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GREEK NECROMANCY: REALITY OR MYTH?

Summary: The article investigates the extent to which Greek necromancy fits into the wider eschatological, cultic and historical context of an epoch demarcated on the one hand by Homer and on the other by the Classical period. The oldest purported necromantic ritual, with the help of which Odysseus descended into the underworld, is a literary construct inspired especially by the heroic tomb-cults. Scenes depicting funereal necromancy, written by dramatists of the Classical period, were also drawn from this source. Ability, behavior and appearance of heroes were additionally ascribed to the so-called restless spirits and revenants and later came to include all the dead. The main cause of this was a change in eschatological ideas and especially heroization, which in the Roman period spread nominally to all the dead. Reports about necromancy include a high percentage of mythical and literarily-dramatized elements that simply do not correspond with contemporary ideas about the soul, the dead, the underworld and chthonic deities. It therefore appears almost certain that, at least to the end of the period described, necromancy was not carried out in reality but remained only the literary surmise of the possibility indicated by Homer.

Key words: necromancy, the dead, tomb-cult, heroes, eschatological ideas

Ancient necromancy was comprised of a wide range of activities. Although it is generally believed that it concerned an act of divination with the help of a ritualistic summoning of the dead (which is already implied by the name of the technique), people, utilizing different methods and differing motives, not only turned a good deal to the dead, but also to certain powers of the underworld. Sometimes it was possible to entice the dead into a discourse without using one of the necromantic ceremonies (e.g., in incubation); other times, however, a necromantic rite or a discourse with the deceased (whose aim, however, was not divinatory) was needed for the placation of the dead (or their repulsion). Not all attempts at establishing contact with the dead required communication with them, as some banishing or exorcising ceremonies have shown. And it was not always necessary to utilize specialists such as necromancers

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or *psychagogoi* to this end, since the dead could bring themselves to speak without any kind of stimulus from these persons, whether it be on the basis of their own decision or by an inducement of underworld deities.

Necromancy also represents a theme that is, in many regards, highly contentious: this is because there is a large volume of problematic data and details that are often not consistent with each other and, especially, because reports about it are conducted in various regimes of speech and that much of these regimes mixes literature with reality. Because a precise differentiation of reality from fiction is, in individual cases, very difficult, in this article I have attempted to examine more fully certain spheres of the eschatological ideas of antiquity and to verify to what extent they are compatible with the “theoretical” make-up and practical exercise of necromancy. First, I concisely review the main forms of addressing the dead with regard to their facticity or fictionality, after which I focus on the invocation ritual with the aim of finding some kind of an actual archetype for it. Following this, I will investigate the extent to which the selected eschatological conceptions (e.g., of the soul, of the underworld, of underworld punishments and rewards, etc.) are in accordance or at variance with necromancy. In the conclusion, I will try to determine the assumptions by which necromancy was ideologically constituted and attempt to assess to what extent it might have actually been carried out in practice. Because of the extent and nature of the materials, I have restricted my investigation to the period stretching from Homer to the beginning of Hellenism; for the same reasons, I present the results of my deliberations rather summarily with references and some small examples instead of an exhaustive analysis of the details.

I. CONTACT WITH THE DEAD

We can divide Greco-Roman attempts to make contact with the dead into seven primary types of rituals, which can be differentiated by the way in which they were carried out and also, on occasion, by their objective. These are: 1) a descent into the underworld (*katabasis*); 2) the resuscitation of the dead; 3) the enticement of a “spirit” into a skull (craniomancy); 4) attracting a “spirit” into the body of a diviner or medium (engastrimancy); 5) inducing the dead into the dream of a client or some intermediary (*incubatio*); 6) the transferring of spirits or souls (*psychagogia*); 7) the summoning of the soul of a dead from the underworld (invocation).

Of course, this “classification” only provides us with a very rough orientation: authors in antiquity neither knew nor used it, and so they variously blended, combined and named the techniques delineated above on the basis of their preferences. In addition, it is possible to classify some necromantic scenes in multiple ways: Odysseus’ encounter with the dead Teiresias was thought of as being both a type of descent into the underworld but also a necromantic invocation of a divinatory soul (see part II).

The heptad of techniques presented above differ in many regards, but what will primarily concern us here is their facticity and feasibility. Because an exhaustive analysis of all the techniques would require a disproportionate amount of space, I will

restrict myself to the more unambiguous examples, even at the cost that some techniques will remain, so to speak, on the sidelines. For example, craniomancy – the magical enticing of the spirit of the dead into the skull of his or her corpse¹ – has its mythical form in (the so-called) cephalomancy,² in which prophecy is provided by a head that has been cut-off or violently torn-off, usually from a mythical being. Although some specialists consider cephalomancy and craniomancy to be the same technique,³ they are certainly not identical: spontaneous divining in Greece and elsewhere by the heads of the dead belongs quite unambiguously in the realm of myth and folklore,⁴ while skulls, on the other hand, figure in many manuals of magic from the Roman era. Certainly, the feasibility of craniomancy is very much open to debate, but it does have parallels in other techniques and does not stand so completely outside the realm of reality.

Invocational necromancy of the Roman era presents a further example, one which allegedly utilized the sacrifice of a human being (most often a child)⁵ in place of the standard animal sacrifice. Descriptions of this type of necromancy, which only appear in the Roman era, are distinctive for the dramatic and repulsive effect they elicit; they do not, however, make any sense. For one thing, the preponderance of invocations made do with animals, for another, the occasionally stated assertion that repulsive acts such as the murder of people or children pleased underworld powers and made them more obliging⁶ can scarcely pass muster because, according to the

¹ Cf. ABT, A.: *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei. Beiträge zur Erläuterung der Schrift de magia*. Gießen 1908, 141/215–144/218; GANSZYNIEC, R.: *Texte und Untersuchungen: Hippolytus' Kapitel gegen die Magier*. Leipzig 1913, 73–75; HOPFNER, TH.: Nekromanteia. In *RE* XVI/32 (1935) 2218–2234, here 2230–2232; COLLARD, M.: *La nécromancie dans l'antiquité*. Diss. Université de Liège, 1949, 126–137; OGDEN, D.: *Greek and Roman Necromancy*. Princeton–Oxford 2001, 211–216; FARAONE, CHR. A.: Necromancy Goes Underground: The Disguise of Skull- and Corpse-Divination in the Paris Magical Papyri (PGM IV 1928–2144). In JOHNSTON, S. I. – STRUCK, P. T. (eds): *Man-tikê. Studies in Ancient Divination*. Leiden 2005, 255–282; VEILLEUX, FR.: *La nécromancie grecque et les influences orientales*. Diss. Montréal 2012, 46–47 and 87–101.

² Not to be confused with variants of cephalomancy from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, which consisted in the placing of an animal's head (e.g., a donkey) on burning coals, after which the diviner, who of course was really more of a pyromancer than a necromancer, appraised by way of the heat the resultant movements and crackling of the tissues and bones (especially the jawbone), and interpreted their "message" (for more detailed references, see DEONNA, W.: Orphée et l'oracle de la tête coupée. *Revue des études grecques* 38 [1925] 44–69, here 51–52).

³ GANSZYNIEC (n. 1) 73–74; OGDEN (n. 1) 208f. and 211f.

⁴ DEONNA (n. 2) 47–68; DODDS, E. R.: *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley – Los Angeles 1951, 168 n. 78; BREMMER, J. N.: *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*. Princeton 1983, 46 n. 91; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 99–100. Cf. THOMPSON, S.: *A Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Helsinki 1961, E 783.

⁵ Lucan. *Phars.* VI 558–559 and 710–711; Cic. *Contra Vatin.* VI 14; Hor. *Ep.* V 1–97; Iuv. *Sat.* VI 552; [Sen.] *Epigr.* 16 Baehrens; Rufin. *Hist. eccl.* II 24; Zachariah Scholasticus, *Vita Sever.* 57. 14 – 59. 4 Kugener. FAHZ, L.: *De poetarum romanorum doctrina magica*. Gissae 1904, 4; HALLIDAY, W. R.: *Greek Divination*. London 1913, 243; HOPFNER, TH.: *Griechisch-Ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber I–II*. Leipzig 1922–1924, II 157 (par. 354), and HOPFNER: Nekromanteia (n. 1) 2227; COLLARD (n. 1) 120–122; CUMONT, F.: *Lux perpetua*. Paris 1949, 107–108; TUPET, A.-M.: Rites magiques dans l'Antiquité romaine. In HAASE, W. (ed.): *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.16.3. Berlin – New York 1986, 2591–2675, here 2664; DINGEL, J.: Sextus Pompeius als Nekromant (ANTH. LAT. 406 R.). *Philologus* 148.1 (2004) 116–125, here 116.

⁶ Cf. Lact. Plac. in *Stat. Theb.* IV 509: *his [scil. in immolatione hominis] enim inferi delectatur*.

sources, the magic of the period not only made the dead docile but also the chthonic powers.⁷ When we further take into account that, in the case of hepatoscopy, those who were also alleged by their opponents with carrying out such horrible sacrifices were almost exclusively in the nature of a political, religious or intellectual authority⁸ – though it is not, even in a single case, possible to definitively prove the allegations – we can consider it very probable that neither human nor children sacrifices were ever used in necromancy either. The main purpose of such insinuations was to demonstrate the hideousness and criminality of the charged.⁹

The resuscitation of a corpse – into which the necromant has temporarily drawn the spirit of the dead person – quite unambiguously belongs to the realm of fiction.¹⁰ Similar resuscitations were carried out by mythical physicians such as Asclepius and Polyides, as well as by such mythical witches as Medea and Circe,¹¹ but outside of literature such a method was hardly realizable. Besides this, the sources regarding the resuscitation of corpses propose the use of differing ingredients and conditions to reach this goal which, even without regard to their facticity, are not mutually compatible with one other. Stories about the spontaneous revival of the dead on the battlefield also carry a distinctive seal of fictionality.¹²

Descents into the underworld are also consistent with a mythical context. Because it was only rarely motivated by divinatory questions, *katabasis* in and of itself was not, to be precise, necromancy. Pirithoos set off with Theseus into the underworld so they could kidnap Persephone; on one occasion, Heracles dragged the demonic dog Cerberus out from there, on another he led Theseus and Alcestis back from the dark depths of Hades.¹³ Orpheus also set out for the underworld (for his dead wife), and so did Demeter (for Core) and Dionysus (for Semele and Euripides).¹⁴

⁷ Cf., e.g., Lucan. *Phars.* VI 727–749; Sen. *Med.* 752–770; Stat. *Theb.* IV 509–510; PGM IV 2096–2097. PREISENDANZ, K.: *Nekydaïmon*. In *RE* XVI/32 (1935) 2239–2266, here 2248; FAUTH, W.: *Carmen magicum. Das Thema der Magie in der Dichtung der römischen Kaiserzeit*. Frankfurt 1999, 89–90, 101; OGDEN (n. 1) 176–177.

⁸ Iuv. *Sat.* VI 550–552; Cic. *Contra Vatin.* VI 14; Plin. *NH* XXX 14–16; Amm. Marc. XXIX 2. 17; Hist. Aug., *Heliog.* VIII 1–2; Dio Cass. LXXIII 16. 5; *Anth. Lat.* 406. 1, p. 315 Riese; Iust. *Apol.* I 18. 4; Rufin. *Hist. eccl.* II 24; Eus. *Hist. eccl.* VII 10. 4, VIII 14. 5 and *Vit. Const.* I 36. 1; Socr. Schol. *Hist. eccl.* III 13; Greg. *in Iul. imp.* I (*Or.* IV) 86–87, 92, 109; Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* V 10; Theodoret. *Hist. eccl.* III 3. *Contra*: Philostr. *VA* VIII 7. 12–15; Amm. Marc. XXI 2. 7. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, A.: *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité I–IV*. Paris 1879–1882, I 168.

⁹ Cf. OGDEN (n. 1) xxx and 149–159; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 81.

¹⁰ Lucan. *Phars.* VI 637–827; Apul. *Met.* I 10 and 13, II 28–29; Heliod. *Aeth.* VI 14; Claud. *in Rufin.* I 155–156; Stat. *Theb.* III 140–141. OGDEN (n. 1) 202–208; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 102–114.

