



Reading Greek Prayers

WE READ Greek prayers from a distance. In any language, of course, a prayer involves a human being asking a god for some benefit. Prayers are requests. Requests, however, are culturally marked speech acts, communications involving assumptions that are specific to the society in which they are made, and that may not be transparent to us. As Adkins and Muellner, among others, have shown, the Greek verb “εὔχεσθαι,” which is usually translated “to boast,” “to assert,” or “to pray,” has no single English equivalent.

The function and characteristic form of an ancient Greek prayer must certainly have depended upon elements inseparable from the occasion of its utterance: the location where it was spoken, often a τέμενος, or space marked off from secular activity and therefore particularly suited to speech that was itself marked off from everyday speech; accompanying ritual action, which could have included a solemn procession, a sacrifice large or small, music, or the dedication of a votive offering. In spite of the situation of the act of “praying” in a cultural, linguistic, and historical setting very different from our own, most studies of Greek prayer ignore or underplay this wider context that should provide a starting point, and depend instead on considerations of form and structure.¹ This may be because the

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1. The following abbreviations will be used throughout:

CEG P. A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca Saeculorum VIII–V a. Chr. n.*
Texte und Kommentare (Berlin and New York, 1983)

prayers that scholars typically discuss are those that occur within the literary texts that have survived until the present; most of these prayers conform to stylized and conventionalized patterns.²

In this paper I will be concerned with what evidence from sanctuaries themselves can tell us about Greek prayer.³ Many of the inscriptions left in sanctuaries throughout Greece provide a primary source of information, but it may be because these texts seem to be at odds with the evidence offered by literary texts that they have been generally ignored in discussions of Greek prayer. Inscribed prayers survive, however, because they were written down to perform a function. The very existence of these texts, especially when inscribed onto some durable material such as wood or stone, is in itself informative, since it implies two occasions: an original utterance of the prayer, which the inscription records and/or commemorates, and an occasion, or a number of occasions, in which the inscription is

DT	A. Audollent, <i>Defixionum Tabellae</i> (Paris, 1904)
DTA	R. Wünsch, <i>Defixionum Tabellae Atticae</i> (Berlin, 1897)
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (Berlin, 1873–)
IGA	H. Roehl, <i>Inscriptiones Graecae Antiquissimae</i> (Berlin, 1882)
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Basel, 1975–)
PMG	D. L. Page, <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> (Oxford, 1962)
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
Svoronos	J. N. Svoronos, <i>Das Athener Nationalmuseum</i> (1908–1937)

Fundamental are C. Ausfeld, *De Graecorum precationibus quaestiones*, *Neue Jahrbücher Suppl.* 28 (1903) 502–47; K. Ziegler, *De precationum apud Graecos formis quaestiones selectae* (Breslau, 1905); F. Schwenn, *Gebet und Opfer* (Heidelberg, 1927); K. von Fritz, “Greek Prayer,” *Review of Religions* 10 (1945–1946) 5–39; E. des Places, “La prière cultuelle dans la Grèce ancienne,” *Revue des sciences religieuses* 33 (1959) 343–59; A. Corlu, *Recherches sur les mots relatifs à l'idée de prière d'Homère aux tragiques* (Paris, 1966); W. F. Bakker, *The Greek Imperative: An Investigation into the Aspectual Difference between the Present and the Aorist Imperatives in Greek Prayer from Homer up to the Present Day* (Amsterdam, 1966); A. W. H. Adkins, “Euchomai, Eûchōle and Eûchos in Homer,” *CQ* 19 (1969) 20–33; J. L. Perpillou, “La signification du verbe *euchomai* dans l'épopée,” *Mélanges P. Chantraine* (Paris, 1972) 169–82; L. C. Muellner, *The Meaning of Homeric εὐχόμεαι Through its Formulas* (Innsbruck, 1976) = *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft* 13; H. S. Versnel, “Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer,” in H. S. Versnel, ed., *Faith Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 1981) 1–64; D. Aubriot-Sévin, *Prière et conceptions religieuses en Grèce ancienne jusqu'à la fin du V^e siècle av. J.-C.* (Lyon, 1992). Versnel and Aubriot stand out in that the former deals with a wide range of evidence, including inscriptions, while the latter, who deals only with prayers from literary texts, examines this evidence in detail for what it can reveal about the wider contexts in which prayers were uttered.

2. I will use the term “literary” for the sake of convenience and with reservations to refer to poetic compositions written down from the eighth to the fifth centuries, most of which must be understood as functioning within a culture that was still primarily oral. For the problems posed by using literary texts, especially tragedy and comedy, as evidence for Greek cults and beliefs, see F. T. Van Straten, *Hiera Kala: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden, 1995).

3. The present study is meant as a survey rather than as an exhaustive treatment, which would involve both data and chronological issues too far-ranging for this format. I intend in a future study to extend the issues I raise here.

meant to be read, and thus put to some further, later use. After briefly reviewing the early literary evidence for the nature of Greek prayer, in the paper's second section I shall examine this function of inscribed prayers in detail by extending Joseph Day's interpretation of the function of dedicatory inscriptions to that of inscribed prayers.

Just as inscribed prayers provide verbal evidence for interaction with gods through prayer, votive reliefs, as I shall argue in the paper's third section, supply us with visual images for this interaction, and are thus another valuable, if underexamined, source of evidence. From the seventh century it was common practice throughout Greece to erect in sanctuaries representations of persons in the act of making an offering and, very often, of a god receiving that offering. Votive reliefs, that is, typically represent successful prayers: prayers and offerings that have been acknowledged and received, and that have succeeded in involving a god in a cycle of give and take. As with inscribed prayers, I will be concerned not only with what these images tell us about the nature of Greek prayer, but with how they were meant to function in a sanctuary. Their function, I shall argue, is analogous to the function of inscribed prayers.

Based on the conclusions I will draw about the role representation came to play in Greek prayer, in the paper's fourth and final section I will suggest an interpretation of a particular votive relief dedicated in Athens in the fourth century to the goddess Hygieia.

1. GREEK PRAYER

Most analyses of Greek prayer have ignored the whole of its performance, the constants of the types of occasion which call for and shape these utterances. This may in part be due to the fact that most discussions of prayer begin and end with Ausfeld's formal definition, in which he claims that prayers and hymns both consist of three parts: *invocatio*, *pars epica*, and *precatio*.⁴ Many Greek prayers, however, do not have three distinct parts,⁵ while hymns, whose function is to praise, usually do, the extended narrative functioning as a spoken *geras*, an enhancement of a god's honor. The two genres sometimes converge, as, for example, in texts spoken or sung by more than one voice, such as the "Paeon Erythraeus," which is both hymn (*qua* sung offering of praise) and prayer (*qua* request for the health of those who utter its closing lines).⁶ Just as often, however, prayer and hymn diverge. Some scholars, therefore, have emended Ausfeld's scheme, and emphasized function over form. Miller, for

4. Ausfeld (above, n. 1) 505ff.

5. Compare, for example, *Il.* 24.308–13 (Priam to Zeus).

6. See below, p. 242. For a recent and helpful discussion of the meaning of the word "hymn" see J. M. Bremer, "Greek Hymns," in Versnel (above, n. 1) 193–215. Even here, however, categories are sometimes mixed in unfortunate ways (e.g., "A hymn is a sung prayer," 193). It *can* be, but need not be.

example, along with Meyer, uses the term *hypomnêsis*, or "reminder," for the middle section of a prayer, since this is where the speaker presents his or her claim on the god's consideration by recalling a previous occasion (or occasions) on which devotion was displayed by the one party and/or assistance rendered by the other.⁷

Muellner and Adkins⁸ have gone further by placing prayer in the wider context of Greek society. Both insist that it is misleading simply to translate "εὔχεσθαι" as "to pray." In Homer the verb εὔχεσθαι and its nominal correlates have no precise English equivalents. They denote a culturally marked conversational exchange: a speech act in which someone is making a claim on someone else within a social structure very different from our own.⁹ Indicative of this difference is the fact that the same word, εὔχεσθαι, is used to assert one's place and rightful claims in social space as well as to assert one's relation to and claims on a god. When Homeric heroes εὔχονται, what they are doing is asserting their identity and their value in the society they inhabit, and by means of this assertion creating a context in which the claim they are making on another member of that society will be appropriate and compelling. In every instance of its secular usage, the verb εὔχεσθαι is an expression of a particular hero's voice and value, of what makes him memorable and enables him to ask for his due. In *Iliad* 6, for example, Glaukos' speech about his lineage is capped with the following line: ταύτης τοι γενεῆς τε καὶ αἵματος εὔχομαι εἶναι, "Such is the generation and the blood I claim to be from" (211). The verb here is often translated "boast," "assert," or "claim," and these words do capture part of its meaning. Unlike these English words, however, εὔχομαι here is tied to a process of asserting one's identity within a society that bestows recognition in terms of a complex system of display and exchange. Diomedes recognizes Glaukos for who his narrative has shown that he is, a ξείνος, and the famous exchange of armor ensues: τεύχεα δ' ἀλλήλοισ ἐπαμείβομεν, ὅφρα καὶ οἷδε / γνῶσιν ὅτι ξεῖνοι πατρώιοι εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι, "But let us exchange our armor, so that these men may know that we claim to be guest-friends from the days of our fathers" (230–31). The verb denotes an interactive process of guiding another in assessing one's status and thus one's due. The purpose is not to "boast" or "declare" something about one's past, but to make a claim on someone in the present, whether in terms of an actual request or of recognition and acknowledgment of status.

7. A. M. Miller, *From Delos to Delphi: A Literary Study of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (Leiden, 1986) 2 and n. 3.

8. Above, n. 1.

9. Speeches in the *Iliad* and in other early Greek poetry, while they are stylized, are also mimetic: they enact what members of an audience would say. These "speech genres" assume in their audience knowledge of the kind of real speech situations they represent, and the social system which creates such situations (e.g., the status of speakers involved in a particular kind of exchange). For this point see R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the Iliad* (Ithaca, 1989) 3–14; E. J. Bakker, "Discourse and Performance: Involvement, Visualization, and 'Presence' in Homeric Poetry," *ClAnt* 12 (1993) 1–29.

At least in its secular usage, then, εὔχεσθαι denotes not only an exchange of recognition and/or goods, but also a particular kind of conversational interchange. There must be two interlocutors present: one does not εὔχεται to oneself. Insofar as εὔχεσθαι refers to an interchange between two people, it conforms to a very basic requirement of conversations: the one interlocutor must press his claim on the other (whether it be recognition, hospitality, or protection) by situating it in terms of mutually recognizable and valued information.¹⁰ This information, along with the addressee's recognition of it for what it is and why it is being offered, shapes and enables the purpose of the exchange. This give-and-take between two people is crucial to the usage and meaning of εὔχεσθαι. We might sum it up with the following criterion: *no interpersonal context, no claim*. Both are inextricably tied to the nature and the success of the speech act denoted by "εὔχεσθαι."

