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Notes on Magical Papyri: Part i

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Notes on Magical Papyri (Part I)

Abstract: This article collects new proposals for the reading and understanding of two Greek magical formularies developed in work on the *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies: Text and Translation (GEMF)*: a narrative incantation motif involving Zeus and, as argued here, a personified part of the human body to be healed by the procedure (“Conduit”) in *PGM IV (GEMF 57)*, and a witness to a complex of invocations of the god Bes in *SM II 90 (GEMF 62)*.

Some contributions to the interpretation of formularies among the Greek magical papyri, developed in the course of work on the editions of *GEMF*, are offered here, as the first part of a planned two. The second part will concern amulets and other finished products of formularies such as those featured in *GEMF*, which still await their day as the focus of a comprehensive editorial project: texts discussed there will include *PGM XXXIII*; *PGM XLIII*; *PGM P 5b*; *PGM P 6c*; *PGM P 10*; *PGM P 16*; *SM II 52*; and O.Moen inv. 631.

1. Zeus, the golden calf, the silver knife, and the ear canal? A narrative incantation motif in *PGM IV (GEMF 57)*.

The famous Greek-Old Coptic magical codex now in Paris (*PGM IV; GEMF 57*) offers alongside its better-known ritual prescriptions an enigmatic and relatively little commented narrative, for which a new interpretation is proposed here. The passage, at f. 10v.7–11 (*PGM IV 825–29*), tells of a calf slaughtered and divided up by Zeus.

ἀνέβη Ζεὺς εἰς ὄρος χρυσοῦν μόσχον ἔχων
καὶ μάχαιραν ἀργυρέαν· πᾶσιν μέρος ἐπέ-
δωκεν, Ἀμάρρα μόνον οὐκ ἔδωκεν· εἶπεν
10 δέ· ἔξαφες ὃ ἔχεις καὶ τότε λήψει Ψινωθερ
νωψιθερ θερνωψι κο¹

Zeus went up to a mountain¹ with a golden calf and a silver knife. To all he gave a portion, to Conduit alone he did not give, but he said, “Let go of what you have, and then you will receive.” PSINŌTHER NŌPSITHER THERNŌPSI, the usual.

The grounds for rendering Ἀμάρρα as “Conduit” are presented below. First, some attention is due to this rare example in the magical papyri of a narrative incantation motif.² A roughly symmetrical structure of nested triplets and doublets may be seen to center on Ἀμάρρα,

¹ As demonstrated by the epithet ὑψότατον “loftiest” applied to ὄρος in the *mystodokos*-incantation of the Philinna papyrus (*PGM XX; GEMF 3*), transmission in a manuscript found in Egypt is insufficient grounds to render the word in the specifically Egyptian sense “desert.” The congregation of deities there, recalling assemblies of the gods on Olympus in Hellenic myth, and the specification of upward progress (ἀνέβη rather than simply ἔβη) needed to reach it also point to a mountain rather than a desert.

² On ancient Greek incantations in general, see Furley 1993; for the narrative motif as a category, Zellmann-Rohrer 2020.

leaving aside the Egyptianizing sequence of sounds at the end, which itself seems to play with rearranging the syllables of what may be the transcription of an Egyptian phrase such as p(³) s³ n-ntr “the son of a god” in the first element Ψινωθερ.

- I. 1. ἀνέβη Ζεὺς εἰς ὄρος
Zeus went up to a mountain
2. a. χρυσοῦν μόσχον ἔχων
with a golden calf
b. καὶ μάχαιραν ἀργυρέαν
and a silver knife
- II. 1. πᾶσιν μέρος ἐπέδωκεν
To all he gave a portion
2. Ἀμάρᾳ μόνον οὐκ ἔδωκεν
To Conduit alone he did not give
- III. 1. εἶπεν δέ·
But he said,
2. a. ἔξαφες ὃ ἔχεις
Let go of what you have
b. καὶ τότε λήψει
and then you will receive

This lively narrative, artful if not poetic, is a worthy addition to the corpus of Late Ancient (and later) Greek incantations. Its general failure to be considered as such, thus far, has been due to its being apparently subsumed within, or intruding from a separate exemplar into, a larger amuletic pastiche of Homeric verses, motivated by the mention of Zeus in the preceding line (τολμήσεις Διὸς ἅντα πελώριον ἔγχος ἀεῖραι; from *Il.* 8.426),³ both in turn subsumed within the long “wondrous binding love-spell” (φιλτροκατάδεσμος θαυμαστός) that begins on f. 5r (*PGM* IV 296 and following), for protection from the powers called up in its ritual. Preisendanz saw just another “amulet,”⁴ but the narrative motif is marked off by a *paragraphos* both before and after, and its distinctness is supported by the complete absence of the Ἀμάρᾳ-text from a second version of the Homer-amulet further on at f. 7r (*PGM* IV 468–74).

The theory of an originally separate incantation is corroborated by a reconsideration of one of its central figures, Ἀμάρᾳ. Preisendanz simply transliterates “Amara,” comparing αμαρω among the divine names further on in *PGM* IV 2516 and citing a discussion by Dieterich (1910: 220–21) on an alleged, highly convoluted relation to a “Mithras liturgy” involving the Carian Zeus Panamaros, and a description of a deity within the alleged “liturgy” at *PGM* IV 696–700 as a “surpassingly massive god (...) holding in his right hand a golden

³ I cannot follow the conclusion in the interesting study of the “liturgy” by Stoholski (2007) that Diomedes has anything to do with Mithras.

