

TEIRESIAS AS MANTIS AND INTELLECTUAL IN EURIPIDES' BACCHAE

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It is often noted that the defense of Dionysiac worship presented by the legendary Theban seer Teiresias in the first *epeisodion* of the *Bacchae* owes much of its style and content to the sophistic movement of the fifth century.¹ While such anachronisms abound in Euripidean drama, the significance of Teiresias, precisely because he is a *mantis*, has proved difficult for commentators to assess.² Euripides' portrait of the Theban prophet has the appearance of parody,³ and that of a "theological

¹ See K. Deichgräber, "Die Kadmos-Teiresiaszene in Euripides' *Bakchen*," *Hermes* 70 (1935) 331–37; E. R. Dodds, *Euripides' Bacchae* (Oxford 1960²) 91; G. M. A. Grube, "Dionysus in the *Bacchae*," *TAPA* 66 (1935) 41; W. Nestle, *Euripides. Der Dichter der griechischen Aufklärung* (Stuttgart 1901) 275; E. Petersen, *Die attische Tragödie als Bild- und Bühnenkunst* (Bonn 1915) 160; M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie* (Göttingen 1954²) 452; H. Rohdich, *Die euripideische Tragödie* (Heidelberg 1968) 143–47; T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Masks of Tragedy* (Austin 1963) 145; J. Roux, *Euripide, Les Bacchantes* (Paris 1972) 1.45, 2.337–38; W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Munich 1940) 662; W. B. Sedgwick, "Again the *Bacchae*," *CR* 44 (1930) 8; C. Segal, *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae* (Princeton 1982) 292–309; and R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* (Cambridge 1948) 40–53 and "Euripides: *Poiêtês Sophos*," *Arethusa* 2 (1969) 127.

² Cf. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* 43, note 3. Nestle (above, note 1) 80–82, 85, for example, suggested that Teiresias expresses the playwright's own views, and Dodds (above, note 1) 91 took the character to represent the "ecclesiastical politics of Delphi."

³ Euripides has a well-known penchant for making light of seers and prophecy, and his treatment of these in *IA* (520–21, 956–58), another of his last plays, makes the playwright's abandonment of this attitude in later life highly unlikely; see P. Decharme, *Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre* (Paris 1893) 93–99; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951) 182; and L. Radermacher, "Euripides und die Mantik," *RhM* 53 (1898) 497–510. At the same time a number of comic-satiric elements have been otherwise observed in this scene; for the varying degrees of humor detected there, see E. M. Blaiklock, *The Male Characters of Euripides* (Wellington 1952) 218; D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1967) 61–62; Deichgräber (above, note 1) 327; Grube (above, note 1) 39–40; H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London 1961) 373; A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen 1972³) 487; G. Méautis, *Les Bacchantes d'Euripide* (Paris 1928) 157; W. Pater, *Greek Studies* (London 1914) 65–68; Rosenmeyer (above, note

sophist,”⁴ a type for which parallels are lacking in extant Greek drama. The aim of this paper is to draw attention to a number of *manteis* active in the fifth and fourth centuries who were undoubtedly sympathetic towards, if not whole-hearted participants in, the intellectual movements around them. The apparent incongruousness presented by a figure such as Teiresias therefore can be viewed as reflecting more the attitudes of our own age, with its sharply defined distinction between the secular and the religious, than those of classical Athens.

I. Teiresias

Teiresias proves to be considerably less accurate a *mantis* in the *Bacchae* than his counterparts elsewhere in Greek literature.⁵ Although Cadmus, his eager if self-conscious student in Bacchic revelry, regards him as *sophos* (178–79, 186), Teiresias is portrayed as an adept not in the more traditional arts of bird-watching, extispicy, and empyromancy, but in eristic. Accused by Pentheus of having employed his suasive talents to convert Cadmus to a spurious new religion (255), the seer in turn addresses a lengthy *epideixis* to the young king (266–327). This speech opens with a conventional *prooimion* (266–71) which attacks Pentheus and his brief through a series of antitheses dealing with the proper use of rhetoric,⁶ and it closes with an *epilogos* (319–27) in which the seer accuses his opponent of madness, apparently a common polemical device in political oratory of the period.⁷ The main body of the speech includes a number of *pisteis* that draw on ideas current in the late fifth century.

