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# Desire, Gossip, Uncertainty and Magic in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*

**Richard Gordon**
**Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, University of Erfurt**
richard.gordon@uni-erfurt.de

**Abstract**

This paper frames what is loosely known as 'love magic' in the Graeco-Roman world as a matter of individual strategies in highly-charged contexts involving not merely two (or more) individuals but fundamental social necessities such as family stability, generational reproduction, the proper ordering of social life, and moral sensibilities. It pursues two main issues: the playing out of the gender asymmetry institutionalised in ancient societies in different situations (heterosexual marriage or quasi-marriage; heterosexual pre-marital relationships; contexts in which sexual favours are exchanged for cash or presents) and the centrality of narratives of all kinds – self-exculpations, rumours, reports, accusations, and explicitly fictional scenarios – in positioning individuals in the face of what they perceived as more or less critical situations.

**Key Words:** . Love magic (Graeco-Roman), gender asymmetries, social strategies, social history in fiction, astrology and sexual life.

**Begierde, Gerede, Ungewissheit und Magie in der griechisch-römischen Antike**

**Zusamenfassung**

Dieser Aufsatz versteht das lose definierte Phänomen der griechisch-römischen „Liebesmagie" als Bündel individueller Strategien, die in brisanten Situationen angewandt werden können und nicht nur zwei (oder mehr) Individuen berühren, sondern fundamentale soziale Bedürfnisse, darunter Familiensicherheit, Fortpflanzung, geordnetes Sozialleben und moralische Werte, tangieren. Er widmet sich zwei zentralen Fragen: den Auswirkungen und der Ausgestaltung der in der Antike tief verankerten Asymmetrien zwischen den Geschlechtern in verschiedenen Konstellationen (heterosexuelle Ehe oder Quasi-Ehe, heterosexuelle voreheliche Verhältnisse, Kontexte, in denen sexuelle Gefallen für Geld oder Geschenke erwiesen werden), sowie der zentralen Bedeutung von Narrativen aller Art – Selbstentschuldigungen, Gerüchte, Berichte, Anschuldigungen und explizit fiktionale Szenarien –, die es Individuen erlauben, sich angesichts der von ihnen als mehr oder minder kritisch empfundenen Situationen zu positionieren.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Liebesmagie in der gräko-römischen Welt, Ungleichheit der Geschlechterverhältnisse, soziale Strategien, fiktionale Erzählungen als Quellen für Sozialgeschichte, Sexualleben in der Astrologie .

Some time ago, I had occasion to visit the town of Azemmour, not far from El Jadida on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, some little way south of Casablanca. Captured by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, the town is still today, like El Jadida, protected by its city walls, but is now mainly known (at any rate among Moroccans) for its well-frequented divinatory shrine near the mouth of the Oum er-Rbia, which flows past the town. Locally, however, it is also known for its magical practices. A female neighbour of the French patron of my *riad* told me, for example, that the baby chameleons I had seen in a jar in one of the numerous stalls offering *materia* for Arab medicine are used by married women in rituals to recover errant husbands, in the course of which the creatures are thrown alive into a fire[1].

The neighbour's account serves to make my first point, which is that in those parts of the Mediterranean world we can still up to a point call 'traditional', and certainly in Antiquity, gender relations, except among the politico-social elites, where women have much greater freedom, are to be defined as asymmetrical, in that, at any rate in relation to sexuality (we can leave domestic violence to one side), it is the 'natural', and indeed often the legal, order of things – i.e. if no 'underhand' measures are taken (of which more below) – that the man's will is central, and everything else

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* I would like to thank Juan Francisco Martos Montiel and Aurelio Pérez Jiménez for inviting me to the enjoyable conference in Málaga. I use the term 'Graeco-Roman' exclusively to refer to to material from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, thus excluding the Classical period (the evidence for which has been well-discussed by Eidinow 2007, 210-224). My title, and especially the partial focus on gossip and rumour, deliberately evokes that of Stewart and Strathern 2004.

Abbreviations used: *Bull.* ép. = *Bulletin* épigraphique , annually in *Revue des* Études *Grecques*; *CCAG* = *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, 12 vols. in 20, Brussels 1898-1953); DK = H. Diels & W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 26, Zurich 1952; *DTAud* = A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* ..., Paris 1904; repr. Frankfurt a.M. 1967; *I.Knidos* = W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Knidos*, 1, IK 41, Bonn 1992); *IMGL* = R. L. M. Heim, "Incantamenta magica graeca latina", *Jahrbuch für classische Philologie*, Supplementband, 19 (1892) 465-575 (also as separatum, Leipzig 1892); *LGPN* = *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names,* Oxford, 1987--; *PGrMag* = K. Preisendanz (ed., tr.), *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, Leipzig 1928-1931; cited from second ed., revised by A. Henrichs, Stuttgart 1973-1974 (repr. Munich and Leipzig 2001); *PWRE* = *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen* Altertumswissenschaft; Syll$^{3}$ = W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, Leipzig 1915-1924.

1 My reason for asking about chameleons in North Africa was, of course, Pliny's report of the entire book on the marvellous properties of the chameleon ascribed to 'Democritus' by Pliny *HN* 28.112-118. Wellmann (1921, 27f.) believed that this was part of the work on sympathies and antipathies by Bolus of Mendes, a claim for which I can see no evidence. Pliny's detailed account of the appearance of the chameleon (8.120f.), which reads quite differently from the Democritean account, is usually taken to be based on the Περὶ Λιβύης συγγράμματα by the learned Juba II of Mauretania (ruled 25 BCE – 23 CE), cf. Münzer 1897: 411-422.

is secondary[2]. In the Moroccan case, unless the married woman herself disposes of independent social power and financial resources through her family of origin, she is effectively helpless if her husband decides to leave her for another younger woman, despite the fact that she has borne him children. She can argue and make scenes, but if he remains adamant, there is little she can do without recourse to magic. The aim of the chameleon-ritual is to cause him to *change his mind, forget the new girl, and remember his responsibilities*. It is therefore what in ancient Greek is called a φίλτρον, in the narrow sense a *substance*, liquid or solid, whose ingestion will cause an *involuntary* change of mind in the context of a crisis in a relationship, in the wider sense a *ritual* whose performance will produce the same result[3].

The φίλτρον, in other words, is an institution produced and driven by the power-asymmetry between the two parties involved[4]. Moreover, because the φίλτρον constitutes an intervention into a 'natural' asymmetry of power, it is inherently contestable: for the one party, it is an illicit, underhand attempt to cause a change of heart, a violent infringement of freedom of decision ( a view strongly supported in Roman law[5]), for the other, a subterfuge reluctantly resorted to in the absence of other means. The φίλτρον in this sense is therefore to be distinguished conceptually from the ἀγώγιμον, which attempts to exploit the prescriptive volatility of (primari-

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2 Pitt-Rivers 1977: 18-47 at 38f.; Lisón-Tolesano 1983; 143-169; du Boulay 1974; 100-141; in ancient Greece: Gould 2001:14f., 65-67. For a balanced discussion of the objections that have been levelled against the use of such comparanda, which are primarily based on village-life, see McGinn 1998, 10-14. Of course, I am not arguing for a return to the old 'paternal despotism' notion.

3 There is a good account of the uses of the word φίλτρον in Classical Greece, and its supposed effects on the mind, by Armoni 2001: 33-67, cf. Faraone 1999: 113-119, 136-140.

4 On the masculine body in antiquity, see briefly Holmes 2010: 163-169.

5 Little is known of Hellenistic rules on such matters. At Rome, the *lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis*, the main legal title covering dangerous drugs throughout the Principate, was explicitly extended by the jurisconsults, at latest by the Severan period but probably much earlier, to cover *amatoria*: *ergo nomen* (i.e. *venenum*) *medium est et tam id quod ad sanandum quam id quod ad occidendum paratum est continet, sed et id quod amatorium appellatur* (Marcianus *Instit.* 14 ap. *Dig.* 48.8.3.2). Although there was no doubt about the usual penalty for causing death by administering such a compound, Hadrian allowed some leeway in taking intention into account (Marcianus *ibid* ap. Dig. 48.8.1.3), though this seems later to have been rescinded – at any rate [Paulus] *sent.* 5.23.19, cf. *Dig*. 48.19.38.5, makes no such allowances if a death supervenes after the administration of a compound intended as a medicine. It is however clear from Apuleius' trial on a charge of using magic, which turned on the claim that he had given Pudentilla an *amatorium*, that the prosecution could view the very administration of such a compound as criminal, cf. Lamberti 2002: 338-350 (though, oddly enough, she does not cite *Dig.* 48.8.3.2); Treggiari 1991: 120; Dixon 1997: 155, 162-164.

ly) female sexuality for personal advantage[6]. In other words, whereas the ἀγώγιμον aims simply to extend the reach of the prescriptive asymmetry *in this situation*, the φίλτρον actually seeks to curtail it[7]. The issue of asymmetrical power in gender relations raised by the Moroccan chameleon-ritual is one main theme of this paper. The other is the centrality in erotic situations of narratives of different kinds (self-exculpations, rumours, reports, accusations, explicitly fictional scenarios ...), each with their own *fabula* or thematic matrix – every player in these situations knows how to frame a 'proper' narrative, i.e. one that blends social stereotypes with his or her own diagnosis of the situation, interests, strategies, self-understanding and moral sense). Where then is 'the truth' in such situations to be found, the Archimedean point?[8] Moreover, given our dependence on literary representations in this context, which invariably derive their recognisability from the *fabulae*[9], it is rare to find scenarios that can be used at all straightforwardly by the social historian – there is an irreducible element of speculation (always 'plausible', of course), of reading between the lines, in any attempt to move from representations to history – not to mention navigating the hidden, and not so hidden, agendas of modern scholarly camps.

Since *MHNH* is devoted to the study both of ancient astrology and of magic, it is appropriate here to consider both practices with regard to ancient gender relations[10]. In general, I view Graeco-Roman texts in these two areas as complementary representatives of a complex discourse relating to a central, highly ambivalent and contentious aspect of these social formations, namely the management and control of emotionally-charged experiences that are at the same time inseparably related to fun-

6 Forcible erotic texts (ἀγώγιμα) are the focus of many contributions to the general topic of 'love-magic', e.g. PETROPOULOS 1988; WINKLER 1990; BERNARD 1991: 285-310; MARTINEZ 1995; LIDONNICI 1999; FARAONE 1999: 41-95; DICKIE 2000; JACKSON-MCCABE 2010: 267-274; DAVIS 2010: 260-264, and I pay little attention to them here.

