

lichen Bischöfe auf sich. Diese ihrerseits reagierten im übrigen nicht einfach damit, daß sie kritisierten und polemisierten: Sie versuchten, insbesondere mit dem Fastengebot des 1. Januar ebenfalls rituell zu reagieren⁶⁸. Völlig ist ihnen dies, wie die nachantiken Riten zeigen, nicht gelungen.

68 Das Fasten wird bereits von Augustin betont, freilich als leichtes Opfer dargestellt, Dolbeau 1992, 95 Z. 127 *quid enim magnum est hoc tempore ieiunare, tam parvi die sero prandere* – d. h. man fastet bloß am Tag, ißt nach Sonnenuntergang, und das ist kurz nach der Wintersonnenwende leicht zu bewerkstelligen. Auf innerfamiliäre Diskussionen zu diesem Gebot geht der Prediger kurz nachher ein, ebd. 95, Z. 166ff.

HENK S. VERSNEL

καὶ εἴ τι λοιπὸν τῶν μερ[ῶ]ν [ἔσ]ται τοῦ σώματος ὅλ[ο]υ[.]
(. . . and any other part of the entire body there may be . . .)

An Essay on Anatomical Curses

I

Instrumental Curses

Selected parts of the body

A considerable number of *defixiones* and other curses of the Graeco-Roman world curse parts of the body (and mind) of an opponent. Usually the selection of the anatomical details is clearly prompted by functional motives: to curse and bind – that is: render powerless – the parts of the body that may help their owner to gain an advantage over the author of the curse. People curse the tongue and the soul of an adversary in a lawsuit¹, or the hands and feet of a rival athlete or gladiator, or various other combinations of these convenient physical tools. Indeed, hands, feet, tongue, soul (ψυχή) and mind (νοῦς) are the most current targets in both Greek and Latin *defixiones* throughout antiquity. In a variety of combinations they already abound in the oldest known *defixiones*, the sixth-century curses from Sicily and those of the fifth and fourth century from Attica².

1 For a detailed discussion of the targets and the “Sitz im Leben” of judicial curses see Moraux 1960, 41–56; Faraone 1989, 157 n. 23, and his earlier studies cited there.

2 The majority of the Attic *defixiones* collected in *DTA* do not allow precise dating, but in his preface Wunsch suggested the third century BC for most of them. However, Wilhelm 1904 convincingly argued for an earlier date – 4th cent. BC – for a majority of the curses. On linguistic grounds, W. Rabehl, *De sermone defixionum Atticarum* (Diss. Berlin 1906) 40, proved that practically all the Attic *defixiones* known in his time should be dated to the fourth century BC, which was then acknowledged by Wunsch in his review of Rabehl, *BPhW* 27 (1907) 1574–1579, at 1575f. Recently, C. Habicht, “Attische Fluchtafeln aus der Zeit Alexanders des Grossen”, *ICS* 18 (1993)

Just a few examples: SGD 95 (Selinous, end of VI a)³ τὰν Ε[ὐ]κλέος γλῶσσαν καὶ τὰν Ἀριστοφάνεια(ο?)ς καὶ ... τῶν συνδίκων τῶν [.]υ[.]λίου καὶ τῶν Ἀριστοφάνεος [τὰς γλῶσ]σας ("the tongue of Eukleês and the one of Aristophanes and ... the tongues of their advocates"); SGD 1 (Kerameikos V a)⁴ καταδῶ Χαρίαν ... καὶ ψυχὴν τὴν Χαρίου καὶ γλῶτταν τὴν Χαρίου ... καταδῶ ψυχὴν τὴν Καλλίππο καὶ χεῖρας τὰς Καλλίππο ("I bind Charias ... and the soul of Charias and the tongue of Charias ... I bind the soul of Kallippos ... and the hands of Kallippos"); DTA 49 and 50 (both Halai, Attica, IV a)⁵ καταδῶ τὴν γλῶτταν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ("I bind the tongue and the soul"); DTA 51 (Attica, IV a) Δημη[τ]ρίου καταδῶ ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦ(ν) θυμὸν Τελεσάρχου: κατ(α)δῶ ψυχὴν καὶ νῶν θυμὸν ... ("I bind their soul, mind and spirit"); DTA 54 (Attica, IV a) ... τὴν γλῶτταν καταδῶ χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καταδῶ καὶ Βάτιον τὴν γλῶτταν ... ("the tongue I do bind and his hand and Batios, his tongue – followed by a long list of people whose tongues are bound"). Incidentally, this may be the appropriate moment to note that, unlike mistakes in the accentuation, the orthographic oddities, as a rule, are *not* mine.

Their popularity continues unabated into late antiquity, as is exemplified by a hoard of judiciary curses DT 22–37 from Cyprus (III p)⁶. Produced by one and the same scribe, they are clearly copied from one model and thus marked by recurrent, practically identical formulas. For instance: παραλάβετε (or: κατακομίσαστε) τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος τὴν γλῶσσαν (or: τὰς φωνάς) τὸν θυμὸν τὸν πρὸς ἐμὲ ἔχει ... ("take over [elsewhere: lull to sleep] the tongue

113–118, again argued for a late fourth-century date for some of them on historical and prosopographical grounds. New evidence for fourth-century names in Willemsen 1990, 142–151. Wherever dating appeared impossible I have indicated this with a question mark. I have made full collections of the various categories of curses involving parts of the body, which I hope to publish in a more comprehensive publication.

3 SEG 26. 1113; Gager 49. Cf. A. López Jimeno/J. M. Nieto Ibáñez, "Defixio aus Selinunt", ZPE 73 (1988) 119f., on the names of the cursed people. For a survey of the various terms for advocates etc. in forensic curses see D. R. Jordan, "A Greek *defixio* at Brussels", *Mnemosyne* 40 (1987) 162–166.

4 Gager 105 = W. Peek, *Inschriften, Ostraka, Fluchtafeln*, Kerameikos. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen 3 (Berlin 1941) 89–100 no. 3. More than twenty men and women are cursed for unknown reasons. Peek: "Das Ganze sieht eher nach Privathändeln als nach einem politischen Prozeß aus."

5 Gager 59; cf. Wilhelm 1904, 114f.

6 DT 22 = Gager 45 (see the bibliography there); DT 25 = Gager 46. Formerly attributed to Kourion (Cyprus), they were re-assigned to Amathous by Jordan; see P. Aupert/D. R. Jordan, "Magical Inscriptions on Talc Tablets from Amathous", *AJA* 85 (1981) 184. For a new discussion: Jordan 1994.

[elsewhere: the utterances] and the grudge that Ariston bears against me ...")⁷. Naturally, outside the forensic sphere hands and feet (in a lavish mixture with other limbs) prevail in curses belonging to the world of sport in the widest sense of the word, as for instance in DT 247 (Carthage, II–III p): *manus oblige* ... *oblige illi pede[s]* ("bind the hands, bind his feet").

Motives and purposes: a first glance

Frequently the underlying motive for cursing special parts of the body is clarified in a variety of formulaic phrases. For instance, the curses from Amathous just mentioned list wishes such as: ἀφέλεσθε αὐτοῦ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἀλκὴν καὶ ποιήσατε αὐτὸν ψυχρόν καὶ ἄφωνον καὶ ἀπνεύμονα ("rob him of his power and courage and make him cold and voiceless and breathless"). Furthermore, these curses show a number of variations on the dominant theme of 'muzzling' the target in not always transparent formulas⁸. Finally, they also display more explicit wishes such as: εἶνα μὴ δύνῃτέ μοι μηδενὶ πράγματι ἐναντιωθῆναι ("in order that he cannot oppose me in any kind of action") – οὕτω καὶ ἀντίδικοι ἦτωσαν ἀλαλοὶ ἄφωνοι ἄγλωσσοι ("may my adversaries be speechless, dumb, voiceless"). However, when it comes to explicit wishes, erotic texts are matchless. SGD 152–156 (Egypt, III–IV p)⁹: ... ὅπως μὴ

7 The term θυμός is applied in a different (more specifically forensic and emotional) meaning from the normal 'spirit', which is emphasized by καὶ τὴν ὀργήν (and his anger) further on in the text. Charms to appease the anger of other persons are frequent in Coptic and Jewish magical texts of late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

8 E.g. δὸς φμὸν τῷ Θεοδώρῳ ("give silence to Theodorus") – τὴν παραθήκην ὑμῖν παρατίθεμεν φμωτικὴν τοῦ ... ("we deposit with you this charge which brings silence") – οὕτοί μοι πάντοτε τελώσουσιν καὶ φμώσουσιν τοὺς ἀντιδίκους ἐμοῦ ... ("these [demons] will forever render powerless and muzzle our adversaries"). The verb φμῶω occurs in several late (mostly forensic) curses, for instance SGD 164 (Nysa-Skythopolis = Beth-Shean, Palestine IV p) = H/ C. Youtie/C. Bonner, "Two Curse Tablets from Beisan", *TAPhA* 68 (1937) 43–77, 128. The *kurioi angeloï* are invoked to bind the parts of three women: "Bind down the muscles, the members, the reflection (ἐνθύμησιν), and the intelligence (διάνοιαν) of ... muzzle them (φμώσουσιν), make them blind (τύφλωσον) and dumb (κώφηνον), ... make them speechless and blind." The technical term for this type of spell used in PGM VII 396ff.; XLVI 4 is φμωτικόν. See Jordan 1994, esp. 143. The verb τελώσουσιν, though rare, recurs in a related curse from Alexandria, DT 38 and should be understood with Gager as "these (demons) will always carry out my wishes", or rather "will fulfil the *mageia*".

9 SGD 152 = *Suppl. Mag.* I 47 = Gager 28; SGD 153 = *Suppl. Mag.* I 46; SGD 155 = *Suppl. Mag.* I 49 = Wortmann 1968 no. 1 (the one quoted in our text), SGD 156 = *Suppl. Mag.* I 50 = Wortmann 1968 no. 2. For a new reading of Wortmann

βινηθῇ, μὴ πυγισθῇ, μὴ [λαυ]κάσῃ μήτε ἀφρο(δι)σιακὸν ἐπιτελέσῃ μεθ' ἑτέρου, μὴ ἄλλω ἀντρί συνέλθῃς εἰ μὴ Θεοδώρῳ ... [ἀλλὰ] μ[ὴ] δ[ι]σσηθῇτω πώποτε Ματρῶνα χωρὶς Θεοδώρου [μὴ] καρτεῖσθαι, μὴ εὐσταθῖν, μηδὲ ὕπνου τυχεῖν νυκτός ("... so that [Matrona] shall not be had in a promiscuous way, not be had anally, not be had orally, not for her pleasure engage in sex with another, not go with another man than Theodoros ... and let Matrona not ever be able apart from Theodoros to have strength, to enjoy good health, and to get sleep by night and day"). Small wonder that exactly this type of text will demand our special attention later on.

We find these specific objectives in cursing, binding or chilling parts of the body throughout antiquity. *SGD* 99 (Demeter Malaphoros sanctuary at Gaggara, Selinous, early Va), belonging to a series of the earliest known *defixiones* from Sicily, has the phrase: Σελινόντιος [κ]αὶ ἡ Σελινοντίῳ γλῶσσα ἀπεστραμέν' ἐπ' ἀπ(ε)λείᾳ ἐνγράφω τῷ τένον. ("I 'register' Selinuntius [or the Selinuntian?] and the tongue of Selinuntius, so that it will be twisted and devoid of success")¹⁰. In a recently published *defixio* from Selinous (ca. 500 a)¹¹, the tongues of different persons are cursed "in order that they cannot be of any use of them" (τὰν γλῶσσαν καταγράφω, ὅς μεδὲν ... ὀφελέσει). *DTA* 96 (Piraeus, date?)¹², after a formula binding the tongue, the soul, the hands and the feet of an adversary, continues: καὶ εἴ[τε] τι μέλλει ὑπὲρ Φίλωνος φθέγγεσθαι ῥῆμα πονηρόν, ἢ γλῶσσ' αὐτοῦ μόλυβδος γένοιτο. καὶ κέντησον αὐτοῦ τὴν γλῶσσαν, τὰ χρήματα, ... ("and if he plans to utter a malicious word about Philon, may his tongue become lead. And stab his tongue, his business [?] ..."). And besides these explicit formulas we also find more inclusive

no. 1 see D. R. Jordan, "A Love Charm with Verses", *ZPE* 72 (1988) 245–259, tracing passages with iambic trimeters and dactylic hexameters. For corrections of Wortmann no. 2: *ibid.* 246 n. 3. All these love spells follow the prescriptions given in *PGM* IV 335–384, following the instructions to make wax dolls.

¹⁰ Various terms used here are common in the language of the *defixio*, though not always in the same application. ἀποστρέφω, for instance, is generally used for the twisting of hands and feet that are bound backwards (for instance in the case of voodoo dolls), but not of tongues. For the variant διαστρέφω see below n. 77. See for further discussion of this tablet the literature cited *SGD* 99 and at Gager 51, and add: R. Arena, "Una defixio di Selinunte", *ZPE* 65 (1986) 205f.; *id.*, "Osservazioni su due defixiones selinuntine", *ZPE* 66 (1986) 161–164; Bravo 1987, 197, 214.

¹¹ P. Weiß, in: E. Simon (ed.), *Die Sammlung Kiseleff im Martin-von-Wagner-Museum der Universität Würzburg 2: Minoische und griechische Antiken* (Mayence 1989) 200–204 nos. 340f. = *SEG* 39.1020f. I quote from no. 1020.

¹² It belongs with *DTA* 97 = Gager 66, which has the same formulas and is obviously produced by the same hand.

expressions, e.g. *DTA* 98 (Patisia, IV–III a)¹³: ἀδυνάτους αὐτοὺς πόει καὶ ἀτελεῖς ("make them strengthless and unsuccessful").

Variants continue to be produced into late antiquity, for instance *SGD* 169, a curse from Klaudiopolis (Bithynia, III–IV p)¹⁴: κατα[δε]δεμένοι, μὴ ἀντιλέγοντες, μ[ὴ] λαλοῦντες, μὴ ἐνβλέποντες, ἀλλὰ ἀναυδοί, κωφοὶ ἔστωσαν, μηδὲν κατ' αὐ[τοῦ] λέγοντες ... ("may all these be spellbound, prevented from speaking against [me], from gossiping, from spying, but let them be speechless, dumb, saying nothing against Capetolinus ..."). The detailed indications concerning charioteers and venators in *SGD* 139 (Carthage, II–III p) hold pride of place¹⁵. Charioteers and their horses are cursed so that they will μὴ ἰσχύειν, μὴ τρέχειν, μὴ πηδῆσαι, μὴ πιᾶσαι, μὴ τὰς καμπτήρας περι[κυ]κλεῦσαι [μὴτε] νεικῆ[σαι] ... ("have no strength, not be able to run, to jump, to press, to circle round the turning points or to be victorious").

These curses tend to become formulaic, and components of the formulas easily cross the borders between the several functional curse types that have been distinguished in recent research. Moreover, in the perspective of this functionalistic application there is plenty of room for cumulative elaboration, since there is a choice of bodily parts, actions and functions that can be usefully and conveniently handicapped. Hence we find a generous variety of more elaborate formulas, involving both physical and socio-economic necessities, including jobs, workshops, profits, in short: means of livelihood. In this connection Richard Gordon¹⁶ speaks of an 'attack-scheme': "shorthand references to human social being as expressed in physical reality."

Motive: functional restraint

What these curse texts have to tell us is in accordance with recent theories on the agonistic context of most *defixiones*.¹⁷ More than three-quarters of the published Greek *defixiones* do not provide any hint of their specific pur-

¹³ Gager 83, belonging to the category of prayer for justice (see below).

¹⁴ Gager 47. Judiciary? Cf. J. M. R. Cormack, "A *Tabella Defixionis* in the Museum of the University of Reading, England", *HTHR* 44 (1951) 25–34.

¹⁵ One of a series of four published by A. Audollent, in: *Cinquième congrès international d'archéologie, Alger 1930* (Algiers 1933) 120–131 = *SEG* 9.838.

¹⁶ In his forthcoming book *Spells of Wisdom*. I am very grateful to the author for his kind permission to read the manuscript.

¹⁷ See especially Faraone 1991 and Gager, who arranged his chapters according to the various agonistic classes. For earlier classifications (Audollent, *DT*, esp. lxxxix; E. G. Kagarow, *Griechische Fluchtafeln*, *Eos* Suppl. 4, Leopoli 1929, 50–55; Preisendanz,

poses, but the majority of the remainder concern social competition in largely four domains: 1) commerce and trade, 2) athletics, theatre and amphitheatre, 3) love and erotics, 4) lawsuits. Just as we can see athletes trying to bind the limbs of their rivals, so we also find shopkeepers or artisans cursing their competitors, including their skills, their business and their hands and minds. *DTA* 74 (Attica, date?): καταδίδημι κῆ αὐτὰν καὶ αὐτὸν κῆ γλῶτταν κῆ σῶμα κῆ ἐργασίαν κῆ ἐργαστήρια κῆ τέχνην ("I bind herself and himself and his tongue and body and job and workshop and craft"). Unfortunately, although the cursed parts of the body often directly pertain to the relevant activities, one cannot confidently deduce the purpose of the curse from the parts of the body mentioned¹⁸.

However, all these formulas can be qualified as functional and instrumental in that they can be understood as instruments to bind – that is to restrain – competitors without the explicit, and perhaps even implicit, aim of physically hurting or tormenting them. Consequently, with the exception of the category of venatores and gladiators, whose business it is to kill or get killed, in this type of curse we rarely find the wish to *kill* a rival¹⁹, but rather to restrain his activities in the daily struggle for the survival of the fittest. For this reason I shall henceforth refer to this type of curse, marked by deliberate and purposeful selections of appropriate parts of the body and necessities of life, as 'instrumental'.

"Fluchtafeln", *RAC* 8, 1972, 1–29, esp. 9–11) see Faraone 1991, 27 n. 45. Cf. also Graf 1994, 176–185, who pays special attention to a more comprehensive principle: the experience of crisis and uncertainty.