¹¹ *Asclepius*: Ovid. *Met.* XV 531–536; Verg. *Aen.* VII 765–773; Prop. II 1. 61–62; Eutecn. *in Met. Ther. Nic.* 685–688. *Polyidus*: [Apollod.] *Bibl.* III 3. 1–2; Palaeph. *Mirab.* 23; Hyg. *Fab.* 136. *Medea and Circe*: [Apollod.] *Bibl.* I 9. 26; *Telegonia*, fr. 1 West; *Schol. in Lycophr.* 805. FAHZ (n. 5) 56–58; KURTZ, D. C. – BOARDMAN, J.: *Greek Burial Customs*. London–Southampton 1971, 282–283; LIMC, s. v. *Iason*, No. 59–62 and s. v. *Pelias*, Nr. 24; OGDEN (n. 1) 204, 206–207.

¹² Phleg. *Mir.* III 4–5; Plin. *NH* VII 178–179. OGDEN (n. 1) 207–208.

¹³ *Theseus and Pirithoos*: Paus. I 17. 4–5; Plut. *Thes.* XXXI 4–5, XXXV 1–2. *Heracles*: Paus. I 17. 4; Plut. *Thes.* XXXV 1–2; Strab. VIII 3. 5; [Apollod.] *Bibl.* II 5. 12; Eur. *Alc.* 139–145. Cf. BURKERT, W.: *Greek Religion*. Cambridge (Mass.) 1985, 195.

¹⁴ *Orpheus*: Eur. *Alc.* 357–362; *Hermesianax*, fr. 7 Powell; Plat. *Symp.* 179d; Bion III 120–127; [Apollod.] *Bibl.* I 3. 2. *Demeter*: Brev. *Exp. ad Verg. Georg.* I 39. *Dionysus*: Diod. Sic. IV 25. 4; [Apollod.]

Two descriptions of necromantic rituals in which the protagonists penetrated into the underworld have been preserved,¹⁵ but neither can be considered actually feasible. Mythical visits to the underworld rely, spoken or unspoken, on the corporeality of those descending into the underworld and the beings that they are leading up out of it. Outside of the mythical genre, however, nobody ever makes such an assumption. Necromancers known from literature usually do not themselves descend into Hades but either bring disembodied souls or spirits to a ritually demarcated area or return them to their dead bodies (see above).

II. INVOCATIONAL NECROMANCY

The ambiguities that are inspired by a mythical optics are also present in Odysseus' famous encounter with the diviner Teiresias. Many scholars suppose it to be the oldest evidence of invocational necromancy, which is often considered to be the oldest, most frequent and primary form of necromancy.¹⁶ Nonetheless, this method is only found very rarely in older Greek sources, if at all: if we do not count Homer or Aeschylus' Atossa (see part IV), there are no reports of it until Roman times.¹⁷ The source of invocational necromancy was concisely described by Maximus of Tyre, according to whom a necromancer first slit open the throat of a sacrificial animal and then made a libation, after which he invoked the spirit of the ancestors or friends of his client. His description almost completely corresponds to the sacrifice carried out by Odysseus, to whom, for that matter, Maximus attributed it.¹⁸ Under such circumstances, the nature of the technique that is presented by Homer becomes a matter of no small importance.¹⁹

Bibl. III 5. 3; Plut. *De ser. num. vind.* 27, 566a; Paus. II 31. 2, II 37. 5; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* II 34. 3; *Anth. Pal.* III 1; Aristoph. *Ran.* 66–82, 1417–1523.

¹⁵ Verg. *Aen.* VI 235–901; Luc. *Menipp.* 9–10; cf. Lucan. *Phars.* IV 653. NORDEN, E.: *P. Vergilius Maro, Aeneis Buch VI.* Leipzig 1903, 194 and 198f.; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 149–150 (par. 331 and 333), II 156 (par. 352), and HOPFNER: *Nekromanteia* (n. 1) 2226–2227; COLLARD (n. 1) 43–44.

¹⁶ Cf., e.g., BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 332 and 338; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 149–151 (par. 328–334); or EITREM, S.: *The Necromancy in the Persai of Aeschylus. Symbolae Osloenses* 6 (1928) 1–16, here 1. All of these authors assume a pre-Homeric occurrence of the technique.

¹⁷ Stat. *Theb.* IV 414–645; Sen. *Oed.* 530–658; Lucan. *Phars.* VI 653; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* XIII 395–895; Val. Flacc. *Arg.* I 735–751. HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 153 (par. 341); FAUTH (n. 7) 86–92.

¹⁸ Max. Tyr. *Dial.* VIII 2b–c.

¹⁹ *Od.* X 511, 540, XI 14–50. Cf. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 332–336; HEADLAM, W.: *Ghost-raising, Magic and the Underworld. Classical Review* 16 (1902) 52–61, here 54–55; FAHZ (n. 5) 4–15; GANSZYNIEC, R.: *Katabasis. RE X/20* (1919) 2359–2449, here 2273–2274, 2401–2408; ROHDE, E.: *Psyche. Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen I–II.* Tübingen 1921 (1898¹), I 53–59; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 149–151 (par. 330–337); COLLARD (n. 1) 15–28; CUMONT (n. 5) 97; PAGE, D.: *The Homeric Odyssey.* Oxford 1955, 21–50; BERNSTEIN, A. E.: *The Formation of Hell. Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds.* London 1993, 23–33; BREMMER, J. N.: *Ancient Necromancy and Modern Spiritualism.* In BREMMER, J. N. (ed.): *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife.* London – New York 2002, 71–86, here 71–72; NILSSON, M. P.: *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I–II.* München

On the one hand, it appears that Odysseus neither sought out any passageway into the earth nor did he at any point make a descent, instead he carried out a ritual which only allowed the dead to come to him. This would suggest an invocation.²⁰ On the other hand, the whole of the underworld – not only its dead but also its gods, its judged and punished wrongdoers, not to mention its ancient heroes – paraded or appeared before Odysseus.²¹ In addition, the spirits who were drawn to the blood in the sacrificial hollow had most likely remained in the underworld and never entered into the world of the living (*Od.* XI 36–37, 539).²² Elpenor, the first of the dead that Odysseus encountered, spoke of “his return from Hades”;²³ similarly Heracles, a famous traveler into the underworld, expressly likened Odysseus’ exploit with his own.²⁴ Odysseus himself repeatedly called his encounter with Teiresias’ *psyche* a descent into Hades.²⁵ This all tends to speak for it being some form of ritualized *katabasis*.²⁶

1967, 1961 (1955¹, 1950¹), I 169; WEST, M. L.: *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*. Oxford 1997, 425–427; DANEK, G.: *Epos und Zitat. Studien zu den Quellen der Odyssee*. Wien 1998, 214–222; FOUACHE, É. – QUANTIN, FR.: Représentations et réalité géographique de l’entrée des enfers de Thesprotie. In CUSSET, CHR. (ed.): *La nature et ses représentations dans l’Antiquité*. Paris 1999, 29–61, here 32–36; OGDEN (n. 1) 251–252; JOHNSTON, S. I.: Delphi and the Dead. In JOHNSTON, S. I. – STRUCK P. T. (eds): *Mantiké: Studies in Ancient Divination*. Leiden–Boston 2005, 283–306, here 288–290; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 13–20.

²⁰ BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 332; NORDEN (n. 15) 196 n. 1; FAHZ (n. 5) 5; PEASE, A. S.: *M. Tulli Ciceronis De divinatione liber primus et secundus I–II*. The University of Illinois 1920–1923, 333; SCHWARTZ, E.: *Die Odyssee*. München 1924, 138–139; EITREM (n. 16) 1; HOPFNER: Offenbarungszauber (n. 5) II 149 (par. 331), and HOPFNER: Nekromanteia (n. 1) 2220–2221; CUMONT (n. 5) 97; PAGE (n. 19) 24; HUXLEY, G. L.: Odysseus and the Thesprotian Oracle of the Dead. *La parola del passato* 13 (1958) 245–248; NILSSON (n. 19) I 169; HARDIE, C.: The Crater of Avernus as a Cult Site, In AUSTIN, R. G. (ed.): *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber sextus*. Oxford 1977, 279–286, here 283; MORRISON, J. S.: The Classical World. In LOEWE, M. – BLACKER, C. (eds): *Oracles and Divination*. Boulder 1981, 87–114, here 89; WEST (n. 19) 426; DONNADIEU, M.-P. – VILATTE, S.: Genèse de la nécromancie hellénique : de l’instant de la mort à la prédiction du futur (la Nekuia de l’Odyssee, Ephyra, Perachora). *Dialogues d’histoire ancienne* 22.2 (1996) 53–92, here 55.

²¹ In this matter, scholars do not hold the same opinion: according to some, Odysseus came to the edge of the underworld but did not descend into it (ROHDE [n. 19] I 56–60; LAWSON, J. C.: The Evocation of Darius [Aesch. *Persae* 607–693]. *Classical Quarterly* 28 [1934] 79–89, here 83; NILSSON [n. 19] I 169–170; WILL, É.: Sur la nature de la mantique pratiquée à l’Héraion de Pérachora. *Revue de l’histoire des religions* 143.2 [1953] 145–169, here 150 n. 2; FAUTH [n. 7] 84; FOUACHE–QUANTIN [n. 19] 31); according to others, he did descend into the underworld, although this contradicts the beginning of the book and the denial of a descent in *Od.* XI.628 (COLLARD [n. 1] 15 and 22; PAGE [n. 19] 24–27).

²² *Pro*: EITREM (n. 16) 5; FOUACHE–QUANTIN (n. 19) 31. *Contra*: GANSZYNIEC: Katabasis (n. 19) 2405.

²³ *Od.* XI 69: ἐνθ’ἐνδ’ε κίων δόμον ἐξ Αἵδαο. DANEK (n. 19) 220.

²⁴ *Od.* XI 618–619. VON DER MÜHLL, P.: Zur Erfindung in der Nekyia der Odyssee. *Philologus* 93 (1938) 3–11, here 8–10; DANEK (n. 19) 247–248; JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 289; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 15.

²⁵ *Od.* X 490–491, XI 164, XXIII 251–252; cf. *Od.* XI 211 and 475, XII 21. VON DER MÜHLL (n. 24) 6; DANEK (n. 19) 220–221; OGDEN (n. 1) 251 n. 2.

²⁶ Cf., e.g., PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2242; VON DER MÜHLL (n. 24) 4–5, 8–10; JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 288–289; perhaps also FOUACHE–QUANTIN (n. 19) 31. Cf. GANSZYNIEC: Katabasis (n. 19) 2272–2273, 2405–2406; COLLARD (n. 1) 22; BERNSTEIN (n. 19) 23f.; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 15, 35. Some authors in antiquity also believed that Odysseus had descended into Hades, see, e.g., Hyg. *Fab.* 124; Tzetz. ap. *Schol. in Lycophr.* 813; Iust. *Apol.* XVIII 5; Paus. X 28. 8.

Supporters of it being an invocation often rebut this conclusion by emphasizing the elaborately described ritual by which Odysseus contacted the dead. Homer, they argue, certainly did not make this up *ad hoc*, so he must have adopted it from some older or contemporary sources. He was therefore either inspired by a necromantic practice occurring in some of the oracles of the dead (they most often speak in this context of Epirus),²⁷ or by the Hittite purificatory rituals.²⁸ Nothing, however, has been preserved about what happened in the ancient oracles of the dead and, moreover, reports about their age, location and actual existence are very problematic (see Conclusion). As far as Hittite rituals are concerned, there is no proof whatsoever of their connections with necromancy and, in addition, their resemblance to the Homeric ritual is manifestly overvalued and, at the present time, even rejected.²⁹ And, even if the poet did truly adopt the invocation ceremony from somewhere, there is only a tiny connection observable with an old, existing and factual invocational necromancy.

It would also be amiss to gloss over the differences that separate Homeric ritual from descriptions of invocational necromancy that date from Roman times. Some of these differences are not so large as others, but none of them are entirely lacking in relevance. To choose just a few at random we can list the differences in the number and type of sacrificial animals,³⁰ in the composition and sequence of the drink-offering,³¹ in the shape, number, size and position of the sacrificial hollows in relation to the sacrificer³² and the absence of purifications (of the space, the necromancer, or the necromantic sacrifice) in Homer.³³ The most striking difference from Homer is the

²⁷ Cf., e.g., PAGE (n. 19) 24; HUXLEY (n. 20) 245–247. *Contra*: ROHDE (n. 19) I 37, 57–58.

²⁸ STEINER, G.: Die Unterweltbeschwörung des Odysseus im Lichte hethitischer Texte. *Ugarit-Forschungen* 3 (1971) 265–283; WEST (n. 19) 426–427; BREMMER: Ancient Necromancy (n. 19) 73. Texts with rituals that are difficult to interpret are reprinted and analyzed by TROPPER, J.: *Nekromantie. Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*. Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989, 111–118 and VEILLEUX (n. 1) 32–34, 124.