7 I thus use the term φίλτρον here not in its extended ancient usage, in which it is often effectively a synonym of φάρμακον, but in a semantically restricted sense, to denote substances and rituals aimed at restricting the play of gender asymmetry within a given (sexual) relationship.

8 The classic account of this impasse is Jeanne FAVRET-SAADA's account of her attempt to study witchcraft in the Norman Bocage (FAVRET-SAADA 1977).

9 Cf. FEENEY 1998; 2007; RÜPKE 2007; GORDON 2009.

10 Most of the contributions to the conference in Málaga ("*Ad astra per corpora*: astrología y sexualidad en el mundo antiguo", February 2015) were concerned with astrological texts: cf., e. g., CALDERÓN DORDA 2014 (Firmicus Maternus), DOMÍNGUEZ-ALONSO 2015 (Anonymous Commentary on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*), GREENBAUM 2015 (Lot of Eros), HEILEN 2014 (Antigonus of Nicaea), HÜBNER 2014 (Ptolemy's *Apotelesmatica*), PÉREZ JIMÉNEZ 2016 (incest).

damental social necessities such as reproduction, the transfer of property from one generation to the next, and the proper organisation of meaningful social life[11]. From the social historian's point of view (as opposed to that of the specialist in astrology), however, there is much less to be said about the latter than about 'magic'. Indeed, the only aspect of astrology of interest to me here is katarchic astrology, which offered advice about forthcoming decisions on the basis of the interplay of the significant heavenly bodies[12]. Because the major ancient *apotelesmatika*, apart from Hephaestion Bk. III, contain so little material relevant to this type of astrology, we are forced to turn to the material to be found in the *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum* (*CCAG*), most of which cannot be dated and some of which, for example the mss. in Athens excerpted by Armand Delatte, were still being copied in the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries[13]. Even the earlier, mainly mid-XV to mid-XVII cent., mss. in Italian, German or Russian libraries are complex 'living' compilations, containing materials of different dates, sometimes antique, often Byzantine, medieval and early modern[14]. But from my point of view this does not matter much, since we are dealing with anxieties, claims and representations that persisted over *la longue durée*, and certainly survived the transition to Christianity. Other mss. transcribed by Delatte in *Anecdota Atheniensia* are interesting here too, since they contain a number of recipes, called φίλτρα or ἀποτελέσματα, claiming to effect compulsive sexual attraction, that is, ἀγώγιμα in my sense, but here spliced with astrological considerations[15].

My main inspiration in focusing on magical practice (and secondarily on katarchic astrology) was the project attached to the Max Weber Center in Erfurt entitled Lived Ancient Religion, which was directed by Jörg Rüpke (2012-2017)[16]. This pro-

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[11] I try throughout to avoid reifying the 'social' here, cf. Joyce 2010: 223-237.

[12] The only major discussion of katarchic astrology known to me is the splendid book by Wolfgang Hübner, which is however confined to the system of *kentra*, which has little relevance to my theme here (2003, cf. 2002). I have elsewhere approached the topic from the point of view of decision-taking (Gordon 2013).

[13] E.g. *CCAG X* (1924) nos. 10, 11, 14, 15, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29.

[14] *CCAG* V.1 (1904), for example, contains an epistolary exchange between Manuel I Comnenus and the Byzantine 'historian' Michael Glycas (pp.106-141) and excerpts from the *libri mysteriorum Apomasaris* (pp.149-179) from Roman libraries. Some of the early Byzantine authors in *CCAG*, such as Eutochius of Ascalon, Julian of Laodicea, Leontius, Rhetorius and Palchos, are discussed in Gundel and Gundel 1966, 244-254.

[15] E.g. Delatte 1927: 4115-21, 4481-12, 4621-4, 4661-19 etc. See also n.65 below.

[16] Financed by the European Research Council (Seventh Framework Programme, F7/2013, grant no. 295555). For the initial aims, see Rüpke 2011, and for the final statement, Albrecht et al. 2018.

ject deliberately adopted a fresh perspective on the religious history of Mediterranean antiquity, starting not from the dominant perspective of public or civic religion but from the individual and his or her concrete religious practice[17]. In our practice at Erfurt, the term 'lived religion' denoted conceptions and experiences of, and practices addressed to, the divine world, which are appropriated, expressed, and shared by individuals in concrete situations in very diverse social spaces, from the primary space of the family through the shared space of public institutions to trans-local literary communication. As far as I was concerned, the idea of 'lived religion' provided a frame-work for shifting the focus of the study of what we conventionally call 'magic' from the 'symbolic' level preferred by traditional approaches in the history of religions to specific social contexts and the meanings constructed within them[18]. This involves abandoning the abstract categories 'religion' and 'magic', with their inescapable moral packaging, and thinking instead in terms of optional, semi-institutionalised strategies open to individuals in predicaments that for them were often crisis-situations, which threatened their social, economic, moral or emotional existence[19]. Written curse-tablets are often our most direct evidence of such strategies, but the limited, and of course one-sided, information they provide needs to be supplemented by more general considerations. As a complement to this context-based approach, we should view professional practitioners as offering relevant services in order to protect the perceived interests of their clients. Both sides shared a conception of the aims and intentions of the practice, even if in point of technical knowledge the relation between practitioner and client was normally, though not invariably, highly asymmetrical. There was moreover a fundus of popular lore about self-help in such matters, and of course there still is, as our Moroccan case bears out.

The first relatively extended attempt to study what astrological texts tell us about ancient society was Franz Cumont's *L'Égypte des astrologues* (1937). Part 2 of this

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17 There are several different, though related, approaches to 'Lived Religion' currently on offer in the US, cf. e.g. the essays in Hall 1997 and Ammermann 2007. The Erfurt version took its starting-point from the book by the American sociologist of religion Meredith McGuire about individual religious bricolage in the United States (McGuire 2008).

18 A corollary of this is that one ceases to talk of 'magicians', 'witches', 'incantations', 'spells' and 'aggression', as if these were the natural or proper terms, and tries to find neutral ones instead: the social historian is not in the game of reproducing the partisan language of ancient actants as though it were 'factual'. These terms are only appropriate, if at all, when discussing the ancient discourse *about* magic, and even then it would be better to transliterate the individual words – what is the Greek for 'witch'? Is γόης a 'magician'? Or γοητεία 'magic'?

19 This socio-cultural approach has now become more common, especially since the publication of Trzcionka 2007, Stratton 2007, Eidinow 2007.

book, published when Cumont was already 70 years of age, is entitled “La religion et la morale”, of which §14, “Les mœurs”, discusses sexual behaviour. Here he adopted the stance of the weary but slightly scandalised man of the world in the face of so much Graeco-Egyptian perversity:

> On pourrait multiplier les textes pour montrer comment ces tares et ces vices étaient répandus. Nos auteurs semblent parfois se plaire, avec une sorte de sadisme, à signaller la variété des turpitudes et des perversions sexuelles dont ils rendent responsable la poétique étoile du soir. Ils énumèrent toutes les aberrations d’un érotisme morbide avec une impudeur sereine de casuistes : viols, rapports contre nature, flagellations, sodomie[20].

The social or cultural historian, however, needs to stand further back. I return to my initial point about the asymmetry of ancient (and many modern) gender relations. It is this that requires the social historian to focus not so much on sex or sexual behaviour ‘in itself’ as upon the different sorts of social relation within which these are framed[21]. In other words, as my distinction between the φίλτρ ον and the ἀγώγιμον has already implid, the label ‘love-magic’, which after all comes from every-day language, is too undifferentiated to be of much value to the social historian. Of the wide range of imaginable situations, I pick out here just three: 1) regular heterosexual marriage; 2) what we might term pre-marital relations, at any rate mainly those of young unmarried persons of free status; 3) sex-workers in brothels or analogous social situations where sex is viewed primarily as a commodity under consideration of the exchange of money, and money-substitutes such as jewellery, in return for sexual services. The evidence for the play of magical practice in many other common situations (e.g. master/slave, structural intra-family tensions, e.g. between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law) where it might have played a role, is extremely limited or even non-existent[22]. I limit myself to heterosexual relations, since that is the primary focus of the surviving material both in katarchic astrology and in magical practice.

1. Institutionalised marriage or marriage-like arrangements between free persons

In what follows, I make no distinction between Hellenistic Greek and Roman marriage-patterns, considerable though they were[23]. With some exceptions, ancient mar-

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20 Cumont 1937: 182f.

21 Frankfurter 2014: 331f. admirably adduces comparative evidence from modern ethnography.

22 Some of these are sketched by Frankfurter 2014: 323-328, who also takes some Coptic material into account.

23 Hellenistic world: Velissaropoulos-Karakostas 2011: 263-294; Rome: Gardner 1986: 31-80; Treggiari 1991: 83-160; Dixon 1997: 61-97.

riage was virilocal, that is, the wife was compelled to separate herself from her family of origin in order to live with her husband's family[24]. Where property was involved, marriages were arranged by the respective fathers or guardians of the prospective couple. This meant that the wife's status in her new family was largely a function of the wealth that was transferred out of her own family to that of the bridegroom. Where no property was involved, i.e. outside the dominant socio-economic groups, 'irregular' marriage (in Hellenistic Athens and the Cyclades ἀνέγγυος γάμος; in Roman law *iniustum matrimonium*) or concubinage was the rule[25]. The significance of marriage as an alliance between substantial families centred upon the transfer of property is clear from the frequency of enquiries περὶ γάμου in the astrological mss. To judge from the substantial chapter devoted to this topic by Hephaestion, *Apotel*. 3.9, περὶ γάμου, who quotes Dorotheus of Sidon's (lost) Bk. 5 at some length, the main aim of the advice given was to try to ensure so far as possible the couple's general prosperity, marital harmony, and fertility[26]. Although Hephaestion clearly views marriage as a union between a man and woman, he consistently takes them separately as regards planetary influences, and allows for a wide variety of possible outcomes. Nevertheless, I do not read these enquiries as genuine attempts to reduce uncertainty. At this social level, no one marries their children off on the basis of a katarchic enquiry: that was a matter of serious, often protracted, negotiation between families, above all, between heads of families. The enquiries rather served a different purpose, acting as a kind of certification that the parents had indeed done all in their power to choose a suitable spouse at an appropriate time, while the complexities of the astrological readings allowed a variety of possible outcomes[27]. At the same time, however, we do find a number of genuine enquiries, evidently stemming from the worries of fathers about marrying off their daughters to the right sort of man, or inversely those of fathers of prospective bride-grooms worrying about prospective brides. Are they suited to one another? Is she a legitimate child, or suppositious? Is she virgin? Will the marriage take place or not[28]?