⁴ “Davon gehören wohl 821–830 zum Amulett (wie 471–474), 824 kann versehentlich aus θυμοκάτοχον 830f. übernommen sein, das wie πρὸς φίλους als selbständiges Amulet gelten darf” (*PGM* comm.).

calf's shoulder" (θεὸν ὑπερμεγέθη (...) κατέχοντα τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ μόσχου ὤμον χρύσειον). The sole point of contact between the latter and the present narrative, however, is the calf, which is not even necessarily entirely of gold in the "liturgy," and nothing suggests Zeus in particular as the deity in whose hand it finds itself. Other possibilities broached by Preisendanz in the apparatus via personal communications shed little light: Jacoby's recognition of a parallel "in spätmittelalt. semit. Gottesnamenaufzählungen," on which no further details are given, and a proposal from Eitrem to emend ἀ(λλ') Ἀρᾶ but without parallels for the personified "Curse" or explanation of its role in the narrative. Meyer, who perceived that this "story" may once have had an independent circulation, referred in passing in a note on his translation of the passage to Hebrew and Latin etymologies for a female name meaning "bitter":⁵ this ingenious explanation, however, requires an unparalleled linguistic borrowing.

So far the possibility of the native Greek ἀμάρα has been overlooked, a word in use in Graeco-Roman Egypt as shown by the documentary papyri.⁶ A "conduit" or "canal," if applied metaphorically to a part of the human body subject to blockage, would provide a fitting personification and analogy that might be tempted to "let go" of blockage in order to receive some desirable reward. The suitability of such a transferred sense is confirmed by the use of ἀμάρα for a part of the human ear, as cited in the *Etymologicum Magnum*: "amarai, the hollows in the ear" (ἀμάραι, αἰ ἐν τῷ ὠτίῳ κοιλότητες, p. 77 Kallierges).

This bodily interpretation can be supported by the recognition of comparable narrative motifs elsewhere in the tradition of Greek incantations.⁷ First there is that of the banquet to which a personified affliction is said not to have been invited. Among some fourteenth-century additions to a thirteenth-century medical codex, one recipe runs as follows,

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 2229, f. 74v (unpublished)
πρὸς βουβῶνας· ποιμὴν ἐποίησεν ἄριστον, ἔθυσεν πρόβατα, πάντα ἐκάλεσεν·
κυθρόποδαν οὐκ ἐκάλεσεν. φεῦγε, φεῦγε, βουβῶν, μή σε κυθρόποδα καταλάβῃ.

For swollen glands: "A shepherd made a meal, he slaughtered sheep, he invited everyone. The cauldron he did not invite. Flee, flee swollen gland, lest the cauldron catch you."

The nature of the threat from the "cauldron" is obscure. A literal reference to a vessel in which a drug is to be cooked is possible, or a euphemism for the female genitals (cf. κύσθος),

⁵ "The name Amara is obscure; it could mean 'the bitter woman' (Hebrew or Latin)" (in Betz, ed., 1986: 54 n. 111); the Hebrew would be *hammārâ*, from which one might have expected Ἀμμαρα.

⁶ As early as 269 CE in *P.Flor.* I 50.106–7; cf. also *P.Stras.* VII 672.10 of two decades later, with a few more attestations in Byzantine texts, e.g. *P.Wisc.* II 67.3, 5.

⁷ For examples of this comparative approach based on the later tradition, see Zellmann-Rohrer 2020 and 2021, and Love and Zellmann-Rohrer 2022; for an overview of the medieval Greek material to which these codices belong, Zellmann-Rohrer 2019. The unpublished witnesses here, and many others, will be included with translation, commentary, and full references in a forthcoming corpus by the author on Byzantine magic.

adjacent to the groin as particularly prone to bubonic swellings. As being “caught” (καταλάβη) by this entity is more particularly at issue—compare in general the address to the “wandering” human womb inscribed on some amulets from Roman Egypt, threatening it with the assault of Typhon-Seth expressed by the same verb,⁸ unless it keeps still—it might be thought to figure instead the (otherwise healthy) gland in its diseased condition, that is, unnaturally swollen to cauldron-like proportions. The organ would hence be less deserving of a banquet invitation as already “full,” in metaphorical appetite and literal inflammation or purulence. The flight might then offer the glands an opportunity to avoid their own envisioned, diseased condition and return to a healthy state.⁹

The disease-personification motif comes across still more clearly in a recipe from a medical codex of the fifteenth century. There the affliction is a euphemistically described “sweet one,” and the banquet is put on by “Cheron,” probably a reflex of the Charon of Greek myth.¹⁰

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, gr. 2315 f. 245r, ed. Legrand 1881: 14; re-collated

ἕτερον περὶ τοῦ γλυκίου· ἔπαρον ᾗ ξύγκιν ἀνάλατον καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ βοτάνους καὶ ἄλειψε τοῦτον μὲ μαχαίριν μαυρομάνικον καὶ λέγε τρίτον τὸν ἐξορκισμὸν ἐτοῦτον· εἰς τὸ μέγαν ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος· ὡσεὶ Χέρων [ὀσιχέρον cod. : ὀσιχέρον (?) Legrand] ἔφαγε καὶ ἔσφαξεν καὶ ὅλα τὰ πάθη ἐκάλεσε, καὶ τὸ γλυκὺν οὐκ ἐκάλεσεν. καὶ διὰ τί τοῦτον οὐκ ἐκάλεσε; διὰτι ῥέει, διὰτι στάσει, διὰτι τὸν τόπον ἀφανίζει. ἀμὴ ἔχε ἄνθον ἀμπέλου καὶ ὄστοῦ βωδίου. στῶμεν καλῶς, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου θεοῦ, ἀμήν.’

