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And You Will Be Amazed: The Rhetoric of Authority in the Greek Magical Papyri

Abstract: An analysis of the rhetorical strategies used in the so-called Greek Magical Papyri to bolster the authority of the authors provides insight into the authors of these texts and their intended audiences. This article reviews the scholarship on the identity of the composers of the Greek Magical Papyri and explores the rhetorical strategies used in the texts to create authority, before comparing the dominant strategies in the Greek Magical Papyri with similar ones in other kinds of recipe collections, specifically alchemical and medical texts. The authors of the recipes in the Greek Magical Papyri make little use of the traditional authority of the temples but instead justify their claims of superiority with reference to the amazing efficacy of the procedures they describe. The direct, second person address in formulas such as “and you will be amazed” suggests that the intended audience was imagined not as potential clients who need to be convinced of the author’s expertise, but rather as potential practitioners interested in impressing their own clients.

Introduction

Address whatever god you want and ask about whatever you wish, and he will reply to you and tell you about anything. And if he has spoken dismiss him with the spell of dismissal, and you who have used this spell will be amazed.¹

One of the most puzzling problems in the study of the collection of ritual recipes known as the Greek Magical Papyri is figuring out who is being addressed here – and who is speaking. Who composed these spells? Who used them? The spells invoke a curiously cosmopolitan set of divinities, from Babylonian Ereschgal to Greek Apollo to Jewish Iao to Egyptian Isis, and they are written not just in a single language, but in Greek, Coptic, Demotic, and Hieratic Egyptian. Since their discovery, scholars have wrangled over whose spellbooks these might be. German Romantics saw in them traces of authentic ancient Greek religion overlaid with a veneer of Egyptianizing elements from the context of their compilation, while later Egyptologists argued that they were primarily Egyptian temple rituals, translated into Greek and bastardized for commercial use. The more recent scholarly consensus seems to be that they were the products of Egyptian lector-priests who, when the authority of the tem-

1 PGM IV.231–233. ὃν βούλει θεόν, καὶ ἐπερώτα, περὶ οὗ θέλεις, καὶ ἀποκριθήσεται σοι καὶ ἐρεῖ σοι περὶ πάντων. ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃ, ἀπόλυε αὐτὸν τῇ ἀπολύσει, ὃς τῷδε αὐτῷ λόγῳ χρώμενος θαυμάσεις.

ples waned under Roman rule, plied their traditional craft under a new guise, capitalizing on the remains of their traditional authority to suit a new clientele.

I suggest that an analysis, along the lines of Heidi Wendt's 2016 study, *At the Temple Gates*, of the rhetorical strategies used in the texts to bolster the authority of the authors provides some insights into the authors of these texts and their intended audiences. I review the scholarship on the identity of the composers of the Greek Magical Papyri and explore the rhetorical strategies used in the texts to create authority, before comparing the dominant strategies in the Greek Magical Papyri with similar ones in other kinds of recipe collections, specifically alchemical and medical texts. The authors of the recipes in the Greek Magical Papyri make little use of the traditional authority of the temples but instead justify their claims of superiority with reference to the amazing efficacy of the procedures they describe. The direct, second person address in formulas such as "and you will be amazed" suggests that the intended audience was imagined not as potential clients who need to be convinced of the author's expertise, but rather as potential practitioners interested in impressing their own clients.

The identity of the magicians of the Greek Magical Papyri

While the fantasies of Reitzenstein and Dieterich that *Quellenforschung* could uncover the authentic elements of Greek folk religion in the Greek Magical Papyri have fortunately been abandoned, controversy still rages over the identity and background of the composers and users of these texts.² Betz suggested that they were best understood as itinerant *magoi*, wandering charlatans of the type mocked as hanging around outside the temple gates, but Egyptologists such as Ritner have argued that no such itinerant magicians appear in the Egyptian evidence. What the Greeks called magic, they argue, is simply the religious traditions of the temple priests, seen through the exoticizing eyes of Greek sources. Hence, any such texts must have been

2 It is worth noting that the Greek Magical Papyri, so called from Preisendanz's collection of *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri*, should not be considered a unified text or corpus like the works of Aeschylus or even Homer, but rather a collected corpus of generically similar texts, most of which come from 2nd-5th century CE Egypt, produced by different writers working in different regions at different times. Other scholars refer to these texts as the Greco-Egyptian Magical Papyri (GEMP) to emphasize their production in Egypt, while the collected translation of Betz (1986) and his team (GMPT) includes material in Demotic, some of which comes from the same scribal hand that produced some of the PGM texts, a choice that reflects the understanding that they belong to the same genre of texts despite being written in different languages. None of these scholarly collections, however, includes the alchemical papyri (P. Holm. and P. Leid J 397) written in the same hand as PGM XIII, which Preisendanz excluded from his collection.

produced and employed by priests trained in the temple traditions.³ Even as other scholars have argued for the multi-cultural bricolage that characterizes the spells in the Greek Magical Papyri, the idea that temple priests are the only possible authors and users of these texts persists. Gordon speaks of

the Graeco-Egyptian magician, whom we should conceive to have been ordinarily a temple-priest, for example the Hellenistic and Roman successor of the *hry-hbt*, the “carrier of the ritual book” in Dynastic Egypt, a priest of course conversant with Greek; but perhaps too, on occasion, a private – but necessarily literate – individual, a clerk or professional document-writer of some kind, able to draw upon the symbolic power of the temple, the traditional source of such texts.⁴

It is worth noting Gordon’s suggestion of a private, non-priestly, individual, but the lector priests, as the term is sometimes rendered, remain likely candidates for the composition of many of the texts in the Greek Magical Papyri, simply because of the limited circle of scribes capable of writing – and reading – the Greek, Coptic, Demotic, and Hieratic scripts that appear together in the papyri.⁵ The extent to which such scribes drew upon “the symbolic power of the temple,” however, remains more problematic, and here the sort of analysis modeled by Wendt provides some illumination.

As Wendt’s analysis of the Pauline letters shows, the rhetorical strategies of such texts are not merely decorative forms with no significance for an understanding of the authors and audiences of the texts. On the contrary, the choice of certain specific devices rather than others indicates what kind of audience would be appropriately and effectively addressed by those devices. Likewise, even without an explicit authorial persona in the text, the framing of the text can indicate the ways that the author grounds the authority on which the claims of the text are based.

Although drawing upon the authority of the temple as the traditional source of ritually powerful texts might seem a natural strategy, the texts in the Greek Magical Papyri only rarely make allusion to the symbolic power of the Egyptian temple. The few references to temples and temple priests that appear are vague and often inaccurate, acceptable perhaps to those familiar only with the Greek stereotypes of the Egyptian magician but not to an audience familiar with actual temple traditions.

3 Ritner 1995: 3354. “With texts restricted to temple holdings and literacy restricted to 1% of the population, one must not imagine itinerant magicians compiling libraries of spells. When spell collections are found in ‘private’ hands, the individual is invariably a priest.” Cf. Frankfurter (2002: 159–160). “The Greek Magical Papyri, for example, are now more accurately located among innovative members of the Egyptian priesthood during the third-/fourth-century decline of the Egyptian temple infrastructure than among some putative class of magoi, for which we have no documentary evidence.”

4 Gordon 1997: 67–68.

5 Cf., most recently, Love (2016: 227). “Temple priests were certainly the composers and/or redactors of many of the spells extant in the GEMP – as attested by the ritual language which many contain –, and were also certainly the scribes of many others – as exhibited by the Demotic, hieratic, and OC scripts utilised –, making them without doubt the past practitioners of many.”

