

GRACE IOANNIDOU

P.Berol. 11520↓: Magical Text?

Unknown provenance

Fr. A + B: 29.5 × 17.5 cm

IIIrd cent. A.D.

Fr. C: 13.5 × 7 cm

P.Berol. 11520 consists of three medium-brown papyrus fragments, written on both sides. Back in the years when Berlin was a divided city, two of the fragments (A and C) belonged to the West Berlin collection, while fragment B was found in the Bode Museum collection. Written across the fibres there is a IIIrd century text, with a sloping to the right hand, similar to that of P.Berol. 21160. Fragments A and B contain parts of two columns, with an intercolumnal space of ca. 2.5 cm. A collesis, ca. 3 cm from the left edge of fragment A, is visible. Fragment A has an upper margin of ca. 4 cm, and is broken off on all other sides. Fragments B and C have a lower margin of ca. 4 cm, and are similarly broken off on all other sides. As shown from the transcription, fragments A and B join immediately together. Two of the initial letters of fragment C have slashes — paragraph indicators? — on their left¹.

Along the fibres there are accounts in arouras. Villages, as well as villagers' names, patronymics and metronymics are mentioned.

The text written across the fibres was described — with some reservation — by W. Schubart and K. Preisendanz² as magical. However, Wm. Brashear³, in 1995, pointed out that: “While the papyrus in fact mentions digging and burning, and a section heading reads ἄλλο [| ἵπτασθαι⁴, the otherwise lacunose text reads more like a narrative and should be classified under the *incerta*”.

The papyrus contains neither *voces magicae*, nor characters, but it does contain many words that strongly indicate magical content. Besides the readings Wm. Brashear had mentioned, there are also words like ὄναρ in A I. 10, ὀρθρί[α in A I. 11, μετεω[ρί]ζεσθαι or something similar in A II. 11, βοῶν in C. 5, and ἐπιθείς in C. 8. Verbs in the past tense, like ἔφη in A I. 1 and B I. 18, as well as the frequent interchanges of persons and genders — we have third person singular, second singular, first singular, first plural, masculine and feminine participles — might be pointing towards a narrative. However, whether it is part of a narrative (e. g. of a novel), or of instructions for a magical ceremony, or still, a narrative included in such instructions, in form of an extended *historiola*⁵, even though our text does not seem poetical enough for such a gender, remains to be proven.

What is more perplexing than anything are the earnings, ἀμοιβάς, in A I. 3, and the three thousand drachmas mentioned twice: in A I. 8 and in B I. 23. Actually, in the latter instance a lady seems to be *selling* something for three thousand drachmas, a fact that is completely disorientating us from the direction of magic. If we were to combine all the data, we should probably come to the conclusion that someone is digging to discover a hidden treasure she has dreamed of! But then, how do we account for all the burnings, the flying and the bull? Is she carrying out this task aided by a sorcerer?

¹ Cf. 'A. N. Οἰκονομίδης, *A Manual of Abbreviations in Inscriptions, Papyri, Manuscripts, and Early Printed Books*, Chicago 1979.

² PGM II, p. 188, note 1.

³ ANRW II. 18. 5 (1995) 3484.

⁴ I read ἵπτασθαι.

⁵ Short story recounting mythological themes, either sympathetically curing the sufferer's ailment, or coercing the divine power to act as in previous instances.

