

# Plethon's Commentaries on the Magical Oracles

Greek and English  
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Plethon's commentary is titled *The Magical Oracles of the Magi from Zoroaster* (Μαγικά λόγια τῶν ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου μάγων). Of course these oracles do not come from the Magi (as Plethon believed), and they are more widely known as the "Chaldean Oracles," which is equally a misnomer. The translations of the oracles are my own. The oracles are numbered in the translation on the right as they are in the manuscripts (if they are numbered at all), which corresponds to the Greek numerals in the Greek text on the left. In the footnotes, the number after "P" is the oracle's number in recent editions of Plethon's commentary, such as Tambrun-Krasker, and agrees with the parenthesized Arabic numeral in the Greek text; the number after "CO" in its number in larger collections of the Chaldean Oracles such as des Places and Majercik; the number after "K" is its place in Kroll.

## Μαγικά λόγια τῶν ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου μάγων

## The Magical Oracles of Magi from Zoroaster

α' (1). Δίξεο σὺ ψυχῆς ὀχετόν, ὅθεν ἢ τίνι τάξει,  
σώματι θητεύσας, ἐπὶ τάξιν ἀφ' ἧς ἐρρύθης,  
αὐθις ἀναστήσεις, ἱερῶ λόγῳ ἔργον ἐνώσας.

β' (2). Μηδὲ κάτω νεύσης, κρημνός κατὰ γῆς  
ὑπόκειται,  
ἑπταπόρου σύρων κατὰ βαθμίδος, ἣν ὕπο δεινῆς  
ἀνάγκης θρόνος ἐστί.

γ' (3). Σὸν γὰρ ἀγγεῖον, θῆρες χθονὸς οἰκήσουσιν.

δ' (4). Μὴ σὺ γ' αὐξάνε τὴν εἰμαρμένην.

ε' (5). Οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ πατρικῆς ἀρχῆς ἀτελές τι  
τροχάζει.

ς' (6). Ἄλλ' οὐκ εἰσδέχεται κείνης τό θέλειν  
πατρικὸς νοῦς,  
μέχρις ἂν ἐξέλθῃ λήθης, καὶ ῥῆμα λαλήσῃ,  
μνήμην ἐνθεμένη πατρικοῦ συνθήματος ἀγνοῦ.

(1) Seek thou the soul's way, whence or by what rank  
to serve the body; to that rank from which thou flowed,  
thou mayst rise up again; join act with sacred speech.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Incline not down. Beneath the Earth there lies a  
cliff,  
which draws one down the seven steps ...  
beneath her is the throne of dire Necessity.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Thy vessel earthly beasts shall occupy.<sup>3</sup>

(4) Enlarge not thou thy Destiny.<sup>4</sup>

(5) Nought incomplete rolls from Paternal Principle.<sup>5</sup>

(6) But the Paternal Mind accepteth not her will,  
until she flee oblivion, and pronounce a Word,  
inserting memory of the pure paternal Sign.<sup>6</sup>

1 P 1, CO 110, K 51. Plethon's text of this oracle omits a few words added in modern editions.

2 P 2, CO 164+, K 63. Contemporary scholars do not consider the third line, which is not in verse, to be part of the oracle.

3 P 3, CO 157, K 60.

4 P 4, CO 103, K 50 #1.

5 P 5, CO 13, K 15.

6 P 6, CO 109, K 50.

- ζ' (7). Χρή σε σπεύδειν πρὸς τό φάος, καὶ πρὸς  
πατρός ἀγῶας,  
ἔνθεν ἐπέμφθη σοι ψυχή πολλὴν ἔσσαμένη νοῦν. (7) You must make haste to light, and to the Father's  
beams,  
from whence was sent to thee a soul full-clothed with  
mind.<sup>7</sup>
- η' (8). Ἄ ἄ τούσδε χθῶν κατοδύρεται ἐς τέκνα  
μέχρις. (8) Alas! The Earth bewails them, even to their  
children.<sup>8</sup>
- θ' (9). Ψυχῆς ἐξωστῆρες ἀνάπνοοι εὐλυτοὶ εἰσιν. (9) The soul's expellers with the breath are easily  
released.<sup>9</sup>
- ι' (10). Λαιῆς ἐν λαγόσιν κοίτης, ἀρετῆς πέλε  
πηγή,  
ἔνδον ὅλη μίμνουσα, τὸ παρθένον οὐ προιεῖσα. (10) Within the left side of the bed is virtue's fount,  
remaining all inside, nor losing chastity.<sup>10</sup>
- ια' (11). Ψυχή ἢ μερόπων θεὸν ἄγξει πως ἐς  
ἐαυτήν,  
οὐδὲν θνητὸν ἔχουσα, ὅλη θεόθεν μεμέθυσται.  
Ἄρμονίαν ἀνχεῖ γάρ, ὑφ' ἧ πέλε σῶμα βρότειον. (11) The human soul will somehow clasp God to  
herself,  
and having nothing mortal, she is wholly drunk with  
God,  
for she boasts harmony, where mortal bodies stand.<sup>11</sup>
- ιβ' (12). Ὅτι ψυχή πῦρ δυνάμει πατρός οὔσα  
φαινόν,  
ἀθάνατος τε μένει, καὶ ζωῆς δεσπότις ἐστι,  
καὶ ἴσχει κόσμου πολλὰ πληρώματα κόλπων. (12) Since Psychê, by the Father's Power a Radiant  
Fire,  
remains immortal, She is Mistress of all Life,  
and holds Full-measures of the Cosmos' many clefts.<sup>12</sup>
- ιγ' (13). Ζήτησον παράδεισον. (13) Seek Paradise.<sup>13</sup>
- ιδ' (14). Μὴ πνεῦμα μολύνῃς, μηδὲ βαθύνῃς τὸ  
ἐπίπεδον. (14) Neither spirit do you stain, nor deepen down  
the plane...<sup>14</sup>
- ιε' (15a). Ἔστι καὶ εἰδώλω μερὶς εἰς τόπον  
ἀμφιφάοντα. (15) And of the radiant place, the image has a piece.<sup>15</sup>
- ις' (15b). Μηδὲ τὸ τῆς ὕλης σκύβαλον κρημνῶ  
καταλείψῃς. (16) Leave not the dross of matter on a precipice.<sup>16</sup>
- ιζ' (16). Μὴ ἐξάξῃς, ἵνα μὴ ἐξιοῦσα ἔχη τι. (17) Do not release, lest holding something she goes  
forth.<sup>17</sup>
- ιη' (17). Ἐκτείνας πύρινον νοῦν,  
ἔργον ἐπ' εὐσεβείας, ῥευστὸν καὶ σῶμα σαώσεις. (18) If thou extend the fiery mind  
to piety's work, the flowing body thou shalt save.<sup>18</sup>

7 P 7, CO 115, K 52.

8 P 8, CO 162, K 63.

9 P 9, CO 124, K 53.

10 P 10, CO 52, K 28. Plethon's text has κοίτης (bed, couch) where modern editions have Ἐκάτης (Hekate), in which case the first line can be translated "Within Hekate's left flank virtue's fount exists."

11 P 11, CO 97, K 48.

12 P 12, CO 96, K 47.

13 P 13, CO 165, K 65 #1. *Paradeisos*, a Persian word for "park."

14 P 14, CO 104, K 64.

15 P 15a, CO 158 v.2, K 61. Oracles 15 and 16 are quoted by Synesius as one oracle (but in the order 16, 15), and so recent editions of Plethon's commentary label them 15a and 15b (the "P" numbers here). Psellus, like Plethon, gives them as separate oracles in this order 15, 16. (Majercik, 1989, p. 108)

16 P 15b, CO 158 v.1, K 61. See also preceding note.

17 P 16, CO 166, K 5.

18 P 17, CO 128, K 54+61.

ιθ' (18). Ἐκ δ' ἄρα κόλπων γαίης θρώσκουσ'  
οὔποτ' ἀληθῆς  
σῆμα βροτῶ ἀνδρὶ χθόνιοι κύνες δεικνύντες.

κ' (19). Ἡ φύσις πειθει εἶναι τοὺς δαίμονας  
ἀγνοῦς,  
καὶ τὰ κακῆς ὕλης βλαστήματα χρηστὰ καὶ ἐσθλά.

κα' (20). Αἱ ποινὰι μερόπων ἄγκτειραι.

κβ' (21). Ἥγεισθω ψυχῆς βάθος ἄμβροτον·  
ὄμματα δ' ἄρδην  
πάντ' ἐκπέτασον ἄνω.

κγ' (22). Ὡ τολμηροτάτης φύσεως ἄνθρωπε  
τέχνασμα.

κδ' (23). Πολλάκις ἦν λέξις μοι, ἀθρήσεις πάντη  
λεκτόν·  
οὔτε γὰρ οὐράνιος κυρτὸς τότε φαίνεται ὄγκος,  
ἀστέρες οὐ λάμπουσι, τὸ μήνης φῶς κεκάλυπται,  
χθῶν οὐχ ἔστηκε, βλέπεται δὲ τὰ πάντα κεραυνοί.

κε' (24). Μὴ φύσεως καλέσης αὐτοπτον ἄγαλμα.

κς' (25). Πάντοθεν ἀπλάστῳ ψυχῆ, πυρὸς ἠνία  
τεῖνον.

κζ' (26). Ἦνίκα μὲν βλέψης μορφῆς ἄτερ εὐίερον  
πῦρ  
λαμπόμενον σκιρτηδὸν ὄλου κατὰ βένθεα  
κόσμου,  
κλῦθι πυρὸς τὴν φωνήν.

κη' (27). Σύμβολα πατρικὸς νόος ἔνσπειρεν ταῖς  
ψυχαῖς.

κθ' (28a). Μάνθανε τὸ νοητόν, ἐπεὶ νόου ἔξω  
ὑπάρχει.

