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PHARNABAZOS, THE DIVINER OF HERMES. TWO OSTRAKA WITH CURSE
LETTERS FROM OLBIA

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PHARNABAZOS, THE DIVINER OF HERMES

TWO OSTRAKA WITH CURSE LETTERS FROM OLBIA

Two magical ostraka from central Olbia Pontica with graffiti that mention one Pharnabazos and one Aristoteles were first published by A.S. Rusyayeva in her 1979 monograph on the agricultural cults in Olbia,¹ soon after the publication of the "Orphic" bone plates.² The "Orphic" plates have become a classic; the Pharnabazos/Aristoteles ostraka, however, are not widely known to scholars in the West, partly because *Rossica non leguntur*, partly because the first editor saw no connection between them and the alleged Orphic plates. Rusyayeva provided a description of the two ostraka with a normalized transcription of the graffiti and made some remarks on their importance for the history of the cult of Hermes in Olbia. The aim of this article is to propose an improved text with a new interpretation of the two graffiti. I will also try to demonstrate that the activity of the diviner Pharnabazos in Olbia provides a key for the explanation of the origin and purpose of the "Orphic" plates.

1. The First Magical Ostrakon

The first ostrakon (with Pharnabazos graffito) has been found at the Western temenos of Olbia, near the cult complex excavated in 1975 and identified by Rusyayeva and Vinogradov as sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite.³ The archeological context, which is somewhat confusing, can be summarized as follows: there are remains of walls and of a stone altar similar in form, material and construction technique to the monumetal altar in the Eastern temenos excavated by Karasev in the fifties; both altars were constructed in the early fifth century B.C.⁴ At the eastern facade of the 1975 altar a ceramic slab was found

¹ A.S. Rusyayeva, *Zemledel'cheskie kul'ty v Ol'vii dogetsogo vremeni* (Kiev 1979) 118-119. French summary in *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 9 (1983) 185-195. For magical graffiti from Olbia and vicinity see Ivan I. Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti drevnikh gorodov Severnogo Prichernomor'a* (Moscow-Leningrad 1953) Nr. 59-64, cf. 65 ff.; A useful survey of Olbian graffiti with occasional quotations from unpublished material is given by A.S. Rusyayeva in S.D. Kryzitskij (ed.), *Kul'tura naseleniia Ol'vii i ee okruzi v arkhaischeskoe vremia* (Kiev 1987) 139-154 (magical graffiti p. 145 ff.); Graffiti from Berezan, some of which are magical, have been published by V. Yaylenko, *Grecheskaia kolonizatsiia VII-III v. do n.e.* (Moscow 1982) 219-233. See also D.R. Jordan, "A survey of Greek defixiones not Included in Special Corpora", *GRBS* 26 (1985) 195 ff. (Olbia); B. Bravo, "Une tablette magique d' Olbia Pontique, les morts, les heros et les demons", in *Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant, Recherches d'histoire et des sciences sociales* 26 (Paris 1987) 185-218. I do not class as magical the Achilles graffiti from Beikush, contra Rusyayeva, *Zemledel'cheskie kul'ty*, 127 ff., also reproduced in H. Hommel, *Der Gott Achilles* (Heidelberg 1980) pl. 1. According to Rusyayeva (*op. cit.* 139) more than 1000 graffiti, most of them from Olbia and Berezan, remain unpublished; compare this with the 255 graffiti from the whole North Black Sea area in Tolstoi.

² A.S. Rusyayeva, *VDI* 1978, Nr. 1, 87-104; M. West, *ZPE* 45 (1982), 17-29

³ For a detailed description of this complex excavated in 1975 see J.G. Vinogradov and A.S. Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apolona i kalendar' v Ol'vii", in *Issledovaniia po antichnoi arkheologii Severnogo Prichernomoria* (Kiev 1980) 20 ff., cf. A.S. Rusyayeva, "Issledovaniia Zapadnogo temenosa Ol'vii", *VDI* 1991, Nr. 4 [123-138] 129. I borrow the archeological whereabouts from the 1980 report.

⁴ A.N. Karasev, "Monumental'nye pamiatniki ol'viiskogo temenosa", in *Ol'viia, Temenos i agora* (Moscow-Leningrad 1964) 76 ff.

and, near it, fragments of clay phalli, a miniature votive amphoriskos of the 5th century B.C., and the calendar graffito of Andokides with the dedication to Apollo Delphinios, Iatros, Thargelios, Lykeios (see now Jeffery, *LSAG* Plate 80, Nr. 4, p. 421). Five graffiti on potsherds of cups dated from the sixth to the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. belong to the Ἑρμέω (εἰμί) type,⁵ one graffito on the potsherd of a red-figured krater of the fourth century B.C. reads Ἀφροδί(της) ἄβατ(α)⁶ and one couples Hermes with Aphrodite:]ων Ἑρμέω Ἀφροδίτη(ς).⁷ Another similar graffito ἄβατα Ἀφροδίτη[...] was found in 1947 by B.M. Rabichkin in a cult *bothros* "very close" to the 1975 altar.⁸ In the same 1947 *bothros* Rabichkin found many fragments of terracottas, clay phalli and votive ostraka including the so called Xanthippos graffito which mentions the Eleusinian triad Demeter, Persephone and Iakchos.⁹ Several



Fig. 1. Ostrakon from Olbia O-74/938.
Drawing by A.S. Rusyayeva, *Zemeledelčeskie kul'ti v Ol'vii* (Kiev 1979) 119

small pits with unbroken pots and inscribed ostraka were found during the 1974/75 excavations at the same location in the deposits of the fifth and first half of the fourth centuries B.C. The most remarkable of these is the subject of the present investigation (see fig. 1; Inv. Nr. O-74/398). When the ostrakon, a foot of a black-glazed cup, was discovered, it was covered with a thick coat of ochre; an X sign was drawn upon the surface of the ochre with broad lines. The removal of the ochre revealed a portrait of a man placed inside a circle with "binding" devices around. The connection of the ostrakon with black magic is immediately clear from a μάχα-ρα inserted into the victim's throat and the fact that the graffito is written in circle; above each letter there are three "needles" presumably rein-

forcing the harmful effect of the curse. Rusyayeva reads and translates the graffito as follows:

Φαρνάβαζ(ς)ος φιλόκαλος, πρόοιδα τέθνηκας, ἤρεμέω, θεοπρόπος Ἑρμού.