More often the religious expertise is validated by an appeal to the extraordinary efficacy of the procedure, an efficacy that is proven by the reader's own experience. The rhetoric resembles that of other technical texts, especially collections of alchemical or medical recipes, which likewise privilege tested efficacy over institutional tradition. The magicians of the Greek Magical Papyri, then, may not have been itinerant *magoi*, but they do appear as freelance religious practitioners without strong foundations in temple institutions upon which to ground their religious authority. Whether or not some of these figures actually also had official roles as priests within the temples, like other freelance practitioners outside the temple gates, they had to convince their audiences of the superiority of their particular practices in contrast to their rivals, and the analysis of the texts reveals their rhetorical strategies for authorizing their practices.⁶

Authorizing Strategies in the Greek Magical Papyri

Temple Traditions

Although appeals to extraordinary efficacy are the most frequent device in the Greek Magical Papyri, a few texts do refer to temple traditions, albeit in ways that mark the intended audience as more familiar with the exotic stereotype of the ancient Egyptian temple than with the realities of its practices. One of the most explicit claims to authority deriving from an Egyptian temple in the collection of Greek Magical Papyri is the first century (CE or BCE) papyrus that claims it is “an excerpt of enchantments from the holy book called Hermes’, found in Heliopolis in the innermost shrine of the temple, written in Egyptian letters and translated into Greek.”⁷ The rhetoric of the introduction emphasizes its Egyptian ethnic origins: not only did it come from the inaccessible inner sanctuary of the Egyptian temple in Heliopolis, but it was originally written in Egyptian letters, the secret code, as it were, accessible only to Egyptians. Such claims, however, find little corroboration in the text itself. The recipe is for an erotic spell using apples (ἐπὶ μήλο[υ] ἐπωδὴ), a technique with no real parallels in the evidence for Egyptian temple rituals but many parallels in the Greek literary record.⁸ As Faraone has pointed out, moreover, the recurring expression, “bring

6 As (Wendt: 223) notes, “All the freelance experts we have considered had to establish and convince people of the value of their religious offerings, precisely because their potential audiences did not automatically value them as such or have an obvious need for them.”

7 P. Berol 21243 = *Supp. Mag.* 2 72 = *GMPT* CXXII. ἐξαγωγή ἐπωδῶν ἐκ τῆς εὐρεθείσης ἐν Ἡλίου[ς] πόλει ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ βύβλωι τῇ καλουμένῃ Ἑρμοῦ ἐν τῷ ἀδύτῳ Αἰγυπτίοις γράμμασιν καὶ διερμηνευθέντων Ἑλληνικοῖς.

8 Although Quack (2011: 77, n.17) cites p.Mag. LL15, 21–23 (= pdm xiv. 449–451) as an Egyptian parallel, the use of apple seed is not actually similar to the Greek tradition of erotic apple throwing on which the spell draws.

to perfection my perfected spell” (τέλει τελέαν ἐπαιοιδῆν) is a traditional refrain in Greek metrical incantations, with parallels appearing as early as the Classical period.⁹ The hexameters that seem (from the fragments) to make up the spell must have been composed in Greek, not translated from Egyptian hieroglyphs. There are certainly elements in the spell that have an Egyptian coloring, most obviously the references to Isis and Osiris (and less obviously the use of a *historiola* and recitation of body parts consumed). But the spell must have been composed in Greek, making use of these elements to add the authority of Egyptian origins to its procedure, rather than something actually composed in the Egyptian temples and later adapted for use in Greek.¹⁰

While Dieleman has pointed out that such rhetorical strategies linking the text to a mythical founder or hidden location within a temple appear in Egyptian texts such as the Book of the Dead or medical treatises from pharaonic times, he has also called attention to inaccuracies that disturb the notion that the authors or intended audiences of the Greek Magical Papyri could have actually known much about temple practices.¹¹ In the London-Leiden Papyrus (PGM XII) that is the focus of his study, a list of “secret” names for ingredients found in many of the magical recipes is preceded by an introduction that claims the list was compiled from the secret names that were written on the sacred statues in the temples by the temple scribes (ἱερογραμματεῖς). Although statues did often have texts inscribed upon them, such texts were generally just the names and titles of the dedicators, not secrets to be concealed from the ignorant masses.¹² Such a claim of origin would therefore not be acceptable to anyone

9 Faraone (2000: 202–209). Cf. Faraone (1992) for the formula; for the apple tradition, see Faraone (1999: 69–78), cf. Faraone (1995).

10 The same strategy is in use in another spell that claims to come from a papyrus found in Aphroditopolis (Per Hathor) that was the special property of the Twelve Gods and Aphrodite Urania herself (PGM VII.862–918). This invocation of the Moon goddess under a variety of epithets, including Egyptian Selene, Baubo, and Ereschigal, makes no other reference to temple procedure or personnel; the origin story merely gives a gloss of Egyptian ethnicity. The same is true for a papyrus (PGM XXIVa) that claims to be the “copy of a holy book found in the archives of Hermes,” with an invocation to Isis and a reference to the 29 (Coptic?) letters Hermes and Isis used in seeking Osiris. See Johnston (2015) on the rarity of *historiolae* in the Greek ritual tradition, especially in contrast to other Mediterranean religious traditions.

11 Dieleman (2005: 272–3, with fn. 285) for examples. He notes (272) that “The geographical location of the temple, Heliopolis, Hermopolis or Aphroditopolis, is not arbitrarily chosen but determined by the religious prestige the city held within Egypt and even abroad,” but such international reputations again suggest that the composer need not come from within the temple gates.

12 PGM XII.401–407. Dieleman (2005: 186) notes simply, “Statues engraved with the names of ingredients for magical rituals as described in the introductory text are not attested in Egypt for any time period.” Even the Horus statues that were inscribed with healing spells did not contain secret lists of ingredient names but rather incantations whose efficacy was activated by pouring water over the statue and internalizing the magical words by consuming water charged with the magical texts. Cf. Dieleman (2005: 187), “Since the advertising text refers to a priestly custom that was not extant in historical reality, it should be considered a fiction, a marketing technique, which anticipates the client’s

trained within the temples, but only to an intended reader ignorant of the actual practice of inscribing statues, especially if such a reader had the linguistic expertise necessary to read the texts on the statues.¹³ Such linguistic facility, however, is precisely what would be required to read (or write) the text of a bilingual papyrus such as the one on which the story of the inscribed statues appears.

The few references to temple traditions found in the Greek Magical Papyri, then, show little indication of actually coming from a source within the temple gates but appear rather as rhetorical strategies to appropriate the authority of the legendary Egyptian temple priests for an audience who are not part of the priestly tradition themselves. Such appropriations might be performed by temple priests seeking to win a new clientele as the power of the temples wanes in the Roman period, but priests from within the temple gates are not the only possible authors.¹⁴ While the manufacture and use of papyri with texts not only in Greek but also Demotic, Coptic, and even Hieratic necessitates a scribe trained in those languages, it need not imply someone who continues to be part of the institution of the temple – multi-lingual literacy, not institutional status, is the only necessity.¹⁵

needs, aspirations and expectations. The question is then who this client or intended reader was. In view of the false claim about Egyptian statues, it is very unlikely that the text aims at convincing Egyptian priests, who would of course have known that ingredients were not written on statues of gods.”

13 As Dieleman (2005: 203) puts it, the “author of these lines was either ill-informed himself as regards the origin of his authentic word list or... he wanted to address a reader who was only partly familiar with Egyptian priestly practice. Whatever the case, the text exploits the idea that Egyptian priestly knowledge is highly valuable and, simultaneously, evokes the idea that the narrator and reader do not belong to the inner-circle of temple scribes.”

