
What is the meaning of *pharmakein* in Revelation 18:23?

"The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your **sorcery** all the nations were deceived" (NKJV).

Introduction

Most of my childhood days was spent in the woods, building forts (against perceived enemies), and re-routing creeks. No TV, no internet, no batteries. Raw nature. Still love it to this day.

I didn't collect stamps when I was a kid (my brother did that, so I didn't!), but I did collect coins. The ones with holes in them from China were cool, I thought, and I was always keen on keeping old pennies and dimes (I confess, sometimes retrieved out of broken bubble gum machines . . .). But I collected something else: prescription drug information papers. Those thick sheets of paper that are stapled to medication packages, and which nobody reads. Side-effect: death. I was fascinated by that information, had my own drug lab in the basement - no, not in the American sense of "drug lab", but a chemical experimentation lab. I could analyze the composition of rocks, mix stuff together, and make liquids bubble. But back to the pharmaceutical papers . . . when somebody in my family or friendship circle got sick, I could usually guess what the doctor would prescribe them, how many milligrams, and what the side effects would be. Aspirin? Nah. "Acetylsalicylsäure".

Later it I was thrilled that my high school was in walking distance of my favorite pharmacy, Dr. Beck'sche Apotheke. What's so unique about pharmacies in Germany is that you can buy raw chemicals there, like sulfur, zinc, citric acid, etc. They're more like compounding pharmacies, where you mix stuff together. (I think those pharmacists knew exactly what we were up to when we bought certain substances - we'd mix them together, put them in an enclosed environment, and watch the thermodynamic reaction make things go poof!)

I attended a recruiting session for Chemical Technical Assistant once but didn't go that route in life. So fast forward to 2022, and the pharmaceutical industry got catapulted into the limelight of media and news coverage. Covid prompted the record-breaking deployment of a new type of vaccination, vector-based and mRNA applications. I won't get into the details of this today; after all, my knowledge in immunology is 0, and I haven't watched a lot of covid videos (of which there are many!).

I took this picture on in 2020 of a hospice patient of mine. It's the poor lady's drug regimen: 17 pills - *every morning!*



What I would like to do today is take a close look at a this much-debated term in Revelation 18:23: *pharmakeia* - usually translated as "sorcery". The question then begs itself to be asked, What is the meaning and relationship of the word *pharmakeia* to sorcery, witchcraft, spiritualism, esp. since the Greek word is carried over into English and many other languages as "pharmacy". The ultimate elephant in the room, therefore, is, of course: Is pharmacy = sorcery, witchcraft?! Should we avoid all pharmaceutical intake? Is all pharmacy bad? I won't answer all these questions for you; my focus will be to explore the word itself.

1. Lexical Meanings [Lexical data abbreviated for formatting purposes]

A Note and a Caution: I will bombard and drown you in lexical details. But listen carefully and patiently. We are trying to get to the most basic level of language understanding. Lexical studies are not neutral! Just imagine the change in meaning over the years of words like cool, hot, gay, gender, marriage, etc. Example: "Marriage" @ [Merriam-Webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com) [with minor formatting edits]

Essential Meaning of marriage [No mention of gender or male/female!]

1: the relationship that exists between two people who are united as spouses : the state of being married . . . It was his second marriage. They have a very happy marriage.

2: a ceremony in which two people are married to each other; many friends and relatives were present at their marriage. A priest who has performed many marriages

3: a close union of or between two things; a marriage of sweet and spicy flavors; a marriage of science and art; a marriage between form and function

1a see usage paragraph below : the state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law

b: the mutual relation of married persons: WEDLOCK

c: the institution whereby individuals are joined in a marriage

2: an act of marrying or the rite by which the married status is effected especially : the wedding ceremony and attendant festivities or formalities

3: an intimate or close union; the marriage of painting and poetry

Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek, 3rd ed., 2015 [electronic: Accordance]

φαρμάκῳ, *contr.* [φάρμακον] a. to suffer the effects of poison *or* a potion Demosth. 46.16 Thphr. *fr.* 105 Plut. *An. procr.* 1016e... b. to require a drug Luc. *Lex.* 4.

φαρμάκειᾶ -ας, ἡ [φαρμακεύω] **use of drugs or potions, medicine, remedy** Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.17 Plat. *Leg.* 933b, *al.* Men. *fr.* 508.9 Plut. *Art.* 19.2 *etc.*; *fig.* φαρμακείας χάρις as a remedy Aristot. *Pol.* 1337b 41 | αἰ ἄνω φ. emetics Aristot. *Pr.* 962a 3 | **purging** Hp. *Aph.* 1.24, *al.* Gal. 15.447 *etc.* || **poisoning** Demosth. 40.57 *Pol.* 6.13.4 Ach. 7.1.3 Oxy. 486.21 (IlCE) | **spell, witchcraft, magic** VT *Exod.* 7.11 NT *Gal.* 5.20 *etc.* • *Ion.* -εἴη.

φαρμάκειᾶ -ας, ἡ [φαρμακεύω] **female poisoner, sorceress** Aristot. *H.A.* 616b 23.

Φαρμάκειᾶ -ας, ἡ **Pharmakeia**, *female name, Naiad* Plat. *Phaedr.* 229.

φαρμάκεργάτης -ου, ὁ [φάρμακον, ἔργον] **pharmacist** Tz. *Hist.* 8.911.

φαρμάκεύς -έως, ὁ [φάρμακον] **poisoner, sorcerer** Soph. *Tr.* 1140 Plat. *Symp.* 203d Ach. 4.15.4, *al.* Iul. 9.197d *etc.* || **druggist, pharmacist** Aret. *C.D.* 2.12.3 Gal. 11.337.

φαρμάκευσις -εως, ἡ [φαρμακεύω] **poisoning** Hp. *Prorrh.* 2.4 Plat. *Leg.* 845d, see φαρμακεία.

