

Naming a Gift: the Vocabulary and Purposes of Greek Religious Offerings

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THE LAST FEW DECADES have seen several valuable studies on the vocabulary of offerings to the gods in ancient Greece.¹ After Rudhardt's useful analysis of Greek religious practices and vocabulary first published in the 1950s, Casabona provided a detailed treatment of the words for sacrifice, followed by Lazzarini's research on the formulae of votive offerings in Archaic Greece. More recently Lazzarini has a short note on several religious terms in epigraphic evidence, and the *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* also has a succinct section on various Greek terms and formulae of dedications. Given these important studies, there may seem to be no need for further work on this subject. Nevertheless, while existing scholarship has discussed different forms of offerings, most notably ἀναθήματα, ἄγαλμα, ιερά, θυσία, and ἐνάγισμα, historians have failed to differentiate among the purposes of

¹ E.g. J. Rudhardt, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique*² (Paris 1992 [1958]); J. Casabona, *Recherches sur le vocabulaire des sacrifices en grec* (Aix-en-Provence 1966); M. L. Lazzarini, *Le formule delle dediche votive nella Grecia arcaica* (Rome 1976), and "Alcuni termini del lessico sacrale greco nei documenti epigrafici," in P. Radici Colace (ed.), *Atti del II Seminario Internazionale di Studi sui lessici tecnici greci e latini* (Messina/Naples 1997) 207–212; R. Parker, "Dedication. Greek Dedications. I," in *ThesCRA* 2 (2004) 269–281. There is also a short but outdated chapter "Formulae" in W. H. D. Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge 1902) 322–334. On dedicatory vocabulary and formulae at Delphi, see the regional studies in A. Jacquemin, "Ordre des termes des dedicaces Delphiques," *Annali di archeologia e storia antica* 2 (1995) 141–157, and *Offrandes monumentales à Delphes* (Paris 1999) 89–92.

offerings. Worshippers could make a *θυσία* or set up an *ἀνάθημα* for a range of reasons and with varying expectations, such as in gratitude for deliverance, to commemorate a victory, to mark the end of childbirth, and to honour the gods for other kinds of assistance; and different Greek words might be used to denote offerings made for different purposes. This article examines the terminology for various types of offerings made on different occasions. My main concern is with vocabulary expressing the reason or purpose, but not the form² or the location,³ of the offering. I have included every relevant term (though not every instance of the term) that I have been able to discover, but I am likely to have missed some: the topic has barely been discussed before, and my purpose is to demonstrate its interest.

Greek religious offerings could take many forms. Some worshippers might offer an animal sacrifice; this could be accompanied, or substituted, by less expensive bloodless offerings in the form of vegetarian foodstuff, cakes, and/or libations. Other worshippers might prefer more durable dedications, which could be objects originally intended for other uses (so-called ‘raw’ dedications) or specially commissioned for dedi-

² E.g. cakes called *πέμμα*, *πόπανον*, *πλακοῦς*, and liquid offerings variously termed *λοιβή*, *μελίκρητον*, *σπονδή*, *χού*. On cakes see E. Kearns, “Cakes in Greek Sacrificial Regulations,” in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence* (Stockholm/Jonsered 1994) 65–70, and “Ο λιβανωτὸς εὐσεβές καὶ τὸ πόπανον: the Rationale of Cakes and Bloodless Offerings in Greek Sacrifice,” in V. Pirenne-Delforge and F. Prescendi (eds.), *Nourrir les dieux? Sacrifice et représentation du divin* (Liège 2011) 89–103. On libations see D. Tolles, *The Banquet-Libations of the Greeks* (diss. Bryn Mawr 1943); W. Burkert, *Greek Religion. Archaic and Classical* (Oxford 1985) 70–73, and *Griechische Religion*² (Stuttgart 2011) 113–117; F. Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet* (Princeton 1990) 209–221.

³ E.g. *προσχάρατος θυσία* (‘sacrifice at the hearth’, e.g. *I.Lindos* II 582, 585, 592, 593), *προβώμιος θυσία* (‘sacrifice before the altar’, e.g. Eur. *Ion* 376, *SEG* IX 72.61, 67–68 = Rhodes/Osborne 97). See Blinkenberg in *I.Lindos* II p.908.

cation ('converted' dedications).⁴ Animal sacrifice, offerings of food and drink, and dedications all feature in the present study. Since in most cases the form of offering had no direct correlation with the purpose for which it was made,⁵ I shall treat them together without differentiating among them. The categorization that follows is based on the function and not on the physical form of the offering.

Before proceeding to the sources, it is important to realize that the vocabulary for different types of offerings is not fixed: ancient authors, and especially Greek tragedians, might occasionally borrow a word normally used in the non-religious sphere to specify the function of a religious offering in a particular context. Some of the words discussed below are attested only in certain genres (such as dramatic poetry) or in isolated instances; and offerings made for similar purposes may be variously termed or without any specific terminology at all. In other words, although there exist different names for various types of offerings as we shall see, the application of these terms is fluid and far from formalized. Nevertheless, despite the flexibility and infrequency with which some of the words were used, their very attestation in our sources is significant for historians: the choice of Greek words is closely connected to the context in which the offering was made, and can reveal much about the ancient worshippers' expectations and religious experience.

⁴ On the terminology and formulae for sacrifice and dedications, see bibliography in n.1 above. On food offerings to the gods, e.g. M. H. Jameson, *Offerings at Meals. Its Place in Greek Sacrifice* (diss. Univ. Chicago 1949); L. Brigitte Zaidman, "Offrandes et nourritures: repas des dieux et repas des hommes en Grèce ancienne," in S. Georgoudi, R. K. Piettre, and F. Schmidt (eds.), *La cuisine et l'autel* (Turnhout 2005) 31–46. On 'raw' and 'converted' offerings, A. M. Snodgrass, "The Economics of Dedication at Greek Sanctuaries," *ScAnt* 3–4 (1989–1990) 287–294, at 291–292.

⁵ But note that the offering of a lock of hair from humans was commonly associated with rituals of adolescence and mourning (to be discussed below).

I. Vocabulary for ‘Offerings’

Of the words collected here, three major kinds of offerings may be identified: thank-offerings made retrospectively in acknowledgement of divine assistance, preliminary offerings made before some enterprise, and propitiatory offerings for the gods and the dead. I shall discuss the Greek terms one by one,⁶ before reflecting on their wider significance for the study of Greek religion in section II.

(i) *Thank-Offerings*

εὐαγγέλια

A cognate noun of *εὐαγγέλειν* ('to bring good news'), *εὐαγγέλιον* normally denotes the reward to a messenger for bringing good tidings; its plural form *εὐαγγέλια* may denote in Classical authors a thank-offering to the gods for good-tidings received. In Aristophanes' *Knights*, to curry favour with the *boule* Paphlagon proposes sacrificing a hundred heifers to Athena as *εὐαγγέλια* to celebrate some good news: *εὐαγγέλια θύειν ἐκατὸν βοῦς τῇ θεῷ* (654–656). Menander's *Perikeiromene* mentions *εὐαγγέλια* offered to the gods for Glycera's good luck in finding her family (992–994). Military victory was often the occasion for sacrificing *εὐαγγέλια*. According to Xenophon, the Spartan commander Eteonicus offered a sacrifice so termed (*ἐθνε τὰ εὐαγγέλια*) for the good news of Athens' defeat in the battle of Arginusae (*Hell.* 1.6.37). So closely related were *εὐαγγέλια* and military victory that Agesilaus, in order not to dishearten his troops with the news of Sparta's naval disaster at Cnidos, announced instead Lysander's death and Spartan vic-

⁶ As part of the purpose of this study is to show that some of the names of the offerings could express their purpose or desired effect, in each case I give the etymology and literal meaning of the words where possible before looking at their usages in the sources, but without implying that etymology necessarily can capture sufficiently the word's meaning. E.g. the words *σωτήρια* and *έλευθέρια* indicate semantically an offering made in relation to ‘saving’ or ‘freeing’, but do not tell us what form of ‘rescue’ or ‘liberty’ is meant, for which we depend on the context in which the word is used.

