Dionysos in Egypt? Epaphian Dionysos in the *Orphic Hymns*

Radcliffe G. Edmonds III

*Bryn Mawr College*, redmonds@brynmawr.edu

---

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: [http://repository.brynmawr.edu/classics_pubs](http://repository.brynmawr.edu/classics_pubs)

Part of the Classics Commons, and the Religion Commons

---

**Custom Citation**


This paper is posted at Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College. [http://repository.brynmawr.edu/classics_pubs/101](http://repository.brynmawr.edu/classics_pubs/101)

For more information, please contact repository@brynmawr.edu.
Dionysos in Egypt? Epaphian Dionysos in the Orphic Hymns

1 Aim

In the collection of hexametrical hymns from the Imperial period that style themselves hymns of Orpheus, two of the hymns to Dionysos invoke the god by a peculiar epithet, Epaphian Dionysos.

To Lysios – Lenaios

Hear, O blessed son of Zeus and of two mothers, Bacchos of the vintage, unforgettable seed, many-named and redeeming demon, holy offspring of the gods born in secrecy, reveling Bacchos, plump giver of the many joys of fruits which grow well. Mighty and many-shaped god, from the earth you burst forth to reach the wine-press and there become a remedy for man’s pain, O sacred blossom! A sorrow-hating joy to mortals, O lovely-haired Epaphian, you are a redeemer and a reveler whose thyrsus drives to frenzy and who is kind-hearted to all, gods and mortals, who see his light. I call upon you now to come, a sweet bringer of fruit.1

While some commentators have in despair postulated textual corruption, others have suggested the epithet must refer to Epaphos, son of Zeus and Io, but have been at a loss to explain why Dionysos should receive such a title. I argue that the epithet identifies Dionysos with a divine figure in an Egyptian context who is

identified in various sources as Osiris, Apis, and Epaphos. This Dionysiac Epaphos suggests some fascinating processes of syncretism in the interrelation of Greek and Egyptian culture, and the nature of these processes of identification of deities, as they appear in ancient thinkers such as Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Plutarch, sheds light on the very nature of Greek religion. The connections between the divine figures appear to be made, not on the level of the theological meaning of the god or his role in the divine hierarchy of the cosmos, but rather at the level of the vivid imagery of the ritual experience in the celebrations of the god. Dionysos is called Epaphian, then, not because the Greeks thought that he, like Osiris, was a chthonic lord of the underworld, but rather because they found the imagery in the myths and rituals associated with Apis and Osiris reminiscent of the rituals of Dionysos. This valuation, by the ancient Greek thinkers, of the ritual experience over the theological significance points to the ‘imagistic,’ instead of ‘doctrinal,’ nature of Greek religion and should provide modern scholars with some parameters for handling the evidence for the cults of Dionysos in ancient Greece.

2 Mythic Parallels

How could Dionysos be equated with Epaphos? Diodorus Siculus, in his list of the many figures of Dionysos, lists the son of Zeus and Io as the second, a ruler in Egypt who established the Dionysiac rituals there. Epaphos provides the Greek ancestral connection to Egypt, the ancestor of the Danaids who return to Argos as well as the ancestor of Agenor, father of Kadmos who founded Thebes. Theban Kadmos is, of course, the father of Semele, mother of Dionysos. Plutarch men-
tions that one ancient scholar, Mnaseas, argued that Dionysos was the same as Osiris, Serapis, Apis, and Epaphos, and, centuries earlier, Herodotus firmly identified the Egyptian Apis with Epaphos. Nevertheless, none of these points of contact between them really explains the identification of Dionysos as Epaphian.

What could it mean in the Hymns?

One possibility that commentators have noted is the parallels between the myths told about them. While Epaphos appears most often as an entry in a genealogical list, there is one myth associated with him that bears a strong resemblance to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos. Both Dionysos and Epaphos are set upon by a band of older men bent on destroying the child of Zeus while he is still young. A similar story appears about the dismemberment of Osiris, and the similarities between these three sets of myth may have contributed to the assimilation of the figures.

While there is no solid evidence for the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos before the Hellenistic period, the tale appears in traces in poets such as Euphorion and references in authors such as Diodorus Siculus. Although it does

says are the fifth generation.’ Sch. E. Ph. 678: ἀπόγονος Ἐπάφου Κάδμος, ἐπεὶ λαγήνορός ἐστιν οὖς τοῦ Ἡλίου τοῦ Λιβύης τῆς Ἐπάφου τοῦ Ἰοῦ. ‘Καδμος is the descendant of Epaphos, since Agenor is the son of Belus, son of Libya, daughter of Epaphos, son of Io.’

4 Phl. Is. et Os. 365F: ἔω δὲ Μνασέαν τῷ Ἐπάφῳ προστίθητα τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ τὸν Ὅσιριν καὶ τὸν Σάραπιν, ἐὼ καὶ Ἀντικλείδην λέγοντα τὴν Ἰον Προμηθέως οὐσαν θυγατέρα Διονύσῳ συνοικεῖν· αἱ γὰρ εἰρημέναι πεί τὰς ἑορτὰς καὶ τὰς θυσίας ὀικετυπητές ἐναργεστέραν τῶν μαρτύρων τὴν πίστιν ἐχοῦσι. ‘I leave out of account Mnaseas’s annexation of Dionysos, Osiris, and Serapis to Epaphus, as well as Anticleides’ statement that Isis was the daughter of Prometheus and was wedded to Dionysos. The fact is that the peculiarities already mentioned regarding the festival and sacrifices carry a conviction more manifest than any testimony of authorities.’ Hdt. 3.28.2: ὁ δὲ Ἀπίς οὕτος ὁ Ἐπάφος γίνεται μῦσος ἐκ βοῶς, ἢτις οὐκέτι οὖ ἑτε ἐγίνετο ἐς γαστέρα ἄλλον βάλλεσθαι γόνον. Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ λέγουσι σέλας ἐπὶ τὴν βοῦν ἐκ τοῦ οὐράνου κατίσχειν, καὶ μὲν ἐκ τοῦτοῦ τίκτειν τῶν ἄπιν. ‘This Apis, or Epaphus, is a calf born of a cow that can never conceive again. By what the Egyptians say, the cow is made pregnant by a light from heaven, and thereafter gives birth to Apis.’

5 Ricciardelli 2000, 426–427 ad loc.: ‘Vì è dunque più di un punto di contatto fra Dioniso ed Epafo, il che comunque non spiega perché Dioniso sia detto Ἐπάφυς.’