φαρμάκευτέον [φαρμακεύω] *verb. adj.* **it is necessary to use a purgative** Gal. 17(2).665.

φαρμάκευτής -οῦ, ὁ [φαρμακεύω] **poisoner, sorcerer** Phil.² *Migr.* 83, *al.* Ptol.⁴ *Tetr.* 161 *etc.*

φαρμάκευτικός -ή -όν [φαρμακεύω] **regarding or by means of drugs** Plat. *Tim.* 89b; φ. ἰατρός doctor who cures by means of drugs Gal. *Thras.* 24 (3.62.5); *subst.* ἡ φαρμακευτική (*sc.* τέχνη)

pharmaceutical art Gal. 15.425 Diog. 3.85.

φαρμάκεύτρια -ας, ἡ [φαρμακεύω] **fem. poisoner, sorceress** Sch. *Theocr.* 2 (*title*) Sch. *Verg. Buc.* 8

φαρμάκεύω [φάρμακον] *impf.* ἐφαρμάκευον, *mid. pass.* ἐφαρμακευόμεν || *fut.* φαρμακεύσω || *aor.* ἐφαρμάκευσα || *pf. mid. pass.* πεφαρμάκευμαι || *ppf. mid. pass.* ἐπεφαρμακεύμεν Men. Her. fr. 4 || *aor. pass.* ἐφαρμακεύθη

1. act. a. abs. to administer medicine Plat. Rp. 459c, Tim. 89d || **to practice magic:** φαρμακεύσαντες ταῦτα ἐς τὸν ποταμὸν *having cast these magic spells on the river* Hdt. 7.114.1

b. with acc. of pers. to administer purgatives, purge ▶ τινα (to) s.o. Hp. Acut. (Sp.) 55, Aph. 4.12; κούφω φαρμάκω with a mild emetic Hp. Art. 67 Gal. 11.350, 17(2).442 || **to administer a poison or drug, poison, drug** Eur. Andr. 355 Syll.³ 1181.4 (II^{BCE}); ἐπὶ βλάβη μὴ θανασίμω for a non-fatal injury Plat. Leg. 933d | *fig.* τὴν ψυχὴν φ. to poison the soul Gorg. B 11.14

2. mid. = act. to practice magic, cast a spell VT Chr. 2.33.6, al.

3. pass. a. to be purged, use purgatives Hp. Aph. 2.37 Men. Her. fr. 5 | *extens. to be cured* Aristot. Top. 111a 2 || *to be poisoned* Astr. Or. 25.4 Plut. Lyc. 3.3

φαρμάκη -ῆς, ἡ [φάρμακον] **pot for purification** Hsch.

φαρμάκηρός -ῆ -όν [φάρμακον] **treated with preservatives, wood** BGU 544.21 (II^CE) || **glazed, of bronze vessels** BGU 544.17.

φαρμακικός -ῆ -όν [φάρμακον] **pharmaceutical, medicinal** Sch. Lyc. 1137.

φαρμάκιον -ου, τό [φάρμακον] **mild remedy** Plat. Theaet. 149c, Phaedr. 268c Plut. Aud. 43b etc.

φαρμακίς -ίδος, ἡ [φαρμακεύς] **female poisoner, sorceress, witch** Demosth. 25.79 Aristot. H.A. 577a 13 Ael. N.A. 14.25 = φ. γυνή Aristoph. Nub. 749 Ap. 4.53; *superl.* φαρμακιστόταται ... γυναικῶν the most powerful witches *los. A.I.* 17.4.1 (63) || *adj. fem. poisonous:* σαύρη lizard Nic. Al. 538.

φαρμακίτης -ου **treated with spices or drugs, wine** Semus 6 || **curative, (magic) ring** Eup. 96.

φαρμακίτις -ιδος [φάρμακον] **poisonous:** φ. σαύρα poisonous lizard Aet.¹ 13.56; φ. βίβλος treatise on drugs Gal. 13.891 = *subst.* ἡ φ. *title of Hippocratic work now lost* Hp. Aff. 9, 28, al. || φ. γῆ Diosc. 5.160, see ἀμπελίτις.

φαρμακίων -ωνος, ὁ **pharmacist, nickname of Asklepiades the Younger** Gal. 13.441, 642.

φαρμακόεις -εσσα -εν [φάρμακον] **a. poisonous** Nic. Al. 4 Or. Sib. 8.289 Nonn. D. 8.41, 36.352 | **poisoned, arrow** Mosch. 4.30; *drink* Man. 3.71 **b. subst.** ὁ φαρμακόεις **sorcerer** Nonn. D. 21.144.

φαρμακοθήκη -ης, ἡ [φάρμακον, θήκη] **medicine chest** CCA 1.104.

φαρμακόμαντις -εως, ὁ [φάρμακον or φαρμακός, μάντις] **one who draws auspices from medicine or one who is an expiatory victim and soothsayer, title of a comedy of Anaxandrides.**

φάρμακον -ου, τό

a. usu. medicinal herb or substance salutary or harmful Od.10.287, al.; φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλά ... πολλὰ δὲ λυγρὰ many beneficial and many harmful herbs Od. 4.230; κακὰ φ. poisonous herbs Od. 10.213; φ. ἀνδρόφονον or θυμοφθόρον and *sim.* lethal substances Od. 1.261, 2.329, al. Phil. 103.31 Luc. Herm. 62; φ. παιώνιον salutary substance Aeschl. Ag. 848 = φ. χρήσιμον Plat. Rp. 382c

b. medicine, drug, medication, usu. applied topically Il. 5.900, al. Pind. N. 3.55 etc.; ἐπιθήσει φάρμαχ' ἃ κεν παύσῃσι μελαινάων ὀδυνάων he will apply drugs that would check intense pains Il. 4.191; φάρμακα πάσσειν to sprinkle in drugs Il. 4.218, 5.401; προσαλείφειν or περιαλείφειν φαρμακόν τι to spread ointment on s.o. Od. 10.392 Aristoph. Eq. 906; χρυστὸν φ. ointment Eur. Hip. 516; καταπλαστόν ointment Aristoph. Pl. 716 | *also of medicinal tonics* Hdt. 4.160.4; φ. ποτόν ... ἔγχριστον... ἐπίπαστον medicinal drink... topical cream... powder Theocr. 11.2 | *especially medic.* Gal. 6.265 Sor. 1.4.2 etc.; φ. ἀξιούν παρὰ τοῦ ἱατροῦ to request a remedy from a doctor Plat. Rp.

