Smith, J. Z., "The Temple and the Magician." *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions.* Leiden: Brill, 1978: 172-89.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TEMPLE AND THE MAGICIAN

One of the most precious texts for an understanding of the religious life of Late Antiquity is the second century autobiography of Thessalos, the magician. Although this text has been commented upon by several scholars, its significance has not been exhausted. It is, therefore, a pleasure to dedicate this brief study of *Thessalos* to Nils A. Dahl who has well taught those of us who were privileged to be his students to value a non-Christian text not as mere "background" but as a *document humain.*

Thessalos exists in two major versions, both serve as prefaces to a complex herbal: a Byzantine Greek manuscript, copied in 1474, now in Madrid (Codex Matritensis Bibl. nat. 4631 [old number 110], f.75-79^{v}) and a fourteenth century Latin translation which is now part of the medical library at Montpellier (Codex Montepessulanus Fac. méd. 227, f.31-35^{v}). The Greek text was first described in 1769 in a catalogue of the manuscripts in the Royal Library of Madrid prepared by Juan Iriarte;[1] and was 'rediscovered' and edited by Charles Graux in 1878.[2] It received wider circulation and discussion following its publication, in 1912, by Pierre Boudreaux in the eighth volume of the *Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum.*[3]

The Madrid manuscript attributed authorship of the autobiography to Harpokration, the alleged tradent of the *Kyranides*, a Hermetic magico-medical, astrobiological collection.[4] But, as the earliest editors perceived, there is a problem with such an attribution.

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[1] J. Iriarte, *Regiae Bibliothecae Matritensis codices Graeci* (Madrid, 1769), Vol. I, p. 435. The catalogue contains an extract of some fifteen lines.

[2] Ch. Graux, "Lettre inédite d'Harpokration à un Empereur publiée d'après un manuscrit de la Bibliotheca naçional de Madrid," *Revue de Philologie*, II (1878), 65-77. This should be considered the *editio princeps.*

[3] P. Boudreaux, *Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum* (henceforth cited, *CCAG*), Vol. VIII: iii, esp. pp. 134-139, 16.

[4] See M. Stephan, "Harpokration," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* (henceforth cited, *RE*), Suppl. vol. VI, cols. 102-104. For an excellent summary of the complex *Kyranides* tradition, see A-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* (Paris, 1949), Vol. I, pp. 201-216; for its relation to *Thessalos*, see M. Wellmann, *Marcellus von Side als Artz und die Koiraniden des Hermes Trismegistos* (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 12f.

Although there is a close connection between the treatise on astral botany which the autobiography introduces and the *Kyranides*, tradition is unanimous that Harpokration was born in Alexandria. The author of the autobiography unambiguously asserts his birth place to have been Asia Minor and describes, with excitement, his later journey to Alexandria.[5]

A clue as to the identity of the author was gained in 1906 with the publication of a fourteenth century Byzantine manuscript which contained an extract from the astral treatise of the Madrid manuscript and named its author as "Thessalos the Astrologer".[6] The name Thessalos did, in fact, occur in the Madrid manuscript in direct address to the author by the god, Asclepius, but it had been garbled by the scribe.[7]

Franz Cumont recalled the title of an unedited Latin text on the mystical-magical nature of plants entitled, *Thessalus philosophus de virtutibus herborum* and intuited a connection.[8] Examining the text, which was part of an extensive manuscript containing a collection of occult documents, he determined that Codex Montepessulanus Fac. med. 227 was, in fact, a close Latin translation of the Greek. He announced his discovery in 1918[9] and, subsequently, edited the Latin version for the *Catalogus*[10] declaring that the claim of Thessalos' authorship had been established "with a certainty which is rarely attained in researches into literary paternity".[11] His judgement has

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[5] Graux, "Lettre inédite," 66 and note 5; Boudreaux, *CCAG*, Vol. VIII: iii, p. 136, n. 1.

[6] Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1144, f. 243, first published in the *Mélanges de l'École de Rome*, XXVI (1906), 351, and noted by Boudreaux in *CCAG*, Vol. VIII: iii, p. 134.

[7] See Graux, "Lettre inédite," 75, n. 61 "Il y a là quelque alteration grave, probablement une lacune" and compare, Boudreaux, *CCAG*, Vol. VIII: iii, p. 137 *ad* line 9.

[8] *Thessalus philosophus* had been noted by title, but left unedited, in *CCAG*, Vol. VII, p. 231, n. 1 and in H. Diels, *Die Handschriften der antike Ärzte* (Berlin, 1906), Vol. II, p. 107. Note that L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, 1923), Vol. II, p. 234 calls attention to a mention of *Tesalus in secretis de XII herbis* in Jacobus de Dondis, *Aggregatio Medicamentorum* (1355).

[9] F. Cumont, "Écrits hermétiques (II): Le médecin Thessalus et les plantes astrales d'Hermès Trismégiste," *Revue de Philologie*, XLII (1918), 85-108. Compare, Cumont, "Lettre de Thessalus," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions*, 1918, 225f.

[10] F. Cumont, *CCAG*, Vol. IV: iv, esp. pp. 254-258, 16.

[11] Cumont, "Le médecin," 102. Although not cited by Cumont, further proof of this identification is provided by the well known Codex Laurentinus 75.1,

remained unchallenged, although debate continues as to whether the Thessalos of the autobiography is to be identified with the infamous physician, Thessalos of Tralles.[12] Recently, the entire manuscript, autobiography and herbal, has been reedited by Hans-Veit Friedrich.[13]

The autobiography is couched in the form of a letter to a king from the magician—a convention well known from both Hermetic revelation literature and medical materials—which serves to introduce and authenticate the herbal which constitutes the major part of the manuscript.[14] It narrates the author's perseverance through a set of

f.143 which names *Thessalus ex Nechepso*, a relationship explicated by the autobiography. See M. Wellmann, "Zur Geschichte der Medicin in Altertum," *Hermes*, XXXV (1900), 370 who, lacking the autobiography, finds the relationship inexplicable. For the identification, see H. Diller, "Thessalos," *RE*, Vol. VIA, col. 181; R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3ed. (Leipzig, 1927), p. 129.

[12] See the summary of the life and teachings of Thessalos of Tralles by H. Diller in *RE*, Vol. VIA, cols. 168-180 and the autobiography, cols. 180-182. While I doubt the identification, the *vita* of Thessalos of Tralles would be an apt illustration of the sociological thesis of this article. Born in Lydia, the son of a weaver, he followed his father's trade and, with little formal education, emigrated to Rome during Nero's reign, and established himself as a physician of the school of the *Methodikoi*, famous for his violent curative techniques (*metasynkrisis*). According to his critics (chiefly Galen), he was vain and boastful, claiming that he was the greatest of physicians who, reversing the Hippocratic maxim that "the art is long," maintained that he could teach the whole of medicine in six months. He was buried on the Via Appia; his tomb bore the inscription ὁ Ἰατρονίκης—" the conqueror of physicians".