tory and “offered sacrifice as if for good news, and sent around to many people portions of the victims which had been offered”: λέγων καὶ ἐβούθυτει ώς εὐαγγέλια καὶ πολλοῖς διέπεμπε τῶν τεθυμένων (*Hell.* 4.3.13–14, transl. Brownson). The murder of Philip II of Macedon in 336 B.C. was also celebrated with such offerings.⁷

Ζωάγρια

From ζωγρεῖν or ζωὸν ἀγρεῖν ('to take alive'), the word ζωάγρια may express the reward to the gods for saving one's life.⁸ In the Homeric scene where Thetis comes to Hephaestus for a new set of armour to be made for Achilles, the god describes his second fall from Olympus and Thetis' rescue of him, on account of which the goddess has a claim to his gratitude: “I must certainly repay fair-tressed Thetis all price for saving my life,” τώ με μάλα χρεὼ πάντα Θέτι καλλιπλοκάμῳ ζωάγρια τίνειν.⁹ The expression ζωάγρια τίνειν may be compared to the phrase ζωάγριοι ὄφελλειν in Homer's *Odyssey*: Nausicaa claims that Odysseus owes her the ransom of his life (8.462). Both applications are extensions of the word's normal meaning—the price or ransom paid (usually to warriors) for taking a prisoner alive—known to Homer and Classical authors.¹⁰ Underlying these various usages is the basic idea of a debt of

⁷ Aeschin. 3.160. For εὐαγγέλια in epigraphic evidence, see e.g. *IG XII.2* 645.42 (fourth century), XII Suppl. 168.5, *I.Ephesos* 108.6 (both late fourth century).

⁸ P. Chantraine, *Études sur le vocabulaire grec* (Paris 1956) 51: “le prix payé pour la vie sauve,” and *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968–1980) 401 s.v. ζωάγρια: “‘rançon’ pour sauver la vie d'un prisonnier”; LSJ s.v. ζωάγρια: “reward for life saved.”

⁹ Hom. *Il.* 18.394–409, at 407. G. Ch. Crusius, *A Complete Greek and English Lexicon for the poems of Homer, and the Homeridae* (London/Oxford 1868) 187: “(ζωός, ἀγρεύω), a reward for the preservation of life” (citing the present passage); R. J. Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* (London 1924) 176: “the price of one's life, a reward for preserving one's life by care or help”; G. Autenrieth, *Homeric Dictionary* (London 1984) 141: “(ζωός, ἀγρα), reward for saving life.”

¹⁰ E.g. Hom. *Il.* 5.698, Hdt. 3.36.

gratitude for saving or sparing one's life. The transfer of the word's normal usages to the religious sphere appears to occur only in verse. Apart from Homer, there are no other early religious usages of ζωάγρια. It is not until perhaps the late third century B.C. that the word came to denote a thank-offering for deliverance from danger.¹¹ In two late verse inscriptions the word ζωάγρια was used of an individual's dedication to Asclepius and other gods for recovery from illness.¹²

Θρεπτήριον

Derived from θρεπτήρ ('feeder', 'rearer') and τρέφειν ('to bring up'), the word θρεπτήριον is used in the opening scene of Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* to refer to the lock of hair dedicated by Orestes to Inachus, the river(-god) of Argos, as a thank-offering for nurture.¹³ This is representative of the common practice in ancient Greece, when individuals attained manhood or womanhood, of shedding a lock of hair as an offering to the gods or rivers, as rivers were regarded as κουροτρόφοι.¹⁴ The ritual is attested already in Homer but the word is not used: Achilles had intended to offer some of his hair to the river Spercheius on his return home; but knowing that he will never go home, he offers it instead to his dead comrade Patroclus in

¹¹ Dioscorides XVI in Gow-Page, *HE* I 85–86, II 246–248 (ca. late third century) = *Anth. Gr.* 6.220 (an offering for escape from a lion). Gow and Page do not comment on the word ζωάγρια.

¹² *IG XIV* 967 = *IG UrbRom* 102 (second century A.D.), a.11–12: νούσων τε κακῶν ζωάγρια, “offering for recovery from grievous illness”; b.11: ζωάγρια.

¹³ Aesch. *Cho.* 6: πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θεπτήριον. The sentence is incomplete; some scholars take the word as an adjective qualifying πλόκαμον (e.g. T. G. Tucker, *Aischyliou Choephoroi* [Cambridge 1901] 10–11; LSJ s.v. θεπτήριος II) and some as a substantive (e.g. J. Conington, *The Choephoroe of Aeschylus* [London 1857] 5).

¹⁴ On the custom of hair-offering see Burkert, *Greek Religion* 70, 373–374 n.29, and *Griechische Religion*² 112–113 with n.30; D. D. Leitao, “Adolescent Hair-growing and Hair-cutting Rituals in Ancient Greece,” in D. B. Dodd and C. A. Faraone (eds.), *Initiation and Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives* (London/New York 2003) 109–129.

mourning (*Il.* 23.140–149). The shedding of hair in both rituals of adolescence and rituals of mourning (see below) makes his transfer of the offering to Patroclus possible. The Aeschylean passage is unique in using θρεπτήριον to denote a ‘nurture offering’; no other adolescent hair-offering to the deities is described as such.¹⁵ Where the plural θρεπτήρια appears in Classical literature, it frequently refers to the reward or return for rearing made to nurses by parents or children, as an equivalent of τροφεῖα.¹⁶ Whether applied to the offering to the gods or the reward to nurses, θρεπτήριον/α is an acknowledgement of the nurture received from them.

κούρειον

Etymologically associated with κείρειν ('to cut', 'to shear') and κουρά ('cropping of the hair'),¹⁷ κούρειον usually refers to a sacrifice offered for the induction of boys into the phratry on the third day of the Apatouria, called *Koureotis*.¹⁸ A hair-cutting ritual was apparently also performed on this day.¹⁹ Another kind of κούρειον is attested in a fourth-century *lex sacra* from Thebes at Mycale. It requires goatherds to offer to Hermes a young goat from each of their own herds, and shepherds a lamb if there were five new-born, as a κούρειον.²⁰ The word here denotes a shearing offering (of goats and sheep) in spring,

¹⁵ The rite (not the word) is attested in e.g. Hdt. 4.34, Eur. *Hipp.* 1425 ff., Theophr. *Char.* 21.3.

¹⁶ E.g. *Hymn.Hom.Cer.* 168, 223; LSJ s.v. θρεπτήριος III.2.

¹⁷ Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique* 510 s.v. κείρω, 573–574 s.v. κουρά; LSJ s.v. κουρεῖον II κούρειον.

¹⁸ E.g. *IG II²* 1237.28 = Rhodes/Osborne 5 (396/5 B.C.); Isae. 6.22, with commentary in W. Wyse, *The Speeches of Isaeus* (Cambridge 1904) 508–509. On the Apatouria and in particular the Koureotis see S. D. Lambert, *The Phratries of Attica* (Ann Arbor 1993) 161–168; R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford 2005) 458–459.

¹⁹ *Suda* κ 2179, Hsch. κ 3843.

²⁰ *IPriene* 362 = LSAM 39; recent discussion in P. Thonemann, *The Maeander Valley* (Cambridge 2011) 196–197.

“une victime ‘immolée à l’occasion de la tonte.’”²¹
νικητήρια, ἐπινίκια

From νικητήρ (‘winner’) and νικᾶν (‘to win’, ‘to prevail’), the substantive νικητήρια refers to a sacrifice or festival in celebration of victory.²² After his conquest of Sardis and Babylon, Cyrus offered sacrifice and celebrated a festival of victory by a banquet: θύσας δὲ καὶ ὁ Κῦρος νικητήρια ἔστιῶν.²³ On this occasion it was Cyrus who held the festival and provided the sacrificial feast, but νικητήρια might also be held by friends of the victor. Plutarch tells us that when Phocas, son of the Athenian politician Phocion, won the foot-race in the Panathenaia, many people invited him to a victory celebration with a feast: νικήσαντος δὲ καὶ πολλῶν αἰτονμένων ἔστιάσαι τὰ νικητήρια (*Phoc.* 20.1). These victory celebrations are similar to ἐπινίκια, a sacrifice or feast in honour of victory.²⁴ Known occasions for ἐπινίκια are, for example, victories in choregic competitions and athletic games.²⁵

ρύσια, παυσιτοκεῖα

An epigram attributed to Perses, late fourth or third century

²¹ J. Labarbe, “L’âge correspondant au sacrifice du κούρειον et les données historiques du sixième discours d’Isée,” *BAB* 39 (1953) 358–394, at 366–368. See also Sokolowski’s comments at *LSAM* 39; *LSJ* Suppl. s.v. κούρειον I.B; R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford 2005) 459 n.13.