14 Frankfurter (2000: 176) provides the best discussion of such stereotype appropriation among Egyptian priests, “in the process of appropriating Hellenistic stereotypes, serving the needs and fantasies of Roman tourists, and generally remodelling themselves according to the perspective of the Greco-Roman world.” See also the broader historical discussions in Frankfurter (1998), especially 52–82. Ultimately, he concludes, “Emphasizing their own supra-local activity, private illumination rituals, their status as priests, and their concerted endeavor to translate Egyptian temple traditions into Hellenistic idiom, they sought to distinguish themselves from the ranks of those local priests whose scopes of authority and action were merely the shrine, the community, and its perennial ritual needs” (Frankfurter 1998: 224). Moyer’s treatment of the case of Thessalos of Tralles in Moyer (2003) and Moyer (2011) is also illuminating for such strategies.

15 As Love (2016: 278) notes, “in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, learned literates could copy, redact, transmit, and practice – in the equally efficacious Greek and/or Coptic languages – without reference to any source or authority except another manuscript.” He concludes: “The ‘potential’ practitioners of the Vorlagen of the bilingual spells were likely to have been individuals who, over time, ‘desacralised’ the knowledge preserved in the Demotic spells by transmitting them (2.3.5.2), and practicing them (6.5.1.1) outside of priestly temple milieus” (Love 2016: 280).

Celebrity Endorsements

Such appropriations of authority from the stereotypes of Egyptian priests appear also in the “celebrity endorsements” that introduce certain spells within the Greek Magical Papyri. Whether the spell is attributed to an Egyptian name (e.g., Pnouthis or Manetho) or framed as a letter from one Egyptian figure to another (usually a magician/priest to a king), the validity of the spell is supported by the endorsement of this famous Egyptian figure.¹⁶ Most blatant is the reference to Pachrates, the high priest (προφήτης) of Heliopolis, who revealed the procedure for a spell of attraction to the Emperor Hadrian. The Emperor was so impressed that he doubled the magician’s fee.¹⁷ Even though Pachrates is called a high priest (as Pnouthis is called a sacred scribe), it is not the authority of the temple institution that validates the procedure, but rather the emperor’s own tests of the procedure’s efficacy, the ritual performance by someone outside the temple gates.

16 PGM I.42–195; cf. PGM III.424, 440–441. Pnouthis is labeled a ‘sacred scribe’ (ιερογραμματεύς), while Manetho is probably meant to be identified as the high priest of Heliopolis of the Ptolemaic period to whom works on the history and religion of Egypt are attributed (as well as, probably later, a work on astrology). Plutarch associates Manetho with the foundation of the Serapis temple (*de Is. et Os.* 28 362a). Dieleman (2005: 257) points out that the name Pnouthis, while authentically Egyptian, is otherwise unattested, suggesting it may be a fabrication. Cf. also the references to Pibechis (PGM IV.3007–3086) and Apollobex (PGM XII.107–121), who may be two transliterations of the same name for a famous Egyptian magician, as well as Zmnis of Tentyra (PGM XII.121–143), Ourbikos (PGM XII.316–350), and Ieu (PGM V.96–172), although this last is listed as a painter (ζωγράφος), rather than a priest or magician. The Pitys to whom three spells are attributed in PGM IV is probably meant to be understood as the Egyptian high priest Bitys mentioned by Iamblichus *de myst.* VIII.5, X.7 as the translator of Hermetic texts into Greek. That he is called a Thessalian in PGM IV.2140–2144 is likely to be a conflicting attempt to burnish his credentials as a magician by providing him with ethnic origins in another place famous for magic. One of these spells is framed as a letter from Pitys to Ostanēs, the Persian magos to whom Pliny NH 30.2.8 credits the introduction of magic to Greece; the letter imparts the secret procedures for necromancy through skulls. Cf. Faraone (2005) for analysis of the skull cup spells. Ostanēs is called a king in that text, just like the King Psammetichos, to whom the magician Nephotes addresses a recipe for bowl divination (PGM IV.154–285), and the convention of a wise expert addressing a king is a standard trope in technical literature from the Hellenistic period onwards. Cf. König (2017: 6) “the dominant pose in ancient knowledge-ordering writing is of the intellectual as a free agent, working with an imagined virtual community of experts, willing perhaps to dedicate his work to a powerful patron, but without following the agenda of any professional or political body.”

17 PGM IV.2441–2621. Pachrates, the high priest of Heliopolis, revealed it to the emperor Hadrian, revealing the power of his own divine magic. For it attracted in one hour; it made someone sick in 2 hours; it destroyed in 7 hours, sent the emperor himself dreams as he thoroughly tested the whole truth of the magic within his power. And marveling at the high priest, he ordered double fees to be given to him. ἐπεδείξατο Παχράτης, ὁ προφήτης Ἡλιουπόλεως, Ἀδριανῷ βασιλεῖ ἐπιδεικνύμενος τὴν δύναμιν τῆς θείας αὐτοῦ μαγείας. ἤξεν γὰρ μονώρονον, κατέκλινεν ἐν ὥραις β', ἀνείλεν ἐν ὥραις ζ', ὀνειροπόμησεν δὲ αὐτὸν βασιλεῖα ἐκδοκιμάζοντος αὐτοῦ τὴν ὅλην ἀλήθειαν τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν μαγείας· καὶ θαυμάσας τὸν προφήτην διπλᾶ ὀψώνια αὐτῷ ἐκέλευσεν δίδοσθαι. (PGM IV. 2442–2451) This Pachrates may be the same legendary figure parodied in Lucian *Philops.* 34.

Nor are such celebrity endorsements confined to legendary Egyptian figures; the texts name magicians from all over – Ostanes and Astrampsychos from the Persians, Demokritos and Apollonius from the Greeks, Solomon and Moses from the Jews.¹⁸ A section in the so-called Eighth Book of Moses lists alternate versions of finding the sacred name of the highest god, citing so wide an array of authorities as Orpheus, Erotylos in his Orphica, Hieros, Thphes the sacred scribe to King Ochos, Evenos, Zo-roaster the Persian, Pyrrhus, Moses, the Hebrew Law, and the fifth book of the Ptol-emaica.¹⁹ Not only are Egyptian authority figures interchangeable with non-Egyptians, but some of the references to Egyptians suggest that the composer does not include himself among the Egyptians. When the directions for collecting plants for various rituals begins by claiming that “among the Egyptians herbs are always obtained like this...,” it is clear that neither the author nor the audience is considered to be in that category.²⁰ The “Egyptians,” like the Persian *magoi* or the Thessalians, are an exotic other, whose very strangeness stamps the procedure with the added authority of its distance from normal ways of doing things. None of the celebrity endorsements come from a perspective within an institutional tradition (e.g., “offering two thousand years of outstanding connections with the gods!”), even if some do seem to be appropriating the stereotypes of the Egyptian priests as sources for the wisdom and ritual expertise that they advertise.

Extra-ordinary Efficacy

However, although references to origins in a temple setting or to legendary magicians are sprinkled throughout the collection of recipes in the Greek Magical Papyri, the most frequent rhetorical trope to boost the authority of the spell is a direct reference to its efficacy. “Tested spell for invisibility: A great work,” begins one recipe, which concludes, “This works very well.”²¹ Three types of advertisements for efficacy may be distinguished; some spells claim that the spell has been tested and found to work, others claim that the effects are marvelous and amazing, and others claim that no other spell is greater. Many spells employ more than one of these tropes, often in ad-

¹⁸ See Dieleman 2005: 263–269. Ostanes: PGM IV.2140–2144, XII.121–143; Astrampsouchos: PGM VIII. 1–63; Demokritos: PGM VII. 167–186, 795–845; Apollonius of Tyana: PGM XIa.1–40; Moses: PGM VII.619–627; Solomon PGM IV.850–929. Cf., also, Dardanos: PGM IV.1716–1870; Claudianus: PGM VII.862–918; Philinna the Thessalian: PGM XX.13–19; Syrian woman of Gadara: PGM XX.4–12; Jacob: PGM XXIIb.1–26.

