

Four Missing Persons, a Misunderstood Mummy, and Further Adventures in Greek Magical Texts

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1. *A lost victim on an anger-restraining gem in London*

On the reverse of a large serpentine gem (3.5 x 2.9 cm) in the British Museum (*BM* 296),¹ we see Hecate (her head obliterated by a later drill hole) holding a flail in her right hand and a sword in her left, while she stands on the back of a prone man (*fig. 1*). The two figures are surrounded by Greek letters that Michel read as $\tau\omicron\upsilon\iota\alpha\omega\mu\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\mu\alpha.\upsilon\theta\rho\rho\alpha\tau\alpha\kappa\alpha\kappa\alpha\tau.\rho\omicron\sigma\kappa\alpha\iota\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta$. She suggested plausibly, for an amulet, that near the beginning of the inscription there was a request for healing for the stomach ($\text{I}\alpha\omega\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \sigma\tau\omicron\mu\acute{\alpha}[\chi\omicron]\upsilon\dots$) and that further on we could see $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$. She also read the letters at the goddess' sides as two separate groups written from top to bottom: $\lambda\nu\pi$ to the left and $\iota\rho\omega\upsilon\sigma$ to the right. During a recent study of the gems depicting Hecate, I realized that the encircling text beginning at her right hand and ending with the letters by the goddess' sides—the latter read horizontally rather than vertically—yield the plea $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\epsilon\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \theta\upsilon\mu\omicron\upsilon\delta\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\delta^2\ \text{E}\acute{\upsilon}\phi\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$

¹ Abbreviations used: *BM* = S. Michel, *Die magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum* I–II (London 2001); *DT* = A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris 1904); *GEMF* = C. A. Faraone and S. Torallas Tovar, *The Greco-Egyptian Magical Formularies: Libraries, Books and Individual Recipes* (Ann Arbor forthcoming); *GMA* = R. Kotansky, *Greek Magical Amulets I* (Opladen 1994); *SMA* = C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor 1950).

² The use of the article before the name is odd; presumably the scribe copied the article that stood before $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\alpha$ (“So-and-So”) and then replaced $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\alpha$ with the victim's name without removing the article.



Figure 1: *BM 296*, drawing used with the permission of the Trustees of the British Museum

(“Restrain the angry outbursts of Euphratas and every person”).³ The name of the victim is placed, perhaps not accidentally, upside down beneath the sprawled body. On the obverse, we find a male figure facing left and standing on a profile lion; they are surrounded by the *Sisiro-logos* and beneath them we see the divine name *Iaô*. The face of this figure was also drilled away at some point and his identity is difficult to establish: like Zeus, he holds a lightning bolt in his right hand, but he also seems to have a sickle tucked under his left armpit.

A similar inscription is found on the reverse of another serpentine gem (*BM 271*), albeit of smaller size (2.0 x 1.7 cm). After a series of magical names we read *κατάσχεσ τοὺς θυμοὺς Τάσοι* (“Restrain the angry outbursts of Taso!”).⁴ On the ob-

³ Many thanks to Jaime Curbera, who in an e-mail notes that this is the genitive of the masculine name *Εὐφράτας*, which is “usually documented in the Doric form. If the gem is late, the accent *Εὐφρατᾶς* is also possible.” The name Euphrates did not refer originally to the Mesopotamian river and it may, in fact, be Iranian, although not all people with that name were Iranians; see R. Schmidt, *Die iranischen und Iranier-Namen in den Schriften Xenophons* (Vienna 2002) 104–106.

⁴ The presumably genitive form and accentuation of the name are not entirely clear. *Τάσοι* is the reading of Michel ad *BM 271*, but the drawing that accompanies her text does not show the final iota. Without the iota,

verse is a radiant lion-headed figure holding a cobra in his outstretched right hand, an image chosen perhaps, as Bonner once suggested, “as symbolizing the control of fierce passions.”⁵ A third gem copied in Beirut and published by Mouterde in 1930 shows on the obverse a radiant goddess, perhaps Nemesis, with her hand covering her mouth and on the reverse the inscription *κατεχέσθω πᾶς θυμὸς πρὸς ἐμὲ Κασσιανόν* (“Let all anger towards me, Cassianus, be restrained!”).⁶ Mouterde does not mention the type of stone. All three of these gems belong to the hybrid genre called “anger-binding spell” (*thumokatochon*) that combines the content and speech-act of a binding spell, a type usually inscribed on a lead tablet and buried in a grave—for example, *κατάσχεται τὴν ὀργὴν, τὸν θυμὸν Παωμίου* (“bind the rage, the anger of Paomios”)—with the media of an amulet, either on gold or silver foil or on a gemstone, like the three amulets described above.⁷

