

Ancient Graeco-Egyptian Rituals

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Egyptian Days

PGM VII.272–83.

Egyptian Month	Modern Dates	Avoid for Magic
Thôth	Aug. 29* – Sept. 27*	1, 4, 12, 13, 22
Phaôphi	Sept. 28* – Oct. 27*	2, 4, 10, 19, 20
Athyr	Oct. 28* – Nov. 26*	7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 23
Choiak	Nov. 27* – Dec. 26*	5, 6, 13, 15, 16, 24, 25
Tybi	Dec. 27* – Jan. 25*	3, 4, 12, 24, 26
Mecheir	Jan. 26* – Feb. 24*	1, 2, 10, 14, 19
Phamenôth	Feb. 25 – Mar. 26	7, 8, 9
Pharmouthi	Mar. 27 – Apr. 25	5, 6, 14, 15, 20
Pachôn	Apr. 26 – May 25	3, 4, 12, 13, 21, 26, 28
Pauni	May 26 – Jun. 24	1, 2, 10, 11, 15, 20
Epiphi	Jun. 25 – Jul. 24	7, 8, 9, 14, 18, 19, 22
Mesore	Jul. 25 – Aug. 23	10, 14, 20, 23, 24, 25
Epagomenae	Aug. 24 – Aug. 28*	Very dangerous

* Add 1 for leap year. E.g. Mecheir 27 = Feb. 21 (Feb. 22 in leap year); Thoth 13 = Sept. 10 (Sept. 9 in leap year).

Pronouncing Greek Letters

Greek	αA	βB	γΓ	δΔ	εE	ζZ	ηH	θΘ
Roman	A	B	G	D	E	Z	Ê	TH
Pron.	ah	b	g	d	eh	z	ay	th
Greek	ιI	κK	λL	μM	νN	ξΞ	οO	πΠ
Roman	I	K	L	M	N	X	O	P
Pron.	ih	k	l	m	n	x	awe	p
Greek	ρP	σΣ	τT	υY	φΦ	χX	ψΨ	ωΩ
Roman	R	S	T	U, Y	PH	CH	PS	Ô
Pron.	r	s	t	ü	f	kh	ps	owe

The Seven Greek Vowels

Greek Vowel	Pronunciation	Planet	Planet
A α	Ah	☾	Moon
E ε	Eh	☿	Mercury
H η	Ay	♀	Venus
I ι	Ih	☼	Sun
O ο	Awe	♂	Mars
Y υ	Oo	♃	Jupiter
Ω ω	Oh	♄	Saturn

Example Magical Pronunciation of Vowels

PGM V.24–30, Oracle of Serapis (P. Lond. 46). IV CE.

Instructions for pronouncing the “nine-letter name” AO IAÔ EOËY:

A	with an open mouth, undulating like a wave
O	succinctly, like breathed threat
IAÔ	to earth, to air, and to heaven
E	like a baboon
O	in the same way as above
Ë	with enjoyment, aspirating it
Y	like a shepherd, drawing out the pronunciation

Heptagram Ritual

PGM XIII.824–41 (P. Lugd. Bat. J395 (W), Leiden). IV CE.

Speaking to the rising sun, stretching out your right hand to the left and your left hand likewise to the left, say “A.”

To the north, putting forward only your right fist, say “E.”