6 Phld. Piet. 44 = fr. 36 Kern = OF 59 I: ἐπάφου τοῦτον τῆν ἄρα μηροῦν, ἑτέραν δὲ τῆς ἐκ τοῦ μηροῦν, τρίτην δὲ τῆς ἐπάφους ἀνασπάσθηκεν ὑπὸ τῶν Τίτανῶν Ῥέας τά μέλη συνθεῖ(σης) ἀνεβιάζοντας (τῆς) Μομφισίας δ᾽ Ἐορφορίῳς ὄμολογεῖ (τοῦ) τοις, (οὐ) δ᾽ Ὄρφικοι καὶ παντά(πασα) ἐνδιατείρουσιν. ‘The first of these was the birth from the mother, the second the one from the thigh, and the third birth was when having been dismembered by the Titans, he came back to life after Rhea gathered together his limbs. And in his Mopsopoiai Euphorion is in agreement with these accounts, and the Orphics also absolutely go on about it.’ Euphorion provides the earliest sure testimony to the tale of Dionysos’ dismemberment by the Titans, but the date and significance of this story have been much debated. Linforth 1941, 307–364, provides a survey of the evidence,
not appear in collections such as Ovid or the mythographical compilation of [ps.] Apollodorus, it nevertheless, to judge from the brief and casual way in which the story is mentioned in other sources, seems to have been widely known. The myth was most popular in the Platonic tradition as an allegory of the One and the Many, and many references survive in the Neoplatonists, but the first detailed account that survives comes from the polemic of Clement of Alexandria.

The mysteries of Dionysus are perfectly inhuman. While he was still a child, the Kouretes danced around with clashing arms, and the Titans crept up by stealth and deceived him with childish toys. Then these Titans dismembered Dionysos while he was still an infant, ... The Titans ... tore him limb from limb, set a cauldron on a tripod and threw into it the limbs of Dionysos. First they boiled them down and, then fixing them on spits, ‘held them over Hephaestus (the fire).’ But later Zeus appeared; ... He assails the Titans with his thunderbolt and consigns the limbs of Dionysos to his son Apollo for burial. And Apollo, for he did not disobey Zeus, bearing the dismembered corpse to Parnassus, deposited it there.7

Characteristically, Epaphos gets less coverage than Dionysos. Hyginus, who also relates the dismemberment of Dionysos, tells that Juno arranged for the Titans to have Epaphos killed in a ‘hunting accident’ and then to rebel against Zeus.8 Such a scenario suggests an Epaphos rather older than the infant Dionysos distracted by the shiny toys in Clement, but the evil step-mother trying to get rid of the child of her husband and another woman remains a constant, as does the identification

while Detienne 1979 studies the broader set of stories of the death of Dionysos. More recently, Bernabé 1998, 2002a has argued that the myth is central to Orphic doctrine, contra Edmonds 1999, 2008, in which I argue that different components of the tale are combined at different times with shifting meanings, because no nucleus of Orphic doctrines ever existed.

7 Clem. Al. Prot. 2.17.2–18.2 = OF 588 I.
8 Hyg. Fab. 150: postquam Iuno vidit Epapho ex pellice nato tantam regni potestatem esse, curat in venatu, ut Epaphus necetur. Titanisque hortatur, Iovem ut regno pellant et Saturno restituant. ‘After Juno saw that Epaphus, born of a concubine, ruled such a great kingdom, she saw to it that he should be killed while hunting, and encouraged the Titans to drive Jove from the kingdom and restore it to Saturn.’
of the Titans as the villains. Apollodorus introduces a surprising variant, claiming that Hera got, not the Titans, but the Curetes to do her dirty work. The Curetes caused Epaphos to vanish, and so his mother Io wandered about seeking him.

At last she came to Egypt, where she recovered her original form and gave birth to a son Epaphus beside the river Nile. Him Hera besought the Curetes to make away with [Epaphus], and make away with him they did. When Zeus learned of it, he slew the Curetes; but Io set out in search of the child. She roamed all over Syria, because there it was revealed to her that the wife of the king of Byblus was nursing her son; and having found Epaphus she came to Egypt and was married to Telegonus, who then reigned over the Egyptians.9

The story of Osiris, as it appears in Greek sources such as Diodorus and Plutarch, also involves the same pattern of a band of enemies conspiring to destroy and dismember, and the same wandering to find. In Diodorus and Plutarch, however, Osiris is a ruling king who is murdered, not by his evil step-mother, but by his jealous brother, Set Typhon. In Diodorus’ historicizing version, Set divides up the pieces of the body between his 26 co-conspirators, while Plutarch makes the dismemberment a separate episode, after Osiris is killed by being nailed into a coffin, dumped in the water, sought, and found by Isis.10 The coffin with the dead Osiris floats off to Byblos, where it is found and incorporated into a pillar. Isis, when she learns of its location, retrieves the body from the pillar and begins to mourn it.11

In any case, the detail that seems important for Apollodorus to relate is that Io wandered in search of Epaphos, just as Isis wandered in search of Osiris in Plutarch, and that Io, like Isis, found what she sought in Byblos. Plutarch provides a few more details of Isis’ wanderings, including that she was informed by a child that Osiris had gone toward Byblos and that, when she reached Byblos, she became the nurse to the royal family and attempted to immortalize one of the princes, a process disrupted by the child’s mother. Plutarch’s tale of Isis’ wanderings, as many have noted, bears more than a little resemblance to the wanderings

9 Apollod. 2.1.3.
10 Cp. D. S. 1.21; Plu. Is. et Os. 358A, cp. 356AB.
11 Plu. Is. et Os. 357A.
of Demeter near Eleusis, where she is informed of Hades’ abduction of Kore by a shepherd boy (Triptolemos or Eubouleus or some other name) and where she acts as nurse and attempts to immortalize the prince, an attempt again foiled by an over-anxious mother.12 In tales of the dismembered Dionysos, Dionysos’ mother Demeter or Demeter’s mother, Rhea, sometimes goes in search of the scattered pieces of the god, bringing together the pieces.13

While the similarities are notable, the resemblances seem, as several commentators have pointed out, to be rather superficial, with quite crucial differences between the accounts.14 Io is the mother of Epaphos and Demeter (or Rhea) is the mother (or grandmother) of Dionysos, whereas Isis is the wife of Osiris – a very different relation, as the episode with the phallus of Osiris indicates! Not only is the figure who seeks different, but what is sought is different – the chunks of flesh torn from the infant Dionysos, the missing youth of Epaphos, or the coffin body of Osiris. Dionysos is dismembered; Epaphos made to vanish; Osiris imprisoned and chopped up after death. Such differences would seem crucial to any interpretation of the religious significance of the story – did the god die or not?