2. *A lost victim on the golden “sword” from Tunisia?*

GMA 62 is a gold foil amulet discovered with human bones in a crypt beneath the Roman forum of Zian in Tunisia;⁸ it dates to the 2nd–3rd century CE. The design is centered upon a drawing of a Roman sword standing vertically on its point; we see inscribed in the top half of the rectangle four Jewish names (Iao and Adonai in line 2, Sabaoth in lines 4–5, and Istraël in line 7)

Τᾶσο would be a better candidate for some kind of genitive of Τᾶσος; the referee suggests helpfully that the name might be Anatolian, citing *MAMA* VIII 139, where the name Τᾶσσος appears.

⁵ *SMA* 149, with Bonner’s comments ad loc.

⁶ R. Mouterde, “Le glaive de Dardanos: Objets et inscriptions magiques de Syrie,” *MélBeyrouth* 15 (1930/1) 53–87, no. 11.

⁷ For the lead curse tablets, the quoted text is *SupplMag.* 57.4–5; for other examples, including an ostrakon, see C. A. Faraone, “*Thumos* as Masculine Ideal and Social Pathology in Ancient Greek Magical Spells,” *YCS* 32 (2003) 144–162. For the amulets: *PGM* X 24–35 and XXXVI 35–68 (both for silver amulets).

⁸ S. Reinach and E. Babelon, *BAC* (1886) 57, fig. 12; now in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris.



Figure 2: GMA 62, drawing after Reinach and Babelon

interleaved with vowels and symbols. Scholars have long noted that this foil seems to belong to the same tradition as the well-known recipe in the Paris Codex called the “Sword of Dardanus,” a recipe for erotic subjugation that preserves a similar text (*GEMF* 57 [= *PGM* IV] 1815–1829):

On a gold leaf inscribe this sword: “Unique is Thouriël, Michaël, Gabriël, Ouriël, Misaël, Irraël, Istraël! May it be a propitious day for this name and for me who know it and am wearing it! I summon the immortal and infallible strength of God! Grant me the submission of every soul that I name.” Give the leaf to a partridge to gulp down and kill it. Then pick it up and wear it around your neck after inserting into the strip the herb *paiderôs* (“boy-love”).

Istraël, the name that we find here at the end of the list of seven angels, is the only angelic name that has been inscribed on the Tunisian amulet, where it also appears in the final position, in this case after the divine names and epithets Iao, Adonai, and Sabaoth. Kotansky suggested rightly that this amulet was also

used for erotic conquest, because on the handle of the sword there seems to be inscribed the command “let him (or her) go mad!” (μέλνολιθω = μάλνολιτο, *GMA* 62.29–31).

The inclusion of “boy-love”⁹ in the papyrus recipe suggests, in fact, that both the user and the target of this recipe were males, and we find similar hints in a medieval Hebrew handbook that is itself called the *Sword of Moses*; its recipe no. 70 seems to derive, as scholars have long noted, from some version of the late antique Greek recipe quoted above from the Paris Codex:¹⁰

To send a dream against someone, write on a silver plate (*sc.* the angels’ names) from ’BNSNS until QYRYW’S and place (it) in the mouth of a cock and slaughter it while it is placed in its mouth and turn its mouth around and place it between its thighs and bury (it) at the bottom part of a wall. And put your heel on its place and say thus: in the name of []¹¹ may the swift messenger go and torment NN, son of NN, in his dreams, until my will is fulfilled.

The similarities are clear: the Greek recipe tells us to inscribe the powerful names of seven angels on a gold foil, while the Hebrew recipe has us inscribe a different series of angel names on a silver foil; both are inserted into the mouth of a bird and the bird is then killed. The primary difference is that the Greek recipe tells us to remove the foil from the dead bird and wear it like an amulet, but according to the Hebrew recipe we are to bury the bird and silver foil like a curse. In the latter case angels are to torment the male victim with bad dreams until

⁹ For discussion of this plant see P. Vitellozzi, “The Sword of Dardanos: New Reflections on a Magical Gem in Perugia,” in K. Endreffy et al. (eds.), *Magical Gems in their Context* (Rome 2019) 283–304, at 295–296.