[13] H.-V. Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, XXVIII (Meisenheim am Glan, 1968), esp. pp. 43-54. See further his valuable comparisons between the Greek and Latin versions, pp. 17f. and 21f.

[14] Compare *Corpus Hermeticum* XVI, Ἀσκληπιοῦ πρὸς Ἄμμωνα Βασιλέα; Lactantius, *Div. inst.* II.15.6, *Asclepius . . . in illo sermone perfecto quem scripsit ad regem* and the materials cited in Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber* (Leipzig, 1924), Vol. II, par. 36 and Festugière, *La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 324-332 (not all of which are relevant). See below, n. 34. For medical material see, for example, A. Nelson, "Zur pseudohippokratischen Epistula ad Antiochum," in *Symbolae Philologicae Dicatie O. A. Danielson* (Uppsala, 1937), pp. 203-217. F. Boll, "Das Eingangsstück der Pseudo-Klementinen," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XVII (1916), 141 compares the epistle to that introducing the pseudo-Clementines—which is impossible. But see Boll's valuable excursus (II), "Könige als Offenbarungsträger," in his *Aus der Offenbarung Johannis* (Leipzig, 1914), esp. pp. 136-142 for shrewd comments on the genre.

For the purposes of this essay, the precise identification of *Germanico Claudio regi et deo eterno* (the Latin ms. preserves the better reading) is not crucial. The general consensus is that it is either Tiberius or Nero. See Cumont, "Le médecin," 98f. and *CCAG*, VIII: iv, p. 254; Festugière, "L'expérience religieuse du médecin Thessalos", p. 155, n. 52 (originally published in the *Revue Biblique*, XLVIII [1939], 45-77 and reprinted in Festugière, *Hermétisme et mystique païenne* [Paris,

trials in seeking "miraculous" knowledge "beyond the boundaries of human powers" and begins with a description of an 'upwardly mobile' young man. Born of wealthy parents in Asia Minor, Thessalos studied with the local rhetoricians and then set out for the 'culture capital' of Alexandria to prove his mettle.[15] There he studied both grammar and "dialectical medicine" and soon became famous among his contemporaries. One day, while searching through a library, he came upon an astrological treatise "by Nechepso which described twenty-four ways of treating the whole body and every illness according to each sign of the Zodiac along with stones and plants".[16] Overcome with the power the book promised, he tried every one of the cures and recitations (especially the preparation of the "helic pill"),[17] but all were futile. "I failed in every one of my attempts to cure sickness". Overcome with shame, he could neither face his friends in Alexandria nor return home to his parents in Asia Minor as he had boasted to both of his abilities. Therefore he began to wander about Egypt, vowing to commit suicide unless he received some communication from the gods "whether by vision in my dreams or by an inspiration from on high".[18]

1967], pp. 141-180 which pagination I follow); Friedrich, *Thessalos*, p. 45 *ad* line 1.

[15] I see no sign, in this narrative, of the traditional aretalogy of the *sophos*—his excellence in studies in his homeland and his journey to a foreign center of learning in order to measure the *sophia* of its wise men, as Festugière claims ("L'expérience," p. 156, n. 56). There is no mention of miraculous speed of learning in Thessalos' homeland (which is *the* aretalogical convention) nor are the *sophoi* of Alexandria being put to the test by Thessalos (for example, by dialogue which is *the* aretalogical convention). Rather the text offers a realistic portrait of a young, wealthy, provincial intellectual journeying to a capital for advanced studies in the hope of securing fame and fortune; a life which may be found in many a biography from Late Antiquity. As I shall argue below, traditional aretalogical motifs appear to be reversed by this account.

[16] *Thessalos*, 6. For a general treatment of such works, see A. Delatte, *Herbarius: Recherches sur le cérémonial usité chez les anciens pour la cueillette des simples et des plantes magiques*, 3ed. (Brussels, 1961), esp. pp. 64-69 and compare the important review of the first edition by F. Pfister in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXVII (1937), 381-390. See further, Pfister, "Pflanzenaberglaube," *RE*, Vol. XXXVIII, cols. 1446-1456. It is just such a book which makes up the bulk of the Thessalos manuscript (see Friedrich, *Thessalos*, pp. 60-273) on which see Cumont, "Le médecin" and Festugière, "L' expérience".

[17] *Thessalos*, 7: τροχίσκον ἡλιακόν—*trociscum heliacum*. The recipe has not been further identified.

[18] *Thessalos*, 11. On the request for a dream or vision, see Festugière, "L'expérience", 143-146. Most of the materials cited are not direct parallels. Far better is A. D. Nock's collection of visions which resolve religious doubts or questions in "A Vision of Mandulis Aion," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXVII (1934) re-

This narrative conceals a stunning reversal of traditional Greco-Egyptian revelatory *bioi*. There is no more common theme in these materials than the quest for ancient, hidden books of wisdom. This *topos* depends on an earlier apologetic *topos* of an ancient (frequently antediluvian) book which is miraculously rediscovered (in fact, having been recently forged). In older materials, this *topos* occurs either in inner-directed apologetics in which a king (or his representative) rediscovers a holy book which legitimates a religious innovation[19] or in outer-directed apologetics in which it becomes part of the general Hellenistic debate over autochthony and heurmatismatics, becoming a means of legitimating the cultural age of a people.[20] In Greco-Egyptian magical, alchemical and astrological literature, it became a special convention in works such as the *bios* of (Bolos-) Demokritos, the "Emerald Tablet of Hermes" and the "Book of Krates".[21] This tradition is continued in Thessalos by

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printed in Z. Steward, ed., *A. D. Nock: Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), Vol. I, esp. pp. 368-374 referring, in passing, to Thessalos (pp. 372f.).

[19] Certainly the most complex libretto for the 'rediscovery' of such a forgery is the account in 2Kings 22-23; 2Chron. 34. The oldest, unambiguous Egyptian example is the Shabaka stone (in J. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2ed. [Princeton, 1955], p. 4). The best, late example would be the Demotic tale of the discovery of the "Book of Breathings" in P. Louvre 3284 (edited and translated by W. Erichsen, "Eine neue demotische Erzählung," *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur zu Mainz*, Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Kl., 1956:2). Whether the same is the case for the well known rubric to chapter XXX of the *Book of the Dead* (with variants) is unclear. For an example of a 'rediscovery' that failed, see the "Books of Numa" in Livy XL.29 and Plutarch, *Numa*, XIII.87 and the study by A. Delatte, "Les doctrines pythagoriciennes des livres de Numa," *Bulletin de l'Academie Royale Belgique*, XXII (1936), 19-40. The same *topos* can, of course, be used in revelation literature to authenticate radically new teachings as in the complex books or stelae of Seth traditions in the various Nag Hammadi codices (see esp. *Gospel of the Egyptians* [*C.G.* III.2 and IV.2] in J. Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* [New York, 1960], p. 180).