Indeed, in the individual interpretations of particular stories that survive in our sources, such details often carry important weight in the exegesis. Dionysos was divided into seven parts, Proclus argues, because seven corresponds to the soul, which divides things up and examines them analytically, whereas the preservation of Dionysos’ heart by Athena represents the unity of the intellect.15

---

12 Cp. h.Cer., Apollod. 1.5.1.
13 D. S. 3.62.6 = fr. 301 Kern = OF 59 III, claims that the pieces of Dionysos were collected by his mother, Demeter, whom Diodorus also understands as Ge, the Earth. Diodorus lists the rebirth of Dionysos after his members are collected by Demeter as the third birth of Dionysos and claims that this version agrees with the Orphica (3.62.8 = OF 58). Bernabé 2002b, 75–80, tries to sort out the complicated testimonies in this passage. Cornutus ND 30 = OF 59 IV. has Rhea in the role of collector instead of Demeter. In the Platonic tradition, Apollo, etymologized as a-pollon, not many, is responsible for restoring the unity to Dionysos, who has been made multiple by the forces of division.
14 Cp. Otto 1965, 195: ‘The myth of the death of Osiris differs from that of Dionysos in far to many important points ... These are not incidental characteristics.’
15 Cp. Procl. in Prm. 808 = fr. 210 Kern = OF 311 III: διὸ καὶ οἱ θεολόγοι τὸν μὲν νοῦν ἐν τοῖς σπαραγμοῖς τοῖς Διονυσιακοῖς ἀμέριστον προνοὶ τῆς Αθηνᾶς σώζεσθαι λέγουσιν, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μερίζεσθαι πρῶτως, καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ γοῦν τομὴ ταύτης ἐστὶ πρώτης: οἴκεον σὺν αὐτῇ καὶ τὸ εἴδος τῆς διαιρετικῆς καὶ τὸ θεωρεῖν μεταβατικός. οὐ δὲ θυσιαστὸν ἐστὶν οὐκετί, τῶν θείων εἰδῶν ὁμοιός καὶ ἤγισμενός ἐν τῷ διημερίσασθαι τῷ προφήτηκότων, τὴν ἡμετέραν ψυχήν διηρημένως αὐτοῦς ἐπιβάλλειν, καὶ νῦν μὲν τὰ πρώτα καὶ κοινότατα θεωρεῖν εἰδή, νῦν δὲ τὰ μέσα ἐχοντα τάξιν, αὐθεὶς δὲ τὰ μερικώτατα καὶ οὐν ἄτομώτατα τῶν εἰδῶν. ‘This is why the theologians say that at the dismemberment of Dionysos his intellect was preserved undivided through the foresight of Athena and that his soul was the first to be divided, and certainly the division into seven is proper
Plutarch tells us that Isis’ generation of Harpocrates with the phallus of the dead Osiris, which produced a premature and lamed child, signifies the process of correcting premature and imperfect thinking about the gods.16 Nevertheless, the figures in these stories are identified with one another, not for what the stories mean, but because of the common pattern of action within the myth – the schema of threat/destruction followed by search and lamentation. The images of the assaulted god, the searching goddess, and the mourning of the lost loved one are what prompt the initial connection; the explanations are secondary, examples of what Whitehouse would call ‘spontaneous exegetical reflection’ by Plutarch, or Diodorus, or Herodotus.17 Thus, in a particular telling of the story, by any ancient author, the details create a specific myth with a particular meaning, but the general pattern, the mythic schema, does not have a fixed meaning that can be transferred from one instantiation to another. To belabor the point, the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos does not have any particular meaning that transcends the uses to which it is put.

3 Ritual Parallels

We may detect a similar phenomenon in the way the ancient sources make comparisons with the rituals. Here too, modern scholars have complained that the parallels Plutarch, Herodotus, and others use are superficial, unable to support any serious identification of the Greek and Egyptian figures. Nevertheless, our sources repeatedly use these apparently superficial ritual parallels, and, rather than dismissing the arguments as superficial, we should consider why they might give such arguments, rather than the arguments from theological meaning we might expect –

primarily to Soul. It is therefore appropriate that Soul should have the function of division and of seeing things discursively. It is no wonder, then, that whereas the divine Forms exist primordially together and unified in the demiurigic intellect, our soul attacks them separately, at one time contemplating the first and most universal Forms, at another time those that have a middle station, and again the most particular and, so to speak, the most atomic.’

16 Plu. Is. et Os. 358DE, 378C: τὴν δ’ Ἰσίαν ἐξ Ὀσίριδος μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν συγγενομένου τεκειν ἕλιτόμην καὶ ἀσθενῆ τοῖς κάτωθεν γυίοις τὸν Ἀρποκράτην. … τὸν δ’ Ἀρποκράτην οὕτω θεόν ἀτελέω καὶ νήπιον οὕτω χεδρόπων τινα νομιστέον, ἀλλὰ τοῦ περὶ θεῶν ἐν ἀνθρώπως λόγῳ νεαροῦ καὶ ἀτελοῦς καὶ ἄδιαρθρώτου προστάτην καὶ σωφρονιστήν. ‘Osiris consorted with Isis after his death, and she became the mother of Harpocrates, untimely born and weak in his lower limbs. … And Harpocrates is not to be regarded as an imperfect and an infant god, nor some deity or other that protects legumes, but as the representative and corrector of unseasoned, imperfect, and inarticulate reasoning about the gods among mankind.’

for example, Osiris and Dionysos are the lords of the dead, representing the rebirth of the human soul or its survival after physical death.\textsuperscript{18} Plutarch considers the ritual parallels his most convincing argument when addressing Clea, an experienced priestess in both the rites of Dionysos and Osiris, who moreover is clearly well-versed in Platonic theology.\textsuperscript{19} If there were ever an occasion for a discussion at a theological and doctrinal level, bypassing superficialities in favor of substantial theological arguments, this would be it. Yet Plutarch, although he does not avoid fairly complex and abstract discussions of theological principles, nonetheless grounds his argument in parallels of ritual experience.

Plutarch starts by comparing the burial rites for the Apis bull, which he identifies as Osiris,\textsuperscript{20} with a Dionysiac procession.

\textit{ἀ δὲ ἐμφανός δρῶν θάπτοντες τὸν ἄπιν ὁι ἰερεῖς, ὅταν παρακομιῶσαι ἐπὶ σχεδίας τὸ σώμα, βακχείας οὐδὲν ἀποδείκτη γὰρ νεβρίδας περικαθάπτονται καὶ θύρσους φοροῦσι καὶ βοᾶς χρώνται καὶ κινήσειν ὕστεροι κάτοχοι τοῖς περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον ὀργισμοῖς.}

The public ceremonies which the priests perform in the burial of the Apis, when they convey his body on an improvised bier, do not in any way come short of a Bacchic procession; for they fasten skins of fawns about themselves, and carry Bacchic wands and indulge in shoutings and movements exactly as do those who are under the spell of the Dionysiac ecstasies.\textsuperscript{21}

Dionysos must be the same as Osiris, since the actions of the fawn-skin-clad, thyrsos-wielding celebrants are the same in the Egyptian festival and the Greek Dionysiac one; they both engage in ecstatic cries and movements while celebrating.\textsuperscript{22} The Apis bull form of Osiris who is the object of this worship finds its

\textsuperscript{18} Cp. Otto 1965, 196: ‘The lord of dying and of the dead himself goes through the horror of destruction and, when it is time, must be summoned forth into the light from the abyss of eternal night.’ Otto, like Kerényi 1976, sees Dionysos as a god of life-force, but emphasizes also the imagery of death. Other scholars have frequently attributed the identification of the two gods because of an association with the fertility of the crops. Burton 1972, 97: ‘However the identification of the Dionysos and Osiris must have been assisted by the fact that both were pioneers of civilization and that both were associated with corn.’ Cp. How/Wells 1949–1950 on Hdt. 2.42. For fertility in general, cp. Lloyd 1976, 220–222.


