“The Greek magical papyri” is a collection of magical spells and formulas, hymns, and rituals from Greco-Roman Egypt. Dating from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., these fascinating papyri have survived not only the forces of nature, but the systematic efforts of ancient official cults to destroy such documents. This new translation of the Greek papyri, as well as Coptic and Demotic texts, has been brought up to date and is now the most comprehensive collection of this literature, and the first ever in English.

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VOLUME ONE: TEXTS

With an updated Bibliography

Edited by

HANS DIETER BETZ
To be able to eat garlic and not stink: Bake beetroot and eat them.

To keep an old woman from either chattering or drinking too much: Mix a
portion of pure* and put it in her mixed wine.

To make the gladiators painted [on the cups] “fight”: Smoke some “fire
head” underneath them.

To make cold food burn the banqueter: Speak a squall in hot water and give him
to wash with. To relieve him: [Apply] oil.

To let those who have difficulty intermingling* perform well: Give gum mint
with wine and honey to be smeared on the face.

To be able to drink a lot and not get drunk: Eat a baked pig’s lung.

To be able to travel [a long way] home and not get thirsty: Gulp down in
beaten in wine.

To be able to copulate a lot:* Grind up fifty tiny pinecones with 2 oza. of wine
and two pepper grains and drink it.

To get an erection* when you want: Grind up a pepper with some honey and
coat your “thing.”

*Tr.: Roy Koralny. This curious collection of recipes contains humorous tricks as well as
helpful remedies presumably designed to be performed or used at a symposium dinner.
Similar tricks are found scattered throughout the pages of Athenaeus’ Deipnosophists.
See also PGM XIII: VII. 149–56; Delarue, Antiqua Atheniaca 449 (3–7); Wellington,
APAWPPT 7 (1928): 1–80. It has not been fully appreciated that this collection seems to
refer to events that take place at a dinner table. This fact does not necessarily hold true for
the other examples of papyrus.

PGM VII. 186–90
*Favor and victory charm: Take a blood-eating gecko that has been found
among the tombs and grasp its right front foot and cut it off with a reed, allowing the
gecko to return to its own hole alive. Fasten the foot of the creature to the fold
of your garment and wear it.

*Tr.: E. F. Heck

PGM VII. 191–92
*Eternal spell for binding a lover: Rub together some gall of a wild boar, some
rock salt, some Attic honey and smear the head of your penis.

*Tr.: E. N. O’Neil

PGM VII. 193–96
*For scorpion sting: On a clean piece of papyrus, write the characters and places
on the part which has the sting; wrap / the papyrus around it, and the sting will
lose its pain immediately.

4. Cf. Athenaeus 3. 84e for a similar breath freshener.
6. It seems likely that the reference is to translucent, painted glass which, when lit, produces its
effect.
7. The reference is presumably to those who are shy in a social setting; the concoction is to be
placed on the face.
8. Cf. Athenaeus 2. 52d where eating almonds is said to prevent drunkenness.
9. In Athenaeus 2. 38f and 2. 60f similar means for quenching thirst are found.
10. Cf. Athenaeus 1. 84f–c. Where certain devices for having frequent sexual intercourse are
mentioned.
11. See on this point PGM VII. 194–95; PDM xi. 58–62.
These are the characters: Ω γ Π ι Λ ι ι γ ι ι ι (there are 11 characters).

To: John Scarborough.

For discharge of the eyes: Write [this] on a piece of papyrus and attach it as an amulet: “BOURARISAROURBRARABRAINS.”

To: John Scarborough.

For migraine headache: Take oil in your hands and utter the spell / “Zéus sowed grape seed: it parts the soil; he does not sow it; it does not sprout.”

To: John Scarborough.

Another: Write these things on scarlet parchment: “ABRASAX” (and add the usual). Place it, having made it into a plaster, on the side of the head.

To: John Scarborough.

Another: Write these things on hyena parchment: “THAPSATE THRAITO”—as I found in another recipe: “TEUTHRAÍO THRAITEU THRAITO THABARMAI / LUKALIRÁTÀ”—deliver [him], NN, from the cough that holds him fast.

To: John Scarborough.

