

PGM IV. 475–829 trans. Marvin Meyer

475 *Be gracious to me, O Providence and Psyche,⁷⁹ as I write these mysteries handed
down [not] for gain but for instruction; and for an only child I request immor-
480 tality, O initiates of this our power (furthermore, it is necessary for you, O daugh-
ter, to take / the juices of herbs and spices, which will [be made known] to you at
the end of my holy treatise), which the great god Helios Mithras ordered to be
revealed to me by his archangel, so that I alone may ascend into heaven as an in-
485 quirer / and behold the universe.

This is the invocation of the spell:

“First origin of my origin, AEËIOYŌ, first beginning of my beginning, PPP SSS⁸⁰
490 PHR[E], spirit of spirit,⁸¹ the first of the spirit / in me, MMM, fire given by god to
my mixture of the mixtures in me, the first of the fire in me, ĒY ĒIA EĒ, water of
water, the first of the water in me, ŌŌŌ AAA EEE, earthy material, the first of the
495 earthy material in me, / YĒ YŌĒ, my complete body, I, NN whose mother is NN,
which was formed by a noble arm and an incorruptible right hand in a world with-
out light and yet radiant, without soul and yet alive with soul, YĒI AYI EYŌIE: now
500 if it be your will, METERTA / PHŌTH (METHARTHA PHĒRIĒ, in another place)⁸²
IEREZATH, give me over to immortal birth and, following that, to my underlying
nature, so that, after the present need which is pressing me exceedingly, I may gaze
505 upon the immortal / beginning with the immortal spirit, ANCHREPHRENESOU-
PHIRIGCH, with the immortal water, ERONOU PARAKOUNĒTH, with the most
steadfast air, EIOAĒ PSENABŌTH; that I may be born again in thought, KRAOCHRAX
510 R OIM ENARCHOMAI, / and the sacred spirit may breathe in me, NECHTHEN AP-
OTOU NECHTHIN ARPI ĒTH; so that I may wonder at the sacred fire, KYPHE; that I
may gaze upon the unfathomable, awesome water of the dawn, NYŌ THESŌ ECHŌ
515 OUCHIECHŌA, and the vivifying / and encircling aether may hear me, ARNO-
MĒTHPH; for today I am about to behold, with immortal eyes—I, born mortal
from mortal womb, but transformed by tremendous power and an incorruptible
520 right hand / and with immortal spirit, the immortal Aion and master of the fiery
diadems—I, sanctified through holy consecrations—while there subsists within
me, holy, for a short time, my human soul-might, which I will again / receive after
525 the present bitter and relentless necessity which is pressing down upon me—I, NN,
whose mother is NN, according to the immutable decree of god, EYĒ YIA EĒI AŌ
530 EIAY IYA IEŌ. Since it is impossible for me, born / mortal, to rise with the golden
brightnesses of the immortal brilliance, ŌĒY AEŌ ĒYA EŌĒ YAE ŌIAE, stand, O per-
ishable nature of mortals, and at once [receive] me safe and sound after the inexor-
535 able and pressing / need. For I am the son PSYCHŌN DEMOU PROCHŌ PRŌA, I am
MACHARPH[.]N MOU PRŌPSYCHŌN PRŌE.”

540 Draw in breath from the rays, drawing up 3 times as much as you can, and you
will see yourself being lifted up and / ascending to the height, so that you seem to
be in midair. You will hear nothing either of man or of any other living thing, nor in
that hour will you see anything of mortal affairs on earth, but rather you will see all

79. The goddess Psyche, “Soul.” Some scholars read Tyche, “Fortune.” On the problem see Dieterich, *Mithrasliturgie* 2, 49–52, 70–72, 230–32. On the “Mithras Liturgy,” see M. W. Meyer, *The Mithras Liturgy* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976).

80. For the meaning of popping and hissing noises in magic, see Dieterich, *Mithrasliturgie* 40–43, 228–29; R. Lasch, “Das Pfeifen und Schnalzen und seine Beziehung zu Dämonenglauben und Zauberei,” *ARW* 18 (1915): 589–93. See also ll. 561–62, and 578–79 below, and elsewhere in the *PGM*.

81. “Spirit,” “breath,” “wind” (πνεῦμα) is one of the four elements.

82. This is evidence that the scribe had at least one other copy of the spell. See Dieterich, *Mithrasliturgie* 4, 221.

immortal things. For in that day / and hour you will see the divine order of the
 skies: the presiding gods rising into heaven, and others setting. Now the course of
 the visible gods will appear through the disk of god, my father; and in similar fash-
 ion the so-called pipe, / the origin of the ministering wind. For you will see it hang-
 ing from the sun's disk like a pipe. You will see the outflow of this object toward the
 regions westward, boundless as an east wind, if it be assigned to the regions of the
 east—and the other (viz., the west wind), similarly, toward its own / regions. And
 you will see the gods staring intently at you and rushing at you.

So at once put your right finger on your mouth⁸³ and say:

"Silence! Silence! Silence!

Symbol of the living, incorruptible god! /

Guard me, Silence, NECHTHEIR THANMELOU!"

Then make a long hissing sound, next make a popping sound, and say:

"PROPROPHEGGĒ MORIOS PROPHYR PROPHEGGĒ NEMETHIRE ARPSENTEN PI-
 TĒTMI MEŌY ENARTH PHYRKECHŌ PSYRIDARIŌ / TYRĒ PHILBA."

Then you will see the gods looking graciously upon you and no longer rushing at
 you, but rather going about in their own order of affairs.

