

## THE GOLD *LAMELLAE* FROM THESSALY

The two gold *lamellae* from Petróporos first edited, with an excellent commentary, by K. Tsantsanoglou and G. M. Parássoglou<sup>1</sup> «contain the same text» (Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou, *art. cit.*, p. 10). I shall quote here the first 5 lines, which are reasonably well preserved (for any details, I refer the readers to the *editio princeps* by Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou):

- 1 νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τῶδε.  
εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνῃ σ' ὅτι Βάκχιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.  
ταῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες.  
αἶψα εἰς γάλα ἔθορες.  
5 κριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσες.

These lines contained two problems, as the editors underlined, namely: a) the metrical structure of line 1 seemed incomprehensible, and b) the meaning of lines 3-5 defied any interpretation. In my pre-

<sup>1</sup> K. Tsantsanoglou - G. M. Parássoglou, «Two Gold Lamellae from Thessaly, *Ἑλληνικά* 38, 1987, p. 3 ff.

ceding<sup>2</sup> paper I think I solved the first of these two problems, by showing that line 1 is an impeccable dactylic heptameter. I should like to add now that dactylic heptameters are attested in this kind of poetry: in Diels-Kranz, *Fragm. Vorsokr.*, vol. I, p. 16, *Orph. B 17 a*, line 3 there occurs one such heptameter

τίς δ' ἔσι; πῶ δ' ἔσι; Γᾶς δ' υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ ἀστερόεντος  
and another heptameter is found in Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, vol. I, *Orph. B 19*, line 1

ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν, χθονίων καθαρὰ, χθονίων βασιλεία.

Needless to say, these two heptameters were disfigured by arbitrary and unwarranted conjectures. As regards the former of these two heptameters, Diels-Kranz complain that the line has one dactyl too many («überschüssig»), i.e. πῶ δ' ἔσι, but admit that the *lectio tradita* is untouchable, because the words πῶ δ' ἔσι are a necessary reference to the «Abstammung»; as regards the latter of the heptameters, Kern (*Orph. Fragm.*, p. 107) leaves the text untouched, and blames the «sculptor» for his alleged «*magna incuria*», whilst Diels-Kranz print [χθονίων] καθαρὰ. In reality, the genitive χθονίων before καθαρὰ is perfectly sound: it is a partitive genitive governed by the adjective καθαρὰ, the sense being «pure (καθαρὰ) amongst the inhabitants of the nether world (χθονίων)». This type of genitive is attested in Homer and in epic poetry (cf. *Scr. Min. Alex.* I, p. 40 f.). In *Orph. B 19*, line 1, we must place a comma after καθαρῶν, exactly as in *Orph. B 18*, 1:

ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν, καθαρὰ χθονίων βασιλεία.

The sense of *Orph. B 19*, line 1 is, in sum: «I come from those who are pure (ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν), o you who are pure amongst the inhabitants of the nether world (χθονίων καθαρὰ), who are the queen of the inhabitants of the nether world (χθονίων βασιλεία)».

<sup>2</sup> «Zu zwei Goldlamellen aus Thessalien» here, pp. 81-83. As I note in the paper in question, if there were a hiatus in line 1 at τρισόλβιε ἄματι this would not constitute a problem, because a hiatus occurs in line 4 of the same *lamella a*. However, the hiatus between τρισόλβιε and ἄματι marks the division between the two κῶλα of the heptameter. I should like now to add that hiatus is, in any case, frequent in the Orphic *lamellae* (e.g. Diels-Kranz, *Orph. B 17 a*, 1 δίψαι αὔρος, 2 αἰένῳ ἐπί).

I should like now to solve the second of the problems just mentioned, i.e. to clarify the meaning of lines 3-5. The formulae ταῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες (line 3 of the *lamellae* from Thessaly) and κριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσες (line 5 of the said *lamellae*) are, as Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou note (*art. cit.*, p. 13) variations of the formula ἔριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον, which we find in Diels-Kranz, *Fragm. Vorsokr.*, vol. I, *Orph.* 18, lines 9-11:

ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἀπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι.  
ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔση ἀντὶ βροτοῖο.  
ἔριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον

and of the formula ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες, which occurs in Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, vol. I, *Orph.* 20, line 4:

θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες.