[20] This tradition most certainly may be traced back to early fifth-century Greco-Egyptian apologetics concerning Thot as the inventor of writing (for a useful overview, see C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque* [Aix-en-Provence, 1971], pp. 279-284 *et passim*.). It becomes standard in Hellenistic Near Eastern literature which paraphrases archaic traditions in Greek (e.g. Philo of Byblos, Berossus, Manetho, Josephus).

[21] The narrative of (Bolus-) Demokritos journeying to Egypt to study with Ostanes and the miraculous discovery of the hidden books of Ostanes' father in a column of a temple would be the classic example (ps. Demokritos, *Physika*, 3 in J. Bidez-F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* [Paris, 1938], Vol. II, pp. 317f.). The best collection of examples is in Festugière, *La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 319-324 and the brief note by Cumont, *CCAG*, Vol. VIII: iv, pp. 102f. It is of interest to note

linking the unexpectedly discovered book to the renowned figure of royal wisdom, Nechepso.[22] While most often cited, in Greco-Roman tradition, as an astronomical authority in an occult chain of tradition,[23] he is well known as a lithicist and designer of amulets.[24] In Greco-Egyptian tradition, he is, as king, the recipient of a number of revelatory epistles, most usually from the sage Petosiris.[25] From a later tradition, closely linked to the *Kyranides*-Thessalos type of astrology, there is a report that: "We have composed this moon book (σελ̣ηνοδρόμιον) by putting two books together: one is in the hand of the sacred scribe, Melampous, addressed to Nechepso, King of Egypt; the other has been found in Heliopolis in Egypt, in the temple, in the holy of holies, engraved in hieroglyphics under King Psammetichus."[26] But, in the autobiography, this tradition has been radically altered. Rather than the setting of the discovery being a temple, it is a βιβλιοθήκη. Rather than the book being a true revelation of hidden, archaic wisdom, it is a collection of erroneous information which lacks power. Rather than resulting in triumphal enlightenment, mastery of its contents produces despair.[27]

In his depression, Thessalos vows to wander Egypt in quest of a revelation or, barring this, to kill himself. His journey takes him to

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that Harpokration, the alleged author of the *Kyranides*, claimed to have translated his work from an ancient column (L. Delatte, *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides* [Liège-Paris, 1942], pp. 13 and 15; Festugière, *La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 322f.).

[22] On Nechepso, see the classic dissertation by E. Riess, *Nechepsonis et Petosiridis fragmenta magica* (Bonn, 1890) conveniently reprinted in *Philologus*, Supplementband VI:1 (1891-3), pp. 325-394; W. Kroll, "Nechepso," *RE*, Vol. XVI, cols. 2160-2167 and W. Gundel-H. G. Gundel, *Astrologumena* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 27-36.

[23] Perhaps the best known passage is Firmicus Maternus, *Math.*, IV, *praef.* 5: (= Riess, T.7) "[I have transcribed] all that Hermes and Anubis have revealed to Asclepius, all that Petosiris and Nechepso have set out in detail, all that Abraham, Orpheus and Kritodemus have written as well as that set forth by other men learned in astronomy."

[24] Perhaps the best known passage is Galen, *De simpl.* X.19 (in the translation by C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* [Ann Arbor, 1950], p. 54): "Some also set it in a ring [a green jasper stone] and engrave on it the radiate serpent, just as King Nechepso prescribed in his fourteenth book. I myself have made a satisfactory test of this stone . . .".

[25] Collected in Riess, *Nechepsonis*, fragments 37-41, see Festugière, *La révélation*, Vol. I, p. 327.

[26] P. Parisin. 1884, f.150^{v} in *CCAG*, Vol. VIII: iv, p. 105, 1-4 (see Festugière, *La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 207 and 230). The 'second', Heliopolitan book appears the object of a separate tradition (see *CCAG*, Vol. VII, p. 63).

[27] See below, pp. 178, 181-85, for a further set of negative characterizations of the book.

Thebes (Diospolis), "the most ancient capital of Egypt, possessing many temples . . . priests, philosophers and sages".[28] In this portion of the narrative, another convention is being employed—the journey to an archaic center of learning to gain a revelation of Oriental *gnosis*—but, once again, the pattern is altered.[29] The Thebes described by Thessalos is not the 'golden city', the center of wealth and wisdom imagined by most writers of this genre. It is rather a realistic portrait of the city in Late Antiquity, such as we find in Strabo, a shadow of its former glory, with a handful of religious specialists inhabiting a few ruined temples.[30] It is a *necropolis* rather than a *diospolis*, and the

[28] *Thessalos*, 12.

[29] For this widespread theme, see, among others, Festugière, *La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 19-44. F. Boll, "Das Eingangsstück der Ps.-Klementinen," 139-148 suggests a specific adaptation of this theme. He compares the parodic structure of Lucian, *Nekyomanteia*, esp. 3, 4, 6 (we may set aside the thorny question of the relationship of Lucian to Menippus [compare, Horace, *Satires* II.5] and the equally complex question as to what religious tradition is being satirized as set forth in the classic debate between R. Helm, *Lucien und Menipp* [Leipzig, 1906], esp. pp. 17-62 and B. M. McCarthy, "Lucian and Menippus," *Yale Classical Studies*, IV [1934], 3-58); *Thessalos* and the pseudo-Clementines (*Hom.* I.1, 3, 5-8, 10, 13-15; *Recog.* I.1, 3, 5-6) noting a variety of common themes in the lives and journeys of the protagonists (Boll, 142f.). The parallels have some validity; but are not overwhelming. His attempt to find structural (Boll, 141) and verbal (Boll, 143f.) parallels with *Thessalos* is unconvincing. A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 107-109 follows and paraphrases Boll without demurral. Festugière, "L'expérience," p. 142, n. 7 offers some further parallels.

[30] For the traditional view of the wonders of Thebes, see texts such as Diodorus Siculus I.45.4-50.7 which presents a portrait of the magnificance of the "most prosperous city, not only of Egypt, but of the whole world", the wealth of its monumental and temple architecture and records the Theban propaganda that: Οἱ δὲ Θηβαῖοί φασιν ἑαυτοὺς ἀρχαιοτάτους εἶναι πάντων ἀνθρώπων, καὶ παρ' ἑαυτοῖς πρώτοις φιλοσοφίαν τε εὑρῆσθαι καὶ τὴν ἐπ' ἀκριβὲς ἀστρολογίαν (I.50.1). For the journey-initiation motif, see the characteristic advice of Thales to Pythagoras in Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* II. 12.

