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'What' s in a list?' Listing in Greek and Graeco-Roman malign magical texts

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AT THE RISK of some over-simplification, we may say that there are two sharply different models of magic on offer at the moment.[1] One of the models is that associated with Stanley Tambiah, who, picking up many of Malinowski's views, tried to elude Frazer's alignment of magic with science (Tambiah 1973, 1990:65–83). Magic does not aim at causal reasoning at all; its key element is a claim to power. Tambiah distinguished between an inner semantic frame of ritual acts, and an outer pragmatic frame. Magical acts transfer properties imperatively; magical language is to be classed as 'telic,' or, in J.L. Austin's usage, 'performative.' The transfer of the properties is effected by two means: (1) metaphorical and analogical transfers mediated by manipulation of objects which act as transformers or switches; (2) verbal transfer of the energy of wholes by way of metonymical naming of parts. On this view magic may appear Other but is in fact familiar, being at bottom persuasive redefinition. The contrasting view, associated with C.R. Hallpike, reaffirms that magic really is the Other, albeit in a purely psychological sense, the fallacy of conceptual realism (Hallpike 1979:384–423). Conceptual realism is the assumption, implicit or not, that the contents of consciousness have the same kind of existence as objects in the real world; and the attribution to external reality of characteristics which are really subjective. Examples of it are the attention paid to dreams and their interpretation; the belief that knowledge of a name gives power over the named; the participation of the represented in the representation; the production of like by like. Hallpike is an evolutionist and takes the beliefs and statements of 'primitives' as literal statements. The rationality of such beliefs for those that hold them can only be saved by invoking different psychological premisses.

1 For the sake of argument, let us agree neither to collapse the content of 'magic' into the issue of disputes over legitimate use of symbolic power, nor (by aligning it with the concept of Taboo) to take it simply as the product of anthropological misrepresentation of native categories and presuppositions.

Now the main difficulty with Tambiah's view is the status of the categories metaphor and metonymy: are these actors' or observers' categories? If they are actors' categories does that mean that they do not really believe in magical effects but only speak as if they did (*cf.* Glucklich 1997:62)? If they are solely observers' categories, are we doing more than wishing away the difficulty? What status do actors' representations enjoy? It is telling that in his more recent account, he ends up by trying to soften the notion of rationality. As for conceptual Realism, it has rightly been pointed out that Hallpike collapses the distinction between collective representations and individual thinking (Shweder 1982:355). It has been shown, for example, that eight- to ten-year old Hausa children believe dreams to be hallucinations or fantasies; but as adults acknowledge them to be external, providing insight into the soul's wanderings (Shweder and LeVine 1975). In other words, the 'magical' view is a deliberate assertion of a higher, non-empirical, truth. Moreover, is conceptual realism a total mind-set or simply one pair of spectacles available to primitives? Can they dip in and out of conceptually-real representations? If what Hallpike describes as conceptual realism turns out to be a special mode of religious looking or thinking, then it must be merely a pseudo-scientific way of presenting the problem. I do not here propose to try to tackle this fundamental dispute directly, but prefer to elude its stark alternatives, if not to wish it away entirely, by looking at a single issue in a single context, that of the deployment of lists in the request sections of Greek and Graeco-Roman malign magical texts.[2] For if any point seems to have been established in this area, it is the need for general views to be tested and explored in particular contexts.

The list has traditionally been thought of as a fine example of magical thinking. When the essence of magic was conceived to be the production and manipulation of *mana*, the obvious explanation for lists in magical contexts was that they are a sort of linguistic central-locking device, designed to block all exit-routes by naming every possibility. On this view, the magical list is analogous to the legal draughtsman's anticipations that we find amply developed at Rome in the later

2 By 'Greek' I denote the Greek texts on lead, mainly but by no means exclusively Sicilian and Attic, prior to *c.* 250 BC; by 'Graeco-Roman' texts in Greek and Latin, including those more properly termed Graeco-Egyptian, on various materials including papyrus, dating mainly from the Principate. 'Malign' specifically excludes texts concerned with divination, and those requesting lists of benefits. 'Request sections,' a term really only applicable to developed ritual magical texts, signifies that I am not here concerned with the lists which really interested such practitioners, namely lists of appropriate divinities and their epithets. But the traditional account of these too (*e.g.* Hopfner 1921–4/1974–90:1 §§682–4) is overdue for revision. For technical reasons, Greek has been transliterated or translated. In references to the Greek *defixiones*, especially from Sicily, I have given the main publications, as a reminder of the instability of many readings. My translations are of what I consider the likeliest text. I would like to thank the editors for their careful reading of the manuscript.

2nd century BC, for example one of the stipulations concerning the selection of jurors under the *lex repetundarum* on the *Tabula Bembina*:

> *dum nei quem eorum legat utei ioud]ex siet, quoi is queive ei, quei petet, gener socer vitricus privignusve siet, queive ei sobrinus[siet propiusve eum ea cognatione atingat, queive e]i sodalis siet, queive tr(ibunus) pl(ebis), q(uaestor), IIIvir cap(italis), IIIvir a(gris) d(andis) a(dsignandis), tribun<us> mil(itum) l(egionibus) IIII prim[is aliqu]a{e} earum siet fueritve, queive {queive} in senatu siet fueritve* .... (Crawford 1996:1, lines 21f. [1:67])

> provided that he do not choose] to be [a juror any of those persons,] to whom the man who shall sue may be related, or who may be related to the man who shall sue, as father-in-law, son-in-law, stepfather, or stepson, or who [may be] a cousin to him, [or may be a closer blood-relative to him than that, or who] may be a *sodalis* [to him], or who may be or have been tribune of the plebs, quaestor, IIIvir capitalis, IIIvir for the granting and assigning of lands, tribune of the soldiers [for any one] of the first four legions, or who may have been in the senate .... (tr. Crawford).

The decline of commitment to *mana* as an explanatory category which set in with Malinowski removed the rationale for the explanation, though I dare say that it is still the residual or sedimented story that many people carry about with them. On the other hand, just as Hallpike has himself been accused of magical thinking in appealing to conceptual Realism, we might well ask why anyone should think that the act of naming could effect the blocking of escape-routes: why should the *mana* stop leaking away simply because the speaker can catalogue items? The so-called explanation simply transfers the problem somewhere else. It really amounts only to the routine invocation of the notion of primitive mentality, a category itself constructed as the imaginary inversion of 'our' reason.

An early alternative view of listing in relation specifically to magic is that of the eminent Arabist H.A. Winkler writing in the late 1920s. He held that there was '[ein] Sinn des Zauberers für Totalität' (1930:14–23), a feeling evidenced for example in the listing of religious books so as to bundle together all their religious force: 'By the Torah and what we read in it ... by the Gospel and what we read in it ... by the Psalter and what we read in it ... by the mighty Koran and what we read in it' (al-Dayrabī, *Mujarrabāt,* in Winkler 1930:14). His interest however was mainly in protective magic. For example he cites (Winkler 1930:14f) a conjuration of a possessed patient, part of which runs:

> I break thee, thou magic, thou knot, thou cunning, thou horror, prepared for N.N., whether thou art made of wood, or of clay, of stone, from a finger-nail, or iron, or bone, whether thou art something plaited or of thread, whether a man made thee, or a woman, a Moslem male or female, a Jew male or female, a Christian male or female, a magician male or female, whether thou wert made on land or water, whether thou wert given to a bird to devour or buried in a cemetery—of whatever kind thou art, I have broken thee.... (My translation of Winkler's German version.)

Winkler understood this procedure in psychological terms: the magician can conceptualize 'everything,' but is not emotionally satisfied with that: he feels he must fill in the category 'everything' as far as he can—we would add, given his understanding of the requirements of the context. The very common use in Arabic magic of allusions to the cardinal points is a kind of routinization of this concern: the cardinal points stand for the notion of totality from a spatial point of view, and are therefore particularly suitable for use in protective amulets. The point of lists, by implication, is not a supposed ambition to be exhaustive for fear of power escaping; rather, they allude to an unstated claim to total efficacy. But Winkler was not content to leave it at that, at a claim: he took it for granted that he had to connect the claim with a primitive preference for feelings over reason: 'Mir scheint, daß wir einem Verständnis dieser Vorstellung näher kommen, wenn wir sie aus der reinen Intellektsphäre in die des Gefühls oder doch auf dieser Grundlage verlegen' (1930:23).

The strangeness of magic is due to its negation of reason; a stock binary scheme—'reason is the opposite of emotion'—provides the unstated premise of the *explanans*, and indeed its sole ground.[3] The western scholar is privileged—in a scarcely veiled metaphor for colonial power—to penetrate the mind of the primitive. The Arab magician under colonial power has no secrets:

> Um einen Kranken zu heilen, greift der Zauberer nicht den Krankheitsherd an, sondern er bildet die Figur des Dämons, der den Kranken eben krank gemacht hat. Dadurch, daß er dann diese Figur ausdrücklich als den betreffenden Dämon bezeichnet hat, ist sie wirklich mit dem Dämon identisch. Eine derartige Denkoperation ist uns nicht möglich. (*ibid.*)

The very enquiry into magic, its objective, indeed sympathetic study—and Winkler is very sympathetic, even empathetic with his texts—is itself, as has long been recognized, hopelessly enmeshed in a much larger ideological matrix.

This truism reminds us of another, that explanations are only as good as the contexts they invoke. Do we need a special acount of magical lists, one which invites us to ignore the parallel existence of other sorts of lists and catalogues in the same society? The best, indeed virtually the only, systematic enquiry into the significance of lists and catalogues in Greek and Latin epic begins from the intuition of E.R. Curtius that the catalogue is the basic or underlying form of epic poetry. One of the roots of the epic catalogue is the desire to assert a truth-claim:

3 *Cf.* Kagarow 1929:39: 'In dem Bestreben das Gewünschte in Worten mögligst klar auszudrücken, greift der Mensch, von seinem Gefühle getrieben, zu Übertreibungen ... diese Methode der sympathetischen Übertreibung beruht auf dem Glauben an die Allmacht des Wortes.'

> (Der Katalog) fordert seiner Intention nach Authentizität, ist selbst informativ, anonym und intersubjektiv; er schließt Gefühl und Seele aus und nennt als Ur-kunde das Seiende, jedem innerhalb der Ordnung entsprechendes Gewicht zugestehend. (Kühlmann 1973:10).

That is a point we shall certainly want to come back to later. Obviously striking is the fact that for Kühlmann the list excludes precisely those qualities—emotions—which Winkler saw as crucial to their motivation. But more interesting in the present connection is that Kühlmann also found it necessary not merely to distinguish epic listing fundamentally from what he dismisses as mere 'rhetorische Häufung,' but also to invoke another tap-root for the epic catalogue, namely magic or ritual. Here he felt he had merely to cite the *Enuma eliš*:

> [Marduk] brought forth Imhullu 'the Evil Wind', the Whirlwind, the Hurricane,
> The Fourfold Wind, the Sevenfold Wind, the Cyclone, the Matchless Wind,
> Then he sent forth the winds he had brought forth, ...
> (*Enuma eliš* 4.45–7, tr. Speiser in Pritchard 1958:1, 32)

or the listing of the days that Gilgameš watched over the bed of his sick friend:

> Stricken is Enkidu, one day, [a second day].
> Enkidu's [suffering], on his bed [increases].
> A third day, a fourth day [...].
> A fifth day, a sixth and a seventh;
> an eighth, a ninth [and a tenth day],
> Enkidu's suffering, on his bed, [increases].
> An eleventh and a twelfth day [...].
> [Stricken] is Enkidu on his bed [of pain]!
> (*Gilgameš* 7.4 frag., 7–14, tr. Speiser in Pritchard 1958:1, 59)

For Kühlmann it was clear that this type of listing is different from lists in Greek or Roman epic, in that it is essentially magical: 'Indem die Dinge Bestandteil eines Sprachrituals werden, wird der Katalog zur Form Sicherheit gebender Vollständigkeit' (1973:18 n.16). The impulse to magical listing is here an existential insecurity, which gives wings to the desire to exhaust reality by pedantic enumeration of every individual member of a class.[4] The ancient Near East (with the notable exception of the Old Testament, which is recruited to illustrate the idea of the catalogue as 'antiquarian learning'), being by definition Other, represents the magical list, things in and for themselves; Greek (and Roman) epic offers us, by contrast, as the prototype of our literature, the list as a component of a rational literary project,

4 His own view of his position was that he was limiting and rationalizing the attempt by the Hungarian classicist K. Marót (1960:321–476) to derive the epic catalogue entirely from its supposed ritual origins; *cf.* too Massart 1959.

the list integrated into narrative. One reason, therefore, for looking at the use of lists in magical contexts is as an entry into the issue of the strangeness of magical thinking. Both Winkler and Kühlmann, in their different ways, remind us that commitment to a dichotomy between 'our' reason and 'their' magic favours explanations which reproduce the structure of the major premiss. *Qua vicit, victos protegit ille manu.* Fading commitment to the dichotomy leaves their confident contrasts beached high on shore; but it also leaves us free to look at magical lists themselves more closely, in their specific contexts. For if anything is obvious about lists in Greek and Graeco-Roman malign texts it is that they are not all of the same kind. Before turning to some examples of this diversity, I should say a word or two about the preconceptions we might bring to the enquiry.