Another for the sweet one: take unsalted lard and some of the plant (*sic*) and smear it on with a black-handled knife and say this exorcism three times, “In the great name of the father and the son and the holy spirit. As Cheron ate and slaughtered, and invited all the afflictions, and did not invite the sweet one—and why did he not invite it? Because it flows, because it drips, because it disfigures the spot. Come, take a grape-flower and an ox-bone. Let us stand in good order, let us stand with fear of God, amen.”¹¹

⁸ “Contract, womb, lest Typhon catch you!” (στάλητι, μήτρα, μή σε Τυφῶν καταλάβη): e.g. Bonner 1950: 275 no. 140, with Faraone 2011: 20.

⁹ Anastasia Maravela is thanked for the latter suggestion.

¹⁰ So too in Modern Greek incantations, where swollen tonsils are called “brother of Charon” (Pantelides 1909: 699: ἀδερφὲ τοῦ Χάροντα) and jaundice “colleague of Charon and brother of death” (Stewart 1991: 227: συνάλλαγε τοῦ Χάρου καὶ ἀδέλφι τοῦ Θανάτου); there is an ancestor for the former at least in Late Antiquity in an incantation in which the “queen” of the tonsils (*uuae regina*) is addressed as “daughter of Orcus” (*Orci filia*: the collection of *Physica* attributed to Pliny, 1.19, ed. Önnersfors 2006, 1:24 from St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Sang. 751 p. 207; cf. Heim 1893: 557).

¹¹ The black-handled knife is a fixture of the apparatus of the ritual healer in the Byzantine world (Zellmann-Rohrer 2018a: 126 n. 18) and already appears in a redaction of the *Testament of Solomon* (C 9.9, p. 77 McCown); the closing exhortation is drawn from the liturgy of the Eucharist (Zellmann-Rohrer 2018b: 114).

A rhetorical move only implied in the text of *PGM IV*—on the new interpretation—is now made explicit, as grounds are given for the lack of invitation. In the papyrus codex the command of Zeus to “let go of what you have” before receiving more—here taken up by the closing offer of a substitute meal—implied a sort of distention or blockage as the reason, and here it is the more generally unpleasant character of the symptoms brought on by the “sweet one” that makes it an unappealing guest. This branch of the motif flourished in Modern Greek incantations recorded in oral use in the 20th century. There is much variety in the personified afflictions and the social occasion from which they are excluded, suggesting a corresponding bifurcation in the Byzantine tradition, most of the direct evidence for which is lost. Christ may be substituted for Charon as the host, and there are applications to get rid of worms in livestock, and spiders, the latter not invited to a wedding “held by the Jews on the Sabbath day,” to which the rest of the world was invited, “because it stinks, because it bites, because it pisses crooked (στραβοκατουρεῖ).”¹² Elsewhere in the Byzantine tradition the “sweet one” is a euphemism for epilepsy; here the language suggesting fluid discharge might point to rheumatism or diabetes, the latter proposed for yet another version involving Christ and “Lady Sweet” (ἡ κυρὰ Γλυκειά) reported from twentieth-century Kephallonia, which again makes reference to urination (γιατὶ ἴσουρεῖ καὶ προσουρεῖ κι’ ἀνθρώπου σάρκα καταλεῖ).¹³

The later Greek tradition also contributes comparanda that help to illuminate the motif of instructions to a personified member of the human body, or to the patient in reference to a personified affliction, or to a combination thereof. More specifically, these incantations seek to cure by ordering the patient, or a personified body part, to release some obstruction, as if it were deliberately held fast. The first witness comes in some medical recipes with a primarily veterinary focus in a fragment of a twelfth-century codex, which concerns the removal of bones stuck in the throat.

Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms. Barocci 216, f. 5r (unpublished)

ἄλλο πρὸς ὀστέον καταπότιον· ‘κατέπισαι Γοργόνης ὀφθαλμὸν καὶ ὀστέον
†σιπίδος τούτο σίρη†· ὃ ἔχεις ἐν τῷ βρόχῳ, ἢ κατάπιε ἢ ἐκβαλε.’

Another for a swallowed bone: “You have swallowed a Gorgon’s eye and a bone of ...: what you have in your ‘net,’ either swallow or cast it out.”

Here it is apparently the patient who is addressed, as the reference to “what you have in your net” makes clear. The reference to the “net,” probably a metaphor for the throat or windpipe with which it is also assonant in Greek (βρόγχος), will be resumed in another branch of the tradition to be considered further on. Here the personification lies in the equation of the obstruction with a “Gorgon’s eye” and possibly with a “bone” of a probably divine source whose identity remains uncertain. The Gorgon belongs to a motif-cluster of Late Antiquity for the treatment of throat obstructions. In a Latin incantation recorded by Marcellus

¹² Christ: Ionas 2007: 89–90, 116; worms: Pharmakides 1928: 610; spiders: Salbanos 1929: 126.

¹³ Epilepsy: e.g. the ritual recipe ed. Zellmann-Rohrer 2018a: 121 §5; “Lady Sweet”: Koukoules 1926.

