christoph Riedweg's "Initiation – Death – Underworld: Narrative and Ritual in the Gold Leaves" was originally published as "Initiation – Tod – Unterwelt: Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblättchen," from *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*, ed. Fritz Graf, B. G. Teubner: Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998, pp. 359–398, but has been adapted and translated for this volume by the author, with the assistance of Andreas Schatzmann, incorporating material from Riedweg's "Poésie orphique et rituel initiatique: Éléments d'un 'Discours sacré' dans les lamelles d'or," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 219: 459–481. My thanks to all of those involved in the laborious process of translation, adaptation, and editing of all these essays, and especially to Edward Whitehouse for his work on the indexes.

Thanks are also due to Michael Sharp at Cambridge University Press, who encouraged me in this project and helped shepherd me through the various stages of it, to the readers for the Press, who contributed valuable critiques that helped to shape the final form of these essays, and to the editors and assistants at Cambridge who helped whip the manuscript into shape.

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works follow those of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn. Oxford 1999.

CHAPTER 7

Center, periphery, or peripheral center
A Cretan connection for the gold lamellae of Crete

Yannis Z. Tzifopoulos

Center and periphery are problematic terms and may be misleading, especially when applied literally to areas and metaphorically to ideas of the ancient Greek world, because center and periphery imply power and influence exerted and sustained. An area or city-state that may have been a periphery may gradually become a center and vice versa. The engraved gold lamellae and *epistomia* are a case in point.[1] The texts engraved on these artifacts express ideas that are usually characterized as peripheral to the central Olympian ideology and culture, whereas the provenance so far of these artifacts indicates that the periphery of the Greek world is privileged over the center: Macedonia, Thessaly, Crete, the Peloponnese, Magna Graecia. This is only partially true, however. Crete and Macedonia, located at the southern and northern borders of Greece, eloquently present the problematics of the terms center and periphery. Macedonia is a periphery before Philip and Alexander but with their leadership becomes a domineering center during the Hellenistic period and then gradually changes into a peripheral center. Crete, because of its geographical position in the middle of the wine-dark sea (*Odyssey* 19.172–173), is one of the centers during the Minoan civilization, but becomes a periphery during the classical period, although its laws and customs continue to exert influences. During the Roman and especially the Imperial periods, however, Crete becomes again one of the peripheral centers. Therefore, especially when these concepts are employed for the ancient Greek world – Rome relatively soon became the

This contribution combines chapters from Tzifopoulos 2010. I am indebted to the Board of Trustees of the Center for Hellenic Studies and to Harvard University Press for their permission; and to Radcliffe Edmonds III for his unstinting support and encouragement, in more ways than one would have expected from an editor.

[1] For the corpus of the lamellae and *epistomia* see Edmonds 2004 and Chapter 2 in this volume; Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004; Graf and Johnston 2007: 50–65; Graf (in press) and Chapter 2 in this volume. Throughout the text incised on the lamellae and *epistomia* are referred to by letter and number according to their classification in Chapter 2 of this volume (Tables 2.2–2.7), except for lamellae in group G (see appendix to this chapter p. 199; also Tzifopoulos 2010).

center of the known world – center and periphery provide only a partial picture. It is far more accurate to understand the Greek world as composed of centers in the periphery and in the mainland, which diachronically may interchange because of dynamic interaction.

In like manner, ideologies and customs within a polis may become central from peripheral and vice versa for a variety of reasons. The ideology and eschatology expounded in the Bacchic–Orphic texts engraved on the gold lamellae and *epistomia* may have been peripheral to the Olympian ideology and religion of a polis. This idea, however, is only an educated guess and a working assumption for which strong evidence is lacking. The individuals who were buried with the incised (or not) lamellae and *epistomia* participated in the religion of the polis – at least there is no evidence to suggest otherwise – but at the same time chose to be initiated into one or more mystery cults, which ensured a special treatment in the afterlife. This need not be incompatible, nor need a tension between public and private be postulated. Moreover, even within the Bacchic–Orphic discourse on the afterlife, as it is presented by the incised (or not) lamellae and *epistomia*, there are strong similarities and divergences, which by definition invite two approaches: to emphasize the similarities, as is customarily done, and conclude that behind all these versions one dominant/central text was in circulation (a stemmatological approach); or to shift the emphasis from similarities to divergences, and allow for the possibility that within the same Bacchic–Orphic discourse on afterlife existed simultaneously dominant and peripheral ideas and texts, for which local, or even individual cultic and religious considerations may be accountable.

In what follows, the twelve gold lamellae and *epistomia* unearthed so far in Crete are discussed as a case study, which *mutatis mutandis* may shed light on the other areas of Greece and Italy from which the remaining gold incised lamellae come. First, the shape and the burial context, where there is one, of all lamellae and *epistomia* is addressed, because the five Cretan *epistomia* found during rescue excavations in Sfakaki present an interesting test case. Then, in addition to Günther Zuntz's Panhellenic epic *Kunstsprache*, a Cretan context is argued for the twelve Cretan lamellae and *epistomia*, which comprises similar or analogous cults and rituals especially in Phaistos, in the Idaean Cave, and in Eleutherna and environs. This Cretan context serves as a useful background especially for understanding the deviant readings in two of the nine texts. More importantly, it emphasizes that the Bacchic–Orphic discourse on afterlife disseminated through these texts, which was facilitated by their composition in a Panhellenic epic *Kunstsprache*, may have undergone modifications, dictated by local or even individual beliefs, cults, and rituals, as the deviant texts and the differences in burial custom suggest.

Since their publication, the first seven Cretan lamellae and *epistomia* (B3–B8, E1) have thrown in relief the problematics of the interpretative tension between local and Panhellenic cults, as well as between central and peripheral ritual and cult. The texts engraved on these paper-thin gold foils betray strong similarities to (and in some points are identical with) texts discovered in Italy, Thessaly, and Macedonia. In recent years five more gold *epistomia* (E5, B12, G2–G4), discovered in graves at Sfakaki, approximately 10 km east of Rethymno and 10 km north of Eleutherna, have increased the number to twelve.[2] This small group of twelve lamellae and *epistomia* presents a very interesting if bewildering case. When compared and contrasted with each other but also with the other similar texts from Italy, Thessaly, and Macedonia, these texts betray both strong similarities and strong differences. If these twelve deceased were not Macedonian, Thessalian, or Italian residents in the wider area north of the Idaean Cave and Eleutherna, then in this part of the island from the third century BCE to the first century CE some people felt strongly the need to be initiated into a mystery cult of eschatological beliefs and of promising life after death. These *mystai*, however, did not express this need in an identical way. Not only do the nine texts present differences, even if only in detail, but the burial context and even the shape of the gold lamellae and *epistomia* are also different.

The shape and burial context of the foils on which a text was engraved, and their significance, if any, has been treated so far only sporadically in discussions of these texts. In Crete lamellae and *epistomia* B3–B5, B7–B8, B12, E1, and G3–G4 are oblong, whereas B6, E4, and G2 are ellipsoid, in the shape of the mouth, indicating their use as an *epistomion*. This word has become a *terminus technicus* at least among the majority of Greek archaeologists, who have no difficulty in identifying paper-thin gold foils as *epistomia*,[3] using as a definitive criterion the position of the foils inside the grave.

The custom, however, of covering the mouth or the whole face of the deceased did not start with the incised lamellae, nor did it end in late

[2] As I was reading and correcting the manuscript in July 2007, two new incised *epistomia* (B13 and B14) were unearthed in the Mnemata site, one of Eleutherna's cemeteries whence come the seven engraved *epistomia* of Crete (B3–B8 and E1). Eva Tegou, in charge of the excavations conducted by the 25th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, graciously showed me the new finds, and kindly informed me of the progress since March 2007 of the ongoing excavations. As excavation is still in progress, which means that more incised lamellae may show up, we decided to present the new incised *epistomia*, and their archaeological context in the near future.

[3] Oikonomou (2004: 91–92), instead of the word *epistomion* employed earlier (2002), defines these objects as "burial jewels: the custom of mouth bands" (Νεκρικά κοσμήματα: τα ελάσματα κάλυψης του στόματος), on account of the meaning of ἐπιστοματίζω and the like (LSJ). Interestingly, however, the noun derived from this verb is the feminine *epistomis*, whereas *epistomion* appears not to have been a word in antiquity, as a search in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* has shown.

antiquity. The *epistomia* date from the end of 5000 BCE until the second and third centuries CE, and their shapes are relatively few: oblong, rhomboid, ellipsoid in the shape of the mouth, and (very rarely) rectangular or triangular. The decorative motifs of the unincised *epistomia*, embossed or engraved, vary greatly.[4] The majority of these artifacts were thought to be jewelry, which formed part of the body's *kosmos*, until Pierre Amandry suggested that the lamellae are descendants of the Mycenaean gold masks.[5] Instead of covering the whole face of the deceased, people gradually employed (for economic and perhaps for more practical reasons) smaller foils for the forehead, eyes, mouth and ears.[6] Aikaterini Despoini (1998) has shown incontrovertibly, under the telling title *Gold epistomia*,[7] that, as the excavations of the cemetery at Sindos in Macedonia during 1980–82 and subsequent discoveries in graves throughout Macedonia testify, the paper-thin gold foils, which were found near the cranium or even on the chest of the skeleton where some of these may have slipped, and which were described earlier as diadems or pectorals, had been used as *epistomia*, mouth-bands. Shape and motif of these *epistomia* do not appear to be important factors, except that these mouth-bands, rectangular, oblong, or rhomboid, approximate the shape of the mouth. The drawing by Arnold von Salis offers an idea of the way in which these *epistomia* were fastened behind the head with a string passing through holes on either end.[8]

[4] Oikonomou (2002: 17–21; 2004) has gathered all the information of 239 published lamellae, the majority in gold and only 8 in silver (Oikonomou 2002: 43), which may be classified as *epistomia*, and studied this custom diachronically. For jewelry from the Neolithic period and its symbolism, if any, see the sensible remarks of Demakopoulou 1998; and Kyparissi-Apostolika 1998; 2001: 155–166; for Greek and Roman jewelry in general see Higgins 1961. For a brief, on-line overview on Greek burial customs see: www.ims.forth.gr/joint_projects/e-mem/burial_customs-gr.htm.

[5] Amandry 1953: 37; Laffineur (1980: 364–366) accepts as *epistomia* only those foils in the shape of a mouth; Oikonomou 2004: 102–103.

[6] For gold masks and gold foils covering the eyes and other body-parts, recently discovered in graves at Archontiko near Pella, Macedonia and dated to the archaic period see Chryssostomou and Chryssostomou 2001 and 2002. Another mask of solid gold, weighing more than half a kilogram, portraying a face with closed eyes and robust expression, has been unearthed in the outskirts of Shipka Peak, near the town of Kazanlak, Bulgaria, by a team of archaeologists led by Georgi Kitov (2005) (www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=39360); Williams 2006 (and www.nationalgeographic.com); for a second mask discovered by the same archaeologist in a Thracian mound near the village of Topolchene, in the municipality of Sliven, see the reports in: dsc.discovery.com/news/2007/07/16/mask_arc.html?category=archaeology; and in: www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=83027.

[7] The title of her article in modern Greek: Χρυσά επιστόμια; Despoini had excluded this group of gold artefacts from her earlier study *Greek Art: Ancient Greek Gold Jewelry* (1996).

[8] von Salis 1957: 98 Abb. 8; see also Vermeule 1979: 14; Garland 1985: 23–24, 138; and Kurtz and Boardman 1994: 210–213. Recently, from four graves of male warriors, dated in the sixth century BCE, gold *epistomia* were recovered in a unique shape which is reminiscent of the archaic smile, according to the excavators, Keramaris, Protopsalti and Tsolakis 2002: 233–234, 239 no. 3; the shape is almost identical to von Salis' drawing.

Despoini, however, suggested that in all probability they were sewed on the garment that eventually covered the head, but, as not all *epistomia* bear marks of a needle, they may have been simply put on the mouth or on the chest of the deceased. The grave-goods in some of these graves, which are published, do not delineate a recurrent pattern so as to substantiate a distinct burial custom for those deceased bearing an *epistomion*, incised or not.[9] As a result, the reasons for this custom or its presence in different areas and especially in different times cannot be ascertained, despite Lucian's satire, wherein the deceased is unable to open his mouth and speak, as his jaws are tied up by the cloth.[10] To state the obvious: people in different periods and in different areas felt the need to cover the face or, more specifically, the mouth of the deceased.