\textsuperscript{20} Specifically, as the bodily image of the soul of Osiris – \textit{Is. et Os.} 362D: ‘Most of the priests say that Osiris and Apis are conjoined into one, thus explaining to us and informing us that we must regard Apis as the bodily image of the soul of Osiris.’ Cp. 359B, 368C.

\textsuperscript{21} Grieffths (1970, 431–432) puzzles over the comparison. He notes that Egyptian evidence does suggest a mourning procession for Apis with an elaborate procession (citing Speigelberg \textit{ZÄS} 56, 1920, \textit{non vidi}), including fawnskins, shouts and cries, but worries over the difference in affect.
parallel in the tauriform statues of Dionysos in Greece, as well as in the ritual
invocations of Dionysos as a bull. The women of Elis cry, ‘Axie taure,’ while the
Argives summon the Bull-born Dionysos from the depths of the Lernaean Lake.

Herodotus identifies this Apis bull, not with Dionysos, but specifically with
Epaphos, a fact of which Plutarch was certainly not ignorant. For Herodotus,
then, all the rituals celebrated for Apis, both the joyous celebrations of his
appearance and the lamentations of his death, must have seemed to fit with
Epaphos, although he never explains this particular identification, merely
describing Apis in terms of his ritual celebrations. He does, however, connect
Dionysos with Osiris in a number of places, again largely through the parallels of
ritual. Herodotus notes the special sacrifice of a pig to the Moon and Dionysos, as
he calls Isis and Osiris.

The rest of the festival of Dionysos is observed by the Egyptians much as it is by the Greeks,
except for the dances; but in place of the phallus, they have invented the use of puppets two
feet high moved by strings, the male member nodding and nearly as big as the rest of the
body, which are carried about the villages by women; a flute-player goes ahead, the women
follow behind singing of Dionysos. This phallic ritual for Osiris, along with the procession of women singing to the
aulos, convinces Herodotus that the Greeks got the worship of Dionysos from
Egypt, and indeed he starts his whole theory of Greek religion derived from
Egypt from his description of this ritual. Herodotus credits Melampus with the

‘The Apis-burial was doubtless full of feeling, but it was sad. A “cry of lamentation” is enjoined;
when the bier is drawn by the priests “all the people raise a great cry of lamentation.” A very
different atmosphere, one would think, from that of the Dionysiac revel.’ (432).

23 Hdt. 2.38, 2.153, 3.27–28. Plutarch’s familiarity with Herodotus is attested by his entire treatise
on the historical method of Herodotus, as well as many other citations. Curiously, Plutarch does
not mention Herodotus in his treatise on Isis and Osiris.

24 Linforth 1910 cites a number of earlier scholars who tried to make the identification on the
basis of the names, Epaphos with Egyptian He-Papi, but notes that the Greeks transliterated the
Egyptian name as Apis. Linforth postulates that the identification of Io with Isis prompted the
invention of a son for Io to correspond with the child of Isis.

25 Hdt. 2.48.2. Griffiths notes ad loc, 220: ‘It is strange that H. should regard the absence of χοροί
as the major difference between Eg. and Gk. rites in honour of Dionysos.’
borrowing, specifically citing the phallic processions.\textsuperscript{26} Diodorus Siculus, on the other hand, credits Orpheus with the borrowing, devising an elaborate scheme by which Orpheus adapted the rites of Osiris to please Kadmos in Thebes.\textsuperscript{27} The phallic rites are once again the key link in the identification for the Greek thinker.

Consequently the Greeks too, inasmuch as they received from Egypt the celebrations of the orgies and the festivals connected with Dionysos, honor this member in both the mysteries and the initiatory rites and sacrifices of this god, giving it the name ‘phallus.’\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Hdt. 2.49.1–2: δι’ ὅν δοκεῖ μοι Μελάμπους ὁ Ἀμύθενων τῆς θυσίας ταύτης οὐκ εἶναι ἀδαίης ἀλλ’ ἐμπειρός, Ἕλλην γὰρ δὴ Μελάμπους ἐστὶ ὁ ἐξηγησάμενος τοῦ Διονύσου τὸ τε ὄνομα καὶ τὴν θυσίαν καὶ τὴν τοιμίαν τοῦ φαλλοῦ· ἀτρεκέως μὲν οὐ πάντα συλλαβῶν τὸν λόγον ἔφηνε, ἀλλ’ οἱ ἐπιγενόμενοι τούτῳ συμφασίαν μεζόνως ἐξήψηναν· τὸν δὲ ὑπὸ φαλλόν τὸν τῷ Διονύσῳ πεισόμενον Μελάμπους ἔστιν ὁ κατηγιασάμενος, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου μαθόντες ποιεῖσθαι τὰ ποιεῖσθαι Ἕλληνες.\textsuperscript{2} Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ οἱ Μελάμποδα γενόμενοι ἄνδρα σοφὸν μαντικὴν τε ἐσωτήρια καὶ πυθόμενον ἀπὸ Αἰγύπτου ἄλλα τε πολλὰ ἐπηγίσασθαι Ἕλλην καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν Διονύσιον, ὅλη παρὰ τοῦ παραλλάξοντα. οὐ γὰρ δὴ συμπεσεῖν γε φήσω τὰ τε ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ποιεύμενα τῷ θεῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τούτῳ Ἕλληνι ὀμότροπα γὰρ ἂν ἦν τούτῳ Ἕλλην καὶ οὐ νεωτί ἐπηγίσει. ’Now then, it seems to me that Melampus son of Amytheon was not ignorant of but was familiar with this sacrifice. For Melampus was the one who taught the Greeks the name of Dionysos and the way of sacrificing to him and the phallic procession; he did not exactly unveil the subject taking all its details into consideration, for the teachers who came after him made a fuller revelation; but it was from him that the Greeks learned to bear the phallus along in honor of Dionysos, and they got their present practice from his teaching.\2 I say, then, that Melampus acquired the prophetic art, being a discerning man, and that, besides many other things which he learned from Egypt, he also taught the Greeks things concerning Dionysos, altering few of them; for I will not say that what is done in Egypt in connection with the god and what is done among the Greeks originated independently: for they would then be of an Hellenic character and not recently introduced.’