(19) From cavities within the Earth spring earthly dogs  
who never show a sign that's true to mortals ...<sup>19</sup>

(20) And Nature prompts belief that daimons all are  
pure,  
and evil matter's offspring are both kind and good.<sup>20</sup>

(21) Avengers, the restraints of people.<sup>21</sup>

(22) Let lead the soul's immortal depth; and all thine  
eyes  
extend quite upward.<sup>22</sup>

(23) O human, thou machine of boldest Nature!<sup>23</sup>

(24) If thou speak'st often to me, thou shalt see what's  
said,<sup>24</sup>  
for neither then appears the heavens' concave bulk,  
nor shine the stars; the brilliance of the Moon is hid;  
the Earth stands not; all things appear as thunderbolts.<sup>25</sup>

(25) Call not on Nature's self-revealing image.<sup>26</sup>

(26) From all sides to the pristine soul stretch reins of  
fire.<sup>27</sup>

(27) But when you see the very holy Shapeless Fire,  
which shines by leaps and bounds throughout the whole  
World's depths,  
attend the Fire's Voice...<sup>28</sup>

(28) Paternal Mind implanted symbols into souls.<sup>29</sup>

(29) Learn the noetic, which exists beyond thy mind.<sup>30</sup>

19 P 18, CO 90, K 45. Slightly rearranged.

20 P 19, CO 88, K 44.

21 P 20, CO 161, K 62.

22 P 21, CO 112, K 32. Plethon had different text for this oracle from that accepted now. Plethon had ἠγείσθω for the first word, but with οἰγνύσθω, the translation would be "Unclose the soul's immortal depth."

23 P 22, CO 106, K 50.

24 Plethon has λέκτον whereas recent editions have λέοντα, in which case the first line is "If thou speak often to me, thou shalt see a lion."

25 P 23, CO 147, K 57. Contemporary editions have a slightly different text, "all things appear by thunderbolts."

26 P 24, CO 101, K 49.

27 P 25, CO 127, K 53.

28 P 26, CO 148, K 58.

29 P 27, CO 108, K 50. Instead of Plethon's ταῖς ψυχαῖς, the modern text has κατὰ κόσμον, which would be translated "Paternal Nous implanted Symbols in the World."

30 P 28a, CO 1 v.13, K 11. Oracles 29 and 30 in Plethon's list (numbered 28a and 28b in recent editions) are single verses from a longer oracle (CO 1, K 11). Plethon's text differs slightly from ours, but has the same meaning.

λ´ (28b). Ἔστι δὲ δὴ τι νοητόν, ὃ χρή σε νοεῖν νόου ἄνθει.

λα´ (29). Εἰσὶν πάντα πυρὸς ἐνὸς ἐκγεγαῶτα.

λβ´ (30). Πάντα γὰρ ἐξετέλεσσε πατήρ, καὶ νῶ παρέδωκε δευτέρῳ, ὃν πρῶτον κληίζεται ἔθνεα ἀνδρῶν.

λγ´ (31) Νοούμεναι ἴγγες πατρόθεν νοέουσι καὶ αὐταί, βουλαῖς ἀφθέγκτοισι κινούμεναι ὥστε νοῆσαι.

λδ´ (32). Ὡ πῶς κόσμος ἔχει νοερούς ἀνοχῆας ἀκαμπεῖς.

λε´ (33). Ἐαυτὸν ὁ πατήρ ἤρπασεν, οὐδ’ ἐν ἑῇ δυνάμει νοερῶ κλείσας ἴδιον πῦρ.

λς´ (34). Πατήρ οὐ φόβον ἐνθρώσκει, πειθῶ δ’ ἐπιχεύει.

(30) There is a notion known by just the flower of mind.<sup>31</sup>

(31) ... all things were born of the One Fire.<sup>32</sup>

(32) The Father finished<sup>33</sup> every thing and handed them to Second Nous, whom you, the human tribe, call First.<sup>34</sup>

(33) The Iynges, thought by Father, also think themselves, by his unutterable counsels moved to understand.<sup>35</sup>

(34) Oh, how the World hath rigid intellectual Guides!<sup>36</sup>

(35) ... the Father snatched Himself away, and didn’t close His Fire in Noeric Power.<sup>37</sup>

(36) The Father makes not fear, but pours persuasion on.<sup>38</sup>

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31 P 28b, CO 1 v.1, K 11. See also preceding note.

32 P 29, CO 10, K 15.

33 “Finished” (ἐξετέλεσσε) means to perfect or bring to a perfect end; that is, the Father thinks the Model perfectly, and passes it on to the Demiurge (Majercik 144). The Demiurge is often mistaken for the First God, because His work is more manifest to us.

34 P 30, CO 7, K 14.

35 P 31, CO 77, K 40.

36 P 32, CO 79, K 40. Current editions have a somewhat different text, but with a similar meaning, “The World entire hath rigid intellectual Guides.”

37 P 33, CO 3, K 12.

38 P 34, CO 14, K 15.

# Commentary on the Oracles

The translations of the oracles are my own; the commentary is by Plethon, translated by Stanley, modernized by me and checked against the Greek text in Tambrun-Krasker. The translation is included as Appendix C in Opsopaus, *Secret Texts*.

## [Γεωργίου Γεμιστοῦ] Πλήθωνος Ἐξηγήσεις εἰς τὰ αὐτὰ λόγια

α' (1). Δίξο σὺ ψυχῆς ὀχετόν, ὅθεν ἦ τίς τάξει, σώματι θητεύσας, ἐπὶ τάξιν ἀφ' ἧς ἐρρύης, αὐθις ἀναστήσεις, ἱερῶ λόγῳ ἔργον ἐνώσας.

Οἱ ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου μάγοι νομίζουσιν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλοι συχνοί, τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην, ἀθάνατον οὖσαν, ἄνωθεν τε κατιέναι, τῷ θνητῷ τῷδε σώματι θητεύσουσαν, ἥτοι ἐπὶ τίνα χρόνον ἐργασομένην αὐτῷ, καὶ ζώσουσάν τε καὶ κοσμήσουσαν ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν, καὶ αὐθις ἐνθὲνδε ἐκεῖσε ἀποχωρεῖν, πλειόνων δ' ἐκεῖ ὄντων τῆ ψυχῆ χώρων, καὶ τοῦ μὲν ἀμφιφαοῦς, τοῦ δ' ἀμφικνεφοῦς, τῶν δὲ τινῶν μεταξὺ τούτων, ἑτεροφαῶν τε δὴ καὶ ἑτεροκνεφῶν· ἀπὸ γε τοῦ ἀμφιφαοῦς ποτὲ ἐς τόδε τὸ σῶμα κατερρύηκυϊαν τὴν ψυχὴν, καλῶς μὲν θητεύσασαν, ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν χῶρον αὐθις ἀνατρέχειν· μὴ καλῶς δέ, ἐς τοὺς τούτου χεῖρους ἐνθὲνδε ἀποχωρεῖν, κατὰ λόγον τῶν αὐτῆ βεβιωμένων. Πρὸς οὖν ταῦτα λέγει τὸ λόγιον, ζῆται σὺ τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ὀχετόν, ἥτοι τὴν ὁδόν, ἣν σοὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐρρύη· ὅθεν ἦ τίς τάξει, τοῦ βίου δηλαδὴ, τῷδε τῷ σώματι θητεύσας, αὐθις ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τάξιν, ἀφ' ἧς ἐρρύης, ἀναστήσεις, τὸν αὐτὸν δηλαδὴ ὀχετόν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἐνώσας τῷ ἱερῶ λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ. Ἰερὸν μὲν οὖν λόγον τὸν περὶ τῆς θεοσεβείας φησὶν, ἔργον δὲ τὴν τελετήν. Λέγει οὖν τὸ λόγιον, ὅτι πρὸς τῷ περὶ τῆς θεοσεβείας λόγῳ, καὶ τῇ τελετῇ χρῶ, πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτὴν ἀναγωγὴν.

β' (2). Μηδὲ κάτω νεύσης, κρημνός κατὰ γῆς ὑπόκειται, ἑπταπόρου σύρων κατὰ βαθμίδος, ἣν ὑπο δεινῆς ἀνάγκης θρόνος ἐστί.

Κρημνὸν τὴν εἰς φθορὰν φησὶ καὶ κακίαν καὶ κακοδαιμονίαν ὑποφορὰν, γῆν δὲ τὸ γεῶδες καὶ

## [George Gemistos] Plethon's Commentary on these Oracles

(1) Seek thou the soul's way, whence or by what rank to serve the body; to that rank from which thou flowed, thou mayst rise up again; join act with sacred speech.

The *Magi*, who are followers of *Zoroaster*, as also many others, hold that the human soul is immortal and descended from above to serve the mortal body, that is, to operate therein for a certain time, and to animate and adorn it to her power, and then to return to the place from which she came. And whereas there are many mansions there for the soul, one *wholly-bright*, another *wholly-dark*, others betwixt both, *partly-bright*, *partly-dark*, the soul, being descended from that which is wholly-bright into the body, if she perform her office well, runs back into the same place; but if not well, she retires into worse mansions, according to the things which she has done in life.

The oracle therefore says, *Seek thou the soul's way*, or the way by which the soul flowed into you; or by what course (*viz.* of life), having performed your charge toward the body, you may mount up to the same place from which you flowed down, *viz.* the same track of the soul, *joining act to sacred speech*.

By *sacred speech*, it means that which concerns divine worship; by *act*, divine rites [*teletên*]. The oracle therefore says that to this exaltation of the soul, both speech concerning divine worship (prayers) and religious rites (sacrifices) are requisite.

(2) Incline not down. Beneath the Earth there lies a cliff, which draws one down the seven steps ... beneath her is the throne of dire Necessity.

