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EMBRACING THE OCCULT

Magic, Witchcraft, and Witches

in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*

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Konstantinos Stamatopoulos

1

INTRODUCTION

*Fillet of a fenny snake,
in the caldron boil and bake;
eye of newt, and toe of frog,
wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,—
for a charm of powerful trouble,
like a hell-broth boil and bubble.*

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

1

Round about the caldron go...

Preliminaries

This dissertation is about magic, witchcraft, and witches in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius. Apuleius needs no introduction: the orator-cum-philosopher-cum-magician-cum-novelist from Madauros of Northern Africa is, without exaggeration, one of the most celebrated post-classical authors of our times. The same, however, cannot be said about the concept of magic itself; what does one really mean or understand when using the term ‘magic’? Is magic the marvellous stunts that Harry Houdini, David Copperfield, or wannabe-famous magicians appearing on television on various *Got Talent* franchises performed and still perform? Is magic connected to a supernatural power, a force that can be used for good or evil? Or is magic a synonym for devil worship, a witch’s Sabbath, and satanic rituals? I recently conducted a small experiment and asked twenty random friends from different scientific fields to tell me the first thing that came to their minds when they heard the term ‘magic’: I was not the slightest surprised that the majority exclaimed ‘Harry Potter’, whereas a small number suggested ‘Walt Disney’ (this was quite unconventional)! I then asked the same friends to attempt to define the concept of magic for me: fifteen could only describe what magic *does* rather than what magic *is*, whereas the remaining five defined magic by saying what magic is *not*. In a sense these answers demonstrate that the general modern term

‘magic’ can cover a very broad semantic field, and it is true that magic can mean whatever a person wants it to mean: from a clever trick such as David Copperfield making the Statue of Liberty apparently vanish before the eyes of spectators for entertainment purposes to the more extreme, regarded by some even as satanic rituals (like the ones occurring in Greece in the early 1990s), which intended to influence the course of events or to manipulate the natural world, usually by using arcane, occult, sometimes apocryphal knowledge.

However, as F. GRAF has suggested, “magic is a bit like a black hole; to many people, it seems invisible. Contemporary social anthropologists doubt whether magic exists at all”.¹ It has now been more than a century during which social and cultural anthropologists, classicists, psychologists, philosophers, and historians of religion have been dealing with the concept of magic. For a long time, it appears, scholars of antiquity neglected this particular phenomenon. The extreme difficulties imposed by the magical texts, as well as the medieval belief that magic was accomplished through the intervention of demons (a belief resting primarily upon the Church Fathers and theologians who were largely outside the mainstream practice of magic²) are but a few explanations which could account for the profound lack of interest in this subject area. Magic, however, had always been ‘out there’, probably ever since the Palaeolithic Ages: if, as C. PHARR suggests, “the evidence has been correctly interpreted, most of the art of the Palaeolithic man was based on magical ideas and devoted to magical purposes”.³

The great deal of work produced over the past decades serves as proof of the enthusiasm that the topic of magic has excited in scholars of not just classical philology. But despite this apparent interest in the study of magic, the road has not always been smooth. Concerns have been raised and objections have been voiced, with a number of scholars not only keen to deny the very existence of ‘magic’, but also intent on ridding scholarship of this term.⁴ It is worth noticing that in the United States, especially during the late 1990s, the study of magic has been seen by some as a fancy albeit racy trend. A withering attack issued in September 1998 by *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* entitled “What College tuition and Fees are

¹ GRAF (1997) 2.

² Augustine addresses the concept of magic in his second book of *On the Christian Doctrine* and declares it to be nothing more than a destructive association between men and demons, which amounts to an infidel and cunning friendship (2.36); this type of establishment is based on a language that is common to both humans and demons and its ‘signs’ are chosen by the demons in order to deceive and catch the humans (2.37). On Augustine and magic, cf. GRAF (2002a) and (2002b) 96-7. For the role of demons in Late Antique and Medieval magic, cf. FLINT (1999).

³ PHARR (1932) 269.

⁴ Cf. HOFFMAN (2002) 179.

paying For!” claimed that “one reason college tuition is so high is that it must cover the cost of paying high-priced professors to teach dozens or hundreds of worthless courses that are not education at all, but are just propaganda, entertainment, or behaviour modification”. Among the ‘bizarre’ and ‘weirdo’ courses being taught at major American Universities the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* enumerates Columbia’s “Sorcery and Magic”, Bucknell’s “Witchcraft and Politics”, Stanford’s “Homosexuals, Heretics, Witches and Werewolves: Deviants in Medieval Society” and Williams College’s “Witchcraft, Sorcery and Magic”.⁵ A possible explanation for launching such an attack is that the concept of ‘magic’ suffered, suffers and will continue to suffer from a troublesome past, since it remains, even to our day, “an ill-defined, evaluative concept that is hopelessly beyond redemption”.⁶ Some critics have suggested a variety of new approaches to understanding magic, such as trying to adopt the terms and concepts that the culture under study use (‘emic’),⁷ or coining new words to replace the old problematic ones; but in the end these approaches, too, reflect merely a shift in emphasis and do not really tackle the problem at its root.⁸ Yet, despite the difficult problems surrounding the concept of magic, in the last decade or so an increasing number of Universities offer courses and/or workshops on a variety of aspects of antique magic, which suggests that ‘magic’ as a phenomenon and as a scholarly category of study is finally here to stay.⁹

Therefore, this introduction is primarily dedicated to magic, since Apuleius will receive individual treatment in chapter 3, and will address three main topics. In section 2 I will discuss concepts and definitions of magic, and in doing so I will take the discussion ‘backwards’ by starting with 19th and 20th century approaches to magic and witchcraft (§2.1); the discussion will then shift over to the Greek and Roman worlds, whereby the semantic

⁵ *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* 32.4 (September 1998).

⁶ HOFFMAN (2002) 180.

⁷ ‘Emic’ and ‘etic’ are terms coined by KENNETH PICKE and are used primarily in the scientific analysis of cultures. The ‘emic’ (‘insider’) approach investigates how *local* people of any given culture think, understand the cosmos, and explain things; in this approach the perspective of the *subject* is centre of attention. The ‘etic’ (‘outsiders’) approach, on the contrary, is a more *scientific* methodology and shifts the attention from within the culture or social group to outside, to the *observer*; when employing an ‘etic’ approach, researchers emphasise what *they* think is important and analyse the culture based on *their own* preconceptions and/or prejudices. On ‘emic’ and ‘etic’, cf. PIKE (1954) 8-28; on the application of these two terms with regards to ancient cultures and the study of magic, cf. VERSNEL (1991b); DICKIE (2001) 19-20.

⁸ HOFFMAN (2002) 180.

⁹ Cf. e.g., King College Halifax’s “Magic, science, and the occult: From antiquity to postmodernity” (2015); Bonn’s “Egyptian and Jewish magic in antiquity” (2015); Bryn Mawr’s “Magic in the ancient Greco-Roman world” (2015); Cambridge’s “Magic in antiquity” (2014); Göttingen’s “Magic in the ancient novels: A selection” (2012); Waterloo’s “Astrology and magic in antiquity and the middle ages” (2010); Arkansas’ “Magic, science and the occult from antiquity to Newton” (2006).

trajectory of μάγος / μαγεία (§2.2) and *magus / magia* (§2.3) will be examined, including the basic magical terminology which will be appearing with some frequency within the pages of this dissertation. Section 3 will present in a concise form the most important modern critical scholarship on magic in general and then more specifically on magic in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* of the last 30 years; and lastly, section 4 will wrap up the discussion by offering an outline of the present dissertation and highlighting some methodological considerations.

2

In the poison'd entrails throw... **Magic: Definitions and approaches**

2.1. What is 'magic'? Some modern approaches

Although modern anthropological definitions and interpretations of magic are beyond the scope of this study, it is worth mentioning that any systematic modern discussion of magic undoubtedly begins with two people: EDWARD TYLOR and JAMES FRAZER. It was in fact FRAZER's *The Golden Bough* that helped to increase exponentially the interest in magic and to establish its modern scholarly study. Contrary to its first edition, the second edition (published in 1900) included the subtitle "A study in magic and religion" and was in many ways a ground-breaking study at that time; how revolutionary FRAZER's *magnum opus* was in the early twentieth century is attested by the fact that while books bearing the terms 'magic' and 'religion' in their titles did not appear prior to the 1900s, such books become a normative feature in the fields of social anthropology and history of religion following its publication.¹⁰

In briefest outline, in *The Golden Bough* FRAZER took TYLOR's discussion on magic from his *Primitive Culture* (1871) one step further: TYLOR had understood human culture in terms of Victorian notions of evolution,¹¹ which heavily influenced his perception and understanding of magic. For TYLOR humanity had evolved through various stages and magic was one of human culture's earliest forms of belief. Magic, which in TYLOR's words was "one of the most pernicious delusions that ever vexed mankind",¹² constituted only a systematic pseudo-science by which primitives attempted to discover and predict events, and cause them to

¹⁰ So argued BREMMER, who reached this conclusion after consulting the computerised systems of university libraries' catalogues (1999: 12).

¹¹ The most well-known expression of Victorian evolutionary theory is none other than Darwin's seminal *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

¹² TYLOR (1891) 112.

happen: despite magic perceiving some connections between events, it mistook imagined connections for real ones, and therefore the magical practitioner accepted an *erroneous* association between cause and effect which he would then attempt to reproduce or even invert during the magical ritual. For example, primitive cultures might have noticed an association between the rising sun and the rooster crowing and would have inferred that by making the rooster crow the sun would rise. Therefore, if one were to prevent the rooster from crowing, the sun would also (magically) not rise on that very day.

TYLOR essentially accepted that magic *worked* because the practitioners of magic distorted or failed to comprehend the *real* reasons or the *underlying* relationship between causes and their effect and analysed the phenomenon in intellectualistic terms. Furthermore, as FRAZER would later articulate in a better way, some sort of medium was required so that the connection a practitioner makes between a manipulated object A which is in the practitioner's vicinity and a person B who is out of the practitioner's reach and who is also the recipient of the operation through the manipulation of object A can work. Therefore, TYLOR introduced the concept of 'sympathy' which assumes that things or objects impact each other at a distance through some kind of sympathy: if one takes a small voodoo figurine resembling person A and pierces its head with a needle, thus trying to cause person A to have a headache, one falsely assumes that the headache comes as a result of the pierced effigy; but the fact could well be, among other reasonable explanations, that person A had simply not drunk enough water and so the headache was due to a severe lack of hydration.¹³

FRAZER's approach to magic was quite similar to TYLOR's: he, too, believed in an evolutionistic model and attempted to map out the scheme of human culture from magic to religion to science. Although TYLOR never really contrasted magic to religion but rather discussed them as two separate phenomena, FRAZER distinguished magic from religion based on an individual's intention and approach towards higher powers (a magical practitioner demonstrates a coercive and disrespectful attitude towards the divine, whereas a religious devotee propitiates and supplicates by humbling himself before the gods) and magic from science—magic is claimed to be “the bastard sister of science”¹⁴—by its faulty association and connection between reason and effect. FRAZER argued that religion developed gradually and out of the realisation of magic's inefficiency; basically, as soon as man realised he was not always able to manipulate at pleasure certain natural phenomena which he had once

¹³ For a critique of TYLOR's view, cf. TAMBIAH (1990) 45-47.

¹⁴ FRAZER (2009) 46.

assumed to be completely within his sphere of control, he began to infer that the reason for this must have been the presence of more powerful, invisible, forces that caused these events which he previously attributed to magic to happen.

However, FRAZER's most important contribution to the discussion of magic is his examination and expansion of TYLOR's theory of 'sympathy'. FRAZER argued that sympathetic magic is fundamentally governed by two core principles: the law of similarity (*similia similibus*) and the law of contact or contiguity. 'Similarity' or homoeopathic magic presupposes that a magician could achieve any desired effect merely by reproducing it: for example, by burning or destroying an image or picture of one's ex-partner one hopes to 'destroy' any remaining ties linking oneself to this person. Contrastingly, 'contagious magic' implies that objects which had once been in contact with each other transcend time and space and continue to act on each other after the physical contact has been severed: this practically means that whatever the magical practitioners do to a material object which they hold in their hands will equally affect the person whom the object was once in contact with, whether this was part of their body (a piece of clothing, a few locks of hair, or some bodily trimmings like nail clippings) or not: so for instance, by burning pieces of clothes or hairs of one's ex-partner—the idea here being that these particular clothes or hair have been in *contact* with that person—one wished to transfer the same burning effect to the person whom the hair, pictures, or clothing once belonged to. As this final example might have demonstrated, both homoeopathic and contagious magic act as supplementary to each other rather than separate or against each other.

Even though these days the majority of FRAZER's core principles are considered by a great deal of critics as rather outdated and old-fashioned,¹⁵ construed by the "individual prejudices of the scholar and his or her imaginings about what modes of ritual actions are inappropriate or simply aesthetically unappealing"¹⁶ and which make "no sense when applied to the cultures of peoples who did not share the Judaeo-Christian religions or the Western variety of science",¹⁷ the *Golden Bough* still remains one of the basic theoretical handbooks debating the notion of magic and its relationship with religion and science. Several different approaches to magic have been proposed: one such approach points out the psychologically satisfying and anti-anxiety element of magic and the instrumental quality of the magical

¹⁵ Going against the grain, BARB accepts the definitions of magic and religion proposed by FRAZER, but suggests some slight alterations (1963: 101).

¹⁶ JANOWITZ (2001) 4.

¹⁷ WAX & WAX (1963) 495.

activity itself (e.g., MALINOWSKI (1948)), whereas another shifts its attention from magic itself onto accusations of witchcraft and their social motivation (e.g., EVANS-PRITCHARD (1937)). EVANS-PRITCHARD, in particular, studied the people of Azande in central Africa and demonstrated how for them witchcraft, magic, and oracles were but three sides of the same triangle: the Azande considered witchcraft a *material* substance which could be found in the bodies of certain people and be diagnosed either by autopsy in the dead or by oracles in the living; magic, on the contrary, is a *technique* which could cure witchcraft by using medicines and rituals.¹⁸ According to EVANS-PRITCHARD, accusations of witchcraft was an easy way for the Azande to understand and interpret any perplexing misfortunes which happened in their lives by giving an explanation that was widely accepted by society.

A new approach to magic, gaining wider acceptance by many scholars these days, is S. TAMBIAH's (1973) concept of 'persuasive' magic, which brings to the forefront the performative aspect of magic. For TAMBIAH magic is a mixture of both verbal and ritual/non-verbal actions, thus objecting to FRAZER's concept of sympathetic magic and the resulting suggestion that sympathy depended on a primitive culture's poor observations of empirical analogies. Instead TAMBIAH argued that magic acts and the interrelation between magical objects are often understood within a comprehensive nexus of metaphors and analogies, during which a transference of properties or qualities from one object to another occurs; but before this transference can take place, one first needs to come to terms with the system of analogical categorisations a particular culture has created for the objects. TAMBIAH, hence, introduced the concept of 'persuasive analogy' to refer to rituals performed by traditional societies in order to encourage future actions.¹⁹

2.2. 'Magic', *μαγεία*, and the *μάγος* in the Greek world

As the previous section might have suggested, the notion of 'magic' is not simply a modern concept which began with TYLOR and FRAZER; it existed as a diffuse construct in antiquity too. But what did 'magic' constitute for the ancients and what did it semantically designate in the Greek world? For the purposes of this dissertation I shall define magic as the socially unlawful and illicit use of preternatural powers and ritual practices in one's effort to exert influence over the natural cosmos and to compel humans, gods, and supernatural

¹⁸ EVANS-PRITCHARD (1976) 226-27.

¹⁹ On a more in depth analysis of modern anthropological theories on magic, cf. WAX & WAX (1963); COLLINS (2008a) 1-26; also GRAF (1997) 13-18.

beings to do one's bidding.²⁰ This heuristic definition will help us to distinguish magic and the witch who practises witchcraft both from goddesses or monsters, who have no real need of magical paraphernalia or ritual practices in order to carry out their will, and also from priests and priestess, the contact of which with the divine is socially sanctioned and lawful.²¹

In the following two sections I will briefly address the most common vocabulary and concepts related to magic and magical activities which are encountered in Greco-Roman literature. A few terms are discussed in greater detail in these sections, whereas others that are pertinent to the general topic of discussion of individual chapters will be addressed more extensively in the corresponding chapters. Emphasis in this section is put primarily on Greek terminology, but the major part of the discussion concentrates on the concept of *μαγεία*, whence the later terms magic (English), magie (French) or Magie (German) derive. The Latin equivalents (wherever applicable) are briefly touched upon in the following section, since most of the semantic problems and 'baggage' exhibited by the Greek terms were also passed on to their Latin counterparts, and so there is no real need to address these issues twice. If any significant difference in meaning occurs, this will be treated separately.

Throughout the Greek speaking world there existed four terms, as well as their derivatives, to designate activities which in modern times would fall under the much disputed category of 'sorcery': *φαρμακεία*, *μαγεία*, *γοητεία*, and *ἐπωδή*.²² As outsider ('etic') scientific investigators of ancient magic, we naturally feel the strong urge to suppose that these terms were initially assigned by the ancients to four very *distinct* categories of magical activities, but the mere fact that one term is usually coupled with another in texts suggests, on the contrary, that such terms not only were used interchangeably at first to refer to some abstract threatening notions, but also referred to inseparable spheres of activities. This semantic ambiguity is also reflected in the English translation of the terms *φαρμακεία*, *γοητεία* and *μαγεία*. The majority of English texts translate the three words either in general as "magic" or simply as "witchcraft", without trying to address the very specific magical overtones that run through these terms. It is, furthermore, interesting that the great majority of these magical terms, which during the second half of the Classical era would have evoked in the minds of people associations of witchcraft in combination with dangerous and illicit activities, do not

²⁰ On magic as an unsanctioned socioreligious activity, cf. PHILLIPS (1991).

²¹ On this definition of magic, cf. FARAONE (1999) 16; SPAETH (2014) 42.

²² For a general discussion of these terms (and their Latin equivalents), cf. GRAF (1997) 20-35; GORDON (1999) 178-191; LUCK (1999b) 99-100; DICKIE (2001) 12-16 and (2007) 357-61; STRATTON (2007) 26-30; on Latin terminology in particular, cf. BURRISS (1936); PAULE (2014).

appear in written records before the early fifth (or perhaps late sixth) century BCE. This fact tends to indicate that magic as a discourse of alterity did not exist in the mind-set of, at least, the early Greeks. But as soon as each of the four terms began to be intertextually linked to each other, each term inevitably coloured the other with additional negative connotations that ultimately conjured up a more sinister concept.²³

This becomes manifest when one examines the ambiguous semantic meaning of the term φάρμακον²⁴ in the Homeric poems²⁵ and in classical Greek authors, such as Plato, to whom I shall come back soon. The first term to express ‘magic’ is φαρμακεία; the term derives from the word φάρμακον, which depending on the context could either refer to a therapeutic philtre and medicine or a poisonous and lethal drug. In the beginning φαρμακεία was limited to the collection of herbs, usually by women known as φαρμακίδες, but with the passing of time it acquired a more sinister meaning as it absorbed characteristics from the figure of the male sorcerer. In the Homeric poems φάρμακον is used in a neutral way; the positive or pejorative sense of the word is often determined by an attributive epithet (φάρμακον ἐσθλόν, ἥπιον, ἀνδροφόνον, ὀδυνήφατον, etc.). Thus, the first wicked witch of Western civilisation, the Homeric Circe, is presented (among many other things) as also being an expert at manipulating φάρμακα, either in the form of benevolent, healing herbs (φάρμακα ἐσθλά) or malignant, deleterious poisons (φάρμακα λυγρά or κακά).²⁶ Fearing for Odysseus’ life and in order to protect him from Circe’s charms, Hermes offers the hero a root called μῶλυ, which functions as an apotropaic device and an antidote to the witch’s magic and is referred to as φάρμακον ἐσθλόν (10.281-306). Elsewhere, Helen’s Egyptian φάρμακα are described as ‘helpful’ (μητιόεντα) because they are able to temporarily cure Menelaus and his dinner guests of their griefs (4.219-32). In the *Iliad*, too, we read about Agamede, the daughter of Augeias, who allegedly knew everything there was to know about all the φάρμακα that grew on God’s green earth (11.739-41).

Though the aforementioned cases of φάρμακα might appear *in our eyes* to be devices employed in magical conduct (‘etic’ approach), there is no evidence whatsoever to indicate that these particular acts were also considered ‘magical’ by Homer, or that Homer even

²³ Cf. STRATTON (2007) 29-30.

²⁴ On the semantic range of the term, cf. *LSJ* s.v. φάρμακον.

²⁵ I confess that I still prefer to address the poet of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as ‘Homer’, but in doing so I am well aware that in all likelihood his name was neither Ὀμηρος nor was he the poet who composed both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. WEST discussed these matters rather extensively and opted to address the poet of the *Iliad* as ‘P’, whereas of the *Odyssey*’s as ‘Q’, on which cf. (1999), (2011) and (2014).

²⁶ *Odyssey* 10.235-40, 276, 290-2, 317, 326-28.

possessed the concept of ‘magic’ (‘emic’ approach).²⁷ As strange as it might be for modern (‘etic’) interpreters to grasp that in the early Archaic period people had not yet concretely formed a category of thought under which attacks on individuals with the use of φάρμακα might be placed, there are no hints to support the thought that Circe’s φάρμακα or her actions bear the same ominous connotations as those of magicians of a later date.²⁸ Prompted by the semantic ambivalence of such passages R. GORDON has suggested that Homer presents us with the concept of ‘magic before magic’—that is, activities which at a later date would undisputedly fall under the category of ‘magic’, but which at the time of their initial depiction do not have a similar negative significance. However, in the first quarter of the fourth century BCE Circe’s φάρμακα are already associated with notions of foreignness and magic, as is evident from Aristophanes (*Wealth* 308-14), but for Plato, a younger contemporary of Aristophanes, the notion of φαρμακεία as a magical activity still remained rather ambiguous and not concrete.

Plato demonstrated a remarkable consistency in his refusal to define the concept of ‘magic’ in his works in the fourth century BCE, but he was nevertheless forced to make a distinction between two different types of φαρμακεία in his *Laws* while discussing penalties for those who hurt people through the employment of drugs. The first type of φαρμακεία relates to the field of pharmacology and can be characterised as poisoning: it inflicts physical injury on individuals according to natural laws and its objective is to induce death (θανάσιμον) or harm (βλάβη) through potions, foods or unguents.²⁹ On the contrary, the second type, which might be labelled as ‘psychological’ φαρμακεία, is more sinister in nature and is linked to magical trickeries (μαγγανείαι).³⁰ This type is more subjective and operates through persuasion (πειθῆναι) and fear of the unknown. It seems that within the Platonic framework φαρμακεία, still an abstract magical notion, exists and has power over its victims not because its practitioners are able to coerce the divine to their ends, but because they are capable of manipulating the minds of people into thinking that by means of rituals and spells the practitioners are in fact able to achieve their goals.³¹ Overall, what becomes apparent from the Platonic discussion of φαρμακεία is that the philosopher ‘feels’ that φαρμακεία has a covert

²⁷ Cf. GRAF (1997) 28; DICKIE (2001) 23; STRATTON (2007) 26. Going against the grain, OGDEN suggests that the concept of magic was already thriving in the age of the *Odyssey*” (2002b: 130-31).

²⁸ GORDON (1999) 165, 178-81. For the semantic development of the term φάρμακον, cf. PHARR (1932) 272-76.

²⁹ *Laws* 11.933a: σώμασι σώματα κακουργοῦσά ἐστιν (i.e. φαρμακεία) κατὰ φύσιν.

³⁰ *Ibid.*: ἄλλη δὲ ἢ μαγγανείαις τέ τισιν καὶ ἐπωδαῖς καὶ καταδέσεισι λεγομέναις πείθει τοὺς μὲν τολμῶντας βλάπτειν αὐτούς, ὡς δύνανται τὸ τοιοῦτον, τοὺς δ’ ὡς παντὸς μᾶλλον ὑπὸ τούτων δυναμένων γοητεύειν βλάπτονται.

³¹ On Plato’s notion of ‘psychological’ magic, cf. GRAF (2002b) 97-9.

and subversive magical association (the term in this context appears vis-à-vis μαγγανεία, ἐπωδή, κατάδεσις, and γοητεία), but he cannot yet fully articulate what it is *exactly* that makes φαρμακεία illicit and dangerous, aside from pointing towards destructive behaviour and inflicting death by poisons.

Ἐπωδή and γοητεία are two additional terms that make an appearance in classical Greek texts to express an illegitimate way of accessing numinous powers. Ἐπωδή and ἐπωδός are connected to the art of magical singing; the terms designate a special form of words and incantations sung by the magician in order to attain his purposes.³² At first the term ἐπωδή, as with the case of φάρμακον, had a neutral meaning; the ἐπωδός was not a sorcerer in the later sense, but a man who specialised in singing over someone who had been affected by ills and could help with the easing of his or her suffering. When Odysseus is injured by a wild boar, his uncles sing a (medical?) ἐπαιδίη over the wound (19.457), thus stopping the bleeding.³³ Plato seems to be aware of the powers of incantations and approves them when used for good purposes (such as the ones sung by midwives in order to ease childbirth pains), but he surely condemns the individuals who by means of sacrifices and incantations evoke the souls of the dead and constrict the divine powers.³⁴ There is, furthermore, some additional evidence from the mid-fifth century BCE suggesting that ἐπωδαί were also used in love magic rituals.³⁵

A sub-category of the magical incantation was the ἐπαγωγή, which referred to a special form of incantation, the purpose of which was to summon the ghost of a dead person and then send it to haunt, terrify or drive mad an enemy. Thus, ἐπαγωγαί were inextricably linked to the practices of ψυχαγωγία (ghost evocation) and νεκρομαντεία (necromancy). Also associated with ghost evocation and necromancy are the arts of γοητεία and the figure of the γόης. These two concepts will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5, so suffice to say at this stage that the γόης was an enthralling figure that combined many characteristics and ‘talents’ in antiquity. Originally, the γόης was believed to be something comparable to a shaman, conveying the spirits of the dead on their final journey to the afterlife.

Μαγεία, contrastingly, whence the English word magic derives, was, in its unadulterated form, the art of the μάγος, a priest or an expert in Persian religion, closely associated with the Great King and the Persian Empire. The word and its family seem to stem

³² On the ἐπωδή, cf. LAÍN ENTRALGO (1970) 46-50; KOTANSKY (1991) 108-10.

³³ *Odyssey* 19.457. A similar therapeutic incantation for broken bones was known by Cato the Elder, on which cf. chapter 2.3.

³⁴ *Theaetetus* 149c-d; *Laws* 10.909b.

³⁵ Cf. e.g., Pindar *Pythian* 4.217.

from the Old Persian word *maguš* which was linked to the Avestan *moyu-* and probably meant ‘member of a tribe’.³⁶ Though early historians and philosophers took a genuine interest in the Persian priestly cast and discussed variously their traditions and beliefs³⁷ from the fifth century BCE onwards—perhaps a bit earlier if we should take into account the problematic first documented appearance of the word *μάγος* in Heraclitus³⁸—the term appears to have acquired a second, more sinister meaning, connected neither to Persia nor to its priests; it was instead used to designate, in a pejorative sense, wandering mendicant charlatans known to the Greek world who used incantations and sacrifices to control demons and the spirits of the dead.³⁹

Two important classical scholars, the late M. WEST and W. BURKERT, attempted individually to explain somehow why such a semantic shift occurred in the first place. WEST hypothesised that the term *μάγος* entered the Greek vocabulary during the mid-sixth century BCE when Greek settlers of the coasts of Asia Minor came into contact with members of the tribe of the magi as the latter were being driven westwards after the defeat of Media by King Cyrus in 549 BCE or perhaps earlier.⁴⁰ BURKERT, contrastingly, suggested that the Greeks of Asia Minor became accustomed to the word *μάγος* through the Behistun inscription: according to this text King Darius berated a certain man named Gaumata by pronouncing him a *magush* and ordered that the text of the inscription was to be sent to every part of his kingdom and to be read out aloud in public. In this way, the Ionian Greeks got acquainted with the word, and hence it entered the writings of Heraclitus.⁴¹ But what precisely Darius had in mind by employing the word *magush* still remains a mystery.

³⁶ Cf. DE JONG (1997) 387-403. On the birth of the term *μάγος* and *μαγεία*, cf. GRAF (1995) and (1997) 20-35; BREMMER (1999); DICKIE (2001) 18-46; (2007).

³⁷ Cf. e.g., (1) historians: Xanthus of Lydia, 765 F31-2 (Jacoby); Xenophon *Education of Cyrus* 8.3.11; Dino, 690 F5 (Jacoby); Theopompus 115 F64 (Jacoby); (2) philosophers: Plato *Alcibiades I* 121e-22a; Heraclides frs. 68-70 (Wehrli); Aristotle fr. 6 (Rose); *Metaphysics* 14.1091b8-10; Clearchus fr. 13 (Wehrli); Eudemus fr. 89 (Wehrli); Aristoxenus fr. 13 (Wehrli).

³⁸ Heraclitus 22 B14 (DK): τίσι δὴ μαντεύεται Ἡράκλειτος ὁ Ἐφέσιος; νυκτιπόλοις, μάγοις, βάρχοις, λήναις, μύσταις· τούτοις ἀπειλεῖ τὰ μετὰ θάνατον, τούτοις μαντεύεται τὸ πῦρ· τὰ γὰρ νομιζόμενα κατ’ ἀνθρώπους μυστήρια ἀνιερωστὶ μνεῦνται. The fragment is quoted by the third century CE Church Father Clement of Alexandria and poses several difficulties. Scholars have remained highly uncertain that what Clement quotes is in fact one hundred per cent Heraclitus. Clement’s tendency to tamper with and expand his sources is a well-known fact, and therefore the fragment’s authenticity has been variously challenged. Moreover, the juxtaposition of *μάγοι* with *βάρχοι*, *λήναι* and *μύσται*, not occurring in other extant texts, has looked suspicious to those who dispute the fragment’s authenticity, hence eagerly suggesting that *μάγοι* was added at a later stage to the list by the Church Father; cf. e.g., LLOYD (1979) 12-13; *contra* GRAF (1995) 31 and (1997) 21.

³⁹ E.g., Derveni papyrus col. VI; cf. also the comments at GRAF (1997) 23-24.

⁴⁰ WEST (1971) 240-01.

⁴¹ BURKERT (2004) 107-09. Cf. also *supra* n.38.

A possible explanation for the transition from μάγος denoting a 'Persian priest' to that of a 'trickster' and 'sorcerer' was put forward centuries later by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, claiming that the change in semantics occurred only during the Persian Wars when the Greeks came into contact with the magi accompanying the invading Persian army and got acquainted with their knowledge of occult practices (30.8). Herodotus, furthermore, who to this day remains our best informant on the early magi, discussed in various sections of the *Histories* their priestly tribe which was the sixth and last in his presentation of the Median nation.⁴² The historian, in general, maintained a neutral stand in his presentation of the priestly cast, yet subtly questioned their legitimacy on three occasions, thus lending some support to Pliny's claims. When reporting the horse sacrifice conducted by the magi during the Persians' crossing of the river Strymon, Herodotus used the participle φαρμακεύσαντες to describe the ritual, a term which would soon acquire a very specific magical meaning and evoke associations of sorcery (7.113-14).⁴³ It remains uncertain whether the historian was convinced of the religious legitimacy of the Persian magi's rite, or whether he employed φαρμακεία due to his own presumptions and prejudices regarding Greek magic; but in any case, the use of magic in this situation is 'foreign'.⁴⁴ The same can be argued for the magi burying nine boys and girls of the local people alive at a crossing-point called the 'Nine Roads'. Herodotus offered no justification for this act of cruelty apart from noticing that it was a Persian custom (Περσικὸν δὲ τὸ ζῶντας κατορύσσειν) and that Xerxes' wife Amestris had also buried fourteen sons of notable Persian ancestry alive as an offering to the god of the Underworld (7.114). Once more there is nothing to indicate that such a practice looked suspicious or wrong in the historian's eyes, although on a similar occasion Herodotus was not reluctant to condemn as outrageous king Cambyses' action of burying twelve leading Persians alive up to their necks, especially given that the perpetrators' offences were of minor importance (3.35).⁴⁵ Had the magi, then, felt that there was a need to terrorise the inhabitants of the 'Nine Roads' by performing an act of cruelty similar to that of Amestris? The historian remains conspicuously silent on this matter; it can only be surmised that the army was eager to propitiate the gods before crossing the river Strymon.⁴⁶ The final case of border-line 'magic'

⁴² E.g., *Histories* 1.107-8, 120, 128, 140; 7.19, 37, 43, 113-14, 191.

⁴³ Cf. also Xenophon *Anabasis* 4.5.35; Tacitus *Annals* 6.37; and the comments at COLLINS (2008a) 56.

⁴⁴ Cf. MIKALSON (2003) 50.

⁴⁵ Elsewhere, queen Amestris was also credited with the vicious act of cutting off the bosoms, nose, ears, lips and tongue of Masistes' wife before killing her, but that is explained as an act of punishment or revenge (9.108-13).

⁴⁶ DE JONG argues that apart from Herodotus there is no confirmation from other sources that the Persians, being Zoroastrians, performed human sacrifices; therefore, the origins and veracity of the historian's account

was when the Persian fleet was hit by a violent storm on the coast of Magnesia in Thessaly. Herodotus reported that the magi, in their effort to get the storm to cease, sang incantations to the wind with the help of sorcerers (γόησι) and offered sacrifices to the dead (ἔντομα), Thetis, and the Nereids (7.191).⁴⁷ The verb ἐντέμνειν implies ‘to cut in pieces’, whereas the neuter plural noun especially signifies the ‘victims offered to the dead’.⁴⁸ It is again ambiguous whether Herodotus really implied that a human sacrifice was conducted by the magi in Thessaly; however, the only other instance in which he used the same word is when describing Menelaus’ impious sacrifice of two Egyptian children to control the weather (δύο παιδιά ἀνδρῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἔντομά σφεα ἐποίησε, 2.119). So given the Persians’ alleged tendency for indulging in human sacrifice, it seems safe to assume that this case is no different from the ones mentioned previously.

In general, from all the above it is reasonable to infer that by the historian’s time the magi and the art of μαγεία were associated with incantations, spells and human sacrifices; and the magi, in particular, were regarded by the Greeks as religious authorities who might have also practised some sort of ‘magic’. However, at this particular stage the magi do not really come forward as a group with whom the Greeks are particularly intrigued owing to their magical affiliations, nor do they become firmly branded as magicians and sorcerers until after the Persian Wars and during the final decades of the fifth century BCE⁴⁹ when a discourse of ‘alterity’ and ‘otherness’ begins to develop: the Persians are now identified as the ‘Others’, the barbarous enemies from the East, whose absolutism and cruelty opposed everything the Greeks of the classical period stood for.⁵⁰

References to non-Persian magi begin to increasingly come into view with fifth century tragedy. The figure of the μάγος now appears alongside the begging priest (ἀγύρτης) and the diviner (μάντις) in Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*, and conforms to what we find in later

remain fairly uncertain (1997: 314-5). But there are similar tales in other sources: Ctesias speaks of Amestris burying alive the doctor Apollonides from Cos as a punishment, and of Parysatis conducting the same act against five enemies (688 F14 (44), F15 (55) (Jacoby)). Furthermore, the pseudo-Plutarchan treatise *On Rivers* (23.1-2) relates the story of the Armenian king Araxes who had his two daughters unwillingly sacrificed so that he would be victorious against the Persians—a story dismissed by DE JONG as fictional (1997: 315 n.14). This evidence suggests that an association clearly existed in Greek storytelling between the Persians and the practices of human sacrifice and burial whilst alive. Yet, if these particular customs had any historicity at all, the probability must have been that they were either performed as rituals or acts of punishment and that Greeks had blurred the distinction; cf. e.g., PARKER (2004) 153.

⁴⁷ I retain the manuscript writing γόησι and do not adopt Madvig’s emendation to βοῆσι.

⁴⁸ *LSJ* s.v. ἔντομος; cf. also Apollonius *Argonautica* 1.587, 2.926; Orphica *Argonautica* 571, 958-9, 1371-2; Antoninus Liberalis *Metamorphoses* 4.7, 37.5 (denoting a case of human sacrifice).

⁴⁹ COLLINS (2008a) 58; see also BREMMER (1999) 8.

⁵⁰ Cf. e.g., HALL (1989) 56-100.

works, especially in the Hippocratic corpus. Oedipus, in a fit of anger, accuses Creon of planning a *coup d'état* with the help of Teiresias, against whom Oedipus launches a vicious verbal attack. Teiresias is more or less accused of being a plotting μάγος, similar to a deceitful begging priest (ἀγύρτης) who has his heart set on profit alone while in his τέχνη as an official seer of the state (μάντις) he is 'blind' (380-90). Oedipus hypothesises that the driving force behind the attempt to overpower him is Creon's envy (φθόνος). Envy has often been associated with magic in Greek literature, and it has been argued that envy remains a principal motivation in magic.⁵¹ It can thus be inferred that the Sophoclean μάγος has nothing to do with 'magic' in the modern sense; on the contrary, he is merely associated with greed and treacherous behaviour, and the word itself is employed mainly as a term of abuse.

A similar juxtaposition of μάγος with ἀγύρτης appears as well in the late fifth or early fourth c. BCE pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*, whose author, though anonymous, is quite close to the Hippocratic way of thinking. The author strongly opposes the divine origin of epilepsy and launches a full scale attack against the priests. The author recounts that epilepsy has been assigned a divine nature due to the ignorance of the μάγοι, the purifiers (καθάρται), the begging priests (ἀγύρται) and the quacks (ἀλαζόνες), and reproaches them collectively for their fake religiosity by stating that their recourse to the divine is but a way to hide their own failure (2.1-10). The magi are deceitful (a characteristic already presented by the Sophoclean passage), for they prescribe purifying rituals which are not a matter of true religion (εὐσεβείη, 3.12-20); and by professing to possess powers and offer services far superior to those of the gods these priests reduced the divinities to nothing. The divine had always been defined by its superiority to humankind, and therefore to claim that a mortal could control the gods would imply that the divine power was no longer divine but mortal, which in itself was impious (ἀσεβείη). In classical Athens such an offender would surely be charged with impiety (γραφὴ ἀσεβείας) and, if found guilty, could face exile or death.⁵²

The Derveni papyrus, discovered in 1962 at Derveni in Northern Greece outside a tomb holding the ashes of what seemed to have been a high ranking soldier, sheds some further

⁵¹ BERNAND (1991) 85-105; COLLINS accepts this view with a few restrictions (2008a: 55-6). RIVES argues that envy, alongside suspicion and hostility, were the key issues at stake in the law against magic from the XII Tables (2002: 278).

⁵² Cf. COLLINS (2001) 484; see also the account of the Aesopic γυνή μάγος condemned to death for ἀσέβεια (Aesop 56 (Perry)).

light on the μάγοι and their potential activities during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.⁵³ In what has now been reconstructed as column VI of the papyrus the μάγοι are introduced as invokers of dark infernal forces, who offer prayers and sacrifices to appease the souls of the dead, and their incantation is able to ward off impeding spirits.⁵⁴ So far, so good. Problems begin to arise as soon as one attempts to identify the μάγοι of the Derveni text. The text itself is not too helpful since a number of contrasting features are offered. For instance, some of the functions assigned to the Persian magi by Herodotus correspond to the activities discussed in the first columns of the papyrus, in particular the magi's role in sacrifices and divination. It has been maintained that the ritual practices of column VI belonged indeed to the priests of the Persian religion, and therefore μάγος is not used in a pejorative way.⁵⁵ The eschatological concept that demons would stand in the way of a soul's journey to its blissful destination was uncommon neither in Greek nor in Persian thought,⁵⁶ and the Derveni author identifies the Eumenides and the δαίμονες as 'souls' (ψυχαι) which take on different functions and, therefore, receive different categorisations.⁵⁷ However, the manipulation and conjuring of ghosts and souls was linked in antiquity to the practice of γοητεία and Orphism in particular,⁵⁸ and aside from invoking the dead the Greek γόης was also believed to keep dangerous souls at a safe distance, something which the Derveni μάγοι are also credited for doing (δαίμονας ἐμποδῶν γινομένους μεθιστάναι). The practices of the μάγοι are then briefly compared and contrasted to those of Greek initiates (μύσται), who perform preliminary sacrifices to the Eumenides in a manner similar to that of the μάγοι. Despite the arguments raised by K. TSANTSANOGLOU regarding the identification of the text's μάγοι, the connection of prayers (εὐχαι) and sacrifices (θυσιαί) with the priestly cast and the classification of the theogony sung by the magi over

⁵³ The original text of the papyrus is thought to have been written towards the end of the fifth century BCE, but at any rate not before the 400s; cf. BURKERT (1970) 443; WEST (1983) 77, although on p.18 he postulates a date of 500 BCE; KOUREMENOS *et al.* (2006) 10. A number of suggestions have been canvassed regarding the author's identity, but none are entirely conclusive or convincing.

⁵⁴ Column VI.1-11: εὐχαι καὶ θυσιαί μειλίσσουσι τὰς ψυχάς, ἐπιιδὴ δὲ μάγων δύναται δαίμονας ἐμποδῶν γινομένους μεθιστάναι· δαίμονες ἐμποδῶν δ' εἰσι ψυχαῖς ἐχθροί. τὴν θυσίαν τούτου ἔνεκεν ποιούσιν οἱ μάγοι, ὡσπερὶ πονιρὴν ἀποδιδόντες. τοῖς δὲ ἱεροῖς ἐπισπένδουσιν ὕδωρ καὶ γάλα, ἔξ ὧν περ καὶ τὰς χοὰς ποιοῦσι. ἀνάριθμα καὶ πολυόμφαλα τὰ πόπανα θύουσιν, ὅτι καὶ αἱ ψυχαι ἀνάριθμοί εἰσι. μύσται Εὐμενίσι προθύουσι κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ μάγοις· Εὐμενίδες γὰρ ψυχαι εἰσιν. Text according to KOUREMENOS *et al.* (2006).

⁵⁵ TSANTSANOGLOU (1997) 110-11. By associating the μάγοι of the text with the Persian magi, TSANTSANOGLOU also suggested that the vengeful δαίμονες are also meant to be identified with the *Fravashis*, the Persian counterparts of the Greek Erinyes (1997: 98-99, 110-3).

⁵⁶ Cf. e.g., Empedocles 31 B 115 (DK); Alexander Polyhistor citing Pythagorean beliefs, 273 F93 (Jacoby). On Persian beliefs, cf. TSANTSANOGLOU (1997) 113.

⁵⁷ On souls, ghosts and the Erinyes/Eumenides in the first columns of the papyrus, cf. BETEGH (2004) 85-9.

⁵⁸ The myth of Orpheus' descent into the Underworld to retrieve his wife Eurydice designates him as a ψυχαγωγός, with Strabo not hesitating to call Orpheus a γόης (*Geography* 7.18). On Orpheus and his connection to the Underworld, cf. BREMMER (2014) 55-80.

sacrifices as ‘incantation’ is not enough evidence to support an identification of the μάγοι with the magi of the Persian religion.⁵⁹ An intriguing theory in connection to the identity of the μάγοι has been put forward by G. BETEGH, who argued that the Derveni’s μάγοι have nothing to do with the Persian priests: when the author speaks of them he is merely referring to the leaders of the group to which he also belonged, and who simply ‘adopted’ that very name.⁶⁰ Therefore, BETEGH states, the column could be referring to the parallel actions of the μάγοι and the μύσται within the same cult, possibly the Eleusinian or Bacchic.⁶¹ From the aforementioned discussion I feel inclined to suggest that the μάγοι of the Derveni papyrus are a conglomeration of three things: the legitimate Persian magi, the Hellenised version of the wandering and mendicant μάγοι known to the Greeks of this period, and the figure of the ghost-evoking γόης.

In Classical Greek rhetorical and legal texts, terms related to μάγος and μαγεία appear primarily as defamatory terms.⁶² But on three occasions accusations were hurled against women who had given reason to be suspected of malicious witchcraft and were condemned to death under a γραφή ἀσεβείας: these were Theoris of Lemnos, the priestess Ninos, and an anonymous female witch in an Aesopic fable. The execution of Theoris, dated between 338 and 324 BCE, was a known case of ‘witch trial’ in antiquity, similar to that of modern Salem. According to our sources, Theoris was either a seer (μάντις) or a priestess (ἱέρεια), who had been accused of being an impious witch (μιαρὰ φαρμακίς) and of providing φάρμακα and ἐπωδαί to the brother of a certain Aristogeiton, and was therefore executed together with all her offspring (τὸ γένος ἅπαν).⁶³ The execution of Ninos, probably dated to the 350s or 340s, was also a notorious one in antiquity. Ninos was a priestess and had been condemned to die for conducting initiation into the mysteries of foreign gods, assumed by some to be an impious mockery of the ‘true mysteries’, and for manufacturing love philtres for young men.⁶⁴ The third

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g., KOUREMENOS *et al.* (2006) 166. Based on the reference to libations of milk and water, BREMMER maintained that while milk is attested in the *Avesta* and in Strabo, on the contrary water is absent from any Zoroastrian libations; therefore, he suggested that the author of the papyrus must have conflated the rituals of the Persian magi with those of the Greeks, who did offer libations of water (1999) 8.

⁶⁰ Cf. the ‘we’ form (πάριμεν) in col. V.4, which in BETEGH’s view shows that the author considered himself as representative of a group of religious experts (2004: 82).

⁶¹ BETEGH (2004) 78-83.

⁶² Cf. e.g., Aeschines *On the False Embassy* 124, 153, *Against Ctesiphon* 137, 207; Dinarchus *Against Demosthenes* 66, 92, 95; Demosthenes *On the Crown* 276, *On the False Embassy* 109, *Against Aphobus* 32; pseudo-Demosthenes *Against Aristogeiton I* 79. On this section cf. the discussion at DICKIE (2001) 50-54.

⁶³ Pseudo-Demosthenes *Against Aristogeiton* 25.79-80; Philochorus, *FrGH* 328 F 60; Plutarch *Demosthenes* 14.4. On Theoris, cf. COLLINS (2000) and (2001).

⁶⁴ Cf. Demosthenes *On the False Embassy* 281 (with Σ.Demosthenes 19.281 (495a-b, Dilts)), *Against Boeotus I 2* and *II* 9; Josephus *Against Apion* 2.267. Cf. also DICKIE (2001) 52.

and final recorded case of execution for magic working during the classical era comes from an Aesopic fable. A female witch (γυνή μάγος) had been accused of earning a living by means of ἐπωδαί and of putting divine wrath to rest. These acts were considered by some as impious (καινοτομοῦσα περὶ τὰ θεία) and a case was brought against her which brought about her death (Aesop 56 (Perry)). For obvious reasons, we are in the dark as to whether there is any historicity to this tale or if it was simply a case of ‘poetic imagination’. However, this version of the fable belongs to the older Aesopic recension (*recentio Augustana*), which was brought together towards the end of the fourth century BCE by the Athenian philosopher Demetrius of Phaleron and can therefore provide some insight into the practices of that particular time. The term καινοτομεῖν (‘to begin something anew’, ‘to make changes or innovations’), found in the Augustana version, is closely related to impious actions.⁶⁵ A second recension, which paraphrases and explains the fable, omits the term and replaces it with the charge of impiety (Aesop 56.3 (Hausrath & Hunger)). The feats the witch claimed she was capable of doing (incantations and the allaying of divine wrath) brings to mind the accusations advanced by Plato⁶⁶ and the author of the *Sacred Disease* against the diviners, the begging priests, the μάγοι and the quacks, who all boasted of being able to tamper with divine will (2.1-10). At any rate, the case in the Aesopic fable seems to be that the charge of impiety was brought against the woman not for her involvement in witchcraft but for her attempt to placate the gods in a way which was felt to be incompatible with Athenian tradition, since it apparently involved some kind of activity which did not ‘feel right’.

I will not linger much at this point on magic in the Hellenistic period, since I shall come back to the topic in chapter 2. However, what is worth mentioning on the discussion of magical terminology in the Hellenistic era is the profound lack of μαγεία-related vocabulary. Although magic emerges fully developed during this period and new types of magic workers begin to appear (there are courtesans and prostitutes practising love magic in brothels; old women are now depicted as purifiers and experts at healing; the expansion of Alexander the Great’s empire brings to the forefront holy men and women from the East, primarily from Assyria, Syria, Babylonia, and Egypt; and it is during this period that the type of the ‘learned magician’, that is, individuals collecting magical lore and compiling magic books, arises), the

⁶⁵ Cf. e.g., Plato *Euthyphro* 3b, 5a, 16a; *Laws* 7.797c.

⁶⁶ Cf. e.g., *Republic* 2.364b-c: ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντιες ἐπὶ πλουσίων θύρας ἰόντες πείθουσιν ὡς ἔστι παρὰ σφίσι δύναμις ἐκ θεῶν ποριζομένη θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπωδαίς, εἴτε τι ἀδίκημά του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ ἢ προγόνων, ἀκείσθαι μεθ’ ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἑορτῶν, ἐάν τέ τινα ἐχθρὸν πημῆναι ἐθέλη, μετὰ σμικρῶν δαπανῶν ὁμοίως δίκαιον ἀδίκῳ βλάψει ἐπαγωγαίς τισιν καὶ καταδέσμοις, τοὺς θεοὺς, ὡς φασιν, πείθοντές σφισιν ὑπηρετεῖν.

two most significant magic-related depictions to survive from this period—Simaetha in Theocritus' *Idyll 2* and Medea in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*—do not employ any vocabulary relating either to μάγος-μαγεία or γόης-γοητεία. One may account for this absence by taking into account the relative paucity of Hellenistic texts and our limited knowledge of Hellenistic literature due to the great loss of works from this era—an estimated 90% of Hellenistic literature is allegedly lost.⁶⁷ This would then imply that such terms were indeed in use but coincidentally do not appear in our surviving literary texts: for instance, a small fragment from Sosiphanes' lost Hellenistic tragedy *Meleager* refers to the popular Thessalian trick of drawing down the moon (unclear, however, in what context) and employs the term μάγος as an adjective⁶⁸ to address the witch's magical incantations (μάγοις ἐπωδαίς).⁶⁹ Or, alternatively, there were other, more popular terms designating magic workers and magic in use, such as 'Chaldean', 'Assyrian', or 'Babylonian',⁷⁰ or more general terms, such as 'astrologer' and 'mathematician' that eventually replaced the classical Greek terms.