Dionysus is presented first as one of the two metonymical τὰ πρῶτ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισι (274–85),⁸ the wet counterpart to Demeter and the dry. Teiresias' description of Demeter as γῆ . . . ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ' ὀπότερον

1) 138, 146; and B. Seidensticker, “Comic Elements in Euripides' *Bacchae*,” *AJP* 99 (1978) 303–16.

⁴ This term was coined by G. M. A. Grube (*The Drama of Euripides* [London 1941] 404), who remarks, “There must have been many seers and prophets in fifth-century Athens, theological sophists who clung to the orthodox belief in gods with all but human forms and personality, but who were intelligent enough to know that they must make some concessions to rationalism.” Cf. R. Nihard, “Le Problème des Bacchantes d'Euripide,” *Musée Belge* 16 (1912) 327.

⁵ Cf. Segal (above, note 1) 295–96: “Virtually every point he [Teiresias] adduces in praise of Dionysus emerges in the subsequent action in just the opposite meaning: nurture of life, release from pain, the Bacchic madness, and so on.”

⁶ U. v. Wilamowitz (*Euripides Heracles* [Berlin 1959²] III.60) rightly labels the term ἀφορμή (267) a “technisch rhetorischer Ausdruck.” For the expression θράσει . . . δυνατὸς καὶ λέγειν οἶος τ' ἀνὴρ (270), cf. Dem. 22.25, 31, and 66.

⁷ See W. R. Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens* (Princeton 1971) 92, note 9; H. North, *Sophrosyne* (Ithaca 1966) 77, 90, 115; and G. Grossman, *Politische Schlagwörter* (Zurich 1950) 137–45. For Pentheus' lack of good citizenship, cf. κακὸς πολίτης (271).

⁸ For τὰ πρῶτα as “elements,” see *LSJ*, s.v. *πρότερος* B.4; cf. Nestle (above, note 1) 275.

βούλη κάλει (276) is noteworthy for its suggestion of theological syncretism and of that looseness in terminology such as we find in Empedocles, where divine names can be employed with inconsistency to denote elements.⁹ This passage is more remarkable for its pre-Socratic opposition of the elements and its deliberate echo of Prodicus (84 [77] B 5).¹⁰ Both gods are celebrated as benefactors of mankind, prefiguring later Euhemeristic theology,¹¹ and Dionysus is especially singled out for praise as the culture hero who discovered wine and introduced it to mankind (279–80).

Teiresias' identification of Dionysus with the wet and his praise of the god as both the discoverer of wine and its embodiment serve to leave the distinct impression that the new god is very nearly primeval. The seer here proves himself a worthy student of Teisias and Gorgias, to whom were attributed the talent of "making the new seem old and the old seem new" (Pl. *Phdr.* 276A–B, Isocr. *Paneg.* 8). Although this description refers specifically to styles of expression, the end result, achieved through the magic of rhetoric, is the same.

Gorgianic influence is also apparent in Teiresias' selective emphasis on the prophetic and martial aspects of Dionysus (298–309), which draws on the notion of *καίρός*.¹² As a *mantis* himself, the seer can speak with authority about a god who has an ostensible relation with prophecy. The mention of Ares is intended to deter a man whose response to the newly-introduced religion is to resort to force of arms (cf. 226–30, 239–41); it is perhaps also meant to answer Pentheus' charge regarding the effeminacy of the Lydian Stranger (235–36). Although Dionysus will indeed be proved a prophetic and martial divinity in the play, according to the seer the god's prophetic powers are made manifest through the

⁹ Cf. *PV* 209–10. Teiresias again shows syncretistic tendencies at 298–309, where he has Dionysus share in the functions of Apollo and Ares. For Empedocles' lack of consistency in the naming of his elements, see 31(21) B 6 Diels-Kranz, where he calls fire "Zeus," and B 96 and 98, where fire is "Hephaestus."

