ORPHEUS

A STUDY IN ICONOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art

by

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DEDICATION

This effort is dedicated to my children, Nelson, Jennifer and Claire, in appreciation of their understanding and patience during the process, and in the hope that they too, have learned something useful from the experience.

"Nicht einsam bleibst du, bildist dich gesellig,
Und handelst wohl so wie ein andrer handelt:
Im Leben ist's bald hin-bald wiederfällig,
Es ist ein Tand und wird so durchgetandelt;"

Goethe
Urworte, Orphisch

"Quot homines tot sententiae; suo quoque mos."
Terence

"That's not a regular rule: you invented it just now.
It's the oldest rule in the book, said the King. Then it ought to be Number One, said Alice."

Lewis Carrol

"The jury all wrote down on their slates, 'She doesn't believe there's an atom of meaning in it.'"

Ibid.

"Hoc volo, sic iubueo, sit pro ratione voluntas."

Juvenal

"All in all it was all just bricks in the wall"

Pink Floyd

"This song is over, It's all behind me."

The Who
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am grateful to Professor Arthur Dale Trendall, who graciously took time to advise me at a critical juncture in the development of this thesis. During the later stages of research, Dr. Kenneth Hamma, of the University of Southern California, was very helpful.
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EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. Works cited by author's name and abbreviated title.


Harrison, Jane. Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903. (Cited as Harrison, Prolegomena)


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ABSTRACT

ORPHEUS

A STUDY IN ICONOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION

by

Priscilla S. Gibbs

Master of Arts in Art

This thesis will trace the iconographic transformation of the mythological Greek poet and musician, Orpheus. As one of the most complex and versatile of the Greek mythological figures, Orpheus has been a favorite subject for both art and literature throughout history. However, this discussion will focus on the manifestations of Orpheus in the culture of archaic and classical mainland Greece, and then trace the changes in iconography as Orpheus is adapted to the different cultural setting of the Greek colonies in Magna Graecia. It is the contention of this study that the iconographic changes in the visual imagery of Orpheus reflects shifts in the intrinsic meaning or iconology of Orpheus. Each
culture perceived Orpheus differently, based on the needs of that particular society, therefore certain aspects of Orpheus were emphasized by means of iconographic changes. Although visual images of Orpheus are the principal topic of this thesis, literary evidence will also be examined to see how it relates to the art. Five themes in which Orpheus is portrayed in mainland Greece have been isolated to begin this study. Then the changes of each theme will be traced in mainland Greece and then in Magna Graecia. The themes are: Orpheus as a musician; the Argonaut voyage; Orpheus and Eurydice; the death of Orpheus; and Orpheus as a religious figure. As these themes are followed into Magna Graecia it is evident that significant changes occur so that the themes do not present parallels in Greece and in Magna Graecia. Instead Italiote iconography presents the themes in substantively different guises and emphases from that which is found in mainland Greek art.
INTRODUCTION

Orpheus makes his earliest appearance in history as long ago as the sixth century, B.C. when the Greek poet, Ibykos, describes him as, "famous Orpheus".\(^1\)

Unfortunately, that is the only information about Orpheus that has survived on this particular fragment and, as is so often the case with Orpheus, more questions are raised than are answered. In spite of the fact that Orpheus is one of the most popular and easily identified of the Greek mythic heroes, he is also one of the most difficult to define firmly. This difficulty is due in part to the complexity inherent in the myth and to the fact that since different cultures have used his image, it was transformed to reflect their cultural values.

The aim of this thesis is to determine what has made Orpheus such a distinctive and identifiable figure despite the many transformations he has undergone. To

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\(^1\)This fragment appeared in a now lost poem by Ibykos of Rhegium (Diehl. fr. 17). For a discussion of the source of the quote, see Michael Grant. Greek Literature: An Anthology, (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 58. See also, Ivan M. Lindforth, Arts, p. 3. This is the earliest extant literary mention of Orpheus. Ibykos is dated ca. mid-sixth century, B.C. He is known to have been at the court of Polycrates, ruler of Samos, from 533-522, B.C.
answer that question this study will trace the iconography of Orpheus as it moves from mainland Greece during the archaic and classical periods to the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia. These two cultural spheres, Greece, beginning in the archaic era and continuing through the classical period, and the colonies of Southern Italy during the fourth and third centuries B.C., have been selected because they were the formative ones in which the major themes of the Orpheus myth were developed and portrayed in visual form. The first part of this study will be the genesis, development and variations of Orpheus in Greece, then the image will be followed to Southern Italy, particularly the area of Apulia. Along with the geographical move from Greece to Magna Graecia, there also occurred iconographical changes which reflected changed cultural perceptions. Orpheus becomes transformed from a Greek mythic hero into a religious symbol with chthonic

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2 In addition to the themes developed in Greece and Magna Graecia, Orpheus later assumed another personna, that of a conflation of Orpheus and Christ which was probably one of the sources from which the Christian Good Shepherd figure derived. However, this study will encompass only the themes that were found in Greek and Italiote art from the archaic period to the end of the fourth century, B.C.
and possibly shamanistic traits when he is portrayed in Italiote art. Not only will this study discuss the iconography of Orpheus in art, but because the themes in the iconography are also found in the literary myths and later in religious and philosophical writings attributed to Orpheus, it will also examine the literature in an attempt to determine its possible relation to the artistic iconography.

Ancient artists and their audience were well aware of the significance of Orphic iconography, but today, centuries later, it is less obvious. How is it that this image can be so different and yet always recognizable? Orpheus is perhaps one of the best known, yet least understood, of all the characters of Greek myth. However, when one attempts to define Orpheus, or relate what facts are known about him, problems immediately arise. Then this famous figure becomes as one scholar termed him,

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Mircea Eliade, Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. Willard Trask, trans. (New York: Bollingen Series LXXI Pantheon Books, 1964), pp. 3-4, limits and defines shamanism as "... he is a psychopomp and he may also be a priest, mystic and poet." Of Orpheus in particular, he mentions the decent to Hades as typically "shamanistic" and goes on to say, "But Orpheus also displays other characteristics of a "Great Shaman": his healing art, his love for music and animals, his "charms," his power of divination."
"elusive". One reason for this elusiveness is the fact that we are dealing with antiquity and, therefore, the subject is prone to the accidents of preservation. Yet, even if sufficient material were at hand, the subject itself presents unique difficulties: Orpheus is one of the most complex figures of Greek mythology and presents a kaleidoscopic composite of character and events.

One of the first questions that arises in any study of Orpheus is simply the question, "What was Orpheus?". Was he a myth completely formed out of human imagination, or was he a figure of legend, perhaps representing centuries of embellishments on the life of an actual person? A good bit of scholarly ink has flowed on both sides of this question without any conclusive results. Whether or not there was ever an historical Orpheus, the important thing is that the experience which he represents has existed in men's minds throughout the centuries. This image has had a more vital and long-lived reality than most historical people ever attain. Orpheus has been the subject of literature, art and music from the mists of antiquity down to the present day. At various times he has been considered the inventor of the lyre, of writing, and of various religious rites and eschatological systems. Hymns, poems and theogonies reputedly authored by Orpheus span the fifth century, B.C. to the fourth

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century, A.D. He was considered by some to be a god, or
godlike, others saw him as a religious reformer or
missionary associated both with the Dionysiac mysteries
and with Apollonian religion. He has been considered
the first musician and poet, as well as the first
pederast. He was the hero of several unrelated and
different legends, from the Argonaut voyage to the
romantic story of the search for his wife, Eurydice. So
much of the information attached to the name of Orpheus is
fragmentary, complex and often contradictory that any
attempt to approach a study of Orpheus as if the
iconography represented a unified, consistent cluster of
ideas would be both futile as well as incongruous with his
Greek origin. Orpheus, like most aspects of Greek
religion, is fluid and full of contradictions and
complexities. He is easily transformed from one meaning
to another; he can be a heroic Argonaut, or "merely a
minstrel", too cowardly to defend himself. John Block
Friedman notes in his recent book on Orpheus, that there
is no "complete 'original' version of the Orpheus

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5This is the role espoused by Guthrie in the book
cited immediately above.

6Raymond Larson, ed. and trans., Plato, The
Symposium and The Phaedo, (Illinois: A. H. M. Publishing,
myth."⁷ If we attempt to find the bedrock, we are faced, instead, with what Friedman describes as a "broken antique status, pierced together from scattered fragments and even then forced to face posterity without an arm or nose."⁸ For purposes of this study, it would be incorrect and misleading to attempt to create a single unity and then to trace its manifestations in historical moments. Instead the multi-faced nature of the figure of Orpheus will be accepted as an integral part of the iconography that will be investigated. In order to provide some coherence to the "scattered fragments," this study will group the materials into five main themes that possess well-defined iconographies.

The first theme to be discussed is that of Orpheus as a musician/poet. This role is not only the earliest chronological manifestation, but represents the innate essence of Orpheus, fundamental to all the other roles. In addition, it provides the primary iconographic


⁸Ibid. p. 5.
attribute of Orpheus, that of his lyre. The second theme is the role of Orpheus in the expedition of the Argonauts. This theme has little visual imagery and was primarily a literary manifestation, but I believe that it had an important influence on the iconology of Orpheus. The next theme, that of Orpheus and Eurydice, was also primarily literary, as far as can be judged from the extant evidence. This romantic tale of Orpheus' descent into the underworld in search of his beloved wife was a favorite of later writers, but was not particularly popular in Greek legend. Greek artists much preferred the fourth theme, that of the death and dismemberment of Orpheus and its subsidiary theme of Orpheus among the Thracians. The literary evidence of this theme is fragmentary, and it has persisted primarily as the subject of Attic vase paintings. Finally, the question of Orpheus as a religious or cultic figure will be investigated. This topic has been the subject of considerable and

'The primary iconographic attribute of Orpheus is the lyre. In the many visual portrayals of Orpheus there are only a few that do not show a lyre. In fact, it is fairly safe to assume that a figure holding a lyre is meant to be Orpheus. There are of course other mythological lyre players, the most common being Apollo Kitharodus. However, usually if an image is meant to be someone other than Orpheus, the artist will add some other attribute to make the distinction clear. In light of the fact that the lyre could be considered a constant in images of Orpheus, it would be very repetitious to discuss its presence in each representation of Orpheus in art. Therefore, the topic of iconography of the lyre, as such, is dealt with in Appendix I (pp. 189-193).
contentious scholarly debate, and while most scholars are now agreed that there was an Orphic cult in Magna Graecia, there is little agreement on the form of the cult. However, the purpose of this study is not an investigation of religious practices, but a survey of its manifestations in art; it will be evident, however, that the religious aspects of Orpheus had greater importance in Magna Graecia than in Greece.

While these themes are to some extent artificial, because they overlap and intermix, nonetheless, they are useful tools for following the transformations of Orpheus in the two cultures with which this study deals. It will become apparent that while each theme possesses a well defined iconography in both visual and literary manifestations in mainland Greece, this does not hold true for Magna Graecia. In Italiote art, these five themes undergo changes and additions and are used primarily to provide the intrinsic meaning or iconology that underlies the iconography of artistic representations. Therefore, while the visual and literary manifestations of Orpheus in archaic and classical Western Greece will be categorized by theme, the material from Magna Graecia will be approached more appropriately by discussion of the funerary vases on which Orpheus is represented. Then an attempt will be made to determine how the vases relate to the five themes. As the artistic evidence of each of the two cultures is examined, an attempt will be made to
determine the iconographic variations which occur as a result of geographical expansion. In order to determine the intrinsic meaning of the Orpheus myth in the different cultural settings, specific iconographic criteria will be applied to the visual imagery, such as the type of costume worn by Orpheus, what the surrounding figures were, and in what context the image is found. The answers to these questions will reveal the iconological transformations that occurred when Orpheus was adapted to meet the needs of the culture of mainland Greece and that of Magna Graecia.
CHAPTER I
Orpheus in Greece

It is perhaps appropriate to begin a study of the imagery of Orpheus as represented in the culture of Archaic and Classical Greece by looking back to one of the small marble statuettes from Amorgos in the Cyclades. Nine of these statuettes have been discovered so far, and have been dated in the later part of the third millennium, B.C., (PLATE 1).\(^1\) The figures are all very similar and represent a seated man playing a stringed instrument. This type of figure provides an interesting background from which to begin an investigation of the iconography of Orpheus since it represents a core of experience that even though it can not be identified as "Orpheus", indicates the respect and perhaps reverence that this early culture felt for the power of music. A man making music was considered significant enough to justify the time and effort to create sculpture in the hard medium of marble. With iconic simplicity the image has been reduced to the essential form, thus making a direct and powerful

statement. If the statue is not "Orpheus" as such, it is a statement of the significance of music in that culture, which later the image of Orpheus symbolized. It proclaims the miracle of man's ability to create music, and is an representation of the power of music.

Equally unverifiable as "Orpheus" is a figure on the fresco in the Throne Room in the Palace of Nestor at Pylos (PLATE 2). This Bronze age fresco, from the second millennium B.C., was contemporary with Tiryns and Mycenae, and shows a male figure rather precariously perched on top of a tall rock, playing the lyre. He is shown dressed in a long, striped robe, barefooted and bareheaded, facing toward the viewer's left. He holds a ornately curved five-stringed lyre balanced on his lap and steadied with his right hand, and appears to be, playing to a bird that is flying away from him. Carl Blegen, the excavator of the site, unhesitatingly identified the figure as Orpheus, while others have been more skeptical. Whomever he was meant to be, the

2 All subsequent directions, unless otherwise specified, will be considered as the viewer's right or left as one faces the object directly.


figure like the Cycladian statue, is the visualization of the importance of the emotive powers of music.

Not until much later in history is definite reference made to someone named Orpheus as a master musician. In the sixth century B.C., the poet Simonides of Kos claimed that Orpheus' music had the power to charm birds and cause fishes to leap out of the water. Thus, it appears that Simonides perceived Orpheus not only as a musician, but also one with magical powers. In Persae, the fifth century B.C. poet Timotheus credited Orpheus with the invention of the lyre: "In the beginning did Orpheus, son of Calliope, beget the motley-musicked shell on Mount Piera, and after him came the famous Terpander." Timotheus has packed considerable information into this brief comment. He places Orpheus' birthplace as Thrace, where Mount Piera is found, and names Calliope, the muse of music, as his mother. In addition, he describes the earliest type of lyre, which used a tortoise shell as the soundbox. There are innumerable references to Orpheus as a musician in Greek

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5 According to J. M. Edmonds, (editor and translator), Lyra Graecia v. I, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Loeb Classical Library 1958), this fragment is attributed to Simonides of Kos by John Tzetzes, a twelfth century scholiast, in his work, Chiliades.

literature; however, to a great extent, they simply repeat the information given by these two early poets and so we shall let them stand as exemplars of the whole genre, and turn instead to visual imagery.

Because almost all visual representations of Orpheus show him with the lyre, we must be careful to distinguish those representations which are solely concerned with the theme of Orpheus as a musician, from those which show him with the lyre, but are meant to illustrate other aspects of his myth. The theme of Orpheus as musician/poet follows two iconographic traditions; sometimes he is shown by himself and identified by only the lyre, and sometimes he is represented playing the lyre to a group of animals surrounding him. The latter type is found on the earliest example of this theme of musician/poet which occurs on an Attic Black-figure plate dated in the early sixth century B.C. (PLATE 3).\(^7\) The crudely painted design is a medallion with a seated figure facing toward the right,

\(^7\)J. D. Beazley, *ABV.*, 659/12. Beazley does not give the location of the vase at the time he was publishing, listing it as "Once Halle", leading to the possibility that it is now lost. However, in spite of the difference in dating, this is surely the plate referred to by Kern, quoted by Lindforth, *Arts*, p. 2., n. 2, when he says, "... Jetzt kommt aber noch eine viel ältere, kleine boiotische Schale aus dem VII Jahrhundert (in meinem Besitz) hinzu, auf der der bärtige, auf einer viersaitigen Lyra spielende Orpheus von sieben auf Zweigen sitzenden Vögeln und einem Reh umgeben ist ...." As Lindforth notes this is the earliest known representation of Orpheus among the animals.
and playing the lyre. At the left and behind the figure is a group of animals ostensibly listening to the music. The animals cannot be identified, nor can Orpheus' costume be distinguished; they are all stick figure types. There is no positive identification of Orpheus on this plate, but, iconographically, it is most probable that the subject is meant to be Orpheus among the animals.

A more sophisticated representation of Orpheus, the musician, is found on a Black-figure oinoche (PLATE 4) dated in the last quarter of the sixth century, B. C. The inscription reads "Hail Orpheus" and shows him mounting a platform probably with the intention of performing with the large, very ornate lyre that he carries in his left hand. With his right hand he is rather daintily holding up the chiton he is wearing. He appears to wear a headdress or a wreath around his head. The vase is identified as portraying Orpheus and described by Mingazzini, in his catalog of vases from the Castellani collection. An alternative identification of this figure has been put forth suggesting that it could be a representation of "a mortal bard invoking his

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8 J. D. Beazley, ABV, 432/below 4.

patron." Other scholars have identified it as Orpheus, and this seems most likely. The theme of Orpheus as a musician/poet with magical powers is a continuing thread in Greek literature, but visual representations naturally tend to favor specific narrative events of his legend, such as the death of Orpheus, or his search for Eurydice. It is not until Roman art that the simple depiction of Orpheus with the lyre and the animals is again popular.

The next theme to appear chronologically is Orpheus in the role of an Argonaut. This is the earliest of the themes to have left a substantial record. Both art and literature attest to his presence on this famous voyage. However, little remains of artistic evidence. Whether this is the result of the hazards of survival, or whether it indicates that this adventure did not have much appeal as a subject for art, cannot be determined at this late date. Only two examples of visual representations of Orpheus as an Argonaut from the art of this period have survived.

The first example is a rather fragmentary, and badly worn metope from the Sicyonian Treasury at Delphi, dating from the sixth century, B. C. (PLATE 5). On this

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11Guthrie, Orpheus, p. 20. Also Beazley, ARV 2, and Mingazzini.
metope, Orpheus is clearly identified by an inscription as the left figure standing in the boat.\textsuperscript{12} It is quite certain that the metope depicts the Argo. Scholars have generally accepted this identification because of the other figures who are clearly the twins Castor and Pollux, who were among the Argonauts. The other figure with a lyre is not positively identified, though the inscription has been speculatively reconstructed as Philammon, another mythical musician.\textsuperscript{13} The question may be raised, why two musicians are depicted, when literary tradition, as we shall see later, presents only one, namely Orpheus. A possible explanation of this feature may be found in the interesting theory that Robert Boehme develops in his chapter on "Orpheus Auf Der Metope In Delphi".\textsuperscript{14} Boehme suggests that Philammon may have been the original musician on the voyage, and that the inclusion of Orpheus was an invention of Cleisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon from 600 to 570 B.C., in aid of a political program. At that time, Cleisthenes was attempting to lessen the influence of the Argive Doriens and to emphasize a return to the old


\textsuperscript{13}Lindforth, \textit{Arts}, p. 2.

Aeolian traditions. Orpheus, according to Boehme, was an example of this early pre-Homeric, more mystical religious background. Whether or not this is the reason for the depiction of two musicians, it is an interesting supposition that as early as the sixth century B.C., Orpheus was perceived as a figure that carried implications of being very ancient. This image of Orpheus on the Delphi metope is important for this study because it establishes the earliest identification of Orpheus as an Argonaut, and it precedes the extant literary references. However, it does not give much else in the way of information. It can only be concluded that he played the lyre he is shown holding, and that he was associated with the voyage.

