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FOR ALL TIME:
AN EXAMINATION OF ROMANTIC LOVE THROUGH CURSE TABLETS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Alicia M. Deadrick

May 2011

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FOR ALL TIME:
AN EXAMINATION OF ROMANTIC LOVE THROUGH CURSE TABLETS

by

Alicia M. Deadrick

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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May 2011

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ABSTRACT

FOR ALL TIME:
AN EXAMINATION OF ROMANTIC LOVE THROUGH CURSE TABLETS

by Alicia M. Deadrick

This thesis analyzes the Greco-Roman amatory *defixiones*, or curse tablets, and binding spells from the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE in order to investigate the existence of romantic love in the Mediterranean Basin. Binding spells provide a unique opportunity for cultural analysis, for they were popular with all levels of society, both genders and all sexualities. Three categories of amatory spells prevalent in ancient society (*agoge*, separation, and *philia*) undergo examination to establish romantic love as a sentiment separate from *eros* and *philia* and in opposition of the currently prevailing relationship theory of "power and penetration." *Agoge* spells called a lover forth, while separation spells blocked rival suitors from visiting the shared beloved. *Philia* spells were used to increase good will and affection towards those who cast them. Tantamount is the examination of language, duration of binding wished, and specific desires of the clients ordering love spells. Additionally, the role of magicians in society and courtesans as magic workers is discussed.

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First, I would like to thank my husband, Ryan, for his continued *eros*, *philia*, support, and patience. Without him, I would be lost. Thank you, Monocle, for ensuring I saw daylight amidst all the researching and writing. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for teaching me that if I persevere anything is possible.

Thank you to Drs. Roth, Bernhardt, and Amiras for their invaluable lessons and time with this project. Lastly, I cannot express enough gratitude to the San Jose State University College of Social Sciences for awarding me the Research Grant, which enabled a research trip to Athens and Thessaloniki, Greece to personally study the curse tablets.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
DT	*Defixionum Tabellae*, ed. A. Audollent (Paris, 1904).
JGG	*Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, John G. Gager (New York, 1992).
PDM	*Papyri Demotic Magicae*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Chicago, 1992).
PGM	*Papyri Graecae Magicae*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Chicago, 1992); ed. Karl Preisendanz (Munich, 2001).

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 a scientific study rocked the fields of neuroscience, biochemistry, and psychology. Larry Young, a neuroscientist working in a lab at Yerkes National Primate Research Center at Emory University in Atlanta, discovered evidence confirming that romantic love is a distinct chemical reaction occurring in the brain.[1] The aforementioned fields launched further studies into the chemicals of the brain controlling emotional responses and examined the implications of this discovery in modern psychology. However, this breakthrough regarding universal human emotion can also be applied to the field of history, prompting a reexamination of affection and romantic love as a cultural construct during different historical periods. The current prevailing model for the study of gender and sexuality in Greco-Roman antiquity defines relationships as based upon either power or penetration. Through analysis of the amatory *defixiones*, or curse tablets, it will be demonstrated that romantic love, in addition to relationships based on domination and familial and political alliances, existed in the classical world.

Romantic love extends beyond individual classes as a basic human emotion; therefore, the *defixiones* were chosen for examination in this study because all members of society ordered their creation: heterosexual and homosexual men and women, wealthy and poor, and free and enslaved. Furthermore, tablets were created as a method to obtain an inner desire, allowing the *defigens*, or individual requesting the creation of a *defixio*, to

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[1] Lea Winerman, "Love is a Chemical Reaction, Scientists Find," *PBS Online NewsHour* February 13, 2009, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/ updates/science/jan-june09/love_02-13.html (accessed January 24, 2011).

speak from the heart. The curse tablets inscribed with spells for intimate personal relationships are more commonly referred to as the erotic, or amatory, curses and were an aspect of ancient love spells. These tablets were first discovered approximately 150 years ago, when the lead balls unearthed at the bottom of a well were unrolled to display an inscription.[2] As of today, more than 1,600 tablets have been uncovered. Of these, eighty-one are examples of published erotic tablets. Of these eighty-one tablets, sixty-nine target women (two homoerotic), nine target men (one homoerotic), and three are too ambiguous to determine gender or sexual orientation.[3] Curse tablets, commonly called by their Latin title *defixiones* and less commonly by their Greek name *katadesmoi*, were a form of magic practiced in the ancient world that bound a victim to the desires of the *defigens* for certain actions and periods of time.

The earliest discovered tablet dates to the fifth century BCE and was found at the Greek colony of Selinus on Sicily. The practice of binding spells flourished through the third century CE. Despite the longevity surrounding this form of magical binding and an increase in the eloquence and length of the inscription, the premise remained unchanged: to use magic as the means of satisfying a personal desire. Given the enduring popularity of binding spells and curse tablets, the scope of this thesis encompasses the fourth century BCE until the fourth century CE in order to examine the evolution of amatory curses and the unchanging nature of the desires of those who employed them. While the

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[2] Tablets have since been discovered in several other key chthonic locations, once archaeologists and historians were aware that the lead balls were inscribed. For more information regarding the deposit locations of curse tablets, please see Chapter 2.

[3] Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 43.

tablets flourished throughout the Mediterranean Basin and north into Great Britain, the bulk of tablets were engraved in the common language of the period: Greek. Thus, Hellenistic practices regarding love and marriage played a pivotal role in the origination of love cursing and had a greater direct influence than Roman customs.

Curses were prevalent in societal arenas of great competition, such as law courts, chariot races, wrestling matches, and the stage as well as business competitors and even rivals in love. The formal categorizations of tablets are litigation, competition, trade, erotic, and prayers for justice.[4] The tablets falling within the litigation category were primarily ordered by the defendant and created to influence speeches during courts of law and in the forum. Competition spells were common among those who risked their livelihoods and prestige for the entertainment of others. Performers' reputations, whether actors or athletes, depended upon the whims of the general public as well as their success in the arena or on the stage. Binding the competition ensured continued success. Tradesmen, for similar reasons, bound the competition in order to increase their own chances of success. People of widely varied professions employed curse tablets, including innkeepers, shopkeepers, pipe makers, carpenters, bronze workers, net makers, frame makers, rope makers, fabric sellers, helmet makers, gold workers, painters, flour sellers, scribes, silversmiths' bellows-workers, shield makers, doctors, helmsmen,

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[4] Daniel Ogden, "Binding Spell: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 31.

seamstresses, brothel owners, and prostitutes.[5] On a separate note, justice curses sought the return, or the monetary equalivant of stolen goods, along with punishment of the (typically anonymous) thief. This is the single category of *defixiones* that was mainly composed in Latin and found in the Roman colony in Bath, England. The erotic curses were used to draw a lover forth or to separate him or her from romantic rivals; additionally, they "constitute the category forced to evolve under the pressure of the circumstances in which they were made and because of their general relevance to the study of gender relations."[6]

The method of binding was popularized through the mythologies surrounding the divine; due to the gods' immortality, they could not be killed. Therefore, they were bound in order to control their actions and such bindings were either defensive or manipulative in nature. Often a binding spell would be accompanied with a ritual utilizing an effigy representing the real life victim. The effigy was ritually and magically bound with items such as cords, but not destroyed. A common custom involved binding effigies of Ares to ward off war-mongering neighbors.[7] Binding was not solely practiced by the Greeks; evidence shows the Egyptians, from the earliest times, used effigies as a part of the state religion.[8]

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[5] Ibid., 34.

[6] Ibid., 35.

[7] Christopher A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 75.

[8] Faraone specializes in further information of the widespread nature of binding curses and magic practices throughout *Talismans and Trojan Horses* (Chapter 5:

Most scholars commence studies of Greco-Roman magical and sexual history with Homer. As Robert Flaceliere points out, the Homeric poems and epics, such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, influenced children's and citizens morals and formal, as well as informal, education for centuries. Verses, even entire books, were learned by heart and studied in educational settings; rhetoricians and philosophers sought the meaning of life and ethical codes in them, recitation competitions were performed at festivals, and particular lines and phrases adopted roles in incantations. Homer permeated every aspect of Greek society, his moral and social ideals transcending centuries and setting a model of behavior to be obeyed, examined, and occasionally refuted.[9] Common themes prevalent within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* relevant to the field of historical gender and sexuality include concubinage of war captives, the fidelity of women, and male philandering. Sarah B. Pomeroy explains that, "In an atmosphere of fierce competition among men, women were viewed symbolically and literally as properties—the prizes of contests and the spoils of conquest—and domination over them increased the male's prestige. Women, free or slave, were valued for their beauty and accomplishments."[10]

Despite his infidelity, Odysseus extols the virtues of marriage to the young Nausicaa, and Faceliere emphasizes that the women Odysseus strays with are witches,

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"Binding and Burying an Effigy of Evil"), which serves as a must-read reference for the use of effigies in magic.

[9] Robert Flaceliere, *Love in Ancient Greece*, trans. James Cleugh (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1962), 14.

[10] Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 25.

who possessed the knowledge and ability to employ charms in order to manipulate, seduce, and detain men.[11] Sarah B. Pomeroy observed that, typically, a virgin goddess with masculine characteristics sponsored and watched over a hero, insuring his continued existence and protection.[12] Pomeroy and Flaceliere both agree that the Homeric works sponsor marriage; Flaceliere states that "the Homeric poems are already a guarantee that matrimony in ancient Greece…might be characterized by the tenderest and most natural of sentiments"[13] and that "it was clear therefore that in the Homeric world the virtues of fortitude and compassion typical of the true 'knight' commanded deep respect and affection, even between man and woman, quite apart from any element of passion. This sentiment, that of friendship, called *philia* by the Greeks, was often regarded by them as superior even to *eros*."[14] As mentioned above, the Homeric tales were rife with witches and magic, seduction and fidelity. Throughout *For All Time*, Homeric tales will be utilized to support and contextualize information within binding tablets and spells.

I have organized *For All Time: An Examination of Romantic Love through Curse Tablets* into six chapters in order to best highlight the various forms of amatory curses. Chapter 1: "Introduction" explores binding magic in mythology, as well as the most relevant historiography regarding both magic and love in the ancient world. Chapter 2: "A Binding Background" provides all relevant information regarding the creation,

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[11] Flaceliere, *Love in Ancient Greece*, 15-16.

[12] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*, 10.

[13] Flaceliere, 14.

[14] Ibid., 27-28.

distribution, and evolution of curse tablets. It also explains the nature of love magic, touches on the debate of magic versus religion, and explores the role of the magician in ancient Greco-Roman culture. Chapter 3: "*Agoge* and *Eros*" analyzes the *agoge*, or "come hither," spells by comparing and contrasting examples that display love and lust. To best understand the effects of *eros*, courtship and marriage are used to contextualize the powerful *agoge* bindings. Chapter 4: "Seductive Spells of Separation" examines the *defixiones* that bind a lover from engaging in relations with rival suitors. Often attributed to prostitutes, this chapter examines the role of courtesans and prostitution within the patriarchal Hellenistic societies. Chapter 5: "*Philia*, *Pharmaka*, *Philtres* and Affection" looks at binding spells within the larger realm of *philia* magic, such as *pharmaka* and love potions.

The primary sources examined to demonstrate the textual evidence of romantic love are magical, literary, and historical in nature. The *defixiones* themselves provide the majority of magical historical evidence supporting romantic love in the ancient Greco-Roman sphere. Two special *corpora* were printed at the turn of the twentieth century in Europe cataloging then-known curse tablets. R. Wünsch published, in 1897, 220 tablets discovered in Attica, Greece in the seminal work regarding curse tablets: *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae*.[15] A. Audollent published his catalogue, *Defixionum tabellae*, in 1904 as a complement to Wünsch's.[16] He included an additional 305 examples and drew from

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[15] Richard Wünsch, "Appendix continens defixionum tabellas in Attica regione repertas," *Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. II/III of *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum* (Berlin: Reimer, 1987).

[16] Augustus Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris: Fontemoing, 1904).

Greek and non-Greek sources in order to provide a comprehensive inventory of curse tablets.

A modern anthology of curse tablets was created and printed by David R. Jordan in 1985 entitled "A Survey of Greek *Defixiones* Not Included in the Special Corpora."[17] In addition to the survey, Jordan has published several articles examining individual tablets and caches recently discovered. "A Survey of Greek *Defixiones*" serves as "a catalogue of all Greek examples known to [him]—over 650 in number—that do not appear in either Wünsch's or Audollent's corpus." Each tablet description is accompanied with, if known, the current location, provenance, tablet dimensions, date created, and a bibliography of other works in which each tablet has been discussed. Another contemporary *corpus* investigating *defixiones* was created and published by John G. Gager in 1992. *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* "arose initially from a desire to define a body of primary materials that might serve to illustrate the long and difficult debate about "magic" and "religion" in Western culture. It seemed clear to [the author] that "ancient *defixiones*…offered a unique body of data. They are largely unknown…[and] were actually put to use by individual clients."[18] Gager systematically divided the curse tablets and binding spells according to the established categories in order to allow easier examination within each sphere.

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[17] David R. Jordan, "A Survey of Greek *Defixiones* Not Included in the Special Corpora," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 26, no. 26 (1985): 151-197.

[18] John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), v.

The *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (*PGM*), or Greek Magical Papyri, has been expanded to include the Demotic spells (*PDM*), translated into English by a team of scholars and edited by Hans Dieter Betz.[19] Originally compiled by Karl Preisendanz, a German Classicist with expertise in Latin and Greek paleography and papyrology in the late 1920s, this *corpus* represents a collection of Greco-Roman Egyptian magical papyri that span from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE were discovered in Egypt.[20] Detailed instructions informed the magician how to create binding spells and tablets, hymns, formulas, ingredients for ointments, healing spells, *pharmaka*, even the ritual and ceremonial rites necessary for a successful casting. The level of detail included in the individual spells was astonishing, from the listing of required ingredients and materials, to the exact inscription to be engraved, to the words to be uttered during the secret magical ceremony; no detail is left to chance when dealing with powerful supernatural beings. These specific elements provide an invaluable and incomparable insight into the world of magic workers and provide context for the *defixiones* discovered throughout the Mediterranean region. These instructions have enabled modern researchers to understand the engraved tablets and hypothesize the role of magicians in the ancient world. The spells within the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* show obvious Hellenistic, Roman, and Egyptian influences, invoking divine beings across several

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[19] *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells, Second Edition: Volume 1: Texts*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[20] Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 2001). This edition is a reprint of the original work, first published in 1928.

religious pantheons—from the traditional Greek deities to Jesus Christ. The fascinating inclusion of such a multitude of diverse divine beings highly illustrates the influx, dissemination, and evolution of diverse religious practices throughout several colonized cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

When reading the included curse tablets and binding spells, certain conventions are utilized to aid in the reading of the source or to show text missing on the original artifact. The initials "NN" are commonly placed in text, such as the spells in the Greek Magical Papyri, to act as a placeholder to indicate where particular names should be inscribed. Since this spell book was an instructional manual, it was important to indicate where to personalize the basic text. *Voces magicae*, words of magical power, are indicated in the text through the use of capitalization or, if the words flow over several lines, the words are removed and replaced with the abbreviation "VM." Since many of the tablets and spells were discovered in less than pristine condition, and ellipsis (…) denotes unreadable letters in the original text and brackets ([]) indicate words or letters not legible, but believed to be correct.

External to the immediate realm of magic workers, literary authors also recorded instances of love magic. The oldest forms of binding are found within the Homeric epics, as detailed above in development of binding. Three key examples, recorded by Lucian, Vergil, and Theocritus lend to the rich literary culture of love as well as the magical sphere. Lucian, in his satire *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, wrote several conversations

between prostitutes.[21] This work has contributed to the assumption that many workers of the sex industry employed magical methods in order to gain and maintain clientele. Vergil's *Eighth Eclogue*[22] and Theocritus' *Second Idyll*[23] both provide literary examples detailing magical ceremonies and the creation of binding spells for amatory desires. Additionally, in order to provide diverse perspectives regarding supernatural practices in antiquity, sources are drawn from law speeches, medicinal treatises, and the works of philosophers.

The study of curse tablets and binding spells remains relatively untouched by modern historians. The few scholars who have published studies on cursing, however, have put forth exemplary and pivotal works in developing further understandings of the ancient psyche and the field of magicians, whether viewed as a subculture of religion or in opposition to sanctioned religious activities. Faraone, a highly published classicist specializing on Greek poetry, magic, and Near Eastern influences, strives to present the magical world in geographical context, with many practices originating in the east and spreading westward over time. He heavily promotes magic as a purely defensive measure in *Talismans and Trojan Horses*, largely deemphasizing the tablets that wish

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[21] Lucian, *Dialogues of the Courtesans* ed. and trans. M. D. Macleod, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936-1967).

[22] Vergil, *The Pastoral Poems: The Text of the Eclogues with a Translation* trans. E. V. Rieu (Aylesbury: Penguin Books Ltd, 1954).

[23] Theocritus, *Second Idyll* ed. and trans. J. M. Edmonds, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912).

harm upon the victim.[24] In the 2001 work entitled *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, he introduced the "misandrist model" of examining the amatory *defixiones*.[25] This model finds individuals with aggressive tendencies, chiefly men, generally created that *agoge defixiones*, based upon eros (erotic love), whereas spells of *philia* (platonic affection) developed as a passive measure to enhance control of the *defigens* were generally ordered by women. Faraone also challenged the six categories of *defixiones* developed by Gager in the chapter called "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells" in the compilation *Magika Hiera*. He instead formulates only four separate categories: 1) those amatory in nature, 2) those employed amongst entertainers, 3) those used in judicial matters, and 4) those that are commercial.[26] Regarding agoge spells, Faraone warns against not falling "into the equally dangerous trap of romanticizing the Greeks as some perennially strange people, who reveal their truest and darkest souls in passionate outbursts on rooftops, late at night with a full moon beaming down."[27]

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[24] Christopher A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[25] Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[26] Christopher A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Greek Binding Spells," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10.

[27] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 3-4.

In direct opposition of Faraone's hypothesis that most binding curses were defensive measures lies Lindsay Watson's *Arae: The Curse Poetry of Antiquity*.[28] Instead, he concludes that *defixiones* are unprovoked curses that

> fall into a category of black magic…They smack of violence and a cruelty which is not, strictly speaking, germane to the execution of the curse, which could be fulfilled quite effectively without the infliction of such horrific injuries. Not that one should expect better of the *defixiones*, which, motivated by purely private emotions such as hate, greed, or sexual jealousy, served merely selfish ends, and exhibited either a blissful unconcern with the well-being of the unhappy victim or, as here, a malevolent interest in his destruction.[29]

Finally, Matthew W. Dickie crafted an outstanding survey entitled *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*.[30] Not only does this work provide a wide range of materials regarding magic practitioners, he also examines the different forms of magic practiced. His careful analysis of all aspects of the field of magic lead him to believe that magicians crafted the *defixiones*, rather than literate individuals hoping to increase their wealth. He also emphasizes the importance of the ceremonial ritual accompanying the creation of binding spells and draws parallels between prayer and incantation.

In conjunction with knowledge concerning curse tablets and magic, love, provides the additional cultural arena pertinent to understanding the erotic *defixiones*. Therefore, scholarship on love, marriage, courtship, prostitution, and homoerotic relationships is relevant to the comprehension of the world of curse tablets. Many of the known curse

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[28] Lindsay Watson, *Arae: The Curse Poetry of Antiquity* (Leeds: Francis Cairns Publications Ltd., 1991).

[29] Ibid., 12.

[30] Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001).

tablets are Greek in origin; therefore we shall commence with an examination of love, marriage, and courtship in Greece.

The Greeks differentiated between love and passion. *Eros* was the name given to passion, and it was not a welcome emotion. *Eros* was viewed as a frenzied state full of lust that tempted upstanding citizens into immoral behavior and desire so intense as to cause physical and mental illness. *Philia*, on the other hand, was a term referring to deep affection between individuals, a form of love, endearment, and respect that was applicable for one's wife, child, sibling, and close friends. The Greek language did not possess a word referring to the ideal romantic love between partners representing both affection and physical attraction, but instead saw these two emotions as separate entities.