Empiricus, the patient is to declare, “I kiss the Gorgon’s mouth [or, bone]” (*os Gorgonis basio*),¹⁴ and an underlying Greek one can be reconstructed in some additions to the *Euporiston* of Theodore Priscian, “Pallas has swallowed the Gorgon’s bones” (Παλλὰς Γοργόνης ὅστᾱ κατέπιεν).¹⁵ The details of the mythological associations remain to be studied in detail, but a sympathy between Medusa’s lithifying gaze and the obstinacy of the foreign objects lodged in the throat may be in view, all the more relevant if the speaker is thereby elevated to the role of Perseus or Pallas Athena in overcoming it. The situation is complicated by the earliest witness to the motif so far identified, in a medical codex of the tenth or eleventh century: there the Gorgon herself is said to have gotten a bone stuck in her throat, for which Pallas provided a remedy through a short command resembling the incantations, “Either spit or swallow.”¹⁶

The text of the clause following the Gorgon reference in the Oxford manuscript is corrupt. A mention of the cuttlefish (*σηπίς < σηπία) is conceivable but has little more point in context than the creature itself has bones. Some bone located in a part of the body of Osiris (τοῦ {τ} Ὀσίρι(ος)) could be produced by emendation, but the location itself (†σιπίδος) resists an easy solution; the reference would be to the travails suffered by his limbs after their dismemberment by Seth, including the loss of the penis to an oxyrhynchus fish. A more generally Egyptianizing tradition may also be in play, as an ancient Egyptian incantation equates a swallowed bone to some member (the spine?) of the god Shu, and to a piece of sacred furniture from a temple, the “carrying-pole” of a divine image.¹⁷ Perhaps preferable, however, and requiring no juxtaposition of Egyptian cultural references with the Greek one in the Gorgon, is the possibility of ἀσπίδος followed by a phonetic spelling for τοῦτο σύρει:¹⁸ “an asp’s bone is what drags this (down),” that is, a part of the body of a dangerous animal—though especially in an Egyptian context, potentially also a divine one, mirroring the ambiguity of the Gorgon in Greek myth—is blamed for the continued menace of a foreign object in the body of the patient.

The personification of the limb appears more plainly when it is addressed and commanded. A Byzantine example in a fifteenth-century miscellany offers healing for splenitis,¹⁹ the recipient of a combination of command and adjuration.

¹⁴ *De medicamentis* 8.172, with Heim 1893: 489–90 no. 94.

¹⁵ Ed. Rose 1894: 283, who transcribes the garbled version transmitted by the codex as: Pallas Gorgonis ostan catepieni.

¹⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 75.03, f. 193r (unpublished): ἐπίλογος πρὸς κατάπομα· Γοργόνη ὅστοῦν κατέπιεν ἰχθύος καὶ Παλλὰς ἐδήλωσεν αὐτῇ· ἢ πτύσον ἢ κατάπιε.

¹⁷ P.BM EA 10059 ii 2, edited by Leitz 1999: 53.

¹⁸ Chris Faraone and Anastasia Maravela are thanked for the suggestions of forms of ἀσπίς and σύρω respectively. It is conceivable that the “bone” might be acclaimed rather to drag the “eye” out of the throat—that is, to be part of the cure—, but this role would seem to conflict with the instructions to the patient to do the dislodging directly by spitting or swallowing.

¹⁹ The flourishing Byzantine genre of ritual splenitis-recipes is anticipated by the bilingual Greek-Coptic P.Utrecht Copt. Ms. B3.8 (van den Broek 2017); there is a pharmacological approach in the handbook Michigan Ms. 136, p. 3.15–19 (Zellmann-Rohrer and Love 2022), which also includes ritual approaches to other medical issues.

Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 3632, f. 91r (unpublished)

γητεία εἰς) σπλῆνα θαυμαστή καὶ ὠφέλιμος· ὅταν λειτουργῇ ὁ ἱερεὺς) καὶ ἔρχεται νὰ εἴπῃ· ἐξαιρέτως τῆς παναγίας ἀχράντου, τὴν ὥραν πιάσον τὴν σπλῆναν μὲ τὸ δεξιὸν σου χερὶν καὶ εἶπέ· ἐκτρίψη, ὁ ἐμὸς σπλήν, ἐκτρίψη. ὀρκίζω σε, σπλήν, καὶ εἰς τὸν θεὸν τὸν ζῶντα καὶ εἰς τὰς ἐπουρανίου αὐτοῦ δυνάμεις καὶ εἰς τὴν ἄχραντον αὐτοῦ μητέρα καὶ θεοτόκον· ἀπόβαλε ὃ κατέχεις καὶ γενοῦ ὑγιῆς καὶ στῆθι κατὰ τάξιν ὡς τὸ πρότερον. λέγε τρίς.

An incantation for the spleen, amazingly useful: when the priest performs the liturgy and is about to say, “especially of the all-holy, undefiled (mother of God),” immediately take hold of the spleen with your right hand and say, “You shall be rubbed out, my spleen, you shall be rubbed out: I adjure you, spleen, by the living God and by his heavenly powers and by his undefiled mother and mother of God, cast off what you hold and get healthy and stand in order as before.” Say three times.

The procedure, to be inserted by the patient at a particular point in a liturgy otherwise officiated by a priest,²⁰ a commemoration of the mother of God to match her intercession as sought in the ritual itself, first menaces the inflamed spleen with the “rubbing out” (ἐκτρίψη) already foreshadowed by the action of the patient’s own right hand with which it is grasped. The spleen is then adjured in the name of Christian holies to “cast off” (ἀπόβαλε) whatever it is “holding” (ὃ κατέχεις), the cause of the inflammation, in order to regain its previous, healthy condition.

