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INTRODUCTION

In his *Memorabilia*, the fourth-century B.C.E. Athenian historian and essayist Xenophon reports how Socrates in the company of his students visits the home of a famous courtesan named Theodote and engages her in a spirited conversation about the contrivances she uses to attract her male friends. At the end of this conversation Socrates mentions in a very playful manner the use of love magic (3.11.16–17):¹

And Socrates, making light of his own laziness, said: “But it is not at all easy, Theodote, for me to get free, for much business, both private and public, keeps me busy. And I have also got my girlfriends (*philai*), who neither day nor night allow me to escape from them, since they are learning both love potions (*philtrā*) and incantations (*epōidai*) from me.”

“Indeed, do you *also* know how to do these things, Socrates?” she said.

“Why else,” he said, “do you think that Apollodorus here and Antisthenes never leave me? And why do you think that Cebes and Simmias come from Thebes? Know well that these things do not happen without many love potions (*philtrā*), incantations (*epōidai*), and *iunx* spells (*iugges*).”²

1. See Tupet (1976) 143, Henry (1995) 48–50, and Goldhill (1998) for discussion.

2. See the Glossary for the definition of frequently used technical terms.

As I discuss in greater detail below, Socrates humorously represents himself here as an aging courtesan who is busy teaching younger girls (his *philai*) the tricks of the trade, which include various types of magical charms.³ At this point, however, I quote the passage simply to point out the utter banality of love magic in the episode. One gets the feeling that Xenophon and his audience were well acquainted with these somewhat technical terms for magical techniques and devices (*phyltron*, *epōidē*, and *iunx*) and that they would not be at all surprised to learn that Theodote employs them or that Socrates would humorously pretend to do so. The passage also reveals quite nicely the potent explanatory value that such technologies provide, for the irony of the whole interchange hinges on Socrates' feigned surprise: "Why else do you think that Apollodorus here and Antisthenes never leave me? And why do you think that Cebes and Simmias come from Thebes?" The subtext here is, of course, Socrates' notorious physical ugliness:⁴ how else can Socrates explain the fact that he, like the beautiful courtesan Theodote, is surrounded by attractive and well-born young men, who vie for his attention? As we shall see repeatedly in the chapters that follow, such accusations of love magic (both playful and serious) provide a rich source of information for the use of such rituals, since they reveal so much about the social relations of practitioners and victims. Finally I would note in passing the twofold purpose of Socratic love magic: to keep his current male companions from leaving and to force other men to come to him from afar, twin goals that mirror quite nicely the bipolar taxonomy of love magic that I offer below.

Love magic, then, seems to be part of the refined world of the wealthy courtesan, who could sometimes move, like the famous Aspasia, in the highest circles of Greek society. The ironic and lighthearted tone of the sophisticated essayist seems—to the modern ear, at least—to dismiss such practices outright as foolishness or (at best) to banish them to the boudoirs of disreputable women. But compare Xenophon's witty anecdote with these three different Greek magical incantations of later date, all of which are designed to force a person away from their homes, presumably

3. See section 4.2. Keuls (1985) 197 is probably right to suggest that this Theodote, like so many other characters in Plato's and Xenophon's dialogues, is based on a historical figure. See Goldhill (1998) for a different interpretation of Socrates' *philai*.

4. See Alcibiades' famous remarks in Plato *Symposium* 215b–c, with Dover's commentary ad loc.

like the charms that (Socrates claims) made Cebes and Simmias come from Thebes:⁵

Bring to perfection the [content] of this binding love spell . . . in order that Theodotis, daughter of Eus, may never have experience of another man than me alone, Ammonion, she being enslaved, driven mad, flying through the air in search of me, Ammonion, son of Hermitaris, and so that she bring her thigh to my thigh and her "nature" to my "nature"⁶ for intercourse always for the entire time of her life.

Drag Heronous by her hair and by her guts to me, Poseidonios, every hour of time, by night and day, until Heronous comes to me, Poseidonios . . . Now, now. Quickly, quickly.

Burn, torch the soul of Allous, her female body, her limbs, until she leaves the household of Apollonius. Lay Allous low with fever, unceasing sickness, incomprehensible sickness.

Gone now are the light humor and distanced view of the philosopher. Here we seem to see raw human motives and desires that appear—in comparison to the treatment of a literary author like Xenophon—perversely confessional in their violence and their hurried insistence: "now, now, quickly, quickly." Thus it would seem in the first example that we can look over Ammonion's shoulder as he orders a chthonic spirit to force Theodotis to come to him for sex. Indeed, we might even be tempted to psychoanalyze his deeper motives and to suggest that the sadism and violence of his requests reveal a vicious case of unrequited love.⁷

I juxtapose the passage from Xenophon with these later texts to illustrate two of the most dangerous pitfalls that await modern scholars who try to make sense of the social practice of Greek love magic from a disconcertingly wide array of sources. The distanced, ironic view that we find in Xenophon's anecdote is typical of most of the early modern scholarship on love magic, which often (wrongly) equates the minority voices of the

5. SM 38 (2d cent. C.E.); PGM O[stakon] 2 (2d cent. C.E.); SM 40 (3d cent. C.E.), all found in Egypt.

6. See Winkler (1990) 217–220 for use of the Greek word *phusis* to mean sexual organ.

7. Winkler (1990) 224–227; but see section 2.4.

philosophic and rationalist tradition with the typical Greek "man in the street" and infers that "most Greeks" would have dismissed such practices as the foolishness appropriate (in their hierarchical view of the world) to social inferiors like women, barbarians, and slaves.⁸ On the other hand, we should not fall into the equally dangerous trap of romanticizing the Greeks as some perennially strange people, who reveal their truest and darkest souls in passionate outbursts on rooftops, late at night with a full moon beaming down.⁹ Implicit in this second approach is, moreover, the mistaken assumption that actual incantations like those quoted above are a kind of ethnographer's windfall: cries of the heart that have fortuitously been recorded on scraps of metal or papyrus. Such an assumption is equally far from the truth, as the following text reveals:

... take away the sleep of that woman until she comes to me and pleases my soul ... lead [BLANK SPACE] loving, burning on account of her love and desire for me ... force her to have sex with me [BLANK SPACE] ... impel, force her to come to me loving, burning with love and desire for me [BLANK SPACE] ... drive [BLANK SPACE] from her parents, from her bedroom ... and force her to love me and give me what I want.¹⁰

8. For the inadequacies of this approach, see Dover (1974), Winkler (1990) 17–44, and Faraone (1992c) 11.

9. E.g., Bonner (1942) 467 thinks an inscribed gemstone designed both to attract and to paralyze the victim "tells a story of despair and love changed to hate," but this is a pattern common to several other spells and seems generic; see Faraone (1992a) 94–95. Similarly Moke (1975) 275, who suggests that a handbook formula (*PGM* LXI. 39–59) "surges with the irate hostility of a man whose bed has been robbed"; and Bernand (1991) 287–288, who assumes that errors in spelling and syntax in some erotic spells result from the "haste and heat" of the agent (e.g., the woman who wrote or commissioned *PGM* LXVIII "semble aussi ardente et impatiente que la Simaitha de Théocrite") and who suggests (p. 298) that the formulaic threat to Osiris in *DT* 270, which shows up on nearly identical Greek spells of fourth and fifth century C.E.—see Brashear (1992) 85–87 lines 15–21 and *SM* 45.11–15—displays the author's personal brutality. Winkler (1991) 216 warns that his approach to love magic "runs the risk of romanticizing Mediterranean passion (as did Stendahl and Browning for Italy)," but then on pp. 222–230 he makes precisely this error. This is not to say that generic spells can never be the vehicle for creative and idiosyncratic expression; see Versnel (1996).

10. *DT* 230 (1st cent. C.E.) is inscribed in Latin but has most probably been translated from a Greek model; see below, note 64.

The person in Carthage who commissioned or wrote this text on a lead tablet a full century before the earliest of the three spells quoted above, made a crucial error: he forgot to add the female victim's name in the blanks left on the tablet and thus made it impossible for the four invoked demons to find their target. For modern scholars, however, such a text is a great boon, revealing as it does that as early as the first century C.E., such spells were to some degree generic and could be copied by a scribe ahead of time and set on shelf with blank spaces that could be filled in later by or for a specific customer. Indeed, as more and more magical texts are deciphered and published, we have begun to realize how stereotyped such expressions are, and we are able to see that many have been copied from handbooks, often with very few changes over the centuries—except, of course, the names of the victim and the practitioner. Thus even when dealing with actual magical texts we need always remember that these spells, no less than lyric poems and tragic choruses, are to a large degree shaped by generic conventions and expectations; they tell us as much or as little about the psychic state of the scribes, practitioners, and clients who used them as ancient literary texts tell us about the individual neuroses of their authors.

1.1 The Ubiquity of Love Magic

Love magic appears or is alluded to in the literature of every epoch of ancient Greek history, beginning with Homer and ending with early Christian hagiography.¹¹ In the fourteenth book of the *Iliad* Aphrodite lends Hera her magical belt (*kestos himas*) to repair her parents' estrangement, but Hera uses it instead to seduce her husband, Zeus.¹² A similarly seductive power probably lies behind the gifts she gives Pandora, Hypsipyle, and Amphitrite on the eve of their weddings.¹³ Two famous episodes in the embedded tales of the *Odyssey* also seem to reflect indirectly themes and beliefs about love magic: Greeks in the later periods, for example, interpret

11. For surveys of Greek literary allusions and references to magic generally see Riess (1896b), (1897), and (1903); Eitrem (1941); and Tupet (1976), all of whom I have used extensively for what follows.

12. Petropoulos (1988) 218 and Faraone (1990) 220–229; see section 3.1.

13. For Pandora, see section 3.1; for the presumed power of the other gifts of Aphrodite, see Scodel (1984) 141 and Brown (1991) 332–333.

Circe's potion as a perverse form of love charm,¹⁴ and the Sirens' song is similarly equated with erotic incantations that attract their victims against their wills.¹⁵ In book 3 of the same poem, Nestor seems to allude to a tradition that Aegisthus used a love charm to seduce Clytemnestra;¹⁶ and Demodocus' embedded tale of the binding of Ares and Aphrodite in book 8 can perhaps be linked with the later use in love spells of images of these two deities bound in an erotic embrace.¹⁷ A fragment of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* preserves parts of the well-known story of Atalanta, seduced by the apples of Hippomenes. The fragment does not describe the effect of these apples on the young woman, but Hellenistic sources state explicitly that they kindled erotic desire in the girl, an assumption that apparently underlies the use of specially charmed apples, quinces, pomegranates, and other fruit to strengthen marital affections of brides-to-be, both in early Greek myth and in actual wedding ceremonies.¹⁸ There are also a number of allusions to or imitations of erotic magic in early lyric poetry. Sappho's *Hymn to Aphrodite* most clearly reflects the form, content, and intent of later erotic spells;¹⁹ and Alcman probably alludes to similar arts in his *Parthenion*, where he mentions in passing a woman named Aenesimbrota, who apparently was skilled in making others fall in love.²⁰ It is Pindar, however, who gives us the earliest detailed account of an erotic charm, when he describes how Aphrodite taught Jason to use a magic *iunx*

14. Dedo (1904) 32, Page (1973) 51–69 and Parry (1992) 226. Plutarch (*Moralia* 139a) implicitly makes this assumption when he cites the Circe episode as a cautionary example for why brides should not use love potions on their husbands; see section 3.2.

15. In a discussion of love magic (Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.6.11), Socrates calls the Sirens' song an incantation (*epōidē*) that they used to attract and bind men, precisely like a love charm. Parry (1992) 270 notes the same equation in a Hellenistic epigram.

16. Page (1972) and Faraone (1996b) 91–92 n. 50.

17. Picard (1942–43) publishes a fifth-century vase painting from the Hephaestus sanctuary on Lemnos (= LIMC s.v. "Ares" no. 60) which shows an armed man and a naked female; both he and Burkert (1983a) 8–9 n. 7 connect it with Demodocus' song. In Chapter 3 I discuss later scenes on a small terracotta relief and gemstones that may have been used in some form of love magic.