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24 Cf. HUMPHREYS 1983: 72f. on Medea's speech complaining about the 'troubles of women' (Eur. Med.230-51); cf. Ischomachus' 'breaking in' his new 14-year-old wife in Xen. *Oec.* 7.3-43, with SKINNER 2005: 142-144.

25 Cf. for Rome, GARDNER 1997.

26 It seems to have been fairly common for men to keep a concubine (παλλακή or παλλακίς *vel sim*.), who might be the daughter of a citizen, or herself a metic, resident in the family home, for the sake of producing free children; for Athens, see MACDOWELL 1978: 89f.

27 GORDON 2013: 108-119.

28 E.g. *CCAG* I no.11: 40-42 (from 'Apomasar'); 53f. (from Palchos' *Apotelesmatikê*). On such considerations before marrying off a daughter, see TREGGIARI 1991: 119-122; 125-138.

The focus of the sexual aspect of marriage in katarchic astrology is clearly upon procreation not pleasure. Although there are quite a number of enquiries περὶ ἀφροδισίων or περὶ συνελεύσεως (one of the words for sexual intercourse), it is not clear, at least to me, whether they are to be understood as referring to marital sex or to other types of experience. My guess is that they mainly refer to the type of case I discuss in the next section, on young people trying to establish a sexual relation with one another before a possible marriage, or to cases of extra-marital infatuation, say with another man's wife, unconnected with a professional sex-worker. At any rate, by far the greatest number of katarchic enquiries, as represented by the mss. in *CCAG*, concern the question of whether there will be a child, implicitly from the husband's point of view. Is she pregnant? Shall we have children? Will it be a boy or a girl? Will the child be human or a monster? Will it have a big nose? Will the birth occur by day or by night? Other questions reveal anxiety: whose fault is our childlessness? How many months has the child been in the womb? Will it die[29]? For his part, Pliny mentions a good number of claims about plants that are supposed to aid conception and birth, which can be taken as exemplary of the role that concerns about successful reproduction played both in rhizotomic and in school medicine: for example, wild cucumber-seeds hung in a bag on the woman's body, provided they have not touched the ground, favour conception, and help in delivery, so long as they are wrapped in wool from a male sheep and tied to the woman's *lumbae*, which I suppose means 'nether parts', without her knowledge (!)[30]. Difficulty in conceiving is remedied by plaiting hairs during intercourse, which have been taken from a she-mule's tail while the animal is copulating[31]. An empirical doctor named Glaukias, famous for his commentaries on Hippocratic texts, dealt extensively with medical plants, and especially the properties of (wild) thistles. Boiled thistle-root, he claimed, not only strengthens the stomach but affects the womb in such a way as to favour the birth of a male child[32]. An apparently Alexandrian source claimed that if a woman breathes in the scent of the carom or ajown plant (Latin *ami*) during intercourse she will conceive more easily[33].

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29 Such questions have of course nothing to do with the major astrological topic of the moment of conception, which Katrin Frommhold has discussed so fully (2004).

30 Pliny, *HN* 20.6: *putant conceptus adiuvari adalligato semine (cucuminis), si terram non adtigerit, partus vero, si in arietis lana alligatum inscientis lumbis fuerit, ita ut protinus ab enixu rapiatur extra domum*.

31 Pliny, *HN* 30.142: *cogunt concipere invitas saetae ex cauda mulae, si iunctis evellantur, inter se conligatae in coitu*.

32 Pliny, *HN* 20.263: *stomachum corroborat et vulvis, si credimus, etiam conferre aliquid traditur ut mares gignantur. Ita certe Glaucias scripsit qui circa carduos diligentissime videtur*.

33 Pliny, *HN* 20, 164: *tradunt facilius concipere eas quae odorentur id (ami) per coitum*.

The katarchic texts suggest that in cases of serious conflict, the wife might well simply leave the marital home – even in my limited sample, there are seven enquiries about whether she will come back to the husband's house; one specifies what we may anyway have expected, that she will have left κατὰ ὀργήν, in a furious temper[34]. Here we may assume that the wife's parents or brothers are sufficiently powerful to support her account of the grievances and negotiate some sort of settlement[35]. One important source of conflict was evidently the husband's jealousy and suspicions that his wife might be unfaithful; not only do we find katarchic queries such as:περὶ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς συνεγίνοντο ἢ οὔ[36] or "Is she having an affair?", but other sources refer to a variety of magical practices intended to force revelations from women suspected of infidelity. Pliny provides such a receipt from pseudo-Democritus, i.e. the 'Magian' tradition. The tongue of a living frog is to be cut out and the animal itself allowed to go free. The tongue is then to be placed over the point in the woman's chest where the heart-beat is perceptible (*supra cordis palpitationem mulieri*). Despite being asleep, she will answer all questions truthfully[37]. In one of two similar texts in the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri, the heart of a hoopoe is to be placed on the woman's vulva, in the other, part of a bird, probably the heart or the tongue, is to be placed under the woman's lips or on her heart. In both cases she confesses all[38]. In sociological terms, as Julian Pitt-Rivers has made clear for the modern Mediterranean world, the source of this anxiety is the irreparable damage that a wife's adultery will cause to the honour of the husband, that is, to his ability to enforce the respect of his peers in the local society, respect that is the essential condition for all other social action in which he is involved[39]. Precisely the same is true

[34] *CCAG* I: 44 (cod. 10 F49v).

[35] At Rome, a large dowry was effectively a guarantee of freedom from a husband's control (e.g. Juv. *Sat*. 6, 162-69): Treggiari 1991: 321.

[36] E.g. *CCAG* I: 51 (cod. 11 F134); XI.1:.86 (cod. 8 F.283v).

[37] *HN* 32.49; cf. *Cyranides* 2.5, p.123.2-6 K. M. Wellmann ap. *DK* 68 B 300,8, and Laurenti 1985: 98, ascribe the passage to Bolos of Mendes' work *Peri antipathôn* (cf. Węcowski 2011: 15, though he does not commit himself on such details) Three other versions appear in a work ascribed to Hierophilus in *Cod. gr. Paris. 2286*, cited in *IMGL* no. 16. In one of these, *onomata* are first written on the tongue; in another, simply the name of the woman. Pliny ascribes a similar recipe, which calls for the heart of a *bubo* to be laid on the woman's breast, to the Magi, i.e. to the 'Zoroastrian' pseudepigrapha (*HN* 29.81).

[38] *PGrMag* VII 411-416; LXIII 8-12. The latter text is in a poor state, and the failure to specify the species of bird suggests that this derives from a popular tradition rather than from a formulary.

[39] Cf. n.3 above; at Rome, cf. Treggiari 1991: 311-319.

of a daughter's loss of virginity outwith marriage, a topic to which we shall return later, and even of the forced prostitution of female slaves (the *ne serva prostituatur* clause in sale-contracts[40]). The essential medium of this loss of honour is gossip. It is the free women in his own house, including aunts, sisters-in-law and other female relatives, that such a man fears most[41].

But let us return to our Moroccan case. What if the wife tries to control or influence the husband's freedom of sexual choice? In my view, such an attempt would only occur under certain circumstances, since in this socio-moral order a married man cannot by definition commit adultery in the sense that a wife can[42]. The emblematic case in antiquity is the myth of Deianeira in Sophocles' version[43]. Deianeira has been married to Herakles for a number of years and has borne his children. She has now lost her youthful charms, and Herakles has fallen in love with a much younger woman whom he has captured in war and proposes to bring her back to supplant Deianeira as his wife[44]. The fact of having borne legitimate children is the basis of Deianeira's claim that she has been wronged. Unable to persuade Herakles to do what was usual in such circumstances, namely to treat Iole, the new girl, as a slave-concubine, she decides to attempt to change her husband's mind by means

40 See McGinn 1998: 288-319, who expressly refers to the desire to protect family sexual honour in this context. At any rate in Roman law, under the provisions of a section of the *lex Aquila*, *de adtemptata pudicitia*, a *paterfamilias* could in theory obtain redress from anyone who attempted to seduce or accost a free woman of his household, cf. Gaius *Inst*. 3.221; *Dig*. 47.10.15.15-26. This might make it attractive to attempt, by means of an ἀγώγιμον, to push the responsibility for leaving the house upon the woman or girl.

41 Particularly, but of course not exclusively, in a society where status was marked *inter alia* by the possession of male domestic slaves, cf. Juv. *Sat.* 6, 279; 331f. *Fama* occurs repeatedly as an active agent in the adultery tales in Apuleius *Met*. 9.

42 The *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* was essentially directed against married women and their lovers: "the *lex Iulia* enshrined a double standard, in which the appointed role of the male [*paterfamilias*/husband] was defender and vindicator of women's chastity" , McGinn 1998: 140-215 at 213; cf. Treggiari 1991: 277-294; on its ineffectiveness even within the Senatorial class, Treggiari, ibid.: 294-298. It must be granted that some moral philosophers, particularly Musonius Rufus, were critical of the double standard. Such attitudes persisted well into late antiquity, cf. Dossey 2008: 21-23.

43 Cf. Faraone 1994; 1999: 110-113, 117-199; Wohl 1998: 17-37; Armoni 2001: 68-100. In Sophocles' version the φίλτρον consists of Nessos' blood mixed with the poison in which Herakles dipped his arrows; in Diodorus' account, it consists of Nessos' semen, since in that version the centaur has already raped Deianeira or at any rate spilled his seed; and he tells her explicitly that the substance will prevent Herakles from desiring any other woman (4.36.4).

44 An "excess of wives", as Victoria Wohl neatly puts it (1998: 34).

of a φίλτρον. This however turns out to be a deadly φάρμακον (poison) that causes Herakles' suffering and death. Whatever moral justification she might have been considered to have is now worthless, so that the only means of maintaining her (anyway weak) female honour is to commit suicide[45].

Though the pattern here is real enough, the details are 'mythic'. Thus, no woman of Deianeira's supposed status would have lacked members of her family of origin to protect her; as I have pointed out, within the class of person who consulted knowledgeable katarchic astrologers, there is clear evidence that wives who felt themselves wronged would simply decamp and leave the marital home for a period. Such women had no need of magic to protect their interests and status as wives. It must however be noted that in the early Empire an aristocratic woman of ancient family, Fabia Numantina, was forced to stand trial for driving her former husband Plautius Silvanus (*praet. urb*. 24 CE) mad by means of magic, *carminibus et veneficiis*[46]. Here, as in other cases in the Julio-Claudian period, we find the *delatores* exploiting the stereotypes of magical practice, here that of the 'castrating wife', for their own pecuniary ends. On the other hand, the evidence was clearly thin, and she was acquitted: on the balance of probabilities, aristocratic women have no need to resort to φίλτρα. Sometimes men just go mad.

