

TWO CURSE INSCRIPTIONS

The first maledictory inscription from the Athenian Agora was recently published in this Journal.¹ Two more are here illustrated and discussed, listed as Nos. II and III. These like their predecessor are inscribed upon sheets of lead. One was open when



Fig. 1. A Maledictory Diptych. Tablet II

found, the other was easily opened in the course of washing. The excellent photographs which were made soon after discovery are more easily read than the tablets themselves, and this fact seems to warrant the conclusion that chemical treatment for the rehabilitation of the lead and the removal of foreign matter tends to dull the sharpness of the letters. Tablet II is unusual in that it is a diptych (Fig. 1) which was folded between the two

¹ *Hesperia*, V, 1936, pp. 43–49.

columns of writing whereas tablet III was rolled in accordance with prevailing practice. In both tablets parts of the text have been obliterated and in both there are erasures which were effected by lines drawn lengthwise through the words.

Tablet II, the diptych, is an unusually substantial plaque.¹ A nail was driven through it but this has disappeared. The left column is the better preserved and averaged perhaps 37 letters to a line. In some cases the missing words can be safely restored thanks to repetition which rendered the curse more effective. Comparison of this tablet with the one already published shows that the same general formula was used in both, which facilitates the restoration of certain missing passages.

TABLET II

Column I

- 1 Βαρβαφορφορβαρφορβαρ : βορα : βορβορ : βαρβα
- 2 φορβαβαιη : κραταιετρωσ παραδιδωμισοι
- 3 φιλοστρατανηρετεγοργιππιαινααντηςκαταψυξης
- 4 παναντηςτοπνευματηνζωητηνδυναμιντη
- 5 ισχυντοσωματαμελητανευραταοστασφλε
- 6 βαστασαρτηριαστηνκαρδιαντουζονυχαστοηπ[α]ρ
- 7 τονπλευμοναταεντοςπανταναικυριετρωσ
- 8 εκδικησον ηρετεκεν =====
- 9 .. ω κ| βοηθησοναντωσιφιλοστρατανηρετεκε
- 10 γοργιπ[πια ρτηνιερ(ε)ωσυνηραν
- 11 τησαφ αεισχοινοσαιοινον
- 12 =====
- 13 ===== [το]υτωνεκπιουσα
- 14 αλλαο : μορξ ν πετειρε : αρωια
- 15 αιαι : καταψυξονπα[ντα]σινφ[ιλο]στρατ[α]νηρετεκε
- 16 γοργιππιατοπνευμα[τηνζωην]τηνδυνα
- 17 μιντηνισχυντοσωματαμελητανευραταοστα
- 18 [τ]αςφλεβαστασαρτηρια[ςτη]νκαρδιαντουζον
- 19 χαστ[ονπ]λευμονατ ταεντοςπαντα
- 20 κρατα[ιε]τρωσ α τε . : βασαου
- 21 εα . α . . αααααπα κα]ταψυξονεπι
- 22 αφανισμω . πορα . ντηνφιλο[στρα]τανηρετε
- 23 κεγοργιππια : ια[ω]ικουβιαιωερβηθ : ιω
- 24 βολχ[οσ]ηθ : τεβαπαγαφοξαμαχ : αποψωε
- 25 φω : σετνεφρηωενονεσυριφρενκων.

¹ The inventory number is IL 372. It was found in a well in Section ΠΘ at 47/IB on May 8, 1936; it was associated with objects dating from the second to the fourth century A.D. The measurements are 0.225 × 0.15 m.

26 λευξερινιρικη . φορραικνωσταυτατανομο
 27 ταψυχεταιοντωσκαιφιλοστρα[τ]ασηζετεκεγορ
 28 γιπιπιακαταψ[υ]χεσθωτοπον[ευ]μαηζωηδυναμης