It calls the descent into wickedness and misery, a *cliff*; the terrestrial and mortal body, the *Earth*, for by the

θνητὸν σῶμα· γῆ μὲν γὰρ καὶ χθονί, τὴν θνητὴν φύσιν, πυρὶ δὲ τὴν θείαν, τὰ λόγια ταῦτα ὡς τὰ πολλὰ σημαίνει. Ἑπτάπορον δὲ βαθμίδα φησὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν πλανήτων εἰμαρμένην, ὑφ' ἣν καὶ δεινὴν τινα ἰδρῦσθαι καὶ ἀπαράτρεπτον ἀνάγκην. Λέγει οὖν τὸ λόγιον, μὴ κάτω πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν δὴ σῶμα ἀποκλίνης, ὃ τῆ ἀπὸ τῶν πλανήτων μόνη τὰ πολλὰ ὑποπίπτον εἰμαρμένη, τῶν οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν μᾶλλον ἐστι· κακοδαίμονήσεις γάρ, ἣν πρὸς τοῦτο ὅλος ἀποκλίνης, ἀτυχῶν, καὶ τῆς βουλήσεως ὑπὸ τῆς ἐς αὐτὸ πεπρωμένης ἀνάγκης ἐκάστοτε ἐκπίπτων.

γ' (3). Σὸν γὰρ ἀγγεῖον, θῆρες χθονὸς οἰκήσουσιν.

Τὸ τῆς σῆς ἀγγεῖον ψυχῆς, τὸ θνητὸν δὴ τοῦτο σῶμα, εὐλαὶ καὶ κνώδαλα οἰκήσουσιν.

δ' (4). Μὴ σὺ γ' αὐξάνει τὴν εἰμαρμένην.

Μὴ σὺ πειρῶ αὐξάνει τὴν σὴν εἰμαρμένην, ἥτοι μείζω ποιεῖν τῆς δεδομένης, οὐ γὰρ οἶός τ' ἔστι δηλαδὴ.

ε' (5). Οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ πατρικῆς ἀρχῆς ἀτελές τι τροχάζει.

Οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς πατρικῆς ἀρχῆς, τῆς τοῦ ἀνωτάτω δηλαδὴ θεοῦ, χωρεῖ τι ἀτελές, δηλαδὴ ὡστ' ἂν σε καὶ δύνασθαι αὐτοτελειοῦν· ἐκεῖθεν γὰρ τέλεια ἅπαντα χωρεῖν, τῷ πρὸς τὴν τελειότητα τείνειν τὴν τοῦ ὅλου.

ς' (6). Ἄλλ' οὐκ εἰσδέχεται κείνης τό θέλειν πατρικὸς νοῦς, μέχρις ἂν ἐξέλθῃ λήθης, καὶ ῥῆμα λαλήσῃ, μνήμην ἐνθεμένη πατρικοῦ συνθήματος ἀγνοῦ.

Ὁ πατρικὸς νοῦς, ὁ δευτέρος δηλαδὴ θεός, καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς προσεχῆς δημιουργός, οὐκ εἰσδέχεται ἐκείνης τὴν θέλησιν, μέχρις ἂν ἐξέλθῃ τῆς λήθης, ἣν ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τότε τὸ σῶμα ἐπιλοκῆς ἔπαθε, καὶ λαλήσῃ τι ῥῆμα, ἥτοι λόγον φρονήσῃ τινά, μνήμης ἐχόμενον τοῦ πατρικοῦ θείου συνθήματος, τοῦτο δ' εἶναι τὴν τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ διώξεως ἐντολήν, ἣς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀναμνησθεῖσαν οὕτως ἤδη καὶ τῷ ἑαυτῆς δημιουργῷ μάλιστα ἀρέσκειν.

ζ' (7). Χρὴ σε σπεύδειν πρὸς τό φάος, καὶ πρὸς

Earth it means mortal nature, as by the fire frequently the divine; by the place with *seven steps*, it means Fate dependent on the planets, beneath which there is seated a certain dire and unalterable Necessity. The oracle therefore advises that you not stoop down towards the mortal body, which being subject only to the Fate that proceeds from the planets, may be reckoned amongst those things which are not up to us [*ouk eph' hêmin*], for you will be unhappy if you stoop down wholly to the body, and unfortunate and continually failing of your desires, in regard to the necessity that is annexed to the body.

(3) Thy vessel earthly beasts shall occupy.

The *vessel* of your soul, that is this mortal body, shall be *inhabited* by worms and other vile creatures.

(4) Enlarge not thou thy Destiny.

Endeavor not to increase your Fate, or to do more than is given to you in charge, for you will not be able.

(5) Nought incomplete rolls from Paternal Principle.

For from the *Paternal Principle*, which is that of the Supreme God, nothing incomplete proceeds, so that you yourself might complete it; for all things proceeding from thence are perfect, as appears, in that they tend to the perfection of the Universe.

(6) But the Paternal Mind accepteth not her will, until she flee oblivion, and pronounce a Word, inserting memory of the pure paternal Sign.

The *Paternal Mind* (the Second God and diligent maker [*dêmiourgos*] of the soul) admits not her *will* or desire until she come out of the *oblivion* that she contracted by connection with the body; and until she speak a certain *word*, or conceive in her thoughts a certain speech, calling to remembrance the paternal divine symbol [*synthêma*] or watch-word, which is the pursuit of the good, and the soul recalling this hereby becomes most acceptable to her maker.

(7) You must make haste to light, and to the Father's beams,

πατρός αὐγάς,  
ἐνθεν ἐπέμφθη σοι ψυχὴ πολὺν ἐσσαμένη νοῦν.

Φῶς καὶ αὐγάς πατρός τῆ ψυχῆ, τὸν ἀμφιφαῖ  
εἶναι αὐτῆς χῶρον, ἐνθεν τὴν ψυχὴν τὸν πολὺν  
νοῦν περιβεβλημένην, ἐνθάδε δὴ  
καταπεμφθῆναι πρὸς οὗν τὸ αὐτὸ φῶς χρῆναι  
αὐθις σπεύδειν.

η´ (8). Ἄ ἂ τοῦσδε χθῶν κατοδύρεται ἐς τέκνα  
μέχρις.

Τοὺς δὲ μὴ πρὸς τὸ αὐτὸ φῶς, ὅθεν αὐτοῖς  
ἐπέμφθη ἡ ψυχὴ, σπεύδοντας αὐθις, ἡ χθῶν ἦτοι  
ἡ θνητὴ φύσις, κατοδύρεται, ὅτι πεμφθέντες ἐφ´ ὧ  
καὶ αὐτὴν κοσμήσαι. Οἱ δὲ πρὸς τῷ μὴ καὶ αὐτὴν  
κοσμήσαι, καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἤσχυναν μοχθηρῶς  
βεβιωκότες, παραπολαύειν δὲ δὴ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τῆς  
τῶν γονέων κακίας, πονηρᾶς ἀγωγῆς τῆς ὑπ´  
αὐτῶν τυγχάνοντα.

θ´ (9). Ψυχῆς ἐξωστήρες ἀνάπνοοι εὐλυτοὶ εἰσιν.

Οἱ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐξωθοῦντες λόγοι, ἐκ τῆς κακίας  
δηλαδὴ, καὶ οὕτω δὴ ἀναπνεῖν διδόντες, εὐλυτοὶ  
εἰσιν, ἦτοι οὐ χαλεπῶς τῆς τέως ἐπεχούσης  
αὐτοὺς λήθης ἀπολυόμενοι.

ι´ (10). Λαιῆς ἐν λαγόσιν κοίτης, ἀρετῆς πέλε  
πηγή,  
ἔνδον ὅλη μίμνουσα, τὸ παρθένον οὐ προιεῖσα.

Ἐν ταῖς λαγόσι τῆς σῆς λαῖας κοίτης, ὑπάρχει ἡ  
τῆς ἀρετῆς πηγή, ἦτοι ἡ δύναμις αὐτῆς, ἔνδον τε  
ὅλη μένουσα, καὶ οὐποτε τὸ παρθένον, ἦτοι  
ἀπαθὲς ἑαυτῆς ἀποβάλλουσα· ἀπαθῆ γὰρ καὶ  
ἀναπόβλητον ἐν ἡμῖν τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀεὶ δύναμιν  
ὑπάρχειν, κἄν ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτῆς ἀποβλητὴ ᾖ. Ἐν  
λαιοῖς δὲ τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς φησιν ὑπάρχειν δύναμιν,  
διὰ τὸ ἐν δεξιοῖς τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτῆς βούλεσθαι  
τετάχθαι· κοίτην δ´ εἶναι ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς, τὴν  
ταῖς διαφοροῖς αὐτῆς ἕξεσιν ὑποκειμένην χώραν.

ια´ (11). Ψυχὴ ἡ μερόπων θεὸν ἄγξει πως ἐς  
ἑαυτήν,  
οὐδὲν θνητὸν ἔχουσα, ὅλη θεόθεν μεμέθυσται.  
Ἄρμονίαν αὐχεῖ γὰρ, ὑφ´ ἧ πέλε σῶμα βρότειον.

Ἡ ψυχὴ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη θεὸν πως ἐς ἑαυτήν ἄγξει,

from whence was sent to thee a soul full-clothed with  
mind.

The light and splendor of the Father is that mansion of  
the soul which is circumlucid [*amphiphaês*], from  
whence the soul arrayed with mind [*nous*] was sent  
hither, wherefore we must hasten to return to the same  
light.

(8) Alas! The Earth bewails them, even to their  
children.

Those who don't hasten to the light, from which their  
soul was sent to them, the Earth or mortal Nature  
bewails, for they, being sent hither to adorn her, not  
only don't adorn her, but also blemish themselves by  
living wickedly; moreover the wickedness of the  
parents is transmitted to the children, corrupted by  
them through ill education.

(9) The soul's expellers with the breath are easily  
released.

The reasons [*logoi*], which expel the soul from  
wickedness and give her breath, are easily released,  
and the oblivion that keeps them in, is easily put off.

(10) Within the left side of the bed is virtue's fount,  
remaining all inside, nor losing chastity.