The underlying point of the Deianeira story, however, is to remind men that, whatever they liked to claim about their right to sexual freedom, they could never be sure that their wives would be ready to accept their infidelities. The great majority of such attempts must, as in the Moroccan case, have been do-it-yourself efforts or have involved a wise-woman or other ritual specialist employing φάρμακα καὶ ἐπῳδαί/ *carmina et venefica*. Given the low rates of female literacy outside the elite, attempts by wives to make use of the institution of the written curse for this purpose must have been rare (though it is of course possible, if they disposed of their own money, that they might have paid a professional writer). We can however cite three cases that reproduce 'Deianeira's dilemma' fairly closely. Resort to a curse-tablet represents

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45 Compare Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Medea and Hermione in Euripides' *Medea* and *Andromache*. "These situations are not essential elements of traditional mythical plots; they reflect [albeit in different measure, RLG] fifth-century interest in and capacity to sympathise with the feelings of both the wife and the the concubine" (Humphreys 1983: 63).

46 Tac., *Ann*. 4.22.4 (24 CE). In a frenzy, Silvanus had killed his second wife by throwing her out of the window. Her father called on Tiberius to intervene, who established that there had been a struggle; Silvanus subsequently committed suicide to avoid standing trial. The incident was thus a *cause célèbre*; Tacitus does not explain the background to the accusation against Numantina.

an attempt to intensify communication with the other world through what Catherine Bell called 'ritualisation', which she defined as "a strategy for the construction of certain types of power relationships within particular social organisations"[47] – or, in our case, 'inherently problematic attempts at communicating with another world'. We might also characterise the second and third cases here as efforts at outright sacralisation, i.e. a more emphatic move towards stabilising the effect of the communication, since all were found inside a temple or a *temenos*.

By far the earliest is a now well-known curse-text from an early fourth-century BCE grave at Pella in Macedonia that contains an appeal to the occupant of the tomb, a certain Makrôn, and 'the *daimones*' by a female principal, at any rate on one plausible reading the present or recently repudiated wife of the male target[48], to prevent a marriage between Dionysophôn and an evidently younger woman, Thetima:

The wedding and marriage (τὸ τέλος καὶ τὸν γάμον) of Thetima and Dionysophôn I curse in writing (καταγράφω), and the marriage of all other women (to him), whether widows or the yet unmarried, but especially of Thetima, and I deposit (this) with Makrôn and the *daimones* ... may he never take another woman than me, let me alone grow old with Dionysophôn and no one else ... I am .... abandoned (ἐρήμα). Keep this (text) for me so that such events do not occur and (so that) the bitch Thetima may die wretchedly (καὶ κακὰ κακῶς Θετίμα ἀπόληται)[49].

The principal here stresses both the symbolic capital afforded by appeal to writing and the pitiful fate of a repudiated woman without powerful relatives or a parental home to fall back upon. Resort to a written text explicitly rejects one other option, the φίλτρον – she has no desire to run the risk of killing Dionysophôn, but simply to be allowed to continue as his wife[50]. The man's 'full' agency – his complete freedom of choice – is contrasted with her own lack of options – "I am abandoned". The implicit allusion to a φίλτρον → φάρμακον, however, continues to work through the text, impelling the thought that Thetima might actually die horribly ... here the

47 Bell 1992: 197-223 at 197.

48 So Voutiras 1998: 74-76, 81-82. I originally assumed that the principal had been betrothed to Dionysophôn but that he had repudiated her for Thetima. However the reference to getting old surely supports Voutiras' conclusion.

49 Voutiras 1998: 8 = *SEG* 43: 434 = 49: 757, cf. *Bull.* ép. 1994: 413.

50 For the expression of the desire to get old together, cf. e.g. Alciphron, *Epist. meretr*. 2.3.3 Schepers = 4.18.3 Benner & Fobes.

shadow of mythical Medea falls over her, only to be dismissed – the wish uttered to the powers of the underworld is as far as our principal will go.

Among a collection of thirteen thin lead tablets found in the late 1850s rolled up among the scattered fragments of a statue of Demeter at Cnidus in Caria, and dated to the last two centuries BCE, was an attempt by a woman named Prosodion[51] to use the fact that she had had children by her husband as her main argument in justifying her appeal to the goddess when her status as wife was threatened by another woman[52]:

> [Prosodion devotes][53] to Demeter whoever it is who is taking [Anakôn, the husband of] Prosodion {the husband of Prosodion} from his children (τίς ...περιαιρῖται ... παρὰ τῶν παιδίων) ... let Prosodion, herself and her children, come off well in all respects. And may anyone else who takes on Anakôn the husband of Prosodion to the detriment of Prosodion (καὶ τίς ἄλ<λα> Ἀνάκωνα τὸν Προσοδίου [ἄνδρα] ὑποδέχεται ἐπὶ πονηρίαι τᾶι Προσοδίο[υ...) find no

[51] Blümel in *I.Knidos* 151 transliterates her name as Proshodion. The name is exceptionally rare: this is the sole instance listed in *LGPN* V.2 (Caria to Cilicia); there are similar names, but no identical ones, in V.1 (coastal Asia Minor, Pontus to Ionia). I was not able to consult *LGPN* V.3 (inner Asia Minor).

[52] *DTAud* 5 = *I.Knidos* 151 = Eidinow 2007: 389, cf. *DTAud* 8 = *I.Knidos* 154; and the very fragmentary 10 = 156. Because the *editio princeps* (Newton 1863) claimed that many of these lead sheets had holes in the corners, a succession of scholars has claimed that they were on public show. In fact, only one (*DTAud* 2 = *I.Knidos* 148) has a nail-hole at the top, and yet it is opisthographic; in the sole case in which the entire tablet survives (*DTAud* 1 = *I.Knidos* 147) no holes at all are visible. In all the other cases, as illustrated by Newton and reproduced by Blümel, the corrosion is such that there is simply no evidence to decide the question; there are no holes, and no corners either. I conclude that Audollent and those who have followed him were right to reject Newton's claim: they were rolled up like any other curse and, in this case, placed by the statue of Demeter, possibly in a receptacle for that purpose. The tablets have in the meantime, thanks to decades of neglect in the British Museum, more or less crumbled to dust.

[53] Since ἀνιεροῖ is the first word in several of the texts (e.g. *DTAud* 1.1 = I.Knidos 147.1, 2.1 = 148.1, 3.1 = 149.1 etc.), all editors since Newton have proposed the reading [Ἀνιεροῖ Προσοδίο]ν for the initial lacuna. Blümel (85), in keeping with his claim that the tablets were pinned up on walls, invents textual support by translating the term ἀνιεροῖ as 'ich hänge/sie hängt (diese Tafel) auf'. It is however far from clear that the actants understood the word in this sense: in *DTAud* 3 = *I.Knidos* 149 and 4 = 150, for example, the principal assumes she is 'devoting' an object or a person to the goddesses, so the idea of 'hanging something up' is out of place. I think it would be preferable to accept the meaning given by LSJ, ' devote/dedicate', and assume that in some cases the principal took over a prescribed initial formula, but then carried on with her own formulation, without thinking about the grammar. Given that the construction in Prosodion's text is indefinite, the τὶς must be taken as a syncope for ἥντινα/ ἄντινα (or τὴν δεῖνα) ἤ or ἄ.... Blass and Debrunner 1959: §298 comment on this use of indefinite τίς used as a relative pronoun, citing these texts.

favour with Demeter or the gods connected with her.

The mistaken repetition of the phrase 'husband (ἀνήρ) of Prosodion' in l.2 suggests not merely that the beginning of the text was copied from some sort of model (as the standardised opening formula in the other texts would anyway imply) but also Prosodion's emotional fixation on what she stands to lose if Anakôn is indeed seduced away from her. Referring to a model is one means of giving one's text authority, another is an appeal to moral obligation; a third is to invoke institutional authority: I see a faintly juristic tone in ὑποδέχεται ἐπὶ πονηρίαι, damage to one's interests being a grounds (in the Hellenistic period also for women) for going to law[54].

Neither of these texts admits a possible reason for the husband's desertion in favour of another woman. By contrast, the third text[55], from the lower terrace of the sanctuary of Demeter and Korê on Acrocorinth, suggests one obvious motive for the repudiation of a wife, namely that she had failed to conceive a (male) child within a certain number of years[56]. The editor plausibly suggests (Stroud 2013, 110) that the principal here has been ridiculed or taunted by the target, a florist named Babbia Karpimê, for her barrenness:

> I entrust and consign Karpime Babia, weaver of garlands, to the *Praxidikai* (Μοίραις Πραξιδίκαις), so that they may punish her acts of insolence (ὅπως ἐγδεικ[ήσ]ωσι τὰς ὕβρ[ι]εις), to Hermes of the Underworld, to Gê, to the Children of Gê, so that they may overwhelm and suppress her life-force and her

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54 At any rate at Athens, the notion of 'damage' (βλάβη) was extremely vague, and might include any situation in which one party felt done down by another, including breach of contract (MacDowell 1978: 149-153). Prosodion is implying that Anakôn (if that was indeed his name, as Blümel suggests – earlier editors read Nakôn; both names are on record) has a strong moral obligation to support her and the childen, even if she is in fact married without ἐγγύη or its local equivalent.

55 Stroud 2013: 104-115 nos.125-126 = *AE* 2013: 1408, a single curse distributed over two small lead sheets, folded together, rolled up seven times, and fixed by two iron nails. It was found near another (Ibid.: 101-103 no. 124 = *AE* 2013: 1407) directed against the same target. Both were buried beneath the tiled floor of Room 7 in the 'House of the Tablets' (cf. Bookidis and Stroud 1997: 281-283). Stroud 2013 does not explicitly offer a date, and unfortunately his accounts of the proveniences have not been correlated with one another: he says his 125/6 was found in fill of Flavian/Hadrianic date, whereas no. 124, which clearly relates to the same person, if not the same case, was found in fill "of the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries A.D." (2013, 101 and 104). M. Sève in *AE* 2013: 1407-08 incautiously dates both to '72/3 CE – early II[p]'. I should be very surppised to find even rudimentary knowledge of Egyptian-style *onomata* in Greece at such an early date. The (almost unique) combination of 'indigenous' Greek deities and Graeco-Egyptian style *voces* in 124 = 1407 and 125/6 = 1408 clearly suggests the later date for both.