¹⁰ Y. Harari, “The Sword of Moses (*Harba de-Moshe*): A New Translation and Introduction,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 7 (2012) 58–98, at 89. For the similarities between the two recipes see Preisendanz, *PGM I* p.6.

¹¹ Harari, *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 7 (2012) 89 n.113: “The words, possibly the names written on the silver tablet, which also had to be recited, are missing.”

the practitioner's "will is fulfilled," a rather general goal, perhaps, but one that may have easily included erotic subjection, a frequent goal of such 'dream-sending' procedures.¹²

As it turns out, the victim of the Tunisian sword may have also been a male. In his edition of *GMA* 62, Kotansky noted that the top half of it was copied from a formulary known elsewhere in the Mediterranean, because the same rows of symbols interspersed with the same angel names and in the same order also appear at the start of another gold amulet (*GMA* 58), which dates much later, to the fourth century CE. This second amulet was allegedly found in Egypt (where perhaps the owner died), but its text shows that it was designed to gain legal victory in the court of the Roman governor of Arabia. The last line inscribed in the top half of the Tunisian 'sword' amulet is not, however, part of the shared formula (line 8): ἀνωτορω. Kotansky thought it was an unattested magical name, but it can, like μέλvolθω, be construed as a Greek performative utterance. Given the scribe's sloppiness in distinguishing alpha and delta in the first two letters of Adonai in line 2, it seems possible to posit a mistake for a personal name followed by a first-person verb: Δεμὸ τορῶ (= τορέω), "I pierce Demo."¹³ Although this Greek verb "to pierce" is to my knowledge unattested in Greek magical texts, it seems appropriate enough on a gold lamella that illustrates a Roman sword. A verb with a similar meaning (περονάω, "to pierce, to pin") is used in a famous erotic curse (*philtrokatadesmos*) in the Paris Codex (*GEMF* 57 [= *PGM* IV] 324 ff.), where we are told to stick thirteen needles into a clay effigy and each time say: "I pierce (περονάω) the head of you, NN, the ears, etc."

3. *A lost victim on a prayer for justice from Delos*

A small marble stele from Delos (*I.Délos* 2531; 1st cent. BCE–

¹² C. A. Faraone, "Some Composite Recipes in the Paris Magical Codex (*GEMF* 57 = *PGM* IV) and How They Grew," in *GEMF*.

¹³ Δημὸ can be an accusative form of the name, contracted from *Demoi-a; I thank Jaime Curbera for his suggestion.

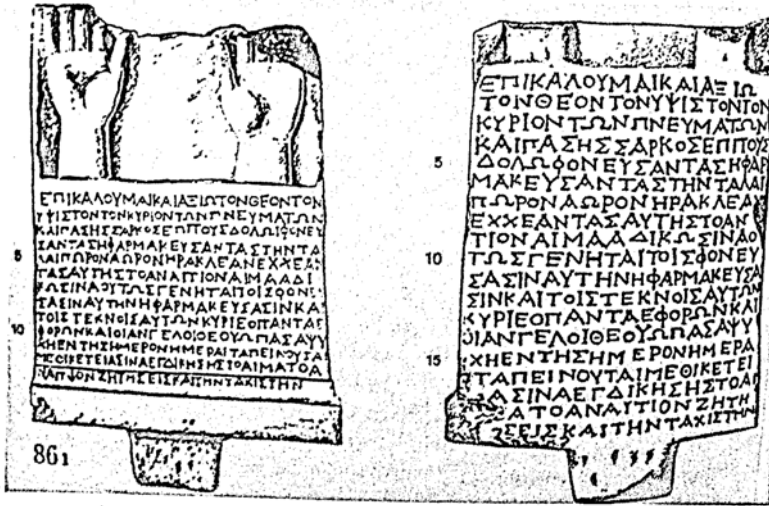


Figure 3: *I.Delos 2532*, drawing after Roussel and Launey

1st cent. CE) was found in the Sanctuary of the Syrian Gods and has a pair of upraised hands on top, similar to those we see on another stele of similar date from nearby Rheneia (*fig. 3*).¹⁴ The Delian version helpfully explains the gesture:¹⁵

Theogenes raises his hands to the Sun and the Pure Goddess against an impious person. She swore to him neither to deprive him of something nor to wrong him and, if she takes a deposit, not to defraud him. And I, having confidence in the Pure Goddess, trusted in the oath and (*sc. in the fact that*) no wrong-doing was done to her by me. But she took a deposit, in order to be manumitted, and deprived me (of it). May she not escape the power of the goddess! And I demand and request from all the worshippers of the goddess to slander her at the right time.