"Pharnabazos, the lover of the beautiful (or loving beauty), I know before you are dead; I am calm, I, the prophet of Hermes."¹⁰ According to Rusyayeva's text, a certain "prophet of Hermes" foresees the death of a certain Pharnabazos and keeps quiet. This reading is unlikely since cursors in early Greek spells usually do not disclose their names or identity.¹¹ It is hard to see why the cursor should ἤρεμεῖν and why the cursed should be praised by the cursor as φιλόκαλος. The reading φιλόκαλος is not sup-

⁵ (1) Inv. Nr. ΑΓΔ/Ο-76/159 [Ἑρμ]έω εἰμί on the bottom of a red-figured cup of the first half of 5th century B.C.; (2) ΑΓΔ/Ο-76/245 Ἑρμ[έω] on the bottom of black-glazed cup of the last quarter of 5th century B.C.; (3-5) similar to (2) on fragments of black-glazed and red-figured cups. Photographs in Vinogradov and Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona", Plate 5, Nr. 1-3, 5, 6; drawings in Rusyayeva, *Zemeledel'cheskie kul'ty*, 119 fig. 61. Two similar graffiti were published by Tolstoi, Nr. 24, 36.

⁶ Inv. Nr. ΑΓΔ/Ο-76/243; on the photograph *ibid.* fig. 5 and 7, the graffito is illegible.

⁷ Inv. Nr. ΑΓΔ/Ο-76/246 on a red-figured skyphos of the 5th century B.C. Supplemented by Vinogradov and Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona", 23 as [θεῶν συννά]ων vel [συμβώμ]ων. This conjectural supplement is crucial for the attribution of the sanctuary to Hermes and Aphrodite, but it is far from certain. [Ἀπόλλ]ων(ος) is conceivable, cf. the Andokides graffito.

⁸ Inv. Nr. O-47/5110, now in Kiev Institute of Archeology. Vinogradov and Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona", 51, n. 15 suppose ellipsis of ἐς, i.e. "(dedication) to the abata of Aphrodite."

⁹ For details see A. Lebedev, *The devotio of Xanthippos: Magic and Mystery cults in Olbia*, below p. 279-283.

¹⁰ Rusyayeva, *Zemeledel'cheskie kul'ty*, 118. The same text and translation are reproduced in J. Vinogradov & A.S. Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona i kalendar' v Ol'vii", 23.

¹¹ The fourth century B.C. *defixio* (Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti* Nr. 63) and the letter to nekydaimon (Bravo, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford 1992), 18 and n. 92; Nr. 48) from Olbia are anonymous. For exceptions see Versnell in *Magica Hiera*, 83 ff.

ported by Rusyayeva's facsimile drawing: the upper transverse bar of the alleged *kappa* is a part of the binding device stretching upwards between the circle and the monogram Δ; the alleged upper part of the vertical of *kappa* seems to be one of the "needles". The letter in question is *lambda*, and the word is φιλόλαλος, not φιλόκαλος.

I propose the following text:

Φαρνάβα[ς]ζος φιλόλαλος, πρόοιδα τέθνηκα· ἡρέμε(ι), ὦ θεοπρόπος Ἑρμοῦ.

"Pharnabazos the babbler, I foreknow you are dead: don't move, you, diviner of Hermes!" According to our text, Pharnabazos and "the diviner of Hermes" is one and the same person cursed by an anonymous enemy. ἡρέμει means both "stay fixed", i.e. "die" and "keep quiet", i.e. "shut up, stop talking"; φιλόλαλος (in pejorative sense) implies that Pharnabazos the prophet "talks too much",¹² presumably in his *theopropiai*. The death of Pharnabazos will also be the end of his λαλιά, cf. ἔκτω ἄλαλος in *defixiones* from the Athenian agora.¹³ If so, μϛ—which may be interpreted as an insertion after ἡρέμει—may stand for μϛε, i.e. shut your mouth, stop talking, or else it may be a verbal reinforcement of the graphic device inserted into Pharnabazos' eye. The remarkable formula πρόοιδα τέθνηκα¹⁴ reveals the connection between the mantis and the magician: the prophecy of death programs and causes death. The act of προειδέναι kills. The grammatical force of the perfect tense is transformed into magical force imposing death as accomplished fact. The isolated letters located at 10 and 4 o'clock of the magical circle most probably are initials of the names of the chthonic deities (in genitive) to whom Pharnabazos is devoted by the cursor. The monogram of *alpha* and *delta*¹⁵ may stand for Δήμητρος (or Διονύσου) and Ἄιδου¹⁶; *epsilon* can be interpreted as Ἑρμοῦ or Ἐκάτης. The isolated letters *delta* and *epsilon* are found in the devotio of Xanthippos to Demeter etc. (see note 9 above) and other magical ostraka from Olbia.¹⁷

Pharnabazos is a genuine Persian (not Scythian) name. Neither Greek parents, nor even local Scythians could give such name to their son;¹⁸ on the other hand, Pharnabazos at the moment of the curse had resided in Olbia for a time sufficient to acquire enemies; therefore he was in all probability an itinerant *magos*.¹⁹ Whether he was a real Persian or a Greek charlatan with an exotic name, is not immediately clear. In any case a person with such name is most likely to have come to Olbia from Asia Minor. He apparently pretended, in a somewhat bombastic manner, to be θεοπρόπος Ἑρμοῦ. The word θεοπρόπος here means mantis or chresmologue. Hermes has nothing to do with inspirational Pythia-style *mantike*. His oracles are usually connected with oniromancy, kledonomanancy and especially klero-

¹² The word φιλόλαλος is elsewhere attested only in the dictum of Cleobulus *ap.* DL I 92 (Stob. 3.1.172 has πολύλαλον), opp. φιλήκοος; and in Eustath. *Il.* 3.500. The additional *hyponoia* therefore may be: "you have talked, and now listen."

¹³ D.R. Jordan, "Defixiones from a well near the southwest corner of the Athenian agora", *Hesperia* 54 (1985) 218 Nr. 4.25; 221 Nr. 6.31 etc.

¹⁴ I could not find parallels in Wunsch, *DTA*; Audollent, *DT*; Jordan, "Survey of Greek defixiones" (above, see n. 1) or Gager, *Curse Tablets* (above, see n. 11).

¹⁵ Also attested in the Xanthippos graffito and in one magical ostrakon from Olbia, 4 c. B.C. (Tolstoi Nr. 66; see below, "The Devotio of Xanthippos", pp. 279-283, especially p. 279). Cf. M. West, *ZPE* 45 (1982), 21.

¹⁶ For Dionysos as Hades see Heraclitus B 15 DK (50 Marcovich) and Dionysos Orphikos in Olbian bone plate (1). For Hades, i.e. Ahriman in the doctrine of magoi, see D. L. I 8 (Aristoteles fr. 23 Gigon; Zoroaster D 2 Bidez-Cumont).