On the decay of native Egyptian temples, the reduction of the sacred centers to cities of old priests, see the remark of A. Bataille who, quite correctly, observes that, by the Roman period, Thebes was a "ville musée" ("Thèbes gréco-romaine," *Chronique d'Égypte*, XXVI [1951], 346). See the description of Thebes in Strabo, XVII.1.46 (816) as possessing only "traces" of her former glory, being now only a "collection of villages" with a few ruined temples, although once fabled for its wealth and for the wisdom of its priests who were "philosophers and astronomers". Compare the portrait of Heliopolis (Strabo, XVII.1.27-29 [805f.]): "The city is now entirely deserted, it contains the ancient temple constructed in the Egyptian manner [now ruined] . . . I also saw large houses in which the priests *had* lived, for it is said that this place in particular was, in ancient times, a settlement of priests who studied philosophy and astronomy; but both this organization and its pursuits have now disappeared. At Heliopolis, in fact, no one was pointed out to me as presiding over such pursuits, but only those who performed the sacrifices and explained to strangers what pertained to the

priests that Thessalos encounters are described as a group of timid old men who are shocked by the "rashness" of Thessalos' query as to whether the "energizing power of magic still exists."[31] While most scholars have interpreted the priests' distress as fear of the Greco-Roman laws against magic,[32] such an understanding, I believe, falls wide of the mark. The προπετεία of Thessalos does not consist in his inquiry into a forbidden subject which, if exposed, might make the priests liable to prosecution; rather it is his faith in the continued efficacy of magic itself—a faith which the priests had evidently lost.[33] Only one of the priests, a person of great dignity and age, gives Thessalos the "assurance" (a term which makes sense only if the interpretation of Thessalos' audacity just offered be accepted) that he has the power to produce a vision through lekanomancy.[34]

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sacred rites" (translation: H. L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo* [London, 1935], Vol. VIII, pp. 79, 83).

[31] *Thessalos*, 13: τι τῆς μαγικῆς ἐνεργείας. That Egyptian temples were considered to be sites of magical, alchemical and astrological activities and their priests, the chief initiators into such mysteries, is well documented from many types of materials. See F. Cumont, *L'Égypte des astrologues* (Brussels, 1937), pp. 163-168 *et passim* and the materials cited above, n. 21. On the Asclēpion in Thebes, see W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Aegypten* (Leipzig, 1908), Vol. I, pp. 135f.

[32] Graux, "Lettre inédite," 67f.; Cumont, "Le médecin Thessalos," 92; Cumont, *L'Égypte des astrologues*, p. 164; Festugière, "L'expérience," p. 159, n. 70.

[33] Compare the Latin at this point which garbles the question but aptly paraphrases the priests' reaction: *querebam ab eis, si aliquod opus divinandi erat in civitate eorum et quidam eorum faciebant ridiculum de me* (Friedrich, *Thessalos*, p. 50, 10f.). See further, Festugière's useful note on the difficult Greek, "L'expérience," p. 159, n. 71.

[34] See "Hydromanteia," *RE*, Vol. XVII, cols. 79-86 and "Lekanomanteia," *RE*, Vol. XXIV, cols. 1879-1889. To the bibliography cited in these articles should be added the rich study, largely devoted to medieval materials, by A. Delatte, *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivés* (Liège-Paris, 1932), pp. 8-11, 147f., 168-170 *et passim*. For the study of *Thessalos*, the most important parallel text is P. Bibl. Nat. suppl. gr. 574 in K. Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (Leipzig, 1928-31), P.IV, 155-285 (Vol. I, pp. 77-81)—henceforth cited as *PGM*. This portion of this great *Theban* manuscript is in the *form of a letter* from Nephōtēs to King Psammētichos. It offers a procedure for self-divinization by uniting the practitioner with the sun (see the splendid translation of this "recipe" in M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and A Secret Gospel of Mark* [Cambridge, Mass., 1973], p. 221) and a gloss on this "theurgic" experience describing a lekanomantic procedure (see on this procedure, A. Abt, *Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura und die antike Zauberei* [Giessen, 1908], pp. 171-173; Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, Vol. II, pars. 241-244; M. Ninck, *Die Bedeutung des Wassers im Kult und Leben der Alten* [Leipzig, 1921], pp. 51f. and Festugière, "L'expérience," pp. 159f., n. 72 who provides a partial translation). This "Letter" is followed, in this complex compendium, by a Βοτανήαρσις (pp. 81.286-83.295). Thus, in overall form, it is quite parallel to *Thessalos*. (See further, Delatte, *Herbarius*, pp. 64-100, esp. pp. 64f., 81f.).

Thessalos has an interview with this venerable priest in the "most desolate part of the city" during which, with tears and swoons, he reiterates his decision to either have a vision of a deity or to die. The priest promises him a vision and instructs him to undertake a preparatory fast of three days.[35] After this period, Thessalos is brought, at dawn, by the priest to a specially prepared οἰκός and there is given the choice of communicating with either "the soul of a dead man or a god". Thessalos chooses the later and requests to see Asclepius, "alone, face to face".[36] Although the priest is unnerved by this demand, he agrees, locks Thessalos in the οἰκός after having him sit on a chair opposite a throne on which the deity will manifest himself, and invokes Asclepius with "powerful mysterious words". The priest then leaves and Thessalos experiences the vision.[37]

This description of the *praxis*, though brief, is remarkable in several respects. Despite what we have been led to expect, it is not a lekanomantic procedure, even though the priest's initial question as to whether Thessalos wished to speak with a soul or a god may be taken as such.[38] Lekanomancy is always an indirect vision—a reflection;[39] Thessalos demanded to speak with the god μόνος πρὸς μόνον—a phrase especially characteristic of neo-Platonic, "theurgic" materials.[40] But, in these circles, the experience almost always implies

[35] Fasting is the most widespread means of preparation for visions; the three day period is common. See, for example, in various traditions: *PGM* III, 304 (Vol. I, p. 44); Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, III.11; Philostratus, *V.Apollonii*, II.37; Philo, *Contemp.* 34; *Canon Muratori*, lines 10f.; *Actus Petri cum Simone* [Codex Vercellensus], 1 and 17; Tertullian, *De ieiunio*, 7. For a general statement with respect to magical praxis, see A. J. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux des grecs et l'évangile* (Paris, 1932), pp. 298f., n. 2 and Th. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, Vol. II, par. 169. For a recent study, see R. Arbesmann, "Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity," *Traditio*, VII (1949-51), 1-71 esp. 9-32, 52-71. Compare the earlier works by Arbesmann, "Fasten im antiken Zauber, " *Blätter zur bayrischen Volkskunde*, XI (1927), *non vidi* and *Das Fasten bei den Griechen und Römern* (Giessen, 1929), pp. 63-70 *et passim*.

[36] *Thessalos*, 21f.

[37] *Thessalos*, 23.

[38] For the union (or confusion) of lekanomancy with nekromancy, see Varro *apud* Apuleius, *Apologia*, 42 and Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, VII.35 (on which see, *RE*, Vol. XI, col. 884; Delatte, *Catoptromancie*, pp. 23 and 148) and the "Letter of Nephōtēs to Psammētichos," *PGM* IV, 220f. (Vol. I, p. 78). Compare the "nekromantic" invocation of Asclepius in Origen, *Contra Haer.* IV.32 in E. J.-L. Edelstein, *Asclepius* (Baltimore, 1945), Vol. I, pp. 167f., (testimony, no. 328).