The variations offered by the *lamellae* from Thessaly «complicate rather than solve things», according to Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou: I hope to show that, on the contrary, by relating the variations present in the *lamellae* from Thessaly to those attested in the poems edited in Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, we shall throw light on the entire problem. Three points must be emphasized. First of all, the words ἔριφος, ταῦρος and κριὸς cannot be referred to any god: the context shows, in all cases, that they designate the deceased. In Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, *Orph.* 20, the dead man is addressed in the second person throughout the poem, and in line 4 the two verbs in the second person (ἐγένου, ἔπετες) demonstrate beyond doubt that ἔριφος refers to him. In Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, *Orph.*, 18, the deceased speaks in the first person in lines 1-9; an interlocutor addresses line 10 to the deceased, who then, speaking in the first person, utters line 11. In the *lamellae* from Thessaly, the dead woman is always addressed in the second person (ἔθανες, ἐγένου, ἔθορες, ἔθορες, ἔπεσες). Secondly: when only the formulae ἔριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον, ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες were known, it was assumed that the γάλα mentioned in them was milk, to which the soul of the dead person rushed, «like a new-born kid» (Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou, *art. cit.*, p. 13). Now that the formulae involving bulls and rams have come to light (in the two *lamellae* from Thessaly), the said assumption no longer holds water: «bulls and rams

do not rush to milk» (Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou, *ibid.*), whence it follows that the γάλα mentioned in all the variations of the formula must be something other than real milk. Now, in Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, *Orph.* 18, lines 9-11 and *Orph.* 20, line 4, the formulae ἔριφος ἔς γάλ' ἔπετον and ἔριφος ἔς γάλα ἔπετες refer to the deceased who has become a god (θεὸς δ' ἔσῃ ἀντὶ βροτοῦ, θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου). All those who adhered to the Orphic religion became gods (or goddesses) upon their death: cf. Diels-Kranz, *Orph.* 19 *a*, line 4 νόμω... δῖα γεῶσα. Gods dwell in heaven: and in fact, in Diels-Kranz, *Orph.* 18, 7 we are told that the deceased who has become a god now lives in the στέφανος, i.e. «die himmlische Sphäre» (cf. Diels-Kranz, *ad loc.*)<sup>3</sup>. At this point we must remember that the στέφανος or στεφάνη was the Milky Way (material in Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 224: τὸν γαλαξίαν κύκλον, *coronae simile... lucis orbem qui cingit caelum...*), also called Γάλα (material in Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, *Wortindex*, s.v. γάλα and γαλαξίας). In the light of all the above, we can conclude that the formulae ἔριφος ἔς γάλ' ἔπετον, ἔριφος ἔς γάλα ἔπετες, ταῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες and κριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσες designate the deceased who, having become a god, has gone to dwell in heaven. Thirdly: why ἔριφος should designate, in the formulae under discussion, the deceased, i.e. «der Myste» (Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 16 and 17) was already explained by the critics: since Dionysos himself was an ἔριφος, as Hesychius tells us, «der Myste», having become a god, is envisaged as an ἔριφος. The same holds true of ταῦρος, which designates the deceased in line 3 of the *lamellae* from Thessaly: since, as is well known, Dionysos could have the form of a ταῦρος (cf. e.g. Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou, *art. cit.*, p. 13, with footnote 18), the deceased men-

<sup>3</sup> There is of course no need to alter ἀπέβαν into ἐπέβαν in line 9 of Diels-Kranz, *Orph.* 18, as suggested by Diels-Kranz *ad loc.* The deceased ascended to heaven, as indicated in line 7 (ἰμεριῶ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι), but then he went to visit Persephone in the nether world (line 8: Δεσποίνας δ' ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας), on which occasion he obviously had to leave heaven (ἰμεριῶ δ' ἀπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι). Ascent to heaven by the deceased was speedy (αἴψα, line 4 of the *lamellae* from Thessaly, = ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι Diels-Kranz, *Orph.* 18, 7); the deceased was, however, expected to visit Persephone in the nether world (Diels-Kranz, *Orph.* 18, 8 = Δεσποίνας δ' ὑπὸ κόλπον κ.τ.λ. = line 2 of the *lamellae* from Thessaly: εἰπεῖν Φερσεφόνα κ.τ.λ.).