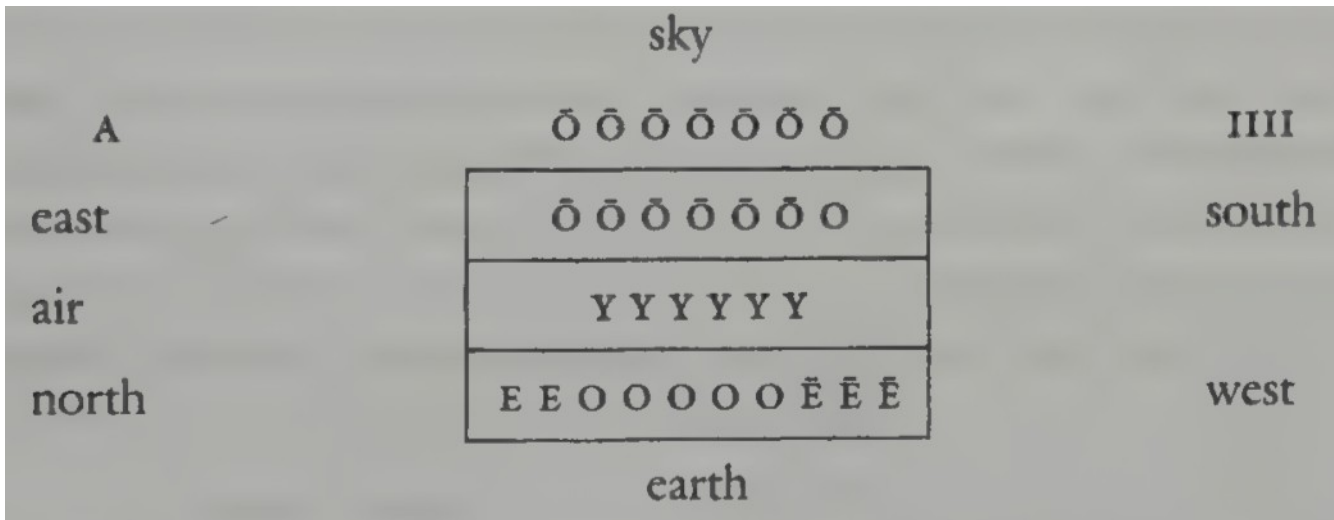
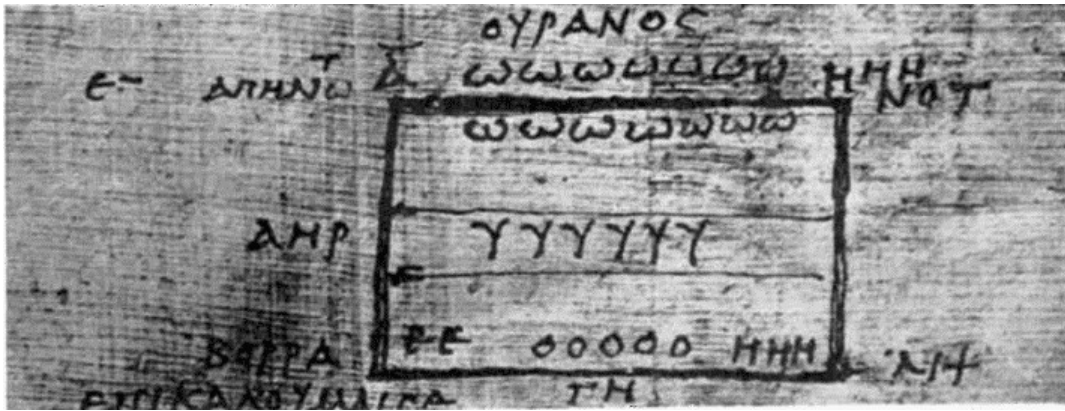
Then to the west, extending both hands in front of you, say “Ë.”

To the south, holding] both on your stomach, say, “I.”

To the earth, bending over, touching the ends of your toes, say “O.”

Looking into the air, having your hand on your heart, say “U.”

Looking into the sky, having both hands on your head, say “Ô”



“I call on you, eternal and unbegotten, who are one, who alone hold together the whole creation of all things, whom none understands, whom the gods worship, whose name not even the gods can utter. Inspire from your exhalation ruler of the pole, him who is under you; accomplish for me the NN thing.

“I call on you as by the voice of the male gods,
 IÊÔ OYE ÔÊI YE AÔ EI ÔY AOÊ OYÊ EÔA YÊI ÔEA OÊÔ IEOU AÔ.

I call on you, as by the voice of the female gods,
 IAÊ EÔO IOY ÊÊI ÔA ÊÊ IÊ AI YO ÊIAY EÔO OYÊE IAÔ ÔAI EOYÊ YÔÊI IÔA.

I call on you, as the winds call you.

I call on you, as the dawn.” Looking toward dawn say,
 “A EE ÊÊÊ IIII OOOOO YYYYYY ÔÔÔÔÔÔÔ.”