18. Hesiod frag. 76.17–23 (West). See Faraone (1990) 230–238 and section 3.2 below for full discussion.

19. Sappho frag. 1. See Archibald Cameron (1939) and (1964), Segal (1974) 148–150, Burnett (1983) 254–255, Petropoulos (1993), Faraone (1992b) 323–324, and section 4.1 below for a detailed discussion.

20. Alcman frag. 1.73–77. See West (1965) 199–200 for discussion.

charm and to recite "prayerful incantations" designed to set Medea aflame with desire for him.²¹

Attic drama occasionally reflects the use of love spells or accusations about them. In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, Deianeira mistakenly kills her husband, Heracles, with poison, thinking that she is giving him an aphrodisiac;²² and a tiny fragment from another of his plays suggests that the melting of a wax effigy as part of an erotic spell may have played a role in the plot.²³ Euripides twice uses erotic magic to heighten the drama or ambiguity of his tragedies. In the *Andromache*, Hermione ambiguously accuses Andromache of using *pharmaka*—"drugs" or "incantations," the word can mean either²⁴—to seduce her husband Neoptolemus, to inhibit Hermione's sexual performance with him, or to render her infertile.²⁵ The Nurse in the *Hippolytus*, on the other hand, gives us more precise details about such contemporary practices and beliefs (509–515):

It just dawned on me, in the house I've got enchanting charms for passion (*philtrā thelktēria erōtos*) which will put an end to this disease of yours without any shame or damage to your mind—if you do not become cowardly. We've got to get some token (*sēmeion*) of

21. *Pythian* 4.213–219. See Faraone (1993a) and section 2.2 below for detailed discussion.

22. Faraone (1994a) and section 3.2 below.

23. Sophocles *The Root-cutters* frag. 536 (Radt): "having melted a doll with fire." There is, however, no agreement as to the context or meaning of the fragment, and other readings have been proposed; for discussion see Radt ad loc.

24. Since the word *pharmakon* has a vexing spectrum of meanings ranging between "poison," "drug," and "incantation," I shall, throughout this volume, leave it untranslated unless the context makes its precise translation clear. The meaning "incantation," though cited by LSJ s.v. i 3 as "enchanted potion, philtre: hence charm, spell," is often ignored by modern scholars. See Pharr (1932) 272–274 and Graf (1992) 276–277 for discussion.

25. *Andromache* 155–158. Burnett (1971) 134 and Kovacs (1980) 13–28, esp. 19–20. The dramatic situation here—two "wives" in the same house—would not have been tolerated in ancient Athens (see Chapter 3 for discussion of a similar dramatic situation in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*), but the rules were apparently different in other places. Dionysius I of Syracuse married two women on the same day, a Locrian named Doris and a Syracusan named Aristomache, both of whom came to live in his palace. This arrangement, however, apparently produced the same rivalry we see in the *Andromache*, for later on—when Aristomache was unable to produce a child—Dionysius had the mother of Doris put to death on the grounds that she had bewitched or drugged (*katapharmakeuein*) her daughter's rival. See Plutarch *Dion* 3.3 and Caven (1990) 175.

that man you desire, either a lock of hair or a thread from his cloak,²⁶ and then fit together one benefit from the two.

The wording here is purposely ambiguous and can be taken to mean either a spell for dissolving Phaedra's love or a spell for captivating Hippolytus and subsequently curing the queen's pains by fulfilling her desire.²⁷ Phaedra's reply to the Nurse's offer—"Is this *pharmakon* an ointment or a potion?"—is equally ambiguous, for it can refer either to an aphrodisiac given to Hippolytus or to an antaphrodisiac given to Phaedra.²⁸ Either way, Euripides is clearly referring to the contemporary use of *ousia*, a later technical word for the magical "material" or "stuff" (almost always the victims' hair or bits from their clothes) that is used to target the spell most precisely.²⁹

Comic writers make many passing allusions to erotic stimulants in the form of love potions, special foods (especially bulbs and shellfish),³⁰ and specialized magical gear like the *iunx* or the *rhombos*.³¹ Aristophanes refers to the rite of apple-tossing (*Clouds* 996–997), and in a fragment from his lost *Amphiarus* he parodies the form and content of a popular hexametri-

26. Reading with Barrett (1964) and most editors Reiske's conjecture *plokón* ("lock of hair") for the MSS *logon*. Commentators have, however, generally missed the practice alluded to in the exceedingly opaque last line, which probably refers to a magical ritual in which the hairs or threads of two people are magically intertwined with the hope of similarly joining the two individuals in love. The symbolic joining of two individuals is common in later magic: a third-century C.E. charm (*DT* 271.42–43) names a couple and then prays to a demon: "Yoke them in marriage and desire, sharing their lives"; and both Wortmann (1968) 85–102 and Brashear (1992) publish pairs of wax *sumplegmata* (male and female effigies in an erotic embrace) found with Greek erotic charms. See Rosenqvist (1986) 60 for a similar Byzantine love charm used by a rejected suitor to get his fiancée back.

27. Goff (1991) 48–50.

28. Barrett (1964) insists (in his comments on lines 516–521) that this can *only* be interpreted to mean a self-applied medicine designed to cure Phaedra's love; but see section 3.1 for examples of self-applied ointments used as love charms to beautify the woman and to increase the man's affection.

29. For *ousia* used elsewhere in literary love spells, see Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 2.32 and 3.15–18 (hairs) and Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4 (clothing, shoes, hair); Jordan (1985b) 25 collects many examples of actual Greek spells found with hair attached.

30. Athenaeus (62e–64b and 356e–f) has a wide-ranging discussion, peppered with quotations from Attic comedy. Menander frag. 397 (Sandbach) mentions *hupobinētiōnta brōmata* ("foods that encourage screwing").

31. For the use of the *rhombos*, see Eupolis *Baptai* frag. 83 (K-A) and Aristophanes *Heros* frag. 315 (K-A). For the *iunx* see his *Lysistrata* 1110, discussed in section 4.2.

cal incantation that turns up repeatedly in Hellenistic and Roman-era charms for erotic purposes.³² Although most of Attic comedy is lost, it seems clear that Lucian writing in the second century C.E. owes much inspiration to Menander and New Comedy for his satirical sketches of the magical spells performed by courtesans in Athens.³³ Later poets remain deeply interested in such themes. An anonymous Hellenistic epigram, for example, purports to be the dedicatory poem for a bejeweled *iunx* wheel—originally a gift from a Thessalian sorcerer—that has the power "to draw a man from across the sea and youngsters from the women's quarters"; and another by the poet Asclepiades refers to a magic girdle with powers similar to those of the Homeric *kestos himas*.³⁴ Horace, on the other hand, describes the macabre rituals of the sorceress Canidia, some of which clearly reflect contemporary love spells;³⁵ and even Dido's elaborate ritual at the end of book 4 of the *Aeneid* has been interpreted as a form of love magic aimed at keeping Aeneas in Carthage.³⁶ But by far the most detailed and best-loved literary descriptions of love spells are those found in Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 and its Virgilian rendition, *Eclogue* 8. In each poem a lovesick woman enacts an elaborate incantation designed to force her wayward lover to return to her.

The prose authors of antiquity offer less evidence for the use of love magic, but they are not silent about it. Oratory provides us with occasional but important glimpses of such activities. In Antiphon's speech *Against the Stepmother* the unnamed speaker accuses two women of poisoning their lovers, one knowingly and the other under the illusion that the *pharmakon* was an aphrodisiac.³⁷ Another Athenian woman charged with homicide in similar circumstances was apparently acquitted by the Areopagus when she

32. *Amphiarus* frag. 29 (K-A) and Faraone (1992b).

33. Herzog (1940) 12–19 and Kofler (1949) 86–98 exhaustively discuss Lucian's most detailed descriptions of erotic magic: *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4.4 and *Philopseudes* 14–15. For the general influence of Attic New Comedy on Lucian, see Fantham (1986) 55–56 and Rosivach (1998) 144–145.

34. *Iunx*: AP 5.205 = Gow and Page (1965) 207 no. XXXV. Magic girdle (*zonion*): AP 5.158 = Gow and Page (1965) 45 no. IV.

35. E.g., Riess (1893), Kuhnert (1894) 44–53, Dedo (1904) 42–44, and Freudenburg (1995). Dedo (1904) 38–39 discusses a lost poem of Catullus that apparently also imitated a love charm.

36. Eitrem (1933) is the classic discussion; see also Tavenner (1916) 33–35 and Tupet (1976) 247–248.

37. Antiphon 1.9.2; see Faraone (1994a) 118–119 and section 3.2 below.

argued that her intent was to get the man to love her more, not to kill him.³⁸ Demosthenes, on the other hand, mentions the prosecution of a woman who, if we can trust the scholiast, was condemned to death for "making love potions (*philtira*) for young men."³⁹ We find occasional references to such activities in the philosophers as well. In addition to the anecdote about the courtesan Theodote, Xenophon's Socrates makes several playful references to love magic in the *Memorabilia*, as one might expect in a dialogue devoted to the causes of friendship and affection.⁴⁰ The historical tradition, given its concern for public events, is understandably silent about such activities, but love magic or accusations about it do turn up occasionally in discussions of the private lives of kings and other important leaders. Herodotus, for example, describes Queen Ladike's prayer to Aphrodite to make her impotent husband virile (2.181); and later, more sensational biographers like Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Suetonius mention the use of aphrodisiacs by Romans and Greeks alike.⁴¹

But by far the best prose sources for ancient love magic are the numerous discussions of the magical powers of plants, minerals, and animals that can be gleaned from naturalist, medical, or encyclopedic writers. Aristotle, for example, gives us a detailed discussion of the famous aphrodisiac *hippomanes*;⁴² and his student Theophrastus, despite his own obvious skepticism about their efficacy, dutifully records in his *History of Plants* the claims of local drug-sellers and root-cutters about the effectiveness of various herbs in stimulating desire.⁴³ Pliny the Elder, Dioscorides, Aelian, Galen, and other authors pursue this scientific tradition in Roman times;

38. [Arist.] *Magna Moralia* 16. 1188b30–38; see MacDowell (1978) 114–115, Faraone (1994a) 118–119, and section 3.2 below.

39. Demosthenes (19.281) claims enigmatically that Aeschines' mother Glaukothea "used to convene meetings, for which another priestess has been put to death." The scholia explain that he is referring to a woman called Ninos, who had been executed either for making *philtira* for young men or for mocking the Mysteries. Derenne (1930) 224–227 and 233 argued that both charges may have been true, an argument revived by Versnel (1990) 116.

40. See the index of individual passages.

41. Cornelius Nepos frag. 52 (Marshall) (= Plutarch *Lucullus* 43.1–2); Plutarch *Antony* 37; and Suetonius *Caligula* 50 and *De poetis* 16.

42. Either a black, fleshy substance on the forehead of a newborn foal or a secretion from a mare; both were believed to have aphrodisiac properties; see Aristotle *HA* 572a30–b4 and 577a10–15, Theophrastus frag. 175, Aelian *NA* 3.17 and 14.18.

43. Lloyd (1983) 129–130, Preus (1987), and Scarborough (1991) 146–151.

and—beginning as early as the Hellenistic period—there is another important and perhaps competing "theosophical" tradition of pseudo-Orphic, pseudo-Democritean, and pseudo-Pythagorean writers who often discuss the magical properties of plants and stones and even pass on recipes for amulets and rituals.⁴⁴ The most illustrious of the latter was Bolus of Mendes, a Hellenized Egyptian active in the second century B.C.E., who under the name of Democritus wrote and compiled many (now lost) works on a wide range of subjects, including demonology, astrology, and necromancy, as well as a treatise on sympathetic and antipathetic magic. His sources seem to have included native Egyptian and Mesopotamian writings, and his works were widely excerpted by Pliny and others.⁴⁵ The late second-century C.E. Christian philosopher Sextus Julius Africanus wrote in a similar vein an eclectic work called *Kestoi* in twenty-four books, a miscellany of magical and medical recipes and observations.⁴⁶ The "Orphic" *Lithica* and more elaborate compilations such as the *Cyranides* date back even earlier, to the first century C.E., and seem to draw on all these various traditions as they discuss the magical properties and practical uses of various gemstones, plants, and animals.⁴⁷ And since the ancients often used herbs and amulets on their livestock to encourage breeding, important information also turns up in various Byzantine handbooks on the care and breeding of animals, such as books 16–17 of the eclectic compilation known the *Geoponica*.⁴⁸

As we saw in the discussion of Socrates' conversation with Theodote, the consistent problem with many literary materials is the offhand manner in which they mention or allude to love spells. In publicly performed genres like epic recitation, oratory, or drama such references must have been easily recognizable to most of the audience, but they can be quite cryptic to the modern reader, who must supplement them with archae-

44. See Brashear (1995) 3412–13 for summary and bibliography.

45. Brashear (1995) 3412 and Dickie (forthcoming).

46. Thee (1984). The title *Kestoi* seems to refer to the *Kestos himas* of Aphrodite (note 12 above) and probably should be translated as *Magic Bands* or *Magic Girdles* (see Chapter 3 note 4).

