

# Rituals of Ecstasy in the *PGM*

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This essay, while not within the research orbit of Frederik Wisse, is nevertheless written to honour someone who fearlessly entered the charted waters of academia and challenged some of the conventional waves of research washing up on its shores. In the same spirit, this paper sets itself the task of exploring states of consciousness and unconsciousness that are variously described as “ecstasy,” “trance,” “waking dream,” “vision,” and “waking vision,” in the *Greek Magical Papyri* (*PGM*). As has long been noted, the *PGM* display a ritual intensity that ranges from the mundane to the extraordinary. Ritual practices are used to invoke and exploit the various forces, infernal and supernal, that contribute to achieving a successful life on earth in order to acquire wealth, health, and love, and to attain heightened states of knowledge, sharpened vision, altered states of consciousness, and intense bodily excitement.<sup>1</sup> I am particularly interested in investigating the way in which body posture and body parts—eyes, hands, feet, head, tongue, lungs—play a role in triggering ecstatic states and, while in those states, the apprehension of beings such as angels, spirits, and intermediary gods. Before proceeding, however, it will be important to consider a few preliminary issues.

The traditional ways of describing and comparing “magic” with “religion” no longer hold up.<sup>2</sup> “Magic,” as modern scholars have reluctantly learned to admit, is a slippery category. No definition of the category has found universal acceptance, and numerous efforts to separate it from “religion” have brought about few, if any, useful results.<sup>3</sup> The problem lies, to a large extent, in the fact that what one society may brand as “magic,” another may call “religion,” so that by privileging one category at the expense of the other one is forced to pick sides vis-à-vis competing formulations of “magic.” Or, failing that, categories are imposed upon societies in which they would have been alien. Accordingly, Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, in the task of re-visioning *ancient magic*, argue that the label “ritual power” more accurately captures the underlying nature of the texts.<sup>4</sup> Similarly,

Rebecca Macy Lesses argues that the overarching category of “magic” is not a helpful one and is more usefully considered as “ritual performances to gain power.”<sup>5</sup> The notion of ritual as a performative designed to empower and protect the adventurous crossers of liminal boundaries is a useful one and will be used in this paper.

Given the eclectic syncretism of religions that the *PGM* represent (Egyptian, Greek, Jewish) and the ubiquity of ritual instruction, attempts have been made to trace the influences of these religious traditions on the *PGM*.<sup>6</sup> It is clear, for example, that some of the material in the *PGM* originated in Judaism, though its source and influence on the *PGM* is far from clear.<sup>7</sup> In an important article, Hans Dieter Betz underscores the point that the writers of the rabbinic tradition adopted and perpetuated the type of magic familiar from the *PGM*.<sup>8</sup> It is also clear from the density of ritual instruction in Jewish magical works that Jewish magicians drew upon a wide variety magical materials at their disposal and, conversely, given the cosmopolitan and ubiquitous nature of magical instruction in the ancient Near East, that some of the spells recorded in the *PGM* are to be ascribed to Jewish sources.<sup>9</sup> It is not the purpose of this essay to answer questions of influence and crossover in the texts nor to discuss the characteristics of Jewish magic or what were the components of Jewish magic in non-Jewish magical sources, as important as these questions are.<sup>10</sup>

Whatever their influences may have been, Jewish sources betray ambivalence about using ritual instructions to gain power, particularly when the practitioners associated with the rituals are questionable.<sup>11</sup> Deut 18:10–12 lists various kinds of abhorrent practices from which the people must abstain: “No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or one who casts spells, or who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead.” Other references of prohibition include Lev 19:26, 20:1–6, Exod 22:17, Isa 8:19, Isa 57:3, Ezek 22:28, and Mal 3:5. Yet, despite these protestations to the contrary, belief in the efficacy of magic appears to have been widespread in Israelite culture.<sup>12</sup> There were practitioners in Judaism who employed a kind of ritualism regarded as efficacious and within the ambit of appropriate activity. For these practitioners such ritualistic activity did not qualify as magic.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the practice of an efficacious kind of ritualism in Israelite

culture required the body and made use of the body in an astonishing variety of ways. The ubiquitous utilization of the body to effect ecstatic states is the one common feature found between the numerous religious associations and textual traditions of the ancient Mediterranean world.