An Attic black figure lekythos from the last quarter of the seventh century B.C., now in Heidelberg (PLATE 6) provides the other example of artistic representations of Orpheus as an Argonaut. The painted decoration of this footed lekythos is divided into two registers. The upper part provides the identification of Orpheus as an Argonaut, as he stands in profile, in a long robe and cloak, and holds out his lyre in his right hand, with the plectrum in his left. On either side he is


\[16\] Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Fascicule 31, Germany, Heidelberg, p. 53, pl. 167, 1-6.
flanked by Sirens which must certainly refer to the episode in the Argonaut story when his shipmates are saved by Orpheus playing his lyre to drown out the singing of the Sirens. The Sirens in this case are very bird-like, with only a side view of a bull facing one lion, with another at its back. A small Siren figure is perched in the space left between the two hindquarters of the lions. Whether the animals are meant to represent Orpheus' power over wild beasts, or are merely decorative, cannot be conclusively determined. It is possible that the painter would have the association of Orpheus and the animals in mind, but if so, he has not made the relationship clear. Not only are the animals separated from the upper representation of Orpheus, and do not appear to be listening to him, but they are powerful and fierce looking. It is more likely that the portrayal of the animals was connected with the animal style of vase decoration prevalent especially in the Corinthian tradition in the sixth century B.C., to which this vase, though Attic, is closely linked in its decorational scheme of registers. The vase is very thoroughly discussed in the Corpus Vasorum, but the information is concerned primarily with the description of the painting and condition of the vase, and does not speculate on its provenance or interpretation. However, it is most likely an example of Orpheus linked to the Argonaut voyage by the Sirens, and thus presenting him not only as a musician,
but as one who can guide his companions through dangerous situations, a role which is clearly easier to develop in literature than in art, which is born out by facts.

Literary evidence of Orpheus as an Argonaut is, in fact, considerably more expansive than the meagre visual artifacts. However, the literature is primarily useful in regards to events during the voyage. The extant literature probably did not influence the iconography of the art, simply because it came later, and, therefore the image of Orpheus as an Argonaut on the Sicyonian metope and on the Heidelberg vase may reflect an early oral tradition rather than the elaborate narratives that came later. However, the existing literature may well have influenced later artistic uses of Orpheus and, therefore, is important to consider.

While the previously mentioned fragment of Simonides\textsuperscript{17} may refer to Orpheus as an Argonaut, the first explicit literary mention of Orpheus as an Argonaut is from the fifth century, B. C. In the \textit{Fourth Pythian Ode}, written in 462 B. C., Pindar relates the adventures of the Argonauts. Although his version is encapsulated within another story, it is the first coherent account that has come down to us from Antiquity. In this version, Orpheus is not a significant figure, and is mentioned only briefly in the opening catalog of the heroes of the

\textsuperscript{17}See note 5 above.
voyage. Pindar says, "... Apollo's son came also, even that ministrel of the lyre, that father of song, the famous Orpheus." Occasionally Orpheus is called Apollo's son, but the fact that Pindar refers to him elsewhere as the son of Oeagrus leads us to conclude that the term was meant more as a tribute to his musical abilities than as genealogical information. Orpheus as an Argonaut is also alluded to by Euripides in the lost play, Hypsipyle, written between 412 and 408, B. C.  

It is, however, not until the Third Century, B. C. that the first major account of the Argonautic voyage occurs. Although the story was one of the most important of the Greek legends, and must have been retold many times both in oral traditions and in written form, nothing any earlier than the version written by Apollonius Rhodius

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19 Hypsipyle is a lost play; two reconstructions have been done, the first by G. Italie, (Berlin, 1923), and by G. W. Bond, Euripides' Hypsipyle, (Oxford, 1963). The play is also discussed by Ivan Lindforth, Arts, p. 6. In the play, Euripides relates how Orpheus, after the death of Jason, arranges the education of the two sons that Jason had fathered with Hypsipyle. One son is trained to be a warrior, but the other son, Euneus, is taught to play the cithara.
around the middle of the century is now extant. Apollonius, although called Rhodius, was actually an Alexandrian, and quite possibly the librarian there. He wrote two versions of the Argonautica, because, at that time, in Alexandria, long epic poems were considered old-fashioned; short poetry, as taught by Callimachus was in vogue, and Apollonius, laughed out of town, retreated to Rhodes, where he tenaciously re-wrote and produced the second version which today provides our primary source for the legendary voyage. In this narrative, Orpheus is an important character; not only does his name appear first in the listing of the Argonauts going on the voyage, but he is a central figure in seven events and is mentioned in four others. We shall examine each of these occurrences to see what they can tell us about Orpheus as he was perceived in the third century.

In the catalog of Argonauts that Apollonius gives us (I:23) he provides considerable background on Orpheus, naming Calliope as his mother, and Oeagrus, the Thracian, as his father. He locates Orpheus very firmly in Thrace by telling us that by the charm of his lyre, Orpheus was able to lead trees, rocks and even rivers down from Mount

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Pieria, to Zone, by the Thracian coast. Other writers may dispute Orpheus' birthplace, but not Apollonius. He also says that Orpheus was included on the voyage because he had been recommended by Charon, the ferryman of the River Styx. Apollonius' next mention of Orpheus is as the peacemaker when two young Argonauts, Idas and Idomon, rather the worse for wine, get into an argument. Orpheus calms and distracts them, as well as the rest of the crew by singing so enchantingly of the beginnings of time, when "Zeus was still a child" (I:494 ff.) that the song lingers even when he is finished, and they are so moved that they make a libation to Zeus, and then go off to sleep, forgetting the quarrel. In the morning they go on board the Argo and begin to row, the rhythm of the oars being maintained by the music of Orpheus' lyre.

Apollonius, furthermore, presents Orpheus in the role of religious leader when in Book I, (line 915), he is the one who has the ship stop at Samothrace, the island of Electra, so that the crew can be initiated into the rites there, and thus insure a safe journey. Also, when they are in Phrygia, Orpheus directs dances in a rite to propitiate Rhea, so that the bad weather that had plagued them would cease, and let them continue their journey (I:1134). Then in Book II, (line 161), there is a brief mention of Orpheus, when with his lyre, he accompanies the celebration song after the victory over King Amycus of the Bebrycians. Religious rites are again mentioned in Book
II, (line 685); Orpheus gives very specific directions to commemorate the miraculous event of an appearance of Apollo. Orpheus also participates in the ceremony initiated at Lyre by Mopsus. He is the one who gives the setting for the rite its name by dedicating his lyre (II:928). It is in the exciting incident told in Book IV (905 ff.) that Orpheus fulfills the primary purpose for which Charon had recommended him. As the Argo and her crew sail near the island of Anthemoessa, Orpheus hastily strings his lyre and begins to play. His music is so beautiful that it drowns out the Sirens whose songs lure men to land on the island, and thus to certain death. Orpheus, by his music, saves all of his shipmates, but two, from this fate. Later, his music serves a more cheerful purpose when in Book IV, (line 1150), he sings the marriage songs at the wedding of Jason and Medea. The final two situations in which Orpheus is involved portray him in the role of a guide, acting to help and direct his shipmates so that their needs are filled. In the Libyan desert, when they are thirsty after portaging their boat, it is Orpheus whose "plaintive voice" persuades the Hesperides to reveal the location of a spring of water (IV:409). Later, when the Argonauts are lost and unable to find their way, Orpheus intervenes, and directs the crew to make an offering of Apollo's tripod, and thus propitiate the gods so that they will reveal the outlet of the Tritonian Lake.
If the role of Orpheus in each of these events related by Apollonius is examined, we find that in most of the situations, his participation depends on the lyre. Although his plaintive voice is enough for the Hesperides, it is his lyre that charms the Sirens, makes peace between Idas and Idom, celebrates victory and marriage, and keeps the rhythm of the rowers. The lyre is not mentioned in the situations which show Orpheus initiating a religious rite. However, considering the importance of music in Greek religion, it is perhaps safe to assume that the use of the lyre is implied in any religious ceremony. It is in the events of Book IV, during the homeward voyage, that Orpheus is most important, for on three separate occasions he saves the lives of his shipmates.

Thus, Apollonius has presented three aspects of the character of Orpheus. First and foremost, he is seen as a musician whose music has divine, magical power. In addition, he has priestly knowledge of religious matters and can initiate the appropriate observances in time of need. Lastly, through his music and his religious skills, he is capable of guiding men through dangerous situations, in much the same way as a shaman or a psychopomp. This then is the character of Orpheus in the role of Argonaut, as perceived in the Third Century, B. C. It is important because it represents the compilation of earlier versions and fragments, a crystallization which in turn, provided the source for later writers, as well as most probably
influencing the visual imagery that will be investigated below. It is certainly a fuller characterization that can be obtained from the visual evidence which presents only two aspects of Orpheus as an Argonaut; that of a musician as portrayed in the Sicyonian metope, and, by extrapolating additional information from the Lekythos, we can see Orpheus as a guide in dangerous situations. This shamanic aspect is indicated by the presence of the two Sirens which refer to a specific and famous incident when Orpheus used his music to save his shipmates. The artistic evidence therefore seems to present only these two aspects of Orpheus, and does not deal at all with any religious role.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice seems to imply an even greater religious dimension to Orpheus than does the content of the Argonaut theme. Both literature and artistic iconography place Orpheus in the underworld, and indicate not only that he was familiar with it, but could return to this world, thus emphasizing his role as a psychopomp. However, as we shall see both the literary and the visual evidence of this theme are composites and contain some inconsistencies. There are several versions of this popular legend, but the basic outline, common to all, relates that when Orpheus' young wife, Eurydice is killed by a snake bite, he was so grief stricken that he decided to go to the underworld to try to reclaim her. Once there he gained first the sympathy of Persephone,
then of her husband, Pluto, ruler of the underworld; both of whom were so charmed by his music that they granted his wish and gave him permission to lead Eurydice back to the world of the living. At this point, crucial differences among the versions appear. Some accounts portray a successful completion of his quest, others introduce the prohibition of a backward glance, so that when Orpheus had almost reached the threshold to the upper world, he turns to assure himself that Eurydice is truly there, and thus, loses her. Descent and return from the underworld was a highly significant venture in mythic lore; and Orpheus' experience not only puts him in the company of such famous heroes as Herakles, and Theseus, but would firmly establish his reputation as a psychopomp who can guide the deceased through the realm of the dead.

This episode of the Orpheus myth has been one of the most popular stories throughout history, with the possible exception of its country of origin. The Greeks seem to have had little interest in romantic stories until the Alexandrian poets introduced that element during the Hellenistic period. In fact, the most famous and probably

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definitive version of the story, did not appear until the last quarter of the first century, B.C. in the writings of Virgil. Obviously, Virgil must have drawn on earlier Greek and Hellenistic sources, but what remains today of Greek origin presents a fragmentary and contradictory picture, both in art and literature.

When the iconography of the art works is considered, it is clear that there are conflicting variations that are reinforced by the literary evidence. It would appear that the theme of Orpheus and Eurydice is one that had at least two manifestations in the Greek world. The first was the heroic Orpheus of Greek myth, already seen in the Argonaut adventures. This Orpheus is perceived as a psychopomp capable of guiding souls to the underworld. The second strand is that of a more romantic Orpheus who goes to the underworld in search of his wife. The outcome of his search really is never decided definitively in Greek art or literature, probably because to the Greeks the most important thing was to have gone to the underworld and to have returned safely from it which was Orpheus' own fate. The visual evidence from Greek art of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice is, unfortunately, not only meagre, but second-hand. The only evidence that remains today of the famous fifth century mural by Polygnotes, is the description of it by Pausanius (X:25-31). The second work to be discussed is a marble relief sculpture, that exists today only in Roman copies.
An additional complication in assessing the visual evidence is that the two pieces seem to represent the two different strands of the Orpheus and Eurydice theme. The sculptural relief clearly depicts the theme of Orpheus and Eurydice, but the mural does not show Eurydice, and seems to be more a representation of a sub-theme of "Orpheus in the Underworld".

The Polygnotos mural was done for the Lesche of the Cnidians at Delphi. This public building was decorated with a series of paintings on historical and mythological subjects. It can be inferred that the paintings were both large and important from the fact that Polygnotos worked on them for over ten years, from 458 to 447 B.C. None of these murals are still extant, so that the description given by Pausanius in the second century, after Christ is the best source of information. It is fortunate that Pausanius was a reliable and careful witness of the lost murals. J. G. Frazer, in the commentary to his edition of Pausanius, particularly points to Pausanius' preference for religious art, and notes that though Pausanius is sometimes "chary in details of civic art and architecture ... he is lavish of them in


describing the temples and sanctuaries."24 As this is one of the longest and most detailed descriptions, it can safely be assumed that it is an accurate word picture.25 Orpheus is shown in the section which depicts the adventures of Herakles, including his descent into Hades. Among the famous figures in the painting is the image of Orpheus holding his harp and wearing a Greek costume. He sits on a mound leaning against a willow tree which he touches with his hand. The choice of a willow is significant, as it was a symbol of mourning, and thus reinforces Orpheus' position as one familiar with the underworld. Eurydice was not represented, whether this omission has any significance or not, is difficult to determine.26 It may indicate that the Greeks simply were not interested in the romantic tale concerning Eurydice, and concentrated more on what was to them the import of the story - that of Orpheus' familiarity with the underworld.

A completely different iconography is found on


25 Pausanias, X:25-31, gives a very explicit description of Orpheus, as well as the composition and other figures in the painting.

26 Guthrie, Orpheus, (P. 30), speculates rather unrewardingly on this point.
Roman copies of a Greek late fifth century relief sculpture that is no longer extant. Three copies exist of this relief panel and all three are generally referred to as the "Three-Figure Relief" (PLATE 7, figs. A. B. C.).

On the panel in the Naples Museum (PLATE VII, A), the figures of Orpheus, Eurydice, and Hermes are each identified by an inscription just over their heads. It can therefore, be stated with some confidence that the panel does indeed illustrate the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. The problem is to determine which variation of the legend is represented. The composition is ambiguous, giving rise to considerable scholarly debate.

When the panels are examined, it is evident that on all three copies the composition is practically

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27 There is one panel in the museum at Naples, one at the Villa Albani, and one at the Louvre. All three are discussed by M. Owen Lee. See footnote 28, below.

28 M. Owen Lee, in "Mystic Orpheus: Another Note on the Three Figure Reliefs". Hesperia, XXXIII:4, (1964), pp. 401-404, says that on the panel in the Louvre the inscriptions identify the three figures as Amphion, Antiope, and Zetus. This is the only mention of this variant that I have come across, and most scholars seem to accept without hesitation the Orphic identification.

29 See the following authors for their interpretations: Emmet Robbins, "Famous Orpheus," in John Warden, Orpheus, The Metamorphosis of a Myth, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 16; see also, Ivan Lindforth, Arts, pp. 16-17; also, M. Owen Lee, "Orpheus and Eurydice: Myth, Legend, and Folklore." Classica and Mediaevalia, vol. XXVI, (1965), pp. 402ff. refers to Euripides' version as successful, and also notes, "The scholiast (In A. 357) is categorically clear: Orpheus brought his wife up from Hades."
identical. In the center is Eurydice, head slightly bowed, looking toward the figure of Orpheus on the right, who is dressed in a Thracian cap and short costume. He holds his lyre in his right hand and with the other reaches out to touch Eurydice's left hand which rests on his shoulder. Whether this expresses fond greeting or sad farewell is not a priori, inherent in this gesture. Eurydice's right hand is held by Hermes standing on the left, wearing Greek garb. It is possible to interpret this as Hermes leading Eurydice to a successful Orpheus, or equally plausible to interpret it as showing her being lead away, either after her first death or the second loss resulting from the backward glance. From a twentieth century vantage point, the panel is seen with a vision informed by Virgil and Ovid, and so the story seems immediately apparent: Orpheus has looked back, and must

30 Both the Naples and the Paris reliefs depict Orpheus wearing what is clearly a Phrygian cap. The panel from the Villa Albani in Rome however, shows a rather indeterminate drape on his head.
therefore, part from Eurydice a second time. It is difficult to peel away centuries of re-tellings of this popular sory, and see it as the Greeks would have looked at it twenty-four hundred years ago. What would the interpretation based on familiar literature have been then?

Perhaps it can be determined to some extent what the meaning the panel would have had for fifth century Greeks, based on the impact of the art as well as the literature. The relief is one of a series of four panels, which, according to Homer Thompson, were placed on the parapet of the Altar of Pity in the Agora in Athens (PLATES 8 and 9). Thompson dates the parapet in the last

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This is the point of view advanced by J. Heurgon, "Orphée et Eurydice avant Virgile," Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire, XLIX, (1932), pp. 606ff. This same conclusion is reached by Jane Harrison, Prolegomena, and by Evelyn Harrison, "Hesperides and Heroes: A Note on the Three-Figure Reliefs," Hesperia, XXXIII n.1, (1964), p. 77, also by Lindforth, Arts, pp. 17-18. The opposite conclusion is proposed by M. Owen Lee in "Mystic Orpheus: Another Note on the Three-Figure Reliefs," Hesperia, XXXIII n.4, (1964), pp. 401-404. Lee disputes Evelyn Harrison's contention that "no one could doubt that this is a moment of irrevocable separation ..." on the basis that the panel predates the unsuccessful version of Vergil. He concludes (p. 403) that "the details suggest a scene of tender greeting." C. M. Bowra, "Orpheus and Eurydice," The Classical Quarterly, II, (1952), pp. 113-26, also concludes that there is not enough emotion shown to justify the conclusion that the panel illustrates the moment of parting. Homer Thompson, "The Altar of Pity in the Athenian Agora," Hesperia XXI:1, (1952), p. 60, cleverly begs the question by identifying the subject as "... Orpheus leading back Eurydice to the upper world, Hermes attending.".

quarter of the fifth century and demonstrates convincingly that the four panels, each "a poignant representation of a piteous situation", are in accord both materially and thematically with this monument. The exact nature of that "piteous situation" is, in the case of the Orpheus panel difficult to determine. If, as scholars generally agree, the panel belongs to the last quarter of the fifth century, literary parallels might be found in references from Euripides and Isocrates, both of whom relate a successful result and were most probably common knowledge at that time. Euripides, in the play Alcestis, written in 438 B.C., has Admetus, husband of the dying Alcestis, wish that he, like Orpheus, could win back his wife from death. The story of Orpheus and Eurydice is only a minor literary device in Euripides' play. However, it would be an incongruous comparison if it were not generally understood that Orpheus had successfully

\[33^{33}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[34\text{The Orpheus panel was originally believed to possibly come from a choregic monument, because of the musical associations of both Orpheus and Hermes. This however does not explain the presence of Eurydice on the panel, and so others advanced the possibility of its being part of a tomb decoration. Thompson, p. 70 notes these other references.}\]

\[35\text{Thompson, p. 71, dates the panels 420 to 410 B. C. Bowra, p. 121, n.1, quotes Beazley as dating them 430 to 400 B. C.}\]

retrieved Eurydice. A similar point is made in *Busiris* written several years after *Alcestis*, by Isocrates, who sarcastically compares the exploits of the blood-thirsty mythical king of Egypt, to the positive achievement of "Orpheus who led the dead back from Hades".\(^{37}\) Eurydice is not mentioned by name, so it is not known positively to whom Isocrates was referring, but that is not important. From these references by Euripides and by Isocrates, we can conclude that in the fifth century, a successful outcome was sufficiently well known for two writers to merely allude to it and assume an audience that was familiar with the story.