Column II

29 ηισχυστοσωματαμελητανευραΐαιφλεβεσταοστα
 30 αιαρτηριαιτηκαρδιαοιονυχεστοηπαροπλευμ[ω]ν[τ]α
 31 εντοςπανταιναπαρλυθη . αιεαωε . .
 32 λερθεξαιωζεθρελνωδαεμαρεβαιεβα
 33 ππιαταωαωεαιεωηδηδηπαχπαχ.
 34 κυριετυφωςπαρਾਲυσονφιλοστραταν[η]νετεκε
 35 γοργιππιακικαταψυξονταμελητοσωματην
 36 δυναμιντηνισχυντοπνευματηνκαρδιαν
 37 τοηπαρτανευραταςαρτηριαςτορυσονυχαστας
 38 χειραςτουςποδαςοια
 39 . . . εμενησαιπαρωτιδ τε
 40 χ . ςπερ . τηςτους
 41 λακακαπεριπ
 42 θεοντυφωνα
 43 ια αα διογο
 44 φα . αυωκρ κετενορεαντ
 45 π φ ===== ετεκε
 46 ===== φιλοστρα
 47 τανηνετεκεν[γοργιππια] αααααπα
 48 ραλυσκικατα[ψυξη] ικεννελ
 49 . . τυφωσκ παρ]αλυσονφιλοστρα
 50 τανηνετεκεν[γοργιππια]αλλακαταψυξον
 51 καταψυξονπαλιν τααλ

TRANSCRIPTION OF TABLET II

Column I

1 Βαρβαφορφορβαρφορβαρ : βορα : βορβορ : βαρβα
 2 φορβαβαιη : κραταιε Τυφως παραδιδωμι σοι
 3 Φιλοστράταν ην ετε(κεν) Γοργιππία ινα αυτης καταψύξης
 4 παν αυτης το πνευμα την ζωην την δυναμιν τη
 5 ισχυν το σωμα τα μέλη τα νευρα τα οστα τας φλέ-
 6 βας τας αρτηρίας την καρδιαν τους ονυχας το ηπαρ
 7 τον πλεύμονα τα εντος πάντα. Ναι κύριε Τυφως
 8 εκδίκησον ν ετεκεν =====

9 ..ω καὶ βοήθησον αὐτῷ διὰ Φιλοστράτα ἣν ἔτεκε
 10 Γοργιπ[πία] ν τὴν ἱερωσύνην αὐ-
 11 τῆς Ἀφ α ἐνσχοῦσα κοινὸν
 12
 13 ===== [το]ύτων ἐκπίουσα
 14 ἀλλὰ οἰμορξ ν πετειρε:αρωῖα
 15 αἱ:κατάψυξον π[ά]ντα σὺν Φ[ιλο]στράτ[ι]α ἣν ἔτεκε
 16 Γοργιππία τὸ πνεῦμα [τὴν ζώην] τὴν δύνα-
 17 μιν τὴν ἰσχὺν τὸ σῶμα τὰ μέλη τὰ νεῦρα τὰ ὀστέα
 18 τὰς φλέβας τὰς ἀρτηρίας τὴν καρδίαν τοὺς ὀνυ-
 19 χας τὸν πλεύμονα τ[ὸ ἥπαρ] τὰ ἐντὸς πάντα.
 20 Κραταὶ Τυφῶς α . . . τε .: βασσον
 21 εα . α . . ααααα πα [κα]τάψυξον ἐπὶ
 22 ἀφανισμῷ . πορα . υ τὴν Φιλο[στρά]τα ἣν ἔτε-
 23 κε Γοργιππία: Ἰαῶ Ἰακούβια Ιω Ερβηθ: Ιω
 24 Βολχοσηθ: τεβαπαγοεαμαχ: αποψωε
 25 φω: σετνεφρηωενονεσνριφρενκων.
 26 λευθερινιρικη. φοραικεν, ὥς ταῦτα τὰ δνόμα-
 27 τα ψύχεται οὕτως καὶ Φιλοστράτας ἧς ἔτεκε Γορ-
 28 γιππία καταψ[υχέσ]θω τὸ πνεῦμα ἢ ζωὴ ἢ δύναμις