47. See Abel (1881) and Halleux and Schamp (1985) for the *Lithica* and (for the present) Kaimakis (1976) and Waegeman (1987) for the *Cyranides*. For dating and authorship see most recently Fowden (1986) 87–88 n. 57. David Bain is launched on a new and superior edition of the *Cyranides*, which takes into account many more manuscripts.

48. Beckh (1895).

ological, epigraphical, and papyrological evidence in order to appreciate them fully. Fortunately, there is an abundance of such nonliterary data, beginning with the late eighth-century B.C.E. "Nestor's Cup Inscription"—among the earliest attested examples of written Greek—which seems to be an incantation designed to charm a cup of wine with amorous power: "Whoever drinks from this cup, desire for beautifully crowned Aphrodite will seize him instantly."⁴⁹ Another inscribed cup calling itself a *philtion* ("love spell") was dedicated in the sixth century B.C.E. to Aphrodite in her temple at Naucratis.⁵⁰ The bulk of our nonliterary evidence for Greek magic comes, however, from the two large corpora of extant spells: the "binding spells," which survive mainly on inscribed lead tablets;⁵¹ and the so-called magical papyri.⁵²

The former date as early as the classical period in Sicily, Attica, and the Black Sea area; and by the late Hellenistic period we find them scattered throughout the Greek-speaking Mediterranean. The usual practice was quite simple: a person inscribed the victim's name on a metal or wax tablet, rolled it, pierced it with a nail, and then deposited it in some underground place, such as a grave or a well. Since the focus of these binding spells is on the restraint of the victim,⁵³ they are occasionally used in agonistic situations that involve love—for example, when people try to bind or restrain their rivals in love.⁵⁴ This is not, of course, love magic per se, as it does not attempt to make another person fall in love. Rather it is designed to reduce the competition, by inhibiting the words, the actions, and even the sexual performance of a rival. Thus, for example, three fourth-century B.C.E. Greek binding spells appear to be written by women who wish to

prevent their husbands or lovers from "marrying" other people, a term that can mean either formal marriage or in slang merely sexual intercourse.⁵⁵ A tablet from Athens, for example, employs a simple wish-formula: "Let him not 'marry' another woman or boy";⁵⁶ and in a recently published Macedonian tablet a woman attempts to inhibit a relationship between her husband(?) and another woman, presumably his girlfriend:

I consign (i.e., for purposes of binding) the sexual fulfillment (*telos*) and marriage (*gamos*) of [Theti]ma and Dionysophon and also (the marriage) of all other women, both widows and maidens, but especially Thetima . . . May he (Dionysophon) indeed not take another woman other than myself, but let me alone grow old by the side of Dionysophon and no other woman.⁵⁷

Yet another late-classical spell from Athens binds "Glycera, Dion's wife . . . in order that she be punished and not consummate her marriage."⁵⁸ All three texts provide us with some important background for understanding Hermione's accusations that Andromache was using magic "to make her hateful to her own husband."⁵⁹

Although this tradition of binding rivals in love triangles continues unabated into later antiquity,⁶⁰ by the late classical period we see signs that it is being adapted to another popular form of love magic, the so-called *agōgē* spells, which—as we shall see in great detail in section 2.2—seek to bind a female victim and force her to come and make love to the practitio-

49. S. West (1994) and Faraone (1996b).

50. Gardiner (1888) 66 no. 798 and Faraone (1996b) 106.

51. They are called *katadesmoi* in Greek and *defixiones* in Latin. The most important corpora and surveys of Greek spells are *DT*, *DTA*, Preisendanz (1928) and (1933), and *SGD*. Latin spells are included in *DT* and have been surveyed further by Besnier (1920), Garcia-Ruiz (1967), and in the appendix to Solin (1968).

52. *PGM* and *SM* are the most important corpora.

53. Kagarow (1929), Preisendanz (1972), and Faraone (1991a) provide general discussions. With increasing frequency in the Hellenistic period, the same media are used to preserve a different genre of malediction that Versnel (1991a) has aptly labeled "judicial prayer": usually a prayer to an Olympian (i.e., not chthonic) deity in which an aggrieved party claims to have been wronged and seeks redress; see below, section 2.1.

54. Petropoulos (1988) 217–219 and Faraone (1991a) 13–14.

55. This slang usage is found in Hellenistic epigrams and persists in modern Greek; see Robert (1967), Shipp (1979) 187–188, Cameron (1982) 163–164, and Petropoulos (1988) 218.

56. *DTA* 78. See Voutiras (1998) for this translation, which corrects Faraone (1991a) 14.

57. For Greek text and this translation, see Voutiras (1998). I thank Professor Voutiras for kindly giving me access to his ongoing work on this text.

58. Willemson (1990) 145–147. The final words in Greek are *ateles gamou*, literally "unfulfilled in her marriage." But given the slang usage of the word *gamos* and the fact that Glycera is a typical name for a courtesan, we might also translate: "Glycera, Dion's woman . . . in order that she . . . have a rotten sex life." For courtesans' use of magic, see section 4.2.

59. See note 25 above.

60. See, e.g., *DT* 271.46 (3d cent. C.E.): "make him obey like a slave . . . desiring no other woman or maiden"; and *PGM* V. 304–369, a recipe for an elaborate binding spell inscribed on a lead tablet, which adds: "If (you are binding a) woman, (write:) 'in order that Ms. So-and-so may not 'marry' Mr. So-and-so.'"

ner. Thus, in a recently published lead tablet from late fourth-century B.C.E. Acanthus, a man named Pausanias puts a binding spell (*katadesmos*) on a woman named Sime "until she embraces him."⁶¹ Because of long-standing and intensive archaeological excavations, Roman Carthage provides us with our most extensive evidence for this important sea change, yielding numerous love spells inscribed in the Latin language, but often written either with the Greek alphabet or with selected parts in the Greek language,⁶² a language not widely known or used in this area of the Mediterranean at this time.⁶³ The fact that several of these spells were copied by scribes from handbooks only increases the suspicion that they reflect an evolving Greek tradition of *katadesmoi*.⁶⁴ In Roman-era Egypt and Hadrumentum (a city near Carthage) this same early Greek tradition of binding spells yields yet another composite: the so-called binding love spells (*philtrokatadesmoi*), which aim to prevent the victim from having sex with others and (at the same time) to encourage him or her to have sex with the person performing the spell.⁶⁵

Miraculously, another even larger corpus of Greek magical texts has survived,⁶⁶ and it contains an enormous amount of information about love magic: seven sizable papyrus rolls filled with magical charms, which appear to be the personal library of a professional magician working in Upper

61. Jordan (1999) no. 3; see section 4.1 for full discussion.

62. *DT* 227 (Latin spell written in the Roman alphabet with a border of nonsensical Greek letters around it), 230 (Latin spell written in the Roman alphabet with the names of the demons written in Greek), 231 (Latin spell written entirely in the Greek alphabet), and 304 (same).

63. Rives (1995) 193–120, esp. 197–199.

64. For example, *DT* 230 (quoted earlier), seems to have been copied out ahead of time with the appropriate blanks left for personal names. For further evidence for scribes in third-century Carthage working from Greek handbooks, see Jordan (1988d) 120–126 (three Greek curses against charioteers follow same formulary) and (1994b) 325–333 (the same Greek formula being used in Beirut and Carthage; in the latter case, the scribe apparently knew no Greek). See section 4.1 for a tentative sketch of the history of these types of spells.

65. See, e.g., *SM* 38 (= *SGD* 161 = *CTBS* 34) and *PGM* IV. 296–466.

66. I say miraculously, because many of the longer handbooks—*PGM* IV, V, X, XII–XIV, and perhaps I–III, VII, and LXI—seem to come from the library of a practicing magician in Upper Egypt in the fifth century; had this one cache remained hidden, *PGM* would only be one-fifth of its present size. See Betz *GMPT* p. xlii, Petropoulos (1988) 216, and Brashear (1995) 3402–05.

Egypt in the late fourth or early fifth century C.E.⁶⁷ About one-quarter of these texts are concerned with love and sex.⁶⁸ Finally, there are scores of magical gemstones that date roughly to the Roman imperial period and are particularly popular in the eastern Mediterranean basin; at least one specifically magical design can be traced back to the second century B.C.E., a fact suggesting that here, too, we have evidence for a much earlier tradition.⁶⁹ Many of these gemstones have short Greek inscriptions and stereotypical scenes involving Aphrodite and Eros that clearly indicate their use for amorous purposes.⁷⁰

1.2 Definitions and a New Taxonomy

There is, then, rich and plentiful evidence for the ancient Greek tradition of love charms, aphrodisiacs, philters, and the like in myth, historical anecdote, and actual practice. The manifold nature of these sources and the many varieties of this form of enchantment have, however, dissuaded modern scholars from attempting any precise definition or taxonomy of the phenomenon, and therefore it is extremely important that I begin by saying precisely what I understand to be the scope of a book titled *Ancient Greek Love Magic*. The chronological and ethnic boundaries are, perhaps, easiest to define: for present purposes "ancient Greek" refers to a variety of peoples living in and around the Mediterranean basin from the eighth to the first centuries B.C.E., who spoke the Greek language, lived in small city-states, and shared in a very loose manner a shifting body of religious practices and beliefs that can be said to characterize traditional Greek religion.⁷¹ This is not to say, of course, that I am uninterested in the later Roman and late-antique periods, for we have already seen that some of our best evidence for actual magical spells—those inscribed on gemstones,

67. Powden (1986) 168–174 and Brashear (1995) 3402–05.

68. Petropoulos (1988) 215.

69. Galen (12.207 Kühn) quoting Pseudo-Nachepso; see M. Smith (1979) 132 for discussion.

70. Bonner *SMA* and Delatte and Derchain (1964) are the classic collections. On the importance of the gemstones, see Eitrem (1939), M. Smith (1979), and Schwartz (1981).

71. Burkert (1985) 7–9. This level of generalization is not, of course, unproblematic. See Finley (1971) 62 and 120–133, and my discussion of the synchronic approach in section 1.3.

papyri, or lead—date to the first four centuries C.E. Nonetheless, the beginnings of the first century B.C.E. provides the best terminus for this study, because it is an important watershed in the history of ancient Mediterranean magic—a point at which the local, oral, “amateur” traditions of magical knowledge and *praxis* begin to yield to an international and conglomerate tradition that is heavily dependent on professional magicians using handbooks (written in Greek, Demotic, Hebrew, and Aramaic), in which we find a fascinating mélange of Greek, Roman, Jewish, Syrian, and Egyptian forms of invocation and ritual mixed with or assimilated to one another.⁷² Although these later and somewhat complicated “Graeco-Roman” or “Graeco-Egyptian” forms of magic are themselves quite beyond the scope of this study, I will at times argue that the originally Greek contributions to them—often signaled by traditional poetic forms and meters or technical terms—can be readily identified and used to reconstruct and understand the much earlier native Greek tradition of love magic.