However, there are other literary versions that portray failure. The earliest of these if found in the seventh century poet, Sappho. A papyrus fragment from the third century, B. C. containing Book VI, line 118, of her poetry, states that Death would not give his beloved wife back to Orpheus.\(^{38}\) Failure is also implied in the


\(^{38}\)J. M. Edmonds, ed. and trans., "Appendix of New Fragments", *Lyra Graecia*, vol. I, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Loeb Classical Library, 1963), pp. 430, 437. This is however, rather dubious evidence, since the passage has suffered considerable restoration. Therefore it is not certain what Sappho's intention was, but it is a tantalizing possibility that this very early mention of the story indicated failure.
disturbing version presented by Plato in 384 B.C. in the Symposium. In a discussion on love, Orpheus is cited as a pejorative example of a lover who was not brave enough to die for love. This cowardice, plus the fact that he was a weakling, being "merely a minstrel," angered the gods so much that they only pretended to give Eurydice back to him, giving him a phantom instead. This is the only version of the legend that has a phantasmagorical element. Whether Plato made up the whole idea, or based it on a now lost tradition, is unknown, but his version of Orpheus as a failure is a surprise, as it comes just fifty years after Euripides; and Isocrates' presentations of Orpheus as an admirable and successful psychopomp. However, Plato's opinion cannot be dismissed an unimportant or eccentric, not only because it is Plato's, but also because the visual imagery of the Three-figure Relief seems most likely to support the thesis of an unsuccessful mission, and indicates that Plato could have been drawing on an earlier tradition of failure. While the Three-figure Relief is ambiguous, the

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40 Ibid., p. 9, line 179.

41 There are scholars who relate this use of a phantom to the story that Paris never carried off the real Helen, but merely a phantom. See Martin P. Nilsson, "Early Orphism and Kindred Religious Movements," Harvard Theological Review, XXVIII, (1935), pp. 230-281.
strongest impression one receives from looking at it is that of a sad parting. Hermes' hand seems to be stretched out to take Eurydice back, and the fact that Orpheus stands slightly apart from Eurydice and faces toward the other two figures gives the appearance that they are on the other side of an imaginary line. In addition, the passage between Orpheus and Eurydice is overwhelmingly tender and sad, their posture and facial expressions resemble those portrayed on funeral stele, and are not at all consonant with the joy of a reunion.

However, the unsuccessful version implied in the relief, and stated in Sappho and Plato, was not the final word in the matter. The idea of a successful ending was tenacious enough to survive in literature in scattered accounts. This is attested to by several later literary accounts. At the very end of the fourth century, the Alexandrian poet, Hermesianax, wrote a kind of compendium of love stories which he titled Leontion, after the name of his mistress.\footnote{The Oxford Classical Dictionary, s.v. "Hermesianax", p. 503.} The Third Book of the work began with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice and related that Orpheus had succeeded in his quest.

It is quite possible that the fourth century was a period of transition for the story and there were both successful and unsuccessful versions in circulation. The
composition of the Three-figure Relief is enigmatic enough to reflect a duality of tradition. In addition, the iconography of the relief is unusual in Greek art of this period. It is the first representation thus far of Orpheus wearing Thracian costume. He is clearly depicted with a Phrygian cap on the reliefs that are in Naples and Paris. As noted earlier (n. 30) the relief in the Villa Albani shows him wearing an indeterminant drape over his head. The reason for the variation in head covering is not immediately clear, but it seems generally apparent that the intention of the relief was to indicate the Thracian origin of Orpheus. In the discussion of the Attic vases which follows, it will be seen that in portrayals of the death of Orpheus that Greek artists usually preferred to show Orpheus in Greek costume. In contrast to Italiote iconography which will be seen later, Greek artists rarely show Orpheus in Thracian clothing (PLATE 16). Thus, this period also seems to vacillate about the ethnicity of Orpheus, adding further to the variables.

An interesting footnote to the Three-figure Reliefs is found on a Thracian coin of a much later date (PLATE 7, fig. D). This coin is clearly a reference to the marble panel. The composition is the same, with the central figure of Eurydice flanked by the two male figures. Both Hermes and Orpheus are nude, except for caps on their heads. Orpheus is leaning on a pillar and does not appear
to hold his lyre. A notable departure from the composition of the marble reliefs is that on the coin, Eurydice is facing full forward, with her head turned away from Orpheus, and is looking directly at Hermes, thus creating an iconography much less ambiguous than that of the marble reliefs. It clearly shows Eurydice going with Hermes, as he looks back toward her as if guiding her. The reason for this unequivocal iconography may well lie in the date of the coin. It is from the reign of Gordianus Pius (238-244 A.D.), long after both Virgil and Ovid. Certainly by the third century after Christ, their version of Orpheus' failure was well established. The designer of the coin may have admired the Three-figure Relief, either in the original or in the Roman copies and used the composition for the coin. However, he would have been portraying a story that was well known for its sad ending, and felt no need to equivocate. The fact that the coin comes from Thrace is also interesting to speculate on, since there seems to be a Thracian connection in the story of Orpheus, which even though the Greeks did not emphasize it, became very important in Italiote iconography.

It is puzzling to note that this theme of Orpheus and Eurydice, or Orpheus in the Underworld does not seem to have been used by Greek vase painters. The only extant vase which portrays both Orpheus and Eurydice is an Apulian vase, which will be discussed in Chapter II.
Attic representations of this subject apparently are lacking. It would seem very likely that topics illustrated on a famous fresco and on an important public monument in Athens would be a popular subject that vase painters would wish to copy. Whether they did not choose to use the theme, or if those vases are lost, cannot be determined. However, as will be seen in the next chapter, Orpheus in the underworld was a very important theme for later painters in Magna Graecia.

The next theme to be discussed, that of the death and dismemberment of Orpheus, is a very complex theme. It is related to the theme of Orpheus and Eurydice, because in some versions his death is a result of his loss of Eurydice, and it also has a related sub-theme which can be called "Orpheus Among the Thracians." This theme with its dramatic death scenes and barbarian looking Thracians was popular in antiquity, and of all the themes of the Orpheus legend, seems to be the one with the most appeal for Greek artists. Representations of his death were a favorite subject for vase paintings in the fifth century B.C., and provide the primary evidence for the legend. Literary references tend to be less plentiful, though they are spread over a longer period of time, and last until well into the second century after Christ. The vases provide a relatively unified corpus, as they are all Attic, and produced within a relatively short time span, while the literary evidence is scattered both geographically and
The topic of the death of Orpheus does not seem to appear in any medium other than vase paintings in Greek art, but it was a favorite subject for a large number of vases throughout the fifth century B.C., with most of the vases concentrated in the first third of the century. If we consult Beazley, it is quite apparent that of all of the Attic vases which depict Orpheus the representation of his death is the predominant topic. The overwhelming preponderance among extant vases of depictions of his death indicates that this must have been the favorite theme of the Greeks. This theme is divided into two episodes that are related but have different iconographies. One theme, to be considered is "Orpheus Among the Thracians" and the other is the actual "Death of Orpheus".

The relationship between these two categories is a fertile field for scholarly speculation. Some writers, such as Guthrie, see the theme of "Orpheus Among the Thracians" as an illustration of the power of his music and of his function as an Hellenic missionary to the barbaric Thracians. The problem with this interpretation

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43 J. D. Beazley, ARV 2. There were thirty-five vases with the death of Orpheus as the subject, compared with only eleven on other aspects of Orpheus, when this catalog was published.

44 Guthrie, Orpheus, pp. 56ff.
is, of course, that conflicts with the widely accepted theory that Thrace was Orpheus' birthplace. However, it is only one of many incongruities that make the legend of Orpheus both fascinating and frustrating. Others see an image of Orpheus luring the Thracian men away, thus arousing the sexual jealousy of the Thracian women who thus provoked, killed him. The natural link between these episodes is reinforced by some vases which seem to present a conflation of the two episodes. The artists have depicted Orpheus playing to the Thracian men, but women hover nearby, as if foreshadowing his death. From the many vases which portray the death of Orpheus, a representative sampling of vases will be selected to illustrate the iconography of the two strands of this theme.

One of the finest examples of vases portraying the death of Orpheus is an Attic red-figure hydria, dated 460-450 B.C., and now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (PLATE 10). On this vase the Niobid Painter has made Orpheus the crescendo of a rhythmic procession that wraps around the vase. The illustration is actually a drawing that shows the frieze unrolled and visible in its entirety. This technique enables us to fully appreciate

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46 Beazley, ARV 2, 605/62.
the painter's mastery in directing the viewer's eye in an ever increasing momentum toward the victim, who is identified by an inscription just over his head. On either side of Orpheus are figures of the approaching women, three to his left and four to this right. The position of their bodies, each one as they near Orpheus, indicates an increasing thrust toward the victim. This movement is further accelerated by the circular forms held by some of the figures. Orpheus is shown in distinctly Greek dress, wearing a chiton with a chlamys over his shoulder and draped down his arm. He has on high books and a filet around his long hair. This contrasts with the two Thracian men who appear at the sides as onlookers. Although these two observers wear short robes, their long cloaks and the Phrygian cap on the left figure clearly identifies them as Thracian. The figure of Orpheus provides the fulcrum for the action, his lower torso thrust dramatically to the right, while his head and shoulder twist back with one arm raised to ward off his attackers. In that hand he holds some sort of unidentified implement, which differs from other portrayals, where he frequently is shown with the lyre raised in futile protection. The women on this vase have a variety of weapons: three hold long spears, and a short dagger. One holds either a curved knife or, as some
scholars think, a sickle. These kinds of weapons would indicate pre-meditation, compared to simply snatching up whatever was at hand, as is suggested by the iconography of the next vase. The two women on a vase originally found at Chiusi, are more likely to have acted impulsively and grabbed up the rock they are shown ready to fling (PLATE 12). The vase is a red-figure Stamnos, now lost, dated by Beazley in the mid fifth century.

This vase shows Orpheus nude except for a chalmys which has slipped down. He has fallen and supports himself on his knee and left arm. He holds the lyre over his head with his other hand, as if to ward off the rock held poised over head by a woman in long Greek dress. Another menacing figure approaches from just behind the first woman. She also is aiming a rock, but is wearing Thracian clothing. To Orpheus' left, another woman also dressed in Thracian costume, aims a spear from astride her horse. Most Greek vases show the women wearing Greek costume, not Thracian, so that this vase is interesting because it has one of the women in Greek dress and the other two in

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48 Beazley, ARV 2, 1050/1. Beazley classifies this vase as belonging to the group of the painter, Polygnotos.
This Thracian element is also emphasized in white ground kylix that exists only in fragments (PLATE 13). This vase, now in the Athens National Museum was painted by the Pistoxenos Painter and is dated by Beazley in 460 B. C., and by Pfuhl in 470 B. C. On this vase the woman is clearly identified as Thracian by the animal tattoo on her arm and the streaks on her neck. Even in a fragmentary condition, this vase relates a comprehensible narrative, showing the woman and enough of Orpheus to indicate that he must be falling back in a position similar to the Red-figure Stamnos, and holding his lyre over his head. The vase is admiringly described by Pfuhl as a masterwork. It is a beautiful vase, which even in fragments conveys its message with clarity and a dramatic impact that is heightened by the lack of emotion which seems to emphasize the austere grandeur of the figures, a trait typical of the Severe style of that era, and the masterly drawing.

We will now turn to several vases illustrating the subsidiary theme of Orpheus among the Thracians. One of

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⁵⁰Pfuhl, Ernst, p. 50.
the most famous of this type of vase is the krater from Gela, now in the Berlin Museum (PLATE 14). This is a relatively late vase, attributed by Beazley as the namepiece of the Orpheus Painter, an artist active during the time of Pericles. Orpheus is depicted in the center of a group of Thracian men, and above his head is the inscription "Kalos, Kalos". The men seem utterly entranced by the music. Orpheus himself is seated, with his gaze soulfully directed upward as if seeking poetic inspiration. He holds a curved eight-stringed lyre, with the plectrum in his right hand. His lower torso is draped, and his upper body is bare; a wreath of what looks like laurel leaves encircles his head. In contrast to Orpheus' "Greekness", the four men are clearly Thracian. They have highly decorated long cloaks, Phrygian caps, and are holding spears to indicate they are warriors. The artist must have meant to illustrate the power of Orpheus' music to charm even these fierce barbaric fighters.

An abbreviated version of this theme is portrayed

51 Beazley, ARV 2, 1104/1.

52 The inscription, "Kalos, Kalos" above Orpheus' head is noted by Amyx, Orpheus, 26-27, who suggests that it may refer to the beauty of Orpheus' music. However, this seems unlikely as the gender does not agree, and in addition, Kalos vases were usually meant as a gift and the inscription of a single "Kalos" was usually followed by a proper name, as a tribute to a young man's beauty. Therefore, this vase is an anomaly. The intention of the Kalos inscription is enigmatic, possibly intending Orpheus, himself.
on a column krater in the Portland Museum (PLATE 15). According to Beazley, it is from around 450 B. C., possibly by the Painter of Tarquinia 707.\textsuperscript{53} This vase shows Orpheus, almost identical with the figure on the Berlin krater, but here he is flanked on the left by a satyr, and on the right by a Thracian in a Phrygian cap, standing in back of his horse, facing towards Orpheus as if listening to the music. Even the satyr, although he stands in back of Orpheus, has his hand thrust out toward the musician and seems to be attending to the music. Another column krater, this one from Naples, depicts a scene very similar to the one in Portland (PLATE 16).\textsuperscript{54} On this vase, while the horse is missing and the Thracian and satyr have changed sides, they are all still in a position similar to the Portland krater. A notable feature of this vase is the garb of Orpheus. He is shown in a long cloak that is very Thracian looking, yet he is bare headed. It would seem likely that if the artist wanted to make him Thracian, he would have portrayed the Phrygian cap also. The significance of this iconographical variation is undetermined.

The conflation of the theme of the death of Orpheus and of Orpheus among the Thracians is represented by two

\textsuperscript{53}Beazley, ARV 2, 1120/3.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., 574/6. This vase is also discussed by Frank Brommer, Satyrspiele, Bilder Griechischer Vasen, (Berlin: Walther DeGruyther & Co., 1959), p. 55.
vases, the first a Late Mannerist hydria in the Petit Palais in Paris (PLATE 17). This vase from the mid-fifth century has the same three figures as the vase in Portland: Orpheus, this time in Greek costume, is flanked by a satyr and a Thracian both of whom bend slightly toward him and gesture with a hand and arm, creating a parenthesis around this vignette of "Orpheus and the Thracians." However, death awaits in the wings; for already moving in are two Thracian women, one holding a spear, the other armed with a club or pestle. An even more forceful Thracian woman is presented on the bell krater by the Painter of London E497 in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Certainly this vase (PLATE 18) represents what one writer calls "a prelude to the catastrophe which immediately follows". In the center of the vase there is a Thracian man who has obviously been listening to the music of Orpheus who is seated to his right, wearing again the Greek drape on the lower body with the upper torso bare and a laurel wreath in his hair. Although Orpheus is still immersed in his music and blissfully unaware of any distraction, the Thracian has turned to confront the woman whose lifted foot and forward thrust of her body stress

55 Ibid., 1112/4 above.
56 Ibid., 1079/2.
57 Amyx, Orpheus, p. 28.
her urgency and emotional state. Her murderous intent is evidenced by the wickedly curved knife held in her left hand. The man appears to be expostulating with her, and the tension of their dialog contrasts with the aloofness of Orpheus. In a very concise and highly compressed manner, the painter has managed to suggest three separate episodes, past, present and future. The Thracian had been turned toward Orpheus, listening to the music, he is at this moment interrupted and turns to the woman who foreshadows the death of Orpheus which is about to occur.

When all of these vases are considered, several pertinent implications emerge. The most obvious is certainly that during the fifth century, the iconography of Orpheus is predominately Greek, with few exceptions such as the column krater by the Agrigento Painter (Naples, IN46739). In fact, his Greek identity is emphasized by the contrast with the Thracian garments of the surrounding figures, setting up a dramatic tension between the two groups. It is also important to note that the vases portray two themes, the relation of which is supported by the existence of vases which show a conflation of the episodes. This would seem to indicate that the vases illustrate an established narrative. Orpheus, a Greek, goes for whatever reason, to Thrace. There the power of his music so charms and soothes the barbarian Thracian men, that the women, overwhelmed with jealousy, attack and kill him. This much is evident from
what can be seen on the vases. More elaborate motives cannot be ascribed, nor can it be determined why Orpheus was in Thrace. Whether he wandered there after the loss of Eurydice, or went there as a missionary, cannot be determined by means of the visual evidence.

The story of the death and dismemberment of Orpheus has so many elements also found in the myth of Dionysus Zagreus that it is tempting to seek a possible relationship. However, the visual evidence does not support this at all. There is no clear Dionysian iconography on these Orpheus vases. Considering that Orpheus was reputed to be a disciple of Dionysus, it is interesting to note that this connection is not indicated in any of the visual images from the period of Archaic and Classical Greece. There are literary references, but in spite of abundant Dionysian imagery on Greek vases, Dionysian elements are strangely absent on vases that portray Orpheus. In fact, it will be seen on other vases

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"Lindforth, Arts, deals with this topic at length in a separate chapter, "Myth of the Dismemberment of Dionysus", pp. 307-364. However, he approaches the subject through literary documentation which tends to support a connection more than any visual evidence can do.

Although some of the vases do show satyrs, which are frequently associated with Dionysus, in my opinion, their appearance on these vases cannot be specifically identified as being Dionysiac. It is more likely they were intended as symbols of uncivilized or barbaric behavior relating to the Thracians. Even the women have no specific attributes to identify them as followers of Dionysus and thus inspired by him to the murder.
discussed later in this chapter, that visual imagery of Orpheus' cultic associations tends to indicate an Apollonian tie, which considering the musical context, seems only natural.

When the literary evidence of the death of Orpheus is examined, there is an array of different versions with conflicting motives and methods. Also the chronology of the evidence is uncertain because several sources come from pseudepigraphic literature, which is difficult to date if the actual writer is unknown. Therefore, it is often conjectural as to whether there were cross influences between the vase paintings and the literature.

The earliest literary mention of the death of Orpheus is in a play by Aeschylus which was, according to Lindforth, part of the Lycurgia tetralogy, dating between 466 and 459 B.C.\(^6^0\) The play, Bassarides, now lost, is known by three fragments and a reference to it in Catasterismi, a collection of mythological explanations about the stars.\(^6^1\) In Catasterismi the death of Orpheus is used to explain the formation of the Lyre

\(^6^0\)Lindforth, Arts, p. 10.

\(^6^1\)Ivan M. Lindforth, "Two Notes on the Legend of Orpheus", Transactions of the American Philological Association, LXII, (1931), p. 12. Subsequent citing of this article will be abbreviated to "Lindforth, T.A. Ph.A.". Catasterismi was once attributed to the third century scholar, Erastothenes, but is now classified as by Psuedo-Eratosthenes. See also, The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 1970, s.v. "Erastothenes", p. 405.
Constellation, and Ps. Erastothenes attributes to Aeschylus the information that Orpheus was torn apart by the Bassarides who afterward scattered the parts of his body. Later, the lyre was cast up into the sky to become a constellation. The motive for the killing is inferred to be the anger of Dionysus who encouraged the women to the deed. The reason for Dionysus' anger is not given, although it certainly must have been explained in the play. In fact, in an attempted reconstruction of the play by G. Haupt, a German doctoral candidate, Orpheus; desertion of Dionysus and conversion to the worship of Apollo is postulated as the cause.\(^6\)\(^2\) This certainly seems a likely motive, but whether or not it was the motive that Aeschylus used we cannot tell. When an attempt is made to evaluate this evidence, we find ourselves on shaky ground. The chronology simply does not permit any firm conclusions. The three fragments of Aeschylus' play date from the mid-fifth century. Any reference to the play has to be later, and the reference from Catasterismi must be centuries later, because Erastothenes' dates are 275-194 B.C.\(^6\)\(^3\) Obviously

\(^6\)\(^2\)This reconstruction of Aeschylus' Bassarides was attempted by G. Haupt, a German Doctoral student, in Berlin in 1896, using fragments and the information from Ps. Erastothenes Catasterismi. However, Lindforth, T.A. Ph.A., concludes that there is not sufficient material to reconstruct the lost play with any reliability, pp. 16-17.

anyone writing in the style of Erastothenes and labelled as "Ps. Erastothenes" must be even later. Therefore, there is a span of several centuries.

