Table of Contents

List of illustrations viii
Acknowledgments ix
Note on abbreviations xii

PART I  INTRODUCTION: DEFINITIONS OLD AND NEW

1 The name of Orpheus 3
   Ancient Orpheus 4
   Age old new age 5
   Redefining ancient Orphism 6

2 Orphism through the ages: A history of scholarship 11
   The Classical category 14
   The Hellenistic category 16
   Roman period 24
   The crystallization of the category among the Christians and Neoplatonists 27
   The Christian apologists’ construction of Orphism 30
   The Neoplatonic construction of Orphism 37
   Orphism as a systematic religion 43
   Orpheus in the middle ages 47
   The Renaissance of Orpheus 49
   From the Renaissance to the nineteenth century 51
   The impact of new evidence: The “Orphic” gold tablets 55
   More new discoveries: The Linear B tablets, gold tablets, and the Derveni papyrus 59
   Orphism in the twenty-first century 63
   Redefining ancient Orphism: Rejecting the Orphic exception 68

3 The problem of definition 71
   Cue validity 72
   Beyond Linforth: A new definition 73
   Emic vs. etic definitions 76
Valid cues: Extra-ordinary purity, sanctity, antiquity, and strangeness 77
Consequences of the new definition 82
Conclusion: Redefining ancient Orphism 88

PART II  ORPHIC SCRIPTURES OR THE VAPORINGS OF MANY BOOKS?

4 Orphic textuality: A hubbub of books 95
Orphic textuality 96
The hubbub of books in Classical Athens 111
The epideixis of exegesis: The Derveni author and his text 124
The name of Orpheus 135

5 Orphic hieroi logoi: Sacred texts for the rites 139
Sacred texts: Myth and ritual again 139
The form of Orphic poems 144
The nature of the Rhapsodic collection 148

6 Orphic mythology: The content of Orphic poems 160
Cosmogony 163
Poems for the sacred rites 172
Tales from the life of Orpheus 188
Exotic myths 190

PART III  ORPHIC DOCTRINES OR THE PURE FROM THE PURE?

7 Orphic purity: Piety or superstition? 195
Introduction: Pure from the pure 195
An absence of Orphics 198
Ritual experts and their clients 200
The works of Orpheus: Teletai and katharmoi 208
Conclusion: The Orphic label for rites and people 244

8 Life in the afterlife: The initiates’ privilege and the mythic tradition 248
Life in the afterlife 248
The Homeric afterlife 252
Orpheus and eschatology 267
Orphic ideas of the soul 269
Conclusions 291

9 Original sin or ancestral crimes: Zagreus and the concern with purification 296
The web of Penelope 296
Recompense for the ancient grief 304
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>That old Titanic nature</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Misreading the eating</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The playthings of Dionysos</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The blood of the earthborn</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olympiodorus’ innovation</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Conclusions: Redefining ancient Orphism</strong></td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blunting Occam’s Razor: Some methodological considerations</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orpha within Greek religion</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**

**Index**

**Index locorum**