We may first glance at the possible role of literacy in fostering, or at any rate conditioning, listing in magical contexts. The work of Jack Goody, already mentioned in this volume by Jens Braarvig, and from which my title comes (Goody 1977:74–111), provides what we might call the strong claim here. The appearance of lists, especially in the Near Eastern high civilisations of scribal literacy, offered Goody in his earliest book on the topic (1977) a striking illustration of the way in which literacy seemed to foster shifts not only in the representation of language but also cognitively. The list contrasts sharply with the discursive flow of natural language, highlighting the separation between words, revealing anomalies in category-sets, and permitting new ways of ordering the linguistic world, by way of alphabetic ordering, by sound, by topic. A flurry of cognitive-anthropological studies threw cold water on most of these claims: literacy is not an autonomous factor but an ideological one, and its effects cannot meaningfully be abstracted from those of the wider culture (Street 1984). Against his detractors, Goody sought ten years later (1986, 1987) to nuance his earlier study, while substantially defending the autonomous thesis. We may here note particularly his argument that literacy causes a shift in the understanding of the smallest unit of sense from 'utterance' to the individual word, which can be inspected in and for itself,[5] and his insistence on how the fact of literacy, in providing the possibility of representing thoughts to someone not present (the letter is the genre most rapidly appropriated by newly literate societies), subtly conditions the presentation of narrative and the ways in which material can be arranged (1987:232, 274–6). The heuristic value of these points lies in the suggestion that, so far from listing being a typical feature of magical mentality, it might rather be fostered by the shift from a primarily oral magical practice to a primarily written one; and further that the skill with which lists are deployed may tell us not so much about the magical mentality quotient as the degree of literacy of their author and the role of listing in his or her society.

5 Note, for example, the ambiguities of Greek *logos* and *rhêma*.

To allow these possibilities we do not need to follow Goody in his thesis of autonomy. With the advent of writing, listing of many different kinds became institutionalized in Greek and Roman culture. It is familiar, for example, that children learned to read and write through the memorization not merely of the written alphabet but of every possible variety of syllable.[6] At a higher level of education, the memorization of written lists was an essential technique in rhetorical education: listing was the handmaid of rhetorical fluency, and it depended for its articulation on the fact of writing. Some Greek writers on memory drew up long lists, consisting of thousands of words to be retained—lists so long that mnemonic devices were required to recall them.[7] Lists of many kinds were also an essential feature of city administration, most especially of democratic administration, from the call-out of the army to the scrutiny of officials, from the ordering of state income and expenditure to the arrangement of processions, from the list of this month's prytany-members to that of the jurors for the day. Some of the earliest known public lists itemize victors at games, and later in competitions in poetry and drama. Temples inventorized their treasure, and listed the wonders that took place there. The development of an encyclopaedic tradition in the early Hellenistic period massively extended the cultural role of lists: the well-known catalogue of Aeschylus' plays in the Florentine and Venetian manuscripts must stem from this period, as well as catalogues of orators' speeches and philosophers' writings, and the catalogues of famous libraries, beginning with Aristotle's.[8] Pliny's *Natural History* contains hundreds of lists mainly derived from this grand mustering of the world, from Mediterranean islands to sudden deaths of eminent Romans, from the occasions on which three suns have appeared to the varieties of the stone *adamas*. Behind any list we may find in a magical context lies this massive cultural deployment, not necessarily of course as an immediate context, but certainly as remote one.

Now such inventories exemplify the obvious point about lists, their refusal of the connecting powers of language. They confirm our ordinary prejudice that lists consist of mere sequences of words, unconstrained by syntax, sophistication or taste, that they lack architecture:

> L. Siccius Dentatus ... captured spoils 34 times, had bestowed on him 18 spear-shafts, 25 breast-badges, 83 necklets, 160 bracelets, 26 crowns (including 14 civic crowns, eight of gold, three mural crowns, one siege-rescue crown), a bag of money, ten prisoners of war and with them 20 cows. (Pliny *HN* 7.101f.)

6 The *loci classici* are D.H. *Comp.* 25, Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.26, 30f. (*syllabis nullum compendium est*); Ath. 10.79, 453cd.

7 *Rhet.Her.* 3.23.38; on mnemonic techniques, mainly in rhetorical education, see now Small 1997:81–137.

8 On all this see the famous article by Otto Regenbogen, 1950:1412–82.

But this prejudice conveniently elides the obvious fact that lists occur in many other contexts, specifically literary contexts, in which this feature of the 'brute list' is to a greater or smaller degree put to creative work. The most famous lists in antiquity were precisely the Homeric Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.484–877)[9] and its pendants in the *Aeneid* (7.641–817, 10.163–214), and the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (*cf.* West 1985.) The latter of course is largely lost, but its probable length, to say nothing of Hesiod's list of famous seers, *Melampodia*, in at least three books (Löffler 1963:25–9, Huxley 1969:54–9) raises the question whether the sheer length of a list is to be read as its careering out of control, as a sign of a frenzy of agglutination—one thinks for example of Robert Burton's tirade against lovers' delusions (*Anatomy of Melancholy* [1638] 3.2.3 [3:155f. Everyman ed.])—or compared rather with the feat of the weight-lifter, who round after round triumphantly demonstrates his strength by lifting yet another increment of metal above his head (Spufford 1989:5). In these epic lists, the spatial organisation of material has wholly, largely, or temporarily replaced the conventional narrative form of development: the gain is that each element of the list is allowed roughly equal weight, the epic as a whole stands still as it were, marks time, so that the elements of the list may each be given due attention. The effect is of an equable succession, like that of small, regular, waves breaking onto a beach. As such, the epic list is perfectly in keeping with the wider generic aim, the assertion of the poet's authority. The epigonal epic list, like Virgil's or Ovid's, then returns to the model in search of local discriminations, subtler literary effects.

A list that occurs in the context of continuous discourse, whether verse or prose, that is, a list which is not conceived purely as a catalogue, wholly in terms of its serviceability, by that very token draws attention to its refusal of the connecting power of language: it draws attention to its sacrifice of one central advantage of language, and thereby alerts us to its own expectations of rhetorical gain. One of these is the prescriptiveness of what has been selected, which diverts attention away from what has been omitted. What is not listed slips out of ken. The contents of a list come to seem, through the device of enumeration, the most important matters in the present connection. By its very nature, the list grabs attention, claims authority for its way of representing the world.

A related feature of such a list, as Kühlmann observed, is its apparent impersonality, its freedom from authorial presence: the succession of elements squeezes out the author, and suggests that the list belongs somehow to the fabric of things. On the other hand, such a list also presents us with a perpetual uncertainty as to how to take its division of reality: is it best understood as an active, purposive fragmentation of the world, an act of magisterial disarticulation, or as a passive collection of things that are lying about, that need to be brought together? Does the list break down the unity of experience in order to assert the power of the list-maker over, and with, the matter in question; or does it rather tend towards holism, assembling *disjecta membra* into an implied totality? Only close attention to the list's tacit organisation—and in antiquity there seem to be no truly disordered lists of the kind that become common from the Romantic period onwards—will allow a decision here; but either way awareness of the question permits us to perceive that part of the rhetorical achievement of a list may be precisely this uncertainty about the grain or flavour of its reading.

9 Ironically enough, of course, a list, whatever its ultimate origins, preserved by oral means.

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To talk of rhetoric is to talk, however allusively, of power. We may certainly agree with Tambiah that what is crucial in magic is a claim to power: more than anything, the practitioner, be he or she professional or not, requires the authority to intervene in a given situation. The holder of an institutional position, a priest of public cult, has such authority prescriptively. At a lower and more restricted level, the *mantis*, the *teratoskopos*, the root-cutter, the wise-man or -woman, may be acknowledged locally to have the power to intervene in certain kinds of situation. But we may make a distinction between willing and reluctant acknowledgement. Where divination or healing is in question, we may say that the acknowledgement, though restricted, is willing. The case with malign magic is different: in the Greek and Roman worlds, sorcery was everywhere feared, and sanctioned for the harm it could be shown to have produced. As Plato observes in the *Laws*, although the truth about such matters is hard to learn, there can be no doubting the fear that sorcery inspired in ordinary people in fourth-century Athens:

> It would be vain to try to convince people beset with such suspicions of each other, to tell them that, if they see a wax maumet set up in doorways, or at crossroads, or at family graves, they should think nothing of it, because the true significance such things is opaque. (*Leg.* 11, 933a5–b5)

In the Roman provinces and surely in the Greek world too, the common fate of persons believed to have caused a death or repeated misfortune (especially general agricultural disaster, such as a damaging hail-storm) by magical action was to be killed by a crowd of enraged neighbours or townsfolk, with or without a form of trial by the magistrates (*cf.* Millar 1981:71f.). Thus Meroë, the witch-innkeeper of Socrates' story in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, is well known in Larissa to have turned various enemies into animals or monsters and closed up the uterus of a lover's wife

for eight years so that *velut elephantum paritura distenditur*, she was blown up as though she were carrying an elephant (*Met.* 1.9):[10]

> As these acts kept occurring and many people suffered harm, public indignation grew strong and it was decided that she should be punished on the following day by the harshest means possible—stoning. (1.10, tr. Hanson, adapted)

Of course this plan goes awry when the witch learns of it: she stops up all the house-doors; but the humour should not cause us to doubt the essential truth of the scenario.

That being so, we might argue that the marginal practitioner, professional or not, stood in particular need of authority when performing malign magic. That is, the fact of offending against social rules required some extra justification: subjectively that requirement expressed itself in the idea that malign magic is more difficult than beneficent magic. One implication would be that the incantation, the verbal element of a magical rite, was understood to require greater intensity, greater imaginative effort. Another, that malign magical practice was continually on the look-out for symbolic reinforcement, preferably from the public realm, in an attempt not merely to reassure itself of its moral acceptability, but also to draw upon the acknowledged authority of those symbols. The crucial watershed here, however, was the development in the Hellenistic period of a strong view of magic, itself conditional upon Alexander's conquests and the subsequent transmission to the Greek world of the developed 'magical' lore of Babylonia and Egypt.[11] This lore became a main vehicle of the transition in the ancient world from marginal practice to ritual magic, between what Pierre Bourdieu, expanding on Max Weber, has called 'objective profanation' and 'intentional profanation' (1971:309–12). Although marginal practice continued to flourish, ritual magic distanced itself from it by appealing to the symbolism of the negative, the secret, and the Other; but still more through its greater command of erudite and elevated, that is literary, language, and its determination to display that command in its incantatory practice.