2.3. 'Magic', *magia*, and the *magus* in the Roman world

In the Roman world, the first surviving testimony of the term *magus* in Latin literature appears rather late in our extant sources and it is not attested before the mid-first century BCE; yet, despite its general lateness, one is inclined to assume that the Greek term μάγος had crossed into Latin at a much earlier stage. *Magia*, contrastingly, appears even later in our written sources, during the mid-second century CE in Apuleius' *Apology*,⁷¹ and remains throughout a fairly uncommon word. Two generations earlier than Apuleius, Pliny the Elder is the first extant writer ever to use in his *Natural History* the abstract term *magice* (e.g., 30.7), quite ostensibly the Latin transliterated form of the Greek μαγική, to refer to the art of the magi, which could imply that late Hellenistic influences are present in its use.⁷² R. GORDON has hypothesised that *magus* must have found its way into Latin vocabulary through Varro Atacinus' *Argonauts*, a Latin translation of Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, written probably in the mid-first century BCE.⁷³ This seems to me rather unlikely for one main reason;

⁶⁷ For an overview of Hellenistic literature (both surviving and non-extant works), cf. CLAUSS & CUYPERS (2010).

⁶⁸ Cf. *LSJ* s.v. II.μάγος.

⁶⁹ Fr. 1 (Snell): μάγοις ἐπωδαίς πάσα Θεσσαλις κόρη / ψευδῆς σελήνης αἰθέρος καταιβάτις.

⁷⁰ Although these terms at first referred to people from a particular ethnic group who were credited with being experts in specific kinds of magical practices, they eventually came to be used metonymically to address in a broad way experts in all kinds of magical lore.

⁷¹ On the concept of *magia* in the *Apology*, cf. the discussion at chapter 3.

⁷² Cf. RIVES (2010) 61 n.27.

⁷³ GORDON (1999) 165.

if we are prepared to accept that Atacinus' work is a faithful translation of Apollonius' *Argonautica*, (something which the surviving fragments tend to suggest),⁷⁴ then we are faced with the following problem: how could *magus* have crossed into Latin through Atacinus when Apollonius does not use the term in his epic? This, of course, should not exclude the possibility that Atacinus may have been familiar with the term *magus* and might have even interspersed it in his Latin version of the Argonauts' saga and for lack of evidence we are not aware of it, but he obviously could not have borrowed the term from Apollonius of Rhodes. In my view, it is perhaps likelier that the term 'intruded' in some form into the Latin vocabulary through Ennius, Accius, or Pacuvius during one of their (faithful) adaptations of Greek tragedies.

Another possibility could be that the term found a home in Rome via one of the many compilations of magical lore on the magi which had been broadly circulating in the Hellenistic world.⁷⁵ But if, hypothetically speaking, *magus* had entered the Latin vocabulary at such an early stage, why is, for instance, Cato the Elder seemingly not aware of the term when he cites a spell for fractured limbs in his *On Agriculture* (160)? Was he genuinely not familiar with the word, or is it simply again a case of lack of evidence which could potentially account for the seeming absence of the term in his works? This is a rather intriguing question, especially if we take into consideration that elsewhere it seems that Cato was already aware of Hellenistic pseudepigraphical treatises on the magi, since he apparently hinted at one during his discussion on the properties of cabbage (157.1).⁷⁶ Or why do extant early writers, like Plautus for example, not use any *magus*-related cognates? The trajectory of *magus* in Latin literature is remarkably cloaked in mystery; and the awfully fragmentary state of early Roman literary productions poses additional great difficulties in trying to provide definite answers to this puzzling question.

At any rate, Cicero is the first author to use the term *magus* in prose literature, referring to the Persian priests; he credits the *magi* with being experts in divination and

⁷⁴ Compare e.g., Varro Atacinus fr. 125 (Hollis): *quos magno Anchiale partus adducta dolore / et geminis cupiens tellurem Oeaxida palmis / scindere Dicta<eo> υ υ — υ υ nympha sub antro* ≈ Apollonius of Rhodes 1.1129-31: Δάκτυλοι Ἰδαίοι Κρηταιέες, οὓς ποτε νύμφη / Ἀρχιάλη Δικταῖον ἀνά σπέος, ἀμφοτέρησιν / δραξαμένη γαίης Οἰαξίδος, ἐβλάστησε; also fr. 129 (Hollis): *desierant latrare canes, urbesque silebant; / omnia noctis erant placida composita quiete* ≈ Apollonius of Rhodes 3.749-50: οὐδὲ κυνῶν ὑλακὴ ἔτ' ἀνά πτόλιν, οὐ θρόος ἦεν / ἠχῆεις, σιγὴ δὲ μελαινομένην ἔχεν ὄρφνην. JACOBSON, however, contemplates whether Attacinus' translation followed faithfully the text of Apollonius of Rhodes or whether the poet "went his own way and produced a work of some depth and originality" (1974: 110).

⁷⁵ Cf. *infra* n.100.

⁷⁶ Again cf. *infra* n.100.

mysticism, who did not approve of the practice of enclosing the gods within walls (i.e. temples), and with whom Pythagoras himself had studied.⁷⁷ Overall, the general use of the word remains rather unchanged in prose literature until at least the first century CE,⁷⁸ and Latin prose writers appear to have drawn carefully from Greek historiographical, philosophical, and ethnographical traditions and treatises regarding the Persian magi.⁷⁹ In poetry the word is first encountered among the verses of Catullus in the mid-first century BCE, who uses it to slander a certain Gellius—perhaps the consul Lucius Gellius Publicola of 36 BCE—by stating that the unholy union with his mother will only produce a *magus*, since *magi* were born out of incest (90.1-6). The attack launched by Catullus against his opponent propagates stereotypes associated with the magi from the Greek-speaking world and the poet's invective is rather learned in nature, since not only does it allude to an ethnographic detail which is Greek in origin, but this detail also predates Herodotus and can be traced back to Xanthus of Lydia, who was the first to bring up the topic of the magi's incestuous relationships with their female relatives.⁸⁰ It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that this negative stereotyping of the magi, which had developed and circulated in Greece in the post Persian Wars era, had crossed over to the Roman world at some stage and was being employed (at least by Catullus, for a lack of further evidence) as a discourse of alterity in Latin verse as early as the first century BCE.

It is not until the late Republican era that *magus* and its cognates acquire a broader semantic coverage. The generation of poets succeeding Catullus exhibited a remarkable fondness for the adjective *magicus* instead of the noun *magus*, with both the noun and the adjective taking a significantly different semantic trajectory in poetry from that of contemporary prose literature. *Magicus* appears for the first time in Virgil's *Eclogue* 8 to describe the marvellous rites performed by a young woman in order to win back her wayward lover. The rites are labelled as *magica sacra* and encompass the use of both *carmina* and *venena* (the Latin equivalents of ἐπωδαί and φάρμακα respectively; *veneficium* stood for the Greek φαρμακεία), categories which at a later date would acquire very specific magical connotations. There are no overt or covert indications in Virgil's description to suggest that

⁷⁷ *On Divination* 1.46, 90-1; *Tusculan Disputations* 1.108; *Laws* 2.26; *Nature of Gods* 1.43; *On Ends* 5.87.

⁷⁸ Cf. e.g., Valerius Maximus *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 1.6. ext. 1b, 8.7. ext. 2; Velleius Paterculus *Roman History* 2.24.3; Curtius Rufus *Alexander* 3.3.10, 5.1.22; Seneca *Epistles* 58.31; Vitruvius *On Architecture* 8 pref. 1.

⁷⁹ Cf. *supra* n.37.

⁸⁰ 765 F31 (Jacoby): Ξάνθος (δὲ) ἐν τοῖς ἐπιγραφόμενοις Μαγικοῖς, μίγνυνται δὲ, φησὶν, οἱ μάγοι μητράσι καὶ θυγατράσι· καὶ ἀδελφαῖς μίγνυσθαι θεμιτὸν εἶναι· κοινὰς τε εἶναι τὰς γυναῖκας, οὐ βία καὶ λάθρα, ἀλλὰ συναίνουόντων ἀμφοτέρων, ὅταν θέλη γῆμαι ὁ ἕτερος τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου.

magicus is affiliated in any way with the Persian priests; on the contrary, the *magica sacra* represent, possibly for the first time in extant Latin literature, practices which would soon be linked to the Roman witch tradition which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 2. J. RIVES even suggested, based on a striking lack of evidence for the use of any μάγος-related cognates from Hellenistic literature, that the meaning given to *magicus* in *Eclogue* 8 may have been Virgil's own innovation, which in itself is an intriguing assumption.⁸¹

In the *Aeneid*, too, the desperate Dido is encountered employing *magicae artes* in her effort to win back Aeneas, who is in the process of deserting her, and apologises to the gods for having resorted to magic (4.487-94). In a sense, Dido and the anonymous maiden of *Eclogue* 8 form two sides of the same coin: they both struggle to win back the affection of their lovers, and, in doing so, they employ magical means (*magica sacra* – *magicae artes*). However, the text of the *Aeneid* raises the question as to why Dido feels the need to seek forgiveness and why she assumes that the gods would be displeased in her. The answer to this comes from the commentator Servius, writing probably in the early fifth century CE, offering a possible explanation on the matter and arguing that although the Romans adopted many rites, they always condemned (*damnare*) the rites of magic, since this art was considered shameful (*probrosa*), and this is the reason why Dido feels the urge to pardon herself.⁸² By employing the verb *damnare* Servius apparently meant to indicate that Dido's *sacra magica* were not simply inappropriate, but in some ways also illicit.⁸³

Following Virgil's use of *magicus*, later Latin poets not only employ the adjective rather consistently to characterise rites and rituals that are capable of effecting the alteration of the natural cosmos, but also stereotypically assign it to portrayals of witches. Thus, the adjective appears once in the poems of Horace and Statius;⁸⁴ twice in Juvenal;⁸⁵ three times in Seneca's tragedies⁸⁶ and in Silius Italicus;⁸⁷ four times in Propertius;⁸⁸ six times in Tibullus,⁸⁹ Valerius Flaccus,⁹⁰ and Lucan;⁹¹ and ten times in Ovid (twelve, should we count the twice-used

⁸¹ RIVES (2010) 71.

⁸² Σ.Virgil *Aeneid* 4.493.

⁸³ Cf. RIVES (2003) 314.

⁸⁴ Horace *Epistles* 2.2.208-9; Statius *Achilleid* 1.135.

⁸⁵ *Satire* 6.610, 15.5.

⁸⁶ *Medea* 684, *Oedipus* 561, *Hercules* 452.

⁸⁷ *Punic Wars* 1.97, 432, 8.98.

⁸⁸ *Elegies* 1.1.20, 2.28.35, 4.1.106, 4.4.51.

⁸⁹ *Elegies* 1.2.44, 49, 64, 1.5.12, 1.8.5, 24.

⁹⁰ *Argonautica* 6.151, 449, 7.212, 327, 389, 8.351.

⁹¹ *Civil War* 3.224, 4.553, 6.460, 576, 822, 9.923.

rarer adjective *magus* for *magicus*).⁹² Moreover, the noun *magus* appears with the same technical meaning as *magicus* in Horace,⁹³ Ovid,⁹⁴ Lucan,⁹⁵ and Juvenal.⁹⁶

On the other hand, Pliny the Elder's discussion of the magi in Book 30 of his *Natural History*, which to this day remains our most important Latin source of information on the Persian priests (in the Greek world, as we have seen in the previous section, that would be Herodotus), appears to have been greatly influenced by the semantic associations engulfing the word *magus* and *magicus* in Latin poetry. Pliny employs throughout his work the two terms in connection with esoteric knowledge about the properties of animals, plants, and certain gems, and the unusual (magical) effects they could have on humans. The two terms were used by Pliny in a rather ambiguous way: *magus* could be used to address the Persian priests, but at the same time *magicus* carried the broad semantic meaning found in Latin poetry. Pliny often uses derogatory phrases like *vanitas magorum* (e.g., 28.89, 28.94) or *magicæ vanitates* (e.g., 27.57, 30.1) to address the magi and their detested art, which suggests that, above all, the terms for him were negatively charged.

At the beginning of Book 30 Pliny argued that the *fraudentissima* art of *magice* (the abstract form he uses instead of *magia*) masked itself behind three faces. It first arose from medicine and healing (30.1): Orpheus, whose therapeutic practices helped establish Thracians as healers in the classical period,⁹⁷ is now linked to magic (30.7). Remarkably, most of the healing remedies described by Pliny in Books 28-29 or 31-32 do not really differ from the ones prescribed by the magi, though he is eager to dismiss the latter with evident distaste and disapproval. *Magice* then slowly usurped for itself characteristics from religion and astrology, thus winning over the minds of people, since it accommodated the human needs for health (medicine), communication with the gods (religion), and knowledge of the future (astrology) (30.1).⁹⁸ Unlike what is found in contemporary prose literature, in the *Natural History* *magice* encompasses a variety of abstract, foreign, and strange rituals, such as Proteus' transformations, Circe's metamorphoses, the Siren's magical song, combined with more specific magical practices, like the Thessalian trick of calling down the moon, interaction with

⁹² *Amores* 3.7.35, *Art of love* 2.102, 425, *Fasti* 2.426, *Remedies of Love* 250, *Metamorphoses* 3.534, 5.197, 7.330, 10.398, 14.58; *Amores* 1.8.5 (*magus* adjective).

⁹³ *Odes* 1.27.21-22, *Epistles* 2.1.210-13.

⁹⁴ *Metamorphoses* 7.196, 197, *Cosmetics* 36.

⁹⁵ *Civil War* 6. 431, 440, 450, 576, 767, 8.220.

⁹⁶ *Satire* 3.77.

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g., Plato *Charmides* 155e-56e.

⁹⁸ Though Pliny presents the separation between magic, medicine, religion, and astrology as his own, it could also be a Hellenistic notion, on which cf. GORDON (1999) 273 n.37.

the dead, and others (30.5-7). Not surprisingly, we are told that the art originated in Persia with the teachings of Zoroaster, nearly six thousand years before the death of Plato, but it soon crossed over to the rest of the known world (30.3-11), even to far away Britain (30.13). Even Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritus, and Plato had studied with the magi and openly went on teaching the *μαγικὴ τέχνη* (30.9), a view which is probably Hellenistic in origin.⁹⁹ In different sections of the *Natural History* the *magicae artes* are associated with *venena* and *veneficium* (e.g., 25.127, 32.33, 36.139), but in Book 30 Pliny concluded that it should be assumed that this deceitful art drew more from the techniques of *φαρμακεία* rather than practices commonly attributed to the magi (30.17). It has been maintained that Pliny's juxtaposition of *magice* with plants, animals, and *veneficia* and the broader semantic coverage that *magus* and *magicus* acquired in his writings can trace its roots to similar lore circulating in Hellenistic collections about the magical and/or healing properties of herbs, animal parts, and stones; such pseudepigraphical compilations went around under the names of Pythagoras (credited with a treatise on magical plants) and Democritus (allegedly having written a work called *Cheiromeikta*), which both laid claims to having obtained their arcane knowledge from the teachings of and their studies with the magi.¹⁰⁰

In retrospect, Pliny's account of the magi and magic in particular is not too enlightening; N. JANOWITZ has argued that Pliny's overall treatment of the magi is quite inconsistent and rather rhetorical, since "he does not use a coherent set of criteria for evaluating the ideas of the magi".¹⁰¹ In the end Pliny's discussion leaves us with more questions than answers concerning the very nature and character of *magice*, as the account produces a conception which is on the one hand despicable and vacant, but on the other hard to define. Pliny, however, did achieve two things: firstly, despite its apparent indefinability and incoherence as a category, he attempted to present magic as a single unity whose roots could be clearly traced: magic might have spread like a virus throughout the antique world, but its 'ground zero' had been Persia. So all the different appearances that magic eventually took on and the precarious expressions it adopted could eventually be accounted for by pointing to the mysterious East. And secondly, by tracing its roots to Persia Pliny could elucidate how a variety of seemingly disparate rituals (like the metamorphoses of Proteus and Circe, the

⁹⁹ Cf. GORDON (1999) 230.

¹⁰⁰ It would appear that Cato the Elder was already aware of this pseudo-Pythagorean treatise in the second century BCE, since he alludes to it in the discussion on the properties of the cabbage in his *On Agriculture* 157.1; cf. also Pliny *Natural History* 20.78, 24.158. On Democritus' *Cheiromeikta*, cf. Pliny *Natural History* 24.160, 30.10. On these pseudepigrapha, cf. GORDON (1999) 166, 232-39; DICKIE (2001) 117-22.

¹⁰¹ JANOWITZ (2001) 13.

Siren's magical incantations, love magic, necromancy, the Thessalian drawing down the moon, etc.) could be loosely brought together to produce a shared representation of 'alien' and illicit practices, thus providing a stereotype for what magical practitioners in reality did (or were, in any case, envisaged as doing). Essentially, the mismatch between all the rudiments of the stereotype could be explicated by assuming they were all Persian in origin. Such 'alien' practices could now be attached to the geographical 'aliens' (Persians, Assyrians, Syrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Jews) who come all the more to the forefront during the expansion of Alexander the Great's empire.¹⁰²

But even before the advent of any *magus*-related vocabulary, the Roman world had already developed 'indigenous' terms to address the concept of employing profane, irreligious power for destructive purposes. *Venenum* and *veneficium* were the Latin equivalent terms for *φάρμακον* and *φαρμακεία* and carry a similar semantic ambivalence to the Greek terms: they could either designate a potion or a deleterious poison, but with the passing of time they come to express evil-doings in general and magical charms. *Venena* are usually coupled in texts with *carmina*, the counterparts of the Greek *ἐπωδαί*.¹⁰³ *Carmen*, too, bears a similar differentiation in meaning: aside from its obvious neutral connotation in designating a song or a poetic creation,¹⁰⁴ *carmen* could also describe a magical singing (as already signified by the Greek term *ἐπωδή*) or it could refer more generally to cursing. The use of both *venena* and *carmina* are prohibited by the Laws of the XII Tables in the mid-fifth century BCE, although difficulties abound in deciphering decisively the original intent and phraseology of the law.¹⁰⁵

A further term merits some mentioning, since it is not only of native Latin origin but also signifies quite conveniently the general notion of 'witchcraft': *maleficium*. The Greek language has no universal word to address the concept of 'witchcraft' (i.e. the activity of performing magic to harm other people) in the way that the Latin *maleficium* does; perhaps the term *γοητεία* is the closest Greek term, but as we will see in chapter 5 *γοητεία* evoked more sinister associations. Originally *maleficium* as the name suggests (*malum facere*) signalled a 'nefarious act' or a 'crime', but it soon began to broaden its semantic coverage by absorbing

¹⁰² On Pliny's treatment of the magi, cf. GORDON (1987b) 74-78 and (1999) 229-31; JANOWITZ (2001) 13-16.

¹⁰³ Aside from the more common form '*carmen*' several others can be found as well to address the same concept: e.g., *cantus* (Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.45), *canticum* (Apuleius *Apology* 42.5), *cantio* (Cicero *Brutus* 217), *cantamen* (Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 2.22.3), *incantamentum* (Pliny *Natural History* 28.10), or *incantatio* (Tertullian *On Female Fashion* 1.2.1).

¹⁰⁴ LEWIS & SHORT s.v. '*carmen*' I; II.B.1-3.

¹⁰⁵ The discussion on the Laws of the XII Tables is picked up in a few more details in chapter 2.3.

characteristics from the fields of *magia*, *veneficium*, and *carmen*.¹⁰⁶ Eventually the word functioned as a general ‘umbrella’ term to refer to the concept of witchcraft as a whole, and it became so popular that it ultimately replaced the rest of the terms from the fourth century CE onwards.¹⁰⁷

I shall close this section by focusing on the terms that were used in Roman antiquity to address certain women who form the core of this dissertation: witches. The modern term ‘witch’ itself is quite problematic: who might be termed a ‘witch’ nowadays? To begin with, the modern term ‘witch’ applies equally both to males and females and refers to individuals in possession of supernatural powers, which were thought to have dealings with the devil or evil spirits;¹⁰⁸ ‘witch’ can be used metaphorically for a young dazzling woman with a bewitching character, or it can be used as term of abuse for repulsive old women. What meaning does ‘witch’ convey? Harry Potter’s Hermione is described throughout the books as a witch, but then so is the Witch of the West in L. F. Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; Jadis, the ‘White Witch’ of C.S. Lewis’ *The Chronicles of Narnia*, is evidently a witch, but so is Melisandre, the ‘Red Woman’, from G.R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* book series. Labelling these four, very different women as ‘witches’ conveys, however, only a very rough meaning: essentially the idea of women in possession of preternatural abilities. But it does not really convey a lot of sense in terms of a character’s nature or temperament: Hermione is young and good; the Witch of the West is hideous and evil; Jadis is quite beautiful but nonetheless wicked, whereas Melisandre is quite an ambivalent character: she is neither good nor evil, and fans of the books (and the TV series) either love her or hate her, but there is no middle ground. This polyvalence of meanings renders the use of the word ‘witch’ quite problematic, but its use is unavoidable for lack of any better term. At any rate, ‘witch’ will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to women who have been endowed with magical and/or supernatural powers and can bring about the alteration of the natural environment,

¹⁰⁶ Interestingly enough, Plato in his *Laws* 11.932e-33b places the acts of μαγγανεία, ἐπιφθία and κατάδεσις under the general umbrella of φαρμακεύειν or γοητεύειν, but not μαγεύειν. Although φαρμακεία, μαγεία, and γοητεία were in all likelihood used interchangeably in antiquity, as suggested previously, γοητεία could have encompassed a broader semantic spectrum. Γοητεία and μαγεία are coupled in the Platonic *Symposium* 202e, and in *Menon* 80e Socrates is not only reproached for γοητεύειν and φαρμάττειν the young Meno, but also that in any other city than Athens the philosopher would have been accused of being a γόης. What is even more interesting is that Latin vocabulary is completely lacking a word for the Greek concept of γοητεία or γόης; in the *Apology* Apuleius translates the term γοητεία from the Platonic *Symposium* with *magorum miracula* (43.2). As I will suggest in chapter 5, this happens because most of the characteristics associated with the γόης and γοητεία had been absorbed in the Roman world by the figure of the witch.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. RIVES (2003) 322.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *OED* s.v. ‘witch’; though there is an obvious preference for the male terms ‘wizard’ or ‘sorcerer’ in addressing men practising witchcraft.

interact with the dead, modify human relations by making individuals fall in and out of love with somebody, and so forth.

Latin vocabulary, alternatively, has an abundance of terms to address (or abuse) witches: a witch could be a *praestigiatrix* or a *praecantatrix* if she was connected to fortune-telling and predicting the future;¹⁰⁹ if she was linked to pharmacology and to the dangerous world of *venena* she could be a *venefica*¹¹⁰ (an equivalent for *φαρμακίς*) or, on rarer occasions, a *trivenefica*;¹¹¹ a witch could also be in general a *docta*,¹¹² *divina*,¹¹³ *vates*,¹¹⁴ a *strix/striga*,¹¹⁵ a *lamia*,¹¹⁶ or even metonymically a *Thessala/Thessalis*¹¹⁷ or *Haemonia*;¹¹⁸ rarely she could also be addressed as a *мага*.¹¹⁹ But witches are most commonly encountered in Latin literature as *sagae*, since they professed to know a lot of things¹²⁰ and were credited with doing practically everything: from counteracting the effects of a bad dream or the evil eye to evoking ghosts from the Underworld.¹²¹ The Latin *saga*, however, poses the same semantic problems as the modern term ‘witch’: it can be employed to refer to anything as harmless as the ‘all-knowing’ old women of Cicero,¹²² to the controversial old women practising erotic magic in Latin love elegy,¹²³ to the inebriated purifiers of Martial¹²⁴ and the diviners of Frontinus,¹²⁵ to the more dangerous and dreadful Meroe of Apuleius.¹²⁶ So the term *saga* in itself is not a very helpful term in describing ancient witches;¹²⁷ therefore, a more concrete classification of witches is necessary, which will look beyond their semantic connotations or nomenclature. I will return to this issue at greater length in chapter 2, where I will discuss and offer a possible taxonomy of Imperial Roman witches.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. e.g., Plautus *Amphitruo* 782, *Braggart Soldier* 693.

¹¹⁰ Cf. e.g., Ovid *Herioides* 6.19, *Metamorphoses* 7.316.

¹¹¹ Cf. e.g., Plautus *Pot of Gold* 86.

¹¹² Cf. e.g., Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.5.

¹¹³ Cf. e.g., Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 1.8.4.

¹¹⁴ Cf. e.g., Lucan *Civil War* 6.651.

¹¹⁵ Cf. e.g., Ovid *Fasti* 6.139; Petronius *Satyrica* 63.8.

¹¹⁶ Cf. e.g., Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 1.17.5.

¹¹⁷ Cf. e.g., Propertius *Elegies* 3.24.10; Lucan *Civil War* 6.451.

¹¹⁸ Cf. e.g., Lucan *Civil War* 6.486.

¹¹⁹ Cf. e.g., Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 2.5.4.

¹²⁰ Cf. e.g., Cicero *On Divination* 1.65; *sagire enim sentire acute est; ex quo sagae anus, quia multa scire volunt, et sagaces dicti canes*. See also MALTBY (1991) 538.

¹²¹ Cf. DICKIE (2001) 15.

¹²² Cf. *supra* n.120.

¹²³ Cf. e.g., Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.43-66; Ovid *Amores* 3.7.27-36.

¹²⁴ *Epigrams* 7.54.3-4, 11.50.7-8.

¹²⁵ *Stratagems* 1.11.12.

¹²⁶ *Metamorphoses* 1.8-10.

¹²⁷ On the problematic use of the term *saga*, cf. PAULE (2014).

Double, double toil and trouble...
Magic and Apuleius: Discussions old and new

The study of ancient magic has been experiencing a scholarly renaissance in the last three decades. Many excellent publications dealing with a broad range of magical phenomena, have been produced since the mid-1980s, which, for obvious reasons, cannot be presented in their entirety within this section.¹²⁸ A few general representative examples, primarily ones which have influenced me during the course of writing the thesis, are going to be briefly presented at this stage, (without, of course, implying that the rest have been of lesser academic importance), whereas others will be appearing in the footnotes of the subsequent chapters. The first in a list of important books and perhaps the one which reignited scholarly interest in the topic of magic in the ancient world is C. FARAONE and D. OBBINK's *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek magic and religion* (1991). This edited volume comprises a thought-provoking collection of ten essays on a number of Greek magical practices and rituals, ranging from the use and purpose of binding spells (FARAONE (1991a)), curses (STRUBBE (1991); VERSNEL (1991a)), magical amulets and incantations (KOTANSKY (1991)) to magical divinatory rituals and prayers (EITREM (1991); GRAF (1991)), love magic (WINKLER (1991)), and the use of plants in φαρμακεία (SCARBOROUGH (1991)). This collection of papers focuses largely on epigraphical evidence and less on literary magic depictions and attempts to re-evaluate the importance of the 'old' and much troubling question of magic's relationship to religion—a debate first instigated by FRAZER in his *Golden Bough*.

A different influential work has been F. GRAF's *Magic in the ancient world* (1997), which is the revised (and translated from French) version of his *Idéologie et pratique de la magie dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine*, originally published in 1994. GRAF's monograph is the first book to address the topic of magic in its entirety for an English audience, although earlier important works addressing and dealing with very specific magical phenomena do exist: for example, R. WÜNSCH collected, edited, and published in 1897 the Attic curse tablets as part of the appendix for the third volume of the *Inscriptiones Graecae* (IG 3.3: *Defixionum tabellae Atticae*), whereas in 1904 A. AUDOLLENT published his *Defixionum tabellae*, focusing on the curse tablets not included in WÜNSCH's edition; also J. GAGER published in 1992 the now much acclaimed *Curse tablets and binding spells from the ancient world*, containing the translation

¹²⁸ For a general overview of pre-2005 scholarship on magic, cf. FOWLER & GRAF (2005).

of, commentary on, and categorisation of a broad spectrum of curse tablets, thus producing a work welcomed both by students and scholars of ancient magical practices. KARL PREISENDANZ's monumental two-volume German edition of the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (1929-1931) was annotated, expanded with new papyrus discoveries (including the Demotic and Coptic magical papyri), and translated into English in 1986 by a group of American scholars put together by HANS DIETER BETZ; lastly a good collection of magical amulets were collected and published in 1994 by R. KOTANSKY in his *Greek magical amulets: The inscribed gold, silver, copper and bronze lamellae*.¹²⁹ GRAF's contribution, however, concentrates on a wide collection of evidence from curse tablets and the magical papyri to voodoo dolls and literary trials of magicians to address the various forms that Greco-Roman magic took on. The discussion is thematised by general topics, and after he has offered a useful introduction to the study of ancient magic, the discussion concentrates on six areas of interest: (i) Greco-Roman magical terminology and the evolution of the concept of magic; (ii) the portrait of individuals regarded by others as magicians (the 'outsiders' view), with a particular emphasis on two Roman trials for witchcraft: that of C. Furius Cresimus and of Apuleius from the *Apology*; (iii) the magician's initiation (the 'insiders' view), arguing for the resemblance of magic with mystery cults; (iv) ritualistic binding practices, having as a focus point both texts of magical *defixiones* and literary references; (v) selective examinations of literary depictions of magic, especially Simaetha's erotic ritual from Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 and Erichtho's reanimation sequence from Lucan's *Civil War*, against our knowledge of these practices from the magical papyri: GRAF concludes that Simaetha's ritual is an elaborate and learned rubric of heterogeneous elements which ultimately does not present a realistic ritual scenario, whereas Erichtho's reanimation ritual, with its internal ritualistic consistency, is constructed in such a way so as to resemble a perverted form of civic religion, a ritual that "might even work, when tried out";¹³⁰ (vi) the special 'sympathetic' nature of the magical ritual and the use of prayer as a magical device.

M. MEYER and P. MIRECKI's two edited volumes which were born out of magic-related conferences held in 1992 and 1998 (*Ancient magic and ritual power* (1995); *Magic and ritual in the ancient world* (2002)) served and still serve as proof that ancient magic as a universal phenomenon, not just confined to the Greek and Roman worlds, is a topic that intrigued

¹²⁹ Both the curse tablets and the magical papyri are being constantly augmented by new discoveries, for which researchers nowadays have to painstakingly keep track across a wide number of diverse scientific publications.

¹³⁰ GRAF (1997) 184, 203.

scholars of ancient cultures back then and continues to draw even more critical attention these days. Both volumes, containing roughly 23-24 papers each, tackle a quite large variety of topics, ranging from thorny methodological considerations attached not only to the word 'magic' itself (GRAF (2002b); HOFFMAN (2002)) but also to its problematic relationship with religion and/or science (SMITH (1995); GRAF (1995); RITNER (1995)) to addressing various issues of Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Near Eastern magic, such as necromancy (SCHMIDT (1995)), the use of amulets in exorcising practices (KOTANSKY (1995a)), the concept of child-killing demons (JOHNSTON (1995a)), or Thessaly as a land of witchcraft and magic (PHILLIPS (2002)).

In the late 1990s three important contributions to the study of ancient magic appeared. The first was the second out of six volumes in the series *Witchcraft and magic in Europe* (1999) edited by B. ANKARLOO and S. CLARK and dedicated to ancient Greece and Rome (the remaining five volumes touch upon magic from biblical and pagan societies up to roughly the nineteenth century). This volume, which examines magic and witchcraft in Greco-Roman antiquity from four particular angles, offers a new input on the magical binding spells and voodoo dolls from the Classical world (OGDEN (1999)); a presentation of literary depictions of a number of figures credited with magical powers from Homer until Lucian, including Moses and Jesus (LUCK (1999b)); an instructive examination of the ideological factors, socio-political structures, and intellectual contexts within which a belief in magic was supported and magic was employed (GORDON (1999)); and finally a discussion as to why the magicians and the Greek benevolent δαίμονες came to be associated in Judeo-Christian thought with 'evil-doers' and diabolic demons and devils (FLINT (1999)).

The second contribution belongs to C. FARAONE and concentrates, as the title clearly indicates, on *Ancient Greek love magic* (1999). FARAONE is widely known for his many contributions on many different aspects of Greco-Roman magic, with his wide-ranging, engaging, and stimulating book on love magic being, to this very day, the most authoritative work on the topic and which my discussion of love magic in the dissertation inevitably draws upon. FARAONE divides love magic into two major categories and examines closely the evidence for each type:¹³¹ in the chapter on ἔρωσ-*magic*, FARAONE (1) suggests that ἔρωσ for the Greeks was like a form of mental illness or an attack by a divine agent, and therefore argues that the language and purpose of erotic magic, the aim of which was to induce a feeling of uncontrollable passion for *men* in their *female* victims, is blatantly similar to the many curses

¹³¹ For a different approach, emphasizing instead the practitioner's agency, cf. FRANKFURTER (2014).

and binding spells found throughout the ancient world that were meant to incur illnesses and discomforts in their victims; (2) he then discusses the tradition of the erotic attraction spell (ἀγωγή)¹³² and (3) the use of enchanted fruit in magical rituals, and (4) the discussion of this chapter is brought to an end with the examination of the two types of weddings in Greece which reflect, in his view, the fruit- and ἀγωγή-magic discussed in the previous sections. The following chapter deals with the category of φιλία-magic, which addresses the type of magic meant to induce feelings of affection in an individual, and it is generally maintained that, contrary to ἔρως-magic, this type of magic (1) was primarily practised by *women* against *men* wishing to regain the love and affections of their men/husbands. The discussion commences with Aphrodite's famous κεστὸς ἱμάς from *Iliad* 14 but soon moves on to an examination of similar amuletic love charms from Egyptian and Assyrian sources, such as magical rings or love-inducing ointments. (2) The ensuing section brings into relief the use of drugs (φάρμακα) in love potions by women, which at times could have an unfortunate and undesirable lethal effect, and (3) the chapter concludes with a section on male anxiety about such magic, which was often perceived in terms of attempting to bind, attack, and even subjugate a male's virility, autonomy, and aggressiveness, which FARAONE in general addresses as a man's 'machismo'.¹³³

The year 1999 could in many ways be described as a good year for the study of ancient magic; it was also a year that saw a renewed interest in the dead and the undead. The last time someone systematically studied the dead and the belief in life in the great beyond had been E. ROHDE, a little over a century ago, in his *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (1898). Possibly quite unaware of each other, three different studies appeared quite simultaneously in 1999 dealing with the theme of ghosts, the dead, and interactions of the dead with the living, but examining material from a different angle: D. FELTON's *Haunted Greece and Rome: Ghost stories from classical antiquity* and A. STRAMAGLIA's *Res inaudita, incredulae: Storie di fantasmi nel mondo greco-latino* direct their attention to Greco-Roman ghost-stories from folkloric and literary points of view, whereas S. JOHNSTON's *Restless Dead: Encounters between the living and the dead in ancient Greece* discusses her sources from a socio-religious perspective. From a very strict technical standpoint, these books have not really a lot to do with the theme of magic *per se*, since their main concern is, obviously, the dead and the relationship of the living with the departed; however, what I personally found

¹³² This topic is briefly discussed in chapter 6.4.1.

¹³³ FARAONE (1999) 124.

particularly enlightening for my discussion of necromancy in chapter 5 was JOHNSTON'S complex and wide-ranging discussion on the one hand of the figure of the γόης as a magical practitioner and an expert in the manipulation and conjuring of the dead, and on the other of the possible reasons for which the art of γοητεία appeared when it did. And since we have touched upon the topic of the dead and the undead, D. OGDEN'S *Greek and Roman necromancy* (2002) should also be briefly mentioned, focusing predominantly on the places, the ways, and the means by which the living could contact the dead.

This profound interest in magic and ancient occult practices has not ceased to grow throughout the 2000s and the first half of this decade: in the last fifteen years conferences have been held world-wide to address not only old 'difficult' questions from different angles (perhaps one of the most striking 'innovations' of the 2000s' discussion on magic has been the deliberate effort of scholars to avoid trying to make clear-cut distinctions between the outdated Frazerian idea of magic's relationship to religion, since many critics (some even voicing their concerns from the early 1990s) have been under the impression that this dichotomy is essentially leading nowhere), but also to traverse still unknown or lesser known territories of (not just Greco-Roman) magic. Fortunately enough, many corresponding conference proceedings and collected volumes are also seeing the light of the day with some relative frequency: one could mention as an example A. MOREAU and J.C. TURPIN'S four-volume *La magie* (2000), based on a conference in Montpellier in 1999; J. BREMMER and J. VEENSTRA'S *The metamorphosis of magic from Late Antiquity to the early modern period* (2002), based on a workshop held in 2000; S. NOEGEL, J. WALKER and B. WHEELER'S *Prayer, magic and the stars in the ancient and Late Antique world* (2003), based on a conference in Washington in 2000; S. SHAKED'S *Officina magica: Essays on the practice of magic in antiquity* (2005), based on a conference at the Warburg institute in London in 1999; R. GORDON and F. SIMÓN'S *Magical practice in the Latin west* (2010), based on a conference in Zaragoza in 2005; A. ANNUS' *Divination and interpretation of signs in the ancient world* (2010) based on a Chicago conference in 2009; or the edited volumes by S. JOHNSTON, *Mantikē: Studies in Greek divination* (2005); J. PETROPOULOS, *Greek magic: Ancient, Medieval and modern* (2008); and G. BOHAK, Y. HARARI and S. SHAKED, *Continuity and innovation in the magical tradition* (2011).

Perhaps the most important and influential publication on Greco-Roman magic to appear in the early 2000s is M. DICKIE'S *Magic and magicians in the Greco-Roman worlds* (2001). This book has become over the course of the last decade an essential contribution in understanding the concept of ancient magic, and has rightly become a prescribed textbook

for University courses on magic and witchcraft. Unlike GRAF's earlier book, DICKIE's is planned out in a chronological way and goes through the vast amount of references or allusions to ritual practices that had been commonly categorised as 'magical' from roughly the late sixth century BCE all the way up to the seventh century CE; in doing so, DICKIE brings to the forefront of scholarly attention a number of long-neglected or not so well-known magical *loci*.¹³⁴ His purpose is far from discussing subversive rituals or the literary depictions of 'the others' as wizards, but rather to uncover the identity of persons practising (or believed to have been practising) magic in antiquity and to what end they apparently did so. Several groups of people parade through the pages of his book, all connected in some way to the practising of magic: from the mendicant and itinerant begging priests to the Hellenistic learned magicians, and from the prostitutes and courtesans to the more widely known figure of the drunk *lenae* from love elegy. DICKIE seemingly rejects any proper 'etic' or 'emic' approaches to ancient magic (though he does concur that magic should always be understood in terms of the ancient authors who describe it), and so does not align himself with the social theories about magic and the cultural implications which past studies had focused on (DICKIE's shunning of any subjectivist or heuristic approaches to the subject of magic has been one of the main criticisms of his methodology by D. FRANKFURTER).¹³⁵

I will wrap up the discussion of magic-related contributions with two of the most current books from the last eight years. The first is K. STRATTON's *Naming the witch: Magic, ideology, and stereotype in the ancient world* (2007). In this study, STRATTON offers a contextualising investigation of the way in which magic was inextricably linked to notions of authority and power in the ancient Mediterranean world as part of a cultural discourse.¹³⁶ STRATTON seeks to evaluate both how magic practices were being used throughout antiquity and also how people who practised magic were perceived by others from an ideological point of view. The main argument which runs through the book is that by assigning to one's opponents the negatively charged term of 'magic' or 'witch' the cultural elite strove to maintain their authorial power. As the title already hints at, STRATTON focuses especially on women explicitly characterised as 'witches' in antiquity and discusses the portrayals of such women within the context of four different cultures: that of fifth-century Athens, Imperial

¹³⁴ The most up-to-date sourcebook of passages related to magic is the revised and augmented second edition of D. OGDEN's *Magic, witchcraft, and ghosts in the Greek and Roman worlds* (2009), which replaced G. LUCK's older *Arcana mundi: Magic and the occult in the Greek and Roman worlds* (1985).

¹³⁵ Cf. *BMCR* 2002.02.26.

¹³⁶ In this respect STRATTON has been influenced by M. FOUCAULT's concept of *discours*.

Rome, early Christianity, and rabbinic Judaism. This apparent fascination with women and witchcraft is further evident by the most recent collection of papers edited by STRATTON and D. KALLERES, bearing the title *Daughters of Hecate: Women and magic in the ancient world* (2014). This volume offers an examination of women and their affiliations with magic and concentrates primarily on the roles of not so well-known (mostly anonymous) women. Out of the fifteen papers of which this book consists, seven focus on material from the Greco-Roman worlds, stretching from aspects of literary portrayals of Greek and Roman witches (SPAETH (2014)) and Roman witch trials (POLLARD (2014)) to women and erotic magic (FRANKFURTER (2014)) and curse tablets targeting women (RIPAT (2014)).

If literary, cultural, socio-political, and archaeological aspects of ancient magic have experienced a scholarly renaissance in the last decades, the same (and even more) could be argued for the African orator, philosopher, novelist, and potential magician Apuleius. Without a shadow of doubt or even exaggeration, Apuleius is one of the most, if not *the* most, celebrated Latin post-classical author of modern times. The ever-growing interest in his life and works is reflected by the overwhelming plethora of critical publications which have sprung, mushroom-like, over the past forty years. Only recently did I come to fully realise how much work has been conducted on Apuleius over the years when I was asked to provide a 'top 10' list of contributions to be used in an undergraduate course on the *Metamorphoses*; while I initially considered the task to be rather easy, I soon discovered how mistaken I had been in assuming so.

One really has to ponder where to begin and where to end when it comes to Apuleian scholarship: from the eleven elaborate commentaries on the *Metamorphoses* from the Groningen Apuleian group that span a remarkable forty years (1973-2015) and the three volumes of *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass* (1978; 1998; 2012) to the recent new critical edition of the *Metamorphoses* (ZIMMERMAN (2012)). Or from the general introductions to Apuleius (SANDY (1997); HARRISON (2000)) to commentaries on the *Apology* (HUNINK (1997); HAMMERSTAEDT, HABERMEHL *et al.* (2002)), the *Florida* (HUNINK (2001b); LEE (2005)), and the numerous monographs (selectively: WINKLER (1985); FINKELPEARL (1998); KAHANE & LIARD (2001); MAY (2006); GRAVERINI (2007); and most recently TILG (2014)) and critical papers on all aspects of Apuleian artistry (most recently BRADLEY (2012); HARRISON (2013) and (2015); LEE, FINKELPEARL & GRAVERINI (2014)). This list could go on and to refer to all the important scholarly discussions ever written on Apuleius exceeds the limitations of this introduction (and of this dissertation in general) and will certainly not do much justice to many excellent

critics who over the decades have shed new light on many creative and intellectual aspects of the Madaurensian author. One only needs to have a quick look at C. SCHLAM and E. FINKELPEARL (2000) to grasp the enormity of Apuleian scholarship from the early 1970s until 1998 or S. HARRISON'S online bibliography on *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. So instead of selecting a few important publications on Apuleius and the *Metamorphoses* that people working on Apuleius will clearly be acquainted with, I have opted to briefly present a few representative discussions that focus more specifically on the topic of magic in the novel, which is, after all, the theme of my dissertation. In doing so, I would again like to point out that the criterion for this small selection has been more personal taste rather than the quality of the contributions.

Although magic and witchcraft are central themes and key concepts of the *Metamorphoses*, the topic has only received marginal attention by the scholarly world. Magic, witchcraft, or the witches of the *Metamorphoses* always come up in academic discussions as a secondary feature and usually in conjunction with another topic, most often Lucius' ruinous *curiositas* (e.g., WLOSOK (1999)) or that of *caeca fortuna* (e.g., TATUM (1969)).¹³⁷ Some contributions focus in a more general way on magic in the *Metamorphoses*. For example, R. SEELINGER'S (1981) doctoral dissertation examines the magical practices of binding and constriction in the novel, which he also compared to the magical papyri and to known binding spells, and the ideas of deception and predisposition to belief. SEELINGER concluded that these two magical practices on the one hand lend an air of verisimilitude to scenes that deal with the supernatural, and on the other hand are linked to principal themes of the novel, such as *voluptas* and *curiositas*, thus contributing towards the inner coherence and unity of the work. N. FICK (1985) studied the presence of magic in the *Metamorphoses* and argued for two distinct types: the first is a 'popular' / fictional type of magic, working primarily on a literary level, which through various constraints and impious practices brings chaos into nature and creates an 'anti-nature'; the second type, which she addresses as 'para-religious' magic, is a type of magic that respects and pays homage to the gods, without attempting to constrain them to the magician's will. Additionally, in a short but enlightening article D. MARTINEZ (2000) discusses the magic of witches in the *Metamorphoses* and contrasts it with creation narratives from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Old Testament, concluding that witches (and in general the practitioners of magic) show an unnatural predilection for the magic of chaos compared to the supreme god's magic of the cosmos. At the heart of this magic

¹³⁷ Interestingly enough, HARRISON (2000) does not touch upon the topic of magic in his discussion of the *Metamorphoses*.

of chaos lies the magician's or witch's wish to eradicate the distinctions between upper (heavenly) and lower (infernal) realms, thus plunging the upper realm in primordial confusion by bringing into daylight all the terrors, horrors, ghosts, and demons of the lower realm.

Several publications discuss in passing magic, witchcraft, and witches in different smaller narrative units of the novel. For instance, while examining the inset tales of the novel which, it has been argued, anticipate in various ways events in the main narrative, J. TATUM (1969) concentrated on the tales of Aristomenes and Thelyphron not only in terms of how their fortunes mirror, or even foreshadow, those of Lucius, but also how these tales frustrate the readers' expectations: Aristomenes, Thelyphron, and the readers are led to believe that the protagonists have successfully escaped from a hopeless situation which has been imposed on them due to their contact with the magic of witches, but it is soon revealed that this was anything but the case. C. MAYRHOFER (1975) also focused on the same stories and on some magical aspects that underlie these tales and argued that the stitching together of disparate stories is not a sign of artistic weakness or fault in Apuleius,¹³⁸ but reflects a technique that is common to stories relating preternatural phenomena.

W. SMITH & B. WOODS (2002) briefly touch upon the theme of magic in their discussion of Aristomenes' tale from Book 1, which they argue betrays influences from Cicero's *On Invention* and *On Divination*, folktales about murderous witches, and Platonic allusions and references, especially to the *Phaedrus*. A cross-examination of, among others, the witchcraft in the first three books of the *Metamorphoses* against that of surviving and fragmentary Greek novels and the magical papyri is the topic of a paper by C. RUIZ-MONTERO (2007), who maintains that the magic of these literary texts reflects a real knowledge of actual practices and rituals. The necromantic scenes of Thelyphron's tale from Book 2 and of the old woman from Book 6 of Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Story* are at the centre of N. SLATER'S (2007) attention; after he has pointed out the resemblances between the two episodes, he concludes that Apuleius' necromantic sequence moves away from the moralising overtones of Heliodorus' scene, with Apuleius putting emphasis more on the comical aspects of necromancy rather than trying to evoke from his audience a sense of thrill or horror, as was apparently the intention of Heliodorus. This comical aspect of Thelyphron's necromantic story is also argued for by M. BAJONI (1990); by comparing it to the ghost and werewolf stories of Petronius'

¹³⁸ An argument used over and over again by B.E. PERRY (1929a) and (1929b).

Satyrica, she argued that the main purpose of such irrational stories is to generate laughter among the readership. Building on and expanding R. GORDON's notion of the 'night-witch',¹³⁹ B. SPAETH (2010) concentrates on Roman night-hag attack stories—that is, stories involving witch attacks in the dead of night—and discusses Aristomenes and Thelyphron's witches in terms of inverting natural processes, liminality and the penetration of domestic and corporeal boundaries, and gender subversion. Alternatively, A. BAKER (2012) has focused on aspects of witchcraft from Aristomenes and Thelyphron's tales and has compared them with legal practices and language, suggesting that magic and law in the *Metamorphoses* are not only thematically closely related (among others, both magic and law destroy lives unjustly and lead the novel's characters to suicide), but also that by likening law to magic Apuleius subtly criticises the legitimacy of the Roman justice system and Roman imperial authority—perhaps, as a result of his own unfortunate encounter with the judicial system during the events recounted in the *Apology*.

Moreover, individual witches of the *Metamorphoses* have received, as well, some separate treatment. It has been suggested by D. LEINWEBER (1994) that Apuleius' depiction of Meroe, Panthia, and Pamphile is a conglomeration of three separate mythological themes (the 'black widow', the childless 'lonely woman', and the old hag), which actively reflect popular culture and beliefs during the Hellenistic and Imperial epochs, and were inspired by the folkloric figure of the dreadful Lamia, hence the witches' many vampiric/succubus traits. Meroe and Panthia and their relationship to wine are discussed by S. PANAYOTAKIS (1998), who surmises based on Panthia's wish to tear apart ('Pentheus-style') the unfortunate Aristomenes that the two witches are depicted in Dionysiac terms. The menacing duo are also at the centre of attention in two papers by S. FRANGOULIDIS ((1999) and (2012)): in the former contribution FRANGOULIDIS studies closely the role the two witches play in the story and how Meroe's revenge on Socrates forces Aristomenes to become an unwilling accomplice in his friend's death, whereas in the latter he emphasises the function of 'double dreams' in the novel and argues that it was a commonplace for witches to blur reality and appearances, a practice which stands in stark opposition to Isis' benevolent magic in Book 11. Meroe, furthermore, receives some peripheral treatment in three papers: P. MURGATROYD (2001) offers a narratological discussion of parts of Aristomenes' tale; W. KEULEN (2006) presents Aristomenes' tale in terms of theatricality and suggests that Meroe is depicted in the

¹³⁹ Cf. GORDON (1999) 204-10.