Fr. A Col. I	P.Berol. 11520↓ margin	Col. II
↓1	] ἔφη ἐπὶ τῷ συντε-	μενοι λαθε [
2	] π αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐριν	τε καὶ πάντ[
3	] τῶν ἀμοιβὰς ἀπολαμ-	ἄλλο [
4	] ν δεῖν οὖν αὐτὸν ἀλλεω	ἵπτασθαι τη[
5	] τα δράμενον σκαπάνην	δραμένη κελων[
6	] ον ἐλθεῖν δηλώσας τὸ χω-	ρισαμένη κάθε[
7	] κἀκείσε ἀνασκάπτειν	το αὐτοῦ ὅπως [
8	] γάρ σε ἐπ' αὐτοῦ τρισχιλίας	διδάξει συνεχ[
9	] εισθε τε[. . . .]ενιας τοῖς	χλούμενος [
10	] πὸ τοῦ θε[. . . .] ὄναρ	ὅτε ποτὲ [
11	] λλα τῇ ὀρθρί[α	καὶ μετεω[. ὑπὲρ τοὺς ὀρό-?
12	ἀ]φειγμένος ἐπ[	φους καὶ [
13	] ανεσ[	ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐλ[
14	] το[	ο [. . .] τῶ [
15	] ἐπ [	τ[. . .] οὐδε[
16	] . . [ . . . ] μφ[	/ ε[. . .] εσθαι[
17	] ν ἐπίστα[	π[. . .] της[
18	] . . κῶτα πε[] σ ἔφη οὔτε	[ἄ]λλο [
19	] . μῶι ἐπαγ[] μένος δηλω-	/ σ[
20	] ερον τον ωσ[] θως η τὸν ἀπο	κ[
21	] . ουν καύσεις [] ε ἐγώ σοι διε-	ν[
22	] . οτερον σ [] των η πωλου-	κ[
23	] δρης εἰς τὰς [δρα]χμας τρισχιλίας	ο[
24	] . . . [ ] παταν περ[	τ[

margin

Fr. C

1] . [
2	] . ην . . [
3	] πιστα [
4	] τὴν ὑπ[όσ]χεσιν
5	] ἀληθῶς βοῦν[
6	] τοιοῦτον ἀμ[
7	] ἀφειγμένος ε . [
8	] αι αὐτὸν ἐπιθεῖς . [
9	] ἔκαυσεν [.] . . [
10	] σαυτοῦ τ . . ν[
11	] ος ἀποδοῦν[
12	] ν ἐπιστάς α[
13	margin

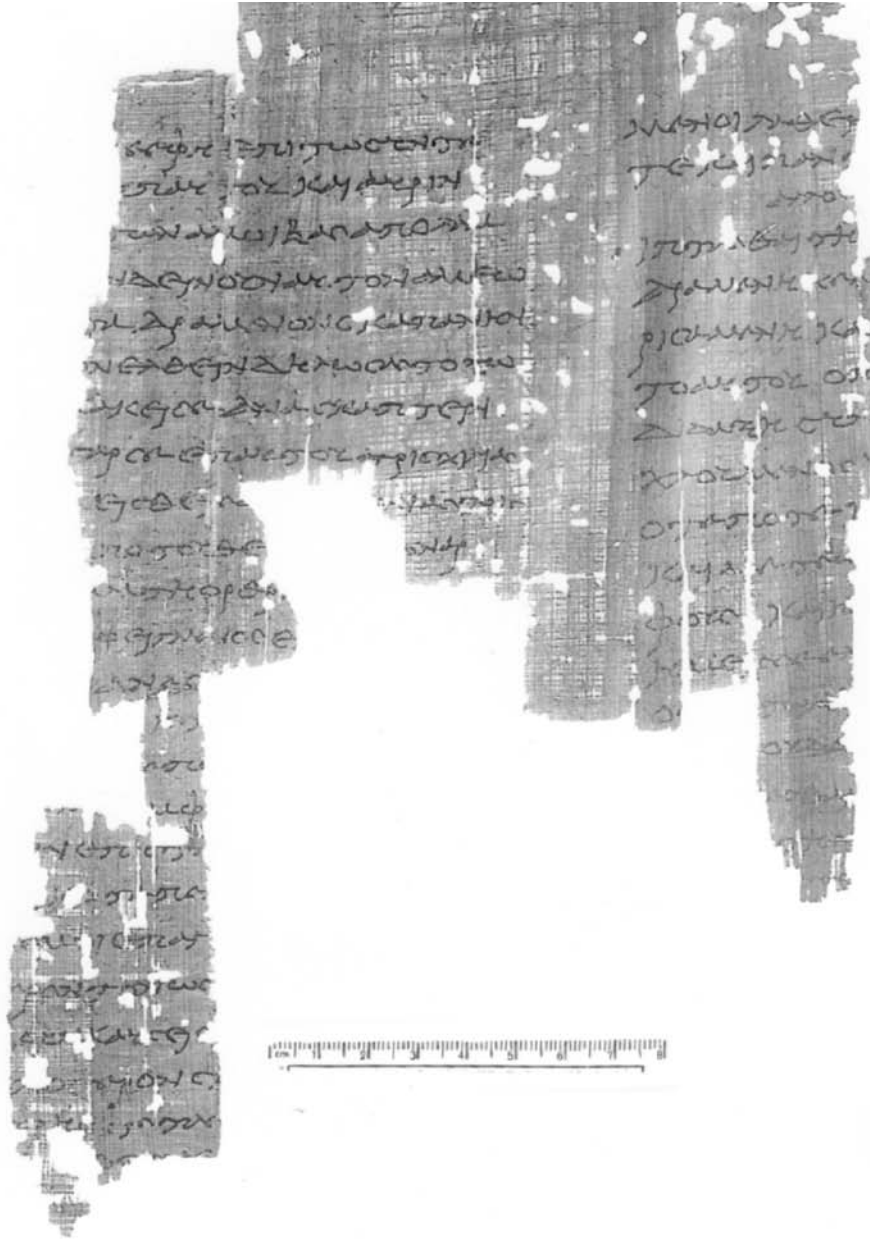
A II. 1: λαθεῖ[ν]? A I. 12, C 7: 1. ἀφειγμένος

