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Five Answers Prescribing Rituals in the Oracular Tablets from Dodona¹

ABSTRACT

In light of the recent publication of the new corpus of oracular tablets from Dodona (mostly dating to the Classical and Hellenistic periods), this paper analyses whether these documents sometimes record answers from the oracle. Particularly interesting are short records of answers from the oracle, attesting to the prescribed necessity of worshipping certain gods, making specific offerings, and performing particular sacrifices. Only a handful of such answers are preserved, some of which are quite detailed (5 examples are discussed here). These texts attest to the authority of the oracle in answering the often vague or general questions of petitioners (“to which gods should I sacrifice?”). They also begin to yield insights into the mechanisms through which the oracle operated at Dodona: sortition, alongside other modes of divination and consultation. Revisiting these tablets containing prescriptive answers with lists of sacrifices and offerings also broaches the wider issue of the role of the oracle in the expression and development of Greek polytheism, notably in the shaping of different configurations of deities to be worshipped for specific concerns.

Keywords: Dodona, tablets, oracle, responses, sacrifice, sortition, Greek gods, Greek polytheism.

Thanks to the new publication of the vast collection of small oracular lamellae from Dodona, our understanding of the role played by oracles in Greek religion will increase immeasurably.² Among the bewildering and fascinating diversity of subjects of enquiry now attested—besides the timeless staples of property and agriculture, childbirth and marriage—one area of investigation that particularly stands to gain is that of cult and ritual. Often understood as a mundane mechanism of sanction in such matters, the oracle is seldom recognised as a prescriptive, albeit also quite conservative authority for religious practice. This article, by revisit-

1. Heartfelt thanks are due to Robert Parker, Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, and Stella Skaltsa, for their valuable comments on preliminary versions of this paper. The exemplarily diligent editors of *Grammateion*, in particular Angelos Matthaïou, provided a series of detailed improvements for which I am extremely grateful. All dates are BC unless otherwise stated.

2. New publication: DVC (see Abbreviations). This corpus is to be supplemented by the excellent edition of Lhôte 2006, which contains numerous inscriptions not discussed in the new publication (cf. also Eidinow 2007). For a helpful recent survey of the material from Dodona and an analysis of the character of the tablets, see Piccinini 2013. The 5 texts discussed and partly reedited in this article are numbered consecutively in bold (nos. 1-5); inventory numbers belong to the Museum of Ioannina.

ing both “old” and “new” texts from Dodona, hopes to contribute to expanding the understanding of Greek oracles as sources of ritual norms. As will be seen, the oracle prescribed specific sacrificial rituals and other offerings, most often to highly traditional gods like Zeus Patroios, but occasionally also with telling variations.

Amongst the finds presented in the two new volumes, there are a good number of cases where answers to questions posed to the oracle appear to be preserved.³ For instance, there now exists a small variety of short replies, generally on subjects outside the religious sphere. The most basic kind sometimes consists of only one word, such as “here” or “there”.⁴ On the whole, though, responses are few and far between in the overall number of texts, whose total well exceeds 4000 items. It would thus appear that what the oracle or the priests/priestesses advised is only sporadically recorded.

A topic on which the oracle’s expertise is occasionally solicited is that of religious proficiency.⁵ One tablet records such an answer, apparently attributed to Diona, though she is only obliquely designated (ἄ θεός) and not explicitly named; the question is now lost. In this case, the goddess selects a priestess—here called an ἀμφίπολος and apparently mentioned by name.⁶ It is probable that this candidate for the priestly office had been put forward for the approbation of the oracle. Furthermore, it is intriguing that such priestesses (ἀμφίπολοι) are known to have served at the sanctuary of Dodona itself.⁷

3. On answers in the previously known documentation, cf. Lhôte 2006: 355-358; Piccinini 2013; for the new texts, see now Parker *forthc.* Answers have not always been correctly identified by the editors of DVC, but cf. the commentary at DVC no. 42B for an attempt at a list of this material in the new corpus. A highly persuasive attempt at identifying one answer, prescribing the sacrifice of ὠραῖα to a hero, is now made by Liapis 2015.

4. “Here”: cf. DVC 1154A (end of 5th c.?), reading simply αὐτεῖ, and probably to be read as a response to one of the questions written on the same tablet (inv. no. M464, viz. 1156B?). “There”: DVC 3809B (ca. 400-350?), ἐνθι | θεός (again perhaps to be connected with one of three other texts incised on the same tablet, inv. no. M1256). Both of these cases are no doubt correctly identified as oracular responses in DVC. For other simple or straightforward responses, cf. e.g. DVC 107A + 108B (opisthographic, inv. no. M96, ca. 325-300?): “should I campaign on land?” (στρατεύομαι | κατὰ γᾶν); answer: “go on land, absolutely!” (ἐπὶ γῆι σκέθε : τελέος).

5. Several enquiries on the subject of priesthoods are present in the new collection: cf. especially DVC 1249A, 1397A, 1572A and 3192A. Beyond Dodona, compare for instance the question of the people of Herakleia-on-the-Latmos to an oracle of Apollo (Didyma?), concerning the mode of attribution of the priesthood of Athena: Wörrle 1990: 23-24 no. SIIA (ca. 100-75).

6. DVC 70A-71A (end of 4th c.?, inv. no. M78): ἄ θεός[ς] ... | *vacat* | ἄ θεός αἰρεῖται ἀμφίπολον | Ὀρεάνδραν. The text of the final line should more carefully be read as OPE[-]ANΔPAN. As the name read by DVC is completely unattested, it may be doubted; perhaps a name with the form Θρε[-]άνδραν might also be possible (though it is equally unattested). On ἀμφίπολοι at Dodona, cf. Quantin 1999: 75 with n. 59 (but add e.g. *LSJ* s.v. for other attestations). The reverse of the tablet (B) appears perhaps to have been originally inscribed, since DVC detected traces of *rasurae*.

