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THE PRAYER OF JACOB (*PGM*22b) AND SPEECH ACT THEORY: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article uses Speech Act Theory to analyse *The Prayer of Jacob*, a magical incantation from the fourth-century *Greek Magical Papyri* (*PGM* 22b. 1-26). Drawing from Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory, I examine various speech acts within the prayer, following Lesses' methodology. Three primary speech act types (directives, expressives, and direct addresses) are identified, alongside an exploration of phrases invoking the power and names of God, and enigmatic *voces magicae*. Ultimately, the paper suggests that the combination of verbal utterances with divine names, expressions of power, and *voces magicae* enhances the prayer's potential effectiveness, leading to the desired outcomes under appropriate conditions.

Keywords: Ancient magic, *Greek Magical Papyri* (*PGM*), religion, Speech Act Theory, illocutionary force

Introduction

In this article, I will conduct a formal examination of *The Prayer of Jacob* (*PGM* 22b. 1-26) (published in both the *Greek Magical Papyri* edited by Preisendanz and Henrichs, and Charlesworth's translated collection of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*), utilizing the pragmatic framework of Speech Act Theory.[1] Following Frankfurter's distinction between historical and functional approaches to magic, I will adopt a functional approach to this magical text by applying Speech Act Theory to it. The latter originated with J. L. Austin and was later developed within the linguistic subfield of 'Pragmatics'.[2] To prepare the text for a pragmatic analysis of this type, I will first undertake a

[1] Preisendanz and Henrichs 1973:148; Charlesworth 1983:715-723.
[2] Frankfurter 2019; Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1976.

brief textual and contextual analysis to establish the setting of the text. I then intend to identify each clausal constituent, analyse each as a performative utterance, and investigate their illocutionary force. This will enable me to define the intended illocutionary force of the prayer. Rather than focusing solely on the locutionary meaning of the verbs and other descriptive words, I will attempt to examine their illocutionary force by measuring them against the general criteria for a successful illocutionary act. It should be noted, however, that the success of the prayer is determined by the actual act of someone reciting it, to which, of course, we have no access.

My investigation will demonstrate that the verbs within *The Prayer of Jacob* are performatives (including directives, expressives, and direct addresses), and that when combined with the use of the divine names of God, *voces magicae,* and ritual actions they should be effective in their illocutionary force.[3]

Application of Speech Act Theory to ancient Jewish and/or Greek texts of this sort has been previously investigated in the work of Lesses on speech acts in ancient Jewish magical texts, Frankfurter on Greek/Egyptian magical papyri in general, and Struck on speech acts, ritual, and Hellenism more generally.[4] I know of no prior research on the direct application of Speech Act Theory to a specific text from the *Greek Magical Papyri.*

Impact on scholarship and limitations

Speech Act Theory offers a framework for exploring the dynamic relationship between language, action, meaning, and efficacy in the context of ancient magic. By applying this theory, researchers can gain deeper insights into how magic rituals functioned, how they were understood by the participants, and how they contributed to the cultural and religious practices of the past. While Speech Act Theory offers valuable tools for analysing the linguistic aspects of ancient rituals, researchers must approach its application with an awareness of its limitations and the complexities inherent in studying magic rituals from the past. Many ancient rituals were conducted in various languages and dialects, some of which may not have direct linguistic equivalents in modern languages, presenting a challenge to the precise categorizations required by Speech Act Theory. Furthermore, ancient magical texts and actions can be subject to multiple

[3] *Voces magicae* are words not immediately recognizable as belonging to any known language and are commonly associated with curse tablets. Such words are intended to represent a language that demons or gods can understand, see Van der Horst and Newman 2008:217.

[4] Lesses 1998; 2001; Frankfurter 1998; 2001a; 2001b; 2019; Struck 2001.

interpretations and the intended illocutionary acts may not always be clear. These ambiguities are further compounded by gaps in historical knowledge and by the absence of a cultural context, making it a complex and multifaceted area of study. Ancient ritual practices are often reconstructed on the basis of fragmentary textual and archaeological evidence. This limited evidence can make it challenging to identify and analyse the illocutionary acts and intentions behind specific ritual actions. Integrating Speech Act Theory with other historical, anthropological, and archaeological approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of ancient magical rituals and their significance.

Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory conveys the idea that language is not only used to describe the world but also to perform actions within it. Austin and Searle are the key originators of this theory. According to Austin, there is more to language than the meaning of words and phrases; we do not only use language to say things but also to do things.[5] Consequently, Austin identified three types of speech events:[6]

1. Locutionary act - the act of saying something.
2. Illocutionary act - the intended function or meaning of an utterance.
3. Perlocutionary act - the actual effect of an utterance on the listener.

A single expression may fall into multiple categories, and the distinction lies in the specific aspect of the speech event we are focusing on or analysing at a given moment. This could involve understanding the content of what is being said, exploring the motive or purpose behind the speech, or examining the impact and consequences of the utterance.[7]

Austin also identified several types of speech acts including:[8]

1. Verdicatives: The giving of a verdict by a judge or jury.
2. Exercitives: Making a request or giving an order.
3. Commissives: Making a promise or making a commitment.
4. Behabitives: These include the notion of reaction to other people's behaviour, for example, expressing feelings or attitudes.
5. Expositives: Making a statement that changes the world such as, 'I now pronounce you husband and wife'.

He also introduced the concepts of 'felicitous' and 'infelicitous' utterances in contrast with the theory of 'truth conditional semantics', which assumed

[5] See Austin 1962.
[6] Austin 1962:94-107.
[7] Austin 1962:98,99,101.
[8] Austin 1962:150-163.

any utterance could be assessed as 'true' or 'false'.[9] A felicitous utterance is successful in performing the intended illocutionary act such as making a promise, giving an order, or issuing an apology. However, an infelicitous utterance fails to achieve the intended illocutionary act.[10]

Frankfurter, in his discussion of speech acts and spells, lists Austin's felicity conditions for the success of speech acts, which need to be considered in this analysis. [11]

1. The officiating figure must have the authority to make statements.
2. The person or object must be receptive to the change.
3. The declaration must be uttered according to tradition to be effective.

Searle expressed dissatisfaction with Austin's categories and introduced his own, which he believed offered a more rational description.[12] He outlined five primary categories of illocutionary acts:[13]

1. Assertives: intended to commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition, such as making a statement, asking a question, or making a prediction.
2. Directives: intended to get the hearer to do something, such as making a request, giving an order, or making a suggestion.
3. Commissives: commit the speaker to some future action or state of affairs, such as making a promise, guaranteeing something, or making a threat.
4. Expressives: express a speaker's psychological state, such as thanking, congratulating, apologizing, or cursing.
5. Declaratives: bring about a new state of affairs, such as pronouncing someone married, firing someone, or declaring someone guilty.

Searle's essay 'Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language' first introduces the category of directives, which includes speech acts such as requesting, ordering, and advising.[14] Regarding the illocutionary act of

[9] Austin 1962:12-24.

[10] For example, if someone says, 'I promise to meet you at five pm', and they intend to make a promise and the conditions are appropriate for the promise to be made, then the utterance is felicitous. However, if they say the same thing, but they do not intend to make a promise or the conditions are not appropriate for a promise to be made, then the utterance is infelicitous.