Metamorphoses as an elegiac albeit comic *exclusa amatrix*; whereas in his investigation of Latin witch vocabulary M. PAULE (2014) has maintained that *saga* as a term applied to witches in Roman antiquity does not do justice to Meroe's uniquely supernatural nature, and as such serves more as a generic term than a real indicator of the witch's dangerous character. In her recent commentary on Book 1 R. MAY (2013) dedicates a small section of her introduction to the practice of ancient magic and briefly surveys Aristomenes' tale in light of magical bindings, erotic magic, and ghost conjuring. MAY infers that although Apuleius had an apparently very good knowledge of ancient magic, he nonetheless offered his readers an often inconsistent image of it in his novel: accuracy and authenticity were sacrificed if the author felt that this might have helped him advance his plot or create a thrill for his audience.

The witches Pamphile and Photis are very briefly mentioned in A. BAERTSCHI and T. FÖGEN'S (2006) account of antique witches, while Pamphile's transformation into an owl in Book 3 is touched upon in passing by A. SCOBIE (1978b) during his general discussion of the motif of strigiform witches across a number of cultures. SCOBIE compared the metamorphosis scene with its Greek counterpart from the pseudo-Lucianic epitomised *Ass* and commented that apparently the reason behind Apuleius' changing of the Greek night-raven (κόραξ νυκτερινός) to an owl was the intention to accommodate native Roman folk beliefs about the owl and its various associations with witchcraft. In a short article H. MÜLLER-REINEKE (2006) hypothesises that the historical Pamphila of Epidaurus, the author of a controversial work on sex, may have been Apuleius' source of inspiration for his fashioning of Pamphile in the *Metamorphoses* and for giving the witch her salacious nature. Contrastingly, much scholarly discussion dedicated to Photis concentrates mostly on the ways in which the rookie witch resembles Isis or acts as a negative counterpart for the goddess in the final Book (e.g., SCHMELING & MONTIGLIO (2006)), or examine various aspects of the sexual theme and how Lucius uses sex and his relationship with Photis as a means to gain access to Pamphile's magic (e.g., SANDY (1974); SCHLAM (1992: 67-81); HINDERMANN (2009: 155-76)). A few of these aspects are re-evaluated in a recent paper by R. MAY (2015), centring her attention on Photis and examining in particular the ways in which Photis differs from her Greek counterpart Palaistra in the *Ass*, her erotic affair with Lucius and her magical mistakes, as well as her relationship with Venus and Isis. MAY concludes that Photis is a multi-layered character, who ought not just to be regarded in the novel in terms of an 'anti-Isis' nor as a rudimentary 'copy-paste' caricature from the Greek *Ass*; on the contrary, she has been carefully fashioned, through

various literary allusions, into a “charming, literary and literate creation”,¹⁴⁰ denoting both the calamities of magic and witchcraft in the *Metamorphoses* and the hidden dangers of sex and eroticism.

The relationship between the goddess Isis and magic in the final Book of the *Metamorphoses* has received some additional treatment. Some critics have seen in Lucius' final initiation into the Isiac cult an attempt to earnestly dissociate himself from the destructive force of the witches' magic which has dominated Books 1-10 (e.g., LUCK (1985: 22, 71-72); SCHLAM (1992: 113-22); KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015: 36)), whereas others have treated the initiation as a conversion to a different, benevolent, sphere of magic (e.g., GRIFFITHS (1975: *passim*); MARTINEZ (2000); FRANGOULIDIS (2008)). Elsewhere, GRIFFITHS (1978) has discussed the Isiac elements that are scattered throughout the novel and in doing so points towards the affiliation of Isis with the witches of Aristomenes' tale on the one hand, and the priest Zatchlas of Thelyphron's on the other. Isis and the final Book of the *Metamorphoses* have been at the forefront of attention in the latest instalment of the *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass* series, edited by W. KEULEN and U. EGELHAAF-GAISER (2012), whereas Isis' connection to witchcraft and the witches of the novel is variously commentated on more recently by KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015).

The most relevant contribution to my dissertation topic is S. FRANGOULIDIS' *Witches, Isis and narrative: Approaches to magic in Apuleius' Metamorphoses* (2008). In this study FRANGOULIDIS adopts an 'intratextual' approach and investigates the varying attitudes adopted by the novel's characters towards magic in order to bring to the forefront the dynamic complexity of the work. By contrasting Lucius with secondary characters of the novel (such as Aristomenes, Socrates, Thelyphron, or Cerdo), FRANGOULIDIS highlights Lucius' comparative 'good fortune' as a victim of magic: unlike the remaining characters, whose contact with witches and magic has dire consequences for their lives and/or wellbeing, Lucius gets away with a slap on the wrist: it is true that Lucius undergoes numerous hardships and a few times even comes close to dying, but he never does and in the end he is indeed rescued by Isis. Lucius' erotic relationship with Photis, his salvation by the grace of Isis, and his re-transformation into a human are understood in terms of a second 'metamorphosis', rewritten this time from a positive point of view.

¹⁴⁰ MAY (2015) 74.

*Fire burn and caldron bubble...***Plan of dissertation and methodological considerations**

My approach in this dissertation is different from that of FRANGOULIDIS' aforementioned contribution inasmuch as I discuss magic and the persons who practise witchcraft from an intertextual perspective. Hence, I will concentrate primarily on *literary* depictions of witches and magic, and the two underlying questions which will constantly run through the dissertation are: (i) to what extent is Apuleius indebted to a prior literary tradition in his depiction of witches and their witchcraft in the *Metamorphoses*? And (ii) how much of the magic and witchcraft in the novel can be best understood as 'fictional' magic—i.e. magic that functions on a literary level—and how much as 'real'—i.e. magic that was practised in antiquity and can be attested from the archaeological record (i.e. from curse tablets and binding spells) and/or our knowledge of the rituals prescribed from the magical papyri? In doing so, I do not aspire to present an extensive and exhaustive diachronic history of ancient magic and its implications for the societies under discussion as a cross-cultural or socio-political phenomenon; nor will I address the reasons why people believed in the efficiency of witchcraft and magic rituals since these questions obviously encroach on the field of psychology, nor the nowadays outdated and problematic question of magic's relationship to religion and science. In the aforementioned sections I have already referred to a number of contributions which a reader interested in this debate could potentially go to for further information.¹⁴¹ Modern anthropological definitions and interpretations of magic are also beyond the scope of this dissertation, although when points of interest arise modern definitions of magic will be briefly noted and addressed. My main interest lies in the reasons why Apuleius depicted magic, witchcraft, and witches in the *Metamorphoses* the way he did, and whether this depiction of magic had any sufficient reality to it.

In pursuing this intertextual approach, I will briefly address in chapter 2 early Roman magical descriptions and the concept of magic in Rome, and I will then shift my attention to Imperial Latin literature and to a selection of women who were commonly addressed (by ancient and modern standards) as 'witches'. Witches in pre-Apuleian Imperial Roman literature appear within a broad variety of contexts and literary genres: on the one hand is Canidia and her cronies in the *Epodes* and *Satires* of Horace, and the witches-cum-*lenae* of

¹⁴¹ Cf. also the remarks at FARAONE (1999) 17-18 and n.75.

Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid's love poetry; on the other is the anonymous witch of Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, Dido and her *magica sacra* in *Aeneid* 4, but also Lucan's terrifying Erictho; to this, one should not forget to add Ovid's Medea and Circe in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Heroines*, and Seneca's *Medea*. So now we have the entire literary spectrum: satire, elegy, drama, epic; four different genres, where women practising magic appear in one capacity or another. Yet one can surely understand that Virgil's anonymous witch from *Eclogue* 8 is not as menacing as Horace's Canidia; nor is Canidia as horrifying and foreboding as Lucan's Erictho. The term 'witch' might well be applied to all these individual women, but not all belong to the same category of witches. In this section, therefore, I will offer a taxonomy of Imperial witches, by pointing out their most important features and characteristics and the type of witchcraft they were envisaged as practising. This categorisation will be a helpful tool in understanding and discussing Apuleius' witches in the following chapters.

Before the main examination of Apuleius' witches commences, chapter 3 will bring into relief Apuleius' own involvement with magic as presented by him in the *Apology* and his discussion of *magia*. When one considers in retrospect the set of magical accusations hurled against Apuleius by his adversaries in conjunction with our knowledge of various magical practices and rituals from the Greek magical papyri and elsewhere, it certainly makes one question Apuleius' true relationship with the world of magic. There can be little room for doubt that Apuleius was interested in occult practices, and that his knowledge of magical rituals exceeded those merely found in literary texts; there can also be little doubt that he was guilty of at least some of the crimes he was accused of. The reason for which the *Apology* will briefly enter the discussion is to demonstrate and establish that Apuleius had already had some familiarity with the topic of magic before writing the *Metamorphoses*, which is replete in magical scenes and rituals. If Apuleius offers only a tiny glimpse of his knowledge for the occult in the *Apology*, in the *Metamorphoses* he displays a whole new area of magical enterprises which he associates primarily with the figure of the witch.

The three main and lengthiest chapters of the dissertation discuss the major witches to be found in the *Metamorphoses* and the representation of magic they practise. Chapter 4, in particular, concentrates on Meroe and Panthia from Aristomenes' tale in Book 1, and to a lesser extent on the witches of Thelyphron's tale in Book 2. In this chapter I will argue that Apuleius was obviously aware of what I have termed in chapter 2 an 'unofficial' 'witch tradition' of Imperial literature, and that he drew extensively from this tradition's features for his own exposition of witchery activities in these two supernatural tales.

Chapter 5 will resume the discussion of Thelyphron's tale, focusing this time on the second half of the story, and will also bring the witch story of the baker's wife from Book 9 into the discussion. In this chapter I will examine the Greco-Roman beliefs about the dead and the undead and the practices of ghost evocation and necromancy. Apuleius' passages will then be studied in the light of their literary tradition, which will bring into relief the various patterns of literary necromantic reanimations. Apuleius' ritual will lastly be compared with similar practices attested by the magical papyri and I will propose ways in which Apuleius' scene may echo real life necromantic rites.

Chapter 6 will target the last of the witches of the *Metamorphoses*, with its main focus being on the under-discussed Pamphile. In this chapter I will suggest that Pamphile's characterisation in the novel is quite unique, since she does not strictly adhere to one category of Imperial witches proposed in chapter 2, but rather seems to borrow characteristics from different types of witches. Hence, I will propose that Pamphile's hybrid nature might allow us to introduce a fourth type of witches / women practising magic in the form of the powerful albeit sexually licentious anti-*matrona*, and will argue that this category actively reflects the various political and ideological factors regarding the standing of women in Roman society, especially during the last century of the Republic and the Imperial era.

As I examine the topic of magic, witchcraft, and witches in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, I shall demonstrate that much insight can be gained by adopting an intertextual approach and by comparing on the one hand the expression of magic and witchcraft and on the other the portrayal of witches to the Greco-Roman milieu in which they flourished. At this stage, two general observations related to the core questions of the thesis could be offered. Firstly, in many ways Apuleius' portrayal of women practising malevolent witchcraft and of magic itself betrays close affinities to the pattern of depicting women engaging in predatory magic in Imperial literature. It would seem that during the Imperial ages a 'tradition of literary witchcraft' had been unofficially constituted which offered a stereotypical portrait of women identified as, or accused of being witches in literature. Despite being obviously indebted to this tradition, Apuleius employs his creative ingenuity to add nuance to this tradition, thus adding his own unique touch to his witch portrayals. Secondly, magic and witchcraft in the *Metamorphoses* function both on a literary/fictive and a 'real' level. Given that descriptions of witchcraft appear in poetic and novelistic texts, it is reasonable to assume that a great deal of imagination had been invested in these literary portrayals in order to arouse a feeling of comic relief and amusement, in some cases also of

horror and suspense in the audience. By contrast, 'real' magic (that is, magic attested by the magical papyri and the archaeological record) was more 'ordinary' and unassuming and came nowhere as close to being similarly extravagant as its literary counterpart. But real magical practices did lie at the heart of all the literary depictions, real practices which people could and would recognise and identify with, regardless of whether one believed in magic's efficacy or not.

2

WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?

EARLY ROMAN MAGIC AND THE ‘WITCH TRADITION’ OF IMPERIAL LATIN LITERATURE

“The ‘witch’ of classical literature is a fascinating figure: sometimes beautiful, sometimes horrible, but always compelling.”

B.S. SPAETH, “From goddess to hag”

*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?*

Horace *Epode* 2.2.208-09

1

Preliminaries

Witches in modern times, especially ones appearing on television and the big screen, are often portrayed as the stereotypical Western style Halloween witch: loathsome with age and hideous, warty noses, long pointy hats, and flying about on wooden broomsticks. The perception of witches in early and classical antiquity was, on the contrary, significantly different, if we take into account the description of Circe in the *Odyssey* who was depicted as a young, beautiful, and sweet-voiced goddess (10.220-23). However, during the first few centuries CE, if not earlier, the view on magic and the approach to the supernatural begin to radically change, and witches no longer conform to their ‘Circe’ or ‘Medea’ prototypes, commonly associated with lethal beauty. On the contrary, witches are now transformed into spiteful and ugly predatory hags who prowl cemeteries, transform themselves or their sexual partners into animals,¹ steal body parts for magical conduct, reanimate the dead, and summon spirits to haunt, drive mad, or kill their victims.

¹ It has been claimed that a witch’s ability to change herself into an animal is inextricably linked to her hybrid nature, which was also a feature of the demonic in antiquity, on which cf. JOHNSTON (1995a) 363; SPAETH (2014) 61 n.19. According to SPAETH, Roman witches look or act like animals, whereas their Greek counterparts are only compared or linked to animals, without actually transforming themselves into one (2014: 47).

Evidently, Roman magic is more sinister, predatory, and horrifying compared to magic in the Greek world which, though injurious and retaliatory, was essentially defensive and restorative in nature, a counteraction to some deed of injustice, so to speak.² Both Deianeira in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* and Medea in Euripides' homonymous play have recourse to *φάρμακα* as a way of retaliating for an injustice committed against them by their respective husbands: Heracles has taken the young and beautiful Iole as a new mistress, whereas Jason is about to marry King Creon's daughter and as a result Medea is forced to abandon Corinth.³ Hellenistic magic, although slightly more powerful than its classical counterpart, followed in the same direction.⁴ Recently, B. SPAETH has offered a new interpretation for the motives of Greek and Roman magic and has maintained that Greek witches often resort to (more or less benign forms of) magic as a result of their sexual attraction for a man, whom they subsequently protect as long as they remain faithful (e.g., Circe for Odysseus, Medea for Jason), whereas their Roman counterparts employ darker forms of witchcraft and invoke dreadful infernal deities for more evil and immoral purposes.⁵

The reasons behind this significant divergence between the Greek and Roman representations of magic and witches subsequently have been variously accounted for: F. GRAF has surmised that magic in general was more negatively viewed in Roman than in Greek society, which led to more frightful and heinous portrayals of magic's working in Latin literature.⁶ R. GORDON has argued that Roman witch descriptions, and consequently the magic that such women were thought to be practising, conform to the pattern of the terrifying Roman conception of the 'night-witch',⁷ which he defines as "a nightmare creature who, unlike the day-witch, can never be encountered but who by her activity erodes the very foundations of human society: woman as the hideous negation of the nurturant mother".⁸ Others have suggested that these magic portrayals signalled the concern and apprehension over the transgression of the boundaries of traditional Roman religion and religious stereotypes.⁹ K. STRATTON has hypothesised that it was the advancement of ritual technology

² Cf. STRATTON (2007) 71-72; also SPAETH (2014) 46.

³ For the defensive nature of Greek magic with an emphasis on the case of Deianeira, cf. the discussion at FARAONE (1999) 110-19.

⁴ For example, Apollonius of Rhodes' Medea is more powerful and wields far greater, even cosmic, powers than her Euripidean counterpart.

⁵ SPAETH (2014) 47-50.

⁶ GRAF (1997) 36.

⁷ GORDON (1987a) 239-41.

⁸ *Idem* (1999) 184. A most telling example of a night-witch is the *strix* or *striga*.

⁹ BEARD, NORTH & PRICE (1998) 212-14, 219-22.

(such as new developments in the practice of binding spells) that led to a more intricate witch/magic description, or that Roman magic depictions were shaped by male anxieties and fears over female licentiousness and social independence and the subsequent threat that such an independence would pose to male dominance.¹⁰ B. SPAETH has maintained that the differences could be explained by looking to the cultural norms and construction of the female within Greco-Roman societies and to the opposing concepts that the two cultures had of the relationship between women on the one hand and societal/divine power on the other: in the Greek world women with magical powers express primarily “the positive fantasies of the [Greek] men who created them”, whereas Roman witches are more indicative of the negative fears of their respective authors.¹¹

My focus in this chapter, as the title demonstrates, is on the early Roman concept of magic, and as mentioned in the previous chapter I will proceed to offer a taxonomy of Imperial witches which will be crucial for the discussion of Apuleius’ witches in the following chapters. If one were to seek archetypes for the way in which witchcraft and witches are depicted in texts of Imperial Latin literature, one ought to turn one’s attention to the representations of magic in the literature of the Hellenistic age, which formed the framework and inspiration for the poets of the Augustan era; in fact, it has been maintained that the Greek notion of magic was transferred to the Roman world via Alexandrian poetry.¹² It is, therefore, to the Hellenistic period that the next section now turns.

2

“My magic wheel, bring that man back to me...” Hellenistic magic and Theocritus’ *Idyll 2*

It is a sad fact that more than 90% of Hellenistic literary production is gone forever.¹³ This great loss, moreover, does not allow us to suggest with any degree of certainty how or when the ‘transfer’ of the notion of magic from the Greek to the Roman world took place.¹⁴ Luckily, two substantial literary depictions of witches which could have influenced Roman poets survive from the Hellenistic period: Medea from Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica*,¹⁵

¹⁰ STRATTON (2007) 73-79, 206 n.4.

¹¹ SPAETH (2014) 53.

¹² Cf. e.g., TUPET (1976) 223-24; GRAF (1997) 37-39; GORDON (1999) 165; DICKIE (2001) 127.

¹³ Cf. chapter 1 n.67.

¹⁴ Cf. also the comments about Varro Atacinus’ translation of Apollonius of Rhodes’ *Argonautica* at chapter 1.2.3.

¹⁵ On Apollonius’ Medea, cf. TUPET (1976) 154-62; CLAUSS (1997); FALIVENE (2000); PAVLOU (2009).

and Simaetha from Theocritus' *Idyll* 2, which also bears the titillating title Φαρμακεύτρια ('The Witch').¹⁶ Yet one thing which quickly becomes evident about the depiction of Roman witches is that similarly to the magic they practise, they too are far more dangerous and evil than their classical or Hellenistic counterparts. Even the witches who are taken directly from Greek sources or myth, such as Medea or Circe, become the embodiment of more negative ideas.¹⁷

Information about magic working and magic workers in the Hellenistic era¹⁸ come from a few, incongruent sources; the general pattern which emerges indicates that Hellenistic poets were primarily interested in portraying ordinary, everyday people engaging in witchcraft, whereas historians, ethnographers, and paradoxographers were keener on treating magicians either from far-away and exotic lands or from the remote Greek past. Adding to this, the expansion of Alexander the Great's empire to the East and into Egypt would make it reasonable to assume that the Greeks of this period came into frequent interaction with these 'exotic' nations on a day-to-day basis, which would have had an impact on the way magic was perceived by the Hellenistic Greeks. Yet, magic during the Hellenistic epoch was still not decisively fixed, with some magical rituals from this period preserved in the Greek magical papyri wilfully blurring the distinctions between 'magic' and Hellenistic 'religion' proper.¹⁹ If defining *μαγεία* in the archaic or classical ages was a difficult task, doing so in the Hellenistic epoch is twice as challenging, especially when bearing in mind that the Hellenistic world was a composite, multifaceted, and varied accumulation of divergent cultures, each having their own conceptions, misconceptions, or even prejudices of what 'magic' (in its broader possible sense) was or did. M. DICKIE has suggested that the biggest differences between Hellenistic and classical Greek magic, resulting from this interaction with foreign nations, were (i) the 'invasion' of new, alien magical practices that ultimately found their way into those already practised by the Greeks; (ii) the emergence of new kinds of magic workers who gradually made their appearance; and finally (iii) the gathering and compilation of books on magical lore, circulating (among others) under the names of Democritus and Pythagoras among the educated élite.²⁰ In this section, I will focus briefly on Theocritus' *Idyll* 2, one of the most representative magic texts of this epoch, since this

¹⁶ On Theocritus' Φαρμακεύτρια, cf. PARRY (1988); ANDREWS (1996); GRAF (1997): 176-90; PRALON (2000); LAMBERT (2002).

¹⁷ Cf. e.g., NEWLANDS (1997); SPAETH (2014) 46; also section 4.1.2 of current chapter.

¹⁸ My discussion in this section is largely influenced by DICKIE's thought-provoking examination of Hellenistic magic (2001: 96-123); cf. also STRATTON (2015) 97-98.

¹⁹ Cf. e.g., the remarks at NILSSON (1948). On the difficulty of assessing Hellenistic magic, cf. SEGAL (1981).

²⁰ DICKIE (2001) 98.

particular work will come up in the discussion in the following sections but also in the chapters to come.

Idyll 2, 'The Witch', is one of the most interesting texts to have survived from this period which, as it will be soon argued, influenced not only a great deal Virgil's *Eclogue 8* but constituted a key text for Augustan poets who looked for inspiration in Hellenistic poetry. The poem represents in a rather colourful manner the efforts of the scorned Simaetha who employs magic to win back the love and affection of the wayward Delphis. The first part of the poem is a magic rite performed by Simaetha and her slave-girl Thestylis and consists of nine quatrains separated each time by the refrain ἰυγξ, ἔλκε τὸ τῆνον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα τὸν ἄνδρα (1-63); the rite itself assumes the form of incantations accompanied by several ritual acts and the burning of a variety of substances.²¹ In the second part of the poem Thestylis departs and Simaetha is left alone to recount in flashback how she first met Delphis, their sexual encounters, and finally how he has stopped visiting her. Simaetha has heard unsettling rumours that Delphis has fallen in love with someone else, whose sex is mysteriously left unidentified; it is at this point that Simaetha has decided to resort to magic. Her monologue (and the poem) ends on a high note, with her threatening to use a variety of deadly φάρμακα she has come to know about from an Assyrian stranger²² in case Delphis carries on rejecting her (64-164).

It would seem reasonable to assume that poems like that of Theocritus' *Idyll 2*, or in general poems that touched upon the theme of witchcraft, were rather popular during the Hellenistic period. The ancient scholia to Theocritus suggest that *Idyll 2* might be partly indebted to Sophron's mimes,²³ possibly to the one entitled *The Women who claim to be Expelling the Goddess*.²⁴ The title of this mime was and remains rather puzzling, but the discovery in the Oxyrhynchus collection of four papyrus fragments belonging to at least three different Sophronic mimes has partly enhanced our understanding, as one of the fragments

²¹ On the structure of *Idyll 2*, cf. LAWALL (1961); for a discussion of Simaetha's ritual, cf. GRAF (1997) 176-85; OGDEN (2008) 39-43.

²² WINKLER enlisted the Assyrian stranger among the *male* experts whose help in magical conduct women would have sought in antiquity, since their talents were considered far superior to those of women (1991: 227, and 240 n.73); *contra* DICKIE, arguing that the Assyrian's superiority is essentially owed to the fact that he is from the East and not because he is a man (2001: 110).

²³ Cf. Σ.*Argument* (Wendel): τὴν δὲ Θεοκυλίδα ὁ Θεόκριτος ἀπειροκάλως ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μετήνεγκε μίμων; Σ.12: χθονίαν δὲ τὴν Ἐκάτην φησί, παρόσον Περσεφόνης τροφός, ἢ παρόσον νερτέρων πρύτανιν αὐτὴν τέθεικε Σώφρων; Σ.69: τὴν δὲ τῶν φαρμάκων ὑπόθεσιν ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μίμων μεταφέρει; cf. also Σ.*Argument*: παρέπλασε δὲ τὸ ποιημάτιον (i.e. *Idyll 15*, Ἀδωνιάζουσαι) ἐκ τῶν παρὰ Σώφρονι Ἰσθμια Θεωμένων.

²⁴ Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner* 11.480b quotes a phrase evidently relating to magic. On the relationship of *Idyll 2* and Sophron, cf. HORDERN (2002).

has been attributed to the mime in question. In briefest outline, the fragment presents a purification ritual or sacrifice to Hecate, the famous ‘Hecate’s suppers’.²⁵ The scene, from what we can infer, is the inside of a house; the ritual takes place during the night under the light of a torch and is performed by the main speaker, whose gender cannot be established from the fragment, assisted by an unspecified number of male helpers. The speaker orders the helpers to hand over a variety of substances (similar to those used by Simaetha) which will be used for purification purposes during the rite, and possibly sacrifices a dog to Hecate. The helpers are then requested to open the doors, put out the torch, and keep silent while possibly a prayer is being offered by the main speaker.²⁶

One cannot really doubt that *Idyll* 2 bears some strong similarities to Sophron’s fragment, though differences are evident too: GOW argued that if the papyrus fragment belonged indeed to *The Women* mime, then Hecate had to be understood as being exorcised and not invoked for help, as in the case of Theocritus.²⁷ However, one cannot preclude the possibility that Theocritus may have indeed based the general idea of the Φαρμακεύτρια on Sophron, but then used his poetic freedom and imagination to ‘transform’ the original rite from an exorcism of Hecate into an invocation of the goddess. Unfortunately, more cannot be said with certainty on this matter, and until new evidence reaches the surface it will have to remain a matter of guesswork as to what extent Theocritus possibly imitated, ‘transformed’, or even ‘plagiarised’ Sophron.

Idyll 2, however, raises some interesting questions about magic and magic working in the greater Hellenistic world. Who practised magic in the Hellenistic era? To take things from the beginning, the world in which Simaetha acts and interacts is apparently a world where (apparently single) women lived alone with their slave girls, whom they would often send to arrange ‘dates’ with young men for their mistresses. The text allows little room to surmise Simaetha’s social status, but in this task we can be assisted by Herodas, who in his first

²⁵ Hecate’s ‘suppers’ (δείπνα) were sent to the ἐκαταία (shrines or statues of Hecate) at crossroads; cf. e.g., Demosthenes *Against Conon* 39; Aristophanes *Wealth* 594-97 with the scholion *ad loc.* (Dübner). These suppers were meant to be an apotropaic device intended to confine the dangerous goddess to the crossroads (cf. e.g., HORDERN (2002) 169), but going against the grain, JOHNSTON has argued that Hecate was supplicated and was offered suppers for protection against dangers that lay at crossroads rather than her being the actual danger (1990: 26-28) and (1991: esp. 218-21).

²⁶ Sophron fr. 4 (Kassel-Austin): τὰν τράπεζαν κάτθετε / ὥσπερ ἔχει· λάξεσθε δὲ / ἄλως χόνδρον ἐς τὰν χήρα / καὶ δάφναν πὰρ τὸ ὤας. / ποτιβάντες νυν πὸτ τὰν (5) / ἰστίαν θωκεῖτε· δός μοι τὸ / τῶμφακες· φέρ’ ὦ τὰν σκύλακα / πεῖ γὰρ ἄσφαλτος; οὐτα. : / ἔχε καὶ τὸ δαίδιον, καὶ τὸν / λιβανωτόν· ἄγετε δὴ (10) / πεπτάσθων μοι ταὶ θύραι / πάσαι· ὕμεις δὲ ἐνταῦθα / ὀρήτε· καὶ τὸν δαελὸν / σβήτε ὥσπερ ἔχει· εὐκαμίαν / νυν παρέχεσθε ἄς κ’ ἐγὼν (15) / πὸτ τάνδε π[υ]κταλεύσω. / Πότνια, δεῖ[πν]ου μέν τυ κα[ῖ] / [ξ]ενίων ἀμεμφέων ἀντα[.]

²⁷ GOW (1952) 34 n.5.

Mimiamb portrays a similar social setting that might help us reconstruct, at least in parts, Simaetha's character. The young girl Metriche, who lives alone with her slave as well, is paid a visit by an old woman who identifies herself as Gyllis, the mother of Philaenis. Gyllis acts as a 'go-between' and attempts to sway Metriche to take on a new lover, on whose behalf Gyllis has been sent, since her current lover has left for Egypt and nothing has been heard of him for ten months. The new lover Gyllis suggests is a young man who spends his time in the palaestra and the gymnasium, a grand athlete, wealthy and chaste (comparable to Simaetha's Delphis). Metriche does not give in to Gyllis' arguments and turns her down politely. However, before sending the old woman on her way she orders her maidservant to offer the woman some wine, which Gyllis drinks eagerly; before she departs, the old woman prays for the happiness of Metriche. In all likelihood Gyllis is a procuress and the mother of a prostitute if we judge by her daughter's name,²⁸ and depends on two other courtesans named Myrtale and Sime. Metriche is, from the looks of it, an independent courtesan living alone with her slave-girl; she had apparently formed an association with a well-off youth who is currently in Egypt, and her new potential lover is also quite wealthy, the underlying suggestion being that women like Metriche were quite dependent on wealthy young men as a source of income. Overall, the impression we are left with from Herodas' *Mimiamb* is that of a world of penurious, though not depraved or debauched women, who live all alone, perhaps with a slave, and perform erotic transactions with wealthy youths.

Judging from Herodas, Theocritus' Simaetha was quite likely part of the same social group. Like Philaenis previously, Simaetha's name is that of a famous prostitute from Megara;²⁹ her general lifestyle, the way she conducts her business, and her acquaintances (prostitutes, *lenae*, flute-girls etc.) also point towards such a profession. In addition, no male relatives from her extended family are hinted at whom she could allegedly turn to had she truly been a *παρθένος*, and there are no hints whatsoever that Simaetha is part of the citizen community; on the contrary, she belongs to the margins of society and her domestic situation is quite comparable to that of fifth century BCE courtesans or courtesans from New and Roman

²⁸ Philaenis was a common name for prostitutes in antiquity; cf. e.g., Lucian *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 6.1; pseudo-Lucian *Loves* 28; Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner* 5.22of. A few poems in the *Palatine Anthology* are dedicated to Philaenides, possibly harlots (e.g., 5.4, 130, 186; 6.206, 207; 7.477). One Philaenis in particular was attributed with the composition of a notorious erotic handbook for sexual stimulation (e.g., Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner* 5.22of), with *P.Oxy* 2891 containing three fragments from Philaenis' racy treatise. She allegedly came from the island of Samos, which would comply with Dioscorides' dedication at *Palatine Anthology* 7.450. On Philaenis and the fragments, cf. PARKER (1989).

²⁹ Cf. e.g., Aristophanes *Acharnians* 524-25, with scholion *ad loc.* (Wilson); also Hesychius *Lexicon* σ 657; *Suda* σ 428.

comedy living together in all-female brothels headed by an elderly *lena*, who had taken in the girls as her ‘daughters’ and taught them the tricks of the trade.³⁰ Contrastingly, GOW, followed later by D. OGDEN too, defended Simaetha’s honour by claiming that the woman probably belonged to the poor and destitute bourgeoisie and therefore strongly objected to her being a courtesan based on the remark at lines 40-1 that Delphis had made her no wife or maiden but a wretched thing (ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τήνῳ πᾶσα καταίθομαι ὅς με τάλαιναν / ἀντὶ γυναικὸς ἔθηκε κακὰν καὶ ἀπάρθενον ἦμεν).³¹ Such claims, nonetheless, were not altogether uncommon among prostitutes, as is later attested by Theodoret in his *Ecclesiastical History* (86). What we are seemingly faced with, then, in Theocritus is a world of prostitutes resorting to magic in their attempt to achieve their goals.³² Simaetha is, astonishingly, very aware of the consequences of her actions and yet does not show the slightest remorse or hesitation in performing them. But as M. DICKIE has pointed out, this should not come as a surprise: taking into consideration that if anyone were ever going to use magic to attract a man or win back a lost lover, then that would have been the prostitutes whose source of income and livelihood were at stake as a result of errant lovers.³³

That prostitutes tended to have resorted to magic is further supported by different sources. In an anonymous Hellenistic³⁴ epigram from the *Palatine Anthology* a Thessalian φαρμακίς named Niko had dedicated her magic wheel (ἴνυξ)³⁵ to Aphrodite which she had used to draw men across the sea and bring girls from their beds (5.205). The name Niko is attested several times in the *Palatine Anthology* (e.g., 5.150, 164, 209; 6.289), and was furthermore the name of a famous courtesan from Samos as Athenaeus claims at *Sophists at Dinner* 5.220f. Yet, besides the actual dedication to Aphrodite, the fact that the epigram belongs to a group of poems with dedications to Aphrodite or Priapus by prostitutes also tends to suggest that Niko was a courtesan too. Another case of a known Hellenistic prostitute practising some sort of magic is Oenanthe, the courtesan of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 BCE), reported by Polybius *Histories* 15.29.8-9: after the death of Ptolemy and fearing for her safety, Oenanthe sought refuge in a temple of the Thesmophorian deities in Alexandria; there

³⁰ Cf. e.g., Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.11.4; Demosthenes *Against Neaera* 18-19; Alexis, fr. 103 (Kassel-Austin); for cases in New and Roman comedy, cf. KONSTAN (1993); ROSIVACH (1998) 144-45.

³¹ GOW (1952) 33; OGDEN (2008) 43; *contra* FARAONE (1999) 153-54; DICKIE (2001) 103.

³² DICKIE (2001) 103. For a criticism of his thesis, cf. FRANKFURTER (2014) and STRATTON (2014a) 4. On prostitutes and magic, cf. FARAONE (1999) 146-60; for a more general discussion, cf. GAGER (1992) 78-85.

³³ DICKIE (2001) 104.

³⁴ On this epigram being Hellenistic, cf. *ibid.* 107.

³⁵ On the *inyx*, cf. chapter 6.4.1 with n.104.

she fell on her knees and started uttering some mumbo-jumbo incantations (μαγγανεύουσα), but she was soon approached and reproached by praying women.

Our understanding of Theocritus' depiction of Simaetha practising witchcraft may be complemented by examining a number of magical *realia* which have surfaced from the town of Cnidus during the first century BCE. One particular lead tablet deposited in the sanctuary of Demeter and other chthonic deities informs us that a woman named Antigone had purportedly wrongfully slandered another woman (the unidentified ἐγώ of the tablet, who was also its commissioner) of having administered a φάρμακον to a certain Asclepiades and planned some evil against him, and of conjuring a woman for a fee to come to the cemetery and dispatch him from the world of the living.³⁶ The implication here seems to be that Asclepiades had suddenly fallen ill and foul play was suspected by Antigone (perhaps the wife of Asclepiades or a rival courtesan?), seemingly openly accusing the ἐγώ-woman of the tablet (a different courtesan?) of trying to harm the man. Though it cannot be conclusively proven, it has been hypothesised that what the curse is pointing towards is indeed a rivalry among prostitutes.³⁷ Such rivalries are attested all the more frequently in later literature and are satirically depicted by Lucian in his *Dialogues of the Courtesans*: in one of these dialogues, two prostitutes reproach a third one for having used her mother, a skilled witch (φαρμακίς), to ensnare through φάρμακα an Acarnanian youth whom mother and daughter are currently milking dry (1.2).³⁸

Prostitutes, then, are the first category of magic workers to have found a place in the Hellenistic world. The old women to whom Simaetha runs for help with incantations (καὶ ἐς τίνος οὐκ ἐπέρασα, / ἢ ποίας ἔλιπον γραίας δόμον ἄτις ἐπᾶδεν, 89-90) are another. Old women engaging in magic and purification rituals are well accounted for during this period. Such women, possibly ex-courtesans themselves, were credited with a variety of practices: they were envisaged as exorcising evil dreams that one might have had;³⁹ they were skilled at manufacturing protective amulets;⁴⁰ and could offer protection against the evil eye⁴¹ and cure

³⁶ DT 1A, esp. 6-18: εἰ μὲν ἐγὼ φάρμακον Ἀσκληπιάδῃ ἢ ἔδωκα, ἢ ἐνεθυμήθην κατὰ ψυχὴν κακόν τι αὐτῷ ποίσει, ἢ ἐκάλεσα γυναῖκα ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν, τρία ἡμιμναῖα διδοῦσα ἵνα αὐτὸν ἐκ τῶν ζώντων ἄρη...

³⁷ Cf. e.g., DICKIE (2001) 105.

³⁸ On the literary tradition of prostitutes and especially Lucians' *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, cf. SHREVE-PRICE (2014).

³⁹ E.g., Menander *The Ghost* 50-6.

⁴⁰ E.g., Bion fr. 30 (Kindstrand); Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 5.64.7.

⁴¹ E.g., Theocritus *Idyll* 6.39-40.

evils in general.⁴² Women like these become a prominent feature in Latin love elegy, to whom the love-stricken poet could run for assistance whenever his beloved *puella* would fall sick.⁴³

On the other hand, the Assyrian stranger from whom Simaetha has come to know the deadly φάρμακα (τοῖά οἱ ἐν κίστᾳ κακὰ φάρμακα φαμί φυλάσσειν, / Ἀσσυρίῳ, δέσποινα, παρὰ ξείνοιῳ μαθοῖσα, 160-61), and more largely foreigners from the East who increasingly come to prominence during this phase are also well-attested stereotypes in the Hellenistic world. Aside from the Persian magi, the Assyrians are perhaps the only other early type of foreigners acknowledged by the Greeks as experts in magic; adding to this the fact that Theocritus introduces his Ἀσσύριος in *Idyll* 2 without any further clarification suggests that he was a known figure during the Hellenistic epoch.⁴⁴ Vitruvius, for one, claims in his *On Architecture* that a certain Babylonian priest of Bel named Berosus, who was furthermore an expert in astrology, had visited the island of Cos and had established there an astrological school; Berosus was succeeded by a man called Antipater (9.6.2),⁴⁵ who apparently went on to become a citizen of Homolium in Thessaly. In the past the historicity of Berosus' presence on Cos was variously contested, but newer archaeological evidence seems to lend support to the accuracy of Vitruvius' statement.⁴⁶

Aside from wandering Babylonian priests, visitors from Caria, Halicarnassus, and Syro-Palestine would have also been recurrent figures not only on the island itself but also in the larger Hellenistic world.⁴⁷ In particular, one of the many groups of ritual experts from Babylon traversing the Hellenistic world were the Chaldean astrologers and mathematicians, destined to be linked later with all kinds of witchcraft and be identified as magicians *tout court*. Chaldeans, it would appear, had spread their wings across the Hellenistic world, and not just through the empire of Alexander's successors: in the second century BCE Cato the Elder in Rome was well aware of astrologers and *mathematici* and warns naïve farmers against consulting Chaldean prophets,⁴⁸ whereas in 139 BCE the praetor Cornelius Scipio Hispanus banished all Chaldean astrologers from Rome and Italy—one of the many edicts which would

⁴² E.g., *ibid.* 7.126-7 and scholion *ad loc.* (Wendel).

⁴³ Cf. e.g., Ovid's advice towards the lover to be kind and affectionate towards his girlfriend in her time of sickness and urges him to bring an *anus* to purify the bed and the area around it with sulphur and eggs (*Art of Love* 2.319-22, 327-30).

⁴⁴ So maintains DICKIE (2001) 110.

⁴⁵ Berosus is also mentioned by Tatian as the author of a historical treatise on the Chaldeans (*Address to the Greeks* 36.3 = 680 (Jacoby)).

⁴⁶ Cf. *SEG* 31.576; BOWERSOCK (1983).

⁴⁷ Cf. e.g., SHERWIN-WHITE (1973) 246-48.

⁴⁸ Cf. Cato *On Agriculture* 5.4; Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.3.3.

target the wandering magicians throughout the centuries.⁴⁹ Different groups of Eastern holy men (and sometimes women) are further encountered during this period accompanying the armies of generals and acting as prophets or prophetesses. On one occasion Aristoboulos reports that a certain Syrian woman was among the camp-followers of Alexander the Great; initially Alexander and his court found the woman amusing, but as soon as he realised her prophetic utterances were coming true, he became keenly interested in the woman and granted her twenty-four hours access to him (*πρόσοδον πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα*); she was even allowed to watch over Alexander while he was asleep.⁵⁰ Elsewhere, a different Syrian wise woman, named Martha, had accompanied to the general Marius during his military expeditions and acted as his advisor during sacrifices;⁵¹ and even the famous rebel Spartacus is said to have had a famous Thracian prophetess among his ranks during his revolt against the Romans.⁵²

3

Early Roman magical descriptions

Any discussion regarding the development of the concept of magic in the Roman world is rendered difficult by the fact that it is not easy to separate the uniquely Roman element from the Greek one.⁵³ From its earliest history Rome had been in contact with the Greek world, and by at least the second century BCE Greek literature and rhetoric had entered the educational curriculum of young Roman aristocrats.⁵⁴ Moreover, judging from the cases of Quintus Fabius Pictor (*flor.* 220-200 BCE), a senator and the earliest Roman historian who wrote his (now lost) work on the history of Rome entirely in Greek, and Cato the Elder, who is said to have learnt Greek late in his life and to have read the orations included in Thucydides and those of Demosthenes,⁵⁵ it is reasonable to assume that by the middle of the same century (if not earlier) a number of men of the senatorial class would have known at least some Greek. Moreover, if the Greco-Roman puns in the comedies of Plautus are any indication, a very basic Greek knowledge must have been widespread in the lower strata of Roman society during the same time too.⁵⁶ As M. DICKIE surmises, Roman aristocrats, one way or another, would have had

⁴⁹ Cf. TAVENER (1916) 14.

⁵⁰ Cf. Aristoboulos 139 F30 (Jacoby) = Arrian *Anabasis of Alexander* 4.13,5-6.

⁵¹ Cf. Plutarch *Marius* 17.1-5; also Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.3,4.

⁵² Cf. Plutarch *Crassus* 8.4.

⁵³ On early Roman magic, cf. again DICKIE (2001) 124-141.

⁵⁴ MARROU (1956) 229-313, esp. 242-64; BONNER (1977); KAIMIO (1979) 195-207.

⁵⁵ Plutarch *Cato* 2.4.

⁵⁶ Cf. DICKIE (2001) 125.

a passive knowledge of the concept of magic and magic-related vocabulary from their readings of Greek texts and they, most probably, would have at least attempted to make sense of what they had read, eventually appropriating both the concept of *magia* and any relevant vocabulary to their own needs.⁵⁷

Archaeological records attest that Greek magical practices were employed by the people of Italy as early as the third century BCE. Though evidence for magic working in early Rome or the Late Roman Republic is to this day non-existent, yet from the material record of other native Italian peoples we can assume that such practices had, in all likelihood, been thriving during this period: although early *defixiones* written in Latin and found in Rome or Latium do not survive (the earliest such tablet dates to the reign of Augustus)⁵⁸, we do have four curse tablets written in Etruscan (three from the town of Volterra and one from the northern part of Etruria),⁵⁹ five in Oscan (two from Campania,⁶⁰ and three from the territory of the Bruttii and Tiriolo⁶¹), a curse tablet from Tiriolo written in Greek,⁶² as well as a curse tablet from the territory of Carmona in Seville written in Latin and dating from the second half of the second century BCE.⁶³

Alternatively, scattered literary evidence of indigenous early Roman magical practices do exist. However, given that our knowledge of these practices depend mostly on direct or indirect references by later writers, it is a truly perplexing task to try to figure out the uniquely early Roman magic element from what might be the fictitious conceptions and even misconceptions of the writers quoting the passages or relating the stories which these magical references appear in. Some of these early practices can be traced back to the early kings of Rome. For instance, King Numa, allegedly ruling during the eighth/seventh century BCE, was said to have learnt the charms against lightning and thunder from the demi-gods Picus and Faunus, who themselves had dragged Zeus down from the heavens;⁶⁴ Numa was also apparently versed in the practice of hydromancy (water divination)⁶⁵ and had written books on the foundations of the Roman religion, which had possibly contained elements of magic

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 126. A different theory is advanced by GRAF, who distinguishes two separate phases in the development of the concept of magic in Rome: one under the Republic and one during the Julio-Claudian reign (1997) 56-57.

⁵⁸ *DT* 138.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 124-26, 128.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 192-93;

⁶¹ POCETTI (1979) 139-41, no. 189; DE FRANCISCIS & PARLANGÈLI (1960) 28-9, no. 13.

⁶² LAZZARINI (1964).

⁶³ CORELL (1993).

⁶⁴ Cf. Plutarch *Numa* 15.4-5; Ovid *Fasti* 3.289-344; also Pliny *Natural History* 2.140.

⁶⁵ Cf. Augustine *City of God* 7.35.

and were destroyed in later times upon discovery.⁶⁶ Likewise, Numa's successor, Tullus Hostilius, had given himself to every form of superstition towards the end of his reign, and while going through Numa's commentaries he came across some secret sacrifices (*occulta sollemnia sacrificia*) offered to Zeus Elicius and attempted to perform them. The rites, however, were not conducted in the proper manner, resulting in Tullus' death.⁶⁷ The occult ceremonies Tullus had engaged in would be banned at a later date for fear of magic.⁶⁸ Moreover, in the sixth century BCE and under the reign of Servius Tullus and Tarquin the Proud, the soothsayers (*vates*), a special class of men engaging in divination, were consulted for various interpretations of prodigies.⁶⁹ Though these references should not be taken at face value as proof for the actual existence of a Roman concept of magic in early Italy, they do, however, demonstrate the efforts of later writers to corroborate that various magical practices had, in their opinions, indeed found a home in Italy from its earliest times.

References to what might have been a magical discourse from the middle of the fifth century BCE onwards come in the form of the prohibitions against the working of magic in the Laws of the XII Tables,⁷⁰ a product of a legal commission, the *decemviri legibus scribundis*, who came together in 451 BCE and attempted to collect and collate Rome's laws.⁷¹ As with the references to Rome's early kings quoted above, our knowledge of the XII Tables depends primarily on direct or indirect quotations and references by writers of the first century BCE and/or later,⁷² which in itself poses extreme difficulties in trying to reconstruct and interpret the original text. The primary evidence for the laws on magic derives from Pliny the Elder, who quotes in his *Natural History* two clauses as proof for the existence of magic among the early Italian people: *quid? non et legum ipsarum in duodecim tabulis verba sunt: qui fruges excantassit, et alibi: qui malum carmen incantassit?* (28.18) The clauses Pliny quotes were measures that apparently regulated penalties for the use of incantations to charm away the

⁶⁶ Cf. Augustine *City of God* 7.34; also Livy *History of Rome* 40.29; Pliny *Natural History* 13.84-87; Plutarch *Numa* 22.2-3.

⁶⁷ Cf. Livy *History of Rome* 1.31; also Pliny *Natural History* 2.140.

⁶⁸ Cf. e.g., MASSONNEAU (1934) 120.

⁶⁹ Cf. Livy *History of Rome* 1.45, 55-6.

⁷⁰ On magic in the XII Tables, cf. MASSONNEAU (1934) 136-50; RIVES (2002); MARTIN (2012) 105-07.

⁷¹ Cicero *Republic* 2.61; cf. HEURGON (1973) 169-7; CORNELL (1995) 272-76. Livy *History of Rome* 3.31.8 reports that a Roman embassy was sent to Athens to study the laws of Solon; although this particular detail has been variously disputed (e.g., OGILVIE (1965) 449-50; HEURGON (1973) 170; CORNELL (1995) 275; DICKIE (2001) 142), the existence of certain Greek elements and concepts in the XII Tables cannot be denied (e.g., WENGER (1953) 364-72).

⁷² Given that orthography of the fifth century BCE would have been rather incomprehensible, these writers would have known the text through a later version. It has been suggested that the ultimate basis for the citations was probably a text produced sometime around 200 BCE by the Roman juriconsult Sextus Aelius Paetus Catus, as part of his work called *Tripertita* (cf. Justinian *Digest* 1.2.2.38), on which cf. RIVES (2002) 272.

crops from one's land into someone else's possession (*fruges excantare*), and a regulation forbidding the chanting of harmful incantations (*malum carmen incantare*).⁷³

Although Pliny is the only author to quote the clause regarding the charming of crops in this exact form, both Seneca and Apuleius refer to it in passing: the former brings up this law in his *Natural Questions* during a discussion about the ability of mortals to affect weather conditions (4b.7.2-3), whereas the latter mentions it in his *Apology* while defending himself against the accusations of witchcraft (47.3). In later times, Roman elegists would treat the feat of charming away crops as one of the most characteristic features of a skilled magic worker,⁷⁴ and it would appear that a somewhat similar belief about charming away cattle may have also been circulating in Hellenistic antiquity: in Longus' pastoral novel *Daphnis and Chloe* we are told that a young male shepherd-cum-singer had succeeded in chanting away (θέλγειν) livestock from the herd of his female neighbour (1.27.3). The verb *excantare* which Pliny uses, roughly translated as 'to charm/chant out', is not common in Latin literature, and appears on limited occasions in our surviving corpus;⁷⁵ in most of the cases it signified the removing of something through the use of incantations, so the action, it would seem, condemned in this law was the removal of crops by means of magical *carmina*. The purpose of this early law was, quite ostensibly, to protect one's property from harm;⁷⁶ yet, scholars have also suggested that this law did not punish so much the crime of magic *per se* but that of theft.⁷⁷

The sole written record for the application of this law is found in a case brought against a certain C. Furius Cresimus, which dates probably to the early second century BCE.⁷⁸ Although *prima facie* the accusation with which Cresimus was faced was linked to the baffling

⁷³ The term *carmen*, similar to the Greek ἐπωδή, carried a double, dubious meaning, on which cf. also the discussion at chapter 1.2.3.