7. In this regard, other lamellae may easily mislead. One tablet preserves an intriguing question, “if they shouldn’t consult (or have dealings with) with Dorios the psychagogos?”, DVC 172 (end of 5th c.?, inv. no. M166): ἦ μὴ χρηῦνται Δωρίω τῶι ψυχᾶγωγῶι. The oracle *might* have answered simply “yes, Δώριος is your man”: DVC 173B, reverse of the same tablet reading ΔΩΡΙ, i.e. Δώρι(ος). However, a better and simpler interpretation is that the repetition of the name was a kind of label or summary, a form of identification of the tablet’s subject, as correctly noted by DVC: “Συνομογραφία του ονόματος Δώριος, αναγνωριστικό της 172A”. For this phenomenon of the repetition of the name of the enquirer, cf. already Lhôte 2006: 352.

The related subject which will form the focus of enquiry here is animal and vegetal sacrifice, one of the core mechanisms in Greek religion. Sacrifice in and of itself naturally forms a subject of enquiry: worshippers ask whether they should employ a certain ritual mode, or whether a given offering is to be deemed appropriate.⁸ By far the most common question asked of the oracle is “to which gods (or goddesses or heroes) should I sacrifice?” (or, more widely, “who should I worship to get the best result?”).⁹ It was thus perfectly appropriate and suitable to this line of questioning that the oracle would answer: “Sacrifice to the following...” Answers prescribing lists of sacrifices and other offerings are known from Delphi.¹⁰ A new tablet from Apollonia in Illyria, not the result of oracular consultation but rather of divination by a female *mantis* (probably using lots), provides a further sample of this type of answer.¹¹ Sacrifice, along with the concrete dedication of objects, can thus form the core of a divinatory or oracular answer.

Among the previously known texts from Dodona is a notorious tablet, for which the only evidence is a German translation. The tablet is opisthographic and contains an unpublished question on its other face; it is possible that the two sides might be related. Though it is now presumed to be damaged or irrecoverable, it is not impossible that the inscriptions may someday be more adequately published.¹² Retranslating a text back into ancient Greek from our sole source of evidence—the German translation—is an admittedly dubious process. Hypothetically, the known text may be reconstructed as follows:

1. Provisional text: no ed. pr. The basis for the reconstruction is Kekule von Stradonitz and Winnefeld 1909: 41-42, providing only a German translation of this side. For an attempt at a Greek text, cf. already Lhôte 2006: 296-297 no. 142 (with an admirable discussion of the tablet and its layout); cf. also, *SEG* 56, 662.

8. Mention of a sacrifice can be as simple as asking “how it went” (i.e. how favourable were the omens?), DVC 361 (beginning of the 4th c.): πῶς ἔχει τᾶς θυσ[ίας:], or the reference can be more allusive and obscure: e.g. “concerning Artemis, with regard to the ancient sacrifice”, DVC 2091A (ca. 400-350?), Ν(ι)κῶν ἐπερωτῆι [περι] | <τᾶς> τᾶς Ἀ(ρ)τάμιτο[ς] | τὰν ἀρχαίαν θυσία[ν]:. Advice can be sought on specific elements of ritual practice, for instance if libations should be made of mixed wine (diluted with water): DVC 2273 (end of 4th c.), ἐπικρασίου ἐπισπένδω;. See also App. here.

9. Cf. notably the index in DVC s.v. τίς. On this type of question at Dodona, see esp. Lhôte 2006: 336-342; varieties of this formulaic line of enquiry are found at most other oracles, such as Delphi and Didyma.

10. Prescriptive Delphic oracles: cf. e.g. *IScM* III 48.B-50 (Kallatis, 2nd c.), and now *I. Kaunos* 31 (2nd c.), as correctly intuited by Lupu, *NGSL* p. 35 with n. 162 (see Carbon forthc. for a full revision of this document).

11. Lead tablet from Apollonia in Illyria (ca. 450-400): Cabanes 2013: 51-53 no. 2 (sides A and B), though it is worth noting that the text also seems to be at least partly connected to Dodona (side B invokes Diona, [Zeus N]aios). A revision of the tablet is currently being prepared by P. Cabanes, F. Quantin, and the present author.

12. The rediscovery of several (if not all) of these tablets in Berlin (originally in the Museum of Charlottenburg) has recently been reported (personal communication). It remains to be hoped that they may be legible through autopsy and/or using new methods of analysis (e.g. Computed Tomography [CT] scans).

Διὶ Ναίῳι [ἔρι]φον,	“To Zeus Naios, a kid(?);
Διὶ Ὀλυμπίῳι χοιρίον, Διὶ Βρονταί[ωι - - -],	to Zeus Olympios, a piglet; to Zeus Brontaios, (an animal);
Διὶ Εὐκλεῖ χοιρίον,	to Zeus Eukles, a piglet;
Διὶ Βουλεῖ λοιβάν,	to Zeus Bouleus, a libation;
5 Κόραι χοιρίον,	to Kore, a piglet;
Ἄρτεμιτι Ἄγεμόναι ἄγαλμα,	to Artemis Hegemone, a statue;
“Ἡρωι Ἀρχαγέται λοιβάν.	to the Hero Archegetes, a libation.”

1 [ἔρι]φον Carbon: σκύφον(?) Lhôte. | 2 Διὶ Βρονταί[ωι - - -] C.: Διὶ Βρόνται [- - -] L.

As printed by Lhôte, both σκύφον(?) in line 1 and ἄγαλμα in line 6 may at first glance seem out of place in this list. However, the new lead tablet from Apollonia (Cabanes 2013: 51-53 no. 2.B2) demonstrates that objects, especially ones relating to a divine statue (namely, clothes, a belt, and a pin), could be prescribed in a similar list. For the ἄγαλμα offered to Artemis, see especially text **no. 4** below. It is σκύφον (“eine Schüssel” in Kekule von Stradonitz and Winnefeld), especially given the apparent uncertainty in the reading (cf. Lhôte), which fails to readily win our approval. If only a part of the relevant letters were read by Kekule von Stradonitz and Winnefeld, then [ἔρι]φον can be suggested as a more plausible sacrifice to Zeus Naios.