¹⁷ Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty*, 47, fig. 28, Nr. 1,5,9,10. It is also worth noticing that A+Δ and E are isopsepha: 1+4 =5. For a possible fourth century B.C. example of magical isopsephism from Panticapaeum see Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti*, Nr. 242. On isopsephism in general see: F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* (Leipzig² 1925) 98-104, 181 ff.; cf. T.C. Skeat, "A Table of Isopsephisms", *ZPE* 31 (1978) 45-54 (on P. Oxy. XLV 3239).

¹⁸ Cf. J.G. Vinogradov, "Varvary v prosopografii Ol'vii VI-V v. do n.e.", in *Demograficheskaia situatsiia v Prichernomorie v period velikoi Grecheskoi kolonizatsii. Materialy II Vsesoiuznogo simpoziuma po drevnei istorii Prichernomria, Tskhaltubo 1979* (Tbilisi 1979) 144; Nr. 9 in Vinogradov's catalogue of barbarous names in the prosopography of Olbia.

¹⁹ On itinerant Persian magoi see M. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford 1970) 239 ff.; on the supposed Near-Eastern origin of itinerant diviners see W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* (Cambr. Mass. 1992) 41 ff.

mancy, in particular *astragalomanteia*.²⁰ Kledonistic oracles should be left aside since they do not require a mantis or a chresmologue.²¹ Oniromancy may be more relevant, as it belongs to the competence of Persian magi, and so does necromancy (Halliday, *Greek Divination* 236 [n. 21]). Kleromantic bone plates have been found at the Eastern temenos of Olbia.²²

There is no reason to doubt that the drawing renders some authentic features of Pharnabazos' portrait and dress. The unusual profile does not look as typically Greek. His headband may be identified as *μίτρα*²³ or *διάδημα* rather than just *ταινία*.²⁴ For a *θεοπρόπος* it is fitting to be *μιτρηφόρος*, for a magos called Pharnabazos *mitra* is a must. *Mitra*-diadema is a distinctive attribute of Dionysos and Bacchic *synthiasotai*²⁵ as well as of noble Persians, magoi and Babylonians.²⁶ It also points to Asia Minor, especially to Phrygia and Lydia whence Dionysos, the wandering mantis of Euripides' *Bacchae*, comes.²⁷ The Orphic hymn to Dionysos *Τριτηρητικός* calls him *Εύβουλεῦ, μιτρηφόρε, θυροσινάκτα* (52. 4 Quandt). Pharnabazos, then, seems to have been not only a diviner, but also a Bacchic priest, conceivably, an Orpheotelestes.

II. The Second Magical Ostrakon

The second graffito was discovered in the eastern part of the sector ΑΓ: located north of the Eastern temenos (Inv. Nr. O-72/252). It is inscribed on a round ostrakon of a black-glazed cup of the 5th century B.C. I offer the following transcription from the photograph:

ΑΡΙCTO | ΤΕΛΗCIEP | ΕΡΜΕΩΕOC | ΚΑΙΑΘΝΑΙHC | ΞΥΝΩΝΗΡΟΓΕ | ΝΗCΗΡΟΦΑ | ΝΗC.

Rusyayeva reads and translates as follows: 'Αριστοτέλης ἱερ(έως) Ἑρμέω ἕως καὶ Ἄθ(η)ναίης ξὺν ὧν (P?) Ἡρογένης Ἡροφάνης. "Aristotle, the priest of Hermes, and earlier of Athena, together with him (?) Herogenes, Herophanes" (Rusyayeva, *op. cit.* p. 119). According to Rusyayeva, the graffito attests a priest of Hermes called Aristoteles. This text is impossible for several obvious reasons; in addition, it is hard to see who are Herogenes and Herophanes, and what might be the purpose of such graffito. ἕως cannot mean "earlier", and is not supported by the photograph. The penultima letter in the third line of the graffito appears on the photograph as oval omikron, not as omega. I propose the following text:

'Αριστοτέλης, ἱερ(ός) Ἑρμέω ἕο(ι)ς καὶ [α] <τε>θναίης²⁸ ξυνὼν †ηρογενης ηροφανης†.

"Aristotle, may you be sacred to Hermes and die, being in the company with (the deceased ?)."

²⁰ *Hom. Hymn. Merc.* 550 ff. Suda, s.v. κλήρος Ἑρμοῦ. On the oracles of Hermes see P. Raingeard, *Hermes Psychagogue* (Paris 1935) 462-466; for automatic dice oracles of Hermes in Roman Asia Minor J. Nollé, "Südkleinasische Losorakel in der römischen Kaiserzeit", *Antike Welt* 18/3 (1987) 41-49.

²¹ Best known is the one at Pharaï in Achaia, Paus. VII 22.2-3; W.R. Halliday, *Greek Divination* (London 1913) 229-234.

²² A. Lebedev, "Orphica, Pythagorica, Magica in the cleromantic bone plates from Olbia", in preparation.

²³ I follow the traditional view accepted by lexicographers, Schuppe in *RE* 15.2, 1822 s.v. *mitra* (2), Picard and others, according to which diadema is one of the legitimate meanings of the word *μίτρα*, contra H. Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra* (Münster 1966) who admits only the meaning "turban". It is hard to see what is the value of a theory which leaves unexplained so many monuments and literary texts.

²⁴ Cf. the golden crown (*τέφανος*) of Pythagoras, *Ael. VH* 12.32; M. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford 1971) 214 n. 1 and 218 n. 3, who compares *PGM* IV.698 (Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, 14; Merkelbach, *Abrasax*, III, 169 ff.); W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambr., Mass. 1972) 165 n. 249. Did Pharnabazos wear white kandys and trousers? For *ταινία* cf. *ταινία*ς περίτεπτος in 31 B 112.6 DK. Empedocles imitated Pythagoras' costume and practiced magic.

²⁵ References in Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra*, 133-148; *RE* (above, n. 24) 15.2, col. 2218, 22 ff.; Ch. Picard, "Dionysos ΜΙΤΡΗΦΟΡΟΣ", *Mélanges G. Glotz* II (Paris 1934) 704 ff.

²⁶ For magoi see Brandenburg, *op. cit.* Schuppe in 164; for the Babylonians see E. Ebeling and B. Meissner, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, II (Berlin 1938) 202 s.v. "Diadem und Krone". "Das Diademband... fällt in späterer assyrischer Zeit... in zwei langen Enden am Rücken hinab—zum Unterschied von anderen niederen Personen, bei denen das Diadem kurz gehalten endigt." Did Pharnabazos claim royal dignity?

²⁷ *Bacch.* 831-3; cf. W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambr., Mass. 1987) 33.

²⁸ Or ἕο(ι)ς, κατα<τε>θναίης taking the vertical as unfinished *tau*..



Fig. 2, Ostrakon from Olbia O-72/252; left: recto; right: verso.