In the left side of your bed, there is the power or fount  
of virtue, residing wholly within, and never casting off  
her chastity or nature void of passion, for there is  
always in us the power of virtue without passion  
which cannot be put off, although her energy or  
activity may be interrupted. It says the power of virtue  
is placed on the left side because her activity is seated  
on the right; by the bed is meant the seat of the soul,  
subject to her several habits.

(11) The human soul will somehow clasp God to  
herself,  
and having nothing mortal, she is wholly drunk with  
God,  
for she boasts harmony, where mortal bodies stand.

*The human soul will somehow clasp God, and join him*

ἤτοι ἰσχυρῶς ἐνώσει, τὸν ἑαυτῆς δηλαδὴ προσεχῆ προστάτην, τῇ πρὸς αὐτὸν κατὰ δύναμιν ὁμοιώσει· οὐδὲν ἔχουσα καθ' ἑαυτὴν θνητόν, ὅλη θεόθεν μεμέθυσται, ἤτοι πεπλήρωται τῶν θείων καλῶν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῷ θνητῷ τῷδε ἐνδέδεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ οὕτω τὴν γε ἁρμονίαν, ἣτοι τὴν ἔνωσιν, ὅφ' ἢ τὸ βρότειον ὑπάρχει σῶμα, ἀυχεῖ, ἣτοι οὐκ αἰσχύνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ φρονεῖ τι ἐπ' αὐτῆ· ὡς ἂν αὐτὴ οὔσα ἢ τὴν τοιαύτην τῷ παντὶ λειτουργίαν λειτουργοῦσα, ὥστε τῶν θνητῶν τοῖς ἀθανάτοις ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐνουμένων, οὕτω καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἐς μίαν τινὰ ἁρμονίαν συγκροτεῖσθαι.

ιβ' (12). Ὅτι ψυχὴ πῦρ δυνάμει πατρὸς οὔσα φαινόν,  
ἀθάνατός τε μένει, καὶ ζωῆς δεσπότις ἐστι,  
καὶ ἴσχει κόσμου πολλὰ πληρώματα κόλπων.

Πατρὸς δύναμιν, καὶ δύναμιν αὐτοῦ νοεράν, καὶ νοῦν πατρικόν, τὸν αὐτὸν δεύτερον θεόν, τὰ λόγια ταῦτα πανταχοῦ καλεῖ, πρῶτιστον τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τε καὶ ἀνωτάτω θεοῦ προεληλυθότα. Λέγει οὖν, ὅτι τοῦ πατρὸς ταύτη τῇ δυνάμει προσεχῶς δηλαδὴ, δεδημιουργημένη ἢ ψυχὴ· πῦρ οὔσα φαινόν, ἣτοι θεία τις οὐσία καὶ νοερά, μένει τε ἀθάνατος διὰ τὴν θειότητα τῆς οὐσίας, καὶ δεσπότις ἐστὶ ζωῆς, δηλαδὴ τῆς ἑαυτῆς, ἅτε οὐκ ἀπόβλητον ἔχουσα τὸ ζῆν. Ἄ μὲν γὰρ ἂν ἀπόβλητα ἔχοιμεν, τούτων οὐδ' ἂν δεσπότης που εἴημεν, χρῆσις δ' ἂν τις μόνη ἡμῖν διδοῖτο αὐτῶν, ἃ δ' ἂν μὴ ἀπόβλητά, καὶ δεσπότης τούτων εἴημεν. Καὶ ἴσχει δὲ δὴ ἢ ψυχὴ, κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτῆς δηλαδὴ αἰδιότητα, πολλὰ πληρώματα τῶν τοῦ κόσμου κόλπων, ἣτοι τῶν διαφόρων ἑαυτῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ χώρων, ὧν πρὸς λόγον τῶν τῆδε αὐτῇ βεβιωμένων ἐκάστοτε τυγχάνει.

ιγ' (13). Ζήτησον παράδεισον.

Τὸν ἀμφιφαῖ τῆς ψυχῆς χῶρον.

ιδ' (14). Μὴ πνεῦμα μολύνῃς, μηδὲ βαθύνῃς τὸ ἐπίπεδον.

Οἱ περὶ τε Πυθαγόραν καὶ Πλάτωνα σοφοὶ τὴν ψυχὴν οὐ πάντη τινὰ χωριστὴν οὐσίαν παντὸς σώματος νομίζουσιν, οὐ μὲν δὴ, οὐ δ' αὖ πάντη ἀχώριστον, ἀλλὰ τῇ μὲν χωριστὴν, τῇ δ'

strictly to herself (who is her continual defense) by resembling him as much as she can possibly; *having nothing mortal* within her, *she is wholly drunk with God*, or replenished with divine goods, for though she is fettered to this mortal body, yet she *glories in the harmony* or union in which the mortal body exists. That is, she is not ashamed of it, but thinks well of herself for it; for she is a cause and affords to the All that, as mortals are united with immortals in humanity, the All is adorned with one harmony.

(12) Since Psychê, by the Father's Power a Radiant Fire,  
remains immortal, She is Mistress of all Life,  
and holds Full-measures of the Cosmos' many clefts.

The Second God, who first before all other things proceeded from the Father and supreme god, these oracles call all along *the Father's Power*, his *Intellectual Power*, and the *Paternal Mind*. It says, therefore, that *Psychê* [the soul], *procreated by this Power of the Father*, is a radiant fire, that is, a divine and intellectual essence, and *persists immortal* through the divinity of its essence, *and is Mistress of Life*, viz. of herself, possessing life that cannot be taken away from her. For how can we be said to be masters of such things as may be taken from us, seeing that use of them is only allowed us? But of those things which cannot be taken from us, we are absolute masters. The soul, due to her own perpetuity [*ai̅diotêta*], *holds full-measures in the clefts* [*kolpôn*] of the *cosmos*, or her diverse places in the world, which are allotted each time according to how she has led her life past.

(13) Seek Paradise.

The circumlucid mansion of the soul.

(14) Neither spirit do you stain, nor deepen down the plane...

The followers of *Pythagoras* and *Plato* conceive the soul to be a substance not wholly separate from all body, nor wholly inseparable; but partly separable, partly inseparable; separable



ἀχώριστον· τῆ μὲν δυνάμει δήπου χωριστήν, τῷ δ' ἔργῳ ἀεὶ ἀχώριστον τιθέμενοι. Τριττὸν γὰρ οὖν το σύμπαν εἰδῶν τίθενται γένος, τὸ μὲν πάντῃ χωριστὸν ὕλης, τοὺς νοῦς δὴ τοὺς ὑπερουρανίους· τὸ δ' ἀχώριστον πάντῃ, οὐ τὴν γε οὐσίαν καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑφessestηκυῖαν ἔχον, ἀλλὰ τῆς ὕλης δὴ ἐξημμένην, κακεῖνη τῷ τῆς φύσεως σκεδαστῷ λυομένη ποτὲ συσκεδαννόμενον τε καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, καὶ τοῦτ' εἶναι τὸ ἄλογον δὴ εἶδος σύμπαν. Τρίτον δὲ μεταξὺ τούτων εἶδος, τὴν ψυχὴν τίθενται τὴν λογικὴν· τῶν μὲν νῶν τῶν ὑπερουρανίων διαφέρουσιν τῷ ἀεὶ ὕλη συνεῖναι· τοῦ δ' ἀλόγου εἶδους, τῷ μὴ αὐτὴν τῆς ὕλης ἐξῆφθαι, ἀλλὰ τούναντίον, τὴν ὕλην ἑαυτῆς ἀεὶ ἔχειν ἐξημμένην, οὐσίαν· αὐτὴν ἰδίαν ἑαυτῆς καὶ καθ' αὐτὴν τῆ γε δυνάμει ἔχουσιν ὑφessestηκυῖαν, ἀμερῆ τε καὶ αὐτὴν κατὰ τοὺς νοῦς τοὺς ὑπερουρανίους, οἷς καὶ συγγενῆ πῶς τὰ ἔργα ἀποδίδωσι, τῶν αὐτῶν, ὥνπερ κάκεῖνοι, ἐφαπτομένη καὶ αὐτῆ, τῆς τῶν ὄντων δὴ γνώσεως καὶ θεωρίας, ἄχρι καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀνωτάτω θεοῦ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀνώλεθρον· τοιοῦτον οὖν εἶδος οὐσαν τὴν ψυχὴν, σώματι ἀεὶ συνεῖναι αἰθερίῳ, οἷον ὀχήματι ἑαυτῆς, συναπαθανατίζουσιν καὶ αὐτὸ τῆ προσεχει ἐπαφῆ, εἶναι δ' οὐδὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον αὐτῆς ὄχημα, ἄψυχον καθ' αὐτό, ἀλλ' ἐμψυχῶσθαι καὶ αὐτό, τῷ ἐτέρῳ τε καὶ ἀλόγῳ ψυχῆς εἶδει, ὃ δὴ ψυχῆς λογικῆς εἶδωλον οἱ σοφοὶ καλοῦσι, φαντασία τε δὴ κεκοσμημένον καὶ αἰσθήσει, ὅλῳ δι' ὅλου ὀρῶντι τε καὶ ἀκούοντι, καὶ πᾶσαν αἴσθησιν αἰσθανομένῳ, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ταῖς ταύταις ἐπομέναις ψυχῆς δυνάμεσιν ἀλόγοις διὰ μὲν οὖν τῆς κρατίστης τοῦ τοιοῦτου σώματος δυνάμεως φαντασίας, τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν λογικὴν ὅλῳ τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἀεὶ συνεῖναι σώματι· δι δὲ τοῦ τοιοῦτου σώματος τῷδὲ ποτὲ τῷ θνητῷ τὴν γε ἀνθρωπίνην συγγίνεσθαι, ὅλου ὅλῳ τῷ τοῦ ἐμβρύου ζωτικῷ πνεύματι, διὰ συγγένειαν τινα ἐπιπλεκομένου, ἅτε πνεύματός τινος καὶ αὐτοῦ ὄντος· τὰς γε μὴν δαιμονίας ψυχὰς τῆ μὲν ἄλλῃ οὐ πολλῷ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων διαφέρειν, γενναιοτέρας δὲ ὅμως οὔσας αὐτάς τε καὶ γενναιοτέροις ὀχήμασι χρωμέναις, ἀμίκτους τῆ γε θνητῆ εἶναι φύσει· τὰς δὲ τῶν ἄστρων πολλὸν ἔτι καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν γε δαιμονίων κρείττους οὔσας, κρείττοσι καὶ ὀχήμασι χρῆσθαι, τοῖς οὕτω διὰ

potentially, but ever inseparable actually. For they assert three kinds of Forms: [1] one wholly separate from matter, the Supercelestial Intelligences [*Noes*]; [2] another wholly inseparable from matter, having a substance not subsistent by itself but dependent on matter; together with which matter, which is sometimes dissolved by reason of its nature subject to mutation, this kind of soul is dissolved also and perishes; this kind they hold to be wholly irrational.