Whatever the due degree of caution which must be exerted given our secondhand knowledge of this inscription, it is clear that it was a prescriptive oracular response of the highest order. Historians of Greek religion –interpreters of configurations of gods in Greek polytheism– can easily have a field day with such material. Though the context remains lost –at least for the time being– one might propose that there are three subsets of gods forming this larger cohort prescribed by the oracle at Dodona. First and foremost, the local god, Zeus Naios, is appropriately invoked, perhaps receiving the most important and costly offering of a young he-goat, if the interpretation proposed here is correct. He is accompanied by what one might cautiously call two “canonical” figures of Zeus: Olympios and Brontaios.¹³ Next, comes a further triad, still declined under the sign of Zeus, but apparently strongly connected with the earth and agriculture: Zeus Bouleus (often identified with Plouton), Zeus Eukles (rare, but likewise identified with Plouton or Hades), and Kore (Persephone).¹⁴ Two among them receive piglets, a

13. Zeus Naios is also the only god in the group who recurs in the evidence from Dodona; the others are unique to this tablet. See also Lhôte 2006: 407-420 for an attempt at identifying the etymology of the epithet Naios. Cf. now [Zeus N]aios in the tablet from Apollonia, Cabanes 2013: 51-53 no. 2.B3, to be restored as coming immediately after Diona. A discussion of the importance of Zeus Olympios would far exceed the reaches of this article. Brontaios must be the correct epithet here, rather than Brontas reported in the preliminary German translation and in Lhôte. Cf. esp. [Arist.] 401a 17 (*On the Cosmos*): (Zeus) ἀστραπαῖός τε καὶ βρονταῖός καὶ αἴθριος καὶ αἰθέριος κεραύνιος; *IC* III:iii 13 (Hierapytna, 1st c.): Διὸς Βρονταίου; and several epigraphic attestations from Mysia and Bithynia, e.g. Marek 1993: nos. 17 and 26.

14. Zeus Bouleus: cf. esp. *LSCG* 96.15-17 (appearing with Demeter and Kore in the sacrificial calendar of Mykonos, ca. 230-200). For the more common form Eubouleus, cf. *IG* XII,7 76 (Arkesine, 4th c.; following Demeter and Kore) and *IG* XII,5 227 (Paros, 1st c.; appearing with Demeter Thesmo-

prevalent form of sacrifice in this context. Finally, there comes a pairing which is connected with the wider sphere of leadership: Artemis Hegemone (“Guide”) and a Hero Archegetes (“Chief-Leader Hero”, or more simply “Founder-Hero”).¹⁵ Elements of the iconography of Artemis Hegemone are known. The goddess, wearing a chiton, boots and a quiver, holds a large torch in one hand: it is possible that the statue or statuette prescribed at Dodona was of a similar figure.¹⁶

In the detailed list commanded by the oracle, the divine register thus seems to evolve from the local and the lofty sky, to agricultural concerns, and, in turn, to leadership. Was the oracle’s response perhaps stimulated by a public rather than a personal consultation?¹⁷ Some form of consultation by a city or group would particularly suit the presence of Artemis Hegemone, in her capacity as a “leader”, and the Hero Archegetes, typically the mythical founder of a community and also its leader. That being said, the offerings prescribed remain relatively modest (mostly piglets and libations; even the statue for Artemis need not have been particularly valuable, in contrast to the one found below **no. 4**). Nevertheless, the elaborate list and its combination of agricultural and “leader” deities remain highly suggestive of an answer given as a response to a public consultation.

Only a few other answers prescribing rituals were available in the material previously known from Dodona, and these have been correctly identified by Lhôte. One, by contrast, pro-

phoros, Kore, and Baubo); as well as two instances from Naxos, *IG XII, Suppl.* 196 with p. 104 (4th c.; cf. A. P. Matthaiou, *HOPOS* 10-12 [1992-1998] 419-422), and N. M. Kontoleon, *PIAE* (1950) 280 and (1954) 336-337 (with A. P. Matthaiou, “Ναξιακά ἐπιγραφικὰ σημειώματα”, *ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΟΝ* 2 [2013] 71-80, esp. no. 3). For Εὐκλής, seldom attested epigraphically or in literary sources, cf. the pairing of this title with Eubouleus in the gold leaf from Thuri, *IG XIV* 641.1-3 (4th c.; cp. *SEG* 37, 820): ἐρχομαι ἐκ κοθαρχῶν > κοθαρά, χθονί <ων> βασιλεία, | Εὐκλῆς Εὐβουλεύς τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι; since Persephone is invoked first, presumably Zeus and/or Hades is meant.

15. Hegemone: the epithet is widespread; beyond a possible link with hunting, it usually has a flavour of political and military leadership. Cp. for instance, a boundary stone for a sanctuary of Artemis Hagemoneia Orthosia on Tenos (*IG XII,5* 894, 2nd c.), which is contemporaneous with a dedication to Artemis Orthosia and other gods by Rhodians who have gone on campaign and received a Delphic oracle (*IG XII,5* 913; cp. also Artemis Orthosia in the Delphic oracle reported in the treaty between Philip II and Olynthos, *GHI* 50.11-16, 357/6; for Artemis Orthosia, ancestral goddess of the Geleontes on Thasos, see Rolley 1965: 449, with the discussion at 457-458). A Hero Archagetes is mentioned in an almost certainly apocryphal (but nonetheless comparable) Delphic oracle cited in Dem. 43.66: Μαντεία, ἀγαθῆ τύχη. ἐπερωτᾷ ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων περὶ τοῦ σημείου τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ γενομένου, ὃ τι ἂν δρῶσιν Ἀθηναίους ἢ ὄτῳ θεῶ θύουσιν ἢ εὐχομένοις εἶη ἐπὶ τὸ ἄμεινον ἀπὸ τοῦ σημείου (...) θύοντας καλλιερεῖν Διὶ Ὑπάτῳ, Ἀθηνᾶ Ὑπάτῃ, Ἡρακλεῖ, Ἀπόλλωνι Σωτῆρι, καὶ ἀποπέμπειν Ἀμφιόνεσσι· περὶ τύχας ἀγαθᾶς Ἀπόλλωνι Ἀγυιεῖ, Λατοῖ, Ἀρτέμιδι (...) Θεοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις καὶ Ὀλυμπίαις πάντεσσι καὶ πάσαις, δεξιᾶς καὶ ἀριστερᾶς ἀνίσχοντας, μνασιδωρεῖν κατὰ πάτρια· Ἡρῶ Ἀρχαγέτῃ, οὗ ἐπώνυμοι ἐστε, θύειν καὶ δωροτελεῖν κατὰ πάτρια. On such heroes at Athens, see e.g. *IG II²* 1641A and 2829 (both 4th c.).