“I call on you as the south.” Looking to the south say,
 “I OO YYY ÔÔÔÔ AAAAA EEEEEÊ ÊÊÊÊÊÊÊ.”

“I call on you as the west.” Standing facing the west, say
 “Ê II OOO YYYYY ÔÔÔÔÔ AAAAA EEEEEÊ.”

“I call on you as the north.” Standing looking toward the north say,
“Ô AA EEE ÊÊÊÊ IIIII OOOOOO YYYYYYY.”

“I call on you as the earth.” Looking toward the earth say:
“E ÊÊ III OOOO YYYYY ÔÔÔÔÔ AAAAAA”

“I call on you as the sky.” Looking into the sky say,
“Y ÔÔ AAA EEEE ÊÊÊÊ IIIII OOOOOO.”

“I call on you as the cosmos, “O YY ÔÔÔ AAAA EEEEE ÊÊÊÊÊ IIIIII.

Accomplish for me NN thing, quickly.

I call on your name, the greatest among gods.”

If I say it complete, there will be an earthquake, the sun will stop and the moon will be afraid and the rocks and the mountains and the sea and the rivers and every liquid will be petrified; the whole cosmos will be thrown into confusion.

I call on you, IYEYO ÔAEÊ IAÔ AEÊ AI EÊ AÊ IOYÔ EYÊ IEOU AÊÔ ÊI ÔÊI IAÊ IÔOYÊ AYÊ
YÊA IÔ IÔAI IÔAI ÔÊ EE OY IÔ IAÔ, the great name.

Become for me lynx, eagle, snake, phoenix, life, power, necessity, images of god, AIÔ IÔY IAÔ ÊIÔ
AA OYI AAAA E IY IÔ ÔÊ IAÔ AI AÔÊ OYEÔ AIEÊ IOYE YEIA EIÔ ÊII YY EE ÊÊ ÔAOÊ
CHECHAMPSIMM CHANGALAS EÊIOY IÊEA ÔOÊOE (seven of the auspicious [names?])
ZÔIÔIÊR ÔMYRYROMROMOS.” [Say it?] thus, extending the second AIÔ: “Ê II YY ÊÊ OAOÊ.”

The ritual then moves into a different phase.

Generic Closing Ritual

Depart, O Master/Mistress, to thy realm,
to thine own palace, to thy throne.

Restore the order of the world.

Be gracious and protect me, Lord/Lady.

I thank thee for thy presence here.

Depart in peace and joy. Farewell!

— Based PGM II.180–3; IV.1061–5, 3120–4; V.41–50

Example Rituals

Phylactery

PGM VII.579–90 (P. Lond. 121). III/IV CE.

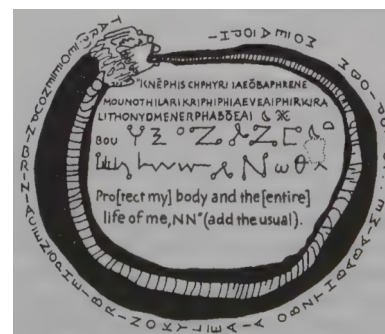
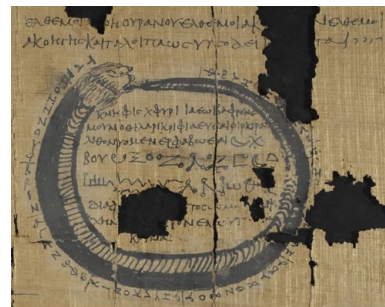
A phylactery, a bodyguard against daimons, against phantasms, against every sickness and suffering, to be written on a leaf of gold or silver or tin or on hieratic papyrus. When worn it works mightily for it is the name of power of the great god and his seal, and it is as follows:

κμηφικς χφυρικς ιαεω ιαω αειη οω αιων ιαεωβαφρενε
 μουνοθιλαρικριφιαε υ εαιφιρικιραλιθανυομενερφαβωεαι

These are the names; the figure is like this: let the Snake be biting its tail, the names being written inside the circle made by the snake, and the characters thus:



The whole figure is drawn thus, as given below, with the spell, “Protect my body, and the entire soul of me, NN.” And when you have consecrated it, wear it.”