[11] Frankfurter 2019:609; Austin 1962:14-15. This article focuses on the first (partially) and third conditions while omitting the discussion on the second condition. Due to the absence of explicit intra-textual evidence in *The Prayer of Jacob*, it becomes necessary to draw on implicit evidence derived from analogous texts within the *Greek Magical Papyri*. For a more in-depth exploration and discussion, see Khumalo 2024.

[12] See Searle 1969; 1976.

[13] Searle 1976:12-20.

[14] Searle 1969:64-71.

requesting, Searle argues that several conditions must be met for the request to be successful:[15]

1. The speaker must intend to get the hearer to perform a specific action. This means that the speaker must have a specific action in mind, and believe that the hearer is capable of performing that action.
2. The speaker must believe that the hearer can recognize the intended meaning of the request. This means that the speaker must use language and gestures that are appropriate to the context and that the hearer can interpret correctly.
3. The speaker must believe that the hearer is willing to perform the requested action. This means that the speaker must consider the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, as well as any social norms or conventions that may affect the hearer's willingness to comply with the request.
4. The request must be made in the appropriate context. This means that the request must be made in a situation where it is socially acceptable and appropriate to make such a request.

Background to the text

The primary source used in this study is *The Prayer of Jacob* (*PGM* 22b.1-26),[16] counted among the fourth-century *Greek Magical Papyri* from Egypt.[17] Despite its claim to be a Jewish prayer attributed to Jacob, it is also classified as a magical incantation due to its form and content, suggesting similarities with second-century texts.[18] Van der Horst and Newman suggest that the papyrus on which this prayer is found was the property of a 'professional ritual expert' (*magos*) who probably had a collection of other spells and incantations.[19] In this prayer, the reciter summons God and requests wisdom and deification. Scholars still question whether it should be considered

[15] Searle 1969:66-67.

[16] The Greek version of the selected text is taken from *Papyri Graecae Magicae* published by Preisendanz and Henrichs 1973:148. Published English translations include Goodenough 1953:203; Charlesworth 1983; Aune cited in Betz 1985; Van der Horst and Newman 2008; Khumalo 2022.

[17] According to Van der Horst and Newman 2008:217, *The Prayer of Jacob* belongs to a collection that originates from the fourth century CE. Charlesworth 1983:715 states that the prayer is extant in a fourth-century papyrus, but its composition predates the fourth century. See Penner and Heiser 2008.

[18] Charlesworth 1983:716.

[19] Van der Horst and Newman 2008:221.

'Jewish' or 'pagan'.[20] Charlesworth argues that *The Prayer of Jacob* should not be considered gnostic or as an ordinary magical charm but should be added to pseudepigraphal texts – because it is Jewish, is related to other pseudepigraphal texts (e.g., *Prayer of Joseph*), and probably dates from the same historical period as other *Pseudepigrapha*.[21] In his unpublished lecture on the text, Davila questions Charlesworth's assertion that it is definitely Jewish, and suggests that the reference to the 'race of Israel' is 'magical window dressing on which we probably shouldn't place much weight'.[22] He claims that it is difficult to assign the prayer definitively to a Jewish, pagan, or possibly even a Christian background.[23]

Preliminary analysis: form, structure, and movement

The Prayer of Jacob, situated within the framework of ancient Jewish and Greek prayers or rituals, prompts an exploration into prayer structures, particularly as Greco-Egyptian private rituals in the *PGM* exhibit extensive variations without adhering to a single structural form.[24] To probe deeper into the structure of prayers, insights from Justus shed light on a proposed framework comprising invocation, basis, and request.[25] Justus contends that these elements constitute the minimal components of ancient prayers, evident across various Indo-European traditions, including the Hittites of ancient Anatolia and extending to later examples like *The Lord's Prayer* in the New Testament.[26] Shalom further highlights the foundational components of Jewish prayers, encompassing praise, petitions, and thanksgiving.[27] Additionally, Houghton reinforces this structural pattern in the prayers found within the Apocryphal Acts, emphasizing elements such as invocation, narrative, and requests.[28]

Charlesworth argues that *The Prayer of Jacob* contains eight internal divisions, consisting of four invocations, three petitions, and one injunction.[29] For the sake of the following discussion, I argue that *The Prayer of Jacob* can be divided into four parts. The divisions align with

[20] The prayer mentions that the one who recites this prayer should be from the race of *Israel* but also refers to the pagan *serpent gods*.
[21] Charlesworth 1983:718.
[22] Davila 1997.
[23] See Khumalo 2024.
[24] Dieleman 2019:283-284, 316-320.
[25] Justus 1993.
[26] Justus 1993:273.
[27] Shalom 1989:17.
[28] Houghton 2004:3.
[29] Charlesworth 1983:715.

Charlesworth's framework of invocations, petitions, and an injunction, as well as the elements of invocation, basis, and request. Rooted in the structural conventions of ancient Jewish and Greek prayers discussed above, these divisions are defined by both structural principles and thematic transitions within the passage. The divisions are as follows:

Part 1
Title – (Line 1)
Invocation and Praise – The invocation of God (Lines 2–6)
Request – Request for God to hear the one praying (Line 7)
Basis – God who has power over all (Lines 10–16)
Part 2
Invocation – The summoning of God (Line 16)
Request – Request for God to hear the one praying (Line 17)
Basis – God gives power to those above, below, and under the earth (Lines 16–17)
Part 3
Request – Make straight the one who makes the prayer (Line 19)
Basis – God the creator (Lines 21–22)
Part 4
Request – Wisdom, power, and good things (Lines 23–24)

Line 26, [λ]έγε ἑπτάκις πρὸς ἄρκ[τον] καὶ ἀ[πη]λιώτην, 'Say the prayer of Jacob seven times to the north and east', is an instruction to the petitioner and is not part of the prayer itself – it should be separated from the prayer. The 'recipient' of this imperative (λέγε) is the one saying the prayer on behalf of the petitioner, whereas all other imperatives are directed toward God. This is the only situational clue to the ritual event found in the prayer.

Detailed analysis

The invocation begins with a vocative address to the Father, πάτερ, which differs from the two consecutive addresses to the Father in the nominative πατήρ (line 2). The invocation, including both vocative and nominative addresses, indicates to whom the prayer is addressed: the Father of the patriarchs, πατριάρχων (in the genitive plural, line 2). Van der Horst and Newman point out that a more common address in the LXX is 'God of our fathers (or ancestors)' (ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν). πάτερ is probably a reference to the God of the Jewish Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from whom the people of Israel were descended.[30] This would be identified

[30] Van der Horst and Newman 2008:233. Line 18 explicitly mentions ὁ κύριος θεὸς τῶν Ἑβραίων (the Lord God of the Hebrews).

with the God of the Hebrews, YHWH, who is the Father of the nation of Israel but is also here described as the Father of all (ὅλων) (line 2) and the Father of the powers (δυνάμεων)[31] of the cosmos (κό]σμ[ου]) (line 1) (referring to all that exists). Other evidence in the prayer that this is the God of the patriarch Jacob and the Hebrews is provided by references to Hebrew angelic beings 'cherubim' (line 5, 14), 'Abraham' (line 6), 'the holy mountain Sinai' (line 10), and 'the tribe of Israel' (line19). Ἰάω (line 13), considered a transcription of the Hebrew YHWH,[32] and Ἀδωνάι (*Adōnai,* lines 15-16) further point to names for the Hebrew God.[33] Van der Horst and Newman suggest that 'the idea that God is enthroned on the sea hearkens back to ancient Near Eastern influence on Israelite religion'.[34] Similarly, *Sabaōth* (lines 15, 20) is a common Hebrew epithet for Israel's God, literally meaning 'of hosts'.[35] God, through his supernatural power, is the creator, κτίστα (used twice in the vocative), of 'all things', 'angels', and 'archangels' (lines 2, 3). He is also the creator (κτίστης, nominative) of saving names (ὀνομάτων σωτηρικῶν) (line 3).[36] In context, these may be God's personal names (mentioned in the prayer), which when spoken have a supernatural power to save.