²² P. Chantraine, *La formation des noms in grec ancien* (Paris 1933) 64: “νικητήρια ‘sacrifice pour remercier d’une victoire,’” and *Dictionnaire étymologique* 755 s.v. νίκη: “νικητήρια ‘sacrifice pour la victoire’”; *LSJ* s.v. νικητήριος II.2: “festival of victory.”

²³ Xen. *Cyr.* 8.4.1; cf. 2.1.24, 8.3.33, where νικητήρια denotes a prize of victory awarded to a human.

²⁴ *LSJ* s.v. ἐπινίκιος II.2: “sacrifice for a victory or feast in honour of it.”

²⁵ Ar. fr.448 K.-A. (unspecified occasion), Pl. *Symp.* 173A (choregic competition), Andoc. 4.29 (Olympic games), Dem. 59.33 (Pythian games). On choral ἐπινίκια see also P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia* (Cambridge 2000) 102–103. Like νικητήρια, ἐπινίκια can also denote a prize of victory: e.g. Soph. *El.* 692.

B.C., uses the word *ρύσια*, from *ρύεσθαι* ('to save') and *ρύσιος* ('delivering', 'saving'), to signify 'offerings for deliverance' made after childbirth:

Πότνια κουροσόος, ταύταν ἐπιπορπίδα νυμφᾶν
καὶ στεφάναν λιπαρῶν ἐκ κεφαλῆς πλοκάμων,
ὅλβία Εἰλήθυια, πολυμνάστοι φύλασσε
Τισίδος ὡδίνων ρύσια δεξαμένα.

Goddess, saviour of children, blest Eileithyia, receive and keep as an offering for delivering Tisis, who well remembers, from her pangs, this bridal brooch and the diadem from her glossy hair.²⁶

In this context *ρύσια*, with the objective genitive *ῳδίνων*, refers specifically to an offering to Eileithyia for deliverance from the pain of childbirth. Another word for an offering after childbirth is found in a third-century B.C. inscription from Gonnoi in Thessaly: a woman dedicated to Artemis Eileithyia an offering termed *παυσιτοκεῖα* (*Ἀρτέμιδι Τλιθύαι Μενέπολις Ἐπίνου παυσιτοκεῖα ἀνέθηκε*). From a compound of *παυσι-* and *τόκος*, this otherwise unattested word apparently refers to an offering marking the end of childbirth.²⁷

σῶστρα

A cognate noun of *σώζειν* ('to save'), the word *σῶστρα* is used in Herodotus on one occasion to denote a thank-offering to the gods for deliverance from danger. In his account of the early history of Persia, Herodotus relates how Cyrus had survived despite his grandfather king Astyages' order to have him killed by the steward Harpagus. In revenge, pretending that he

²⁶ Perses III in Gow-Page, *HE* I 156, II 448–449 = *Anth. Gr.* 6.274 (transl. adapted from Paton). LSJ s.v. *ρύσιος* III.2.

²⁷ B. Helly, *Gonnoi* II no. 175 bis: "Ménépolis a consacré 'ce qui met fin à ses couches, ce qui en marque le terme et sa délivrance'"; J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1973, 247: "en offrande pour la fin des couches"; LSJ Suppl. s.v. *παυσιτοκεῖα*: "an offering marking the end of childbirth." Note that the stone has *παυσοτοκεῖα*, which the commentators have normalized to *παυσιτοκεῖα*. Lazzarini, in *Atti del II Seminario* 211: "l'offerta per un parto ..., intendendo letteralmente il termine come 'cessazione dakka gravudabza.'"

was “about to sacrifice thank-offerings for the boy’s deliverance to those of the gods to whom this honour belongs” (*σῶστρα γὰρ τοῦ παιδὸς μέλλω θύειν τοῖσι θεῶν τιμὴ αὕτη προσκέεται*), he had Harpagus’ son murdered and his flesh served to Harpagus at the dinner.²⁸ All other known applications of the term *σῶστρα* in the Classical period refer to the reward paid to humans for bringing back lost cattle or run-away slaves.²⁹ Like *ζωάγρια*, the transfer of the word *σῶστρα* to the religious sphere is found only in verse; in later Greek *σῶστρα* may also denote a thank-offering to the gods for escape from death³⁰ or to Asclepius for healing.³¹ Two epigrams on an inscription in Rome describe a physician’s dedication to Asclepius simultaneously as *ζωάγρια*, *σῶστρα*, and *χαριστήρια*, which shows that their meanings and usages are closely related or interchangeable in some contexts.³²

σωτήρια, ἐλευθέρια

A further word for ‘thank-offering for deliverance’ is *σωτήρια*, from *σωτήρ* (‘saviour’) and *σώζειν* (‘to save’).³³ In Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, the Greek troops vowed to sacrifice *σωτήρια* to Zeus Soter³⁴ as soon as they reached a friendly

²⁸ Hdt. 1.107–118, at 118. H. Stein, *Herodotos I* (Berlin 1893) 141: “‘Rettungssopfer’, die man (in Hellas) nach überstandenen Gefahren zu bringen pflegte.”

²⁹ Hdt. 4.9, Xen. *Mem.* 2.10.2; LSJ s.v. *σῶστρα* I.2.

³⁰ *Anth.Gr.* 9.378, dedication for escape from a collapsing wall, attributed to Palladas, fourth century A.D.

³¹ *IG IV²* 483 (Epidaurus, Roman imperial).

³² *IG XIV* 967 = *IGUrbRom* 102, a.1–2: τῷ [σωτῆρι] Ασκληπιῷ σῶστρα καὶ χαριστήρια Νικομήδης ὁ ἱατρός, b.1–2: τῷ βασιλεῖ Ασκληπιῷ σῶστρα καὶ [χαριστήρια] Νικομήδης Σμυρναῖος ἱατρός (for *ζωάγρια* in these two epigrams see n.12 above).

³³ Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique* 1084–1085 s.v. *σῶς*; LSJ s.v. *σωτήριος* II.2.

³⁴ Presumably because Zeus Soter was thought to have sent the omen: one of his soldiers sneezed when Xenophon mentioned their hopes of deliverance.

land: εὗξασθαι τῷ θεῷ τούτῳ θύσειν σωτήρια ὅπου ἀν πρῶτον εἰς φιλίαν χώραν ἀφικόμεθα; the vow was fulfilled when they reached the Greek city of Trapezus on the Euxine Sea.³⁵ Sacrificial offerings aside, the word can also denote a festival held in honour of the gods and in celebration of deliverance from danger, such as the Soteria at Priene ca. 297 B.C. in honour of liberation from a tyrant (*I.Priene* 11) and the Delphic Soteria established in 279/8 to commemorate the Greek expulsion of the Gauls (*Syll.³* 398). These are similar in nature to Ἐλευθέρια, “a festival of liberation or liberty” (LSJ) such as the one held at Plataea every four years in commemoration of the Greek victory there in 479.³⁶

In post-Classical usages, the word ἐλευθέρια (from ἐλευθεροῦν, ‘to set free’) may denote an offering for liberation from slavery. A marble dedication to Apollo Tempeites in Larisa ca. 100 B.C. by a freedwoman is inscribed: Ἀπόλλωνι Τεμπείτῃ Τάτιον Κλεοπάτρας καὶ Σωστράτου ἀπελευθέρα ξενικῇ ἐλευθέρια. Given that Tation was a freedwoman (ἀπελευθέρα), ἐλευθέρια most probably refers to ‘a thank-offering for liberty’ upon her manumission.³⁷ Nevertheless, another dedicatory inscription from Larisa might be using ἐλευθέρια in relation to another form of liberty: Ἀπλονι Τεμπείτᾳ Αἰσχυλίς Σατύροι ἐλευθέρια. If it is correct to identify this dedicator as the

³⁵ Xen. *An.* 3.2.9, 4.8.25, 5.1.1. For other examples see Arr. *Indica* 36.3, *Anth.Gr.* 6.216 (attributed to Simonides but the ascription may not be reliable), *SEG* XVIII 215 (Delphi, third century B.C.; quoted 322 below).

