Letters to the Underworld: The Religious Context of Classical Greek Katadesmoi

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Abstract

The following paper explains the underlying religious context of the use of *katadesmoi* (binding tablets) from Classical Greek society. Elements of examination include oath ceremonies, literary sources for binding, the development and role of Hermes, beliefs concerning souls of the dead, and lastly an explanation of how *katadesmoi* relate to these elements. Using historical analysis supported by Classical texts, such as Homer's *Odyssey* and Aeschylus' *Choephoria*, this paper establishes that *katadesmoi* reflect classical Greek religious beliefs. The religious context of these tablets is important to this field of study because it is an under-researched connection between these two topics.

1. Introduction

Katadesmoi, commonly yet misguidingly referred to as 'curse tablets' and also known in Latin as *defixiones*, were, to borrow David R. Jordan's definition, "inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of small, thin sheets, intended to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or welfare of persons or animals against their will."[1] The Greek word *katadesmoi*[2] comes from the verb *katadein*, to bind, and that is exactly what these tablets were intended to do.[3] The tablets were used to bind people's tongues in court cases, bind business rivals from becoming too profitable, bind one's romantic interest to oneself, and in some cases, to bind one's enemies into the hands of death. The purposes of these binding tablets were varied and so the popularly used yet limiting term of 'curse tablets' will therefore be substituted in the following paper with the original term that the Classical Greeks gave to these tablets: *katadesmoi*.

  The following paper will aim to present to the reader an understanding of these tablets as the Classical Greeks saw them, as objects not solely of magic as many authors on this subject explain, but rather as objects that reflect the religious ideas of the time from which they came. I here use the term 'religion' to specifically refer to the beliefs and accompanying ritualistic practices of the ancient Greeks themselves; and the term 'magic', in the sense of how most scholars use the term, as a modernly constructed category as explained by the anthropologist James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*.[4] Approaching the topic of *katadesmoi* through situating it in the religious context of ancient Greek society stands in sharp contrast to how much of the literature currently written on *katadesmoi* focuses almost exclusively on situating the practice within the confines of our modern definition and understanding of magic. While helpful in some instances, Frazer's definition of magic unfortunately does not take into account a society's original understanding of what practices may be classified as magical.[5] A different way in which these tablets can be understood as magical objects is to place them within their original emic context of how the Classical Greeks themselves defined and understood magic. Fortunately there is an increase of scholarship which seeks to redefine our interpretation of these tablets as magical artifacts through this emic instead of etic context. However, neither approach credits the then existing religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Greeks with the development of *katadesmoi*. Through temporarily setting aside the topic of magic, this paper aims to pay particularly close attention to the way in which these tablets reflect Classical Greek religious ideas and thereby fill a gap in the current scholarship on this topic.

2. Methodology

It should come as no surprise then that the methodological approaches utilized in this paper consist of primarily historical research and analysis from a phenomenological perspective. Historical analysis is employed because these tablets have been excavated from their resting place in the ancient past in order to be studied in our present time. Therefore, to understand their original context within Classical society, literature, such as Greek tragedy, as well as ancient cultural customs, such as oath ceremonies, will be examined. My historical approach is informed by phenomenology because I seek to understand these tablets as the Classical Greeks themselves understood them. The methodological approaches employed in this paper shed new light on this topic of growing interest within Classical studies and present a new perspective on these tablets that has not yet been advanced by other scholars. It is important to establish an understanding of the history of the study of these tablets before proceeding to the core of this paper. Therefore the following discussion will review current literature on binding tablets.

3. Literature Review

While there are many modern scholars on the subject of Greco-Roman religion, there are fewer scholars who focus on Greco-Roman magic (to which the subject of curse tablets is often attributed), and still fewer scholars whose specialty is *katadesmoi*. There are some scholars however that have published books on the subject and even more Classical scholars (specifically epigraphists) who publish articles in scholarly journals that address the translation of specific tablets. Among the most recognized authors on this subject is Christopher A. Faraone whose popular book *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion,* compiled with Dirk Obbink, contains articles from various authors, one of which is "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells" by Faraone, and, another,"Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers"*, by H. S. Versnel.[6] Faraone, a Classics professor at the University of Chicago, has also published numerous articles on the subject of ancient magic and specifically on the topic of curse tablets.[7] Another scholar whose work has been influential in this field is John Gager, who as a professor of religious studies at Princeton University specializing in religions of the Roman Empire,[8] published the book *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World.* This work surveys different categories of binding tablets throughout the fifth century BCE to the fith century CE.[9] Of course there are other modern scholars whose work on Greco-Roman curse tablets is available, often in broader works that deal with Greco-Roman magic in general. The works of Faroane and Gager are, however, most likely to immediately appear in a search for publications on the subject.

What the current scholarship on the subject of these tablets shows us is that this specific practice was widely used for a millennium from about the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE throughout a large part of the Greco-Roman world. Modern scholarly books often take this approach to the study of curse tablets; they survey a wide range of tablets by providing one or two examples from each variety of different locations, time periods, and purposes. As the practice of using these tablets spans different time periods and therefore religious differences through time and space, it is easier for scholars to assume that the performance of creating and employing *katadesmoi* is, as Frazer would define it, a magical practice as opposed to a religious practice. Also, it appears that scholarship is lacking in its focus on this practice from any one specific place and time in history. This paper seeks to address this deficit by focusing on a specific time period and location, namely, Classical Greece of the fifth to fourth centuries BCE.

4. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Research

Before directly engaging the topic of *katadesmoi* from Classical Athens it is important to explain basic beliefs and practices from the late Archaic and early Classical periods because these serve as the religious foundations on which *katadesmoi* were constructed. First, basic beliefs and customs from the late Archaic and early classical periods will be introduced. Next, the language of binding in early Greek literature will be addressed. Then the role of chthonic (underworld) deities and the development of Hermes will be examined, followed briefly by early views about the souls of the dead. Only then will one be equipped with enough of a basic understanding of Greek thought to see more clearly how the *katadesmoi* reflect Greek religious ideas.