18 For instance, the reference to male and female genitals in *DTA* 77 cited below (p. 231) does not necessarily put the tablet in an erotic context, but may be an indication of a commercial competition. Faraone, for instance, suggests that the binding of the penis and the vagina here may be intended to cause infertility. Likewise, formulas typical of judiciary *defixiones* occur in different contexts as well. Most illustrative is a hoard of curse texts from the Athenian agora *SGD* 24–39 (mid III p), Jordan 1985. Written by two or three professional practitioners obviously using the same model, they display recurrent identical formulas. In the opening lines the demons are asked to "chill the opponents and their purposes", and the curses all end with the formula (with slight variations): ὥς ταῦτα τὰ ὀνόματα ψύχεται οὕτως ψυχῆτω Ν. τὸ ὄνομα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ. ἡ ὀργή, ἡ ἐπιπομπή, ἡ ἐπιστήμη. "Ἐστω κωφός, ἄλαλος, ἄνους, ἀκέρατος" ("As these names grow cold, so let N's name and his soul, impulse, charm, knowledge grow cold. Let him be deaf, dumb, mindless, harmless . . ."). Now, the same formulas are used both in curses against athletes and in a curse against lovers intended to spoil a love affair, except for a slight addition "let N. grow cold to N." This very common exchangeability of (elements of) formulas in different contexts often prevents the determination of the setting of a curse.

19 Faraone 1991, 26 n. 38.

II

Dissecting the body: Anatomical Curses

II 1

Anatomy and Justice

Listing limbs

There is another, less common, type of curse whose authors are *not* content with cursing the most apposite limbs. Instead, they present a complete list of *all* the conceivable constituents of the human anatomy, or at the least a fair number of additional limbs that are not directly relevant to the social context of the curse. Besides detailed enumerations, this drive to comprehensiveness may also find expression in more global and inclusive references to the total body. In order to give a first impression I cite a few of the most explicit ones.

First, two often cited Latin examples, which were written on either side of a lead tablet found at Nomentum, near Rome (Ia–Ip)²⁰:

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, oculus, fronte, supercili, scaplas, umerum, nervias, ossu, merilas (?), venter, mentula, crus, quastu, lucru, valetudines, defico in as tabelas*. ("Malchio son/slave of Nikon: his eyes, hands, fingers, arms, nails, hair, head, feet, thigh, belly, buttocks, navel, chest, nipples, neck, mouth, cheeks, teeth, lips, chin, eyes, forehead, eyebrows, shoulder-blades, shoulders, sinews, guts, marrow [?], belly, cock, leg, trade, income, health, I do curse in this tablet").

B) *Rufa Pulica, manus, detes, oculos, bracia, venter, mamila, pectus, osu, merilas, venter, . . . crus (?) os, pedes, frontes, uncis, dicitos, venter, umlicus, cunus, ulvas (?), ilae, Rufas Pulica deffico in as tabelas*. ("Rufa the public slave: her hands, teeth, eyes, arms, belly, breasts, chest, bones, marrow [?], belly, guts, mouth, . . . feet, forehead, nails, fingers, womb, navel, cunt, vulva [?], groins: Rufa the public slave I do curse in this tablet").

DT 42 (Megara, I–II p): . . . μασθὸν [. . . πνεύ]μονας καρδίαν ἦπαρ [. . .] ἰσχία ῥάχιν κοιλίαν [. . .] αἰδοῖον μηρούς προκτὸν [. . .] κνήμας πτέρνα[ς] . . . υς ἄκρα

20 *DT* 135 = Gager 80. The tablet was dated II–III p by Audollent (Gager: "date unknown"), but it is undoubtedly older. H. Solin, "Analecta epigraphica", *Arctos* 22 (1988) 141–162, at 141–146: "Absurde Spätdatierung . . . die Defixionen aus Nomentum stammen aus viel älterer Zeit, aus der frühesten Kaiserzeit, würde ich sagen" (145). I have borrowed the translation (and that of the following ones) from Richard Gordon's *Spells of Wisdom*.

ποδῶν δακτύλους [...] καὶ εἴ τι λοιπὸν τῶν μερ[ῶ]ν [ἔσ]ται τοῦ σώματος ὅλ[ο]υ[.]
 ("breast, lungs, heart, liver, . . . hips, lower back, intestines . . . sex, thighs,
 arsehole, . . . shins, heels . . . toes, fingers . . . and any other part of the en-
 tire body there may be . . ."). So here is where I found the title of my paper.

These baffling anatomical exercises are usually regarded as the final step in a process of gradual accumulation, from hands and feet to "all the 365 muscles of the body" as another curse²¹ has it. The present paper aims to argue that, conversely, this is *not* a process of uncontrolled growth of the 'instrumental' curses discussed above. I hope to demonstrate that both the objectives and the atmosphere or "Sitz im Leben" – as far as we can trace them – are of a different nature. In a forthcoming book on magic, *Spells of Wisdom*, which in my view will be a revolution in the field, Richard Gordon analyses the rhetorical value of listing, including such figures as polysyndeton, pleonasm, and redundancy. These forms of expressive intensification, he argues, are intended to exert an irresistible rhetorical pressure upon the addressee. The lists should not be regarded as exponents of a typically 'magical' strain toward completeness. While gladly endorsing this view, my own focus is on the question of what circumstances, i.e. what emotional or social contexts specifically tend to provoke the application of this "bitter language of insult, by means of which the attacker seeks to strip the opponent of his or her protective shame, shielded in normal social intercourse behind euphemism, discretion and avoidance". Obviously, these types of 'hard words' give expression to emotions such as hate, desire, etc. more explicitly than in normal communication²².

21 P. Colon. inv. T 4, first published by Wortmann 1968, 108f. no. 12. Wortmann believed that the mention of 365 members was unparalleled, but Maltomini, who re-edited the text in *Suppl. Mag.* II 53, has adduced several other examples, both in Coptic (PGM IV 149f.) and in a Greek curse tablet from Attica (Ziebarth 1934, 1042–1045 no. 24, III p?) adding three exorcistic charms in late manuscripts suggesting a background in the cosmology of Basilides. D. R. Jordan, "Magica Graeca Parvula", *ZPE* 100 (1994) 321–335, at 321f.: "The 365 members", offers a further parallel, pursuing a suggestion by Ziebarth on a lead curse tablet in the Louvre (DT 15) directed against a dancer for the Blue Faction. There are phrases with obvious cosmic references including 36 decans, five planets etc. Jordan brilliantly reconstructs a phrase θάψιν διὰ ἀναίρεσιν τῶν ἑξὲ μελῶν αὐτοῦ, ("affliction through destruction of his 365 members"). Without exception, these texts date from late antiquity.

22 I here cite Gordon, who refers to A. B. Weiner, "From Words to Objects to Magic. Hard Words and the Boundaries of Social Interaction", *Man* 18 (1983) 690–709, esp. 705. Elsewhere Gordon expresses his view as follows: "What is most striking about longer (and invariably later) lists of body parts is their resemblance to the

In order to distinguish them from the *instrumental* curses, referring to *defixiones* with *functionalistic selections* of body parts, I shall now introduce the term *anatomical curses* as a provisional label for the comprehensive curses with full – or at least extensive – lists of parts of the human body. As yet, these are no more than labels or working definitions, *my* definitions. Whether they – more or less consistently – correspond to an emotional or social reality behind the texts is a question that we hope to answer after the exposition of the relevant evidence. Naturally, we must be prepared to find an area where the two types tend to overlap. The distinction between full (anatomical) and selective (instrumental) lists is by their very nature rather slippery in the middle of the scale connecting the two extremes, and furthermore complicated by the scarcity of explicit motives and incentives. The two examples just quoted, for example, do not provide unequivocally reliable clues²³. Regarding one of them, the curse from Megara, however, we shall be able to make a reasonable conjecture on the basis of circumstantial evidence and, generally, the situation will turn out to be less desperate here than in the case of the 'instrumental' *defixiones*.

In order to put us on the track, I quote a collage composed of five – partly mutilated – curses in the Johns Hopkins University, which are identical except for the names of the cursed people (Rome, Ia)²⁴. Again the body is depicted from head to foot, this time in five sub-schemes with precise bodily indications including the purport of each curse. I cite the part relevant to our issue.

camera's 'panning-shot'. Just as the panning-shot spares our attention for *that* thing *now*, so the remorseless enumeration of parts of the body enables the practitioner imaginatively to dismember the victim so that the curse moment, the period of the practitioner's projective fixation upon the victim, can be extended as long as possible."

23 Gager's argument concerning the curse from Nomentum, "the use of the term *quaestus* suggests that the occasion involved business competition of some sort", is not compelling, since, as we have seen, economic aspects can also be included in curses with different motives. Gordon points out that this list is constructed on the basis of a tripartite scheme: outer, inner and social. The curse drives from the exterior of the body to the physical and social essence.

24 Besnier 33 = W. S. Fox, "The Johns Hopkins *Tabellae Defixionum*", *Suppl. to AJPh* 33.1 (1912) 16–19 no. 1 = *AnnEp* 1912, 140 = Gager 134, with bibliography. Add: *CIL* I² 2520; A. Ernout, *Recueil de textes latins archaïques* (Paris 1957⁴) no. 140.

Do tibi cap[ut]
 Ploti Auon[iae. Pro]serpina S[aluia],
 do tibi fron[tem Plo]ti. Proserpina Saluia,
 do [ti]b[i] su[percilia] Ploti. Proserpin[a]
 Saluia, do [tibi palpebra]s Plo[ti],
 Proserpina Sa[luia, do tibi pupillas]
 Ploti. Proserpina Saluia, do tibi nare]s,
 labra, or[ficulas, nasu]m, lin[g]uam,
 dentes P[loti], ni dicere possit
 Plotius quid [sibi dole]at: collum, umeros,
 brachia, d[i]git[os, ni po]ssit aliquit
 se adiutare: [pe]c[tus, io]cinera, cor,
 pulmones, n[on] possit senti(re) quit
 sibi doleat: [intes]tina, uenter, um[b]licu[s],
 latera, [n]on possit dormire: scapulas,
 ni possit s[a]nus dormire: uiscum
 sacrum, nei possit urinam facere:
 natis, anum, [fem]ina, genua,
 [crura], tibiae, pe[des, talos, plantas,
 digito]s, unguis, ni po[ssit] stare [sua
 vi]rtute.

"To you (Proserpina) I consign the head of Plotius slave of Avonia." The head is then dissected into its constituent parts: forehead, eyebrows, eyelids, pupils, nostrils, lips, ears, nose, tongue, teeth, and the list ends with a statement of its function: *ni dicere possit Plotius quid sibi doleat* ("that he cannot say what is hurting him"). Next follow the other four sections of the body with the respective purposes: *ni po[ssit] aliquit se adiutare* ("that he cannot in any way help himself"); *n[on] possit senti(re) quit sibi doleat* ("that he cannot make sense of what is hurting him"); *ni possit s[a]nus dormire* ("that he cannot sleep soundly"); *nei possit urinam facere* ("that he cannot urinate"); *ni po[ssit] stare [sua vi]rtute* ("that he is not able to stand by his own strength").

These expressions clearly indicate that the victim should not only be restrained in his actions – one may even wonder whether this is the primary motive at all – but first and foremost that he must suffer. This is put beyond doubt by further sections of the long text: *eripias salutem, c[or]pus collorem, uires, uirtutes Ploti* ("snatch away the health, the body, the complexion, the strength, the physical faculties of Plotius") . . . *tradas illunc febris quartan[ae], tertian[ae], cottidia[n]ae, quas cum illo luctent, deludent; illunc euincant, vincant, usque dum animam eius eripiant* ("deliver him to the

quartan, tertian, daily fevers, which must fight, defeat him, overcome him, until they have snatched away his life"). . . . *mal[e] perdat, male exset, [mal]e disperdat* ("may he perish horribly").

This appears to be a popular device. DT 190 (Latium, date?) consigns all the body parts of a woman, from head to foot, to the infernal gods *vobis commedo* (= *commendo*, "I consign to you"): . . . *membra colore ficura caput capilla umbra cerebri fructus (frontem) supe . . . ia (supercilia) os nasu metu buccas la . . . rhu vitu colu iocur umeros cor fulmones intestinas vetre bracia digitos manus ubi visca femina cuncta crura talos planta tictos dii iferi*. At the end there is the explicit wish, phrased in a votive formula, to see her waste away: *Dii i[n]feri, si illam videris [t]ibi abesse te[m] vobis sa[n]ctu[m] il[li]ud lib[er]e . . .* ("Infernal gods, if I see her wasting away I shall gladly make a sacrifice . . .").

Obviously, we are here in a different atmosphere than that of the instrumental curses: the target must suffer, must be visited by severe afflictions, must perish.

Inflicting pain and affliction

This combination of cursing the complete body – either dissected into its anatomical details or *in toto* – on the one hand, and the wish to make a person suffer, on the other, will first demand our attention, while we reserve the question of motivation for the next section. The increasing emphasis on afflicting pain in later curses has, of course, not gone unnoticed²⁵ and is sometimes explained as just another exponent of the general hypertrophy of the rhetoric and practice of cruelty in later antiquity²⁶. However

25 Most recently, Graf 1994, 145f., for instance, observes that, whereas in the earliest texts of the fourth century BC the author does not wish to harm but only to restrain, more recent texts become more threatening. From now on the aim is to *perdere*, "ruiner les adversaires, ils doivent aller chez Pluton (*adsint ad Plutonem*); c'est la mort des adversaires que l'on recherche".

26 On the issue of cruelty see for instance P. Garnsey, "Why Penalties become Harsher. The Roman Case, Late Republic to Fourth Century", *Natural Law Forum* 13 (1968) 141–162; F. Millar, "Condemnation to Hard Labour in the Roman Empire, from the Julio-Claudians to Constantine", *PBSR* 52 (1984) 124–147, esp. 127ff.; R. MacMullen, "Judicial Savagery in the Roman Empire", *Chiron* 16 (1986) 147–166; K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades. Roman Executions Staged as Mythical Enactments", *JRS* 80 (1990) 44–73. For the gladiatorial games in particular: R. Auguet, *Cruelty and Civilization. The Roman Games* (London 1972); C. A. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans. The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton 1993), esp. 47–81; P. Plass, *The Game of Death in Ancient Rome. Arena, Sport, and Political Suicide* (Madison 1995). For violence among circus factions and judicial torture see below.

influential this trend may have been, as an exclusive explanation it is insufficient in that it does not account for the specific patterns and features of the phenomena. Who would be satisfied with a similar generalizing interpretation of gladiatorial shows or of executions on stage? In the course of our inquiry we will be confronted with the following peculiarities: a) the continuity of the differences between types of curse texts themselves, b) the specific 'ecphrastic' enumerations of the parts of the body, c) the specific nature of the sufferings called down upon the targets, d) the combination with other typical features such as legal terminology, e) their earliest appearance already in late classical and early Hellenistic periods. Let us take a closer look at a few relevant examples.

Curious and in its phrasing unique is a curse from Lilybaeum (II a?)²⁷: δέομαί σου κάτω Ἑρμῇ κάτωχε, Ἑρμῇ, σοῦ καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ παραιτηταὶ δὲ ἀνικόνου Τελχίνες. δῶρον τοῦτο πέμπω παιδί[σκη]ν ἱκνουμένην [Πρ]ῖμα[ν] ἐρωτῶ. παιδίσκην καλὴν δοροῦμαι σοὶ [δῶρον] καλόν, ὅτα νοετὰ, θώρακα καλή[ν], Πρῖμα Ἄλλια, ἔχοντα τρίχας καλὰς, πρόσωπον καλόν, μέτωπον καλόν, ὄφρυς καλαί, ὀφθαλμοὶ καλοί, δύο ὅπα λεῖα, δύο μυκτήρες[ες], στόμα²⁸, ὀδόντες, ὅτα λεῖα, τράχηλος, ὅμοι, ἀκρωτήρια. Κατορύσσω, σεῖω, εὐοί. μνήμα εἶε τὸ ἐπαφρόδειτον Ἄλλια Πρῖμα. ταύτης τὴν ἐπιστόλην γράφω. ("I implore you, Hermes of the Netherworld restrainer, you and the many intercessors [?], the imageless Telchines. I send you as a gift the fitting [proper, becoming?] girl Prima with a request. A handsome girl I give you as a beautiful gift: perceptive [?] ears, a lovely chest. Prima Allia with her lovely hair, her lovely face, her lovely forehead, her lovely eyebrows, her lovely eyes, her two soft eyelids, her two nostrils, her mouth, her teeth, her soft ears, her throat, her shoulders, her extremities ...")²⁹. On the reverse Kerberos is mentioned. Again Allia Prima is consigned to the gods of the Netherworld and her pretty

27 SGD 109 = E. Gàbrici, "Sicilia. Rinvenimenti nelle zone archeologiche di Panormo e di Lilibeo", *NotScavAnt* 7.2 (1941) 261–302, at 296–299 = *Epigraphica* 5–6 (1943–44) 133 no. 1929, from a grave. Presenting a person as a gift to the gods of the Netherworld also occurs in SGD 54 (Athens, date?): πέμπω δῶρον, and in the closely related *defixio* DTA 99.

28 Gàbrici reads σῶμα here, but no doubt Gordon is right in reading στόμα.

29 Gordon comments: "The force of a minute survey of a face is here to build an irresistible ironic force against the victim, the irony generated by the deepening contrast between the compliment in 'lovely' and the destructive purpose in listing Prima Allia's advantages. It is not the desire that nothing be omitted that generates this list, it is hatred of a sexual allurements which has deprived the client of a husband, lover or customer." It is exactly this element of hatred as a motive which interests me.

body parts are again enumerated ending up in καλὰ ἅπαντα (all those lovely things): "I hand over to you, Hermes, Allia Prima, in order that you hand her over to the cruel (?) Mistress. I beseech you Hermes . . . in order that you scrape off Prima Allia . . . I give her to Mistress Persephone. I bury her in Hades." (ἵνα αὐτὴν [παραδό]σει τῇ κυρείᾳ ἄδευ[κεῖ]. Ἑρωτῶ, Ἑρμῇ . . . – ἵνα ἀποξέης [Πρ]ῖμαν Ἄλλιαν . . . δωρέω τῇ κυρείᾳ Περσε[φ]όνη. Κατορύσσω εἰς [Ἄϊδην]). Though no reason is given, it is apparently a case of competition in a love affair, probably an action of a rejected lover.

A late curse from Rome (IV p)³⁰ gives a more conventional list of body parts that must be destroyed: κοῦρα(ι), πολύνουμαι κοῦραι, ἄραται καὶ . . . καὶ ἀρπάσσεται τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὰ σπλάγχνα, τοὺς μοιαλοὺς καὶ τὰ νεῦρα καὶ τὰς σάρκας τῆς Αἰταλίας (= Εἰταλικᾶς?) . . . ("maidens with the many names, destroy and take away the soul, the heart, the innards, the marrow, and the sinews and the flesh of Italike [?]").

