

Prayer and Magic

Mechanics of Prayer

Vocabulary of Prayer

euchê - prayer
euchomai - to pray, claim, boast
charis - favor

Form of the Prayer

invocation (*invocatio*)
narrative (*pars epica/argumentum*)
wish (*preces*)

Types of Prayer:

do ut des: I give so that you might give
da quia dedi: give because I gave previously
da quia dedisti: give because you gave previously
da quia dedit: give because (s)he gave previously
da ut dem: give so that I will give
da ut dare possim: give so that I shall be able to give

Gifts for the Gods - dedications and sacrifice

Dedications: votives, reliefs, statues, shrines, temples

Types of Sacrifice

libation
cereal offerings
burning incense
animal sacrifice
communal meal
holocaust

Sacrificial Meals And The Ordering Of Society

origins of sacrifice
procedures of sacrifice
distribution of sacrifice according to status
marking boundaries of community
performer of sacrifice
time and place for sacrifice

Emic vs. Etic views of prayer and sacrificial ritual

horizontal vs. vertical axis of communication
performer and audience
ritual and self-definition
past, present, and future

Religion of *Here*, *There*, or *Anywhere*

Pindar *Olympian* 1

And when he blossomed with the stature of fair youth, and down darkened his cheek, he turned his thoughts to an available marriage, to win glorious Hippodameia from her father, the lord of Pisa. He drew near to the gray sea, alone in the darkness, and called aloud on the deep-roaring god, skilled with the trident; and the god appeared to him, close at hand. Pelops said to the god, "If the loving gifts of Cyprian Aphrodite result in any gratitude (charis), Poseidon, then restrain the bronze spear of Oenomaus, and speed me in the swiftest chariot to Elis, and bring me to victory. For he has killed thirteen suitors, and postpones the marriage of his daughter. Great danger does not take hold of a coward. Since all men are compelled to die, why should anyone sit stewing an inglorious old age in the darkness, with no share of any fine deeds? As for me, on this contest I will take my stand. May you grant a welcome achievement." So he spoke, and he did not touch on words that were unaccomplished. Honoring him, the god gave him a golden chariot, and horses with untiring wings. He overcame the might of Oenomaus, and took the girl as his bride. She bore six sons, leaders of the people eager for excellence. Now he has a share in splendid blood-sacrifices, resting beside the ford of the Alpheus, where he has his attendant tomb beside the altar that is thronged with many visitors.

Euripides *Hippolytus* 115ff.

Hippolytus: Come follow me and sing of Zeus's heavenly daughter [60] Artemis, who cares for us.

Lady, lady most revered, daughter of Zeus, my greeting, daughter [65] of Leto and of Zeus, of maidens the fairest by far, who dwellest in the broad heaven in the court of your good father, the gilded house of Zeus. [70] My greeting to you, fair one, fairest of all who dwell in Olympus! For you, lady, I bring this plaited garland I have made, gathered from an inviolate meadow, [75] a place where the shepherd does not dare to pasture his flocks, where the iron scythe has never come: no, it is inviolate, and the bee makes its way through it in the spring-time. Shamefast Awe tends this garden with streams of river-water, for those to pluck who have acquired nothing by teaching but rather in whose very nature [80] chastity in all things has ever won its place: the base may not pluck. But, dear lady, take this coronal for your golden hair from a worshipful hand. For I alone of mortals have this privilege: [85] I spend my days with you and speak with you, I hear your voice but never see your face. May I end my life just as I have begun it!

***Iliad* 1.34 ff.**

He went forth in silence along the shore of the loud-resounding sea, and earnestly then, when he had gone apart, the old man prayed [35] to the lord Apollo, whom fair-haired Leto bore: "Hear me, god of the silver bow, who stand over Chryse and holy Cilla, and rule mightily over Tenedos, Sminthian god, if ever I roofed over a temple to your pleasing, or if ever I burned to you fat thigh-pieces of bulls and goats, [40] fulfill this prayer for me: let the Danaans pay for my tears by your arrows."

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. Down from the peaks of Olympus he strode, angered at heart, bearing on his shoulders his bow and covered quiver. [45] The arrows rattled on the shoulders of the angry god as he moved, and his coming was like the night. Then he sat down apart from the ships and let fly an arrow: terrible was the twang of the silver bow. The mules he assailed first and the swift dogs, [50] but then on the men themselves he let fly his stinging shafts, and struck; and constantly the pyres of the dead burned thick.

Sappho Frag. 1

Ornate-throned immortal Aphrodite, wile-weaving daughter of Zeus, I entreat you: do not overpower my heart, mistress, with ache and anguish, but come here, if ever in the past you heard my voice from afar and acquiesced and came, leaving your father's golden house, with chariot yoked: beautiful swift sparrows whirring fast-beating wings brought you above the dark earth down from heaven through the mid-air, and soon they arrived; and you, blessed one, with a smile on your immortal face asked what was the matter with me this time and why was I calling this time and what in my maddened heart I most wished to happen for myself: "Whom am I to persuade this time to lead you back to her love? Who wrongs you, Sappho? If she runs away, soon she shall pursue; if she does not accept gifts, why, she shall give them instead; if she does not love, soon she shall love even against her will." Come to me now again and deliver me from oppressive anxieties; fulfil all that my heart long to fulfil, and you yourself be my fellow-fighter.

***Odyssey* 3.75 ff.**

"Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, [80] thou askest whence we are, and I will surely tell thee. We have come from Ithaca that is below Neion; but this business whereof I speak is mine own, and concerns not the people. I come after the wide-spread rumor of my father, if haply I may hear of it, even of goodly Odysseus of the steadfast heart, who once, men say, [85] fought by thy side and sacked the city of the Trojans. For of all men else, as many as warred with the Trojans, we learn where each man died a woeful death, but of him the son of Cronos has made even the death to be past learning; for no man can tell surely where he hath died,-- [90] whether he was overcome by foes on the mainland, or on the deep among the waves of Amphitrite. Therefore am I now come to thy knees, if perchance thou wilt be willing to tell me of his woeful death, whether thou sawest it haply with thine own eyes, or didst hear from some other the story [95] of his wanderings; for beyond all men did his mother bear him to sorrow. And do thou nowise out of ruth or pity for me speak soothing words, but tell me truly how thou didst come to behold him. I beseech thee, if ever my father, noble Odysseus, promised aught to thee of word or deed and fulfilled it [100] in the land of the Trojans, where you Achaeans suffered woes, be mindful of it now, I pray thee, and tell me the very truth."