³⁶ Ἐλευθέρια at Plataea: Plut. *Arist.* 20.4, 21.1; Diod. 11.29.1; Paus. 9.2.6; but the festival is not attested until the fourth century, see J. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (London 2003) 90–101.

³⁷ T. Tziaphalias, “Anekdotes Thessalikes Epigraphes,” *Thessaliko Hemerologio* 7 (1984) 193–234, at 215–216, no. 94 [*SEG* XXXV 607]. Precisely what ξενικῇ means in manumission documents is disputed: existing suggestions are e.g. a mode of manumission through which the freedman acquired the status of a ξένος, or some privilege enjoyed by a freedman (e.g. exemption from paying taxes called ξενικά?); the different views are summarized in R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, “The Phrase ΞΕΝΙΚΗ ΛΥΣΕΙ in Manumission Inscriptions,” *ZPE* 153 (2005) 108–112 [*SEG* LV 597].

Aeschylos who was priestess of Artemis Delphinia and who received an honorific statue from the people of Larisa, she is unlikely to have been a slave-woman.³⁸ The word ἐλευθέρια probably refers here to an offering for some other form of liberty; Lazzarini suggests “offerta di ringraziamento per l'avvenuto riscatto da briganti o pirati.”³⁹

τελεστήρια

In the Classical period the word τελεστήρια is attested only in Xenophon. Towards the end of the *Cyropaedia*, when Cyrus realized that he was about to die, he offered animal sacrifices to ancestral Zeus and Helios and the other gods, praying that they might accept these things as τελεστήρια and χαριστήρια for his many splendid enterprises: Ζεῦ πατρῷε καὶ Ἡλιε καὶ πάντες θεοί, δέχεσθε τάδε καὶ τελεστήρια πολλῶν καὶ καλῶν πράξεων καὶ χαριστήρια (8.7.3). LSJ had explained τελεστήρια as ‘thank-offering for success’, but in the revised supplement ‘thank offerings to a sanctuary’.⁴⁰ Etymologically the word is related to τελεῖν (‘to fulfill’, ‘to accomplish’) and τέλος (‘fulfillment’, ‘achievement’). The sense is doubtless that Cyrus was offering sacrifice as a token of gratitude for his past accomplishments when he looked back on his life, as he went on to acknowledge the gods’ help in his past successes (ἐντυχίαι). The sense of ‘thank-offering for fulfillment’ is preferable to LSJ’s revised explanation.⁴¹ The word is restored in a fragmentary

³⁸ IG IX.2 1034 (first century B.C.); cf. 1035: Ἀρτέμιδι Δελφινίᾳ Αἰσχυλὶς Σατύροι κόρα, γυνὴ Φιλοξενίδα ἀμουμείτο λειτορεύσανσα, and SEG XXV 672: [ό] δῆμος ὁ [Λ]αρισαίου Αἰσχυλίδα Σατύροι κόρων Φιλο[ξ]ενίδα ἀμουμείτειοι γυναῖκα. LGPN III.B 19 takes Aeschylos in all three inscriptions to be the same person. Cf. G. Daux, “Notes de lecture,” *BCH* 92 (1968) 625–632.

³⁹ Lazarrini, in *Atti del II Seminario* 208. LSJ s.v. ἐλευθέρια II: “thanksgiving for liberty.”

⁴⁰ LSJ and Suppl. s.v. τελεστήριον II. Cf. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique* 1102 s.v. τέλος: “avec τελεστήρια n. pl. ‘sacrifice pour célébrer un succès.’”

⁴¹ For religious usages of τελεῖν and its cognates signifying fulfillment, cf.

inscription at Delphi, dated to the third century B.C.: Προκλῆς Ἀντικλέος Βοιωτὸς — — σω[τήρ]ια καὶ τελεστ[ήρ]ια — — Ἀπόλ[η]ωνι Πυθίαι — —. According to the supplements, a Boeotian was making a dedication as a *σωτήρια* and *τελεστήρια* to Apollo Pythios; but we do not know the context in which it was made.⁴²

τελείουμα

A different kind of fulfillment offering seems to be denoted by the word *τελείουμα*. We have two dedicatory inscriptions from second-century B.C. Thessaly, in which two female dedicators described their offering as *τελείουμα*: Ἀρτέμιδι Θροσίᾳ Εὐπάτρα Πασιμελοντεία *τελέουμα*, and Δαμμάτερι καὶ Κόρᾳ Μέλισσα Ἐπιγενεία *τελείουμα*.⁴³ Related to *τελειοῦν* ('to complete') and *τέλος*, *τελείουμα* probably signifies a thank-offering for some form of fulfillment. But in the absence of further contextual information, it remains disputed whether the word refers to a dedication on attainment of womanhood or completion of childbirth.⁴⁴

e.g. Aesch. *Ag.* 973–974: Ζεῦ, Ζεῦ τέλειε, τὰς ἐμὰς εὐχάς τέλει· μέλοι δέ τοι σοι τῶνπερ ἂν μέλλῃς τελεῖν.

⁴² J. Bousquet, "Inscriptions de Delphi," *BCH* 82 (1958) 61–91, at 66–67 no. 4795 [*SEG* XVIII 215] (supplements of G. Daux); Bousquet envisaged the possibility of adding [καὶ χαριστήρια] to the end of line two, since the stone is broken on the right-hand edge. Cf. Jacquemin, *Annali di archeologia e storia antica* 2 (1995) 143 n.18, and *Offrandes monumentales* 92 and n.81, who notes that we have no literary or epigraphic examples of the two (or three) terms used together. The closest parallels I can find are two later inscriptions (n.32 above) in which *ζωάγρια*, *σῶστρα*, and *χαριστήρια* occur.

⁴³ *SEG* XXXV 615; *IG* IX.2 1235 [*SEG* XLIV 457].

⁴⁴ M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Cultes et rites de passage en Macédoine* (Athens 1994) 39–40: dedication of the occasion of maidens' 'achèvement' and 'maturat[i]on' (*SEG* XLIV 1748); LSJ s.v. *τελείωμα* 2: "dedication on the occasion of *τελείωσις* II"; s.v. *τελείωσις* I: "development, completion of physical growth ... II: a. attainment of manhood ... b. marriage." B. Helly (per ep.) on *SEG* XXXV 615: "offrande de relevailles"; Lazzarini, in *Atti del II Seminario* 211 n.28: "offerta per il compimento della gravidanza."

χαριστήριον

Although the word χάρις and its cognates are used as early as Homer,⁴⁵ it is not until the fourth century, in the works of Xenophon, that χαριστήριον ('thank-offering') is attested.⁴⁶ Cyrus sacrificed χαριστήριον to the gods not only in old age (see above), but also earlier in his military career. Having routed the Assyrians, he praises the gods and suggests that "we ought, therefore, to render to the gods thank-offerings for these things of whatsoever we have": τούτων μὲν οὖν χρὴ χαριστήρια ὃν ἀν ἔχωμεν τοῖς θεοῖς ἀποτελεῖν.⁴⁷ The word χαριστήρια is also used when Xenophon makes Croesus say that he owes Apollo 'thank-offerings' for his blissful life and for Cyrus' kind treatment of him (7.2.28). In epigraphic evidence, the word is attested from the second half of the third century B.C. onwards.⁴⁸ It is inscribed many times on a group of ceramic vessels dedicated to a Nymph at Kafizin on Cyprus, and on the victory dedications of the Attalids.⁴⁹ The related word εὐχαριστήριον,

⁴⁵ E.g. Hom. *Il.* 9.609, 11.23, *Od.* 2.12, 5.307.

⁴⁶ Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique* 1247–1248 s.v. χάρις; LSJ s.v. χαριστήριος II. The variant χαριστεῖον is also used: e.g. *I.Knidos* 138 (late third century B.C.), *IG XII.3* 416 (Thera, first century B.C.), 420 (undated); LSJ s.v. χαριστεῖον.

⁴⁷ *Cyr.* 4.1.2 (transl. Miller); see also 4.5.14, where Cyrus' command seems to be carried out.