Column II

29 ἢ ἰσχὺς τὸ σῶμα τὰ μέλη τὰ νεῦρα αἱ φλέβες τὰ ὀστέα
 30 αἱ ἀρτηρίαι ἢ καρδία οἱ ὀνυχες τὸ ἥπαρ ὁ πλεύμ[ω]ν [τ]ὰ
 31 ἐντὸς πάντα ἵνα παραλυθῇ. Αἰεαωε . .
 32 λερθεξαιωζεθρελνωδαιεμαρεβαιεβα
 33 ππιαταωαωεαιεωιδηδηπαχπαχ
 34 κύριε Τυφῶς παράλυσον Φιλοστράταν ἣν ἔτεκε
 35 Γοργιππία καὶ κατάψυξον τὰ μέλη τὸ σῶμα τὴν
 36 δύναμιν τὴν ἰσχὺν τὸ πνεῦμα τὴν καρδίαν
 37 τὸ ἥπαρ τὰ νεῦρα τὰς ἀρτηρίας τοὺς ὀνυχας τὰς
 38 χεῖρας τοὺς πόδας διὰ α
 39 . . . εμενησαι παρωτιδ τε
 40 χ . ς περ . της τους
 41 λα κακὰ περιπ
 42 θεὸν Τυφῶνα
 43 ῖα αα διοιο
 44 φα . ανωκρ κετενρεαντ
 45 π φ ===== ἔτεκε
 46 ===== Φιλοστρά
 47 ταν ἣν ἔτεκεν [Γοργιππία] ααααα πα

48 ραλύσῃ καὶ κατα[ψύξῃ] νκεννελ
 49 .. Τυφῶς κ [παρ]άλυσον Φιλοστρά
 50 ταν ἣν ἔτεκεν [Γοργιππία] ἀλλὰ κατὰψύξον
 51 κατὰψύξον πάλιν τα αλ

TRANSLATION

Column I

1 Barbaphorphorbarphorbor Bora Borbor Barbar
 2 phorbabaie, mighty Typhos, I deliver to you
 3 Philostrata whom Gorgippia bare in order that you may chill everything hers,
 4 her spirit, life, power,
 5 strength, body, limbs, sinews, bones, veins,
 6 arteries, heart, nails, liver,
 7 lungs, everything inside her. Yes, Lord Typhos
 8 avenge whom bare
 9 and aid him because Philostrata whom Gorgippia
 10 bare dishonored(?) her priesthood
 11 of Aphrodite(?)
 12
 13 from these(?) drinking
 14 peteiere arōia
 15 aiai, chill everything with Philostrata whom
 16 Gorgippia bare, spirit, life, power,
 17 strength, body, limbs, sinews, bones,
 18 veins, arteries, heart, nails,
 19 lungs, liver, everything inside her.
 20 Mighty Typhos a te basou
 21 ea aaaaaa (paralyse and) chill,
 22 in order that she may disappear, Philostrata
 23 whom Gorgippia bare. Iaō Iakoubia Iō Erbeth Iō
 24 Bolchosēth Tebapagaphoeamach Apopsōe
 25 phō Setnephēēōenonesuriphreuknōn
 26 leuēerinirikē Phoraiken, as these names
 27 are chilled so also of Philostrata whom Gorgippia
 28 bare let be chilled the spirit, life, power

Column II

29 strength, body, limbs, sinews, veins, bones,
 30 arteries, heart, nails, liver, lungs,
 31 everything within her in order that she may be paralysed. Aieaōe

32 lerthexaiōzethreluoōdaiemarebaieba
 33 ppiataōaōeaieōēdēēdēpachpach,
 34 Lord Typhos, paralyse Philostrata whom Gorgippia
 35 bare and chill her limbs, body,
 36 power, strength, spirit, heart,
 37 liver, sinews, arteries, nails,
 38 hands, feet because
 39
 40
 41 evils(?)
 42 god Typhon
 43
 44
 45 bare
 46 (I deliver to you) Philostrata
 47 whom Gorgippia bare aaaaa, to para-
 48 lyse and chill nkennel
 49 Typhos (chill and) paralyse Philostrata
 50 whom Gorgippia bare, but chill,
 51 chill again.

COMMENTARY

Line 1. The long magical title which occupies the entire first line and part of the second is perhaps composed of variations of the syllable *βαρ* in *βάρβαρος*. Barbarous phrases *ἐήματα βαρβαρικά* were employed by the priests of Cybele in their incantations, and were the more potent because people did not understand them.¹ If foreign language sounded like *barbar* to the Greeks, a magical title designedly unintelligible might logically be made up of that sound and various modifications of it. That this title is of Egyptian provenance is a safe inference from its occurrence in Greek magical papyri where it is applied to Hecate.² It came over to Attica along with other magical titles as is shown by the tablet already published where however I made the erroneous conjecture that it was the title of Hecate rather than of Typhon who is later invoked in the same inscription. A magical papyrus of the third century, and therefore roughly contemporary with our tablet, gives the earliest name of Typhon at which the entire universe seems to have trembled. The name had a hundred letters.³ Apparently the Athenian devotees of the curse were aware of the length of the name of Typhon-Seth and of its compelling

¹ Graillot, *Le Culte de Cybèle*, p. 308, n. 8; Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, I, p. 92. For an Ethiopic charm with secret names of deity see Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, pp. 392, 397; Cumont, *T. et M.*, I, p. 313.

² Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, I, p. 120, line 1433.

³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 118: τὸ δὲ ἑκατονταγράμματον τοῦ Τυφῶνος.

power although they did not give it one hundred letters. If barbarous phrases made up of *barbar* were uttered by the priests of Cybele in the cure of disease the name Ἀβαρβαρέη for a woman well versed in the art of healing seems quite appropriate.¹

Line 2. The name Philostrate is found in Attic inscriptions of the period approximately of our tablet. Kirchner cites three examples from grave stelae.² The name Gorgippia is however new but the name Gorgippos is attested for Attica in the second century.³ The practice in the tablets of naming the mother of the accursed rather than the father reduces the chances of identifying the persons involved.

Lines 4–7. Here and again below where the parts of the body are listed there is a noticeable decency in the selection of parts. Comparison with other such lists shows that the juxtaposition of certain parts was perhaps a matter of traditional formula. With the grouping in line 5 may be compared that in a curse tablet which was found at Alexandria, the more significant because of the indebtedness of the Athenian curses to the Egyptian: τὴν ἰσχὺν τὴν δύναμιν . . . τὰ νεῦρα τὰ μέλη.⁴ This enumeration is followed by a clause of purpose with ἵνα as in line 31 of our inscription. The Alexandrian tablet is dated to the third century after Christ. With the sequence τὰ νεῦρα τὰ δαστᾶ compare *nervias ossu* in a curse inscription from Latium,⁵ and with πνεύμονας καρδίαν on a tablet discovered at Megara⁶ compare *cor, fulmones, itestinas* on another from Minturnae.⁷ Why the word “nails,” perhaps “finger-nails,” should be inserted between the words for heart and liver, as in line 6 of our inscription, is a mystery unless the nails were conceived of as clawing the seats of passion and love. In general the original juxtaposition of parts of the body in these curses was obviously suggested by natural groupings. It will be observed that in our inscription the list of parts cursed begins and ends with the inclusive terms πᾶν (4) and πάντα (7).

Line 7. The repetition of the name Τυφώς with the particle καί occurs also in tablet I.⁸

Line 8. In this line which is for the most part beyond repair the author of the inscription may have called upon Typhon to avenge him. He seems on second thought to have erased his name and that of his mother.

Lines 10–11. The word for priesthood is certain but the restoration of the name Aphrodite depends largely upon the two initial letters of the name which are clear. Perhaps Philostrata is accused of malfeasance in her office as priestess of Aphrodite.

Line 12. This line has suffered both obliteration and erasure.

¹ Abel, *Orphica*, p. 124; *Lithica* 455. The name is as old as Homer (*Il.* 6, 22).

² *P.A.*, II, p. 378.

³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 202; Sundwall, *N.P.A.*, p. 45.

⁴ Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae*, p. 70, no. 38, lines 22 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 191, no. 135 A, line 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 249, no. 190, lines 9–10.

⁸ *Hesperia*, V, 1936, p. 45.

Line 14. The letters *ομορξ* may be the remnant of the participle *δμορξαμένη*.

Line 20. The author of the curse appeals to Typhon to chill Philostrata and cause her disappearance. She is to share the fate of her name which is inscribed upon the tablet. She is to disappear in the cold waters of the well on her way to Typhon. The sequence of the request here that first the offending lady be chilled and then disappear offers a possible interpretation of the phrase *φριουριγξ*¹ *ἐπὶ ἀφανισμῷ* in tablet I. The first word may be a magical combination of the verbs for "shiver," *φρίσσω* and *ῥιγέω*. The restoration of *πα* as *παράλυσον* is more likely than as *παταθραξ*.

Line 23. The magical names Iao Iakoubia, Io Erbeth Io Bolchoseth all occur in tablet I.

Line 27. The pronoun *ῆς* is attracted to the case of its noun.

Line 28. The form of the verb here is not clear. The restoration is made with the help of tablet I, 16.