One measure of the difference between marginal practice and ritual magic—it is of course also a measure of the difference in the practitioners' education and social location—is the rôle played in the acquisition of authority by knowledge of divine names. This form is highly developed in the temple magic of Egypt, and still more so in the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri, and hence in the practice of some

10 *Cf.*: 'The next day the wife coming out at the same door was taken sick, and began to swell from time to time as if she had been with child; by which swelling she came so great in body as she feared she should burst, and to this day is not restored to health;' from *A detection of damnable driftes ... at Chelmisforde in Essex ... April 1579, ap.* Rosen 1969:97.

11 On Walter Burkert's view, this would count as the second cultural borrowing by the Greeks of magical knowledge (1984:43–84).

learned practitioners in the Principate, at Hadrumetum in North Africa for instance, indirectly dependent upon it. But, whatever the case in literary hymns, and particularly the *Orphic Hymns*, it is poorly developed in Greek and Roman marginal practice, at any rate in the curse tablets, where there is virtually no interest in such knowledge. A fine example of the shift is the invocation to the powers of the Underworld inserted in the early 3rd century AD by Julius Africanus into the text of Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, to enable Odysseus to evoke the shade of Teiresias in the manner then supposed proper, combining Greek and outlandish divinities :

> [Hear] me, gracious and guardian, well-born
> [An]ubis; [hear, sly] one, O secret mate,
> Osiris' saviour; come, Hermes, come, robber,
> Well-trussed, infernal Zeus; Grant [my desire],
> Fulfil this charm. [Come hither, Hades,] Earth,
> Unfailing Fire, O Titan Helios;
> [Come,] Iaweh, Phthas, Phre, guardian of laws,
> [And Neph]tho, much revered; Ablanatho,
> In blessings rich, with [fiery] serpents girded.
>
> (*PGM* XXIII 1–8, transl. E.N. O'Neil in *GMPT*)

An apparatus of spoof scholarship explains why it no longer forms part of the received text:

> Either the poet himself suppressed the remainder because it was an elaboration of the spell in order to preserve the decorum of the work, or the Peisistratids, as they were assembling the other verses, withheld them because they considered them foreign to the passage here. (*ibid.*, transl. O'Neil)

Another source of authority also well-developed in late Egyptian and analogous contexts is knowledge of voces magicae, ostensibly utterances in the language of the gods. Such magical words are hardly found in ordinary Greek or Roman malign texts; where they do commonly occur, in healing incantations, they undoubtedly lack the refined explanation current among the educated (*cf.* Gordon 1996, Versnel 1996). A third is the clear evidence offered by the 'magical hymns' of a desire, and a limited capacity, to use literary means of embellishment in written incantations (*cf.* Heitsch 1959:223–36, *SupplMag* 49.64–73). We should therefore expect that one primary determinant of the lists to be found in malign magical texts is the type of tradition they belong to. In general, the complexity and interest of the request list is a function of the degree to which the practitioner or, more neutrally, the composer, felt himself—it is here hardly requisite to add herself—to be heir to a developed magical tradition of weight and consequence; a sense of compositional decorum meant that there would be pressure for the request section to be in keeping with the demonstration of arcane knowledge of the divine world.

The second determinant is the degree to which the written document was perceived as the actual or main means of effecting the magical action foreseen or desired: that is, the place of document-mindedness in the collective representation of the possible ways of effecting malign magical action.

I therefore draw a relatively sharp distinction between the type of request lists to be found in classical and early Hellenistic malign magical texts, and their lineal descendants into the Roman Empire, on the one hand, and those found in the late Hellenistic and imperial texts which show the influence of ritual magic on the other. The detailed picture is naturally more clouded than this distinction allows for, but I do not think that it is a serious distortion.

1. Classical and early Hellenistic lists

Ignorant of a learned tradition of magical lore, but mindful as it were of the principle that 'superiority of personal power or position increases the power of the blessing or curse' (Crawley 1911:370), the texts of my first category had to acquire authority where they could, mainly through elements adapted from the public realm. The appeal to Demeter, Persephone, Hermes, Hekate, Gê, and other gods of the civic pantheon conceived as having a special relationship to the Underworld, is most appropriately viewed in this context of the need for authority, as a means of providing the curse with additional weight or substance, of dressing up in grander clothes the malignity, despair, or desperation it expressed: direction gives point. But the civic realm itself acknowledged in part the capacity and willingness of these divinities to hear curses. Writing itself constitutes another claim drawn from the public realm. One of the things that Goody noted in an informant's house in Northern Ghana was blackened papers, inscribed in Arabic, hanging from a house shrine in the form of a gourd. The informant did not know Arabic and was not a Moslem: they had been written by an itinerant *mallam*. But the informant felt that just as writing enables people to communicate more effectively at a distance, so it might afford a better means of communicating with distant deities (Goody 1968:201). One or two Attic tablets sure enough call themselves 'letters' (*DTWü* 102.1, with Bravo 1987:203f.; *DTWü* 103a.1; *cf.* Watson 1991:200). The idea that gods can actually read, just like their worshippers, seems to be already assumed in the Archaic practice of inscribing statues of gods (Pucci 1988:484).

Some curses seek also to recruit authority by appealing to the moral high ground, for example a mid-to-late 5th-century list from Passo Marinaro at Kamarina in Sicily, which concludes: 'may they all be drained of blood, the blackguards.'[12] Rather more do so by drawing upon public and legal language. This is the tacit force of the performatives we so frequently find in these documents, particularly the words *katagraphô, katadô, paradidômi* in Greek, *commendo, mando, demando* in Latin, to say nothing of words for conjuring or adjuring. At least one Attic curse-tablet opens with the formula *Theoi: Agathê Tykhê* regularly used in public inscriptions (Stŷd 1903:5 = SGD 18; also *DTWü* 158.1.) We also find a number of words for the act of solemnly burying lead tablets which evoke the familiar institution of depositing something precious or important for safe-keeping, either with a trusted person or directly in the ground: *paratithêmi*, for example,[13] made explicit at Amathous in Cyprus by the complement *tên parathêkên*;[14] also the more formal legal word *parakatatithêmi* and its derivatives.[15] But *parakatathêkê* also has significant religious associations: not only is it used of placing money in a temple for safe keeping (*e.g. IG* II.2 1407.42), it is the word used by Pausanias in connection with the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone at the Kabeireion at Thebes (9.25.6): Demeter is herself supposed to have entrusted some object to Prometheus and Aitnaios, two inhabitants of the mythical city of Kabeira. And we may recall the sheet of tin secreted by Aristomenes at Messene, which revealed the mysteries of the Great Gods (4.26.8). In these cases the object hidden is of great symbolic value; so that the wider context of the burial of a curse tablet surely includes such divine and heroic models—its significance is not simply the deposition of

12 *SEG* 4:30.27–9 = *IGDS* 121 = SGD 88; *cf. DTWü* 84a.1f.: 'his wicked tongue, and his wicked *thymos*, and his wicked *psykhê*' (of two men severally, IV^{a}); 98.6f.: 'Beloved Gê, come to my aid: I am being wronged by Euryptolemos and Xenophôn, and therefore do bind them.'

13 *DTAud* 86a.1 = Ziebarth 1934:1040 no. 22.1 (mid.) (Boeotia); other examples are from the Principate: *SEG* 40:919 = *AE* 1991:1304 (Savaria); *DTAud* 155a.47f. = b.4 (Porta S. Sebastiano, Rome); *SupplMag* 48.2 (*cf.* Martinez 1991:36f.).

14 *DTAud* 22.39, 56 (*cf.* Drew-Bear 1972:106f.); 26.27f.; 27.23; 29.25f.; 30.31; 31.25; 32.37; 35.26; for the force, *cf.* Hdt. 6.86 *ad fin.* I take it that the word *katathema* repeatedly used in the same group does not mean, as *LSJ* has it, 'accursed thing' but is a nonce formation from *katatithêmi* which can mean 'deposit' (*e.g.* Hdt. 5.92.η), 'dedicate.' The word *diathêkê*, 'disposition (usually by will)' in the poorly-preserved *DTAud* 189b.*ef*6 (Rome), unless purely imaginary, suggests a similar metaphor. However I do not know any example of *e.g. depositum* as an image in a Latin tablet: the phrase *animam suam in templo deponat* at Bath (*TSMB* 31.4–6), which echoes *DTAud* 250b.13, *[ha]nimam et ispiritum deponat in omnem prolium* (Carthage), and 300b.7–9 *depona[s] eum* at Tartera (Cirta), is of course largely irrelevant in our connection.

15 The earliest example is *DTWü* 100a.7 = *SEG* 37:217; much later, *DTAud* 161.36 (Porta S. Sebastiano); the word is relatively common however since it occurs in *PGM* IV 335, and so in *SupplMag* 46.1, 47.1, 49.6, 50.5 (but not 48.2); *cf.* also *PGM* XV 8f. The legal allure of the word in 4th-century Athens is suggested by Aeschin. 1.187; Dem. 21.177; but it perhaps thereafter becomes routinised, *cf.* Feissel and Gascou 1989:559f. no. 12 (Syria, III^{p}).

documents with a court.[16] It is in this context of the search for authority based on public usage that we may place the first type of list that I want to look at, the list of names arranged in a column.

'Natural' lists

Disregarding the matter of *boustrophedon* and retrograde writing, we may notionally arrange the possibilities of organising a list of names along a continuum. One pole of this continuum is represented by the continuous sequence of names from left to right; the other by the columnar list.

Given the model of epic lists, we may take it that the most 'natural' solution is the first, as in a 5th-century example from the temple of Demeter at Gaggera (Selinous) in Sicily:

> Pithôn, Gorgias, Pythod<ô>ros, Detas, Khim<a>ros, Philoleôs?, Akroiôi, Selinôi.[17] (*SEG* 16:572 = *IGAS* 70 = SGD 105 = *IGDS* 34)

There are several possible variations on this scheme, all of which suggest an uneasiness or discomfort at the nakedness of the simple list. I select:

(a) Inserting the conjunction 'and' between each name in the list, as in the text from South of the Acropolis at Athens cited earlier:

> I bind and shall not release Antiklês son of Antiphanês, and Antiphanês son of Patroklês, and Philoklês, and Kleokharês, and Philoklês, and Smikrônidês, and Simanthês, and Timanthês, and Timanthês. (Strÿd 1903:5 = SGD 18)

The repetition of the final name here makes it plausible to suppose that the writer had a list of names in front of him; the patronymics of Antikles and Antiphanes were added above the line. The repetition of the connective here provides an effect of sonorous emphasis—a technique we find often enough in lists of names in the Attic orators.[18]

(b) Expanding the list by means of additional information, patronymics and prominent clan-membership for example, as in a mid-5th-century text from Gaggera (Selinous):

16 *Pace* Harrauer 1987:58f. Ancient courts—the experience of so many curse-writers proves it—were not places where 'justice' could even pretend to prevail. The deposition of a curse was intended to have a powerful effect, an effect analogous to these mythical deposits.

17 Other examples: Shkorpil 1908:69f. nos. 1-11 = SGD 171f. (Olbia).

18 *E.g.* Dem. 59.19, Lycurg. *Leoc.* 42; Din. 1.43; Hyp. 4.1 Kenyon. An instructive contrast with *e.g.* the bare list of witnesses preserved in And. 1.13.

