

HANS DIETER BETZ

The “Mithras Liturgy”

*Studien und Texte zu
Antike und Christentum*

18

Mohr Siebeck

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18



Hans Dieter Betz

The “Mithras Liturgy”

Text, Translation, and Commentary

Mohr Siebeck

HANS DIETER BETZ, born 1931; student of Protestant theology at Bethel and Mainz (Germany), and Cambridge (England); 1957 Dr. theol., 1966 Habilitation at Mainz; 1963–1978 Professor of New Testament at Claremont, California; 1978–2000 Shailer Mathews Professor of New Testament, University of Chicago; emeritus since 2000.

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Verzeiht! es ist ein groß Ergetzen,
Sich in den Geist der Zeiten zu versetzen,
Zu schauen wie vor uns ein weiser Mann gedacht,
Und wie wir's dann zuletzt so herrlich weit gebracht.

GOETHE, *Faust I*, ll. 570–73

Preface

The Preface to Albrecht Dieterich's *Eine Mithrasliturgie* is dated Heidelberg, May 2, 1903. The present commentary appearing a century later is deeply indebted to this ground breaking work which has remained in print through several re-editions with updated notes. Dieterich's main achievement was to elevate a seemingly obscure papyrus text to one of the most important original documents reflecting an insider's perspective of Graeco-Egyptian religion in the late Hellenistic period. Dieterich's work, however, has remained unfinished and his achievements have been recognized only partly. Responding to the challenge of carrying further Dieterich's investigations in the light of new evidence, and making the text and its interpretation accessible to an English-speaking readership has been the aim of the present writer.

Interest and encouragement by many colleagues and students in several countries helped speed up the completion of the commentary. Special acknowledgements are due to the participants of seminars at Claremont, Chicago, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature. It is simply impossible to sort out the generous contributions made by so many colleagues and students who attended seminars and lectures over a good number of years.

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Last but not least, I am exceedingly grateful to Georg Siebeck, my publisher, for making it possible that such a specialized study can see the light of day; to the editors of the series “Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity” for accepting the volume; and to the team of Mohr Siebeck, especially Henning Ziebritzki and Matthias Spitzner, for their pleasant and efficient cooperation.

Chicago, May 2003

Hans Dieter Betz

Abbreviations and Short Titles

ABG	<i>Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte</i>
Abt, <i>Die Apologie</i>	Adam Abt, <i>Die Apologie des Apuleius von Madaura</i>
ACSt	American Classical Studies
ADAI.Ä	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Ägyptologische Abteilung
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AHAW	Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften
AHAW.PH	Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
AlVi	Albae Vigiliae
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
APF	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
APEB	Archiv für Papyrusforschung, Beiheft
ARW	<i>Archiv für Religionswissenschaft</i>
ARW.B	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Beiheft
ARWAW.PC	Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sonderreihe Papyrologica Coloniensia
ASAW.PH	Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-historische Klasse
Assmann, <i>Liturgische Lieder</i>	Jan Assmann, <i>Liturgische Lieder an den Sonnengott</i>
AuC	<i>Antike und Christentum</i>
Audollent, <i>Defixionum Tabellae</i>	Auguste Audollent, <i>Defixionum Tabellae</i>
Aune, <i>Prophecy</i>	David Aune, <i>Prophecy in Early Christianity</i>
Aune, <i>Revelation</i>	David Aune, <i>Revelation</i>
BAH	Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
Bagnall, <i>Egypt</i>	Roger Bagnall, <i>Egypt in Late Antiquity</i>
BAK	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BCNH.T	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section textes
BDAG	Walter Bauer, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (3rd ed., 2000)
BDF	Friedrich Blaß & Albert Debrunner, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i>
BDR	Friedrich Blaß, Albert Debrunner & Friedrich Rehkopf, <i>Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch</i>
BEAT	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
Beck, <i>Planetary Gods</i>	Roger Beck, <i>Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders</i>

Berg, <i>Proclus' Hymns</i>	R. M. van den Berg, <i>Proclus' Hymns</i>
Betz, <i>Lukian</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament</i>
Betz, <i>Galatians</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>Galatians</i>
Betz, <i>GMPT</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation</i>
Betz, <i>Hellenismus und Urchristentum</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>Hellenismus und Urchristentum</i>
Betz, <i>Paulinische Studien</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>Paulinische Studien</i>
Betz, <i>Sermon on the Mount</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>The Sermon on the Mount</i>
Betz, <i>Antike und Christentum</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>Antike und Christentum</i>
Betz, <i>Gottesbegegnung</i>	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>Gottesbegegnung und Menschwerdung</i>
BHTb	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BiTeu	Bibliotheca Teubneriana
<i>BJ</i>	<i>Bonner Jahrbücher</i>
BKP	Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie
Boll, <i>Sphaera</i>	Franz Boll, <i>Sphaera</i>
Boll, <i>Aus der Offenbarung Johannis</i>	Franz Boll, <i>Aus der Offenbarung Johannis</i>
Boll, Bezold, Gundel, <i>Stern Glaube</i>	Franz Boll, Carl Bezold, Wilhelm Gundel, <i>Stern Glaube und Sterndeutung</i>
Boll, <i>Kleine Schriften</i>	Franz Boll, <i>Kleine Schriften zur Sternkunde des Altertums</i>
BollS	Bollingen Series
Bonner, <i>Studies</i>	Campbell Bonner, <i>Studies in Magical Amulets</i>
Bonnet, <i>RÄRG</i>	Hans Bonnet, <i>Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte</i>
Borgen, <i>Philo Index</i>	Peder Borgen, <i>The Philo Index</i>
Bousset, <i>Himmelsreise der Seele</i>	Wilhelm Bousset, <i>Die Himmelsreise der Seele</i>
Bousset, <i>Hauptprobleme</i>	Wilhelm Bousset, <i>Hauptprobleme der Gnosis</i>
Bousset, <i>Kyrios Christos</i>	Wilhelm Bousset, <i>Kyrios Christos</i> (5th ed.)
Bousset, <i>Religionsgeschichtliche Studien</i>	Wilhelm Bousset, <i>Religionsgeschichtliche Studien</i>
Brashear, "Greek Magical Papyri"	William Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri"
Budé	Collection des Universités de France, publiée sous la patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé
Bultmann, <i>HST</i>	Rudolf Bultmann, <i>History of the Synoptic Tradition</i>
Burkert, <i>Greek Religion</i>	Walter Burkert, <i>Greek Religion</i>
Burkert, <i>Ancient Mystery Cults</i>	Walter Burkert, <i>Ancient Mystery Cults</i>
<i>ByZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
BzA	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
BZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, Beihefte
CChr.SA	Corpus Christianorum, Series apocryphorum
CCTC	Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries
<i>CEg</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i>
Chadwick, <i>Origen</i>	Henry Chadwick, <i>Origen: Contra Celsum</i>
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
Clauss, <i>Mithras</i>	Manfred Clauss, <i>The Roman Cult of Mithras</i>
<i>CIR</i>	<i>The Classical Review</i>
CMG	Corpus Medicorum Graecorum