There is, however, a special category that deserves attention: the incised or unincised lamellae in the shape of certain leaves, a word which sometimes is also employed for the incised lamellae to describe thinness, regardless of shape.[11] Some of these leaves were used as *epistomia*, but not exclusively. Unfortunately, the excavators' preliminary reports seldom provide detailed information regarding the exact findspot of these gold leaves or of their accompanying grave-goods. Even when such information is provided, few students have paid attention to the archaeological context of the lamellae, in order to understand shapes, material, usage and texts.[12] Only nine (D2, E3, F2, F4, F5, F6, F7, F11, F13) incised gold leaves have been found so far in graves in Macedonia, in Thessaly, and in north-northwestern Peloponnese. A tenth leaf may have been written on in ink, now lost, as Pavlos Chryssostomou (1992) has proposed (G1, see Table 7.1, p. 193 below). What emerges from the excavators' reports is that, except for the unambiguous ivy leaves from Pelinna (D2), and for Philemena's myrtle leaf from Elis which is also employed as a *danake* (F7),[13] the shape of the remaining six leaves is either unknown or described as laurel-or almond-shaped. In his study of the shapes of the incised leaves that have been published, Matthew

[9] Oikonomou 2002: 6, 43–44, and 2004.

[10] Lucian, *Περὶ πένθους* 19.16–20: ὥστε μοι νὴ τὴν Τισιφόνην πάλαι δὴ ἐφ' οἷς ἐποιεῖτε καὶ ἐλέγετε παμμέγεθες ἐπῆλει ἀνακαγχάσαι, διεκώλυσε δὲ ἡ ὀθόνη καὶ τὰ ἔρια, οἷς μου τὰς σιαγόνας ἀπεσφίγξατε.

[11] Parker and Stamatopoulou (2004: n. 1) clarify the conventional use of the word. Actual (ivy-) leaves, incised with just a name, were also used as "mantic votes," as the scene on the krater by the Sisyphos painter in Munich indicates (Tiverios 1985: 49–56, pls. 5–6); for the ivy of liberation see Lewis 1990.

[12] Notable exceptions are: Zuntz 1971; Guarducci 1974; Bottini 1992; Graf 1993; Dickie 1995; Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001; Oikonomou 2002; Roberts 2002; and Parker and Stamatopoulou 2004.

[13] Themelis 1994; on the name Philemena see Zoumbaki 2005: 354–355.

Dickie has argued convincingly that the literary sources and the archaeological record allow for only a few trees to be represented by these gold leaves: primarily myrtle and ivy, and less often olive.[14] All three are evergreen trees associated with fertility, vegetation, and the chthonian aspects of Dionysos, Demeter and Persephone, Aphrodite, and also perhaps Athena. In Macedonia, where more than half of the lamellae discovered are incised with only a few words and where no lamellae have been found bearing a longer text, shape did not matter, or so it appears. The lamellae of Hegesiska, Poseidippos, Philoxena, Palatha and the blank leaf (F11, E4, F6, F13 and G1) are myrtle or olive leaves, as most probably are the ones from the Peloponnese (F2, F4, F5, F7). The shape of the remaining lamellae with short texts is either rectangular or rhomboid. As Dickie discovered, and as Davaras, Despoini, and Kaninia also stressed in their studies of gold wreaths, there is an insurmountable difficulty in distinguishing especially between myrtle, laurel and sometimes olive leaves.[15] This may be due to the shape of these leaves, all of them being oblong with differences in details which the ancient goldsmiths could not or did not care to reproduce. The goldsmiths may have been interested simply in a more schematic representation, letting the customer decide, or as Dickie aptly put it, letting the "context determine which plant was imagined to be represented."[16]

Further evidence from the graves' burial context not only corroborates Dickie's interpretation of these as myrtle leaves, instead of laurel- or almond-shaped leaves, but provides an overall picture, more or less similar (for details of the grave-goods see Chapter 2 of this volume, Tables 2.2–2.7).[17] In seven cases, the deceased appear to have received offerings, sacrifices, and *enagismoi* in some form of ritual after burial, with Timpone Grande standing out perhaps as a case of a local hero-cult (A1–A4, C1, D4,

[14] Dickie 1995: 84–86.

[15] Davaras 1985: 180–182; Despoini 1996: 26; and Kaninia 1994–95: 105 with n. 21 and n. 22; for wreaths in Macedonia, in particular, Tsigarida 1993. In the archaeological record of Macedonia laurel-wreaths are scarce (so far only one has been uncovered in a grave at Europos, for which see Savvopoulou 1995: 399, 404 no. 14). Despoini (1996: 26) observed that laurel is the sacred tree of Apollo, whose relations with the dead and the Underworld are virtually non-existent, and that the oak-wreaths in Macedonia are related to Zeus, whose cult was boosted by the Argead dynasty, whereas olive-wreaths appear in graves of Amphipolis (and perhaps Potidaea), colonies of Athens and therefore associated with Athena. For excellent photographs of wreaths recovered from graves: a rare one of ivy (Despoini 1996: 47 pl. 1; add also Adam-Veleni 2000), four of myrtle (Despoini 1996: 48 pl. 2, 52 pl. 5, 53 pl. 6 (zoom of pl. 5) and 54 pl. 7), two of oak (Despoini 1996: 49 pl. 3 and 50–51 pl. 4), and one of olive (Despoini 1996: 55 pl. 8); to these add also Kallintzi 2006: 148 pl. 20.1.

[16] Dickie 1995: 86.

[17] There always will be an interpretative tension between textual and archaeological evidence and the methodological attempts to make sense of them both, for which see Morris 1987; the essays in Small 1994; and Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: especially 413–444.

E6, F10).[18] There are also four cases in which Dionysiac overtones emerge, irrespective of the text incised on the gold lamellae: D2 was accompanied by a clay figurine of a comic actor seated-on-altar in addition to the two incised ivy leaves placed over each breast of the buried female; in the Timpone Grande, two medallions with a female head looking like the Persephone on the Apulian vases were placed on the chest of the deceased (A4, C1);[19] the Pharsalos hydria bears a representation of the "abduction" of Oreithyia by Boreas, which reminds the excavator of the more familiar one of Persephone by Plouton and which "prepares and complements the text on the lamella" (B2);[20] finally, ivory fragments from the bier's decoration in Pydna represented figures from the Dionysiac cycle (F3).

In certain cases, the deceased was crowned with wreaths of gold or of gilt clay, which were less expensive (E4, F5, F6, F10, G1),[21] or, in two instances, with a diadem (D2 and F1). The presence of gold or gilt clay wreaths inside a grave in addition to an engraved lamella seems to defy explanation. Despoini has noticed that relatively few wreaths have been found in the hundreds of graves in Attica, despite the frequent references in literature and in inscriptions to honors individuals received, sometimes including a gold wreath, and other times including a myrtle crown after initiation at Eleusis.[22] Most of these, as with the gold athletic wreaths, would have been dedicated to the appropriate god after the celebration and some would have ended up in graves.[23] The number of wreaths, however, recovered from graves in Macedonia, indicates, according to Despoini, that the crowned deceased, re-enacting the *persona* of either 'an athlete' or 'a symposiast', or (less likely in Macedonia) 'an honored citizen', would have

[18] For the trapezoid constructions or exedrae used for rituals after burial see: Tsimbidou-Avloniti 1992; Savvopoulou 1992; and Malama 2000 and 2001. These exedrae, however, are not exclusively for deceased with incised or unincised lamellae, as they are also found elsewhere, e.g. in the Europos cemetery (Savvopoulou, Giannakis, and Niaouris 2000), and in other parts of the Amphipolis cemetery (Malama 2000 and 2001).

[19] Graf 1993: 254–255.

[20] Ricardo Olmos in Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001: 310–313, quotation at 313. Roberts (2002: 20–21) draws on Richter's (1946: 361–367) study of hydriae with related subjects, Dionysos and Ariadne, and Dionysos with a satyr, all symbolizing love and marriage.

[21] See also Vermeule 1979: 13–15.

[22] Despoini 1996: 26–28. Dickie (1995: 84–86) suggests that the myrtle crowns are reminiscent of Eleusinian initiation, but Parker and Stamatopoulou (2004) rightly stress that the texts on the lamellae defy any one association with a specific mystery cult.

[23] Kefalidou (1996) discusses representations of athletes in iconography. Chaniotis (2005a: 50–55) argues that *stephanosis* accommodated a variety of purposes from the Hellenistic period onwards, each time with different symbolism and meaning. Scafuro (2005) discusses instances in inscriptions, which prescribe that wreaths were to be dedicated to gods, and that statues of gods were to be crowned by wreaths. Günther (2003) examines the crowning with wreaths of the prophets in inscriptions from Didyma as an immortalizing self-representation.

certainly expected to attain eternal life among the blessed.[24] The metaphor of the foot-race and the crowning of the victorious 'athlete' is employed in lines 9–10 of the lamella from Thurii (A1): ἱμερτο<ῦ> δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνο<υ> ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι. According to Zuntz,[25] the line is spurious because it is repeated in lines 12–14 of the same lamella, even though he admits that *stephanos*, the normal prize of victors, is appropriate for the occasion, and that it is used elsewhere, again metaphorically, to denote purpose and distinction. Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal have discussed in more detail the literary references to events for which a wreath was employed and have concluded that the wreath-metaphor, rich in symbolism, may at the same time stand for mystic initiation, athletic triumph, and symposium.[26] But what about the deceased (especially in Macedonia) in whose graves both an *epistomion* and a wreath have been recovered?[27] Is it sheer coincidence, or is this *stephanosis* nothing more than the material sign of the lines in the Thurii text A1? Does this connote not only a metaphorical but also an actual event of the initiation? Would this burial practice in Macedonia thus allow us to associate the texts of group A with the ones in groups B and E? Whatever the case, the coincidence is indeed remarkable.

These differences in the burial context of the deceased with a lamella or *epistomion* may be compared to the excavated part of the Sfakaki cemetery for a rule of thumb, although, at present, the nature of the evidence is such as to allow only for assumptions and educated guesses (the previously published lamellae from Eleutherna were chance finds).

It appears that, as with the other lamellae, the shape of the *epistomia* was not crucial, as in addition to those in the shape of the mouth (E4, G2), even rectangular gold foils (G3–G4) could very well serve as *epistomia* (B12 was discovered in a disturbed grave). Of the fifty-six burials excavated so far, five graves, whose context cannot be called Dionysiac, contained gold *epistomia* (B12, E4, G2–G4). The overall picture of "Men and Women, Rich and Poor" (to borrow Graf's title)[28] that emerges from the graves where lamellae

[24] Despoini 1996: 28. [25] Zuntz 1971: 319 n. 2.

[26] Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2001: 165–173, 241; and also Guthrie 1993: 180–182. Seaford (1986: 23–25) discusses the roundness of the wreath and the association of its origin with Prometheus. Kokkinia (1999) associates the ritual of roses (*rhodismos*) over the grave during the Roman period with the *rosalia* and *parentalia*, and also with the wreaths offered to the dead in Greece.

[27] Soueref (2002) has excavated graves dated to the late archaic period, in which together with an *epistomion* amber beads were found inside or on the mouth; for two probable cases in Athens see Theochari 2003. Wreaths or parts of them, most often gilt clay but also gold, are very often recovered from graves in Macedonia and are usually dated to the Hellenistic period, as can be seen by a perusal of the archaeological reports published in the volumes *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη*.

[28] Graf 1993: 255.

have been found is not clear, as the evidence is inconclusive and perhaps misleading. In terms of gender, males and females are equally equipped with the necessities for their eternal trip. There is no evidence to suggest any preferences, besides the usual, of males or females regarding certain types of offerings or concerning the texts incised. In terms of affluence, richer graves may give an impression of a "Dionysiac context," while poorer graves may allude to an "Orphic/Pythagorean" one. The archaeological finds at the Thurii graves (A1–A4, C1) are moderate if not austere in comparison to the finds in some graves in Macedonia, but grave-goods at Thurii may have been of less importance as compared to the tomb's actual construction and the later ritual over the tumuli. Even so, as Themelis and Touratsoglou have shown convincingly with regard to the Derveni grave, generalizations and *prima facie* conclusions should be resisted. The discovery of the papyrus in Derveni grave A led to the conclusion that the deceased was an Orphic follower. The richness, however, and the strong Dionysiac character of the grave's archaeological context stand in sharp contrast to the Orphic–Pythagorean austere life and to its more moderate means. As has become evident only recently, "Orphism" and Dionysos are not, after all, mutually exclusive.[29] The graves with a lamella at Hipponion, Thessaly, and Sfakaki constitute an intermediate stage between the "rich" burial customs in Macedonia and the "poor" ones in Thurii. The grave-goods recovered from the five graves with a lamella in the Sfakaki cemetery indicate that the deceased were of moderate means. These five graves are not among the richest of the fifty-six excavated so far, but they are richer than the pit-graves, and the overall picture of the undisturbed graves is that of a careful and well-ordered burial but with no extravagance.