While εὔχεσθαι then means something like the English "to pray," as Muellner points out, the translation is inadequate, since the basic connotation "request, petition, or entreaty" in English corresponds to only one aspect of εὔχεσθαι.¹¹ The verb does not mean simply "to request," but involves instead a complex system

10. As Gumperz and others have argued, meaning is always culture-bound: "participants in a communicative event must be able to guide each other's interpretations of what is being said through the seemingly vast if not infinite range of potentially relevant factors and dimensions." J. J. Gumperz, "Contextualization and Understanding," in A. Duranti and C. Goodwin, eds., *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon* (Cambridge, 1992) 229. For an application of this understanding of verbal meaning to Greek epic's use of traditional language, see Bakker (above, n. 9), 3: "As a background, then, for a dynamic view of tradition, a dynamic view of speech is in order, in which 'context' is not so much a static concept ... as a dynamic process that is constitutive of the speech process itself. Context is what is *created* in speech, by speakers and listeners alike, both in ordinary situations and in poetic performances." The social relation to which the Iliadic speakers refer may be one of blood, one of hospitality (which Muellner [above, n. 1] takes to be an extension of the γένος relationship, see 86), or one of suppliant to helper. By far the greatest number of instances in Homer of secular εὔχεσθαι have to do with asserting one's identity in terms of one's father or place of birth (e.g., *Od.* 14.204; 17.373; 21.335; *Od.* 1.180, Athena in disguise to Telemachus; *Il.* 6.156, Glaukos' speech about his identity).

11. For full discussion of this point see Muellner (above, n. 1) 17–67. εὔχεσθαι, Muellner argues, is used in Homer both in exchanges between human beings and between humans and gods. In his study of the metrical contexts of this verb, Muellner argues that the root εὔχ- originally meant "say in a functionally marked (as opposed to φημί) context." The verb hence developed into three semantic categories preserved in the Homeric poems: (1) boasting, (2) its use in a legal context, (3) to pray. For Muellner there are no conceptual gaps between Homeric usages of this word when it means "boast" or "say" and "the complex, holy utterances designated by sacral εὔχομαι..." (113) Unlike Adkins, Muellner does not take the secular usage to be primary. It is interesting, however, that according to Muellner's own analysis, the oldest meaning of the nominal derivative of εὔχ-, i.e., εὔχος, is "fame," which in its typical *sedes* in the hexameter line is a functional equivalent of κῦδος or κλέος. (107–13) The partitioning of εὔχος into the meanings "vaunt" and "object of prayer" is secondary, and due, according to Muellner, to a relatively new formal association with εὔχομαι. (111) εὔχος, that is, does not simply parallel εὔχεσθαι and mean "what is heard." It is, in every instance of its usage, an expression of a particular hero's voice and value. This supports Adkins' claim about the verbal derivative of εὔχ-, that is, that when Homeric heroes εὔχονται what they are fundamentally doing is asserting their identity, their

of relations, statuses, and actions, whose formal manifestation can be realized, but need not be, in Ausfeld's tripartite structure. Taking into consideration the word's secular usage is helpful, since Greek prayers, in order to be successful, must also involve an interpersonal context. Khryses' appeal to Apollo at *Iliad* 1.37–42, a typical example of a Homeric prayer, illustrates this well:

κλῦθι μευ, ἀργυρότοξ', ὃς Χρῦσιν ἀμφιβέβηκας
 Κίλλαν τε ζαθέην Τενέδοιό τε ἴφι ἀνάσσεις,
 Σμινθεῦ, εἴ ποτέ τοι χαρίεντ' ἐπὶ νηὸν ἔρεψα,
 ἢ εἰ δὴ ποτέ τοι κατὰ πλοῖνα μηρί' ἔκηρα
 ταύρων ἢ δ' αἰγῶν, τόδε μοι κρήνην ἐέλδωρ·
 τείσειαν Δαναοὶ ἐμὰ δάκρυα σοῖσι βέλεσσιν.

Hear me, Lord of the Silver Bow, you who rule over
 Khryse and sacred Killa, who are lord in strength over Tenedos,
 Smintheus, if ever it pleased you that I built your temple,
 if ever it pleased you that I burned countless rich thigh pieces
 of bulls, of goats, then bring to pass what I wish for:
 let your arrows make the Danaans pay for the tears I have shed.

(translation based on that of R. Lattimore)

Khryses does three things here which correspond closely to what Glaukos does in *Iliad* 6. Most obviously, he asks for something: he makes a claim on Apollo. Like Glaukos, Khryses does not make his claim straightaway. After invoking Apollo, he refers to the god's identity ("Lord of the Silver Bow . . . lord in strength over Tenedos"), and then to sacrifices that he himself has made in the past ("if it ever pleased you that I built your temple, . . . that I burned countless rich thigh pieces of bulls, of goats . . ."). This reference to the many offerings Khryses has made to the god in the past suggests an "economic" exchange, an element which many have recognized as a necessary component of prayer.¹² But the resemblance of this reference to Glaukos' strategy is close, as is that of Khryses' mention of Apollo's identity. "Religious" and "secular" εὐχεσθαι do the same thing. They "stake a claim," and they do it in the same way.

value, and their consequent claims within a particular context, understood within a wider social reality.

The twofold usage (secular/religious) continues at least through the fifth century. Cf., e.g., τὸ πατρόθεν ἐκ Διὸς εὐχονται, in sense of "assert," at Pi. *O.* 7.23; Soph. *Ph.* 1019 or Lys. 21.21 for the verb's "religious" usage.

12. The most important study of the element of exchange in prayer is A. J. Festugière, "Ἀνθ' ὧν. La formule 'en échange dequoi' dans la prière grecque hellénistique," *Rev. Sc. Phil. Théol.* 60 (1976) 389–418. Graf, stressing the economic model, speaks of the speaker's establishment of his "solvency": F. Graf, "Prayer in Magic and Religious Ritual," in C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink, eds., *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York, 1991) 189. Perhaps most helpful is Mauss' discussion of the notion of reciprocity as a total social phenomenon "with manifestations in political, social, economic, legal and sacral spheres." M. Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. I. Cunnison (New York, 1967), 12ff.

In the secular usage, a claim can be made only in a particular interpersonal context: reference by the speaker to his identity, his status in the society he and his interlocutor inhabit, and therefore his prerogatives. In the religious usage, the situation is closely analogous, but there are important differences. Someone who is “praying” makes a claim on a god against the background of the relationship between him-/herself and the god. Who the god is—his parentage, birth, or ἀρεταί—may come into the equation, as may reference to an offering the speaker is giving (or has given, or will give) to the god. The claim that someone praying makes on a god, like the claim made by someone on another human being, can be made only when it is properly situated: by referring to who the god is or what s/he has done, and/or to what the speaker himself is doing for the god.

This leads us back to the importance of interpersonal context. The aim of prayer is direct human-god communication: the god must hear and see if s/he is to act, and to hear *is* to act in accordance with the request. Thus the second-person imperatives that so often begin prayers invoke the god’s presence or attention: κλῦθι, ἄκουε, ἄκουσον.¹³ To hear, the god must be present. This is, however, a highly contingent state of affairs. Thus prayers typically include vocatives in their beginning as well, a form of address whose primary function in speech is to attract someone’s attention.¹⁴ By carefully choosing epithets, the speaker carefully particularizes the function of calling the god near. As Versnel has put it:

We perceive the wish that the god should, for an instant, turn his exalted head to the mortal. Mere attention often suffices: “to attend” is to “assist,” *ad-esse* is *adesse*, παρίστασθαι also means “to help.” Central ... is the act of listening: ἀκούω becomes ἐπακούομαι; “hearing” becomes “granting.”¹⁵

These vocatives and imperatives imply the required presence of both a particular speaking subject, an “I,” and a “you,” who is a particular god. In addition, then, to being a request and an economic exchange, a prayer is a conversational exchange, even if the god’s presence is only linguistically realized.¹⁶ Only

13. Cf., e.g., *Il.* 1.37ff., 10.278ff.; *Eur. Hipp.* 63–87. ἄκουε, ἄκουσον, and by extension, ἐλθέ, ἔθι, φάνηθι are also common in this function.

14. “The vocative is typically used to attract someone’s attention, and as such most typically occurs initially; or, in other positions it simply punctuates a speech to keep someone’s attention; to invite turn-taking; or to express a feeling or attitude.” K. Wales, *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (London, 1981) s.v. “vocative” (quoted by A. Kahane, *The Interpretation of Order: A Study in the Poetics of Homeric Repetition* [Oxford, 1994] 80).

15. Versnel (above, n. 1) 29–30 and n. 113. The famous scene in *Il.* 6, where Athena hears Theano’s prayer and sees the robe she has offered her, but still refuses her request, is an exception that “proves” the rule. Moved by their own aims, gods can accept prayers and gifts and still turn away from the request that accompanies them (cf. also, e.g., *Il.* 2.420).

16. Sappho (fr. 1 L.-P.) plays with, and thus confirms, this element central to a prayer’s articulation and function: Aphrodite is brought into the text of the prayer itself to converse with “Sappho” and to answer her plea.

when both speaker and addressee are present may the request be made, and always against the background of an actual relationship between them both. This relationship is (re-)established by reference to the past (for example, in Khryses' prayer), the present (as, e.g., in Herondas' *Mimiambus* IV.11–13: ἔλεω δεῦτε / τοῦ ἀλέκτορος τοῦδ', ὄντιν' οἰκίης τοίχων / κήρυκα θύω, τὰπίδορπα δέξαισθε), or the future (for example, *Il.* 6.305–10; *Od.* 3.375–84). What makes εὔχεσθαι prayer, then, and distinguishes it from the word's secular usage, is simply its context, specifically the presence of a god as an "interlocutor."

With gods, however, whose presence cannot be guaranteed, there is always a problem of access. If one's need were not too pressing, one could attempt to solve this problem by going to a god's sanctuary to pray. Because public sanctuaries, as the Greek *temenos* suggests, are literally spaces "cut off" from secular activity, they are particularly conducive to special speech, or to commerce with the divine. Moreover, a god is more likely to be in his or her *temenos* to hear and to respond to one's request.¹⁷ In fact, reliable contact with the divine would have been the critical factor in the foundation of most cults and sanctuaries. This is corroborated by myth, where cults are most often founded as the result of a god's epiphany,¹⁸ and by practice. Shrines, for example, as Plato (disapprovingly) notes in *Leges* 909d–910d, were often founded on spots where individuals had experienced some evidence of a god's presence.¹⁹

Such locations promise, in ways that secular space does not, the future presence of the god. This is why sacrifices are made and prayers spoken in a sanctuary. It is also why inscribed prayers, dedications, and votive offerings are left in them.

17. For expressions of this belief, cf., e.g., Eur. *Androm.* 1117; Hdt. 6.61. The god's image would also be housed in the sanctuary, and proximity to it was commonly equated with proximity to the god. See Versnel (above, n. 1) 30–31.

18. E.g. *h.Hom.Cer.* 268–74; the first half of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* recounts the aetiological myth explaining how Apollo's worship on Delos originated in his first epiphany (i.e., his birth) on that island.

19. When a polis marked off a τέμενος, advice for its location normally would come from an oracle, a vision, or some other direct contact with a god. For discussion of this point, see A. Schachter, "Policy, Cult, and the Placing of Greek Sanctuaries," *Le Sanctuaire Grec = Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* 37 (Geneva, 1990) 1–57.