406d | *of veterinary medicines* Flor. 222.11 (III^{CE}) || *with gen. medicine, remedy*: νόσου against disease Aeschl. *Pr.* 249, 606; βηχός for coughing Phryn. 64; κεφαλῆς for headache Plat. *Ch.* 155b; μέθης for drunkenness Amph. 37 *but* ὑγείας φ. restorative medicine Aristid. *Or.* 37.11

c. extens. remedy, solution Hes. *Op.* 485 *etc.*; μείζον προσάπτει τῆς νόσου τὸ φ. he adopts a cure worse than the disease Soph. *fr.* 589.4; φ. τιτινι remedy for or against sthg. Thgn. 1134 Archil. 13.7 = πρὸς τι Aristot. *Pol.* 1321a 16 Men. *Ph.* 52; *with acc.* φ. ποττὸν ἔρωτα remedy for love Theocr. 11.1; *but usu. with gen.:* χλαῖνα ... φ. ρίγος cloak (remedy) against the cold Hippon. 43.3; βλάβης remedy for a loss Aeschl. *Ag.* 548; πόνων for woes Eur. *Bac.* 283; λύπης for pain Eur. *fr.* 1079.1; [p. 2259] φόβου against fear Plat. *Leg.* 647e; ὁ χρόνος ἀπάσης ἐστὶν ὀργῆς φάρμακον time cures all anger Criti. 22 *TrGF*; *of writing* φ. λήθης remedy against forgetfulness Eur. *fr.* 578.1; Ζεὺς πάντων φάρμακα μῦνος ἔχει Zeus alone has a remedy for everything Sim. 87 || *with gen. also means, expedient, way*: σωτηρίας of safety Eur. *Ph.* 893; ἐξόδου of leaving Plat. *Phaedr.* 230d; ἀθανασίας of immortality Antiph. 86.6 *etc.*; μνήμης for remembering Plat. *Phaedr.* 274c = ὑπομνήσεως Plat. *Phaedr.* 275a | φ. ἐὰς ἀρετᾶς ... εὐρέσθαι to find the potion of his own excellence Pind. *P.* 4.187

d. magic drink, potion, of drinks Od. 4.220, 10.326 Aristoph. *Th.* 561, *Pl.* 302 | *fig. spell, witchcraft* Pind. *O.* 13.85 Hdt. 3.85.2 NT *Rev.* 9.21 || *post-Hom. inneg. sense poison* Soph. *Tr.* 685 Eur. *Med.* 385; πιεῖν τὸ φ. to drink the poison Antipho 6.15 Plat. *Phaed.* 57a, *al.*; φάρμακα εἰσβεβληκῆναι εἰς τὰ φρέατα to poison the wells Thuc. 2.48.2

e. dye, color Emped. B 23.3 Aristoph. *Ec.* 735 Plat. *Rp.* 420c, *al. etc.* || **dye, mordant** Chem. *Le.* 14.87, *al. Zos.*¹ 160 | *used in the tanning of hides* Sch. Aristoph. *Eq.* 44c, 369a.

φαρμάκοποιέω, *contr.* [φαρμακοποιός] *aor. ptc.* φαρμακοποιήσας Sch. *Opp.* 4.664; **to prepare paints or colors** L. *Sud.* s.v. βάψας.

φαρμάκοποιία -ας, ἡ [φαρμακοποιός] **preparation of medicinal substances** Diog. 7.117.

φαρμάκοποιός -όν **that prepares medicinal substances, people** Aeschl. *Eleg.* 2.

φαρμάκοποσία -ας, ἡ [φάρμακον, πίνω] **drinking of medicine, drug use** Hp. *Aph.* 4.19 Xen. *An.* 4.8.21 Plat. *Soph.* 227a, *Leg.* 646 Gal. 17(2).679 *etc.* || **taking of poison** Luc. *Nec.* 18 Porph. *Chr.* 96.

φαρμάκοποτέω, *contr.* [φαρμακοποσία] *aor. ptc.* φαρμακοποτήσας Evagr.¹ *H.E.* 6.24 (p. 240.13); **to drink a drug** Hp. *Aff.* 27, 41 Thphr. *H.P.* 9.15.4 *Ion. inf.* φαρμακοποτέειν Hp. *Vict.* 73.18 | *ptc.* φαρμακοποτέων Hp. *Aff.* 41.1, *al.*

φαρμάκοπωλέω, *contr.* [φαρμακοπώλης] **to sell medicine** Aristoph. *fr.* 28 Epic. 101, 102.

φαρμάκοπώλης -ου, ὁ [φάρμακον, πώλης] **seller of medicine, pharmacist** Aristoph. *Nub.* 767 Criti. B 70 *FdV* Theop. 3.2 Aeschn. 3.162 Thphr. *H.P.* 6.2.5 *etc.*

φαρμακός -οῦ, ὁ [see φάρμακον] **expiatory victim, sacrificed to purify another's sin, scapegoat** Hippon. 6.2, *al.* Aristoph. *Ran.* 733 Callim. *fr.* 90 *etc.* || *extens. delinquent, criminal* (s. *times condemned to death as an expiatory victim*) Aristoph. *Eq.* 1405 Lys. 6.53 • *for the accent see* Hdn. 1.150.3 | -μᾶ- Hippon. *and* Callim. *Il.cc.*, -μᾶ- Aristoph. *Eq.* 1405 .