So much for the first half of my title. “Love magic” itself, however, is not so easy to define, since in many societies both “love” and “magic” are more culture-bound than most ideas and therefore can be extremely difficult for outsiders to grasp. To begin negatively, by “magic” I mean neither the illusions and parlor tricks of a Houdini⁷³ nor “magic” in the more diffuse literary sense of “fantastical” such as one finds in the so-called magical realism of recent Latin American writers. Rather, I mean a set of practical devices and rituals used by the Greeks in their day-to-day lives to control or otherwise influence supernaturally the forces of nature, animals, or other human beings.⁷⁴ This type of magic was traditionally mundane and unremarkable to the ancient Greeks. Thus when Hera dons a magical cord to help her seduce Zeus, or when Deianeira smears her husband’s shirt with a magic potion to make him more affectionate, such activities

72. Faraone (1991a) 14–15, Graf (1991), Brashear (1995) 3413–14 and 3445–46, and Faraone (1996b) 96–97.

73. The Greeks were not, of course, without a sense of humor. Indeed, there is evidence in the magical papyri of a Greek tradition of *paignia* (“playful tricks”) that were apparently used at drinking parties, e.g., *SM* 76, 83, or *PGM* VII. 167–185, which is labeled “The *Paignia* of Democritus.” Bain (1998) provides an overview.

74. This definition is similar to that of Versnel *OCD* 909, who describes the “family resemblance” of magic as “a manipulative strategy to influence the course of nature by supernatural (‘occult’) means.”

per se would not have been any more remarkable to a Greek audience than Socrates’ conversation with Theodote about *iugges* and *philtrā*. I would argue that in both cases the poets are simply putting practical tools (magical amulets and ointments) into the hands of literary characters (usually gods or heroes), much the same as they dress them in clothes typical of the period or arm them with familiar human weapons. I might contrast the use in a modern literary text of an unremarkable device of practical technology (for example, a fax machine or a telephone) with a fantastical conceit, such as a large invisible rabbit named Harvey or an elixir that brings eternal youth. Just as we believe in the mundane power of a fax machine and find it unremarkable, by the end of this book it will be clear that many Greeks believed in or at least feared the practical efficacy of magic spells.

A more precise theoretical definition of “magic” as a category distinct from “religion” or “science” lies at the center of a long-standing controversy among anthropologists and historians of religion and need not detain us here.⁷⁵ Suffice it to say that these traditional modern divisions are for the most part inappropriate for ancient Greece because (1) until very late the Greeks had no developed system of empirical science to test the efficacy of magical spells and thereby distinguish between magic and science; and (2) as extremely tolerant polytheists the Greeks had a very flexible sense of religious orthodoxy, one that allowed them to worship a wide diversity of divinities and to perform an enormous variety of ritual acts, many of which we might call “magical” today. The ancient lack of interest in distinguishing magic and science is perhaps best illustrated in Pindar’s description of early fifth-century medical practice, which included incantations, surgery, drugs, and amulets.⁷⁶ In this environment, at least, modern notions of magic as “bad science” or “quackery” are at best unhelpful in

75. The bibliography is staggering and still growing; see Brashear (1995) 3446–48 n. 353. For some helpful recent studies pertaining specifically to magic in classical antiquity, see Versnel (1991b) and Graf (1995), who cite and discuss some of the contemporary debates. Versnel argues rightly that any modern definition of ancient “magic” other than an “outsider’s” (etic) one is impossible. Thus in this volume I follow the recent trend in ignoring the distinction altogether for Mediterranean cultures before the advent of the Christian Roman empire; compare, e.g., Fox (1986) 36–37, Phillips (1986) 2711–32 and (1991), Rives (1995) 15, J. Z. Smith (1995) 13–20, and Broton (1996) 109–111. Graf (1995), however, tentatively tries to recapture an “insider’s” (emic) definition in fifth-century Athens (mainly in philosophic circles) and republican Rome.

76. Pindar *Pythian* 3.47–54 and Kotansky (1991a) 108–109.

understanding ancient Greek beliefs and the social milieu of their magical rites. Nor would most Greeks dismiss magical practices as a form of "bad (i.e., unorthodox) religion." Indeed the ancient Greek tendency toward extreme diversity in religious belief and ritual practice was ensured by the peculiar decentralization of political, economic, and religious authority in the Greek city-states well into the Christian period.⁷⁷

Defining the narrower topic of Greek *love* magic is even more difficult. Again, I start negatively, by excluding any detailed investigation of antaphrodisiacs⁷⁸ or other spells that are used to bind or impede love,⁷⁹ as both fall more easily into the category of inhibitory magic. For our purposes, "love magic" will refer almost exclusively to a large body of traditional ritual techniques used by the Greeks to instill or maintain various forms of desire and affection. The most common and best-known forms of love magic are, of course, those that one person uses to make another person desire or love him or her. Greek males did, however, apparently use magical substances or techniques on themselves from time to time as a form of self-help or medication, presumably in cases of impotence, a practice with a long prehistory in the eastern Mediterranean basin, beginning with early Mesopotamian "potency spells."⁸⁰ In the Greek world, the earli-

77. Each city-state had its own pantheon of deities and its unique repertoire of rituals, and there were rarely any professional or hereditary priesthoods (as in Egypt or the Near East) that rigorously enforced religious principles or jealously guarded their own prerogatives by resisting innovation; see Burkert (1985) 8 and 216–217. Parker (1996) 152–153 notes that it is a delicious paradox (at least to modern scholars) that traditional polytheisms are subject to constant change; this is one of their most important traditions.

78. The Greeks and Romans were well aware of the ability of certain herbs to suppress sexual desire and even sexual dreams. Thus, e.g., the herb *numphaea* was thought to "relax" the phallus for a few days (Dioscorides *Materia Medica* 3.132), make someone incapable of intercourse for twelve days (Pliny *NH* 25.75), and take away sexual desire and sexual dreams for forty days (ibid. 26.94). Pliny claims similar power for lettuce seed (20.68); condrilla (22.91); *agnus castus* (24.59, where he notes its use in the Athenian Thesmophoria; and 61–64); *brya* (24.72); rue (20.143); purslane (20.214); and willow (24.58).

79. For "separation spells" (*diakopai*) see Jordan (1985b) 222–223; for "hate spells" (*misēthra*) see Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4.5 and Bevilacqua (1997).

80. Biggs (1967) is the standard commentary on this series of cuneiform "potency incantations," which were copied faithfully well into the seventh century B.C.E. and which were designed "to get and maintain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse" (p. 3). See Leick (1994) 204–210 for a Mesopotamian ointment of magnetite and oil designed for a similar purpose.

est example may be the "Nestor's Cup Inscription," which tells us that if a man drinks from this particular cup, he will immediately be struck with desire for making love.⁸¹ The late sixth-century B.C.E. poet Hipponax, on the other hand, seems to describe a ritual designed (like the Mesopotamian spells) to increase a man's potency by rubbing or striking his testicles;⁸² and we have a number of other references, beginning in the classical period, to penis creams that were believed to encourage erections or to increase their duration: Aristophanes, for example, has a joke about a bride and groom who are told to use a special wine in this way;⁸³ and Aristotle's junior colleague Theophrastus, drawing on the oral traditions of fourth-century B.C.E. drug-sellers (*pharmakopolai*), discusses one herb that when rubbed on a man's penis is said to produce twelve erections in succession.⁸⁴ This same Greek tradition of sexual self-help shows up repeatedly in later magical recipes, which recommend rubbing the penis with various herbs, oils, and liquids to encourage a prolonged erection⁸⁵ and in a few cases to increase women's desire as well.⁸⁶

Aristophanes and Theophrastus also mention special foods that have an aphrodisiac effect on males, especially bulbs and the herb *eruca sativa*,

81. Faraone (1996b).

82. Hipponax frag. 78 (West); West (1974) 142–143 compares a similar rite in Petronius 127.9 and 131.8. Hipponax may also allude to a love potion to be drunk when one sees the first swallow in the spring; see Degani (1962).

83. Aristophanes *Acharnians* 1048–68.

84. Theophrastus *HP* 9.18.9 (also cited by Pliny *NH* 26.99); Lloyd (1983) 120–126 and Preus (1988) 78–80 discuss the *pharmakopolai*.

85. *SM* 76.5–6 (anoint the penis with the juice of the "deadly carrot" in order "to play with a woman"); *SM* 83.11–5–6 (rub "yourself" with swallow dung and honey "to have fun with a concubine[?]); *PGM* VII. 185–186 (anoint your "thing" [*pragma*] with honey and pepper); and *PDM* lxi. 58–62 (rubric; "For an erection"). See Riess (1896a) 83 n. 1 for parallels in the medical writers.

86. Theophrastus, in his discussion of the herb used for multiple erections (see above), mentions in passing that women "are considerably more eager when they (i.e., their men) use this *pharmakon*." Demotic Egyptian handbooks preserve several recipes for penis creams (*PDM* xiv.1046–55, 1155–62, 1190–95; and lxi.58–62) where the aim is "to cause a woman to love her husband" or "to make a woman love copulating," a feature known in two Greek recipes—*PGM* VII.191–192 ("A binding love spell that lasts forever") and XXXVI.283–294 (to ensure faithfulness in a woman)—and attested in the Middle Ages and Renaissance; see Kieckhefer (1991) 32–33 (if the wife is indifferent) and Brucker (1963) 10 (to ensure her faithfulness).

more commonly known as rocket or arugula.⁸⁷ This tradition continues unabated down through the Roman period, where we also find repeated mention of a plant called *saturion*, apparently a general name for aphrodisiac plants in the orchid family.⁸⁸ Pliny the Elder, in particular, provides abundant evidence, much of it culled from earlier Greek sources, that men believed they could increase their sexual potency or stamina by eating or wearing parts of a number of special plants⁸⁹ or strange animals such as the crane and the skink;⁹⁰ and quite similar beliefs also show up from time to time in the much later magical handbooks.⁹¹ Although encyclopedic sources like Pliny may often tell us vaguely that such materials stimulate sexual desire or activity without designating the gender of the desiring subject,⁹²

87. E.g., bulbs (Aristophanes *Eccl.* 1092 and several other Attic comedians cited by Athenaeus 63e–64b, 64e–f, 356e); arugula (Theophrastus *HP* 1.6.6); and cyclamen (Theophrastus *HP* 9.9.3).

88. For *saturion*, see Dioscorides *MM* 3.134 and Pliny *NH* 26.96–99; for arugula, see Hor. *Satires* 2.8.51; Dioscorides *MM* 2.140 and 169; Pliny *NH* 10.182 and 19.154; and Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 421–424. See Freudenburg (1995) 211–212 and Maltomini's note on *SM* 76.12 for discussion of arugula.

89. Pliny offers many other examples: *terebinth* (24.28); *donax* (24.87); *clematis* (24.140); *xiphium* and *ormenos agrios* (26.94); *orchis* (27.65); *phyteuma* (27.65); radish (20.28); *staphylinus* (20.32); leeks (20.47–49); garlic with fresh coriander in wine (20.56–57); Megarian onions (20.105); wild asparagus mixed with dill (20.110); *hebrotonum* placed under the pillow (21.162); sea holly (22.20); asphodel (22.71); *buprestis* (22.78); chervil (22.80); and the pith of a *tithymallus* branch (22.99).

90. Pliny *NH* 28.261–262 provides a long list of animal materials used to stimulate coitus, including wearing the right testicle of an ass in a bracelet. Other examples: eggs (Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 421–424; Athenaeus 63e); the brain of a crane (Aelian *NA* 1.44); the tail of a deer (*Geoponica* 17.5.3 and 19.5.4); a reptile called the skink (Pliny *NH* 38.91 and—when mixed with *saturion*, rocket, and pepper—30.119–200); the flesh of lascivious birds (Athenaeus 9.384e–f) and the *salpe*-fish (*Cyranides* 1.18.50; see Bain [1998] 268). For the magical use of materials from sexually excited animals, see Leick (1994) 207–208 (in Mesopotamia) and Kieckhefer (1991) 34 and 36 (in medieval Europe).

91. *SM* 83.5–9: "To copulate a lot: bruise the seed of arugula and small pine cones and drink on an empty stomach"; and *SM* 76.11–12: "To screw a lot: drink, in advance, celery and arugula seed." See also *PGM* VII.183–185 (small pine cones with wine and pepper).