²⁹ See, especially, VEILLEUX (n. 1) 32–34 and 124, who persuasively refutes any kind of connection between these ceremonies and Homer.

³⁰ Homer and other authors present a sheep and (or) a ram (*Od.* X 527 a XI 32–35; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* XIII 405; Philostr. *VA* IV 16; Luc. *Menipp.* 9; Suda, s. v. ψυχᾶγωγῆ; Eustath. in *Od.* X 535, p. I 394, 16 Stallbaum), but other types and numbers of animals also occur: Verg. *Aen.* VI 243–251 (4 black bulls, a sheep and a heifer); Sen. *Oed.* 556–557 (black bulls and sheep); Sil. Ital. *Pun.* XIII 430–431 (a bull, a heifer, a sheep); Stat. *Theb.* IV 445 (black bulls and sheep); Val. Flacc. *Arg.* I 783–787 (a black bull); *Orph. Arg.* 950–987 (three black puppies); Aen. Gaz. *Theophr.* 24, p. 18. 21 – 19. 2 Colonna (a rooster of unspecified color).

³¹ Cf. *Od.* X 519–520, XI 26–28 (milk with honey, wine, water with flour); Sil. Ital. *Pun.* XIII 416, 431–434 (honey, wine, milk); Stat. *Theb.* IV 451–452 (milk and honey, not less than 9 times); Heliod. *Aeth.* VI 14. 3 (honey, milk, wine); Verg. *Aen.* VI 244 a 254 (wine and oil); Sen. *Oed.* 566–568 (milk, wine); Porph. *De antr. nymph.* 28 (honey, milk); *Orph. Arg.* 573–575 (honey, water, milk). HEADLAM (n. 19) 54; FAHZ (n. 5) 8–9; STENGEL, P.: *Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer*. München 1920, 102–105, 149; EITREM (n. 16) 2–3; COLLARD (n. 1) 18–19, 118; DONNADIEU–VILATTE (n. 20) 82–83; OGDEN (n. 1) 170; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 16–17.

³² Cf. *Od.* X 517, XI 24–25; Luc. *Philops.* 14, *Menipp.* 9; Sen. *Oed.* 550; Philostr. *VA* IV 16; Stat. *Theb.* IV 451–452 (here there are altogether 9 hollows!); *Orph. Arg.* 570–572; Heliod. *Aeth.* VI 14. 3. HEADLAM (n. 19) 53; FAHZ (n. 5) 6; STENGEL (n. 31) 16; EITREM (n. 16) 4–5; COLLARD (n. 1) 18; OGDEN (n. 1) 168–169.

³³ Cf. Stat. *Theb.* IV 416–418; Ovid. *Met.* VII 261; Verg. *Aen.* VI 153; Luc. *Menipp.* 7; Schol. in *Eur. Alc.* 1128. COLLARD (n. 1) 119–120; OGDEN (n. 1) 165.

strongly accentuated presence of magic (i.e. exhortations, threats, the use of magic dolls and charms), which in all probability did not make its way into the necromantic scene until Roman times.³⁴ It is true that some authors link magic with necromancy from its very beginnings and assume that Odysseus was already using a magic incantation,³⁵ but even with the best of wills it is not possible to believe this.³⁶ *Literati* of the Roman era undoubtedly found in Homer an archetype for their necromantic scenes,³⁷ but the ritual that is presented by him certainly cannot be considered a functional necromancy.

III. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are further factors that speak against the necromantic character of Homeric ceremonies. The Homeric person appears as a peculiar, unfocused assemblage of rather uncertainly demarcated and mutually overlapping physical and psychical components whose parting meant his or her expiration. From among those which, by a means that is somewhat unclear, persisted after death, it is above all the *psyche* that interests us. The *psyche* was presented as some kind of partly corporeal, force- or life-lacking spirit or double of a living person, which retains the physical form and mental state of the person at the moment of his or her death³⁸ and also, possibly, the key moments of his or her previous life.³⁹ As a matter of fact, *psychai* keep the form that their body had *in articulo mortis* (e.g., in Hades, fallen soldiers were covered in their wounds and imbrued by blood); they remain among the same group of people in the same circumstances under which they died (e.g., in the underworld, the murdered Agamemnon emerges with the whole of his massacred retinue, likewise the slaughtered bridegrooms appear as a group); they are found in the same mental frame of mind as they had at the moment of their death or shortly before it (e.g., even after his death Ajax hated Odysseus).⁴⁰ In the underworld, the Homeric *psyche* does not manage to generate

³⁴ HALLIDAY (n. 5) 236; PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2242; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 78–79.

³⁵ Iulius Africanus, *Kestoi* V 1 (cf. *PGM* XXIII 1–70); Eustath. in *Hom. Od.* X 535, I 394, 19–21 Stallbaum. Also reaching a similar conclusion were BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 332–333, 335; HEADLAM (n. 19) 55; EITREM (n. 16) 3–4; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 11 and 150–152 (par. 21, 329, 334–338) and HOPFNER: *Nekromanteia* (n. 1) 2221–2222; BREMMER: *Ancient Necromancy* (n. 19) 80–81. Cf. With more caution JOHNSTON: *Delphi* (n. 19) 290; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 78–79.

³⁶ PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2242; COLLARD (n. 1) 24–28; NILSSON (n. 19) I 170; OGDEN (n. 1) xx n. 11, and 164.

³⁷ Cf. FAHZ (n. 5) 5–15, 38–61; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 152–154 (par. 341–346), and HOPFNER: *Nekromanteia* (n. 1) 2222–2223; CUMONT (n. 5) 102; FAUTH (n. 7) 81–102; BREMMER: *Ancient Necromancy* (n. 19) 76–77.

³⁸ DODDS (n. 4) 138–139; LATTIMORE, R.: *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*. Urbana 1964 (1942¹), 43 n. 168; VERMEULE, E.: *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1981 (1979¹), 37; OGDEN (n. 1) 221. Cf. COLLARD (n. 1) 17; BREMMER: *The Early Greek Concept* (n. 4) 83, 88–89; BURKERT (n. 13) 195–196.

³⁹ Cf. BERNSTEIN (n. 19) 27; or ALBINUS, L.: *The House of Hades: Studies in Ancient Greek Eschatology*. Aarhus 2000, 52–53, who, however, interprets *psyche* as a lifelong memory.

⁴⁰ *Od.* XI 40–41, 387–389, 543–564; cf. also *Il.* XIV 454–477. The dead were recorded in this way both in later literature (see, e.g., Aesch. *Eum.* 103–105; Sophocl. *OT* 1372–1374; Plat. *Gorg.* 524a–525d),

any activity of its own: it cannot change, worry or find pleasure. With the exception of the seer Teiresias, who, even after death, manages to keep his reason and memory, the rest of the *psychai* lack any kind of perception or capability of orientation.⁴¹

If, however, the Homeric *psychai* are nothing more than non-living reflections of the circumstances of a death that lack consciousness, reason and knowledge and which nobody links with a particular personality and its posthumous existence, it would make no sense to summon them from the underworld so as to undertake special necromantic ceremonies.⁴² Besides which, the Greeks for quite some time had held that the ordinary dead do not have any sort of exceptional knowledge to offer and therefore made no attempt to gain it from them.⁴³ The conviction that the dead somehow automatically know much more than the living did not assert itself until the Roman era.⁴⁴

The notion of *psyche* underwent a basic transformation in the course of the Archaic and Classical periods. The assumption progressively gained ground that if the *psyche* leaves a person at the moment of death then it must not only dwell alive in and vivify people but must also in some sort of way be their core and focus that settles somewhere inside of them. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the Classical period a rational and more or less eschatological dimension of the soul was almost entirely missing.⁴⁵ It was only at the end of the 5th century BCE that the soul emerged as a bearer of moral responsibility and a substrate of a personality with whom it was

and in iconography (CHAMAY, J.: Des défunts portant bandages. *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 52–53 [1977/1978] 247–251). COLLISON MORLEY, L.: *Greek and Roman Ghost Stories*. Oxford–London 1912, 5; ROHDE (n. 19) I 60; PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2260; BREMMER: The Early Greek Concept (n. 4) 83–84, 89; BERNSTEIN (n. 19) 30; FAUTH (n. 7) 94; FELTON, D.: *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity*. Austin 1999, 17–18; OGDEN (n. 1) 221.

⁴¹ *Teiresias*: *Od.* X 490–495. *Psychai*: *Od.* XI 475. PAGE (n. 19) 21–24; BURKERT (n. 13) 195–196; MORRIS, I.: Attitudes toward Death in Archaic Greece. *Classical Antiquity* 8.2 (1989) 296–320, here 309–310.

⁴² Cf. similarly JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 289; or BURKERT (n. 13) 197.

⁴³ BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 334; ROHDE (n. 19) I 54–55; COLLARD (n. 1) 23; OGDEN (n. 1) xxiv; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 17. *Contra*: HOPFNER: Offenbarungszauber (n. 5) II 149 (par. 329), and HOPFNER: Nekromanteia (n. 1) 2220; CUMONT (n. 5) 90. There are some exceptions (cf. *Od.* XI 180–196 and 543–567; Aesch. *Pers.* 805–806), but most likely they are a matter of some unintended contradictions because, for example, in both Homer and Aeschylus the dead learn about events in the world either from the dead who died after they had (*Od.* XXIV 105–190) or from the living with whom they had spoken (Aesch. *Pers.* 693–741). About the inconsistency of the sources, compare SCHWARTZ (n. 20) 138; PAGE (n. 19) 25–26; OGDEN (n. 1) 238, 247.

⁴⁴ Cf. Lucan. *Phars.* VI 425–434, 803–815; Stat. *Theb.* IV 409–414 and 637–644; Verg. *Aen.* VI 886–892; Val. Flacc. *Arg.* I 744–745; Heliod. *Aeth.* VI 14–15; Phleg. *Mir.* II 11, III 4–5, III 14; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* XIII 507–515, 874–893; Serv. in *Georg.* I 277; Augustin. *De cur. pro mort. ger.* XV 18, PL XL 605; Dio Cass. LXXVII 15. 4. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 337; OGDEN (n. 1) 80, 231–232, 237–239.

⁴⁵ DODDS (n. 4) 138–139; FURLEY, D.: The Early History of the Concept of Soul. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 3 (1956) 1–18, here 9–10; DARCUS, SH. M.: A Person's Relation to ψυχή in Homer, Hesiod and the Greek Lyric Poets. *Glotta* 52 (1979) 30–39, here 34, 37; BREMMER: The Early Greek Concept (n. 4) 68; BURKERT (n. 13) 199.

possible to identify, although this theory never became too widely or generally accepted.⁴⁶

The ideas connected with the underworld and the life of the dead in it also markedly changed. In Homer, the *psychai* were in a vaguely vegetative state with the exception, on the one hand, of the favored few that the gods had transported *in toto* to some blissful place (see, for example, Menelaus) or, on the other, a similarly miniscule number of wrongdoers whom the gods punished in Hades for threatening their supremacy (the Titans, the Giants, Typhoon) or offending them in some way (Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus).⁴⁷ However, the eschatological theories of the Classical period transformed the underworld into a place where all people were being judged for the life they had led and consequently either rewarded or punished on the basis of whether, during that time, they had behaved in accordance with the law and the divine code or, contrarily, had committed iniquities and crimes.⁴⁸

Not everybody who was willing to concede the existence of an underworld with souls inhabiting it shared the perspective of there being a rightful reciprocity between guilt and punishment and merit and reward. The peddlers of rituals – in response to their customers' fear of posthumous punishments – would assert that one's position in the underworld was determined by ritual and that merits and faults had nothing to do with it.⁴⁹ Their position arose naturally out of traditional Greek religion, which was ritualistic and in its god-human-relationship quite openly counted on the utilitarian principle *do ut des*. If completing an initiation rite (e.g., the Eleusinian mysteries) sufficed for the purposes of securing a better posthumous fate,⁵⁰ why could a different ceremony not neutralize or wipe away one's culpability and transgressions or convert them into merits?⁵¹

Just the conviction that certain rituals were able to, for good and for bad, fundamentally influence or change the fate of the dead opened the way for attempts at eschatological manipulation. The ritual – just as with the underworld rewards and punishments linked to it – introduced coercive means on the dead so that they would appear or effectuate something. Such thinking was baseless for Homer and in the Classical period because nobody believed that the “ordinary” dead had any special

⁴⁶ Cf. Sophocl. *Aj.* 558–559; [Isocr.] *in Demon.* (Or. I) 12; DK 10. 3, Cleob. 9; Plat. *Apol.* 50c–e; Hyperid. *Or.* VI 43. TER VRUGT LENTZ, J.: *Mors Immatura*. Groningen 1960, 39, 42; BREMMER: *The Early Greek Concept* (n. 4) 68.

