

SPELLS IN THE GREEK MAGICAL PAPYRI AND THE CHRISTIAN RITE OF COMMUNION

comparisons and distinctions in magical and religious tradition

PGM XIII, LINES 760-1050:

*The instruction [for recitation] of the heptagram, and the spell to which the
god gives attention*

Opens with glory of god - spell, 'greeting the sun' and other
directions, and offering - ends in prayer

RITE OF COMMUNION IN CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Preparation of altar - Eucharistic prayer - Communion Rite
(Lord's Prayer - Sign of Peace - Lamb of God Litany -
Communion song/procession to eat) - End in Prayer *

* http://parish.holytrinitysp.org/resources/general_instrustion_of_the_roman_missal_g_i_r_m/17_the_communion_rite

SIMILARITIES

- Structure

- Libation and offering

Frankincense; engraved lamella into a clean box on a linen altar, offering of pure pinecones, bread, sweetmeats, flowers, and wine (lines 1010-1015)

'putting milk, wine, and water in a new vessel, pour a libation while burning incense' (lines 1015-1016)

'The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the preparation of the gifts and the altar...The celebrant blesses and praises God for these gifts and places them on the altar...In addition to the bread and wine, monetary gifts for the support of the Church and the care of the poor may be brought forward.' - **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

- Thanksgiving to god

- Prayer through godly representatives

'you from the four winds, ruler of all, who breathed spirit into men for life, whose is the hidden and unspeakable name' (lines 764-765)
Dionysus, Ereschigal (lines 915-933)

'The Eucharistic Prayers make clear that these prayers are offered, not to Christ, but to the Father. It is worship offered to the Father by Christ as it was at the moment of his passion, death and resurrection, but now it is offered through the priest acting in the person of Christ, and it is offered as well by all of the baptized, who are part of Christ's Body, the Church.' - **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

- Being free from impurity / sin

engraver of lamella - 'pure from all impurity' (lines 1004-1005)

'They should fast (except for medicines) for at least one hour before receiving the Eucharist and should not be conscious of having committed serious sin.' - **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

CONCEPTIONS OF MAGIC AND RELIGION

- 'Similarly, formularies that employ for their efficacy propitiation, slander, and compulsion of divine forces blur perhaps the most conventional and misleading contrast, that between religion as propitiatory and magic as coercive in their respective attitudes toward divinity. - Derek Collins, 'Nature, Cause, and Agency in Greek Magic,' p. 18

DIFFERENCES

- Singular actor vs. group led by priest
- “for NN purpose” vs. collective praising
 - However: sign of peace in comparison with greeting the sun
- God being part of the Greek magical actor vs. God leading the Christians, Christ’s body as connection

‘Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.’

CONCLUSION

- That the spell can be used for a given purpose, calling attention to a particular by the participant versus the supplicant nature of the Communion highlights the modern, Western perspective of magic as seeking results versus religion as prostration
- "Thus [Goldenweiser] perceived that the distinction and differentiation between religion and magic is historically late, rather than early" Wax, 'The Notion of Magic' p.496
Spell — god is stronger than magic (line 801)
- The location of agency is the most apparent difference
- 'When a people views the world magically, they see it as composed of beings where Western man sees lifeless objects' Wax, 'Notion of Magic,' p. 501