

Apotelesmata Apollonii Tyanensis

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The following is an English translation of the Greek text published by F. Nau, with Latin translation, 'Apotelesmata Apollonii Tyanensis' *Patrologia Syriaca* 1 (1907) pp. 1362-1392. It is in fact an appendix to the Syriac Testament of Adam, to which it is related by content that deals with hour mysticism. Many cultures have created time divisions, given them names and tried to use them as a way of negotiating the difficulties of an uncertain world, e.g. Egyptian texts from the 2nd millennium BC that chart the journey of the sun through the twelve hours of the night.

The text is a sort of 'instruction manual' and, as such, contains special terms and names. Like other instruction manuals it is intended primarily for those wishing to use it not for others to read it. The lists of names can be fairly tedious for the modern 'reader', but of course for the 'user' they were essential. Some of these lists I have omitted, and have indicated the omission in the text. There are four manuscripts of the text in Paris and a related text published by M. R. James in *Texts and Studies* II, 3 (1893) pp. 139-144.

Apollonius, whose life covered most of the 1st cent AD, had become a celebrated figure in his lifetime and was compared by some with Jesus.¹ He professed the set of beliefs and practices known as Neo-Pythagoreanism, intended as a revival of the earlier Pythagoreanism, for which numbers were of primary importance. The later philosophy has mystical elements which have no place in the earlier form. The only writings attributed to Apollonius are letters, quite a few in fact, but it is not certain whether he wrote any of them. The memoirs of him were made by his *amanuensis* Damis, who is said to have been a *quondam* resident of Niniveh,² and were gathered together for publication, at the behest of Julia Domna the second wife of the emperor Septimius Severus, by Philostratus. Nau has various references in Christian and non-Christian writers on pp. 1364-1368. On pp. 1369ff. he discusses the activities of Apollonius, citing among other works the *Vita Apollonii*.³ It seems clear from a passage in Bk. 3, 442 that Apollonius was taught by Iarchas the Indian philosopher. The text bristles with names and probably *voces mysticae*, many but not all of Hebrew origin. Names are an essential part of identity.⁴ The name of God in Hebrew, according to some, cannot be erased or destroyed, and this may explain why texts containing the name of God were stored in places such as the Genizah (storeroom) of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo. Words and phrases that may once have had a lexical meaning⁵ have since become *voces mysticae*.

1 Claims discussed and refuted by Eusebius in *Contra Hieroclem*, cf. *Vita Apollonii* vol. 2 (1912) tr. F.C. Conybeare pp. 484-605. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the authorship of Eusebius has been disputed in recent years, but this hardly affects the substance of the arguments presented there.

2 *Vita Apollonii* Bk 1, 3

3 F.C. Conybeare *Philostratus: Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2 vols. (1912).

4 Consider for example the story of Isis and Re (preserved in two 19th dynasty papyri) and how she tricked the ageing sun-god into revealing his (secret) name so that she might have power over him.

5 The word 'abracadabra' might be a composite word: *abrek* indicating an act of submission (F.W. Gesenius *Hebrew Lexicon* p.10), perhaps derived from Egyptian *rq* 'incline', as an imperative with the prothetic *j*, a survival from Old

A note on Greek terms

ἀποτέλεσμα is to be understood here, according to Liddell and Scott *Greek Lexicon*, as 'the result of certain positions of the stars on human destiny'. The Greek word gave rise to the Arabic **طلسمن**, which in turn has given rise to 'talisman', the form common in European languages. Like Nau, I use the term 'apotelesma' together with its cognate forms. The verb στοιχειόω, also following Nau, is translated as 'enchant'.

Egyptian, and the verb אדבר 'I say'.

Book of the wisdom and understanding of the apotelesmata of Apollonius of Tyana, who wrote it and taught it to Dystoumus Thalassus⁶ his pupil, as follows.