Collins & Fishbane, <i>Death</i>	John J. Collins & Michael Fishbane, eds., <i>Death, Ecstasy and Other Worldly Journeys</i>
Copenhaver, <i>Hermetica</i>	Brian Copenhaver, <i>Hermetica</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres</i>
CSLP	Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum Paravianum
Cumont, <i>Textes et Monuments</i>	Franz Cumont, <i>Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra</i>
Cumont, <i>After Life</i>	Franz Cumont, <i>After Life in Roman Paganism</i>
Cumont, <i>Lux Perpetua</i>	Franz Cumont, <i>Lux Perpetua</i>
Daniel & Maltomini, <i>Supplementum Magicum</i>	Robert Daniel & Franco Maltomini, eds., <i>Supplementum Magicum</i>
DDD	Karel van der Toorn et al., eds., <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i>
Deines & Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Drogenamen</i>	Hildegard von Deines and Hermann Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Drogenamen</i>
Deissmann, <i>Licht vom Osten</i>	Adolf Deissmann, <i>Licht vom Osten</i>
Deissmann, <i>Light from the Ancient East</i>	Adolf Deissmann, <i>Light from the Ancient East</i>
Delatte, <i>Herbarius</i>	Armand Delatte, <i>Herbarius</i>
Delatte & Derchain, <i>Les Intailles</i>	Armand Delattes & Philippe Derchain, <i>Les Intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes</i>
Denniston, <i>Greek Particles</i>	John D. Denniston, <i>The Greek Particles</i>
Diels, <i>Doxographi</i>	Hermann Diels, <i>Doxographi Graeci</i>
D.-K.	Hermann Diels & Walther Kranz, eds., <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i>
Dieterich, <i>Abraxas</i>	Albrecht Dieterich, <i>Abraxas</i>
Dieterich, <i>Nekyia</i>	Albrecht Dieterich, <i>Nekyia</i>
Dieterich, <i>Mithrasliturgie</i>	Albrecht Dieterich, <i>Eine Mithrasliturgie</i>
Dieterich, <i>Kleine Schriften</i>	Albrecht Dieterich, <i>Kleine Schriften</i>
Dieterich, <i>Untersuchungen</i>	Karl Dieterich, <i>Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der griechischen Sprache</i>
DNP	<i>Der Neue Pauly</i>
Dodds, <i>The Greeks and the Irrational</i>	Eric R. Dodds, <i>The Greeks and the Irrational</i>
DÖAW.PH	Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-hist. Klasse
Dölger, <i>Sol Salutis</i>	Franz Joseph Dölger, <i>Sol Salutis</i>
Dornseiff, <i>Das Alphabet</i> ed.(eds.)	Franz Dornseiff, <i>Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie</i> editor (editors)
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
<i>Eranos</i>	<i>Eranos</i>
ERE	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics</i>
ErJB	<i>Eranos-Jahrbuch</i>
Erman & Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i>	Adolf Erman & Hermann Grapow, eds., <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i>
EVO	<i>Egitto e vicino oriente</i>

- Faraone & Obbink, *Magika Hieria* Christopher A. Faraone & Dirk Obbink, eds., *Magika Hieria*
- Fauth, *Helios Megistos* Wolfgang Fauth, *Helios Megistos*
- Festugière, *La Révélation* André-Jean Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*
- FGH Felix Jacoby, ed., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*
- Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*
- Frankfurter, *Religion* David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt*
- Friedrich, *Thessalos* Hans-Veit Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles*
- FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
- Furley & Bremer, *Greek Hymns* William D. Furley & Jan Maarten Bremer, *Greek Hymns*
- FZPhTh *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*
- Gardthausen, *Griechische Paläographie* Viktor E. Gardthausen, *Griechische Paläographie*
- GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
- GGA *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*
- Gignac, *Grammar* Francis T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri*
- GMPT Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*
- Graf, *Ansichten griechischer Rituale* Fritz Graf, ed., *Ansichten griechischer Rituale*
- Graf, *Gottesnähe* Fritz Graf, *Gottesnähe und Schadenzauber*
- Graf, *Magic* Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*
- Griffith & Thompson, *Demotic Magical Papyri* F. Ll. Griffith & Herbert Thompson, eds., *The Demotic Magical Papyri of London and Leiden*
- Griffith & Thompson, *The Leiden Papyrus* F. Ll. Griffith & Herbert Thompson, *The Leiden Papyrus*
- Griffiths, *Plutarch* John Gwyn Griffiths, ed., *Plutarch: De Iside et Osiride*
- Griffiths, *Apuleius* John Gwyn Griffiths, ed., *Apuleius of Madaurus: The Isis-Book*
- Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*
- Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism* Ithamar Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism*
- Gundel, *Dekane* Wilhelm Gundel, *Dekane und Dekanstermbilder*
- Gundel, *Astrologumena* Wilhelm & Hans Georg Gundel, *Astrologumena*
- Gundel, *Weltbild und Astrologie* Hans Georg Gundel, *Weltbild und Astrologie in den griechischen Zauberpapyri*
- Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy* W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*
- Harrauer, *Meliouchos* Christine Harrauer, *Meliouchos*
- HAW Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
- HBVK *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*
- Helbing, *Grammatik Hesp.* Robert Helbing, *Grammatik der LXX Hesperia*
- Hinnells, *Studies* John R. Hinnells, ed., *Studies in Mithraism*
- HLV Hans Lietzmann-Vorlesungen
- HNT Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
- Holzhausen, *Das Corpus Hermeticum* Jens Holzhausen, *Das Corpus Hermeticum Deutsch*