¹⁰ See Dodds (above, note 1) 104–5. In addition, if Housman's commonly accepted emendation ἡλθ' ἔπειτ', ἀντίπαλον (278) is correct, the advent of the wet chronologically later than that of the dry agrees with one current view, which can be traced back as far as Hesiod (*Th.* 116–34), on the order of appearance of the two elements; cf. Anaximen. 13(3) A 6; Emp. 31(21) A 49; and Plato *Ti.* 31B, 40C, 40E.

¹¹ See W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge 1969) 3.241–42; A. Henrichs, "Two Doxographical Notes: Democritus and Prodicus on Religion," *HSCP* 79 (1975) 107–15, especially 110, note 64; and W. Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos* (Stuttgart 1942) 354–55.

¹² The otherwise tenuous connections of Dionysus with prophecy and warfare in Greece (cf. Dodds [above, note 1] 108–11) suggest that the seer is here tailoring his arguments to the position from which he makes his plea and to the particular individual whom he wishes to persuade under the present circumstances. For the notion of *καίρός*, see, e.g., G. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton 1963) 66–67 and M. Untersteiner, *The Sophists*, transl. K. Freeman (Oxford 1954) 110–14, 118–21, 195–98.

excessive drinking of wine,¹³ and panic is likewise conceived as a form of intoxication, if such expressions as μέθη τοῦ φόβου (Pl. *Leg.* 1.639B) are any indication.¹⁴

Teiresias' Dionysus might share in the functions of Apollo and Ares, but his relation to Aphrodite is a different matter altogether. Pentheus' fears regarding the inimical effects of Dionysiac worship on the women of Thebes (216–25, 236–38, 260–62) are allayed by drawing on contemporary speculations on *physis* that viewed inborn nature, rather than circumstance, as determining an individual's conduct. The god, Teiresias contends, will not compel a woman to be chaste; one must instead look to her *physis* for *sophrosyne* since this quality cannot be corrupted by the Bacchic rites (314–18). Such an appeal to *physis* amounts to special pleading, for what is Cypris if not another type of *theia mania*, like prophecy and panic, in which Dionysus might be said to have a share?¹⁵

Teiresias' speech is also notable for the varied uses it makes of language. The seer's version of Dionysus' salvation by Zeus (286–97), intended to be a rationalizing account but in truth no less grotesque than the traditional myth it is meant to correct, relies on the confusion of the words μῆρος, ὄμηρος and μέρος.¹⁶ An interest in etymology is clearly shown by the implicit relation drawn between μαντική and μάνια (299), anticipating Plato's similar connection of the words at *Phdr.* 244C. We are perhaps also provided with an etymology for the name of the god himself if we accept Dalmeyda's brilliant emendation of διάλυσιν for Διόνυσον in line 294.¹⁷ In that case Teiresias will have provided an explanation for the names of both the divine subject of his encomium and his counterpart Demeter, whose name, he implies, is derived from Γῆ-μήτερ.¹⁸

Other features of the speech show Teiresias' interest in language as well. The verb σπένδεται (284) has both a middle and a passive sense, signifying that Dionysus makes peace with the gods on man's behalf and

¹³ Cf. Plut. *De def. or.* 432E and Ath. 2.37E.

¹⁴ Cf. *ebrius curis*, Lucr. 3.1051.

¹⁵ Cf. the apt expression μεθύοντα ὑπὸ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης at Xen. *Symp.* 8.21. For amatory *mania*, see Eur. *Hipp.* 1274; Pl. *Phdr.* 245B–257A; Soph. *Ant.* 790; and Theoc. 10.31.

¹⁶ Cf. C. del Grande, *Filologia minore* (Milan 1956) 41–42; W. J. Verdenius, "Notes on Euripides' *Bacchae*," *Mnemosyne* 15 (1962) 344. W. B. Stanford (*Ambiguity in Greek Literature* [Oxford 1939] 174–75) comments that the ambiguity employed here is an example of a "dialectical ambiguity . . . used to sustain an argument," and that the passage betrays the "exaggerated methods of the sophists' eristic fallacies."