¹⁴ P. Roussel and M. Launey, *I.Délos 2532*; 2nd cent. BCE.

¹⁵ This is the translation of Chaniotis quoted by I. Salvo, “Sweet Revenge: Emotional Factors in ‘Prayers for Justice,’” in A. Chaniotis (ed.), *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World* (Stuttgart 2012) 252 n.74, with my addition of “(*sc. in the fact that*).” For discussion and bibliography see Salvo 251–253.

The beginning of this curse (Θεογένης κατ' ἀναγίου αἶρει τὰς χεῖρας τῷ Ἡλίῳ) presents a puzzle: because the target is not named here, scholars have assumed (as translated above) that this curse is against an anonymous thief who is denigrated as “an impious person.” This is, of course, a sensible assumption, given that there are a number of curses against thieves and most are against anonymous perpetrators.¹⁶ But the difficulty in this case, at least, is that the curse goes on to describe this “impious person” in some detail: she is a woman, she is a former slave, and she defrauded Theogenes of a deposit in order to manumit herself, perhaps even after swearing an oath not to do so in the same sanctuary where the inscription was found. If, therefore, Theogenes forgot to add the person’s name, it was a foolish and crucial mistake, because (i) the whole point of such public curses is to shine a spotlight on the misdeeds of the named individual, and (ii) his final plea that “worshippers of the goddess slander” the perpetrator cannot be fulfilled because they will not know what her name is. There is, however, another possibility: perhaps we have the woman’s name hidden in plain sight. Indeed, the phrase κατ' ἀναγίου could be articulated differently as κατὰ Ναγίου. The name *Ναγίου (gen. Ναγίου), related to the Semitic adjective for “prompt,” could be that of a slave-woman or courtesan from the East, although such a name is undocumented and therefore doubtful; the masculine name Νάγη, however, is found on an ossuary from Jerusalem.¹⁷

4. *A corpse named Jucundus on a curse from Hadrumetum*

A binding curse from Hadrumetum (*DT* 295) was found in a grave and probably dates to the third century CE. The first eight lines are in Greek and invoke a series of magical names,

¹⁶ See C. A. Faraone and J. Rife, “A Greek Curse against a Thief from the North Cemetery at Roman Kenchreai,” *ZPE* 160 (2007) 141–157, with many additional parallels.

¹⁷ E. Puesch, *RBibl* 90 (1983) 525 [*SEG* XXXIII 1288], citing OT names of the root Ναγ- (Ναγαί etc.).

including Baubo, Ereshkigal, and the “Queen of Tartarus.” The rest is written mainly in Latin and ends by bidding these *demonēs infernales* to attack a number of chariot horses:¹⁸

... bind the feet of these horses, so that they are unable to run, these horses whose names you have here inscribed and submitted, Incletus, Nitides, Patricius, Nauta ... bind them so that they cannot run on the racetracks tomorrow or the day after and so that at every hour they collapse on the racetrack *quomodo et tu iucundu emeritus es βίος θάνατος*.

The untranslated words at the end are a mixture of Latin and Greek and their meaning is not entirely clear. Audolent threw up his hands (“Quid significet locus me fugit”) and Gager translated “just as you lie (here) prematurely dead,” following a suggestion made privately by Jordan that βίος θάνατος means “prematurely dead,”¹⁹ although one would think that this is more likely a mistake for βίαιοθάνατος, “violently killed.” Gager’s translation rightly understands that the simile beginning with *quomodo* somehow equates the targeted horses with the corpse, but it completely ignores the word *iucundu* (= either *iucundus* or *iucunde*), which, if taken at face value, seems contrary to the sense needed, indeed almost oxymoronic, *tu iucunde emeritus* “you who are pleasantly exhausted (i.e. dead),” which is in fact how Tremel rendered it (“erfreulich ausgedient”).²⁰ The adjective *emeritus* is itself perfectly suitable, because it can be used to describe exhausted horses,²¹ so I suggest that *iucundu* is

¹⁸ For the frequent attacks on the horses before or instead of the charioteers see C. A. Faraone, “Cursing Chariot Horses instead of Drivers in the Hippodromes of the Eastern Roman Empire,” in C. S. Sánchez Natalias (ed.), *Litterae Magicae: Studies in Honor of Roger Tomlin* (Zaragoza 2019) 83–101.