⁷⁴ Cf. e.g., Virgil *Eclogue* 8.95-9; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.8.18-23; Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.5-20; Ovid *Remedies of Love* 255-60.

⁷⁵ Cf. e.g., Plautus *Bacchides* 27 (Lindsay), and Servius Σ. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.71; Lucilius 63 (Marx); Varro *Menippean Satire* 151 (Buecheler); Horace *Epodes* 5.45-6; Propertius *Elegies* 3.3.49-50; Lucan *Civil War* 6.457-8, 6.685-6, 9.930-1.

⁷⁶ CRAWFORD's reconstruction of the text places the law on crops (VIII.4) in the general section of harm against property, which also included the law on *mala carmina* (VIII.1), the law on loss caused by a quadruped (VIII.2), the prohibition of pasturing animals on foreign land (VIII.3), the law that people who graze cattle or cut crops by night will be sacrificed to Ceres (VIII.5), and the law on arson (VIII.6) (1996: 677-86); cf. also RIVES (2002) 277.

⁷⁷ GRAF (1997) 42; DICKIE (2001) 143; RIVES (2002) 278; STRATTON (2007) 31.

⁷⁸ The freedman Cresimus was envied by his neighbours for producing larger crops on his small land than they had on their big farms, and was subsequently charged with using malign magical means to entice away their crops. Afraid of being convicted, Cresimus presented his farming equipment and slaves to the Forum, and identified them as the *veneficia* his accusers were indicting him for; the only thing he could not bring was the night watches he had kept, the midnight oil he had burnt, and the sweat he had expended. The court ruled in his favour and the man was unanimously acquitted of all charges. Cf. L. Calpurnius Piso fr. 33 (Peter) = Pliny *Natural History* 18.41-43.

phenomenon of one small piece of land producing greater crops than the larger lands around it, it may have also reflected the tensions induced in a community by the presence of a successful 'outsider' whose production of a crop greater than the one he was entitled to, and the imminent threat of becoming richer than the rich, would have been understood as a subversion of social structures.⁷⁹ Apuleius himself was faced with a similar predicament during the events recounted in his *Apology*: by accusing him of using magical means to bewitch Pudentilla and trick her into marrying him, Pudentilla's extended family, who also acted as the main plaintiffs in the court trial, strove to incite the closed society of Oea to eliminate, in a most effective and permanent way, an individual that essentially threatened the established order.⁸⁰

The second clause cited by Pliny (*qui malum carmen incantassit*) dealt with the chanting of *mala carmina* that could potentially have some impact on the natural cosmos. Pliny, however, is the only author to refer to such a law in the XII Tables, and though references to a law dealing with *carmina* are found elsewhere too, the language employed is different and the interpretation offered is that concerning slander (*carmen famosum*), and not magic *per se*.⁸¹ For instance, while quoting a passage from Cicero's fourth book of the *Republic*, Augustine recalls in his *City of God* a law from the XII Tables that forbade, on the penalty of death, the composition of a song deliberately intended to bring ignominy and shame on another person (2.9); Cicero had also referred to the same law in his *Tusculan Disputations* (4.4). Critics, however, have been sceptical about how much of Cicero's and Augustine's quotations were truly part of the original law or the authors' own interpretations of it.⁸² Horace, too, in *Epistle* 2.1.152-55 related that what began in early Rome as a welcome licence at times of festivals eventually mutated into vicious slander, so that a law was passed declaring punishments for portraying any man in malicious verse (*malum carmen*). It is true that Horace does not refer to the XII Tables either explicitly or implicitly, but the setting of

⁷⁹ GRAF (1997) 63. For a discussion of this episode, cf. GAROSI (1976) 33-6; FORSYTHE (1994) 376-84; GRAF (1997) 62-5; GORDON (1999) 253-4; DICKIE (2001) 143-44.

⁸⁰ On the *Apology*, cf. chapter 3.

⁸¹ RIVES has argued that Pliny seems to be quoting accurately from a reliable source, since the construction used by the author is archaic and would appear as such only in an ancient text; perhaps the quotations were taken from Verrius Flaccus, whom Pliny cites in the next line, and not from the XII Tables directly (2002: 272, and n. 14).

⁸² RIVES, e.g., finds no reason why Cicero's clause could not have stood in the original text with minor modifications, and in the case that Cicero "paraphrased or modified it in some way, he probably did so by reformulating it in terms of more contemporary concepts; but he is unlikely to have fundamentally misunderstood and hence misrepresented its general significance" (2002: 281-82).

early Rome tends to point towards this indication.⁸³ At a later date Arnobius linked this law in his *Against the Gentiles* openly to the Laws of the XII Tables and the *decemviri* (4.34). The interpretations of Pliny and Cicero's clauses remain, nevertheless, puzzling, and scholars have taken different stands on whether the initial law addressed slander or some type of magic. The explanations offered so far vary and include assigning the two clauses to separate laws,⁸⁴ supposing that the original law had two distinct clauses, one on magic and one on slander,⁸⁵ or even assuming that Pliny was the only correct authority and all other authors had been wrong in their interpretations.⁸⁶ The most recent suggestion proposes that for the Romans magic and libel were not mutually exclusive alternatives, but rather points of the same spectrum; it may have been, as well, that to the Romans of the mid-fifth century BCE magic and slander were variants of the same general action: that of malediction.⁸⁷

Different evidence from the second century BCE indicates that a number of prophylactic or apotropaic practices had already found a home in Roman Italy and included objects that in the Greek world at least had magical affiliations. One of the practices was the wearing of amulets to ward off evils and threats,⁸⁸ known to the Greeks as *περίαμματα* or *περίαπτα*.⁸⁹ Apart from protective qualities, amulets were also used to induce qualities like love, luck and prosperity, or to cure injuries and illnesses. Organic substances or less complicated compounds could have been used as amulets and they were often accompanied by prayers

⁸³ Elsewhere Horace used the phrase *mala carmina condere* (*Satire* 2.1.82: *si mala condiderit in quem quis carmina*) which is, more or less, the same expression Cicero employed in his citation (*Tusculan Disputations* 4.4: *condi iam tum solitum esse carmen*).

⁸⁴ E.g., FRAENKEL (1925) 195.

⁸⁵ E.g., CRAWFORD (1996) 679.

⁸⁶ E.g., PHARR (1932) 277-8; MASSONNEAU (1934) 136-50.

⁸⁷ RIVES (2002) 285-88; he also brings as an example the lack of a firm distinction between 'curse' and 'abuse' in several languages, including English. In English, the verb 'to curse' can mean both 'to consign to the powers of darkness' and 'to rail at or abuse', and even 'to utter profanities and obscenities'; he argues that there is a similar tendency in Latin as well to use the same terminology for both curses and abuse.

⁸⁸ The earliest mentioning of a Greek amulet is Pindar *Pythian* 3: while presenting Asclepius' medical methodology (consisting of incantations (*ἐπαιδαί*), drugs (*φάρμακα*), and surgical cuts (*τομαί*)), Pindar subdivided *φάρμακα* into ones that are drunk and ones attached to amulets (47-53). The *φάρμακα* attached as amulets and perhaps applied with an incantation are in a way similar to those employed by Autolycus' sons to stop the haemorrhaging of Odysseus' wound at *Odyssey* 19.457-59. It is not, however, until we have reached Plato's *Charmides* 155e that the first explicit reference to an amulet applied with an incantation appears. The earliest inscribed amulet attested by the archaeological evidence is a fourth century BCE Cretan amulet containing the famously tabooed *Ἐφέσια γράμματα*, a *terminus technicus* for 'magic formula'; cf. KOTANSKY (1991) 110-12. On *Ἐφέσια γράμματα* being inscribed on amulets, cf. Anaxilas, fr. 18 (Kassel-Austin) = Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner* 12.548c.

⁸⁹ On *περίαμματα*: cf. e.g., Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 5.64.7; Polybius *Histories* 33.17.3. On *περίαπτον*: cf. e.g., Plato *Republic* 4.426b; Plutarch *On the Face in the Moon* 920B. For a discussion of amulets, cf. TAVENER (1916) 76-105; OGDEN (1999) 51-54 and (2008) 129-38.

and incantations.⁹⁰ The Romans attributed the invention of amulets⁹¹ to Gaia Caecilia, wife of King Tarquin Priscus (the successor of Ancus Marcius), suggesting that the use of amulets in Italy goes back to Rome's prehistory.⁹² The most distinctive type of amulet, which might also exhibit traces of Punic and Egyptian influences, consisted of a roll of inscribed papyrus or gold and silver lamella which was then hung in a copper tube around the neck.⁹³ In the second century BCE Cato the Elder was aware of a primitive amulet and *cantio* in repairing a fractured bone.⁹⁴ Although Pliny identifies Cato's incantation with a magical *carmen* (*Cato prodidit luxatis membris carmen auxiliare*, 28.21), it remains uncertain whether the song had, in fact, something magical or mystical to it, or if it was merely meant to be understood as a medicinal treatment for fractured limbs. The ritualistic symbolism and practices, nevertheless, do suggest that the song was supposed to exercise some sort of 'homeopathic' magic.⁹⁵ Aside from Cato, a number of sources report that a prophylactic amulet called *bullā* was worn around the neck of noble newly-born Roman boys to protect them from physical ills and the influence of the evil eye.⁹⁶ In addition, protective amulets attached to dogs were said to be employed for hunting purposes,⁹⁷ whereas amulets attached to the sick were offered as thank-offerings in temples dedicated to *Febris*.⁹⁸ Overall, the references to amulets presented so far

⁹⁰ Cf. KOTANSKY (1991) 107.

⁹¹ Charisius the grammarian informs us that one of the terms designating an amulet in Latin was *amuletum* (*Art of Grammar* 1.105.9); this term, however, with the exception perhaps of Pliny the Elder (e.g., 23.20, 25.115), is not used by any of the Latin authors. The old Latin word was presumably *praebium*, as found in Naevius' *Stigmatias* (Ribbeck), although the more general term used may have been *remedium* (cf. e.g., Varro *On the Latin Language* 7.107). In the fifth century CE, Marcellus Empiricus had already replaced the term *amuletum* in his *On Medicine* with that of *phylacterium* (e.g., 8.27, 14.30) and *praeligamen* (e.g., 8.57-59, 29.26), suggesting that the term *amuletum* had already been outdated.

⁹² Cf. e.g., Festus *On the Significance of Verbs* s.v. '*praebia*': *praebia rursus Verrius vocari ait ea remedia, quae Gaia Caecilia, uxor Tarquini Prisci, invenisse existimatur, et inmiscuisse zonae suae [...] ea vocari ait praebia, quod mala prohibeant.*

⁹³ Cf. KOTANSKY (1991) 115-16. Inscribed gemstones also functioned as amulets, on which cf. *idem* (1994) xv-xvi.

⁹⁴ *On Agriculture* 160: *luxum si quod est, hac cantione sanum fiet: harundinem prende tibi viridem p(edes) IIII aut quinque longam, mediam diffinde, et duo homines teneant ad coxendices. incipe cantare [in alio s(ic) f(ertur): "moetas uaeta daries dardaries asiadarides una petes" usque dum coeant]: "moetas uaeta daries dardares astataries dissunapiter", usque dum coeant. ferrum insuper iactato. ubi coierint et altera alteram tetigerint, id manu prehende et dextera sinistra praecide; ad luxum aut ad fracturam alliga; sanum fiet. et tamen cotidie cantato [in alio s(ic) f(ertur) vel luxato vel hoc modo "huat hauat huat ista pista sista dannabo dannaustra"] et luxato vel hoc modo: "huat haut haut istasis tarsis ardannabou dannaustra".*

⁹⁵ For a discussion of Cato's *carmen*, cf. TUPET (1976) 169-71; GRAF (1997) 43-46.

⁹⁶ E.g., Plautus *The Rope* 1171; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.6.9-10. Pliny the Elder records that the *bullā* was first bestowed by Tarquin Priscus upon his son, who while still in his *toga praetexta* had killed a public enemy, and was thereafter used as a distinction mark for noble youths (33.10). The *bullā* was a small golden locket concealing the real amulet (cf. Porphyrio Σ.Horace *Satire* 1.5.65) which could have been either a lizard (Marcellus Empiricus *On Medicine* 8.50), a representation of a heart (Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.6.17), or a phallus (Pliny *Natural History* 28.39; Varro *On the Latin Language* 7.97).

⁹⁷ Grattius *On Hunting* 399-407.

⁹⁸ Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 2.5.6.

support the notion that magical apotropaic devices were in use far and wide not only in early Rome but also later, and there can be little doubt that people expert at creating and applying them would have existed, whom one could seek out to employ their services. One such person was an old woman encountered in Petronius' *Satyrica* 131 who purportedly was able to cure impotence by applying a kind of fertility amulet consisting of a twist of threads (*licium varii coloris filis*) around the neck of the lover,⁹⁹ while accompanying it with a small ritual that included marking the forehead with a mixture of spit and dust, singing a *carmen*, spitting and clasping charmed stones to one's bosom three times, and forcing the powers of the charm over the genital area.

Apart from amulets and the use of prophylactic magic, erotic magical practices were seemingly known to Romans of the second century BCE. A fragment from the pre-Neoteric poet Laevius (*flor.* 100/90 BCE) provides a description of witches(?) collecting all the necessary ingredients for what seems to be a love spell.¹⁰⁰ Laevius' fragment is quoted by Apuleius in his *Apology* whilst rejecting the accusations of having employed fish for arousing love by claiming that if his accusers had been familiar with their Virgil or Laevius, they would have surely known that different objects were in use for erotic magic (30). Laevius' fragment covers three types of ingredients used in magic philtres: firstly inanimate objects (*antipathes*, *trochiscili*, *ungues* and *taeniae*), secondly plants (*radiculae*, *herbae*, and *surculi*), and lastly animals (*saurae*).¹⁰¹ The variety of *termini technici* employed throughout does not merely imply the poet's familiarity with the paraphernalia of erotic magic, but also indicates that Roman poets of the late second century BCE had more than a passive knowledge of Greek love magic. One, however, ought to be cautious not to over-interpret the significance of Laevius' passage about the overall extent of the Romans' knowledge of love magic: it is a well-known fact that the pre-Neoterics and the Neoterics looked to Hellenistic literature for inspiration; and given that

⁹⁹ Interestingly, OGDEN suggests that this was meant to promote erotic asphyxiation (2008: 130).

¹⁰⁰ Laevius fr. 27 (Courtney): *philtrā omnia undique eruunt; | antipathes illud quaeritur, | trochiscili, ungues, taeniae, | radiculae, herbae, surculi, | saurāe inlices bicodulae, hin-/nientium dulcedines*. On Laevius, cf. COURTNEY (1993) 118-20.

¹⁰¹ *Antipathes* was an ingredient considered to arouse mutual feeling, probably a black stone as mentioned by Pliny 37.145 (cf. also pseudo-Lucian *Loves* 27: ἀντιπαθείς ἡδοναί); *trochiscili* were linked to the whirling of the magic wheel (on which cf. p. 255 n.155); *ungues*, like hair, formed part of the physical body (οὐσία) of the person towards whom the erotic spells was directed (cf. also p. 258 n.166); *taeniae* (magic ribbons and cords) are attested by Virgil *Eclogue* 8.64 and Propertius *Elegies* 3.6.30 as being employed in erotic rites (cf. also ABT (1908) 70-1); *radiculae*, *herbae*, and *surculi* are all associated with the production of φάρμακα and ῥιζοτομία (cf. ABT (1908) 108-9); *saurae* are often employed in various kinds of magical conduct and the production of philtres (cf. Theocritus *Idyll* 2.58 with scholion *ad loc.* (Ziegler); *DMP* XIII.23-24; also NOCK (1972)); whereas the *dulcedines hinnientium* refers to the ἵππομανές (cf. Aristotle *History of Animals* 572a8-13; also FARAONE (1999) 10). For these three types of substances in philtres, cf. TUPET (1986) 2626-47; for a good discussion of the fragment, cf. ABT (1908) 101-11.

the great majority of Hellenistic production is now lost, it is a challenging task to estimate or hypothesise accurately how much of love magic had been common knowledge in Rome at the time and how much was simply a product of an *imitatio graeca*. Laevius' passage, for instance, betrays some minor influences from Theocritus: would this imply that to an educated Roman audience the passage would have evoked associations of witchcraft and indigenous Roman love magic practices or would it simply be identified as a Theocritean intertext?

Judging from some direct and indirect allusions to magic from roughly the same period as Laevius, we can assume that the Roman poets were in fact somehow familiar with the concept of love magic. In a surviving fragment from his seventh book of *Satires* (apparently dealing with *erotodidaxis*) Lucilius appears to be discussing the adverse effects that age has on youth and the outer appearance of women(?), most probably uttered by a woman who might have been earning a living as a *saga* and a match-maker.¹⁰² The grammarian Nonius, who cites the Lucilian verse, comments that *saga* was a term applied to women who explored their lust for men and acted as match-makers in men's love affairs.¹⁰³ In order to corroborate his claim, Nonius cites a further verse from the comic poet Turpilius, a slightly older contemporary of Lucilius, whose character in the play *Boethuntes* states that he does not manage his love affairs by seeking help from a *saga* as is most usually done.¹⁰⁴ The word *saga*, common in both fragments, could designate a wise woman, a witch, or even both: in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, in particular, a *saga* has come to denote not merely a witch, but a witch of the highest order who, among other things, could suspend the earth, perform necromantic rites, bring down the gods, extinguish the stars, and, not least, illuminate ever gloomy Tartarus (1.8.4).¹⁰⁵ It does seem likely that a procuress could have passed as a sorceress and that the practice of magic—including love magic—was part of their professional skills in the Roman world; from what we can infer, this was also the case in the Hellenistic world, as the previous section has suggested: old women practising magic were apparently common in Hellenistic literature, and some of the magical tasks old women were said to perform in the larger Hellenistic world spanned from helping courtesans and curing sicknesses to creating apotropaic amulets and exorcising nightmares.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the question of how much of

¹⁰² Fr. 271 (Marx): *aetatem et faciem ut saga et bona conciliatrix*.

¹⁰³ *Abridged Doctrine* 23.1: *'sagae' mulieres dicuntur feminae ad lubidinem virorum indagatrices. unde et sagaces canes dicuntur, ferarum vel animalium quaesitores*.

¹⁰⁴ Turpillius fr. 6 (Rychlewska): *non ago hoc per sagam pretio conductam, ut vulgo solent*.

¹⁰⁵ On the semantic problems of the term *saga*, cf. chapter 1.2.3.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *supra* n.39-42.

these practices actively reflects common knowledge of magic and of magic workers in Rome or is merely a case of *imitatio et aemulatio* of Greek sources still remains. M. DICKIE has suggested that one ought to assume that such an association between *sagae* and *conciliatrices*, as implied by Lucilius and Turpillius, worked well beyond the literary level and must have been, in fact, a common phenomenon of everyday life.¹⁰⁷ It is, however, a fragment from the late second century BCE comic poet Lucius Afranius that is of particular interest to our discussion, since unlike the *comoediae palliatae* (adaptations from Greek New Comedy) of Plautus and Terence, Afranius wrote comedies within a Roman setting and with Roman characters (*comoedia togata*).¹⁰⁸ In his play *The Twin who Lived* (*Vopiscus*) one of the *personae dramatis* exclaims (unknown in what context) that if a man could be ensnared by means of bewitchment (*delenimenta*), every old woman would be able to find a lover; old women, however, lack three distinct qualities, three *venena*, that a beautiful young woman possesses in order to seduce a man: youth, a soft body, and a charming character.¹⁰⁹ Although Afranius' lines succinctly echo Menander's thoughts on love-philtres,¹¹⁰ the fact that we find a *comoedia togata* referring to enticements procured by love-philtres is a good enough indication to suppose that the practice of magical love philtres was known and used in the Roman world of Afranius' time. In conclusion, what these poets seem to suggest is that as early as the second century BCE love magic had not only found its rightful place in Rome, but had also acquired practitioners considered experts in the field: the *sagae* and the *conciliatrices*. These two types of magic workers would later be identified in Latin literature, especially in love elegy, with the figure of the *lena*.¹¹¹

4

A taxonomy of Imperial Roman witches

In the previous section it was maintained that the Italian people and the Romans in particular had come in contact with the Greek concept of magic from a fairly early stage, but it is rather unclear whether magic as a distinct category of thought *actually* meant anything to them or if it were simply one of the concepts eventually transferred to the Roman world

¹⁰⁷ DICKIE (2001) 132.

¹⁰⁸ On Roman comedy and the distinction between *palliata* and *togata*, cf. PANAYOTAKIS (2005).

¹⁰⁹ Fr. 20.378-82 (Ribbeck): *si possent homines delenimentis capi, / omnes haberent nunc amatores anus. / aetas et corpus tenerum et morigeratio, / haec sunt venena formosarum mulierum: / mala aetas nulla delenimenta invenit.*

¹¹⁰ Cf. fr. 794 (Kassel-Austin): *ἐν ἐστ' ἀληθές φίλτρον, εὐγνώμων τρόπος, / τούτῳ κατακρατεῖν ἀνδρὸς εἴωθεν γυνή.*

¹¹¹ On the *lena*, cf. MYERS (1996).

and naturalised by the Romans to fit their own ideas. As far as we can tell both from surviving early Latin literature and from various allusions of later writers, the first Roman Kings were thought to be experts in a number of magical practices; the Laws of the XII Tables prohibited the unlawful use of *venena* and *carmina* in bringing about damages to others' property or harming an individual's reputation in the fifth century; curse tablets and magical *defixiones* seem to have been in use since the third century; literary references to amulets begin to show up from the second century; whereas some evidence of love magic together with a variety of magical paraphernalia and individuals associated with its being practised seem to have been known to poets of the second century. But until the first fully extant witch portrayal comes into play in the second half of the first century BCE, this is the extent of our (unfortunately) skimpy knowledge of early Roman magic afforded both by Latin literature and any relevant material records.

However, the Roman witches who appear from the first century BCE onwards are a unique and mysterious paradox. Due to the extremely fragmentary state of early Latin literature, we cannot really tell if independent and extended witch portrayals had really appeared before our surviving depiction of the anonymous witch in Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, and if they had, then in what capacity. There is, of course, the figure of Medea who figured prominently in plays translated from Greek by Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius, but one does wonder if there had been any independent and/or indigenous witch portrayals which did not rely so much on Greek sources. At any rate, the fact remains that when our first witch portrayal appears with Virgil, the witch as a literary category of thought emerges fully grown. It is to the witches of Latin Imperial literature that I shall now turn my attention. In the following sections I will discuss the figure of the witch through a selection of representative cases, and by examining the most important characteristics of these caricature figures I will argue that Imperial witches shared far and wide a number of thematic similarities. In what follows the witches of Imperial Latin literature have been divided into two large thematic groups: group A, which I will conveniently term 'Greco-Roman witches', consists of witches who draw their inspiration from a variety of Greek sources and include the sub-categories of the amateur witch and the sorceresses-cum-goddesses of Greek myth; contrastingly, group B, which I will term 'native Roman witches', belongs exclusively to Roman literary imagination

and is comprised of the spiteful crone.¹¹² This constructed taxonomy, though not encountered by any ancient surviving authors, will facilitate the general discussion of these figures.

4.1. 'Greco-Roman' witches

4.1.1. The amateur witch

Ἔρος δηῦτέ μ' ὀ λυσιμέλης δόνει,
γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον.

Sappho fr.130 LP

The first type of witch to be encountered among Roman literary sources, also from a chronological point of view, is the amateur. Unlike the mythical witches who will be addressed in the following section, these women have no divine or extraordinary qualities or powers; they are merely mortal women who were under the impression that magic could deliver them from the desperate situation they were facing, which most commonly was identified with a love affair gone awry.¹¹³ Roman writers drew their inspirations for their amateur witches from Greek literature, the most important (and extant) representations being Theocritus' *Simaetha* and Apollonius of Rhodes' *Medea*.¹¹⁴

The earliest account of a witch portrayal and, consequently, of a magical ritual in Augustan poetry is afforded by Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, which this section focuses on.¹¹⁵ The general theme of the poem is a pastoral singing *certamen* between Damon and Alphesiboeus, but of particular interest for the present discussion is the second half of the poem (64-109), which has been modelled upon Theocritus' *Idyll* 2.¹¹⁶ The song of Alphesiboeus describes the erotic magical ritual (*magica sacra*) of an anonymous maiden of undisclosed social status¹¹⁷ in order to regain the love of her errant lover.¹¹⁸ The song consists of ten strophes separated each time

¹¹² A similar classification of witches is offered by CLAUSER (1993) 11-13. Some of Imperial witches' characteristics are offered by OGDEN (2009) 124-25 in a tabulated form. On the *lena*, cf. MYERS (1996).

¹¹³ Love magic is, perhaps, one of the oldest types of magic known to man, with references or allusions to it appearing in Greco-Roman sources as early as the Homeric poems; cf. Aphrodite's *κεστός ἰμάς* at *Iliad* 14.197-217 and the discussion at FARAONE (1990) 220-29 and (1999) 97-110. Bibliography on love magic is vast: above all, cf. FARAONE (1999); DICKIE (2000); FRANKFURTER (2014).

¹¹⁴ Famous literary amateur witches include Dido from Virgil's *Aeneid* 4 and Deianeira from Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*: the former turned to a magical ceremony after Aeneas abandoned her, whereas the latter became unwillingly the reason for Hercules' demise after she employed magical means.

¹¹⁵ For a discussion of the poem, cf. CLAUSEN (1994) 233-39. On the poem's magic, cf. TUPET (1976) 223-32; FARAONE (1989).

¹¹⁶ Cf. ROSE (1942) 139-61. On Virgil's indebtedness to Theocritus, cf. HEYWORTH (2005).

¹¹⁷ Cf. also the remarks on *Simaetha*'s debatable social status in section 2 of current chapter.

¹¹⁸ Though the maiden addresses the man as *coniux*, he was most probably not her real husband; this becomes all the more apparent when taking into consideration Servius' interpretation of the *Eclogue*'s scene which

by a refrain and alternates between a performance of a variety of ritualistic acts and the deployment of magical *carmina* and *venena*. C. FARAONE has suggested that the song is not a detailed ritualistic narrative, but, on the contrary, it is left to the readers to deduce the whole ceremony from the disjointed imperatives and incantations based on their knowledge of popular magic.¹¹⁹

Two of the *Eclogue's* strophes are especially important, since they represent the first ever extant Roman list of a witch's supernatural powers. This list is a key feature in all witch descriptions: almost every witch in Latin literature from Virgil onwards provides a list of ἀδύνατα which she allegedly is able to perform through the miraculous powers of her magic.¹²⁰ Though quite concise and less extravagant than many of the lists appearing later, Virgil's list still sets some of the most important details for all later portrayals of Roman witches. The first of the strophes underlines the power of magical *carmina* and their influence on both natural and supernatural forces: with the help of incantations the moon could be drawn down from the sky, Circe could transform Odysseus' companions into pigs, and poisonous snakes could immediately be eradicated from fields.¹²¹ The second strophe picks up on where the first left off and briefly discusses the magical effects of *venena*: with the help of potions one is capable of altering his physical appearance to that of a wolf, could summon the ghosts of the dead (ψυχαγωγία),¹²² and charm the crops out of one's fields.¹²³ Virgil's list and the feats he attributed to *carmina* and *venena* bring together elements from a variety of disparate sources. Circe's power of turning men into pigs and the practice of summoning the spirits of the dead are episodes originating from the Homeric *Odyssey*;¹²⁴ the rest of the features betray Greek and native Italian origins: drawing down the moon is a famous trick ascribed to the witches of Thessaly,¹²⁵ exploding snakes by means of charms or incantations was ascribed to the Italian

was based on Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 (Σ. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.66: *apud Theocritum non coniugis, sed alieni adulescentuli persona subest, sicut supra dictum est*; cf. also *ibid.* 8.18: '*coniugis*': *non quae erat, sed quae fore sperabatur*).

¹¹⁹ FARAONE (1989) 296.

¹²⁰ Such lists do not generally appear in any Greek witch descriptions, with the exception, perhaps, of the small list recounted in Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.528-33: κούρη τις μεγάροισιν ἐνιτρέφετ' Αἰήταο, / τὴν Ἐκάτη περίαλλα θεὰ δάε τεχνήσασθαι / φάρμαχ' ὄσ' ἠπειρός τε φύει καὶ νήχυτον ὕδωρ / τοῖσι καὶ ἀκαμάτοιο πυρός μελίσσειτ' αὐτμήν / καὶ ποταμοὺς ἴστησιν ἄφαρ κελαδεινὰ ῥέοντας, / ἄστρα τε καὶ μήνης ἱεράς ἐπέδησε κελεύθους. On these lists cf. the discussion at CLAUSER (1993) 16-21.

¹²¹ 8.69-71: *carmina vel caelo possunt deducere lunam, / carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulixi, / frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis*.

¹²² On the practices of ψυχαγωγία and νεκρομαντεία, cf. STAMATOPOULOS (2017), and also chapter 5.

¹²³ 8.95-99: *has herbas atque haec Ponto mihi lecta venena / ipse dedit Moeris (nascuntur plurima Ponto); / his ego saepe lupum fieri et se condere silvis / Moerim, saepe animas imis excire sepulcris, / atque satas alio vidi traducere messis*.

¹²⁴ Circe's potion with which she transforms humans into animals has been treated as a perverse form of a love charm, on which cf. PAGE (1973) 51-69; FARAONE (1999) 6.

¹²⁵ On the practice of drawing down the moon, cf. HILL (1973).

Marsi,¹²⁶ whereas prohibitions against the charming of crops are already attested in the Laws of the XII Tables discussed previously. The ability of witchcraft to influence emotions (in itself quite ironic considering that this is what the maiden was hoping to achieve with her magical ritual in the *Eclogue*) and the performance of unimaginable feats (ἄδύνατα), whose main purpose was to highlight the wide range of a witch's powers, are two conspicuous exclusions from Virgil's catalogue, which were destined to become a permanent *locus* of many subsequent lists. Although absent from the *Eclogue*, these feats are included when Virgil returns once more to the subject of witchcraft in the *Aeneid*, influenced this time by the extravagant lists which had appeared, among others, in the poems of Horace and love elegy: in her description of the powers of a Massylian priestess, Dido enumerated a few of the ἄδύνατα the woman was capable of performing, such as making running water stand still, turning the stars backwards, rousing the dead from their graves, making the earth tremble, and forcing the trees to descend from mountains.¹²⁷

To come back to the *Eclogue*, Virgil's magical ritual consists mainly of two parts: the first contains the wish formula with which the woman explicitly expresses what she hopes to achieve (*coniugis ut magicis sanos avertere sacris / experiar sensus*; 66-67), whereas the second comprises three significant acts that make use of the formula *similia similibus* or 'persuasive analogy'¹²⁸, during which the actual rite is enacted: (i) three threads are tied around the effigy of the man to represent his ritualistic binding (*terna tibi haec primum triplici diversa colore / licia circumdo*, 73-74); (ii) three knots are woven to symbolise the unbreakable bonds of love with which the woman and her lover will be tied up in (*necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli, colores; / necte, Amarylli, modo et Veneris' dic 'vincula necto'*, 77-78);¹²⁹ and finally, (iii) the

¹²⁶ Cf. also Lucilius fr. 575-76 (Marx); Ovid *Cosmetics* 39.

¹²⁷ 4.487-91: *haec se carminibus promittit solvere mentes / quas velit, ast aliis duras immittere curas, / sistere aquam fluvii et vertere sidera retro, / nocturnosque movet Manis: mugire videbis / sub pedibus terram et descendere montibus ornos.*

¹²⁸ On TAMBIAH's concept of 'persuasive analogy', cf. chapter 1.2.1.

¹²⁹ Cf. also love's 'inescapable bonds' at Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 2.5.6 (*pedicis aeternis alligat*), *SM* 45.44-45 (καὶ καταδήσατε αὐτὴν δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις, ἰσχυροῦς, ἀδαμαντίνους πρὸς φιλίαν ἐμοῦ, Θέωνος), *DT* 252.26-27 (δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις αἰωνίοις ἰσχυροῖς ἀδαμαντίνους), 253.36-37, 47-48 (exact same phrase as in *DT* 252); also BRASHEAR (1992) 85 for a fourth century CE ἀγωγή employing δεσμὰ ἄλυτα to bind Fate (Μοίρα) and Necessity (Ἀνάγκη). SEELINGER has noticed that the knot constitutes the most obvious expression of the principle of binding, since by its very nature the knot is the end result of the binding process (1981: 34). On the significance of knots in magical bindings and the concept of 'twistedness', cf. *idem* 34-6; also OGDEN (1999) 29-30. The use of knots in magical practices can be attested as early as the first millennium BCE, whereby a cuneiform tablet prescribed a recipe for a ritual, the purpose of which was to alleviate (if not entirely inhibit) a husband's anger against his wife. In order for the spell to work, the woman ought to tie into fourteen knots while reciting a magical formula the tendons of a gazelle and a hemp with some red wool and then wear the knotted cord around her waist (this bears some distant affinities with Aphrodite's κέστος ἱμάς from *Iliad* 14.214-17). If the woman

hardening of the clay and melting of the wax signifies by means of persuasive analogy again Daphnis' melting with love for the woman (*limus ut hic durescit, et haec ut cera liquescit | uno eodemque igni, sic nostro Daphnis amore*, 80-81).¹³⁰

The rite is identified as a combination of two well-known erotic magical practices: a ritualistic binding (*defixio*, κατάδεσμος or κατάδεσις), and an attraction spell (ἀγωγή). A *defixio* was a spell written, primarily, on thin pieces of lead (therefore, also known as lead curses or curse tablets, although other materials were known to be used, like ostraca, shells, pottery bowls, gemstones, papyri rolls, or wax), which were then rolled up and pierced with a bronze or iron nail and deposited in a variety of places, ranging from the graves of the untimely dead (ἄωροι) and sanctuaries of Underworld deities¹³¹ to underground bodies of water,¹³² or places in which the intended victims lived. The initial function of these spells was to impose constraints on an opponent but from the fourth century BCE they were also employed in harming enemies, or in winning the affections of a potential lover.¹³³ The *Eclogue's* binding spell, however, is rather atypical in nature, since no lead tablet is employed during the rite; but the spell's intended function is overall the same: the abandoned woman wishes to 'bind down' her lover.

Aside from binding the wayward lover, the ritual seeks to inflict on the perfidious Daphnis, by means of persuasive analogy as emphasised by the translingual word-play, the same fiery desire currently afflicting the woman (*Daphnis me malus urit, ego hanc in Daphnide laurum*, 83). This characteristic is typical of the erotic attraction spell known as ἀγωγή, whose intention was to burn, torture and discomfort the victims, eventually driving them away from

followed the instructions to the letter, she would then be loved again by her husband. On this spell, and others similar to it, referred to in Assyrian tradition as *egalkura*, cf. FARAONE (1999) 101-02.

¹³⁰ This final act poses some interpretive difficulties. Based on an analogous passage from Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 (ὡς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω, / ὡς τάκωιθ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος ἀτύκκα Δέλφεις, 28-29) a number of modern critics understood *limus* and *cera* either as referring to clay and wax effigies in the shape of Daphnis, or simply as small cubes of clay and wax which were destined to be delivered to the fiery altar. In any case, both the 'hardening of the clay' and the 'melting of the wax' were perceived as having Daphnis as their primary recipient. On the contrary, a different interpretation was advanced by the ancient commentator Servius, who suggested that *limus* must have referred to an (implied) effigy resembling the maiden, signifying thus her hardening towards her lover on the one hand, and her sexual endeavours on the other, whereas *cera* referring to one resembling Daphnis, indicating his softness and desire to melt with love for her (Σ. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.80). This view has been adopted by ROSE (1942) 157, 250-51, and FARAONE (1989), who also supplies further examples.

¹³¹ Cf. JORDAN (1980) for a list of binding spells related to Underworld deities.

¹³² Cf. e.g., FOX (1912); JORDAN (1980) and (1985b).

¹³³ AUDOLLENT (1904) classified the various *defixiones* in five big groups: (i) judicial spells; (ii) erotic spells; (iii) agonistic spells; (iv) spells against thieves; (v) spells against economic competitors. A slightly more concise regrouping has been offered by FARAONE (1991a) 10. On the nature and function of binding spells, cf. FARAONE (1991a); GAGER (1992) 3-41; GRAF (1997) 118-174; OGDEN (1999); COLLINS (2008a) 64-103.

their homes and leading them (ἄγειν) directly to the practitioner.¹³⁴ This ‘leading’ aspect of the spell is indicated twice in the woman’s ritual: once with the use of the verb *ducere* in the repetitive *versus intercalaris* (*ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnin*), but also by burying parts of Daphnis’ clothes under the threshold of her house,¹³⁵ thus representing in terms of persuasive analogy her lover’s imminent return. The one peculiarity of this spell lies in the fact that this form of erotic magic was practised in antiquity most often by men and not women, as can be attested from the plethora of such spells in the Greek Magical Papyri.¹³⁶ Virgil, therefore, appears to be reversing the gender roles and, on the one hand, masculinises the woman by depicting her as engaging in sexual pursuit, while, on the other, presents Daphnis as being the passive and ‘female’ object of the woman’s ‘masculine’ sexual desire. Witches, in general, are driven by an abnormal passion for the body and bodily lust: from Homer’s Circe to Theocritus’ Simaetha, and from the crones of Horace to the witches of Apuleius witches are all driven by their sexual desires and in doing so, invert the preconceived ‘natural’ order by transcending the limits of their natural genders.¹³⁷ This aspect of gender reversal and of women engaging in masculine sexual pursuit will come more into relief when discussing the third type of witches, the crone.

4.1.2. The sorceresses-cum-goddesses of Greek mythology

*Heav'n has no rage, like love to hatred turn'd,
nor Hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd.*

William Congreve *The mourning Bride*

The second type under discussion consists of the great sorceresses-cum-goddesses of the Greek mythical past, women of godly ancestry originating from the farther corners of the known world. Among the pioneers of this group are naturally Circe and Medea, whom the Roman poets also adopted from Greek sources. The two sorceresses had acquired a uniquely

¹³⁴ On the erotic ἀγωγά, cf. further the discussion at chapter 6.4.1.

¹³⁵ Such erotic spells, buried at the doorways of potential victims, are attested all the way back to the tenth century BCE from Mesopotamian cuneiform sources. One recipe in particular, written in Akkado-Sumerian language, suggests that if a man wished to win the affections of a woman, he ought to create the woman’s figurine and bury it at the city gate and should recite three times the incantation “the beautiful woman has brought forth love” as the woman walks over the spot where the effigy has been buried. If everything is performed according to the recipe, then the woman will be magically led to the magician’s house and he will be able to make love to her; on this spell, cf. LEICK (1994) 202-03.

¹³⁶ On this aspect, cf. GRAF (1997) 185-86; see also the cases cited in chapter 6 n.106, where it is most often the male subject casting erotic attraction spells on the female object.

¹³⁷ Cf. also SPAETH (2014) 45.

prominent status in the literary witch tradition, and it is therefore not surprising that given their reputation for being powerful Greek witches, they often featured as imperative models for later literary witches.¹³⁸ By the first century BCE, Circe and especially Medea had become a synonym for ruinous and nefarious magic. Yet, despite being Western literature's first 'wicked witch', Circe did not share the same prominence among the Romans as Medea. The Romans found Medea's character and story more abhorrent albeit captivating, thus raising her to the status of 'archetypal evil witch': she is the 'barbarian' who betrayed her father for Jason, helped the latter steal the Golden Fleece and then escaped with him to Iolcus, murdered her brother Apsyrtus in the process, convinced the daughters of Pelias to kill their usurper father in a supposed rejuvenation ritual, and in the end slaughtered her own children to spite Jason for marrying another woman.¹³⁹ As it will become apparent later when discussing Erichtho, the standards of cultured behaviour and civilisation do not seem to apply to Medea.¹⁴⁰ It should then come as no surprise that Medea's career was exploited in various ways within the pages of Roman writers. Though some obscure parts of the Circe saga were treated peripherally by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (14.1-74, 248-415), Medea attracted a larger number of poets: we know for certain that not only was the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes translated during the mid-first century CE in Latin by Varro Attacinus,¹⁴¹ but also that Medea was the central theme of plays written (or translated from Greek) by famous early Roman poets, such as Ennius, whose *Medea Exiled* appears to be a reproduction and in some sections a faithful translation, of Euripides' homonymous play, Pacuvius, and Accius.¹⁴² Of all these sources treating the Medea myth, only the works of Ovid, Seneca, and Valerius Flaccus are wholly extant.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ For example, many of the activities the amateur witches or the crones engage in are compared to those of their mythical counterparts; cf. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.70; Horace *Epodes* 5, 61-68; Petronius *Satyrica* 134.12.11-12.

¹³⁹ For the narrative of Medea's career, cf. (primarily Greek sources) Hesiod *Theogony* 956-62, 992-1002; Pindar *Pythian* 4; Euripides *Medea*; Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3-4; Apollodorus *Library* 1.9.23-8; also (in fragmentary state) *Returns* fr. 6 (West); Eumelus *Corinthiaca* frs 17, 20, 23 (West); *Naupactia* fr. 6-9 (West); Callimachus *Hecale* frs 4, 7 (Hollis). Bibliography on Medea is vast; selectively cf. CLAUSS & JOHNSTON (1997); MASTRONARDE (2002); BAERTSCHI & FÖGEN (2006) 228-36; GRIFFITHS (2006); OGDEN (2008) 27-35; for further bibliography, cf. OGDEN (2009) 345.

¹⁴⁰ On this aspect, cf. GORDON (1987b) 80-82.

¹⁴¹ Cf. also chapter 1.2.3.

¹⁴² Ennius: *Medea Exiled* fr. 1-10 (RIBBECK (1897) 49-57), *Medea* (RIBBECK (1897) 57). Pacuvius: *Medus* fr. 1-24 (RIBBECK (1897) 118-23). Accius *Medea* fr. 1-17 (RIBBECK (1897) 216-20). For a discussion of the Medea myth in Roman plays, cf. ARCELLASCHI (1990).

¹⁴³ Roman writers drew upon the Medea image in portrayals of other practitioners of witchcraft as well; for example, Virgil based his treatment of Dido in *Aeneid* 4 on the representation of Medea in both Euripides and Apollonius of Rhodes (cf. COLLARD (1975)), whereas Seneca followed closely in his portrayal of Deianeira in the *Hercules Oetaeus* (cf. DAVIES (1989) 469-73).

Ovid was the first Roman author to present us with an extant treatment of Medea. As far as it can be inferred, he was well acquainted with the Medea-myth from both Greek and early Roman sources,¹⁴⁴ and he came back to the theme of the sorceress several times during his writing career; Ovid was even credited with the production of a *Medea* play, which was highly esteemed by his peers if later comments are any indication.¹⁴⁵ Medea and the events surrounding her person are the themes of two of Ovid's *Heroines*.¹⁴⁶ The common material, as well as the mutual addressee and the number of very specific incidents related therein, allow the two epistles to be treated as a sort of intertextual diptych. *Heroines* 12 contains a fictional epistle sent by Medea to Jason, where the latter's betrayal is contemplated.¹⁴⁷ Her epistle is an inventive monologue, a self-aware *apologia pro vita sua* one could say, during which the tortured sorceress reflects on her present misery by looking back on her various deeds, starting from the moment she first set her eyes on Jason in Colchis to the moment of her abandonment in Corinth.¹⁴⁸ *Heroines* 6, on the other hand, touches upon the Medea myth from the vantage point of Hypsipyle, queen of Lemnos:¹⁴⁹ Hypsipyle sends her epistle to Jason after she has come to know of the expedition's success, Jason's return to Thessaly, and his marriage to Medea.

In both poems references are made to Medea's *ars magica* and a list of the Colchian witch's extraordinary powers is provided. In *Heroines* 12 Medea lists all the possible ways in which Jason had been profited by her in the past: she was the one who gave him the powerful *medicamina* under whose protection he had successfully performed Aeetes' demanding tasks, and it was she, in the end, who drew the ever vigilant serpent into a *medicatus somnus* with the power of her magic (97-108). Medea, however, acknowledges in retrospect that even though her magic was capable in the past of subduing even the mighty sleepless dragon, it

¹⁴⁴ Cf. HEINZE (1997) 3-11.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. e.g., Tacitus *Dialogue on Oratory* 12.5; Quintilian *Orator's Education* 10.1.98. On this play, cf. HEINZE (1997) 223-52.

¹⁴⁶ On the *Heroines*, cf. KNOX (1995) 5-34; FULKERSON (2005) 1-22.

¹⁴⁷ The time during which the narrative takes place can be estimated to shortly before the events of Euripides' – and perhaps Ovid's? – *Medea* took place. Depending on whether Ovid's *Medea* had any thematic similarity to that of Euripides and dealt with her stay at Corinth, the infanticide, and perhaps her flight to Athens, the epistle might have served as an intertextual *avant-propos* to the play, which has generally been assumed to predate, but only slightly, *Heroines* 12. On dating Ovid's early works, and in particular the *Heroines* and the *Medea*, cf. JACOBSON (1974) 300-18; HEINZE (1997) 21-24.

¹⁴⁸ The Medea of *Heroines* 12 is an ingenious combination of Apollonius' Medea, the modest and innocent *puella* who falls desperately in love with Jason, with that of Euripides, the villainous fratricide and murderer of her own children. RICHARDSON states it is as if "Ovid recreates Apollonius' Medea in terms of the Euripidean Medea" (1974: 119).

¹⁴⁹ The story of the Lemnian women had been reported in detail in Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 1.559-909, and Ovid was apparently well acquainted with this version of the tale.

has now been rendered ineffective when it comes to *affaires de cœur*. Neither her *cantus*, nor the *herbae*, nor the *artes*, nor her patron goddess Hecate could influence Jason's love for her any more (163-72). A slightly more expanded list is recounted in *Heroines* 6 when Hypsipyle launches an attack on her rival by recounting one by one the deplorable habits and powers of her witchcraft. This particular list seems to draw more on Apollonius of Rhodes, whose version of Medea in the *Argonautica* wields powers from herbs and drugs, searches for magical ingredients among the dead, invokes Hecate, and raises the dead with her incantations.¹⁵⁰ First on Hypsipyle's list comes the accusation of Medea's involvement with spells, incantations, and *venena*. Due to her potent drugs, Jason has not been in his right mind; he is in love with Medea only because her *carmina* and *pabula* have compelled him to find her attractive (83-84, 97-98). What Hypsipyle adds to Medea's list from *Heroines* 12 is the ability to perform *ἀδύνατα*, thus reducing the natural cosmos to utmost chaos: she reverses the natural course of the moon and makes the sun eclipse, defies gravity by stopping the running waters and halting the momentum of rivers, animates trees and rocks, and dislodges forests and mountains from their proper homes (85-88). There are references to Medea's infernal activities too: Hypsipyle portrays Medea vividly as making her way through cemeteries in the dead of night, her hair loosened, in search of ingredients for her magic; her audacity does not even stop her from desecrating corpses whose bones only recently had been taken down from funeral pyres. As if that were not enough, she also curses and uses voodoo dolls made of wax to inflict torture or untimely death on her victims (89-92).

Similar powers are ascribed to Medea in the seventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid relays her entire story in a rather concise and selective manner. This time, however, Medea is depicted in less flattering terms. If the Medea of *Heroines* 12 managed somehow to arouse sympathy from the audience and take Medea's side against Jason, in the *Metamorphoses* Medea has been stripped of her humanity, and her barbarian, brutal semi-divine nature is brought more to the forefront. The Medea of the *Metamorphoses* resembles in many ways the barbarous Medea that emerges towards the end of Euripides' play: by severing the last remaining bonds that still attached her to Jason (i.e. her children), Medea in a way 'killed off' the last part of humanity that remained in her, hence allowing her to ultimately embrace her divine nature to the fullest. In the exodus she appeared like a goddess on her winged chariot, spoke to Jason with disdain and arrogance like a goddess would to a

¹⁵⁰ Cf. e.g., 4.51, 1665-66, 1672.

human, prophesied like a *dea ex machina*, and in the end flew into the skies like one of the gods. In essence, in Euripides' tragedy the 'mortal' Medea 'died' the day her children perished, whereas the 'divine' Medea rose the exact moment the human Medea fell. This is the type of Medea which Ovid portrays in the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁵¹ The first episode which attracts his attention is the beginning of Medea's love for Jason, who after having acquired the Golden Fleece with her help, sets off to Thessaly (1-158). The narrative pace is then momentarily slowed down; entreated by Jason, Medea performs an elaborate rejuvenation ritual for Jason's dying father (159-293). Dressed in robes, feet bare, hair unbound, and companionless, Medea wanders the fields in the dead of night seeking out the ingredients required for her ritual. It is only while praying to Night, Earth and Hecate that she is encountered enumerating for the first time *ipsa voce* a list of all her miraculous powers. She relates how magic had helped her in the recent past perform a variety of ἀδύνατα: she had made streams run back to their fountain-heads, laid the swollen seas and stirred up the calm waters, driven away and brought on clouds, dispelled and summoned winds, uprooted rocks and trees from their soil, moved forests, shook mountains, made the earth tremble, called forth ghosts from the Underworld, drew down the moon, and turned Helios and Aurora pale at the mere sight of her poisons (192-209). The *Metamorphoses* list follows in general the same pattern instigated by Virgil and taken up by Ovid in his previous depictions of the sorceress, but it has now been increased out of proportion with a great deal of exaggeration, and it is in this form that it will be encountered in later witch depictions. Aeson's rejuvenation, however, only acts as a precursor of what is about to ensue: Medea perverts normal filial devotion and tricks the Peliades into murdering their usurper father by taking advantage of their piety and dedication to their father (294-349). The narrative is concluded with Medea first escaping to Corinth, where she wreaks havoc on the royal house and slays her own children in the process, and then to Athens, where she attempts to poison Theseus. As soon as her murderous endeavour has been thwarted, Medea disappears while being engulfed by a dark misty cloud, and so Ovid brings to an end the witch's career (350-403).