⁴⁸ C. Vatin, "Etruschi a Delfi," *Annali della Fondazione per il Museo "Claudio Faina"* 2 (1985) 173–181, thinks he sees a fifth-century bilingual Etruscan-Greek inscription on a dedication by the Tyrrhenians in Delphi, the Greek version of which seems to contain the word χαρ[ισ]τέ[ριον]. However, the existence of this inscription has been questioned by M. Pallottino, "Proposte, miraggi, perplessità nella ricostruzione della storia etrusca," *StEtr* 53 (1985) 3–16, esp. 7–14; J. Bousquet, *Bull.épigr.* 1988, 640; SEG XXXVII 415. Note also Vatin's proposal to restore [χαριστέριον] in another dedicatory inscription at Delphi of the late sixth or early fifth century: apud G. Colonna, "Apollo, les Étrusques et Lipara," *MEFRA* 96 (1984) 557–578, at 565 [SEG XXXIV 405]. However, in the absence of any epigraphic parallel for the word of this early date, Vatin's supplements must remain highly conjectural.

⁴⁹ T. B. Mitford, *The Nymphaeum of Kafizin* (Berlin/New York 1980), nos.

on the other hand, is not attested until the second century B.C.⁵⁰

χορεῖα (?)

The Delian inventory lists of the third and second centuries B.C. record many dedications of *χορεῖα* dispatched by the *theoroi* of different Greek cities to Delos.⁵¹ A common formula is, for example, φιάλην Δηλιάδων, *χορεῖα* ἐπιδόντων Κνιδίων, or ὀνάθ[ημα] Δηλιάδων, *χορεῖον* ἐπιδόντων Μεγαλοπολιτῶν (or similar).⁵² It is unclear what the word *χορεῖα* signified precisely, and on what occasions they were sent to Delos. Bruneau thus explains the practice: ‘les théores remettent des honoraires, *χορεῖα*, aux Déliades qui emploient cette somme à la consécration d'une phiale.’⁵³ LSJ, on the other hand, take *χορεῖα* as ‘thank-offerings for choral victory’.⁵⁴ If they were choral thank-offerings brought to the gods, it is unclear why the verb used is ἐπιδιδώμι (which seems to carry more specialized meanings) instead of the more common ἀνατίθημι or related words.

(ii) *Preliminary Offerings*

διαβατήρια, ἀναβατήριον

A cognate of διαβαίνειν ('to cross over', 'to pass over'), the word *διαβατήρια* refers to 'offerings before crossing the border' (LSJ). In Classical literature it is confined to Thucydides (three times) and Xenophon (eight); all applications refer to Spartan practices.⁵⁵ Before crossing a frontier, the Spartan

⁵⁰ 119, 124, 139, 147, 193, 206, 229, 253. Attalids: *OGIS* 269, 273, 280, 328.

⁵¹ Polyb. 5.14.8: τοῖς θεοῖς ἔθυεν εὐχαριστήρια, and *SEG* LVII 577 (Macedonia, second century B.C.).

⁵² E.g. *IG* XI.2 164.A.55–57 (Rhodes), 199.B.14 (Casos), 219.B.25 (Megapolis), *I.Délos* 298.A.117 (Cnidos), 313.25 (Cos).

⁵³ *I.Délos* 298.A.117, 1439.Ab.21–22.

⁵⁴ P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale* (Paris 1970) 93–114, at 108.

⁵⁵ LSJ s.v. *χορεῖος* III.

⁵⁶ Thuc. 5.54.2, 5.55.3, 5.116.1; Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.3, 3.5.7, 4.7.2, 5.1.33,

army would customarily make sacrificial offerings termed **διαβατήρια** to provide omens; only if they were favourable would the army advance into the territory.⁵⁶ The **διαβατήρια** were therefore offerings for learning the gods' will before a military move, a 'consultative' sacrifice according to Parker's categorization.⁵⁷ Later Plutarch uses the word in a slightly different context to denote thank-offerings made after (not before) crossing (*Luc.* 24.6–7): Lucullus sacrificed a bull as **διαβατήρια** to the river Euphrates (ἐθύσε δὲ καὶ τῷ Εὐφράτῃ ταῦτον διαβατήρια) in acknowledgement of his army's safe passage. Plutarch also uses a related word **ἀναβατήριον** (from ἀναβαίνειν, 'to mount', 'to go on board'), not attested in any other Greek authors,⁵⁸ of an offering for a safe voyage (attained): tradition held that the men sent by Ptolemy Soter to fetch Sarapis from Sinope were blown off course, but were guided by a dolphin to Cirrha in Phocis; in gratitude for the safe voyage they sacrificed **ἀναβατήριον**.⁵⁹

εἰσι(τη)τήρια, εἰσαγώγεια

From **εἰσεῖναι** ('to enter', 'to go into') and **εἰσιτήριος** ('belonging to entrance'), the word **εἰσι(τη)τήρια** expresses 'a sacrifice for entry into a year or an office'.⁶⁰ Demosthenes twice

⁵⁶ 3.14, 5.4.37 5.4.47, 6.5.12. The practice is very common in Arr. *Anab.*, but the term **διαβατήρια** is not used; instead Arrian uses the related phrase ἐπὶ τῇ διαβάσει θύειν (or similar), e.g. 4.4.3, 5.3.6, 5.28.4.

⁵⁷ In Thuc. 5.54.2, 5.55.3, the Spartans returned home when the **διαβατήρια** were unfavourable. On sacrifice before crossing, see also W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War I* (Berkeley 1974) 113–115; M. Jameson, "Sacrifice before Battle," in V. D. Hanson (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London 1991) 197–227, at 202–203; R. Parker, "Sacrifice and Battle," in Hans van Wees (ed.), *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (London 2000) 299–314, esp. 300–302.

⁵⁸ Parker, in *War and Violence* 299.

⁵⁹ Except in *Geponica* 9.17.8.

⁶⁰ Plut. *Mor.* 984B. LSJ s.v. **ἀναβατήριον**: "sacrifice for fair voyage"; Chantraine, *La formation* 63: "sacrifice pour obtenir une heureuse traversée."

⁶¹ Chantraine, *La formation* 64: "sacrifice offert par le sénat au commencement-

refers to this kind of sacrifice: the Athenian *boule* would hold a sacrifice at the beginning of the year, perhaps as an induction of its new members.⁶¹ Attic inscriptions have many allusions to εἰσιτητήρια, showing that apart from the *bouleutai*, other groups (such as the hipparchs and ephebes) were also inaugurated by such sacrifice, whether offered by themselves or by priests and priestesses.⁶² The εἰσιτητήρια could also be called εἰσαγώγεια (from εἰσάγειν ‘to bring in’, ‘to introduce’),⁶³ but this word is not found in literary sources.

προθεάρια

A third-century B.C. inscription from Cyrene has a rarely attested word προθεάρια. Among a long list of names of priests inscribed on a marble stele is a short text mentioning the sacrifice of προθεάρια to Archagetas performed by the treasurers: τοὶ ταμίαι προθεάρια τῷ Αρχαγέται θύωντι.⁶⁴ Dobias-Lalou explains προθεάρια as sacrifices performed by the *tamiae* to (Apollo) Archegetas before *thearois* set off to Delphi.⁶⁵ Thu-

ment de l’année”; LSJ s.v. εἰσιτήριος: “a sacrifice at the beginning of a year or entrance on an office”.

⁶¹ Dem. 19.190, 21.114. On ‘entry sacrifice’ not described with this term, see e.g. Thuc. 8.70.1, Lys. 26.8. P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* (Oxford 1972) 132: “εἰσιτητήρια, inaugural rites.”

⁶² E.g. *Agora XVI* 270.4 (entry of hipparchs), *IG II²* 1011.5, 34 (ephebes). See the useful collection of inscriptions in Parker, *Polytheism* 98, 434 n.64.

⁶³ *SEG XXXIII* 115.11–12 (εἰσιτητήρια), 26–27 (εἰσαγώγεια), in relation to the sacrifice performed by the priestess for (perhaps) the ephebes’ induction; discussed in Parker, *Polytheism* 434 n.64. Cf. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Athenian Myths and Festivals* (Oxford 2011) 197–203, who considered the εἰσιτητήρια as distinct from the εἰσαγώγεια, which in her opinion was performed by the priestess of Aglauros on the εἰσαγωγή (‘bringing in’) of the statue of Athena Polias from Phalerum to the Acropolis in the Plynteria and Kallynteria.