¹⁹ J. G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford 1992) 65 and n.70.

²⁰ J. Tremel, *Magica Agonistica: Fluchtafeln im antiken Sport* (Hildesheim 2004) 143.

²¹ Lewis and Short s.v.: “unfit for service, worn out,” citing Ov. *Fasti* 4.688 *dempserat emeritis iam iuga Phoebus equis* (“Phoebus had already unyoked his spent steeds”).

likely the name of the person buried in the grave where the curse was buried: “may they (the horses) collapse (of exhaustion) on the racetrack, just as you, Jucundus (the corpse), are also ‘exhausted’, one violently killed.” In this reading, we assume, of course, that the *defigens* knew that the name of the deceased was Jucundus²² and that he had indeed died violently, facts that he could have easily learned from an epitaph or from local tradition.²³

5. *A misunderstood mummy on a lead curse tablet from Egypt*

Of unique design is a pair of lead tablets that date to the second century CE. They were cut to the same rectangular size (10.1 x 8.8 cm), placed face to face like a diptych, and then held together by four nails (*Suppl.Mag.* 37; D. R. Jordan, *GRBS* 26 [1985] 190). Each was inscribed with a short curse aimed at the erotic subjugation of a woman named Nike:²⁴

²² There are at least three secure parallels for direct address to the dead person in the grave. Two are from Egypt: *Suppl.Mag.* 37, a pair of second-century CE erotic curse tablets addressed to “Horion, son of Sarapous” (see §5 below for full text and discussion), and P.Duk.inv. 230, another erotic curse, this one addressed to “Kleopatron, daughter(?) of Patrakinos(?),” discussed by D. R. Jordan, “P.Duk.inv. 230, an Erotic Spell,” *GRBS* 40 (1999) 159–170. For the third parallel see E. Vouiras, “Euphemistic Names for the Powers of the Nether World,” in D. R. Jordan et al. (eds.), *The World of Ancient Magic* (Bergen 1999) 73–82, discussing a curse tablet from Pella (found near the hand of the corpse) that entrusts a curse to “Makron and the *daimones*” and enters the debate on a fourth possible example, *DT* 43–44, 1st–2nd cent. CE, a curse tablet from Megara addressed to a “Pasianax,” who is either the corpse or an underworld god. Jordan (168) also cites a recipe in *GEMF* 57 (= *PGM* IV) 2180–2181 that tells us to insert the name of the *nekudaimon* into the spell to be recited at the grave.

²³ Jordan, *GRBS* 40 (1999) 168, notes that Boll, the original editor of *SM* 37, “assumed that the scribe knew the young Horion before he died.”


²⁴ The idea that one might curse the object of one’s erotic desire is a long-standing one in the Greek world, beginning with Pindar’s description of the curse that Jason used to seduce Medea and ending with Roman-era curses like this one against Nike, which combines a plea for erotic subjugation with two features usually associated with binding spells inscribed on curse tablets: the lead medium and deposition in a grave. See C. A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek*

Horion, son of Sarapous, make and force Nike, the daughter of Apollonous, to be erotically attracted (ἐρασθῆναι) to Paitous, whom Tmesios bore.

Make Nike, the daughter of Apollonous, be erotically attracted to Paitous, whom Tmesios bore, for five months.

The first curse has, in addition, a small profile drawing of mummy with a footboard and three vertical lines drawn across its thighs (*fig. 4*):

Tab. A	Tab. B
1	1
4	4
8	
12	

᾽Ωρίων Σαραπούτος,
ποιήσον καὶ ἀνάγκα-
 σον
Νίκην
᾽Απολ-
λωνοῦ-
τος ἐ-
ρασθῆ-
ναι Παι-
τοῦτ[ος,]
ἦν ἔτ[εκ-]
ε Τμεσιῶς.

ποίησον Νίκην ᾽Α[πολ-]
λωνοῦτος
ἐρασθῆναι Παντοῦ-
τος, ἦν ἔτεκεν
Τμεσιῶς, ἐπὶ ε᾽
μῆνας.