> A curse upon these and their descendants: Nikyllos son of Kaposos, Dendilos son of M<n>amôn, Ainôn son of Blepôn, Xenios son of Apontis the Herakleid, Sauris, Athanis son of Tammaros the Herakleid, Rhasparmaua, Diôn son of Piakis, Piththias, Ikhaion son of Mammareios, Zoxta, Agathyllos, Xenios the Herakleid, Synetos son of Xenôn.[19] (*SEG* 16:571 = *IGDS* 36 = SGD 104)

(c) Incorporating the names, with or without additional information, into a polysyndetic curse-formula, as in a 4th-century example from Athens:

> I bind Kallias my neighbour the shop-keeper, and his wife Thraïtta, and the shop of Phalakros, and the shop of Anthemiôn near D[.....], and Philôn the shop-keeper: of all these I bind the .... I bind Sôsimenes his brother, and Karpos his slave the cloth-dealer, and Glykianthis also called Malthakô; and Agathôn the shop-keeper, slave of Sôsimenês: of all these I bind the .... (*DTWü* 87; *cf. SEG* 37:216.3)

All three tendencies, but more especially the two latter, reflect a desire to evade the inexpressiveness of the bare list: they reveal in fact the same pressures at work that we see in the epic list, the desire to comment upon the individual items, to locate them in a history or context, to clothe them with some personal meaning. At its extreme: 'Die Integration in die Handlung ist dabei enger oder weiter, bis sie schließlich ganz schwindet und das im Katalog ausgebreitete Wissen interessanter wird als die Rücksicht auf die Stringenz des Geschehens' (Kühlmann 1973:71).

The point can easily be illustrated from epic and sub-epic, as we can see from Homer's treatment of the list of gifts offered by Agamemnon to Achilles:

> Before you all I will count off my gifts in their splendour:
> Seven unfired tripods; ten talents' weight of gold; twenty
> Shining cauldrons; and twelve horses, strong, race-competitors
> Who have won prizes in the speed of their feet. That man would not be
> Poor in possessions, to whom were given all these have won me.
> (*Il.* 9.121ff. = 263ff., tr. Lattimore)[20]

Or we may take a passage from Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women:*

> (Khlôris) gave birth to splendid children in the palace, Euagorô, and Antimenês, and divine Alastôr, and Tauros, and Asterios, and great-hearted Pylaôn, and Dêimachos, and Eurybios, and renowned Epilaos, and Nestôr, and Khromios and noble Periklymenos, wealthy—to whom Earthshaker Poseidon gave all manner of gifts, for some-

19 I adopt Arena's suggestions (*IGAS* 69) in line 2f. Several readings are uncertain; the meaning of Herakleidas is disputed: I follow Jeffery, 'presumably ... the colonial offshoots of a Heraclid clan in mainland Megara; there is ample evidence of how such clans were regarded as the rightful leaders of any emigration to the West' (1955:73 no.3). The 'great *defixio*' at Selinous contains a similar, but more regular, list: *SEG* 16:573.16–19 = *IGAS* 63 = *IGDS* 38; *cf.* esp. Masson 1972:384.

20 *Cf.* Hainsworth *ad loc.*: 'Here [Homer] allows Agamemnon to add to his gifts some complimentary descriptions: the horses are prize-winners, the gold will make Akhilles rich, and the women are especially attractive.'

times he would appear among birds as an eagle, and sometimes, *mirabile dictu*, he would become an ant.... (frg. 33a:8–16 M.-W.)

In other words, in the epic list, which we may take here for the sake of argument as a 'natural' list, the process of enumeration is continually interrupted by the narrator, who is tempted to break into the recital of facts to give them social meaning—each name or gift is potentially a peg upon which another narrative might be hung. We can indeed find curse-lists partly analogous to such natural lists, such as a late 4th-century text from Athens:

(I Dioklês son of Xenophôn) bind Ki[mônokles of Oin]ôe,[21] flute-maker and joiner, and his amphorae and his workshop where he produces flutes, and Athenagoras (?). (Loses grammar, now in nominative:) Xenarchos and Pataikion who Epainetos said is his daughter and whom he betrothed to Ekhesthenês of Troizen—(on them I invoke a) curse.... (*DTWü* 55a.2–7)

In the breakdown of the grammar here one can trace the desire to communicate some of the circumstantial knowledge which lies behind the curse, and which the genre normally inhibits, but which reproduces the 'natural' mode of the proto-literate list of epic.

Lists in a column

Let us turn now to the other pole of our continuum, the columnar list. Probably the earliest known example, of the early 5th or even late 6th century, comes from the temple of Demeter Malophoros at Gaggera (Selinous) in Sicily, and consists of 13, *i.e.* at least 13, abbreviated names arranged one above the other (*IGAS* 71 = *IGDS* 39 = SGD 103). Characteristic of columnar lists is that they include no, or virtually no, information apart from the names. Typical is the following example from Athens:

Xenophôn
Têloklês
Aga<thar>khos
Aristoklês
Poseidip(p)os
Lysistratos
Mnêsiklês
Mousaios the shop/tavernkeeper
Dêmêtrios
Hilara the shop/tavernkeeper
(*DTWü* 30)[22]

21 Kimônoklês and his deme occur in full elsewhere on the tablet. There were two demes of this name.

22 Three lines were apparently added later; the first name is qualified [κάπη]λις 'female shop/tavernkeeper' (*suppl.* D. Jordan *per epistt.*), while the two others bear the demotic Aixoneus.

A list of this type is not a 'natural' list, but one which neatly combines ease of reading with an awareness of visual effect. Each item is separated from the next, open to inspection as a thing in itself, divorced from the flux of things and indifferent to social knowledge.[23] Far more than the horizontal list, it resists commentary.[24] The *defigens* compensates for his or her sacrifice of the right to comment—a denial we must suppose to be a generic rule of this type of list—by gaining the visual equivalent of 'magisterial disarticulation.'[25]

Now it would be perfectly plausible to argue that columnar lists are no less 'natural' than horizontal lists—we use them for shopping, and they may already in late Archaic times have been used for listing separate items in consignments of cargo, for example. Certainly there are a small number of lists in this form on curse tablets from Magna Graecia (two of them, from Selinous, are indeed among the earliest curse tablets yet found)[26] and one from South Russia.[27] But it is striking that by far the greatest number are found in Attica up to around 300 BC. Some 40 of the 135 complete texts in Wünsch's collection of the Attic texts (30%) consist of bare columns; while 15 of the 34 Attic texts of SGD that may be dated prior to *c.* 300 BC are columnar lists (44%). It also bears stressing that, at least in the Classical period, there is no question of dismissing this type of list as a simple type later superseded by more complex forms. Columnar lists are not markedly early: there is no simple movement from bare lists to more complex constructions, though they do become rare in the Hellenistic period and after. It is true that columnar lists are very simple documents, and require in theory only a low level of literacy. But, as I have suggested, low literacy in fact prefers the horizontal list; and it is anyway probable (though impossible to demonstrate, since all Wünsch's texts have disappeared and we have mainly to rely upon his drawings as printed in *DTWü*) that

23 Small 1997:19: 'Reading words that are all run together (*scriptio continua*) dramatically affects the way a reader processes those words.'

24 There are however a number of cases in which a columnar list is prefaced, interrupted or completed by a brief curse or a note, *e.g.* *DTWü* 41–6; SGD 6 (= Peek 1941, no. 4); 9 (= Trumpf 1958:97); 46 (= *SEG* 24:263); 48a,b (= Ziebarth 1934 no. 1); 62 (= Ziebarth 1934 no. 20).

25 There is one case of a columnar list in which each name is prefaced by *kai*: *DTWü* 22.

26 I note in Sicily and Magna Graecia, in addition to the example cited:
Selinus: *IGAS* 62 = *IGDS* 30 = SGD 96 (late VI^a or early V^a), 3 names on a fragment; *IGAS* 64 = *IGDS* 35 = SGD 101 in two columns (1st half V^a: Jeffery, Arena).
Camarina: *SEG* 4:29 = *IGDS* 120 = SGD 87 (nb. two names + patronymics in lines 1f.; ?mid V^a); *SEG* 4:30 = *IGDS* 121 = SGD 88 (?450–425 BC); *TDSG* 22 = SGD 85 (just 2 names on recto, 1 on verso) (?mid V^a).
Gela: probably the more or less illegible fragmentary *TDSG* 16 = SGD 90 (?mid V^a).
Phintias: *SEG* 31.837 = *TDSG* 28 = SGD 92 (but lines 1–3 have two names each; II-I^a).
Tarentum: *GDI* 4616.1f. = SGD 125f. (fine examples of around 20 names, ?IV-III^a).

27 Kocevalov 1948:163 = SGD 174 (Olbia: IV-III^a).

most of the hands at Athens are relatively practised. Moreover, even poetry until the Hellenistic period was written continuously across the page, indifferent to the very notion of line (Small 1997:12). We need rather to ask: why should the columnar list have been attractive to the writers of curse tablets at Athens? Why should it have maintained its attractiveness in competition with more expressive curse texts?

In my view, the attraction of the columnar list depends upon a tradition of democratic literacy. It has rightly been argued by Rosalind Thomas that the main impact of literacy upon the city-state from the second half of the 7th century was of two kinds: the creation of written laws, and the provision of lists of public officials (1992:65–7). At Athens, the effects of civic literacy did not make themselves felt in more complex bureaucratic forms, for example, but primarily in the public display of inscribed laws and lists. And we might argue that the invention and dominance of the *stoichedon* style in the first half of the 5th century BC both asserted the need for a distinctive and highly formal civic style of inscription over against the 'primitive' formal design of Archaic texts and also sensitized the Athenian population generally to the visual force—almost the rhetorical force—of the formal arrangement of texts.

Columnar lists had a special place at Athens: they were among the most prominent public documents of the democracy, and, being easy to consult, are cited by the sources much more frequently than any others (Thomas 1989:64–6). One type of list important and familiar to all adult males, citizen and metic, was the deme-list; another was the list of public benefactors. But hardly less prominent, and especially eagerly consulted, were the lists of shame, at least some of which were exposed to public view on the Acropolis. At the end of the 5th century, the 'decree of Patrokleides' seems to assume the existence of public lists of deserters from the army, and of those tried before the Areopagus or the Ephetai for homicide, or for attempted tyranny—lists from which the names of those covered by the amnesty of 403 could be expunged, lit. 'whited over' (And. 1.78). Most interesting in the present connection however is the list, mentioned in the same decree and probably housed in the temple of Athena, of public debtors, who were subject to *atimia* until they had redeemed their debt (And. 1.77f.; [Dem.] 25.99; *Ath.pol.* 48.1; *cf.* Busolt, 1920–25:2, 1051). The value of these for litigants will be obvious. The speaker in one case, for example, was able to force his opponent to give ground merely by threatening to check them:

> This man Theokrines came forward, admitted the debt and in the presence of the members of his tribe promised to pay it, when he saw that we were coming up and were planning to take a copy of what stood written on the tablet. (Dem. 58.18, tr. A.T. Murray, adapted)

Elsewhere (20.64) Demosthenes says of such stelai—in this instance the stelai of state benefactors—that they should serve as a *mnêmeion*, a memorial, and as *paradeigmata*, patterns to which people may refer.

My argument is that the attraction at Athens of the columnar list of private enemies presented to the powers of the Underworld lay in the authority conferred by its allusion to the lists by which the state made public the infamy of its enemies. The columnar list is an example of magical practice usurping tokens of authority in the dominant world for its own ends. The public list of infamy singled out each name as a separate object of inspection, opened to scorn and derision; the private list drew upon that public model as a source of guidance to the powers of the Underworld, who were invited to react as the Athenian public reacted. More precisely, perhaps, the private columnar list sought to evoke the public process of exposure and condemnation that prefaced the appearance of a name on these lists of infamy.[28]

Although most of these public lists undoubtedly included patronymic and demotic, we know of at least one (*IG* I^2 943; ML 48), the Athenian casualty list of ?447 BC, which consisted of bare names, just like the great majority of columnar lists on curse tablets.[29] This latter point however is partly to be explained by the fact that many, but by no means all, of the *defixi* were not citizens. It seems more plausible in general to explain the common omission of patronymic and deme as implying that the subjective relation of the *defigens* to the *defixi* remained the dominant consideration even while the form of the list alludes visually, for the sake of rhetorical force, to public epigraphic culture. The columnar list was a citation, an allusion, not a slavish imitation.