In addition to primary sources such as Hesiod, Sappho, Plato, and Ovid, I have chosen several modern historians for their contributions to the field of gender and sexuality studies in antiquity. The forerunner of examining the role of women in antiquity is Sarah B. Pomeroy. She developed the idea for *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* when she pondered what women were doing while men made and wrote history. She states, "the overwhelming ancient and modern preference for political and military history, in addition to the current fascination with intellectual history, has obscured the record of those people who were excluded by sex or class from participation in the political and intellectual life of their societies."[31] Using archaeological and literary evidence, she delves into the role of women, from aristocrats to slaves, in both Greek and Roman cultures. Marilyn B. Skinner, on the other hand, created a survey to investigate

[31] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, ix.

sexuality designed to explore the prevailing trends currently popular in sexuality studies in *Sexuality in the Greek and Roman Culture*.[32] The most popular trend, the power and penetration theory, is the one under closest examination in this thesis. This theory proclaims ancient relationships were only based upon two variables: what could be gained through a familial marriage alliance or the lustful desire to penetrate. It leaves no room for romantic love as an aspect of sexuality in ancient culture.

In *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*, author John J. Winkler examines spells in relation to the power and penetration theory throughout his portrayal of sexuality in Greece. He states "sex, so understood, was basically a way for men to establish their social identities in the intensely competitive, zero-sum formats of public culture. The rigor of this sexual ethos was applied to individuals when citizens were about to enter political office in Athens: each underwent a public scrutiny of his personal life, including his sexual conduct."[33] The nature of one's sexuality was integral to the stability of the *oikos*, or household, and the *polis*, or city-state. Additionally, he pioneered the theory that the *agoge* spell performed a type of psychological relief for the *defigens*, allowing the *defigens* to cast forth the overwhelming pains of *eros* upon the beloved, so that he or she may release pent up emotions or receive satisfaction when the beloved arrived.

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[32] Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

[33] John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

The role of the *oikos* was supremely important in Hellenistic society, particularly in the Attic region. Cheryl Anne Cox wrote *Household Interests: Property, Marriage Strategies, and Family Dynamics in Ancient Athens* to "study the attitudes and practices that went beyond legal and social norms, and which in fact determined how interests and arrangements for transferring property affected family relations."[34] Supporting Winkler's claims of societal scrutiny, she examines the shame aspect of Attic culture for both men and women, finding that a man's honor was based on his benefactions, political prowess, and proper conduct of the household, while a woman's "honor was bound up with her public display of sexual modesty."[35]

K. J. Dover introduced numerous themes in his close examination of interpersonal relationships in Greek society in his seminal work *Greek Homosexuality*.[36] As an original proponent of the "power and penetration" theory, his examination of male and female homosexuality, the role of prostitution in homosexual relationships, and the examination of art in the section "Dominant and Subordinate Roles."[37] Dover noticed that in heterosexual copulation, "The woman is almost invariably in a 'subordinate' position, the man 'dominant;' the woman bent over or lying back or supported, the man

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[34] Cheryl Anne Cox, *Household Interests: Property, Marriage Strategies, and Family Dynamics in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[35] Ibid., 69.

[36] K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (New York: MJF Books, 1989).

[37] Ibid., 100-110.

upright or on top."[38] The female was subordinate and the recipient of penetration in the bedroom and therefore, the subordinate in all aspects of life. This belief correlates to the view that those that receive penetration, whether male or female, are subordinate to the more powerful, masculine penetrator.

Through applying a modern scientific study proving the existence of romantic love as a complex reaction in the brain to amatory *defixiones*, relationships in the ancient Greco-Roman world face a reevaluation. Using binding tablets and spells, which were created as an expression of innermost desires, I intend to demonstrate that romantic love existed in the ancient world, in spite of the prevailing power and penetration theories.

[38] Ibid., 101.

CHAPTER 2.

A BINDING BACKGROUND

Curse tablets can be seen as relics of people's inner desires and society's hidden practices. While individuals in the Greco-Roman sphere of influence possessed awareness and knowledge of magical influences and rites, magic was viewed by them as individualistic and separate from sanctioned sacred activities. The distinction between magic and religion differs. Here, magic is defined as an aspect of religion, for the people of antiquity did not differentiate magic as a separate entity, apart from religion. The key distinction was that the use of magic expressed inner personal desires and magicians performed sacrifices for the good of the individual, whereas religion served the community as a whole and received official sanction through community leaders. Magicians permeated society and commonly employed two magical approaches when creating binding spells, sympathetic and volitional.

Sir James George Frazer coined the term sympathetic magic, referring to the magical method of creating an analogy between the ritualistic elements and the desired outcome in reality.[39] Also known as imitative and contagious magic, sympathetic magic creates a bond between ritualistic actions and objects with physical surroundings. For

[39] "If we analyze the principles of thought on which magic is based, they will probably be found to resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity, the latter the Law of Contact or Contagion." James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, Abridged* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2009), 11.

example, Eli Edward Buriss states "[a]s the knot binds, so the action is bound."[40] From the materials to the words chosen to the actions performed, most *defixiones* are elementally sympathetic in nature. Alternatively, volitional magic is the term applied to the magical approach of performing a ritual to achieve a specific desired outcome.[41] Many spells are volitional and sympathetic simultaneously, which is highly evident in the analysis of the amatory *defixiones*: love is the desired outcome and curse tablets were thus created to achieve love and the materials selected boast numerous sympathetic properties to strengthen the binding curse.

Curses were widespread in the ancient world and were cast for a variety of personal reasons, from love to revenge. Revenge curses constituted the majority of known curses; they served as a method to achieve justice in a society of inequality where catching and prosecuting a culprit within the law systems was difficult. Also prevalent were curses for those who would disturb a grave or alter the outcome of assembly. Demosthenes, a fourth-century BCE Athenian orator, abhorred immoral actions in the law courts, declaring:

> Every man keeps his oath who does not, through spite or favor or other dishonest motive, vote against his better judgment. Suppose that he does not apprehend some point that is explained to him, he does not deserve to be punished for his lack of intelligence. The man who is amenable to the curse is the advocate who deceives and misleads the jury. That is why, at every meeting, the crier pronounces a commination, not upon those who have been misled, but upon

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[40] Eli Edward Buriss, *Taboo, Magic, Spirits: A Study of Primitive Elements in Roman Religion* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1972), 123.

[41] Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 45.

> whosoever makes a misleading speech to the Council, or to the Assembly, or to the Court.[42]

In all forms of curses, a standardization of themes and phrases evolved over time and across geographical landscapes. Watson developed a list of common themes found in all types of curses (including, but not limited to, binding spells) which included an inability to walk on land or sail the sea, infertility, personal and familial destruction, premature death, ongoing suffering, exile, loss of burial rites, one's corpse being harmed by wild animals, military defeat, beggary, hunger, thirst, blindness, murder at the hands of a family member or dear friend, that is an unforeseen betrayal, death by thunderbolt (if Zeus, the lightning-bearer so willed it), or the all encompassing "he shall experience every evil."[43]

Jordan's definition is the most widely reiterated in curse tablet studies, and it shall find a home here as well: "*Defixiones*, more commonly known as curse tablets, are inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of small, thin sheets, intended to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or the welfare of persons or animals against their will."[44] While the Greeks derived the name for curse tablets from the verb "to bind," the Romans called them *defixiones* because of the piercing needles found within. *Defigere*, Latin for "to fasten down," instead draws attention to the controlling aspect of the binding and accentuates the final piercing with nails during the ceremonial rites.

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[42] Demosthenes *Against Aristocrates* 23.97.

[43] Watson, *Arae*, 31-36.

[44] Jordan, "A Survey of Greek *Defixiones*," 151.

However, it was more common to pierce the lead tablet during the Attic period than during the Imperial one.

The curse tablets were, most commonly, pieces of lead inscribed with a binding spell, words of magical power (*voces magicae* in Latin), pictures (*kharakteres* in Greek), and accompanied a magical ritual utilizing vocalization. The purpose of binding depended upon the intents of the practitioner, but was often to remove free will from the intended victim. The curse tablets and binding spells spanned across social classes and genders, sought after by wealthy and poor, men and women alike. Their popularity with a diverse range of people lent them a lasting power and prominence that spanned hundreds of years.

Curse tablets evolved significantly during Greco-Roman times. They originated in Mesopotamia and quickly spread to Greece and, over time, ranged across the Roman Empire. The oldest *defixiones* consisted simply of the victim's name inscribed in the nominative, which progressed to the victim's name in the accusative tense followed by the Greek word meaning, "to bind," *katadein*. Over centuries, binding spells grew increasingly complex, including a list of specific body parts to be bound. Commencing at the head of the victim and continuing down to the feet, no vital member or organ was forgotten while describing the intended actions against the recipient of the curse. Moreover, organs specifically bound were chosen due to their previously established role in divination.[45] The use of the imperative form was introduced during the Imperial

[45] The liver played an especially important role in both divination and binding. Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 85.

Period, along with threats against the gods themselves if the curse was not carried out.[46] An Etruscan tablet bearing the simple formula of names in the accusative and nominative was found in a tomb in Volterra, but the earliest Roman *defixio* dates to the reign of Augustus.[47]

To create a *defixio*, one must first gather and prepare the necessary materials. Curse tablets were composed on various materials and objects. John G. Gager finds *defixiones* inscribed upon

> ostraca or broken sherds of pottery, limestone, gemstones, papyrus, wax and even ceramic bowls—but lead, lead alloys, and other metals remained the primary media for expressing a desire to enlist supernatural aid in bringing other persons (and animals, in the case of racehorses) under the control of the person who commissioned or personally inscribed the tablet.[48]

While wax and papyrus disintegrated easily in the Mediterranean climate, pottery and metals often survived long enough to be discovered, studied, and properly housed. Similarities between the original, simplistic, cursing form and the practice of ostraka draw many parallels, and it is reasonable to ascertain the power seen in simply writing a name. Daniel Ogden explains that "writing may have been attributed with some magical power of its own: initially the very act of writing a name, of 'freezing' it permanently in lead, could in itself have been considered a way of tying it down by comparison with the transience of uttering it."[49] Of the variety of objects that binding spells were inscribed

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[46] Ogden, "Binding Spell: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 46.

[47] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 128.

[48] Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells*, 3.

[49] Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 10.

upon, lead and lead alloys were by far the most popular medium then, and the vast majority of surviving tablets are lead. The reasons for the popularity of lead as the medium of choice to create a *defixio* is debatable, however, most scholars currently concur that the reasons range from multiple contributing factors, particularly the availability of the material and the magical properties lead was reputed to possess.

Lead was fairly accessible to the individuals of the ancient Mediterranean and it was not a difficult material to prepare for inscription and magical rites. As a soft material, it was easily shaped, arranged, and flattened into the desired tablet thickness and shape. The basic practice to create a lead *defixio* were to pour molten lead into a bowl, hammer or scrape it into a smooth, thin the piece of lead into a flat sheet, cut sheets into smaller tablets, then inscribe the individual tablets with a stylus made of bronze or other hard metal.[50] Lead stolen from city water pipes possessed more intrinsic magical value because it was colder, touched underground water, and because, as Ogden, explains, "It is common for ancient magical ingredients to be either extremely dangerous or difficult to obtain."[51] Moreover, lead was ideal when casting sympathetic magic. Similarities drawn upon the inanimateness, temperature, and color of lead increased the efficacy of the spell; the victim should mimic it in its immovability, cool temperature, and sickly shade. Magicians often utilized a bronze stylus to inscribe the binding spell and sacred imagery

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[50] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 65.

[51] Georg Luck, "Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 112-13.

on the soft lead due to its strength and unbreakable nature as well as the tradition of inscribing magical items with bronze, rather than iron, tools.[52] The freshly inscribed text upon the lead tablet would have appeared shiny silver, evoking the appearance of a magical inscription.[53]

The tablets invoked a divine intervention, a *deus ex machina* for the love life of the *defigens*, or client ordering the creation of a curse tablet or binding spell. Three mortals played roles in binding curses: the *defigens*, a magician, and the victim. The *defigens* ordered the curse tablet to be prepared according to his or her desires. A magician prepared the curse tablet and performed the appropriate accompanying ritual. The victim is the target of the curses in the spell. In amatory curses, the victim is also sometimes referred to as the beloved. Matronymic clarifications followed the identity of the victim, whether male or female. Identity declared via the mother of the victim ensured the correct individual was cursed, for lineage through the mother was more apt to be correct than that of the father.

The divine intervention consisted of those invoked upon the tablet and during the ritual. Chthonic deities, those of the earth and Underworld, populated those invoked, for the souls and deities of the Underworld would carry out nocturnal transmissions and dark desires. Popular chthonic powers include Hermes, Persephone/Kore, Hades, Hecate, the Furies, Demeter, and Gaia.[54] The evolution of binding spells was directly affected by the

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[52] Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells*, 4.

[53] Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 12.

[54] Ibid., 44-45.

interactions between Greece and the surrounding countries and territories. During the period of the Roman Empire, a rise in popularity of Egyptian cults and religious practices influenced the gods called upon. Osiris, Isis, Thoth, and Seth began to make appearances in binding spells. Later period *defixiones* and the spells detailed in *Papyri Graecae Magicae* idealized the perceived perfect romantic relationship between Isis and Osiris, often prompting the *defigens* to request a comparable relationship. Additional religious figures appeared in binding curses, including Babylonian, Jewish, and Christian figures such as, Iao, Adonai, cherubim, Ereschigal, and even Jesus Christ.[55]

The supernatural beings called upon to perform the magician's and *defigens*' bidding were called *daimones*, or spirits, which could be human ghosts, demons, or angels. Called upon in conjunction, the chthonic divinities would spur the *daimones* into action. Thales, a sixth-century BCE Greek philosopher, defined *daimones* as a "divine force capable of producing motion but which is otherwise not clearly defined."[56] Often, in the curse tablets, they are viewed as ghosts. *Nekydaimones* were particularly restless souls; often those of children and soldiers, who wandered the cemeteries nightly, waiting for the arrival of the moment of their natural death to find peace. Many curse tablets promised peace and rest for *nekydaimones* when the objective of the curse is obtained, thusly offering a worthy bribe for their aid.

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[55] For further reading on the influence of Middle Eastern practices upon early Greek magic and religion, please see Christopher A. Faraone's *Talismans and Trojan Horses*.

[56] Thales, "Daimones," in *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. and trans. Derek Collins (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 32.

Defixiones follow one of four distinct formulas that *defixiones* fall within: direct, prayer, wish, and *similia similibus*.[57] The direct binding formula was composed with the first-person singular verb that directly bound the victim and any identified body parts. Prayer formulas include an invocation of supernatural beings, whether gods or *daimones*, and a request by a second-person imperative to perform the binding. Within this formula are two formulaic subsections: the coercive and the submissive. The wish formula places the victim in the third-person optative and Faraone feels that this formula may be the most revealing, as it reveals the rationale behind rituals is stated.[58] The "*similia similibus*," or like-gets-like, formula exploits a persuasive analogy, much like those seen in examples of sympathetic magic. The materials used and deposit location played a relevant role in fulfilling the wish formula.

Tablet inscriptions show manipulation in an effort to increase aspects of sympathetic magic, including retrograde, boustrophedon, and reverse writing.[59] Inhabitants of classical Attica regularly inscribed common tablets in retrograde, where the text was read from right to left, as were many varieties of inscriptions during this period. The Late Classical Period saw a change from retrograde to other methods of inscription; however, the reverse direction of *defixiones* became cemented as a ritualistic

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[57] Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Greek Binding Spells," 5-10.

[58] Ibid., 6.

[59] G. Rosati, "Working on Middle Kingdom Stelae in Turin," in *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Language: Proceedings of the Eight International Congress of Egyptologists Cairo, 2000,* ed. Zahi A. Hawass (New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2003), 3:377.

aspect, therefore creating a significance that lasted through the Roman Imperial period. [60] Boustrophedon formation, a common practice in early Greek writing, was more rare than retrograde on binding tablets and took a more sinister approach during a curse. [61] It signified a further twisting of the victim by creating spiral imagery deemed magically potent. The victim's name engraved in reverse, or mirror writing, also served to twist the victim into submission. Palindromes were prevalent for the same reason. Furthermore, elaborate curse tablets boasted every letter of the Greek alphabet, often linked to a demonic name and stated as part of the *voces magicae*. The seven vowels appeared frequently, for seven was a powerful number in antiquity.[62]

Voces magicae is the term for magical words of power, which flourished in curse tablet language during and following the Roman Early Imperial Period.[63] These words were powerful in and of themselves, representing the names of demons and divine epithets. Similar to cultures across the ancient world, the ancient Mediterranean Basin placed power in naming; thus the practitioner employed the *voces magicae* as a declaration of his power and ability to control the demon or deity invoked. Imagery commonly accompanied the magical words, such as pictures of snakes, mummies, bound

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[60] Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Greek Binding Spells," 7-8.

[61] The practice of writing with a directional change, i.e. row one: left to right; row two: right to left, etc.

[62] Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 49.

[63] Ibid., 38-39.

figures, and demons, called *kharakteres*.[64] Also, the letters forming the *voces magicae* were arranged to create various shapes, including squares, triangles, wings, and diamonds.[65] During the ceremony the "magical practitioner address[ed] the *kharakteres* directly as independent divine agents who will carry out the desired operation."[66] One particular demonic name was invoked with greater frequency, that of the cock-headed, snake-legged Abrasax, who was linked to the number 365 and the sun. In efforts to strengthen his power, his name was often arranged into shapes, such as the popular wing formation. This figured was formed through eliminating a letter after repeating the same word line after line until only the last letter was inscribed.

Vocalization played vital function during a binding ritual. The similarities between incantation and prayer are nearly identical; causing Burriss to point out that "the mental attitude of the person toward the object of his incantation or prayer, and the consequent change in tone" is the only way to distinguish the two.[67] Incantations were linked to magic ceremonies, while prayer was linked to religion: the incantation was a chanted command typified via use in private ceremonies for the benefit of the few, whilst prayer was a request. Volitional magic's prevalence increased during the Roman Imperial period and laws were established to guard individuals against the harm evoked during a magical curse, referred to as *carmina* (Latin for songs) which emphasizes the

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[64] Ibid., 50.

[65] Ibid., 49.

[66] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 78.

[67] Buriss, *Taboo, Magic, and Spirits*, 177-78.

vocal rite accompanying the creation of a curse tablet. The fact that Romans referred to magical spells as songs enforces the evidence regarding spoken incantations during the *defixio* ritual, for even the root of incantation is derived from *cantare*, Latin "to sing." Some guidelines regarding an incantation include: imperative form, chanted in an under voice, repetition, exact wording, an individualist end, and, interestingly, no deity involved.[68]

The similarities between prayers, incantations, and cursing are imperative for understanding communications between mortals and immortals. Rhetorical devices common in literature and prayers, such as alliteration, repetition, and rhythm escalated the power of the curse, particularly during the ritualistic incantation.[69] A tripartite structure of invocation, narrative middle (called *pars epica/argumentum* in Latin), and wish traversed both prayer and curse formulae.[70] Furthermore, H. S. Versnel examined judiciary curse tablets and extolled their relationship to judiciary prayers. However, he elaborates upon the differences between the curses' victims, for amatory victims were either called to, or blocked from, a lover, whereas the judicial prayers targeted individuals guilty of a crime.[71] Justice curse tablets seek the return of stolen items and are highly

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[68] Ibid., 180.

[69] For further information regarding preventative curses, please see J. H. M. Strubbe, "Cursed Be He That Moves My Bones," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 41.

[70] Fritz Graf, "Prayer in Magical and Religious Ritual," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 189.

[71] Further differences are illustrated by the fact that the *defigens* did not name himself, invoked deities associated with justice rather than chthonic, and requested

similar to judicial prayers regarding the invocation, typically targeting nonchthonic deities and not demons, requesting justice, demonstrating humility and lacking the imperative voice, but are unable to curse a known individual, for the thief may be anonymous. However, Ogden believes that despite the previously mentioned differences they should still be considered *defixiones* for they were written on lead, rolled, and pierced with nails and deposited in sanctuaries.[72] Prior to the final depositing of the tablet, personal items belonging to the victim of the spell were included to increase the efficacy and efficiency of the binding. This often included strands of the victim's hair or clothing.