Fragments A & B I

“¹... He (she) said on the ²... and tomorrow ³ ... enjoy (get) their payment ⁴... so he has ... ⁵... grabbing the spade ⁶ to come and point out the place ⁷ ... and dig there ⁸... for you ... three thousand on that ⁹..... ¹⁰... the dream from god ¹¹... but during the morning ¹²... having arrived at ... ¹⁷..... ¹⁸..... he (she) said neither ¹⁹ to point out ²⁰ ²¹... you must burn ... I ... you | ²² she who is selling ²³... to the ... three thousand drachmas ²⁴..... is deceiving (?) ...”

Fragments A & B II

“¹... to hide (?) ... ² and all ... ³ other: ... ⁴ flying ... ⁵ grabbing ⁷ his ... so that ... ⁸ he (she) explains (teaches) ¹¹ and being suspended over ¹² the roofs (hills?) and ... ¹³ we..... | ¹⁸ other:



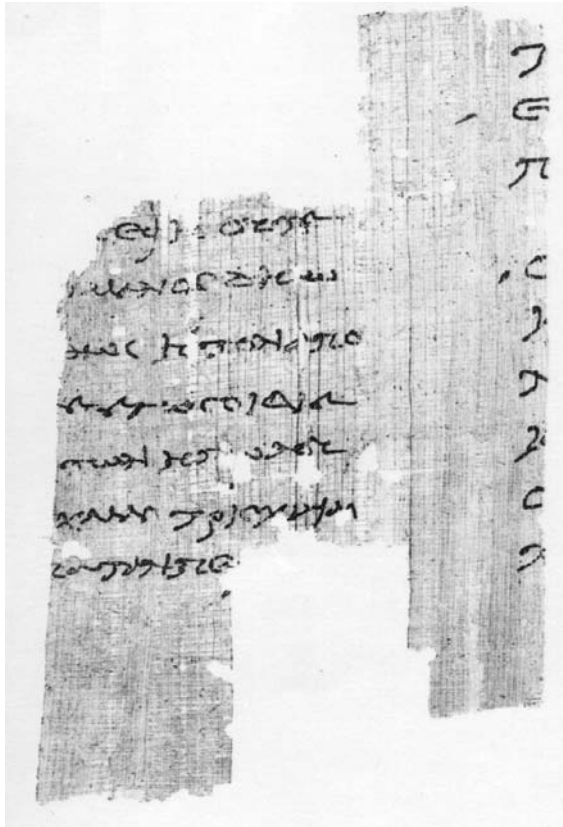
P.Berol. 11520 A

Fr. C

“..... ⁴... the promise ⁵... really a cow ... ⁶... such ... ⁷... having arrived ... ⁸... placing him on ... ⁹... he (she) burned ... ¹⁰... your own ... | ¹¹... giving ...”

A I. 1: ἐπὶ τῷ συντε-: συντεταγμένῳ, συντελεσμένῳ or similar. Cf. e. g. Suppl. Mag. I 42. 40–41, III/IVth cent. A.D.: ναί, κύριε, βα(σι)λεῦ χθονίων θεῶν, συντέλεσον τὰ ἐ[γγ]εγραμμένα; PGM V. 110–111, IVth cent. A.D.: τὰ μυστήριά σου τὰ συντελού|μενα; PGM LVII. 2: [συντέλε]σον τῷ δείνα, ...