The Classical attack-scheme

We turn now to consider the other kind of list I want to discuss in the curse tablets of this early period, the list of items that are 'bound.' Such lists, which occur during the Classical period to all intents and purposes in Attica alone, generally bear an immediate relation to the context of the curse: judiciary examples often

28 It is possible that the columnar list was directly modelled rather on a list of participants on either side in a given case, posted outside the court. But we do not know whether such lists existed; and even if they did, they would surely only have mentioned the principals, and not the crowd of supporters. The fact that almost all trials at Athens lasted only a few hours would also speak against the supposition.

29 Although it does not list demotics, the casualty list of course conveys membership of a tribe in its superscriptions.

specify that the tongue is being bound,[30] or 'turned back';[31] trade or commercial examples expressly attack the enemy's business.[32]

If that were all, there would be nothing to discuss. But the issue is slightly more interesting.

The underlying problem for the *defigens*—or the authors of these texts, insofar as they were different—was to convert an endlessly rehearsed, and rehearsable, narrative of indignant self-justification into a brief, specific, request for harm. What is the proper, the most effective, content of such a curse? There was a flamboyant Hellenistic literary genre devoted to this problem, which built on a substantial Classical legacy (Watson 1991:79–149). But this tradition was evidently of little concern to the individuals who wrote, or who bought the services of those who wrote, curse tablets in the late Archaic and Classical period; at any rate their curses have very little in common with literary, civic or funerary curses. In this connection, the most interesting feature of these Classical curse-lists is their routinized quality. At one level, such routinization simply underscores the value of magic as 'good to think': its use in social negotiation is taken for granted (Gordon, forthcoming). At another, it encourages the restriction of the 'curse-palette' to a small number of items, which are taken synecdochically for the whole.[33] These items function rather like Homeric line-schemes, making possible a considerable variety of expression within an extremely restricted set of ideas. My interest lies in the mental schemes which may underlie the apparently feeble stereotypy.

Two texts of around 500 BC from the necropolis at Buffa (Selinous) will illustrate what I see as two different strategies for small-scale cursing. One aims precisely at a single explicit target, the notion 'tongue,' and simply repeats it through its list of names:

> (I bind) Euklês' tongue and Aristophanês' and Angeilês' and Alkiphrôn's and Hagestratos'; the tongues of (Euklês') and Aristophanês' advocates, and [the tongue of] X, and the tongue of Oinotheus and Y. (*SEG* 16:1113 = *IGAS* 60 = *IGDS* 31 = SGD 5)[34]

30 *E.g. DTWü* 49b/50a; 52; 53; 56ab with Rabehl 1906:42f.; 57; 60; 61a; 66a; 88a; 105a,b; *cf.* Kagarow 1929:56.

31 *E.g.* the early 5th-century group from Gaggera (Selinous), *SEG* 4:37f. = 37:769 = *IGAS* 61 = *IGDS* 37 = SGD 99; *IGAS* 65 = *TDSG* 9 = SGD 100; cf. *SEG* 16:574.4 = *IGAS* 67 = *IGDS* 33 = SGD 108.

32 Perhaps the purest case is Robert 1936, no. 12 = SGD 43, a list consisting solely of names qualified by 'the shop and the business of ...' (Attica, IV^a); *cf.* also *DTWü* 52, 56a, 68ab, 69, 74, 86, 87.

33 This is explicit in *e.g.*: 'I bind Isias before Hermes *katokhos*: the hands, the feet of Isias, the whole body' (Robert 1936, no. 13b = SGD 64, tr. Gager 1992, no. 19 [Karystos, IV^a]); 'Mytis: (I bind) her tongue and her *psykhê* and her acts: let everything go awry' (*SEG* 24:263a = SGD 46 [Attica, IV^a]); 'I bind their *psykhai* and their acts—every bit of them as individuals and everything they possess' (*DTWü* 77a.6–9 with Rabehl 1906:44).

34 Brugnone and Dubois date this to the late VI^a, Raubitschek to *c.* 500^a, while Jordan prefers a rather lower date.

The descendants of this choice are those which confine themselves to a single consideration, whether briefly: 'his tongue and his *psychê*,'[35] or at greater length, as in:

> (*recto*) I bind X son of Apollodôros—his tongue, his voice, his entrance (into the court), his memory;
> (*verso*) what he is up to, what he is [planning; (*DTWü* 61a,b)

or:

> I bind Dioklês my opponent at law: his tongue and his mind and all his supporters and his speech and his witnesses and (all) the documentation he has prepared against me—and take him! (*DTWü* 94.2–11.)

The basis of the list here is an implied narrative: the curse rehearses the crucial moments of the prospective case before the assembled court. Its elements have a purely metonymic relation to one another. Although, as we shall see, lists constructed in this way are important in later magical composition, they are rare in the Classical and early Hellenistic period.

The other text from Buffa, probably also judiciary, simply invokes the stock contrast between words and actions: 'May Oinokles' acts and words be in vain ....' (*SEG* 26:1112 = *IGAS* 59 = *IGDS* 29 = SGD 94).[36] Instead of an implied narrative, this curse invokes a standard locution: its authority is drawn from cliché, or rather, a socially-recognized antithesis expressing the notion 'everything a person does.' Whereas the first type limits itself to a single scenario, this second type of curse signals its authority through its command of discrimination.

Two main devices are at work in the construction of this second type of list: the binary opposition and the intermingling of abstract and concrete terms. The binary opposition is telling because it suggests command of what are taken to be real (because socially guaranteed) boundaries of experience. The ability to wield antitheses is a mark both of penetration and rhetorical skill: it is not for nothing that pre-Socratic and indeed later Greek philosophy deals so extensively in formulations of this kind (Lloyd 1966:15–171). As Aristotle observes: 'They all (the Presocratics) identify the elements, and what they call the principles, with the contraries, although they give no reasons for doing so but are, as it were, compelled by the truth itself' (*Phys.* 1.5, 188b27–9). That antitheses were felt to give a curse penetration and weight is suggested by the curse of Apellis from Gela (early V^a):

35 *DTWü* 49b = 50ab, that is, the ability to argue, seen as a physical and as a mental act; cf. 66; 88a.

36 I adopt Jordan's suggested reading. Dating: latter half VI^a.

> Let no one be more successful than Eunikos, not even Phintôn, but let everyone,[37] willing and unwilling, praise him, even Phintôn ... I curse all chorus-producers to failure in word and deed—and their children and fathers—and to futility both in the contest and outside the contests. ... Let no one be more successful either with men or with women ... (Miller 1973:69f. = *IGDS* 134 = SGD 91, tr. Miller, adapted)

Mingling abstract and particular provides a thumb-nail 'deep description' of a person conceived as an actor over time: it is a device akin to an X-ray, one that privileges the enumerator just as the X-ray privileges the radiologist. For example,

> *psykhê*, feet, hands, body, heart, livelihood, words uttered (*rhêmata*)

probes the victim inside, outside, abstractly, concretely.[38] These two devices are often, but by no means invariably, used in combination.[39] Taking, for example, a text from Dekeleia:

> (Let) everything be topsy-turvy (for Kallias), both deeds and words, both hands and feet, both children and *psykhê* (Schwyzer 1923: Appendix 2.15 [6] = SGD 40),[40]

we can see that the first contrast catches the victim as a person in the course of daily life, as an agent speaking and acting; the second as a physical body, 'from top to toe' as it were, but seen again from the point of view of action;[41] the third links what issues from the loins (children considered as representatives of their parents) to the inner essence of the person, the *psykhê*, which departs at death.

Another typical list runs: '*psykhê*, business, livelihood, hands, feet,' moving from human essence to the subject of the dispute, in the world of ordinary experience, which is then enlarged by means of the abstract *bios* and the concrete 'hands, feet.'[42]

37 Jordan suggests the reading *phintiona* which he understands as the Doric comparative of *philos*. The sentence would then mean 'let no one be more successful than Eunikos ....' But this would make the following phrase well nigh unintelligible to me.

38 *DTWü* 93b.2–4, of a woman; *cf.* 53.2f. (fragmentary) 'Diôn's *thymos*, acts, tongue [...] livelihood.'

39 At its simplest, this may amount to no more than *e.g.* 'hands, heart, feet' (*DTWü* 93a.4), 'tongue, words and acts' (*ibid.* 105a passim), or 'hand, words and acts' (*ibid.* 137.7f. [but very lacunose]).

40 I accept Jordan's suggestion of the date, IV^a. *Gonata*, here 'children,' might also mean 'genitals,' or '(giving) birth'; the first person cursed on *a* is a woman, perhaps a prostitute.

41 It is clear from *Il.* 20.360f. and *Od.* 11.595, *cf.* 497, that 'with hands and feet' already in the Archaic period meant 'might and main,' *i.e.* was a stock phrase for active engagement; Aeschin. 3.109 (*cf.* 2.115), shows that this sense was current still in 4th-century Athens. 'Binding hand and foot' is presupposed as a stock phrase in *Od.* 12.50 = 178; *H. Hom. Bacch.* 13f.

42 *DTWü* 87.6, with several variations elsewhere; *cf.* 52.2–4 'tongue, business, hands, *thymos*'; 56b (*cf.* Rabehl 1906:42) 'their acts and themselves and their craft and Dexion's [tongue] and body and *psykhê*, and their activity, both by night and by day—hands and feet' (apparently as an afterthought); 68a.2f. 'hands, feet, and business; memory, hands, and feet and workshop' (of two individuals); also 68b.1f. 'hands and feet and tongue and feet and workshop and everything in it,' (where the repetition of 'feet' might be taken as a sign that the writer was using a written model—or equally, that he was conscious of the rule of opposition; it does not occur in the following identical sequence; 74.2–5 'her and her *psykhê* and him and his tongue and his body and his business and his workshops and his craft'; 90a ii.3–iii.2 'her and her tongue and hands and feet and her work' (noun clause).

Texts which apparently offer neither oppositions, nor contrasts between abstract and concrete, such as 'Dêmêtrios' *psykhê* and *nous* and *thymos*,'[43] surely presuppose the same tacit rules of composition, but obtain a slight frisson by rejecting them.

The infringement of rule may thus bring textual or rhetorical gain. There are too some other signs of discontent with the tacit rules, a few Classical lists which show a certain self-consciousness about their organisation or their language, which refuse the tendency towards routinization. These texts, in a very limited way, anticipate, as it were, the kinds of lists we encounter in some later Hellenistic and Roman curse tablets.

An early example is to be found in one of two texts from the Kerameikos, apparently dating from the latter part of the 5th century, directed against a 'blower' in a silver-smith's shop, Lysanias, and his wife:

> I bind both what he works at and what he does and what he transacts and what [... (Peek 1941:2 = SGD 4)[44]

Here the force of the curse is derived from the accumulation of synonyms for the same idea, which is one common strategy in the composition of later lists. Again, given the prominence at Athens of verbal abuse expressed in sexual language, it is surprising that these texts studiously exclude it; the one exception that I know of, which expressly curses 'their pricks and their cunts,' thus deliberately infringes another tacit generic rule.[45] Thirdly, deliberate variation of the order of items in these lists, which often occurs on an insignificant scale, may also be used self-consciously for rhetorical effect. One of the longest Classical curse texts, from the Kerameikos (mid-4th century), uses this device extensively:

> [I] bind ... the tongue of Litias, the hands of Litias, the *psykhê* of Litias, the feet of Litias, the body of Litias, the head of Litias. I bind Nikias, the hands of the Areopagite to Hermes *katokhos*, feet, the tongue, the body of Nikias. I bind Dêmetrios to Hermes *katokhos*, his body, the business of Dêmetrios the ?tiler, his hands, his feet, his *psychê* (several other variations, ending:) Litias I bind, his feet, his hands, his *psychê*, the body of Litias, the tongue of Litias, the intentions of Litias, what he does in business.... (Peek 1941:9.1–7, 15f. = SGD 44)

43 *DTWü* 51.1f.; *cf.* 60a.3f. 'hand, limbs, foot, comportment of (?his) tongue'; 107a.8–10 '*psykhê*, and *nous*, and tongue, and plans, and what he is up to, and what he has in mind (to do against me)' —but this might be considered a case of the list based on an implied narrative. The first and third seem tacitly to reject the folk-model which represents action concretely, 'hands and feet,' in favour of a mentalist model of the springs of action.

