

MAGIC

IN THE

ANCIENT WORLD

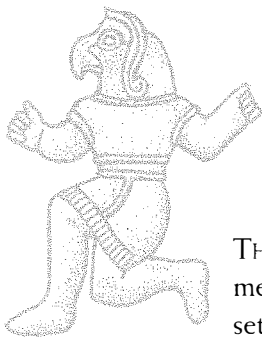
Fritz Graf

Translated by Franklin Philip

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LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF MAGIC



THE LITERARY and epigraphical documentation for ancient magic and its rituals sets in towards the end of the sixth century

B.C. The lead tablets begin to be numerous in the later part of the fifth and the first half of the following century; this first peak is caused mainly by the Athenians and their passion for writing. Curse tablets become much rarer in the Hellenistic era to peak a second time in the imperial epoch; here, they are omnipresent, from Arabia to Britannia. The Egyptian finds belong to the same epoch, both the large papyrus books and the single spells on small sheets of papyrus, whose number is still rapidly growing. On the other hand, in the Hellenistic epoch and the beginning of the empire, there exist some literary texts that describe magical practices in colorful detail. It is tempting to use them in order to fill the gap in the epigraphical documentation, and too many scholars have uncritically yielded to this temptation.¹

But this procedure is dangerous. Works of literature have their own laws, and it is always risky to disregard laws—although in this case, the literary critics long con-

curred in taking seriously what their text presented as religious facts.² It is not that these texts—from Theocritus to Lucan and to Heliodorus—were devoid of interest, but their interest bears less on the understanding of magic than that of literature. Two questions seem paramount: the first is the use these authors make of the motif of magic for their own poetic and sometimes psychagogic objectives, and the second lies with the intertextual dialogue of these texts in the closed world of the Alexandrine and Imperial literature, where every later text reacts on its precursors and models. Ancient literature, as we know, does not know any anxiety of influence. Even in the rare cases in which a poet works out new motifs, the poet does so not so much in reaction to religious and cultural realities as to contribute to this discourse between poets and texts in a new and unexpected way.³

THEOCRITUS AND THE EROTIC SPELL

To illustrate these problems, let us focus on erotic magic, which is, after all, very much present in the literature, from Theocritus to Virgil and up to the Roman elegiacs.

For the Roman authors, Theocritus's second *Idyll* (*Pharmakeutria* or *The Sorceresses*) constitutes the key text, the indispensable though often implicit reference. The first part of this text (lines 1 to 62) brings onto the scene a magic ritual, as the title announces. In the middle of the night, under the shining moon, two women are practicing magic, Simaitha and her slave Thestylis. The goal of the rite is to win back the love of a young man, Delphis, who was for a time the lover of Simaitha, but has henceforth turned to other loves.

The rite as Theocritus describes it follows a precise course, carefully presented after the introduction, in nine strophes of four lines each, separated by the refrain "iynx, draw this man to my dwelling, my lover." The poem opens with the preparations

for the rite. Required are laurel and *phíltra*, an extremely vague term referring to the ingredients for erotic magic, and a vase adorned with purple wool (1–2). Then unfolds the actual rite, which follows very distinct stages.

The first stage takes us up to the moment when the goddess Hecate appears. Simaitha has three objects to burn: the sacrificial barley (*álphita*), which she spreads over the flames, saying "I scatter Delphis's bones"; some laurel leaves, whose burning is accompanied by the wish "that his flesh burn in the same way"; and some husks of corn (*pítura*). After this, Simaitha begins a prayer to Artemis-Hecate. The prayer is interrupted: dogs are heard, a sign that the goddess has arrived at the crossroads, and to protect herself, Simaitha must sound a gong.

A nonritual strophe marks the transition to the second phase of the rite. The goal of the actions of the first phase was to make the love (the fire) come back to Delphis's body; now it is a matter of breaking down his resistance and enticing him. Simaitha makes some wax melt ("let him melt in the same way," melting being a common metaphor for that love without resistance); she makes a rhombus turn ("let him turn in the same way to my door"); and she offers three libations, each time praying for him to forget any other love.⁴ A new nonritual strophe marks a second pause.

Now comes the third phase. Up to this point, Delphis has been only very indirectly concerned by these metaphorical processes, but now, the rites come closer to him. Simaitha begins by tearing off a piece of his coat and throws it into the fire. Then, she orders Thestylis to rub some *thróna* underneath the threshold of Delphis's house and to say "let his bones be rubbed in the same way." The scholiasts simply state that *thróna* are *phármaka*, without further specifications. Simaitha herself sets about crushing a lizard to make a drink of it for her lover. Here ends the ritual; there follows a very long passage in which

Simaitha recalls her past love. At the poem's end, however, she announces other, much more terrible rites in case Delphis would not let himself be won back.

To this ritual, Theocritus seems to give a very precise name. Three times Simaitha speaks of "binding," in introducing the rite (line 3), announcing the rite itself (line 10), and summarizing it (line 159). We are thus in the presence of a binding spell, a *defixio*.⁵

That is the first problem. The rite, as Theocritus describes it, does not correspond to the love spells that we know. Although, at the beginning, Simaitha uses a thread of wool, this thread binds nothing, but rather adorns a vase. Later on, Simaitha speaks of wax, which can be a way of designating a wax manikin, even if nothing proves it; but the wax is melted, and the figurine does not remain tied as a symbol of permanent submission. And although she makes use of the formula *similia similibus* several times over, this formula does not follow the known forms.

Besides what the papyri call the "erotic binding spells," *philotokatadesmoi*, there is a second category of erotic rites called "spells of attraction," *agōgaí*, or, more rarely, "erotic rites," *phíltra*.⁶ Their objective is the same as that of the binding spells, that is, to attract a beloved woman by ritual means. In a single case, this rite is even described as capable of "binding down" (the technical term for a *defixio*). Nevertheless, the rites that we possess follow rather a different procedure from the one described by Theocritus, although it is closer to the other binding spells.

Many of these "attraction rites" make use of fire to offer fumigations. The objects burned are extremely varied, and go from simple myrrh⁷ to a recipe as complex as this one: "Take a field mouse and drown it in the water from a spring, take two lunar beetles and drown them in the water from a river, a crayfish, some fat from a spotted goat that is virgin, some dung from a dog-faced baboon, two ibis eggs, two drachmas of resin

of styrax, two drachmas of myrrh, two drachmas of saffron, four drachmas of herb of Italian Cyprus, four drachmas of an uncut incense, a single onion. Pour all this into a mortar with the mouse and all the rest, and grind the whole."⁸

This process is typical. When dealing with a long and complex list of ingredients, the magician never burns the various elements one after another, as in Theocritus, but combines these ingredients into one specific fumigation, sometimes in the form of a pill. Nor are the materials that Theocritus has Simaitha burn (barley, laurel, husks of corn, cloth) often attested in the papyri; barley, husks, and cloth are absent, laurel is found once only, in a binding spell with the help of Apollo (whose sacred plant is laurel).⁹ Sprinkling the flames of an altar with barley flour, on the other hand, is a fairly widespread ritual—but not in magic: it opens the Greek Olympian sacrifice. Simaitha thus gives the opening of her ritual a sacrificial look, so to speak, and the servant who helps her to carry out the rite fits into this. It is thus the rites of sacrifice that Theocritus evokes and not those of actual magic. Odder yet is the cremation of a piece of cloth taken from the beloved's coat. In the magic of the papyri (and elsewhere), such a piece represents the so-called magic essence, which usually indicates the path to the victim or to a dead person, but which was not the object of a symbolic destruction and substitution.¹⁰ When Theocritus has her tear and burn, he thus inserts this rite in that series of "sympathetic" acts brought particularly into relief in his text as in the popular conceptions of magic.