56 Cf. Gardner 1985: 84.

> heart and her wits and her emotions (ψ[υ]χὴν καὶ καρδίαν καὶ νοῦν αὐτῆς [καὶ] φρένες)... I adjure you and implore you ... make me fertile (κάπισαί με) ... mighty name, make me fertile (κάπισαί με) and make away with Karpimê Babia, from head to toe, month by month (ἰ{ς} ἐπιμήνιον κατεργασίαν)[57].

It is tempting to go further and suppose that the principal's evident anger and distress was due not merely to public humiliation but to the thought that Karpimê was to replace the principal as the permanent partner or 'wife' of the putative husband. The target was evidently a freedwoman of the very widespread *gens* of the Baebii; I would conclude that the principal knew her personally and that the form 'Karpimê Babia' was a slightly botched attempt at a formal designation of someone she knew only by the name 'Karpimê'[58], an illocutionary effort evident enough in the resort to solemn synonyms, the anaphora of καί in ll.4f., and the repetition of τὸ μέγα ὄνυμα (sic) in ll.12 and 14. The unusual reference at the end to Karpimê's monthly distress is surely a curse upon her fertility – she is to suffer perpetual menstruation and fail month by month to conceive[59].

At the same time, expectations of manliness more or less required husbands to exercise their sexual rights outside marriage. Not to do so ran the risk of appearing unmanly or even ridiculous[60]. To quote one of the interlocutors in Oscar Lewis' famous account of a Mexican family in the 1950s, *The Children of Sánchez*:

> I knew a man who was dominated by his wife. She yelled at him and it was well known that she had put him under a spell. How could you explain it any other way? When I was in Chiapas, they told me to be careful because, there, women do harm to a man by giving him 'coconut milk' to drink. They wash the vagina while menstruating and use the water to make the man's coffee. Once he drinks it, they say, he is completely under the woman's power[61].

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57 Tr. STROUD with minor changes. I accept STROUD's interpretation of the repeated phrase κάπισαί με (2013: 112).

58 The reversal of *nomen* and *cognomen* is not common in Roman-period Greek epigraphy, but the order of other two legible female names in this group, Postumia Secunda and Pontia Maxima, is likewise reversed. I assume that it is colloquial, since we very occasionally find ananalogous reversals among the grafitti at Pompeii, e.g. *CIL* IV 2076, *Vale(n)s / Stronnius / Venustus / Sestius*; 2455: *Surus Petellius* for the *lanista Paetellius P.l. Syrus*.

59 So rightly David JORDAN and Sergio GIANNOBILE ap. STROUD 2013: 114.

60 Besides, children born to slaves or concubines were excluded from inheritance, so extra-marital sex of this kind might be a rational part of the 'family planning' of a man of property.

61 LEWIS 1961: 207. Plutarch's warning against wives using philtres to dominate their husbands makes virtually the same point: *Praec. conj*. 5, 139a; in satire: Juv. *Sat.* 6, 610-626, who includes the

In antiquity, this kind of thought led to the search by rhizotomists for plants and animal parts that might act as antaphrodisiacs or take over the mind, such as the *skolymos* that grows around Tegea and made people act strangely[62], or the common water-lily, which made men both impotent and sterile if taken in drink over a period of days[63]. It also produced the images of what we might call 'erotic dystopias' in the astrological accounts of the effects of planets, especially Venus and Mars, upon women's sexual behaviour[64]. And it led to the stereotype of the wicked witch who prepares φάρμακα or *venena* with which to attack men's minds and turn them into non-men. Here we may think of Horace, *Epode* 5, where four witches, Canidia, Sagana, Veia and Folia, have kidnapped a young boy in order to use his bone marrow (*medulla*) and his dried liver as the main ingredients in a love-potion intended to recapture the affections of a man named Varus for the ring-leader, Canidia[65]. An analogous scenario occurs in Apuleius' boccaccionic tale of the baker (*pistor*) and his unfaithful wife: in revenge for her husband's sodomy and flogging of her young lover, she "resorted to the usual ploys of women" (*ad familiares feminarum artes accenditur*) by hiring an old woman reputed to possess maleficent powers (*veteratricem quandam feminam, quae devotionibus ac maleficiis quidvis efficere posse credebatur*) either to bring about a reconciliation with her husband or to kill him[66]. When the φίλτρον fails to have any effect, the hired specialist sends a female zombie to the baker, who is later found hanged in his own office. Both authors undercut these scenarios, in Horace's case by comic asides and comparisons (for example, the boy is buried up to his neck in a pit, so his head sticks out "like someone swimming in a river", 35f.), in Apuleius' by the narrative framing, which explicitly calls attention to the absurdity of an ass finding out what the scheming wife and the old woman were plotting (9.30)[67]. Yet the comedy depends entirely on the reader's familiarity with the image of the 'castrating wife'.

famous rumour about Milonia Caesonia, the plain but sexy third wife of the emperor Caius (cf. Suet., *Calig*. 50,2).

62 Theophr., *HP* 9.13.4.

63 Pliny, *HN* 25.75; 26.94; Diosc., *Med*. 3.132 (2 p.142.3-6 Wellmann); other examples in Ducourtial 2003: 228-230. Frankfurter 2014: 324 cites two Coptic efforts to make named men impotent.

64 E.g. Ptolemy, *Apotel*. 3.14.23 and 32; 15.10f.; 4.5.18-20 Hübner; Firmicus Maternus, *Math*. 3.6.22 etc.; Heph., *Apotel.* 2.16.8f.; cf. Bouché-Leclercq 1899: 450.

65 Cf. Watson 2003: 176-237; Gordon 2009: 221-223.

66 Apul., *Met.* 9.28f.

67 Cf. Winkler 1985: 60-62, 69f. (the "dead man's tale").

A possible interest on the part of men in making use of stories about the power of bewitchment and antaphrodisiacs will become clear later; at this point I just want to emphasise the rôle of rumour concerning bewitchment through φίλτρα in reinforcing the fundamental gender asymmetry. Among the Cnidus tablets, for example, there is an anonymous curse[68] against a rumour to the effect that the principal has given her husband a φίλτρον:

> I devote to Demeter and Korê the person who [maligns] me by saying that I give my husband potions (ἀνατίθημι ... τὸν κατ᾽ ἐμο[ῦ --- ε]ἰπάντα ὅτι ἐγω τῶι ἐμῶι ἀνδ[ρὶ]] φάρμακα ποιῶ) ... And I also devote anyone who indicts me or starts proceedings (?)(ἀνατίθημι δὲ καὶ τὸν κατ᾽ [ἐμοῦ] γράψαντα ἢ καὶ ἐπιτάξαντα)[69].

The principal here is appealing to Demeter and her circle to stop the mouth of rumour[70]. I take it that the reference to a single agent (τὸν κατ ἐμο[ῦ --- ε]ἰπάντα, καὶ τὸν κατ᾽ [ἐμοῦ] γράψαντα) does not necessarily imply that she had a single (male) person in mind but thought the singular would add more illocutionary force to the plea. This curse thus aligns itself with the group of Latin curses that appeal to Muta Tacita *vel sim*. to stop the mouths of gossip-mongers and sometimes hostile witnesses[71]. Nothing however is said of the circumstances which led up to the gossip, but it is clear that the principal has been forced onto the defensive, and that her resort to the goddesses is an act of desperation in a situation that has got out of hand, with a threatened lawsuit looming[72]: a household without a *man* is a scandal. That is why

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68 Unlike Blümel, I do not believe that sides *a* and *b* relate to the same case but that Hagemonê (or, inversely, our principal) used the back of this tablet for her own effort. If Hagemonê introduces herself immediately in *DTAud* 4b, why did she not do so on 4a? I therefore prefer to allow the principal of 4a to remain anonymous.

69 *DTAud* 4a = *Syll*3 1180 = I.Knidos 150.

70 Another text at Cnidus also refers to such accusations (*DTAud* 1 = *I.Knidos* 147) but does not specifically allude to rumour, cf. Graf 2010: 236.

71 Cf. Marco Simón 2010; Marco Simón and Rodà de Llanza 2008, with further references. Add now *AE* 2012: 740: *Marcel(l)us Valerius mutus tacitus siet / adversus C. Licinio Gallo. Qu<em>admodum / rana sene (!) lingua muta tacita est, sic Mar/cellus mutus tacitus debilitatus siet / adv<e>rsus L[i]cinio Gallo* (from Peñaflor, prov. Sevilla, late I[p]).

72 I think γράψαντα with κατ᾽ [ἐμοῦ] must be an active form used for the usual middle (γραφάμενον), i.e. lay a accusation; ἐπιτάσσειν, which normally means 'order, command', seems here to be used to mean 'order to (come before a magistrate)'. Here I disagree slightly with Blümel's tr., "denjenigen, der die schriftliche Klage gegen mich einreicht oder dies aufgetragen hat"; moreover, I take the aorist participles as anticipating a possible, even likely, future event. If the procedure was like that at Athens, the complainant had to utter the summons in person, before a witness, and the case had to be presented to the magistrate in written form (MacDowell 1978: 238f.).

she explicitly anticipates again living with her husband and being reconciled to him (ὁμοστεησάσῃ ἢ ὧι πο[τε]τρόπωι ἐπιπλεκομένηι, l.6f.).

The most illuminating case however is one known to us from the so-called 'confession-texts' from the Hermos valley in western Asia Minor, which involves not a wife but a mother-in-law. It centres on the attempt by a woman named Tatias to use a public oath to stop small-town gossip about the 'strange behaviour' (ἐν διαθέσι μανικῇ, l.4f.|) of her son-in-law, Ioukoundos[73]. The gossip claimed that Tatias must have given him a φάρμακον, i.e. in my sense a φίλτρον. At some point, Tatias decided to use the authority of the local temple of Anaitis and Men Tiamu to stop the gossip, making a formal declaration on oath that she had done no such thing. But in fact, so the text claims, "she knew (that the gossip was true, i.e. she had indeed given him a potion) and the gods meted out to her a punishment she could not escape" (l.14f.). The same happened to her son, Sôkratês: he was walking along by the sacred grove with a pruning knife in his hand, which fell onto his foot "and so (καὶ οὕτως) he suffered the punishment of death on the very same day". The inscription was put up by the four children of Ioukoundos and his wife Moschion, i.e. Tatias' grandchildren, after they had propitiated the gods.