Cursing 'all the limbs' or the whole person or total body by inflicting illness or death is a very common variant. DT 51 (Athens, not earlier than I–II p): ἐνβάλλετε πυρετοὺς χαλε[ποὺς] εἰς πάντα τὰ μέλη Γαμετῆς . . . κατακαίνετε, καταχθόνι[οι], ψυχὴν κὲ τὴν καρδίαν Γαμετῆς . . . ἐνβάλλετε πυρετοὺς χαλεποὺς εἰς . . . ("Throw horrible fevers into all the limbs of Gamete . . . kill [burn?] gods of the Netherworld, her soul and heart").

A curse from Messina (II p)³¹ makes itself rather explicit: a) Βαλερίαν Ἀρσινόην τὴν σκύζαν (read: σκύζαν) σλώλληκες (read: σκώλληκες) τὴν ἁμαρτωλὸν Ἀρσινόην κ(αὶ) μελέαν. b) Βαλερίαν Ἀρσινόην τὴν ἁμαρτωλὸν νόσος, τὴν σκύζαν [αν] σῆψις. (a) "Valeria Arsinoe, the hot bitch, [may the] worms [eat her], the sinner, Arsinoe, the miserable." b) "Valeria Arsinoe, the sinner, [may] sickness [get her], the hot bitch, and putrefaction". The words σκώλληκες, νόσος and σῆψις will make devotees of Lactantius' *De mortuis persecutorum* immediately feel at home³². Although no specific occasion is mentioned, "at

30 SGD 131 = R. Wünsch, "Deisidaimoniaka", *ARW* 12 (1909) 1–45, at 41–45. The verb ἄραται occurs also in other curses: DT 1.18 ἐκ τῶν ζώντων. Cf. Mt 24.39; Joh 19.15.

31 SGD 114 = Gager 116 = A. Vogliano, *BPhW* 45 (1925) 1937 = SEG 4.47.

32 Obviously, the author must be sought in Jewish (less probably Christian) circles. Cf. Gager *ad loc.*: "The Greek word *hamartōlos* is used widely for 'sinner' in Jewish and Christian texts. Here it means something like 'wrongdoer'." I do not agree with him that the dungworm should be understood as another epithet of Valeria, for σκώλληκες is a plural nominative and has the very same position in the formula as νόσος on side b. For σκώλληκες in curses see: SEG 4.47; Björck 1938, 60. Ultimately the worms have their roots in the Old Testament: Jes 66.24 = Mk 9.48. Hence Coptic curses crawl with this species of animals, for instance: Meyer/Smith nos. 92, 93, 100, 108.

the very last, the tablet indicates strong feelings of animosity towards Arsinoë" (Gager). Indeed, to rot away by consumption and to be consumed by worms are not the most obvious woes that you would curse your competitive neighbour with (or are they?). The very same may be said concerning a curious *defixio* from Rome (Poitiers, c. 200 p)³³, a Latin text but with strong Greek influences. It curses a *mimus* named Sosio: *Sosio deliria, Sosio pyra, Sosio cottidie doleto* . . . Equally straightforward is a *defixio* from Syria-Palestine, near Hebron (III–V p)³⁴, invoking the Charakteres: κατακλίνει ἐπὶ κάκωσι(ν) καὶ ἀε[κ]ία[ν] (follows the name of the cursed person) . . . βάλεται αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ πυρέτιον κατακλίνει[ε] αὐτὸν ἐπὶ κάκωσι(ν) καὶ θάν[ατον] καὶ κεφαλαργίας ("lay him low with suffering and injury, cast him into a fever, deliver him to distress, to death, to headache" [in this order]). And it requires no fewer than four (very mutilated) Latin *defixiones* from Bologna³⁵ to curse one medical doctor (*medicus Porcellus*) with threats of death, a variety of fevers and illness against his body and limbs: 1. (Voces magicae in Greek) *Porcellus molo medicu Porcellu medicu molo medicu interficite om corpus caput tente(?) oculu* . . . 2. *occidit(e)* . . . *omni menbra omnis vis* . . . 3. *Porcello molo porce lo molo medico interficite eum occidite eni te profucate Porcellu et mall?* *Silla usore ipsius anima cor atu. epar. 5. tertianas quartana Luris frigora morbu em [P]orcellus molo medicus* . . . (The rest is incomprehensible).

There is a large number of curses which display explicit wishes that the cursed persons must get ill, waste away or die, in a variety of formulas³⁶. Surveying the complete evidence, we observe that the *defixiones* with an explicit wish to hurt parts of the body or the whole body, or to inflict illness or death in general, largely belong to the post-classical period. In the material presented so far the earliest 'anatomical curses' *sensu stricto* appear in the first century BC, their prime being the second to fourth century AD.

33 For a bibliography and the history of its interpretation: Versnel 1985, esp. 247f.

34 SGD 163 = Gager 106 = B. Lifshitz, "Notes d'épigraphie grecque", *RevBibl* 77 (1970) 76–83, no. 20 at 81–83 (with photo, pl. 9). The text is reported with a misleading omission in SGD.

35 Besnier 1920, nos. 1–5 = A. Olivieri, "Tavolette plumbee bolognesi di *defixiones*", *SIFC* 7 (1899) 193–198.

36 DT 93. 96–98 (mentioning *inimici*); 100 (probably amatory); 101 (*inimici*); 129, 140, 193 (?), 195, 229, 300; Besnier 1920, 12 (?), 39 (*si quis [i]nimicus inimic[a] adve[r]sarius hostis* . . .); Solin 1968, nos. 1, 34; SGD 104, 114, 116–121, 136, 163; SEG 49. 858, 919; *AnnEp* 1988, 1146. Note that, in accordance with the subject matter of the present section, this list includes only curses which lack an explicit motivation or justification. For lists of anatomical curses providing motives see next section.

This is in accordance with the geographical predominance of the Western parts of the empire, including Sicily and Italy, but even more Germania, Gallia, and as we shall see shortly, especially Britannia. All this is equally true for the curse types that we shall discuss below. Hence, it may be expedient at this point to establish that this type of anatomical curse, albeit not frequent, was not lacking in classical Greece either. Here are some clear samples, showing so many well-known ingredients that translation seems to be superfluous.

DTA 77 (Attica, IV–II a?)³⁷: a) . . . τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ τὰ ἔργα αὐτ[ῶν] καὶ αὐτοὺς ὅλους καὶ τὰ τοῦτ[ων] ἅπαντα . . . b) . . . καὶ τὰς ψωλὰς (*membrum virile praepertio retracto*) αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς κύσθους (*pudenda muliebra*) αὐτῶν . . . καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν [καὶ ἔρ]γα καὶ αὐτοῦ[ς] ὅλλου[ς] καὶ τὴν ψωλὴν καὶ τὸν κύσθον τὸν ἀνόσιον (Τλησία)[ς] κατ[άρ]ατος. This is a variety of membra quite uncommon to the average instrumental curse from fourth century Attica. The final words betray the atmosphere of animosity, apparently lying in the domain of erotic competition. DTA 89 (Attica, IVa) displays an even stronger similarity with the anatomical curses of the Roman period: a) . . . κάτοχε κάτεχε Φ[ρ]ύ[ν]ιχον κ[αὶ] τὰ ἀκρω[τήρ]ια αὐτοῦ το(ῦς) πόδας: τὰς χεῖρας ψυχὴν φύσιν (= αἰδοῖον, *pudenda*) π[υ]λ[γ]ήν τὴν κεφαλ[ή]ν τὴν γαστ[έρ]α τὴν πιμελῆς . . . τὰ ἀκρω[τήρ]ια τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ το(ῦς) (ὀ)φρῶς . . . b) . . . τὰς [χ]εῖρας τὸν νοῦ: ψυχῆς τὴν κεφαλῆς τὴν ἐργασίαν τὴν καρδίαν τὴν οὐσία[ν] τὴν γλ[ῶ]τταν.

In an aside, I also draw attention to a curse from Nemea (IVa?)³⁸, although we shall reserve a discussion of this curse type for a later section. It is a 'Trennungszauber' intended to separate a woman from her lover: "I turn away Euboula from Aineas, from his face (προσώπου), from his eyes (ὀφθαλμῶν), from his mouth (στόματος), from his nipples (τιθίαν), from his soul (ψυχᾶς), from his belly (γάστρος), from his [penis] ([ψωλίον]: this reading seems to be appropriate and is confirmed by parallels), from his anus (προκτοῦ), from his entire body (ὅλου τοῦ σώματος). I turn away Euboula from Aineas."

37 Gager 24. The Latin translations *ad usum delphini* in these texts are Wunsch's. The numerous orthographic and grammatical oddities are not.

38 SGD 57 = Gager 25 = St. G. Miller, *Hesperia* 49 (1980) 196f. = SEG 30. 353. Translation: Gager *loc. cit.* with some minor changes. Initially, both Jordan and Gager took Euboules to be a masculine name. Jordan now writes me that he reads Euboula as a feminine and also doubts its early dating. He also sent me the text of another unpublished related anatomical curse from Nemea. Note that, in accordance with the special purposes of 'Trennungszauber', the focus is here on the (erotic) separation, which does not necessarily or primarily require the destruction or harm of the competitor or his body parts. Not all anatomical curses need include the wish that the target must suffer. However, the majority does.

Together, the instances presented in this chapter unequivocally substantiate our initial suggestion that there is a strong and often explicit link between the wish that a person shall suffer, struck by an affliction or even by death, on the one hand, and the enumeration of body parts or the mention of the body as a whole, on the other. We have also seen that in a considerable number of these curses marked feelings of hatred find an expression either in 'hard words' or through more implicit allusions in the text. This brings us back to the question of motivation.

Motive: retribution

The curse from Megara DT 42 quoted above (p. 223) is, in Audollent's collection, preceded by another Megarian curse, according to Wünsch by the same hand. This *defixio* invokes Persephone, Hecate, Selene, Earth against some unnamed persons: ἀνάθεμα[τί]ζομεν σῶμα πνεῦμα ψ[υ]χὴν [δι]άνοιαν φρόνησιν αἴσθησιν ζοὴν [καρδ]ίαν λόγοις Ἑκατικίους ὀρκίσμ[ασι] τε ἄβραϊκοῖς . . . ("we anathematize them: body, spirit, soul, mind, thought, feeling, life, heart with Hekatean words, with Hebrew oaths"). There follows a long list of body parts: τρίχας κεφαλὴν ἐνκέφαλον [πρόσω]πον ἄκοᾶς ὄφρ[υς] μυκτῆρας (nostrils) οἱ[.] . . . πρὸ σιαγόνας (jaws) ὀδόντα[ς] [.] . . . ψυχὴν στοναχεῖν ὑγείαν[ν] [.] . . . τον αἷμα σάρκα κατακάειν στοναχεῖ δὲ πάσχοι καὶ . . . ("hair, head, brain, face, ears, eyebrows, nostrils . . . jaws, teeth, . . . so that their soul may sigh, their health may . . . , their blood [and] flesh may burn. And let him sigh with what he suffers . . ."). Moreover, side B has: [κατα]γράφ[ο]μεν [εἰς] κολάσε[ι]ς . . . καὶ [ποι]νὴν καὶ [τιμω]ρίαν ("we enroll [curse] them for punishments, pain and retribution . . ."). Then the text ends with the term: Ἀνέθεμα³⁹. This text – obviously from a Jewish milieu – is particularly instructive. First it expresses the explicit desire that the victim shall suffer in every part of his body, that his blood and flesh shall burn, and that he shall bewail his misery and pain. The reverse side, on the other hand, clarifies that the agony is intended as a punishment for some offence against the writer of the tablet.

This appears to be a popular scheme. In other curses the offence is sometimes spelled out. Again, the first curse from Megara is instructive. Like its local analogue, just cited, it has a text on the reverse side, which gives an

39 On ἀνάθεμα and related words: J. Behm, *ThWNT* 1 (1933) 354–357; K. Hofmann, "Anathema", *RAC* 1 (1950) 427–430. In Greek curses: Martinez 1995, 340f. C. A. Faraone, "Taking the 'Nestor's Cup Inscription' Seriously", *ClAnt* 15 (1996) 77–112, esp. 97ff., suggests that we should regard similar single words in magical texts as indications of a 'rubric' or 'label'.

account of the reason for the magical action. Although the text is mutilated, it seems to concern either the refusal to return a loan or the false charge of such a refusal. So, again, we have a combination of three interconnected aspects in one curse text: 1) the cursing of a comprehensive set of body parts, 2) the wish that in this way the target will suffer miserably, 3) a justification of the curse requiring a just punishment for an offence against the writer of the tablet.

A well-known and most interesting *defixio* from Delos (Ia–Ip)⁴⁰ provides further clarification: Side A: "Lords gods Sykoniai, Lady goddess Syria Sykona, punish and give expression to your wondrous power and direct your anger at whoever took away my necklace, who stole it, those who had knowledge of it and those who were accomplices, whether man or woman." Side B: "Lords gods Sykoniai (. . .), Lady goddess Syria (. . .) Sykona, punish and give expression to your wondrous power. I register (καταγράφω 'curse') whoever took away, who stole my necklace. I curse those who had knowledge of it, those who participated. I curse him, his brain (ἐνκέφαλον), his soul (ψυχὴν), sinews (νεῦρα), . . . genitals (τὰ οὐδέα), his private parts (τὰ ἀνανκῆα), the hands (τὰς χεῖρε) . . . the feet (τοὺς πόδες), from the head (ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς) to the nails (μέχρι ἀκρῶν ὀνύχων τ(δ)ν δακτύλων)".

Besides the combination of a list of body parts from top to toe with a punishment for a specific offence, the most conspicuous feature is the fact that the verso has an unmistakable *defixio* formula, while on the recto we descry a kind of prayer formula. Now, a considerable number of such prayer-like invocations can be found among the tablets that are traditionally ranged under the name of *defixiones*. In Versnel 1991a I have collected and discussed these texts and proposed to reclassify them as a category beyond the curses *stricto sensu*. They are rather prayers for legal help, whence I have labelled them judicial prayers or prayers for justice⁴¹. They invoke divine

40 SGD 58 = Gager '88 = Ph. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale*, BÉFAR 217 (Paris 1970) 649–653. The text bristles with writing errors. I am grateful to David Jordan for having communicated several new readings to me.

41 This identification has now been generally accepted and productively pursued. Tomlin's publication of the Bath curses (1988, esp. 59 n. 3) is based on this classification, and Gager devotes the fifth chapter of his book to these 'pleas for justice and revenge.' See especially: Jordan's review of Tomlin, *JRA* 3 (1990) 437–441, and *id.*, *op. cit.* below n. 59; G. W. Dickerson, Rev. of Faraone/Obbink 1991, *BMCR* 2 (1991) 212–214; A. Chaniotis, "'Tempeljustiz' im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien. Rechtliche Aspekte der Sühneinschriften Lydiens und Phrygiens", in: G. Thür/J. Vélissaropoulos (Hgg.), *Symposion 1995. Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte (Korfu,*

help either to make a thief return a stolen object to its owner (or to help redress a particular injury caused by another – often unknown – person)

1.–5. September 1995), Akten d. Ges. f. Griech. u. Hellenist. Rechtsgesch. 11 (Köln/Wien 1997) 353–384); Faraone 1991, 27 n. 45: “Versnel rightly reclassifies the proclamations as ‘judicial prayers’, which have a social context different from that of the *defixiones*.” I quote this assessment because some other scholars are more reticent. Gager (rightly) advocates caution in drawing too strict distinctions between the *defixiones* proper and this specific category. Graf 1994, 183–185, though acknowledging the differences between the other (agonistic) *defixiones* and the present (vindicatory) type, explicitly argues for their basic unity as *defixiones* on account of 1) the common material (lead, metal), 2) the shared places of deposition: sanctuaries and pits or wells, 3) the common reason for their application, being a crisis provoked by lack of information on future or past events, adding 4) the fact that the search for thieves can also be executed through strictly magical means (‘le sorcier’). Though I myself have paid much attention to the similarities and transitional forms between various curse types (‘borderline cases’, see next note), in my view not one of these alleged ‘common’ features is really conclusive on the basic unity of all curse tablets. 1) and especially 3) are simply *too* ‘common’, the first being equally typical of certain types of oracles, especially those of Dodona (in fact, as Graf 1994, 155 acknowledges, lead most probably started its career as the common material for epistolary communication in general), whereas 3) is typical of *all* oracles, *and* prayers of supplication *and* votive religion. Yet we do not rate all these types of expression among *defixiones* or curses. As to 4), of course, thieves can also be traced by magical devices (though the evidence is not abundant), as they are – more frequently – by consulting an oracle (e.g. D. Evangelidis, “Ἡπειρωτικαὶ ἔρευνα 1: Ἀνασκαφὴ τῆς Δωδώνης 1953”, *Epeirōtika Chronika* 1, 1935, 192–259, at 259 no. 32: ἔκλειψε Θωπίων τὸ ἀργύριον, *Bull. Ép.* 1939, 153; and other texts from Dodona), but it is difficult to see the relevance of this argument, if it is intended as an argument. As for 2): the two vast collections found in regular sanctuaries (Knidos, Bath) – with one or two exceptions – do not provide any *defixio* in the usual sense of the word, but only prayers for legal help with a choice of specific features that I analysed. The same seems to be true for the Akrokorinth and for the few texts from Uley that have been deciphered so far (see below n. 54). Pits/wells, on the other hand, may be either considered as direct connections with demons of the underworld, comparable to graves (very appropriate for *defixiones*), or as sanctuaries of (indeed chthonic) deities (best example: Minerva Sulis, Bath) (very appropriate for judicial prayers). Which one of the two qualities dominated can be only established by the archaeological context (see for literature on the places of burial of *defixiones* Faraone 1989, 155 n. 19) or (above all) through the phrasing of the tablet texts. Of course hybrids occur. I would point out that the subterranean realm is both the abode of the dead and the place of supernatural justice and retaliation. However, if one wishes to cover the two types (*and* the border cases) under one common denominator, the Latin term *defixio* is *not* the most appropriate term, nor is English ‘curse’. Greek ἀρά does cover both aspects. Still, I am quite aware that current usage is not likely to change.

or, if this does not work, at least to take revenge and punish the culprit. One of the distinctive traits is the use of legal terminology and argument. Naturally, there are borderline cases, which share *some* of these features with characteristics of the *defixiones* in general⁴². However, apart from a variety of different specific characteristics, which are not of immediate interest to our present subject, all of them share the request to a god to make the offender sick and/or suffer, or at the least be harmed.