Another: On hyena parchment write these characters: ΚΛΑΘΥΑΤΕΥΤΕΟΠΩ. Hang it around the neck as an amulet, but keep it dry while wearing.

To: John Scarborough.

For hardening of the breasts: Take a fine linen rag and write on it in black ink: ΚΟΣΤΟΑΘΡΟΡΩ.

To: John Scarborough.

For swollen testicles: Take a cord from a coin bag / and say with each knot “Kas-” once, “Thab” twice.

To: John Scarborough.

For fever with shivering fits: Take oil in your hands and say 7 times, “SABADH” (and the usual, twice). And spread on oil from the sacrum to the feet.

To: John Scarborough.

For daily fever and nightly fever: On the shiny side of an olive leaf write Β, and on the dark side write Α and wear it as an amulet.

To: John Scarborough.
But the strip of cloth put around your neck, so that he will not smite you.

Formula to be spoken to the lamp: “I call upon you, the headless god, the one who has his face upon his feet; you are the one who lança lightning, / who thunders, you are / the one whose mouth continually pours on himself. You are the one who is over Necessity ABRAMATE, the one who is lying on a coffin and having at the side of the head an iron cushion of resin and asphalt, the one whose they call ANOUTH. Rise up, daimon. You are not a daimon, but the [blood] of the 2 falcons, / who chatter and watch before the head of Heaven. Reuse your nighttime form, in which you proclaim all things publicly. I conjure you, daimon, by your two names ANOUTH ANOUTH. You are the headless god, the one who has a head and his face on his feet, / dust-sighted Besas. We are not ignorant. You are the one whose mouth [continually] burns. I conjure [you by] your two names ANOUTH ANOUTH M. ORA PHESARA B. . . . Come, lord, reveal to me concerning the NN matter, without deceit, without treachery, immediately, immediately, quickly. Quickly.” The small figure is drawn in the beginning of the book.

W. C. Geese.

*Request for a dream oracle. A request which is always used. Formula to be spoken to the day lamp: “NALENCHRE NALENCHRE, mother of fire and water, you are the one who rises before ARCHENTECHTA, reveal to me concerning the NN matter. If yes, show me a plant and water, but if not, fire and iron; immediately, immediately, quickly.”

W. C. Geese.

*Another to the same lamp: “Hail, lord, lamp, you who shine beside Osiris and shine beside Osirhentechta and my lord, the archangel Michael. If it is advantageous for me to do this, show me a plant and water, but if not, fire and iron, immediately, immediately.”

W. C. Geese.

*For ascent of the uterus: “I conjure you, O Womb, [by the] one established

17. See the note on l. 227 above. There is no previous reference in this charm to a picture (though “writ” in l. 226 can also mean “draw”). Cf., however, PGM VIII. 64–65.

18. See this detail, see PGM VIII. 67.


20. Cf. on this point PGM VIII. 97–98.

21. A reference to Isis and Nephthys, who in the form of falcons or kites watch over the body of Osiris. See Griffiths, Pharisades De Texte et Oracles 38, 305, 328. [R.R.B.]

22. See on this concept the parallel passage PGM VIII. 100–101, which has "Oriques, "or Osiris," instead of "of Heaven." But "of Heaven" should be kept (against the suggestion by F. Boll, in Preisendanz, apparatus ad loc.). Perhaps, Nix (Heaven) is really meant here: her image was placed in the coffin in such a way that her head and that of the dead were close to each other. [L.B.]

23. The picture is missing; it may have been in the portion of the papyrus which is now lost.

24. See PGM VIII. 171 and note; note also the apparatus at PGM VIII. 232.

over the Aïyôn, before heaven, earth, sea, light, or darkness came to be: (you?) also created the angels, being fire, flame, AMMICAMITAOI and CHAUCMAO (cf. Enoch)

OUFLACHÓ ODÜ OU PROSENGOGE, and who sit over the cherubim, who bear your (?) own throne, that you return again to your seat, and that you do not turn (to one side) into the right part of the ribs, 26 or into the left part of the ribs, and that you do not gnaw into the heart like a dog, but remain indeed in your own intended and proper place, not chewing (as long as) I conjure by the one who, in the beginning, made the heaven and earth and all that is therein. Hallelujah! Amen! 23

Write this on a tin tablet and "clothe" it in 7 colors. 27

*Tr.: John Scarborough.