So when you see that the world above is clear / and circling, and that none of the
 gods or angels is threatening you, expect to hear a great crash of thunder, so as to
 shock you. Then say again:

"Silence! Silence! (the prayer) I am a star, wandering about with you, and shin-
 ing forth out of / the deep, OXY O XERTHEUTH."

Immediately after you have said these things the sun's disk will be expanded. And
 after you have said the second prayer, where there is "Silence! Silence!" and the
 accompanying words, make a hissing sound twice and a popping sound twice, and
 immediately you will see / many five-pronged stars coming forth from the disk and
 filling all the air. Then say again: "Silence! Silence!" And when the disk is open, you
 will see the fireless circle, and the fiery doors shut tight. /

At once close your eyes and recite the following prayer. *The third prayer:*

"Give ear to me, hearken to me, NN, whose mother is NN, O lord, you who
 have bound together with your breath the fiery bars of the fourfold / root,"⁸⁴

O Fire-walker, PENTITEROUNI,

Light-maker (others: Encloser), SEMESILAM,

Fire-breather, PSYRINPHEU,

Fire-feeler, IAŌ,

Light-breather, ŌAI,

Fire-delighter, ELOURE,

Beautiful light, AZAI,

Aion, ACHBA,

/ Light-master, PEPPER PREPEMPIPI,⁸⁵

Fire-body, PHNOUĒNIOCH,

Light-giver, . . .

83. For examples of this common depiction on stones, see the engraved gem showing Harpokrates with his finger to his mouth, in F. M. and J. H. Schwartz, "Engraved Gems in the Collection of the American Numismatic Society, I: Ancient Magical Amulets," *The American Numismatic Society, Museum Notes* 24 (1979) no. 3, p. 159. See also the bronze statue in G. S. Gasparro, *I culti orientali in Sicilia*, *EPRO* 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), plate XLV, fig. 66.

84. Reading *τετραλιζώματος* with Hopfner (see apparatus ad loc.) rather than *τετραλιζώματος*. The reading of the manuscript, on the other hand, suggests *διαζώματος* (cf. *C. H., Frag.* 26.8). [W.B.]

85. For PIPPI as a permutation of the tetragrammaton, the Hebrew divine name, see S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1942) 120 n. 38;

APPENDIX 2

Robert L. Fowler, “Greek Magic, Greek Religion,” in Richard Buxton (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 318, 324-25.

Although the definition of magic is notoriously difficult, for heuristic purposes its often-noted tendency to be oriented towards the achievement of specific goals (enhancing fertility, securing the attention of one’s beloved, etc.) may serve to focus discussion. In what follows I will suggest that this tendency is also found in some important Greek rituals that are not normally thought of as magical, and that, consequently, the distinction between ‘magic’ and ‘religion’ does not lie so much in the substance of the ritual acts as in their social context (p.318).

The magical or goal-oriented aspect of some rituals is indeed readily acknowledged by scholars, if not always put front and centre in discussion. The rain-making of the Eleusinian Mysteries was mentioned above; this was not the only agrarian connection of the ritual. Another readily granted example is the Thesmophoria for Demeter, the most widespread religious rites in Greece; these involved throwing a dead pig into the earth, to be excavated later, chopped up, and mixed in with the seed corn of every family participating. The pig is Demeter’s fertile animal, and this is simply fertility magic; making the crops grow was a very important purpose of this festival, if not the main one. Although this aspect is usually recognised, modern interpreters normally place more stress on the social function of the festival in providing women an opportunity to express solidarity in the face of oppressive Greek men. This was of course an important part of the festival, but to distribute the stress so may tell us more about our own times and preoccupations than about ancient reality.

Other examples will readily be conceded once pointed out, though they are rarely introduced simply as instances of magic. Scapegoat rituals, by which the evils of a whole city are transferred ceremoniously on to the head of an animal or some unfortunate human, who is then driven beyond the bounds of the country, thus purifying the city, can hardly be described by any other term but magic. Sacred marriages, by which the copulation of humans is ritually performed in the belief that it will enhance the fertility of the crops, are an obviously magical business. The complete destruction of an animal in full view of an enemy army prior to joining battle is another elementary piece of sympathetic magic.

In addition, there are cases in which the magical/ instrumental aspect has been quite overlooked. First, the Panathenaia. This festival of all Athenians on Athena’s midsummer birthday involved a spectacular parade through the city up to the Akropolis, where oxen were sacrificed and a new robe, the peplos, was presented to Athena in the form of her ancient statue in the Erechtheum. Modern discussions of the festival stress its social function in uniting all classes, and make much of its location at the beginning of the civic year. It is, beyond doubt, a New Year’s festival of renewal and regeneration. But it is something else too. Scholars who write on the Panathenaia naturally mention the peplos, but seem to regard it merely as a pious gift. Yet it is much more than this. The peplos of ritual is the aegis of myth, Athena’s impenetrable armour won in the battle of the Giants, those older, monstrous forces of chaos who threatened the orderly and just government of the Olympian gods. The aegis rendered Athena invulnerable. The ancient statue of Athena on the Akropolis was a talisman upon whose preservation the safety of the city depended, like the Palladion of Troy which had to be stolen by Odysseus and Diomedes before the city could be taken. The goddess who protects the citadel, housed in the king’s own palace, is a figure already in Mycenaean religion; this statue is Athena. Putting the peplos on the talisman was an act of simple magic. In its fabric was always woven one theme, and one theme only: the battle of the Giants. The message could hardly be plainer: to give Athena a new robe was to secure the protection of the city. In the fifth century BC, this was surely an important purpose of the proceedings; one can imagine the fears of the citizens were anything to go wrong with the presentation (pp.324-325).