Significantly, but not surprisingly, this category abounds in anatomical curses. For instance, a *defixio* from the Athenian Agora (III p)⁴³, after some *vores magicae*, invokes Typhon: παραδίδωμί σοι Φιλοστράταν . . . ἵνα αὐτῆς καταψύξης πᾶν αὐτῆς τὸ πνεῦμα τὴν ζοὴν τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἰσχὺν τὸ σῶμα τὰ μέλη τὰ νεῦρα τὰ ὀστέα τὰς φλέβας τὰς ἀρτηρίας τὴν καρδίαν τοὺς ὄνυχας τὸ ἥπαρ τὸν πλεῦμονα τὰ ἐντὸς πάντα (“I hand over to you Philostrata . . . in order that you may chill everything hers, her spirit, life, power, strength, body, limbs, sinews, bones, veins, arteries, heart, nails⁴⁴, liver, lungs, everything inside her”). The formula is repeated four times, the last times with the addition of hands and feet as targets. “Yes, Lord Typhon, ἐκδίκησον (avenge) . . . (no doubt the author of the text) whom NN bore . . . and βοήθησον (help him)”. Although there is a complete summary of the parts, it is not asked that the person suffer, but that she be chilled – which is formulaic in later *defixiones* –, even to the effect of her disappearance (21/2: [κα]τάψυξον ἐπὶ ἀφανισμῷ), or paralysed (31: ἵνα παραλύθῃ) or in combination (47–51). The words ‘avenge me’ and ‘help me,’ however, clearly refer to the retaliation for the injury the writer has suffered.

42 Because there seems to be some misunderstanding on this particular point I here quote an explicit passage from Versnel 1991 a, 67f., which should clarify my position: “Although it is conceivable to try and divide the material into two polar opposites, *defixio* and prayer for justice, there is, as we have seen, a whole spectrum of approaches which lie between them. Absolute distinctions, though sometimes indispensable for systematic definitions, are more often than not blurred or even non-existent in reality. Consequently, I do not plead for the complete elimination of the samples of our ‘border group’ from the collections of the *defixiones*, provided that their specific peculiarities are duly recognized and appreciated. Just as elements usually associated with religious prayer tend to occur in the texts of the *defixiones*, so too we shall meet striking examples of curse terminology in the ‘pure’ juridical prayers.”

43 SGD 22 = G. W. Elderkin, *Hesperia* 6 (1937) 384–389. The formula is very similar to that of SGD 23, except for the first clause which gives instructions to chill the bodily parts of the victim. See also SGD 21 below.

44 In a letter Chris Faraone rightly notes that “nails” is out of place in a list of internal organs that ends with τὰ ἐντὸς πάντα and points out that *LSJ* gives a rarer, later meaning for ὄνυξ: “part of the liver” (Ruf. *Onom.* 180; Σ Nic. *Ther.* 560).

DT 74 (Athens, probably II p)⁴⁵ is more informative. It opens with an enumeration of the gods and powers to whom the cursed person is consigned: "Aggeloi Katachthonioi, Hermes Katachthonios, Hekate Katachthonios, Plouton, Kore and Persephone and Moirai Katachthoniai and all the gods and Kerberos . . . the doorman and to φοίκη κ(αί) καθ' ἡμέραν καθημερινῶ [πυρετῶ] (shivers, and daily fever)". The reason seems to be that this person has an object belonging to the author of the tablet in his possession and refuses to give it back: τοῦ κα(τα)σχόντος [κ(αί) οὐκ] ἀποδ[όντος . . . Next follows καταγράφω . . . [τε]χας ἐνκέφαλον στό[μ]α ὀδόντας χίλη ὦμους βραχίονα[ς] στῆ[θ]ος στόμαχον νῶ[τ]ον ὑπο[γ]άστριον ἐφίβειο[ν] μηρούς [. . . δα]κτύλους [π]οδῶν – ὄνυχ[ας] ("I enroll . . . the hair, brains, mouth, teeth, lips, shoulders, arms, breast, stomach, back, lower belly, pubes, thighs, . . . toes, nails"). Finally Paulus the stonemason is included, apparently because he is an accomplice (συνγνώ(ν)τα). The formulaic part of DT 75 (same place, same date, same hand as the preceding one) is practically identical. However, this time the target is a thief (τοῦ κλέπτου . . .). On side B we can read the following body parts: ὄνυχ[ας], μα[σθ]οῦ[ς], . . . στῆ[θ]ος, πρ[ω]κ[τ]ή[ς], ἔν[τε]ρα . . . [. . .] αλον, ὑπο[γ]άστριον ("nails, breast, anus, innards [?], lower belly").

Three texts from the Latin West are clearly related to the Greek ones. A recently published lead tablet from Spain⁴⁶, not rolled up, has two holes apparently indicating that it was fixed to a wall or altar. The text is very well conserved: *Dis inferis vos rogo utei recipiatis nomen Luxsia A(uli) Antesti filia caput cor co(n)s[il]io(m) valetudinem vita(m) membra omnia accedat morbo cotidea et sei faciatis votum quod faccio solva(m) vostris meritis* ("To the gods of the Netherworld: I implore you that you register my complaint against Luxia, daughter of Aulus Antesius, let sickness visit her head, heart, intelligence,

45 I include here later readings by Ziebarth 1934, 1049, and S. Eitrem, *Rev. of Ziebarth 1934*, *Gnomon* 12 (1936) 557–559, at 558.

46 J. Corell, "Defixionis Tabella aus Carmona (Sevilla)", *ZPE* 95 (1993) 261–268. This is not only the oldest *defixio* from Spain, but it is also one of the oldest Latin *defixiones* in general: second half of the first century BC. The judicial nature of the prayer is revealed even more explicitly than elsewhere by the unique expression *nomen recipere*, which is the normal technical term for the acceptance of an accusation by the Roman magistrate. Furthermore, the votive terminology goes well together with (and is sometimes found in) the judicial prayer, but not with the *defixio* proper. So does the list of body parts that are being cursed including the fact that a sickness must haunt them. Note the summarizing term *membra omnia*, which also occurs in DT 134 B; Besnier 2 = A. Olivieri, "Tavolette plumbee bolognesi di defixiones", *SIFC* 7 (1899) 193–198, at 195. Three other recent finds, one of which is a judicial prayer: J. Corell, "Drei Defixionum Tabellae aus Sagunt (Valencia)", *ZPE* 101 (1994) 280–286.

health, life and all her members, every day. And if you fulfil the vow that I make, I will duly recompense you"). Comparably, a tablet found in a well in France (Montfo, Dép. de l'Hérault, 50–60 p)⁴⁷ has: *Quomodo hoc plumbu non paret et decadet sic decadat aetas, membra, vita, bos, grano, mer eoru qui mihi dolum malu fecerunt*. Finally, in a tablet from Nottingham⁴⁸ Iuppiter is addressed in order that he *exigat per mentem, per memoriam, per intus, per intestinum, per cor(dem, per) medullas, per venas per [. . .] si mascel si femina quivis involavit (dena)rios Cani Digni ut in corpore suo in brevi temp[or]e pariat . . .* ("in order that Iuppiter sues him [haunts him] in his mind, his memory, his inner parts, his intestine, his heart, his marrow, his veins, his . . . whether male or female, whoever has stolen the denarii of Canus Dignus. He must with his body [or: in person] settle the matter without delay . . .").

Besides listing long series of body parts, there are again different strategies, including that of the shortcut. Calling down on the culprit all sorts of afflictions or death is typical of these prayers for justice⁴⁹. In addition to a number of incidental and isolated finds we have two large collections of judicial prayers, one from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in the Carian city of Knidos, the other from the sanctuary of the hot spring of Sulis Minerva at Bath, England. Since they are very formulaic, a summary of the main features relevant to our inquiry will suffice⁵⁰.

DT 1–13 (Knidos, II–I a?)⁵¹. A series of some dozen judicial prayers by which enemies of the authors (always female) are subjected to divine punishment (κόλασις, τιμωρία), torments (βάσανοι), and a specific type of

47 R. Marichal, "Une tablette d'exécration de l'oppidum de Montfo (Hérault)", *CRAI* 1981, 41–51 (with pls.); 48: "De même que ce plomb disparaît et tombe, qu'ainsi tombent la jeunesse, les membres, la vie, le bœuf, le grain, les biens de ceux qui m'ont fait tort . . ." (= *AnnEp* 1981, 621). M. Lejeune, "En marge de la défexion de Montfo", *ibid.* 51f.

48 Gager 98 = E. G. Turner, *JRS* 53 (1963) 122ff. This tablet is one of the numerous judicial prayers from England discussed below.

49 Apart from the collections mentioned in the text the following tablets unite the prayer for revenge or vindication with the wish that the target must suffer or die: *SGD* 21, 115; *AnnEp* 1982, 448 (much improved by H. Solin, "Analecta epigraphica", *Arctos* 15, 1981, 101–123, at 121f.); *ibid.* 1988, 840; Solin 1968, nos. 6, 12. Of a different nature is *AnnEp* 1978, 455 (Cremona, I p: H. Solin, "Analecta epigraphica", *Arctos* 21, 1987, 119–138, at 130–133), where the author enrolls some named persons *apud eos inferos ut pereant et defigantur quo ego heres sim*, adding: *meo sumptu defigo illos quos pereant*. No retaliation here, but the wish to be sole heir.

50 For an extensive discussion and interpretation of both series see Versnel 1991a.

51 Gager 89 cites DT 1, 4, 13 in translation.

affliction for which a fixed formula is used: "let the thief return the stolen object (or let the slanderer confess his guilt etc.) πεπρημένος". The latter term, though often misunderstood, can only mean "burnt", more especially "burnt by fever"⁵², *inter alia* since fire and fever often freely intermingle in curse texts. Several curses are conditional in that the targets will be absolved from punishment as soon as they have paid for their crime (false accusation, theft, seduction of a husband, attempt to harm or kill the author). Here follows a relevant passage from DT 1: ἀναβαῖ Ἀντιγόνη πὰ Δάματρα πεπρημένα ἔξιμολο(γο)ῦσ[α] καὶ μ[ὴ] γένοιτο εὐειλάτ[ου] τυχεῖν Δάματρο[ς] ἀλλὰ μεγάλας βασάνους βασανιζομένα ("may Antigone, burnt by fire [= fever], go up to Demeter and make confession, and may she not find Demeter merciful but instead suffer great torments"). A South Italian tablet, DT 212 (Bruttium, III a)⁵³, is closely related: "Kollyra dedicates to the attendants of the god the dark-coloured [cloak] which [NN took] and does not give back . . . He is not to have rest for his soul until he pays the god (μὴ πρότερον δὲ τὰν ψυχὰν ἀνειή ἔστω ἀνθείη τῷ θεῷ) a twelve-fold fine and a measure of incense according to the city's law . . ."

Likewise, in the numerous tablets from Bath, published by Tomlin in an exemplary way⁵⁴, the culprit is consistently threatened with the wish that he shall pay for his sin *sanguine suo* ("with his blood") or *corpore suo* or *vita sua* ("with his body, with his life"). Variations occur, as for instance in a tablet from Bath⁵⁵: *a[e]n[sum] me[sum] qui levavit [e]xconic[tu]s [e]st templo Sulis dono si mulier si baro si servus si liber si puer si puella et qui hoc fecerit sangu(in)em suum in ipsu aenmu fundat* ("the person who lifted my bronze vessel is utterly accursed. I give him to the temple of Sulis, whether woman or man, whether slave or free, whether boy or girl, and let him who has done this spill his own blood into the vessel itself"). Or a more general expression in a tablet from Lydney Park (Gloucestershire, IV p)⁵⁶: *Devo Nodenti Silvanus*

52 For this interpretation (as against the certainly mistaken "sold into temple slavery" as suggested by Newton and others) and its implications in the context of the Knidian curses see Versnel 1994. For fire and fever in curse texts below p. 249ff.

53 Gager 92; discussed in Versnel 1991a, 73f.

54 Tomlin's full publication of the Bath tablets numbers 130 items, while there are 30 more published texts from elsewhere in Britain (collected by Tomlin 1988, 60f.). Moreover, there are about 140 unpublished curse tablets from Uley, many of them still rolled or fragmentary and likely to remain illegible, but surely of the same type as the ones quoted above p. 237–239.

55 Tomlin 1988, 44 = Gager 95.

56 Gager 99 = Versnel 1991a, 84.

anilum perdidit demediam partem donavit Nodenti. Inter quibus nomen Seneciani nollis petmittas sanitatem donec perfera<t> usque templum Nodentis ("To God Nodens. Silvanus has lost a ring. He has given half of it [its value] to Nodens. Among those whose name is Senecianus, do not permit health until he brings it to the temple of Nodens").

New finds, some of them still unpublished, continue to substantiate the proposed classification. Apart from the large hoard from Uley, mostly still rolled and uninspected but surely of the same type as the Bath tablets, there is now a collection of some 16 tablets (many of them severely damaged) from the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on the Akrokorinth, all dating from the Roman period⁵⁷. The few that provide sufficient information display clear characteristics of the judicial prayer, and, like the ones from Knidos, are all written by women (and aim at female targets). The most extensive one curses a list of parts of the body "from her head to the soles of her feet with lasting destruction" on account of "acts of insolence."

A fascinating tablet from Pella (Thessaly), found in a grave of the fourth century BC⁵⁸, provides a 'Trennungszauber' cursing any woman who might (want to) marry a man mentioned by name. Influence of the style of the judicial prayer in this *defixio* manifests itself when the dead agent and the demons are addressed in a very deferential tone and the cursed person must perish miserably.

Equally interesting, finally, is the only known Attic tablet found in a sanctuary, viz. that of the hero Palaimon Pankrates. Like so many other Attic curses of the fourth century BC, this tablet is directed against opponents in a lawsuit. David Jordan, whose publication is forthcoming⁵⁹, has established that it belongs to the category which I have labelled 'borderline cases.' On the one hand, it displays traces of the stereotyped instrumental curses with

57 See for instance R. S. Stroud, "Curses from Corinth", *AJA* 77 (1973) 228f.; *SGD* p. 166f.; N. Bookidis/R. S. Stroud, *Demeter and Persephone in Ancient Corinth*, American Excavations in Old Corinth. Corinth Notes 2 (Princeton 1987) 30f. with fig. 32. I am very grateful to Ron Stroud for granting me the opportunity to inspect these unpublished texts and to Nancy Bookidis for her information on the archaeological context.

58 The text will be published with a circumstantial commentary by E. Voutiras, whom I thank for having sent me a draft of his forthcoming paper. See for the time being L. Dubois, "Une tablette de malédiction de Pella. S'agit-il du premier texte macédonien?", *REG* 108 (1995) 190–197. Apart from the aspects mentioned above, the formula is another instance of the type discussed by Bravo 1987.

59 To appear in A. Kalyeropoulou (ed.), *To ἑγὼ τοῦ Παγκράτου*. I thank David Jordan for sending me a draft of his publication.

functional parts of the body, intending to put opponents out of action; on the other, it is a prayer for justice both on account of its religious context and its request: "become a punisher (τιμωρός) of those whom I have listed for you . . . for they both do and say unjust things."⁶⁰

Inferences and reflections

On the basis of the evidence produced so far, our first conclusion is that cursing the whole body, either in anatomical detail or in a comprehensive formula covering the whole, is characteristic of formulas concerning (at least allegedly) 'legitimate' and socially accepted revenge and retribution. In this respect they are closely similar to – and as a matter of fact often are – public curses. For instance, funerary imprecations, intended to be read by all passers-by, may either threaten the potential violator with horrible afflictions or call down severe penalties on those who have wronged the deceased and/or caused his death.

60 In addition, of the five decipherable new *defixiones* from the Kerameikos (V–IV a), published by Willemsen 1990, 142–151, one attacks Glykera, wife of Dion, in order that she τιμωρηθεῖ καὶ [ἄ]τε[λ]ῆς γάμου A . . . – R. Wünsch, in: F. J. Bliss/R. A. S. Macalister (eds.), *Excavations in Palestine during the Years 1898–1900* (London 1902), 158–187, published 35 Greek curses written on limestone from Tell Sandahannah (West of Hebron) dating to the second century AD. Though most of them are too fragmentary to allow interpretation, some are very clear and of particular relevance, since they are, as Wünsch aptly noticed (184), "imprecations of persons who considered themselves undeservedly wronged, against their enemies, containing invocations of a god, with the intent to bring punishment on the head of the offending person". Wünsch also noticed the close relationship with the Knidian tablets. They contain words such as: βασι[λ]είῃ, [τιμω]ρίαν γέινεσθαι. This series has not been included in any of the great corpora and I am grateful to Richard Gordon for having drawn my attention to it. However, David Jordan refers me to R. Ganschinietz, "Sur deux tablettes de Tell Sandahannah", *BCH* 48 (1924) 516–521, who doubts their magical nature. Of course the Coptic-Christian curses also present many a good instance of judicial prayers. Meyer/Smith 1994, nos. 1, 27–29, 88–93, 104, 108 are prayers for vengeance, but more interesting is no. 66, labelled by the editor as a spell for protection during childbirth, but in my view definitely a malicious curse to induce abortion (as R. K. Ritner suggested): "It is not really I who shall ask you nor [other] (humans) but [. . . Sa]baoth [. . .] to her side [. . .] from the crown of (her) head down to (the) nails of her feet and bring forth under her polluted blood and dark water on (her) right side (over) to (her) left side. You must make it weigh on her like a millstone. . . . When I cast it into the fire, you must fill the 12 bowls (?) with fire (and) cast them into her heart – her lungs, her heart, her liver, her spleen, [into all] the hundred twentyfive body parts . . ."

Curses against violators are probably best represented by the series of largely identical curses set up here and there by Herodes Atticus and members of his circle; they are inspired by Jewish formulas⁶¹. Numerous and pre-eminently appalling for their cruelty are the funerary imprecations from Asia Minor⁶². "May he, an evil man, be evilly destroyed" is kind compared to another imprecation, in which the wrath of the gods and the Erinyes is called down, "and the culprit shall taste of the liver of his own child" (ἰδίου τέκνου ἥπατος γεύσεται)⁶³.

In the category of pleas for revenge, the funerary inscriptions addressed to Helios, some with depictions of raised hands⁶⁴, are the most familiar examples, one of the best known being the poignant inscription from Rhe-neia⁶⁵ invoking the Jewish (or Samaritan) god to avenge the innocent

61 One of its phrases: "May God strike the desecrator with trouble and fever and chills and itch and drought and insanity and blindness and mental fits," for instance, is derived from Deut 28, 22. 28. On these curses see L. Robert, "Malédictiones funéraires grecques", *CRAI* 1978, 241–289 (= *id.*, *Op. min. sel.* 5, Amsterdam 1989, 697–745); W. Ameling, *Herodes Atticus*, *Subsidia Epigr.* 11 (Hildesheim 1983) I 101f., 114ff.; II 23ff., 160ff. nos. 147–170. Cf. *id.*, "Eine neue Fluchinschrift des Herodes Atticus", *ZPE* 70 (1987) 159. Most of the inscriptions are meant to protect private property; Gager 86 gives an example.