Another problem is posed by the instruments that Simaitha uses. The poem mentions two of them, the iynx and the rhombus, the iynx being mentioned in the refrain, the rhombus only once, in one of these "sympathetic" passages: "As this rhombus of bronze turns by the power of Aphrodite, let him turn in the same way around my door" (line 30). From the most ancient

commentaries on Theocritus to the most recent ones, there has been a scholarly discussion on the question of whether iynx and rhombus must be distinguished as different instruments. The scholiasts identify them with each other; most modern commentators distinguish between them, which seems more convincing. Simaitha, indeed, turns her iynx, a small magical wheel manipulated by two strings, at regular intervals, and once, she also makes the rhombus turn, an instrument that gives off a sound and that British social anthropologists would compare with a "bull roarer." But there is a much greater difficulty: neither of these instruments appears in the papyri. The rhombus is rather poorly in evidence anyway, whereas the iynx has been attested to in the literary texts since Pindar and on fifth century Athenian vase paintings and magnificent fourth century gold earrings, where it is primarily manipulated by Eros.¹¹ Later the attestations are limited to literature, and we can assume that it was no longer in use during the era of the papyri. In this situation, it is impossible to reach an unequivocal conclusion; we cannot tell whether Theocritus is referring to a practice that is contemporary or—and I am rather of this opinion—whether he is using a purely literary tradition that raised the iynx above the realities of the ritual.

Among all the rites that Theocritus has Simaitha perform, one single fumigation does not fit into the series of "sympathetic" rites: the sacrifice of the husks of corn. It is the moment when Theocritus brings a little ritual drama on the scene. While burning the husks, Simaitha does not go through her "sympathetic" litany but invokes Artemis-Hecate. Nevertheless, after a brief invocation of a line and a half, she interrupts herself, frightened: the goddess has arrived at the crossroads, and self-protection is called for.

It is important to emphasize that Simaitha begins a prayer but does not even go on with it to the end of the invocation: "You,

Artemis, who also move the brass doors of Hades and everything that is as strong . . ." Such an invocation had to mention other mythic and ritualistic qualities of the goddess before reaching the *narratio* of the prayer, the second part of the traditional prayer (in which an earlier occasion is recalled when the divinity granted her help), to end with the *preces* expressing the actual wish.¹² Simaitha does not even finish the first part of this canonical tripartite structure, interrupted as she is by the divinity's arrival.

The comparison with the papyri shows that Theocritus's description is a skilled and highly informed game. The sacrifice of husks is found only once in the rites of attraction, and this in a particular subspecies, the ritual insult, *diabolé*. In this rite, instead of offering a prayer, the magician addresses the divinity with a calumny supposed to emanate from the person she wants to attract. Consequently, the goddess, angry at the victim and ready to do him harm, pushes him straight ahead to the magician. The husks (of wheat) appear in a long list of horrible ingredients of a fumigation: "fat of a dappled goat, blood and dung, the menstrual fluid of a dead virgin, and the heart of a person who died young, the magical essence of a dead dog, a woman's embryo, fine-ground husks of wheat, sour rubbish, salt, fat of a dead doe, horseradish, myrrh, black laurel, barley, and the claws of a crab. . . ."¹³ All this is the perversion of an ordinary ritual ("NN offers you, goddess, a horrible fumigation") in order to arouse the divine wrath against someone: burning husks is the reversal of burning barley. A psychological interpretation might be that this sort of ritual proves the guilty conscience of that man who aspires to possess a woman, but recognizes that it is to harm this woman that the goddess is propelling her to him. But more to the point than such explanations is the fact that the magician is using a traditional Egyptian ritual.¹⁴

The very content of the calumny is highly varied. In the same

rite of attraction, the sorcerer asserts that his victim "said that you, goddess, slew a man and drank the blood of this man and ate his flesh; and she says that your headband is his entrails. . ."; in another rite, in a prayer to Isis-Selene: "I shall reveal to you calumnies of that wicked and impious NN; for she has revealed your holy mysteries to the knowledge of men. It is she, NN, who told, and not I, that you left the celestial vault and walked the earth, with a single sandal, a sword, and shouting a foul name. It is she who said: 'I see the goddess drinking blood.'" ¹⁵ At least a trace of this type of rite appears also outside the Egyptian papyri: we remember the dream of Libanius, that his enemy sacrificed two children who were then buried in the temple of Zeus, a dream that roused in Libanius the suspicion that magic attacks were the source of all his problems. This makes sense only if these acts serve to arouse Zeus' anger and thus are ritual slander as well. ¹⁶

Thus, in Theocritus the sacrifice of the husks of corn, that worthless refuse, which must be thrown away and not offered to the goddess, is an element of ritual slander that, however, is not explained; Simaitha does not say an explanatory prayer, unlike the sorcerers in the papyri. Now, the ritual slander forms the most effective means for attracting a divinity, but also the most immoral and hence most dangerous means. It is necessary not to play with this rite that necessitates a ritual protection: "Do not use without due consideration [this is the warning on the papyrus], but only in case of need. There is a protection against the fall from on high, for the goddess has a custom of raising into the air those who do not protect themselves and of letting them fall from on high." ¹⁷ We now understand Simaitha's concerns. Her third sacrifice is the most hazardous, for it attracts a goddess, but an angry goddess. Therefore, one has to watch out and protect oneself from the outset.

The instruments employed in this rite of protection are not

the same in Theocritus and in the papyri. In the papyri, the protection normally devolves on an amulet that can be made earlier and used in different magic acts or that, in the case of a more dangerous rite of slander, as ours is, is specially made and hidden under a person's right arm. In Theocritus, it is the gong that must chase out Hecate. The gong always signals the presence of subterranean power: it is one of those instruments that are played, like the trumpet, in marginal situations. In the mysteries of Eleusis, the gong was sounded when Kore arrived. In Rome, the gong was used during a lunar eclipse, which is also a liminal moment of crisis.¹⁸ The gong opposed to Hecate is thus not an isolated practice. But to the extent that it primarily appears in the Eleusinian ritual, often exploited by literature, we cannot rule out that it is a literary idea, without parallel in actual contemporaneous magic.

The slander rite ends by a rite of separation. In the ritual considered before, it is necessary to leave the space where the rite has taken place, in this case the roof, walking backward, and the door must be opened, because the efficacy of the rite is such that the woman loved could arrive in a great rush and could die out of desire if she found the door closed. There is nothing of the kind in Theocritus, who continues with something quite different: Simaitha makes the wax melt and offers a triple libation with its formula. We have already spoken of the wax; this action, which is also "sympathetic," is found in other magic rites, which are not necessarily erotic, and is never combined with a slander spell. The libation is much more commonplace, as was the sacrifice of barley. The magical character is due only to the threefold repetition of the incantation. A similar observation holds for the rites at the end: a person can perform binding spells (erotic and otherwise) at a threshold, and there is even an attraction rite that must be carried out in front of the magician's door.¹⁹ As to the crushed lizard, an indication of its power for

magical attraction lies in the fact that the *Cyranides*, the collection of magical stones, recommends the "lizard stone," the *lithos saurītēs*, for a rite of erotic attraction. On the other hand, a papyrus from the third century A.D., now in Leipzig, gives the recipe for an attraction rite performed with the help of a gecko that must be dried and burned.²⁰ With the crushed lizard, Simaitha prepares an "evil drink." The closest parallel is furnished by one of the papyri of Leyden that gives the recipe for a love potion whose main ingredient is some hornets gathered on a spider web.²¹ As a pretty symbol of the desired effect, the tiny spider even succeeded in capturing those large insects.