Near Eastern and early Greek oath ceremonies can be seen as a precursor to the practice of *katadesmoi.* These oaths implied that a curse was placed on an individual that would violate the oath whether the curse was explicitly detailed or not.[10] In this way a person was bound to honor the oath that he or she made. It appears that binding ceremonies were common throughout the Mediterranean during the Archaic era. Individuals would bind themselves to one another

through an oath ceremony for reasons such as the establishment of treaties and to guarantee the truth of statements made in court.[11] In major cases where individuals were suspected of not keeping their oath, all of those involved in the oath would at the time of the oath call a curse upon those who did not remain true to the oath.[12] Near Eastern oaths contained longer lists of curses than did Greek oaths, but the Greeks nonetheless would have come into contact with these long explicitly verbal curses. The deities would be called upon in these oaths as witnesses and if a person were found to break their oath then the deity called upon would automatically enact the curse.[13] It was believed that "violation of an oath was an act of impiety which could disturb in more general terms the good relationship between men and gods."[14] As the Athenian orator Lycurgus put it, "No one who has committed perjury can escape the notice of the gods or escape punishment from them."[15]

This language of calling upon a deity as a witness and expecting that deity to enact a curse is exactly the same language that is used later in judicial *katadesmoi* from the Classical period, as we will later see. Greek familiarity with explicitly stated cursing language from Near Eastern oath ceremonies may have also influenced an early classical stele (a stone slab or column bearing an inscription) called *The Cursing. The Cursing* is a stele from Teos on the coast of Asia Minor from the early fifth century BCE.[16] The stele is a form of law-code and public cursing against those who would commit a crime against the Teian state or individuals of the Teian state. The stele inscription begins: "Whoever works baneful spells upon the teians, on State or individual, death to him and his seed. Whoever hinders the import of grain to Teian territory by any means or device, by sea or land, or re-exports any imported grain, death to him and his seed."[17] The inscription then continues the "death to him and his seed" formula and finishes by cursing anyone who would damage the stele.[18] What the oath ceremonies show us is that in the Greek context binding oaths and their accompanying curses were oral in nature and not written down until the early classical period. It would not be until this time when literary evidence of these practices would be produced.

An early literary source of binding prayers comes from the poet Pindar's first *Olympian Ode* from 476 BCE.[19] This victory ode recalls the myth of Pelops' race against Oenomaus in which Pelops prays for Poseidon to "come and bind (*pedason*) the brazen spear of Oinomaos and give me the faster chariot by Elis' river!"[20] Another very clear literary reference to a binding in Greek literature was Aeuchylus' *Eumenides* which was a play that won first prize when performed in Athens in 458 BCE.[21] In this play, "The Furies use a spell against Orestes to gain an advantage over him before the beginning of his trial."[22] These Furies, the Erinyes, "…to an educated Athenian in 458 B.C., were avengers of murder, perjury and other grave wrongs, who might exact their vengeance from the wrongdoer himself or from his descendants. […] They could be thought of as the embodiment of a curse."[23] But perhaps the story that best brought binding rituals into popular Athenian culture was a play attributed to Aeuchylus called *Prometheus Bound*. In this play, which dates probably from 479 to 424 BCE,[24] Hephaistos repeatedly binds different parts of Prometheus' body. John M. Marston in *Language of Ritual Cursing in the Binding of Prometheus* draws the parallels between this scene and the repetitive binding of body parts found in later *katadesmoi*.[25]

Physical evidence of the practice of *katadesmoi* appears rather suddenly from the Classical period. In 483 BCE a major silver mine was discovered near Athens and therefore silver production increased. Lead, a byproduct of silver refinement, was soft and easily hammered out into thin sheets. According to Faraone,

> [T]hey used small lead tablets as a very cheap (and reusable) medium to write business letters and various other things. That's why we have such a large number of curse tablets during the late classical (during and just after the mines were in operation) and much fewer in the later periods—it seems that eventually this stockpile of lead ran out and the Athenians began to write their curses on more available materials, such as wax and papyrus, that do not survive when they are buried in the ground.[26]

John G. Gager elaborates on the use of such materials when he states that "the process of inscribing on metal tablets posed no great difficulty. The preferred instrument was a bronze stylus." He further mentions that "a practiced scribe could write on the soft metal surface as easily as on wax."[27]

It appears that there is only one enigmatic binding tablet that has survived since before the silver mine was in operation and, as expected, it is not found on lead. It is an Attic black-ware pottery shard whose inscription when translated reads, "I lay upon Aristion a deadly (es aida or until death) quartan fever."[28] It seems that this pottery shard is an exception to the rule and that primarily bindings were done orally before the readily available materials on which to inscribe them were in use.[29] Also, literacy was an issue in Classical Athens and not all individuals were therefore able to write binding tablets. "On most tablets, the hand-writing is not more than a mere scribble. Some tablets are barely literate."[30] Therefore it is plausible that even illiterate slaves could have performed oral binding rituals against their slave-owners. We have a case of an oral curse in the *Illiad*: "when Meleager's mother curses her son, she simply pounds the earth with her hand and prays that Hades and Persephone might destroy him."[31] Written a few hundred years before the Classical period, this instance in the Illiad shows how simply a binding ritual could have been

performed. As we will later see, the names of these chthonic deities will appear in *katadesmoi* from the classical period and figure prominently into the ontological framework for understanding how these tablets worked. For the time being it will suffice to say that regarding early *katadesmoi*, "[G]ods may have been invoked *orally*, when the tablet was either commissioned or deposited." It only follows that early binding rituals were primarily oral in nature and that from the archaic to the classical periods people began to write simple inscriptions on the earliest tablets. As Gager has put so clearly in *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, "[T]he relatively simple forms of the earlier tablets may be explained by the strong likelihood that the commissioning and depositing of tablets with simple written formulas were accompanied by oral prayers, invocation, and incantations."[32] Also, to quote Nigel Wilson,

> Incantations were accompanied by various practices that served to reinforce the power of the spoken word. One important supplement to the oral spell from the Classical period onward was the process of inscription – the performance of writing down the name of the victim and that of the god or demon invoked to work the spell lent greater efficacy to the accompanying words.[33]

This additional efficacy that was attributed to writing down the names of the victims and deities involved may have stemmed from the simple fact that in Classical Athens writing was generally used for official purposes.[34] It would have been one thing to simply voice a binding prayer against someone but to actually put the matter into writing would have offered the individual a more tangible and concrete expression of their intent. The earliest and most common forms of *katadesmoi* were simply the names of individuals inscribed on the tablets.[35] The earliest and simplest tablets could also contain the verb *katadein* (to bind) and the names of chthonic deities such as Hermes and Persephone.[36] These deities were believed to serve as witnesses to the binding ritual and to also put forces into motion that would bring about the binder's intent. These deities would be "frequently called by their epithets *katakhos* and *katokhe*, terms which reinforce their role as the divinities most responsible for overseeing the binding action envisaged in the tablets."[37]