I. Listen to me, my son, and I will reveal to you the mystery of wisdom, unknown, unknowable and hidden, about seasons,⁷ times, hours of the day and night, their name and efficacy and the true wisdom concealed in them. I will reveal to you from the knowledge given to me by God of the *apotelesmata* by which everything created by God on earth are enchanted. Look, I acquired four books more precious than gold or jewels: one of astronomy, one of astrology, one of grammar and the fourth more precious than the others, which contains the great and awesome signs followed by prodigies and mysteries, I mean of course about the enchantment of the things fashioned and set in motion by God. Those handling this book who wish to work such marvels successfully and skilfully must abstain from all wickedness, especially the company of women. They must also refrain from the service of women in performing such acts, for there are many extraordinary things that come from women naturally: when they happen to be menstruating, trees which they approach wither and are uprooted and quake⁸ from the force of the rains and violence of the winds.⁹ It is therefore necessary, as we have said, to be careful of these things. If anyone wishes to form, under the yoke of necessity, everything on earth, so to speak, destroying trees, birds, animals, reptiles, winds and the courses of rivers, he must have precise knowledge of the doctrine of the constellations, by which I mean the names and form of address of Almighty God, and choose a moment in time in which to enchant these things. For those who beg and pray with those names will be heard. I will set forth those names in this book.

II. The one about to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem will be a great teacher and save the human race and destroy the shrines of idols but not remove the apotelesmatic art which I will create. For whatever is achieved by the skill invested in him, I have already effected and enchanted. The temple which I built in Tyana and in which I set up a golden column is a place of worship for all. It is therefore fitting for you to take care of yourself, and whatever marvel you wish to perform, name it according to the moment and time, sun, moon and wind, that it may be performed when the moon is propitiously aligned,¹⁰ for when the stars are rectangular or hexagonal they do not perform in the required way.¹¹

6 The name is probably corrupt, according to Nau.

7 καιρός

8 ἐκτοστρομβουῖσθαι. I cannot find this word in Liddell and Scott, but I generally assume it to be connected with τρομέω

9 Nau quotes two passages of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis* 19, 57 and 28,23. One might also add the passage from Plutarch *Consolatio ad uxorem* (144D), warning men who have just had sexual intercourse that they might be stung by bees.

10 καλοσηματίζομαι

11 According to Pythagorean calculations. Nau has a lengthy footnote about the details.

III. From March 13¹² to June 13 is called Spring, and its constellations are¹³ The Latin names are Aries, Taurus and Gemini. The season is called Ilekebrouthin. From June 13 to September 13 is called Summer, and its constellations are Cancer, Leo and Virgo, and the season is called Liouran. From September 13 to December 13, and is called Autumn, and its constellations are Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius. This season is called Ambleber. From Deember 13 to March 13 is called Winter, and its constellations are Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. This season is called Sardaaphek or Sthardiphek.

IV. Concerning the hours of the day, what their names are and what they do.

The first hour of the day is called Iack, and in this hour it is good for men to pray.

The second is called Nanouris, and in this hour are the prayers and hymns of the angels.

The third is called Oukhosiour, and in this hour all winged creatures thank God and every element of the birds is enchanted.

The fourth is called Slakhne, and in this hour all of creation thanks God. In this every element of the birds is enchanted as well that of scorpions, snakes and all other poisonous creatures.

The fifth is called Saglat, and in this hour every creature praises God and in the same every element of quadrupeds is enchanted, the lion, the leopard, the bear, the wolf and other creatures.

The sixth is called Têekhmoul, and in this hour the Cherubim intercede with God on behalf of the human race.

The seventh is called Berouki, and in this hour ranks of angels praise God.

The eighth is called Bouran.

The ninth is called Khapbroum or Khapauroun.

The tenth is called Boukhoun, and in this hour the waters praise God, and the spirit of God descending on the waters lies on them and sanctifies them. If this were not the case, the wicked demons would have harmed the human race through water. In this hour, if a chaste human being takes water and mixes it with holy oil, it will cure every illness, purify those possessed by demons and drive away demons.