¹⁷ This emendation is transcriptionally likely and dispenses with the need of positing a lacuna after 293; cf. C. W. Willink, "Some Problems of Text and Interpretation in the *Bacchae*," *CQ* 16 (1966) 40–41. For this particular etymology of the god's name, see Cornutus *ND* 30.

¹⁸ This is evident from the alternative name Gê (276) and the characteristic activity attributed to her: ἐκτρέφει βροτούς (277); cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 685–86, and see O. Kern, "Demeter," *RE* 4.2 (1901) 2713.

is himself poured out in libation.¹⁹ Parechesis is employed with the combinations Πενθεῦ, πιθοῦ (309) and δοκῆς-δόξα-δόκει-δέχου (311–12); this device, used for the direct appeals to Pentheus in the midst of his *pisteis*, is rhetorically effective, as is his repetition of the verb διαγελᾷς (272, 322), together with καταγελᾷς (286).

II. Euthyphro

Teiresias' particular intellectual preoccupations are closely paralleled by those of the Athenian *mantis* Euthyphro, a younger contemporary of Euripides,²⁰ suggesting that the playwright's portrayal of the Theban seer as a "theological sophist" has some basis in reality. In the *Euthyphro* and *Cratylus*, Plato depicted Euthyphro as possessing a distinctive theology, a self-professed talent for eristic, and a keen interest in etymology. As a teacher, he had a number of disciples, among whom Socrates included himself with that characteristic irony reserved especially for the most obtuse. For his part, Euthyphro regarded himself a kindred spirit and was evidently a hanger-on at the fringe of the Socratic circle.²¹

Euthyphro's approach to matters concerning the divine was manifestly unconventional.²² This is immediately clear from the seer's complaint about his being ridiculed and thought mad whenever he speaks by way of prophecy in the *ekklesia* (*Euthyphr.* 3B–C). He is thought to be no less mad in connection with the δίκη φόνου he intends to bring against his own father for the death from exposure of a πελάτης who was in his father's employ and had himself committed murder (*Euthyphr.* 4C–D). Not only is the legal basis for such a suit possibly open to question,²³ but the action entails the flagrant transgression of that Greek *nomos* which demanded filial piety (cf. *Euthyphr.* 4D–E). Euthyphro's insistence on pursuing the case on the behalf of a man who was not a relation and

¹⁹ Cf. J. E. Sandys, *The Bacchae of Euripides* (Cambridge 1880) 140; Stanford (above, note 16) 175; and R. Y. Tyrrell, *The Bacchae of Euripides* (London 1892) 86.

²⁰ Grube (above, note 1) 41 describes Euthyphro as a "theological sophist" like Teiresias but does not mention any specific parallels between the two. Euthyphro would have been about fifty years old at the time of Socrates' trial as he is mentioned in the *Cratylus*, which is set shortly after the start of the Peloponnesian War, and his father is still alive in 399, the dramatic date of the *Euthyphro*; cf. A. E. Taylor, *Plato, the Man and his Work* (London 1926) 76–77, 146.

²¹ Cf. *Euthyphr.* 3A; at 3C, the seer observes that [οἱ πολλοί] φθονοῦσιν ἡμῖν πᾶσι τοῖς τοιούτοις. At Plut. *De genio Socratis* 580D Euthyphro and Socrates, accompanied by Simmias and other friends, are described as engaging in a discussion as they go to Andocides' house.

²² Cf. R. G. Hoerber, "Plato's *Euthyphro*," *Phronesis* 3 (1958) 96 and Taylor (above, note 20) 147.