Photo A.S. Rusyayeva, *ibid.* 120

In this interpretation, graffito 2 is also a curse (ἄρα). Aristotle is not a priest of Hermes (let alone, of Athena), but a victim cursed to death by an anonymous magician.

The consecration to Hermes is similar to the formula ἀνιεροῖ (ὁ δεῖνα) or ἀνατίθημι with the name of a chthonic god (Hermes, Ge, Persephone etc.) in the *tabellae defixionum*.²⁹ Someone curses to death Aristoteles by consecrating him to Hermes, apparently to Hermes Chthonios. Once (the soul of) Aristoteles becomes the property of Hermes, he will bring him into the company of Persephone and οἱ κάτω.³⁰ Hermes Psychopompos appears in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. on lekythoi from the nekropolis of Olbia.³¹ The festival of ΧΥΤΡΟΙ with a sacrifice to Hermes Chthonios is attested in one Hellenistic graffito on the foot of a grey clay pot.³²

The last two words of the curse present some difficulties. The iteration of ηρο- sounds as incantation and makes ordinary personal names unlikely; it is therefore preferable to connect the first element not with Hera, but with ἥρωc, the "diseased"³³ or with ἡρίον (?). There are at least four possibilities. (1) Ἡρογένης, Ἡροφάνης are magical invocations of chthonic deities (cf. the Eukles and Eubouleus type), reinforcing the curse and not grammatically connected with the preceding text; in this case we should understand ξυνὼν (τοῖc κάτω) *vel. sim*; (2) ξυνὼν (μετὰ) Ἡρογένης, Ἡροφάνης (fem. gen.), i.e. with Persephone;³⁴ (3) ἡρογενής and ἡροφανής are adjectives meaning "becoming dead" (from ἥρωc ἐγένετο) and "appearing as dead", construed with the preceding verbs as predicates; a supplement similar to (1) is required; (4) admit confusion of η and ε in the endings³⁵ and read ἡρογενῆς(ι) (or ἡρογενῆc), ἡροφανῆς(ι) or ἡρ(ι)ογενῆς(ι), ἡρ(ι)οφανῆς(ι) "may you be in company with the diseased" or "with those who are born from and appear from the grave", i.e. with the ghosts of the dead. It is hard to decide without parallels, but in any case, there is a connection with the dead and the Netherworld.

²⁹ Cf. A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris 1904), Indices VI (*Formulae devotivae*), p. 474, s.v. Asia.

³⁰ On the cult of Demeter and Kore-Persephone in Olbia see Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty*, 35-71 (see above, n. 1), graffiti on p. 46-47; fig. 27-28; Lebedev, "The Devotio of Xanthippos" (below, pp. 279-283).

³¹ Y.I. Kozub, "Lekify Ol'viiskogo nekropolia V-IV st. do n.e.", *Arkheologiya* 14 (Kiev 1962) 116-134; 142; Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty*, 116 and 117 fig. 60.

³² Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty*, (above, n. 1) 115; on Chytroi see most recently R. Hamilton, *Choes and Anthesteria* (Ann Arbor 1992) 33ff.

³³ Cf. the festival Ἡροφάνεια at Megara IG 7.48. I take this as a festival for a local hero Herophanes, not as theophany of Hera, *contra* Hiller van Gaertringen, *ad loc.*

³⁴ Such feminine formation is, of course, abnormal, but Pharnabazos may be granted some linguistic license in Greek.

³⁵ η for ε in Olbian graffiti, see, e.g., Δηλοφιν Inv. Nr. 0-48/938, cited by A.S. Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty* (above, n.1), 17.

The first editor interprets the drawing on the verso as portrait of a lady. If this were so, it might represent the cursor's idea of Persephone. However, more probably, this is a portrait of the cursed victim, i.e. of Aristoteles. Like the portrait of Pharnabazos it is placed in a circle. In a magical ostrakon from Pantikapaion, the portrait of the male victim is placed on the recto, the love spell on the verso.³⁶ Incidentally, on the verso it has a hexagonal design interpreted by Tolstoi as magical rhombos or iynx rotated by the left hand of the witch. The hexagon inscribed into the circle in Aristoteles ostrakon also has a binding force; the parallel lines within the segments are analogous to the "needles" in the portrait of Pharnabazos. The device that sticks into his head from behind is either a lethal weapon or a magical nod (ἄμμα), paralyzing the dynamis of Aristoteles. It seems to be connected with the device that binds Aristoteles' neck.³⁷

Aristoteles looks younger than Pharnabazos and his nose looks Greek. His hair is probably covered with kekryphalos of the *reticulum* type,³⁸ a mark of the effeminatus (Aristoph. *Thesm.* 38; Antiph. fr. 117 K. etc). He has an earring in his left ear, another sign of effeminacy or Oriental descent.³⁹ Could he be a transvestite beggar priest, e.g. a metragyrtes or a priest of Aphrodite? The Western temenos was rich in Metroac and Aphrodisiac cults as is shown by the Metroon, the cult of Aphrodite Syria, the shrine of Hermes and Aphrodite. Ithyphallic Hermes with Priapos and Aphrodite appears in Olbian lead herms of the fifth cent.. B.C. (Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty* [above, n. 1]) 116. The cult of Aphroditos in Athens had transvestite rites (Philochoros, *FGrHist* 328 F 184; Burkert, *Greek Religion* 152 and note 5).

The name Ἀριστοτέλης is attested on another (unpublished) magical graffito inscribed on an ostrakon of archaic grey-clay pot (Inv. Nr. 0-75/ΑΓΔ 275). Rusyayeva provides only the following information: "In the middle of the ostrakon there is a drawing of a square with diagonals and straight lines. Around the square the name Ἀριστοτέλης is inscribed. The form of letters is close to the late archaic style"⁴⁰. Whether this Aristoteles has to do anything with the one of graffito (2), we will see after its publication.

3. A Comparative Interpretation of the Two Ostraka

In graffito (1) one mantis (cf. πρόοιδα) curses another (θεοπρόπος). Since the Pharnabazos and Aristoteles curses are so unusual in form and at the same time so similar, and since the cursor (2) appeals to Hermes, whereas the cursor (1) dismisses "the diviner of Hermes", it is natural to suppose that the two graffiti are connected: in graffito (1) Aristoteles curses Pharnabazos, in graffito (2) Pharnabazos curses Aristoteles. There is additional confirmation: the cursor (2) invokes the spirits of the dead; this fits "the diviner of Hermes" who, as we have noticed, is likely to have been ψυχαγωγός. Note that Pharnabazos' dialect is Ionic (Ἐρμέω, ἔοις, ξυνών); Aristoteles writes Ἐρμού; ε for ει in ἡρέμε may be (though not necessarily) an orthographic Atticism. As his name is rather uncommon in Olbian prosopography, he may have come from Athens.