Odyssey 4.315 ff.

[315] Then wise Telemachus answered him: " Menelaus, son of Atreus, fostered of Zeus, leader of hosts, I came if haply thou mightest tell me some tidings of my father. My home is being devoured and my rich lands are ruined; with men that are foes my house is filled, who are ever [320] slaying my thronging sheep and my sleek kine of shambling gait, even the wooers of my mother, overweening in their insolence. Therefore am I now come to thy knees, if perchance thou wilt be willing to tell me of his woeful death, whether thou sawest it haply with thine own eyes, or didst hear from some other the story [325] of his wanderings; for beyond all men did his mother bear him to sorrow. And do thou no wise out of ruth or pity for me speak soothing words, but tell me truly how thou didst come to behold him. I beseech thee, if ever my father, noble Odysseus, promised aught to thee of word or deed and fulfilled it [330] in the land of the Trojans, where you Achaeans suffered woes, be mindful of it now, I pray thee, and tell me the truth."

Odyssey 4.758 f..

Penelope went up to her upper chamber with her handmaids, and placing barley grains in a basket prayed to Athena:
"Hear me, child of Zeus who bears the aegis, unwearied one. If ever Odysseus, of many wiles, burnt to thee in his halls fat thigh-pieces of heifer or ewe, [765] remember these things now, I pray thee, and save my dear son, and ward off from him the wooers in their evil insolence."
So saying she raised the sacred cry, and the goddess heard her prayer.

Odyssey 17.239 ff.

And the swineherd looked the man in the face, and rebuked him, and lifted up his hands, and prayed aloud:
[240] "Nymphs of the fountain, daughters of Zeus, if ever Odysseus burned upon your altars pieces of the thighs of lambs or kids, wrapped in rich fat, fulfil for me this prayer; grant that he, my master, may come back, and that some god may guide him. Then would he scatter all the proud airs [245] which now thou puttest on in thy insolence, ever roaming about the city, while evil herdsmen destroy the flock."

Aristophanes Peace 385 ff.

Chorus: [385] Oh! mighty Hermes! do not do it; no, do not do it! If ever you have eaten some young pig, sacrificed by us on your altars, with pleasure, may this offering not be without value in your sight to-day.

Trygaeus: Do you not hear them wheedling you, mighty god?

Chorus: [390] Be not pitiless toward our prayers; permit us to deliver the goddess. Oh! the most human, the most generous of the gods, be favourable toward us, [395] if it be true that you detest the haughty crests and proud brows of Pisander; we shall never cease, oh master, offering you sacred victims and solemn prayers.

Trygaeus: [400] Have mercy, mercy, let yourself be touched by their words; never was your worship so dear to them as to-day. Aside. Really they are the greatest thieves that ever were. To Hermes. And I shall reveal to you a great and terrible plot that is being hatched against the gods.

Hermes: [405] Hah! speak and perchance I shall let myself be softened.

Trygaeus: Know then, that the Moon and that infamous Sun are plotting against you, and want to deliver Greece into the hands of the barbarians.

Hermes: What for?

Trygaeus: Because [410] it is to you that we sacrifice, whereas the barbarians worship them; hence they would like to see you destroyed, that they alone might receive the offerings.

Hermes: Is it then for this reason that these untrustworthy charioteers have for so long been defrauding us, one of them robbing us of daylight [415] and the other nibbling away at the other's disk?

Trygaeus: Yes, certainly. So therefore, Hermes, my friend, help us with your whole heart to find and deliver the captive and we will celebrate the great Panathenaea in your honor as well as all the festivals of the other gods; [420] for Hermes shall be the Mysteries, the Dipolia, the Adonia; everywhere the towns, freed from their miseries, will sacrifice to Hermes the Liberator; you will be loaded with benefits of every kind, and to start with, I offer you this cup for libations as your first present.

Hermes: [425] Ah! how golden cups do influence me!

Aeschylus Libation Bearers 245ff

Orestes: O Zeus, O Zeus, regard our cause! Behold the orphaned brood of a father eagle that perished in the meshes, in the coils of a fierce viper. They are utterly orphaned, gripped by the famine of hunger: [250] for they are not grown to full strength to bring their father's quarry to the nest. So you see both me and poor Electra here, children bereft of their father, both outcasts alike from our home. If you destroy these nestlings of a father who made sacrifice and revered you greatly, [255] from what like hand will you receive the homage of rich feasts? Destroy the brood of the eagle and you cannot again send tokens that mortals will trust; nor, if this royal stock should wither utterly away, will it serve your altars on days when oxen are sacrificed. [260] Oh foster it, and you may raise our house from low estate to great, though now it seems utterly overthrown.

Demosthenes 18.141

In your presence, men of Athens, I now invoke all the gods and goddesses whose domain is the land of Attica. I invoke also Pythian Apollo, the ancestral divinity of this city, and I solemnly beseech them all that, if I shall speak the truth now, and if I spoke truth to my countrymen when first I saw this miscreant putting his hand to that transaction--for I knew it, I knew it instantly--they may grant to me prosperity and salvation. But if with malice or in the spirit of personal rivalry I lay against him any false charge, I pray that they may dispossess me of everything that is good.

Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazeusae* 1136ff

Chorus: Oh! Pallas, who art fond of dances, hasten hither at my call. Oh! thou chaste virgin,-- [1140] --the protectress of Athens, I call thee in accordance with the sacred rites, thee, whose evident protection we adore and who keepest the keys of our city in thy hands. [1143] Do thou appear, thou whose just hatred has overturned our tyrants. [1145] The womenfolk are calling thee; hasten hither at their bidding along with Peace, who shall restore the festivals.