If we try to get behind this temple-directed version of what happened, we need to speculate. It seems plausible to assume that Tatias was known not to get on with her son-in-law precisely because town-gossip and rumour claimed that he was being being unfaithful to her daughter Moschion, his wife. When Ioukoundos began to act strangely, it was easy to guess that Tatias had secretly given him a φίλτρον which had not had quite the desired effect of causing him to return to Moschion. Tatias' appeal to the temple institution of the public oath was an attempt to stop the rumours and stabilise her reputation. This may have worked for a while, perhaps for years, until Tatias fell ill and died, when the whole story blew up again in the town memory; and her guilt was 'confirmed' by Sôkratês' fortuitous death. This crisis induced the four grandchildren to unite in offering to subscribe to the temple-script (that her death was a divine punishment for lying) and agreeing to raise a *stela*. That involved re-structuring the narrative so that the 'proof' of Tatias's guilt, her subsequent death, is turned into a claim about what she secretly knew when she went up to the temple, i.e. that she was committing perjury, a religious crime. The introduction of the 'strange' death of her son Sôkratês' underscores the legitimacy of this re-structuring: he had supported Tatias and now he has suffered death: it's a sign! Who could doubt now that she was guilty? Whatever her intentions may have been, divine punishment confirms that Tatias' supposed attempt to

[73] Petzl 1994: 88-90 no. 69 (from the temple of Anaitis and Men Tiamu near Kula, 156/57 CE); cf. Versnel 1991: 76; Chaniotis 2009: 122f.; Gordon 2016: 246f. The stela itself is now lost.

use a potion on a man, even in the interests of her daughter, is a sin[74].

Pre-marital relationships

It is time to move on to my second main topic, what we might term pre-marital relationships, mainly those of young unmarried persons of free status. This was a source of deep concern, as I have pointed out, to property-owning fathers of nubile daughters, not only because their loss of their virginity would make it extremely difficult for their parents to control their marriage-chances but because of the threat to the father's honour, if that loss of virginity were to become known through town-gossip. Among the Roman elite, with its special politico-social requirements, very early betrothal and marriage was a common parental solution to the dilemma[75]. Inversely, nubile girls might have an interest in losing their virginity to a young man they were attracted to, as a means of exercising pressure on their parents to permit marriage even to someone they (the parents) considered socially and materially unsuitable. Παννυχίδες, all-night festivals in honour of a god, especially Dionysos, notoriously provided occasions for such escapades[76]. Though it is impossible to be sure, I assume that many of the katarchic enquiries περὶ συναλλαγῶν πρὸς γυναῖκας, like some of the forcible erotic recipes in the Graeco-Egyptian and Byzantine magical texts and the heavily routinised Byzantine recipes for getting a girl (entitled φίλτρον, or περὶ ἀλόχίδος), which often require the inscription of specific (planetary) *charaktêres*, belong to such scenarios[77]. I provide one example of the latter type, a simple ἀγώγιμον involving the creation of an image cut from a piece of tin, from a sixteenth-century ms. in Milan[78]:

> When the Moon is in Cancer, at the hour of the Moon, make an effigy out of tin (ποίησον εἰκόνα μετὰ στανίου[79]) in the name of whomever you want

74 "Story-lines are explanations spread over time": WHITE 2008: 188.

75 The minimum legal age for marriage at Rome was 12 for girls and 14 for young men. About 50% of aristocratic Roman girls were married by the age of 16 (HOPKINS 1965). SALLER 1994: 25-41, using data derived from the age at which parents ceased to be the primary commemorators of a death, argued that for the remainder of the population, the commemorative shift occurs for women from the late teens to the early twenties, and for men between 25 and 34. This provides a rough gauge of date of first marriage, mainly for those without immovable property.

76 E.g. Alciphron, *Epist. meretr.* 6.3.

77 Enquiries, e.g. *CCAG* I: 54 (cod.11 f.223); magical papyri: e.g. WINKLER 1990; FARAONE 1999: 41-95; poppets e.g. *CCAG* III: 40-46 passim (cod. 17 f.373v).

78 DELATTE 1927: 641 (cod. Mediol. E37 f.374f.), εἰς φίλτρον. At two significant points, however, I follow the slightly different version printed in *CCAG* III: 41f. by Æ. MARTINI and D. BASSI, who in their n. to l.21 correctly link the word στάνιον to Latin *stannum* (see following note).

79 I thank Elsie SARATSIE (Athens) for help in understanding this text. The word στάννιον, and the alternative spelling στάνιον, is only to be found in DU CANGE 1688, s.v., where it is defined as

> to get, and name each of the limbs, and write on it the name of (the woman) you wish to attract (τὸ ὄνομα ἧς θέλγεις), and the symbols (σημεῖα) of Venus <and> Leo, and touch the edge (καὶ ἔγγισον ἀκμήν), and <recite> the names of the angels, i.e. Leo, Venus, Helios and Ares.

The intended force of the repeated association here between Venus, the planet associated with female lust, and the zodiacal sign Leo, associated with great heat, is transparent[80]. The 'symbols' here are the positive stellar signs (usually of the planets only, τῶν πλανητῶν) taken from some list of cryptic sigla, including 'planetary alphabets', typical of Arabo-Byzantine astrology, as recorded, for example, in the eighteenth-century astrological ms. cod. 115 in the library of the Historical Society of Athens[81].

I prefer however to take two well-known literary i.e fictional or pseudo-documentary texts that allow one to illustrate some of the divergent ways in which magical themes could be deployed in this context. The first, Theocritus' *Pharmakeutria* (*Idyll* 2), taken with Vergil's re-working in *Eclogue* 8 ll.64-109, appears at first sight quite similar to the Deianeira-pattern we have already looked at in the context of wronged wives who have borne legitimate children[82]. Theocritus represents Simaitha as a young woman who, on the way to join a procession in honour of Artemis, happens to see two handsome (and relatively well-off) young men coming from the gymnasium. Simaetha's social status is left deliberately vague; however, she dispos-

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κασσίτερος, tin (or pewter). For some reason it is not listed in the relevant fascicule of the Austrian Academy's *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität* nor in any other Byzantine dictionary available to me. In Latin, *stagnum/stannum* means (as well as *galena*, 'base bullion', 'Werkblei') an alloy of lead and silver, i.e. more or less tin, all of which are often found together in nature. The form στάνιον, however, may well be derived from the Italian *stagno*, silver or tin foil. The significance of εἰκών here is slightly unclear: it may mean not a three-dimensional poppet, as I originally thought, but a sort of silhouette cut-out, similar to but simpler than modern Greek τάματα – an interpretation supported by the injunction ἔγγισον ἀκμήν, 'touch the edge/rim/border'. On the other hand, rough three-dimensional poppets cast or hammered in bronze and lead are known from the Archaic and Classical periods in Greece. The version given by Martini and Bassi prints this phrase, καὶ ἔγγισον ἀκμήν, immediately after the injunction to write the symbols, where it makes sense, if, as they suggest, we understand <λέξον> before the reference to the four angels. Delatte printed it *after* the reference to the angels, as a sort of afterthought, but there it makes no sense at all. The disagreement is perhaps due its having been omitted by the copyist and then inserted later above the line.

[80] E.g. Ptolemy, *Apotel.* 2.12.5 Hübner (Leo); 3.15.7-11 (Venus); Heph., *Apotel.* 1.1.81f. (Leo); 2.16.8, 21.24 (Venus).

[81] *CCAG* X nos. 9 f.13 and 23 f.9 and10 etc. (excerpted by Delatte on pp.82-96). For ἀγγέλοι, see ibid. no.9 f.9v and 23 f.5 (Delatte: 80f.), and his Index veborum, p.262.

[82] I am not fully convinced by many of the analyses of this well-known text, but note the remarks of Goldhill 1991: 261-271.

es of a slave-girl and I infer that she still lives in the parental home[83]. However that may be, she falls in love on sight with one of the young men, Delphis, and, after in vain taking antaphrodisiacs and consulting wise-women (90f.), eventually sends her slave-girl to bring him to her room. Since she insistently claims she was a virgin, we have to assume this was done secretly, without the knowledge of her parents. So far, this is the scenario I have just sketched, the nubile girl with an interest in losing her virginity to a young man she is attracted to, as a means of exercising pressure on her parents to permit marriage even to someone they might consider socially unsuitable or who was simply not foreseen in their plans for the marriage of their daughter.

But in Theocritus' poem, Delphis has not fulfilled his part of the implied bargain, marriage in return for virginity. Simaetha is thus threatened with exposure to her parents, and her father with the loss of his honour along with her shame. In this situation, given that Delphis has not visited her for nearly two weeks and town-gossip claims he is infatuated with someone else, Simaetha thinks she has no choice but to attempt to change his mind by means of a φίλτρον – and even, she adds with a pout, if that doesn't work, to kill him by poison (i.e. the alternatives posed in Apuleius' baker's story). The free-standing dramatic monologue made possible by the emergence of a new refined reading-public plays adroitly between the stereotypes of the spoiled, faux-naïve young girl, the handsome skirt-chaser, and the *imaginaire* of the coconut-water type of popular magic. Deianeira has, as it were, become your next-door neighbour's daughter.

But that is not quite all. To remind us that this is all not quite in earnest, Theocritus heaps up *ad absurdum* the magical plants, remedies and rituals that he has found in rhizotomists' handbooks and popular lore, thus insinuating Simaetha's cluelessness; he makes her perform the ritual herself instead of consulting a woman-specialist in this sort of thing, as she would most probably in fact have done as young woman excluded from the circle of older married women with experience of such matters (a different kind of 'gossip'); and, by leaving things completely in the air, gives the impression that after all, Simaetha's father has sufficient influence to get Delphis' parents to force him to marry her after all, and thus nip the threatened scandal in the bud. The *Idyll* thus implies to the sophisticated reader that, although at this social

83 Marilyn SKINNER, however, considers her poor and no longer under the protection of her family, which seems to me quite implausible if she has a slave-girl (2005, 179-181). One of her points is that Simaetha borrows a robe from another woman to attend a festival (74): yet this need not imply that she was poor but simply be a light disguise, as in the case of the adulterous woman in Aristain. *Ep*. 1.5, who wishes to avoid being recognised by her husband. In my view, it is precisely because her affair has been kept secret that her abandonment by Delphis is such a catastrophe – she is no longer a respectable virgin.

level magic is not seriously on anyone's agenda, yet it is interesting to imagine such a state of mind, strung between these conflicting emotions, hopes and uncertainties. The bottom line, though, even for such a sophisticated reader, is: if you value your honour, just watch your nubile daughter. In Vergil's briefer half-poem, on the other hand, in keeping with the negative Roman image of *magia*, the now nameless girl becomes a darker figure, thoroughly knowledgeable about witchcraft and a familiar of Moeris, the werewolf, the denizen of cemeteries by night – an altogether different scenario. Yet, unlike the *Idyll*, the *Eclogue* ends with a hint that Daphnis has indeed been forced to come – or is it just a lover's imagining? Here the *social* aspect of resort to a φίλτρον, still of interest to Theocritus, has disappeared behind lazy stereotypes. Catullus' imitation of Theocritus' poem (Pliny, *HN* 28.19) was probably much more interesting.

