UNIVERSIDADE DE BRASÍLIA

PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTERIES
From ἐπόπτεια to ἐποπτικά:
EPIPHANY IN THE HIGHEST MYSTERIES

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ABSTRACT

Title: Philosophical Mysteries: From ἐπόπτεια to ἐποπτικά—Epiphany in the Highest Mysteries

Abstract: This thesis argues that Diotima's ἐποπτικά are presented into a well-structured, controlled, and prepared way of leading to divine epiphanies beyond the constraints of divine agency, adapted by Plato from Eleusinian ἐπόπτεια and presented as epiphanies, in an interplay of intermediary agency, at the summit of an educative, transformative, complex exercise of hermeneutics in the apprehension of truth after the attainment of a reorienting and lifelong continuous state of viewing: the philosophical framing during the philosophical life. This argument examines the outcomes of rendering ἐποπτικά as Plato's transpositions of the unique divine *theoria* from the Eleusinian Mysteries into a philosophical *theoria,* specifically the philosophical framing of the transformative process by which individuals continuously seek to view for themselves and transform themselves. The analysis of ἐποπτικά at Diotima's passage could aid us in discussing the manifold interpretive challenges that emerge from Plato's engagement with the mysteries in the *Symposium*, debating the extent to which Diotima's ἐποπτικά is presented as the Philosophical Mysteries.

Keywords: Plato, visuality, knowledge, epiphany, Mysteries.

ABSTRACT

Título: Mistérios Filosóficos: de ἐπόπτεια a ἐποπτικά — Epifania nos Grandes Mistérios

Resumo: Essa tese argumenta que as ἐποπτικά de Diotima são apresentadas enquanto uma modalidade bem estruturada e controlada para direcionar a epifanias divinas para além das limitações de agência divina, adaptadas por Platão da ἐπόπτεια Eleusina e apresentadas como epifanias em um jogo de agência intermediada, no culminar de um exercício educacional, transformativo e complexo de hermenêutica na apreensão da verdade após a obtenção de um estado contínuo e duradouro de reorientação do ver: o escopo filosófico durante a vida filosófica. Esse argumento examina as consequências de interpretar ἐποπτικά enquanto transposições de Platão da *theoria* divina dos Mistérios Eleusinos para uma *theoria* filosófica, especificamente no que diz respeito ao escopo filosófico do processo transformativo pelo qual indivíduos continuamente buscam ver por si mesmos e transformar a si mesmos. A análise de ἐποπτικά na passagem de Diotima poderia auxiliar-nos a discutir a multiplicidade de desafios interpretativos que emergem do relacionamento de Platão com os mistérios no *Banquete,* a debater em que medida as ἐποπτικά de Diotima são apresentadas como os Mistérios Filosóficos.

Palavras-chave: Platão, visualidade, conhecimento, Epifania, Mistérios.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This Thesis argues that Diotima's ἐποπτικά[1] are presented into a well-structured, controlled, and prepared way leading to divine epiphanies beyond the constraints of divine agency, adapted[2] by Plato from Eleusinian ἐπόπτεια [3] and presented as epiphanies, in an interplay of intermediary agency, at the summit of an educational, transformative, complex exercise of hermeneutics in the apprehension of truth and attainment of a lifelong reorienting and never-ending continuous state of viewing: the philosophical framing in the philosophical life. This argument examines the consequences of rendering ἐπόπτικα as Plato's transposition[4] of the unique divine *theoria* from the Eleusinian Mysteries into a

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[1] μυηθείης· τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά κτλ, "...could be made into a μύστης. However, the Highest Mysteries and insightful viewing..." (Pl. *Symp.* 210a1). Dover's (1980) Greek text. The translation is our own. The discussion for this choice for μυηθείης· τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά will be discussed at the correlate pagination in the 'Commentaries' section on Chapter II.

[2] This thesis depards from the underlying assumption that this is not a simple matter of 'using motifs' but a conscious intellectual processes involved in selecting, imitating or adapting the purpose or function for which, as Lorna Hardwick suggests in her reception studies, "the new work or appropriation of ideas or values is made," using it to sanction subsequent ideas or practice in "a close approximation to the supposed form and meaning of the source" and "representing in such a way that *difference* between source and reception is emphasized" (Hardwick 2003, 5–10).

[3] τοῖσι μύστ[εσ]ιν καὶ το[ῖς][ἐπ]όπτεισιν (*IG* I³ 6 B9-11), Sokolowski's (1962) Greek text.

[4] This will be discussed throughout as "adapting the purpose or function for which the new work or appropriation of ideas or values is made," as "using it to sanction subsequent ideas or practice," as "a close approximation to the supposed form and meaning of the source" and "representing in such a way that difference between source

philosophical *theoria*, specifically the philosophical framework in which individuals undertake a transformative process of seeking to view for themselves and transform themselves. The analysis of ἐποπτικά at Diotima's passage could aid us in discussing the manifold interpretive challenges that emerge from Plato's engagement with the mysteries in the *Symposium*, debating the extent to which Diotima's ἐποπτικά is presented as the Philosophical Mysteries.

This thesis lays the conceptual groundwork for approaching Diotima's speech, centred not on 'what is seen,' or on 'who sees,' or on 'when it is seen.' Instead, our approach is centred on 'how one sees,' namely the 'ways of viewing,' grounded in the concept of visuality. Georgia Petridou defines it as "the entire sum of discourses," that stand "between the eye of the beholder and the things seen" (Petridou 2013, 310). This departs from the assumption of vision as "submit[ting] his or her retinal experience to the socially agreed description(s) of an intelligible world" as a "social construction of visual reality" (Brysson 1988, 91). Like language, which exists before one is born and is immersed in a community, persisting after one's passing, viewing is informed by a myriad of cultural signs that exist before one is born and persist after one's passing. Inasmuch as one 'accepts' language to engage with others by using it, the same applies for viewing: what emerges from our field of gaze has been named, organised, and categorised by a community. Therefore, like with language, one must 'accept' what is socially accepted regarding what comprises the field of gaze inherent to previously established cultures, under the risk of being perceived as hallucinating by the community if not in accordance with what has been socially established in the domain of viewing.

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and reception is emphasized;" as well as "reworking material" and "refiguration of a source" (Hardwick 2003, 9–10).

Therefore, our reading rejects "the notion of vision [as] unmediated visual experience," assuming, instead, that "between retina and world is inserted a *screen of signs*" (Brysson 1988, 92). They are considered as "scopic regimes" (Metz 1982, 61), the multiplicity of culturally constructed visual reality that informs viewing, "a contested terrain, rather than a harmoniously integrated complex of visual theories and practices. It may, in fact, be characterized by a differentiation of visual 'subcultures,' whose separation has allowed us to understand the multiple implications of sight" (Jay 1988, 8).

In this sense, to approach ἐπόπτεια according to these postulates, we attempt to conduct ἐπόπτεια "in the context of the larger cultural system that generated and received them," considering, as Julia Kindt suggests, the ancient perceptual filters which have shaped ways of viewing and through which they were perceived (Kindt 2012, 19).[5] For example, the numerous votive plaques depicting gods appearing among mortals, which are spread throughout Greek temples, are something one sees from youth. Also, the very notion that gods are present and can manifest themselves in terrifying ways to someone unaware of them, as depicted in festivals during the theatrical performance of Greek poetry. Ultimately, the very personal expectations of viewing a god during choral dances in festivals, the unique relationship worshippers have with statues and their odd ontological status to the 'insiders' who partake in their displaying, which is highly debatable by the 'outsiders' who can no longer take part of long-gone events, or other similar religious performances that enhance the perception: all of it informed the ways of viewing in ancient Greek communities.

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[5] This in line with Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1991; 1996; 2002).

Introduction

In the introduction of the first Chapter, we discuss methodological intricacies in our subject of analysis, such as "making decisions about probability in the face of historical possibility" (Bloch 1953, 124) as well as considering theoretical models from other fields of knowledge in the absence of sufficient historical data (Martin 2004, 12). To put it forthrightly, there is no direct historical data on the events that happened at the site of the goddess during the Eleusinian Mysteries at all. The difficulties surrounding Eleusis are manifold, although our study in light of Plato asks for adjustments in approach, namely a synchronic analysis considering *times*, in the plural, "suspended or abolished analytically so that things that actually occur in the flow of time are treated as part of a uniform moment" (Sewell 1997, 40). Admittedly, during a 'single uniform moment' in a given culture, there is a conflicting complexity of plural 'beliefs, practices, judgments, and forms of action.' They differ from one another on numerous levels yet coexist in dynamic friction, entailing, thus, the possibility for us "to suspend time" and focus on how "different times are present in a continuous moment" (Sewell 1997, 41), linked together by 'thin coherence' of competing and conflicting beliefs and discourses (Parker 2005, 78). Concludingly, we briefly present the problem of 'initiation' as a category discussed in anthropology, sociology, and also in classical studies, particularly questioning "the often uncritical acceptance of the view that initiation was a common and coherently legible phenomenon within the Greek world and that it provides the hermeneutical keys to interpreting a wide array of cultural and literary productions" (Dodd 2003, xiv). We intend to "use it more sparingly," whilst questioning whether to expand "the paradigm or make it more complicated and nuanced" (Dodd 2003, xiv) or to use it strictly as an analytical tool to enable understandable and clear communication.

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In the section 'Seeing the Language,' we aim at an analysis of terminology. The approach to beliefs, discourses, and practices in ancient Greece cannot disregard the uniqueness of the language used at the time: μυστήρια, μύστης, τελετή, as well as ἐπόπτεια itself, offer nuances that are daringly challenging to translate into modern languages. Nonetheless, this section displays the limits of terminology for our investigation. In this sense, the second section, 'Seeing the Mortals,' addresses 'ritual' to account for ways to handle the practices, discourses, and beliefs surrounding ἐπόπτεια in Eleusis. This step reveals profoundly ideological origins for the term 'ritual' and its implications for understanding culture and meaning. This moves us closer to Eleusis to the extent of suggesting the use of ritual as an analytical tool[6] to describe a set of sometimes gradual, oftentimes continuous, occasionally contradictory, inevitably juxtaposing symbolic acts in the mortal-immortal interaction, called 'religious ritual,' including the eventual long and gradual preparation for some central act and the outcomes of maintaining a positive relationship with the gods.

The third section, 'Seeing the Gods,' explores the extensive range of mythology in Greek culture at the time and how the gods and their myths may clarify the ways individuals and groups interacted with the gods, converging the discussion on the mortal-immortal visual interaction in Eleusis. Jenny S. Clay's valuable insights into 'archmyths' (Clay 1989, 13) and aetiological myths (Parker 2011, 25) present ways to analyse phenomena from which we cannot provide direct evidence. Nonetheless, mythology cannot be detached from approaches to 'ways of viewing,' particularly within the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Petridou 2013, 310). As we will see further in this investigation, the exhaustingly recurring

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[6] In some way, similarly to our decision to use 'initiation' as an analytical tool to make ourselves understandable.

Introduction

usage of a visual vocabulary in the *Hymn*, which is also connected to knowledge, particularly when narrating the misfortune of deities, should not be overlooked.

In the final section, 'Seeing the Visions,' we bring together visuality, scopic regimes, and a more pluralist approach to Greek culture, held in a loose coherence, to the sanctuary of Demeter. There, ἐπόπτεια is considered in relation to its embeddedness within a ceremony, which, in turn, lies in a set of political and religious institutions of Greek life, as well as within the broader cultural framework that held it together at the time, providing it meaning. Most importantly, in the section that directly precedes the final one, epiphany is proposed as an exercise of hermeneutics, namely divine appearance dynamically followed and grounded by the apprehension of signs, σήματα. Accordingly, the notion of 'face-to-face' encounters is noted to reflect a Christian world-view (1 *Corinthians* 13.12) in many ways incompatible with the manifold complexities of Greek polytheism (Versnel 2011, 23–149), such as the epiphanies in moral-immortal interaction in Eleusis as Verity Platt reminds us: "A phenomenon that is grounded in very different concepts of deity and forms of religious practice" (Platt 2015, 493).

At the 'Conclusion,' considering such a plurality of beliefs, practices, and discourses, as well as the scopic regimes that may have framed the ways of viewing in Eleusis, we converge ritual-centred visuality (Elsner 2007, 25), reciprocal gaze (Elsner 2007, 27), divine agency in epiphanies (Platt 2015, 493–501), and ritual framing in the Mysteries: "The passage from ritual blindness to ritual sight, the transformation from being a μύστης (being sightless and blind to true knowledge) into being an ἐπόπτης (that is, an insightful and sensitive viewer)" (Petridou 2013, 316). Remarkably, these approaches allow us to establish a valuable link between the Eleusinian Mysteries and Plato. Precisely, the manner in which the ways of viewing are interpreted in Eleusis compared to what is proposed by Diotima, one

that cannot be detached from the manifold complexities of polytheism nor from the very different concepts of deity and forms of religious practice, as well as the intertwinment of vision and knowledge, alluded and directly mentioned by Plato through this character: "The most pressing question is not whether they [the gods] exist at all, but, first, how they can be known and, second, how such knowledge can be correctly transmitted without sacrificing cognitive immediacy to the distancing effects of representation. It is telling that epiphany's negotiation of the relationship between vision and knowledge provided Plato and his contemporaries with an influential paradigm for philosophical practice itself" (Platt 2011, 60).

A second Chapter is devoted to an English translation of the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* (201c-212c), with a facing Greek text, to facilitate a full appreciation of the text. The translation seeks to reflect the hermeneutic approach posed in the first chapter of the thesis. The extensive set of notes accompanying the translation, along with its lengthy 'Introduction,' is intended to represent the dialogue with commentators that was necessary to achieve the proposed result.

CHAPTER ONE

Wreathed in Divine Light: ἐπόπτεια in the Eleusinian Mysteries[1]

1. Seeing the Framework: Initiation and Time in an Introduction

This chapter will discuss the Eleusinian Mysteries. More specifically, we will discuss the Eleusinian Mysteries to propose an interpretation of Plato's ἐποπτικά in Diotima's Highest Mysteries. Accordingly, we present in this chapter approaches to ἐπόπτεια in the Eleusinian Mysteries. This route aims to lay the groundwork for building our path in rendering the philosophy presented by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*. The reason for this lies in "Plato frequently refer[ing] to various mystery cults" and, most importantly, Diotima making "explicit mentions and more subtle allusions to the Eleusinian Mysteries" (Betegh 2022, 234). Betegh means in 'explicit mentions' the cultic vocabulary transformed by Plato, whose first documented occurrence is in *Eleusis* 19.[2] Moreover, the

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[1] We follow the *Chicago manual of style* (2017) as the guideline for both English language writing and visual structuring. Accordingly, we aimed at reproducing the framework of one standard guideline for English academic writing to better reflect the expectations of readers in English language. Moreover, adjustments were made for the usage of British English, favouring its standard conventions. In this sense, the particular instructions of the *University of Oxford Style Guide* (2016) were assimilated with the Chicago Style general recommendations. Additionally, we will ignore rules of style that directly affect the ways authors may express their identities, such as *«guillemets»* when originally used in French or Italian citations, the same to German *„Anführungszeichen"*. Finally, divergence will be maintained in English citations according to their original usage (e.g. 'behaviour' and 'behavior').

[2] This Athenian decree regulates fees in the Eleusinian Mysteries to be charged from τοῖσι μύστ[εσ]ιν καὶ το[ῖς][ἐπ]όπτεισιν (*IG* I³ 6 B9-11), Sokolowski's (1962) Greek text. In Diotima's words: μυηθείης· τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά, "...could be made into a μύστης. However, the Highest Mysteries and insightful viewing . . . " (Pl. *Symp.* 210a1) Dover's (1980) Greek text. The translation is our own.

scholar means by 'subtle allusions' the Eleusinian Mysteries' framework that is beyond the terminological level, adapted throughout the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima, enhanced by the explicit mentions at 210a1 and transposed into philosophy in her final words. Therefore, Plato reframes ἐπόπτεια along with its surrounding cultic framework, transforming not just the terms but, most importantly, their locus and dynamics into philosophy at the summit of this remarkable speech.

In more than ten of his dialogues, Plato's engagement with various mystery cults invites questioning, cf. Bianca M. Dinkelaar (2020, 36). Notwithstanding, the scope of the present analysis is the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima in the *Symposium*. Thus, we question Plato's engagement with the Eleusinian Mysteries in this moment of his dialogue. To minimise ambiguity and favour economy, 'mysteries' as in 'mystery cults' or 'mystery religions' will be henceforth called *mysteria*. Moreover, 'Eleusinian Mysteries' will be referred to as 'the Mysteries,' always capitalised. Finally, the anonymous '*Homeric Hymn to Demeter*' will be called 'the *Hymn*.' This does not mean that we consider the variety of beliefs and doctrines in many mystery cults to be the same, let alone that it is possible to approach one of them analytically and adequately without considering the others. Alternatively, this is a heuristic convenience for the sake of clarity in language use, albeit solely as a taxonomic horizon that does not aim to reflect a set of identical phenomena in ancient Greece.[3]

We thus present a set of general questions: i) 'How precisely does Plato engage with ἐπόπτεια during the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima?'

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[3] The sources indicate a wide array of heterogenous *mysteria.* Each cult may have had distinct aims and motivations for participation. Cf. Wellman (2005, 308–48) for taxonomical challenges and trends in recent scholarship on this subject.

Namely, 'What surrounding ἐπόπτεια has Plato transposed into this moment of the *Symposium*?' This begs the set of questions: ii) 'To what extent could we determine what would be ἐπόπτεια and its framework in the Mysteries?' More precisely, 'What could we consider as ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries in light of Plato?'

Many more questions could be formulated. Yet, these alone pose difficulties on numerous levels: on the one hand, complications arise from competing and conflicting beliefs and discourses in tension within the ancient Greek cultures of that time, and, on the other hand, the challenge of establishing an interdisciplinary dialogue between multiple fields of knowledge. This poses the inevitable risks of "trying to work out precisely Plato's engagement with mystery cults," a path "fraught with methodological difficulties," to the extent that "interpretations are bound to remain speculative and tentative" (Betegh 2022, 235). Even so, as Betegh has compellingly displayed, if we take another look at the Mysteries, if we immerse ourselves within its ways of viewing, it may as well be "a risk worth taking" (2022, 235).

As such, this chapter proposes to address the second set of questions formulated above: we are to analyse ἐπόπτεια and its framework in the Mysteries in light of Plato. Accordingly, we cannot afford to limit our discussion to literacy alone, as archaeological remains, such as iconographic and epigraphic records, are invaluable sources in the absence of direct written records of this religion. Furthermore, when we say 'discussion,' we precisely mean to approach the Mysteries from scholarship on classical studies and from any other field of knowledge that can assist us, in an open dialogue with their respective perspectives, tools, and methods. This is one way to build an adequate path, drawing on authoritative recent scholars, and address the central inquiry of this chapter: namely, 'What could we consider as ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries in light of Plato?'

Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (2003, 25) argues that many culturally determined assumptions render the reconstructions of the Mysteries' basic lines vulnerable: to say it again, not their 'deepest aspects' but their 'basic lines.' This Hellenist cautions against proposing definite reconstructions. "Instead, we should try to set in place some basic parameters for the reconstruction of the most elementary aspects of the nexus" (2003, 25). This is what she called "artificially reconstructing" basic lines as "parameters" that can clarify one another once mapping them "in a process roughly comparable to that of pinpointing the location of a radio transmission through triangulation" (2003, 25). This is a consequence "[of] the nature of our phenomena and our limitation of access" (2003, 25), which urges us for more humble approaches "to recreate fluid contours, not locate accurately definite positions" (2003, 25).

Naturally, we can make decisions about probability in the face of historical possibility (Bloch 1953, 124). However, the complications regarding reconstructing ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries pose a question of method: "In the absence of sufficient historical data, might some historiographical reconstructions be completed on the basis of theoretical models that have elsewhere been substantiated?" (Martin 2004, 12). Sourvinou-Inwood suggests precisely adjustments for an interdisciplinary dialogue: by comparing distinct grids of evidence, from "archaeological, cultic, and mythological," as well as doing "cross-checks between grids," that is, to depart from "wider nexuses," which begs a dialogue with invaluable insights from different fields in fluid approaches to the Mysteries (Sourvinou-Inwood 1990a, 217).

The main issue regarding the evidence, or the lack of evidence, is beyond the constraints of culturally determined assumptions because, as Helene P. Foley reminds us, "the majority of our specific knowledge comes from hostile witnesses who often received their information secondhand" (Foley 1993, 68). This does not

mean, however, that they should be disregarded altogether. Indeed, indirect witnesses have their own beliefs and discourses shaped by culturally determined assumptions, as they lived at least five hundred years apart. Yet, they can still provide valuable insights if approached in the right way. Nonetheless, it is difficult to argue away that "our understanding of events is based on evidence drawn from a long chronological period, and some parts of the procedure may have been introduced later than others" (Bowden 2010, 30).

These later introductions mentioned by Bowden comprise "a process of *bricolage,* to fit the 'needs', the 'spaces'," through which "any echoes of cultic history are radically reshaped and adapted" (Sourvinou-Inwood 1990a, 216).[4] This means that, when we look back to Eleusis, at least from a historiographic perspective, what we glimpse must consider both the possibilities of continuity and change. On a broader level, "around 800 BC, different communities had developed in very different social, political, and economic ways, and this development was also reflected on their religious level" (Bremmer 1994, 1). That is to say, we "have to reckon with Greek societal developments at widely varying paces and into widely varying directions" (Graf 2003a, 11). Burkert mentions that "shifts, changes, and revolutions were constantly occurring at the social, political, and intellectual levels" (Burkert 1987a, 4). "Yet," adds Burkert, "there were traits of identity maintained through continuous tradition" (1987a, 4).

Fundamentally, the scholars acknowledge that precise reconstructions of what has been undertaken on the terrace beyond the eighth-century Eleusinian

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[4] It should be noted that Sourvinou-Inwood's description is developed to debate the relation between myth and historiography, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (1990a, 215–41 at 215-17).

wall are off the table.[5] Additionally, we depart from multiple gaps between heterogeneous readings. In this sense, "the most recent detailed analyses by Walter Burkert, Fritz Graf and Robert Parker have given up on the attempt to offer a linear reconstruction of the initiation proper" (Bremmer 2014, 1). Considering this direction in scholarship, we propose to evaluate and discuss ἐπόπτεια and its position within the framework of the Mysteries, examining them in terms of 'fluid contours' from 'elementary basic lines' of reconstruction, approaching them regardless of the nature of the evidence, instead of presenting a complete itinerary both for the festival within which the Mysteries took place and for other specific events that surrounded the Mysteries at the time.

We can ask, then, 'How can we begin to approach ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, considering Plato, if approaching the Mysteries *tout court* is an open field of debate in scholarship?' Indeed, our investigation is frail to yet another complication, one of method. It begs for one other adjustment.

This adjustment departs from Sewell's "brilliant definition of synchronic analysis," as Kindt (2012, 27) labels it. Sewell suggests that synchronic analyses of culture could better approach time not as a 'snapshot' or a 'slice of time,' which

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[5] For a debate on archaeological evidence attesting to a dividing wall which dates back to the eighth century BCE, cf. Mylonas and Travlos (1952, 55–56); Mylonas (1961, 44–45); Darcque (1981, 593–605); Travlos (1983, 239–30) and (1988, 92); Le Roy (1984, 167); Parker (1988, 102 no. 31); Kokkou-Vyrid (1991, 5 and 55-56); and Survinou-Inwood (1997a, 132–64). For archaeological evidence of a possible cult dating back to the fifteenth century BCE in the Mycenaean period, cf. Mylonas (1972, 44 ff.). Foley argues that "Mylonas and others may be overly optimistic about the Mycenaean evidence" (Foley 1993, 65 no. 1). Graf would disagree, as he defends a widely spread diffusion of the cult already in Ionia, antecedent to the late Bronze Age (Graf 1974, 275–77). Nonetheless, the archaeological evidence of a dividing wall in the eighth-century BCE's sanctuary is out of discussion. Despite the evidence, what the existing wall meant and, most importantly, what took place on the inner grounds and buildings divided by the wall remains widely open.

would assume that there is *one time* as "a temporal sequence of statement and counterstatement or as linked by causal chains of antecedent and consequence" (Sewell 1997, 40). Conversely, we could better approach *times* instead, in the plural, "*suspended* or *abolished* analytically so that things that actually occur in the flow of time are treated as part of a uniform moment." Namely, they are "seen as components of a mutually defined and mutually sustaining universe of (at least momentarily, until the analytic spell breaks) unchanging meaning" (Sewell 1997, 40). In this way, we could "convince our readers—and ourselves—that we have truly understood the pastness of that time by showing how a wide range of different beliefs, practices, judgments, and forms of action were linked by some common but now foreign logic" (Sewell 1997, 41).

Admittedly, this does not mean setting distinct and conflicting discourses horizontally as a univocal development of culture, whilst many dissonances are kept hidden. Neither does it mean to dissolve contradictions among discourses and complications in diverging meanings. Conversely, we acknowledge that, even during a single moment, there is a complexity of plural 'beliefs, practices, judgments, and forms of action' in a culture. They differ from one another on numerous levels yet coexist in dynamic friction, entailing, thus, the possibility "to suspend time" and focus on how "different times are present in a continuous moment" (Sewell 1997, 41), linked together by alterity of meanings. Not one meticulously established time, but a plurality of diverging 'times' within a 'time,' dynamically in tension with one another, whose dissonances left petrified remains from which insightful results may emerge if their conflict could be artificially reignited, to the extent we can attempt to make sense of possible cultural dynamics.

As Kindt suggests, "despite the fundamental changes in the religious landscape between the eighth and fourth centuries BC, these periods are

frequently constructed as a uniform epoch in which time can be ignored in favour of a mutually sustaining universe of unchanging meaning" (Kindt 2012, 27). Periodisation is a useful marker that can and should be adjusted to fit the needs of the subjects of analysis. Moreover, the period of Plato becomes much more interesting to discuss if, at the same *time*, we consider that each discourse holds a system of meaning in a competing and conflicting tension of its own, as the philosophers sustain beliefs that do not match even among themselves. The same applies to politicians, poets, or worshippers.[6] Even so, they can and should be linked analytically in a broader framework of meaning that minimally accounts for the linkage that temporally revokes their profound differences.

Our suggestion is to approach ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries in light of the broader framework of meaning that holds them in tension with Plato in "one moment" (Sewell 1997, 40). As such, the ruler to measure the axis of our analytical framework should be the cultural tension current at Plato's time. In this sense, although helpful to our analysis, later testimonies render their accounts too fragile, making it imperative to evaluate their plausibility by reconducting them in light of the competing and conflicting beliefs and discourses of Plato's time. "The evidence," concludes Sourvinou-Inwood, "is scarce and problematic, as

> it comes from mostly late sources, often of questionable reliability, as we often do not know how well-informed the relevant writers were—and in any case their particular filters had shaped their perceptions of what had taken place (let alone of what it had meant) and their articulations of

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[6] Alternatively, cf. Versnel (1990; 1992) on inconsistencies within 'the system' of Greek religion, unearthing even more plurality among worshippers: They differ drastically from cult to cult. More notably, Veyne (1988, 32) makes a compelling call for contradictory forms of beliefs in ancient Greece grounded on varying concepts of truth instead of a sustaining single-voiced discourse, cf. (Kindt 2012, 21).

what they had perceived, in texts written with particular aims and biases (Sourvinou-Inwood 1997a, 133).

Nonetheless, she adds, "it is desirable to attempt to reconstruct" (1997a, 133). Otherwise, "the vacuum is implicitly filled by older orthodoxies and unexamined assumptions so subtly enmeshed into the scholarly discourse as to appear to be self-evidently correct—'common sense'" (1997a, 133). In light of this, we finish the introduction by noting something that should not be taken as a 'self-evidently correct' assumption: 'initiation'.

Dodd admitted a "collective frustration about the limitations of the traditional initiation paradigm or the wisdom of applying it uncritically to many different ceremonies and texts" (2003, xv). The 'initiation paradigm' is a category from the 20th century scholarship, whose primary influence, on the one hand, he claimed to be that of Jung (CW 7 = GW 9),[7] exerted upon Eliade (1958) and Campbell (1949), as well as, on the other hand, van Gennep's (1909) notion of 'rites of passage,' which influenced Turner (1969), Vidal-Naquet (1968; 1989), and Vernant (1959; 1992).[8] Both of these ideas, Dodds argues, were articulated in a

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[7] "Primordial images" (Jung CW 7, §101)—following Burckhardt (Shamdasani 2010, 297–99)—in the "deeper layer of the unconscious" (§102), which has "two layers;" the 'deeper' is called "collective unconscious" (§103) "where the primordial images"—not to be confused with personal memories—are "common to humanity" (§102). The German text, an earlier version published much later (Hull 2014, 6–7), is similar: „*Die Frage lautet einfach, gibt es solche universalen Formen, oder gibt es sie nicht? Wenn es sie gibt, dann besteht ein Bereich der Psyche, den man das kollektive Unbewußte nennen kann*" (GW 9, §92).

[8] As Graf (2003, 5) summarised, van Gennep (1909, 163–93) would have proposed a 'formalisation of initiation,' with a spot for «*initiation aux sociétés secrètes*» (1909, 94), albeit eclipsed by the massive influence that initiation «*aux classes d'âge*» (1909, 94) had in scholarship, such as in Schurtz (1902, 19), Webster (1908, 19), Mauss and Hubert (1909, 144), and Jane Ellen Harrison (1903, 22). Harrison brought this model of *aux classes d'âge* to the Greek world, cf. West (1965, 149–59), also inspired by "Durkheim's

"quasi-mathematical formula" by Lévi-Strauss (1958, 257) in an attempt to categorise myths in culture (Dodd 2003, xiii). Accordingly, Graf notes one of the ideas incorporated in the paradigm is from Frazer (1890, 3:2225–78), namely, 'death and rebirth' as a universal symbol manifested in 'rites of passage.' Later, it influenced Eliade (1958, 103–36) on *mysteria*, who expanded its manifestation to all rituals, both ancient and modern, whether religious or secular. "Eliade's global approach seemed to break down the Frazerian wall between Them (tribal societies) and Us and thus resonated deeply in Western culture" (Graf 2003a, 7).[9] It is glaringly noticeable that earlier models did not hesitate to compare "certain features in the mysteries" with "the mysteries of savage races" (Lang 1913, 270).

At the very least, we have a methodological tool in the 'initiation paradigm' to approach the Mysteries.[10] Dodd says that familiarity with the works

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theory of the social origin of religion" (Graf 2003a, 5). Moreover, Vidal-Naquet (1968; 1981; 1989) and Vernant (1959; 1992) would have also presented their contribution to our understanding of 'rites of transition' and the establishment of the initiation paradigm into Ancient Greece. Van Gennep's model "gained new luster during this period" (Graf 2003a, 5). The modern paradigm was also influenced by Frazer (1890) and Eliade (1958), noticeable in Burkert's detailed analysis of the Mysteries (Burkert 1983, 248-97; 1987, 89-106), as we will see further below.

[9] "Any genuine human life implies profound crises, ordeals, suffering, loss and reconquest of self, 'death and resurrection'" (Eliade 1958, 135). Eliade's view is more optimistic, notes Lincoln, as Eliade, compared to the scholarship at the start of the last century, has a wider integrative view regarding religious behaviour both across the globe at his time and in Antiquity across the myriads of cultures and their respectives practices. Yet, Lincoln argues, and we wonder, if "he also took care to blur this difference, using the modifier 'genuine' to signal that some human lives are not 'genuine' at all . . . in the present only to a privileged few" (Lincoln 2003, 244–45).

[10] "Strictly speaking, the use of the term outside ancient mystery cults is metaphor, and a rather bold one, based on some phenomenological similarities. The term in its metaphorical meaning became current in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ethnographical reports and, in the later nineteenth century, in the theorizing of the armchair ethnographers" (Graf 2003a, 4). We follow this reading, perhaps not as

of the scholars influenced by the paradigm "seems to have provided a better-informed audience for accounts of Greek religion and society" (Dodd 2003. xiii). At the same time, what is predicated of the initiation paradigm differs drastically. Is it worth paying the price? The model undeniably assists us in approaching the plethora of beliefs, discourses, and practices surrounding what we refer to as 'initiation.' Conversely, it might be challenging to understand 'each initiation' from a formula, particularly 'initiations' from different religions, at distinct places, over a long period of time. "Once we conceptualize these two models in this way, it becomes clear that we are dealing with a dynamic model for initiation as well" (Graf 2003a, 11). [11] The nearly unrestricted usage of van Gennep's paradigm has created "a kind of Kuhnian paradigm, which in turn has encouraged the often uncritical acceptance of the view that initiation was a common and coherently legible phenomenon within the Greek world and that it provides the hermeneutical keys to interpreting a wide array of cultural and literary productions" (Dodd 2003, xiv).

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ardently as Graf. Yet, we depart from the assumption that this process of 'metaphorisation' of *initiation* is more harmful than clarifying for our approaches to ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, as it blurs the lines both between μύστης and ἐπόπτης in Eleusis and between the μύσται in Eleusis with the μύσται in multiple other *mysteria*. As our research unfolds, we will leave the usage of 'initiation' and its 'troubled history' to the bare minimum as possible, namely, as an analytical tool to make ourselves understandable in the absence of a clearer Greek term.

[11] Two models of the initiation paradigm explained, at it follows, by Whitehouse in terms of 'Rites of passage' vs 'initiation into secret societies': "Rites of passage mark transitions, for example, between changing seasons (calendrical rituals) or between social statuses such as the transformation from child to adult (initiation or puberty rite), or from prince to king (coronation). Van Gennep argued that these transition rituals had a universal tripartite structure, involving rites of separation (detachment and sacralization), liminality (segregation), and incorporation (reaggregation), all of which were symbolically marked" (Whitehouse 2021, 17).

Furthermore, "this somewhat fuzzy consensus has developed, in part, because of the indiscriminate or interchangeable use of the terms 'initiation', 'transition ritual' and 'rite of passage'" (Faraone 2003, 43). Moreover, "some, for example, assume that all these terms mean the same thing" (2003, 43). In contrast, "others blur these two senses of the term 'initiation'" (2003, 43). At this point, the scholar further divides the blurred and confusing senses exactly like both Dodd and Graf: "i) age-grade or puberty rituals" contrasts with "ii) ceremonies connected to mystery cults like those celebrated at Eleusis" (Faraone 2003, 44). Yet, to what extent would this twofold, general initiation paradigm account for the 'ceremonies connected' to the Mysteries in contrast with the ones juxtaposed with other *mysteria* in different locales at the time? [12]

Proposing a critical view of "this seemingly monolithic paradigm of initiation" is not about "throwing out the baby with the bathwater" (Dodd 2003, xiv). We have to acknowledge that it is like "an observer's category bringing together phenomena that the Greeks described by a variety of terms, a variety that also changed over time; and though those terms often overlap, they do not intertwine so densely as to give the concept the firmness of a rope . . . the Greek vocabulary extends out to include practices that we might wish to exclude" (Parker 2011, 154). What should be the parameter for including or excluding practices, deities, offerings, etc., that clearly differ or overlap?

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[12] Most notably, "in the absence of key organising principles of the religious such as a church, a dogma, a holy book and a creed, classical scholarship has conceptualised the fabric of ancient Greek religion around a bipolar model in which 'the local' (read: the *polis*) and 'the universal', or 'panhellenic' serve as opposing, yet mutually reinforcing, localisations of the religious" (Kindt 2012, 123). However, the very notion of *polis* religion (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1990b, 295-322; 2000b, 13-37; 2000a, 38-54) and the extent of the overlapping at the local level has been at the center of historiographic discussions again and again (e.g., Price 1999; Kindt 2012, 97–98), making the categorising of Greek 'religions,' in the plural, an absolute grueling task.

Returning to the Mysteries, we have the terms μυστήρια, τελετή, μύησις, and ὄργια surrounding ἐπόπτεια, all called 'initiation.' These terms, in the context of the Mysteries, have been used interchangeably, and, as we will discuss in the first section of this chapter, they can be used with distinct meanings yet have considerable overlap. Moreover, distinctions that apply to one testimony do not work for the others. "We are faced with an array of practices that resemble one another in varying degrees and again in varying degrees are described in similar terms" (Parker 2011, 154).

The problem does not lie in the words themselves, let alone in using analytical categories because "often there are compelling reasons for the use of a scholarly non-native term for certain phenomena even when there would be a native term, be it to maintain comparability with other cultures, or more simply just to understand what is going on" (Graf 2003a, 13). That is precisely why we may eventually use the term 'initiation.'

Even if we concede that the initiation paradigm can help clarify many points, it can also hinder our research, and we can briefly explain the reason. It lies in, on the one hand, grouping many different age-grade rituals together in one subcategory, and, on the other hand, those connected to the *mysteria* in another. For analytical purposes, this is not impractical. However, we cannot forget that we initially set those two subcategories at the end of the analysis. By forgetting the analytical usage of the tool, we may fail to perceive how, when viewed through the same label within each of those very subcategories, the plethora of different religions and cultures bear differences that are meaningful enough to enrich our understanding of each phenomenon by itself and in relation to the others. Moreover, it may further blur our vision to the extent that their profound similarities are equally valuable for our understanding of the *mysteria* and, particularly, the Mysteries. Over a hundred years have passed, to

the extent that we can no longer simply and uncritically use a crystallised paradigm without reflecting on the very terms that the paradigm predicates.

Accordingly, in the first section of this chapter, we approach the terms to ground a point of departure in terminology, avoiding all-encompassing definitions to discuss possible tentative ways to diminish the difficulties and 'understand what is going on,' even if that means setting analytical categories as tools in our analysis.

The second section of the chapter discusses what is called ritual, assuming that it may not necessarily mirror ritual acts directly and accurately (Lada-Richards 1998, 90). From this discussion, we aim to present possibilities for dealing with roughly comparable sets of activities concerning the Mysteries by using sufficiently adequate analytical tools to approach the "even more basic lines of the associated perceptions and beliefs" (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 25).

Burkert (1987a, 11) claimed the Mysteries were based on personal choice, emphasising the individual experience. While Graf concedes to this reading, he considers that their secrecy played a significant role in determining group identity (Graf 2003b, 256). Moreover, scholarship is further divided on the extent of the interaction ἐπόπτεια provided between mortals and their gods, as more recent discussions challenge fundamental readings on religious activity and its overlapping nature, rendering the Mysteries into a one-of-a-kind and complex *mysteria*. This can be further elucidated through mythology, as Sarah Iles Johnston suggests that 'myth' and 'ritual' "were still *living* languages in Greece, possessed of all the communicative fluidity of which we sometimes forget they are capable, seeing only their petrified remains as we do" (Johnston 2003, 171). Not only 'living languages,' as Johnston rightly notes, but also filled with gods. Henrichs mentions that the gods have been scholarly neglected in classical studies in the 20th century (Henrichs 2010, 24–25). If "we do not share the ancient

religious and cultural assumptions," (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 25) then we must consider cultural constructions that mediate between the eye of the beholder and the things seen (Brysson 1988, 91–92). Thus, in the third section, we focus on the myths and gods, particularly through approaches centred on viewing. This is something dangerous that we do not wish to forget to see: the gods.

Lastly, the closing section will approach the highest point in the Mysteries. We are in profound disadvantage: *„wie dieser Ritus im Einzelnen vor sich ging, wissen wir nicht . . . das religiöse Erlebnis, vom dem wir Kunde haben, steht in einem rational kaum faßbaren Verhältnis zum zugrundeliegenden Ritual"* (Graf 1974, 139). [13] Like Begeth, Clinton warns it "relies on a good amount of speculation" (Clinton 1993, 93). Bremmer states that "almost all analyses of ancient festivals are no more than probable, ahistorical scripts or templates, because we cannot access the original performances, and must confine ourselves to static outlines of festivals, however unsatisfactory that may be. This is certainly true of the Eleusinian Mysteries" (Bremmer 2014, 2). Even so, we believe we can do more than static outlines of festivals, as Bremmer commented above. Therefore, we will conclude the chapter by analysing ἐπόπτεια in relation to the framework that held it together, along with its surrounding rituals in the Mysteries, considering 'times' within 'times' to account for 'one moment.'

In the end, we cannot finish the introduction by declaring: "Let us see what we may through the veil of secrecy that has enshrouded them for so many,

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[13] Graf, in the context of this citation, is aware this is not a concern restricted to the Mysteries, nor is he suggesting we should revoke from approaching the traces of their rites. Graf's suggestion, which is the one we follow, is for flexibility in approaching *mysteria*. "Indeed, it may only be in modern educated circles, influenced by the philosophical traditions of the Enlightenment, that this flexible approach seems contradictory" (Whitehouse 2021, 64–65).

many generations" (Mylonas 1961, 261). After all, we seek to take a closer look at how they could have been seen.

2. Seeing the Language: The Eleusinian Mysteries from Terminology

In the closing remarks of the *Cratylus,* Socrates says, "Perhaps, Cratylus, this is true, but perhaps this is not. Therefore, this must be considered courageously and thoroughly and not accepted carelessly, for you are still young and in your prime. Then," Socrates adds, "Should you find out after having investigated, share it with me" (Pl. *Cra.* 440d2-6).[20] They bid farewell, and the dialogue comes to an end. Socrates' reminder of the importance of careful and thorough investigation, even after exhaustively discussing language, should not be understated.[21]

Aristotle said that "a name is a significant spoken sound"[22] (Arist. *Int.* 16a19)[23] and that "written words [are] from spoken sounds" (*Int.* 16a4).[24] It

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[20] ἴσως μὲν οὖν δή, ὦ Κρατύλε, οὕτως ἔχει, ἴσως δὲ καὶ οὔ. σκοπεῖσθαι οὖν χρὴ ἀνδρείως τε καὶ εὖ, καὶ μὴ ῥᾳδίως ἀποδέχεσθαι—ἔτι γὰρ νέος εἶ καὶ ἡλικίαν ἔχεις—σκεψάμενον δέ, ἐὰν εὕρῃς, μεταδιδόναι καὶ ἐμοί (Pl. *Cra.* 440d2-6). Fowler's (1989) translation, modified, Burnet's (1900) Greek text.

[21] For a study on Plato's *Cratylus,* cf. Sedley (2003), particularly regarding the limits of etymology (Sedley 2003, 123–46).

[22] "'Name' gives the original and central meaning of the Greek *onoma*" . . . "it is tempting to write [i.e. translate to] 'word' or 'noun', but only 'name' can do duty in all contexts" . . . "The linguistic items he wishes to consider are marked off from sounds not spoken, from spoken sounds that are not significant . . . marks them off from phrases and sentences . . . distinguishes names from verbs" (Ackrill 1963, 115). Ackrill precision on defining the reasons for translating Aristotle's words is a privilege that scholars who study Greek religion, particularly the Mysteries, do not possess.

[23] ὄνομα μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ (Arist. *Int.* 16a19). Ackrill's (1963) translation, modified, Minio–Paluello's (1963) Greek text.

[24] καὶ τὰ γραφόμενα τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ (Arist. *Int.* 16a19). Ackrill's (1963) translation, modified, Minio–Paluello's (1963) Greek text.

follows that 'names' used in discourse, whether written or spoken, [25] are σημαντικὴ. [26] Indeed, when Aristotle presents a new term such as 'name' and 'written words' in his writings, the Stagirite attempts to clarify them by using λέγω δὲ right afterwards, which Ackrill (1963) translates to 'I mean.'

We have inherited much from this tradition, as discursive precision urges us to promptly explain the meaning of the terms used in the arguments. Unfortunately, methodological adjustments are necessary to approach the terms of the present subject. They comprise a broad web of Greek terms. They are terms from different word families that are assumed to match the same modern taxa. This assumption: perhaps it is correct, but perhaps it is not. Burkert warns us by reinforcing that "sound methodology requires that clear definitions stand at the beginning of research." But he also reminds us that "in the study of religions,

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[25] Aristotle also distinguishes 'significant' spoken sounds "from spoken sounds that are natural signs (e.g. certain animal calls and cries—the word rendered 'spoken sound' has a wider range of application than the English expression)" (Ackrill 1963, 115). That is to say, in this context, as Ackrill clinically argued above, ὄνομα is not simply a 'name' or 'word': φωνὴ and σεμαντικὴ are both necessary to form propositions. The crucial point in φωνὴ σεμνατικὴ, either in spoken or written discourse, is that they give body to propositions, the very fabric of scientific discourse. Again, the abundance of writings we have from Aristotle allows Ackrill, and much of Aristotlean scholarship, to present crystal-clear definitions of the 'conceptual vocabulary' presented by Aristotle in his works. Again, this does not apply to the Mysteries, of which we do not have even a single, direct, documented, written record of the ceremony to assist us with their vocabulary.

[26] In line with Ackrill (1963, 115), 'significant' does not exhaust the term σημαντική, here employed, as aforementioned, to enable discursive definitions, cf. s.v. σημαντικός in LSJ (1996), Pape (1880), Bailly (1935), and Woodhouse (1982). Even when dealing with a vocabulary whose records are abundant, the wider range of meanings inherent within ancient Greek language raises trouble even to scholarship who possess numerous written records as their subject of analysis. We also deal with a wide range of meanings for central terms connected to the Mysteries, making the investigation, from its beginning, considerably discouraging.

however, a satisfactory definition may rather be the final outcome" (Burkert 1987a, 7).

The first section of this chapter is a suitable place to clarify the terms and hope for a satisfactory final outcome, as Burkert noted above. In this sense, we aim to approach the terms while mindful of inevitable terminological ambiguity, "given the fluidity of any such reconstruction outside Greece" (Graf 2003a, 11). If, indeed, in this subject "we are least well documented" (Eliade 1958, 110), then we should start by establishing a firm grip on the loose threads to hopefully create a stable web of meanings that will enable us to pull ourselves forward in our investigation. Again, the task is gruelling, to say the least. After all, "it is difficult to say anything useful about mysteries in short compass (or indeed in long)" (Parker 2011, 252).

Notwithstanding, we begin from Graf's questioning: "How are we to understand the term 'Mysteries' (or rather *mysteria*) when the term covers a much wider ground?" (Graf 2003b, 242). This also concerns the broader scope of τελετή and ὄργια in the Mysteries. "Recent approaches," proposes Wellman, "(including Gordon's dictionary entry)[27] to the subject have generally taken the major corrective works of Walter Burkert (1987a) and Jonathan Z. Smith (1990) as the methodological starting points for any serious inquiry into the subject" (Wellman 2005, 310).

Wellman is referring to interdisciplinary approaches that sought to address what he calls "taxonomic markers," terms related to culture that cover a much wider range of phenomena. "Smith, Burkert and others," continues Wellman,

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[27] Wellman refers to Gordon (1996) s.v. 'Mysteries' in the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, further expanded in the fourth edition (Gordon 2012 s.v. 'Mysteries' at 990).

"have emphasised that *mystēria* were often joined to other cultic complexes and were particular parts of larger systems of religious practice and world-making for their participants" (Wellman 2005, 310-11). This can be further elucidated, argues Wellman, when we uncouple 'mystery' from 'cult', the contribution from Smith's (1990) reorientation of our awareness towards the myriad of local *mysteria,* the cults intertwined in layers of social complexity, as displayed by Graf (2003b, 241–62).

Richardson suggested that the "Mysteries retained throughout antiquity their local character, as the cult of Eleusis" (Richardson 1974, 16). However, we may have to disagree with this statement to some degree, as continuity is also marked by change. Mylonas (1961, 7) describes it as "a local cult originally, perhaps even a family cult limited to the members of the family or clan." Afterwards, "it gradually spread beyond the narrow confines of Eleusis and the Thriasian Plain, and in historic times, when the town became part of the Athenian State,[28] it developed into a Panhellenic institution" (Mylonas 1961, 7). Later, "the cult was adopted by the Romans, it acquired universal status" (Mylonas 1961, 7). Regarding this later adoption, Bremmer says that "for obscure reasons, the Romans used the term *initia,* also plural, to translate *Mysteria,* and this usage became the basis of our term initiation" (Bremmer 2014, xiv).

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[28] Sourvinou-Inwood's (1997a, 132–64) compellingly argued for Eleusis being part of Athens from the beginning, a possibility previously suggested by Clinton (1993, 89–90) and later debated by Parker (2005, 343). The abundance of documented data from the period, particularly laws passed by Solon that aimed at Eleusis and the significant archeological data confirming structural changes in the buildings, which were expanded considerably from the eight to the fifth centuries BCE, are enough to persuade us that Eleusis was part of Athens from the beginning. By Plato's time, for example, the Telesterion had been rebuilt and expanded at least three times.

Furthermore, Scarpi notes that μυστήρια, τελετή, ὄργια and their correlated inflexions appear to be woven together (Scarpi 2002, I:xvi). In the *Hymn,* *τελ- is used only once, in the term ἀτελής in verse 482 during the *makarismos* [29] proclaimed by Demeter to those destined (αἶσαν) to be in nether darkness (ζόφῳ εὐρόεντι),[30] unlike those favoured by the goddesses. The term is composed of a privative alpha added to *τελ- and the suffix -ής. Before establishing what *τελ- is, the resulting translation could not be much different from 'the one that does not act/does not do that which *τελ- is,' which is utterly unacceptable. Foley (1993)

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[29] On the motif of *makarismos,* as Richardson (1974, 314) suggests, cf. Norden (1913, 99 ff.); Dirichlet (1914, 62 ff.); Regenbogen (1930, 11); and Festugière (1956, 78 ff.). For studies after recent evidence on Orphic connections with the Eleusinian *makarismos,* cf. Graf (1993, 239–58) on Tsantsanoglou's and Parássoglou's (1987, 3–17) findings; Burkert (1993, 259–75) on Foti's and Carrateli's (1974, 91–126); West (1982, 17–29) on Rusajeva's (1978, 87–104); Bernabé and Cristóbal (2008) for a broader analysis; and Guthrie (1966, 171–82) should also be mentioned, bearing in mind it predates clarifying discoveries from Hipponian, Olbian, and Pelinnan inscriptions.

[30] Richardson argues that "the dative ζοφῳ is not used in Homer, and the substitution of εὐρώεντι for the formulaic ἠερόεντι is perhaps due to a reminiscence of Hes. *Th.* 72-31. It also enhances the menacing tone of these lines" (1974, 265). Furthermore, "the great majority of expressions used do have definite parallels elsewhere. Of these, the greatest proportion are Homeric, but there are also a striking number of Hesiodic parallels" (1974, 29). Moreover, he adds that "ἠερόεντος: when used of the underworld, this probably means 'dark', ἀήρ in early epic means mist, darkness, etc." (Richardson 1974, 315). Among lexicons, we find Autenrieth (1891): "Gloom, darkness, esp. of the nether world, and for the realm of shadows itself" (s.v. ζόφος I); Chantraine (1968): *«ténèbres», notamment celles des enfers, «obscurité, region obscure» c'est-à-dire l'ouest (Hom., poètes grec hellén. et tardif) . . . Dérivés: ζοφερός «sombre, obscur» (Hés.)* (s.v. ζόφος, 401); Frisk (1960): *„Dunkel, Finsternis, Westen' (ep. poet, seit II., hell, u. spat). Als Vorderglied z.B. in ζοφο-ειδής, dunkelfarbig' (Hp.)—Ableitungen: ζοφερός ,dunkel, finster'(Hes.)* (s.v. ζόφος, 614)"; and Beekes (2010): "Darkness, west (*Il.*) . . . DER ζοφερός 'dark' (Hes.)" (s.v. ζόφος, 502). In English translations of the poem, Evelyn-White (1914) renders ἀπὸ ζόφου ἠερόεντος at 337 into "from the misty gloom", the same as Foley (1993), whereas ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι at 482 is "down in the darkness and gloom" in Evelyn-White (1914) and "in the dreary darkness" in Foley (1993). Finally, LSJ (1996) suggests "nether darkness" in the context of epic poetry (s.v. ζόφος I).

has translated the term to 'uninitiate,' following Evelyn-White (1914) and Richardson (1974, 313–15). Yet, the latter indicates that there may be broader meanings for this word: "In Homer ἀτελής occurs only once, meaning 'unaccomplished' (*Od.* 17.546), which later would have reflected the terms . . . τέλος, τέλη of initiation ceremonies, especially the Eleusinian Mysteries . . . τελετή, τελεστήριον, etc. . . . τέλος and τελεῖν αre also used of religious services in general" (Richardson 1974, 314).

This is not different from the Roman term *initia.* Scarpi proposes a relation between Greek μυστήρια and Roman *initia*:

> *Se teleté era per i Greci il completamento ovvero la perfezione conseguita attraverso la partecipazione alla cerimonia rituale, un completamento conseguibile soltanto alla fine di un itinerario e dunque un punto d'arrivo espresso anche dal nesso etimologico di* τελετή *e di* τελέω *con* τέλος, «fine» *appunto, e con* τελευτή, «fine della vita», *il suo corrispondente latino era, con una paradossalità ossimorica,* initia (Scarpi 2002, I:xvi–xvii).*31*

It indeed is absurdly contradictory because of the opposition between *τελ-, which is found in terms such as τέλος, "coming to pass, performance, consummation," in s.v. τέλος I, TLG (1996), and *initia,* plural of *initium,* "*ab inire,*" in s.v. *initium* I, TLL (2024), or, in a Latin-English lexicon, "a beginning, commencement," in s.v. *initium* I, Lewis and Short (1879). That is to say, whereas in Greek the term belongs to a family of words related to 'the end,'

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31 Eliade also noted this connection: "The play on words between 'initiation' (*teleisthai*) and 'dying' (*teleutan*) was quite popular in Greece" (1961, 110-111). As found, for example, in the *Republic*: εἰσὶ μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν, ἃς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, "...while they are still in life and later in death, and they even call it τελετὰς" (Pl. *Resp.* 365a1-2). The translation is our own; Sling's (2003) Greek text. Cf. Graf (1993, 246) and Bernabé and Cristóbal (2008, 92–93) for two readings of Pl. *Resp.* 364b-365a; cf. West (1983, 24) for Eleusinian resonances.

'accomplishment,' and 'completion' (even of life), the Latin term, conversely, belongs to one related to 'beginnings.'

Borgeaud points to Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* where the Stagirite considers μυστήρια, «*sous-entendu d'Éleusis*» (2013, 137), the most honoured τελετή.[32] Scarpi proposes it «*è giocoforza concludere che la teleté è un genere di cui i misteri sono una specie*» (2002, I:xv). Indeed, the conclusion could not be different: μυστήρια is predicated of τελετή by Aristotle. Yet, this distinction between genre and species does not tell us much about the meanings of these terms in relation to Eleusis.

Borgeaud proceeds on his search and argues that «*en latin, pour parler de la fête d'Éleusis, on conserve souvent le terme grec mysteria*» (2013, 138). Not only would the Romans have done a kind of proto-Romanisation, but they would have also done «*une vraie traduction latine*», from μυστήρια to the neuter plural of *initium*: *initia* (Borgeaud 2013, 138). In this reading, *initia* would have been closer in meaning to Greek μυστήρια than to our modern term 'initiation.' This is because the Latin term *initiatio* has only a single documented occurrence in antiquity (Borgeaud 2013, 138–39). In Suetonius' recount, Nero was dissuaded from the 'initiation' of the Eleusinian *sacris*:

> When he was in Greece, he durst not attend the celebration of the Eleusinian rites, at the initiation of which impious and wicked persons

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[32] "The *mysteria* are the most honoured τελετή" is our preliminary translation of Ross' (1959) Greek text: τὰ γὰρ μυστήρια πασῶν τιμιωτάτη τελετή (Arist. *Rh.* 2.1401a.15). We do not have elements to formulate a complete translation before establishing a vocabulary. For the same reason, Borgeaud offers on page 137, like us, an incomplete translation: «*les mystères sont la telete la plus respectée*» (Borgeaud 2013, 137).

are warned by the voice of the herald from approaching them (Ner. 34.4.10-13).[33]

Scarpi further argues that «*su initia è costruito initiatio*» (2002, I:xvii), which is followed by Bremmer (2014, xv). Borgeaud continues and finds in Cicero a possible distinction between *initia*, which he calls the Roman translation, and *mysteria,* the «*transposition latine*» (2013, 138). In Cicero's *De Legibus* 2.35-36, Cicero proposes regulations on the "nocturnal sacrifices" (*nocturnis sacrificiis*, 35.1). Borgeaud's argument is grounded on subtleties in the language employed by Cicero, which, indeed, is quite compelling. Cicero warns about the risk of dismissing the "revered *mysteria*" (*augusta illa mysteria*, 35.5) through strict laws. The "revered *mysteria*" are the *mysteria* of "your Iacchus and Eumolpidae" (*Iacchus Eumolpidaeque uostri*, 35.4-5), Atticus is told, precisely because the laws are "not just for the Roman people" (*non enim populo Romano*, 35.6), but "for all good and stable communities" (*sed omnibus bonis firmisque populis leges damus*, 35.7).

Atticus, then, or Cicero, instead, puts himself in the catbird's seat, as his best friend asks if Cicero meant to make an "exception," maintaining "those great *initia* in which we participate" (*quibus ipsi initiati sumus*).[34] Cicero nods in agreement and presents a rich testimony.

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[33] *Peregrinatione quidem Graeciae et Eleusinis sacris, quorum initiatione impii et scelerati uoce praeconis summouentur, interesse non ausus est* (Suet. *Ner.* 34.4.10-13). Rolfe's (1914) translation, modified, Ihm's (1907) Latin text.

[34] Rudd's (1998) translation, modified, Plinval's (1959) Latin text. According to Borgeaud's suggestion, we render *initiati* as perf. part. pass. nom. pl., which indicates it takes place before the action of the main verb. Accordingly, *sumus* becomes 'we participate' to reflect the perfect tense of the nominative participle *initiati*. Lastly, *quibus* and *ipsi* are linked directly to the nominative *initiati*, instead of to a compound with the verb *sumus*. The translation result is the only possible lexical answer to

Yes, I shall do so. For I think your beloved Athens has brought to birth, and contributed to human life, many outstanding and divine creations, and nothing better than those *mysteria*. Thanks to them, we have become mild and cultivated, moving from a rough and savage life to a state of civilization; we have learned from the *initia* things which are in fact the first principles of life, and we have been taught a way of living happily and also of dying with better hopes (Cic. *Leg.* 2.36.3-9).[35]

Fundamentally, one does not have to assume anything implied in the text, such as in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* regarding μυστήρια. Here, Cicero presents many elements, and we are to evaluate this late testimony by reconducting it to distinct sources at Plato's time.[36]

Borgeaud's reading. Otherwise, *excipis credo illa, quibus ipsi initiati sumus* would be translated into "I believe you are excluding that one in which we have been initiated" (Rudd 1998). In this rendering, *ipsi* becomes dative singular instead of nominative plural, thus linking the two clauses through the ablative *quibus*, maintaining the adjective behaviour of the participle, *sc.* 'initiated'. Although this last translation better matches the Latin construction, it could be argued that it sees the context of the sentence differently from Borgeaud. The construction is preceded by *augusta illa mysteria*, 35.5, a nominative plural. Nonetheless, it could be argued that *mysteria* at 35.5 is not a participle but a noun; thus, it should be translated differently than the participle *initiati* at 36.1. This would be a sound lexical rendering, albeit rather oblivious to *initia* defined as a neuter plural at 36.7 by Cicero in the answer that directly follows Atticus' indirect question.

[35] *Ego uero excipiam. Nam mihi cum multa eximia diuinaque uide<a>ntur Athenae tuae peperisse atque in uitam hominum attulisse, tum nihil melius illis mysteriis, quibus ex agresti immanique uita exculti ad humanitatem et mitigati sumus, initiaque, ut appellantur, ita re uera principia uitae cognouimus, neque solum cum laetitia uiuendi rationem accepimus, sed etiam cum spe meliore moriendi. Quid autem mihi displiceat in noct<ur>n<is>, poetae indicant comici. Qua licentia Romae data quidnam egisset ille qui in sacrificium cogitatam libidinem intulit, quo ne inprudentiam quidem oculorum adici <f>as fuit?* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.36.3-9). Rudd's (1998) translation, modified, Plinval's (1959) Latin text.

[36] Cicero is as close to Plato's time as we are to the first print of Newton's *Principia* (1687).

Euripides mentions "burnt offerings" and the "Great Mother," including the "night-long celebrations" of the goddess.

> You made burnt offerings
> that were neither just nor hallowed
> In the chambers of the gods,
> And you have incurred the wrath
> of the Great Mother (μεγάλας Ματρός), child,
> By not honouring her sacrifices (θυσίας οὐ σεβίζουσα).[37]
> Oh! Great is the power of dappled,
> Fawn-skin robes, and green ivy that crowns (στεφθεῖσα) a sacred (ἱεροὺς)
> thyrsus, the whirling beat of the tambourine circling in the air,
> Hair streaming wildly for the revelry (βακχεύουσα) of Bromios,
> And the night-long celebrations (παννυχίδες) of the goddess (Eur. *Hel.*
> 1353-65).[38]

Herodotus mentions "Iacchus" of the "sacred rites" in "Eleusis" and its power in the fortunes of war:

> They marvelled at what men might be raising such a cloud of dust and immediately heard a cry. The cry appeared to be the Iacchus of the Mysteries (τὸν μυστικὸν ἴακχον), and Demaratus, ignorant of the sacred [rites] of Eleusis, asked him what was making this sound (Hdt. 8.65.7-13).[39]

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[37] Cf. Parker (2011, 115 ff.), Georgoudi (2010, 99 ff.), and Bremmer (1994, 40 ff.).

[38] ὧν οὐ θέμις οὔθ’ ὅσια/ἐπύρωσας ἐν θαλάμοις,/μῆνιν δ’ ἔχεις μεγάλας/Ματρός, ὦ παῖ, θυσίας/οὐ σεβίζουσα θεᾶς./μέγα τοι δύναται νεβρῶν/παμποίκιλοι στολίδες/κισσοῦ τε στεφθεῖσα χλόα/νάρθηκας εἰς ἱεροὺς/ῥόμβου θ’ εἱλισσομένα κύκλιος ἔνοσις αἰθερία/βακχεύουσά τ’ ἔθειρα Βρομί-/ωι καὶ παννυχίδες θεᾶς (Eur. *Hel.* 1353-65). Coleridge’s (1938) translation, modified, Diggle’s (1981c) Greek text.

[39] ἀποθωμάζειν τέ σφεας τὸν κονιορτὸν ὁτέων κοτε εἴη ἀνθρώπων, καὶ πρόκατε φωνῆς ἀκούειν, καί οἱ φαίνεσθαι τὴν φωνὴν εἶναι τὸν μυστικὸν ἴακχον. Εἶναι δ’ ἀδαήμονα τῶν ἱρῶν τῶν ἐν Ἐλευσῖνι γινομένων τὸν Δημάρητον, εἰρέσθαι τε αὐτὸν ὅ τι τὸ φθεγγόμενον εἴη τοῦτο (Hdt. 8.65.7-13). Godley’s (1925) translation, modified, Legrand’s (1932) Greek text.