16. Cf. a stele with a relief in a niche from Kallindoia, intriguingly showing both Apollo Pythios (depicted as *kitharoidos*) and Artemis Hegemone (pouring a *phiale* over an *omphalos* with her other hand): Despina, Stefanidou Tiveriou, and Voutiras 1997: 95-97 no. 69 (Museum of Thessaloniki inv. 106, late Hellenistic; see also Hatzopoulos and Loukopoulou 1992: 80-82 no. K3, pl. XXV-XXVI). Cp. also, though less certainly, the female figure and the graffito on a fragmentary red-figure kylix discussed in Makarov and Ushakov 2009 (Tauric Chersonesos; the inscription reads: ΑΓΕΜΟΝΑΣ ΚΑΛΑΣ).

17. For a wider discussion of public enquiries at Dodona and other oracles, see still Parker 1985, and now Bonnechere 2013 and 2014.

bably derives from a personal consultation, that of a woman named Nike. The response begins with an invocation to Diona or Zeus Naios:

2. Ed. pr. Evangelidis 1952: 305 no. 22; cf. now Lhôte 2006: 291-294 no. 141.Ba (beg. of 4th c.); cf. also, *SEG* 15, 391, Eidinow 2007: 114-115 no. 2.

θεός.	“God.
Διὶ Πατρόϊω ΠΕΡΙ[...]ΙΟ	To Zeus Patroios (...);
Τύχαι λοιβάν,	to Tyche (Fortune), a libation;
Ἡρακλεῖ, Ἐρεχθεῖ,	to Herakles, to Erechtheus,
5 Ἀθάναι Πατρία<ι>.	to Athena Patroia (also?/other offerings?).”

1 ΠΕΡΙ[...]ΙΟ transcription of Evangelidis, Lhôte; corr. e.g. {l} ἱερεῖο<ν>? Carbon. | 4 Ἐρεχθεῖ L. : ΕΡΕΧΘΕ transcription. | 5 Πατρία<ι> L.: ΠΑΤΡΟΙΑ transcription.

This tablet likewise appears to be lost and Lhôte was unable to confirm the readings through autopsy. The traces at the end of line 2 remain problematic. Given the standard character of oracular enquiries, it might be expected that we have here a summary of the subject on which the consultation was made (see also text **no. 3** below). Still, the placement of the phrase would remain an oddity in the list. Tentatively, one might perhaps think instead of restoring an offering to Zeus Patroios, e.g. a ἱερεῖο<ν> (cp. how in both lines 4 and 5, an *iota* is either missing to the right or was left uninscribed). Alternatives are difficult to discern: a sacrifice called περι[βώμ]ιο<ν> (vel sim.) might be envisaged, though the term is only found in much later sources: e.g. the honours prescribed for Kore Soteira in an oracle (*I. Didyma* 504.15-16, end of 3rd c. AD): τιμὴν περιβωμίδα ῥέζει; a περι[θυτ]ι<κ>ό<ν> (cp. *IvP* III 79, 140, 161A-B, all mid-2nd c. AD) would be still more improbable.

Since the relationship between the question on side A of the tablet and this list of divine recipients (side Ba) is probable on several grounds (date, mixed dialect, content; so Lhôte), the response given by the oracle can be seen as well suited to the enquiry.¹⁸ Nike, likely an Athenian woman, petitions the oracle on behalf of someone else (perhaps her husband), and the subjects in question are judicial adversaries and houses (side A, lines 4-5: τὸς ἀντιδίκος | καὶ τὰς φοικίας). Accordingly, the oracle recommends a group of gods related to Athens (Erechtheus), concerned with ancestral properties (Zeus Patroios and Athena Patroia), and perhaps with struggles (Herakles) and good fortune (Tyche)—both appropriate in disputes.¹⁹ In particular, it is worth underlining that Zeus Patroios is one of the most frequently invoked gods in the small group of sacrificial lists collected in the present article (cp. below **nos. 3, 4 and 5**): his

18. Side A remains problematic and in Lhôte’s text is given as: θεός. τύχα. διαιτᾶι ΙΚ | Εὐμένος Νίκῃ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ΧΟ|ΕΟΥ {= Εὐόχῳ(?) } τοῦ Ἀριστογείτω ΣΑ|ΠΕΔΟΙΟΧΙ τὸς ἀντιδίκος | καὶ τὰς φοικίας. Cf. Lhôte’s detailed discussion, noting that it contains “un curieux mélange d’attique et de dorien archaïque”. He emits the plausible hypothesis that (2006: 293): “Nike doit être d’origine athénienne, mais mariée à un dorien, et elle doit résider en pays dorien”.

19. For Herakles, see also now DVC 746A and 806B. Tyche: repeatedly invoked in the new tablets, and cf. DVC 80A.

ancestral character and his supervision of patrimony together form an aspect of Zeus particularly apt to be worshipped by individuals and by families.²⁰ Though it remains unclear if some of the gods received explicit offerings—the reading at the end of line 2 is uncertain; a lacuna to the right in lines 4-5, or below, is possible; only the libation for Tyche can be confirmed—the cohort of deities in this oracular response again appears to form a varied but coherent whole. At Dodona, as one might of course expect, it would therefore seem that the answer matched the character of the question and/or the consultant, at least to some degree.

These are only two cases, however, and for the most part, individuals simply do not seem to have bothered to record the responses of the oracle in much detail (alternatively, records could have been kept elsewhere, by the priestly personnel, or on other materials). On some occasions, the oracle was proverbially pithy, or it is the individuals recording the response who were laconic. One answer reads simply: “Sacrifice to Diona”.²¹ The new corpus of tablets provides evidence for perhaps a few further, extremely simple responses concerning sacrifice.²² One of these is straightforward: “Give (i.e. offer) female sheep”.²³ Since most of the lamellae from the sanctuary of Dodona are extremely fragmentary, other instances are difficult to identify with any certainty.²⁴

20. On “paternal gods”, see esp. Parker 2008. In the new collection, cp. DVC 3210A, also concerned with sacrifices, but the precise meaning of this tablet is difficult to ascertain. For an Apolline oracle advising an individual and his family that sacrifices be performed to Zeus Patroios (and other ancestral gods), cf. Carbon and Pirenne-Delforge 2013: Appendix, ‘The Stele of Poseidonios’ (Halikarnassos, ca. 285-250).