The act of physically rolling and twisting the *defixio* was a necessary part of the ritual in order to ensure the binding of the victim. Burriss describes the act of binding as a general religious ritual act for,

> In all instances cited—whether the taboo be on rings, dressed hair, crossed legs, crossed fingers, fettered culprit, peasant's spindle, or actual knots in clothes or rope—the same principle is involved: as the ring, the crossed legs, the fetters, the spindle, the knot, bind physically, so they bind the god and his rites—a survival of the earliest days when man believed that a thing or action which resembled another thing or action (whether actual or conceived in the imagination) was one and the same thing.[73]

The *defixiones* were commonly rolled into a circle or a ball, reminiscent of the ring discussed by Buriss, and to enforce the binding effect to a greater degree, often pierced

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punishment or even death for the victim. H. S. Versnel, "Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers" in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 60-62.

[72] Strubbe, "Cursed Be He That Moves My Bones," 38.

[73] Buriss, *Taboo, Magic, and Spirits*, 113.

with nails. The rolled tablets have drawn comparisons to other rolled lead tablets of antiquity, the letters to gods and oracles found at sanctuaries. Faraone concludes that the act of rolling exceeds purely *similia similibus* measures, but instead indicated communication to the Underworld, both the chthonic deities and the *daimones*. These rolled letters have been found directed to the oracle of Zeus at Dodona, both as the question presented and the answer given.[74] Curse tablets were pleas for supernatural aid; presenting the tablet as a letter or oracular plea to the chthonic powers or *daimones* may trick them into reading and fulfilling the already invoked curse. Characteristic rolling served the goal of communicating with the divine in a traditional format, whilst all the while enforcing a binding, especially in regards to the nails piercing through the tablet, of the desired victim. Three rolled curse tablets have been found that are addressed to chthonic gods, mimicking the appearance of standard letters.[75] Lindsay Watson encourages "regard[ing] many curses as specialized forms of prayer, i.e. prayers of revenge."[76]

Once the binding tablet was created and inscribed, the ritual's finale entailed placing the *defixio* in a location of power and importance according to the desires of the *defigens*. Thusly, the sympathetic magic was heightened throughout every aspect of the ritual, which terminated with the strong note of physically affixing the tablet. If calling

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[74] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 8.

[75] However, Faraone stresses the rarity of an outer inscription is stressed in "The Agonistic Context of Greek Binding Spells," 4.

[76] Watson, *Arae*, 4.

upon the aid of *daimones* to ensure the desired effect of the curse, the tablet was placed in the vicinity of those who died before their time or through violence (and thus had become *nekydaimones*) or at sanctuaries of the Underworld deities. For the same reason, sites of battles and executions were popular locations to deposit *defixiones*.[77] During the Roman period, Greek graves were adapted, and a new custom emerged, in which pipes from above ground ran into graves for offerings to the dead. Pipes leading straight to the corpse greatly aided the magician in depositing a curse tablet with human remains.[78]

Often, water provided an effective resting place for curse tablets, and not only because it aided in sympathetic magic by chilling the victim. Several spells illustrate that specific amatory curses required submersion into the sea as a method of reaching out to the goddess born of sea-foam, Aphrodite, goddess of erotic love. Wells and springs were also common dumping grounds. Placing the rolled tablets into wells signified further efforts to communicate, not bind, for the magician was placing the tablets near to the Underworld by sending them literally underground.[79] Sherwood Fox discusses the efficacy of drowning the tablets, stating

> The symbol, whatever it was, was inscribed with the victim's name. Now to the worker in magic the name is the man himself. The submersion of the symbol is, therefore, the submersion of the man, and the longer the symbol can be kept under water the more permanent will be the victim's plight. Hence it was desirable to hurl the symbol far out into the current of a stream where it would be safely hidden and subject to rapid corrosion. But it was still more desirable to cast it

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[77] A mass burial located at Amouthous on Cyprus yielded curse tablet discoveries with the corpses. Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 17.

[78] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 18.

[79] Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Greek Binding Spells," 9-10.

> into the deep waters of the sea where the eye and hand of man would not reach until the day when the sea will give up its magically as well as its literally dead.[80]

Magicians selected specific locations based on the needs of the client, such as on the personal property of a law court opponent, the theater of a rival actor, a hippodrome hosting an upcoming race between rival charioteers, or a competitive business establishment. Placement in a grave took precedent when invoking *nekydaimones* and chthonic divinities, as did the physical sanctuaries of the underworldly divine. Ogden presents the interesting point that placing a binding spell with a corpse was just a another sympathetic restraining technique common in amatory curses, for a corpse was no longer in control of its own faculties, but bound by death and earth.[81] Placing the rolled tablets into wells and graves signified further efforts to communicate, not bind, for the magician was placing the tablets near to the Underworld by sending them literally underground.

Kollosoi, commonly known as "voodoo dolls" in modern times, accompanied particularly strong binding spells. Thus far, there have been thirty-eight separate finds dating as far back as the Archaic Age and ranging in geographical locations, from Greece, to Italy and Sicily, to North Africa, with a greater concentration in Egypt, into the Near East and as far removed as the Black Sea.[82] Most commonly lead, bronze, wax, clay, and mud formed the humanoid figures. Faraone presents a six-step description on how to recognize a *kollosos*: "(1) the doll's arms or legs are twisted behind its back as if

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[80] Sherwood Fox "Submerged Tabellae Defixionum." *The American Journal of Philology* 33, no. 3 (1912): 309.

[81] Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 14-15.

[82] Ibid, 71.

bound; (2) the doll is transfixed with nails; (3) the head or feet or upper torso of the doll has been twisted back to front; (4) the doll is tightly shut in a container; (5) the doll has been inscribed with a victim's name; (6) the doll has been discovered in a grave, sanctuary, or in (what was) water."[83] *Kollosoi* were commonly placed within a closed container made of lead, referred to as a "coffin," and then most deposited within graves. The double binding, both on the doll and on the coffin, and the double simulation of a grave heightened the power and effect of the curse. From the individual figure evolved an amatory-specific figurine of two people wrapped together in sexual congress. The illicit affair between Aphrodite and Ares elicited envy and a desire to emulate in the *defigens*. Passion overcame Ares and Aphrodite; they ignored her marital vows (a trait many *defigens* sought) and joined together in sexual unions (another highly sought after end).[84]

Anthropomorphic figurines created of inanimate materials, particularly in the spells utilizing *kollosoi*, represented a sacrifice. Sacrifices and effigies were common in both religious and magical practices, and binding spells were no anomaly. Animal sacrifices were used in amatory binding spells and are prevalent throughout the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. Common animals include the aforementioned *iunx*, other birds, bats, fish, lizards, and even dogs. Spells invoking Hecate ritually sacrificed canines due to their importance to the goddess of the moon and mysticism. Myth relates the tale of how Hecate obtained an attendant in the form of a female black dog: "the maiden daughter of

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[83] Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Greek Binding Spells," 3.

[84] Homer *Odyssey* 8.267.

Perseus [acquired]… [Queen Hecuba of Troy as] her attendant, [who was] terrifying with [her] baying in the night all mortals who worship not with torches the images of [Hekate] queen of Strymon [in Thrace], appeasing the goddess of Pherai with sacrifice."[85] Sacrifices increased the efficacy of the spell and honored the divine spirits the magician appealed to for aid. In a culture long based in a bartering economic system, the divine required a sacrifice if a mere mortal had any chance of receiving a favor. Fritz Graf illustrated the principal differences between religious sacrifice and magical sacrifice in the following passage:

> In cases where the animal or parts of it are eaten the magician always appears to be alone, in marked contrast to the ordinary sacrificial meal. The difference is important: the community, which finds its identity and its feeling of *communitas* in the Olympian sacrifice and the ensuing meal, is absent from the magical praxis. The magician is an isolated individual—either an itinerant specialist working for a customer or an individual layperson, practicing the ritual in his or her own interest.[86]

Curses were irrevocable once cast. Only the gods invoked or the invoker himself might repeal the curse. Amatory curses typically aimed towards binding a single individual, however, other forms of cursing could target an entire *oikos*, *genos*, or even *polis*.[87] Some were so powerful that it transformed into an evil *daimon* called an *Ara*, or Curse. To remove a curse, the accursed needed to please the gods well enough to entice them to remove it, or, in the case of some binding curses, find and remove the buried ritually buried effigy.

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[85] Lycophron *Alexandra* 1174-1180.

[86] Graf, "Prayer in Magical and Religious Ritual," 195.

[87] Strubbe, "Cursed Be He That Moves My Bones," 43.

Magic relied upon agency to increase efficacy.[88] The materials chosen and rituals enacted were just one aspect of agency: the other aspect being the person preparing the objects and performing the rites in order to invoke the divine beings and bind the victim. Magicians and magic workers navigated the archaic geography of the Mediterranean Basin. Greek sources indicate the *magoi* migrated east from the Persian lands. In the early third century BCE Clement of Alexandria first recorded the term "*magos*" in Greek when he described the prophecy Heraclitus of Ephesus declared centuries prior, forewarning fires of punishment to those that improperly performed mystery cult initiations: the magicians, the bacchants, and the maenads.[89] Following in suit, Cicero was the first Roman to employ '*magus*' when referring to the Persian magicians. Overall, the Greeks and Romans were more willing to accept mystical men from the exotic east than they were willing to accept their native fellows practicing magic. The nomenclature of the specialized wares denoted the titles of the various types of magic workers.

The Greek termed *magoi* practiced *mageia*, or magic, whereas the Latin *magus* practiced *magia*. They were capable of causing people to disappear and prolonging life. The Greek *karthartai* executed professional purification ceremonies via performing a purifying ritual following the occurrence of a sacrilegious activity. Such rituals were desired in homes, temples, sanctuaries, and even entire cities.[90] The Greek term *epodos* referred to a magical practitioner specifically known as an "enchanter." Derived from

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[88] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 24.

[89] Ibid, 54.

[90] Ibid., 51.

epoide, meaning incantation or chant, the *epodos* drew its name from the importance of repetitious chant in magical ritual. They also performed initiations into mystery rites, as did the Greek *goes.* The *goes* specialized in raising the dead with an invocation known as a *goeteia*. In Latin, the female *cantatrix* also extolls the chant and *carmina* referred to both song and incantation, highlighting the aforementioned similarities between ceremonial religious songs and ritual incantation in song. [91]

The Greek terms *pharmakeus*, sorcerer, and *pharmakis*, or witch, were derived from their use of *pharmaka*, drugs and poison. *Pharmaka* referred to an assortment of different concoctions, some with magical properties, and others with medicinal benefits applied by more reputable medical practitioners. *Pharmaka* include love potions, ointments for health issues, and poisons. In addition, Collins notes that the "Thessalian *pharmakides* are specifically credited with an expertise in bringing the moon down from the sky."[92]

Magical practitioners were both itinerant and stationary. Beggar priests, viewed as "mendicant vagabonds" from Asia Minor, claimed prophetic powers while many seers permanently attached themselves to stationary fixtures, such as temples and armies. Within non-Roman armies of the Mediterranean Basin, those who could call upon supernatural powers were considered very valuable, performing prophetic rituals like interpreting flight patterns of birds, casting stones, and reading animal entrails, as well as

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[91] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 17.

[92] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 33.

providing sacrificial expertise.[93] However, not all seers chose to remain in a sedentary or affixed lifestyle, instead they sought out more knowledge and opportunities by traveling. Often magicians received recognition as scholars and were allowed access to archives and arcane documents. Evidence also supports stationary magicians, particularly the multitude of curse tablets found in a well in the Athenian agora that displayed similar handwriting, in addition to comfort and familiarity with the area.[94] Specialists, after assessing the needs of a community established a stationary lifestyle to further sell his or her desired wares until demand was exhausted.

There are several debates concerning the nature of magic workers. One is whether magic workers were typically male or female. Beyond gender, debates occur over whether the curse tablets were constructed by trained magicians, scribes, or courtesans. The number of terms naming male and female magicians are approximately equal. Literature in antiquity typically portrayed the magic worker as a female witch, however efforts have been made to dispel this notion. Rather, the literary manipulation of a dangerous women, characteristically the old crone or the prostitute of any age, developed due to "male writers [that] engaged in a systematic misrepresentation of the realities of magic-working in portraying erotic magic as an exclusively female preserve; the reality was that men were the main participants in this form of magic-working."[95] According to this view, classical authors composed a ploy in effort to discourage youthful

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[93] Ibid., 50.

[94] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 243.

[95] Matthew W. Dickie, "Who Practiced Love-Magic in Classical Antiquity and in the Late Roman World?" *The Classical Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (2000): 563.

males from utilizing magical means to achieve their desires by depicting magic as feminine, manipulative, and underhanded—therefore not appropriate for a real man. Masculinity, and the appearance thereof, was highly desired and prized in the classical world, drawing comparisons to lions and heroes, whereas the degrading of a man's maleness were the worst possible sort of insult. However, this is not implying that women never practiced magic. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Demeter, disguised as a nurse, extols her virtuous of knowledge concerning magical protections within her skill set to protect the infant from demons, ghosts, and witches.[96] Often elderly women would provide amulets and perform apotropaic remedies. A fear of the elderly, who did not have a needed place in society, also was expounded in the literature, with the fear of the old crone.

The debate over whether a trained magic professional or a simply literate individual was the more common practitioner leans in favor of trained specialists. To support the hypothesis that any literate individual could compose an inscription, such as a scribe searching to increase their personal wealth, Ogden states "many curse tablets were probably made, activated, and deposited by amateurs on an ad hoc basis, there were opportunities for the involvement of different kinds of specialists, not all of whom need to be perceived as 'magicians.'"[97] He maintains that there are four distinct points in the binding process where one was not required to be a formal magician in order to accomplish: the instructions of the curse, the creation of the lead tablet, the inscription of

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[96] Homer *Hymn to Demeter* 192-200.

[97] Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 54-55.

the tablet, and its placement. However, it is arguable that a scribe would not risk many of these dangerous facets involved in creating *defixiones*.

On the other hand, as is evident in the aforementioned description of *defixio* preparation, simply inscribing the tablet represents only a portion of the ritual involved. Knowledge of such ceremonies was viewed as proprietary by practitioners and dangerous for untrained individuals to perform. However, magical books and knowledge circulated the ancient world and not all magicians strictly guarded the valuable information within these sources. Furthermore, daring entrepreneurs could choose to simulate a professional magic worker after being privy to the mystical rites.[98] Similar to other sanctioned positions, in which performing sacred rites and leading the community in honoring the deities were tantamount, both the role of priest and magician required the individual to undergo significant initiations to become educated in the mysteries of the divine. Much importance was placed in not angering or upsetting the fickle gods, especially the chthonic variety. Amateur literate individuals, untrained in magical ritual, risked cutting their own lives short by venturing forth in the middle of the night to deposit the *defixio*, for they would not possess the knowledge of how to control the supernatural beings that wondered graveyards after nightfall. The *daimones*, as restless souls, would not easily submit to the commands of the living and knowledge of the magical words to control the wrathful beings would be instrumental for a successful binding. Additionally, supernatural dangers comprised only a portion of what to fear: fellow humans encompassed another great danger. Stumbling about graveyards in the dark, exploiting

[98] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 9.

deceased family members could lead to prosecution or familial vengeance. Criminal charges faced those who desecrated graves and created dangerous elixirs; *pharmaka* causing harm were illegal and highly punishable in the justice system. Plato sums up a societal viewpoint of those who practice harmful magic in *Laws*:

> But let us address those who take up the wild belief that the gods do not care or are placable, those who, in contempt for men, charm the souls of many of the living, by alleging that they charm the souls of the dead. They undertake to persuade the gods, through the practice of sorceries with sacrifices and prayers and spells, and try to destroy the root and branch of individuals and entire houses for the sake of money. The court should punish one judged guilty of these things with confinement in the inland prison; no free person should approach him, but slaves should be used to provide him with the ration of food decided by the guardians of the law. When the convict dies, he should be cast outside the boundaries unburied. If any free person colludes in burying him, he is to be liable to an accusation of impiety by anyone who wishes to make it."[99]

The less than reputable characters in society often linked together in the mind of the ancient individual; for example, prostitutes received attention, at least literary, for their magical prowess. Dickie explains thusly: "The only other women in Athenian life who have both independence and fame of whom anything is known are the great courtesans."[100] Lusty women and magical prowess have been linked since the epics of Homer, where Calypso and Circe posed great obstacles for the wily Odysseus. The nymph goddess Calypso detained the wanderer on her island for seven long years, and Odysseus narrates, "The goddess welcomed me lovingly, tended me, offered me immortality and eternal youth; yet she never won the heart within me. I remained with her for seven full years, and watered with continual weeping the celestial garments that

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[99] Plato *Laws* 909a-d.

[100] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 81.

she gave me."[101] All forms of love were employed by Calypso in grand efforts to deter the hero from his quest to reach his beloved Penelope and his homeland, and, as illustrated above, this included the magical gift of immortality. Circe, a witch well versed in the dark magical arts, including enchantments and necromancy, brewed a powerful *pharmakis* turning any who drank it into a pig. Odysseus managed to avoid a creaturely transformation with the aid of winged Hermes and the divine *mole* acting as a counter-spell. Once Circe realized Odysseus was not a swine, she attempted to catch him with her seductive womanly wiles.[102] Henceforth, from at least the time of recorded Greek literature and onwards the Greeks feared witches and womanly charms, often linking seduction and spells in their psyche. The fear of women increased due to their secrecy surrounding menstruation, childbirth, and sexual knowledge.[103]

The motivation to order *defixiones* was highly personal, even if the creation process was formulaic. The importance of ritual along with the final product in the form of a tablet as the representation of an inner desire, spurred the *defigens* into choosing whether they needed an *agoge* tablet, a separation spell, or an amulet to increase *philia*. While the tablets and forms of binding spells may look similar for each form of love magic, the desired outcome of was substantially different, which is explored analyzed in the following chapters.

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[101] Homer *Odyssey* 7.250.

[102] Homer *Odyssey* 10-12.

[103] John Scarborough, "The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 161-162.

CHAPTER 3.

AGOGE AND *EROS*

ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
Bring Daphnis from the town, my spells, bring Daphnis home.
-Alphesiboeus from Vergil's *8th Eclogue*

The bed at night, or the rooftop nearby, is the imagined location of most agogai, *their place of performance and the goal of the rite, and it is in the fantasy world of half-sleep that the desperate, sometimes suicidal, passions grow strong. Some of the violence of language and gesture in the* agogai *is due to the projected intensity of the performer's own sense of victimization by a power he is helpless to control. My subtext takes a risk here of romanticizing Mediterranean passion as something exquisite and vital, missing our drier and paler culture. This too, of course, is a trick of sorts. It is not that modern culture is passionless, only that we are differently embarrassed about certain displays and expressions of it.*
-John J. Winkler, "The Constraints of Eros"

Romantic love and primal lust are not mutually exclusive; often, together comprising core components of a modern relationship. However, the aforementioned sentiments do not and did not always coincide and, as the *defixiones* indicate, it was entirely possible for individuals to experience overwhelming lust free of romantic notions. The *defixiones* that fall into the category *agoge* provide excellent examples for analysis into the occasionally dichotomous aspects of love versus lust in the ancient Mediterranean basin.

Agoge binding spells were the most popular form of erotic spells and charms in the ancient Greco-Roman world.[104] Ordered by both men and women, they called forth an intended lover, often inflicting the pains of *eros* upon the victim. *Eros*, an all-

[104] The popularity of the *agoge* is asserted by Dickie in *Magic and Magicians* (56); however, he also declares that it was performed to lead a woman from the sanctity of her home only for sexual activity.

consuming, passionate, and madness-inducing emotion attributed to the deity of the same name, was viewed as an illness and scourge upon the men afflicted. Eros, the son of Aphrodite was not viewed as an adorable, child-like cherub, but rather a youth of approximately fifteen years of age that wielded martial weapons, including bow and arrow, torch, and whip to torture his victims of erotic desire. Hesiod, writing in the eighth century BCE, described Eros as "Love, most beautiful of all the deathless gods. He makes men weak, he overpowers the clever mind, and tames the spirit in the breasts of men and gods."[105] Already his power to overwhelm and weaken mortals and immortals is emphasized. The burning pains of longing are attributed to him, causing Sappho to exclaim, "you burn me" of the pains he unleashed upon her.[106] Ibycus, the sixth-century Greek lyrical poet, conjures further war imagery and a burning sensation whilst bewailing the lust he feels at on old age, declaring: "Eros once again from beneath dark eyelids darting me a melting glance with spells of all sorts cast me into the inextricable nets of the Cyprian. How I tremble at his onslaught, just as the yoke-bearing horse, contest winner, near old age, unwillingly goes with swift chariot back into the race."[107]

The oldest known *agoge* spell is a literary example from the fifth century BCE, and is part of the epic tale of Jason and Medea. Pindar's *Pythian* fully emphasizes the dangers of madness and desire through utilizing the *iunx* bird, described:

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[105] Hesiod *Theogony* 120-123.

