

TROPHONIOS: THE MANNER OF HIS REVELATION

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It is usually held that those who wished to consult the oracle of Trophonios at Lebadeia in Boeotia descended into the chasm and waited for the divine message to be revealed in a dream,¹ as happens at incubatory oracles. Türk long ago suggested that the oracle of Trophonios may not have been incubatory.² Dr. A. Schachter has recently remarked that our oracle seems to be a mixture of two kinds of oracles, the incubatory and the type "in which the prophet approaches the deity directly, having been inspired by the water of the sacred spring."³ This paper is intended to supplement this remark, and re-examines the various testimonia about the manner in which the revelation was received.

The oracle had a long history. It almost certainly functioned in Homeric times.⁴ It was one of the oracles consulted by Croesus' messengers (Herod. 1.46) and by Mys (Herod. 8.134); it gave an oracular response before the battle of Leuctra (Paus. 4.32.5-6); and Celsus was still urging visits to it in the second century of our era

N.B. I wish here to express my gratitude to Mr. H. W. Stubbs, and to Mr. J. W. Fitton, for their kindness and the help they have given me in preparing this article. For any idiosyncrasies which may have crept into the final form I am alone responsible.

¹ E.g. L. Deubner, *De incubatione*, 8 note 2: "Elucet ex his Trophonium eodem modo vaticinari, quo Amphiaräum et Mopsum, h.e. per somnum"; and innumerable other authorities. R. Flacelière, *Greek Oracles* (London 1963) 24 says that "quite different [i.e. from Amphiaraios] and very unusual was the mantic procedure employed in the cave of Trophonios," but he does not explain the difference, unless he refers simply to the descent mechanism.

² In Roscher, vol. 3.1.907 s.v. "Oneiros," Türk says that "Bisweilen sind auch Toten-orakel mit Inkubation verbunden," and remarks of Trophonios that it is "nicht eigentliche ἐγκοίμησις, sondern Niederfahrt in sein underirdisches Gemach" (909).

³ *BICS* 14 (1967) 9.

⁴ See below, p. 72 and note 29.

(*ap.* Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.35). Yet the descriptions of the method whereby the revelations were vouchsafed are tantalizing. Already in the fifth century B.C. the custom of descending into the Trophonion with honey-cakes was familiar enough to invite Aristophanes' scorn,⁵ but no account of the manner of the revelation is given. Dicaearchus, a pupil of Aristotle and contemporary of Theophrastus, wrote a complete work comprising at least two books entitled *ἡ εἰς Τροφωνίου Κατάβασις*,⁶ which is unfortunately lost. The Delian historian Semos mentions the descent made at the oracle by Parmeniscus of Metapontum in the fifth book of his *Δηλίας*,⁷ but no account of the revelation is recorded. Strabo mentions the oracle (9.2.38), but once again the manner of revelation is passed over.

Three accounts, found in Plutarch, Pausanias, and Maximus Tyrius, are more enlightening on the question whether revelation came direct or through dreams. We shall take the Plutarch passage first.

In Plutarch's *De genio Socratis* (589F–592E) Simmias relates the story of Timarchus' descent into the oracle of Trophonios to enquire after the nature of Socrates' "sign," *δαιμόνιον*. Timarchus enters the cave, *μαντεῖον*, and lies down in darkness. He is uncertain whether he is awake or dreaming. He feels a blow on the head and his soul is let loose. It sees the universe and hears a voice explaining. The voice ceases. Timarchus turns his head, feels a pain in his head again, and loses consciousness. When he comes to his senses, he finds that he has been two nights and a day in the same place. He returns from the underground chasm and "began to describe the many visual and auditory wonders," *διηγείτο ἡμῖν θαυμάσια πολλὰ καὶ ἰδεῖν καὶ ἀκοῦσαι* (590B).

