

Complete Gold Leaves



Transcriptions of Sixteen
Ancient Greek Gold Lamellae
compiled with English translations
by Edward Jenner

Percutio
PUBLICATIONS

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Scholarship

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from the Ancient Greek of the so-called 'Orphic' Gold Tablets).* Atuanui. 2014
The Love Songs of Ibykos: 22 fragments. Holloway Press. Auckland. 1997

Poetry

A Memorial Brass. Hawk Press. Eastbourne. 1980
Dedications. Omphalos. Auckland. 1991
Writers in Residence and other Captive Fauna. Titus. 2009

Complete Gold Leaves

Compiled with English translations by Edward Jenner

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Preface

This electronic document complements my earlier printed book *The Gold Leaves (Being an Account and Translation from the Ancient Greek of the So-called 'Orphic' Gold Tablets)* (Atuanui Press, 2014), which contained only two Greek texts (those of 'Thurii 1' and 'Hipponion'). Three of the Greek texts differ from those cited as texts 'of choice' in that edition. Here, I have preferred the more reader-friendly presentations of the Greek for 'Thurii 2a', 'Mylopotamos' and 'Rethymnon', as found in R.G. Edmonds, *The 'Orphic' Gold Tablets and Greek Religion* (2011).

In the Greek texts, square brackets indicate scribal dittography ('Thurii 1'), scribal omissions, or text missing on a fragmentary lamella (e.g. 'Entella'); chevrons indicate scholarly restorations; braces, scribal errors. In my English translations, paired brackets indicate dittography ('Thurii 1'), lacunae caused by unintelligible Greek, conjectural supplements (e.g. the third last and last lines of 'Petelia'), and the 'boundaries' of a fragmentary line (e.g. the penultimate line of 'Petelia'). A single bracket on a line indicates the left- or right-hand edge of a fragmentary lamella or the margin at the beginning of an otherwise unintelligible line (e.g. 'Entella' in both cases).

Acknowledgements are due to William Direen for his care in assisting me with assembling and compiling the Greek texts to bring these messages engraved on diminutive shreds of gold leaf to 'cyberspace', after having lain buried for well over two millennia with the ashes or the skeletons of their owners.

E.J. December 2015

A-texts

Thurii 1

Ἔρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρῶν κοθαρά, χθονίων βασιλεία,
Εὐκλήης Εὐβουλεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι·
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμῶν γένος ὄλβιον εὐχομαι εἶμεν.

ἀλλὰ με μοῖρ' ἐδάμασσε {καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι}
καὶ ἀστεροβλήτα κεραυνῶι.
κύκλου δ' ἐξέπταν βαρυπενθέος ἀργαλέοιο,

ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἐπέβαν στεφάνου ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισι,
δεσποίνας δ' ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας.
{ἱμερτοῦ δ' ἀπέβαν στεμάνου ποσὶ καρπασίμοισι}

“ὄλβιε καὶ μακαριστέ, θεὸς δ' ἔσηι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο.”
ἔριφος ἐς γάλ' ἔπετον.

Text: Zuntz (1971), p. 301

Thurii 1

Pure, I come from the pure, Queen of the Dead,
 Eukles, Eubouleus, and other immortal gods:
 for I too claim to be of your blessed race.

But I was vanquished by Fate [and other immortal gods]
and Lightning-striker's bolt.
 I flew out of the wheel of grief and suffering,

I raced to win the crown I so desired,
 I sank beneath the breast of our mistress, the Queen of the Dead.
 [I raced to win the crown I so desired]

'Blessed and fortunate man, god will you be, no longer
mortal.'
 I am the kid that rushed to milk.

Southern Italy, mid-4th c. B.C.

Thurii 2 (a)

Pure, I come from the pure, Queen of the Dead,
Eukles and Eubouleus and other gods and deities:
for I too claim to be of your blessed race,
having paid the penalty for my unjust deeds
whether Fate vanquished me or Lightning-striker.
Now I come as suppliant before chaste Persephone
that she kindly send me amongst the purified.