92. In his discussion of the materials listed above in notes 88–90, Pliny says that nearly all of them are useful for exciting sexual desire (e.g., *concitatrix veneris*; *veneris causa*; *venerem excitat* or *concitat* or *stimulant*; *libidinem excitat*; *libidinis causa*; *ad stimulandos coitus*), without specifying the gender of the person. He does specify, however, that both arugula and *saturion* increase desire in the male (10.182 and 26.96). As far as I can tell he makes no specific mention of the arousal of female desire.

the general focus on male potency is often made clear by references to a desired erection⁹³ or evident in more subtle ways, for example, in the derivation of the name *saturion* from the often ithyphallic satyr, in allusions to the sympathetic relationship between plant bulbs and testicles,⁹⁴ and in the frequent crossover between these human aphrodisiacs and those used to encourage stud animals to mate.⁹⁵ Perhaps related is the scantier evidence that images of a couple in an erotic embrace (*sumplegmata*) may have been placed in the home to promote a man's erection or to encourage in a more general fashion a couple's lovemaking, but here, since some of these images were apparently displayed openly in the house, any alleged "magical" effect merges quickly into the more mundane power of erotic images to create sexual desire.⁹⁶

93. Pliny *NH* 26.96, on the benefit of eating arugula. Martial 3.75.3 suggests eating *saturia*, eggs, and arugula for an erection. The *Cyranides* suggests the use of arugula mixed with spices and honey for a large and pleasurable erection (1.5.10–18) or carrying the tail of a lizard (2.14.10–13) or the right molar of a skink (2.29). Medical writers claimed that the condition of satyriasis (continual and painful erection) occurred in places like Crete where men had too much *saturion* in their diet; see Gourevitch (1995) 153–154.

94. This is explicit in Pliny's discussions of *orchis* (*NH* 26.95 and 27.65), *saturion* (26.99), and sea holly (22.20). See Scarborough (1991) 148–149 for the logic of this "doctrine of signatures" in the herbals.

95. Pliny *NH* 26.99 (discussing *saturion*): "They tell us that sexual desire is aroused if the root is merely held in the hand; a stronger passion, however, if it is taken in dry wine; that rams and he-goats are given it to drink, when they are too sluggish; and that it is given to stallions from Sarmatia, when they are too fatigued for copulation." He also discusses at 8.165 and 26.181 the similar effect of *hippomanes* on humans and stallions. Julius Africanus *Kestoi* 3.5 and the authors of Greek horse-breeding manuals suggest the flesh of the skink given with wine as an aphrodisiac for stud horses; see Thee (1984) 230 n. 1. *Geoponica* 17.5.3 and 19.5.4 prescribes a similar use of the tail of a deer.

96. For Mesopotamia, see Leick (1994) 294 n. 12, who discusses a tablet with a couple embracing on one side and the sign "ZI" ("rise" or "have an erection") inscribed over and over again on the reverse. Ovid mentions small painted tablets depicting "the various unions and forms of sexual love" traditionally on display in Roman homes (*Tristia* 2.523–524), and Clement of Alexandria (*Protrepticus* 4.57–61) rails at similar images in Greek homes, which show Aphrodite naked and bound in a sexual embrace; Montserrat (1996) 213–215 discusses these passages and publishes some examples from Egypt (plates 21, 23, and 24). See, too, Delatte and Derchain (1964) 238–239 no. *329 (a magical gemstone from Tarsus depicting Eros and Psyche in two different scenes of sexual intercourse). These are, of course, quite different from the *sumplegmata* that are buried in graves and under thresholds; see section 2.1.

It would appear, then, that the Greeks—especially the men—used magic and herbal techniques on themselves to enable or to enhance their own sexual performance. There is also occasional evidence that Greeks might use magic to cause someone to fall in love with a third person. In a few cases, in which the object of this love is particularly inappropriate, these spells are simply a curse hurled against an enemy, for example, in the apocryphal story of how the poet Homer, when rebuffed by a priestess, cursed her with a lust for old men.⁹⁷ In his lost poem *Arae* (Curses) the Hellenistic poet Moero apparently told a similar story about a Corinthian housewife named Alcinoe, who mistreats her servant and dismisses her unjustly. The angry servant prays to Athena for revenge, and the goddess responds by forcing Alcinoe “to fall madly in love with a Samian stranger . . . and to abandon her home and children and sail away with him.”⁹⁸ Here Athena’s action—striking a woman with *erōs* and forcing her to flee her home—has precisely the same goals as the three Greek erotic spells quoted earlier, but here they are the result of an enemy’s curse, not of an incantation performed by the Samian stranger with whom she elopes. Broadly speaking, both of these stories are not unlike like the plot of Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, in which the vengeful goddess Aphrodite causes Phaedra to conceive an inappropriate passion for her stepson. As all of these instances involve pleas or plots for revenge, one might argue that these are curses pure and simple, but even this approach raises some interesting questions, for, as we shall see in section 2.1, crossovers between the technologies of cursing and erotic magic were extremely common in ancient Greece.

On the other hand, sometimes a friendly third party is at work. Simichidas, in his prayer to Pan in Theocritus’ *Idyll* 7, asks the god to bring the boy Philinos into the arms of his lovesick friend Aratus, a request that is, in fact, a clever parody of an erotic spell.⁹⁹ Two other cases involve the

97. [Herodotus] *Life of Homer* 30 = [Homer] *Epigram* 11. He prays: “Hear me as I pray, O Kourōtrophos. Grant that this woman may refuse the affection and bed of young men, but let her find joy in old men with wizened temples, whose strength is blunted but whose desire remains keen.” In the past scholars have debated the identity of the goddess Kourōtrophos, some preferring Aphrodite, while others (noting the place of the sacrifice at the crossroads) have identified her—correctly, in my view—as Hecate. See Markwald (1986) 199–200 and 204–206 and Watson (1991) 139–140. Gigante (1991) 33–36 suggests that she is Hera of Samos, but I am unconvinced.

98. Parthenius *Tales of Unhappy Love* 27. See Watson (1991) 227–228 for discussion.

99. Fantuzzi and Maltomini (1996).

well-intentioned attempts of parents to manipulate the affections of their own child or someone else on behalf of their child, a credible use of magic in a culture that depended upon arranged marriages. Thus in Heliodorus’ novel *Aethiopica* the father of the heroine—who lacks a male heir—hires a professional magician to cause his daughter to fall in love with his nephew,¹⁰⁰ and one of Lucian’s courtesans—in an effort to explain why a soldier suddenly became passionate for an aging and ugly rival—claims that the woman’s mother, a sorceress (*pharmakis*) knowledgeable in “Thesalian charms,” put *pharmaka* in the man’s drink which drove him mad with desire for the daughter.¹⁰¹ An oddly formulated third-century C.E. Greek spell may in fact have been written by a parent on behalf of a daughter who was having marital problems: “Yoke them (i.e., both) in marriage and in passion, as they live together for the whole time of their lives. Grant that he, like a slave, be subordinated (*hypotetachthēnai*) to her as he lusts (*erōnta*) for her, desiring to hold as his life-mate no other woman or maiden but Domitiana alone for all their lives. Now, now, quickly, quickly.”¹⁰²

In this study, however, I shall focus mainly on the interpersonal use of love magic, that is, spells used by persons to force others to lust after, fall in love with, or be more affectionate toward themselves. I do so because such spells are by far the most frequently attested in our extant sources and because the Greeks themselves so frequently call attention to them in their myths and stories, a noteworthy fact when one searches in vain for any mention of the practice in ancient Mesopotamian or Egyptian myth or

100. Heliodorus *Aethiopica* 2.33. At 3.9 the same father wishes aloud that his daughter might “feel a lover’s longing” for the nephew.

101. Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 1.2. This accusation helps explain the otherwise inexplicable: a soldier in love with an ugly woman. Note that the role of the “mother”—here probably an aging courtesan who has “adopted” and trained the younger woman, just as Socrates pretends to do. This pattern of adoptive families of courtesans is apparently a well-known Mediterranean phenomenon; see Chapter 4, note 80.

102. *DT* 271.39–46. The use of “her” instead of the usual “me” in this spell is striking, and cannot be explained by the intermediary of a professional magician working on behalf of Domitiana, for the handbooks always give first-person formulae, e.g., “force X to come to me.” David Jordan informs me by letter of a similar third-century C.E. spell from Cyprus (unpublished) that seems to take the husband’s side: “. . . lay hold of the name Strategis and restore her and their former marriage to Sosibios and bind her to the (former) marriage with indissoluble bonds.”

literature. This apparent Greek fascination with such spells and their effects arises, as I will show, from the danger perceived in them, for in a culture devoted so radically to personal autonomy (be it a man's body or its extension, his home and wife) the very existence of this kind of technology creates some very unsettling problems. It is one thing for a man voluntarily to use an aphrodisiac on himself—this was apparently quite unproblematic for the Greeks, with the exception of those philosophers who are generally suspicious of the carnality of the body. But it is another story entirely if a woman, for example, uses a similar ritual or herb against a man without his knowledge or permission. Popular Greek erotic spells aimed at the removal and seduction of the daughters and wives of other men similarly threaten the autonomy of a Greek man's household, but, as we shall see in section 2.4, the discourse on these types of spells is frequently connected in a positive light with stories about courtship and marriage. Thus it is not at all surprising that love spells directed against another, unwilling person are the most-discussed forms of erotic magic in ancient Greece and form the central topic of my book.

With our preliminary definitions in place, some complicated questions arise concerning native taxonomy. Did the ancient Greeks have a word for our modern category of "love magic"? The answer is "no, not exactly." Our word "aphrodisiacs" probably comes from the rarely used Greek adjective *aphrodisiakos* ("lecherous" or "salacious"), which occasionally designates gemstones or foods that have this effect on people.¹⁰³ The Greeks of the classical and Hellenistic periods, however, preferred a variety of overlapping (and sometimes interchangeable) words. General terms such as *thelktērion* (from the verb *thelgein*, "to charm or enchant"), *pharmakon*, and *epōidē*, which simply denote a magical incantation, can also be understood by context to mean specifically a "love charm."¹⁰⁴ Conversely, the two other terms used above by Xenophon (*philtron* and *iunx*) in their original and primary meaning apparently denoted a specialized form of erotic spell,

103. Pliny *HN* 37.148 mentions "stones that make one lecherous" (*aphrodisiaca*), while [Aristotle] *Problems* 954a3 and Galen 14.241 (Kühn) refer to foods with similar qualities (*edemata aphrodisiatika*).

104. For *thelktērion*, see LSJ s.v. For *pharmakon*, see note 24 above. The word *epōidē* (poetic form is *epaoidē*) means either "a song sung over or to (i.e., a sick person or a damaged limb)" or "a song sung against (i.e., an enemy or a demon)," and it is usually translated (like the similarly formed Latin *incantamentum*) as "charm, spell." See Lain Entralgo (1970), Kotansky (1991a), and Furley (1993).

but as early as the fifth century B.C.E. come to be used generically for any kind of magic spell. Thus, for example, the word *philtron*, formed from the verb *philein* ("to love"),¹⁰⁵ means a "love potion" or "love incantation" and more generally a "magical potion" or "drug" of nonamorous power.¹⁰⁶ The development of the term *iunx* follows a similar trajectory: Pindar describes it as a bizarre magical device—a bird tied to a wheel—that is employed with prayers and incantations to seduce Medea, but other fifth-century writers occasionally use it less precisely to mean any "magic spell" that draws people unwillingly.¹⁰⁷ The definitions of other special terms, however, remain fairly stable. The poetic words *stergēma* and *stergēthron* (from the verb *stergein*, "to love") consistently mean "love charms," while *charitēsion* (from *charis*, "beauty" or "grace") designates spells or devices that make the user more beautiful or charismatic.¹⁰⁸ The word *saturion* is derived from the word "satyr" (the hybrid goat-man famous for its randiness) and is commonly used throughout the Roman period to denote plants in the orchid family thought to produce erections and male lust.¹⁰⁹

The rubrics of the papyrus magical handbooks provide a good overview of the Greek terminology employed by the professional magicians of the Roman and late-antique periods, but there is surprisingly little cross-over with the popular terms discussed above.¹¹⁰ The most popular rubric by far is *agōgē* or *agōgimon*, which means "a spell that leads" and designates a variety of techniques used to force young women from their homes,¹¹¹

105. Smyth *Grammar* 232, in a discussion of words with the suffix *-tron* (an indication of instrumentality or means of action), defines a *philtron* as "that which brings *philia*." A scholiast to Theoc. 2.1 defines *philtrā* as "*pharmaka* used to encourage *philia*."