\textsuperscript{27} D. S. 1.23.2: Ὅρφεα γὰρ εἰς Αἰγύπτου παραβαλόντα καὶ μετασχόντα τῆς τελετῆς καὶ τῶν Διονυσιακῶν μυστηρίων μεταλαβέν, τοῖς δὲ Καθετισίως πλοῦν ὄνομα καὶ τιμῶμεν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν μεταβίβασαν τὸ θεὸν τὴν γένεσιν ἑκάστους ἀριθμοῦ· τοῦ δὲ ὀχλους τὰ μὲν διὰ τὴν ἀδινοίας, τὰ δὲ διὰ τὸ ἔμπλησθαι τοῦ θεοῦ Ἕλλην νομίζεσθαι, προσδέξασθαι προσφυγῆς τῶν τελετῶν καὶ τῶν μυστηρίων. For they say that Orpheus, upon visiting Egypt and participating in the initiation and mysteries of Dionysos, adopted them and as a favor to the descendants of Cadmus, since he was kindly disposed to them and received honors at their hands, transferred the birth of the god to Thebes; and the common people, partly out of ignorance and partly out of their desire to have the god thought to be a Greek, eagerly accepted his initiatory rites and mysteries.

\textsuperscript{28} D. S. 1.22.7.
Diodorus’ Euhemeristic theory of how the Egyptian god became worshipped in Greece naturally differs from Herodotus’ idea of the diffusion of divine knowledge from Egypt to Greece, just as they both differ from the more complex theories of Plutarch, but they all ground their comparisons in the similarities of ritual actions. Plutarch speaks of a specific ritual of Pamylia for Osiris that resembles the familiar phallic processions of Greece, and he cites this rite as part of his list of ritual proofs for Clea that Dionysos and Osiris are one and the same.29

Also in Plutarch’s list is the rousing of Dionysos Liknites, the god in the liknon or winnowing basket. Servius tells us that the liknon in which the infant Dionysos was placed was identified with the liknon in which Isis placed the remains of Osiris after his dismemberment.30 The liknon was used to carry first-fruits offerings, and, in some rituals, a phallus. Again, what seems significant to the ancient thinkers making the connections is the use of the liknon, not what exactly the liknon bears or what its contents signify.

The pieces of Osiris, Plutarch tells us, were buried in a number of tombs around Egypt, and various cities thus claim to be the place where the god is

29 Plu. Is. et Os. 355E: τὴν τῶν Παμυλίων ἔστη τὴν αὐτῆς τελείωθαι Φαλληφορίας ἐσκεύη. ‘It is in his [Pamyles, who took in Osiris] honour that the festival of Pamylia is celebrated, a festival which resembles the phallic processions.’ Cp. 365B. On this Hellenized form of an Egyptian epithet for Osiris, see Griffiths 1970, 297–298 and Lloyd 1976, 223.

30 Serv. Georg. 1.165: id est cribrum areale. mystica autem Iacchi ideo ait quod Liberi Patris sacra ad purgationem animae pertinent: et sic homines eius Mysteriis purgabantur, sicut vannis frumenta purgantur. Hinc est quod dicitur Osiridis membra a Typhone dilaniata Isis cribro superposisse: nam idem est Liber Pater in cuius Mysteriis vannus est: quia ut diximus animas purgat. unde et Liber ab eo quod liberet dictus, quem Orpheus a gigantibus dicit esse disceptum. nonnulli Liberum Patrem apud Graecos Λικνιτην dicerunt; vannus autem apud eos ἄκινον nuncupatur; ubi deinde positus esse dicitur postquam est utero matris editus. alii mysticam sic accipiunt ut vannum vas vinineum latum dican, in quod ipsi propum capacitatatem congrere rustici primitias frugum soleant et Libero et Liberae sacrum facere Inde mystica. ‘The mystic fan of Iacchus, that is the sieve (cribrum) of the threshing-floor. He calls it the mystic fan of Iacchus, because the rites of Father Liber had reference to the purification of the soul and men were purified through his mysteries as grain is purified by fans. It is because of this that Isis is said to have placed the limbs of Osiris, when they had been torn to pieces by Typhon, on a sieve, for Father Liber is the same person, he in whose mysteries the fan plays a part, because as we said he purifies souls. Whence he is also called Liber, because he liberates, and it is he who, Orpheus said, was torn asunder by the Giants. Some add that Father Liber was called by the Greeks Liknites. Moreover the fan is called by them liknon, in which he is said to have been placed directly after he was born from his mother’s womb. Others explain its being called “mystic” by saying that the fan is a large wicker vessel in which peasants, because it is of large size, are wont to heap their first-fruits and consecrate it to Liber and Libera. Hence it is called “mystic”.’
buried, as he notes, Delphi claims to be the burial place of Dionysos.31 At Memphis in Egypt, Plutarch explains, the Apis bull is regarded as the image of the soul of Osiris and the name of the city itself is interpreted as ‘the tomb of Osiris.’32 In addition to the joyous processions of the god’s arrival, then, there are also rituals associated with his death. Herodotus recounts the lamentations and beating of breasts that take place in the festival at Bousiris, although he feels that it would be profane to discuss the figure who is being lamented, most likely because he feels that this ritual is similar enough to one in Greece where it is inappropriate to talk about certain aspects of a ritual in a public context.33 Herodotus has a similar objection to discussing Isis rites which remind him of Demeter’s Thesmophoria, and there is little reason to doubt that the lamentation rites for Osiris seem to him like Greek rites for Dionysos.34 Diodorus says bluntly that ‘The rite of Osiris

31 Plu. Is. et Os. 358A, 365A: ἕκ τοῦτο ᾅ καὶ πολλοὺς τάφους Ὀσίριδος ἐν Ἀιγύπτῳ λέγεσθαι διὰ τὸ προστυγχάνουσαν ἐκάστῳ μέρει ταφᾶς ποιεῖν. οἱ δ’ οὐ φασίν, ἀλλ’ εἰδὼλα ποιομένην διδόναι καὶ ἐκάστην πόλιν ώς τὸ σῶμα διδύσαν ὅπως παρὰ πλείουν ἔχῃ τιμᾶς. ... Ἀιγύπτιοι τε γὰρ Ὀσίριδος πολλαχοῦ θήκας, ὠσπερ εἰρήται, δεικνύουσι, καὶ Δελφοὶ τὰ τοῦ Διονύσου λείψανα παρ’ αὐτοῖς παρὰ τὸ χρηστήριον ἀποκείσθαι νομίζουσι. ‘The traditional result of Osiris’s disembem-ent is that there are many so-called tombs of Osiris in Egypt; for Isis held a funeral for each part when she had found it. Others deny this and assert that she caused effigies of him to be made and these she distributed among the several cities, pretending that she was giving them his body, in order that he might receive divine honours in a greater number of cities. ... The Egyptians, as has already been stated, point out tombs of Osiris in many places, and the people of Delphi believe that the remains of Dionysos rest with them close beside the oracle.’ Cp. Philoch. FGrHist 328 F 7b ap. Io. Mal. Chron. 2.44.21.