⁶⁴ C. Dobias-Lalou, *Questions de religion cyréenne* (Paris 2007) 145–160 [*SEG LVII* 2010]. It is generally thought that the stele was re-used: the long list of priests was inscribed later above and below the pre-existing sacred calendar.

⁶⁵ C. Dobias-Lalou, “Voyageurs cyréenens,” in H. Duchêne (ed.), *Voya-*

cydides' reference to *theoroi* sacrificing at the altar of Apollo Archegetes at Naxos before sailing from Sicily (6.3.1) makes her view more or less certain.⁶⁶ But we cannot exclude the possibility that the word προθεάρια might carry other meanings in a different context, given the wide range of meanings associated with θεωρία/θεαρία which could include the office of *theoros*, festival attendance, sightseeing, contemplation, or public spectacle at festivals or games.⁶⁷ An honorific decree from Ambryssos in Phocis has a supplemented [προ]θεαρίαν, apparently meaning 'front-seating privilege' (usually denoted by προεδρία) at public games or in theatres (*IG IX.1* 10, second century B.C.).

προτέλεια

From προτελεῖν ('to pay beforehand'), the term προτέλεια refers to an offering made before a solemnity, such as before marriage-rites.⁶⁸ Iphigenia is described as a προτέλεια ναῶν, a sacrifice before the ships could set sail.⁶⁹ In another variant of the myth, believing Agamemnon to be giving Iphigenia in marriage to Achilles, Clytemnestra asks whether he has already sacrificed 'pre-marriage offerings' to the goddess for their child (προτέλεια δ' ἡδη παιδὸς ἔσφαξας Θεᾶ;).⁷⁰ Perhaps initially a voluntary offering made in kind before marriage, προτέλεια

geurs et antiquité classique (Dijon 2003) 11–21, at 17–19. On Apollo Archegetes at Cyrene, cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 5.60.

⁶⁶ Commentary and detailed bibliography in S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides III* (Oxford 2008) 279–281.

⁶⁷ Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique II* 433–434 s.v. θεωρός; LSJ s.v. θεωρία.

⁶⁸ Hsch. s.v. προτέλεια: ἡ πρὸ τῶν γάμων θυσία, καὶ ἐορτή; cf. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berkeley/London 1983) 62–63 n.20.

⁶⁹ Aesch. *Ag.* 227; J. D. Denniston and D. Page, *Aeschylus. Agamemnon* (Oxford 1957) 89: "preliminary sacrifice on behalf of the ships." E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus. Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) II 40–41, 129, on lines 65 and 227, noted that Aeschylus is inverting a word with cheerful images (because of its usual association with marriage) and giving it a sinister meaning.

⁷⁰ Eur. *IA* 718; see also 433: Ἀρτέμιδι προτελίζουσι τὴν νεάνιδα.

later signified a cult payment. A fourth-century B.C. *thesauros* on the Athenian acropolis collects one drachma from Athenian maidens as a ‘pre-marriage offering’ (*προτέλεια γάμο*) payable to Aphrodite Ourania.⁷¹

χρηστήριον

Derived from *χρήστης* ('one who gives oracles') and *χρᾶσθαι* ('to consult an oracle'), *χρηστήριον* could denote 'an offering for the oracle' made by those consulting it.⁷² Euripides' Ion tells the chorus that if they wish to consult Apollo at Delphi, they can offer a *πελανός*⁷³ in front of the temple and advance to the altar, but must not approach its inner shrine if a sheep has not been slaughtered: εἰ μὲν ἐθύσατε πελανὸν πρὸ δόμων καὶ τι πυθέσθαι χρῆζετε Φοίβου, πάριτ’ ἐξ θυμέλας· ἐπὶ δ’ ἀσφάκτοις μῆλοισι δόμων μὴ πάριτ’ ἐξ μυχόν (*Ion* 226–229). Later, when Xuthus arrives, he says that he will go inside, since the *χρηστήριον*—presumably a sheep—has been sacrificed for strangers in common before the shrine: στείχοιμ’ ὃν εἴσω· καὶ γάρ, ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω, χρηστήριον πέπτωκε τοῖς ἐπήλυσιν κοινὸν πρὸ νοσοῦ; and he wants to receive the god’s oracle: βούλομαι δ’ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῇδ’—αἰσίᾳ γάρ—θεοῦ λαβεῖν μαντεύματα (418–421).⁷⁴ Instead of offerings made spontaneously, the *χρηστήριον* is essentially a preliminary sacrifice before oracular consultations.

⁷¹ SEG XL1 182. See also *IG I³* 5.2: [προτέ]λεια θ[ύ]νε]ν.

⁷² Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique* 1276, s.v. *χρησ-*: “‘sacrifice préliminaire’ avant l’oracle”; LSJ s.v. *χρηστήριον* II.

⁷³ A *πελανός* was originally a vegetarian offering, but later signified a cult payment in oracular consultation and other cult services. E.g. Herod. 4.90–91, with the commentary in I. C. Cunningham, *Herodas. Mimiambi* (Oxford 1971) 145.

⁷⁴ On the preliminary procedures of consulting the Delphic oracle, see P. Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes* (Paris 1950) 86–114; H. W. Parke, *Greek Oracles* (London 1967) 80–85. But *χρηστήριον* can also be used in the more general sense of ‘sacrificial victim’, without reference to oracular consultations: e.g. Aesch. *Sept.* 230, *Supp.* 450.

(iii) *Propitiatory Offerings*

ἀρεστήρ, ἀρεστηρία/ἀρεστήριον

Etymologically related to ἀρέσκειν ('to make amend', 'to please') and ἀρεστός ('acceptable', 'pleasing'), the words ἀρεστήρ and ἀρεστηρία (or ἀρεστήριον) denoted a 'propitiatory offering' to the gods. A fourth-century B.C. *lex sacra* from Piraeus makes provisions for a 'propitiatory offering' termed ἀρεστήρ to be offered to Helios and Mnemosyne (Ἡλίῳ ἀρεστῆρ[α] κηρίον. Μνημοσύνῃ ἀρεσ[τῇ]ρᾳ κηρίον).⁷⁵ We know from the lexicographers that an ἀρεστήρ was a form of cake offered to propitiate the gods.⁷⁶ A common occasion for making propitiatory offerings was upon making alterations of sacred property. A fourth-century decree from Oropus, concerning restoration work to the fountain and baths at the Amphiareum, prescribes the use of twenty drachmai for an ἀρεστήριον to be made to Amphiaraus.⁷⁷ An ἀρεστήριον was likewise required on the occasions of repairing the statue of Athena Nike and of melting down the dedications of the Hero Doctor in Athens.⁷⁸ This was probably meant to please the gods and to divert any potential danger that might result from altering divine property.⁷⁹

ἐκλυτήριον

From ἐκλύειν ('to release'), ἐκλυτήριον appears only once in Classical literature to denote an 'expiatory offering'. When

⁷⁵ *IG II²* 4962.B = *LSCG* 21B; note that side B is thought to be inscribed later. For ἀρεστήρ see also *IG II²* 4971 = *LSCG* 22 (Piraeus), *LSCG* 26 (Athens), *IG XII.6* 260.8 = *LSS* 80 (Samos, all both fourth century B.C.).

⁷⁶ Hsch. α 7134, Phot. α 2801, *Suda* α 3828, *Etym.Magn.* 138.54. On cakes in Greek sacrifice see n.2 above.

⁷⁷ *I.Oropos* 290.19 (369/8 B.C.).

⁷⁸ *LSCG* 35.18–19 (mid-fourth century), 41.46 (third century).

⁷⁹ Rudhardt, *Notions fondamentales* 269. Other examples of ἀρεστήριον/ἀρεστηρία are e.g. Meiggs/Lewis 23.38 (Athens, 480 B.C.), *LSCG* 32.58 = Rhodes/Osborne 58 (Athens, 352/1: restored), *IG II²* 1672.223, 302 (Athens, 329/8), *LSCG* 116.24–25 (Chios, fourth century).