### Varieties of Ritual In the *PGM*

As stated, the present essay has the modest goal of describing ritual instruction pertaining to “vision,” “waking dream,” “trance,” and “ecstasy” in select texts of the *PGM* especially as regards the role of the body in triggering these states.<sup>14</sup> A quick survey of some of the material pertaining to the inducement of trance or ecstasy in the *PGM* shows a rich pattern of ritual instruction that involves the body in an assortment of ways.<sup>15</sup> As the *PGM* demonstrate, cosmic adventurers who aspired to cross the boundaries between life and death, earth and heaven, corporeal and incorporeal, and human and divine, had at their disposal an impressive array of ritual practices that empowered and protected them. The texts from the *PGM* show humans summoning powers infernal and supernal, for the purposes of these “powers coming to expression in the lives of people for divination, healing, protection, exorcism of evil, and love.”<sup>16</sup> Instructions for rituals designed to trigger altered states of consciousness invested the initiate with power, once in such a state, by heightening awareness, sharpening vision, enhancing knowledge, exciting the senses, and releasing the body from the limitations of the mundane.<sup>17</sup> Ascent into heaven, prophetic ecstasy, and hyperphysical arousal (awareness, vision, knowledge, fear, agitation, joy, intense pleasure, etc.) are achieved through changes in degrees of consciousness and through the removal of the mundane limitations of corporeal essence. Ritual instructions employ both spoken word and physical exertion to bring about these desired changes in states of consciousness and body. These changes may be experienced directly by the initiate or vicariously through a suggestible medium.

Not unusual is the desire for the initiate to excurse the liminal boundaries of heaven and earth, human and divine, and life and death. These venturesome transgressors of the commonplace make border crossings into the world of the spirit through dreams, visions, and ecstatic practices. The role that techniques or rituals played in

inducing ecstatic activity and journeys into the world of the spirits are numerous (including silence, mourning and weeping, fasting, food abstention for purposes of purgation and vision causation, praying, sleep deprivation, self mutilation, contact with some holy object, sleeping in sacred enclosures [incubation], dreams, auto-suggestion, the use of young boys in the *PGM*, scrying, formulaic utterances, prophetic frenzy, etc.).<sup>18</sup> All of them involve in one way or another the use and control of bodily orifices (eyes, ears, mouth, sexual organs) and body parts (lungs, eyes, ears, bowels). In addition, the trance, vision, ecstasy, and dream often had a significant effect on corporeal essence. The limitations and restraints which the mundane normally imposed upon the body appear to be lifted in the midst of such a state. This means either divesting the body of material existence or substance—disembodied ecstasy—or maintaining its material essence while releasing it from the restrictions of the mundane through altered states of consciousness—embodied ecstasy—a kind of embodiment accompanied by an apparent unawareness of the body.<sup>19</sup>

While Platonic idealism tends to denigrate the body and privilege the soul/spirit, at the practical level it is difficult easily to dispense with the body. So, contrary to conventional wisdom that suggests the ancient world denigrated corporeal essence, the *PGM* testify to an active interest in the body. I think that because the ancients were not as aware of the interplay between psychology and corporeality as moderns, they could make such statements as “whether in the body or not”—as a matter of fact, it was all body-based, body-rooted, and in the body. To be sure, in some instances, the experience was of leaving the body behind, quite normal in some ecstatic experiences while, in other instances, the experience was body-based. The body becomes not only the medium through which the ecstatic states take place but also the means to an ecstatic state. The *PGM* ritualizes the body in an amazing number of ways and uses a range of body parts to induce these ecstatic states.

#### ***PGM* IV. 475–829**

While this famous text, known as the Mithras Liturgy, concerns itself with describing an ascent, such ascents are nevertheless the stuff of dreams, visions, and techniques that are designed to trigger states of ecstasy.<sup>20</sup> The goal is immortalisation, which cannot be achieved

without excursions into the spirit world, and such excursions required learning particular techniques of ecstasy.