[3] Between these they place a middle kind, the rational soul, differing from the Supercelestial Intelligences, in that it always co-exists with matter, and from the irrational kind, in that it is not dependent on matter, but, on the contrary, matter is dependent on it, and it has a proper substance potentially subsistent by itself. It is also indivisible like the Supercelestial Intelligences, and performs some works in some manner allied to theirs, being itself also busied in the knowledge and contemplation of beings even unto the Supreme God, and for this reason is indestructible.

This kind of soul is always co-existent with an ethereal body as its *vehicle*, which she by continual approximation makes also immortal; neither is her vehicle inanimate in itself, but is itself animated with the other species of the soul: the irrational (which the wise call the image of the rational soul) adorned with imagination and sensation which sees and hears altogether as a whole, and is furnished with all the senses and with all the rest of the irrational faculties of the soul.

Thus by the principal faculty of this body, imagination, the rational soul is continually joined to such a body and by such a body sometimes the human soul is joined with a mortal body by a certain affinity of nature, the whole being enfolded in the whole vital spirit [*zōtikō pneumatī*] of the embryo, this vehicle itself being of the nature of a spirit [*pneumatikos*].

The daimons' souls differ not much from the human, only they are more noble and use more noble vehicles; moreover, they cannot be mingled

μέγεθος δραστηκῆς δυνάμεως λαμπροῖς τούτοις σώμασι. Ταύταις περι ψυχῆς ταῖς δόξαις καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου οὗτοι μάγοι φαίνονται ἔτι πρότεροι χρώμενοι. Τὸ τοιοῦτον οὖν τῆς ψυχῆς πνεῦμα μὴ μολύνῃς φησὶ τὸ λόγιον, μὴ δὲ βαθύνης ἐπίπεδον ὄν. Ἐπίπεδον αὐτὸ καλοῦν, οὐχ ὡς οὐ τριχῆ διαστατόν, σῶμα γάρ, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἄγαν αὐτοῦ λεπτότητα ἐμφαίνον, ἐπίπεδον αὐτὸ καλεῖ. Μὴ βαθύνειν οὖν αὐτὸ παρακελεύεται, ἥτοι μὴ παχύνειν, πλείονος ὕλης ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ ὄγκῳ προσθήκη· παχύνεσθαι δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον τῆς ψυχῆς πνεῦμα, τῇ πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν σῶμα αὐτῆς ἄγαν ἀποκλίσει.

ιε' (15a). Ἔστι καὶ εἰδώλῳ μερὶς εἰς τόπον ἀμφιφάοντα.

Εἶδωλον ψυχῆς καλεῖ, τὸ ἐχόμενον τοῦ λογικοῦ ἄλογον, ὃ τοῦ ὀχήματος αὐτῆς ἐξῆπται. Λέγει οὖν, ὡς ἔστι καὶ τῷ τοιοῦτῳ εἰδώλῳ μερὶς εἰς τὸν ἀμφιφαῖ χῶρον· οὐ γὰρ ἀποτίθεσθαι. ποτε ψυχῆν τὸ ἑαυτῆς προσεχὲς ὄχημα.

ις' (15b). Μηδὲ τὸ τῆς ὕλης σκύβαλον κρημνῶ καταλείψῃς.

Ἐκείνου σκύβαλον, τὸ θνητὸν σῶμα λέγει, καὶ παρακελεύεται μηδὲ τοῦτο εἰκῆ κακῶς πράττον περιορᾶν, ἀλλὰ φροντίζειν τι καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ, μένοντα ἔτι ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ, ὅπως ὑγιαῖνοι τε ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν, καὶ καθάριον εἶη, καὶ τ' ἄλλα τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς κόσμῳ συμφωνοῖ.

ις' (16). Μὴ ἐξάξῃς, ἵνα μὴ ἐξιοῦσα ἔχη τι.

Μὴ ἐξάξῃς, τὴν ψυχῆν δηλαδὴ τοῦ θνητοῦ σώματος, ἵνα μὴ ἐξιοῦσα ἔχη τι· αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο, τὸ παρὰ τοὺς φυσικοὺς θεσμοὺς ἑαυτὴν ἐξαγαγεῖν.

ιη' (17). Ἐκτείνας πύρινον νοῦν, ἔργον ἐπ' εὐσεβείας, ῥευστὸν καὶ σῶμα σώσεις.

Ἐκτείνας τὸν σὸν θεῖον νοῦν ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἔργον, ἥτοι τὴν εὐσεβῆ τελετὴν, καὶ τὸ θνητὸν σῶμα σώσεις, ὑγιεινότερον καὶ αὐτὸ διὰ τῆς τελετῆς ποιήσας.

ιθ' (18). Ἐκ δ' ἄρα κόλπων γαίης θρόσκουσ'

with corruptible nature. Likewise the souls of the stars are much better than the daimons' and use better vehicles, which are bright bodies by reason of the greatness of their active potentiality.

These doctrines concerning the soul the Magi, followers of Zoroaster, seem to have held long ago. *Stain not* this kind of spirit of the soul, says the oracle, nor *deepen down the plane*. He calls it planar, not as if it lacked a third dimension, for it is a body, but to signify its extraordinary rarity; nor make it become gross by accession of more matter to its bulk, for this spirit of the soul becomes gross if it declines too much towards the mortal body.

(15) And of the radiant place, the image has a piece.

It calls the *image* of the soul that irrational part that is joined to the rational part and depends upon the vehicle thereof. Now it says that this kind of image has a piece of *the radiant* [*amphiphaonta*, circumlucid] *land*, for the soul never lays down the vehicle adherent to her.

(16) Leave not the dross of matter on a precipice.

It calls the mortal body *the dross of matter*, and exhorts us not to neglect it through misfortune, but take care of it while in this life, to preserve it in health as much as possible, so that it may be pure and in all other respects correspond with the soul.

(17) Do not release, lest holding something she goes forth.

*Do not release*, meaning the soul, out of the mortal body *lest by going forth* you incur some danger, implying as much as to carry her forth beyond the laws of Nature.

(18) If thou extend the fiery mind to piety's work, the flowing body thou shalt save.

Extending up your divine mind to the exercise of piety [*eusebeias*] or to religious rites [*tên eusebê teletên*], and you will preserve the mortal body, making it more sound by performing these rites.

(19) From cavities within the Earth spring earthly dogs

οὔποτε ἄληθές  
σημα βροτῶ ἀνδρὶ χθόνιοι κύνες δεικνύντες.

Εἴωθε τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν τελουμένων φαίνεσθαι  
κατὰ τὰς τελετὰς κυνώδη τινὰ καὶ ἄλλως  
ἀλλόκοτα τὰς μορφὰς φάσματα. Ταῦτ' οὖν φησι  
τὸ λόγιον, ἐκ τῶν τῆς γῆς ὀρμᾶσθαι κόλπων,  
δηλαδὴ τοῦ γεώδους τοῦδε καὶ θνητοῦ σώματος,  
καὶ τῶν τούτῳ συμφύτων παθῶν ἀλόγων, οὔπω  
ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἰκανῶς κατακεκοσμημένων,  
εἶδωλα τῶν τοιούτων τῆς τοῦ τελουμένου ψυχῆς  
παθῶν, φαινόμενα ἀνυπόστατα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο  
οὐδ' ἀληθές σημαίνοντα οὐδέν.

κ' (19). Ἡ φύσις πείθει εἶναι τοὺς δαίμονας  
ἀγνοῦς,  
καὶ τὰ κακῆς ὕλης βλαστήματα χρηστὰ καὶ  
ἐσθλά.

Ἡ φύσις, ἥτοι ὁ φυσικὸς λόγος, πείθει εἶναι τοὺς  
δαίμονας ἀγνοῦς, καὶ ἀπλῶς πάντα τὰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ  
αὐτοαγαθοῦ ὄντος προεληλυθότα χρηστὰ εἶναι,  
καὶ αὐτὰ τὰ κακῆς ὕλης βλαστήματα, ἥτοι τὰ τῆς  
ὕλης ἐξημμένα εἶδη. Κακὴν δὲ τὴν ὕλην φησίν,  
οὐ τῆ οὐσία, πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ εἴη τῆ οὐσία κακῆ,  
ἥς τὰ βλαστήματα χρηστὰ καὶ ἐσθλά; ἀλλ' ὡς  
ἐσχάτην ἐν ταῖς οὐσίαις τεταγμένην καὶ τοῦ  
ἀγαθοῦ ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον μετέχουσαν, τὸ ἐλάχιστον  
αὐτῆς ἀγαθὸν τῷ κακῷ σημαῖνον. Καὶ δὴ  
βούλεται τὸ λόγιον, εἰ καὶ τὰ κακῆς ὕλης  
βλαστήματα χρηστὰ τῆς ἐσχάτης δηλαδὴ οὐσίας,  
πολλῶ μᾶλλον οἱ δαίμονες, οἱ καὶ τοσοῦτον αὐτῆς  
ὑπερανέχοντες, τῷ τε λογικῷ τῆς φύσεως, καὶ τῷ  
πρὸς τὴν θνητὴν φύσιν ἀμίκτω.