As such narratives are rare among the Greek magical papyri, it is all the more significant that another also centers on Zeus, in *PGM VII* 199–201, and that it shares a medicinal context. There the god’s planting of an olive-pit provides an etiological analogy for the affliction—there, headache—and for its relief.²¹ In fact the tradition of Graeco-Roman gods in narrative incantation motifs for healing can be traced more broadly outside the papyri. Besides some examples already encountered here, two Latin texts from Late Antiquity feature Neptune and Juno respectively as exemplary patients, the latter receiving treatment in turn from Jupiter himself. Neptune takes charge of his own cure from swollen tonsils by means of his characteristic trident.

Physica attributed to Pliny in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Sang. 751, 1.11 (cod. p. 202, addition in bottom margin; ed. Önnersfors 2006, 1:19; cf. Heim 1893: 557; recollated)

ad tussellas. praecantas: Neptunus tussellas habebat, supra petram his stabat, neminem habuit quem curare, ipse se curavit in falcis suis triple. hoc ter dicis.

²⁰ Part of the prayer uttered out loud (ἐκφώνως) during the consecration of the offerings for the Eucharist: cf. the edition of the liturgy for mass attributed to John Chrysostom in Goar 1730: 62.

²¹ Admitted by Furley 1993: 92–93 as an example of the genre despite a lack of the formal features of poetry.

For swollen tonsils. You perform the incantation, “Neptune had swollen tonsils. He was standing on top of a rock. He had no one to cure (him). He cured himself with his triple scythe.” You say this three times.

Juno and Jupiter feature in an incantation in the same collection, to treat the disorder of a body part of uncertain identity described as the “(little) tongue.” The epiglottis suggests itself, but from the context of the recipe in the collection, between chapters on chest pain and indigestion, the xiphoid process might also be considered, called after its shape, more likely in turn to become dislocated or detached.

Physica attributed to Pliny in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Sang. 751, 2.12 (cod. p. 220; ed. Önnorfors 2006, 1:37; cf. Heim 1893: 557–58; re-collated)
lingulae praecantatio. nouies dices: Iuno Iouem rogabat qui leuaret lingulam: quomodo sol, quomodo luna, quomodo uespera, quomodo Septentrion, quomodo Lucifer et Antiuer redeunt, sic reuertatur loco suo, redeat lingua.

For the “tongue” (*lingula*), an incantation. You will say nine times, “Juno was asking Jupiter who might relieve the ‘tongue’: as the sun, as the moon, as the evening, as the Seven (stars of Ursa Major), as the Light-bearer and the Opposite-bearer²² return, so may it be returned to its place, may the ‘tongue’ return.”

The narrative of Juno and Jupiter had previously been regarded as separate from the following analogical imprecation. In view of the popularity of scenarios in which deities not only suffer, but also get relief from analogous afflictions in particular through dialogues with other deities, which may in turn be reenacted in the present scenario of use,²³ the words may be regarded as direct speech of Jupiter in answer to Juno’s query, providing the precise ritual utterance that will produce the cure.

A final complex of motifs unites the metaphor of throat obstructions as something actively (albeit undesirably) “caught” by the human body with the role of the god Jupiter as intercessor, whose supremacy extends over the personified and thus far disobedient human throat. The fuller version in a medical collection of Late Antiquity attached to the name of Pliny is given here, of which there is an abridgement in the contemporary additions to the *Euporiston* of Theodore Priscian (ed. Rose 1894: 283).

Physica attributed to Pliny in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Sang. 751, 1.13 (cod. p. 202; ed. Önnorfors 2006, 1:18–19; cf. Heim 1893: 557; re-collated)
ad trauoratum—trauoratum hoc si [h(o)si, (si) Önnorfors] in gulam ossum de pisce eserit siue alia res. de sinistra manu tangens crebrum et de altera ispina nouies: Lafana piscator, exi et fac quae te iussit Iuppiter. et expues.

²² That is, the morning star (*Lucifer* / Φωσφόρος) and the evening star (the fictive analogue compound *Antifer* [TLL II, 169]; compare Ἑσπέριος and Ἑσπερος), both describing the planet Venus.

²³ For some examples and discussion, see Zellmann-Rohrer 2020: 52–53, 58–61.

For something swallowed crosswise—swallowed crosswise, that means, if a bone from a fish or anything else sticks in the throat. Touch the head with the left hand and with the other the obstruction (and say) nine times, “Lafana [Theodore Priscian: Lasana] the fisherman, come out and do what Jupiter has ordered you,” and you spit it out.

A variant in the same collection replaces the metaphor of fishing with one of hunting and Lafana (alias Lasana) with Sana as its agent.

Physica attributed to Pliny St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Sang. 751, 1.13 (cod. p. 202; ed. Önnorfors 2006, 1:19; cf. Heim 1893: 557; re-collated)
item, trauoratum aliter. sinistram manu alteris tanges crebrum et dicis: Sana{t} uenatur, exi et fac quod Iuppiter iussit. nouies dicis et expues.

Likewise, another way, (for) something swallowed crosswise. You touch <the obstruction(?)> with the left hand, with the other the head, and you say, “Sana the hunter, come out and do what Jupiter has ordered.” You say it nine times, and you spit it out.

The identity of Lafana-Lasana, and of Sana, which is probably a shortening of the latter despite the banalization of the copyist as the finite verb *sanat*, awaits satisfactory explanation. Palaeographically, an error of reading or copying can easily account for the interchange between Lafana and Lasana in Latin script of the period to which the St. Gallen codex belongs (f and the tall f-form of s). If a Graeco-Latin etymology were accepted, the tradition of metaphorical designation of parts of the body with manmade objects to which Ἀμάρα “Conduit” itself belongs could be recognized once again: *lasanum* as Greek loanword (λάσανον, but plural λάσανα for singular is found), “trivet”, “cook-pot” or “chamber-pot” personified, broadly parallel to the “cauldron” (κυθρόποδα) of the Byzantine incantation encountered already, a vessel in which an obstruction is lodged, or which has actively “hunted” for such an obstruction, to its owner’s detriment. The reliance of ancient fishing and hunting on nets also links both the “fisherman” Lafana or Lasana (“Potty”) and the “hunter” Sana to the cycle of incantations urging the throat to release obstructions with mythological menace, seen already, in which the object “in your net” (ἐν τῷ βρόχῳ) is equated with the “Gorgon’s eye,” among other perils.