[39] See above, n. 34.

[40] See, for example, Plotinus, *Enneads*, I.6.7, V.1.6, VI.7.34, VI.9.11; Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, II.49; Proclus, *In Tim.* I.212, 24; Numenius (Thedinga, fr. 10) *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* XI.22. For these texts, and their relationship to

the ascent of the adept, as in the well known conclusion of Plotinus, *Enneads* VI.9.11: φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον. In *Thessalos*, to the contrary, an autophany is described in archaic Temple language. The deity Asclepius (no doubt, originally, the Egyptian Imḥotep-Imouthes)[41] descends and enthrones himself in a kratophanic display: "for no human speech could adequately describe the features of the [god's] face or the beauty of the ornaments that adorned it. The god lifted his right hand and greeted me . . ."[42]

Once more a traditional pattern has been altered. The vision does not take place in a temple but rather in an οἰκός. Although this term could refer to a temple, it is difficult not to understand the word as designating either an ordinary dwelling which has been specially prepared and purified (thus, simply, a room); or, less likely, but more tempting, a special construction for the occasion.[43] On either inter-

Thessalos, see F. Cumont, "Le culte égyptien et le mysticisme de Plotin," *Monuments Piot*, XXV (1921-2), esp. 87f. and E. Peterson, "Herkunft und Bedeutung der *Monos pros Monon*-Formel bei Platon," *Philologus*, LXXXVIII (1933), 30-41. The formula μόνος πρὸς μόνον stands in some relationship to the older formula μόνος μόνῳ as "private" or "secret" (see the texts cited by Peterson, *op. cit.*, 34f.); but see Philo, *V.Mosis*, II.163 where it approaches the force of the mystic formula.

[41] On Imhotep-Imouthes-Asclepius, see O. Weinreich, "Imhotep-Asclepius und die Griechen," *Aegyptus*, XI (1931), 17-22; and K. Sethe, *Imhotep der Asklepios der Aegypter* (Leipzig, 1902), esp. p. 23.

[42] *Thessalos*, 24. Compare Festugière's attempt to locate the vision in Hopfner's typology (*Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, Vol. II, pars. 70-75) in "L'expérience," pp. 175-180.

[43] Festugière reversed his earlier interpretation of οἰκός as a room in an ordinary house ("L'expérience," pp. 160f., 175-179)—quoting with some justification the account in Hippolytus, *Ref.* IV.32—and now argues: "Le mot [οἰκός] est courant au sens de 'chambre sacrée' dans un temple, de 'chapelle' dans un témenos ou encore de 'tombe' . . . Mais je croirais volontiers qu'il s'agit ici d'une cabane construit exprès pour la circonstance (il faut qu'elle n'ait jamais servi encore pour être parfaitement 'pure'), car un manuel de magie hellénistique conservé en Arabe (*Ghāyat al-ḥakim*, 'But du sage') et traduit en latin sous le nom de *Picatrix* contient, à la lettre, la même formule: 'Mache dich auf am Donnerstag, wenn Jupiter im Bogenschützen . . . steht und *baue ein* sauberes Haus (οἶκος καθαρός!) und stelle es aus so schön wie du nur kannst, das ist der Tempel, und gehe hinein allein . . .' cf. H. Ritter, *Picatrix, ein arabisches Handbuch hellenistischer Magie* (Vorträge, d. Bibl. Warburg, 1922), p. 23 du tiré à part . . . Voir aussi Blochet, *Gnosticisme musulman*, 1913, p. 52, n.1: dans l'Égypte arabe les *berba* (mot égyptien) étaient des édifices où l'on faisait de la magie: ainsi la magicienne Tadoura construit à Memphis un *berba* sur les ordres se la reine Dalouka." (*La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 57f., n. 3).

While I am tempted by Festugière's intuition, the evidence he presents is far from conclusive, being far removed from *Thessalos* by centuries—indeed, it all but evaporates under careful examination. Festugière did not have available to him the recent translation of *Picatrix* and therefore relied on a contextless quotation in Ritter's early article. The passage he quotes (*Picatrix*, III.9) is alleged,

pretation, the locus of religious experience has been shifted from a permanent sacred center, the temple, to a place of temporary sacrality sanctified by a magician's power. The mode of the autophany, a throne vision,[44] is likewise associated with the royal temple cultus as

by the author of *Picatrix*, to be taken from the pseudo-Aristotelian, *Kitāb al-Iṣṭamāṭis* of which other Arabic manuscripts and versions are extant. According to the critical apparatus, these manuscripts and versions read "prepare the clean room" rather than "build a pure house" and the editor notes that by "house is clearly meant only a room" (H. Ritter-M. Plessner, *Picatrix: Das Ziel des Weisen von pseudo-Maǰrīṭī* [London, 1962], p. 248, n. 5). There is a closely parallel instruction, most likely also from the *Kitāb al-Iṣṭamāṭis*, in *Picatrix*, III.6: "go into a pure room" (Ritter-Plessner, *Picatrix*, p. 200, 3f.); the same reading appears in the fifteenth century Latin version of *Picatrix*, III.6 (unfortunately as yet unedited, but see the paraphrase, in L. Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science* [New York, 1923], Vol. II, p. 819). Thus the same ambiguity: house, temple, room, special construction—is, at least, continued, with the last option the least likely. The same ambiguity may be found with respect to Festugière's notice of the term, *berba*. It is derived from the Egyptian, *pr*, meaning house, temple or tomb. It carries over into the Coptic ⲡⲣⲉ, usually restricted to temple and, as a Coptic loan-word with the article (ⲡⲉⲣⲡⲉ), is found as the Arabic *berbe* or *barbā* (W. Spiegelberg, *Koptisches Handwörterbuch* [Heidelberg, 1921], p. 102; W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* [Oxford, 1939], p. 298). *Barbā* is the general word for the ruins of ancient Egyptian temples and, by extension, of any pagan temple or ancient building. It is almost always used in texts describing magical practices—presumably being carried on at these ancient sites (C. H. Becker, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* [Leiden, 1913], Vol. I, p. 655; G. Wiet, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2ed. [Leiden, 1960], Vol. I:2, pp. 1038f.). See, for example, its use in an Arabic hermetic text describing a throne vision and the revelation of a hidden book in an underground *barbā* (A. Siggel, "Das Sendschreiben *Das Licht über das Verfahren des Hermes* . . .," *Der Islam*, XXIV [1937], 301 and n. 2).

It is possible to find many examples of temporary cultic houses in archaic Egyptian materials—see W. B. Kristensen, *De loofhut en het loofhuttenfeest in den Egyptischen cultus* (Amsterdam, 1923)—as well as elsewhere in the Near East—see the material collected in H. Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfiguré* (Copenhagen, 1947), pp. 146-205—but none of these seem relevant.