²³ Cf. R. E. Allen, *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms* (London 1970) 20–23; but see S. Panagiotou, "Plato's *Euthyphro* and the Attic Code on Homicide," *Hermes* 102 (1974) 419–37.

whose social status was barely above that of a slave,²⁴ together with his firm conviction of the necessity of prosecuting any wrongdoer, even if it be one's own father or mother (*Euthphr.* 5D), suggests that he was affected by contemporary notions concerning the equality of mankind in *physis*.²⁵ The particular *τεκμήριον* that Euthyphro offers to justify the correctness of his behavior is one that those who object to his action on the ground that it violates conventional morality must admit as valid (5E). This is the unfilial conduct of Cronus and Zeus themselves, for had not Cronus castrated Uranus, and did not Zeus imprison Cronus (5E–6A)? The misuse of this particular myth is, of course, familiar from Aristophanic admonitions regarding the dire effects of the sophistic “New Education.”²⁶

Euthyphro's peculiar expertise in matters divine is complemented by a taste for eristic. In the *Euthyphro*, the seer twice offers to launch into an *epideixis*, one describing amazing stories concerning the gods (6C), the other on the gods' views on right human conduct (9B).²⁷ Elsewhere, he asserts confidence in his abilities to help Socrates with the preparation of a defense against Meletus' charges by declaring to the philosopher:

²⁴ For the social standing of the *πελάτης* see schol. ad *Euthphr.* 4C; *Ath. Pol.* 2.2; Phot. s.v. *πελάται*.

²⁵ This idea is also implicit in Teiresias' proselytizing for a religion that admitted Greek and barbarian, old and young. Among other contemporary proponents of this advanced conception was Antiphon the Sophist, who is also known to have been a seer (see below, page 66). For fifth-century ideas on the equality of mankind, see H. C. Baldry, “The Idea of the Unity of Mankind,” in *Grecs et barbares*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 13 (Geneva 1962) 169–204 and *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge 1965). J. Burnet (*Plato's Euthyphro, Apology, and Crito* [Oxford 1924] 5–6) intimates that the seer's way of thinking may reflect Pythagorean influence. This might well explain the source of his notions regarding human equality (cf. Aristoxenus at Diels-Kranz I 471.8–9; Arist. *EN* 1132B22 and *MM* 1194A28), except for the fact that Pythagoreans especially honored their parents (*D.L.* 8.23).

²⁶ See *Ar. Av.* 755–59, 1337–52 and *Nub.* 904–19, 1399–1446; cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 640–43, *Pl. Grg.* 456D and *Resp.* 377E–378B. In the latter passage, the philosopher would have as few people as possible hear the myth. It is probably no coincidence that Plato has Euthyphro encounter Socrates at the latter's arraignment, for the turning of sons against fathers was precisely one of the charges lodged against Socrates; cf. especially Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.49:

Σωκράτης . . . τοὺς πατέρας προπηλακίζειν ἐδίδασκε, πείθων μὲν τοὺς συνόντας ἑαυτῷ σοφωτέρους ποιεῖν τῶν πατέρων, φάσκων δὲ κατὰ νόμον ζεῖναι παρανοίας ἐλόντι καὶ τὸν πατέρα δῆσαι, τεκμηρίῳ τούτῳ χρώμενος, ὡς τὸν ἀμαθέστερον ὑπὸ τοῦ σοφωτέρου νόμιμον εἶη δεδέσθαι.

²⁷ These Socrates deftly avoids, preferring to elicit the information he requires through his accustomed dialectic. Euthyphro is happy enough to accommodate him; J. Adam (*Plato's Euthyphro* [Cambridge 1890] ad 6E) observes, “Euthyphro's readiness to suit his manner of answering to the wants of his audience is a point which he has in common with the sophists of Plato's dialogues.”

εἰ ἄρα ἐμὲ ἐπιχειρήσειε γράφεσθαι, εὐροίμ' ἄν, ὥς οἶμαι,
ὅπη σαθρός ἐστιν, καὶ πολὺν ἄν ἡμῖν πρότερον περὶ ἐκείνου
λόγος ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ ἢ περὶ ἐμοῦ. (*Euthphr.* 5B–C)

This boast, combined with his presence at the stoa of the Archon Basileus on the present occasion and his familiarity with human behavior at the law courts (8C), suggests that Euthyphro is no stranger to litigation.