106. LSJ s.v. The Latin word *venenum*, apparently derived from the name of the goddess Venus, undergoes a similar transformation from the specific ("aphrodisiac") to the general ("drug, poison, charm")—a range almost identical with that of Greek *pharmakon*.

107. *Pythian* 4.218; see section 2.2 for full discussion. For the *iunx* as a generalized magic spell, see Lycophron 310, Diogenes Laertius 6.76, and Aeschylus *Persians* 989. Bury (1886) notes that Virgil translates Theocritus' *iunx* with *carmina* ("magic spells").

108. For the terms derived from *stergein*, see Sophocles *Women of Trachis* 1138, Euripides *Hippolytus* 256, and Dioscorides *MM* 4.48. See Winkler (1991) 218–219 for *charitēsia*.

109. See note 88 above. In medical texts, erection-producing drugs are also called *saturika* or "tension-producing drugs" (*entatika*); see Gourevitch (1995) 150.

110. There are three recipes for *philtrā*, all in the same handbook: *PGM* VII.405–406 (= 661–663), 459–461, and 462–466. The first is called "a *philtron* for (gaining) affections (or perhaps 'friendships,' *epi philias*)," and the second two have the rubric "an excellent *philtron*."

111. It is formed from the Greek verb *agein*, "to lead" or "to drive." See Eitrem (1925) 49–50.

suggesting that the term was originally borrowed from the vocabulary of marriage or initiatory ritual.¹¹² The term *agōgē* is first used as a rubric for an erotic spell in third-century C.E. and later handbooks, but the alternate form *agōgimon* was known to both Plutarch and Galen.¹¹³ Like the general term *pharmaka*, *agōgē* is sometimes qualified by an adjective to identify a more specific type of spell. Thus one recipe is labeled an *agōgē agrupnētikē* ("a spell that leads by insomnia"),¹¹⁴ while another handbook qualifies the term *agōgē* by adding in apposition the noun *empuron* (an "in-the-fire spell") in order to indicate a special subset of *agōgē*-spells that attempt by "persuasive analogy" to burn the victim and thereby force her from her home.¹¹⁵ Other terms are used in a more narrowly defined way. The rubric *potērion* (literally, a "drinking-cup spell") appears thrice as a rubric for spells in which a drink or a cup is enchanted by a verbal incantation or adulterated with magical material, and then given to the victim to drink.¹¹⁶ These are the technical terms most commonly employed in the papyrus

112. Borgeaud (1988) 32 notes that the word *agōgē* is used for the bride's procession from her father's house to her husband's and also for initiation rites that force young men and women from their parents' homes.

113. The first handbook recipe labeled *agōgē* is PGM LXI.39–44 (3d cent. C.E.). Soon thereafter, however, we find several examples in PGM VII (3d–4th cent. C.E. handbook): 300a–310 (*agōgimon*), 593–619 (*agōgē*); 973–980 (*agōgimon*). For earlier literary references see Plutarch *Moralia* 1093d and Galen 12.251 (Kühn).

114. PGM IV 2943 (*agōgē agrupnētikē*). The neuter form of the adjective, *agrupnētikon*, is used by itself to mean "insomnia spell," but it refers consistently to erotic spells of the *agōgē* type, e.g., PGM VII.374–376 ("Let Ms. So-and-so . . . lie awake because of me"); XII.376–396 ("Let her, Ms. So-and-so . . . lie awake until she consents"); and LII.20–26 (very fragmentary but undoubtedly erotic, e.g., "summoning Eros," "through night and day," "set a flame in the heart"). Insomnia or similar restlessness is also a component of Mesopotamian magic. Leick (1994) 200–201 quotes a spell that encourages a female victim to "be restless at night, find no peace during the day, not sit peacefully at night." See Ortega (1991) 71 for the very similar focus on insomnia in a Spanish love spell.

115. The term *empuron* is used in only one of the late-antique handbooks (PGM XXXVI), where we find "*agōgē, empuron*" (68–101), "another *empuron*" (102–133), and "*agōgē, empuron* over unburnt sulfur" (295–311). Other terms are used for this type of spell; see, e.g., "*agōgē* over myrrh" (XXXVI.333–360) and "*agōgē* over myrrh as it is burning on hot coals" (IV.1496–1595). For discussion see Kuhnert (1894) and section 4.1. I use Stanley Tambiah's term "persuasive analogy" throughout this volume as a more precise way of referring to the phenomenon that Frazer called "sympathetic magic"; see Chapter 2, note 4.

116. PGM VII.385–389, 619–627, 643–651, 969–971; cf. XIII.319–320 (*potēria*). The term may be as old as the eighth-century B.C.E. "Nestor's Cup Inscription"; see Faraone (1996b) 104–106.

handbooks; but other clever coinages appear as well, such as *philtrokatadesmos* ("love-binding spell") and *phusikleidion* ("genital-key spell").¹¹⁷

What survives, then, of native Greek terminology and taxonomy for love magic is not at first glance very helpful to our analysis, and indeed most scholars implicitly assume that love magic is comprised of a wide variety of charms or magical materials that all aim generally at the same goal. In this study, however, I argue that Greek love magic in fact falls into two distinct categories: those rituals used *generally* by men to instill erotic passion in women and those used *generally* by women to maintain or increase affection in men. (I stress the word "generally" here, for, as we shall see in the final chapter, there are important and illuminating exceptions to these trends, which reveal how the Greeks constructed gender in some interesting ways.) Table 1 summarizes these categories of use. The second column characterizes the types of spells that women traditionally use to induce *philia* and similar affections in men, while the third column characterizes those magic rituals that men usually employ to throw *erōs* into women.¹¹⁸ Each group of rituals is deployed in a very different social context. The former are generally used within a household or at least within an existing relationship to increase a man's affection and esteem for his partner or associates. The Greeks generally describe such feelings with words connected etymologically with the nouns *philia*¹¹⁹ and

117. The rubric *philtrokatadesmos* (a combination of *philtro* and *katadesmos*) is first used self-referentially on a second-century C.E. lead tablet from Egypt (SM 38), twice as a handbook rubric (PGM IV.191–192 and 296–466), and on a series of fourth- and fifth-century C.E. lead tablets from Egypt. For *phusikleidion*, see PGM XXXVI.283.

118. Kieckhefer (1991) 31–36 suggests a similar taxonomy of medieval European love spells, which he divides into three categories: "sex-inducing magic," which was used "to induce a person to become a sexual partner" (= my *erōs* magic); "love magic," which was used "to encourage an intimate and lasting amorous relationship" (roughly = my *philia* magic); and "sex-enhancing magic," used "to enhance the sexual experience of partners who were already willing," a category that corresponds to the "self-help" love magic discussed earlier. He does not, however, point to gender as a significant criterion as it is in Greek love magic.

119. Benveniste (1973) 273–278. Dover (1984) 143 provides a succinct contrast between *philia* and *erōs*. The long debate over the affect of *philia*—does it simply designate a relationship (i.e., "friendship") without any comment on human feelings, or does it mean "affection"—has focused primarily on some peculiar uses in Homer. See Konstan (1996) and (1997) 28–31, who champions the latter view. Joly (1968) 15 notes that the verb *philein*, when used (rarely) to indicate erotic passion, is limited to amatory inscriptions, the PGM, and Lucian, esp. his *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, where it appears five times. For a similar development in these same genres of the slang meaning of the Greek verb *gamein* ("to marry") see note 55 above.

Table 1. A taxonomy of ancient Greek love magic

	Spells for inducing <i>philia</i>	Spells for inducing <i>erōs</i>
Greek terms	<i>philtrā, charitesia</i>	<i>iugges, agōgai, empura, agrupnētika, philtrokatadesmoi</i>
General description	incantations over amulets, knotted cords, rings, love potions, or ointments	incantations over bound images, tortured animals, burning materials, or apples
Desired action	binds, enervates, or mollifies victims, thereby reducing their anger and making them esteem their companions	burns, tortures, or maddens victims, thereby emboldening them to leave their homes and come to the practitioner
Desired effect	love or affection (<i>philia, agapē, storgē</i>)	uncontrollable lust (<i>erōs, pothos, himeros, oistros</i>)
Social context	used by an insider within a marriage or an existing relationship to repair or heal it	used by an outsider in courtship or seduction to destroy existing loyalties to natal family, spouse, or community
Typical users	wives or social inferiors	men, courtesans, or whores
Typical victims	husbands, kings, and other male "heads of household"	young women and men, usually living in their natal home
Mythic exempla	Hera against Zeus, Deianeira against Heracles	Hippomenes against Atalanta, Jason against Medea

agapē,¹²⁰ both of which in their root meaning refer to "affection" and "love" in a wide range of relationships, including but not limited to family members, friends, and spouses. In the last case (marriage), these terms can be used to signal bodily passions as well, which is precisely what we see in the *Iliad*, where Hera clearly uses an amulet to arouse sexual desire in Zeus. The charms that arouse *erōs*, on the other hand, are almost always used to begin a new relationship by forcing the victims (usually but not always women) from their homes and into the arms of the person who performs the

120. See LSJ s.v. I.1. The basic meanings of the verb are "to hold in great affection," "to love," and "to be content with." Joly (1968) 36–41 surveys the various uses of this verb from the classical to the imperial period and shows how it gradually ousts the verb *philein* in popularity.

spell. In this case the spell is designed explicitly to arouse the victim's sexual desire for the practitioner of the spell, as is abundantly clear from the repeated use of the Greek nouns *erōs* and *pothos* and related verbs and adjectives.

Here I must pause to make the linguistic distinctions between "*erōs* magic" (spells that induce passion) and "*philia* magic" (spells that induce affection) as clear as possible, since modern notions of the meanings of "erotic" and "friendship" may cause problems here. In archaic and classical Greek discourse there is a clear difference between the invasive and dangerous onset of *erōs* and the more benign feelings of *philia*, a term that generally describes a reciprocal relationship based on mutual affection.¹²¹ Thus, from the earliest periods Greeks either describe the onset of *erōs* as an invasive, demonic attack or use a ballistic model in which Aphrodite is said to throw and hit someone with *erōs* or *pothos*.¹²² On the other hand, Greeks never personify or demonize *philia* or *agapē*, nor do they ever picture a deity hurling *philia* or *agapē* at mortals in an hostile way. This distinction should not, however, be overdrawn in a way that denies a sexual component to "*philia* magic." Indeed here I am careful to avoid the polar opposition of "erotic magic" to "nonerotic magic,"¹²³ because in Greek, verbs and nouns related to *philia* and *agapē* describe a wide array of marital, familial, and other relationships, some of which *do* involve—more so in Mediterranean cultures than in northern European ones—intimate personal contact, such as kissing on the lips and cheeks, embracing, caressing, and, in the case of a marriage or a homosexual friendship, sexual intercourse as well.¹²⁴

121. The Greeks understood that *erōs* was basically incompatible with *philia*; see Konstan (1997) 38–39. Jordan apud Versnel (1998) 256 n. 107 seems to anticipate the distinction I make here, when he suggests that the more violent spells should be called "erotic charms" or "lust charms" rather than "love spells."

122. Discussed in detail in section 2.1.

123. As I mistakenly did in Faraone (1992a) and (1994a).

124. The gradual historical development of these terms creates an additional problem. The verbs *philein* and *agapan* (cognates *philia* and *agapē*)—and even the rarer *stergein* (related to *storgē*)—which originally mean "to love" or "to be affectionate" by the Roman period can mean "to fondle" or even "to have sexual intercourse" in an extramarital context, a development that is probably parallel to the evolution of the verb *gamein* (see note 55 above). As a result, beginning in the late second century C.E., we occasionally find these verbs in spells of the erotic type: *philein* first in spells like PGM XVI.1–38 (late 2d–early 3d cent. C.E.), LXI.1–38, or DT 271 (both 3d cent. C.E.); and then *agapan* and *stergein* in spells like PGM VII.862–918 and SM 42 (both 3d–4th cent. C.E.).

The real emphasis, then, for understanding these categories lies on the term *erōs*, which for the Greeks was clearly and narrowly defined as a dangerous, unwelcome, and irresistible lust that aims squarely and explicitly at sexual intercourse.