**PGM VII. 272–83**


*Tr.: W.G. Frese. An Egyptian calendar of months and days unsuitable for magic operations. See P. Fr. 148, 26, 29. See also PGM VII. 153–37. Delattre, L'entrelac.

**PGM VII. 284–99**


*Tr.: E. N. O'Neil. Cf. PGM III. 275–81, which is very similar to this passage despite some significant differences in detail.

**PGM VII. 300**

"SACHMOU OIZOZO, you the one who thunders, the one who shakes the heaven / and the earth, the one who has swallowed the serpent, hour by hour raising the

some problems [blockage] in urination, and also causes a swelling of the pubic area; in some patients, it [will cause] an inability to stand upright." [J.V.] For a more magical interpretation see A. A. Barb, "Die Matrix," JWCG 16 (1953): 193–238.

26. The context might suggest "ipsi," but the Greek is specific; perhaps the author was quite vague in the knowledge of internal anatomy. [J.V.]

27. Presumably, this means that the cord around the neck is to be woven together from the threads of seven colors. The strip of tin would then be worn as an amulet.
365

*Charm for causing separation: On a pot for smoked fish inscribe a spell with a bronze stylus and recite it afterwards and put it where they live, where they usually return, repeating at the same time this spell: "I call upon you, god, you who are in the empty air, you who are terrible, invisible, and great, you who afflict the earth and shake the universe, you who love disturbances and hate stability: scatter the clouds from one another, L A N O Y E I O E B R E T H I O P A K R B E H I O B O L O H O S E T H B A S O U A M A P A T A T H N A S A P O P S A B O E S O A T A P H I A T A R B A O U S O T H A H A R A B A B O B A R A A R O B R E I T H A B O L O H O S E T H B O K K O L H O S E T H O L L A R M B T H N P S; give him, NN, the son of her, NN, strife, war, and to him, NN, the son of her, NN, odiousness, enmity, just as Typhon and Osiris had" (but if it is a husband and wife, "just as Typhon and Asia had"). "Strong Typhon, very powerful one, perform your mighty acts."

*Tr.: R. F. Hock. This charm provides a means for effecting a breach between two men, friendship or love for each other, with a variant formula inserted to make the spell work against a husband and wife.

376-96

*Charm to induce insomnia: Take a living bar and on the right wing paint with myrrh the following figure, and on the left write the 7 names of the god as well as "Let her, NN whom NN bore, lie awake until she consents." And so release the bar again.

Perform this spell at the waning of the moon when the goddess is in her third night, and the woman will die for lack of sleep, without lasting / 7 days.

This charm cannot at any time have an antidote. But if you at some time wish one, do not release the bar, but keep it in custody; and this does the same thing: when you want to release it, wash off with spring water [what] has been written on the wings and release the bird. But do not do this, save for a great intrigue.

91. On the enmity between Typhon/Seth and Osiris, see PGM VII 964 and n.
92. That is, the moon goddess Selene.
*"Foamy of the Moon": It is a white stone-like globe, which is rubbed into a liquid like a gum.


**PDM xiv. 935–39**

935 *Prescription for an ear which is watery: Salt; heat with good wine and apply to it after first cleaning it. You should rub copper salt 643 heat with wine, and apply this for four days.


**PDM xiv. 940–52**

940 *Salamander, a small lizard which is blue-green 643 in color and which has no feet.*

945 *Ram's-horn 643 is its name; an herb which is like a wide femic bush. Its leaf and its stem are incised like the "love-man" plant. You should pound it when it is dry, sift it, make it into a dry powder, and apply it to any wound. It stops.*

950 Styx; it grows like / with regard to its leaf. Its seeds are twisted like a "ram's-horn" plant which has a small thorn at its end.


**PDM xiv. 953–55**

953 *A prescription to stop blood: Juice of "Great-Nile" plant together with beer; you should make the woman drink it at dawn before she has eaten. It stops.*

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyri, verso, col. v/1–3.