Plutarch's reference to a blow on the head might be taken to suggest that Timarchus was knocked out deliberately. This would be a tricky game for the priesthood to play, and more probably we are to understand an acute emotional experience that *felt like* a knock on the head. Plutarch nowhere says that Timarchus "slept," but his experience is exactly fitted by the description of a cataleptic trance in which

⁵ *Nubes* 506–8. For the honey ingredient see Paus. 9.39.11; Philost. *Vit. Ap.* 8.19; Suid. s.v. *Τροφωνίου κατὰ γῆς πάγνια*.

⁶ FGH 1.325 and 2.262 = Athenaeus 13.594EF and 14.641EF.

⁷ FGH 4.493–94 = Athenaeus 14.614A.

the subject is bereft of all sensation, including breathing and pulse, and appears to be dead.⁸ This is surely not an account of "sleep" in the ordinary sense, such as one assumes occurred at the incubatory oracles of Asclepios or Amphiaraos.⁹ To the sceptic who refuses to recognize a difference between sleep and thirty-six hours' unconsciousness after trance, one may reply that Plutarch certainly does not suggest that Timarchus went to sleep before the trance, i.e. does not suggest that the revelation was a dream.

The context makes it quite clear that Timarchus did not "see" and "hear" in his waking state either, for it appears that his "soul" left his body and ascended into the celestial spheres. From there he saw the mysteries of the cosmos which were explained by the voice of an invisible daimon. The substance of the whole vision need not detain us here: suffice it to say that the universe is divided into four regions presided over by Monas, Nous, Physis, and Persephone (591D), and that particular stress is laid upon the role of νοῦς. Timarchus' guide says that every soul, ψυχή, partakes of understanding, νοῦς, but when ψυχή is incarnated it becomes irrational, ἄλογος. Sometimes the ψυχή is entirely submerged into the body, sometimes part—the purest part—remains outside like a lifebuoy keeping its owner (here one might almost say by a lifeline) in contact with the celestial spheres. This external part is called by the multitude νοῦς and is believed to reside within: Timarchus learns that it remains outside in the wise and good man and is called δαίμων (591DE).¹⁰ Mr. Hamilton rightly saw this doctrine as an elaboration of the original doctrine in Plato's *Timaeus* 90A, where the mind dwelling within the body at the top, is a root in heaven which keeps the whole body upright.¹¹

By so modifying the *Timaeus* doctrine, Plutarch afforded a new explanation of astral travel. The external nous-daimon is able to

⁸ On cataleptic trances generally, and for a description of a modern instance (quoted from Tyrrell, *Apparitions*, 149 f.) remarkably similar to Timarchus' experience, see J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962) 139–40.

⁹ See e.g. Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena*³, 342–43.

¹⁰ Cf. W. R. Hamilton, *CQ* 28 (1934) 179, as against H. F. von Arnim, *Plutarch über Dämonen und Mantik* (Amsterdam 1921) 31, where it is implied that νοῦς alone exists before incarnation and at incarnation the part of νοῦς that sinks into the body is called ψυχή: "der Unterschied von Nus und Seele entstehe erst durch die Einkörperung."

¹¹ W. R. Hamilton (above, note 10) 181.

wander among the celestial spheres and report back what it has learnt there. During the vision Timarchus was told about Hermodorus, who underwent just such an experience (592CD). The common story, says Timarchus' guide, that his body was found bereft of soul and burned by his enemies (cf. Pliny, *HN* 7.174; Apollonius, *Hist. mir.* 3; Tertullian, *De an.* 44) is not true. The *ψυχή* was present all the time and only the *νοῦς-δαίμων* had wandered while he was "asleep," τὸ σῶμα κοιμωμένου (592D). Plutarch's doctrine thus gave a logical explanation, and therefore greater credibility, to astral travel, since a body without a psyche would on the usual view be regarded as dead.