Like Teiresias, Euthyphro was also an avid etymologist. In the *Cratylus*, Socrates repeatedly attributes his fluency in devising etymologies to Euthyphro's inspiration (399A, 407D, 409D), having heard the seer discourse on the subject earlier in the day (396D).²⁸ The nature of the etymologies cited as produced through the seer's influence suggests that Euthyphro and his school held that words do not derive from convention, but express an absolute truth about the individual being or concept named. *Cratylus* 400A–B further indicates that the more technically complex (τεχνικώτερον) the etymology, achieved through the addition or subtraction of any number of letters from other words or phrases (cf. 399B–C), the more likely it would be acceptable to τοῖς ἀμφὶ Εὐθύφρονα. The example provided is the etymology of ψυχή, which is taken to be a refinement of the hypothetical word φύσέχη that in turn was produced by condensing the phrase ἢ φύσιν ὀχεῖ καὶ ἔχει. But it is not only the verbal similarity, however contrived, that is thought to be potentially attractive to the seer's disciples; the etymology is also intended to gain approval because it is in accord with current scientific thought, conforming as it does to Anaxagoras' theory that "mind and soul set in order and hold (ἔχουσιν) the nature (φύσιν) of all other things" (400A).

III. Other *Manteis*

In addition to Euthyphro, further examples can be cited as attesting to the existence of a variety of *mantis* fitting the description of "theological sophist." Lampon, the most prominent *mantis* in fifth-century Athens because of his close association with Pericles,²⁹ was perhaps a seer of this type. In 443 Lampon played a key role in the foundation of Pericles' panhellenic colony at Thurii, an enterprise with which were associated such advanced thinkers as Protagoras, Euthydemus, Dionysodorus, and

²⁸ U. v. Wilamowitz (*Platon* [Berlin 1919] 2.76–77) suggests that Euthyphro imparted his allegories and etymological wisdom by means of a written work, or at the very least, a sophistic *epideixis*. Nestle (above, note 11) 131 would put Euthyphro in the same class as Anaximander, Metrodorus, and Stesimbrotus. The seer is cited in connection with the etymologies of Ζεύς, Κρόνος, Οὐρανός (396A–D), ἥρως, ἄνθρωπος (398D–399C), ψυχή (400A–B), and Ἄρης (407D).

²⁹ Plutarch ranked Lampon among Pericles' πιστοὺς ἄνδρας (*Praec.* 812C–D); cf. *Per.* 6.2, *Arist. Rh.* 1419A. See F. Schachermeyr, *Religionspolitik und Religiosität bei Perikles*, SAAW 258 (Vienna 1968).

Hippodamus.³⁰ *Manteis* of a traditional bent are hardly likely to have entered into congenial cooperation with men such as these. Lampon, however, was in all likelihood thoroughly at home in the sophistic circles cultivated by his statesman friend. Aristophanes, in fact, includes the *Thuriomanteis*, an unambiguous allusion to Lampon and his intellectual companions, in a list of sophists nurtured by the Clouds (*Nub.* 331–34).³¹

If Antiphon the Sophist is to be identified with the Antiphon who was an interpreter of dreams and *τερατοσκόπος*,³² we have a clear instance of an individual practicing divination while embracing non-traditional thought. M. Untersteiner responds to those who relegate Antiphon's interest in divination to an earlier, pre-sophistic period in his life by suggesting that his profession as diviner was not incompatible with his philosophical outlook. He contends that Antiphon's approach to divination was based on the principle that "the content of a dream cannot be judged according to the criteria of *nomos*," since the significance of any given portent depends on its context; he therefore concludes that Antiphon's method of interpretation "fits precisely into the science of understanding the harmonies of the opposites of contingent experience (*τέχνη*) in order to establish the true 'physis.'"³³ One such example of Antiphon's technique is supplied by Clement (*Strom.* 7.24): a man thought it an unpropitious sign when his sow ate her own litter; seeing, however, that the animal was thin because her parsimonious owner had not fed her properly, Antiphon declared that the prodigy should be taken as favorable since the sow might well have eaten the man's own offspring through sheer hunger.³⁴

A similar instance of this sort of interpretation is attested for Dion's *mantis* Miltas, who had studied under Plato at the Academy (Plut. *Dion* 22.6). He once interpreted a lunar eclipse, normally an unlucky sign, as propitious. The eclipse occurred on the evening prior to the departure from Zacynthus of Dion's expedition against Dionysius II of Syracuse in the summer of 357. On that occasion Miltas allayed the troops' fears by assuring them that the phenomenon signified the eclipse of someone who

³⁰ In general, see V. Ehrenberg, "The Foundations of Thuri," *AJP* 59 (1948) 149–70.