Saucer Divination of Aphrodite

PGM IV.3209–54 (Great Paris Magical Papyrus). IV CE.

Having kept oneself pure for 7 days, take a white saucer, fill it with water and olive oil, having previously written on its base with myrrh ink:

ηιοχ χιφα ελαμψηρ ζηλ α ε η ι ο υ ω (25 letters)

“ÊIOCH CHIPHA ELAMPSÊR ZÊL A E Ê I O Y Ô”;

And beneath the base, on the outside:

ταχιηλ χθονιη δραξω (18 letters¹)

“TACHIÊL CHTHONIÊ DRAXÔ.”

Wax over with white wax. On the outside of the rim at the top:

ιερμι φιλω ς ερικωμα δερκω μαλωκ γαυλη αφριηλ έρωτῶ

1 Only 17 are shown in the ms. Perhaps the last word should be δραξῶν.

“IERMI PHILÔ 6 ERIKÔMA DERKÔ MALÔK GAULÊ APHRIËL I ask”

(say it 3 times).

Let it rest on the floor and looking intently at it, say “I call upon you, the mother and mistress of nymphs, ILAOUCH OBRIË LOUCH TLOR; come in, holy light, and give answer, showing your lovely shape.”

Then look intently at the bowl. When you see her, welcome her and say, “Hail, very glorious goddess, ILARA OUCH. And if you give me a response, extend your hand.” And when she extends it, expect answers to your inquiry.

But if she does not listen say, “I call upon the ILAOUCH who has begotten Himeros, the lovely Horai and you Graces; I also call upon the Zeus-sprung Physis of all things, two-formed, indivisible, straight, foam-beautiful Aphrodite.

Reveal to me your lovely light and your lovely face, O mistress ILAOUCH. I conjure you, giver of fire, by ELGINAL, and by the great names OBRIËTYCH KERDYNOUCHILEPSIN NIOU NAUNIN IOUTHOU THRIGX TATIOUTH GERTIATH GERGERIS GERGERIË THEITHI. I also ask you by the all wonderful names, OISIA EI EI AÔ ÊY AAÔ IÔIAIAIÔ SÔTHOU BERBROI AKTEROBORE GERIË IËOYA; bring me light and your lovely face and the true saucer divination, you shining with fire, bearing fire all around, stirring the land from afar, IÔ IÔ PHTHAIË THOUTHOI PHAEPHI. Do it.”

Preparation: having kept yourself pure, as you learned, take a bronze drinking cup, and write with myrrh ink the previously inscribed stele which calls upon Aphrodite, and use the untouched olive oil and clean river water. Put the drinking cup on your knees and speak over it the stele mentioned above, and the goddess will appear to you and will reveal concerning what things you wish.

Aphrodite’s Name Love Spell

PGM IV.1265–74 (Paris) IV CE.