Medea's superhuman character is further brought into relief in Seneca's homonymous drama which, akin to its Euripidean version, dealt with the witch's last day in Corinth until the murder of her children. But different from the more humane version of Medea in Euripides' play, who ultimately achieves some sympathy from the chorus for the misfortunes

¹⁵¹ Cf. also the discussion at NEWLANDS (1997).

that had befallen her, Seneca's Medea is from the outset larger than life and left all alone: not only is the chorus in alignment with the royal house of Corinth and Jason, who in Seneca's rendition of the story is cast as the 'good' and sensible husband apparently having Medea's best interest at heart,¹⁵² but there is also no Aegeus to offer her any possible escape after her murderous plan is set in motion. Instead, Seneca chose to emphasise Medea's ruinous erotic desire and her dreadful divine nature that is capable of surrendering the nature environment in chaos (*effera ignota horrida / tremebunda caelo pariter ac terris mala / mens intus agitat*, 45-47).¹⁵³

The middle part of the play is dedicated to an elaborate and exaggerated magical rite during which Medea bewitches the robe she will soon send to Jason's new wife with her magical *venena*. It is in this scene that Medea's witchery powers are fully disclosed, revealing not only Seneca's indebtedness to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,¹⁵⁴ but also that much of the material Seneca drew upon had already become *topoi* in witch descriptions. Medea begins by collecting the ingredients necessary for her magical potion: first she summons a number of poisonous snakes to extract their venom and when she is not content with earthly serpents, she reaches into the heavens to collect poisons from the constellations Draco and Ophiucus; she even summons the slain Hydra and the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece for help (670-704). She then throws into the concoction an assortment of deadly herbs collected from one corner of the world to the other (705-30), to which the body parts of ominous animals are also added (731-39). The ritual's preparatory stage is recounted in a sort of messenger's speech by the nurse, but then Medea enters on stage invoking her patron goddess Hecate, the infernal gods and the ghosts of the Underworld, including threatening Night with her evil face, to all stand by her side as she sings her magical incantation. During her rite, Seneca has Medea recount her witchcraft list, which is not all too different from the lists encountered previously, exposing thus the wide range of her world-disrupting powers: her magic is capable of calling forth rain from dry clouds and making the winds stand still, driving back the seas and sending waves crushing inland, bringing the sun and stars together or halting the movement of heavenly bodies, changing the seasons, and turning rivers backwards (752-70). She concludes her rituals by making a variety of offerings to Hecate, including her own blood (771-86), and then applies the poisons to the gifts which are meant to bring about Creusa's untimely demise.

¹⁵² He is therefore not the ambitious opportunist of Pindar, Euripides, or even Apollonius of Rhodes' versions, on which cf. STRATTON (2007) 88.

¹⁵³ Cf. NUSSBAUM (1997).

¹⁵⁴ On which cf. the discussion at CLEASBY (1907); also BOYLE (2014) 296-97.

Overall, Seneca's Medea, by following closely in the footsteps of Ovid's depiction of the powerful sorceress in his *Metamorphoses*, becomes a reincarnation of evil and the personification of the destructive force of witchcraft. Not only is Medea portrayed in the vilest of terms, but also as a brutal and inhumane force of nature, who takes unnatural pleasure in her murderous crimes and shows no hesitation in bringing about death and misery in every possible way (*iuvat, iuvat rapuisse fraternum caput; | artus iuvat secuisse et arcano patrem | spoliasse sacro, iuvat in exitium senis | armasse natas*, 911-14). In many ways Seneca's Medea is only second to his nephew's portrayal of Latin literature's most terrifying witch, the crone Erichtho.

4.2. Native Roman witches: The crone

*The ditch is made, and our nails the spade,
with pictures full, of wax and of wool;
their livers I stick, with needles quick;
there lacks but the blood, to make up the flood.
Quickly, Dame, then bring your part in,
spur, spur upon little Martin,
merrily, merrily, make him fail,
a worm in his mouth, and a thorn in his tail,
fire above, and fire below,
with a whip in your hand, to make him go.
O, now she's come!
Let all be dumb.*

Ben Jonson, *Masque of Queens*

The third and final category of witch, which is also the most popular in Latin literature, belongs exclusively to Roman imagination. Crones are usually depicted as loathsome with age and hideous mortal women who practise witchcraft as a way of living. Different from the witches of the previous section who belong to the sphere of mythology, these horrifying women are presented as part of the contemporary world and could be historical figures, thus posing a 'real' threat and exciting 'real' fears.¹⁵⁵ They are part of neither the high society, nor of the lowest strata, but occupy the more degraded regions of the public domain. Although there are some scanty references in Greek literature to old women casting spells (Theocritus' Simaetha, for instance, openly reveals that she had previously consulted old women (γραιῶν) in hopes of regaining Delphis' affections (2.89-90)), it was nonetheless

¹⁵⁵ Cf. e.g., SPAETH (2014) 51.

among the Romans during the first century BCE that the crone received treatment as a fully developed literary character.¹⁵⁶

4.2.1. The serio-comical Canidia

Although Virgil's *Eclogue* 8 paved the way, at least on a literary level, for portraying desperate women engaging in erotic magic, it was, however, Horace and the depiction of magic working in his poetic *œuvre* that advanced magic to a whole different level. With the exception of Erichtho, who will receive special treatment soon, not only is Canidia the second indigenous witch of Latin literature well-known for her notoriety, but it was also she who was destined to grow into a literary 'archetype' for all later interpretations of bawdy witches in Imperial literature.¹⁵⁷ Over the centuries there has been abundant speculation on Canidia's historical identity: was she an actual person or simply a figment of Horace's writing *stilus*? Opinions are divided. The ancient scholiast Porphyrio suggested that Canidia was only a pseudonymic cover-up for a certain Neapolitan perfumer named Gratidia, whom Horace accused of witchcraft and ridiculed in his work; taking into account that defamatory poetry was illegal, Horace must have substituted the real name with one that looked quite similar.¹⁵⁸ Alternatively, there are critics assuming Canidia to be an entirely fictive character with an ambivalent hidden symbolism, because her name, like many others in Horace's poetry, is a significant one. Some have associated her with animals, such as the goose ($\chi\gamma\eta\nu > ch\bar{e}n > Canidia$), often considered a bird of sexual promiscuity,¹⁵⁹ or the dog ($canis > Cani-dia$), therefore also associated with the sexual heat of the Dog Star Canicula.¹⁶⁰ Others have proposed that the witch's name either points towards her old age and superannuated appearance ($cani-ties > Cani-dia$), thus representing, in a metaphorical way, Rome's *senectus*,¹⁶¹ or is a witty allusion to the general Canidius Crassus, executed by Octavian after his victory at Actium.¹⁶² On a more

¹⁵⁶ However, the image of the frightening crone with otherworldly powers can be found cross-culturally, on which cf. WIDDOWSON (1973). STRATTON (2014b) discusses the crones of Roman literature in terms of Julia Kristeva's concept of the 'abject'.

¹⁵⁷ On the literary Canidia, cf. MANNING (1970); TUPET (1976) 284-329; WATSON (1993) and (2003) 135-36, 174-250, 266-86; MANKIN (1995) 299-301; DICKIE (2001) 178-81. On her literary precedents, cf. MANNING (1970) 396-99; OGDEN (2008) 50. For an analysis of her magical practices, cf. INGALINA (1974), esp. 75-177.

¹⁵⁸ Σ.Horace *Epodes* 3.7-8; cf. also DICKIE (2001) 180-01.

¹⁵⁹ MANKIN (1995) 300.

¹⁶⁰ OLIENSIS (1991) and (1998) 68-90. By taking into consideration the connection of the witch's name to *canis* MANKIN has detected a further implicit association of Canidia with "the furiously "dogged" genre of *iambus*" (2010: 100).

¹⁶¹ ANDERSON (1972).

¹⁶² It has also been suggested that the witches of the *Satire* could potentially stand for the Pompeian party, and may refer especially to Nigidius Figulus (prosecuted for necromancy) and Canidius Crassus; cf. DUQUESNAY (1984) 38-39; NISBET (1984) 9.

far-fetched level, it has been advocated that Canidia could stand for Rome, a woman who seduces her lovers but simultaneously fills them with revulsion for their fellow citizens and, ultimately, for her.¹⁶³

Canidia haunts extensively three of Horace's poems (*Satire* 1.8, *Epodes* 5 and 17), whilst also making guest appearances or being hinted at in at least a further six in her capacity as *venefica*.¹⁶⁴ The story of *Satire* 1.8 is narrated by a fig-wood statue of the ithyphallic god Priapus, who was placed as a warden in Maecenas' newly constructed gardens on the Esquiline Hill.¹⁶⁵ Gardens are commonly perceived as a sexual metaphor signalling the female genital area, and so Priapus, a god of fertility with an oversized phallus, seems to be the perfect candidate to act as protector of the *pudendum muliebre*. Furthermore, Priapus was a figure associated with uncouth humour, and so his presence in the *Satire* should be an indicator for the reader that what is about to take place should not be taken too seriously.¹⁶⁶ His appointed task in the poem is to guard the area from thieves and birds. Yet the gardens share a dark secret: in former times the territory served as a cemetery for the poor and the wretched, whose bones are still lying exposed. It is also reported that destructive mind altering herbs (*herbae nocentes*) grow on the cemetery grounds.

On one occasion Priapus recalls witnessing Canidia and her fellow witch Sagana visiting the area by moonlight in search of human remains and in order to perform a variety of magical rites. Through Priapus' narrative, the reader is allowed a few glimpses of their witchery activities, thus reciting, in a way, a witchcraft list. The two witches are hideous, and their faces have a hellish pallor; they enter the park barefoot, scrape the ground with their bare hands, tear apart a lamb with their teeth, and use the blood to summon the ghosts for what appears to be a necromantic séance (23-29). The necromantic consultation is swiftly abandoned for other aims and the witches perform next erotic attraction spells¹⁶⁷ with the help of woollen and waxen dolls (30-33).¹⁶⁸ Similar to the ritual in Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, Canidia's

¹⁶³ MANKIN (1995) 301. For several more interpretations, cf. SITAIOI (1981) 1704-07; WATSON (2003) 174-90.

¹⁶⁴ *Epode* 3.7-8, *Satire* 2.1.48, 8.95; possibly also at *Epodes* 8, 12 and *Odes* 1.16. On Canidia's appearance in *Satire* 2.8, cf. FREUDENBURG (1995).

¹⁶⁵ On the gardens of Maecenas, cf. HÄUBER (1990). For a brief discussion of *Satire* 1.8, cf. FRAENKEL (1957) 121-24; ANDERSON (1972); GOWERS (2012) 263-65.

¹⁶⁶ On the use of sexual humour embedded in Roman satire, cf. RICHLIN (1983) 57-80.

¹⁶⁷ For a similar case of necromantic-cum-erotic attraction magic, cf. Lucian *Lover of Lies* 13-15.

¹⁶⁸ The use of voodoo figurines, known as *κολοσσοί*, in magical rituals was ubiquitous in antiquity. They were usually made out of lead, clay, or wax, and the practice of binding and burying such dolls in hopes of binding one's enemies was merely one aspect of the wider gamut of defensive magical rituals used in the ancient world. Dolls, especially in pairs, were common in erotic magic (cf. e.g., *PGM* 4.296-303). Sometimes their conformation expressed the act of compulsion, and sometimes it could express the desired result with the two dolls bound together in a tight embrace. Wax effigies are commonly mentioned and often symbolically

magical rite reverses traditional gender roles, since it is reasonable to assume that the larger woollen doll¹⁶⁹ overpowering the smaller made of wax stands for the witch herself, who by means of persuasive analogy is attempting to subjugate and dominate her beloved by infusing him with uncontrollable passion for her. Once again, what we encounter here is a case of a female (Canidia) taking on the role of the *male* hunter while the male is rendered merely the *female* prey. From his place of confinement Priapus observes Canidia's and Sagana's revolting deeds, which include the summoning of their patron goddess Hecate and of the fury Tisiphone, the manifestation of hell-hounds and serpents around the pit, and conversation with ghosts (33-45). Priapus' resounding and frightening fart¹⁷⁰ interrupts the terrifying atmosphere of the poem and forces the witches to abruptly cease their ghoulish activities and flee towards the city in a frenetic state, stripped of their fake bodily accoutrements. The teeth and the false hair¹⁷¹ left behind by Canidia and Sagana expose them for what they truly are: moribund ugly old women whose magic cannot deliver them from the natural aging process that has already started taking a toll on them.

Canidia's serio-comical role in Horace's poetic corpus is further attested from *Epode* 17, whereby Horace invents a dialogue between him and the witch. The opening of the poem could indicate that the poet may have intended his readers to think that the speaker, at least at first, is yet another victim of the witch's malevolent arts, but as the poem slowly unravels before us it becomes apparent that this is nothing more than Horace's way of satirising and ridiculing Canidia. The poet declares himself a true believer in her magical abilities and admits to have fallen under her spells (1-7). He maintains that he has turned prematurely old, his hair has gone white, his lungs have been constricted, he has trouble breathing, and is constantly feeling seared with a fire hotter than the one which burnt Hercules. Overall,

melted. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the maiden of Virgil's *Eclogue* 8 presumably throws into the fire a wax figurine of her lover, Daphnis. The symbolical burning of wax *κολοσσοί* is also attested by the "Cyrenean foundation decree", dating to the fourth century BCE (MEIGGS & LEWIS (1969), no. 5.44-49), whereas a second century CE Ephesian inscription contains Apollo's prophecy that Artemis will burn an evil mage's wax doll, thus delivering a city from its plague (GRAF (1992) 268, lines 6-9). Wax and woollen dolls are also coupled together by Ovid, perhaps as a tribute to Horace's poem (*Amores* 3.28-30, 79-80). On the *κολοσσοί*, cf. ROUX (1960); DUCAT (1978). For the widespread use of this practice in antiquity, cf. JORDAN (1988); FARAONE (1991b). On similar dolls being used in apotropaic (binding) magic, cf. FARAONE (1999) 51.

¹⁶⁹ Wool was considered to have apotropaic qualities and it is often used in cases of binding magic throughout antiquity; cf. e.g., Theocritus *Idyll* 2.2; Virgil *Eclogue* 8.73-74; Ovid *Amores* 3.7.79. It was also associated with women and femininity, on which cf. CARSON (1990) 154 n.39; FARAONE (1999) 52 n.53.

¹⁷⁰ Farting due to excessive fear is frequently attested in Old Comedy (e.g., Aristophanes *Clouds* 1133, *Lysistrata* 354, *Wealth* 699-700), on which cf. also HENDERSON (1991) 195-96.

¹⁷¹ Unkempt or revolting hair is the most regular feature of the crone, possibly because the hair of younger women could be seductive; cf. e.g., the repulsive hair of Canidia and Sagana (Horace *Epode* 5.15-16, 27) Acanthis (Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.71) and Dipsas (Ovid *Amores* 1.8.111). Cf. also Lucius' fixation on Photis' hair at *Metamorphoses* 2.9.

Horace is convinced that he is being tortured by an erotic binding spell set upon him by the crone (21-32). He promises to recant, in a manner of a mock-παλιωδία, the evils he has spoken against her in previous poems (such as violation of tombs, abuse of the dead, concocting deadly potions) as long as she desists from her magic and releases him from her magical incantations.¹⁷²

But his apology is not as genuine as one may first think; the poet mocks Canidia's witchcraft in a way similar to which he purportedly yields to it. Horace does not openly proclaim that Canidia's witchcraft does not work; on the contrary, he cynically admits that it does function in some way. Yet, he chooses to taunt her irrespective of her terrifying powers. Ridicule and humiliation are part of the poet's ammunition against her. Although pleading for his release by promising to retract all the allegations in future poems, the poet still seizes the chance to taunt her even more and smears her low birth (*o nec paternis obsolete sordibus*, 46), old age (*anus*, 47) and sexual promiscuity (*amata nautis multum et institoribus*, 20). It appears then that according to Horace Canidia's magic is nothing more than an empty threat—the wooden Priapus of *Satire* 1.8 can interrupt her magical rituals by letting go a gigantic fart and the poet can still insult her despite being under the influence of her spells—whereas Canidia herself is nothing more than a serio-farcical old witch. Canidia, nonetheless, is not placated; Horace's prayers will not alleviate her inner anger: he has sarcastically ridiculed her and for that he must pay the price. She does not even try to refute his accusations; on the contrary, she accepts them and rejoices in them (76-81), which in a way foreshadows the pride Seneca's Medea takes in murdering her brother Apsyrtus or inciting the daughters of Pelias in killing their father.¹⁷³ Nonetheless, Canidia retorts that a slow and excruciating death awaits the poet, and she will take pleasure in seeing him slowly wither away. Only this will appease her ire.

Unlike the Canidia of the two previous poems, *Epode* 5 presents the witch in a more serious and sinister way. The theme of the poem is child sacrifice, and as in the aforementioned *Satire*, Canidia is not alone in her nefarious deed; three fellow witches, all equally described in hideous terms, are there to assist her. The poem opens with a kidnapped boy of noble birth pleading for his release. Indifferent towards the boy's entreaties, Canidia orders her fellow witches to bring her a variety of exotic ingredients to be burnt on the

¹⁷² Cf., for instance, the scattered references to *Satire* 1.8 at lines 47-48 (*neque in sepulcris pauperum prudens anus / novendialis dissipare pulveres*), 58-59 (*et Esquilini pontifex venefici / impune ut urbem nomine impleris meo?*) and 76-77 (*an, quae movere cereas imagines, / ut ipse nosti curiosus*).

¹⁷³ Seneca *Medea* 911-14.

sacrificial pyre, and while doing so, the witch Veia digs a pit into which the boy is buried alive up until his neck. Canidia then relates that her previous attempts to win back her lover Varus had failed, though she had used against him the same sorcery once used by Medea herself against her enemies, assuming thus that her magic must have been counteracted by that of a rival and very skilful *venefica*. The reason for resorting to human sacrifice becomes then clear: the witch aspires to starve the boy to death in such a way that his body gets infused with longing, so that the famished liver together with the dried-up marrow can be used for the concoction of a powerful erotic philtre.¹⁷⁴ Realising the futility of his pleas, the boy in the end abandons any hope of being released and utters with his dying words a powerful curse against his captors: he threatens the unholy gathering that his ghost will haunt them as a fury for their remaining nights, and predicts that his brutal murder will excite such a vengeful wrath among the crowd that it will bring about the witches' public stoning in the middle of the streets.

Aside from being terrifying and appalling in nature, *Epode* 5 also succeeds in casting Canidia in a somehow comical light: the witch implicitly assimilates herself to Medea (*flammis aduri Colchicis* at line 24 would either imply that the ritual is taking place at Colchis, which is quite unlikely, or that Canidia is casting spells like those of Medea), but Canidia is nothing like the great sorceress: Medea's great magic has failed Canidia. The only explanation Canidia can come up with is the counter-magic of a more skilled witch; the possibility of her own incompetence never crosses her mind. In addition, contrary to the allegedly beautiful Medea, Canidia is repulsive with small vipers inhabiting her unkempt hair (15-16), her fingernails are untrimmed and her teeth are discoloured (47-48), she is slurred for apparently having faked a birth (5-6), whereas her beloved 'Jason' is nothing more than an aged adulterer (57).

Nonetheless, despite the satirical allusions and insults, all of which are effectively used to undermine Canidia's frightening bravado, the disturbing reality of the poem still remains: human sacrifice was known to have been a feature in early Roman history (though by the Augustan period it was considered archaic and abhorrent),¹⁷⁵ and three diverse references give testimony to its frightening veracity. Pliny relates in his *Natural History* how the consuls Cornelius Lentulus and Licinius Crassus passed a *senatus consultum* that explicitly forbade the use of humans as sacrificial victims, the implication, obviously, being that in former times humans had been used as such (30.12), whereas Tacitus recounts in the

¹⁷⁴ The liver was often considered the seat of erotic desire; cf. Horace *Odes* 1.25.15, 4.1.12; *Epistles* 1.18.72.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. HARRISON (1991) 202-03.

Annals that Germanicus' ill health was allegedly brought about by Piso's magical practices, which stimulated the desired effect by using human remains, incantations, curses, and *defixiones* inscribed on lead tablets (2.69).¹⁷⁶ What is more disquieting, however, is a surviving inscription from the 20s AD bearing witness to the practices recounted by Horace in *Epode* 5. An epitaph reports a young boy being snatched away by a witch with the boy presented as exhorting potential parents to guard their children from having a fate similar to his.¹⁷⁷ The epitaph remains conspicuously silent as to the fate of the boy, but given that this was a funereal inscription, it is safe to conclude that the boy was murdered or even sacrificed by a *sagae manus*.

4.2.2. The lewd witches of love elegy

Many of the magic-related characteristics and practices encountered in Virgil and Horace were taken to the next level in the poetry of the Augustan elegiac poets and were, in one way or another, made canonical. The figure of the crone or *saga* played a conspicuous role in Rome's three most famous love elegists: Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid.¹⁷⁸ These poets often portrayed themselves as being somehow reconciled with the idea of having to live in a world where witches – often depicted as old,¹⁷⁹ bawdy,¹⁸⁰ and usually in the form of the procuress¹⁸¹ – were a part of their mistresses' lives, without necessarily being persuaded of their magical abilities.¹⁸² In general, an elegiac poet's approval or disapproval of magic largely depends on whether the witches are willing to use their powers for his benefit or not: if yes, then magic and witchery are tolerated; if not, the elegiac poet targets and abuses the crone, since it is she whom the poet mainly blames for his mistress' capriciousness. It is easy to deduce from the theme of this genre that love magic in its various expressions is a predominant feature of most elegiac witchcraft portrayals. But it is certainly not the only one. Among other activities, the elegiac witchcraft list enumerates *sagae* exerting magical influence on both the natural elements and the heavenly bodies; they raise the dead from the Underworld, manipulate spirits in doing their nefarious biddings, gather noxious herbs and human remains for a

¹⁷⁶ Cf. also the discussion at chapter 6.3.2.

¹⁷⁷ *CIL* VI 19747: *Iucundus Liviae Drusi Caesaris filius Gryphi et Vitalis. in quartum surgens comprehensus deprimor annum, cum possem matri dulcis et esse patri, eripuit me saga manus crudelis, ubique cum manet in terris et nocit arte sua. vos vestros natos concustodite, parentes, ni dolor in toto pectore fixsus eat.*

¹⁷⁸ Cf. the discussion at TUPET (1976) 330-37.

¹⁷⁹ Propertius *Elegies* 4.5, 64, 67-68; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.2, *Fasti* 2.583.

¹⁸⁰ Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.2, 75; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.5, 50; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.3-4, 111-14, *Fasti* 2.583. Cf. also the several epitaphs dedicated to drunken old women at *Palatine Anthology* 6.291, 7.353, 455-57, 11.409.

¹⁸¹ On the figure of the *lena* in Latin love elegy, cf. MYERS (1996).

¹⁸² Cf. DICKIE (2001) 175-76.

variety of magical practices; in addition, most of these women acknowledge, in an overt or covert way, their relationship to Medea, Hecate, and Thessaly; some even possess the ability to shape-shift.

Tibullus' witch from *Elegies* 1.2 sketches, quite effectively, the portrait of the elegiac witch. She is a powerful woman with a remarkable array of powers: she can bring the stars down from the sky, chase away the gloomy clouds or make it snow during summertime, turn back rivers, summon ghosts and demons from the Underworld, call back bones from funeral pyres, gathers the deleterious herbs of Medea, and tames the ferocious hounds of Hecate. This *verax saga* has used her powers to the poet's advantage by composing a series of incantations which will prevent his mistress' husband from recognising the wife's obvious infidelity (41-58). Magic also appears to be working in favour of Tibullus in *Elegies* 1.5, where the lover is found employing witchcraft in order to purify his girlfriend in her time of sickness. What is noteworthy about this scene is the fact that instead of employing a *saga* to perform the magical purification ritual, the poet carries it out himself: he cleanses the bed with sulphur after an *anus* had sung a *carmen magicum*, sings apotropaic prayers over a sacrificial barley meal, and makes nine vows to Hecate τριῶδῖτις (*trivia*) in the middle of the night (9-18).¹⁸³

In a similar vein, Propertius in *Elegies* 1.1 also turns to magic—although he is admittedly less confident in its efficiency—and invokes the *sagae* who claim to be capable of drawing down the moon and placating spirits over sacrificial fires and puts them to the test: if they can change the mind of his beloved Cynthia and make her go pale at the mere sight of him, he will officially acknowledge their ability to call up ghosts from the Underworld and to alter the direction of the stars with the help of Thessalian spells (19-24).

Ovid, contrastingly, rejects in *Amores* 1.14 the insinuations that the loss of hair his beloved *puella* has suffered was effectively brought about from enchanted herbs of a rival woman or by the Thessalian water in which a deceitful old woman had washed the girl's hair. He argues, on the contrary, that the hair has fallen out due to the girl's excessive dyeing and was, therefore, not induced by any magical means (1-2, 39-42). Elsewhere from the same collection of poems, Ovid considers the possibility that magic may be responsible for his impotence and toys with the idea that a witch may have cursed him with a binding spell

¹⁸³ Ovid similarly advises the lover to be affectionate towards his girlfriend in times of illness and proposes that he should fetch an old woman to cleanse the bed and the area around it with sulphur and eggs (*Art of Love* 2.319-22, 327-30).

(3.7.27-35, 77-80).¹⁸⁴ In addition, in the second Book of *Art of Love* he claims that those who resort to magic philtres and spells in hopes of winning the affections of a girl are merely wasting their time; not only do they harm the girls, but they also induce madness; the only way to win over the heart of a young woman is by being *amabilis* (99-107).

Not uncommon within the poems of love elegy and germane to erotic magic were curses against the *lenae-cum-sagae* for interfering with the poets' love affairs. In *Elegies* 4.5 Propertius curses the procuress Acanthis ('Thorny') with torture beyond the grave for having instructed his girl to take on more economically competent lovers. Acanthis and Canidia are very much alike: she is an ugly crone, her skin is thin and wrinkled, her teeth are hollow, her hair sparse, and she lives in utter poverty (64-70). The witch's abilities enumerated by the poet betray Acanthis' expertise in inflicting or suppressing love: her erotic magic was ostensibly capable of corrupting even the mythically chaste Hippolytus and Penelope (5-8), and she uses her powers to deceive attentive husbands, thus destroying marital bonds (15). The poet associates Acanthis with animal imagery too: she plucks out the eyes of ravens (16) and converses with *striges* (17), transforms herself into a wolf after she has called down the moon (13-14), and employs the mystical powers of the plant coltsfoot (*ἰππομάνεζ*) during her rituals (17-18). It is noteworthy that while Acanthis' portrayal is not as threatening in nature as that of Horace's Canidia, Propertius, nonetheless, has recycled a number of *loci* from the imperial witch tradition to belittle the *lena* for her meddling with the poet's love affairs.¹⁸⁵

In a different poem from Tibullus' *Elegies* (1.5), one of the poet's sexual partners suggests that the poet has been cursed with a binding spell by his beloved *puella*, so that he may take no satisfaction when in the company of other women.¹⁸⁶ But it appears that the *puella* is now under the impact of a *lena* whom Tibullus suspects of being a witch. The poet curses the lewd *lena* with hunger, thirst, and humiliation: driven by famine she is to devour the harmful herbs she has been so intently collecting in the past and like a rabid dog to chew on the bones she was used to stealing for her magical enterprises; the ghosts she has invoked are to haunt her, and instead of cups of wine she is to consume cups of gall (39-56).¹⁸⁷ This sort

¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, Encolpius, the protagonist of Petronius' *Satyrica*, is introduced to an old woman to cure his impotence; when her ritual fails, she forwards him to another old woman, presumably a priestess of Priapus, who performs a more elaborate magical ritual (126-38).

¹⁸⁵ Cf. STRATTON (2007) 85. On magic in Propertius, cf. TUPET (1976) 348-78.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. the argument that prostitutes manufacture *venena* in order to keep young men away from rival prostitutes at pseudo-Quintilian *Major Declamations* 14.6: *excogitasti, per quod maritos a coniugum caritate diducas, per quod iuvenum mentes abiungas ab aliis fortasse meretricibus. odii medicamentum numquam ideo tantum meretrix habuit, ut illo contra se uteretur.*

¹⁸⁷ For a treatment of magic in Tibullus, cf. TUPET (1976) 337-48.

of malediction was certainly not uncommon in invective poetry, but what makes this passage intriguing is the way in which Tibullus formulates his curse so that it suggests sorcery. He has used typical witch motifs and has shaped them in the form of abuse: the ghosts are no longer present to obey the crone's demands, but to annoy her; herbs and bones are gathered not for magical purposes but to satisfy her starvation; the *strix* appears here as an ill-omened bird; and the dogs, normally announcing the presence of Hecate at the crossroads, are now chasing the witch throughout the town.

Similar to Propertius' and Tibullus' cursing poems, Ovid also dedicates a poem from his collection of the *Amores* to the drunken procuress Dipsas ('Thirsty'), cursing the *lena* for offering *erotodidaxis* to his *puella* Corinna and for attempting to entice the girl to abandon the poet for a richer suitor.¹⁸⁸ Dipsas is sketched in terms familiar from the poetry of Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus. As one would anticipate by now from a procuress, Dipsas' main field of expertise is love induced by the arts of erotic magic; however she is also adept in manipulating the natural environment (she can turn the liquid waters back to their source, turn a blue sky cloudy and vice versa, make the stars and the moon bleed), changing her shape into that of birds, summoning the dead, and collecting herbs for her various magical enterprises (1.8.1-20). Unlike Propertius or Tibullus, Ovid hardly perceives Dipsas as a real threat. The catalogue of her magical powers follows directly after the detailed account of the witch's drinking habits, and is thus difficult to take seriously; hence, Ovid opts to ridicule the old witch more than to denigrate her.

The *lena-cum-saga* with a propensity for alcohol is the main theme of a passage from the second Book of the *Fasti*, whereby the holiday of the Feralia, an annual festival in late February in honour of the dead, is discussed. During the ceremony described the reader witnesses the transmission of magical expertise from the *anus*, presumably identified as a *lena*, to the *puellae* or the protégées of the *lena*. The old woman performs a number of magical rites to Tacita (the 'Silent One'),¹⁸⁹ and places a tongue-binding or silencing spell¹⁹⁰ on a group of people or an individual whom she identifies as her enemy (*hostiles linguas inimicaque*

¹⁸⁸ On the elegy's affinities with comedy and Herodas' first *Mimiamb*, cf. MCKEOWN (1989) 198-201.

¹⁸⁹ Ovid explains that Muta Tacita had formerly been a chatty nymph named Lara who revealed Jupiter's love for the naiad Juturna to Juno. The god, angered by her indiscretion, ripped out her tongue and ordered Hermes to escort her to the Underworld, where she was to live with the ghosts as a nymph of the infernal marsh. On the way there, Lara won the heart of Hermes, and she eventually gave birth to the *Lares compitales* or *praestites*, the public guardians of the city (*Fasti* 2.583-616).

¹⁹⁰ On tongue binding spells, cf. Aeschylus *Eumenides* 306, 327-33; Cicero *Brutus* 217; *DT* 43-44; LOPEZ JIMENO (1991), no. 3; JORDAN (1999), no. 1. For a silencing spell addressing Muta Tacita directly, cf. EGGER (1963).

vinximus ora, 581).¹⁹¹ Before the old woman exits, she drinks the largest portion of the wine used for parts of the ritual (571-82).¹⁹²

4.2.3. Erictho, a Roman super-witch

"I am in trouble here. This woman is not right!"

Stephen King, *Misery*

The semi-goddess Medea might have been Greece's most influential and well-known witch, yet it was in the pages of Lucan's epic that the readership of Roman antiquity was introduced to its most dark and, no doubt, nefarious witch: the Thessalian über-witch Erictho.¹⁹³ In the *nekuia* scene of Book 6 of the *Civil War* (395-830),¹⁹⁴ Sextus Pompey, the *proles indigna* of Pompey the Great, seeks the witch's assistance in receiving divination on the war's outcome. This is in general the third passage in the epic to feature a divinatory scene:¹⁹⁵ earlier, in Book 1 (522-695) prodigies predicting the beginning of the civil war had appeared in Rome and were interpreted by three different seers (an Etruscan *haruspex*, an astrologer, and an inspired matron), whereas in Book 5 (67-236) Appius Claudius Pulcher had sought to consult the defunct Delphic oracle. However, differently from Appius, whose attempt to receive direct prophecy from the Delphic oracle had failed (*solus in ancipites metuit descendere Martis / Appius eventus, finemque expromere rerum | sollicitat superos multosque obducta per annos / Delphica fatidici reserat penetralia Phoebi*, 67-70),¹⁹⁶ Sextus has a predilection for the occult and is well acquainted with the powerful magic of the Thessalian region. He is even convinced that revelations of future events are more easily imparted by the shades below than the gods above (6.430-34; 770-73), a view also shared by Statius in his *Thebaid* (4.409-414).

After an extended narrative interlude into the subject of Thessalian witchcraft (434-506), presented in terms of a witchcraft list (e.g., constraint of the gods, control over human

¹⁹¹ LUCK rejects the insinuation that the rites performed are magical, although he does accept that they may have some apotropaic quality (1999a: 219).

¹⁹² For a discussion of the ritual, cf. TUPET (1976) 408-14.

¹⁹³ On Erictho, cf. selectively FAUTH (1975); GORDON (1987a) and (1990) 254-55; JOHNSON (1987) 1-33; TUPET (1988); MASTERS (1992) 179-215; KORENJAK (1996) 9-51; OGDEN (2002a); FINIELLO (2005); ARWEILER (2006); BAERTSCHI & FÖGEN (2006) 236-40; MCCLELLAN (2015) 203-16.

¹⁹⁴ Epic *nekuiai* contemporary to Lucan's also appear at Statius *Thebaid* 4.406-645 (cf. PARKES (2012) 214-15; for a similar scene, cf. Seneca *Oedipus* 530-658), Silius Italicus *Punic Wars* 13.381-895, and Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 1.730-826 (cf. ZISSOS (2008) 379-81). On a discussion of Lucan's *nekuia* against that of Homer and Virgil, cf. MORFORD (1996) 66-67.

¹⁹⁵ On the techniques of prophecy in Lucan, cf. DICK (1963); MORFORD (1996) 59-74.

¹⁹⁶ For a treatment of this scene, cf. AHL (1976) 121-30; O'HIGGINS (1988) 211-17; MASTERS (1992); 91-149; RADICKE (2004) 319-23.

emotions, the heavenly bodies, the seasons, etc.),¹⁹⁷ Erictho is introduced, in quite a magnificent albeit hyperbolic way, as the most perilous of all the inhabitants dwelling in the area: she is old and ugly (515-16), her revolting face has a hellish pallor (517), and she is feared by humans and gods alike (507-68). The *scelerum ritus* and *dira crimina* the witch takes part in are described in lengthy detail, and it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that in his moulding of Erictho Lucan agglomerated the various attributes attached to witches from prior literature, and in doing so created the persona of an ultimate *Überhexe* consisting of a variety of diverse characteristics. Had there been a collective list of witch traits, Erictho would have successfully ticked the majority, if not all, of the boxes.

Erictho is undoubtedly a liminal character: she lives far away from towns and inhabits the tombs of a cemetery, and therefore is always in direct contact with the dead.¹⁹⁸ She can listen to and converse with the shades below and she is familiar with the Underworld's mysteries and topography (510-15). The celestial gods mean nothing to her, and she holds all matters of life and death in her hands; when she wishes to, she condemns the living to a premature death, whereas the dead are brought back from the grave and reinstated to life (523-32). The ways in which she preys on dead bodies and collects cadaverous body parts for use in her magical enterprises are expounded in a grotesque and surreal—one scholar has even argued 'pornographic'¹⁹⁹—manner: she removes burning bones or ashes of victims from funeral pyres (533-37); she desecrates the tombs of the dead and mutilates the cadavers (538-43); she cannibalises the corpses of people hanged from the gallows and on crosses (543-53); she snatches from the mouths of ravenous beasts the limbs they have gnawed from carcasses (550-53); she cuts open the wombs of pregnant women, rips out the babies, and sacrifices them on fiery altars (557-58);²⁰⁰ and she uses corpses to convey her messages to the Underworld (563-68). Overall, there is no monstrosity or act of cruelty Erictho is not willing to perform: *hominum mors omnis in usu est* (560).²⁰¹

When Sextus comes across Erictho for the first time, she is encountered devising a new horrible incantation (*carmen*) with which she hopes to retain the civil carnage in the

¹⁹⁷ On this scene, cf. the discussion at MASTERS (1992) 150-78.

¹⁹⁸ On Thessaly, too, being a region of liminality, cf. ARWEILER (2006) 16-29.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. STRATTON (2007) 91: "To describe such a passage as pornographic in the lurid explicitness of its details would not be an overstatement." JOHNSON, on the other hand, has argued that Erictho is a comic figure, and Lucan's portrayal of the witch's activities combines elements of wit and horror so to expose the banality of evil (1987: 22-23)

²⁰⁰ On fetuses used in magical rituals, cf. FRANKFURTER (2006).

²⁰¹ On a discussion of Erictho's revolting acts in terms of Kristeva's notion of abjection, cf. STRATTON (2014b) 152-153, 162. On abjection, cf. KRISTEVA (1982).

region (576-85).²⁰² It should come as no real surprise why Erictho is striving to maintain the war in her area; bearing in mind that the dead of war fell under several categories of ‘restlessness’—they had died a violent death (βιαιοθάνατοι) before their allotted time (ἄωροι), and since they had perished on the field of battle they would probably remain unburied (ἄταφοι) too—a carnage of such extraordinary proportion would inevitably come in useful in her multifarious magical practices. It seems that the belief resting behind this idea is that the restless dead roamed the earth as dangerous spirits who could not yet enter Hades, and would continue to wander around their graves until their allotted time on earth had been completed. Such spirits were unhappy about missing out on life and could easily be persuaded or manipulated to do harm against others.

Erictho agrees to perform the necromantic ritual for Sextus and selects a fallen soldier with a cut throat to serve as her vessel.²⁰³ This scene is obviously meant to invert similar heroic necromantic scenes from antique epics: instead of the hero (e.g., Odysseus, Aeneas) journeying to the Underworld with the advice of a medium (Circe, Sibyl) to receive a hidden piece of information from someone (Teiresias, Anchises) necessary to his cause, Erictho in her capacity as anti-Sibyl is now willing to bring the Underworld (in the form of a dead soldier) to the upper world (an *anabasis* instead of a *katabasis*) in order to assist the anti-heroic Sextus. Her divinatory medium, however, is not randomly chosen by Lucan, since it hints at the practice of deriving divination from decapitated skulls, a practice documented as well by the magical papyri.²⁰⁴ But on a whole different level it could be an allusion to an episode related by Pliny the Elder in *Natural History* 7.178-9 regarding the death of Gabienus, a soldier in Caesar’s army, at the hands of Sextus Pompey. It is said that during the Sicilian War Gabienus served in Octavian’s army and was taken prisoner by Sextus, who ordered his throat to be cut and his body to be left on the seashore to bleed. Gabienus lay on the shore in a nearly decapitated state for an entire day, screaming either for Sextus or one of his trusted friends to come and hear him out, for he claimed to have returned from the Underworld (*ab inferis remissum*) and carried a prophecy relevant to Sextus. Before dying, Gabienus revealed that the gods were planning on crowning Sextus and his cause with victory; the prophecy, however, was false, for Sextus lost the war against Octavian.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Cf. also Tertullian *On the Soul* 56, and the discussion at STRAMAGLIA (1999) 8-16. On antiquity’s various categories of restless dead, cf. JOHNSTON (1999) 127-60.

²⁰³ On the dead soldier foreshadowing the corpse of Pompey the Great, cf. MCCLELLAN (2015) 212-16.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *PGM* 4.1928-2240; also OGDEN (2001) 208-15.

²⁰⁵ For a discussion of this episode, cf. AHL (1976) 133-7; MARTINDALE (1980) 367-68; FRATANTUONO (2012) 254.

As soon as the fallen soldier is chosen, the witch drags the cadaver by a hook²⁰⁶ back to her cave and makes all the necessary preparations for the rite: she further abuses the soldier's dead body by cutting open the corpse's chest cavity,²⁰⁷ washes the innards with hot blood, and pours in the body a concoction of different poisons and magical ingredients, including leaves and herbs (667-84).²⁰⁸ Erictho then utters her first incantation: she first screams a series of incoherent and cacophonous beastly voices combined with threatening noises from the natural environment, and in the end casts a Thessalian spell with which she openly invokes the gods of the Underworld, requesting that the ghost of the soldier be allowed to briefly return and prophesy (685-718). The ghost of the soldier, fearful of what has taken place, suddenly appears and stands beside Erictho, but is reluctant to re-enter his body. Erictho is not amused; she unleashes a second, even more powerful, incantation in the form of a *διαβολή*, targeting the gods of the Underworld this time and compelling them to obey her wishes, lest she reveal to the world their true identity and call upon them the horrendous unnamed deity dwelling beneath Tartarus, whom the subterranean gods feared most (719-49). This is an interesting albeit perplexing deity; it seems that this god lives in the depths of Hell, occupying an area further below than the one that regular Underworld deities dwell in. The same unnamed deity is hinted at by Teiresias during the necromantic ritual of Statius' *Thebaid* 4 (*novimus et quidquid dici noscique timetis, | et turbare Hecaten, ni te, Thymbraee, vererer | et triplicis mundi summum, quem scire nefastum*, 514-16) and is identified by the ancient scholion *ad loc.* as a being known as the Creator/*δημιουργός*. Hermes Trismegistos and the Jewish God (or perhaps his adversary?) have also been named as possible candidates by M. KORENJAK, although he admits that Lucan, most probably, had no fixed divine power in mind.²⁰⁹

Whoever this terrifying deity is, the mere mentioning of his name is enough to make the gods tremble, and the ghost is immediately forced to re-enter his own body and stand upright, returning to a state of limbo, lingering between life and death like a zombie. The soldier attempts to speak, but utterance is bestowed upon him only for the purpose of reply. Erictho promises to put him to eternal rest and to cast a powerful spell on him, guarding him

²⁰⁶ MCCLELLAN has suggested that, by having Erictho drag the corpse back to her hellish cave with a hook, Lucan inverts the role of a public executioner who was commonly charged with dragging corpses with a hook to be thrown into the river Tiber (2015: 205 and n.166).

²⁰⁷ On the general maltreatment of corpses in Imperial epic, cf. MCCLELLAN (2015).

²⁰⁸ Cf. also the similarities between this scene and the 'brew' scene of Aeson's rejuvenation by Medea at Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.262-87. On this scene being a perversion of the Sibyl's sacrifice at Virgil *Aeneid* 6.248-49, cf. MASTERS (1992) 192.

²⁰⁹ KORENJAK (1996) 210-11; cf. also MOSCADI (1976a) 180-84; VOLPILHAC (1978) 282-84.

against any magical exploitation in the future, should he grant the prophecy Sextus seeks; she then casts an additional spell so that knowledge of future events is imparted to the soldier (750-76). Interestingly, a promise to a ghost similar to that of Erictho's is afforded by a second or third century CE curse tablet, containing an erotic attraction spell and accompanied by a nude female clay figure that appears bound and pierced with numerous needles from top to bottom. The *defixio* addresses the ghost (νεκυδαίμων) of Antinoos—the deified dead lover of the emperor Hadrian—and requests the spirit to drag Ptolemais into the arms and bed of Sarapammon; akin to Erictho's dead soldier, if the spirit of the *defixio* complies with Sarapammon's wishes, he will then set the ghost free.²¹⁰ The revived corpse's message, although delivered in the form of a prophecy, can be best regarded as a lament—the corpse weeps sorrowfully (*maestum fletu manante cadaver*, 776) as he begins to deliver his gloomy message—over the Republic's imminent destruction and the loss of Rome's liberty. The prophecy is one of doom and death, signalling the demise of Caesar, Pompey and the latter's entire household: *Europam, miseri, Libyamque Asiamque timete: / distribuit tumulos vestris fortuna triumphis* (816-17). When the revelation is concluded, Erictho remains true to her promise and gathers wood to build a huge funeral pyre. Given that this is a rather untypical funeral, magical *carmina* and *herbae* are necessary for the rite: this is not just any fallen soldier, but a soldier whom death had already claimed once before and therefore could not claim again (*et nequeunt animam sibi reddere fata / consumpto iam iure semel*, 823-24). Magic brought the man back to life, and it is magic that must send him back to the Underworld once more. The witch delivers the cadaver to the flames—perhaps the one and only act of decency and kindness that Erictho extends to the (un)dead soldier²¹¹—and ends the ritual as the new bloody day is about to dawn (777-830).²¹²

²¹⁰ *SM* 47.17-21, 27-28: μή παρακούσης, νεκυδαίμων Ἀντίνοε, ἀλλ' ἔγειραί μοι σεαυτὸν καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς πᾶν τόπον, [...] καὶ ἄγαγέ μοι τὴν Πτολεμαΐδα, [...] κατὰσχες αὐτῆς τὸ βροτόν, τὸ ποτόν, ἕως ἔλθῃ πρὸς ἐμέ. [...] ἐάν τοῦτο ποιήσης, ἀπολύσω σε.

²¹¹ On Erictho's treatment here being 'almost motherly', cf. JOHNSON (1987) 27. In this respect, Erictho is different from Caesar in the epic, who denies the soldiers lying on the battlefield a proper burial. For a comparison of Erictho and Caesar, cf. TESORIERO (2004).

²¹² Brief references to corpse reanimation can be further traced in Statius *Thebaid* 4.140-46; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 11-13; Claudian *Against Rufinus* 1.154-56; Isidore of Seville *Etymologies* 8.9.11. The reanimation sequence of Lucan appears to have sprung in a fully developed form, and so it is reasonable to assume that the account must have been based on a number of literary antecedents which do not survive from antiquity; Ovid's account of Aeson's magical reanimation (*Metamorphoses* 7.179-293) could have been some source of inspiration for Lucan's episode, since both scenes share a few common features. OGDEN has suggested that Lucan and Ovid's episodes were remodelled on an earlier necromantic reanimation source, now lost to us (2009: 90).

Concluding discussion

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate that representations of magic and witchcraft had become something of a literary *topos* in Imperial Latin poetry. Despite our rather limited knowledge of early Roman witchcraft and native Italian magical practices, it can be surmised that the people of the Italian peninsula had come into contact with the Greek concept of magic from a fairly early stage, possibly through the works of Hellenistic writers. It remains, however, rather uncertain whether ‘magic’ as a category of thought had any real meaning for them or if it was simply one of the concepts that found a home in the Roman world and was naturalised there to fit the Romans’ own ideas. As it has been demonstrated, references to magic and magic-working in early Latin literature are few and far between, ranging from passing allusions to magic working purportedly among the first Roman Kings and the (what is commonly regarded as) prohibitions against magic in the XII Tables to the minor *realia* attesting the use of curse tablets and *defixiones* and the literary references to amulets and early Roman love magic. In spite of this situation, the advent of the first century BCE brings together not only the first documented use of the term *magus* in Latin literature, but also the first fully extant portrayal of a witch. Though the anonymous witch of Virgil’s eighth *Eclogue* is nothing like the evil and nefarious witches that appear later in Horace, Seneca, or Lucan, it is nevertheless the first example of a literary figure that is destined to haunt Imperial Latin literature for centuries to come.

The witches of Latin Imperial literature were subsequently separated into two big groups, each group bearing its own (sometimes unique) characteristics. The first group, the ‘Greco-Roman’ witches, consists of Roman witches whose inspiration derives from Greek sources. One such type is the amateur witch, who is also the least menacing of all women practising magic. The amateurs are portrayed as ordinary mortal women who seek some consolation from magic, as their resort to witchcraft is only a final measure in a desperate situation, most often a love affair gone awry. The second type belonging to this group are the sorceresses-cum-goddesses, witches of godly or semi-divine nature. They belong to the distant mythological past and have become imperative models for all later witches. The amateurs and the crones aspire to become as good as their heroic counterparts, and most often employ the same spells (or some slight variations thereof) used by their patrons. Contrastingly, the second group, which I have termed ‘native Roman witches’, is comprised solely of the crones: these

are witches portrayed as old and repulsive hags who are often identified with *sagae* and *lenae*. They are mortal women who belong to the historical present and occupy the lowest strata of society. Magic for them is a way of earning a living, and the crones especially are the witches who in Latin literature have advanced the art of witchcraft to the next level.

Aside from their obvious differences, the three types of witches recycle a number of common motifs and formal characteristics which may allow us to propose an unofficial 'tradition' of Imperial witchcraft. This 'tradition' seems to entail the following aspects which are generally linked to three domains: nature, lust, and the superhuman cosmos. The witches of Imperial Latin literature most often originate from, or are based in Thessaly, and treat Circe, Medea, and Hecate as their patron goddesses or mythical/divine archetypes. Their primary concern is love magic in its various manifestations, whether in the form of inflicting love and *φιλία* and/or suppressing of *ἔρως* (with or without the help of voodoo dolls), or by casting binding and attraction spells. These women demonstrate an odd fascination with nature and know how to collect and manipulate noxious herbs for use in various magical rituals and *φαρμακεία*. The great majority of Imperial witches either recount for themselves or have others recount for them a list of all their magical powers, which give them control over the gods (often by constraining them in doing their bidding), as well as over the natural landscape, the elements, and the heavenly bodies. Such miraculous powers and performance of *ἀδύνατα* were often regarded as severely threatening by ancient authors, who on occasion would suggest that it could lead to the destruction of the entire worldly fabric (cf. e.g., the remarks at Seneca *Hercules Oetaeus* 463: *nihilque leges ad meos cantus tenet*). Some witches can be shapeshifters, capable of changing their physical forms into that of animals (mostly wolves or birds), and matters of life and death and the exploitation of the dead and demons fall under their field of expertise, too: they communicate with the dead and manipulate them into receiving prophecies; they employ dead spirits and demons into haunting and driving mad their enemies; they condemn the living to an unnatural and premature death, and bring back to life those who are long gone. And since it was believed that manipulation of bones would grant power over the spirit to whom the bones once belonged, witches are depicted as collecting remains of corpses in various ways, which they then proceed to use in magical rites.