Moreover, we find more in the words of Philodamus of Scarphea on ὀργίων "for all the Greeks," the "Eleusinian" one, where the ἐπόπταις are favoured by the "god Iacchus."

> There, all the people of Greece
> among the inhabitants of the land, celebrate Iakchos
> benevolent to the ἐπόπταις of the ὀργίων.
> Thou openest a safe haven from the suffering in mortals (Phld. *Dio.* 32-35).[40]

Aristophanes mentions the fertility in "the flower-bearing grove" and in "the blooming, flowery meadows," including the "all-night celebration."

> In the sacred round dance of the goddess, in the flower-bearing grove
> Playing with all who partake in the festival (ἐορτῆς) dear to the goddess (θεοφιλοῦς).
> I will go with the women and young girls,
> Where they dance all night (παννυχίζουσιν)
> For the goddess to bring the divine splendour (φέγγος ἱερὸν).
> Let's march (χωρῶμεν)[41] to the flowery meadows (Ar. *Ran.* 441-49).[42]

Back to tragic poetry, we have mention of the Eumolpidai's protagonism, whom Cicero set side-by-side with the god Iacchus (*Iacchus Eumolpidaeque uostri et augusta illa mysteriadae*, 2.35.4-5). In the words of Sophocles,

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[40] [ἔθνος ἔνθ'] ἄπαν Ἑλλάδος/γᾶς ἀ[μφ(ὶ) ἐ]ννατέταις [φίλιον] ἐπ[όπ]ταις/ὀργίων ὁς[ίων Ἴ]ακ-/χον [κλείει ς]ε. (Phld. *Dio.* 32-35). The translation is our own. Powell's (1970) Greek reconstruction of the text includes a possible ['Ελε]υσῖνος between lines 29-30.

[41] The significance in the carefully polished wordplay between the Aristophanes' Chorus at the stage, the motifs of choral odes, choral rites of dancing and chanting, as well as the compounds used to predicate them (e.g. καλλιχορώτατον at 451), all share the same morphologic nexus that wheels this Greek masterpiece.

[42] νυν ἱερὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον θεᾶς, ἀνθοφόρον ἀν' ἄλσος/παίζοντες οἷς μετουσία θεοφιλοῦς ἐορτῆς./Ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν ταῖσιν κόραις εἶμι καὶ γυναιξίν,/οὗ παννυχίζουσιν θεᾷ, φέγγος ἱερὸν οἴσων./Χωρῶμεν εἰς πολυρρόδους/λειμῶνας ἀνθεμώδεις (Ar. *Ran.* 441-49). Colleridge's (1938) translation, modified. Coulon's (1928) Greek text.

By the torch-lit coasts,
Where the hallowed goddesses foster τέλη for mortals,
On whose lips the ministers of Eumolpidae
Have laid the golden seal of silence (Soph. *OC.* 1049-53).[43]

In an Aristotelian text, there is a division of their roles:

Initially, the Archon *basileus* took charge of the Mysteries (μυστηρίων), among overseers elected by the people (δῆμος): two from all the Athenians, one from the Eumolpidae, and another from the Keryx (Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 57.1.1-4).[44]

Interestingly, we can make a triangulation with the *Decree of the First Fruits*. Not only does the inscription suggest that it is lawful to offer harvest to the two goddesses, but it is also in accordance with tradition (τὰ πάτρια),[45] a detail also mentioned by Cicero.[46] The decree prescribes:

The Athenians shall have the first fruits of the harvest led to the two goddesses, according to both ancestral custom (τὰ πάτρια) and the oracle at Delphi" (*IG* I³ 78a 4-5).[47]

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[43] λαμπάσιν ἀκταῖς,/οὖ πότνιαι σεμνὰ τιθηνοῦνται τέλη/θνατοῖσιν ὧν καὶ χρυσέα/κλὴς ἐπὶ γλώσσᾳ βέβα-/κε προσπόλων Εὐμολπιδᾶν (Soph. *OC.* 1049-53). Jebb's (1889) translation, modified, Dain's (1955) Greek text.

[44] ὁ] δὲ <βασιλεὺς> πρῶτον μὲν μυστηρίων ἐπιμελεῖ[ται μετὰ τῶν ἐπιμελητῶν ὧ]ν ὁ δῆμ[ος χ]ειροτονεῖ, δύο μὲν ἐξ Ἀθηναίων ἀπάντων, ἕνα δ' [ἐξ Εὐμολπιδῶν, ἕνα] δ' ἐκ Κηρ[ύκω]ν (Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 57.1.1-4). Rackham's (1935) translation, modified, Oppermann's (1928) Greek text.

[45] For a trend in scholarship on the importance of rituals to be perceived as traditional, cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983).

[46] "By all means bring in such a ban for Rome, but do not take our [Athenian] laws away from us" (*Tu uero istam Romae legem rogato, nobis nostras ne ademeris*, Cic. *Leg.* 2.36.15-16). Rudd's (1998) translation, Plinval's (1959) Latin text.

[47] ἀπάρχεσθαι τοῖν θεοῖν τὸ καρπὸ κατὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ τὲν μαντείαν τὲν ἐγ Δελφõν Ἀθεναίος (*IG* I³ 78a 4-5). Lambert's (2022) translation, modified, Sokolowski's (1969) Greek text.

Further in the decree, sacrifices are also to be offered, according to the Elmopidae tradition. In contrast, fertility is directed to the goddesses in a context that establishes a relation between what is dear to and sanctioned by the gods (ἱερός) and what is sanctioned by the law. Again, the emphasis here is tradition (τὰ πάτρια).

> And they should willingly give to the goddesses from the cake (πελανō)[48] as the Eumolpidae expound, and a triple sacrifice (τρίττοιαν βόαρχον) led by a bovine with gilded horns to each of the two goddesses from the barley and the wheat . . . and the overseers of the sacred (ἱερῶν) with the Council shall sell the rest of the barley and wheat and dedicate gifts to the two goddesses, doing whatever the Athenian people decide, and shall write on the gifts that these were made from the first-fruits of the harvest and that the Greeks were delivering first-fruits; and to those who do this may much good come, and good and plentiful harvests (εὐκαρπίαν καὶ πολυκαρπία[ν]), as long as they do no wrong to the Athenians or the city of the Athenians or the two goddesses (*IG* I³ 78a 36-46).[49]

Isocrates presents a discourse very similar to Cicero's, which makes one wonder if the latter has not taken inspiration from the former:

> [Furthermore, the goddess] gave a twofold gift, the greatest that happens to be: the fruits of the earth, which have enabled us to rise above the savage life, and the τελετὴν which [inspires] in those who partake of it to have sweeter hopes (ἡδίους τὰς ἐλπίδας) regarding both the end of life (τῆς

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[48] «*Il πελανός con ogni probabilità è una focaccia*» (Tonelli 2015, E54.189).

[49] θύεν δὲ ἀπὸ μὲν τō πελανō καθότι ἂν Εὐμολπίδαι [ἐϙϲhε][γō]νται, τρίττοιαν δὲ βόαρχον χρυσόκερον τοῖν θεοῖν hεκα[τέρ][αι ἀ]πὸ τōν κριθōν καὶ τōν πυρōν καὶ τōι Τριπτολέμοι καὶ τōι [θε]ōι καὶ τēι θεᾶι καὶ τōι Εὐβόλοι hιερεῖον hεκάστοι τέλεον καὶ τēι Ἀθεναίαι βōν χρυσόκερον· τὰς δὲ ἄλλας κριθὰς καὶ πυρὸς ἀποδομένος τὸς hιεροποιὸς μετὰ τēς βολēς ἀναθέματα ἀνατιθέναι τοῖν θεοῖν, ποιεσαμένος hαττ' ἂν τōι δέμοι τōι Ἀθεναίον δοκēι, καὶ ἐπιγράφεν τοῖς ἀναθέμασιν, hότι ἀπὸ τō καρπō τēς ἀπαρχēς ἀνεθέθε, καὶ hελλένον τὸν ἀπαρχόμενον· [τοῖ]ς δὲ ταῦτα ποιōσι πολλὰ ἀγαθὰ ἔναι καὶ εὐκαρπίαν καὶ πολυκαρπία[ν, hοί]τινες ἂν [μ]ὲ ἀδικōσι Ἀθεναίος μεδὲ τὲν πόλιν τὲν Ἀθεναίον μεδὲ τὸ θεό (*IG* I³ 78a 36-46). Lambert's (2022) translation, modified, Sokolowski's (1969) Greek text.

τοῦ βίου τελευτῆς)[50] and the entirety of one's lifetime (Isoc. *Paneg.* 4.28.7-12).[51]

This suggests plausibility from Cicero's late *initia*, which can be argued to resonate elements from the moment framing the *times* we set to discuss: Isocrates depicts a mighty Athens, heir to tradition, rooted in its glorious past; in Philodamus, Dionysus and Eleusis come together; this is also true in Aristophanes' Chorus, albeit his play is profoundly critical of the direction taken by the Athens praised by Isocrates. Again, Sourvinou-Inwood calls for caution. The Hellenist warns about

> reconstructing the knowledge behind the texts, as is the case with ritual. The established religious beliefs and collective representations provided the parameters within which poetic creativity operated. Texts touching on religious belief refract, are shaped and determined by, the society's established beliefs in complex ways. They are articulations of particular perceptions, determined by a variety of factors, including their place and role in the texts, and the nature, conventions, and aims of these texts; they may be exploring the interstices of established belief and/or giving a particular form to an ambiguous concept-or stressing one facet of an ambivalent one (Sourvinou-Inwood 1997b, 163).

In other words, the very existence of this collection of documented written data, which bears the same set of terms and makes explicit mentions of Eleusinian elements, does not mean they should be analysed at the same level, particularly poetry depicting religious beliefs and practices. That is to say, by approaching these texts, we solely aim at checking historical possibility during Plato's time for

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[50] The wordplay in Isocrates' Greek text between τελετὴν and τελευτῆς adds to Eliade's precise comment and to Plato's *Republic,* inevitably wiped away in translation.

[51] καὶ δούσης δωρεὰς διττὰς, αἵπερ μέγισται τυγχάνουσιν οὖσαι, τούς τε καρπούς, οἳ τοῦ μὴ θηριωδῶς ζῆν ἡμᾶς αἴτιοι γεγόνασιν, καὶ τὴν τελετήν, ἧς οἱ μετασχόντες περί τε τῆς τοῦ βίου τελευτῆς καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος αἰῶνος ἡδίους τὰς ἐλπίδας ἔχουσιν (Isoc. *Paneg.* 4.28.7-12). Norlin's (1928) translation, modified, Mathieu's and Brémon's (2003) Greek text.

the continuity of meaning to the terms, to the extent this movement may allow us to consider, with enough historiographic stability, their resemblance to Cicero's later testimony and their plausibility. Moreover, by identifying the occurrence of these terms in environments which feature Eleusinian elements, we methodologically stop there, namely, at their sole identification, to the extent that neither do we question the truth value of the theatrical and poetic representations nor the truth value of Isocrates' speech and Herodotus' recount.

That said, this set of evidence is in tension, displaying to us elements predicated from τελετή, μυστήρια, and ὄργια as follows:[52] i) hopes for happiness in life and the afterlife appeared in Isocrates (*Paneg.* 4.28.7-12) and Philodamus (*Dio.* 27-36), the latter mentioning ὄργια; ii) the nocturnal celebration appeared in Euripides (*Hel.* 1353-65) and Aristophanes (*Ran.* 441-49); iii) the decree heavily emphasised sacrifice (*IG* I³ 78a 4-5); iv) while Sophocles (*OC.* 1049-53) enforced secrecy. Among the many *mysteria*, it seems that, at least for Cicero, there are the *augusta illa mysteria*, which he defined as the *initia,* the Athenian *mysteria* led by the god Iacchus and officiated by members from the Eleusinian Elmopidae family, which may be the most honoured τελετή to Aristotle. Borgeaud concludes, and we cannot help but agree: «*On peut donc se dire que quand le mot (initia) est*

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[52] We consciously repeat the term 'elements' related to Eleusis because, in fact, none of them are direct written records of the Mysteries. Moreover, this inevitably poses us problems and raises questions regarding whether a deity mentioned in Eleusinian records is sufficiently ressembling to be included. As Parker notes, "Discursive accounts of the ritual of the Mysteries never existed, but gods and heroes who had a relation to them were honoured with sacrifices and votive reliefs, and might be depicted on vases or coins with Eleusinian themes. . . . One indirect approach to the Mysteries, therefore, is to assemble from such sources a cast of Eleusinian deities, and the method is not the less useful for inevitable uncertainties at the margins over whom to include" (Parker 2005, 334).

appliqué aux mystères d'Éleusis, il signifie quelque chose d'analogue, se référant aux inventions de Déméter» (Borgeaud 2013, 140). In this sense,

> *la réception à Rome peut être considérée comme l'étape qui introduit la confusion et qui entraîne l'usage du mot « mystère » (ou de son équivalent grec de plus en plus utilisé, telete) pour désigner un ensemble de rites difficilement réductible à une seule structure* (Borgeaud 2013, 140).

Scarpi presents a similar conclusion, *«a initia va in certo modo attribuita la responsabilità dell'inveterata consuetudine di tradurre telete con «iniziazione»* (Scarpi 2002, I:xvii). Borgeaud concludes from Cicero's testimony *that «les initia (mystères) sont conçus, à Rome, comme des rites qui marquent un début, une introduction à un savoir fondamental»* (2013, 139).

Indeed, there is historical plausibility of *initia* being used to refer precisely to the Mysteries and to Demeter, which are *« les initia par excellence, ce sont ceux d'Éleusis: initia vocantur potissimum ea, quae Cereri fiunt sacra»* (Borgeaud 2013, 140). This Latin citation in Borgeaud's text belongs to Varro, the first documented occurrence of the term *initia*.[53]

> It was not without good reason that they called earth at the same time Mother (*Mater*) and Ceres. And those who would worship her believed to conduct a proper and pious life, and even [believed] to be the very remnants (*reliquos*) from the lineage (*stirpe*) of king Saturn, who sanctions what is called *initia*, which they regard as the most prominent *sacra* dedicated to Ceres (Varro, *Rust.* 3.1.5).[54]

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[53] *"De origine:* Varro" in s.v. *initia*, TLL (2024).

[54] *nec sine causa terram eandem appellabant matrem et Cererem, et qui eam colerent, piam et utilem agere vitam credebant atque eos solos reliquos esse ex stirpe Saturni regis. cui consentaneum est, quod initia vocantur potissimum ea quae Cereri fiunt sacra* (Varro, *Rust.* 3.1.5). The translation is our own, cf. Hooper's (1934) translation. Goetz's (1929) Latin text.

Varro adds another element to Cicero's account, who mentioned only the god Iacchus. Most importantly, it suggests that during the Republic, the Romans, or at the very least Varro, considered *initia* as "the most important *sacra* dedicated to Ceres." Even so, Wagenvoort remains unconvinced. The scholar argues that the cult of Demeter had already been introduced in Rome by the fifth century BCE and connects it with the *sacrum anniversarium Cereris,* attested in 216 BCE. "The term *initia,*" he concludes, "in origin has nothing to do with [Eleusinian] mysteries" (1956, 152).

Inevitably, we find complications in conflicting sources, periodisation, and origins. At the same time, *initia* seems to be the term from which we derived our modern 'initiation,' as concluded by the three other scholars. Moreover, both Cicero and Varro point to *mysteria* and not to *initiatio,* because the latter is marked by a suffix employed to form a noun relating to an action or the result of an action, recorded only in Suetonius. Furthermore, *initia* bears the same form as the neuter plural, such as *mysteria*. This is where Borgeaud's argument led us. The same evidence, however, presented us with no conclusion regarding τελετή.

"*Telete,*" argues Dowden, "derives from the verb *teleo* in the same way that *melete* derives from *meleo*. It therefore means 'performance,' but in fact is restricted in usage to a 'performed rite'" (Dowden 1980, 416), whereas "*teleo* is derived from *telos* by regular laws via **teles-yo*. It can mean 'to fulfil or perform,' including a technical sense 'to perform rites' (1980, 415). Dowden adds that "in Pindar, as Zijderveld's thesis shows,[55] it can cover the Panthenea, the Olympic Games, the Theoxenia and ecstatic rites of Dionysos. After Pindar there is a

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[55] Scarpi also makes good use of Zijderveld's (1934) monumental catalogue of nearly all occurrences of the term τελετή in antiquity. Cf. Schuddeboom (2009, 3–119; 199-226; 239-441) for "a revised and expanded English edition of the studies by Zijderveld."

narrowing of the term to refer especially to secret and esoteric rites" (1980, 416). Clinton disagrees with what "has been claimed" (Clinton 2003, 25): "While it is true that this more narrow usage predominates," proceeds Clinton, "it is not universal" (2003, 53). Clinton, then, displays archaeological evidence from the first century CE to sustain his claim, in which, indeed, an inscription states that the ἐφεβής were to partake in all the τελεταί considered by tradition, [τ]ῶν τε τελετῶν ἁπασ[ῶν ὧ]ν πάτριον ἦν (*IG* II² 1042 c14). Furthermore, Clinton helpfully compares different sources for us.

> Pindar uses telete for the festivals Theoxenia at Acragas (*Ol.* 3.41) and the Panathenaia at Athens (*Pyth.* 9.97), Euripides for the Choes (*IT.* 959–960), Aristophanes for the Mysteria, Dipolieia, and Adonia (*Pax* 420) and evidently—perhaps in jest—even for sacrifice (*Pax* 413). Prose usage, too, was certainly not restricted to mystery cults or initiations. Herodotus refers to the Thesmophoria, which were neither Mysteria nor an initiation, as Demeter's *telete* (2.171.2–3). The Scythian king, Scyles, was initiated into Bacchic cult (διονύσωι Βακχείωι τελεσθῆναι), which Herodotus called a *telete* (4.79): this is a good example of the verb (τελεσθῆναι) and noun (*telete*) being used to indicate initiation, but there is no sign that this was a mystery cult (Scyles was not called *mystes*, and the cult was not called *mysteria*. (Clinton 2003, 54)

Clinton finishes with a decree from the fourth century BCE, one that "had nothing to do with initiation" (2003, 54): "Hippokrates proposed that the Plataeans be Athenian (citizens) from this day forward to have the same rights as the other Athenians, and have a share of whatever Athenians have a share of, both sacred and secular matters, except if a priesthood or *telete* belongs to a clan (*genos*), nor are they eligible to be one of the nine archons, but their descendants are to have this right." [56]

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[56] Ἱπποκράτης εἶπεν, Πλαταιέας εἶναι Ἀθηναίους ἀπὸ τῆσδε τῆς ἡμέρας, ἐπιτίμους καθάπερ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἀθηναῖοι, καὶ μετεῖναι αὐτοῖς ὧνπερ Ἀθηναίοις μέτεστι πάντων, καὶ ἱερῶν καὶ ὁσίων,

Scarpi (2002, I:xiv) goes in the same line with Dowden, for he argues that τελετή «*qualificava la dimensione e la pratica rituale*». The critical insight Scarpi presents is, conversely, distant from Dowden's definite reading:

> *questi vocaboli erano per lo più impiegati senza rigidità e si sovrapponevano gli uni agli altri, dando vita anche a formazioni lessicali che concorrevano e comprire le articolazioni del campo concettuale significato dai misteri* (Scarpi 2002, I:xiv–xv).

Fundamentally, Scarpi's more cautious and tentative reading proposes that ὄργια, τελετή and even μύησις, an inflexion of μυστήρια, all partake in this usage «*senzza rigidità e si sovrapponevano gli uni agli altri*» (Scarpi 2002, I:xiv–xv). Bowden also expressed this caution: "*orgia, mysteria* or *teletai*, [are] words usually translated as mystic rites, mysteries or initiations, though the terms tend to be used somewhat flexibly in both Greek and English" (Bowden 2010, 14).

For instance, ὄργια is present in the *Hymn,* right before the *makarismos* mentioned above, after the establishment of the Mysteries. Scarpi clarifies that

> *conesso con ergon (*ἔργον*), orgia indica l'«agire» tipico del rituale e in generale dei culti misterici. Forse è possibile che orgia individuassse l'agire destorificato dell'uomo nel tempo limitato del rito, in opposizione al «narrare» del mito—greco beninteso—che descriveva l'agire degli dèi e degli eroi nel tempo precosmico* (Scarpi 2002, I:xv).[57]

Scarpi's nuanced reading allows us to notice the wrath, sorrow, and grief undertaken by Demeter within the poem (ὀργαῖς, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 205),

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πλὴν εἴ τις ἱερωσύνη ἢ τελετή ἐστιν ἐκ γένους, μηδὲ τῶν ἐννέα ἀρχόντων, τοῖς δ' ἐκ τούτων (Dem. *Naer.* 104.9-13). Clinton's (2003) translation, Rennie's (1939) Greek text.

[57] Eliade suggested a similar possibility: "The myth of Demeter and Kore became contemporary once more; the rape of Kore, Demeter's laments, take place here and now, and it is by virtue of this nearness of the Goddesses, and finally of their presence, that the initiate (*mystes*) will have the unforgettable experience of initiation" (Eliade 1958, 110).

diminished once Iambe pleased [the goddess'] moods (εὔαδεν ὀργαῖς), as translated by Foley (1993). In other words, whether this term allows us to make such a connection, as Scarpi does, a more nuanced approach to the terms invites us to appreciate the *Hymn* by following the narrative with our attention turned to the deity's emotions and passions, which may leave room for readings in favour of probable reenactments of her path filled with toils during the Mysteries (cf. Parker 1991).

Furthermore, μύησις, «*appartiene alla medesima famiglia di mysteria*», is also traced along with μυστήρια to the verb μυῶ (Scarpi 2002, I:xvii). Dowden adds that

> *myo* is the most basic word in Greek from the root *my-*. In origin presumably Indo-European),[58] the meaning of the word is given by the shape of the lips in forming it, namely pressed together. It is used therefore of closing the lips and (more usually) the eyes (Dowden 1980, 414).

Scarpi accurately points to Homer (*Il.* 24.420; 637) for its first documented occurrence in Greek: «*Designa il richiamarsi delle ferite o il chiudersi degli occhi*» (2002, I:xvii). Scarpi suggests the semantic range in μυῶ might have been inherited

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[58] Beekes (2010, 988) in s.v. μύω: "<IE? **meus-, *meuH-*." Beekes further adds that "the present μύω can be explained either from **mus-i̯e/o-,* or from **muH-i̯e/o-.* The short vowel in the aor. μύσαι, like that of φθάσαι, etc., may perhaps be explained from an older root aor. (Frisk suggests that μύσαν Ω 637 stands for older **μύν*); μῦσαι can be secondary after μύω. The fut. μύσω derives from the aorist. The innovative presents μνέομαι and μύω may have arisen from non-presentic forms enlarged with η, like μνηθῆναι, μυμύημαι; cf. Schwyzer: 721. The perfect μέμῡκα recalls other intransitive perfects, like ἔστηκα, βέβηκα, etc., and could be a recent formation. . . . So, either the [Indo-European] root was **meus-,* in which case the perfect was innovated, or it was **meuH-,* when the aorist and nominal forms like μύστης are young" (Beekes 2010, 988 - s.v. μύω). Cf. West (2009, 432); Kloekhorst (2008, 587–88); and Adam (2013, 504–5).

from scholiastic tradition, and we take a closer look at Tzetzes' commentary on Aristophanes' *Frogs* to check this possibility.

'The many of us μεμνήμεθα': 'ἐτελέσθημεν the festival's μυστήρια' means that we have looked upon (ἐπέγνωμεν) the mystic [objects] (τὰ μυστικὰ) which are ineffable (ἀπόρρητα), and not to be revealed to the ἀμυήτους. It is called μυστήρια because of this: the closing (μύειν) and barring the μεμνημένους's mouth, not even one of them is allowed to say anything to the ἀμνήτων. [Therefore], 'the many of us μεμνήμεθ' means to have ἐτελέσθημεν the μυστήρια. (schol. In Ar. *Ran.* 456a.1 Com. Recen. Jo. Tze.) [59]

From this commentary in the form of a scholium, one in which we deliberately left key words untranslated to take a closer look at them, we can identify two distinct word families. The first, μεμνήμεθα, indicates the perfect mediopassive and could be preliminarily translated to "have been initiated." Problems arise as, in the same line, we also have ἐτελέσθημεν, from the second family of terms, the aorist passive of τελέω, which could be preliminarily translated as "initiated." The problems lie precisely in the fact that the first verb is in the perfect tense and, thus, bears the aspect of a complete action or lasting state. Astonishingly, the very word from the second family of terms denotes completeness, as its root is that of τέλος, inferred from its genitive form τέλεος, namely, *τελ-. Clinton (2003, 54 no. 14) argues that, if the meaning of τελετή narrowed from archaic to hellenistic Greece, "the meaning of *mysteria,* on the other hand, broadened, and could mean simply secrets" (cf. Nock 1952, 184–89). What about the usage of the perfect mediopassive tense? For now, it is in our

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[59] <ὅσοι μεμνήμεθα:> ἐτελέσθημεν τὰ μυστήρια τῆς ἑορτῆς, τουτέστιν ἐπέγνωμεν τὰ μυστικὰ καὶ ἀπόρρητα καὶ πρὸς ἀμυήτους ἀνέκφορα. μυστήρια γὰρ λέγεται διὰ τοῦτο, διὰ τὸ μύειν καὶ κλείειν τὸ στόμα τοὺς μεμνημένους καὶ μηδενὶ τῶν ἀμνήτων λέγειν αὐτά. ὅσοι μεμνήμεθ'] ἐτελέσθημεν τὰ μυστήρια. The preliminary translation is our own. Koster's (1962) Greek text.

reach to stop at admitting that, in the context provided, *mysteria* is linked with 'hiding' and 'not speaking about' τὰ μυστικὰ for whatever reason, as it is clearly predicated as ἀπόρρητα in the line that follows.

Regarding μυστήρια and the verb μυῶ, the root does indeed go back to Homeric μύσαν, the aorist from which both μυστήρια and μύστης are presumably derived. This does not solve our problem because Tzetzes, who uses both derivations of *τελ- and *μυσ-, writes in the 12th century CE. The context of his commentary and the range of meanings that these words would have had more than 15 centuries after Plato suggest they may or may not have meant the same thing. Should we try for a reading that follows Tzetzes' commentary and analytically revoke from rendering both different terms as synonyms for 'initiation,' we would have to translate ὅσοι μεμνήμεθα into "the many of us who have been made into a μύστης" and ἐτελέσθημεν τὰ μυστήρια τῆς ἑορτῆς into "we accomplished the *mysteria* of the festival." Moreover, the perfect μεμνημένους would serve, exclusively according to what Tzetzes says, to designate the ones who undertook and maintained a lasting state of being made into a μύστης. Finally, ἀμυήτων would literally be the not-μύστης.

Beyond any doubt, this would move us no further. Nonetheless, it contributes to taking a closer look at a commentary in which there is an explicit mention of the closing and barring of one's mouth, τὸ μύειν καὶ κλείειν τὸ στόμα, already mentioned above in Sophocles. In an attempt to resolve the problem of blurred lines and juxtaposed meanings, Dowden (1980, 411) states that Foucart broke down Eleusinian initiation into two grades to distinguish the meaning of the terms: «*Il y avait deux degrés dans l'initiation: les mots myesis et mystai s'appliquaient au premier, epopteia et epoptai au second*» (Foucart 1914, 432). Dowden, however, presents a profoundly worrying claim.

Realising that *myesis* already had a meaning and one which did not fit into the scheme above, he closed the *myesis* at Athens before the procession reached Eleusis (in a passage omitted from his 1914 book) and yet unbelievably claimed that it was the revelations of the Great Mysteries which constituted *l'initiation proprement dite*. This phrase has had an unhappy influence on later authors . . . I cannot see any other explanation for these positions than a desire that the first grade of the Great Mysteries should be called *myesis* or 'initiation,' whatever the evidence said (Dowden 1980, 411).

Scarpi offers an alternative route, as he ponders that secrecy implies a field of exclusion destined for those who were not admitted and remained outside, a notion that was earlier suggested by Burkert (1972, 253) and later maintained by Graf (2003b, 256). «*Forse attraverso un processo di lessicalizzazione*», concludes Scarpi,

orgia, teleté e myesis hanno sviluppato l'idea di esclusione dal rito iniziatico ovvero di negazione . . . di μεμυημένος, *di* τετελεσμένος, *di* ὠργιασμένος, *e cioè* ἀμύετος, ἀτέλεστος, ἀνοργίαστος, *termini che individuano molto prosaicamente colui che non ha le labbra chiuse, che non è completo, che è rimasto senza il rito, in una parola chi non ha partecipato al rito iniziatico e pertanto ne rimane escluso* (Scarpi 2002, I:xix).

This makes translation tricky, yet it presents a better route nonetheless. Scarpi's reading indicates a way to avoid difficulties in handling four different terms from four different word families with distinct and precise definitions. Moreover, the concept of exclusion adds sociological depth to the terms, assisting us in handling them when preceded by a privative alpha, implying, to a fuzzy extent, exclusion from the Mysteries.

Edmonds (2017, 196) presents an alternative for handling τελετή. In his reading, he suggests the possibility of translating τελεταί to "perfections," which "would be more accurate" instead of to "the often misleading" initiation. This is because *mysteria* are not aimed "to introduce the worshipper into a group of other worshippers but rather to improve or perfect the worshipper's relationship

to the god" (Edmonds 2017, 196). This is a more convincing reading, and to some extent, we should follow it. Admittedly, even Scarpi considers this with caution, which is grounded on τελετή being derived from the same root as that of τέλος: *«teleté, sul piano alquanto rarefatto del significato, è l'«azione portata a comprimento», l'«atto perfetto» . . . τετελεσμένος ο τελεσθείς è colui che è stato portato a compimento attraverso il rito, ovvero è stato portato a perfezione dalla sua partecipazione alla celebrazione rituale»* (Scarpi 2002, I:xvi). Alternatively, Bernabé and Ana Isabel J. San Cristóbal suggest that

> τελετή is mostly used to refer to rituals whose peculiar characteristic consists in that the relation that human beings establish with the divinity through them is not based, as in the case of civic rituals, in worshipping them, but in searching in such practices for a solution to the fears of the participants, the fear of sickness, of death, and what happens after it (Bernabé and Cristóbal 2019, 20).

This reading becomes quite interesting when we take a closer look at the ending of the *Hymn.* The twofold gift Demeter offers is precisely the establishment of the Mysteries and a possibility of countering, for example, the fear of death or of what happens in death through blessings:

> Blessed is the one who has seen (ὄπωπεν)[60] these things,
> among the mortals who live upon the earth;
> but to the ἀτελὴς in the sacred rites (ἱερῶν),
> who has no share in them,

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[60] Note the perfect tense, whose aspect marks the verb by adding layers of meaning, such as a lasting or continuous state. Therefore, Demeter is not simply dealing with vision here, but also knowledge and perhaps personal transformation: in the perfect tense, the verb has the sense of 'the one who sees and somehow maintains something in the future of whatever is seen.' The very blessings are supposed to last, be it happiness or freedom from fears. Most importantly, we can infer from the perfect tense a typical feature of viewing, attesting already in Epic tradition, which is the deep connection between the realms of viewing and knowing in ancient Greece, something we will return to further below.

has no lot of similar things when waned in nether darkness (*Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 480-2).[61]

Bremmer has yet to be satisfied with Hellenic scholarship's solutions for making sense of these terms, as "generations of scholars have connected *mystêrion* with the Greek verb *myô*, which means 'to close the lips or eyes', and they have explained it as referring to Demeter's commandment in her *Homeric Hymn* (478-479) to keep the rites secret. This assumption may be correct if *mystêrion* contains a secondary -s-, like many other Greek words" (Bremmer 2014, vii). He points to Hittite scholars instead.

Melchert displays how Hittite *šanna-* means to keep a secret, although primarily with the verbal sense of withholding information, whereas *munnā(i)-* would be the act of putting out of sight (2004, 337). Melchert notes that these explanations have been provided in detail by Puhvel. This scholar has exhaustively presented occurrences of the words in Hittite, emphasising that "*munnai-* implies visual concealment as shut out of sight, cover up'" and "tends to refer back to *au(s)-* 'see' . . . breached by fingerpointing (*tekkussanu-*); only occasionally in late texts does *munnai-* imping on *sanna-* as 'withhold spoken information', with a sequence *istamas-...munai-* (...*mema-*)" (Puhvel 2004b, 102).

From archaeological evidence, Puhvel displays occurrences in over thirty fragments from clay tablets. In the *Hatice Gonnet-Bağana Hittite Collection*, there is a treaty between Mursili II and Targasnalli, in which we find the line "or you hide him from my majesty" (*nasma-an-kan ANA PUTU-ŠI-ma munnāsi,* KBo

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[61] ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων· ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὅς τ' ἄμμορος, οὔ ποθ' ὁμοίων αἶσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ' ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι, *Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 480-2. Petridou's (2013) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

V 4) (Puhvel 2004a, 198). Interestingly, Puhvel traces his evidence back to the Homeric μύσαν. According to the Hittite scholar,

> the Greek synonym μύω was basically intransitive, e.g. *Iliad* 24.637 οὐ γάρ πω μύσαν ὄσσε ὑπὸ βλεφάροισιν ἐμοῖσιν, 'not yet did the eyes close under my lids', where μύσαν may well be a sigmatic innovation for a root aorist *μύν (whence the sigma spread further into the root, as in μύστης). μύω < *mu-yō points to a root *mew-, while *munnai-* reflects *mu-nā-ye-w with transitivizing *-nā-* as in *sunna-*, *sanna-*, *iskuna-* (unlike nasal infix verbs *tarna-*, *kinai-*, cf. Puhvel (2002, 244–45). The intransitive base verb does not survive in Hittite, but the phrasal *sākuwa munnai-* may be a direct transitivization of the equivalent of Gk. μύσαν ὄσσε (Puhvel 2004b, 191–92).[62]

This profoundly fertile comparison between Hittite and Homeric Greek is followed by Bernabé and Helena R. Somolinos (1993, 123). They specify the meaning of μύσαν not as 'to close,' which they consider a highly literal rendering. Alternatively, they propose 'to hide': «*car mes yeux ne se son pas encore cachés sous mes paupières*» (Bernabé and Somolinos 1993, 123).[63] Furthermore, the scholars are convinced that 'to hide' explains the semantic evolution of the set of terms related to *mysteria*, which they consider a much better explanation than 'to close': «*le rapport entre l'hittite munnai- et le grec* μύω *semble plus clair*» (Bernabé and Somolinos 1993, 123). Unfortunately, the nature of the evidence of Hittite *munnā(i)-* in the Bronze Age is even more scarce than that of Greek terms at Plato's time. Therefore, we are restricted to Cuneiform Tablets and should stop here.

Burkert mentions that "the root *my(s)-* seems to be attested in Mycenaean Greek" (1987a, 8). There is evidence in Baumbach's (1971, 174) s.v. μύω, μυέω: "*mu-*

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[62] Cf. Oettinger (1979, 161) and Beekes (2010, s.v. μύω).

[63] οὐ γάρ πω μύσαν ὄσσε ὑπὸ βλεφάροισιν ἐμοῖσιν (Hom. *Il.* 24.637). Allen's (1963a) Greek text.

jo-me-no PY Un 2; prob. dat. sg.: poss. *muiomenōi* 'being initiated' [Docs. 221; Chadwick, Minos 5. 125". However, Lydia Baumbach notes that "the Mycenaean form implies a verb μυίω (< *mus-ịo), cf. μύω, but in a sense equivalent to μυέω" (1971, 174).

Palaima describes the Mycenaean tablet on which the word *mu-jo-me-no* is found: "On tablet Un 2, a sacrificial and commensal ceremony within the religious territory of *pa-ki-ja-ne* is recorded as taking place on a ceremonial occasion when the *wanaks* is initiated" . . . "Where the feasting accompanying the ritual initiation of the king, or *wanaks,* might be assumed to involve all segments of society" (Palaima 2004, 229–23).

Hiller indicates broader possibilities in reading the same tablet: "Linear B documents concern the economic administration of the palace in its various aspects. Therefore, there are no religious texts in the strict sense of the word—no prayers, hymns, manuals of religious instruction" (Hiller 2011, 170). Furthermore, "all conclusions can only be incomplete and provisional since they are mostly based on extrapolations from the restricted number of relevant terms and names available in the few texts at our disposal" (Hiller 2011, 171). Nonetheless, "two new and important pieces of evidence have now appeared: firstly, the sealing found in Thebes in 1982 document the existence of State banquets . . . Secondly, the tablets found in Thebes in 1993-95 have raised lively and extensive discussion" (2011, 171). "Etymological observations," warns Hiller, "though always of interest, are a less secure guide and can only be used with caution" (2011, 173).

At the same time, Hiller is not sure that the text can be rendered from an initiation pattern, although he does not rule out the possibility. Hiller mentions Chadwick's reluctance: "If the ceremony really were a royal initiation, these offerings are by no means excessive" (Chadwick 1976, 100). Weilhartner, when analysing Pylos Tablet Un 2, also mentions the abundance of "supplies for

sacrificial banqueting," and emphasises that "there exists a fairly substantial amount of iconographic documentation for this practice on Bronze Age sealings and frescoes" (Weilhartner 2012, 220). However, there is no mention of initiation. In Hiller's description of what he calls a state banquet, he mentions that Pylos Tablet Un 2's "introductory line informs us that a banquet was held at the cult centre (holy district) of *pa-ki-ja-ne* on the occasion of *mu-jo-me-no e-pi wa-na-ka-te, mujomenoi epi wanaktei*. This must mean either that the *wanax* was introduced into a religious mystery cult (?) or that he presided over some kind of initiatory ritual" (Hiller 2011, 178). This has led the scholar to conclude that

> we have a very limited view, glimpses more than anything else, of the rituals performed. We owe it once more to single designations of festivals which can be etymologically interpreted . . . and also to descriptions of cult activities like *mu-jo-me-no e-pi wana-ka-te, mujomenoi epi wanaktei* '(on the occasion) when the *wanax* was introduced into a religious mystery cult' ([?]; PY un 2; other interpretations cannot be excluded) . . . Much remains to be done before we can achieve a generally satisfying interpretation of the Linear B texts concerning Mycenaean religion . . . in any case, and despite all the difficulties which must still be, the tablets are an invaluable source of information (Hiller 2011, 206–8).[64]

"The etymology of μυστήρια and τελετή which seemed to be clear," in Burkert's words, "has been lost again on account of Mycenean evidence" (Burkert 1987a, 9). There is not enough Mycenaean data to discuss, as the records are from the palace administration, which is unlikely to advance our investigation. Moreover, there is not much to sustain a compelling claim on a religious connection between Greek μυστήρια and Mycenaean *mu-jo-me-no*, for it seems that *mu-ja-me-no*'s rendering induces from Homeric Greek the meaning of what

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[64] Hiller uses question marks and brackets to highlight a tentative assessment, as in the previous citation.

is described in the Pylos Tablet, leaving us without further converging evidence to render the unquestionable linguistic connection between the two terms.

Wellman alerts us to the dangers of (2005, 314) "the originalist claim," which is "that origin defines nature or essence" (Wellman 2005, 314). This tendency, argues him, "is to valorise the oldest examples and to see later use as a (varyingly legitimate) extension of the category, but this is an interpretive decision with particular underlying assumptions and consequences, not an automatic ascription of importance" (2005, 312–13). That is to say, "determining the lineaments of the word *mystēria* in its various ancient uses," concludes the scholar, "is a different project from defining the comparative modern taxon mystery cults *stricto sensu,* but it is an equally useful one" (Wellman 2005, 314). The difference between what Wellman urges the scholarship to aim at, which is a methodological horizon, and our search for the delineaments of juxtaposing terms is that our aim is not μυστήρια "in its various ancient usages" but to converge conflicting usages, including the terms intertwined with μυστήρια, to what can be mapped at Plato's time.

To conclude this stage of our investigation, we have approached the terms from the Mysteries. This discussion has covered different grids of evidence to further advance our analysis of the ritual and mythological context in which the terms were embedded. Naturally, some conclusions presented compelling possibilities for broader meanings to be sustained. In contrast, others presented problems that we must account for in any choice we make for the following sections.

We moved from μυστήρια, τελετή, and ὄργια, whose echoes point to the Bronze Age and to our own time: *munnā(i)-* and *mu-ja-me-no;* μύσαν; *initia;* and initiation. "It is evident that this word family is much more general in meaning; usually it does not suffice to identify mysteries proper" (Burkert 1987a, 9). Neither

does it suffice to identify the 'not-mysteries' that appear to suggest a field of exclusion. They all point to action and discourses whose conflicting tension must be reintegrated within a broader framework of possible practices, discourses, and beliefs in the following sections, primarily because "etymologies can never replace the meaning of words in current parlance" (Bremmer 2013a, 44).

In this sense, restricting the analysis to terminology may render the terms devoid of cultural significance if they are not considered immersed in a wider nexus of meaning. At the same time, analyses of cultural practices and beliefs lose complexity if they do not engage with the terms within their own nuanced semantic field. The absence of direct written records of the Mysteries can be circumvented if we remain aware of possible morphological subtleties that indicate overlapping practices and beliefs. For example, when considering the usage of the perfect participle in relation to these terms, which denotes a continuous and lasting state connected to their religious dimension. This detail is carefully explored by Graf and also explained by Bernabé.

According to Graf, "the perfect participle designates someone who not only has performed the rite but who has been transformed into a new and lasting state of being through his initiation" (2003b, 252). Bernabé notes the conscious usage of this pattern by Plato in the *Phaedo*:

> *Platón vuelve a utilizar un participio de perfecto,* πεφιλοσοφηκότες, *como los que usaban los de las teletai (*βεβακχευμένος, κεκαθαρμένος, μεμυημένος, τετελεσμένος*), pero para definir a los filósofos, dado que para él es la práctica continuada de la filosofía la que produce un estado (el que define el perfecto en griego) que permitirá al filósofo un destino mejor en el Más Allá* (Bernabé 2011, 227).

Plato's transposition at the linguistic level in the *Phaedo*, which uses the perfect participle to define the one who pursues a transformative way of life mentioned by Bernabé, is at *Phaedo* 69d1: πεφιλοσοφηκότες. This shows us that

Plato is engaging with the Mysteries by adapting a linguistic typical feature, namely, the perfect participle to mark in individuals the attainment of a continuous lasting state (βεβακχευμένος, κεκαθαρμένος, μεμνημένος, τετελεσμένος, and Plato's πεφιλοσοφηκότες). Even if we did not reach precise definitions in this section, this subtlety of *mysteria*'s vocabulary at least points us in a direction regarding how Plato can engage with them.[65]

Bremmer suggests that the variety we face in terminology begs to contend with Wittgensteinian family resemblance (Bremmer 2014, xiii).[66] After all, this

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[65] The context of this subtle transposition done by Plato at the linguistic level in the *Phaedo* at 69b-d: Socrates mentions many promises of wisdoms are made by people reputed as virtuous. Yet, he notes, the truth would be, in fact, a 'kind of purification' from all sorts of false virtues (τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς τῷ ὄντι κάθαρσίς τις τῶν τοιούτων πάντων, *Phd.* 69b). Socrates also even dares to reckon that those from the τελεταί (καὶ κινδυνεύουσι καὶ οἱ τὰς τελετὰς ἡμῖν οὗτοι, *Phd.* 69c) got something right. Obviously, they did not get it right by claiming that it is through completing the purification in the τελεταί that they are to become happy and dear to the gods—note the double perfect participle used in a row to identify those who bear a continuous lasting state derived from undertaking the τελεταί: ὁ δὲ κεκαθαρμένος τε καὶ τετελεσμένος ἐκεῖσε ἀφικόμενος μετὰ θεῶν οἰκήσει, 69c). Not even close: Socrates, in his usual double-edged mockery, affirms that the ones who got it right in the τελεταί, *in his opinion,* are the ones who 'have become philosophers' <u>correctly</u> (note the perfect participle being subtle modified by the adverb ὀρθῶς, with clear Orphic resonances, cf. Bernabé 2011): οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἄλλοι ἢ οἱ πεφιλοσοφηκότες ὀρθῶς, 69d). In other words, the problem does not lie in the τελεταί for Socrates, but in failing to undertake, among the many τελεταί, among the many *mysteria,* the *correct* one, which is the continuous practice of philosophy. Namely the 'becoming a philosopher' through a continuous effort that leaves in the individual a lasting transformative state, marked by this aspect of the perfect participle πεφιλοσοφηκότες and subtly modified by the adverb ὀρθῶς: again, not only one must continuously practice philosophy, but, quite literally, 'in a continuous state of being a philosopher *correctly.*' And that is precisely how Socrates describes his own way of life: "That is how I too, as much as possible, never left it away from my life, but eagerly desired to become one [a philosopher] in every single way" (ὧν δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ κατά γε τὸ δυνατὸν οὐδὲν ἀπέλιπον ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἀλλὰ παντὶ τρόπῳ προυθυμήθην γενέσθαι, *Phd.* 69d).

[66] Bambrough summarises Wittgeistein's family resemblance: "The realist's claim that there is an objective justification for the application of the word 'game' to games and

Greek set of terms is significantly loose compared to our current analytical categorisation. They are "part of the cultural repertoire available to Greek individuals and groups" in "a never-ending, rather than essentialist, process susceptible to forces of semantic innovation as well as conservatism, which at least partially accounts for the diversity of materials to which the term was applied" (Wellman 2005, 311). As Henrichs suggests, "what people *do* in pursuit of their religious beliefs is more consistent over time and more indicative of social realities than what they *say*" (Henrichs 2010, 26). Wellman further elaborates on semantic innovations:

> In this case, we have cultural texts (the cultic systems) which are in constant dialogue with other cultural texts, both each other and things not given the name *mysteria*. The constant process of taxonomic and formal realignment in which cultic terminology (e.g. *mysteria, epopteia* and *mystes*) is appropriated by other discourses and actors is also a feedback situation. After the terms have acquired, through these new associations, altered semantic fields, they may be borrowed back into the cultic complexes. The process of signification, negotiation and contestation never stopped for *mysteria* and neither should they for mystery cults (Wellman 2005, 329).

This implies that ancient terms were constantly reframed to account for the fluidity of the ongoing ancient phenomena from which they emerged. Conversely, the fluid and changing ancient phenomena were informed and culturally reshaped by the representations that assisted in constituting their identities. From this, we should approach the terms with sufficient stability yet fluidity enough to account for their dynamics: "We must be prepared for

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the nominalist claim that there is no element that is common to all games". There is no objective element common to the phenomena predicated of the terms in the vocabulary employed to analyse the phenomena. Yet, there is an objective justification for analytically applying the terms, viz. phenomena's overlapping similarities that support the usage categories proposed by argumentation (Bambrough 1961, 207–21).

reinterpretation, inclusion, shifting relevance and signification" (Wellman 2005, 329). In the end, "attempting to use an analytical category that is organized by family resemblances does pose various problems" (Saller 1999, 397). However, as Graf has it, sometimes we cannot help but use flexible or scholar categories "to understand what is going on" (Graf 2003a, 12). "Terms such as 'religion,' 'sacrifice,' 'value' and so forth are conveniences," notes Saller, as he argues that

> they allow us to talk about things that interest us in more or less intelligible fashion. And we can do so even though the terms themselves are polysemous and the categories to which they pertain are organized by family resemblances. We need to be cognizant of their complexities and subtleties, however, if we are to avoid using them in rigid and otherwise nonproductive ways. And we need also to have some sense of their connotations (Saller 1999, 403).

That said, we will use 'initiation' to refer to what happened within the enclosed terrace in the Eleusinian sanctuary's grounds, only in the absence of a better term, partially accepting Edmonds' suggestion (2017, 196). 'Initiate,' as a noun, or even better μύστης maintained in Greek, will be preferable to 'worshipper,' as noted by Bernabé and Cristóbal (2019, 20), in the sense of it being a 'kind of worshipper,' sc. considered by family resemblance and not by definitional fiat. The initial evidence suggested closing the mouth and the eyes. After further analysis, it appears more reasonable to connect it with ritual secrecy and identity. Considering the usage of the perfect participle, the state of being a μύστης appears to be continuous and maintained, thus indicating personal transformation. Regarding μυστήρια, we will follow scholarship in using the "Mysteries" [of Eleusis] in the Eleusinian context.

Furthermore, our analysis suggests τελετή predicates both the events or acts in *mysteria* and the individuals who participated in them when inflected as a participle or verb. Although the nature of their participation remains unclear at

this point, the term indicates they did so positively, given its kinship with τέλος. Thus, we have to evaluate further the extent to which it would be possible to follow either Edmond's and Scarpi's (2002, I:xvi) suggestion for 'perfections' in the context of the interaction between gods and mortals. Additionally, ὄργια, interchangeable with τελετή, remains elusive. We have not passed through sufficient accounts to propose any categorisation. It might be helpful to follow Scarpi's indication of its possible relation to Demeter in the *Hymn.* In this sense, the loose usage will overlap with τελετή as 'cultic acts' or 'rituals,' the next section's subject.

Nonetheless, since the terms point to complexities in ancient Greece that are beyond the scope of definitional fiat, perhaps we should consider Calame's suggestion.

> *C'est dire qu'en Grèce ancienne aussi bien que dans l'anthropologie moderne, il n'y a de définition qu'opératoire de ces manifestations symboliques que sont devenus à nos yeux mythes et rites . . . Par ailleurs, classant des produits langagiers ou gestuels du processus symbolique, elles ne peuvent plus se contenter d'être l'objet de notre part d'une simple analyse lexicale et sémantique de type structural. Leur étude requiert l'interrogation des circonstances de leur formulation et de leur énonciation, avec les implications pratiques de toute mise en discours* (Calame 1991, 204).

It may be methodologically fruitful to consider the terms 'provisionary' or 'of immediate analytical utility.' In other words, to view the terms as bearing the *typicality* (Jackendoff 1983, 139) of the Mysteries so that we better approach ἐπόπτεια. They are a necessity upon which we will base the following sections on practices, discourses, and beliefs in ancient Greek culture at that time. "Whether or not to admit peripheral cases," should remain "a matter for scholarly argument relative to our defining pool of features and their linkages rather than a matter to be settled by definitional fiat" (Saller 1999, 398). The terms themselves obviously "allow us to talk about things that interest us in a more or less intelligible fashion.

And we can do so even though the terms themselves are polysemous and the categories they pertain to are organised by family resemblance" (Saller 1999, 403). "The analytical and conceptual danger," warns Wellman, "of course, lies in reifying the solutions that we advance and forgetting the provisionality of our taxonomic markers" (Wellman 2005, 310).

In this sense, we must follow scholarship as tentatively as possible and accept the tragic fact that "substitution of categories will not save us from problems" (Saller 1999, 404). They are a necessary taxonomic groundwork, not as solid as brick columns but stable enough, like a rope whose resembling linkage allows for a firm yet malleable grip (Wittgenstein 1953, 66–67).

3. Seeing the Mortals: The Eleusinian Mysteries from Ritual

Burkert's "tentative definition" of *mysteria* resonated deeply in scholarship.[67] It is another befitting starting point for approaches to ἐπόπτεια in Eleusis: "Mysteries [*mysteria*] were initiation rituals of a voluntary, personal, and secret character that aimed at a change of mind through experience of the sacred" (Burkert 1987a, 11). The Eleusinian are the prominent *mysteria* in Burkert's reading, considering that his detailed analysis of the Mysteries (1972, 274–327; = 1983, 248–97) comprised the highest point of his most influential work. In this section, we will discuss two central elements of this definition: (i) 'Mysteries were initiation rituals' and (ii) 'experience of the sacred.' The more specific 'voluntary, personal, and secret character' and the 'transformative aspect' will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

First, it follows from element (i) that the terms discussed in the previous section are to be rendered as 'rituals,' 'ritual states,' 'ritual acts,' or 'ritual agents.' Moreover, if this collection of terms used by the Greeks to refer to the Mysteries is to be rendered in such a framework, then it follows from (ii) that they are 'sacred rituals.' Burkert's analysis of the Mysteries is grounded on a complex sacrificial theory that cannot be disregarded for a deeper understanding of the Mysteries— one among the most prominent contributions to our fragile grasp of *mysteria*. For this reason, we will attempt to observe in this section how these two central elements are embedded in a set of intricacies whose critical debate with

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[67] "This tentative definition largely coincides with the term *misterico* in the typology of Bianchi, in Bleeker (1965, 154–71) and Bianchi (1976, 1–8; 1979, 5–9; 1980, 11); cf. Cosi (1976, 54) and Sfameni Gasparro (1981, 377; 1981, 6)" (Burkert 1987a, 138 no. 59).

scholarship may deepen our comprehension and provide a valuable methodological tool in our approaches to ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries.

Bremmer observes that "the study of ritual has always been an important part of Burkert's work" (Bremmer 1998b, 14). Admittedly, Burkert (1979, 35) acknowledged that there is no consensus on a definition of ritual. Even so, as Bremmer (1998b, 14) notes, Burkert considered ethology sufficiently capable of defining and observing rituals. Problems emerge from "how these scholars knew what they had to observe. Surely, their point of departure was the pre-existing notion of ritual in anthropology and psychology" (1998b, 14). From this follows, Bremmer says, that "ethology can not present the key to the problem of how to define ritual" (Bremmer 1998b, 14).

We are unsatisfied with the assumption that observed phenomena are independent of the actors, undetermined by the context, and also not by the scholars. This is utterly unacceptable. Nonetheless, Asad remarks that anthropologists—himself included—, particularly ethnographers, "will probably recognize a ritual when he or she sees one, because ritual is (is it not?) symbolic activity as opposed to the instrumental behavior of everyday life" (Asad 1993, 55). Burkert was not the first scholar to face the problem, noted Bremmer (1998b, 15), and since Burkert's works on *mysteria*, "there have been literally dozens of definitions, which all depart from the idea that ritual is an objective phenomenon" (Bremmer 1998b, 15).

Naturally, one could wonder what this "idea" means. 'What does it entail to consider ritual as an independent objective phenomenon?' In particular, religious rituals, such as those defined by Burkert as *mysteria*. Asad explains that the idea of independent objective phenomenon for human behaviour entails that "ritual is to be conceived essentially in terms of signifying behavior—a type of activity to be classified separately from practical, that is, technically effective,

behavior" (1993, 58). In other words, "behavior, which is itself *likened* to a text" (Asad 1993, 58).

The context from which this idea emerged, according to Boudewijnse, was the moment when many human customs could not be explained in the late 19th century "and therefore seemed irrational." Moreover, "these customary practices came to be seen as isolated phenomena" (Boudewijnse 1998, 286). Furthermore, "scholars became interested in religious behaviour—i.e. prescribed ceremonial behaviour—because its rule-based nature could not be rationally explained.[68] Thus, religious action was set apart as a separate category of behaviour, and it seems to have been in this context that the word 'ritual' was first used to refer to religious practice" (Boudewijnse 1998, 286–87).[69]

To consider ritual as an isolated and independent objective phenomenon implies that so-called irrational rituals can be reduced to rational symbols. Moreover, rational symbols are passive to being decoded and deciphered. Furthermore, "the term 'ritual' seemed inspired by its original meaning of a script for behaviour," continues Boudewijnse, and "may have instigated adoptions of the term 'ritual' to refer to 'ordered sequences of religious acts,' 'acts based on (a) ritual,' later to be called 'ritual acts,' which, with the passage of time, became 'ritual' (1998, 287). The outcome, remarks Bremmer, is "the modern inability to reach a consensus about a definition" (Bremmer 1998b, 14).

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[68] "Unlike technically useful behaviours, rituals lack a fully specifiable causal structure" (Whitehouse 2021, 12).

[69] "'The ritual turn,' then, clearly took place in the late 1880s and 1890s. According to the Oxford anthropologist Franz Steiner (1909-1952), it was caused by the interest of the Victorian Age in 'irrational rules' of religion which could not be explained by the more rationalistic theories of the time" (Bremmer 1998b, 22).

Both Asad (1993, 65–69) and Boudewijnse (1998, 280) agree that "outward behaviour now came to be perceived in terms of its *public* aspect: as 'strategic' in the social arena. This made it possible to see conventional behaviour as essentially *representational* and independent of the individual self" (Boudewijnse 1998, 280). Therefore, if the idea of behaviour not having a causal structure, being independent, and an objective phenomenon had presented the framework for the definitions of ritual, and, further, if behaviour began to be considered as representational, then it is no coincidence that "the question arose as to *what* it represents and *why*" (Boudewijnse 1998, 280).

"But if rituals have no knowable causal structure," asks Whitehouse, "and therefore no objective technical value—and if they are also a drain on time and resources, why do them at all?" (Whitehouse 2021, 13). This is the most pressing question for Eleusis: the answers to the 'what' and 'why' posed by Boudewijnse above are inherently related to the question of the inexistence of a causal structure underlying ritual. In other words, if we ask the same questions, we may not receive the answers we are looking for. Even if we hypothetically consider, for a moment, in an analytical manner, that both propositions are true, namely, an objective phenomenon with no causal structure, then we may have to change our questions to make sense of this kind of phenomenon.

Asad states that the earlier answers were immersed in a belief that regarded representational behaviour as manifesting universal symbols present in every culture, "identifiable by the ethnographer prior to its meaning and effect being determined" (1993, 60). In other words, since scholarship in the early 20th century considered the symbols that the rituals represented as universal and part of human nature, it entailed "establishing as authoritatively as possible the meanings of representations where the explanations offered by indigenous discourses are considered ethnographically inadequate or incomplete" (Asad 1993, 60).

In approaching ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, this scenario could pose impregnable obstacles. If a religious ritual is to be *likened* to a text, then it begs 'reading,' understanding, and explaining: the question 'why' or the pursuit of a causal structure. However, undesirable results will follow if the 'reading' is grounded on understanding the manifestation of universal symbols as independent of the cultural context where they are manifested in the past and independent of the scholarly discourse that 'explains' them in the present. Neither would one have to look to ancient Greece nor to consider debates in current scholarship to understand ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries as rituals.

The universality of symbols manifested in rituals and the dismissal of the actors was first posed by Smith, entailing what follows: "So far as myths consist of explanations of ritual, their value is altogether secondary, and it may be affirmed with confidence that in almost every case the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth" (1889, 16). This is a relegation of mythology to mere pastime tales, and we cannot accept it. "The omission of mythology," comments Bremmer, "is once again a legacy of the late nineteenth century and not the outcome of the actor's point of view" (Bremmer 1998b, 14).

Furthermore, suppose we concede that it is possible to abstract universal symbols from the Mysteries, supposedly represented in their rituals. In that case, it is imperative to ask who would possess the secret cypher to decrypt the Mysteries. Even if we temporarily sustain the possibility of universal symbols manifested in representational behaviour, it could be perniciously argued that the Greeks themselves did not possess the means to 'read,' understand, and explain what their own behaviour represented. This is precisely what has been suggested by the famous remarks of Jane Harrison: "Ritual practice misunderstood explains the elaboration of myth" and "there is no more fertile source of absurd mythology than ritual misunderstood" (Harrison 1903, iii; xxxii–xxxiii).

Appalling suggestions. Asad renders it as a view on "unsophisticated who employ 'outward signs' in formal behavior and speech do not understand the entire meaning being signified" (1993, 59). This, according to Asad, indicates a relation of power. And, in our view, also colonialism and racism. "But, in this case, behavioral signs need to be seen as representations conceptually detachable from what they represent; only then can they invite readings in a game of power, a game in which the 'true' self is masked by its representations, and where this masking is aptly done" (Asad 1993, 65).

Admittedly, to "treat a cultural performance as a text," one might be tempted to conceptually "bracket the question of the processes that produced it in order to work out its internal logic" (Roseberry 1982, 1021). Both Asad and Roseberry note the danger in detaching behavioural signs and what they may represent, in order to conceptualise them apart from their social, religious, and political contexts. Sewell discussed Geertz's theory on ritual as a symbolic system, one that allows

> searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms—words, images, institutions, behaviors—in terms of which, *in each place*, people actually represented themselves to themselves and to one another (Sewell 1997, 39).

This means that it is possible to approach ritual from the underlying assumption of cultures as interlaced and mutually sustaining systems of meaning. This grounds our synchronic approach to the Mysteries, namely, analytically assuming tensions of distinct 'times' whose framework links them according to their common systems of meaning: a 'framework' as 'one moment'.

The problem, however, lies in proposing conceptual, symbolic forms manifested in the rituals as detachable from the 'moment' in which they occur, in our case, detaching them from Plato's time and the Mysteries. To be more precise,

"the specific cultural setting of the archaic and classical *polis* as a cultural context of its symbolic meaning" (Kindt 2012, 15). These are the 'culturally determined assumptions' of which Sourvinou-Inwood has ominously warned us in the introduction. The perceptual filters must not be removed from the equation, even if we decide to abstract the symbols to discuss meaning analytically. Whether it is 'scopic regimes,' culturally determined ways of viewing, or place and time, they are all part of the phenomenon's system of meaning.

> Several of her [Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood] works explore religious phenomena as forms of collective representation, which must be studied in the context of the larger cultural system that generated and received them. To 'read' such religious symbols we must place them back in their original culture. 'Reading' as an act of decoding cultural symbols is a concept central to all her monographs. Sourvinou-Inwood's main goal, then, is to reconstruct the ancient perceptual filters which have shaped these symbols and through which they were perceived in their own time (Kindt 2012, 19).

Geertz was clinical in warning us to refrain from "confusing our traffic with symbols with our traffic with objects or human beings, for these latter are not in themselves symbols, however often they may function as such" (1973, 93). At the same time, "no matter how deeply interfused the cultural, the social, and the psychological may be in everyday life . . . it is useful to distinguish them in analysis" (Geertz 1973, 93).[70] Rituals, then, "give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves

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[70] Geertz is most criticised at this point: "Setting religious symbols apart from the social actions and processes from which they derived their meaning, in effect assigning religious symbols a *sui generis* quality" (Kindt 2012, 78). He offers an undeniably helpful analytical tool to the extent one employs it as a stage to identify differences between Greek religions, provided that at the end of the analysis, they are traced back to the cultural framework sustaining their meaning.

to it and by shaping it to themselves. It is, in fact, this double aspect which sets true symbols off from other sorts of significative forms" (Geertz 1973, 93–94).