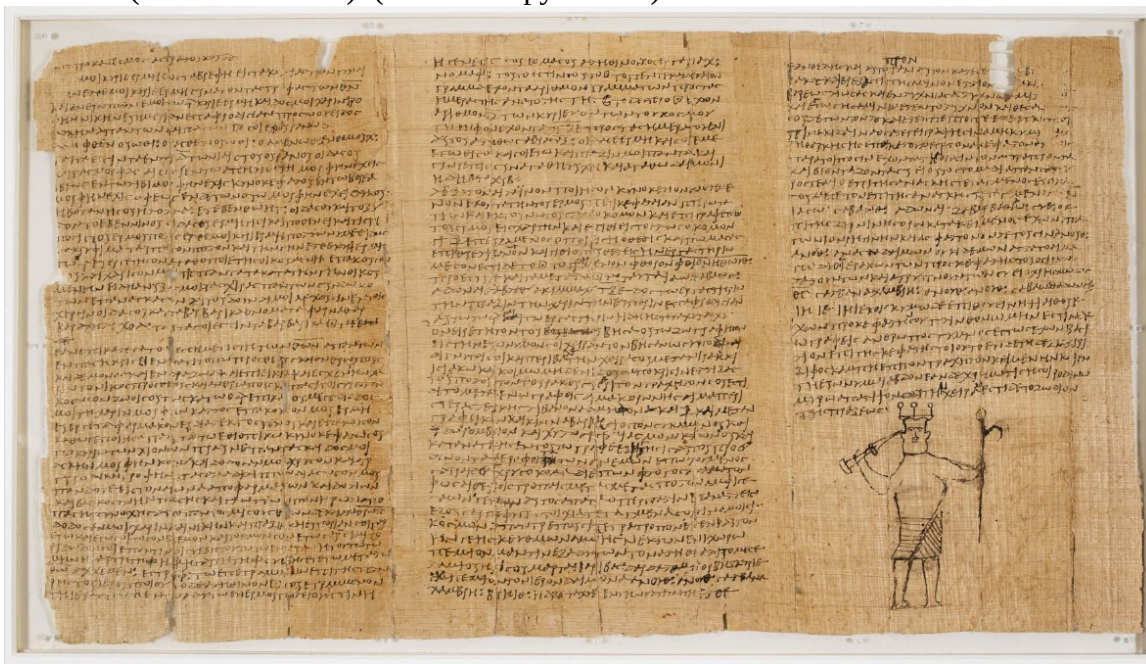
Aphrodite’s name which becomes known to no one quickly is NEPHERIËRI—this is the name. If you wish to win a woman who is beautiful, be pure for 3 days, make an offering of frankincense, and call upon this name over it. You approach the woman and say it seven times in your soul as you gaze at her, and in this way it will succeed. But do this for 7 days.

Nepheriêri is Egyptian Nfr-îry.t (𓏏𓏏𓏏), which might be translated “she of the beautiful eye.” Nefer (𓏏) means beautiful, perfect, good, but also young person; and îry (𓏏) means to make, create, or do. Note that îry-nfr-t (𓏏𓏏𓏏) means to have intercourse with a virgin. The sign 𓏏 represents the heart and throat, and symbolizes heartfelt speech.



Astrapsoukhos' Spell for the Favor of Hermes

PGM VIII.1–63 (with corrections). (London Papyrus 122). IV/V CE.



Ritual

Come to me, Lord Hermes,
just as fetuses come into women's wombs.

Come to me, Lord Hermes,
gathering the sustenance of gods and people.

Come to me, Lord Hermes,
to [a certain one], and give me:
sustenance and grace, fair face, good living, charm,
victory, and strength of every man and woman.

Hear thy names in Heaven:

Λαμφεν Οὐῶθι · Οὐάσθεν Οὐῶθι · Ὅαμενωθ · Ἐνθομουχ
Lamphen Ouôthi : Ouasthen Ouôthi : Oamenôth : Enthomoukh

for these names are in the quarters of the sky.

Yes, I know thee, and I know what are thy shapes:

in the East thou hast the figure of an Ibis;
in the West thou hast the figure of a Dog-baboon;

in the North thou hast the figure of a Snake;
in the South thou hast the figure of a Wolf;

and I know thy plant: “the Grape that is an Olive”;
and I know thy wood, for it is Ebony.

Yes, I know thee, Hermes, who thou art and also
where you’re from, which town: Hermopolis.

Come to me, Lord Hermes,
Many-named One, knowing secrets under Earth and Sky.

Come to me, Lord Hermes, to [a certain one].

Kindly help me, benefactor of our world.

Hear me!

Make me pleasing to all forms throughout the world;
open for me hands of all who may grant gifts;
make them give me what they’re holding in their hands.

Yes, I know thee and thy Names Barbarian:

Φαρναθαρ · Βαραχήλ · Χθα.

Pharnathar : Barakhêl : Khtha.

For these are thy Names Barbarian!

And whenever Isis, Greatest of the Gods,
hath invoked thee, Yea! in every crisis,
and in every place, ’gainst people, gods and daimons,
and what lives beneath the sea and on the land,

She hath held thy favor and had victory
over gods and men with every creature in the world.

Therefore also I, [a certain one], invoke thee!

For this reason, give me beauty, form, and grace.

Hear me, Hermes, helper, who invented spells;
be thou easy to converse with and attend;
doing all things like thine Ethiopian
dog-baboon, the Lord of all those underground.