Hopfner, <i>OZ</i>	Theodor Hopfner, <i>Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber</i>
Hornung, <i>Conceptions</i>	Erik Hornung, <i>Conceptions of God</i>
Hornung, <i>Ägypten</i>	Erik Hornung, <i>Das esoterische Ägypten</i>
HRWG	Hubert Cancik et al., eds., <i>Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe</i>
HThR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HThSt	Harvard Theological Studies
HUTh	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
IGSI	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae Siciliae et infimae Italiae</i>
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JAC.E	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i> , Ergänzungsband
Jaeger, <i>Theology</i>	Werner Jaeger, <i>Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers</i>
JCPH	<i>Jahrbücher für classische Philologie</i>
JCPH.S	<i>Jahrbücher für classische Philologie</i> , Supplementband
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JMiS	<i>Journal of Mithraic Studies</i>
Jordan	David Jordan, comments by letter
Jordan, <i>The World of Ancient Magic</i>	David R. Jordan, et al., eds., <i>The World of Ancient Magic</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
Kaimakis, <i>Die Kyraniden</i>	Dimitris Kaimakis, <i>Die Kyraniden</i>
Kingsley, <i>Ancient Philosophy</i>	Peter Kingsley, <i>Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic</i>
Kirk & Raven	G. S. Kirk & J. E. Raven, eds., <i>The Presocratic Philosophers</i>
Klauser & Rücker, <i>Pisciculi</i>	Theodor Klauser & Adolf Rücker, eds., <i>Pisciculi</i>
Kotansky, <i>Amulets</i>	Roy D. Kotansky, <i>Greek Magical Amulets</i>
Kropp, <i>Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte</i>	Angelicus Kropp, et al., <i>Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte</i>
LÄ	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lewy, <i>Chaldean Oracles</i>	Hans Lewy, <i>Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy</i>
LIMC	<i>Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae</i>
Löhr, <i>Verherrlichung</i>	Gebhard Löhr, <i>Verherrlichung Gottes durch Philosophie</i>
Long & Sedley	Anthony A. Long & David N. Sedley, <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i>
LSJ	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stewart Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
Mach, <i>Entwicklungsstadien</i>	Michael Mach, <i>Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens</i>
Mahé, <i>Hermès en Haute-Égypte</i>	Jean-Pierre Mahé, <i>Hermès en Haute-Égypte</i>
Mandilaras, <i>The Verb</i>	Basil G. Mandilaras, <i>The Verb in Greek Non-Literary Papyri</i>
Martinez, <i>P. Michigan XVI</i>	David G. Martinez, <i>P. Michigan XVI</i>
Martinez, <i>Baptized</i>	David G. Martinez, <i>Baptized for Our Sakes</i>
Martinez	David G. Martinez, by communication
MBPF	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
Merkelbach, <i>Weihegrade</i>	Reinhold Merkelbach, <i>Weihegrade und Seelenlehre der Mithrasmysterien</i>
Merkelbach, <i>Mithras</i>	Reinhold Merkelbach, <i>Mithras</i>
Merkelbach, <i>Isis Regina</i>	Reinhold Merkelbach, <i>Isis regina – Zeus Sarapis</i>

Merkelbach & Totti, <i>Abrasax</i>	Reinhold Merkelbach & Maria Totti, eds., <i>Abrasax</i>
Meyer, "Mithras Liturgy"	Marvin Meyer, "Mithras Liturgy"
Meyer & Smith, <i>Ancient Christian Magic</i>	Marvin Meyer & Richard Smith, eds., <i>Ancient Christian Magic</i>
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
Michel, <i>Gemmen</i>	Simone Michel, <i>Die magischen Gemmen</i>
Moulton, <i>Grammar</i>	James H. Moulton, <i>A Grammar of New Testament Greek</i>
Müller, <i>Ägypten</i>	Dieter Müller, <i>Ägypten und die griechischen Isis-Areale</i>
Naveh & Shaked, <i>Amulets</i>	Joseph Naveh & Shaul Shaked, <i>Amulets and Magic Bowls; Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity</i>
Naveh & Shaked, <i>Magic Spells</i>	Joseph Naveh & Shaul Shaked, <i>Magic Spells and Formulae</i>
Nestle-Aland	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> (post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle ed. Barbara et Kurt Aland, et al.; 27th ed. rev.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993)
NF	Neue Folge
Nilsson, <i>GGR</i>	Martin P. Nilsson, <i>Geschichte der griechischen Religion</i>
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NJKPH	<i>Neue Jahrbücher für Klassische Philologie</i>
Nock, <i>Essays</i>	Arthur Darby Nock, <i>Essays on Religion and the Ancient World</i>
Nock & Festugière	Arthur Darby Nock & André-Jean Festugière, eds., <i>Hermès Trismégiste</i>
Norden, <i>Agnostos Theos</i>	Eduard Norden, <i>Agnostos Theos</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovT.S	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NRSV	<i>The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, New Revised Standard Version</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)
<i>NTApoc</i>	Edgar Hennecke et al., eds. <i>New Testament Apocrypha</i>
<i>NTApok</i>	Edgar Hennecke & Wilhelm Schneemelcher, eds., <i>Neutestamentliche Apokryphen</i>
<i>NTFi</i>	<i>Nordisk Tijdskrift for Filologi</i>
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OEAE	<i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt</i>
<i>Orph. Frag.</i>	<i>Orphiconum Fragmenta</i> , ed. Otto Kern
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	James H. Charlesworth, ed., <i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
Pap.	Papyrus
Parker, <i>Miasma</i>	Robert Parker, <i>Miasma</i>
PDM	Papyri Demoticae Magicae
Pease, <i>Cicero</i>	Arthur Stanley Pease, ed., <i>M. Tulli Ciceronis De natura deorum</i>
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PGL	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> , ed. G. W. H. Lampe
PGM	Papyri Graecae Magicae
<i>Ph.</i>	<i>Philologus</i>
PhAnt	Philosophia antiqua

<i>Phoe.</i>	<i>Phoenix</i> . Bulletin uitg. door het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap 'Ex oriente lux'
<i>Phron.</i>	<i>Phronesis</i>
PL	Patrologia Latina
Pohlenz, <i>Die Stoa</i>	Max Pohlenz, <i>Die Stoa</i>
Pradel, <i>Gebete</i>	Fritz Pradel, ed., <i>Griechische und süditalienische Gebete</i>
PRE	Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
PRE.S	Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Supplementband
Preisendanz & Henrichs	Karl Preisendanz & Albert Henrichs, eds., <i>Papyri Graecae Magicae</i>
Preisendanz, vol. 3 (index)	Karl Preisendanz, ed., <i>Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> , vol. 3 (Leipzig & Berlin: Teubner, 1941 [unpublished galleyproofs])
Preisigke, <i>Wörterbuch</i>	Friedrich Preisigke & Emil Kießling, eds., <i>Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden</i>
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RAC.S	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , Supplementband
Radermacher, <i>Grammatik</i>	Ludwig Radermacher, <i>Neutestamentliche Grammatik</i>
<i>RAr</i>	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
Reitzenstein, <i>Poimandres</i>	Richard Reitzenstein, <i>Poimandres</i>
Reitzenstein, <i>Erlösungs-mysterium</i>	Richard Reitzenstein, <i>Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium</i>
Reitzenstein, <i>HMR</i>	Richard Reitzenstein, <i>Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen</i>
RGG	Hans Dieter Betz, et al., eds., <i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> (4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–)
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
Ritner, <i>Mechanics</i>	Robert K. Ritner, <i>The Mechanics of Egyptian Magical Practice</i>
<i>RhM</i>	<i>Rheinische Museum für Philologie</i>
Robinson, <i>Library</i>	James Robinson, ed., <i>The Nag Hammadi Library in English</i>
Roeder, <i>Kulte</i>	Günther Roeder, <i>Kulte</i>
Rohde, <i>Psyche</i>	Erwin Rohde, <i>Psyche</i>
Roscher, <i>Lexikon</i>	Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher, <i>Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie</i>
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
SAWW.PH	Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBA	Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft
SBL.TT	Society of Biblical Literature: Texts and Translations
SBW	Studien der Bibliothek Warburg
SC	Sources chrétiennes
Schäfer, <i>Übersetzung</i>	Peter Schäfer, ed., <i>Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur</i>
Schäfer & Kippenberg, <i>Envisioning Magic</i>	Peter Schäfer & Hans Kippenberg, eds., <i>Envisioning Magic</i>