The Sfakaki *epistomia* together with their grave-goods demonstrate similarities in burial customs – whether this might also indicate familial relations of the deceased must remain a conjecture – but at the same time, they militate against generalizations. Of the twenty-six graves in Sfakaki studied so far, which include those with *epistomia* B12, E4, and G2–G4, twenty-two contained burial-coins. Of the five graves with *epistomia*, coins were also discovered in two graves (E4, G2). This may be accidental, but it may also be that the deceased with *epistomia* E4 and G2 and their relatives felt strongly about the burial-coin practice, as most probably also did the deceased with lamellae D2, D4, E4, F2, F4, F5, G1.

[29] Themelis and Touratsoglou 1997: 148–149; Laks and Most 1997; Oikonomou 2002: 48–49. Kouremenos, Parássoglou, and Tsantsanoglou 2006: 3–5. See also Nilsson 1957: especially 116–147; and Burkert 1987.

Three unique (thus far) examples in Pieria, Macedonia bring together the use of the burial-coin practice with the mystic *symbola*. Matthaios Bessios recovered from two graves in Pydna two gold coins of Philip II incised with a male and a female name: Andron and Xenariste, respectively (F9 and F8); the coins were found in the mouths of the deceased, buried in two almost identically decorated graves. Dimitrios Pantermalis has published a photograph of a small gold disc on which the name Epigenes was incised with dotted letters from Macedonian grave V in Dion (F12).[30] Coins on which personal names are incised are extremely rare: either because of a lack of a gold lamella, or lack of time, or for some other reason, the relatives(?) of Andron, Xenariste, and perhaps Epigenes employed two gold coins and a small gold disc (as a token, or as a pseudo-coin?), on which they engraved the names of the deceased. These three examples appear to combine, in a manner so far unique, the burial-coin with the gold *epistomion* practices, a fact that Margherita Guarducci and Petros Themelis had already postulated for B3–B8 and for F7, respectively.[31] In this regard, the deceased with *epistomia* G2–G4 probably employed these three unincised *epistomia* both as pseudo-burial-coins, because of their intrinsic value, and at the same time perhaps as unincised tokens of initiates for passage and transfer to a special place of the Underworld.

The five *epistomia* from Sfakaki attest that differentiation in burial customs may have been both a diachronic and a synchronic phenomenon, as they seem to embrace diversity or, as Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) has argued convincingly, individualization rather than homogeneity. Among the five graves at Sfakaki in which a deceased was buried with an *epistomion*, three different practices are evident. This variety suggests that, even though these people were inhabiting the same area, practiced similar burial customs, became *mystai* in an Bacchic–Orphic cult promising life after death, and lived one sometime between the third to the early first century BCE (B12), another between 20 BCE and 40 CE (E4), and three in the first century CE (G2–G4), they nevertheless developed a more personal attitude towards death.

[30] Bessios 1992: 247, and Bessios in Tzifopoulos 2010; Pantermalis 1999: 271 (*SEG* 49.703); Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2006. Bernabé (2004–07: fasc. 2 75–79 496 F) is cautious and does not include the three names incised on the coins and the gold disc in the group of the other lamellae with short texts, but he mentions Andron and Xenariste in the endnote (78), among other texts suspected of being "Orphic"; skeptical are also Graf and Johnston (2007: 28 no. 18).

[31] Guarducci 1939: *IC* II: 314–315; and especially 1974: 8–18; Zuntz's skepticism (1971: 335–336 n. 2); and Themelis (1994). A comparable but not entirely similar case is presented by a gold rectangular tablet with an inscription addressing Serapis, found inside a skull in a cinerary urn in Columbarium III at Rome. Although not Orphic, this phylactery, with its address to Serapis, presents a curious case of either a Charonian obol or a mystic *symbola*, according to Jordan 1985: 162–167.

This individualization is also evident when the texts themselves are studied. The five deceased buried with *epistomia* in Sfakaki manifest three different attitudes towards death (or more if the presence of a burial-coin is another criterion), just as the deceased buried with lamellae and *epistomia* in Macedonia, Thessaly, and Italy: those with an unincised *epistomion* (G2–G4), those with an *epistomion* incised with greetings to Plouton and Persephone (E4, similar to E1 published from Eleutherna), and the deceased with an *epistomion* incised with a long text (B12, similar to B3–B8 published from Eleutherna).

The unincised *epistomia* (G2–G4), provided they fulfill the same function, may be understood as implying a content analogous to the texts of the other lamellae and *epistomia* from Crete, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Italy. Their being left blank need not present a problem, as this would be a perfect, if extreme, example of symbolic epigraphy.[32]

The two short texts (E1, E4) address Plouton and/or Persephone with the verb χαίρειν, incised or understood. On account of Plouton's presence, these lamellae have not traditionally been classed with the other incised lamellae and *epistomia* B3–B8, B12. According to Margherita Guarducci, the presence of Plouton may have been due to a conflation of Orphic beliefs, as expounded in the gold lamellae with the long texts, with some sort of local cult and ritual in Eleutherna, chief among them the mystery cult of Cretan Zeus in the Idaean Cave. Günther Zuntz accepted Guarducci's explanation, but modified her formulation: the conflation of Orphic beliefs was not with a local, but with a general tradition. By focusing on the overwhelming similarities of the Cretan texts with the ones from Italy, Thessaly, and Macedonia he understood them as part and parcel of a Panhellenic epic *Kunstsprache*, through which was transmitted an eschatological discourse on life after death.[33] It is hard to deny that Plouton's role is kept very much in the background in the long texts of group B (in the texts of group A he is addressed euphemistically), but at the same time his presence is always implied as the husband of Persephone and as Lord of the Underworld. Zuntz, as it turns out, was right about Plouton's presence: it is due not to a local but to a general tradition, as more pieces of evidence have since appeared.

[32] Bodel 2001: 19–24; see further Skouteri-Didaskalou 1997; Chatzitaki-Kapsomenou 1997; Frankfurter 2004. The performative aspect of symbolic epigraphy is the only one shared by curse-tablets, amulets, phylacteries, and the gold lamellae. For this aspect of the texts see Obbink and Calame in this volume.

[33] Guarducci, *IC* II.xii.31bis: 171; Zuntz 1971: 384.

Until recently, the known examples from Macedonia addressed only Persephone (E3 and E4), but a new lamella (E5), contains a text where Plouton alone is addressed as *despotes*.[34] Moreover, the Apulian volute-krater, attributed to the workshop of the Darius painter whose themes and motifs are usually inspired from dramatic works, presents a unique narrative scene at its center:[35] Hades with sceptre in his left hand is seated upon a throne inside his palace and extends his right hand to Dionysos, who, coming from the right side, "grasps" it with his right hand; to Hades' left side, Persephone is standing with a torch in her hands, and Hermes is holding a caduceus and resting against one of the columns of the palace. The connection with Euripides' *Bacchae*, noted by Trendall and Cambitoglou, and the scene's eschatology are evident enough. The dominant role of Plouton, previously attested only in two Cretan texts (E1 and E4), is corroborated by E5 from Macedonia, and is also evident on the main narrative scene of the Apulian krater, although admittedly the deceased buried with this krater may not have been a *mystes* in a Bacchic-Orphic cult, similar to the one of the deceased with the incised lamellae and *epistomia*. In these instances Plouton's prominence does not jibe well with the tradition in which Persephone is the key-figure, but it accords perhaps with another, final(?) stage of the initiate's Underworld journey, in which final approval and consent depended ultimately on the Lord of the Dead. If such a stage existed, the long texts on the lamellae and *epistomia* offer no proof, except for the cryptic form of E1, E4, and E5.

Turning to the seven longer texts from Crete (B3–B8, B12), two motifs of the long versions from Thessaly and Italy seem important enough to be incised: (a) a deadly thirst that is quenched by drinking from a specific, revitalizing spring, whose location appears to be a crucial factor;[36] and (b) the recognition of the deceased's identity through certain questions and answers. Zuntz proposed that the Cretan texts contain the absolute

[34] Hatzopoulos 2002, 2006 and 2008.

[35] The krater was found in Tomb 33 at Timmari (Basilicata) and was acquired by the Toledo Museum of Art (1994.19). Since its publication by Trendall and Cambitoglou (1992: 508 no.41a1), it has attracted much attention and rightly so: Graf 1993: 256; Johnston and McNiven 1996: 25–36, pl. 1; Gavrilaki and Tzifopoulos 1998; Tzifopoulos 2002; and Avagianou 2002 in relation to Thessalian inscriptions to Hermes Chthonios. Kefalidou (2005–2006) discusses afresh the iconography and she tentatively suggests for the painter's inspiration some dramatic work like the *Minyas* or *Nostoi* or even another painting such as Polygnotos' in the Knidian Lesche at Delphi. Chicoteau (1997) discusses a similar interaction with and/or influence of Bacchic–Orphic beliefs on a fresco in a Roman catacomb. For depictions of the Underworld on Apulian vases see Schmidt (1991, 1996, and 2000, the Toledo scene on pp. 96–97); and Carpenter in press. For Bacchic themes see Rauch 1999.

[36] On the motif of thirstiness and the Egyptian parallels see Dousa's balanced and convincing discussion of the evidence in this volume.

minimum form, what he termed "the cardinal words" of the longer, expanded versions, but concluded that "the Cretan text, however solid and primordial its substance, cannot be taken for the original of the expanded versions."[37] It is impossible to find a reasonable explanation for the synoptic character of some of the texts in the B series, the seven from Crete (B3–B8 and B12), and B9 from Thessaly (the only synoptic one, so far, outside the island).[38] For that matter, it is just as difficult to find any suitable explanation in this regard for all of the lamellae with brief texts. The identical repetition of the same formulae and motifs (except for the two questions in rhythmical prose) proves beyond doubt that these lamellae belonged to the same tradition which was responsible for the four long texts in the same group: B1, B2, B10, and B11.

As with the deceased buried with the *epistomia* E1 and E4, and G2–G4, similarly with those buried with the *epistomia* B3–B8 and B12 from Crete homogeneity is lacking. Two of the texts (B6 and B12) deviate in the topography of the spring and in the *symbolon* the deceased has to utter in order to be recognized by the guards of the spring and the Underworld powers. Instead of the expected *symbolon* in the question-and-answer trial scene *I am the son of Earth and starry Sky*,[39] or the like (this much at least seems to have been the engraver's intention), lines 4–6 of B12 read: *Who are you? Where are you from? Earth is my mother; from where? and what . . . And the (starry) Sky* (τ<ί>ς δ᾽ εἶ ἢ πῶ δ᾽ εἶ; Γᾶ |{σ} <ἐ>μοί μάτηρ· πῶ; τί; ΑΕΤ | [κ]αὶ <Ο>ὐρανός). Another equally possible reading of these lines may be: *Of Earth I am, mother*, (questions interrupting the *symbolon*: *from where? what? . . .*) *and of the starry Sky* (Γᾶ|ς ἠμ{ο}ί, μάτηρ, (πῶ; τί; ΑΕΤ) [κ]αὶ <Ο>ὐρανῷ <ἀ>στε<ρόεντος>), in which case *mater* should be

[37] Zuntz (1971: 381–382) explained the deficiencies the Cretan texts present as follows:

> First, because of its informal imperfections. This combination of perfect poetry with completely unmetrical prose cannot possibly represent the primitive form of conveying this eschatological vision; nor obviously, is it in the least likely to have been done, originally, in a local Cretan dialect. The obvious vehicle would have been the traditional epic *Kunstsprache*, retranslation into which indeed can afford a cure for the most striking irregularity: namely the question in prose ('v. 3'); but not for all (unless indeed one were to rewrite the whole *ad lib.*).
>
> And yet, only a few pages earlier, in his discussion of the "rhythmical prose" in the announcement of the deceased's deification in the A-texts (a quality he denied line 3 of the Cretan texts), he awards the dialect a distinct importance: "The Doric dialect in both these legends is remarkable. It seems to have conveyed, in this late period, an aura of archaic sanctity" (Zuntz 1971: 341–342, the quotation from 342 n. 1).

[38] As John Papadopoulos, at the time Associate Curator at the Getty Museum, informed me, the Thessalian provenance of this lamella is not certain.