Southern Italy, mid-4th c. B.C.

Thurii 3

Ἄλλ' ὀπτόταμ ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος Ἄελίοιο,
δεξιὸν †ΕΣΟΙΑΣΔΕΕ† <ιέ>ναι πεφυλαγμένον εὖ μάλα πάντα.
χαῖρε παθὼν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὔπω πρόσθε ἔπεπόνθεις·
θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες.

χαῖρ<ε> χαῖρε· δεξιὰν ὀδοιπόρ<ει>
λειμώνας τε ἱεροὺς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας

Line 2: upper case letters within obeloi † are illegible

Text: Zuntz (1971), p. 329

Thurii 3

But when the soul forsakes the light of the sun,
take the right [] each step with all due care.
'Welcome! After an ordeal you have never been through before.
A god you are and mortal no longer. You are the kid that rushed to milk.

Welcome and rejoice! Take the path to the right
for the sacred meadows and groves of Persephone.'

Southern Italy, mid-4th c. B.C.

Rome

Ἔρχεται ἐκ καθαρῶν καθάρᾳ, χθονίων βασίλεια
Εὐκλεες Εὐβουλεῦ τε, Διὸς τέκος, ἀλλὰ δέχε<σ>θε
Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον ἀοίδιμον ἀνθρώποισιν.
Καικιλία Σεκουδεΐνα, νόμωι ἴθι δῖα γεγῶσα.

Text: Graf & Johnston (2007), p 18.

Rome

Pure, she comes from the pure, Queen of the Dead,
Eukles and Eubouleus, child of Zeus. But accept
this gift of Memory's, this song forever sung.
'Come then, Caecilia Secundina, goddess now by law.'

mid-3rd c. A.D.(?)

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B-texts

Hipponion

Μναμοσύνας τόδε θρῖον · ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλλησι θανεῖσθαι
 εἰς Ἄϊδαο δόμους εὐήρεας · ἔστ' ἐπὶ δεξιὰ κρήνα,
 πὰρ δ' αὐτὰν ἔστακῦα λευκὰ κυπάρισσος·
 ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυχὰὶ νεκύων ψύχονται.
 ταύτας τᾶς κράνας μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐνγύθεν ἔλθεις.
 πρόσθεν δ' εὐρήσεις τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας
 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον · φύλακες δ' ἐπύπερθεν ἕασι.
 οἱ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐν<ι> φρασὶ πευκαλίμαισι
 ὅτ<τ>ι δὴ ἐξερέεις Ἄϊδος σκότος ὀρφνήεντος.
 εἶπον · ὕδρ Γᾶς ἡμὶ καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος.
 δίψαι δ' ἡμ' αὖτος καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι · ἀλλὰ δότ' ὤ[κα
 ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμ[νης·
 καὶ δὴ τοί <σ'>ἐλεοῦσιν ὑποχθόνιοι βασιλῆες
 καὶ δὴ τοὶ δώσουσι πιεῖν τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπ[ὸ λίμνας
 καὶ δὴ καὶ σὺ πλὴν ὁδὸν ἔρχεα<ι> ἂν τε καὶ ἄλλοι
 μύσται καὶ βᾶκχοι ἱερὰν στείχουσι κλε<ε>ινοί.

Greek text is substantially that of Edmonds (2011), but reading θρῖον ('leaf') in line 1 (West, 1975:230); line 2, εἰς ('to'); line 10 (G&J); line 12 Zuntz 1976:133; line 13 Janko 1984:99.