⁴⁷ BURKERT (n. 13) 195; OBRYK, M.: *Unsterblichkeitsglaube in den griechischen Versinschriften*. Berlin–Boston 2012.

⁴⁸ Pind. *Ol.* II 56–77 and fr. 129–130 Race; Plat. *Gorg.* 523a–524a; [Plat.] *Epist.* VII, 335a and *Axiach.* 370c; Demosth. *De cor.* (Or. XVIII) 127; cf. *Od.* XI 568–571; Aesch. *Suppl.* 228–231. ROHDE (n. 19) II 204–216; NILSSON (n. 19) I 817; GRAF, FR.: *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung*. Berlin – New York 1974, 85–86; JOHNSTON, S. I.: *Divination and Prophecy: Greece*. In JOHNSTON, S. I.: (ed.): *Religions of the Ancient World*. Cambridge (Mass.) – London 2004, 383–386, 487.

⁴⁹ Cf. Sophocl. *OT* 387–388; [Hippocr.] *De morb. sacr.* I 2; Eur. *Alc.* 1128, fr. 933 Nauck; Plat. *Phaed.* 69b–c, *Resp.* 364b–e, 366a–b, *Leg.* 909a–c. Cf. BURKERT (n. 13) 199.

⁵⁰ *Hom. hymn. Cer.* 480–482; Sophocl. fr. 837 Radt; Pind. fr. 137 Maehler; Isocr. *Paneg.* (Or. IV) 28–29. Cf. NILSSON (n. 19) I 674–676; GRAF (n. 48) 79; GARLAND, R.: *The Greek Way of Death*. London 1985, 61; BURKERT (n. 13) 199; JOHNSTON: *Divination* (n. 48) 487.

⁵¹ Epicur. ap. Plut. *Non poss. suav. Ep.* 27, 1105b. GRAF (n. 48) 89–90.

knowledge or powers. As one of Euripides' characters said (perhaps Heracles): "if someone dwells in the land below with those who are no more, he can have no strength" (fr. 450 Nauck, transl. Collard, Cropp). Necromancers most likely did not utilize the possibility of ritualistic and eschatological pressure on the dead until the Roman period, when they threatened to bring down terrible punishments on the souls who did not want to obediently appear and speak⁵² or, to the contrary, promised to reward them by freeing them from necromantic (magical) manipulation⁵³ or improving their posthumous status (see part IV).

The dead seeking vengeance for their violent deaths (ἀλάστωρ, ἀλιτῆριος, μιάστωρ, παλαμναῖος) show how the belief in the power and activity of the dead only grew very slowly. Initially, it was underworld deities – from among whom the Erinyes stood out – who avenged murdered people when their murderers were not discovered or punished.⁵⁴ From the Classical period, however, the spirit of the dead person him- or herself, working with the Erinyes, also began to actively play a role in vengeance. In Aeschylus' play *Eumenides*, for example, the Erinyes pursue Orestes but at the same time the spirit of his mother, Clytaemnestra, whom he murdered, roams the world, demanding revenge for her murder and she herself contributes to the prosecution of her son.⁵⁵ A little while later, the underworld power jointly carries out the revenge for the murder with the spirit of the murdered person.⁵⁶ In a further "evolutionary" phase it is only the spirit of the murdered who avenges the murderer,⁵⁷ whether they decide to do it on their own or are sent in the form of an apparition or a nightmare by the underworld goddess Hecate.⁵⁸ Only in the final phase did a rather sporadic blending of the Erinyes with the soul of the murdered emerge.⁵⁹

Curse tablets (*tabellae defixionum*) also reflect this change in the status and the power of the dead. The texts that were written on them during the whole of the Classical period – tacitly or quite explicitly – only made appeals to the underworld powers;⁶⁰ it was only at the beginning of the Hellenistic period that curse tablets or

⁵² Lucan. *Phars.* VI 775; Apul. *Met.* II 29; cf. Heliod. *Aeth.* VI 14. 6.

⁵³ Lucan. *Phars.* VI 763–770; *Tab. def.* 28 and 48 Gager; *PGM* IV 2095–2096, XV 9, LVII 5–6; *Stat. Theb.* IV 622–624. TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 51; JOHNSTON, S. I.: *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1999, 78 n. 128.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Il.* IX 561–572; *Od.* XI 271–280; Sophocl. *El.* 110–117; Aristoph. *Plut.* 423–424. JOHNSTON: *Restless Dead* (n. 53) 139–140; BERNSTEIN (n. 19) 27–28.

⁵⁵ Aesch. *Eum.* 244–268, 94–119. TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 33–34.

⁵⁶ Cf., e.g., Eur. *Or.* 253–279; Xenoph. *Cyr.* VIII 7. 18–19.

⁵⁷ *SEG* XLIII 630B from Selinus (cca. 460 BCE); [Aesch.] *Prom.* 561–689; cf. Eur. *Herc. fur.* 965–966. OGDEN (n. 1) 233–235; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 55–56.

⁵⁸ *Trag. adespot.*, fr. 375 Nauck; [Hippocr.] *Morb. sacr.* I.4; Dio Chrysostom. *Or.* IV 90. JOHNSTON: *Restless Dead* (n. 53) 144–145.

⁵⁹ *PDerv.* VI 9–10 (4th cent. BCE); [Sen.] *Oet.* 619–620. The Erinyes, who from the earliest times of antiquity to its end passed for goddesses, were ordinarily activated, but not created, by a violent death; it is therefore not possible to consider the identicalness of the spirit of the murdered person and the Erinyes to be indigenous and to then assert that the Erinyes only became independent entities later on (*pro*: ROHDE [n. 19] I 269–270; NILSSON [n. 19] I 100; *contra*: JOHNSTON: *Restless Dead* [n. 53] 143–144). Cf. OGDEN (n. 1) 234.

⁶⁰ *Implied*: *Tab. def.* 39, 41, 42, 49–51, 55–60, 64, 65, 71, 72, 74, 81, 83, 103 Gager. *Explicitly*: *Tab. def.* 19, 22, 38, 40, 62, 67, 69, 70, 74, 105 Gager. BRAVO, B.: Une tablette magique d'Olbia Pontique,

letters begin to appear that call upon the dead themselves to execute a curse, may it be in conjunction with the underworld gods or quite independently.⁶¹ The fact that, as late as the end of the Classical period, even the common layers of society did not put much stock in any kind of cooperation from the dead is demonstrated by the Attic curse tablet, on the front side of which there is a curse paralyzing the tongue and secured by the condition that the command will stop being valid only in the case that the prematurely dead (ῥήθιοι) will read it. The author evidently considered this condition to be unrealizable, which is confirmed in part by similar curse tablets⁶² and in part by the back side of the same tablet on which the god Hermes is entrusted with the reading and execution of the curse.⁶³ In a similar sense, the curse tablets are occasionally interpreted that were, in the early Hellenistic period, placed in the tombs of heroes because the dead appeared to the authors to be unfit not only for the execution of the curse, but apparently also for the handover of the curses to an underworld power.⁶⁴

However, as the curse tablets have already indicated, in antiquity the dead did not form a homogenous group whose members would have identical fates, possibilities or abilities. In this respect, standing out from the ordinary dead are the so-called restless spirits who, in the magic of the Roman period, were sometimes collectively called demons from the corpses (νεκροδαίμονες).⁶⁵ Among them belong: 1) those who did not receive a burial (ἄταφοι; *insepulti*); 2) the violently killed (βί[αι]οθάνατοι,

les morts, les héros et les démons. In *Poikilia: Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant*. Paris 1987, 185–218, here 198 and 203.

⁶¹ *Tab. def.* 48 (4th–3rd cent. BCE.): the addressed is dead; *Tab. def.* 45 (middle 3rd cent. BCE): the addressed are *daimons* from the graves as well as underworld gods; *Tab. def.* 46 (middle 3rd cent. BCE): the “task” should be carried out by *daimons* lying in the grave; *Tab. def.* 87 (2nd cent. BCE): the punishment of the murderers should be carried out by the underworld gods and the prematurely dead; see also *Tab. def.* 28–30, 36, 73, 78, 112 and 115 Gager (GAGER, J. G.: *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*. New York – Oxford 1999 [1992], 210). Cf. also TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 45–46; BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 196–198 and 201–205; FARAONE, CHR. A.: The Ethnic Origins of a Roman-Era Philtrokatadesmos. In MIRECKI, P. – MEYER, M. (eds): *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*. Leiden 2002, 319–343, 327–330. JOHNSTON: Restless Dead (n. 53) 71 and 80, therefore it is not correct to state that the majority of the curse tablets made their appeals to the dead “from the very beginning”.

⁶² *Tab. def.* 43 and 44 Audollent. Cf. also *Tab. def.* 55a16–18 Wünsch (4th cent. BCE) and *Tab. def.* 102.1 Wünsch (4th cent. BCE), whose authors were persuaded that the dead are quite impassive and powerless. BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 198–203.

⁶³ *Tab. def.* 52 Audollent (4th cent. BCE). BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 201–202; JORDAN, D. R.: Three Curse Tablets. In JORDAN, D. R. – MONTGOMERY, H. – THOMASSON, E. (eds): *The World of Ancient Magic*. Bergen 1999, 115–124, here 118–119, Nr. 2, I. 5–9, 14–15.

⁶⁴ A heptad of curse tablets with erotic curses was discovered at the tomb of the child hero Opheltes of Nemea (BRAVO, J. J.: Erotic Curse Tablets from the Heroön of Opheltes at Nemea. *Hesperia* 85.1 [2016] 121–151), who, considering the absence of any other kind of divine power, is highly likely to be the one that is supposed to carry out the curse even though he is not directly addressed in the text. The author of a tablet from the end of the 4th century BCE, that originated in the Athenian shrine of the heroes Pancrates and Palaemon, explicitly entrusts the hero Palaemon with executing the revenge (JORDAN, D. R.: New Greek Curse Tablets [1985–2000]. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 41 [2000] 5–41, here 10, Nr. 14). Cf. BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 203, 210–211: “Dans les rares tablettes magiques de cette période (scil. 4^e siècle av. J.-C.) qui s’adressent à un mort, celui-ci est conçu comme un héros” (p. 211).

⁶⁵ HOPFNER: Offenbarungszauber (n. 5) II 11 (par. 21); PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2239–2266; BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 196–197.

βιομόροι; *biothanati*), i.e. primarily those who were murdered or died a violent death and their death remained unpunished; 3) the prematurely dead (ἄωροι, ἀτέλειστοι; *immaturi*), i.e. especially girls and youth, who did not live long enough to get married and have children, later also just children by themselves.⁶⁶ These spirits, who were not granted a tranquil repose in the underworld, became a favorite object for ritualistic, magical and, later, necromantic, manipulation. Numerous magic texts demand the bodies (or their parts) of restless spirits, others in turn entrust them with various duties and tasks.⁶⁷ On the other hand, placing a spirit among the restless had a strongly ambivalent character since some of the spirits became unhappy apparitions who went among the living and destructively intervened in their affairs while others – sometimes simply as a result of their rampages – were elevated to a heroic status and were placated with or awarded a posthumous cult (see part V). Although authors of the Classical period already mention restless spirits, it is not possible to find in their reports any formulation of an eschatological or “spiritual” concept⁶⁸ and it was not until the Roman period that clearer delineations of it were recorded.⁶⁹ It was also from this period that the clear majority of the magic reports mentioned above originated.

The objection could of course be made that, contrary to what was written above about the soul and the underworld, the return of the dead is to a certain extent

⁶⁶ COLLISON MORLEY (n. 40) 5–12; ROHDE (n. 19) II 411–413; LAWSON, J. C.: *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*. Cambridge 1910, 412–484; HOPFNER: *Nekromanteia* (n. 1) 2219; PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2241–2266; WASZINK, J. H.: *Mors immatura. Vigiliae Christianae* 3 (1949) 107–112, here 107–112; CUMONT (n. 5) 83–86, 303–342; NOCK, A. D.: *Tertullian and the Aori*. In *Vigiliae Christianae* 4.3 (1950) 129–141; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46); LATTIMORE (n. 38) 184–187; BREMMER: *The Early Greek Concept* (n. 4) 101–108; GARLAND (n. 50) 89–103; GAGER (n. 61) 19–20; JOHNSTON: *Restless Dead* (n. 53) 127–249; JOHNSTON: *Divination* (n. 48) 488; OGDEN (n. 1) 12–16, 225–226.