[39] For the parallels in terms of poetics and composition of this formula with Homeric epic see Herrero de Jáuregui in this volume; and for Gnostic and early Christian echoes Betz in this volume.

understood as a vocative, even though the ending in eta is again problematic. In the second half of line 6 the engraver is either repeating by mistake the letters from the previous lines 4–5 (ΠΩΔΕΙΓΑ and ΠΩΤΙΑΕΤ), or this is an additional formula in the question-and-answer trial scene: *And who (are you)? (Are) you thirsty?* (τε τίς; δίψαι το|ι . . .). A similar difficulty is encountered again in the *symbolon* incised in line 4 of B6: ΓΥᾸΤΗΡ, which Guarducci emended to <θ>υ<γ>άτηρ (*I am the daughter of Earth and starry Sky*), and Pugliese Carratelli to γ<ενε>τήρ (*figlio?*).[40] In light of the reading of B12 above, however, the word may also be emended to <μ>ᾰ́τηρ, an equally sound emendation palaeographically, but with grammatical problems. If so, lines 4–5 of B6, and lines 4–6 of B12 would read: *I am of Earth, mother, and starry Sky* (Γᾶς ἠμι, <μ>ᾰ́τηρ, καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος), the *mystes* addressing her/his reply to the *mother*, none other than Persephone.

These deviant readings in the *symbola* of B6 and B12 do not create any serious obstacles in understanding the gist of what was intended. They may present different choices of text for incision on the lamellae of the kind we encounter in Macedonia, the Peloponnese, and Rome, where only the name, or the word *mystes*, or a few words are chosen to be incised.

Most intriguing and challenging is the reading in lines 2–4 of the new text B12: *but (give) me to drink from the spring of <S>auros to the left of the cypress* (ἀλλ<ὰ> π{α}ιεῖν μοι κράνας <Σ>αύ|ρου ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τᾶς κυφα{σ}|ρίζω). The spring is located at the left of the cypress (the genitive in its Doric form), a topographical indication so far unique in all the texts of group B, and also different from the other Cretan texts (B3–B8), to which, when compared, it appears to be contradicting the topography in Hades.[41] In all other Cretan texts the location of spring and cypress is clearer: either the spring is to the right, and the cypress is disassociated from it, if τῆ is understood as the deictic interjection (κράνας . . . ἐπὶ δεξιά. τῆ! κυφάριζος, *from the . . . spring to the right; there! the cypress*); or, if a comma is placed after δεξιά and τῇ is understood as the locative relative pronoun, the cypress marks the place, to the right of which the deceased must look for the spring whence to drink (*from the . . . spring to the right, where the cypress*). Moreover, whereas the spring in the Cretan texts is specified by two epithets: ἀ(ι)είροος in three texts (B3–B4 and B7, line 2); or ἀ(ι)έναος in two texts (B5 and B8, line 2), *epistomion* B6 line 2 reads: ΑΙΓΙΔΔΩ, and the new text B12 in lines 2–3 reads: κράνας <Σ>αύρου, or κράνας Αὔρου (*the spring of Sauros/Auros*), both equally possible readings.

[40] Pugliese Carratelli 2001: 82–83 no. 1B4. [41] Cole 2003: 193–217.

For B6 Guarducci's easiest solution was to emend the problematic reading ΑΙΓΙΔΔΩ to αἰ<ε>ι<ρό>ω, one of the two epithets of the spring attested in B3–B4, B7. This emendation may likewise be accepted for the problematic reading in the new text B12: <Σ>αύρου or Αὔρου into ἀ<ει>ρό<ω>. If emended, these deviations in the texts of B12 and B6 may be eliminated, and thus the two texts may be made to conform to the other long texts especially from Crete, but also from Thessaly and Italy.

But perhaps before emendation of both divergent texts is considered final, other plausible options should also be entertained, in particular the possibility that these divergences may have been influenced by local (or individual) cultic and religious considerations. This is after all the golden rule of epigraphy, expounded constantly and most eloquently by Louis Robert: inscriptions, before all else, belong to, and should be understood within their *local context* first and foremost, and then within wider contexts of similar texts from other areas. It may not be a coincidence, or the engraver's mistake that both texts present divergent readings in the same places: the *symbolon*, and the location of cypress and spring. The process, by which a minor detail was allowed to creep into the dominant version, if such a text was ever in circulation, can only be guessed at, and this constitutes one important objective in the study of these texts, which is based primarily on their strong similarities (the stemmatological approach). Another objective, equally worth the effort, is to shift the emphasis from similarities to divergences, and, instead of one central document behind these texts, to entertain the possibility that these texts may all have been dominant and peripheral at the same time.[42] The deviant readings in texts B12 and B6 (and E1 and E4 for that matter) from Crete may also be understood not as scribal mistakes by an engraver/copyist, but as local influences on, or individual choices from the Bacchic–Orphic discourse of afterlife, which to judge from the present state of the evidence did not meet with unanimous approval, as only two (or four if E1 and E4 are counted) of nine texts betray such local or individual considerations and prejudices.

Before attempting to place the twelve Cretan *epistomia* within their local context, it will be useful to briefly review the record of the island, particularly that of Phaistos, the Idaean Cave, and Eleutherna, for parallels or analogous cases of mystery cults, for a Cretan context as it were, which may support in a significant way the two deviant texts B12 and B6. Especially the evidence from these three areas is concrete and tangible and strongly suggests specific rituals and cultic activities.

[42] On this see Obbink in this volume.

In Phaistos, the city south of the Idaean Cave and close to Gortyn, an epigram was set up in the temple of Magna Mater. This text has been commented upon briefly but convincingly by Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli, who associated it with the Cretan *epistomia* (the text is printed below in its hexametric form with verticals indicating line-divisions on the stone):[43]

θαῦμα μέγ' ἀνθρώποις | πάντων Μάτηρ προδίκνυτι:
τοῖς ὁσίοις κίνχρητι καὶ οἳ γονεὰν ὑπέχονται,
τοῖς δὲ π|αρεσβαίνονσι θιῶν γέν|ος ἀντία πράτει.ν
εὐσεβίες τε καὶ εὔγλωθ|{ι}οι πάριθ' ἁγνοὶ ν
ἔνθεον ἐς | Μεγάλας Ματρὸς ναόν, ἔνθεα δ' ἔργα
γνώσηθ' ἀθανάτας ἄξια τῶδε ναῶ.

A great marvel for humans the Mother of all performs by example (in advance):
for the *hosioi* she divines and (for those) who maintain (stay within) their race;
but for the transgressors of the race of gods she does the opposite.
Every pious and eloquent (or sweet to the ear) come pure
to the holy temple of the Great Mother, and the divine works
you will learn of the immortal (Mother), worthy of this very temple.

The epigram is divided either into two or three parts, as the empty spaces on the stone indicate after the verb πράτει and after ἁγνοί. In the first case (3:3), the first three hexameters state the ways of the goddess; the latter three invite all who are *pious* and *eloquent* or *sweet to the ear* to enter the temple *pure* and learn the *divine works*. In the second case (3:1:2), the fourth hexameter forms the central portion of the epigram, where there is also a change from the third person of the first three hexameters to the second, while the last two hexameters form an elegiac couplet (the problematic sixth line is not a hexameter, but a pentameter). The shift in metrical rhythm and in the person of the verbs is not alien to compositional techniques of funerary epigrams, with which the Phaistian epigram invites comparison. This is also the case concerning the Cretan texts on the *epistomia* of group B, which follow the same compositional techniques of the epic *Kunstsprache*, but aim at a different target, as they present different discourses on death and afterlife. Thus, the great miracle in line 1 is picked up again in the concluding lines 10–12, where it is explicated as the god-inspired *erga* worth performing in this temple. The pentameter highlights the transition from the ways of the goddess in the first part to the invitation to the pious in the second and complements the shift of the verbs from third to second person.

[43] Pugliese Carratelli 2001: 86–89 = *OF* 568. For cults and rituals in Phaistos and environs see Sporn 2002: 195–218; Prent 2005: 519–523.

The first part of the epigram (especially the second and third hexameters) is difficult to understand. The first verb προδίκνυτι (*show by example, show first, make known beforehand*, LSJ), clearly indicates an oracle and/or a cultic place where mysteries (*a great miracle*) are performed. The verb's semantics allude to the ritual and performative aspect of the text itself,[44] and the deictic at the end, τῶδε ναῶ, emphasizes forcefully the performative present, the *hic et nunc* performance of the ritual.[45] The goddess' foreknowledge and divination (κίνχρητι)[46] is exclusively reserved for the *hosioi* and for those who literally *put themselves under/within their generation* (LSJ), and who *maintain their origin* (lines 3–4). But to those who *transgress the divine generation*, the goddess performs the opposite, i.e. does not foretell or divine. Pugliese Carratelli proposed to associate the two sentences, οἳ γονεὰν ὑπέχονται, and τοῖς δὲ παρεσβαίνονσι θιῶν γένος, to the same confession, none other than the one encountered in the texts of group B, where the deceased introduces him/herself as: *the son of Earth and starry Sky*; and in two of the B texts from Thessaly, the deceased also adds: *my name is Asterios* (B2: Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>, | Ἀστέριος ὄνομα); or *my generation is from heaven* (B9: Γᾶς υἱός εἰμι | καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος· | αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον).

What kind of mystery cult and ritual is behind this epigram is not clear, although tempting suggestions have been proposed. Pugliese Carratelli emphasized the relation between this text and Euripides' *parodos* of the *Cretans*, where *divine works* are also performed in honor of the triad: Zeus, (Dionysos) Zagreus, and Mountain Mother. Behind these cults and rituals, according to Pugliese Carratelli, may lie an interrelation between a Cretan Dionysiac mystery cult and an "Orphic-Pythagorean belief about Mnemosyne", because only through Memory can the initiates accomplish the divine message: to remain within and not to transgress their divine origin.

What this epigram does demonstrate is that the Phaistian mystery cult, if not directly related, is at least similar in concept to the cult and rituals behind the *Cretans' parodos*, performed in honor of Zeus, (Dionysos) Zagreus, and the Mother Oreia (who by analogy is closer to Magna Mater

[44] For δείκνυμι as a term of performance, semantically close to σημαίνω and its relation to *kleos* see Nagy 1990: 217–221; and Lateiner 1989: 13–51; for the monumental character of Herodotus' *prooemion*, analogous to funerary inscriptions see Bakker 2002: 30–31 n. 64 and n. 65 with earlier bibliography; for the funerary epigram and Homeric epic see Létoublon 1995; but especially Day 2000, and Depew 2000.

[45] Bakker 1997: 28–29 and 78–80.

[46] Chantraine 1980: 1274 s.v. χράομαι; Bile (1988: 227 n. 298) Attic κίχρησι; Pugliese Carratelli (2001: 87–88) χρήιζει or χρᾶι.

than to Rhea or Leto).[47] Both cults and rituals also appear similar in concept to the mystery cult(s) behind the texts of the gold *epistomia* discovered in the wider area of Eleutherna, but also in Pherai, Thessaly (text D5). Moreover, in this epigram the priest/poet employs the verbs προδίκνυτι and κίνχρητι to denote the activity of the goddess. Magna Mater, inside her god-inspiring temple, reveals the only god-inspiring deeds that count. She pronounces "*the oracle*" of life and death by answering the awe-inspiring question "what happens when humans die?"[48]

Phaistos and Eleutherna lie on opposite sides of Crete's most famous site in antiquity, the Cave of Zeus on Mount Ida, where a mystery cult and rituals were also performed (although of what kind remains a mystery). It would be quite astonishing, however, if the mystery cult and rituals in the Cave were very different from what the Phaistian epigram, the twelve Eleuthernaean *epistomia*, the Thessalian D5 text, and the *parodos* of Euripides' *Cretans* imply. The Cave, located at an altitude of ca. 1500 m, has intrigued visitors and students alike. Literature concerning the location and its enticing qualities and mesmerizing effects stretches back to ancient times. The recent excavator Yannis Sakellarakis has presented solid evidence that confirms continuous worship from the Minoan period until well into the fourth century CE:[49]

As is to be expected, the sanctuary particularly prospered during certain periods when it received panhellenic offerings and at other times worship shows signs of decline. Most frequently worship was transformed, a subject of particular

[47] The evidence is scanty, but at present these female deities seem to be separate, although Lekatsas (1985: 172–189) understands all the female divinities associated with Dionysos as *personae* of Magna Mater.

[48] For the similarities in composition and technique between the texts on the lamellae and *epistomia* and the oracles see Edmonds in this volume, and Tzifopoulos 2010.