The appearance of Hecate in Theocritus deeply disturbs Simaitha. The goddess reveals herself at some distance, and immediately Simaitha begins to protect herself—which would be a completely erroneous reaction in a rite intended to be realistic: the magician makes the divinity appear only to be aided by her even if, as a general rule, it is not one of the major gods who appears, but demons. Characteristic is this prayer to Selene, conceived as the supreme divinity, in which the magician prays to her to send him a helpful messenger (*ángelos*) who can go fetch the woman desired. If at that moment the moon became red, she had really sent this demoniacal helper: "But recite the prayer several times, and he will bring her and bind her, and she will love you for the rest of your life."²²

The conclusions are thus clear. Theocritus does not realistically describe an actual ritual scenario and does not play the ethnologist, but rather constructs a mosaic, a kind of superritual capable of activating in its readers all sorts of associations connected with magic, and he constructs it following ritual facts that are well-informed but, taken as a whole, would not work. In short, this poem does not constitute a source of information for contemporary magic. This is true as well for the details whose ritual references escape us, like the use of the *inyx*. No

one can guarantee that it is an authentic ritual fact rather than a literary reminiscence. A further complication, incidentally, is added by the fact that the scholiasts affirm that Theocritus imitates a poem of Sophron, an obscure author of the fifth century. The specialists discuss, without bringing in convincing arguments, whether fragments of Sophron can be compared with the Theocritan *Second Idyll*.

This conclusion does not mean that the text is devoid of all value and interest for the study of ancient magic. It shows what magic represents for the cultured contemporaries of Theocritus, who viewed these rites with amusement and in a detached way. We see that, from their intellectual and enlightened perspective, magic involved mainly strange sacrificial fumigations practiced with aberrant substances, but much less aberrant than those that we find in the papyri, and according to a suggestive "sympathetic" process: the categories of sacrifice and "sympathetic" practices dominate in Theocritus's imagery much more than they did in actual magic.

It remains to tackle a question that has not yet been mentioned, but that is of the utmost importance, the one concerning the identity of these practitioners of magic. In Theocritus as well as Virgil, or in the elegiac poets, and generally in the great majority of the literary texts, it is women who practice magic, whether erotic or of another kind. This situation amounts to an astonishing reversal of what we find in the epigraphic texts and the recipes on the papyri. In the papyri, most commonly a man tries to attract, bind, and possess a female victim. It is almost always, with one or two exceptions, *ho dêina*, so-and-so (accompanied by masculine forms), that designates the sorcerer, and it is *bē dêina* (or rather *tēn dêina*) and feminine forms that designate the victim. On rare occasions the recipes mention a homosexual relationship, but it is always a relationship between men. The same observation can be made for the erotic defixions: it is

almost exclusively men who seek to bind a woman or, in the rare case of seduction, who seek to drive away a rival for a woman. There is one small, consoling detail (however consoling it is): it is not already married women who are targeted in actual practice. Whereas the recipe for a love spell in the great Paris papyrus offers a blank in which to insert the name of the desired woman's husband, the actual curse texts do not make use of it. They are out for (as the papyri say) "a woman for one's whole life."

This rather curious detail can help us answer two questions that now must be asked. How can one explain the fact that it is almost exclusively men who tried, clandestinely and by magic, to obtain women, not for the purpose of an affair, but for one of marriage? Why, on the other hand, do these same men, when they are well-educated, always imagine the reverse situation and represent women practicing erotic magic in order to possess men?

The first question admits of two answers, of which the second modifies the first. We can first place the erotic spells back in the context of general social competition, along with the struggles to achieve success and social benefits aimed at by the professional and commercial binding spells. In this framework, it is pointless to dwell too long on the role that the woman could have in the struggle for power in ancient societies, Roman or Greek. Through marriage, the daughter could bring her family benefits resulting from relations with another house. As a source of potential benefits, she was strictly guarded; the access to young women, especially of "good families," was never easy. The erotic binding spell and the rite of attraction offered a path, clandestine but thought to be effective, toward this source of benefits. That is why what is sought in our texts is almost always permanent union, that is, marriage. That is also why the masculine sexual attractiveness, to appear beautiful in the eyes of the

world, is a good that can help the ancient male to acquire some social status.

The problems encountered by Apuleius in Oea are thus indicative on more than one count. His plea in his defense clearly brings out that at the origin of his difficulties, there were questions of wealth and social standing. He who would marry the rich widow would have access to her fortune and could thus enjoy whatever social standing this fortune would bestow. It is thus a sign of perspicacity on the part of Apuleius to stress, at the beginning of his speech, that he, Apuleius, was not gaining as much from this marriage as might be believed, for his own family was already rich and powerful, and his personal fortune was not as slight as his itinerant philosopher's clothing would lead one to suppose. It was not the opposition between a romantic marriage and a marriage for money that was at issue in the governor's court in Sabratha. We also understand the trouble that Apuleius goes to in order to lower the social position of his adversaries. The more they have to gain through marriage to the rich widow, the more credible become his own efforts to reduce the accusation to a mere manifestation of their envy. We then understand why, rather curiously, he is accused "of being handsome," *formosum philosophum*. If we admit that male beauty served as a weapon in the social contest and could be obtained, preserved, and even increased by magic, we catch sight of the implications contained in this accusation.

Erotic magic, however, remained a secret weapon, unworthy of the ideal warrior of the world of men, who for this reason always steered clear of it. An anecdote, once again taken from Lucian's *Philopseudes* ("The Lover of Lies"), demonstrates the way that men could talk about it. Glaukias, a young man of eighteen who had recently become the heir of a fortune through the death of his father, falls madly in love with Chrysis, his neighbor's wife. His philosophy teacher cures him in a rather surpris-

ing way: he brings in a Hyperborean magus who performs an attraction rite. After having invoked Hecate and called down the moon (and, amusingly enough, after having invoked the spirit of the deceased father to consent to the relationship), he fashions a small Eros and sends it to fetch Chrysis. The god brings her, and she arrives full of desire. In the morning she returns to the women's quarters of her husband.²³

It is a racy story worthy of Boccaccio. Young Glaukias gets a bedfellow for a night, not a wife. Lucian leaves no doubt about the fact that Chrysis herself had neither the character nor the inclination to maintain a stable erotic relationship. In this rather frivolous milieu, a milieu of men and "casino," in which one-night stands are boasted of, one could invoke erotic magic.

The disparity thus is obvious between principle and reality. In theory, men never used the practice of magic (or only for a short adventure); in practice, this resort seemed indispensable. This conclusion, however satisfying it may seem, must nevertheless be qualified. Indeed, the sociological model for the transferring of power and fortune through women does not explain everything. According to this model, the true transfer would never be done through the will of the woman, but through the will of the heads of the families concerned, whereas in the papyri and inscriptions it is always the women from whom one wishes to obtain not only love but a mad, unbridled passion. Never is a charm addressed to those fathers, recalcitrant owners of amorous daughters. Even more disturbing for this analysis is the existence of erotic magic practiced by women on men, where these same social constraints are not in effect. There is, moreover, homosexual erotic magic, feminine as well as masculine, in which the social problem is posed in quite a different way. In Athens, at least in the classical era, a homosexual relation could confer prestige on the beloved.²⁴ Our texts, however, come neither from Athens nor from the classical era, but from

Roman Egypt, where homosexual relationships did not confer any social prestige.²⁵ Thus, it must be admitted that it is not just a matter of struggles for position and social goods, although this is very often an important aspect of the problem, but that we can also be in the presence of an individual's emotional crisis, provoked by the mad love that he bears for a person who seems out of reach. Erotic magic thus offers a way to resolve this personal and even intimate crisis, and that is why the same processes can serve for loves lacking a social purpose (which, later, the Christian polemist was to call *amor inconcessus*).²⁶

We begin to catch a glimpse of the answer to the second question—why, in literature, is it always the women who perform erotic magic?—or at least an aspect of the answer. These stories remove erotic magic still further away from the world of men; they are thus a means for getting rid of what should not exist. At the same time, though, they reveal the real existence of this magic; however, although practiced by men, it is in reality a concern of women. That is why a man using magic steps over the borderlines of male behavior; a true man does not need erotic magic—the only male sorcerers are those funny foreign specialists. But this is only one aspect of the question; the other aspect involves a well-known theme. We have spoken of those Roman ladies of the republican era who practiced *veneficium*. The women, marginalized and excluded from the society of men, on this account constituted a danger. They are capable of all sorts of disguised attacks, threatening either the life of their husbands or the body of some desired man. In this perspective, these stories of love spells also talk of the danger that women's love constitutes for the autonomy of the men.