I should also note in passing that the types of magical devices employed in these two genres of love spells accord well with the two larger categories of Greek magical technology: beneficial charms (i.e., "white magic"), which usually aim at warding off or curing an illness; and harmful curses (i.e., "black magic"), which generally seek to harm or destroy an enemy. Thus although some *philia* charms traditionally deployed by women against men—ointments and amulets—can be connected in obvious ways with the adornment of Greek women, they also have (especially when we include love potions in the group) very strong affinities to the Greek corpus of healing and prophylactic lore, a fact that suggests that this whole branch of *philia* magic may aim (at least conceptually) at protecting an existing relationship or curing a sick one.¹²⁵ The various types of erotic spells, on the other hand, are clearly related to the large arsenal of rituals used in the more masculine world of interpersonal curses and other invasive techniques, a point to which I shall return in great detail in the next chapter. These commonalities suggest ironically enough that the general category of "love magic" may not in fact have been recognizable to the Greeks themselves, who may have seen *erōs* magic as a specialized extension of cursing rituals and *philia* spells as a subcategory of healing and protective rites.

1.3 The Advantages of a Synchronic and Comparative Approach

This study is unabashedly synchronic and makes comparative use of literary and nonliterary Greek texts from a wide chronological and geographic range to provide as rich a description as possible of an ancient social practice. In my defense I might, of course, invoke Braudel's *longue durée* or

125. Kieckhefer (1991) 34–35 points out that in medieval formularies recipes for increasing marital affection are "often explicitly remedial" and aimed at healing angry rifts or recovering love lost. He also notes that women who used magic to improve their own marriage were much less likely to be persecuted for magic than were women who used magic to facilitate adultery. On this point, see also Ferrante (1988) 218 and Flint (1991) 233–234, who notes the concern of the church fathers that love magic was being used to attack married women.

Lévi-Strauss' *structure* or the important subsequent work on antiquity of their followers, especially Vernant and Detienne,¹²⁶ or the similar techniques of the so-called New Cultural Historians,¹²⁷ but in fact nearly every modern scholar of ancient Greek religion from Foustel de Coulanges to Burkert and beyond has depended on (1) a mélange of Greek literary sources, inscriptions, and artifacts from different epochs and widely separated localities in and around the Mediterranean; and (2) repeated comparisons between the generally "realistic" ancient poetic tradition (e.g., epic and drama) and ancient life.¹²⁸ This method of "historically soft focus"¹²⁹ was dictated then—as it is dictated now—primarily by the paucity of evidence in any one city or century, and in the case of ancient magic it can perhaps be further defended by the assumption that rituals, at least in their formal outer manifestations, remain fairly stable in one place over time and even after considerable geographic diffusion.¹³⁰

In this study, however, I regularly make comparative use of two corpora of evidence that until very recently have been generally ignored or overlooked by historians of early Greek religion and which therefore merit specific explanation: fourth- and fifth-century C.E. Greek magical handbooks from Upper Egypt (discussed briefly above) and tenth- and ninth-century B.C.E. cuneiform tablets from Assyria. In the case of the Egyptian documents, I can understand why a skeptical reader might hesitate when I juxtapose, for instance, a hymn of Sappho or a Pindaric ode with a series of much later Greek magical spells from Roman Egypt and North Africa, and then go on to extrapolate a continuous Greek tradition between them.¹³¹

126. On the subsequent fusion and confusion of the two theories—signaled in the beginning by Braudel's move from "geohistory" to "structural history" and typified by Sahlins' use of *longue durée* to mean Lévi-Strauss' *structure*, see Bierstack (1989) 72–74.

127. Cohen (1991b) and (1992) uses this term to describe the work of Winkler (1990) and several of the essays collected in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin (1990).

128. Rives (1995) and Parker (1996) are exceptions that prove the rule; both have written excellent and detailed histories of the religions of (respectively) Roman Carthage and classical Athens, based on an uncharacteristically huge amount of archaeological, epigraphical, and literary data. For the usual synchronic treatment, see, e.g., Burkert (1985) or Parker's earlier work (1983) on pollution and purification in the Greek world.

129. As Redfield (1982) 182 puts it in his excellent synchronic discussion of Greek wedding ritual.

130. See Faraone (1992c) 114–117 and below in section 4.1.

131. See Finley (1971) 70 for "extrapolation" of a series from fragmentary data as an

My assumption of continuity involves, of course, two imaginative leaps, one of chronology and another of geography and ethnicity, since my juxtaposition of these texts seems, at first glance at least, to straddle a millennium-long interval and to involve questions concerning the assimilation of Greek and Egyptian cultures from Alexander's conquest onward. The chronological gap between classical Greece and these late papyrus handbooks has, however, been cut at least in half in recent years by the discovery in Egypt of papyrus fragments of very similar Greek handbooks dating to the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.,¹³² confirming earlier suggestions that sections of the fourth- and fifth-century C.E. handbooks were in fact copies of collections composed or compiled as early as the Hellenistic period.¹³³ Recent research has also shown that in the specific case of hexametrical incantations—many of them love spells—there is firm evidence of a continuous Greek tradition stretching from classical Athens to late-antique Egypt.¹³⁴

The Egyptian provenance of the Greek magical papyri also raises questions about the ethnicity of the spells they preserve, since that country is generally thought to be uncharacteristically insular and since the Greeks themselves beginning in the Roman period attribute so much to Egyptian expertise in magic and the occult.¹³⁵ But scholars reluctant to treat these papyri as part of a much wider cultural phenomenon in the Greek world ignore at their peril the growing evidence that many similar handbooks were indeed known and used widely throughout the Mediterranean basin, as is borne out by reports of the burning of magical handbooks outside Egypt¹³⁶ and by some striking parallels between the papyrus recipes found

acceptable form of generalization for historians. But he was talking about much shorter periods.

132. Brashear (1995) 3413–14 surveys these important discoveries of the 1970s.

133. Ibid. 3419 discusses several other features of the fourth- and fifth-century C.E. handbooks that point to original compositions in the first and second centuries C.E. Gow (1952) 35–36 suggests that Theocritus knew of similar recipes, albeit probably not collected in handbooks.

134. Faraone (1995, 1996a, and 1996b) discusses the history of Greek hexametrical incantations generally; see idem (1992b) and sections 2.2 and 4.1 below, where I trace the history of a special coda ("O Lady Cyprogeneia, bring to perfection a perfect incantation") that seems especially popular in erotic incantations.

135. Brashear (1995) 3390–3420 gives a detailed survey of the problem. Ritner (1993) 99–100 argues for a traditional Egyptian basis for nearly all the rituals in the PGM, a greatly overstated claim, as Graf (1997) 5 notes.

136. E.g., thousands of magical handbooks were burned in the first century B.C.E., most

in Egypt and actual incantations on metal tablets and gemstones that have survived in Athens, Cyprus, Rome, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.¹³⁷ In several cases, moreover, scribes unwittingly copied handbook instructions onto a metal tablet, thus giving us valuable information about the use of Greek handbooks—during the early first century B.C.E. (Syria and Rome),¹³⁸ the second and third century C.E. (Sicily),¹³⁹ and the third century C.E. (Athens, Rome, Hadrumantum, Carthage, and Beirut).¹⁴⁰ In short, the fact that favorable climatic conditions have preserved so many magical papyri in Egypt should not be interpreted as proof that such handbooks were designed only for an Egyptian audience and did not exist elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world. Indeed, by such faulty logic we might be tempted to conclude that since all of our papyrus fragments of Homer, Euripides, and Menander come from Egypt, only Egyptians were reading Greek classics in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

This is not to say, of course, that the ancient Egyptians were uninterested in such technologies or that they had no influence on the spells that

spectacularly in Ephesus (Acts of the Apostles 19:19) and in Rome (Suetonius *Augustus* 31.1); see Betz *GMPT* p. xli.

137. Brashear (1995) 3416–19 provides a sizable list but is puzzled that there are not more examples. Jordan (1994a) 123–124, (1994b) 323–331, and (1996) 123–125 gives several more examples, including two late-antique gemstones, one from Rome and the other from Afghanistan, which have virtually identical texts, copied from handbooks, as errors on the Roman text reveal; and a curse tablet with Egyptian themes found in Rome (*DT* 188) that employs a formula found in a contemporary papyrus handbook from Egypt (*PGM* LVIII.6–14).

138. In lines 11–12 of *GMA* 48, an inscribed silver amulet from Emesa in Syria, the scribe mistakenly copied the words "the drawing of the god" instead of inserting the drawing at this point; see Sijpesteijn (1978–79) and Kotansky *GMA* ad loc. Fox (1912) 54–56 published five nearly identical Latin *defixiones* from Rome (dating between 75 and 50 B.C.E.) written by a scribe working with a model that was used three centuries later by the people who inscribed *DT* 134, 135, and 190 (all from Latium).

139. In lines 6–7 of *GMA* 32, an inscribed copper amulet from Sicily, the scribe mistakenly copied directions from the handbook.

140. See Jordan (1985b) for evidence of professional scribes copying spells from handbooks in the Athenian agora; idem (1988d) for similar activity regarding spells against charioteers in Beirut and Carthage; and idem (1994a) 116–123 for very close parallels between a curse found at Corinth (against runners) and those against charioteers found in Hadrumantum. See Bevilacqua (1997) for a Greek *defixio* (from Rome) with a mistakenly copied handbook-rubric "For a hate spell" (*pros misēthron*). Versnel (1991a) gives a detailed survey of curses from Greece and Italy and suggests that only "sample books or professional formularies" (p. 91) can explain similarities; likewise Tomlin (1988) 63: "oral tradition or the circulation of handbooks."

appear in the Greek magical handbooks discovered there. To the contrary. Although there is almost no extant evidence that the Egyptians practiced love magic prior to Alexander's conquests,¹⁴¹ it would be churlish to suggest that all or most of the love spells in the Greek magical papyri are solely of Greek origin. Indeed, Roman-era handbooks written in demotic and the Coptic texts from the Christian period suggest a lively native Egyptian interest in love magic, some of whose forms are completely alien to the Greek methods surveyed in this study.¹⁴² The difficulty, then, in dealing with the late Greek handbooks lies in separating, if possible, traditional Greek material from Egyptian, Jewish, and other materials. In some cases, this is not so difficult. Take, for instance, a series of erotic binding spells inscribed on lead tablets in Egypt in the second and third centuries C.E. that begin with a very similar invocation:

I deposit (*parakatatithemai*) this binding charm (*katadesmon*) with you, chthonic gods, Pluto and Kore Persephone, Ereschigal, and Adonis, also called *Barbaritha*, and chthonic Hermes Thoth *Phokensepseu erektathou misonktaik* and mighty Anubis *Psēriphtha*, who holds the keys of the gates to Hades, and chthonic demons, gods, men, and women who suffered untimely death, youths and maidens, year after year, month after month, day after day, hour after hour, night after night.¹⁴³

We can begin to parse some of the various ethnic contributions to this spell by noting that inscribing on lead a text that calls itself a *katadesmos* and then depositing it in a grave and invoking Pluto, Kore, and chthonic Hermes and the "untimely dead" (*ahōroi*) are all immediately recognizable as parts of a traditional Greek ritual documented as early as the classical period in Sicily, Athens, and elsewhere.¹⁴⁴ There are, however, some obvi-

141. The single example is *AEMT* 1; see Smither (1941) for discussion.

142. For example, they use persuasive analogies drawn from the behavior of animals, e.g., "just as a calf the footsteps of its mother, so too, may X follow my footsteps." See the preceding note.

143. *SM* 46–51. I give the editors' translation of *SM* 47.1–5.