Line 29. The previous articles explain the *τ* which the author of the tablet deletes. The second column of the inscription is for the most part repetition of the first.

Line 36. The juxtaposition of *καρδίαν* and *ῆπαρ* occurs also in an inscription from Megara.²

Line 48. The subjunctives here are certainly of purpose and dependent upon a missing *ῥα* as is shown by comparison with lines 2–3.

This tablet is of considerable help in the reconstruction of some obliterated passages in tablet I. Both begin with an invocation of chthonic deity whose long magical titles are concatenations of the same syllables. Hence the missing initial part of this title in tablet I is to be filled in with syllables such as *βαρβαρ* while the missing final syllable is probably *η* thus giving both titles the same ending *-βαιη*.³ The initial gap in the second line of tablet I is to be filled with *κραταιὸν Τυφῶν* of which only the *ν* survives. This tablet uses the form *Τυφῶν* whereas tablet II uses *Τυφῶς*. The formula of consignment which follows this name is in both cases the same. This coincidence raises the question whether in the gap in line three of tablet I we should restore *κατάψυξον*.

TABLET III

- 1 εςσ[ε]βουμετογ[κ]αταγρᾱ
- 2 φονταχετοναπολε[σαντα]οτιουκε
- 3 κωναλλανανακζ[ομεν]οςδιατους
- 4 κλεπταστοντοποεικαταγρᾱφωκεκατα
- 5 τιθεμεπλουτωνικεμοιρξκεπερσξφονη
- 6 κεερεινυσικεπαντικακωκατατιθεμεκεεκα[τη]

¹ Cf. *φριουριγει*, Audollent, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

² *Ibid.*, p. 77, no. 42, col. B l. 3.

³ Cf. *φαβρανη* in a similar title in the Paris papyrus, Preisendanz, *P.G.M.*, I, p. 114, line 1260.

7 ε[ρπ]ειτοφραγωκατατιθεμεκεθεαις^{ερίν}κεθοιςκαταχθο
 8 ν[ι]οιςκεερμειδιακονωκατατιθεμετουςκλεψ[αν]
 9 ταςαποτονοικειδιουλιτοανφοδουτουκαλουμενου[ς]
 10 κελενουκλεψανταεκατηγανστρωματατριβ
 11 [ω]ναμαλλωτονλευκονκενονκανκαβον =====
 12 =====τρουνσυνεργαλευκαχωματαλιν. τον
 13 . αςτρειςλευκαςμαστιχηνπιπερινετικατα
 14 τιθεμεκετουςσυγειδοταςτηκλεψεικααρν[ο]
 15 υμ]ερουςκατατιθεμεδεκεολουςυποδεξαιδε
 16 [ακ]ουεταενφερο μεναεκα τηκαταγραφ
 17 ωωδεσποινα εκατηουρ ανιαεκατηκα
 18 [τ]αχθονιαεκατητρ ιοδιτ ιεκατητριμο
 19 ρφξεκατημον ο προ αω πεκαρδιοτα
 20 ὁ[τ] [ο]ιτουςκλε ψανταςητορ
 21 [κ]λειψαντανταε ν φ ερομενα
 22 αητεαυτου[ς]συν ειδο[ι]ταςκαταγρα
 23 [φωε]κατη . . βιρυν θα αλα
 24 αλλααταειτα ν ις εκ νων
 25 τικτης ις ω α η αυτο υσηαυτον
 26 εηφα ωγαιηανοσιςενξεις αυτοις
 27 ετε αχαρκεοιο κοψ η αν
 28 τους
 29 σεβουμεδετονκαταγραφοντα
 30 κετοναπο λεσαν τα