[106] Sappho, *Lyrics in the Original Greek* trans. Willis Barnstone (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 7.

[107] Ibycus *Fragment* 287C.

> And the queen of sharpest arrows, Cyprogeneia
> brought down from Olympus the dappled *iunx* bird
> pinned to the four spokes of an inescapable wheel,
> a mad bird, to mankind for the first time,
> and she taught Jason to be skillful in prayers and charms,
> in order that he might strip Medea of reverence for her parents,
> and that desire for Greece might shake her
> with the whip of Persuasion as she was burning in her heart[108]

Several facets of this tale became traditional elements of *agoge* binding spells and curse tablets. Lustful desires, such as those from *eros*, were further heightened as the wryneck bird, described as "mad" by Pindar, spun around and around into a frenzy. Originally, Iunx was an Oreiad nymph who invented the spinning wheel with the bird attached as a love charm. However, Iunx angered the mighty Hera by employing her love charms on Zeus, thusly causing Hera to transform her into a wryneck.[109] Prevalent in love magic for their bobbing heads and tails, which represented their lust or madness and Faraone notes "practitioners apparently hoped that by persuasive analogy they might transfer the natural madness or sex hunger of these birds to the female targets of the spell."[110] Like Eros, his mother Aphrodite, also known as Cyprogeneia, conjures associations with piercing

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[108] Pindar *Pythian* 4.213-4.219.

[109] "Iynx: The daughter of Ekho or Peitho (Persuasion), also Aphrodite, conquerer in the games: bewitching Zeus with drugs she was turned to stone for such things by Hera. And she was called Kinaidion (Wryneck) by some. There is also a little instrument which is called *iynx*, which enchantresses are accustomed to turn about as they cast charms on their beloveds. It is also a bird, which is believed to have the same power. Wherefore they bind [them] on wheels." Suda On Line: Byzantine Lexicography, "Suidas: Byzantine Greek Lexicon," Stoa Consortium, http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=iunx&field=any&num_per_page=100 (accessed February 17, 2011).

[110] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 65.

arrows and the madness of passion. Here, she utilized the *iunx* as a portion of curse ritual and provided knowledge to Jason so that he may continue to curse Medea and instill her with desire. The charm produced here emphasizes the lustful nature of traditional *agoge* charms, in that Medea was instilled with an overwhelming passion for Greece—and therefore Jason—that she would disobey her parents and flee the sanctity of her home and family. The ritual contains two key events: the tying of the *iunx* to a spinning wheel to increase its disorientation and madness and the incantations taught by Aphrodite and invoked by Jason, providing a fascinating inner glimpse into a binding ceremony not explained through simple viewing of a curse tablet.

In addition to the *iunx* and spinning wheel, the magic practitioner creating amatory *defixiones* made figurines of Eros to be used during the ritual. Offerings to the statues and prayers would awaken the winged figures. These figurines were called *erotes* and, much like the *daimones*, aided in completing the binding of the victim.[111] The ritually animated *erotes* performed the bidding of the magician, seeking out the victim to arouse desire and longing. In mythology, three main erotes graced literature and earthenware: Eros (Love), Himeros (Desire), and Pothos (Passion).[112]

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[111] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*, 97.

[112] "Socrates: Let us inquire what thought men had in giving them [the gods] their names…The first men who gave names [to the gods] were no ordinary persons, but high thinkers and great talkers…[Of the Loves :] The name *himeros* (longing) was given to the stream (*rhous*) which most draws the soul; for because it flows with a rush (*hiemenos*) and with a desire for things and thus draws the soul on through the impulse of its flowing, all this power gives it the name of *himeros*. And the word *pothos* (yearning) signifies that it pertains not to that which is present, but to that which is elsewhere (*allothi pou*) or absent, and therefore the same feeling which is called *himeros* when its object is present, is called *pothos* when it is absent. And *erôs* (love) is so called because it flows in (*esrei*)

Marriage in Homeric and Classical Greece was a familial affair and not arranged according to love. Rather, it was based on creating alliances between families, following a strategic examination on how the betrothal would affect the family politically, economically, and socially. The stability of the *polis* was a preeminent goal of its citizens and daughters performed their duty to the *polis* through an arranged marriage.[113] The marrying age for males was in the late twenties, whereas girls were typically wed in the middle of their teen years. Hesiod states in *Works and Days:*

> Bring a wife to your house when you are of the right age, not far short of thirty years nor much above. This is the right age for marriage. Your wife should have been an adolescent for four years, and married to you in the fifth. Marry a virgin so that you may teach her good ways. Especially marry one who lives near you and be observant about everything around you. See that your marriage is not a joke to your neighbors, for a man wins nothing better than a good wife; and again he wins nothing worse than a bad wife, greedy for food, who roasts her man without fire, strong though he is, and brings him to a premature old age.[114]

The aforementioned marriage guidelines remained popular for many centuries. Commencing with courtship in Homeric society, where the habits and rituals of the upper echelons of civilization are evident due to literary works, serves as a starting point for traditional rituals in Greek culture. The suitor is advised to take great care in selecting his future bride, placing importance upon age, obedience, goodness, and devotion. Additionally, the father, interested in obtaining the best possible match, would announce

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from without, and this flowing is not inherent in him who has it, but is introduced through the eyes; for this reason it was in ancient times called *esros*, from *esrein*—for we used to employ omicron instead of omega--but now it is called *erôs* through the change of omicron to omega." Plato *Cratylus* 400d and 419e - 420b.

[113] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 64.

[114] Hesiod *Works and Days* 697-705.

his daughter's availability and invite potential mates to compete for her. Courtship would include gifts to the family and athletic trials, whereupon host gifts, athleticism, and sanguine benefits determined the victorious bridegroom.

While the marriage itself was viewed as a contract, the marriage ceremony varied due to class and location, though it typically involved feasting and a processional. Following the exchange of numerous gifts, an evening was arranged for the bride to proceed to through the city to the home of her intended. The bride traversed the way from maiden to matron in a chariot accompanied by the torchlight of her escorts to the awaiting banquet and husband.[115] Freeborn Athenians' weddings exemplified the business aspect of betrothal. The wedding, referred to then as Pledging, was an oral binding agreement before witnesses, who were usually of the bridegroom and the bride's *kyrios*, or legal guardian, typically her father.

Wedded life also varied greatly due to extenuating circumstances such as wealth, social standing, and region. The advent of urban centers increased the need and desire for women to remain near the home to guard it, provide childcare, and home management. Customarily, urban Athenian wives of enough means resided primarily in the *gynecea*, women's quarters, of the home, exiting into the outside male world for festivals, religious duties, or shopping for the home. New evidence suggests that women were often veiled in public. On the separation of sexes, Flaceliere states that "it is hardly credible that in classical times Athenian married couples habitually shared thoughts and

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[115] Flaceliere, *Love in Ancient Greece*, 32.

feelings in any real sense or based their mutual affection on any such reciprocity…there cannot have been much communication of ideas between them or much genuine devotion."[116]

Surviving pottery indicates the presence of women at dominantly male events, such as symposiums. Symposiums were gatherings in the male quarters of the home, where dining, drinking, and conversation were accompanied by hired entertainers to serve, play music, and be an overall charming addition to the evening. However, when female entertainers were hired, they were not the wives, daughters, or mothers of the male attendees. They would not subject their respectable wives to leering or sexual commentary. It was Demosthenes who explained an ideal arrangement, stating: "We have *hetairi* for delectation, slaves to see to our daily sexual needs, and wives to bear legitimate offspring and to be faithful protectors of the households."[117]

The fidelity of wives was highly prized and praised throughout antiquity. The earliest literary evidence of such is found within the Homeric works. The *Odyssey* would not have been as successful if faithful Penelope had not manipulated the encroaching suitors via the wifely duty of creating the husband's funeral shroud. In this example, Penelope not only maintained the household in hopes of Odysseus' return, but also did so through performing the admirable and necessary duty of a woman widower. When Odysseus, against all odds, returned to his domicile on Ithaca, a description of their unique marital bed was employed to confirm his identity. Hesiod, writing approximately

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[116] Ibid., 119.

[117] Demosthenes 59.122.

one hundred years after Homer, spouted a much more misogynistic viewpoint and that "The one who avoids marriage will live comfortably, lacking nothing, until the arrival of old age when there will be no one to care for him. His relatives will divide his wealth."[118] A good wife was often honored post-mortem with an inscription upon her grave stele extolling her virtues. Dionysia was rewarded in fourth-century BCE Athens with the inscription: "It was not clothes, it was not gold that this woman admired during her lifetime; it was her husband and the good sense that she showed in her behavior. But in return for the youth you shared with him, Dionysia, your tomb is adorned by your husband Antiphilus."[119] The first-century Roman housewife, Amymone, received the praise that: "Here lies Amymone wife of Marcus best and most beautiful, worker in wool, pious, chaste, thrifty, faithful, a stayer-at-home."[120] As one can see, frugality, "good sense," fidelity, and industriousness were desired characteristics, and therefore worthy of eternal praise.

The overpowering need and desire projected by *eros* and the Hellenistic custom of sequestering females presented a profound dilemma for those seeking a love interest. How was one to obtain any quality time with a beloved if she were always kept safely under watch within her domicile? How would a woman, who spends her time monitored by men, meet and seek out a potential mate or lover? *Agoge* spells developed in order to remove an intended lover from the sanctity of the home and seek out the individual who

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[118] Hesiod *Theogony* 603-605.

[119] Antiphilus *Dionysia*.

[120] Marcus *Amymone*.

ordered the spell. However, there was a differentiation between those spells cast explicitly to satiate the purely physical, lustful needs and those employed to commence a more meaningful, long-term, and loving relationship.

A spell found within the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* provides a template for magicians to follow when casting a spell, instructing:

> *Agoge I:* [For any place], either home or workshop. [it attracts a woman] to a man. The same one [makes them steadfast] and faithful: Take a leaf [of lead] and with a nail write the figure while saying [the name that follows and]: 'I shall burn up the house and the [soul of him, NN, to] cause desire for her, NN, whom NN bore, whom NN bore, as Typhon did [not] allow Osiris to find sleep. For I am [master of] VM. Fulfill this for me, all-brightener, august bight-bringer [of gods and daimons].'[121]

A typical example of an *agoge* binding spell, the above spell and ritual afflicts the victim with attributes of *eros*; however, as it will become evident, the infliction of desire and insomnia pales in comparison to more powerful traits. Most importantly, the request of the victim is not sexual, but rather this specific spell's purpose is to make her "steadfast and faithful."

Viewing the above spell in juxtaposition with another *agoge* binding spell outlined in the magical papyri, the differences between a peaceful outcome and a stronger, sexual one is obvious:

> *Agoge II:* He said to her, "Arise, O my daughter Isis, and [go] to the south to Thebes, to the north to Abydos. There are…those who trample there. Take for yourself Belf son of Belf, [the one whose] foot is of bronze and whose heels are of iron, [that] he forge for you a double iron nail with a … head, a thin base, a strong point, and light iron. Bring it before me, dip it in the blood of Osiris, and hand it over; we…this mysterious flame to me." "Every flaming, every cooking, every heating, every steaming, and every sweating that you [masc.] will cause in

[121] PGM 78.1-14; to view the image and *voces magicae*, see Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri* (299).

> this flaming stove, you [will] cause in the heart, in the liver the area of the navel, and in the belly of NN whom NN has borne, until I bring her to the house of NN whom NN has borne and she puts what is in her hand into my hand, what is in her mouth into my mouth, what is in her belly onto my belly, what is in her female parts onto my male parts, quickly, quickly, immediately, immediately. Rise up to the kings of Alchah, speak the truth in Oupoke, arouse gods [after] NN whom NN has borne, and I shall send her to be with NN whom NN has borne. For I am To son of To; I am the Great son of the Great; I am Anubis, who bears the glorious crown of Re and puts it upon King Osiris, King Osiris Onnophris,…who arouses the whole earth, that you may arouse the heart of NN whom NN has borne, that I may know what is in her heart for me, for NN whom NN has borne, on this day."…[Say] these things on behalf of women. But when [you are speaking] about women, then speak, conversely, so as to arouse the females after the males: "When she drinks, when she eats, when she has intercourse with someone else, I will bewitch her heart, I will bewitch the heart of her, I will bewitch her breath, I will bewitch her 365 members, I will bewitch her inner part…wherever I desire, until she comes to me and I know what is in her heart, [what] she does, and of what she thinks, quickly, quickly; immediately, immediately."[122]

The above examples both draw upon *voces magicae* and Egyptian mythological references to add power and divinity to the spell. However, the latter papyri template is increasingly forceful and provides insights into the ritual. The blood of the victim is used to strengthen the binding in a sympathetic magic ritual, as Osiris instructed Isis, and sends forth the pains of unrequited lust through heating the blood-stained pin upon a stove to cause the burning sensations associated with desire to erupt within the victim. The arousal sent forth to the abdominal region would not abate until the female victim relented and sought out the curser to place her belly and genitals upon his.

As previously highlighted, *eros* was viewed as a terrible, uncontrollable plague in the ancient world, which Dickie sums up as a "pathological…mental disease, which attacks the various inner faculties of thought and emotion, such as the heart or the

[122] PGM 4.94-15.

mind."[123] The overpowering, burning physical needs inflicted by Eros upon the unwitting victim served to not only arouse the target, but to psychologically ease the insatiable pain troubling the *defigens*. The violence found in the binding, casting, and piercing represents the pain overwhelming the *defigens* and taking action provided a therapeutic mental release while simultaneously aiding in obtaining the person causing the *eros*.[124] Winkler terms the sending forth of *eros* as *Remedium Amoris* and illustrates the continued importance of dominance in ancient relationships.[125] With *eros* viewed as an actual disease, one that could fell the swiftest and mightiest of men, performing a ritual act, even one of magical means, symbolized the clients taking control of their bodies again and asserting dominance over their being in their own battle against consuming passion.

The following binding spells further illustrate the linguistic similarities between bindings of love versus lust, however different the desired outcome. The calling forth by heart and soul, rather than casting *eros* represents a more tender, affectionate love.

> *Agoge III:* "I adjure you, Evangelos, by Anubis and Hermes and all the rest down below; attract and bind / Sarapias whom Helen bore, to this Herais, whom Thermouthrin bore, now, now; quickly, quickly. By her soul and heart / attract Sarapias herself, whom [Helen] bore from her own womb, VM. Attract and [bind / the soul and heart of Sarapias], whom [Helen bore, to this] Herais, [whom]

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[123] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 43-44.

[124] Most scholars believe the transient experience of casting a binding spell aided in the release of desire and the *agoge* spells were so very violent due creating a sympathetic release. However, Faraone in *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (80-85) disagrees and instead touts the importance of erotic magic in obtaining a wife via bridal theft.

[125] Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire*, 226.

Thermoutharin [bore] from her womb [now, now; quickly, quickly.]"[126]

The original Greek pronouns make evident that this *defixio* is a love spell of homosexual attraction between two women. The existence of homosexual curse tablets and love spells, particularly between women present an interesting opportunity to examine a rare reference to lesbian love. Below, the heart and soul are also called upon in a spell that could be cast for either a male or female *defigens*:

> *Agoge IV:* Take a shell from the sea and draw on it with myrrh ink the figure of Typhon given below, and in a circle write his names, and throw it into the heating chamber of a bath. But when you throw it, keep reciting these words engraved in a circle and "attract to me her, NN, whom NN bore, on this very day, from this very hour on, with her soul and heart aflame, quickly, quickly; immediately, immediately." The picture is the one below. But when reciting the spell, [say] its beginning: "this is the god of Destinies, VM, attract her to me, NN, whose mother is NN," and the rest.[127]

The magical properties of the seashell and myrrh, both associated with Aphrodite, calling upon Typhon, as well as depositing the inscribed product within a bathhouse heating chamber, serve to strengthen the formulaic inscription. As with *Agoge II*, an outside heat source warms the *defixio*, once again forcing the victim to share the pains of *eros*. *Agoge IV* emphasizes the heart and soul, similar to *Agoge III*, however *Agoge IV* inflames said properties, thusly causing the victim to come forth immediately, whereas *III* binds the heart and soul of the victim. The attraction is an aspect of the binding, but not the primary focus or intention of the *defigens*.

Kollosoi figures strengthened magical bindings. A physical representation of the victim, these dolls molded into positions of a supplicant, often with legs and hands

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[126] PGM 32.1-19.

[127] PGM 7.467-77; Betz, 130-131.

bound, represent further sympathetic magical practices used to increase the efficacy of the spell. Popular in spells with strong domination tones, many magic practitioners paired *kollosoi*, representing the fiery relationship between Ares and Aphrodite, with the binding spell:

> *Agoge V*: Take wax [or clay] from a potter's wheel and make two figures, a male and a female. Make the male in the form of Ares fully armed, holding a sword in his left hand and threatening to plunge it into the right side of her neck. And make her with arms behind her back and down on her knees […] I adjure you, god of the dead, VM; do not fail, god of the dead, to heed my commands and names, but just arouse yourself from the repose which holds you, whoever you are, whether male or female, and go to every palace, into every quarter, into every house, and attract her, NN, to me and with a spell keep her from eating and drinking, and do not allow her, NN, to accept for pleasure the attempt of another man, not even that of her own husband, just that of mine, NN. Instead, drag her, NN, by the hair, by the heart, by her soul, to me, NN, at every hour of life, day and night, until she comes to me, NN, and may she, NN, remain inseparable from me. Do this, bind her for all the time of my life and help force her, NN to be serviceable to me, NN, and let her not frolic away from me for even one hour of life […] to me and join head to head and fasten lip to lip and join belly to belly and draw thigh close to thigh and fit black together with black, and let her, NN, carry out her own sex acts with me, NN, for all eternity.[128]

The above example is particularly relevant for it illustrates aspects of the ritual implicit in a binding ceremony that includes the magical doll element. Thusly, it removes the mystery surrounding the found *kollosoi* and curse tablets, as well as presents concrete evidence and insight into the motives spurring the multiple penetrations with nail upon the voodoo doll used as an effigy.

> *Agoge VI:* […] Let her not be able to sleep for the entire night, but lead her until she comes to his feet, loving him with a frenzied love, with affection and with sexual intercourse. For I have bound her brain and hands and viscera and genitals and heart for the love of me, Theon [...] Let me not be forced to say the same things again IOE IOE. Lead Euphemia, to whom Dorothea gave birth, to me, Theon, to whom Proechia gave birth, loving me with love, desire, affection,

[128] The full text is available in the appendix. PGM 4.296-466.

> sexual intercourse, and a frenzied love […] Grab Euphemia and lead her to me, Theon, loving me with a frenzied love, and bind her with bonds that are unbreakable, strong and adamantine, so that she loves me, Theon; and do not allow her to eat, drink, sleep, or joke or laugh but make (her) rush out of every place and dwelling, abandon father, mother, brothers, and sister, until she comes to me, Theon, loving me, wanting me (with a) divine, unceasing, and wild love. And if she holds someone else to her bosom, let her put him out, forget him, and hate him, but love, desire, and want me; may she give herself to me freely and do nothing contrary to my will. You holy names and powers, be strong and carry out this perfect spell. Now, now. Quickly, Quickly.[129]

Agoge curses *V* and *VI* are very similar. Both are uncommonly long and rely upon the *daimones* for results. Both represent very strong and powerful *agoge* curse tablets and inflict *eros*. Both require a *kollosos* to strengthen the spell and bind the victim. Both request the victim to remain attached to the *defigens* for a specified period of time in addition to fulfilling sexual commands. However, the differences within these similarities are tantamount to understanding the romantic and lustful intentions of the *defigens*. *Agoge V* requests the aid of otherworldly shades and professes to return them to peaceful slumber once the spell was accomplished. *Agoge VI* takes a different approach to raising the dead, instead threatening the ghosts with unending consciousness and the destruction of all known planes if they do not comply and follow instructions perfectly. Lust and the satiation of sexual desire prevail in the two spells, as does blocking the victim from engaging in sexual activities with another. The former desires for her to "carry out her own sex acts with me, NN, for all eternity," whereas the latter craves only for Euphemia to "give herself to me freely and do nothing contrary to my [sexual] will."