It could be imagined that these stories of feminine erotic magic have a third function, which would be to provide an explanation for the mad love that a man has for a woman. Such behavior contravened the social rules, and it had to be explained.

The accusation of magic then becomes a way meant to excuse social faults, such as the mad love felt by a young woman pledged to chastity or the spectacular memory lapses of a Roman orator. But in the case of mad love felt by men, the argument of magic does not seem to have been used at the time, a fact that is all the more surprising as it is very much used in modern Greece.²⁷ Would this be due to some lacuna in our sources? Or could gender asymmetry in antiquity even mean that mad love in man was excused and was censured only in women?

MAGIC DIVINATION: LUCAN AND RITUAL PRACTICE

Another text helped build the image of the witch in the post-ancient literature even more than the one of Theocritus or his Virgilian transformation: the description that Lucan gives of the necromantic ritual performed by the Thessalian witch Erichtho when consulted by Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great. Because the text is complex, I shall try only to understand the rite without taking up more far-reaching literary problems.²⁸

Lucan introduces his theme with a long passage on divination, which leads him to the magic divination of the Thessalians (VI, 425–506). But he is content to contrast this magic, which is considered commonplace, with the unprecedented arts practiced by Erichtho, a sort of superwitch (a “witches’ witch,” in W. R. Johnson’s felicitous expression), whose image the poet fills with all the features characteristic of extreme marginality (506–569). She lives away from houses and towns, in empty tombs, in direct contact with the world of the dead. She collects interesting cadavers, those of hanged persons, and of young men and young women who died early—if necessary, she kills them herself. Although serving as an intermediary between the world of the living and that of the dead, she seems decidedly inclined toward the dead. She also brings death; under her steps, fresh growths

with in the fields, and everywhere she goes, she poisons the air. Correspondingly, she puts herself outside the civic rites, and she is even their enemy. She never says prayers, never offers sacrifices. On the contrary, she defiles the sacrifices offered to the Olympian gods by mixing the pure fires of the altars with the fire of the funeral pyres, and she disturbs the order of funerals as well as the rituals intended for the dead by stealing the incense from funerary altars. Here again she does not steer a middle course between the gods from down below and those from on high, but sides with the infernal powers. The gods on high thus fear her, in the way that they fear the underworld. They are so fearful that they grant her everything she wishes as soon as she utters her first incantation, because "they are afraid to hear a second spell."²⁹

After a narrative interlude in which the Younger Pompey meets Erichtho, greets her, and flatters her while she consents to a divinatory rite, Lucan concentrates on the long description of the rite (624–830). Erichtho leaves for the field of battle in search of a useful cadaver (the desired property: it must be capable of speaking, thus to have lungs and all the other necessary organs). Once she has found it, she lodges it in a dark hollow in the middle of a dense forest, which does not let the sunlight come through, on the threshold between our world and that of the dead, but there again, rather on the side of the infernal beings (649ff.). Dressed in multicolored clothing (*discolor*), crowned with snakes, she makes the cadaver's blood flow afresh, washes it, and smears it with lunar poison (*virus lunare*).³⁰ A long catalog relates the ingredients, from the foam of rabid dogs to the poisons invented by her (671–684). Then she begins her *carmen*, her magic incantation. She first utters sounds unrelated to human language, cries of sinister and nocturnal animals (dogs, owls, snakes, wild animals) and the roaring of natural forces (sea, winds, thunder); then in "a Thessalian song" she addresses the

infernial divinities, from the Eumenides to Charon, and recalls for them her earlier benefits, her prayers "in an impious and contaminated voice" (706), her human sacrifices, especially of children, and commands them to help her: "obey my prayer" (711)—that they give the cadaver the knowledge necessary to make prophecies to Sextus Pompey.

This prayer was intended to revivify the dead man and make him speak. But a strange thing, the soul hesitates to return to the body. Erictho needs another *carmen*, this time with a threatening aspect: she will reveal the most intimate secrets of Tartarus, if the gods do not force the recalcitrant dead man to help her. The threat produces its effect—the cadaver begins to come back to life and is ready to answer the witch's questions. But before interrogating him, she promises him, if he answers her questions, a sepulture that will in the future protect him against any magical threat. To guarantee the truth of the prophecy, it is necessary to win the zombie's benevolence. After a vague *carmen*, he begins to make predictions or rather to tell what is known of the future in the world of the dead, a story that becomes a reversed version of Virgil's "Catalog of the Romans" in *Aeneid* VI. Once the story has ended, Erictho fulfills her promise and burns the cadaver.

The ritual is clear and straightforward. After the preparatory acts—the search for the cadaver, its transport to the forest, Erictho's change of dress—the rite proper begins. The cadaver is prepared with the help of the "lunar poison"; it must be ready once again to receive its soul. Next comes the long prayer, with its clear divisions. The first part is alien to human language; the witch speaks the languages of nature, that of the nocturnal or dangerous animals and that of the destructive forces of nature. The second part adopts, in an almost pedantic way, the structure of a commonplace Greco-Roman prayer.³¹ It begins with the *invocatio*, the call to the divinities by their names, their places of

worship, and their functions, an enumeration structured by anaphorical invocations and relative clauses, which ends with the invitation to appear and to hear the prayer ("listen to my prayers," 706). Next comes the *narratio*, the essential part that must establish the credibility, so to speak, of the person praying, most often by the recall of earlier sacrifices or of help already given that confirm the right to the future services of the divinity. Erictho enumerates her earlier sacrifices by a formula common in all prayers that uses the anaphorical *si . . .*; already the Homeric Chryses justifies his request with the words, "If I ever built you a splendid temple, if I burnt to you fat thighs of bulls and goats, (so help me now)." The prayer ends with the actual request, the *preces*, as in any private or public prayer.

Lucan thus stresses the almost tritely religious character of what happens, but reading him more closely, we note that it is a cleverly perverted religious practice. The divinities whom Erictho is addressing are those of the infernal world. The list of them begins with the negative and destructive powers—"Eumenides, Stygian Crimes, Punishments of the guilty, Chaos eager to confound innumerable universes" (695f.)—threatening the whole universe, and not just our world. She continues with the great divinities—Dis "Master of the Underworld," Styx, Persephone, infernal Hecate (described as the mediator between Erictho and the Manes), and then she ends with the mythological figures of Cerberus and Charon.³² Her prayers and sacrifices constitute a deliberate inversion of the usual worship; she prays with an "impious and sullied mouth" (706), sacrifices human victims, and makes libations of human blood. At the end is not a wish, but an order: "Obey my prayers, *parete precanti*."

When this prayer does not have the desired effect, she resorts to a second prayer, this time designated as a *carmen*, uttered in a fierce and threatening tone: "She barks at the dead and shatters the silence of their reign" (829). Thus, she succeeds in perform-

ing the rite. We recall that the theme of the second prayer had already appeared in the introduction. Lucan there said that the gods would never expect this *carmen secundum*: we now understand the reason for the gods' fear.