32 Plu. Is. et Os. 359B: ἐν δὲ Μέμφι τρέφεσθαι τὸν Ἀπιν εἰδώλων οὖν τῆς ἑκείνου ψυχῆς, ὅπως καὶ τὸ σῶμα κείσθαι· καὶ τὴν μὲν πόλιν οἱ μὲν ὄρμον ἄγαθὼν ἐρμηνεύουσιν, οἱ δ’ ἱδίως τάφον Ὀσίριδος. ‘In Memphis, however, they say, the Apis is kept, being the image of the soul of Osiris, whose body also lies there. The name of this city some interpret as “the haven of the good” and others as meaning properly the “tomb of Osiris.”’

33 Hdt. 2.61.1: ταύτα μὲν δὴ ταύτη ποιεῖται, ἐν δὲ Βουσίρι πόλι ὡς ἀνάγουσι τῇ Ἰσι τὴν ὀρθήν, εἰρήται προτερών μοι τύπτονται μὲν γάρ δὴ μετὰ τὴν θυσίαν πάντες καὶ πᾶσαι, μυρίας κάρτα πολλαὶ ἀνθρώπων· τὸν δὲ τύπτονται, οὗ μοι διαίνει ἐστι τέφειν. ‘This is what they do there; I have already described how they keep the feast of Isis at Busiris. There, after the sacrifice, all the men and women lament, in countless numbers; but it is not pious for me to say who it is for whom they lament.’

34 Hdt. 2.61.1. See Lloyd ad loc. for a reconstruction of the Egyptian ritual from the Egyptian sources. Lloyd points out that the Egyptians have a class of rites, that are kept out of the view of the public and performed only by priests. This category does not correspond with the Greek mystery or with rites, like the Thesmophoria that Herodotus mentions in 2.171, which were deemed profane to speak of, even if they were celebrated with a fairly large group of people (e.g., the women of Athens).
is the same as that of Dionysos and that of Isis very similar to that of Demeter, the names alone have been interchanged.\footnote{D. S. 1.96.5: τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ὀσιρίδος τελετὴν τῇ Διονύσου τὴν αὐτὴν ἐναι, τὴν δὲ τῆς Ἰσιδος τῇ τῆς Δήμητρος ὄμοιοτὴν ὑπάρχειν, τῶν ὀνομάσων μόνων ἐνηλλαγμένων.}

Plutarch compares the Greek rituals of the Titanika and the Nyktelia to the things related about the dismemberment of Osiris.\footnote{Pl. Is. et Os. 364F: ὑμολογεῖ δὲ καὶ τὰ Τιτανικὰ καὶ Νυκτέλια τοῖς λεγομένοις Ὀσιρίδος διασπασμοῖς καὶ ταῖς ἀναβιώσει καὶ παλιγγενεσίας. ‘Furthermore, the Titanika and the Nyktelia agree with the accounts of the dismemberment of Osiris and his revivification and regenesis.’} Of the Titanika, we know nothing more than the name, which does suggest a version of the dismemberment tale involving the Titans, but Pausanias mentions a temple of Dionysos Nykelios in Megara, and various sources attest to rituals for Dionysos Nykelios, so the Nyktelia seems to be a \textit{polis} cult, performed with a certain degree of secrecy, like the Thesmophoria or the rites of the Gerarai at the Athenian Anthesteria.\footnote{Paus. 1.40.6: Ἐστὶ μὲν Διονύσου ναὸς Νυκτελίου, πεποίηται δὲ Ἀφροδίτῃς Ἐπιστροφίας ἵερόν καὶ Νυκτός καλούμενον ἔστι μαντεῖον καὶ Δίως Κόνιος ναὸς οὐκ ἔχον ὄροφον. ‘There is a temple of Dionysos Nykelios, a sanctuary built to Aphrodite Epistrophea, an oracle called that of Night and a temple of Zeus Conius without a roof.’ For Dionysos Nykelios, Plu. Quaest. Rom. et Gr. 291A, mentions that Dionysiac ivy is used in the nocturnal rites of the Agronia and Nyktelia, Ἀγριωνίως δὲ καὶ Νυκτελίως, ὡς τὰ πολλὰ διὰ σκότους δράται, πάρεστιν. Nyktelios is also one of the names given to the dismembered Dionysos in Plu. De E ap. Delph. 388E. The nocturnal rites are designated mysteries in \textit{EM} s.v. Νυκτέλιος: ὁ Διόνυσος, ὃς νύκτωρ τὰ μυστήρια ἐπιτελεῖται. The term ‘mysteries’ here, however, need not imply a private cult rather than a polis festival.} Such rituals might indeed be the sort of Dionysos ritual Herodotus had in mind, not a private or sectarian mystery, but a community ritual whose sanctity must be respected.

The lamentations in the rites of Isis strike another ancient commentator as resembling the rites of Demeter, which involve a search for her lost child. Lactantius tells us that the priests of Isis lament and mourn the lost Osiris and seek him as Isis did in the myth.\footnote{Lact. Div. Inst. Epit. 23: Isidis sacra nihil aliud ostendunt, nisi quemadmodum filium parvum, qui dicitur Osiris, perdidert et invenerit. nam primo sacerdotes ac ministri, derassis omnibus membris, tunisque pectoribus, plangunt, dolent, quaerunt, affectum matris imitantes; postmodum puer per Cynocephalum invenitur. sic luctuosa sacra laetitia terminantur. his etiam Cereris simile mysterium est, in quo, facibus accensis, per noctem Proserpina inquiritur, et ea inventa, ritus omnis gratulatione ac taedarum jactatione finitur. ‘The sacred rites of Isis show nothing else than the manner in which she lost and found her little son, who is called Osiris. For first her priests and attendants, having shaved all their limbs, and beating their breasts, howl, lament, and search, imitating the manner in which his mother was affected; afterwards the boy is found by Cynocephalus. Thus the mournful rites are ended with gladness. The mystery of Ceres also resembles these, in which torches are lighted, and Proserpine is sought for through the night; and their lamentations strike another ancient commentator as resembling the rites of Demeter, which involve a search for her lost child.’} This search resembles the search for Dionysos in various Greek rituals such as the Agronia, and Sourvinou-Inwood has identified a ritual...
schema involving such a search that plays out in different ways in different places, with different figures as the object of the search.39 This kind of ritual search amid lamentation evokes another set of Greek identifications with Egyptian rituals. According to Plutarch, the rites of Isis include lamentations for another figure, Maneros, a child who dies while Isis is mourning Osiris. Accounts vary as to how this happened: he disturbed Isis while mourning and died when she looked on him in anger or perhaps he just fell off the boat while they were travelling together; his younger brother in any case had perished from the dreadful wail that Isis gave when disturbed in her process of trying to immortalize their youngest brother in her capacity as nursemaid to the royal family at Byblos. Again, what is striking about these tales is that why and how the boy died (and even which brother is lamented) – is unimportant; what is important is that he is lamented in the ritual.40 Herodotus identifies Maneros as the Egyptian Linos, the youth lamented in the Linos song, a harvest song mentioned as early as Homer.41 Although some stories have Linos killed because of his musical talents, in Argos Linos is lamented as the young prince who was torn apart in the midst of a

when she has been found, the whole rite is finished with congratulations and the throwing about of torches.’