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[129] The full text is available in the appendix. This tablet (JGG 30) was discovered in a cemetery north of Assuit. It was inscribed upon a very large sheet of papyrus, measuring 22.5 x 55 cm. The papyrus and accompanying dolls were found stuffed into a pot together.

The former asks for "all eternity," "may she, NN, remain / inseparable from me," "bind her for all the time of my life," and "let her not frolic away from me for even one hour of life," which is vastly different from Theon's desire to only be with Euphemia for a grand total of "ten months." It is this distinction regarding the duration of time, as well as the intensity of submission, that reveals the mindset of the *defigens*: Theon, obviously interested in sexual intercourse with Euphemia, did not wish to make her his wife or even long term mistress, but a sexual slave for a term of ten months. The adaptable spell, designed for a man with more than a passing infatuation, resulting in the victim being kept for all eternity—never separated for more than a mere hour—possesses more similarities to a vow than an erotic spell.

The following two spells continue to exemplify the importance of word choice to determine the intention behind the spell casting. Here the similarities are evident: *nekydaimones*, desire for sexual intercourse, as well as an inclusion of aspects common to separation binding spells.[130]

> *Agoge VII*: I will bind you, Nilos, who is also [called] *Agathos Daimon*, whom Demetria bore, with great evils. Neither gods nor men will procure a clean getaway for you! On the contrary, you will love me, Capitolina whom Peperous bore, with a divine passion, and in every way you will be for me an escort, as long as I want, that you might do for me what I wish and nothing for anyone else, and that you might obey no one save only me, Capitolina, and that you might forget your parents, children, and friends. I also conjure you, daimons, who are in this place, VM. I, Capitolina, have the power, and, on meeting you, Nilos, will return the favors. They are releasing all who have drowned, have died unmarried, and have been carried away by the wind. Let me insert this deposit, in papyrus, on account of which I am conjuring you, daimons, by the force and fate that constrains you. Accomplish everything for me and rush in and take away the

[130] See Chapter 4 for more information and examples of separation binding curses.

> mind of Nilos, to whom this magical material belongs, in order that he might love me, every hour and every day. I conjure you daimons by your spiteful fates that hold you and by those carried by the wind, VM, the only begotten god in heaven, who shake the deep, sending out waters and winds—discharge the spirits of the daimons where my deposit box is, in order that they, either male of female, small or great, might perform for me the things in the tablet, in order that they might come and accomplish the things in this tablet and might bind Nilos, who is also [called] *Agathos Daimon*, whom Demetria bore, to me, Capitolina, whom Peperous bore, for his [whole] life. Nilos shall love me with an eternal affection; immediately, immediately; quickly, [quickly].[131]

Ritualistic practices detailed in this spell further contribute to a modern understanding of secret practices. Here, requirements include "insert this deposit, in papyrus, on account of which I am conjuring / you, daimons" in addition to "discharge the spirits of the daimons where my deposit box is." These reveal the location of the ceremony as a graveyard, for the magician or *defigens* sought to release the spirits of the dead after placing the deposit in their direct vicinity, as is evidenced with "I also conjure you, daimons, who are in this place."

> *Agoge VIII*: VM, guardian of strong Destiny, who manages my affairs, the thoughts of my soul, which no one can speak out against, not a god, not an angel, not a *daimon*: arouse yourself for me, / *daimon* of the dead, and do not use force but fulfill what has been inscribed and inserted into your mouth, immediately, immediately; quickly, quickly. [Elaborate forms shaped from *Voces magicae*] VM, draw off, thrust away every member of this dead body and the spirit of this tent and cause him to serve / against Karosa, whom Thelo bore. Aye, lord *daimon*, attract, inflame, destroy, burn, cause her to swoon from love as she is being burnt, inflamed. Sting the tortured soul, the heart, of Karosa, whom Thelo bore, until she leaps forth and comes to Apolos, whom Theonilla bore, out of passion and love, in this very hour, immediately, immediately; quickly, quickly. As long as the divine mystery remains within you, do not allow Karosa herself, whom Thelo bore, to think of her [own] husband, her child, drink, food, but let her come melting for passion and love and intercourse, especially yearning for the

[131] PGM 15.1-21.

> intercourse of Apalos whom Theonilla bore, in this very hour, immediately, immediately; quickly, quickly.[132]

Separation is a common factor within these spells, for both victims were married, causing the *defigens* to seek magical methods to separate the victims from their significant others and children. *Agoge VII* tore the pair asunder via wishing "…that you might forget your parents, children, and friends" while *Agoge VIII* instructed the following: "…do not allow Karosa herself, whom Thelo bore, to think of her [own] husband, her child, drink, food…" Karosa is mainly bound to adhere to the wish of the *defigens* to experience "yearning for the intercourse of Apalos," whilst Nilos "shall love me with an eternal affection" and "love me, every hour and every day." The dichotomous nature in such similar examples highlights the motivations for either sexual satisfaction or a lasting, romantic relationship.

The following *defixiones* require additional properties to ensure the outcome. *Agoge IX* provides hairs from the victim to not only strengthen the spell, but to guarantee the correct woman received the curse. *Agoge X* is a very interesting example referred to as "The Lunar Spell of Claudianus" and details the ritual to create and cast a spell upon a model of the moon goddess. Additionally, both spells command to receive the female victims' love "for all the time of her life."

> *Agoge IX*: Let Matrona, to whom Tagene gave birth, whose stuff you have, including hairs of her head, love Theodoros, to whom Techosis gave birth. I invoke you, spirit of the dead by VM and by VM and by…Do not ignore me, whoever you are, but awaken yourself for me and go off to Matrona, so that she may freely give me everything that is hers, and carry out this binding spell. Now, now. Quickly, because I invoke you, spirit of the dead, by …VM. Do it quickly, quickly. Just as Isis loved Osiris, so may Matrona love Theodoros for all the time

[132] PGM 19a.1-54.

> of her life. Now, now. Quickly, quickly, Today…VM…I invoke you by the name of ABRASAX.[133]

Here, both the meanings of love and lust are deduced linguistically. Theodoros longs for Merona to have sexual intercourse with him, as is implied by the command "she may freely give me everything that is hers." However, it is important for Theodoros to make the distinction that, despite the fact he is commanding her to give it freely via magic, Merona would only realize that she is choosing to be with him. Isis and Osiris are principal deities in the Egyptian divine pantheon and represent the ideal marriage and partnership. For Theodoros to request a relationship built upon Isis' love of Osiris, for whom she scoured the earth and faced many dangers to locate and assemble his dismembered body parts following the foul encounter with their evil brother Seth, demonstrates his desire for an immortal, unbound love for the rest of her life.

> *Agoge X*: *The Lunar Spell of Claudianus and [ritual] of heaven and the north star over lunar offerings*. This papyrus itself, the personal property of the Twelve Gods, was found in Aphroditopolis [beside] the greatest goddess, / Aphrodite Urania, who embraces the universe. Take clay from a potter's wheel and make a mixture with sulfur, and add blood of a dappled goat and mold an image of Mistress Selene the Egyptian, as shown below, making her in / the form of the Universe. And make a shrine of olive wood and do not let it face the sun at all. And after dedicating it with the ritual that works for everything, [put it away,] and thus it will be dedicated in advance. And anoint it also with lunar ointment and wreathe it. And late / at night, at the 5th hour, put it away, facing Selene in a [pure] room. And also offer the lunar offering and repeat the following in succession and you will send dreams, you will bind with spells. For the invocation to Selene is very effective. And after anointing yourself in advance [with] the ointment, appeal to her.
>
> "I call upon you, Mistress of the entire world, ruler of the entire cosmic system, greatly powerful goddess, gracious [daimon], lady of night, who travel through the air, VM. Heed your sacred symbols and give a whirring sound, [and] give a sacred angel or a holy assistant who serves / this very night, in this very hour,

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[133] This tablet (JGG 29) was constructed of a small clay pot, about 11 x 11 cm and discovered in Egypt.

> VM, and order the angel to go off to her, NN, to draw her by her hair, by her feet; may she, in fear, seeing phantoms, sleepless because of her passion for me and her love for me, NN, come to my bedroom." So goes the song. But when / you see the goddess turning red, know that she is now attracting, and then say: "Mistress, send forth you angel from among those who assist you, one who is leader of night, because I adjure [you] by your great names, because of which no aerial or infernal daimon can ignore you, VM. Come to me just as I have summoned you, / VM; hear my words, and send forth your angel who is appointed over the 1st hour: / MENEBAIN, and the one over the 2nd hour: NEBOUN, and the one over the 3rd hour: LEMNEI, [continues on to a total of twelve hours with matching *daimones*], so that you may do this for me; that you may attract, that you may tame on this very night, and so that she, NN (or he, NN) be unable to have success until coming / to me, NN. [May she remain] fully satisfied, loving, desiring me, NN, and me she be unable to have intercourse with another man, except with me alone." Now recite the spell many times, and it will attract and bind, and she will love you for all the time of her life. But when you attract her and she has had intercourse with you, then pick up / the goddess and stow her away, giving her magical material, and do not show her to the sun and she will not stop coming, desiring you. You will act in the same way for the spell to send dreams until you accomplish what you want. The power of the spell is strong. The figure is below.[134]

The notion of dream transmission in the Hellenic world dates to the Homeric works, for "dreams (the significance of which affected both the high and low alike, both god and poet) were under the control of the Olympian deities; in other words the entire dream technique with its coercion of spirits and magical offerings underwent restriction and modification in Olympian religion and yet a certain recollection of magical practice remained."[135] Within a culture that placed a great deal of value in prophecies and portents, dreams were viewed as important personal messages from the gods. Oneiromancy, so named from dreams personified by Oneiros, was the practice of

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[134] PGM 7.862-918.

[135] Samson Eitrem, "Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 179.

divining meaning from dreams. The third-century Ephesian soothsayer Artemidorus compiled the *Oneirocritica*, a work discussing dream revelations and interpretations. The *ouroboros* was a serpent represented devouring its own tail in a symbolizing unity and the cycle of perpetual destruction and rebirth. It also allowed the practitioner to strengthen a dream transmission, hence its role in The Lunar Spell of Claudianus. Selene, goddess of the moon incarnate, was frequently invoked in all varieties of binding spells. Apollonius Rhodius described the harrowing tales of Jason and the Argonauts and the doomed love affair with Medea in *Argonautica*. Selene chastises the crafty Medea, who possesses a penchant for witchcraft, in the following excerpt:

> Rising from the distant east, the Lady Selene (Moon), Titanian goddess, saw the girl [Medea the witch] wandering distraught [for love of Jason], and in wicked glee said to herself : `So I am not the only one to go astray for love, I that burn for beautiful Endymion and seek him in the Latmian cave. How many times, when I was bent on love, have you disorbed me with your incantations, making the night moonless so that you might practice your beloved witchcraft undisturbed! And now you are as lovesick as myself. The little god of mischief has given you Jason, and many a heartache with him. Well, go your way; but clever as you are, steel yourself now to face a life of sighs and misery.' So said Selene.[136]

Sending a dream to a victim as a facet of an *agoge* spell would not only draw the intended lover forth, but would make the victim believe that divine will insists upon it.

Faraone hypothesizes the usage of *agoge* spells primarily lay within the masculine realm, whereas the *philia* curses were feminine, entitling this theory the "misandrist model."[137] This model is based upon his belief, that in contrary to ancient literature, men

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[136] Appolonios Rhodios *Argonautika* 4. 55 ff.

[137] Faraone proposes in *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (ix) "a survey of ancient Greek love magic and a new bipolar taxonomy based mainly on the genders of the agents and their victims: those rituals used mainly by men to instill erotic passion (*eros*) in women

were actually the wilder 'lascivious' gender whilst women were actually modest and chaste, not wild and wicked entities as they were portrayed. This dichotomous nature of love curses cannot divide easily and simply, hence the viewing of women as masculine and males as feminine. The women who employed *agoge defixiones* boast an unusual quantity of aggressiveness and independence, possessing control over their own lives and livelihoods. Faraone pinpoints prostitutes and courtesans conducting *agoge* spells for not only their autonomy in society, but for professional reasons as well. Maintaining clientele via separating the male victim from their families and wives caused courtesans to employ love magic, as did the desire to bring forth wealthy patrons and rivalries with fellow sex workers. However, as the female homoerotic tablet illustrates, not all *agoge defixiones* cast by women were the purview of prostitutes.

Vergil, wrote the *Eighth Eclogue* "Damon and Alphesiboeus" in Rome during the first century BCE, created as a literary representation discussing magic. The success of the *Eclogues* was remarkable for the period, even receiving attention on the stage. Here, Damon and Alphesiboeus, two shepherds, engaged in a singing competition. Damon led the way in song, bitterly lamenting the engagement of his beloved, Nysa, to another man. Alphesiboeus, as a friendly gesture, sang a song of magical instructions to bring a lover "home," for: "Nothing is wanting here but magic spells."[138] According to the poem, the singer learned of this ritual from a magician werewolf named Moeris, who had studied

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and those primarily by women to maintain or increase affection (*philia*) of men…show[ing] how freedmen and other socially subordinate males are construed as female, according to widespread patriarchal notions of female inferiority."

[138] Vergil *Eclogue* 8.67.

Thessalian magical practices. The ritual commenced by wrapping three different colored threads around the *defigens* while holding the effigy and walking thrice around an altar. The three threads are then to be knotted three times while saying "These are the chains of Venus that I twine." Then, as

> the clay is hardened, and this wax is melted, by the selfsame fire. So may the fire of my love act on Daphnis. Scatter the salted grain and kindle crackling twigs of bay with pitch. The heartless Daphnis burns me up: I burn these bays to deal with *him*. Bring Daphnis from the town, my spells, bring Daphnis home. May Daphnis be possessed by such a yearning as a heifer feels when, worn out by a long search for her mate through copses and tall forest trees, she sinks down on the green sedge by a running water, forlorn, forgetting even to go home as the dusk deepens into night. May Daphnis know desire like that, and I not care to cure it.[139]

That Vergil knew particulars of the magical formulae raises questions regarding the secrecy regarding magical canons and the prevalence of magic within Greco-Roman culture. Either the canons were not terribly well guarded, or so many people had visited magicians for binding spells that the ritual was practically common knowledge. The binding, knotting, and ambulating in measures of three, as well as the sympathetic heating of an effigy is accompanied with a poetical comparison of the victim and a heifer relentlessly seeking a missing mate and the sadness that comes by not finding the mate. The *defigens* desires for Daphnis to come forth inflamed with *eros*; however, in an act of revenge, the *defigens* will deny Daphnis the affection, as he had denied it previously.

The *agoge* binding spells were used for centuries to create curse tablets to draw a lover from the safety of his or her home and into the arms of the *defigens*. From Classical, Hellenistic and Roman literature, to Greco-Egyptian texts, the *agoge* remained

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[139] Ibid., 8.80-89.

a popular method of inflaming a victim with the *eros* one felt. The juxtaposition of similar spells and tablets utilizing formulaic inscriptions allowed for an analysis of motivation and personal desire. When directly compared, one is best able to ascertain the varying levels of commitment and lust felt by the *defigens*. Upon examining the commands and the duration of the binding to be in effect, the *agoge* tablets reveal a pattern of romantic love with requests of everlasting affection in conjunction with physical consummation of the relationship, rather than just sexual intercourse for a few months. The *defigens* of the romantic tablets also requests for the target to share their thoughts and engage in meaningful conversations rather than be mindless automatons fulfilling the sexual bidding of the *defigens*, in order to create a multi-dimensional and satisfying relationship.

CHAPTER 4.

SEDUCTIVE SPELLS OF SEPARATION

> *"Separate NN, born of NN, from NN, born of NN!" And you say this name to it again, 7 times, and you lift the sherd, and you…in the house in which they are.*
> -excerpt from the *Greek Magical Papyri*, PDM xii. 62-75

> *Bacchis, do you know any old woman of the kind called Thessalians? There are said to be a lot of them around. They use incantations and can make a woman to be loved, no matter how much she is hated before. My blessings on you, if you can bring one of them to me. I would gladly give up these dresses and all this gold, if I could only see Charinus returning to me, and hating Simiche as he now hates me.*
> -Melitta, "Melitta and Bacchis," in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*

Envy and jealousy are complex human emotions, dictated by inner wants and desires caused by neurotransmitters, and induce covetous, occasionally irrational, behavior. Courtesans, spouses, spurned lovers, and those pining from afar used binding curses to separate their beloved from rival romantic competition. The *agoge* curse tablets called an intended lover forth, the *defigens* compelled by unrequited love and the lust of *eros*. However, the client ordering a separation *defixio* fell to prey to yet another madness-inducing emotion caused by an offspring of Aphrodite: *phthonos*. Despite the passage of centuries, humans continue to experience the pangs of jealousy, much as they did in antiquity. In this section, an examination of separation amatory curses, also known as blocking spells, undergo examination for evidence supporting romantic love separate of erotic passion in Greco-Roman society.

To properly contextualize the separation spells as a societal construct, the emotions and motives that inspired their casting are pertinent. *Phthonos* was a *daimon*,

rumored to be another son of Aphrodite, and was the root of envious emotions caused by greed and desire. *Phthonos* itself was a curse, which prompted the conception of apotropaic charms. People developed safeguards and magic shields that protected the wearer by averting the dangerous gaze. Spitting, laughter, protective amulets, the skin of the hyena, the phallus, and phallic shaped amulets all boast apotropaic properties that defended the wearer from harm, whether intentional or coincidental. The same envy that brought forth treacherous sidelong glances spurred individuals into the hazardous realm of magic and magicians, witchcraft and sorcery.

A common example of an apotropaic charm is the evil eye talisman. The talisman, which mimics the appearance of an eyeball with a blue pupil, guarded the wearer or the domicile from the negative energy caused by an envious gaze. Helios, the sun god, is attributed as the father of the evil eye gaze, which was purported to cause misfortune and trouble for the recipient. Helios' daughters were the infamous witches of antiquity: Medea and Circe. It is said of Medea and Circe that: "All the Children of Helios were easy to recognize, even from a distance, by their flashing eyes, which shot out rays of golden light."[140] The tale of how Medea saved the Argonauts from Talos is the most famous example of the use of the evil eye. Talos, the bronze guardian of the island Crete, prevented safe anchorage upon his isle, which prompted Medea to proffer her mastery of sorcery:

> There with spells she invoked, and placated, the death spirits,
> those eaters of life, swift hellhounds, that all around us
> circle the air, to pounce upon living creatures.
> Thrice now in supplication she besought them with spells,

[140] Apollonios Rhodios *The Argonautika* 4.726-728.

> thrice with prayers, then hardened her will with malice,
> and with alien hostile gaze hexed bronze Talos's vision,
> teeth grinding in hate-filled wrath against him, while her vehement
> fury assailed him with deadly hallucinations.[141]

Through the assistance of supernatural beings, Medea weakened mighty Talos, but it was her evil eye, described as an "alien hostile gaze," that destroyed Talos and saved her beloved and his crew.[142] Others, such as Strabo, link the evil eye to the Telchines of the island of Rhodes:

> Some say that they are evil-eye-ers [*baskanoi*] and sorcerers [*goetes*], who pour the waters of the Styx with sulphur [with envy] to destroy plants and animals. Others say, to the contrary, that, because they excelled in their crafts, they were evil-eye-ed [*baskanthenai*] by competing craftsmen and were consequently branded with this ill repute.[143]

As established, the evil eye was mainly produced by envy and bore associations with magical workers of mythology. The evil eye was a powerful gaze, and could be both deliberately and accidently projected forth upon the object or individual inciting the envious response. It affected the fertility of people, animals, and plants, causing infertility and crop failure. It had the power to halt budding love affairs and magical rituals. Danger presented itself at every corner, both internally and externally from the home, from something as seemingly insignificant as a sidelong glance or the presence of a person, especially a woman, with double pupils and blue eyes.

Curse tablets with a blocking nature are frequently linked to realm of sexual workers. Lucian developed his satirical piece *Dialogues of the Courtesans* based upon

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[141] Ibid., 4.1665-1672.

[142] Ibid., 4.1665-1672.