A I. 2: αὔριν: According to LSJ, αὔρι = ταχέως, AB 464, whereas αὔρινός = of the morrow, Gloss. Of course, it might just be a misspelling for αὔριον.



P.Berol. 11520 B



P.Berol. 11520 C

A II. 1: λαθεῖν?: Cf. PGM IV. 1762, early IVth cent. A.D.: ὁ κούφιμος καὶ λάθρα ἐπιμεόμενος πάσαις ψυχαῖς.

A I. 3: ἀμοιβάς, A I. 8: τρισχιλίας, B I. 22: ἡ πωλοῦ[σα]? and B I. 23: δρα]χμάς τρισχιλίας: For a direct reference to money in magical papyri, cf. e. g. P.Berol. 21243⁶, augustean times, Col. II. 10–11: οὐδὲ περὶ ἀργύρια (l. ἀργυρίου), ἀλλὰ περὶ τοῦ δεῖνα ... Of course, in that case, the reference is probably relevant to the actual *metal* of the coins, according to the editor⁷. However, in the present text, ἀμοιβάς, δρα]χμάς and πωλοῦ[σα] are the words that most strongly point towards a non-magical text. The sum of three thousand drachmas is indeed too high for supposing it is related to any act of selling magical herbs. Most ingredients needed for any one magical ceremony never exceed the cost of a few drachmas⁸. Besides, here the word is of earnings (ἀμοιβάς), even though once again the sum would be unthinkable for paying a sorcerer. Another remote possibility is that the three thousand mentioned here is the writing in full of the magical number γχξγ, which would be τρεῖς χιλιάδες ἑξακόσια ἑξήντα τρία, that is, the magical word Βαινχωωωωχ, the soul of darkness⁹.

Cf. also e. g. Suppl. Mag. II 59. 16, a Christian curse of the VIth cent. A.D.: ἡμετέρων καμ[ά]των μνημῆα [τ]ῖσον ἀμοιβήν (pay memorable compensation for the sufferings which I suffered); Suppl. Mag. II 99 verso l. 4, an iatromagical charm of diverse nature, dated in the V/VIth cent. A.D., is offering us an alternative translation of ἀμοιβάς:] . . . [. . .] ὑποκατ' ἀμοιβὰς διδομεν . . . [, is translated by the editors “in turns given”.

⁶ Published by W. Brashear, *Ein Berliner Zauberpapyrus*, ZPE 33 (1979) 261–278.

⁷ Cf. id., note of the editor.

⁸ Cf. e. g. PGM II, XII. 194–196: καὶ ἔχε τὸ ἄ[μ]α ἀλόξ κοινού (δραχμάς) ἡ' | σττυπηρ[ί]ας σχιστῆς (δραχμάς) β', λιθαργύρου (δραχμάς) δ' ...

⁹ Cf. e. g. PGM IV 930–1114 and Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber; mit einer eingehenden Darstellung des griechisch synkretischen Daemonenglaubens*. Vol. I: (SPP 21), Leipzig 1921, § 705 (p. 430). Cf. also R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, Suppl. Mag. I, note on 15. 3–4.

For *πωλοῦσα* cf. PGM XXVI. 3, III/IVth cent. A.D., question to an oracle: εἰ πωλοῦμαι, and id., 1,12: εἰ εὐρήσω πωλήσειαι.

A I. 6: δηλώσας τὸ χω[ρίον]: The delineation of the area within which the magical rite should be performed, is absolutely necessary. Cf. also e. g. PGM VII. 840–841: καὶ πάντα μοι δηλώσης | κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους ἐπ’ ἀκριβείας, ἄγγελε.

A I. 5 and A II. 5: δράμενος and δραμένη: Cf. e. g. PGM III. 708: τῆ εὐω[νύ]μφ [σ]κῦτος δεδρα|γμέ- von: with the left hand he holds a whip.