Teiresias reveals that Creon must sacrifice his son to appease Ares' wrath (aroused by Cadmus' slaughter of his serpent), Creon persuades Menoeceus to flee, saying that he himself is ready to die as an 'expiatory offering' for the fatherland: θνήσκειν ἔτοιμος πατρίδος ἐκλυτήριον.⁸⁰ It is a common mythical motif in Greek literature that a chosen member of the community must die for the common good.⁸¹ It was customary to placate the gods with sacrifice (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 1.446–478); but no other victim (whether human or animal) for appeasing divine wrath is described as an ἐκλυτήριον.

Θελκτήριον

Etymologically related to θελκτήρ ('soother', 'charmer') and θέλγειν ('to charm', 'to enchant'), the word θελκτήριον is first attested in Homer to refer to a means of enchantment or propitiation.⁸² In the *Odyssey* the Trojan horse is described as θεῶν θελκτήριον, a means of appeasing or placating the gods, in other words a 'propitiatory offering'.⁸³ In Classical literature the word is confined to Aeschylus and Euripides, but only in one other instance is it applied to offerings. Iphigenia describes her libations to Orestes, consisting of milk, wine, and honey, as νεκροῖς θελκτήρια, "soothing offerings to the dead" (Eur. *IT*

⁸⁰ Eur. *Phoen.* 969. See also the related word λυτήρια ('expiatory offering') at Ap. Rhod. 4.704: ἀτρέπτοι λυτήριον ἡγε φόνοιο.

⁸¹ E.g. Eur. *Erechtheus* fr.360 Kannicht (Erechtheus' daughter), Dem. 60.29 (Leon's daughters), Pherecydes *FGrHist* 3 F 154 (king Codrus), Diod. 8.8 (king Aristodemus' daughter). See E. Kearns, "Saving the City," in O. Murray and S. R. F. Price (eds.), *The Greek City: from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 323–344.

⁸² LSJ s.v. θελκτήριον: "charm, spell." On the Homeric usages of this word see Crusius, *A Complete Greek and English Lexicon* 199–200; Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* 187; Authenrieth, *Homeric Dictionary* 150.

⁸³ Hom. *Od.* 8.509: ἦ ἑάσαν μέγ' ἄγαλμα θεῶν θελκτήριον εἶναι. See Crusius, *A Complete Greek and English Lexicon* 200; W. W. Merry and J. Riddell, *Homer's Odyssey*² (Oxford 1886) 350; Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect* 187; Authenrieth, *Homeric Dictionary* 150; R. D. Dawe, *The Odyssey. Translation and Analysis* (Lewes 1993) 343–344; A. F. Garvie, *Odyssey. Books VI–VIII* (Cambridge 1994) 337.

166). Non-religious applications of the word will not be discussed here.⁸⁴

μειλικτήρια, μείλιγμα

Also used of libations for the dead is the substantive *μειλικτήρια* ('propitiations'), from *μειλίσσειν* ('to soothe', 'to appease', 'to propitiate'). The word is used only once in Classical literature: Aeschylus describes how the Persian queen brings to the grave of Darius *χοαί* (of milk, honey, water, wine, oil, and also flowers), as "propitiatory offerings for the dead" (*νεκροῖσι μειλικτήρια*).⁸⁵ Similar in meaning and usage is the cognate *μείλιγμα*. Orestes offers libations to Agamemnon as "appeasement offerings for the dead" (*χοὰς φερούσας νερτέροις μείλιγματα*).⁸⁶ In both Aeschylean passages, we find *μειλικτήρια/μείλιγματα* used in apposition to *χοαί*. Propitiatory libations were also made to the chthonic deities. In another play of Aeschylus, the word *μειλίγματα* is used of *χοαί ἄστοιν* for the Erinyes (*Eum.* 107).

πενθητήριον

Derived from *πενθητήρ* ('mourner') and *πενθεῖν* ('to mourn'), *πενθητήριον* is used of 'mourning offering' in Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* (6–7). After offering a lock of hair to Inachus as a "nurture offering" (*θρεπτήριον*: see above), Orestes dedicates another lock to Agamemnon as a "mourning offering": *πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θρεπτήριον. τὸν δεύτερον δὲ τόνδε πενθητήριον*. In rituals of mourning, it was customary to cut a strand or

⁸⁴ These are Aesch. *Supp.* 447 (μύθου μῦθος ἀν θελκτήριος), 1004 (ὄμματος θελκτήριον), *Cho.* 670 (πόνων θελκτηρία στρωμνή), *Eum.* 81 (θελκτηρίους μύθους), 886 (γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον); Eur. *Hipp.* 478 (λόγοι θελκτήριοι), 509 (θελκτήρια ἔρωτος).

⁸⁵ Aesch. *Per.* 610. On libations for the dead see Burkert, *Greek Religion* 71–72, 194, and *Griechische Religion*² 115–117, 296.

⁸⁶ Aesch. *Cho.* 15. LSJ. s.v. *μείλιγμα* I.2. See also H. Friis Johansen and E. W. Whittle, *Aeschylus: The Suppliants III* (Copenhagen 1980) 316, on Aesch. *Supp.* 1029: "μειλίσσειν and its nominal derivates are most frequently used of propitiatory libations to the dead or the potentially hostile powers below."

strands of hair and place it upon the corpse or the grave; but only in this Aeschylean passage is the hair offered described as a πενθητήριον.⁸⁷ This ritual has been variously interpreted as an act of self-immolation, an act of symbolism by which the living dedicated himself to the dead, or a means of establishing contact with the deceased.⁸⁸

(iv) *Other Offerings*

ἐκτίμητρα

The word **ἐκτίματρα** (Doric for **ἐκτίμητρο**), a cognate of **ἐκτιμᾶν**, is uniquely attested in a dedicatory inscription from Cnidos from perhaps the third century B.C.: Δάματρι καὶ Κούραι καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς τοῖς παρὰ Δάματρι καὶ Κούραι χαριστεῖα καὶ ἐκτίματρα ἀνέθηκε Πλαθαινὶς Πλάτωνος γυνά (“to Demeter and Kore and the gods with Demeter and Kore, Plathaenis wife of Platon dedicated thank-offering and **ἐκτίματρα**”).⁸⁹ Rejecting the view that the word denotes a thank-offering for release (using sacred money) from slavery or captivity,⁹⁰ Lazzarini prefers “come ringraziamento e segno del massimo apprezzamento.”⁹¹ Similarly in the revised supplement of LSJ **ἐκτίματρα** is taken as an offering in honour of the goddesses.⁹² However, the cognate verb **ἐκτιμᾶν**, apart from the sense of ‘to honour highly’, can also mean ‘to estimate’ or

⁸⁷ For hair-offerings for the dead see e.g. Hom. *Il.* 23.140–149; Soph. *Aj.* 1174; Eur. *El.* 91, *IA* 1437, *Phoen.* 1524–5, *Tro.* 480.

⁸⁸ A. W. Verrall, *The Choephoroi of Aeschylus* (London 1893) 2, on *Cho.* 6–7: “the wish to bring the person of the giver into permanent connexion with a source of help and strength”; A. C. Pearson, *Euripides. The Phoenissae* (Cambridge 1909) 190 on *Phoen.* 1524–1525: “an act of symbolism, by which the survivor devoted himself to the service of the dead”; see also A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus. Choephoi* (Oxford 1986) 51, summarizing various views with bibliography.

⁸⁹ *I.Knidos* 138 (= *Syll.* 3 1146).

⁹⁰ *Syll.* 3 1146 n.3.

⁹¹ Lazzarini, in *Atti del II Seminario* 211–212.

⁹² LSJ Suppl. s.v. **ἐκτίμητρα**: “some form of honorific offerings.” Cf. LSJ s.v.: “penalties, *SIG* 1146 (possibly, = reward for redemption from slavery).”

'to evaluate', as in the famous Cyrene cathartic law of the late fourth century B.C.⁹³ We cannot exclude the possibility that ἐκτίματρα might have some more specific meaning than an 'honorific offering'.

II. Offerings in Ancient Greece: Some Observations

This survey of the vocabulary of offerings to the gods (and the dead) is not meant to be exhaustive, as a thorough examination of all the Greek words for 'offerings' (and their cognate verbs) would require treatment on a much wider scale. Yet the above analysis suffices to demonstrate the great variety of sacrifice and dedications offered for a range of purposes in ancient Greece, showing that the nature of offerings is much more complex and varied than such categories as ἀναθήματα, ιερά, and θυσία may lead us to believe.