What Lucan describes for us is one of the most interesting—and most influential—necromancies in literature. In this first part, we already noticed some precise ritual details. Lucan describes a rite that puts our world in relation to the one down below, through two mediators; the first is the witch, who (as a human being) comes from the world of the living, and the second is the soul of a dead man, fallen on the field of battle, who is forced to come back from down below, bringing his knowledge with him: being a young warrior who died in battle, he is both *ābhōros* and *biaiothánatos*. We understand, moreover, that Lucan presents Erichtho's mediating function in two slightly contradictory ways. In the descriptive part, she is decidedly inclined toward the world of the dead, whereas in the description of the ritual, she goes from the world of the living to meet with a revived cadaver who made the reverse journey. This inconsistency must be attributed to the tension between the literary will to present Erichtho as a superhuman, almost infernal figure and the precision with which the poet reports the ritual.

Greek and Latin literature contains a whole series of necromancies, starting from the Homeric *Nekyia* (which, moreover, reappears among the divinatory texts of the papyri)³³ and Aeschylus's rite of *The Persians* down to the fictions in the late novels and the parodies in Lucian. None is as detailed.³⁴ But what concerns us here is not this intertextuality (still widely unexplored by researchers, moreover), but the relationship between Lucan's description and the comparable recipes of the papyri, research that leads to a hitherto barely mentioned domain, that of magic divination.

We have seen that binding spells had the role of helping the

individual immersed in a crisis brought on by a situation of competition or social conflict (a trial, commercial rivalry, athletic contest, or sexual conquest), whose outcome is still undecided. Through the rite, an individual sought to influence the course of events, and the *defixio* was a means for gaining control of the future. Another means for achieving these ends, divination was much more widespread, and it plays a considerable role both in the papyri and in the popular or literary conceptions of magic. Arnobius, the Christian of the fourth century A.D., draws up a long list of what in his eyes a sorcerer perpetrates against his fellow humans:³⁵

Indeed, who does not know that these people make every effort to foresee what is imminent, what necessarily happens, whether they wish it or not, by virtue of the order of things; that they send a mortal illness to whom they please, or that they break the bonds of affection between the members of the same family, or that they open without keys what is locked, or that they sew up mouths shut to keep them silent, or that they weaken, stimulate, slow down the horses at the races, that they arouse in the women and children of others, boys or girls, ardors and frenzied lusts of an illicit love, or that, if they seem to attempt a useful undertaking, it is not their own strength that makes them capable of it, but the power of those they invoke?

He begins with the most commonplace activity: sorcerers attend to the divination of the imminent future. The objective is thus completely practical and amounts to knowing the weather tomorrow or the price of olives in two months. The sorcerers also seek to influence this future, an undertaking that the Christian makes fun of. But they are also quite capable of doing harm, of inducing sudden deaths or fatal disease, and can undo family affections. The first accusation derives from the *veneficus* of the Roman tradition, the second is found in the papyri as a charm

under the name of "charm to create disunion," *diákokos*; several cursing tablets coming mainly from mainland Greece attest to its actual performance.³⁶ Other texts underscore the divinatory function of magic even more; the same Arnobius calls the sorcerer "the brother of the soothsayer," and in the influential encyclopedia of Isidorus of Seville, the magicians are specialists of divination. In addition, already in early imperial Rome, the Magi served as soothsayers, together with the Chaldeans, the astrologers: the Romans never sharply differentiated the two kinds of funny Orientals.³⁷

The list continues, mentioning some more specific feats. The magician can enter everywhere and without a key. This power, which in this text has a negative connotation, is nevertheless considered as a sign of the extraordinary power possessed by Apollonius, who left his prison unaided; it is feared in the Christian martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas; and it is also found in the papyri as a charm called "Door-opener" or "Release from bonds," as a feat meant to impress the crowds at fairs.³⁸ The magician can "sew up mouths to keep them silent" and can "weaken, stimulate, and slow down horses at the racetracks": we are in the domain of judiciary and agonistic *defixiones*. Also mentioned is the erotic defixion, in a fine definition that combines binding spell and spell of attraction; the sorcerers "cause ardors and raging desires of an illicit love" in women and the children of others, boys or girls—*amor inconcessus* being a polemical formulation that repeats the literary stories of extraconjugal love as well as homosexual love.

Divination thus constitutes only a part of that magic world appearing in highly diverse forms in the recipes of the papyri. First there are multifunctional rites that allow for a varied range of actions; when a demoniacal or even divine parhedros has been procured, it can do almost anything. But there are other ways that make it possible to have access to divination. For example,

one may use three lines from Homer as a potent spell; written on an iron tablet, they bring back a fugitive slave, make a corpse prophesy, secure success in a trial and in love. The papyrus book in the Bibliothèque Nationale presents a long list of useful functions.³⁹ Among the specialized rites of divination, there are the simplest charms, like one that makes it possible to foresee everything; before speaking to someone, a person must put a finger under the tongue and murmur a little incantation to Helios.⁴⁰ However, most of the recipes are much more complex. It is always a matter of making contact with a superhuman being (divinity, demon, dead person) to profit from the being's knowledge. In this domain, we can distinguish, roughly, several ways of proceeding, depending on the modes of contact:

- (a) The rites seeking direct contact with a divinity, without mediation: the papyri call them "direct visions."⁴¹
- (b) The rites seeking contact with a divinity through divinatory possession, which uses a medium in a trance, especially a boy.⁴²
- (c) The rites seeking contact through divinatory dreams and that often use a lamp, once even a small statuette of a god.⁴³ One of the papyri of the British Museum (PGM VII) has collected a great number of these dreams, including a recipe deriving from Pythagoras and Democritus; its author was clearly a specialist.
- (d) The rites using an object, particularly a container filled with water, with a little oil (the lecanomancy), more rarely a lamp (as did the witch in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*) to establish the contact. But this category is complex, for the vase or the lamp, in the papyri, can also be used for divination by dreams, like the one done through the intermediary of a medium or a direct vision.⁴⁴

- (e) The rites seeking contact with the dead to obtain information about the future. Technically, this could be a rite of "direct vision"; in practice, the rites fall into the category of necromancy.

DIVINATION AND THE DEAD

In the papyri, there are a few divinatory rites that resort to the assistance of a dead person. The most important one is a text in a threefold version preserved in the magic papyrus in the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁴⁵ The first is named *Erotic Attraction Spell of King Pitys*. It is followed by a second *Erotic Attraction Spell of Pitys*, which is much longer and more detailed and takes the form of a letter of Pitys to one King Osthane, and by a very short formula, *Consultation of a Skull According to Pitys the Thessalian*, a radical but obvious abridgement of the *Letter*. Of this letter, the addressee is clearer than the writer. Osthane was not a king, but simply a counselor to King Xerxes, whom he accompanied to Greece, importing magic with him, according to Pliny.⁴⁶ Pitys, on the other hand, is less easily identified. Perhaps he is Bithus of Dyrrhachium, a magician mentioned by Pliny and no doubt transformed into an Egyptian priest under the name of Bitys in Iamblichus.⁴⁷ Even more remarkable is the fact that Pithys is a Thessalian; it was the Thessalians who immediately collaborated with the invading Persians of Xerxes: if this is not pure chance, the Thessalians being the paramount sorcerers in antiquity, the fiction in the papyrus tries to attain historical plausibility, which might point to a date of its origin in Hellenistic times when such facts still were remembered.

The manipulation of the skull clearly is essential in these texts, and suggests necromancy. Nevertheless, it is not a matter of resuscitating a dead person, as the rite in the first text shows. The magician prays to the Sun to send him a demon, this

nekuodaímōn whose skull he possesses. The magician will question him not directly, but in a dream. So before going to bed, he has to write the questions on leaves of ivy, the plant of Osiris-Dionysus, and put them inside the skull. The rite of the *Letter* is structured in the same way, if only in that the preparation is more complicated and the dead person has all the functions that a demoniacal assistant can perform. Among the latter, the erotic attraction is so important that it gave the title to the whole recipe. Although a skull, i.e., a dead person's head, must be manipulated, this is not a necromancy. The skull functions as magical essence: it is merely the indicator that will allow for the Sun to find the skull's former possessor. There is even a formula for the case in which the magician indeed would have a skull, but not that of a *nekuodaímōn*; it is not so easy to find such skulls.