As mentioned previously, the analysis of grammatical constituents is mainly centred on verbs – which I will argue are speech acts in a ritual context. The first verb uttered by the speaker is a 'call', καλῶ (I call, name, or address, line 3), to the addressee, where σε is the pronoun (personal, second person, singular), referring back to the Father.[37] The present indicative καλῶ (from καλέω) has an interesting usage in the context of *Greek Magical Papyri*. It is not merely a call or a naming of the Father but an invocation of the supernatural, in other words, seeking a communion with the divine.[38] It is the invoking of a supernatural being who has power over all things. The invocation, in the present active indicative, leads to the

[31] *Sabaōth is also translated in the LXX as δύναμις* (2 Kingdoms 6:2, 6:18).
[32] See Pietersma and Cox 1984; Wevers 2001.
[33] Charlesworth 1983:723 states that the *PGM* uses Hebrew names without understanding them or pronouncing and transliterating them correctly.
[34] Van der Horst and Newman 2008:238.
[35] Van der Horst and Newman 2008:241. *Sabaōth* specifically means 'hosts'. The epithet *Elōhim Adōnai Sabaōth* signifies a genitive relationship, translating to 'Lord [*Adōnai*] of hosts'.
[36] This concept is found in biblical and apocryphal literature but not in the *PGM*. See Charlesworth 1983:720.
[37] 'I call upon you' also appears in an anonymous Jewish magical prayer found in *PGM* XXXV.2.161. Repeated invocations, the idea of God sitting upon serpents, and the reference to snow are the shared features between *The Prayer of Jacob* and this anonymous prayer. See Charlesworth 1983:717.
[38] Dieleman 2019:299.

request, and its basis is not a request in and of itself, since it is not in the imperative mood. It is on this basis that all praise and requests are made. This relates to Dieleman's discussion of formularies in spells within the *PGM* that seek communion with the divine.[39] He states that:

> A few spells are ... concerned with establishing intimate contact between the ritualist and the supreme deity. PGM IV... gives detailed instructions for ... an encounter with the highest god, Helios Mithras (IV.475–820). ... the ritual's final goal ... is receiving oracular revelations from the deity. PGM XIII preserves three variant versions ... of a text entitled 'Monad' and 'Eighth Book of Moses' (PGM XIII.1–343, 343–646, 646–734). The composition lays out ... a ritual to produce an encounter with the highest god ...

The prayer repeats the invocation of the Father, πατέρα (line 3), this time in the accusative singular in agreement with σε, referring again to the Hebrew God, who is a supernatural being with power over all existence, in a predicated subordinate clause acting as the object of summons. After this repetition, the subordinate clause is separated or elaborated on by καὶ and nouns in the genitive, καὶ ὅλης γενέσεως (of all existence), the participial adjective καὶ οἰκουμένης (inhabited) and the adjective καὶ ἀοικήτου (uninhabited), which modify the noun γενέσεως (line 5). [40] Two relative clauses, ᾧ ὑπεσταλμένοι οἱ χερουβίν (line 5) and ὃς ἐχαρίσατο Ἀβραὰμ ἐν τῷ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῷ (line 6), which specify πατέρα, precede the first request or petition to the Father – in the form of an aorist, active, imperative, ἐπάκουσόν μοι, 'Hear me' (line 7). [41] This request is followed by fragmented sentences (lines 8–16) which contain the names and basis of the authority of God together with the indeclinable *voces magicae*. This forms the basis for the next indirect invocation, ἐπικαλοῦμαί σε (line 16), a present indicative: in context, this is another call or summons to God (I summon you), an appeal for aid from a higher power leading to the request ἐπάκουσον (aorist, active, imperative) τῷ ἔχοντι τὴν εὐχήν (hear the one who makes this prayer) (line 17). [42]

The names of God that follow this form the basis for the next request: διόρθωσον (aorist, active, imperative) τὸν ἔχοντα τὴν εὐχήν (make straight

[39] Dieleman 2019:299. *PGM* III. 494-611 features a distinct prayer to the sun god, culminating in a *Prayer of Thanksgiving*. See Lanzillotta 2021.
[40] Γένεσις refers to creation or created things.
[41] ὑπεσταλμένοι is perfect middle/passive participle of a word literally meaning 'to draw back'. χερουβίν are mythical angelic beings (cherubim). ἐχαρίσατο, aorist, middle, indicative, refers to giving something to someone, often in a manner such that no reciprocation is in view.
[42] A repetition of the first request.

the one who makes this prayer) (line 19).[43] The mentioning of God's secret names and his creative power sets the stage for the final requests, which seem to be the culmination of the entire prayer:[44] πλήρωσόν με σοφίας (fill me with wisdom) (line 23), δυνάμωσόν με (put power into me) (line 23); μέστωσόν μου τὴν καρδίαν ἀγαθῶν (fill my heart with good things) (lines 23–24); ὡς ἄγγελον ἐπίγειον (as an angel on the earth), (line 24); ὡς ἀθάνατον [γε]νάμενον (as one having become immortal), ὡς τὸ δῶρον τὸ ἀπὸ σοῦ δεξάμενον (as one having received the gift given by you) (line 25).[45]

The verbs 'fill' (πλήρωσόν; μέστωσόν) and 'put power into'/'strengthen' (δυνάμωσόν) are also in the aorist, active, imperative, and are followed by adverbial clauses (like an earthly angel) which contain the participles 'having become' (γενάμενον) and 'having received' (δεξάμενον) which are in the aorist, accusative.[46] The aorist middle participles agree with aorist imperatives, possibly indicating that 'at the moment God gives the petitioner wisdom, empowerment, and good things, he or she becomes an angel and receives these as God's gift'.[47] The last verb λέγε (present, active, imperative), is the first and only present imperative. This is an instruction to the one praying that he/she should say the prayer seven times to the north and east.