TRANSCRIPTION

1 ες σ[ε]βου με τὸν [κ]αταγράφ-
 2 φοντα καὶ τὸν ἀπολέ[σαντα] ὅτι οὐκ εἰ-
 3 κων ἀλλὰ ἀναγκαζ[όμεν]ος διὰ τοὺς
 4 κλέπτας τοῦτο ποιεῖ. Καταγράφω καὶ κατα-
 5 τίθεμε Πλούτωνι καὶ Μοῖρες καὶ Περσεφόνη
 6 καὶ Ἑρμῆσι καὶ παντὶ κακῷ, κατατίθεμε καὶ Ἑκά[τη]
 7 εἰ[ρπ]ειτοφάγω, κατατίθεμε καὶ θεαῖς καὶ θεοῖς καταχθο-
 8 ν[ι]οις καὶ Ἑρμῆ διακόνω, κατατίθεμε τοὺς κλέψ[αν]-
 9 τας ἀπὸ τοῦ οἰκειδίου λιτοανφόδου του καλουμένου[ς].
 10 κελεύου κλέψαντα ὧ Ἑκάτη νᾶν στρώματα τρίβ-
 11 [ω]να μαλλωτὸν λευκὸν κενὸν καὶ ἀβον =====
 12 =====τρουν συνεργὰ λευκὰ χῶματα λιν. τον
 13 ας τρεῖς λευκὰς μαστίχην πίπεριν. Ὅτι κατα-
 14 τίθεμε καὶ τοὺς συνειδότας τῇ κλέψει καὶ ἀρν[ο]-

15 *νμ]ένους. Κατατίθεμε δὲ καὶ δλους. Ὑπόδεξαι δὲ*
 16 *[ἄκ]ουε τὰ ἐνφερόμενα, Ἑκάτη. Καταγράφ-*
 17 *ω ᾧ δέσποινα Ἑκάτη οὐρανία Ἑκάτη κα-*
 18 *[τ]αχθονία Ἑκάτη τριοδίτι Ἑκάτη τριμο-*
 19 *ρφε Ἑκάτη μονοπόσωπε καρδιο[δαῖ]τα*
 20 *θήσον τοὺς κλέψαντας ἢ τὸν*
 21 *[κ]λέψαντα(ν) τὰ ἐνφερόμενα*
 22 *ἀγίτε αὐτοῦ[ς] συνειδό(ι)τας καταγρά-*
 23 *[φω] Ἑκάτη... βιονον... θαλά*
 24 *ἀλλὰ ἀναειτανίς... ἐκνωγ*
 25 *τικτησίς ἢ αὐτοὺς ἢ αὐτὸν*
 26 *ἐμφαδωγαιηαισιςενξείσα αὐτοῖς*
 27 *εὔεαχαρκεονο κοψη αυ-*
 28 *τούς.*
 29 *.....σέβον μὲ δὲ τὸν καταγράφοντα*
 30 *καὶ τὸν ἀπολέσαντα*

TRANSLATION

1 es, have regard for me the inscriber
 2 and the loser because not willingly
 3 but compelled by thieves
 4 he does this. I inscribe and consign
 5 to Pluto and Fates and Persephone
 6 and to Furies and every evil one, I consign also to Hecate
 7 eater of animals, I consign to underworld goddesses (the two goddesses) and gods
 8 and to Hermes messenger, I consign the thieves who take their
 9 name from the little house of a certain slum quarter.
 10 Bid the thief, O Hecate, restore(?) three coverlets,
 11 a fleecy white new cloak and even a corn measure(?)
 12
 13 three white poplars, a mastich-tree, a pepper-tree. Further
 14 I consign also those who have knowledge of the theft and
 15 deny that they know about it. And I consign all (of them). And receive,
 16 hear this message, Hecate. I inscribe
 17 oh mistress Hecate Urania, Hecate Katachthonia,
 18 Hecate of the cross-roads, Hecate trimorphous,
 19 Hecate of one person only, feaster upon hearts,
 20 bind the thieves or
 21 the thief who stole the things mentioned.
 22 Bind(?) those who have knowledge of the theft.

23 I inscribe, Hecate . . .
 24
 25 either them or him
 26 to them
 27
 28 them
 29 Have regard for me the inscriber
 and the loser.

COMMENTARY

In this curse inscription (Fig. 2) the writer consigns to the underworld powers the thief or thieves who made off with some of his property. He is reluctant to address these powers but finds himself constrained to do so, thus placing at the door of the thieves any annoyance which the appeal may cause Hecate and her associates. He has no well defined suspicion as to the identity of the offenders for he mentions thief or thieves but he goes so far as to say that they get their name from a little house in a certain quarter of the town. Not only are the actual perpetrators of the deed delivered to the chthonic gods but those as well who, knowing something about the theft, deny that they have such knowledge.