The instructions for the ritual are provided only after the ascent is described—an impressive account of “ascend[ing] into heaven as an inquirer and behold[ing] the universe” (484–485).<sup>21</sup> A long, complex invocation precedes the instructions for the rite of ascent. It involves reciting a number of prayers, expressing the desire for immortalisation, hyperventilating, thwarting the advances of hostile gods and angels, making hissing and popping sounds, invoking the seven immortal gods of the world, drawing the breath of the divine into oneself, hailing a “youthful god, beautiful in appearance, with fiery hair, and in a white tunic and a scarlet cloak, and wearing a fiery crown” with the greeting, “hail, O lord, great power, great might, king, greatest of gods, Helios, the lord of heaven and earth, god of gods: mighty is your breath; mighty is your strength, O lord” (634–645), bellowing to excite the five senses, becoming disembodied, and speaking as if prophesying in ecstasy.

The invocation itself involves the initiate in a number of techniques designed to trigger changes in states of consciousness. It begins by expressing the desire to be given immortal birth so that “I may gaze upon the immortal beginning with the immortal spirit water, with the most steadfast air . . . that I may be born again in thought . . . and the sacred spirit may breath in me. . . for today I am about to behold, with immortal eyes—I, born mortal from mortal womb, but transformed by tremendous power and an incorruptible right hand and with immortal spirit, the immortal aeon and master of the fiery diadems . . .” (506–520).<sup>22</sup> Once the desire for immortalisation has been expressed, the first technique is introduced. The initiate is instructed to draw in breath from the rays. Drawing in three times as much as he can, he will see himself lifted up and ascending to the height, so that he seems to be in midair. From that moment on mortal hearing ends and immortal vision takes over: “For in that day and hour you will see the divine order of the skies; the presiding gods rising into heaven, and others setting” (540–545).

Breathing in the rays of the sun at the rate of three times as much as one can resonates with hyperventilating and the resultant symptoms of rapid heart rate and breathing, floating sensations, faintness or fainting, numbness around the mouth, in the fingertips or toes, and cramping of the hands and fingers. In this text, breathing in the divine

at these extraordinary levels leaves the initiate feeling faint and eventually collapsing altogether. Feeling faint is often accompanied by light-headedness and sensations of floating in midair. It is not surprising, then, that after stipulating the exercise of heavy breathing, the text mentions that the initiate will be “lifted up and ascending to the height, so that you seem to be in midair” (540). Hyperventilation helps to alter the initiate’s state of consciousness—a type of semiconscious ecstatic state triggered by the reduction of carbon dioxide levels in the brain. It also appears to trigger a fainting spell in which the initiate hears “nothing either of man or of any other living thing, nor see[s] anything of mortal affairs on earth” (540–545). As the initiate crosses the border between consciousness and unconsciousness, they “will see immortal things” (545). It is in this liminal state that ocular transformation takes place and permits a perception of reality that is not normally open to the eyes.

Initially the gods stare hostilely and advance aggressively towards the initiate. But after the initiate puts a right finger on the mouth and says “silence, silence, silence,” then makes a long hissing sound and a popping sound, the gods look graciously upon the initiate and no longer rush towards him in a threatening way (550–565). At once, the initiate is to recite a prayer with eyes closed which, among other things, involves invoking the seven immortal gods of the world (590–620). Upon recitation of this prayer, a thundering and shaking in the surrounding realm will commence, along with the initiate feeling agitated. All of this takes place while the eyes are closed. Once the eyes are opened, however, “you will see the doors open and the world of the gods which is within the doors.” The pleasure and joy of the sight will cause your spirit to run ahead and ascend (625). The initiate is then to stand still, draw breath from the divine into himself, and stare intently . . . this will restore the soul and lead directly into a vision of a “youthful god, beautiful in appearance, with fiery hair, in a white tunic and a scarlet cloak, and wearing a fiery crown” (635). Here again the technique of drawing in breath of the divine and staring intently combine the two elements of hyperventilating and staring steadily, intently, and with rapt attention at a fixed point. Each of these techniques is frequently employed throughout the *PGM* not only to trigger an altered state of consciousness but also to maintain it (hydromancy).

Besides the techniques of hyperventilation, reciting prayers with eyes closed, drawing in breath of the divine, and gazing intently, the initiate is twice instructed to “make a long bellowing sound, like a horn, releasing all his breath and straining his sides” (665). In line 705 the initiate is instructed to “at once make a long bellowing sound, straining his belly, that he may excite the senses; he is to bellow long until out of breath.” He is then to say, “life of me, dwell in my soul, do not abandon me” (710) All the while, the initiate is to gaze upon the god while bellowing long” and greeting him with these words:

Hail, O Lord, O Master of the water! Hail, O Founder of the earth!  
Hail, O Ruler of the Wind! O Bright Lightener . . . Give revelation,  
O Lord, concerning the NN matter. O Lord, while being born  
again, I am passing away; while growing and having grown, I am  
dying; while being born from life generating birth, I am passing on,  
released to death—as you have founded, as you have decreed, and  
have established the mystery (710–724).