[49] Sakellarakis 1988: 209, 212–213 and 214 respectively. The bibliography is extensive: for the recent excavations see Sakellarakis 1983, 1988–89; Chaniotis 1987, 1990, 2001a, 2001b, 2006, and in press (for the inscriptions from the recent excavations), who rightly calls the Idaean Cave "eine überregionale Kulthöhle"; Sporn 2002: 218–223; and Prent 2005: 565–604. Verbruggen (1981) raised doubts about the nature of Zeus Kretagenes and proposed not to view this god as a dying and being reborn young god; see Chaniotis' 1986 critical assessment; Lekatsas (1985: 77–79) identifies Cretan Zeus with Dionysos and discusses his association with caves; see further Kokolakis 1995a, 1995b; Vikela 2003. Psaroudakis (1999–2000) studies the often neglected relation of Dionysos with metals, which are mined in caves, and the "magical" world of technology. For the possibility of the presence of Zeus' throne inside the cave see Sakellarakis 2006, who presents an informed array of this object's ramifications in the cave's cult and ritual; for possible cultic activity near Ida's top see Kritzas 2006; for iron finger-rings with very interesting, if intriguing, depictions see Moustaka 2004; for the depictions on "shields" and phialae see Galanaki 2001 and 2006; for the possible production in Eleutherna of some orientalizing artifacts recovered from the cave see Goula 2006; for the cave during neolithic times Mandeli 2006; for the cave's Minoan period Vassilakis 2006; for the Roman period Melfi 2006; for the cave's literary uses in Latin texts see Braccesi 2004; and George 2006.

importance for religion, to blend other divinities, chiefly in later times … The origin of the singular worship of Cretan Zeus, the god who was born and died every year, lies in the prehistoric, Minoan deity, the young god who personified the yearly birth and death of the vegetation cycle, despite the lack of archaeological proof. *This evidence is now explicit and unquestionable*, and furthermore indicates the extent and dynamism of Minoan worship which preceded … Fortunate, too, are the names of the neighbouring mountain tops, one of which is called Tympanatoras, which alludes to an act of worship, namely the beating of the drums by the Kouretes at the birth of Cretan Zeus (my emphasis).

The findings are overwhelming.[50] Conclusive evidence has not been found for the worship of the triad and the mysteries found in the *parodos* of Euripides' *Cretans*, except for Zeus Idaeos, mentioned in a number of treaties between Cretan cities as their guarantor.[51] But even so, rituals in the Idaean Cave were still performed in the fourth century CE, as an inscription from Samos testifies.[52] Some of the artifacts are associated with ephebic initiation rites and fertility, while others indicate worship of other deities in addition to Zeus.[53] Motifs on bronze art works from the Idaean Cave, dated from the ninth century BCE to the archaic period, include the *potis* and *potnia theron*, ritual dancing and musical processions, warriors and hunters, and female divinities enthroned or lying on a couch.[54]

The very few texts from the Cave that have been published and those whose publication is forthcoming include: a dedication to Zeus Idaeos of the Imperial period engraved on a clay tabula ansata(?) by Aster son of Alexandros;[55] a gold lamella with a curious text (perhaps a phylactery); and a first-century CE dodecahedral die made of rock crystal, and engraved with a letter or number on all twelve sides. The presence of the latter two in the Cave is intriguing and not easily explainable, as a number of different reasons may account for their findspot, but a connection with the activities, oracular and/or ritual, in the Cave seems the most probable.[56]

[50] More will definitely come to light, as excavations have resumed at Zominthos, a late Minoan site close to the Idaean Cave, perhaps the last stop from the north and east roads leading to the Cave, for which see Sakellarakis and Panagiotopoulos 2006 with the earlier bibliography.

[51] Chaniotis 1996b: 70; Sporn 2002: 222–223.

[52] Chaniotis 1987 and 1990. In the text Ploutarchos mentions that before his appointment as *praeses insularum* he performed sacrifices on Mt. Ida.

[53] Sporn 2002: 220–221; for the terminology of initiation in Cretan inscriptions see Bile 1992.

[54] Galanaki (2001: 39–44, and passim) has argued that the *potis theron* motif is reminiscent of the later mystery cult of Zeus Idaeos and Dionysos Zagreus; compare Pappalardo 2001 and 2004.

[55] *IC* I.xii.1 (on the back side the letters ΔΙ are probably Zeus' name again in the dative): Διὶ Ἰδαίῳ | εὐχὴν | Ἀστὴρ Ἀ|λεξάν|δρου.

[56] For the incised gold foil with the curious text Halbherr tentatively suggested a gnostic formula, and Guarducci labeled it an *inscriptio abracadabrica?* (*IC* I.xii.8; line 4 is incised retrograde): [- -]ΙΟΥΩΗ | [- -]ΩΑΙΙΗ | [- - φυλ]|άσσου. Chaniotis (2006) rightly associates the rock crystal die with

Finally, Eleutherna and its environs, the city north of the Idaean Cave and the provenance of the nine incised and three unincised gold *epistomia*, provides enough evidence to support the view that these *epistomia* may not have been out of context, especially from this particular part of the island. Chance finds and the excavations by the University of Crete over the last twenty years have brought to light structures, artifacts, and especially inscriptions that demonstrate continuous but fluctuating habitation since the late Neolithic period.[57]

The intra-mural necropolis at Orthi Petra, dated from the ninth to perhaps the end of the sixth century BCE, attests to a variety of burial practices which demonstrate a developing ideology and self-consciousness of the city's inhabitants during this period.[58] The necropolis comprises a number of remarkable finds:[59] the Orthi Petra itself, a huge stone-pessos around which the cemetery itself gradually developed; the pyre A of the warrior with the beheaded skeleton at its corner (an example reminiscent of Patroklos' pyre and Achilles' revenge in Homer, as the excavator has argued);[60] the lady of Auxerre and a second Kore of Eleutherna, most probably grave monuments;[61] and a cenotaph or *heroon*, a public burial monument to 'the unknown warrior' as it were, inside which were discovered no skeletal remains, but only a baetyl, and on whose roof probably stood as akroteria or cornices the ten shield-bearing warriors, none other than the ten Kouretes, among them no doubt Eleuther himself (after whom the city was named). If the excavator is correct, what may have begun in Eleutherna as an intra-mural burial

divinatory activities which may have taken place in the Idaean Cave, where Cretan Zeus was prominent, as the legends about Epimenides also indicate. He cautions, however, that, if an oracle existed in the Idaean Cave, as Capdeville (1990) has argued, it need not have been permanent. A parallel case is the sanctuary of Trophonios at Lebadeia, near Delphi, which appears to have been regarded both as an oracle and as a mystery cult, where divinatory practice depended upon *Lethe* and *Mnemosyne*, for which see Bonnechere 2003a and 2003b; and Maurizio 1999. Ustinova 2002 discusses mythical figures with prophetic traits and their association with subterranean places in the southern Balkans; and Ustinova 2004 argues that Apollo's epithet *pholeuterios* in Histria on the Thracian Black Sea coast should rather point to the god's oracular activities in dens and caves as well.

[57] Sanctuaries and public buildings from the late Geometric and Archaic to the Hellenistic and Roman periods have been excavated on the hills Pyrgi and Nesi (Kalpaxis 2004), and also at the site Katsivelos (Themelis 2002 and 2004a).

[58] This is also the case in the Prinias-stelai, dated to the seventh century BCE: they were fitted on the outer walls of grave monuments in the necropolis of ancient Rhizenia or Apollonia (modern Patela of Prinias) and were engraved with male and female figures representing all social classes, in an impressive posture and with iconographic elements that "may characterize the figures ... as 'heroic', in the secular sense of the word," according to Lebessi 1976: 176 and passim; and also Sporn 2002: 176–177.

[59] Stampolidis 2004a: 116–138; and Stampolidis 2001 for the burial practices in the necropolis.

[60] Stampolidis 1996a; 2004a: 127–129; 2004c: 69–70.

[61] As argued by Stampolidis 2004b: 235–236 nos. 252–253. For the problematics of describing statues, especially the Lady of Auxerre, see Donohue 2005: 131–143, 202–221.

monument of one or more aristocratic clan-members who claimed their ancestry from one or more of the Kouretes, became gradually by the sixth century BCE the city's most prominent and "official" necropolis.[62] What rituals and burial rites, if any, were performed at the necropolis and whether the necropolis continued to function as such in the Hellenistic and Roman periods are at present open questions.

Moreover, from 400 BCE onwards, the epigraphical record of Eleutherna together with other finds provides strong indications about the presence of certain divinities who may suggest the existence of cults and rituals relevant to the texts on the *epistomia*.[63]

Apollo was apparently one of the major divinities of the city. The silver and bronze coins, issued by Eleutherna's mint and dated from the middle of the fifth to the middle of the second centuries BCE, carry on the obverse Apollo laureate. On the reverse, two legends appear: in one Apollo is standing nude and is holding a sphere and a bow in his hands; in the other, nude Apollo with bow and quiver and a sphere in his right hand is seated on an omphalos with a lyre beside it.[64] The latter coin-legend in particular alludes clearly not only to the hunter-motif, but also to the motifs of prophecy and music, associated in the literary record with Epimenides and Eleutherna.[65] The god's epithets include: Δελφίνιος (in two inscriptions), Βιλκώνιος, and Σασθραῖος.[66] Furthermore, a very fragmentary text from ca. 500 BCE, which Guarducci tentatively calls *lex ad kitharoedos*, may be a regulation regarding the location within the city where the *kitharistai* might live (according to Paula Perlman's cautious reconstruction), but it cannot be taken in itself as evidence for foreign-residents in the city.[67] Perlman is correct in stressing that the legendary figures of poetry and

[62] Stampolidis 2004a: 137–138; 2004b: 234–235 nos. 250–251.

[63] For Eleutherna and environs see Stampolidis 2004a; Sporn 2002: 234–244.

[64] The sphere is variously described as a round object, a stone, a rock, a disc. Sidiropoulos 2004; Furtwängler and Spanou 2004; Stampolidis 2004b; *SNG Kopenhagen*: 429–436; Le Rider 1966: 105; Svoronos 1890: 128–136, 131–135 nos. 2–34.

[65] It should be noted that a rock and a tree form the scenery, where communication with the divine, and poetic and/or prophetic inspiration, are achieved, as Hesiod's proverbial apostrophizing indicates (*Theog.* 35): ἀλλὰ τίη μοι ταῦτα περὶ δρῦν ἢ περὶ πέτρην; see O'Bryhim 1996 with previous bibliography. West (1997: 431) adduces Near Eastern texts where birth from a tree and a rock is mentioned; in Minoan times a similar scenery appears in what Nannó Marinatos (2004) calls scenes of epiphany, and Burkert (2004: 19 and passim) tentatively describes as "some form of 'divination'." For the line's use in Plutarch see Alexiou 1998.

[66] van Effenterre 1991: 26–30 (*SEG* 41.743; *BE* 1992.360); Chaniotis 1995: 16–27, and Chaniotis 1996a: 190–195 no. 6 (*SEG* 45.1258; 46.1206; *BE* 1996.324, 332; 1998.318); Themelis and Matthaiou 2004 (*SEG* 52.852); and Tzifopoulos 2009, 107–111 no. 6.

[67] Perlman 2004: 109–112, especially 112. The inscription reads: κιθαριστᾶν, and not Guarducci's (*IC* II.xii.16Ab line 1): κι[θ]αριστὰς (van Effenterre and Ruzé 1995: 118–119 no. 26 read κι(θ)αριστὰς).

music from Eleutherna and this single fragmentary attestation are not proof for the city being a center of music and poetry. But perhaps there is more to this than an intriguing coincidence. If these legendary stories predated this inscription, and if the coin-legends are therefore later than the inscription or at the least contemporary with it, then the Eleuthernaeans were conforming to their legends for obvious reasons. If, however, the stories were later inventions and postdate the inscription, then Eleuthernaean perceptions of themselves were projected onto these legends, which for some reason became widespread beyond the island – hence their attestation in non-Cretan literary texts.

Zeus' presence at Eleutherna is attested in the epithets: Fidatas, Thenatas, and possibly Skyllios in two fragmentary treaties from the third century BCE;[68] Ὕψιστος in a small altar;[69] and Πολιάο[χος], Μα[χανεύς?] in the calendar of sacrifices dated to 150–100 BCE.[70]

In the same calendar-of-sacrifices inscription, the cult of the Materes is also attested for the first time, as is [?Δάματερ Μεγάλα?]ρτος, and probably a month Damatrios. Eutychia Stavrianopoulou has argued convincingly that this inscription is the missing evidence that the Materes-cult in Engyon Sicily originated in Crete in the area around the Idaean Cave. Who these Materes were is not clear. Their identification with Demeter and Kore is an easy solution, but the literary evidence does not support it and it is not certain that the number of the Materes was two. Stavrianopoulou has recognized in them the Nymphs, mentioned in the context of the Idaean Zeus-cult, Amaltheia and Melissa. She has also argued for a connection of their cult with the locality Pantomatrion or Amphimatrion, thus probably named after them, north of Eleutherna in the area of modern Chamalevri, Stavromenos, and Sfakaki,[71] whence the *epistomia*. Sporn, although in general agreement, is skeptical about the specific identification of the Materes with Amaltheia and Melissa.[72] In the same calendar of sacrifices, however, a Nymph (Λύμφα<ι>) is also to receive a sacrifice, and in the

The text is very difficult to read, because the stone was re-inscribed without erasing completely the previous text; thus, the strokes of both texts are visible at places; see also Stampolidis 2004a: 69–70; and Guizzi 2006. Presence of Anatolians at an earlier date is attested in the necropolis as three Phoenician *cippi* have been found, for which see Stampolidis 2003; 2004b: 135, 238 no. 257; 2004c: 67–68.