φάρμακος -ου [see φάρμακον] **poisoner, sorcerer, enchanter, wizard or witch** VT *Deut.* 18.10, *Jer.* 34.9, *al.* NT *Rev.* 21.8, 22.15, *al.* • *also* φαρμακός VT *Il.cc.*; *for the accent see* Hdn. 1.150.4 .

φαρμάκοτριβῆς -ου, ὁ [φάρμακον, τρίβω] **powderer i.e. preparer of drugs or colors** Demosth. 48.12, *al.* Poll. 7.197, *al. etc.*

φαρμάκουργός -όν [φάρμακον, ἔργον] **that prepares potions, magician** Lyc. 61.

φαρμάκοφόρος -ον [φάρμακον, φέρω] **that produces medicinal plants** Eustath. 1415.54.

φαρμάκω, *contr.* [φάρμακον] *impf.* ἐφαρμάκουν Arr. Hist. 61c || *aor.* ἐφαρμάκωσα || *pf. mid. pass.* πεφαρμάκωμαι || *aor. ptc. pass.* φαρμακωθείς

1. act. to prepare, mix, of medicinal substances: σὺν δ' ἐλαίῳ φ. ἀντίτομα ὀδυνᾶν to mix analgesics into olive oil Pind. P. 4.221

2. pass. to be poisoned Plut. Amat. 768d (*drink*) Diosc.² Eup. 2.144 (*arrow*) (*v.l.*) || **to be poisoned or bewitched** Oxy. 1477.20 (III-IV^{CE}) • *aor. ptc. fem.* φαρμακώσασα Pind. I.c.

φαρμάκτηριος -α -ον [φάρμακον] **of medicinal or magic herbs** Lyc. 1138.

φαρμάκτος -ή -όν [φαρμάσσω] **poisoned** Strab. 11.2.19 (*v.l.*) Man. 4.540 || **poisonous, deceit** Man. 4.52.

φαρμάκωδης -ες [φάρμακον] **a. medicinal, curative** Aristot. H.A. 624a 18, Pr. 863b 32, al. Thphr. H.P. 9.15.4 Sor. 3.29.6, al. etc.

b. poisonous, poisoned Plut. Sollert. 974c, al. Diosc. 3.80 | *subst.* τὸ φαρμακῶδες **poison** Plut. Aud. poet. 17b

c. of places rich in medicinal plants Thphr. H.P. 9.15.4 || *compar.* -δέστερος Thphr. C.P. 6.4.6 Sor. 2.33.1 | *superl.* -δέστατος.

φαρμάκων -ῶνος, ὁ [φαρμάσσω] **dye works** Soph. fr. 1109.

φάρμαξις -εως, ἡ [φαρμάσσω] **a. medication, treatment w/ drugs** Plat. Phil. 46a || spell Num. (Eus. P.E. 14.8.3) || Gloss., Lat. veneficium **b. tempering, of metals** Plut. Pyth. 395b.

φαρμάσσω, Att. **φαρμάπτω** [φάρμακον] *impf.* ἐφάρμασσ(ττ)ον || *aor.* ἐφάρμαξα, *mid.* ἐφαρμαξάμην Nonn. D. 36.347 || *pf. mid. pass.* πεφάρμαγμα || *aor. pass.* ἐφαρμάχθην

1. act. a. Hom. to temper, only of metals Od. 9.393 **b. post-Hom. to cure with medicine** Plat. Leg. 933b Ap. 4.1512 | φ. μέθυ to mix drugs in wine Nic. Th. 619 || of food **to prepare, season:** σησάμοισι with sesame Hippon. 37.2 || of fabrics **to dye, color** Poll. 7.169

c. to practice magic Ap. 3.478, 4.61 || *fig. to charm, with flattery* Plat. Men. 80a, Symp. 194a

2. mid. to prepare magic charms Ap. 3.859

3. pass. to be bewitched, be charmed Aristoph. Th. 534; *subst. ptc.* οἱ πεφαρμαγμένοι those who have been bewitched Hp. M.S. 1 || **to be poisoned** Plut. Art. 19.6 (*meat*), al. Sor. 2.25.3 (*milk*) || **to be painted, fig. be forged** Philostr. epist. 27 || *fig.* λαμπάς ... φαρμασσομένη χρίματος a lamp fueled with olive oil Aeschl. Ag. 94; **φαρμιανός -όν** soothing plaster Gal. 13.975.

Etymological Dictionary of Greek, 2009 [electronic: Accordance]

φάρμακον [n.] 'healing or harmful medicine, healing or poisonous herb, drug, poisonous potion, magic (potion), dye, raw material for physical or chemical processing' (Il.). <PG(V)> •var φάρμακος (accent following Hdn. Gr. 1, 150) [m.] 'poisoner, enchanter' (LXX, Apoc.). •dial Myc. pa-ma-ko.

•comp φαρμακοπώλης [m.] 'medicine seller, pharmacist' (Att.), πολυφάρμακος 'having many φ., skilled in many φ.' (Hom., Sol., A. R., Thphr.).