This curse like numbers I and II is carefully written with only an occasional slip, and in one place there is an erasure. The use of ϵ for α and the omission of the iota of the dative may be mentioned. The tablet is very fragile along the edge. The upper part of the pronoun $\mu\acute{\epsilon}$ survives on a small fragment from the first line.¹

Line 1. At the beginning the author invokes a deity whose name or more likely whose magical title ends in $\epsilon\varsigma$. This is probably Hecate since she is subsequently invoked under various titles. The verb $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\gamma\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega$ occurs in another Attic curse.²

Lines 5–7. Of the deities here mentioned Hermes, Pluto, Persephone and Hecate are invoked in a curse inscription which was discovered in Alexandria.³ Moira and Erinys are associated in the great magical papyrus at Paris.⁴ The *epitheton* $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\phi\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega$ seems to be the only possible restoration. Later (line 19) Hecate is invoked as the “feaster upon hearts.” Towards the end of line 7 the author has inscribed $\epsilon\alpha\iota\nu$ under $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota\varsigma$ apparently having in mind as an afterthought Demeter and Persephone, the latter of whom has already been mentioned in line 5. The ϵ is placed partly between the first two letters of $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota\varsigma$ to make its θ serve double duty. The

¹ The inventory number of the tablet is IL 493. It was found in a well in Section IIΘ at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ NE on February 26, 1936; it was lying in a deposit dating from the first century A.D. It measures 0.23 × 0.177 m.

² Wünsch, *Defixionum Tabellae Atticae*, no. 160.

³ Audollent, *op. cit.*, p. 69, no. 38.

⁴ Preisendanz, *P.M.G.*, I, p. 164, line 2862.