[68] On Zeus Skyllios see Psilakis (2002) who relates the epithet with σκυλλίς, the "vine-shoot" according to Hesychios.

[69] Sporn (2002: 241 and 244) follows the reading in Themelis (1989–90: 266; *SEG* 39.958): Ὑέτ[ιος], but see Tzifopoulos 2009, 113–115 no. 8.

[70] Stavrianopoulou 1991 (*SEG* 41.744); on Zeus Machaneus see Martin 1983: 76–84.

[71] Stavrianopoulou 1991 and 1993.

[72] Sporn 2002: 239–240; on maiden triads see further Scheinberg 1979; for reliefs depicting Pan and Nymphs in Crete see Sporn 2004.

treaty between Eleutherna and Rhaukos, the last divinities mentioned in the oath are: [κ]αὶ Λύμφας καὶ θιὸνς πάντ<α>[νς]. It appears, therefore, that the cult and ritual of the Nymph(s) is rather distinct from that of the Materes, who may thus be identified with the Magna Mater of Phaistos and the Mater Oreia of Euripides, and/or Rhea, Leto, Hera or some other Magna Mater figure.

Persephone and/or Demeter, or even a chthonian Aphrodite were most likely worshipped in a sanctuary at the site Elleniko on the hill SE of the modern village.[73] In the calendar-of-sacrifices inscription, Artemis is to receive offerings in her *adyta*,[74] while the epithet ἀγρο[τέραι], if the restoration is correct, most probably refers to this goddess; she is also included in the oath of the treaty between Eleutherna and Rhaukos without epithet, followed by Velchanos (Fέλχανος).[75] To Aphrodite and Hermes was dedicated the excavated Hellenistic temple in the site Katsivelos, as the discovery of a small naiskos with the couple in relief, and the statue of Aphrodite and Pan demonstrate. Aphrodite is also included in the oaths of the two fragmentary treaties, together with Ares and Hermes.[76]

The presence of Dionysos and his entourage at Eleutherna and the existence of Dionysiac cult(s) and ritual(s) in the city was until recently conjectured on the basis of a few pieces of evidence: a fragmentary text dated to the sixth or fifth century BCE which preserves the name of the month Dionyssios;[77] a statue group of Dionysos and Silenos in the Rethymno Museum;[78] a few coins depicting a bunch of grapes issued by Eleutherna;[79]

[73] Stampolidis 2004a: 57. For Aphrodite see Pirenne-Delforge 1994; for Aphrodite and Dionysos see Pingiatoglou 2004.

[74] On the stone: AADYTITAAPTE (, [ἐς τ]ὰ ἄδυτ<α> τὰ Ἀρτέ[μιδος]). Stavrianopoulou (1991: 33 and 38; *SEG* 41.744) reads: [ἐς τ]ὰ ἄδυττα <τὰ> Ἀρτέ[μιδος].

[75] Themelis and Matthaiou 2004 (*SEG* 52.852); Artemis is missing from what survives from another treaty (above n. 66).

[76] Themelis 2002; 2004a; and 2004b: 183 no. 78 (naiskos), 178–180 no. 71 (statue). For the inscriptions above n. 66 and n. 75. For more artifacts relating to Aphrodite see Tegou 2004: 147 no. 1; Themelis 2002; and 2004b: 181 no. 72, 182 no. 77, 184 no. 81, 218 no. 191. For phylacteries, magic amulets, and demonic/apotrotopaic figurines see Yangaki 2004 (with an addendum of known phylacteries); Themelis 2002: 60, 62 figure 67, 74, 76 figure 84, 78 figures 88–89; Themelis 2004b: nos. 87, 219, 224, 246, 411. For the fascinating ivory plaques decorated with mythological scenes from Achilles' life, dated to the fourth century CE, see Themelis 2004b: 231–232 no. 248.

[77] *IC* II.xii.9 line 2, as restored by van Effenterre and Ruzé 1994: 114–117 no. 25: Διονυσσίαν νεμον[ηίαν]; see also Bile 1988: 154 n. 334; and Sporn 2002: 239. The month Dionyssios is attested only in Praisos (*IC* III.vi [Praisos].7A line 14; and Trümpy 1997: 195), and Sybritos (Tzifopoulos 2004–2009, 569–573 no. 1).

[78] Sporn 2002: 239 and n. 1768.

[79] Eleutherna, Sybritos, and Kydonia were the only three cities of Crete that issued coins whose legends employed Dionysiac motifs; Marangou-Lerat 1995; and Perlman 2004: 102–103.

and the asylia-treaty between Eleutherna and Teos, dated *paulo ante* 201 BCE, inscribed on the wall of the temple of Dionysos at Teos.[80]

A number of recently discovered artifacts, most of them dated from the second century BCE onwards and displaying Dionysiac motifs and themes, add important pieces to this sketchy picture and strengthen Dionysos' presence at Eleutherna: a fragment of a marble vessel, depicting a Maenad in the characteristic stance of ecstasy, and reminiscent of the Dionysiac scenes on the Derveni krater; a bronze lamp in the shape of a panther with Dionysos as rider;[81] a clay dramatic mask, a clay figurine of Ganymedes carrying wine, and a clay-figurine of Papposilenos.[82] The most remarkable find, however, an exquisite piece of work imported from Athens and a unique example for Crete, comprises the three "Herms" of Pentelic marble unearthed during the excavations of the protobyzantine Basilica's narthex, and dated according to the excavator Petros Themelis to the years of Hadrian or Septimius Severus.[83] The Eleutherna example, however, is not truly a "Herm" (hence the quotes for all three), because the one whose head has been recovered depicts, according to Themelis, Dionysos and Ariadne crowned with an ivy-wreath and wearing a band. The features of the two heads are nearly identical, and instead of Dionysos and Ariadne perhaps other identifications may be entertained, a representation of Dionysos and Apollo, or even a double Dionysos. All three identifications seem plausible, but whichever may be correct, it is clear that Dionysos is connected with a divinity intimately associated with poetry, either Apollo or Ariadne, who in the literary record have overlapping spheres.[84] If, however, its identification with the Delphic odd couple is correct, this "Herm" would visually represent most eloquently the true nature of the two gods: being identical, but

[80] *IC* II.xii.21, especially lines 19–29; on this and the similar asylia-decrees from Lappa and Sybritos (and other Cretan cities) see Kvist 2003 with previous bibliography.

[81] Tegou 2004: 147 no. 2 (Maenad), 151 no. 8 (lamp). For the Derveni krater see Yiouri 1978; and Themelis and Touratsoglou 1997.

[82] Themelis 2004b: 210 nos. 162, 163 and 164.

[83] Rethymno Museum (Λ[ίθινα] 2579 stele + Λ[ίθινα] 2377 head with two faces); Themelis 2002: 96–99; and 2004b: 185–186 no. 86. So far, this is one of the rarest representations in the Hellenic world and a quite unexpected find at Eleutherna. The few rare "Herms" of Dionysos depict the god on one side as a youth, and on the other as a bearded adult. Themelis has suggested that the original, in all likelihood, was a fourth-century BCE bronze work(s) by Praxiteles, which was used as a model for later copies. He compares the Eleutherna copy with the scene of the couple on the bronze kalyx-krater B1 from Derveni tomb B, and also with Dionysos on the western pedimental sculpture of Apollo's temple at Delphi. For "Herms" of Dionysos in Macedonia see Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 1992: 81. For a sanctuary of Apollo (*kitharoidos*), in which Artemis and Dionysos were also worshipped, in Western Macedonia see Karamitrou-Medessidi 2000.

[84] For Ariadne's poetic associations see Sarinaki in press.

looking in different directions, they share an intimate relationship often alluded to in the literary works.

The evidence presented so far, despite its piecemeal and sketchy nature, if it does not prove beyond reasonable doubt, at least reveals a Cretan context for the mystery cult behind the texts on the Cretan *epistomia* and the archaeological and epigraphical record of the area around the renowned Idaean Cave. The context that produced these texts is not only a Bacchic–Orphic Panhellenic mystery cult, as the other texts denote from Italy, the Peloponnese, Thessaly, and Macedonia with which they share strong similarities. The Cretan example argues in favor of a process by which the Bacchic–Orphic Panhellenic mystery cult which produced these texts underwent changes and adaptations in order to cater to local (or individual) cultic and ritual concerns about the afterlife, a process that in all probability had also taken place in Italy, the Peloponnese, Thessaly, and Macedonia. The Cretan context is manifest in the similar in concept mystery cult(s) and rituals in Phaistos, in the Idaean Cave, and in Eleutherna and environs wherefrom the *epistomia*. As the texts on the *epistomia*, so the evidence from these areas betrays both similarities and divergences. More importantly, they also point to a renaissance of cults and rituals in these and in other places of Crete from the third century BCE until the late fourth century CE, notably after the Roman conquest and the organization of the island as a Roman province. In fact, the extensive necropolis, wherefrom come the twelve gold *epistomia*, follows closely the west–east artery, which near Sfakaki by the sea-shore turns north–south, and through Viran Episkopi, Eleutherna, and Sybritos finally reaches the Roman capital Gortyn.[85]

During the Roman and imperial periods, the Cretans apparently revitalized and emphasized the long-standing perceptions about their island and themselves, chief among them the Idaean Cave and its rituals and mystery cult(s). Milena Melfi has argued that during the classical and Hellenistic period, when Crete was plagued by internal strife, the artifacts from the excavations in the Idaean Cave are few and indicate a decline, but from the imperial period onwards, the number of artifacts increases remarkably. This suggests, as she argues, that in the first centuries CE the Idaean Cave, among

[85] Martha Baldwin Bowsky (2006, with earlier bibliography) has argued cogently that the Romans took a particular interest in realigning and reorganizing the regional zone between Mt. Ida and the White Mountains, with the result that Eleutherna was privileged over Axos, despite the latter's proximity to the Idaean Cave, because Eleutherna's strategic position facilitated mobility along routes of trade, transit, and communication; for the Roman reorganization of the island and its ramifications see further Viviers 2004; Sonnabend 2004.

other places on the island, became a fashionable destination, mainly among Neoplatonic circles, which, however, may have been only one of the crucial factors.[86]

Moreover, the evidence from Eleutherna corroborates that this was the city's golden period (and, after the Minoan period, the entire island's for that matter), and it may very well provide the missing answers for the renaissance of old cults and rituals from the third century BCE onwards throughout the island, but chiefly around Mount Ida. In all probability, the priesthood in the Idaean Cave and the neighboring cities, Phaistos/Gortyn, Knossos, Axos, and Eleutherna exploited to their advantage this Roman interest and tried to accommodate the needs of those frequenting cult-places.

The Cretan context sketched above, the evidence from the area around the Idaean Cave, to the south at Phaistos, and to the north at Eleutherna, does point to intensive and continuous ritual and cultic activity. Such a context is fitting for, and may explain not only the presence of the deceased buried with incised *epistomia*, but also the deviant choices and ideologies in these texts, because of the various but similar in concept mystery cults and rituals in Phaistos, the Idaean Cave, and Eleutherna. The piecemeal nature of the evidence, however, advises caution, and the dedication by Aster, son of Alexander may illustrate how far the argument can be pushed. It is indeed far-fetched to argue that Aster – a rare name anyway[87] – was not his true name but the name he received after initiation into the mystery cult in the Idaean Cave, because Aster is reminiscent of: 1) the *mystes* from Pharsalos who identifies himself as: Ἀστέριος ὄνομα (B2); 2) the *mystai* of the B-texts, who identify themselves as: Γῆς παῖς καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος; 3) the entry of Hesychios: Ἀστερίη. ἡ Κρήτη καὶ ἡ Δῆλος οὕτως ἐκαλοῦντο (and of Herodianos: Χθονία. οὕτως καλεῖται ἡ Κρήτη); and 4) Asterion or Asterios or Asteros, in myth the childless king of Crete to whom Zeus

[86] Melfi 2006; and Di Branco 2004. A number of cases attest this renewed interest in certain locations of Crete, e.g. other caves become religious destinations and attest Roman fascination in this period in the wider area of the Idaean Cave in the Rethymno Prefecture, for which see Tzifopoulos 1999; Niniou-Kindeli 2002; Sporn 2002: 251–252, all with previous bibliography; for two lamps from the Melidoni and Amnissos Caves with unique depictions of *taurokathapsia*, dated to the Roman period, see Sapouna 2004. For the Diktynnaion and its funding activities see Tzifopoulos 2004, Sporn 2001, Baldwin Bowsky 2001, and Baldwin Bowsky and Niniou-Kindeli 2006. For the Asklepeion at Lebena see Melfi 2004, Girone 2004, and Di Branco 2004. For the sanctuary at Palaikastro, where in this very period arose the need to reinscribe the Hymn to Megistos Kouros in a new copy, see MacGillivray, Driessen, and Sackett 2000; Furley and Bremer 2001, vol. I: 69–76; Sporn 2002: 45–49; Prent 2005: 532–550; and Alonge 2005.