The next literary reference is also pseudepigraphic and, therefore, difficult to date with any certainty. An epigram quoted by Ps. Alcidamas relates a version of the death that is radically different from the one portrayed by Aeschylus in Bassarides. When Ps. Alcidamas was active is not important, because we assume that the epigram was written earlier than Alcidamas, who was a fourth century rhetorician. Lindforth proposes a date of about 431 B.C. for the epigram based on the assumption that it was a piece of Athenian propaganda written to flatter the Thracians and thereby gain their allegiance in the Peloponnesian Wars. The epigram identifies Orpheus as the inventor of writing, as well as the teacher of Herakles, and relates Orpheus' death as the result of a thunderbolt of Zeus. A motive for Zeus' action is not given, and the origin of this version of Orpheus' death is open to speculation. Nevertheless, this epigram certainly provides a contract to the Aeschylean version. This contradiction is even more notable, considering that if Lindforth's dating is correct, the epigram is only thirty years earlier than Aeschylus' play.

Next comes Isocrates who can be more firmly dated,

\[64\] Lindforth, T.A. Ph.A., p. 9.
but who also presents a different version than those discussed above. Isocrates, who was roughly a contemporary of Alcidamas, mentions the death of Orpheus in his work *Busiris*, quoted earlier in conjunction with the theme of Eurydice (p. 15). In this early work, written probably near the late fourth, early third century, Isocrates maintains the Aeschylean murder method, but introduces a new motive. According to Isocrates, Orpheus was torn apart by women as the result of having blasphemed the gods. The nature of these blasphemies is not specified, and it cannot be determined if they related to any form of Orphism which may have been practiced at that time. What is interesting is that Isocrates' first reference to Orpheus seems to indicate a heroic nature, one who was a successful psychopomp, even though his death is attributed to a base motive. Also in the early fourth century, Plato, in the *Republic* (x, 620a), ascribes Orpheus' death to the anger of the gods, but Plato claims their anger was incurred by Orpheus' lack of courage for going to Hades alive, instead of being brave enough to die for his love. As punishment for this cowardice, the gods had him killed by women. Thus, within the same time frame there are two different motives for Orpheus' death, though both versions agree on the method.

About a century later, a very complete description of Orpheus' death appears in an elegy by the Greek poet Phanocles (ap. Stob. 4.20.47). The date for this work is uncertain, as the poet's date and place of birth are unknown, but it is speculated, on the basis of internal evidence of the six surviving fragments of his work, that the first half of the third century B.C. is most likely. The poem has four parts, the first describes Orpheus and the pastoral scene, followed by the murder, when he is torn apart by the women of Thrace who are jealous over their husbands becoming followers of Orpheus. In addition, a new motive is introduced: it is claimed that the women were also outraged at Orpheus because he invented the practice of pederasty. The third and longest part of the poem introduces a theme new to literature, but one that is later portrayed on vase paintings: that of the oracular head of Orpheus. According to Phanocles, after the Thracian women tore Orpheus' body apart, they tied his head and the lyre together, and threw them into the sea. Miraculously, the head continued to sing and the lyre to play. Eventually, they washed ashore at Lesbos. The poem then returns to


Thrace to relate the grief and anger of the Thracian men when they discovered what their wives had done. As a retribution and as a symbol of their sin, the husbands tattooed the women, which ever after marks the women of Thrace.\footnote{There are various theories about this tattooing. Marcovich, p. 363, notes that some authors have indicated that it was used as a sign of slavery, others attribute a decorative tradition. He quotes an anonymous poet in the Greek Anth. 7.10, who says that the women did it as a sign of grief over what they had done. This belated guilt and sorrow is seen by some scholars to indicate that the Thracian women once they had recovered from their frenzy are seen in the guise of the Muses gathering the body for burial. A thorough discussion of Thracian tattoos can be found in K. Zimmerman, "Taetowierte Thrakerinnen auf Griechischen Vasenbildern," Jahrbuch des Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut, XCV, (1980), pp. 163-196.} This elegy is by far the most complete and detailed description of Orpheus' death known and it represents the generally accepted version of that age.

In summarizing the literary accounts of the death of Orpheus, it is evident that there was a variety of methods for the deed: Orpheus died by being struck by lightening or a thunderbolt of the golds (Ps. Alcidamas, Pausanius) or suicide (Pausanius), or, by far the most common, by being torn apart by women, either Thracians, Bassarides, Ciconians, Bacchanals, or Dionysian Maenads. The motive for the murder range from religious (Isocrates, Ps. Eratosthenes, Pausanius), to cowardice (Plato), to jealousy (Phanocles, Pausanius), or to punishment for the practice of pederasty (Phanocles). In addition the confusion is compounded by the lack of a corpse. Orpheus'
remains were either thrown in the river/sea, gathered up by the Muses, buried in several different cities, or floated to the island of Lesbos.

While the medium of vase painting is not appropriate for relating a motive, there are a variety of methods represented or implied on the vases. Orpheus is shown being attacked with either farm implements, household tools, weapons of war, or bare hands. He is never shown actually being torn apart, nor, other than the oracular head, are separate parts of his body shown. There are no vases which show action that could be interpreted as suicide, and none that indicate thunder or lightning from the gods. Pederasty, while not an unknown subject for vase paintings, does not appear on vases with Orpheus' death. Still, the vases do provide more consistent evidence than the literary examples. Women are always the perpetrators of his death. Where there is tattooing, it is quite certain the women are Thracian, otherwise their identity cannot be specified. With the representation of the women there is the implication of death by physical violence. However, it is not really possible to determine whether the iconography of the vases was influenced by the literature. Considering that the early literature is mostly pseudographic, it seems more likely that the vase paintings are based on an oral tradition which, together with the paintings, later shaped the literature.
The mantic head of Orpheus which is the next theme to be discussed, is only visually depicted on the medium of vases, although it is the subject of several literary works. The theme is derived from the earlier theme of the death and dismemberment of Orpheus, but the iconology relates more to the religious significance of Orpheus and it is from this point of view that the vases will be considered. There are only two extant Attic vases, the rest are from Magna Graecia, and will, therefore, be discussed in the next chapter. Both of the Attic vases date from the Fifth Century, B. C. and are probably the earliest evidence of Orpheus as a religious figure.  

The prophecizing head of Orpheus is clearly depicted on a red-figure kylix, previously in the Barone Collection, and now at Corpus Christi, Cambridge (PLATE 19). The front of the kylix portrays the head of Orpheus, facing left, looking up and with the lips parted as if speaking. The head is between two figures, the one on our left is seated and appears to be a scribe. With his left hand he holds an open tablet on his lap, while with his other hand he writes with a stylus. Since it was

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69 Euripides' Alcestis (438 B. C.) implies a religious role for Orpheus and mentions the head of Orpheus. This is roughly contemporary with some of the later vases, but the testimony from the play is not as incisive as the vase imagery.

customary at oracular shrines to have a scribe write down the prophecies, this figure quite likely represents that practice. The other possible is that he is Musaeus, the son or disciple of Orpheus. He holds a staff of laurel, and so may confidently be identified as Apollo. His right arm and hand are extended forward in a commanding gesture. Guthrie (p. 36) says this gesture refers to a story in which Apollo, jealous of the fame of Orpheus, commands him to cease interfering. The literature relating this story is, however, much later than the vase. The story is found in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius written under the aegis of the Empress Julia Domna in the third century after Christ.\footnote{The Oxford Classical Dictionary, s.v. "Philostrati", p. 824.} In Book IV, Chapter XIV, Philostratus visits a shrine at Lesbos, where it was said that the severed head of Orpheus had floated ashore, been placed in a cave, and become famous for its prophecies. According to Philostratus, Apollo, observing the popularity of Orpheus, which extended to his prophecies being solicited even by Cyrus the Great, stood over the head and commanded it to, "Cease to meddle with my affairs for I have already put up long enough with your vacillations."\footnote{F. C. Conybeare, Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Loeb Classical Library 1912), p. 374.} While this presents an amusing picture
of a petty Apolli shutting down his competition, there are several objections to interpreting the kylix as an illustration of this event. First, of course, is the fact that the vase is so much earlier than the first literary recording of the story. While it may be argued that Philostratus is simply relating a story that had existed for centuries, the iconography of the vase presents an even stronger argument against this interpretation. It would seem that if the painter intended to depict Apollo in the act of speaking to Orpheus, he would have Apollo look directly at the head. Therefore, it would seem that it is likely that the vase is meant to represent the mantic head of Orpheus being inspired by his mentor, Apollo, and that this is a scene of inspiration and cooperation rather than enmity. The other side of the kylix depicts two female figures (PLATE 19, fig. B). They could be either two muses, who in some versions recovered and buried Orpheus, or they could represent the women of Lesbos, where the head came to rest. One of the figures holds the lyre as if she had just picked it up. The other holds a strap, either from the lyre, or perhaps a strap which is intended to be used to hang the lyre up in the temple of Apollo.73 The iconography on the vase is very Greek, since all four figures are in typical Greek

73 According to Lindforth, Arts, p. 129 n.102, Lucian (Adv. indoct. 109-111), says the lyre was dedicated in the temple of Apollo.
costume. Orpheus' severed head is bare, without the Phrygian ap seen on Italiote vases (cf. PLATES 22-41).

The second of the Attic vases is a red-figure hydria which portrays the same subject, but with a slightly different configuration (PLATE 20). The standing Apollo is the center figure this time. Again he holds a laurel branch, but it is slung downward, creating a pointer to the head of Orpheus, which is at ground level looking up at Apollo. A lyre is held in Apollo's left hand. Compositionally, this is a very unified arrangement; the main figures of Apollo and the mantic head are enclosed by two parenthetical female figures. Both curve to encompass the central figures, with the head of the woman on the left bent over almost touching the leaves of the laurel held by Apollo. The eye then sweeps down the branch to Orpheus' head, and thence up the curved arm of the figure on the right: altogether a very pleasing and clear composition. The two women are not identified, though Guthrie (p. 36) speculates that they might be Eurydice, on the left, and Pythia, Apollo's priestess at Delphi, on the right. As there is no identification either by inscription or attribute, this remains conjectural. The meaning of the scene is also open to interpretation. It may represent Apollo inspiring Orpheus, or it may refer to the same story from

74 Beazley, ARV 2, 1174/1.
Philostratus just mentioned in regard to the kylix. In the case of the hydria, however, the story from Philostratus seems more defensible, primarily because, on this vase, Apollo is looking directly at Orpheus, and, indeed, there seems something just a bit threatening about the position of the laurel branch. Whether or not this vase is meant as an illustration of the jealous wrath of Apollo, cannot be determined beyond the statement that it might possibly be based on the iconography. Because the literature is so much later than the vases, it is not possible to make any direct connection. However, the story from Philostratus could have been current during the fifth century, and, in fact, Philostratus related what he felt to be history, based on centuries old tradition.

This time lag is also evident in the most detailed version of the legend which is from the early third century B. C. poet Phanocles. This four part elegy, mentioned earlier, is preserved only in a scholiast. It relates the legend that after the death of Orpheus, the head and lyre floated to the island of Lesbos. There the head continued miraculously to sing, and it is this incident that accounts for the musical fame of Lesbos. Phanocles does not make mention of prophecy in the poem, but he does put great stress on the miraculous continuation of Orpheus' singing.

See note 70.
The only literary evidence available to us that is contemporary with the vases is contained in lines 962-971 of Euripides' *Alcestis*. This strophe is quoted by Lindforth, and discussed at great length in an attempt to translate what the Greek words would have meant to an Athenian audience in the fifth century. Although the passage is difficult and obscure, Lindforth concludes that it indicates that it was understood that the writings of Orpheus were taken down on tablets by others whom Orpheus inspired by means on the oracular head. This then provides succeeding generations of poets with justification for the hymns, poems, theogonies, etc. which were attributed to the name of Orpheus. Thus, says Lindforth, there was an established tradition which encompassed an amauensis, frequently, but not always, Musaeus, the son of Orpheus, whose name means servant of the muses. In turn, Orpheus is considered to have been relaying the words of Apollo. If Lindforth's interpretation of the lines from *Alcestis* is correct, which seems likely, then we can conclude that both the artistic and the literary evidence indicate a religious perception of Orpheus as an oracle inspired by Apollo.

Both the vases and the literature may provide a rationale to interpret Orpheus as having superhuman

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76A direct quote from the Greek; and a very technical discussion of the possible meanings of these lines can be found in Lindforth, pp. 119-125.
powers. However, there is not sufficient evidence to indicate that these powers resulted in an organized Orphic cult in Greece that worshipped Orpheus or more likely that worshipped Apollo. The only slight evidence of Orpheus as a cult figure comes from Pausanius, who mentions a Pelasgian sanctuary containing a wooden image of Orpheus. Later in Book V, XXVI:3, Pausanius describes a statue of Orpheus that was one of a group with Dionysus and Zeus, donated by Micythus at Olympia, as a thank offering. Both of these artifacts are open to conjecture as to whether they were intended as cult statues or not. The emphasis Pausanius gives to them may reflect more the influence of increased religious conceptions of Orpheus found in Magna Graecia, than the perceptions of the mainland Greeks.

Thus, it appears that the role of Orpheus as a religious figure in archaic and classical Greece has left rather sparse evidence which raises more questions that it answers. From the visual evidence however, there emerges a clear picture of Orpheus in an oracular role. The literature is not as certain regarding this role, because most of it is relatively late. There are other religious roles that are attested to by literature, and these have been discussed earlier. The Argonaut stories clearly portray Orpheus as an initiator of religious rites. From the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, the role of Orpheus as

Pausanius, Book III, XX:5.
a psychopomp can be extrapolated. However, both of these assume more significance later in Italiote art, in Greek art the parameters of the religious perceptions of Orpheus remain relatively narrow.

In summary, it is evident from the foregoing discussions of the five themes or aspects of Orpheus and their manifestations as seen in the culture of archaic and classical mainland Greece, that several important points have emerged which should be reviewed before proceeding to an investigation of the transformations that Orpheus undergoes in Magna Graecia. First, it is evident that as far back as both artistic and literary representations of Orpheus can be traced, there is no firmly established, canonical legend. In keeping with Greek culture in general, Orpheus was passed by oral tradition from the ancient past, and thus subject to variation in both interpretation and detail. This fluidity of character enabled Orpheus to be involved in different myths and often in different, even conflicting versions of the same myth. For example, even though the iconography of Orpheus was predominantly Greek, there is a Thracian connection that runs throughout both art and myth. In addition, it is apparent that while the Greeks much preferred the active, narrative aspects of Orpheus as subjects for art, there is a literary tradition, and in the vases with the mantic head of Orpheus, a small artistic tradition, of Orpheus as a religious figure with chthonic and as an
oracle, possibly shamanic associations. Thus, in attempting to draw conclusions about Orpheus in Greece, it must be kept in mind that the image that moved to Magna Graecia was not solid bedrock, but a complex of many strands, from which Italiote art selected those most suited to that cultural environment.
CHAPTER II
Orpheus in Magna Graecia

In the preceding chapter the iconography of Orpheus was traced in five major manifestations that occurred in both the art and literature of Archaic and Classical Greece. However, when representations of Orpheus in the art of Magna Graecia, are examined, it is evident that significant iconographic shifts have occurred, and that the intrinsic meaning or iconology, of Orpheus is not the same in the colonies of Magna Graecia as it was during the archaic and classical periods in mainland Greece. Italiote artists selected those strands from the aggregation of images of Orpheus inherited from mainland Greece which were most appropriate to express the cultural values of that society. The five relatively distinct roles that Orpheus assumed in Greece provide the basis, but are not as pronounced in the art of the Greek colonies in Italy. Some roles simply disappear, while others become combined. This change in iconography reflects a shift in the intrinsic meaning of Orpheus. In Italiote art and literature, Orpheus is no longer involved in mythic adventures, but is perceived more as a cultic figure associated with the underworld. Therefore, this
chapter will approach the iconography of Orpheus in Italiote art in a different manner from that of the preceding chapter. Instead, the focus will be on the funerary vases which comprise the major manifestation of the iconography of Orpheus in Italiote art. By describing the iconography of the vases, and categorizing them by theme, the attempt will be made to reach some conclusions about the conceptualization of Orpheus in Magna Graecia. To this end, additional information will be sought from Orphic writings that were in circulation at the time, including the famous gold leaves buried in the graves of presumed Orphic initiates. An extensive examination of these complex literary remains falls outside the framework of an art historical investigation, but since they undoubtedly are evidence of popular contemporary beliefs, their relationship to the iconography of the vase paintings merits investigation.

There are now about 17,000 to 18,000 extant vases of South Italian manufacturers, and more are coming to light each year.¹ Many of them were discovered relatively early, mostly from excavations in Apulia and in Campagna in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although some publication was done at that time, interest waned and it is only in the last few

decades that there has been a resurgence of scholarly attention. Fortunately, this renewed interest has aroused serious consideration of Italiote vases as a source of information about life in Magna Graecia. Art appreciation seems to run in cycles. Some twenty years ago, R. M. Cook, disdainfully dismissed Italiote ware with the comment,

"Its availability, the many theatrical scenes it exhibits, and perhaps their stronger stomachs made it popular to an earlier generation of scholars."  

Today, scholars are more inclined to agree with Margaret Mayo's assessment that,

"evidence of the vitality, taste, and wealth of the western Greeks lies in their artistic achievements -- their impressive temples, fine coinage, and highly decorative painted vases."

Before proceeding to an examination of the iconography of the specific vases which depict Orpheus, it

A primary force in this resurgence of interest has been the scholarship of Arthur Dale Trendall whose encyclopedic knowledge of South Italian vases has enabled him and his associate, Alexander Cambitoglou, to identify, interpret, and classify the various South Italian fabrics. In addition, a series of annual conventions held in Naples on various aspects of the culture of Magna Graecia has generated contributions of numerous scholars, so that the Atti from the conventions provide a rich source of information on current research. In the United States, a recent exhibit mounted by Margaret Mayo and Kenneth Hamma at the University of Virginia, and the fine catalog published in conjunction with it, has brought these vases to public attention.


would be well to review briefly the cultural milieu of which the vases are a product. As early as the Mycenaean period, Greek traders visited the coasts of Southern Italy and Sicily, but it was not until the first half of the eighth century that permanent colonies were established by expatriate Greeks. These colonies tended to be concentrated along the coasts, and did not extend very far into the hinterland where the indigenous Italian tribes lived. Originally the colonies followed the mainland Greek tradition of separate entities, each small settlement was a city-state more related to its founding city in Greece than to other cities in Magna Graecia. While there was little effective control exercised by the sponsoring city over its colony, trade relations were maintained for centuries, so that many vases manufactured on the Greek mainland were found in Italian sites. For example, the bell-krater by the Orpheus Painter depicting Orpheus playing to the Thracians (PLATE 14), that was discussed in Chapter I, page 45, is an Attic vase that was found at Gela, on the coast of Sicily. While there was a considerable amount of pottery made in Magna Graecia soon after colonization, it was not until the middle of the fifth century that the red-figure ware called "Italiote" or "South Italian" was produced locally. The first venture was in Campania about 440 B.C., followed shortly by Lucania. By 420 B.C., the city of Taras, present-day Taranto, in Apulia began to manufacture its own vases
probably to replace imported ware which was no longer available, because of the Peloponsian War. The fact that it was Taras that became a ceramic center may have influenced the choice of subject matter of the vase paintings for some scholars believe that Taras was a center for an Orphic cult. This vase manufacture seems to have lasted about one hundred-fifty years and was concentrated in the fourth century. It did not extend past the early third century B.C. when the manufacturing of figured pottery seems to have come to a halt.

In general, Italiote vases exhibit a variety of shapes and subject matter, and it must be kept in mind that the vases on which Orpheus is represented comprise only a small fraction of the wide range of topics found on these vases. Subjects such as mythological figures, genre scenes, theatrical allusions, as well as many representations associated with the cult of the dead, including both funerary scenes and scenes of parting, were all popular.