[44] For the archaic language of throne epiphanies, see the materials assembled in H. P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo, 1953), pp. 18-37 *et passim*. For θρόνος in the praxis or visions of the magical papyri, see *PGM* I, 333 (Vol. I, p. 18); II, 160, 165 (p. 29); V, 31, 35, 36, 44 (p. 182); VII, 737 (Vol. II, p. 33). R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* 3ed. (Leipzig-Berlin, 1927), pp. 129f. compares the vision in *Thessalos* to traditions of the revelation of a hidden book by a figure seated on a throne in alchemical literature (see above, n. 21) as in "The Book of Krates" (M. Bertholet, *La chimie au moyen âge* [Paris, 1873], Vol. III, p. 46; J. Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina* [Heidelberg, 1926], p. 113) and an alchemical manuscript edited by Reitzenstein (*loc. cit.*). See further, the later alchemical parallels quoted by C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* (New York, 1953), pp. 237f., n. 7 and fig. 128. In his interpretation of Hermas, *Vis.* I.2.2, E. Peterson offers a brilliant comparison with *Thessalos* and quotes much of the above cited material ("Beiträge zur Interpretation der Visionen im Pastor Hermae," in *Miscellanae G. de*

is the general homology of the appearance of the god with the first rays of the sun[45] and the raising of the deity's right hand.[46] But, in *Thessalos*, this language has been displaced. Thessalos and his "room" have replaced the archaic complex of king, priest and temple.

The vision is set in the context of an oracle[47] with three parts: (1) a salutation: "O blessed Thessalos"; (2) a promise of divinization: "today a god greets you . . . later men will greet you as a god" and (3) an invitation to ask a question, the question and the god's response.[48] Such a structure would appear to be a pattern in some archaic literary oracles[49] as well as in some magical "recipes for immortality".[50] But, unlike the latter, there is relatively little interest in Thessalos' divinization; but great interest in the god's response. Once again, a surprising element is introduced. The oracle consists of a denigration of the legendary powers and wisdom of King Nechepso.[51] Thessalos asks why the recipes in Nechepso's book failed and receives the answer: "King Nechepso, although a wise man and a

Jerphanion [Rome, 1947], rp. in Peterson, *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* [Freiburg, 1959]—which edition I cite—esp. pp. 254-258). A caution should be given against his understanding of the epithet θρονομάντις as applied to Harpokrates (R. Harder, *Karpokrates von Chalkis und die memphitischer Isis-propaganda* [Berlin, 1944], p. 8). While many translate this as "divining by throne" (Peterson, "Beiträge," p. 256, n. 17; A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion in the Ancient World*, Vol. II, p. 702), perhaps thinking of the mantic throne of Apollo (e.g. Euripides, *Iphig. Taur.*, 1254, 1282; Aeschylus, *Eum.*, 616), the *Supplement* to the Liddell-Scott *Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968), p. 72 renders "diviner by θρόνον, magic herbs".

[45] One needs do no more than call attention to the solar orientation of many temples in the Mediterranaen world, especially in Egypt and to the equally widespread tradition of revelation at dawn, as in our text (see Arbesmann, "Fasting and Prophecy," 30f.).

[46] See H. P. L'Orange, *Studies*, pp. 139-197 and Peterson, "Beiträge," p. 258, n. 25.

[47] See above, n. 18, for such "theological" oracles.

[48] *Thessalos*, 25-27. The macarism is defective in the Greek (see above, n. 7) and was first restored on the basis of the Latin: *o beate Thessale* by Cumont, "Le médecin," 90. It should be noted that at this point (*Thessalos*, 25), the textual tradition becomes more complex. In addition to the Madrid Greek manuscript which attributed authorship to Harpokration and the Latin Montpellier text which attributed authorship to Thessalos, there is a third group of Herbals which begin with the conclusion of the narrative and attribute authorship to Hermes Trismegistus under the general title περὶ ἱερῶν βοτανῶν καὶ χυλώσεως. See Friedrich, *Thessalos*, pp. 55-60 for these texts and variant readings—none of which alter the sense of the passage under discussion.

[49] The oldest example I know is the Pythian prophetess' response to Lykurgus in Herodotus, I.65.2. For other examples of macarisms in oracles, see G. L. Dirichlet, *De veterum macarismis* (Giessen, 1914), pp. 60f.

[50] See the materials quoted in Festugière, "L'expérience," p. 146 and n. 27.

[51] See above, p. 177.

possessor of great magical powers, had not received from a divine voice the secrets you have requested. Endowed with natural wisdom he had grasped the affinities of stones and plants with the stars; but he did not know the times or places where the plants must be gathered . . . ." While this may be interpreted, in part, as a polemic against a rival astral-botanical system,[52] it is a stunning reversal of Nechepso's claim that, during a nocturnal ecstasy, he had ascended through the air and heard a "heavenly voice"[53] and the claim of his companion, Petosiris, to have journeyed together with gods and

[52] Thus, F. Boll in Boll-C. Bezold-W. Gundel, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, 4ed. (Berlin, 1931), p. 140, compare p. 97. For an alternative understanding of the text as polemic, see Cumont, "Le médecin," 94f. Note that F. H. Cremer, *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics* (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 123 has entirely missed the polemic elements.

[53] E. Riess, *Nechepsonis et Petosiridis*, fr. 1: ἔδοξε δέ μοι παννύχον πρὸς ἀέρα < . . . > καὶ μοί τις ἐξήχησεν οὐρανοῦ βοή (*apud* V. Valens, *Anth.* VI, *praef.* ed. W. Kroll [Berlin, 1908], p. 241, 16-18). Riess joined this fragment to the *Thessalos* text which he printed as frs. 35-36. R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (Leipzig, 1904). pp. 4-7 argued that this was a hellenized Egyptian literary form. Other examples, mostly of revelation from a heavenly body, are given in Reitzenstein, *loc. cit.*; Boll-Bezold-Gundel, *Sternglaube*, pp. 96-99 [the best collection] and Boll, *Offenbarung Johannis*, pp. 4-8. Festugière, *L'idéal religieux*, p. 123, n. 1 and 2, relates the Nechepso fragment to the general theme of an ἀνάβασις εἰς οὐρανόν but his texts all lack the crucial element of a heavenly or divine voice. In *La révélation*, Vol. I, pp. 104, 313-315, Festugière does print some proper parallels: *Poimandres*, 4 (see A. D. Nock-A. J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum*, 2ed. [Paris, 1960], Vol. I, pp. 7f., n. 2); the claim, in the herbal Περὶ τῆς Παιωνίας, that botanical knowledge was given directly by God to Hermes Trismegistos (*CCAG*, vol. VIII: i, p. 190, 31—see the brilliant French translation of this text by Festugière, "Un opuscule hermétique sur la pivoine," *Vivre et penser*, II [1942], rp. in Festugière, *Hermétisme et mystique païenne*, pp. 181-201, esp. p. 192) and the logion attributed to Hermes Trismegistos: "I spoke to Zeus and Zeus spoke to me" (*CCAG*, vol. V: i, p. 149, 27). One might also compare the "Ορασις of Kritodemos (see Boll, *RE*, Vol. XI, col. 1928). It should be noted that W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p. 357, n. 6 attempts to relate the "heavenly voice" of Nechepso, fr. 1 to the tradition of hearing the music of the heavenly spheres rather than to a revelation-discourse.