62 J. H. M. Strubbe, *ΑΠΑΙ ΕΠΙΤΥΜΒΙΟΙ. Imprecations against Deprecators of the Grave in the Greek Epitaphs of Asia Minor. A Catalogue*, *Inscr. griech. Städte aus Kleinasien* 52 (Bonn 1997). Cf. Strubbe 1991 and for the Jewish evidence *id.*, "Curses against Violation of the Grave in Jewish Epitaphs of Asia Minor", in: J. W. van Henten/P. W. van der Horst (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, *Arb. z. Gesch. d. ant. Judentums u. d. Urchristentums* 21 (Leiden 1994) 70–128.

63 I. Smyrna (G. Petzl, Hrsg., *Die Inschriften von Smyrna*, *Inscr. griech. Städte aus Kleinasien* 24.2, Bonn 1990) no. 898 = *SEG* 34.1194, and *MAMA* III (= J. Keil/A. Wilhelm, edd., *Denkmäler aus dem Rauhen Kilikien*, Manchester etc. 1931) no. 77 (cf. J. Zingerle, "Heiliges Recht", *JÖAI* 23, 1926, Beibl. 1–72, at 59) respectively, with thanks to Johan Strubbe.

64 The main collections and discussions are F. Cumont, "Il sole vindice dei delitti ed il simbolo delle mani alzate", *Mem. Pont. Acc. Ser. III* 1 (1923) 65–80; *id.*, "Nuovi epitafi col simbolo della preghiera al dio vindice", *Rend. Pont. Acc. Arch.* 5 (1926–27) 69–78; *id.*, "Deux monuments des cultes solaires", *Syria* 14 (1933) 381–395 at 392–395; Björck 1938, 24ff.; cf. also G. Sanders, *Bijdrage tot de studie der latijnse metrische grafschriften van het heidense Rome: De begrippen "licht" en "duisternis" en verwante themata*, *Verh. Kon. Vlaamse Acad. Wet., Lett. en schone Kunsten van België, Kl. Letteren* 37 (1960) 264–411; F. Bömer, *Untersuchungen über die Religion der Sklaven in Griechenland und Rom 4: Epilegomena*, *Abh. Akad. d. Wiss. u. d. Lit. Mainz* 1963: 10 (Wiesbaden 1963) 201–205. They are discussed in Versnel 1991a, 70ff. On the symbol of the raised hands see Strubbe 1991.

65 For a discussion and bibliography see Gager 87.

blood of a girl who is supposed to have been murdered by deceit or a spell (or poison): "may the same happen to those who murdered or cast a spell on (or: poisoned) her and also to their children". Coptic and Greek Christian funerary curses from Egypt display exactly the same formulas of revenge and physical punishment⁶⁶.

Comparable funerary texts can be found all over the Mediterranean world, though not everywhere in the same concentration. In the Latin-speaking world, funerary inscriptions like the one from Mactar⁶⁷, warning the potential desecrator of the tomb that *habebit deos iratos et vivus ardebit*, or curses of evil-doers like *clavom et restem sparteam ut sibi collum alliget, et picem candentem pectus malum commurat suum*, are more or less formulaic⁶⁸.

Many of these pleas for vengeance, both on lead tablets or papyri and in public inscriptions, derive their legal terms and expressions straight from the lawcourt⁶⁹. However, there is a very important, additional feature. Not only are most of these pleas for justice – as opposed to (other) curse tablets – phrased in a different, i. e. deferential, tone vis-à-vis the gods, but they have also been found, as we saw, in places that are *not* typical of the *defixio* proper, namely in sanctuaries of generally chthonic gods, including deities associated with wells or (hot) springs. This is not only true for the large collections found at Knidos, Corinth, and Bath, but also for the majority of the rather idiosyncratic judicial prayers from Sicily, where the sanctuaries of Demeter Malaphoros at Gaggara (Selinous, Va?) and of the chthonic gods at Morgantina (Ia) have pride of place; further for tablets from Spain, where Nymphs associated with springs and other goddesses are addressed in a most reverential jargon, as well as for quite a few scattered finds among the ones cited from Italy and Western Europe, and some unpublished ones from Greece⁷⁰. Moreover, in some cases (Spain, Knidos, Akrokorinth) they were not hidden, but simply attached to or placed near the altar.

66 See for a collection and comprehensive treatment Björck 1938, 49–60: "Kopistische Rachegebete. Der liturgische Einfluß. Die Anwünschung von Krankheiten".

67 CIL VIII 11825 = ILS 8181. On this curse type with *dei irati* see Versnel 1985.

68 CIL VI 20905 = *Carm. Lat. Epigr.* (Bücheler) 95. Cf. CIL VI 12649; VIII 11825. The formulaic nature of these curses is further borne out by their application in the parodic *Testamentum Porcelli*, as John Bodel reminds me. On a related funerary inscription, CIL VIII 2756, commemorating a girl killed through magical practice and adding an invocation to the gods as *vindices*, see J. Sünskes Thompson, "Der Tod des Mädchens. Zur Magie im römischen Reich", *Laverna* 5 (1994) 104–133, with thanks to Tony Birley for the reference.

69 Amply discussed in Versnel 1991a.

70 D. R. Jordan, in a forthcoming paper, mentions unpublished curses from Mytilene (four tablets, IV a) and Rhodes (one tablet, IV a?).

This is not meant to imply that no anatomical curses of judicial prayers have been found in graves. Whoever wants absolute consistency here should choose a different profession. As always, we are speaking in terms of family resemblance and polythetic classes, with overlapping and criss-crossing similarities⁷¹. Yet, our evidence confirms that wherever the cursing of comprehensive lists of parts of the body or of the body as a whole occurs, other fixed characteristics may be expected to emerge. These include legal terminology, gods as judges, entailing the concomitant deferential addresses and the inclusion of the action in a more or less official temple ritual, and finally, the desire to hurt the adversary with pain, ailment, death. In all these cases it is obvious that the plaintiffs feel fully entitled to their actions, legitimating them with references to the injuries they have suffered. Theft prevails among these injuries⁷², which implies that the perpetrators are mostly unknown, a circumstance which lends an additional aspect of ordeal to the action of the divine judges⁷³.

Altogether, then, in this specific type of tablet text the target is *not* (or not principally) a competitor in the social sphere; he is first and foremost an accused, to be judged and persecuted by divine law. The concomitant emotional atmosphere may be voiced in abusive qualifications of the target such as τὸν δυσσεβῆν καὶ ἀνομὸν καὶ δύσμογον . . . ("the impious, lawless, ill-fated"). Regardless of their historical setting – after the first attestations in the Hellenistic period (Knidos) there is a boom in the imperial period – this basic distinction between competitive *defixiones* and curses intended to inflict suffering is a constant⁷⁴.

71 Cf. also above n. 42. I have discussed these concepts in Versnel 1991 b.

72 Lists of curses (practically all belonging to the judicial prayers) prompted by theft: Solin 1977; Tomlin 1988, 60–63 counts about 70 curse texts from Britain (the hoard from Uley not included) and 20 from elsewhere prompted by theft. For an interesting discussion of a Punic curse against a thief (or rather against people who gloat over lost property) see S. Ribichini, "Un episodio di magia a Cartagine nel III secolo av. Cr"., in: Xella 1976, 147–156. There are also examples in Coptic and Jewish curses; for instance Meyer/Smith 1994 no. 112 betrays an interesting similarity to the curses from Britain. Cf. also PGM V 70, 175.

73 A *defixio* from Concordia (Aquila Italy: Solin 1977 no. 1, with discussion) gives a perfect illustration of the writer's uncertainty: *Secundula aut qui sustinet* ("Secundula or whoever [else] is the thief"). Suggestions of names with the addition "or whoever else may have been involved or is an accessory", including such formulas as *si puer si puella, si vir si femina* etc. are formulaic. On the aspect of ordeal in prayers for justice see Versnel 1994.

74 I emphasize once more that, naturally, amalgamations and overlaps occur. Regrettably, lack of space precludes a discussion of the typical mixture of instrumental and emotional anatomical elements in curses from the domain of gladiators, vena-

Consequently, we might be tempted to look for the provenance of the torture of extended series of limbs in a secular judiciary context as well. As a matter of fact, some curse texts echo legal terminology. In some Sethianic curse tablets from Rome (*DT* 155–156)⁷⁵ it is asked that the victim be made cold in all his parts. Next we read: αὐτὸν ποιήσητε κατὰ κράβατον τιμωρίας τιμωισθῆνε κακῷ θανάτῳ. This is an unequivocal reference to the rack as an instrument of punishment on which the victim must suffer a painful death by torture. In other texts we have seen related terms such as βάσανος/βασανίζω (judicial torture)⁷⁶. Does secular judicial prosecution provide any clues concerning similar enumerations of body parts that are exposed to torture? The evidence turns out to be both sparse and marginal, in fact mainly restricted to martyrological sources, a genre in which ‘hard words’ naturally abound. 2 Macc 7.1–42, for instance, gives a horrific account of the martyrdom of seven Jewish brothers at the hands of Antioch IV. The first of them, who dared to defy the king, had his tongue cut out (as punishment for his words) after which he was scalped, mutilated and

tors and jockeys, for instance the two long series *DT* 141–187, 234–245. In *DT* 239 and 240, for example, the horses must simply break their legs and lose their speed. The human opponents, however, must not only be bound in their hands and feet and perception but must really be hurt: μετὰ βλάβης τοῦ σώματος καὶ σκελῶν κατάγματος. *DT* 241: καταδήσητε πᾶν μέλος καὶ πᾶν νεῦρον Βικτωρικοῦ ὃν ἔτεκεν γῇ μήτηρ παντός ἐνψύχου . . . (for a detailed discussion of the closely related *DT* 242 see Wünsch 1900, 248–259). Here (as in modern soccer) competition is war: A. Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford 1976). The emotional overtones of especially the *defixiones* that curse all the limbs of a person’s body may also appear from the fact that exactly here *similia similibus* comparisons (for instance connected with the slaughter of a cock) are applied. Furthermore, it is not by chance that in the same series we find not the usual verb δέω to bind the parts of the body but βασάνισον αὐτῶν τὴν διάνοιαν and ἀπόκνισον αὐτῶν τὰ ὄμματα. In this specific domain of physical competition (and indeed, struggle for life in the literal sense) hate and competition coincide, effecting an amalgamation of the functionalistic and the emotional curse elements. See for instance a curse from North Africa against a venator: *DT* 247 [occi]dite exterminate vulnerate Gallicu . . . manus oblige . . . oblige illi pedes[m] m[e]m[br]a sensus medulla; oblige Gallicu. Cf. also *DT* 250.

75 R. Wünsch, *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln aus Rom* (Leipzig 1898).

76 Faraone 1993 extensively discusses references to torture by whipping, branding and the wheel in magical texts, with reference to the Iynx in Pind. *Pyth.* 4. Though interesting and important, they are practically restricted to erotic magic, for which see the next section, and not directly relevant to the issue of listing limbs. For another view on several points: S. Iles Johnston, “The Song of the Iynx. Magic and Rhetoric in *Pythian* 4”, *TAPhA* 125 (1995) 177–206.

finally roasted in a cauldron. Here we have it all: bodily mutilation, in 7.7 referred to as “tearing limb from limb” (τιμωρηθῆναι τὸ σῶμα κατὰ μέλος), while similar expressions return in 4 Macc 9–12, esp. 9.14, where the same story is told in even more revolting detail: κατὰ πᾶν μέλος κλώμενος, 9.17 τέμνετέ μου τὰ μέλη καὶ πυροῦτε μου τὰς σάρκας καὶ στρεβλοῦτε τὰ ἄρθρα. . . . Compare, in a Christian context, Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 8.10.4: διετείνοντο πᾶν μέλος . . . διὰ παντός τοῦ σώματος . . . καὶ τῆς γαστροῦ καὶ κνημίων καὶ παρειῶν . . .

However, more instances referring to normal penal practice in Greece and Rome are particularly difficult to find. Although we are well informed about the different procedures and instruments of ancient torture, such as whip, wheel, rack, and corporal punishment in general, *lists of body parts* being tortured in a judiciary context are conspicuously lacking in our evidence⁷⁷. Classical Greece, for that matter, was extremely reticent in applying torture to persons of free status⁷⁸. Texts attest that Athenians explicitly contrasted ‘pre-cultural’ practices of this kind to their own contemporary, civilized form of prosecution and punishment⁷⁹. Though the Romans did

77 *Du châtement dans la cité: supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique. Table ronde Rome 9–11 nov. 1982*, Coll. de l’École Franç. de Rome 79 (Rome 1984); J. Vergote, “Les principaux modes de supplice chez les Anciens et dans les textes chrétiens”, *Bull. Inst. Hist. belge de Rome* 20 (1939) 141–163, discussing 1) l’écartèlement des membres (*eculeus*), 2) la laceration (*fidiculae* et *ungulae*), 3) la brûlure (*ignis, laminae*), 4) la flagellation; *id.*, “Folterwerkzeuge”, *RAC* 8 (1969) 112–141. S. Beta, “Pisandro e la tortura. Il verbo ΔΙΑΣΤΡΕΦΕΙΝ in Eupoli Fr. 99 K.-A., *ZPE* 101 (1994) 25f., cites a comic adespote: τῇ κλίμακι διαστρέφονται κατὰ μέλη στρεβλοῦμενοι.

78 Virginia J. Hunter, *Policing Athens. Social Control in the Attic Lawsuits, 420–320 BC* (Princeton 1994) 70–95: “Slaves in the Household”, with app. (1) “Torture”, (2) “Instances of Torture”; 154–184: “The Body of the Slave. Corporal Punishment in Athens”. Exceptions *ibid.* 174ff. Even in the case of slaves, torture was not used primarily as punishment but as a device for extorting testimony: G. Thür, *Beweisführung vor den Schwurgerichtshöfen Athens. Die Proklesis zur Basanos*, Veröff. d. Komm. f. ant. Rechtsgesch. 1, Sb. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl. 317 (Wien 1977) 17: “Keine der genannten Folterungen sollte die Verschärfung der Todesstrafe bezwecken”. Exceptions in Hunter *op. cit.* 165ff. For whipping and beating as punishment see G. Glotz, “Les esclaves et la peine du fouet en droit grec”, *CRAI* 1908, 571–587. For whip and wheel: Faraone 1993, 12ff. However, even an author who had the least reason for reticence, viz. Aristophanes, though staging a rich harvest of corporal punishments, does not go beyond beating, whipping, and occasionally chains, deprivation of food, branding and the mill (Hunter *op. cit.* 165ff.).

79 P. Dubois, *Torture and Truth* (New York/London 1991), in an interesting chapter (9–34, esp. 29) on *basanos* (touchstone), esp. in its metaphorical uses, discusses Aesch. *Eum.* 185–190.

tolerate a more cruel regime vis-à-vis slaves (and in later times also the *humiliores*)⁸⁰, even there I have not been able to find 'anatomical' descriptions comparable to those in our curse texts. Accordingly, explicit terminological references to torture etc. in *defixiones* seem to prevail in curses that betray Jewish, or more generally Near Eastern influence. Last but not least, whenever our curses are explicit on the *nature* of the suffering, the terminology generally refers to *ailment*, more especially to a variety of fevers, consumption, headaches and the like⁸¹. If these torments are represented as judicial punishments, as they patently often are, they obviously refer to *divine* justice, whose manner of castigation is just of this kind⁸².

If we also bear in mind the period in which these characteristics become prevalent in 'curse texts', we may be encouraged to reflect on their origins. In Versnel 1991a, 93 I already suggested a non-Greek origin of the judicial prayer, namely in an area or areas where a strongly monarchical ideology influenced both the perception of and the forms of communication with the divine. In a letter David Jordan suggests to me that the same may be assumed for the head-to-toe listing, which as we have seen is practically restricted to the judicial prayer. The evidence presented above does indeed seem to point in this direction, although we have a few early anatomical curses (p. 231). However, tracing origins is one thing, the search for function, meaning and social or emotional context, especially in the period that witnessed the bloom of the anatomical curses all over the Mediterranean world (and beyond), is another. It is on these aspects that my inquiry focuses.

80 K. R. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire. A Study in Social Control* (New York 1987) 119–123. Flogging and beating being staple ingredients, slaves might also be exposed to dire atrocities, in accordance with the maxim *in servum omnia licent* (Sen. *Clem.* 1. 18. 2); Caligula had cut off the hands of a thievish slave (Suet. *Cal.* 32. 2); Augustus had the legs of a slave broken for taking a bribe (Suet. *Aug.* 57. 1f.) In Puteoli, inscriptions tell us, there were public facilities (*crux, patibulum, verberatores*) to inflict savage punishments on slaves. Yet these penalties seem generally to be of a private nature. See also R. Saller, "Corporal Punishment, Authority, and Obedience in the Roman Household", in: B. Rawson (ed.), *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome* (Canberra/Oxford 1991) 144–165, esp. 157–60; and the literature above n. 26.

81 Significantly, total recovery after an illness is often expressed with the same type of formula: ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς μέχρι ὀνύχων, and other examples in *Suppl. Mag.* I p. 95.

82 This is even more obvious in Coptic curses. Cf. besides the ones mentioned from Meyer/Smith (above n. 60), also *ibid.* nos. 66, 96–98, 101, 106, 110, 111, 127. Note that in a ritual that bears some similarities to the curse, viz. the ἐπιπομπή, too, it is above all ailments and epidemics – besides natural disasters, like hail or storm – that are diverted to the enemies. For ἐπιπομπή in magic see *Suppl. Mag.* II p. 176.