The story is similar to Plutarch's own tale of the immoral Thespesios of Soli (*De vindicta*, 563B f.), who fell down a hill and was taken for dead, but revived three days later as he was about to be burned, and changed his habits because, as he said, his soul had learnt from a preview the torment suffered by sinners in Hades. Both stories are reminiscent of similar stories told of Er the Armenian, Aristeas of Proconnesus, Abaris, Empedotimos, Pythagoras,¹² the boy in the experiment at which Aristotle assisted, Cleonymus the Athenian,¹³

¹² J. D. P. Bolton (above, note 8) 125-41, 151-53, 158, suggests that the soul-journeys of Aristeas, Abaris, Empedotimos (his revelation was "in the body"), and Pythagoras all derive from Heraclides Ponticus, and that the literary genre was therefore inaugurated by Plato's Er (*Rep.* 10.614B ff.). Powerfully he disputes Rohde's suggestion (*Psyche*⁸, 328 notes 109 and 110) that Maximus Tyrius (*Dissert.* 16.2 f. and 38.3) preserves the primitive version supposedly underlying the antishamanistic account in Herod. 4.13-16—a view which led K. Meuli to suggest that Aristeas was a Greek shaman of the Scythian type (*Hermes* 70 [1935] 121-76). J. W. Fitton in an important analysis of Eur. *Hipp.* points out that the chorus in 732 ff. (ἡλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κευθμῶσι is the "cave of transformation") desire to be a shaman (*Pegasus* 8 [1967] 22). Although the shaman probably here and in early accounts whizzed about in corporeal form as a bird, the more sophisticated account of a psychic excursion must surely be earlier than Heraclides and Plato's Er. Bolton unfortunately does not discuss the *Hippolytus* passage, nor the significance of the journey of the *ψυχή* to the *αἰθήρ* in Euripides (passages are collected by Rohde, 461 note 146), but we may take it that this was not an entirely new idea to Euripides and that mystics probably thought that what an ordinary soul could reach at death, a special soul could reach by *ἐκστασις*.

¹³ The experiment is related in Clearchus of Soli's dialogue *On Sleep*. Text is found in Proclus, *In Rem.* 2.122.22 ff. Kroll (=Clearchus, fr. 7 Wehrli). The story is fully discussed with relation to a Jewish Sage in H. Lewy, *HTR* 31 (1938) 205-35. Cleonymus also is treated in Clearchus' dialogue in Proclus, *In Rem.* 2.113.19 ff. Kroll (=Clearchus, fr. 8 Wehrli). The late W. F. Jackson Knight has discussed these phenomena further in his yet unpublished *Elysion*, which I have been privileged to see.

and Epimenides.¹⁴ To this list we should now add Socrates, according to Plutarch's explanation of his daimonion.

What has Plutarch achieved? He has presented Timarchus as a character parallel to Plato's Er—only for the battlefield the oracular chasm of Trophonios has been substituted. We should note that the oracle, *μαντεῖον*, in some sources called *καταβάσιον*,¹⁵ is a strictly superfluous mechanism for the phenomenon of soul-wandering (though caves are appropriate); but Plutarch is enabled thereby to integrate the comparatively recent genre of literature about *ἐκστάσεις* with the very ancient tradition of *καταβάσεις*. The new visionary type of literature has been grafted on to the old tradition in the cause of psychic excursions. Plutarch no doubt chose the Trophonion as his framework for yet another reason. In common with Socrates' daimonion and Hermodorus' nous-daimon, Trophonios was regarded as a daimonion, as Maximus of Tyre shows thus (*Dissert.* 14.2): *ὁ δέομενος συγγενέσθαι τῷ δαιμονίῳ κτλ.*

Similarly Plutarch has grafted a new tradition on to Socrates, doubtless using and extending one of Socrates' own ideas: "For if pure knowledge is impossible while the soul is with the body one of two things must be true; either we cannot gain knowledge at all or we can gain it only after death; for then, and not till then, will the soul exist by herself, separate from the body" (Plato, *Phaedo* 66–68 esp. 66E). Plutarch, aided by the nous-daimon doctrine, has added a third possibility: the nous-daimon may be released as in the case of Timarchus and Hermodorus *while the body is still ensouled*. Plutarch's account of Socrates' daimonion is more relevant if we recall that Socrates was liable to trances.