From this kind of dialectics of meaning, there is no room for 'a cypher to decrypt' the Mysteries because "meaning [is] not locked away in actors' heads but embodied in publicly available symbols. He [Geertz] insisted that the symbol systems that make up a culture are as public as marriage and as observable as agriculture" (Sewell 1997, 39). Most importantly, we insist that meaning, and particularly regarding rituals surrounding the Mysteries, should be reconducted to the plurality of competing and conflicting beliefs and discourses at Plato's time. It may as well be found in literary, archaeological, mythological, or cultic records. It is there that we will find possibilities regarding the meanings the Greeks could have represented themselves, which is inseparable from their own 'moment.' Moreover, we also insist that the possibilities must be sustained through argumentation, preferably along with authoritative scholarship. There is no other way but through academic dialogue. "Geertz's definition of religion," praises Kindt,

> remains 'good to think with' for the classical scholar because it reminds us of the symbolic dimension of ancient Greek religion, which should no longer be neglected by scholars. A more thorough embrace of Geertz, and of symbolic analysis more generally, promises to open up a variety of avenues for the classical scholar (Kindt 2012, 69).

This symbolic dimension of Greek religion does not mean that "there is only a single symbolic discourse in the ancient Greek world," namely, "[one discourse] providing a total and uncontested realm of religious meanings" (Kindt 2012, 21).[71] Conversely, the Mysteries are a form of religious discourse that engages

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[71] "Even in so far as Greek religion is structured by the *polis*, it is not confined to the inner workings of the individual *polis*. One of the main ways religion works in ancient

with other conflicting religious discourses, i.e., a large variety of *mysteria,* all reflecting the tensional dynamics of ancient Greece's plural culture.[72] When we look back 2,500 years, we single out the Mysteries because they have been historically established, particularly after Solon and, above all, after Pericles, as the most elevated in terms of political and religious relevance. However, at the boiling cauldron of Greek religion during the time of Plato, namely, as *living* religions dynamically shared by communities, many other *mysteria* existed and fought for their place in the social arena of ancient Greek religiosity, an open system without the religious exclusives of monotheism. Greek polytheism was characterised by openness, without any pretence of a vertically oriented, causal structuring. In this way, other *mysteria* were in tension with the more popular ones, seeking their place in a more juxtaposing, sometimes devoid of logic, and integrative religiosity than we are comfortable admitting. Again, we do not propose Greek culture as a whole "as a consensual sphere of interaction," but rather seek "a more flexible and fluid understanding of it as open to the internal frictions" (Kindt 2012, 22).[73]

Greece is by facilitating connections with the broader world through networks that connected individuals and cults in different locations, and through a framework of common sanctuaries. . . . Even contact between Greek and non-Greek is negotiated in part by the translation of religious ideas between cultures" (Rutherford 2013, 1).

[72] The problem in assuming Greek religion as one discourse in an uncontested realm of religious meaning is not that patterns of coherence will be found—which are helpful— but that plurality that does not fit the patterns, by a logical necessity, is seen as exceptional, "largely to the exclusion of religious divergence" (Kindt 2012, 21). Conversely, the plurality of meanings that links religious discourses in tension with one another "allows us to bring in religious movements such as Orphism and the use of magical practices, which have so far been marginalised" (Kindt 2012, 24).

[73] "There were many vibrant cultures (and thus a variety of competing and compelling cultural identities) within Greek culture," held in a 'thin coherence' or 'thin framework,' from which the Mysteries cannot be detached (Ober 2005, 78). Of course, there is 'a framework' and coherence in the face of plurality in tension, otherwise it

Rituals,[74] or ritual acts, are proposed by us as a symbolic activity within the environment of the Mysteries. Hereafter, we use ritual precisely as defined above, as an analytical tool to describe the mortal-immortal interactions undertaken in the Mysteries in light of ἐπόπτεια. [75] Burkert suggested that *mysteria* were initiatory rituals and, particularly in the Mysteries, he emphasised the 'experience of the sacred,' namely, killing-sacrifice („*die Opfertötung*").[76]

Graf admits that, among the various ways ancient Greeks interacted with their gods, the most privileged occasion was their festivals (ἑορταί), where sacrifices and prayers were central features.[77] Before Burkert, Mauss and Hurbert

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would not comprise systems of meaning and the analysis would collapse altogether. At the same time, it is one 'thinly held' by alterity and constantly reshaped and transformed by it.

[74] "The terms are not faithful reflections of reality but scholarly constructs of which the definitions remain up for negotiation and adaptation" and "awareness of their ideological origin may lead us to ask new questions" (Bremmer 1998b, 32). The debate by posing new questions, particularly over ideology, although necessary, is beyond the reach of the present investigation.

[75] «*Le rite, c'est donc en Grèce la fête ou l'action qui en forme le pivot . . . les Grecs aimaient à désigner la célébration rituelle du nom de l'action située en son centre: le concours* (ἀγών ou ἄθλος), *la procession* (πομπή), *la performance chorale* (χορός) *et surtout le sacrifice* (θυσία ou τὰ ἱερά)» (Calame 1991, 199).

[76] „*Grunderlebnis des ‚Heiligen' ist die Opfertötung*" (Burkert 1972, 9). "*Heiligen* is "'Holiness' or 'the sacred'" (Bremmer 1998b, 24). Not only is ‚*Opfertötung*' directly connected with ‚*Grunderlebnis des Heiligen*', indicating Burkert's clear emphasis on killing, but also the univocal images used by Burkert in the passage reinforce it. Burkert is clinical in stating that „*der Gott an seinem Opferplatz*", although they are present in „*Aschenhaufen*", present in „*den Hörnern oder Schädeln der geschlachteten*", present in „*Blut*". What makes „*Gott am ächtigsten erlebt*" is the „*tödlichen Axthieb, im verrinnenden Blut und im Verbrennen der Schenkelstücke*" (Burkert 1972, 9).

[77] «*À travers* ἑορτή *et la permanence de son signifié, les Grecs semblent donc posséder un concept stable de la fête comprise comme 'célébration en l'honneur d'un dieu' . . . Cette conception de la fête comme loisir, comme un moment de repos interrompant le déroulement des occupations quotidiennes va naturellement être développée dans les textes chrétiens*» (Calame 1991, 196–97).

saw animal sacrifice as "a ritual that opened communication with the gods through consecration of a victim" (Parker 2011, 134).[78] Meuli's (1975, 907–1021) reading of Greek animal sacrifice, which was embedded in guilt and would have been derived from the hunting life, added to Hubert's and Mauss' sacred-prophane dichotomy in killing, influenced Burkert's *Opfertötung* in the Mysteries (Bremmer 1994, 41). Burkert had made the feeling of guilt, central in Meuli's work, the focus of his theory on the Mysteries.[79]

Parker outlines Burkert's view on the 'experience of the sacred' as follows:

> Burkert saw sacrifice as a social ritual that dealt with the problem of human, more specifically male human, aggressiveness in two ways: on the one hand it discharged it harmlessly against an animal victim; on the other hand, even in regard to that discharge it created a sense of guilt which helped inhibit aggression against fellow humans. Burkert linked sacrifice to guilt. (Parker 2011, 160)

Parker presents a broader sense of sacrifice beyond the limiting constraints of Burkert's reading. Parker proposes the *charis* ideal: "The exchange of gifts and favors as the ideal relationship between man and god" (Parker 2011, x). In the *Iliad,* Achilles is carefully described as preparing what Parker notes to be of "utmost solemnity" in the name of Patroclus to succeed in battle and return in complete safety.

> But Achilles went into his hut,
> and opened the lid of a large chest, fair and richly-dight . . .
> Therein had he a fair-fashioned cup,
> wherefrom neither was any other man
> wont to drink the flaming wine,
> Nor was he wont to pour drink offerings

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[78] "This procedure consists in establishing a means of communication between the sacred and profane worlds through the mediation of a victim, that is, of a thing that in the course of the ceremony is destroyed" (Hubert and Mauss 1964, 97).

[79] Cf. Burkert (1985, 5–20).

as a libation to any other of the gods save
only to father Zeus.
This cup he then took from the chest
and cleansed it first with sulphur,
and thereafter washed it in fair streams of water;
and himself he washed his hands,
and drew flaming wine. (Hom. *Il.* 16.220-32)[80]

This is no mere cup but a goblet or bowl of the highest value. Not even he, who celebrated many renowned victories, had ever sipped from it. No one was ever allowed to use it, not one among the men (οὔτ' ἀνδρῶν). This is a relinquished bowl, and he dared not use such a relic to make libations to any other god (οὔτέ τεῳ σπένδεσκε θεῶν). No mere trinket would be held with such care, nor would it be brought to this critical expedition in a large chest (χηλοῦ). "The care with which he purifies the libation bowl," notes Parker,

> a bowl that he reserves for offerings to Zeus, is elaborately described. He does all this because he is about to seek a favour from the god, and the honorific libation is a gift; in an emergency when he lacked time to bring an offering, he could have reminded Zeus of offerings brought in the past, or promised such in the future (Parker 2011, x).

Indeed, the epic poem describes this right after he prepared such solemnity.

Then he made prayer, standing in the midst of the court,
and poured forth the wine, looking up to heaven;
And not unmarked was he of Zeus,
that hurleth the thunderbolt . . .
'Aforetime verily thou didst hear my word,'
'When I prayed: me thou didst honour,' . . .

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[80] αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς/βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐς κλισίην, χηλοῦ δ' ἀπὸ πῶμ' ἀνέῳγε/καλῆς δαιδαλέης . . . ἔνθα δέ οἱ δέπας ἔσκε τετυγμένον, οὐδέ τις ἄλλος/οὔτ' ἀνδρῶν πίνεσκεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ αἴθοπα οἶνον,/οὔτέ τεῳ σπένδεσκε θεῶν, ὅτε μὴ Διὶ πατρί./τό ῥα τότ' ἐκ χηλοῖο λαβὼν ἐκάθηρε θεείῳ/πρῶτον, ἔπειτα δ' ἔνιψ' ὕδατος καλῇσι ῥοῇσι,/νίψατο δ' αὐτὸς χεῖρας, ἀφύσσατο δ' αἴθοπα οἶνον./εὔχετ' ἔπειτα στὰς μέσῳ ἕρκεϊ, λεῖβε δὲ οἶνον/οὐρανὸν εἰσανιδών· (Hom. *Il.* 16.220-32). Murray's (1925) translation, Allen's (1963a) Greek text.

'Even so now also fulfil thou for me this my desire' (Hom. *Il.* 16.231-38).[81]

Zeus was present to receive this sacrifice. In line with our current discussion, this sacrifice can be better understood as a set of ritual acts: polishing the cup, cleansing the hands, and selecting a worthy relic, all of which are carefully performed, resembling a purification. Finally, the central ritual act is the libation to the god surrounded by prayer: the act of presenting a gift, in which the giver directly and carefully participates in a set of ritual acts from start to finish. This is what Burkert himself considered a symbolic exchange, as noted by Kindt (2012, 66), at the very core of the dedication of items at sanctuaries (Burkert 1987b, 43–44).[82] The limits of juxtaposing ritual acts, namely, when one begins and the other starts, are better left blurred amid the symbols they evoke and present. In a libation, the moment of pouring forth the liquid is clearly the central ritual act; we could say, 'That is the ritual.' However, the tricky point lies in firmly establishing the surrounding acts: What about every ritual act that precedes it? What about the moment the bowl was first selected? What about the choice of place? The participants who witnessed, and maybe even contributed with prayers? What about the aftermath of the liquid's offering? Are they to be excluded from the ritual?

Even upon making himself present, the god that Acchiles favoured above all other gods granted only a portion of the mighty hero's requests: Patroclus

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[81] εὔχετ᾽ ἔπειτα στὰς μέσῳ ἕρκεϊ,/λεῖβε δὲ οἶνον οὐρανὸν εἰσανιδών·/Δία δ᾽ οὐ λάθε τερπικέραυνον·/Ζεῦ ἄνα Δωδωναῖε Πελασγικὲ τηλόθι ναίων/ . . . ἠμὲν δή ποτ᾽ ἐμὸν ἔπος ἔκλυες εὐξαμένοιο,/τίμησας μὲν ἐμέ . . . ἠδ᾽ ἔτι καὶ νῦν μοι τόδ᾽ ἐπικρήηνον ἐέλδωρ (Hom. *Il.* 16.231-38). Murray's (1925) translation, modified. Allen's (1963a) Greek text.

[82] This is what Pierre Bourdieu would call 'symbolic capital,' as in what mortals invested in the expectation of something in return to reciprocate the value of the sacrifice (Bourdieu 1977, 171–83).

succeeded but did not return alive. "What is at issue is not therefore a simple '*do ut des*,' whereby one gift buys one benefit, but a continuing relationship (what anthropologists call "generalized reciprocity"). Because of the *charis* ideal, the study of Greek religion is inevitably a study among other things of the cult practices that constitute the gifts made by mortals" (Parker 2011, x).[83]

Parker's analysis of Achilles' ritual sacrifice and the nourishment and reinforcement of his relationship with Zeus through the ritual act of libation provides both a broader view of sacrifice and clarifies to us that 'ritual' in ancient Greek religion could be better understood if considered as a set of gradual and continuous, symbolic, juxtaposing activity in the interaction with gods that includes the long and gradual preparation for some central act and its outcomes in this continuous relationship with the gods. Although we use a single term, namely 'ritual,' the Greek counterpart θύειν points to a set of ritual acts that are often juxtaposed and overlap, and must be considered in a broader and fluid context through family resemblance.[84] In this sense, sacrifice or θύειν is not exclusively killing to offer animal meat to the gods, either burnt or raw. "In some contexts," adds Parker, even "vegetarian offerings replaced blood sacrifice; and the verb used for bringing them was that used also for animal sacrifice, θύειν" (Parker 2011, 135). Moreover, Parker reminds us that "incense too is 'sacrifice' (the original application, as it seems, of the verb θύειν, and one it never loses): the sweet smoke goes up, like the savor of sacrifices, to please the nostrils of the gods. θύειν, we

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[83] Not to be confused with modern sacrifice, oftentimes "pointless and self-punishing renunciation." Instead, Greek sacrifice could be better understood as "the renunciation for another's benefit known as a gift" (Parker 2010, 138).

[84] Namely, a loose definition of sacrifice as "the renunciation for another's benefit known as a gift" (Parker 2010, 138) by bringing together a collection of practices whose resemblance is close enough to be included, despite their differences concerning context, locales, or even communities.

note, relates to what is burned for the gods (whether incense, cake, or bones)" (2011, 136). Most importantly, what cannot be overlooked by any means whatsoever is that the set of overlaps "is not one of language but of practice" (Parker 2011, 155).[85]

Bremmer turned to the dichotomy of 'sacred' vs 'profane': "Is it a valid one?" (1998b, 24). He is not convinced that it applies to ancient Greek culture. The words we translate to 'holy' and 'sacred' are ἁγνός and ἱερός, argues Bremmer (1998b, 28). The former would be "an adjective used to indicate the reverence due to divinities, the inviolable sanctity of places, such as sanctuaries, and activities, such as a dance in divine service. At the same time, it also indicates the purity of the worshipper who thus expresses his reverence for the gods or their domain". The latter "was the word used for everything to do with gods and sanctuaries" (1998b, 29). Burkert offers a beautiful rendering of the broader sense of ἱερός: As if it were the shadow cast by the divine (Burkert 1977, 17).

The issue is not in defining ἱερός as 'sacred' or 'holy,' but in assuming that the opposite of ἱερός would be 'profane.' Wagenvoort's (1949, 319) suggestion of *pro fano* as "that which is away from the holy place" is not convincing enough, if we consider, as Bremmer, that 'holy' and 'sacred' were split "into a number of words," albeit there was no single term for the sense of profane whatsoever:

> ἀνιερός, like its modern equivalents *'onheilig,' 'unheilig'* and *'unholy,'* does not mean 'secular' but rather 'evil,' whereas ὅσιος, the normal opposite of ἱερός, does not mean 'profane' or 'taken out of the religious

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[85] Following the killing, the feast itself propagates the nourishment and augmenting of a good relationship with the gods (Parker 2011, 139). Even iconography depicts gods present in their feasts, as Burkert also noted (1972, 9). This suggests a much broader sense for ritual acts called sacrifice (preparation, killing, feasting, and the three could further be broken down in more acts).

domain' but 'non-holy behaviour,' which nevertheless remains *sanctioned* by the gods (Bremmer 1998b, 30).

To conclude this section on approaching the Mysteries from ritual, the element i) in Burkert's definition can be fruitfully considered more nuancedly according to the terms analysed in the previous section. In other words, 'rituals' like those proposed by Parker and Bremmer seem a better analytical tool to approach 'ritual acts' at the time, namely a long and gradual set of symbolic activities that overlap with one another, scholarly determined by the linkage in their resemblance.

Burkert view of sacrifice is strongly tied to his theory: ii) 'experience of the sacred' is by him proposed as a social ritual in the Mysteries, that is, the killing act that discharges a male's individual aggressiveness in an animal to connect one with the sacred through a direct encounter with death, fostering and strengthening social bonds in the community of individuals whose lives would be spared of male aggressiveness because of guilt. This moment, *die Opfertötung*, would mark the accomplishment of the initiation ritual and, thus, would define the 'experience of the sacred', according to Burkert.

> The great fire at a festival for the gods does not burn for its own sake but for its purificatory and its destructive powers. Offerings for the gods, sacrificial remains, corpses are purified and dispensed with by fire. Thus, the fire in the Eleusinian Telesterion must likewise have formed the center of a sacrificial ritual. And if our sources do not mention it, this must be because it was an ἄρρητος θυσία (Burkert 1983, 277).

Burkert's clever argument is based on the necessity of no written evidence of what is ἄρρητος. Considering our approaches to the Mysteries, Burkert's sounds like a possible reading. As such, could killing-sacrifice be the central part of the Mysteries concerning ἐπόπτεια? Are killing sacrifices what possibly define the undertaking of the Mysteries and ἐπόπτεια, as Burkert suggested? Could the

encounter with death in killing possibly be ἐπόπτεια and foster the relationship between gods and mortals during the highest point of the Mysteries?

We do not have the elements to respond to these questions at this moment. Even with our discussion on ritual and possible ways to approach ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, we must continue our investigation to assess them by considering the myths and their respective gods, which have been lacking in the present analysis. Now, we must turn our eyes to the gods surrounding Eleusis and, above all, consider the possible cultural framework that sustained how the Greeks could have interacted with their gods in the Mysteries to better frame ἐπόπτεια.

After all, one can only maintain a positive, continuous relationship with a god if one *knows* what is loved by the god. Many possibilities will emerge from discussing the gods, as well as what could have been considered the best outcome from interacting with them. And, most importantly, how they interacted in light of ἐπόπτεια to reinforce their relationships in the Mysteries.

4. Seeing the Gods: The Eleusinian Mysteries from Mythology

Rituals were at the core of our discussion in the previous section. They were proposed as a symbolic activity within the environment of the Mysteries (Asad 1993, 55; Sewell 1997, 39; Geertz 1973, 94–95). As such, ritual is used as an analytical tool to describe what could have been undertaken in the Mysteries.[86] Although this is a significant tool, particularly in light of the linguistic subtleties discussed in the absence of direct historical data from the Mysteries, it does not suffice alone. Both terminology and rituals are devoid of cultural significance if left unrelated to possible beliefs and discourses that influenced how Greeks interacted with the divine in the Mysteries.[87] The gods must be made present.

Fortunately, previously relegated myths are now relevant in scholarship: "Mythology is fully integrated into Greek religion" (Bremmer 1998b, 14). Most importantly, mythology as *living* language (Johnston 2003, 271), conveying a profound communal potential to connect Greeks with one another and with their gods. At the time, there was no such thing as an opposition between, on the one hand, logical discourse as in reasoning, and, on the other hand, myths as a religious discourse. The two were not exclusive but integrative. Mythology, then,

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[86] «*Il n'y a de définition qu'opératoire de ces manifestations symboliques que sont devenus à nos yeux mythes et rites*» (Calame 1991, 204). In this way, it does not mean that the meaning for the symbolic behaviour upon which we predicate the term 'ritual' should be derived from the term, but it is the other way round: our focus is in the meaning from the behaviour to approach religious acts and access ἐπόπτεια, whereas the terms used are used insofar as tools and means for academic communication.

[87] «*Il s'agit en effet de traduire en un langage propre, dépendant d'un découpage culturel singulier, un ensemble de concepts dont articulation et désignation sont différentes*» (Calame 1991, 179). That is to say, the problem is not one of translation regarding words but one regarding culture, particularly phenomena which are for long lost.

is an integral dimension of Greek culture and life, as if it were one central thread fastening the rope we weave to grasp meaning from everything we comprehend from ancient Greece.

The discussion on sacrifice as a series of juxtaposed ritual acts grounded on the *charis* ideal clarifies that rituals are better understood as undertaken by mortals *with* their gods, "shown on votive reliefs standing behind altars to which worshippers are leading a victim" (Parker 2011, 141). The gods were present: "At the ideal level, gods attend their sacrifices" (Parker 2011, 141).

Even so, Henrichs noted scholarship "[has] paid infinitely more attention to cult and rituals than to the gods" (Henrichs 2010, 24). To pay adequate attention to the gods, this section proposes discussing three general divine properties within the context of the Mysteries, particularly centred on the visual interaction between mortals and immortals. Fundamentally, we will tentatively debate how these three properties are articulated in the mythology surrounding ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, sustained in tension with broader systems of meaning that gave body to the cultures in ancient Greece.

Bremmer argues that "from the very beginning of Greek religion,"[88] there would have been "divine invisibility" along with i) power, ii) anthropomorphism, and iii) immortality (Bremmer 2010, 2).[89] These divine properties are intertwined with vision and the lack of vision in the *Hymn*. Immediately upon the first encounter between gods and mortals in Eleusis, the three daughters of Keleos

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[88] 'The very beginning' dates to nearly a thousand years before Plato.

[89] We owe this triad of general properties to Henrichs (1993, 18–21; 2010, 29–39). Rámon (2005, 85–86) has discussed invisibility based on Mycenaean theophoric names "*a-wi-to-do-to/Awisto-dotos*". 'Invisible' is attested in epithets to gods as a compound in Mycenaean Greek with the same root from Indo-European **weyd-*, which is shared with Homeric Greek's **ιδ-*.

"did not recognise" (οὐδ' ἔγνων, 111) the disguised Demeter they had seen sitting by the Kallikoron's well. The same verse concluded with a fateful statement.

The gods are difficult (χαλεποὶ) for mortals to see (ὁρᾶσθαι).[90]

This characteristic undeniably augments the sense of distance between mortals and gods. However, in the cultures of ancient Greece, from the beginning, they consistently found ways to connect with their gods. And, in many ways, they had to make their gods known and recognisable to legitimate their own worship. Secrecy is a powerful social mechanism for establishing and justifying interaction with gods, who, by their nature, are invisible to mortal eyes and remain so by their own will. "The special secrecy attaching to mysteries [*mysteria*]," argues Parker, "required associated myths (or some of the associated myths, for not all were secret) to be sucked in and incorporated in the ceremony itself" (Parker 2011, 22). This affects considerably "the participant's experience of the ritual," for it "must have been so shaped by the knowledge of the myth that the myth was close to constituting the plot of the ritual" (Parker 2011, 28). We sustain this to be the case for the Mysteries: their ritual acts would be entrenched in "archmyths" (Clay 1989, 13).

Accordingly, the *Hymn* could be considered a set of aetiological myths, as it presents the arrival of gods at their principal cult site, which is centred on the institution of the Mysteries. At the time in Eleusis, perhaps, the *Hymn* was "an act of dedication, establishing and perpetuating a relationship of mutual gratitude between the god and his mortal devotees" (Platt 2011, 31). Even so, the

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[90] χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ θνητοῖσιν ὁρᾶσθαι (*Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 111). Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

relationship between myths, gods, and the religiosity of the people, who differ from place to place, sometimes even within the same city, is not that simple.

> It is not that myths explain rituals in detail but that, without myths, the gods and heroes lose shape and attributes and differentiation. They cease to be the gods known to us, or to the Greeks. Not all myths, to repeat a point, reveal the gods in this way. Why should they? Real progress has been made in the last two decades or so in appreciating how myths gave a sense of identity to human groups, rooted them in a landscape, placed them in history, mapped out their interrelationships with other such groups (Parker 2011, 25).

When we return to the passage from the *Hymn,* the difficulty for Keleos' daughters to recognise Demeter is not an isolated case, nor is it an extraordinary event. Even though "seeing the gods is one of the most ubiquitously attested forms of divine-human interaction in antiquity" (Henrichs 2010, 19), one cannot rule out the "deep-seated Greek belief in a special sort of visual ability that can only be provided by the divine" (Petridou 2013, 311). Again, the visual ability to see in the *Hymn* depends on the will of a goddess. At Keleos' house, Demeter's divine presence is gradually presented

> from certain signs, σημεῖα, which commonly accompany it, such as physical beauty, extraordinary stature, radiance, fragrance, exceptionally bright light, and above all, the power to perform and achieve beyond human measure (Petridou 2015, 23).

If there are signs and, thus, a way for them to be seen and recognised, to what extent, then, were the gods invisible? "If we asked another, more cautious, Greek," proposes Henrichs, "he might play it safe and say with Homer: 'Gods are dangerous (χαλεποί) when they manifest themselves clearly'" (2010, 19).[91] "Or does the verse suggest that gods are 'difficult' to recognize when they appear to

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[91] χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ φαίνεσθαι ἐναργεῖς (Hom. *Od.* 20.131). Henrich's (2010) translation, Allen's (1963c) Greek text.

mortals?” (Henrichs 2010, 19 no. 2). The ambiguity in translating χαλεπός may reinforce the context in which “gods rarely appear to men in their own form” (Richardson 1974, 185), perhaps only “to a very limited number of individuals” (Petridou 2015, 26).

They are difficult for living to recognise (Hom. *Od.* 11.156).[92]

Could the ambiguity between ‘difficulty’ and ‘danger’ in seeing the gods be connected to the quality of the relationship between gods and mortals? If so, then Metaneira’s sneak peeking of the goddess’s rituals in the *Hymn* turns out to be useful for our analysis. Immediately, Demeter manifested her divine self and “gave light to the splendour of her immortal skin” *in anger* (τῇ δὲ χολωσαμένη, 251),[93] declaring not-so-gentle words in a powerful, divine appearance.

Mortals are ignorant and foolish, unable to make sense (προγνώμεναι)
If what they are to receive (αἶσαν ἐπερχομένου) is good or bad.[94]

Mortals could struggle to sustain what Parker conceptualised as “reciprocity” through sacrifice, namely “the renunciation for another’s benefit known as a gift” (Parker 2011, 138) because “the gods were invisible . . . this posed a considerable problem in maintaining good relations with them” (Bowden 2010, 12). Fox further connects the quality of the relationship as a marker for the outcome of an appearance:

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[92] χαλεπὸν δὲ τάδε ζωοῖσιν ὁρᾶσθαι (Hom. *Od.* 11.156). The translation is our own, Allen’s (1963b) Greek text.

[93] φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο λάμπε θεᾶς (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 278-9). Foley’s (1993) translation, modified, Richardson’s (1974) Greek text.

[94] τῇ δὲ χολωσαμένη καλλιστέφανος Δημήτηρ . . . Νήϊδες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀφράδμονες οὔτ’ ἀγαθοῖο αἶσαν ἐπερχομένου προγνώμεναι οὔτε κακοῖο (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 251; 255-56). Foley’s (1993) translation, modified, Richardson’s (1974) Greek text.

> The gods were best seen by the pious or their special *protégés*, a limit which put their presence beyond refutation; those who failed to see them had only themselves to blame (Fox 1988, 106).

Dodds analyses Greek dreams, "[of] little resemblance to our own dream-experience, and scholars have been inclined to dismiss it" (1951, 104). Moreover, "the Greeks never spoke as we do of having a dream, but always of seeing a dream—ὄναρ ἰδεῖν, ἐνύπνιον ἰδεῖν" (Dodds 1951, 104). These visual interactions prescribe "a dedication or other religious act; and this has left concrete evidence of its actual occurrence in the form of numerous inscriptions stating that their author makes a dedication 'in accordance with a dream' or 'having seen a dream'" (Dodds 1951, 108). This means that although neither do we have records from the dream experience nor from the viewing of gods in dreams in ancient Greece, the historiographic records derived from them, as Dodds catalogued, are numerous: dedications, buildings, temples, or even political decisions across the centuries, as he has argued, are documented with words related to a visual vocabulary: ὄναρ ἰδεῖν, ἐνύπνιον ἰδεῖν.

Fox also suggested that there would be a significant difference between seeing the gods at the time and "modern accounts of a presence or encounter in Western culture" (Fox 1988, 112), namely, hallmarked by "emotional warmth, reassurance and a sense of unity" (1988, 113). Quite unlike it, Metaneira's encounter with Demeter is all but a warm reconnection with the divine.

> As a direct, unmediated manifestation of divine presence, epiphany might be understood as the purest form of contact between mortals and immortals, whereby the gods reveal themselves 'face to face' rather than communicating through oracles or divinatory signs that must be decoded by religious personnel. Yet epiphanies are inevitably *culturally mediated*. Despite the influence of Greek epiphany on Christian modes of revelation (Mitchell 2004), we must be wary of applying Christian language, such as Paul's notion of a 'face-to-face' encounter with God at

1 *Corinthians* 13.12, to a phenomenon that is grounded in very different concepts of deity and forms of religious practice. (Platt 2015, 493)

The cultural mediation of vision, as mentioned by Verity Platt, is what we propose as the concept of visuality.

> When I look, what I see is not simply light but intelligible form: the *rays* of light are caught in a *rets*, a network of meanings, in the same way that flotsam is caught in the net of the fishermen. For human beings collectively to orchestrate their visual experience together it is required that each submit his or her retinal experience to the socially agreed description(s) of an intelligible world (Brysson 1988, 90–91).

The multiple discourses on vision integrated within a culture would mediate vision down to the most basic level, as we all submit our retinal experience to accord with the socially agreed description of an intelligible world of meaning, where competing "scopic regimes" (Metz 1982, 61), are positioned between what is seen and the eye of the beholder. This myriad of perspectives, which are, again, the result of a collective phenomenon, therefore varying from community to community, certainly influences *how* one views the gods. Greek epiphany emerges from the intricacies of multiple 'sopic regimes' in Greek polytheism, responding to the expectations of a people who acknowledged the power of gods, their anthropomorphism, and, above all, their immortality. Furthermore, this specific kind of epiphany also occurs in a moment when the ability to visualise, identify, and represent divine forms was fundamental to the detailed taxonomies found in ancient records (Versnel 2011, 23–149). Perhaps the 'Greek scopic regimes' could be better understood as suggested by Jay,

> a contested terrain, rather than a harmoniously integrated complex of visual theories and practices. It may, in fact, be characterized by a differentiation of visual 'subcultures', whose separation has allowed us to understand the multiple implications of sight in ways that now only beginning to be appreciated (Jay 1988, 4).

Demeter only assumed an anthropomorphic form because her daughter was raped at the Nysian plain, a location that "has associations with the wine god Dionysos, who later played a role in the Mysteries, probably under the name Iakchos" (Foley 1993, 36).[95] Dionysus may well be "the most complex and multifaceted of all the Greek gods" (Faraone 1993, 1), in a paradoxical way as "the most visible as well as the most elusive" (Henrichs 1993, 13). In Euripides' *Bacchae,* Dionysus makes "the city of Thebes 'see' his divinity" (Foley 1980, 119).[96] This is no mere coincidence in vocabulary: "In 1047 the messenger says of Dionysus: ξένος θ' ὃς ἡμῖν πομπὸς ἦν θεωρίας ("and the stranger who was escort in our mission"). Pentheus is being led by the god to a *theôria,*[97] a word which can mean embassy, the experience of being a spectator, or spectacle, such as those presented at the theater or the games" (Foley 1980, 116).

> Pentheus repeatedly seems unable to see . . . he unconsciously responds
> to the god's message as he is finally lured to the mountain by a desire to

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[95] Burkert (1983, 279) comments that "in classical times Iakchos was considered a divine or demonic personage, frequently identified with Dionysus" (Soph. *Ant.* 1119, 1151; fr 959 Pearson; Eur. *Ion* 1075-86; Eur. *Bacch.* 725; Phld. 27-36. *IG* II/III² 1672.67; 4604), cf. Mylonas (1961, 68–118); Marcovich (1986, 297–98); *Contra* Clinton (2012, 720).

[96] Interestingly, the Dionysus wants to be seen by Thebes, not by Athens: "That play [*Bacchae*] can now be seen not as an isolated exploration of ecstatic cult in a society innocent of such goings on, but as an exploration of what it is like to be an outside observer of phenomena with which Athenian society had long been familiar" (Osborne 1997, 211). In other words, ecstatic inspired women capable of viewing and invoking a deity to be among them during ritual acts are not the expection or a rare phenomenon to Athenians, but, if we are to follow Osborne clinical reading of Euripides, then we see how the poet uses both actors and spectators, presenting something familiar to them and, conversely, incomprehensible to the eyes of Thebans, whose scopic regimes may have been filtered by different interaction with the divine.

[97] *Theoria* is "the practice of 'going to see' a god—and prepared visitors for their own encounters with deity by drawing upon the visual authority of the cult image that served as the divinity's ultimate embodiment" (Platt 2011, 73), cf. Rutherford (2000, 133–35; 2013, 217–21). We will return to this further below.

see or spy upon the god's forbidden rites (811-15, 829, 838, 912, 916, 952, 1060-62); in fact he is never allowed, despite his wishes, to see the sacred activities of the maenads on the mountain (1060, 1075) until the moment of his death. (Foley 1980, 123)

During the enactment of Euripides' play, tension is made fully manifest through the gods' epiphany. Unlike Demeter's appearance to Metaneira, Pentheus, like many depicted in Greek literature, did not have a second chance in his ἀναγνώρισις of the god's epiphany.

> The sun that Pentheus sees is not the dawn that warms a mountain landscape, with its bright patches of snow (661-62, 677-80), nor even the level glare of the arid Persian plateau (14) . . . Instead of the heightened perception and power of the worshiper, he is helpless before the hallucinogenic god who makes him 'see what he should see' (924; cf. 918) . . . For Pentheus, as for Semele, the brilliance that attends the complete epiphany of a god means destruction for the mortal onlooker (Segal 1982, 231).

Euripides implies throughout the play a claim for controlled divine vision (Foley 1980, 132),[98] a strong claim about his discourse's capacity to depict a divine reality beyond the grasp of human viewers. Most importantly, Euripides' discourse notes the 'danger' and 'difficulty' of not seeing with recognition,[99] namely, seeking to see the divine based on mortal imposition without the irrevocable nourishment of the relationship with them. "Both Pentheus and the

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[98] Alternatively, this could depict the tension and conflict of beliefs that stirred at the moment: "What Euripides should be seen as doing in the *Bacchae* is not helping Athenians to come to terms with the alien but helping them to see just how shocking were the rituals to which they were so accustomed" (Osborne 1997, 211). It is the Thebans whose worship the god desired and wanted, perhaps, to norture a true reciprocity directly with their leader, yet constantly rejected by Pentheus impositions to see without understanding, namely, without observing the ritual acts accordingly.

[99] "In this sense the complexities of the Greek anthropomorphic system mean that *no encounter* with divinity can transcend the need for interpretation entirely" (Platt 2011, 57).

Chorus of Dionysus's devotees are looking at the same things, but end up seeing completely different things. The vision of the unbeliever is contrasted with the vision of the believer" (Petridou 2013, 315). Here, visuality makes all the difference in approaching the poem: a contrast in ways of viewing, whose scopic regimes that inform viewing are not shared by both communities. There is pride, arrogance, and many other traits in Pentheus, undeniably. However, the complexity of the *Bacchae* can be savoured by alternative renderings, should we also consider what lies between the eyes of the beholder and the things seen, which is what lies behind visuality. Nonetheless, "Dionysus will punish Pentheus only if he insists on resisting the god (50 ff.) . . . the similarities in the language of the early choral odes of the *Bacchae* and the comic chorus of Eleusinian initiates in the *Frogs* are for this reason not surprising" (Foley 1980, 120).[100]

There are striking occurrences of being able to see or recognise in the *Hymn,* reinforcing the centrality of seeing and recognising appropriately in the Mysteries. There are ἰδέσθαι 10, λεῦσσε 34, ἴδον 57, σκοπὸν 62, ἴδον 68, καταδέρκεαι 70, ὄπωπας 71, εἰδήσεις 76, εἶδος 94, εἰσορόων 95, ἴδον 105, ὁρᾶσθαι 111, εἶδος 146, εἶδος 157, ἰδοῦσα 167, εἶδόν 172, εἰδυῖα 195, εἰδυῖα 203, ἰδοῦσα 222, ἐπιτηρήσασα 244, σκέψατο 245, θεῶν 259, εἶδος 275, εἰδὼς 321, ἴδοι ὀφθαλμοῖσιν 333, ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 339, ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 350, ἰδοῦσα 385, ἴδεν ὄμματα 387, ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 409, ἰδέσθαι 427, ἴδον 458, ὄπωπεν 480.[101] It is difficult to argue away that "the *Hymn* privileges seeing, and especially seeing with understanding and pleasure, over

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[100] Cf. Ar. *Ran*. 326-29 and Eur. *Bacch*. 80 and 106-07; *Ran*. 345-47 and the Cadmus/Tiresias scene; *Ran*. 333-34, 376, 394, and 410 and *Bacc*. 160-61; *Ran*. 346 and *Bacc*. 380-81.

[101] It should be noted these are only words directly and explicitly related to seeing and recognising. The list could be multiplied if we add the numerous ambiguous words and absences that suggest seeing and recognising.

hearing" and that "the motifs of hearing and seeing are important in the rites of the Mysteries as well" (Foley 1993, 33; 39).[102] Most importantly, "one must not forget that the connection between the realms of knowledge and viewing is built into the Greek language and culture (cf. ἰδεῖν εἰδέναι and εἶδον οἶδα) . . . it was a commonplace that visual data were, generally speaking, more trustworthy than auditory data" (Petridou 2013, 313).

This plethora of occurrences contributes to our discussion when we relate them to the aetiological relation between this poem and the Mysteries. It is striking to notice that the series of difficulties in seeing, both among gods and mortals, led to the establishment of the Mysteries. What kept Kore's hope alive in the underworld was her desire "to see (ὄψεσθαι) her dear mother and the race of immortal gods again." [103] "For so long, hope charmed her strong mind despite her distress." [104] Demeter repeatedly refused to yield until she could fulfil her desire to "see her daughter with her own eyes" (ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 333, 339, 350, 387, 409). None of these makes sense unless we further ask how this contributes to the final outcome that matters, namely, the institution of the Mysteries.

Zeus' betrayal of her daughter is indeed puzzling. Let's consider that in the poem, Zeus is called "Father Zeus of infallible vision" (ἄφθιτα εἰδὼς),[105] and further look at the outcomes of his particular actions in relation to the whole

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[102] For hearing: ἤκουσεν 23, ἤχησαν 38, ἤκουσ' 57, ἄκουσα 67, ἄφθογγος 198, ἄϊε 250, ἄφθογγος 282, ἐσάκουσαν 284, cf. note directly above.

[103] ἔτι δ' ἔλπετο μητέρα κεδνὴν ὄψεσθαι καὶ φῦλα θεῶν αἰειγενετάων (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 35-36). Foley's (1993) translation, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[104] τόφρα οἱ ἐλπὶς ἔθελγε μέγαν νόον ἀχνυμένης περ' (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 37). Foley's (1993) translation, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[105] Δήμητερ καλέει σε πατὴρ Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα εἰδὼς, "Demeter, Zeus, the father, with his unfailing vision is calling you" (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 221). Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

poem. We sustain that this 'betrayal' was a renunciation of his own daughter as a gift to the god of the underworld, as a gesture of a good relationship to be reenacted by initiates and allow for reciprocity between mortals and gods to take place in the Mysteries. Again, reciprocity through sacrifice, or θυεῖν, as "a renunciation for another's benefit known as a gift" (Parker 2010, 138). What if we consider Zeus' observance of a good relationship with Aidoneus as what set in motion the establishment of the Mysteries that enable continuous and ongoing nourishment of the good relationship between the realms of gods and mortals, both in life and the afterlife? Parker's route is aligned with our reading:

> The Mysteries commemorated Kore's return after the rape, from which derived her unique status as a commuter between the two worlds. Such a movement between the two worlds was not what the *mystes* aspired to, but it was (we assume) as a commuter that the goddess was also a mediator, both Kore, the inoffensive maiden who could be imagined seated on her mother's lap, and Persephone, who slept in the arms of the king of the dead. The return of Kore betokened the opening of communication between the two worlds and the possibility for mortals of winning the favour of the queen of the underworld (Parker 2005, 360).

This is what Parker calls reading it less in its motives and more in its results: "Demeter naturally turns her steps to Eleusis, because there she is worshipped; it is comprehensible that she seeks to make Demophon immortal, and fails, because that failure leads to the establishment of her Mysteries" (Parker 1991, 11). In this sense, maybe we could consider the *Hymn* also "as a representation of the act of offering, it is also an offering in itself," providing a model of ritual behaviour and "functioning as a 'mediating mechanism'" (Platt 2011, 31). According to her, the

> Hymns introduce the epiphanic narratives . . . they accompany the worship of deities at festivals, where they have an invocatory function, charming their divine addressee into witnessing rhapsodic or choral displays, acknowledging receipt of sacrifices and dedications, or attending ritual processions . . . the hymn is designed to induce the god's attendance

at its own performance . . . hymnic performance functions as a spatio-temporal frame. (Platt 2011, 73)

In fact, Aristophanes indicates that a god leads the initiates in the procession to the Mysteries, [106] a deity who is invoked by the initiates to participate in the sacred ritual acts of the choral dances, like in the Hymns' performance, it sets through the reenactment of the poem at the theatre stage a spatio-temporal frame for ritual-viewing, one in which the 'insiders' at the stage undertake an epiphany based on ways of viewing which may be shared with the spectators during the theatrical play.

> Iacchus (Ἴακχ᾽, ὦ), here dwelling in the sanctuaries most honoured,
> Iacchus, Oh Iacchus (Ἴακχ᾽, ὦ),
> Come to dance (χορεύσων) in this meadow;
> To your hallowed (ὁσίους) followers (θιασώτας)
> Come to shake the leafy crown
> Around your head, brimming
> Surrounded in myrtle (στέφανον μύρτων), boldly stomp your feet
> Among the undisciplined
> In the wild, fun-loving worship,
> Having a full share of the favours (χαρίτων), the divine dance (χορείαν), sacred (ἱερὰν)
> Among your hallowed initiates (ὁσίοις μύσταις). (Ar. *Ran.* 324-336) [107]

Aristophanes describes the god as having a full share of the *charis* (χαρίτων πλεῖστον ἔχουσαν μέρος), who is invoked to participate in his own choral rituals

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[106] «*È la processione del 19 Boedromione da Atene a Eleusi*» (Tonelli 2015, E42.155).

[107] Ἴακχ᾽, ὦ πολυτίμητ᾽ ἐν ἕδραις ἐνθάδε ναίων,/Ἴακχ᾽, ὦ Ἴακχε,/ἐλθὲ τόνδ᾽ ἀνὰ λειμῶνα χορεύσων/ὁσίους εἰς θιασώτας,/πολύκαρπον μὲν τινάσσων/περὶ κρατὶ σῷ βρύοντα/στέφανον μύρτων, θρασεῖ δ᾽ ἐγκατακρούων/ποδὶ τὰν ἀκόλαστον/φιλοπαίγμονα τιμάν,/χαρίτων πλεῖστον ἔχουσαν μέρος, ἁγνήν, ἱερὰν/ὁσίοις μύσταις χορείαν (Ar. *Ran.* 324-36). Dillon's (1938) translation, modified, Coulon's (1928) Greek text.

alongside mortals.[108] The ritual acts he mentions were performed during the procession to Eleusis, specifically an overlap between the procession, choral dances, and night-long ecstatic rituals, all of which were surrounded by the presence of the divine.

> Iakchos, greatly honoured,
> Thou who founded the sweetest song of the festival,[109]
> Join in our midst here (δεῦρο συνακολούθει),
> With the Goddess (πρὸς τὴν θεὸν),
> And show how effortlessly you travel a long way.
> Iakchos, who loves the choral dances (φιλοχορευτά),
> Commune with me in this procession. (συμπρόπεμπέ) (Ar. *Ran.* 397-403)[110]

Iacchus is directly connected to the goddess (πρὸς τὴν θεὸν), as the μύσται are led to Eleusis carrying the sacred objects: "The procession took an entire day, and it was guided by Iacchus, 'Demeter's servant'" (Graf 2004, 126). The statue is at the forefront of the initiates, in a

> presentation of divine form to its internal worshippers, while re-presenting the god and his consorts to a broader group of external viewers. The latter may only see the god in image form, yet for those who have entered the ritual system of reciprocity, such representations have effaced their status as mere objects and become the divine beings they embody (Platt 2011, 37).

This myrtle-wreathed Iacchus is one of the god's multiple anthropomorphic forms. Graf argues that "once the anthropomorphic form is

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[108] The ritual cry in uttering the god into the procession to Eleusis is presented in verse 316 by Aristophanes as ἴακχ᾽ ὦ ἴακχε (Tonelli 2015, E42.155), Coulon's (1928) Greek text.

[109] «*È il canto degli efebi che scortano gli oggetti sacri*» (Tonelli 2015, E98.279).

[110] Ἴακχε πολυτίμητε, μέλος ἑορτῆς/ἥδιστον εὑρών, δεῦρο συνακολούθει/πρὸς τὴν θεὸν/καὶ δεῖξον ὡς ἄνευ πόνου/πολλὴν ὁδὸν περαίνεις./Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτά, συμπρόπεμπέ με (Ar. *Ran.* 397-403). Dillon's (1938) translation, modified, Coulon's (1928) Greek text.

seen not as the real physical image of a divinity, but as just another form to make the divine essence accessible to human perception, the distance between god and image can become even smaller" (Graf 2004, 125). This distance between the statue leading the procession is further narrowed because of the power inherent to the anthropomorphic nature of gods. Images may "blur the distinction between statue and 'real' deity within its ritual and pictorial frame, yet it is still dependent upon the sculptural tradition that it seems to disavow. In this sense, it functions as a 'multi-stable image', allowing the viewer to shuttle between different modes of interpretation: it is both literal *and* symbolic, both god *and* image". (Platt 2011, 37) [III] The visuality of the god leading them strikes precisely at the seemingly paradoxal nature of the different modes of interpretation of the same phenomenon: to the 'insiders,' whose scopic regimes informs viewing by the very image represented, by their psychological expectations to be with the divine, by their desire to see, and so forth; to the 'outsiders,' we who are informed by our scopic regimes today, it is a symbolic act and an image made of marble.

"Greek viewer-worshippers," notes Platt, "were fully aware, for instance, of the materiality of cult statues (the use of wood, stone, ivory or precious metals was actually of paramount importance), but they were rarely impious enough to think them 'just' statues" (Platt 2011, 50).[112] The matter is not about matter, since the gods were constantly considered in their corporeality. "Divine body was different from the human body," clarifies Kindt (2012, 157). "The notion of

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[III] "The tangible physical presence implicit in the human form enabled the Greeks to 'see' and recognize their gods, thus making the concept of divine epiphany possible; by the same token, the epiphanic experience must have been instrumental in the creation of the earliest Greek cult images" (Henrichs 2010, 33).

[112] Note the dissonance in discourses and beliefs in Xenophanes B 14-16 and Heraclitus B 5 (Diels and Kranz 1992).

alterity to the body of the divine" is what complements "the idea of its identity to the human body. The resulting paradoxes pervaded every level of the divine existence as a corporeal existence" (2012, 157). Furthermore,

> the mortality of the human body was contrasted with the immortality of the divine; like the human body, the divine body contained blood but not as a vital substance and source of energy (even bleeding gods do not die); gods enjoyed meals but without satisfying a bodily need, etc. Divine ichor was like and unlike human blood; ambrosia and nectar were like and unlike human food. As Vernant succinctly put it, 'the corporeal code permits one to think of the relations between man and god under the double figures of the same and the other, or the near and the far, of contact and separation' (Kindt 2012, 157).[113]

"They constantly behaved and spoke *as if* their statues were gods; when a statue of Dionysus was brought in procession . . . this was not a 'representation of the bringing in of Dionysus' but quite simply 'the bringing in of Dionysus'; and so on in numerous other cases" (Parker 2011, xi). This is an ambivalence of 'reality' in Greek religious and cultural practices with statues (Platt 2009, 141), an ambiguity of an open, not a closed religious system (Gould 2001, 210), filled with "internal frictions, inconsistencies and tensions springing from them" (Kindt 2012, 20). We find this ambivalence already in Homer (*Il.* 6.302-311): in the temple of Athena,

> there is no distinction made between goddess and statue. The word 'statue' does not occur in the text, yet the mention of her knees clearly suggests the presence of a statue of a sitting divinity . . . Moreover, the goddess/statue gave a sign with her head (Bremmer 2013b, 8).

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[113] "One of the features of gods is that they can pass the barrier constructed by the oppositions formed/shapeless, limited/unlimited, visible/invisible, great/small. As a range of artificial objects, statues of gods permitted the Greeks to register this aspect of the 'otherness' of the gods" (Gordon 1979, 14).

Additionally, Bremmer mentions Alcaeus' (Storey 2011) fr. 298-20-27: "We are first told that Cassandra embraced the image of Athena, but subsequently that the *goddess* left her temple" (Bremmer 2013b, 9). Herodotus (8.64.2), "tells us that the Athenians had sent a ship to Aigina 'to fetch the sons of Ajax', presumably their cultic images" (Bremmer 2013b, 9). Sophocles' fr. 452 (Radt 1999) also show us gods carrying their own cultic images, or as Hölscher has it, "the image in narrative scenes" (Hölscher 2010, 113).

> It is of the essence of the representation that it denies in order to assert. It is a sort of logical puzzle. But then, so are gods. They are here *and* not here, seen *and* invisible, human *and* not human, just *and* unjust, ordered *and* disorderly, powerful *and* weak. They combine every contrary. They are impossible but actual. As representations, statues and pictures of gods indeed represent them. They are true illusions, pictures of a world we cannot know. (Gordon 1979, 25)

However, despite their potential to justify rupture and change through direct demonstrations of divine agency, "epiphanies nevertheless gain validity through their incorporation into a network of pre-existing traditions, and ratification by alternative sources of divine authority" (Platt 2015, 499). The distance may be short, but it remains a distance, nonetheless. It lies in the gods being gods, not mortals (Parker 1991, 11). Immortality "has created even more confusion among modern scholars" (Henrichs 2010, 31). Demeter failed in making Demophon immortal, a failure due to Mateneira's seeing what she could not recognise: it better suits

> the Eleusinian context, since the story of immortality (inevitably) lost seems there to prepare for a second best, the institution of Mysteries that help mortals to secure a better lot in the afterlife (Parker 1990, 197).

This is immortality in the Mysteries: not an eternal life after death, "nor of a soul and the transmigration of souls, nor yet deification" (Burkert 1983, 294). It is being blessed both in life and the afterlife as one single reward, as the divine

interaction in Eleusis can "bring to perfection what is good" (Burkert 1987a, 93) through "an immediate encounter with the divine" (Burkert 1987a, 90). Immediate, yet to some extent, as we must disagree with Burkert. It is mediated by the filters that shape viewing, standing between the retina and the light of the goddess. In this context, the σημεῖα scattered throughout the procession, which led the μύσται from image to the goddess, from statues to Demeter in her full splendour. "Epipanhy is a complex exercise in hermeneutics, concerned with the relationship between sense-perception and conceptual knowledge, with the question of *how do I know what I see?* In this sense, it sheds its own revelatory light upon the design and operation of the gods within Greek culture" (Platt 2011, 59).

Nonetheless, Burkert's insight on the encounter with death becomes interesting once we note that the gods themselves had to encounter death in the aetiological poem, entailing direct consequences to mortals. In this sense, Bernabé is clinical, as he mentions

> it is noticeable that Dionysos and Persephone, who as gods should in principle be immune to death, take part in some odd stories where they were affected by death. Dionysos is dismembered and is then reborn. Persephone is raped by the god of death and disappears from the Olympian world and from the spheres of life and sunlight. To the latter episode we must add an even stranger event, which is found in relation to the rape, both in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and in the Orphic version of the same theme preserved in the Berlin Papyrus (*OF* 396): Demeter's failed attempt to compensate for the loss of her divine child by turning a mortal child, Demophon, into a god. It is very probable that the relation of both these gods with death and with the other events of human life combines to turn them into mediators of the destiny of men in the afterlife (Bernabé 2010, 438).

Their encounter with death presented the possibility of ensuring a 'countergift' as a better life both in this world and in the afterlife. In this sense,

the very immortality of the gods allows them to be sent to face death and thereafter cast their blessed light over the entirety of mortals' lives, both in life and in the afterlife, which is a refraction of the shadow of their own divinity (Burkert 1977, 17). The divine blessing in the Mysteries is the immortality one can hope for, or a 'second best' to immortality, in an "intimate [relationship], personal and not necessarily easy to talk about" (Bowden 2010, 22). It is definitely not easy to talk about, as "their significance is not always self-evident, but requires careful decoding so that the rupturing effects of divine incursion into mortal experience can be acknowledged and responded to appropriately" (Platt 2015, 496).

In the Mysteries, the interplay between gods, their power, anthropomorphism, immortality, and their closer relationship with mortals appears to point indeed to ἐπόπτεια as a form of visual encounter with the divine, which Burkert (Burkert 1987a, 90) has suggested as a form of killing-sacrifice. Nevertheless, the encounters appear to be at a somewhat elevated and unique level of seeing with proper recognition, unlike the mortal agency attempted to be imposed upon the sacred by Pentheus. We sustain that what Pentheus sees is unlike what the worshippers could see precisely because of the filters that shaped their viewing, carefully adjusted by observing the ritual acts in a dimension of reciprocity with the divine. The filters are what stand between the eye and the divine appearance, as continuously emphasised by the *Hymn* and comprising visuality as an interpretive model proposed by Metz (1982, 61), Bryson (1988, 90–91), Jay (1988, 4), Platt (2009, 2011), and Petridou (2013). In this view, epiphany stands as a valuable key to approach ἐπόπτεια in the context of attaining the best outcome one could expect from the Mysteries: a better lot in life and the afterlife.

"For the modern scholar," however,

> epiphany can only exist at the level of discourse: the challenge is thus to identify, contextualize, and elucidate discursive trends in the cultural

treatment of epiphany without losing sight of either the phenomenon's validity for Greek worshippers or its propensity to resist straightforward categorization and interpretation (Platt 2015, 500–501).

It is toward this challenge that we approach ἐπόπτεια at the highest point of the Mysteries, keeping a clear vision of its terms, rituals, myths, and gods, to the extent of minimising, as much as feasible, losing sight of its cultural validity or its resistance to categorisation and definite interpretations.

5. Seeing the Visions: Reconstructions of the Eleusinian Mysteries

The splendour (φέγγος, 278)[114] of Demeter's divine appearance manifested no words from the host who bore the weight of the goddess's gaze. This is what happens when one meddles with the goddesses and their sacred rites while unable to recognise what is seen (οὔτ'...προγνώμεναι 256-57).[115] "At once Metaneira's knees buckled. For a long time, she remained voiceless (ἄφθογγος), forgetting to pick up her dear only son from the floor".[116]

Once again, this is not an isolated case in Greek religion. As Verity Platt, quite rightly, reminds us, "the intense immediacy of such unsought experiences serves to validate and reinforce ritually generated means of encountering the divine, and so affirms traditional religious practice and belief" (Platt 2011, 57). In this case, the episode does not follow the epiphanic pattern of divine appearance directly followed by and led to a correct interpretation of signs, which in turn leads to understanding. Instead, the abrupt, unsought experience is usually followed by confusion, blindness, voicelessness, and even death.[117] The power of

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[114] τῆλε δὲ φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο λάμπε θεᾶς, "gave light to the splendour of her immortal skin" (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 278-79). Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[115] οὔτ' ἀγαθοῖον αἶσαν ἐπερχομένου προγνώμεναι οὔτε κακοῖο, "unable to make sense if what they are to receive is good or bad" (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 257). Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[116] τῆς δ' αὐτίκα γούνατ' ἔλυντο, δηρὸν δ' ἄφθογγος γένετο χρόνον, οὐδέ τι παιδὸς μνήσατο τηλυγέτοιο ἀπὸ δαπέδου ἀνελέσθαι (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 281-83). Foley's (1993) tfranslation, not modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[117] "An unnerving revelation of divine form and disruption of intimacy is prompted by a sense of misunderstanding or difference that opens up between mortal and god–grim

gods is also manifested in their divine presence, as seen in Zeus's thunderbolt in the *Iliad,* as previously discussed. However, in that case, the god was sought through a series of ritual acts, culminating in a sacrifice, θυεῖν: the libation and the goblet, that is, the sacred pouring of liquid to a god.[118]

Perhaps, as a first guess, one could consider this as the worst outcome to befall a mortal in the Mysteries, namely, breaking into the sacred rites and meddling with the goddesses. However, the plot begs to differ. Metaneira is given a second chance to repair the damaged mortal-immortal relationship born from observing divinely sanctioned hosting customs,[119] carefully observed by the mortal even when unable to recognise the sparks of the divine traces, σημεῖα, faintly glimpsed through Demeter's anthropomorphic disguise. Moreover, the second chance is to deliver a gift suitable enough for the height of the goddess, which grounds the proper field for reciprocity. Thereafter, it becomes the environment for a privileged interaction between mortals and immortals, when Demeter brings to light (δεῖξε, 474) the Mysteries to be undertaken correctly, that is, through a sought series of willingly observed ritual acts that may lead to divine epiphanies rather than abrupt unsought sightings. The establishment of the Mysteries is possible only after Metaneira disrupts Demeter's rituals in the *Hymn*.

In this sense, as a more educated guess,

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reminders of the chasm that yawns between the human and divine . . . which is expressed through the exceptional characteristics of divine bodies and the paralysis or mutism of their mortal counterparts" (Platt 2011, 64).

[118] "Human acts of worship are balanced by a corresponding bestowal of divine presence—that within the network of reciprocity so characteristic of Greek religious practice, the divine goodwill generated by a dedication or sacrifice is rewarded with an epiphany, a 'becoming visible' of immortal form to mortal eyes" (Platt 2011, 33).

[119] δεξαμένη δ' ὁσίης ἕνεκεν πολυπότνια Δηὼ, "Almighty Deo accepted [to break fasting] for the sake of what is sanctioned by the gods" (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 281-83). Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[encounters] locate or draw their authority from external sources (the epiphanic agency of the divine), yet are actually responsible for creating the very cosmic order and presupposition of divine presence that they draw upon, helping to generate a sacred environment which, constructed and reconstructed by the actions of the social agents within it, provides an experience of the objective reality of the subjective schemes that have created it. (Bell 1992, 141)

The "objective reality of the subjective schemes that have created it," as mentioned above by Catherine Bell, is precisely what makes the Mysteries unique, secret, and sacred rites: it is the result of a tiresome, long, and, to some degree, repetitive path undertaken by μύσται. To violate the Mysteries means to obscure the objective reality of the subjective schemes within a visual mode of reciprocity, "reflected in the standard terminology of sight that can be found throughout the epiphanic record" (Henrichs 2010, 34).

"Epiphany," proposes Henrichs, "is a matter of seeing and being seen, of φαίνεσθαι and ἰδεῖν" (2010, 35). However, we believe it is much more than that. "As many epiphanic narratives suggest," Platt reminds us, "the visual manifestation of a god, often signified by the use of *phainesthai* or *enarges*, requires a *corresponding* process of perception and recognition—*noesis* and *anagnorisis*—from its mortal witnesses" (Platt 2011, 57). This latter process is the key point and the spark for the central question among the many that might have been unfortunately overlooked in this chapter, and that must guide this concluding section: How can the discussion with scholarship's reconstructions of the Mysteries, particularly on epiphany, clarify our approaches to ἐπόπτεια during their highest point, precisely the elevated position ἐπόπτεια has in this restricted, exclusive religious setting? What surrounds ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries in Plato's time?

Graf presents the Mysteries in the context of „*dem jährlichen Hauptfest der Mysteria*" (Graf 2000, 613). The Mysteries are undertaken in a once-every-

year festival "celebrated in autumn, at the start and not the finish of the farming year," for "in Attica the seeds germinate in autumn" (Parker 1991, 11–17). This is profoundly connected with the propagation of human life. "Not only the agricultural cycle," notes Richardson, "but also the important stages in the life of the community, birth, marriage, and death" (Richardson 1974, 15). Agricultural plenty is part of the twofold gift rewarded from the nourishment of a good relationship with the goddesses in the Mysteries. They give "abundance to mortals" that "they graciously favour with love"[120] (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 487-89).[121] The Mysteries are undertaken in the festival of the "Greater Mysteries,"[122] an annual festival towards which the god Iacchus leads the μύσται, "the ecstatic participants of the procession, the statue and the god turned into one figure" (Graf 2004, 126).

The sacred artefacts, usually referred to as τὰ ἱερά or simply ἱερά, are vital for ritual modes of representation. Their image, as a material marker of divine presence, helps bridge the gap between pilgrims [123] who desire and expect to be

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[120] "The goddesses will send *Ploutos* to earth as a guest in the houses of those they love, to give them *aphenos* (489), presumably 'agricultural abundance'. Demeter and Persephone love initiates *prophroneds* (graciously, 487), and the poet asks here that they be *prophrones* (494) to himself. (The word *prophron* is used elsewhere at 140 and 226 of Demeter's proposal to serve the household of Keleos assiduously, and of the daughters' concern to take care of the disguised Demeter at 138)" (Foley 1993, 64).

[121] προφρονέως φίλωνται ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων . . . Πλοῦτον, ὃς ἀνθρώποις ἄφενος θνητοῖσι δίδωσιν (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 487-89. Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[122] μ]είζ[οσιν] [μ]υστερίοις (*IG* I³ 6 C 8-9). Lambert's (2022) translation, Sokolowski's (1962) Greek text.

[123] "This is a somewhat controversial use of the term 'pilgrimage,' in so far as some have recently questioned whether it is appropriate to use 'pilgrim' or 'pilgrimage' either for theōroi and their activities or for any other group of visitors to sanctuaries in the ancient Greco-Roman world . . . not everyone deines pilgrimage in such a narrow and loaded

closer to the divine and the divine, who are described as loving the very ἱερά produced and conducted by sacred officials: the sacred objects are dear to the gods and vital for enabling the possibility of divine appearance. As Platt explains,

> By representing—and yet underdetermining—forms of divine manifestation within ritual contexts, artefacts like these exhibit theology in action. While retaining an important degree of ambiguity about the ontological status or precise details of epiphanic experience, they explore the visual and verbal means by which the gods' favour can be apprehended and communicated through material markers of divine presence (Platt 2011, 39).