¹⁹ PGM XIII.934–980.

²⁰ PGM IV.2963–2972. As Dieleman (2005: 188) notes, “Written in this fashion the clause seems to posit ‘the Egyptians’ as a category distinct from the narrator and his implied audience, who are willing to adopt, or learn about, the idiosyncratic ritual techniques of this ethnic category.”

²¹ PGM I.247–262.

dition to a celebrity endorsement or other strategy, and the nature of these authorizing strategies points to the kind of competitive context from which these texts come.

In some cases, the claim that the procedure has been tested is a simple assertion, but other recipes provide more detail, such as the claim in the Great Demotic Papyrus that the procedure has been successfully tested nine times.²² The emperor Hadrian himself tested the spell provided by Pachrates, just as Manetho himself tested the charm for foreknowledge he received directly from Osiris.²³ Nephotes instructs King Psammetichos to test the procedure himself, and Pitys does likewise for King Ostanes, while the author of the Mithras Liturgy claims that he has used the procedure himself many times with amazing results.²⁴ Such a claim of marvelous results appears in a variety of the recipes, and many recipes in fact claim that this particular procedure is actually the best – “none is greater” or “I have found nothing greater than this in the world.”²⁵

The advertisements of efficacy, with or without the celebrity endorsements, appear with much greater frequency in the Greek Magical Papyri than stories of origins within a temple, suggesting that it is such tested and proven efficacy, rather than the association with the temple, that carries the greater authority. Although the ancient temples and the priestly rituals associated with them provide some cachet due to the stereotype of the Egyptian magician-priest that pervades the cultural world of the ancient Mediterranean, the authors (and audiences) of these texts place a higher priority on tests of efficacy, suggesting that the interests of both lies in the performance of such procedures for clientele in a competitive market.

You will be amazed

One of the most striking examples of a rhetorical device used in these texts to bolster the authority of the recipe is the phrase, “and you will be amazed.” The recipe instructs the reader to do X, do Y, and do Z, and then “you will be amazed.” This phrase is found in a number of the recipes in the Greek Magical Papyri, particularly

²² PDM xiv.232–38. Simple claim to have been tested: PGM I.247–62, PGM IV.3007–86, PGM XI.a.1–40, PDM xiv.117–49, PDM xiv.711–15, PDM xiv.856–75. The work of Dieleman (2005: 198, 228) shows that the trope that the procedure has been tested in the Demotic papyri has a parallel in older Egyptian texts, such as Book of the Dead spell 167 and Snake Book §70 = 4/18–19, both of which claim the procedure has been tested “a million times.” The collection of 146 magical recipes in Borghouts (1978) includes a few with similar product claims, nos. 36, 46, 52, 68, 71, 72, 81, 84, and 104.

²³ Manetho: PGM III.424–66; Hadrian: PGM IV.2441–2621,

²⁴ Nephotes: PGM IV.160; Pitys: PGM IV.2006–2125; Mithras Liturgy: PGM IV.791–793.

²⁵ Claim to greatness: PGM IV.2006–2125, PGM IV.2373–2440, PGM IV.2441–2621, PGM IV.3125–71, PGM XXXVI.69–101. Nothing greater: PGM III.424–66, PGM IV.475–829, PDM xiv.1–92, PDM xiv.309–34, PDM xiv.670–74, PGM XXXVI.35–68, PGM XXXVI.69–101, PGM XXXVI.134–60, PGMXXXVI.161–77, PGM XXXVI.211–30.

in some of the larger collections of spells, but it also appears in recipe collections for other kinds of procedures, particularly alchemical and medical ones. Such a phrase not only indicates the author's endorsement of the recipe's validity, but the second person address points to the expected nature of the audience, not as clients for whom the author will perform the rites, but rather as practitioners who will themselves perform the rites (for others or for themselves).

Amazement in the Greek Magical Papyri

At the beginning of the spell recipe framed as a letter by Nephotes to King Psammetichos, Nephotes assures Psammetichos that he personally will be astounded by the power of the spell.²⁶

Nephotes to Psammetichos, immortal king of Egypt. Greetings. Since the great god has appointed you immortal king and nature has made you the best wise man, I too, with a desire to show you the industry in me, have sent you this magical procedure which, with complete ease, produces a holy power. And after you have tested it, **you too will be amazed** at the miraculous nature of this magical operation. You will observe through bowl divination on whatever day or night you want, in whatever place you want, beholding the god in the water and hearing a voice from the god which speaks in verses in answer to whatever you want. You will attain both the ruler of the universe and whatever you command, and he will speak on other matters which you ask about.

The second person future, “you will be amazed, (θαυμάσεις)” is repeated later in the recipe, at the end of the procedure for dismissing the daimonic assistant summoned by the spell, “and you who have used this spell will be amazed.”²⁷

The same formula appears in another recipe in this papyrus, at the end of a spell for bringing luck to a business.²⁸ In the Eighth Book of Moses, one of the uses for the secret name of the highest god is the familiar restraining of anger (θυμοκάτοχον). “Say the name of the sun disk while tying a knot in your pallium or shawl, and

26 PGM IV.154–285. Νεφώτης Ψαμμητήχῳ, βασιλεῖ Αἰγύπτου αἰωνοβίῳ, χαίρειν· ἐπεὶ σε ὁ μέγας θεὸς ἀπεκατέστησεν βασιλεὺς αἰωνόβιον, ἡ δὲ φύσις κατέστησεν ἄριστον σοφιστήν, καὶ ἐγὼ σοι βουλόμενος ἐπιδείξασθαι τὴν ἐν ἐμοὶ φιλοπονίαν ἀπέστειλά σοι τήνδε τὴν πράξιν ἐν πάσῃ εὐκοπίᾳ ἱερὰν ἐπιτελουμένην ἐνέργειαν, ἣν καὶ (σὺ) δοκιμάσας θαυμάσεις τὸ παράδοξον τῆς οἰκονομίας ταύτης· σκέψῃ διὰ λεκάνης αὐτόπτου ἐν ᾗ βούλει ἡμέρᾳ ἢ νυκτί, ἐν ᾗ βούλει τόπῳ, θεωρῶν τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ φωνὴν λαμβάνων ἐν στίχοις παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οἷς βούλει· οἷσεις καὶ τὸν κοσμοκράτορα καὶ εἴ τι ἂν προσῆς, ἔρει δὲ καὶ περὶ ἄλλων, ὧν ἐπερωτήσεις.

27 PGM IV.233. ὃς τῷδε αὐτῷ λόγῳ χρώμενος θαυμάσεις.

28 After the final prayer, “Then open [your establishment] and you will marvel at the unsurpassed holy power.” PGM IV.3168. εἴτα ἀνοίγε, καὶ θαυμάσεις τὴν ἀνυπέρβλητον ἱερὰν δύναμιν. While in this version, θαυμάσεις takes the direct object of ἱερὰν δύναμιν, holy power, in other recipes, the simple second person future assumes the object of the whole procedure – the performer will be amazed at how well the ritual works.

you will be amazed.”²⁹ An erotic spell in a papyrus roll formulary likewise touts its amazing powers.³⁰ This recipe is the best (βέλτιστον); there is nothing better (μῖζον οὐδέν). The claim is emphasized by the second person address, which assumes that the reader is the kind of person who will try the procedure, and the amazing efficacy of the results provides the ground for the recipe’s claims.