[87] Bechtel 1917, s.v.; and *LGPN* I, II, IIIA, IIIB, IV, s.v.

gave Europa in marriage and who reared Zeus' and Europa's children Minos, Rhadamanthys, and Sarpedon.[88] All this is far-fetched, but the coincidence is bewildering, as most probably is the relation between mystery cult and prophecy expounded in the Phaistian epigram, and the presence of the incised rock crystal die, and the phylactery(?) in the Idaean Cave.

Even so, however, and given the Cretan context(s) sketched above, the deviant readings in the *symbolon* and particularly in the topography of the *epistomia* B12 and B6, before they are dismissed as rather simple palaeographical oversights or mistakes, deserve serious consideration as significant variant readings. The expression: *I am of Earth, mother, and starry Sky* (Γᾶς ἠμι, <μ>ά̣τηρ, καὶ Ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος), may have undergone a small change, perhaps because of the cult of Magna Mater or the Materes, so as to be in concert both with local cult and with the Bacchic–Orphic mystery cult on afterlife. The *mystes* addressing her/his reply to the *mother*, none other than Persephone in a Bacchic–Orphic mystery cult, or the Magna Mater or the Materes in their mystery cult, would thus have it both ways, not unlike the *mystes* in D5, or the chorus in the *parodos* of Euripides' *Cretans*. This much at least, in spite of the problems in grammar, is an equally plausible understanding of the *symbola* in B6 and B12.

The topographical variants in B12 and B6 are more intriguing. Lines 2–3 of B12 locate the cypress near *the spring of Sauros/Auros* (κράνας <Σ>αύρου or Αὔρου), and line 2 of B6 near *the spring of* ΑΙΓΙΔΔΩ (κράνας ΑΙΓΙΔΔΩ). Both texts deviate from all other texts in group B from Eleutherna, Thessaly, and Italy, in which the spring is simply ever-flowing, divine, or its water is ice-cold (ἀ(ι)είροος, ἀ(ι)έναος, θεία, or ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ); or it is not a spring but the lake of Mnemosyne (λίμνη Μνημοσύνης). If the reading in B12 is not a nonsensical topographical mistake, then the *spring of Sauros/Auros* should be identified with the only other attestation for such a spring on Mount Ida. Theophrastos, in his narrative on black poplars (αἴγειροι, some of which bear fruit and some not) records that in the Idaean Cave and environs, most of the black poplars bear fruit. He locates one at the entrance to the Cave, another smaller one

[88] In Hesiod's *Theogony* 376 and 409 Astraios and Asterie are assigned minor roles, which may be due to their importance in poetry rivaling Hesiod's epic (*Asterie* was also the original name of Delos; see West 1966: 270 and 281). According to Pausanias (2.31.1) Minos had also a son *Asterion* whom Theseus defeated, if *Asterion* is not another name for Minotauros, for which see the discussion in Willetts 1962: 166–167; and Lambrinoudakis 1971: 301, 343–344. For a later development of Asterios' myth see Vian 1998 with previous bibliography.

nearby, and, at a distance of twelve stades from the entrance (approximately 2,200 m), he notes many black poplars around *some spring called of Sauros*.[89]

There is no way of determining the source of Theophrastos' information. In the Nida plateau at the foot of the Cave, a number of springs are interspersed. One of them, *Christ's spring* has been identified as Theophrastos' so-called *spring of Sauros* by Spyridon Marinatos and Eleutherios Platakis.[90] A second spring called *Partridge-water* (Περδικόνερο) was used by Sakellarakis' team during excavations in the 1980s (*personal communication*). Sauros, *the lizard-man*, and especially Auros, are not very common names,[91] and this accounts well for Theophrastos' skepticism (περί τινα κρήνην Σαύρου καλουμένην). It is almost as if the author himself does not believe what he is writing (the manuscript tradition is sound and presents no difficulties in this sentence). And yet, a close parallel may be found in the name of the Nymph Saora or Aora after whom the city of Eleutherna was originally named Saoros or Aoros. If not a reference to some unknown local tale, then in all probability, Sauros/Auros should be associated with Eleutherna's earlier name Σάτρα or Σάωρος, attested in the grammarians Stephanos Byzantios and Herodianos:[92] "*Satra*: a city in Crete that changed the name to Eleutherna; the citizen is called Satraios. *Eleutherai*: a city in Crete, named after Eleuther, one of the Kouretes, which used to have also the name Saoros/Aoros after a nymph Saora/Aora."

Nymphs gave their names to springs and cities, and in the epigraphical record of Eleutherna, they are included in treaties and in the calendar of sacrifices, as noted above. Moreover, the inhabitants' name Satraios is also a

[89] Theophrastos, *Historia plantarum* 3.3.4: ἐν Κρήτῃ δὲ καὶ αἴγειροι κάρπιμοι πλείους εἰσί· μία μὲν ἐν τῷ στομίῳ τοῦ ἄντρου τοῦ ἐν τῇ Ἴδῃ, ἐν ᾧ τὰ ἀναθήματα ἀνάκειται, ἄλλη δὲ μικρὰ πλησίον· ἀπωτέρω δὲ μάλιστα δώδεκα σταδίους περί τινα κρήνην Σαύρου καλουμένην πολλαί. (I owe this reference to Angelos Chariotis.) For this passage see also Stampolidis 1996b; 1998a: 114–116; 1998b; 2003.

[90] Apud Sakellarakis 1983: 419 and n. 3.

[91] Bechtel 1917; *LGPN* I, II, IIIA, IIIB, IVS. The form *Sauros* as a name is already attested in a Linear B tablet from Knossos: *Saurijo* (Chantraine 1980: 991). There is, of course, a Roman name Σάτριος/ S*atrius*, relatively uncommon in Greek nomenclature (see Baldwin Bowsky 1995: 272–273; *SEG* 45.1239). Another intriguing coincidence is the form of the month at Lato: *Sartiobiarios*, "a strange-sounding foreign word," according to Robertson (2002: 26–27), for which see Chaniotis 1996b: 322–323 no. 55 A22, B16 (= *IC* I.xvi.4 line 22); Chaniotis 1996a; and Trümpy 1997: 193–194.

[92] Stephanos Byzantios, *Ethnica* s.v. Σάτρα. πόλις Κρήτης, ἡ μετονομασθεῖσα Ἐλεύθερνα. ὁ πολίτης Σατραῖος; and s.v. Ἐλευθεραί. ἔστι καὶ Κρήτης ἀπὸ Ἐλευθῆρος ἑνὸς τῶν Κουρήτων, ἥτις καὶ Σάωρος ἐκαλεῖτο ἀπὸ Σαώρης νύμφης. Herodianos s.v. Ἐλευθεραί. πληθυντικῶς λεγόμενον. ἔστι καὶ Κρήτης ἀπὸ Ἐλευθῆρος ἑνὸς τῶν Κουρήτων, ἥτις καὶ Σάωρος ἐκαλεῖτο ἀπὸ Σαώρης νύμφης; and s.v. Ἄωρος. πόλις Κρήτης ἀπὸ Ἀώρας νύμφης. ἐκαλεῖτο καὶ Σάωρος; and s.v. Ἀώρα ἢ Σαώρα νύμφη, ἀφ' ἧς Ἄωρος ἢ Σάωρος πόλις Κρήτη μετονομασθεῖσα Ἐλευθεραί. Stampolidis 1993: 24–25; 1994: 143–144; 2004d; see also van Effenterre 1991: 29; and Themelis 2002: 11–14; 2004a: 48.

local epithet of Apollo (Σασθραῖος), attested in the oath of a fragmentary treaty dated to the third century BCE.[93] The form Sasthraios most probably provides the original name of the nymph, which perhaps the grammarians changed first to Σαστραῖος and then to Σατραῖος. If the grammarians are to be trusted, then it appears that the two names, Sa(s)t(h)ra and Eleutherna, may have been understood as similar in meaning;[94] hence the change into a Greek and more intelligible name.

Be that as it may, the coincidence is remarkable. Meaning either *free/sovereign*, or *fatherland/kingdom*, *Sasthra/Satra* or the like,[95] after it was changed to *Eleutherna*, may have been retained as a name of one of Eleutherna's districts or neighborhoods, where Apollo's worship was prominent and ancestral links were thriving.[96] Could *Sasthra/Satra* and *Eleuther/Eleutherna* have been Eleuthernaean (re)inventions of the past, especially promoted from the late Hellenistic period onwards, when people began flocking to the city and the neighboring reputed Cave-sanctuary on Ida? The stories could presumably have been about a Nymph named so and so, who had an escapade with Apollo in such and such a place, whence the epithet of Apollo and the name of the spring on Mount Ida. And about Eleuther, one of the most important of the Kouretes, there could also have been stories, about how he took such and such an action on behalf of the baby-god, and came down from Ida to such and such a place, whence

[93] van Effenterre 1991: 29; Faraklas et al. 1998: 78; and Chaniotis 1996b: 190–195 no. 6 (*SEG* 46.1206).

[94] An intriguing coincidence in understanding Satra and Eleutherna as similar in meaning is in Herodotus' narrative (7.110–112) about the Thracian tribe Satrai, the only one that remained always free (ἐλεύθεροι), because of their unparalleled military valor and their habitat high in the mountains, covered with every kind of forest and with snow; the Satrai also possessed the oracle of Dionysos, whose prophets were from a group of Satrai called Bessoi, and whose female promantis was divining in exactly the same way as the priestess at Delphi (I owe the reference to Nicholas Stampolidis). Another intriguing coincidence is the modern names of the cities *Eleuthero(u)polis* and *Eleutherai* in the wider area of ancient *Satrai* (for ancient Pieria see Pikoulas 2001); and the name of the village Satres (Σάτρες) in the Thracian Prefecture of Xanthi. And one should also keep in mind that Dionysos entered Attica from the Boeotian *Eleutherai*.

[95] *Satra*, in all probability, should be associated with the Iranian root χšaθra, whence the Old Persian χšaθra-*pavan* and *satrap*, literally *kingdom/fatherland protector*; alternately, it may have originated from a form *Sat(a)ra* or *Sat(u)ra*, after syncopation, from a root *Sat-*(*Ksat-*) which meant *free, master, ruler*, or even *fatherland*; see Chantraine 1980: 989 (*satrapes*), 990 (*saturos*); and LSJ s.vv. *satres, satra, satrap-*. Stampolidis (1993: 24–25; 1994: 143–144; 2004d) calls the root *sat-* (*free, master, ruler*) Thraco-Pelasgian and entertains the possibility of *Sat(a)ra* being related to the Linear B toponym *Katara*.

[96] This much has been proposed by Henri van Effenterre (1991: 29–30) for the other epithet of Apollo, *Vilkonios*, derived from *Vilkon*, most probably the name of Eleutherna's western hill Nesi, where presumably Apollo's presence was also prominent, a proposal, however, not supported at present by the evidence, for which see Chaniotis' arguments (1996b: 191–192 and 195; *BE* 1996.332, 324). Until 2002 in Greek cities the districts or neighborhoods were given in most cases the names of the parish-churches dominating the district, according to which the voting catalogues were prepared.

the new name of the city. Such mythistorical creations,[97] or "archaeologies" as Claude Calame (2003) would call them, would more than sanction Eleuthernaean presence in the Idaean Cave and its lucrative administration. The Eleuthernaeans apparently employed in certain periods for their own political, social, economic, and religious purposes some or all of the names for their city, names far more numerous than for any other Cretan city:[98] Satra/Sasthra, Saoros/Saora, Aoros/Aora, Eleuther, Eleutherai, Eleuther(r)a, Eleuthernai, Eloutherna, Eleuthenna, Eleutherna, Apollonia. These names variously reflect the inhabitants' prejudices and ideology regarding self-awareness of their past and self-identity.