There is evidence that Plutarch tried to cope with the biographical tradition. Ordinary people regarded Socrates as an eccentric liable to trance-like states, which would be regarded as contacts with strange powers of another world. This is surely the point of Aristophanes' scene in the *Birds* (1553–64), where Socrates is holding a kind of séance. Socrates' occult powers tended to be minimized by his followers and, as we can tell from Plato's works, there is a steady trend away from

¹⁴ Suid. s.v. *Ἐπιμενίδης*, and for the interpretation of long sleep as *ἐκστάσις* see Rohde (above, note 12) 331 note 116.

¹⁵ Schol. on Aristoph. *Nub.* 508; Suid. s.v. *Τροφώνιου κατὰ γῆς παίγνια*.

divination to rationalization as the ideal for man.¹⁶ Simmias consequently shifts about uneasily for a definition of Socrates' daimonion: it is *φωνῆς τινος αἰσθησις* (approximating to the biographical tradition which makes it sound irrational) ἢ *λόγου νόησις* (an alternative which sounds much more respectable to a professional philosopher). Since the *λόγος* was revealed by a voice to Timarchus' nous-daimon, both traditions were fulfilled. Both Socrates and Timarchus obtain mantic wisdom of the *natura* rather than the *ars* type, but the *nous*-daimon distinguishes the experience from *irrational* possession.¹⁷

In a curious passage by Gregory of Nazianzus (*Oratio* 4 [*Adversus Iulianum* 1] 59) Trophonios is associated with the names of Empedocles, Aristas, and Empedotimus. The connection with Empedocles implies a connection with Pythagoras or Pythagoreanism, and Mr. Bolton¹⁸ suggests that Pythagoreanism was the lowest common denominator among all these names. If so, it looks as though the Pythagoreanization of Trophonios began with Plutarch; and we should note that Simmias' speech was highly thought of by the dialogue's fictitious Pythagorean named Theanor (named, no doubt, after Pythagoras' wife Theano), who based upon this myth a belief in what doubtless would be termed today the availability of psychic aid (593D-94A).

We turn now from what Plutarch has achieved to what he has failed to achieve. The overriding interest in astral projection to which all else in the dialogue is made subservient has given rise to one or two inconsistencies, in addition to those already indicated. Timarchus' vision was intended as a revelation to explain the nature of Socrates' daimonion. The explanation of Socrates' daimonion in terms of Hermodorus' or perhaps Timarchus' nous-daimon in the oracle of Trophonios, himself a daimonion as we have already noticed, provides

¹⁶ The trance is not in fact connected with the daimonion by Plato, as the two trances described in *Symp.* 174D-175C and 220CD show. For Plato's own views on *μάντις* see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1963) 230 note 56. The "sign" makes mere inhibitions according to *Apol.* 31D, and positive suggestions also according to *Xen. Mem.* 4.3.12.

¹⁷ The experience is shamanistic rather than "possession," which rather applies to the frenzy of sibyls and Delphic priestesses and possibly to prophecy like that given by Theoclymenus in *Od.* 20.345-57. For the distinction see E. R. Dodds (above, note 16) 88 note 43. On mantic wisdom see Plato, *Phaedrus* 224B f. For the distinction between *ars* and *natura*, Cic. *De div.* 1.6.12 (cf. *ars* with *furor*, 1.18.34).

¹⁸ Bolton (above, note 8) 145.

a clever link, but the comparisons do not correspond in every respect. Socrates' daimonion is surely an external agency; Hermodorus' and Timarchus' nous-daimon seems to be part of their own personality; Trophonios' daimonion could, by Maximus' definition, be Trophonios himself, or his ghost.