Hipponion

This is the leaf of Memory: on the point of death

. . .

to Hades' well-built halls; there is a spring on your right
 and by it the cypress with its luminous sheen
 where the souls of the dead descend to slake their thirst.
 You must not go near this spring or drink its water.
 Further on you will find cold water flowing from
 Memory's lake; there are guardians standing over it.
 Shrewdly, in their wisdom, they will ask you
 why you scour Hades' sombre shadows.
 Say: 'I am a son of Earth and starry Heaven.
 I am parched with thirst and dying: quickly, give me
 the cool water flowing from Memory's lake.'
 And the rulers of the Underworld will pity you
 and they will give you water from Memory's lake
 and then you will pass along the sacred way that other
 initiates and bacchants tread to their glory.

Southern Italy, c. 400 B.C.

Petelia

Εύρήσ[σ]εις <δ'> Ἄϊδαο δόμων ἐπ' ἄριστερὰ κρήνην,
πᾶρ δ' αὐτῆι λευκὴν ἔστηκυῖαν κυπάρισσον·
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἔμπελάσειας.
εὐρήσεις δ' ἑτέραν, τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον· φύλακες δ' ἐπίπροσθεν ἕασιν.
εἰπεῖν· Ἐγὼ παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος,
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί.
δίψῃ δ' εἰμὶ αὕη καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι. ἀλλὰ δότ' αἶψα
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης·
καὺτ[οί] σ[ο]ι δώσουσι πιεῖν θείης ἀπ[ὸ] κρή[νης],
καὶ τότε ἔπειτα [τέλη σὺ μεθ'] ἠρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[ς].
[Μνημοσύ]νης τόδε [τερῖον]· ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλλησι] θανεῖσθ[αι
.....] τόδε γραψ[
(in right margin) τογλωσειπα σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας.

Text: Edmonds (2011), p. 22

Petelia

You will find a spring on your left in Hades' halls
 and by it the cypress with its luminous sheen.
 Do not go near this spring or drink its water.
 You will find another, cold water flowing from
 Memory's lake; its guardians stand before it.
 Say: 'I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven,
 but descended from Heaven; you yourselves know this.
 I am parched with thirst and dying: quickly, give me
 the cool water flowing from Memory's lake.'
 And they will give you water from the sacred spring
 and then you will join the heroes at their rites.
 This [is the of Memo]ry: [on the point of] death
] write this [
] the darkness folding [you] within it.

Southern Italy, 4th c. B.C.

Pharsalos

Εύρήσεις Αΐδαο δόμοις ἐνδέξια κρήνην,
πὰρ δ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἔστηκυΐαν κυπάρισσον·
ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μηδὲ σχεδόθεν πελάσηισθα·
πρόσσω δ' εὐρήσεις τὸ Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προ(ρέον)· φύλακες δ' ἐπίπερθεν ἕασιν·
οἱ δὲ σ' εἰρήσονται ὅ τι χρέος εἰσαφικάνεις·
τοῖς δὲ σὺ εὖ μάλα πᾶσαν ἀληθείην καταλέξαι·
εἰπεῖν· “Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἄστ(ερόεντος)·
Ἄστέριος ὄνομα· δίψῃ δ' εἰμ' αὔος· ἀλλὰ δότε μοι
πιεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς κρήνης.”

Text: Zuntz (1971), p. 361

Pharsalos

You will find a spring on your right in Hades' halls
and by it the cypress with its luminous sheen.
Do not go near this spring or drink its water.
Further on you will find cold water flowing from
Memory's lake; its guardians stand over it.
They will ask you the purpose of your visit.
Tell them the whole truth without any hesitation;
say: 'I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven,
Asterios by name. But I am parched with thirst;
Let me drink from your spring.'

Thessaly, 350–320 B.C.

EDWARD JENNER

Thessaly

Δίψαι αὖτος ἐγὼ κ(αὶ) ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πίε μου
κράνας αἰειρόω. ἐπὶ δεξιὰ λευκή κυπάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἔσί; πῶ δ' ἔσί; Γᾶς υἱός εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος·
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γένος οὐράνιον.