This can be better understood by aligning Burkert's (1987, 12-15) suggestion of gradual ritual acts in which initiates would foster a significantly closer relationship with the gods. Yet, we add that it seems to have been through sacred objects, to the extent that they can improve their familiarity with such signs until they can fully recognise the god through the σεμεῖα. Parker's (Parker 2011, ix–x; 155 ff.) suggestion of juxtaposition in rituals surrounding mortal-immortal interaction at the festivals of the Mysteries also contributes to our understanding of the role of sacred objects, as markers of divine presence, scattered across the entirety of the festival, from the piglets washed at the beginning of the procession and, later, sacrificed, to the divine birth at the last minutes of the Mysteries.

Bremmer argues that "prospective initiates first had to complete a whole series of ritual acts" (Bremmer 2014, 3). That is to say, the Mysteries are embedded and juxtaposed with ritual acts that start way before Eleusis, from the very annual

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way; for many historians of religion and anthropologists, 'pilgrimage,' understood in a broader and weaker sense, is something found in all cultures and religions, and any journey undertaken for religious reasons, whether by an individual or a group, can qualify" (Rutherford 2013, 12).

procession from the city of Athens during the festival of the Greater Mysteries,[124] or perhaps even at „*die Kleinen Mysteria; diese wurden im Frühjahr in Agrai am Ilissos vor den Toren Athens abgehalten*" (Graf 2000, 613).[125] Therefore, it is a difficult assessment to argue away that "initiation into the Mysteries, then, was not a simple act" (Bremmer 2014, 4). Even the legislation highlights the indispensable position of spending time (Bremmer 2014, 4). From this set of circumstances, we can assume that prospective μύσται who met the criteria chose to elevate an already existing relationship with the goddesses, and even with other gods who surround Eleusis, maintained through many distinct and juxtaposing rituals that are continuously undertaken before, during, and after the Mysteries in the Eleusinian sanctuary of Demeter once every year.

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[124] "The Archon *Basileus*, the magistrate of Athens who had the supreme direction of the celebration, called the people to a festive assembly at the *Stoa Poikile*, or Painted Stoa, in the famous Agora of Athens. Because of this gathering the day was officially known as the ἀγυρμός" (Mylonas 1961, 247).

[125] "The bipolarity acted out in the spatial articulation of the Great Mysteries is in a way duplicated across ritual time . . . and this can be said not only to reinforce the strength of the Mysteric cult component in the *asty*, but also to place the *asty* as the starting point of a bigger, spatio-temporal articulation of the mysteric initiation. The temporal articulation increases the symbolic strength of the initiation and thus goes with the grain of the ritual logic of rites of this kind. But there is an aspect of its spatial articulation which appears to be less in harmony with that logic. Much of the Mysteries, all but the last (major) stage inside the Eleusinian sanctuary, took place in spaces that were not secret, but open to all. In its basic lines, the spatial articulation of the Mysteries corresponds to the schema 'procession to outlying sanctuary', with the territorial/poliadic and agricultural dimensions of signification we discussed" (Sourvinou-Inwood 1997a, 151).

Notwithstanding the 'public' section of the festival (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 39), so to speak, the Mysteries are voluntary [126] and optional,[127] restricted and secret,[128] of personal choice,[129] which lends it a personal character, carried out at closed doors at Demeter's sanctuary. Burkert proposes that "the goal of initiation is the path to Eleusis and to *seeing* what occurred in the great chamber

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[126] Price proposes that "initiation or non-initiation into public mystery cults illustrates nicely that individuals made choices within a wide range of civic cults" (Price 1999, 114).

[127] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, following Foucart's (1914, 277) reading, also followed by Clinton (1974, 98), believes the optionality is ambiguous because the entire *polis* would have been initiated through the rites performed in the Prytaneum (Clinton 1980, 284 = IE 138 41-42; cf. Clinton 1980, 285). We follow Julia Kindt in reinforcing that "most recent scholarship has moved away from the narrow conception of ancient Greek religion as always and necessarily confined to the communal and civic. The trend is now distinctly towards a more flexible and pluralistic depiction of the religious culture at Athens and elsewhere," to the extent that "a more complicated picture of the religious emerges in which the civic and the non-civic are variously intertwined," and a "more interesting account of ancient Greek religions: it does not set elective cults in a conceptual vacuum, but rather considers them in interaction with *polis* religion" (Kindt 2012, 97–98). For *polis* religion, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (1990b, 295–322), (2000b, 13–37), (2000a, 38–54).

[128] "The *mystes* is distinguished by the fact that non-*mystai*, the uninitiate, live alongside him. The inner circle of initiates contrasts with those who stand outside, and man reacts to this dichotomy of 'in' and 'out' with an almost instinctive urge toward the inner circle" (Burkert 1983, 253). "Even children," notes Burkert, "discover again and again spontaneously how keeping a secret evokes respect and a feeling of power: blessed is he who belongs" (Burkert 1983, 253). Graf maintains that restriction and secrecy played vital roles: "I would assume that nevertheless a distinction between those who underwent the Mysteries and those who were invited was maintained, the invitees forming the necessary outsiders whose perception of the initiated as different was vital in the dialectic process of secrecy and knowledge" (Graf 2003b, 256).

[129] It should be noted that beyond social and political implications discussed above "the individualism of the Mysteries stands out by contrast, and reflects their character as a preparation for another individual experience, death" (Parker 2005, 342–43). Even after analysing the social dimension of the Mysteries, Burket acknowledges that "the sociological and structural description of the Eleusinian festival as the self-renewal of a secret society through initiation describes only a superficial function" (Burkert 1983, 254). The blessings after death are, undeniably, individual.

of initiation on the sacred night" (Burkert 1987, 274). However, as aforementioned, this supposed 'goal' of seeing what occurred at the site is framed and inseparable from a long, gradual path that leads toward the sanctuary of Demeter.

> Viewer-pilgrims, already taken out of their normal social realities through rituals which affect on the external level the body itself and on a more interior level the individual's sense of subjectivity, bring their identities to the house of the god. This house is already an especially holy place (Elsner 2007, 23).

The ἐπόπτεια is framed within the rituals in the sanctuary, possible only "as a culmination of a ritual process" (Elsner 2007, 23). In this sense, the multitude of initiates, male or female, Athenian or visitors, free people or enslaved persons, [130] have chosen to undertake a transformative process down to their regular identities, to the extent that they become μύσται. It is "within the temple," after many ritual acts such as the ecstatic procession, the choral dances, the invocations, the chanting, and the 'night-long celebrations' that the μύσται pass through personal transformations to "the culmination of the journey (from a pilgrim's personal point of view) and at the pivotal center of the site (from the viewpoint of both liturgical action and sacred geography), the viewer confronts the god" (Elsner 2007, 23).

Demeter's arrival in Keleos' house "is the aetiological core of the poem, rich in allusions to the preliminary ritual of the Mysteries. Most notably, Demeter sits on a special stool covered by a fleece, she refuses wine but takes instead a drink of

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[130] "All Greeks, including slaves, could participate in the Mysteries—from which barbarians and those who had impure hands were excluded" (Sourvinou-Inwood 1997a, 145). Parker poses the "possibility for slaves at Eleusis received μύησις at the sanctuary's expense, not, we assume, from solicitude for their souls, but to allow them to perform repairs within the sacred precinct" (Parker 2005, 345).

kykeon,[131] and she is cheered up by Iambe's jests (192-211); these are allusions as clear as one could wish to aspects of the historical Mysteries" (Parker 1991, 8). The rituals of drinking *kykeon* are part of the gradual, steady, and continuous purification process carried out within the sanctuary (Parker 1983, 284), accompanied by ritual washing, as Demeter, for nine days, maintained fasting and remained unclean (Parker 1991, 8). Moreover, "these final cleansings were merely the culmination of a long series of preparations for the great revelation" (Parker 1983, 284).

These rituals, called by Parker the 'final cleanings,' could have included, as Burkert suggested, "purification with fire" (Burkert 1987a, 98). Parker acknowledges this from votive reliefs.

> Such a rite seems to be illustrated by the well-known reliefs which show a veiled and seated Heracles, behind whom stands a priestess, holding a winnowing-fan over his head or a torch at his side. A scene to the left portrays Demeter enthroned in splendour. Heracles seems to be undergoing a ritual of submissive 'sitting' of a kind that is common in initiations and for which certain acts of the grieving Demeter in the *Homeric Hymn* provide a prototype. Formally this is a purification—the mystic torch cleanses the sitting man . . . its expressive force clearly derives largely from the symbolism of admitting a candidate to a new status by raising him up from his humble posture (Parker 1983, 285).

Not only did the goddess herself perform the sitting on a stool as a guest in Keleos's house in the *Hymn*, but also Heracles, a demigod and divine-like figure, is portrayed to be doing the same. Moreover, the hero does it willingly to please the goddess, whom he sought in hopes of taking a share of her power. This relief is the kind of object placed in sanctuaries, known to pilgrims and part of the plethora of visual representations that informed and shaped the ways of viewing

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[131] For a debate on supposed hallucenoegenics in the *kykeon*, cf. Burkert (1987a, 108–10), Wasson (1978); Kerényi (1967, 96; 179 ff.) and (1976, 35–36).

in ancient Greece. The visuality of a goddess gazing back at a human-like hero, Heracles, is depicted here. Platt notes the role of reliefs in ritual viewing, such as the rituals surrounding ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries.

> The relief provides a visual field for exploring the relationship between mortals and immortals, establishing the spatio-temporal conditions in which the divine can be apprehended. In doing so, it also raises questions about how such relations can be depicted and communicated, reflecting and shaping the physical and conceptual framing devices that influenced ritual activity and modes of viewing within the sanctuary (Platt 2011, 33).

Additionally, the rendering of Heracles' relief provided above finds support in Euripides. The poet makes striking use of terms related to vision, highlighting the ritual modes of viewing that comprised the set of expectations of μύσται undertaking the Mysteries.

> –Did you really go to the house of Hades (Ἅιδου),[132] my son?
> –Yes. And even scorched the three-headed Cerberus with my light (φῶς).[133]
> –Did you conquer him in combat, or [received] it as a gift from the goddess (θεᾶς)?
> –In combat, for I have been fortunate to have seen (ἰδών) the sacred rites of the *mystae* (μυστῶν) (Eur. *HF*. 610-13).[134]

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[132] The etymology of Ἀΐδης points to invisible, a possible privative alpha added to the *ιδ-, as found in Beekes (2010, 34), Chantraine (1968, 31), Frisk (1960, Band I: A-Ko:33–34), cf. s.v. Hades in *Der Neue Pauly* (Bremmer 1998a, 51–53).

[133] This is a very literal translation to emphasise the choice of words by Euripides, better translated as 'torch.' Parker points to "the very common iconographic type of a torch-bearing Demeter" (Parker 1991, 7). Helene P. Foley adds that "the carrying of the torches by the goddesses and initiates is a standard motif on vase paintings associated with the rites at Eleusis" (Foley 1993, 38).

[134] ἦλθες γὰρ ὄντως δώματ' εἰς Ἅιδου, τέκνον; καὶ θῆρά γ' ἐς φῶς τὸν τρίκρανον ἤγαγον. μάχηι κρατήσας ἢ θεᾶς δωρήμασιν; μάχηι· τὰ μυστῶν δ' ὄργι' εὐτύχησ'' ἰδών (Eur. *HF*. 610-13). Coleridge's (1938) translation, modified, Diggle's (1981b) Greek text.

Here, it is not said that Heracles has 'undertaken sacred rites' to maintain a good relationship with the goddess, a reciprocity invoked by the mention of a gift, lit. '[what is] received from the goddess' (θεᾶς δωρήμασιν), but that Heracles has seen (ἰδών) τὰ μυστῶν δ' ὄργι', that is, he has seen the sacred rites of the μύσται. Not only did this enable him to go to the realm of the invisible, but it also provided him with 'light' to succeed in his challenges. "The dominant language in early texts is of 'showing' or even just 'doing' the Mysteries" (Parker 2005, 353). This inevitably links ritual modes of viewing to ἐπόπτεια [135] into the framework of the Mysteries. Beyond a shadow of doubt, there are difficulties in a juxtaposition between μύσται and ἐπόπται.[136] Burkert proposes that "the *epopteia* repeats, renews, and deepens that which had been laid as a foundation in the *myesis*. Already the *mystai* were permitted to see the blissful 'sight'. The *epoptai* may simply have seen more or, more importantly, differently" (Burkert 1983, 275).

This nuance suggested by Burkert of 'seeing differently' is indeed valuable and cannot be detached from both the framework of the Mysteries and Demeter's sanctuary. There, one of the ritual acts would be a sacred drama, "more appropriate . . . 'dramatic performance appropriate for the μύσται'" (Petridou 2013, 327). Survinou-Inwood follows Clinton (1992, 131) [137] in suggesting priestly

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[135] Note the radical of the term with that of ὄψομαι, first-person singular future indicative middle of ὁράω: s.v. ὁράω in LSJ (1996), Pape (1880), Bailly (1935), and Woodhouse (1982).

[136] For a debate on precise definions on μύησις vs ἐποπτεία, cf. Foucart (1914, 432 ff.), Dowden (1980, 409–27), and Clinton (2003, 50–78). The reason for not entering the debate is, fundamentally, "no evidence has survived to tell us how this juxtaposition of *myesis* and *epopteia* was organized" (Burkert 1983, 275).

[137] Clinton proposes that "the *mystes* remained blindfolded as he or she wandered through the darkness, helped by a *mystagogue*, and experienced all the terrors of the route" (Clinton 2003, 66). Simms indicates that there is no evidence for such a claim at the period, because "μυσταγωγός and its cognates are relatively late words, attested only

personnel "impersonating the deities" (2003, 29). Georgia Petridou notes that "representational strategy, whereby a human being is assimilated to the god or his statue as his facsimile and the living embodiment of his power, is attested in both Greek art and cult from Archaic times onwards" (Petridou 2013, 329).[138] This representation can be better understood in the context of the tension between scopic regimes at the time, as well as the semiotic complexities inherent in the relationship between divinity and mortal creativity in Greek culture.

> Humans can only know the gods by means of representations (whether conceptual, verbal or visual), yet in order to be compelling and trustworthy, these representations must derive their value and authority from a perceived potentiality for direct engagement with the divine. (Platt 2011, 53)

Here lies the core of the epiphanic aspect embedded in the ritual viewing of the Mysteries, the 'seeing differently' suggested by Burkert, namely the expectation of viewing a goddess during the assimilation of the search conducted by Demeter. This is what Elsner calls our attention to, namely, to consider the 'insider' texts, such as the *Hymn* written by religious devotees, where we may find

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twice before the first century AD: first in a fragment attributed to Menander (fr. 714 K), next more than 200 years later in an Attic decree of the first century BC *LSCGS* 15. Plutarch (*Alc.* 34.6) projects the word back to fifth-century Athens, but this is very likely an anachronism," which would be "terms are not attested before ca 300 BC because they were not in use at Eleusis, but were adopted there in Hellenistic times as a replacement for μυεῖν, in the sense of what the Eumolpidai and Kerykes did at the Mysteries" (Simms 1990, 193–94). Bowden adds that "*mystagogoi* are only mentioned in connection with the Eleusinian Mysteries from the first century BC ownwards" (Bowden 2010, 32).

[138] "Throughout the Greek-speaking world this blurring of boundaries between the god and his human body is most clearly reflected in the prerequisites for becoming a priest or a priestess of a deity . . . Furthermore, in iconography this close visual link of the deity with her or his ritual servant is often denoted by portraying the latter as the mortal look-alike of the former" (Petridou 2013, 329).

traces of their ways of viewing, which are never the same as the ways of viewing of sceptics. The insider's ways of viewing is what Elsner defines as "ritual-centered visuality" (Elsner 2007, 23).[139]

Burkert proposed that the hierophant "completed the initiation in the Telesterion 'amid a great fire' . . . And the *mystai* then saw him 'emerge from the *Anaktoron*, in the shining nights of the mysteries.' A 'great light' would become visible 'when the *Anaktoron* was opened.' This was, then, the location of the great fire; the smoke escaped through a hole in the roof above it" (Burkert 1983, 276–77). In light of his 'experience of the sacred,' as already discussed in the second section of this chapter, Burkert's reading would abstract ἐπόπτεια from the Greek epiphanic context.

Petridou offers an alternative reconstruction for ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries. She argues that we should move our focus from 'vision,' that is, "unqualified and unmediated visual experience" (Petridou 2013, 310), to 'visuality,' our main methodological approach.

> Even if we could actually *look* at what happened within the τελεστήριον, it is quite unlikely that we would be able to *see* what the initiates *saw*, as it is extremely difficult to reconstruct with any certainty the complex nexus of sociopolitical and cultural discourses that shaped their gaze, their ways of viewing (Petridou 2013, 310).

Conversely, by focusing on what the scholar mentions as "ritual framing," in line with Elsner's (2007, 23), we have an alternative approach to ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries. Additionally, what she calls 'ritual framing' in the Mysteries is "the passage from ritual blindness to ritual sight, the transformation from being a μύστης (being sightless and blind to true knowledge) into being an ἐπόπτης (that

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[139] For an overview on insider/outsider, or emics/etics, cf. Headland, Pike, and Harris (1990).

is, an insightful and sensitive viewer)" (Petridou 2013, 316). In other words, ἐπόπτεια surrounding ritual modes of viewing in the Mysteries would not be read in terms of goals but as part of the symbolic behaviour surrounding agents and the construction of identities, in the context of either of 'recognising' what one sees by affinity — again we are back at identities — or of 'being sightless' to what one sees and cannot recognise in the same circumstances.

Bremmer is not convinced of this route. He acknowledges that "our best recent students [140] both consider the importance of 'seeing' and 'showing' is continuously stressed by our sources as a fundamental component of the highest degree of initiation" (Bremmer 2014, 15). Conversely, the scholar is concerned with the multiple pillars in the Telesterion, which "must have been impossible for everyone to see exactly what was on show during the climax of the ritual" (2014, 15), as well as concerned with the dramatic aspect of the spectacle, "clearly a well-staged moment in the ritual which made a big impression on the participants" (Bremmer 2014, 14).

Admittedly, one of our best recent students (Parker 2005, 351) acknowledges that "it is very difficult to see how the crucial display of sacred objects or depiction of sacred scenes could in fact have been visible to all the initiates in the room." And we agree with Parker in his response:

> However, here a robust and table-thumping response is in order: we know that the initiates did see the sacred objects, even if we do not understand how. It is illegitimate to use the problem of visibility as an argument against certain kinds of representation ('sacred drama'), when it applies equally to those representations which we know, beyond a peradventure, to have occurred (Parker 2005, 351).

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[140] Fritz Graf and Robert Parker.

Nevertheless, one misses the opportunity for insightful approaches to ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries if the debate centres on vision and not visuality—that is, around 'immediate visual data' instead of the semiotic complexities inherent in viewing. This does not mean downplaying the display of "an ear of wheat harvested in silence"[141] or "the showing of which was probably accompanied by the display of a statue of Demeter" (Bremmer 2014, 14). Alternatively, "ritual props (statues, priests dressed up as gods, empty couches, divine names as signs of divine presence), however, seem to have been the exception, not the rule. They were props that help us understand how the Greeks bridged the gap between the physical world and divine manifestation" (Graf 2004, 127). This returns us to ritual framing: "Iconography of the deities depicted both draws upon and magnifies the 'aura' of the cult image, preparing the viewer for an epiphanic encounter with the statue within by contributing to its ritual framing" (Tanner 2006, 85–87).

Following this route, we are convinced that 'ritual blindness' creates a necessary visual and intellectual void, the contrast to pave the way for the forthcoming intense divine vision bestowed by the goddesses overseeing the ceremony and their sacred representatives:

> The μύσται saw during their initiation what they expected to see after their death, and that these visions may have included visions of underworld deities and especially visions of Persephone or Korê. The underlying idea may have been that proper ritual behavior in the course of initiation determines afterlife experience and existence (Petridou 2013, 319).

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[141] Here Bremmer refers to Hipp. *Ref.* 5.8.39-41.

This is precisely the intentional confrontation prepared by the ritual, "the word for it in Greek is *theoria*" (Elsner 2007, 24).[142] Petridou explains "that the expectation of encountering the ultimate 'Other'—the deity or the deities that presided over the religious festival or the sanctuary—was embedded within the viewing modality of private θεωρία at a festival" (Petridou 2013, 317). In this sense, ἐπόπτεια would be surrounded by these Greek scopic regimes: "Hopes and expectations create focus, and focus creates reality. Effectively, this kind of culturally nuanced visuality of the sacred provides the right conceptual framework for the spectacle to come" (Petridou 2013, 318). Both the gradual preparation and the set of diverging beliefs that informed the scopic regimes in Greek culture at the time contribute to framing ritual visuality, positioning ἐπόπτεια at the core of a mortal-immortal interaction grounded in viewing with recognition in the Mysteries.

> Viewing the sacred is a process of divesting the spectator of all the social and discursive elements which distinguish his or her subjectivity from that of the god into whose space the viewer will come. In the reciprocal gaze of divine confrontation, there is a form of visuality in which the image does not just *look back* at the viewer, but in which the viewer has specifically made the journey *in order that* the image should look back. (Elsner 2007, 23)

These are the intricacies of divine agency surrounding ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, establishing a reciprocal gaze in divine confrontation at the culmination of a *theoria*. Not a matter of 'seeing or not seeing' but of

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[142] "The true spectator. The word *theōriā* itself seems to have sometimes meant 'spectacle' or 'festival,' and it was also probably an advantage to this semantic development that *theōros* was sometimes felt to be related to the Greek word for 'god' – *theos*. Indeed, modern linguists are still divided about whether *theōros* should be analysed as 'sight-watcher' (*theā* + (e.g.) **wōros*) or 'god-watcher' (*theos* + (e.g.) **wōros*)" (Rutherford 2013, 5).

'recognising'—"a complex exercise in hermeneutics" (Platt 2011, 59). As Betegh mentioned, "going through the Eleusinian mysteries was the most well-established, controlled, and structured way a Greek could prepare for and expect personally to experience an epiphany at the moment of *epopteia*" (Betegh 2022, 241).

Clinton presents one claim for ritual-centred epiphany in the Mysteries based on a fourth-century BCE relief, "a small votive plaque (Wilhelm 2006) found within the sanctuary" (Clinton 2004, 98). He links this relief to Euripides' "mistress of the fire" (Eur. *Phaeth.* fg. 286)[143] epithet to Demeter. Petridou provides a detailed and appropriate description:

> One could say that this votive relief resembles those found in the famous healing sanctuaries, if it were not for the remarkably beautiful image of a radiant Demeter with red rays springing out from her head,[144] her hair, and her neck, and attached to the top of the plaque. This striking artefact is unique in having the paint almost intact on its surface of white marble. We can even see the red paint on the right eye, the lips, and the eyes of the goddess. Her hair, on the other hand, is painted in a red-brown color. The flat area that surrounds the nose and the eyes in the lower part of the relief must have also been painted in a bright red-orange color . . . Demeter was perceived in a similar way, as emitting light and radiance that are compared to those of lightning,[145] by Metaneira in the *Homeric*

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[143] σὺ δ' ὦ πυρὸς δέσποινα Δήμητρος κόρη (Eur. *Phaeth.* fg. 286). Clinton's (2004) translation, Diggle's (1998) Greek text.

[144] "They clearly do not represent a radiant crown. They represent light" (Clinton 2004, 98).

[145] "In the extract from the *Homeric Hymn* the luminosity (φέγγος) comes from the body and hair of the goddess, not from anything she wears (clothes, jewelry, etc.)" (Petridou 2013, 322).

Hymn to Demeter (lines 189-90); and then again in lines 277-9 (Petridou 2013, 321).[146]

Burkert mentions the birth of a child during the sacred rites: "Side by side with the peril of death and blood we find the miracle of new life in birth. This is the sacrificial ritual's necessary supplement, which makes the cycle of life a possibility" (Burkert 1983, 290). After what Burkert suggested as „*die Opfertötung*" (1972, 9), this ritual birth would manifest the universal symbol of 'death and rebirth',[147] from which "the collective experience that life and nourishment result from terror, the encounter with death and destruction, binds the *mystai* together and adds new dimensions to their lives" (Burkert 1983, 291–92).[148]

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[146] "Light beamed far out from the goddess's immortal skin, and her golden hair flowed over her shoulders. The well-built house flooded with radiance like lightning", τῆλε δὲ φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο λάμπε θεᾶς, ξανθαὶ δὲ κόμαι κατενήνοθεν ὤμους, αὐγῆς δ' ἐπλήσθη πυκινὸς δόμος ἀστεροπῆς ὥς, (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 278-80). Foley's (1993) translation, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[147] In a more reasonable rendering of Greek's cultural scopic regimes informing the Mysteries: "Given the cultural equation of light to life and knowledge and of darkness to ignorance and death (on which see above), this externally imposed temporary blindness may also have been thought of as a kind of symbolic death of the initiate, which will be subsequently negated by his symbolic rebirth" (Petridou 2013, 321).

[148] Eliade originally brought this peculiar manifestation of universal symbolims from Frazer to the discussion of the Mysteries, in which the initiates would perform a ritual death and rebirth: "At Eleusis, as in the Orphic-Dionysiac ceremonies, as in the Greco-Oriental mysteries of the Hellenistic period, the *mystes* submits himself to initiation in order to transcend the human condition and to obtain a higher, superhuman mode of being. The initiatory rites reactualize an origin myth which relates the adventures, death, and resurrection of a Divinity. We know very little about these secret rites, yet we know that the most important of them concerned the death and mystical resurrection of the initiand" (Eliade 1958, 112). Parker is strongly against this rendering, and so are we for obvious reasons. Beyond Frazer (1890, 3:2225–78), Parker notes a relation to John 12:24 and Plut. (*De fac.* 943b).

Bremmer suggests that "this is likely an import from Orphic poetry, probably at the end of the fifth century BC" (Bremmer 2014, 15). Moreover, this "seems to have been incorporated into the Eleusinian ritual" (Bremmer 2013a, 41), from the "closeness of the Orphic movement in Athens to Eleusis in the last decades of the fifth century BC" (Bremmer 2013a, 40). The embeddedness of "Eleusinian eschatology" with "Orphic" literacy was also suggested by West (1983, 24).[149] In Parker's rendering,

> as a minimalist interpretation it might be said that, in general Greek perception, cults, particularly mysteries [*mysteria*], of Demeter and Dionysus were so closely associated that vase-painters, orators and other persons not bound to precision could amalgamate them if they chose; in regard to Eleusis this could happen all the more easily because the famous Iacchus procession had a markedly Dionysiac character. A maximalist interpretation will introduce the 'Orphic' myth of Dionysus son of Persephone, and transfigure our picture of the cult . . . I shelve that issue for the moment. (Parker 2005, 341)

Parker shelves the issue because "if the Mysteries consisted primarily in 'showing,' not teaching, it is unlikely that the hierophant set out to expound all this as one of the secret doctrines of the cult.[150] But if the hierophant did, the Orphic writings on these subjects would have been profanations of the Mysteries; yet they circulated without complaint. Perhaps 'Wealth'[151] is after all the best

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[149] "You too, goddess, once gave birth to a beloved boy" (Eur. *Supp*. 54). ἔτεκες καὶ σύ ποτ', ὦ πότνια, κοῦρον φίλα (Eur. *Supp*. 54). Coleridge's (1938) translation, modified, Diggle's (1981b) Greek text. It should be noted that Persephone has eaten Aidoneus' seed (κόκκον) in the *Hymn* (371-73), whose blossoming remained unmentioned in the poem.

[150] "Orphic τελεταί are oriented towards the acquisition of eschatological [doctrinal] knowledge" (Bernabé and Cristóbal 2008, 186)

[151] "For soon they will send to the hearth of his great house/Ploutos, the god giving abundance to mortals" αἶψα δέ οἱ πέμπουσιν ἐφέστιον ἐς μέγα δῶμα/Πλοῦτον, ὃς

candidate for the child" (Parker 2005, 358–59). Furthermore, Berbabé describes to us that in the gold tablets Persephone appears "as Lady of Hades, who controls the access to the Meadows of the Blessed, before whom initiates come as suppliants and to whom they address their declarations of purity and liberation" (Bernabé 2010, 437). Graf remarks that in the Pelinnan gold leaves "again, we are in a world where Orphic and Eleusinian details go together: in both Orphism and the Eleusinian mysteries the queen of Hades is the person who decides about the destiny after death" (Graf 1993, 242). Despite being the one who "must give her ultimate permission" (Bernabé and Cristóbal 2008, 205), the inscription (*OF* 485.2)[152] emphasises Dionysos as the mediator for deliverance (Bernabé 2010, 437). Most importantly, "tablets emphasize 'liberation' more than the initiate's visual experience, which is characteristic of the Eleusinian rites" (Bernabé and Cristóbal 2008, 194).[153]

Graf clarifies that "the 'deliverance' or 'freeing' (*lusis*) granted by Dionysus and relevant to Persephone . . . cannot just mean death as the freeing of the soul from the body: why should that be the work of Dionysus, and why should that be relevant to Persephone? It has to be more, namely, release from punishment after death that would otherwise be in store for human-kind" (Graf 1993, 243). As

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ἀνθρώποις ἄφενος θνητοῖσι δίδωσιν (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 488-89). Foley's (1993) translation, Richardson's (1974) Greek text.

[152] "Tell Persephone that Bakchios himself has liberated you" (εἰπεῖν Περσεφόναι σ’ ὅτι Β<άκ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε, (*OF* 485.2). Bernabé's (2010) translation and Greek text (2005).

[153] "On a minimalist view, to undergo Orphic initiation in addition to initiation at Eleusis would have been merely the eschatological equivalent to carrying a second credit card" (Parker 2011, 257). Alternatively, in Orphic initiation "both gods act as mediators who grant the initiates salvation and divinization. The initiates hope to be identified with Dionysos after death, in the last stage of a long series of reincarnations, and be welcomed by the god's mother, Persephone, whom they now consider their own mother" (Bernabé 2010, 441).

seen in the previous section, immortality in this context is not as an eternal afterlife or a life after death because "immortality means freedom from death" (Henrichs 2010, 31).

Nonetheless, Betegh acknowledges that, as we have seen, "secrecy surrounding these cults makes a precise reconstruction of the ritual actions and the religious ideas sustaining them well-nigh impossible. There is no scholarly consensus about what happened at the various stages of the Eleusinian mysteries" (Betegh 2022, 234). Burkert also concludes, "we cannot guess what appeared—perhaps only for an instant—in the flickering firelight" (Burkert 1983, 287). It should be noted "the religious prohibitions regarding the secret ceremony (the θεωρός is not allowed to speak about what he saw), as well as the difficulties of putting the unique visual experience of the secret segment of the mysteries into words" (Petridou 2013, 320).

Finally, says Bremmer, "whatever awe there was would eventually have turned into relief and joy. With their personal well-being assured the initiates will have left the *telestêrion* tired but content" (Bremmer 2014, 16). In Burkert's more poetic words:

> The nighttime festival was brought to a close outside the Telesterion, perhaps even outside the sanctuary. The narrow confines were too small to hold in such an experience . . . The waning moon would by now have risen and could illuminate this festival until dawn, as a celestial torch (Burkert 1983, 292).

6. Seeing Visuality: The Reciprocal Gaze in a Conclusion

The previous section's abrupt ending is a deliberate move to maintain our intention proposed at the 'Introduction' clear until the very end. That is to say, this anti-climactic ending in textual form serves as a reminder, on the one hand, of the absolute lack of direct historical data on the Mysteries and, on the other, the absence of consensus among the most experienced scholars on the possible reconstructions proposed for the Mysteries (Betegh 2022, 234). Moreover, we believe this is the furthest any serious inquiry on the Mysteries can reach along with authoritative scholarship as of today, given the lack of causal structure in symbolic activity and, therefore, our honesty as scholars must not be understated: we must be humble and admit the need to end the inquiry at this point, instead of forcing a goal-oriented construal to festivals and behaviour to fit an agenda, which should not be done by any means whatasoever in any scientific research. It is a scholarly absurdity to attribute goals to agents as the final explanation for Greek festivals or their ancient religious behaviour, of which, beyond this point, we have room only for wild speculation.

Conversely, an assessment of the identities of agents and the transformations they may have undertaken at the Mysteries is in line with trends in recent scholarship on Greek religion. As such, our intention in "artificially reconstructing" basic lines as "parameters" to clarify one another once mapping them "in a process roughly comparable to that of pinpointing the location of a radio transmission through triangulation" (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 25) could not end in a more modest way other than presenting the views of most recent scholarship, displaying the impossibility of coming to terms with what happened in the Mysteries, and proposing our alternative approach, namely, visuality.

Ultimately, as long as the debate without definite positions can still formulate enough insights to assist us in interpreting Plato, we decided for an open ending, rather than a definite closure.

However, we could only do so after exhaustingly comparing distinct grids of evidence, from "archaeological, cultic, and mythological," as well as doing "cross-checks between grids," of evidence, which asked us for a dialogue with invaluable insights from different fields of knowledge, their respective tools and methods, in fluid approaches to the Mysteries (Sourvinou-Inwood 1990a, 217). By doing so, this chapter aims to contribute to the scholarly debate on ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, having discussed various aspects of this central element at the highest point of the sacred rites in Eleusis. It proposes visuality as a methodological alternative to provide new insights into reconstructions of the Mysteries.

From the beginning, we have seen the risks of isolating the analysis of terms, particularly if they are abstracted from their cultural significance, which fastens them to wider webs of meaning. Despite the risks, we have also seen that analyses of beliefs, discourses, and practices cannot disregard the uniqueness of the language used at the time: μυστήρια, μύστης, τελετή, as well as ἐπόπτεια itself, offer nuances that are daringly challenging to translate into modern languages. They shed significant light on the particular set of beliefs discussed, such as those in the Mysteries. Additionally, this provided more ways to consider its position among the broader framework available to individuals and groups at the time, indeed in "a never-ending, rather than essentialist, process susceptible to forces of semantic innovation as well as conservatism, which at least partially accounts for the diversity of materials to which the term was applied" (Wellman 2005, 311).

The terms point to what we further proposed as a set of sometimes gradual, oftentimes continuous, and even contradictory and devoid of a causal

structure, inevitably juxtaposing symbolic acts in the mortal-immortal interaction, called 'religious ritual,' including the eventual long and gradual preparation for some central act and the outcomes of maintaining a positive relationship with the divine. This is by no means immune to complications. At the time of Plato, there was no all-encompassing term such as 'ritual,' as they were simply referred to as τὰ νομιζόμενα, activities also known as κατὰ τὰ πάτρια, cf. Lys. (30.19-21); Isoc. (7.29); *Ath. Pol.* (57.1). Furthermore, killing acts were usually called 'to do,' and many events were named after the most central act (Bremmer 1994, 53), such as προθύματα, cf. *IG* II² 47 (23-39), named after the preliminary sacrifices in the ἐπιδαύρια, cf. *IG* II² 4962, in turn, is named after the sanctuary that held ritual sacrifices in honour of Asclepius (Clinton 1994, 153). However, by using 'ritual' as a tool *of immediate utility*, we realised that there is not simply a juxtaposition of terms, but one of practice (Parker 2011, 155).

Furthermore, the terminology and the rituals did not suffice to handle the subject because it required considering the possible beliefs and discourses that influenced how the individuals and groups interacted with the divine in the Mysteries, equally shaped by the competing and conflicting mythology held together in a 'thin coherence' comprising the culture at the moment (Ober 2005, 78). This challenging set of competing and conflicting beliefs provided us with the means to note resemblance and similarities between ἐπόπτεια and other occurrences of epiphany at the time. At the same time, a glaring uniqueness in Eleusinian ἐπόπτεια emerged from this route. After all, ἐπόπτεια *qua* ἐπόπτεια belongs to one *mysteria*, which we may further abstract into a set of ritual acts carried out in one or two nights, connected to a collection of purificatory rituals equally subject to extensive abstraction into a myriad of juxtaposing acts during almost 20 days, in turn, held by the polytheism of a people in 'one moment.'

In this sense, it is part of the challenge to turn a synoptic eye to the many competing and conflicting discourses in a bigger picture, even if exposing ourselves to the risk of simplification, so that mythology so essential to Greek life may give life to properties of the gods that were once *present* in "a religious mentality that tried as hard as possible to make a divine presence felt if not seen . . . especially during the extraordinary experience of [Eleusinian] mystery initiation" (Graf 2004, 126–27). This led us to realise that the general properties of gods, such as power, anthropomorphism, and immortality, are intertwined with the properties of particular gods we suggested to be gods in the Mysteries, "honoured with sacrifices and votive reliefs," the deities that "might be depicted on vases or coins with Eleusinian themes." Nonetheless, even this decision is a debatable task, namely, assembling "from such sources a cast of Eleusinian deities . . . not the less useful for inevitable uncertainties at the margins over whom to include" (Parker 2005, 334).

Interestingly, the secrecy attached to the Mysteries provided us with an encouraging way to approach the properties of the gods to make sense of the position of 'viewing' in the Mysteries, namely the indication of associated myths, or some of them, being incorporated in the ceremony itself, informing the individuals to the point of such myths nearing to "constituting the plot of the ritual" (Parker 2011, 28). The *Hymn* invoked a collection of beliefs and discourses whose traces we found scattered in the plurality that comprised the moment, assisting from 'an outsider' point of view possibilities to analyse ἐπόπτεια in the Mysteries, whilst from 'an insider' point of view we reckon that the *Hymn* was once a dedication itself to the gods central within a system of reciprocity that this people held with their gods (Kindt 2012, 66).

The mythology in the *Hymn* repeatedly insists on the ambiguity between 'difficulty' and 'danger' in seeing the gods, particularly regarding the ability to

recognise appropriately what 'appears,' reflecting the quality of the relationship between gods and mortals. Most importantly, it also reinforced divine agency, as it was up to Demeter to manifest herself to a mortal who at the time could not recognise what was shown: Demeter's epiphany cast light on the asymmetrical relationship between gods with their "radiant immortal skin" (χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο λάμπε, 278-9) and humans "powerless and lacking understanding" (νήϊδες ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀφράδμονες, 256).[154]

The core of our contribution to the debate was approaching the ways of viewing in Eleusis through visuality: "the entire sum of discourses" between the eye and the appearance, which "make[s] visuality different from vision, the notion of unmediated visual experience. Between retina and world is inserted a screen of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena" (Brysson 1988, 91). The epiphany of Demeter is part of a culture in which the belief in 'viewing' and 'understanding' is rooted at the linguistic level (Petridou 2013, 313): the individuals expected to encounter gods, as we have seen in numerous distinct discourses, either literary, iconographic or epigraphic. These were proposed as many of the "scopic regimes" (Metz 1982, 61) that informed the way individuals viewed the world at the time.

This led us to follow Verity Platt and concede that epiphany in the Mysteries was unlikely to be just a matter of ἰδεῖν and φαίνεισθαι, of 'visions' and 'apparitions,' but 'apparitions' followed by a necessary "corresponding process of

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[154] Here we use 'powerless' as in the sense of 'inability'. Helene P. Foley translates to "ignorant and foolish," which is the rendering we have chosen during the chapter. The term νήϊδες has genetive -ιδος, which Authenrieth (1891) points to "root ϝιδ" in Homeric Greek, further connected with both ἰδεῖν and εἰδέναι in LSJ's (1996) s.v. νῆις. Moreover, LSJ points ἀφράδμονες to ἀφραδής, which Beekes (2010) suggests to be from φράζω ("to show") + -ής. In this sense, it is not a matter of humans having or lacking 'power' but of 'ability to understand what is manifested'.

perception and recognition—*noesis* and *anagnorisis*—from its mortal witnesses"
(Platt 2011, 57), whose life (and afterlife) in the poem depended on this
corresponding process. Again, gods are 'dangerous' and 'difficult' for mortals to
'see with recognition' or simply 'to recognise' (χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ θνητοῖσιν ὁρᾶσθαι,
111).[155] This makes epiphany in the Mysteries "a complex exercise in hermeneutics"
(Platt 2011, 59). As such, we ended the section 'seeing the gods' by agreeing with
Burkert that both blessings in life and the afterlife rewarded to the μύστης in the
Mysteries from the mortal-immortal closer interaction grounded on reciprocity
are in "an immediate encounter with the divine" (1987a, 90), whilst noting that
the immediacy is *to some extent* because the reward is measured by *anagnorisis*:
"blessed is who has seen these things" (ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ᾽ ὄπωπεν, 480),[156] that has a
lasting state indicated by the perfect tense, which down to the linguistic level
indicates a 'viewing that lasts,' thus is retained: seen with understanding.

The discussion in the last section, based on the reconstructions provided
by scholarship in ancient Greek religion, then, was not centred around 'what is
seen' or 'who sees,' nor in goals, which would lead to endless circular disputes.
Instead, we opted for possibilities on 'how one sees,' namely, 'the ways of
viewing.' This led us to Elsner, who suggested ritual-centred visuality (2007, 23),
in line with Tanner's (2006, 85–87) insights on the value of ritual framing.

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[155] Note the mediopassive reflexive sense of ὁράω in the form ὁρασθαῖ: 're-see,' 're-view,'
thus 're-cognise.'

[156] Morphologically, the demonstrative pronoun is nom. masc. sing. However, we take
into account the fifth-century BCE decree that ratified what the Council and Assembly
decided according to tradition, demanding that "as they have paid until now the
Elmopidai and Kerykes are to receive five obols from male and three from female
μύσται" (τἀναλόματα [δõναι καθ]άπερ τέος [ἀ]νέλοτο Κέρ[υκ]ας λαμβάν[εν παρὰ] τõ μ-
ύστ[ο h]εκάστο πέγ[τε ὀβολὸς τ]-ον [ἀρρ]ένον, θελειõ[ν δὲ τρεῖς], *IG* I³ 6 C 19-23,
Sokolowski's (1962) Greek text). In this sense, nothing in the context suggests whether
the blessing it to male or female persons, hence 'who' instead of 'he.'

Namely, it is a context of expectations, ritual acts, beliefs, and temporary, ritually generated identities that may lead to the transformation of pilgrims into insightful viewers. Elsner proposed it as a ritual framing in the culmination of a transformative process: we agree that one *becomes* μύστης.

Additionally, Georgia Petridou and Verity Platt also noted the pattern of divine *theoria* in ἐπόπτεια, a resemblance that clarifies both μύστης and ἐπόπτεια. However, it does not appear to define the juxtaposing terms positively, as a final explanation, because the ritual framing, doing justice to symbolic behaviour and the identities of the agents, appears to provide us with a tool for a helpful 'negative' postulate. In other words, the transformative journey dissolves and negates everything that an individual is at the point one enters the liminal space of the house of the divine to contribute to the effectiveness of the encounter with the goddesses:

> To undermine the multiple discourses of the social arena, the screen of signs produced by and carried over from 'everyday life.' Instead the pilgrim is put through a process of purification of body and mind, in which the self is prepared in a liminal space for the meeting with the being from the Other World (Elsner 2007, 25).

Precisely what Petridou called "the passage from ritual blindness to ritual sight, the transformation from being a μύστης (being sightless and blind to true knowledge) into being an ἐπόπτης (that is, an insightful and sensitive viewer)" (2013, 316). In this sense, we sustain that the Mysteries, in the context of ritual framing, would dissipate the identities of the participants in the name of cleansing them, to the point of sufficient void for the contrasting and profound encounter with the divine: they are reframed from anything they are to become nothing but the "blessed who has seen these things" (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 480).

Again, the "putting aside of normal identity and the acquisition of a temporary cult-generated identity," (Elsner 2007, 25) which the transformative

aspect suggests to be a lasting state, would culminate in framing one's vision for a reciprocal gaze as an "intimate communication with the divine," precisely into epiphanies grounded on this mode of viewing that begs recognition, *anagnoris*.

> This is a complex semiological process in which the relevant divinity must be correctly identified by recourse to the numerous *semata* of form and attribute that distinguish each individual god from the pantheon. But proper cognitive response to an epiphany also necessitates the understanding that, although each divine *sema* may function as a 'sign,' it also constitutes the *thing itself*, for what makes an epiphany 'epiphanic' is that the categories of sign and referent inexorably coalesce (Platt 2011, 57–58).

In this sense, particularly following Petridou's rendering of Demeter's relief (Wilhelm 2006), the reciprocal gaze adds to ἐπόπτεια as a ritual mode of viewing in the Mysteries, submitting one's identity and mortal impositions to the divine agency necessary for the goddesses to manifest themselves clearly, making ἐπόπτεια a matter of 'recognition' in the culmination of a process of reorientation and transformation. The μύστης does not voluntarily choose to undertake the Mysteries to see the divine, but may as well be there for "the power that comes from being allowed to view and being viewed by the divine" (Petridou 2013, 311). In terms of identity, we propose that the reciprocal gaze is the outcome of the μύσται subjecting themselves to appropriately 'ἐπόπτ' the gaze of the gods. The divine may bestow upon the μύστης the attainment of blessings both in life and the afterlife only if the reciprocal gaze from divine confrontation is grounded in visual reciprocity, a typical feature so central in Greek religion: one does not simply walk into the Mysteries.

Additionally, the ritual birth in the Telesterion has been suggested to be a symbolic representation of death and rebirth, which resembles Orphic eschatology, as noted by Bremmer (2014, 16) and Bernabé (2008, 194). Being Orphic does not exclude it from the Mysteries, as juxtaposing beliefs and practices

has been clearly indicated throughout the chapter: polytheism leaves open the possibility for constant integration. The problem, however, is the very structure of the *Hymn*: facing death is not praised in the poem, but it is what causes profound distress in both goddesses to the extent that Demeter employs her divine powers to cleanse Demophon of mortality with fire during the night.

Most importantly, death marks being sightless, as Demeter cannot see her daughter anymore once in the realm of the dead and repeatedly demands to see her again with her own eyes. It does not make sense to propose symbolic ritual death to take part in the highest point at the Mysteries, whose own goddess refuses death and, instead, associates 'the power of sight' with immortality from start to finish and death with 'being sightless', invisible, and even dead. In this sense, any symbolic ritual death *at the end* of the sacred rites after light blazes forth seems contradictory: "One might expect the strong child born to the strong mother to do something with his life. After his birth, Wealth has no history" (Parker 2005, 358). [157] Conversely, the ritual birth in the Mysteries could be rendered as subjecting mortals to partake in viewing the begetting of immortality as an insightful viewer.' This point is an interesting link with Plato's Diotima.

Nonetheless, the 'second best' to immortality (Parker 1991, 10) is ineffable (ἄρρητος), precisely for "the difficulties of putting the unique visual experience of the secret segment of the mysteries into words" (Petridou 2013, 320). Moreover, ritual-centred visuality "constructs a ritual barrier to the identification and objectification of a screen of discourse and positions a possibility for sacred vision" (Elsner 2007, 25).

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[157] "But in religious terms a 'birth of Iacchus' would have been a rather weak climax; Iacchus has nothing to offer mankind beyond the mystic experience itself" (Parker 2005, 358). As we have seen in the previous section, if it were Dionysus, we would know: the Orphics made no attempt to keep secrets.

In the Mysteries, we propose that the *charis* ideal would come to light in the religious relationship of personal character, reinforced by the mortal's choice to subject themselves willingly in a personal and mutual relationship to "get acquainted with, get to know the god" (Betegh 2022, 243) in closeness to the divine (Burkert 1987a, 12). In contrast, the goddesses have the privilege of continuously receiving the voluntary, insightful visions that mortals undertake in profound reverence, the 'cognitive reliability,' for the goddesses' very existence, reaffirmed by the reciprocal gaze in the Mysteries.

Admittedly, "the most pressing question is not whether they exist at all, but, first, how they can be known and, second, how such knowledge can be correctly transmitted without sacrificing cognitive immediacy to the distancing effects of representation. It is telling that epiphany's negotiation of the relationship between vision and knowledge provided Plato and his contemporaries with an influential paradigm for philosophical practice itself" (Platt 2011, 60).

This influence is precisely what must guide our rendering of ἐποπτικά in Diotima's words, considering the philosophical framework that presents us with an epiphanic setting for the epistemological process presented by her discourse, which might have much to say regarding the 'insightful viewer' that undertakes the Philosophical Mysteries of Plato.

CHAPTER TWO

Becoming Insightful to the Truth: ἐποπτικά in Diotima's Philosophical Mysteries

INTRODUCTION

1. A three-part dialogue, yet not quite the tripartite scheme

Before we begin the 'Introduction' to Chapter II, where we will present the structure that unfolds this passage of Plato's *Symposium,* it is imperative to clarify the reasons for our translation, interpretation, and commentaries. To put it forthrightly, we challenge what has become, from the late 20th century, the reasoning for accepting the standard tripartite scheme of Diotima's passage. Moreover, we are surprised by the absence of critical assessments of the archaeological, cultic, and mythological data within Plato's *Symposium* scholarship, which often accepts data at face value without engaging in debate with the scholars of those respective areas. Namely, a proper questioning of the groundworks that sustain any construal, regardless of the nature of the sources, is what one should expect. Notwithstanding, we see in this passage many recurring signs of Plato's integrative relationship with the Mysteries, to the point of transposing elements from *mysteria* to weave his spectacle of Philosophical

Mysteries,[158] as brought to light by Socrates and Diotima at the closing moments of the passage. Nonetheless, it has become commonplace in the scholarship of the *Symposium* that

> According to an influential reconstruction, the two festivals were linked as stages in a continuous progression, so that the Lesser Mysteries were a preparatory stage for the Higher Mysteries. Accordingly, interpreters of the *Symposium* tried to make *philotimia* a stage on a path leading to *philosophia* (Riedweg 1987: 2–29; Ionescu 2007). Yet, as an alternative reconstruction shows, there is no need to assume this. The Lesser Mysteries were probably an independent festival, and taking part in them constituted an act of piety complete in itself, although of lower prestige than being initiated at Eleusis (Betegh 2022, 265 n.31).[159]

Indeed, "the relation between pre-initiation and participation at the Lesser Mysteries—was the one a precondition for the other?—is obscure. So too is the content of both sets of ceremonies" (Parker 2005, 345). As we have seen in 'Chapter I,' the lines are further obscured when we also consider how a series of events is somehow interconnected yet bearing a religious significance of its own. They are spread between the i) Lesser Mysteries at Agrai, cf. Graf (2000, 614); the ii) Procession, cf. Bonnechere (2003, 176); its iii) choral rites of invocation, cf. Kindt (2012, 69); iv) the display and carrying of statues, cf. Graf (2004, 126); and vi) many other ritual acts such as a) washing and b) fasting, which all bear the typicality, cf. Jackendoff (1983, 139), of resembling acts of purification (Parker 1983, 257-309). Immersed in the plurality of polytheistic Greek cultures at the time, each of these ritual acts had a piety of its own, lending religious significance and

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[158] We owe much of our insights, particularly on terminology, such as 'spectacle,' which has a technical sense as we will see further below, to Andrea Wilson Nightingale (2001, 2004, 2005, 2010, 2021).

[159] To specify Betegh mention of Riedweg's scheme: "i) ἔλεγχος, ii) διδαχή + μῦθος, iii) ἐποπτικά. These can respectively be found at i) 199c3–201c9, ii) 201e8209e4 e iii) 209e5–212a7" (Cornelli and da Paz 2022, 8).

reciprocity to the small communities that lived near those sites and engaged in such ceremonies as part of their local communities. Moreover, we have no idea how these scholars can define the motivation of individuals to perform religious acts over 2,500 years ago, given the elective nature of the Mysteries in Eleusis and the sheer lack of historical data on the ceremony, as well as on other religions of the time. In particular, the ritual acts at Agrai (Lesser Mysteries), taken as strictly as a means for an individual to become eligible to perform the voluntary, optional, secret, and of personal choice sacred rites in the Temple of Demeter in Eleusis (Greater Mysteries):

> Whether someone participated in a cult because everyone else was doing it, or had always done it, or because there was a specific objective, I suspect that motivation was either more vague or more specific than we tend to feel comfortable about (Wellman 2005, 312).[160]

We sustain that an Athenian could be very much content with pursuing other elective local cults either in the *polis* or abroad, for any personal vague or specific reason we do not know, whilst still joining fellow Athenians during other activities in the Eleusinian festival, such as the *aparchai* of the first fruits (*Eleusis* 28a = *IG* I[3] 78a). Furthermore, an Athenian, or even civilians from other *poleis*, can choose whether to proceed in further attunement into a pious life, eventually

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[160] We reinforce the umpredicatibility for the motivation of individuals regarding behaviour in symbolic activity, which is not oriented towards goals, with two examples found in Isocrates: "We always went with him to spectacles [sc. *public theoria*] and sat at his side" (καὶ μετ' ἐκείνου τε ἐθεωροῦμεν καθήμενοι παρ' αὐτόν: Isoc. 8.16.); ". . . during our childhood we were fonder of each other than of our brothers, and we would perform no sacrifice, make no pilgrimage [sc. *divine theoria*], and celebrate no festival except in one another's company" (ἕως μὲν γὰρ παῖδες ἦμεν, περὶ πλείονος ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἡγούμεθα ἢ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, καὶ οὔτε θυσίαν οὔτε θεωρίαν οὔτ' ἄλλην ἑορτὴν οὐδεμίαν χωρὶς ἀλλήλων ἤγομεν: Isoc. 19.10). Here the 'goal,' or rather the motivation for participation in the ceremonies, is clearly friendship, a very specific and personal one, whose determining should be left to the agents.

pursuing the prestigious and elective sacred rites of the Mysteries toward Demeter's sanctuary in Eleusis. In any case, both in the 'Mysteries of Eros,' as we will further discuss, and the Eleusinian Mysteries, such 'preparation' or 'purification' is not, by any means whatsoever, a matter of any singular set of acts of qualification and graduation, such as it is equivocally claimed about 'The Lesser Mysteries,' but a matter of a continuous and transformative practice (Elsner 2007; Petridou 2013; Edmonds 2017, 201-02), following the pattern of reciprocity so typical of Greek religion, from the Homeric to the Hellenistic periods.

Furthermore, the 'Lesser' and 'Greater Mysteries' debate on eligibility is otiose at this point. Surprisingly, despite the lack of consensus among authoritative scholars on the Mysteries over the past 50 years,[161] scholarship on the *Symposium* appears to have largely agreed by accepting the traditional reading proposed almost 40 years ago without much critical scrutiny,[162] drawing from just one of the many *probable* reconstructions of the Mysteries. The primary issue with this reading is that its historiographic foundation can no longer sustain itself.

The shift in the historical debate in Greek religion and ancient Greek history has its roots in the works of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1997, 151), who clarified the integration of the Mysteries within the Athenian intra-*polis* civic

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[161] The following authoritative sholars on Greek religion, epigraphy, archaeology, literacy, and ancient Greek history, repeteadly emphasise their own inability to reliably provide a reconstruction of the Mysteries based on inexistent direct historical data: Graf (1974, 139); Burkert (1979, 35; 1983, 287); Foley (1993, 68); Clinton (1993, 93); Bremmer (1998b, 14; 2014, 2); Sourvinou-Inwood (2003, 25); Parker (2011, 252); Petridou (2013, 320).

[162] Betegh (2022) and Edmonds (2017) are two exceptions to the wide acceptance of Riedweg's.

context in the Classical Period. It was Price (1999, 144 ff.), however, who pointed to blurring lines between i) Athenian obligatory, civic religiosity and ii) elective, public *mysteria* spread within and outside Athens, suggesting a more nuanced view of Sourvinou-Inwood's 'closures' and 'openings' at the individual level, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood (1987, 227). Graf elucidated the social aspects of 'lesser' local *mysteria* in forming group identity through a dialectic relation with the prestigious Mysteries from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods (Graf 2003, 254-56). The core of the technical issue could not be better expressed than by Parker's corrective view:[163]

> Festivals are, above all, forms of collective activity, but those who interpret them in terms of goals are hard put to it to explain why this should be so, or why they constitute, in fact, the most important form of festivity for societies that take them seriously . . . one in which the identity of the actors is just as important as the acts which they are called on to perform. The meaning of such a performance cannot be squeezed out into a formulation in a few words any more than can that of a play or other work of art; and labels such as 'rites of passages' or 'calendrical rites' are legitimate only for use in crude preliminary sorting, not by way of final explanation. Unfortunately, if this approach to the understanding of ritual is sound, the vast gaps in our knowledge become all the more damaging. One might with luck be able to grasp the main aim of an action many details of which were obscure. But fragments of a performance mean little, and the quality of an experience can emerge only from a continuous description (Parker 2005, 158–59).

In this sense, we opted to minimise in our interpretation the tendency to view Greek religious acts as goal-oriented activities. From the second section of 'Chapter I,' we were clear in adopting 'rituals' as an analytical category of *immediate utility,* rather than as a final explanation, which pointed to juxtaposing, gradual, and sometimes contradictory symbolic behaviour thereafter

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[163] Julia Kindt (2012, throughout) as a corrective is also worth mentioning.

described in terms of action and identity of the agents. We thus moved away from definite positions regarding Greek religion. We cannot answer for the μύσται regarding their motivations in undertaking the Mysteries, as scholars have apparently done, and, by doing so, profanating the ἀπόρρητα: unfortunately, the secrets remain, to this day, well-kept. Although we tentatively proposed a probable structure for subjective and personal transformation regarding identities grounded on visuality in the Mysteries, we were cautious enough not to extrapolate the limits of each set of religious acts, particularly those within the domain of visual activity. It is quite absurd to assume that literally a dozen religious practices and beliefs at the time, at different locales, existed for the sake of the sole purpose of enabling people to undertake the Mysteries in Eleusis.[164]

Therefore, considering the inexistence of direct historical data of the ceremonies during Mysteries in the time of Plato, there is no historiographic justification to follow the traditional tripartite scheme's reasons, as explained above by Betegh, because it draws its sources from considerably later testimonies, particularly Clemens, Theon, and Philon: they are as close to Plato as we are to Thomas Aquinas. It does not mean their testimonies should be disregarded or considered invalid. Conversely, as we demonstrated in Chapter I's first section, it is possible to find plausibility in the face of historical possibility, cf. Bloch (1953, 124), based on later testimonies. In fact, we were even able to find historical plausibility in Cicero's later testimony because we have found historical

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[164] It should be noted that it is sound to accept that many individuals, across over a thousand years of Eleusinian Mysteries, decided to seek the 'Greater Mysteries' for prestige, and may have invested money and an unreasonable amount of time to do so. However, we cannot take the exception for the rule, as each year over 3000 μύσται undertook initiation by the time of Pericles, numbers carefully provided by Bremmer (2014, 15). As such, generalisations do not help us in the scholarly debate on the Mysteries.

possibilities surrounding Plato's time in many other sources, including literary, laws, and inscriptions. However, it is not the same case with Clemens, Theon, and Philo regarding Eleusis in Plato's time. The reason is simple: in a process of *bricolage*, to fit the 'needs,' the 'spaces,'" through which "any echoes of cultic history are radically reshaped and adapted" (Sourvinou-Inwood 1990a, 216), Eleusis underwent considerable changes over the span of more than 600 years from Plato to the Imperial period, providing a different picture to the first Christian authors. The plausibility in their view of the Mysteries, when compared to the possibility of practices and beliefs surrounding Plato's time, is something we cannot simply determine, because, on the one hand, their testimonies are not as simple as Cicero's and, on the other hand, they do not even agree among themselves, depicting drastically different images of the Mysteries. Admittedly, Clemens, Theon, and Philo provide significant and relevant insights into the religion of the Greeks. Their contribution is robust and valuable. However, their insights reflect a religious 'moment' in many ways incompatible with the Mysteries of the fifth century BCE. Therefore, their views remain distant from the Eleusis we take as one of the main objects of this study.

As such, we reject Riedweg's construal and present our approach to the text, seeking to translate it word by word, in a close dialogue with over 30 translations and the four editions of the text we have at our disposal, as well as the Second Century CE's *Papyrus P.Oxy.5 843* (1908), which has the entirety of Diotima's dialogue with Socrates on its pages and insightful remarks from its editor. Naturally, since Schleiermacher, translations dealt with the Greek text and proposed solutions to many of its complex problems. Furthermore, each translation reflects an interpretation of the text, enriching the debate on this passage. Consequently, one-liner footnotes would not do justice to a careful and critical debate over choices on translation, both at the theoretical and at the lexical

level. Conversely, not only does a section of commentaries leave the translation clean, providing readers with a fluid text without requiring them to shift their focus to the bottom of each page, but it also enables us to properly debate problems in length and point to possibilities that inevitably remain open.

Lastly, although we do not follow the widespread tripartite schematisation of this passage, we do not disregard a vocabulary that has been crystallised in studies of the *Symposium* in the last 40 years. In this sense, we still refer to the second moment of the passage as the 'Lesser Mysteries' and the third as the 'Highest Mysteries' for the sole purpose of academic clarity and to insert us in the debate by making ourselves understandable regarding such scholarly consolidated terms. Nonetheless, now we will present the structure that unfolds this moment of the *Symposium,* along with our interpretation of the text, followed by extensive commentaries, not before displaying Plato's transpositions of the Mysteries into Philosophy in the pages that follow.

2. The Being of Eros, The Doings of Eros, and the *Telos* of Eros: for an alternative tripartite reading of Diotima in the *Symposium*

The structure of this passage from the *Symposium* consists of three core moments, a living, unfolding structure carefully crafted by Plato. The young Socrates, by himself, continuously seeks the priestess Diotima (ἐφοίτων παρὰ σὲ αὐτὰ ταῦτα: 206b5) in a dialogue permeated by religious elements, as Plato transposes them into philosophy through the characters, setting, words, and images. The very first word spoken by Diotima sets the religious tone for the passage: οὐκ εὐφημήσεις. Yet, her words demonstrate how Plato subtly and gradually transposes religion into the heart of the philosophy presented by

Diotima, who, instead of practising religious acts along with Socrates, employs questions and answers (ἀνακρίνουσα διῄει: 201e), a typical feature of dialectics. This is a meaningful shift, one carefully executed through a character who has halted the plague in Athens for ten years (δέκα ἔτη ἀναβολὴν ἐποίησε τῆς νόσου: 201d) and urges Socrates to speak words of good omen (οὐκ εὐφημήσεις; 201e), yet she herself relentlessly presents complex philosophical arguments. When Socrates wonders, usually marked by θαυμαζώ, Diotima rebukes him (ἀλλὰ μὴ θαύμαζ᾽: 205b) and calibrates her tone to become understandable (ἀλλ᾽ ἐγώ, ἦ δ᾽ ἥ, σαφέστερον ἐρῶ: 206c), shifting the subject of their investigation and marking points of inflexion in the passage, to the extent the young can follow. Diotima does not display sacred objects to the young but instead displays him reasons (λόγον δοῦναι: 202a). To put it differently, the very text, and its points of inflexion, are built by, on the one hand, Socrates's desire for truth, which impels him not to give up as he faces thorny arguments and acknowledges his own lack (γνοὺς ὅτι διδασκάλων δέομαι: 207c) and, on the other, Diotima's desire to care for the youth's eagerness to follow her reasoning (ἐρῶ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, ἐγὼ καὶ προθυμίας οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω: 210a), in their conjoint seeking for truth. Regarding the third moment of the passage, our interpretation owes its structuring to the insights of Christopher Rowe:

> The so-called 'ascent' passage, which introduces a new metaphor, that of the mysteries [*mysteria*] (mainly those of Eleusis), and combines it with the one already in play . . . However, there is no real sense of strain in the combination, partly because the latter theme is not entirely a metaphor: just insofar as the passage is — like what precedes it — about desire as a whole . . . However if it is read closely with, and as representing the climax and end-point of what precedes it, its general sense and shape seem to emerge clearly enough . . . I have described what I believe, at least for the moment, to be the most satisfactory interpretation, measured by its explanatory power both in relation to the actual language of the passage and, equally importantly, in relation to the passage's context as the last

part of a long and apparently structured piece of writing. No reading is likely to be successful which fails to explain the development of the argument from at least as far back as Agathon's speech (since Diotima incontrovertibly starts from there), and the way in which the ascent passage develops out of that (Rowe 1998, 192-193).