I propose the following explanation of the interrelation between the two graffiti. Pharnabazos and Aristoteles were two wandering priests, diviners and magicians working at the agora region of Olbia.⁴¹

³⁶ Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti*, Nr. 238 (fifth century B.C.).

³⁷ Contra Rusyayeva, *op. cit.* (above, n. 1) 119 who interprets the devices as two fishes (?).

³⁸ Plut. *Mor.* 154b; KP 3.176.; Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra*, 131 with references. Kekryphalos under mitra see Aristoph. *Thesm.* 257.

³⁹ For male earrings as an Oriental feature see Xenoph. *Anab.* 3.1.31; Athen. 12. 533f.

⁴⁰ A.S. Rusyayeva in S.D. Kryzitskij (ed.), *Kul'tura naseleniia Ol'vii i ee okrugii*, (Kiev 1987) 146.

⁴¹ The distinction between "temenos" and "agora" of Olbia is a modern archeological convention which has no support in Olbian inscriptions or in Greek usage. There were temples on Athenian agora too, but no one called (or calls) it "temenos". With the discovery of the Western (olim "Second") temenos with different temples the artificial character of this terminology has become obvious. The complex including "agora" and two "temene" (according to modern terminology) was most probably known to Olbiopolites as agora. I use the term temenos only in references to avoid confusion, but switch to Greek usage in historical reconstruction.

They practiced divination, black magic and, presumably, purifications and initiations into mysteries for a fee, like ἀγύρται καὶ μάντις in Plato, *Rep.* 364b or οἱ τέχνην ποιούμενοι τὰ ἱερά in *P. Derv.* col. XVI. For some reason, most probably because of professional rivalry (καὶ μάντις μάντις κοτέει), Pharnabazos cursed Aristoteles to death (graffito 2). Aristoteles found this out and retaliated with an anti-curse (graffito 1). By φιλόλαλος Aristoteles dismisses Pharnabazos' curse as empty talk. He pretends to be a more powerful magician. His *ars magica* is superior to that of the θεοπρόπος Ἑρμοῦ. Thus we have in graffiti 1 and 2 a duel of two rival magicians, a trivialized form of the "magical contest"⁴² and possibly also a theoretical conflict between two methods of magical art and/or a conflict of generations. It would be interesting to know whose *theopropos* was Aristoteles. Pharnabazos's style is more archaic, mythical and Oriental.⁴³ Aristoteles has a modern touch: he kills elegantly with the power of his προειδέναι. He may be better educated. His language is less formulaic and is sparkled with black humour; even his drawing and writing are more refined. The ἀραί of Pharnabazos and Aristoteles have the following common features that distinguish them from ordinary *tabellae defixionum*:⁴⁴ (1) they are inscribed on ostraka, not on lead tablets;⁴⁵ (2) they express an unconditioned wish of opponent's death in the most explicit and cynical form;⁴⁶ (3) they have the form of a letter addressed to the cursed in the second person.⁴⁷ In addition, graffito (1) contains a mockery (φιλόλαλος) which is hard to imagine in such serious texts as *defixiones*.⁴⁸ Therefore, a possibility cannot be excluded that the two ostraka are indeed curse letters exchanged between Aristoteles and Pharnabazos. In this case the portraits, apart from their magical purpose, may have been intended also as threats (and offensive caricatures?) with a hyponoia: "look what I can do to you!" The question is important for the localization of the mantic shops of Aristoteles and Pharnabazos, at least at the moment of their "duel". If the two ostraka are real letters, it is natural to suppose that they were delivered to the addressee and that the place of discovery corresponds to the working place of each addressee. This means that Pharnabazos worked near the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite (a suitable place for a θεοπρόπος Ἑρμοῦ and a magician selling love-spells), and Aristoteles at the eastern part of the sector ΑΓ:. If, however, the ostraka had been buried by the cursors, the position of two magicians may be reversed or there may be no connection between the place of discovery and the localization of the mantic shops, especially in the case of graffito (1): Aristo-

⁴² On which see, e.g. F. M. Butler, *The myth of the Magus*, (Cambr. 1993 [1948]) 3 et passim. Strabo XIV 1.27 p. 642 comments on the mantic contest of Kalchas and Mopsos (Hesiod. fr. 278 Merkelbach-West) περιτυχῶν δ' ἑαυτοῦ κρείττονι μάντι κατὰ τὴν Κλάρον Μόψοι ... διὰ λύπην ἀποθανεῖν. L. Koenen (*per litteras*) also compares *CMC* 137 ff., a contest between Mani and a leader of a sect (rather Jews than Magoi) in which the latter's curse against Mani's father Pattikios is successfully disarmed by Mani and his Twin; L. Koenen and C. Römer, *Mani: auf der Spur einer verschollenen Religion* (Herder 1993), 100 ff. and C. Römer ad loc.

⁴³ Cf. W. Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* (above, n. 19) 65 ff.

⁴⁴ On spell formulas see E.G. Kagarow, "Griechische Fluchtafeln", *Eos Supplementum* 4 (Leopoli 1929) 44 ff.; Chr.A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Spells", in: Chr.A. Faraone and D. Obbink, *Magika Hiera. Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Oxford 1991) 4 ff.

⁴⁵ The use of pottery sherds for *defixiones* is exceptionally rare; see Audollent, *DT* (above, n. 14) XLVII, n. 11; Gager, *Curse tablets* (above, n. 11) 31, n. 5. It must be admitted, however, that the use of ostraka for magical spells in the Northern Black Sea area, and Olbia itself, seems to be less unusual; a genuine *defixio* (καταδέω γλώσσας ἀντιδίκων etc.) found in the nekropolis of Olbia (4 c. B.C.) is inscribed on the interior part of a light yellow clay cup (see Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti* [above, n. 1] Nr. 63; Nr. 62 (4 c. B.C., a defence against ἀρά), Panticap. Nr. 238-242 and Nymphaeum Nr. 142 (with δῆ[ov]) are also inscribed on black ostraka.

⁴⁶ The goal of early *defixiones* is usually to obstruct, not to kill the cursed, and the mention of death in them is exceptionally rare, see Chr.A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Spells" (above, n. 44) 8 and 26, n. 38.

⁴⁷ For this I could not find parallels in the *defixiones*. There are only "letters" to agents, chthonian gods (*DTA* 102 [Nr. 104 Gager]) or to the dead in the grave. A remarkable case of the latter (with a promise of a δῶρον to the nekydaimon) is found in Olbia, on which see Bravo (above, n. 1).