The question which naturally arises is whether such representations of magic mirror any native Italian magical beliefs and practices, or whether one ought to assume that they were merely picked up from Hellenistic sources and were put to various uses by the Roman authors. This is a difficult question to answer, especially given the paucity of early Roman

sources, and so any firm conclusions can only remain speculative. It is my belief, however, that the truth lies somewhere in-between: essentially, the descriptions of magic working do reflect those of Hellenistic authors, but they have undergone a significant *interpretatio Romana* so as to accommodate not only native Italian beliefs but also the needs of a Roman audience with a fondness for the macabre and a 'taste' for horror.

3

ACCUSAMUS EUM MAGUM ESSE

THE MAGIC OF APULEIUS AND THE WITCHCRAFT OF THE *APOLOGY*

“And what about your own ethics? You know for a fact that your client is guilty, they’ve told you as much. And yet you have to stand in front of that jury every day and lie to their faces.”

How to get away with murder – Season 1, Episode 14

1

Apuleius of Madauros: Life and historical background

Any reconstruction of Apuleius’ life is based primarily on what Apuleius reveals about himself in his own works and on the writings of Augustine, to whom the works of Apuleius were known.¹ There are mainly three instances which help with the more or less exact dating of specific known events from Apuleius’ life and provide the chronological framework for arranging many others. The first secure date is that of Apuleius’ trial, conducted in the town of Sabratha before C. Claudius Maximus, the African Proconsul; there is general agreement that Claudius Maximus held the proconsulship during 158/59 CE, and thus Apuleius’ trial took place during that time, possibly in the winter of 158.² Later in the *Apology* Apuleius mentions that one of the accusers had read in court one of his wife’s letters in the presence of the statues of the reigning emperor Antoninus Pius, ruling between 138-161 CE (85.2). Lastly, the final few dates of Apuleius’ life which can be established with some degree of certainty are all derived

¹ For Augustine’s knowledge of Apuleius, cf. HORSFALL SCOTTI (1990).

² On dating Maximus’ proconsulate to 158/59 CE, cf. GUEY (1951); SYME (1959); THOMASSON (1996) 63. AMARELLI suggests a date older than 160 CE (1988: 129), FICK round about 161 CE (1991: 4).

from references in the *Florida*: in *Florida* 9 Apuleius lavishly bids farewell to Sextus Cocceius Severianus Honorinus at the end of his African proconsulship, dating at 162/163 CE,³ and his reference to the *favor Caesarum* (40) in the same passage alludes to the co-principate of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (161-69 CE).⁴ *Florida* 17 praises Scipio Orfitus, African proconsul during 163/164 CE, whereas *Florida* 16 refers to the hopes of Strabo Aemilianus, *consul suffectus* in 156 CE, of becoming proconsul, something to which he might possibly have ascended in the late 160s or early 170s. Therefore, the allusion to the “two Caesars” gives us a secure *terminus ante quem* of 169 CE, even a slightly later date, should one also decide to take into account *Florida* 16. But there is no real evidence for a date extending Apuleius’ career much further than the late 160s. Other less accurate dates can be assembled by a process of inference from, and reference to the fixed dates.⁵

Apuleius was born in the 120s CE⁶ at Madauros, a city in the Roman province of Africa Proconsularis, a place with a strong Latin culture; he was, therefore, a contemporary of many well-known sophists of the height of the Greek Second Sophistic, such as Lucian, Galen, and Aelius Aristides.⁷ His family was sufficiently wealthy. According to Apuleius, his father, after a full political career, had been appointed *duumvir*, which was the highest magistracy for a colony (*Apology* 24.9). After he died, he passed on to his sons a very generous sum of 2 million sesterces (23.1). The family’s particular wealth allowed him to begin studies in Platonic philosophy in Carthage, which served as the provincial capital and the proconsular seat (*Florida* 18.15). From there, Apuleius travelled to Athens for higher studies in the mid-150s, where he claims to have studied poetry, music, geometry, and universal philosophy (20.4). Although often addressed by himself (and by others) as *Platonicus* or *philosophus Platonicus* (e.g., *Apology* 10.6; *Florida* 15.26), it is difficult to determine whether Apuleius continued his studies in Platonic philosophy in Athens.⁸ It has been argued that there is no evidence to maintain that he was actually an alumnus of the Academy, since it seems to have had no

³ On which cf. SYME (1959) 318.

⁴ Cf. also SANDY (1997) 6 n.19.

⁵ For a discussion of the internal references and inferences regarding dates, cf. SANDY (1997) 1-8; HARRISON (2000) 1-10.

⁶ The date is deduced from *Florida* 16.36, where Apuleius confesses of having been ‘school comrades’ with the consul of 156 CE, Aemilius Strabo, presumably aged 32 (the minimum age for the consulship during this time), thus bringing the birth date to the 120s.

⁷ On Apuleius’ sophistic links, cf. SANDY (1997). Bibliography on the Imperial Greek intellectual revival known as the Second Sophistic is vast; but above all, cf. BOWERSOCK (1969); BOWIE (1970) and (1982); ANDERSON (1993); WHITMARSH (2001) and (2005); and the collection of papers at BORG (2004); SCHMIDT & FLEURY (2011).

⁸ Cf. also Augustine *City of God* 8.12,14,24, 9.3, 10.27. Apuleius’ philosophical studies reflect the revival of Platonism in the second century CE, on which cf. WHITTAKER (1987). For Platonic inferences in the *Apology*, cf. SANDY (1997) 22-26; on Apuleius’ Platonism, cf. FLETCHER (2014).

formal existence by the second century CE.⁹ Hence, the reference to *meditationes Academicae* in *Florida* 15.26 seems more likely to refer to his youthful studies, while still in Carthage, under Platonic teachers. Apuleius often brags about his *longa peregrinatio* and *diutina studia* (*Apology* 23.2), and at some point before 158/59 CE he visited and spent time in Rome (*Florida* 17.4), where he probably met and befriended Aulus Gellius.¹⁰ He was then *en route* to Alexandria at the beginning of the events which led to the *Apology* (*Apology* 72.1). From the references to Athens, Rome, and Alexandria, it becomes evidently apparent that Apuleius, similar to the Greek sophists of Imperial times, had visited many major places of sophistic activity during his active career.¹¹

The 160s find Apuleius flourishing in Carthage: he is at that time a successful public orator, and based on what he says, he has been giving declamations already for six years (*Florida* 18.16); his status as an orator had conferred on him the honour of the erection of a statue by the senate and the people of Carthage (16.1), as well as the honour of becoming the *sacerdos provinciae* of Africa Proconsularis (16.38).¹² All these facts point towards the suggestion that in the late 160s Apuleius was not only a respectable and established public orator, but also belonged to the wealthy Carthaginian elite, since he was able to afford the λειτουργία of provincial priest. As S. HARRISON notices, Apuleius “like contemporary Greek sophists, not only came from a respectable background but also increased his social status by rhetorical activities within his home community.”¹³ Contrastingly, there is hardly any evidence to shed light on what happened to him after the 160s. If the disputed works *On the World* and *On Plato* are taken to be genuine Apuleian treatises,¹⁴ their prefaces address a *fili Faustine*, assumingly a son of Apuleius old enough to be interested in philosophical matters; that would, then, place these two works in the 170s, or even later. Perhaps he continued his rhetorical performances and teaching in Carthage throughout the 170s, 180s, even the 190s.¹⁵ It seems, however, conclusive that Apuleius did not follow a political career; Augustine

⁹ GLUCKER (1978) 139-41. For the remains of the philosophical schools in Athens during the Roman Imperial period, cf. CAMP (1989).

¹⁰ For the possible friendship between Apuleius and Gellius, cf. SANDY (1993); HOLFORD-STREVENS (2002) 16-19.

¹¹ There are internal references suggesting that he might have also visited Samos (*Florida* 15.4) and Hierapolis in Phrygia (*On the World* 17); for possible trips to other major Asia Minor sophistic centres, cf. HARRISON (2000) 6.

¹² Cf. also Augustine *Epistles* 138.19. Based on references from *Apology* 13.8, 55-10, and *Florida* 18.38, RIVES has suggested that instead of provincial *sacerdos*, Apuleius was, probably, priest of Ceres or Aesculapius (1994: 273-90).

¹³ HARRISON (2000) 8. On the social status of Greek sophists, cf. BOWIE (1982).

¹⁴ On which, cf. HARRISON (2000) 174-180.

¹⁵ For the contribution of Apuleius in the development of Latin education at Carthage, cf. OPEKU (1993).

reports in his *Epistles* that the provincial priesthood was the highest public *officium* he ever attained (138.19).

2

Apuleius *magus*? Magic and witchcraft in the *Apology*

Οὐκοῦν βασιλεὺς εἶ σί;

John 18:37

Apuleius lived and flourished during the second century CE, a time not only of religious uncertainty, but also of thirst for esoteric lore. A frequently attested desire to comprehend and grasp the occult ultimately led to a renewed interest in oriental, mystical, and magic practices. Undoubtedly, Apuleius was, so to speak, a child of his time; he was immersed in the culture of his age and the occult definitely caught his eye. But how acquainted was Apuleius really with the topic of magic? The answer to this question: very. In fact, well before Apuleius embarked on his most famous work, the *Metamorphoses*, and amidst his success as a public rhetor and philosopher, he was faced with a variety of magical criminal charges and had to defend himself in court in the winter of 158/59 CE.¹⁶ Court trials, defence against attacks, and self-presentation were not uncommon features for sophists during the Second Sophistic period. Flavius Philostratus, one of our main authorities on the Greek sophists of this period, reports in his influential *Lives of the Sophists*¹⁷ a number of disputes between famous and often eccentric sophists, whose quarrels would, on occasion, end in a big and flamboyant court trial.¹⁸ The theme, additionally, of Apuleius' trial should come as no real surprise; rumours of magic-working and obtaining help from praeternatural forces were also attached to two extempore Greek sophistic performers: Philostratus reports in *Lives of the Sophists* 523 that the sophist Dionysius was said to have purportedly trained his pupils in mnemonics with the help of astrology (Χαλδαίους τέχναις) and magic arts (γοητεύων), whereas by the time the sophist Hadrian of Tyre died, he had attained to such high honour that many had assumed he was a γόης (590).

¹⁶ On dates, cf. section 1 of current chapter. I am in agreement with those who argue that the *Metamorphoses* belongs to the climax of Apuleius' career and thus situate it in the period between the 170s and 180s CE; cf. e.g., WALSH (1970) 248-51; HARRISON (1999) xxix and (2000) 9-10.

¹⁷ On Philostratus, and the *Lives of the Sophists* in particular, cf. ANDERSON (1986), esp. 1-120; also the collection of papers in BOWIE & ELSNER (2009); ESHLEMAN (2012) 125-48.

¹⁸ On sophistic disputes during the Second Sophistic, cf. BOWERSOCK (1969) 89-100; ANDERSON (1993) 35-39.

The circumstances of Apuleius' trial are well known from the *Apology*,¹⁹ his (revised for publication) self-defence speech.²⁰ The speech gives the impression that the trial was willingly pursued by Apuleius in order to be cleared from any insinuations of him being a sorcerer, since, no doubt, such a suspicion could not only have been damaging to his career, but could have also posed a real threat to his life.²¹ Any explicit or implicit association with witchcraft and *maleficia* was considered a capital offence according to the Sullan *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* of 81 BCE,²² the law which Apuleius was probably charged and tried under.²³ The final outcome of the court case remains to this day unknown.²⁴ But the rhetorical and stylistic brilliance of the defence—notwithstanding its later publication, the fact that Apuleius was still alive and flourishing in Carthage in the 160s, and he becoming the *sacerdos provinciae* of Africa Proconsularis, an honour which would have never been conferred on him had he been found guilty and, at best, had been forced into exile—has convinced many that the author was in the end acquitted of all charges.²⁵ It was not then for nothing that R. HELM pronounced the *Apology* a 'Meisterwerk der zweiten Sophistik.'²⁶

¹⁹ Several titles for the speech seem to have circulated in antiquity (e.g. *De magia* or *Pro se De magia*), whereas the more traditional (and convenient) title *Apology* does not seem to antedate the Aldine edition of 1521. For a discussion of the 'original' title of the speech, cf. HARRISON (2000) 42-44; more recently CONSTANTINI (2016) 2. On the *Apology* in general, cf. selectively ABT (1908); WINTER (1968); TATUM (1979) 105-19; HIJMANS (1994); SALLMANN (1995); GRAF (1997) 65-88; BRADLEY (1997), (2000), and (2014); HUNINK (1997) I. 11-34, and (2001a) 11-24; SANDY (1997) 131-48; HARRISON (2000) 39-88 and (2008); HAMMERSTAEDT *et al.* (2002); RIVES (2003) 322-28 and (2008); MAY (2006) 73-108; CONSTANTINI (2016).

²⁰ It was not uncommon in antiquity for a speech delivered in court to be later reworked for publication, the most notable cases being some of Cicero's speeches. Apuleius elsewhere vows to publish a lengthier version of a *gratiarum actio* for the Carthaginians' effort to erect a statue in his honour (*Florida* 16.47-48). On the *Apology* being a reworked post-trial version, cf. GAIDE (1993); HARRISON (2000) 42; RIEMER (2006).

²¹ HUNINK, however, doubts Apuleius' readiness to undergo a trial which in the end could have claimed his life and questions whether "this seems to be exaggerated" (2001a: 13).

²² For a reconstruction of this law, cf. Ferrary's contribution at CRAWFORD (1996) 749-53. On the *Lex Cornelia*, cf. FERRARY (1991); RIVES (2003) and (2006).

²³ Cf. HARRISON (2000) 41. RIVES, on the other hand, retains a more sceptical approach as to whether Apuleius was tried under the scope of this specific *Lex* or under any particular law in general (2003: 323 n.31), and suggests instead that Apuleius faced charges during a procedure known as *cognitio extra ordinem* (2008: 19-21); cf. also BRADLEY (2014) 24-25. LAMBERTI also argues something similar, suggesting that the law under which Apuleius faced charges was entirely different from the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* (2002: 342).

²⁴ It still remains a puzzling fact of Apuleian scholarship that there exists no independent contemporary evidence, apart from the *Apology* itself, supporting the claim that Apuleius underwent a trial for witchcraft; a reference to the trial emerges in Augustine's *City of God* 8.19 (*postremo Apuleius ipse numquid apud Christianos iudices de magicis artibus accusatus est?*), but this reference occurs some two and a half centuries after Apuleius' hearing presumably took place. Nor, additionally, does Apuleius allude to his trial in any later works, unless one is prepared to accept Lucius' mock trial during the Festival of Laughter in the third Book of the *Metamorphoses* as reflecting in some odd manner Apuleius' earlier judicial experiences, on which cf. HARRISON (2000) 10, 218. VAN DER PAARDT, however, considered any identification of Lucius with Apuleius at this point as misleading and fallacious (1971: 89-91).

²⁵ On Apuleius' acquittal, cf. HIJMANS (1994) 1714-15; ZANKER (1995) 234; GRAF (1997) 65; BRADLEY (1997) 203; HUNINK (1997) I. 19-20 and (2001a) 20-21; HARRISON (2000) 7; MAY (2006) 73 and (2013) 1.

²⁶ HELM (1955).

However, there are scholars who, contrary to majority opinion, earnestly doubt whether there is any tangible historicity to the trial to begin with.²⁷ It is a fact that fictive courtroom speeches were not unusual features in the Greco-Roman worlds, and that is even more so the case for the rhetorical *paideia* under the Second Sophistic.²⁸ Throughout the Imperial Age students of rhetoric would have had adequate practice with sophistic preparatory exercises (*προγυμνάσματα*) on how to improvise successful *αὐτοσχέδια μελέται* or *declamationes* on any given topic, whether in the form of historico-political *suasoriae* or the more judicial *controversiae*.²⁹ There can be no doubt that Apuleius was thoroughly imbued in the rhetorical education of the times and, therefore, such rhetorical exercises would have not been unknown to him. So to scholars doubting the factuality of the speech the *Apology* is nothing more than an intricate rhetorical work of fiction, intended for an audience of *litterati* who would recognise and appreciate its erudite witticisms, sophistic playfulness, and multi-layered literary allusions to earlier works.³⁰

The underlying ‘story’ of the speech goes along the following lines. While setting out on a journey to Alexandria, perhaps from Carthage, Apuleius broke his winter journey at Oea and stayed with friends. He was visited there by Sicinius Pontianus, an old friend of his, whom he had met and shared rooms with when studying in Athens, probably in the early 150s CE (*Apology* 72.3). Pontianus succeeded in persuading Apuleius not just to stay at Oea for an entire year, but also to marry his mother, Pudentilla, a wealthy widow in her forties, in order to protect her considerable fortune for her sons.³¹ This, however, did not sit well with several members of Pudentilla’s extended family, who formally accused Apuleius of having practised witchcraft in order to bewitch and inveigle the widow into marriage in pursuit of profit (69.4). The trial took place in Africa Proconsularis at the town Sabratha, near Oea, before the proconsul Claudius Maximus and his *consilium*. The main accuser was Sicinius Aemilianus, a

²⁷ HUNINK, for instance, initially regarded the idea of the *Apology* being an entirely fictive account as ‘radical’ ((2001a) 23), but in a later publication is willing to consider the speech as a literary showpiece which has very little to do with an actual self-defence speech delivered at a court ((2008) 86 n.32). HIJMANS, on the contrary, rejects out of hand any notion that the *Apology* is an entirely fictive account that belongs to Apuleius’ creative imagination (1994: 1712) and suggests that the extant *Apology* comes from a direct and unadulterated copy made at the trial (*ibid*: 1715-19). Cf. also BRADLEY (1997) 213 n.19; SCHENK (2002) 39-46.

²⁸ Cf. RIVES (2008) 18 n.4, who also cites the cases of Antiphon’s *Tetralogies*, Isocrates’ *Antidosis*, or even the fictive courtroom speeches from the Greek novels.

²⁹ On the *προγυμνάσματα*, cf. KENNEDY (1983) 54-70, and (1994) 202-08; ANDERSON (1993) 47-53. On *μελέται*, also ones referring to (fictive and not) court cases, cf. ANDERSON (1993) 55-68; also MARROU (1956) 286. For the rhetorical *paideia* of the Second Sophistic, cf. KENNEDY (1994) 201-57.

³⁰ Various aspects of Apuleius’ multifaceted sophistic artistry are discussed by HARRISON (2008); HUNINK (2008); RIESS (2008).

³¹ On Pudentilla’s wealth, cf. FANTHAM (1995); HUNINK (1998b); BRADLEY (2000).

brother of Pudentilla's first husband, who, driven by avarice, was bent on keeping control of the former widow's considerable fortune within the family of the Sicinii. Marrying into a powerful and rich family would have definitely had its advantages: not only would the philosopher be securing a profitable alliance, but he would also be advancing up the social 'ladder'.³² Although it is not expressed in so many words, it becomes fairly evident from the course of the speech that by being a foreigner to Oea, not to mention a philosopher,³³ Apuleius challenged the very social structures and dynamics of the town. Had it not been for him, Pudentilla's wealth would have passed on to the family of the Sicinii and everyone would have been happy; but not in this case. Apuleius was a problem which needed to be dealt with in an efficient, if not permanent, way. By bringing forth a charge of magic, a charge which, by all means, would have been difficult to defend himself against, Apuleius' adversaries were eager to achieve mainly two things. On the one hand, the use of magic could explain to some extent their sudden reversal of fortunes. Though no particular law existed forbidding a wealthy widow to remarry whosoever she pleased and granted that Pudentilla had not voiced any complaints against her husband, the accusers could not possibly maintain that she had married Apuleius against her will. Hence, their only viable solution was to put forward a charge suggesting that Pudentilla was not in her right mind since Apuleius had employed witchcraft to make her fall in love with him. On the other hand, by accusing Apuleius of having used magical means, the plaintiffs strove to incite the closed society of Oea to eliminate, in a most effective and permanent way, a problem that essentially threatened the established order.³⁴

It is within this frame that Apuleius' *Apology* is a stimulating text; not only does it allow us an intimate view into Apuleius' most private (if not fictive) affairs, but it also provides a frame for understanding the image of the sorcerer within the boundaries of his own society, a community that tends to blur the fine lines between a philosopher-cum-scientist-cum-doctor, an initiate, and a sorcerer. As it will soon be shown, Apuleius' alleged 'pure' scientific inquiries lead to fallacious (or purposely malevolent?) interpretations on behalf of his opponents; a seemingly harmless medical diagnosis is mistaken, due to the accusers' benighted (or feigned?) ignorance, for magical conduct and/or exorcism; not to mention

³² Cf. FARAONE (1999) 85.

³³ On the general scepticism concerning philosophers and their status, cf. *infra* n.44.

³⁴ Apuleius' case is not the first we encounter whereby magic is used as a pretence for the challenge of social structures and rivalry between competitors; cf. also the case of C. Furius Cresimus referred to in chapter 2.3.

tokens of Apuleius' initiation into private mystery cults that are misapprehended or deliberately misread by the plaintiffs as signs of witchery.³⁵

After a very lengthy *praemunitio*, which has largely not much to do with the *crimen magiae* itself, Apuleius reaches the specifics that he has pledged to clear up in the beginning of his speech. Among the many accusations Aemilianus and his group brought against him, five in particular are related to phenomena of magic. Instead of denying the accusations outright, Apuleius opts to cast doubt on their characterisation as crimes and provide alternative explanations, a rhetorical strategy which is attested by ancient rhetorical handbooks.³⁶ But as the speech unfolds little by little before us, it becomes evident that Apuleius has a vast knowledge of magical practices, and it is therefore easy for him to refute the accusations. However, the ease with which Apuleius contests the charges makes it natural to question whether it was in fact magic that lay at the heart of the formal charges, or if such charges had come up along the way and after considerable pressure had been put on the plaintiffs.³⁷

The first of these 'magical' accusations concerns Apuleius' suspicious interest in fish and his purchasing fish from fishermen (29.1). The opposition apparently had mentioned the unlawful use of the sea hare (*lepus marinus*)³⁸ in bringing about a woman's love and had stated some unfamiliar kinds of fish whose very names (*veretillum*, *virginal*) would seem to have pointed to sexual organs and practices (33.5-6; 34.5; 35.6).³⁹ Although Apuleius does not deny buying fish, he rejects out of hand his accusers' allegations of being a *magus* by indicating several weaknesses in the charge and asserting that his interest in fish is solely of a scientific and philosophical nature and has nothing to do with witchcraft and the concoction of mind-altering *venena*. On the contrary, he interprets his fascination with fish as a case of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* of Aristotle; in order to corroborate the veracity of his claims, he orders one of the attendants to read out some fragments from one of his (now lost) Greek treatises on fish.⁴⁰ What is more, his interest also seems to have a hands-on side to it: by examining and

³⁵ On the similarities and differences between magic and mystery cults, cf. GRAF (1997) 96-117.

³⁶ Cf. RIVES (2003) 324-25.

³⁷ Cf. e.g., HUNINK (2001a) 13.

³⁸ The sea-hare is discussed by Pliny *Natural History* 9.155, 20.223, 32.8-9. Philostratus reports that the emperor Titus is also said to have died after consuming a dish which consisted of a *lepus marinus* (*Apollonius of Tyana* 6.32).

³⁹ On the correlation of sea creatures with sexual practices and genitalia, especially in Greek comedy, cf. SHAW (2014); cf. also HENDERSON (1991) 142.

⁴⁰ On Apuleius' zoological works, cf. HARRISON (2000) 29-30. On fish-mongering and Roman comedy, cf. MAY (2006) 91. On this scene, cf. VALLETTE (1908) 58-68; ANNEQUIN (1973) 112-13; HIJMANS (1994) 1764; HUNINK (1997) II. 97-8; HARRISON (2000) 65-9.

dissecting fish, Apuleius wishes to discover possible medicinal properties of sea creatures for the benefit of humankind (40.1-4).⁴¹ The inference that Apuleius is striving to get through to the presiding court officials and the audience at this stage is that his opponents, resting upon beliefs and ideas concerning witchcraft which dominated them,⁴² had interpreted his scientific interest in uncommon fish as an indicator for practising malevolent erotic magic, and they had thus construed the philosopher's actions according to a classification which was available to them, but differed inherently from that of Apuleius. Apuleius seems to be suggesting that the issue at stake is a matter of "accepted norms and their limits" (not to mention of perceived deviance):⁴³ the distinctions between a philosopher and a *magus* were not always too evident; one person's philosopher could easily have been another person's *magus*, and a wide array of actions could be interpreted as magical by those who have no real knowledge of philosophy, whereas to others they may appear as entirely harmless and philosophical. Apuleius has anyhow mentioned from the outset of the *Apology* that his defence is meant to be understood as a defence of philosophy (*verum etiam philosophiae defensionem*), since most of the reproaches against philosophers are made by the *imperiti*, who could not comprehend what it meant to lead a φιλόσοφος βίος (3.5-6).⁴⁴

It is nonetheless rather astonishing that Apuleius repudiates or downplays any associations between fish and magic, especially given the abundance of evidence from antiquity pointing towards the use of maritime animals in numerous magical activities and rituals.⁴⁵ For example, when Ovid discusses the holiday of the Feralia at *Fasti* 2.577-82, he mentions that the old woman performing the magical binding rite roasts the head of a small fish which she had sewed up and pierced with a bronze needle.⁴⁶ The magical concoction brewed by Lucan's Erictho which is then used to reanimate the dead soldier contained, among other things, the enchanted fish *echeneis* (6.675); the *echeneis* is also discussed by Pliny in the *Natural History*, who moreover devotes an entire book to remedies derived from fish

⁴¹ On Apuleius' potential medical knowledge, cf. GAIDE (1991).

⁴² On these ideas, most of which relate to the image and perception of the *magus*, cf. RIVES (2008) 25-26, and more detailed at (2010).

⁴³ Cf. RIVES (2003) 325.

⁴⁴ RIVES briefly discusses the various misconceptions of philosophers during the second century CE, and in order to enhance his argument he brings into discussion one of the most controversial figures from this period: the philosopher/healer/prophet/magician Apollonius of Tyana (2008: 27-35). On Apollonius' dubious status, cf. BOWIE (1978); for the ambivalent reception of Apollonius in the Renaissance, cf. DALL'ASTA (2008); on Philostratus' *Apollonius of Tyana*, cf. ANDERSON (1986) 121-239; FLINTERMAN (1995); and the relevant papers in BOWIE & ELSNER (2009), and DEMOEN & PRAET (2009).

⁴⁵ Cf. ABT (1908) 61-157; also DERCHAIN & HUBEAUX (1958); AMARELLI (1988) 121 n.35.

⁴⁶ Cf. also chapter 2.4.2.2.

and sea creatures, some of which come close to having magical associations.⁴⁷ In addition, several recipes from both the magical and demotic papyri refer to the use of fish in magical ceremonies.⁴⁸ It would seem then that Apuleius is not entirely honest. It has been noted that Apuleius' strategy at this point is that of utter denial of facts and deliberate falsehood, combined with an intrepid bluff which throws off his opposition; by denying any association between magic and fish Apuleius cunningly prevents the accusers from pursuing this particular charge any further lest they were willing to raise obvious questions and concerns as to how they knew so much about the magical properties of fish, thus running the risk of exposing themselves as potential magicians too.⁴⁹ But in the end it does not effectively matter whether Apuleius is entirely candid or not, or how he manipulates the implicating evidence to answer his needs. All that matters to him is to establish an intellectual connection with the governing proconsul, the *pepaideumenos* Claudius Maximus.⁵⁰ He is the one who needs to be convinced of Apuleius' innocence; he is the one holding all the cards in his hands.

For the first accusation Apuleius chooses to present himself as an impartial scientist who has no knowledge of vulgar magical practices. A similar stance and rhetorical strategies are followed for the remaining allegations. The second charge Apuleius contests can be broken down in two parts: he is first accused of having cast an enchantment on a slave boy named Thallus, who as a result of this had lost consciousness and collapsed (42.3); and he is then indicted of having put a spell on, or even having exorcised⁵¹ a demon from, a woman brought to him for a cure (48.1). Apuleius once again defends himself by presenting this new charge as further ill-informed misinterpretation: he argues that both persons were not suffering from witchcraft of any sort, but, on the contrary, were demonstrating symptoms of epilepsy, for which he feels obliged to present a physiological account in the form of a

⁴⁷ Cf. e.g., 32.44, 72, 74, 115-16, 133, 137, 139; also at 9.79 he offers a discussion of the magical properties of the *echeneis*.

⁴⁸ Cf. *PGM* 3.515-20; 4.2454, 2685-94; *PDM* 14.330, 335-49, 875-85; 127.1-2.

⁴⁹ Pointed out by HUNINK (2001a) 17.

⁵⁰ Apuleius often addresses in the *Apology* Claudius Maximus' interests in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy (e.g. 25.10, 36.5, 41.4, 51.1, 64.4-7). This Claudius Maximus is also identified with the Μάξιμος that Marcus Aurelius claimed of having as a Stoic teacher at *Meditations* 1.15 and 1.17.10; for the identification, cf. BRADLEY (1997) 216; HARRISON (2000) 45.

⁵¹ GRAF maintains that the episode of the epileptic woman may contain subtle traces of exorcism and argues that Apuleius' society was well acquainted with such practices (1997: 78). On Greco-Roman literary sources referring to exorcism and the expulsion of evil spirits, cf. *Gospel of Mark* 5.1-20, 9.14-29; *Gospel of Matthew* 4.23-24, 12.22-24, 17.14-21; *Gospel of Luke* 4.31-41, 8.26-39, 9.37-42; *Acts of the Apostles* 16.16-18, 19.11-20; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 8.42-49; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 16; Philostratus *Apollonius of Tyana* 3.38; *PGM* 4.3007-86, 13.242-44. Cf. also BONNER (1943); BROWN (1971); FLINT (1999); JANOWITZ (2001) 27-46.

digression (49-51).⁵² Alternatively, he counter-argues that even if he had cast a spell, the boy Thallus would not be fit for the purpose of divination, assuming that divination “is the great benefit that derives from spells” (*quipped hoc emolumentum canticis accipimus, praesagium et divinationem*, 42.5); he is neither handsome, nor healthy, nor intelligent, nor eloquent, and hence clearly an inappropriate divinatory medium for any god to dwell in (43.4-6).

Third in line comes a minor accusation that Apuleius had stored some mysterious magical object wrapped in linen cloth in Pontianus’ library among his household *lares*, an object which no-one had ever seen, or was aware of its precise identity (53.2). The presence of linen here may look suspicious. Although linen was a material most traditionally associated with religion and purity (it is mentioned in relation to Egyptian priests as early as Herodotus,⁵³ and was linked to Pythagoras⁵⁴), it was, moreover closely connected to witchcraft and magical rituals in the magical papyri.⁵⁵ During this charge Apuleius seizes the opportunity to ingeniously mock Aemilianus for his incompetence and ignorance by pointing to the fact that he was unaware what he was accusing Apuleius of (*‘hoc fuit, quoniam quid fuerit ignoro’*, 53.5). For matters of disclosure, Apuleius does reveal that the implied ‘magical’ object he is suspected of hiding in Pontianus’ household belongs, in fact, to the mysteries of Dionysus (one of the many cults he had been initiated into), but he prefers to refrain from divulging its identity to the uninitiated (55.8).⁵⁶

Apuleius then proceeds to address the allegation of having practised illegal nocturnal sacrifices (*nocturna sacra*) together with his friend Appius Quintianus in the household of a certain Junius Crassus during the latter’s absence (57.2). Crassus had testified that upon his return to Oea he had detected signs of soot and sacrificial bird feathers in his house. It is quite easy to comprehend why such a *sacrum* could have been perceived by the plaintiffs as magical: unlike public rites, which were official, open, took place at regular intervals, during the day, with the involvement of all the town officials and the citizen body, magic rites were carried out far away from dwelling places, at night, in secret, and were considered abnormal,

⁵² On this scene, cf. ABT (1908) 158-205 (and on epilepsy’s connection to demons, esp. 198-99); HUNINK (1997) II. 126-27; HARRISON (2000) 69-72.

⁵³ *Histories* 2.37.2: εἴματα δὲ λίνεα φορέουσι [sc. οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι] αἰεὶ νεόπλυτα, ἐπιτηδεύοντες τοῦτο μάλιστα.

⁵⁴ Cf. QUASTEN (1942).

⁵⁵ Cf. *PGM* 1.277, 293, 332; 4.81, 663, 676, 769; 7.209, 338, 359, 543, 664; 12.145; 13.96, 314, 650; 36.237; *SM* 81.4. Also ABT (1908) 215-16.

⁵⁶ On Apuleius’ religious interests, cf. WALSH (1968); BEAUJEU (1983); SCHLAM (1992) 11-3. On Dionysus’ cult in the Roman Empire, cf. FOUCHER (1981); TURCAN (1996) 291-327. MÜNSTERMANN has claimed that both the unidentified image referred to here, as well as the Mercury statuette mentioned later at *Apology* 61-63, are in essence Hermetic (1995: 196-203). For a discussion of the scene, cf. ABT (1908) 206-16; HUNINK (1997) II. 144-45; HARRISON (2000) 72-3.

unauthorised and illegal. Remoteness and privacy are two signs of the very intimate nature of a magic rite, and thus point towards a person working as a private agent with a very private agenda; both the magic rite itself and its *auctor* are veiled in mystery and secrecy. And given that the charge of practising *nocturna sacra* was a serious capital offence under the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis*,⁵⁷ it is surprising that we encounter Apuleius treating this charge in quite a comic fashion, making humorous allusions to the low-life world of Roman satire and comedy⁵⁸ and employing Lucilian and Terentian terms in portraying Crassus as a glutton (*gumia, lurco*, 57.2; *helluo*, 57.6). Apuleius maintains that Crassus could not have possibly been a witness to his suspected magical sacrifices, since he was in Alexandria at the time (hundreds of miles away from Oea), and it is only later revealed that a slave had apparently informed Crassus of what had taken place in the house. Apuleius, moreover, counter-argues that, had he really practised illegal sacrifices, it would unquestionably have made more sense to have done so in the privacy of his own house and not in the house of a stranger (once again the contrast between civic/open and magic/private rites is insinuated), and that he would additionally have had the common sense to have a slave clean up the house afterwards and not leave all the incriminating evidence lying around (58.3-5). Furthermore, by sketching Crassus as being prone to intemperate food and drink consumption, aside from the fact that he was not able to appear in court and testify in person due to a hangover,⁵⁹ Apuleius contends that he is an unreliable witness, whose testimony Claudius Maximus has already rejected, and accuses him of having received a (pitifully small) bribe of 3,000 sesterces from Aemilianus to bear false witness at the trial (59.8).⁶⁰

The last of the impious actions Apuleius is arraigned for concerns the suspected manufacturing out of a special kind of wood of an infernal ghostly image, intended to be used in impious ceremonies, which he then worshipped and addressed as βασιλεύς (61.1). Apuleius summons to the court the creator of the effigy, Cornelius Saturninus, a talented and skilful local artisan, to testify that he had created the statuette for Apuleius out of a special ebony box upon Sicinius Pontianus' request. The statuette, claims Apuleius, has been once again

⁵⁷ Cf. e.g., Paul the Jurist *Opinions* 5,23.15: (*ad legem Corneliam de sicariis et veneficis*) *qui sacra impia nocturnave, ut quem obcantarent defigerent obligarent, fecerint faciendave curaverint, aut cruci suffiguntur aut bestiis obiciuntur.*

⁵⁸ Cf. HARRISON (2000) 73; MAY (2006) 96-99. For the comical elements of the *Apology*, cf. HUNINK (1998a).

⁵⁹ Apuleius' invective against Crassus appears to be following the established pattern of abuse as found in Cicero's *Against Piso* 13, on which cf. HARRISON (2000) 73.

⁶⁰ HUNINK notices that 3,000 sesterces was apparently a small price for offering false testimony in a charge of capital offence (1997: II. 160, s.v. '*tribus milibus nummis*'); cf. also DI VITA (1968) 190. On this scene, cf. ABT (1908) 217-21; HUNINK (1997) II. 153-54; HARRISON (2000) 73-4.

misinterpreted by Aemilianus and his group, for it represents neither a ghastly image nor a skeleton, but, on the contrary, the god Hermes, and is used by Apuleius for his personal devotions (61.8). Apuleius produces the effigy in court for everyone to examine it, and at the same time offers an *ekphrasis* of it (63.6-9).⁶¹ He then unleashes a curse on Aemilianus in the name of Hermes for his fabrications, evoking the god's wrath to bring Aemilianus in contact with all the sinister elements with which the prosecution had associated the statuette (64.1-2).⁶² As for addressing the statue as βασιλεύς, Apuleius upholds that he has firm philosophical reasons for doing so and refers to the pseudo-Platonic *Second Epistle* which invoked the mystical concept of the 'king' divinity that controls all things.⁶³ But he remains conspicuously reticent concerning the identity of the βασιλεύς, reminiscent, perhaps, of his earlier silence on the identification of the secret object wrapped in linen cloth in Pontianus' library (64.3-8).

Once more Apuleius deliberately manipulates the evidence to suit his own needs, preferring to conceal the factual truth by providing a plausible (but perhaps, calculatingly false) explanation. But the evidence, or better the accusation, brought against him this time seems quite incriminating. Identifying the statuette with Hermes was, no doubt, a very bold move on Apuleius' behalf; Hermes is often identified as one of the principal gods of magic, only second to Hecate, and he is frequently invoked in various rituals in the Greek magical papyri.⁶⁴ Perhaps in a moment of oratorical grandeur (or unfortunate absent-mindedness), Apuleius fails to recall that he has earlier referred twice to Hermes' magical associations, so that the mere recollection of the deity right now could seem extremely suspicious, not to mention incriminating (31.9; 42.6). And as if that were not enough, one spell in particular, identified as the 'binding love spell of Astrapsoukos' (*PGM* 8.1-63), mentions that ebony is the wood associated with Hermes (οἶδά σου καὶ τὸ ξύλον· τὸ ἐβεννίνου, 12-13). Could this be more random coincidence? Apuleius would like us to think so; but sensing possibly that his arguments are not too convincing, he ingeniously tones down the magical aspect of the statue

⁶¹ ABT logically argues that the wooden statuette presented by Apuleius in court may not necessarily be the one the prosecution had in mind while filing their charges (1908: 223).

⁶² The curse demonstrates some features which are characteristic of Roman prayers and magical incantations, on which cf. HUNINK (1997) II. 169, s.v. '*at tibi, Aemiliane...*' For the possibility that the curse was added to the revised version of the speech, after Apuleius had been acquitted, cf. HUNINK (1997) II. 163; HARRISON (2000) 75 n.93.

⁶³ *Apology* 64.6 = pseudo-Plato *Epistles* 2.312e: περὶ τὸν πάντων βασιλέα πάντ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἐκείνου ἕνεκα πάντα. Although the Platonic *Epistle* is now considered spurious, it was, nonetheless, regarded as genuine in antiquity. On this scene, cf. ABT (1908) 222-306; HUNINK (1997) II. 162-63; HARRISON (2000).

⁶⁴ Cf. *PGM* 3.47, 4.1443, 1463, 5.399, 7.668, 8.2-4, and *passim*. On Hermes' relation to magic and to his Egyptian equivalent Thot, cf. COPENHAVER (1992) 93; on the relation of the *Apology's mercuriolium* to magic, cf. NORDEN (1912) 44-6; FICK (1991) 23-5. On Apuleius' Hermetic interests, cf. MÜNSTERMANN (1995) 130-74.

and rather insinuates that it was in fact Sicinius Pontianus' idea, and not his, to construct a statue of this particular deity (61.7-8). And as for his conspicuous silence on the identity of the βασιλεύς, this may too have an ulterior motive. The magical papyri supply ample evidence for the existence of certain magical divinities addressed as βασιλεύς, but it looks as if they do not belong to the realm of the dead.⁶⁵ On the contrary, these divinities are powerful δαίμονες whom the magician wishes to obtain as all-mighty assistants (πάρεδρος). Some scholars have even suggested possible links between the βασιλεύς with either the Egyptian Osiris,⁶⁶ or the Judaeo-Christian God.⁶⁷

In conclusion, the *Apology* offers us the opportunity to glimpse the semantic connotations of the term *magus*, and especially of *magia* during Apuleius' time. As mentioned previously in chapter 1, the term *magia* appears for the first time in Apuleius' *Apology* and it is used explicitly as a legal charge: it is a *crimen* (25.5), which in itself implies that magic was an act considered as socially unwanted and illicit. Apuleius repeatedly describes the charge brought against him by his adversaries as one of *magia* or, to a lesser extent, of being a *magus*.⁶⁸ Throughout the speech Apuleius offers briefly three different definitions of what a *magus* is: on a more erudite level, betraying Platonic influences: a *magus* is either a Persian priest,⁶⁹ or an educator of Persian princes;⁷⁰ but he could also be a person who exerts supernatural control over the gods through wondrous powers granted to him by powerful spells.⁷¹ Essentially, the first two definitions of *magia* are more or less identical, stressing the *magus*' piety and propriety towards the divine, and are brought into play in order to ennoble and hence minimise the severity of the charge of *magia* itself.⁷²

But Apuleius does not linger for long on the first two definitions of *magus*, since he is well aware that the third definition, which is presented as the 'popular opinion' (*more vulgari*), reflects more common and contemporary perceptions of *magia* and the persons versed in this art. Emphasis in the third definition is put primarily on the *magus*' power and

⁶⁵ Cf. *PGM* 1.163; 2.53; 3.81, 102; 4.243, 255; 5.138; 12.183, 247, 264; 13.605; *SM* 42.A.35, 40; see also *ABT* (1908) 225-26; *BEAUJEU* (1983) 404; *GAIDE* (1993) 230. *REGEN* discusses this particular passage in connection to its Platonic, Hermetic, and magical associations (1971: 92-103).

⁶⁶ Cf. *TRIPP* (1988) 250.

⁶⁷ Cf. *HERRMANN* (1952) 337 and (1959).

⁶⁸ E.g., 2.2, 9.5, 25.5, 25.8, 29.9, 47.1.

⁶⁹ 25.9: *Persarum lingua magus est qui nostra sacerdos*.

⁷⁰ 25.10: *si quidem magia id est quod Plato interpretatur, cum commemorat, quibusnam disciplinis puerum regno adulescentem Persae imbuant*.

⁷¹ 26.6: *sin vero more vulgari eum isti proprie magum existimant, qui communione loquendi cum deis immortalibus ad omnia quae velit incredibili quadam vi cantaminum polleat*.

⁷² Cf. *GRAF* (2002b) 94; *RIVES* (2010) 55.

the attainment of his desires. By addressing and refuting one by one the plaintiff's allegations, Apuleius ingeniously allows his readers to glance at the portrait and activities of a person who in the second century CE might have passed as a *magus*. Surprisingly, he devotes only a small amount of time addressing the sort of things a *magus* was apparently an expert in; what we do get instead is Apuleius emphasising both the methods and the general conduct of affairs that principally governed a *magus'* actions.⁷³ A great part of the speech is used to refute the accusations that he had employed *magica maleficia* to bewitch Pudentilla in order to make her fall in love with him.⁷⁴ This then appears to be the first field of expertise of a *magus*: erotic magic, which comes as a result of the *magus'* sexual lust. The next field is divination and this becomes apparent from the accusation that Apuleius had caused a slave-boy to collapse; but Apuleius ridicules his accusers' ignorance by openly declaring that if they really had any active knowledge of what they were accusing him of, they would have expanded their accusation to include a charge of using the young slave-boy as a divinatory medium, a practice that the magi were notoriously known for.⁷⁵ Moreover, as the speech slowly progresses, the reader is informed that a *magus* was imagined as being a professional in certain types of rituals and of making use of a number of magical paraphernalia in attaining his selfish purposes: he allegedly takes part in nightly activities; he offers impious nocturnal sacrifices,⁷⁶ and prays to ghastly infernal deities;⁷⁷ additionally, he knows how to utter magical incantations (*carmina*) and to concoct powerful *venena*⁷⁸ from a variety of unnatural substances (such as the *lepus marinus*). Lastly, the *magus'* magical rites are cloaked in isolation and secrecy—a topic linked to the accusation that he had hidden a secret object, wrapped in a linen cloth, among the household gods of Pontianus⁷⁹—which are important aspects of any magical enterprise.⁸⁰

⁷³ Cf. RIVES (2010) 56.

⁷⁴ 78.5: *illas famosissimas litteras, quibus, ut isti aiebant, confessa est sese mea magia in amorem inductam dementire.*

⁷⁵ Cf. 43.1: *haec et alia apud plerosque de magis et pueris lego equidem.*

⁷⁶ E.g., 57.2: *me in eius domo nocturna sacra cum Appio Quintiano amico meo factitasse.*

⁷⁷ Cf. the skeletal *mercuriolum* at 61.2 (*quod me aiunt ad magica maleficia occulta fabrica ligno exquisitissimo comparasse et, cum sit sceleti forma turpe et horribile, tamen impendio colere et Graeco vocabulo βασιλέα nuncupare*) which looks like a terrifying Underworld figure (63.1: *tertium mendacium vestrum fuit macilentam vel omnino evisceratam formam diri cadaveris fabricatam, prorsus horribilem et larvalem*).

⁷⁸ E.g., 84.3: *quae enim relinquitur vis cantaminibus et veneficiis, si fatum rei cuiusque veluti violentissimus torrens neque retineri potest neque impelli?*

⁷⁹ 54.8: *praesertim quod conditum cumque, quod obsignatum, quod inclusum domi adservatur, id omne eodem argumento magicum dicitur aut e cella promptaria in forum atque in iudicium proferetur.*

⁸⁰ Cf. also the remarks at MAUSS (2001) 29.

If we were to take into consideration the totality of allegations brought against Apuleius by his adversaries in conjunction with our knowledge of various magical practices from the Greek magical papyri and elsewhere, it would seem that the charges Apuleius was faced with raise some very obvious questions regarding his affiliation with magic in general. As M. DICKIE has pointed out, “in the second half of the second century AD, the philosopher with an interest in the occult was almost certainly a familiar type.”⁸¹ This notion certainly applied to Apuleius, who had a vast knowledge of many things and was not reluctant to present it to a large audience. There can be little room for doubt that Apuleius was interested in occult practices—the majority of the evidence tends to support this notion. However, being *interested* in the occult and *practising* occult rites are two separate things; his interest in the occult does not necessarily imply that Apuleius was guilty of criminal acts. Since his accusers only managed to put together a hasty and badly prepared accusation, perhaps under external pressure, Apuleius achieved to cast reasonable doubt on the implicating evidence. Given that in the end he was apparently acquitted, he must have done so in quite a convincing manner.

3

Concluding discussion

In this chapter, I have briefly examined the magical allegations hurled against Apuleius as they appear in his defence against being a *magus*. The reason why the *Apology* was brought into the discussion was to demonstrate and establish that Apuleius had already had some familiarity with the topic of magic well before he set out to produce the *Metamorphoses*, which are rich in magical scenes and rituals. Although the question of whether the *Apology* reflects any actual historical events or is merely a sophistic work of fiction remains, at least to some, open for discussion, it is important to keep in mind that the *Apology* reflects in certain ways Apuleius’ familiarity with and knowledge of some very specific magical rituals. By refuting his accuser’s allegations one by one, he offers an implicit definition of the concept of *magia*: it is a secret art that makes use of esoteric rituals, employs magical *carmina* and *venena*, makes nocturnal sacrifices and evokes praeternatural entities and divinities, especially ones related to the dead and the Underworld, in achieving specific goals. Although the knowledge of occult practices reflected in the *Apology* would not have necessarily made Apuleius a *magus*, it would however strongly point towards his interest in the occult and the

⁸¹ DICKIE (2001) 204.

mystical / magical lore that came with it. If one is willing to keep an open mind, some resonances of the *Apology's* magical allegations may be reflected in some form in the *Metamorphoses*: for instance, Lucius' purchase of bad quality fish from a provisions market at *Metamorphoses* 1.23-24 may draw our attention to Apuleius' interest in exotic fish in the *Apology*;⁴³⁵ whereas the unidentified item wrapped in linen and deposited in Pontianus' library may recall in some fashion the statuette of the Syrian goddess, wrapped in a silken mantle and paraded through the streets by the catamite priests at *Metamorphoses* 8.27.1-3 (this scene, however, is already present at *Ass* 37). At any rate, the notion of *magia* found in the *Apology* comes more into relief in the *Metamorphoses* and is enhanced with further, more sinister forms of magic. If Apuleius offers only a tiny glimpse of his occult knowledge in the *Apology*, in the *Metamorphoses* he displays a whole new area of magical enterprises and supernatural activities which are not linked to the *magus* but to the figure of the witch.

⁴³⁵ On this episode's possible autobiographical dimensions, cf. HICTER (1944) 106-11. On a number of striking parallels between the *Apology* and the *Metamorphoses*, cf. TILG (2014) 100-03, 124-25.

4

YOU WICKED OL' WITCH!