Amazement in Alchemical and Medical Texts

Contrary to Gordon’s assertion that such a personal address is “formally foreign to the genre of the formulary,” the same formula appears in other kinds of recipe collections, suggesting that it is a common rhetorical trope in the genre of recipes.³¹ The formularies of the Greek Magical Papyri are thus comparable to collections of instructions for other technical procedures, particularly alchemy and medicine. The alchemist Zosimus, working in Egyptian Panopolis in the third to fourth centuries CE (the same time that many of the formularies of the Greek Magical Papyri were compiled), uses the same rhetorical device to enhance the authority of his procedures, as do other alchemical treatises. The same formula, “you will be amazed,” appears in medical treatises as early as the second century CE Archigenes, and it is deployed by the third century Galen in his collection of simple remedies, as well as by the later writers who collected handy remedies under the name of Galen.

In the excerpt entitled, *Zosimus Speaks about Chalk* (ἀσβέστου), the alchemist gives instructions for creating a supremely white substance to his addressee, probably his sister alchemist Theosebeia to whom many of his treatises are addressed.

29 PGM XIII.250–252. θυμοκάτοχον· πρὸς βασιλέα ἢ μεγιστᾶνα εἰσαγε, τὰς χεῖρας ἐντὸς ἔχων λέγε τὸ ὄνομα (τ)ὸ δίσκου, βαλὼν ἅμμα τοῦ παλλίου σου ἢ τοῦ ἐπικαρσίου, καὶ θαυμάσεις. (translation slightly modified)

30 PGM XXXVI.69–101. Love spell of attraction, excellent divination by fire, than which none is greater. It attracts men to women and women to men and makes virgins rush out of their homes. Take a pure papyrus and with blood of an ass write the following names and figure, and put in the magical material from the woman you desire. Smear the strip of papyrus with moistened vinegar gum and glue it to the dry vaulted vapor room of a bath, and you will be amazed. Ἀγωγή, ἔμπυρον βέλτιστον, οὗ μῖζον οὐδέν. ἄγι δὲ ἄνδρας γυνεξίν καὶ γυνεκας ἄνδρεσιν καὶ παρθένους ἐκπηδᾶν οἴκοθεν ποιεῖ. λαβὼν χάρτην καθαρὸν γράφε αἵματι ὀνίω τὰ ὑποκείμενα ὀνόματα καὶ τὸ ζῳδιον, καὶ βαλὼν οὐσίαν, ἧς θέλεις γυναικός, χρίσας τὸ πιττάκιον ὀξοκόμῃ βεβρεγμένη κόλλα εἰς τὸν ξηρὸν θόλον τοῦ βαλανίου, καὶ θαυμάσεις.

31 Gordon (1997: 87–88): “Though formally foreign to the genre of the formulary, such passages were incorporated into recipes thanks to an insistent desire to document the success of ritual magical claims. Once universalized in writing, they helped to reinforce the claim by providing fragments of imagery for each succeeding generation of magical diviners. They were one basis, alongside the prayers, ingredients and instruments of ritual magical divination, for a genuine tradition of willed self-delusion.”

I will make these things clear to you. For it is known that the alabaster stone has been called 'brain' on account of it retaining every fleeting dye. Therefore, taking the alabaster stone, cook it a day and a night, and have chalk (*asbestos* – *the unquenched*). And take the sharpest vinegar and quench it, and you will be amazed at the divine creation. For it makes the whitest appearance.³²

An alchemist who follows the recipe will be amazed at the divine work resulting from this simple procedure.³³

Other uses of the formula deploy similar rhetorical strategies to boost the procedure's authority.

And having smelted one pound of pure silver, make a projection from the dry matter 3 or 6 parts and you will be amazed. This is the divine and great mystery that is sought, and able to conquer poverty and to ward off enemies.³⁴

The aim of conquering poverty is at times attributed to the legendary alchemist Demokritos, imagined to be the famous Atomist from the Classical period. Another use of the "you will be amazed" formula couples the appeal to the testing of the proce-

32 CAAG 2.113–115. Δῆλα ὑμῖν ποιούμεαι. Γινώσκεται γὰρ ὅτι ὁ λίθος ὁ ἀλαβαστρίτης ἐγκέφαλος κέκληται διὰ τὸ κάτοχον αὐτὸν εἶναι πάσης βαφῆς φευκτῆς. Λαβὼν οὖν τὸν ἀλαβάστρινον λίθον, ὅπτα νυχθήμερον καὶ ἔχε ἄσβεστον. Καὶ λαβὲ ὄξος δριμύτατον καὶ κατὰσβεσον καὶ θαυμάσεις θεῖαν γὰρ ποίησιν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν λευκοτάτην ποιεῖ.

33 After further instructions, Zosimos goes on to praise the special nature of this recipe's result. "You will have the untransferable mystery, which no one of the prophets dared to transmit as a mystagogue in word, but they only transmitted it with their nods. For in a nutshell this is what they call in the hidden writings the stone that is not a stone, the unknown and known to all, the unhonored and much-honored, the ungiven and god-given. And I will praise it as ungiven and god-given, the only thing in our workings stronger than matter. For this is the magic substance, the thing having power, the Mithriac mystery." ἔχε τὸ μυστήριον ἀμετάδοτον, ὃ οὐδεὶς τῶν προφητῶν ἐτόλμησε μυσταγωγῆσαι τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ μόνον τοῖς νεύμασιν αὐτῶν ἐμυσταγῶνουν. Τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ κεφάλαιον ἐκάλεσαν ἐν ταῖς λοξαῖς γραφαῖς λίθον τὸν οὐ λίθον, τὸν ἄγνωστον καὶ πᾶσι γνωστόν, τὸν ἄτιμον καὶ πολύτιμον, τὸν ἀδώρητον καὶ θεοδώρητον· κἀγὼ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐγκωμιάσω τὸν ἀδώρητον καὶ θεοδώρητον, τὸν μόνον ἐν ταῖς ἡμῶν ἐργασίαις κρείττω τοῦ ὑλαίου. Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ φάρμακον, τὸ τὴν δύναμιν ἔχον, τὸ Μιθριακὸν μυστήριον. Zosimos uses the language of mystery cults, with puzzling allusions to the Mithriac mysteries as well as the terms of mystagogues and prophets, adding in an origin for these secrets in the 'hidden writings', all of which would not seem out of place in the Greek Magical Papyri. Cf. a passage from his treatise *On Divine Water*, which likewise combines mystery terminology with paradoxical descriptions of the secret substance (CAAG 2. 143.20–144.7 = Mertens 1995: 21).

34 Zosimos, *From the Great Art of the Ancients* (Mertens 1995: 48–49). καὶ χωνεύσας ἄργυρον καθαρὸν λίτραν μίαν, ἐπίβαλε ἐκ τοῦ ξηρίου μέρη γ' ἢ ζ', καὶ θαυμάσεις· τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τὸ θεῖον καὶ μέγα μυστήριον τὸ ζητούμενον, καὶ δυνάμενον πενίαν νικῆσαι καὶ ἐχθροὺς ἀπώσασθαι. Conquering the evil of poverty is a frequent justification for alchemical procedures, a practical note that has often seemed to modern scholars to be at odds with the more spiritual aims of the divine and great mystery, but such two-fold motivation seems geared to appeal to practicing alchemists who combine their theoretical interests with a need to support themselves.

dures' efficacy with a citation of Demokritos' famous slogan about the processes of nature manipulated by alchemy.