21. Lhôte 2006: 322-324 no. 166c (ca. 400; with facsimile): Διόνῃ θύην (i.e. Διώνῃ θύῃν). See Lhôte for his astute interpretation, despite the noticeable textual errors in the copy: “une réponse de l’oracle inscrite par un consultant athénien”. The question on the same tablet (no. 166a, badly preserved or deciphered) takes the form τί κα θύσας (line 2), but it may be doubted that the texts are related. The individual called Διονύσι[ος], mentioned in the summary inscription no. 166b, appears to be the practitioner who visited the oracle.

22. Other fragmentary cases cannot be as securely established, but they are nonetheless suggestive. In the previously known material, possibilities for short answers related to specific questions include Lhôte 2006: no. 67 (cf. *SEG* 15, 386; Eidinow 2007: 121 no. 3; ca. 425-400). Side A preserves the following question: τίνι {l} κα θεῶν εὐξάμενος πράξαι | ἡὰ ἐπὶ νόδι ἔχῃ. Side B may record the response or a summary: Ηυγίε[<ίαι>]. Cf. already Lhôte: “Il peut s’agir de la réponse de l’oracle, au datif, gravée par le consultant sous la dictée du prêtre; le consultant doit adresser des prières à Hygie”. Potentially similar responses in the new corpus, mentioning a single deity in the dative for instance (e.g. DVC 1299B: Ἀπόλλω[νι]), or an apparent list of female deities in the dative (e.g. DVC 892: [-]ΙΔΙ| [-] ΑΙ), ought to be investigated more carefully, through autopsy and further decipherment of the tablets. Similarly, Éric Lhôte (forthc.) has proposed a connection between DVC 272A and the apparent response in 274B (a list of female deities in the dative; no offerings are preserved); see also now Liapis 2015.

23. DVC 1149 (ca. 450-400?): ΔΟΜΕΝΟΙΑΣ. As K. Tsantsanoglou convincingly suggests apud DVC, the text is clear and is to be interpreted as: δόμεν ᾄας. Though δίδωμι does not necessarily point to sacrifice, the imperatival use of the infinite (cf. n. 24 above) can nonetheless be thought to indicate a response. It remains unclear whether this answer is connected with any of the other traces of inscriptions preserved on the same opisthographic tablet (DVC 1148-1152, inv. no. M463). Once again, the tablet from Apollonia (Cabanes 2013: 51-53 no. 2, side B) provides an intriguing parallel, attesting to several sacrifices of sheep (once as ᾄας, line 3); for the Doric form, cf. also *IG* XII,4 350.60 (Kos, end of 2nd c.).

24. Another potential response may be identified in DVC 585A (ca. 450-400?; inv. no. M301): εὐτοκία | [- -] Δάματρι, i.e. “Easy delivery; (sacrifice?) to Demeter” (cp. perhaps DVC 2270B, though the restoration there can be doubted). If an answer, this text might be associated with the apparently

Yet detailed lists of offerings and sacrifices can also be found in the newly published collection. One of the prime instances of a response prescribed by the oracle is the following list:

3. Ed. pr. DVC 2393A (ca. 400-350?; inv. no. M837, same tablet as nos. 2393-2396).²⁵

[?περὶ τῶ]ν χρεῶν ἀν<ε>λλε· Δὶ Κτησίωι αἶ[γα] “(Concerning?) debts(?), select (or the
god/goddess selected? the following):

to Zeus Ktesios, a goat;

τῶι Δὶ τῶι Πατρ[ώ]ωι - -] to Zeus Patroios, (offering);

τῶι Διονύσωι ἀπ[αρχάν?] to Dionysos, (a “first offering?”);

τῶι Ε[- - - - -] to E(...), (offering);

5 τᾶ<ι> Εἰλη[ι]θύια [- - -] to Eileithyia, (offering).”

vacat (?)

1 [περὶ τῶ]ν χρεῶν ἀν<ε>λλε DVC: [ό/ά θεός περὶ τῶ]ν χρεῶν ἀν<ε>λλε Carbon vel ἀν<εῖ>λλε Matthaiou per litt.; Δὶ Κτησίωι αἶ[γα] Carbon: Δ(ι)ὶ Κτησίωι αἶ [DVC. | 2 Πατρ[ώ]ωι DVC. | 3 ἀπ[αρχάν] vel αἶ[γα]? C.: ΑΠ facsimile. | 4 τῶι ‘Ε[ρμῆ] vel τῶι ‘Ε[γναλίω] C. | 5 τᾶ<ι> Εἰλη[ι]θύια [- - -] C.: ΤΑΣΙΑΓ[.]ΟΥΙΑΙ facsimile; ΤΑΣ ἱεροῦται [...] DVC.

As the apparatus indicates, a few textual improvements to the recent edition have been suggested here. In light of the other prescriptive lists analysed earlier (nos. 1-2), we should also think of an answer containing a series of gods followed by appropriate offerings or sacrifices: Zeus Ktesios is thus to be honoured with a goat; Zeus Patroios probably with another offering; Dionysus, if not with a “first offering”, perhaps also with a goat. The last line, as given by the editors, makes little sense: the traces are more suggestive of a female deity, and thus better reconstructed as mentioning Eileithyia.

Unusually, perhaps, we seem to have a sort of heading in the first line of the response. A record of a response beginning with an indication of the subject matter, in the form *περὶ* or *ὑπὲρ κτλ.*, is in fact well attested for Delphic oracles.²⁶ *Prima facie*, the word ἀν<ε>λλε read in the recent edition is to be interpreted as an imperative of ἀναιρέω, meaning both “answer” and “choose”. Indeed, the verb is etymologically linked with the action of “selecting” or “drawing up” lots, used during divination through sortition: the mechanism of the oracle chooses and, at the same time, the god answers and ordains.²⁷ Yet the reading of an imperative ought to point

contemporaneous question in 586A, which seems to relate to a woman’s anxiety about staying at home (line 2: [μὲν]οσά κα φο[ι]κο[ι]).