Of interest here is the instruction to bellow loudly, to bellow long until out of breath, and to bellow hard so as to strain the belly. As is well known in human experience, bellowing, shouting loudly, screaming, or whooping unleash a cocktail of hormones in the body. These hormones rouse a person to a heightened state of awareness. The cheering of fans at sporting events, the hollering of teams in huddles, the grunting of athletes (weight lifters, tennis players, etc), the bellowing of soldiers as they emerge from trenches, the chanting of crowds repeating defiant slogans, the droning of initiates as they intone mantras, all of these activities effectively stimulate the senses, sharpen focus, notch up intensity and desire, and inflame courage, helping to release every ounce of muscle strength. In other words such activity catapults the mind and body into an altered state, preparing someone for competition, combat, or an encounter with the gods.<sup>23</sup> Bellowing excites the senses.

After the initiate has spoken the greeting to the god, the god immediately responds with a revelation. While the content of the revelation is not disclosed, the unveiling will cause the initiate to “grow weak in soul and [he] will not be in [your] himself” (725). In this state, however, the initiate will be able to comprehend all matters by himself and will remember infallibly all things spoken to him by the god even though the oracle will contain myriads of lines.

In other words, an elevated state of knowledge, awareness, and memory are the particular outcome of growing weak in soul and not being in oneself. The initiate is also offered the possibility of taking along a fellow initiate so that he too may hear the things spoken. In preparation, the fellow initiate must remain pure for seven days, and abstain from meat and the bath. Should the initiate remain alone, without fellow, however, and undertake the things communicated by the god, he will “speak as if prophesying in ecstasy” (735–740). Apparently, the content of the revelation causes the initiate to grow weak in soul and to become disembodied, and undertaking the things communicated by the god leaves the initiate uttering words as if prophesying in a state of ecstasy. The list of prohibited actions (not bathing) and forbidden food (abstaining from meat) are not unusual, with parallels in Jewish, Graeco-Roman philosophical, and hermitic-monastic piety.<sup>24</sup> Lists of prohibited food and drink include specific culinary items such as meat, wine, vegetable, strong drink, onions, garlic, and fish.<sup>25</sup> The type of meat from which the initiate is to abstain is not mentioned here. What is clear, however, is that abstention from the mundane, human desires of eating and bathing in this text are preconditions of gaining the necessary power to achieve elevated knowledge and sharpened hearing.

Ascending into heaven as an enquirer in order to behold the universe is not a simple undertaking but requires careful preparation. The invocation makes the initiate ready for the ascent. This, however, is not the end of it. A second stage involves the elaboration of a recipe for obtaining the “ointment for the immortalization” (770). The rite centers on a sun-scarab that has twelve rays. The sun-scarab is made to fall into a deep, turquoise cup, during a time when the moon is invisible. A cake is prepared by grinding together the seed of the fruit pulp of the lotus, and honey. After the scarab consumes the cake and dies, it is thrown into a glass vessel filled with rose oil. The vessel is set upon sacred sand spread out in a pure manner, and a formula is pronounced over the vessel for seven days, while the sun is in mid-heaven (760). On the seventh day, the scarab is buried in a flourishing bean field, together with myrrh, Mendesian wine, and fine linen. After feasting and entertaining, the initiate stores the ointment for the immortalization in a pure manner. When the god eventually appears, at first rejecting the ointment, the encounter proceeds as follows: the initiate is to take a leaf of the persea tree and anoint it with juice



mixed with honey and myrrh and to inscribe an eight lettered name upon it, as given to him (I EE 00 IAI). He is then to keep pure for three days, come out in the morning to face the sunrise, and lick off the leaf while he shows it to the sun (780–785).