The Olympian deities that many people are familiar with such as Zeus and Athena are considered *ouranic* deities (of the sky). However, those with which our study is concerned such as Hecate and Hades are considered *chthonic* (of the earth). There are very different practices that were performed between the two categories, as Mikalson explains in *Ancient Greek Religion*:

> Offerings and sacrifices to purely ouranic deities were performed in daylight, were directed upwards to the sky, and often resulted in a feast among the participants. Since chthonic deities were "in the earth," offerings and sacrifices to them were directed downwards to the earth, with liquid offerings (*choai*) of milk, blood, or honey poured into low-lying altars (*escharai*) or pits. Such offerings were usually made at night, and animals sacrificed to these deities were to be black, not white as for ouranic deities. Usually the whole victim was offered, as a holocaust, with no meat set aside for a banquet of the sacrificers.[38]

The chthonic deities were believed to reside in the realm of Hades, whose location was said to be "'beneath the depths of the earth.'"[39] Chthonic deities were not the only ones believed to reside beneath the earth; they "form but a part of a large class of divinities who are easily roused to anger, and to all of these divinities propitiatory sacrifices are necessarily offered."[40] The Titans and Erinyes were described as residing beneath the earth[41] and Daimons were also chthonic. The Daimons were "powers which bring only dangers and evil, powers which it is best not to name and which must be turned away by appropriate sacrifice in order to be rid of them."[42] It seems that they existed because the Athenians did not want to hold the Gods responsible for the unfortunate circumstances that occur in life such as misfortune, failure, and death.[43] These Daimons do appear in the more violent language of latter *katadesmoi,* but not as much in the Classical period. The most common deity addressed on *katadesmoi* from the Classical period is Hermes.[44]

Hermes Psychopompos (escorter of souls) originally played the role of guiding souls on their journey to Hades,[45] and the distance between the realms of the living and the dead decreased as the Archaic age became the Classical age. "In the Classical era (the 5th and 4th centuries BC), the role of the *psuchopompoi* is extended. Hermes does not merely accompany souls to Hades, but sometimes facilitates their temporary return to the living. He also operates as a go-between (*kêruks*), sensitising souls to messages from the living."[46] Hermes is the messenger who can travel freely between men, Gods, and the dead. One can then easily see how this figure became a common component to the effective execution of *katadesmoi,* as will soon be explained. But first let us look at the history and development of Hermes in order to understand how this deity became associated with the souls of the dead.

The etymological origins of the name Hermes guide our study of this deity in the proper direction. The name Hermes comes from the ancient Greek term ἕrma [47] (*herma*), which means "a heap of stones."[48] Piles of stones were not an

uncommon sight in the ancient world and were frequently found by travelers along rural roads. These stone piles were "telling to anyone passing that here is a decisive spot and somebody has been here before."[49] These travelers would often add stones to these cairns along their way and in this respect Hermes first became known as the daemon or spirit of the stone-heaps themselves[50] and as the "guide of wayfarers and god of roads."[51] "Phallic figures were carved in wood and planted on top of the cairns."[52] It appears that these wooden poles once present in the countryside characteristically consisted of a "wooden shaft, brackets, a mask, and garment. Doubtless the fine garments were not worn at all times by statues standing in the open and exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, so that the undraped shaft was a familiar sight."[53] This sounds somewhat similar to the modern day scarecrow and was primarily used to demarcate the boundaries between properties.[54] The common and classical *herma* developed from a wooden shaft into a rectilinear carved stone pillar which consisted of "a rather dignified, usually bearded, head on a four-cornered pillar and, in due place, an unmistakable, realistically molded, erect phallus."[55] "The stone form was introduced in Athens about 520 by Hipparchos, the son of Pisistratus, to mark the midway points between the various Attic villages and the Athenian agora [the marketplace], and soon this form came to be adopted generally."[56] These boundary stones also became common sites in front of Athenian houses.[57] Later in 477/6 the general Cimon won a victory over the Persian army at Eion in Thrace and erected three *herma* as victory monuments in the northwest corner of the agora in Athens.[58] These *herma* previously had not been used as a victory monument before that time[59] and in the decades that followed, "feelings of uneasiness seem to arise: by-and-by herms cease to be ithyphallic."[60] These stone pillars also "would mark graves, which of course were commonly by the roadside in ancient times, and perhaps for this reason, perhaps simply by a natural extension of his function as a guide, he became the spirit who led the souls of the dead down to Hades, *psychopompos*."[61] Messages to the dead would be spoken to the herm at one's grave,[62] and libations were offered at the herm as well.[63]

Thus we see in a general sense how a heap of stones by the roadside came to be personified as a spirit in charge of leading the dead in their afterlife journey. In the mid fifth century BCE phallic iconography on the herms fell out of style and it is during this time period that we see Hermes begin to develop from a stationary bearded stone pillar into a swift and youthful traveling messenger whose characteristics consisted of wings on his sandals, a staff in hand, and a broad brimmed traveler's hat.[64] Some of our earliest literary references to Hermes date as far back as Homer with his being mentioned in both the Illiad and the Odyssey. Indeed, Pausanias, a Greek traveler of the Roman Empire who recorded his wanderings from roughly 150-80 CE,[65] mentioned of Hermes that, " [T]he poems of Homer have given currency to the report that he is a servant of Zeus and leads down the spirits of the departed to Hades."[66] The stories of Homer also offer a mythological framework in which to contextualize the association of Hermes with the herms. In the Illiad Hermes used his magical staff[67] to place a deep sleep on the many-eyed giant Argos and killed him with the cast of a stone.[68] "When Hermes killed Argos, he was brought to trial by the gods. They acquitted him, and in doing so each threw his voting-pebble (γῆfoj) at his feet. Thus a heap of stones grew up around him."[69] Also in the Odyssey Hermes "Summons forth the souls of the slain suitors from the palace of Odysseus, and, gibbering like bats, they follow him to the meadow of Asphodelos where souls have eternal sojourn."[70] We even see offerings to Hermes in the Odyssey where "Eumainos, the pious swineherd in the *Odyssey*, sets aside a portion for Hermes and the nymphs at the sacral meal."[71] We see then that, as far back as the seventh century with Homer, Hermes was seen in Greek literature as more than just a heap of stones or even as a single anthropomorphized stone. In Greek thought Hermes became idealized and personified as the forces these stones represented.