25. As with the other cases discussed here, this text is incorrectly identified by the editors as a question: “Ἰδιωτικὸ ἐρώτημα”. The response might relate to the partially preserved enquiry in 2395B, though this is far from obvious.

26. For ὑπὲρ + the subject matter, cf. *IScM* III (Kallatis, 2nd c.) 48.Bb8 and 12; 49.12. For *περὶ κτλ.*, cp. esp. Pl. *Lg.* 914a.

27. For ἀναιρέω in this sense, cf. *LSJ* s.v. III. See now Parker 2015 for a discussion of some of the new evidence from Dodona, including the imperative ἀνελλε found as part of the question on certain tablets.

to a question rather than a response: perhaps the question or request made to the god or the goddess (Zeus Naios or Diona) was simply repeated as a preamble to the response. Alternatively, it could be presumed that the form and the subject of ἄν<ε>λε are imperfectly understood. An alternative would then be to take ἄν<ε>λε as an unaugmented third-person singular aorist indicative, implying a restoration like [ὁ/ἡ θεός περὶ τῶ]ν χρεῶν ἄν<ε>λε—“(the god/goddess) chose/answered (the following) concerning debts...”,—or perhaps better yet to restore the verb as the augmented third-person singular aorist ἄν<εῖ>λε, yielding the same sense.²⁸

Whatever the exact case may be, it is fairly clear that the subject of enquiry appears to have been some financial business, “debts”, or more simply “things” and property.²⁹ Though the precise circumstances remain murky, the group of gods convoked in the response once again coheres very well with the subject matter at hand: Zeus Patroios has already been witnessed in connection with familial disputes and houses; Zeus Ktesios is the protector *par excellence* of the household, its wealth and property.³⁰ Likewise, Eileithyia, if correctly restored, has a clear connection with the familial sphere, particularly with concerns relating to descendants and their legitimacy.³¹ We thus have an enquiry concerning debts (or possessions), together with a response of the oracle to propitiate gods closely connected with the sphere of familial property and inheritance. However, the inclusion of Dionysus and of another missing recipient in line 4 may also add further, fleeting complexities to this picture.

Also interesting, but still more enigmatic, is another list found on a fragmentary lamella:

4. Ed. pr. DVC 2035A (ca. 400-350?; inv. no. M727, with nos. 2034-2037).³²

[... ca.6? ...]ΩΑΛΙΟΝ,	“(To male god?), (offering);
[Δ(ι)ῖ Πατρ]ώϊωι τέλειον,	To (Zeus) Patroios, an adult animal;
[... ca.6? ...]ΑΛΙΟΝ,	(To recipient), (offering);
[... ca.5? .. ἄ]γαλμα καιν<ὸ>ν χρυσὸν,	(To recipient), a new, gold statue;
5 [... ca. 6 ...] Ὀπαδεῖ [- ? -]	To (deity called) Attendant, (offering).”
<i>vacat</i> (?)	

28. For epigraphical attestations, cf. esp. Lhôte 2006: 59-61 no. 11.2 (ca. 330-320): ἀνελεῖν (from the infinitive ἐλεῖν of αἰρέω); and the elaborate divinatory procedure in *IEleusis* 144.49-50 (352/1): ... ὁ | θεὸ[ς] ἄ[ν]ε[λεῖ] λῶϊον [καὶ ἄμειν]ον εἶναι... In this context, recall also the middle form of αἰρέω (αἰρεῖται) in the tablet where Diona herself (ἡ θεός) “selects” a priestess (cf. n. 6 above).

29. Cf. esp. *LSJ* s.v. χρεός I, II and VI, and cp. the few instances in DVC index s.v., which also appear to relate to “financial obligations” or “things”. For debts, cp. also the record of a dispute concerning what a certain Gorgias owed to a certain Oniator, DVC 2976A-2977B (this is apparently claimed in the latter text to total 400 drachmae).

30. Ktesios: cf. esp. A. *Supp.* 443-445, καὶ χρημάτων μὲν ἐκ δόμων πορθουμένων (...), γένοιτ’ ἄν ἄλλα Κτησίου Διὸς χάριν. The god is also invoked in the pseudo-Dodonaian oracle quoted in Dem. 21.53, where he receives a white male ox (cited above, n. 8).

31. On Eileithyia “at work” in this context, cf. Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti 2013 (esp. p. 84 for a discussion of filiation).

32. Again labelled “Ἰδιωτικὸ ἐρώτημα” in DVC. It is unclear whether this response is to be related with any of the questions fragmentarily preserved on the same opisthographic tablet.

1 Ω ἄλιον DVC, id. in l. 3; perhaps -ω<ι> ἄλιον, though the trace of *omega* appears far from clear on the facsimile—the reading may thus be doubted, Carbon. | 2 [Δ(ι)ἰ Πατρ]ώιωι C.: ΩΙΩΙ DVC, sugg. [Ναῖ]ωι {ωι}. | 3 ἄλιον DVC. | 4 καιν<ό>υ C.: ΚΑΙΝΥ facsimile; καί νυ DVC. | 5 ὀπαδεῖ DVC.