This clarifies the relation between the first and the second version. Their designation as "Erotic attraction spell," *agōgē*, is misleading, because they do not serve for erotic magic. This suggests that the original ritual had a much wider function, comparable to the second version, among other things that of an erotic attraction: therefore its title. Thus, the second version comes closer to the original, of which it also preserves the epistolary form; it goes without saying that, in this sort of wild transmission, we cannot tell how close the second version came to the original. The abridged version, which transformed it into a divinatory ritual, retained the more appealing but now misleading title—and it retained another now misleading piece of information; its title claims that it can be performed "over any skull cap." Its actual text, however, asks for the specific skull of a "man who died a violent death"; the ritual, which prepares an unsatisfactory skull, is added in the second version, presumably again from the original.

The fact that the papyri do not contain necromantic rites does not mean that they do not contain rites for resuscitating the

dead, but they are not used for divination. A very short passage from *Moses VIII* contains a spell intended to make a dead man walk, but without any indication of the ritual details or the functions of the spell.⁴⁸ More relevant is the promise contained in the book of the Bibliothèque Nationale. If three verses of book X of the *Iliad* are written on a lamella of iron, one has a powerful charm: "Hang it around the neck of a man who has been executed and tell him the verses in his ear: he will tell you anything you want."⁴⁹ It is thus again a man who died by violence, like Lucan's warrior, but the resuscitation is rather peaceful and purely symbolic. The rest of the text describes the consecration of this tablet, a rite that will have the effect that the executed man will live for another three days to serve as a *párbedros* for the sorcerer, which is inscribed in a well-known series in which a dead man, a *nekudaímōn*, becomes the sorcerer's demonical assistant.

But that, after all, is what we expect. The rituals of the papyri must function in an empirical world, as difficult to believe as it may sometimes seem to us. In the empirical world, the dead do not easily set about walking and talking. A sorcerer thus leaves cadavers in their graves and manipulates only some magical essence, a skull or something else; the sorcerer always relies upon the same symbolic processes to make a *párbedros* appear. It is not surprising that often this demoniacal assistant makes his or her prophecies in a dream. Throughout the ancient world, it is in a dream that one encounters the gods, the demons, and the dead.

LUCAN AND THE MAGIC RITES

The rite described in Lucan, with its resurrection of a cadaver for divination, has no full parallel in the papyri. Nevertheless, there are interesting parallels in the level of details. Erictho

begins her long prayer by "murmuring sounds that are discordant and very different from human language," *murmura dissona et humanae multum discordia linguae* (6,686), that is, sounds issuing from nocturnal and wild animals or natural forces. This sound-making can seem a fantasy, but it plays a certain role in the vocal rites. In the initial invocation of *Moses VIII*, the sorcerer must whistle and make the tongue click, even imitate the chirping of birds. These sounds have an obvious function: the bird cries translate the name of the god in the language of the birds.⁵⁰ The sounds thus constitute merely an extension of those magic words that to us—and already to ancient observers—seem so strange.⁵¹ For the sorcerer, they are "barbarian names," *onómata barbariká*, but only in the sense that they are divine names in a foreign, powerful language. In uttering them, the sorcerer demonstrates immense knowledge as well as the capacity for approaching the gods. The sorcerer knows all their names, even those belonging to the most distant languages or to the language of the birds; it is a splendid instance of this claim to superior wisdom that already had irritated the author of *On the Sacred Disease*. The same explanation holds for the other sounds, as is confirmed by a strange myth of creation told in the continuation of *Moses VIII*. Frightened, the Creator whistled, and the earth became round. Frightened again, he made his tongue click and a second god was born. Finally, he shouted IAO (Jahweh), and a third god appeared. The sorcerer repeats these sounds, and in repeating them, he shows anew the intimate knowledge he has of the Supreme God. These sounds are thus functional, but in a very different context from the one mentioned by Lucan. It indeed seems that Lucan knows only that the sorcerers use such sounds, animal cries and other noises. He uses them to underscore the destructive and superhuman powers of Erictho, which her marginal position associates with the nocturnal animals and destructive forces of nature, humanity's permanent enemies.

After the failure of the first invocation, Erictho resorts to threats, which seems again to reflect the witch's diabolical character. But here again, the process is known through the papyri. They contain a group of spells that they call "constraining words," (*lógoi*) *epánankoi*. These spells have a precise function, which is to constrain the divinity or the demon in the rare cases in which the first prayer does not eventuate in an immediate success because the god or the demon is taking so long. These second spells are not always threatening. Some of them are rather friendly: "When he delays, say these words after the prayer to the gods, uttering them once or three times: 'The great god, he who lives, commands you, he who exists from eternity to eternity . . . enter, appear before me, Lord, joyous, kindly, peaceful, glorious, without anger, as I entreat you in the name of the Lord IAO . . . enter, appear before me, Lord, joyous, kindly, peaceful, glorious, without anger.'"⁵² Here it is the reference to the Supreme God, with whom the sorcerer seems to be intimate and familiar, which will constrain the demon. Nevertheless, threats are not unknown: "In another copy, I found the following version: When he does not obey this way, wrap the figurine in the same cloth and on the fifth day throw it in the oven of a bath, and after the invocation say: God of gods, king of kings, now also force a benevolent and divinatory demon to appear to me, so that I do not resort to punishments more violent than the leaf."⁵³ In this text, the divination is performed with the help of a demon whose nature cannot be determined (the beginning of the text has been lost), but which indeed throws light on Lucan's text.

Lucan's text thus shows two fundamental differences in relation to the one of Theocritus. One difference concerns the course of the ritual. In Theocritus, the ritual ended with a rite that never could have worked in reality. It has no continuous and closed structure, because Theocritus tinkers with heteroge-

neous elements. Lucan, on the other hand, constructs a rite that has a perfect internal logic and that is completely consistent within the general framework of magical ritual: it might even have worked, when tried out. Certainly, it is a matter of a literary construction, and Lucan must be placed in an intertextual network whose references begin with the Homeric *Nekyia*. It is up to specialists in literature to decode this game that few Latin authors play with such brio. What the historian of religion must point out, however, is the resemblance of some particular details with the very real rites of the papyri, details that seem drawn from a precise knowledge of contemporaneous magic; it is not inconceivable that Lucan might have access to the respective books.⁵⁴ Although it is not legitimate to read this poem as if it were a source for the history of magic rites, it remains no less true that, with the one of Theocritus, it testifies to the imaginary world of magic.

Which leads us to the second difference, that of the descriptive code of the rites. In Theocritus, magic remains a petit-bourgeois act. The almost family activity of these two young women is considered with uppity benevolence; symptomatically, the poet sometimes uses a language from a cookbook to describe the rites. It is necessary to "dredge" the altar with flour, to "melt" the wax, to "scramble" the lizard, to "knead" the herbs—activities belonging to the realm of cooking. Although sacrificial action always takes place in proximity to the culinary space, this language reflects the social condition of the two female magicians. Lucan, who brings onstage the terrors of magic, resorts to the language of religion in his narration of the rite. The long initial passage already informs us that it is indeed a matter of religion. Lucan gives a list of oracles whom Pompey does not consult and whom it would have been "pious," *fas*, to consult, if it were not that Pompey seeks the *nefas*, the infernal gods. Thus he happens upon Erictho, the radical enemy of the gods on high

(*superi*) who is given over to perverting all civic and private rites and who is totally dedicated to the world of the dead and the infernal powers. Lucan uses this to depict magic as a radical perversion of the civic religion, and he pushes this description well beyond what the papyri attest as the realities. Whereas in Lucan, Erictho's divine protectors are Pluto, Persephone, and the other powers of the netherworld, in the papyri it is always a supreme god, Helios, or even the Jewish ΙΑΩ, who protects and helps the sorcerer in his deeds. The papyri do not confirm the radical opposition of religion and magic found in Lucan—as it will be found, later, in the Christian authors. But it is not in a spirit of religious (or enlightened) criticism of magic that Lucan is writing; the literary aim of all this radicalization characterizes Pompey the Younger, who, *Magno proles indigna*, perverts the republic and defiles (again, the code of religion) the triumphs, *polluit triumphos* (420–422). This perverse career finds its narrative climax in the encounter with Erictho.