A more serious objection is that Socrates is able to receive divine communication while he is awake, yet in the myth Hermodorus is cited as the man who *par excellence* had the ability to let his daimon roam afar while he was asleep. Unless Hermodorus is to be classed among "the multitude" (cf. 588D) or among "the ignorant" (589D)¹⁹—and this is unlikely because he is highlighted as an exceptional man who attained a rare degree of communication—the explanation of Hermodorus' experience in sleep fails satisfactorily to explain Socrates' experience in wakefulness. The confusion arises partly because Plutarch linked Socrates' daimonion with the traditional "admonitions" rather than with the "trances," and partly because he failed properly to distinguish the common dream-state from the state of cataleptic trance to which Hermodorus' experience belonged.²⁰

Such structural weaknesses do not support von Arnim's thesis that Plutarch drew unintelligently from two incompatible sources affecting the relation of *ψυχή* to *νοῦς*.²¹ They show instead that he overreached the purpose of the myth, which was to explain the nature of Socrates' "sign," because of his overriding interest in astral projection. Thus the revelation at Trophonios' oracle, like the working of Socrates' daimonion, has been found capable of explanation in terms of a psychic excursion. Plutarch's testimony can no longer be summoned in order to show that Trophonios gave his revelation in dreams.

We turn therefore to Pausanias. He tells us that the future is not learnt in one and the same way in all cases, "but some actually saw and others heard," ἀλλά πού τις καὶ εἶδε καὶ ἄλλος ἤκουσεν (9.39.11).

¹⁹ Mr. W. Hamilton finds a slight inconsistency between 588D and 589D (above, note 10, 180 note 1): "In the first [passage] Simmias appears to mean that only exceptional men like Socrates can receive divine communication awake; for the majority of men they are only possible in sleep. In the second he seems to think that it is more natural for a revelation to come to a man when he is awake than when he is asleep, and those who think otherwise behave ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις οἶοιτο τὸν μουσικόν, ἀνεμμένη τῇ λύρᾳ χρώμενον, ὅταν συστή τοῖς τόνοις ἢ καθαρμοσθῇ μὴ ἄπτεσθαι μηδὲ χρῆσθαι."

²⁰ See above, note 8.

²¹ See above, note 10.

This is strange phrasing (the personal pronoun precedes the first *καί* and follows the second) and seems to mean that some only heard while others heard and saw. After the revelation the consultant must write down and dedicate *ὅποσα ἤκουσεν ἕκαστος ἢ εἶδεν* (9.39.14). Maximus Tyrius, our third witness, says that the consultant receives the revelation *τὰ μὲν ἰδὼν, τὰ δὲ ἀκούσας* (*Dissert.* 14.2). This is not unlike Pausanias' description, but for reasons of chronology Maximus is likely to have used an independent source. Pausanias is perhaps the more authoritative source because he described the procedure from experience: *γράφω δὲ οὐκ ἀκοήν ἀλλὰ ἑτέρους τε ἰδὼν καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ Τροφωνίῳ χρησάμενος* (9.39.14). At any rate neither mentions anything about dreams. The problem is whether Pausanias and Maximus mean that the consultant saw and heard with the physical eye and ear, or with the soul in dream. That "see" and "hear" cover both activities constantly gives rise to confusion²² of a kind which is sometimes used for poetic effect.²³

The following possibilities present themselves. If Pausanias did not mention sleep, it was because the consultant did not sleep, and the revelation came not in dreams. Alternatively, Pausanias did not mention sleep because he assumed that his reader was already familiar with the manner of revelation. Against the alternative, which is adopted by those who understand Trophonios' oracle to be incubatory,²⁴ there are two objections. First, Pausanias' description of the procedure is so detailed—unfortunately more detailed than lucid—that we have no grounds for believing that he assumed familiarity with it on the part of his reader. Secondly, he took the trouble to inform us that revelation at the equally famous oracle of Amphiaraos at Oropus came in dreams; and since the description there was briefer, he might have assumed even more on the part of the reader, yet did not omit this detail (Paus. 1.34.5).

²² E.g. Origen, *Con. Cels.* 7.34; cf. the phrase *θείῳ ψυχῆς ὁμματι τὰ θεῖα καταλαμβάνει* in Ps.-Arist. *De mundo* 391A.