Speech act analysis: Lesses

Lesses previously applied Speech Act Theory to the adjuration of the Prince of the Presence, a mystical text from the Jewish Hekhalot literature that describes the ascent of a mystic to heavenly realms.[48] Lesses' work offers a critical contrast to the approaches of Austin, Searle, and Frankfurter. By placing her analysis in direct conversation with these scholars, I aim to demonstrate how her insights challenge and refine our understanding of speech acts within magical contexts. Therefore, Lesses' contribution serves

[43] See Charlesworth 1983:722; Van der Horst and Newman 2008:243.
[44] In the *PGM,* the names of God are considered to be secret (unknown to men) and full of powers. The name was an important part of the ritual formula and was used to manipulate the gods and powers to grant wishes. See Charlesworth 1983:717.
[45] The concept of being immortal and like an earthly angel is reminiscent of some passages in the *Dead Sea Scrolls* (1QH 6.13; 1QH 3.21f., 4.24f.). See Charlesworth 1983:717. Davila 1997 also mentions that the Merkavah mystics were turned into angels of fire, Enoch received deification, and deification rites are also found in pagan magical papyri.
[46] Μέστωσον meaning cause to bulge, be filled exceptionally full (Strong's number 3325 – Louw & Nida's lexicon 59.40).
[47] Van der Horst and Newman 2008:246.
[48] Religious texts from the Cairo Genizah collection written in both Aramaic and Hebrew. See Lesses 2001.

as both a foundation for and a contrast to the main theoretical framework of the article.

Lesses identified and analysed four primary types of speech acts relevant to the text: (1) verdicatives, (2) exercitives, (3) commissives, (4) expositives.[49] Her methodology is influenced by Austin, Searle, and, in the context of ancient magic, by Tambiah (an anthropologist interested in the power of ritual language).[50] Lesses begins with Austin's theory of performatives and later considers the speech event (locution and illocutionary force). She provides three main elements that make the adjuration work: the names of God and the angel, verbs with illocutionary force that have the power to compel an angel to act in the desired way, and locutionary phrases that refer to the power of divine names. This joins the names and illocutionary verbs together to give the reciter the power to compel the angel.[51]

Speech Act analysis: The Prayer of Jacob

Within the confines of *The Prayer of Jacob*, performatives come to the fore, each playing a distinctive role in invoking and establishing a connection with the divine realm. These performatives, which can be characterized as illocutionary acts, encompass a diverse array of functions, all geared toward the pursuit of wisdom and divine intervention across various facets of life. To unravel these illocutionary acts comprehensively, I have undertaken the task of identifying and categorizing them into distinct groups. Broadly speaking, the performatives within *The Prayer of Jacob* combine into three overarching categories based on Searle's framework. The first category encompasses directives, which predominantly manifest as requests and entreaties. These utterances are characterized by their imperative nature, accentuating the supplicative dimension inherent in the prayer. The second category involves expressives, which, in their essence, articulate descriptions of the power and authority vested in the Divine. The third category encompasses direct addresses that bear the sacred names of the Divine – these names are closely associated with Searle's declaratives.[52] These addresses serve as powerful conduits for invoking divine presence and guidance, emphasizing the profound spiritual connection central to the prayer. It is worth noting that a fourth group, the *voces magicae*, adds an intriguing layer of complexity. Within this category, one may encounter

[49] Lesses 2001:192. She prefers Austin's classification. Her preference for Austin's terms explains how they relate specifically to magical or ritual speech acts.
[50] See Tambiah 1968; 1973; 1985.
[51] Lesses 2001:205.
[52] Searle's categories of speech acts do not thoroughly cover the use of vocatives, which makes it challenging to classify them.

direct address, albeit occasionally intermingled with illegible Greek phrases. These enigmatic utterances, obscured by manuscript damage, often blend elements of direct address, expressive, and directive illocutionary acts, lending an aura of mystique to the prayer. The ensuing table provides a summary encapsulating the directives. The tables illustrating expressives and direct addresses are presented further below, corresponding to the sections where these categories are examined.

	Lines	**Verbal Utterance: Greek**	**English Translation**	**Performative Classification**[53]
1.	Line 4	καλῶ σε	I invoke you	Directive (Entreaty)
2.	Line 7	ἐπάκου[σό]ν μοι	Hear me	Directive (Request)
3.	Line 16	ἐπικαλοῦμαί σε	I summon you	Directive (Entreaty)
4.	Line 17	ἐπάκουσον τῷ [ἔχο]ντι [τὴν] εὐχήν	Hear the one who makes the prayer	Directive (Request)
5.	Line 19	διόρθωσον τὸν ἔχοντα [τὴ]ν εὐχὴν	Make straight the one who makes the prayer	Directive (Request)
6.	Line 23	πλήρωσόν με σοφίας	Fill me with wisdom	Directive (Request)
7.	Line 23	δυνάμωσ[ό]ν με	Put power into me	Directive (Request)
8.	Line 24	μέστωσόν μου [τὴν] καρδίαν ἀγαθῶν	Fill my heart with good things	Directive (Request)
	Line 26	[λ]έγε ἑπτάκις πρὸς ἄρκ[τον]	Say the prayer of Jacob seven	Directive (Command)

[53] I prefer Searle's category of directives (his proposed replacement) to Austin's category of exercitives and therefore consistently use Searle's categories throughout this article.

		καὶ ἀ[πη]λιώτην [τὴν προ]σε[υ]χ[ὴ]ν τ[οῦ] Ἰακώβ	times to the north and east	

Table 1: Verbal Utterances in The Prayer of Jacob

The table presented above serves as a classification of the illocutionary speech acts centred around verbal utterances discerned within the text of *The Prayer of Jacob*. These speech acts, numbered for clarity, exhibit a nuanced array of linguistic features and functions. Notably, speech acts one and three manifest as active in sense (even though speech act 3 is in the middle voice), indicative forms, setting them apart as distinctive components of the prayer's rhetorical landscape. They distinguish themselves by deviating from the aorist imperative nature characterizing requests two, four, five, six, seven, and eight. This departure imbues them with a unique quality within the context of the prayer.

Conversely, speech act number nine deviates from the observed pattern, as it does not adhere to the present indicative form. It is a command rather than a supplication to a deity, as it is directed not to the divine but to the individual reciting the prayer (i.e., it is outside of the prayer). Recognizing the predominant pattern in prayer language is essential, particularly the distinction in tense usage between requests addressed to the divine and commands directed at the individual engaging in prayer. Generally, the aorist imperative prevails in requests to God, reflecting a default tense for non-indicatives without specific claims about the nature of the action in contrast with the imperfective (continuous or iterative) or perfective (completed).[54] According to Justus, Greek, Latin, and Hittite all have prayers with imperative request verbs, but Greek may substitute the imperative with an optative or infinitive and Latin with a subjunctive.[55] Burton's *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* states that the imperative mood is not only used in commands and exhortations but also in entreaties and petitions.[56]

Conversely, the present imperative emerges as the preferred linguistic form for instructing the petitioner, conveying an imperfective or iterative sense, encouraging continuous or repeated engagement in prayer (for example, pray 'repeatedly' seven times to the north and east). While this

[54] Bakker 1966. Houghton 2004:3 also emphasizes that all requests within the Apocryphal Acts (dated second to third century CE) are aorist imperatives, either in the second or third person.
[55] Justus 1993:278.
[56] Burton 1898:80.

observation stems from an analysis of a single prayer, an investigation into other examples could reveal whether this tense pattern may extend to other prayers, underscoring the significance of understanding the nuanced usage of present- versus aorist-imperative aspects in the context of divine requests and individual instructions within the act of prayer. This trend is mirrored in the *Lord's Prayer*, where the introduction 'Pray thus' (οὕτως...προσεύχεσθε) employs the present imperative, guiding individuals on the manner of prayer.[57] Notably, the imperative requests made to God, such as 'give us' (δός) and 'forgive us' (ἄφες), are expressed in the aorist aspect. This choice in divine requests maintains consistency with the general pattern observed, emphasizing a default, non-indicative quality without specifying the nature of the action.