⁴⁸ Words of abuse are rarely found in *defixiones*, cf. H.S. Versnel, "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers" in *Magika Hiera*, 64 and n. 23.

teles may have placed his curse against Pharnabazos at the sanctuary of chthonic deities following the common magical practice.⁴⁹

This latter possibility is favoured by the fact that ostrakon (1) was found in a small pit amidst other pits which contained unbroken pots, apparently, offerings to chthonic daimones.⁵⁰ The ochre which covered the graffito 1 at the moment of discovery seems to be a sympathetic reinforcement of the verbal curse based on the principle of *similia similibus*: just as the portrait of Pharnabazos is ὀχρός (pale), so Pharnabazos himself will be affected by a yellow paleness of a deadman (cf. the ψυχρός analogy between the lead and the cursed in *defixiones*).⁵¹ In this case the ochre was applied by Aristoteles. But it is also conceivable that the ochre had apotropaic purpose and that it was used in combination with the X sign (cancellation, διαγραφή?) by Pharnabazos to neutralize (ἀναλύειν) the curse of Aristoteles after he had read it.⁵² Even if the two ostraka were not real letters, there is still a possibility that the cursors buried them near the mantic shops of each one's rival. We may conclude that at the present state of our knowledge the localization of Pharnabazos' workplace in proximity to the Hermes/Aphrodite complex looks more probable than not.

There are reasons to believe that Pharnabazos is identical with the owner of the kleromantic (so called "Orphic") bone plates (A. Lebedev, "Orphica" [above, see n. 22]) The fact that the kleromantic plates were found near the temple of Zeus at the Eastern temenos proves nothing: Pharnabazos may have lost them while wandering around the agora region in search of clients. Many votive ostraka and cult offerings to Meter that were found in the *bothroi* of the Eastern temenos in fact derive from the Western temenos.⁵³

4. The Date

In the editio princeps Rusyayeva dates the kylix of the ostrakon (1) to the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.⁵⁴ Vinogradov accepts a late fifth century B.C. date of the graffito (1).⁵⁵ The lettering of graffito (1), because of its cursive elements, is too peculiar to allow comparison with lapidary inscriptions; contrast fifth century B.C. forms of *sigma*, *nu*, *omega* with more recent forms: *mu* with parallel outer strokes, one *theta* with a stroke, *pi* with equal verticals (not found in Olbian lapidary inscriptions before 3 century B.C.).⁵⁶ The ostrakon (2) is attributed by Rusyayeva, *op. cit.* 119 to a fifth century type. The lettering of graffito (2) displays no cursive elements and comes close to Nadpisi Ol' vii 3 A-6 and 11, which have been assigned by Vinogradov to c. 400 B.C.⁵⁷ The consistent Ionic dialect does not

⁴⁹ Well attested in Olbia: see Lebedev, "The Devotio of Xanthippos" (see below, 279-283, especially pp. 279 and 281); in general, J. Gager, *Curse Tablets* (above, n. 11).

⁵⁰ The Olbian defixio Tolstoi, Nr. 63 is inscribed on clay cup; on the use of pots in magic see J. Gager, *Curse tablets*, 26, 92, 100-101.

⁵¹ Kagarow, "Fluchtafeln", 28 ff.; Jordan, "Defixiones from the Athenian agora", passim; C. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Spells" (above, n. 44), 7 ff. D.G. Martinez, *P. Mich. X VI, A Greek Love Charm from Egypt (P. Mich. 757)*, ASP 30, 3f.

⁵² This is not attested elsewhere; on antidotes and counter-spells see J. Gager, *Curse Tablets* (above, n. 11), 218 ff. Unfortunately, Rusyayeva does not specify the type of ochre. Two of the four main ochre types—the Lydian and the Attic (from Laurion)—correspond to the possible homelands of our magicians: see R.J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology III* (1955); *RE XVII 1772f*. According to Rusyayeva (in Kryzhitsky, *Kul'tura naseleniia Ol'vii i ee okrug* [above, n. 1] 146), the Fikellura potsherd with the "letter of the priest" from Olbia (6th century B.C., unpublished) had traces of red paint. Rusyayeva implausibly suggests a "ritual purpose". Could it be used as "envelope"?

⁵³ Rusyayeva, "Issledovaniia Zapadnogo temenosa Ol'vii" (above n. 3), 129.

⁵⁴ *Zemledel'cheskie* (above n. 1) 118. In the 1980 publication Vinogradov and Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona" (above, n. 3) 23, the cup is dated to the first half of the fourth century B.C. No explanations of the discrepancy are provided.

⁵⁵ Vinogradov, "Varvary v prosopografii Ol'vii", *loc. cit.* (above, n. 18).

⁵⁶ Cf. T.N. Knipovich, "Grecheskoie lapidarnoe pis'mo v nadpisiakh Ol'vii" in *Numizmatika i epigrafikatt*. VI (Moscow 1966) p. 9 table IX; the development of the alphabet in 4th century lapidary inscriptions from Olbia is discussed by J. Vinogradov in Vinogradov and Karyshkovsky, *VDI* 1976 Nr. 4, 24-26.

⁵⁷ T.N. Knipovich and E.I. Levi (edd.), *Nadpisi Ol'vii (Inscriptiones Olbiae) 1917-1965* (Leningrad 1968); Vinogradov, *VDI* 1976 Nr. 4, 24.

allow to date it much later. The punctuation sign consisting of two dots (after *ηρογενης*) is thought to be rather early since it is found in Milesian dedications of the 6th-early 5th century B.C.⁵⁸ But it is also attested four times in a fourth century B.C. graffito on the upper wall of the clay louterion from Olbia.⁵⁹ If our synchronization of the two graffiti is correct, the exchange of curses between Pharnabazos and Aristoteles should be dated around 400 B.C.; the early decades of the fourth century are possible (also see below, sect. 5).