44 As W. Peek, its initial editor, pointed out, this text presupposes the more conventional Peek 1941:1 = SGD 3.

45 *DTWü* 77b.1f., also 5f. (Wünsch's line numbering is incorrect); *cf.* Rabehl 1906:44. Bain lists only this text for both *psôlê* and *kysthos* in a magical context (1991:52).

Any one of these lists in isolation might be randomly organised; together in the same document they seem deliberately trying not to repeat themselves, as though in obedience to the rhetorical good of *variatio*.

We come finally to what is, at least as regards listing, the most interesting of all these Classical examples, a 4th-century (so Wünsch, Wilhelm 1904:71) text whose *recto* is organized in two parallel columns:

Lord Hermes
katokhos, seize Phrynichos and his extremities

the feet	the head
the hands	the belly
psykhê	the (subcutaneous) fat
cock	Lord Hermes
the ?backside	*katokhos* seize
	Kittos and his extremities
	the *psykhê*
	and the eyebrows
	(remainder unclear)

(*DTWü* 89a)

Here the columnar device has been transferred to the attack-scheme to create what is indeed a shopping-list of parts; but the double column seems to be a device to render the notion 'extremities' graphically, as though feet were to head what hands are to the belly.[46] This is the germ of an interest in the possibilities of the visual field of the tablet—it is worth noting that there is no attempt in these texts to represent the victim visually, despite the contemporary practice of making maumets—that later produces the experiments with magical 'concrete poetry' to be found above all in Roman North Africa. Equally remarkable, both victims seem to be singled out for some physical peculiarity, Phrynichos because of his obesity, Kittos for his beetling brows. This again anticipates some highly individual lists of attributes in later curses.

Flexible but low-intensity attack-schemes such as these presume, it seems to me, a society both democratic and litigious, a society in which the language of inner motive, justification, veridicality, and individual responsibility was, as we can see from the orators, widely familiarized through the jury-system. The Attic list of parts is in fact a concession to that language of moral discrimination. Indeed we might go further and say that the judicial curse as a genre fits particularly well into the Athenian legal system prior to Demetrius of Phaleron. The object of this legal system was not to attain 'justice' in any abstract sense but to measure against one another before a mass public two theses or claims about a given situation or allegation, in order to judge which seemed more convincing or preferable (*cf.* Todd 1993:88). In a system of this kind, in which there were no legal 'experts' let alone professional judges, and in which the law was whatever the jury decided it was, the outcome of a case was quite unpredictable. Under those circumstances, a large proportion of curses—if not quite 50%—must have appeared successful, in that their author or purchaser came off victorious. In a word, it was the irrationality of the Athenian judicial system that underwrote the rationality of the curse.[47]

46 Cock and backside, taken as opposites, surely fit the same implicit scheme; perhaps they were added as an afterthought.

2. *Late Hellenistic and Roman lists*

We turn now to consider a few examples of the much greater variety of lists in later magical incantation. Although dominant practice continued throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods to produce simple curses, I am concerned in this section more or less exclusively with the products of Bourdieu's 'intentional profanation.' The more self-conscious a magical practice becomes, the less it seeks to rely on public institutions for its authority, and the more it asserts the value of its own learning and, in the case of requests, its own capacity to persuade the addressee. I suggest that the rhetorical form that best served these aims in the request sections of incantations was the list.

For the *defigens* and, increasingly, the specialist magical practitioner, the list was highly practical. In the absence of formal rhetorical schemes for invention—and whatever we think of the social status of the *defigentes*, they are most unlikely to have been through a rhetorical education—the list is the simplest means of generating text, since, with some exceptions, pre-Romantic lists inventorize lexical items on the basis of contiguity: they are created from matrices familiar from everyday experience. The 'natural' list, especially a list of body parts, is itself a series of *topoi* or *loci*, the 'places' which furnished the basis of ancient mnemonic systems. Moreover lists encourage the use of a range of simple figures, notably *comma* (*asyndeton*), *polysyndeton*, *anadiplosis*, *symploce*, *anaphora*, *homoioptoton* and *isocolon* (*parison*), all of which are devices of insistence and memorability. The abandonment of the connecting power of language by no means implies the abandonment of the desire to impress. The list is in fact the main means to the most striking rhetorical feature of later incantation, what we might call emphatic redundancy—in a word, saying the same thing over and over again. Finally, what-

47 My emphasis is thus rather different from that of Faraone 1989. By no means all of the material from Classical Athens is related to court cases—it is in particular difficult to decide the immediate context of the 'commercial' curses, though some may have to do with back-biting and slander. As I see it, the prestige of judicial cursing extended the practice to other areas of high contention and high risk.

ever value Kühlmann's view that lists exclude feeling may have in other contexts, it cannot be sustained in the case of incantation. The accumulation of synonyms, instances and possibilities is intended—not supposed, but intended—to create irresistible pressure upon the addressee.

This intention is especially clear in sequences of words expressing destruction, which are a common feature of these texts. Consider for example the sequence of synonyms for bewitching in a 4th-century AD judiciary *defixio* from Beth-Sh(e)an (Skythopolis) in Palestine, which may involve members of a Christian community:

> Silence and subdue and crush and bewitch and enslave and 'catch' and enchant. (Bonner and Youtie 1937:54–6, 58f., lines 20f. [= SGD 164]; *cf.* Daniel 1988:250)

Such a polysyndetic sequence has no interest at all in enumerating different ways of overwhelming, but only in the single idea: *GAG!*—reiterated in as many ways as possible without being repeated.[48] The list, following immediately after an invocation comprising one of the longest surviving sequences of *onomata barbara* in any text, itself a linguistic feat, appears as a sudden tower of intelligible words, the one balancing on the other, a device which pushes the following sequence, the names of the victims, into a glare of publicity, forcing them, as it were, irresistibly upon the attention of the *daemones*. If we think of late incantation as virtuoso performance—we should suppose that in their original form they were composed orally (including the *onomata barbara* surely), and only written out when complete—the value of devices of this kind becomes apparent.[49] By ruthlessly rejecting linguistic complexity, the practitioner acquires topical authority.

In another late example, from the Porta S. Sebastiano at the outset of the Via Appia, against the 'impious, blackguardly, damned' charioteer Kardelos, the use of the figure *climax* reinforces the intended meaning: the practitioner is trying to pile up harsh words, not so much to give precise instructions to his addressee as to pummel his ears:

> Nirl, throttle, waste, waste away, throttle ... (Wünsch 1898:16b.63f.; *DTAud* 155b.11f.)[50]

In this instance, however, the desire outruns the performance and expires rather limply in mere repetition. A rhetorically more successful example can be met in a charioteer *defixio* from Hadrumetum (Sousse) in Tunisia (II^{P}):

48 *Cf. e.g. DTAud* 250a.22–4 *perducatis, obl[i]getis, pe[r]obligetis, [...]etis, apsumatis, desumatis, consumatis.*

49 It this respect, the curse tablets were only following the usual method of composition.

50 *Cf. DTAud* 250b.17 *depremite, defigite, perfigite, consu[mite ...*; 238.10f. *ekkopson, ekneurôson, exarthrôson*; *cf.* 238.28; 239.10, 24f.; 240.10, 27f. (Carthage).

> May (the horses named) come to grief, crash, be smashed up, go badly, swerve, may they not answer the reins.... may they not be able to run, may they come to grief ... to grief, to grief, to grief, be smashed up, come to grief.... (*AE* 1907:68.13–8)[51]

The precise form of this list is a function of the formulations that have already been used in the series to which it belongs, in which a string of directives is written round the edges of the lead plaque, thus trapping or 'catching' the list of men and horses within. The focus of the repetition here, *cadant*, is throughout the series appropriated from the central list, which usually takes the form of massed 'curse-units' consisting of one or two names followed by *cada(n)t* or *cada(n)t, verta(n)t*. The repetition here thus has the unmistakeable rhythm of a spoken finale.

I have already pointed out that pre-Romantic lists are primarily metonymic constructs, that they are based upon matrices found in ordinary experience. Apart from the lists which consist of synonyms, whose rhetorical function is clear, I see only two generative matrices in the malign magical material: narratives—generally implicit or tacit; and, much the most important, the human body. Let me take first lists constructed on the basis of implied narratives, which might be said to adapt one of the basic organisational schemes of charms and incantations, the *historiola*, to the request section.[52]

The last example I quoted came from a curse against charioteers, and used cant terms taken from the language of racing: the practitioner quite evidently knew what he was talking about. In that respect, such a curse might be said to allude to a tacit narrative, the familiar sequence of events—normal and possible—in a chariot-race. Other chariot curses however are much more obviously based on such a matrix, such as this Greek example from a cinerary urn found beneath the garden of the Villa Aldobrandini on the Quirinal:

> Don't let Eucherios get a good [start] at the gates, don't let him squeeze in, don't let him overtake, don't let him get neck-and-neck, don't let him get in front, don't let him carry the corner, don't let him win a prize—don't let him cut in when neck-and-neck and don't let him overtake when he's right behind: but let him be done up, tangled up, broken up, washed up.... (*DTAud* 187 (IV^{P}))[53]

The sequence of the curse closely follows the sequence of a race, the curse consisting indeed mainly of the serial negation of the narrative elements. The various rare or technical words refer to the critical moments when everything hangs on the

51 *Cadant frangant dis[frangant]tur male gurent vertant nec frenis [a]udiant nec [.... n]e currere possint cadant [...] cadant cadant cadant disfrangantur cadant*; analogous formulations in *DTAud* 272.11–3, 275.29–33, 276.22–5, 277, 278.19–22, 279–83, 284.29–33; *AE* 1907:69.41–4.

52 On the *historiola* in the Graeco-Egyptian magical tradition, see Sørensen 1984; Frankfurter 1995.

53 I have used Audollent's supplement at the end of line 59. Another example is *DTAud* 247.15–20 = *ILS* 8755 (Carthage II–III^{P}), relating to a beast-fighter.

charioteer's skill—the moment near the beginning when the chariot can get to the wall and hug it, the turns and overtaking. The rhetorical gain for the practitioner is the weight of minutely-imagined concentration upon the objective that he can amass through following a narrative sequence—the tacit narrative is in fact a mnemonic device for his rhetorical construction. But the gain is accompanied by a loss: for dependence upon a narrative has almost destroyed the logic of the curse, whose purpose is precisely to prevent it all from happening—but here is Eucherios already in the final straight, ready to strike.