The majority of Italiote vases, including the vases depicting Orpheus, were undoubtedly intended for funerary

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5 Arthur Dale Trendall, in Mayo and Hamma, The Art of South Italy, pp. 15-16.

6 Ibid., p. 19.

use.\(^8\) This is evidenced not only by the fact that the vases are larger than normal household use requires, but in addition they are non-functional, most of them being without a bottom. All of the vases that depict Orpheus were found in burials,\(^9\) which further indicates that they were traditional grave goods in Magna Graecia. This practice would conform to mainland Greek tradition, which frequently used vases as grave markers or placed them in the tombs of deceased along with other valuables.\(^10\)

Depictions associated with mourning and with life after death were immensely popular on these funerary vases, as well as scenes in the underworld. In fact, because there are so many of this latter type, perhaps it would be well to digress momentarily to define clearly what this study means by the term "Underworld Vases" in general, as distinguished from vases which depict Orpheus in the underworld. The "Underworld Vases" were among the first to be discovered and studied, as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Unfortunately some early scholars tended to broadly term all vases with any representations of Hades as "Underworld Vases", and often loosely characterized them as being "Orphic", whether or not

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 23.


Orpheus was actually depicted. In fact, under the general term "Underworld" there are many iconographic variations which have been the subject for considerable scholarly debate over possible interpretations.  

11 Although there are many vases that use symbolic abbreviations such as Herakles and Cerebus, or Pluto enthroned, to indicate an underworld locale, in general the standard Underworld Vases are characterized by the depiction of the palace of Pluto and Persephone surrounded by traditional, mythological inhabitants of the Underworld. The John Needles Chester vase, now in the Walters Art Gallery (inv. no. 48.86), and the subject of a recent detailed study exemplifies this underworld genre (PLATE 21).

12 Attributed to the Baltimore Painter, this Late Apulian Ornate vase is distinctly funerary. On the obverse, the body of the vase depicts a typical underworld scene, with Pluto and Persephone in the palace which is in the center of the body, surrounded by various underworld figures. The neck is decorated with an amazonamachy which is not

11 Among the most important of these works are: Jane Harrison, Prolegomena, also, Erwin Rhode, Psyche, The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925), also, Guthrie, Orpheus, and H. R. W. Smith, Funerary Symbolism in Apulian Vase Painting, ed. J. K. Anderson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

related to the main scene. The reverse has a depiction of two figures in a funeral naïskos. Both the base and the volute handles depict a woman's head encircled by floral motifs. Nowhere on this vase is there a depiction of Orpheus; therefore, while it is an "Underworld Vase", there is no basis for considering it an "Orphic" vase, nor could it be classified as Orpheus in the Underworld. Thus, it is evident that this size and style of vase is not unique to Orphic cults, but was generally popular for funerary use. We must, therefore, be very careful to distinguish among these vases. The theme of "Orpheus in the Underworld" which is the topic that is the concern of this study, should be regarded as a sub-set of "Underworld Vases". Consequently any interpretation of the iconography, or conclusions about an Orphic sect based on the underworld vases, must take into consideration the fact that the vases with Orpheus, are only a small part of a larger whole. Even though all underworld vases are stylistically similar, there are substantive iconographic differences as will be seen below.

Most of the Underworld Vases, including the ones that depict Orpheus, are of a late style which Trendall has designated as "Apulian Ornate". They represent a development and elaboration of the earlier Apulian Plain
Style. In general they are characterized by monumental size, sometimes as much as 150 cm. high; and grandiose decoration, often arranged in tiers. Guthrie describes them as, "huge things painted in a repellent style." In comparison to Attic vases, they do seem gaudy, crowded with as many figures as possible, and then if there is any space left over, a bit of vegetal or geometric motif is added. If there are tiers, there is no attempt to relate the different registers into a unified narrative. Usually the middle register carries the story line, while the other registers may be either purely decorative, or depict another story altogether.

With this background, the vases which specifically depict Orpheus in a variety of roles will be examined in detail. There are twenty-four of these listed by Trendall in Index III "Vases with Mythological Scenes", and twenty-seven in the General index. All of the vases with Orpheus are of Apulian origin, and most likely produced in or near Taras since Professor Trendall

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14 Guthrie, Orpheus, p. 187.

15 RVap, Indices, pp. 1267 and 1289, respectively.

16 The discrepancy is a result of including more vases that use the head of Orpheus as a decorative device, and the omission of one vase from the mythological category. The indices were prepared by the publisher, not by Professor Trendall, and in addition, there was a delay, so that this may well account for the difference.
states that depictions of Orpheus do not appear in any of the other South Italian fabrics.\textsuperscript{17} Trendall classified the vases into six categories: Orpheus, Death, Thracians, Underworld, Prophetic Head, and Decorative Head. This discussion will follow his divisions to some extent. However, the classification of the vases depends upon the iconographical interpretation and since the publication of Trendall's catalog, additional research has resulted in some re-evaluation which results in some interpretations which are different from his.\textsuperscript{18} These differences are primarily reflected in the re-assessment of the category which he calls "Orpheus in the Underworld". This category is Trendall's largest category as he did not subdivide or distinguish iconographical variations, but simply placed all vases which depict the underworld in this category. In light of additional research on some of the vases in this category, it would seem more logical and enlightening to differentiate between a standardized Orpheus in the underworld, and other vases which depict him in the underworld, but have strikingly different iconographies.

\textsuperscript{17}Statement by Arthur Dale Trendall in personal interview. The fact that depictions of Orpheus in Magna Graecia are unique to Taras is one of the grounds on which scholars base the supposition of a Orpheus cult in that city.

\textsuperscript{18}In particular, the Atti from the Naples conventions mentioned previously are informative as to the general background. For work on specific vases see the references cited below in note 36.
In addition, this discussion will emphasize a new category called Orpheus as a psychopomp, consisting of two vases that Trendall originally put in his "Orpheus" group, and "in the Underworld", respectively.

Four vases that have been referred to as Underworld Vases, will be discussed first. They will be considered a separate category, "Standardized Underworld" instead of including other vases which depict Orpheus in the underworld, but bear no resemblance to the iconography on these vases, which is more like what scholars have called "Underworld Vases, as exemplified by the Chester vase, discussed above, Chapter II, pp. 6-7. While the style and subject are strikingly similar, the difference is that Orpheus now appears among the stock characters in Hades. The four vases resemble each other and must certainly have been intended to convey the theme of Orpheus in the underworld. They are: Naples 3222 (PLATE 22 and 23), Karlsruhe B4 (PLATE 24), Malibu 77 AE 13 (PLATE 25) and Munich 3297 (PLATE 26). They are all volute kraters and all depict the palace of Pluto surrounded by a fairly standard cast of characters. There are slight variations: the neck of both Munich 3297 and of Karlsruhe B4 show Helios in a quadriga, while Naples 3222 depicts an Amazonamachy, and the vase at Malibu simply has a female

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19RVap, Naples (3222) 16/82; Karsruhe (B4) 16/81; Malibu (77 AE 13) 27/17; Munich (3297), 18/282.
head surrounded by floral scrolls. They all show both Persephone and Pluto inside the palace, though each has a different position. Architectural details of the palace also vary; Naples has very ornate caryatids atop acanthus leaves, Munich 3297 is the only one with six pillars instead of four, the Malibu vase simply has plain pillars with Ionic capitals, while the Karlsruhe B4 vase has sphinx capitals. The ceiling is visible on all of the vases, the view is that of looking up into the palace, and on all but Karlsruhe B4 wheels hanging from the ceiling are visible.\textsuperscript{20} With the exception of the vase at Malibu, which is broken the other vases all depict Herakles holding Cereberus. They are placed directly below the palace and astride of the infernal rivers which according to legend flowed through the underworld. On all of the vases, Orpheus appears wearing a Phrygian cap and a long Thracian priest's robe. The lyre he holds is of an identical type on each vase. The Malibu vase is the only one where Orpheus is shown to the right, and slightly below the palace (as one faces it); all the others place him on the viewers left of the palace and on about a level with it.

It is evident that these artistic differences are

\textsuperscript{20}These wheels may represent either Orphic or Pythagorian ritual. Guthrie, Orpheus, pp. 187, 208, and Harrison, Prolegomena, pp. 590 ff., have both speculated on the significance of these wheels on the underworld vases.
minor variations and are not iconologically significant. It is more likely that the vases share a common prototype, rather than the same painter. Earlier writers such as Guthrie, had posited the idea of the same painter producing the vases.\(^1\) Trendall, writing fifty years later, is in a position to date the Malibu vase in the last third of the fourth century B.C. and attribute it to the Baltimore Painter. The Karlsruhe and the Naples vases he characterizes as relatively early, around the beginning of the fourth century B.C. and on the "threshold of Late Apulian".\(^2\) Both vases, according to Trendall descend from a earlier prototype, possibly a painting, though stylistic traits indicate that they originated in different schools of painting.\(^3\)

Before proceeding to other vases that portray Orpheus in the underworld, it might be worthwhile to

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\(^{1}\)Guthrie, Orpheus, p. 187, describes, "the idea which has taken the painter's fancy, and which he has caused to be repeated with variations on a number of vases .... It seems to be a hotch-potch of all that he knew about Hades."

\(^{2}\)RVap, vol. i, p. 431.

\(^{3}\)Ibid., vol. i, p. 430. Trendall believes that both the Naples 3222 and Karlsruhe B4 vases, as well as Naples Stg. 709 which is discussed later, all look back to a painting. It seems quite likely to me that this painting could be the one by Polygnotos at Delphi, discussed earlier, pages 25-26. It must have been very famous, and as Pausanius wrote about it in the second century A.D., it was certainly still in existence for the vase painters to use as a source for underworld description, adding their own iconographical changes.
summarize in a preliminary way the existence of an Orphic cult to which these particular four vases point. The vases are often referred to as "Orphic", implying that they relate to a specific Orphic religion or cult. This is the point of view espoused by Jane Harrison who says the vases "were obviously designed under Orphic influence" and represent "popular Orphism with an emphasis on fear of punishment." Guthrie is rather more skeptical, but he does speculate on the fact that both the vases and the Gold Leaves contain similar geographical features of Hades. Erwin Rohde's conclusion that, "All attempts to read mystical or edifying intentions into these (vases) are now regarded as completely mistaken.", seems too sweeping a dismissal; nonetheless, caution is advisable. In light of the many other Underworld Vases which do not include Orpheus, these four vases, by themselves without any supportive literary or other visual evidence, provide insufficient evidence of an Orphic cult. The vases seem to present Orpheus more as one among many inhabitants of the underworld. If these vases are meant to be specifically Orphic, a more dominant role for Orpheus would be expected, and a clearer indication that he is a successful psychopomp. It seems likely that

24 Harrison, Prolegomena, pp. 600ff.
25 Guthrie, Orpheus, p. 190.
26 Erwin Rohde, Psyche, p. 250, n. 27.
Eurydice, as an intimation that Orpheus successfully brought her back would be portrayed. However, in the whole repertoire of underworld vases, Eurydice appears only once, on a vase in Naples (Stg.709), which will be discussed below (PLATE 27). On these four rather standardized Underworld Vases, Orpheus is simply standing off to the side, playing his lyre to Persephone and Pluto, neither of whom seem to be paying any attention. He is no more important than any of the others, the only difference being that the others are the traditional Homeric characters, while Orpheus, as emphasized by his Thracian dress is outside this tradition. Certainly these vases can be interpreted as indicating that Orpheus is among those who are familiar with the Underworld, but they do not support the existence of a cult based on a belief in his efficacy as a psychopomp. Additional evidence will need to be explored before final conclusions can be drawn regarding the significance of these vases.

The next vases to be examined, constitute a variation of the Underworld type. Although Trendall has included these in his underworld category, they show substantive iconographic variation from the standard Underworld representation. Such variation indicates that the intent of these vases was to convey Orpheus' special position in the underworld. These vases do not depict Orpheus as merely one of many stock characters in Hades, as he is seen on the four vases discussed above. Instead,
he appears to be the center of attention, and a much more important figure. While this group of vases all portray the same theme, "Orpheus in the Underworld," they exhibit considerable stylistic differences, and therefore will be described and interpreted individually.

The first vase to be considered may provide an answer to the earlier problem that the Underworld Vases do not give any indication that Orpheus went to the underworld for the purpose of recovering his wife, Eurydice. As noted above, there is just a single vase extant, which portrays Orpheus with Eurydice. The vase is a volute krater, Naples Stg. 709. Trendall identifies the vase as a product of the Underworld Painter, and dates it 330 to 310 B.C. It is badly damaged, and difficult to discern details (PLATE 27, fig. B, C). However, the fact that it is meant to be an underworld scene is indicated by the figures of Herakles with his club and Cereberus. The rendering of Herakles and his eleventh labor is almost identical to that on the Underworld Vases discussed above, with the exception, of course, of the damaged Malibu vase. Immediately above Herakles is a group of three figures, in the center a seated figure seems, by the hair style, to be a female, and is probably meant to be Persephone. To her left

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27RVap, 18/284. (All vases in RVap will be cited by chapter (18) and by their number within the chapter (284).)
stands a male holding a scepter or spear. He is probably her husband, Hades or Pluto.\textsuperscript{28} Persephone appears to be looking to her right, as does the standing female attendant next to her. Their field of vision brings us to the most interesting part of the vase. They seem to be looking at Orpheus, who can be identified by his long robe, Phrygian cap and lyre. He reaches out with his right arm, and gently grasps the wrist of a female who seems most likely to be Eurydice (PLATE 27, fig. A). This identification is advanced by Heurgon in his study and it seems to me that there are good reasons for proposing that this is a rare representation of Eurydice.\textsuperscript{29} First a winged eros is hovering by Orpheus' right shoulder, surely a symbol of romantic interest. Secondly, in the way she stands and the gesture of her right arm, Eurydice implies intimacy, a subtle flirtatiousness. In addition, Orpheus' gesture as he holds her arm with his right hand, is very reminiscent of the famous Three-figure Relief, a century earlier (PLATE 7). It is almost as if there has been a change of roles, and it is now Orpheus, instead of Hermes, who gently leads Eurydice. It is difficult to determine

\textsuperscript{28}At certain periods in Greek history, the term Hades was used for both the place and its ruler. To avoid confusion, this paper will use Hades for the place, and Pluto solely for the ruler, even though the term was not in general use.

\textsuperscript{29}J. Heurgon, "Orphée et Eurydice Avant Virgile," Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire, XLIX, (1932), pp. 22-27.
exactly what is happening on this vase. Possibly Orpheus and Eurydice appear simply as examples of famous people in the Underworld, but considering that Persephone, her attendant, and possibly Pluto are all focused on the two figures, it seems more likely that it was meant to be a representation of Orpheus' plea for the release of Eurydice. This interpretation is re-enforced by the fact that Orpheus appears to be playing the lyre with his left hand. This awkward position makes the lyre look as if it is floating in mid-air, as it is physically impossible to hold the lyre and to play it with only one hand. However, if the artist only wanted to show Orpheus with the lyre, he probably would have him carry it properly by the wooden soundbox, not by the strings. It would seem that it was most important to the artist that Orpheus' left hand hold Eurydice, rather than lose that physical contact by playing the lyre with the plectrum as would be expected. An artistic convention then implies that Orpheus, holding his wife, was in the process of charming the underworld with his music. Thus, it can be assumed that the story of Orpheus and Eurydice could provide some of the rationale for an Italiote cult of Orpheus as a psychopomp, and, it appears this vase implies that he was a successful advocate.

A volute krater in Leningrad (Hermitage St. 498) has also been interpreted as depicting Orpheus and
Eurydice (PLATE 28). However, Professor Trendall, has stated that he believes this to be, "highly unlikely."

This vase which, according to Trendall is contemporaneous with the Naples Stg. 709, shows a seated Pluto who appears to be lecturing Orpheus. Orpheus is again shown in the long Thracian robe and he stands facing Pluto in an attentive attitude. Directly behind Orpheus, or to the viewer's right, is the seated woman whom Smith proposes as Eurydice. The visual impression seems more that of someone who is casually listening in, for there is neither physical contact, nor any symbolic indication of a relationship. Additionally, Orpheus does not seem to be playing the lyre to persuade Pluto to release Eurydice. Although, he holds the lyre, again, very awkwardly by the strings instead of the wood or the strap, the presence of the unused plectrum in his right hand indicates that he is not meant to be playing at the moment. Instead, the import of the iconography seems to be much more that of Orpheus, as a Thracian priest, receiving greetings or perhaps instructions about the Underworld. One rather strange detail of this vase is Orpheus' head dress that differs from the usual Phrygian cap. This head dress is

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30 This is the opinion expressed by Smith, Funerary Symbolism, p. 243. However, Professor Trendall in a personal interview, Malibu, California, April 16, 1985, viewed this identification as very doubtful. Trendall's listing of the vase in RVap 23/46, does not mention Eurydice, but classifies it as as "Orpheus in the Underworld."
not pulled over the head as a cap is, instead it is perched on top of his head, and has a crown-like turned up, embroidered brim. This same unusual hat also appears on the next vase to be discussed. These two vases seem to be the only one which depict this type of hat. It is unknown whether this variation has any iconographical significance.

In 1974, a number of important vases were discovered in a large tomb in Altamura, in central Apulia. Unfortunately, many were broken but an amphora was carefully pieced together so that its theme can be interpreted with some degree of confidence.\textsuperscript{31} This vase, now at Taranto, has Underworld scenes both the upper and lower registers (PLATE 29). On the upper register of the body, Herakles and Cereberus appear, on the viewer's left side of the vase. On the far right side Orpheus and Pluto appear in a position similar to that on the Leningrad vase. Orpheus is facing Pluto who gestures with his right hand, as if addressing Orpheus, who wears the long priests robe and strange hat. The lyre is just visible above missing pieces of the vase. The Underworld theme is further re-enforced by the scene in the bottom register which depicts female water carriers, undoubtedly the Danaids, a re-current theme in Underworld

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, 23/293.
Very similar to the above is another amphora, this one is from Bari, and now in the Perrone collection.\textsuperscript{33} It also consists of two registers separated by a decorative band (PLATE 30). The lower register is again a funeral scene, this time two groups of two female mourners who bear offerings, approach a stele. The top register is centered on Pluto who is seated on his throne (PLATE 31). With his left hand Pluto seems to gesture at Orpheus, who wears a long, flowing robe, and Phrygian cap. While the other figures seem firmly placed on a ground line, Orpheus, looks more as if he were floating slightly above, Orpheus is looking back over his shoulder at Pluto, who is seated on his throne. A winged eros approaches Orpheus' head, as if to crown him,\textsuperscript{34} but Orpheus does not appear to notice him, and a crown is not visible in the photograph. The most interesting aspect of this vase is the presence of figures that, according to their costumes and weapons, are clearly meant to be Thracian warriors. These are the only subsidiary figures portrayed, and since there are no standard Underworld characters, this vase

\textsuperscript{32}See Eva Keuls, \textit{Water Carriers in Hades}, (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1974).

\textsuperscript{33}RVap, 18/225. This vase is discussed in Schmidt, \textit{Orfeo}, p. 112.

\textsuperscript{34}See Trendall's description of this vase, RVap, 18.225.
seems to represent a fusion of the Underworld theme, represented by Pluto, and the theme of Orpheus among the Thracians. Speculation on the significance of the appearance of these Thracians in the Underworld will be reserved until a later examination of additional vases with Thracians pp. 91ff. In all of the vases discussed above the presence of traditional underworld figures such as Hades or of Herakles and Cereberus, or both, make it very clear that the painter intended to portray Orpheus in the Underworld.

The next two vases to be considered have an obviously funerary theme, but become much more problematical when an attempt is made to discover what message the artist intended the iconography to convey. Trendall has classified the first vase (Basel S 40) (PLATE 32 and 33) simply as "Orpheus", and the second (B.M. F270) (PLATE 34) as depicting Orpheus in the underworld. However, re-evaluation of these vases indicates that they might be considered in a new category that could be called "Orpheus as a Psychopomp".