Attention should also be called to the horoscope (dated 137-138 A.D.) in P. Salt (= P. Louvre 2342) which suggests a revelatory chain: "After examination of many books as they have been handed down to us [ὡς παρεδόθη ἡμεῖν] from ancient wisemen, that is, the Chaldeans, and Petosiris, and, especially, king Necheus [*scil.* Nechepso—see the early argument on this in Lauth, "König Nechepsos, Petosiris und die Triakontaëteris," *Sitzungsberichte . . . München*, 1875, phil-hist. Kl. Vol. II, esp. pp. 96-109], just as they themselves consulted with [ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτοὶ συνήδρευσαν ἀπὸ. . .] our Lord Hermes and Asclepius, that is, Imouthes son of Hephaistos". The συνεδρεία suggests a situation of face to face (revelatory) discourse. This text has been much commented on. See Riess, *Nechepsonis*, fr. 6; Kroll, *RE*, Vol. XVI, col. 2160; and, especially, Cumont, *CCAG*, Vol. VIII:iv, pp. 95 and 121 and O. Neugebauer-H. B. van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes* (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 39-45 with bibliographies, to which add: Gundel, *Astrologoumena*, pp. 26 and n. 38, 29.

angels.[54] It is, above all an utter revaluation of the archaic Egyptian kingship ideology that the Pharaoh was divine and spoke, himself, with a "divine voice". Such a revaluation would only be possible in Late Antiquity. Thessalos, as the recepient of a "divine voice", has made the pilgrimage from natural wisdom to revealed knowledge analogous (although with a quite different end) to Philo's allegory of the migration of Abraham.[55] The content of the revelation is knowledge of the καιροὶ καὶ τόποι,[56] the complex herbal which follows this narrative in the manuscript, and, ultimately, Thessalos' divinization and immortality.[57] But it is, above all, to have met Asclepius face to face, to have won through from a state of death-like despair, to have 'come home'.[58] Thessalos accomplished through his horizontal journey from Asia Minor to Diospolis what Plotinus' *Enneads* were designed to accomplish through vertical ascent—φυγὴ μόνον πρὸς μόνον.[59]

In describing the text of *Thessalos*, I have used the term "reversal" or the phrase "the pattern has been altered" to describe every major

[54] Riess, *Nechepsonis*, fr. 33 (*apud.* Proclus, *in Rem* ed. W. Kroll [Leipzig, 1899-1901], Vol. II, p. 345, 3).

[55] Philo, *Abr.* 60-62, 68-80; *Mig.* 176-196; *Somn.* I.41-60, 68-71; on which see E. Bréhier, *Les Idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* 2 ed. (Paris, 1925), pp. 56-61, esp. p. 56, n. 6 and A. Wlosok, *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis* (Heidelberg, 1960), pp. 81-114, esp. pp. 81-84. I find this a more convincing parallel than that proposed by Nock, *Conversion*, p. 109 who refers to the "rabbinic type of true proselytes, Joshua, Naaman and Rahab . . ."

[56] On the importance of the "proper time and place" in astral botany, see Delatte, *Herbarius*, pp. 39-72 ("Temps propice à la récolte"). See further the theurgic materials discussed by G. Wolff in his edition of Porphyry, *De philosophia ex oraculis haurienda* (Berlin, 1856), pp. 195-205 and H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo, 1956), pp. 228-244 *et passim*. See especially the complex "Chaldean" ritual described in Psellus, *Peri daimonen* (Migne, *PG*, vol. CXXII, p. 881 B-C; Bidez-Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, Vol. II, p. 172, n. 2 and compare J. Bidez in *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs* [Brussels, 1928], Vol. VI, p. 218).

One might also compare the overall structure of *Asclepius* 37-38 which invokes Imhotep as the *medicinae primus inuentor . . . omnia etiamnunc hominibus adiumenta praestans infirmis numine nunc suo, quae ante solet medicinae arte praebere* and goes on to describe the theurgic doctrine of the *di terreni*: *Constat, o Asclepi, de herbis, de lapidibus et de aromatibus* and see the valuable note *ad* Iamblichus, *de Myst.*, V.23 in the edition of E. des Places (Paris, 1966), pp. 178f., n. 3.

[57] *Thessalos*, 25 and compare the conclusion to the Latin text of the Herbal, II, *epil.* 12-14 (Friedrich, *Thessalos*, p. 271 and parallels [pp. 272f.]).

[58] I have omitted discussion of the initiatory scenario of Thessalos twice being brought to the point of death in the narrative, especially during his complex and dramatic interview with the aged priest (*Thessalos*, 15-20).

[59] Plotinus, *Enn.* VI.9.11 and compare *Orac. chald.* 213 with the note in the edition of E. des Places, *Oracles chaldaïques* (Paris, 1971), p. 151 (*ad.* 213.1).

episode. And it is precisely this unexpected character of the document that makes it such a precious witness to the religious life of Late Antiquity.

In a series of articles, I have set forth several correlative models of religious persistance and change in the Mediterranean world in Late Antiquity: native/diaspora; locative/utopian; celebration/rebellion.[60] For most, the diasporic, utopian, rebellious world-view has been taken as characteristic of Late Antiquity. This is the case, I would want to argue, largely due to the almost total cessation of native kingship and sovereignty in the domains of Alexander's successors. Or, to phrase it differently, if there is no native king, then even the homeland is in the diaspora.[61] But I believe that a more complex model is called for—one that might better account for a large class of cultic phenomena that exhibit characteristics of mobility, what I would term religious entrepreneurship and which represent both a reinterpretation and a reaffirmation of native, locative, celebratory categories of religious practice and thought.[62]

To develop this model fully, it would be necessary to undertake a careful study of the various fortunes of temples throughout the Mediterranean world during this period: those that continue, those that are newly founded, those that are restored, those that are re-dedicated or otherwise altered, those that are destroyed and those that are neglected. While a final proposal would have to await the assemblage of this vast quantity of data, *Thessalos* may allow one to advance some tentative suggestions.

I am particularly interested in the shift so brilliantly depicted by Peter Brown with his image of Simeon Stylites:

> The idea of the holy man holding the demons at bay and bending the will of God by his prayers came to dominate Late Antique society. In many ways, the idea is as new as the society itself. For it places a man, a 'man of power', in the centre of people's imagination . . . Ancient religion had revolved round great temples . . . their ceremonies assumed a life in which the community, the city, dwarfed the individual. In the fourth and fifth centuries [A.D.], however, the individual, as a

[60] See J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down or Rightside Up?," chapter 7, above; "A Place on Which to Stand," chapter 6, above; "Native Cults in the Hellenistic Period," *History of Religions*, XI (1971), 236-249; "The Wobbling Pivot," chapter 4, above.