The miniature narrative of Zeus and the golden calf in *PGM IV* may now be recognized as an incantation motif with a healing aim, belonging to an originally separate tradition akin to the Greek and Latin texts discussed in the preceding, for which addenda probably remain to be uncovered, especially among later Byzantine and Modern Greek texts. It has attached itself to the Homeric amulet in the papyrus codex due to a general contiguity in goal (protection) and the more particular coincidence of the mention of Zeus, and a sequence of Egyptian divine names has also been grafted on at the end. Further study of this motif-complex, and others like it, has the potential to illuminate mentalities of body, the conception of the limbs and their discontents in the selection of particular metaphors and personifications, of means of justifying the exclusion of disease focalized through the conventions of banqueting and hospitality, or persuading towards removal by pointing out the benefits of relieving a distended or blocked condition. If one wished to continue to

entertain for *Amara* a Semitic background, following Meyer, or at least assonance, one might consider, instead of *hammārā* “the bitter (woman),” the “bitter water” (*mê hammārîm*) of the ritual for exposing adultery in Deuteronomy 15, designed to produce distension of the body of a guilty party.

2. The Bes invocation of *SM* II 90 (*GEMF* 62) and its parallels

The Oxyrhynchite formulary most recently edited as *SM* II 90, to be republished as *GEMF* 62, was copied on the back of a bookroll of Plato’s *Republic* (*P.Oxy.* XXXVI 2751). The fragmentary state of the papyrus leaves uncertain how much of the bookroll was actually recycled, but the formulary certainly consisted of multiple columns. The most substantial remains belong to an invocation of Bes, under various names and epithets including the “headless god” (ἀκέφαλος θεός), to assist in divination. The accompanying instructions for divination are not well preserved in the Oxyrhynchus formulary but mention at least the use of rainwater and the utterance of the invocation over a lamp, and the rest was probably broadly similar to recipes for dream-divination in *PGM* VII / *GEMF* 74 (ὄνειραιτητὸν Βησᾶς) and VIII / *GEMF* 72 (ὄνειραιτητὸν τοῦ Βησᾶ). These three formularies preserve variants of the same Bes invocation (*PGM* VII 233–49; *PGM* preserved witness. The intertext had been identified already by the first editor for *P.Oxy.*, with restorations thereby suggested, taken up with slight alteration for *SM*. This note is concerned with aligning the parallels in *PGM* VII and VIII with the Oxyrhynchus formulary, which has not yet been done in print,²⁴ on the way to reconsidering the restoration of the fragmentary text. A reconstruction of a common ancestor for the Bes invocation reflected by these three witnesses is reserved for another occasion, but that the Oxyrhynchus version, though fragmentary, should have an important place therein is suggested by its sole witness to the correct text in the portion analyzed as the twelfth limb below. Details of the traditional Egyptian background, above all the significance of the falcons with whose blood the headless deity is equated, also remain to be elucidated.

The following partitur-text between the Oxyrhynchus and *PGM* versions (adjusted after collation with facsimiles) may be given, in which the limbs are numbered for convenience. In *PGM* VII the invocation is essentially doubled (‘a,’ 233–38 ~ ‘b,’ 243–47), and of the doublets the Oxyrhynchus text mostly follows ‘a’ with a possible exception in the fourth limb. In addition, the more distantly related, first-person speech of the “headless daimon” in *PGM* V 145–59 (*GEMF* 58), in an invocation for subjugation of demons, is adduced only where directly relevant.

1.

PGM VII ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε τὸν ἀκέφαλον θεόν

PGM VIII ἐπικαλοῦμέ σε τὸν ἀκέφαλον θ(εό)ν

[*PGM* V] ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἀκέφαλος δαίμων

²⁴ A tabular presentation of the corresponding translations, but with only passing and inaccurate reference to the Greek, is given by LiDonnici 2007: 100–2.

- SM* 90 [ἐπικαλοῦμαι σε] τὸν ἀκέφαλον θεὸν
2.
PGM VII τ[ὸ]ν ἐπὶ τοῖς ποσὶν ἔχοντα τὴν ὄρασιν
- PGM* VIII [σ]οῖς παρὰ τοῖ ποσὶν ἔχοντα τὴν ὄρασιν
- [*PGM* V] ἐν τοῖς ποσὶν ἔχων τὴν ὄρασιν
- SM* 90 τὸν [c. 12 ἔχοντα] τὴν [ὄ]ρασιν

The restoration [ἐπὶ τοῖς ποσὶν ἔχοντα] in *SM*, while doubtless accurate in terms of general sense—the deity sees with his feet in the absence of a head—is insecure in the details, against [ἐν τοῖς κτλ.] suggested by *PGM* V or [παρὰ τοῖς κτλ.] suggested by *PGM* VIII, possibilities in fact acknowledged in the commentary.