It wasn't until the *Choephoria* of Aeschylus in 458 BCE[72] that Hermes directly receives his epithet *Chthonios*:

> Orestes addresses him as *Chthonios* in the impressive prayer for aid in which he invokes both Hermes and his dead father… He is standing, as he says, actually "at the funeral mound" of his father, and it is this that gives the invocation its point. Hermes is present at the grave-mound, and may help Agamemnon to rise from the shades and assist his children.[73]

Ultimately Hermes is seen as the deity who is able to assist souls with the successful traverse of the divide between the realms of the living and the dead. This was not seen in Greek thought as a one way journey in which souls of the dead can no longer have contact with the living. Hermes was the facilitator of bringing the souls of the dead back to the land of the living temporarily for the purpose of communication with the living. It should now be clear that Hermes played a crucial role in the practice of *katadesmoi* because without Hermes, as mediator between the lands of the living and the dead, communication would not have been possible.

And yet, some Greek practices of necromancy did not automatically call upon Hermes to allow the souls of the dead to communicate with the living. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Greeks still would have understood that it was Hermes who allowed the dead to communicate with the living. Our focus now shifts to explaining how Greek religious concepts of the soul after death played an important role in the execution of *katadesmoi*.

Some of our earliest literary sources for Greek views of the soul come from Homer. Homeric language of archaic Greece terms what we may consider the soul as *psyche*.[74] The following quote aids in understanding what the archaic Greeks believed concerning the *psyche*:

> Psyche is not the soul as a bearer of sensations and thoughts, it is not the person, nor is it a type of Doppelgänger. Yet from the moment it leaves the man it is also termed an *eidolon*, a phantom image, like the image reflected in a mirror which can be seen, though not always clearly, but cannot be grasped: the dream image and the ghostly image, the forms in which the dead man can still appear, are identified with the breath which has left the body.[75]

These *psychai* may resemble their physical bodies but have no strength or life in them and it is uncertain to what extent they maintain their consciousness or intelligence.[76] This is one view present in Homeric literature which later develops to give more animation to the *psyche*. There are certain Homeric poems which show the dead interacting with one another,[77] which clearly does not mean that they were considered to be completely void of consciousness. Other places in the Odyssey of Homer show that "they must first drink the sacrificial blood in order to recollect themselves and speak."[78] The contradictions present in the literature of Homer call one to question if the early Greeks had a clear mythos of the nature of the *psyche* in the afterlife or not. The answer to this appears to be that they did and that these seeming contradictions only go to show the dynamic nature of these beliefs. It very well could be that

> Homer initially collated the original tales from the pre-Homeric era, but that there had been certain alterations even in his own time; that the early and the later components of the poems therefore do not reflect the opinions of a single era , and that certain texts, such as book 24 of the *Odyssey*, were written later, during the archaic era… In the Archaic era (from the 8th to the 6th century BC) the concept of the afterlife underwent a significant change. Two accompanying figures (*psuchopompoi*) emerge at this time, with the function of taking the soul to Hades… In the Classical Era (the 5th and 4th centuries BC), the role of the *psuchopompoi* is extended. Hermes does not merely accompany souls to Hades, but sometimes facilitates their temporary return to the living.[79]

This is not to say that there was no effort of communication between the living and the dead before the Classical era but rather that during the Classical period Hermes was recognized as the deity responsible for the facilitation of such communication. The *psyche* of a deceased person was generally considered to be unable to establish communication with the living unless the correct rituals were performed. The *Nekuia*, book 11 of the *Odyssey*, offers an account:

> It is night. On Circe's instructions, Odysseus digs a pit (*bothros*). He pours libations around it to all the dead, first of a mixture of milk and honey, *melikraton*, second of sweet wine, and third of water, and then he sprinkles barley on top. He prays to the dead, promising to sacrifice to all of them on his return home the best sterile heifer of his herd and to burn treasures on a pyre for them. To the ghost of the Tiresias, with which he particularly wishes to speak, he promises a separate sacrifice of his outstanding all-black ram. With his bronze sword, he opens the necks of (jugulates) a pair of black sheep, male and female, holding their heads down toward the underworld while turning his own face in the opposite direction. He lets their blood flow into the pit. At this point the ghosts gather. Odysseus orders his companions Perimedes and Eurylochus to flay the sheep and burn their bodies in holocaust (i.e., to burn them whole), and to pray to Hades and Persephone.[80]

This necromantic ritual described by Homer in the *Odyssey* is the same for that of other chthonic beings but the blood of the sacrifice is what was believed to be needed by the souls of the dead to communicate with the living. The souls of the dead played an integral role in the proper deployment of *katadesmoi* because many tablets are found at gravesites, as we shall soon see.

To summarize the key elements examined thus far: First, binding ceremonies were common in Archaic Mediterranean society and the Greeks produced sufficient literary evidence of instances of binding. Secondly, Hermes evolved throughout the Archaic era and by the classical period had become an important figure in underworld and afterlife thought. Hermes' role as a facilitator of communication between the living and the dead was believed to be crucial for successfully contacting the dead. Lastly, sacrifices and offerings were important to the communication with both the chthonic deities as well as the souls of the dead. Now our study reaches an axis on which to turn towards addressing the tablets themselves.

As mentioned in the introduction, *katadesmoi* are thin lead sheets that are inscribed with the intent of binding someone against his or her will. The literary content of these tablets do not always explicitly explain for what specific

purpose the tablets were created. As this study focuses on Classical Greek *katadesmoi* it will be useful to keep in mind that "[t]he general rule is that the earliest examples are also the simplest", and that they often "give only the name of the target."[81] Numerous tablets of this simple type have been found as well as many other tablets that specifically use the verb 'to bind' against those the tablet names. There are four main literary styles that any one tablet may contain, which I here list[82]:

1. Direct Object – The tablet contains only the name of the individual or individuals to which desired effects are directed with no other accompanying text or images.
2. Accusative – The tablet contains simple binding formulae, which usually consist of, and start with, the word Καταδω (*katado*, I bind…). Faroane refers to this type as a 'performative utterance'.[83]
3. Petitionary – The tablet explicitly contains a request for supernatural forces to bind an individual or individuals.
4. Sympathetic – The tablet contains language which equates its intended target with the nature of either the physical substance of which the tablet is made or the words or images used on the tablet. Here we see that, "names were often written in symbolically significant ways on early Greek tablets—the letters could be scrambled or written backward—so that names clearly operated as more than labels. The name embodied the person or the animal and gave some measure of control over them."[84]