[143] Strabo C655.

the literary conceit of *pharmaka*-brewing, philter-distilling prostitutes. The conversation between Glycera and Thais showcases the concerns of client theft and the regularity of magical methods. Glycera informed Thais that Gorgona, her supposed friend, had tricked her male client into making Gorgona his mistress. Thais expressed surprise, for Glycera's beauty surpassed that of Gorgona, who was scraggly and balding. Glycera, in explanation, resonded:

> Why, Thais, you don't think the Acarnanian has fallen for her beauty? Don't you know that her mother, Chrysarium, is a witch who knows Thessalian spells, and can bring the moon down? Why, they say she even flies of a night. She's the one who's sent the fellow out of his senses by giving him a drink of her brew, and now they're making a fine harvest out of him.[144]

There was stiff competition between rival prostitutes and courtesans for the best clientele, each woman seeking to snare a wealthy patron. Particularly popular targets were young men from affluent families, not yet married and lacking in sexual experience.[145]

Society distinguished between courtesans, or *hetairai*, and prostitutes, *pornai*. The *porne* was a lower-class sex worker. They could often be found standing in alleys or lined up before the entrance of a brothel, accepting clientele indiscriminately. The *hetaira*, however, selected her patrons with care and cultivated an arrangement with a select few men. While the *pornai* were owned by the brothel owner and primarily served as a source of income, the *hetaira* strove to be the perfect companion. She could be freed or freeborn, which allowed her to own her own property and achieve autonomy in a patriarchal culture. She learned the arts of pleasure, such as poetry, singing, or playing a

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[144] Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 356-359.

[145] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 132.

musical instrument to perform at symposiums for entertainment, in addition to those of the boudoir.[146] Men and working girls attended symposia, reveling far into the night. These gatherings commenced with a light dinner of bread with cheese, olive oil, and vegetables, and included fish if it were a sacrificial event. This was followed by the drinking and gaming portion of the evening. Wine was diluted with water in a *krater*, which guests drank from it for several hours. Flute girls, handsome youths, and *hetairai* provided entertainment through conversation, music, and games. The evening concluded in a *komos*—a noisy procession through the streets to show their enjoyment in each other's companionship.[147] The young boys under the tutelage of adult male citizens were also in attendance in order to learn how to behave socially with other citizens.

Often the women sex workers were war captives, foreigners, or itinerant tradeswomen following festivals or military campaigns, and even, simply, the daughters of poor families. Pomeroy compares the role of a concubine kept by a man favorably to that of a traditional wife. Seducing or raping another man's concubine elicited the same legal punishments as those against a wife; the greatest difference lies in that only the children of the legal wife could be heirs.[148] However, the *hetaira* gained access to the wealth of the *oikos* as a non-legal member of the household, fulfilling the sexual needs of the man and creating a dependency where he supported her and her lifestyle.[149]

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[146] Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 98-99.

[147] Ibid., 65.

[148] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*, 91.

[149] Cox, *Household Interests*, 188-189.

Solon, the sixth century BCE Athenian lawmaker, established laws to clarify the distinction between good women and those with a bad reputation. Plutarch reported that his laws instituted regulations making "it illegal to kill any adulterer who was caught in the act, but the offence of rape against a free woman was punished by a fine of no more than 100 drachmae. If the man seduced her, he would be fined twenty drachmae, except in the case of women who openly sell their bodies."[150] The abhorrent and punishable character of seduction arose from the fear of having a wife seduced, stolen, and possibly impregnated and from the worry that a daughter could be deflowered prior to her arranged marriage, for these actions would upset the *oikos* and the societal customs of the *polis*. Solon cared for the stability of the city-state, and therefore sought to eliminate distractions in order to make the male citizens focus rationally and protect their wives and daughters from unwanted advances. Since women were a great distraction, causing both pleasure and pain, he limited the number of times a woman could appear in public and founded the first state-owned brothels.[151] Not only did these government brothels increase income for the *polis*, they drew in more foreigners and travelers to Athens, while simultaneously providing an outlet for lusty young men who would not be marrying for several more years.

Female Roman slaves spent more time in the home than their Classical Greek counterparts, which allowed for specialized training in wealthier homes. This brought about clerks, handmaidens, hairdressers, masseuses, midwives, and entertainers. Similar

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[150] Plutarch, *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives* trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Classics, 1960), 23.

[151] Ibid., 21.

to Greek practices, however, was the complete ownership of a slave. Any slave was not only the domestic property of the owner, but the sexual property as well. With the owner's permission, his guests could take advantage of free sexual services, and slaves were required to obtain permission from their owner to fornicate with each other.[152] Some owners recognized this as an opportunity to turn a profit, and sold the services of their slaves at brothels, inns, baths, and taverns. Seeking financial rewards, some parents might sell their daughters into sexual slavery. Higher-class brothels would seek out beautiful and intelligent girls to purchase and train in the arts of companionship. Less than ideally pretty or stupid girls would find their way into cheap whorehouses and in the employ of tavern owners seeking to please their clients on many different levels.

The sphere of erotic workers inspired binding amatory curses for different reasons, but Dickie claims that "[w]hatever the inadequacies the literary evidence may have as a source of information about the links between magic-working and prostitution in Athens, the material record leaves us in no doubt that prostitutes in Athens in the fourth century BCE lived in a milieu in which sorcery was, if not endemic, certainly present to a degree that it was not in other sectors of society."[153] One popular motivator was to separate the beloved from his wife and any other mistresses and bring him solely to the *defigens*.[154] An alternative motive prompting the creation of a blocking binding

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[152] Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, 192.

[153] Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 85.

[154] Faraone in *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (157) states that if the courtesan was involved in a monogamous relationship with a lover as a concubine, then she would use a *philia* spell like a legal wife.

spell with a similar formula to those employed by prostitutes was that of the wife attempting to decrease her husband's desires and predilections for extramarital affairs. Doing so would ensure that no illegitimate children would be born and that he would not be supporting a mistress in addition to his legal family. Finally, men themselves would order curse tablets to separate a favorite courtesan from seeing other clients.

The following double-sided tablet was discovered in Boeotia with an unknown date and a wish that transcends centuries. While the name of the client remains a mystery, she undeniably sought to remove the perceived desirable traits of the wife in order to decrease the husband's affections and draw him closer to herself.

> *Separation I: (Side A)* I assign Zois the Eretrian, wife of Kabeira, to Earth and to Hermes—her food, her drink, her sleep, her laughter, her intercourse, her playing of the kithara, and her entrance, her pleasure, her little buttocks, her thinking, her eyes…
>
> *(Side B)* and to Hermes (I consign) her wretched walk, her words, her deeds, and evil talk…[155]

The desirable traits of Zois, such as her musical abilities, her appetite for food and drink, her intercourse, which here could imply either sexual or social, and most importantly, her sexuality were each individually bound in order to ensure efficacy. Just as the sending of *eros* in the *agoge* spells allows for a psychological release of the lustful pain felt by the *defigens*, the binding spell of separation provides a comparable mental liberation regarding the symptoms of jealousy. Given the sexual nature of the binding forced upon the wife of Kabeira in addition to her appealing qualities that would make her delightful

[155] Approximate lead measurements are 8 x 7 cm. JGG 18; *DT* 86; Wünsch 71.

to be around, it is possible the *defigens* was hoping to become his mistress and therefore provide sexual delights, affection, *philia*, and pleasant entertainment.

The following *defixio* was discovered in a well located in the Athenian agora with two more tablets of a similar variety. These were aimed at separating a woman from two other men, Leosthenes and Peios:

> *Separation II:* VM Oh powerful BEPTU, I deliver to you Leosthenes and Peios, who frequent Juliana, to whom Marcia gave birth, so that you may chill them and their intentions, in order that they may not be able to speak or walk with one another, nor sit in Juliana's place of business, nor may Leosthenes and Peios be able to send messages to Juliana. And also (chill) in your gloomy air those who bring them together. Bind (them) in the darkened air of forgetfulness and chill and do not allow Proklos and Leosthenes and Peios to have sexual/social intercourse with (her). VM, I deliver to you Leosthenes and Peios. Powerful Typhon VM who are in charge of disappearing and chilling, VM, may Leosthenes and Peios cool off, so that they are unable to talk with Juliana. Just as these names are cooling off, so may the names of Leosthenes and Peios cool off for Juliana and also their soul, their knowledge, their passion, their charm, their mind, their knowledge, and their reasoning. May they stand deaf, voiceless, mindless, harmless, with Juliana hearing nothing about Leosthenes and Peios and they feeling no passion or speaking with Juliana.[156]

Juliana was a desirable woman, with at least two suitors, three if Proklos was pursuing her, and four if the *defigens* was a suitor as well. Leosthenes and Peios were bound from visiting Juliana's place of business, implying a brothel. Gager cautions against assuming a brothel with certainty, but Dickie ascertains that the coveted Juliana was, indeed, a very successful and skilled prostitute.[157] However, it is possible that Juliana may have assisted

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[156] Dimensions: 10.1 x 6.7 cm. JGG 21.

[157] For viewpoints on the profession of Juliana, see Gager *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (89) and Matthew W. Dickie *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (247-248). Dickie writes, "The spells are unquestionably aimed at separating Juliana from certain of her regular customers.

in a family business and that the client ordering the tablet was a family member seeking to maintain her purity until a husband was chosen.

Sympathetic magic chilled the ardor of the two men by acknowledging the tablet's impending deposit into a well. The binding chill of a dark, deep well was cast forth upon the victims through sympathetic properties and strengthened with repetition, allowing the darkness of the deep created an air of forgetfulness, particularly regarding intercourse with Juliana. Peios and Leosthenes were bound not only regarding their passion, but their minds, souls, reasoning, and charm so that they do not remember Juliana, and, most relevantly, remain "harmless" to the *defigens*. In a culture of intense male competition for a worthy mate and desirable courtesan, men used magical means to increase their chances at success. Some employed *philia* magic to enhance their personal qualities, whilst others, such as this particular *defigens*, removed the competition. Leaving nothing to chance, the *defigens*, lest Juliana should inquire about her missing suitors, bound her to learn nothing of their whereabouts or intentions, thusly preventing her from seeking them out to renew their fervor.

The following Boeotian binding tablet is unique in its overall circular shape and use of inscribed lines upon both sides of the tablet. Side A is engraved with eleven concentric lines and Side B boasts twenty-one parallel lines. The poor condition of the tablet prevents a seamless translation, however, the motivation is clear: the client employed a binding spell rife with sympathetic properties in an attempt to block the relationship between Antheira and Zoilos.

Although sexual jealousy cannot be ruled out as a factor, the motive for the spells is as likely as not to be economic."

> *Separation III: (Side A*) Just as you, Theonnastos, are powerless in any act or exercise of (your) hands, feet, body…to love and see maidens…so too may Zoilos remain powerless to screw Antheira and Antheira (remain powerless toward) Zoilos in the same way, of beloved Hermes…the bed and the chitchat and the love of Antheira and Zoilos…and just as this lead is in someplace separate from humans, so also may Zoilos be separated from Antheira with the body and touch and kisses of Antheira and the love-makings of Zoilos and Antheira…the fear of Zoilos…I inscribe even this blocking (spell) with a seal.
>
> *(Side B)* …may you not catch, O god, Antheira and Zoilos [together] tonight and may they not…with one another and…Timokles…binding spell…thus also Zoilos…this binding spell…just as this lead (tablet) has been completely buried, deeply buried and …thus also bury for Zoilos…his business and household affairs and friendships and all the rest.[158]

The client wishes for Zoilos to replicate the corpse of Theonnastos in his immobility and inability to procreate. Theonnastos' characteristics are to be felt by Antheira as well, for she must be powerless in relation to Zoilos and unable to join him in bed, in pillow talk, or demonstrate affections. The affectionate acts between the couple, such as kissing, are sympathetically linked to the lead tablet through inscription and placement. By placing the tablet in a grave—apart from the warmth and congeniality of civilization—the amorous affections should be blocked as well. The further attempts to bury Zoilos' household affairs and leave him, presumably, destitute, imply that the client is a rival of Zoilos', seeking the attentions and affections of Antheira. If binding and separating the lovers physically did not sever their relationship, the client desired to ruin Zoilos' *oikos* and societal relationships with other citizens. This was an effort to mar Zoilos' character and take from him the traits that a woman and her family would find desirable in a bridegroom. Reputation and good standing were very important qualities when families sought to form a marital alliance. Thusly, by removing these qualities from Zoilos, the

[158] The round tablet measures a 9.5 cm diameter. JGG 20, Wünsch no. 70, *DT* 85.

client hoped that Antheira's family would halt their affair, allowing the client the opportunity to present himself as a more serious, and worthy, suitor.

The subsequent Attic fourth century BCE *defixio* was placed with a corpse and inscribed upon both sides. However, unlike the tablets above, Separation IV foremost bound the woman, rather than the men, engaged in relations with her. The magician refers to the grave as that of the "unmarried," implying the invocation of a *nekydaimon* of a child rather than a soldier, for a child would not know marriage or sexual experiences.

> *Separation IV: (Side A)* I bind Theodora in the presence of the one (female) at Persephone's side and in the presence of those who are unmarried. May she be unmarried and whenever she is about to chat with Kallias and with Charias—whenever she is about to discuss deeds and words and business…words, whatever he indeed says. I bind Theodora to remain unmarried to Charias and (I bind) Charias to forget Theodora and (I bind) Charias to forget…Theodora and sex [marriage bed] with Theodora.
>
> *(Side B)* [And just as] this corpse lies useless, [so] may all the words and deeds of Theodora be useless with regard to Charias and to the other people. I bind Theodora before Hermes of the underworld and before the unmarried and before Tethys. (I bind) everything, both (her) words and deeds toward Charias and toward other people, and (her) sex with Charias. And may Charias forget sex. May Charias forget the girl, Theodora, the very one whom he loves.[159]

In further differentiation, Theodora was bound to remain unwed, particularly when associating with Charias. The tablet adapts a more familiar formula towards the conclusion of Side A, binding Charias with the objective of halting the intimate relations between him and Theodora while simultaneously removing knowledge of her in order to obstruct future dalliances and block recollection of past happenstances.

The ambiguous use of "*koite*" in the final line of Side A, translated here as "sex" may also be translated as "marriage bed," the "act of going to bed," or "the lair of a beast,

[159] This example was a thick tablet, measuring 12 x 8 cm. JGG 22, *DT* 68.

nest of a bird."[160] While the lair and nest translation regards undomesticated animals, it is analogous with the viewpoint of the marital bed as the lair of a bride and bridegroom. The marital bed played a pivotal role in Odysseus' homecoming. After a long twenty years, Penelope was unsure if the man that arrived before her was truly her husband, finally returned. To prove his identity, Penelope cleverly made an incorrect statement regarding the mobility of their marriage bed, to which Odysseus indignantly replied: "No one of mortals who now are alive, even one in full vigor, ever could easily change its position, because in the well-wrought bed a great token was fixed—I worked on it; nobody else did. Growing inside the court was the long-leaved trunk of an olive tree in the prime of its vigor, and it was as stout as a pillar. So around this I constructed the chamber until it was finished."[161] A couple's marital bed was an extremely private, intimate place for the lovers.

The following homosexual Greek tablet was discovered in Nemea (twelve kilometers southwest of Corinth) inside a pit within a large building. Inscribed during the late fourth century BCE, it was one of many *defixiones* discovered within the pit that was used as a curse tablet deposit location throughout the fourth century. Five of the unearthed *defixiones* appear to by written by the same person, supporting the stationary magician hypothesis. This amatory blocking *defixio* boasts several unique qualities:

> *Separation V:* I turn away Euboles
> From Aineas, from his
> Face, from his eyes,

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[160] An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded Upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon (1889), s.v. "koite."

[161] Homer *Odyssey* 23.187-192.

From his mouth,
From his breasts,
From his soul,
From his belly, from
His penis, from
His anus,
From his entire body. I
Turn away Euboles
From Aineas.[162]

The first point of interest is the lack of divine or supernatural invocation. Unlike most binding spells, where supernatural powers are appealed to or cajoled into aiding and abetting the *defigens* and the magician controlling the ceremony, this example combines the early tablet habit of listing body parts with the early formula of simple naming. Aineas was the desired beloved and Euboles the amorous adversary of the anxious admirer. The ritual binding of the limbs and organs of Aineas is comparable to the *agoge* spells of a similar nature, which also sought control of their victims through compelling compliance part by part. To turn Euboles away, restrictions were applied to the desirable traints of Aineas, at least according to the admirer's perspective.

Homosexuality prevailed in the upper echelons of Greek society and Plutarch states, "There can be no doubt that the development of homosexuality was connected with the rise of gymnasia and arena in which boys practiced the five exercises of the *pentathlon*, which comprised wrestling, the foot-race, leaping, throwing the discus and hurling the javelin."[163] The courtship occurred between an adult male citizen and a youth lacking facial hair as a facet of the student/teacher relationship. The adult citizen would

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[162] JGG 25.

[163] Plutarch *Erotikos* 71F.

act as a father figure, instructing the boy on how to be a good citizen for his *polis* and the man of his *oikos*, as well as engaging in sexual intercourse with him. Jealousies flared if a boy was courted by more than one man, as well as amongst the boys for the attention of the most desirable patrons. It was not uncommon for the man to actively pursue a youth by following him about, serenading him, spending the night outside his home, composing lyrics in his honor, scrawling his name as graffiti across town, and gifting him with various presents, much like a suitor in a heterosexual courtship. Frequent gifts included fruit, cocks, hares, dogs, the game of knuckle-bones, and painted vases bearing the boy's name and the epitaph *kalos*, meaning "fair" or "good."[164]

This practice remained in style for centuries. Petronius, the first century C.E. Roman, wrote of his two protagonists, Encolpius and Ascyltos, in the satire *Satyricon*, as they fought over the affections of a beautiful youth named Giton.[165] Straton, a second century CE Greek poet, waxing poetic, humorously lists his preferences, exclaiming: "I really like (boys) pale, and at the same time I love them honey-coloured and golden as well; on the other hand, I am content with ebony ones. Nor do I overlook hazel eyes. But I exceedingly love (boys) with lustrous dark eyes."[166] Eyes not only cast evil curses of *phthonos*, but also played an important role in seduction and courtship. An intense gaze alerted a target to romantic interest, which could be returned with a gaze or steadfastly ignored. It could convey power and confidence in attaining one's desire.

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[164] Flaceliere, *Love in Ancient Greece*, 70-75.

[165] Petronius *Satyricon* 8-11.

[166] Straton *Greek Anthology* 12.5.

The following tablet was discovered Egypt and its date of inscription falls in the second or third century CE. Despite several centuries of passage between the earlier tablets and this specimen, the distinct similarities in language and personal motivation five centuries after the early Greek *defixiones* exemplifies the unchanging nature of magical practices in the ancient world, as well as the desires of humans. The biggest difference is the exchange of Hellenistic chthonic deities for the Egyptian pantheon.

> *Separation VI:* I bind you, Theodotis, daughter of Eus, by the tail of the snake, the mouth of the crocodile, the horns of the ram, the poison of the asp, the hairs of the cat, and the penis of the god so that you may never be able to sleep with any other man, nor be screwed, nor be taken anally, nor fellate, nor find pleasure with any other man but me, Ammonion, son of Hermitaris, For I alone am VM. Make use of this binding spell, employed by Isis, so that Theodotis, daughter of Eus, may no longer try anything with any other man but me alone, Ammonion, and may be subservient, obedient, eager, flying through the air seeking after Ammonion, son of Hermitaris and bring her thigh close to his, her genitals close to his, in unending intercourse for all the time of her life. And here are the figures: (The figures follows the text.)[167]

The *agoge* curse characteristics are applied on this artifact in conjunction with the separation demands in an attempt for Ammonion to possess Theodotis. Here, the phrase "for all the time" appears again, popular in the Greco-Egyptian *agoge* tablets. Not satisfied with simply sharing a life together, Ammonion desires "unending intercourse" with his beloved, making this a rather lusty spell indeed. Ammonion does not bind her societal interactions with other men, as other separation spells are prone to do, but instead focuses the binding upon various sexual relations. Her mind was not bound and a particular individual was not mentally blocked through a lack of contact or clouded mind;

[167] This tablet (JGG 34) is large, measuring 19.4 x 11 cm, which allowed room for the numerous *charakteres* included across the bottom.

alternatively, the magician inflamed Theodotis with powerful *eros* to cause the forgetfulness of any other paramour.