³¹ K. J. Dover (*Aristophanes: Clouds* [Oxford 1968] 144) notes that the use of the word *σοφιστής* in this passage "may be the earliest example of the sense 'teacher of undesirable or superfluous accomplishments.'" Also mentioned in this passage (332–33) are the *ιατροτέχναι*, which may be an allusion to Antiphon, who wrote a *Τέχνη ἀλυντίας* (87[80] A 6 Diels-Kranz); the *σφραγιδονυχαρροκομήται*, which probably refers to the Sophists' fashionable young students and hangers-on; the *κυκλίων χορῶν ἀσματοκάμπται*, perhaps an allusion to the *κακοδαίμονιστής* Kinesias and Diagoras the Sophist; and the *μετεωροφέναι*.

³² The *Suda* (A 2744) refers to him as *τερατοσκόπος καὶ ἐποποιὸς καὶ σοφιστής*; cf. A 2746; Hermog. *Id.* 2.399.18 Rabe; D.L. 2.46; Lucian *Ver. Hist.* 2.33.129. For the use of the term *τερατοσκόπος* to denote *mantis*, cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.357 (Mopsus); Aesch. *Eum.* 62 (Apollo); Soph. *OT* 605 (Teiresias).

³³ *The Sophists* (above, note 12) 257. Cf. Cic. *Div.* 1.39 and 116.

³⁴ See Cic. *Div.* 2.144 for two further examples of this type of divination.

was then conspicuously notable, namely Dionysius (*Dion* 24.1–2; cf. *Nic.* 23.4).

The atthidographer Philochorus, another *mantis* able to reconcile his tradition-bound role with more modern intellectual interests,³⁵ also was able to interpret a lunar eclipse as propitious. Plutarch informs us that Philochorus discussed from hindsight the fateful eclipse which caused the superstitious Nicias to delay twenty-seven days before retreating from Syracuse in the summer of 413 (*Nic.* 23.5 [328 F 135b *FGrH*]). Philochorus argued that in this particular instance the eclipse had been a favorable omen inasmuch as certain operations, such as retreats, require concealment, while light in such circumstances serves as a hindrance.

Like the fictional Teiresias, Philochorus was a builder of bridges between traditional belief and an age that had grown accustomed to seeking a rational basis for the old stories about the gods. In the first book of his *Atthis*, Philochorus objected that *πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἁοιδοί* (F 1 *FGrH*), expressing a common concern voiced before him by men such as Solon, Xenophanes, and Plato.³⁶ F. Jacoby has observed that in general Philochorus “turns back to the method by which Ionic science had attempted to distill history out of epic traditions,”³⁷ and he describes him as a consummate scholar “in touch not only with the history, but also with the science of his time.”³⁸

With regard to more specific similarities, Philochorus shares with Teiresias a conception of Dionysus as a benefactor of mankind. In his account of the origin of the Athenian altar of Dionysus Orthos in the second book of his *Atthis*, Philochorus treated the god as a culture hero who taught king Amphictyon to mix wine (F 5b *FGrH*). This discovery enabled men, previously bowed-down under the potency of neat wine, to drink in an upright posture (*ὀρθούς*). The atthidographer also displays a tendency towards syncretism. As Empedocles had done before him, Philochorus identified Gê with Demeter and Hestia (F 185 *FGrH*),³⁹ paralleling Teiresias’ identification of the former two at *Bacchae* 276. Finally, his fondness for devising etymologies is evident from his numerous explanations of the names of individuals, peoples, and places.⁴⁰ The

³⁵ The *Suda* (Φ 441, [328 T 1 *FGrH*]) describes Philochorus as a *μάντις καὶ ἱεροσκόπος* and lists among his works a *Περὶ μαντικῆς* (see F 76–78). In the ninth book of his *Atthis* (*Dion. Hal. Din.* 3 [F 67]) he mentions two omens he was called upon to interpret.