And ye, august goddesses, display a smiling and propitious countenance to our gaze; come into your sacred grove, [1150] the entry to which is forbidden to men; 'tis there in the midst of the sacred orgies that we contemplate your divine features. [1155] Come, appear, we pray it of you, oh, venerable Thesmophorae! If you have ever answered our appeal, oh! come into our midst.

Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazeusae* 295ff

Woman Herald: [295] Silence! Silence! Pray to the Thesmophorae, Demeter and Cora; pray to Plutus, Calligenia, Curotrophus, [300] the Earth, Hermes and the Graces, that all may happen for the best at this gathering, both for the greatest advantage of Athens [305] and for our own personal happiness! May the award be given her who, by both deeds and words, has most deserved it from the Athenian people and from the women! [310] Address these prayers to heaven and demand happiness for yourselves. Io Paean! Io Paean! Let us rejoice!

Chorus: May the gods deign to accept our vows and our prayers! [315] Oh! almighty Zeus, and thou, god with the golden lyre, who reignest on sacred Delos, and thou, oh, invincible virgin, Pallas, with the eyes of azure and the spear of gold, who protectest our illustrious city, [320] and thou, the daughter of the beautiful Leto, queen of the forests, who art adored under many names, hasten hither at my call. Come, thou mighty Poseidon, king of the Ocean, leave thy stormy whirlpools of Nereus; [325] come, goddesses of the seas, come, ye nymphs, who wander on the mountains. Let us unite our voices to the sounds of the golden lyre, [330] and may wisdom preside at the gathering of the noble matrons of Athens.

Woman Herald: Address your prayers to the gods and goddesses of Olympus, of Delphi, Delos and all other places; [335] if there be a man who is plotting against the womenfolk or who, to injure them, is proposing peace to Euripides and the Medes, or who aspires to usurping the tyranny, plots the return of a tyrant, or [340] unmasks a supposititious child; or if there be a slave who, a confidential party to a wife's intrigues, reveals them secretly to her husband, or who, entrusted with a message, does not deliver the same faithfully; if there be a lover who fulfils naught of what he has promised a woman, whom he has abused on the strength of his lies; [345] if there be an old woman who seduces the lover of a maiden by dint of her presents and treacherously receives him in her house; if there be a host or hostess who sells false measure, pray the gods that they will overwhelm them with their wrath, [350] both them and their families, and that they may reserve all their favours for you.

Chorus: Let us ask the fulfillment of these wishes both for the city and for the people, [355] and may the wisest of us cause her opinion to be accepted. But woe to those women who break their oaths, [360] who speculate on the public misfortune, who seek to alter the laws and the decrees, who reveal our secrets to the foe [365] and admit the Medes into our territory so that they may devastate it! I declare them both impious and criminal. Oh! almighty Zeus! see to it that [370] the gods protect us, albeit we are but women!

Theophrastus, fr.584a

There are three reasons one ought to sacrifice to the gods: either on account of honor or on account of gratitude or on account of a want of things. For just as with good men, so also with these (the gods) we think that offerings of first-fruits should be made to them. We honour the gods either because we seek to deflect evils or to acquire goods for ourselves, or because we have first been treated well or simply to do great honour to their good character.

Porphyry *Phil. Ex Orac.* 314 & 315 = Eus. *PE* IV; 8.4 – 9.7

Following after what has been said concerning piety we shall record the responses given by [the gods] concerning their worship, part of which in anticipation we have set forth in the statements concerning piety. Here is an oracle of Apollo that also includes a reckoning of the order of the gods:

Friend who has entered on this heaven-taught path, perform your sacrifices and do not forget the blessed gods, slaying your sacrifices now to the gods upon the earth, now again to the gods of heaven; sometimes to the kings of the aither themselves and to those of the watery aer, and to [the kings of] of the seas and all those who dwell beneath the earth (*hypochthonioi*). For everything is bound up in the fullness of their nature.

I shall sing to you of how it is proper to perform the burnt offerings of living creatures (be sure to write my oracle down on tablets): offerings to the gods upon the earth and to the gods of the heavens.

- Bright [victims] are for the gods of heaven; for the gods of the earth use [victims] similar [to them] in color. Divide the sacrifices for the gods of the earth into three parts when you slay them.
- Bury the victims for the infernal gods and pour the blood into a pit.
- For the nymphs, pour out honey and the gift of Dionysus.
- For those gods who fly around the earth constantly, having filled the flaming altar altogether with the blood of the victim, throw into the fire the body of a winged creature, sacrificing it.
- Then, having mixed honey with Deo's grain, place [the mixture in the fire] and throw in as well the aroma of frankincense and sprinkle on the barley grains.
- But when you look upon the sandy shore, pouring out grey sea water, offer the victim's head as a sacrifice and cast the rest of the animal, undivided, into the waves of the sea.
- Then, having done all of these things, make your way to the great company of the gods who live in the heavens and those who live in the aer.
- Finally, for all the gods who dwell in the stars and those who dwell in the aither, let blood in fullest stream flow from the throat over the sacrifice. Make a banquet for the gods out of the limbs, giving the extremities to Hephaestus.
- The rest you can eat, filling the liquid aer with sweet aromas. When everything is done, send forth your prayers. ...

This is the method of sacrifices, which are accomplished according to the reckoning of the gods that I mentioned earlier. For whereas there are gods beneath the earth, and upon the earth, and those beneath the earth are [also] called infernal gods and those upon the earth are also called gods of the earth – for all of these in common [Apollo] commands the sacrifice of black four-footed victims. But with regard to the manner of the sacrifice he makes distinctions: for to the gods upon the earth he commands the victims to be slain upon altars, but to the gods beneath the earth he commands the victims to be slain over pits, and moreover after the offering to bury the bodies therein.

That four-footed animals are appropriate to all these deities, the god himself added, when he was questioned, *Four-footed victims must be given only to gods of the earth and gods beneath the earth. For gods of the earth the new limbs of lambs [are appropriate].* But to the gods of the aer Apollo commands us to make holocaust offerings of winged creatures, letting the blood run round upon the altars; winged creatures are also [appropriate for] the gods of the sea, but they must be cast alive into the waves and must be black. For he says:

Winged creatures for the gods, but for the sea gods black.