•**der A. 1. φαρμάκ-ιον [n.] 'healing or harmful medicine'** (Pl., Hell. pap., Plu. etc.). 2. φαρμακ-ία, Ion. -ίη [f.] 'remedy' (Hp., LXX etc.). 3. φαρμακ-εύς [m.] 'who prepares φ., poisoner, enchanter' (S., Pl. etc.), probably backformed from -εύω. 4. φαρμακ-ίτης [m.], -ίτις [f.] 'containing φ., concerning φ.' (Hp., Eur., etc.). 5. φαρμακ-ίων [m.] epithet of a physician (Gal.). 6. φαρμακ-ίς (Ar., D., Arist. etc.), -εια (Arist.), -εύτρια (Theoc. in tit., Eust.), -ισσαι [pl.] (H., see βαμβακεύτρια) [f.] 'enchantress'. 7. φαρμακ-ών, -ῶνος [m.] 'dye works' (S. Fr. 1109).

B. Adjectives 1. φαρμακ-ώδης 'medicinal, poisonous, rich in φ.' (Arist., Hell.+). 2. φαρμακ-όεις 'id.' (Hell. and late poetry). 3. φαρμακ-ηρός 'treated with φ., imbued, impregnated' (pap. IIp). 4. -ικός 'concerning the φ.' (Tz.; usually -ευτικός for euphonic reasons).

C. Denominative verbs: 1. φαρμακ-εύω 'to prepare or use φ., to heal, poison, enchant' (IA), also with κατα-, δια-; hence -ευτής = -εὺς (late), -ευτικός 'concerning the use of φ., belonging to φ.' (Pl., Gal. etc.), -εία [f.] 'preparation or use of φ., healing, poisoning, enchantment' (Hp., Att., Hell.+), -ευσίς [f.] 'id.' (Hp., Pl.), -εὔτρια (see A 6); also as a back-formation -εὺς (see A 3). 2. φαρμακ-άω 'to feel the effect of a φ., to long for φ.' (D., Thphr., Plu. etc.). 3. φαρμακ-όομαι 'to be poisoned, enchanted' (Plu., pap.), aor. act. -ῶσαι 'to provide with φ.' (Pi.). 4. φαρμάσσω, Att. -ττω 'to treat with φ., to heal, poison, enchant' (ι 393), rarely with κατα-, ἐν-, ἐπι-; hence φάρμαξις [f.] 'medical treatment, enchantment, metalworking' (Pl., Plu., etc.), -ακτήρ, -άκτης [m.] = φαρμακεύς (Opp.), -ακτήριος 'healing' (Lyc.). Also back-formation φαρμαῖός [m.] 'lustration, scapegoat', also as a term of abuse (Hippon., Ar., Lys., D., Call.); perhaps, the long α was introduced after pejorative words in -ᾶξ (the length is certain in Hippon. and Call., but shortvowel in Ar. Eq. 1045, both are possible in Ar. Ra. 733). •etym The original meaning of φάρμακον cannot be established with certainty. The word is clearly Pre-Greek. Fur.: 220 compares φόρβαντα· ἰατρικὰ φάρμακα (H.), φόρβια· φάρμακα, οἱ δὲ φόρβα (H.). Note the variations α/ο and μ/β, well-known from Pre-Greek. Foreign origin is already pleaded for by Chantraine 1933: 384 and Schwyzer: 497.

NT Word Study Dictionary, 1993 [electronic: Accordance]

5331. φαρμακεία *pharmakeía*; gen. *pharmakeías*, fem. noun from *phármakon* (n.f.), a drug, which in the Gr. writers is used both for a curative or medicinal drug, and also as a poisonous one. *Pharmakeía* means the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs (Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21; 18:23; Sept.: Ex. 7:22; Is. 47:9, 12). **Syn.:** *mageía* (3095), magic.

5332. φαρμακεύς *pharmakeús*; gen. *pharmakéōs*, masc. noun from *phármakéūō* (n.f.), to administer a drug. An enchanter with drugs, a sorcerer (Rev. 21:8 [TR]). **Syn.:** *pharmakós* (5333), a magician, sorcerer, enchanter.

5333. φαρμακός *pharmakós*; gen. *pharmakού*, masc. noun. A magician, sorcerer, enchanter (Rev. 21:8 [UBS]; 22:15; Sept.: Ex. 7:11; 9:11; Deut. 18:10; Dan. 2:2). The same as *pharmakeús* (5332). The noun *pharmakeía* (5331) means the preparing and giving of medicine, and in the NT, sorcery, enchantment.

BDAG, 1957, 1979, 2000 [electronic: Accordance]

While the standard Greek lexicon (BDAG) identifies the term employed in Rev 18:23 as "sorcery, magic", the four cognates (related words) all imply the use of drugs, potions. In other words, the semantic domain of the **φαρμακ*** stem includes harmful substances in connection to sorcery, magic:

φαρμακεία, ας, ἡ (also -κία; X., Pla. et al.; Vett. Val., pap, LXX; En, Ascls; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 94; 98; Ar. 13, 7; Tat. 18, 1) **sorcery, magic** (φάρμακον; Polyb. 38, 16, 7; Ex 7:11, 22; 8:18; Is 47:9, 12; Wsd 12:4; 18:13; En 7:1; SibOr 5, 165) Rv 18:23. Pl. *magic arts* 9:21 (v.l. φαρμάκων). In a list of vices Gal 5:20; B 20:1 (Ascls 2:5 ἐπλήθυνεν [ἡ] φαρμακία καὶ ἡ μαγία καὶ ἡ μαντία . . . καὶ ἡ πορνία . . .); pl. D 5:1.—B. 1495. DELG s.v. φάρμακον. M-M.

φαρμακεύς, ἑως, ὁ (φάρμακον; Soph., Trach. 1140; Pla., Symp. 203d γόης καὶ φαρμ.; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 38 [otherw. φαρμακευτής, so also Just., A II, 6, 6]; Jos., Vi. 149f; Orig., C. Cels. 3, 46, 27. Whether poison is implied depends on the context) **maker of potions, magician** Rv 21:8 t.r. (so Tdf. app., based on Erasmus' 2d ed. 1519; the 1st ed. 1516 has the correct rdg; s. RBorger, GGA 143; s. φάρμακος 2).—DELG s.v. φάρμακον.