tioned in line 3 of the said *lamellae* is, accordingly, envisaged as a bull. The «κρίός -formula» present in the *lamellae* from Thessaly perplexes Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou (*art. cit.*, p. 13): in reality, their perplexity is not justified because the Orphic God (Kern, *Orph. Fragm.*, fragm. 81, and apparatus to *fragm.* 79; cf. in particular Herwerden *Herm.* 1871, p. 139) could assume the form of a bull and of a ram (κριοῦ καὶ ταύρου): consequently, the female devotee mentioned in the *lamellae* from Thessaly, having become a god, is envisaged as a ταῦρος and a κρίός.

The Orphic God who could assume the form of a bull and a ram (Kern, *Orph. Fragm.* 81) was called Ἡρικεπαῖος:

θῆλυς καὶ γενέτωρ κρατερὸς θεὸς Ἡρικεπαῖος.

Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou are perfectly right in stressing the syncretistic fusion of «Bacchic» and «Orphic» elements (*art. cit.*, p. 9-10): such a fusion is confirmed by Kern, *Orph. Fragm.* 170: ὁ Διόνυσος καὶ Φάνης καὶ Ἡρικεπαῖος συνεχῶς ὀνομάζεται.

We may conclude. The *lamellae* from Thessaly, far from complicating things, as suggested by Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou, enable us to solve all the problems which Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou accurately focused.

That is to say: the words ἔριφος, ταῦρος and κρίός designate the Orphic devotee who has died and has become a divinity; the word γάλα, in the two Thessalian *lamellae*, signifies «sky», «Milky Way», and confirms that the interpretation of στέφανος = «Milky Way», «himmlische Sphäre» in Diels-Kranz, *Orph.* 18, 7, is correct.

Whether the deceased is called ἔριφος, ταῦρος and κρίός because he (or she) is metaphorically envisaged in the form of such three animals «wegen der Beziehung zu Dionysos» (Diels-Kranz, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 17, quoting Delatte and Vollgraff), or whether we must think of a real, non-metaphorical transformation of the deceased into the said three animals (for this «theriomorphic» hypothesis cf. lastly Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou, *art. cit.*, p. 13), is of course a matter of debate<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> In my already quoted article *Zu zwei Goldlamellen aus Thessalien* I have indicated certain phonetic peculiarities in the text incised by the etcher which incline me to

Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou (*art. cit.*, p. 13) note appositely: «the interchange of ἔπετες and ἔθορες leaves no doubt but that the animals ‘rush to’ and not ‘fall into’ the milk; that much is clear now». However, they add: «though what they will do after they have reached it is not as obvious». In reality, now we have understood that γάλα means, in all the variations of the formula, not real milk, but the «Milky Way», i.e. «die himmlische Sphäre», all is perspicuous. It is interesting to note that in Eur. *Hel.* 1013 ff., in an allusion to the «Orphic doctrine» (cf. Paley, in his commentary on Eur. *Hel.* 1013) we read ὁ νοῦς τῶν καθθανόντων ζῆ μὲν οὖ, γνώμην δ’ἔχει ἀθάνατον, εἰς ἀθάνατον αἰθέρ’ ἔ μ π ε σ ὡ ν.

The verb ἐπίπτω governs εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν in *Com. Adesp.* 9 D, as noted in LSJ, s.v. ἐπίπτω, 8.

On ancient conceptions concerning the sky cf. Chryssafis in *Mus. Phil. Lond.* III, 1978, p. 45 ff.

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date the *lamellae* in question to the third century b.C. One more peculiarity which points to the third century b.C. is the spelling χριός (= κριός) in *lamella a*, line 5: if I read the facsimile on p. 7 of Tsantsanoglou-Parássoglou, *art. cit.* correctly, the etcher wrote χριός εἰς γάλα κ.τ.λ. For confusion between κ and χ cf. Mayser-Schmoll, *Gramm. Pap.*, p. 144, and Mayser, *Gramm. Pap.* I, 1, p. 171.