In sum, the verbal statements encapsulated within *The Prayer of Jacob* predominantly gravitate toward the overarching categories of directives, finding their rightful place under the illocutionary speech acts of requests and commands.

Directives

These verbal expressions, prominently featured within *The Prayer of Jacob*, can be appropriately categorized as Searle's directives. This classification aligns with their fundamental nature as the exercise of linguistic power to command or request, as elucidated by Lesses.[58] Within the specific context of petitionary prayer, these utterances transcend ordinary statements or requests. Instead, they serve the purpose of fervently encouraging or urging someone, particularly God, to undertake specific actions. Implicit within these utterances is the effort to persuade and invoke divine intervention. This nuanced dimension prompts me to describe these directives as 'entreaties' rather than mere 'requests'.[59]

Within *The Prayer of Jacob*, the phrases 'I invoke you' and 'I summon you' closely align with what Austin classifies as 'explicit performatives'.[60] These utterances exhibit distinct characteristics, including a first-person singular construction, employment of simple indicative in the present tense, and active voice. Austin posits that explicit performatives are, in essence, actions in and of themselves rather than descriptions of other actions.[61] He introduces the 'hereby test', which involves inserting the word 'hereby' before the performative verb to determine whether an utterance qualifies

[57] Matthew 6:9–13.
[58] Lesses 2001:199.
[59] 'Petition' would also be appropriate in this instance. See Shalom 1989:19.
[60] Austin 1962:56–66.
[61] Austin1962:62–63.

as an explicit performative.[62] For instance, the phrases 'I hereby summon you' and 'I hereby invoke you' are considered explicit performatives because the inclusion of 'hereby' underscores that these utterances serve as the very vehicles for performing the acts denoted by the verbs.[63]

Lesses emphasizes that the focus lies on what the adjurer (the one reciting the prayer) is doing by reciting the directives.[64] These words require no accompanying physical actions to take effect; their mere articulation, often coupled with divine or angelic names, suffices. Consequently, within *The Prayer of Jacob*, these utterances act as vehicles for invoking and summoning God's presence. Conversely, some utterances do not pass the 'hereby test', and they fall into the category of implicit performatives. These include phrases like 'Hear me', 'Hear the one who makes this prayer', 'Make straight the one who makes the prayer', 'Fill me with wisdom', 'Put power into me', and 'Fill my heart with good things'. Lesses categorizes these as positive imperatives since they shift the focus from the adjurer to the divine being, and the emphasis transitions from the act of adjuration to the actions requested from the angel or deity. Despite their imperative nature, when directed toward a divine entity, they do not function as commands but rather as humble requests.[65]

Each of these directives can be classified as a single illocutionary act of requesting, where the consequence of the petitioner's entreaties is God's benevolent response, symbolized by his granting the requests. In this context, God's actions are seen as a result of the petitioner's requests, aligning with Austin's felicity conditions, where the subsequent behaviour corresponds to the petitioner's appeal.[66] Finally, the utterance, 'Say the prayer of Jacob seven times to the north and east', represents a direct command directed at the one reciting *The Prayer of Jacob*. This particular utterance serves a distinct purpose within the text, namely, to reinforce the authority of the speaker and, consequently, to amplify the illocutionary force of the directives.

Illocutionary Speech Acts of Requesting

The analysis of illocutionary speech acts in *The Prayer of Jacob* aligns with Austin's first, second, and third felicity conditions. As Austin delineates, an exercitive, which encompasses requests, is a form of illocutionary act

[62] Austin 1962:57.
[63] For more on the explicit performative, see Austin 1962. See Sadock's 1974:51–96 distinction between direct and indirect speech acts.
[64] Lesses 2001:199.
[65] See Tambiah 1968.
[66] Lesses 2001:200.

designed to prompt the hearer into performing a specific action or providing a particular item.[67] Searle further expands on the conditions necessary for a successful request, which include the speaker's intention to elicit a particular action, the speaker's belief in the hearer's capability to execute said action, the speaker's use of language and gestures appropriate to the context, and the speaker's consideration of the hearer's willingness to comply, taking into account the relationship between them and appropriate social norms.[68]

In the context of *The Prayer of Jacob*, it is evident that the speaker's intentions are explicitly conveyed through the invocation and summoning of God, as well as through the specific requests presented – to make the reciter straight, to be given wisdom, to be given power, to fill the reciter's heart with good things, and to be turned into an immortal earthly angel.[69] This aligns with Lesses' argument in her article 'The adjuration of the Prince of the Presence' (2001). The speaker is resolute in the desire to bring forth the presence of God, a goal made manifest through the prayer's content. Moreover, the clarity and unambiguity of the requests within the prayer serve to leave no room for doubt regarding the speaker's intentions. Each request is articulated with precision, from imploring God to hear the petitioner to seeking wisdom, power, and an immortal, earthly angelic transformation.

This adherence to clarity and unambiguity satisfies the propositional content, intention, and implied sincerity conditions. I will further discuss the sincerity conditions with the expressives. The speaker's belief that God can discern the intended meaning of the requests is implicit in the prayer. The use of indeclinable mystical words and phrases are assumed to be understood by God, underscoring the speaker's conviction of the comprehensibility of the prayer's content to its divine recipient. In essence, the illocutionary speech acts of requests within *The Prayer of Jacob* successfully meet the criteria established by Austin and Searle. The speaker's clear intentions, unambiguous articulation, belief in God's comprehension, and the contextual appropriateness of the prayer collectively contribute to its effectiveness as a series of requests.

Utilizing the methodology outlined by Lesses, it is crucial to identify additional performatives that, when coupled with verbal statements, are expected to convey the intended illocutionary force: the names of God (direct addresses), the power of God (expressives), and *voces magicae* (expressives). These topics are examined in further detail below.

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[67] Austin 1962:154–155.

[68] Searle 1969:66–67.

[69] 'To make the reciter straight': διόρθωσον. This probably means 'to make his/her path straight'. This list could be the gift(s) (τὸ δῶρον) given by God (line 25).