The desire for immortalization and the excursion into the spirit world in order to obtain it involved an impressive number of techniques to trigger an ecstatic state. Hyperventilating, reciting prayers with eyes closed, gazing intently at a fixed point, bellowing, abstaining from meat and bath for a period of seven days, preparing the ointment of immortalization, and licking the leaf of the persea tree, prepared the initiate for the mystical journey through the cosmic regions.

#### *PGM IV. 850–929*

This text describes a technique that produces a trance; a procedure that causes a hypnotic or an ecstatic state or what appears to be an ecstatic seizure. It works on both men and boys and is not to be shared with just anyone, in particular with someone who may put it to questionable use. It begins with a formula that calls upon the holy names to reveal to the initiate, through a man or boy medium, the thing that he wants, to inspire the medium concerning that which the initiate asks, or to enter into the medium and reveal to the initiate concerning the matter (878, 895). It is quite possible that the formula was intended to hypnotize a suggestible man or boy. While the one desiring the revelation speaks, it is the medium that is called to stand in place of the magician. Both should be rather naïve and simple-minded along with being virginal and sexually pure. It is clear that the reason for virginity and naïveté was that of purity, though a naïve subject was also ideal for hypnosis.

Once the formula has been spoken, the designated medium is to be purified by being kept from intercourse for three days.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the petitioner is to remain sexually pure. After the third day, the medium is to be taken to an open place in an isolated and pure location and seated on unbaked bricks. He is then to be dressed and given an anubian head of wheat and a falconweed plant. Both of these plants are intended to protect him. The petitioner is to dress himself with the fibre of a male date palm, extend his hands up to heaven, toward the rays of the sun, and repeat the formula seven times (905). Next he is to make an offering of male frankincense after pouring out

wine, beer, honey, or milk of a black cow onto grapevine wood. Once these steps have been completed the formula is repeated again, only this time directly into the ear of the medium, who immediately falls down, gripped by a divine ecstatic seizure. While the medium is prostrate on the ground, the petitioner is to sit down on the bricks and ask the medium concerning the matter. The medium then describes everything in truth (915).

At the end of the session, both petitioner and medium are to be crowned with a garland of indigenous wormwood because the god delights in the plant. It is clear that the purpose of this act is to protect both petitioner and medium from harm (perhaps on occasion the medium would either come out of his trance with difficulty or suffer negative side effects). The petitioner then carefully dismisses the deity with an invocation of dismissal. If the deity refuses to leave, a sacrifice is required, accompanied by the words, "go away, lord, to your own thrones and protect him from all evil" (920). Finally, the medium must be awakened from his seizure. The initiate stands away from the medium, spreads his palms on his buttocks, keeps his feet together on the ground, and repeatedly recites a formula until the medium awakes.

The object of these rituals is to bring about an ecstatic seizure or trancelike state in a suggestible medium. Inducing the trance in the medium permits receiving revelation on a matter of some concern vicariously so that the petitioner is not exposed to the dangers of hostile and aggressive gods. The large number of invocations of dismissals and protective charms indicates that excursions into the world of the spirits and gods were fraught with danger.

The body is integral to bringing on a divine ecstatic seizure—posture, ritualized activity, and changing the shape of the body's contours by ornamenting it are exercises designed to "modify the relation of the individual to the self, the body, the initiate's sense of identity, and the environment of time, space, or other people."<sup>27</sup> Sexual abstinence, sitting on unbaked bricks, dressing the body, crowning the head, and making offerings are all activities that are calculated to modify sensory input. To bring the initiate out of the trance once more involves the body, from placing palms on buttocks, keeping feet together on the ground, to repeating specific formulae. Body ritual prepares and transforms corporeal essence for encounters

with spirits and gods—indeed, one could argue that these encounters were impossible without the body.