He names winged creatures for all of the gods except those of the earth, and he names black for the sea gods only, and therefore [he intends] white for the other gods. But to the gods of the heavens and the gods of the aither he commands us to consecrate the extremities of white victims, and to eat the other parts: for these animals only are appropriate for eating, and not the others. But those whom in his classification he calls gods of heaven, here he calls gods of the stars.

Will it then be necessary to explain the *symbola* of the sacrifices, clear as they are to those who are in-the-know? There are four-footed land animals for the gods of the earth because like rejoices in like. And the sheep is of the earth and therefore dear to Demeter, and in heaven the ram, with the help of the sun, brings forth out of the earth its display of fruits. The ram must be black, for the earth is dark in nature. The victim must be divided into three parts because three is the symbol of the corporeal and earthy.

To the gods upon the earth one must make sacrifices high upon altars, for these gods dwell on earth; but to the gods beneath the earth one must make sacrifices in a pit and in a grave, where they abide.

To the other gods we must offer birds, because all things are in swift motion. For the water of the sea is also in perpetual motion, and dark, and therefore victims of this kind are suitable.

But white victims are appropriate for the gods of the aer because the aer itself is filled with light, being of a translucent nature.

For the gods of heaven and the gods of the aither, the parts of the animals that are lighter [in weight] are appropriate, and these are the extremities.

With these gods we must participate in the sacrifice; for they are the givers of good things, but the others are averters of evil.

Herodas Mime 4 Women Dedicating And Sacrificing To Asclepius

Cynno: Greetings, Lord Paeon, who rulest Tricca and hast settled sweet Cos and Epidaurus, and also may Coronis who gave thee birth and Apollo be greeted, and she whom thou touchest with thy right hand Hygieia, and those to whom belong these honoured altars, Panace and Epio and Ieso be greeted, and the sackers of Laomedon's house and walls, curers of cruel diseases, Podalirios and Machaon be greeted, and whatsoever gods and goddesses live at thy hearth, father Paeon: may ye graciously come hither and receive this cock which I am sacrificing, herald of the walls of the house, as your dessert. For our well is far from abundant or ready-flowing, else we should have made an ox or a sow heaped with much crackling, and not a cock, our thank-offering for the diseases which thou hast wiped away, Lord, stretching out thy gentle hands. Coccale, set the tablet on the right of Hygieia.

Phile: Oh, what lovely statues, dear Cynno; what artist made this sculpture and who is the person who dedicated it?

Cynno: The sons of Praxiteles; don't you see these words on the base? And Euthies son of Prexon dedicated it.

Phile: May Paeon be gracious to them and to Euthies for their lovely works.

Cynno: See, Phile, that girl looking up at the apple: wouldn't you say that if she doesn't get the apple she will quickly expire?

Phile: And that old man, Cynno—

Cynno: Oh, by the Fates, how the child chokes the goose. Certainly if it were not stone before our feet, the work, you'd say, will speak. Ah, in time men will be able to put life even into stones.

Phile: Now this statue of Batale, daughter of Myttes, don't you see, Cynno, how it stands? Anyone who has not seen Batale herself, looking at this likeness would not need the real thing.

Cynno: Come with me, Phile, and I'll show you a lovely thing such as you have never seen in all your life. Cydilla, go and call the temple-warden. Am I not speaking to you, who gape this way and that? Ah, she has paid no heed to what I say, but stands staring at me more than a crab. Go, I say, and call the temple-warden. Glutton, no woman pious or impure praises you as good, but everywhere you are valued equally. I make this god my witness, Cydilla, that you inflame me though I do not wish to swell up. I make him witness, I say: that day will come when you will scratch your filthy head.

Phile: Don't take everything so readily to heart, Cynno; she is a slave, and a slave's ears are blocked with sluggishness.

Cynno: But it is day and the crush is getting worse. You there, wait, for the door has been opened and the curtain unfastened.

Phile: Don't you see, dear Cynno, what works are here! You would say that Athena carved these lovely things—greetings, Lady. This naked boy, if I scratch him, won't he have a wound, Cynno? For the flesh is laid on him in the painting, pulsing like warm springs. And the silver fire-tongs, if Myellus or Pataeciscus son of Lamprion sees them, won't they lose their eyes thinking they are really made of silver? And the ox, and the man leading it, and the woman following, and this hook-nosed man and the one with his hair sticking up, don't they all have the look of life and day? If I did not think I was acting too boldly for a woman, I should have cried out, in case the ox might do me some harm: he glances sideways so, Cynno, with the one eye.

Cynno: Yes, Phile, the hands of the Ephesian Apelles are truthful in every line, nor would you say 'That man looked at one thing but rejected another,' but whatever came into his mind he was quick and eager to attempt; and anyone who has looked on him or his works without just excitement ought to hang by the foot in the fuller's house.

Temple-warden: Perfectly fair, ladies, are your offerings, and looking forward to better: no one has found more favour with Paeon than you have. Hail hail Paeon, mayest thou be well disposed for their fair offerings to these ladies and to any who are their spouses and near kin. Hail hail Paeon; so may it be.

Cynno: May it be, o most mighty, and in good health may we come again with our husbands and children, bringing greater offerings.—Coccale, remember to cut carefully the bird's little leg and give it to the temple-warden, and place the batter reverently in the snake's hole and dip the cakes; the rest we shall feast on at home....

Hesiod, *Theogony* 535-557

For when the gods and mortal men had a dispute at Mecone, even then Prometheus was forward to cut up a great ox and set portions before them, trying to deceive the mind of Zeus. Before the rest he set flesh and inner parts thick with fat upon the hide, covering them with an ox paunch; [540] but for Zeus he put the white bones dressed up with cunning art and covered with shining fat. Then the father of men and of gods said to him:

"Son of Iapetus, most glorious of all lords, good sir, how unfairly you have divided the portions!"