Eleutherna's distance from the Nida plateau and the Idaean Cave (today approximately an hour and a half by car, but in antiquity probably a full day's walk up the mountain) should not present an insurmountable difficulty, as a modern example aptly illustrates. The pasture of the Nida plateau (or at least the majority of it) belongs today to the village of Anogeia, located at a distance of 21 km to the north, and not to the village of Vorizia, located at a much closer distance of 8.5 km to the south. Whoever wished to visit the Idaean Cave and return could not have done so in one day, but had to spend at least one night, and probably more if s/he also wished to be initiated. The Nida plateau is scattered with Roman remains,[99] some of which no doubt belonged to structures for the accommodation of the visitors, perhaps similar to the ones excavated in the Diktynnaion. As the Idaean Cave was an interstate sanctuary (whether this was the case all along or if it only happened gradually is unclear) whose logistics and priestly responsibilities were administered by the citizens of Gortyn/Phaistos, Knossos, Axos, Eleutherna (and perhaps other cities), it is only natural that these citizens who had to spend a considerable number of days or months in the Nida plateau would have their own lodgings somewhere near the Cave. An analogous case is the so-called *thesauroi* of cities in the sanctuaries at Delphi and Olympia, which housed and protected the city's dedications to the god, because the principle behind the *thesauroi* is the same. The sanctuary-authorities permit cities to build within the precinct their own *oikiskoi* as dedications to the god, in which the city also housed and protected its smaller offerings. Likewise, in the Nida plateau, albeit not within the precinct itself (but its borders can only be guessed at), the neighboring cities would have had to come to terms and divided up the

[97] Baldwin Bowsky (2000) argues that the Cretans responded to Roman influence by revitalizing local traditions.

[98] See above n. 92 and n. 95.

[99] Sakellarakis 1983: 418 and *passim*; Melfi 2006.

space proportionately(?), presumably to everybody's benefit. If such an amiable agreement, as described, ever existed, the evidence for it is wanting, as is also information about the sanctuary's administration. In fact, evidence to the contrary is presented by the fate of the interstate sanctuary of Diktaean Zeus in eastern Crete.[100]

With names sounding so strange (Saoros and Aoros), no wonder Theophrastos was skeptical about the spring's name. His reading and that in B12 are in all likelihood related to the "older" name of Eleutherna, Satra/Saoros/Sauros, and the name of the spring can thus denote nothing else but the *spring of Eleutherna (Sauros/Saoros/Satra)* in the Nida plateau. This would imply that the area around this spring "belonged" to Eleuthernaeans, where presumably they would have camped when visiting the sanctuary, or would have built more permanent lodgings.

Thus, B12 provides a strong link between Eleutherna and the mystery cult initiations performed in the Idaean Cave sometime from the third century BCE onwards, if not earlier. More importantly, however, if the *spring of Eleutherna* in the Nida plateau did exist (and at present there is no compelling reason to doubt that it did – whether it is the *Christ's spring* which Marinatos and Platakis identified as Theophrastos' so-called *spring of Sauros*, or one of the other springs in the plateau), then the Underworld illustrated in the texts on the Cretan gold *epistomia* (and perhaps also in those of the other gold lamellae) gains a significant local dimension. It is commonly assumed that initiation into a cult comprised the *legomena*, *dromena*, and *deiknymena*. The texts on the lamellae and *epistomia* provide some of the dialogue and the action, but what kind of performance and what was shown to the initiates is anybody's guess. The drama, re-enacted constantly for each initiation and supposedly with minimal changes, must have also included some kind of scenery for the Underworld journey.[101] Some persons, the priest(s?), would have acted out the roles of the guards of the spring/lake, and perhaps also those of Dionysos, Hermes(?), Demeter/Mater Oreia/Persephone, and Hades. The whole ritual performance should have been so impressive as to be inculcated into the initiate who thus would have no trouble during the "actual journey" *recognizing the cypress and the spring*, and *remembering* the *symbola* dialogue. What is astonishing,

[100] Guizzi (2001 with previous bibliography) discusses the fierce and long-lasting disputes between the neighboring cities Itanos, Dragmos, Praisos, and Hierapytna about their borderline and about control of the arable land and pastures of the sanctuary, which eventually ended each time with the annihilation of one of the parties involved, until the Romans reorganized the island as a province.

[101] For the ritual(s) behind the texts on lamellae and *epistomia* and their eschatology see Graf and Johnston 2007: 94–164; and in this volume Riedweg (Chapter 9), and Faraone (Chapter 13).

provided this is a plausible scenario, is that an actual spring, the *spring of Eleutherna/Sauros/Saoros* in text B12 and its surrounding scenery may have been used as a "prop" during the deceased's initiation. If so, this may also account for the "wrong" topography of the spring to the left of the cypress, as *the spring of Eleutherna/Sauros* on Ida may have been actually to *the left of a cypress-tree*.

In that respect, the reading in B6 line 2: κράνας AIΓIΔΔ(ω), if it does not refer to some topographical detail unknown so far, and if emendation is imperative, may also be emended to κράνας αἰγί{δ}ῥω, *the black-poplar spring*, an equally, if not more, acceptable emendation, as Verbruggen had proposed.[102] For *the black-poplar spring* may also have been another element conveniently appropriated from the epic by the composer of this particular text (and perhaps of other texts), and given a new and very specific symbolism within the local Cretan context on Mt. Ida. Although the cypress is absent from Circe's detailed instructions to Odysseus, poplars are not. These trees and a spring are part not only of Persephone's grove at the entrance to the Underworld, but both also appear on the islands of Calypso, the Cyclops, Phaeacia, and Ithaca.[103] The scenery of the Nida plateau included both black poplars, as Theophrastos attests, but also the famous cypress-trees, exported throughout the Mediterranean, near which springs were flowing.[104]

Like the black poplar, the cypress and the spring are mythic stock-elements, which, as Radcliffe Edmonds has argued, do not illustrate a clear-cut operative dichotomy of left and right, but they can signify different things in particular texts.[105] This accounts well for the divergent readings in the B group texts, but B12 and B6 may add another significant explanation of a more mundane nature. It appears that during initiation, a kind of Underworld scenery and atmosphere was created for the re-enactment and performance of the ritual, which may indeed sound far-fetched, but is not unprecedented, as Merkelbach has documented the small ritual acts

[102] Verbruggen (1981: 90–91) also suggested that the cypress and the spring may have originated in Crete. Comparetti (1910: 34) understood the *leuké* cypress as identical to the white poplar (in Greek *leúke*); but Guthrie (1993: 182 and 192 n. 16) was skeptical; on the cypress' whiteness and brightness see Graf and Johnston 2007: 108–109.

[103] *Odyssey* 5.238–240 (Calypso's island); 6.291–294 cp. 7.105–106 (Phaeacia in the grove of Athena); 9.140–142 (island of the Cyclops); 10.509–510 (entrance to the Underworld, in the grove of Persephone); and 17.208–210 (Ithaca); for the "catabatic" associations of these passages see Martin 2007: 15–17 and passim.

[104] Theophrastos' text above n. 89; for the cypress of Ida see Chaniotis 1993; Chaniotis 1999: 208–209; Perlman 2000: 145–146.

[105] Edmonds 2004: 46–55.

performed during the initiation ritual into the cult of Isis and Sarapis.[106] This "stage" for the performance of the ritual had to be plausible enough and had to represent as closely as possible the Underworld scenery as imagined by the "priesthood," for which sometimes real props, ready at hand, would have had to be employed, and which from one place to the other would no doubt be tinted with a local coloring.[107] Thus, the Underworld illustrated in the texts of the gold lamellae and *epistomia* is a unique combination not only of stock mythic-elements, but also of "real" ones, a combination conveniently present on the Nida plateau, the *black-poplar*, a *spring*, and a *cypress*, which may account for the divergent topographical hints in these texts. The world above, more familiar and less dangerous, lends to the world below some real objects, a *cypress* nearby the *spring of Eleutherna/Sauros*, and *the black-poplar spring*, in order to render it less threatening, and thus more attainable.

The deviant readings in texts B12 and B6 (and E1 and E4 for that matter) from Crete may present a case of local (or individual), and therefore "peripheral," influences on the Bacchic–Orphic discourse of afterlife, and not another typical case of an engraver's mistake. To judge from the present state of the evidence, it may not be sheer coincidence that both texts present divergent readings in the same places, the *symbolon*, and the location of cypress and spring. The Cretan context(s) of mystery cults and rituals, especially the context sketched above from Phaistos, the Idaean Cave, and Eleutherna, amply illustrates that especially from the third century BCE onwards mystery cult(s) and eschatological beliefs, similar in concept to the one expressed in the texts on the lamellae and *epistomia*, were in vogue and flourishing. These were not always and in all areas of the island peripheral or central to the polis religion, but apparently co-existed side by side not only with Olympian religious ideas but also with other cults and rituals. Nor was there one central Bacchic–Orphic doctrine which prescribed specifically how the Underworld journey should be accomplished, and how the promised life after death should come true.

Within the small group of the twelve incised *epistomia* there is evident differentiation. Different *mystai* felt differently and expressed their beliefs and attitudes in differing, more individual(?) ways, as the shapes of the

[106] Merkelbach 1995: 147–181, 328–331, 343–346; the small ritual acts include impersonation of gods by priests, theatrical devices, machines, etc.

[107] Graf and Johnston (2007: 109–111) explain the topographical divergence in B12 as a probable innovation by an *orpheotelestes*, claiming that *his* is the correct knowledge of the Underworld topography; this need not exclude a local context for the incised *epistomion*, unless he was an itinerant *orpheotelestes*.

epistomia, the burial-coin practice, and the choice of the words to be incised strongly suggest. Although the majority of the *mystai* conform to the general and therefore central ideology of eschatological beliefs as expressed in the long texts from Italy and Thessaly, two *mystai* insist on engraving in texts B6 and B12 a local and therefore peripheral version of the Underworld topography, not to mention the two *mystai* addressing Plouton and Persephone (E1, E4), and the three who do not engrave anything but leave the matter completely blank to be filled in accordingly (G2–G4). Why are the specific details of topography so significant for the two *mystai*? Have these two *mystai* been initiated in the Idaean Cave on the Nida plateau, whereas the other ten elsewhere? Is this a local change of the Underworld narrative-topography, or were similar attempts also made elsewhere but so far are unknown?

These are legitimate questions that show the limitations imposed by the evidence. Crete, located in the periphery of Greece, and Phaistos, the Idaean Cave, and Eleutherna and environs, in turn peripheral centers on the island, provide strong evidence against hasty emendation of both deviant texts so as to make them conform to their similar Cretan examples, and in support of further research particularly of local idiosyncrasies. Center and periphery, employed either literally or figuratively, are useful interpretative tools but only to a certain degree. Religious attitudes and ideologies not only within a polis but also within a specific group of *mystai*, as is the case at Sfakaki, need not, or could not always conform to identical practices. The evidence from Eleutherna and Sfakaki, in the "periphery" of the Greek world, and a peripheral center of Crete, reveal an interpretative tension and dynamic interaction between local and Panhellenic, central and peripheral rituals and mystery cults, burial practices and ideologies, and discourses on afterlife.

APPENDIX

Table 7.1 ***GROUP G*** *Unincised lamellae*

	Provenance	*Date*	*Gender*	*Shape*	*Position in grave*	*Coin*	*Inscription*	*Burial and grave-goods*
G1	Pella, Macedonia	200–150 BCE	female	olive leaf	inside the larnax	gold stater of Philip II	no text (written in ink?, now lost)	Cremation in chamber tomb. On the dromos pottery and amphora-handle with seal. Inside marble sarcophagus: wooden larnax with cremated bones covered with gold-purple cloth; two gold myrtle-wreaths (24 and 30 leaves each); gold jewel shoe-shaped; burnt bone object. On the floor of the chamber: bronze phiale, small clay pyxis, two clay unguentaria, a small bone object, clay Thasian amphora, clay lamp, iron lamp-stand, glass skyphos
G2	Sfakaki, Crete	1–50 CE	male?	*epistomion*	mouth	silver coin	no text	Inhumation in cist-grave. Around the feet from the knees down: clay prochous, four glass cups, glass phiale, bronze lekythion, and bronze strigil
G3	Sfakaki, Crete	50–100 CE	female?	rectangular *epistomion*	mouth	no	no text	Inhumation in cist-grave. Around the feet: a clay kylix, a clay prochous, four clay unguentaria, glass cup, bronze mirror, lead pyxis, and bronze nails
G4	Sfakaki, Crete	I C. CE	female?	rectangular *epistomion*	mouth	no	no text	Inhumation in cist-grave. Deceased A buried later than deceased B to the N, and B (an older burial probably of a female) to the S. Around the feet of both: a clay prochous, three aryballos-shaped lekythia, a clay unguentarium, a clay cup, and a glass phiale; deceased A also a bronze coin; deceased B also *epistomion*, and between the legs bronze foils (from a wooden pyxis?)

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Note: Abbreviations of journal titles and series titles follow those of *L'Année philologique* or *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn. Oxford 1999.
In addition:

AcOr	*Acta Orientalia* (Societates Orientales Danica, Norvegica, Svecica. Leiden and Copenhagen.
SNG Kopenhagen	*Sylloge nummorum graecorum Kopenhagen: The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals*. Copenhagen.

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