#### **PGM IV. 930–1114**

A large number of the *PGM* are concerned with the desire to receive direct visions, dream oracles, and dreams.<sup>28</sup> This spell combines a charm for a direct vision of the gods with a lamp divination and a prayer for a divine alliance. The initiate is to say the prayer for divine alliance (literally “god’s arrival”), first toward the sunrise and then before a lamp. Whenever seeking these divinations he is to be dressed in the garb of a prophet, shod with fibres of the doum palm, and crowned with a spray from an olive tree, with a single-shooted garlic tied around the middle of the spray. While clasping a pebble inscribed with the number 3663 to the breast, the initiate petitions the god for his grace, strength, and alliance (945–50). The initiate is to compel the god to listen through the charm and the lamp divination. Before using the light-bringing charm, the initiate is to crown his head with the same spray, to stand in the same fashion before the lamp, close his eyes, and recite the spell seven times. If perchance the light-bringing charm invokes the “god-bringing spell darkness,” the living god, fiery, invisible begetter of light is conjured by saying, “I conjure you, holy light, holy brightness, breadth, depth, length, height, brightness. . .” (975–979). Then the initiate is to utter three times with eyes open a long spell that also repeats six times the refrain, “enter in, appear to me, lord. . .” (995–1035). If the god delays, a charm of compulsion is spoken one or three times and the phrase, “enter in, appear to me, lord” repeated twice (1038–1045).

After the god appears, the conjurer greets him while still holding the pebble, but at the same time prepares to retain the god by stepping with his left heel on the big toe of the god’s right foot (1055). This practice will guarantee that the god does not leave prematurely unless the conjurer raises his heel from the god’s toe and at the same time says a dismissal. Invoking the gods was a dangerous business as seen from the content of one of the charms, “enter in, lord, appear to me happy, kind, gentle, glorious, not angry” (1045). Indeed, an elaborate phylactery for the rite is prescribed. The initiate is enjoined to wrap it around his whole body for protection (1070–1080).

Clearly, the body is a stimulus that sets off an action, process, or series of events leading to an altered state in which humans are in a position to receive a direct vision of the gods. The transformation from the mundane to the sublime is achieved through ritualized dress, clasp a pebble to the chest, and ocular control. The act of standing with eyes closed while reciting spells, and opening them while repeating the refrain “enter in, appear to me, Lord,” stimulates changes in sensory perception. Ritualizing the body arouses it and prepares it to traverse the conduits of power in the celestial realms.

## Conclusion

Trances, frenzy, inspired madness, visions, dreams, and ecstasy, are the stuff of religious experience and empowerment in the PGM. Achieving such states does not come through a simple, one-time ritual performance of word and body. The rituals of instruction are elaborate, involving both spoken word—repeated recitations of formulae, repetitions of incantations, and formulaic prayers—and physical exertion—hyperventilating, staring at fixed points, bellowing loudly for extended periods of time, maintaining purity by abstaining from certain proscribed foods and intercourse, and ritualized preparation of ointments. Although the rituals were complex and involved, the outcome provided humans with access to the celestial realms in a variety of ways: ascent, enhanced vision, disembodied/embodyed states, lucid dreams, prodigious memory, elevated awareness, increased knowledge, weakness in the soul, mystical union with the gods, prophesying in ecstasy, and seeing the divine order of the skies. In this exalted state of mind and body, the celestial realms, the gods, and their knowledge became available to mortals. Bodily arousal, fear, agitation, convulsions, pleasure, and joy were additional markers of encounters with gods, lords, and other powerful beings. At the heart of these changes in mind and body equilibrium is some form of ecstatic state.

## Notes

1. Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
2. See Peter Schäfer, “Magic and Religion in Ancient Judaism,” in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, ed. Peter Schäfer and

Hans G. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 65–84. Sir James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1910).

3. Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), 18–46.

4. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

5. Rebecca Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power. Angels, Incantations and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity, 1998), 11.

6. R. Ritner, "Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and Their Religious Context," *ANRW* 2.18.5 (1995): 3333–79. W. M. Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey; Annotated Bibliography (1928–1994) [Indices in vol. II 18.6]," *ANRW* 2.18.5 (1995): 3380–3684. Jonathan Z. Smith, "Trading Places," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, 13–27. John Pilch, "The Transfiguration of Jesus. An Experience of Alternate Reality," in *Modelling Early Christianity*, ed. Philip F. Esler (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 53–64.

7. See, *PGM* IV. 850–929; *PGM* IV. 3007–3086 – large number of references and allusions to Hebrew history, including the adjuration to abstain from pork; *PGM* XIII. 1–343; *PGM* XIII. 343–646; *PGM* XXIIb. 1–26; *PGM* XII. 201–269.

8. Hans Dieter Betz, "Jewish Magic in the Greek Magical Papyri (*PGM* VII.260–71)," in Schäfer and Kippenberg, *Envisioning Magic*, 45–64. Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, vol. 1 (TSAJ 42; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1994).