Plato's description of the foundation of shrines is worth quoting in full:

No one is to possess a shrine in his own private home. . . . To establish gods and temples is not easy; it's a job that needs to be very carefully pondered if it is to be done properly. Yet look at what people usually do—all women in particular, invalids of every sort, men in danger or any kind of distress, or conversely when they have just won a measure of prosperity: they dedicate the first thing that comes to hand, they swear to offer sacrifice, and promise to found shrines for gods and spirits and children of gods. And the terror they feel when they see apparitions, either in dreams or awake—a terror which recurs later when they recollect a whole series of visions—drives them to seek a remedy for each individually, with the result that on open spaces or any other spot where such an incident has occurred they found the altars and shrines that fill every home and village. (trans. A. E. Taylor)

2. VERBAL IMAGES OF PRAYER: THE GODS LEARN TO READ

Apart from prayers that are part of and subordinate to the wider aims of poetic texts, we possess prayers that were, for one reason or another, written down on (or inscribed onto) some durable material. The very existence of prayers inscribed onto stone implies that they were meant to perform some ongoing function, a function that I would suggest is linked to what linguists would call the “medium-transferability” of language: “it is possible to read aloud what is written and, conversely, to write down what is spoken.”²⁰ A prayer inscribed on stone implies *two* occasions of performance: an original utterance, of which such objects are a record, and an occasion, or a number of occasions, in which the inscription is itself put to some further, later, use.

The earliest uses to which writing was put in Archaic Greece accord remarkably well with the meaning of εὔχεσθαι that Muellner and Adkins have elucidated from the Homeric poems: an assertion of one’s place and rightful claims in social space as well as of one’s relation to and claims on a god. “The [earliest] inscriptions are self-assertive,” notes Barry Powell: they declare ownership, record the giving of a gift, celebrate an object’s maker, perpetuate an individual’s fame after death, dedicate an object to a god, or invoke a god.²¹ They do this in the language and meter of eighth-century oral poetic composition.²² The “secular” usage of εὔχεσθαι so familiar from epic, for example, is evident in *CEG* 195, a sixth-century inscription in the flutings of an Ionic column found on the Athenian Akropolis:

Ἀλκίμαχος μ' ἀνέ[σ]θεκε Διὸς κόρει τόδ' ἄγαλμα |
εὐχολὲν ἔσθλῳ δὲ πατρὸς ἡῦς Χαιρίωνος ἐπεύχεται <ῥ>να[ι].

Alkimakhos dedicated me, this pleasing gift, as a vow to the
Daughter of Zeus; he boasts he is the son of a noble father, Khairion.

This inscription expresses the complex combination of display, honor, and piety that εὔχεσθαι denotes: the gift (τόδ' ἄγαλμα) is a thank-offering given in response (εὐχολὲν) to a prayer answered, and its display in the sanctuary enables its giver to announce his status and identity to god and man alike (ἐπεύχεται).

20. J. Lyons, *Language and Linguistics* (Cambridge, 1981) 11.

21. B. B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge, 1991) 182–83.

22. Kevin Robb describes the eighth century’s receptivity to the uses writing could afford in the following way: “Into this environment, one in which men and women at every level of society knew no writing but heard vast amounts of poetry, the alphabet silently intrudes.” K. Robb, *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1994) 22. For discussion of the composition of early inscriptions according to the principles of oral poetics, see, in addition to Powell and Robb, J. Day, “Interactive Offerings: Early Greek Dedicatory Epigrams and Ritual,” *HSCP* 96 (1994) 40–41; G. Nagy, *Pindar’s Homer* (Baltimore, 1990) 18–19, n. 7; 168, n. 95; idem, “Homeric Questions,” *TAPA* 122 (1992) 35–36, both cited by Day.

Until the mid-sixth century, dedicatory inscriptions typically present the object upon which they are written as speaking. This is because their primary function was not only to record spoken language but, perhaps more importantly, to perpetuate it.²³ As Day has put it, "Writing on the object is substituted for live performance. However, this 'performance in writing' remains incomplete until people read out the inscription, lending their voices to the monument's utterance, producing sounds which in turn produce meaning for their own ears and for anyone in earshot."²⁴ The famous seventh-century bronze statue dedicated to Apollo by Mantiklos illustrates this function well. The pair of hexameters incised on the figure's legs read:²⁵

Μάντικλός μ' ἀνέθεκε φεκαβόλοι ἀργυροτόξοι
τᾷς {δ} δε|κάτας· τὸ δέ, Φοῖβε, δίδοι χαρί|φετταν ἀμοιβ[άν].

Mantiklos dedicated me to the Far-Darter of the Silver Bow out of his tithe. Do you, Oh Phoibos, grant a *charis*-filled return.

As Day has argued, by referring back to the act of its own dedication, this inscription records and commemorates that occasion. Moreover, whenever a passerby reads the inscription out loud, "Mantiklos' act [of dedication] is spoken aloud,"²⁶ and a new verbal gift of praise is thereby given. The reader not only recalls the original act of dedication, s/he acts as a substitute for the absent Mantiklos, and in this way perpetuates the honor he has given to the god. Svenbro describes the interaction between object and intended addressee in the following way: "[the object mediates] between the giver and the god, pointing out the value of the dedication, [and] prompting the desired response. . . . The donor may be absent, but he has left an alter ego to state his claims."²⁷ Day carries this point

23. For the former function, cf. Powell (above, n. 21) 181. CEG 413, an inscribed marble column, probably from Delos or Paros (late sixth century), voices its own "boast":

Ἄρτεμι, σοὶ τὸδ' ἄγαλμα Τελεστοδί|χη μ' ἀνέθηκεν |
Ἀσφαλίου μήτηρ, Θερσέλεω θυγάτηρ.
τὸ Παρίο ποίημα Κριτωνίδεω εὐχομ[αι εἶναι]

Artemis, to you Telestodike, mother of Asphalios, daughter of
Therseleos, set up this offering.

It is my boast that I am the work of Parian Kritonides.

For a discussion of "the written word as a cue for oral performance," and the visual representation of reading in early Greek art, see J. M. Hurwit, "The words in the image: Orality, literacy, and early Greek art," *Word & Image* 6 (1990) 180–97.

24. J. Day, "A 'Reader's Response' to Archaic Epigrams." After Tea Talk, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 29 March, 1994. I thank the author for sending me a xerox copy of this text.

25. CEG 326; G. M. A. Richter, *Kouros*³ (London, 1970), figs. 9–11; A. P. Kozloff and D. G. Mitten, eds., *The Gods Delight* (Cleveland, 1988), no. 2, pp. 52–57; LIMC 2 s.v. Apollon no. 40, pp. 194, 314, pl. 185; Day (above, n. 22) 39 and n. 7.

26. Day (above, n.22).

27. J. Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Lloyd (Ithaca and London, 1993) 28ff.; cf. D. T. Steiner, *The Tyrant's Writ: Myths and Images of Writing in*

one important step further by showing how the dedication is not (re-)activated until someone stops and reads out loud the inscribed words.²⁸ The inscription on Mantiklos' thighs, when read out loud, can communicate the same message that his original words to Apollo would have communicated.²⁹ The statue itself, however, is something more: it is an artifact that when set up prominently in a sanctuary will display Mantiklos' act of dedication and invite any viewer as well as any reader to appreciate his status, wealth, and privileged relation to Apollo. By what they represent both verbally and visually, then, statue and inscription affirm "the dedicator's place in the social order by publicly asserting his . . . claim on people's admiration."³⁰

As Day has shown in detail, as time went on, the technology of writing was adapted to communicate such a message ever more successfully. The third-person ἀνέθηκε formula that becomes common after the end of the sixth century commemorates the dedicator's original act of giving. In addition, each time someone views the offering and then reads the inscription accompanying it, s/he reenacts the original occasion of its dedication and in this way gives again the gift of praise. The effect of a passerby reading a third-person ἀνέθηκε formula is mimetic, as Day points out, and "would be felt most strongly where the epithet is in the vocative, as in *CEG* 197 (Athenian Akropolis, ca. 510):"³¹

[π]ότνι Ἀθηναία, σοι Τιμοκράτης ἀνέθεκε[ν]
 ηυιδς Ἀρισταίχμο, παῖ Διδς αἰγίοχο.

Lady Athena, child of Aegis-bearing Zeus,
 Timokrates, the son of Aristaiakhmos, dedicated this to you.

Ancient Greece (Princeton, 1994) 50–52; M. Burzachechi, "Oggetti Parlanti nelle Epigrafi Greche," *Epigraphica* 24 (1962) 3–52 (a catalogue of the kinds of artifacts that "speak"); D. T. Steiner, "Pindar's 'Oggetti Parlanti,'" *HSCP* 95 (1993) 159–80.

28. Robb suggests that such first-person inscriptions were not meant to be read, but "they permitted the object, as surrogate for the donor, to *speak* continuously before the god." (Robb, above, n. 22, 59). Steiner follows Svenbro in viewing the object (inscription alone, or inscribed statue or statuette, e.g.) itself as speaking: "The first-person voice guarantees that the request will not go unheard: the donor may be absent, but he has left an alter ego to state his claims." Steiner 1994 (above, n. 27) 77. Cf. J. Svenbro (above, n. 27), especially chapters 1–3 and 9. Cf. R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992) 63–64. Day argues in detail for an alternative interpretation of such inscriptions, that is, that visitors to sanctuaries were meant to read out loud these texts, and in so doing stand in for the original "ego." "Readers . . . spoke the role of another 'ego,' . . . that is, readers as hearers of their own voices and others in earshot (including the god). The *Ich-rede*, then, encodes an intended, presumably typical context of reception, the acts of reading aloud, hearing, even viewing." J. Day, "Epigram and Reader: Generic Force as (Re-)Activation of Ritual," in M. Depew and D. Obbink, eds., *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society* (Harvard, forthcoming). I find Day's detailed argument, which takes into consideration diverse evidence to reconstruct the context of such communicative situations, convincing, and base my own approach to inscribed prayers and votive reliefs (below) upon it.

29. On the issue of whether the statue represents Apollo or its dedicator, see below, n. 64.

30. Day (above, n. 24).

31. Day (above, n. 22) 54.

The passerby who reads out loud this inscription calls once again upon Athena. He does this not in his own voice, but by pronouncing Timokrates' name, and by using the same verb and the same vocative that Timokrates would have used, he speaks as a stand-in for the original dedicator. The result is a perpetuation of Timokrates' gift of τιμή to Athena.

We have seen how the force of εὔχεσθαι and its nominal correlates is polyvalent, encompassing in one word what English "vow," "assert," and "pray" express discretely. Thus it should come as no surprise that not only do dedicatory inscriptions typically announce both their donor's status and his or her fulfillment of a vow, but that they also very often contain a request for the god's future care. Day has analyzed in detail how a dedication such as Mantiklos' involves these three functions: Μάντικλός μ' ἀνέθεκε "encodes a basic act of offering," the mention of a tithe perhaps implying that it fulfilled a vow. Moreover, the imperative δίδου χαρίζετταν ἀμοιβ[άν] transcribes, and thus makes available for future reading and re-performance, a request: the god's grateful, or *charis*-filled, return for Mantiklos' gift. A close literary parallel to Mantiklos' prayer is *Odyssey* 3.58 (Mentor/Athena to Poseidon): δίδου χαρίεσσαν ἀμοιβήν. Mantiklos' request, and others like it, illustrate a convergence between dedicatory and hymnic language and occasion. "The representation of ritual in [Mantiklos'] statue and the rest of the epigram would guide readers toward the ritual semantics of *charis* seen in hymnic requests of like for like."³² Hymns are a community's verbal gift of praise to a god, and typically close with a generic sign-off formula and/or a request for a *charis*-filled return.³³ Dedications that invite a god's appreciation of the gift's beauty and worth perform on a private level of self-representation and display what hymn performs more publicly: the giving of a prized gift to a god, in return for which the giver asks for the god's own reciprocal gift of *charis*.³⁴

Many dedicatory inscriptions, however, include a request for something more specific, and therefore diverge somewhat from this common dedicatory pattern. While CEG 334, a sixth-century *boustrophedon* inscription on red tile from Boeotia, includes the expected request for the return of ἀρετή and ὄλβος, it also asks for Apollo's protection:³⁵

32. Day (above, n. 28) 14.

33. Just one example among many: *h.Hom.* XV.9: Χαῖρε ἄναξ Διὸς υἱέ· δίδου δ' ἀρετὴν τε καὶ ὄλβον. I examine the generic status of hymns as large-scale offerings of verbal praise in "Greek Hymn: Representing the Poet and the Community," in *Matrices of Genre* (above, n. 28).