The amphora which Trendall terms Basel S 40 is a relatively recent discovery and is perhaps the most significant artistic evidence in any attempt to interpret Orphues' relation to the underworld. Since the

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publication of Trendall’s catalog, it has been the subject of several additional studies which indicate an increased importance of its iconography. 36 This vase, now in a private collection in Basel, depicts a naïskos, or small shrine, in which is seen an elderly, heavily bearded man seated on a stool, and faced toward the figure of Orpheus, who wears a long, flowing Phrygian robe and cap, and approaches with dancing steps. He appears to be plucking the strings of his large ornate lyre with his left hand, while strumming with the plectrum held in his right hand. This is the first time Orpheus has been shown actually within the naïskos, and the question arises of what the implication of this position might be. Scholars agree that the seated man’s age, his walking stick as well as his presence inside the naïskos, indicate that he is meant to be dead, or more probably in the state that Garland characterized as “between worlds.” 37 What really arouses interest is the fact that in his left hand the deceased holds a papyrus roll. In combination with the presence of Orpheus this would seem to indicate that

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he is holding Orphic writings that will help him to find his way in the underworld. This possibility is further sustained by the fact that it is known that there were Orphic texts in circulation at this time. Of particular interest is the 1962 discovery of the Derveni Papyrus in a tomb at Derveni near Thessalonki, which is dated ca. 330 B. C. Fortunately the papyrus was incompletely burned at the funeral, and this permitted its recovery and decipherment. It contains a commentary written ca. 400 B. C. on a theogony-cosmogony attributed to Orpheus. Thus, it is evident that there were people whose grave goods contained "Orphic" writings, and that this vase could be representation of such a person. Whether this is evidence that they were "Orphics", that is, members of an organized cultic association, is a matter of considerable debate which is outside the iconographical focus of this paper. It can only be posited that it is quite likely that the seated man represents an Orphic initiate, but there is no way to be positive as to the existence of a specific Orphic religiosity. The best conclusion possible is that the

38 There are many books dealing with this topic, but the most recent and very comprehensive is, M. K. West, The Orphic Poems, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

39 Burkert, Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries, p. 2.

40 Alderick, Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism: and Burkert, Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries, are the most recent discussions of this ongoing controversy.
papyrus roll and the presence of Orpheus within the
naiskos, indicate that the intent of the iconography of
this vase was to present Orpheus in the role of guide of
the dead, and to suggest that his music and his writings
enabled the deceased to pass safely into the nether
world. This vase, depicting Orpheus within the naiskos,
indicates that Orpheus was perceived to have a special
relationship with the dead. It provides that most
concrete artistic evidence seen so far that Orpheus
chthonic powers included a role as a psychopomp.

The next vase (PLATE 34) to be discussed might also
be interpreted as being of the same type as the Basel vase
(PLATE 32 and 32). However, it exhibits a unique
iconography, and has been the subject of conflicting
interpretations.\footnote{Trendall, RVap, 25/15 interprets this vase very
differently than Schmidt, Orfeo, pp. 120-122; and West, Orphic Poems, p. 25.} This problematical vase is a calyx
krater now in the British Museum, which Trendall
attributes to the Darius/Underworld Painter, and dated in
the last quarter of the Fourth century B.C. However,
Trendall indicates that he is not certain that it is really Orpheus represented on the vase. He
tentatively identifies the herm as possibly Apollo, and
the figure to the right as "Orpheus (?)" holding out his
lyre with his right hand, and grasping Cerebus' leash in
his left. Margot Schmidt offers a completely different
interpretation. She maintains that it shows Orpheus standing to the left and under a tree. He stands atop a plinth, and looks more like a statue than a person. As usual he wears a long robe. He holds his lyre out toward a young man standing on the other side of the tree grasping the lyre with his right hand. Schmidt contends that this represents Orpheus as "santo protettore", who, by the magic of his lyre, has the power to save the young man, who is possibly an Orphic initiate, from the "hostile forces" of the underworld, represented by Herakles who stands to the left of Orpheus. The tree which is in such a prominent position also may symbolize underworld geography. Possibly it is meant to be the tree referred to on some of the gold lamellae which are discussed below. These gold leaves give the deceased directions for finding the way through the underworld, and on several of them, a tree is described as one of the landmarks. A further complication on this vase is the presence on the far left, of an old paidagogos who is associated with theatre more than underworld scenes. The iconography is unique among extant Orpheus vases, and, therefore, raises more questions than it answers. It is difficult to draw

42 Guthrie, Orpheus, pp. 172-173, gives the following translation of the Petalia tablet:

"Thou shalt find to the left of the House of Hades a spring, And by the side thereof standing a white cypress..."
any conclusions regarding its specific meaning, or to be certain whether it represents an example of Orpheus as a psychopomp. If Trendall's doubts prove to be correct, the vase would be outside the subject of this study. However, if Margot Schmidt is correct, and it is meant to Orpheus, then this vase, like the Basel amphora, is important evidence to support the concept of Orpheus as a psychopomp, whose special association with the underworld could provide the basis for an Orphic cult. Perhaps, as other vases, and the literary manifestations of Orpheus are studied below, the significance of this vase will be clarified.

The next vases to be investigated are those which depict the head of Orpheus, which are known from mainland Greek legend as having oracular powers. Trendall distinguishes two categories of vases depicting the head of Orpheus. The largest group are those which use Orpheus' head as a decorative motif on either the neck or foot of the vase.\footnote{For a list of these vases see RVap, 13/34, 14/142, 15/36, 15/60.} The significance of this use of Orpheus is problematical. A head was frequently used on Apulian vases as a kind of space filler. For example, the Chester vase (PLATE 21) uses a female head in a manner very similar to the head of Orpheus on the Vatican Krater (PLATE 35, fig. A). So it is possible that its purpose is
simply decorative. However, it is possible that it was intended to refer to the prophetic powers that the head of Orpheus was supposed to possess. Another possibility would be as an allusion to Orpheus as a guide for the dead. Certainly the floral motif that surrounds the head was in general a symbol of life after death. However, as there is no context on these vases to indicate any specific meaning, only the Phrygian cap identifies the head as probably being Orpheus, there is not sufficient evidence to reach a conclusion on the significance of these vases, other than the fact that as the vases were meant for funerary use, the selection of this particular motif seems quite appropriate.

A much more specific and interesting use of the head of Orpheus is found on a pelike in the Honolulu Academy of Arts (PLATE 35, fig. B). This has been identified by Trendall and other scholars as a "prophetic head". When compared with the vases above, it is clear that both the position and the context indicate a more significant function. Here the head is not only on the body of the vase, but is in the center, and is proportionately larger than the surrounding figures. It seems to rise from a series of pod-like flowers, which

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44 Statement made by Professor Kenneth Hamma, in a personal interview, Los Angeles, California, November 20, 1985.

45 RVap, 23.224, and Schmidt, Orfeo, pp. 131-132.
gives it a mystic appearance, as if the artist wished to give the impression of the head rising up to prophesy. On either side of the head are two figures; a woman stands to the left, and a man is seated to our right. They may be presumed to be seeking wisdom at the shrine of the oracular head. This depiction would of course have been based on Greek legends, such as the third century B. C. elegy of Phanocles discussed in Chapter I, pages 54-55, and 53, and represented in Attic art by the kylix at Cambridge, and the hydria at the Otago Museum in Dunedin (PLATES 19 and 20). In addition, it seems likely that there is an implied reference to religious writings under the name of Orpheus, which were widely circulated during that time. In fact the mantic head of Orpheus provided a perfect vehicle for generations of writers who wrote under the name of Orpheus. In addition to these Orphic writings, the third century B. C. elegy by Phanocles, although itself slightly later than the vase, is still evidence that the story was in circulation both in Greece and Magna Graecia. It is evident from this vase that the head of Orpheus was considered to have oracular powers in Magna Graecia as well as in Greece.

The last vases to be discussed are those that depict the theme of the death of Orpheus, and the related theme of Orpheus among the Thracians. Although these themes accounted for the majority of the Greek art depicting Orpheus, they represent a much smaller
proportion of the extant Italiote work. There are three vase fragments which portray the death of Orpheus among the Thracians. These themes were found in literature as well as very probably borrowed from Attic vase imports; for example, from a vase such as the Attic bell krater by the Orpheus Painter found at Gela (PLATE 14). It seems quite likely that as these themes enjoyed so much popularity in mainland Greece, that artists in South Italy would attempt to imitate a proven favorite. However, it was a century later that this occurred, probably because there is always a time lag in the transmission of art, and also because the Attic vases were produced in the early part of the fourth century and the manufacturer of red-figured Italiote ware did not develop until later. An examination of a sampling of the vases on which the themes of Orpheus among the Thracians, and the death of Orpheus occur, will show that there are many important differences between the Attic iconography and that of Apulian artists a century later.

These differences are immediately apparent on a bell krater fragment from Taranto (PLATE 36, fig. A).\textsuperscript{46} Not only is it characteristically Apulian in the crowded composition and spatial effects, but the iconography of Orpheus is different from anything seen on Attic vases. Here he is dynamically positioned to fight back against

\textsuperscript{46}RVap, 8/150.
his attackers. Instead of ineffectually sinking to his knees and vainly attempting to cover himself with his lyre, as he is portrayed on Attic vases, here his right hand grasps a large rock that he is ready to throw. The lyre is held down and in back by his left hand, serving more as identifying attribute than a weapon or defense. As if to gain an advantageous height over his opponents, he has one knee up on a rather strange looking pile of rocks, while the other leg is stretched out for balance. Even more notable than his aggressive stance is the fact that Orpheus' costume is clearly meant to be Thracian. However, both the robe and cloak are short in contrast to the long priestly garments that he wears on Italiote vases relating to the underworld. He has the high laced boots seen before on Thracian warriors. His Phrygian cap is also highly distinctive, and can be seen to better advantage on the small fragment of a skyphos now in Heidelberg (PLATE 35, fig. b).47 It is an ornate peaked cap with long streamers on the side that are either meant to be decorative or untied chin straps, very different from the helmet-like Phrygian cap that is seen occasionally on Greek works, for example, the Three-figure relief (PLATE 7). This hat resembles the high mitre-like cap noted on the Apulian vases portraying the underworld themes, except that it curls forward while the others seem

to rise straight up from the forehead. This high peaked cap with side flaps seems to be the standard Apulian iconography to indicate a Phrygian origin, so that even while the dress may be either long or short, the peaked cap is always indicative that the figure is meant to be Thracian, not Greek.

Italiote representations of the theme of Orpheus' death follow the mainland Greek convention that he was murderously set upon by women. Fortunately, the Taranto fragment is large enough to depict several women in long robes advancing menacingly toward Orpheus with spears and knives. The art of Magna Graecia, then, agreed with the Greek tradition of his death at the hands of enraged women as portrayed both on Attic vases and in the literary works by Aeschylus, Isocrates, and Phanocles. The only other vase depicting the death of Orpheus is a calyx krater now in Amsterdam (2581). However it is too fragmentary to contribute anything new to the discussion.

Next, four vases which depict Orpheus among the Thracians will be discussed. They seem only to have their theme in common; compositionally and iconographically they do not resemble each other at all. To begin there is the bell krater that was previously in the collection of the Muso del Duomo in Anagni, and is now on the Zurich market (PLATE 37). This vase is an anomaly in Apulian

\[48\] Ibid., 7/22. \[49\] Ibid., 1/12.
iconography of Orpheus, because, as far as this investigation has gone, it is the only representation of Orpheus as a Greek. In spite of its uniqueness in Italiote art, there can be no doubt that this is indeed Orpheus, and not another musician, as the artist has inscribed his name over his head. Orpheus is to the left on the vase, seated on a rock, bare-headed as well as bare-chested, and wears a Greek type himation around his waist. He holds his lyre on his lap and is clearly meant to be playing it for the Thracian warrior who stands facing Orpheus. The warrior holds a spear in his left hand and the reins of his horse, which also appears to be listening, in his right hand. The Thracian is dressed in typical fashion, with laced boots, a short tunic with a cloak, and a Thracian cap with a low peak. This very Greek iconography is reminiscent of Attic vases such as the column krater in the Portland Art Museum (PLATE 15) more than of Italiote work, and is probably the result of a direct adaptation of Attic imports, rather than having any distinctively Italiote iconographical significance.

A intermediate stage is represented by a second vase in this group, a volute krater in Naples (H 1978)\textsuperscript{50} that depicts all the figures in Thracian costume, but is compositionally more related to Attic vases. On this vase (PLATE 38), Orpheus is playing a large ornate lyre and is

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., 8/147.
wearing a long robe and high peaked Phrygian cap. He seated in the center and faces a group of two listening Thracian warriors in decorative cloaks, boots and high caps, one of whom holds a shell in his hand (PLATE 38, fig. B).\textsuperscript{51} To the left and in back of Orpheus, stand two women with their arms around each other as if partly listening to Orpheus and partly talking to each other. They recall the Attic vases which presented a fusion of themes, showing both the Thracian men and the women who were the instigators of his death. The charming fawn just under Orpheus seems to represent the power that Orpheus' music has even over shy, wild creatures.

The next two vases are much more typically Apulian. The composition of the Bari 873 amphora (PLATE 39) is much like the amphora in the Perrone Collection (PLATE 30) discussed earlier, and in fact Trendall attributes both to the late fourth century B.C. and the influence of the Darius and the Underworld Painters.\textsuperscript{52} Both have two tiers separated by a decorative band, with the lower register depicting funeral ceremonies around a central stele. The top register of the Bari Amphora 873

\textsuperscript{51} The shell pictured here would be used to scoop water out of the lustral basin during a ritual. It is discussed below, pp. 88-89, in conjunction with the Bari amphora which shows not only the shell, but the basin, while on this vase, Naples (H1978), only the shell hints at a ritual situation.

\textsuperscript{52} RVap, 18/325. Schmidt, Orfeo, p. 112, attributes it definitely to the Darius Painter.
depicts Orpheus in a long robe and Phrygian cap, seated on a folding stool, facing to our right, and playing his lyre. In back of Orpheus is a Thracian standing in front of his horse. This Thracian turns his head and seems to be listening to the music, while the seated Thracian to our far left is engrossed in his weapons. This group is a straightforward representation of the Thracian theme, not all that different from Attic works. However, the group to the right, for whom Orpheus seems to be playing, raises some interesting questions about the interpretation of the iconography (PLATE 40, figs. A and B). There are two figures, a standing nude with a drape over her left shoulder, and a typical Thracian warrior, to the right of the nude, who leans over to scoop water out of the large lustral basin with the shell he holds in his right hand (cf. PLATE 30). The presence of a lustral basin and the stand on which the nude is spreading incense, immediately indicate that this scene is meant to depict a ritual event. The question is, what ceremony is meant? Schmidt in her discussion of this vase, presents two possible explanations. First, it may simply be that Orpheus is present as one who has authority over ritual. Certainly it has been seen in Greek tradition that Orpheus is often

the initiator of teletai,\textsuperscript{54} and it is possible that it is in this role that he appears on this vase. In that case, it might mean that the figure of the nude woman is perhaps the dead person to whom the stele in the lower register refers, and that Orpheus appears here as the musician whose music has the power to influence the underworld. The other possibility that Schmidt explores is more evident when the volute krater in the H. A. Collection in Milan is considered (PLATE 41 and 42).\textsuperscript{55} Here again Orpheus is shown surrounded by six armed Thracians in typical costume. On the right, one Thracian leans on a lustral basin while the shell scoop floats just below. The interesting addition to the standard group are the two figures just above Orpheus' head. A seated Aphrodite holds a plate in her right hand, and turns over her shoulder to look at a winged Eros who reaches out to gain her attention. The presence of these two figures, often associated with wedding ritual, is interpreted by Schmidt as a possible reference to the old legend of Orpheus' antipathy to women and his homosexuality.\textsuperscript{56} Smith also explores this hypothesis explaining the lustral basin as part of Aphrodite's ritual wedding bath for

\textsuperscript{54}See the discussion of Orpheus as an Argonaut in Chapter I, pp. 19-21.

\textsuperscript{55}RVap, 16/42.

\textsuperscript{56}Schmidt; Orfeo, pp. 109-110.
men. In this case the six Thracians who are scattered around on the vase, and not really attending to Orpheus or his music, would serve as reminders of the story that Orpheus originated pederasty. It is not possible to determine which of these theories is the correct one, or if there is another explanation altogether. Certainly from the point of view of iconography, these vases have a more ritualistic implication than the Attic vases of the same subject, from which the theme was taken. Thus, these vases provide an appropriate conclusion to this survey of the imagery of Orpheus in Italiote ware. Although only a representative selection of the vases which depict Orpheus have been described, the major themes and iconography of Orpheus in Magna Graecia have all been displayed.

The visual imagery depicted on the Italiote vases discussed above is substantively different from Orphic imagery seen earlier in the art of mainland Greece. In an attempt to account for these differences, this discussion will now turn to the literary evidence from Magna Graecia as a possible source of additional information. Both fictional accounts of Orpheus and the religious writings sealed with the name of Orpheus will be discussed. In addition to this literary evidence, artifacts which do not fit into either the literature or art category, yet which are important in any attempt to document the concept of

57 Smith, Funerary Symbolism, pp. 115ff.
Orpheus in Magna Graecia will also be taken into consideration. All of these pieces of evidence have been the subject of recent study by classical scholars, philologists, religious historians, and others who seek to solve or at least clarify the question of the relationship of Orpheus, Orphice, and Orphism. This survey will make no attempt to deal with this question, but will simply provide an indication of the context from which the Italiote iconography of Orpheus developed.

It seems reasonable to assume that the Greek literature about Orpheus that was discussed in the previous chapter was also known to the inhabitants of Magna Graecia. There was a life line contact between Greece and South Italy, both commercial and cultural, and the latest play, or book from Greece was undoubtedly imported along with olive oil, wine, and vases. The fact that Orpheus as an Argonaut was not a popular subject for Italiote art does not mean that the Argonaut legend was unheard of in Magna Graecia. All Greek writers were known to educated Romans, and before that we must assume the same to be the case with the Greek speaking part of South Italy. In fact the story of the Argonauts must have been both popular and long-lived in Italy, as it provided the basis for the writings of both the first century Latin version by Valerius Flaccus, and the later anonymous compiler of the Orphic Argonautica. Both of these works are too late to have specifically influenced the
iconography of Orpheus on vase paintings under discussion. However, it must be kept in mind that the version by Apollonius Rhodius discussed in Chapter I, p. 20-25, was available and probably popular in Magna Graecia. It is instructive to compare briefly the treatment of Orpheus by the writer of the Orphic Argonautica with the earlier version by Apollonius.\textsuperscript{58}

This latter version purports to be written by Orpheus, and, in fact, is narrated in the first person as if it were a biography. However, its author and its date are unknown. Guthrie places it sometime between the second and fourth centuries, after Christ, and believes that it is probably based on the previous two versions by Apollonius and Valerius Flaccus.\textsuperscript{59} As might be expected in a biographical mode, Orpheus is rather more important in this version than in the others. There are several additional incidents not found in other accounts, featuring Orpheus in a magically religious role. Three of these are based on his music.

In the first, the Argo will not permit itself to be launched until Orpheus plays his lyre, at which sound the boat magically goes into the water of its own accord (239-270). Next, Orpheus is credited with charming the

\textsuperscript{58}G. Dottin, Les Argonautiques D'Orphée, (Paris: Budé, 1930).