φαρμακεύω fut. φαρμακεύσω; aor. ptc. φαρμακεύσας 2 Macc 10:13 (φαρμακεύς; Hdt., Pla. et al.; POxy 472, 1; 5 [II AD]; LXX; Philo, Det. Pot. Ins. 38) **to make potions, practice magic** D 2:2 (here mixing of poisons is not especially indicated; cp. Ps.-Phoc. 149 Horst p. 212f; Wengst, Didache p. 69 n. 8).—DELG s.v. φάρμακον.

φάρμακον, ου, τό (s. three prec. entries; Hom. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; TestAbr A, Test12Patr; Philo; Jos., Vi. 150). Prim. 'a drug', ordinarily contexts indicate whether salubrious or noxious.

1. a harmful drug, poison (Hom. et al.; Jos., Ant. 16, 253; 17, 62; TestAbr A 17 p. 99, 28 [Stone p. 46]; TestJos 5:1; Hippol., Ref. 4, 30, 2) Hv 3, 9, 7a (w. φαρμακός); in imagery of the 'poisoned' heart, ibid. 7b. θανάσιμον φάρμ. (s. θανάσιμος) ITr 6:2. δηλητήριο φάρμ. *lethal poison* Papias (2:9).

2. a drug used as a controlling medium, magic potion, charm (Hom.+; PSI 64,20 [I BC]; 4 Km 9:22; TestReub 4:9; Jos. Ant. 15,93;19,193; Hippol., Ref. 6,39,3) φαρμάκων Rv 9:21 (v.l. φαρμακειῶν).

3. a healing remedy, medicine, remedy, drug (Hom. et al.; SIG 1168, 40; 77; 119; PRyl 62, 22 [I BC]; PTebt 117, 22 [I BC]; PGM 5, 247; TestJos 2:7; Philo; Jos., Bell. 4, 573; Ar. 10, 5; Tat. 20, 1; λογικὸν φ. Orig., C. Cels. 5, 1, 11; Did., Gen. 72, 8) in trans. sense of *means of attaining someth., w. gen. of the thing desired* (Eur., Phoen. 893 φ. σωτηρίας; likew. the teaching of Epicurus: CJensen, GGAbh III/5, '33, 81; Cleopatra In. 45; 130 φ. τῆς ζωῆς; Sir 6:16), the Eucharist as φάρμακον ἀθανασίας *the medicine of* (i.e. *means of attaining*) *immortality* IEph 20:2 (φ. ἀθαν. Antiphanes Com. 86, 6; Diod. S. 1, 25, 6; Herm. Wr. 460, 13 Sc. The remedy, widely designated by the t.t. φ. ἀθαν., whose origin was credited to Isis, was prescribed for the most varied diseases. TSchermann, TQ 92, 1910, 6ff; Rtzst., Mysterienrel. 400).—TAllbutt, Greek Medicine in Rome 1921; other lit. OCD, s.v. 'Medicine'.—B. 310f. Schmidt, Syn. IV 106–16. DELG. M-M. Sv.

φάρμακος, ου, ὁ (LXX; other edd. ὄς; on the accent and differentiation fr. φαρμακός 'scapegoat' [Hipponax et al.] see L-S-J-M under both words, w. ref. to Herodian, Gr. I, 150; s. PKatz, TLZ 82, '57, 112, The Text of the Septuagint '73, 95; B-D-F §13; φάρ. is masc. Ex 7:11; fem. Mal 3:5; so also Orig., C. Cels. 5, 38, 38 w. μάγοι). In our lit. only masc.

1. one skilled in arcane uses of herbs or drugs, prob. poisoner Hv 3, 9, 7ab, but w. implication of the role described in 2 next:

2. one who does extraordinary things through occult means, sorcerer, magician (Ex 7:11; 9:11 al.; SibOr 3, 225) Rv 21:8 (s. φαρμακεύς); 22:15.—L-S-J-M s.v. fails to differentiate mng. in LXX pass. listed after a series of glosses.—For a vivid poetic description of a sorcerer's procedures s. Horace, Epodes 5.—DELG s.v. φάρμακον C. M-M.

So also **Mounce's Greek Dictionary: φαρμακεία** *pharmakeia* 2x: employment of drugs for any purpose; sorcery, magic, enchantment, Rev. 18:23; Gal. 5:20*; GK G5760 | S G5332a φάρμακον *pharmakon* 1x: a drug; an enchantment; magic potion, charm, Rev. 9:21 GK G5761 | S G5333 φάρμακος *pharmakos* 2x: a sorcerer, magician, Rev. 21:8; 22:15

UBS: φαρμακεία, ας f sorcery, witchcraft . . . φαρμακία alt. form of φαρμακεία

φάρμακον, ου n witchcraft, magic; magic potion

φάρμακος, ου m sorcerer, one who practices magic or witchcraft

Louw-Nida Lexicon of Semantic Domains: 53.100 φαρμακεία, ας f; φάρμακον, ου n: the use of magic, often involving drugs and the casting of spells upon people — 'to practice magic, to cast spells upon, to engage in sorcery, magic, sorcery.'

φαρμακεία: ἐν τῇ φαρμακείᾳ σου ἐπλανήθησαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ‘with your magic spells you deceived all the peoples (of the world)’ Re 18:23.

φάρμακον: οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν φόνων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν φαρμάκων αὐτῶν ‘they did not repent of their murders or of their magic’ Re 9:21.

φαρμακεία and the variant **φάρμακον** (as in Re 9:21) differ from the preceding terms (53.96–53.99) in that the focus is upon the use of certain potions or drugs and the casting of spells.