II 2

The Anatomy of Love and Hate

Torturing the beloved

Feelings of being wronged and the concomitant craving for revenge are human emotions that particularly flourish in one special domain of communication. In *DT* 198 (Cumae, II–III p) the gods of the Netherworld are invoked: . . . ὅποκατέχετε ὑμεῖς [αὐτὴν ταῖς ἐ]σχ[άτ]αις τιμωρίας . . . ὅτι πρώτη ἡθέτησε τὴν πίστιν πρὸς Φίλικα τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἄνδρα ("subject her to the ultimate penalties . . . because she was the first to break her loyalty [or love, or friendship] to her husband Felix"). It is quite some conjecture, I admit, but the context does not leave much room for serious doubt. No loss has a more stimulating effect on the adrenaline than having one's beloved snatched away by another. Here, we literally feel the flames of hate, and the texts are equally sulphurous. The disloyal wife or husband, the treacherous friend or faithless lover is widely accused of ἀδικία in literature⁸³. However, in the domain of love magic, they are easily matched by, as well as closely related to, the far more numerous curses written by (or for) rejected lovers, designed to overcome the resistance of a recalcitrant girl, who is often suspected (but not necessarily explicitly accused) of being interested in another man. Being abandoned or being rejected: we shall see that these experiences give rise to identical expressions of hate and vindictiveness in our sources, the relevant curses being phrased in equally harsh and cruel language. And here we have found the second type of curse texts where 'anatomical curses' prevail.

If we come straight to the point this time, this is because the material is so familiar and has been so frequently discussed⁸⁴ that everybody will

83 See the discussions in Cameron 1939, esp. 12; Dover 1978, 177; and n. 126 below.

84 Unfortunately the two fullest treatments were inaccessible to me: D. F. Moke, *Eroticism in the Greek Magical Papyri* (Diss. Minneapolis 1975), provides full texts and commentaries of the papyrological material, but has never reached the libraries of the Low Countries. However, see the very full review by F. Maltomini in *Aegyptus* 59 (1979) 273–284. C. A. Faraone is preparing a monograph on the subject under the provisional title *Aphrodisiaka. Erotic Magic and the Dynamics of Gender in Ancient Greek Culture*, which will include several of his earlier studies. However, I did consult Petropoulos 1988, Winkler 1990, Martinez 1991, Gager pp. 78–115, and various studies by C. A. Faraone mentioned below.

immediately feel at home. Whoever fancies a beautiful girl or boy and wishes to influence her or his feelings, would be well advised to peruse a few corpora of *defixiones* or magical papyri. Here is a helpful passage from one of three spells written by a certain Theodoros, who lusts for a girl named Matrona⁸⁵. First he presents bits of her hair and nails (οὐσία) to a demon of the dead and then he orders him: "Go to her and seize her sleep, her drink, her food . . . Drag her by her hair, by her guts, by her soul, by her heart (ἔλκε τὴν Ματρῶναν τῶν τριχῶν, τῶν σπλάγγων, τῆς ψυχῆς, τῆς καρδίας) until she comes to Theodoros and make her inseparable from me until death, night and day, for every hour of time. Now, now, quickly quickly, at once, at once". This is probably not what the modern reader would call an affectionate proposal⁸⁶, but it certainly is typical of the so-called *agogai* or *agogima*, love spells that are deposed to rouse feelings of love and erotic desire in the victim. I consciously use the term 'victim,' for nowhere do we find more grim and detailed bodily torments than in precisely this type of spell⁸⁷.

Here is a small but representative selection⁸⁸: PGM IV 1540f. κατάκαυσον τὸν ἐνκέφαλον, ἔκκαυσον καὶ ἔκστρεψον αὐτῆς τὰ σπλάγγνα, ἔκσταξον αὐτῆς τὸ αἷμα ("burn the brain of her [NN, whom I love], inflame her and turn her guts inside out, suck out her blood . . ."); PGM IV 2767 φλέξον ἀκομήτω πυρὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ("set her soul ablaze with unrelenting fire"); PGM XVI 3–6⁸⁹ ποιήσ[ον] φθείρειν καὶ κατατήκεσθαι [Σ]αραπίωνα ἐπὶ τῷ ἔρωτι Διοσκοροῦτος, ἦν ἔτεκε Τικαί. καὶ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ ἔκτηξον, καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐκ[κ]ηλάσον μου φιλία, ἔρωτι, ὀδύνη (" . . . cause Sarapion to pine and melt away for the passion of Dioskourous, whom Tikau bore. Melt her heart and [suck out her] blood because of love, passion and pain"); PGMXIX a 50–54 ναί, κύριε δαίμων, ἄξον, καῦσον, ὀλεσον, πύρωσον, σκότωσον [καί]ομένην, πυρουμένην,

85 SGD 156 = *Suppl. Mag.* I 50 = Wortmann 1968 no. 2, after the model of PGM IV 296ff.

86 "A modern reader might well wonder whether this state of health would be conducive to meaningful love and sex": D. Frankfurter, in: Meyer/Smith 148.

87 I am not the first to suggest that many, if not the majority, of the above-mentioned anatomical curses that withhold their specific purpose belong to this category. Others already cited, including the early 'Trennungszauber' from Nemea (p. 231), most explicitly do.

88 As collected by C. A. Faraone, "Aristophanes, Amphiaraus, Fr. 29 (Kassel-Austin): Oracular Response or Erotic Incantation?", *CQ* 42 (1992) 320–327, esp. 325 n. 28, and *id.* 1993, 7 n. 19.

89 I use here the reading of D. R. Jordan, "A New Reading of a Papyrus Love Charm in the Louvre", *ZPE* 74 (1988) 231–243.

κέντει (βα)σανιζομένην τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν τῆς Κάρωσα ("aye, lord daimon, attract, inflame, destroy, burn, cause her to swoon from love as she is being burnt, inflamed. Sting the tortured soul, the heart of Karosa") . . . μὴ ἐάσης αὐτὴν τὴν Κάρωσα . . . μὴ [ιδίῳ] ἀνδρὶ μνημονεύειν, μὴ τέκνου, μὴ ποτοῦ, μὴ βρωτοῦ, ἀλλὰ ἔλ[θη] τη]κομένη τῷ ἔρωτι καὶ τῇ φιλίᾳ καὶ συνουσίᾳ ("do not allow Karosa herself . . . to think of her [own] husband, her child, drink, food, but let her come melting for passion and love and intercourse"); *Suppl. Mag.* I 42. 37f. καῦσον, ποίρωσον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἥπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα, καομένη, πυρουμένη, βασανιζομένη Γοργονία . . . ("burn, set on fire the soul, the heart, the liver, the spirit of the burning, inflamed, tortured Gorgonia"); 45. 31: καύσατε αὐτῆς τὰ μέλη, τὸ ἥπαρ, τὸ γυνεαῖον σῶμα, ἕως ἔλθῃ πρὸς ἐμέ, . . . ("burn her limbs, liver, the private parts, until she comes to me"); *DT* 51 κατακαίνετε . . . ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν καρδίαν ("burn her soul and heart"); *DT* 271. 12–14 ἀγαγεῖν καὶ ζεύξαι τὸν Οὐρβανόν . . . βασανιζόμενον ("drive and yoke Urbanus . . . tortured").

Destroy, burn, afflict, torture – this is the language of love, at least in the spells under discussion. There is a marked penchant for the imagery of fire and burning, no doubt due to the fact that this is also the privileged cliché for the effects of love-sickness in both love poetry and medical diagnostics. *DT* 227 *uratur Sucesa aduratur amore et desiderio* . . . and *DT* 230 *uratur furens amore; amante aestuante amoris et desiderio*, for instance, seem to mirror the words of Simaitha in Theocritus' second idyll: "may Delphis destroy his own flesh by the flame."⁹⁰ Furthermore, the victim must not be able to eat, drink, and above all sleep⁹¹, all of them equally recurrent symptoms in medical works on love-sickness⁹², in poetry and last but not least in the Greek

90 For burning, fire and fever in erotic magic see E. Kuhnert, "Feuerzauber", *RhM* 49 (1894) 37–54; E. Tannenr, "The Use of Fire in Greek and Roman Love Magic", in: *Studies in Honor of F. W. Shipley*, Washington Univ. Ser. in Lang. and Lit. 14 (St. Louis, Wash. 1942) 17–37; Faraone 1993; Versnel 1994. For fire etc. as symptoms of love-sickness see below n. 119. There is even a special type of erotic spells called "burnt-offering spells": Faraone 1993, 6 n. 18.

91 On these formulas of enforced abstinence see Martinez 1991, 57ff.; *id.* 1995, 352ff.

92 *Ibid.* 353: "Wasting away through sleeplessness and a lack of food and drink are all symptoms of love-sickness, a malady well-known to Hellenistic medicine and which acquired the status of a topos in the late Greek romantic tradition." In PGM XXXVI 356ff. the symptoms of love are indeed strikingly consistent with medical descriptions: ποιήσων αὐτὴν λεπτήν, χλωρόν, ἀσθενήν, ἀτοναν, ἀδύναμον, ἐκ π[αντ]ὸς [τοῦ] σώματος αὐτῆς ἐνεργήματος. Sleeplessness has given its name to a subcategory of these love spells: *agrypnētika*.

novel⁹³. Although, once more, functional aspects do play a part (as for instance in the stereotyped wish that the target will forget about or not be able to speak with parents and other relatives), the characteristic appeal to detailed and refined bodily dissection⁹⁴ cannot but recall the similar descriptions in the judicial or vindictory prayer that we discussed in the first part of this paper. For instance PGM XIV 656ff.: "I am casting fury against you today (. . .) in order that every burning, every heat, every fire, in which you are today, you will make them in the heart, the lungs, the liver, the spleen, the womb, the large intestine, the small intestine, the ribs, the flesh, the

93 The literature is overwhelming. Here is a selection of the most recent studies on physiognomical and behavioural symptoms of love and love-sickness in antiquity: S. C. Frederichs, "A Poetic Experiment in the Garland of Sulpicia (Corpus Tibullianum 3.10)", *Latomus* 35 (1976) 761–82; A. Giedke, *Die Liebeskrankheit in der Geschichte der Medizin* (Diss. Düsseldorf 1983); H. H. Biersterfeldt/D. Gutas, "The Malady of Love", *JAmOrientSoc* 104 (1984) 21–55; J. Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, transl. and ed. with a crit. introd. and notes by D. A. Beecher and M. Ciavolella (Syracuse, N. Y. 1990) (*De la maladie d'amour, ou mélancholie érotique. Discours curieux qui enseigne à cognoistre l'essence, les causes, les signes et les remèdes de ce mal fantastique*, Paris 1623); H. Maehler, "Symptome der Liebe im Roman und in der griechischen Anthologie", in: *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 3 (Groningen 1990) 1–12; Winkler 1990, 82–91; F. Létoublon, *Les lieux communs du roman. Stéréotypes grecs d'aventure et d'amour* (Leiden 1993), esp. 145–148: "La blessure et la maladie"; Martínez 1991, 60; J. G. Griffiths, "Love as a Disease", in: *id.*, *Atlantis and Egypt with Other Essays* (Cardiff 1991) 60–67; P. Toohey, "Love, Lovesickness, and Melancholia", *ICS* 17 (1992) 265–286; Martínez 1995, 353ff.

94 I mention two unnoticed literary allusions. According to the Echo myth in Longus 3.23, Pan, frustrated in his love for Echo, sent the shepherds and goatherds mad, and like dogs or wolves they tore her apart and scattered her limbs over the whole earth. Secondly, C. A. Faraone, "Deianira's Mistake and the Demise of Heracles. Erotic Magic in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*", *Helios* 21 (1994) 115–135, among other things convincingly argues that the disquieting figure of a weakened, effeminate Heracles at the end of the play is (partly) the effect of the *philtion*. Cf. Heracles' words: "A woman, a female in no way like a man, she alone without even a sword has brought me down" (1062f); he is "moaning and weeping like a girl" (1071); "the strong man has been found a woman" (1075). But there is more: the elements of torture and anatomical detail in this scene help to evoke the imagery of the effects of erotic magic. In 1051ff. talking about the cloth with poison (which was intended as a *philtion*), Heracles says: "This woven net of the Furies, in which I perish: Glued to my sides, it has eaten my flesh to the inmost parts; it is ever with me, sucking the channels of my breath; already it has drained my life-blood, and my whole body is wasted". This literally anticipates the jargon of the PGM. Cf. especially a striking parallel in the Spell of Cyprian (cited below p. 251): "for her garments burn her body". All this becomes even more beautiful if K. Ormand, "More Wedding Imagery: *Trachiniae* 1053ff.", *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993) 224–226, is right (as I believe he is).

bones, in every limb, in the skin of NN, whom NN bore, until she goes to NN, whom NN bore, at every place where he is." And to underpin the anatomical elaboration (though not necessarily the specific torments) we have both the instructive manuals and the applications of "voodoo doll" magic⁹⁵: little figurines of mainly women transfixed with 13 needles, one "for every opening" of the body⁹⁶.

Nor were early Christians averse to similar devices. One of the most complete and telling texts is the famous erotic spell of Cyprian⁹⁷, who tried to seduce a Christian virgin by employing magic, did not succeed, and so converted to Christianity. Here are a few relevant passages:

"Everything has changed in my person. My heart was grown bitter. I have grown pale. My flesh shudders; the hairs of my head stand on end(?). I am all afire. I have lain down to rest, but could not sleep; I have risen, but found no relief. I have eaten and drunk in sighing and groaning. I have found no rest in soul or in spirit for being overwhelmed by desire. . . . the great minister of blazing flame, Gabriel, he with the great power of fire, in that he fills his fiery face with the fire that devours every other fire . . . He comes in the rush of his power at your command, O father of the aeons, to go to N. daughter of N. and reveal himself to her in great revelation, relentless(?), fascinating, filling her heart, her soul, her spirit, and her mind with burning desire and hot longing, with perturbation and disturbance, filling her from the toenails of her feet to the hair of her head with desire and longing and lust, as her mind is distracted, her senses go numb, and her ears are ringing. She must not eat or drink, slumber or sleep, for her garments burn her body, the sky lightning sets her afire and the earth beneath her feet is ablaze. The father must not have mercy upon her, the son must show her no pity; the holy spirit must give no sleep to her eyes . . . Yea, I adjure you Gabriel: Go to N. daughter of N. Hang her by the hair of her head and by the lashes of her eyes. Bring her to him, N. son of N. in longing and desire, and she remains in them for ever . . . Go to N. daughter of N., and put fire and longing and desire and disturbance and agitation into her heart for N. son of N."

95 C. A. Faraone, "Binding and Burying the Forces of Evil. The Defensive Use of 'Voodoo Dolls' in Ancient Greece", *CLAnt* 10 (1981) 165–205; Graf 1994, 158–171.

96 For the anatomically uninitiated: there are no thirteen openings in a (any) human body. So piercing in the texts means piercing, not sounding or penetrating.

97 Now most easily available in Meyer/Smith no. 73. Cf. H. M. Jackson, "A Contribution toward an Edition of the Confession of Cyprian of Antioch: The *secreta Cypriani*", *Muséon* 101 (1988) 33–41. Other spicy (Coptic) Christian curses: Meyer/Smith nos. 74 ("until she becomes like a dog crazy for its pups"), 75, 77 ("that she may be a mare going under [sex]crazed stallions"), 84; "Trennungszauber": nos. 85 ("may his male organ be like the rag upon the manure pile"), 86, 87, 127 ("make his male organ become like an ant that is frozen in the winter").

Rambling through sadism

How must we explain this breathtaking sadistic⁹⁸ fashion of courtship? How to explain that a human being hates and even tortures the person he *desires*? The paradox embarrasses the modern reader and the debate has no end. The latest fashion is to take the sting out of the unimaginable by downplaying the violence and thus avoiding the scandal. The first move is to stress that “the explicit goal (of these love spells) is *not to harm* (my italics) the target but to constrain her”. Thus Gager p. 81f., partly endorsed by Graf 1994, 158ff., who adds various different observations, all intended to show that the wish to harm the desired person is not really real. Now, as to the *ultimate* goal (i.e. literally dragging the target to the practitioner) there is no room for doubt⁹⁹. The question remains why this goal should be attained through the application of such deeply aggressive and violent imagery. Why not restrict oneself to whispering words over a wine cup before giving it to someone to drink (PGM VII 285–289, 619–627, 643–651) or with those other innocent, even romantic ‘lowtech’ devices scattered in PGM? Gager proposes a number of considerations¹⁰⁰, thus voicing a widespread scholarly concern:

1) The violent language may have been taken over from another type of curse, especially the forensic curses, where its harming function was quite “appropriate”. However, as we have seen, forensic (and other basically competitive) curses do *not* normally – and certainly not originally – display the wish to cause physical pain to the adversary, nor do they mention anatomical lists like the ones typical of love spells.

2) Transfixing the dolls with needles as well as the hard words accompanying this action or playing their part autonomously, are *not* meant to hurt, but are functional analogues to the therapeutic use of needles in Chinese acupuncture. Graf 1994, 163ff., in a long digression on the figurines, in which he attacks late Frazerian believers in sympathetic magic, also empha-

98 On ‘sadism’ and sexual mastery in erotic magic: Petropoulos 1988, 216; 1993, 51f.; Winkler 1990, 91, 94, esp. 96. On δαμάζω in the sense of “to tame, subdue, conquer” in the context of love in general: L. Rissman, *Love as War. Homeric Allusion in the Poetry of Sappho*, Beitr. z. Klass. Phil. 157 (Königstein 1983) 4 with n. 14; in magical papyri: D. G. Martinez, “T. Köln inv. 2.25 and Erotic δαμάζειν”, ZPE 83 (1990) 235f.

99 See *loci cit.* prec. n.

100 To serve the clarity of the discussion I have reversed the order of his third and fourth items.

sizes the fact that the figurine is not identical to the victim¹⁰¹. Instructions for the production of a figurine as contained in PGM IV 296ff. give an accurate description of the purpose: “I pierce such-and-such part of Miss NN in order that she have no one in mind but me, Mr NN.” This is no doubt true, although in the spell that accompanies the ritual all that dragging by the hair, by the heart, by the soul, and the enforced abstinence that we have discussed before emerge¹⁰². Moreover, piercing a representation of a human body with needles is hardly the most appropriate course of action to *discourage* sadistic associations¹⁰³. Why not *bind* the limbs, if that is indeed what is explicitly intended, or why not caress or hug them, instead of this sample of body-piercing?

Far more important, however, is that to emphasize the figurines in the discussion of the “real” meaning of erotic magic generally may in fact distort the issue, which is not only that of the “voodoo doll” practice – about whose purpose there is scarcely any scholarly difference of opinion nowadays –, but (also, and far more so) that of the numerous violent verbal expressions. If, on the one hand, the function and purpose of piercing figurines, as detailed in the texts, is accepted and validated without question, it is a question of method to do – at least in principle – the same concerning the instructions (papyri) and applied texts (lead tablets), either combined with a figurine or autonomous, where the practitioner very explicitly wishes that the victim suffer what he wants her to suffer, in order to reach his ultimate goal. But then another strategy is resorted to.

