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**The Appropriation of the Figure of Orpheus and Orphic Doctrines  
An Example of Pythagoras' Artful Knavery (*kakotechnie*)?**

Heraclitus (DK 22 B 129) harshly criticized Pythagoras for resorting to artful knavery (*kakotechnie*) to elaborate his own knowledge. Despite numerous objections to this claim, a detailed analysis of the figure of Pythagoras advises taking such an accusation into account. In fact, many biographical elements transmitted by different sources, as well as the introduction of the notion of the immortality and transmigration of souls, suggest that Pythagoras, and Pythagoreanism, took many doctrinal elements from the prestigious figure of Orpheus and Orphism. Thus, in the first place, there are numerous biographical traits that link Pythagoras to Orpheus, such as resorting to music as a means to influence other human beings, the capacity to communicate with animals or travel to the Hades. Moreover, Pythagoreanism might also have absorbed the notion of the immortality and transmigration of souls from other religious doctrines, including Orphism, and presented it as its own, to the point that it became tradition to consider Pythagoras as the true custodian of the interpretation of the knowledge transmitted by Orpheus. Finally, several Pythagorean assertions and practices in relation to the belief in the immortality and transmigration of souls appear to be fraudulent acts aimed at convincing the credulous inhabitants of southern Italy of its veracity. The observation of all these facets leads to the conclusion that there are sufficient elements to consider that Heraclitus' criticism of Pythagoras was not unfounded.

**Biography:**

Francesc Casadesús Bordoy is professor at the University of the Balearic Islands, and president of the Iberian Society of Greek Philosophy. He has carried out numerous studies related to the Mysterious religions and their connection with Greek philosophy, especially Pythagorean, Heraclitean, and Platonic Philosophies.