34. Many examples of inscriptions that employ this language of reciprocity and assertion could be cited, e.g.: CEG 40 (fifth-century Antipolis); 370 (sixth-century Laconia); *IG* I² 631, 686, 688, 834 (Athens Akropolis).

35. In the following, Friedländer and Hoffliet sum up well the social aims of this and most dedicatory inscriptions from the Archaic and early Classical periods: "The contrast between the plain object and the grand style of the dedicatory verses is . . . remarkable. . . . These workmen raised themselves above the level of the *banaios* with the help of Homeric poetry, the language being given only a slightly local touch (δίδου Boeotian = δίδου). Such a dedication takes, no doubt, the place of a

καλφὸν ἄγαλμα φάνακτι [εκαβόλοι Ἀ|πόλονοι ·]
 [ca. 3]ορίδας ποίφεςέ μ' Ἐχέστροτ[ος· αὐτὰρ ἔπεμψαν ·
 ———— | ————]ον Πτοίεφι,
 τὸς τύ, φάναχ[ις, φεφύλαχσο, δίδοι δ' ἀρ(ε)τάν [τε καὶ ὄλβον].

Beautiful thing of delight for Far-Darting Apollo ... Echestrotos
 made me; but who sent me to the god of Ptoion were ... and ...
 Them do you, O Lord, guard and give *aretê* and wealth.

However the beginning of CEG 358 (Corinth, late sixth century) is to be restored,³⁶ it ends: δίδοι χαρίεσα[ν ἀφ]ορμάν, “give gracious support to our enterprise.” Adapting the formula δὸς χαρίεσσιν ἀμοιβάν, the dedicator asks for the god’s help in a particular situation of need.³⁷

CEG 414 (Paros, ca. 500) was inscribed on the base of a statue:

Δημοκύδης τοδ' ἄγαλμα Τε|λεστοδίκη τ' ἀπὸ κοινῶν |
 εὐχσάμενοι στῆσαν παρ|θένει Ἀρτέμιδι |
 σεμνῶι ἐνὶ ζαπέδωι κό|ρηι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο, |
 τῶν γενεῆν βίότον τ' αἰ|ῶχσ' ἐν ἀπημοσύνηι.

Demokydes and Telestodike, having made a vow / said a prayer,
 erected this offering in common to the maiden Artemis on her
 holy ground, to the daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus. To their race
 and their substance give increase without pain.

The aorist participle εὐξάμενοι records the dedicator’s original vow and prayer, and when read out loud would, I suggest, enact once again that utterance in both its senses. The dedicated inscription is the fulfillment of the vow; it also scripts future pronouncements of the request it voices.³⁸ By pronouncing the names of Demokydes and Telestodike, as well as the divine addressee of their original εὐχή, the reader stands in for them and voices their original request, as it may have been hoped, at a time (or at times) when Artemis is in her sanctuary to hear it.

We may see more clearly how these personal nouns function in inscribed prayers if we compare them to an inscription such as the “Paeon Erythraeus” (PMG 934). This fourth-century text, which is part hymn,³⁹ part prayer, is preceded by

modern advertisement. . . .” P. Friedländer and H. B. Hoffleit, *Epigrammata: Greek Inscriptions in Verse from the Beginnings to the Persian Wars* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948) 41.

36. From the examples of IG IV 214 and 215 Friedländer and Hoffleit (above, n. 35, p. 36) restore — [μ' ἀνέθηκε Ποτειδάφωνι φάνακτι].

37. Cf., for example, Theognis 11–14:

Ἄρτεμι θηροφόνη, θύγατερ Διός, ἦν Ἀγαμέμνων
 εἴσας' ὅτ' ἐς Τροίην ἔπλεε νηυσὶ θοαῖς
 εὐχομένωι μοι κλυθι, κακὰς δ' ἀπὸ κῆρας ἄλλακε·
 σοὶ μὲν τοῦτο, θεά, σμικρόν, ἐμοὶ δὲ μέγα.

38. For the aorist participle and its use in Homeric formulae, cf. Muellner (above, n. 1) 31.

39. Cf. its beginning, Παῖ᾽ ἄνα κλυτὸ[μ]ητιν αἰέσατε / κοῦροι . . . , which indicates the presence of a chorus singing and thus honoring the god.

a *lex sacra* that details its use: those who came to the sanctuary of Apollo and Asklepios were to sleep in the sanctuary, and on the next day sacrifice and sing paeans to the gods. The second of these paeans ends with the following request:

χαῖρέ μοι, ἵλαος δ' ἐπινίσσο
τὰν ἀμὰν πόλιν εὐρύχορον,
ἱὲ Παιάν,
δὸς δ' ἡμᾶς χαίροντας ὄρᾶν φάος
ἀελίου δοκίμους σὺν ἀγακλυτῶι
εὐαγεῖ Ὑγίειαι·
ἱὴ Παιάν, Ἀσκληπιὸν
δαίμονα κλεινότατον
ἱὲ Παιάν.

Be greeted (χαῖρε), and come with kindness to my city with its broad dancing-floors—Ie Paian—and grant that we may with rejoicing (χαίροντας) see the light of the sun, being fit in the company of radiant Hygieia—Ie Paian, Asklepios most famous god, Ie Paian.

The text recalls the language and function of many private inscriptions in its request that the gods receive the *charis* this gift of song offers them, as well as in its request for a specific return: the restoration of health. The first-person pronouns and adjectives (ἀμὰν, ἡμᾶς) open the text up to the voice of anyone present at the sanctuary who is seeking a cure.⁴⁰ To this function we may compare the use of proper names in inscriptions dedicated by individuals, where, as we have seen, the dedicator's name is always present in order to ensure that future readings will enable his or her own gift and request to be acknowledged by the god they address.

The earliest inscribed prayers, then, conform to the usage of εὐχεσθαι in the earliest Greek literary texts. In both contexts, prayers situate a claim on a god's care by referring to a speaker's status and identity; in the case of inscribed prayers, the sign of this status is the dedication itself. Inscribed prayers, moreover, attempt to ensure the success of the two-way communication that εὐχεσθαι denotes by the use of writing that is meant to be read, and thus spoken, out loud. Faraone has suggested that the earliest inscribed curses, which he would date to the eighth century, employ traditional metrical and verbal formulae that were developed for specific ritual purposes, and that Homer and other poets adopted this language for poetic emphasis or dramatic impact. "We must," he urges, "leave open the possibility that traditional hymnic, oracular or incantatory forms could have been

40. The refrain, as Bremer remarks, was probably sung by a chorus. Bremer in Versnel (above, n. 1) 209. A similar function is suggested by other texts, such as the so-called "Hymn to the Kouros" (*I.Cret.* III 2), which, with its insistent demand for the vegetation god's return in spring (θόρε, strophes 5 and 6), is a prayer sung by and for the entire community. Cf. *inter alia* M. L. West, "The Dictaeon Hymn to the Kouros," *JHS* 85 (1965) 149–59; Bremer in Versnel (above, n. 1) 205–206.

regularly borrowed or adapted by the narrative poets and not *vice versa*.”⁴¹ To his list I would add “prayer,” and I would allow the “vice versa.” The functions of εὔχεσθαι that Adkins and Muellner find in the Homeric texts are common in inscriptions from the Archaic through the Classical periods: religious influence influences poetry; poetry influences religious usage.

The technology for preserving and enacting prayers was refined over time, first of all with regard to curses. As Graf, Faraone, and others have shown in detail, curses are prayers.⁴² One difference, however, between curses and prayer “proper” is that a curse would have been typically spoken not in public, but in private: the target must not hear the words meant to do him harm. Perhaps for this reason the usefulness of writing for curses became appreciated relatively early, and was adapted accordingly. Faraone has traced how the earliest *defixiones*, which are Sicilian and Attic (sixth–fifth centuries B.C.E.), make only limited use of writing, and, in line with what we have seen about first-person dedicatory inscriptions, clearly subordinate its use to the spoken performance of the curse. These texts are simply lists of names, with the performative verb of binding that would have been uttered aloud during the ritual omitted.⁴³ As time goes on, however, and literacy becomes more widespread, *tabellae* become more complex and, in a process that we will see parallels the developments in inscribed prayer “proper,” they come to represent more of the original ritual. First-person performative verbs, for example, enable a reader to pronounce the curse, and thereby to reactivate it, at any time. By the third century, the name(s) of the deity or deities who appear as overseers of the act of cursing are common,⁴⁴ and by the first century C.E. lead tablets represent the entire spoken and acted charm. Theocritus’ *Simaetha Idyll*—a highly self-conscious, mimetic recreation of a practice rooted in everyday life—is a further stage in this development of the potential of writing and representation.

Unlike the prayers we have examined, however, most curses were not meant to be read, and thus reactivated, by another human being. It is precisely because the problem of access to a god’s attention is the same with curses as with other prayers that a large number of curses were inscribed onto lead and then placed out of any (living) human being’s view in a grave or a well. That is, they were placed in a location where the chthonic god they address would have been most likely to

41. C. A. Faraone, “Taking the ‘Nestor’s Cup Inscription’ Seriously: Erotic Magic and Conditional Curses in the Earliest Inscribed Hexameters,” *ClAnt* 15 (1996) 86–87.

42. Magical spells are often called εὔχαι in the papyri, and the form they take is the same as any prayer: invocation, “establishment of credentials,” and request. Where curses diverge from prayers proper is in ritual, since “The rituals of the magician put him in opposition to ordinary, ‘religious’ ritual and isolate him from his fellow man” (F. Graf [above, n. 12] 189 and 196 especially). See also C. A. Faraone, “The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells, in *Magika Hiera* (above, n. 12) 3–32.