39 Plu. Quaest. Conv. 716F–717A: οὐ φαύλως οὖν καὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν ἐν τοῖς ἀγριωνισίοις τὸν Διώνυσον αἱ γυναικεῖς ὡς ἀποδεδρακότα ξητοῦσιν, ἐτὰ παῦονται καὶ λέγουσιν ὅτι πρὸς τὰς Μοῦσας καταπέφευγεν καὶ κέκρυπται παρ’ ἐκείναις. ‘It is not an accident that in the Agronia, as it is celebrated here, the women search for Dionysos as though he had run away, then desist and say that he has taken refuge with the Muses and is hidden among them.’ Cp. Paus. 3.22.2 for Dionysos at Larysion, Str. 12.4.3 for Hylas, and Paus. 1.43.2 for Demeter seeking Kore at Megara. Sourvinou-Inwood 2005, 346–351.

40 Plu. Is. et Os. 357E. Maneros, Plutarch adds, may not even be the name of a person, but simply an expression, wishing for happiness.

41 Hdt. 2.79.1–3: τοῖς ἄλλα τε ἐπάξια ἄστι νόμιμα, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἁεισίμα ἐν ἂστι, Λίνος, ὅσπερ ἐν τε Φοινίκη ἀοιδόμος ἄστι καὶ ἐν Κύπρῳ καὶ ἄλλη, κατὰ μέντοι ἐθνα ὄνομα ἔχει, συμφέρεται δὲ ὧντός εἶναι τὸν οἱ Ἑλληνες Λίνον ὀνομαζόντες ἁεῖδος, ὡστε πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἄλλα ἀποθωμάζειν μὲ τῶν περὶ Λίνιτον ἠμώντων, ἐν δὲ δὴ καὶ τὸν Λίνον ὑπάκουσαν ἐλεφθόν τὸ ὄνομα: φαίνονται δὲ αἰεὶ κοτε τοῦτον ἁεῖδοντες, ἄστι δὲ Ἀἴγυπτισσί ὁ Λίνος καλεόμενος Μανερός, ἐφασαν δὲ μὲ Λιγύπτιοι τοῦ πρῶτου βασιλεύσαντος Λίγυπτου παίδα μουνογενέα γενέαθαι, ἀποθανόντα δὲ αὐτόν ἀνωφρον θρήνοι τούτους ὑπὸ Λιγύπτιος τιμήθηναι, καὶ ἁοιδὴν τε την πρώτην καὶ μούνην σφία γενέαθαι. ‘Among other notable customs of theirs is this, that they have one song, the Linus-song, which is sung in Phoenicia and Cyprus and elsewhere; each nation has a name of its own for this, but it happens to be the same song that the Greeks sing, and call Linus; so that of many things in Egypt that amaze me, one is: where did the Egyptians get Linus? Plainly they have always sung this song; but in Egyptian Linus is called Maneros. The Egyptians told me that Maneros was the only son of their first king, who died prematurely, and this dirge was sung by the Egyptians in his honor; and this, they said, was their earliest and their only chant.’
hunting expedition. Herodotus remarks in amazement that everyone around the Mediterranean (Cyprus, Phoenicia and even elsewhere) seems to have a song like this, and Pausanias makes a similar comment, although he thinks that the lament for Linos spread around the world, even to the Egyptians, who call him Maneros. Later sources include the Maneros and Linos songs in a list of work songs sung at the harvest, along with the Aletis song for Erigone and epilenaia songs sung at the vintage. The scholiast to Clement, in defining ληνοίζοντας, refers to the rustic song sung at the wine trough, the ληνός, having to do with the dismemberment of Dionysos, again presumably a lament. The ancient Greek religious thinkers, then, identified Maneros and Linos and perhaps even Dionysos Lenaios, on the basis of the ritual lamentation performed for them.

Again, the insignificance, for the ancient classifiers, of the crucial details of the story is striking to the modern scholar. It doesn’t really matter who Linos or Maneros was, whether he was torn apart by his grandfather’s hounds or fell overboard from Isis’ funeral barge. Was Dionysos torn apart by Titans as an infant or Epaphos killed while hunting with the Curetes? Is it the harvest of the grain or the trampling of the grapes? For the ancient thinkers who make the identifications, these questions seem not to be of primary concern. The experience of the mourning ritual, the women lamenting and beating their breasts, the haunting wail of the song, that is what prompts them to identify the figures. So too, the exuberant processions, flaunting phalluses, and ecstatic cries that are found in rituals to Osiris or Apis in Egypt cause Herodotus, Diodorus, and Plutarch to identify them with Dionysos, since Dionysos too has rituals with such experiences in various places in Greece.

42 Argive women and maidens in an annual festival lamented the death of Linos, who was torn apart as a youth by his maternal grandfather’s hunting dogs (Call. fr. 26–31 Pf.).
43 Paus. 9.29.7: ἀποθανόντος δὲ τοῦ Λίνου τὸ ἔπ’ αὐτῷ πένθος διήλθεν ἄρα καὶ ἄχρι τῆς βαρβάρου πάσης, ὡς καὶ Ἀγνυτίως θαμα γενέσθαι Λίνον· καλοῦσι δὲ τὸ θαμα Αἰγύπτων τῇ ἐπιχωρίῳ φωνῇ Μανέρων. ‘On the death of Linos, mourning for him spread, it seems, to all the foreign world, so that even among the Egyptians there came to be a Linos song, in the Egyptian language called Maneros.’
44 Ath. 14.618c–620a and Poll. 4.52–53 list terms for many kinds of working songs, such as the harvest οὐλός or ίουλος and those named after Βώριμος, Μανέρως, Λητέρις and Ἕριγόνη (Ἀλήτες); winnowing songs (πτιστικόν or πτισμός); vintage songs (ἐπιλήνια).
45 Sch. Clem. Al. Prot. 1.2.2, p. 297.4–8. Note that the Aletis song was defined as a lament for the death of Erigone, who wandered in search of her murdered father, but also as Persephone, cp. EM s.v. Άλήτες (62.9).
4 Conclusion