Expressives: power of God and *voces magicae*

Lines	Greek	English Translation
Line 2–3	πάτερ πατριά[ρχ]ων, πατὴρ ὅλω[ν, πατὴ]ρ δυνάμε[ων τοῦ κό]σμ[ου], κτ[ί]σ̣τ̣[α παν]τὸ[ς ...,] κτίστα τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ ἀρχαγγ[έ]λ[ων], ὁ κ[τ]ίστης ὀνομ[άτων] ϙ̣ῳ̣[τηρικῶν,]	Father of the Patriarchs, Father of all, Father of powers of the world, creator of all_ _ _ _, creator of the angels and the archangels, the creator of saving names.
Line 4–5	καλῶ σε, πατέρα τῶν ὅλων δυνάμε[ω]ν, πατέρα τοῦ [ἄπα]ντος [κό]σ̣[μ]ου [καὶ τῆς] ὅλης γενέσεως καὶ οἰκουμένης καὶ ἀοικήτο[υ, ᾧ ὑπ]εστ[α]λ[μέν]ο[ι οἱ] χ[ερουβίν.	Father of all powers, Father of the whole ordered world, and of all created existence, both inhabited and uninhabited whom the cherubim shrink from.
Line 7	ὁ θεὸς τ[ῶν δ]υνάμεων, ὁ θ[εὸς ἀγγ]έλων κ[αὶ ἀ]ρ[χα]γγέλων, βα[σιλεύς ...]	God of the powers, God of angels and archangels, king.
Line 10	ὁ κ[α]θ[ήμενος] ἐπὶ ὄρους ἱ[εροῦ Σ]ι̣ναΐου	The one seated on the holy mountain Sinai,
Line 11	[ὁ] καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῆς θα[λάσσ]ης [.]	the one seated on the sea.
Line 12	ὁ καθήμενο[ς ἐπὶ] τῶν δ[ρα]κ̣οντ[είων] θεῶν,	The one seated above the dragon gods.
Line 13	ὁ [θεὸς ὁ καθήμε]υ̣[ο]ς [ἐπὶ τοῦ] [Ἡ]λίου	God seated above Helios.
Line 16	ὁ κ[ύρ]ιος τῶν ὅλων	The Lord of all,
Line 16–17	ἐ[πὶ χ]άσ̣[ματος δόντα] δύναμιν <τοῖς> ἄνω καὶ τοῖς κάτω καὶ τοῖς ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς	upon the chasm, giving power to those above, and below, and under the earth.
Line 18	ὁ κύριος θεὸς τῶν Ἑβραίων οὗ [ἡ] ἀ̣ἑ̣ν̣α̣ο̣ς̣ δύναμις	The Lord God of the Hebrews, of whom is the ever-flowing power.
Line 21–22	[ὁ] χιόνα γεννῶν, ἐπὶ ἀστέρων ὑπ[ὲ]ρ αἰώνων κ(αὶ) ἀεὶ διοδεύ[ω]ν [κ(αὶ) ποιῶν] τοὺς	The one who brings forth the snow, and over the stars above eternity and always

	ἀπλανεῖς καὶ πλανωμένους ἀ[στ]έρας διώκειν τὰ πάντα τῇ σῇ δημιουργίᾳ·	travelling through and creating the fixed planets and wandering stars, urging all of them by your creative power.

Table 2: Expressives: Power of God

In *The Prayer of Jacob*, the expressives serve a multifaceted purpose, encompassing both the expression of the speaker's psychological state and the depiction of God's nature and power. These utterances not only convey the speaker's reverence and awe but also function as a form of reaction to God's behaviour and attributes.[70] The speaker employs these expressions to highlight the divine authority and omnipotence of God, positioning him as the Father of all and emphasizing his ever-flowing power. This portrayal underscores God's supremacy over all aspects of existence, including creation, the patriarchs, and other deities. The speaker's reaction to God's behaviour, as conveyed through these expressives, serves the dual purpose of reinforcing the speaker's own authority and seeking sympathy from God. The repetition of these formulaic expressions may evoke a sense of divine benevolence, potentially persuading God to heed the speaker's requests. Furthermore, when examining the felicity conditions, it becomes evident that the utterances pertaining to God's power form the foundation of the speaker's authority to make requests. By exalting God's omnipotence, the speaker establishes the basis upon which his supplications rest. The speaker implicitly intends to convey a profound belief in God's capability to grant the requests, with the expressions of God's power and authority reinforcing this belief.

Additionally, the somewhat flattering nature of these attributions, where God is hailed as supreme and all-powerful, might serve as an attempt to persuade or appease the divine. It is as if the speaker employs a form of flattery to potentially incline God toward a favourable response. Thus, when combined with the subsequent requests, these expressives augment the illocutionary force of the prayer, satisfying both Austin's authority conditions and Searle's sincerity conditions. In sum, the expressives within *The Prayer of Jacob* play a pivotal role in conveying the speaker's psychological state, reacting to God's attributes, and reinforcing the speaker's authority. These expressions, laden with reverence and acknowledgement of God's omnipotence, contribute to the overall

[70] These include: God creating all that exists, including saving names, snow, stars, and planets; his sitting on Sinai, the sea, the chasm, above the dragon gods and Helios (the sun-god); his giving power to earthly and heavenly beings; and his existing above eternity.

effectiveness of the prayer as a supplication and establish a profound connection between the petitioner and the divine.

Lines	*Voces Magicae*
Line 8–9	λελεαχ '....αρωαχ· του..αχ 'αβολ[.]ω.....[υρ]αμ 'του....βοαχ κα [10] θ[.]ρ·α [7] χαχ· μαριρο[κ...] υραμ '[9] ι̣θ̣θ [7] σεṣοικ....
Line 10	ὁ κ[α]θ[ήμενος] ἐπὶ ὄρους ἱ[εροῦ Σ]ι̣ναΐου [9] ι[.]βο [6] αθεμ̣ [10]
Line 11–12	[ὁ] καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῆς θα[λάσσ]ης [.]εα '...βλ [6] δ̣[.]κ [8] ε[.]θης [9] π̣α̣ραχθη[.]. ὁ καθήμενο[ς ἐπὶ] τῶν δ[ρα]κ̣οντ[είων] θεῶν, ὁ [θεὸς ὁ καθήμε]ν̣[ο]ς [ἐπὶ τοῦ]
Line 13	[Ἡ]λίου Ἰάω, ὁ καθήμε[νος ἐπὶ.....] τα[.]ω[.]ι...χ, ὁ [καθήμ]εν[ος ἐ]πὶ
Line 13–14	το[ῦ..]θε[....] ..μ̣α̣..σι Ἀβρ̣ι̣ήλ· Λουήλ· [.....]μ̣[.. τ]ὸν̣ [κ]οιτῶνα χε[ρο]υ[β]ὶ[ν
Line 14	....]χιρε̣...ọζ [7] ι[.]
Line 15–16	ἀστρα.....ε̣ χα̣...αώθ

Table 3: Expressives: (possible) *voces magicae*

In 'The Greco-Egyptian magical papyri', the concept of *voces magicae* holds significant importance, as practitioners perceived them as the secret and authentic names of the deities and demons being addressed.[71] These mystical utterances do not hold meaning in any human language, yet their etymological origins can be traced back to divine epithets and phrases in Egyptian and other Semitic languages.[72] It is crucial to note that distinguishing between indeclinable words and incomplete or missing words within these magical incantations is challenging. However, it appears that some of them are not incomplete Greek words or names in other languages. With a more complete source, it would likely become apparent which elements are indeed *voces magicae*.[73]

One prevailing perspective, as suggested by Van der Horst and Newman, is that the *voces magicae* were considered part of a language comprehensible

[71] Dieleman 2019:285. Thereby functioning as direct address.
[72] See Nock 1972; Graf 1991:192-194; Janowitz 2001; Dieleman 2019:285; Frankfurter 2019:623.
[73] For example, αθεμ̣- and π̣α̣ραχθη- strike me as being of Greek origin in sound, whereas λ̣ελεαχ sounds more like a non-Greek word phonetically and is more likely to be a Semitic *vox magica*.

only by the gods.[74] This notion aligns with the belief that these magical words established a unique form of communication with divine entities, transcending earthly languages and facilitating a shared understanding between practitioners and deities. As Dieleman notes, possessing knowledge of the various names within these *voces magicae* is akin to knowing a deity's true name and nature.[75] This knowledge is believed to secure the sympathy of the deity toward the ritualist's requests. In essence, these mystical names act as a conduit to establish a profound connection with the divine, enhancing the efficacy of magical rituals.