43. Faraone (above, n. 41) 5.

44. Faraone (above, n. 41) 5, with examples.

come across them.⁴⁵ The intended reader of these texts, unlike prayers inscribed on a *pinax* or on stone and left in the public realm, can be none other than the god they address and whose presence they often implore. In this context, it is significant that lead, the material on which most of these curses were inscribed, was, since it was both inexpensive and malleable, a common medium for letter writing in the Classical period.⁴⁶ Some lead curse tablets were actually fashioned to look like letters. They were rolled up and inscribed on the outside with the names of the chthonic gods the curse inside invoked, and dispatched to the gods' address, as it were, in the same way a letter would be sent to a human recipient.⁴⁷ These texts illustrate vividly how, just as it would be important for a human recipient to read a letter addressed to him or her, the communication a prayer supposes cannot be completed unless the god reads the text. *DT* 43–44 is interesting in this regard. The author of the curse actually says that the efficacy of his request depends upon the god's reading the inscribed tablet:

Ὅταν σύ, ὦ Πασιάναξ, τὰ γρ[ά]μμα-
τα ταῦτα ἀναγνῶς· ἀλλὰ [ο]ὔτε
ποτὲ σύ, ὦ Πασιάνα[ξ], τὰ γρ[ά]μμα-
τα ταῦτα ἀνα(να)γν[ώ]σει [οὔ]τε
ποτὲ Νεοφάνης Ἀριστάνδρῳ
δίκαν ἐποί[σ]ει . . .

When you, Pasianax, read these letters—
But if you do not read these letters, then
Neophanes will never punish Aristandros . . .

It is typical in curses for the *defigens* to call upon chthonic gods to hear and thereby to accomplish the curse. Here the activity of reading is exactly parallel to

45. For example, a first-century lead tablet found in a cistern in the Athenian Agora addresses the κύριαι νύμφαι who were probably believed to be resident in the cistern's waters; see D. Jordan, "Defixiones from the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 54 (1985) 207. Compare also the lead tablet edited by Lenormant (*RhM* 9 [1854] 370; cited in full by Wünsch, *IG* III.III, p. xv), lines 14–20:

Ἐκάτη Ἐκάτη ἀληθὴ ἔλθετε καὶ τε-
λειώσατέ μοι τὴν πραγματείαν ταύτην, Ἑρμῇ χθό-
νιε Ἀρχεδαμα φαχεν [σ]εφευσσερεταθουμισον καὶ κτ.
καὶ Πλούτων Ψεσεμμεγ[α]δων μααρχαμα καὶ Κόρη
Ἑρεσχιγαλ ζαβαρβαθου[χ] καὶ Φερσεφόνη Ζαυδαχθου-
μαρ καὶ δαίμονες οἳ ἐν [τ]ούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ ἔστε συν-
έχετέ μοι τῷ (Ι)ωνι[χ]ῷ
Ἀννιανοῦ τὴν ἰσχὺν . . .

46. *IG* III.III.102 and 103 expressly call themselves ἐπιστολαί. See D. Jordan, "Two Inscribed Lead Tablets from a Well in the Athenian Kerameikos," *AM* 95 (1980) 226, n. 6.

47. Cf. e.g., *DTA* 103, which reads, "I send this letter to Hermes and Persephone." (Faraone, above, n. 41). See also Thomas (above, n. 28) 73 and n. 63 for further bibliography on the use of lead in letter writing, which was at first confined to long-distance business transactions; see as well W. H. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, 1989) 88ff.

hearing: the curse will be effective if the god simply reads the text which has been left for him.

The use of writing to perpetuate a “proper” prayer, that is, a prayer that is not part of an inscription that is also dedicatory and that is not a curse, is relatively late and relatively rare. It may be that the use of performative verbs and deictic language that had become so common in the functioning of *tabellae* influenced this development, especially since inscribed prayers, like curses, come over time to represent more and more of their original ritual, and thus to ensure ever more carefully a god’s full acknowledgment of the prayer’s original context. An inscription from Phrygia, dating from the second century C.E., is a good example of this.⁴⁸

[. βρέχε γαῖαν,
καρπῷ [ὅπ]ως βρέ[θη καὶ ἐν]ι σταχύεσσι τεθήλῃ.
τ[αῦ]τα [σε] Μητρεόδωρος ἐγὼ λίτομαι, Κρονίδα Ζεῦ,
ἀμφὶ τεοῖς βωμοῖσιν ἐπήρρατα θύματα ῥέζων.

[Zeus . . . wet the ea]rth, that she become heavy with fruit and flower with ears of corn. This I, Metreodoros, beg of you, Zeus son of Kronos, as I perform delightful sacrifice on your altars.

If a prayer like Khryses’ is typical of actual spoken prayers, this inscribed prayer contains some important differences. The proper name, followed by the emphatic personal pronoun, a first-person verb, and a present participle make it abundantly clear just who is speaking and making an offering to Zeus. Unlike speakers, whose identities the god, if attendant, would spontaneously recognize, the authors of inscribed prayers, as we have seen, identify not only their divine addressee but also themselves, focusing the god’s attention on the origin of words that are now detached from their original speaker and so require further, often emphatic, identification—as here, for example, with a proper name and the deictic first-person pronoun: Μητρεόδωρος ἐγὼ λίτομαι . . . ῥέζων.⁴⁹ The proper noun, with its definite reference to its speaker, suggests that this text is not quite a precise record of a spoken prayer. The inscription’s performative verbs, together with the emphatic identification of the speaker and his reference to the altar (the inscription might well have been placed near it), bring the whole εὐχή-occasion repeatedly to life in the here-and-now, whenever anyone reads the text.⁵⁰

48. A. Körte, *AM* 25(1900) 421, n. 33; Graf (above, n. 12) 199.

49. The verb is commonly used to refer, in literary prayers, to a sacrifice as it is being made. Cf., e.g., *Od.* 1.61 and 3.5: ῥέζω ἱερά; also *Pind. P.* 10.34; *Il.* 2.400; 8.150, etc.

50. The following must have been meant to perform the same sort of function. It is a fragment of text preserved on an ostrakon from Karanis (2nd–3rd century C.E.):

Διόσχοροι Σωτήρες . . . [. . .]
Μουρανόν, Διόσχ[οροι] {Σω}
Σωτήρες . [. . .]
Διόσχ[οροι Σωτήρες]

One intended reader of such texts would have been a human passerby, who, as with Day's dedicatory inscriptions, might read the text out loud and thereby reenact the original occasion at a time when the god might be in the sanctuary to hear it. In this scenario, just as with an inscribed object, inanimate until writing gives it the power of speech, "writing is the servant of the spoken word, a means of communicating what would usually be . . . said."⁵¹ Metreodorus' prayer, even though it is relatively late, employs a strategy common in the Archaic period, when writing reinforced speech but remained subordinate to it.

It may, however, also suggest another scenario. As we have seen with curses—at least by the late Classical period—gods, it seems, could read. It is also clear from the changes in inscribed prayers "proper" that the addressed god is meant to read some of these inscriptions, and that this act is functionally parallel to hearing (and thus responding to) the original spoken prayer. How this new "ability" was integrated into the practice of prayer and ritual action is made explicit in a first-century C.E. prayer to Achilles Pontarches from the north shore of the Black Sea. The cult of the hero flourished in this area from the sixth century, and was especially popular among the sailors who traveled in this area. Inscribed on a marble plaque, the text ends:⁵²

ἀλλ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, δέ[ξαι θυ]σίην καὶ εἴλλαος ἴσθι
ἡμετέ[ραν αἰών μοῦσαν ἀπὸ γραφίδος.

Achilles, receive my sacrifice and be gracious,
hearing/perceiving my muse from this tablet.⁵³

This inscription fully utilizes writing and reading in the mechanics of prayer. It suggests two scenarios: Achilles might hear the author's words spoken if some passerby were to read them out loud. On the other hand, the hero could also be

For the broken text in lines 1–2 Youtie suggests φυλάξατε or σώσατε Μουρανόν. H. C. Youtie, "Ostraca from Karanis," *ZPE* 16 (1975) 272ff.

51. The formulation is Thomas' (above, n. 28) 62.

52. *SEG* XL.610. The entire text reads:

[...]Ο [...] [...]
[...] Ἀχιλλεῖ Πον-
[τάρχῃ]ι χαριστήριον
vacat
[Κυκλο]τερὲς κτεάτισμα, θεῶν | [περικαλλὲς] ὄχημα
νῆσσε περικλύ[στη], κύμασι γηθομένη,
σὸν πε[ιδον] εἴληχεν Θέτιδος γόνος αἰ[μα]θ' ὑπερ]θε
Αἰακίδης Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀθα[νατοῖ]σιν ἴσος·
ἀλλ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, δέ[ξαι θυ]σίην καὶ εἴλλαος ἴσθι
ἡμετέ[ραν αἰών] μοῦσαν ἀπὸ γραφίδος

For the a detailed discussion of the cult and a reconstruction of its origins in the popularity of the *Aithiopis*, see G. Hedreen, "The Cult of Achilles in the Euxine," *Hesperia* 60 (1991) 313–30.

53. If γραφίς may be so understood. Its sense as "graving tool" (e.g., *Hymn.Is.* 11) is difficult to understand here. Cf. *AP* 5.275, where it refers not to an embroidering needle, but the embroidery itself; in the plural it commonly meant "paintings."

envisaged as reading the words himself, “perceiving” them ἀπὸ γραφίδος.⁵⁴ In either situation Achilles would be asked both to receive the speaker’s sacrifice and to appreciate his literary ability as an equally fine gift; in return Achilles’ favor is requested. Reading an inscribed prayer has become equivalent to the addressed god’s hearing it spoken; both receptions logically entail the recognition of words and other gifts offered, and the god’s due response.

In the Archaic and Classical periods it was hoped that prayers would be heard by the gods they addressed either upon the occasion of their utterance or when read aloud by a third party. As we have seen, however, particularly in the case of curses, by the early Hellenistic period a prayer could also be meant to be seen and read by a god, and in this way “heard,” the greater potential for successful communication having been enhanced by the superior technology of the time. It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace in detail the change from inscriptions that were simulacra of spoken prayers, meant to be spoken and heard, to inscriptions that fully utilized writing and reading in their functioning. By the beginning of the fifth century, however, a new way of representing, and thus enabling, successful communication with the divine had become available.

3. VISUAL IMAGES OF INTERACTION

The majority of sculpted votive offerings from the early Archaic to the Hellenistic period corroborate the account of inscribed prayers that I have suggested. Votive reliefs typically depict worshippers offering gifts and a god or gods accepting them. That is, they represent visually what we have seen inscribed prayers represent verbally, ever more fully over time: successful, or putatively successful, communications with the divine—an act of worship made visible with reference to a listening or watching deity.⁵⁵

Van Straten sums up the function of votive offerings in a sanctuary in the following way:

In view of the ephemeral nature of the animal and cereal offerings, it was often considered a good idea to include a reference to these in the

54. Vinogradov emended ἀίων to ἐστῶν, presumably because he understood the text to be something the god would simply look at. But ἀίων may be more appropriate if the two functions of the inscriptions that I have suggested are understood.

55. The formulation is Van Straten’s: “Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer,” in Versnel (above, n. 1) 83. Van Straten is the only scholar to have taken this function into account, although he does not develop it within the scope of his study. Other studies: W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge, 1902); F. Eckstein, *Anathemata: Studien zu den Weihgeschenken strengen Stils im Heiligtum von Olympia* (Berlin, 1969); G. Neumann, *Probleme des griechischen Weihreliefs* (Tübingen, 1979) = *Tübinger Studien zur Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* III; F. T. Van Straten, “Votives and Votaries in Greek Sanctuaries,” in *Le Sanctuaire Grec* (above, n. 19) 247–90; idem, “Gifts for the Gods,” in Versnel (above, n. 1).

more lasting *ex votos*. In its most simple form, such a votive offering might be a replica or depiction of the sacrificed animal or the sacrificial cakes. Alternatively, one might choose a representation of the worshiper bringing these gifts, or, even more elaborate, a more or less complete sacrificial scene.⁵⁶

Votive reliefs typically represent the visual analogue of prayer: the offering of a gift to a god and the god's participation in the interchange. Also like inscribed prayers, these representations, as I shall argue, enable the reenactment of an offering whenever they are viewed by a human or a divine visitor to the sanctuary.