MEROE, PANTHIA, AND THE HAGS OF THELYPHRON'S TALE

*Wicked Witch of the West: "Who killed my sister?
Who killed the Witch of the East? Was it you?"*

*Dorothy: "No, no. It was an accident. I didn't mean to
kill anybody."*

*Wicked Witch of the West: "Well, my little pretty, I
can cause accidents, too!"*

The Wizard of Oz (MGM 1939)

1

Preliminaries

In the course of chapter 2, I examined the presence and depiction of magic in Imperial Latin literature, and the evidence gathered there suggested that one could talk about an "unofficial" constitution of a literary witch tradition. The current chapter focuses on the portrayal of the serio-comical witches in the first two inserted tales of the *Metamorphoses*, and it discusses them both in terms of the magic and witchcraft they evoke and of their various supernatural associations. Most of the discussion will concentrate on the powerful witches of Aristomenes' tale. The reason for focusing primarily on these two witches is rather simple: on the one hand, the activities they engage in and the witchcraft underlying their actions present the most interest; on the other, their magical machinations and various preternatural implications are reflected by the anonymous hags of Thelyphron's story. Whenever points of contiguity or interest arise, Thelyphron's witches will also be brought into the discussion. I have excluded from this examination the necromantic implications of Zatchlas' ritual (Book 2), the witches Pamphile and Photis (Books 2-3), and the anonymous

witch of the baker's adultery tale (Book 9), as they will receive separate treatment in the subsequent chapters.

Some of the questions this chapter will address are: what exactly characterises and/or defines these women as 'witches'? What activities do they indulge in, and for what purpose? What are the magical implications of these scenes? How much of Apuleius' representation of witches, magic, and witchcraft is indebted to the witch tradition discussed earlier, and how much of this representation is his own contribution to the topic? Is the magic of these tales perceived and conceived as 'fictive', i.e. magic which functions principally on a literary level, or 'real' magic, i.e. magic attested from the Greek magical papyri and assumed to have been practised in reality?

2

Tales of witchcraft

The *Metamorphoses* (or the *Golden Ass*) of Apuleius is a wondrous tale of magic and witchcraft, of love lost and regained, of humiliation, betrayal, adultery and murders, and, finally, of salvation.¹ The narrative relates the many major and minor doings of the young nobleman Lucius, whose arrival at Hypata in Thessaly, land *par excellence* of witchcraft and magic, triggers the beginning of his Odyssean (mis)adventures.² Through his own curiosity and involvement with magic, Lucius is accidentally transformed into an ass and undergoes a long series of adventures at the hands of numerous masters (some good, others bad), until he is restored to his human form at the hands of the Egyptian goddess Isis at Cenchreae. Credit for the story itself, however, does not belong to Apuleius. In the prologue to the *Metamorphoses* the narratorial *ego*³ addresses the potential reader by urging him to sit back

¹ On the novel's title and its significance, cf. PERRY (1923); TATUM (1972) 306; BITEL (2001).

² The narrator Lucius explicitly compares himself to Odysseus at 9.13.4-5. The *Odyssey* is a good starting point for allusion hunting in the *Metamorphoses*, since it is recognised as a structural model for ancient novels in general; cf. REARDON (1991) 15-16; SANDY (1994) 1540-42. TATUM notices that "he (i.e. Lucius) has the itinerary of an Odysseus, with no heroic stature. He has a range of experiences as bizarre as any hero ever had, but, because he is, after all, an ass, he is continually denied the glory of a real hero—however much he pretends to be one" (1969: 525). For a discussion of some Odyssean scenes and allusions in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. HARRISON (1990b); FRANGOULIDIS (1991), (1992a), (1992b) and (1992c); SALLMANN (1996); MONTIGLIO (2007); TILG (2014) 52-54.

³ To this very day the identity of the prologic *ego* remains arguably elusive. Some scholars have identified the speaker either with Apuleius or Lucius, or in some cases a combination of both (selectively MASON (1983) 135-7; EDWARDS, M. (1993); DE JONG (2001b); SLATER (2001); DREWS (2006); KEULEN (2007) 11-13); others have proposed a more independent (metaliterary) speaker in the form of a speaking book, who could be associated neither with Lucius nor Apuleius (HARRISON (1990a)), whereas some have identified the speaker as an actor outside the work (SMITH (1972) 514-20; WINKLER (1985) 200-3; MAY (2006) 110-15), or largely

and enjoy a story which has been adapted from Greek (*fabulam graecanicam*, 1.1.6). Scholars throughout the years have argued that Apuleius' novel is based on Greek models, something which the narrator hints at with the phrases *fabulam graecanicam* and *sermone isto Milesio* (1.1.1):⁴ these works are the now lost Greek *Metamorphoseis*, whose abridged version or epitome, the *Loukios or the Ass*, has come down among the works of Lucian,⁵ and the also lost ἀκόλαστα βιβλία of *Milesian Tales* by Aristides of Miletus.⁶ Reworking and adapting a Greek story into Latin—for that is what *graecanicus* implies⁷—should not come as a surprise. Apuleius had devoted a large part of his writing career to bridging the gap between the two cultures and to transmitting and interpreting the accomplishments of the Greek East to the Latin West.⁸ However, we are at a loss when it comes to providing with any certainty an answer to the question of how Apuleius treated, used, and reused the Greek Μεταμορφώσεις or the shorter *Ass* epitome in his work. The relationship of the *Metamorphoses* to the lost

unidentifiable (GAISSER (2008) 19). More recently, TILG has offered a new suggestion which combines, to some extent, the possibilities of the speaker being an amalgam of Apuleius, Loukios/Lucius (both the Greek and Roman counterparts), and the talking book (2014: 22-24); also (2007).

⁴ For a survey of the Greek sources of the *Metamorphoses*, cf. selectively PERRY (1967) 211-35; VAN THIEL (1971/1972); ANDERSON (1976) 34-67; SCOBIE (1978a); HÄGG (1983) 176-81; SCHLAM (1992) 18-28; MASON (1994), and (1999) with notes; HARRISON (1997) 500-02, and (2000) 215-20; SANDY (1997) 233-42, and (1999) 84-6; SCHLAM & FINKELPEARL (2000) 36-41; KEULEN (2007) 7-8; MAY (2013) 8-9; TILG (2014) 2-7.

⁵ The *subscriptio* in manuscript Γ reads Λουκιανού ἐπιτομή τῶν Λουκίου Μεταμορφώσεων. Modern scholars tend to give credit to Photius' claim that the *Ass* is only an abbreviated form of the Μεταμορφώσεις of a certain Loukios from Patrai (*Library* 129); cf. JAMES (1987) 7-24; SCHLAM (1992) 18-28; MASON (1999) 103-04. PERRY suggested that the only connection between Lucian and the Μεταμορφώσεις would have been that of author and work (1967: 211-35); cf. also BOWIE (1994) 444; SHUMATE (1999) 115. ANDERSON, on the other hand, has suggested, but failed to prove, that Lucian first wrote the Μεταμορφώσεις and then also created the epitomised version known today as the *Ass* (1976: 34-67, esp. 44). For Lucian's relationship to the *Ass*, cf. MASON (1999) 104-5. Going against the grain, VAN THIEL argued for Flavius Phoenix of Hypata as the potential author of the Μεταμορφώσεις (1971: 40-42), for which he was criticised by MASON (1972) 315.

⁶ It is characterised as such by Plutarch *Crassus* 32.4 (εἰσήνεγκεν ἀκόλαστα βιβλία τῶν Ἀριστείδου Μιλησιακῶν). The *Milesian Tales* were, perhaps, a collection of oral anecdotes of ribald nature circulating the popular stereotype of the inhabitants of Miletus as wanton and self-indulgent and were adapted into Latin as *Milesiae* or *Milesiarum Libri* by Sisenna within a few decades from the composition of the original, on which cf. JENSSON (2004) 262-63; RAWSON (1979), however, casts doubt on Sisenna's authorship. For an overview of the *Milesian Tales* and their relationship to the Roman novel, cf. WALSH (1970) 10-18; MORESCHINI (1990), who also suggests that for Apuleius *fabula Milesia* connoted nothing more than 'prose fiction'; LEFÈVRE (1997); HARRISON (1998a); SANDY (1999) 84-6; JENSSON (2004); KIRICHENKO (2010) 178-84; TILG (2012) 144 and (2014) 37-40; MAY (2013) 5-6.

⁷ KEULEN distinguishes more an element of *usurpation* than of mere *adaptation* (2007: 90).

⁸ SANDY (1999) 82. Apuleius had adapted pseudo-Aristotelian treatises and had also coined new words to render Aristotle's technical terms in Latin (*Apology* 36.3-8), and had moreover given declamations in both Greek and Latin over an extended period of time (*Florida* 18). It should then not come as a surprise that one of the accusations brought against him in the *Apology* was his ability of being fluent in both languages (*accusamus apud te philosophum formosum et tam Graece quam Latine—pro nefas—disertissimum*, 4.1).

Μεταμορφώσεις has been interpreted on a wide spectrum of possibilities, from close association with the original Greek text⁹ to almost complete alteration.

Meroe and to some extent Panthia and the anonymous hags of Thelyphron's tale are among the first significant 'inserted' witches the reader encounters in the *Metamorphoses*. By 'inserted witch' I mean the witches that appear within embedded narratives, so that as a consequence Lucius, whether in human or asinine form, never chances upon them, unlike, for example, the witches Pamphile or Photis, with whom he interacts. The first two witches appear in the embedded tale of Aristomenes, the first secondary story to be narrated in the novel which also takes up the greater part of Book 1, and is completely absent from the epitomised *Ass*.¹⁰ The story serves a double function: on the one hand, it offers an apt introduction to the world of Thessalian witchcraft, land *par excellence* of magic;¹¹ on the other, it functions as the first of three implicit warnings (the other two being Byrrhena's prophetic utterance '*tua sunt cuncta, quae vides*' when Lucius stumbles upon the statue of Actaeon at her house (2.5.1),¹² and Thelyphron's witch story) urging Lucius not to give in to his *curiositas*¹³ and to dissociate himself from magic.¹⁴

⁹ The statement 'original text' should be used with caution since it is not known whether Apuleius used the abridged *Ass* as his source, or the entire Greek *Metamorphoseis*. Photius states that the first two books of the *Metamorphoseis* were comparable to the *Ass* (cf. MASON (1999) 106), which has led to the conclusion that either the entire Greek *Metamorphoseis* dealt with the ass-story, and Photius only bothered reading the first two books (cf. WINKLER (1985) 256), or that the first two books only dealt with the ass-story, and later books with other examples of metamorphosis (cf. HALL (1981) 414-32). Scholars tend to assume that Apuleius did not base the *Metamorphoses* on the *Ass*, but on the extended Greek *Metamorphoseis*, on which cf. FINKELPEARL (2007) 263; FRANGOULIDIS (2008) 10. Cf. also the discussion at ZIMMERMAN (2002). For the Greek and Roman versions of the ass stories, cf. MASON (1994); SLATER (2014).

¹⁰ VAN THIEL ascribed the novella of Aristomenes to the Greek Μεταμορφώσεις (1971: 46-7), and found support from EFFE (1976) 364-65; for reservations, cf. MASON (1972) 315-16.

¹¹ Cf. JUNGHANNS (1932) 121-2; CIAFFI (1960) 9-52, esp. 9-17, 38-41; PERRY (1967) 259-64; TATUM (1969) 493-9. On Thessaly as a land of witchcraft, cf. PHILLIPS (2002).

¹² The myth of Actaeon is introduced in the narrative as a 'calculated' premonition for what was destined to befall Lucius: Actaeon is penalised for his curiosity after spying on Diana by being transformed into a stag, Lucius' prying *curiositas* in Pamphile and her witchcraft will be penalised by his transformation into an ass; cf. WALSH (1970) 178; TATUM (1979) 38-9; WINKLER (1985) 168; PEDEN (1985) 380; HARRISON (1998b) 59-60 and (2015); WLOSOK (1999) 146-48. On Actaeon, cf. FRONTISI-DUCROUX (1997).

¹³ *Curiositas* constitutes a key motif of the novel with critics interpreting Lucius' transformation into an ass as a moral and just punishment for his irksome inquisitiveness; cf. WALSH (1988) 75-78; DEFILIPPO (1999); WLOSOK (1999); MAY (2013) 22. On positive connotations of curiosity, cf. JOLY (1961) 34. For an ironic and comical reading of *curiositas* in Apuleius, cf. KIRICHENKO (2008). On curiosity being the main attribute of Lucius-ass, cf. TASINATO (1997). On Lucius' characterisation, cf. HARRISON (2015); TILG (2015).

¹⁴ Lucius' three warnings may be a brilliant case of the pattern of the number 3, which reoccurs often enough in ancient literature: to mention but a few examples, there are three failed warnings for Lucius not to engage with magic; three failed warnings for Psyche not to give in to her *simplicitas* and *curiositas*; Odysseus' three failed attempts to embrace his mother and Aeneas' to embrace his father in the Underworld; Achilles chases Hector three times around the walls of Troy without being able to catch him; or even Peter's three denials of Jesus.

Both inserted stories have been on the receiving end of multiple scholarly interpretations throughout the years, the most polemical views belonging to B.E. PERRY, concentrating mainly on the various logical lapses of Aristomenes' tale (and of the entire novel, in general) and arguing that the narrative was nothing more than a hastily assembled patchwork.¹⁵ Other critics have considered Aristomenes' story as deriving from at least two main sources, a legal one betraying elements from declamatory themes and a folkloric one concerning witchcraft, which have then been padded out with Platonic allusions and allegories.¹⁶ Some have attempted to establish a connection between the fates suffered by Socrates and Lucius,¹⁷ or have looked into the episode's elegiac resonances,¹⁸ its theatricality,¹⁹ and the shift of roles of its main characters as a result of Meroe's revenge.²⁰

For its part, Thelyphron's story²¹ has not fared any better with PERRY either, who frequently pointed out the various inconsistencies in this story and argued that Apuleius, keeping true to his statement in the prologue that he will be stitching together various stories for the reader (*varias fabulas conseram*, 1.1.1), contaminated three different stories into one awkward compound, which comprised (1) a story relating the unsuccessful supervision of a corpse, (2) a story about witches attacking a corpse to steal its bodily parts and where a fatal identity in names results in the guardian's loss of some facial features, and (3) an aretalogical story of a dead man's magical reanimation that has no relevance to the previous witch stories.²² Some have tried to explain these inconsistencies in a less polemical way, either accepting them as "evidence of one of the ways the thematic structure is established in the work",²³ or arguing that "events seem to unfold in a sort of logical void, and the length of time it takes the reader to grasp its dimensions, lulled as he or she is by the superficial appearance of normal sequence, adds to the sense of insidiousness."²⁴ Others have discussed the

¹⁵ PERRY (1929b); (1967) 259-64. SHUMATE, on the contrary, treats these inconsistencies as a "breakdown of patterns" (1996: 74).

¹⁶ SMITH & WOODS (2002).

¹⁷ E.g., TATUM (1969) 493-502; SCOBIE (1978a) 51; SCHLAM (1992) 67-68; MURGATROYD (2001) 41.

¹⁸ MATTIACCI (1993); also HINDERMANN (2010).

¹⁹ MAY (2006) 128-42.

²⁰ FRANGOULIDIS (2001) 16-35. For a summary of further interpretations, cf. *idem* (2008) 47-48.

²¹ VAN THIEL also ascribes this novella to the Greek *Metamorphoseis* (1971: 76-7); also BROTHERTON (1934) 50; for reservations, cf. MASON (1972) 316; also WALSH (1970) 153: "it is reasonable to assume that the whole episode is inserted by Apuleius."

²² PERRY (1929a), (1949) 40, (1967) 269-73. WALSH, on the other hand, reduced the number of stories in Thelyphron's tale to two instead of three (1970: 153-54). For reservations on Perry's view, cf. BROTHERTON (1934) 47-50, esp. n.38; DE JONGE (1941) 4; MAYRHOFER (1975) 75-80.

²³ SCHLAM (1992) 70.

²⁴ SHUMATE (1996) 81.

affiliations between Aristomenes' and Thelyphron's tales of witchcraft,²⁵ while others again have concentrated on Lucius' and Thelyphron's similar fates.²⁶

3

Meroe, a *femina divina*

*And when thou dost wake,
Dame Earth shall quake,
and the houses shake,
and her belly shall ache
as her back were brake
such a birth to make
as is the blue drake,
whose form thou shalt take.*

Ben Jonson, *Masque of Queens*

An anticipated supernatural appearance has been already foreshadowed during the initial conversation between Aristomenes and the anonymous sceptical stranger: while travelling towards Thessaly for business, Lucius falls into the company of two strangers, and triggered by his thirst for novelty (*novitas*) politely requests to join their discussion (1.2). One of the interlocutors, whose identity remains unknown, reproaches the other, who we are soon to find out is named Aristomenes, for his belief in the power of magic over natural phenomena. Lucius chides the anonymous stranger for his stubbornness and scepticism about the powers of magic (1.3),²⁷ and proceeds to recount in brief the miraculous deeds he witnessed being performed in Athens: a man swallowing his sword²⁸ and burying a spear in his stomach, and a young boy climbing up to the top of the spear and dancing, as if he had no muscles or spine (1.4.2-4). The anonymous stranger's utter disbelief in the abilities of magical whispers to exert any influence either on terrestrial or heavenly and cosmic bodies leads Aristomenes, with the earnest exhortation of Lucius, to relate his encounter with a powerful and menacing witch. The phrase Apuleius puts into the anonymous stranger's mouth in order to describe the wondrous powers of *magica susurramina* is "*amnes agiles reverti, mare pigrum*

²⁵ Cf. WALSH (1970) 153-54.

²⁶ Cf. FRANGOULIDIS (2008) 85-107. For a summary of further interpretations, cf. *idem* (2008) 85-87.

²⁷ Compare, on the other hand, the story recounted by Milo to Lucius at *Met.* 2.13-14 regarding the soothsayer Diophanes, who ended up accidentally exposing his own chicanery. This story, SHUMATE suggests, was intended to be a warning against gullible belief in the supernatural (1999: 114).

²⁸ On this introductory scene with an emphasis on the sword swallowing performance, representing the 'penetrating' power of the word and the 'swallowing of fiction', cf. KEULEN (2003a).

conligari, ventos inanimes exspirare, solem inhiberi, lunam despumari, stellas evelli, diem tolli, noctem teneri" (1.3.1): this short, concise, and to the point phrase conclusively connects the manifold associations of witchery activities in the *Metamorphoses* with those of the Imperial witch tradition discussed previously in chapter 2.²⁹

Apuleius, in the form of the sceptical stranger, connects at this stage these miraculous ἀδύνατα not with witches *per se*, but with one of the witches' form of magic: the singing of incantations. *Susurramen* is an interesting word choice, since not only is it not attested in this form prior to Apuleius, but it is also charged with a very specific magical meaning and addresses the special and intimate manner in which a magical formula or spell was supposed to be pronounced. In quite a similar context Lucan uses the noun *susurrus* to refer to a prayer of unscrupulous nature (5.104-09), and the same term is later used by Justinian to specifically connote a magical incantation (*Institutions* 4.18.5; *Theodosian Code* 9.38.6). Murmuring was closely linked to magical enterprises, as it is attested by a number of Greco-Roman authors,³⁰ and it is associated in some way with the various *vores magicæ* or ἄρρητα ὀνόματα³¹ which are attested throughout the magical papyri. These *vores* are foreign nonsensical words or phrases composed of a variety of vowels and consonants and are arranged in a cadenced way. Iamblichus claims that though these words might appear as meaningless babblings to humans, they have, on the contrary, a very deep and sacred meaning to the gods (*On mysteries* 7.4-5).

Despite making only a brief 'live' appearance towards the end of the tale and for a mere two chapters (1.12-13), Meroe is an essential character of Aristomenes' tale: the

²⁹ On reversing rivers, cf. Euripides *Medea* 410-11; Cicero *On Divination* 1.78; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.46; Ovid *Amores* 2.1.26; Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 6.443, 7.391; also *PGM* 4.189-93 (ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ κλείσας οὐρανοῦ δισσᾶς πτύχας καὶ κοιμίσας δράκοντα τὸν ἀθεώρητον, στήσας θάλασσαν, ρεῖθρα, ποταμῶν νόματα, ἄχρισ οὐ κυριεύσης τῆσδε τῆς σαηπτουχίας). On restraining the sea, cf. pseudo-Hippocrates *Sacred Disease* 4.3; Petronius *Satyrica* 134.12.4-5; Seneca *Hercules* 378, *Medea* 765-66, *Agamemnon* 161; Lucan *Civil War* 5.434-35. On reducing winds, cf. Petronius *Satyrica* 134.12.5-6; also *PGM* 1.99 (ἀναρίπτει ἀνέμους ἐκ γῆς). On halting the sun, cf. pseudo-Hippocrates *Sacred Disease* 4.1-2; Ovid *Heroines* 6.85, *Amores* 2.1.24; also *PGM* 57.2-3 (συντέλεσον τῷ δεῖνα, ὅσα σοι εἰς τοῦτο ἔγραψα, καὶ ἀφήσω τὴν ἀνατολὴν καὶ τὴν δύσιν) and *Pap. Mich. inv.* 5.6-7 (καὶν δεήθωμεν πάλιν ἡμέρας, τὸ φῶς οὐκ ἀπελεύσεται). On calling down the moon and the stars, cf. pseudo-Hippocrates *Sacred Disease* 4.1; Aristophanes *Clouds* 749-52; Livy *History of Rome* 26.5.9; Horace *Epode* 5.45-46, 17.77-78; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.45; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.207-08; Martial *Epigrams* 12.57.16-17; Juvenal *Satire* 6.442-43; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 14, *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 1.2; also *Pap. Mich. inv.* 5.1-2 (καὶν σελήνην κελεύσω, καταβήσεται). On making the stars fall, cf. Virgil *Aeneid* 4.489; Horace *Epode* 5.45, 17.4-5; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.45; Lucan *Civil War* 6.499-500; pseudo-Quintilian *Major Declamations* 10.15; also *PGM* 1.123-24 (καὶ ὅταν θέλης ἄστρα καταναγκεῖν).

³⁰ Cf. e.g., Theocritus *Idyll* 2.11, 62; Lucian *Menippus* 7; pseudo-Quintilian *Major Declamations* 10.15; Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.7.4-5; Heliodorus *Ethiopian Story* 6.14.4. On the suspicious magical practice of murmuring in a low voice, cf. BREMMER (2002a) 10; also the discussion at MOSCADI (1976b).

³¹ On the term, cf. Proclus *Timaeus* 1.274.17.

devastation she wreaks and the unbearable misfortunes she brings upon the two friends is enough to change or end (in the case of Socrates) their lives forever. Whatever we learn about the witch comes directly from the secondary accounts of Aristomenes and Socrates. Meroe is initially introduced as the kind inn-keeper who seemingly takes a keen interest in Socrates during his time of need, only to turn him a while later (by force of a disastrous sexual relationship) into her pet, a ragged beggar and a pitiful ghost (*larvale simulacrum*, 1.6.3).³²

Let us begin then by asking the obvious question: who is Meroe? The answer, quite frankly, is an easy one: we do not know. Unlike the various conjectures on the historical identification of Horace's Canidia (not to mention Porphyrio's convenient reference to her speculated identity),³³ Meroe is destined to remain in everlasting anonymity. Any attempt to unearth Meroe's historical identity can be a tedious, if not pointless, task, since there is no real reason to believe that Apuleius sought to associate the witch with any factual figure in particular; instead, as it will be discussed during the course of this chapter, he modelled and shaped the figure of Meroe based on a number of stock figures and characteristics from the Imperial witch tradition.³⁴

Setting aside any matters of identity, there are a few things that could be inferred about her. Although we may not know who Meroe really was, we can infer who or what Apuleius wants us to assume she was. One thing can be said about her from the outset: Meroe (and Panthia, who will be discussed later) is nothing like the anonymous hags of Thelyphron's tale. They both might engage in similar magical activities, but Meroe is a witch who can be both good and bad, lives and interacts with other people, and can be identified by others or even be actively accused of malicious magic and prosecuted whenever things go awry in a community. Thelyphron's hag-witches, on the contrary, are anonymous, their identities remain concealed, and they are driven by mere malice and do harm indiscriminately;³⁵ in this respect, they seem to have more in common with the evil witches (*striges*) of Trimalchio's tale in Petronius' *Satyrica* 63, who narrates a story of witches attacking and stealing body parts from a dead boy: in the end, Trimalchio could not really tell who these witches were or how they had successfully carried out their attack on the dead boy.³⁶

³² Socrates' self-stylization and his ragged appearance tend to suggest a figure from tragedy; cf. MAY (2006) 130-31. On rags being traditionally regarded as a symbol for tragedy, cf. KEULEN (2003b) 118-20.

³³ On which cf. chapter 2.4.2.1.

³⁴ However, an effort to establish the historical associations of Meroe's name is afforded by ZACH (1992).

³⁵ On these two types of witches, cf. GORDON (1990) 254 n.66 and (1999) 204-10.

³⁶ On the *striges*, cf. also *infra* n.151.

As with several *nomina omina* belonging to witches of Roman literature (e.g., Propertius' Acanthis ('Thorny'), Ovid's Dipsas ('Thirsty'), Horace's Canidia ('Elderly' or 'Bitchy', depending on how one opts to etymologically derive her name)),³⁷ Meroe's name is quite expressive, and it ought not be assumed it was chosen haphazardly by Apuleius. Her very *nomen* evokes three main associations germane to witchcraft.³⁸ Firstly, the name's root *mer-* could point towards the practice of consuming undiluted wine (*ἄκρατος οἶνος*, *vinum merum*) and a general state of drunkenness; in this respect, Meroe can be linked to the bawdy lewd witches of Latin elegy, and in particular the 'thirsty' witch-cum-procuress Dipsas of Ovid's *Amores* 1.8. Meroe's proneness to alcohol and her excessive wine consumption are related by Socrates, who once had an apparently stimulating discussion with the drunken (*temulenta*) witch during which she garrulously spilt the beans on some of her magical activities (1.10.3). Secondly, her name seems to betray some sexual overtones and could be related to prostitutes (*meretrix*) and to consorting with men for money (*merēre*). This particular implication is alluded to twice in the text: in the first case, Aristomenes reprimands Socrates for having preferred the company and sweet embraces of a 'filthy old whore' (*scortum scorteum*) to that of his lawful wife (1.8.1),³⁹ and again when Socrates refers in passing to Meroe's revenge on *one* of her wayward lovers, the implication being that the witch had many lovers to choose from (1.9.1). And thirdly, Meroe is correlated to magic and the goddess Isis through her name's association with the upper Nile kingdom of Meroë, a region which both Juvenal *Satire* 6.526-29 and Strabo *Geography* 17.2.3 mention in connection with the Egyptian goddess' worship.⁴⁰ It seems reasonable to assume that Apuleius covertly, but quite surely, alludes to the prior witch tradition, and especially, the depiction of witches in Augustan love elegy, by associating Meroe with the triptych of inebriation, prostitution, and foreign origin.

³⁷ Cf. the discussion at chapter 2.4.2.

³⁸ On significant names in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, cf. HIJMANS (1978); KEULEN (2000); BITEL (2006); CONNORS & CLENDENON (2012).

³⁹ For invective against old women, focusing primarily on their advanced age, repulsiveness, and sexual voraciousness, cf. Horace *Epodes* 8 and 12, *Priapea* 57, and the discussion at RICHLIN (2014) 62-80. On the importance of the age and on aspects of Roman invective against *vetulae*, cf. RICHLIN (1983) 109-16.

⁴⁰ Cf. further the discussion at GRIFFITHS (1978) 143. Meroe's Egyptian origin and link with Isis' sanctuary also look forward to Isis' manifestation and role in Book 11. In a way, both Meroe and Isis influence Lucius' life in very distinct ways: in Book 1, Meroe is the first ever witch that Lucius encounters, albeit in Aristomenes' narrative, thus awakening his curiosity in the dark arts which later sets him on his perilous journey in the form of an ass, whereas Isis in Book 11 restores Lucius to his human form and sets him on a new path, that of abstinence and righteousness.

Meroe, in addition, echoes elderly lascivious women from Attic comedy, who actively strive to look younger and more attractive by using large amounts of makeup and wearing saffron-coloured dresses;⁴¹ but the main material for her depiction derives from the witch tradition's figure of the crone. The first point of contiguity with that tradition is with regard to Meroe's age. It has already been discussed in chapter 2 that crones are usually depicted as old and hideous mortal women who practise witchcraft as a way of living. Meroe's advanced age is acknowledged by both Socrates and Aristomenes: the two friends refer to her as an old woman (*anus*), whereas as soon as the witch attacks the duo at the inn, Aristomenes cannot refrain from making a remark on her old age.⁴² Most of Imperial literature's crones are described in appalling and repulsive terms due to their superannuated status: Horace's Canidia, for instance, is said to have a pallid complexion, her hair is either unkempt or inhabited by small vipers, and she is so old that she wears false teeth;⁴³ Canidia's sister-witch, Sagana, is described as wearing a wig, whereas her natural hair resembles a sea-urchin or a racing boar.⁴⁴ Lucan's super-witch Erictho would also fail to win any prize at a beauty pageant: she is portrayed as gaunt and loathsome with age, her face has a hellish pallor, and her hair is long, shabby, and infested with little vipers (6.515-18, 655-56). Meroe, on the other contrary, is not that repellent, for we are told that she still maintains some of her fading attractiveness (*admodum scitulam*); having said that, the witch is certainly not disillusioned about her age, given that she sarcastically refers to her 'youthful years' (*aetatula*) when she attacks the inn and reproaches Socrates for his attempt to desert her (1.12.4-5).⁴⁵

Like all crones, Meroe is part of the contemporary world. She neither belongs to the mythological past, nor is she a witch of divine ancestry like Circe or Medea, although her revenge on Socrates for his attempt to abandon her recalls Medea's revenge on the perfidious Jason. She is a mere mortal, leading a mortal's life, and practises magic as a way of living. She

⁴¹ Cf. e.g., Aristophanes *Women at the Assembly* 878-82. On old women in Attic comedy, cf. HENDERSON (1987).

⁴² 1.7.7: *et utpote ultime adfectus ad quondam cauponam Meroen, anum sed admodum scitulam*; 1.11.2: *ne quo numinis ministerio similiter usa sermones istos nostros anus illa cognoscat*; 1.12.2: *video mulieres duas altioris aetatis*.

⁴³ *Satire* 1.8.23-29, 48-50; *Epode* 5.15-16, 47-48, 98; 17.47.

⁴⁴ *Satire* 1.8.48-49; *Epode* 5.25-28.

⁴⁵ Both *scitula* and *aetatula* are Plautine in nature (cf. e.g., *The Rope* 565, 894), and thus give Meroe a comic overtone. I personally opt to read *aetatula* as a sign of sarcasm on her behalf rather than taking the comment at face value, as e.g., KEULEN (2007) 257 s.v. '*aetatulam*': "Meroe obviously does not see herself as an *anus*." On the phrase suggesting sexual aggression, cf. *idem* (2003b) 116. Meroe's concern for her age could further invite comparison with the goddess Venus who articulates similar concerns for her advancing years in the tale of Cupid and Psyche, on which cf. FRANGOULIDIS (1999) 380 n.18.

belongs to a *hic et nunc* which the novel's readership could associate with. She has no heroic stand; she is merely an innkeeper (*caupona*), but her very profession betrays her association with witchcraft. Innkeepers, especially female, were often linked to or doubled as sorceresses in antiquity. Augustine reports in *City of God* 18.18.5-11 that while he was journeying across Italy he heard of female innkeepers who would transform innocent passers-by into animals by offering them cheese mixed with drugs⁴⁶—a practice which, certainly, brings to mind Circe's magical concoction of cheese, wheat, honey, and Pramnian wine from *Odyssey* 10.233-36. Inns and innkeepers, in addition, feature as places and omens of death in the literary evidence and are usually associated with sinister activities, most often crime and murder.⁴⁷ Apuleius seems to be aware of this tradition, since not only does he represent Meroe as a villainous *caupona*, but he also shows her as exacting her revenge on the cowering duo at the inn where they had taken shelter.

4

Love, transformations, and constrictions

Meroe's list of miraculous feats and witchcraft provides an additional link to the Imperial witch tradition. The list of a witch's praeternatural powers with whose help she is capable of throwing the cosmos into complete chaos and of performing a series of ἀδύνατα is, as it has already been argued in chapter 2, one of the most essential features of this tradition. Meroe is in this aspect no different from her literary predecessors. As Aristomenes little by little unfolds his tale for Lucius, the reader gets more and more acquainted with the *femina divina* and her outstanding command over the natural and supernatural elements.⁴⁸ The first magical aspect which is revealed about her is that her powers can induce love and affection in anybody, no matter how near or far her object of affection might be. Socrates relates to Aristomenes how Meroe, aroused by her 'manly' lust, led him into her bed, and unbeknownst to him at that time he entered a parasitic relationship from which he was destined not to escape alive.⁴⁹ The relationship drained him of his life force, reduced him to a tragic beggar

⁴⁶ Cf. also the discussion at MOINE (1975).

⁴⁷ Cf. e.g., Cicero *On Divination* 1.57, *On Invention* 2.14-15; see also PANAYOTAKIS (1998) 128; KEULEN (2007) 44. It has been argued that Aristomenes' tale has been modelled upon the "inn-murder stories" of Cicero's *On Divination* and *On Invention*, on which cf. the discussion at SMITH & WOODS (2002) 174-80.

⁴⁸ For the description of sorcery and magic in divine terms, cf. ABT (1908) 34-36.

⁴⁹ 1.7.9-10: *et statim miser, ut cum illa adquevi, ab unico congressu annosam ac pestilentem contraho; et ipsas etiam lacinias quas boni latrones contegendo mihi concesserant in eam contuli, operulas etiam quas adhuc*

and a ghostly image of his former self, and in the end this relationship claimed his very life. Meroe's expertise in the *affaires du cœur* is also revealed a bit further ahead in the narrative when it is revealed that making people fall madly in love with her is only a trivial task; neither the far-off Indians, nor both tribes of the Ethiopians,⁵⁰ nor even the legendary Antipodes who dwell on the other side of the earth,⁵¹ could possibly escape her enchanting arts (1.8.6).

Love magic is only the first aspect of Meroe's magical 'arsenal'. Up to this point Meroe has only been addressed in terms of an 'inspired woman' (*femina divina*), but Aristomenes' insults forces Socrates to expose her for what she really is: a powerful and dangerous *saga*. Socrates enumerates a brief catalogue of Meroe's extraordinary witchcraft, quite similar to that pronounced by the sceptical stranger at the beginning of the novel (1.3.1), which is in accordance with all the major catalogues of witchcraft discussed in chapter 2. Her array of *contra naturam ἀδύνατα*, although quite impressive, is nonetheless quite conventional within the frame of the witch tradition: she can lower the sky and darken the stars,⁵² suspend the earth,⁵³ solidify fountains and dissolve mountains,⁵⁴ raise up the ghosts,⁵⁵ bring down and constrain the gods,⁵⁶ and illuminate the darkened Tartarus⁵⁷ (*caelum deponere, terram suspendere, fontes durare, montes diluere, manes sublimare, deos infimare, sidera extinguere, Tartarum ipsum inluminare*, 1.8.4). It is interesting to notice that both passages (1.3.1 and 1.8.4) addressing the praeternatural powers of witchcraft mention the four Empedoclean elements in cosmic proportions by referring to control over the heavenly bodies, including the earth

vegetus saccariam faciens merebam, quoad me ad istam faciem quam paulo ante vidisti bona uxor et mala fortuna perduxit

⁵⁰ On the two tribes of the Ethiopians, cf. Homer *Odyssey* 1.22-25.

⁵¹ On the Antipodes, cf. Cicero *Republic* 6.20.4; Pomponius Mela *Chorographies* 1.4, 54.

⁵² Cf. Horace *Epode* 5.45-46, 12.80; Propertius *Elegies* 1.1.23-24; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.45, 51-52; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.9-10; Lucan *Civil War* 6.461-76, 499-500; Seneca *Medea* 673-74. For the control of the heavens, cf. also *PGM* 4.2310 (κινηθήσεται οὐρανός).

⁵³ Cf. Horace *Epode* 5.79-80; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.206; Lucan *Civil War* 6.481-84.

⁵⁴ Cf. Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.46; Ovid *Heroines* 6.87-88, *Amores* 1.8.6, *Metamorphoses* 7.153-54, 199-200, 205; Seneca *Hercules* 237-38; Lucan *Civil War* 6.476-79; on making the waters hard so as to walk on them, cf. *PGM* 1.120-22 (πήξει δὲ ποταμούς και θάλασσαν συντόμως και, ὅπως ἐνδιατρέχης σταδίως, ὡς βούλει) and Lucian *Lover of Lies* 13 (ἐφ' ὕδατος βαδίζοντα); on dissolving mountains, cf. *PGM* 4.2669-70 (ἀναγκάσει γὰρ τῷ λόγῳ και τὰς πέτρας ῥαγήναι).

⁵⁵ Cf. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.98; Horace *Satire* 1.8.28-29, *Epode* 17.79; Propertius *Elegies* 1.1.20, 23-24; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.47-48; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.17-18, *Metamorphoses* 7.206; Lucan *Civil War* 6.531-32, 584-85, 619-23; Lucian *Lover of Lies* 14. On raising the ghosts, cf. also *PGM* 4.1443-71, 2054-59, 3060-64, 19a.14-15, 19b.14-17; *DT* 28.1-6, 198.10-12, 242.1-3.

⁵⁶ Cf. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.69; Propertius *Elegies* 1.1.19, 4.5.13, 27; Ovid *Heroines* 6.85-86, *Metamorphoses* 7.207; Lucan *Civil War* 6.440-41, 445-48, 500-06, 527-28.

⁵⁷ Cf. *PGM* 4.2531-32: Ταρτάρου χάσμα φαινόν.

(*sol, luna, stellae, dies, nox, terra, sidera*), water (*amnes, mare, fontes*), air (*venti*), and fire (*sidera*).

But Aristomenes' stubborn incredulity and cynicism prompts Socrates to disclose further aspects of Meroe's arts, this time with regard to transformation and magical constriction. The theme of transformation recurs quite often during the first three books of the *Metamorphoses*⁵⁸ and fits nicely with the underlying theme of the novel, Lucius' involvement with magic and metamorphosis into an ass.⁵⁹ Meroe employs her magical arts in pursuit of her sexual desires and is swift to exact revenge on anyone who frustrates her *voluptas* by transforming them into wretched animals, whereas Lucius' *curiositas* in the *artes magicae* forces him to enter a sexual relationship with a rookie witch, which eventually leads to his transformation. The witches of Thelyphron's tale are also said to be experts in transformation magic. Thelyphron is advised by a herald to be on his guard against Thessalian witches, since they could easily change their shape even to something as tiny as a fly and deceive even the most attentive watchmen in order to achieve their magical goals.⁶⁰ Transformation into animals is a minor theme of the Imperial witch tradition,⁶¹ and it traces its roots all the way back to Circe's various transformations in the *Odyssey* (10.237-40). However, one striking difference between the transformations occurring in the accounts of the witch tradition, Thelyphron's witches, and the ones performed by Meroe is related to the object towards which the transformation magic is directed. The primary recipient of the metamorphosis in the accounts of the former is usually the witch herself.⁶² One notable exception to this rule is Circe from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, since she alone transforms her lovers or the objects of her lover's affection into animals as a form of revenge: she turns the beautiful Scylla into the horrendous dog-like monster known from the *Odyssey* in order to spite Glaucus (14.55-67),⁶³ and she also changes Picus into a bird for failing to reciprocate her love (14.386-96).

⁵⁸ Cf. *Metamorphoses* 2.1.3-5, 4.10, 22.2-3; 3.21.

⁵⁹ On literal and metaphorical transformations in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. TATUM (1972). Aside from the various literal transformations, the novel itself undergoes a metamorphosis of its original story, on which cf. Appendix C.2.

⁶⁰ 2.22.2-3: *quippe cum deterrimae versipelles in quodvis animal ore converso latenter adrepant, ut ipsos etiam oculos Solis et Iustitiae facile frustrentur. nam et aves et rursus canes et mures, immo vero etiam muscas, induunt.*

⁶¹ Cf. e.g., Virgil *Eclogue* 8.97; Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.14.

⁶² Cf. Virgil *Eclogue* 8.97-98; Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.13-14; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.13-14.

⁶³ On the figure of Scylla in the Greco-Roman world, cf. HARDIE (2009); GOVERS HOPMAN (2012); MURGATROYD (2012) 109-18. Apart from Scylla, MURGATROYD also investigates from a literary standpoint the figures of

Akin to Circe's transformations, Meroe's are always directed towards the objects of her punishment, and they are used principally as a form of revenge. When one of her lovers is unfaithful to her, Meroe penalises his infidelity by turning him into a beaver— an animal which would rather cut off its genitalia and free itself than remain in captivity (1.9.1-2) and whose supposed propensity to perform auto-castration was so well-known in antiquity that it had become a proverbial saying, used by a number of authors.⁶⁴ Castration, whether forced or voluntary, seems to tie in well with the overall theme of witchcraft in the *Metamorphoses*, since not only is it used within a magical context, but it is also employed chiefly as a witch's form of revenge: instead of performing the castration herself, Meroe opts to transform her perfidious lover into a beaver so that he could auto-castrate himself for his indiscretion, thus receiving what Meroe considers 'just' punishment for his crime. Further in the narrative the prospect of castration occurs again when Panthia suggests emasculating Aristomenes by cutting off his genitalia as retribution for his verbal offences against Meroe (1.13.2). Aside from this, a more metaphorical castration, albeit again related to magic, has been pointed out by D. VAN MAL-MAEDER, who by examining the similarities between the present transformation of Meroe's lover into a beaver and the prospect of his self-castration and Lucius' 'anamorphosis' and metaphorical self-castration at Book 11 (Lucius' reinstatement to his human form deprives him of his gigantic asinine penis) reached the interesting conclusion that magical-induced transformations lead always to some form of castration, whether of a literal or metaphorical kind.⁶⁵

Meroe is, moreover, credited with transforming a rival, and perhaps more successful, innkeeper into a frog (1.9.3). Perhaps due to their infernal links,⁶⁶ frogs were used in a variety of magical contexts and rituals in antiquity.⁶⁷ But contrary to beavers, frogs were infamously disreputable and degraded animals, symbolising loquaciousness and supercilious behaviour.⁶⁸ Given their contemptible nature and the hoarse sounds they produced, a

various other renowned mythological monsters of Classical antiquity. On monsters and the concept of monstrosity, cf. ATHERTON (1998).

⁶⁴ Cf. e.g., Cicero *Scaurus* fr. 2.14 (Olechowska); Pliny *Natural History* 8.109; Juvenal *Satire* 12.34-36; Aelian *History of Animals* 6.34; Dioscorides *Medical Materials* 2.24.

⁶⁵ VAN MAL-MAEDER (1997) 109. On the theme of castration in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. WINKLER (1985) 174-77; SCHLAM (1992) 72-73; also GORDON (1990) 238 with n.15.

⁶⁶ Cf. Aristophanes *Frogs* 207; Juvenal *Satire* 2.150.

⁶⁷ Cf. *PGM* 3.508, 5.202, 10.13, 36.324-26.

⁶⁸ Cf. e.g., Petronius *Satyrical* 74.13: *inflat se tamquam rana*. The frog's frivolous and cowardly behaviour is also attested by Phaedrus *Fables* 1.2 (*ranae regem petierunt*), 6 (*ranae ad solem*), 24 (*rana rupta et bos*), 30 (*ranae metuentes taurorum proelia*). On the literary subject of frogs, cf. SCHMITZER (1993).

transformation into a frog was regarded in antiquity as a severe punishment.⁶⁹ The third and last reported case of metamorphosis is that of an aggressive lawyer who had once foolishly spoken against Meroe and was not only turned into a ram but was also allowed to continue pleading in his new bestial form as a form of mockery (1.9.4).⁷⁰ It could, however, be the case that Apuleius, being a known *philosophus Platonicus*, interjects traces of Platonism in the witch's transformations, since the transformations of her lovers or enemies into animals might echo a passage from the *Republic*, whereby souls passing into the upper world get to choose the forms of various animals which best reflect their personality and character.⁷¹

The transformations into a beaver and a frog, however, betray in a covert way the divine dimensions of Meroe's powers, or at least Meroe's claims to a semi-divine nature, given that the metamorphoses follow, in some way, in the footsteps of godly *exempla*. Infidelity and castration constitute key themes of the famous episode between the goddess Cybele and her youthful lover Attis; according to Ovid's version of the myth in the *Fasti*, Attis had sworn an oath to remain chaste, but broke his vow as soon as he met the nymph Sagaritis. Cybele killed the nymph by destroying the tree she was associated with and afflicted her lover with madness; after recognising the errors of his way, Attis decided to castrate himself (4.223-44).⁷²

The godlike overtones of Meroe's powers are likewise underscored by the very nature of her next transformation, as it echoes some details from a known story about the goddess Latona (Leto's Roman counterpart) and her transformation of some peasants into frogs. Ovid recounts in the *Metamorphoses* that the goddess had only recently given birth to her twins, Apollo and Artemis, and was already fleeing pursuit by Juno. At some point during her wanderings she found herself in dire need of water, and so she attempted to quench her thirst from a lake in the region of Lycia. Some rustic peasants, nevertheless, forbade her to touch the water, despite her numerous pleas. As a punishment for their insolence and arrogance, Latona turned them into frogs and cursed them to live forever in the lake and treat each other in the same pompous manner they had treated her (6.313-81).⁷³ As it becomes apparent, in this account too the frog is deployed as a symbol of loquaciousness, malediction, petulance,

⁶⁹ Cf. KEULEN (2007) 216 s.v. 'ranam.'

⁷⁰ On the association between lawyers and sheep, cf. BORGHINI (1986).

⁷¹ Cf. Plato *Republic* 620a-c; also SMITH & WOODS (2002) 190. For further Platonic traces in the tale of Aristomenes, cf. THIBEAU (1965); VAN DER PAARDT (1978) 82-84; MÜNSTERMANN (1995) 8-22; SMITH & WOODS (2002) 184-92.

⁷² Although Pausanias *Description of Greece* 7.17.10-12 relates a slightly different Phrygian version of the story, he nonetheless keeps the principal aetiological feature of self-castration.

⁷³ For a similar, but slightly expanded version of this story, cf. Antoninus Liberalis *Metamorphoses* 35.

and general shamelessness, with transformation being used within the context of divine retribution. Both transformations then serve to link the goddesses' divine revenge and the divine dimensions of Meroe's powers. It has been suggested earlier in chapter 2 that most crones tend to regard Medea, Circe, and Hecate as their patron goddesses, whose magic they often try to emulate. In Apuleius' case, it seems more likely that Meroe is implicitly trying to imitate or be assimilated to Cybele and Latona. In the first case, an external praeternatural force (transformation magic, madness) is directed towards a perfidious lover, who as a result of this force is driven to perform self-castration; whereas in the second case, just as Latona compels the peasants to live a life as frogs, by having to fully adapt to their new degraded lifestyle, so Meroe forces the innkeeper to adjust to the contemptible character of the animal he has been transformed into by compelling him to swim in a barrel of his own wine, deep down in the dregs and the filth, and to croak to his old customers.

Before concluding with the topic of transformation and moving on to Meroe's powers of constriction, it should be noted that the social context within which Meroe exercises her transformation magic is quite comparable to that of the magical binding spells which survive from Greco-Roman antiquity.⁷⁴ *Defixiones* were employed in a variety of competitive contexts, the most important of which were those of love, commerce, and law.⁷⁵ It is within the broader frame of this triptych that Meroe practises her magic as well. When she transforms her perfidious lover into a beaver, she uses magic in the same manner that one would have recourse to a binding spell in order to win the affections of a potential lover or frustrate the sexual advances of a rival.⁷⁶ The transformation of the rival innkeeper into a frog reveals Meroe's employment of metamorphosis magic in the context of competitive trade. The use of magic in such an agonistic perspective was not uncommon in antiquity; the surviving evidence from the classical period suggests that small business tradesmen and shopkeepers would in general resort to magical means and binding spells in order to stay ahead of their competition and thwart the success of their rivals. Among the many extant binding spells of this category,⁷⁷ some are interestingly directed towards innkeepers.⁷⁸ Meroe's

⁷⁴ On binding spells, cf. the discussion at chapter 2.4.1.1 with n.131-33.

⁷⁵ For a brief summary of these contexts, cf. FARAONE (1991a) 10 with n.45; GRAF (1997) 120-21.

⁷⁶ On love *defixiones*, cf. PETROPOULOS (1988); WINKLER (1990) 71-98; FARAONE (1991a) 13; GAGER (1992) 78-85 (85-115 for a survey of the spells); OGDEN (1999) 35-37. On love magic in general, cf. FARAONE (1999).

⁷⁷ On which cf. GAGER (1992) 155-74.

⁷⁸ Cf. *DTA* 30, 87; *SGD* 11 (addressing a γράψς καπηλίδς). On using magic and *defixiones* within the context of tradesmen rivalry, cf. FARAONE (1991a) 11; GAGER (1992) 151-55; OGDEN (1999) 32-35.

final transformation is employed within a judicial context, given that her unfortunate victim was a lawyer. Judicial *defixiones* are attested mainly throughout classical and Hellenistic antiquity and make up the largest group of binding spells in our surviving magical corpora. It is generally accepted that these particular spells were written before the outcome of the court case and were largely used in one's attempt to do harm to or influence one's cognitive capacities, thus hindering the effectiveness of an adversary's speech during the trial.⁷⁹ For instance, a surviving spell attempts to bind not just the soul, but also the mind, tongue, plans, and generally the actions and conspiracies of one's adversaries.⁸⁰ Aristophanes also relates at *Wasps* 946-48 how the famous politician Thucydides, son of Melesias and Pericles' political opponent, became suddenly paralysed in the jaw during a trial and was unable to defend himself, with the ancient *scholion* to this passage commenting that Thucydides had apparently been afflicted with a tongue-binding spell (Σ.*Wasps* 947b).⁸¹ In a similar vein Cicero reports in *Brutus* 217 that the orator Curio, while pleading a case against one of Cicero's clients, unexpectedly forgot his line of argumentation, claiming therefore that his loss of memory was induced by a binding spell, if not by some other sort of witchery. It could be imagined (although it is by no means suggested by the text itself) that the lawyer might have been preparing or pleading a case against Meroe, and his transformation into a ram was her way of 'silencing' him. It is, furthermore, interesting to notice that Meroe does not kill her three victims; she transforms them, but allows them to go on living. Quite similarly, the purpose of the binding spells was not to kill their intended victims, but to subject one human being to the will of another, no matter what their intentions may have been.⁸²

After concluding with the topic of metamorphosis, Socrates proceeds to relate Meroe's magical powers of binding and constriction. Constriction implies exerting some control over access into and out of a confined space, whether this is perceived as literal/factual or in metaphorical terms. In the first of these cases, binding constriction is applied to the womb of a woman: Socrates recounts how the witch had indefinitely prolonged the pregnancy of a woman who had spoken ill of her by clamping shut her womb, thus

⁷⁹ Although this is now the general consensus, initially these spells were regarded as post-trial 'revenge' curses directed towards the winning party; cf. FARAONE (1991a) 15 and n.67. On judicial *defixiones*, cf. FARAONE (1991a) 15-17; GAGER (1992) 116-24 (124-50 for a survey of the spells); OGDEN (1999) 31-32.