Text: Edmonds (2011), p.29

Entella

col. i [ἐπεὶ ἂν μέλ]λησι θανεῖσθαι
 [μ]εμνημέ<ν>ος ἥρωσ
 []σκότος ἀμφικαλύψας
 [ἐπὶ] δεξιὰ λίμνην,
 [πὰρ' αὐτῇ λευκὴν ἔστη]κῦαν κυπάρισσον·
 [ἔνθα κατερχόμεναι ψυ]χαὶ νεκύων ψύχονται.
 [ταύτης τῆς κρήνης μη]δὲ σχεδὸν ἐ<μ>πελάσ<ασ>θαι.
 [πρόσθεν δ' εὐρήσεις τῆς] Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
 [ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον·] φυλακοὶ δ' ἐπίπτε<ρ>θε<ν ἔ>ασιν.
 [τοὶ δέ σε εἰρήσονται ἐνὶ] φρασὶ πευκαλίμησιν,
 [ὅτι δὴ ἐξερέεις Ἄιδος σκότο]ς ὄρφονήεντος.
 [εἶπον· Γῆς παῖς εἶμι καὶ] Οὐρανοῦ ἄστερόεντος.
 [δίψαι δ' εἶμ' αὔος καὶ ἀπόλλ]υμαι· ἀλλὰ δότε μοι
 [ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι τῆς] Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης.

col. ii αὐτὰρ ἐ[μοὶ γένος οὐράνιον· τόδε δ' ἴστε καὶ αὐτοί.]
 καὶ τοι δὴ [<σ'>ἐλεοῦσιν ὑποχθόνιοι βασιλῆ]ες
 καὶ τότε τ[οι δώσουσι πιεῖν τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμνης
 καὶ τότε δ[ὴ - - - - -
 οὐμβολα φ[- - - - -
 καὶ φε[- - - - -
 σεν[

Text: Graf & Johnston (2007), p.16 with the exception of line 16 which is line 13 of our text of Hipponion.

Entella

col. i

on the point of death
] hero remembering
] the darkness folding
] a lake on your right

and by it the cypress with its luminous sheen
 where the souls of the dead descend to slake their thirst.
 Do not go near this spring or drink its water.
 Further on you will find cold water flowing from
 Memory's lake; there are guardians standing over it.
 Shrewdly, in their wisdom, they will ask you
 why you scour Hades' sombre shadows.
 Say: 'I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven.
 I am parched with thirst and dying; give me
 the cool water flowing from Memory's lake.

col. ii

But descended from Heaven; you yourselves know this.'
 And the rulers of the Underworld will pity you
 and they will give you water from Memory's lake
 and then [
 passwords [
 and [
 [

Sicily, 3rd c. B.C. (?)

EDWARD JENNER

Eleutherna

Δίψαι αὔρος ἐγὼ καὶ ἀπόλλυμαι· ἀλλὰ πιέμ μοι
Κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιᾶ, τῆ κυφάρισσος.
“Τίς δ' ἔσσι; πῶ δ' ἔσσι;”
Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ ὠρανῶ ἀστερόεντος.

Text: Zuntz (1971), p. 362

Eleutherna

I am parched with thirst and dying: let me drink
from the ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress tree.
'Who are you? And where are you from?'
I am a son of Earth and starry Heaven.

Crete, 2nd-1st centuries B.C.)

EDWARD JENNER

Mylopotamos

Δίψα<ι> δ' ἤμ' αὔρος καὶ ἀπόλ<λ>υμαι· ἀλ<λ>ὰ πιέν μοι
κράνας αἰειρόω ἐπὶ δεξιᾶ, τῆ<ι> κυπάρισσος.
τίς δ' ἔσσί; πῶ δ' ἔσσί; Γᾶς ἤμι θυ<γ>άτηρ καὶ Ὀρανῶ
ἄστερόεντος.

Text: Edmonds (2011), p.27

Mylopotamos

I am parched with thirst and dying: let me drink
from the ever-flowing spring on the right, by the cypress tree.
'Who are you? And where are you from?'
I am a daughter of Earth and starry Heaven.