3) Following Wittgenstein, Gager suggests the option of understanding the function of love curses (and other magical acts) not primarily as attempts

101 The problem remains that even if the figurines are “not identical to the target” or “deeply symbolic”, it simply cannot be denied that in the eyes of the practitioner they do represent the live targets, because this is most consistently and emphatically stipulated. See the ritual formulas given in the text. How problematic attempts to downplay this aspect may be appears from the following passage from Graf 1994, 163 with my italics: “*Il ne s’agit pas, en perçant les membres d’une figurine, de percer et de blesser les membres correspondants de la victime. Le but de la perforation de la figurine est clairement indiqué dans le texte. Chaque fois qu’il enfonce une aiguille, le sorcier doit dire: ‘Je perce tel membre de telle personne, afin qu’elle ne pense qu’à moi, le NN.’*”

102 As Graf of course admits. He also has to argue away some unmistakable instances where causing pain or sickness is the explicit goal (and effect) of the ritual.

103 For that matter, why should the suggestion “the penetration of the female figurine by needles probably carries sexual meanings as well” (Gager p. 81) be permissible, while the proposition “the penetration of the female figurine by needles probably carries sadistic meaning” should be *anathema*?

to produce effects on the targets, but rather as an effort to “express the turbulence of erotic passion and to regain control of oneself. (. . .) The goals are largely realized in the very act of commissioning and depositing the tablets”. Without dismissing this type of “therapeutic” interpretation (related to the preceding one), I would note that substituting a functionalistic for a substantivistic interpretation is not always the most helpful, and rarely an exclusively decisive solution. More often than not, instead of neutralizing each other, either one, seen in its own perspective, may retain its own specific explanatory value¹⁰⁴. As a matter of fact, the “therapeutic” solution skirts, but still does not solve, the question of the aggressive, violent, even sadistic language as explicitly directed at the target. The practitioner instructs his divine, demonic or prematurely dead henchmen to burn, hurt, torture, (sometimes) even kill *the target him – or herself*. Just so, Simaitha wishes that Delphis will burn like the bay leaves which she throws into the flames. How are we to imagine that persons remain completely unconscious of, or even manage not to mean or intend what they are explicitly pronouncing in the most unambiguous terms? Glossing over unequivocal and explicit words pronounced by the practitioner himself – however symbolic or formulaic (see below) they may have been – in favour of an exclusively valid, unconscious and hidden meaning is not an advisable strategy at this stage. In other words, what *we* think they were doing, however interesting and even correct our interpretation may be, can never be a substitute for what *they* thought they were doing, especially not when they expressly *said* what they thought they were doing. This, I repeat, is neither to deny the additional and autonomous value of proposed functionalist meanings nor to question that the torture is a means to achieve a goal.

By way of refutation of the latter argument and an overall critique of psychological interpretations of the curse as a spontaneous and emotional release of violent feelings due to erotic frustrations, Graf finally presents two interrelated arguments. One is that the execution of the ritual instructions as exhibited in the magical papyri just takes too much time to keep alive the flame of emotion; the other is that the procedure of copying the models of the magical textbooks or orally repeating the formulas dictated by a professional magician does not leave much room for personal emotions either. These are important observations that require careful consideration, more, alas, than I can give here. I must restrict myself to a few remarks.

104 I have argued for a polyparadigmatic approach in Versnel 1993 a, 1–14.

Admittedly, magical devices are indeed almost by definition highly formulaic and stereotyped. This is equally true for agonistic (instrumental) curses, judicial prayers and erotic magic. Before discussing its inferences, however, I should strike a note of warning: we do in fact have a considerable number of curses on lead that are both sufficiently succinct to keep the emotion boiling during its processing *and* bear witness to sometimes very ingenious and always palpably emotional, personal creativity¹⁰⁵, manifest in colourful works of abuse or hate. The person who curses a lady's *κῦσθον ἀνόσιον* (above p. 231) is – at least as far as our evidence goes – unique and original, but not nearly as brilliantly inventive as the one who wishes a thief spill his blood into the very vessel that he has stolen (above p. 238).

Yet this is not the core of the matter. Perhaps two of the most frequent words in the PGM are “write” and “recite,” the idea being that the client himself either copied or recited the text, or did both. Scholars practically agree that generally, and at any rate originally, the burying of a *defixio*, too, was preceded or accompanied by a recitation of its text. So let us imagine a man writing or pronouncing precisely the texts that we have amply quoted: “burn, torture, drag (all) the limbs of . . .,” while himself replacing the sections “Miss NN” and “me, Mr NN” by the real names of the beloved girl and himself. How must we fancy that he managed *not* (ever) to realize what he was actually saying or writing? Moreover, what is the essential difference between reciting a model text, on the one hand, and expressing a “spontaneous” curse of his own, on the other, if the two virtually coincide, as the written text gave a pretty accurate expression of his emotions? In that case, what is wrong with an extensive and time-consuming detailing of the curse in word and action? It is simply *good* to go over all the limbs of the person you desire or hate (or desire *and* hate) and enjoy the idea of what is being done to them¹⁰⁶. As a matter of fact, we should not be content with establishing the formulaic nature of erotic magic, but go on and appreciate the highly formulaic nature of curses in general, including our own. Practically without exception they are prefabricated, (although we realize that only when we hear a strikingly novel creation, which we hasten to plagiarize). Nor does this lack of spontaneous originality at all affect the emotional functions. After all, where did the magicians find

105 Recently I have drawn attention to processes of poetical creativity in spells of late antiquity: “Die Poetik der Zaubersprüche”, in: T. Schabert/R. Brague (edd.), *Die Macht des Wortes*, Eranos N. F. 4 (Munich 1996) 233–297.

106 See Gordon's very appropriate assessments of the sadistic impact of both words and actions, above nn. 22, 29.

their very expressive formulas? Did they come out of the blue? Or were they verbal crystallizations of affections, feelings and emotions that were available in their society, hence also familiar to their clients?¹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most interesting question, however, is how to explain the variety of scholarly attempts to argue away the expressed aggressive and sadistic intentions in *erotic magical texts*, on the one hand, and the conspicuous absence of a comparable anxiety concerning *the judicial prayers*, which do share the same core characteristics of being both formulaic and sadistically violent? Why argue that in erotic magic the *real* meaning of the phrase “I wish that she burn” cannot possibly be that the target will burn, and on the other hand be silent about the veracity of the very same wishes in

107 Here I must insert some important observations suggested by David Jordan after the completion of the present paper. First he suggests that the anatomical lists and the “pangs of lust” connected with them – the majority of which are found in magical papyri which also include typically Jewish-Egyptian formulas – are “part of a basically eastern view of things.” As we shall see in the next section, there are indeed indications of a Near Eastern flavour in the ecphrastic anatomical expressions in the domain of love. In view of the (few) earlier Greek curses of this anatomical type and other evidence from Greek literature, as well as some contemporaneous anatomical erotic *defixiones* (above p. 231 ff.) I would opt for a coalescence of Greek (and Roman) ideas and Near Eastern expression. Secondly, Jordan strongly recommends not to speak of “love charm” but rather of “sex charm”, “erotic charm” or “lust charm.” Rather than expressions of love, he regards these spells as instances of cold-blooded manipulation, even in those few cases in which the wish is stated that the victim shall, as a result of her inflamed lust, become the *symbios* of the defigens. Hence, in his view much of Jack Winkler’s and his followers’ theorizing is to be dismissed. Here we must await Jordan’s full treatment, but for the moment I am not convinced that this view is completely (or solely) correct, although certain elements no doubt are. First, the correspondence with the descriptions of affections and experiences in Greek love poetry (see next section) are too obvious. Secondly, recurrent wishes of the type that the target “must be fond of me, love me” etc. (φιλοῦσάν με, ἐρώσ[ά]ν μου *Suppl. Mag* I, 47.27) accurately mirror earlier instances of Greek erotic *defixiones*, especially in ‘Trennungszauber’. In these tablets, just as in the magical papyri, the defigens asks to “grow old together (with the beloved)” (συνκαταγηράσαι) and the “affection and love” (τὸν φίλιον, τὸν ἀγάπην) for a rival lover are cursed. I cannot regard these expressions, being essential in amatory *defixiones*, as secondary to the indeed strongly physical wishes in the magical papyri, especially not in women’s wishes that their targets “shall love me with an eternal affection” (φιλή με φίλτρον αἰώνιον *PGM* XV 22) or “let him continue loving me until he arrives in Hades” (διαμεῖνῃ ἐμὲ φίλῶν ἕως ὅταν εἰς Ἄϊδην ἀφίκηται *PGM* XVI *passim*). The problem, in my view, lies rather in our inability to accept that the wish for (lasting) affection can be phrased in such direct and ‘hard’ physical expressions. In other words, our problem is the equation of what *we* tend to disconnect or at least distinguish as eroticism, on the one hand, and love, on the other.

pleas for justice? The answer is (*sit venia verbo*) a psychological one. It is exemplarily worded in Gager’s remark (his first item above) that in the judicial curses “the harming function was quite ‘appropriate,’” the implication being that in erotic curses it is not. “Indeed it is the presence of so much venomous and malicious feeling (...) that offers twentieth century readers such a jolt (...) The vanilla connotations of “love” for us include mutual delight and consent (...) not wishing discomfort (...) and pain on the body and the soul of one’s beloved,” thus Winkler 1990, 72, in his brilliantly innovating interpretation of the ‘constraints of desire’¹⁰⁸. In a pronounced sociopsychological argument he explains the magical action as a remedy aiming at a double effect. The various – *real!* – torments called down upon the victim are nothing else than the symptoms of the love-sickness experienced and abominated by the *male* performer himself. Through a dual form of transference the illness is removed from the performer and projected onto the target. The effect is a role reversal, the victim suffering the performer’s former state of passion, and the performer regaining his own state of mind and superior control¹⁰⁹. Here, the violent language retains its realistic quality: “The purpose expressed in the words is psychological – the lover aims to create in his victim a state of mental fixation on himself – but the imagery is physically violent, even sadistic” (Winkler 1990, 94). And he most instructively adds a test for the reader, citing two curses, both alarmingly bloodthirsty, and asking which of the two procedures is used for fostering love, and which for expressing hate.

This is in my view easily the most attractive suggestion so far, but this does not mean that it solves all the problems¹¹⁰, nor that it excludes other

108 Gager lists Winkler’s theory as his third option.

109 On similar instances of role-reversal in amatory magic see also C. A. Faraone, “Clay Hardens and Wax Melts. Magical Role-Reversal in Vergil’s Eighth Eclogue”, *CPh* 84 (1989) 294–300.

110 One of its problems is that the ‘sadistic’ curses were avidly employed by women as well, as Winkler grudgingly admits, but tends to belittle (1990, 90). Nor should we underestimate the influence of the powerful anti-erotic strain of ancient Greek society, especially in heterosexual relations, with its undeniable misogynistic implications, which could be another incentive to the sadistic aspects of erotic curses. See A. Carson, “Putting Her in Her Place. Woman, Dirt and Desire”, in: D. Halperin/F. Zeitlin/J. J. Winkler (eds.), *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton 1990) 135–169; P. Dubois, “Eros and the Woman”, *Ramus* 21 (1992) 97–116. Generally, the motive of pre-eminently *male-dominated* social competition – “a kind of sneak attack waged in the normal warfare of Mediterranean social life” (Winkler 1990, 97) –, though certainly important, runs the risk of receiving an all too monolithic emphasis.

possibilities. In my opinion, any claim that any one explanation is uniquely and exclusively correct¹¹¹ is by its very nature suicidal. The aim of the present paper is to add a few suggestions. I propose to start from the observation – mentioned in passing earlier – that like the ‘judicial prayers’ discussed before, many erotic curses display two interconnected features: the enumeration of sometimes very extended lists of parts of the body, and the wish that a named person should suffer a series of rather specific agonies. Let us try to trace the possible backgrounds of these two aspects.

Odi et amo: lovely limbs and ailing lovers

One remarkable feature of love poetry is a marked tendency to sing the praise of the beloved in an ecphrastic overview of all her or his body parts. The *Song of Songs*¹¹² provides the most celebrated example, and it is a popular device in Near Eastern poetry, ancient and modern¹¹³. It has even been

111 Which Winkler did not do. Cf. *id.* 1990, 98: “These considerations (...) are baby-steps on a methodological path that has not yet been widely followed in studying classical and later Greek culture,” and what follows.

112 “Ah you are fair my darling, ah you are fair. Your eyes are like doves . . . Your hair is like a flock of goats . . . Your teeth are like a flock of ewes . . . Your lips are like a crimson thread, your mouth is lovely, your brow behind your veil gleams like a pomegranate . . . Your neck is like the Tower of David . . . your breasts are like two fawns . . . Every part of you is fair, my darling, there is no blemish in you” etc. Cohen (below n. 115) gives the literature.

113 A. S. Rodrigues Pereira, *Studies in Aramaic Poetry (c. 100 B.C.E.–c. 600 C.E.). Selected Jewish, Christian and Samaritan Poems* (Diss. Leiden 1996) 11–26, discusses ‘The Ode to Sarai’s Beauty’, from the Genesis Apocr. XX 2–8a, belonging to the Qumran texts. See also J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I. A Commentary* (Rome 1971²); J. C. Van der Kam, “The Poetry of 1 Q Ap Gen, XX, 2–8a”, *Rev. de Qumran* 10 (1979–81) 57–66. (I thank my colleague L. van Rompay for references.) The Ode, dating perhaps from the second century BC, is a lyrical description of the physical and mental beauties of Sarai as put in the mouth of one of Pharaoh’s princes, praising her face, hair, eyes, nose, the radiance of her countenance, breast, all her whiteness, arms, hands, the whole look of her hands, palms of her hands, fingers, feet, legs, the completeness of her total beauty and insight. Fitzmyer *op. cit.* 119f., calls it an example *avant la lettre* of the *wasf* in early Jewish poetry. *Wasf*, meaning ‘description’, is a technical term in Arabic poetics denoting a song that lists the charms of prospective brides and bridegrooms. The *Song of Songs*, which clearly belongs to this category, exhibits three inventories: two from top to bottom, one the reverse.

suggested that this trope was introduced into Western poetry¹¹⁴ through “probably the most famous of the (around 30) known epigrams of Philodemus”, a Syrian from Gadara born c. 110 BC and better known from the fragments of his Epicurean works¹¹⁵. The poem gives a fairly complete anatomical inventory from toe to top¹¹⁶.

114 The trope, of course, retained its popularity through the ages, as for instance in Rilke’s *Lösch mir die Augen aus* in the second part of his *Stundenbuch*, in which he gives expression to his tormented love for Lou Salomé:

Lösch mir die Augen aus: ich kann Dich sehn,
wirf mir die Ohren zu: ich kann Dich hören,
und ohne Füße kann ich zu Dir gehn,
und ohne Mund noch kann ich Dich beschwören.
Brich mir die Arme ab, ich fasse Dich
mit meinem Herzen wie mit einer Hand,
halt mir das Herz zu, und mein Hirn wird schlagen,
und wirfst Du in mein Hirn den Brand,
so werd ich Dich auf meinem Blute tragen.

I owe this reference (and others on things anatomical) to my colleague H. F. J. Horstmanshoff. According to R. Wolf, *Rainer Maria Rilke en Lou Andreas Salomé. Een vriendschap in brieven 1903–1910* (Amsterdam 1976) 22, these metaphors refer to a sexual unification, which can only be effected if the author lets himself be deconstructed in all his fibres. Small wonder that his diaries from this period note that he sometimes *hates* (my italics) his beloved as something which is “too big” for him.

115 S. J. D. Cohen, “The Beauty of Flora and the Beauty of Sarai”, *Helios* 8 (1981) 41–53. *Anth. Pal.* 5. 132 = A. S. F. Gow/D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams* (Cambridge 1968) I 356–359 with comm. II 381f. Philodemus went to Italy around 70 BC.; the last two lines then inspired Ov. *Her.* 15, 35f. I borrow Cohen’s translation and thank Chris Faraone for his reference to this very useful article.

116 Outside the sphere of eroticism, the first instance of this type of detailed description in Greek literature is that of Thersites in *Il.* 2. 216–219. As to the Greek contributions to these anatomical enumerations, it is especially ancient anthropology, medicine, and above all Aristotle’s physiognomic theories of the interrelation of human physical and moral characteristic – distinguishing twenty-three parts of the body – that deeply influenced both the portrayal of historical persons in biography and historiography and the genre of ecphrasis as taught in rhetoric: [Aristot.] *Physiogn.* 44–66 (*Script. Physiogn.* ed. Foerster, I 52–72). Cf. R. Megow, “Antike Physiognomielehre”, *Das Altertum* 9 (1963) 213–221; J. Fürst, “Die Personalbeschreibungen im Diktysberichte”, *Philologus* N. F. 15 (1902) 374–440, 593–622, gives a full discussion.

What a foot! What a leg! What thighs – I am
really dying! What buttock! What pube! What sides!
What shoulders! What breasts! What a slender neck!
What hands! What darling eyes – I am mad!
What calculated movement! What incomparable
kisses! What darling sounds – slay me!
And if she is Oscan and Flora and does not sing Sappho,
Perseus loved Andromeda though she was Indian.

Hence, there is no reason for surprise if we encounter the very same device in love magic as well. As a matter of fact the similarities are striking, not only in the enumeration of body parts – one of two Anacreontea, cited by Cohen¹¹⁷, lists hair, forehead, eyebrow, eye, cheek, lips, neck, chest, hands, thighs, belly, genitals, back, and feet – but also in the malicious tone of some poems: in his eighth Epode, Horace insults an old prostitute by abusively enumerating her teeth, face, buttocks, chest, breasts, stomach, thigh, and calf. Altogether then, it is quite possible that the anatomical component of erotic magic is partly borrowed from the erotic poetry of its culture. But it is equally conceivable that the specific nature of love-magic itself – in cooperation with the overtly sadistic aspects – independently fostered the same imagery.