[545] So said Zeus whose wisdom is everlasting, rebuking him. But wily Prometheus answered him, smiling softly and not forgetting his cunning trick:

"Zeus, most glorious and greatest of the eternal gods, take which ever of these portions your heart within you bids." [550] So he said, thinking trickery. But Zeus, whose wisdom is everlasting, saw and failed not to perceive the trick, and in his heart he thought mischief against mortal men which also was to be fulfilled. With both hands he took up the white fat and was angry at heart, and wrath came to his spirit [555] when he saw the white ox-bones craftily tricked out: and because of this the tribes of men upon earth burn white bones to the deathless gods upon fragrant altars. But Zeus who drives the clouds was greatly vexed and said to him:

"Son of Iapetus, clever above all! [560] So, sir, you have not yet forgotten your cunning arts!"

So spake Zeus in anger, whose wisdom is everlasting; and from that time he was always mindful of the trick, and would not give the power of unwearying fire to the Melian¹ race of mortal men who live on the earth. [565] But the noble son of Iapetus outwitted him and stole the far-seen gleam of unwearying fire in a hollow fennel stalk. And Zeus who thunders on high was stung in spirit, and his dear heart was angered when he saw amongst men the far-seen ray of fire. [570] Forthwith he made an evil thing for men as the price of fire; for the very famous Limping God formed of earth the likeness of a shy maiden as the son of Cronos willed.

Homer, *Odyssey* iii.418-463

Quickly, my dear children, fulfil my desire, that first of all the gods I may propitiate Athena, [420] who came to me in manifest presence to the rich feast of the god. ... [430] So he spoke, and they all set busily to work. The heifer came from the plain and from the swift, shapely ship came the comrades of great-hearted Telemachus; the smith came, bearing in his hands his tools of bronze, the implements of his craft, anvil and hammer and well-made tongs, [435] wherewith he wrought the gold; and Athena came to accept the sacrifice. Then the old man, Nestor, the driver of chariots, gave gold, and the smith prepared it, and overlaid therewith the horns of the heifer, that the goddess might rejoice when she beheld the offering. And Stratius and goodly Echephron led the heifer by the horns, [440] and Aretus came from the chamber, bringing them water for the hands in a basin embossed with flowers, and in the other hand he held barley grains in a basket; and Thrasymedes, steadfast in fight, stood by, holding in his hands a sharp axe, to fell the heifer; and Perseus held the bowl for the blood. Then the old man, Nestor, driver of chariots, [445] began the opening rite of hand-washing and sprinkling with barley grains, and earnestly he prayed to Athena, cutting off as first offering the hair from the head, and casting it into the fire. Now when they had prayed, and had strewn the barley grains, straightway the son of Nestor, Thrasymedes, high of heart, came near and dealt the blow; and the axe cut through the sinews [450] of the neck, and loosened the strength of the heifer. Then the women raised the sacred cry, the daughters and the sons' wives and the revered wife of Nestor, Eurydice, the eldest of the daughters of Clymenus, and the men raised the heifer's head from the broad-wayed earth and held it, and Peisistratus, leader of men, cut the throat. [455] And when the black blood had flowed from her and the life had left the bones, at once they cut up the body and straightway cut out the thigh-pieces all in due order, and covered them with a double layer of fat, and laid raw flesh upon them. Then the old man burned them on billets of wood, and poured over them sparkling wine, [460] and beside him the young men held in their hands the five-pronged forks. But when the thigh-pieces were wholly burned, and they had tasted the inner parts, they cut up the rest and spitted and roasted it, holding the pointed spits in their hands.

Homer, *Odyssey* xiv.418-448

On this he began chopping firewood, while the others brought in a fine fat five year old boar pig, and set it at the altar. Eumaios did not forget the gods, for he was a man of good principles, so the first thing he did was to cut bristles from the pig's face and throw them into the fire, praying to all the gods as he did so that Odysseus might return home again. Then he clubbed the pig with a billet of oak which he had kept back when he was chopping the firewood, and its soul left it, while the others slaughtered and singed it. Then they cut it up, and Eumaios began by putting raw pieces from each joint on to some of the fat; these he sprinkled with barley meal, and laid upon the embers; they cut the rest of the meat up small, put the pieces upon the spits and roasted them till they were done; when they had taken them off the spits they threw them on to the dresser in a heap. The swineherd, who was a most equitable man, then stood up to give every one his share. He made seven portions; one of these he set apart for Hermes the son of Maia and the nymphs, praying to them as he did so; the others he dealt out to the men man by man. He gave Odysseus some slices cut lengthways down the loin as a mark of especial honor, and Odysseus was much pleased. "I hope, Eumaios," said he, "that Zeus will be as well disposed towards you as I am, for the respect you are showing to an outcast like myself."

To this you answered, O swineherd Eumaios, "Eat, my good fellow, and enjoy your supper, such as it is. A god grants this, and withholds that, just as he thinks right, for he can do whatever he chooses."

As he spoke he cut off the first piece and offered it as a burnt sacrifice to the immortal gods; then he made them a drink-offering, put the cup in the hands of Odysseus, and sat down to his own portion.

Isaeus 8.15-16

Now there are other proofs which we can bring forward to show that we are the children of Ciron's daughter. For, as was natural, seeing that we were the sons of his own daughter, Ciron never offered a sacrifice without our presence; whether he was performing a great or small sacrifice, we were always there and took part in the ceremony. And not only were we invited to such rites but he also always took us into the country for the Dionysia, and we always went with him to public spectacles and sat at his side, and we went to his house to keep all the festivals; and when he sacrificed to Zeus Ctesius --a festival to which he attached a special importance, to which he admitted neither slaves nor free men outside his own family, at which he personally performed all the rites--we participated in this celebration and laid our hands with his upon the victims and placed our offerings side by side with his, and took part in all the other rites, and he prayed for our health and wealth, as he naturally would, being our grandfather.