From the Archaic period there are numerous examples from sanctuaries throughout Greece of what Van Straten calls votive offerings in their "most simple form": bronze, stone, and terracotta statuettes that represent sacrificial animals, cakes or fruit. In cases where it would have been either inconvenient or too expensive to offer an animal for sacrifice, these figures were in many instances offered to a god in place of the real thing.⁵⁷ Such representations could have been, that is, the offering itself, and because of their durability would have possessed an advantage over a perishable offering. Unlike an animal led to an altar and there sacrificed to a god, such figures remain in the sanctuary as signs of their dedicator's act of worship, his honor for the god, and hope for future care. They represent visually, that is, what εὐχεσθαι expresses verbally.

The practice of dedicating images of animals or other gifts in place of the real thing is not confined to ancient Greece. An informative parallel may be found in Mesopotamian sanctuaries from the first millennium B.C.E. Postgate has discussed the function of clay models of dogs found in a sanctuary of Gula, a healing deity, in Sippar (northern Babylonia).⁵⁸ It is clear that these animal figurines, which correspond to numerous sculpted dogs and other sacrificial animals that have been found in other contemporary sanctuaries, are gifts to the deity, given in the place of an actual sacrifice. This interpretation is corroborated by inscriptions on the animals of which the following is typical: "To Gula, the lady of the Egalmah temple, lady of life, great physician, giver of the breath of life, his lady—Illi[. . .]daya prayed and she heard his prayer . . . Atanah-ili . . . dedicated the dog."⁵⁹ These statuettes and their function correspond to numerous replicas

56. Van Straten (above, n. 2) 53.

57. Van Straten (in Versnel, above, n. 1) 87–88, for discussion, bibliography, and inscriptional evidence for this interpretation. Some statuettes of animals bear inscriptions that make their function unmistakable. Cf., for example, IGA 385 (Samos; on a small bronze rabbit): Τῷ / Ἀπῶλωνι τῷ / Πριη[ν]ῇ μ' ἀνέθηκεν Ἡφαιστίων; a bronze sheep from the Athenian Akropolis, also inscribed on its belly (Athens NM 6695, cited by Van Straten [in Versnel, above, n. 1] 87, n. 111): Πέσιδος θυεσσία.

58. J. N. Postgate, "Text and figure in ancient Mesopotamia: Match and mismatch," in C. Renfrew and E. B. W. Zubrow, eds., *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology* (Cambridge, 1994) 176–84. I owe this reference to John Bennett.

59. Postgate 176–77.

of animals that have been found in sanctuaries throughout Greece and that are meant to stand in for the sacrifice of an actual animal.

What is notable for our purposes, however, is that in these same Mesopotamian sanctuaries an equally impressive number of sculpted images of human figures have been found. These figures usually represent dedicants in a kneeling position, making some gesture to indicate supplication. In this they conform to statue types going back to the third millennium in Mesopotamia that are erected “in the temple, where they would pray unceasingly to the deity,” a function “explicitly stated on occasion. One statue inscription, for example, says ‘I brought this statue to my Lady’s attention, may it speak my prayers.’”⁶⁰ The sculpted animal figurines in these sanctuaries are substitutes for real animal sacrifices. The human figures, on the other hand, Postgate identifies as effigies, or simulacra of dedicants themselves, whose function is to act for the supplicant when s/he is no longer in the temple and the god’s presence.

Statuettes representing worshippers offering gifts to gods have been found in sanctuaries all over Greece, and their function would seem to parallel that of the figures Postgate discusses.⁶¹ Figurines of bronze, or, more commonly, clay, carry a bowl or some other ritual utensil, a wreath, fruit, or an animal marked for sacrifice, such as a lamb or a cock. Many of the Archaic and Classical *korai* dedicated in the Samian Heraion and on the Athenian Akropolis, moreover, were clearly meant to represent their donor, their outstretched hand holding an offering for the goddess.⁶² As Day has pointed out about the function of these figures, “Many *korai* dedicated on the Athenian Akropolis hold offerings of crowns, flowers, fruit, rabbits, or birds in one hand, and often that hand extends outward, forming the statue’s visual focal point, perhaps originally aimed at an altar.”⁶³

It is not difficult to see how writing could enhance the function of keeping always before the god’s (and the public’s) eye such an act of worship. Mantiklos’ bronze statue may or may not represent the dedicator himself,⁶⁴ but if it does, it would resemble the Mesopotamian figures analyzed by Postgate not only in

60. Postgate 177–78.

61. For a discussion of the wide variety and provenance of these figures, see Rouse (above, n. 55) 283–95.

62. See, e.g., G. M. A. Richter, *Korai: Archaic Greek Maidens* (London, 1968) 3–4. An obvious example is the early Archaic statue group from Samos signed by Geneleos (Richter 49–50, nos. 67 and 68, figs. 217–24). An inscription on the base identifies one *korê* and her function: ἡμᾶς ἐποιήσε Γενέλεος, “Geneleos made us,” continuing [...]όχη εἰμι [ῆ] καὶν[έ]θηκε τῇ Ἥρῃ, “I am ... oche, who has also dedicated it to Hera.”

63. Day (above, n. 24). An example is the “Antenor *korê*.” Richter (above, n. 62) 69–70, no. 110, figs. 336–40.

64. Day takes the statuette to represent Apollo, and its function “to [bring] the god before a viewer’s eyes in a kind of epiphany.” Day (above, n. 22) 39; Palagia’s assessment (*LIMC* 2 s.v. Apollon, p. 194: “Deutung auf Apollon sehr wahrscheinlich.” See also P. Pucci in M. Detienne, ed., *Les savoirs de l’écriture* (Lille, 1988 [*Cahiers philologiques, Serie apparat critique* 14]) 480–97, whom Day cites. Scholars are divided, however, as with other early *kouros*-type figures, over whether the figure represents a god or the dedicator himself. The figure’s left hand could have held either

preserving Mantiklos' verbal offering and making it available to the god whenever anybody should read it out loud, but also in preserving for the eyes of either a passerby or for the god himself Mantiklos' act of dedication. Others have emphasized how these and similar statues are "read" by visitors to a sanctuary, who interact with them to perpetuate the "self-assertive display" we have seen to be one of the primary connotations of εὐχέσθαι.⁶⁵ It is important for my purposes that these figures also perpetuate the ritual act of dedication for the god's eyes to behold.⁶⁶

As we have seen, for a prayer to be successful, a god must hear it or read it, but it is also crucial that the god see the offering that would accompany and commend it.⁶⁷ No prayer is complete without a sacrifice or an offering, and no amount of after-the-fact reading of an inscription such as Metreodorus' ("This I . . . beg you, Zeus . . . , while I am performing delightful sacrifice on your altar") will allow a god belatedly to see an animal being sacrificed. Just as a prayer is either heard or not, and its request thereby actively regarded, so an offering is either observed and accepted or it is not. If an important purpose of inscribed prayers is to enable their reenactment, then an important purpose of these sculpted artifacts, besides providing a public record, advertisement, and perpetuation of an offering, is also to enable the god's future attendance to the well being of their dedicator. Votive statues keep open the lines of human-divine communication. Like their Mesopotamian counterparts, they may be understood as simulacra of an original donor, perpetuating his or her presence and actions until the god concerned should visit his sanctuary and attend to his supplications.

Such statues, however, are large-scale, expensive gifts, and were unavailable to all but the wealthy. Beginning around the end of the seventh century, votive reliefs begin to make this function available to a wide portion of the populace.⁶⁸ Votive reliefs, moreover, have a distinct advantage over statues, since they can represent more completely what sculptures can only do in part. Votive reliefs

a bow or a spear; Alscher and Vermeule have interpreted the presence of holes in the forehead and crown as evidence for the attachment of a helmet. I find this interpretation, i.e., that the figure represents Mantiklos himself, more satisfying, given Day's interpretation of the function of the inscription. For discussion and bibliography, see Kozloff and Mitten (above, n. 25) 54–57.

65. Day, above, n. 24; Svenbro (above, n. 27); See also R. Osborne, "The Viewing and Obscuring of the Parthenon Frieze," *JHS* (1987) 96–105; L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* (Ithaca and London, 1991) ch. 1; eadem, "The Economy of Kudos," in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke, eds., *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics* (Cambridge, 1993) 131–63.

66. Steiner (above, n. 27) 79, addresses this point in citing Demosthenes' outrage at the bowls placed in the temples by his opponent Androtion. (Dem. Ag. And. 22.72–73) Drawing attention to the inscriptions on the bowls, made at Androtion's direction, Demosthenes asks how it is that "the man whom the laws prohibit from entering sacred places on account of his multiple crimes is allowed to thrust his written name into the divine presence through the ostentatious dedications."

67. Cf. Apoll. Rhod. 1.1140ff., where Rhea is said to "see" a sacrifice that is being performed, and then to acknowledge that her seeing is accepting by causing a series of miracles.

68. For the social conditions surrounding the rise in this form, see Neumann (above, n. 55) 10–11.

represent both halves of the interchange of prayer by depicting worshippers along with a listening and accepting god.⁶⁹ For example, an Archaic sculpted relief, found on the Athenian Akropolis, shows a family processing with a victim (a pregnant sow) and other sacrificial paraphernalia (one boy holds a *phiale*). They are walking in the presence of Athena herself, who is depicted as standing on the left and looking straight at them, perceiving and thus acknowledging them and their offering.⁷⁰ Whether erected as thank offerings for a prayer that has been answered, or as offerings that project the outcome of a request, reliefs such as this represent successful interchanges with the divine in terms of what would become standardized iconography. Their function in a sanctuary, I would argue, is thus analogous to the function I have suggested for inscribed prayers. Like dedicatory inscriptions and statues, they display and record a ritual act of offering that was once performed in a sanctuary. Moreover, perhaps the gods these images represent were envisaged as viewing the reliefs and attending to what they represent: a successful interchange with worshippers and thus the establishment of a context within which future care may be expected.⁷¹ In his prayer to Zeus at *Il.* 16.236ff., Achilles expresses verbally what these reliefs represent in images: ἡμὲν δὴ ποτ' ἐμὸν ἔπος ἔκλυες εὐξαμένοιο / τιμήσας μὲν ἐμέ, . . . / ἦδ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν . . . ("As once before when I prayed to you you heard, so also now . . ."). Votive reliefs corroborate the meaning of εὐχέσθαι that Adkins and others have proposed. Moreover, like votive statues, they function in a sanctuary to keep open the lines of human-divine communication.

Different gods, as well as different ways of depicting them that had become regularized over time, provided various opportunities for representing the communicative strategy I have described. As twins, for example, the Dioskouroi suggested a unique possibility. A stone relief from Piraeus,⁷² which is typical of a standardized composition, shows on the right a boat inside which a small figure is raising his right hand, a typical stance for praying in ancient Greece. The Dioskouroi are depicted to the man's left. Represented as much larger than the sailor, they take up most of the relief's frame. One of the gods is still mounted on his horse, gazing toward the sailor, just as Athena gazes at the processional offering in the relief mentioned above (Akropolis Museum 581). The other has dismounted and stands with his hand outstretched, ready to receive the gift of thanks the sailor promised should his prayer be answered. Another relief corroborates this

69. For this formulation and several apposite examples, see Van Straten (in Versnel, above, n. 1) 82–83. While Van Straten's discussion of votive reliefs is perceptive, he mentions this function only in passing and does not connect it to the function of inscribed prayers.