The eleventh is called Simbrou, and in this hour the elect of God rejoice.

The twelfth is called Dakhlioum, and in this hour the prayers of men are well received by God

V. Concerning the twelve hours of the night

The first hour of the night is called Soukhouloum, and in this hour the demons praise God, and they

¹² 13 is an error found in only one ms., probably added around 1300. Read '21'

¹³ Zodiacal signs follow.

neither commit wrong nor punish until their prayer is fulfilled.

The second is called Bepteroul, in which God is praised by the fish and everything in the waters.

The third is called Takhran, in which God is praised by serpents and the abyss of fire. All that is below them cannot be said or thought by humans.

The fourth is called Hygkel, the hour at which the demons run among the graves. If anyone encounters them there, he will suffer harm and be struck by fear and fright at the appearance of the demons. In that hour it is necessary to work for love, enmity, bonds and all the magical arts of the wizard.¹⁴

The fifth is called Kosgar. In that hour the waters above heaven praise God and all his creations.

The sixth is called Zarous. In that hour there is a need for quiet and rest, for it is slightly fearful.

The seventh is called Makhloukh. In that hour animals rest and humans sleep: if a chaste man takes water and the priest mixes it with oil and blesses it and he rubs it on sick parts of his body, he will recover immediately from the sickness.

The eighth is called Zanbe. In that hour it is necessary to cast lots about trees, allotments, vines olives and all plants.

The ninth is called Sophiou.

The tenth is called Khalgou.

The eleventh is called Saltou. In that hour the gates of heaven are opened. He who prays with a pure heart and conscience will be heard. The angels will flap their wings with an echo.

The twelfth is called Eulsis and Elis. In that hour the celestial ranks and the fiery spirits rest.

These are the names of the hours which God made in the seven days. I received them from God and showed you how I came to know them and how I learned them. I have revealed everything to you. And nothing will be concealed from the one who knows them well, but everything will submit to him.

VI. Concerning the days and hours blessed by God.

The blessed hours and days in which you wish to do is secure and safe because the angels are your servants:

Day 1 has these good hours: 1, 2 and 9. Michael is the administrator.

Day 2 has these good hours: 1,2 and 6. Ouriel is the administrator

Day 4 has these good hours: 4,2 and 8. Katakhael is the administrator

Day 5 has these good hours: 5, 6, 7 and 8. Raphael is the administrator

Day 7, or the Sabbath, is inactivity and cessation of all work.

¹⁴ Note 30 on the passage gives the variant readings, which illustrates the difficulty involved in understanding it.

When you wish to enchant something, choose the hours we have said and bring forth the names you wish of the days and hours, heaven and sea, sun and moon, the times and the angels and the towers of the Lord, and the winds. Refrain from all that is shameful and serve the creator to receive what you ask for. Whatever animals, sea or anything else you wish to enchant. utter the names of the hours of the day and the time in question, and pray for them with a pure conscience, after having previously fasted for forty day.

The prayer to be recited with a pure and contrite heart by the one wishing to enchant anything.

God, you and your name and your magnificence are blessed. I magnify and praise and glorify you and your powerful name, which is for ever. Your name is feared by the army of fire, and it makes the sea roll back and the world blesses you and every breathing creature confesses and magnifies your name. I, your servant and the son of your handmaiden, given over like darkness to the sub-footprints, the grave and worms, I beg you, my God, because your are near to those who call upon you, grant me the mercy of your love for mankind.

When you say these things, your face will be bowed and cry out: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord my God, the mighty and powerful, the one who fills heaven and earth with glory.

Invocation after the prayer

Then say these Hebrew names.¹⁵ Say these names after the completion. If you ask anything of God, you will receive it, and nothing will be concealed from you.