5. Pharnabazos

The very idea of any relation between the "diviner of Hermes" and the noble family of Pharnabazoi, the satraps of Daskyleion *prima facie* seems incredible. But the name Pharnabazos is very rare; all three known Pharnabazoi come from the same family and from the same area. Pharnabazos, the satrap of Daskyleion (*RE* 2; c. 450 - after 373 B.C.) seems to be contemporary with our Pharnabazos and therefore comes into consideration.⁶⁰ Theoretically, the two Pharnabazoi may be identical only on the assumption that Pharnabazos *RE* 2 lost his power and went into exile after 373 B.C. making his living as itinerant diviner. According to Klearchos, Dionysius II became a metragyrtes after his expulsion from Sicily.⁶¹ Vinogradov argues the Timesileos, the tyrant of Sinope, was granted asylum in Olbia after his expulsion by Pericles in 437 B.C. (J. Vinogradov, *VDI* 1981, Nr. 2-3). In 405 B.C. when Milesian oligarchs played the city into the hands of Lysander, Pharnabazos (*RE* 2) accepted the democrats from Miletus and settled them in Bauda (Diod. Sic. XIII 104. 4-6; Plut. *Lys.* 8.19). Miletus and Olbia were bound by an isopoliteia treaty⁶² and at the time of Herodotus' Olbiopolites still called themselves Μιλήσιοι. So it is theoretically conceivable that the democratic Olbia, in recognition of Pharnabazos' *euergesia* towards Milesians, gave him asylum and citizenship. Our ostraka then would have to be dated c. 370 B.C.; the ex-satrap Pharnabazos in the Olbian portrait would be about his eighties or so. The loose-hanging low lip points to the old age of the diviner. On the coin portraits, Pharnabazos (*RE* 2) wears a satrapal tiara and diadema which is identified by Brandenburg with the headband of magoi.⁶³ The portraits of Pharnabazos (*RE* 2) and Pharnabazos the diviner do not look strikingly similar, but one may take into consideration the difference in age and to admit that the portrait of the satrap on the coins of Kyzikos is idealized, whereas the portrait on the Olbian ostrakon is a caricature. In fact we know nothing of what happened to Pharnabazos (*RE* 2) after his fall 373 B.C.⁶⁴ To judge by Pharnabazos (*RE* 3), the grandson of Pharnabazos (*RE* 2), nothing happened to the family of the satraps of Daskyleion up to the times of Alexander. The coincidence of names may be as accidental as that of the priests Megabyzoi in Artemision of Ephesos and of Persian nobles. Thus the conclusion must be *non liquet*, but the possibility that Pharnabazos the diviner came to Olbia from the Hellespontine Phrygia cannot be ruled out. A Graeco-Persian relief from Daskyleion dated to c. 500 B.C. pictures two magi dressed in tunic and

⁵⁸ L.H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1990) p. 325, fig. 46, P 2; p. 26.

⁵⁹ Vinogradov and Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona" (above, n. 3), 47, fig. 11 and pl. 10 after p. 80; cf. Jeffery, *LSAG*, Supplement 479 (P). Vinogradov thinks it is a fourth century copy of the early fifth century law. Jeffery dates the graffito 450 B.C. *dubitanter*.

⁶⁰ On Pharnabazos *RE* 2 see D.M. Lewis, "Sparta and Persia", *Cincinnati Classical Studies, New Series I*, (Leiden 1977); P. Cartledge, *Agesilaos* (Baltimore 1987) index, s.v. Pharnabazos.

⁶¹ Klearch. fr. 47 Wehrli *ap.* Athen. 541, cf. W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambr. Mass. 1987) 35 compares Herod. 7,153ff.: Telines, the ancestor of Gelon was "hierophant of chthonic deities" and *θηλυδρίης*. The founder of Gela Deinomenes brought the sacra of this cult to Sicily from Triopion, the sanctuary of the Knidian Demeter, *Schol. Pind. Pyth.* II. 27b.; G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford 1971) 136-139.

⁶² Milet I. H3, Nr. 136 (Tod, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, Nr. 195); A.J. Graham, *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece* (Chicago² 1983) 99ff.

⁶³ Portrait of Pharnabazos (*RE* 2) on a tetradrachm from Kyzikos: B. Head, *Historia nummorum* 597; F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Porträtköpfe auf antiken Münzen* (1885) 73, plate 3. 2; W. Schwabacher, "Satrapenbildnisse", *Charites Langlotz* (1957) pl. 4.4; H. Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra* (above, n. 24) 164ff.

⁶⁴ The statement in *RE*, s.v. Pharnabazos (2) that he died soon after this is only a conjecture.

trousers, wearing kandys and tiara, with bundle of rods (baresman) in their hands.⁶⁵ They perform a ritual of consecration to *yazata* Haoma of the heads of sacrificial animals (ram and bull) outside the tomb of Pharnakes (supposedly), the ancestor of all known Pharnabazoi. The ram was the sacred animal of Hermes,⁶⁶ the rods could easily become a magical rhabdos of Hermes in *Interpretatio Graeca*, and the divination with rods from the Greek point of view was a kind of kleromancy, the gift of Hermes.⁶⁷ It is easy to see how a magos from Daskyleion (or a noble Persian experienced in Zoroastrian mageia) could transform himself into a θεοπρόπος Ἑρμοῦ. The Olbian Pharnabazos worked at the Western temenos where Meter Phrygia was later worshipped,⁶⁸ the family of Pharnabazoi in Daskyleion lived next to Meter Dindymene and not that far from the great cult center of Meter in Pessinus. The tradition about the *Phrygios logos*⁶⁹ provides a "Phrygian" link between Metroa and "Orphica". Pausanias knew a *hieros logos* which was spoken ἐν τελετῇ Μητρὸς ἐπὶ Ἑρμῆι ... καὶ τῷ κριῶι.⁷⁰ The Naassene gnostics who claimed knowledge of Phrygian mysteries identified Aphrodite with Persephone, Dionysos with Attis, and made Hermes Psychagogos an important mystery god.⁷¹

The separate worship of Hermes and Aphrodite in Olbia goes back to the 6th century B.C.; their common cult is attested from the fifth century B.C. and certainly antedates Pharnabazos.⁷² It is easy to see why a Persian magos (or, for that matter, an orientализing beggar priest from Asia Minor) may have called himself Pharnabazos and may have been attracted by this particular sanctuary. At the time of Darius II (423-404 B.C.) the cults of Tiri and Anahiti were promoted.⁷³ Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C.) went further. He established the temple cult of Anahiti with statues and, breaking with the Achaemenid tradition, started to invoke not only Ahuramazda in his inscriptions, but also Anahiti and Mithra.⁷⁴ Tiri-Nabu and Anahiti-Ishtar are unambiguously translated into Greek as Hermes and Aphrodite.⁷⁵ Nabu, like Egyptian Thoth, was the god of writing and wisdom; most importantly he was associated with tablets, in particular "tablets of fate", as well as with mystery rites and divination (*teretu*).⁷⁶ Even though he plays a modest role in Babylonian magical texts as compared with Marduk or Ea, the cuneiform tablets in ordinary Greek perception must have been something like magical πίνακες. The cult of Aphrodite Syria, alias of Ishtar-Anahita, is attested in Berezan in the sixth, and in Olbia

⁶⁵ M.J. Vermaseren, *Mithras, The Secret God* (New York 1963) 21 fig. 1; M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism II* (Leiden 1982) 117-118, 146; D. Stronach, "The relief of the Magi from Dascylion", *Festschrift K. Bittel.*, xxx

⁶⁶ On the connection of Hermes with the supposed kriomorphie Irano-Skythian royal Sun god see W. Fauth, *Der Kleine Pauly II*. 1072 with references.