[61] It is the great merit of S. K. Eddy, despite the many faults of his work, to have emphasized this element in *The King is Dead* (Lincoln, 1961).

[62] For other aspects of this model, see "Wisdom and Apocalyptic," chapter 3, above and "Good News is No News: Aretalogy and Gospel" chapter 9, below.

> 'man of power', came to dwarf the traditional communities ... Simeon the Stylite, gloriously conspicuous on his column, sifting lawsuits, prophesying, healing, rebuking and advising the governing classes of the whole eastern empire not far from the deserted temple of Baalbek, was the sign of a similar change. In the popular imagination, *the emergence of the holy man at the expense of the temple marks the end of the classical world.*[63]

We would disagree only as to date. The sociological niche that the holy man, in Brown's sense of the term,[64] would later fill was already being occupied by entrepreneurial figures as early as the second century (B.C.).[65]

One way of stating this shift is to note that the cosmos has become anthropologized. The old, imperial cosmological language that was the major mode of religious expression of the archaic temple and court cultus has been transformed.[66] Rather than a city wall, the new enclave protecting man against external, hostile powers will be a human group, a religious association or secret society. Rather than a return to chaos or the threat of decreation, the enemy will be described as other men or demons, the threat as evil or death. Rather than a sacred place, the new center and chief means of access to divinity will be a divine man, a magician, who will function, by and large, as an entrepreneur without fixed office and will be, by and large, related to "protean deities" of relatively unfixed form whose major characteristic is their sudden and dramatic autophanies. Rather than celebration, purification and pilgrimage, the new rituals will be those of conversion, of initiation into the secret society or identification with the divine man. As a part of this fundamental

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[63] P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1971), pp. 102f. (emphasis mine). Compare Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies*, LXI (1971), 80-101, esp. 100.

[64] Brown uses the term "holy man" in conscious distinction to the "divine man" and "magician" of, for him, an earlier period (Brown, "Rise and Function," 92f.).

[65] See, already, Joseph son of Tobias as described by V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 133f.

[66] For a brief description of the archaic cultus, see J. Z. Smith, "Earth and Gods," chapter 5, above. The perspective of this article requires correction in light of the above. While from an archaic point of view, exile and the destruction of the Temple was a "descent into chaos", elements in Judaism had, before these two traumatic events, responded to the new religious and social situation in a manner characteristic of the religions of Late Antiquity. In the synagogue, Judaism found its secret society; in the rabbi, its magician. Through the magic of words it attempted, in the great rabbinic legal enterprise, to construct a mythical cosmos, a portable homeland in which any Jew might dwell.

shift, the archaic language and ideology of the cult will be revalorized—only those elements which contribute to this new, anthropological and highly mobile understanding of religion will be retained.[67]

In previous scholarship, some of these elements have been recognized and subsumed under the formula: "the spiritualization of the cult",[68] held to be a "prophetic" protest against the "automatic" and "magical" efficacy of archaic practices such as sacrifice.

Such an interpretation contains a modicum of truth, but it is formulated in a way that requires demurral. It is clearly evolutionary in form, a modification of the Victorian chain from "magic" to "religion" and owes much to Reformation polemics against "Paganopapism". It emphasizes the "compulsive", "automatic", *ex opere operato* character of the archaic rituals and denigrates these as "magical" as opposed to the "petitionary", "inward" and "ethical" activities labeled "religious". Although such a dichotomy was proposed by figures in Late Antiquity,[69] this must be taken, not as evidence that such a view is correct, but rather that the religious horizon had shifted from that of the archaic period.[70]

The most serious consequence of the *Spiritualisierung* interpretation is that it permits us to overlook the creativity of magic in Late Antiquity. Indeed, although this theme has been as yet insufficiently explored, the only major set of materials from Late Antiquity which continue to employ sacrificial structures and terminology, which continue to reinterpret their meaning and reapply the rituals are the so-called magical papyri, theurgic and alchemical treatises.[71]

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[67] One might note the concentration upon mobile elements from the Jewish cultus, e.g. the *shekînâh*, *kâbôd* and ark rather than the "house" (see K. Baltzer, "The Meaning of the Temple in the Lukan Writings," *Harvard Theological Review*, LVIII [1965], 263-277 which requires extension); the image of the temple as the community of believers and the "body" of the divine man (see, among others, B. Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* [Cambridge, 1965], pp. 16-46 *et passim.*); etc., in early Christianity as examples of this revalorization which may be paralleled throughout the religious traditions of Late Antiquity.

[68] For the classical formulation, see H. Wenschkewitz, "Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe: Tempel, Priester und Opfer im Neuen Testament," *Angelos*, IV (1932), 71-230. Cp. N. A. Dahl, *Das Volk Gottes* (Oslo, 1941), pp. 70 *et passim.*

[69] Much of this material is collected in J. Bernays, *Theophrasts Schrift über Frommigkeit* (Berlin, 1866) and J. Haussleiter, *Der Vegetarismus in der Antike* (Berlin, 1935). See further, F. W. Cremer, *Die Chaldäischen Orakel und Jamblich de Mysteriis* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969), pp. 123-130.

[70] See the useful note by M. Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark*, p. 222, n. 8 *ad* Iamblichus, *Myst.* III.18.

[71] Perhaps the best study, to date, is H. Riesenfeld, "Remarques sur les hymnes

Thessalos provides a direct witness to this shift. The ancient books of wisdom, the authority—indeed the divinity—of the priest-king, the faith of the clergy in the efficacy of their rituals, the temple as the chief locus of revelation—all of these have been relativized in favor of a direct experience of a mobile magician with his equally mobile divinity. This experience allows Thessalos to revalorize the archaic wisdom of plants, stones and stars,[72] to transform the archaic practices of sacrifice into a salvific event.

It is revealing that the Hebrew Scriptures, in the two great traditions that cherish them, do not end, in their present Late Antique redactions, with the same passage. The Jewish collection ends with the promise of 2Chronicles 36.23 of a rebuilt Temple and restored cultus. The Christian collection ends with the promise of Malachai 4.5 of the return of the *magus* Elijah—a promise fulfilled in the figure of John the Baptist who reinterprets an archaic water-ritual of purification into a magical ritual that saves. The Temple and the Magician were one of the characteristic antinomies of Late Antique religious life; the tension between them contributed much to its extraordinary creativity and vitality.

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magiques," *Eranos*, XLIV (1946), 153-160 but this is insufficient. A study of these phenomena remains a prime need. Some useful material, with respect to the astral-botanical tradition represented by *Thessalos*, may be gleaned from Delatte, *Herbarius*, pp. 148-163 who notes a variety of "transformations" of sacrificial procedures in the magical, herbal *praxis*.

[72] For a careful delineation of such archaic wisdom as *Listenwissenschaft*, see the important article by A. Alt, "Die Weisheit Salomos," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, LXXVI (1951), 139-144; see also, J. Z. Smith, "Wisdom and Apocalyptic," chapter 3, above.