Frankfurter introduces the concept of Bronislaw Malinowski's *coefficient of intelligibility and weirdness* to shed light on the function of the *voces magicae*.[76] This coefficient encompasses not only authoritative and powerful elements but also the inclusion of seemingly nonsensical words that trace their origins to the realm of primaeval ancestors and cultural heroes. Frankfurter posits that these magical words, including *voces magicae*, play a role in grounding magic within the context of mythology. They serve as vocalic symbols that transcend conventional language, imbuing utterances with a potent and transformative quality. Miller's essay 'In Praise of Nonsense' complements this perspective by examining trends in theological speculation during Greco-Roman antiquity.[77] These speculations advocated for the deliberate removal of semantic meaning in the pursuit of accessing heavenly beings. The goal was to transcend language itself and reach a celestial realm of pure sounds. Various devices, such as foreign or animal-like names and sounds, were employed in this effort to move beyond linguistic or cultural boundaries and enter the divine sphere of sounds.[78]

The text *Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III, 66.8–22; IV, 78.10–79.11), included in two of the *Nag Hammadi* codices, exemplifies the systematic approach of using phonetic elements to surpass conventional language and enter a realm of spiritual significance.[79] In this context, the Greek alphabet, which originally served as a tool for denoting oral language through vowels and consonants, paradoxically leads to its own nullification. The very vowels that enable the functionality of the alphabet become symbolic and vocalic means to transcend the boundaries of language as it is typically understood. This 'radical orality' transcends speech through the utilization of its own

[74] Van der Horst and Newman 2008:221.
[75] Dieleman 2019:311.
[76] Frankfurter 2019:623.
[77] Cited in Frankfurter 2019:622.
[78] It is possible that *voces magicae* may be a form of *ecstatic* (unintelligible utterance that requires interpretation to be understood) or *xenolalic* speech (heavenly or angelic speech).
[79] On *Nag Hammadi* codices III, 2 and IV, 2 see Böhlig and Wisse 1975.

alphabet, a concept also reflected in visual representations of vowels on amulets and corresponding manuals, where sound and image continually reference one another.[80]

In *The Prayer of Jacob*, the recitation of the *voces magicae* (regardless of which specific words are used) serves the purpose of establishing a unique form of communication with God. Whether using God's secret names or a language specific to divine entities and the speaker, the objective is to invoke a favourable response from God in answer to the speaker's supplications. Graf's analysis of the *voces magicae* within ancient magical practices emphasizes their role as a display of superior knowledge and a means of establishing a special connection with the divine.[81] These magical words, often celestial names or sacred epithets, were not commonly known and were considered secret, enhancing the prestige of the magician who could invoke them.[82] Contrary to the notion of coercion, Graf argues that these names were used to demonstrate respect and understanding, serving as credentials that justified the magician's invocation and prayers. The gods were believed to enjoy being called by these names and invoking them was thought to induce joy and pleasure, enhancing the efficacy of magical rituals.

These mystical words can be interpreted as expressives, reinforcing the speaker's unwavering faith in God's ability to respond to and fulfil requests, thereby enhancing the illocutionary force of the prayer. However, they are more than just expressives. The knowledge of these divine words appears to possess a magical influence, suggesting a form of control over the person or being named. This phenomenon aligns with Searle's category of directives, where the speaker attempts to compel or persuade the hearer (God) to act in accordance with their desired course of action.[83] In the subsequent section, the significance of God's names will be further explored, with a particular focus on how they contribute to the overall effectiveness of the prayer in meeting sincerity and receptivity conditions.

[80] Frankfurter 2019:622-623.
[81] Graf 1991:192-194.
[82] Graf 1991:192.
[83] While these utterances do elicit a response from the divine, they do not function as *declaratives* (as Lesses suggests) because they are not used to bring about a new reality solely through their articulation. Instead, they rely on a reciprocal relationship between the speaker and the hearer (deity), which again points towards their directive function.

Direct addresses: the names of God

Lines	Names of God	Translation
Line 13	’Ιάω	YaHWeH
Line 15	θεὸς Ἀβαώθ	Theos Abaōth
Line 15	Ἀβραθιαώθ[84]	Abrathiaōth
Lines 15 and 20	[Σα]βα[ώθ x2	Sabaōth
Line 15	Ἀ]δωνάι	Adōnai
Line 16	βριλεωῳαι[85] [Ἀ]δοῴι	Brileōnai Adonai
Line 16	χα...αώθ	Cha...aōth
Line 18	’Εμα[γ]αήλ αλαμν[86]	Epagaēl alamn
Line 18	[’Ελω]ήλ	Elōēl
Line 19	Σουήλ	Souēl

Table 4: Direct addresses: the names of God

The inclusion of names and titles for direct address (vocatives) is not extensively examined by Austin and Searle, making it challenging to categorize them within one of their speech act categories despite their evident pragmatic function. Lesses argues that the divine names of God fall under the speech act category of directives.[87] While the category of directives seems intuitively appropriate, it does not entirely conform to Searle’s definition. Names present a unique challenge due to their independence from the broader grammatical structure and their specific association with certain discourse types like prayers. To address this, Hill suggests direct addresses,[88] but their exact placement within either Austin’s or Searle’s taxonomies remains uncertain, possibly aligning with Searle’s declaratives – speech that brings about a new state of affairs.

[84] May reflect the Hebrew ‘arba’ meaning ‘four’, suggesting the tetragrammaton. See Van der Horst and Newman 2008:241.
[85] Charlesworth 1983:721 omits βριλεωῳαι.
[86] ’Εμα[γ]αήλ αλαμν appears only in the *Greek Magical Papyri*. See Charlesworth 1983:722. Its etymology or structure is unclear.
[87] Lesses 2001:197.
[88] Hill 2013.