70. Athens Akropolis Museum 581 (end sixth, beginning fifth century). *LIMC* 2 s.v. Athena no. 587, p. 1011; Neumann (above, n. 55) 34, pl. 18a.

71. On the reciprocal relationship established by a votive gift, see T. Linders, "Gods, Gifts, Society," in T. Linders and G. Nordquist, eds., *Gifts to the Gods = Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium* 1985 (Uppsala, 1987) 118.

72. Athens NM 1409 (fourth–third century B.C.E.); Svoronos 358, pl. 33; Van Straten (in Versnel, above, n. 1) 97, pl. 39; D. Wachsmuth, *Pompimos ho Daimon* (Berlin, 1967) 156.

interpretation of this gesture. From Tomis on the Black Sea, it depicts in its upper half a hero (Manimazos) by an altar on which a sacrifice is being made to him. Below this scene is a ship, in which the sailor and a boy are praying to the same hero, their hands upraised.⁷³ Both reliefs depict both a successful interchange and the fulfillment of a vow made under conditions of extreme danger. In both cases, the relief itself, along with, at least in the latter case, a sacrifice, would have been that offering. When the prayers were uttered, however, the sailors were in no position to give the gods anything. Van Straten, in his discussion of these two reliefs, notes another anomaly: "What is striking is the fact that the votive offerings given by sailors which have survived from Antiquity never provide a realistic reproduction of the dangers from which they have been saved."⁷⁴ That is because the function of these reliefs requires that, even though the verbal utterance of the prayer and the gesture of supplication made with it would have been both temporally and geographically separate from the offerings that the sailors eventually gave, their requests, as well as the gods' acknowledgment and acceptance of their offering, are depicted as though they had occurred simultaneously. The sculptors have elided what must have been two separate occasions, and in so doing have represented what votive reliefs typically represent: a successful interaction taking place. The Dioskouroi can illustrate the dual role one god must usually be represented on votive reliefs as playing alone: listening to a prayer being spoken and accepting the offering as it was being made, and in addition, acknowledging at a later date the gift of the votive relief, a relief that typically represents the successful interchange. By virtue of both responses, the god answers a prayer and involves him- or herself in an ongoing cycle of reciprocal care. The relief depicts in stone what it commemorates and perpetuates: a successful and ongoing interchange between two gods and their human supplicant.

4. THE ICONOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATION: A HYPOTHETICAL INTERPRETATION

I would like to explore the possibility that, like the Dioskouroi relief, another type of fourth-century votive iconography makes explicit the temporal complexity that is implicit in all votive reliefs and inscribed prayers. We have seen how, as strategies for exploiting the technology of writing developed, the representation of verbal interaction with gods through prayer changed over time. It would not be surprising if there were a parallel development, perhaps linked to changes in the functioning of inscribed prayers, in the visual representation of this interaction. I intend to pursue this broader question in detail elsewhere, but I will conclude this discussion of prayer with a tentative interpretation of one particularly suggestive type of votive iconography.

73. Bucurest L 595; Van Straten (in Versnel, above, n. 1) 97, pl. 40.

74. Van Straten (in Versnel, above, n. 1) 97.

Louvre 755 (fig. 1), a votive relief dating from the late fourth century B.C.E., depicts the beginning of a sacrificial ceremony.⁷⁵ Hausmann, in his study of the function and typology of votive reliefs depicting Asklepios, characterizes it as a fine example of what we have seen is a relatively common type of relief in the fourth century, one that depicts worshippers sacrificing or offering gifts in the presence of the gods to whom those gifts are given: here, Asklepios, who is seated and shown in profile, and Hygieia, standing and facing the viewer of the relief. The sculptor has relaxed the more typical grouping of worshippers, which places them in a row approaching the gods,⁷⁶ into a complex assortment of young and old, privileged and servile, who are situated around an altar as the sacrifice is about to commence. A bearded man to the right of the altar has taken something from the basket (a *κανοῦν*, or flat, woven, hamper with three raised “ears,” not preserved on the relief), presumably grains of barley, and is placing them on the altar. A boy standing next to him is holding out the basket, while another boy, who is standing behind the altar, is holding down a sacrificial bull. Everything is ready for the offering to be made. The divine figures are poised, the posture of Asklepios especially suggesting acceptance of the gifts and worship being offered.

The relief is clearly the product of a fine sculptor, and one skilled enough to innovate within a traditional format.⁷⁷ Asklepios is shown doing what we have seen gods typically do in such reliefs: he is observing, and thus accepting, an offering as it is being made to him, his pose enacting his response to the giver’s supplication. What Hygieia is doing is less clear. She is standing, facing straight ahead into the eyes of the viewer, and resting her right hand on some sort of disc or plaque, which is placed on top of a pillar. To my knowledge, only one other roughly contemporary votive relief exists (and none with any other god or goddess) which involves such a combination of poses. Athens NM 1330, from the Athenian Asklepieion, dated also to the fourth century, shows Asklepios seated, gazing ahead at a procession involving a man and a servant with a *κανοῦν*. The rest of the relief is broken off (fig. 2).⁷⁸ Hygieia stands partly behind and to Asklepios’ left, and, as in Louvre 755, rests her right hand on some object resting on a pillar, which is here placed behind the back of Asklepios’ throne. The object is broken, and whether it is a disc or a plaque of some other shape cannot be ascertained. It does not appear to be angled or to stand in such high relief as the disc in Louvre 755. What will concern me here is the anomalous juxtaposition

75. *LIMC* 2 s.v. Asklepios, no. 64, p. 873; U. Hausmann, *Kunst und Heilum: Untersuchungen zu den griechischen Asklepiosreliefs* (Potsdam, 1948), 178, no. 146, pl. 5; Van Straten (above, n. 2) 280, R23. It is unknown where the relief originally stood: “Provenance inconnue, très probablement Athènes,” B. Holtzmann, *LIMC* 2, 873.

76. Cf. e.g. Athens NM 1331 (= *LIMC* 2 s.v. Asklepios no. 386, p. 889), and the remarks of Hausmann (above, n. 75) 167, no. 16.

77. “Die Auflockerung der Adorantengruppe erreicht ihren Höhepunkt auf dem Asklepiosrelief im Louvre 755, das zu den spätesten seiner ganzen Gattung gehört.” Hausmann (above, n. 75) 92.

78. Hausmann (above, n. 75) 178, no. 144, pl. 9; *LIMC* 2 s.v. Asklepios no. 63, p. 873.

of Hygieia's leaning pose, familiar, as we shall see, from other reliefs, and the object on which she is leaning, which is not part of any other composition except possibly NM 1330.

The gods' poses in Louvre 755 are both standard. In another fourth-century relief, for example, a sacrificial table is shown, laden with cakes and fruit.⁷⁹ Here too Asklepios sits facing the offerings and his worshippers, while Hygieia stands and looks straight ahead, with her right hand resting for support on a tree which has a serpent entwined about its trunk. The seated Asklepios is a common type in votive reliefs of this period and is probably derived from the god's cult statue at Epidaurus.⁸⁰ He is typically shown seated and facing a group of worshippers as they approach him and offer him gifts. He may, as in Athens NM 173 or 174, be raising one hand, a gesture which overtly signifies acknowledgment of worshippers and of the gifts they are giving.⁸¹

Hygieia's leaning pose is also standard, having become prevalent by around 350 B.C.E. Her pose, however, remained far more elastic than Asklepios', and it was varied in many ways.⁸² Throughout the fourth century, for example, she is shown facing either to the right or the left, or leaning not upon her arm, but with her body, as on the back of Asklepios' throne in Berlin 685, a pose that allows her, like Asklepios, to look directly at her worshippers.⁸³ When she looks straight ahead at the viewer of the relief, she may rest her elbow for support on a pillar, her other hand resting on her hip to accentuate the "s-curve" so characteristic of all these poses. In Athens NM 1333 she stands behind an altar and a sacrificial procession, in this instance able to observe both the scene itself and to gaze outward toward the viewer. As in NM 1335, she rests her left hand on a tree trunk for support.⁸⁴

Hygieia's leaning pose is not reserved for her alone. It also became common in reliefs depicting nymphs, whose associations with chthonic worship easily coordinated with Hygieia's own chthonic ties via her father. Prior to the fourth century nymphs are typically depicted on reliefs as three young women, dancing

79. Athens NM 1335, from the Athenian Asklepieion. *LIMC* 2 s.v. Asklepios no. 96, p. 875.

80. "Those [fourth-century reliefs from Athens] depicting Asklepios seated and Hygieia leaning are not likely to reproduce sculptural groups; Hygieia is freely varied and implausible as a fourth-century statuary type, while Asklepios is probably derived from the cult statue at Epidaurus, which had no companion." Steven Lattimore, "Asklepios and Hygieia: Some Evidence for Two-figure Groups," unpublished paper.

81. Athens NM 173 = *LIMC* s.v. Asklepios no. 62, p. 873; Athens NM 174 = *LIMC* s.v. Asklepios no. 61, p. 873.

82. On its many variations, see Lattimore (above, n. 80); G. Güntner, *Göttervereine und Götterversammlungen auf attischen Weihreliefs: Untersuchungen zur Typologie und Bedeutung*, Beiträge zur Archäologie 21 (Würzburg, 1994), 36–38.

83. Berlin, Staatliche Museen 685; Hausmann (above, n. 75) 177, no. 139; Van Straten (above, n. 2) 283, R35, fig. 69.

84. Athens NM 1333, from the Athenian Asklepieion, fourth century B.C.E. *LIMC* 2 s.v. Asklepios no. 66, p. 873.

hand in hand.⁸⁵ By the mid-fourth century, however, a change had occurred. Standing groups became common, as did framing the composition within a cave setting, an obvious context for divinities associated with fertility and the underworld.⁸⁶ A votive relief from a Nymph sanctuary on Mt. Pentelikon in Attika is typical of this new iconography (fig. 3).⁸⁷ It shows a libation being made in a sanctuary which the sculptor has realistically depicted as a cave. On the left are three Nymphs, Hermes, and Pan, who is seated, holding pipes. On the right, above a rough altar, a boy pours from an *oinochoe* into a *kantharos* held by a man, from which a libation will be made. There is an accompanying inscription: Ἀγαθήμερος / Νύμφαις / ἀνέθηκε: "Agathemeros dedicated this to the Nymphs." The nymph in the middle is posed just like Hygieia in the reliefs I have described, her outward-facing stance integral to her leaning pose. Edwards, following Palagia, concludes, moreover, that Hygieia's pose in NM 1330 is adapted from this relief, and that Louvre 755 is also dependent on it.⁸⁸

A closer parallel, however, which Edwards also notes (84), are those reliefs which represent Hygieia leaning against a tree or the architectural frame of the relief itself. NM 1383, for example, shows Hygieia leaning against the frame with her left hand.⁸⁹ NM 1330, moreover, resembles these reliefs in that the pillar upon which Hygieia is leaning rests against the relief's architectural frame. In Louvre 755, however, Hygieia is not leaning upon a wall or a natural object, or on any other stable object, but upon the face of a disc that has been placed on a free-standing pillar. Such pillars were commonly erected in sanctuaries and temples, and often held offerings to gods, including votive reliefs. The function of offerings so placed is reflected in their name: ἀναθήματα. Pillars showcase the gift for both its divine and human viewers,⁹⁰ and thus provide another means of access to a god's attention. A rod would have been drilled into the base of the votive in order to secure it to the pillar. It is difficult to imagine, however, that such objects were securely enough fastened to invite someone to lean most of his or her weight upon them. NM 1330 solves this difficulty by placing the pillar

85. C. Edwards, *Greek Votive Reliefs to Pan and the Nymphs*, Diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (1984) 30–31, n. 14, calls Hygieia "a water Nymph with a chthonic father," and cites the dedication of locks of hair to Hygieia at Titane (Paus. 2, 11, 6), which makes her seem like a goddess of marriage. He also notes the evidence, on the other side of the coin, for healing nymphs (31, n. 15). See also pp. 12ff.