In many cultures, most particularly in Graeco-Roman culture, as we have seen, (falling in) love is experienced and pictured as a form of sickness¹¹⁸, with symptoms of mania, depression and especially fever/fire¹¹⁹ dominating

117 *Anacreont.* 16f. West. Cf. Rufin. *Anth. Pal.* 5.48, 76, 94; Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.90–93; Ov. *Am.* 1.5.19–22: *umeri, lacerti, papillae, pectus, venter, latus, femur. Singula quid referam? Nil non laudabile vidi.*

118 For literature see above n. 93. Especially Toohey focusses on the relationship of love-sickness and melancholic symptoms. He argues that, while the depressive expressions do not appear before early imperial literature (are in fact “a cliché of medieval and modern literary experience”), the dominant reaction of frustrated love in ancient literature was manic and frequently violent. His article is as informative as his argument is unconvincing. It seems to me that Toohey consistently tries to downplay depressive symptoms instead of noticing that in many, including early, descriptions the depressive and manic *go together*, as for instance in the two most famous instances: Sappho fr. 31 L.-P. and Theocritus’ second *Idyll*. For a perfect evocation of the alternation of manic and depressive symptoms see Heliod. 3.10; 4.5. My own conclusion from the evidence is that the literary descriptions display the two sides of ‘melancholia’ in much the same way as do curses and spells (and medical symptomatology, ancient and modern).

119 Martinez 1991 *ad* P. Mich. 757.11: “πυρρουμενή: the verb is used of various fervent emotions, e.g. anger; pious devotion, and, as in our text, erotic arousal”, comparing: “Ἐρως, σὺ δ’ εὐθέως με πύρρωσον (*Anacreont.* 11.14f. West); κρείττον γὰρ ἔστι γαμήσαι ἢ πυρρῶσθαι (NT 1 Cor 7.9); PGM XIX a 50; LXI 23; XIX a 50; XXXVI

the scene. The symptoms of love-sickness, sketched above are experienced as an unremitting torture bringing the patient to the verge of (self-)destruction¹²⁰. More especially, of course, frustrated love and jealousy provoke melancholic symptoms. Hence, feelings of euphoric affection and of dysphoric distress freely alternate, and no literature has given richer and more poignant expression to this ambiguity than that of Greece and Rome. This

111, 128f., 195, 200; cf. F. Lang, “πυρρῶν”, *ThWNT* 6 (1959) 948–950. On the locus classicus of eros as a consuming fire, Apoll. Rh. 3.286–298, see M. Campbell, *Studies in the Third Book of Apollonius Rhodius’ ‘Argonautica’*, Altertumswiss. Texte u. Stud. 9 (Hildesheim etc. 1983) 27f. with nn. at 104. As E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose. A study of primitive marriage and of primitive thought in its bearing on marriage 1* (London 1927²) 237f. already remarked: “There is an universal connection, seen in all languages, between love and heat.” Cf. A. S. Pease, *Virgil Aeneid IV* (Cambridge, Ma. 1935) 86f.: “Fire is perhaps the commonest of the metaphors associated with passion,” providing a very full survey of the evidence (*accendo, ardeo, ardesco, caleo, flagro, flamma, ignis, incendio, tepeo, uro*). More recently, J. Richardson, “The Function of Formal Imagery in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*”, *CJ* 59 (1964) 161–169, esp. 169 n. 1, depicts the deplorable effects of the image of fire on the poetical quality: “The concept was at least a stereotyped if not dead metaphor.” G. Huber-Rebenich, “Feuermetaphorik in Ovid’s *Metamorphosen*”, *RhM* 137 (1994) 127–140, discovers no fewer than seven different strategies applied by Ovid in order to solve the problem that the dead metaphor has lost its metaphorical function and degenerates into a synonym ‘*ignis = amor*’. In her poem about her illness Sulpicia shows a “calculated ambiguity between real fever and the heat of passion,” according to M. S. Santirocco, “Sulpicia Reconsidered”, *CJ* 74 (1979) 229–239, esp. 233.

120 There is only one remedy, as the ancient doctors were well aware: the beloved herself. Aretaeus 3.5.7 (p. 41.6–11 Hude, *CMG* 2²): λόγος ὅτι τῶν τοιῶνδ’ (viz. the bodily symptoms of μελαγχολία) τις ἀνηκέστως ἔχων, κούρης ἥρα τε καὶ τῶν ἡμερῶν οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦντων ὁ ἔρως μιν ἰήσατο . . . ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν ἔρωτα ξυνήψε τῇ κούρῃ, παύεται τῆς κατηφείης . . . καθίσταται γὰρ τὴν γνώμην ἔρωτι ἡτρωῶ; Gal. *In Hippocr. Progn.* 1.4 (XVIII:2 p. 18 Kühn = p. 206sq. Heeg, *CMG* 5:9:2) alludes to the story (told by Val. Max. 5.7 ext. 1; Plut. *Demetr.* 38 etc.; other loci in Heeg’s *app. test.*) of Antiochus the love-sick of Seleukos, where the remedy is attributed to the diagnosis of the doctor Erasistratos; Heliod. *Aeth.* 4.7; Chariton 1.1; Xenoph. *Eph.* 1.5f. Martinez 1995, 355: “She will suffer as he suffers, until both experience the *remedium amoris* of sexual union”. Simaitha in Theocritus’ second *Idyll* can only be healed by the remedy of love making. “There is no cure for eros – except the beloved herself/himself” (Winkler 1990, 89). On the psycho-somatic symptoms of ἔρως and contemporary religious concepts to account for such phenomena, cf. still Galen. *loc. cit.* (p. 19 Kühn = p. 207 Heeg): love is an ἀνθρώπινον πάθος, he insists, εἰ μὴ ἄρα τις οὕτως πείθεται τοῖς μυθολογουμένοις, ὥς νομίζειν ὑπὸ δαίμονός τινος μικροῦ καὶ νεογενεῶς λαμπάδας ἔχοντος καιομένης εἰς τοῦτο ἀγεσθαι τὸ πάθος ἐνίοις τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

brings us back to the question of how to explain the violent aggression against the 'beloved'.

Odi et amo. Ask Catullus why he loves and hates at the same time and he answers: *nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior*. This is perhaps the most perfect wording of the ambivalent feelings evoked by excruciating Eros the "Bittersweet." Variations abound: "bitter honey", "sweet wound", "sweet tears", "sweet fire"¹²¹. Aristophanes, *Ran.* 1425, tells us that the seductive young Alcibiades was able to inspire a feeling like lover's passion in the Greek *demos*: ποθεῖ μὲν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ' ἔχειν. ("for they love him and they hate him and they wish to hold him"). The theme is perfectly elaborated in Theocritus' second Idyll, which reveals a dynamic contrast of emotions, changing combinations of love and hate in which hatred gradually becomes dominant¹²². The negative feelings are not only inspired by the experience of being abandoned, not even of being rejected, but also by the fact that being in love irrevocably evokes the sense of these looming threats.

Curiously enough the very same combination of *odi et amo* is beautifully exemplified in what is perhaps the earliest instance of a specific magical "help for rejected suitors", an Old Akkadian incantation of the late Sargonic period (c. 2200 BC)¹²³. Here is the splendidly ambivalent passage as addressed by the magician or the practitioner to the absent girl: "I have seized your mouth, so far away, I have seized your dazzling eyes, I have seized your vulva, stinking from urine". As the commentators remark, the first two lines probably describe the girl, as she herself would prefer to be seen: beautiful and attractive, yet remote, unattainable and proud. The sudden change from flattery to abuse¹²⁴ is meant as a shock treatment: "Don't forget that there is more to you than just your pretty eye!" and, at the same time, as a reminder for her not to be overly choosy with her admirers. I would point out the similarity in tone with the curses cited above p. 228 and 231.

121 A. Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet. An Essay* (Princeton 1986) discusses the issues in her first chapter, from which I borrow some examples. She shows that the triangular scheme of x loving y, who loves z is fundamental in Greek notions of Eros ever since Sappho.

122 See N. P. Gross, *Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity. Studies in Theory and Practice* (Newark 1985), 124–178: 'The Amatory Dilemma', on the *odi et amo* theme.

123 J. and A. Westenholz, "Help for Rejected Suitors. The Old Akkadian Love Incantation MAD V 8", *Orientalia* 46 (1977) 198–219.

124 Similar unflattering remarks abound in the so-called 'divine love-lyrics' of the first millennium: W. G. Lambert, "The Problem of the Love Lyrics", in: H. Goedicke/J. J. M. Roberts (eds.), *Unity and Diversity. Essays in the History, Literature and Religion of the Ancient Near East*, (Baltimore/London 1975) 98–135

It is the ambivalent feeling of being the plaything of (excruciating feelings inspired by) another person, that, according to Winkler, the practitioner tried to project onto the source of his passion. I agree. But perhaps there is more to it. I think the violence and aggression can be explained in a slightly different manner. Let us consult Sappho. In her famous first poem the poetess tells how she invoked Aphrodite to help her to attract a girl whom she had fallen in love with:

With a smile on your immortal face
you asked me what had happened to me this time, why
I was calling on you this time,
and what most I wished to obtain,
with heart distracted. "Whom this time am I to persuade?
[. . .] to your love? Who,
Sappho, wrongs you? (τίς σ' ἀδικήει;)
For even if she flees, soon she will pursue,
and if she does not accept gifts, yet she will give,
and if she does not love, soon she will love
even unwilling"

Several scholars¹²⁵ have scrutinized the poem for its many references to erotic magical texts. But what interests us here is that the poem denounces a person as doing an injustice to the writer. The target ἀδικήει, "wrong", the author, *not* by breaking a pledge of loyalty, but by *not responding* to the overtures of the writer. A quick glance into ancient literature confirms that the refusal to requite love is as frequently experienced and qualified as 'injustice' as is disloyalty and abandonment¹²⁶. From the perspective of the amorous person the two are hardly distinguishable. Consequently, unrequited love is characterized by Sappho herself (1.3) as ἀνία afflicted by another person, just as Simaitha constantly refers to her torments with terms based on this notion¹²⁷.

Now, this is revealing for an interpretation of the malicious tone in our spells, because we have now detected the practitioner in a position close to that of the writers of our judicial curses. Τίς σ' ἀδικήει; asks Aphrodite refer-

125 Cameron 1939; C. Segal, "Eros and Incantation. Sappho and Oral Poetry", *Arethusa* 7 (1974) 139–160, esp. 148–50; Winkler 1990, 166–176; Petropoulos 1993.

126 See the testimonia cited by Cameron 1939, 12; Petropoulos 1993, 44 n. 8; Dover 1978, 177; A. Pippin Burnett, *Three Archaic Poets: Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho* (London 1983) 254–256.

127 Theoc. 2.23, 34, 55, and variants: 64f., 95, 159f. On the implications of the term see Burnett (prec. n.) 252 n. 60.

ring to love. "Sorry for being forced to bring this action, ἀδίκημαι γάρ, Δέσποινα Δάματ'ε", says the author of a Knidian prayer for justice¹²⁸. "Torture the thief until he returns my property; punish the one who has wronged me", ask the authors of judicial curses. Βασανίσσατε αὐτῆς τὸ σῶμα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμαίρας ("torture her body night and day until she comes to me") is the wish of the female author of a homoerotic *defixio* from Hermoupolis (IV p), while others ask: δὸς αὐτῇ . . . κόλασιν ("give her punishment") or δὸς αὐτῇ τὰς τιμωρίας ("give her penalties")¹²⁹, and, as we have seen, an amazing alternative to the *agoge* is that the beloved but unwilling person dies. In both types of texts, judicial prayers and erotic magic, torture¹³⁰ and punishment unequivocally presuppose that the practitioners are wronged, aggrieved, deprived of something they feel entitled to¹³¹. In both types, the victims are forced by supernatural means to stir themselves, to adjourn from their hidings to a place where the writer wants them to go, either the sanctuary of the avenging deity or his own residence, in order there to deliver the object claimed by the writer: either the *corpus delicti*, or their own *corpus deliciosum*. In both categories (and only here) the 'legitimate' indignation has given rise to identical formulas such as anatomical lists and invoking torments upon the victim, both in the magical models and in their applications.

128 I have collected and discussed these 'clauses of excuse' (cf. DT 98 φίλη Γῆ, βοήθει μοι ἀδικούμενος γάρ . . .) in Versnel 1991 a, 65–69. P. S. J. Levi, "The Prose Style of the Magical Papyri", in: *Proc. of the XIVth International Congress of Papyrologists (Oxford, 24–31 July 1974)*, Graeco-Roman Mem. 61 (London 1975) 211–216, at 215 n. 21, had already noticed the similarity of the two expressions in love magic and the judicial curses.

129 *Suppl. Mag.* I 42. 37f. (already cited p. 249 above; on which see also Petropoulos 1993, 52); *PGM* IV 2489f.; *PGM* IV 3274, respectively. See Faraone 1993, 9 with n. 23.

130 I call to mind Faraone's conclusions concerning the secular legal background of torture in erotic magic (above p. 244f.).

131 Of course, once more there are also differences: stealing, refusing to return a loan, poisoning etc. are offences not tolerated by society, hence to be entrusted to gods whose concern is justice and retaliation. Rejection or abandonment of a lover, on the other hand, is a personal 'affront', demonstrably assessed as an act of injustice by the lover, but not concerning society or the gods (with the occasional exception of Aphrodite). Accordingly, there is no 'legal' prayer for justice here, but a magical procedure enforcing demons or divine powers to do what the author wants them to do. However, even here, it may help to convince a god that the intended victim *deserves* to be punished, by means of the good Egyptian device of the *diabole*: *PGM* IV 2471–2492; cf. XXXVI 138–144. On *diabole*: S. Eitrem, "Die rituelle διαβολή", *SymbOsl* 2 (1925) 43–61. A new specimen in D. R. Jordan, "Inscribed Lead Tablets from the Games in the Sanctuary of Poseidon", *Hesperia* 63 (1994) 111–126, esp. 123 n. 22.

III Conclusion

I have argued for a differentiation between two types of curses involving parts of the human body. Our first category comprises the curses that function as instruments of social competition. They aim at restraining a rival from actions that are expected to be harmful to the practitioner. In the majority of these curses emotional expressions do not prevail: generally the phrasing is businesslike, not to say clinical: those parts of the body are selected that are regarded as instruments of potential danger, and they are succinctly enumerated and disqualified. The focus is not on the *person* of the competitor but on his *actions* through his hands, feet, mouth or mind. The immediate purpose is to bind, not to hurt.

Our second category comprises the anatomical curses *sensu stricto*. Listing extended series of body parts or the complete anatomy in comprehensive formulas, they share a number of additional features as well, which together make them distinct from the category of instrumental curses. These features include:

- 1) a marked intensity and emotional involvement, apparent from various elements of the expression,
- 2) the focus is consistently on the cursed person as a person, to which *inter alia* the anatomical completeness bears witness,
- 3) as a rule these curses demonstrably do not belong to the domain of social competition, but to two different ones: justice and love,
- 4) the immediate aim is not to bind (= render inoperative), but to hurt: the victim must suffer through torture, pains, illness, very often fever or fire.

The latter point, being of special relevance, should be stressed: obviously, the longterm purpose of these anatomical curses is not to *restrain a person from taking action* but, conversely, either to *compel a person to take action*, or to *punish him/her for his/her refusal to do so*. Naturally, all *defixiones* or curse texts – I hope that by now the reader will share my uneasiness in applying these terms indiscriminately to *all* the categories we have discussed – are purpose-motivated: their ultimate concern is the self-interest of the practitioner. However, the explanatory value of truisms – and this *is* a truism – approaches zero. It is the variations, the qualifications, the contextual differences that (should) solicit our scholarly interest. Competitive or agonistic *defixiones* try to secure the personal advantage by putting a rival out of action. The *means* to achieve this (the immediate or short-term purpose of

the curse) is the selective binding of the relevant body parts that function as instruments in the competition. Hence: *instrumental* curses. 'Curses' of the other type try to realize the practitioner's advantage by forcing a person to perform an action desired by the author of the text. Here the anatomical parts are *not* viewed as instruments in a social competition, but as the materials of a carefully detailed "panning-shot" composition: the target as a person – simultaneously dissected *and* constructed – is consigned for torture either as an incentive to submit him/herself to the desires of the practitioner or to be punished¹³². Accordingly, in these 'anatomical' curses, both the vindictory and the erotic ones, the ultimate *motive* as a *motif* seems to retreat and at the least to share its place of honour with the bitter language of torture and punishment.

The characteristics just listed are the outcome of a strictly phenomenological analysis. Part of the similarities in the formulas of judicial prayer and love magic may result from processes of convergence or even mutual influence. On the other hand, different contexts may effect similar images and expressions independently¹³³. However, the nearly exclusive application of the *combined* features of anatomical listing and torture in these two different types of curse is best understood as an expression of closely related motivations, as I have explained in my argument. As such they are no doubt often prescribed in manuals or by ritual tradition: for example the magical papyri and the temple practices of for instance Knidos and Bath, respectively. People knew (or learned) what to write or recite. But the real point of interest is to have found that and explained why these two types of formula were as similar to one another as they were different from other curse types.

132 Of course, combinations may come in very handy. You can constrain a beloved girl to come to you *and/or* bind her in order to prevent her from having intercourse with another man. In other words, you can combine an *agoge* with 'Trennungszauber'. For instance: *Suppl. Mag* 138 = V. Martin, "Une tablette magique de la Bibliothèque de Genève", *Genève* 6 (1928) 56–63.

133 In the judicial prayer a culprit is forced to redress his offence. Here the curse works as a kind of judicial torture, and the terminology and imagery (perhaps minus the torturing of a list of body parts) is identical to and no doubt largely derived from the domain of secular jurisdiction. This was once more established recently by Tomlin. The other type tries to persuade a person to render him- or herself like putty to the affections or erotic desire of the author of the tablet. The details of the suffering are here borrowed partly from current expressions of love as illness, which often comes very close to both torture and fire. Both types, however, are exclusively marked by anatomical enumerations.

To conclude, I (of course) wish to dedicate this essay to the scholar whose 65th birthday we celebrate with the present book and who perhaps more than any other has influenced my own work, to the degree that I once took the courage to defend him against himself, by stating that he should not too easily recant his earlier not too optimistic views of human nature¹³⁴. Although, at present, the evolution and the cultural roots of humankind are in the limelight again, scholars seem less prone to accept the image of an aggressive, cannibalistic and murderous forebear. Yet, the sadistic and violently aggressive expressions in our magical material – sometimes even uniting such divergent emotions as love and hate in identical formulas – may give us some food for further reflection¹³⁵.

134 Versnel 1993a, 77 n. 159.

135 This paper would never have been completed but for the invaluable help of Alice van Harten, who was assigned to me as a research assistant by the Faculty of Arts of Leiden University. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to both. I am also indebted to Lily Knibbeler for her criticism and corrections of the first draft, and above all to Chris Faraone and David Jordan who showered me with corrections of flaws and misprints in the English and Greek, as well as numerous suggestions on questions of interpretation which prompted me to reconsider several parts of the paper. Finally, Peter Mason once more scrutinized the English text. All remaining mistakes, of course, are my own.