Unify *aphroselenos* with *komaris*, pounding it fine and softening it and making it solid and washing it, smelt silver, and make a projection from the compound, and you will see the silver transmuted into gold, and you will be amazed. Nature rejoices in nature, and nature conquers nature.³⁵

Such celebrity endorsements, however, are less significant in the rhetoric of authority than the appeals to efficacy. Demokritos is cited for the theoretical principle, but the practical procedure is given authority by claims that it has been tested and provides amazing results, not its origin.³⁶

The medical treatises likewise foreground the practical results rather than the origin of the cure. Archigenes provides instructions for making lozenges to ease an inflamed spleen and caps the imperatives of the instructions with the second person future address, “and you will be amazed at the power of it. For it swiftly relaxes the spleen.”³⁷

Even the philosophical doctor Galen makes use of the trope, claiming that his addressee will be amazed upon using the drug to care for ulcers and other sores.³⁸ The phrase appears more often in the *Handy Remedies* (*Euporista*), a collection of medical recipes attributed to Galen, but whose three books were probably assembled in succeeding centuries from various earlier remedy collections. “And you will be

35 Fragmenta Alchemica, *On the Dyeing of Stones*, CAAG 2.358.28–2.359.3 Berthelot. Ἀφροσέληνον ἔνωσον μετὰ κομάρεως, λειῶν καὶ μαλάττων καὶ πηγνύων καὶ βάπτων αὐτὸν, χώνευσον ἄργυρον, καὶ ἐπίβαλε ἀπὸ τοῦ συνθήματος, καὶ ἴδης τὴν ἄργυρον εἰς χρυσὸν μεταποιηθεῖσαν, καὶ θαυμάσεις. Ἡ φύσις τῇ φύσει τέρπεται, καὶ ἡ φύσις τὴν φύσιν νικᾷ.

36 A recipe for whitening pearls caps off its process with the claim that the alchemist who tries it will be amazed at its efficacy. “Then check if they are not still shiny, and throw them in barley bulb. And mold it, making a pure cake. And bake it in a bread oven. Thus clean it off and shine it, and you will be amazed.” Fragmenta Alchemica, *On Pearls*, CCAG 2.370.19–21 Berthelot. Εἴτα ἐρεύνησον ἐὰν μὴ ὥσι στίλβοντες, καὶ βάλε αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ βολβῷ τῇ κριθίνῃ· καὶ πλάσσε αὐτήν, καθαρὸν ἄρτον ποιήσας· καὶ ὅπτα ἐν κλιβάνῳ· οὕτω σμῆχε καὶ στίλβου, καὶ θαυμάσεις· Cf. also Demokritos, *Physica et mystica* (CAAG 2.16–24; Martelli 2013: 18) and the recipe attributed to Demokritos in P. Holm. 2.

37 Archigenes *On the inflammation of the spleen* 11.32–12.2. ἔστι δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος τροχίσκος ἐπιτήδειος πρὸς πᾶσαν σπληνὸς διάθεσιν· βάτου τῶν ἀπαλῶν ἀκρεμόνων τῶν πάνυ τρυφερῶν ἀμμωνιακοῦ θυμιάματος ἀνά ? δ καμπάρεως φύλλων ? β μυρίκης καρποῦ τῆς ἀσπλήνου λεγομένης σκίλλης ὀπτῆς πεπέρως ἀνά ? α ὕδατι πλάττε τροχίσκους καὶ δίδου ὀξύμελιτι καὶ θαυμάσεις τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ· τῆκε γὰρ ταχέως τὸν σπλῆνα. “There is a certain little lozenge suitable for every condition of the spleen. Take some tender branches of bramble (very dainty ones); ammoniac incense in the amount of 4 drachmas, caper leaves in the amount of 2 drachmas, some tamarisk fruit called ‘spleenless’ (*asplēnos*), some roasted squill, some pepper in the amount of 1 drachma; mold a little lozenge and give it with vinegar and honey] and you will be amazed at the power of it. For it swiftly relaxes the spleen.” A preparation for those with bowel troubles (Archigenes *On lientery* 20.26–21.1) likewise concludes the instructions with the claim that the reader who tries it will be amazed.

38 Galen *de simplicium* (Kühn 12.231.14–232.3).

amazed. And this has been entirely tested.”³⁹ Again, the emphasis is on the astonishment that the user will experience when trying the recipe, as well as the assertion that the remedy has been successfully tested by other practitioners. The rhetoric makes no reference to a tradition or an institution to validate the recipe, but the focus is rather on the powerful results that have been proven to occur by practitioners in the past and that will amaze the practitioner in the future.

The phrase, “and you will be amazed,” thus points to a particular kind of strategy for authorizing practice, one suited to a freelance practitioner located “at the temple gates.” Such a practitioner cannot rely on an established institution to provide authority for the kind of practices he advocates but must win over his audience in a competitive market, whether for medical expertise, alchemical wisdom, or magical power.

Who is “you”?

Medical and Alchemical Parallels

The question arises, however, of who the “you” might be that the author of such recipes addresses. If the author of the texts is a freelance practitioner operating outside of the authority of an established institution, to whom are his texts addressed? Whereas Paul’s letters specify their addressees, we have no information about the particular people to whom the Greek Magical Papyri were addressed. The parallels with the medical and alchemical texts, however, can provide some illumination, since a little more is known about the readership of these texts that have come to us through a manuscript tradition rather than as a fortuitously discovered papyrus. The “you” who will be amazed appears not as a potential client for the religious or technical expertise of the author but rather as a fellow practitioner, with clientele of his own, who seeks to improve his techniques by learning from the author as an expert.⁴⁰

39 [Galen] *de remediis parabilibus* (Kühn 14.386.17–387.6). For Sciatica: Take a little swallow, and if it is the right foot that you are suffering from, crushing the wings in your right hand and scraping, draw the blood from above the socket up to the ball of the ankle, dragging the blood with the whole little swallow. And then having plucked and roasted it, eat it, casting nothing outside and having eaten it immediately anoint with olive oil up to the ball of the ankle joint for three days and you will be amazed. And this has been entirely tested. [Πρὸς ἰσχυαδικούς.] χελιδόνιον ἄγρευσον, καὶ ἐὰν ἢ ὁ δεξιὸς ποὺς ὃν πάσχεις, τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ τὰ περὰ πατήσας τῷ πάσχοντι καὶ κνήσας ἔλκε τὸ αἷμα ἀπὸ ἄνωθεν τῆς κοτύλης ἕως τοῦ ἀστραγάλου σύρων τὸ αἷμα ὅλῳ τῷ χελιδονίῳ, καὶ λεπίσας καὶ ὀπτήσας φάγε μηδὲν βαλὼν ἕξω καὶ φαγὼν παραυτίκα ἄλειψον ἐλαίῳ ἕως ἐπὶ τὸν ἀστράγαλον ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας, καὶ θαυμάσεις. πεπεύραται δὲ πάνυ καὶ τοῦτο. Cf. [Galen] *de remediis parabilibus* (Kühn 14.494.14–15; 14.500.9–12; 14.522.10–12).