Tame them all and give me strength, fair form, [add the rest].

[Let them give me silver, gold, and endless sustenance.
Save me always and through all eternity—
 from spells, deceits, all slander, knavish tongues;
 from possession, hate from mortals and from gods.
Let them give me favor, business, wealth, success.]

Inasmuch as thou art I, and I am thou,
 and because thy name is mine, and mine is thine,
 and because I am the effigy of thee.

If perhaps some thing might come to pass for me,
 any time this year or month or day or hour,
 it will happen to the Great God Ἀχχμεν Ἐστροφ (*Akhkhemēn Estroph*);
 to the one carved on the holy vessel's prow.

On the Sacred Stêlê thy True Name is carved,
 in the shrine in thy birthplace, Hermopolis.

Thy True Name: Ὀσεργαριαχ : Νομαφι : (*Osergariakh Nomaphi*)
 for this is thy name of fifteen characters,
 and the number of the days the Moon doth rise;
 and thy second name doth have the number seven,
 corresponding to the Rulers of the World.
 and doth have the count of the year's days: 365.

Truly: Ἀβρασαξ (*Abrasax*).

 Yes, I know thee, Hermes, and thou knowest me;
 thou art I, and I am thou.

Therefore, do thou everything for me I ask;
with Good Fortune and Good Daimon turn to me.

Now! Now! Quickly! Quickly!

Ἦδη, ἤδη, ταχύ, ταχύ.

Êdê! Êdê! Takú! Takú!

Statue

Make from olive wood a small statue of a dog-faced baboon with Hermes' winged hat on its head. There should be a box in its back with a lid to close it. Write on papyrus with myrrh ink the following name of Hermes:

ΦΘΟΡΟΝ ΦΘΙΟΝΗ ΘΩΥΘ
(*Phthoron Phthionê Thôuth*)

You may add the following Great Names:

ΙΑΩ ΣΑΒΑΩΘ ΑΔΩΝΑΙΕ
(*Iaô Sabaôth Adônaie*)
ΑΒΛΑΝΑΘΑΝΑΛΒΑ
(*Ablanathanalba*)
ΑΚΡΑΜΜΑΧΑΜΑΡΕΙ
(*Akrammakhamarei*)
ΤΞΕ'
(365)

Give Thou: business, favor, elegance, prosperity,
to [a certain one] and to his/her work.

Now! Now! Quickly! Quickly!

Ἦδη, ἦδη, ταχύ, ταχύ.

Êdê! Êdê! Takú! Takú!

While you do so, pray for what you want. Put the papyrus in the statue and put on the lid. Burn incense before it and recite the following ritual. Replace “[a certain one]” by the beneficiary’s name, usually in the form “[name], son/daughter of [mother’s name].”

Divine Assistance from Three Homeric Verses

PGM IV.2145–2240 (The Great Paris Papyrus). IV CE.

Several spells (PGM IV.471–73, 821–24, 2145–50) ascribe magical power to these three Homeric verses in this order.

ὧς εἰπὼν τάφοριο διήλασε μώνυχας ἵππους

he spoke and drove the one-hoof horses through the trench [*Il.* 10.564]

ἄνδράς τ' ἀσπαίροντας ἐν ἀργαλέησι φονῆσιν

and men in painful carnage gasped convulsively [*Il.* 10.521]

αὐτοὶ δ' ἰδρῶ πολλὸν ἀπενίζοντο θαλάσση

but in the sea they washed much sweat from off themselves [*Il.* 10.572]

(Odysseus and Diomedes have just stolen two outstanding horses from the Trojans and escaped with them back to the Greeks.)

Among its uses: If a runaway carries it on an iron lamella, they will not be caught. A contestant will be victorious. It keeps away daimons and wild animals, and will make you fearsome and invulnerable in combat. “When you ask you will receive; you will enjoy favor; your life will change; and you will be loved by any man or woman you have contact with. You will have honor, happiness; you will receive inheritances, have good fortune, be unaffected by potions and poison; you will break spells and conquer your enemies.” However, some uses require empowering it by touching it to an executed criminal and then consecrating it, since it operates by the power of the dead.