Pausanias V.15.3-12

Well, there is in the Altis, when you are about to pass to the left of the Leonidaem, an altar of Aphrodite, and after it one of the Seasons. About opposite the rear chamber a wild olive is growing on the right. It is called the olive of the Beautiful Crown, and from its leaves are made the crowns which it is customary to give to winners of Olympic contests. Near this wild olive stands an altar of Nymphs; these too are styled Nymphs of the Beautiful Crowns. [4] Outside the Altis, but on the right of the Leonidaem, is an altar of Artemis of the Market, and one has also been built for Mistresses, and in my account of Arcadia I will tell you about the goddess they call Mistress. After this is an altar of Zeus of the Market, and before what is called the Front Seats stands an altar of Apollo surnamed Pythian, and after it one of Dionysus. The last altar is said to be not old, and to have been dedicated by private individuals. [5] As you go to the starting-point for the chariot-race there is an altar with an inscription "to the Bringer of Fate." This is plainly a surname of Zeus, who knows the affairs of men, all that the Fates give them, and all that is not destined for them. Near there is also an oblong altar of Fates, after it one of Hermes, and the next two are of Zeus Most High. At the starting-point for the chariot-race, just about opposite the middle of it, there are in the open altars of Poseidon Horse-god and Hera Horse-goddess, and near the pillar an altar of the Dioscuri. [6] At the entrance to what is called the Wedge there is on one side an altar of Ares Horse-god, on the other one of Athena Horse-goddess. On entering the Wedge itself you see altars of Good Luck, Pan and Aphrodite; at the innermost part of the Wedge an altar of the Nymphs called Blooming. An altar of Artemis stands on the right as you return from the Portico that the Eleans call the Portico of Agnaptus, giving to the building the name of its architect. [7] After re-entering the Altis by the processional gate there are behind the Heraeum altars of the river Cladeus and of Artemis; the one after them is Apollo's, the fourth is of Artemis surnamed Coccoca, and the fifth is of Apollo Thermius. As to the Elean surname Thermius, the conjecture occurred to me that in the Attic dialect it would be thesmios (god of laws), but why Artemis is surnamed Coccoca I could not discover. [8] Before what is called Theëcoleon is a building, in a corner of which has been set up an altar of Pan. The Town Hall of the Eleans is within the Altis, and it has been built beside the exit beyond the gymnasium. In this gymnasium are the running-tracks and the wrestling-grounds for the athletes. In front of the door of the Town Hall is an altar of Artemis Huntress. [9] In the Town Hall itself, on the right as you enter the room where they have the hearth, is an altar of Pan. This hearth too is made of ashes, and on it fire burns every day and likewise every night. The ashes from this hearth, according to the account I have already given, they bring to the altar of Olympian Zeus, and what is brought from the hearth contributes a great deal to the size of the altar.

[10] Each month the Eleans sacrifice once on all the altars I have enumerated. They sacrifice in an ancient manner; for they burn on the altars incense with wheat which has been kneaded with honey, placing also on the altars twigs of olive, and using wine for a libation. Only to the Nymphs and the Mistresses are they not wont to pour wine in libation, nor do they pour it on the altar common to all the gods. The care of the sacrifices is given to a priest, holding office for one month, to soothsayers and libation-bearers, and also to a guide, a flute-player and the woodman. [11] The traditional words spoken by them in the Town Hall at the libations, and the hymns which they sing, it were not right for me to introduce into my narrative. They pour libations, not only to the Greek gods, but also to the god in Libya, to Hera Ammonia and to Parammon, which is a surname of Hermes. From very early times it is plain that they used the oracle in Libya, and in the temple of Ammon are altars which the Eleans dedicated. On them are engraved the questions of the Eleans, the replies of the god, and the names of the men who came to Ammon from Elis. These are in the temple of Ammon. [12] The Eleans also pour libations to all heroes and wives of heroes who are honored either in Elis or among the Aetolians. The songs sung in the Town Hall are in the Doric dialect, but they do not say who it was that composed them. The Eleans also have a banqueting room. This too is in the Town Hall, opposite the chamber where stands the hearth. In this room they entertain the winners in the Olympic games.

Hesiod Works and Days 320-340

Wealth should not be seized: god-given wealth is much better; for if a man takes great wealth violently and perforce, or if he steals it through his tongue, as often happens when gain deceives men's sense and dishonor tramples down honor, the gods soon blot him out and make that man's house low, and wealth attends him only for a little time. Alike with him who does wrong to a suppliant or a guest, or who goes up to his brother's bed and commits unnatural sin in lying with his wife, or who infatuatedly offends against fatherless children, or who abuses his old father at the cheerless threshold of old age and attacks him with harsh words, truly Zeus himself is angry, and at the last lays on him a heavy requital for his evil doing. But do you turn your foolish heart altogether away from these things, and, as far as you are able, sacrifice to the deathless gods purely and cleanly, and burn rich meats also, and at other times propitiate them with libations and incense, both when you go to bed and when the holy light has come back, that they may be gracious to you in heart and spirit, and so you may buy another's holding and not another yours.

Plato, Republic 364b

But the most astounding of all these arguments concerns what they have to say about the gods and virtue. They say that the gods, too, assign misfortune and a bad life to many good people, and the opposite fate to their opposites. Begging priests and prophets frequent the doors of the rich and persuade them that they possess a god-given power founded on sacrifices and incantations. If the rich person or any of his ancestors has committed an injustice, they can fix it with pleasant things and feasts. Moreover, if he wishes to injure some enemy, then, at little expense, he'll be able to harm just and unjust alike, for by means of spells and enchantments they can persuade the gods to serve them. And they bring in the poets as evidence for their claims, now smoothing the path of vice with the words of Hesiod: "Vice may be had in abundance without trouble; the way is smooth and her dwellingplace is near. But before virtue the gods have set toil," and a long, harsh uphill road. Then they cite Homer as a witness that the gods may be influenced by men; for he also says: "The gods, too, may be turned from their purpose; and men pray to them and avert their wrath by sacrifices and soothing entreaties, and by libations and the odor of fat, when they have sinned and transgressed."

Porphyry, On Philosophy Drawn from Oracles

I have come in response to your eloquent prayer, which was invented by mortals in accordance with divine counsels ... Why then have you summoned me, goddess Hekate, from purest heaven by means of god-taming constraints?