The tablet indicates that Ammonion possessed supernatural powers by providing himself with a mystical power name in the form of *voces magicae*. Isis, the almighty goddess herself, purportedly used this binding spell. The previous statement, in concurrence with the accidently inscribed statement that "the figures follow the text" show that the *defixio* was created using a magical text. The above statement comprised instructions for the magician to inscribe the *charakteres* after the curse in order to increase efficacy. The figures are drawn across the bottom of the tablet on the same side as the text and depict some of the creatures and activities that bound Theodotis: a crocodile, a kissing couple, a figure that is viewed as a potential deity, and a close-up depiction of male and female genitalia.

The next example of a separation binding spell hails from the Greek Magical Papyri and details the instructions to create a separation binding tablet. Specific wording for binding either a man or a woman is provided:

> *Separation VII:* Taking hieratic papyrus or a lead lamella and iron ring, put the ring on the papyrus and with a pen draw the outlines of the ring, inside and outside, then tint the outlined area with myrrhed ink, then write on this outlined area of the ring—writing on the papyrus—the name, and write the characters outside [the area], then, [in the circle] inside it, what you want not to happen, and "Let so-and-so's thoughts be bound so that he may not do NN thing." Then putting the ring on its outline, which you made, and turning up the [areas of the papyrus] outside the outline, wrap up the ring until it is completely covered. Piercing [the package] through the characters with the pen and tying it, say, "I bind NN with regard to NN [thing]. Let him not speak, not be contrary, not oppose; let him not be able to look me in the face nor speak against me; let him be subjected to me, so long as this ring is buried. I bind his mind and his brains, his desire, his actions, so that he may be slow [in his dealings] with all men." And if it be a woman: "In order that she, NN, may not marry him, NN" (add the usual).

> Then, taking it [the package] away to the grave of someone untimely dead, dig [a hole] four fingers deep and put it in and say, "Spirit of the dead, who[ever] you are, I give over NN to you, so that he may not do NN thing." Then, when you have filled up the hole, go away. Better do it when the moon is waning.
> The things to be written inside the circle [bounded by the inner side of the ring's outline] are these: "VM, let NN thing not be done so long as this ring is buried."
> Bind [the package] with ties, [using] cords you have made, and thus deposit it.
> The [wrapped] ring may also be thrown into an unused well, [into the grave] of [anyone dead] untimely. After the characters, write also the following, under the [outline of the] ring, as a rectangle: "VM, the greatest daimon, VM" and the entire 59 [letter formula] above, which you also put inside [the circle bounded by the ring's outline].
> [The same schedule can be written on a lead lamella; then, putting the ring in [the middle] and folding up [the lead] around it, cover [it] with plaster. After the rectangle underneath [write] also the IAEO formula and the following: "VM, prevent the NN thing," [or], as the names are found in the authentic [text]: VM, prevent the NN thing."[168]

The text referring to binding a man, "Let him not speak, not be contrary, not oppose; let him not be able to look me in the face nor speak against me; let him be subjected to me … I bind his mind and his brains, his desire, his actions, so that he may be slow [in his dealings] with all men," does not appeal to a sexual relationship with a woman or another male, but rather the civil courts or forums. It displays a desired subjugation of the victim's mental capacities to prevent the victim from speaking ill of the client and cause ruin in his associations with fellow citizens. Conversely, when binding a woman to prevent wedlock, the magician simply engraved, "In order that she, NN, may not marry him, NN."

The following fourth century B.C.E. tablet was ordered by a woman in order to prevent her lover from marrying another woman.

> *Separation VIII*: I consign the sexual fulfillment and marriage of [Theti]ma and Dionysophon and also (the marriage) of all other women, both widows and

[168] PGM V. 304-369; see Betz (106) for images.

> maidens, but especially Thetima…May he (Dionysophon) indeed not take another woman other than myself, but let me alone grow old by the side of Dionysophon and no other woman.[169]

While Faraone is quick to indicate that the term "marrying" during Hellenistic times may refer to either a legitimate and legal bonding of two individuals into a marriage, it was also occasionally used as slang referring to intercourse.[170] However, the marriage of this *defigens* requests with Dionysophon involves "grow[ing] old" together with no extramarital affairs impeding their wedded bliss.

Unlike the *agoge* curses, the separation binding spells are more difficult to juxtapose in order to examine the differing language signifying romantic and lustful motivations. *Eros* as a motivating force demanded an immediate and simple solution to satisfy overwhelming desire, and was found through bringing the target of the desire to the *defigens*. *Phthonos* was a much more complex impulse. One could feel romantic jealousy because a spouse was straying, or a rival suitor was interested in one's beloved; such feelings could even be found between courtesans seeking the same patron. Jealousy could indicate pains at the thought of losing a romantic love interest or the greed one feels when what they are entitled to is being taken away. Most importantly, it shows that one cared enough to use magical methods, whether about coming together sexually or growing old with one's beloved.

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[169] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 13.

[170] Ibid., 12-13.

CHAPTER 5.

PHILIA, *PHARMAKA*, PHILTERS AND AFFECTION

Curse tablets are a division of ancient love magic and were accompanied in the realm of Aphrodite by additional magical measures. Similar to *kollosoi*, some of these measures may have supplemented a binding ritual or been used in conjunction with *defixiones* in order to increase efficacy. *Pharmaka* were dangerous drugs that served to increase *philia* or *eros*, with potentially deadly consequences. Love philters encompass the method of magic used to increase *philia*, or affection, through potions. Amulets engraved with spells were worn by both men and women to increase personal charisma and external influence. On the other end of the spectrum, amulets imbued with defensive properties were a common method to prevent curse victimization. Often the language and the motivation behind brewing a philter or wearing an amulet derived from the same psychological motivations as ordering a *defixio*.

In the dominion of the love goddess, *eros* and *philia* reside within the same spectrum of emotions shared between lovers. There were many key actions and emotions that create interpersonal relationships. *Eros* was expressed with overwhelming passion, often of the erotic sense. Alternatively, *philia* was the platonic affection and friendship found between individuals of either gender and was regarded as a desirable emotion. The application of spells and techniques used to increase *philia* were popular forms of healing

magic, despite the fact that they were "clearly designed to dominate and control others by binding or otherwise debilitating them."[171]

There was a long medical tradition in the Mediterranean Basin and into Mesopotamia—many practices and discoveries travelled throughout the region. For the Greeks, healing science was performed under the divine eye of Asclepius, and evolved throughout ancient times as knowledge concerning the human body and local herbs increased. People visited sanctuaries known for their healing properties or that were dedicated to Asclepius, such as Epidaurus, to receive medical attention from Asclepius' priests. Illness was not well understood in the Greco-Roman sphere during antiquity and was treated through both medicines and carefully guarded rituals. It was imperative that medical professionals did no harm to their patients, a tenet which is still sworn today as a part of the Hippocratic Oath. Healing professionals cautioned against the inaccurate treatments and potential dangers behind healing magic outside of their professional sphere. The fourth-century CE treatise *On the Sacred Disease* attributed to Hippocrates reveals the disdain and danger in visiting a magician rather than a healer for epilepsy:

> I think that the first people to have projected this disease as "sacred" were men like those who are now magi and purifiers and beggar-priests and vagrant-charlatans. These people purport to be extremely reverent of the gods and to know something more than the rest of us. They use the divine to hide behind and to cloak the fact that they have nothing to apply to the disease and bring relief…They added further appropriate arguments to render their method of healing safe for themselves. They applied purifications and incantations…They claim to know how to draw down the moon, make the sun disappear, create bad weather and good, rains and draughts, render the sea impassable and the land sterile, and all the other things like this. Those skilled in these things say that

[171] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 96.

> such effects are achievable through the performance of rites or some other cleverness or practice. But they seem to me impious…[172]

The opinion held by trained healers on the topic of magicians is clear in the above excerpt: magicians are mainly charlatans who profess something is divine and construct false remedies. If someone truly desired to be healed, that person should visit an appropriate priest rather than an individual promising miraculous cures with untested ingredients and selfish motives. However, magicians not only tried to cure the infirmities ailing the body, but those of the heart and mind as well. The *Greek Magical Papyri* contains numerous recipes for creating magical ointments for curing sexual impotency, increasing pleasure, and creating *philia*.

Both men and women employed *philia*-inducing spells and charms. However, Faraone hypothesizes that women dominated the body of clients for this form of incantation and ritual.[173] Since the earliest writings of Hellenic history and literature, women were portrayed as perpetrators of using affection and sexual wiles to control those around them. The most renowned episode hails from Homer's *Iliad* in Book 14. The Trojan War raged and the gods, individually, declared favor upon the opposing sides. Hera devised a plan to increase Zeus' affections and distract him from the waging battle occurring on the mortal plane below in order to remove the protection and favor he provided the Trojans. The first step in Hera's grand scheme included a visit with

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[172] Hippocrates *On the Sacred Disease* 1.10-30.

[173] Faraone particularly believes such and bases his 'misandrist' model on its accuracy in *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (96).

Aphrodite, requesting, "Lend me longing, lend me desire, by which you bring immortals low as you do mortal men!" Complying, the love goddess replied:

> 'It is not possible and not expedient, either, to deny you, who go to lie in the great arms of Zeus.' Now she unfastened from around her breast a pieced brocaded girdle. Her enchantments came from this: allurement of the eyes, hunger of longing, and the touch of lips that steals all wisdom from the coolest of men. This she bestowed in Hera's hands and murmured: 'Take this girdle, keep it in your breast. Here are all the suavities and charms of love. I do not think you will be ineffective in what you plan.'[174]

The Homeric epics retained their popularity throughout antiquity; generations of youths memorized these passages that guided morality and societal ideals for centuries. Here, youths learned the characteristics of a hero, the dangers of hubris, the desirable quality of fidelity in a wife, and that there are magical items that elicit an emotional response in those around them. Post-coital sleep was also feared, for Hera promises Sleep a muse as a mistress if he would lull the mighty Zeus to slumber after laying together. Hera's plan succeeded, and Zeus, overcome with rampant desire, proclaimed, "No lust as sweet as this for you has ever taken me!"[175] In a bed of crocuses and hyacinths they consummated their desire and "soon the Father, subjugated by love and sleep, lay still. Still as a stone on Gargaron height he lay and slumbered with his lady in his arms."[176] Thus, Hera removed the protection and power Zeus bequeathed upon the Trojan prince and skilled warrior, Hector. Eventually, the Trojans lost and Troy fell before the Greeks, backed by Hera.

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[174] Homer *Iliad* 14.220-250.

[175] Ibid., 14.353-357.

[176] Ibid., 14.385-398.

The love charm in the form of a woman's girdle, *kestos himas* in Greek, remained popular for several centuries. Asclepiades, in the third century BCE, described an instance in which he received a girdle with a binding spell inscribed within: "I myself once played with easy Hermoine, who wore a variegated girdle of flowers, O Paphian one, which had a golden inscription: 'Keep loving me forever and do not get angry if another man holds me.'"[177] Hermoine bequeathed her enchanted intimate undergarment as a gift, which Asclepiades accepted and bemoaned to mighty Aphrodite upon discovering the inscription. By referring to Hermoine as "easy," the reader infers that she catered to the whims of men as a sex worker. The binding spell inscribed upon her girdle was beneficial to the growth and stability of her business, and thus, her financial gain and independence. There was a possibility she possessed several such enchanted girdles and gifted them to all of her serious suitors in order to maintain her clientele in a harmonious manner.

Similar in vein to the aforementioned girdle, an infamous *philtron* bears another spell for increasing desire. This eight-century BCE vessel, known as Nestor's Cup, was found at the Greek colony of Pithekoussai and is inscribed upon the bottom of the cup, so as to be invisible when filled with wine, "Whoever drinks from this cup, desire for beautifully crowned Aphrodite will seize him instantly!"[178] The inscription would only be visible upon finishing the contents of the wine vessel, much as Hermoine's was only visible once the inside of her girdle was exposed. The inadvertent acceptance of the

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[177] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 100-01.

[178] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 12.

vehicles for the spells would bind unknowing victims. Nestor's Cup, used for mixing wine at social gatherings, may have been a ribald joke by a mischievous homeowner hoping to incite a very exciting conclusion to a symposium. The secretive measures of Hermoine and the owner of the Nestor Cup are suggestive of the youths seeking to trick maidens into accepting seeded fruit by hurling it at the maidens. Acceptance of the spellbound item insured that its power and efficacy would affect the recipient to the greatest degree.

Gifting was an important aspect of friendship and culture in the ancient world, and played a prominent role in Greek relationships. Gifts were given to hosts and to guests, to a person of honor at a dinner party, or to select individuals to increase *philia*. Gifts were exchanged during courtship between the potential mates and the *oikoi* involved in a matrimonial transaction. Suitors presented their best offerings to the father of the intended bride in order to obtain a wife and the requisite dowry. However, accepting a gift of seeded fruit from an admirer indicated interest in reciprocating affection and the commencement of courtship. Seeded fruits, linked to fertility, were offered to potential love interests in order to demonstrate interest and gauge reciprocity. If a person accepted such seeded fruit, such as apples or pomegranates, from a member of the opposite sex, it implied they accepted the giver as a suitor.[179] In order to trick maidens into accepting the fruit, potential suitors might throw pieces at her to incite lust or trick her into picking up a piece. Particularly interesting is the idea of female consent—the potential suitor wanted to know if she was interested in pursuing a

[179] Ibid., 69-70.

relationship. However, a suitor would know that if the apple was not accepted, he had other magical measures he could take to aid in his success.

The ability to use a charm to cause a distraction would have been a powerful tool for women seeking to deflect the aggression and dominance of the men surrounding them. As illustrated in previous chapters, the male position at the head of the household was one of dominance and control. While the wife filled the subservient role, that did not halt arguments between couples, much like Hera and Zeus. In order to sway the outcome or lesson the man's anger, *philia* magic was cast.

Potions comprised a particularly fascinating and powerful subsection of amatory magic. They were also the most dangerous, for potions were often brewed with ingredients that possessed dangerous levels of toxicity if the dosage was miscalculated. Many ancient ingredients, such as lead and mercury, were toxic even in the proper dose. Due to this danger, laws were enacted to protect the victims of poisoning via a love *philtron*. Mythology provides a tale bespeaking the dangers of using binding potions and ointments to increase *philia* in the death of mighty Hercules. The demi-god who completed twelve labors set forth by the goddess Hera succumbed to a love spell from his wife, Deianeira. Diodorus Siculus, a first century BCE historian, relates the account of how a wife, jealous of a mistress, unintentionally killed her hero spouse. While traveling along the Euenos River, the centaur Nessos became enamored with the beautiful Deianeira and attempted to rape her. While engaged in intercourse, Nessos is struck with Hercules' arrow and promises Deianeira "that he would give her a love-charm to the end that Hercules would never desire to approach any other woman. He urged her,

accordingly, to take the seed which had fallen from him and, mixing it with olive oil and the blood which was dripping from the barb of the arrow" to create an ointment.[180] Later, when the couple arrived at Kenaion, Hercules wished to perform a sacrifice and had his servant fetch his appropriate robes from Deianeira. Deianeira, jealous of the love and affection her husband showed for Iole, anointed the robes with the *philia* love potion created from the seed and blood of the slain centaur. However, the tricky centaur knowingly provided the recipe for a poison, and when Hercules donned the anointed attire, "the strength of the toxic drug began slowly to work he met with the most terrible calamity. For the arrow's barb had carried the poison of the adder, and when the shirt for this reason, as it became heated, attacked the flesh of the body."[181]

Deianeira, jealous of the love and affection Hercules showered upon Iole, sought magical means to return her husband to her arms and their marital bed. Tricked by the ravaging centaur into creating a topical ointment to increase affection, Deianeira unintentionally anointed her husband's ceremonial robes with poison. Rather than inflaming Hercules' psyche with affection and love for his wife, the supposed *philia* ointment used body heat to transform and fatally attack the skin. Instances such as those in the myth above made *phthonos* as dangerous as madness-inducing *eros*, for the jealous individual sought out methods to cure their envy-induced madness. If the *defigens* did not wish to use an *agoge* or separation spell, he or she might turn to magical methods to

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[180] Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 4.36.

[181] Ibid., 4.38.

increase *philia*, and the former's sympathetic comparisons to corpses was easily rivaled by the very real risk of accidental poisoning.

Mythology does not provide the only examples of an accidental poisoning when attempting to administer a *philia* spell. A tragic incident, which left two dead, was preserved in the speech *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning*. Antiphon, a fifth-century Athenian orator, composed the following speech for a son to present to a law court after his stepmother inadvertently killed his father through administering a love potion. Here, a wife and mistress joined forces to renew their individual beloveds' interest in them:

> In the first place, I was ready to torture the defendants' slaves, who knew that this woman, my opponents' mother, had planned to poison our father on a previous occasion as well, that our father had caught her in the act, and that she had admitted everything— save that it was not to kill him, but to restore his love that she alleged herself to be giving him the potion…
> There was an upper room in our house occupied by Philoneos, a highly respected friend of our father's, during his visits to Athens. Now Philoneos had a mistress to whom he proposed to place in a brothel. My brother's mother made friends with her; and on hearing of the wrong intended by Philoneos, she sends for her, informing her on her arrival that she herself was also being wronged by our father. If the other would do as she was told, she said, she herself knew how to restore Philoneos' love for her and our father's for herself. She had discovered the means; the other's task was to carry out her orders. She asked if she was prepared to follow her instructions, and, I imagine, received a ready assent. Later, Philoneos happened to have a sacrifice to perform to Zeus Ctesius in Peiraeus, while my father was on the point of leaving for Naxos. So Philoneos thought that it would be an excellent idea to make one journey of it by seeing my father as far as Peiraeus, offering the sacrifice, and entertaining his friend. Philoneos' mistress accompanied him to attend the sacrifice. On reaching Peiraeus, Philoneos of course carried out the ceremony. When the sacrifice was over, the woman considered how to administer the draught: should she give it before or after supper? Upon reflection, she decided that it would be better to give it afterwards, thereby carrying out the suggestion of this Clytemnestra here. Now it would take too long for me to furnish or for you to listen to a detailed description of the meal so I shall try to give you as brief an account as I can of the administration of the poison which followed. After supper was over, the two naturally set about pouring libations and sprinkling some frankincense to secure the favour of heaven, as the one was offering sacrifice to Zeus Ctesius and entertaining the

> other, and his companion was supping with a friend and on the point of putting out to sea. But Philoneos' mistress, who poured the wine for the libation, while they offered their prayers—prayers never to be answered, gentlemen—poured in the poison with it. Thinking it a happy inspiration, she gave Philoneos the larger draught; she imagined perhaps that if she gave him more, Philoneos would love her the more: for only when the mischief was done did she see that my stepmother had tricked her. She gave our father a smaller draught. So they poured their libation, and, grasping their own slayer, drained their last drink on earth. Philoneos expired instantly; and my father was seized with an illness which resulted in his death twenty days later. In atonement, the subordinate who carried out the deed has been punished as she deserved, although the crime in no sense originated from her: she was broken on the wheel and handed over to the executioner; and the woman from whom it did originate, who was guilty of the design, shall receive her reward also, if you and heaven so will.[182]

Philoneus had lost interest in his mistress and wanted to downgrade her from concubine to prostitute. Her position extended beyond a lack of affection, for the loss of Philoneus' interest and desire would greatly alter her quality of life. Instead, a miscalculation ended not only her patron's life but hers as well. As punishment for killing a citizen, she was tortured at the wheel and executed. The wife of Philoneus' best friend, however, was spared due to her legal status in relation to the deceased. Laws differed for the various forms of binding love regarding who received capital punishment—individuals ordering spells, curses, and/or potions were assessed according to the scope of damages caused by the spells inflicted and their intent, while the magicians who created the spells received a death sentence.[183] Additionally, *Against the Stepmother* reveals the usage of a love potion by a legal wife and a mistress working together to increase the love and affection of their beloveds. It is interesting to note that the wife, not the courtesan, was the

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[182] Antiphon, *Against the Stepmother* 1.9, 1.14-20.

[183] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 140.

advocate of employing a *philia* potion and provides the instructions to the courtesan regarding the creation of the *pharmaka*. Despite the stepmother's role as the mind behind the mission and the one providing the knowledgeable and plan, her punishment is less than Philoneos' courtesan, who was talked into the schemes of the stepmother.