40 Gordon (2002: 76) suggests that the texts may be addressed primarily to the authors themselves, who seek to reassure themselves of their own power with the waning of the temples’ influence. “I

There is little substantive information about the actual readers of the medical manuals, either the collections of remedies or the more theoretical treatises. Patterns of quotations, however, from the Hippocratic corpus and from later such texts, most notably those of Galen, indicate that such texts were not read solely in the established schools but by educated readers of all stripes. The theoretical works were consulted by philosophers interested in the nature of the body and the world, but the practical works, the collections of remedies and case histories, seem to have been read by other practitioners. Sometimes the source is acknowledged in the later quotation, but the rhetoric of tested efficacy, of amazing results, continues to overshadow the authority of the origins.⁴¹ Nutton suggests that collections such as the *Euporista* (or *Handy Remedies*) attributed to Galen were used by the “layman,” rather than the professional member of one of the “medical clans” like the Asclepiads. The prologue to the first book of the *Euporista* indeed claims that the recipes are provided, “so that even someone who is a layman may choose on the spot to aid those in danger or otherwise suffering to the extent possible.”⁴² Such a “layman” may rather have been a freelance practitioner who did not, from the perspective of a doctor who was part of the establishment, merit the title of doctor, but who nonetheless provided medical care to patients, even if only himself or a few members of his immediate family and friends. The “you” of the recipe collections thus seems to have been a freelance doctor, a practitioner looking to find techniques that he could use in his own practice, a category recognized as early as the Hippocratic treatises.

The alchemical texts are more difficult, but the scenario seems to be somewhat similar. Some of the earliest alchemical texts, the Stockholm and Leiden Papyri, are

want to pursue this theme of the claim to magical power, which in my view did not have to be, indeed could hardly be, directed towards the magicians’ clientele. It was rather a self-regarding matter, if one likes, a personal re-assurance of the individual’s prowess, a re-assurance which may (though I do not insist on this) have become more necessary as the institutional framework of the ‘House of Life’ grew less secure and the priests were more often likely to practice their craft privately.”

41 The fact that some recipes that appear in the works of Galen are drawn from earlier medical writers (such as Archigenes) and that recipes from Galen likewise appear in later writers (such as Oribasius) indicates that there was a chain of transmission of such recipes.

42 [Galen] *de remediis parabilibus* (Kühn 14.312.14016). ὅπως ἂν τις καὶ ιδιώτης ἐκ τοῦ παραχρήμα βοηθεῖν ἔλῃ τοῖς κινδυνεύουσιν ἢ ἄλλως πάσχουσι κατὰ τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον. Cf. Nutton (1992: 17). The beginning of the Hippocratic *peri pathōn* (*On Affections*) 1 describes what a layman should know of medicine. “Any man who is intelligent must, on considering that health is of the utmost value to human beings, have the personal understanding necessary to help himself in diseases, and be able to understand and to judge what physicians say and what they administer to his body, being versed in each of these matters to a degree reasonable for a layman.” Ἄνδρα χρή, ὅστις ἐστὶ συνετός, λογιζόμενον ὅτι τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισι πλείστου ἀξιόν ἐστιν ἢ ὑγίειν, ἐπίστασθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ γνώμης ἐν τῇσι νούσοισιν ὠφελέεσθαι ἐπίστασθαι δὲ τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ἰητρῶν καὶ λεγόμενα καὶ προσφερόμενα πρὸς τὸ σῶμα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ διαγινώσκειν· ἐπίστασθαι δὲ τούτων ἕκαστα ἐς ὅσον εἰκὸς ιδιώτην. Oribasius mentions Galen’s lost books of *Euporista* as being for the use of laymen, as well as the book of the first century CE Rufus of Ephesus. Rufus’ work is lost, but quotations survive in the Arabic tradition.

bare collections of recipes with few rhetorical devices authorizing their authority, but alchemists like Zosimus did quote recipes and theories from earlier practitioners (as later alchemists quoted Zosimus).⁴³ Zosimus provides more information about his addressee because he names her in several places as Theosebeia. His treatise *On the Letter Omega*, begins with a direct address to her, referring back to another treatise of his, *On Furnaces*, that she has read. Theosebeia is thus clearly an experienced alchemist in her own right, although Zosimus at times mentions that he is writing to her in response to questions that she has raised about practice.⁴⁴ He also warns her not to pay heed to the subversive theories of other alchemists, who neglect what Zosimus sees as proper alchemical method in favor of astrological calculations of favorable times.⁴⁵

The specific addressee of Theosebeia aside, the texts of Zosimus seem designed to be read by practicing alchemists, since many of the procedures described require a fair amount of technical knowledge – and special equipment! – merely to follow the recipe. While Zosimus does include complex and fascinating theological discussions in his works, the theoretical discussions are often mixed in with very detailed and technical recipes. Other alchemical authors are even more narrowly targeted upon the practice, so alchemical practitioners would be the most plausible addressees or intended audiences for the works.

It is worth noting that the earliest alchemical manuscripts come from the same cache of Egyptian papyri as the Greek Magical Papyri; indeed, the same scribal hand that penned the so-called Eighth Book of Moses also created the codex collections of alchemical recipes known as the Stockholm and Leiden Papyri.⁴⁶ The alchemical texts thus provide a good analogue for understanding the authorization strategies of the magical papyri, since in some cases the authors and audiences were in fact

⁴³ One of the few recipes to include authorizing rhetoric uses both celebrity endorsements and a mention of the proven efficacy. “Anaxilaus traces back to Democritus also the following recipe. He rubbed common salt together with lamellose alum in vinegar and formed very fine small cones from these and let them dry for three days in the bath chamber. Then he ground them small, cast copper together with them three times and cooled, quenching in sea water. Experience will prove the result” (P. Holm. 2, trans. Martelli 2013).

⁴⁴ e.g., Zosimus, *On the Letter Omega* 2. = CAAG II. 228–235 B = MA 1.11–16, 20–23.

⁴⁵ Zosimus, *Final Reckoning* 6–7 = CAAG II. 243.6–244.16 B. Later quotations of Zosimus contain the salutation, “O woman,” usually assumed to be Theosebeia, and a later Arabic compilation of material from Zosimus known as *The Book of Pictures* is framed as a series of questions and answers between Zosimus and Theosebeia. Zosimus addresses Theosebeia by name, e.g. CAAG II.204.9, II.209.9, 2.239.3. He addresses her as ὦ γύναι, e.g., *On the Letter Omega* 2. = CAAG II. 228.16 = MA 1.11, CAAG II.138.6, II.209.10, II.239.4, II.244.15, II.246.23, II.194.13, II.208.9. *The Book of Pictures* or *Muṣḥaf aṣ-ṣuwar* is translated in Abt and Fuad (2007).

⁴⁶ P. Holmiensis and P. Leid. J 397 were written in the same scribal hand as PGM XIII, as Brashear 1995: 3402–3404 notes. Another magical papyrus, PGM Va, which contains a single page with a spell for a direct vision from Helios was found among the leaves of P. Holm, and PGM XII.193–201 contains an alchemical recipe for making a gold tincture. All of these texts may have come from the same cache, known as the Anastasi hoard.

the same in both kinds of texts. Just as there were no guilds or institutionalized groups of alchemists, but a variety of freelance practitioners in competition with one another, so too the authors of the Greek Magical Papyri competed for authority from their readers, relying not on the clout of the established temple (or even the memory of the temple's now vanished authority) but on claims to the extraordinary efficacy of their practices.

Temple Training?

One of the reasons that the practitioners of the Greek Magical Papyri have often been assumed to be temple priests is the variety of languages present in the texts – Greek, Coptic, Demotic, and even Hieratic Egyptian. While the temple is probably the most likely place to learn the linguistic and scribal expertise necessary to compose the spells within the papyri, scribes who would be able to read and copy the texts would not need to be part of a temple hierarchy. As Love points out, “in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, learned literates could copy, redact, transmit, and practice – in the equally efficacious Greek and/or Coptic languages – without reference to any source or authority except another manuscript.”⁴⁷ Love cites a letter from Kellis in Egypt as an example of the kind of transmission of magical texts that could lie behind the formation of the Greek Magical Papyri; the writer, Ouales, responds to the request of his correspondent, Psai, for a particular erotic separation spell by copying into the letter, not the spell Psai asked for, but another one Ouales had found.⁴⁸ One educated writer could pass along a ritual recipe to an educated reader who wished to make use of it, either for himself or for a client.⁴⁹

Extensive training in the ritual tradition of the Egyptian temples was not a prerequisite for someone wanting to make use of the recipes in the Greek Magical Papyri; all that is needed to perform such rituals is the ability to read the recipe and the materials to carry it out.⁵⁰ Indeed, the technical training needed to perform most of the erotic or divinatory spells in the Greek Magical Papyri is far less than that needed to perform many of the alchemical procedures mentioned in Zosimus. Like the recipes in the *Handy Remedies* attributed to Galen, the recipes in the Greek Magical Pap-

⁴⁷ Love 2016: 278.