My second text takes us from early Hellenistic Sicily to somewhere near Antioch on the Orontes in the early fifth century, and concerns an incident related by the pious Theodoret of Cyrrhus in his *Philotheos* or *Historia religiosa*[84]. It concerns a Christian girl, still confined to the women's quarters (κόρης δέ τινος ἔτι θαλαμευομένης), who nevertheless suddenly shows signs of being possessed by an evil spirit (πονηροῦ δαίμονος ἐξαπιναίως δεξαμένης ἐνέργειαν). The father, evidently a man of some social standing, say a decurion, calls in the local holy man Macedonius to cure her. After the holy man has prayed, and forced the spirit to speak (evidently through the girl), it transpires that it has been compelled against its will to enter the girl by means of an ἀγώγιμον performed by, or on behalf of, a man who is in love with her (μαγγανείᾳ βιασθῆναι γοητευτικῇ)[85]. The father promptly denounces the man, whose name the girl must have divulged, to the highest local official, possibly even the *comes orientis*, and demands that he be put on trial. The defendant rejects the charge as unfounded, and the judge declares he cannot condemn a man on the evidence of a demon.

The remainder of the story can be omitted here, except to say that the holy man is represented as inducing the defendant to admit that he did the girl give a potion, or at any rate arranged for one to be given[86]. The basic narrative, however, is remarkably similar to one narrated by Jerome in his *Life of Hilarion*, set in Gaza in the mid-fourth century, so that we may suspect some intertextual relationship[87]. The alle-

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[84] Theodoret *HR* 13 (Macedonius) 10-12 Canivet/Leroy-Molinghen; tr. Price 1985.

[85] The word ἀγώγιμον is, however, not used, and the entire account avoids using any terms that might suggest familiarity with magical practice.

[86] See the forthcoming analysis of the remainder of the story by Lotz 2019.

[87] Jerome, *Vit. Hilar*. 12 ed. Morales = 21 Migne. Hilarion (c.291-c.371) is called *senex*, and left

gation that the daughter had been 'possessed' is simply a Christian interpretation of her peculiar behaviour, a means of deflecting blame away from the prominent family and onto a third party – that is, a classic witchcraft accusation, using two established tropes, the forcible love spell and demonic possession. In this story, unlike Jerome's, the girl is completely anonymous and indeed quickly disappears, her place in the narrative being taken by the demon 'interrogated' by the holy man, but the obvious inference is that her strange behaviour , which is never specified or described, was due to her attraction to the man the father accused[88], which she felt forced by the double burden of high status and Christian moral stringency to suppress as long as she could. It may well also be that the issue came to a head because the girl, under the influence of her infatuation, simply refused to marry the 'much more suitable' man that the father had picked out for her, so her performance of 'possession' was her way out of the inner-familial conflict[89] – 'demons' and 'demonic possession' were after all major themes of late-antique Christianity[90]. The family thus used the trope of the ἀγώγιμον in order to maintain its public figure in the face of rumour and represent the girl as the involuntary victim of external aggression – the object of the girl's passion was after all known to them perfectly well. A major strategic interest of the father was thus in getting rid of this person, and the easiest means of doing so was to accuse him of aggressive magic, which, if it could be proved, would lead to his execution. Unfortunately, however, just as in the case of Apuleius at Oea, there simply was no judicially acceptable proof – in all likelihood, again like Apuleius, the defendant was himself of relatively high status, with powerful family and friends.

All this of course was completely beside the point for Theodoret, whose sole concern is with the holy man, whom he knew personally. He represents Macedonius as forcing the demon to confess, i.e. by getting the girl to point to the object of her infatuation and the slave-girl who had supposedly given her a potion (καὶ τὴν παιδίσκην δι᾽ ἧς ὁ κυκεὼν ἐκεῖνος προσηνέχθη τῃ κόρῃ)[91]. This was easy to do, but, as the judge

Palestine for Egypt, then Sicily and finally Dalmatia in the early 360s. I have discussed this text in GORDON 1999: 202-204.

88 So rightly TRZCIONKA 2007: 84-86.

89 On the diagnosis 'demonic possession' as a strategy in early Byzantine society, see HORDEN 1993.

90 Cf. BROWN 1971: 86-91 = 1982: 119-129; 1976 = 1982: 153-165; and his later reflections in 1995: 57-78 at 70-75; FRANKFURTER 2010: 33f.

91 "Highly individual through the experience of possession may be, its handling tends to be acted out as a duet between the possessed and the non-possessed. In such a duet, each side has a rôle; each

pointed out, one could not condemn someone on the evidence of a demon. Moreover, things threatened to get out of hand when the girl began to get out of control and play her 'mad' part to the full by claiming that the demon was also responsible for a number of untoward recent events – a house burned down, some property destroyed, someone taken ill ... all of which threatened the plausibility of her accusations in the primary affair, so the demon has hurriedly to be 'dispatched' (13.12). Macedonius is also given the credit for saving the defendant from execution. The story comes to an end here: Theodoret simply moves on to his next wonder, leaving all the ends here open: the father has failed, the girl is 'cured', and the object of her affections still in the neighbourhood.

Such intra-familial conflicts probably lie behind many of the ἀγώγιμα of the Roman imperial and Byzantine periods but, without the sort of background, however thin, provided by Jerome and Theodoret, we cannot even speculate – the texts themselves are completely de-contextualised and thus for the social historian more or less useless.

Sex-workers in brothels or analogous social situation

If anything has become clear by now, it is that narratives relating to magical practice, however apparently straightforward, are never what they seem – there are always several items on the agenda. In that respect, of course, they do not differ from any social narrative, which, we have learned from Harrison White, are always shots at local mastery, at ordering and controlling events and situations[92]. This is especially clear in the context of sexual services offered in return for money or gifts, that is, in a relatively public arena, the brothel, whose inmates would be slaves, or in the private apartments of free-born women *sui iuris* (in Roman terms) or freed women, whom we can roughly term concubines, even though this term might also cover a man's own (female) slaves with whom he enjoyed sexual relations. All at any rate are distinguished from the respectable woman, married or unmarried, slave or free, the ideal represented in Latin as the *mater familias*[93].

One kind of claim can be found in a well-known passage from Ovid's *Amores*, in which the first-person narrator comically excuses his momentary impotence (*inguen effetum … pars pessima nostri*) while in bed with an *amica* by invoking witchcraft, suggesting that he has been given a Thessalian drug (*venenum*) or even been attacked by a *saga* sticking pins into a poppet[94]. The *amica* is made to grant that possibility

unconsciously follows a score": Brown 1971: 88 = 1982: 123.

92 White 2008, 31: "Stories can and do conceal projects of control".

93 Ulpian 71 *ad edictum*, ap. *Dig*. 43.30.3.6: *cum audis matrem familias, accipe notae auctoritatis feminam;* a more expansive version at *Dig.* 50.16.46.1, cf. McGinn 1998: 153.

94 *Amores* 3.7.27-36, cf. 79f.

but adds another, that he has just been to bed with another girl – a thought that the I-narrator has already confirmed by boasting about his oft-proven virility[95]. At any rate, the scenario intimates how men, under constant pressure to prove their virility, could invoke witchcraft – again the 'coconut water' pattern – to account for sexual failure. whether momentary or long-term. Awareness of the stock figure of the *saga*, the female rhizotomist, the cunning-woman, of the existence of antaphrodisiac drugs, of the possibility of malicious action at a distance summarised in the phrases φάρμακα καὶ ἐπῳδαί /*carmina et venena* – all this social knowledge offered a line of excuse, irrespective of personal belief: "It's not my fault – my wife (etc.) must have bewitched me!" As the *amica* implies, however, no one is obliged to take such expostulations very seriously. On the other hand, once the tropes and the figures exist, they could be used maliciously, both actively, in attempts to destroy relationships, and passively, to maintain the integrity of male dominance by projecting sexual failure onto (conveniently anonymous) third parties. Moreover it is in this social context that jewellery with erotic-magical motifs, aphrodisiacs and antaphrodisiacs, abortifacients, sterilising recipes, were in special demand[96] – the 'witch' is often simply a negative version of the female rhizotomist specialising in gynaecological and obstetric problems, a few of whom at least were literate and indeed compiled books[97].

If men thus stood to gain from witchcraft beliefs, they might also be important for female sex-workers, especially accomplished ones who were neither installed in brothels nor kept as concubines, but free women/metics/*peregrinae*, who depended largely on attracting small numbers of regular customers, young or old, who showed their fancy by giving handsome presents[98]. Ulpian at any rate assimilated such presents (*donationes*), as long as they were made *affectionis gratia*, to presents between

95 Cf. BRETZIGHEIMER 2001: 236f.

96 Lucian twice alludes to the financial problems created for a *hetaira* by pregnancy, and includes an allusion to the possibility of exposing such a child: *Dial meretr*. 2.1; 14.1.

97 The best-known of these individuals is Olympias of Thebes, whose gynaecological writings are cited several times by Pliny, e.g. *HN* 26.226, 246 and 253, cf. DEICHGRÄBER 1939.