²³ Cf. Soph. *O.T.* 370–414, where Teiresias, although blind, can "see" more clearly than Oedipus who still has his sight.

²⁴ It is explicitly stated by Pley in *RE* 9.1258 s.v. "Incubatio" thus: "Nun wird allerdings von den meisten Traumorakeln nicht berichtet, dass der Ratsuchende sich auf ein Fell zum Schlaf niedergelegt habe. Das wird manchmal ein Fehler der Überlieferung sein; recht wahrscheinlich ist das wenigstens z.B. beim Trophoniosorakel (Paus. 9.29.5 ff.)."

We now look for clues in the ritual preliminaries. Certainly the events before descent can be paralleled from incubatory ritual. According to Pausanias, the prospective candidate spent several days in ritual purification and offered preliminary sacrifices to Trophonios and the deities of the place. On the night of the descent a ram was sacrificed over a *βόθρος*. The consultant was washed in the river Hercyna and, dressed in special clothes, drank from the waters of Lethe and Mnemosyne. He then did homage to the Daedalic statue of Trophonios and descended into the chasm through the small entry, which necessitated lying supine for the body to be drawn swiftly down. The consultant took down barley-cakes kneaded with honey. Tertullian remarks that "apud oracula incubaturis ieiunium indicitur ut castimoniam inducat."²⁵ Trophonios' oracle may share this feature with the incubatory oracles of Amphiaraos and Nysaeian Hades.²⁶ The sacrificed ram is *par excellence* the appropriate animal for incubatory oracles,²⁷ and the double sacrifice at Lebadeia forms a further parallel with the duplicate sacrifice at the oracle of Amphiaraos. The descent at night might also suggest incubation. Further points of contact between the two oracles are provided by the legends. Amphiaraos was pursued, and swallowed up alive by the earth. So too, at Lebadeia, was Trophonios. There are two variants of the story. In one of them Trophonios was received in the opened earth as he fled from Hyrieus, the eponymous hero of Hyria, which is itself not far from Oropus (Paus. 9.37.4 ff.). The difference between the two heroes is that Amphiaraos' adventure is told in heroic epic, Trophonios' as a folk-tale variant of the Egyptian story told by Herodotus (2.121) about the treasury of

²⁵ *De an.* 48 = Migne 2.777. Tertullian includes Trophonios' oracle in the incubatory type (*De an.* 46), but he, or his sources, doubtless made the inference from the incubatory ritual which precedes the descent and from the general links between Trophonios and Amphiaraos.

²⁶ We are expressly told that the candidate has meat in plenty from the sacrifices, from which a possible fast in other foods may be inferred. This interpretation is put by L. Deubner (above, note 1) 14 note 4 on the verse from Cratinos' *Trophonios*: οὐ σῖτον ἄρασθ', οὐχ ὕπνου λαχεῖν μέρος (fr. 218 Kock). See Philos. *Vit. Ap.* 2.37 and Strabo 14.1.44 for fasts at the oracles of Amphiaraos and Hades respectively.

²⁷ For Amphiaraos, Paus. 1.34.5 and also Frazer's commentary *ad loc.* for non-classical parallels; for Podaleiros, Lycophr. 1047-48; for Calchas, Strabo 4.3.9. On the latter two see Rohde (above, note 12) 151 note 96, but in this case failure of transmission is a more likely explanation than a "mistake." On the significance of sleeping on sheepskins see e.g. Jane Harrison (above, note 9) 23-24, 27-28, 53.

Rhampsinitos. Nevertheless, despite the similarities, the ritual act of lying down to sleep—which the word *incubare*, cf. *ἐγκαθεύδειν*, *ἐγκοιμᾶσθαι*, implies—is not mentioned. Nor are we told that it was the custom of the consultant to take the skin of the ram down into the cave, as we should expect. Either these are serious faults in transmission, difficult to explain in view of Pausanias' care as exemplified in his description of Amphiaraos' oracle, or we must assume that sleep was not part of the ritual at the time when Pausanias wrote. The *onus probandi* lies with those who assert that the oracle in Pausanias' day was incubatory.