⁶⁷ *Biothanatoi*: PGM IV 333, IV 342, IV 1394, IV 1401, IV 1880–1881, IV 1949–1951, IV 2164–2165, IV 2210, IV 2216, IV 2574–2575, IV 2642, IV 2728–2731, IV 2784, V 331, V 346, VII 399, LVII 6; *Tab. def.* 6, 9, 11, 30 (= PGM CI 2–3) and 46 Gager; *Tab. def.* 246–254 Audollent; cf. also *Stat. Theb.* IV 483 [ABT [n. 1] 128/202–129/203; ROHDE [n. 19] II 412; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* [n. 5] I 59, 63, and HOPFNER: *Nekromanteia* [n. 1] 2219; PREISENDANZ [n. 7] 2246; WASZINK: *Mors immatura* [n. 66] 110–1111; TER VRUGT LENTZ [n. 46] 48; FARAONE: *The Ethnic Origins* [n. 61] 319). *Aoroi*: PGM IV 333, IV 342–343, IV 1401, IV 2215, IV 2574–2275, IV 2733–2734, XV 8; *Tab. def.* 73, 87, Gager; *MAMA* I 425a1–2, VI 291. 5–6, VI 303. 14–15, VI 319. 10–12, VI 366. 1–4, VII 308. 1–3, X 40. 13–14, X 47. 3–4, X 150. 4, X 183. 1–3, X 199. 1–2, X 235. 2–3; *SEG* VIII 574. 4; *Epigr. Graec.* 376. 8–9 Kaibel (PREISENDANZ [n. 7] 2245, 2258; NOCK [n. 66] 135; TER VRUGT LENTZ [n. 46] 45–49; LATTIMORE [n. 38] 112–113; BRAVO: *Une tablette* [n. 60] 206; GAGER [n. 61] 178; JOHNSTON: *Restless Dead* [n. 53] 77–78).

⁶⁸ Aesch. *Eum.* 95–99; Eur. *Troad.* 1083, *Hec.* 31–50, *Hel.* 570; Sophocl. *Ant.* 896, 1070–1072; *Trag. adesp.*, fr. 375 Nauck; [Hippocr.] *De morb. sacr.* 1; Plat. *Phaed.* 81c–d, *Leg.* 865d. ROHDE (n. 19) II 411–413; WASZINK: *Mors immatura* (n. 66) 108; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 27, 51; GARLAND (n. 50) 101.

⁶⁹ Cf. Verg. *Aen.* VI 426–435; Tertull. *De an.* 56; Plaut. *Most.* 497–505; Prop. IV 7. 23–24 and IV 11. 1; Lact. *Div. inst.* II 2. 2 and II 2. 6; Plut. *Cim.* I 7–8, *Amat.* 20, 766b; Achill. *Tat.* V 16; Porph. *Abst.* II 47. 1–2; Orig. *Contr. Cels.* VII 5; Greg. Nyss. *De an. et resurr.*, PG XLVIII 88B; Amm. Marc. XIX 12. 14; Macr. *Sonn. Scip.* I 13. 10; Olympiod. in *Phaed.* III 4 and VII 2; Augustin. *Epist.* CLVIII 3 and 8; Heliod. *Aeth.* II 5. 2; Serv. in *Aen.* IV 386; Apul. *De deo Socr.* XV 152–153; Procl. in *Remp.* I 121. 10–13 Kroll; Plotin. *Enn.* I 9. 1; Cic. *Tusc. disp.* I 30. 72 and I 31. 75; Sallust. *Philosoph. De diis et mundo* XIX 2. LAWSON: *Modern Greek Folklore* (n. 66) 412, 433; CUMONT (n. 5) 84, 306–313; WASZINK, J. H.: *Biothanati*. In *RACH* II (1954) 391–394, here 391–393.

independent of these conceptions. And it is true that in the Mediterranean and elsewhere the possibility of the return of the dead to the world of the living was believed in long before anybody had heard of any kind of a soul. Indeed, it was such a common idea that in antiquity they integrated it into official state cults and festivals. It was supposed that the dead could visit the world of the living on certain days, even when they had died a natural death and received completely proper funeral rites. On some of those days the gate of the underworld was opened up for all of the dead and the community would include them in their festivals (in the case of Greece, these were especially the Anthesteria and the Genesia). When the festival or the anniversary of the day of mourning had come to an end, however, care was always taken that the dead should return to where they came from.⁷⁰ Nor was it thought that somebody would, in and of themselves, induce them to come or even welcome them if they did so: this was because it was thought that the dead were or could be dangerous and, in addition, they were considered to be ritually unpure and any kind of contact with something connected with them demanded variously long, expensive and strenuous purifications. And finally, to an increasingly greater degree, the Greeks came to fear their dead so that they always made sure that they maintained an appropriate distance from them (which used to be, not without justification, regarded as a further reason why there had been a growing belief in the power of the dead).⁷¹ If they felt that the dead were harassing them, the Greeks would try, with the help of special rituals, to drive them away; nothing, however, suggests that they would try to invoke them for any reason.⁷²

IV. THE GRAVE OFFERING

The ritual which helped Odysseus open up the underworld (see section II) has another parallel which has not been mentioned yet. This would be the grave offering, which shows so many similarities to the Homeric ritual that, formerly, many considered it to be its prototype.⁷³ Some interpreters have even concluded that grave offerings

⁷⁰ COLLISON MORLEY (n. 40) 9–11; CUMONT (n. 5) 82–83, 396–398; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 56–59; FELTON (n. 40) 13–14; JOHNSTON: Restless Dead (n. 53) 63–64, and JOHNSTON: Divination (n. 48) 488; OGDEN (n. 1) 168 n. 13.

⁷¹ JOHNSTON: Restless Dead (n. 53) 96–99; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 10–11.

⁷² SEG XLIII 630 B from Selinus (cca. 460 BCE); SEG IX 72. 111–121 from Cyrene = LSCG 115 B 28–39 (recorded in the 4th cent. BCE, but its origin is placed in the 6th to 5th cent. BCE). Even when professionals occasionally performed ceremonies of this type (see especially *psychagogoi*), the sources for the most part do not indicate that they would invoke the dead for the purpose of appeasing or chasing them off (Plut. fr. 126 Sandbach = *Schol. AB in Eur. Alc.* 1128; Aristodemus, *FGrHist* 104 F 1, par. 8; Thuc. I 134; Diod. Sic. XI 45; Plut. *De ser. num. vind.* 17, 560e–f; Paus. III 17. 9; Epimenid. *DK* 3 A 1, par. 110; Suda, s. v. *ψυχαγωγεῖ*; [Quintilian.] *Decl. maior.* X 7). Authors who deviate from this rule (Plut. *De ser. num. vind.* 10, 555c; Suet. *Nero* 34) evidently are not writing about an actual practice but are rather projecting necromantic techniques known from literature into the past.

⁷³ ROHDE (n. 19) I 57; HOPFNER: Offenbarungszauber (n. 5) II 149–150 (par. 331 and 333); COLLARD (n. 1) 23; PAGE (n. 19) 48 n. 6; CUMONT (n. 5) 97; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 20, 123; cf. also SCHWARTZ

had laid the foundations for all types of necromancy and that the grave was the oldest or original place where it was performed.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, what was taking place at the graves was above all a “cult” of the dead without, in the absolute majority of cases, any sort of attempt to draw them outside; there are even known, explicit requests which demand that the invoked dead keep to herself or himself and far from the living.⁷⁵ Many people in antiquity would certainly, as people still do now when making a graveside visit, have some sort of an intimate conversation with “their” late ones,⁷⁶ during which the one party only passively plays a part by way of their assumed presence and willingness to listen.

In these discourses, the mourners would often rhetorically call upon the dead to come or exhort the gods to bring them although, in reality, they did not expect them to come and did nothing to bring it about. For example, Electra and Orestes prayed at the grave of Agamemnon for him to come and help them against their enemies, but they showed no disappointment when he did not make an appearance.⁷⁷ Not even those who placed curse tablets and letters in the graves of the deceased expected a direct response to their appeals.⁷⁸ Going a step further were those who, after having made their address or request at the grave, expected some kind of a response, most often in the form of a dream manifestation of the dead in the context of an incubation.⁷⁹ Attempts at a true discourse with the dead, which in this approach have been taken furthest, are already evident in the Classical period; careful consideration must however be given as to whether they can be considered to actually be necromancy, whether they apply to all types of the dead and whether they can be supposed to have existed outside of literary works.

(n. 20) 138; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 34; JOUAN, FR.: L'évocation des morts dans la tragédie grecque. *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 198/4 (1981) 403–421, here 412f.

⁷⁴ DEUBNER, L.: *De incubatione: capita quattuor*. Lipsiae 1900, 6 n. 2; PEASE (n. 20) 333; BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 290, 330–331; EITREM (n. 16) 4.

⁷⁵ Val. Flacc. *Arg.* II 449–451. Cf. Phot. s. v. Θύραζε Κάρες and Zenob. IV 33 with ROHDE (n. 19) I 239 n. 2.

⁷⁶ Aesch. *Choeph.* 84–151, 332–339, 476–504; Eur. *El.* 112–167, *Hec.* 422–423; Sophocl. *El.* 454–463; *GVI* 1491 and 1492 from Athens (4th cent. BCE); *IG* II/III² 11169 from Athens (middle 4th cent. BCE); *GVI* 2002 from Corcyra (1st cent. BCE); *IGUR* III 1146 from Roma (the Roman period); *GVI* 861 from Albanum (3rd cent. BCE). Such conversations are also vestigially preserved in modern Greece, see LAWSON: Modern Greek Folklore (n. 66) 345–346.

⁷⁷ Aesch. *Choeph.* 459–460, 489, 495–497. Cf. further, e.g., Sophocl. *El.* 454–455, fr. 186 Radt; Eur. *Herc.* 494, *Hec.* 535–536, *El.* 678–680. LAWSON: Modern Greek Folklore (n. 66) 430; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 34, 36; JOUAN (n. 73) 415–417; BURKERT (n. 13) 195; OGDEN (n. 1) 8–9; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 58.

⁷⁸ Cf., e.g., *Tab. def.* 104 Gager = *IG* III 3. 102 A1–4 from Athens (4th cent. BCE); *Tab. def.* 38 Gager = *IG* III 3. 103. 1–2 from Athens (middle 4th cent. BCE).

⁷⁹ Either it was possible to ask the gods or heroes for a (dream) manifestation of the dead in their shrines (cf. Herodot. V 92; Plut. *Consol. Apoll.* 14, 109b–d; Thessalus, *De virt. herb.* I 13 = *CCAG* VIII 3. 136, 30) or with the same aim, people lay down directly on the graves of the dead (Plut. *De gen. Socr.* 16. 585e–f; Athanas. *Epist. fest.* XLII, p. 47 Lefort; *TAM* V 1–2, 1055 from Thyatira (the Roman period); *SGO* 16/31/10 A from Acmonia (beginning of the 4th cent. BCE); *SGO* 16/41/08 = *MAMA* I.389 from Metropolis (the Roman period); Cyrill. *Adv. Iul.* X PG LXXVI 1024C, in *Is.* V 6. 65, PG LXX 1408B–C; Hieronym. (*vel* Eus.) in *Is.* XVIII 65. 4, PL XXIV 632C–D; Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* I 11. 4–5; Phot. *Bibl.* 256. 471a39–b6).