⁶⁷ W.R. Halliday, *Greek Divination*, 226-8 denies the existence of Greek rhabdomancy. The "arrow" of Abaris the Hyperborean may be connected with rhabdomancy.

⁶⁸ M.J. Vermaseren, *CCCA* (Leiden 1989) VI, Nr. 514; Rusyayeva, *Zemled. kul'ty* (above, n. 1) 46, fig. 27, Nr. 12.

⁶⁹ *FGrHist* 800; *Orph. Fr.*, T 160 Kern (Midas disciple of Orpheus); Diagoras of Melos, T 93-98 Winiarczyk.

⁷⁰ Paus. II. 3.4; Sfameni Gasparro, "Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis" (Leiden 1985) 73ff. On the problem of Phrygian mysteries *ibid.* 64ff.

⁷¹ Hippol. *Ref.* 5.7.3ff. G. Sfameni Gasparro, "Interpetazioni Gnostiche e misteriosofiche del mito di Attis" in: R. Van den Broek and M.J. Vermaseren (edd.), *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religion* (Leiden 1981) 380-398; A. Lebedev, "Orpheus, Parmenides or Empedocles? The Aphrodite verses in the Naassene Treatise of Hippolytus' *Elenchos*", *Philologus* 138 (1994) 24-31.

⁷² Vinogradov and Rusyayeva, "Kul't Apollona" (above, n. 3) 24.; for the oriental connections of Hermes and Aphrodite see W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (above n. 43) 220.

⁷³ M. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism II* 201ff (Anahiti), 204ff. (Tiri).

⁷⁴ Berossos III, fr. 65; M. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism* (above, n. 70) II. 216ff.

⁷⁵ Herodotus' (I.131) identification of Aphrodite with Persian Mitra is probably based on a confusion with Anahita; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 5.56.3 τῆς Ἀφροδίτης Ἀναίτιδος; Bidez-Cumont, *Mages hellen.* II. 84,4; Strab. VX. 3.13; R. Turcan, *Mithras Platonicus* (Leiden 1975) 99ff.

⁷⁶ Fr. Pomponio, *Nabu. Il culto e la figura di un dio del Pantheon babilonese ed assiro* (Studi Semitici 51) Roma 1978, 177ff. (writing), 183 ff (wisdom); 187 (*teretu*); the latter term may have been associated by popular etymology with Greek τέρατα, cf. W. Burkert, *Orientalizing revolution* (above, n. 19), 51.

(probably, in Metroon at the Western temenos) from the fifth century B.C.⁷⁷ It is in the reign of Artaxerxes II that the new "Zoroastrian" calendar was adopted in which each of the 30 days and each of the twelve months were named after Zoroastrian yazatas (M. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, II, 243 ff.). The seventeenth day is named after Sraoša, the companion of Mithra, also promoted under Artaxerxes II (*ibid.* II 246 and 251-3). In this context I would like to point to the mysterious graffito from Olbia (4th century B.C.) inscribed on a potsherd of black-glazed skyphos: ΣΠΑ⁷⁸ which may preserve another trace of the activity of Pharnabazos in Olbia. The cult of Sraoša in Olbia is, of course, out of question; one might think of some kind of calendar magic or divination.⁷⁹

However this may be, the case of Pharnabazos throws new light on the origins of the Greek use of μάγος in the sense of "sorcerer, magician", (hence "charlatan"). The useful lexicographical distinction between μάγος "Persian priest" and μάγος "magician" requires some qualifications. It involves that (1) the Persian magoi were priests of the Zoroastrian religion who did not practice magic in the Greek sense of the word and that (2) Greek magoi "magicians" had no relation to the Zoroastrian religion. Even if (1) is grosso modo correct, it does not follow that (2) should be always and necessarily true. The distinction goes back to Aristotle and the Platonists, who denied any connection between the Persian magoi, the successors of Zoroaster, and the γοητική μαγεία.⁸⁰ In the Old Academy Zoroaster was venerated as the alleged source of ancient wisdom passed to Pythagoras and Plato. The Platonists, therefore, must have been reluctant to admit any relation between Zoroaster and the disreputable street diviners and magicians who called themselves μάγοι. In fact Aristotle speaks of idealized magoi of the past (note the historic tense οὐδ' ἔγνωσαν) and represents them as theoretical philosophers à la Plato. The case of Pharnabazos provides a link between the two types and proves that the Aristotelian distinction is an oversimplification determined by the Academic idealization of Zoroaster. Pharnabazos practices γοητική μαγεία and, at the same time, bears an aristocratic Persian name; his religious doctrine displays a genuine Iranian dualism of Truth and Falsehood as cosmic powers which determine the fate of the soul.⁸¹ It seems, therefore, that Greek μάγος "magician" does not derive from a confusion or a bizarre popular misuse of the Iranian word,⁸² but rather originated as a self-appellation of a particular group of Hellenized Iranian magi from Asia Minor who made their living in Greek cities as itinerant diviners and magicians. They were followed by Greek imitators of non-Iranian descent who called themselves μάγοι in a conscious attempt to claim ancient Oriental wisdom. Our most important conclusion is that the fusion of magic and Zoroastrian religion, and, consequently, the image of Zoroaster as the inventor of magical arts, are Pre-Hellenistic and go back to the Achaemenid period.⁸³

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⁷⁷ Vinogradov, *Politicheskaia istoriia*, 76; Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti* (above, n. 1) n. 25.

⁷⁸ Tolstoi, *Grecheskie graffiti* (above, n. 1) Nr. 69, who thinks of Iranian name Ἀρσάκης; but the script is not retrograde.

⁷⁹ E.g., the times of exorcism were important in Mesopotamian magic; see J. Bottéro, "Magie", in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, VII (Berlin - New York 1987-1990) 220. Of course, such hypothesis is only tenable on the assumption that the ostrakon is one of the many with different names/dates which were used as sortes for establishing the "appropriate" day of magical action or other predictions.

⁸⁰ D. L. 1.8 (Arist., *Περὶ φιλοσοφίας* fr. 23 Gigon; Zoroaster fr. B1a Bidez-Cumont; [Plat.] *Alcib. I*, 122 A).

⁸¹ ἀλήθεια ψευδος, bone plates from Olbia 1-3, A. Rusyayeva, *VDI*, 1978, Nr. 1, p. 89.

⁸² Contra, e.g. J. Dushesne-Guillemin, *Der Kleine Pauly* III. 890, s.v. "Magoi"; M. Boyce and F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3 (Leiden 1991), 513, who speak of a "wilful misunderstanding".

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