It is clear that a series of offerings is also being recorded here, according to what the oracle prescribed, but the character of the recipients is much less clear. According to my restoration, Zeus Patroios again makes an appearance in the second visible rank. In the final line, the dative of ὀπηδός might naturally be viewed as a common noun, denoting in this case an attendant who participates in the rituals, and thereby gets a share from them or some other benefit.³³ Instead, ὀπηδός might more attractively be interpreted as a new *epiklesis* for a deity, which would cohere with the format of the list and appear as expected in the dative. Such an epithet is not unexpected, since we find the word ὀπηδός used for gods who work in an ancillary capacity (Pan, Hekate, or even Apollo; perhaps others).³⁴ And at least one epigraphic ritual norm may provide a supporting parallel for a god or goddess called by an epithet meaning “Helper”.³⁵

The offerings themselves are unproblematic in two cases only: an adult animal (τέλειον), and more surprisingly but again not wholly unexpectedly, a new golden statue or statuette. This object indeed recalls the figure offered to Artemis Hegemone in the response seen above (no. 1), but here the offering is no doubt more special and more expensive (though its exact value remains unspecified). The requirement that a new object (e.g. a cup) be made for the purpose of a specific ritual is sometimes found in the epigraphical evidence, and this “newness” was a marker of the purity of the object in question, as was the material used here: gold.³⁶ The other traces of an offering in the masculine or neuter accusative, ΑΛΙΟΝ or .ΑΛΙΟΝ repeated in lines 1 and 3, are more troublesome. If ἄλιον is indeed the correct reading, then we will have to think outside the usual box of sacrifices and offerings.³⁷ But it is not impossible that earlier traces and letters further elucidated this word. Thus, we could think e.g. of a [φι]άλιον or small cup, or perhaps even better of [νηφ]άλιον, a “wineless” libation or sacri-

33. Cp. e.g. the sacrificial calendar of Thorikos, *NGSL* 1.15-16, for a lunch provided by the attendant (who brings the sacrifices) to the priest of Zeus Polieus: τῶι ἀκολουθῶντι ἄριστομ παρέχεν τὸν ἱερέα.

34. Pan: Pi. fr. 95, Πάν, Ματρὸς μεγάλας ὀπαδέ. Hekate: Phld. *Piet.* 91, cf. 33, τὴν Ἐκάτην ὀπαδὸν Ἀρτέμιδος εἶναι. Apollo (speaking): *h.Merc.* 450, ἐγὼ Μούσησιν ὀπηδός. All examples given here are derived from *LSJ* s.v.

35. *IG* II² 4970.1-4 (Piraeus, mid-4th c. BC): Ἀρτέμιδος. | Ἀκόλουθοι | μονόμοφαλ[α] | III. Though the formulation remains odd, it may be presumed that Akolouthos is here an epithet or a byname of Artemis, rather than a human figure, since divine figures are virtually always the recipients of cakes offered on altars and in other prescriptive inscriptions. The list of parallels for “assisting” deities could of course be extended even further, cf. e.g. Herakles Παραστάτης at Olympia (Paus. 5.8.1; 5.14.7).

36. New objects: cf. the new oven or furnace, ἱπνὸς καινός, employed in the context of a sacrifice for Herakles on Kos, *IG* XII,4 276.13 (ca. 350); or the new cups at Selinous *NGSL* 27.A15-16, and at *IG* XII,4 274.25-26 (Kos, id.). For gold objects used in purificatory rituals, see Parker 1996: 228 with n. 118.

37. A substantivised adjective ἄλιος (*LSJ* s.v. A) might suggest something “of the sea”, e.g. perhaps fish or a maritime object. Alternatively, we might—very desperately!—recall the corrupt lemma in Hsch. s.v. †ἀλίη· κάπρος. Μακεδόνες.

fice.³⁸ Though the scale of the offerings envisaged here may again suggest a public consultation of the oracle (as in **no. 1** above), we regrettably cannot even begin to reconstruct the context of this enquiry and its response.

I take as a final example an even more fragmentary lamella, notably for the purpose of demonstrating that a revision of the recent edition of the texts would be highly desirable. The text of this snippet is given in the new edition as:

5. DVC 1122B (end of 5th c.?.; inv. no. M456).³⁹

]Α Δὶ Πατρωῖωι
]. ἄκροῖς

The editors implausibly suggest that the word in line 2 has something to do with entrails.⁴⁰ It may be better to reconsider these traces altogether, either as a locative epithet for a deity which was part of a list, or better yet as both an epithet and an offering, thus yielding the following text—a conjecture that could only be confirmed through autopsy:⁴¹

- - - - -
[- - - -]Α, Δὶ Πατρωῖωι, “(recipient + offering?); to Zeus Patroios (+ offering?);
[- - - ἐπ’/ἐν] ἄκρω[ι] οἷς. to (god/goddess on?) the height, sheep.”
vacat (?)

2 [- - - ἐπ’/ἐν] ἄκρω[ι] οἷς Carbon: ἄκροῖς DVC.

There appears to be a fold or tear in the tablet where the *iota* of ἄκρω[ι] or ἄκρω[ι] may have been inscribed. In my reading, οἷς could be the nominative singular or, perhaps more plausibly, the contracted accusative plural of οἷς.

At the outcome of this brief investigation of difficult fragments, one may wonder if our understanding of the oracle at Dodona has been improved in any way. The responses of the oracle, such as we have them here, appear traditional or conservative, much as at Delphi or in other oracles. The local gods of Dodona recommend sacrifice to themselves (Zeus Naios, Di-ona) and to other gods who are widespread in Greek polytheism: Zeus Patroios, other “Olympians”, standard local heroes, etc. The offerings prescribed by the oracle—and of course

38. For such “wineless” offerings in ritual norms and other sources, see Pirenne-Delforge 2011.

39. DVC again comment: “Ἰδιωτικὸ(;) ἐρώτημα”. The text, if correctly identified here as a prescriptive answer, might tentatively be related to one of the fragmentary and more or less contemporaneous questions preserved on the same opisthographic tablet, perhaps esp. one of DVC 1123-1125.

40. DVC, citing Hsch. s.v. ἄκρωα· σπλάγχνα, ἔντερα.

41. Epithet: cf. e.g. *SEG* 20, 316 (Karpasia on Cyprus, 2nd c. AD): Ἀφ[ροδίτη] τῆ ἐπὶ τοῖς Ἄκροις; *IG* V,1 1336.22-23 (Gerenia in Lakonia): τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ποσιδᾶνος τοῦ [ἐ]π[ι] ἄκρωι; *IG* IX² 4, 862 (ca. 500-450; cf. A. P. Matthaiou, Παρατηρήσεις σὲ μία Κερκυραϊκὴ ὑποθήκη, *ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΟΝ* 1 [2012] 31-32): ὄρφος Ἡιαρὸς τᾶς Ἀκρίας (Hera?); cp. also Apollo Hyakrais/Hypomakrais at Athens.

through the agency of the cult personnel involved in the sanctuary—are, for the most part, equally unexceptional: libations, adult sheep or piglets, and other normative sacrificial animals.