**PDM xiv. 956–60**

956 *The way to know if a woman whether she will be pregnant: You should make the woman urinate on this plant, above, again, at night. When morning comes, if you find the plant scorched, she will not conceive. If you find it / green, she will conceive.*


**PDM xiv. 961–65**

961 *A prescription to stop blood: Leaf of 643 leaf of fresh "copper-fly" plant. Pound, put [it] on yourself while you lie with the woman. Another: Myrrh, galac of a gazelle; pound with / old scented wine; put [it] on yourself while you lie with her.*

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyri, verso, col. vi/9–13. The word preceded by *is written in Demotic with Old Coptic gloss inserted above.

562. Reading lhm hath, as Griffith and Thompson, The London Papyrus 175, n. on V. 1. IV. 7. Copper based medicines were common in Pharaonic medicine, presumably since the copper helped kill bacteria.

563. See PDM IV. 1090.

564. Written in Egyptian and Greek.

PDM xiv. 966-69

*Aphodel, also called wild onion.*

Garlic, also called wild garlic.

*Tr. Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. vi/14-17.*

PDM xiv. 970-77

*A prescription to stop liquid in a woman: The first prescription: salt and oil... two days after the two days.*

The second prescription: White lead; you should pound it with a little salt paste of an oil dealer very carefully; you should put true oil of fine quality to it, together with an egg; you should pound them; you should bring a strip of fine woven linen; you should dye it in this medicine (she should wash in the bath and wash in good wine); you should put the medicated strip up in her; you should push it in and out in her womb for a short time, in the manner of a man’s phallicus, until the medicament permeates; you should remove it; and you should leave her until evening. When evening comes, you should dye a bandage in genuine honey and put it up in her until dawn, for three (another [manuscript] says, four) days.

*Tr. Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. vii/1-8.*

PDM xiv. 978-80

*Another, after it: Juice of a cucumber which has been rubbed, one measure; water of an animal, one measure; in accordance with the measure of a wine qnt, you should add a measure of good wine to them and she should drink it at midday without having eaten anything at all after bathing in the bath, which she had beforehand. When evening comes, you should put the rag with honey up in her as above for seven days.*

*Tr. Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. vii/1-4.*

PDM xiv. 981-84

*Another, after it: You should bring a new dish; you should put ten measure of old sweet wine in it; and you should put a drachma of fresh rue in it from dawn until midday. She should wash in the bath, come out, and drink it. When evening comes, you should put honey up in her as above again for seven days.*

*Tr. Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. vii/4-7.*

PDM xiv. 985-92

*Goss: You should make the man sit down, place clay under the man’s feet, and place... after it* while his feet are on it. You should ask the man, “Has it [already] healed?” for three days. Afterwards you should bring an ant; you should cook it in henna oil, and you should anoint his foot with it. When you have finished, you should bring Alexander leb, dried grapes, and *Potentilla.*

*566. See Griffith and Thompson, The Leyden Papyrus 177, n. to verso col. V, l. 15.
567. See ibid., 178, n. to V, l. 1, for a discussion of the passage omitted.
569. Or “him.”
570. Or “whether he has [already] healed.”
571. See Griffith and Thompson, The Leyden Papyrus 180, n. to V, l. VIII, 7.*
should pound them with wine and anoint him. In addition to this, you should breathe at him with your mouth.

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. viii/1-8. The word preceded by "is written in Demotic with an Old Coptic gloss inserted above.

**PDM xiv. 993-1002**

[v. col. ix.]

*Another: 1 dram of spurge; 2 drachm of pepper; 1 drachm of pyrethrum; 1 drachm of assafoetida; 1 litra of native sulfur; 6 litrai of [any] wine; 8 measures of genuine oil. You should pound them and make them into a poultice. Apply to the place which pains the man.

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. xi/1-10.

**PDM xiv. 1003-14**

*Another amulet for the foot of the gouty man: You should write these names on a strip of silver or tin. You should put it on a deerskin and bind it to the foot of the man named, on his two feet: "THMBARATHEM OURERENOUTPE / AIOX-THOUM ARARAMEMOU NAISOU, let NN, whom NN bore, recover from every pain which is in his knees and two feet." You do it when the moon is [in the constellation] Leo.

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. x/1-12.