Figure 4: *Suppl.Mag.* 37, drawing used with the permission of the authors and the Institut für Altertumskunde, University of Cologne

Commentators suggest plausibly that this is a drawing of Horion, son of Sarapous, the dead man who is invoked as the agent of the curse and whose body we might indeed imagine to be wrapped as a mummy. It is not clear, however, why the author would depict the intended agent of the curse in such a helpless position, since curses that invoke the dead usually aim

Love Magic (Cambridge [Mass.] 1999) 41–68; “Simaetha got it right, after all: Theocritus, *Idyll* 2, a Courtesan’s Pantry and a Lost Greek Tradition of Hexametrical Curses,” *CQ* 71 (2021).



Figure 5: Via Appia tablet, detail, drawing after Wunsch

at waking them up and getting them to emerge from the ground and attack the victim.²⁵ The image, in short, works against the typical scenario for this type of curse. There are, moreover, no parallels for depicting an attacking nekudaimon as a mummy, but there are a number of mummies (also engraved in profile) on the later fourth-century curse tablets from the Via Appia (*fig. 5*) that clearly represent the intended victims.²⁶ We know this because they are encircled by snakes and they are each clearly labeled or associated with the name(s) of the person(s) being cursed in the text. The layout of the Egyptian curse tablet suggests the same idea, in fact, because the mummy was placed on the fourth line of the text, three lines below the name of the dead man (Horion), but directly before the name of the targeted victim (Nike).

²⁵ See the use of imperatives of ἐγείρειν (“wake up!”) in a number of curses buried in graves, e.g. *Suppl.Mag.* 45.4, 47.18, 48.20.

²⁶ R. Wunsch, *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln aus Rom* (Leipzig 1898) no. 17.

6. *A rubric for apnea on a gold amulet from Syria*

A gold lamella from Syria (*fig. 6*) dated to the fifth-sixth century CE was published originally by Mouterde (*IGLSyrie* IV 1284) and then republished by Kotansky forty years later (*GMA* 45). With the help of a new photograph, the latter transcribed the initial rubric as *πρὸς ἀμπιαν*, which he saw as a mistake for *πρὸς ὑγ(ε)ίαν*, “for health,” a reading that echoed the text highlighted at the center of the amulet in the frame of a *tabula ansata*: *ὑγιάνω / δὸς τὴν εὐχάριον* (“Make healthy. Give favor”).²⁷ The rubric *πρὸς ὑγ(ε)ίαν*, “for health,” however, is unparalleled, and so general that it frustrates our usual expectation that the second word would be a specific disease or danger.²⁸ Jordan, moreover, suggested that that the last two lines inside of the *tabula ansata* are better rendered as *δὸς πνε(ῦμα), χάριον*, pointing out that there seems to be a line above *πνε* which would make it an abbreviation for *πνεῦμα*,²⁹ an abbreviation that would be welcome in such a late and obviously Christian text, which has crosses at the start and finish, invokes “the vigorous name, crown of the Lord,” and renders the final word of that phrase with another common abbreviation, *κ(υρίο)υ*, which also has a line drawn above. The revised text of the last two lines in the *tabula ansata* must be read, therefore, as “give breath (and) charm.”

²⁷ The verb *ὑγιάνω* makes some sense as a subjunctive, “may I be healthy!”, although it is found only very rarely, e.g. in a purpose clause in the Christian prayer on a papyrus amulet (*PGM* IX.13 and 30: “that you chase away from me the demon ... in order that I be healthy”). Here in *GMA* 45, however, it is followed immediately by an imperative.

²⁸ Rubrics with *pros* + positive outcome are not, however, unheard of, e.g. “For (i.e. easy) childbirth”; see the discussion in A. E. Hanson, “A Long-lived ‘Quick-birther’ (*okytokion*),” in V. Dasen (ed.), *Naissance et petite enfance dans l’Antiquité* (Göttingen 2002) 265–277.

²⁹ D. R. Jordan, “Il testo greco di una gemma magica dall’Afghanistan (?) nel Museo Pushkin, Mosca,” in A. Mastrocinque (ed.), *Atti dell’incontro di studio: Gemme gnostiche e cultura ellenistica* (Bologna 2002) 61–68, at 67–68.