There are many different literary structures and patterns that can be observed on a wide variety of tablets, but these appear to be the most common forms.[85] In addition to their literary structure these tablets can also be categorized by their purpose and intent which consists of the following categories: legal, choral or athletic competition, trade, love and sex, and prayers for justice.[86] The variety of uses for these tablets shows that while they were all meant to bind their target in some way they were not necessarily created for the purpose of cursing their targets, as the misguided terminology in referring to *katadesmoi* as 'curse tablets' denotes. It is more proper to consider these tablets as representing the struggles between rivals in competitive contexts[87] and that the Classical Greeks viewed these tablets as a means of conflict resolution.[88] The method of employing *katadesmoi* to bind one's rivals transcended socioeconomic status, although wealthy politicians certainly utilized it in a manner different from that of others, as we shall see in one of the following examples.

Concerning the demographics of these tablets, "Some 1,600, the majority in Greek, survive from all periods of antiquity from 500 B.C. onward."[89] "Approximately three hundred curse tablets have been excavated in Athens over the past hundred years, about two hundred seventy of which date back to the fourth century BCE."[90] About half of these two hundred and seventy are barely readable, about eighty are judicial in nature with roughly half being composed or commissioned by the political elite, about forty tablets are business-related, and tablets concerning love are even less common.[91] What one notices about the status of *katadesmoi* in classical Greece and more specifically in Classical Athens is that most binding tablets contained judicial content and were "to be cast on adversaries before crucial trials."[92] What may account for the substantial amount of judiciary binding tablets at this time is the sudden rise of democracy in both politics and legal court structure.

After the text of a binding tablet was inscribed, the tablet would then be sealed and deposited in an appropriate location. We find that after "almost all *defixiones* were rolled or folded; they might also be pierced with one or more nails."[93] The specific function of the nailing of the tablet is uncertain. One is therefore left only to speculate as to the nails intent. It is likely that once the tablet was nailed it would not be unfolded and edited in any way. This can be compared to the way that one seals a letter today inside an envelope. It is a way of sealing one's message and intent. The binding tablet would then be deposited in a location considered to be receptive for the sending of the message that the tablet conveyed. These locations included, "for love spells, the home of the desired target; for racing, the stadium floor; and sanctuaries associated with chthonic deities."[94] Most often tablets were placed in cemeteries at the graves of the dead.[95] This topic of the role of the dead, and in turn the chthonic deities, brings this study to a point of culmination to tie together all the aforementioned elements before proceeding to an examination of some examples of the tablets themselves. When modern authors on this subject describe that the tablets were just simply deposited at graves, they seldom explore the complexities that such a deposit implies, but it is where one observes how these tablets fit into the religious framework of the Classical Greek mind.

An individual wishing to deposit a *katadesmos* in a cemetery would first need to locate an appropriate grave at which to deposit it. The person would first enter the cemetery at dusk or later at night in search of a grave and most likely not use the grave of one in his or her own family.[96] Ideally he or she would want to find the grave of one of the *aōroi* (those who had died young) or the *biaiothanatoi* (those who died by violent means).[97] [98]The reason for this is because these specific types of souls "remained in a restless condition near the graves until their normal life-span had been reached."[99] "The marginal status of *aōroi* and *biaiothanatoi* would both facilitate interaction with the living and make

them easier prey for the practitioner—they were neither impeded nor protected by the walls of the Underworld."[100] To find such a grave would have been the best case scenario because they were readily present at the gravesite and therefore the individual would not need to call the soul of him or her up from Hades.[101] In the event that an individual could not find such a grave, as was likely often the case, he or she would choose one at random or of one recently buried as the freshly dug soil would make it easier to dig.[102] The *escharai*, low lying pit, would be dug in which to make whole sacrifices of animals as well as offerings of milk, blood, and honey. This served the purpose of animating the soul of the dead to comprehend his or her task as serving as a messenger "between this world and the next, carrying the words of the tablets to deities in the underworld".[103] Once this ritual was performed, the individual would then place the *katadesmos* in the pit as well, cover the whole thing back up with soil and depart, leaving no trace of the events that had just occurred. The soul of the dead would then deliver the message on the tablet to the chthonic deities such as Hecate and Hermes who are then expected to rouse the spirits,[104] *daimones,* and any other forces to execute the requests made by the individual. The individual would then offer additional sacrifices and offerings at the successful execution of his or her requests.

It should now be clear to the reader that these tablets reflect Classical Greek religious ideas. As mentioned in the introduction, these tablets should not be viewed solely as the archaeological remains of some 'magical' system, as many authors on 'curse tablets' would lead one to believe; but rather, these binding tablets are remains of an immensely complex religious world view in which mortal men, immortal Gods, and souls of the dead all interact with one another.

5. Analyses of Specific Tablets

To conclude, I offer some examples of classical Greek binding tablets. The first example to consider is an early fourth century tablet from Attica (the geographic region surrounding Athens).[105] I here offer David R. Jordan's transcription of the original Greek as well as an accompanying translation followed by interpretation.

Side A:

Εἴ τιj ἐμὲ κατέdesen   Whoever put a binding spell on me, whether

ἐ gunὴ ἤ <ἀ>nὴr ἐ d<o>ῦloj ἐ ἐ-   woman or man of slave or free or foreigner

leύqeroj ἐ zέnoj ἐ ἀj-   or citizen or domestic (?) or alien, whether

`s΄toj ἐ oἰkeῖoj ἐ ἀllώt-   for spite towards my work or my deeds,

rtoj ἐ ἐpὶ φqόnon tὸn   whoever put a curse on me before Hermes

ἐmɛὶ ἐrgasίai ἐ ἔrgoij,   *eriounios* or *katochos* or *dolios* or anywhere

eἴ tιj ἐmὲ katέdes-   else, I put a reciprocal bindingspell on all

en pròj tòn Ἑrmɛ̑n tò-   my enemies.

n ἐριόnion ἐ prò`j΄ tòn

kάtocon ἐ pròj tòn dό-

lion ἐ ἄlloqί po, ἀnti-

katade`s΄meύw tòj ἐc`r΄θ-

òj ἄpantaj.