We could dismiss these identifications as ‘superficial,’ stemming either from a blatant disregard of the ‘real’ meaning for the sake of the argument or from a desire to hide the true doctrines on which the identifications are ‘really’ being made. But the recurrence of this return to ritual to make the identifications should prompt us to reconsider the very way in which the ancient Greeks thought about their religion – their gods and their relations with them. We should take Plutarch seriously when he claims, after reviewing the opinions of many learned religious thinkers, that ‘the fact is that the peculiarities already mentioned regarding the festival and sacrifices carry a conviction more manifest than any testimony of authorities’ – the ritual similarities are the most important part of the argument.\(^{46}\)

Such a weighting of the experience of the ritual over the religious doctrine signified by the festival seems counterintuitive to modern scholars of religion, but recent anthropological studies of religion by Whitehouse and others have shown that many cultures have a mode of religious transmission that works quite differently from the doctrinal mode to which we are accustomed, an ‘imagistic’ mode that relies on what Burkert has called ‘the extraordinary experience.’\(^{47}\) Rather than regular forms of ceremony that include recitation of texts that reinforce the memory of particular doctrines and ideas, in imagistic religious contexts:

virtually no attempt was made to communicate religious ideas as bodies of doctrine. Revelations were codified in iconic imagery, transmitted primarily through the choreography of collective ritual performances. Religious representations were structured as sets of revelatory images connected by loose (and somewhat fluid) thematic associations, rather than as cohering strings of logically connected dogma.\(^{48}\)

Such a set of images connected by loose associations describes quite well the nature of the evidence from the Greek-Egyptian context. The significance of the religious experience depends not on understanding the meaning of the myth or ritual but upon the vivid images of the myth (the goddess wailing for her lost loved one) or the extraordinary experience of the rite itself. That is to say, it is the similarity of the experience of the phallic procession or the ritual laments and search for the lost one that truly does matter most to the ancient Greek interpreter and thus truly is the most solid ground upon which he can explain a comparison of Greek and Egyptian rituals to a Greek audience.

\(^{46}\) Plu. Is. et Os. 365F: αἱ γὰρ εἰρημέναι περὶ τὰς ἐορτὰς καὶ τὰς θυσίας οἰκειότητες ἐναργεστέραν τῶν μαρτύρων τὴν πίστιν ἔχουσι.

\(^{47}\) Burkert 1987, 89–114.

\(^{48}\) Whitehouse 2000, 14.
The connection of Dionysos to Apis and Osiris implied by the epithet *Epaphie* in the Hymn therefore does not depend on the identification of some chthonic or underworldly aspect of Dionysos. Indeed, it is striking, when examining the ancient testimonies that connect the deities, to note the absence of connections made between Osiris as ruler of the dead and Dionysos, the first connection made by most modern scholars. The ancient thinkers who identified the gods did so primarily on the basis of the kinds of ritual experiences associated with the two figures, not on the basis of a classification like chthonic or Olympian. Diodorus identifies Epaphos as the Egyptian Dionysos, not as the ruler of the dead or the one who conquers death, but as the one responsible for the rites in Egypt.49 In Euripides’ *Phoinissai*, the Theban chorus invokes Epaphos as the child of Io, who is the προμάτωρ of all the Thebans. Epaphos is thus an ancestor of Dionysos, an Egyptian child of Zeus who must be invoked by a barbarian (Egyptian) cry, hailed with foreign prayers and rites.50

By the time of Plutarch and the Orphic Hymn, the identification has become traditional; Plutarch can dismiss Mnaseas’ presumably learned and lengthy identification of Dionysos, Osiris, and Serapis to Epaphos with a brief mention, while the Orphic Hymn tosses in the epithet, *Epaphie*, among a long string of other identifications for the god. To invoke Dionysos as Epaphian, then, is to evoke the kind of rituals for Dionysos which Greek thinkers for centuries had connected with rites of Osiris and Apis in Egypt, joyous processions celebrating the arrival of the god and mournful searches and lamentations for the absent god. Such rituals may indeed have been the same as those evoked by the epithet Lenaie, the aspect of Dionysos to whom the hymn is addressed. My investigation of the epithet, *Epaphie*, by means of the comparisons made by Greek thinkers such as Herodotus, Diodorus, and Plutarch, suggests that modern scholars need to take such ritual connections more seriously and abandon the attempts to find doctrinal

49 D. S. 3.74.1: τὸν δὲ δεύτερόν φασιν ἐξ Ἰοῦς τῆς Ἰνάχου Δίῳ γενόμενον βασιλεῦσαι μὲν τῆς 
Αἰγύπτου, καταδείξατε δὲ τὰς τελετὰς, ‘The second Dionysos, as men say, who was born to Zeus by 
Io, the daughter of Inachus, became king of Egypt and appointed the initiatory rites of that land.’

50 E. Ph. 676–689: καὶ ά, τὸν προμάτορος / Ἰοὺς ποτ’ ἐκγονον / Ἐπαφον, ὁ Δίος γένεθλον, / [ἐκάλες] ἐκάλεσα βαρβάρῳ βοῦ, / ίω, βαρβάρους λιταῖς: ἤβαζε βαθὺς τάνδε γὰντι – σοὶ νῦν ἐκγονοι 
κτίσαν] καὶ διώνυμοι θεαὶ.] Περαφάρασα καὶ φίλα / Δαμάτῃ θεά, / πάντων ἀνάσσα, πάντων δὲ Γα 
τροφῶς, / κτήσαντο – πέπισε πυρφόρους / θεάς, ἄμμυνεν τάδε γὰρ / πάντα δ’ εὐπέτη θεοῖς. ‘And you, 
Epaphus, born from Io, our first mother, and child of Zeus: you I summon in foreign cry, oh! in 
foreign prayers: come, come to this land; your descendants settled here; and the goddesses of 
twofold name, Persephone and the kindly goddess Demeter the queen of all, Earth the nurse of all, 
won it for themselves; send to the help of this land those torch-bearing goddesses; for to gods all 
things are easy.’
significance in the myths of Dionysos, especially the dismembered Dionysos whose rites, Herodotus and Diodorus tells us, were brought from Egypt.

Bibliography

Kern 1922, O.: Orphicorum Fragmenta, Berlin 1922.
Redefining Dionysos

Edited by
Alberto Bernabé, Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui,
Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal,
Raquel Martín Hernández
MythosEikonPoiesis

Herausgegeben von
Anton Bierl

Wissenschaftlicher Beirat:
Gregory Nagy, Richard Martin

Band 5