There remains one further significant feature of the oracle. The consultant was normally his own medium. There was no professional intermediary.²⁸ This may be taken as support for J. A. K. Thomson's view that the *Nekyia* is based on the oracle at Lebadeia,²⁹ for no intermediary is mentioned in the Odyssean account. If there is any truth in Professor Thomson's conjecture, we must simply assume that, for the purposes of the *Nekyia*, Teiresias was taken from the cult at Telpousa or Orchomenos³⁰ and superimposed on the cult of Trophonios as the person consulted. Odysseus' revelation appears to be direct, though his revelation has been regarded as dream-like.³¹

Sometimes, however, the consultant did employ a medium, though not a professional one. Mys actually paid one of the inhabitants to go down into the Trophonion on his behalf (Herod. 8.134). Professor H. W. Parke has recently suggested that the consultant produced his own prophecy by the confused remarks which he made on emerging.³² We have no evidence for these confused remarks, and it is difficult to see how they can be turned into coherent oracular responses, such as that delivered in hexameters before the battle of Leuctra (Paus. 4.32.5–6).

²⁸ Strabo 9.2.38 remarks, *καταβαίνει δ' αὐτὸς ὁ χρηστηριαζόμενος*. Maximus, *Dissert.* 14.2 says that the consultant is *ὑποφῆτης αὐτάγγελος*. Cf. Paus. 9.39 *passim*. Philostratus, *Vit. Ap.* 8.19 says that Trophonios' oracle is unique, *μόνον γὰρ ἐκείνο* [sc. *μαντεῖον*] *δι' αὐτοῦ χρᾶ τοῦ χρωμένου*.

²⁹ J. A. K. Thomson, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Oxford 1914) 26, 29, 84, 92, 111–12. His conjecture is made primarily from consideration of Odysseus' ancestry, which may be traced to Lebadeia.

³⁰ References to Teiresias' death and grave at Telpousa are collected by A. Schachter (above, note 3) 15 note 32; for Teiresias' cult at Orchomenos see Rohde (above, note 12) 104 note 8.

³¹ For example by L. G. Pocock, *Odyssean Essays* (Oxford 1965) 52 note 22.

³² H. W. Parke, *Greek Oracles* (London 1967) 94.

There has been no systematic excavation of the Trophonion. Thus the measurements of the chasm are unknown; but if the consultant was drawn down by one or more priests we may be able to form some idea of its size. How the consultant "saw" and "heard" Trophonios is more problematical. Perhaps the deity "appeared,"³³ or a performance might have been put on by the priests to masquerade as Trophonios. If these possibilities are ever shown to be precluded by the size of the Trophonion, visual hallucinations in total darkness might be assumed to have occurred; this would explain why some enquirers did not see but only heard. The voice of the unseen δαίμων was probably that of a concealed priest; thus the story in Plutarch may have been authentic tradition. How to explain the visual hallucinations? Unless we are simply to assume with M. P. Nilsson (*Gesch. der gr. Relig.* 12.169) "Das Orakel des Trophonios in Lebadeia scheint durch Erschrecken gewirkt zu haben," the possibility cannot be ruled out that a hallucinatory drug was added to the water of Lethe or Mnemosyne.³⁴ This would explain the strange procedure which Pausanias describes after the emergence from the chasm. The enquirer is taken by the priests to the chair of Memory, where they learn what the consultant saw and heard. They then hand him to his relatives, who lift him "still paralysed with terror and unaware both of himself and his surroundings," κάτοχόν τε ἔτι δείματι καὶ ἀγνώτα ὁμοίως αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν πέλας. The ἔτι is significant and may imply that the state of paralysis began on the chair of Memory or, more likely, it signifies that the enquirer had not yet recovered from his state in the cave. This is no ordinary sleep, and that the enquirer is paralysed *with terror* is only Pausanias' explanation. Hallucinatory drugs, about which Pausanias would not have been told and would therefore not know, provide a satisfactory explanation. If a performance had been put on in the cave it was probably before the drug had taken full effect. As the effect was wearing off he was brought

³³ The discovery at the *nekyomanteion* in Epirus of a *mêchanê* for showing "ghosts"—see T. B. L. Webster, *Lustrum* 11 (1966) 9—suggests a method whereby Trophonios may have appeared. (I owe this ref. to Mr. J. H. Cowell.)