Side B:

katadesmeύw ἀtίdikon Dί-   I bind my opponent in court Dion and

wna kaὶ Grάnikon μὲ AΠ[ˌ]D? ̣E-   Granicos.

STAI aὐtὸn toῦ ἐλά[ton]o (?) mέ-

roj pleίonoj ἐ ἐgὼ ἀnedόmen.

The above transliteration of side B comes from Daniel Ogden,[106] whereas the transliteration of side A and the original Greek come from David R. Jordan.[107] Side B is only partly legible and therefore difficult to fully interpret. Jordan

states that the tablet's grammatical context likely dates it to before 370 BCE and that it is possible that the figure Granicos mentioned on side B could have been a metic (foreigner), slave, or former slave from Asia Minor.[108]

This specific tablet shows a unique glimpse into the mindset of its author. First of all, it can be assumed that the author of this tablet is going to court against at least two people named Dion and Granicos. It also implies that the author anticipated that the opponents in the upcoming court case may have already made a binding tablet of their own. As a result, our author places a reciprocal binding on anyone that has placed one against him. Notice, the author does not name his or her opponents on side A but instead lists categories of people such as women, men, foreigner, and citizen. This then "offers an early example of the use of highly stylized 'exhaustive dichotomies.'"[109] The author is unsure of specifically who may have placed a binding on him or herself and therefore makes sure to include a list of possible categories that the person may belong to. Ultimately this shows just how common the practice of *katadesmoi* was in Classical Greece because common people (in this example, Dion and Granicos) were assumed by another person (our author) to be familiar with binding tablets.

In addition, and particularly relevant to our study of the religious context of these tablets, this example shows the author's assumption of to whom the *katadesmos* was addressed. It was assumed that tablets were addressed to Hermes *eriounios*, *katochos,* or *dolios,* which are all epithets designating specific functions of Hermes. So not only Hermes *katochos* (the restrainer) was believed to bind individuals but also Hermes *dolios* (the trickster) was believed to bind individuals as well. The author's assumption that tablets were brought before Hermes shows how important Hermes was in their proper execution.

Our next tablet for consideration is another tablet from fourth century Attica. I offer here the original ancient Greek text, its transliteration into a clearer Greek text containing accent marks[110], a translation[111], and an accompanying commentary.

ΩΔΑΤΑΚΝΗΝΕΘΣΟΡΔΝΑΝΗΝΑΘΥΜΕΦΙ ΚΑΙΑΝΩΜΟΡΔΝΑΙΜΙΣΓΟΔΑΣΧΕΙΡΑΣ ΠΡΟΣΤΟ.ΕΡΑ..ΝΤΟΝΚΑΤΟΧΟΝ ΨΥΧΗΝΓΛΩΝΤΑΣΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ ΧΕΡΔΗ	Ἰφεμυθάνην Ἀνδροσθένην καταδῶ χαὶ Σιμ(μ)ίαν Δρόμωνα· πόδας χεῖρας πρὸς τὸ[ν] Ἐρ[μῆ]ν τὸν κάταχον ψυχὴν γλώντας ἐργασίας κέρδη	I bind over before Hermes the Restrainer Androsthe-nês and (?) Iphemuthanês and (?) Simias (and Dromôn)—feet, hands, soul, tongue, products, and income.

"Of the five lines, parts of the first and second lines are written so that the full line reads from left to right, while the individual words are spelled from right to left."[112] In other words, a sentence that reads, "I bind before Hermes, Andro and Iphem" would in this format read as, "I bind before Hermes, ordnA and mehpI." This format was not uncommon in early *katadesmoi,* but why? I propose that these types of tablets, and tablets similar to them which employ a greater amount of complexity in their letter arrangement, may have been written in such a way to try and conceal the identity of their intended targets. This may have been a precaution taken by the author. The reason for this strategy may be so that even if their intended target were to find the tablet they would not know it was directed against them. This also protected the identity of the tablet maker because if an individual knew they were the target of a *katadesmos* and had few enemies then it would not be difficult to figure out who it was that created the tablet. This epigraphical theory on personal pronoun structure aside, there is evidence to support that the words also acted as a tangible representation for the author's desired effect upon a target. "In the greek world […] we occasionally find formulas calling attention to the fact that the victim's name or the entire text is inscribed backwards, such as in this [fourth century tablet] from Athens […] 'Just as the words are cold and reversed (ἐparístera, lit. written right to left), so too may the words of Krates be cold and reversed'."[113]

What makes our specific example interesting is not only its epigraphical nature but also what it includes in its list of items to bind. It is common to find tablets that list many body parts of individuals to bind but it is less common to find examples of bindings on one's products and income. Therefore, this tablet suggests a competition in business of some sort.[114]

For our final example I offer another fourth century tablet, this one from Athens. Included are drawings of the tablet in Figure 1 as well as transcriptions of the original Greek[115] followed by a translation[116] and commentary.
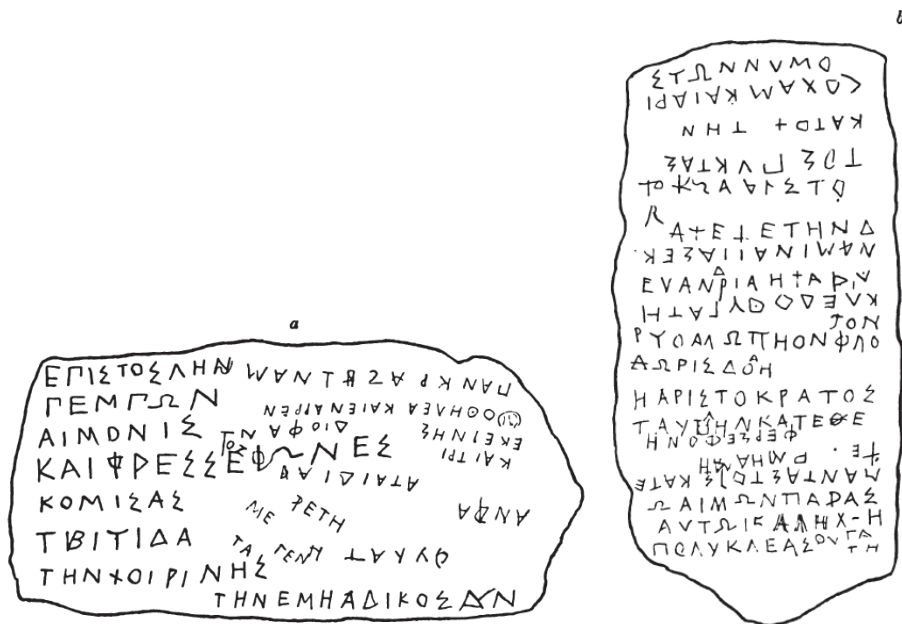
Figure 1. Drawing of fourth century tablet.