144. See Versnel (1991) 99 n. 68 and Kotansky (1995) 266 n. 50 (for the verb *parakatatithemai* and related terms of deposit in Greek *defixiones*); Faraone (1991a) 3–6 (for invocation to "the chthonic Hermes"), 7–8 (the use of lead), 9–10 (for the idea of a legal deposit or consignment of the victim to the underworld gods), 21 n. 3 (for the word *katadesmos*), and 22

ously foreign elements as well: alongside the usual denizens of the Greek underworld, we find two Semitic deities (Ereschigal and Adonis) and two Egyptian (Thoth and Anubis). Both of these Egyptian deities, moreover, are further identified by "magical names" that are clearly derived from Egyptian divine epithets and by possession of the keys of the underworld, another native Egyptian motif.¹⁴⁵

From the point of view of a historian of ancient Greek magic, this text, which continues on to adjure a series of Jewish magical names, is very clearly the combination of an originally Greek binding spell—a *katadesmos* ritual performed at a graveside—with a popular exorcistic conjuration of Hellenistic Jewish origin.¹⁴⁶ A recent study has suggested, however, that the origin for this text and others like it is "not Greek but Egyptian, deriving directly from the ancient native custom of private 'letters to the dead.'"¹⁴⁷ This problem of competing claims of ethnic identity derives, of course, from the fact that both Greek and Egyptian—indeed, most Mediterranean—cultures have native traditions of invoking the dead to attack the living, and as a result modern scholars well versed in one or the other of these traditions "see" what is "native" to their own discipline and fail to appreciate what is not. This phenomenon itself has, however, much to teach us, for it suggests that these later spells may have been *purposely* shaped by the professional magicians and scribes in late Roman Egypt to appeal to the widest range of ethnic expectations (not only Greek and Egyptian, but also Semitic), and that the more popular spells are those that could be quickly understood as a natural extension of more than one national tradition. A similar effect is achieved when a formal Egyptian pedigree is given to a patently Greek spell, as in the case of this rubric in a late Hellenistic handbook: "An excerpt . . . from the holy book called 'of Hermes,' found in Heliopolis in the innermost shrine of the temple,

n. 6 (for the word *ahōroi*). A recently discovered Greek erotic spell from the late fourth or early third century B.C.E. calls itself a *katadesmos*; see Jordan (1999) no. 3.

145. Martinez (1991) 41–45.

146. Kotansky (1995) discusses this hybrid Jewish-Greek tradition in amulets, and Faraone (forthcoming b) applies his work to this text.

147. Ritner (1993) 178–183; quotation p. 180; he discusses this tablet on p. 181 with n. 842. See also p. 183, where he insists on "a purely Egyptian milieu" for the bound and pierced image that accompanies this text. I argue below, Chapter 2, note 5, that this image can similarly be understood as a development of native Greek traditions. For the difficulty in arguing for "single-source" approaches to the ethnicity of the Greek magical spells of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Faraone (1996a).

(written) in Egyptian letters and translated into Greek.¹⁴⁸ The incantation that follows, however, is composed in good Greek hexameters, closes with a traditional appeal to Aphrodite Cyprogeneia, and is used to charm an apple for erotic purposes—a practice that has a long prehistory in Greece but is otherwise unheard of in Egypt.¹⁴⁹ For the purposes of this study, therefore, I do not insist that many, more, or most of the Greek magical texts on Egyptian papyri are purely or primarily “Greek,” but only that some of these later international or polyglot erotic spells preserve identifiably Greek images, idioms, media, rites, or ideas that are also reflected in earlier archaic and classical Greek texts, and can therefore be discussed as part of a continuous Greek tradition of erotic magic.

The cautious reader may hesitate again at the points in this study where I use Neo-Assyrian cuneiform recipes dating between 1000 and 800 B.C.E. to elucidate ritual practices in archaic and classical Greece (800–300 B.C.E.). In fact these comparisons are not as outrageous as they would have seemed as recently as two decades ago, before mounting archaeological and linguistic evidence forced classical scholars to admit the existence of close and continual cultural contacts between the Near East and Greece, beginning in the Bronze Age and reaching a zenith in the eighth century, the so-called Greek Renaissance, when numerous eastern technological innovations—for example, the construction of monumental temples and the use of the alphabet—begin to sweep westward into the more rudimentary Greek city-states.¹⁵⁰ More important, however, is the continual east-to-west drift of “religious technology,” an extremely useful concept coined by Walter Burkert. Archaeological and linguistic evidence has shown, for example, that incense burning, purificatory rituals, hepatoscopy, and the use of foundation deposits in temples—all well-documented Near Eastern practices—begin to make their first appearance in Greece and Etruria in the eighth and seventh centuries.¹⁵¹ There is, moreover, the further complication of Mesopotamian recipes arriving in Greece throughout the classical and Hellenistic periods either directly or via Egypt. Indeed, cuneiform ritual texts continue to be copied well into Hellenistic times, and there is evidence for the transmission of some Mesopotamian recipes into

148. SM 72 col. i.1–4.

149. See section 2.3.

150. See, e.g., Burkert (1983b) and (1992) and Faraone (1992c) 26–29 and (1993b).

151. Burkert (1992) 41–87.

Greek magical handbooks and Neo-Pythagorean treatises of Hellenistic date.¹⁵² Most astonishing is the case of a second-millennium Mesopotamian curative incantation that apparently finds its way into a magical handbook written in Greek, found in Egypt and bearing the rubric “The [incantation] of . . . , the Syrian woman from Gadara”—a startling attestation of the close proximity of these different magical traditions, especially in highly hellenized and centrally located cities like Gadara in northern Palestine.¹⁵³

Such interplay between East and West is already evident in the earliest Greek references to magic. In the *Odyssey*, Helen claims to have learned about magical *pharmaka* from Egypt (4.220–230), and Hermione, in her angry diatribe against Andromache, accuses her of working spells against her, pointing out that “the minds of Asian women are skilled in such things.”¹⁵⁴ In Theocritus’ second *Idyll*, Simaetha—a Greek woman probably living on the island of Cos¹⁵⁵—implies that she has learned her love charms from a “foreign Assyrian man” (line 162), and we hear of a similar rite performed by a Syrian woman living near the Athenian Ceramicus, who performs for a fee.¹⁵⁶ Although the Greeks (as we have seen) sometimes falsely displaced their own home-grown magic onto foreigners to the east, it would be perverse to deny that some of the love charms used by the Greeks have in fact been borrowed at a very early period from Mesopotamia or the Levant.¹⁵⁷ It must be stressed, however, that such cultural transfers quickly become an essential part of Greek culture. Thus Greeks in archaic or classical times who use love charms first attested in the tenth century B.C.E. in Mesopotamia probably would not consciously see them-

152. See section 3.2 for similar Assyrian and Greek recipes for magical rings and facial ointments. For amulets used outside the sphere of love magic, see Barb (1950) and Reiner (1995) 124, who discusses the use of amulet stones “to make a woman talk,” an expression that appears in Pliny (*NH* 37.169).

153. Faraone (1996a).

154. Euripides *Andromache* 159–160, translated by D. Kovacs, with “Asia” here meaning Asia Minor.

155. Dover (1971) ad loc. and Sherwin-White (1973) 291 and 321–322.

156. Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4.1; see section 4.2 for detailed discussion.

157. Indeed, as we shall see in sections 2.3 and 3.1, close similarities between Greek and Neo-Assyrian love charms suggest that the Greeks borrowed such charms in the geometric or archaic period and made them, like incense burning and the divinatory inspection of entrails, “Greek” for all intents and purposes.

selves as imitating a strange "oriental" rite any more than, say, those who burn incense to a god or examine the entrails of a sacrificial animal to determine the course of future events, even though both of these rites were demonstrably borrowed from the Near East during the eighth century B.C.E., if not earlier.

Finally a short note on my use of literary descriptions or enactments of love magic as evidence for real social practices. Can I in fact safely assume that with regard to magic rituals, at least, art does imitate life? Here the detailed evidence from the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance is especially helpful, for scholars in those fields, armed in some cases with an enviable mass of nonliterary data, can frequently show numerous close correspondences between literary descriptions of magical ceremonies and reports of actual practice. Scholars have argued convincingly, for example, that episodes involving the use or accusation of love magic in Theocritus' *Idyll* 2,¹⁵⁸ in Horace's *Epodes*,¹⁵⁹ in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*,¹⁶⁰ in Lucian's comic sketches,¹⁶¹ in the Icelandic sagas,¹⁶² or in Renaissance drama¹⁶³ often reflect close and accurate knowledge of contemporary magical spells or handbooks. Indeed, it is most notable that Apuleius himself, when he is put on trial for allegedly having used love magic to induce a wealthy widow to marry him, quotes from a wide variety of Greek and Latin literary texts to show the ubiquity and social acceptance of magic, a strategy that implies the ready understanding of his audience that there is a close correspondence in the ancient world between life and letters in the case of magical rites.¹⁶⁴

158. Gow (1952) 35–36: "The details of Simaetha's magic have every appearance of being true to contemporary practice." Faraone (1995) argues further that Theocritus consciously imitates the metrical form and some oddities of syntax of traditional hexametric magical incantations.

159. Riess (1893), Manning (1970), Ingallina (1974), and Freudenburg (1995) agree that Horace's poems about the witch Canidia reflect contemporary rites.

160. Winkler (1991) 223–224, discussing the elaborate description of Pamphile's love spell (*Metamorphoses* 2.32 and 3.15–18): "Before the recovery of the rituals in PGM, one might have thought that Apuleius' picture was so much fantasy. But everything in it . . . belongs to the regular procedures for drawing one out of one's house."

161. Herzog (1940) 12–19.

162. Pálsson (1991).

163. Wills (1995) 33–76 *passim*, citing older bibliography, gives numerous examples from Elizabethan drama. See Ruggiero (1993) 247–48 n. 52 for the magic in Ruzante's comedy *La moschata*.

164. Apuleius *Apology* 30–32, with the detailed commentary of Abt (1967) 167–213.

If, then, other premodern periods of history provide repeated examples of literature closely imitating life with regard to love magic, why should we be reluctant to believe that the same is true of archaic and classical Greek texts? The answer lies, as I have argued elsewhere, in the modern perception of the fifth-century "Greek miracle," which constructs the Greeks—the Athenians really—as an ancient anomaly, a people who as the first rationalists threw aside the tyranny of superstition and religion at least for a few centuries. The evolutionary and teleological underpinnings of such an approach have long been exposed, but the influence of these ideas lingers on.¹⁶⁵ As a result scholars have traditionally had little difficulty using the text of Homer or Sophocles to illustrate Greek beliefs and social practices concerning burial, marriage, or the manufacture of woolen goods, but stop short when it comes to the use of amulets or erotic magic. This prejudice in fact flies in the face of decades of research showing that early Greek poetic texts repeatedly testify to magic rites in contemporary Greek society, for example: the incantations sung over Odysseus' wound by his uncle Autolycus,¹⁶⁶ the necromantic ceremonies performed in book 11 of the *Odyssey* and in Aeschylus' *Persae*,¹⁶⁷ the wind magic performed by Aeolus,¹⁶⁸ and the series of magical statues designed by Hephaestus to protect palaces, cities, and even entire islands.¹⁶⁹ It has, moreover, been pointed out that traditional magical incantations also lie behind the form of a number of early poetic texts, for example: Sappho's *Hymn to Aphrodite*,¹⁷⁰ Demeter's boast to knowledge of protective magic in her Homeric *Hymn*,¹⁷¹ the Erinyes' "binding song" in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*,¹⁷² and Aristophanic parodies of inscriptions found on amuletic rings¹⁷³ and of hexametrical love charms.¹⁷⁴ In short, if we lay aside some timeworn ideas

165. See Faraone (1992c) 114–117 for discussion.

166. Kotansky (1991a) 108 and Renehan (1992).

167. Headlam (1902), Eitrem (1928), Lawson (1934) 79–89, and Broadhead (1960) 302–309.

168. *Odyssey* 10.19–27; for the argument that this incident reflects actual magical practices, see Strömberg (1950) 82–84 and Page (1973) 73–78.

169. Faraone (1992c) 18–35.

170. See note 19 above.

171. *Hymn to Demeter* 227–230. For discussion, see Maas (1944) 36–37, Richardson (1974) 229–231, and Scarpi (1976) 159–173.

172. Faraone (1985) 150–154.

173. Aristophanes *Wealth* 883–885, discussed by Bonner (1950) 4–5 and Kotansky (1991a) 110–111.

174. Faraone (1992b).

about the special status of classical Greece as an age of pervasive and (for the ancient world) atypical rationalism, we can see that the literature of this period—generally famous for its thoroughgoing realism—can provide us with extremely useful information about early Greek love spells, just as it has in the past provided crucial details about sacrifice, divination, or the burning of incense.