

Prayer and Worship

Expanding Your Greek Vocabulary

A lesson for the *Paideia* web-app

© Ian W. Scott, 2015



More Language for Worship

- προσκυνέω, "worship, bow down"
 - Not primarily an inward attitude
 - First and foremost a physical stance
 - often included lying right down face first on the ground
 - A sign of respect for someone's power
 - Hence human rulers and angels can be "worshipped"
 - without necessarily implying they are divine



Fearing the Gods

- ἡ εὐσέβεια, "piety, reverence for the gods"
 - A chief virtue in Greek and Roman ethics
- εὐσεβέω, "I show piety, I act reverently"
- εὐσεβής, -ες (adj.) "pious"
 - 3rd declension adj. (ἀσθενής-type)
 - Gen. sing. εὐσεβους (real stem εὐσεβε-)
 - Masc/fem. nom. pl. εὐσεβεις (εὐσεβε + ες)
 - Neut nom. pl. εὐσεβη (εὐσεβε + α)



Fearing the Gods

- θεοσεβέω, "I fear the gods, I fear God"
- θεοσεβής, -ές (adj.), "god-fearing, god-fearer"
 - Used for Gentiles who adopted much of the Jewish law but didn't fully convert
 - 3rd declension adj. (ἄσθενης-type)
 - Gen. sing. θεοσεβους (real stem θεοσεβε-)
 - M./f. nom. plur. θεοσεβεις (θεοσεβε + ες)
 - Neut. nom. plur. θεοσεβη (θεοσεβε + α)



Prayers and Requests

- προσεύχομαι, "I pray, I request"
 - Not a strictly "religious" word
- ἡ προσευχή, "prayer, request"
 - Common in the synagogue services
 - Synagogue could be called an οἶκος προσευχης or simply a προσευχη
- αἰτέω, "I ask, beg, request"
 - Again, not a uniquely religious word
- ἡ αἴτησις, "request"
 - 3rd declension (πολις-type)



Serving the Gods

- λατρεύω, "I serve, I perform a sacred service"
 - ἡ λατρεία to God or the gods
- ὁ προφήτης, "prophet, seer"
 - Πωλῆς-type 1st declension masc. noun
- προφητεύω, "I speak prophecy, I prophesy"
- προφητεία, "prophecy, visions, oracles"
- ἡ παρθένος, "young woman, virgin"
 - ὁδος-type 2nd declension fem. noun
 - Athena's temple in Athens was called το παρθενον



Who Was Worshipped?

- Ζεύς

- Often treated by philosophers as the name for the one God
- Real root is δι-
 - So genitive is διος, etc.

- Ἄρτεμις

- Associated with the hunt and fertility
- Real root is Ἄρτεμιδ- (παις-type)

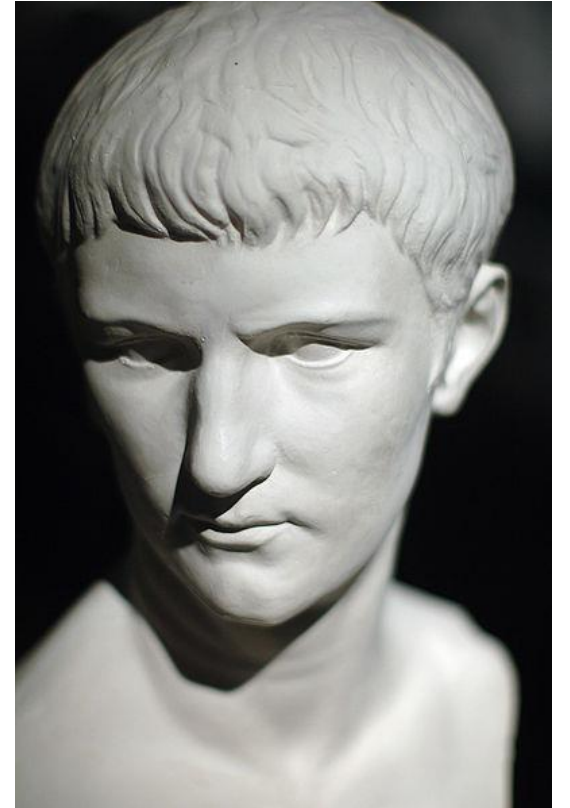
- Ἀπόλλων

- Associated with visions and prophecy
- Genitive Ἀπολλωνος (ἄμπελων-type)



The Divine Καίσαρ and His Images

- ὁ Καῖσαρ, "Caesar, Emperor"
 - Originally a proper name (Julius Caesar)
 - Title for the Roman Emperor
- τὸ εἶδωλον, "image, idol"
 - Any visual representation, esp. of a person
 - Often used for the images of pagan gods
- ἡ εἰδωλολατρία, "service to idols, idolatry"
 - Jews argued it was silly to serve and worship a physical object



Other Spiritual Beings

- ὁ/ἡ δαίμων, "demon"
 - The generic term for a spiritual being
 - Also the variant form τὸ δαιμόνιον
 - In Jewish literature always an evil spirit
 - Jews have several names for the chief δαιμονιον
- ὁ Σατανᾶς, "Satan"
 - Transliteration of the Hebrew word for "accuser"
 - Masc. 1st declension with odd genitive: Σατανᾶ
- ὁ διάβολος, "the devil"
 - From διαβολος, -η, -ον "slandorous"



What Is Divine?

- θεῖος, -η, -ον (adj.), "divine, god-like"
 - Don't confuse with the noun θεός (no ι)
 - Nearly anything could be called θεῖος
 - reflected the power and perfection of the gods
- το θεῖον a generic term for "the divine"
 - used for the one "God" of some philosophers