Side A: | Side B:

Ἐπisto<s>lὴn
pέmpwn
d]aίmo(sin)
kaὶ Fressefώn(η)<j>
komίsaj
Tibitίda
tὴn Coirίnhj
tὴn ἐm(ὲ) ἀdiko(ὺ)san
qugat(έra)
ἄndra
kaὶ trίa (p)aidίa
ἐceίnhj
dύo qέlea kaὶ ἓn ἄrrén·
Pagkrάth Mant(ίan)
Diόfanton
Metagέnh.

Side B:

Katόc(ouj) tὴn (l/ῆn)
to(ὺ)j pύktaj
toὺj Ἀristό-
macoj kaὶ Ἀdi-
stώn<n>umo(j)
kάtace tὴn d[ύ-
namin ἄpas(an) ἐk[eίnwn.
Eὐandrίa ἡ Cari-
kle(ί)do(u) qugάth-
r (tὸn) . . . .
. . . .
ἡ Ἀristokrάto(u)j
taὺt(hn) ὅlhn kάtace
Fersefόnh.
pάntaj (toύ)touj katέ-
ce[te Ἑ]rmῆ Ἅidh
ῶ̃ [d]aίmwn parὰ s-
autῶi Galήn[h] ἡ
Polukle[ί]aj qugάthr.

Side A:

I am sending a letter to the *daimones*
and to Persephone, and deliver (to
them) Tribitis, (daughter of)
Choirinê, who did me wrong,
daughter, husband, and three
children, two female and one male.
Pagkratês Mant[ias] Diophantos
Metagenês

Side B:

Restrained are . . . the boxers,
Aristomachos and Aristônumos.
Restrain all their power. Euandria,
daughter of Charikleidês . . . ,
treacherous Doris, (daughter) of
Aristokratês. May Persephone
restrain all of her. Hermes and
Hades, may you restrain all of these.
Daimon, (may you restrain) Galênê,
daughter of Polukleia, by your side.

This final example brings our study of the Greek *katadesmoi* to a close by showing us, at least in this particular example, how the binding tablets were understood; as letters to the underworld. Intent and purpose aside, this example

shows just how engrained the belief in chthonic deities was in the execution of these tablets. Dating from the later fourth century, as many later Greek tablets go on to show, the authors begin including precise lists of names of chthonic deities and more text in general. The author specifically calls upon the *daimones*, Hermes, Persephone, and Hades; all chthonic figures from the underworld. Our author asks that these beings not only bind someone that has done wrong against her, Tribitis, but also, that they bind Tribitis' husband and children. The author then goes on to bind other individuals as well. The way in which this tablet is particularly violent is in what it implies. The phrase 'by your side' when referring to the chthonic beings means that the author desired death for these individuals so that their souls would reside with them in Hades.

6. Concluding Thoughts

If rituals were performed and deities invoked orally with the deposit of tablets from the early Classical period as my thesis explains then why do we see a shift to include many deities' names on the tablets in the later Classical period? Perhaps the later authors of these tablets became more lenient in their observance of the proper oral prayers and rituals for the tablets' deposits. Perhaps the next generation of *katadesmoi* makers found it more convenient to write more and do less; and so, what was once a complex religious ritual became distilled into a precise literary form and a tradition in and of itself which would adapt and change over the following thousand years along with the people all across the Mediterranean.

7. Endnotes

1. David R. Jordan, "A Survey of Greek Defixiones not Included in the Special Corpora," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 26, no. 2 (1985: Summer), 151-197.

2. Katadesmoi (katadesmoi) being the plural form of the singular katadesmos (katadesmos)

3. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5.

4. James Frazer. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

5. Frazer's etic scholarly construct of 'magic' as a category in which to place certain beliefs and practices assumes a particular sort of imperialism which aims to differentiate between 'civilized' religion and 'primitive' magic. This imperialist perspective views religion as a more evolved social structure than magic. However, this view of certain beliefs and practices as constituting 'magic' is a categorization made completely by the scholar and not by the practitioners themselves. Therefore in order to understand a practice as closely as possible to the manner in which an original practitioner would, it is useful to utilize emic terminology. For example, the Greek term *magia* differs greatly from our modern definition of magic; however, when Frazer discusses certain practices of the ancient Greeks he uses his own scholarly defined term of magic as opposed to the understanding of *magia* as according to the Greeks. This is not to say that modern scholarly constructed categories and terminology are inferior in some way to the terminology used by the society which the scholar studies, but rather, that emic terminology offers a unique view of the subject matter which more accurately resembles the views held by society in question. Overall, such emic terminology proves to be more useful to the scholar who aims to understand beliefs and practices on their own terms and from the perspective of an original believer or practitioner. When such original terminology is lacking then it may be useful for the scholar to create terminology by which to understand and categorize certain beliefs and practices. Critical reflection of such terminology is therefore important to the understanding of a society's beliefs and practices.

6. Christopher A. Faraone, *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

7. "Christopher A. Faraone." Department of Classics The University of Chicago. https://classics.uchicago.edu/faculty/faraone.

8. "John Gager." People- Princeton University- Department of Religion. http://religion.princeton.edu/main/people/all-people/emeriti-faculty/john-gager/.

9. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*

10. Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 36.

11. Ibid., 35.

12. C. A. Faraone, "Molten Wax, Spilt Wine and Mutilated Animals: Sympathetic Magic in Near Eastern and Early Greek Oath Ceremonies" *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 113 (1993): 60-80.

13. Ibid.

14. Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion*, 36.

15. Ibid., 37.

16. Michael Gagarin and David Cohen, *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 26.

17. Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 275. Pharmakeon

18. L. H. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece: The City-states, C. 700-500 B.C.* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 226.

19. William Hosmer Race, *Pindar I: Olympian Odes. Pythian Odes.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997), 9.

20. David Cohen, *Demokratie, Recht Und Soziale Kontrolle Im Klassischen Athen*, (München: Oldenbourg, 2002), 78.

21. Alan H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus: Eumenides*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 18.