Indeed, the third moment does not present a shift in subject but instead presents the logical dynamics of what has been discussed up to that point, converging the two other moments in a presentation of a general methodological horizon to be correctly pursued by the μύστης in τὰ ἐρωτικά. Following the pattern of naming events after the most central acts in Greek religion (Bremmer 1994, 53), such as προθύματα, cf. *IG* II² 47 (23-39), named after the preliminary sacrifices in the ἐπιδαύρια, cf. *IG* II² 4962, here we opted to translate τὰ ἐρωτικά, when mentioned by Diotima, as the Mysteries of Eros, to emphasise the centrality of Plato's conscious transpositions of *mysteria* into philosophy. The brilliant point in this movement is that they are not mutually exclusive but rather integrative:

> Plato thus never suggests that taking the Forms as divine, and conceiving philosophy as the highest mystery leading to them, should be concomitant with a deprecation of the traditional gods or a desacralization of sacred rites, and the traditional mysteries in particular – as long as they are in line with his theological principles. Indeed, in the very same texts in which Plato presents philosophy as the highest mystery, he also allows that poets, priests, diviners, and founders of *teletai* can have direct access to information about divine matters – or more precisely, that gods can choose to communicate with humans through select individuals (*Smp.* 202e–203a, *Meno* 99c–d). Plato appears to accept that on such important topics as the soul–body relationship and the immortality of the soul, or what might happen to the soul after death, the divinely inspired pronouncements of such people might contain crucial insights. Once we make a genuine effort to understand what these pronouncements really mean, and subject them to a thorough critical examination, they can galvanize and feed into philosophical investigation (Betegh 2022, 239).

To say it again, in the *Symposium*, it becomes philosophy without ceasing to be religious, as both characters, from the conclusions they reached together through the dialogue (οὗ πολλάκις ὡμολογήκαμεν: 207c), and after a toilsome route through complex philosophical arguments (οὗ δὴ ἕνεκεν καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν: 210e), end up together in seek of the divine beautiful itself (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλὸν: 211e), in hopes of becoming dear to the gods by the continued practice of philosophy, the only way of life to make one truly virtuous (τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι: 212a). Notwithstanding, the passage has been divided in our rendering into three main sections:

i) The Being of Eros: A linkage between gods and mortals (201d1-206a11); ii) The Doings of Eros: An activity of extreme eagerness (206b7-209e4); iii) The *Telos* of Eros: Becoming kindred to the Truth (209a5-212a7).[165]

2.1. Intro: From wanderings to wondering: Socrates passes the torch from Agathon to his young self.

In the Introduction (201d-e7), Socrates reminds us of a crucial detail for comprehending Diotima's path, which subtly shifts the object of Eros from 'what is beautiful' to 'what is good,' a movement that may confuse the interpretation of the text. The detail is precious and well-woven by Plato. In comparing his young self to Agathon and stating that 'his young self has reached the same

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[165] Introduction (201d-e7), along with Outro (212b-c3), are not considered here as belonging to any of the three moments, given that they comprises remarks of the 'old Socrates,' namely, moments in the fictional 'present' of the *Symposium*, when the 'old Socrates' offers and finishes his talk, rather than belonging to the dialogue with Diotima.

conclusions the host has arrived,' he also adopts the very conclusions both have reached together in the discourse as the starting point for his dialogue with Diotima.

The key point to follow Diotima's complex explanation, which is indeed thorny at some points, is found precisely at 201c2-3 (S: τἀγαθὰ οὐ καὶ καλὰ δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι; A: ἔμοιγε. S: εἰ ἄρα ὁ Ἔρως τῶν καλῶν ἐνδεής ἐστι, τὰ δὲ ἀγαθὰ καλά, κἂν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐνδεὴς εἴη). Here, back at the ending of Agathon speech, Socrates and the host concluded together that 'good things are also beautiful things,' thus equating 'what is good' with 'what is beautiful' and vice versa. This is the credential for Diotima, who inherits the arguments carried out by Agathon and Socrates through this Platonic literary device, allowing her to shift between the two as objects of Eros whenever it is more convenient for her to continue her arguments.

Moreover, Socrates makes it clear that it is a recount (διελθεῖν: 201d) of a talk about Eros (τὸν δὲ λόγον τὸν περὶ τοῦ Ἔρωτος: 201d) he has held with Diotima (Μαντινικῆς Διοτίμας: 201d) in the past. Furthermore, 'recounting' has been emphasised by the verb διέρχομαι in multiple layers, from the prologue's first lines (172b4) to its insistent repetition in the opening of each talk, up to Socrates himself, as noted by Pio (2025, forthcoming). Moreover, 'recounting' what has been seen is an integral part of a divine *theoria*, arguably as central as the journey to view the gods. The listeners form the necessary 'outsiders' whose perceptions are vital to the dialectic process of creating the boundaries required to instantiate the social identity and validating the discourse of a divine *theoros*, the 'insider' of the tale (cf. Graf 2003, 256). The very structure of this presentation transposes the image of the *theoros* into this passage, transforming the pilgrimage's wanderings into the philosophical wonderings, cf. Nightingale 2005, as just the very

beginning of a series of appropriations and transformations of religious elements to fit Plato's construction of this text.

3. The Being of Eros: A linkage between gods and mortals (201d1-206a11).

3.1. (201d1-203a8): Eros as Intermediary: Mediated agency.

Diotima begins precisely as Socrates introduced her, namely, by refuting Socrates' notion (ἤλεγχε δή με) that Eros is beautiful or good (οὔτε καλὸς . . . οὔτε ἀγαθός). He is neither of the two (201e5-6). To the young's astonishment, Eros, however, is not ugly nor bad either (αἰσχρός ἄρα ὁ Ἔρως ἐστὶ καὶ κακός; 201e7-10). Diotima presents an analogy of correct opinion (ἡ ὀρθὴ δόξα: 202a7) to solve the astonishment of the young Socrates, which is profoundly relevant to the dialogue that is about to unfold.

Diotima explains that correct believing is being unable to give reasons for what one believes (τὸ ὀρθὰ δοξάζειν καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι: 202a5). After all, knowledge cannot be unreasonable (ἀλόγος: 202a6) and ignorance cannot be of what may happen to be true (τὸ γὰρ τοῦ ὄντος τυγχάνον: 202a7). The correct opinion, then, lies between wisdom and ignorance (ἡ ὀρθὴ δόξα, μεταξὺ φρονήσεως καὶ ἀμαθίας 202a5-7202a7-8). By extension, their conclusion also counts for Eros, which is also situated between the beautiful/good and the ugly/bad (ὁμολογεῖς μὴ εἶναι ἀγαθὸν μηδὲ καλόν, μηδέν τι μᾶλλον οἴου δεῖν αὐτὸν αἰσχρὸν καὶ κακὸν εἶναι, ἀλλά τι μεταξύ, ἔφη, τούτοιν: 202b1-5). The dividing line between a recount of a *theoros* and this transposition made by Plato may be in the offering of *reasons* to justify the recounting of what is viewed, passive of collective examination: Diotima explains here that knowledge implies being able to give an account (ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι: 202a5) of 'what is.'

Socrates displays difficulties in abstracting the 'in-between' from the tension of one pole with the other. Diotima, then, focuses on the core of what sustains her argument on Eros's status as intermediary. The pillar for this argument is that Eros is not a god (ἔρωτα οὐ θεὸν: 202b6-e2), drawing resistance from the puzzled Socrates. But Diotima carefully calibrates her words so that not only can Socrates himself follow, but it is also the very Socrates that will enounce the conclusion at which both arrive together.

Diotima claims that gods are happy and beautiful (πάντας θεοὺς φὴς εὐδαίμονας εἶναι καὶ καλούς: 202c5-6) and that the happy are those who possess beautiful and good things (εὐδαίμονας δὲ δὴ λέγεις οὐ τοὺς τἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ καλὰ κεκτημένους: 202c10). Since Eros desires what he lacks, which is good and beauty (ἔνδειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν: 202d1-2), then Eros does not have what is typical of a god (πῶς ἂν οὖν θεὸς εἴη ὅ γε τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἄμοιρος; 202c6-d7). In fact, now Socrates is ready to accept that Eros is an intermediary between gods and mortals, a *great daimon* (δαίμων μέγας, ὦ Σώκρατες: καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξύ ἐστι θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ: 202d8-e2).

3.2. (202e3-203a8): The δύναμις of Eros: his power/abilities.

Upon concluding together with Diotima that Eros is not a god, Socrates turns the question to his δύναμις (τίνα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δύναμιν ἔχον; 202e). Diotima explains that he is an interpreter and messenger between gods and mortals (ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν: 202e5). Eros mediates distinct modes of religiosity. Most importantly, Eros is one among many *daimones* (οὗτοι δὴ οἱ δαίμονες πολλοὶ καὶ παντοδαποί εἰσιν, εἷς δὲ τούτων ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ Ἔρως: 203a), precisely the one who provides communion and

communication between gods and human beings (διὰ τούτου πᾶσά ἐστιν ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους: 203a).

This entire paragraph, particularly its conclusion, holds significant philosophical importance. From "Eros is one of them" follows that there are many other *daimones* (οὗτοι δὴ οἱ δαίμονες πολλοὶ καὶ παντοδαποί εἰσιν: 203a6-7) whose influence on either mortal or divine domains is left unspecified by Diotima. Additionally, it follows from this paragraph that other modes of religion (ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπῳδὰς καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν: 202e6-203a2) and their respective specialists (σοφὸς δαιμόνιος ἀνήρ: 202e6-203a2) also become possible because of Eros. Furthermore, Eros is not *the* intermediary but is instead *one* of the intermediaries, namely the one because of which (διὰ τούτου: 203a2) communion (intercourse) and communication (transmitted language/perhaps *semata*?) become possible between gods and mortals (ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους: 203a2-3). This is a bold move, challenging the claim of religious specialists and cults to offer access to the divine, as many *mysteria* consider themselves the most fitting way to provide and maintain more intimate relationships with the divine. Plato, however, does not cut the knot to artificially remove the issue by denying their claim. After all, since both ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος are because of Eros, Plato lays the ground for his transposition of Greek religion's crowning jewel into his philosophy. Diotima's words set an exclusive ontological groundwork for any claims to the acquisition of knowledge from the divine to be grounded on Eros. More precisely, Diotima's image of Eros's δύναμις depicts him as clearly being responsible for two core, typical features of divine epiphany in Greek religion at the time: divine presence (ὁμιλία: 203a3) and a need for interpretation (ἑρμηνεῦν: 202e3) of the divine that appears.

No encounter with divinity can transcend the need for interpretation entirely. As many epiphanic narratives suggest, the visual manifestation of a god, often signified by the use of *phainesthai* or *enargēs*, requires a corresponding process of perception and recognition—*noēsis* and *anagnōrisis*—from its mortal witnesses (Platt 2011, 57).

Not only is Plato's transposition of divine epiphany at the core of Diotima's speech, but it may also be at the centre of his philosophical project as a whole (cf. *Phdr.* 249d4-256e2, *Resp.* 518d3-7; 521c5-8). As Platt reminds us: "As a hermeneutic exercise, however, epiphany also functions as a religious expression of the epistemological project that drove much Greek philosophy" (2011, 59). Further below, we will see how, at the same time, it does not cease to be religious and is transposed to the domain of the philosophers, the ones who may establish an intimate contact with divine beauty itself (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλὸν: 211e3) in the *correct way*.

3.3. (203b1-e9): Eros' origin as the cause for his nature.

Diotima, then, is asked about the origins of Eros, and Plato presents through her a beautiful aetiological myth, following a tradition dating back to Hesiod, as we saw in Chapter I's third section. To be precise, it is a tradition that incorporates narrative elements in recounting the establishment of a religion or the worship of a deity. In the case of Eleusis, regardless of whether the *Hymn* served as a script for cultic behaviour during the Mysteries or not, it is a narrative that explains, through a causal structure grounded in a cosmogony, how the sacred rites were instituted. Plato's myth resembles, at least in its structure, the explanatory myths that give reasons or causes for the origin of a deity or a cult, even if it resorts to images. The difference, which is profound, is that Plato explains the origins of something that is neither divine nor worthy of worship.

Eros has a divine birth: child of Poros (Resource) and Penia (Poverty) (203b1-c4). Because he was conceived during the divine celebrations of Aphrodite's day of birth (ὅτε γὰρ ἐγένετο ἡ Ἀφροδίτη, ἡστιῶντο οἱ θεοὶ: 203b) due to Penia's *aporia* (διὰ τὴν αὐτῆς ἀπορίαν παιδίον ποιήσασθαι ἐκ τοῦ Πόρου, κατακλίνεταί τε παρ' αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκύησε τὸν ἔρωτα: 203b-c), he was by nature a lover of the beautiful because of Aphrodite's divine beauty (φύσει ἐραστὴς ὢν περὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καλῆς οὔσης: 203c).

Therefore, due to his double nature and quite a unique ontological status, his φύσις is unlike either that of gods or mortals (ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός: 203e1), for he rises and flourishes while resourceful (τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ: 203e1-2) to die again when they fade away (τοτὲ δὲ ἀποθνῄσκει: 203e3). He is neither in *aporia* nor in abundance (οὔτε ἀπορεῖ Ἔρως ποτὲ οὔτε πλουτεῖ: 203d4). This is the mythological reason for being an intermediary: he exists between ignorance and wisdom (σοφίας τε αὖ καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν: 203e).

If we translate ἀπορίαν instead of maintaining it in its transliterate form as *aporia*, we may lose an insightful detail from the image conveyed by Diotima's aetiological myth of Eros. As we will see further below, Πόρος is neither 'wealth' nor 'abundance,' as Πλοῦτος is in the Eleusinian/Orphic tradition, but instead explains the 'Resource-ful' φύσις of Eros. At the same time, Eros has a poor (πενής) φύσις as well, because his origins also lie in Πηνία (Poverty). Accordingly, if we read this clause as causal/explicative (δια τὴν απορίαν: 203b7-8), then the upcoming definition of Eros as a philosopher, between wisdom and ignorance, displays how, by analogy, it is also part of the philosopher's nature to sometimes have the resources in the pursuit for truth, whilst to sometimes be in *aporia*— lacking resources during an investigation. In other words, *aporia* may be indicated here as an integral part of both Eros' and the philosopher's nature,

instead of the expected candidate: wisdom. Conversely, *aporia* could be attractive to be read as an inherent marker of both Eros' and philosophers' needful nature, which maintains the philosopher in a never-ending movement of seeking truth. That is, a necessary limiting element responsible for moving, so to speak, both Eros and the philosopher toward the unlimited horizon of wisdom, which cannot be fully attained due to the *aporetic* nature of both Eros and the philosopher.

Furthermore, the perfect tense in γέγονεν contrasts with terms used to determine Eros' event of birth (γεννηθεὶς: 203c3, aorist) and origin (ἡ γένεσις: 204b6, noun). Both γέγονεν and πέφυκεν (203e1) in the perfect tense refer to the δύναμις of Eros' φύσις. Namely, the inherent constitutive attributes that Eros currently has for being an intermediary *daimon*. In this sense, Diotima answers Socrates' question from the start of this section (τίνα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δύναμιν ἔχον; 202e1) by describing the origin and nature of Eros and displaying to Socrates how an investigation of his φύσις and γένεσις provides reasons for Eros' current δύναμις as an intermediary *daimon*, better expressed with the perfect tense.

3.4. (204a1-c6) Eros is a philosopher: intermediary and acknowledged lack.

This route — once the investigation of Eros φύσις grounded through reasons unfolded the answer to Socrates' question about his δύναμις — allows Diotima to define Eros as a philosopher and define intermediary as acknowledged seekers: Neither gods, wise people, nor ignorant desire to become wise (οὐδ' ἐπιθυμεῖ σοφὸς γενέσθαι: 204a), the latter because they cannot even acknowledge their lack wisdom, as they find themselves sufficient enough as they are (τὸ μὴ ὄντα καλὸν κἀγαθὸν μηδὲ φρόνιμον δοκεῖν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἱκανόν: 204a), seekers of wisdom are neither wise nor ignorant (οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες, εἰ μήτε οἱ σοφοὶ μήτε οἱ ἀμαθεῖς; 204a), wisdom is of utmost beauty (ἔστιν γὰρ δὴ τῶν καλλίστων ἡ σοφία 204b2),

and Eros is love for the beautiful (Ἔρως δ' ἐστὶν ἔρως περὶ τὸ καλόν: 204b3) Therefore Eros is necessarily a philosopher (ἀναγκαῖον ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι 204d), intermediary between the wise and the ignorant (φιλόσοφον δὲ ὄντα μεταξὺ εἶναι σοφοῦ καὶ ἀμαθοῦς: 204d), who seek both what they lack insofar as they both acknowledge and value it (204b1-7). And the value of the object they seek is described bearing heavy resonances with *mysteria*: both τέλεον and μακαριστόν.[166]

Diotima, through this route, which goes back to Socrates's original question that opens this section (τίνα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δύναμιν ἔχον; 202e), can only reach this conclusion because the investigation pointed to the nature (φύσις) of Eros, from which emerged the nature of the philosopher. And the Greek text is emphatic: the origin of them, namely, ἡ γένεσις τούτων, lies in a reason (αἰτία δὲ αὐτῷ: 204b): the nature of Eros (ἡ μὲν οὖν φύσις τοῦ δαίμονος: 204b), that is, a wise and resourceful father and a lacking mother in *aporia* (πατρὸς μὲν γὰρ σοφοῦ ἐστι καὶ εὐπόρου, μητρὸς δὲ οὐ σοφῆς καὶ ἀπόρου: 204b). The aetiological myth, therefore, is also a pedagogical display to the young Socrates, teaching him to investigate the cause (αἰτία) in the nature (φύσις) of the subjects he seeks, for investigating the causes may as well reveal the answers a philosopher looks for.

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[166] cf. Norden (1913, 99 ff.); Dirichlet (1914, 62 ff.); Regenbogen (1930, 11); and Festugière (1956, 78 ff.). For studies on late-twentiethcentury evidence for Orphic connections with the Eleusinian *makarismos*, cf. Graf (1993, 239–58) on Tsantsanoglou's and Parássoglou's (1987, 3–17) findings; Burkert (1993, 259–75) on Foti's and Carrateli's (1974, 91–126); West (1982, 17–29) on Rusajeva's (1978, 87–104); Bernabé and Cristóbal (2008) for a broader analysis. Guthrie (1966, 171–82) should also be mentioned, bearing in mind that it predates clarifying insights from Hipponian, Olbian, and Pelinnan inscriptions. For Plato's transposition of *makarismos*, cf. Faraone (2010, 145–66).

3.5. (204d-205b2): Happiness as the object of Eros for humans: possessing what they lack and value.

After such a long explanation, as Diotima warned him (μακρότερον δέ, ἔφη: 203b), Socrates then pushes for another pressing question: 'What is the value of Eros and all of this to human beings?' (τοιοῦτος ὢν ὁ Ἔρως τίνα χρείαν ἔχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις; 204c7). Diotima, then, moves toward questioning that lovers of beautiful things love to have beautiful things (D: ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν καλῶν: τί ἐρᾷ; S: καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὅτι γενέσθαι αὑτῷ: 204d1-10). Insofar as lovers of good things love to have good things (D: ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν ἀγαθῶν: τί ἐρᾷ; S: γενέσθαι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, αὑτῷ: 204e1-2). When both lovers of beautiful things and good things have those things, they become happy (εὐδαίμων ἔσται: 204e). Therefore, Diotima defines happiness as the object of love for what is good (204e1-205a2).

3.6. (205b3-206a2): The Analogy of Eros-*Poiesis*: mistaking parts and whole.

Diotima is satisfied with the conclusion of this moment in their investigation, by subtly using another term from the Mysteries which will be constantly repeated later in the passage (ἀλλὰ τέλος δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἡ ἀπόκρισις: 205a). However, the priestess wants to move their conclusion in generality, namely, Diotima decides to move upwards along with the young Socrates by testing if they can reach a general definition of Eros. Their point of departure is in asking if this Eros is commom to every and all human beings (τὸν ἔρωτα τοῦτον πότερα κοινὸν οἴει εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων: 205a). Socrates believes so, but is left wondering again (θαυμάζω, ἦν δ' ἐγώ: 205b) because Diotima strikes at the heart of the problem: of some we say they love and are lovers, whilst of others we do not (ἀλλὰ τινάς φαμεν ἐρᾶν, τοὺς δ' οὔ; 205b).

Diotima shifts to an analogy between Eros and *poiesis*: one form of love is abstracted from the whole of love (ἀφελόντες γὰρ ἄρα τοῦ ἔρωτός τι εἶδος: 205b3-5). *Poiesis* is crafting in general, and all crafters are poets (205b6-c3). But we take one form of *poiesis* and poets to name the whole (οὐ καλοῦνται ποιηταὶ ἀλλὰ ἄλλα ἔχουσιν ὀνόματα, ἀπὸ δὲ πάσης τῆς ποιήσεως ἓν μόριον ἀφορισθὲν τὸ περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ τὰ μέτρα τῷ τοῦ ὅλου ὀνόματι προσαγορεύεται. ποίησις γὰρ τοῦτο μόνον καλεῖται, καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες τοῦτο τὸ μόριον τῆς ποιήσεως ποιηταί: 205c5-c9). All the desire for good and happiness is in everyone (205d1-2), but we do not apply the name of the whole to all forms of love (οἱ δὲ κατὰ ἕν τι εἶδος ἰόντες τε καὶ ἐσπουδακότες τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ὄνομα ἴσχουσιν, ἔρωτά τε καὶ ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐρασταί: 205d5-e8). Diotima even moves towards 'those who say' (τις, ἔφη, λόγος: 205d) that love is for the whole or a part, because we do not love either part or whole unless valued as good (ὁ δ' ἐμὸς λόγος οὔτε ἡμίσεός φησιν εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα οὔτε ὅλου, ἐὰν μὴ τυγχάνῃ γέ που, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἀγαθὸν ὄν: 205e1-3). After all, being whole is not a sum of parts but integrality (205e4-6). Thus, everyone loves what they value as good (ὡς οὐδέν γε ἄλλο ἐστὶν οὗ ἐρῶσιν ἄνθρωποι ἢ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ: 206a1-2).

3.7. (206a3-11) Eros is love for having what is good forever: the first general definition.

Diotima, now, can present a first general definition of Eros after aiming towards generality by asking what is common to all before the analogy of Eros-*poiesis* (τὸν ἔρωτα τοῦτον πότερα κοινὸν οἴει εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων: 205a). Precisely, human beings love what is good (οἱ ἄνθρωποι τἀγαθοῦ ἐρῶσιν: 206a3-4). Not only do they love to have what is good for them (καὶ εἶναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὑτοῖς ἐρῶσιν: 206a6-7), but they also love to *always* have what is good for them (καὶ οὐ μόνον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀεὶ εἶναι: 206a8). Therefore, the conclusion can be no other than

that Eros is for having what is good for oneself forever (ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἀεί: 206a11).

4. The doings of Eros: an activity of extreme eagerness.

4.1. (206b7-207a4): The activity of begetting in what is beautiful.

Right after conceding that what they concluded together was absolutely true (ἀληθέστατα, ἔφην ἐγώ, λέγεις: 206a), the young Socrates was again left to wonder, this time at Diotima's wisdom and eager to learn (ἐθαύμαζον ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ ἐφοίτων παρὰ σὲ αὐτὰ ταῦτα μαθησόμενος: 206b), for she shifted the investigation from 'what Eros is' to seek questions on 'the doings of Eros' (τί τοῦτο τυγχάνει ὂν τὸ ἔργον; 206b). The young Socrates comes to the point to suggest the need for someone related to the divine to make sense of the general mechanism of Eros (μαντείας, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δεῖται ὅτι ποτε λέγεις, καὶ οὐ μανθάνω: 206b): begetting in what is beautiful with the body and with the soul (τόκος ἐν καλῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν: 206b).

> The centrality of "giving birth" as the culmination of philosophical life is a striking feature of the *Symposium*, and interpreters of the dialogue sometimes have a hard time explaining it. As we now understand, this special focus is in a way overdetermined. It is naturally linked to the topic of erotic desire, the overarching theme of the dialogue. Giving birth is also the way to achieve "immortality" through one's biological or psychic progeny. But for someone who knew what happened at the Mysteries, Diotima's pronouncement had deeper meaning and powerful connotations, echoing and reinterpreting the culmination of the rites (Betegh 2022, 251).

Diotima proceeds to explain that everyone is pregnant and desires to beget (κυοῦσιν . . . πάντες ἄνθρωποι: 206c1-5). Living beings beget for the sake of

immortality (τοῦτο ἐν θνητῷ ὄντι τῷ ζῴῳ ἀθάνατον ἔνεστιν: 206c6). Pregnancy and begetting are something divine (τοῦτο θεῖον τὸ πρᾶγμα: 206c7): the ugly (αἰσχρόν) has nothing to do with the divine (ἀνάρμοστον δ' ἐστὶ τὸ αἰσχρὸν παντὶ τῷ θείῳ: 206d1-3). Beauty, on the other hand, is attuned to the divine (τὸ δὲ καλὸν ἁρμόττον: 206d1-2). Since begetting cannot be in (through) what is ugly/bad (206d1-2), beauty is the medium of begetting (206d3). Beauty delights and relaxes for begetting and procreation (ἵλεών τε γίγνεται καὶ εὐφραινόμενον διαχεῖται καὶ τίκτει τε καὶ γεννᾷ: 206d4-e2), whereas Ugly/bad repulses and painfully halts procreation (206d4-7). Beauty releases the great anguish held within (τὸ καλὸν διὰ τὸ μεγάλης ὠδῖνος ἀπολύειν τὸν ἔχοντα: 206e1-2), for great is the state of excitement near the beautiful (πολλὴ ἡ πτοίησις γέγονε περὶ τὸ καλὸν: 206e2).

Note that *what is beautiful* (καλῷ, dat.) in the singular indicates a particular beautiful medium in which *who is pregnant* (τὸ κυοῦν) *may beget and procreate* (τίκτει τε καὶ γεννᾷ: 206d5) whatever they bear within. Sheffield adds that "the notion that lovers are seeking something beautiful in which to beget needs to be analysed carefully. The phrase τόκος ἐν καλῷ suggests begetting (literally) in beauty, as if lovers were ejaculating inside a beautiful object in the context of a sexual encounter. Throughout, τόκος is ambiguous between ejaculation and delivery. But since the role of beauty is to preside over childbirth (206d1) and we are told that the pregnant lover begets 'in proximity to the beautiful' (περὶ τὸ καλόν, 206e1), we need to modify our understanding of τόκος ἐν καλόν so that it does not import any literal, spatial sense of begetting in beauty. Beauty is better described as the creative environment in which lovers beget their offspring, where the ἐν indicates being in the presence of, rather than literally inside, beauty. Price notes a similar use of 'in' to signify the occasion rather than precise location at *Phaedr.* 228 e 4; cf. *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (1989), 41 n. 45" (Sheffield 2001, 3).

4.2. (207b1-208b6) The cause of this activity: for the sake of immortality.

Diotima finishes this moment of her explanation of Eros being for procreation and begetting in what is beautiful (τῆς γεννήσεως καὶ τοῦ τόκου ἐν τῷ καλῷ: 206e3-4) by noting that, if Eros is for having what is good forever (207a3), then it is necessary to admit that Eros is desire for immortality (ἀναγκαῖον δὴ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας τὸν ἔρωτα εἶναι: 207a4). Therefore, Diotima and the young can conclude on the cause of this activity: it is for the sake of immortality (207b1-208b6). This suggests a universal function and mechanism for Eros, as animals are also subject to this love and desire (πάντα τὰ θηρία: 207b1-207b6): first, intercourse, then communion in care for offspring (πρῶτον μὲν περὶ τὸ συμμιγῆναι ἀλλήλοις, ἔπειτα περὶ τὴν τροφὴν τοῦ γενομένου: 207b3).

Socrates is left bewildered and even scolded by Diotima when asked why animals do such a thing, if they are not rational like humans (ἡ δ' εἶπεν, Διανοῇ οὖν δεινός ποτε γενήσεσθαι τὰ ἐρωτικά, ἐὰν ταῦτα μὴ ἐννοῇς: 207c). However, he acknowledges his own lack and need for a teacher (ὅπερ νυνδὴ εἶπον, παρὰ σὲ ἥκω, γνοὺς ὅτι διδασκάλων δέομαι: 207c), urging Diotima to continue. And she does again by describing the general activity of Eros: All living beings seek to beget and procreate (207d1-208b3). If mortals seek to exist forever and be immortal (ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀεί τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος: 207d1), then the key is to replace the changing by a sort of εἰκασία (ἀεὶ καταλείπει ἕτερον νέον ἀντὶ τοῦ παλαιοῦ: 207d3-8b3). That is, εἰκός as something new left behind to replace the old (207d4-5), similar enough to being mistaken as *the same* (ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν ᾧ ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ζῴων ζῆν καλεῖται καὶ εἶναι τὸ αὐτό: 207d5-6). Every living being undertakes this general mechanism (208b3-6). Mortals partake of immortality by this kind of eikastic renewal (θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει, καὶ σῶμα καὶ τἆλλα πάντα: 208b3), whilst immortal beings do in another manner (208b4). This is the reason for

esteeming eikastic offspring (208b5). Therefore, eagerness and love are for the sake of immortality (ἀθανασίας γὰρ χάριν παντὶ αὕτη ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἔπεται: 208b6).

4.3. (208c1-209e5) *Philotimia*: misguided expectations as love for what *appears* to be the most valuable immortality.

Socrates is left amazed by everything he hears (ἐγὼ ἀκούσας τὸν λόγον ἐθαύμασά: 208b), although he is not entirely sure if everything is as she said it. Particularly after hearing that even the soul and our very pieces of knowledge leave us (κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας, ἀλλὰ καὶ μία ἑκάστη τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ταὐτὸν πάσχει. ὃ γὰρ καλεῖται μελετᾶν, ὡς ἐξιούσης ἐστὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης: λήθη γὰρ ἐπιστήμης ἔξοδος: 208a), Socrates could not contain himself and asked a very important question to the framework of the entire passage: 'Are these things, I asked, really like you are saying?' (ταῦτα ὡς ἀληθῶς οὕτως ἔχει; 208b). This line returns us to the original question of this second moment at 206b (τῶν τίνα τρόπον διωκόντων αὐτὸ / τί τοῦτο τυγχάνει ὂν τὸ ἔργον; 206b2-4).

To summarise the path Diotima followed to answer the question from 206b2 to 208b7: All living beings pursue i) immortality with ii) the good by a) the continuous delivery of what they carry within via b) an intimate contact with what is beautiful. Nonetheless, this explanation of 'what Eros does' (τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ; 201e1; τὸ ἔργον 205b3) left Socrates wondering (καὶ ἐγὼ ἀκούσας τὸν λόγον ἐθαύμασά: 208b7-8) to the point of asking whether her general description matches with how everyone *in fact* (ἀληθῶς: 207b8) loves.

Fortunately, the analogy of Eros-*Poiesis* on the relation between *the parts* and *the whole* becomes crucial for Diotima. From the analogy's conclusion, departing from the previously established *necessary condition* that Eros is a desire

for the sake of immortality together with what is good (ἀθανασίας δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπιθυμεῖν μετὰ ἀγαθοῦ: 207a1-2), Diotima describes the general mechanism (ταύτῃ τῇ μηχανῇ: 208b2) shared by all the living (καὶ σῶμα καὶ τἆλλα πάντα: 208b3), the general way for mortals to partake of immortality (θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει: 208b2). It is challenging to recognise the *general* or the *whole* of Eros within the manner (τῶν τίνα τρόπον: 205b1) and the activity (πράξει: 206b2) of extreme eagerness called love (ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ἡ σύντασις ἔρως ἂν καλοῖτο: 206b2). Even more in the multiple particular forms of Eros towards which people turn to pursue it (οἱ μὲν ἄλλῃ τρεπόμεοι πολλαχῇ . . . οἱ δὲ κατὰ ἕν τι εἶδος ἰόντες: 205d7-8), like money-making, fondness for exercise, and love for wisdom (ἢ κατὰ χρηματισμὸν ἢ κατὰ φιλογυμναστίαν ἢ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν: 205d6). These particular forms may be what one first notices when looking at (βλέψαι: 208c2) how people *in fact* (ἀληθῆς: 208b8) love.

Upon Socrates wondering (ἐθαύμασά), Diotima leads him (208c1-209e4) to take a look at the *philotimia* of the people (τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰ ἐθέλεις εἰς τὴν φιλοτιμίαν βλέψαι: 208c1-2), a manner by which people are dangerously affected by Eros (ὡς δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι: 208c6). According to Rowe, *Philotimia* is a phenomenon within the "*generic erôs,* but presented as if it followed the pattern of specific *erôs*—and so involving a beautiful partner, who provides the necessary environment for *giving birth*" (Rowe 1998, 188). Suppose we do not reflect upon what she has been saying, becoming conscious of it (ἐγὼ εἴρηκα εἰ μὴ ἐννοεῖς, ἐνθυμηθεὶς: 208c4), like Socrates was warned. In this case, we may be left wondering about how this phenomenon appears inconceivable (θαυμάζοις ἂν **τῆς ἀλογίας** περὶ [ὡς δεινῶς . . . ἔρωτι] 208c2-4) with the *whole of* Eros.

The careful reflection on how people *in fact* love is followed by a concluding response to this ἀλογία: how people *should* love (209e5-212a7). We also follow Rowe on this point: Diotima's response does not seem to be another

particular form of love but what loving *really is.* "How we should set about achieving it, both in life as a whole and in our erotic relationships" (Rowe 1998, 192). This reading suggests this aim is *the whole* and not *another part,* even if it were *the correct part.* The reason, as Aronadio proposes, lies in "the ὅλον Diotima envisages is not a genus or a composition of parts. It is an internally articulated whole, whose *unity* precedes its parts from a logical as well as ontological point of view" (Aronadio 2016, 222). This sense for *the whole*, concludes Aronadio, "highlights a vertical dynamics, axiologically structured, in virtue of which the ὅλον of ἔρως takes shape as an identitary structure, with respect both to the reference of the name and to the nature of the denoted thing" (Aronadio 2016, 222). This can lead us to consider the truth both as a unitary principle *and* an end on the horizon.

Would this be Diotima's antidote to avoid loving like everyone, doing everything for what is reputed to be immortal virtue? (ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ τοιαύτης δόξης εὐκλεοῦς πάντες πάντα ποιοῦσιν: 208d7-8) The candidate for an antidote for a disoriented Eros may be a person who has become reoriented (τεττράμενος: 210d5) from what everyone gazes at with envy (πᾶς . . . ἀποβλέψας . . . ζηλῶν: 209c7-d3) and believes to be valuable enough to live (and die for) toward what is *truly* valuable and for the sake of which all the toils must be undertaken (οὗ δὴ ἕνεκεν καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν: 210e6). Only then one may contemplate and deliver «*in un amore per la sapienza privo di invidia*» (Casertano 2016, 229 *sc.* θεωρῶν . . . τίκτῃ . . . ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ: 2105-7).

Even so, Diotima does not put the cart before the horse, going straight for it. Instead, she proceeds by *"resultados concordados"* (Casertano 2018, 173). For this reason, if Socrates is willing to see (εὖ ἴσθι . . . εἰ ἐθέλεις: 208c1-2), he may as well attempt to follow her as best as he can (πειρῶ δὲ ἔπεσθαι, ἄν οἷός τε ᾖς: 210a4) towards a possible *whole*, whilst avoiding the dangerous (δεινῶς: 208c4) partial

forms of love—as well as the multiple sacred rites (ἱερὰ πολλὰ: 209e2)—to be made into something we can identify if we are also willing to see with clarity.

The most significant table-turning point at the end of Diotima's response to *philotimia*: people, *in fact*, love for the sake of what they believe (οἰομένους 208d5; οἴονται 208e4), they say (λέγονται 209a4; ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν 209d6), they esteem (τίμιος δὲ παρ' ὑμῖν: 209d7), and make appear (ἀποφηνάμενοι: 209e2) to be the most valuable to '*wield them immortal fame for all time*' (τοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ γενέσθαι <καὶ κλέος ἐσ τὸν ἀεί χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι>: 208c5-6). Eros *qua* Eros, or loving insofar as loving, always is for the sake of immortality, as previously concluded. The problem does not lie in Eros but in what people *gaze at* with *envy* (πᾶς . . . ἀποβλέψας . . . ζηλῶν: 209c7-d3), instead of looking at what is truly valuable. After all, since youth (ἐκ νέου 209a7-b1), echoing the ἄρχεσθαι νέον ὄντα: 210a4-5 at the start of the upcoming ascent, they are aiming at a mistaken mirror-image of what is true, looking toward what is *reputed* to be the most valuable: "If anyone does things for the sake of fame, that is because they think fame a good thing" (Rowe 1998, 189). This does not appear to be an intellectualist matter of knowledge or a lack of knowledge *tout court* but rather may be of becoming reoriented to pursue what must be truly loved.

The problem of *philothimia* can be noted with a subtle omission at 208e1: τοῦ γὰρ ἀθανάτου ἐρῶσιν. Note the absence of *the good* paired with *love for immortality* in this whole paragraph, precisely what has been previously established as 'what is necessary to be pursued' (ἀθανασίας δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπιθυμεῖν μετὰ ἀγαθοῦ: 206e8-207a1). Conversely, the ones who die for the sake of a renowned immortality do so because it is reputed as good, regardless of whether or not it is *truly* good: hence, a *philotimia*.

This is also made evident when Diotima directly mentions Homer and Hesiod at 209c7-d2: καὶ πᾶς ἂν δέξαιτο . . . καὶ εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀποβλέψας . . . ζηλῶν

ἔκγονα. The (logical) subject of the participle accords with the main verb's (πᾶς, nom. sg.). As we have suggested before, those who are unable to recognise what they see may have their love (*philotimia*) directed towards what they *believe* to be valuable. The translation of ἀποβλέψας + ζῆων into *looking at nothing but* Homer and Hesiod, *envying* their offspring, is based on the construal followed in our translation. Namely, Diotima is here describing how people *in fact* love, not how they should love. Accordingly, we suggest they regard Homer's and Hesiod's offspring, which are of an immortal kind, as worthy of love because they tunnel-view immortality from renowned and reputed offspring that bestow it upon their 'parents' (ἃ ἐκείνοις ἀθάνατον κλέος καὶ μνήμην παρέχεται αὐτὰ τοιαῦτα ὄντα: 209d4-5), fixed on it to the extent of becoming unable to distinguish the *value* of the immortality they have set their eyes upon.

It is interesting to note a construction conveying to Diotima's words a term for sacred rites (ἱερὰ πολλὰ: 209e2-3) being established for people regarded as akin to the divine, right before presenting the making into a μύστης on her accomplished/highest rites. Moreover, there is a direct occurrence of τέλεα in the Orphic golden leaves from Pelinna, cf. Graf (1993, 240–49), particularly: "They are either the prizes attained or the rituals to be performed . . . after all, the performance of the rites is the supreme prize" (Graf 1993, 242); and Bernabé and San Cristóbal (2008, 89–93), particularly: "Plato seeks to modify a more elementary scheme, in which a better life is simply promised to whoever is initiated" (Bernabé and San Cristóbal 2008, 92).

5. The Telos of Eros: Becoming kindred to the Truth (209a5-212a7).

5.1 Philosophical Mysteries: Plato transpositions of Eleusinian ἐπόπτεια into Diotima's ἐποπτικά.

Diotima's ἐποπτικά is framed in a well-structured, controlled, and philosophically oriented process of leading to divine epiphanies beyond the constraints of divine agency. Plato's ἐποπτικά is the spectacle for the insightful viewing of truth in an interplay of intermediary agency: it is the correct seeking. Fundamentally, it is the continuous procedure of viewing desireful signs that appear simultaneously as 'what is' and 'what is not.' They are Plato's transposition of the σημεῖα in epiphanic records, primarily from Eleusis. As Betegh carefully explain:

> The viewer thus acquires a preliminary, ordinary acquaintance with the god through her culturally validated representations [the viewing/display of objects]; and most people will remain at this stage. The select few are, however, allowed a direct vision of the divine prototypes in an (*epoptic*) epiphany, which then leads to a recognition of the ways in which the representations give something back of the god's features, but are still paltry images compared to the full power and radiance of the god. This scheme could serve Plato as a model for describing the relationship between everyday acquaintance with different properties in the physical world and the stable recognition of instantiations based on knowledge of the Forms, which, at the same time, makes us realize that the physical manifestations fall short of the divine original. . . . The encounter with the divine original not only enables us to recognize its manifestations in the physical world; remembering the epiphany motivates and enables us to create instantiations of it in the physical world – just as it was sometimes claimed that Praxiteles and Phidias created their astonishing cult statues on the basis of epiphanies. By remembering the Form of Virtue one can give a fully satisfactory account of virtue, and also produce truly virtuous acts, as agalmata of the Form. Such truly virtuous acts, based on remembering the Form, are extraordinary, even to a much higher degree than the stupendous cult

states of Praxiteles and Phidias. . . . It is precisely his direct observation and knowledge of the divine prototype that enables the demiurge to create a valid "agalma," which represents as well as possible the relevant features of the divine original. It is on the basis of his direct knowledge of it that he can also perfect his creation, making the agalma an appropriate likeness of the model in as many respects as possible (Betegh 2022, 247-48)

In this procedure, individuals remain motivated to see and understand for themselves what is in these signs of beauty, viewed along with or in the context of their partners or guides, namely the value that provides the signs of beauty with ontological and logical unity. This continuous and intimate scopic development expands the range of one's gaze, gradually improving the ability to recognise the value from the manifested signs of beauty: from outward appearance to the soul, from beautiful gestures to discourses. Ultimately, if correctly reoriented, this narrowing and expanding of one's view by focusing on the manifested, desireful value becomes the movement of a transformative and reoriented pursuit of value itself.

Moreover, neither is this viewing determined by the arbitrary will of the divine nor by the arbitrary wish of human beings. It is neither like with Demeter, who manifests herself at her will in the *Hymn,* nor like Pentheus who demands to view the sacred by arrogance without observing the prescribed rites in Euripides's *Bacchae*. Instead, they are negotiated effortfully by a mediated agency through Eros during one's education from youth. This is a negotiation that aligns the immediate desires of individuals with the philosophical pursuit of what is truly valuable, rather than simply nullifying desires. The 'correct seeking' is famously presented step-by-step by Diotima, namely a movement from recognising value in desirable things that manifest beauty to having value itself within view: the beautiful itself. As Betegh, quite rightly, concludes on Eleusis and Diotima:

Diotima offers a coherent, self-contained, and philosophically sophisticated account of the complex relationship between the (im)possibility of reaching immortality for human beings, how this is connected to the endless cycles of death and birth in nature, the transformative experience of getting close to and beholding the divine, and giving birth in that very moment to what makes a life good – indeed, we wouldn't need to know anything about what happened at Eleusis to understand and appreciate all this. Yet, as I have tried to show, the conjunction of these themes is conspicuously close to the key elements of the rites; these elements now receive new meaning as part of Plato's substantive account of the quest for the best human life. We see once again that Plato's attitude toward the Mysteries is not confrontational but integrative (Betegh 2022, 252).

Accordingly, the transformative 'making into a μύστης' in the Mysteries, as well as insightfully viewing the gods during the annual sacred rites, acquires a new locus in Plato's *Symposium*. It may culminate in the attainment and maintenance of a life-long, lasting, reoriented state we call insightful viewing. We claim that this insightful viewing can be understood as Plato's philosophically centred visuality. The philosophical framing presented in the *Symposium* leads to a transformative viewing, as much as it fosters a sense of kinship with what is viewed and given birth. The constant begetting of beauty in the presence of a beautiful medium gradually transforms individuals at an existential level.

It is a process of locking eyes with what manifests beauty: one delivers what is kindred to it. Therefore, this cannot be read in terms of the locus of ritual-centred visuality in ancient Greek religion. Instead, Plato's visuality transcends the boundaries of ritual activity because it is about the constant practice of philosophy, a constant delivery of what is valuable, as the locus for a kind of divine intimacy and recognition of divine presence is beyond determined sacred objects or sanctuaries.

Additionally, it is not the sacred officials who manifest the divine. In Diotima's words, not only may individuals recognise the presence and

manifestation of the beautiful in everything that manifests beauty, but also the philosopher is the one who, by becoming kindred to what is truly valuable, may recognise and manifest beauty to others through actions and discourses which excel in value. Plato's transposition of ἐπόπτεια as a one-of-a-kind philosophical-centred visuality is marked by individuals becoming transformed by what they correctly view to the point of collectively manifesting the best one can bring to light: virtue and excellence.

As such, we sustain that this transposition lays the ground for Plato's display of a procedure, step by step, of becoming reoriented to view the truth in the 'correct seeking' to the point of eventually becoming kindred to it. Unlike the eventual τελεταί, Diotima's procedure is to be undertaken during one's entire lifetime, which resonates with many other dialogues. Moreover, the insightful viewing, typical of divinely intimate and insightful viewers in the Mysteries, is transposed into an integral development of the education of individuals and their partners or guides by the development of the ability to deliver and nourish true human excellence, according to the correct intimate contact with 'what is' and 'what is not.' The accomplished nourishment in this intimate relationship with the divine happens in the philosophical life during which a person, who has been correctly educated and, most importantly, has been correctly reoriented to a lasting and continuous state, may view (epopt-) and manifest the divine, κατὰ τὸν δύνατον, through actions of true human excellence.

Finally, Plato's transposition also accounts for being seen by the divine: the divine blessings bestowed upon accomplished μύσται/ἐπόπται dear to the gods during the Mysteries. Plato's reciprocity emerges upon the individual becoming capable of recognising one's kinship with the divine through one's offspring that are kindred to the truth: the true human excellence continuously delivered and

manifested, as much as possible, is akin to 'what is,' as a marker of an integral self-development that has the best human life possible at its horizon.

The most striking of Plato's transpositions of the Mysteries lies at the linguistic level. The participle θεωρῶν (210d4) is paired through καὶ with the only perfect participle (agreeing in gender, case, and number) of the entirety of the 'Highest Mysteries,' τετραμμένος, a significant image of *mysteria*. Again, we mention Graf's insights in the conscious usage of the perfect participle by Plato as a marker of *mysteria*; the inscriptions from antiquity remain silent about the content of secret rites. However, they use the perfect participle to determine the initiates in a way that has much to tell. The writings "also refers to the initiates as *kekorubantismenoi* ("those who have become Korybants"), an expression closely related to the *bebakcheumenoi* ("those who have become *bakchoi*") in the famous graveyard regulation from fifth-century Cumae in Italy and, no less important, to the Ephesian designation of former Kouretes as *kekoureutekotes*, "those who have been Kouretes" (Wankel et al. 1979–1984, 47.7 [=Knibbe 1981, 53 no. B54.7]): in all three cases, the perfect participle designates someone who not only has performed the rite but who has been transformed into a new and lasting state of being through his initiation" (Graf 2003b, 252). We also recall Bernabé's analysis, which, for us, is the best in terms of linguistic subtlety regarding the usage of this nuance of the Greek language by Plato to transpose the Mysteries in the *Phaedo*:

> *El primero, es que Platón vuelve a utilizar un participio perfecto,* πεφιλοσοφηκότες, *como los que usaban los de las teletai (*βεβακχευμένος, κεκαθαρμένος, μεμυημένος, τετελεσμένος*), pero para definir a los filósofos, dado que para él es la práctica continuada de la filosofia la que produce un estado (el que define el perfecto en griego) que permitiá al filósofo un detino mejor en el Más Allá. El segundo detalle es que determina el participio con el adverbio «correctamente» (*ὀρθῶς*), cuyas resonancias órficas son claras* (Bernabé 2011, 227–28).

Indeed, the *Republic* too presents the most comprehensive description of this transposition, particularly after the Cave, where the most renowned image of becoming reoriented to view 'what is' can be found in the dialogues. After the Cave, when Socrates proceeds to discuss it with Glaucon, he clarifies that such a 'turn' would not be a simple act, "like flipping a shell during an oyster-turning game" (οὐκ ὀστράκου ἂν εἴη περιστροφή: *Resp.* 521c5), "but the conversion of a soul from a day which is somehow night to the real daytime" (ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς περιαγωγὴ ἐκ νυκτερινῆς τινος ἡμέρας εἰς ἀληθινήν: *Resp.* 521c5-7). At this point, Socrates uses the very same image presented by Diotima, immediately linked to this clause, the image of ascent: "[this conversion] is an ascent to what is" (τοῦ ὄντος οὖσαν ἐπάνοδον: *Resp.* 512c7), "that which we can really affirm to be true philosophy" (ἣν δὴ φιλοσοφίαν ἀληθῆ φήσομεν εἶναι: *Resp.* 521c7-8). This is consistent with how Diotima had just described philosophy with the same perfect participle τετραμμένος—not an occasional turning to observe the vast, open sea of beauty during a sunny afternoon. In the *Republic*, Socrates uses the same τετραμμένος presented by Diotima, now undeniably in terms of becoming reorientated to view the truth in the acquisition of knowledge: "This would be the proper art of conversion" (τούτου τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, αὐτοῦ τέχνη ἂν εἴη, τῆς περιαγωγῆς: *Resp.* 518d3-4), "the most efficient and easy way to be turned into a direction" (τίνα τρόπον ὡς ῥᾷστά τε καὶ ἀνυσιμώτατα μεταστραφήσεται: *Resp.* 518d4-5), "not for inserting in a person the power of sight" (οὐ τοῦ ἐμποιῆσαι αὐτῷ τὸ ὁρᾶν: *Resp.* 518d5), "because a person already has it in them" (ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχοντι μὲν αὐτό: *Resp.* 518d5-6), "but, instead, because one neither views what is needed nor has become **correctly reoriented**" (οὐκ **ὀρθῶς δὲ τετραμμένῳ** οὐδὲ βλέποντι οἷ ἔδει: *Resp.* 518d6-7) "it contrives one precisely in this way" (τοῦτο διαμηχανήσασθαι: *Resp.* 518d7). Therefore, θεωρῶν here comes directly after one 'has reached and maintained a continuous and integral, lasting state of reorientation,' which in the *Symposium*

is the one who becomes reoriented to view what is truly beautiful. This is what we consider having been at the core of Plato engagement with the Mysteries through the transposition of this continuous and lasting transformative state into his philosophy: or, as Betegh has it, "one can then either say that philosophy is a direct competitor of the mysteries in offering the best life through closeness to the divine or – and this appears to be Plato's preferred way to conceive the relationship – that philosophy is the truest mystery." (Betegh 2022, 237).

The Highest Mysterie's structure:

5.2 (209a5-210a3): The Making into a μύστης in the Highest Mysteries and Insightful Viewing.

5.3 (210a4-210e2): The Ascent to what is: how to proceed correctly.

5.4 (211d2-212a7): From recognising 'what is' to begetting what is true.

5.5 (211a1-211b5): The choral ode to Beauty: an invocation of 'what is.'

5.6 (211b6-d2): The *Scala Amoris* is the accomplished way to see 'what is.'

5.7 (211d2-212a7): From recognising 'what is' to begetting what is true.

5.8 (212a5-7): Becoming kindred to what you view and beget – ἀρετήν ἀληθῆ.

TRANSLATION

Plato's Symposium (201c-212c) - Dover ed. 1980

"Now off you go, Agathon, so that I recount the talk about Eros I once heard from Diotima, a Mantinian woman, wise on these matters and in much more—before the plague, when the Athenians were amid sacrifices, she even made a ten-year halt for their disease—it was her the very person who taught me things about Eros."

"I will try to recount how she said her talk, departing from the conclusions that Agathon and I have reached together, in whatever manner I possibly can. It is necessary, dear Agathon, as you proposed, first to go through in detail about what Eros is and what he is like, then his doings."

"I think the easiest way to do it is like the visitor from Mantineia went with me at the time, by questions and answers. I, too, told her something similar to what Agathon has been telling me now: that Eros would be a great god and of what is beautiful. She promptly refuted me in these arguments, just like I did here. According to my own argument, Eros would not be beautiful or good!"

"But I protested."

'What are you saying, Diotima? Is Eros then ugly and bad?'

'Be careful with profanation,' she rebuked. 'Do you honestly believe that what is not beautiful has to be ugly?'

'For sure.'

'What is not wise would have to be ignorant too? Have you not noticed that there is something between wisdom and ignorance?'

'And what is that?'

'Correct believing in something without being able to give a reason for it. Don't you know,' said her, 'that neither is it to have knowledge (how could knowledge be a matter that lacks reason?) nor ignorance (how could ignorance be, somehow, of *what is*?). Correct opinion, I presume, is like this: between wisdom and ignorance.'

'This is true,' I admitted.

'Then stop insisting that what is not beautiful has to be ugly and what is not good has to be bad. The same applies to Eros: from your conclusion that it is neither good nor beautiful, it does not follow that Eros has to be ugly or bad. Instead,' she said, 'it is something between the two.'

'So what?' I continued. 'Everyone agrees that he is a great god.'

καὶ σὲ μέν γε ἤδη ἐάσω· τὸν δὲ λόγον τὸν περὶ τοῦ Ἔρωτος, ὅν ποτ᾽ ἤκουσα γυναικὸς Μαντινικῆς Διοτίμας, ἣ ταῦτά τε σοφὴ ἦν καὶ ἄλλα πολλά (καὶ Ἀθηναίοις ποτὲ θυσαμένοις πρὸ τοῦ λοιμοῦ δέκα ἔτη ἀναβολὴν ἐποίησε τῆς νόσου), ἣ δὴ καὶ ἐμὲ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἐδίδαξεν, ὃν οὖν ἐκείνη ἔλεγε λόγον, πειράσομαι ὑμῖν διελθεῖν ἐκ τῶν ὡμολογημένων ἐμοὶ καὶ Ἀγάθωνι, αὐτὸς ἐπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ, ὅπως ἂν δύνωμαι. δεῖ δή, ὦ Ἀγάθων, ὥσπερ σὺ διηγήσω, διελθεῖν αὐτὸν πρῶτον, τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ ποῖός τις, ἔπειτα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. δοκεῖ οὖν μοι ῥᾷστον εἶναι οὕτω διελθεῖν, ὥς ποτέ μὲ ἡ ξένη ἀνακρίνουσα διῄει. σχεδὸν γάρ τι καὶ ἐγὼ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἕτερα τοιαῦτα ἔλεγον οἷάπερ νῦν πρὸς ἐμὲ Ἀγάθων, ὡς εἴη ὁ Ἔρως μέγας θεός, εἴη δὲ τῶν καλῶν· ἤλεγχε δή με τούτοις τοῖς λόγοις οἷσπερ ἐγὼ τοῦτον, ὡς οὔτε καλὸς εἴη κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον οὔτε ἀγαθός.

καὶ ἐγώ, "πῶς λέγεις," ἔφην, "ὦ Διοτίμα; αἰσχρὸς ἄρα ὁ Ἔρως ἐστὶ καὶ κακός;"

καὶ ἥ, "οὐκ εὐφημήσεις;" ἔφη. "ἢ οἴει, ὅτι ἂν μὴ καλὸν ᾖ, ἀναγκαῖον αὐτὸ εἶναι αἰσχρόν;"

"μάλιστά γε."

"ἢ καὶ ἂν μὴ σοφόν, ἀμαθές; ἢ οὐκ ᾔσθησαι ὅτι ἐστίν τι μεταξὺ σοφίας καὶ ἀμαθίας;"

"τί τοῦτο;"

"τὸ ὀρθὰ δοξάζειν καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι οὐκ οἶσθ᾽," ἔφη, "ὅτι οὔτε ἐπίστασθαί ἐστιν (ἄλογον γὰρ πρᾶγμα πῶς ἂν εἴη ἐπιστήμη;) οὔτε ἀμαθία (τὸ γὰρ τοῦ ὄντος τυγχάνον πῶς ἂν εἴη ἀμαθία;); ἔστι δὲ δήπου τοιοῦτον ἡ ὀρθὴ δόξα, μεταξὺ φρονήσεως καὶ ἀμαθίας."

"ἀληθῆ," ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, "λέγεις."

"μὴ τοίνυν ἀνάγκαζε ὃ μὴ καλόν ἐστιν αἰσχρὸν εἶναι, μηδὲ ὃ μὴ ἀγαθόν, κακόν. οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἔρωτα ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ὁμολογεῖς μὴ εἶναι ἀγαθὸν μηδὲ καλόν, μηδέν τι μᾶλλον οἴου δεῖν αὐτὸν αἰσχρὸν καὶ κακὸν εἶναι, ἀλλά τι μεταξύ," ἔφη, "τούτοιν."

"καὶ μήν," ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, "ὁμολογεῖταί γε παρὰ πάντων μέγας θεὸς εἶναι."

'By *everyone* do you mean who is insightful,' asked her, 'or who is not insightful?'

'I am talking about all the people.'

And she laughed. 'Well, Socrates, how could it be,' she asked, 'that everyone agrees on Eros being a great god when they say he is not a god at all?'

'They who?' I asked her.

'Huh? You and I, for instance,' she replied.

Then I had to ask, 'What are you talking about?!'

'This is easy,' she mocked. 'I am talking about us, or would you not say that all gods are happy and beautiful? Would you dare to affirm that the gods are not beautiful nor happy?'

'By Zeus! I would never!' I said.

'And would you not say that happy is who possesses beautiful and good things?'

'For sure.'

'But, instead, you have concluded that, by lacking what is good and beautiful, Eros desires these very things he lacks.'

'Yes, I have.'

'Then how would it be possible for a god not to have a share of what is good and beautiful?'

'No way, it looks like.'

'Can't you see,' she concluded, 'that you too, in fact, do not believe that Eros is a god?'

'But what would Eros be?' I asked. 'A mortal?'

'By no means.'

'What then?'

'As we have said before,' she replied, 'Eros is something between mortal and immortal.'

'What is that, Diotima?'

'A great *daimon*, Socrates, for every *daimon* is intermediary between divine and mortal.'

'What kind of power,' I asked, 'does Eros have?'

'He is an interpreter and transmits mortal pleas and sacrifices to the gods and divine commands and recompenses to mortals for their sacrifices. He

"τῶν μὴ εἰδότων," ἔφη, "πάντων λέγεις, ἢ καὶ τῶν εἰδότων;"

"συμπάντων μὲν οὖν."

καὶ ἡ γελάσασα "καὶ πῶς ἄν," ἔφη, "ὦ Σώκρατες, ὁμολογοῖτο μέγας θεὸς εἶναι παρὰ τούτων, οἵ φασιν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ θεὸν εἶναι;"

"τίνες οὗτοι;" ἦν δ' ἐγώ.

"εἷς μέν," ἔφη, "σύ, μία δ' ἐγώ."

κἀγὼ εἶπον, "πῶς τοῦτο," ἔφην, "λέγεις;"

καὶ ἥ, "ῥᾳδίως," ἔφη. "λέγε γάρ μοι, οὐ πάντας θεοὺς φὴς εὐδαίμονας εἶναι καὶ καλούς; ἢ τολμήσαις ἄντινα μὴ φάναι καλόν τε καὶ εὐδαίμονα θεῶν εἶναι;"

"μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ'," ἔφην.

"εὐδαίμονας δὲ δὴ λέγεις οὐ τοὺς τἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ καλὰ κεκτημένους;"

"πάνυ γε."

"ἀλλὰ μὴν Ἔρωτά καλῶν γε ὡμολόγηκας δι' ἔνδειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῶν τούτων ὧν ἐνδεής ἐστιν."

"ὡμολόγηκα γάρ."

"πῶς ἂν οὖν θεὸς εἴη ὅ γε τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἄμοιρος;"

"οὐδαμῶς, ὥς γ' ἔοικεν."

"ὁρᾷς οὖν," ἔφη, "ὅτι καὶ σὺ Ἔρωτα οὐ θεὸν νομίζεις;"

"τί οὖν ἄν," ἔφην, "εἴη ὁ Ἔρως; θνητός;"

"ἥκιστά γε."

"ἀλλὰ τί μήν;"

"ὥσπερ τὰ πρότερα;" ἔφη, "μεταξὺ θνητοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτου."

"ἐπί οὖν, ὦ Διοτίμα;"

"δαίμων μέγας, ὦ Σώκρατες· καὶ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξύ ἐστι θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ,"

"τίνα," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "δύναμιν ἔχον;"

"ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, τῶν μὲν τὰς δεήσεις καὶ θυσίας, τῶν δὲ τὰς ἐπιτάξεις τε καὶ ἀμοιβὰς τῶν θυσιῶν

is in the middle, partaking from both and maintaining everything completely interconnected. For this, all prophecies make their journey, as does the art of sacred officials regarding sacrifices, sacred rites, chants, divination, and magic. Even though the divine is not brought into contact with a mortal, through Eros all the communion and dialogue between gods and mortals, either awake or asleep, is possible. Additionally, Daemonic is the person wise in these affairs. The wise in something different, like arts or any handicraft, is a craftsperson. These *daimons* are indeed multiple and manifold. Eros, too, is among them.'

'Who is his father?' I asked. 'And who is his mother?'

'This is a long story,' she said. 'But I will tell you nonetheless. When Aphrodite was born, the gods gathered together. One of them was the son of Metis: Poros.'

'After they finished their meal, Penia arrived intending to beg, as expected when a feast is happening, and stayed by the door. Poros got drunk with too much nectar, as wine did not yet exist. He went to the garden of Zeus. Being filled with nectar, he laid himself down to sleep.'

'Meanwhile, Penia schemed to make a son with Poros because of her *aporia*. Thus, she laid with him and got pregnant with Eros. Because he has been given birth on Aphrodite's birthday and because, by his nature, he is a lover of the beautiful, and Aphrodite is beautiful, Eros also comes into being as a follower and servant of Aphrodite.'