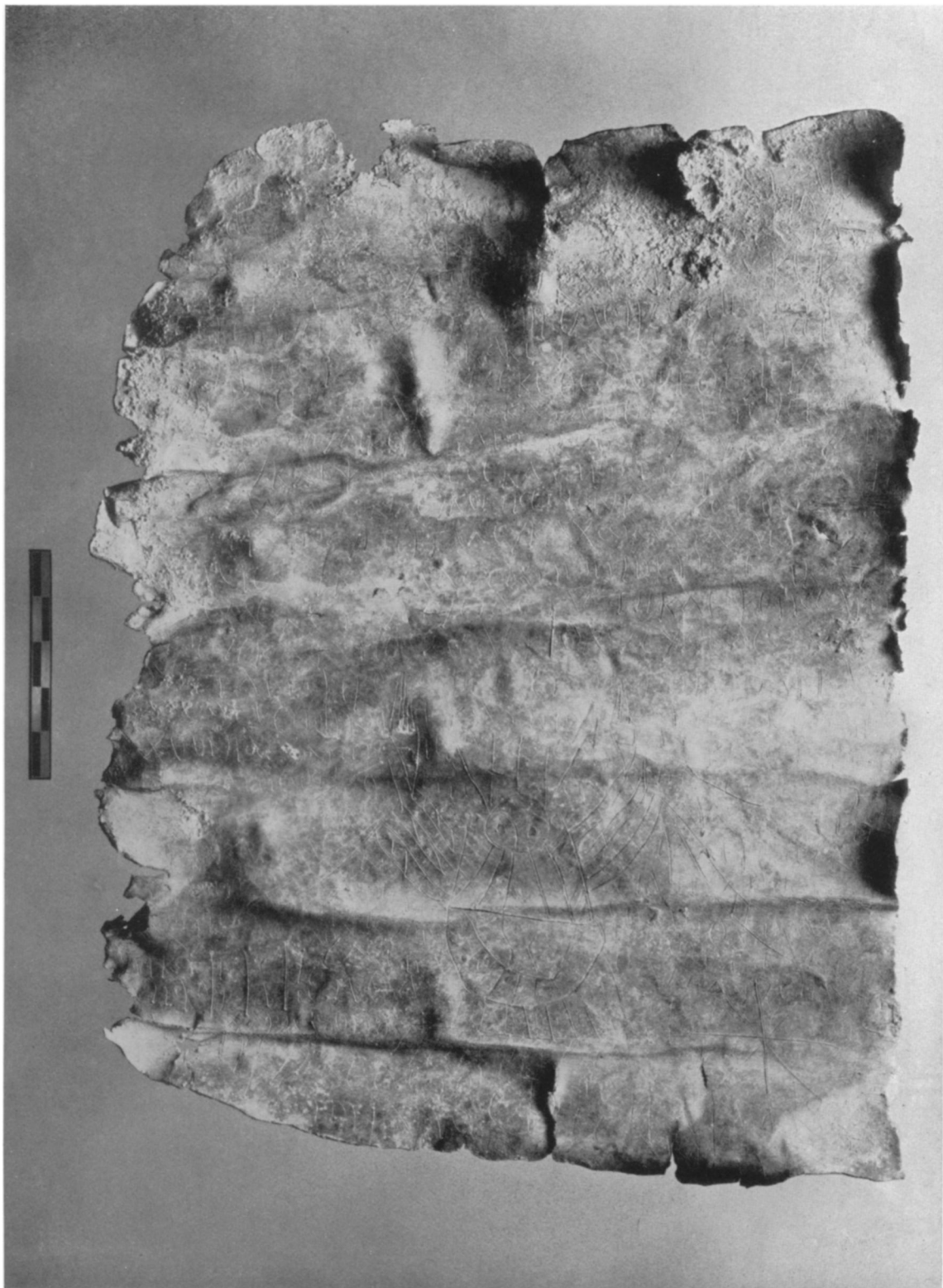


Fig. 2. Tablet III

curser consigns the offenders as entities and does not specify their various organs or faculties as is usual.



Line 9. *λιτοανφόδον* is quite clear and must be a compound of *λίτος* and *ἔμφοδον*.

Line 10. *νᾶν* presents a difficulty. It cannot mean "spin" and may be the final syllable of an infinitive part of which has been omitted.

Line 11. *κερόν* for *καιρόν*. The reading *κᾶν κάβον* is not satisfactory and the erasure following it increases the difficulty.

Line 12. What is the meaning of *συνεργὰ λευκὰ χώματα*? Can it refer to earth of light color which was to be used in setting out the trees which are mentioned in the succeeding line?

Line 16. Starting with this line the author has sketched crudely the figure of a bat with outspread wings which reaches downward to line 29. The inscription continues across the figure but for the most part the letters are placed in the interstices of the wings and the body. The head of the bat is flanked by repetitions of the name Hecate each with an *epitheton* which is known from other sources. This juxtaposition shows that the bat is here closely associated with Hecate. Its name *νυκτερίς* "the bird of night" (*νύξ*) suggests that it is appropriate in the darkness of Hecate's abode. There is probably special purpose in its presence on the tablet which consigns transgressors to Hecate. The thieves are to go down the dark ways to Hades as did the slaughtered suitors of Odysseus who fluttered like bats behind Hermes.¹ In the great magical papyrus at Paris Nyx is given with Moira as a name of Hecate. The appearance of "illustrations" in the curse tablets was inspired by the similarly crude drawings in the approximately contemporary magical papyri of Egypt.² This obligation is confirmed by the appearance in the papyri of the lesser linear designs of

the tablet,  and .³

Lines 18–19. The author seems to feel that in invoking the trimorphous Hecate he must mention the oneness of her person. Hence *τρίμορφε* is immediately followed by *μονοπρόσωπε*. The concluding appellative of the series *καρδιота* is an instance of haplography. The complete *epitheton καρδιοδαῖτε* occurs in the great papyrus at Paris⁴ which, to judge from its several coincidences with the tablets from the Agora, seems to have served as a reference book for the Athenian who wished to curse an offender. The title "feaster upon hearts" which was applied to the underworld goddess may have been suggested by the importance of the heart in the scenes of judgment which appear in the Egyptian papyri.

¹ *Odyssey*, XXIV, 6. Cf. Pauly-Wissowa, *R. E.* s. v. Fledermaus.

² Cf. Preisendanz, *P. M. G.*, II, pls. I, III.

³ *Ibid.*, pl. I, fig. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 164, line 2868.

Line 24. *αναειτα* may be Anahita or Artemis.¹

Lines 29–30. The author ends as he began with an appeal to Hecate that she be considerate of him. It is but another version of the magical: *Ἰλαθί μοι καλέοντι καὶ εὐμενέως ἐσάκουσον*.²

¹ *Ibid.*, lines 2815 ff.: *τοῦνεκά σε κλήζουσι Ἐκάτην, πολυώνυμε, Μήνην, ἀέρα μὲν τέμνουσαν ἔτε Ἀριεμιν λοχέαιραν κτλ.*

² *Ibid.*, lines 2728–29, reading *ἐς* for *εἰς* in the last word so as to improve the hexameter.

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