³⁴ The use of medicated water was suggested long ago by A. van Dale, *De Oraculis* (Amsterdam 1700) 192–94. This possibility seems to be ignored by recent commentators. A fine engraving of van Dale's imaginary reconstruction of the *Interiora antri Trophonii cum suis cellis ac fornicibus* faces p. 195.

ἐπὶ θρόνον Μνημοσύνης and his memory was refreshed. I suggest that he was there told what he ought to have learnt in the cave and that he then recalled the details as he had learnt them before unconsciousness. In this way the revelation could be manipulated by the priests. Pausanias' account thus shows no contradiction with Plutarch's; both describe a cataleptic trance belonging to a kind of "psychedelic" experience.

How to explain the ritual similarities between Amphiaraos and Trophonios? I would tentatively suggest that Trophonios' oracle was originally an earth-oracle which operated by incubation. The ritual and in particular the emphasis on serpents suggests this. Trophonios later took over this earth-oracle, possibly under Delphic influence³⁵ and about the same time as the change was made at Delphi. Delphi, it will be remembered, was once an earth-oracle, characterized by a snake, which practiced incubation.³⁶ Apollo took over and the snake-cult was dispossessed. At the same time as Lebadeia came under new management, the method of revelation was changed, possibly to enable greater control over the messages. It is a commonplace of intuitive μαντική that Apollo assumed the patronage of trance divination, while his son Asclepius assumed that of dreams. Trophonios is made Apollo's son in some versions of the aetiological legends which attributed the discovery of the oracle to the direction of the Pythia and even linked Trophonios and his father with the building of Delphi.³⁷ A significant difference is that, whereas at Delphi Apollo suppressed the original snake-cult, Trophonios, as his name perhaps implies, "nourished"³⁸ the snake-cult which he took over at Lebadeia. This

³⁵ A. Schachter (above, note 3) 3, 5, 10, has suggested possible Delphic influence at the Boeotian cults at Ptoion, Ismenion, Telphousa, Thourion, and Tegyra, as well as at Lebadeia.

³⁶ For the oracle at Delphi as earth-oracle superseded by Apollo, see Rohde (above, note 12) 111 note 33 and cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 2-8. For incubation cf. Eur. *Iph. Taur.* 1259-60 and *Hec.* 70-71. Thus Lebadeia and Delphi in some respects had a parallel history.

³⁷ Charax in schol. on Arist. *Nub.* 508; Paul. 9.37.5 (son of Apollo) and 9.40.1-2; Philo. *Vit. Ap.* 8.19 (son of Apollo). Trophonios is often identified with the Olympian deities, for example with Zeus in Strabo 9.2.38, which is a sign of his lateness. If Heraclides Ponticus can be trusted, the sanctuary of Apollo at Pagasai in Thessaly was founded by Trophonios (fr. 137a-b Wehrli).

³⁸ For the etymology cf. Suid. s.v. *Τροφωνίου κατὰ γῆς παίγνια* (and cf. schol. on Arist. *Nub.* 508): τὰς δὲ μάζας ἐλάμβανον ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ἀδικηθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν συναντῶντων ὄψεων, ἀλλ' ἐκείνας αὐτοῖς παραβάλλειν τροφήν. My general point

would explain why so much emphasis was placed upon cake-appeasement of reptiles, and why incubatory ritual survived without the incubation.

does not depend on the etymology for its validity, and A. B. Cook proposed *Τροφώνιος* or *Τρεφώνιος* from *Διοτρεφῆς βασιλεύς* (*Zeus*, vol. 2.2 App. K).