'Given that he is a son of both Poros and Penia, Eros happens to be in a position such as this: in the first place, he is always poor. Despite many supposing that he has to be exceedingly delicate and beautiful, he is, conversely, harsh and rough, barefoot and homeless, always lying bedless on the ground, dumped by the doors and sleeping on the streets in the open air. Eros is always associated with lack, for he has his mother's nature. On the other hand, like his father, he is preying upon the beautiful and good ones, being vigorous, bold, and eager, a mighty hunter, always devising some trick, desireful of wisdom and resourceful for it, in a life-long pursuit of knowledge, terrific sorcerer, enchanter, and sophist.'

'And neither is he made to be like an immortal nor a mortal, for during a single day he rises and flourishes when he has the resources, only to die and rise back to life again because of his father's nature. Even so, he has his

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ἐν μέσῳ δὲ ὂν ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὑτῷ συνδεδέσθαι. διὰ τοῦτον καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπῳδὰς καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν. θεὸς δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ οὐ μείγνυται, ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτου πᾶσά ἐστιν ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἐγρηγορόσι καὶ καθεύδουσι· καὶ ὁ μὲν περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα σοφὸς δαιμόνιος ἀνήρ, ὁ δὲ ἄλλο τι σοφὸς ὢν ἢ περὶ τέχνας ἢ χειρουργίας τινὰς βάναυσος. οὗτοι δὴ οἱ δαίμονες πολλοὶ καὶ παντοδαποί εἰσιν, εἷς δὲ τούτων ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ Ἔρως.”

“πατρὸς δέ,” ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, “τίνος ἐστὶ καὶ μητρός;”

“μακρότερον μέν,” ἔφη, “διηγήσασθαι· ὅμως δέ σοι ἐρῶ. ὅτε γὰρ ἐγένετο Ἀφροδίτη, ἡστιῶντο οἱ θεοὶ οἵ τε ἄλλοι καὶ ὁ τῆς Μήτιδος ὑὸς Πόρος. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐδείπνησαν, προσαιτήσουσα οἷον δὴ εὐωχίας οὔσης ἀφίκετο ἡ Πενία, καὶ ἦν περὶ τὰς θύρας. ὁ οὖν Πόρος μεθυσθεὶς τοῦ νέκταρος—οἶνος γὰρ οὔπω ἦν—εἰς τὸν τοῦ Διὸς κῆπον εἰσελθὼν βεβαρημένος ηὗδεν. ἡ οὖν Πενία ἐπιβουλεύουσα διὰ τὴν αὑτῆς ἀπορίαν παιδίον ποιήσασθαι ἐκ τοῦ Πόρου, κατακλίνεταί τε παρ’ αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκύησε τὸν Ἔρωτα. διὸ δὴ καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἀκόλουθος καὶ θεράπων γέγονεν ὁ Ἔρως, γεννηθεὶς ἐν τοῖς ἐκείνης γενεθλίοις, καὶ ἅμα φύσει ἐραστὴς ὢν περὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καλῆς οὔσης. ἅτε οὖν Πόρου καὶ Πενίας ὑὸς ὢν ὁ Ἔρως ἐν τοιαύτῃ τύχῃ καθέστηκεν. πρῶτον μὲν πένης ἀεί ἐστι, καὶ πολλοῦ δεῖ ἁπαλός τε καὶ καλός, οἷον οἱ πολλοὶ οἴονται, ἀλλὰ σκληρὸς καὶ αὐχμηρὸς καὶ ἀνυπόδητος καὶ ἄοικος, χαμαιπετὴς ἀεὶ ὢν καὶ ἄστρωτος, ἐπὶ θύραις καὶ ἐν ὁδοῖς ὑπαίθριος κοιμώμενος, τὴν τῆς μητρὸς φύσιν ἔχων, ἀεὶ ἐνδείᾳ σύνοικος. κατὰ δὲ αὖ τὸν πατέρα ἐπίβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς, ἀνδρεῖος ὢν καὶ ἴτης καὶ σύντονος, θηρευτὴς δεινός, ἀεί τινας πλέκων μηχανάς, καὶ φρονήσεως ἐπιθυμητὴς καὶ πόριμος, φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου, δεινὸς γόης καὶ φαρμακεὺς καὶ σοφιστής· καὶ οὔτε ὡς ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ, τοτὲ δὲ ἀποθνήσκει, πάλιν δὲ ἀναβιώσκεται διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φύσιν, τὸ δὲ

resources always slipping through his fingers, to the extent that neither is Eros in *aporia* nor in abundance. He exists, to repeat it, in the middle of wisdom and ignorance.'

'This is what follows: no god pursues knowledge nor desires to become wise— for they already are—, neither does anyone already wise: they will not pursue knowledge. Likewise, neither do the ignorant pursue knowledge nor desire to become wise. This is the problem of ignorance: who is neither beautiful nor good nor wise considers themself to be just as fine. Therefore, the one who does not believe to be in need certainly does not desire what they do not believe to lack.'

'Who are them, Diotima?' I asked. 'Those who pursue knowledge, if they are neither wise nor ignorant?'

'By now this is obvious even to a child,' she mocked. 'Those between the two, among whom Eros would also be. Wisdom is among what is of utmost beauty. And Eros is love for the beautiful. Therefore, Eros is necessarily a philosopher, because a philosopher is intermediary between wise and ignorant. The cause lies in his origin: while his father is wise and resourceful, his mother is not wise and is in *aporia*.'

'Therefore, that is the nature of this *daimon*, Socrates. There is nothing surprising in what you believed Eros to be. After all, judging from your words, you believed that Eros was the beloved, not the lover. This is the reason Eros appeared to you as supremely beautiful. For it is the beloved that is beautiful, graceful, complete, and the most blessed. In fact, the lover has another appearance, the sort of which I described.'

"And I said, 'This is very good, dear visitor. You speak beautifully! But tell me, what kind of value does Eros have for human beings?'

'This is precisely what I will try to teach you next,' she replied. 'We have discussed how Eros comes into being, that he is of beautiful things, as you say. But what if someone asked us: *Socrates and Diotima, what does it mean to say that Eros is of beautiful things?* Or, to put it as clearly as possible, *What does the lover of beautiful things love?* '

"And I replied that it was 'that they become his.'

'This answer begs the question: What will happen supposing that beautiful things become his?'

"At that point, I had nothing at hand to answer her question."

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δὲ ποριζόμενον ἀεὶ ὑπεκρεῖ, ὥστε οὔτε ἀπορεῖ Ἔρως ποτὲ οὔτε πλουτεῖ, σοφίας τε αὖ καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν. ἔχει γὰρ ὧδε. θεῶν οὐδεὶς φιλοσοφεῖ οὐδ' ἐπιθυμεῖ σοφὸς γενέσθαι—ἔστι γάρ—οὐδ' εἴ τις ἄλλος σοφός, οὐ φιλοσοφεῖ. οὐδ' αὖ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς φιλοσοφοῦσιν οὐδ' ἐπιθυμοῦσι σοφοὶ γενέσθαι· αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦτό ἐστι χαλεπὸν ἀμαθία, τὸ μὴ ὄντα καλὸν κἀγαθὸν μηδὲ φρόνιμον δοκεῖν αὑτῷ εἶναι ἱκανόν. οὔκουν ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ μὴ οἰόμενος ἐνδεὴς εἶναι οὗ ἂν μὴ οἴηται ἐπιδεῖσθαι.

"τίνες οὖν," ἔφην ἐγώ, "ὦ Διοτίμα, οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες, εἰ μήτε οἱ σοφοὶ μήτε οἱ ἀμαθεῖς;"

"δῆλον δή," ἔφη, "τοῦτό γε ἤδη καὶ παιδί, ὅτι οἱ μεταξὺ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων, ὧν ἂν εἴη καὶ ὁ Ἔρως. ἔστιν γὰρ δὴ τῶν καλλίστων ἡ σοφία, Ἔρως δ' ἐστὶν ἔρως περὶ τὸ καλόν, ὥστε ἀναγκαῖον Ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι, φιλόσοφον δὲ ὄντα μεταξὺ εἶναι σοφοῦ καὶ ἀμαθοῦς. αἰτία δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τούτων ἡ γένεσις· πατρὸς μὲν γὰρ σοφοῦ ἐστι καὶ εὐπόρου, μητρὸς δὲ οὐ σοφῆς καὶ ἀπόρου. ἡ μὲν οὖν φύσις τοῦ δαίμονος, ὦ φίλε Σώκρατες, αὕτη· ὃν δὲ σὺ ᾠήθης Ἔρωτα εἶναι, θαυμαστὸν οὐδὲν ἔπαθες. ᾠήθης δέ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ τεκμαιρομένη ἐξ ὧν σὺ λέγεις, τὸ ἐρώμενον Ἔρωτα εἶναι, οὐ τὸ ἐρῶν· διὰ ταῦτά σοι οἶμαι πάγκαλος ἐφαίνετο ὁ Ἔρως. καὶ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ ἐραστὸν τὸ τῷ ὄντι καλὸν καὶ ἁβρὸν καὶ τέλεον καὶ μακαριστόν· τὸ δέ γε ἐρῶν ἄλλην ἰδέαν τοιαύτην ἔχον, οἵαν ἐγὼ διῆλθον."

καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον, "εἶεν δή, ὦ ξένη, καλῶς γὰρ λέγεις· τοιοῦτος ὢν ὁ Ἔρως τίνα χρείαν ἔχει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις;"

"τοῦτο δὴ μετὰ ταῦτ'," ἔφη, "ὦ Σώκρατες, πειράσομαί σε διδάξαι. ἔστι μὲν γὰρ δὴ τοιοῦτος καὶ οὕτω γεγονὼς ὁ Ἔρως, ἔστι δὲ τῶν καλῶν, ὡς σὺ φής. εἰ δέ τις ἡμᾶς ἔροιτο· 'τί τῶν καλῶν ἐστιν ὁ Ἔρως, ὦ Σώκρατές τε καὶ Διοτίμα;' ὧδε δὲ σαφέστερον· ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν καλῶν· τί ἐρᾷ"

καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὅτι "γενέσθαι αὑτῷ."

"ἀλλ' ἔτι ποθεῖ," ἔφη, "ἡ ἀπόκρισις ἐρώτησιν τοιάνδε· τί ἔσται ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν γένηται τὰ καλά;"

οὐ πάνυ ἔφην ἔτι ἔχειν ἐγὼ πρὸς ταύτην τὴν ἐρώτησιν προχείρως ἀποκρίνασθαι.

'What if instead of what is beautiful,' she suggested, 'this person changed the question, replacing it with what is good? The question would be: *tell me, Socrates, what does the lover of good things love?* '

'That they,' I replied, 'become his.'

'And what will happen presuming that good things become his??'

'This,' I said, 'I have more resources to answer: he will be happy.'

'The happy are happy in possession of good things. There is no need to further ask: *What does the one who wants to be happy want?* The answer seems to be complete.'

'That's true,' I nodded.

'This wish and this love—Do you think this is common to everyone? Do you think everyone wants good things for themselves always? What say you?'

'That's it!' I agreed.'This is common to everyone.'

'Why then, Socrates,' asked her, 'we do not say that everyone loves, if every single person is in love—and always—but, instead, we say that some are in love, others not?'

'I wonder this too,' I admitted.

'There is no reason to wonder,' she snapped. 'This is because they abstract what we call it from a certain kind of love and apply to it the name of the whole, Eros, and for the other kinds we use other names.'

'Like what?' I asked.

'Like this: you know very well that *poiesis* is something multiple. That is to say, inasmuch as *poiesis* is named after causing something to come into being from nothing, *poiesis* is also named after all those arts in which things are manufactured. Additionally, all the crafters of these arts are poets.'

'True.'

'Even so,' she said, 'you know very well that they are not called poets but have other names. From the whole of *poiesis* one part was abstracted, the one about music and metric, being called by the name of the whole. This alone is called *poiesis* and the ones who belong to this part of *poiesis* are called poets.'

'That's correct,' I said.

'This is the same regarding love. Most importantly, all the desire for what is good and for happiness, *the greatest and treacherous love*, is in everyone.

"ἀλλ'," ἔφη, "ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις μεταβαλὼν ἀντὶ τοῦ καλοῦ τῷ ἀγαθῷ χρώμενος πυνθάνοιτο· 'φέρε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐρᾷ ὁ ἐρῶν τῶν ἀγαθῶν· τί ἐρᾷ;'"

"γενέσθαι," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "αὐτῷ."

"καὶ τί ἔσται ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν γένηται τἀγαθά;"

"τοῦτ' εὐπορώτερον," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "ἔχω ἀποκρίνασθαι, ὅτι εὐδαίμων ἔσται."

"κτήσει γάρ," ἔφη, "ἀγαθῶν οἱ εὐδαίμονες εὐδαίμονες, καὶ οὐκέτι προσδεῖ ἐρέσθαι 'ἵνα τί δὲ βούλεται εὐδαίμων εἶναι ὁ βουλόμενος;' ἀλλὰ τέλος δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἡ ἀπόκρισις."

"ἀληθῆ λέγεις," εἶπον ἐγώ.

"ταύτην δὴ τὴν βούλησιν καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα τοῦτον πότερα κοινὸν οἴει εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων, καὶ πάντας τἀγαθὰ βούλεσθαι αὑτοῖς εἶναι ἀεί, ἢ πῶς λέγεις;"

"οὕτως," ἦν δ' ἐγώ. "κοινὸν εἶναι πάντων."

"τί δὴ οὖν," ἔφη, "ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐ πάντας ἐρᾶν φαμεν, εἴπερ γε πάντες τῶν αὐτῶν ἐρῶσι καὶ ἀεί, ἀλλά τινάς φαμεν ἐρᾶν, τοὺς δ' οὔ;"

"θαυμάζω," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "καὶ αὐτός."

"ἀλλὰ μὴ θαύμαζ'," ἔφη· "ἀφελόντες γὰρ ἄρα τοῦ ἔρωτός τι εἶδος ὀνομάζομεν, τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ἐπιτιθέντες ὄνομα, ἔρωτα, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἄλλοις καταχρώμεθα ὀνόμασιν."

"ὥσπερ τί;" ἦν δ' ἐγώ.

"ὥσπερ τόδε. οἶσθ' ὅτι ποίησίς ἐστί τι πολύ· ἡ γάρ τοι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ ὂν ἰόντι ὁτῳοῦν αἰτία πᾶσά ἐστι ποίησις, ὥστε καὶ αἱ ὑπὸ πάσαις ταῖς τέχναις ἐργασίαι ποιήσεις εἰσὶ καὶ οἱ τούτων δημιουργοὶ πάντες ποιηταί."

"ἀληθῆ λέγεις."

"ἀλλ' ὅμως," ἦ δ' ἥ, "οἶσθ' ὅτι οὐ καλοῦνται ποιηταὶ ἀλλὰ ἄλλα ἔχουσιν ὀνόματα, ἀπὸ δὲ πάσης τῆς ποιήσεως ἓν μόριον ἀφορισθὲν τὸ περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ τὰ μέτρα τῷ τοῦ ὅλου ὀνόματι προσαγορεύεται. ποίησις γὰρ τοῦτο μόνον καλεῖται, καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες τοῦτο τὸ μόριον τῆς ποιήσεως ποιηταί."

"ἀληθῆ λέγεις," ἔφην.

"οὕτω τοίνυν καὶ περὶ τὸν ἔρωτα. τὸ μὲν κεφάλαιόν ἐστι πᾶσα ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμία καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονεῖν ὁ <μέγιστός τε καὶ δολερὸς ἔρως> παντί·

'Conversely, they who turn to love in many other forms, either by money-making, fondness for exercise, or love of intellectual excellence, are neither said to love nor called lovers. Instead, they hold back the name of the whole—love, loving, and lover—from those who eagerly proceed toward one form of it.'

'Your words are truly terrific,' I told her.

'There is something also said,' she added, 'a talk about how those in love would seek their other half. My argument is that neither is love for a half nor a whole, if it does not somehow happen, my dear friend, to be good. After all, people would be willing even to cut off their feet or hands if they seemed to be in a bad state. Thus, I don't think either of them is after what is proper of themselves—unless a person calls the good what is proper for themself, and the bad improper. People in love are after nothing but what is good. Do they seem to be after something else?'

'I am not saying anything! For Zeus!' I exclaimed.

'Well then,' she wondered, 'is it possible, so to speak, to say that people love what is good?'

'Yeah,' I replied.

'How come?' she asked. 'Should we not add that they also love to have the good for themselves?'

'Yes, let's add this.'

'And too,' she added, 'not only to have it but also to always have it?'

'Let's add this as well.'

'To put it shortly,' she said, 'Eros is of having the good for oneself forever.'

'This is so true!' I exclaimed.

'If this is what Eros is always,' she went on, 'then how do people pursue it? And in what kind of activity could the extreme eagerness be called Eros? What does this function happen to be? Can you tell?'

'If I knew it,' was my response, 'I would not be marvelled by your wisdom, going after you to learn these very things.'

'But to you,' she said, 'I will tell: it is begetting in what is beautiful with the body and with the soul.'

'Now I need to ask an oracle to make sense of this!' I told her. 'I don't get what you are saying.'

"ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἄλλῃ τρεπόμενοι πολλαχῇ ἐπ' αὐτόν, ἢ κατὰ χρηματισμὸν ἢ κατὰ φιλογυμναστίαν ἢ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν, οὔτε ἐρᾶν καλοῦνται οὔτε ἐρασταί, οἱ δὲ κατὰ ἕν τι εἶδος ἰόντες τε καὶ ἐσπουδακότες τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ὄνομα ἴσχουσιν, ἔρωτά τε καὶ ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐρασταί."

"κινδυνεύεις ἀληθῆ," ἔφην ἐγώ, λέγειν.

"καὶ λέγεται μέν γέ τις," ἔφη, "λόγος, ὡς οἳ ἂν τὸ ἥμισυ ἑαυτῶν ζητῶσιν, οὗτοι ἐρῶσιν· ὁ δ' ἐμὸς λόγος οὔτε ἡμίσεός φησιν εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα οὔτε ὅλου, ἐὰν μὴ τυγχάνῃ γέ που, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἀγαθὸν ὄν, ἐπεὶ αὑτῶν γε καὶ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐθέλουσιν ἀποτέμνεσθαι οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἐὰν αὐτοῖς δοκῇ τὰ ἑαυτῶν πονηρὰ εἶναι. οὐ γὰρ τὸ ἑαυτῶν οἶμαι ἕκαστοι ἀσπάζονται, εἰ μὴ εἴ τις τὸ μὲν ἀγαθὸν οἰκεῖον καλεῖ καὶ ἑαυτοῦ, τὸ δὲ κακὸν ἀλλότριον· ὡς οὐδέν γε ἄλλο ἐστὶν οὗ ἐρῶσιν ἄνθρωποι ἢ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. ἢ σοὶ δοκοῦσιν;"

"μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔμοιγε, ἦν δ' ἐγώ."

"ἆρ' οὖν," ἦ δ' ἥ, "οὕτως ἁπλοῦν ἐστι λέγειν ὅτι οἱ ἄνθρωποι τἀγαθοῦ ἐρῶσιν;"

"ναί," ἔφην.

"τί δέ; οὐ προσθετέον," ἔφη, "ὅτι καὶ εἶναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτοῖς ἐρῶσιν;"

"προσθετέον."

"ἆρ' οὖν," ἔφη, "καὶ οὐ μόνον εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀεὶ εἶναι;"

"καὶ τοῦτο προσθετέον."

"ἔστιν ἄρα συλλήβδην," ἔφη, "ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὑτῷ εἶναι ἀεί."

"ἀληθέστατα," ἔφην ἐγώ, "λέγεις."

"ὅτε δὴ τοῦτο ὁ ἔρως ἐστὶν ἀεί," ἦ δ' ἥ, "τῶν τίνα τρόπον διωκόντων αὐτὸ καὶ ἐν τίνι πράξει ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ἡ σύντασις ἔρως ἂν καλοῖτο; τί τοῦτο τυγχάνει ὂν τὸ ἔργον; ἔχεις εἰπεῖν;"

"οὐ μεντἂν σέ," ἔφην ἐγώ, "ὦ Διοτίμα, ἐθαύμαζον ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ ἐφοίτων παρὰ σὲ αὐτὰ ταῦτα μαθησόμενος."

"ἀλλὰ ἐγώ σοι," ἔφη, "ἐρῶ. ἔστι γὰρ τοῦτο τόκος ἐν καλῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν."

"μαντείας," ἦν δ' ἐγώ, "δεῖται ὅτι ποτε λέγεις, καὶ οὐ μανθάνω."

'Then I,' she offered, 'will speak more clearly. Every person is pregnant with the body and with the soul. When they come of age, it is natural that one desires to beget. It is impossible to beget in what is ugly, for we do it in what is beautiful. Indeed, there is a begetting from the intercourse between a man and a woman. This is something divine, pregnancy and procreation, for this is also how immortality happens within mortality for a living being, impossible to happen in something not attuned: whereas the ugly is not in tune with anything divine, the beautiful is attuned. Therefore, Beauty is the Moira and Eleithyia of procreation.'

'They would be what drives the pregnant into what is beautiful, more than happy to become relaxed, both to beget and to procreate. Conversely, before what is ugly, one shrinks, repulsed, coiling up, affected by pain and would not procreate, restraining the offspring in a way difficult to bear. Hence, the one who is pregnant and ready to burst comes into a great state of excitement near the beautiful because of the release from a striking anguish that one holds.'

'For this, Socrates,' she said, 'Eros is not for what is beautiful, as you believe.'

'And what, then?'

'It is for procreating and begetting in what is beautiful.'

'Fine,' I replied.

'It is more than fine,' she snapped. 'Why, then, is it for procreation? Because procreation is a way for mortals to be everlasting and immortal. If Eros is really for having what is good forever, then, from what we have concluded, it is necessary to desire immortality together with what is good. Therefore, it also follows from this argument that Eros is for immortality.'

"Eventually, when teaching me all these things and talking a bunch of stuff about Eros, she asked: 'Socrates, what do you think is responsible for this love and desire? Have you not noticed how all the animals are terribly affected when desiring to procreate? The birds and land beasts alike all suffer and are subject to love: first for intercourse with one another, then for the nourishment of the newborns, to the point even the weakest are ready to fight against the strongest and die for their offspring, maintaining themselves in hunger to rear their brood, and for anything else that must be done.'

"ἀλλ' ἐγώ," ἦ δ' ἥ, "σαφέστερον ἐρῶ. κυοῦσιν γάρ," ἔφη, "ὦ Σώκρατες, πάντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν, καὶ ἐπειδὰν ἔν τινι ἡλικίᾳ γένωνται, τίκτειν ἐπιθυμεῖ ἡμῶν ἡ φύσις. τίκτειν δὲ ἐν μὲν αἰσχρῷ οὐ δύναται, ἐν δὲ τῷ καλῷ. ἡ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς συνουσία τόκος ἐστίν. ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο θεῖον τὸ πρᾶγμα, καὶ τοῦτο ἐν θνητῷ ὄντι τῷ ζῴῳ ἀθάνατον ἔνεστιν, ἡ κύησις καὶ ἡ γέννησις. τὰ δὲ ἐν τῷ ἀναρμόστῳ ἀδύνατον γενέσθαι. ἀνάρμοστον δ' ἐστὶ τὸ αἰσχρὸν παντὶ τῷ θείῳ, τὸ δὲ καλὸν ἁρμόττον. Μοῖρα οὖν καὶ Εἰλείθυια ἡ Καλλονή ἐστι τῇ γενέσει. διὰ ταῦτα ὅταν μὲν καλῷ προσπελάζῃ τὸ κυοῦν, ἵλεών τε γίγνεται καὶ εὐφραινόμενον διαχεῖται καὶ τίκτει τε καὶ γεννᾷ· ὅταν δὲ αἰσχρῷ, σκυθρωπόν τε καὶ λυπούμενον συσπειρᾶται καὶ ἀποτρέπεται καὶ ἀνείλλεται καὶ οὐ γεννᾷ, ἀλλὰ ἴσχον τὸ κύημα χαλεπῶς φέρει. ὅθεν δὴ τῷ κυοῦντί τε καὶ ἤδη σπαργῶντι πολλὴ ἡ πτοίησις γέγονε περὶ τὸ καλὸν διὰ τὸ μεγάλης ὠδῖνος ἀπολύειν τὸν ἔχοντα. ἔστιν γάρ, ὦ Σώκρατες," ἔφη, "οὐ τοῦ καλοῦ ὁ ἔρως, ὡς σὺ οἴει."

"ἀλλὰ τί μήν;"

"τῆς γεννήσεως καὶ τοῦ τόκου ἐν τῷ καλῷ."

"εἶεν," ἦν δ' ἐγώ.

"πάνυ μὲν οὖν," ἔφη. "τί δὴ οὖν τῆς γεννήσεως; ὅτι ἀειγενές ἐστι καὶ ἀθάνατον ὡς θνητῷ ἡ γέννησις. ἀθανασίας δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπιθυμεῖν μετὰ ἀγαθοῦ ἐκ τῶν ὡμολογημένων, εἴπερ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἑαυτῷ εἶναι ἀεὶ ἔρως ἐστίν."

"ἀναγκαῖον δὴ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ λόγου καὶ τῆς ἀθανασίας τὸν ἔρωτα εἶναι."

ταῦτά τε οὖν πάντα ἐδίδασκέ με, ὁπότε περὶ τῶν ἐρωτικῶν λόγους ποιοῖτο, καί ποτε ἤρετο "τί οἴει, ὦ Σώκρατες, αἴτιον εἶναι τούτου τοῦ ἔρωτος καὶ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας; ἢ οὐκ αἰσθάνῃ ὡς δεινῶς διατίθεται πάντα τὰ θηρία ἐπειδὰν γεννᾶν ἐπιθυμήσῃ, καὶ τὰ πεζὰ καὶ τὰ πτηνά, νοσοῦντά τε πάντα καὶ ἐρωτικῶς διατιθέμενα, πρῶτον μὲν περὶ τὸ συμμιγῆναι ἀλλήλοις, ἔπειτα περὶ τὴν τροφὴν τοῦ γενομένου, καὶ ἕτοιμά ἐστιν ὑπὲρ τούτων καὶ διαμάχεσθαι τὰ ἀσθενέστατα τοῖς ἰσχυροτάτοις καὶ ὑπεραποθνῄσκειν, καὶ αὐτὰ τῷ λιμῷ παρατεινόμενα ὥστ' ἐκεῖνα ἐκτρέφειν, καὶ ἄλλο πᾶν ποιοῦντα."

'One might suppose human beings do these things because they are rational,' she said. 'What about the animals? What is the cause of being subject to love in such a way? Can you tell?'

After telling her once more that I could not see the reason, she said: 'Do you think that you will ever become terrific in the matters of Eros if you are not reflecting on these things?'

'Look, Diotima, as I just said, this is the very reason for coming before you, knowing that I am in need of teachers. Anyway, tell me about these things, the cause, as well as the bunch of stuff about Eros.'

'Very well,' she nodded. 'If you believe that by nature Eros is for that which we have concluded together many times, then you do not have to wonder. Remember that argument in which mortal nature seeks, as much as possible, to exist forever and be immortal? There, only one way emerged as possible. It was by procreation: that is, to always leave behind something new in the place of what is old, to the extent that from each one of the living beings it is said that they are alive and that they are the same individual, just like an elderly who turns out to become old from youth is said to be the same person. But, as a matter of fact, this person who is called *the same* has by no means the same things in them. Instead, there is always something new coming into being, whilst others are fading away. This applies to hair, flesh and bones, blood, and the whole body. And this is not just with the body but also applies to the soul: the behaviour, customs, beliefs, desires, pleasures, pains, and fears. None of these things remains the same for a person, but they are always coming into being and ceasing to be. It is quite strange that these things happen with pieces of knowledge as well: not only are they coming into being and being lost from us, but also we are never the same, not even regarding pieces of knowledge. Instead, each piece of knowledge—one by one—passes. What is called improvement is because of the knowledge that is leaving us: forgetting is the departure of knowledge; improvement is preserving knowledge by creating a new memory to replace what is departing us, to the extent it appears to be the same. In this way, everything mortal is preserved, not by always being entirely the same, as if it were divine, but by leaving behind something new of the same kind as the decaying and the departing.'

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τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἀνθρώπους," ἔφη, "οἴοιτ' ἄν τις ἐκ λογισμοῦ ταῦτα ποιεῖν· τὰ δὲ θηρία τίς αἰτία οὕτως ἐρωτικῶς διατίθεσθαι; ἔχεις λέγειν;"

καὶ ἐγὼ αὖ ἔλεγον ὅτι οὐκ εἰδείην· ἣ δ' εἶπεν, "διανοῇ οὖν δεινός ποτε γενήσεσθαι τὰ ἐρωτικά, ἐὰν ταῦτα μὴ ἐννοῇς;"

"ἀλλὰ διὰ ταῦτά τοι," ὦ Διοτίμα, "ὅπερ νυνδὴ εἶπον, παρὰ σὲ ἥκω, γνοὺς ὅτι διδασκάλων δέομαι. ἀλλά μοι λέγε καὶ τούτων τὴν αἰτίαν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν περὶ τὰ ἐρωτικά."

"εἰ τοίνυν," ἔφη, "πιστεύεις ἐκείνου εἶναι φύσει τὸν ἔρωτα, οὗ πολλάκις ὡμολογήκαμεν, μὴ θαύμαζε. ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκείνῳ λόγον ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀεί τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος. δύναται δὲ ταύτῃ μόνον, τῇ γενέσει, ὅτι ἀεὶ καταλείπει ἕτερον νέον ἀντὶ τοῦ παλαιοῦ, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν ᾧ ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ζῴων ζῆν καλεῖται καὶ εἶναι τὸ αὐτό—οἷον ἐκ παιδαρίου ὁ αὐτὸς λέγεται ἕως ἂν πρεσβύτης γένηται· οὗτος μέντοι οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ ἔχων ἐν αὑτῷ ὅμως ὁ αὐτὸς καλεῖται, ἀλλὰ νέος ἀεὶ γιγνόμενος, τὰ δὲ ἀπολλύς, καὶ κατὰ τὰς τρίχας καὶ σάρκα καὶ ὀστᾶ καὶ αἷμα καὶ σύμπαν τὸ σῶμα. καὶ μὴ ὅτι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν οἱ τρόποι, τὰ ἤθη, δόξαι, ἐπιθυμίαι, ἡδοναί, λῦπαι, φόβοι, τούτων ἕκαστα οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ πάρεστιν ἑκάστῳ, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν γίγνεται, τὰ δὲ ἀπόλλυται. πολὺ δὲ τούτων ἀτοπώτερον ἔτι, ὅτι καὶ αἱ ἐπιστῆμαι μὴ ὅτι αἱ μὲν γίγνονται, αἱ δὲ ἀπόλλυνται ἡμῖν, καὶ οὐδέποτε οἱ αὐτοί ἐσμεν οὐδὲ κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας, ἀλλὰ καὶ μία ἑκάστη τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ταὐτὸν πάσχει. ὃ γὰρ καλεῖται μελετᾶν, ὡς ἐξιούσης ἐστὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης· λήθη γὰρ ἐπιστήμης ἔξοδος, μελέτη δὲ πάλιν καινὴν ἐμποιοῦσα ἀντὶ τῆς ἀπιούσης μνήμην σῴζει τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ὥστε τὴν αὐτὴν δοκεῖν εἶναι. τούτῳ γὰρ τῷ τρόπῳ πᾶν τὸ θνητὸν σῴζεται, οὐ τῷ παντάπασιν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀεὶ εἶναι ὥσπερ τὸ θεῖον, ἀλλὰ τῷ τὸ ἀπιὸν καὶ παλαιούμενον ἕτερον νέον ἐγκαταλείπειν οἷον αὐτὸ ἦν."

'By this mechanism, Socrates,' she said, 'a mortal partakes of immortality, as does the body and all the rest; the immortal do in another manner. Thus, do not be surprised that every being esteems an offshoot of themself. This eagerness and love in every being is for the sake of immortality.'

"I listened to what she said and voiced my amazement: 'Diotima, the wisest! Are these things,' I asked, 'really like you are saying?'

"And her, as if she were those accomplished sophists, said: 'Pay attention, Socrates, if you will, and look at the *philothimia* of the people. If you do not reflect and become conscious of what I have been saying, you might wonder about the lack of reason for the manner they become dangerously affected by the love of renowned things *to lay up immortal fame for all time*. For the sake of this, they do not hesitate to risk all kinds of danger, waste money and suffer whatever toils, even more than they would for their children, to the point of dying.'

'Do you believe,' she said, 'that Alcestis would have died for Admetus, or Achilles after Patroclos or your Kodros early on behalf of his children's succession if they had not expected that the memory of their virtue, which even now we still have, would be immortal?'

'It must be far from it,' she said. 'I believe they all do everything for immortal virtue and this kind of glorious fame: the better they are, the greater they do. They love what is immortal'.

'The pregnant,' she said, 'with the bodies tend to turn towards women. Affected by Eros, thus, they expect that begetting children is how they are to obtain for themselves immortality, memory, and happiness for all the time to come.'

'The pregnant with the soul—for there are indeed those,' she said, 'even more pregnant in the souls than in the bodies—, who has something fitting for the soul to be pregnant with and beget. What, then, is fitting? Wisdom and the remaining virtue, of which the makers are all procreators, just like the crafters considered to be cunning inventors.'

'By far the greatest and most beautiful,' she said, 'kind of wisdom is the one of the ordering of the *poleis* and households, whose name is moderation and justice. Moreover, when someone is pregnant of these

"ταύτῃ τῇ μηχανῇ, ὦ Σώκρατες," ἔφη, "θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει, καὶ σῶμα καὶ τἆλλα πάντα· ἀθάνατον δὲ ἄλλῃ. μὴ οὖν θαύμαζε εἰ τὸ αὑτοῦ ἀποβλάστημα φύσει πᾶν τιμᾷ· ἀθανασίας γὰρ χάριν παντὶ αὕτη ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἕπεται."

καὶ ἐγὼ ἀκούσας τὸν λόγον ἐθαύμασά τε καὶ εἶπον "εἶεν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ σοφωτάτη Διοτίμα, ταῦτα ὡς ἀληθῶς οὕτως ἔχει;"

καὶ ἥ, ὥσπερ οἱ τέλεοι σοφισταί, "εὖ ἴσθι," ἔφη, "ὦ Σώκρατες· ἐπεί γε καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰ ἐθέλεις εἰς τὴν φιλοτιμίαν βλέψαι, θαυμάζοις ἂν τῆς ἀλογίας περὶ ἃ ἐγὼ εἴρηκα εἰ μὴ ἐννοεῖς, ἐνθυμηθεὶς ὡς δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι τοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ γενέσθαι <καὶ κλέος ἐς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι>, καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου κινδύνους τε κινδυνεύειν ἕτοιμοί εἰσι πάντας ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων, καὶ χρήματα ἀναλίσκειν καὶ πόνους πονεῖν οὕς τινασοῦν καὶ ὑπεραποθνῄσκειν. ἐπεὶ οἴει σύ," ἔφη, "Ἄλκηστιν ὑπὲρ Ἀδμήτου ἀποθανεῖν ἄν, ἢ Ἀχιλλέα Πατρόκλῳ ἐπαποθανεῖν, ἢ προαποθανεῖν τὸν ὑμέτερον Κόδρον ὑπὲρ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν παίδων, μὴ οἰομένους ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς πέρι ἑαυτῶν ἔσεσθαι, ἣν νῦν ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν; πολλοῦ γε δεῖ," ἔφη, "ἀλλ' οἶμαι ὑπὲρ ἀρετῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ τοιαύτης δόξης εὐκλεοῦς πάντες πάντα ποιοῦσιν, ὅσῳ ἂν ἀμείνους ὦσι, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον· τοῦ γὰρ ἀθανάτου ἐρῶσιν. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐγκύμονες," ἔφη, "κατὰ τὰ σώματα ὄντες πρὸς τὰς γυναῖκας μᾶλλον τρέπονται καὶ ταύτῃ ἐρωτικοί εἰσιν, διὰ παιδογονίας ἀθανασίαν καὶ μνήμην καὶ εὐδαιμονίαν, ὡς οἴονται, αὑτοῖς εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον πάντα ποριζόμενοι· οἱ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν—εἰσὶ γὰρ οὖν," ἔφη, "οἳ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κυοῦσιν ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν, ἃ ψυχῇ προσήκει καὶ κυῆσαι καὶ τεκεῖν· τί οὖν προσήκει; φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν—ὧν δή εἰσι καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ πάντες γεννήτορες καὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν ὅσοι λέγονται εὑρετικοὶ εἶναι· πολὺ δὲ μεγίστη," ἔφη, "καὶ καλλίστη τῆς φρονήσεως ἡ περὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεών τε καὶ οἰκήσεων διακόσμησις, ᾗ δὴ ὄνομά ἐστι σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη—τούτων δ αὖ ὅταν τις ἐκ

things with the soul since youth, being unmarried and coming of age, he, then, desires to beget and procreate.'

'He too, I believe, goes after the beautiful, seeking to procreate in there, for in what is ugly he would never procreate. Because he is pregnant, he welcomes beautiful bodies over ugly ones. When he stumbles into the beauty, kindness, and gracefulness of the soul, he is more than happy to accept the combination of both. Before such a person, he is immediately resourceful of talks on virtues and on whatever befits to make a good person and attempts to educate him.'

'For, I believe, that by attaching himself to what is beautiful and getting acquainted with it, the memory of which is bringing to presence by having it recalled to mind in absence, he thus begets and procreates what he has for so long been bearing in pregnancy, rearing the offspring in communion with the other person. They have a much stronger partnership and firmer friendship with one another, as the offspring that maintain them united are beautiful and immortal compared to children. Everyone would rather be a parent of this kind of children over humans and gaze at Homer, Hesiod, and the other good poets, envying the offspring they leave behind, which yield them immortal memory and fame, a kind in itself immortal.'

'If you want more,' she said, 'take, for example, the kind of children Lycurgus has left behind in Sparta as the salvation not only of Sparta, as word has it, but also of all Greece. Solon, too, is held in honour by producing laws for your people. And elsewhere, among Greeks and non-Greeks, many other people display their own great and beautiful deeds, producing all sorts of virtue. For the sake of this kind of children, many sacred rites have now been established in honour of these people. For the sake of the human kind, not a single altar has been sprinkled.'

'These are the Mysteries of Eros. Perhaps even you, Socrates, could be made into a *mystes*. Regarding the Highest Mysteries and insightful viewing—for the sake of which all of this exists, if one proceeds correctly—I cannot see if you can be made into one. I shall tell,' she said. 'And I will not leave anything lacking. But you too must try to follow as best as you can.'

νέου ἐγκύμων ᾖ τὴν ψυχήν, ἤθεος ὢν καὶ ἡκούσης τῆς ἡλικίας, τίκτειν τε καὶ γεννᾶν ἤδη ἐπιθυμῇ, ζητεῖ δὴ οἶμαι καὶ οὗτος περιιὼν τὸ καλὸν ἐν ᾧ ἂν γεννήσειεν· ἐν τῷ γὰρ αἰσχρῷ οὐδέποτε γεννήσει. τά τε οὖν σώματα τὰ καλὰ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ αἰσχρὰ ἀσπάζεται ἅτε κυῶν, καὶ ἂν ἐντύχῃ ψυχῇ καλῇ καὶ γενναίᾳ καὶ εὐφυεῖ, πάνυ δὴ ἀσπάζεται τὸ συναμφότερον, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον εὐθὺς εὐπορεῖ λόγων περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ οἷον χρὴ εἶναι τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἃ ἐπιτηδεύειν, καὶ ἐπιχειρεῖ παιδεύειν. ἁπτόμενος γὰρ οἶμαι τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ὁμιλῶν αὐτῷ, ἃ πάλαι ἐκύει τίκτει καὶ γεννᾷ, καὶ παρὼν καὶ ἀπὼν μεμνημένος, καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν συνεκτρέφει κοινῇ μετ' ἐκείνου, ὥστε πολὺ μείζω κοινωνίαν τῆς τῶν παίδων πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἴσχουσι καὶ φιλίαν βεβαιοτέραν, ἅτε καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων κεκοινωνηκότες. καὶ πᾶς ἂν δέξαιτο ἑαυτῷ τοιούτους παῖδας μᾶλλον γεγονέναι ἢ τοὺς ἀνθρωπίνους, καὶ εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀποβλέψας καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητὰς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ζηλῶν, οἷα ἔκγονα ἑαυτῶν καταλείπουσιν, ἃ ἐκείνοις ἀθάνατον κλέος καὶ μνήμην παρέχεται αὐτὰ τοιαῦτα ὄντα· εἰ δὲ βούλει, ἔφη, οἵους Λυκοῦργος παῖδας κατελίπετο ἐν Λακεδαίμονι σωτῆρας τῆς Λακεδαίμονος καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν τῆς Ἑλλάδος. τίμιος δὲ παρ' ὑμῖν καὶ Σόλων διὰ τὴν τῶν νόμων γέννησιν, καὶ ἄλλοι ἄλλοθι πολλαχοῦ ἄνδρες, καὶ ἐν Ἕλλησι καὶ ἐν βαρβάροις, πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀποφηνάμενοι ἔργα, γεννήσαντες παντοίαν ἀρετήν· ὧν καὶ ἱερὰ πολλὰ ἤδη γέγονε διὰ τοὺς τοιούτους παῖδας, διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἀνθρωπίνους οὐδενός πω.

ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἴσως, ὦ Σώκρατες, κἂν σὺ μυηθείης· τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά, ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἔστιν, ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς μετίῃ, οὐκ οἶδ' εἰ οἷός τ' ἂν εἴης. ἐρῶ μὲν οὖν, ἔφη, ἐγὼ καὶ προθυμίας οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω. πειρῶ δὲ ἕπεσθαι, ἂν οἷός τε ᾖς.

'To proceed correctly on these matters, it is necessary to begin from youth by pursuing beautiful bodies. First, if the guide leads correctly, he must love a single body and there generate beautiful discourses. Afterwards, it is necessary to see for himself that beauty upon any particular body is kindred to beauty upon any other body. Additionally, if it is necessary to pursue beauty manifested in appearance, then it would be quite foolish not to consider beauty upon all bodies as one and the same. He must come to realise this to loosen the exceeding love for one body, leading him to look down upon it as of lesser importance to become a lover of all beautiful bodies.'

"Next to all of this, it is necessary to consider beauty in the souls more valuable than the beauty of the body, so that even if someone happens to have just a spark upon the surface while being the soul suitable, it would be enough for him to love and care for a person and beget discourses as much suitable, seeking whichever may make the youth better people, to the extent one may be impelled to see with further clarity the beauty in different kinds of activities and laws, also observing that all is in itself related, to the point of considering the beauty surrounding the body as something of lesser importance.'

'It is necessary to lead from activities toward distinct kinds of knowledge to the extent one may further see the beauty of different kinds of knowledge. Looking toward beauty, now multiple, he may no longer be enslaved to the beauty of anyone, as if serving one master, content with the beauty of a young boy or the beauty of a person, or even the beauty of a sole activity, babbling about trivial matters.'

'Instead, he has become reoriented to the vast, open sea of beauty and contemplates it, begetting many beautiful discourses and magnificent thoughts in ungrudging *philosophia*. At this moment of life, if matured and faring well, it might be possible to recognise a kind of unique knowledge: the knowledge of a beauty which I will try to describe. Turn your attention to me,' said Diotima, 'trying as best as you can.'

'Whatever youth who is led up to this point in the Mysteries of Eros, seeing with clarity the beautiful things in the correct and ordered way, nearing the culmination of the Mysteries, now the Highest, may

δεῖ γάρ," ἔφη, "τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα ἄρχεσθαι μὲν νέον ὄντα ἰέναι ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ σώματα, καὶ πρῶτον μέν, ἐὰν ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται ὁ ἡγούμενος, ἑνὸς αὐτὸν σώματος ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐνταῦθα γεννᾶν λόγους καλούς, ἔπειτα δὲ αὐτὸν κατανοῆσαι ὅτι τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἐπὶ ὁτῳοῦν σώματι τῷ ἐπὶ ἑτέρῳ σώματι ἀδελφόν ἐστι, καὶ εἰ δεῖ διώκειν τὸ ἐπ᾽ εἴδει καλόν, πολλὴ ἄνοια μὴ οὐχ ἕν τε καὶ ταὐτὸν ἡγεῖσθαι τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς σώμασι κάλλος· τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐννοήσαντα καταστῆναι πάντων τῶν καλῶν σωμάτων ἐραστήν, ἑνὸς δὲ τὸ σφόδρα τοῦτο χαλάσαι καταφρονήσαντα καὶ σμικρὸν ἡγησάμενον· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τὸ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κάλλος τιμιώτερον ἡγήσασθαι τοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι, ὥστε καὶ ἐὰν ἐπιεικὴς ὢν τὴν ψυχήν τις κἂν σμικρὸν ἄνθος ἔχῃ, ἐξαρκεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐρᾶν καὶ κήδεσθαι καὶ τίκτειν λόγους τοιούτους καὶ ζητεῖν, οἵτινες ποιήσουσι βελτίους τοὺς νέους, ἵνα ἀναγκασθῇ αὖ θεάσασθαι τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλὸν καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἰδεῖν ὅτι πᾶν αὐτὸ αὑτῷ συγγενές ἐστιν, ἵνα τὸ περὶ τὸ σῶμα καλὸν σμικρόν τι ἡγήσηται εἶναι· μετὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα ἐπὶ τὰς ἐπιστήμας ἀγαγεῖν, ἵνα ἴδῃ αὖ ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος, καὶ βλέπων πρὸς πολὺ ἤδη τὸ καλὸν μηκέτι τὸ παρ᾽ ἑνί, ὥσπερ οἰκέτης, ἀγαπῶν παιδαρίου κάλλος ἢ ἀνθρώπου τινὸς ἢ ἐπιτηδεύματος ἑνός, δουλεύων φαῦλος ᾖ καὶ σμικρολόγος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ θεωρῶν πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτῃ καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ, ἕως ἂν ἐνταῦθα ῥωσθεὶς καὶ αὐξηθεὶς κατίδῃ τινὰ ἐπιστήμην μίαν τοιαύτην, ἥ ἐστι καλοῦ τοιοῦδε. πειρῶ δέ μοι," ἔφη, "τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν ὡς οἷόν τε μάλιστα. ὃς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ παιδαγωγηθῇ, θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλά, πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν

suddenly have something wonderful within view: the nature of beauty. That one, Socrates! The one for the sake of which absolutely all the toils up to this point have been undertaken!'

'Above all, it *always is*!'
'Not born! Nor die! Not big! Nor small!'
'Not this! Nor that! Not here! Nor there!'
'Not in this! Nor in that! Not in these! Nor in those!'
'Not for me! Nor for thee!'
'Not will the beautiful itself be flickered elusively!'
'Not as some mask! Not some handiwork!'
'Not as any other thing!'
'Not the sort of which the body partakes with!'
'Not some discourse! Not some knowledge!'
'Never in anything different than itself!'
'Neither in the living!'
'Nor on the earth!'
'Nor in the sky!'
'Nor in any other place!'

'Neither will it flicker, but will clearly come to light'
'Being itself, according to itself, by itself, pure forever!'
'And all the other beautiful things partake of it by means such as this:
'They become and uncome and what else such as this!'
'That one is neither any bigger nor any smaller!
'Nor is subject to absolutely any single thing!'

'At this point, when one proceeds correctly in the love of boys, ascending from these here to that beautiful there, one begins to have it within view, close to somehow touching upon what is perfect.'

'This is really the correct way to pursue or to be led by another on the Mysteries of Eros: beginning from all of these beautiful things here that are for the sake of the beautiful there, always ascending by using them like steps of a stair, from one to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, from beautiful bodies to beautiful activities, from activities to beautiful

ἐξαίφνης κατόψεταί τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὦ Σώκρατες,
οὗ δὴ ἕνεκεν καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν,”

“πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὂν”
“καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον,”
“οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον,”
“ἔπειτα οὐ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δ’ αἰσχρόν,”
“οὐδὲ τοτὲ μέν, τοτὲ δὲ οὔ,”
“οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρόν,”
“οὐδ’ ἔνθα μὲν καλόν, ἔνθα δὲ αἰσχρόν,”
“ὡς τισὶ μὲν ὂν καλόν, τισὶ δὲ αἰσχρόν·”
“οὐδ’ αὖ φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν”
“οἷον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες οὐδὲ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ὧν σῶμα μετέχει,”
“οὐδέ τις λόγος οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη,”
“οὐδέ που ὂν ἐν ἑτέρῳ τινι,”
“οἷον ἐν ζώῳ”
“ἢ ἐν γῇ”
“ἢ ἐν οὐρανῷ”
“ἢ ἔν τῳ ἄλλῳ,”

“ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μεθ’ αὑτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν,”
“τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα καλὰ ἐκείνου μετέχοντα τρόπον τινὰ τοιοῦτον,”
“οἷον γιγνομένων τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἀπολλυμένων μηδὲν ἐκεῖνο”
“μήτε τι πλέον μήτε ἔλαττον γίγνεσθαι”
“μηδὲ πάσχειν μηδέν.”

“ὅταν δή τις ἀπὸ τῶνδε διὰ τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν ἐπανιὼν ἐκεῖνο τὸ καλὸν
ἄρχηται καθορᾶν, σχεδὸν ἄν τι ἅπτοιτο τοῦ τέλους. τοῦτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρθῶς
ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι ἢ ὑπ’ ἄλλου ἄγεσθαι, ἀρχόμενον ἀπὸ τῶνδε τῶν καλῶν
ἐκείνου ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ ἀεὶ ἐπανιέναι, ὥσπερ ἐπαναβασμοῖς χρώμενον, ἀπὸ ἑνὸς
ἐπὶ δύο καὶ ἀπὸ δυοῖν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ σώματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν καλῶν σωμάτων
ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ

kinds of knowledge; and from kinds of knowledge to that accomplishing knowledge, which is no other than knowledge of that one beautiful itself: there, one culminates in knowing what is the beautiful itself.'

'At this moment of life, dear Socrates,' said the Mantinian visitor, 'if anywhere, life is worth living for a human being, in seeing with clarity the beautiful itself. If you ever happen to glimpse that, it would not be comparable to gold and garments, nor as the beautiful boys and younglings may seem for you, who now you see in astonishment and for whom you and others are eager, seeing the beloved younglings and always wanting to get acquainted with them, if somehow were it possible not to eat nor to drink but uniquely to have them seen and get acquainted with them.'

'What then,' she said, 'can we suppose to happen if one were to see the beautiful itself unmixed, clean, undefiled, not infected by flesh or by mortal skin and by any other mortal folly, but instead able to see with understanding the divine beautiful itself in its pure form?'

'I think you may suppose,' she said, 'that life would become of little value for the one who looks there and must see that one beautiful itself with clarity and get acquainted with?'

'Would you not conclude,' she said, 'that it is within this circumstance alone, by seeing the beautiful in the manner which it is to be seen, begetting not illusions of virtue, because one is not taking hold of illusion but what is true, since one is holding gaze on what is true? By begetting true virtue and nourishing it, would one not become dear to the divine? And, if it were indeed possible for any person to become immortal at all, would it not be that person? '

"This, Phaedrus and everyone else, is what Diotima said, and I am persuaded by her. Since I am persuaded by what she said, I have been trying to persuade others too that by acquiring this possession one could hardly get a better partner for human nature than Eros. That's why I say left and right that everyone has to honour Eros, and I myself honour and practise these things about Eros in different ways. I have been recommending

μαθήματα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν μαθημάτων ἐπ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ μάθημα τελευτῆσαι, ὅ ἐστιν
οὐκ ἄλλου ἢ αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ μάθημα, ἵνα γνῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὅ ἔστι
καλόν. ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, ὦ φίλε Σώκρατες," ἔφη ἡ Μαντινικὴ ξένη, "εἴπερ που
ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν. ὃ ἐάν ποτε ἴδῃς, οὐ κατὰ
χρυσίον τε καὶ ἐσθῆτα καὶ τοὺς καλοὺς παῖδάς τε καὶ νεανίσκους δόξει σοι εἶναι,
οὓς νῦν ὁρῶν ἐκπέπληξαι καὶ ἕτοιμος εἶ καὶ σὺ καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοί, ὁρῶντες τὰ
παιδικὰ καὶ συνόντες ἀεὶ αὐτοῖς, εἴ πως οἷόν τ' ἦν, μήτ' ἐσθίειν μήτε πίνειν, ἀλλὰ
θεᾶσθαι μόνον καὶ συνεῖναι. τί δῆτα," ἔφη, "οἰόμεθα, εἴ τῳ γένοιτο αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν
ἰδεῖν εἰλικρινές, καθαρόν, ἄμεικτον, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀνάπλεων σαρκῶν τε ἀνθρωπίνων
καὶ χρωμάτων καὶ ἄλλης πολλῆς φλυαρίας θνητῆς, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλὸν
δύναιτο μονοειδὲς κατιδεῖν; ἆρ' οἴει," ἔφη, "φαῦλον βίον γίγνεσθαι ἐκεῖσε
βλέποντος ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἐκεῖνο ᾧ δεῖ θεωμένου καὶ συνόντος αὐτῷ; ἢ οὐκ
ἐνθυμῇ," ἔφη, "ὅτι ἐνταῦθα αὐτῷ μοναχοῦ γενήσεται, ὁρῶντι ᾧ ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν,
τίκτειν οὐκ εἴδωλα ἀρετῆς, ἅτε οὐκ εἰδώλου ἐφαπτομένῳ, ἀλλὰ ἀληθῆ, ἅτε τοῦ
ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ· τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ
γενέσθαι, καὶ εἴπέρ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ;"

ταῦτα δή, ὦ Φαῖδρέ τε καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι, ἔφη μὲν Διοτίμα, πέπεισμαι δ' ἐγώ·
πεπεισμένος δὲ πειρῶμαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πείθειν ὅτι τούτου τοῦ κτήματος τῇ
ἀνθρωπείᾳ φύσει συνεργὸν ἀμείνω Ἔρωτος οὐκ ἄν τις ῥᾳδίως λάβοι. διὸ δὴ ἔγωγέ
φημι χρῆναι πάντα ἄνδρα τὸν Ἔρωτα τιμᾶν, καὶ αὐτὸς τιμῶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ καὶ
διαφερόντως ἀσκῶ, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις παρακελεύομαι

it to others. And, now and always, I am praising the power and might of Eros as many times as I can. This is my talk on Eros, Phaedrus—my praise, as you usually say, if you will. Or else, if you prefer to call it by whatever name, call it as you please."

καὶ νῦν τε καὶ ἀεὶ ἐγκωμιάζω τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ἀνδρείαν τοῦ Ἔρωτος καθ᾽ ὅσον οἷός τ᾽ εἰμί. τοῦτον οὖν τὸν λόγον, ὦ Φαῖδρε, εἰ μὲν βούλει, ὡς ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἔρωτα νόμισον εἰρῆσθαι, εἰ δέ, ὅτι καὶ ὅπῃ χαίρεις ὀνομάζων, τοῦτο ὀνόμαζε.

COMMENTARY

Moments before, Socrates rebuked *the manner* in which all the previous symposiasts made their praise (τρόπον τοῦ ἐπαίνου: 199a4). They praised Eros, so to speak, with 'fancy words' (καὶ καλῶς γ' ἔχει καὶ σεμνῶς ὁ ἔπαινος: 199a2-3). Socrates, however, aims at nothing but to say the truth (οὐ μέντοι ἀλλὰ τά γε ἀληθῆ: 199a7). He speaks plainly: "*dizer a verdade, como Sócrates, é grosseiro e pertinaz*" (Casertano 2010, 17). Accordingly, we attempt to translate Socrates' words by offering vernacular English to match his character. On the other hand, his Mantinian guest has a distinct vocabulary. Nonetheless, her words equally contrast with the previous 'fancy words'—or, somewhat, the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima contrasts, in many ways, with the encomiastic genre (cf. Danzig, 2016, 36-44), as Plato transposes a dispute in which Eros, and the symposiasts themselves, are made to appear as the finest (φαίνηται ὡς κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος: 199a1). Moreover, Diotima has consistently adjusted her tone to accommodate an inexperienced youth eager to follow her. This is noticeable throughout (201d-212c), particularly in the range of constructions' syntax, word choice, and sentence length (cf. Morgan 2021, 558). Accordingly, we attempted to utilise the English language as a living element to convey our interpretation of this dramatic and philosophical movement, whenever the Greek text permitted us to do so.

201d1-6: τὸν δέ λόγον . . . ὃν οὖν ἐκείνη ἔλεγε λόγον, πειράσομαι ὑμῖν διελθεῖν. In this long sentence, ἤκουσα appears to indicate that τὸν λόγον is meant as spoken words. We opt for 'the talk . . . heard' in the sense of a "continuous statement, narrative (whether fact or fiction), oration, etc" (LSJ 1996 s.v. λόγος V.3) which Socrates now will try to recount (πειράσομαι ὑμῖν διελθεῖν: 201d6). Moreover, 'talk' is translated without implying falseness. After all, Socrates may have been persuaded (πέπεισμαι δ᾽ ἐγώ: 212b2) by Diotima's τὰ ἐρωτικά, to the point of even trying to persuade others (πεπεισμένος δὲ πειρῶμαι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πείθειν: 212b2-3).

201d3-4: Ἀθηναίοις ποτὲ θυσαμένοις . . . ἀναβολὴν ἐποίησε. As Parker notes, individual sacrifice was "commonplace in Greek religion," although collective rituals were realised "on behalf of all" (Parker 2005, 342). Could Diotima, as a priestess, have sacrificed for Athens? Parker would maintain that "magistrates represent the city, before the gods as in other spheres; the priest communicates with the divine, for the city as for other clients" (2005, 98). Moreover, "on the basis of this evidence not only numerous priests but also the eponymous *archon*, the generals, the *hipparchs*, the *taxiarchs*, the *prytaneis*, various kinds of *epimeletai* and *hieropoioi* and, in the Hellenistic period, the *agonothetai* and the *kosmetes* of the *ephebes* all sacrifice for Athens or for segments of it" (Parker 2005, 96). Yet, it seems that the religious specialists frequently mentioned by Plato in the dialogues may not technically belong to any of those categories: "Perhaps Plato is using 'priests and priestesses' in a loose way which will include religious specialists of all type" (Parker 2005, 99). Nevertheless, a more literal translation may aid us in avoiding this contested territory: Ἀθηναίοις . . . θυσαμένοις, a noun and participle both in the dative plural, whereas δέκα ἔτη ἀναβολὴν ἐποίησε requires a singular

(logical) subject. It can be read that she (sg.) made a ten-year halt for them (pl.) who were offering sacrifices (Ἀθηναίοις ποτὲ θυσαμένοις).

201d6-8: διελθεῖν . . . ὅπως ἂν δύνωμαι. 'I will try to recount in whatever manner I can'. The relative ὅπως (from ὅς 'who', 'which') + πῶς, 'how') with the subjunctive, often with the conditional ἄν, expresses purpose (Ayer 2018, 638c). Here it expresses Socrates' intention of recounting τὸν λόγον according to his own abilities (δύνωμαι).

201d6-7: ὁμολογημένων. Perfect participle mediopassive in the plural. It can be read as more than simply 'agreeing'. That is, as having agreed together, particularly from ἐμοὶ καὶ Ἀγάθωνι: concluded together may better match the perfect tense. Regarding its central meaning in Plato's philosophy, particularly its methodological position in the dialogues, Casertano is clinical: "*Não apenas a busca da verdade por meio de um diálogo que se faça corretamente, quer dizer, com base num método que prevê não só a correção lógica das argumentações, mas também o consenso dos interlocutores em cada passagem do diálogo*" (Casertano 2018, 171). This consensus is a result (note ὁμολογημένων's perfect tense) of a collective and discoursive effort in the search for truth: "*o que na realidade é mais conforme à dialética* (75d4: διαλεκτικώτερον), *por um lado, é responder a verdade* (75d5-6: τἀληθῆ ἀποκρίνεσθαι), *mas, por outro, e sobretudo, formular a sua resposta 'dentro dos termos com que o interrogado declare concordar'* (75d6-7: δι' ἐκείνων ὧν ἂν προσομολογῇ εἰδέναι ὁ ἐρωτώμενος) . . . *E esta característica da dialética como capacidade de fazer perguntas e de dar respostas, de refutar-se reciprocamente e de alcançar resultados 'concordados' estará fortemente presente em muitos diálogos platónicos, do Górgias ao Fédon*" (Casertano 2018, 173).

201d8-9: διελθεῖν αὐτὸν πρῶτον. The meaning of διελθεῖν here can be inferred from what directly precedes it (ὥσπερ σὺ διηγήσω: 201d8). As such, διελθεῖν in this

construction specifies the description of a way to proceed in the investigation, namely going through in detail first . . . then . . . (201e1-2).

201e1-2: τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ ποῖός τις, ἔπειτα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. The terms τίς ἐστιν and τὰ ἔργα bear a profound philosophical relevance. In modern English, we would rather say the effects of Eros or what Eros causes regarding τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. However, while the terms cause and effect are a better match to 'love,' they would anticipate propositions established by Diotima only at 206d4. At this early point, a more vague translation (its doings) may be a safer route.

201e3: ἡ ξένη. Both i) stranger/foreigner and ii) visitor would work here. The second option appears to better capture Diotima's position as 'the special guest' or 'the Mantinian visitor' that Socrates called to partake in this symposium. Nonetheless, it should be noted that ἡ ξένη has a broader meaning which simultaneously denotes the stranger/foreigner nonetheless.

201e3: ἀνακρίνουσα. Lit. just questioning, or even examining.

201e5: εἴη δὲ τῶν καλῶν. The genitive in the plural indicates 'of the beautiful things,' leaving the object of the clause undetermined. This extremely literal translation serves to preserve, at this early point in the dialogue, the philosophical propositions being presented by the characters. Namely, Eros *qua* Eros has so far been defined as 'of beautiful (and good) things in general,' precisely the conclusion Agathon and Socrates have reached together (ἐκ τῶν ὡμολογημένων ἐμοὶ καὶ Ἀγάθωνι: 201d6-7). Although subtle in English, the distinction between 'beautiful things' and 'the beautiful' is significant in this dialogue, as we will see further below.