22. John M. Marston, "Language of Ritual Cursing in the Binding of Prometheus." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 47 (2007), 121-33.

23. Alan H. Sommerstein, *Aeschylus: Eumenides*, 9.

24. Mark Griffith, *The Authenticity of "Prometheus Bound*", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 10-11.

25. There is even direct evidence to suggest that in at least one case a viewer of the play replicated the binding on his or her own *katadesmos*. For more information on this see Marston.

26. Christopher A. Faraone, "Ancient Greek Curse Tablets." Fathom Archive. 2004. http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/1/777777122300/.

27. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 4.

28. Ibid., 31.

29. Werner Riess, *Performing Interpersonal Violence: Court, Curse, and Comedy in Fourth-Century BCE Athens*. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 164.

30. Ibid.

31. C. A. Faraone, "Molten Wax, Spilt Wine and Mutilated Animals: Sympathetic Magic in Near Eastern and Early Greek Oath Ceremonies," 60-80.

32. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 7.

33. Nigel G. Wilson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 675.

34. Zinon Papakonstantinou, "Binding Curses, Agency and the Athenian Democracy." Academia. https://www.academia.edu/6462419/Binding_Curses_Agency_and_the_Athenian_Democracy.

35. Daniel Ogden and Matthew W. Dickie, "Magic in Classical and Hellenistic Greece." In *A Companion to Greek Religion* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 362.

36. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 12.

37. Derek Collins, *Magic in the Ancient Greek World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008), 40.

38. Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion, 2nd ed.* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 37.

39. Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*. 2nd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 49.

40. Arthur Fairbanks, "The Chthonic Gods of Greek Religion." *The American Journal of Philology* 21, no. 3 (1900): 241-59. doi:10.2307/287716.

41. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 200.

42. Ibid.

43. Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 66.

44. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 12.

45. Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion*, 75-76.

46. Fp Retief and L. Cilliers, "Burial Customs, the Afterlife and the Pollution of Death in Ancient Greece." *Acta Theologica Theol.* 26, no. 2 (2006), 46-48.

47. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 88.

48. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 156.

49. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 41.

50. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 88.

51. Ibid.

52. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 156.

53. Hetty Goldman, "The Origin of the Greek Herm." *American Journal of Archaeology* 46, no. 1 (1942): 58-68.

54. Ibid.

55. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, 39.

56. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 156.

57. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 89.

58. James I Porter, *Constructions of the Classical Body*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 129.

59. Ibid.

60. Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, 41.

61. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 89.

62. Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, 3rd ed, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1955), 53.

63. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 156.

64. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 90.

65. John Elsner,"Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim In The Roman World." *Past and Present* 135, no. 1 (1992): 3-29.

66. Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, 3rd ed, 54.

67. The staff of Hermes was according to Gurthrie, "…in all probability originally of wood, and is sometimes depicted as having leaves."(92) This description reminds me specifically of the imagery used on the back of old Mercury dimes and it's likely that this form developed through time into the caduceus whose snake imagery Burkert claims originated from the Near East.(158)

68. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 157.

69. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 88.

70. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 157.

71. Ibid.

72. T. G. Tucker, *The Choephori*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1901), 3.

73. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, 89.

74. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 195. *Psyche* comes from the verb *psychein*, to breathe. With a dying person's last breathe the *psyche* is believed to be released from the body.

75. Ibid.

76. P. E. Easterling, *Greek Religion and Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 53.

77. Fp Retief and L. Cilliers, "Burial Customs, the Afterlife and the Pollution of Death in Ancient Greece.", 45.

78. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 196.

79. Fp Retief and L. Cilliers, "Burial Customs, the Afterlife and the Pollution of Death in Ancient Greece.", 45-46.

80. Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 23-24.

81. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 5.

82. I present here my own expanded and modified form of a list. The original list consists of three types of tablets put forth by Faraone and referenced in Gager p. 13.

83. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 13.

84. Ibid., 14.

85. Another form which exists which I have chosen not to immediately list here is that of what are termed '*ephesia grammata*' which contain *voces mysticae* (indecipherable words) and *charaktêres* (drawings). These are primarily found in the Roman era and therefore do not directly concern our study here of Classical Greek *katadesmoi*.

86. Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*, 210. For a summary of these categories refer to page 167 of *Performing Interpersonal Violence: Court, Curse, and Comedy in Fourth-Century BCE Athens* by Werner Riess.

87. Ibid., 210.

88. Werner Riess, *Performing Interpersonal Violence: Court, Curse, and Comedy in Fourth-Century BCE Athens*. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 164.

89. Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*, 210.

90. Werner Riess, *Performing Interpersonal Violence: Court, Curse, and Comedy in Fourth-Century BCE Athens*, 167-8.

91. Ibid., 169-71.

92. Ibid., 169.

93. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 18.

94. Ibid.

95. Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 71.

96. Ibid., 75.

97. Ibid., 78.

98. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 19.

99. Ibid.

100. Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, 78.

101. Because of the liminal status of these specific souls of the dead, the individual would likely not need to proceed with a complex ritual of sacrifice and libation as with other souls of the dead. This is purely a matter of personal opinion as I have yet to discover sufficient scholarly research on whether or not the *aõroi* and *biaiothanatoi* received any special ritual offerings.

102. Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead Encounters Between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, 79.

103. Ibid., 72.

104. Ibid., 72-3.

105. David R. Jordan et al, eds. *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4-8 May 1997*, (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999) 115-117 Tablet from Ashmolean Museum Inv. G.514.3 It's measurements are H. 0.07, W. 0.055 m.

106. Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*, 211.

107. David R. Jordan et al, eds. *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 4-8 May 1997*, (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999), 117.

108. Ibid., 116.

109. Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*, 211.

110. Richard Wunsch, "Pars 3 Appendix Inscriptionum Atticarum." In *Vol III Inscriptiones Atticae Aetatis Romanae*. (1897) 19 tablet number 86; It's measurements are H. 6, W. 19 cm. and was originally folded and pierced with a nail.

111. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 160-61.

112. Ibid.

113. Richard Lindsay Gordon, and Francisco Marco Simón, eds. *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.-1 Oct. 2005* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 382.

114. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 160-61.

115. Richard Wunsch, "Pars 3 Appendix Inscriptionum Atticarum." In *Vol III Inscriptiones Atticae Aetatis Romanae*. (1897), 26. Tablet number 102, opisthographic, measuring 13 x 6 cm.

116. John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, 201-2.