A I. 5: σκαπάνην and A I. 7: ἀνασκάπτειν: Digging with the spade was an exercise for the athletes, cf. note of the editor of Theocr. IV. 10: κῶχεται ἔχων σκαπάναν τε καὶ εἵκατι τουτόθε μῆλα. Of course digging is most common in magical practice. Cf. e. g. PGM IV 3005, early IVth cent. A.D.: καὶ τὴν ἀνασκαφεῖσαν γῆν ἐγχώσας.

A I. 10: ὄναρ: The word might indicate some relation of the text to dreams, i. e. that the text contains instructions on how to induce a dream (ὄνειραιτησία), or an attempt to transmit to someone a specific dream (ὄνειροπομπία), or even an interpretation of a dream (ὄνειροκρισία).

A I. 11: ὀρθρί[α]: Dawn is the time when most dreams come. Early in the morning would also be an ideal time for performance of a magical rite¹⁰. Liminality in time and space plays an important role in magic¹¹. Cf. also *Abraxas* I, IV. 1602, p. 108: ὀρθ(ρ)ινὸν ἐπιλάμποντα; id., II. 92, p. 30 (sunrise hymn): σοὶ φλόγες ὠδίνουσι φεραυγέες ἡματός Ὅρθρον: for you the lightbringing rays of the day give birth to the morning.

A I. 12: ἀ]φειγμένος and C. 7: ἀφειγμένος: Cf. e. g. P.Oxy. XL 2902. 2, 10, A.D. 272: ἀφειγμένος for ἀφειγμένος¹².

A I. 21: καύσεις and C. 9: ἔκαυσεν: Burnings are very often part of the rituals. Cf. e. g. PGM II 35, IVth cent. A.D.: ... καὶ ἀρτεμισίαν καύσας.

A II. 3: ἄλλο . [and possibly A II. 18: [ἄ]λλο . [: The esthesis in l. 3 indicates that we are dealing with a section heading. The following section must be a variation of what was described before. Even though the obscure magical ceremonies had to be carried out with extreme precision, otherwise the outcome would be hazardous to the performer, it is quite commonplace to have in the same “manual” two or more alternative ways to obtain the desired result. Cf. e. g. Suppl. Mag. II. 78 i. 7, II. [2], 7, 10, [12]: ἄλλο ., and the note of the editors. As it is, ἄλλο is one of the strongest arguments that we are dealing with a manual of instructions for magical ceremonies.

A II. 4: ἵπτασθαι: ἵπταμαι- πέτομαι: Mosch. 3. 43; Babr. 65. 4; Jul. Or. 272a et al. (LSJ). Cf. also e. g. *Historia Alexandri Magni* 1. 8. 3: μαγικαῖς κακοτεχνίαις παρασκευάσας αὐτὸν ἵπτασθαι (having prepared him by evil magical practices, he made him fly) and id., 3. 1. 2: καὶ αὐστηρότητι ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι ἀετὸς μέλλων εἰς θήραν ἵπτασθαι et al. The closest parallel, however, is probably PGM IV. 210ff. (Hymn No. 6): ἰέραξ γὰρ πελάγιος καταπτὰς τύπτει σε ταῖς πτέρυξιν ... (a sea-hawk flies down and beats you with his wings). In that instance it is predicted to be an omen. Falcons are sun-birds, not only for the Egyptians¹³, but also for the Greeks who connect them with Apollo¹⁴. They send the dreams, and are probably identified with Isis¹⁵. In Ps.-Callisthenes i. 8. 1 (p. 8 Kroll), Nectanebo is using a sea-hawk in order to send Philip a dream. There is a host of falcons mentioned in magical papyri, as e. g. in Suppl. Mag. II. 70. 13: ἰέρακος π[ε]λαγίου¹⁶, PGM IV 2597f., and 2660, where the blood of the sea-hawk is drunk.

¹⁰ Cf. W. Brashear, ZPE 33 (1979) 273; also id., APF 36 (1990) 61–74 and AEMT 67, 95.

¹¹ Cf. on the subject, W. Brashear, APF 36 (1990) 61–74, and n. 21.

¹² For interchange of ι and ει, cf. Gignac, *Grammar* I, p. 190.

¹³ The hawk is related to good Sun-gods, and especially Hor in his various forms and Osiris. Cf. also A. Dieterich, *Abraxas, Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des späteren Altertums*, Leipzig 1891, vol. 2, pp. 7ff.