Consecration

Consecrating the plaque: Go, I say, into a clean room. Set up a table, on which you are to place a clean linen cloth and flowers of the season. Then sacrifice a white cock, placing beside it 7 cakes, 7 wafers, 7 lamps; pour a libation of milk, honey, wine, and olive oil.

Here is the formula to be spoken when you consecrate the plaque: “Come to me! You who are master above the earth and below the earth, who look to the west and the east and gaze upon the south and the north, O master of all, Aion of Aions! You are the ruler of the universe, Ra, Pan, (H)ARPENCHNOUBI BRINTATÊNÔPHRI BRISKYLMA AROUZAR BAMESEN KRIPHI NIPTOUMI CHMOUMAÔPHI IA IOY IYÔ AII OYÔ AEËIOYÔ BAUBÔ BAUBÔ PHORBA PHORBA OREOBAZAGRA ÔYOIËEA ER.” Speak too the formula that invokes Necessity: “MASKELLI MASKELLÔ PHNOUKENTABAÔ OREOBAZAGRA RHÊXICHTHÔN HIPPOCHTHÔN PYRIPÊGANYX,² IARCHTHA ECHTHABA CHOIX IABOUCH IABÔCH,” and the one that invokes all supernatural powers. So much for the ritual of consecration.

Typical Uses

For popularity spells and love spells: Write “MYRI MYRI NES MACHESNÔN” (μυρι μυρι νες μαχεςων) on a gold tablet, after putting it under / the iron one for 3 days. When you remove it, carry it, keeping yourself clean all the while.

For fetching spells. Burn roses and sumac as an offering; take myrtle leaves and write on them in ink: “STHENEPIÔ ARRÔRIPHRAISIS YYYY IIII (σθενεπιω αρρωριφρασις υυυυ ιιιι) fetch her, NN, for him, NN.” Recite the formula and put the magical substance under the lamella.

You are to add some single-stemmed wormwood to the myrrh ink. Let the lamella be worn on a cord; get it from the places where / the woolworkers have their shops

2 The MASKELLI formula.

“I call upon you, PHTHA RA PHTHA IÊ PHTHA OUN EMÊCHA ERÔCHTH BARÔCH THORCHTHA THÔM CHAIEOUCH ARCHANDABAR ÔEAEÔ YNÊÔCH ÊRA ÔN ÊLÔPH BOM PHTHA ATHABRASIA ABRIASÔTH BARBARBELÔCHA BARBAIAÔCH; let there be depth, breadth, length, brightness, ABLANATHANALBA ABRASIAOUA AKRAMMACHAMAREI THÔTH HÔR ATHÔÔPÔ. Come in, lord, and reveal.”

The serpent-faced god will come in and answer you. When you dismiss him, make an offering of the skin of a serpent.

(The serpent-faced god is the primordial form of the gods, since we are reenacting creation, as indicated by “depth, breadth, length, brightness.”)

Stele of Aphrodite

PGM VII. 215–18. (P. Lond. 121). III/IV CE.

To gain friendship, favor, success, and friends. Take a strip of tin and engrave on it with a bronze stylus. And be sure you are pure white carrying it.

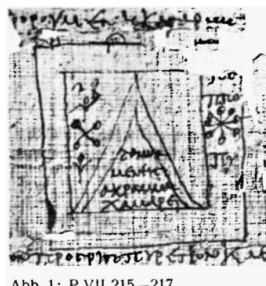
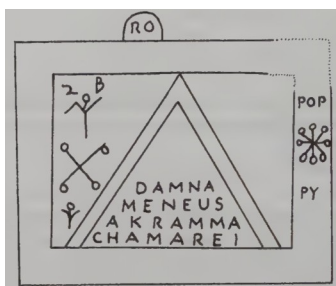


Abb. 1: P VII 215–217.

(This uses two common magic words, DAMNAMENEUS [δαμναμενευς] and AKRAMMACHAMAREI [ακραμμαχαμαρει].)

Healing Spell

PGM LXXXIX.1–27 (Suppl. Mag. 13) IV cent. CE.