**PDM xiv. 1015-20**

[v. col. xi.]

*Prescription for a . . . Garlic, frankincense, old . . . genuine oil. Pound them; anoint him with it. When it is dry, you should wash him with cold water.

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. xi/1-6.

**PDM xiv. 1021-23**

*Prescription for a foot which is very stiff: (it is) very good. You should wash his foot with cucumber juice and rub it on his foot very well.

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. xi/7-9.

**PDM xiv. 1024-25**

[v. col. xi.]

*Another: Sycamore figs of . . . fruit of acacia; perse fruit. Pound [them]; 30:

*Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyrus, verso, col. xi/10-11.

**PDM xiv. 1026-45**

**"I am this great one, shab i"** (another manuscript) says, "the great one, shab i"), "who makes magic against the great Triphius, the lady of Koot, Koot, Koot. The waters of the Muth is what is in my mouth; the fat of Hatha, worthy of love, B

572. See ibid., 181, n. to V. I. IX. 8.
573. Written in Egyptian and Greek.
574. Ending: written "i, "i".
575. See n. 399 above.
576. Thus R.K.R.
577. See Griffith and Thompson, The London Papyrus 184, n. to V. I. XII. 3.
what is in my heart. My heart yearns, my heart loves with (?) a longing which a she-elephant feels for a cat, a longing which a she-wolf feels for a wolf, a longing which a bitch feels for a dog, the longing the god, the son of Sirius, felt for Moses while he was going to the hill of SUMERI to offer water to his gods, his lord, his *IAHÔ*
habit, his *GLUMYRA MYSE PLEMBEY 5 ML ARRASAKS SENKAF*.

Let NN, whom NN bore, feel it for NN, whom NN bore. Let her feel a yearning, a love, a great madness, a seeking after him everywhere. O fury of *IAHÔ SABAHY HORIZON* (!) all-mighty *ANTEGRATOR* 1035

*ARBANTHALA THALO THALAK,* I cast fury against you 1040

of the great gods of Egypt. Fill your hands with flames and fire! Use it! Cast

on the heart of NN, whom NN bore! With her, O spirit! Take her sleep, O man of

the west! 1045

Let the house of her father and her mother, the places where she is.

Call out while the flame of fire is against her, while she speaks, saying,

“mercy,” she standing outside murmuring “mercy,” for I am an agent (?) of Geb,

Homis 1050

Pre is my name. Tear her name out of Egypt for 40 days, 33 months,

176 days, the complement of six months, O GIRLS, THEY PITY EXOMU ATAM 1055

(Say) seven times."

Crocodile dung, a little donkey placenta, and isy dubium, 7 ope of antelope
dung, gall of a male goat, and first fruits of oil. You should heat them with flax

galls; you should repeat it seven times for seven days; you should anoint your

phallus / with it; and you should lie with the woman, and you should anoint the

woman’s heart. 1060

*[Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyri, verso, col. xii/1–xii/9. Words preceded by ’* are written in the text in Demotic with Old Coptic glosses inserted above.]

**PDM xiv. 1046–47**

*[A prescription] to cause a woman to love her husband: 1060

Acacia, fruit. Pound

with honey, anoint your phallus with it, and lie with the woman.

*[Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyri, verso, col. xii/11–12.]

***PDM xiv. 1047–48**

*To make a woman love copulating with her. Foam of a stallion’s mouth. Anoint

your phallus with it and lie with the woman.

*[Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyri, verso, col. xii/11–12.]

****PDM xiv. 1049–55**

*To make [a woman love copulating with her (?)]: Alum, 1 dram; pepper, 1

dram; dry *membane* plant, 4 drams; orchid, 4 drams. Pound into a dry medication!

Do [your] business with [it] in accordance with what you know with any woman.

*[Tr.: Janet H. Johnson, following the edition and translation of Griffith and Thompson, Demotic Magical Papyri, verso, col. xiv/1–7.]

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578. Is this the preceding with the initial p interpreted as the Egyptian masculine singular definite article and omitted?
579. Plural.
580. See n. 32 above.

v. i. XIII. 6.
582. Or “breast” (?) as Griffith and Thompson, ibid., 187.
583. There is a parallel in PDM xiv. 920–32.