Many of the words for 'offerings' were formed by adding the suffix -τήριος/τήριον, or less frequently -τον/τα and -τρα, to a word expressing the reason, context, or desired effect of the offering. Religious terminology formed in this way is seen already in Homer's θελκτήριον and ζωάγρια; but it is in tragedy that such words are most common. Aeschylus alone provides us with three words for religious offerings ending in -τήριος or -τήρια.⁹⁴ As we have seen, these words are usually based on agent nouns ending in -τήρ or -τής or based on a verb.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the application of these words in our sources is far from consistent. Thus, while Aeschylus uses θρεπτήριον,

⁹³ Rhodes/Osborne 97.43. Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐκτιμάω.

⁹⁴ These are θεπτήριον, μειλικτήρια, πενθητήριον. Chantraine, *La formation* 45, noted that a large number of words ending in -τήριος/v are products of the language of tragedy.

⁹⁵ On words formed similarly with the suffix -τήριος/v, see Chantraine, *La formation* 45 §38, 62–64 §49; E. Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik I* (Munich 1940) 467, 470; H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1956) 238 no. 14. On words ending in -τήριον in Greek tragedy see D. M. Clay, *A Formal Analysis of the Vocabularies of Aeschylus, Sophocles & Euripides* (Minneapolis/Athens 1958–1960) I 42–43, 95, II 27, 60.

other authors do not describe adolescent hair-offerings to the deities as such. In Euripides' *Alcestis*, when the queen is brought back to life by Heracles, Admetus orders his people to hold song-dances and make public sacrifices “for the blessed happenings” (ἐπ’ ἐσθλοῖς συμφοραῖσιν, 1155–1156). This is no doubt a thank-offering for a life saved but neither εὐαγγέλια nor σῶστρα nor σωτήρια is used. It appears that the same kind of offering may be variously described: the choice of word (if a particular term is used at all) can vary from context to context, and from one author to another. This necessarily complicates the task for anyone studying gifts to the gods: one has to take into account offerings made both with and without the terms, and the contextual information (if any) on the circumstances in which they were made.

The names of types of offerings are of significance not only to linguists but also to Greek historians, as they capture some of the ways in which the worshippers experienced and conceived of their relations with the gods. We have seen that offerings might be made to thank the gods for a range of divine assistance received: for nurture (*θρεπτήριον*), for deliverance (*σῶστρα*, *σωτήρια*, *ζωάγρια*), for good news (*εὐαγγέλια*), for victory of various kinds (*νικητήρια*, *ἐπινίκια*), for the profit from shearing (*κούρειον*), for fulfillment (*τελεστήρια*), and for any divine favours (*χαριστήριον*). It is interesting and significant that most of these terms are extensions from a word, or have an equivalent word, indicating the reward or return made to humans for similar services: an *εὐαγγέλιον* could denote a reward to a messenger who brought good tidings, *θρεπτήρια* (in the plural) the return for rearing made to nurses, *σῶστρα* the reward for bringing back run-away cattle or slaves, *σωτήρια* a physician's fee in later Greek; *ζωάγρια* usually meant the ransom paid to a warrior for taking a prisoner alive, *νικητήριον* and *ἐπινίκια* could apply to a prize of victory awarded to a successful competitor or warrior, and *χαριστήρια* could be made to human benefactors. This assimilation between gifts to the gods and rewards to men reflects the Greeks' perception of their gods as *εὐεργέται*: the Greeks could appeal to their gods for all kinds of favours and assistance, in return for which they

deserved rewards as did human benefactors. It is unclear whether this kind of human-divine relation was modelled on the relation between human benefactors and beneficiaries, or vice versa. What is evident is that in the Greeks' imagination of the divine, the gods were thought to interact with worshippers by a process of gift-giving similar to that in human social interactions, and to take pleasure in gifts and counter-gifts as men did. This helps to explain why religious life was often construed in terms of exchange relations in ancient Greece.⁹⁶ While the nature, scale, and means of effecting the benefaction were different, in both sets of relations the idea of reciprocity was fundamental.

The variety of thank-offerings has important implications for Greek piety. Influenced perhaps by the relatively late appearance of the word *χαριστήριον*, which is not attested until Xenophon, some scholars in the early twentieth century claimed that thank-offerings were conspicuously lacking in the Greeks' relations with their gods.⁹⁷ Yet the present study shows that Greek terms for 'thank-offerings' are by no means lacking, and are variously expressed in words other than *χαριστήριον* from at least the beginning of the Classical period onwards. Instead of focusing narrowly on *χαριστήριον* as the Greek equivalent of the English 'thank-offering', historians should allow the possibility that there were other words and means of expressing gratitude in Greek religion. More importantly, the diversity of thank-offerings should nuance the way in which the nature of gift-giving in Greece is understood. Contrary to the emphasis

⁹⁶ E.g. Pl. *Euthphr.* 14C. On reciprocity see A.-J. Festugière, "Ἄνθετος Ων," *RSPh* 60 (1976) 389–418; J. M. Bremer, "Reciprocity of Giving and Thanksgiving in Greek Worship," in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite, and R. Seaford (eds.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford 1998) 127–137; R. Parker, "Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion," in Gill et al., 105–125.

⁹⁷ E.g. J. W. Hewitt, "On the Development of the Thank-Offering among the Greeks," *TAPA* 43 (1912) 95–111, and "The Thank-Offering and Greek Religious Thought," *TAPA* 45 (1914) 77–90; H. Beer, *Aparche und verwandte Ausdrücke in griechischen Weihinschriften* (diss. Würzburg 1914), esp. 125, 133.

in scholarship on *do ut des*, these offerings suggest that equally prominent in Greek religion is the mentality of *do quia dedisti*: an offering might be made to the gods for some divine favour attained, whether or not a vow had been made beforehand.

While the terms of thank-offerings indicate the context or reason for bringing the gift, the names of preliminary and propitiatory offerings express semantically the desired effect an offering was intended to bring about. A θελκτήριον was expected to enchant (θέλγειν) the gods, a πενθητήριον to mourn (πενθεῖν) the dead, μειλικτήρια to appease (μειλίσσειν) them, an ἐκλυτήριον to release (ἐκλύειν) a community from evil, διαβατήρια to cross (διαβαίνειν) a border, a χρηστήριον to inquire of the god (χρᾶσθαι), and εἰσιτήρια to enter (εἰσεῖναι) a new year or position. These terms make explicit worshippers' desires, showing that the Greeks could project their hopes and expectations onto the names of the offerings. A similar phenomenon is seen in the choice of cult epithets: individuals and groups might invoke a god with a title that indicates the effect they wanted to achieve. Greek religious vocabulary was therefore a means of expressing the worshippers' desires, and is revealing about their expectations and motivations.

Finally we should consider how ancient worshippers normally described their gifts to the gods. Many of the words collected here are attested exclusively or more commonly in literary than in epigraphic evidence. Instead of these terms, the most commonly attested words in dedicatory inscriptions that have come down to us are, for example, ἄγαλματα, δῶρα, μνῆμα, ἱερά, ἀπαρχή, and δεκάτη. Compared with some other Greek religious terminology, such as the title(s) under which a god was invoked, the names for the types of gifts being offered to the gods were perhaps not of crucial importance: for most worshippers, what mattered most was the gift itself; how the gift was called was of secondary importance. In other words, although such terms as διαβατήρια, μειλικτήρια, and ἐκλυτήριον could serve as indicators of the desired effects, the 'correct' naming or labelling of a gift had little or no bearing on the offering's efficacy to achieve the desired result. It was the act of making the offering, not the precision with which the offering

was described, which concerned the giver and the divine recipient. This may explain the prominence of non-context specific terms, such as ὄγαλμα, ἀναθήματα, ιερά, and θυσία, which are applicable to multiple contexts. Amid the innumerable kinds of gifts offered to the gods in different circumstances, there was as much room for individual and local variation⁹⁸ in religious vocabulary as in cult practices. In Greek religion the custom of offering gifts to the gods was flexible enough to allow individual choice and variety, a variety which is reflected in the value and form of the offerings, the frequency with which they were offered, as well as the names they were given.⁹⁹

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⁹⁸ E.g. the word τελείονμα in Thessaly.

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