¹⁴ Cf. Aristophanes, *Aves* 514–516: Ὁ δεινότατον (γ) ἐστὶν ἀπάντων, Ζεὺς γὰρ ὁ νῦν βασιλεύων | αἰετὸν ὄρνιν ἔστηκεν ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, βασιλεὺς ὢν, | ἢ δ’ αὖ θυγάτηρ γλαῦχ’ ὁ δ’ ἄπόλλων ὡσπερ θεράπων ἰέρακα.

¹⁵ Cf. Th. Hopfner, *Der Tierkult der alten Ägypter nach den griechischen und lateinischen Berichten und den wichtigsten Denkmälern*, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, Denkschriften 57.2 (1913) 102–104.

¹⁶ Cf. also note on Suppl. Mag. II 70. 13.

This papyrus of course does not mention falcons, or any other birds. However, birds are the most likely creatures to fly, and falcons are closely connected to both the time of the day and to the dreams mentioned here.

A II. 5: κελών: It could be almost anything. Κέλης is a fast sailing vessel, cf. PSI V 533. 10, P.Cair. Zen. 2. 3 (IIIrd cent. B. C.). Κεῖλος, according to *WB* means κίλλος, i. e. donkey: SB I 5224. 29, 40. Κέλλωρ is the voice: P.Cair. Masp. III 67151. 249 (VIth cent. A.D.) and κέλλα (*cella*) is the room, the cell, the stable etc.: BGU IV 1036. 10 (IInd cent. A.D.): ἐμοῦ ἔχοντος κέλλαν ἐν οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρός. P.Oxy. VIII 1128. 15 (IInd cent. A.D.): ἐμίσθωσεν συμπόσιον καὶ τὴν ἐντὸς αὐτοῦ κέλλαν. The simplest solution would be to assume that the scribe left out two letters, and we have κέλων for κελ(εύ)ων.

A II. 8: διδάξη: Cf. e. g. *Abrasax* 3, p. 176, l. 750 = PGM IV. 750, the Psai¹⁷-Aion Liturgy: διδασκαλία τῆς πράξεως, instructions for the procedure of preparing a sun-beetle ointment (χρῖσμα κανθάρου ἡλιακοῦ); also PGM IV. 1871: Μηδένα δίδασκε, let nobody know; PGM 17. 3, V/VIth cent. A.D.: καθῶς καὶ [Ἰωάνν]ης ἐδίδαξεν τοὺς |...

A II. 11–12: μετεω[]φους: μετεω[ρί]ζεσθαι ὑπὲρ τοὺς ὀρό[]φους, ὑπὲρ τοὺς λό[]φους, or something similar? Cf. e. g. PGM IV. 1155: ἀνακρεμάσας μετέωρῳ ὑψώματι: he who hung the sky over the earth. A more pedestrian interpretation of μετέωρον, μετεωρισμός, or sim., would be thoughtlessness, absentmindedness, uncertain condition, unsecured debt, etc. For ὀρόφους, cf. e. g. PGM LXI. 20: ἐξορκίζω σε τὸν μέγαν θεὸν | τὸν [ἐ]πὶ τῆς ὀροφῆς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ: I conjure you, the great god on the roof of the sky...; PGM XI c ii. 4: [ὑπ' ἐμόν] | ὀροφ[ον] ἔλθέτω ἢ | δεῖνα ...

B II. 16 and 19: Similar dashes are used in quite a few magical texts, along with paragraph indicators, denoting change of subject, cf. e. g. Suppl. Mag. 79 ii. 26.

B I. 24:]παταν περ[: ἀ]πατᾶν περ[ί? Unless the word is just a misspelling for ἀ]πα(ν)τᾶν περ[ί, ἀπάτη is understandably a word that often comes to one's lips in connection to witchcraft¹⁸. Concentrating on our data, we might be justified to think that some kind of swindling, involving the three thousand drachmas, took place.

C 5: βοῦν: Bulls are often mentioned in magical texts in different capacities:

1. As the holy bull of Apis and other gods. It symbolizes many deities, among which Hecate, the preeminently goddess of magic. Hecate can appear having three faces. That on the right is the face of the bull, on the left there is the face of a dog, and in the center the face of a young virgin¹⁹.