9. Michael A. Morgan, *Sepher Ha-Rezim: The Book of the Mysteries* (SBLTT 25, Pseudepigrapha Series 11; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983). Douglas L. Penney and Michael O. Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran (4Q560)," *JBL* 113 (1994): 627–50. Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes; Leiden: Brill, 1985). Eidem, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations from Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1993). Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

10. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, eds., *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 263–315.

11. Rather than falling prey to the old debates about the nature of magic and its relationship to religion, for this essay I shall accept the taxa of magic as ritual power. See Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, 3–4; David E. Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," *ANRW* 2.23.2 (1980): 1507–57

12. Brian B. Schmidt, "The 'Witch' of En-Dor, in 1 Samuel 28, and Ancient Near Eastern Necromancy," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, 111–29.
13. S. Daniel Breslauer, "Secrecy and Magic, Publicity and Torah: Unpacking a Talmudic Tale," in Mirecki and Meyer, *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, 263–64. Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World* (London/New York: Routledge, 2001).
14. I.P. Couliano, *Out of this World: Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Einstein* (Boston and London: Shambala, 1991). I.P. Couliano, *Expériences de l'extase: Extase, ascension et recite visionnaire, de l'Hellénisme au Moyen-Age* (Paris: Payot, 1984). Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*. Philo speaks of a trance or heavenly inflicted madness. Max Nelson, "Narcissus: Myth and Magic," *CJ* 95 (April/May 2000), 363–89.
15. Ronald H. Isaacs, *Divination, Magic, and Healing: The Book of Jewish Folklore* (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1998).
16. Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, 3.
17. *Ibid.*, 5.
18. Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions. Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
19. C. Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: The Deciphering of the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. R. Rosenthal (New York: Penguin, 1991).
20. Marvin W. Meyer, ed., *The "Mithras Liturgy"* (SBLTT 10; Graeco-Roman Religion Series 2; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976). For the Mithras Liturgy I follow Meyer's translation in *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, ed. H. D. Betz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 48–54. John S. Hanson, "Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World in Early Christianity," in *ANRW* 2.23.2 (1980): 1395–1427.
21. Alan F. Segal, "Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christianity and their Environment" in *ANRW* 2.23.2 (1980): 1333–94.
22. Martha Himmelfarb, "The Practice of Ascent in the Ancient Mediterranean World," in *Death, Ecstasy, and Otherworldly Journeys*, ed. John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 121–37.
23. The possessed man at Gerasa howls in the cemetery and shouts when he encounters Jesus (Mark 5:1–20).
24. The Manicheans proscribed meat consumption because the flesh had very few traces of the light element present within it, but permitted vegetable consumption because it had greater quantities of light particles present within it.

25. *PGM* I. 42–195. Abstain from animal food. An aerial spirit will bring water, bread, olive oil, vinegar, and plenty of vegetables, with the exception of pork. . . “but as for pork, you must not ever tell him to bring this at all,” and fish. *PGM* I. 262–347 says to refrain from all unclean things and from all eating of fish. The prohibition against pork was well known in Egypt. It was considered unclean because it was related to Seth. *PGM* V. 52–85 prohibits all meat, wine and uncooked food. See, W. T. Darby, et al., *Food: The Gift of Osiris*, 2 vols. (London, New York, San Francisco: Academic Press, 1977).

26. *PGM* I. 262–347 enjoins the one summoning the heavenly gods to refrain from all sexual intercourse, “so that you may bring the god into the highest desire toward you” (290).

27. John J. Pilch, “Altered States of Consciousness: A Kitbashed Model,” *BTB* 26 (1996): 133.

28. *PGM* IV. 2441–2621; *PGM* IV. 54–69; *PGM* Va. 1–3; *PGM* VII. 250–254; *PGM* VII. 319–334; *PGM* VII. 335–347; *PGM* VII 359–369; *PGM* VII. 664–685; *PGM* VII. 703–726; *PGM* VII. 727–739; *PGM* VII. 740–755; *PGM* VII. 795–845; *PGM* VIII. 64–110; *PGM* XII. 144–152; *PGM* XII. 153–160; *PGM* XII. 190–192; *PGM* XXIIb. 27–31; *PGM* XXIIb. 32–35; *PDM* Suppl. 60–101; *PDM* Suppl. 101–116; *PDM* Suppl. 117–130.