201e6-7: τούτοις τοῖς λόγοις . . . κατὰ τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον. In the beginning, τὸν λόγον (201d1), which Socrates ἤκουσα (201d2) and Diotima ἔλεγε (201d5), indicates a talk

or, more literally, 'things said' about Eros by her. Now λόγοις is an indirect object governed by the verb ἤλεγχε. In the context of ἀνακρίνουσα (201e4), both can be translated into arguments, passive of refutation/examination (ἤλεγχε). It should be noted that the direct object in the clause is με, in the sense that Socrates was refuted/examined in λόγοις such as these here (i. ὁ Ἔρως μέγας θέος; ii. εἴη δὲ τῶν καλῶν: 201e5).

201e8-9: αἰσχρὸς ἄρα ὁ Ἔρως ἐστὶ καὶ κακός; The usage of beautiful and good and their contraries ugly and bad has been happening since Socrates examined Agathon's speech and will be maintained throughout Diotima's speech. They apply to a considerably broader sense than 'beautiful' and 'good' today, for it had significant religious and ethicopolitical resonances in ancient Greece; cf. Barney (2010, 363–77) for an overview of καλόν and ἀγαθόν in Plato.

201e10: οὐκ εὐφημήσεις. This term is typical of sacred rites and the very first word used by Diotima in the *Symposium*.

202a3: μεταξὺ. Eros is repeatedly emphasised as an intermediary.

202a5: λόγον δοῦναι. Typical of dialectical discourse, 'to give an account of the discourse', is recurrent in later books of the *Republic*.

202a5-9: τὸ ὀρθὰ δοξάζειν … ἐπίστασθαί ἐστιν … τὸ γὰρ τοῦ ὄντος. Diotima's entire response here carries a considerable epistemological and ontological weight. For this reason, the translation remained exceedingly anchored in the Greek text, maintaining the Greek word order without attempting to match it with colloquial spoken English.

202b6: ὁμολογεῖταί. Unlike the perfect ὁμολογημένων at 201d6-7, the current ὁμολογεῖταί does not convey the wide semantic field provided by the perfect tense of the former. Therefore, we assume it indicates a weaker sense of 'agreeing'.

Unlike the perfect tense, the present lacks both the sense of a *complete action* of 'agreement'/'concluding' and the *lasting state* of 'agreeableness' as noted above by Casertano.

202b8: τῶν μὴ εἰδότων . . . ἢ καὶ τῶν εἰδότων. In the context of mystery cults, the perfect participle to determine a group of individuals denotes a continuous and lasting state connected to completing the sacred rites, a detail carefully explored by Graf (2003b, 250 ff.) and also explained by Bernabé (2011, 227–28). In this context, there is no reason to expect the same meaning. Here, it simply means 'those who know'. However, it should be noted that the perfect participle εἰδότων indicates that the "connection between the realms of knowledge and viewing is built into the Greek language and culture (cf. ἰδεῖν-εἰδέναι and εἶδον-οἶδα)" (Petridou 2013, 313). This will be heavily explored in Diotima's speech further below. To avoid projecting it back to this early point, 'insightful' maintains in English a morphological trace of this connection regarding viewing-knowing in Greek culture, particularly in Plato's philosophy. And does so without removing the strong cognoscitive meaning of this perfect participle.

202c1: ὁμολογοῖτο. Yet again, the present tense does not seem to convey the wider semantic range of this verb in the perfect tense, leading us to take it as 'agreeing,' exactly as translated four lines above.

202c11: κεκτημένους. This term has philosophical implications, as noted by Sheffield (2001, 27–28). The meaning of this perfect participle is more specific than that of other verbs we can translate to 'have,' such as ἔχω. Fundamentally, κτάομαι indicates possession in a narrower sense, as in the possession of properties, lands, or any objects. Therefore, κέκτημαι does not imply the possibility of 'having' something as an inherent quality. Conversely, the usage of this verb here makes the distinction between 'what possesses' and 'the things

possessed' quite clear, leaving no room for identifying Eros with its objects. This reading would maintain Diotima in line with what they have previously concluded together.

202d1-3: ἀλλὰ μὴν Ἔρωτά γε ὁμολόγηκας δι᾽ ἔνδειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καῖ καλῶν ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῷ τούτων ὧν ἐνδεής ἐστιν. Plato switches again from the present to the perfect tense. In this context, ὁμολόγηκας again may indicate the sense of having 'arrived at a conclusion,' suggesting the typical state of 'agreeableness' during τὸ διαλέγεσθαι, as Casertano (2018, 171-174) carefully explained above.

202d5: ἄμοιρος. Note the resonance it will have in 206d1: Beauty as Moira and Eileithyia of procreation.

202d7: ὁρᾷς. 'Can't you see (reckon) that?' Another use of 'viewing' to imply 'knowing.'

202d13-e1: πᾶν τὸ δαιμόνιον μεταξύ ἐστι θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ. The 'doubling of between' (intermediary + between) is used here to emphasise the double role of μεταξύ in this construction. First, the neuter-definite article is used before the (logical) subject to which μεταξύ is attached, which can be read as τὸ δαιμόνιον [τὸ] μεταξύ. Second, μεταξύ as a preposition also governs the genitive from which, in turn, it is pushed away by the verb ἐστι. This indicates μεταξύ functioning as the subject predicative of δαιμόνιον, which it determines, and as a preposition for the indirect objects, which it governs. Thus, μεταξύ is both 'intermediary' as the object and 'between' as a preposition.

202e2: τίνα . . . δύναμιν ἔχον; This usage of ἔχον does not seem to present the same sense of possessing as κτάομαι used above, but instead of a capacity/ability, as in the inherent/intrinsic *dynamis* Eros has (ἔχον).

202e7: χωρεῖ. This term bears significance in Greek religion, cf. Eur. *Bacch*. and Ar. *Ran*. It is worth noting that this image is reinforced further below, as Plato transposes the choral dances into Diotima's religious invocation, marking a key point in her philosophical journey of ascent, culminating in the description of the beautiful itself (210e6-211b5). For now, we stop at it being of religious significance.

202e8: ἱερέων . . . τελετάς. Regarding ἱερέων, "terms 'priest' and 'sacred official' also need some explanation. The latter term is meant to include persons who had religious functions in the cult but were probably never called ἱερεύς or ἱέρεια" (Clinton 1974, 8). Moreover, this is the only occurrence of τελετή in Diotima's speech. The other occurrences of cognates in religious contexts, such as τελευτῆσαι: 210c7 and τελευτῶν: 210c8, or of its etymon, like τέλος: 210e3 and τέλους: 211b7, as we will see, must be addressed case by case.

203a1-2: θεὸς δὲ ἀνρθώπῳ οὐ μείγνυται. This mediopassive ranges from 1. '. . . is not engaged in sexual intercourse with' (if the two sides of the clause were persons), to 2. '. . . holds a (friendly) intercourse with', 3. '. . . is not brought in contact with', as well as 4. '. . . is not to mingle with'.

203a4-5: σοφὸς δαιμόνιος ἀνήρ. This literal translation follows δαιμόνιος as an adjective and σοφὸς as the subject predicative for ἀνήρ (the *daimonic* person [is] wise).

203b1: σοι ἐρῶ. This is the first of the many occurrences of ἐρῶ, which is the future of both ἐράω and εἴρω, that Plato uses through Diotima. Here, it means 'I will tell you'. Even so, the refinement of this wordplay and its pairing with the drama should also be considered. It may indicate, simultaneously, that Diotima is willing 'to tell' and 'to care' about Socrates.

203c4: *περὶ τὸ καλὸν*. This is the first occurrence of *τὸ καλόν* in the entire exchange, instead of the commonly used *τοῦ καλοῦ* or *τῶν καλῶν*.

203c6: *πένης*. As mentioned earlier, *πένης* is a reference to his mother, Penia, manifesting *ἀπορίαν* as a contrast to the resourcefulness of his father, Poros.

203d3: *τὴν τῆς μητρὸς φύσιν ἔχων*. Note ἔχων φύσιν as determining an intrinsic characteristic (to have) as opposed to possessing (κέκτημαι) something distinct from what possesses.

203d4: *ἐπίβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς*. The plural dative here refers to beautiful and good things and persons.

203d7: *φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου*. Here, φιλοσοφῶν is a participle and functions as a verb, instead of a noun or subject predicative.

203d8-e1: *καὶ οὔτε ὡς ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός*. Plato does not use an aorist to determine the event of, so to speak, Eros' assembling. Instead, the perfect tense here indicates the presence of elements from Eros' current δύναμις, which have been established during his generation.

203e5: *σοφίας τε αὖ καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν*. Here we have an existential ἐστίν in the clause.

204a1 and 204a2: *φιλοσοφεῖ*; 204a3: *φιλοσοφοῦσιν*. Once again, φιλοσοφεῖ and φιλοσοφοῦσιν are used as verbs and participles, rather than as nouns or subject predicatives, to the extent that Plato, in a subtle yet deliberate way, continues to hint at the category instead of defining it, sc. Philosophy or Philosopher. This has a literary reason: Diotima has not presented them to Socrates, and it is his desire for knowledge that will lead him to pose the question that prompts Diotima to immediately present a definition. For now, Plato has not put the horse before the

cart and continues to use the Greek language as a literary and philosophical device.

204a6: ὁ μὴ οἰόμενος . . . μὴ οἴηται ἐπιδεῖσθαι. This construction is crucial, as Diotima emphasises believing/expecting. This verb will be reinforced in the description of *philotimia*. It should be noted that Plato uses this term in Diotima's speech in multiple senses: 'think', 'believe', 'mean', 'suppose', 'expect', and 'feel'.

204a8: τίνες οὖν . . . οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες. Finally, Socrates poses the famous question 'what is', which begs for a definition that follows directly, thus specifying the philosopher as a noun for the first time in their exchange. Plato carefully tailors his linguistic masterpiece as Diotima is called to clarify to the youth what she has only hinted at.

204b3: Ἔρως δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἔρως. Lit. 'Eros is eros.' This is traditionally translated as 'love' and is thus maintained. However, it should be noted that ἔρως's meaning should be re-conducted to its cultural context. As useful as the term 'love' is in translating ἔρως, its resemblance must take into account the manifold incompatibilities between ἔρως and what we call *love* in a considerably distinct cultural context today (cf. Carone 2006, 208-228).

204b4-5: φιλόσοφον δὲ ὄντα μεταξὺ εἶναι σοφοῦ καὶ ἀμαθοῦς. Once again, μεταξύ is used to determine a neuter-singular noun, which in this clause is φιλόσοφον. The positioning of εἶναι pushes the preposition away from the genitive which it should govern, further indicating μεταξύ as both a preposition and the subject predicative. Most importantly, it determines a neuter-singular noun, which, on its part, can transform a verb or adjective (e.g. to pursue knowledge) into a noun (τὸ φιλόσοφον, the knowledge-pursuer = philosopher). For this reason, the verbs

and participles translated as pursuing knowledge thus far must now be translated as philosopher.

204c6: τὸ δέ γε ἐρῶν ἄλλην ἰδέαν τοιαύτην ἔχον. Noun from the verb to see, thus the appearance in the sense of the look, form, or shape of what is seen.

204c7-8: ὁ Ἔρως τίνα χρείαν ἔχει. Note again the usage of ἔχει to denote something inherent (the value, χρείαν) and not a possession which does not necessarily identify with what possesses it.

204d7: γενέσθαι αὐτῷ. The absence of both ἔχω and κέκτημαι regarding τῶν καλῶν that has been used before with τῶν ἀγαθῶν or δύναμις and χρείαν makes it unclear what construal should be considered into translating this. Philosophical problems emerge both from claiming that here it is love for possessing what is beautiful in the sense of κέκτημαι and from claiming that it is having in the sense of ἔχω, cf. Sheffield (2001, 16–25). Perhaps a more literal translation, namely the vague "that they become his", may allow us to avoid projecting back into this line what is yet to be defined further below.

204e5: τί ἔσται ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν γένηται τὰ καλά; Here γένηται (3rd sg.) is being governed by τἀγαθά (nominative-neuter in the plural), a phenomenon repeated since 204d8-9's τὰ καλά. Thus lit.: what will happen (τί ἔσται) supposing that (ᾧ ἂν) good things (τἀγαθά) become (γένηται) for that one [his] (ἐκείνῳ).

205a1: κτέσει γὰρ . . . ἀγαθῶν οἱ εὐδαίμονες εὐδαίμονες. This construction is tricky because κτέσει is not a verb (for it would beg a second person to govern it) but a noun. Moreover, it cannot be the subject, because οἱ determines both the subject and the subject predicative. In this sense, κτήσει must be an indirect object; thus, the dative of 'possession'/ 'property' + the ἀγαθῶν.

205d4-5: ἢ κατὰ χρηματισμὸν ἢ κατὰ φιλογυμναστίαν ἢ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν. Here we follow Rowe in considering the term philosophia, a term in vogue in intellectual circles of the time, as similarly done by Pausanias during his speech to determine the love for intellectual excellence, the activity suitable to Pausanias' environment and not to Platonic philosophy: "In business, like Apollodorus' listeners (173c6), and for *philogumnastia* and *philosophia*, see Pausanias at 182b8 (where *philosophia* was 'love of intellectual excellence'; now 'philosophy' is surely meant, introducing the same opposition as in 173c)" (Rowe 1998, 180).

205b5: τι εἶδος ὀνομάζομεν, τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ἐπιτιθένες ὄνομα. For a debate on this analogy of parts and whole here in Diotima's speech, cf. Aronadio (2016, 218, 223), Bravo (2016, 16–23), and Casertano (2016, 224–30).

205d10: καὶ λέγεται μέν γε τις . . . λόγος. Here, λόγος is considered to bear the same meaning as τὸν λόγον at the beginning of the first paragraph in 201d1. However, now it has a negative connotation, namely, the λέγεται at the beginning of the clause, it is said, without a precise specification of who says, marking λόγος as a subject predicative. While at first the Greek grammar does not indicate it has a negative connotation, scholarship has, quite rightly, pointed to the speech of Aristophanes as the 'subject' of this λέγεται, as well as those who align with the contents of Aristophanes' speech, in many ways resembling Ar. *Av.* and its parody of Orphic motifs, respectively, cf. Destrée (2015, 365) and Calame (1999, 181-185).

205c1: ὁ δ' ἐμὸς λόγος. Like in the first paragraph (λόγοις: 201e5), λόγος here appears in a narrower sense, 'my argument.'

205e6: οἰκεῖον. This translation renders οἰκεῖον as 'what is proper.' For a discussion on its usage as 'what is proper for oneself' in Aristophanes' speech as opposed to

'what is good as proper for oneself' proposed by Diotima, cf. Destrée (2015, 360–66).

206a: ἐρῶσιν ἄνθρωποι ἢ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. This detail is significant: Diotima is here asking about love for 'what is good,' as in the quality of a part/whole/half discussed in this argument. Notably, a more substantial claim is about to be used down below: one that neither is 'for what is good' nor for 'good things' (gen. - neut. pl.).

206a11-12: ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὑτῷ εἶναι ἀεί. For the first time, the general object of love is specified as 'the good,' not 'something good' in particular. From previously concluding that having good things leads to happiness (τί ἔσται ἐκείνῳ ᾧ ἂν γένηται τἀγαθά; / εὐδαίμων ἔσται: 204e6-7) and that everyone wishes to have good things for themselves always (πάντας τἀγαθὰ βούλεσθαι αὑτοῖς εἶναι ἀεί: 205a6), being this wish and desire (ταύτην δὴ τὴν βούλησιν καὶ τὸν ἔρωτα: 205a5) common to everyone (κοινὸν εἶναι πάντων: 205a7), Diotima can finally present a general definition of Eros: love is for having the good for oneself forever (ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὑτῷ εἶναι ἀεί: 206a11-12). The emphasis at the end, in the placement of the adverb ἀεί, may be better captured in English with the strength of 'forever.'

206b5-7: ἐφοίτων παρὰ σὲ αὐτὰ . . . ἀλλὰ ἐγώ σοι, ἔφη, ἐρῶ. Plato's wording contributes to the image of 'what happens to people in love.' He uses a participle ἐφοίτων that can convey sexual meaning. Additionally, there is again the usage of a homonymous verb between 'telling' and 'loving', namely ἐρῶ. The motivation behind Socrates' eagerness and Diotima's care, however, is presented in terms of pursuing knowledge and guiding one's pursuit, hence 'coming and going after you' (ἐφοίτων παρὰ σὲ) and 'but, to you, I will tell/care' (ἀλλὰ ἐγώ σοι, ἔφη, ἐρῶ).

206d9-c1: μαντείας, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, δεῖται ὅτι ποτε λέγεις, καὶ οὐ μανθάνω/ἀλλὰ ἐγώ, ἦ δ' ἦ, σαφέστερον ἐρῶ. The morphological wordplay here is lost in translation: one between μαντείας, akin to Diotima's image—"which Diotima of *Mantineia* probably is" (Rowe 1998, 183)—and μανθάνω, 'learning/understanding'. Plato continues to lay the ground for his upcoming transposition of erotic activity into 'loving correctly' in the Mysteries of Eros, emphasising here the 'guiding correctly.' Plato insists on repeating the homonymous ἐρῶ: I will speak (to you)/love (you) more clearly.

206c5-6: ἡ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς συνουσία τόκος ἐστίν. The article here determines συνουσία, whilst τόκος, in the nominative, is left undetermined. The latter is the subject predicative in this clause. Moreover, εἶναι positioning suggests an existential sense. Literally: a [kind/form of] begetting exists (in? from?) the intercourse of a man and a woman.

206c7-8: ἡ κύησις καὶ ἡ γέννησις. Begetting is used here exclusively to translate τίκτειν (the delivering). 'Pro-creation' and birth are used for translating γεννᾶν. The difference in usage in the Greek text is subtle. Yet, considering that everyone is pregnant (πάντες ἄνθρωποι: 206c2), then the contact with beauty does not appear to imply the generation/creation of a content (κύησις), but rather the delivery and birth of what everyone already has within in the first place. This reading is from Sheffield (2001, 1–33).

206d1-2: Μοῖρα οὖν καὶ Εἰλείθυια ἡ Καλλονή ἐστι τῇ γενέσει. Sheffield suggests this as "the description of beauty as Moira and Eileithyia at the birth (206d1). In the role of Eileithyia, beauty presides over the delivery; in the role of Moira, beauty determines the fate of the offspring in the sense that the quality of one's virtuous offspring is determined by the quality of the beautiful environment in which one gives birth. For Moira's role see Pind. *Ol. 6*" (Sheffield 2001, 9). Rowe also

indicated further reading in Pindar, adding the *Nemeans* 7.1 to the *Olympians Odes* 6.41-2, "for the presence at births of Fates, as well as Eileithyia (goddess of childbirth)" (Rowe 1998, 183).

206d8-e1: πολλὴ ἡ πτοίησις γέγονε περὶ τὸ καλὸν. In the end, to describe the lasting state of extreme excitation upon the moment of delivery, the neuter of the singular is used to determine the beautiful medium: it is τὸ καλόν and not τὸν καλόν. The significance of this neuter τὸ should not be understated.

207a1-2: ἐκ τῶν ὡμολογημένων. Once again, a perfect mediopassive participle may indicate 'from what we have concluded.'

207c2: καὶ ἐγὼ αὖ ἔλεγον ὅτι οὐκ εἰδείην. Like Plato has done throughout, εἰδείην, a term from the realm of vision, is used to convey the meaning of knowing/understanding, emphasising our insistence on a fluid and juxtaposing approach to viewing-knowing in Ancient Greek language and culture.

207c9: οὗ πολλάκις ὡμολογήκαμεν. Note the perfect tense for 'what we have concluded many times.'

207e5-208a3: αἱ ἐπιστῆμαι . . . τὰς ἐπιστήμας. Regarding the image of 'pieces of knowledge' and the usage in the plural in this entire sentence, we follow Rowe in considering that, "as Diotima points out, we may at any time forget anything we currently know, so that while knowledge qua what is known will not change, and is a paradigm of stability, our possession of it is, sadly, not so reliable. 'Pieces of knowledge' translates *epistêmai*, the plural of *epistêmê*, 'knowledge': the plural indicates cases of knowledge/knowing (so regularly with abstract nouns), as the Meno passage illustrates—the Greek there for 'true opinions become knowledge' is 'true opinions become epistêmai'. Sier is surely wrong to suggest that Diotima is referring to a popular conception of knowledge (Sier 1997, 244–45); in

principle, she suggests, anyone can forget something, because that is what human knowing is like. Someone with complete, perfect knowledge (which allowed him or her to make sense of everything, and connect any item with any other) might well not forget any part of it—but then he or she would have joined the company of the gods" (Rowe 1998, 187).

208a3: ὃ γὰρ καλεῖται μελετᾶν . . . μελέτη δέ. Here is a wordplay between μελέτη and λήθη. The former is not simply a practice, but a very specific 'kind of practice' in Plato, one that is aimed at improving oneself, sc. the well-known Socratic ἐπιμέλεια.

208a4-5: λήθη γὰρ ἐπιστήμης ἔξοδος. Not by chance, λήθη is also deeply connected to recollection, cf. the entire discussion on recollection in the *Phaedo* and Ionescu (2007, 27–42) for the *Symposium*.

208b3: θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει. Here the emphasis lies on μετέχει or 'participation,' the obscure ontological relation Plato presents in the dialogues.

208b5: ἀθανασίας γὰρ χάριν. The χάριν is emphatic, namely, 'for the sake of,' clearly in reference to the object of Eros.

208c1: εὖ ἴσθι. Note the imperative in this construction, paired with a perfect tense of viewing (+ εὖ), which we attempted to capture with the command 'pay attention,' as one who 'pays attention' to an object may see well/realise something. Without the imperative, this could be better translated as 'you see well' / 'you know well.'

208c1-3: ἴσθι . . . βλέψαι. Diotima urges Socrates to see twice in the same construction, paired with reflecting deeply (ἐννοεῖς).

208e3: ἐρωτικοί εἰσιν. This noun is derived from a causative verb, and this should be considered. It has the sense of those who are affected by love; those who become driven by love. Thus amorous, erotic, and so forth.

209a1-2: ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κυοῦσιν ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν. For the first time, pregnancy is described in terms of 'in the souls/bodies' (locative) and not 'with/according to' (κατὰ + acc.).

209a4-5: ὧν δή εἰσι καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ πάντες γεννήτορες καὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν ὅσοι λέγονται εὑρετικοὶ εἶναι. Sheffield presents an interesting reading for this passage: "Pausanias' speech praises the practices of Eros which are lawful (182a7), Eryximachus praises Eros as a fine craftsman (186d5), and Agathon praises his poetic practices (197a–b). See also Rowe (1998, 190), who argues that the reference to the poets is meant as 'an ironic compliment' to Aristophanes and Agathon, and the reference to the craftsmen is meant to recall Eryximachus, who is indirectly 'compared to the great inventors of the past' (cf. δημιουργός 'craftsman', used by him of the doctor in his praise of Eros at 186d5)" (Sheffield 2001, 10).

209a6: ἡ περὶ . . . διακόσμησις. Literally, the greatest and most beautiful of kinds of wisdom is [the wisdom] of the ordering of poleis and households.

209b1-2: ἤθεος ὢν καὶ ἡκούσης τῆς ἡλικίας . . . ἐπιθυμεῖ. This sentence does not specify the gender at all, which may tempt translators to use a singular 'they' to govern the clauses. However, the following sentence specifies it with οὗτος.

209b3-4: τὸ καλὸν ἐν ᾧ ἂν γεννήσειεν· ἐν τῷ γὰρ αἰσχρῷ οὐδέποτε γεννήσει. Again, the image of procreating through a beautiful medium is maintained with the dative in this construction, in the neuter giving it a more sense of 'conceptual generality,' so to speak, emphasised by the preposition ἐν at 209b3 and repeated right afterwards to determine its contrary (sc. in the ugly).

209b6-7: πάνυ δὴ ἀσπάζεται τὸ συναμφότερον. Here the subordinate comes before the main clause in Greek, whose ordering is maintained in translation to keep its causal effect evident. The adverb that starts the main clause, followed by an emphatic δὴ, has an emphasis of its own ('exceedingly,' 'greatly,' 'very'). Thus, we decided to reproduce its force by using a larger construction in English.

209d1-2: καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητὰς τοὺς ἀγαθούς. Here ποιητὰς is used to specify the genre of metric and verse makers for the first time since the analogy of Eros-*poiesis*, to the extent it may be better translated into 'poets.'

209e1: ἐν Ἕλλησι καὶ ἐν βαρβάροις. . . . among Greeks and non-Greeks' captures the same semantic range of '*hellenes'* and '*barbaroi,*' whilst holding back a racist term.

209e5-210a: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐρωτικά. This demonstrative refers to nearby things around, perhaps pointing to the previous section of Diotima's speech, which is closer compared to its first section, cf. Riedweg (1987, 21). Moreover, this could refer to everything Diotima said thus far, cf. Pratt (2011, 128).

209e5: κἂν σύ. As Pratt reads it, "καὶ ἂν σύ = even you. Diotima's disparagement of Socrates' abilities is typical of her, but is particularly pronounced here" (2011, 218). "The contemptuous καὶ σύ here," concurs Bury, "serves to keep up the same ironical fiction . . . the disguise assumed by the ideal Socrates when he played the part of pupil" (Bury 1909, 124). Dover considers it could carry "Socratic mock-modesty" (Dover 1980, 155). Rowe (1998, 193–94) disagrees, for it could refer to the opening of a presentation significantly difficult to follow. Sheffield goes in the same line, providing a fitting explanation: "After the *elenchus* of Agathon, Socrates continues to play the role of both the Agathon who now realizes he lacks wisdom about Eros, and the wise Diotima (201d–e). He comforts Agathon with

the thought that he too used to make the same mistakes about Eros, but now, as a mature Socrates who has learnt about these things from the wise Diotima, he has come to understand 'erotic matters.' In other words, Socrates' abject ignorance belongs to the past and is rehearsed here for the sake of his host, who has just been refuted by Socrates. It is not, then, the mature Socrates who would not understand the erotic matters of the ascent, but the young, inexperienced Socrates who—before he met Diotima—used to be in just the same state in which Agathon is now (201d8)" (Sheffield 2001, 10). Nonetheless, it is the conditional particle κἂν that roots the central optative verb in the upcoming transposition of the μύστης's transformative journey into the transformative 'becoming reoriented' into a philosophical life.

210a1: μυηθείης. Aorist optative of μυέω, another typical feature of *mysteria*. This verb, paired with the setting, contributed to our rendering of τὰ ἐρωτικά as 'the Mysteries of Eros.' In this we followed Dowden's view on the verb: "*myeo* is a causative verb from *my-*, meaning 'to make someone *my/-*' but necessary only in the light of the word *mystes*: it is therefore restricted to the sense 'to initiate someone' and is used especially in the context of the Eleusinian mysteries, to whose technical language it belongs, but also in the context of other solemn mysteries constructed either on the Eleusinian model or at least in the same way" (Dowden 1980, 414). Moreover, *my-* comes directly from μυέω and not from μύω. Although μυέω is undeniably derived from μύω, the context of *mysteria* in the fifth century BCE suggests a narrower sense of the verb μύω ('to hide') into μυέω (the causative verb 'to make into a μύστης'), maybe later widened to 'keeping secrets' in general from the Helenist period forward, cf. Clinton (2003, 71), Nock (1952, 184–89), and Nilsson (1992, 19–21). As tempting as it can be, we cannot define this term unless by Wittgensteinian family resemblance, cf. Saler (1999,

395–96). There are i) too many *mysteria* in ii) too many places iii) during a too long period, called by iv) too many juxtaposing names. Therefore, "determining the lineaments of the word *mystēria* in its various ancient uses is a different project from defining the comparative modern taxon" (Wellman 2005, 314). Admittedly, it bears the typicality and resemblance of the modern taxons 'initiate' and 'initiation,' cf. Jackendoff (1983, 139), albeit cannot be reduced to it without forcing onto μύστης our modern sense of «*initiation aux sociétés secretes*» (van Gennep 1909, 94). Both in the 'Mysteries of Eros' and the Mysteries of Eleusis, there are compelling reasons to admit that μύεω would not be "to introduce the worshipper into a group of other worshippers but rather to improve or perfect the worshipper's relationship to the god" (Edmonds 2017, 196), cf. Burkert (1987, 12). Even so, in Eleusis, both senses are not exclusive: i) one may voluntarily choose to be made into a μύστης to perhaps attain and maintain a better relationship with the divine in hopes of a blessed life and afterlife, while ii) accepting it is ἄρρητος and keeping secrecy, cf. Graf (2003b, 256). Nonetheless, the text indicates that Plato's transposition of the making into a μύστης may provide the correct way for a person to become reoriented (τετραμμένος: 210d4) by being led from youth through education (παιδαγωγηθῇ: 210e3), entailing in personal growth (ῥωσθεὶς καὶ αὐξηθεὶς: 210d7), complete knowledge (τὸ μάθημα τελευτῆσαι: 211c7), and true virtue (τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ: 212a6), intimacy with the divine (θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι: 212a7), and the best immortality available (ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ: 212b7). For this, as much as 'initiated' is an adequate translation to μυηθείης, we recommend a literal rendering, instead, to capture the masterpiece Plato is doing here with this transposition, which may be lost in translation: to be made (transformed) into *a mystes* of philosophy: the one who has become reoriented to view that which is of the highest value and to become akin to it by begetting what is akin to it, instead of an initiation in the sense of 'graduating' in Diotima's

mysteria. For the origins of this verb in Homeric Greek μῦσαν, cf. Bernabé and Somolinos (1993, 122–23). For Hittite *munn(ā)i-* as, in turn, a possible origin for the Homeric μῦσαν, cf. Melchert (2009, 337) and Puhvel (2004, 189–92). For Mycenaean Greek *mu-jo-me-no* as an alternative, cf. Baumbach (1971, 174), *contra* Burkert (1987, 9). For a corrective, cf. Hiller (2011, 207–16). For a discussion on its Indo-European roots, cf. Beekes (2010, 988), West (2007, 432), Kloekhorst (2008, 587–88), and Adams (2013, 504–5). For Roman translations of μυστήρια into *mysteria* (Cic. *Leg.* 2.36.3-9) and transposition into *initia* (Varro, *Rust.* 3.1.5), the latter derived into *initiatio* (Suet. *Ner.* 34.4.10-13) as the Latin origin of our modern term 'initiation', cf. Wagenvoort (1956, 150–68) and Borgeaud (2013, 131–44). For a methodological debate on the 'troubled' modern concept of initiation, especially van Gennep's (1909, 93–163), Frazer's (1890, 3:225–78), Smith's (1889, 150–51), and Harrison's (1903, 19–22), cf. Dodd (2003, xiii–xvi), Graf (2003a, 3–24), and Faraone (2003, 43–44).

210a1: τὰ δὲ τέλεα. After suggesting the possibility of making Socrates into a μύστης, τέλεα is a clear marker of a transposition of religious images throughout the 'Highest Mysteries.' Bernabé and San Cristóbal (2008) argue against the meaning of τέλεα as 'prizes' or 'accomplishments' in the context of the aforementioned Orphic tablets: "τέλεα in the sense of 'prizes' occurs only in epinicia, in metaphors referring to athletes" (2008, 90). They prefer to read it as a culmination to "achieve the happiness that awaits initiates, that is, those who have carried out the same rites" (Bernabé and San Cristóbal 2008, 91–92). It is the sense of culmination suggested by Bernabé that we will follow in our construal of the entirety of the 'Highest Mysteries.'

210a1: τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά. It is here considered an accusative of respect, where both clauses are linked via μὲν - δὲ. In this sense, we follow the interplay

between τὰ ἐρωτικά, as 'the Mysteries of Eros', and τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά that are to follow. The next clause can justify this, ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἔστιν, in which καὶ emphasises ταῦτα, "repeating ταῦτα τὰ ἐρωτικά" (Bury 1909, 124). Furthermore, if rendering ἐρωτικά as 'Mysteries of Eros' may be acceptable, then τέλεα, considering the term in the context of *mysteria*, could be translated into i) 'the Highest Mysteries' or ii) 'the accomplished/culminating rites,' the latter more accurate and the former more familiar to the *Symposium*'s scholarship. For a thorough study of τελετή's documented occurrences, cf. Zijderved's (1934) monumental work, revised and expanded by Schuddeboom (2009, 3–119; 199-227; 239-241). Moreover, ἐποπτικά as 'insightful viewing' should be understood not as an event but instead as reflecting Plato's glaring usage of a juxtaposing vocabulary for viewing-knowing, exhaustingly repeated by Diotima in the 'Highest Mysteries': κατανοῆσαι 210a8, ἐννοήσαντα καταστῆναι 210b4, θεάσασθαι 210c3, ἰδεῖν 210c4, ἴδῃ 210c7, βλέπων 210c7, θεωρῶν 210d4, κατίδῃ 210d7, θεώμενος 210e3, κατώψεταί 210e4, καθορᾶν 211b6, θεωμένῳ 211d2, ὁρῶν 211d5, ὁρῶντες 211d6, θεᾶσθαι 211d7, ἰδεῖν 211e1, κατιδεῖν 212e4, βλέποντος 212a1, θεωμένου 212a2, ὁρῶντι 212a3. This appears to be a transposition in line with the well-known, seventh-century Eleusinian epic poem, in which the anonymous author also insistently used a juxtaposing vocabulary for viewing-knowing: ἰδέσθαι 10, λεῦσσε 34, ἴδον 57, σκοπὸν 62, ἴδον 68, καταδέρκεαι 70, ὄπωπας 71, εἰδήσεις 76, εἶδος 94, εἰσορόων 95, ἴδον 105, ὁρᾶσθαι 111, εἶδος 146, εἶδος 157, ἰδοῦσα 167, εἶδόν 172, εἰδυῖα 195, εἰδυῖα 203, ἰδοῦσα 222, ἐπιτηρήσασα 244, σκέψατο 245, θεῶν 259, εἶδος 275, εἰδὼς 321, ἴδοι ὀφθαλμοῖσιν 333, ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 339, ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 350, ἰδοῦσα 385, ἴδεν ὄμματα 387, ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα 409, ἰδέσθαι 427, ἴδον 458, ὄπωπεν 480 (*Hom. Hymn Dem.*). For the relationship between the *Hymn* and the cult in Eleusis, cf. Richardson (1974), Foley (1993) and Parker (1991, 1-17). For the first documented occurrence of ἐποπτ-, cf. *Eleusis* 19 = *IG* I³6 B11. For a debate on μύησις vs ἐποπτεία

in Eleusis, cf. Foucart (1914, 432 ff.), Dowden (1980, 409-27), Burkert (1972, 274–327 = 1983, 248–97), Sourvinou-Inwood (1997, 132–64), Clinton (2003, 50–78). For ἐποπτεία in the context of a well-established, controlled and structured way of preparation to experience a divine epiphany, cf. Graf (1974, 128–29; 2004, 126–27), Parker (2005, 351–52), Burkert (1987, 90), Elsner (2007, 24–25), Platt (2011, 121), Petridou (2013, 309–41; 2015, 121 ff.). For an overview of ἐποπτικά in Plato's *Symposium*, cf. Cornelli and da Paz (2022, 44–56); for *mysteria* across the dialogues, cf. Dinkelaar (2020, 36-62) and Begeth (2022, 233–67).

210a1: καὶ ταῦτα. 'All of this,' "καί (before ταῦτα): not connective here, puts emphasis on ταῦτα" (Pratt 2011, 218). For now, it might be safe to stop at ταῦτα 'as repeating τὰ ἐρωτικά' (Bury 1909, 124).

210a1-2: ἔστιν. Considered as existential in our translation, following Souza (1972): "*existem;*" Allen (1981): "exist;" Hernandéz (1986): "*existen;*" Zehnpfennig (2000): „*da sind*".

210a2: μετίη. "μέτειμι = go after, pursue" (Pratt 2011, 218). This transitive verb has no clear object, following an existential ἔστιν, which is more reasonable to consider as part of Plato's deliberate and precise usage of the Greek language in these clauses rather than an occurrence by chance. From this section to the last line of Diotima's speech, the complexity of the constructions follows the astonishingly complex exposition presented by the Mantinian visitor. Following Rowe (1998, 194), we maintain that the transitive is presented without a clear object, which indicates that μετίη, conditioned by 'should' to sustain the subjective in our English translation, could be rendered as connected to καὶ ταῦτα, sc. τὰ ἐρωτικά as its object.

210a2: ὀρθῶς μείη. Bernabé notes the usage of ὀρθῶς in the Mysteries and displays how Plato in the *Phaedo* adapted and appropriated the 'state of perfection' attained by the βακχοί in their cult (*OF* 434 III, 576 1), transposing this religious message into a defence of philosophy (Bernabé 2004; 2005; 2011, 228). Moreover, "we know that at the end of the fifth century BC there was a considerable Orphic influence in Eleusis" (Bremmer 2014, 2). The six occurrences of ὀρθῶς here indicate a series of steps of pursuing correctly (ὀρθῶς μετίη: 210a2), proceeding correctly (τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα: 210a4-5), leading correctly (ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται ὁ ηεγούμενος: 210a6-7), seeing with clarity the beautiful things in the correct way and the correct order (θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλὰ: 210e3), the correct love for boys (τὸ ὀρτῶς παιδεραστεῖν: 221b5), and, finally, pursuing the Mysteries of Eros or being led by another into it *correctly* (τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι ἢ ὑπ' ἄλλου ἄγεσθαι: 211b7). As noted by Calame: "Those initiated into Orphism were encouraged to adopt a series of ascetic practices in order to recover their initial state" (Calame 1999, 197). The scholar grounds his analysis on the *Deverni papyrus*, the *Birds*, and the Orphic *Rhapsodies*, displaying how "the metaphysics of the Orphics even managed to reconcile the generative movement from the one to the many with a mystic passage from the many to the one" (Calame 1999, 193). The difference, as we have seen with Diotima's rebuke (λέγεται μέν γε τις λόγος: 205d10), namely, 'what is said about pursuing the half or the whole,' Plato's transposition makes it clear that the movement from the many to the one is valid only if 'the one' happens to be good [and beautiful] (οὔτε ἡμίσεός φησιν εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα οὔτε ὅλου, ἐὰν μὴ τυγχάνῃ γέ που, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἀγαθὸν ὄν: 205c2-3). In this sense, ὀρθῶς in the Highest Mysteries may resonate with Plato's transposition of Orphic imagery of ascent, precisely in the series of steps to ascend toward the correct philosophical life, albeit we do not see it possible to read the ascending as ascetic, because it is not for the sake of 'the one' but for the sake of what is truly good (and beautiful),

whose value, or ἀρετῆς αληθῆς: 212e5, applies to both body and soul, quite encouraging the correct way to love the body and a partner instead of suppressing the body and its love.

210a2: οὐκ οἶδ'. Rowe discusses Diotima's abilities: "that she is a 'Mantinean' is usually taken—by those who treat her as a fiction—to be intended to suggest a particular connection with seers (*manteis*, sing. *mantis*). The traditional role of the seer is to have an understanding of things, past and present as well as future, which is superior to that possessed by ordinary human beings, and Diotima certainly has that" (Rowe 1998, 173). Concerning visual terms which clear cognoscitive resonances, we insist that "one must not forget," as alerts Petridou, "the connection between the realms of knowledge and viewing built into the Greek language and culture cf. ἰδεῖν εἰδέναι and εἶδον οἶδα" (Petridou 2013, 313). In this sense, 'I cannot see' instead of 'I do not know' is our decision to maintain this nuance evident on the eve of the spectacle to come, without altering the semantic range of the Greek verb οἶδα. Admittedly, 'I do not know' is the sense of οἶδα used here instead of 'I do not see.' At the same time, this Greek nuance may be better left explicit in English.

210a2: τ' ἂν εἴης. Here εἴης is used as another potential optative, that of εἶναι. The 'Highest Mysteries' is introduced by a thorny linguistic construction, which is not pleasing to the eye, considered by authoritative scholarship as the usage of "the art of rhetoric," done "more subtly" than "the proper verbal sophistries of others," albeit "no more honestly" (Dover 1980, 145). Maybe we could play it safe and suggest, as Bury believes, μυηθείης as implied in this clause: "οἷός τ' ἂν εἴης. sc. μυηθῆναι" (Bury 1909, 124). That might be the case, as also indicated by Pratt (2011, 218): "οἷός τ' ἂν εἴης: supply μυηθῆναι (of which τὰ...ἐποπτικά of line 210a is the obj.)". At the same time, the openness in syntax raises the question of whether

this was not intended to remain as it is. Admittedly, there is a contrast between i) καὶ ταῦτα sc. τὰ ἐρωτικά and ii) τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά. Nonetheless, Bury's (1909, 124) insights point to the glaring 'presence in absence' of a potential optative (μυηθείης) attracting an equally potential optative (εἴης). Moreover, these two are constructed with a transitive subjunctive (μετίῃ) in between, whose object is left unspoken by the Mantinian visitor. Rowe has noted the linguistic framework's intertwinement, as the passage "combines it [τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά] with the one already in play . . . However there is no real sense of strain in the combination" (Rowe 1998, 192). At the minimum, this syntactic complexity introduces "the last part of a long and apparently structured piece of writing" (Rowe 1998, 193).

210a3: ἐρῶ μὲν οὖν. The homonymous future of εἴρω with the future of ἐράω (contr. ἐρῶ) in the first person of the singular follows a pattern that has been done across Diotima's speech (203b, 206b, 206c, 210a). As before, μὲν οὖν is used to give force to what precedes it, namely ἐρῶ. (1st. fut. sg. of both ἐράω and εἴρω). It should be noted that, again, the text promptly uses 'she said' after it, "as often, the 'she said' marks that a particularly important point is about to be, or is being, introduced" (Rowe 1998, 198). This adds further emphasis to this construction, as Plato makes an external reference to the narrative. This is the reason for using a solemn shall paired with the verb to mark the future tense instead of using the colloquial will as we have done before. The usage of shall over 'will' is also followed by Benardete (2001). The next occurence of ἐρῶ in such a way is said by Alcibiades. The young aristocrat announces: I will tell the truth (τἀληθῆ ἐρῶ: 214e6), echoing 'I will love the truth'. This wordplay appears to further dissociate Alcibiades' image with philosophy, as 'philosopher' was previously equated with 'Eros' by Diotima (Ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι: 204b4). Alcibiades intends to

exchange 'bronze for gold' (<χρύσεα χαλκείων> διαμείβεσθαι νοεῖς: 219a1), because he may not have been capable of loosening his exceeding love for a single person (ἑνὸς δὲ τὸ σφόδρα τοῦτο χαλάσαι: 210b5). He considers his bodily beauty as valuable as the beauty he sees within Socrates, instead of regarding it as more valuable than the beauty in the body (ψυχαῖς κάλλος τιμιώτερον ἡγήσασθαι τοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι: 210b6-7). In the end, Alcibiades neither loves nor tells the truth, as his words and love end up being neither akin to Socrates' nor to philosophy, let alone to the 'Highest Mysteries.' For Alcibiades' speech, cf. Cornelli (2016, 337–41), Boeri (2016, 362–70), Vegetti (2016, 321–36), and Edmonds (2017, 194-215).

210a3: προθυμίας οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω. As Pratt reminds us, "ἀπολείπω + gen. = be lacking in" (Pratt 2011, 218).

210a4: πειρῶ δὲ ἕπεσθαι. Although we follow Dover's edition of the text, the Second Century CE's Papyrus P.*Oxy*.5 843 (1908) indicates πειρῶ δὲ <καὶ σὺ> ἕπεσθαι, which is also displayed in the *apparatus criticus* of both Burnet's (1901) and Dover's (1980) editions. Even though Tomlison (2019) offers interesting arguments for the *Papyrus* to stand level as manuscript A, we cannot provide an assessment of the textual tradition of the *Symposium* or textual criticism, cf. West (1973, 48–59). Bury suggests that <καὶ σὺ> could aid us regarding the μὲν - δὲ linking the clauses: "It serves to lay an appropriate stress on the personal effort required on the part of the disciple" (Bury 1909, 124-125). For this, we maintain <καὶ σὺ> in the English translation.

210a4: ἂν οἷός τε ᾖς. Conditional (ἂν) + capable (οἷός τε) + to be (εἶναι) followed by the subjunctive mood in ᾖς. Unfortunately, "the force of ἂν with the subjunctive cannot usually be expressed in English" (Smith 1920, 1768). Schleiermacher's *„wenn du es vermagst"* (1805) captures the range of this conditional. As such, ἂν, when it means if, usually has a long vowel, because it is a contraction of εἰ + ἄν:

sc. ἐάν. Here at 210a4, however, it is just ἄν: "The subjunctive with ἄν is not employed as a form of independent statement in Attic prose. In dependent clauses it is either a future or good for all time" (Gildersleeve 1900, 451). Given the urge in the imperative with <καὶ σύ> implied, perhaps Bury's suggestion (1909, 124-25) can better clarify the context of Diotima urging Socrates with her words. Put differently, we could note the interplay of μὲν - δὲ as follows: i) 'I will do my best' + μὲν, followed by ii) a command + δὲ conditioned by 'ἄν + subjunctive' integrated with οἷός τε ('capable'). In this sense, we suggest the following reading: 'I cannot guarantee that you will succeed. For this, while I will try my best in telling/caring, you (on your part) must try to follow as best as you can'. Therefore, ἄν + subjunctive is here maintained as 'the best' (possible future). This appears to be the case for English translation, like done by Waterfield (1994), closer to the Greek construction. This is also done by Robin (1938): «*a toi d'essayer de me suivre dans la mesure de tes moyens*»; and Trombino (2004): «*cerca di seguirmi, almeno finché puoi*», and Carlos Alberto Nunes (1980): "*Esforça-te por acompanhar-me até onde te for possível*".

210a4-5: τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα. To proceed instead of 'to pursue' because ἰέναι is used in the following clause. We maintain the urge of 'to pursue' for ἰέναι (pres. inf. governed by δεῖ) instead of ἰόνται. Rowe's clinical reading suggests "this looks as if it is meant to echo 210a2 [ὀρθῶς μετίη] . . . if so, and if 'this matter' [τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα] is 211b8 [τοῦτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ], we should perhaps take 210a2 too to refer to priorities" (Rowe 1998, 194). Rowe's construal points to what Plato could be doing in this section. Fundamentally, the scholar questions the possibility for A) the object of i) ὀρθῶς μετίη at 210a2, which begs an object because it is a transitive verb modified by the adverb, to be A) καὶ ταῦτα in the clause directly before it. In turn, καὶ ταῦτα must be read as A) τὰ

ἐρωτικά, linked to this clause via μὲν - δὲ, because ii) ὧν ἕνεκα excludes the possibility of A) καὶ ταῦτα to determine C) τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά. After all, the latter is the 'reason' for the sake of which (sc. ὧν ἕνεκα) A) καὶ ταῦτα 'exists' (sc. ἔστιν). Additionally, considering we accept this possibility (sc. A καὶ ταῦτα = τὰ ἐρωτικά), then another possibility is posed by Rowe: i) ὀρθῶς μετίῃ at 210a2 is echoed by iii) τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα at 210a4-5, in which B) τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα may be stated again all the way ahead at 211b8 as iv) τοῦτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ B) τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι. If we agree with Rowe, which the Greek text at the very least allows us to accept the possibility, then B) τοῦτο το πρᾶγμα (210a5) is reinforced as iv) τοῦτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ B) τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι. Consequently, C) τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά—which cannot be A) τὰ ἐρωτικά since A) τὰ ἐρωτικά back then is the object of i) ὀρθῶς μετίῃ—could be *both* iii) τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα *and* τὸ ὀρθῶς...ἰέναι...ἄγεσθαι, namely, C) the 'Highest Mysteries' / accomplished rites and 'insightful viewing' iii/iv) determined by ὀρθῶς as Plato's insistent marker for the correct undertaking of τὰ ἐρωτικά. Robin (1938), Hamilton (1951), Souza (1972), Hernandéz (1986), Zehnpfennig (2000), Reale (2001b), Brisson (2007), and Trombino (2004) translated τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα to 'this goal', 'this target', 'this end', 'this destination', 'this summit'. Alternatively, our translation of τὸ πρᾶγμα into *these matters* maintains the sense of generality in this case as well as remains less forceful than determining a referent that appears to, on the one hand, echo both ὀρθῶς μετίῃ and τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά and, on the other hand, be echoed at τοῦτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι. This choice may be an alternative to risking putting the cart before the horse.

210a4: δεῖ γάρ. This impersonal δεῖ "governs the construction of the entire paragraph" (Pratt 2011, 218). Moreover, "the massive sentence beginning at δεῖ γάρ in 210a4 is composed of six items dependent on δεῖ," and "with (2) and (3) αὐτόν

is inserted as subject of the infinitive, but not the (4) and (5)" (Dover 1980, 155). As such, δεῖ γάρ governs up to τοιοῦδε at 210e1, including the clause that begins with ἕως ἂν at 210d6. The scholars further suggest that "this straggling style" of text, written with multiple subordinate clauses, is perhaps "a parody of the style of Pausanias" (Bury 1909, 125). Alternatively, as Rowe (1998, 193) suggests, Plato may use Greek syntax here to intertwine the Highest Mysteries with an already ongoing discussion, which we suggest being the Mysteries of Eros (τὰ ἐρωτικά).

210a5 "ἰόντα ἐπί / ἰέναι ἐπί = go after, go for; i.e. pursue" (Pratt 2011, 218). The verb 'to pursue' has a stronger sense of urgency and, originally, of intention, better matching the context than 'to go'.

210a6-7: ἐὰν ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται ὁ ἡγούμενος. Perhaps guided by Bury (1909, 125), Rowe (1998, 194) argues for a parallel between ἡγούμενος here with μυσταγωγός in the "real Mysteries" [of Eleusis], grounded on a first-century CE's Eleusinian decree and Plutarch. The μυσταγωγός would be "someone who guides the new initiates" (Rowe 1998, 194), a role described during the ritual search in Clinton's (2003, 66) reconstruction, the ones who may have led the blindfolded μύσται at Eleusis during the sacred rites. It should be noted this term is "not attested before ca 300 B.C." (Simms 1990, 1994): "μυσταγωγός is attested only twice before the first century A.D.: first in a fragment attributed to Menander (Fr. 714 K), next more than 200 years later in an Attic decree of the first century B.C (*LSCGS* 15). Plutarch (*Alc.* 34.6) projects the word back to fifth-century Athens, but this is very likely an anachronism" (Simms 1990, 193). Cf. Bowden (2010, 32). Even if the term is an anachronism, a possible ritual role for priestly personnel to conduct sacred rites can be speculated from archaeological, literary, and mythological sources dating to ca. 750 BCE (cf. Mylonas and Travlos 1952, 53–72; Mylonas 1961; Sourvinou-Inwood 1993, 1–13; 1997, 132–64; 2003, 25–49; Graf 1974; Clinton 1974;

1993; 2005; Parker 1991, 1–17; 2005). Despite the debate on the term μυσταγωγός in the context of the Mysteries, it may be worth considering discussions on Plato's reformulation of pederasty (τὸν ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν: 211b5-6): "In the present context the '*mystagogue*' will be someone already initiated in, i.e. experienced in, 'loving correctly' . . . His 'correct leading' will in the present case perhaps consist not so much in pointing the initiate towards beautiful bodies" (Rowe 1998, 194), cf. Brisson (2006, 229–51).

210a7: ἑνὸς αὐτὸν σώματος ἐρᾶν. Both ἑνὸς and σώματος are genitive and the object of ἐρᾶν because the 'body' here is a person. This has been the subject of ongoing debate because of divergence in textual tradition: "Editors have raised problems about αὐτόν in both 210a7 (where one of the principal manuscripts has αὐτῶν) and 210a8" (Rowe 1998, 194). We consider αὐτόν as the one pursuing, "which has the support of the Papyrus" (Bury 1909, 125), marking "the return to the original (logical) subject of the sentence after the conditional clause" (Rowe 1998, 194).

210a7: ἐνταῦθα. As Dover suggests, "'with it', 'in it'/ the idea of 'procreating in a beautiful medium' (last encountered in 209b1-3) is maintained throughout (c1, d5)" (Dover 1980, 155). Cf. Sheffield (2001) on delivering through a beautiful medium.

210a7: γεννᾶν. It should be noted although it is γεννάω here, namely, the 'procreation,' the contexts may suggest as 'the moment of bursting ripeness' (ὅθεν δὲ τῷ κυοῦντί τε καῖ ἤδη σπαργῶντι πολλὴ ἡ πτοίησις γέγονε περὶ τὸ καλὸν διὰ τὸ μεγάλης ὠδῖνος ἀπολύειν τὸν ἔχοντα: 206d8-e1). That is, the same verb that has previously been used to 'procreation' or even 'creation,' as applied to poets, animals, and parents. Conversely, here it is now used in the context of the correct procreation/creation/generation. The difference is subtle. Nonetheless, this subtlety has been noted by Sheffield: "It is important to bear in mind the degree

of continuity between the start of the Lover of the Highest Mysteries' progress and its finale: the activity of repeated begetting in the context of a correct method and in response to different beautiful objects of desire does not inspire the Lover of the Highest Mysteries to reconceive, but rather to bring forth the conception he already carries (note the exclusive use of τίκτειν and γεννᾶν here). This might seem problematic unless one takes it that this pregnancy he has undergone 'from youth' is a potentiality which is being developed" (Sheffield 2001, 12). Moreover, "the philosophical method of the ascent is required for the proper realization (the 'successful delivery') of the lover's potentiality," namely to become reoriented to recognise that for the sake of which everything is loved and, ultimately, see it with understanding: "one comes to be in the presence of the Form of beauty by understanding beauty" (Sheffield 2001, 9)—not the other way round.

210a8: λόγους καλούς. Here it should be noted the broader semantic field of λόγος. Admittedly, we translated into discourses as we had to make a choice. Nonetheless, it should be understood here as words that are reasonable, in a more literal sense. Further below, it will be specified that one should come to a point of begetting καλοὺς λόγους . . . καὶ διανοήματα: 211d5-6. For now, however, if we consider this delivery of λόγους as the result of intimate contact with the beauty of a person, then there is no clear distinction between speech and thoughts. It may be better understood as discourses *sc.* 'spoken words that are reasonable.'

210a8: ἔπειτα δὲ. This clause is also governed by δεῖ γάρ from 210a4, as δὲ marks what may follow i) δεῖ ἐρᾶν and ii) δεῖ γεννᾶν, considering that i) and ii) are a possibility subject to the clause conditioned by ὀρθῶς at 210a6-7. The impersonal δεῖ is an impersonal form of δέω: 'to bind,' 'tie,' 'fasten,' 'fetter,' The choice could not fit better the context of the Highest Mysteries: according to the impersonal

δεῖ, 'it is *needful* for one to do' *p* to reach what *may* (or may not) happen, reinforcing the potentiality of μυηθείης. This is a hallmark of this entire section.

210a8: *αὐτὸν κατανοῆσαι.* Pratt reads it as "κατανοέω = observe well, understand" (2011, 218). Sourvinou-Inwood (2003, 29), following Clinton (1992, 131), *contra* (Mylonas 1961, 310-11), suggested a possible representational strategy of priestly personnel at Demeter's sanctuary, "attested in both Greek art and cult from Archaic times onwards" (Petridou 2013, 329). The sacred officials may have assimilated the divine as the living embodiment of the gods during the δράμα μυστικόν during the Mysteries. This would be a ritual search for the goddess' daughter, the maiden for the sake of which Demeter repeatedly refused to yield to Zeus' demands until she could fulfil her demands to see her daughter with her own eyes (ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδοῦσα: *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 333, 339, 350, 387, 409), the girl who, in turn, kept her hopes alive in the underworld wishing to see her dear mother again (μητέρα κεδνὴν ὄψεσθαι: *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 35-36). For a parallel, from 210a4's δεῖ γάρ it is necessary, at 210a8 αὐτὸν κατανοῆσαι, 'to observe well/to understand for himself', see with understanding for himself that beauty is kindred in all beautiful bodies, a κατανοῆσαι undetachable from correctly delivering in beauty (sc. λόγους καλούς: 210a8). At the minimum, this is "something which is in any case a requirement of his progress as a philosopher" (Rowe 1988, 195). At the maximum, Plato reinforces this visual centrality in his transposition and, as aforementioned, appropriates and transforms divine epiphany in the manner it has, in turn, been transposed in Eleusis to become a typical feature of the Mysteries, to present his correct way of preparation to experience a divine epiphany (Begeth 2022, 242), one that will beg understanding and recognising what appears (Sheffield 2001).

210a8-210b1: ὅτι τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἐπὶ ὁπῳοῦν σώματι τῷ ἐπὶ ἑτέρῳ σώματι ἀδελφόν ἐστι. For the first time in Diotima's speech, Plato uses τὸ κάλλος in the singular instead of the neuter nominative τὸ καλόν. Thus, we translated it into 'the beauty' of a singular person. This is a linguistic subtlety that aligns with the starting moment in the Highest Mysteries: the dimension in which the relationship with a particular beauty is through a particular medium. Admittedly, behind this 'singular beauty' lies an implied generality: a 'particular beauty' in any (sc. all) 'particular body' is kindred to the 'particular beauty' in any other (sc. all) body. This recognition of one in the many, however, is something for he who correctly undertakes (τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα: 210a4-5) the Mysteries of Eros and if correctly led (ἐὰν ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται: 210a6) to see for himself (αὐτὸν κατανοῆσαι: 210a8): „*wenn im einzelnen das Allgemeine erkannt wird, verliert das einzelne seine zentrale Stellung*" (Zehnpfennig 2000, 158).

210b1: ἀδελφόν. "Akin; cf. *Resp.* 402c" (Dover 1980, 155).

210b2: εἰ δεῖ διώκειν τὸ ἐπ' εἴδει καλόν. There is a subtle switch to the neuter καλόν, indicating it is not to the beauty of a particular person but, rather, possibly to everything that manifests it, viz. beauty manifested in appearance. As Dover has it, "if beauty (sc. manifested) in appearance is to be pursued" (Dover 1980, 155). Bury summarises possible renderings of the passage as follows: "This has been interpreted in three ways: (1) „*das in der Idee Schéne*" (Schleiermacher), „*das Schéne der Gesammtgattung*" (Schulthess); so too Zeller and F. Horn; (2) "*quod in specie* (opp. to '*summo genere*') *pulchrum est*" (Stallb., after Wyttenbach), so too Hommel; (3) „*das in der Gestalt Schöne*" (Ruge), "*pulcritudo quae in forma est atque sensibus percipitur*" (Rückert). The last of these is undoubtedly right, and has the support also of Vemebreu, Rettig and Hug; for εἶδος of physical 'form' or 'outward appearance,' cp. 196A, 215 B" (Bury 1909, 125). All three alternatives

presented by Bury are compelling, and the third may be "undoubtedly right" because τὸ ἐπ' εἴδει καλόν 211b1-2 will repeatedly be governed by participles of 'seeing'/'understanding'. However, this distinction between physical and non-physical seems misplaced in this context: it would be very difficult to accept the offspring of Polykleitos and Phidias—certainly two among τῶν δημιουργῶν ὅσοι λέγονται εὑρετικοὶ εἶναι: 209a4-5—as a result of psychic pregnancy: 'non-physical' children of pure stone. Yet, οἱ ποιηταὶ πάντες γεννήτορες, in whose category Polykleitos and Phidias belong, are clearly described under οἱ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κυοῦσιν ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν (209a1-2). Accordingly, in our rendering δεῖ διώκειν refers to the *true* beauty medium in a particular appearance that ought to be pursued, because this early at 210b2 what is in question seems to be *the way* of the pursuit, not the ontological status of beauty. As such, εἰ δεῖ διώκειν τὸ ἐπ'εἴδει καλόν is rendered here as if one seeks [to see and procreate through] the beauty manifested [in any = every particular] appearance. This rendering maintains the present line in the context of a gradual and controlled mode of epiphany, now at an early point, *viz.* the dimension of the particular beauty. Admittedly, even if beauty manifested in a particular medium is a *true* appearance and not an illusion, we concede that there is a difference in degree between i) a particular manifestation of true beauty and ii) the true beauty itself. That is to say, it is difficult to argue away that the particular beautiful thing is frail to illusions of multiple natures, whereas 'that one' beauty is always true. However, to repeat, the ontological question in the Highest Mysteries does not seem to be a distinction between 'physical' and 'non-physical'. We believe this is misplaced because of the recurring usage of 'touching', 'taking hold', and other 'physical' vocabulary surrounding even beauty itself up to the last line (ἐφαπτομένῳ: 212a5 and 212a6). After all, would not a 'physical' manifestation of beauty be possibly preferable to a 'non-physical' manifestation of beauty, if the latter happens to

appear falsely (εἴδωλον) while the former, even physical, happens to appear (φανεῖται) as a *true* image of beauty (εἰκός)?

210b2-3 μὴ οὐχ . . . ἡγεῖσθαι. The negation of the infinitive is expressed with μὴ, thus 'not' of which the infinitive is, sc. not to consider. In this sense, οὐχ is omitted in English to avoid confusion with double negation (μὴ ἡγεῖσθαι + οὐχ ἕν τε καὶ ταὐτὸν). It is implied as [not being] one and the same.

210b3: κάλλος. The language again shifts to the beauty of the particular. However, here there is a step towards more generality: it is one and the same (ἕν τε καὶ ταὐτὸν: 210b3).

210b4: ἐννοήσαντα καταστῆναι. Bury argues that the implied (logical) subject is the one pursuing, "sc. αὐτὸν δεῖ, resuming the oblique construction" (Bury 1909, 125). Here there is an echo from αὐτὸν κατανοῆσαι at 210a8: he must see for himself. Now, there is no reflexive pronoun (αὐτὸν). The verb is taken in the sense of 'to become,' 'to come to,' and 'to set,' which is infinitive because it is governed by the impersonal δεῖ from 210a4. The active participle implies 'reflection' when used with the accusative, which here τοῦτο is an accusative of respect. Then we assume a similar construction in the sense as that of 210a8: 'He must come to consider this,' *sc.* 'end up having this in one's own mind' or 'come to this within one's own mind.'

210b6: καταφρονήσαντα καὶ σμικρὸν ἡγησάμενον. Both participles here are taken as a consequence of the previous χαλάσαι, the expectation of 'loosening the exceeding love for one body.' If the expectation is fulfilled, then χαλάσαι is not an expectation anymore and becomes a reality, lit. 'that leads [one] to look down upon [a 'particular' body] as of lesser importance.'

210b7: ἡγήσασθαι. Aorist infinitive governed by δεῖ from 210a4, with a sense similar to ἡγεῖσθαι at 210b3. It is the same verb used to lead or guide (ἡγῆται ὁ ἡγούμενος: 210a6-7). However, paired with τὸ κάλλος and τιμιώτερον, it may be better translated as 'to consider' such as ἡγεῖσθαι at 210b3. Namely, 'to regard beauty in the souls more honourable/valuable than beauty in the bodies.'