κα' (20). Αἱ ποιναὶ μερόπων ἄγκτειραι.

Αἱ ποιναί, ἥτοι αἱ κολαστικαὶ δαίμονες, ἄγκτειραι  
τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσίν· ἥτοι συνεκτικαὶ τῷ ἀπάγειν  
τῆς κακίας αὐτοῦς, τῆ ἀρετῇ ἐγκαταδοῦσαι.

κβ' (21). Ἠγείσθω ψυχῆς βάθος ἄμβροτον·  
ὄμματα δ' ἄρδην  
πάντ' ἐκπέτασον ἄνω.

Ἠγείσθω τῆς σῆς ψυχῆς τὸ θεῖον βάθος. Τὰ δὲ σὰ  
ὄμματα πάντα ὁμοῦ, ἥτοι τὰς σὰς γνωστικὰς  
δυνάμεις, ἄνω ἐκπέτασον.

κγ' (22). Ὡ τολμηροτάτης φύσεως ἄνθρωπε

who never show a sign that's true to mortals ...

Sometimes to many initiates [*teloumenôn*] there  
appear, during rites [*teletas*], some apparitions in the  
shape of *dogs* and several other figures. Now the  
oracle says that these *issue out of the receptacles*  
[*kolpôn*] of the Earth, that is, out of the terrestrial and  
mortal body, and the irrational passions planted in it  
that are not yet sufficiently adorned with reason. These  
are apparitions of the passions of the soul in  
performing divine rites, mere appearances having no  
substance, and therefore *not signifying anything true*.

(20) And Nature prompts belief that daimons all are  
pure,  
and evil matter's offspring are both kind and good.

*Nature* or natural reason *prompts belief that daimons  
are all pure*, and that all things proceeding from God  
who is in himself good *are beneficial*; and *the very  
offspring of evil matter*, or the forms dependent upon  
matter, are such. Also he calls matter *evil*, not as to its  
substance [*ousia*] (for how can the substance be bad  
the offspring of which are beneficial and good?), but  
as it is ranked last among the substances and is the  
least participant of good, which littleness of good is  
here expressed by the word “evil.” Now the oracle  
means that if the offspring of “evil matter,” viz. of the  
last of substances, are good, then much more so are  
the daimons such, who are in an excellent rank as  
partaking of rational nature and being unmixed with  
mortal nature.

(21) Avengers, the restraints of people.

*The avengers* or the vindictive daimons clasp people  
close or restrain and drive them from vice and excite  
them to virtue.

(22) Let lead the soul's immortal depth; and all thine  
eyes  
extend quite upward.

Let the *divine depth of your soul* govern and lift *all  
thine eyes* or all your knowing faculties *upward*.

(23) O human, thou machine of boldest Nature!

τέχνασμα.

Τολμηροτάτης φύσεως τέχνασμα τὸν ἄνθρωπον  
καλεῖ, διὰ τὸ μεγάλοις πράγμασιν ἑαυτὸν  
ἐπιβάλλειν.

κδ´ (23). Πολλάκις ἦν λέξις μοι, ἀθρήσεις πάντη  
λεκτόν·  
οὔτε γὰρ οὐράνιος κυρτὸς τότε φαίνεται ὄγκος,  
ἀστέρες οὐ λάμπουσι, τὸ μήνης φῶς κεκάλυπται,  
χθῶν οὐχ ἔστηκε, βλέπεται δὲ τὰ πάντα κεραυνοί.

Ὡς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ λέγει τὸ λόγιον τῷ τελουμένῳ,  
ἐὰν πολλάκις λέξις μοι, ἦτοι καλέσης με, ὅψει  
πανταχῇ αὐτὸ τὸ λεκτόν, ἐμὲ δηλαδὴ ὃν καλεῖς.  
Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο τότε ὀφθήσεται σοι ἢ τὰ πάντα  
κεραυνοί, πῦρ δηλαδὴ πανταχοῦ τοῦ κόσμου  
ἄττον.

κε´ (24). Μὴ φύσεως καλέσης αὐτοπτον ἄγαλμα.

Μὴ ζητήσης ἰδεῖν αὐτοπτον ἄγαλμα τῆς φύσεως,  
δηλαδὴ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἅτε οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς ὄν  
ὀρατόν. Τὰ δὲ τελουμένοις φαινόμενα, κεραυνοί  
καὶ πῦρ καὶ εἴτι ἄλλο, σύμβολα ἄλλως ἐστίν, οὐ  
θεοῦ τις φύσις.

κς´ (25). Πάντοθεν ἀπλάστῳ ψυχῇ, πυρὸς ἡνία  
τεῖνον.

Τὰ τοῦ φαινομένου σοι κατὰ τὴν τελετὴν πυρὸς  
ἡνία πάντοθεν ἐς σεαυτὸν δηλαδὴ τεῖνον, ἐν ψυχῇ  
ἀπλάστῳ, ἦτοι ἀπλῇ, καὶ πανουργίας ὅτι μάλιστα  
καθαρευούση.

κζ´ (26). Ἦνίκα μὲν βλέψης μορφῆς ἄτερ εὐίερον  
πῦρ  
λαμπόμενον σκιρτηδὸν ὅλου κατὰ βένθεα  
κόσμου,  
κλῦθι πυρὸς τὴν φωνήν.

Ἦνίκα ἂν ἴδης ἀσημάτιστον πῦρ θεῖον, καθ´  
ὄλον λάμπον τὸν κόσμον σκιρτηδόν, ἦτοι σὺν  
χάριτι καὶ ἴλεων, τούτου τὴν φωνὴν ἄκουσον, ὡς  
ἀληθεστάτην πρόγνωσιν φέρουσαν.

κη´ (27). Σύμβολα πατρικὸς νόος ἔνσπειρεν ταῖς  
ψυχαῖς.

Ὁ πατρικὸς νοῦς, ὁ τῆς τῆς ψυχῆς δηλαδὴ οὐσίας  
προσεχῆς δημιουργός, οὗτος ταῖς ψυχαῖς

It calls the *human* the *machine of boldest Nature*,  
because people attempt great things.

(24) If thou speak'st often to me, thou shalt see what's  
said,  
for neither then appears the heavens' concave bulk,  
nor shine the stars; the brilliance of the Moon is hid;  
the Earth stands not; all things appear as thunderbolts.

The oracle speaks as from God to an initiate  
[*teloumenō*]: *If thou speak'st often to me* or call me,  
*thou shalt see that of which you speak*, viz. me whom  
you call everywhere, for then you will perceive  
nothing but *thunderbolts* all about, fire gliding up and  
down all over the world.

(25) Call not on Nature's self-revealing image.

Seek not to behold the self-revealing *Image* [autopton  
agalma] of *Nature*, that is, the Nature of God, which is  
not visible to our eyes. For those things that appear to  
initiates, such as thunder, lightning, and all else  
whatsoever, are only symbols [*sumbola*], not the  
Nature of God.

(26) From all sides to the pristine soul stretch reins of  
fire.

Draw unto yourself from all sides the *reins of fire* that  
appear to you during the rite [*teletēn*] with a sincere  
soul, one that is simple and unsoiled with knavery.

(27) But when you see the very holy Shapeless Fire,  
which shines by leaps and bounds throughout the  
whole World's depths,  
attend the Fire's Voice...

*When you behold the divine fire* devoid of figure  
*brightly gliding up and down the World* and graciously  
smiling, listen to this voice, which brings a most  
truthful foreknowledge [*prognōsin*].

(28) Paternal Mind implanted symbols into souls.

*The Paternal Mind* [*Nous*], viz. the attentive Demiurge  
of the substance [*ousias*] of the soul, has *implanted*

ένέσπειρε καὶ τὰ σύμβολα, ἤτοι τὰς τῶν νοητῶν εἰδῶν εἰκόνας, ἐξ ὧν τοὺς τῶν ὄντων ψυχὴ ἐκάστη ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἀεὶ κέκτηται λόγους.

κθ' (28a). Μάνθανε τὸ νοητόν, ἐπεὶ νόου ἔξω ὑπάρχει.

Μάνθανε τὸ νοητόν, ἐπεὶ ἔξω τοῦ σοῦ ὑπάρχει νοῦ ἐνεργεῖα δηλαδή. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐνεσπαρμέναι σοὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ αἱ τῶν νοητῶν εἰσὶν εἰκόνας, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει αὐταὶ ἔγκεινται σοῦ τῇ ψυχῇ. Δεῖ δὲ σε καὶ ἐνεργεῖα τὴν τοῦ νοητοῦ γνῶσιν μετιέναι.

λ' (28b). Ἔστι δὲ δὴ τι νοητόν, ὃ χρὴ σε νοεῖν νόου ἄνθει.

Τὸν ἀνωτάτω θεόν, ἅτε ἐν ἄκρως ὄντα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὡσαύτως τοῖς ἄλλοις νοητοῖς νοεῖν, ἀλλὰ τῷ τοῦ νοῦ ἄνθει, ἤτοι τῷ ἀκροτάτῳ καὶ ἐνιαίῳ τῆς ἡμετέρας νοήσεως.

λα' (29). Εἰσὶν πάντα πυρὸς ἐνὸς ἐκγεγαῶτα.

Ἄπαντα ἐξ' ἐνὸς πυρός, ἤτοι θεοῦ, ἔστι γεγονότα.

λβ' (30). Πάντα γὰρ ἐξετέλεσε πατήρ, καὶ νῶ παρέδωκε δευτέρῳ, ὃν πρῶτον κληῖζεται ἔθνεα ἀνδρῶν.