VII. *What follows are lists of names of
the angels who serve the four seasons of the year
the sun in the four seasons of the year,
the moon in the four seasons of the year,
heaven,
the earth in the four seasons of the year,
the east wind in the four seasons of the year,
the north winds in the four seasons of the year,
the Great Bear in the four seasons of the year,
the four names of the south wind,*

¹⁵ A total of 50 names, which I have not reproduced here.

*the four names of the west wind,
the angels controlling the sea,
the angels controlling crops and field.*

VIII. Concerning the names of the seven days of the week.

Day 1 Phamouden and Ganoun, Sophioum and Machal

Day 2 Imeper, Manakhloun and Ouarkhoun

Day 3 Ourikhoun, Kirden, Gabalmoth

Day 4 Kamboulesin, Mempson, Beroum

Day 5 Oup, Phanbe, Koumatem, Berkhabire

Day 6 Gamenal, Gamioriolel, Makhaskin, Aterbelmith

Day 7 Khougouran, Batnek, Khartouneesth

Beginning of the *apotelesmata* to gather the birds into a place of your choice.

Make any bird you wish from pure tin¹⁶ and write these names on it in a rectangle and put them in it: Nouel, Ennouel, Sarmeel, Parnichel, Eizeri, Kemeret, Lektmoi, Sangasar, Apgarel, Karphaphel, Tesmarel, Nekhmarel, and bury it where you will and there will be a gathering. If you wish to drive them away, repeat the procedure and write: Nездol, Besmol, Kharios, Gadril, Tambel, Samtel, Kharmasael, Paukhartel, Pememtel, Gazarsan. Kulel, Beltel, and they will go away.

For gathering doves.¹⁷

Stand wherever you like and say in a low voice: 'You pure birds of God, who purifies his creation. listen to what I have to say. Say these wonderful and sacred names: Hyathelsou, Aperpousou, Touldou, Nemiga, which draw the sun within heaven.

On extinguishing the conflagration or the funeral pyre

Say these seven words against the fire: Makhalael, Aphadnael, Azriael, Amnouiael, Kasidsael, Nourael, Brael. Say these seven names to the sun, and it will be extinguished

¹⁶ Plentiful sources of tin in Europe were SW Britain and Brittany.

¹⁷ Doves still play a part in a certain magic trick known as the 'dove pan', in which a dove emerges from an empty metal pan.

On the preparation of the looking glass through which all mysteries appear

If you wish to see all that is completed and mysteries invisible to men on earth, do as you are instructed. Swear by the indescribable powers of God and these greatest and secret names not to share this mystery, for with these names and regulations I have effected *apotelesmata* and miracles in the world. Take bronze, quicksilver, silver, gold, tin and glass, in equal parts, and make from them a mirror of any size you like. The colour will be like that of natural crystal. Place behind it small silver plates and write these names on it: Bisarakh, Sarsatzie, Murde, Biarag and Galga. Around the face of the mirror place a strip of gold leaf and insert seven precious stones, as if to close it, and carve on each one this mystery, in sequence: Ankhour, Zazekhar, Sampas, Epras. Magtes, Sakartes and Zakgram. When you wish to know the things that come into existence in all parts of the earth and in heaven and on earth. Look chastely and joyfully over the mirror and consider them. Carve these four mysteries, in which the four parts of the world¹⁸ are contained, with the mirror, and it will truly happen. You will see everything you want. If you want to see things below the earth, look at the bottom part of the mirror. If you want to see things in heaven, look at the top part and you will see unusual things. If you do not turn your face away, you will suffer anxiety. In another copy are these names and characters: Miuzz, Tharazin, Thaupsaran, Eagkhar, Gogokhou, Galgo, Gogourez, Maaras, Talgo. These are behind the mirror. On the face of the mirror make seven seals and attach them to it, and write these mysteries on each bull: Aiskhrour, Olaskhar, Games, Pharais, Methas, Skarthas, Khagram. These are the characters which you see.¹⁹

18 Symbols appear at this point.

19 Symbols appear at this point.