3.
PGM VII ὁ ἀστράπτων, ὁ βροντάζων
- PGM* VIII τὸν ἀστράπτοντα καὶ βροντάζοντα
- [*PGM* V] ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἀστράπτων καὶ βροντῶν
- SM* 90 ἀστράπτοντ[α καὶ βροντάζοντα]

The concurrence of *PGM* VII and VIII in a form of βροντάζω is probably enough to exclude the restoration [βροντῶντα] in the Oxyrhynchus text. Secure attestations of βροντάζω are confined to these two passages of *PGM* VII and VIII, *PGM* IV 1039, and Hesychius, whose lemma might suggest a divine epithet or even a hymnic context (β 1189: βροντάζω glossed with βροντῶν). In *SM* the article (τὸν) is inserted at the beginning, but the variation in its presence in the second limb in the parallels suggests that the omission may have been deliberate.

4.
PGM VII(a) σὺ εἶ, τὸ στόμα διὰ παντὸς προσχέεται
PGM VII(b) σὺ εἶ οὗ τὸ στόμα [δ]ι[ἀ] π[αν]τὸς κάεται
- PGM* VIII σὺ εἶ οὗ τὸ στόμα διὰ πάντα πυρὸς γέμι
- [*PGM* V] ἐγὼ εἰμι οὗ τὸ στόμα καίεται δι' ὄλου
- SM* 90 σὺ εἶ οὗ τὸ στόμα πῦρ δ[ι]ὰ παντ[ὸς c. 10]

The continually fiery mouth of the deity is surely present in all versions, but the details differ enough that the restoration [προσχεῖται (*sic*)] of ed.pr., adopted also

in *SM*, should be kept out of the main text. The version in *PGM VII(a)*, apparently taken as the basis for that restoration, lacks the word for “fire” itself, although πῦρ (not πυρός as suggested in the apparatus of *PGM*) may indeed have fallen out. The apparently accusative case of πῦρ in the Oxyrhynchus text does point towards a sense of “disgorging” or similar for the missing verb, and against “being full of” or “burning with” as might be suggested by the other versions, but other possibilities alongside προσχέω include ἐκπνέω (cf. *PGM IV* 2109–10 [*GEMF* 57] ἐκ δὲ τοῦ στόματος (...) πῦρ πνεέτω) and ἐπιβάλλω (cf. *PGM XIII* 299 [*GEMF* 60] ὁ Αἰὼν ὁ ἐπιβαλόμενος πῦρ). This characterization of Bes may be related to the red color of his mouth as rendered in the drawing (fig. 1) in *PGM XXXIX* (“rotzüngig,” Preisendanz); compare also the description of an astrological deity in *P.Oxy.* III 465.60–65 as a human figure with “tongue and face of fire” ([ἡ] δὲ γλῶσσα καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον πῦρ, 65).

Figure 1. *PGM XXXIX* (P.Oslo 434). Figure of Bes (detail).

5.

PGM VII σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης Ἀρβᾶθιαῶ

PGM VIII ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης τεταγμένος

SM 90 [σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐπὶ] τῆς ἀναγκῆς

6.

PGM VII omitted

PGM VIII ἐπικαλοῦμέ σε τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης τεταγμένον θε(εὸ)ν Ιασω· Σαβαωθ:
Αδωναι: Ζαβαρβαθι□□ω

SM 90 ἐπ[ικαλο]ῦμαί σε [c. 13] θεὸν [[ιαεαι]] [c. 25] χαρβᾶ[c. 4]

For the first lacuna in the Oxyrhynchus text a likely supplement, not considered in *SM*, is [τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης], a repetition of the reference to the deity’s control over fate from the fifth limb well paralleled by the version in *PGM VIII* (ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης τεταγμένος in limb 5, τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀνάγκης τεταγμένον in limb 6). The latter probably provides the best hope of a sense of what stood in the second lacuna in the Oxyrhynchus version (an overline is visible only over the *beta* and the following letter of the magical word, but it may have extended further on one or both sides where the surface above the line is now damaged): Judaizing divine names, but [Ιασω Σαβαωθ Αδωναι] is too short, and so restoring the sequence [Ιαεω (*sic*) Σαβαωθ Αδωναι] preceded by a gap, as in *SM*, is hazardous. The deleted sequence ιαεαι in the Oxyrhynchus text suggests some schema of rearrangement of a subset of the Greek vowels similar to those of Ιαω, in which the copyist perhaps committed dittography, which certainly could have introduced some combination of Ιαω itself with Σαβαωθ and Αδωναι, not necessarily in that order. Certainty about the χαρβα[θιαω] assumed to follow it in *SM* must also be

tempered in light of the sequence χαρβαθα on its own in *SM* II 96 A 36 (followed by σθωμβαυλη; so too E → 2–3), and the obvious divergence between χαρβα- and the form in ζαβαρβα- in the parallel, which is the sole basis in turn for restoring the former.

7.

PGM VII σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐπὶ σωρῶ κατακείμενος

PGM VIII σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐπὶ τῆ ζυρνίνη σορῶ κατακείμενος

SM 90 [σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐπὶ τῆ ζυρνίνη σορῶ κατα]κείμενος

8.

PGM VII καὶ πρὸς κεφαλῆς ἔχων ὑπαγκώνιον ρητίνης καὶ ἀσφάλτου

PGM VIII ἔχων ὑπαγώνιον ρητίνην καὶ ἄσφαλτον

SM 90 καὶ πρὸς κεφαλῆ[ς] ἔχ[ων ρητίνης] ὑπαγκώνιον καὶ ἀσφάλτου μ[c. 13]

In the Oxyrhynchus text a fitting parallelism would be gained from a noun in μ-qualified as made or imbued with a soaking “of asphalt” or “bitumen.” The mention of the head might suggest μ[ίτραν], of a headpiece or wrapping soaked in asphalt or bitumen. These substances are known to have been used in mummification especially in the Graeco-Roman period (Clark, Ikram, and Evershed 2016). How the rest of the line would have been filled remains uncertain: further protective or other ritual apparatus about the head, perhaps expanded into a tricolon of objects of ἔχων, would suit best the clause-division reflected in the two parallels, against, e.g., a turn to further divine names anticipating those in the following limb.