Schäfer & Shaked, <i>Magische Texte</i>	Peter Schäfer & Shaul Shaked, eds., <i>Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza</i>
Schenke, <i>Nag Hammadi Deutsch</i>	Hans-Martin Schenke, <i>Nag Hammadi Deutsch</i>
Schmekel, <i>Die Philosophie</i>	August Schmekel, <i>Die Philosophie der mittleren Stoa</i>
Schreckenberg, <i>Ananke</i>	Heinz Schreckenberg, <i>Ananke</i>
Schröder, <i>Plutarchs Schrift</i>	Stephan Schröder, <i>Plutarchs Schrift De Pythiae Oraculis</i>
Schürer, <i>History</i>	Emil Schürer, <i>The History of the Jewish People</i>
Schweitzer, <i>Geschichte</i>	Albert Schweitzer, <i>Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung</i>
Schwyzler, <i>Grammatik</i>	Eduard Schwyzler, <i>Griechische Grammatik</i>
Scott, <i>Hermetica</i>	Walter Scott, ed., <i>Hermetica</i>
Sethe, <i>Pyramidentexte</i>	Kurt Sethe, <i>Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte</i>
Sethe, <i>Übersetzung</i>	Kurt Sethe, <i>Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den altägyptischen Pyramidentexten</i>
SGAM	Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und Naturwissenschaft
SGKA	Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums
SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
SHAW.PH	Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
Smith, <i>Studies</i>	Morton Smith, <i>Studies in the Cult of Yahweh</i>
SO	<i>Symbolae Osloenses</i>
Speyer, <i>Frühes Christentum</i>	Wolfgang Speyer, <i>Frühes Christentum im antiken Strahlungsfeld</i>
SSIA	Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen
Stengel, <i>Kultusaltertümer</i>	Paul Stengel, <i>Die griechischen Kultusaltertümer</i>
StPP	Studien zur Paläographie und Papyruskunde
SubEpi	Subsidia Epigraphica
SVF	Hans von Arnim, ed., <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TDSA	Testi e documenti per lo studio dell' antichità
Theiler, <i>Poseidonios</i>	Willy Theiler, <i>Poseidonios: Die Fragmente</i>
ThWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
ThWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
TK	Texte und Kommentare
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i>
Totti, <i>Texte</i>	Maria Totti, ed., <i>Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapisreligion</i>
Tran Tam Tinh, <i>Essai</i>	Vincent Tran Tam Tinh, <i>Essai sur le culte d'Isis à Pompéi</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UMS.H	University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series
Velde, <i>Seth</i>	Henk de Velde, <i>Seth, God of Confusion</i>
Vermaseren, <i>CIMRM</i>	Maarten J. Vermaseren, <i>Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae</i>
Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca I</i>	Maarten J. Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca I: The Mithraeum at S. Maria Capua Vetere</i>
Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca II</i>	Maarten J. Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca II: The Mithraeum at Ponza</i>

Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca III</i>	Maarten J. Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca III: The Mithraeum at Marino</i>
Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca IV</i>	Maarten J. Vermaseren, <i>Mithriaca IV: Le monument d'Ottaviano Zeno et le culte de Mithra sur le Célius</i>
Vermaseren & Van Essen, <i>The Excavations</i>	Maarten J. Vermaseren & C. C. van Essen, <i>The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome</i>
Versnel, <i>Inconsistencies</i>	Henk S. Versnel, <i>Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion</i>
<i>VisRel</i>	<i>Visible Religion</i>
de Vogel, <i>Greek Philosophy</i>	Cornelia J. de Vogel, <i>Greek Philosophy</i>
Volz, <i>Eschatologie</i>	Paul Volz, <i>Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde</i>
Wächter, <i>Reinheitsvorschriften</i>	Theodor Wächter, <i>Reinheitsvorschriften im griechischen Kult</i>
Weinreich, <i>Studien</i>	Otto Weinreich, <i>Religionsgeschichtliche Studien</i>
Wessely, <i>Zauberpapyrus</i>	Carl Wessely, <i>Griechische Zauberpapyrus</i>
Wessely, "Zu den griechischen Papyri"	Karl Wessely, "Zu den griechischen Papyri des Louvre"
Wiedemann, <i>Herodot</i>	Alfred Wiedemann, <i>Herodots zweites Buch</i>
<i>WJA</i>	<i>Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>WKP</i>	<i>Wochenschrift für klassische Philologie</i>
<i>WSt</i>	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
WSt.B	Wiener Studien, Beiheft
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
Zuntz, <i>Persephone</i>	Günther Zuntz, <i>Persephone</i>

Critical Signs used in the Papyrus Text

[]	Lacuna
< >	Omission in the original
[]	Deletion in the original
()	Resolution of a symbol or abbreviation
{ }	Cancelled by the editor of the text
∩	Interlinear addition
αβγδ	Uncertain letters
....	Illegible letters

Introduction

I. The “Mithras Liturgy”: A Provocative Title

The title of the present book is borrowed from Albrecht Dieterich’s *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, which calls for explanation. The title announces two basic assumptions. First of all, the approach to the text is indirectly through Dieterich’s commentary. Secondly, we thus recognize that it was Dieterich who, after considerable preparatory work had been done, decided to call the segment of text taken from the long magical papyrus of Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. grec 574) by the name *Eine Mithrasliturgie*.¹ He intended this title to be provocative, a fact proved subsequently by the reception of the book. The provocation turned out to be greater than Dieterich had anticipated.