2. As Eitrem mentions in his posthumously published study on dreams and divination in magical ritual, it is somehow connected to ὄνειροπομπία, a fact that is welcome in our effort to interpret this text: “A winged daemon with the horns of a bull and the tail of a bird, with a diadem on its head and swords at its feet, is used forcibly for dream transmission. The daemon is drawn in a piece of linen and the powerful name is added. Other ‘sacred names’ of the god are uttered into a lamp filled with cedar oil; in addition, the Agathos Daemon is apostrophized and Seth is involved. The hour of birth and the 365 names of the ‘great god’ are pronounced under a grim threat of severe punishment”²⁰.

3. The animal is also used in the procedure of obtaining a paretros. In PGM I. 4–6 the aspiring sorcerer is advised to “... take two of his fingernails and all the hairs from his head. Then take a Circaen falcon and deify it (i. e. drown it) in the milk of a black cow, after he has mixed Attic honey with the milk ...”. For the black cow, cf. PGM I. 5; III. 383; IV. 909, 1440, 3149; VII. 652ff.; XIII. 129; XXXVI. 239.

4. In their note on Suppl. Mag. II 71 fr. 4. 1. 2: βοῦς, the editors say that the animal, which is always feminine, and is often mentioned in praxeis, can also be mentioned in a series of divine “symbols” (σημεῖα or σύμβολα), as in PGM VII. 780, where βοῦς is one of the symbols of the double-horned goddess Mene.

¹⁷ Psai is the Egyptian equivalent to Ἄγαθος Δαίμων.

¹⁸ Cf. J. de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge, Mass. and London 1975.

¹⁹ Cf. PGM IV. 2121: (Ἐκάτη τριπρόσωπος) ... (ἐκ) δεξιῶν μερῶν τῆς ὄψεως ἔχουσα βοῶς κεφαλῆν, | ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἀριστερῶν κυνός, ἢ δὲ μέση | παρθένου.

²⁰ S. Eitrem, *Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual*, in: C. A. Faraone, and D. Obbink (eds.), *Magika Hiera*, Oxford, New York 1991, 180.

In a σύστασις to the Sun, the goddess appears to be changing her names, symbols and form, according to the hour of the day. During the sixth hour she gives birth to a cow with a white forehead²¹.

5. Wm. Brashear, in his note in ZPE 50 (1983) 102, is mentioning a text published in ZPE 42 (1981) 112, which contains different forms of the word βοῦς²². He is also citing a number of similar texts, which seem to be amulets containing the name of the god Βώς²³. By tiding up his name to the ailing part of the body, people were seeking healing.

C 8: ἐπιθείς: Cf. e. g. PGM IV. 42: ... τὸ λοιπὸν σῶμα τῷ ἡμμένῳ βωμῷ ἐπιθ[ε]ίς: place the rest of the body on the burning altar.

C 11: ἀποδοῦν[: Cf. e. g. PGM XIII. 392: τὸν ποπυσμὸν ἀποδίδωσιν: it makes a clicking sound; PGM IV. 2095–2096: τελέσαντι δέ σοι | θυσίαν ἀποδώσω: once you have completed it, I will offer you a sacrifice.

²¹ Cf. Σύστασις πρὸς Ἥλιον, PGM III. 500ff., early IVth cent. A.D.: ... ὅτι οἶδά σου τὰ σημεῖα καὶ τὰ | παράσ[η]μα καὶ μ[ο]ρφὰς καὶ καθ' ὥραν τίς εἶ καὶ τί σου ὄνομα ... |⁵¹⁵: ὥρα ἕκτη μορφὴν ἔχεις ... Γεννᾶς ... |⁵¹⁶: ἐπὶ [γῆς βοῦν λευ]κομέτωπον.

²² Cf. also H. Buschhausen, U. Horak, H. Harrauer, *Der Lebenskreis der Kopten*, Wien 1995, Nr. 312: “Amulette mit BOYC-Inschrift ...”, with literature.

²³ Cf. W. Gundel, *Dekane und Dekansterbilder*, Glückstadt, Hamburg 1936, Anm. 1; also H. G. Gundel, *Weltbild und Astrologie in den griechischen Zauberpapyri*, München 1968 (Münchener Beiträge 53), 21.