9.

PGM VII ὄν λέγουσιν Ἀνῶυθ

PGM VIII ὄν λέγουσιν: Ανουθ ΑνοϞϞ:

SM 90 [ὄ]ν λ[έγο]υσιν Ἀνῶυθ Ἀνῶυθ

The position of the Oxyrhynchus text midway between the two parallels may be noted, sharing the overlining of the divine name with the *PGM* VII version and its doubling with the *PGM* VIII version (encountered also further on in *PGM* VIIb, where the deity is adjured κατὰ τῶν β' ὀνομάτων σου Ανουθ Ανουθ).

10.

PGM VII ἀνάστα δαίμων

PGM VIII ἀνάστα δαίμων

In the Oxyrhynchus text ἀνακτα □ c. 8] □□□□ was read in *SM*, with the editor (R. W. Daniel) considering [δαί]μονα in the commentary for the end of the sequence. The surface is damaged at the top part of the alleged *kappa* of ἀνακτα, so read already by ed.pr., leaving the reading less certain than previously allowed, with what has previously been taken as its upright possibly belonging to the tail of the preceding *alpha* or a false start to the bow of a lunate *sigma*. The concurrence of both parallels in ἀνάστα δαίμων, which also suits the traces in the Oxyrhynchus text, favors its adoption here instead. The solution to the rest of the lacuna probably lies in an addition such as what comes later in *PGM VII(b)*, that is, further divine names: ὀρκ[ίζω σε κατὰ] τῶν β' ὀνομάτων σου Ανουθ: Ανουθ: μ[□□□□□□]ρα φησαρα η[□□□] the traces where the Oxyrhynchus text resumes do not suit well [δαί]μονα in any case, as the left upright of *nu* would have descended unusually far below the baseline.

11.

PGM VII οὐκ εἶ δαίμων

PGM VIII οὐκ ἴ δέμων

SM 90 [οὐ]κ εἶ δαίμων

12.

PGM VII ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀῖμα τῶν ιβ̄ ιεράκων τῶν πρὸς κεφαλῆς τοῦ Οὐρανοῦ λαλούντων καὶ ἀγρυπνούντων

PGM VIII ἀλλὰ τὸ αῖμα τῶ δύο ιεράκων τῶν πρὸς κεφαλῆς τοῦ Ὀσίρεως λαλούντων καὶ ἀγρυπνούντων

SM 90 ἀλλὰ τὸ αῖμα τῶν [β̄ καὶ τῶν ιβ̄] καὶ τῶν λ̄ καὶ τῶν ρδ̄ ιεράκων □καὶ□τῶ[v πρὸς κε]φαλῆς τ[ο]ῦ Ὀσί[ρε]ως λαλούντων καὶ ἀ[γρυπνούντων]

The possibility of restoring the numerals [β̄ καὶ τῶν ιβ̄] was already considered in the commentary in *SM*. Preisendanz had unnecessarily emended the numeral in the parallel in *PGM VII* from ιβ̄ to β̄ on the basis of δύο in *PGM VIII*, but once it is recognized that both readings reflect genuine parts of a longer original sequence, the existence of a quadripartite or at least tripartite enumeration being the only possible conclusion from the remnants in the Oxyrhynchus text, the sequence 2 + 12 + 30 + 104 can be accepted with confidence. The identity of the falcons remains to be illuminated: Isis and Nephthys, as assumed by Preisendanz and others, would properly be ἰκτινοὶ (kites) not ἰέρακες (falcons or hawks).²⁵ In

²⁵ For a critical view of previous proposals that the three Greek papyri reflect contemporary cult of Osiris at Abydos: Smith 2017: 477–80.

the commentary of *SM* the reference to birds “over the decapitated head of the headless god” is misleading, as no version of the Bes incantation makes any reference to decapitation, and the version in *PGM VII* at least is clear that the headless god invoked is Bes, not Osiris. The invoked deity can hardly be both a decapitated entity and the blood of birds keeping watch over that entity’s head. If the added *καί* after the final numeral of the sequence in the Oxyrhynchus version represents a fifth avian group and not a recapitulation, that fifth group might indeed be the keening kites, distinct from the *ἰέρακες*, if it is kept in mind that the invoked *θεός* must be distinguished in his turn from Osiris. The total would then reach a round number of 150 birds. The constituent subtotals may have cosmological significance in part, the natural pair of day and night, the twelve hours of day and night and twelve months of the year, the thirty days of the Egyptian solar month, and perhaps the 104 weeks of a pair of years. Commentators have generally regarded *Ούρανοῦ* in *PGM VIII* as a copying error for *’Οσίρεως*, but a genuine variant in an Egyptian source might be indicated, i.e. Shu, a god of air whom falcons would suitably accompany. In the Egyptian context of the magical papyri *Ούρανοῦ* governing *κεφαλή* seems the more difficult reading, hence less likely to have arisen by copying error.

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Abbreviations follow the papyri.info checklist, with the following additions:

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PGM = K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, revised by A. Henrichs, 2 vols. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–1974.

SM = R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols. Papyrologica Coloniensia 16. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–1992.

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