53.101 φάρμακος, ου m: (derivative of φαρμακεία ‘to practice magic, to engage in sorcery,’ 53.100) one who uses magic and sorcery — ‘sorcerer.’ ἔξω οἱ κύνες καὶ οἱ φάρμακοι καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς ‘outside (the city) are the perverts, the sorcerers, the immoral, and the murderers’ Re 22:15.

An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon, Liddell and Scott’s:

φαρμακεία, ἡ (φαρμακεύω) the use of drugs, potions, spells, Plat. 2. Poisoning, witchcraft, Lat. veneficium, Dem. II. Remedy, cure, Artist.

φαρμακεύς, ἕως, ὁ, a poisoner, sorcerer, Soph.

φαρμακεύω, f. σω, to administer a drug, Plat. 2. To use enchantments II. To drug, give him a poisonous or stupefying drug, Eur.

φάρμακον, τό, a drug, medicine, Hom., etc. . . . applied outwardly (examples given); those taken inwardly (examples given) 2. In bad sense, an enchanted potion, philter, so a charm, spell, enchantment, Od., Theocr.: -also a drug, poison, Spot., Eur. II. A remedy, cure, Hes.

The Expositor’s Bible commentary, Rev. Ed. (Vol. 13), Tremper Longman III & David E. Garland: “John has previously used *pharmakeia* in conjunction with ‘murders,’ ‘fornicators,’ and ‘thefts’ (see comments at 9:21). An element of drugging is involved that results in fatal poisoning” (p. 752).

“‘Magic arts’ (*pharmakon*) means the practice of sorceries or ‘witchcraft’ (LXX Ex 7:11; 9:11; Gal 5:20; Rev 21:8; 22:15). Drugs were usually involved in these arts. Sometimes the word *Pharmakon* means ‘to poison,’ as in a Jewish prayer form the first century BC: ‘I call upon and pray the Most High, the Lord of the spirits and of all flesh, against those who with guile murdered or poisoned [*pharmakon*] the wretched, untimely lost Heracles, shedding her innocent blood wickedly” (p. 675).

Wuppertaler Studienbibel, S. 460:

“Das verwendete Bild hat sicher seinen Anhaltspunkt in der Praxis der Dirnen, die seit alters ihren Opfern Pülverchen in den Wein tun, um sie zu betäuben und zu berauschen. In Nah 3,4 wird das Bild auf die Stadt Ninive bezogen, die die Völker zunächst brauschte, um sie dann zu überfallen und auszuplündern (Jes 47,9 in bezug auf Babel).

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown on Rev 9:21: sorceries—witchcrafts by means of drugs (so the Greek).

Vincent's Word Studies

Only here, Revelation 18:23; and Galatians 5:20, where φαρμακεία sorceries, A.V., witchcraft is enumerated among the "works of the flesh." Used in the Septuagint of the Egyptian sorceries (Exodus 7:22. Of Babylon, Isaiah 47:9, Isaiah 47:12). From φάρμακον a drug, and thence a poison, an enchantment. Plato says: "There are two kinds of poisons used among men which cannot clearly be distinguished. There is one kind of poison which injures bodies by the use of other bodies according to a natural law... but there is another kind which injures by sorceries and incantations and

magic bonds, as they are termed, and induces one class of men to injure another as far as they can, and persuades others that they, above all persons, are liable to be injured by the powers of the magicians. Now it is not easy to know the nature of all these things; nor if a man do know can he readily persuade others of his belief. And when men are disturbed at the sight of waxen images, fixed either at the doors, or in a place where three ways meet, or in the sepulchers of parents, there is no use of trying to persuade them that they should despise all such things, because they have no certain knowledge about them. But we must have a law in two parts concerning poisoning, in whichever of the two ways the attempt is made; and we must entreat and exhort and advise men not to have recourse to such practices, by which they scare the multitude out of their wits, as if they were children, compelling the legislator and the judge to heal the fears which the sorcerer arouses, and to tell them, in the first place, that he who attempts to poison or enchant others knows not what he is doing, either as regards the body (unless he have a knowledge of medicine) or as regards his enchantments, unless he happens to be a prophet or diviner" ("Laws," xi., 933).

OT Background: Pharmakeia (and cognates) in the Septuagint

Ex 7:11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their **enchantments** [τοὺς φαρμάκους].

Ex 7:22 Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their **enchantments** [pharmakeias]; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

Ex 8:7 [LXX 8:3] And the magicians did so with their **enchantments** [pharmakeias], and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

Ex 8:18 [LXX 8:14] Now the magicians so worked with their **enchantments** [pharmakeiais] to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast.

2 Kings 9:22 Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "*Is it peace, Jehu?* So he answered, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her **witchcraft** [pharmakon] *are so many?*"

Isa 47:9 But these two *things* shall come to you in a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness Because of the multitude of your sorceries, For the great abundance of your **enchantments** [pharmakeia].

Isa 47:12 "Stand now with your **enchantments** [pharmakeia] And the multitude of your sorceries, In which you have labored from your youth— Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail."

Dan 2:2 "Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the **sorcerers** [pharmakon], and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king."

Nahum 3:4 "Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, The mistress of **sorceries** [pharmakon], Who sells nations through her harlotries, And families through her sorceries [pharmakon]."

Mal 3:5 "And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against **sorcerers** [pharmakon], Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and

widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien— Because they do not fear Me," Says the LORD of hosts."

Gal 5:20 "idolatry, **sorcery** [pharmakeia], hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies . . ."