³⁶ See Solon fr. 29 (West); Xenophanes 21[11] A 1, B 11 Diels-Kranz; Pl. *Resp.* 2.377D; ps-Pl. *Just.* 374A; Arist. *Metaph.* 983A2; Plut. *Quomodo aud. poet.* 16A.

³⁷ *Atthis* (Oxford 1949) 139.

³⁸ *FGrH* IIIb Suppl. 1, 234; cf. 223, 227–28, 230–34.

³⁹ Other examples of syncretism are his identification of Helios and Apollo (F 182) and of Aphrodite and Selene (F 184); see *FGrH* IIIb Suppl. 1, 227.

⁴⁰ For Philochorus’ etymologies, see *FGrH* IIIb Suppl. 1, 233–34 and L. Pearson, *The Local Historians of Attica* (Philadelphia 1942) 115–16.

fragments, however, do not betray any attempt at employing these to elucidate serious theological matters.

The implications of the foregoing discussion make necessary a re-assessment of our understanding of the relation between the classical *manteis* and the intellectual revolution around them, for the modern view characterizes diviners as a reactionary group inexorably opposed to the Athenian Enlightenment. M. Nilsson, for example, maintains that "By virtue of their profession these men [diviners] were the defenders of the old religion when sophists and unbelievers directed their attacks against it."⁴¹ This sort of generalization, however, is both simplistic and misleading, and is based, in fact, on the career of one particular seer. Sometime during the second half of the fifth century, Diopeithes, an Athenian chresmologue and political opportunist, moved the infamous *psephisma* calling for the prosecution of τοὺς τὰ θεῖα μὴ νομίζοντας ἢ λόγους περὶ τῶν μεταρσίων διδάσκοντας (Plut. *Per.* 32.2).⁴² It was from the activities of this single prophet that modern scholars have undeservedly conferred upon the Athenian *manteis* as a group their sinister reputation for persecuting intellectuals.

The actual evidence, however, indicates otherwise. The famous encounter between Lampon and Anaxagoras described by Plutarch (*Per.* 6), often cited as testimony for friction between seers and intellectuals, illustrates nothing of the kind. On that occasion Pericles was brought a ram which had only one horn, and that growing from the middle of its head. Lampon interpreted the teratological phenomenon to signify that Pericles, who at the time was contending with Thucydides, would become dominant in Athenian politics because the portent was brought to him. Anaxagoras, on the other hand, dissected the animal's skull and gave a natural explanation for the single horn. Plutarch, himself a Delphic priest, suggests no deeper conflict underlying this episode, but instead remarks with approval that each man was proved correct in his own way since the one pronounced on the significance of the prodigy, the other on its cause. Again, Cicero records that with the exception of Xenophanes and Epicurus, all of the ancient philosophers *divinationem probaverunt* (*Div.* 1.5), and in fact some, most notably Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Socrates, either adopted a prophetic persona

⁴¹ *Greek Popular Religion* (New York 1940) 133; cf. Dodds (above, note 3) 189–90.

⁴² Cf. Diod. Sic. 12.39.2. On Diopeithes' religious and political activities, see especially W. R. Connor, "Two Notes on Diopeithes the Seer," *CP* 58 (1963) 115–18; P. Decharme, "La Loi de Diopeithes," *Melanges Perrot* (Paris 1903) 72–77; E. Derenne, *Les Procès d'impiété intentés aux philosophes à Athènes au v^{me} et au iv^{me} siècles avant J.-C.* (Leige 1930) 19–24; and P. Kett, *Prosopographie der historischen griechischen Manteis bis auf die Zeit Alexanders des Grossen* (diss. Nürnberg 1966) 33–35.

or believed themselves possessed of prophetic powers. It is therefore evident that there was hardly a hostile and untraversable gulf dividing seers and intellectuals, but rather, there actually existed a variety of cross-currents.