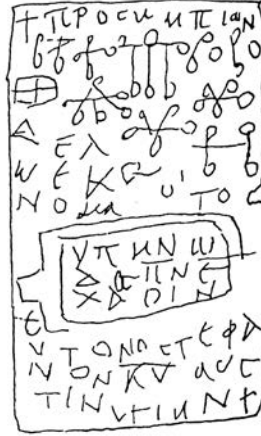


Figure 6: GMA 45, drawing by Roy Kotansky, used with his permission and that of the Institut für Altertumskunde, University of Cologne

Jordan's new interpretation tempts us, in turn, to take a further look at the puzzling rubric *πρὸς ἀμπιαν*, which is, I suggest, better understood as a mistake for *πρὸς ἄπν(ο)ιαν*, "Against apnea."³⁰ Apnea is, of course, the temporary and sometimes fatal suspension of breathing that occurs in young infants, as well as in adults. This concern about infants is apparent in Book 18 of *Testament of Solomon*, a collection of amulet recipes cast in the form of the individual confessions that numerous demons made to King Solomon before he imprisoned them beneath the temple in Jerusalem. The twenty-first demon confesses as follows (18.25):³¹

³⁰ The word *ἄπνοιαν* originally refers to the absence of or shelter from wind, but medical writers, beginning with Galen (e.g. VII 959, VIII 281 K.), use it to mean "absence of respiration." As to the loss of the omicron, Latin initially borrows the Greek term as *apnoea*, which then becomes *apnea*.

³¹ For the fairly recent revolution in our understanding of the origins and date of Book 18 see R. W. Daniel, "Testament of Solomon XVIII 27–28, 33–40," in *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer (P. Rainer Cent.): Festschrift zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Vienna 1983) 294–304, no. 39; T. E. Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon: Tradition, Conflict and Identity in a Late Antique Pseudepigraphon* (London 2006) 107.

I am called Ousalath. I produce difficult breathing in babies (δύσπνοιαν τοῖς νηπίοις ἐμποιῶ), if anyone writes “Rharideris” and carries it, I will retreat immediately [variant added in P: inscribe on papyrus “You, Rhorêx, pursue Alath!” and tie it on the neck].

In both of the versions preserved in the manuscript tradition, powerful entities with similar sounding names—“Rharideris” and “Rhorêx”—will chase away the demon who causes the problem. There is, moreover, at least one gemstone aimed at curing a similar pathology, a hematite gem in the Skoluda collection: “Lord Rhathaor, stop the shortness of breath (παῦσο[ν τ]ῆν δύσ[π]νοιαν) of the woman who carries (this) or the man who carries (this)!”³² The name of this entity, Rhathaor, is similar enough to the pursuer(s) in the *Testament* passage to suggest a common tradition.

If *GMA* 45 was indeed used to cure apnea in a baby, then we might also make better sense of the first line in the *tabula ansata*, which Kotansky transcribes as υγιανω. The *Testament* recipe and the Skoluda gem both suggest that what we need here is a divine or magical name and the most likely candidate is Ὑγί<ει>α,³³ a singular goddess to whom the singular imperative δὸς is addressed, but this leaves the final ω unaccounted for. It is, then, probably safer to assume that the power invoked on the gold lamella from Syria was an invented magical name, like “Lord Rhathaor” invoked above, one that had as its base the

³² C. A. Faraone, “Notes on Four Inscribed Magical Gemstones,” *ZPE* 160 (2007) 81–85, correcting the text in S. Michel, *Bunte Steine – Dunkle Bilder: “Magische Gemmen”* (Munich 2001) 35, no. 23.

³³ According to S. Michel, *Die Magischen Gemmen: Zu Bildern und Zauberformeln auf geschnittenen Steinen der Antike und Neuzeit* (Berlin 2004) 524, Hygieia appears in the nominative on at least three gem amulets in the shortened forms that begin to be used in the late Hellenistic period, e.g. *BM* 270 (εἰς θεὸς ὑγία on the reverse of a fourth-century CE gem of the horseman Solomon spearing a demoness); *SMA* 270 (a corrupt prayer on the back of an otherwise blank carnelian: “Comfort <me>, O Hygieia!” in Bonner’s interpretation—the goddess’ name is spelled ὑγιῶ); and A. Delatte and P. Derchain, *Les intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris 1964) 80.

name of the Greek healing goddess Hygieia: Ὑγιανῶ, δὸς πνεύμα), χάριν.