\textsuperscript{59}Guthrie, Orpheus, p. 15.
Clashing Rocks, so that the Argo and its crew passes safely through, losing only a portion of the stern decoration (680-711). Both Apollonius and Valerius Flaccus relate this event, but gave the credit to the intervention of Athena. When the Argonauts come to the place of the Golden Fleece, it is the music of Orpheus that puts the guardian dragon to sleep (988-1019), instead of Medea's magic as related by Apollonius (IV:145), and Valerius Flaccus (VIII:51-120). These incidents serve to emphasize Orpheus' role as a musician of magical powers.

Other additions augment his role as an initiator of religious rites. For example, at the very beginning of the voyage, Orpheus performs the inaugural sacrifice and, at the end, it is Orpheus who stays behind to make the final thanksgiving sacrifice. He also directs the sacrifice after the accidental killing of King Kyzikos (569-575), and sees to the rites of purification for the crew (1233). Thus, in the Orphic Argonautica, Orpheus assumes significantly enhanced religious powers when compared to the minor role he plays in the earlier literature by Apollonius Rhodius, Euripides, or Pindar. This expanded role indicates that in the intervening period there was a change in the perceptions of Orpheus. Not only was he the initiator of religious rites, but he

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possessed magical powers which enabled him to guide others to safety. It seems reasonable to assume that in South Italy the image of Orpheus assumed religious dimensions that he had not possessed in Archaic and Classical Greece.

This role as guide is further attested to by the famous gold lamellae, mentioned earlier.¹ These objects are thin tablets made of gold and inscribed with miniscule writing (PLATE 43, fig. A). They have been found in burials in Southern Italy, Thessaly, and in Crete, and are dated from the fourth century to the second century B.C.,² and are thus contemporary with the Italiote vases depicting Orpheus in the underworld. Some were found lying beside the skeletons, some, such as the Petalia tablet were folded up and placed inside a gold case (PLATE 43, fig. B). A lamella now at the Getty Museum was found in a bronze hydria that had been used as an ash urn. There has been a great deal written about these lamellae since the first one was published in

¹A list of these gold lamellae can be found in Guenther Zuntz, Persephone, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 286.

²The Hipponion/Vibo Valentin tablet is the oldest, and according to Burkert, Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries, p. 2, can be safely dated to ca. 400 B.C.
1835. Zuntz contends that this date, which was a period when scholarly writing was inclined to accept the idea of an Orphic religion, influenced the interpretation of the tablets as "Orphic". Zuntz himself, posits an Egyptian origin for many of the details of symbolism, and Pythagorean influence in adapting them as guides to the underworld. However, the text of the recently discovered tablet from Hipponion/Vibo Valentia suggests a firmer connection with Orpheus.

While it is not appropriate for this paper to speculate on religious history, the general tenor of the inscriptions, as well as the opinions of most scholars, indicate that these gold lamellae can be identified in relationship to the concept of Orpheus as a psychopomp, even though his name is not specifically mentioned. Certainly they represent directions given to the deceased during his journey to the underworld. Geographical features are described, such as the tree described on the

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65 This inscription refers to Bacchic Mysteries, which were related to Orpheus. See Burkert, *Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries*, pp. 2-4, for a discussion of this tablet and its Orphic translations.
The departed are warned away from a spring near the side of the tree, and guided to a safer drinking place where water flows from the Lake of Memory. Also included are formulae that the deceased are to repeat to identify themselves to the powers of the underworld. The inscriptions on the gold tablets are taken from sacred writings available at the time, mostly in the form of papyri. There were many religious texts in circulation under the name of Orpheus, and it is not unlikely that these were the source of at least some of the lamellae inscriptions. If, as Zuntz contends, these tablets originated in Pythagorean ideas, a connection with Orpheus is still not ruled out, as there was a great deal of overlapping and flow among what Alderick characterizes as "the broad stream of ancient Greek mysteries."  

Opportunity for interaction between the followers of Pythagorean philosophy and Orpheus would arise from the fact that Metapontum where Pythagoras died, was close to Tarentum, which was not only the source of many of the tablets.

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66 See Guthrie, Orpheus, p. 173, from the Petalia tablet:

"Say, 'I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven; but my race is of Heaven (alone). This ye know yourselves. But I am parched with thirst and I perish. Give me quickly The cold water flowing forth from the Lake of Memory.'"

67 Alderick, Larry J., Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism, p. 21.
vases, but may well have been a center for those interested in Orpheus. Scholars believe that is is quite likely that Pythagoreans and possibly Pythagoras himself wrote under the name of Orpheus, and produced a synthesis of ideas called Pythagorean Orphica.\textsuperscript{68}

Both modern and contemporary scholarship attests to the large number of religious writings circulated under the name of Orpheus. In fact, the first chapter of West's recent study of Orphic writing, borrows its title, "A Hubbub of Books" from Plato.\textsuperscript{69} Not only was there the Orphic Argonautica cited above, but there were no less than six theogonies dating from the Protogonos Theogony in the sixth century B.C. to the first century B.C. Rhapsodic Theogony.\textsuperscript{70} There was also Jewish pseudepigraphic writings called the Testament of Orpheus that attempts to present Orpheus as a student of Moses and, therefore, an early monotheist.\textsuperscript{71} A number of hymns and poems were also credited to Orpheus.\textsuperscript{72} As mentioned in connection with the vase paintings of

\textsuperscript{68} West, Orphic Poems, pp. 7-15.


\textsuperscript{70} See the West's "Stemma of Orphic Theogonies" in West, Orphic Poems, p. 264.

\textsuperscript{71} Guthrie, Orpheus, pp. 255-256.

\textsuperscript{72} Athanassakis, Apostolos M., The Orphic Hymns, (Missoula, Montana: The Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 3-146.
Orpheus' head, it is apparent that the name of Orpheus was invoked to give authority to many different writers over a long period of time. This was fairly common practice among the Greeks, and Orpheus was an ideal name to use. Older even than Homer, he imparted the authority of great antiquity, but as he was not as revered as Homer, it was easier and safer to use Orpheus. Although there are beliefs that are common to all of these writings, it is evident that anything written by many different people in different places, over an extended period of time, is not going to produce a coherent, unified body of doctrine around which a definite cult could form, or reflect an existing unified cult. Orpheus probably provided a convenient hook on which to hang what Alderick calls, "a climate of opinion" or "structure of thought" that tended toward a mystic approach to life and to life after death that is reflected in the vase paintings and in the Orphic texts. It would seem that in this syncretic period, Orpheus was loosely associated with different religious communities, such as the Pythagoreans as previously noted, and to a greater extent a Dionysiac

\[73\text{Alderick, Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism, p. 19.}\]
connection, perhaps as a reformer.\textsuperscript{74} A phrase in Herodotus (2.81) concerns the practice of not using woolen garments and says that this custom has been incorrectly labelled as "Orphic and Bacchic". Thus, Herodotus seems to indicate that the two terms are synonymous. Greek drama portrayed Orpheus and Bacchic connections in Aeschylus' \textit{Bassarides} as well as in Euripides' \textit{Hippolytus}. In addition, the interesting bone tablets (PLATE 44) found at Olbia, a Greek colony in what is now Russia, bear inscriptions that mention both Orpheus and Dionysus (PLATE 45).\textsuperscript{75} According to West, these tablets are most likely membership tokens indicating initiation in Bacchic mysteries. In fact, it seems likely that by the mid-fifth century Orpheus was an element in Bacchic cults spread over a large part of the Greek world.\textsuperscript{76}

Thus, the evidence provided by literary manifestations of Orpheus presents a cultural environment that provided fertile ground for the development of an artistic iconography that reflected an increased religious

\textsuperscript{74}For discussion of the possibility of Orpheus' role as a reformer of Dionysiac/Bacchic rites see the response of Dr. Anitra Bingham Kolenkow in Burkert, \textit{Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries}, pp. 24-25. Pythagorean influences are discussed both by Zuntz, \textit{Persephone}, see note 63 above, and West, \textit{Orphic Poems}.

\textsuperscript{75}See (Plate 44 and 45) for a drawing of the bone tablets and a translation of them from West, \textit{Orphic Poems}, pp. 17 and 19.

\textsuperscript{76}West, \textit{Orphic Poems}, p. 18.
emphasis in the perception of the figure of Orpheus. It is not difficult to extrapolate the idea of Orpheus as a powerful guide from the Argonaut story, or to add his familiarity with the underworld gained through his attempt to rescue his wife, and to combine these with all of the writings describing Hades by "Orpheus" to create the figure of Orpheus as a psychopomp guiding the dead in the underworld. It is obvious that his chthonic aspects are highly important to Magna Graecia, and in addition, the oracular abilities ascribed to him hint at the prophetic powers usually attributed to shamans.

Orpheus' transformation from the mythological hero depicted in art and legend of mainland Greece to a religious figure with chthonic and oracular power in Magna Graecia is highly significant. This change reflects the differing cultural values of the two societies. By tracing the image of Orpheus from its earliest appearance in Greece to its representations in Italiote art, it becomes evident that iconological shifts have given rise to changing iconography. The implications of these changes will be pursued in greater detail in the conclusion.
CONCLUSION

This tracing of the development of the iconography of Orpheus in archaic and classical Greece to the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia has followed a long and often twisting trail. It began with the small Cycladic marble figures not even identified as Orpheus, led through the examination of architectural sculpture and Attic vases, and thence to the ornate and symbolic vase paintings of the Greek colonies in Apulia. Throughout this search, the figure of Orpheus was always easily recognizable in spite of the fact that there were changes in his iconographic attributes and narrative functions. These changes are reflections of varying cultural perceptions of Orpheus; the inner meaning or iconology of Orpheus has changed along with his outward appearance. So the question to be answered now is: why after changes in both content and form has the image of Orpheus retained its integrity, so that it is as recognizable in simple stick-like shapes on an early sixth century, B.C. black-figure platelet (PLATE 3) as on the elaborate vases of Magna Graecia (PLATES 22-40)?

Part of the answer to the question is found in an examination of what remains constant in both the
iconography and iconology of Orpheus. As was seen earlier, artistic representations of musicians existed even before the myth of Orpheus developed. Music was important to the Greeks, as it is to most peoples. In Greece, as early as the Cycladic culture, forerunner of the Greek civilization, it was significant enough to give rise to artistic representations. The ability to make music and to control its emotive power is surely god-like. It is no surprise that the ancient Greeks viewed music as magical, and musicians as having such super-human powers that they were capable of charming both man and beast, and even causing fishes to leap out of the water. From these archaic beliefs the image of the archetypal musician, known as Orpheus, developed in Greek culture. To be able to identify him as a music maker a symbol was needed, and thus the iconographical attribute of the lyre is present in representations of Orpheus from the earliest time on. No matter what elaborations and variations are found in his myth or in visual arts, the essential, unchanging characteristics of the image of Orpheus are the magical musician persona and the lyre.

Another recurring element in the myth of Orpheus is a Thracian connection. Thrace is like a thread that runs through the legend of Orpheus, sometimes visible and sometimes submerged under other concerns. Yet its very persistence indicates that there must have been some intrinsic significance. Many of the ancient authors, for
example, the poet Timotheus quoted earlier (p. 12), claimed that Orpheus had been born in Thrace. Certainly most authors, ancient and contemporary, seem to argue that Thrace was the scene of his death and most often, though not always, Thracian women are held responsible for it. In addition, some sort of interaction by Orpheus with Thracian men, either as missionary, musician or pederast, is attested to by literature as well as both Attic and Italiote vases. Orpheus is frequently referred to as Thracian, yet he is seldom portrayed as Thracian in mainland Greek visual representations, which usually show him in Greek clothing with a wreath or fillet around his head. A major iconographic difference between images of Orpheus in Greece and in Magna Graecia is that in the latter he is almost always shown in a Thracian robe and Phrygian cap. This change in costume undoubtedly indicates an important shift in the emphasis of his role.

Possibly this change from Greek to Thracian clothing was simply meant to emphasize Orpheus' Thracian origin. Thrace was considered a distant barbaric country with strange and mystical religious practices. Thus, in Magna Graecia the increased focus on Orpheus' chthonic role may be portrayed by the Thracian clothing, indicating that Orpheus was perceived as an intermediary between this world and the underworld, as well as having oracular
powers sometimes attributed to shamans. Because this role was more important to the colonial Greeks of Magna Graecia than it was to the mainland Greeks, it is in Italiote art that the Thracian role and Phrygian cap are used. With the exception of the Three-figure relief, Greek art of the mainland, tended to reflect the fact that Orpheus has been absorbed into Greek culture which did not have the underworld cults that were popular in general in South Italy and Sicily.

In addition to the change in costume, the context in which the image is found is also an iconographic clue to the changes in the meaning of the figure of Orpheus in different cultures. In Magna Graecia images of Orpheus seem to have exclusively funerary connotations since as mentioned earlier, all of the vases on which Orpheus is shown were found in burials. Although this may be due to the accident of preservation, or to incomplete knowledge of the underworld cults that were popular in general in South Italy and Sicily.


2There was a strong underworld cult of Persephone in South Italy and in Sicily, and this may well have exerted influences on the development of an Orphic cult in Magna Graecia. Although speculation on this interaction is outside the parameters of the visual focus of this study, it certainly can be assumed that the prominence of this cult testifies to a psychological climate in which mystery religions and chthonic cults flourished. Thus, the figure of Orpheus would be very much in the same sensibility. This subject is dealt with in depth by Zuntz in Persephone, pp. 3-173.
of sites, the overwhelming proportion of evidence available indicates that Orpheus' primary function was related to the underworld. He was not a subject for metopes or altar sculpture in Southern Italy as he was in Greece. It also may be noted that in Italiote art the surrounding figures tend to have underworld connotations and the objects that are shown are used in ritual. Thus, all of these, the Thracian costume, the funerary function of the vases, and the religious or cultic nature of the pictorial surroundings, provide evidence that in Magna Graecia, the image of Orpheus assumed chthonic aspects, primarily that of a psychopomp.

Italiote iconography also reflects this increased chthonic role of Orpheus on the two vases that portray Orpheus as a psychopomp. As discussed earlier, the amphora from Basel (PLATE 32), is undoubtedly meant to depict Orpheus in the act of coming hurriedly (notice his dancing feet) to the aid of the deceased old man. The Orphic writings found on papyri such as the old man holds, and the music Orpheus plays on the lyre, which is held so prominently in front of him, imply that the deceased will be guided safely on his journey. The wheels hanging from the rafters probably gives further indication of Orphic/Pythagorean doctrine of an afterlife, or cycle of being. The novel iconography of the London Calyx Krater, discussed earlier in Chapter II, pages 87-89, is much more difficult to interpret. However, it seems quite
likely that it, too, gives further support to the supposition that the most important manifestation of Orpheus in Magna Graecia was as a psychopomp. The central position of the tree indicates that it symbolizes the underworld. Orpheus, then, is the figure standing herm-like to the left of the tree, marking the boundary of the underworld and offers to help the young man by the power of his lyre which he holds out toward the youth.  

This increased emphasis on the religious role of Orpheus may be seen by tracing the thematic manifestations of Orpheus. As noted in Chapter I, representations of Orpheus in the art of archaic and classical Greece can be classified into five themes which parallel or possibly derive from a strand of the literary myth. However, if each of these five themes is distilled to its intrinsic meaning, it becomes evident that these myths of the Greek mainland provided the basis for the funerary symbolism found in Italiote art.

Certainly, it seems very likely that the representations of Orpheus as a psychopomp seen on the Italiote vases is based on the literary traditions of the

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3Professor Kenneth Hamma in a personal interview, Los Angeles, California, November 20, 1985, speculated that another possible interpretation would be that both figures are meant to be Orpheus. It is not unusual in Italiote art to have a god represented by a statue and in person, so to speak, as well. This interpretation further emphasizes Orpheus role as someone with powers greater than those of ordinary humans.
Argonaut story and the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, both of which were favorite stories widely circulated throughout the Greek world. In these legends Orpheus was depicted as a knowledgeable, indeed, super-human guide, who was able to rescue his shipmates from many dangers and his wife from the underworld. There does not seem to be, however, any direct inheritances in visual art of the Argonaut theme from Greece to Magna Graecia. It is questionable whether there are any representations of the Argonaut theme in Italiote art. The discovery of a terra cotta group consisting of a seated lyre player and two standing Sirens led many scholars to theorize that this group exemplified the Argonautic Orpheus with Sirens. The use of this grouping in a funerary setting was interpreted as symbolizing Orpheus' power as a psychopomp.4 Recently however, other scholars have raised doubts about the identification, so this possible key piece may not be considered until more is known. (See Appendix II, page 194, for a discussion of the Getty terra-cotta.

Artistic representations of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth were quite likely also rare in Magna Graecia. There is only one vase existing today that shows Orpheus and Eurydice, even though the legend must have been well known, and the visual depiction of it on the Three Figure Relief (PLATE 7), indicates that it was a

4Burkert, Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries, p. 31.
familiar story in Greece and probably in Magna Graecia also. However, in Magna Graecia, the intrinsic meaning of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice was more important than portraying the story itself. The theme of Orpheus and Eurydice stresses the role of Orpheus as a guide in the underworld, so its message is not that of the romantic, sentimental journey, but that there could be communication between this world and the next. The more formal Olympian religion of the Greeks denied this chthonic trait because they emphasized the finality of death. Orpheus as psychopomp would represent an antithetical assumption and perhaps a return to the older pre-Homeric/Myceanean religion that had been superseded by Apollo at Delphi. Orpheus' success or failure as a psychopomp when he attempted to rescue Eurydice is not as important as the fact that he was one of the select few who had breached the underworld and managed to return alive. In the culture of Magna Graecia, as compared with mainland Greece, it is evident that both the theme of the voyage of the Argonauts and of Orpheus and Eurydice, as such, were not popular as subjects of visual imagery, but were important for the underlying meaning -- that of Orpheus' ability as a guide of souls extrapolated from the themes. Thus, both these themes, while not actually portrayed in

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Italiote art, were used as support for the portrayal of Orpheus in the underworld, which was his primary manifestation in Magna Graecia.

It is possible the wall painting by Polygnotos could have been one of the sources for the Italiote iconography of Orpheus. This fifth century B.C. fresco was a famous tourist attraction even as late as Pausanias in the second century after Christ, and demonstrates that in the culture of mainland Greece Orpheus had chthonic associations, although not to the degree seen in Italiote art. The underworld vases of Magna Graecia do not portray Orpheus in any particular role, he is simply one of many inhabitants of the underworld. He is there, according to Rohde, as a mythical singer who goes to retrieve his wife, and not as the founder and prophet of his mysteries. However, his journey to and return from the Underworld is an immensely important feat from which can be extrapolated a shamanic role around which a cult could form. While these vases (as Rohde remarked), do not give any direct indication of Orpheus as a cultic figure, they do raise the question of why Orpheus was included. Was it simply a matter of direct borrowing of the subjects portrayed by Polygnotos, or did his presence have a deeper significance for the Tarentines who purchased these vases? It will be

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recalled that in the discussion of the vases in Chapter II underworld vases in general were very large and used solely for funerary purposes. It seems quite likely that anything this elaborate would be done on a commission basis, and perhaps the patron would request the inclusion of Orpheus on an underworld vase, because it held a specific meaning and message for one acquainted with or participating in the Orphic cults that were found in that area. Thus, those underworld vases with Orpheus could conceivably have cultic implications if they were in fact commissioned by patrons who felt that the inclusion of the inclusion of the figure of Orpheus symbolized his role as a psychopomp. It is almost as if the old Greek theme of Orpheus as a musician whose music charmed both men and beasts had re-appeared in Magna Graecia, but transformed so that now his music not only moves earthly beings, but also the gods of the underworld. However, this possibility will remain speculation until either additional artistic representations or definite literary...
descriptions of an Orphic cult are found.