86. See Edwards (above, n. 85) 59–63, and 59: "The frame was an abbreviated view of the stoa, the meeting place between the healing god and his devotees. The cave border acquired the same meaning in the third quarter of the 4th century."

87. Late fourth century B.C.E. Athens NM 4466; Edwards (above, n. 85) 478, no. 22, for bibliography. See Güntner (above, n. 82), 10–25 for the development of this iconography.

88. Edwards (above, n. 85) 135–35, n. 129; O. Palagia, "A Draped Female Torso in the Ashmolean Museum," *JHS* 95 (1975) 182, who argues against the view of Fuchs, who suggested that the Hygieia of NM 1330 and Louvre 755 are derived from a statue of the 320s.

89. *LIMC* 5 s.v. Hygieia no. 28, p. 558.

90. See for example Rouse (above, n. 55) 94 for this function in relation to the numerous pillars dedicated in the Athenian Acropolis; Van Straten (in *Le Sanctuaire Grec*, above, n. 19) 248ff.

against the "wall" of the relief's frame. In Louvre 755, in contrast, Hygieia is standing quite straight, and instead of leaning on the disc, and thus emphasizing the "s-curve" that is typical of her pose elsewhere, she seems only to be touching it lightly with the palm of her hand.

When taken together with NM 1330, then, Louvre 755 suggests two questions: what is the object which Hygieia is touching, and what, if anything, does her gesture signify? The object's thickness suggests that it is meant to be understood as being made of stone rather than wood. It is not finished into any fully determinate shape.⁹¹ In fact, there are a few extant examples of votive reliefs shaped not in the rectangle so common in sanctuaries throughout Greece, but in a more rounded form. The most well-known example is the early Classical disc from Melos, which is a circular marble slab carved in relief with a female head.⁹² Two roughly contemporary discs, from about 500 B.C.E. may also be noted. One is a painted marble *pinax* showing a bearded man sitting in a chair, the other a funerary disc containing only an inscription.⁹³ More interesting for our purposes is a marble disc that depicts snakes and that was dedicated by one Pythodelos. Since it dates from the fourth century and was found on the south slope of the Athenian Akropolis, it is likely that it is a dedication from the Asklepieion.⁹⁴ Votive discs are relatively rare, and as these examples illustrate, they tend to be closely connected either to funerary contexts or to the cults of gods with chthonic associations, especially Asklepios.⁹⁵ We may be fairly certain, then, that the object on which Hygieia is leaning is meant to represent such a votive disc.

From the fourth century, representations of votive reliefs, set upon a pillar, are a common element in votive iconography. They are especially common on reliefs found in healing sanctuaries. NM 3369, for example, from Oropus, depicts Amphiaraos on the right; on his left is a man reclining on a couch, attended by another figure (fig. 4).⁹⁶ Behind the reclining man is a pillar on which is resting a rectangular plaque, facing the viewer. NM 1383 (fig. 5) shows Hygieia in her typical leaning pose, head turned slightly to the right, with her left hand resting against the architectural border of the relief; her right hand is on her hip. To her right is an altar, behind which is a pillar which supports a rectangular plaque.

91. Charbonneaux notes (with no discussion) that it is "un objet circulaire (tympanon)." J. Charbonneaux, *La sculpture grecque et romaine au Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1963) 119.

92. Athens NM 3990. Ch. Karouzos, "An Early Classical Disc Relief from Melos," *JHS* 71 (1951) 96–110, pl. 37; B. Ridgway, *The Severe Style in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton, 1970) 53, no. 2.

93. The former disc is inscribed with the following: *μνημα τόδ' Αἰνείου σοφίας, ἱατροῦ ἀρίστου*. *IG* I² 1019; P. Jacobsthal, *Diskoi* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1933) 27–28. The second disc is inscribed: *Γνάθωνος τόδε σῆμα θέτο δ' αὐτὸν ἀδελφῇ ἡλίωιον νοσηλεύσασα*. Karouzos (above, n. 92) 98, n. 5.

94. Athens Epigraphical Museum 9004a; Svoronos, pl. 231, no. 1; *IG* II² 4361; Jacobsthal (above, n. 93) 27, pl. 18; Karouzos (above, n. 92) 98–99. It is inscribed *Πυθόδηλος Αἰθαλίδης ἀνέθηκε*. The same man also dedicated *IG* II² 4360 to Hygieia.

95. Cf. Karouzos (above, n. 92), 99–100, who interprets the Melos disc as representing Artemis, Kore, Aphrodite, or a local nymph.

96. *LIMC* I s.v. Amphiaraos no. 63, p. 702.

I can make out no figures either sculpted or painted on the plaque, but it does have a raised frame that quotes the architectural frame of the relief on which it is depicted. During the fourth century sculptors began angling objects on pillars in order to show them in perspective, which would enhance the suggestion of space in the sanctuary.⁹⁷ Except for Louvre 755 and NM 1330, however, I know of no other *reliefs* that are so angled.

In NM 3369 (fig. 4), as elsewhere, the presence in the composition of the votive plaque may be a way to signal to the viewer that the locale represented is within the bounds of the god's sanctuary. This interpretation of these votives-within-votives accords well both with the function of the architectural framing so common in these reliefs and with evidence from other sanctuaries, such as the cave setting common to nymph reliefs of the fourth century. It does not, however, fully explain Hygieia's pose in Louvre 755. I would suggest that in this relief two elements that had by the mid-fourth century become standard converged to offer its sculptor an intriguing possibility: Hygieia's leaning pose and its versatility, and the way in which a votive relief and its function in a sanctuary had come to be understood. As we have seen, votive reliefs typically represent successful interchanges with a god, and in so doing, are fitting gifts for a prayer that has been answered. The images represented on these reliefs are, moreover, simulacra that perpetuate ritual action just as inscribed prayers perpetuate ritual language. In so doing, they enable the god's future attention and care. As the Dioskouroi reliefs suggest, the temporal complexity inherent in this function came over time to be itself the object of representation. In Louvre 755, Asklepios is depicted as acknowledging the original offering this group made him. Hygieia, I suggest, is acknowledging what would have been a later gift: the votive relief itself.

Herondas' fourth *Mimiambus* illustrates this disjunction between the offering of a sacrifice and a votive object. Two women visit a sanctuary of Asklepios, sacrifice a cock to him, and say a prayer of thanksgiving for a cure. They then leave a *pinax* in the sanctuary before they depart: ἐκ δεξιῆς τὸν πίνακα, Κοκκάλη, στήσον / τῆς Ὑγιείης, says one of the two women to her companion (19–20). Herondas does not specify what the *pinax* looks like, and so may have assumed that it is an instance of the very common representations of the part of body that the god has healed.⁹⁸ Others have concluded that it contains an inscription, whether a dedication or a fuller prayer of thanksgiving.⁹⁹ It is, of course, impossible to know what the *pinax* is meant to be, but it may be significant for our purposes that, while their prayer and sacrifice have been directed to Asklepios, the *pinax* is left specifically for Hygieia.

97. Two examples of objects so angled are discussed by E. B. Harrison, *Agora XI*: a pillar only, pp. 84–85, no. 132, pl. 31; a herm, p. 174, no. 233, pl. 61.

98. On these objects and their volume in an Asklepieion, see S. B. Aleshire, *The Athenian Asklepieion: The People, their Dedications, and the Inventories* (Amsterdam, 1989) 147–48.

99. H. S. Versnel, who also cites Wünsch and Wachsmuth. "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer," in *Faith Hope and Worship* (above, n. 1) 34 and note 133.

As we have seen, if the disc and pillar were included in this relief simply to give Hygieia something to lean on, the arrangement that the sculptor of NM 1330 adopted was available. If, however, Hygieia is to note the object, and also keep her leaning pose that is so common in these reliefs, then there are only two alternatives: she can turn her head toward the object, or she can acknowledge it with her outstretched hand. NM 2557 (fig. 6) shows Hygieia leaning on a snake-entwined pillar, which, along with its base, is somewhat taller than she is.¹⁰⁰ On top of the pillar, above her head, is a relief on which may be just seen the outlines of several sculpted figures. Hygieia's face and arm are eroded, but she is clearly facing the pillar. She is, however, not looking up at the votive relief, but, as far as can be made out, at the pillar itself. I know of no relief in which a god is depicted as looking directly at a votive relief, so Louvre 755 may be experimental in its attempt to depict such a scenario. Moreover, the disc clearly cannot be meant to represent Louvre 755 itself, which is a rectangular relief. It may represent, rather, a votive relief, and more specifically, the sort of votive relief—a disc—that would be particularly suited to a healing sanctuary.

It may be objected that Hygieia, far from acknowledging the disc, is covering up whatever is "on" it with her hand. It was, however, common practice in a sanctuary to place votive offerings and inscriptions near or even on cult statues. A god's statue could literally be covered with *pinakes*, each bearing a prayer or an image.¹⁰¹ The proximity to the statue itself seems to have been enough to enable the god's acknowledgment. To human viewers, moreover, the close proximity of a cult statue and a votive object would represent in spatial terms what votive reliefs depict in their own medium: a successful communication had taken place between its donor and the god.

We can, of course, speak only of possibilities, and assume that hypotheses are more likely if they concur with other evidence. The fact that by this period gods were envisaged as reading the texts of inscribed prayers and dedications, and therefore as actively responding to artifacts and the signs they utilized, corroborates the interpretation I have suggested for this relief. Given Hygieia's iconography in other reliefs, moreover, it is not, I think, implausible to interpret her pose as signifying attention to whatever might be envisaged as depicted on the disc. The relief depicts, that is, a doubly successful communication with the gods of healing: Asklepios faces the family and notes their sacrificial offering, while Hygieia, with her outstretched arm, notes the votive disc. Real and imaged interaction occur simultaneously. Both together—or so the family that offered this relief hoped—define a successful prayer.

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100. *LIMC* 5 s.v. Hygieia no. 29, p. 558.

101. Most of the direct evidence for this practice has vanished, but there are many indirect testimonies of it, for which see Versnel (above, n. 1), 32.



Figure 1: Louvre 755.



Figure 2: Athens NM 1330.



Figure 3: Athens NM 4466.



Figure 4: Athens NM 3369.



Figure 5: Athens NM 1383.



Figure 6: Athens NM 2557.



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