The oldest, best known and also the most disputed illustration of a graveside discourse with the dead is presented to us in Aeschylus' play *The Persians* (staged in 472 BCE), whose protagonist is the Persian queen Atossa.⁸⁰ Earlier in the play, her husband, who had been dead for four years, appears to her in the same terrifying dream as her desperate son Xerxes, who in real life had led his army abroad in an attempt to conquer Greece (*Pers.* 176–213). The frightened queen confides the dream to interpreters, who recommend that she placate the underworld gods and dead (*Pers.* 214–228). Tardily, as it turns out, for presently a messenger arrives with news that the Persian army had been crushed at the Battle of Salamis (r. 480). Later on, Atossa follows the advice that she had received from the interpreters and gives an order to bring offerings to the underworld gods and the dead (*Pers.* 521–523). In the scene that follows, we encounter her – with the placating gifts and the chorus of elders-interpreters – at Darius' tomb. Here, the queen first carries out a libation, consisting of milk, honey, water and wine intended for “all the gods of the underworld” (*Pers.* 621),⁸¹ then she adds olives, a wreath of fresh flowers and also, probably, a cake, after which everybody present sings a hymn invoking Darius.⁸² Up to this point, we have been dealing with absolutely standard offerings at the grave. More surprising is that, in the framework of the hymn, the underworld gods – with Hades, Persephone, Earth and Hermes in the lead – are suddenly asked to send up from the depths the soul of Darius (*Pers.* 628–630), who subsequently appears. His sole bit of advice, which he relays to his wife and former associates in a very flowery and long-winded manner, is essentially that the Persians should leave the Greeks in peace (*Pers.* 759–842). In this moment it is no longer difficult to understand why Aeschylus in this propagandistic play raises Darius from the dead. It nonetheless remains unclear if he drew from already existing necromantic and magic techniques⁸³ or if he instead creatively took advantage of the possibilities that the standard grave offering and the Homeric *Nekyia* offered him.⁸⁴

Personally, I lean toward the minority point of view, which sees neither necromancy nor a literary treatment of contemporary necromantic practices in the ceremony

⁸⁰ For an analysis of the “necromantic” passage, see HEADLAM (n. 19) 54–60; EITREM (n. 16) 6–16; LAWSON: The Evocation (n. 21) 79–89; HOPFNER: Nekromanteia (n. 1) 2222; COLLARD (n. 1) 29–35; WILL (n. 21) 151–152; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 34–35; JOUAN (n. 73) 403–421; MORRISON (n. 20) 90; JOHNSTON: Restless Dead (n. 53) 116–118; OGDEN (n. 1) 3–4, 8; BREMMER: Ancient Necromancy (n. 19) 72–73; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 42–46.

⁸¹ *Pers.* 621: τὰσδε νεπτέροις θεοῖς. Cf. also *Pers.* 624–627.

⁸² *Pers.* 609–622. Cf. Sophocles: *Oed. Col.* 466–490. STENGEL (n. 31) 129, 149; EITREM (n. 16) 6–9; COLLARD (n. 1) 30.

⁸³ HEADLAM (n. 19) 55–59; HOPFNER: Offenbarungszauber (n. 5) II 152 (par. 340); EITREM (n. 16) 6 (partly); COLLARD (n. 1) 34–35; WILL (n. 21) 152 (partly); KRAMER, B.: Tragödienfragment: Aischylos, *Psychagogoi* (?). In KRAMER, B. – ERLER, M. – HAGEDORN, D. – HÜBNER, R. (eds): *Kölner Papyri III*. Opladen 1980, 14–23, here 20; VERMEULE (n. 38) 199–200; MORRISON (n. 20) 90; JOUAN (n. 73) 417, 419–421; OGDEN (n. 1) 3–4; BREMMER: Ancient Necromancy (n. 19) 72; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 43–45, 76.

⁸⁴ Cf. GANSZYNIEC: Katabasis (n. 19) 2407; or EITREM (n. 16) 6, 11 and 12, who consider the Homeric *Nekyia* the primary model.

that is described.⁸⁵ Above all, Atossa's visit to the grave lacks the basic paraphernalia of a literarily presumed necromancy, i.e. the sacrifice of an animal of black color, whose blood gushes into a hollow in the ground, a sacrificial fire, night as the time that it is realized, threats to underworld powers or gods, or the presence of a professional necromancer. It is not possible to simply dismiss all of this by saying that these elements would be very difficult to realize in a theatrical context. What is also lacking in the scene is any trace of magic.⁸⁶ The gods are politely asked to temporarily release Darius; nobody coerces them to do so. Besides, Darius does not belong to the order of the ordinary dead who, in Aeschylus' plays, only appear in dreams.⁸⁷ on the one hand, he does, to a certain extent, succumb to the authority of the underworld gods,⁸⁸ but, on the other hand, he is called there by a *daimon* or somebody equal to a *daimon*, a god or a god from Susa and a divine guide.⁸⁹ Aeschylus, therefore, almost certainly perceived him as one of the heroes who could appear and disappear, according to his own desire.⁹⁰ This shows that it is most likely that, on occasion, heroes were summoned by name at offerings and festivals.⁹¹

The objection can, of course, be raised that other contemporary testimonies about funeral necromancy present significantly more necromantic elements, including animal sacrifices. If we leave aside a disputed fragment of uncertain provenance and date – in which, after the invocation of underworld deities and a blood libation into the water of the lake, unspecified “night pilgrims” are called up from the underworld⁹² –, a scene from Euripides, in which Neoptolemus, at his father's grave, slits the throat of Polyxena so that Achilles would permit the departure of Greek ships, remains the

⁸⁵ LAWSON: The Evocation (n. 21) 79–83; JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 290–291; partly also HOPFNER: Nekromanteia (n. 1) 2222; PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2242.

⁸⁶ EITREM (n. 16) 7–8, 10–13; LAWSON: The Evocation (n. 21) 80–83; HOPFNER: Nekromanteia (n. 1) 2222; COLLARD (n. 1) 34; WILL (n. 21) 152, 153; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 35.

⁸⁷ See explicitly Aesch. *Eum.* 104–105. JOUAN (n. 73) 413.

⁸⁸ Darius belonged among the “dead” (*Pers.* 632: θνητῶν), and the singers of the invocal hymn repeatedly plead with the underworld gods to allow him to come (*Pers.* 628–680). EITREM (n. 16) 10; COLLARD (n. 1) 31.

⁸⁹ *Pers.* 620–621 (δαίμονα Δαρείον ἀνακαλεῖσθε), 633–634 (μακαρίτας ἰσοδαίμων βασιλεύς) 644 (Σουσιγενῆ θεόν), 654–655 (θεομήτορ δ' ἐκικλήσκειτο Πέρσαις).

⁹⁰ For the heroic status of Darius and its forms in tragedy, see, for example, FARNELL, L. R.: *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*. Oxford 1921, 77; or EITREM (n. 16) 14. Regarding the fact that Darius' being Persian need not impede his achieving heroic status, see, e.g., the heroic cult of another Persian, Artachaes (Herodot. VI 117; Ael. *NA* XIII 20).

⁹¹ Pind. *Pyth.* XI 1–4; Herodot. VI 117; Paus. IV 27. 6; *Schol. in Pind. Nem.* VII 44; *Schol. in Lycophr.* 365; cf. Paus. II 10. 1, IV 14. 5. DENEKEN, FR.: Heros. In *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*. Hrsg. von W. H. Roscher. Bd. I.2 (1886/1890) 2441–2589, here 2514–2515; FARNELL (n. 90) 372. The restless spirits and unburied dead were similarly addressed by name: *SEG* XLIII 630 B from Selinus; *Schol. in Od.* IX 62, 64 and 65; *Schol. in Pind. Pyth.* IV 281; Verg. *Aen.* VI 500–510. COLLARD (n. 1) 124; OGDEN (n. 1) 109.

⁹² *PKöln* III.125. The fragment is usually attributed to Aeschylus (Aesch. fr. 273a Radt) and is considered a part of his play *Psychagogoi*, but confirmation of this in papyrus is lacking and Aeschylus cannot unequivocally be considered its author. Cf. KRAMER (n. 83) 14–23; RUSTEN, J. S.: The Aeschyliaen Avernus. Notes on P. Köln 3.125. In *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 45 (1982) 33–38; OGDEN (n. 1) 47–51; JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 290; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 44–45.

main proof of this objection.⁹³ It would only be, however, the crudest of analyses that would see human sacrifice as being in any way typical of attempts to insure an appearance by the dead (see part I). In Sophocles' lost play *Polyxene*, which was addressing the same theme at roughly the same time, the spirit of Achilles, who prevents the Greek flotilla from sailing away, first appears on its own accord and divines the seafarers' future fate; in fact, it is only then that he demands the sacrifice of a girl.⁹⁴ So, in this case, an undoubted hero, endowed with special powers (the ability to divine and to keep ships from setting sail), ascends from the grave and makes an appearance according to his own will. Thus, no time-tested rituals were performed beforehand to induce him to do so.⁹⁵ This means that the slitting of the throat of a sacrificial victim or its bleeding to death into a hollow at the grave do not themselves imply necromancy in any way, because both types are recorded in the case of standard graves as well as the graves of heroes.⁹⁶ However, while the ordinary dead were, from the beginning of the Classical period on, only rarely offered sacrificial blood by way of a hollow,⁹⁷ in the hero cults this happened quite regularly⁹⁸ and often took place at dusk or during the night.⁹⁹

We can therefore make our initial thesis about the resemblance of the Homeric ritual with the sacrifice at the grave more precise and say that it applies especially to the graves and cults of heroes, which necromancy certainly found the most inspiration in.¹⁰⁰ Compare, for example, Atossa's visit to the grave with the annual festival in Plataea to honor the fallen and the subsequently heroized soldiers. After the ceremonial procession is over, the Boeotian archon, clothed in a purple tunic and holding a sword, first places gifts (sprigs of myrtle and a wreath) at the graves of the fallen, then anoints their tombstones with oil, salve and water, after which he starts a fire, prays to Hades and Hermes and then slaughters a black bull, upon which he summons the heroes "to a feast and a holy day of blood" and in addition pours them wine and milk.¹⁰¹

There nonetheless remains the question as to whether a funeral necromancy of the literary type arose primarily from the graveside funeral cult or whether a true

⁹³ Eur. *Hec.* 534–539. TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 11; JOUAN (n. 73) 415; OGDEN (n. 1) 3–4.

⁹⁴ *Nostoi*, fr. 1 West = Procl. *Chrestom.* 291–293; [Longin.] *De subl.* XV 7–8; Sophocl. fr. 523 Radt = Apollod., *FGrHist* 244 F 102a. JOUAN (n. 73) 415; OGDEN (n. 1) 4, 111.

⁹⁵ E.g., Apollonius of Tyana, who rejected blood sacrifices of whatever type, enticed Achilles to a conversation with the help of special "Indian prayers" (Philostr. *VA* IV 11 and 16).

⁹⁶ *Common graves*: Clitodemus, *FGrHist* 323 F 14. *The graves of heroes*: Philostr. *Heroic.* LIII 11, p. 742. 8–10 Olearius; cf. Luc. *Char.* 22. KURTZ–BOARDMAN (n. 11) 75–76, 215.

⁹⁷ Luc. *De luct.* 14; *Schol. in Pind. Ol.* I 146a. ROHDE (n. 19) I 149 n. 6; STENGEL (n. 31) 147–148.

⁹⁸ STENGEL (n. 31) 140–141, 147–148; ROHDE (n. 19) I 148–150; KURTZ–BOARDMAN (n. 11) 215; BURKERT (n. 13) 205.

⁹⁹ Pind. *Isth.* III 109–112; Apoll. *Rhod. Arg.* I 587–588; Plut. *Sol.* IX 1; Paus. II 11. 7 and VIII 14. 11. DENEKEN (n. 91) 2514; BURKERT (n. 13) 200; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 60.

¹⁰⁰ NILSSON (n. 19) I 170; WILL (n. 21) 152 n. 3, and 164; cf. also BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 333; EITREM (n. 16) 14; TER VRUGT LENTZ (n. 46) 34; VEILLEUX (n. 1) 57, 59–60.

¹⁰¹ Plut. *Arist.* XXI 3–6; cf. Thuc. III 58. 4; Paus. IX 2. 4. DENEKEN (n. 91) 2520–2521; STENGEL (n. 31) 143; FARNELL (n. 90) 362; COLLARD (n. 1) 23; KURTZ–BOARDMAN (n. 11) 298; OGDEN (n. 1) 16.

necromancy did, which then inspired the literary type. In my opinion, we need to reject the latter possibility. Individual invocational scenes at the graves have so little in common that they can neither be seen to reproduce or to modify some concrete necromantic ritual that might have served as a general template and thus do not at all support its actual existence.¹⁰² Necromantic scenes from the Classical period do not – just as with the Homeric *Nekyia* – show any traces of the magic or pressure directed at the dead or chthonic gods that characterized the invocational necromancy of the Roman period.¹⁰³ The *literati* of the Classical and later periods probably bestowed only upon heroes the possibility of manifesting themselves on their graves, whether they be mythical heroes (Achilles, Teiresias, Protesilaos, Agamemnon) or newly promoted ones (Darius); but it only ever happened in the mythical regime of speech.¹⁰⁴ This means, in other words, that in the time of the Classical and earlier periods the ordinary dead were not actually called upon and nobody even allowed for such a possibility.