Ὁ γὰρ πατήρ ἅπαντα ἐξετέλεσε, τὰ νοητὰ δηλαδή εἶδη, ταῦτα γὰρ ἔστι, τὰ ἐκτετελεσμένα τε καὶ τέλεια, καὶ τῷ μεθ' ἑαυτὸν δευτέρῳ θεῷ παρέδωκεν, ἄρχειν δηλαδή καὶ ἡγεῖσθαι αὐτῶν· ὥστε ἦν τι καὶ διὰ τούτου παράγεται τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς παράδειγμα ἑαυτοῦ τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης νοητῆς οὐσίας, καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ ἀνωτάτω πατρὸς ἴσχειν τὴν γένεσιν. Τοῦτον τὸν δεῦτερον θεόν, πρῶτον φησὶν ἑαυτοῖς τίθεσθαι τὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔθνη, ὅποσα δηλαδή, τοῦ μὲν κόσμου τοῦδε προσεχῆ τινα δημιουργὸν νομίζει, τούτου δ' οὐκ ἔτι ἀνωτέρῳ οὐδένα.

λγ' (31) Νοοῦμεναι ἴγγες πατρόθεν νοέουσι καὶ αὐταί, βουλαῖς ἀφθέγκτοισι κινούμεναι ὥστε νοῆσαι.

Ἴγγας, τὰ νοητὰ εἶδη καλεῖ, νοοῦμενα τε

symbols or the Images of Intelligibles into souls, by which every soul possesses in herself the reasons of beings.

(29) Learn the noetic, which exists beyond thy mind.

*Learn the noetic (intelligible), because it exists beyond thy mind [nous], that is, in actuality. For though the images of intellectual things are planted in you by the Demiurge, yet they are in your soul only potentially, but it behooves you to have knowledge of the intelligible in actuality.*

(30) There is a notion known by just the flower of mind.

The Supreme God, who is perfectly one, is not conceived after the same manner as other things, but by the flower of the mind [*tô tou nou anthei*], that is, the supreme and singular part of your understanding [*noêseôs*].<sup>39</sup>

(31) ... all things were born of the One Fire.

All things were generated from *One Fire*, that is, God.

(32) The Father finished every thing and handed them to Second Nous, whom you, the human tribe, call First.

*The Father finished every thing, viz. the intelligible species (for they are absolute and perfect) and delivered them over to the Second God next after him to rule and guide them; so that if anything be brought forth by this God, and formed after the likeness of him and the other intelligible substance, it proceeds from the Supreme Father. This other God the human tribe call First; that is, they think him the Demiurge of the Cosmos, to whom there is none superior.*

(33) The Iynges, thought by Father, also think themselves, by his unutterable counsels moved to understand.

It calls *Iynges* the Intellectual Forms [*ta noêta eidê*]

39 The verbal resonances cannot be preserved in the translation: "There is a thought [*noêton*] known [*noein*] only by the flower of mind [*noou*]."

πατρόθεν, καὶ αὐτὰ νοοῦντα· κινούμενα τε πρὸς τὰς νοήσεις βουλαῖς ἀφθέγκτοις, ἤτοι ἀκινήτοις κίνησιν γὰρ ἐνταῦθα νοήσεως, οὐ μετάβασιν βούλοιτ' ἂν λέγειν, οὐδὲ διέξοδον, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς τὴν πρὸς τὰ νοούμενα σχέσιν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ βουλαῖς ἀφθέγκτοις, τοῦτ' ἂν βούλοιτο τὸ ἀκινήτοις, ὡς τό γε φθέγγεσθαι ἐν κινήσει ὄν. Καὶ λέγοι ἂν που, ὡς ἀκινήτως τὰ τοιαῦτα εἶδη, καὶ οὐ διεξοδικῶς, ὡσπερ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὴν πρὸς τὰ νοούμενα ἔχει σχέσιν.

λδ' (32). Ὡ πῶς κόσμος ἔχει νοερούς ἀνοχῆας ἀκαμπεῖς.

Τὰ προὔχοντα τῶν νοητῶν εἰδῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ οὐρανῷ ἀθανάτων παραγωγὰ, νοερούς ἀνοχῆας κόσμου καλεῖ, ὧν κορυφαῖον τὸν μετὰ τὸν πατέρα δευτέρον βούλεται εἶναι θεόν. Ἀκαμπεῖς δὲ ἀνοχῆας φάσκον τοῦτο τὸ λόγιον ἔχειν τὸν κόσμον, δηλονότι ἀφθαρτον αὐτὸν βούλεται εἶναι.

λε' (33). Ἐαυτὸν ὁ πατὴρ ἤρπασεν, οὐδ' ἐν ἐῆ δυνάμει νοερᾷ κλειῖσας ἴδιον πῦρ.

Ἐαυτὸν ὁ πατὴρ, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐξαίρετον ἐποίησεν, οὐδ' ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ νοερᾷ δυνάμει, ἤτοι τῷ μεθ' ἑαυτὸν δευτέρῳ θεῷ κλειῖσας, ἤτοι ὀρίσας τὸ ἴδιον πῦρ, τὴν ἰδίαν δὲ θεότητα. Τὸ γὰρ τοὶ πάμπαν ἀγέννητον καὶ αὐτὸ δι' αὐτὸ ὄν, ὃ ἢ αὐτοῦ θεότης τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐξήρηται. Ἄτε οὐδ' ὄλως μεταδοτὸν ἐτέρῳ ὄν, οὐδὲ μετέδωκεν οὐδενί, οὐ φθόνῳ, τῷ δ' ὄλως οὐ δυνατῷ τοῦ πράγματος, τῷ ἐς ἀντίφασιν περιστάσθαι.

λς' (34). Πατὴρ οὐ φόβον ἐνθρώσκει, πειθῶ δ' ἐπιχεύει.

Οὐ φόβον ἐμβάλλει ὁ πατὴρ, πειθῶ δ' ἐπιχεῖ, ἤτοι ἔρωτα. Ἄτε γὰρ ἄκρως αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ὢν, οὐδ' ἂν κακοῦ αἴτιος εἶη οὐδενί, ὡστ' ἂν καὶ φοβερὸς εἶναι, ἀγαθῶν δ' αἰεὶ πᾶσιν αἴτιος ὢν, κᾶν ἀγαπῶτο ὑπὸ πάντων.



Δῆλοι οὖν εἰσιν ἄλλοι τε συχνοὶ ἀνθρώπων, τοῖς ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου τούτοις συνωδούς πη

which are *conceived by the Father; they themselves also conceiving*, and exciting conceptions or notions [*noêseis*], by *unutterable* or *unspeakable* [*aphthegktois*] *counsels*. By *motion* here is understood intellection not displacement, but simply a relation to notions [*nooumena*], and so *unspeakable* counsels also means unmoved, for speaking consists in motion. The meaning is this, that these forms have an unchangeable relation to notions, not transient like the soul's.

(34) Oh, how the World hath rigid intellectual Guides!

The most excellent of the Intelligible (Noetic) Ideas [*noêton eidôn*], and of those which are brought down by the Immortals into this heaven, it calls *the Intellectual (Noeric) Guides of the World* [*noerous anochêas kosmou*], the Coryphaeus [chorus leader] of whom it conceives to be a god, who is the second from the Father. The oracle saying that *the World hath rigid Guides*, means that it is incorruptible.

(35) ... the Father snatched Himself away, and didn't close His Fire in Noeric Power.

*The Father has kept himself apart from all others, not including himself either in his own Intellectual (Noeric) Power* [δύναμις νοερά], i.e., in the second God who is next after him, or limiting *his own fire*, i.e., his own divinity. For he is absolutely uncreated and himself existing by himself, so that his divinity is separate from all others, as it is incommunicable to any other, although it be loved by all. That he doesn't communicate himself is not out of envy, but only by reason of its impossibility.

(36) The Father makes not fear, but pours persuasion on.

*The Father makes no impression of fear, but pours on persuasion* or love; for he, being extremely good, is not the cause of harm, and therefore frightening, but is the cause of all good to all; whence he is loved by all.



These Oracles of Zoroaster many eminent persons have confirmed by following the like opinions,

καταστησάμενοι τὰς δόξας, μάλιστα γὰρ μὴν καὶ οἱ περὶ τὴν Πυθαγόραν καὶ Πλάτωνα σοφοί, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐκεῖνοις ἔτι τῶν Ζωροάστρου, οἷς φησὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ Πλούταρχος, πάνυ συνωδὰ καὶ τὰ Πλάτωνος φαίνεται. Φησὶ δὲ περὶ Ζωροάστρου Πλούταρχος, ὡς τριχῆ τὰ ὄντα διέλοι. Καὶ τῆ μὲν πρώτη αὐτῶν μοῖρα, Ὠρομάζην ἐφιστῶν, τοῦτον δὲ εἶναι τὸν ὑπὸ τῶν λογίων πατέρα καλούμενον, τῆ δ' ἐσχάτῃ Ἀριμάνην, Μίθρην δὲ τῆ μέσῃ, καὶ τοῦτον δ' ἂν εἶναι τὸν δεύτερον νοῦν καλούμενον ὑπὸ τῶν λογίων· ἀλλ' Ὠρομάζην μὲν, ἡλίου, ὃν γὰρ δὴ καὶ κύρον περσιστὶ καλεῖσθαι τριπλάσιον ἑαυτὸν ἀφεςτακέναί, Μίθρην δὲ δηλονότι, τὸν μετὰ γὰρ Ὠρομάζην, διπλάσιον, οἷσπερ πάντως συνωδὰ καὶ τὰ Πλάτωνος ἐκεῖνά ἐστι,

περὶ τὸν πάντων βασιλέα πάντ' ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐκεῖνου ἕνεκα πάντα, καὶ, ἐκεῖνο αἴτιον ἀπάντων τῶν καλῶν, δεύτερον δὲ περὶ τὰ δεύτερα, καὶ τρίτον περὶ τὰ τρίτα·