The above literary and legal examples have a woman in the role of *defigens*, perpetuating an assumption that women generally used magic more frequently than their male counterparts. In order to characterize who ordered what form of love magic, Faraone developed the "misandrist model." This model lies in opposition of the contemporary literary portrayals regarding magic, which portrayed women as manipulative and insatiable, whereas he finds "men are the 'naturally' lascivious and wild gender, who often need to be sedated and controlled by 'naturally' moderate and chaste women."[184] According to this model, men represented the primary clientele ordering *agoge* spells to quench their sexual needs, whereas women predominantly ordered *philia* spells as a passive method to gain control. Consequently, women who used *agoge* spells to increase *eros* in others are viewed as aggressive. Faraone concludes that, due to their societal freedoms and aggressive nature of employment, female prostitutes were the primary women employing *agoge*. Men desiring *philia* spells and charms are construed as subordinate and desirous of increasing their social standing and favor amongst other men. This model is interesting because it transposes previous assumptions regarding magic and gender; however, one must exercise caution when constructing categorizations based upon broad assumptions, such as prostitutes being the

[184] Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, ix-x.

main female clients of *agoge* curses or that only weak, subordinate men would want to increase the charisma and luck with a magical amulet.

Often, the spells to increase *philia* were inscribed upon amulets and other everyday charms the *defigens* could wear on their person. Amulets were a popular technique to increase the wearer's *xaris*, or charisma in Greek, as a tactic to intensify *philia* and favor from those around them. Greco-Roman culture stressed the ideal man, "combining what we would call the social virtues—which serve to secure an elevated position in its society (a good name, benevolence, persuasiveness)—with what in our eyes constitute private virtues (health and the like), without forgetting…sexual attractiveness.[185] The following spell describes a method to increase *philia*: "If someone wears the right eye [of the *kinaidos* bird] underneath an unblemished lapis lazuli, on which Aphrodite has been engraved, the man who wears this will be desired. His words will please men and he will win every lawsuit. The left eye too does the same when worn by a woman."[186] The aforementioned bird is more popularly known as the *iunx* bird, that which Jason received from Aphrodite in order to induce *eros*.[187] The use of this bird in both *agoge* and *philia* spells further links the bindings to increase affection with those of a more erotic or romantic nature in the eyes of the ancient Greeks. The image of Aphrodite engraved upon her sacred blue stone of lapis lazuli increased the efficacy of

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[185] Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 159.

[186] *Cyranides* 1.10.39-42.

[187] For more information regarding the role of the *iunx* bird in love magic and mythology, see Chapter 3.

the incited *eros* or *philia*. The wearing of enchanted amulets and talismans to bring good luck also meant they were seeking favor from the gods.

The wryneck also makes an appearance in Greek poet Theocritus' *Second Idyll*, written in the third century BCE, as part of a multi-part spell featuring *agoge*, separation, and *philia* magic collectively. The monologue commences from the point of view of Simaetha, the scorned lover of Delphis, speaking to her maid Thestylis. So, under the light of the moon, she exclaims: "I would…have the fire-spell to my cruel dear that for twelve days [has] not so much as come [to] me, the wretch, nor knows not whether I be alive or dead, nay nor even hath knocked upon my door, implacable man."[188] Using barley meal and bay leaves to create an effigy representing Delphis' bones, Simaetha cast sympathetic magic by burning the barley meal in order to send forth *eros*. As the effigy of barley burned with pieces of his cloak, she spun the *iunx*. When the materials were burned down to ash, she commanded Thestylis to "smear them privily upon his lintel above, and spit for what thou doest and say 'Delphis' bones I smear.'"[189] Once Thestylis departed, Simaetha lamented to Hecate her romantic history. One day, Simaetha gazed upon the beautiful Delphis and was subsequently seized and "a parching fever laid me waste and I was ten days and ten nights abed…There's not a charmer in the town to whom I resorted not, nor witch's hovel whither I went not for a spell."[190] Finally, a magician cast a successful *agoge* binding spell, allowing the lovers to satisfy their lust.

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[188] Theocritus *Second Idyll* 2.2-4.

[189] Ibid., 2.58-61.

[190] Ibid., 2.83-93.

Then, tragedy struck when Delphis was seen with another fair maiden and did not call upon Simaetha for twelve long, torturous days. Distrusting the effectiveness of her replicated *agoge* spell to cause Delphis to return to her arms and forget the other woman, she brewed a *pharmaka* and declared, "Tonight these my fire-philters shall lay a spell upon him; but if so be they make not an end of my trouble, then, so help me Fate, he shall be found knocking at the gate of Death; for I tell thee, good Mistress, I have in my press medicines evil enough."[191]

Simaetha possessed knowledge of magical rites because of her numerous visits to magic workers in order to gain the love of Delphis. When one particularly strong *agoge* spell bound her beloved once, she sought to recreate the ritual using an effigy, *iunx* bird, and fire. If the *agoge* spell did not work, she already possessed the necessary ingredients to create a *pharmaka* with fatal results. If she could not have Delphis, no one could.

Alternatively, amulets were also worn to protect the wearer from falling victim to magic.[192] Xenophon transcribed an exchange regarding questions of magic, charms, and *philia* in *Memorabilia*:

> Socrates: They say that there are incantations, which those who know them sing against whomever they wish to make friends of them, and they also say that there are love-potions [*philtra*], which those who know them employ against whomever they wish, to make themselves loved by them...[193]
> Socrates: No, but I heard that Pericles knew many. He used to sing them against the city and make it love him.
> Critobulus: So how did Themistocles make the city love him?

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[191] Ibid., 2.160-165.

[192] Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls," 51.

[193] Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.6.10.

> Socrates: By Zeus, it was not by incantations, but he fastened an amulet around the city.[194]

Socrates himself linked love potions with incantations to "make friends." Employing an interesting metaphor, the amulet Socrates referred to was, in actuality, the Long Walls linking Athens with Piraeus and an expanded naval fleet for protection.

As several examples of binding spells detailed herein have demonstrated, circles and knots were powerful magical concepts. It is no surprise that several texts instruct the magician to create circular figures upon the tablets to increase efficacy: walls increased the safety and power of a city, which directly correlated to the increased power applied to a charm. By inscribing the text within the circle, it was protected from outside influences and locked the invoked supernatural powers within a circle of control established by the magician. Prayers for protection inscribed upon amulets consisted of the name of the invoked god or gods and the request formulated in the imperative case. If the amulet was for protection against disease, rather than a mortal enemy, it was addressed to the disease itself. If addressed to a divinity, a simple prayer requesting alleviation of symptoms was inscribed.[195]

In other instances, the amulet worn about the neck was closer to the appearance of a *defixio*: made of lead and inscribed with a protective spell to ward off earthly and otherwordly dangers, while simultaneously increasing charisma.[196] In addition to those

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[194] Ibid., 2.6.13

[195] Ibid., 119.

[196] Collins, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 116-117.

to increase favor, amulets professed to contain healing properties were in high demand. Amulets were used for a range of medical conditions, including bites, broken limbs, nausea, headaches, epilepsy, and impotence, as well as precautionary measures like pregnancy prevention.[197]

Philia spells bound the emotions of the recipient to bestow affection and favor upon the *defigens*. As affection is an equally important aspect to a romantic relationship as *eros*, the cultural relevancy and gender-blind qualities of the potions and amulets that accompany this form of magic are just as powerful as *agoge* and separation curse tablets. This form of magic allowed women to calm and control their husbands, while he may be using a *philia* amulet to increase his *xaris* in the forum or workplace. Simultaneous casting with a separation spell would not only bind the target from seeking the attention of rival lovers, but would increase the target's affection for the *defigens*. While these spells may appear the most innocuous in nature when compared to the implied violence and burning desire caused *agoge* spells and the mental forgetfulness demanded during separation bindings, but, in actuality, they are the most dangerous form of amatory spell. Rather than using a volitional and sympathetic recipe to create a curse tablet, *philia* spells often turned to the use of *pharmaka* to increase affection. As highlighted by the case *Against the Stepmother*, potions had potential to be fatal when created incorrectly, which were beneficial to some, such as the scorned Simaetha. Spells and binding curses to increase *philia* may have been cast upon others due to *phthonos*, and like the separation

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[197] Roy Kotansky, "Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets," in *Magika Hiera*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 107.

spells, show that jealousy was often an aspect of romantic love. This category also betrays the desire to be accepted and loved by one's spouse rather than simply coexisting under the same roof.

CHAPTER 6.

CONCLUSION

Curse tablets permeated every social strata of Greco-Roman society in the ancient Mediterranean Basin, allowing for a revealing glimpse of romantic endeavors at a cultural level. Although many tablets and binding spells were formulaic in nature, they provide a glimpse into the psyche of ancient individuals. Historians have portrayed the Greco-Roman sphere as a culture that emphasized power in the forum and in the home as well as glorified scenes and tales of penetration in the currently prevailing "power and penetration" theory. Personal relationships and sexual conquests were formulated for greedy measures; according to this view, marriages were formed due to societal standing and affairs were to satiate lustful desires. The male penetrator asserted his masculinity, power, and dominance through penetration, while the penetrated was seen as subordinate and feminine.

However, through the examination of curse tablets, created by magicians separate from sanctioned priests and religious practices, ordered in desperation, one finds evidence of romantic love. Many curse tablets and binding spells do indeed support prevailing power and penetration theories; however, upon closer examination of word choice and specified desires, key differences are deduced. Discovered are desires more romantic in nature, such as to spend lives together, to engage in conversations, to remove rival suitors, and to increase a lover's affection. Binding love magic is as old as the Homeric epics and as common. This form of magic is seen as both volitional, seeking a specific outcome, and sympathetic, for it uses many ceremonial aspects that represent

what is to happen in real life. Magicians operated throughout the geographical region and were trained in the dangerous magical rituals, preparation of materials, and were commonly literate. The process of invoking the divine for personal gain was not one to be taken lightly, and would have been a very dangerous idea for even the financially motivated. Additionally, the tablets evolved over time, increasing in inscription length and eloquence, and the curse creator would need to be aware of adaptations for efficacy. Rites included fiery altars, *kollosoi* effigies, knotting cords, supernatural invocation, and the act of depositing the tablet near the victim, graves, or bodies of water.

The *agoge defixiones* and binding spells were highly popular in the ancient world. They were ordered by the *defigens* to cast forth the pains of *eros* upon his or her beloved in a frantic attempt to quell his or her overwhelming emotions and call the intended forth. John J. Winkler states

> Indeed, the presence of such venomous and malicious feeling in many of the erotic magical rites offers twentieth-century readers quite a jolt. 'Love' is certainly not the *le mot juste* for the scenes of bondage and humiliation that are acted out in the central group of procedures aimed at bringing a desired person to one's bed; we can speak of this as 'passion,' 'lust,' or 'desire' but hardly as 'love.' The vanilla connotations of 'love' for us include mutual delight and consent, harmonious and balanced tenderness, perhaps a certain loss of self in the great mystery of the beloved other; they do not include wishing discomfort, annoyance, profound inner turmoil, and pain on the body and soul of one's beloved, as do the bulk of erotic incantations, both generic and prescription, found in *Papyri Graecae Magicae* and *Defixionum Tabellae*. When we further note that norm for such procedures is male agency and female victimage, we clearly have something to be concerned about.[198]

Winkler's assertions about the modern romantic ideal of love are in opposition to the overwhelming *eros* demonstrates a lack of close analysis regarding the specific

[198] Faraone and Obbink, 214-215.

commands of the *defigens*. The juxtaposition of similar spells and tablets utilizing formulaic inscriptions allowed for an analysis of motivation and personal desire. When directly compared, one is best able to ascertain the varying levels of commitment and lust felt by the *defigens*. Upon examining the commands and requested length of binding, the *agoge* tablets and spells reveal a pattern of romantic love with requests of everlasting affection instead of sexual intercourse for a few months, as well as for the target to share their thoughts and engage in meaningful conversations.

Separation spells were motivated by *phthonos*, or jealousy. While the *agoge* examples provided a clear method of delineation from a magical formula, the separation spells were not so clearly defined. *Phthonos* was a much more complex impulse than burning *eros*, despite the similarity in the removal of rationality. One could feel romantic jealousy for a multitude of reasons: a spouse was straying, or a rival suitor was interested in one's beloved; such feelings could even be found between courtesans seeking the same patron. Jealousy could indicate pains at the thought of losing a romantic love interest or the greed one feels when what one is entitled to taken away. Most importantly, it shows that one cared enough to use magical methods, whatever the danger, whether about coming together sexually or growing old with one's beloved.

Spells to induce *philia*, or affection, varied in methods of casting. Dangerous drugs, potions or even enchanted amulets accompanied curse tablets. As affection is an equally important aspect to a romantic relationship as *eros*, the cultural relevancy and gender blind qualities of the potions and amulets that accompany this form of magic are just as powerful as *agoge* and separation binding spells. This form of magic allowed

women to calm and control their husbands, whilst he may be using a *philia* amulet to increase his *xaris* in the forum or workplace. Simultaneous casting with a separation spell would not only bind the target from seeking the attention of rival lovers, but would increase the target's affection for the *defigens*. Courtesans employed love magic in order to gain and maintain their clientele while wives used them to keep their philandering husbands home and the sanctity of the *oikos* intact.

Thus, in agreement with Robert Flaceliere, "It would of course be absurd to maintain that in the fifth century no Athenian really loved his wife. For a marriage concluded on such practical grounds as the founding of a family and the promotion of legitimate business interests may very well lead to true and deep affection between a married couple."[199] As well as Larry Young's scientific study proving romantic love as a chemical reaction occurring in the brain, a close examination for notions of romantic love amongst amatory curse tablets and binding spells reveals that a wide variety of individuals sought to obtain the object of this sentiment through magical means, if cultural standards of power and penetration were not in accordance with the desires of the heart.

[199] Flaceliere, *Love in Ancient Greece*, 111-112.

APPENDIX:

AGOGE

Agoge V: Take wax [or clay] from a potter's wheel and make two figures, a male and a female. Make the male in the form of Ares fully armed, holding a sword in his left hand and threatening to plunge it into the right side of her neck. And make her with arms behind her back and down on her knees. And you are to fasten the magical material on her head or neck. Write on the figure of the woman being attracted as follows: On the head: VM; on the right ear: VM; on the left ear: VM; on the face: VM; on the right eye: VM; on the other; VM; on the right shoulder: VM; on the right arm: VM; on the other: VM; on the hands: VM; on the breast: the name, on her mother's side. Of the woman being attracted; on the heart: VM; and below the lower belly: VM; on the pudenda: VM; on the buttocks: VM; on the sole of the right foot: VM; on the other: VM.

And take thirteen copper needles and stick one in the brain while saying "I am piercing your brain, NN"; and stick two in the ears and two in the eyes and one in the mouth and two in the midriff and one in the hands and two in the pudenda and two in the soles, saying each time, "I am piercing such and such a member of her, NN, so that she may remember no one but me, NN, alone."

And take a lead tablet and write the same spell and recite it. And tie the lead leaf to the figures with thread from the loom after making 365 knots while saying as you have learned, "ABRASAX, hold her fast!" You place it, as the sun is setting, beside the grave of one who had died untimely or violently, placing beside it also the seasonal flowers. The spell to be written and recited is: "I entrust this binding spell to you, chthonic gods, VM to infernal gods and daimons, to men and women who have died untimely deaths, to youths and maidens, from year to year, month to month, day to day, hour to hour. I adjure all daimons in this place to stand as assistants beside this *daimon*. And arouse yourself for me, whoever you are, whether male or female, and go to every place and into every quarter and to every house and attract and bind her. Attract her, NN, whom NN bore and whose magical material you possess. Let her be in love with me, NN, whom she NN bore. Let her not be had in a promiscuous way, let her not be had in her ass, nor let her do anything with another man for pleasure, just me alone, NN, so that she, NN, be unable either to drink or eat, that she not be contented not be strong, not have peace of mind, that she, NN, not find sleep without me, NN, because I adjure you by the name that causes fear and trembling, the name at whose sound the earth opens, the name oat whose terrifying sound the daimons are terrified, the name at whose sound river and rocks burst asunder. I adjure you, god of the dead, VM; do not fail, god of the dead, to heed my commands and names, but just arouse yourself from the repose which holds you, whoever you are, whether male or female, and go to every palace, into every quarter, into every house, and attract her, NN, to me and with a spell keep her from eating and drinking, and do not allow her, NN, to accept for pleasure the attempt of another man, not even that of her own husband, just that of mine, NN. Instead, drag her, NN, by the hair, by the heart, by her soul, to me, NN, at every hour of life, day and night, until she comes

to me, NN, and may she, NN, remain inseparable from me. Do this, bind her for all the time of my life and help force her, NN to be serviceable to me, NN, and let her not frolic away from me for even one hour of life. If your accomplish this for me, I will quickly allow you your repose. For I am VM; attract her, bind her, NN, filled with love, desire and yearning for NN (add the usual), because I adjure you, god of the dead, by the fearful, great VM so that you attract her, NN, to me and join head to head and fasten lip to lip and join belly to belly and draw thigh close to thigh and fit black together with black, and let her, NN, carry out her own sex acts with me, NN, for all eternity.
Then write on the other side of the tablet the heart and the characters as they are below: VM[200]

Agoge VI: I bind you unbreakable bonds of the Fates in the underworld and powerful Necessity. For I invoke you *daimones* who lie here, who are continually nourished here and who reside here and also you young ones who have died prematurely. I invoke you by the unconquerable god VM. Rouse yourselves, you *daimones* who lie here and seek out Euphemia, to whom Dorothea gave birth, for Theon, to whom Proechia gave birth. Let her not be able to sleep for the entire night, but lead her until she comes to his feet, loving him with a frenzied love, with affection and with sexual intercourse. For I have bound her brain and hands and viscera and genitals and heart for the love of me, Theon. If you ignore me and fail to carry out quickly what I tell you, the sun will not sink below the earth, nor will Hades and earth continue to exist. But if you bring Euphemia, to whom Dorothea gave birth, to me, Theon, to whom Proechia gave birth, I will give you Osiris VM, the brother of Isis, who brings cool water and will give rest to your soul. But if you fail to do what I tell you, VM will burn you up. I invoke you, *daimones* who lie here: VM. I hand over (this spell) to you in the land of the dogs. Bind Euphemia for love of me, Theon. *Daimones*, I place an oath on you in/by the stele of the gods. I place on oath upon you by the names of the all-seeing god: VM. I invoke you who are content in the temple and (are content with) the blood seized/drunk by the great god IOTHATH. I invoke you by the one who sits upon the four points of the wind. Do not ignore me, but act very quickly, for I have commanded you VM. Let me not be forced to say the same things again IOE IOE. Lead Euphemia, to whom Dorothea gave birth, to me, Theon, to whom Proechia gave birth, loving me with love, desire, affection, sexual intercourse, and a frenzied love. Cause her limbs, her liver, and her genitals to burn until she comes to me, loving me and not ignoring me. For I invoke you by powerful Necessity—VM—so that you may bind Euphemia to me, Theon, in love and longing and desire for a period of ten months from today, which is the twenty-fifth of Hathur in the second year of the indiction. Once again I invoke you by the one who rules over you, so that you do not ignore me; and again I invoke you by the one who governs the air; and again I invoke you by the seven thrones—VM. Grab Euphemia and lead her to me, Theon, loving me with a frenzied love, and bind her with bonds that are unbreakable, strong and adamantine, so that she loves me, Theon; and do not allow her to eat, drink, sleep, or joke or laugh but make (her) rush out of every place and dwelling, abandon father, mother, brothers, and

[200] PGM 4.296-466.

sister, until she comes to me, Theon, loving me, wanting me (with a) divine, unceasing, and wild love. And if she holds someone else to her bosom, let her put him out, forget him, and hate him, but love, desire, and want me; may she give herself to me freely and do nothing contrary to my will. You holy names and powers, be strong and carry out this perfect spell. Now, now. Quickly, Quickly.[201]

[201] This tablet (JGG 30) was discovered in a cemetery north of Assuit. It was inscribed upon a very large sheet of papyrus, measuring 22.5 x 55 cm. The papyrus and accompanying dolls were found stuffed into a pot together.

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