⁴⁸ P. Kell. Copt. 35 (TM #85886). See the discussion of Love (2016: 273–276), building on Mirecki, Gardner, and Alcock (1997).

⁴⁹ “We know from the Kellis letter that magical texts could be freely copied and transmitted by literates with access to source manuscripts. Hence, it seems much more likely that magical texts were transmitted in such forms, and that bookrolls or codices reflect a ‘writing-up’ stage, in which collections of loose-leaf spells were compiled into one ‘master copy’ as we know was the case for PGM IV, cf. LiDonnici 2003” (Love 2016: 279).

⁵⁰ As Love (2016: 233) notes, “the only prerequisite for the practice of the bilingual spells of PGM IV was the ability to read ritual instructions and invocations.”

yri require of the reader only a certain practical facility with certain procedures, like the cutting and cooking of certain plant materials or the sacrifice and cutting up of certain animals. None of the recipes rely on the audience of the text knowing how to perform certain temple rituals in order to accomplish the spell. Indeed, in one of the few examples of a procedure that might be directly traceable back to temple practice, the Ouphōr spell in PGM XII, the connection with the temple procedure of the “Opening of the Mouth” ritual is obscured and indirect at best. Nor is it linked in the rhetoric of the recipe with the temple, but rather with a particular practitioner, an unknown Ourbikos, whose Ouphōr rite is framed as being better than that of others.⁵¹ Thus, even where the procedure does derive from the temple tradition, the authority of the temple is not invoked, but rather the authority of a practitioner within a competitive context.

The practitioner in the Greek Magical Papyri, moreover, does not rely on a longstanding relationship with the divine powers invoked, of the kind that priestly status provides. Rather, the prayers in the spells request power from the gods on the basis of a present and pressing necessity, not because of a longstanding reciprocal relationship or even with the promises of future services to the divinity.⁵² The authority with which the magician demands help from the divine rests on demonstrations within the spell of his special knowledge or privilege, not like Chryses in the *Iliad*, who rehearses the favors he has done for Apollo in making sacrifices and building temples as the justification for Apollo to fulfill his curse upon the Greeks by striking them with plague.⁵³

Even the spaces mentioned in the Greek Magical Papyri are private spaces, a house rooftop or a workshop rather than a temple space;⁵⁴ the rites are, in J. Z.

51 PGM XII.313–321. This is the Ouphōr which Ourbikos used, the holy Ouphōr, the true one, in all brevity truly recorded, through which every sculpture and carving and statue is kindled to life. For this is the true one; the others, which are reported at length, are falsified, encompassing a useless length. ὁ δὲ Οὐφωρ οὗτός ἐστιν, ὃς Οὐρβικὸς ἐχράτο. τὸ ἱερὸν Οὐφωρ, τὸ ἀληθές, διὰ πάσης συντομίας ἀληθῶς ἀναγέγραπται, δι’ οὗ ζῶπουρεῖται πάντα πλάσματα καὶ γλυφαὶ καὶ ξόανα· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι[ί]ν τὸ ἀληθές, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα, ὅσα φέρεται διὰ μακρῶν, ἐψευσδηγόρηται μῆκος εἰκαῖον περιέχοντα. Translation from Moyer and Dieleman (2003: 60). See the discussion in Moyer and Dieleman (2003), where they carefully trace the connections.

52 Cf. PGM IV.525–527. the present bitter and relentless necessity which is pressing down upon me. τὴν ἐνεστώσαν καὶ κατεπιέγουσάν με πικρὰν ἀνάγκην ἀχρεοκόπητον. For a discussion of the present focused relations in the prayers of the PGM, see Edmonds (2019: 169–174).

53 *Iliad* 1.34–50.

54 As Dosoo (2014: 212) comments, “The site where the ritual is to work is generally described in vague terms as a ‘place’ (τόπος; PGM 4.2366,3127), ‘house’ (οἰκία; PGM 4.2374) or ‘place of business/workshop’ (ἐργαστήριον), but in one case the most likely place of business is apparently a temple (ἱερὸν; PGM 4.3125, 3126). Again, there are several layers of interpretation here: are the rituals intended for the papyrus’ owners, or for their clients? Would the rituals have been used by the owners of the Theban Library, or were they simply copied from their exemplars without any intention of being used? Nevertheless, the picture they imply would fit well with what we know or might imagine

Smith's terms, religion of *anywhere* rather than of *there*. Temple rituals depend on the sacrality of the space of the temple, and people go there to perform the ritual, whereas the rites of the Greek Magical Papyri often involve creating their own sacred spaces in which to make contact with the divine.⁵⁵

Conclusions

The “you” to whom these texts are addressed, the “you” who will be amazed at the results of the ritual, is thus, like the addressee of the alchemical or medical texts, someone who will put into practice the procedure in the recipe, not someone who is looking to the author of the text to perform the ritual for them. In this respect, these texts (magical, alchemical, and medical) differ from the texts of freelance religious experts like Paul or the author of the Derveni Papyrus. Paul, as Wendt has shown, builds up his religious expertise for the addressees of his letters so that they will accept his authority in telling them how to live their lives and regulate their communities. The Derveni Author likewise demonstrates his skill at exegesis of an Orphic poem to convince his audience that they should accept his authority as a ritual practitioner and become clients for his performance of *teletai* instead of clients of another, who will leave them confused and without the proper experience of the rite.⁵⁶ By contrast, the authors of the Greek Magical Papyri write for fellow practitioners, rather than potential clients, and so their strategies for bolstering their authority are different. They still seek to convince their readers to adopt their procedures rather than those of their competitors, but they address them as potential practitioners of the procedures, stressing the demonstrable efficacy of the rite and the marvelous nature of the results rather than referring to the prestigious origins of the rite or its place in the established religious tradition. Just as a cookbook is aimed at cooks who want to try the recipes in their kitchens rather than at restaurant patrons who might want to order the dish, so too the recipes of the Greek Magical Papyri address an audience of potential practitioners, whose qualification to perform the spells is not ritual training within the hierarchy of the temples, but simply the ability to read the texts. While such practitioners may have had training as scribes – or even as priests – within a temple context, the most effective appeal to such

of the practitioners' activities – offering luxury metalworks, fabrics and more occult ritual services, based in a workshop, private house or temple.”

55 Smith (2003) deploys the terminology of here, there, and anywhere from Dr. Seuss' *Cat in the Hat* to distinguish different modes of religion. Cf. the analysis of the creation of a new sacred space in PGM IV.26–51 in Johnston (2002: 353–357).

56 Cf. Wendt (2016: 222), “To the contrary, sources such as the Derveni papyrus and the Pauline Epistles provide excellent evidence for how such needs were created by freelance experts who deliberately contrasted their specialized knowledge and the benefits they purveyed with more ordinary forms of religion.” For the Derveni Author, see Edmonds (2013: 124–135).

an audience is not to the authority of the temple traditions, but rather to the demonstrable efficacy of the practices – “you will be amazed.”

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