Something similar occurs in a formulaic *agôgimon*, a spell to force a woman to come to a man, where concentration upon the implied narrative of seduction almost derails the curse:

> If she is sitting, let her not sit; if she is talking to someone, let her not talk; if she is looking at someone (in the eye), let her not look; if she is approaching someone, let her not approach; if she is going for a walk, let her not walk; if she is drinking, let her not drink; if she is eating, let her not eat; if she is cuddling with someone, let her not cuddle; if she is getting pleasure from something, let her have no pleasure; if she is asleep, let her not sleep but .... (*PGM* IV 1510–9)

What is attractive to the rhetorician in the practitioner is precisely the open-endedness of the implied narrative, which has no necessary end and which therefore allows him to contemplate the victim at leisure: the effect is to allow the practitioner to concentrate wholly for these moments upon the imagined object of the curse. Hence implied narratives can equally well be used in creating incantations for protective amulets, as is suggested by a 4th-century AD phylactery from Berytos, requesting protection for a woman from demonic or malign magical attack resulting

> ... from a kiss or an embrace or chance meeting, in food or drink, on her bed or while having intercourse, or from the evil eye or a piece of clothing, or while she is going somewhere, either in the street or in someone else's house (?), or upon going down into a river or in a bath-house. (*GMA* 52.97–109)[54]

The client here has diagnosed herself, or been diagnosed by the practitioner, as particularly liable to malign attack—perhaps she was a prostitute, a woman vulnerable through the envy of her colleagues or love-magic requested by lovers. The practitioner's circumstantial knowledge enables him to construct a day for her, the list following her through imagined encounters, interrupting the sequence to take special note of the points at which she might be most liable to attack from envy or malign sorcery—the piece of clothing is perhaps something of her own that has or

54 I take *proseukhomenê<n>* in line 105 as a slip for *proserkhomenên* in the original version being copied, as Jordan surmised (1991:69).

may have been subjected to magical action, knotting or 'poisoning'; rivers and baths were places where demons abounded (*cf.* Dunbabin 1989:35–37).

Given their general character, however, it was bound to be the case that the most important matrix for listing in requests is the body. Because the body belongs to nature, and is universally familiar, it provides, no less than the ordered macrocosm, an obvious pattern for list-making. In particular, the body offers a 'natural' hierarchy, whose values can be drawn on in various ways. Thus in one of the Late-Assyrian Maqlû tablets, the exorcist claims to have been attacked by a witch:

> She has laid hold of my heart, my head, my neck and my fa[ce],
> she has laid hold of my eyes with which I see,
> she has laid hold of my feet with which I walk,
> she has laid hold of my arms with which I perform.
> (Meier 1937:2.31–5 p. 14)

This sequence expresses the debilitating nature of the attack by claiming that it has first struck the most vital organ, the heart; it then moves to the next most significant organ, the head in the large sense, devoting an entire line to the eyes; only then do we reach the limbs, first those furthest away from the head, finally the arms. But the exorcist can equally use such a list for aggressive purposes:

> Witch, I have laid hold of your mouth, laid hold of your tongue,
> have laid hold of your eyes with which you see,
> have laid hold of your feet with which you walk,
> have laid hold of your knee with which you stride,
> have laid hold of your arms with which you perform,
> have bound your arms behind your back.
> (*ibid.* 3.94–9 p. 25)

In this case the most important organ is the spell-uttering mouth and tongue.

The feature of the body that interests me here is the opportunity it offers to the literate to devise sub-matrices, which have to be filled up—a task which is only meaningful when one can write out schemes of divisions and subdivisions, and when such skills are familiar in a population, so that such tasks become widely imaginable and interesting. A fine example of such matrix-filling is provided by the account in the Gnostic *Apocryphon of John* of the creation of Adam's body (*NHLE*, p. 113ff.). A series of Archons create specific souls: bone-soul, sinew-soul, flesh-soul, marrow-soul, skin-soul, eyelid-soul—proceeding, that is, from solid substructure to fluttering superficies (*Ap. John, NHC* II,1, 15, 13–29). In the long recension of the text, the *choic* (material) body itself is next broken down into regions, beginning from the head and descending to the toes, and further subdivided into individual organs (so that the head contains brain, right eye, left eye, right ear, left ear, nose, lips, teeth, molars, tonsils, uvula). Each part is created by a named angel

(*NHC* II,1, 15, 29–17, 7). A second list (17, 8–29) follows a simpler scheme, naming different angels. The body as a whole is presented as an ordered, symmetrical, affair—the list is intensely interested in the hierarchy of right and left, as well as in the hierarchy of organs—that mirrors the angelic hierarchy. The earthly Adam in fact reproduces the Perfect Man, that is, the image of the supreme divinity.

A list of body parts may look familiar enough, but we need to look at its modalities with care. As a very simple illustration in our material we can take the request by Ammonion son of Hermitaris that Theodotiseus may not be capable of

> ever having intercourse with another man or being screwed or being buggered or fellating or having pleasure with any other man but me .... (*SupplMag* 38.4–6 [III-IV^{P}]

The opening and closing terms here, which are synonyms, enclose three verbs, *binêthênai*, *pygisthênai*, and *lêkazein*, all of them blunt, non-euphemistic terms which 'belong to the lower register of the Greek language' (Bain 1991:51). They refer obviously to the three orifices of women of common sexual interest among men. Now it might be thought that such explicitness is typical of the undesirable sort of people who were magicians. But things are not so simple. On the one hand, the sequence we find in the *agôgimon* is derived from a trope in erotic poetry, known at least as early as the late Republic or early Principate (and surely Hellenistic), so well-known that Martial has merely to allude to it: *hanc volo quae pariter sufficit una tribus* (9.32.4).[55] On the other, the complete sequence is also found in two other *agôgima* (*SupplMag* 46.9, 49.21f.) which happen to be activated versions of the well-known *philtrokatadesmos*, binding love-spell, in the Great Paris codex (*PGM* IV 297–406). Yet neither the version of this spell in the codex (351f.) nor the other surviving versions (*SupplMag* 47.8; 48.8, 22) contain all three—and the term they omit is the last. (*SupplMag* 50.59f. uses quite a different expression.) This strongly suggests that *laikazein* was censored by some practitioners because it was thought disgusting.

When we consider the use of lists of body parts in later incantation, it seems rewarding to note a possible parallel between lists and the panning-shot in the cinema. Whereas the tracking-shot narrates, the panning-shot 'spares our attention for that thing now' (Cavell 1979:122). The enumeration of parts enables the practitioner imaginatively to dismember the victim so that the curse-moment, the period of projective fixation upon the victim (as opposed to the appeal to powers), can be given more weight. Moreover breaking up the victim's body into its butcher-parts signals the triumph of the objective gaze: the subjective coherence of the self is transformed into *disjecta membra* and laid out, as it were, for sale

55 *Cf. AP* 5.49 (= Page 1981:61, *s.v.* Gallus, 1); also Jocelyn 1980:20f. with n. 83. Gallus is doubtless an otherwise unknown poet of the late Republic or early Principate, rather than C. Cornelius.

in a shambles.[56] The disarticulate body is just that; the force of the curse is directed, moment by moment, onto every piece of flesh exposed to contemplation. Thanks to language, abstract 'parts' such as mind or industry can be reduced to concrete status and similarly exposed.

At the same time, with the extension of the gaze, the rhetorical challenge becomes more acute: the weightlifter cannot afford to let the bar drop on his own head. It is in the face of that unease that the completeness of a list becomes a guarantee that it will not fail rhetorically. This is surely the case in the sole text, a lacunate *defixio* from Megara of Roman date, in which it is explicitly stated that the list is supposed to be exhaustive:

> ... breast ... lungs, heart, liver ... hips, lower back, intestines ... sex, thighs, arsehole ... shins, heels ... toes, fingers ... and any other part of the entire body there may be.... (*DTAud* 42b.2–9)[57]

The notion of remaining parts shifts the pace of the list's ending from *mancando* to *affretando*, breezily suggesting the possibly indefinite extension of the list's mastery of the topic. If they could have known them, the practitioners who produced such lists would have found the 'attack schemes' of the Classical Athenian texts primitive, failing to understand the advantage they derived from acceptance of a narrow generic convention. But the price these later practitioners paid for their greater generic freedom was the perpetual threat of inadequacy: how can one deliver on the promise of a complete list?

The solution, to my mind, lay in the use of matrices, schemes which gave a reassuring sense of completeness. In principle these later matrices did not differ from those of classical Athenian curses, but they are more ambitious. Familiarity with writing has made it possible, and necessary, to be explicit where the Classical texts could get away with being implicit. The person, conceived primarily a body but also as a social being, is broken down into domains; the parts of each domain are then ticked off. But because the body is ready inscribed with nameable parts it offered a handier matrix than social being. Besides, what the cursers mainly had in mind were the physical disablements regularly associated with malign magic in their locality. To illustrate these points, I propose to take the curse against Malchio and a female public slave, Rufa, found in a cinerary urn at Nomentum north-east of Rome (*DTAud* 135 = *ILS* 8751), which is one of the three most complete surviving

56 There is a partial analogy in the clay models of parts and organs found at healing shrines: the private experience of being healed is objectified in the model, which is then open to contemplation by visitors.

57 Another attempt at a highly detailed list from the same period (or perhaps earlier) may have been Ziebarth 1934:28 = SGD 80 (provenance unknown), but it is unfortunately too fragmentary to be worth discussing.

examples of such a list, all of which are in Latin and date from the late Republic or early Principate. The others are the list from Minturnae (*DTAud* 190) and the five splendid curses from the Porta Salaria (Rome) known as the Johns Hopkins *defixiones* (Fox 1912 = *CIL* 1^2 2520 = *AE* 1912:40).

It is worth preserving the line-divisions of the text because they seem sometimes at least to have served as the practitioner's practical limit of exhaustiveness or completeness in relation to each sub-matrix:

recto (a):

Malcio Nicones oculos,
manus, dicitos, bracias, uncis,
capilo, caput, pedes, femus, venter,
natis, umlicus, pectus, mamilas,
collus, os, bucas, dentes, labias,
me[nt]us, oclus, fronte, supercili,
scaplas, umerum, nervias, ossu,
melilas, venter, mentula, crus,
quastu, lucru, valetudines, defico
in as tabelas.

verso (b):

Rufa Pulica manus, detes,
oclos, bracia, venter, mamila,
pectus, osu., merilas, venter,
crus, os, pedes, frontes,
uncis, dicitos, venter,
umlicus, cunus,
ulvas, ilae, Rufus Pulica de(f)ico
in as tabelas.

(*recto*) Malchio son/slave of Nikon: his eyes, his hands, his fingers, his arms, his nails, his hair, his head, his feet, his thigh, his belly, his arse, his navel, his chest, his nipples, his neck, his mouth, his cheeks, his teeth, his lips, his chin, his eyes, his forehead, his eyebrows, his shoulder-blades, his shoulders, his sinews, his bones, his marrow (?), his guts, his cock, his leg, his trade, his income, his states of health, I do curse in this tablet.

(*verso*) Rufa the public slave: her hands, her teeth, her eyes, her arms, her belly, her breasts, her chest, her bones, her ?marrow, her guts, [...] her leg, her mouth, her feet, her forehead, her nails, her fingers, her womb, her navel, her cunt, her ?vulva, her groin, Rufa Pu(b)lica I do curse in this tablet.[58]

Of the two victims, the man alone is conceived both as a body and as a social person: Apart from her status denomination, Rufa is represented solely as a body, most insistently, it seems, as a thing to be penetrated. Both lists however seem to

58 For the date, Solin 1989:196f. Malchio seems to be a Syrian name.

view the body by way of a primary contrast between surface and interior. This is most evident from the repeated occurrence in each of *venter*, which must mean first 'belly seen from outside' but later 'the guts,' while the third use in Rufa's case must mean 'womb';[59] and the repetition of *oculus* in the curse against Malchio (on which see below). At the same time, the figurative use of parts external and internal, whereby the material becomes the notional, reminds us that the stability of the contrast between outside and inside can easily be exaggerated. The two lists need however to be taken separately if we are to understand more precisely their articulation.