PGM I.321-325

And may you not be angry at my sacred chants. But guard that my whole body come to light intact, for you yourself arranged these things among mankind for them to learn. (*cp. PGM IV.453-5, 1980*)

Precatio omnium herbarum

Hither, hither come with your powers, because the one who gave you birth, she herself has given me leave to gather you, and he also to whom medicine is entrusted has bestowed his favor.

PGM IV. 2891-2942

A white dove's blood and fat, untreated myrrh and parched wormwood. Make this up together as pills and offer them to the star on pieces of vine wood or on coals.

PGM IV. 2456-2470

Take a field mouse and deify it in spring water. And take two moon beetles and deify them in river water, and take a river crab and fat of a dappled goat that is virgin and dung of a dog-faced baboon, 2 eggs of an ibis, 2 drams of storax, 2 drams of myrrh, 2 drams of crocus, 4 drams of Italian galingale, 4 drams of uncut frankincense, a single onion. Put all these things onto a mortar with the mouse and the remaining items and, after pounding thoroughly, place in a lead box and keep for use. And whenever you want to perform a rite, take a little, make a charcoal fire, go up on a lofty roof, and make the offering as you say I this spell at moonrise, and at once she comes....

PGM I. 244-7

This is also the composition of the ink: myrrh troglitis, 4 drams; 3 karian figs, 7 pits of Nikolaus dates, 7 dried pinecones, 7 piths of the single-stemmed worm-wood, 7 wings of the Hermaic ibis, spring water. When you have burned the ingredients, prepare them and write...

Catullus 34

We, upright maids and youths, are in Diana's care: upright youths and maids, we sing Diana. O Latonia, progeny great of greatest Jove, whom your mother bore beneath Delian olive, that you might be queen of lofty mounts, of foliaged groves, of remote glens, and of winding streams. You are called Juno Lucina by the mother in the pangs of childbirth, you are named potent Trivia and Luna with an ill-got light. You, Goddess, with monthly march measuring the yearly course, glut with produce the rustic roofs of the farmer. Be you hallowed by whatever name you prefer; and cherish, with your good aid, as you are accustomed, the ancient race of Romulus.

"Orphic Hymn" 16. To Hera, incense - aromatic herbs

You are ensconced in darksome hollows, and airy is your form,
O Hera, queen of all and blessed consort of Zeus.
You send soft breezes to mortals, such as nourish the soul,
and, O mother of rains, you nurture the winds and give birth to all.
Without you there is neither life nor growth;
and, mixed as you are in the air we venerate, you partake of all,
and of all are queen and mistress.
You toss and turn with the rushing wind.
May you, O blessed goddess and many-named queen of all,
come with kindness and joy on your lovely face.

"Orphic Hymn" 17. To Poseidon,

incense - myrrh

Hearken, dark-maned Poseidon, holder of the earth,
equestrian; carved in bronze is the trident in your hand,
and you dwell in the foundations of the full-bosomed sea.
Deep-roaring ruler of the sea and shaker of earth,
your blossoms are waves, O gracious one, as you urge horses and chariot on,
rushing on the sea and splashing through the rippling brine.
To your lot fell the third portion, the unfathomable sea,
and you delight in waves and in their wild dwellers, O spirit of the deep.
Save the foundations of the earth and ships moving at full tilt,
and bring peace, health, and blameless prosperity.

"Orphic Hymn" 18. To Plouton

Subterranean is your dwelling, O strong-spirited one,
a meadow in Tartaros, thick-shaded and dark.
Chthonic Zeus, sceptered one, kindly accept this sacrifice,
Plouton, holder of the keys to the whole earth.
You give the wealth of the year's fruits to mankind,
and to your lot fell the third portion, earth, queen of all,
seat of the gods, mighty lap for mortals.
Your throne rests on a tenebrous realm,
the distant, untiring, windless and impassive Hades,
and on dark Acheron that encompasses the roots of the earth.
All-Receiver, with death at your command, you are master of mortals;
Euboulos, you once took pure Demeter's daughter as your bride
when you tore her away from the meadow and through the sea
upon your steeds you carried her to an Attic cave,
in the district of Eleusis, where the gates to Hades are.
You alone were born to judge deeds obscure and conspicuous;
holiest and illustrious ruler of all, frenzied god,
you delight in the worshipper's respect and reverence.
Come with favor and joy to the initiates. I summon you.

"Orphic Hymn" 19. To Zeus the Thunderbolt,

incense - storax

Father Zeus, sublime is the course of the blazing cosmos you drive on,
and ethereal and lofty the flash of your lightning,
as you shake the seat of the immortals with divine thunderbolts.
With the fire of your lightning you emblazon the rain clouds;
storms you bring and hurricanes, and mighty thunder,
blazing and roaring thunder - like a shower of arrows -
which with horrific might and strength sets all aflame,
this dreadful missile that makes hearts pound and hair bristle.
Holy and invincible, it comes with a sudden crash,
an endless spiral of noise, omnivorous in its drive,
unbreakable, threatening, and ineluctable; the gale's
sharp and smoke-filled shaft swoops down
with a flash, dreaded by land and sea.
Wild beasts cringe when they hear the noise,
faces reflect the brilliance of thunder roaring
in the celestial hollows. You tear the robe
that cloaks heaven and hurl the fiery thunderbolt.
But, O blessed one, (calm down?) the anger of sea waves
and mountain peaks. We all know your power.
Enjoy this libation and give all things that please the heart,
a life of prosperity, queenly health,
divine peace that nurtures youths and is with honors crowned,
and an existence ever blooming with cheerful thoughts.

"Orphic Hymn" 28. To Hermes,
incense - frankincense

Hear me, Hermes, messenger of Zeus, son of Maia;
almighty is your heart, O lord of the deceased and judge of contests;
gentle and clever, O Argeiphontes, you are a guide
whose sandals fly, and a man-loving prophet to mortals.
You are vigorous and you delight in exercise and in deceit;
interpreter of all, you are a profiteer who frees us of cares
and who holds in his hands the blameless tool of peace.
Lord of Korykos, blessed, helpful and skilled in words,
you assist in work, you are a friend of mortals in need,
and you wield the dreaded and respected weapon of speech.
Hear my prayer and grant a good end to a life
of industry, gracious talk, and mindfulness.