V. HEROES

Heroes were key to the development of necromancy not only because of the place where they usually lingered after death (i.e. their grave, possibly their statue)¹⁰⁵ and the rituals by which they were venerated, but also for their specific qualities. Even after their death, heroes amazed with their powerful bodies and strength; they traveled, copulated, wrestled and fought in battles on the side of those whom they favored. Astrabacus, for example, fathered children with the mother of the Spartan king Demaratus. Actaeon tormented the Orchomenians until they (on the command of the oracle of Delphi) sought out the remnants of his corpse, buried him and established a cult for him. Eunostus, murdered thanks to the plottings of his spurned mistress, reacted to the presence of women in the vicinity of his grave at Tanagra with devastating earthquakes. In the fight against the Persians, the likes of Phylakes, Autoonoo, Theseus and Marathon helped the Greeks, and were sighted alongside the human warriors.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 291.

¹⁰³ EITREM (n. 16) 5; COLLARD (n. 1) 23–24; cf. also BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 207. Roman references to graveside necromancy are too brief to make a comparison possible (Verg. *Ecl.* VIII 98; Hor. *Sat.* I 8, *Ep.* XVII 47–48, 78; *Vitae patrum* II 28; cf. Lucan. *Phars.* I 568).

¹⁰⁴ JOUAN (n. 73) 414.

¹⁰⁵ ROHDE (n. 19) I 81–82; NILSSON (n. 19) I 184, 186, 188–189; BURKERT (n. 13) 203; LARSON, J.: *Greek Heroine Cults*. London–Madison 1995, 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Astrabacus*: Herodot. VI 69. *Actaeon*: Paus. IX 38. 5. *Eunostus*: Plut. *Aët. Graec.* 40, 300d–f. *Phylacus and Autoonoo*: Herodot. VIII 38–39. *Theseus and Marathon*: Plut. *Thes.* XXXV 5; Paus. I 15. 3. For the corporeality and violent behavior of heroes see, with many further examples, FARNELL (n. 90) 371–372; ROHDE (n. 19) I 190–191; PHILLIPS, E. D.: Odysseus in Italy. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73 (1953) 53–68, here 57; BURKERT (n. 13) 206–207; LARSON (n. 105) 142–143; FELTON (n. 40) 27–28.

A violent or premature death did not in any way impede heroization, and often caused or forced it to happen.¹⁰⁷ However, it frequently occurred that even after their “canonization” heroes attacked the community and harmed people, animals or crops. Sometimes because of their questionable character (already evident when they were alive), other times for some supposed or real injustice that the people living in the area around the grave did to the hero¹⁰⁸ and at still other times out of a sense of vengeance for the fact that, because of an early or violent death, the hero was unable to fulfill his basic role in life.¹⁰⁹ Heroes could cause harm as well as do good¹¹⁰ and woe betide everybody when they decided on the first course of action. For example, Polites, one of Odysseus’ crew, got drunk and raped one of the local girls in the Italian Temesa, for which the local residents stoned him to death. The deceased Polites subsequently harassed, attacked and murdered the Temesans until, on the advice of the oracle of Delphi, they heroized him and, to placate him, each and every year gave him the nicest looking girl. In the end, it was said that Polites was overpowered and driven into the sea by Euthymus, the Olympic champion in boxing,¹¹¹ who later mysteriously disappeared and was also heroized.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ E.g., Onesilos was executed (Herodot. V 114); Phocaeans were stoned to death (Herodot. I 167); Hymetho and Hippodameia’s suitors were murdered (Paus. II 28. 3, VI 21. 9–11); Euphron was beaten to death (Xen. *Hell.* VII 3. 12); the daughters of Erechtheus committed suicide (Eur. fr. 370. 71–74 Nauck); Erigone hung herself (see below), as did Charilla (Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 12. 293c–f); Helena was hanged (Paus. III 19. 9); Lais was beaten or stoned to death (Athen. *Deipn.* 589ab; Plut. *Amat.* 767f–768a). BREMMER: The Early Greek Concept (n. 4) 107–108, even considers violent death to be the launching pad for the majority of heroizations, although it would perhaps be more precise to speak of certain symptomatic types of death which comprised one of the – but not the sole or primary – prerequisites for the formation of a cult (LARSON [n. 105] 16).

¹⁰⁸ E.g., Talthybios heralded a bad sign and caused the Spartans unspecified problems (Herodot. VI 134–137); in Citium, Cimon induced bad harvests and famine (Plut. *Cim.* XIX 5); Theagenes caused a crop failure for Thasos (Paus. VI.11.6–8); Ajax killed and caused damage in the area around his grave at Ilion and Hector, after his death, killed a boy who had allegedly insulted him (Philostr. *Heroic.* XVIII 3–4, 6, p. 681. 28–682. 17–23 Olearius); Anagyrasius tortured the entire family of a man who offended him by entering his grove (Suda, s. v. Ἀναγυράσιος). COLLISON MORLEY (n. 40) 26; ROHDE (n. 19) I 173–174, 178–180, 190–192; NILSSON (n. 19) I 188, 190; BREMMER: The Early Greek Concept (n. 4) 107–108; LARSON (n. 105) 134; OGDEN (n. 1) 14.

¹⁰⁹ E.g., it was told that some girls who had died prematurely by their own hands would pose a threat to the lives of similarly aged mates, so that the community was forced to institute, along with a hero cult, special placating ceremonies (see, in this regard, with many examples, LARSON [n. 105] 131–144; JOHNSTON: Restless Dead [n. 53] 216–248).

¹¹⁰ Aristoph. fr. 58. 1–6 Austin; Xenocrat. fr. 25 Heinze; Menandr. fr. 394 Körte; *PMich* 3690 (2nd–3rd cent. BCE). According to Babr. *Fab.* 63, damage could only be caused by heroes, whereas from the gods it was only possible to ask for good. FARNELL (n. 90) 369; MERKELBACH, R.: Die Heroen als Geber des Guten und Bösen. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 1 (1967) 97–99; BURKERT (n. 13) 207–208; LARSON (n. 105) 134.

¹¹¹ Paus. VI 6. 4–11; Suda, s. v. Εὐθύμος; cf. also Callim. *Aet.* IV = fr. 98–99 Pfeiffer; *Dieg. in Call. Aet.* IV; Ael. *VH* VIII 18; Strab. V 1. 5. COLLISON MORLEY (n. 40) 51–62; FARNELL (n. 90) 369, 371; ROHDE (n. 19) I 192–193; PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2246; PHILLIPS (n. 106) 57; BREMMER: The Early Greek Concept (n. 4) 106–107; LARSON (n. 105) 132–134; FELTON (n. 40) 26–27; OGDEN (n. 1) 108–109. For more details on this, see MAAS, E.: Der Kampf um Temesa. In *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 22 (1907) 18–53; GIANELLI, G.: *Culti e miti della Magna Grecia*. Firenze 1963, 223–235.

¹¹² Paus. VI 6. 10; Ael. *VH* VIII 18; Plin. *NH* VII 47. DENEKEN (n. 91) 2526.

This story is not only interesting because of the typically violent character of the hero or the possibility of driving him away, which is reminiscent of both the way troublesome spirits were driven away as well as of their ambivalent positions (see part III); similarly motivated heroizations serve as a reminder that, already in the 5th century BCE, being incorporated into a cult appears to be one of the methods for neutralizing the unwanted activity of the dead.¹¹³ If a competent professional had visited Temesa before the oracle of Delphi had recommended heroization as a solution to the problem (which, according to the reports, they often did), the troublesome Polites could have been driven away and could have remained a wandering demon,¹¹⁴ the features of which the sources have ascribed to him. The painter Polygnotus reportedly drew him as a terrifying black monster in a wolf's hide (Paus. VI 6. 11), which made him appear both like a black, chthonic being or demon¹¹⁵ as well as like the dead who are very often described or depicted as frightening, squalid and dark beings.¹¹⁶

That there was no fundamental separation of heroes and restless spirits is also shown by stories about revenants, by which we mean here the dead who not only repeatedly visited the living but who, even after their death, lived very much like them.¹¹⁷ The revenants, who without exception came from the ranks of the restless spirits (see part III), dwelled in their graves just as the heroes did but their bodies did not decompose and they were able to leave their graves and visit the world of the living. Indeed, even more to the point, the body of the revenant was quite corporeal, which enabled them to eat, drink, carry things, wrestle or even have sex. Nonetheless, they only resembled a person on the outside, since they had superhuman strength, appeared and disappeared unexpectedly and could transform themselves into an animal. Because the restless spirits did not substantially differ from the (potential) heroes

¹¹³ FARNELL (n. 90) 362, 365–366; BURKERT (n. 13) 206; LARSON (n. 105) 133.

¹¹⁴ E.g., Erigone, mentioned above, was heroized because she succeeded after her death in forcing girls in Athens to commit suicide (Ael. *NA* VII 28; Athen. *Deipn.* XIV 618e; Hyg. *Fab.* 130; Hyg. *Astron.* II 4. 2–5; Serv. in *Georg.* II 389; Hesych. and *Etym. magn.*, s. v. Αἰώπα; FARNELL [n. 90] 31 n. 15; LARSON [n. 105] 140–141; JOHNSTON: Restless Dead [n. 53] 219–228; Gello, however, after being hanged, continued to be among the troublesome dead, or a demon, although she strangled children (Zenob. *Paroem.* III 3; Suda, s. v. Γελλοῦς παιδοφιλωτέρα; cf. Sappfo, fr. 47 Bergk; TER VRUGT LENTZ [n. 46] 11, 51; LARSON [n. 105] 201 n. 23).

¹¹⁵ Cf. *Il.* III 360, XVI 686; *Od.* IV 180; Hes. *Theog.* 744–745; Aesch. *Suppl.* 160f.; Paus. VI 6. 7–11, VIII 34. 2–3 and X 28. 7; Val. Max. I 7. 7; Val. Flacc. *Arg.* I 815; Iambl. *Myst.* II 3; Nonn. *Dion.* XXXI 173; Stat. *Theb.* II 28 and 49; *Acta Petri* 22/70; *Passio Bartholomaei* II 1. 146; *Anecd. Athen.* I 64. 21 Delatte. HEADLAM (n. 19) 52, 54; WINKLER, J.: Lollianos and the Desperadoes. *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980) 155–181, here 161; OGDEN (n. 1) 171; DONNADIEU–VILATTE (n. 20) 60–61, 63.

¹¹⁶ *Squalor and menace*: Eur. *Troad.* 1083; Plin. Jun. *Epist.* VII 27. 5; Sen. *Oed.* 624–625; Stat. *Theb.* IV 614–615; Plut. *Brut.* XXXVI 7; *POxy* III 416. 9 and 13; Apul. *Met.* I 6, I 19, IX 30, *Apol.* 63; Iambl. *Babyl.* = Phot. *Bibl.* 74b40–41. *Dark color*: Luc. *Philops.* 16, 31; *Od.* XI 601–606; *PGM* VII 349; Heliod. *Aeth.* I 3. 1; Suet. *Cal.* 57; Dio Cass. LXVII 9. COLLISON MORLEY (n. 40) 5–6; WINKLER (n. 115) 160–165; FELTON (n. 40) 14–16.

¹¹⁷ Cf. LAWSON: Modern Greek Folklore (n. 66) 412, 416; OGDEN (n. 1) 230. The surviving examples are few in number and none of them were recorded until the Roman period: Phleg. *Mir.* I 1–18, II 1–11; Procl. in *Remp.* II 115. 7 – 116. 18 Kroll; [Quintilian.] *Decl. maior* X 1–15.

either in their behavior or appearance (the powerful dead = heroes),¹¹⁸ it is difficult not to see their normative or narrative template in the heroes.¹¹⁹ At the same time, the restless spirits and revenants inspired in many respects the appearance and behavior of the ordinary dead: that which was initially assumed to be the case only with them gradually crossed over – in certain circles, a certain genre and time – to all of the dead.