Dieterich realized that a different descriptive title is found in the text itself, so he made that title, ΑΠΛΘΑΝΑΤΙΣΜΟΣ ([Ritual of] Immortalization),² the subtitle of his work (p. XI), followed by *Text und Übersetzung der Mithrasliturgie* (“Text and Translation of the Mithras Liturgy”). After publication, the provocative title “Mithras Liturgy” (which of course does not occur in the papyrus itself) became a kind of trigger to evoke controversies going straight to the heart and substance of classical scholarship.

Moreover, Dieterich dedicated his book to Franz Cumont (1868–1947), the famous Belgian scholar on Mithraism,³ whom he greatly admired but whose fundamental theories about Mithras he wished to challenge.⁴ Instead of Cumont’s attribution of the text to an Egyptian magician engaged with Hermeticism, Dieterich’s proposed to take the text’s reference to Mithras

¹ Albrecht Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie* (Leipzig & Berlin: Teubner, 1903; 2nd ed. 1910, by Richard Wünsch; 3rd ed. 1923, by Otto Weinreich; reprinted Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966).

² See the commentary *infra*, at lines 477, 647–48, 741, 747, 771.

³ On Cumont see Robert Turcan, “Franz Cumont, Fondateur,” *Hieros* 2 (1997) 11–20; Corinne Bonnet, “Cumont, Franz,” *RGG* (4th ed.), 2 (1999) 504–5.

⁴ On this point, see Albrecht Dieterich, “Die Religion des Mithras,” *BJ* 108–9 (1902) 26–41; reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften* (ed. Richard Wünsch; Leipzig & Berlin, 1911), 252–71.

seriously and to interpret it in the context of syncretistic forms of Mithraism.⁵ Cumont's basic objections are the following:

"Among the learned researches which we cannot enumerate here, the most important is that of Albrecht Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, 1903. He has endeavored with some ingenuity to show that a mystical passage inserted in a magical papyrus preserved at Paris is in reality a fragment of a Mithraic liturgy, but here I share the skepticism of Reitzenstein (*Neue Jahrb. f. das class. Altertum*, 1904, p. 192) and I have given my reasons in *Rev. de l'instr. publ. en Belg.*, XLVII, 1904, pp. 1ff. Dieterich answered briefly in *Archiv f. Religionswis.* VIII, 1905, p. 502, but without convincing me. The author of the passage in question may have been more or less accurate in giving his god the external appearance of Mithra, but he certainly did not know the eschatology of the Persian mysteries. We know, for instance, through positive testimony that they taught the dogma of the passage of the soul through the seven planetary spheres, and that Mithra acted as a guide to his votaries in their ascension to the realm of the blessed. Neither the former nor the latter doctrine, however, is found in the fantastic uranography of the magician. The name of Mithra, as elsewhere that of the magi Zoroaster and Hostanes, helped to circulate an Egyptian forgery"⁶

Cumont based his views regarding Mithraism on the evidence of inscriptions and literary texts, which, as he correctly pointed out, contained nothing comparable to Dieterich's Mithras Liturgy.⁷ He did not take the name Mithras that occurs in the text seriously, but attributed it to the stereotypical cleverness with which Egyptian magicians dressed up their forgeries. Dieterich's other suggestion, according to which the text contained a "liturgy," was equally unacceptable to Cumont. Besides the problem of defining the term "liturgy," Cumont found it utterly incredible that an Egyptian magician should have had access to a Mithraic liturgy; such an esoteric text, had it existed, would have been highly secret, but no trace of it has survived. These objections are, however, speculative in view of the fact that the Paris Magical Papyrus is meant to be just such an esoteric text.

While these issues will have to be discussed further in the present commentary, it should be understood that Dieterich had walked into another highly

⁵ Cumont's major review of Dieterich is entitled, "Un livre nouveau sur la liturgie païenne," *Revue de l'instruction publique en Belgique* 46 (1904) 1–10; see also his *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (Paris: Leroux, 1906), 300. Dieterich advanced further arguments to persuade Cumont (in *Mithrasliturgie*, 234–36), but Cumont remained unconvinced and repeated his criticism in the 4th edition (Paris: Geuthner, 1929), 272; see also the German edition, *Die orientalischen Religionen im römischen Heidentum* (trans. August Burckhardt-Brandenberg; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1959), 279–80.

⁶ Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1911; reprinted New York: Dover, 1956), 260–61.

⁷ Cf. idem, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* (2 vols.; Bruxelles: Maertin, 1899, 1896), 1.41.

contentious territory, that of the methodological debate between the two most influential schools of classical scholarship at the time, the schools of Hermann Usener (1834–1905) in Bonn⁸ and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in Berlin (1848–1931).⁹ Dieterich represented the methodological approaches developed by Usener, his father-in-law and close collaborator. In Berlin, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was deeply divided about the Usener school's extension of classical scholarship into the areas of popular religion ("Volksreligion"), folklore ("Volkskunde"), superstition ("Aberglaube"), and magic. On the one hand, Wilamowitz confirmed that the study of antiquity must include all of antiquity;¹⁰ on the other hand, he sensed the danger that classical philology could be neglecting the great Hellenic tradition by bogging down in what he contemptuously named "Botokudenphilologie."¹¹ Although he respected Usener, he saw in Dieterich's scholarship a tendency toward disintegration of the discipline of classical philology.¹² As a result, Wilamowitz and

⁸ Instructive is the correspondence between Usener and Wilamowitz; see William M. Calder III, ed., *Usener und Wilamowitz: Ein Briefwechsel 1870–1905* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart & Leipzig: Teubner, 1994), especially 55–58, where both articulate their basic premises regarding ancient religion. On the Usener school see Hans Joachim Mette, "Nekrolog einer Epoche: Hermann Usener und seine Schule: Ein wirkungsgeschichtlicher Rückblick auf die Jahre 1856–1979," *Lustrum* 22 (1979–1980) 5–106; Arnaldo Momigliano, "Hermann Usener," in *New Paths of Classicism in the Nineteenth Century* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1982), 33–48.

⁹ See, especially, Albert Henrichs, "'Der Glaube der Hellenen': Religionsgeschichte als Glaubensbekenntnis und Kulturkritik," in *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (eds. William M. Calder III, Hellmut Flashar, Theodor Lindken; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 263–305, esp. 280, 283–84, 287–88; Friedrich Pfister, "Albrecht Dieterichs Wirken in der Religionswissenschaft," *ARIW* 35 (1938) 180–85.