98 That is, in Greek, ἑταίραι, who already in the Hellenistic world might be subject to tax (cf. *Syll*[3] 1000 l.5 [Cos, II-I[a]). There was no corresponding term in Latin, since the term *meretrix* could apply to slaves in brothels, to free peregrines and *libertae*, but the very existence of a Volumnia Cytheris in the late Republic (GUNDEL 1967), for example, shows that such accomplished (libertine) women could maintain themselves. Like other prostitutes, however, after Gaius' reform, they were liable to tax, and this seems to be the reason for the blurring of the social level of Lucian's imagined courtesans (see n.106 below). On the basis of modern estimates, MCGINN 1998: 265 suggests around 4-6 sexual contacts a day (at least) for higher-class prostitutes, and between 13 - 30 for women in brothels, street-corners and parks etc.

spouses, though characterised as *inhonestae*[99]. At any rate in Italy, sex-workers were stigmatised in different degrees by the praetorian edict, and had no legal recourse if they were accosted or insulted. From the time of the emperor Caius all prostitutes, male and female, free or slave, and their pimps, had to pay a heavy flat-rate tax on their daily earnings, collected, often somewhat roughly, by soldiers (praetorians at Rome, *beneficiarii* etc. in the provinces)[100]. The loss of a generous lover could therefore mean financial difficulties if not crisis[101].

In some ways, the survival of high-end ἀγώγιμα in the Graeco-Egyptian tradition has had an unfortunate effect on modern discussion, inasmuch as these texts have tended to distract attention away from the socially more important topic of the strategic use of the idea of erotic magic in negotiating gender relations. We know nothing of any significance of the contexts of these efforts, since the names tell us nothing; only that for specialists in this tradition in Egypt there was a ready market open for exploitation. On the other hand, of course, their very existence provides the discursive narratives with a crucial real-world correlate, however shadowy and insubstantial that correlate might be. Moreover, it is in this social context, among the sex-workers, perhaps even more than in regular marriage, that we can see how male desire and male financial and social power are the axes around which the entire *dispositif* revolves[102]. Lucian's *Dialogues of courtesans (Dialogi meretricum)*, like

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99 Ulpian *ap. Dig*. 39.5.5, cf. McGinn 1998: 335f. We find 'typical' lists of such gifts in Lucian, *Dial. meretr*. 7.1, 9.2 and 4, 14.3; [Lucian] *Amor.* 41; Alciphron, *Epist. meretr.* 1.38.4 = 4.11.4.

100 The taxation of Roman pimps and prostitutes is discussed exhaustively by McGinn 1998, 248-287. He suggests a tax-rate of around one fifth of daily income.

101 Shortage of money and the need to choose between sexy young lovers without money and generous older men are repeated themes in Lucian's *Dial. meretr*. e.g. 4.3, 6.3-4, 7.1-3, 14.2-3 with Gilhuly 2006, 61; cf. Alciphron, *Epist. meretr*. 1.36.1-2 = 4.9.1-2; 1.37.3 = 4.10.3; 1.38.8 = 4.11.8; *Epist. agr*. 9. Betrayal of relationships is thus a structural necessity of this world, e.g. Lucian, *Dial. meretr.* 9. Alciphron at any rate imagined his Athenian *hetairai* as metics, with their own families of origin in the neighbourhood, or even the same house, e.g. 2.4.1 = 4.19.1, cf. Lucian, *Dial. meretr*. 6.1.

102 Since this term (*dispositif* means 'mechanism', 'plan of action' in French) may be unfamiliar, I cite here the simpler of Foucault's explanations in 1977 of what he denoted by it: "un ensemble résolument hétèrogène, comportant des discours, des institutions, des aménagements architecturaux, des décisions règlementaires, des lois, des mesures administratives, des énoncés scientifiques, des propositions philosophiques, morales, philanthropiques, bref: du dit, aussi bien que du non-dit, voilà les éléments du dispositif. Le dispositif lui-même, c'est le réseau qu'on on peut établir entre ces éléments (1994: 299-300), I use it here in a narrower sense, to mean the interlocking discursive elements within a Bourdeusian 'field', together with the physical products and the social practices they give rise to, in a specific society at a relatively specific time.

the analogous compositions by Alciphron and 'Aristaenetus', are of course fictional texts designed to amuse in the manner of New Comedy and the *epyllion*, whence they adapted many of their motifs and character-types[103], but it is plausible that, in this social context of high risk and shallow but ostentatious emotions, protective amulets, philtres, Thessalian witches, and the rest of the magical inventory, including the evil eye, should have played a part in rationalising success and failure[104]. It is precisely this sort of precarious life-situation, where the carousel of affections whirls ceaselessly round, that Lucian depicts in two of the very first dialogues of his collection, thus implicitly underlining their importance in this world[105]. Of course Lucian is in no sense a neutral reporter[106]: his ironic distance highlights the prescriptive superficiality of this world – and the first scene at any rate suggests not only that such notions are foolish but that even in the demi-monde women do not invest much faith in explanations of the ups and downs of relationships that invoke magic.

The work opens with a conversation between Thaïs and Glycerion. Glycerion used to have a soldier among her clients "that well-dressed chap, the one with the cloak" (τὸν εὐπάρυφον λέγω, τὸν ἐν τῇ χλαμύδι)[107], but he has now fallen for Gorgona, who, her friend confirms, is ugly, with a long nose and receding hair – how can that be? Well, say Glycerion, her mother is a φαρμακίς, who knows some Thessalian incantations and can pull down the moon (Θετταλάς τινας ᾠδὰς ἐπισταμένη, καὶ τὴν σελήνην κατάγουσα) (1.2). And she has driven the fellow out of his wits by means

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[103] Minarini 2006; Ozanam 2018: 1334-1337.

[104] Unlike the Roman elegists and Lucian, however, Alciphron (perhaps III$^{p}$)and Aristaenetus (perhaps c.500 CE) make barely any reference to magical action in these contexts. In the praise of the beautiful Laïs, however, Aristaenetus (1.1.56 Bing & Höschele) alludes to fears of envy and the evil eye (βασκανία) attacking the girl – itself a probable literary allusion to the opening of Callimachus' *Aitia* (Höschele 2012: 175).

[105] On the differences between Lucian's representation of 'courtesans', which seems to cover a fairly wide range of sex-workers, and that of Archaic and Classical Greece, see Gilhuly 2006: 60, cf. Hartmann 2000. Other recent discussions include Novak 2007, emphasising the objectification of these women in a man's world; and Hartmann 2006, emphasising the quasi-realism of Lucian's treatment. Neither, however, is concerned with the role of magic.

[106] Cf. Halliwell 2008, 435: "...the pervasively quizzical tone of [Lucian's] writing, whose perpetually shifting mixture of parody, burlesque, pastiche and satire opens up a spectrum of tones that runs from, at one end, an airily frivolous, even 'rococo' ethos ....to the deployment, at the opposite extreme, of what we shall find to be some extremely disturbing 'black' ridicule".

[107] Cf. on the semantics of men's cloaks in Classical Athens, which is Lucian's foil in these dialogues, see Hartmann 2011.

of a potion (πίειν τῶν φαρμάκων ἐγχέασα). The sheer banality of this explanation of events is neatly implied by Thaïs' rejoinder: well, never mind, there are plenty other fish in the sea you can catch (ἄλλον τρυγήσεις, τοῦτον δὲ χαίρειν ἔα). Glycerion's claim here is effortless common knowledge: magic comes from Thessaly and Thessalian witches perform love magic by 'calling down the moon' – whatever that means; and if the soldier is now seeing Gorgona, the mother must have turned his mind[108]. It is just one of those things....

The second scene reverses the situation, in that Melitta asks her friend Bacchis to help her recover her rich young lover Charinus, who is jealous because of a graffito near the Dipylon Gate in Athens that claims Melitta is in love with another rich boy named Hermotimus:

> Bacchis, you know all those Thessalian women, who are said to utter incantations (οἷαι πολλαὶ Θετταλαὶ λέγονται ἐπᾴδουσαι) and can make a woman loved, even if she is deeply hated before: a blessing on you if you can get hold of one of them and bring her to me. I'd willingly give up all these dresses and gold, if only I could see Charinus coming back to me and hating Simiche as he now hates me … (Lucian, *Dial. meretr*. 4.1, tr. C.D.N. Costa).

Bacchis of course turns out to know just the person, a Syrian woman, who helped her when she was in a similar situation (4.4). Here again Lucian intimates the foolishness of such practices by making Bacchis 'innocently' describe how little the Syrian woman charges, how much she drinks, and the mumbo jumbo she gets up to, complete with a little routine for making the lover hate his new girl: you 'wipe her out' by putting your left foot over her right footprint, and you right foot over her left footprint, and say, "I have stepped on you and got the better of you (ἐμβέβηκά σοι καὶ ὑπεράνω εἰμί)" (tr. Costa). Bacchis' endorsement of the efficacy of such rituals makes her as naïve as Melitta is desperate: "and Phanis came back to me, being mainly induced by the spell" (ἧκέ μοι τὸ πλέον ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπῳδῆς ἀγόμενος). Nevertheless, despite his determined distancing, Lucian does convey something of the helplessness of such women, their need for strategies of survival – not always pretty –, and their vulnerability to the whims of the men they depended upon to maintain not only a household and perhaps a family but also their self-respect[109]. In

[108] Alciphron does make one of his *hetairai* discuss φίλτρα, in a similar context, to induce a former lover return to her but also to make him less arrogant and prevent him from getting drunkenly boorish; but she reflects on their danger, and the ease with which potions can cause a death (1.37.4f. = 4.11.4f.). Here we are given a hint of genuinely rational reflection.

[109] Cf. Gilhuly 2006: 67-71 on *Dial. meretr.* 6.

short, belief in magic may be naïve, but it does afford such women a modicum of agency and a means of rationalising both large disappointments and small victories. Here gossip and rumour reflect the routinisation of such narratives in a professional milieu, a far cry from the lonely fears of married women faced with abandonment by their husbands, or the pressures that drove young women threatened with dishonour.

Fiction is not social history, and can only be made to resemble the latter by imaginative distortion, deconstruction, 'reading between the lines', and so on. In relation to lived ancient sexuality, however, there is no alternative but to use literary scenarios constructively within the context of a model such as I have used, which is essentially based on PITT-RIVERS' version of Mediterranean anthropology[110]. Magic owes its place in the history of ancient sexuality to the combination of asymmetry, uncertainty, vulnerability and high passion inherent in that field of social action. In this connection, pragmatic or horary astrology provides an instructive corrective to some of the more lurid ἀγώγιμον-scenarios, which are, as is well-known, based on the tropes of literary erotic literature and, in my view, have no serious psychological value. Whereas the characterological inventories of the astrological handbooks are of equally little sociological value here, it is the katarchic enquiries – admittedly referring only to the priorities of the heads of property-owning families – that enable us to relate astrology, at least tangentially, to the problems and anxieties in the erotic field revealed by curse-tablets and literary fiction.

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[110] For some remarks on possible contrasts between Greek and Roman attitudes, as regards masculinity and its rights, which I have generally played down here, note DOSSEY 2008.

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