In all likelihood, the innovative quotient of the recommendations of the oracle was thus very limited. Yet many other questions remain. To begin with, why are answers so seldom preserved? It can hardly be that they were deemed unimportant. Is this then because they were written on other material supports, or that copies were more often taken away by those consulting the oracle? Did the sacrifices prescribed merely take place at the sanctuary in Dodona, or were they sometimes carried out on returning from the oracle, thereby potentially having a more longstanding and durable impact on cult practice, whether in the home or in the community at large?⁴²

Despite these lingering questions and other reservations, I would nonetheless argue that we now have a firmer hold on the modes in which the oracle at Dodona operated. Given the language of the oracular responses themselves—the verbs *αίρέω* and *ἀνααίρέω* denoting both the action of “drawing” lots and uttering a prescriptive response (cf. again **no. 3**)—and the limited question-answer framework through which consultations were made, the use of lots has been plausibly suggested as the prevalent mechanism of divination in use at Dodona.⁴³ Sortition would indeed readily explain some of the fairly conventional groups of gods which are found in the responses at Dodona (much as at Delphi and elsewhere). There is also now a growing body of evidence for the use of lots by diviners to prescribe this exact sort of response.⁴⁴

Still, one may doubt that this is the whole picture. When one asked “to which gods should I sacrifice?”, the response one received was almost certainly not a pure product of sortition, not merely *pro forma* or arbitrary. Sortition was used, certainly, but the answers we have also display a coherent and well-structured list of deities that were to be honoured with sacrifices or other offerings. Much of the procedure of consultation now admittedly lies hidden from our view. Yet the cult personnel at Dodona must sometimes have influenced the results of the drawing of the lots, favouring the worship of gods which had meaning for the enquirer, or whose worship he or she might be thought to “have in mind”: consultation of the oracle thus surely occurred on a personal level. As I have tried to suggest, even in the limited evidence from Dodona, it is remarkable that the response of the oracle was substantially tailored to the question, to the origin of an individual, or to the needs and concerns of a group. So, an Athenian received an answer mentioning Erechtheus (**no. 2**), someone concerned with debts or ma-

42. The dossiers of Delphic oracles recorded at Kyzikos and Kaunos, for instance (n. 10 above), likely testify to the continued preservation and observance of the oracular commands, notably through ritual practice in the community.

43. Parker 2015 (and *forthc.*) builds a compelling case for the fundamental use of this divinatory practice at Dodona. On other forms of divination at Dodona, see also Georgoudi 2012.

44. Cf. esp. the little bronze spheres (lots?) published and reviewed in Brugnone 2011, probably originally part of a kleromantic kit (Himera, near the end of 5th c.). Three of the *spherulae* are incised with the names of Zeus Soter, Herakles, and Leukathea, in the genitive (a further specimen, reading *ἐπιλυσαμένος*, may in fact be an epithet or a byname of Eileithyia). Cf. also again the new evidence for a female diviner at Apollonia in Illyria, who probably practiced sortition (Cabanes 2013: 51-53 no. 2.A3).

terial possessions was told to propitiate Zeus Ktesios and other related gods (**no. 3**), etc. No doubt receiving such customised responses explained much of the utility and the popular appeal of the oracle. It also presents a fascinating case-study for our understanding of Greek polytheism and its multifarious *modi operandi*, which remains to be enriched with still further sources and comparative material.

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APPENDIX

The Triple Sacrifice at Dodona

One of the prominent rituals featured in the collection of lamellae is a unusual “triple” form of sacrifice. This was apparently a highlight of the sacrificial practice performed in the sanctuary at Dodona, cf. DVC 87B (beginning of 4th c.?: Lhôte 2006: no. 138; Eidinow 113 no. 3): ἡ τριθυτικόν; and 3250A (end of 5th-early 4th c.): ἡ χρώμεθα τοῦ [...] | τριθύται;. As the editors rightly point out, this form of triple sacrifice is surely to be related with the one offered to Zeus Naios in the first of the two oracles cited as sources in Dem. 21.53 (likely derived from collections of chresmologies): Ἐκ Δωδώνης Μαντεία. (1) τῶ δήμῳ τῶ Ἀθηναίων ὁ τοῦ Διὸς σημαίνει. ὅτι τὰς ὥρας παρηνέγκατε τῆς θυσίας καὶ τῆς θεωρίας, αἶρετοὺς πέμπειν κελεύει θεωροὺς ἕνεκα τούτου διὰ ταχέων· τῶ Διὶ τῶ Ναΐῳ τρεῖς βοῦς καὶ πρὸς ἑκάστῳ βοῖ δύο οἶς, τῇ Διώνῃ βοῦν καλλιερεῖν, καὶ τράπεζαν χαλκῆν καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀνάθημα ὃ ἀνέθηκεν ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων. (2) ὁ τοῦ Διὸς σημαίνει ἐν Δωδώνῃ, Διονύσῳ δημοτελεῖ ἱερά τελεῖν καὶ κρατῆρα κεράσαι καὶ χοροὺς ἰστάναι, Ἀπόλλωνι Ἀποτροπαίῳ βοῦν θῦσαι, καὶ στεφανηφορεῖν ἐλευθέρους καὶ δούλους, καὶ ἐλινύειν μίαν ἡμέραν. Διὶ Κτησίῳ βοῦν λευκόν. On the problematic use of documentary sources in the Demosthenic corpus, see now Canevaro 2013: esp. 209-236 (Harris) on the *Against Meidias*, with further refs. Note, however, that doubting the oracle’s authenticity does not diminish its verisimilitude as a religious document: the rituals within it may still be reckoned as plausible points of reference. In particular, the offering of τρεῖς βοῦς καὶ πρὸς ἑκάστῳ βοῖ δύο οἶς to Zeus Naios—i.e. $(1+2) \times 3 = 9$, an interesting form of ritual mathematics—strongly suggests that this was a habitual form of “triplicate sacrifice” (τριθυτικόν) offered at Dodona, most likely in the context of more elaborate public consultations.

Abbreviations

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