¹⁰ See the remarkable conclusion of his lecture, given 1893 at Göttingen, entitled "Aus ägyptischen Gräbern" (*Reden und Vorträge* [2nd ed.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1902], 224–55), 254–55: "Ich habe einmal gehört, wie ein bedeutender Gelehrter beklagte, daß die Papyri gefunden wären, weil sie dem Altertum den vornehmen Schimmer der Klassizität nehmen. Daß sie das tun, ist unbestreitbar, aber ich freue mich dessen. Denn ich will meine Hellenen nicht bewundern, sondern verstehn, damit ich sie gerecht beurteilen kann. Und selbst Mahadöh, der Herr der Erden, – soll er strafen, soll er schonen, muß den Menschen menschlich sehn." The final sentence reflects Goethe's ballad of 1797, "Der Gott und die Bajadere: Indische Legende," in *Goethes Werke* (Hamburger Ausgabe, ed. Erich Trunz; München: Beck, 1989), 1.273–76, with the commentary, 664–66.

¹¹ Reported by Pfister, "Albrecht Dieterichs Wirken," 183.

¹² Dieterich made known his future plans that seem to confirm Wilamowitz's suspicions: a multi-volume work, entitled *Volksreligion: Versuche über die Grundformen religiösen Denkens*. In Part IV he wished to treat the subject of "Formen der Vereinigung des Menschen mit Gott," and in it he planned to complete the commentary work on the second part of the Mithras Liturgy. Only Part I was published: *Mutter Erde: Ein Versuch über Volksreligion* (Leipzig & Berlin: Teubner, 1905). See Richard Wünsch, "Albrecht Dieterich," in Dieterich, *Kleine Schriften*, ix–xlii, esp. xxx, xxxvi; Pfister, "Albrecht Dieterichs Wirken," 182–83.

his school consistently treated Dieterich's work as marginal. The deeper reason, to be sure, had to do not so much with differences in philological method but with deeper competing conceptions of what constitutes the discipline of "classical philology."¹³

Dieterich was aware of the kind of risks he was taking. As correspondence with Usener reveals, he discussed matters beforehand with him, in particular the title of the book.¹⁴ He also gave lectures about his work before publication; he mentions his previous lectures on the Mithras Liturgy in the Preface. Thanking his friends Siegfried Sudhaus, Paul Wendland, and Richard Wünsch for their suggestions and warnings means that he shared manuscripts and galley-proofs with friends. Therefore, whatever the risks were, he took them knowingly and courageously, although he may have got more than he had bargained for.

Although even present-day scholars repeat Cumont's rejection of the title and the major hypothesis of Dieterich's book,¹⁵ these responses did not diminish the continuous stimulation exerted by it. The ongoing role Dieterich's book played in scholarship has been documented by the editors in the successive editions. From early on, scholars distinguished between Dieterich's provocative claim that the Mithras Liturgy actually came from the liturgy of the cult of Mithras and the plethora of materials and suggestive ideas assembled in the book. In his authoritative work, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (vol. 2, 1961), Martin P. Nilsson summed up the common view about Dieterich's book in this way. Regarding the main thesis, he says that "it should now be

¹³ See the studies included in *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren* (eds. William Calder III, Hellmut Flashar, Theodor Lindken; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), esp. 280–84.

¹⁴ In his letter to Usener, dated May 3, 1901, he brings up the "Mithrasweihe" and raises the question of the title in a letter of October 29, 1901; replying to Usener's suggestions (non-extant) in the letter of December 8, 1901, he decides on "Eine Mithrasliturgie": "ἀπαθανατισμός hatte ich zuvorgesetzt, weil in dem Papyrus nachher diese Partie so genannt wird in einer Stelle, die ich noch anhangsweise herausgebe: es schien mir die Bezeichnung zu sein, die diese Leute für den Kultakt wirklich brauchten; der Zusatz sollte nur eben die Zugehörigkeit zum *Mithraskult* [sic] gleich vorn hervorheben. Ich ändere das. Würdest Du 'Mithrasliturgie' oder 'Mithrasweihe' auf die Seite drucken? Ich muß auch, da an einer Abbildung für den Titel (eben der Rindschulterszene) probirt wird, die Worte des Titels formuliren. Würde Dir gefallen: EINE MITHRASLITURGIE – Text Übersetzung Einleitung von ... oder die Mittelreihe weglassen? Die Fragen haben aber gar keine Eile!" Quoted with permission from the *Nachlaß* of Usener and Dieterich in the University Library in Bonn (Signature: S 2102.2).

¹⁵ So also Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Egyptian Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 82, n. 33: "The section that mainly concerns us here (475–750) is what Dieterich misleadingly dubbed "eine Mithrasliturgie" in his book of that name."

given up.” Yet, “The significance of Dieterich’s book does not depend on this thesis, but on the more general ideas he presented, which in many ways have since become standard.”¹⁶ This evaluation, however, requires revision in the light of more recent research in the areas of hellenistic syncretism in Graeco-Egypt and in Mithraism. The two implications of Dieterich’s title, therefore, still demand explanation: the appearance of the name of Mithras and the “liturgical” nature of the text.

The present assessment of Dieterich’s work has been well stated by Walter Burkert: “The interest in magical papyri for the history of religion was initiated by Albrecht Dieterich in his books *Abraxas* and *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, the success of which was lasting and well-deserved. Yet the thesis implied in the title *Mithrasliturgie*, that the fantastic voyage to heaven, as contained in this magical book, was enacted in the mysteries of Mithras, was criticized immediately and can hardly be maintained. The text describes a private trip in a quest for oracular revelations, not a communal mystery rite, with special elaborations on a syncretistic background. There remain puzzling problems in explaining this and similar texts.”¹⁷ Indeed, this is the point where new investigations need to begin.

II. The Papyrus

1. Origin and Provenance

The text of the Mithras Liturgy consists of a segment of what scholars call the “Great Magical Papyrus of Paris,” now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Supplément grec #574, part of the Anastasi collection, #1073). According to Preisendanz,¹⁸ the name derives from its great length of 36

¹⁶ Nilsson, *GGR*, 2.670, n. 2: “Diese These ... dürfte nunmehr aufgegeben sein.... Die Bedeutung des Dieterichschen Buches beruht nicht auf dieser These, sondern auf den von ihm vorgetragene allgemeinen Gesichtspunkten, die vielfach maßgebend geworden sind....” For a more detailed discussion of Dieterich, see *ibid.*, 286–93. Cf. also Arthur Darby Nock who follows Cumont and Reitzenstein in his article of 1929 (“Greek Magical Papyri,” *Essays*, 1.176–94, esp. 192): “We are here in the sphere of individualist religion. And this, as Reitzenstein has observed, is the key to the understanding of the so-called *Mithrasliturgie*. That document is neither a liturgy nor, properly speaking, Mithraic. It is an ἀπαθανατισμός, directions how one shall make oneself immortal and pass through the heavens....”