- für Assyriologie 32, 1918/19, pp. 164–184; E. Ebeling, *Liebeszauber im Alten Orient* (Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft 1:1), Leipzig: Pfeiffer 1925; R. D. Biggs, *Sà zi ga Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations*; reconciliation of a married couple V. Scheil, *Revue d'Assyriologie* 18, 1921 No. 17; Joan and Aage Westenholz, "Help for Defected Suitors: The Old Akkadian Love Incantation MAD V8," *Orientalia* 46, 1977, pp. 203–215; a Sumerian example, A. Falkenstein, "Sumerische religiöse Texte. 6: Ein sumerischer Liebeszauber," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 56, 1964, pp. 113–129. Success: "To provide success for an innkeeper"; "depositing of money," that is, the discovery of a treasure; "reporting a fugitive slave," Ungnad 1941/44, II, 19, 20, 25, 47. The "Schenkenliebeszauber" promises the success of a cabaret (and its girls) thanks to an erotic charm; and the rite for capturing a fugitive slave E. Ebeling, *Orientalia* N. S. 23, 1954, pp. 52–56. Social status: "To enter the palace"; "to calm the anger"; "that the king in his palace mentions the name for the good"; "let him who sees you rejoice to see you." Ungnad 1941/44, II, 12–16. See also T. Abusch, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 37, 1985, pp. 91–100; and O. R. Gurney, "A Tablet of Incantation Against Slander," *Iraq* 22, 1960, pp. 221–227.
176. Synthesis in Thomsen 1989: 58; see Codex Hammurapi 2, in Hugo Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte aus dem Alten Testament* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1926), p. 383; J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 163; Assyrian laws 47 (Gressmann 420).
 177. Sicily: López Jimeno 1991; the practice in Magna Graecia is indirectly attested, through the Oscan texts that start in the later 6th century, earlier in Chapter 2, n. 95.
 178. Fritz Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (RGVV 31) (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1974).
 179. As Dodds had it, 1951: 194f., writing about "regression taking an even cruder form."

6. LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF MAGIC

1. Among others, Jacques Annequin, *Recherches sur l'action magique et ses représentations: Ier et IIème siècle après J.C.* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres,

- 1973); and Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); much more conscious of the problems is Anne-Marie Tupet, *La magie dans le poésie latine I: Des origines à la fin du règne d'Auguste* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976).
2. As A. S. F. Gow in his authoritative *Theocritus* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), vol 2, p. 25; see the justified protest of Tupet 1967: p. 52.
 3. I cannot share A. D. Nock's conviction that it would be possible to interpret the difference between Theocritus's and Lucan's texts as an indication of a historical development in magic: A. D. Nock, "Greek Magical Papyri," in A. D. Nock (ed.), *Essay on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 183–187 (originally published in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 15, 1929).
 4. See *Anthologia Palatina*, 5,277 (Agathias); 3,71 (Dioscurides).
 5. There is a small textual problem: in the three occurrences v. 3, v. 10, v. 159—the manuscript tradition unanimously writes *καταθύσομαι*; it is the *Scholia Vetera* that attest to the already ancient variant *καταδήσομαι*, undoubtedly (and all the modern editors think so) the correct text.
 6. John J. Winkler drew up a list of these, in "The Constraints of Eros," in Faraone and Obbink 1991: pp. 214–243.
 7. *PGM* IV, 1496.
 8. *PGM* IV, 2455–2464.
 9. *PGM* III, 224 (prayer to Helios-Apollo who enjoys fumigations of laurel), 309 (divination). Pods, *πίτυρα*, are parts of a sacrificial cake in *PGM* LXX, 20, and they are used in a cathartic ritual in Demosthenes, *De corona* (18) 259.
 10. For the magic essence (*οὐσία*), earlier in Chapter 5, n. 71; cloth in this function is already present in the Near East, Maqlû 2,185 ("Wer bist du, Zauberin, die . . . im Haus des Gerbers abgeschnitten hat [meinen Gewandsaum] . . .?").
 11. See A. S. F. Gow, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 54, 1934, pp. 1–13; Loretta Baldini Moscadi, "Osservazioni sull'episodio magico del VI libro della Farsaglia di Lucano," *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 48 (1976) 140–199, Appendix 193–199; for the oldest attestation, G. W. Nelson, "A Greek Votive lynx-wheel in Boston," *American*

- Journal of Archaeology* 44, 1940, pp. 443ff.; the earrings Dyfri Williams and Jack Ogden, *Greek Gold Jewelry of the Classical World* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1994), p. 96f., nos. 49f.
12. For this traditional structure, see C. Ausfeld, "De Graecorum precationibus quaestiones," *Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie* Supplement 28, 1903, pp. 502–547; H. S. Versnel, "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer," in H. S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), pp. 1–64; for the magic prayers, see Fritz Graf, "Prayer in Magic and Religious Ritual," in Faraone and Obbink 1991: pp. 188–213.
 13. PGM IV, 2575–2584. The papyrus does not mention the common laurel: what is important for the reversed ritual is the color of the black laurel.
 14. Ritner 1993: p. 97 and p. 173f.
 15. PGM IV, 2594–2596, 2475–2482.
 16. Libanius, *Oratio*, I, 245.
 17. PGM IV, 2504–2509.
 18. Eleusis: Apollodorus, FGrHist 244 F 110; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* I,4,1: other parallels in Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. Peter Bing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Trumpet: Fritz Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome: Schweizer Institut in Rom, 1985), p. 245.
 19. PGM IV, 1854, "hits the door with the statuette."
 20. See Arthur Darby Nock, "The Lizard in Magic and Religion," in Nock 1972, pp. 271–276; in a fragment of magic papyrus, published by Wortmann 1968, 109 no. 13, the eye of a lizard must be used; unfortunately, the context has been lost.
 21. PGM XIII, 318. The same PGM XIII, 320, recommends the use of the statuette of a crocodile to prevent a wife's infidelity. A drink plays a rather enigmatic role in an Attic defixion, Wünsch 1897: no.99,10: "when she drinks this drink on my behalf . . ."
 22. PGM VII, 861–918 (lunar rite of Claudianus).
 23. Lucian, *Lover of Lies* 13–15; I owe this story (like other suggestions contained in this paragraph) to J. Winkler, see earlier n. 6.
 24. See Kenneth Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Har-