A direct artistic heritage from Greek tradition is seen in representations of the death of Orpheus and the related theme of Orpheus among the Thracians, both of which were popular in fifth century B.C. Attic art and have later versions on the fourth century B.C. Italiote vases that depict the same themes but with a different iconography. In Magna Graecia the representations on these vases seem to be an imitation of vases which were imported and later adapted by Italiote artists for the home market. Certainly the narrative seems to be the same. On the fragments remaining that depict Orpheus' death, it is clear that he is killed by women (PLATE 36). The differences are that on the Italiote vases he appears to put up more of a fight, and that he is shown wearing a Phrygian cap and Thracian short robe and cloak. The Thracian costume is also found on Italiote vases that depict the theme of Orpheus among the Thracians. This is in contrast to Attic vases on which Greek clothing worn by Orpheus and the men listening to him wear Thracian costume. However, in Magna Graecia this theme seems to contain religious overtones that were not a part of Greek art that derived from a mythological sphere. The Red-figure Amphora Bari 873 (PLATE 39) and the volute krater in the H. A. Collection in Milan (PLATE 41), both show a lustration bowl and shell associated with religious rites. The krater from Milan adds Aphrodite and Eros, who
are never present on the depictions of the themes of Orpheus among the Thracians in Attic ware. Thus, the heightened religious role of Orpheus in Magna Graecia is seen even on these vases which have borrowed the Attic theme of Orpheus among the Thracians.

The oracular head of Orpheus is portrayed on both Attic and Italiote vases, and both groups appear to point to the same background; a reference to the dismemberment of Orpheus and to the legend that his head floated to the island of Lesbos where it was placed in an oracular shrine. The differences in the two representations are that in both Attic vases that portray this subject (PLATE 19 and 20) Orpheus is linked with Apollo by the god's presence, while in Italiote ware Orpheus' head is either shown by itself (PLATE 35, fig. A) or, as on the Honolulu pelike (PLATE 35, fig. B) flanked by a man and woman presumably listening to him. It is perhaps significant that only in the vases from Greece is Orpheus' connection with Apollo clearly indicated. In Magna Graecia there does not seem to be an Apollian tie. Orpheus is not portrayed either as an oracle of Apollo, or as a missionary. In fact, some scholars have speculated on a link between Orpheus and Dionysos, and while this is possible, the visual evidence from Greece and from Magna
Graecia give no indication of this. Instead Italiote art emphasizes Orpheus' chthonic aspect which would exclude the Olympian god of the sun who slew the chthonic monster of darkness. Thus, while the role of Orpheus as an oracle is clearly established by vase paintings in both Greece and Magna Graecia, the iconography indicates that each cultural sphere had a different emphasis.

It is evident that the theme traced in Chapter I of this thesis in the art of archaic and classical Greece also are found in Italiote art discussed in Chapter II. However, in the latter they have undergone significant transformations as each theme was adapted to the more religious/cultic emphasis of Magna Graecia. As comparisons of visual representations of Orpheus in Greece with those of Magna Graecia have shown, the iconographical shifts found in the imagery are testimony to a fundamental change in the perception of the iconology of Orpheus. The thematic emphasis differed from one area to the other and from the earlier Classical period in mainland Greece to a considerably later period in Magna Graecia. Italiote

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The myth of Dionysos/Zagreus and its possible connection with an Orphic Cult, is a very complex subject and outside the visual emphasis of this thesis. However, it is possible that the idea of Orpheus death and dismemberment by women is related to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos by the Titians. If so, visual imagery of the death of Orpheus would imply a connection between Orpheus and the god. Ivan M. Linforth discusses this at length in a separate chapter (pp. 307-364) in his Arts of Orpheus.
artists of the fourth and third centuries B.C. were no longer interested in his full gamut of roles. They were aware of the stories, but instead of continuing to depict all of them in visual imagery, they concentrated upon one role so important for their culture -- that of spiritual guide. This reflects the different spiritual climate of the post-Classical world, when, in general, mystery cults became popular, and to some extent replaced the Olympian gods as spiritual mainstays. Later artists, therefore, preferred to portray Orpheus as a symbol rather than a mythical hero. The emphasis changed from the narrative mythological aspects found earlier in mainland Greece to the static symbol of religious, cultic beliefs of fourth and third centuries B.C. Magna Graecia.

Thus, it can be concluded that the changes in the iconography of Orpheus as he was portrayed in Greece and then in Magna Graecia are illustrative of how the different cultural areas interpreted and used the image of Orpheus, the archetypal magical musician, for their own purposes. The spiritual focus was very different in mainland Greece during the archaic and classical periods than it was later in Magna Graecia in the changed world of the post classical era, which had a prominent cult of the underworld in general. The art that has been examined has illustrated this divergence of emphasis. Orpheus in Greek art of the archaic and classical periods appeared in a variety of media, and was seen in different roles. In
Magna Graecia, representations of Orpheus were concentrated in funerary art where his chthonic aspects were most important. Thus a fundamental shift in the underlying meaning of the image of Orpheus is evident in these two cultural areas.

Although this discussion has been linked to Greece and Magna Graecia, the changing imagery of Orpheus is exhibited in other eras as well. Throughout history Orpheus has been a useful receptacle for cultural values. Even a brief projection of the subsequent fate of the Orpheus image demonstrates that the changes traced to this thesis were not isolated phenomena, but just the beginning of a continuing process of transforming this multi-faceted figure into different cultural periods.

Orpheus was a popular subject in Roman art. As the Romans moved southward and conquered the area previously known as Magna Graecia, the image of Orpheus expanded northward. There are over eighty extant mosaics, which depict the theme of Orpheus the musician charming the animals, found throughout the Roman Empire, from North Africa to Great Britain, particularly in the Late Empire. Although there are stylistic variations, they all portray Orpheus surrounded in some manner by animals, implying that the animals are listening to his music. The theme of Orpheus and Eurydice is also found in Roman art, although examples are not as numerous as the mosaics, the most well known being a wall fresco from Ostia (PLATE 46), which seems almost as if it
was an illustration for the canonical literary versions of the legend by the Roman writers, Virgil and Ovid. It is evident that the image of Orpheus was flourishing as an artistic subject when Christianity arrived in Rome. The early Christians found Orpheus just as useful as the pagan Greeks and Romans had done earlier, in their own ways. At a time when there was a hesitancy about portraying an image of Christ, Orpheus made an excellent substitute. Depictions of Orpheus charming the animals into peaceful submission, were often used to decorate Christian catacombs, and thus Orpheus became a symbolic substitute for Christ as the Good Shepherd. A conflation of Orpheus and Christ called Orpheus-Christ was used on Christian sarcophagi as well as on magic amulets popular in the syncretistic religions of Late Antiquity. The image of Orpheus can be traced through each era of Western history up to contemporary art, but such an evolution falls outside the scope of this thesis. From even this brief survey of the iconographical transformations of the image of Orpheus, however, it is apparent that Orpheus is one of the most enduring yet changing images derived from Greek myth. Certainly if a measure of a myth's significance is its persistence and adaptability to differing cultural needs, then the changing iconography of Orpheus has expressed deeply felt truths that often can only be articulated symbolically and that have gained increased resonance by each adaptation.
PLATE 3
Attic Black-figure Platelet
Beazley, ABV 652"
PLATE 4
Attic Black-figure Oinochoe
Beazley, ABV 432
PLATE 5

Sicyonian Metope

A. "Orpheus with the Argonauts"

B. Drawing of Metope
PLATE 6

Attic Black-figure Leythos

A. Obverse

B. Detail

Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum-Fascicule 31
PLATE 7
Copies of the Three-Figure Relief
A. Naples, National Museum
   B. Paris, Louvre
   C. Rome, Villa Albani
   D. Thracian Coin
B. West

A. East

Parapets from Altar of Pity

Plate 8
Beazley, ARV 2 606

“Death of Orpheus”

Attic Red-Figure Hydria

Plate 10
PLATE 12

Attic Red-figure Stamnos
"Death of Orpheus"

Beazley, ARV 2 1050
Beazley, ARV 2, 860:
"Death of Orpheus"

White Ground Kylix (frag.)

PLATE 13
PLATE 14
Attic Red-figure Bell Krater
"Orpheus Among the Thracians"
Beazley, ARV 2 1104'
PLATE 15

Attic Red-figure Column Krater

"Orpheus Among the Thracians"

Beazley, ARV 2 1120
PLATE 16
Attic Red-figure Column Krater
"Orpheus Among the Thracians"
Beazley, ARV 2 852²
PLATE 17

Attic Red-figure Hydria

"Orpheus Among the Thracians with Thracian Women"

Beazley, ARV 2 1112
PLATE 18

Attic Red-figure Bell Krater

"Orpheus, Thracian Man and Woman"

Beazley, _ARV_ 2 682⁷⁴
PLATE 19
Attic Red-figure Kylix

A. Obverse
B. Reverse

Beazley, ARV 2 1401
PLATE 20
Attic Red-figure Hydria
"Mantic Head of Orpheus"
Beazley, ARV 2 1114
PLATE 21
John Needles Chester Krater
A. Full view
B. Obverse detail
C. Reverse detail
Trendall, RVap 27/23a
PLATE 22
Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater
Underworld
Trendall, RVap 16/82
PLATE 23

Drawing of PLATE 22
PLATE 24

Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater

"Underworld"

Trendall, RVap 16/81
PLATE 25

Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater

"Underworld"

A. Obverse

B. Obverse, detail

Trendall, RVap 27/17
PLATE 26
Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater
"Underworld"
Trendall, RVap 18/282
PLATE 27

Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater

A. Drawing of detail
B. Obverse, left
C. Obverse, right

Trendall, RVap 18/284
PLATE 28
Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater
"Drawing of Obverse"
Trendall, RVap 24/46
PLATE 29
Apulian Red-figure Amphora Fragment
"Orpheus in Underworld"
Trendall, RVap 23/293
PLATE 30
Apulian Red-figure Amphora
"Orpheus in Underworld"
Trendall, RVap 18/225
PLATE 31

Detail of PLATE 30
PLATE 32
Apulian Red-figure Amphora
"Orpheus as Psychopomp"
Trendall, RVap 25/15
PLATE 33

Detail of PLATE 32
PLATE 34

Apulian Red-figure Calyx Krater

Trendall, RVap 18/318
PLATE 35

A. Neck of Volute Krater
"Decorative Head of Orpheus"
Trendall, RVap 15/60

B. Apulian Red-figure Pelike
"Prophecying Head of Orpheus"
Trendall, RVap 23/224
PLATE 36

A. Bell Krater Fragment

"Death of Orpheus"

Trendall, RVap 8/150

B. Skyphos Fragment

"Death of Orpheus"

Trendall, RVap 7/20
PLATE 37
Apulian Red-figure Bell Krater
"Orpheus and Thracian"
Trendall, RVap 1/12
PLATE 38

Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater
"Orpheus and Thracians"

A. Obverse
B. Obverse, detail

Trendall, RVap 8/147
PLATE 39

Apulian Red-figure Amphora

"Orpheus and Thracians"

Trendall, RVap 18/325
PLATE 40

Detail of PLATE 39

A. Center

B. Viewers' Right
PLATE 41
Apulian Red-figure Volute Krater
"Orpheus and Thracians"
Trendall, RVap 16/42
PLATE 42

Detail of PLATE 41
PLATE 43

A. Gold Lamella from Petalia

B. Case and Chain for Petalia Lamella
PLATE 44
Bone Tablets from Olbia
PLATE 45

A. Drawing of Bone Tablets

B. Translation
(1) Life: death: life.—Truth.—A—?—Dio(nysus), Orphic().
(2) Peace: war. Truth: falsehood.—Dio(nysus) N—A.
(3) Dio(nysus) ?—Truth.—(illegible word) . . soul.—A.
PLATE 46
Wall Painting from Ostia
"Orpheus and Eurydice"
PLATE 47

Getty Terra Cotta Group

"Orpheus and Sirens"
PLATE 48

Getty Terra Cotta Group

"Orpheus"
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APPENDIX I

The lyre is such an inherent part of the image of Orpheus that it is taken for granted, and seldom commented upon. Certainly that is the purpose of any iconographical attribute, to become an integral part of the imagery, identifying without intruding. However, the lyre itself has some interesting and specific characteristics which made it an ideal choice for the attribute of a magical musician. As noted earlier, the concept of the musician existed well before Orpheus, for example, the Cycladic marble statuettes. In fact, with no particular basis other than the assumption of a lyre, modern scholars have sometimes identified the statuettes as "so-called Orpheus", simply because the musician is depicted with a stringed instrument.\(^1\) While this may be rather hypothetical, it indicates the strong identification of the lyre with the power of music; an association that was old before the Greeks created the myth of Orpheus. The pipes of Pan are equally ancient, but traditionally the two instruments accompanied different types of poetry, the

lyre being considered more appropriate for an elevated style of poetry. Thus the myth of the creation of the lyre describes a heavenly origin. According to the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, it was invented by the infant Hermes, who used a tortoise shell for the soundbox (lines 23-61). This tortoise shell origin is not always clearly noted by painters, perhaps they were not aware of its significance. An exception to this is the Niobid painter, who clearly delineated tortoise markings on both the red-figure hydria in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, discussed in Chapter I, and the red-figure amphora in Brooklyn (PLATE 11). As related in the legend, the lyre was an important part of Hermes' attempts to achieve recognition as a god. Having stolen Apollo's cattle, Hermes pacified the angry god by playing the lyre and singing (lines 420-510). Certainly one of the earliest of the many examples of the lyre's function of peacemaking. Apollo accepted the gift of the lyre, forgave and accepted Hermes. In an article about this incident, Susan Shelmerdine emphasizes the transformation of the tortoise into the lyre, which Hermes then exchanges for his

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3 Beazley, ARV 2, 604/57.
acceptance as a god. This indicates that the lyre was believed to have transformative powers, that it could be used to overcome even the gods, and attain one's goal. So that the lyre is perceived as a very powerful instrument, with a divine origin and ownership. Apollo taught Orpheus to play it, and then later, Apollo invented the kithara with its more sophisticated wooden soundbox, and passed the primitive lyre on to Orpheus. In contract to the exalted origin of the lyre, the pipes of Pan come from a more disreputable source, and in fact, in antiquity it was believed that wind instruments appealed to the sensual nature of man, while the stringed instruments echoed the harmony of the heavens, and thus evoked the rational and spiritual nature of man. This idea was further developed by Pythagoras and also by the Neo-Platonists both of whom put great emphasis on the fact that the lyre had seven strings. The number seven was symbolic of celestial harmony, there were supposed to be seven spheres through which the soul had to pass before reaching its


7The contest between Apollo and Marsyas, the flute player, is often interpreted as a contest between the spiritual and sensual nature that exist in man.
Thus it is evident that a seven stringed lyre would be considered a most appropriate instrument especially for a musician who was also a psychopomp who guided the deceased on their post-mortem journey, whether it be to the traditional Greek Hades, or to the Pythagorean heavenly spheres.

It is interesting to note the myth of the lyre's invention distinguishes between a lyre and a kithara. This distinction is seldom made when talking about Orpheus, who is referred to in literature both as a lyre player or as a kitharist. However, the distinction does appear in artistic iconography. Greek artists tended to portray Orpheus with a lyre, the exception to this is the elaborate kithara on the sixth century B.C. Black-figure Oinoche (PLATE 4). Italiote iconography on the other hand, prefers the more sophisticated kithara. However, there is an exception here also, and of course, it is on the Calyx Krater in London (B.M. F270) (PLATE 34) whose unusual iconography in general raises so many questions. If, as has been presumed, the figure on the plinth was meant to be Orpheus, he is clearly holding the older style lyre instead of the large, elaborate kithara usually found on vases from Magna Graecia. This dichotomy between Greek and Italiote iconography does not seem to have interested

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scholars, and there is no mention of it which I am aware. Whether it has any deeper significance beyond the fact that Apulian artists generally liked everything as large and elaborate as possible, cannot be determined.

It will also be noted that the lyre is defined as having seven strings, which relates to a specific eschatological doctrine. However, visual representations of the lyre show varying numbers of strings. It seems likely that the artist, unless he was aware of the underlying symbolism of the number, simply painted on as many strings as he wished.
A slightly under life-size terra-cotta group of three statues of Tarentine origin at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California provides an interesting footnote to the iconography of Orpheus in Magna Graecia (PLATE 46). This group is dated ca. 310 B.C. and consists of two standing sirens and a seated man holding a plectrum presumably with which to strum the now missing lyre; he has been identified as "Orpheus With Two Sirens". However, the figure of Orpheus was removed from the galleries for cleaning and restoration during which some interesting and disturbing points have come to light which may well change the original identification (PLATE 47).

The group as it originally stood in the galleries seemed a clear reference to the Argonaut legend, which as may be recalled, related how Orpheus saved the lives of his shipmates by playing his lyre so beautifully that it overwhelmed the enchanting spell of the Sirens who lured

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sailors to their death. This theme of salvation and overcoming of death is re-inforced by the fact that the group was funerary, most probably coming from an underground hypogeum grave. Thus, the group would seem to portray Orpheus in a soteriological role, such as was found in the Argonaut episode. This would of course have significant implications for any consideration of Orpheus' role in an Orphic cult in Magna Graecia. Portrayals of Orpheus on Italiote vases, as well as literary evidence, indicate that Orpheus' primary importance in Magna Graecia was his chthonic connection, but in the terra-cotta group there is the implication that not only is he a guide, but is actually a savior. And in fact, this is the interpretation as put forth by Walter Burkert in a colloquy in March of 1977 when he calls the group, "a key monument of Pythagorean Orphism in fourth-century Tarentum."

However, before the role of savior can be assigned to Orpheus, on the basis of this work, it is necessary to be absolutely certain that it is indeed Orpheus. This is where the findings of the conservator raise some questions.

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2 Dr. Jiri Frel, in Burkert, Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries, p. 19.

3 Walter Burkert, in Burkert, Orphism and Bacchic Mysteries, p. 31.
according to Professor A. D. Trendall. The first part to undergo cleaning was the footstool. It was found that this stool is of a different clay than the rest of the figure. This leads to the possibility that the footstool does not belong to the figure of Orpheus, but to another seated figure, now missing. Professor Trendall speculated that the other figure could be a woman, and in fact that the tomb was the burial of a man and wife who were both represented by terra-cotta figures. The sirens then would not be references to the Argonaut, but simply symbols of the role of psychopomp that sirens traditionally portrayed in Magna Graecia. The argument against this, is of course, the question of the hypothetical fourth figure. It seems strange that the three figures at the Getty survived in almost perfect condition while the only trace of a fourth figure is the footstool. Perhaps the answer is simply that the fourth figure did not exist, and the footstool is different because the original was broken in transit to the grave and replaced by one of a different clay. In addition, a close look at the figure shows the face of a youth who appears very young both to have died and to have been married and had a wife presumably equally young to have been buried with him (PLATE 47).

Professor Trendall also questioned the Orphic

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identity on iconographic grounds. As has been seen in the discussion of Italiote vases depicting Orpheus, the Italiote iconography of Orpheus throughout the fourth century, B.C. depicts Orpheus in Thracian clothing. Variations in his costume do occur, but they are all within the Thracian mode, while in this sculpture he is depicted in Greek clothing. Dr. Frel posits that the typical Phrygian cap, along with the lyre was made separately and is now missing as are two broken fingers.5 This is possible, and if so would give credence to identification as Orpheus. It is unfortunate that the provenance of the group is not clear and that there is not information on the condition of the grave from which it came, this might provide some help with both the missing cap and the missing wife. If however, there was no cap and the Greek clothing was to indicate that the figure was meant to be the deceased, why was he portrayed with a lyre which is so specifically an attribute of Orpheus? Perhaps it may be that he was a member of an Orphic cult, and the lyre is a symbol that he was a follower of the master musician. The fact that the group was made in Taras, gives weight to this speculation, as the city was noted both as a famous coroplastic center and also the probable center of Orphic cults.

These questions cannot be answered at this time. Perhaps further discoveries in the conservation process as well as additional research in Taranto will resolve the problem. However, for now the identity remains ambiguous and until it is resolved; speculations on its variant iconography as well as implications regarding the beliefs of Orphism must be postponed.