This was most likely caused by the spread of heroization. Up until the end of the Classical period the sources can only substantiate a few dozen historical figures who were actually heroized (from which, moreover, some were only mythical or were heroized later), and these were instigated, sponsored and cultically maintained by the state;¹²⁰ however, in the course of the Hellenistic and, especially, Roman period their numbers grew astronomically because heroization became a personal gesture made by the bereaved in which the state played no role and which also had virtually no meaning or reflection in a real cult.¹²¹ In the Classical and Hellenistic periods nobody could yet ask the ordinary dead to do something in the world or in the underworld because even those who accepted their posthumous existence considered them to be noncorporeal and almost powerless (see part III). Only in the Roman period, when the dead to a certain extent merged with *daimons* and heroes and nominally acquired their strengths and powers,¹²² could they be entrusted by magicians to do services for which they needed not only powers, but also some kind of a body. For example, Apuleius' revenant, on the order of a witch, took on the form (body?) of a woman and hung the man whom the witch indicated.¹²³ It is characteristic of this case and period that the magician very much controls the deceased and leads him or her along as though they were a puppet; previously, the powerful dead, i.e. the restless spirits, revenants and heroes, were almost ungovernable. So long as it was

¹¹⁸ Precisely for this reason the heroes were κρείττορες, i.e. "the more powerful" (than normal people), see, e.g., Epicharm. fr. 165 Kaibel = Hesych. and Phot., s. v. κρείττονας. FARNELL (n. 90) 343; NILSSON (n. 19) I 190–191; GARLAND (n. 50) 88; FELTON (n. 40) 27–28.

¹¹⁹ See similarly BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 211.

¹²⁰ E.g., CONNOLLY, A.: Was Sophokles heroised as Dexion? *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 118 (1998) 1–21, here 21, records only 53 heroized historical figures up to the year 336 BCE, of which at least ten are questionable. Cf. similarly DENEKEN (n. 91) 2517–2530; FARNELL (n. 90) 361–372; LATTIMORE (n. 38) 238–239; BURKERT (n. 13) 206, 207; LARSON (n. 105) 128–130; OBYRK (n. 47) 176.

¹²¹ DENEKEN (n. 91) 2517, 2546–2554; DEUBNER (n. 74) 6 n. 2; ROHDE (n. 19) I 358–362; NILSSON (n. 19) I 143–144, 545; BURKERT (n. 13) 206; LARSON (n. 105) 130.

¹²² The denoting of the dead as heroes or as *daimons* is already documented from the Classical period (only in some places and rather exceptionally) and the Hellenistic period (commonly), but there is almost no reference made to heroization and a real cult (see, with many examples, LATTIMORE [n. 38] 97–99; LARSON [n. 105] 3), although the intention to raise in this way the status of the dead is sometimes found in this activity (FARNELL [n. 90] 367; cf. DENEKEN [n. 91] 2530f.). By contrast, the grave inscriptions of the Roman epoch quite openly demand a higher status for the dead, see, e.g., *GVI* 2040. 5 from Pergamon (2nd cent. CE); *GVI* 1683. 2 from Cyzicus (2nd cent. CE); *SIG*³ III 1243. 24 from Acraphiai (2nd cent. CE); *IG* XIV 2257. 2 from Veii (the Roman period); *IG* VII 45. 3 from Megara; *IG* XII 3 *Suppl.* 202. 5 from Astypalaia. COLLISON MORLEY 1912, 3; CUMONT (n. 5) 86; LATTIMORE (n. 38) 237–240; MERKELBACH (n. 110) 98–99.

¹²³ Apul. *Met.* IX 29–30. Cf. similarly Plaut. *Most.* 509. PREISENDANZ (n. 7) 2247; OGDEN (n. 1) 256–257.

extremely difficult to drive them away or placate them, only a very small number of people apparently had the interest and courage to trifle with them and demand information or some service from them.¹²⁴ Until the Roman period it was therefore not possible to find something on which to base the belief – which reports about necromancy from the Roman and Byzantine periods have in common – that necromancers were able to summon the dead from the underworld without regard to the manner of their life, death or burial.¹²⁵

CONCLUSION

The majority of the necromantic techniques discussed above raise doubts as to what extent these practices were truly feasible and to what extent they were mainly literary images and constructs. In antiquity, only a small portion of authors from the literary stratum touched on the problem of the existence and practicability of necromancy, and they did not all share the same attitude towards it; moreover, it is often unclear what they truly thought about the supposed practice. It is not possible to automatically attribute a belief in the feasibility of necromancy to the *literati* who incorporated a necromantic scene into their work, as they were usually pursuing an artistic effect which they certainly did not want to weaken by expressing some sort of doubt about it. Similarly, those who disparaged necromancy cannot necessarily be considered to inadvertently acknowledge its functionality,¹²⁶ as some of them were criticizing the very beliefs that had underlain such ceremonies and goals, even if they were more or less skeptical regarding their feasibility.¹²⁷

It was the intellectuals of the Classical period who were most likely to be counted among the doubters; they turned against the traveling salesmen who peddled rituals that aimed at the manipulation of the dead or their posthumous fate. These doubters included the author of the Hippocratic text *De morbo sacro*, Euripides, Plato and perhaps also Sophocles, whose Neoptolemos concluded that “it is impossible to

¹²⁴ Cf. BURKERT (n. 13) 208: “It is some extraordinary quality that makes the hero; something unpredictable and uncanny is left behind and is always present. A Heroon is always passed in silence.”

¹²⁵ Tertull. *De an.* 57; Stat. *Theb.* IV 479–487, 543–544; Lucan. *Phars.* VI 637; Apul. *Met.* I 8, I 10, II 28, III 17, IX 29–31; Aen. Gaz. *Theophr.* 24, p. 18. 21 – 19. 2 Colonna; Nicephorus Gregoras, in *Synes. De insomn.*, PG CXLIX 616A and 618B.

¹²⁶ Although there were such authors, cf. Cic. *Tusc. disp.* I 16. 37, *Div.* I 58. 132, *Vatin.* 14; Philostr. *VA* VIII 7. 12; Iambl. *De myst.* II 5–6 and 9; Iulius Arianus (?), *Const. apostol.* I 62. 2; Augustin. *Conf.* X 35. 56; Ioann. Chrysostom. in *Matth.* 34. 4, PG LVII 403. 27–30; Zacharias Scholasticus, *Vit. Sever.* 72, p. 58. 1f. Kugener. HOPFNER: *Nekromanteia* (n. 1) 2228; SMELIK, K. A. D.: *The Witch of Endor*: I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D. *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979) 160–178, here 174–176; BREMMER: *Ancient Necromancy* (n. 19) 83.

¹²⁷ Aristotel. *De somn.* 3. 462a12–15; Artemid. *On.* II 69; Plut. *Brut.* XXXVII 5, *Dion* II 4; Tertull. *De an.* 57; Augustin. *De cura pro mort. ger.* XII 14–15, *PL* XL 602; Lact. *Epit. Div. inst.* 28, *PL* VI 1036; Aen. Gaz. *Theophr.* 20, p. 54. 4–10 Colonna. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 337–338; HOPFNER: *Offenbarungszauber* (n. 5) II 157 (par. 359 and 361); COLLARD (n. 1) 116; SMELIK (n. 126) 176; FELTON (n. 40) 21; OGDEN (n. 1) 266; BREMMER: *Ancient Necromancy* (n. 19) 82.

bring up to the light him who is hidden in the tomb".¹²⁸ In that particular epoch, however, the magicians almost certainly did not offer necromantic rituals of the type that called up the souls of the dead or revived corpses because sources only rarely allude to such a possibility, and do so ambiguously and almost exclusively in connection with mythical personalities (Circe, Hercules, Orpheus). If somebody truly offered the possibility of moving the dead about and altering posthumous fates, it is likely that only a few people took it seriously, although such assertions undoubtedly evoked an emotional response.¹²⁹

It was always the *literati* that disseminated the oldest and most detailed information about necromancy. It is unlikely that they were building upon truly feasible contemporary and older ceremonies, since they only share a minimum of common elements and enshroud them in a thick, mythical-fabulous mist. Primarily, the *literati* most likely drew from scenes of other *literati*, that means mainly from the Homeric *Nekyia* and, secondarily, from famous mythical visits to the underworld. The ritual described by Homer, which took place in a remote mythical locality on the edge of the world, was inspired by cults of the dead and heroes. The *literati* of the Classical period (Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles) also found inspiration in the hero cults that were tied to particular graves, as they needed some kind of precedent and verisimilitude that the dead who had been addressed could appear among the living or somehow intervene in their affairs.

Even though the foundations of ancient necromancy were laid down by *literati*, who to a certain extent also built the entire edifice that rested on them, this does not mean that all literary scenes touching on necromancy are pure fiction or circumlocutions of older models. The *literati* instead produced for their readers some mixture of fantasy and reality in which indisputably mythical elements were blended with: a) actually held notions about the underworld, the dead and their habits; b) rituals that were actually carried out (especially from the cult of heroes); c) magic theses and instructions which, in part, circulated among the people and which, in part, were collected or created in magic texts (that applies above all to the Roman period).

Somebody carefully considering the executability of the majority of the necromantic instructions will likely reach the conclusion that they do not appear, for the most part, to be feasible; this holds true whether they concern the revival of corpses, discussions with heads that have been removed from their bodies or with skulls that have been animated, or the beckoning of souls or restless spirits. Personally, I do not see any way to rationally explain how it is that as a result of some ritual the dead could be perceived to come to the place indicated, allow themselves to be seen and then have a discussion with those who have summoned them. *In illo puncto* there remains little to the academically-anchored researcher other than to append him- or herself to the ancient skeptics. In spite of the number of necromantic scenes that

¹²⁸ Soph. fr. 557. 4–5 Radt, trans. H. Lloyd-Jones. Cf. BRAVO: Une tablette (n. 60) 207–208.

¹²⁹ E.g., Plat. *Leg.* 909a–c, ordains that people who assert that they can guide the souls of the dead and affect their posthumous fate should be imprisoned outside of the community deep in the interior, strictly isolated from all normal people and then, after they die, to be cast outside the borders without burial (cf. *Leg.* 933d–e). CUMONT (n. 5) 98; COLLARD (n. 1) 116; OGDEN (n. 1) 105–106.

occur in literature and the abundance of the details that are presented, such events could not truly have been carried out. One can only feel surprised in this regard at how many modern researchers believe in the execution and great dissemination of necromantic practices, and not only in the ancient Greece of the Prehistoric, Archaic, Classical and Roman periods,¹³⁰ but also amongst other peoples and civilizations.¹³¹ All of the preceding findings however point to a very unequivocal conclusion that, at least in the Homeric, Archaic and Classical periods, necromancy was only realized in mythology and literature.¹³²

Nor can the Oracles of the Dead, places in which necromancy was already allegedly being carried out in the Classical period (if not earlier) significantly alter this conclusion. There is an abundance of arguments available that refute both their great age as well as their very existence, but this is a task that shall have to wait for another time. Personally, I do not believe that necromancy was carried out at any time during antiquity, not even in the Roman period. To prove this would be all the more laborious and methodologically more complex because of the fact that, above all, such an investigation would necessarily come up against the difficult to solve question of the actual feasibility and effectiveness of magic instructions and of magic itself.

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¹³⁰ Cf., e.g., BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ (n. 8) I 332f. and 336–338; PEASE (n. 20) 334; EITREM (n. 16) 1–2; SMELIK (n. 126) 176 n. 59 (in the Roman period); MORRISON (n. 20) 89; TUPET (n. 5) 2663–2665 and 2672–2673 (in the Roman period); BREMMER: Ancient Necromancy (n. 19) 80; DINGEL (n. 5) 119; FARAONE: Necromancy (n. 1) 256, 278; FRIESE, W.: Facing the Dead: Landscape and Ritual of Ancient Greek Death Oracles. *Time and Mind* 3.1 (2010) 29–40, here 36–38.

¹³¹ Cf., e.g., COLLISON MORLEY (n. 40) 33, 37, 42; PEASE (n. 20) 334; COLLARD (n. 1) 115–116; TROPPER (n. 28) 18, 21; BREMMER: Ancient Necromancy (n. 19) 80; SEIDEL, J.: Necromantic Praxis in the Midrash on the Seance at En Dor. In CIRAOLO, L. – SEIDEL, J. (eds): *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World*. Leiden–Boston–Köln 2002, 97–106.

¹³² Cf. similarly TOY, C. H.: *Introduction to the History of Religion*. Boston – New York – Chicago 1913, 429; WILL (n. 21) 150 n. 2, 165; NILSSON (n. 19) I 169–170; FOUACHE–QUANTIN (n. 19) 59; OGDEN (n. 1) xxii–xxiii, 163–164; JOHNSTON: Delphi (n. 19) 292, 297, 299.