7. *Hecate on a heart-shaped amulet*

GEMF 57 (= *PGM* IV) 2630–2635 preserves a puzzling recipe for a magnetic amulet to be worn for protection during a divine encounter:

σκευὴ φυλακτηρίου τῆς πραγματείας· λαβὼν μάγνητα τὸν πνέοντα ποιήσον ὡς καρδίαν, καὶ ἐνγεγλύφθω Ἑκάτη περικειμένη καρδίᾳ ὡς μηνίσκια. εἶτα τὸ εἰκοσαγράμματον τὸ φωνᾶεν χάραξον, καὶ φόρει περὶ τὸ σῶμα. ἔστιν δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ὄνομα τὸ γραφόμενον· “αεω ηιε· ωα· εωη· εωα· ωι· εωϊ.”

Preparation of the procedure's protective charm: Take a magnet that is breathing, fashion it in the form of a heart, and let there be engraved on it a Hecate lying about the heart like a little crescent. Then carve the twenty-lettered spell that is all vowels, and wear it around your body. The following name is what is written: ΑΕΥΟ ΕΙΕ ΟΑ ΕΟΕ ΕΟΑ ΟΙ ΕΟΙ.³⁴

This magnetic amulet is to be shaped like a “heart,” presumably the traditionally jug-shaped Egyptian amulet that by the Roman period is simplified to a shape like that of an inverted teardrop, as in *fig. 7*.³⁵ Preisendanz, thinking that the figure of Hecate was to be carved in such a way that she *surrounds* the heart like a crescent moon, translated ἐνγεγλύφθω Ἑκάτη περικειμένη καρδίᾳ ὡς μηνίσκια as “eine Hekate ... die das Herz umgibt wie ein kleiner Mond,” and O’Neil followed suit: “*lying about* the heart, like a little crescent.” The word μηνίσκια, however, is plural (“crescent moons”), and it is difficult to imagine how such a design could be achieved on the shape that we see in *fig. 7*. The solution, I suggest, begins with the realization that (i) the letters καρδία need to be understood as κάρδια, the plural of the neuter diminutive κάρδιον, which re-

³⁴ Transl. O’Neil in H. D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*² (Chicago 1992) 87.

³⁵ M. Sommerville, *Engraved Gems: Their Place in the History of Art* (Philadelphia 1889) pl. 49, no. 1434.



Figure 7: Egyptian heart-amulet, drawing after Sommerville

fers to a “heart-shaped ornament”;³⁶ and (ii) the verb *περίκειμαι* is often used in the middle voice with the accusative to refer to something “worn around” the neck or the head (LSJ s.v. II). Thus, the passage—emending *καρδία* to *κάρδια*—can be translated: “and let there be engraved a Hecate wearing around her (neck or head) heart-shaped ornaments, like little crescent moons.” But what does the simile at the end mean: heart-shaped ornaments, “like little crescent moons”? Hecate herself is, in fact, occasionally depicted with an upturned crescent moon on the top of her head, as we can see in the heliotrope gem *BM* 66, over the head farthest to the right (*fig.* 8). The plural *μηνίσκια* in the *GEMF* 57 passage has in the past been dismissed as an error, but the plural form of *κάρδια* guarantees it, and a recently discovered version of the famous bronze triangle in the ‘Pergamon kit’ helps us visualize the design:³⁷ on it all three images of Hecate wear the same crescent moon (*fig.* 9), suggesting that the *GEMF* 57 recipe directs us to engrave an image of the famous triple-faced goddess, albeit with a single body and six arms, as she often appears on magical gems (e.g.

³⁶ LSJ s.v. cite *IG* XI.2 161B.116 (Delos, 3rd cent. BCE), where it appears, as here, in the plural.

³⁷ W. Bruce and K. J. Miller, “Towards a Typology of Triangular Bronze Hecate Bases: Contextualizing a Recent Find from Sardis,” *JRA* 30 (2017) 509–516.

BM 69, fig. 10), with one crucial change, namely, that heart-shaped ornaments replace the little crescent moons. Such a triple image of Hecate, wide on the top and narrow on the bottom, would, moreover, fit easily onto an amulet in the shape of an Egyptian ‘heart’, which, as we saw above (*fig. 7*), is also wider at the top and tapers to the bottom.³⁸

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Figure 8: BM 66, author’s photograph, used with the permission of the Trustees of the British Museum

³⁸ I am grateful to Jaime Curbera, Roy Kotansky and Kent Rigsby for their comments and corrections on this article.



Figure 9: Bronze plate from Sardis, drawing after Bruce and Miller (2017) and used with permission



Figure 10: BM 69, author's photograph, used with the permission of the Trustees of the British Museum