¹⁷ Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 68.

¹⁸ *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1.64; he also explains the different description in Lenormant’s auction catalogue (p. 87) as having 33 pages (see below, n. 20).

leaves containing 3274 lines, written on both sides and to be taken as the pages of a papyrus codex. Fol. 1 recto, 3 verso, 16 and 34 recto, and fol. 16 and 34 recto, verso are blank. The creator of the book had 18 double-leaves, which he folded in the middle like pages and on which he wrote from p. 2 recto onwards. Fol. 1 recto verso, together with fol. 36 recto verso, formed the book cover; the small Coptic piece in fol. 1 verso seems to have been written onto it as an addition.

The delimitation of the beginning and end of the Mithras Liturgy was made first by Dieterich on the basis of Wessely's edition. While Dieterich was right about the beginning, he remained undecided about its end. In his commentary, he divides the Mithras Liturgy into two parts, the ritual proper, called ἀπαθανατισμός, "Immortalization" (ll. 475–723), and the "Anweisung zu magischer Verwendung der Mithrasliturgie" ("Instruction for the magical application of the Mithras Liturgy," ll. 723–834). This division, however, is not based on a composition analysis and therefore creates more problems than it solves. While he includes the quotations from Homer at the end (ll. 821–34), he does not include those that stand before the beginning (ll. 467–74). More likely is that the Mithras Liturgy is, for whatever reason, sandwiched between the Homeric quotations. Moreover, his naming of the first part as "liturgy" ("Mithrasliturgie") and second part as "Anwendung" (Application) seems artificial, since he ignores the fact that both parts are "applications." Dieterich's reason follows from his assumption of a primary Mithraic source and its secondary magical application. The delimitation of the text segment, therefore, needs reconsideration in the light of a thoroughgoing compositional analysis.

a. Circumstances of Discovery

Regarding the origin and provenance of the papyrus book not much is known, and what little information we have seems to have come from the collector, Giovanni Anastasi (1780–1857).¹⁹ The man's original name may have been different, but he was known under the assumed name, written in Italian or French (Jean d'Anastasy). He was the son of an Armenian merchant from Damascus who had settled in Alexandria. This son became wealthy and gained the favor of the Pasha who appointed him in 1828 as Consul General in Egypt to the kingdoms of Norway and Sweden; he served in this capacity until his death. Besides business and politics, Mr. Anastasi enjoyed great

¹⁹ See Warren R. Dawson, "Anastasi, Sallier, and Harris and Their Papyri," *JEA* 35 (1949) 158–66, esp. 158–60.

success as an enthusiastic dilettant and collector of Egyptian antiquities. In the post-Napoleonic world a wave of interest in these antiquities developed on the part of European dealers, scholars, and museums. He was of course not the only collector, but the time was ripe for rich pickings. Most likely working through Egyptian agents, Anastasi was able to amass huge treasures, of which he sent several shipments to Europe for auctions in Paris and London. Among the materials were 60 papyrus manuscripts, one of which was the Great Magical Papyrus. At the widely publicized auction in Paris in 1857 this papyrus was acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale (#1073), where it is until today.²⁰ As the printed auction catalogue reveals, little was known at the time about the content of the papyri, but all sources agree that they came from Thebes,²¹ probably because Anastasi had said so.²² However, there is no concrete evidence concerning the time, location and circumstances of the discovery. Because of the similarities between the pieces in the collection and the fact of their relatively good condition, it is conceivable indeed that all or most of them came from the library of a learned priest and magician that was placed with him in his grave, perhaps in a large box or terracotta vessel.²³

If the “great magical papyrus of Paris,” and together with it the Mithras Liturgy, was indeed found in Thebes, it does not necessarily imply that the papyrus was also written there. The collection, serving a practicing magician as a “handbook,” was compiled from many sources. These sources may have existed in Theban temple libraries, but they could just as well have been excerpted at other places in Egypt, which would presuppose that the author travelled, visited temple libraries, and shared materials with other magicians.

²⁰ The sizable catalogue of 1129 items was compiled by François Lenormant, *Catalogue d'une collection Rassemblée par M. d'Anastasi, Consul général de Suède à Alexandrie, sera vendue aux enchères publiques Rue de Clichy, No. 76, les Mardi 23, Mercredi 24, Jeudi 25, Vendredi 26 & Samedi 27 Juin 1857, à une heure*. Etc. (Paris: Maulde et Renou, 1857), especially pp. 84–88: “Papyrus.”

²¹ On this city in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, see the essays and bibliographical materials in S. P. Vleeming, ed., *Hundred-Gated Thebes: Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 27; Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1995). For the PGM, see W. J. Tait, “Theban Magic,” *ibid.*, 169–82.

²² Lenormant's description is rather fanciful (p. 84): “M. Anastasi, dans ses fouilles à Thèbes avait découvert la bibliothèque d'un gnostique égyptien du second siècle...” Cf. Carl Wessely (*WSt* 8 [1886] 189) who opts for Heracleopolis at the time of Tertullian. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 169–71, speaks of the Anastasi collection as “the Thebes cache” and refers to a letter by Anastasi, dated March 18, 1828 (now in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden), confirming the origin in Thebes (169, n. 48).

²³ This is Preisendanz' conclusion; see Karl Preisendanz, *Papyrusfunde und Papyrusforschung* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1933), 91–95: “Bibliothek der Zauberpapyri von Theben.” Cf. also Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, 166–68: “Temples and priests.”

The Mithras Liturgy explicitly refers to such sharing of ritual texts among magicians. This assumption could mean either that the handbook was filled not at once but over a period of time, or that the sections were successively assembled before they were copied together into the handbook, or that the final copy resulted from a combination of both these activities.