The first line of the curse against Malchio seizes upon the physical feature that, as cognitive psychologists have shown, is most important in our recognition of another person, the eyes. As Pliny says, *in oculis animus habitat* (*HN* 11.145): the eye is a sign for character. This eye as a window on the soul is to be distinguished from the eye as a mere organ in the face between chin and forehead in line 6.[60] There follows a sequence of nine sub-matrices which organise the main list: arms, head/foot, trunk, bust, shoulders, sinews/bones, 'innards,' penis, leg (shin), social figure. Only two sub-matrices, the penis and the leg, are represented by a single item.[61] Up to the end of *a.7*, an impression of competence through command of detail is achieved by force of brute sequence: the longest, devoted to the bust, covers nine parts in precisely two lines.[62]

In the case of each sub-matrix it is obvious that, while the composer's eye certainly is at work, social or *a priori* knowledge of the body, the knowledge that comes from catch-phrase and collective representations, is also important. Thus the parts of the arm are not enumerated in a logical sequence—arm, hand, finger, nail (or the reverse)[63]—but begin from the social equivalent of the eye, the (grasping) hand and its visually-dominant fingers,[64] up the arm and only then back to what one knows to be on the fingers, the nails.[65] The shift to the next scheme 'head

59 Audollent, *DTAud ad loc.*: 'me ... fugit cur iteretur in *a venter* et in *b* ter detur.' *Venter* is distinguished from *intestina* in *CIL* 1^2 2520.31 and associated with *umbilicus* and *latera*, so that there it seems also to mean 'abdomen considered from the outside.' *OLD* allows all three meanings: (1) 'the lower part of the human torso, abdomen (especially in its frontal aspect),' citing *e.g.* Cels. 7.4.3A; Scrib.Larg. 179, but also Varro *Rust.* 2.7.13; (2) the inner abdomen = the bowels, already in Lucil. 645, Petr. 47.2 etc.; (3) the part containing the womb, *e.g.* Varro *Rust.* 2.6.4, Mart. 11.61.8, Ulpian *ap. Dig.* 29.2.30.1.

60 See the texts cited in *TLL s.v.* C b α (col. 447); also *OLD* senses 1c and 5b.

61 The status of the final word, *valetudines*, is ambiguous; see further below.

62 In five cases, by my count, a sub-matrix concludes at the end of a line.

63 As in the Porta Salaria texts (27f.): *collum, umeros, bracchia, digitos.*

64 *Cf.* Verg. *Aen.* 11.311: *ante oculos interque manus sunt omnia vestras.*

65 *Cf.* at Minturnae (10f.): *bracia, dicitos, manus.*

to foot'—itself a double cliché in *nec caput nec pedes* and *per caput et pedes*—is surely motivated through the catch phrase *manibus pedibusque*, with all one's might and main;[66] but the first item of the scheme has been substituted by something even 'higher' than the head, the hair: the substitution is intended to prove the competence of the list.[67] Now that one's glance has flicked from the head to the feet, it carries on more slowly back up the body for the third sub-matrix, from the thigh to the nipples (including the buttocks but excluding the penis, reserved for a different context later)[68] to reach the head again, which is dissected in greatest detail.[69]

This is in fact the list's culmination: after this point the organisation in terms of sub-matrices begins to flag. The inner parts are merely alluded to (in the second occurrence of the word *venter*)—when anyone familiar with sacrificial animals and seriously interested in completeness could have named at least *cor, pulmones, iecur* if not *fel, lien, renes, stomachum, vesica*.[70] Those that are mentioned seem to be connected with the idea of strength and essence: Pliny for example tells us that the *nervi* begin at the heart and bind the bones to one another (and presumably to the heart).[71] That *medullae*[72] means not merely marrow but figuratively 'strength' is suggested by two brief lists from Hadrumetum in North Africa, which offer the sequence *nervia, vires, medullas, impetos, victorias*.[73] I have already suggested that

66 The curse formula *vae capiti tuo* must also have played its part in the decision to deploy this scheme in second place. Porta Salaria begins its sequence with *caput* for this reason; Minturnae lists the head only after *mem(b)ra, colore(m), ficura(m)* (5f.). Both of them use the cliché *caput-pedes* as their fundamental matrix, following the body straightfowardly down from head to toe. The Nomentum list is thus, I would say, deliberately self-conscious about its ordering.

67 *Cf.* Minturnae, line 6: *caput, capilla*; also *DTAud* 210 (Salernum, Antonine): *locus capillo ri(v)us expectat caput suum*, which Mommsen understood to imply that where the hair is, the head, *i.e.* life, should follow.

68 Porta Salaria (35) mentions the anus along with the buttocks.

69 Also Porta Salaria, which devotes six formulae to it (11 parts); our list oddly, unlike the others (*cf.* Minturnae, 8: *me(n)tu(m), buc(c)as, la[bra, ve]rbu(m)*), excludes *lingua*. I think this must be due to the desire to fit the sequence into two lines.

70 Minturnae, 9f.: *iocur, umeros, cor, fulmones, itestinas, vetre*; Porta Salaria, 29f.: *[pe]c[tus io]cinere, cor, pulmones*. Of my second list, both can offer *vesica* alone (11 and 33f. respectively).

71 *HN* 11.217; in its figurative uses, the word has of course precisely the force of strength or power. In my view, *ossu* in line 7 completes the sixth sub-matrix, but leads naturally on to the seventh, the 'innards.' Presumably because of their basic choice of organisation from top to toe, neither of the other two lists offers *nervi* or *ossa*; for *nervi*, *cf. DTAud* 252.41, and the texts cited in n.73 below.

72 There can be little doubt that the tablet reads *melilas* (Solin 1989:196); Linderski (1993:203f.) shows that *melilas* is an intelligible form of *medullas*, which Niedermann originally proposed in 1906.

73 *DTAud* 288b.6, 289b.6; cf. the sequence in Greek *DTAud* 155b.13f.: *psykhé, ostea, myeloi, neura, sarkai, dynamis* at Porta S. Sebastiano; *DTAud* 250a.24 *cor, membra, viscera, interania*, in the context of a *bestiarius* losing his strength. But the word may also mean mean more neutrally 'vitals' (*OLD* sense 2).

venter here connotes 'vitals' in the figurative sense. Martial provides evidence enough for *mentula* as 'dearer than life itself';[74] and that peripatetic member directly suggests the next sub-matrix, the leg—dismissed in a single word.[75]

The final item in the list, *valetudines*, perhaps steers us to an explanation here. Although it might—indeed, if it is a straightforward part of the list, it must—mean 'states of health', the word in the plural seems to be used rather to denote illnesses.[76] This more common meaning perhaps prompted the use of the plural, because the practitioner indeed intended to wish upon Malchio ill-health. The character of the list shifts halfway through: having sufficiently made the point about its competence as an enumeration of parts, it turns from *a.7* into a catalogue of bodily and social sites particularly associated with attack by sorcery—the internal organs, male sexual performance, physical mobility, livelihood (*valetudo* is paired with *vita* and *quaestum* in a curse from Capua).[77] *Nervi* are precisely what were-owls (*striges*) eat up.[78] It is scarcely necessary to cite here the well-known story in the *Satyricon* about the sudden death at the hands of a *nocturna*, a night-witch, of a beefy Cappadocian, who collapses on his bed covered in weals, *non cor habebat, non intestina, non quicquam* (*Sat.* 63.8).

The list of Rufa's parts can be discussed more briefly, since it clearly presumes the curse on Malchio, and the sub-matrices are only roughly filled.[79] She, and her curse, are mere appendages of Malchio. In my view, the first three items, *manus, de(n)tes, oc(u)los*, are the equivalent of Malchio's eyes: they are the most striking thing about her, and therefore in a sense are metonyms for her entirety. There follow two related sub-matrices, one external, covering the trunk (arms to chest), the other internal—skeleton, marrow, guts (*b.*2f.). The third sub-matrix is quite differently organised, since it is composed of a double opposition, between leg and face, feet and forehead, thus 'enclosing' the previous two sub-matrices. The idea of an enclosing opposition then gives rise to the deliberate ambiguity of the next sub-

74 *E.g.* 2.45; 3.75; 11.15.10, 20.8, 25, *etc.*; *cf.* Adams 1982:9–12, who notes that although *mentula*, as the basic obscenity for the male member, derives from a 'sub-culture of low abuse' it may be used neutrally, citing the present text in support.

75 The cursory quality of the list here contrasts sharply with the attention paid the leg by both Minturnae (11f. *femena, cenua, crura, talos, planta*) and Porta Salaria (35f. *[fem]ina, genua, [crura], tibias, pe[des, talos, plantas*).

76 *OLD* cites only Vitr. 1.4.4.; Pliny *HN* 23.48, *febrium valitudines*; Tac. *Ann.* 6.50.3; Suet. *Tib.* 11.2. Our text is not cited, nor Cic. *Tusc.* 5.39.113.

77 *DTAud* 195.3f.; also another from Nomentum, *nesu (nisum), quaestu(m), caput* in *DTAud* 134a.7, with Solin 1989b:197–9. A victim's health (*sanitas*) is explicitly to be consumed in a vindicative text from the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: *TSMB* 54.8; *cf. DTAud* 250b.17.

78 Petr. *Sat.* 134: *Quae striges comederunt nervos tuos...?*

79 The lines play no rôle in the organisation this time.

matrix, *uncis*, *dicitos* (*b*.5).[80] But the real target of the curse against Rufa is only reached in the final two and a half lines: after her extremities have been defined, the last five items bore into her female 'centre', womb (*venter* for the third time), navel,[81] and, as Audollent rightly urged, three words for vulva, or at any rate, parts 'not rigidly distinguished' from the vulva.[82] The insistence on the sexual organs of the woman alone strips the victim of her protective shame, exposes her to the prurient ridicule of a knowing male consensus. The offensive synonymity reduces Rufa to a cunt.

The drive of such lists to control the victim by the device of naming parts does not need to be further stressed. If even the romantic list of the beloved's parts turns subjectivity inexorably into the exercise of one sex's power over another (Spufford 1989:19f.), the malevolent list turns flesh into meat quite deliberately. We need to see them not simply as philological curiosities but as rhetorical constructions, as in themselves means of attaining the ends they propose. They may flaunt their address to gods, powers and angels (though the curse on Malchio and Rufa is quite silent on this matter); but the lists themselves suggest that they have more than one addressee, that another, albeit implicit, model for the practitioner as he or she reflects on the most effective means of 'catching' a victim is that of gossip, ridicule, public exposure, the social uses of shame and abuse. If poisons could attack the mind of a victim, why not hard words too? That is indeed another question; but perhaps lists and their properties have by now suggested that there are indeed options open between seeing magic as mere persuasive redefinition and magic as mere mistake. One of these is the perception that we ought to read magical texts not for some supposedly peculiar—however rational, coherent or the opposite—commitments but as so many trial runs in the search, in principle endless, for reliable access to the world of the marvellous. That is, we may think, why these texts go to such considerable bother to impress.

80 I think this is why no reference is made to *plantas* or *talos*, for example: the terms are meant to be ambiguous between hand and foot.

81 Minturnae (11) links *umblicus* to *vesica*, the bladder; Porta Salaria (31) gives *intestina*, *venter*, *umbilicus*. The navel was supposed to be the junction of the veins, Pliny *HN* 11.220; connected to the bowels (*alvum*), *ibid.* 32.101. As mid-point of the body: Varro, *Ling.* 7.17, Vitr. 3.1.3 (with geometric proofs).

82 *cunus*, *ulvas*, *ilae* (b.6f.). Adams (1982:81) cites *cunnus* here as an example—in fact his only one—of the word used 'without an inherently offensive implication.' Since his quotation ends before *ilae* it is not clear how he takes the sequence as a whole, but he seems to think that ulvas means 'womb' (*cf. ibid.* 101–8). But this is to overlook the threefold repetition of *venter*, and he himself cites a number of passages which certainly use *vulva* in the sense 'vagina' (Cels. 4.1.12; 7.28.1; Pers. 6.73; at Juv. 6.129 it seems to mean 'clitoris'). *TLL s.v. ile* accepts Audollent's conjecture that *ilae* here means *ilea*; but Adams is certainly correct to maintain (*ib.* 50f.) that the word mainly refers to the lower groin, defined as the area between hip and pubes (in medical writers sometimes denoting blood-vessels in this region). Adam lists *ile* among (loose) synonyms for *mentula*, but women certainly had *ilia* too (*e.g.* Ovid *Ars am.* 3.285), and we must surely suppose that it is intended as a (loose) synonym for 'shameful parts.'

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