- vard University Press 1978); and Harald Patzer, *Die griechische Knabenliebe* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982), pp. 112–114.
25. A list of homosexual defixions from Egypt has been drawn up by Daniel and Maltomini 1990, p. 132 (there are examples of relations between men as well as between women); an Athenian example can be added from the High Empire, Jordan 1985b, 225 no. 8 (two men; this whole group of texts belongs to the world of the ephebes).
 26. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* I, 43,5.
 27. See J. Winkler, loc cit. (earlier n. 6).
 28. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, VI, 507–830. See, among others, Wolfgang Fauth, "Die Bedeutung der Nekromantieszene in Lucans *Pharsalia*," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 118, 1975, pp. 325–344; Loretta Baldini Moscadi, "Osservazioni sull'episodio magico del VI libro della *Farsaglia* di Lucano," *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 48, 1976, pp. 140–199; Richard Gordon, "Lucan's Erictho," in Michael Whitby, Philipp Hardie, Mary Whitby (eds.), *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (Oak Park, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1987), pp. 231–241 and, for the literary analysis, W. R. Johnson, *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and his Heroes* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 19–33.
 29. Lucan VI, 527f. "omne nefas superi prima iam voce precantis concedunt carmenque timent audire secundum." "The heavenly gods allow her all the heinous crimes at the first words of her prayer, and they fear hearing a second charm."
 30. Modern commentaries refer to the nine knots of three colors in Virgil, *Eclogues* VIII, 78; more to the point is the contrast with the plain dress of the Roman matron. The *virus lunare* is found in other writers of the era; see the commentary of Pierre-Auguste Lemaire (Paris: N. E. Lemaire, 1832), on VI, 505.
 31. See earlier, n. 12.
 32. VI, 695f. "Eumenides Stygiumque Nefas Poenaeque nocentum / et Chaos . . ." (700f.) "nostraeque Hecates pars ultima, per quam / manibus et mihi sunt tacitae commercia linguae." "Hecate, by whom the Manes and I exchange secrets."
 33. PGM XXIII, 1–70, following the *Kestos* 18 of Iulius Africanus (third century A.D.); for the latter, see the thesis of Francis C. T.

Thee, *Julius Africanus and the Early Christian View of Magic* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1984).

34. For Greek and Roman necromancy, see Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg i.B./Leipzig/Tübingen, 1898), vol. 2, pp. 362–365. Ancient Orient and Israel: J. Tropper, *Nekromantie. Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 223), (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989); Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 11) (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994). Middle ages: Richard Kieckhefer, "La necromanzia nell'ambito clericale nel tardo Medioevo," in Agostino Paravicini Bagliani and André Vauchez (eds.), *Poteri carismatici e informali: Chiesa e società medioevali* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1992), pp. 210–223.
35. Arnobius, *Against the Gentiles* I,43,5. "Quis enim hos nesciat aut imminetia studere praenosceri, quae necessario velint nolint suis ordinationibus veniunt aut mortiferam immittere quibus libuerit tabem aut familiarium dirumpere caritates aut sine clavibus reserare quae clausa sunt aut ora silentio vincere aut in curriculis equos debilitare incitare tardare aut uxoribus et liberis alienis sive illi mares sunt sive feminei generis inconcessi amoris flammis et feriales immittere cupiditates aut, si utile aliquid videantur audere, non propria vi posse, sed eorum quos invocant potestate?" Similar lists in Libanius, *Declamations* XLI, 29, and Zacharias, *Vita S. Severi* 69; see earlier Chapter 5, n. 12.
36. The list of defixions in Jordan 1985b, p. 222; the *diakopos* PGM XII, 365. See earlier Chapter 5, n. 105.
37. Arnobius, loc. cit. 4,12 "magi, haruspicum fratres"; Isidorus, *Etymologiae* VIII, 9; Tacitus, *Annales* 2,27f. and 12,22.
38. Apollonius: Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, VIII, 5; *Passio Perpetuae* XVI, 2; ἀνοίξις PGM XIII, 327, 1065; δεσμόλυτον XII, 161, see earlier, Chapter 4, n. 72.
39. PGM IV, 2145–2240.
40. PGM III, 263–275 (with the title *πρόγνωσις*).
41. *autoptos* in PGM V, 55–69; the term is used by mistake to refer to lecanomancy, and PGM IV, 930–1114, combines it with lychnomancy.

42. For example, PGM IV, 850. The accusers reproach Apuleius to have practiced similar divination, *Apologia* XLII (other means—lamp, vase—can come into play, too).
43. *ὄνειραιτη* in *ὄν τ* PGM VII; *ὄνειροδανπτάνη* in PGM IV, 3174, a word that Preisendanz explains by *ὄνειρ-αυτ-ὑπτάνη*, "immediate vision in the dream"; Pythagoras and Democritus, PGM VII, 795–845; a statuette of Hermes in PGM, V, 370–446. See the synthesis by Samson Eitrem, "Dreams and Divination in Magical Ritual," in Faraone and Obbink 1991: pp. 175–187.
44. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, II, 11; immediate vision and lamp: PGM V, 1–53; immediate vision and lamp: V, 55–69.
45. PGM IV, 1928–2006 (first version); 2007 2139 (second version); 2140–2144 (third version).
46. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* XXX, 8–11, see Bidez and Cumont 1938 I, pp. 167–212; II, 267–356. Heinz J. Thissen, "Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri," in U. Verhoeven and E. Graefe (eds.), *Religion und Philosophie im alten Ägypten Festgabe für Philippe Dercham* (Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 39) (Louvain: Peeters, 1991), 285f., identifies Pithys with Bithys in Iamblichus and proposes an Egyptian etymology: this does not explain why the papyri call him a Thesalian.
47. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* XXVIII, 82; Iamblichus, *The Mysteries of Egypt* VIII, 5; VIII, 10.
48. PGM XII, 278 *ἐγερσις νεκροῦ*, "the awakening of a dead body."
49. PGM IV, 2145–2177.
50. XIII, 139f.
51. For those ancient observers, see the fun that Lucian, *Menippus* IX, pokes at "barbarian, meaningless and polysyllabic words," and the dead-serious criticism of Plutarch, *De superstitione* III, 166 B, "their strange and barbarian expressions are shameful and unjust with respect to the gods."
52. PGM IV, 1035–1047.
53. PGM II, 50–53; another text that exhibits a sign of the almost-philological work of these collectors of magic recipes, see earlier, Chapter 1.
54. A. D. Nock, moreover, insisted on the quality of Lucan's sources and thought of Statilius Taurus or another platonist as a source,

"Greek Magical Papyri," in Nock 1972, p. 186ff. (originally *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15, 1929).

7. WORDS AND ACTS

1. See Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London: Routledge 1994), p. 103f, who underscores that the term was important in ancient medicine already before the Stoa.
2. Quotation taken from Bidez and Cumont, 1938: I, p. 193ff.
3. Plotinus, *Enneads* 4,4,40. See Philip Merlan, "Plotinus and magic," in *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin: De Gruyter 1976), pp. 388–395 (urspr. *Isis* 44, 1954, 341–348) and esp. his own polemics against the magicians in *Enneads* 2,9, for which see Karin Alt, *Philosophie gegen Gnosis: Plotins Polemik in seiner Schrift II 9* (Abhandlungen der Akademie Mainz 1990:7) (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1990).
4. See the synthesis Tambiah 1985, pp. 123–166, "A performative approach to ritual." The discussion about ritual is immense, a first sensible help in Daniel de Coppet (ed.), *Understanding Rituals* (London: Routledge, 1992) and Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
5. Tambiah 1990, p. 58. Ludwig Wittgenstein's discussion is published in "Bemerkungen über Frazer's 'The Golden Bough,'" *Synthese* 18, 1965, pp. 236–258.
6. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974) and id., *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982).
7. S. J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man* 3, 1968, pp. 175–208; reprinted in Tambiah 1985: pp. 17–59.
8. Stanley J. Tambiah, "Form and Meaning of Magical Acts: A Point of View," in Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan (eds.), *Modes of Thought: Essays on Thinking in Western and Non-Western Societies* (London: Faber, 1973), pp. 199–229; reprinted in Tambiah 1985: pp. 60–86.
9. Christopher A. Faraone, "Molten wax, spilt wine and mutilated animals: Sympathetic magic in Near Eastern and Early Greek oath ceremonies," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113, 1993, pp. 60–80.