Crete, 2nd-1st centuries B.C.

Rethymnon

Δίψαι {τοι} <α>ῦος παραπ<ό>λλ<υ>ται· ἀλλὰ π{α}ιέν μοι
κράνας <Σ>αύρου ἐπ' {α} ἀρι<σ>τερὰ τᾶς κυφα{σ}ρίσσω.
τίς δ' εἶ ἢ πῶ δ' εἶ; Γᾶς ἡμίοῖ μᾶτηρ {πωτιαετ} <κ>αὶ
<Ο>ῦρανῶ
<ᾶ>στε<ρόεντος>
{τισδιψαιτοιατοιλυτοοπασρατανηο}

Text: Edmonds (2011), p. 34

Rethymnon

He is parched with thirst and wasting away: let me drink
 from the ever-flowing spring to the left of the cypress tree.
 'Who are you? And where are you from?'
 Earth is my mother [] and of starry Heaven.
 [who with thirst . . .]

Crete, 2nd-1st centuries B.C.

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Other texts

EDWARD JENNER

Pelinna (a)

Νῦν ἔθανες καὶ νῦν ἐγένου, τρισόλβιε, ἄματι τωῖδε.
εἶπειν Φερσεφόνοι σ' ὅτι Β<ακ>χιος αὐτὸς ἔλυσε.
ταῖι|ῦρος εἰς γάλα ἔθορες,
αἶψα εἰς γ<ά>λα ἔθορες,
κριὸς εἰς γάλα ἔπεσ<ες>.
οἶνον ἔχεις εὐδ<α>ίμονα τιμή<ν>
κᾶπιμένει σ' ὑπὸ γῆν τέλεα ἄσσαπερ ὄλβιοι ἄλλοι.

Text: Graf & Johnston (2007), p.36

Pelinna (a)

Now you died and now you came into being, thrice blessed,
on this very same day.

Say to Persephone that the Bakkhios himself released you.

A bull, you leapt into milk,

you quickly leapt into milk,

a ram, you rushed to milk.

You have wine as your mark of good fortune.

And the same prizes await you beneath the earth
as the other blessed souls possess.

Thessaly, 325-300 B.C.

EDWARD JENNER

Pherai 1

Σύμβολα· Ἄν<δ>ρικε-
παιδόθυρσον, ἀνδρικεπαι-
δόθυρσον· Βριμῶ, Βριμῶ. εἴσιθ<ι>
ἱερὸν λειμῶνα· ἄποινος
γὰρ ὁ μύστης.
ΓΑΠΕΔΟΝ

Text: Graf & Johnston (2007), p. 38

Pherai 1

'Passwords?' Man-child-
thyrsus 'Man-child-
thyrsus' Brimo 'Brimo' 'Come into
the sacred meadow: redeemed
is the initiate.'
GAPEDON

Thessaly, 350-300 B.C.

EDWARD JENNER

Pherai 2

πέμπε με πρὸς μυστῶ<ν> θιάσους· ἔχω ὄργια [Βάκχου]
Δήμητρος Χθονίας τε <τέ>λη καὶ Μητρὸς Ὀρεί[ας].

Graf & Johnston (2007), p. 38

Pherai 2

Send me to the bands of initiates, for I know the mysteries of [
the rites of Demeter Chthonia and those of the Mountain Mother.

Thessaly, 320-280 B.C.

EDWARD JENNER

Amphipolis

Εὐαγῆς ἱερὰ Διονύ-
σου Βαχχίου εἰμί,
Ἄρχεβού[λι]η
Ἄντιδώρου.

Text: Graf & Johnston (2007), p. 40

Amphipolis

Pure am I
sacred to Dio-
nysos Bakkhios,
Arkhe Boulē
[daughter] of Antidoros.

Macedonia, 320-280 B.C.

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Cover image

Thessaly, unknown location. 350-320 BC, 22 x 37 mm. By courtesy of the John Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California.

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