Meyer's NT Commentary on Gal 5:20

φαρμακεία] may here mean either poison-mingling (Plat. Legg. viii. p. 845 E; Polyb. vi. 13. 4, xl. 3. 7; comp. **φαρμακός**, Dem. 794. 4) or sorcery (Exodus 7:11; Exodus 7:22; Exodus 8:3; Isaiah 47:9; Isaiah 47:12; Revelation 9:21; Revelation 18:23; Revelation 21:8; Wis 12:4; Wis 18:13; comp. **φάρμακα**, Herod. iii. 85; **φαρμακεύειν**, Herod. vii. 114). The latter interpretation is to be preferred (with Luther, Grotius, Estius, Koppe, Winer, Usteri, Schott, de Wette, Ewald, Wieseler, Hofmann, and others), partly on account of the combination with **εἰδωλολατρεία** (comp. Deuteronomy 18:10 ff.; Exodus 22:18), partly because **φόνοι** occurs subsequently. Sorcery was very prevalent, especially in Asia (Acts 19:19). To understand it, with Olshausen, specially of love-incantations, is arbitrary and groundless, since the series of sins of lust is closed with **ἀσέλγεια**.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

The word which is used here (φαρμακεία pharmakeia, whence our word "pharmacy," from φάρμακον pharmakon, a medicine, poison, magic potion) means, properly, the preparing and giving of medicine. Then it means also poisoning, and also magic art, or enchantment; because in savage nations pharmacy or medicine consisted much in magical incantations. Thence it means sorcery or enchantment, and it is so used uniformly in the New Testament. It is used only in Gal 5:20; Rev 9:21; 18:23; 21:8. Some have supposed that it means poisoning here, a crime often practiced; but the more correct interpretation is, to refer it to the black art, or to pretensions to witchcraft, and the numerous delusions which have grown out of it, as a striking illustration of the corrupt and depraved nature of man.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

The word rendered 'witchcraft' originally meant 'the use of drugs', then, in a bad sense, 'poisoning'. Those who 'used curious arts' (Acts 19:19) combined demonology or witchcraft with the use of drugs as philtres, &c. For an illustration of this compare the well-known 5th Epode of Horace.

Bengel's Gnomes

Φαρμακεία) See LXX., Exodus 7:11, and in many other passages. That Paul is not speaking here of natural poisoning by potions, but of magic, is evident from this, that he joins it not with murder, but with idolatry. Comp. Revelation 21:8, note.—**διχοστασίαι**, seditions) respecting civil affairs.—**αἰρέσεις**, heresies) respecting sacred things: 1 Corinthians 11:19.

Pulpit Commentary

"Sorcery." The word φαρμακεία, originally denoting the use of drugs merely, means, sometimes, their use for poisoning; but this sense would not be very suitable here. But the nouns φαρμακός, φαρμακεύς, and φαρμακεία, like veneficus and veneficium in Latin, are also often used with reference to the employment of drugs in charms and incantations; and thence of the employment of black arts in general - magic, sorcery, witchcraft; cf. Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15; where the AV gives "sorceries," "sorcerers;" and in the Septuagint, Ex 7:11, 22; 8:18 (AV, "magicians"); Isaiah 47:9, 12 ("enchantments"). See also μαγεύων μαγείας ("sorceries"), Acts 8:9, 11. The claim to the

possession of such powers, common at Ephesus (Acts 19:19; 2 Timothy 3:13, γόντες), and rife, perhaps, universally among heathens, certainly so in the Roman empire round the Mediterranean, had no doubt been a snare also to the Galatians. Bishop Lightfoot adverts to a very stringent canon of the Council of Ancyra (the capital of Galatia), A.D. 314, condemning φαρμακεία. It may be doubted whether the apostle himself would regard, or had reason to regard, pretensions to such supernatural arts as merely delusive or superstitious. Experiences such as that recorded in Acts 16:16-18, would hardly permit him to do so.

Conclusion

3 uses of φαρμακεία: positive or negative medicine, and with spiritualistic connotations. This is so important because in Revelation 18 the 4th angel spreads the 3 Angels' messages, and that for a last time. Light attracts darkness. Rev 18:1 immediately solicits the warning that Babylon is not just false, incorrect, mistaken, but "a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!" (Rev 18:2).

Interestingly, the deception is compared to intoxication: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (Rev 18:3).

Even more interesting is that Ellen White associates or identifies alcohol with demon possession: **"In dealing with the victims of intemperance we must remember that we are not dealing with sane men, but with those who for the time being are under the power of a demon" (MH 172).**

Babylon deceives the world and kills the righteous (18:23-24). In short, for anyone (singular) in the world to hear the call to come out of Babylon before the final collapse, they must be sober, not drunk, not intoxicated, not bewitched, not under the power of spiritualism *as can be administered and communicated and facilitated and catalyzed by mind-altering substances!*

Ellen White on Revelation 18

"When the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel of Revelation eighteen, the religious elements, good and evil, will awake from slumber, and the armies of the living God will take the field."—SDABC 7:983 (1899). LDE 251.3

"Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices which seemed to sound everywhere, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel's message in 1844. The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning, proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God's people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom" (EW 277.2).

"When the messages of the three angels come prominently before the world again just before the second advent of Christ, the angel of Revelation 18:1 joins in the proclamation of the second angel in the message that "Babylon is fallen." "Come out of her, my people" (EW 304.1).

"The second angel's message of Revelation 14 was first preached in the summer of 1844, and it then had a more direct application to the churches of the United States, where the warning of the judgment had been most widely proclaimed and most generally rejected, and where the declension in the churches had been most rapid. But the message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a moral fall, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that "Babylon is fallen,... because she made *all nations* drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." She has not yet made all nations do this. The spirit of world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination. (GC 389.2)

The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work "with *all* power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" and they that "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to receive "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future. Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: "Come out of her, My people" (Revelation 18:4)." (GC 389-390)

The world, poisoned, deceived, drunk, mislead, dying.

Revelation 18 not only calls out people out of Babylon, but it thereby calls on people outside of Babylon to not be poisoned, deceived, mislead, drunk, dying!