About the “great magical papyrus” the catalogue has this to say: “Manuscript sur feuilles de papyrus pliées en livre, formant 33 feuillets écrits des deux côtés, à 60 lignes environ par page.... En tête sont trois pages de copte, qui débutant par l’histoire d’un fromage mystique pour la composition duquel s’associent Osiris, Sabaoth, Iao, Jésus et tous les autres éons. Ce fromage n’est autre que la *gnose*. – Ecriture du second siècle de notre ère.”²⁴

Some general information about the milieu of these collectors can be gleaned from one of Anastasi’s acquaintances, Giovanni d’Athanasī, commonly known as “Yanni,” who was a resident for eighteen years at Thebes, engaged in hunting after objects of antiquity.²⁵ He was born on the island of Lemnos, and his father was a merchant in Cairo. At the suggestion of English travellers who met him in Thebes, where he worked as an interpreter to an English collector by the name of Henry Salt, he wrote up a personal account of his activities. This account was published in London in the year 1836, together with a catalogue of Mr. Salt’s collection of antiquities.²⁶ D’Athanasī’s own collection was auctioned off in London by Leigh Sotheby in 1837.²⁷ These collectors speak of the manuscript scrolls as having been found in terracotta urns in or near tombs.²⁸

²⁴ Lenormant, 87 (Nr. 1073). Cf. on this passage Karl Preisendanz, “Zum Pariser Zauberpapyrus der bibl. nat. suppl. gr. 574” (*Ph.* 68 [1909] 575–77), 575–76: “Aus dem ganzen Passus geht hervor, daß man schon damals den Papyrus als eine Schicht von 33 (bzw. 36) *Einzelblättern* kannte. Das war natürlich die ursprüngliche Form des Buches nicht; denn von “Büchern”, die aus übereinandergelegten, unzusammenhängenden Blättern bestanden, wissen wir nichts. Papyrusbücher in *Codexform* dagegen kennen wir.”

²⁵ Giovanni d’Athanasī, *A Brief Account of the Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt*, made under the direction of Henry Salt, Esq., to which is added a detailed catalogue of Mr. Salt’s collection of Egyptian Antiquities; illustrated with twelve engravings of some of the most interesting objects, and an enumeration of those articles purchased for the British Museum (London: John Hearne, 1836), ix, 151.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ix, 151.

²⁷ *Catalogue of the Very Magnificent and Extraordinary Collection of Egyptian Antiquities, the Property of Giovanni d’Athanasī*, which will be sold by auction by Mr. Leigh Sotheby, at his house, 3, Wellington Street, Strand, on Monday, March 13th, 1837, and the Six following Days (Sunday excepted), at One o’Clock precisely (London: J. Davy, 1837).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 79, 151.

b. Date

The question of the date has been decided firmly on linguistic and palaeographical grounds by the Vienna papyrologist Carl Wessely (1860–1931), with whom all other papyrologists agree. They date the script to the early fourth century.²⁹ This, however, pertains to the written papyrus as extant: “Die Zeit Diokletians ist also terminus, ante quem das Papyrusbuch abgefaßt sein muß: auf alle Fälle ist die Liturgie in dieser Abschrift geschrieben zur Zeit hoher Blüte des Mithrasdienstes.”³⁰

As Dieterich indicates, this date applies to the extant script, but the text presupposes a longer process of development. The fact that the text shows evidence of the interpretation of older traditions means that these traditions have a prehistory of their own. Considering the complexities, Dieterich suggests that the development of the composition took more than 200 years, the origin occurring in the years 100–150, followed by the ritual function of the original text in the Egyptian Mithras cult (150–200), the subsequent adaptation and development by the magicians (200–300), and concluded by the inclusion of the final copy in the papyrus book.

Dieterich’s hypothesis is, however, beset with problems. (1) He does not distinguish clearly enough between scribe and author; (2) because he has no detailed compositional analysis on hand, he cannot clearly identify the author’s contributions in distinction from sources; (3) Dieterich’s own hypothetical assumption of an earlier stage as a Mithraic cultic text and subsequent adaptation by magicians determines how he sees the development, but does not conform to the textual evidence.

These problems, however, do not render Dieterich’s time frame invalid. It seems reasonable to estimate that it took about 200 years for the composition and its parts to come together. Internal criteria point to some older and some younger sources. Externally, the text is thoroughly Hellenistic–Egyptian – without any traces of Christian, Christian-gnostic, or Neoplatonic influences –, although traditions of Middle Stoicism are apparent, as is a certain closeness to Hermeticism.

²⁹ See Dieterich, *Mithrasliturgie*, 43–46; Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 1.64.

³⁰ Dieterich, *Mithrasliturgie*, 44 (emphasized). Preisendanz (1.64) also refers to Wilhelm Schubart, *Das Buch bei den Griechen und Römern* (Berlin: Reimer, 1907; 3rd ed.: Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1962), who points out that the papyrus codex came into use just about this time.

c. *Authorship*

The question of authorship is also complicated. What we see on the papyrus pages is the work of a scribe who copied the text from a *Vorlage* into the codex. Redactional references in the text itself indicate that we must, at least in principle, distinguish the scribe from the author.

The redactional comments, if taken seriously, imply that the scribe or author had available more than one version of the *Vorlage*.³¹ If the two were different persons, one of them had compared the versions and noted the textual variants; he would then be the author, while the scribe copied his autograph. If scribe and author were the same person, the final text is the author's own autograph that included all the insertions and supplements. Things get more complicated by the facts that the author's work is a highly developed redactional composition involving his own contributions, older sources adopted and adapted from tradition, and supplements added at various stages of the composition by subsequent copyists. Therefore, while source materials excerpted from other contexts had their own authors before inclusion in the final copy, that final copy has only one author and redactor; there is no evidence of multiple authorship at the final level.

While the final author remains anonymous, he speaks in the first person throughout. Even when he identifies himself by names in passages we call "self-presentations," he leaves the place vacant by using the symbol Δ or magical names. As one might expect, he was an expert in the handling of magical materials. What is surprising, however, is his expertise as a literary scholar and writer.³² He has carefully examined other versions of the text and has noted textual variants: ἐν ἄλλῳ (l. 500) and φωτὸς κτίστα, οἱ δὲ· συνκλεῖστα (l. 591).³³ He inserts a marginal comment (ll. 478–81) and cross-references to the supplements, and he corrects his own earlier practice (ll. 791–98).³⁴ He adds learned theological commentary with explanations of traditions (e.g., ll. 495–98, 529–32), or library research and consultation of herbalist sources for information on the plant *kenrītis* (ll. 798–813). Finally, he begins his work with a fine literary preface (ll. 475–85), and he adds supplementary information before he ends with a note indicating completion (ll. 819–20).

³¹ On the references to variants see below at n. 33.

³² For the full evidence see the *Conspectus* of the literary analysis, below, pp. 60–87.

³³ Cf. also PGM II.50; IV.29, 1277; V.51; VII.204; XII.201; XIII.731; see also Graf, *Gottesnähe*, 211 n. 9; *Magic*, 236, n. 7).

³⁴ David Jordan's evaluation confirms this (letter of December 17, 2002): "Palaeographically, the papyrus is more interesting than I had thought. The scribe is clearly conscious of what he is doing: he leaves spaces within the line to mark punctuation and sometimes even to distinguish words. And there are several previously unnoticed lectional signs over some of the clusters of vowels." See below on ll. 610–17.

Indices

The Indices refer to the line numbers of the papyrus containing the “Mithras Liturgy”

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