"Orphic Hymn" 29. Hymn to Persephone

Persephone, blessed daughter of great Zeus, sole offspring
of Demeter, come and accept this gracious sacrifice.
Much honored spouse of Plouton, discreet and life-giving,
you command the gates of Hades in the bowels of the earth,
lovely-tressed Praxidike, pure bloom of Deo,
mother of the Furies, queen of the nether world,
whom Zeus sired in clandestine union.
Mother of loud-roaring and many-shaped Eubouleus,
radiant and luminous playmate of the Seasons,
august, almighty, maiden rich in fruits,
brilliant and horned, you alone are beloved of mortals.
In spring you rejoice in the meadow breezes
and you show your holy figure in shoots and green fruits.
You were made a kidnapper's bride in the fall,
and you alone are life and death to toiling mortals,
O Persephone, for you always nourish all and kill them, too.
Hearken, O blessed goddess, and send forth the earth's fruits.
You who blossom in peace, in soft-handed health,
and in a life of plenty that ferries old age in comfort
to your realm, O queen, and to that of mighty Plouton.

"Orphic Hymn" 42. To Mithras
incense - storax

I call upon law-giving Dionysos who carries the fennel stalk -
unforgettable and many-named seed of Euboleus -
and upon holy, sacred and ineffable queen Mithra,
whose twofold nature is male and female. As redeeming Iacchos,
I summon you, lord, whether you delight in your fragrant temple at Eleusis,
or with the Mother you partake of mystic rites in Phrygia,
or you rejoice in Cyprus with fair-wreathed Kythereia,
or yet you exult in hallowed wheat-bearing fields along
Egypt's river with your divine mother,
the august and black-robed Isis, and your train of nurses.
Lady, kind-heartedly come to those contesting for noble prizes.

PGM I. 262-347

Apollonian invocation: Take a seven-leaved sprig of laurel and hold it in your right hand as you summon the heavenly gods and chthonic daemons. Write on the sprig of laurel the seven characters for deliverance.

The characters are these: , the first character onto the first leaf, then the second again in the same way onto the second leaf until there is a matching up of the 7 characters and 7 leaves. But be careful not to lose a leaf [and] do harm to yourself. For this is the body's greatest protective charm, by which all are made subject, and seas and rocks tremble, and daemons [avoid] the characters' charm for the rite so that you fear nothing.

Now this is the rite: Take a lamp which has not been colored red and fit it with a piece of linen cloth and rose oil or oil of spikenard, and dress yourself in a prophetic garment and hold an ebony staff in your left hand and the protective charm in your right (i.e., the sprig of laurel). But keep in readiness a wolf's head so that you can set the lamp upon the head of the wolf, and construct an altar of unburnt clay near the head and the lamp so that you may sacrifice on it to the god. And immediately the divine spirit enters.

The burnt offering is a wolf's eye, storax gum, cassia, balsam gum and whatever is valued among the spices, and pour a libation of wine and honey and milk and rainwater, [and make] 7 flat cakes and 7 round cakes. These you are going to make completely [near] the lamp, robed and refraining from all unclean things and from all eating of fish and from all sexual intercourse, so that you may bring the god into the greatest desire toward you.

Now these are the names, [which] you are going to write on the linen cloth and which you will put as a wick into the lamp which has not been colored red: "ABERAMENTHÓOULERTHEXANETHRENLYOÓTHNEMARAIBAI AEMINNAEBARÓTHERRETHÓBABEANIMEA." When you have completed all the instructions set out above, call the god with this chant:

"O lord Apollo, come with Paian.
Give answer to my questions, lord. O master
Leave Mount Parnassos and the Delphic Pytho
Whene'er my priestly lips voice secret words,
First angel of [the god], great Zeus. IAŌ
And you MICHAEL, who rule heaven's realm,
I call, and you, archangel GABRIEL.
Down from Olympos, ABRASAX, delighting
In dawns, come gracious who view sunset from
The dawn, ADŌNAI. Father of the world,
All nature quakes in fear of you, PAKERBÊETH.
I adjure God's head, which is Olympos;
I adjure God's signet, which is vision;
I adjure the right hand you held o'er the world;
I adjure God's bowl containing wealth;
I adjure eternal god, AIŌN of all;
I adjure self-growing Nature, mighty ADŌNAIOS;
I adjure setting and rising ELŌAIOS:

I adjure these holy and divine names that
They send me the divine spirit and that it
Fulfill what I have in my heart and soul.
Hear blessed one, I call you who rule heav'n
And earth and Chaos and Hades where dwell
[Daimons of men who once gazed on the light].
Send me this daimon at my sacred chants,
Who moves by night to orders 'neath your force,
From whose own tent this comes, and let him tell me
In total truth all that my mind designs,
And send him gentle, gracious, pondering
No thoughts opposed to me. And may you not
Be angry at my sacred chants. But guard
That my whole body come to light intact,
For you yourself arranged these things among
Mankind for them to learn. I call your name,
In number equal to the very Moirai,
ACHAIPHŌTHŌTHŌAIÊIAÊIA
AIÊIAIÊIAŌTHŌTHŌPHIACHA."

And when he comes, ask him about what you wish, about the art of prophecy, about divination with epic verses, about the sending of dreams, about obtaining revelations in dreams, about interpretations of dreams, about causing disease, about everything that is a part of magical knowledge.

Cover a throne and couch with cloth of linen, but remain standing while you sacrifice with the aforementioned burnt offering. And after the inquiry, if you wish to release the god himself, shift the aforementioned ebony staff, which you are holding in your left hand, to your right hand; and shift the sprig of laurel, which you are holding in your right hand, to your left hand; and extinguish the burning lamp; and use the same burnt offering while saying:

"Be gracious unto me, O primal god,
O elder-born, self-generating god.
I adjure the fire which first shone in the void;
I adjure your pow'r which is greatest o'er all;
I adjure him who destroys e'en in Hades,
That you depart, returning to your ship,
And harm me not, but be forever kind."