Write this on new papyrus and wear it:

Sô Sô Abrasax Abrasax. I am ABRASAX ABRASI CHÔ OU (Σω Σω Αβρασαξ Αβρασαξ, ἐγώ εἰμι Αβρασαξ αβρασι χω ου), help NN. Get hold of and do away with what comes to NN, whether it is a shivering fit—get hold of it! Whether a phantom—get hold of it! Whether a daimon—get hold of it! Sô Sô Abrasax Abrasax. I am ABRASAX ABRASI CHÔ OU. Get hold of, get hold of, and do away with what comes to NN on this very day, whether it is a shivering fit—do away with it! Whether a daimon—do away with it!

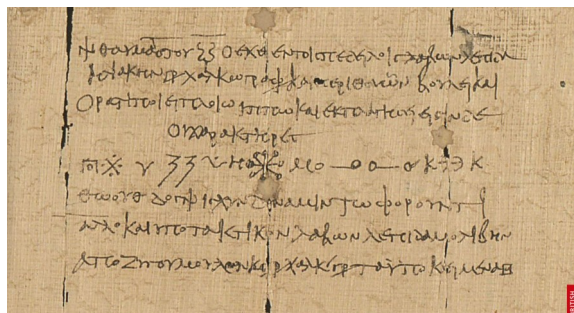
(Sô is the Egyptian god Shu.)

Hermes Wondrous Victory Charm

PGM VII.919–24 (P. Lond. 121). III/IV CE.

Hermes Wondrous Victory Charm, which you are to keep in your sandals: Take a tablet gold like the sun and inscribe on it with a bronze stylus and put it on whatever you want and see what it does on a boat, on a horse, and you will be amazed.

These are the characters: Ϝ ✕ Υ Ζ Ζ ~ Η ✱ ε ο ~ ε ε σ κ ε ε κ



Charm to Restrain Anger and for Success

PGM XXXVI.161–77 (P. Oslo I, 1). IV CE.

No charm is greater, and it is to be performed by means of words alone: Hold your thumbs and repeat the spell 7 times: “ERMALLÔTH ARCHIMALLÔTH stop the mouths that speak against me, because I glorify your sacred and honored names which are in heaven.”

To augment the words: Take papyrus and write thus: “I am CHPHYRIS. I must be successful. MICHAËL RAPHAËL ROUBËL NARIËL KATTIËL ROUMBOUTHËL AZARIËL IOËL IOUËL EZRIËL SOURËL NARIËL METMOURIËL AZAËL AZIËL SAOUMIËL ROUBOUTHËL RABIËËL RABIËËL RABCHLOU ENAEZRAËL, angels, protect me from every bad situation that comes upon me.”

(Written names: Χφυρις and Μιχαηλ Ραφαηλ Ρουβηλ Ναριηλ Καττιηλ Ρουμβουθιηλ Αζαριηλ Ιοηλ Ιουηλ Εζριηλ Σουριηλ Ναριηλ Μετμουριηλ Αζαηλ Αζηηλ Σαουμιηλ Ρουβουθιηλ Ραβιηηλ Ραβιηηλ Ραβχλου Εναεζραηλ.)

Victory Charm of Helios

PGM VII. 528–39 (P. Lond. 121) III/IV CE.

Victory charm: “Helios, Helios, hear me, NN, Helios, lord, Great God, you who maintain all things and who give life and who rule the world, toward whom all things go, from whom they also came, untiring, ÊIE ELËIE IEÔA ROUBA ANAMAÔ MERMAÔ CHADAMATHA ARDAMATHA PEPHRE ANAMALAZÔ PHËCHEIDEU ENEDEREU SIMATOI MERMEREÔ AMALAXIPHIA MERSIPHIA

EREME THASTEU PAPIE PHEREDÔNAX ANAIE GELEÔ AMARA MATÔR MÔRMARÊSIO
NEOUTHÔN ALAÔ AGELAÔ AMAR AMATÔR MÔRMASI SOUTHÔN ANAMAÔ
GALAMARARMA. Hear me lord Helios, and let the NN matter take place on time.” Say this while
you make an offering over oak charcoal, sacred incense, with which has been mixed the brain of a
wholly black ram and the wheat meal of a certain plant [κατανάγκης ἄλευρα].

Additional Background

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