Vocatives, as elucidated by Hill (2013), consistently manifest within a dialogue structure, where a speaker communicates with an interlocutor (the hearer), setting the stage for direct address.[89] The mode of communication can either be direct or indirect, contingent upon the social context, wherein the interlocutor (the hearer) is either directly addressed (as a second person) or indirectly referenced (as a third person). Hill posits that 'only the direct address involves vocative phrases', distinguishing them from indirect addresses and exclamations.[90]

In terms of Speech Act Theory, in *The Prayer of Jacob* direct addresses align with the names ascribed to the divine being or deity invoked. According to Hill, direct addresses qualify as speech acts because they possess the function of explicitly identifying the addressee.[91] Hill's book provides a key argument, asserting that all vocatives essentially constitute vocative phrases, even when appearing as bare nouns or names. It is the underlying structure of the vocative phrase that enables a noun, whether bare or adorned, to articulate the addressee. In Hill's words, 'The [Vocative Phrase] is the functional field that relates the vocative noun to the [hearer]....'[92] Addressing the challenge posed by 'names', particularly their detachment from the broader grammatical structure in discourse, Hill asserts that vocative phrases hold a distinct position within grammar, specifically in the realm of syntax, as they are syntactically derived.[93] This assertion is rooted in the inherent nature of vocative phrases, revolving around a noun (or a pronoun), typically a name or a common noun, which may be accompanied or modified by adjectives, other nouns, prepositional phrases, or relative clauses.[94]

Additionally, vocatives play a fundamental role in shaping the interpersonal relations between the speaker and the hearer.[95] These relational nuances are grammatically conveyed through various methods, such as the employment of a vocative marker and/or the presence or absence of vocative case endings; and/or the placement of vocative nouns within the clause, be it initial, medial, or final.[96] Magic incantations written in Greek frequently employ the vocative case to directly address deities or supernatural entities. The presence or absence of vocative case endings can indicate the level of formality or intimacy between the speaker and the

[89] Hill 2013:5.
[90] Hill 2013:6–8.
[91] Hill 2013:5, 206.
[92] Hill 2013:194.
[93] Hill 2013:3.
[94] Hill 2013:8.
[95] Hill 2013:13.
[96] Fraser 1990; Leech 1999; Shiina 2005; cited in Hill 2013:13.

entity addressed. For example, the use of the vocative without a case ending can suggest a more direct or forceful address, while the presence of a vocative marker might indicate a more formal or respectful tone.[97] Thus, in *The Prayer of Jacob*, direct addresses serve as a means to establish a profound connection with God.

On another note, Lesses, in her discussion of the adjuration of the Prince of the Presence, argues that names of God operate more as descriptions than explicit performatives.[98] This alignment may associate them closely with Searle's speech act category of declaratives, speech acts that bring about a new state of affairs. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that, even as declaratives, these names serve a specific purpose within the prayer – to elicit a response or action from the divine addressee. As articulated by Lesses, these names function in the service of illocutions.[99] They are not present solely for their descriptive value but are intentionally employed to trigger specific actions by the divine being. In this sense, the names of God are imbued with inherent power and significance, contributing to the overall efficacy of the prayer. The 42-letter name of God, as illustrated in section 625 of the adjuration of the Prince of the Presence, is a prime example. While the verbs within this name do not directly act against the angels, they emphasize the potency of the Name itself in its ability to influence and assert power over these divine entities.[100] Therefore, the mention of God's names in *The Prayer of Jacob* serves to strengthen the illocutionary force of the requests made by the supplicant. These names, such as Ἰάω, Ἀβραθιαώθ, [Σα]βα[ώθ, Ἀ]δωνάι, and Ἐ̣πα[γ]αήλ αλαμν carry intrinsic power and authority.[101] They are associated with the God of all creation, the transcendent deity who governs all powers, and with the God of the Hebrews. By repeatedly invoking these names, the speaker aims to evoke the immense authority and divine power encapsulated within these sacred names. This reinforcement of divine authority further contributes to the overall effectiveness of the prayer in seeking a favourable response from the divine addressee.[102]

[97] See Hill 2013.
[98] Lesses 2001:200.
[99] Lesses 2001:200.
[100] Lesses 2001:201.
[101] Ἐπα[γ]αήλ αλαμν appears only once in the *Greek Magical Papyri.* See Betz 1985:722.
[102] *The Eighth Book of Moses* (*PGM* XIII. 1–343) and *The Tenth Hidden Book of Moses* (*PGM* XIII. 734–1077) contain similar formulae (the names Ἀβραθιαώθ, [Σα]βα[ώθ, and Ἰάω) that are intended to serve the same function.

Illocutionary force

The discussion presented by Lesses concerning the authority and success of the illocutionary force within the context of the adjuration of the Prince of the Presence is grounded in the conceptual framework of the Hekhalot literature. This framework draws from a specific textual tradition and socio-historical context, which may not be directly translatable to other bodies of texts, such as the *Greek Magical Papyri*. The *PGM*, although related in some respects to the Hekhalot literature and sharing certain elements, has its own distinct textual and socio-historical traditions.

Given this, it is crucial to approach the analysis of the illocutionary force, authority, and effectiveness of utterances within the *PGM* with contextual sensitivity. The conceptual framework and worldview of the *PGM* differs from those of the Hekhalot literature, even though there may be some overlapping themes or elements. Therefore, it would be fallacious to apply the findings or conclusions from one textual tradition directly to another without careful consideration of the specific context. To evaluate the authority, conventionality, and receptivity of the participants in the speech event within the *PGM*, it would be essential to conduct an independent investigation (for which there is not sufficient space here) that considers the unique characteristics and cultural affiliations of the Greek language texts with Jewish ethnic and cultural ties found in the *PGM*. This investigation should consider factors such as the role of magical practices, the understanding of divine names and powers, and the socio-historical context in which these texts were produced and used. In essence, the analysis of the illocutionary force and the success of utterances within the *PGM* should be undertaken within the specific framework of this textual tradition, acknowledging its distinctiveness and potential variations from other related traditions. This approach ensures a more accurate and contextually relevant understanding of the authority and effectiveness of speech acts in the *PGM*.[103]

Conclusion

In accordance with Lesses' analytical framework, the verbal utterances in *The Prayer of Jacob* have been catalogued and categorized, employing the taxonomies outlined by Austin and Searle. It has been posited that these utterances predominantly align with the performative categories of Searle's directives, effectively encapsulating the illocutionary speech acts of requesting and commanding. It is imperative to emphasize that these

[103] A comprehensive discussion of this can be found in Khumalo 2024.

requests are specifically directed towards the deity invoked while also encompassing a command addressed to the practitioner reciting the prayer. Furthermore, the convergence of illocutionary speech acts with verbal expressions comprising the names of God (functioning as direct address), manifestations of God's omnipotence (expressives), and the inclusion of *voces magicae* (also expressives), collectively constitute the requisite components for the successful realization of the intended illocutionary force. This intricate interplay between verbal utterances and supplementary performatives significantly contributes to the overall efficacy of the prayer.

In consideration of the felicity conditions appropriate to these utterances, this analysis has scrutinized Austin's felicity conditions, specifically those pertinent to illocutionary speech acts of request. It is posited that these conditions have been satisfactorily met, or at the very least, partially met within *The Prayer of Jacob*. The requests embedded within the prayer are presented in a manner characterized by clarity and absence of ambiguity, thereby unmistakably conveying the speaker's intentions. Moreover, these appeals are articulated with an underpinning sense of respect, politeness, and a profound belief in the divine capacity to fulfil them. Similarly, an exploration of Searle's criteria reveals a similar alignment with the utterances in the prayer. The speaker's intentions, transparency of expression, lack of ambiguity, appropriateness, respectful tone, and faith in the recipient's capability are discernibly manifested throughout *The Prayer of Jacob*.[104]

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