μοίρας δὲ τρεῖς ἐς ἃς Ζωροάστρης τε καὶ Πλάτων τὰ ὄντα διηγήκεσαν, εἶναι πρώτην μὲν, τὴν αἰώνιον, δευτέραν δέ, τὴν ἔγχρονον μὲν, ἀίδιον δέ, τρίτην δὲ τὴν θνητὴν. Ζωροάστρη δὲ φησὶ Πλούταρχος οὕτω παλαιὸν τινα γεγονέναι, ὡς καὶ πεντακισχιλίοις ἔτεσι τῶν Τρωϊκῶν πρεσβύτερον ἱστορεῖσθαι.

especially the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists*,<sup>40</sup> since these oracles of the disciples of Zoroaster, to whom Plutarch refers when speaking of Zoroaster, also seem to be in complete agreement with Plato's writings. Plutarch says<sup>41</sup> Zoroaster would divide beings [*onta*] into three. Over the first part of these beings presides Hōromazê, who is called *Father* by the Oracles; over the last is Ahriman; Mithras is over the middle, and he is the one called *Second Intellect* [*Noun*] by the Oracles. Hōromazê, on one hand, has removed himself three times as much from the sun, which in Persian is also called "Cyrus" [*Kyros*],<sup>42</sup> but Mithras, the one who comes after Hōromazê, by twice as much. Now, this is also very much in agreement with these words of Plato:

*Related to the King of All are all things, and for his sake they are, and of all things fair he is the cause. And related to the Second are the second things and related to the Third the third.*<sup>43</sup>

As for the three parts into which Zoroaster and Plato have divided beings, the first is the one that is eternal [*aiōnion*]; the second is the one that is temporal [*egchronon*], but which is everlasting [*aïdion*]; the third is the mortal [*thnêtên*] part. Zoroaster, says Plutarch, is someone so ancient that it is said that he lived five thousand years before the Trojan War.

40 Stanley did not translate the remainder of this last part of Plethon's commentary.

41 Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, §46–47 (369E, 370A).

42 Plutarch, *Ataxerxes I*, 1012a. However Old Persian *Kūruš* (Cyrus) does not mean "sun."

43 Plato, *Epist.* II 312e1–4, tr. Bury.

## Brief Explanation

In this brief text Plethon provides an interpretive key for some of the more obscure phrases in the oracles. The footnotes indicate which oracle he is explaining. My translation.

**Βραχεῖά τις διασάφῃσις  
τῶν ἐν τοῖς λογίοις τούτοις  
ἀσαφεστέρως λεγομένων**

**Γεωργίου τοῦ Γεμιστοῦ**

Τὰ λόγια ταῦτα πυρὶ μὲν τὴν θεότητα σημαίνει, γῆ δὲ καὶ χθονὶ τὴν θνητὴν φύσιν· καὶ δύναμιν μὲν πατρός, καὶ νοῦν πατρικόν, καὶ δεύτερον νοῦν, τὸν μετὰ τὸν πατέρα θεὸν δεύτερον καλεῖ, τὸν τὰ δευτερεῖα τῆς κατὰ πάντα ἔχοντα ἡγεμονίας. Ἰυγγας δὲ τοὺς τούτῳ συγγενεῖς νοῦς, καὶ εἶδη τὰ χωριστά, ἃ δὴ καὶ ἀκαμπεῖς κόσμου ἀνοχῆας φησίν· Ἰυγγας δ' αὐτὰ καλεῖ, τῶ ἔρωτικῶς εἰς ἑαυτὰ τὰ τῆδε ἀναρτᾶν τῶ τῆς Ἰυγγος ὀνόματι τοῦτο ἐμφαίνοντα. Καλεῖ δὲ ταῦτα τὰ λόγια καὶ ἔργον, τὴν τελετὴν, καὶ ἔργον εὐσεβείας, ἱερὸν δὲ λόγον, τὸν τῆς θεοσεβείας λόγον. Ὄταν δὲ λέγῃ, λαίῃς ἐν λαγόσι κοίτης, ἀρετῆς πέλε πηγῆ, τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς φησὶ δύναμιν, τοῖς λαοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν προσήκουσαν, ἣν διὰ τοῦ παρθένου, καὶ ἀπαθῆ σημαίνει, ὡς τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτῆς ἅμα μὲν δεξιόις προσήκουσαν, ἅμα δὲ διὰ τὸ ἀπόβλητον, οὐκ ἀπαθῆ. Ὄταν δ' ἀρμονίαν τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν λέγῃ ἀρχεῖν τὴν τοῦ παντός συμφωνίαν τε καὶ ἐνωσίν φησιν, ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρα συμβαίνουσαν ψυχῇ τῇ πρὸς τὸ θνητὸν σῶμα αὐτῆς κοινωνία, οὐσης τε ἀθανάτου, τῶν

**A Brief Explanation  
of What is Said More Obscurely  
in these Oracles  
by  
George Gemistos**

By *Fire*<sup>44</sup> these oracles signify the divine, and by *earth* and *ground*, mortal nature; and the second god after the Father they call *the Father's Power*,<sup>45</sup> *Paternal Mind [Nous]*,<sup>46</sup> and *Second Nous*,<sup>47</sup> who holds the second rank in the sovereignty of everything. And *Iunges* they call the intellects akin to him, and the separated forms,<sup>48</sup> which they also call *rigid guides*<sup>49</sup> [*anochêas*] of the world; they call these *Iunges*, because of the erotic attachment of the things here to themselves, which is reflected by the name *Iunx*. These oracles call the ritual [*teletên*] both *act*<sup>50</sup> and *piety's work*,<sup>51</sup> and *sacred speech*<sup>52</sup> means the speech of religious worship. When they say *within the left side of the bed is virtue's fount*,<sup>53</sup> they mean the *power* of virtue, belonging to the left-hand parts of our soul, which, through chastity, signifies impassivity, because its activity belongs entirely to the right-hand side and through casting off is not impassive. When they say our soul *boasts harmony*,<sup>54</sup> they mean the concord and unity of the All, coinciding in our soul in common with its mortal body, (the soul) being immortal, since all immortal and mortal things have a share of one another. When they say *plane*<sup>55</sup> for the spirit [*pneuma*] of our soul and its attached vehicle

44 Oracles 27 (P 26) and 31 (P 29).

45 Oracle 12 (P 12).

46 Oracles 6 (P 6) and 28 (P 27).

47 Oracle 32 (P 30).

48 Oracle 33 (P 31).

49 Oracle 34 (P 32).

50 Oracle 1 (P 1).

51 Oracle 18 (P 17).

52 Oracle 1 (P 1).

53 Oracle 10 (P 10).

54 Oracle 11 (P 11).

55 Oracle 14 (P 14).



πάντων ἀθανάτων τε καὶ θνητῶν ἀλλήλοις κοινουόντων. Ὅταν δ' ἐπίπεδον καλῆ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡμῶν πνεῦμα καὶ ὄχημα προσεχές, οὐ καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐπίπεδον αὐτὸ βούλεται εἶναι σῶμα γάρ, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἄγαν αὐτοῦ λεπτὸν τῷ ἐπιπέδῳ δηλοῖ. Καὶ εἶδωλον δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ καλεῖ, εἰ καὶ τῆς ὀχουμένης φέρον ψυχῆς, καὶ συνεισιδὸν αὐτῇ ἐς τὸν ἀμφιφαῖ τόπον, ὃν αὖ καὶ παράδεισον ὀνομάζει. Ὑλῆς δὲ σκύβαλον, τὸ θνητὸν τόδε σῶμα, καὶ ἐντέλλεται μὴδ' αὐτὸ περιορᾶν διαφθειρόμενον, ἀλλ' ἐς δύναμιν γε ἀνασώζειν. Χθονίους δὲ κύνας τὰ ἐκ τῶν παθῶν τοῦ ἡμετέρου θνητοῦ, κατὰ τὰς τελετὰς ὀρώμενα τοῖς γε οὐπω κατακεκοσμηκόσι τὴν ψυχὴν φάσματ' ἄττα ἀνυπόστατά φησιν, οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς σημαίνοντα. Ὅταν δὲ κακὴν τὴν ὕλην λέγη, οὐκ ἀπλῶς κακὴν αὐτὴν βούλεται εἶναι, οὐ γὰρ ἂν τὰ χρηστὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἔλεγε βλαστάνειν, ἀλλὰ τῇ πρὸς πᾶσαν τὴν εἰδικὴν οὐσίαν παραθέσει κακὴν φησι, τῷ ἐσχάτην αὐτὴν εἶναι συμπάσης φύσεως οὐσιώδους. Ὅταν δ' ἑαυτὸν ὁ πατὴρ ἤρπασε λέγη, τὸ ἐξάριετον αὐτοῦ τῆς θεότητος σημαίνει καὶ θεοῖς σύμπασι τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐκ ἐνάριθμον.

[*ochêma*], they do not mean that it is really a plane, for it is a body, but they reveal its excessive thinness like a plane. And they call this the *image* [*eidôlon*],<sup>56</sup> if the soul moves its vehicle, and it goes with her into *the radiant place*,<sup>57</sup> which they also name *Paradise*.<sup>58</sup> *Dross of matter*<sup>59</sup> means this mortal body, and it is enjoined that it not be neglected, though corruptible, but preserved so far as possible. By *earthly dogs*,<sup>60</sup> they mean the things seen from the passions of our mortal part during the rites [*teletas*] by those without well-ordered souls, mere apparitions without substance, signifying nothing true. When they call *matter evil*,<sup>61</sup> they do not mean that it is absolutely evil, for they would not say beneficial and good things grow out of it, but they say it is evil by comparison to the entire Ideal [*eidikên*] substance, compared to which it is the last of the whole essential [*ousiôdous*] nature. When they say *the Father snatched Himself away*,<sup>62</sup> they signify the specialness of his divinity and that he is not to be numbered among all the other gods.

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56 Oracle 15 (P 15a).

57 Oracle 15 (P 15a).

58 Oracle 13 (P 13).

59 Oracle 16 (P 15b).

60 Oracle 19 (P 18).

61 Oracle 20 (P 19).

62 Oracle 35 (P 33).

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