210b7: καλλός. Once again, we are at the level of beauty through a particular medium; thus, the vocabulary indicates the beauty of individual souls.

210c1: τίκτειν λόγους τοιούτους. Now the vocabulary, which describes the same delivery of discourses through particular beautiful mediums, makes use of τίκτειν in the exact same construction as γεννᾶν a few lines above (γεννᾶν λόγους καλούς: 210a7-8). It should be noted that "the verb used in the hierophant's dramatic announcement, *eteke*, runs through Diotima's speeches [τόκος: 206b5, 206c6; τόκου: 206e5; τικῶν: 207a6; τικῶς: 207c1; τίκτειν: 206c3, 206c4, 209b2, 210c1, 212a3; τεκεῖν: 209a3; τίκτει: 206d5, 209c3; τίκτῃ: 210d5; τίκειν: 212a3; τεκόντι: 212a5], and she uses the same word repeatedly at the climax to describe 'giving birth' to true virtues" [τεκόντι: 212a5] (Betegh 2022, 256).

210c3: ἵνα ἀναγκασθῇ αὖ θεάσασθαι. First, ἵνα is rendered as an adverb of circumstance, considering the recurrent usage of the subjective tense, including the verb ἀναγκασθῇ that immediately follows it—one among thirteen other conditional particles in this whole paragraph. Second, αὖ is considered an adverb of repeated action, for it is conditioned by the circumstance and by the subjective tense in this clause. This adverb is integrated with the following verb, θεάσασθαι, leading to the following construction: ἵνα = given the preceding circumstance ('so that'/'in order that'); ἀναγκασθῇ = one might be impelled to; αὖ = further; θεάσασθαι = see with clarity (contemplate) the beauty.

210c4: τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν. Now, there is a shift back to τὸ
. . . καλόν instead of κάλλος, perhaps matching the increasingly general sense that
beauty acquires.

210c5: περὶ τὸ σῶμα καλόν. If we are to follow our rendering, then the body here
is presented as the category and not of an individual, thus the neuter subject (τὸ
σῶμα) paired with the neuter object καλὸν instead of the masc./fem. acc. κάλλον.

210c7: ἀγαγεῖν. According to Rowe, "the Greek is not identifying either the
subject or the object of the 'leading,' but the Greek even omits the 'he' and the
'him.' In a way no explicit identification is needed; we know who is doing the
leading (the leader) and who is being led (the lover). However the sudden use of
the transitive verb, with no subject, and with the likely candidate for the role last
mentioned seventeen lines ago (in a6), is striking (that the object is unspecified is
less so, since the obvious candidate for that role has been present all the time).
Nor, if there are two relationships involved (guide/lover, lover/beloved), is the
question 'who must lead who?' obviously otiose. In that case, it is not
unreasonable to suspect a deliberate ambiguity: perhaps both guide must lead
lover, and lover the beloved (that is, on separate occasions)? It is already fairly
clear, after all, that both lover and beloved will progress; and if they do, they
presumably do in the same way" (Rowe 1998, 196).

210c7: ἵνα ἴδῃ αὖ ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος. The same criteria from 211c1 (ἵνα ἀναγκασθῇ
αὖ θεάσασθαι) were applied here to match the interconnected constructions and
keep a consistent translation.

210c6: τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα ἐπὶ τὰς ἐπιστήμας. Here we have three sentences in a row
with activities, laws, and knowledges in the plural, either accusative, dative, or
genitive, like ἐπιτηδεύματα translated into a kind of activity, mirroring ἐπιστήμας

insistently used in the plural back from 207e5 to 208e6 ('pieces/bits of knowledge' rather than knowledges). Moreover, the usage of καλλός as a predicate of particulars ('the beauty of a *p*') aids us in translating into 'a particular kind of *p*' from ἐπιτηδεύματα and ἐπιστήμας.

210d1: πολὺ ἤδη τὸ καλόν. The subtle pattern of alternance between καλλός and καλόν is strikingly maintained, now pointing to beauty in a general sense, or rather 'beauty not-of-an-individual'. The adjective πολύ is in the predicate position, as argued by Pratt: "The beautiful, multiple now" (as opposed to how it was perceived previously) (Pratt 2011, 220).

210d1: οἰκέτης. Pratt suggests it is a "slave, apparently implying narrow and petty, possibly because a slave serves a single master" (Pratt 2011, 220).

210d1-2: μηκέτι τὸ παρ' ἑνί [καλλός]. Pratt, quite rightly, says that "the pieces of this sentence are hard to put together and have generated some scholarly dispute (Rowe 1998, 196–97). Probably the easiest thing to do is to make μηκέτι negate the subjunctive ᾖ and to make τὸ παρ' ἑνί [καλόν] the object of the participle ἀγαπῶν. παιδαρίου κάλλος . . . ἑνός is then a series of examples in apposition to τὸ παρ' ἑνί [καλόν]. Or, as Rowe suggests, take κάλλος as completing τὸ παρ' ἑνί" (Pratt 2011, 220). Perhaps we could suggest a middle ground? That is, a route closer to the latter because up to this point the interplay of beauty has been between the beauty of individuals (persons, kinds of 'something') and beauty in a more general sense, as we have previously stated. Here, the construction does not seem to be the object of ἀγαπῶν. Instead, it may be attached to an implied verb ('to be enslaved,' implied from οἰκέτης) with the sense of 'no longer enslaved' to the beauty surrounding an individual, τὸ [κάλλον] παρ' ἑνί, instead of τὸ [κάλον] παρ' ἑνί, similarly to above: τὸ [ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς] κάλλος: 210b6-7. Cf. Rowe: "The general upshot is that the conversion away from the individual—whether

lover or beloved?—is an epistemological process, involving the acquisition of that ability to grasp the general/generic which is blocked by too great an attachment to the particular" (Rowe 1998, 197).

210d3-4: ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ θεωρῶν. According to Bury, "this should be taken closely (supplying αὐτό) with what precedes, not with πολλοὺς...λόγους (as Ast's Dictionary s.v. implies). It should be noted that the morphological base of this active, present participle: "From θέᾱ (*théā*, 'sight') + ὁράω (*horáō*, 'I see'). Although with partial signification from θεός (*theós*, 'god')" (Rutherford 2013, 5). This is the only occurence in the Highest Mysteries of θεάω + ὁράω. Additionally, this is the only combination of active voice and present tense for any inflexion of θεάω or θεάομαι during the Highest Mysteries. Not only is the main verb ἀγαγεῖν governed by an impersonal δεῖ, but also the usage of ἀγαγεῖν, as noted by Rowe (1998, 196) and discussed above, deliberately leaves open the question of who the subject of the sentence is. In this sense, we can sustain that the (logical) subject of θεωρῶν is the same subject of τετραμμένος, thus whoever becomes reoriented by correctly undertaking the Highest Mysteries, regardless of their role. 'Theorises' renders into English Plato's transposition of the Eleusinian divine *theoria* into a philosophical *theoria*: it is a transposition of a well-established, controlled mode of divine epiphany into his own philosophical contemplation—the translation we have chosen—, grounded in simultaneously seeing and understanding what is manifested, an insightful viewing reallocated from the sacred halls to be 'theorised' *ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ* at 210d6: "The philosopher who ascends correctly moves from the 'sight' of the beautiful body of a boy to the beauty of all bodies and, from there, to the beauty of the soul; he will then 'behold' the beauty of laws and institutions and, finally, 'theorize' (θεωρῶν) the Form of the Beautiful (210a–d). In this passage, then,

Diotima clearly identifies philosophic theoria with the revelation of the highest mysteries at the initiation ceremony at Eleusis" (Nightingale 2005, 84). It is worth noting, as we will see directly below, that 'philosophical *theoria*' is immediately followed by 'philosophical begetting': τίκτη at 210d5. 210d6: ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ. Pratt argues that "ἄφθονος is used alike of fruits (*Plt.* 272a) and of soils (*Soph.* 222a), thus meaning both 'abundant' and 'bountiful' – 'unstinted' and 'unstinting'. Rowe, quite rightly, points out that φιλοσοφίᾳ is philosophy. Yet, "c3 ('and seeks for', with the text as transmitted) has reminded us of the connection Diotima made earlier—in her description of Love the philosopher—between philosophy and searching. Given that this searching will take place in the presence of someone else, and will issue in 'words,' it is only a short step to the Socratic notion of philosophy as conversation (*dialegesthai*); and also to the near-total metamorphosis of the relationship between lover and beloved into one between philosopher and pupil (or between an experienced and a less experienced philosopher). But that is just what b5 own 'eroticism' will turn out to amount to the drive towards wisdom, and more 'procreation in beauty'—'That grudges nothing': Dover comments 'ungrudging,' hence 'unlimited,' but in a context that has aspects of a donor-recipient relationship, it seems reasonable to allow room for the literal sense of the word" (Rowe 1998, 197). Yet, the most striking detail in this construction is the contrast with its poor mirror image, the gazing (ἀποβλέψας: 209d1) in *philotimia*, which was a gazing envying (ζηλῶν: 209d2) the immortal children of renowned poets. Here, who has become reoriented and contemplates (θεωρῶν: 210d4, note the active voice) the vast, open sea of beauty (τὸ πολὺ πέγαλος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ: 210d4) ends up in a profoundly different kind of love: one in *philosophia*, like Casertano brilliantly has it, as «*un amore per la sapienza privo di invidia*» (2016, 229). There is no room for envy, but, instead, there is begetting many beautiful discourses and magnificent thoughts (πολλοὺς

καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτῃ καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ: 210d4-6). To illustrate the clear contrast between *philotimia* and *philosophia*, we have left both words transliterated in Greek instead of translating them into English.

210d7: τινὰ ἐπιστήμην μίαν. In Bury's reading, "this unitary science—ἐπιστήμη in the strict Platonic sense, called also (211c) μάθημα—is *dialectic*: cf. *Phdr*. 247b τὴν ἐν τῷ ὅ ἐστιν ὂν ὄντως ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν" (Bury 1909, 127).

210e1: τὸν νοῦν προσέρχειν. Literally, 'turn the mind.' It is interesting to note the wording here, particularly after an image of a vast, open sea of beauty: turning the mind or thinking (νοῦν) is from the same family of words such as 'turning the ship' or navigating, a connection noted by Dover back a the beginning of the previous sentence: ἀγαγεῖν (lead, guide) with ἀγάγειν (set sail) (Dover 1980, 158).

210e1: πειρῶ δέ μοι. "Here again," argues Bury, "as at 210a (πειρῶ δὲ ἔπεσθαι κτλ.), a climax in the exposition is marked" (Bury 1909, 127). Pratt remarks that "μοι = for me, for my sake, please (ethical dat.)" (Pratt 2011, 221). We follow Rowe (1998) in translating into 'to me,' precisely as a particular medium through which beauty may be delivered. Most importantly, the Choir in Eur. *Bacch*. and Ar. *Ran*. had their lead constantly rising their voice and calling attention as they announced the invocation of the divine during the παννυχίδα.

210e3: παιδαγωγηθῇ. This construction has the verb in the passive voice. Cf. Pratt (2011, 221): "παιδαγωγέω = attend as a παιδαγωγός, train and teach, educate." The context suggests who has been led by education. Even so, as Rowe notes, "the person normally led by a *paidagôgos*, or taught, is (as the word suggests) a boy (*pais*); thus although *paidagôgein* can be used generally of teaching, it positively encourages us to think of the relationship between lover and beloved rather than,

or at least as well as, that between the lover and his 'leader' (cf. c78n.)" (Rowe 1998, 198).

210e3: θεώμενος . . . ὀρθῶς (ὀρθῶς + participle). Here θεώμενος remains consistent with θεάσασθαι from 210c3.

210e3: ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς. Bury translates the passage as "in correct and orderly succession"/ see 211b *ad fin.* τοῖτο γὰρ δή ἐστι τὸ ὀρτῶ . . . ἰέναι κτλ., and 210a where the right order or procedure (πρῶτον . . . ἔπειτα, etc.) is specially emphasised" (Bury 1909, 128). Cf. Rowe: "The emphasis again is on the procedure" (1998, 198). Additionally, as much as it is undeniable that 'orderly succession' (ἐφεξῆς) "is necessary"—for this clause is still governed by δεῖ γάρ from 210a4 (Dover 1980, 155)—, the possible Orphic resonances on repeatedly using ὀρθῶς to determine participles, cf. Bernabé (2011, 228), could be, once again, pointing to the (logical) subject's action, expressed through the participle after the main verb παιδαγωγηθῇ: *„keine Stufe übersprungen werden, und auf jeder Stufe muß das Bewußtsein ihrer Vorläufigkeit präsent sein—sonst käme es wieder zu einer Fixierung“* (Zehnpfennig 2010, 158). Seeing with clarity (θεώμενος) is determined by ὀρθῶς and can also mean no fixation in the vision of any of the beautiful things successively recognised during 'education,' an arguably life-long educational practice, as this participle is connected to the main verb παιδαγωγηθῇ.

210e4: πρὸς τέλος ἤδη. Bury notes that "πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν *dicebantur ii, qui superatis gradibus tandem ad spectanda arcana admittebantur* [were said to those who, having passed the steps, were finally admitted to see the mysteries] (Hommel)" (Bury 1909, 128). Additionally, here there is an echo of πρὸς πολὺ ἤδη from 210c9-d1. In this sense, at 210c9-d1 we translated the neuter πολὺ in the predicate position, as suggested by Pratt (2011, 220). Thus, considering the echo, the neuter τέλος is rendered in the predicate position again, we propose: πρὸς +

ἰὼν = nearing; τέλος = the culmination; τῶν ἐρωτικῶν = of the Mysteries of Eros; + [τέλος] ἤδη = now the Highest / accomplished: what at this point should have been correctly undertaken, viz. the accomplished ἐρωτικά. Rowe suggests quite a compelling reading: "final (*teleos*) like 'end' (*telos*) here includes the senses both of ending/completion and of end/goal" (Rowe 1998, 198). Alternatively, it may not be a final or ultimate goal, but rather a primary aim, thus accomplished/perfect/highest. After all, "the goal of the *process* is reached when, having beheld Beauty itself, the philosopher-*epoptēs* gives birth to the highest form of virtue, the best of offsprings . . . What is born at the climactic encounter with the divine is still the highest reward: The life of the highest virtues is the best possible life and possibly the closest a mortal can get to immortality" (Betegh 2022, 251).

210e4: ἐξαίφνης. Dover proposes the ἐξαίφνης here in this context of the epiphany as possibly analogous to "the excitement of glimpsing a wonderfully simple, comprehensive answer to a problem after a process of reasoning which was full of difficulties and discouragements" (Dover 1980, 157). Additionally, "this suggests the final stage in the mystery-rites, when out of darkness there blazed forth suddenly the mystical φέγγος, and ἐν αὐτῇ καθαρᾷ the φάσματα or ἱερὰ μυστικά—consisting probably of images of Demeter, Iacchus and Persephone, and other sacred embles—were displayed to the awe-struck worshipper (μακαρία ὄψις τε καὶ θέα)" (Bury 1909, 128). However, even at Eleusis, the vision was not a passive receptacle of whatever is shown but an activity: seeing and being seen upon recognition in a state of attunement and correct ritual orientation, resulted from a long and gradual process of purification, of seeing to get acquainted with the divine to know them and have a share in whatever power the divine might bestow upon their dear ones. As the ending lines of the poem solemnly declare: "Blessed

is the one who has seen these things, among the mortal who live upon the earth; but to the uninitiated in the sacred rites, who has no share in them has no lot of similar things when waned in nether darkness": ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων· ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὅς τ' ἄμμορος, οὔ ποθ' ὁμοίων αἶσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ' ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι, *Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 480-2. Petridou's (2013) translation, modified, Richardson's (1974) Greek text. Note the renowned ἐξαίφνης in the *Republic*.

210e5: κατόψεταί. Bury suggests a similarity with the *Phaedrus* at 247d: "(καθορᾷ μὲν αὐτὴν δικαιοσύνην κτλ..), which suggests that καθορᾶν was a *vox propria* for viewing ritual displays" (Bury 1909, 218). This is one of the reasons for emphasising in translation the vocabulary of vision: „*um den mystischen Charakter des Aufstiegs zu betonen*" (Zehnpfennig 2010, 158). However, it is primarily to keep in mind that the vocabulary of 'seeing' and 'understanding' is interconnected not only in the Greek language and culture, cf. Petridou (2013, 323), but also transposed by Plato into seeing ὀρθῶς in a way authentically Platonic, regardless of its original connotations. After all, this is a transposition and not a mere reproduction. Therefore, this is Plato suggesting the correct philosophical *theoria*. As Zweisprachige also notes: „*Diotima spricht andererseits aber von der Erkenntnis des Schönen; so eindeutig dem Nicht-Rationalen zuzurechnen ist dieser Aufstieg also nicht*" (Zehnpfennig 2010, 158).

210e4-5: τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν. It is worth noting the *thauma* we have seen during Metaneira's before the light radiating from Demeter during her epiphany in the Eleusinian *Hymn* in the previous chapter. Similarly, *Phdr.* 250b: κάλλος δὲ τότ' ἦν δεῖν λαμπρόν. For θαυμαστόν cf. 219b: "it often connotes the supernatural, e.g. *Resp. 398a* προσκυνοῖμεν ἂν αὐτὸν ὡς ἱερὸν καὶ θαυμαστὸν καὶ ἡδύν" (Bury 1909, 128).

210e5: τὴν φύσιν. We follow Pratt in rendering it as "accusative of respect with θαυμαστόν" (Pratt 2011, 221).

210e5: τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὦ Σώκρατες. "The expression has a somewhat exclamatory and dramatic character" (Dover 1980, 157).

210e6: πάντες πόνοι. Rowe notes that "those Diotima has been describing since a4. The description may have been short, but the ascent itself is long and arduous; indeed some of the things Diotima has said earlier (see esp. 203e-204a) suggest that mere human beings may not be capable of completing it at all (cf. 212a6-7n., 211b7-8n.) The beauty in question is, of course, 'the (Platonic) form of beauty'" (Rowe 1998, 198).

210e6-211a1: ἀεὶ ὤν. "Is, i.e. 'is (just what is)'; an example of what Kahn—appropriately enough—calls the 'stative-durative value' of the Greek verb 'to be,' *einai*" (Rowe 1998, 198), cf. Kahn (1966, 249). This section breaks the form of the text from prose to verse, evidencing Plato's transposition of sacred rituals, particularly of the choral dances (περιχωρεῖν) in *mysteria*: "In describing the nature or essence of Beauty found there, the prose suddenly bursts into dithyrambs, in the manner of a choric ode (211a-b). This is a metaphysical description that is also a hymn. Plato's style quickens under the impulse of certain ideas; it is impossible to preserve in translation the pounding beat of his rhythms, the beat of the dance" (Allen 1991, 82). In the Mysteries, like in the prose conducted by Plato, the procession led by the priestly personnel gave way for choral dances at the night-long revelry of the goddesses (Eur. *Hel.* 1365: παννυχίδες παννυχίδες θεᾶς), possibly by the shores of the Thriasian Plain close to the sanctuary of Demeter (cf. Soph. *OC* 441-42: ἢ λαμπάσιν ἀκταῖς, οὗ πότνιαι σεμνὰ τιθηνοῦνται τέλη, or by the torch-lit coasts / where the hallowed goddesses foster sacred rites). As Graf notes, "the sacrifices to the divinities must have taken place

in the grove, as part of the secret ritual, as did dances for which the regulations list the musicians" (Graf 2003b, 244). Moreover, not only is a Hymn "as a representation of the act of offering [θυεῖν], it is also an offering in itself . . . functioning as a *mediating mechanism*" (Platt 2011, 31). In this sense, "Hymns introduce the epiphanic narratives . . . they accompany the worship of deities at festivals, where they have an *invocatory function*, charming their divine addressee into witnessing rhapsodic or choral displays, acknowledging receipt of sacrifices and dedications, or attending ritual processions . . . the hymn is designed *to induce the god's attendance* at its own performance . . . hymnic performance functions as a spatio-temporal frame" (Platt 2011, 73). These sacred rites of choral dances and chants marked an 'appearance' of the deity in 'divine splendour' upon the processions' culmination (Ar. *Ran.* 448: φέγγος ἱερὸν οἴσων), usually Iacchus (Phld. *Dio.* 34-45: ἐπ[όπ]ταις ὀργίων ὁς[ίων Ἴ]ακχον, *Iakchos* / benevolent to the ἐπόπταις of the sacred rites), or Dionysus (Ar. *Ran.* 368: ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου, the traditional sacred rites of Dionysus), having a full share of the χάρις (Ar. *Ran.* 349: χαρίτων πλεῖστον) with the pilgrims at the end of long processions: "Here the ritual came as close to a collective epiphany as possible" (Graf 2004, 126).

211a2: τῇ μὲν . . . τῇ δέ. "As is typical, the feminine dative singular implies adverbial 'way' = in one way . . . in another" (Pratt 2011, 221).

211a3: πρὸς μὲν τό . . . πρὸς δὲ τό. "For one purpose . . . for another" (Pratt 2011, 221).

211a5: φαντασθήσεται. Literally, "will appear, with a suggestion of illusion, appropriate to the particulars (a6-b1) with which abstract beauty is contrasted" (Dover 1980, 156). We follow Dover in reading here as pointing to 'appearing' as an illusion to which particulars are subject. Moreover, we see an echo from ἀποφηνάμενοι at 209e2 (πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀποφηνάμενοι ἔργα). Nonetheless, we

cannot reduce the particulars to being necessarily illusions, considering that particulars can manifest true beauty as feasible to a particular (εἰκός). Conversely, illusions made to appear as beautiful (εἴδωλος) certainly will not lead to the beautiful as they are not kindred to truth but to deception instead, a deception which φαντασθήσεται denotes, given the context in which it is used. As Bury has it: "φαντασθήσεται αὐτῷ. φαντάζεσθαι often connotes illusive semblance; cf. *Phd.* 110d, *Resp.* 572b" (Bury 1909, 129).

211a3: λόγος . . . ἐπιστήμη. Here, Bury mentions "οὐδέ τις λόγος [and we add the οὐδέ τις ἐπιστήμη that directly follows]. It is difficult to be sure of the sense in which λόγος is used here" (Bury 1909, 129). It is indeed difficult, and Bury suggests either to take it as a λόγος [and ἐπιστήμη] of a lesser kind compared to τὸ μάθημα τελευτῆσαι in 211c7, or to take it as a 'concept,' which would not exhaust αὐτῷ τὸ καλὸν from 211a6. He concludes that neither option would be satisfactory, implied by "it is difficult to be sure" at the opening of his comment, so that he presents a third way: "Mathematical relation. Perhaps 'formula' would best render the word here" (Bury 1909, 129). Rowe presents possibilities that go in line with this, although he is not entirely sure: "Given that there are hardly any clues, no doubt we should conclude that this is another case of deliberate ambiguity— with the difference that nothing much hangs on it" (Rowe 1998, 198). We suggest an alternative way, which considers the context of the sentence in which the clause is used. Here, many conditionals surround the main verb φαντασθήσεται. This verb implies the deceit typical of illusions: οἷον πρόσωπόν τι οὐδὲ χεῖρες paired with φαντασθήσεται may be more than 'one face or hands' (note the plural of χεῖρες), considering *s.v.* χείρ III in LSJ (1996): "The hand often receives the attributes of the person using it," which in this construction points to the display of illusion. The 'hands' also share in the attributes of φαντασθήσεται, the 'displaying

illusion;' thus, we follow LSJ's sense of 'handicraft' for this term's usage in the plural. Once this sense is paired with πρόσωπον as a mask/face, the combination makes one wonder if it is not critiquing the anthropomorphic nature of gods, through which they effectively use illusion. Particularly Dionysus, "the most complex and multifaceted of all the Greek gods" (Faraone 1993, 1); also the god of illusion, the mask, and the theatrical play. In the *Bacchae* he is actually in charge of a controlled mode of vision, a typical feature of epiphany in the Ancient Greek of Plato's time: "Gods control sight and it is up to them to bestow or to withdraw it. This is an idea that goes back to Homer" (Petridou 2013, 314). In Sophocles' *Ajax*, for example, "his piece of stagecraft creates a mental and visual focus on the partial vision and knowledge of the mortals, versus the complete and impartial vision and knowledge of the immortal" (Petridou 2013, 314). Even in the *Hymn*, one of the primary sources for reconstructions of the Mysteries, this feature is highlighted in the first encounter between gods and mortals, specifically in the interaction between Demeter and Keleos' daughters. The young girls *did not recognise* (οὐδ' ἔγνων: *Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 111) Demeter disguised as an old lady sitting by the Kallikoron's well. This same verse concluded with a fateful statement: "The gods are difficult (χαλεποὶ) for mortals to recognise" (ὁρᾶσθαι). In the *Bacchae*, Dionysus assumed a multiplicity of forms that throughout the play deceived Pentheus, "led by the god to a *theôria*: 1047" (Foley 1980, 116), and whoever refused to worship him in a comedy of a ὑβριστής that looked down upon the god in illusive disguise, unable to recognise yet constantly desiring to "spy upon the god's forbidden rites (811-15, 829, 838, 912, 916, 952, 1060-62)" (Foley 1980, 123), leading the spectators to be sympathetic to the deceit and illusions that the masked god constantly subjected to the King's arrogance. "What Pentheus's vision lacks," argues Petridou, "is essentially what Elsner (2007, 25) calls 'ritual-centered visuality'; this allows the viewer to put aside his normal identity and

temporarily acquire a new cult-generated identity one whose aim is to undermine a culturally engendered secular visuality, and to prepare, usually through a process of physical and mental purification, the self for the possibility of a meeting with the divine" (Petridou 2013, 315). This pattern is similar to the one offered by Diotima. However, here, with φαντασθήσεται, the priestess makes it clear that the divine beauty has nothing to do with either divine agency or deceitful appearance, let alone with any λόγος or ἐπιστήμη related to falseness or illusion.

211a8: οὐδέ που ὄν. We do not follow the local sense of που. Since the preposition ἐν and the dative τινι both imply location, it seemed to be redundant to translate it to further emphasise the local sense. The adverb of manner seems a suitable match. *Contra* Bury (1909, 129): "οὐδέ που ὄν. που is probably used in a local sense."

211a8: ἑτέρῳ. It "implies than itself" (Dover 1980, 157).

211b1 ἀλλ᾽. We follow Dover and consider "it is more appropriate to understand φανεῖται 'it will clearly be...'" (Dover 1980, 157). Namely, it is appropriate to understand this ἀλλά bearing an implied φανεῖται, in opposition to the main verb φαντασθήσεται. This would capture the image presented here, namely not manifested as false (οὐ φαντασθήσεται) vs manifested as true, an implied φανεῖται in this ἀλλά as [coming to light as nothing but] always being itself, according to itself, by itself, of pure form.

211b1-2: μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν. This is an echo of the start of 'Plato's Hymn,' namely πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὄν at 210e6-211a1. The start of the 'Hymn' makes a clear usage of Kahn's stative-durative value of εἶναι (Kahn 1966, 249), remaining existential. In this sense, this echo of 211a1's ἀεὶ ὄν sets μονοειδὲς between ἀεὶ paired with 'is' (not copular) is the last element of the clause, thus receiving further force (Dover 1960, 32–34). Admittedly, μονοειδὲς is a terrific term, which strikes the eyes given its

metaphysical tradition: "Stewart renders 'of one Form,' but the full force may be rather 'specifically unique,' implying that it is the sole member of its class" (Bury 1909, 129). Moreover, it is striking, given its sense in ancient Greek religion, in the 'pure' and 'simple' technical sense, so to speak, concerning what is ἱερός. This sense is a typical feature of epiphanic records in the Mysteries, specifically regarding the purity (a lasting state of attunement) necessary to commune with the divine. Nonetheless, the position of the terms and the echo from 210e6-211a1 appear as stronger reasons to consider 'always' as determining the entire sentence. Moreover, given the form of 'εἶναι' from Kahn's reading, namely not a copula, ὄν can be redirected toward the starting αὐτὸ with the sense of existing as / being itself, also determining the entire sentence.

211a7: μετέχει. "Quite what relationship is indicated by this notion of 'participation' is unclear (as Socrates himself is elsewhere represented as admitting, see *Phaedo* 100d); but that there must be *some* sort of relationship of beautiful particulars, over however wide a range, would be capable of leading towards an insight into Beauty Itself, in the way Diotima envisages in the present context" (Rowe 1998, 199).

211b4: μήτε τι πλέον μήτε ἔλαττον γίγνεσθαι. This is an echo from οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον at 211a. Admittedly, the word 'uncoming' in English is attested only in the late 1500s, which is atypical in modern English. Yet, it fits very well the poetic contrast with 'becoming' in this clause. Like in the entire section, we make daring usage of 'poetic licence,' whilst trying to remain as literal as we can in the clauses that bear significant metaphysical weight. In this sense, we remain grounded in the Greek text, evidencing the choral ode in what we called Plato's 'Hymn to Beauty,' trying as much as possible not to ignore syntax nor philosophical significance.

2nb4: ἐκεῖνο. In a similar construction as ἐκείνου from 202b2, which will be constantly repeated from now on: "Sc. (αὐτὸ) τὸ καλόν" (Bury 1909, 130).

2nb5: ὅταν δή τις ἀπὸ τῶνδε. Now the 'Hymn' comes to an end after Diotima's invocation makes the divine 'appear' as αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ μεθ' αὑτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν: 2nb1-2. The prose returns to the Greek text, and likewise in our translation. The Mantinian now leads us 'upwards' through the renowned *Scala amoris*. The construction that marks this linguistic turn is made by an indefinite conditional clause leading to a subjunctive verb, as a transition pattern repeated in this section of Diotima's speech. First, at 210d6-7: ἕως ἂν ἐνταῦθα ῥωσθεὶς καὶ αὐξηθεὶς κατίδη; then at 210e6-7: ὃς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦτα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ παιδαγωγηθῇ.

2nb5: τις. This 'someone' (or 'a person') is nominative, ὅταν conditions it similarly to ἐάν, further strengthening the temporal significance of δή. This is the reason for not rendering as a particle of emphasis but in apodosi to ὅταν (ὅτ'+ἄν).

2nb5-6 παιδεραστεῖν (ὀρθῶς + articular infinitive). Pederasty, "a reminder that Diotima is not speaking of solitary mysticism, but of the 'right' use (ὀρθῶς recurs throughout: 210a2, 210a4, 210a6, 210e3, 2nb5, 2nb7) or the emotional relationship about which Phaedrus and Pausanias were talking" (Dover 1980, 158). Pederasty has been reformulated into the correct love of boys, which is undertaken to lead a youth to see with understanding for himself what is truly beautiful and good to the extent of begetting true virtue. What will be at stake now is to lead a life worth living (βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ: 2nd2), a consequence of loving and caring and begetting discourses as much suitable, seeking whichever might make the youth better people (καὶ ἐρᾶν καὶ κήδεσθαι καὶ τίκτειν λόγους τοιούτους [καὶ ζητεῖν] οἵτινες ποιήσουσι βελτίους τοὺς νέους: 210c1-3).

211b5-6: ἀπὸ τῶνδε . . . ἐκεῖνο τὸ καλόν. Plato makes a cataphoric usage of ὅδε in a well-written linguistic interplay between 'these here'—nearby/present, plural and multiple—and 'that one there'—distant, singular, whose sight begs ascending (ἐπανιὼν: 211b6) from these here. This provides the rhetorical effect of anticipating τῶν καλῶν σωμάτων in the following sentence, insofar as exclaiming this really is (τοῦτο γάρ δή ἐστι: 211b7) the correct way to pursue the Mysteries of Eros (τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι: 211b7-c1). The masterclass in Greek writing is not simply an opposition between 'that one there' and 'these many here,' but as we have seen in the 'Hymn,' it is a multifaced distinction between 'here and there,' 'now and then,' 'down and up,' 'this and that,' 'what is and what is not,' 'illusions and real appearance.' Accordingly, we maintained the translation by hiding the noun phrase (*sc.* 'from these' instead of 'from these things'), omitting it from the translation, in an attempt to add in some way this flavour from the Greek text to be savoured in the English translation.

211b7: σκεδὸν ἄν τι ἄπτοιτο τοῦ τέλους. This σκεδὸν τι ('I dare say / so to speak' and so forth) is paired with ἄπτοιτο, here considered to be a construction "joined with Verbs: somewhat, in any degree, at all" (LSJ 1996 s.v. τις II.C). Additionally, while ἄπτοιτο is here paired with σκεδὸν τι, it will be mirrored onto ἐφαπτομένῳ used twice at 212a4-5, precisely to echo the aftermath of a visual/epistemological contact with the beautiful itself ('just after having touched/grasped'). Moreover, regarding the objective genitive here: "This combines the sense 'goal' and 'sacred symbol'" (Bury 1909, 130). Bury is clinical in noting the wordplay with the vocabulary of *mysteria*. At the same time, both regarding the Mysteries and Diotima's Mysteries, 'final' depends on the construal. Rowe reads it as the goal: "The optative + *an* ('would') reflects the tone of circumspection introduced by Diotima"'s 'practically' (*schedon . . . ti*), and also by her 'begins to' ('begins to

catch sight of that beauty,' b7). It is, evidently, an elusive object" (Rowe 1998, 199). What if, conversely, it is the most visible object, the one which is accomplished/sacred? Again, although this is the culmination of an ascent, it does not seem to be *the* 'goal/aim' of the lifelong, correct way of loving presented by Diotima. Moreover, neither in the Mysteries of Eros nor in the Mysteries is the 'reaching upon the sacred'—here explicitly what Rowe rightly connects to "catch a sight" (καθορᾶν)—final. After all, both at the closing moments of the sacred rites and by the last lines of Diotima's speech, it is a begetting that lies as final. In Eleusis, the divine is born and witnessed by intimate, mortal pilgrims who have undertaken and observed all the long preparation: "*Epopteia* in Eleusis did not consist in simply catching sight of the goddesses, but—as mentioned at the outset of this section, in the dramatic event of the goddess giving birth to a child, announced at high voice by the hierophant, the leader of the rites, and marked by the appearance of an ear of grain (and possibly of a child)" (Betegh 2022, 251). Here, as aforementioned, in a bold and original transposition, Plato turns the philosopher into the correct/accomplished *theoros*, who comes in intimate contact with the divine as a culmination, from all the toilsome efforts (οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν: 210e6), of an ascent to 'what is.' Most importantly, as becomes clear in Diotima's last lines, the epiphanies are in no way the final step or aim of Plato's transposed *theoria*, because the *telos* in the sense of 'the end' or 'aim' is not simply 'getting acquainted with' and 'seeing/understanding' the divine, since this 'intimacy' with the divine is pursued for the sake of 'delivering' the best that one has within—not mere images of the divine (τίκτειν οὐκ εἴδωλα: 212a3-4) like statues or sacred objects—, but 'offspring' whose excellence is truly kindred to the divine (τέκοντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ: 212a5-6): the truth. This sets immortality with the good/beauty on the horizon as the τέλος in the sense of goal and aim of Diotima's Mysteries, not the epiphanies which happen within an

accomplished ascent. This reading inevitably brings the image of Plato's philosophy's transformative potential to mind: ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν· ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως, "becoming alike the divine, as much as possible: to become alike the divine is to become just and pious along with having wisdom" (Pl. *Tht*. 176b1-3).

211b7: τοῦτο γὰρ δή. "Here commences a recapitulation of 'the Ascent of Love' as described in 210a-211b" (Bury 1909, 130).

211b7-c1: τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι. This construction mirrors τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα ἐπὶ τοῦτο το πρᾶγμα . . . ἰέναι ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ σώματα from 210a4-6. Accordingly, in both constructions ἰέναι is translated into 'to pursue' because in English, again, it has a stronger sense of urgency and, originally, of intention, better matching the context than 'to go.'

211b7-c1: τὸ ὀρθῶς . . . ἰέναι . . . ἢ . . . ἄγεσθαι. (ὀρθῶς + double articular infinitive, sc. τὸ . . . ἰέναι ἢ [τὸ] . . . ἄγεσθαι). Bury argues that the ὑπ' ἄλλου ἄγεσθαι (passive verb) "refers to the παιδαγωγός or μυσταγωγός of 210e" (Bury 1909, 130). Rowe adds that "this is how a lover should behave in relation to his beloved, or (rather) be guided to behave; I take that Diotima here marks the reintroduction of the idea of the 'leader', who has been left out of the picture for a little while" (Rowe 1998, 199–200).

211c3: ἐπαναβασμοῖς. "Ascending steps" (Dover 1980, 158).

211c7: τὸ μάθημα τελευτῆσαι. Pratt notes that "the infinitive is parallel to ἐπανιέναι" (Pratt 2011, 223). Not only is this a parallel in theme but also in syntax, one noted by Dover, following Bury and Usener, who emended τελευτήσῃ from the subjunctive and καὶ γνῷ into ἵνα γνῷ (Dover 1980, 158; Bury 1909, 131). In this sense, ἐπανιέναι can be read as a present dynamic infinitive, expressing a

continuing event, further heightened by the construction ἀεὶ ἐπανιέναι 211c2. Conversely, τελευτῆσαι is not a participle nor an aorist; hence, there is no time involved in it. The construction through the usage of a neuter-singular article τὸ from μάθημα leads us to take it as a verbal noun: τὸ μάθημα [τὸ] τελευτῆσαι as 'the accomplishing knowledge.' If it were a participle, it would be better considered as 'finishing' the action of 'ascending.' Could this indicate that the ascension may point to what lies beyond it?

211c8: ἵνα γνῷ . . . τελευτῶν. Here is where the difference between Burnet's (1901) and Dover's (1980) Greek texts is significant. In Dover's, the circumstantial participle does not become an adverb because ἵνα replaces Burnet's καὶ: "There is surely something wrong with the transmitted text here (see *apparatus*: the sudden break into subjunctives looks hardly possible); none of the editorial solutions to the problems looks particularly attractive, but none makes much difference to the sense. The solution I have adopted, following Dover and others, gives that sense straightforwardly: the final clause at the end ('in order that one may finally know what beauty is, itself') simply brings us back to the crucial point of the purpose of the whole ascent ('for the sake of that beauty,' 210c1-2). 'What beauty is, itself': or 'what is (truly) beautiful, (by) itself, or that very thing that is beauty,' or . . . (for what is in Greek a closely similar formula, see 199e4 'just insofar as he is a brother'); in any case the sense of the formula is given by the preceding description, in 210e6-211b5" (Rowe 1998, 200). Perhaps a better solution may be found in considering both τελευτῆσαι and τελετῶν as images of *mysteria*, transposed by Plato to become the philosophical culmination of the ascent in Diotima's Mysteries. In the environment of *mysteria*, the image of τελετή stands for performing/accomplishing the sacred rites, whereas the image of τελευτή stands for its culmination. In this sense, the 'finality' suggested by Bury (1909, 130)

becomes less attractive to our construal regarding the goal/aim of either the Mysteries or the Philosophical Mysteries. According to Reale, «*la rivelazione non è sufficiente, ocorre che chi è iniziato ai misteri dell'Eros compria un lungo cammino (dialettico) di preparazione; ma neppure questo basta*» (Reale 2001). In Eleusis, the image of the end (such as the end of life) is the horizon of expectations for the blessings in the afterlife. Yet, were the blessings for the afterlife alone, then this reading would be acceptable. However, blessings during life are also expected from the sacred rites. As such, this cannot mean 'finishing' Eleusis without disregarding the religious and repeatable aspects of their sacred rites. Could Plato have transposed this central detail from *mysteria* to also propose that philosophy is not a one-time imparting of secret knowledge but rather an ongoing lived activity (Edmonds 2017, 201-02), one that is life-long compared either to the yearly Eleusinian festival or to other τελεταί?

211d1: τοῦ βίου. Pratt suggests it as "partitive gen. with ἐνταῦθα = at this moment of life; literally = in this place within life" (Pratt 2011, 223).

211d2: εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ. Dover points out that "we say 'if any,' 'if anywhere,' etc., but Greek adds 'other,' 'else-,' βιωτόν '(sc. it is) livable,' i.e. '(a man [human being]) should live" (Dover 1980, 158).

211d3: ὅ ἐάν ποτε ἴδῃς. As Rowe carefully noticed, "if ever you see it: that Socrates has not yet 'seen' beauty itself is not just part of the present fiction based around Diotima; the whole dialogue pictures him as the needy, philosophical lover" (Rowe 1998, 200).

211d3: κατά. "On the same level with" (Pratt 2011, 223); "In the same way as . . . on the plane of . . ." (Dover 1980, 158).

211d7-8: ἀλλὰ θεᾶσθαι μόνον καὶ συνεῖναι. Here, Diotima uses the same language to the beloved boys that she had previously used strictly to 'see with clarity'/'beholding'/'contemplating.' This nears the scorn as Diotima in this digression speaks about the opposite of the correct way of love that has been described in this closing section. Additionally, Rowe notes the sexual connotations of *suneinai* (get acquainted with), such as sexual intercourse (Rowe 1998, 200).

211e1: αὐτὸ τὸ καλὸν ἰδεῖν εἰλικρινές. Cf. Pratt (2011, 224): "εἰλικρινής -ές = unmixed, pure; ἄμεικτος -ον = unmixed (cf. μείγνυμι)."

211e2: ἀνάπλεως. Dover proposes that "is literally 'full of...,' but Thuc. 2.51.4 uses the verb ἀναπιμπλάναι of infection by disease, and cf. *Phd.* 67a, where it is said that knowledge is best attained by our souls if we have as little as possible to do with the body μηδὲ ἀναπιπλώμεθα τῆς τούτου φύσεως" (Dover 1980, 158).

211e2: μὴ ἀνάπλεων σαρκῶν τε ἀνθρωπίνων καὶ χρωμάτων. Cf. "Gave light to the splendour of her immortal skin" (φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο λάμπε θεᾶς: *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 278-9). Foley's (1993) translation, modified, Roberston's (1974) text. *Contra* Pratt (2011, 224): "χρῶματος τό = color."

211e4: δύναιτο is governed by the same (logical) subject as γένοιτο at the start of the question.

212a2-3: ἐνταῦθα . . . μοναχοῦ. *Contra* Pratt: "In this one place alone" (Pratt 2011, 224); μοναχοῦ, as Dover notes, qualifies ἐνταῦθα (Dover 1980, 159). Here it should be noted that Diotima uses ἐνταῦθα five times in her exposition of the Highest Mysteries (210a7, 210d6, 210e2, 211d1, 212a2). In every occurrence within conditional clauses, ἐνταῦθα was here translated in the adverbial sense of time, sequence, position or circumstance. The only occurrences outside conditional

clauses were the ones translated in 210a7 and 211d1. On the one hand, the latter may convey the adverbial sense of time (ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου: 211d1, the time being 'moment of life'). On the other hand, the former is the only construction which conveys the adverbial sense of place (ἑνὸς αὐτὸν σώματος ἐρᾶν καὶ ἐνταῦθα γεννᾶν λόγους καλούς: 210a7-8, the place as 'a beautiful medium'). In this sense, we suggest that Plato maintains a pattern for the usage of ἐνταῦθα, making it at 211a2-3 to determine a condition *tout court* in a conditional clause.

212a3: ᾧ ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν. We propose that this 'manner by which (ᾧ) the beautiful is to be seen' (ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν) is precisely by becoming reoriented (τετραμμένος: 210d4, perf. part. mp.) in 'insightful viewing' as the determining transformation to philosophical contemplation (θεωρῶν: 210d4). In other words, becoming reoriented in the sense of philosophical framing here is the transformative aspect which is central in 'the correct manner' for the accomplished loving/accomplished philosophising, namely, 'by seeing the beautiful in the manner it is to be seen' (ὁρῶντι ᾧ ὁρατὸν τὸ καλόν), directly followed by ἅτε τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ. In this sense, after using a recurrent and exhausting visual vocabulary, it is no wonder to see Diotima conclude her speech by indicating that what is most beautiful is most visible. *Contra* Dover and Rowe: "With the faculty he should use: lit. 'with what he must (contemplate)', i.e. the soul/mind, not the body; if he uses the body, he will 'contemplate' only physical beauty" (Rowe 1998, 200). The physical vs non-physical debate seems at this point otiose in the context of our reading, particularly in this section where the contrast is here proposed to be between 'touching' or 'grasping' what is false versus what is true. In this sense, precisely in the context of this passage, we cannot predicate εἴδωλα to any physical object if they instantiate what is truly beautiful. It seems counterintuitive because an εἰκός manifestation instantiates truthfully (ἀληθῆ), regardless of its materiality.

Diotima appears to refer to degrees of reality, not to the substantiality of reality. Accordingly, we follow Rowe precisely as he presents this good point: "But then it is an extraordinary difference of degree, as Diotima has emphasized—the difference, I take it, that philosophy makes, allowing us to perceive and to pursue the real good, the real object of our 'love' and desire. The whole ascent passage describes the process which might lead to that, away from our current—and mistaken—preoccupations). If this interpretation is right, all those 'great achievements' referred to in the earlier passage—those of Homer and Hesiod, Lycurgus and Solon—are written off as insubstantial; but so they must be, by implication, in any case, since Homer and the rest lack the vision of true beauty that enables the philosophical lover to procreate true virtue" (Rowe 1998, 201).

212a4: οὐκ εἴδωλα ἀρετῆς . . . ἅτε οὐκ εἰδώλου ἐφαπτομένῳ. Dover notes it has the sense of "images, with the connotation of 'poor imitations,' 'remote and partial copies'" (Dover 1980, 159). As much as this is the correct definition of εἴδωλα, we do not believe that the context here allows us to translate εἴδωλα into 'image,' even in compounds like 'poor image' or 'partial image,' which are correct translations, nonetheless. In the line directly above, 'to be seen' (ὁρατὸν) is predicated of τὸ καλόν, which is not as an elusive entity but, conversely, τὸ καλόν is presented by Diotima as what is most visible/recognisable to those who view it correctly. Unsurprisingly, the opposite of εἴδωλα presented by Plato in this very sentence is ἀληθῆ. The opposite of 'truth' is 'false.'

212a4-5: ἐφαπτομένῳ. Morphologically, from ἐπι+ἅπτομαι (to touch) = verb. act. ἐφάπτομαι. There is a phonetic transition from επια to εφα. As part. mp. dat. sg. ἐφαπτομένῳ means to take hold/grasp through vision and understanding. Additionally, the passive sense also has the sense of kindled. It is worth noting, as Nightingale, that "seeing, then, is not the passive reception of external

impressions or effluences but a participatory activity in which the human being interacts with its object in the medium of light. In fact, vision occurs when the subject reaches out and, in some sense, 'touches' the object. The perceiver's visual faculty does not, however, become identical with either the light or the object of vision. Rather, the kinship between the 'light-bearing eyes' and the external light allows for the perception of the quite different essence of the object . . . in its ongoing attempts to 'see' the Forms, the soul grasps its own nature and limitations by apprehending both its kinship to and difference from these timeless, changeless beings" (Nightingale 2004, 12). Cf. Dover (1980, 159): "to grasp the nature of the entity itself."

212a5: τέκοντι . . . θρεψαμένῳ. Pratt indicates that "participles with ἐκείνῳ in line 30, can be interpreted either as circumstantial participles or as indefinite substantive participles without significant difference in sense" (Pratt 2011, 225). According to Rowe, "for 'nurturing,' cf. 209c4, but especially 207a ff., on the care that animals take to rear their offspring; like them, the lover nurtures his offspring, and sees to it that they flourish—because after all, what he desires is the 'immortality' they are going to provide for him (a6-7). The virtue he gives birth to, if we may judge by the parallel case in 208e-209e (as we surely may, if that passage describes a 'shadowy imitation' of the procreation of virtue), will be both his beloved's (209c4-7 with 208e6-209a3; cf. 210c) and his own" (Rowe 1998, 201).

212a6: ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ φενέσθαι. Dover suggests this as "a relation of mutual φιλία with the gods, who do not love a sinner but do not reject a devotee" (Dover 1980, 159). In the ending lines of the *Hymn ter,* Foley notes that "the goddesses will send Ploutos to earth as a guest in the houses of those they love, to give them *aphenos* (489), presumably 'agricultural abundance.' Demeter and Persephone love initiates *prophroneds* (graciously, 487), and the poet asks here that they be *prophrones* (494) to himself. (The word *prophron* is used elsewhere at 140 and 226 of Demeter's proposal to serve the household of Keleos assiduously, and of the daughters' concern to take care of the disguised Demeter at 138)" (Foley 1993, 64).

212a7: ἀθανάτω. Pratt reads it as "pred. adjectives with γενέσθαι / εἴπέρ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων: parenthetical = if indeed for any human being at all" (Pratt 2011, 225).

212a7: ἐκείνῳ. Pratt notes that "by delaying the demonstrative that completes the impersonal expression and setting it apart with an adverbial καί, Plato makes the final words of Diotima's speech more emphatic and dramatic (= 'he too,' 'that man especially'). The question carries over from ἐνθυμῇ" (Pratt 2011, 225). The debate on what kind of immortality Diotima refers to is an ongoing one in scholarship: "It is a vexed question whether Diotima only allows the immortality of the soul, or only immortality through our biological and/or intellectual progeny" (Betegh 2022, 266). Rowe argues that "immortality, according to Diotima's theory, will stem from his offspring, whose true value will be recognized by the gods (and not by mere the politicians and poets); there is no immortality in the strict sense mortals, like those of for human beings—how could there be, when they are mortal? On the absence from *Symp.* of the notion of immortality of the soul, see 206e8-207a2n.; what the Mysteries

themselves offered was not immortality, but some altogether vaguer promised things for the initiate after death" (Rowe 1998, 201).

212b1-2: ταῦτα δή . . . ἔφη μὲν Διοτίμα, πέπεισμαι δ᾽ ἐγώ. As Rowe remarks, "so Socrates is committed to the truth of what Diotima told him (or rather, presumably, what hides beneath its metaphorical garb); he has evidently lived up to *his* notion of what an encomium should be (198b ff.)" (Rowe 1998, 202).

212b3: τούτου τοῦ κτέματος. Rowe argues that "this possession must be immortality, which is after all, according to Diotima, what we all desire, always; if it is Love who works within us to direct our actions, then it will be an understatement to say 'one couldn't easily get a better co-worker than Love" (Rowe 1998, 202).

212b8: δύναμιν. Power as *dynamis* (an intrinsic characteristic) and not possession as a predicate. This claim, thus, does not contradict Eros being a lack (Eros *qua* Eros being 'of something').

212b8: ἀνδρείαν. This is a harder statement to argue away. Rowe presents a possibility: "The idea of Love's courage here is surely meant to take us back to the arduousness (*ponoi*: 210e6) of the ascent" (Rowe 1998, 202).

212c1-3: εἰ μὲν βούλει, ὡς ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἔρωτα νόμισον εἰρῆσθαι, εἰ δέ, ὅτι καὶ ὅπῃ χαίρεις ὀνομάζων, τοῦτο ὀνόμαζε. Rowe notes a subtle detail in its ending, which fits well with Diotima's speech: "Socrates plays with a formula often used in prayers and hymns—'I address you, X, or Y, or whatever name it pleases you to go under'" (Rowe 1998, 202).

CONCLUSION

Our argument that ἐποπτικά are presented into a well-structured, controlled, and prepared way leading to divine epiphanies beyond the constraints of divine agency, adapted by Plato from Eleusinian ἐπόπτεια and presented as epiphanies, in an interplay of intermediary agency, at the summit of an educational, transformative, complex exercise of hermeneutics in the apprehension of truth and attainment of a lifelong reorienting and never-ending continuous state of viewing: the philosophical framing in the philosophical life, was grounded on a careful analysis of the "relationship between this process and the contexts in which it takes place," which is the philosophical text of the *Symposium*. Plato's ἐπόπτεια in Diotima's speech and the 'ways of viewing' in search for truth were reconducted in "a close approximation to the supposed form and meaning of the source" (Hardwick 2003, 5). The philosophical significance of ἐπόπτεια and how and when it is employed by the character Diotima demanded "us to look closely at the source text and context as well as at the receiving ones" (Hardwick 2003, 10), maintaining a 'critical distance' that illuminated our philosophical investigation of ἐποπτικά.

We delved deep into the text of the *Symposium* during Diotima's speech, under the assumption that "according to an influential reconstruction, the two festivals were linked as stages in a continuous progression, so that the Lesser

Mysteries was a preparatory stage for the Higher Mysteries. Accordingly, interpreters of the *Symposium* tried to make *philotimia* a stage on a path leading to *philosophia* (Riedweg 1987: 2–29; Ionescu 2007). Yet, as an alternative reconstruction shows, there is no need to assume this. The Lesser Mysteries were probably an independent festival, and taking part in them constituted an act of piety complete in itself, although of lower prestige than being initiated at Eleusis" (Betegh 2022, 265 no. 31). Accordingly, following Betegh, our analysis did not oppose 'Higher Mysteries' to 'Lesser Mysteries'. A close look at the Greek text provided us with clarifying insights on the continuity, juxtapositions, as well as imcompabitilies of the two.   There, we have found μυηθείης, passive optative from μυέω: "a causative verb from *my-*, meaning 'to make someone *my/-*' but necessary only in the light of the word *mystes*" (Dowden 1980, 414). Moreover, μυηθείης may be supplied by οἷός τ' ἂν εἴης (Pratt 2011, 218; Bury 1932, 124), directly linked to ὀρθῶς μείη.[167] From this 'pursuing correctly' we find five occurrences of ὀρθῶς, indicating a series of steps of 'proceeding correctly' (τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα 210a4-5), 'leading correctly' (ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται 210a6), 'contemplating correctly' (θεώμενος . . . ὀρθῶς 210e3), 'loving the youth correctly' (τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν 211b5-6), and, finally, 'pursuing by themselves or with another person correctly' (τὸ ὀρθῶς . . . ἰέναι . . . ἄγεσθαι 211b7-c1), all underlying the philosophical activity in the Highest Mysteries. Bury's (1932, 124) insights evidence that, right at the start of the Highest Mysteries, there might be a glaring presence of an implied potential optative (μυηθείης) attracting an equally potential optative (εἴης). Furthermore, these two are constructed with a transitive subjunctive (μετίη) in between, whose object is left unspoken by the Mantinian visitor. Rowe has noted the linguistic framework's intertwinement, as the passage "combines it [the Highest Mysteries]

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[167] ὀρθῶς has clear Orphic resonances (Bernabé 2011, 228.

with the one already in play. . . However, there is no real sense of strain in the combination" (Rowe 1998, 192). The syntax of Plato's writing may suggest the maintenance of μυηθείης's potentiality throughout. Diotima gives birth to thirteen verbs in the subjunctive mood (210a2, a4, a6, c1, c2, c3, c6, c7, d3, d5, d7, e3, e4), three verbs in the potential optative mood (210a1, a2, b5), all paired with sixteen conditional conjunctions (209e5, a2 x3, a4, a6, b2, b8 x2, c2, c3, c5, c7, d6, e3), as Plato gradually builds up the 'sudden' (ἐξαίφνης) and wonderful viewing of beauty itself through κατόψεται, a subjunctive verb, in an indefinite subordinate conditional clause rooted at a relative pronoun expressed as collective hypothetical. Interestingly, the entire block's structure is governed by an impersonal δεῖ γάρ from 210a4 (Bury 1932, 125; Dover 1980, 155; Rowe 1998, 193; Pratt 2011, 218). Right after this, 'suddenly' all conditionals, subjunctive, and optative leave the scene. The conditionals, subjunctive, and optative return in full force precisely as the first word after what Allen called "dithyrambs in the manner of a choric ode" (1991, 82): ὅταν 211b5, one of the nine conditional conjunctions (211b5, b7, c3, c8, d2, d3, d7, d8, 212a6), grounding four subjunctive verbs (211b6, c8, d3, 212a2), and three potential optatives (211b7, d8, e4), as well as conditioning two indicative future verbs (211d4, 212a3). Plato's usage of Greek syntax as a philosophical element in this piece of writing should be taken into account.

In our engagement with Diotima's speech, we discovered how the 'wanderings' of the pilgrims are transformed into 'wondering', inviting us to question "the link between philosophic theorizing and the traditional practice of *theoria* at religious festivals and sanctuaries" (Nightingale 2004, 36), generally treated by scholarship "as superficial metaphors" (2004, 73). Most importantly for us: "Diotima uses the technical language of the Eleusinian Mysteries, explicitly referring to *theoria* at this famous festival . . . Diotima identifies Socrates as a *mustes* . . . He is not, she claims, an *epoptes* and thus cannot be granted the vision

of the highest mysteries. When Diotima goes on to describe these "*epoptika*" in the passage that follows, she is clearly referring to the contemplation of the Forms" (Nightingale 2004, 84).

We have seen how the process presented by her emphasises individuals who are encouraged to engage deeply with the signs of beauty around them, gaining insight not only through personal observation but, above all, from their relationships with their partners or guides. The signs of beauty, when considered in this context, reveal their inherent ontological and logical unity. Through this ongoing and intimate process of looking, one's perspective broadens, enhancing the ability to discern value in these manifestations—progressing from surface appearances to deeper qualities, from gestures to the underlying discourses. Ultimately, when approached with the right focus, this dynamic of narrowing and expanding one's perspective leads to a transformative reorientation, guiding the pursuit of value itself in a more profound and meaningful way.

The key difference and originality in Plato's transposition, as we have also seen, lies in this epiphanic process not being governed by the arbitrary whims of the divine, nor does human desire govern the manifestations. They point to the appearances. Thus, Plato's model stands in contrast to the figure of Demeter in the *Hymn*, who appears by her own discretion, or even Pentheus in the *Bacchae*, who attempts to grasp the sacred through arrogance, thereby bypassing the necessary rituals. Instead, this engagement with beauty is the result of a mediated effort, due to the intermediary nature of Eros throughout one's education, beginning in youth. This is not a suppression of desire, but a thoughtful negotiation that aligns individual desires with the philosophical aim of seeking what is genuinely valuable. Diotima's model of 'correct seeking' encapsulates this transformative journey: it begins with recognising beauty in the things we desire.

It culminates in the pursuit of the highest value—the beautiful itself, in its purest form.

This showed us how the continuous practice of facing beauty at all their ontological levels with a responsive gaze—one that seeks understanding of what it perceives. Such a dynamic cannot be fully understood through the framework of ritual-centred visuality typical of ancient Greek religion. Plato's transposition, as we have approached through visuality, allowed us to realise how it is not confined to sacred spaces or prescribed ceremonies. It became clear to us that it was solely grounded on Plato's philosophical exercise—a sustained, lifelong practice through which one continuously begets to what is valuable as a response to the beautiful things that are correctly viewed. The recognition of divine presence, then, does not depend on ritual objects or sanctuaries, but emerges in the ongoing, intimate exchange between body and the soul and the beauty of which individuals gradually enhance their comprehension. In this way, by using visuality as a tool to interpret Plato's transpositions in the *Symposium,* we redefined how we understand divine intimacy as a matter of philosophical commitment rather than a ritual encounter.

In light of this, we have also seen how the transformative experience of becoming a μύστης in the Mysteries, as well as the privileged epiphany of the goddesses during the sacred rites, acquired a new philosophical locus in Plato's *Symposium*. The momentary and ritual-bound ceremony, after being transposed by Plato, brought to light the possibility of a new lifelong condition: the reoriented and continuous state that we have described as insightful viewing. This state, we suggest, can be understood as Plato's own formulation of a philosophically grounded way of viewing.

In other words, Diotima presented a mode of viewing that not only transforms the one who contemplates but also evidences a kinship with what is beheld and continually brought forth. In the presence of beauty, individuals are compelled into a process of existential transformation, giving birth to what is akin to the beautiful itself. To view, in this sense, is already to take part in this personal transformative way of life that Plato presents as philosophy.

Such originality in Plato's rendering cannot be reduced to the ritual-centred visuality of Greek religion. Plato's ways of viewing do not culminate in an epiphanic moment tied to sacred spaces, objects, or occasions. Instead, we have seen how it is directly tied to the continued philosophical practice: an ongoing engagement with beauty as the locus of divine intimacy and recognition. It is in this ceaseless generating and responding to beauty through a negotiation with Eros that philosophy takes the place of ritual, and viewing becomes the medium of enduring transformation.

Therefore, we conclude that such transposition provides the foundation for Plato's articulation of a gradual, procedural ascent: a reorientation of vision toward truth through the practice of "correct seeking," culminating in becoming kindred to what is sought. In contrast to the momentary τελεταί of the Mysteries, Diotima presented a path to be pursued throughout the entirety of one's life.

The "insightful viewing" once reserved for ritual initiates is now transformed into a lifelong education for individuals and their companions or guides. Its aim is the cultivation of the capacity to generate, nurture, and embody true human excellence—an excellence grounded in intimate contact with both "what is" and "what is not." The fruit of this intimacy with the divine is not ecstatic or fleeting but rather manifests through a sustained philosophical life. In this life, those who have been rightly educated and reoriented into a lasting state of view may, as it is possible for human beings, behold and manifest the divine as

possible for a human to bring to light: the acts of true excellence and the dialogue grounded in the truth.

Our translation and commentary took us to discuss mythology. As seen in 'Seeing the Gods' in Chapter I, mythology is fully integrated into Greek culture and can be misleadingly taken as a religious discourse *tout court*. The aetiological myth of Eros is in focus here and enables one to 'see for themself' in the ἐπόπτικα during the Highest Mysteries. This may be a matter of intermediary agency: without considering the birth of Eros during the 'celebration' of a divine birth by the gods, the resonances of Eleusinian ἐπόπτεια and the clear differences they have with philosophical ἐπόπτικα might be severely understated. Namely, if Eros were a god, then divine agency would determine the epiphanies, entailing the dissolution of philosophy in Diotima's speech: the priestess would be acting on behalf of the divine to display it by ritual-centred visuality.

We also grasped the extent of human agency in determining epiphanies: Eros' intermediary agency allows one to desire to 'see with understanding' the divine truth in an active philosophical interaction of *correctly* pursuing the Highest Mysteries. Moreover, one's intermediary agency allows one to pursue a lasting state of reorientation (τετραμμένος 210d4),[168] the 'turn' to the sea of beauty to *theorise* (θεωρῶν) and give birth (τίκτῃ) to discourses and thoughts in ungrudging philosophy (ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ). This 'turn' marks the state of philosophical growth that determines the apprehension of divine epiphanies of truth.

Obviously, a doctoral thesis has a limited scope. There is still much to be written on the subject. In the future, we would very much like to finish our investigation by more details from Plato's engagement with the Mysteries

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[168] Note the perfect tense.

regarding the apprehension of truth after the attainment of a reorienting and lifelong, continuous philosophical life. This is not an event nor an end, but a transformation that enables a new way of seeing the world through 'philosophical framing', the insightful state in which epiphanies, as the apprehension of truth grounded in intermediary agency, may become a reality.

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