⁸⁰ Cf. *DTA* 107: Θερσίλοχος, Οινόφιλος, Φιλώτιος καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος Φερενίκωι σύνδικος, πρὸς τὸν Ἑρμῆν τὸν Χθόνιον καὶ Ἑκάτην Χθονίαν καταδεδέσθω· Φερενίκου καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν καὶ γλώτταν καὶ βουλάς καὶ τὰ πράττει καὶ τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ βουλευέται, ἅπαντ' αὐτῶι ἀντία ἔστω καὶ τοῖς μετ' ἐκείνου βουλευούσιν καὶ πράττουσιν.

⁸¹ On this episode, cf. FARAONE (1989).

⁸² Cf. e.g., GRAF (1997) 120.

delaying the birthing process (1.9.5).⁸³ This particular feat is quite interesting within the frame of the witch tradition, since nowhere else do we hear of a witch performing something similar. Quite to the contrary: Lucan's Erictho is credited with slicing open pregnant wombs and ripping out unborn babies (6.558-59), and the magical and demotic papyri contain spells for the deliverance of babies (*PGM* 123a.50-51), pregnancy tests (*PDM* 14.956-60), cures for fallen wombs (*PGM* 7.260-71),⁸⁴ and even a spell identified as φυσικλείδιον for the opening or closing of the uterus (*PGM* 36.283-94),⁸⁵ but nothing is ever mentioned about how to delay childbirth. It is only in Ovid's narrative of Heracles' birth that an additional case of a prolonged pregnancy comes into relief: Alcmene relates to Iole how the guardian deity of birth Lucina, motivated by Juno, inhibited the birth of the demigod for a week by means of constriction magic and enchantments. One of Alcmene's maidens, Galanthis, managed to trick the goddess into thinking that the woman had somehow already given birth and so she released her magic, thus allowing Alcmene to deliver her child. For her trickery and gloating, however, Galanthis was transformed into a weasel (*Metamorphoses* 9.273-323, esp. 295-301).⁸⁶ The account suggests that Lucina had apparently succeeded in staying the birth by means of persuasive analogy, by crossing her legs, interlocking her fingers, and mumbling secret enchantments. This notion finds additional support in Pliny *Natural History* 28.59, who in general believed that during the process of childbirth knots and any other expressions of binding constriction had to be generally avoided, not only by the parturient woman, but also by any of the people present.

The powers of Meroe's constriction magic are moreover demonstrated in what is perhaps one of the witch tradition's most miraculous feats; magic in this case is not simply directed towards one individual person, but towards an entire town. Due to her various crimes, the townspeople had decided to take matters into their own hands and had decreed that Meroe should be stoned to death for her witchery crimes, which by itself is an interesting choice of punishment. Stoning was used neither in Attic nor in Roman law as an official capital punishment, although it is found as a punishment in Athens at Heliodorus 1.13.4 and

⁸³ JOHNSTON treats the passage as one of the few possible examples of gynaecological imbalances caused by the magical actions of other mortals (1999: 186).

⁸⁴ Cf. also the remarks at Soranus *On Gynaecology* 3.50 (περὶ ἀναδρομῆς μήτρας), and the discussion on the 'divine' womb, which served *inter alia* as an opposite to the deified phallus, at BARB (1953).

⁸⁵ This spell is meant to be cast by a male with the purpose of making sure that the female recipient will get impregnated by him.

⁸⁶ On this story, cf. also the account by Antoninus Liberalis *Metamorphoses* 29.

1.15.3. Sometimes this punishment is mentioned as a form of lynching, as in the case of Cicero's *Against Verres* 2.1.119, whereas whenever it is used within a literary magical context, it always appears as a measure against magicians or supernatural phenomena.⁸⁷ Despite the severe nature of the punishment, Meroe thwarts the citizens' plans by performing psychagogic magic,⁸⁸ and with the help of supernatural forces she barricades all the townspeople within the walls of their houses for two whole days. Only after an oath of allegiance had been sworn that no harm would ever befall her, does Meroe finally release her constriction witchcraft and set the people free. As for the man who had instigated the meeting in the first place, the witch transported his entire house to a town situated on top of a barren and arid mountain and dropped it in front of the town's gate (1.10).⁸⁹ In this example Meroe directs her powers of constriction towards the confining spaces of a house; by the miraculous force of her magic the houses are transformed into impenetrable fortresses: the locks cannot be broken, the doors cannot be opened, and the walls cannot be dug through (1.10.4). Hence, she seizes control over the townspeople by offering a solid demonstration of her binding powers.

Socrates' description of Meroe's miraculous feats eventually terrifies the 'scrupulous' Aristomenes who, though unbeknownst to him and to the first reader, switches roles with the citizens of the town to which Meroe had applied her constriction magic at 1.10: the citizens were involuntarily locked up in their houses as a result of Meroe's powerful magic, whereas Aristomenes voluntarily and anxiously locks himself up in the inn's room by properly blockading the doors in order to hide away from Meroe's magic (1.11.5). Socrates may at first appear like a comical figure and an unreliable narrator, a person who apparently takes pleasure in spicing up his story with elements of drama here and there,⁹⁰ but whatever he says

⁸⁷ Cf. e.g., Horace *Epode* 5.97-98; Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 4.10. In Lucian *Peregrinus* 20 stoning is a method employed against charlatans. Interesting to notice, however, is that the jurist Paul's exposition on the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* assigns different forms of punishment for magic-workers and magicians: depending on the social status of the magician, the person could either be crucified, thrown to the wild beasts, or be burnt alive (*Opinions* 5.23.15-18). Cf. further the remarks at SCOBIE (1975) 101 s.v. '*saxorum iaculationibus*'; KEULEN (2007) 223-24 s.v. '*statutum ... vindicaretur*.'

⁸⁸ On psychagogic and sepulchral magic in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. chapter 5.

⁸⁹ This is perhaps reminiscent of a scene from Plato *Republic* 9.578e as suggested by SMITH & WOODS (2002: 190). BAKER maintains that in this particular scene magic and law go hand-in-hand in order to demonstrate how the magical powers of witches could be perceived in legal terms and employ witchcraft within a juridical context (2012: 354-59).

⁹⁰ Notice Aristomenes' remark at 1.8.5: '*oro te, inquam aulaeum tragicum dimoveto et siparium scaenicum complicato et cedo verbis communibus*.'

about Meroe is surprisingly very true. He is a competent storyteller, as W. KEULEN claims,⁹¹ and not an erratic blubberer. Aristomenes (the secondary internal narratee of Socrates' story) and the readers of the *Metamorphoses* (the implied external narratees) do not realise this yet, since this aspect of the tale does not become evident from the first recounting of the story.⁹² It is only during the second reading that it becomes apparent that much of the magic which directly affects Aristomenes—not to mention the misfortunes which will eventually befall him—has already been foreshadowed in Socrates' earlier description of Meroe. Soon it is revealed that not only is Aristomenes not the 'scrupulous' listener we had initially thought him to be, but, on the contrary, he has been quite an inattentive audience; Meroe has complete dominion over doors, locks, and liminal spaces in general,⁹³ and this ultimately reaches a climax with her attack on Socrates and Aristomenes at the inn where they had sought shelter. In Aristomenes' case, and despite his best efforts to secure the room, all the 'locking' provisions are proven futile against Meroe's magic: the doors, though firmly sealed, violently burst open, and the force of the break-in is so magically intense that it tears away the doors from their sockets and turns Aristomenes' cot upside-down, thus burying him underneath it and making him look like a turtle (1.11.8-12.1).⁹⁴ Aristomenes' metaphorical 'transformation' into a turtle not only brings again into relief Socrates' earlier narrative of Meroe's transformation magic at 1.9, but it also foreshadows in some way Lucius' transformation into an ass.⁹⁵ Meroe's powers over confined spaces place her in stark contrast

⁹¹ KEULEN (2003a) 167.

⁹² I follow in this section the narratological terminology outlined by DE JONG (1987) and DE JONG *et al.* (2004). Aristomenes' tale demonstrates a uniquely complicated narratological construction. Lucius is first and foremost the primary internal narrator of the *Metamorphoses*, since he is the main narratological *ego* and agent (*story A*). Aristomenes appears within Lucius' story, and so he is an internal secondary narrator and agent (a narrator within Lucius' narrative), who narrates his story (*story B*) to Lucius, the external secondary narratee; in this case, Lucius does not take part in the action of *story B*. Socrates acts as an internal tertiary narrator and agent (a narrator within Aristomenes' narrative within Lucius' narrative), who recounts his adventure with Meroe (*story C*) to Aristomenes, the external tertiary narratee of Socrates' tale (Aristomenes does not take part in *story C*). The readers of the *Metamorphoses* act as implied external narratees: Socrates relates *story C* to Aristomenes who then tells *story B* to Lucius who then tells *story A*, which contains *story B* and *C*, to his fictive audience. An insightful narratological discussion of the entire novel is offered by WINKLER (1985); FRANCIS (2001), on the other hand, offers a discussion of the *Metamorphoses*' multiple narrators and their relation to the novel's inserted tales.

⁹³ KEULEN has amusingly suggested that Meroe seems to be fixated on "thresholds, doors, bars, unlocking and locking" (2006: 53).

⁹⁴ On the comical / farcical elements of this scene, cf. KEULEN (2006) 47-48 and (2007) 246. See also Petronius *Satyrica* 97 for a scene where a *grabattulus* is used as a similar hiding-place. On the use of beds in mime performances, cf. PANAYOTAKIS (1995) 154.

⁹⁵ Both Aristomenes and Lucius act as narrators of their respective stories but narratologically 'focalise' from an animal perspective: Aristomenes' from the vantage point of a turtle, Lucius from that of an ass.

to the less powerful witches of Thelyphron's tale, who are unable to physically enter the bolted room and steal the cadaverous remains Thelyphron was hired to protect; the witches are thus forced to cast their magic spells from outside the room (*quamquam foribus cubicula diligenter obclusis*, 2.30.5), resulting in the fiasco of mistakenly cutting off Thelyphron's appendages and not the cadaver's.

Meroe's power over confined spaces and her ability, particularly, to burst doors open can be viewed also in terms of constriction magic; it is merely a different side of the same 'binding/unbinding' coin. This form of unbinding, especially in the form of opening doors, is a feature well attested from literary and magical texts and occurs often within a religious or supernatural context. In the former case, doors of a building or a temple will suddenly fly open to indicate either the presence of a god or to manifest a prodigy,⁹⁶ though sometimes the spontaneous opening could signify a bad omen, too.⁹⁷ Holy men, as well, like Apollonius of Tyana, are said to have possessed praeternatural powers that would cause doors to burst open or bonds to be broken. Philostratus in his biography of Apollonius recounts three cases, where the θεῖος ἀνὴρ managed to miraculously free himself from the shackles he wore (7.34, 38; 8.30). The biographer, moreover, goes the extra mile to emphasise that Apollonius' deliverance was not achieved by performing magic tricks or exercising dark sorcery, but it was all due to his θεῖα φύσις, which clearly surpassed that of any regular human being (7.38). Origen, likewise, while discussing the wondrous liberations of Peter and of Paul and Silas, categorically argues that the apostles' deliverance from captivity was accomplished through the omnipresent δύναμις of God and the intervention of angels and not with the help of magical means (*Against Celsus* 2.34.7-17).⁹⁸ There are, however, instances where doors are compelled to swing open by magical incantations.⁹⁹ In some cases the magician himself causes doors to open, but in most cases the aid of a demon assistant (πάρεδρος) or of some supernatural being in general is procured in order to accomplish such a feat.¹⁰⁰ Although many of the spells in the magical papyri concern specifically the opening of physical doors

⁹⁶ Cf. e.g., Homer *Iliad* 5.749, 8.393; Pindar *Nemean* 1.41-42; Euripides *Bacchae* 447-48; Xenophon *Hellenica* 6.4.7; Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 4.41-42; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.696-700; *Acts of the Apostles* 12.10, 16.26; John *Apocalypse* 3.8; Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 45.282-83.

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g., Cicero *On Divination* 1.74, 2.67; Virgil *Aeneid* 7.620-21; Statius *Thebaid* 7.407-08; Suetonius *Julius Caesar* 81.3, *Nero* 46.2.

⁹⁸ Cf. also *Acts of the Apostles* 12.6-9; 16.24-26.

⁹⁹ Cf. e.g., Propertius *Elegies* 3.3.47-50; Ovid *Amores* 2.1.27-28.

¹⁰⁰ On the πάρεδρος, cf. CIRAOLO (1995); SCIBILIA (2002).

and/or breaking of chains (*PGM* 1.101, 13.288-96, 1065-77; 36.312-20),¹⁰¹ some spells are especially directed at metaphorical doors, whether in the form of the gates of Heaven (*PGM* 4.623-28, 661-64, 967-72, 12.324-35) or the πύλαι Ἄιδου (*PGM* 4.2287-90, 13.327-33),¹⁰² which were commonly regarded as very specific confined spaces.¹⁰³ These spells often pertain to mystic ascent or descent, as it becomes evident from one spell in particular, whereby the entire cosmic structure is laid open for the magician to gaze upon.¹⁰⁴

We have already seen how Socrates has exposed earlier in his narrative Meroe's powers of transportation by describing the way in which the witch had miraculously transported an adversary's entire house to a different region (1.10.5). The scene at 1.10.5 and the magic which underlines it reflect upon Aristomenes' story in more than one way. Both the man responsible for the gathering of the townspeople against Meroe and Aristomenes are presented as the witch's adversaries. Hence, Meroe is inclined to take magical action against them. In the first case, her magic affects the man directly, since his entire house is transported to a wholly different far-away area. In Aristomenes' case, however, the witch's revenge scheme is more oblique: the primary recipient of her retaliation is Socrates, her wayward lover, but Aristomenes is the one who is expected to deal with the grave consequences of her actions. Unlike the man at 1.10.5, who gets involuntary uprooted and transported, Aristomenes goes into voluntary exile in Aetolia and starts a new life after laying his dead friend to rest.¹⁰⁵ The reason for which Aristomenes claims to have embraced *ultroneum exilium* is fear—fear on the one hand for his own life, and on the other that he might be accused of murdering his friend (1.19.12). But a third kind of fear also seems quite probable. B. SPAETH has argued that Aristomenes' humiliation at the hands of Meroe and Panthia and his incapacity to save Socrates from the clutches of death leads not only to his 'emasculat[i]on', but also to the loss of

¹⁰¹ On the existence of magic rings capable of opening any given door, cf. Lucian *The Ship* 42, with *PGM* 12.279-80 prescribing a recipe for the creation of such a ring.

¹⁰² Cf. also Lucian *Menippus* 6.

¹⁰³ Cf. e.g., the narrative of Jesus' harrowing of Hell in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, where Jesus orders the gates of Hell to be opened wide so that he can enter the dominion of Hades and deliver the righteous from death (21.1-3: ἄρατε πύλας οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν καὶ ἐπάρθητε πύλαι αἰώνιοι καὶ εἰσελεύσεται ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης [...] καὶ εὐθέως ἅμα τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ αἱ χαλκαὶ πύλαι συνετρίβησαν καὶ οἱ σιδηροὶ μοχλοὶ συνεθλάσθησαν καὶ οἱ δεδεμένοι πάντες νεκροὶ ἐλύθησαν τῶν δεσμῶν).

¹⁰⁴ *PGM* 12.324-35: ἠνοίγησαν αἱ πύλαι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἠνοίγησαν αἱ πύλαι τῆς γῆς. ἠνοίγη ἡ ὄδευσις τῆς θαλάσσης, ἠνοίγη ἡ ὄδευσις τῶν ποταμῶν, ἠκούσθη μου τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπὸ πάντων θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων, ἠκούσθη μου τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπὸ πνεύματος οὐρανοῦ, ἠκούσθη μου τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἐπιγείου, ἠκούσθη μου τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπὸ πνεύματος θαλασσίου, ἠκούσθη μου τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπὸ πνεύματος ποταμίου.

¹⁰⁵ FRANGOULIDIS suggests that Aristomenes' exile and remarriage in Aetolia points to his symbolical 'death' and 'rebirth' after coming in contact with magic, and thus forms a distant parallel to Lucius' ordeals and final salvation in Book 11 (1999: 388; 2001: 34).

his social standing, so to speak. It is, therefore, the fear that this ‘emasculatation’ may be exposed that eventually drives him away from his family and his *patria* and forces him to seek refuge in Aetolia, where he explicitly states that he has settled and remarried, i.e. he has acquired a new social position and has also regained part of his lost ‘masculinity’.¹⁰⁶

5

The attack on the inn and its magical significance

5.1. Meroe’s second-in-command: the witch Panthia

“And all around them, the bestiality of the night rises on tenebrous wings. The vampire’s time has come.”

Stephen King, *Salem’s Lot*

Meroe’s attack on the inn resonates in some fashion with the intrusion of Quartilla’s slave-girl from Petronius’ *Satyrica* 16.1-2, or Cynthia’s violent incursion from Propertius’ *Elegies* 4.8.49-51.¹⁰⁷ Similar to Horace’s Canidia, Meroe is not alone when she barges into her former lover’s room;¹⁰⁸ she is accompanied by Panthia, her ‘sister’-witch, though ‘*soror*’ ought to be understood in this context as a term of affection rather than designating actual kinship. Panthia is quite an odd and superfluous figure; nothing in Aristomenes’ narrative has foreshadowed her appearance, nor is she of vital importance to the story. It could very well be the case that Apuleius inserted Panthia in Aristomenes’ story not only as a tribute to Horace’s Canidia and her witching ‘sisterhood’ (notice that Canidia, like Meroe, acts alone neither in *Satire* 1.8 nor in *Epode* 5, and so Meroe and Panthia’s deadly retribution on Socrates has a literary precedent in the murderous schemes of Horace’s witches), but also in order to reinforce and underpin Meroe’s magical authority. Bluntly put, Panthia is unnecessary for the development of the narrative. It is evident that she is inferior to Meroe in the manner that Sagana, Veia, and Folia are inferior to Canidia: Panthia is not allowed to act impulsively on Aristomenes, having to first request Meroe’s permission before she can either castrate him or frantically dismember him, and she yields to Meroe’s wishes when the latter prevents her from killing him, since this would only impede her greater plans (1.13.2-3). If we could speak,

¹⁰⁶ SPAETH (2010) 255 n.66.

¹⁰⁷ On the comic motif of *θυροκοπεῖν* and its relation to Apuleius’ current witch scene, cf. KEULEN (2006) 53-55.

¹⁰⁸ On the witches’ connection to characters from the mime, especially Sophron’s *ταὶ γυναῖκες αἰ τὰν θεόν φαντι ἐξέλαν* (fr. 3-9 (Kassel – Austin)), cf. MCKEOWN (1979) 77; FANTHAM (1989) 159; PANAYOTAKIS (1995) 171-72.

anachronistically obviously, in terms of a witch's coven, Meroe and Canidia would have been the leading arch-witches.

But Apuleius' insertion of Panthia into the tale might also have a more unassuming explanation: she could be merely introduced as a supporter of Meroe's decisions. From Panthia's perspective, Meroe has been abandoned by Socrates and she therefore feels that Meroe's revenge is honourable and just. Panthia, as a fellow woman and a fellow witch, is only sympathetic towards Meroe's suffering and she cannot find fault with the latter's course of action. It has been suggested that witches have the propensity to resort to same sex members in order to find support for the injuries they have suffered at the hands of the opposite sex, and this might very well be the case here.¹⁰⁹

Similar to Meroe, Panthia too betrays some hidden Isiac overtones; her very name hints at Isis' epithet πανθέα, thus bringing further into relief the antithetical association between the benevolent goddess and the witches, whose witchcraft throws the natural world into havoc.¹¹⁰ However, it has been surmised that Panthia could also point towards Dionysiac rituals by associating her name with Pentheus ('Pentheia'), the unfortunate king of Thebes,¹¹¹ whose violent dismemberment (σπαραγμός) was portrayed in gruesome details in Euripides' *Bacchae*.¹¹² The association between Panthia and Pentheus has not entirely convinced some scholars,¹¹³ but though it might seem a far-fetched suggestion at first, there may be some truth to it: Panthia's bacchic nature is alluded to by the remark on the 'maenadic' punishment she has in store for Aristomenes for his various indiscretions ('*quin igitur, inquit 'soror, hunc primum bacchatim discernimus vel membris eius destinatis virilia desecamus?* 1.13.2), and this 'maenadic' overtone could also explain the ferociousness of her nature. The prospect of total or partial dismemberment is a theme recurring often enough in the *Metamorphoses*, with both Lucius and the secondary protagonists often running the risk of losing a limb or their

¹⁰⁹ Cf. SMITH & WOODS (2002) 180.

¹¹⁰ Cf. GRIFFITHS (1975) 140-41 and (1978) 143; VAN DER PAARDT (1978) 92 n.71; also WITT (1971) 128-29; SCHLAM (1992) 69; MARTINEZ (2000); WATSON (2004) 651 n.1; MAY (2013) 34. Cf. also the discussion at Appendix A.

¹¹¹ Suggested in passing by WALSH (1970) 149 n.2, although KEULEN remains unconvinced (2007: 266 s.v. '*bacchatim discernimus*').

¹¹² Cf. Euripides *Bacchae* 1125-36: λαβούσα δ' ὠλένιασ' ἀριστερὰν χέρα, / πλευροῖσιν ἀντιβάσα τοῦ δυσδαίμονος / ἀπεσπάραξεν ὦμον, οὐχ ὑπὸ σθένους / ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς εὐμάρειαν ἐπεδίδου χεροῖν. / Ἴνώ δὲ τὰπι θάτερ' ἐξηργάζετο / ῥηγνύσα σάρκα, Αὐτονόη τ' ὄχλος τε πάς / ἐπέιχε βακχῶν· ἦν δὲ πάσ' ὁμοῦ βοή, / ὁ μὲν στενάζων ὄσον ἐτύγχαν' ἐμπνέων, / αἱ δ' ὠλόλυζον. ἔφερε δ' ἡ μὲν ὠλένην, / ἡ δ' ἴχνος αὐταῖς ἀρβύλαις, γυμνοῦντο δὲ / πλευραὶ σπαραγμοῖς, πάσα δ' ἡματωμένη / χεῖρας διεσφαίριζε σάρκα Πενθέως. For representations of Pentheus' dismemberment in classical Greek art, cf. WEAVER (2009).

¹¹³ Cf. e.g., KEULEN (2007) 266 s.v. '*bacchatim discernimus*'.

lives due to some sort of punishment.¹¹⁴ However, the punishment of *σπαραγμός* might also refer to—or in some way hint at—a more revoltingly ritualistic act of Dionysus’ cult, linked principally with the act of tearing apart: the consumption of raw meat (*ὠμοφαγία*).¹¹⁵

The reference to the tearing apart of Aristomenes (and the tearing out of Socrates’ heart later on) also provides a connection to the greater Imperial witch tradition. There is ample evidence in these texts of witches collecting body parts from corpses for use in a variety of magical enterprises,¹¹⁶ and such references reappear in the witch descriptions of the *Metamorphoses*: the hags of Thelyphron’s tale are said to be in the habit of collecting human body parts for unidentified magical activities (*sagae mulieres ora mortuorum passim demorsicant, eaque sunt illis artis magicae supplementa*, 2.21.7), whereas Pamphile’s magical ‘laboratory’ contains among its many gruesome and gory ingredients human body parts, like noses, fingers, innards, and mutilated skulls (*hic nares et digiti, illic carnosi clavi pendentium, alibi trucidatorum servatus cruor et extorta dentibus ferarum trunca calvaria*, 3.17.5).

5.2. Witchery implications

“What hath night to do with sleep?”

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

And so Meroe and Panthia enter the room bearing no proverbial gifts, but three very odd instruments (of torture?): a lamp (*lucerna*), a sword (*gladium*), and a sponge (*spongia*). Despite their obvious and profound oddity, these instruments are interestingly enough enumerated by the Peripatetic philosopher Clearchus as being among common domestic objects (instead of sword Clearchus quotes a knife, but then is not a knife a miniature

¹¹⁴ Socrates’ loses his heart when it is removed by Meroe (1.13.6); Actaeon gets transformed into a stag for spying on Diana naked and is torn apart by her fierce hounds (2.4); Thelyphron underestimates the witches’ capabilities and loses his ears and nose in the process (2.30.7); witches gather various body appendages for use in magical rituals (2.21.7; 3.17.5); during the robber tales, the robbers who stole Lucius-ass from Milo’s house cut off the legs of Lucius-ass’ fellow ass for being lazy (4.5.4); the robber Lamachus has his nailed arm amputated during a failed attack on a rich man’s house (4.11.1-2); Psyche’s jealous sisters instruct Psyche how to decapitate her allegedly ‘monstrous’ husband (5.20.5); after Charite is recaptured, the robbers consider either tearing her to pieces or placing her alive within the body of a hollowed Lucius-ass (6.31); the wicked boy tormenting Lucius-ass gets savagely ripped apart by a ferocious bear (7.26.1); huge wolves are reported to have left a trail of half-eaten human bodies (8.15.6); and finally, Lucius-ass faces constant threats of dismemberment from the robbers (7.22.2-3, 26.5) and the wicked boy’s parents (8.31.4-5).

¹¹⁵ On these two aspects of the Dionysiac cult, cf. DODDS (1960) xvi-xvii; BURKERT (1977) 434; HALM-TISSERANT (2004); JOHNSTON (2011) 80-81. On Dionysian *ὠμοφαγία*, cf. BURKERT (2011).

¹¹⁶ Cf. e.g., Horace *Satire* 1.8.20-23, *Epode* 5.23-24; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.47-48, 1.5.53-56; Ovid *Heroines* 6.89-90; Lucan *Civil War* 6.533-68. On the collection of human body parts for magical purposes, cf. TUPET (1986) 2657-68.

sword?),¹¹⁷ and they have very specific magical connotations. Athenaeus, who dedicates an entire discussion to lamps in his *Sophists at Dinner*, suggests that the wide use of λύχνοι was only a recent ‘trend’ in Greece (15.699D-701B, esp. 700E),¹¹⁸ since the use of torches (δᾶδες) was clearly favoured by the Greeks and the Romans, and this preference is mirrored by the somewhat exclusive presence of torches in the hands of divinities and their followers in archaic and classical literary sources and iconography.¹¹⁹ It seems that lamps come into wider use only during the late Hellenistic period and betray oriental—principally Egyptian—influences.¹²⁰

Despite their late ‘appearance’, *lucernae* become an essential characteristic of Roman domestic cults.¹²¹ Although the lamp might have been a rudimentary instrument of everyday life according to Clearchus, as it will be soon demonstrated they were also markers of magic in Greco-Roman literature, not to mention in the magical papyri, and occur also within erotic contexts.¹²² In the case of Meroe, the use of a *lucerna* emphasises the nocturnal character of the scene under discussion, since it is explicitly mentioned that the witches’ attack took place around midnight (*circa tertiam ferme vigiliam*, 1.11.6); as was suggested in chapter 3, night-time and nocturnal activities were closely linked to magic and witchcraft. Lamps, moreover, could highlight structures of power and hierarchy within the Roman Empire,¹²³ since lamps were commonly associated with slaves, who would be expected to use such instruments to

¹¹⁷ Clearchus fr. 87 (Wehrli): Κλέαρχος ὁ Σολεὺς ἐν τῷ περὶ γρίφων οὐτωσί λέγων: σκευῶν κελεύοντι λέγειν ὀνόματα εἶπεῖν ‘τρίπους χύτρα λυχνεῖον ἀκταία βᾶθρον / σπόγγος λέβης σκαφεῖον ὄλμος λήκυθος / σπυρίς μάχαιρα τρύβλιον κρατὴρ ῥάφισ.’

¹¹⁸ Perhaps the earliest reference to a lamp in Greek literature is Homer *Odyssey* 19.33-34: πάροιθε δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη / χρύσειον λύχνον ἔχουσα φάος περικαλλὲς ἐποίει.

¹¹⁹ Cf. PARISINOU (2000).

¹²⁰ NILSSON (1950). Cf. as well the festival of lamps at the Egyptian town Sais mentioned in Herodotus’ *Histories* 2.62, and Lucian’s ‘City of Lamps’ (Λυχνόπολις) at *True histories* 1.29, on which cf. also the discussions at GEORGIADOU & LARMOUR (1998) 150 s.v. ‘Λυχνόπολις’; VON MÖLLENDORFF (2000) 194-201; SABNIS (2011). Clement of Alexandria had credited the Egyptians of being the πρῶτοι εὐρεταί of lamps (*Stromata* 1.16.7.2).

¹²¹ Cf. ZOGRAFOU (2010a) 276.

¹²² The lamp takes on various roles in Alexandrian poetry, but it is most usually praised as a surrogate and trusted confidant of furtive lovers. A similar role is reserved for the *lucerna* at Martial *Epigrams* 14.39: *dulcis conscia lectuli lucerna, / quidquid vis facias licet, tacebo*. Cf. also ZIMMERMAN, PANAYOTAKIS *et al.* (2004) 290 s.v. ‘*audax et temeraria lucerna*.’ On the motif of the lamp in erotic epigrammatic poetry, cf. KOST (1971) 126-32; KANELLOU (2013).

¹²³ Cf. SABNIS (2012) 81.

light the way¹²⁴ or in general produce light for their masters.¹²⁵ So the presence of a lamp in the hands of Meroe might further highlight the fact that Aristomenes, being the sole witness to Socrates' murder and to the witches' witchcraft, has no slave present to verify the veracity and accuracy of his story; this fact puts him in a dire predicament, as it might lead to the charge of being an accomplice to Socrates' murder, if not of perpetrating the murder himself.¹²⁶

Midnight, combined with a state of semi-sleepiness and/or inebriation, seems to be an appropriate time for supernatural activities to happen; it is the time when evil manifests itself and terror wreaks havoc, especially on unsuspected travellers.¹²⁷ In the *Metamorphoses*, this form of 'night-terror' comes in the guise of witches (1.10.5, 11.6, 2.22.2-4), robbers (1.15.2, 4.18.3-4, 8.17.1), and bloodthirsty young aristocrats (2.18.3). Moreover, various supernatural activities occur in the *Metamorphoses* either at midnight or during the dead of night: earlier in the narrative Socrates mentions that Meroe magically transported the house of the person responsible for summoning the meeting against her 'in the middle of the night' (*nocte intempesta*, 1.10.5), whereas Thelyphron's witches are also reported to have made their attack on the dead body he was guarding 'in the dead of night' (*nox intempesta*, 2.25.2), and this while Thelyphron is fast asleep, presumably due to a spell put on him by the weasel which had crept into the room (2.25.5).¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Cf. e.g., Suetonius *Augustus* 29.3: *tonanti Iovi aedem consecravit liberatus periculo, cum expeditione Cantabrica per nocturnum iter lecticam eius fulgur praestrinxisset servumque praelucentem exanimasset*. Also *Metamorphoses* 2.31.4-32.1: *post haec monitu famuli mei, qui noctis admonebat, iam et ipse crapula distentus, protinus exsurgo et appellata propere Byrrhena titubante vestigio domuitionem capesso. sed cum primam plateam vadimus, vento repentino lumen quo nitebamur exstinguitur...*

¹²⁵ Cf. e.g., *Metamorphoses* 4.19.3: *nec mora, cum numerosae familiae frequentia domus tota completur. taedis, lucernis, cereis, sebaciis et ceteris nocturni luminis instrumentis clarescunt tenebrae*.

¹²⁶ On the relationship between lamps and slaves, cf. SABNIS (2012).

¹²⁷ Cf. WINKLER (1980) 158-59; FELTON (1999) 7. For this belief in antiquity, cf. Aristophanes *Birds* 1482-93; Euripides *Helen* 569-70; Plato *Republic* 2.381e; Plutarch *Cimon* 6.5-6; Babrius *Fables* 1.63; Xenophon *Ephesian Story* 5.7.7-8; Heliodorus *Ethiopian Story* 6.14-15.

¹²⁸ *Nox intempesta* appears again at *Metamorphoses* 6.30.1 and would seem to be a translation in Latin of the Greek νυκτὸς ἄωριᾶ, occurring at pseudo-Lucian *Ass* 24.2: ποὶ βαδιζεις ἄωριᾶ, ταλαίπωρε; οὐδὲ τὰ δαιμόνια δέδουκας; Curiously enough, this particular praeternatural notion of the 'midnight hour' terror crossed into Medieval Europe. For example, while discussing the witches' nocturnal assemblies or Sabbats in Medieval Europe, NICOLAS REMY, whose *Demonolatriy* (1595) together with HEINRICH KRAMER'S *Malleus maleficarum* (1486) and FRANCESCO MARIA GUAZZO'S *Compendium maleficarum* (1608) became the authoritative witchcraft handbooks of their day and helped church and judicial authorities in defining, assessing, prosecuting, and punishing witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, comments as follows about the midnight hours: "the two hours immediately preceding midnight were the most suitable and opportune, not only for these assemblies but for all other devilish terrors, illusive appearances and groanings; and that the hour after midnight was not unsuitable. [...] no other hours of the night are held in such suspicion for ghostly apparitions by those who go in any fear for such things. Indeed, they are not without cause for such a belief; for experience teaches that these hours are chiefly notorious for spectres and terrible apparitions, and the ancients have amply testified to this in their writings. In Apuleius [...], Aristomenes says that he and his companion Socrates were attacked by the famous witches, Meroe and Panthia, about the third watch, which

But apart from underlying the nocturnal character of the scenes, the lamp is also used within a magical context,¹²⁹ with the motif of the *lucerna* reappearing briefly in four scenes of the *Metamorphoses* with strong supernatural undertones.¹³⁰ While guarding the corpse and despite his many absurd requests, Thelyphron is only given a lamp and some lamp-oil from the grieving widow in order to guard himself against any impending attacks from witches (2.24.8); additionally, in Book 2 Pamphile performs lamp divination (λυχνομαντεία) to predict the upcoming weather (2.11.5), and during her transformation ritual she converses (*conlocuta*)¹³¹ extensively with her lamp (3.21.4). Moreover, the reason seemingly why Lucius gets dragged into the Festival of Laughter prank is because a strong gust of wind had blown out his lamp while walking back to Milo's house from Byrrhaena's dinner party and in conjunction with his inebriated state he could not properly distinguish the magically reanimated wine-flasks obeying the erotic calling of Pamphile, from living human beings (2.32.1). Λυχνομαντεία, being part of the larger spectrum of antique divination,¹³² played an important role in Greco-Egyptian magical practices and rituals of 'personal encounter' (σύστασις) or 'direct vision' (αὐτοψία) of a god.¹³³ Some rituals from the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, attested as 'dream oracles' (ὄνειραιτηγὰ and ὄνειροπομποί),¹³⁴ required also the use of lamps.¹³⁵ In the *Metamorphoses*, in particular, lamps seem to serve a double function: they can be used as a force for good, signifying either the 'bonne lumière' as manifested, for

I take to mean about midnight, for it is then that the second watch ends according to the arrangement of the watches said to have been made by Palamedes, their first inventor, in the Trojan War" (REMY *Demonolatry* 1.14, quoted from REMY (1974) 54).

¹²⁹ Cf. also the lamps bearing *defixiones* at MASTROCINQUE (2007).

¹³⁰ Also worth mentioning is the presence of a *lucerna* during Apuleius' alleged magical ritual which had put an enchantment on a young boy; cf. *Apology* 42.3: *igitur ad praescriptum opinionis et famae confinxere puerum quempiam carmine cantatum remotis arbitris, secreto loco, arula et lucerna et paucis consciis testibus, ubi incantatus sit, corruisse, postea nescientem sui excitatum*.

¹³¹ The use of the verb *conloqui* does not merely imply *addressing* or *talking to* the lamp (*loqui*), but it suggests a *discourse*, a *two-way dialogue* between the witch and the lamp (*conloqui*).

¹³² JOHNSTON suggests that lychnomancy may have been a variation of the divinatory practice of φωταγωγία, a 'leading in the light' ritual which would allow the magician or theurgist to acquire some information, and it could possibly have derived from the older divinatory practice of ἔμπυρα (divination through flames, usually of temples), practised most commonly at the temple of Zeus in Olympia or the temple of Apollo at Thebes (2008a: 158-59). On empyromancy, cf. *ibid.* 98; also FLOWER (2008) 24.

¹³³ On the divinatory practices of σύστασις and αὐτοψία, cf. JOHNSTON (2008a) 155-58.

¹³⁴ On dream oracles, cf. EITREM (1991); JOHNSTON (2008a) 161-66 and (2010).

¹³⁵ There are numerous references to the use of lamps in the magical papyri; cf. e.g., *PGM* 1.277, 282, 293, 340, 2.57, 4.2185, 7.255, 376-77, 541, and *passim*. On λυχνομαντεία, cf. *ibid.* 4.952; 7.540, 561; also *PDM* 14.459-75, 476-88, 489-515, 516-27, 750-71. On dream oracle spells, cf. *ibid.* 7.250-59. On *Lampenzauber*, cf. ABT (1908) 162-65; GANSZYNIEC (1927); CUNEN (1960); EITREM (1991); PETROPOULOS (1999); OGDEN (2001) 191-96; VAN MAL-MAEDER (2001) 203 s.v. 'quam—crotino'; GEE (2002); and most recently, ZOGRAFOU (2008) and (2010a). On magic and divination, cf. GRAF (1999); JOHNSTON (2008a) 144-82.

example, by Isis' apparition (11.3.2), the *lucerna praemicans* of the Isiac cult (11.10.3), or even the *sol coruscans* which is said to have shone bright during the night of Lucius' initiation (11.23.6), or they can be a synonym for the dark and '*mauvaise lumière*' that reinforces or assists sacrilegious actions, as in the cases of Pamphile's divinatory lamps,¹³⁶ the lamp through which Psyche's pernicious *curiositas* is satiated (5.22.1-2) and which later scorches Cupid (5.23.4-5),¹³⁷ or the ambiguous role the *lucerna* plays in Photis' and Lucius' sexual encounters (2.11.3).¹³⁸

The sword, alternatively, is an interesting choice of weapon, especially in the hands of a witch. The witches of the Imperial witch tradition do not usually kill with swords; they opt for more oblique and less bloody ways to end life—potions, magic spells and incantations, driving their victims mad or haunting them with the help of praeternatural forces, even death by starvation or hanging, but never death by sword. The one and only witch ever credited with killing her victims with a sword is Medea. In Euripides' homonymous play the heroine deliberates for some while the best way to dispatch her enemies from this world: her options are either to set the bridal chamber on fire (πῦρ), thrust a sword (φάσγανον) through the princess' vital organs, or resort to the use of magic/poisons (φάρμακα) (376-85). In the end she elects to use her magic against the princess and king Creon, but reserves the more horrendous (and sacrificial) death by sword (ξίφος) for her children (1244-45).¹³⁹

If the sword then is indeed a remnant from the Medea myth, Meroe implicitly invites comparison with the great witch of Greco-Roman antiquity.¹⁴⁰ It has already been discussed in chapter 2 how the figure of Medea, being one of the most powerful divine witches of Greek antiquity, functioned as an archetypal authority for all later witches who desperately try to imitate both her magic and her character and deeds. In his capacity as narrator Socrates has already assimilated Meroe to Medea earlier in the narrative by likening the former's deeds to

¹³⁶ Cf. SABNIS (2012) 88-95.

¹³⁷ Cf. *ibid.* 98-103.

¹³⁸ Cf. LANCEL (1961) 46 n.1; also SABNIS (2012) 103-06. On the general symbolism of the lamp in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. WINKLER (1985) 42.

¹³⁹ Cf. Seneca *Medea* 969-70; also Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.285-86, where Medea jugulates Aeson with a *strictus ensis* during the rejuvenation ritual. In the *Apology* Apuleius links Medea to Philomela and Clytemnestra, the common denominator being that they are all women who employed swords in their murderous schemes against their loved ones (78.4: *at qua tandem manu? Philomelae an Medeae an Clytemnestrae?*). But interestingly enough, Clytemnestra is usually portrayed in visual representations as holding an axe in her hands, not a sword; cf. e.g., *LIMC* 1.2 s.v. 'Aigisthos' no. 11-13; 6.2. s.v. 'Klytaimestra' no. 15-16, 19.

¹⁴⁰ SMITH & WOODS also suggest that the sword may be an "instance of imperfect suturing by Apuleius of two disparate stories" which additionally "provides thematic links within the *Golden Ass* to the sword-swallower described earlier by Lucius and to the 'flashing sword' later used by Charite (8.13)" (2002: 175-76).

the horrors and havoc wreaked by the latter: just as Medea aspired to bring down the entire royal house of Corinth in the day's truce she had gained from Creon, so did Meroe manage in a single night to lock up an entire town within their homes, thus altering their initial death verdict against her.¹⁴¹ Meroe's comparison to Medea not only brings out the former's implied 'divine' nature, but it also looks back to Imperial literature's witch tradition. Meroe is not just any crone; she is a crone with delusions of grandeur, and what one might call a 'goddess complex': she is an elderly witch who thinks of herself in terms of a Medea.

Her delusions of grandeur and her imitation of divine *exempla* (not to mention allusions to the witch tradition itself) are further attested by several of the witch's remarks regarding her relationship to Socrates, as well as her habit of transforming humans into animals, which brings to the forefront her 'Circean' nature.¹⁴² When Meroe stands over her peacefully sleeping ex-lover and rehearses her grievances against him like an *exclusa amatrix*,¹⁴³ she sarcastically retorts '*hic est, soror Panthia, carus Endymion, hic Catamitus meus*' (1.12.4), whereas later she compares herself to Calypso and Socrates to Odysseus (*at ego scilicet Ulixi astu deserta vice Calypsonis aeternam solitudinem flebo*, 1.12.6). Both Endymion and Ganymedes (*Catamitus* being the rare Latin archaic form of the name) were youthful men desired by divine agents. Endymion was the handsome youth whom Selene fell in love with and put to sleep in order to visit him every night. Ganymedes was Zeus' lustful object of affection; in order to be with him the king of the gods transformed himself (in one version of the myth) into a giant eagle and snatched Ganymedes from earth and brought him to Olympus to become the gods' wine-steward.¹⁴⁴ Calypso, on the other hand, was according to Homer the daughter of Atlas and therefore a nymph, although a number of sources portray her as well as a Nereid, Oceanid, or Hesperid.¹⁴⁵ Calypso saved Odysseus from shipwreck and

¹⁴¹ 1.10.2: *ut illa Medea unius dieculae a Creone impetratis indutiis totam eius domum filiamque cum ipso sene flammis coronalibus deusserat, sic haec ...*

¹⁴² On Meroe being a Circe caricature, cf. HARRISON (1990b) 194-95.

¹⁴³ Apuleius has ingeniously toyed with the motif of the *exclusus amator* not only by substituting a male lover (*amator*) with a female one (*amatrix*), but also by making the 'masculinised' *amatrix* break into the 'passive' male lover's home, thus becoming *inclusa* instead of the traditional *exclusa*. FANTHAM traces the character of the lustful 'masculinised' woman back to Roman mime (1989: 156). For a similar break-in of another famous *exclusa amatrix*, cf. Propertius *Elegies* 4.8. On Meroe being a more extreme and aged version of Theocritus' witch, Simaetha, cf. KEULEN (2006) 52-3.

¹⁴⁴ On Endymion, cf. Hesiod fr. 260 (Merkelbach-West); Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 4.57-65; Apollodorus *Library* 1.7.5; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 5.1.3-4. On Ganymedes, cf. Homer *Iliad* 5.265-67, 20.231-35; *Little Iliad* fr. 29 (Bernabé); *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 202-17; Theognis *Elegies* 2.1345-48. Both stories are sarcastically parodied in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Gods* 8, 10, and 19.

¹⁴⁵ Nymph: Homer *Odyssey* 1.14, 52; Apollodorus *Library* 7.24; Nereid: Apollodorus *Library* 1.2.7; Oceanid: Hesiod *Theogony* 359; *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 422; Hesperid: *LIMC* 5.1, 399-400, no. 36.

with the promise of immortality kept him on the island of Ogygia for seven years, until she was commanded by Zeus and Hermes to release him.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, by assimilating Socrates to Endymion, Ganymedes, and Odysseus, Meroe alerts the readers of the novel to compare and correlate her to Selene and Zeus (implicitly) and Calypso (explicitly), thus bringing to the forefront her seemingly 'godlike' nature.

Meroe then uses the very sword she carries to slit Socrates' throat, tears out his heart, and carefully collects all the blood in her effort to cunningly implicate Aristomenes in the murder of his friend, since the witches leave no trace of the crime behind them. It has been suggested by S. HARRISON that the wound inflicted on Socrates' throat is reminiscent of a more tragic (and serious) battle narrative from the *Iliad* (Achilles' slaying of Lycaon via a neck wound),¹⁴⁷ or as R. MAY argues it could possibly allude to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where Caeneus not only slays Latreus, but also plunges his hand inside the deadly wound and tampers with Latreus' inner organs, just like Meroe does.¹⁴⁸ In both cases Socrates' novelistic slaughter invites some comparison with the heroic epic genre, hence revealing the dimensions and the extents to which a low-life light genre, like the novel, would parody more elevated and grandiose forms of literature: *heroes* (Achilles, Caeneus) slaying their *enemies* (Lycaon, Latreus) on the *field of battle* are reduced in the novel to an unheroic *witch* (Meroe) 'killing' her insignificant *ex-lover* Socrates (he is a 'nobody' with no heroic stature of his own) at an *inn*.

The collection of Socrates' blood, moreover, seems to betray, albeit from an anachronistic point of view, Meroe's 'vampiric' nature; in the end not only does she drain the poor man of his blood, but earlier in the narrative we are told that Socrates is also drained of his life force, being reduced to a state of a wretched ghost (1.6.3).¹⁴⁹ In Ovid's *Fasti*, too, the

¹⁴⁶ Homer *Odyssey* 5.1-268, 7.244-46. Once more, Lucian satirises this episode in his *True Histories* by portraying Odysseus as sending a post-mortem letter to Calypso from the Isles of the Blessed (one of Lucian's manifold representations of the afterlife), where he states that he has utterly regretted having left her and promises to return to her as soon as possible (2.35). On Lucian's various depictions of the Underworld, cf. NESSELRATH (2017); OIKONOMOPOULOU (2017).

¹⁴⁷ HARRISON (2009) 177. Compare *Iliad* 21.116-18 (Ἀχιλλεύς δὲ ἐρυσσάμενος ξίφος ὀξύ / τύψε κατὰ κληίδα παρ' ἀρχένοια, πᾶν δ' ἐοίεσσι / δὴ ξίφος ἀμφηκες) and *Metamorphoses* 1.13.4 (et capite Socratis in alterum dimoto latus per iugulum sinistrum capulo tenus gladium totum ei demergit).

¹⁴⁸ Compare Ovid *Metamorphoses* 12.491-93 (capuloque tenus demisit in armos / ensem fatiferum caecamque in viscera movit / versavitque manum vulnusque in vulnere fecit) and *Metamorphoses* 1.13.6 (immissa dextera per vulnus illud ad viscera penitus cor miseri contubernalis mei Meroe bona scrutata protulit); cf. also MAY (2013) 7.

¹⁴⁹ On the relationship between witches and vampires/Lamia, cf. LEINWEBER (1994), arguing that the three major witches of the *Metamorphoses* (Meroe, Panthia, and Pamphile) exhibit many vampiric traits associated with the figure of the Lamia, and that their depiction draws mainly from three mythological

wicked *striges*, horrendous bird-like hags, act as precursors to vampires, who attack nurseless infants and defile their bodies by sucking the blood out from their chests, not their necks (sic!) (6.131-43, esp. 135-38).¹⁵⁰ These wicked winged screech hags reappear in Petronius' famous witch tale, in which they attack and mysteriously hollow the corpse of a young lad (63.8).¹⁵¹ Although Apuleius does not specifically relate the purpose which the blood was collected for, it can be assumed it was intended to be used in a variety of magical practices and rituals, some of which are also attested from the magical papyri.¹⁵² In literary texts, for example, the blood of the sacrificial sheep entices the ghosts to gather around the pit and approach Odysseus in the Homeric *nekuia* (10.535-37), and in Lucian, in a scene reminiscent of Homer, it is blood which opens the gates of Hades (*Menippus* 9); in Ovid, moreover, blood is one of the principal ingredients that Medea uses for Aeson's miraculous rejuvenation ritual (*Metamorphoses* 7.257-61, 285-87).

The human heart, on the other hand, was commonly endowed with magical properties in antiquity. From Plautus (*The Rope* 1171) and Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 1.6.9-10) we learn that the apotropaic amulet *bullā* was worn around the neck of newly-born boys to protect them from physical ills and the influence of the evil eye. The *bullā* was a small golden locket concealing the real amulet, which could have been either in the shape of a heart, or a phallus.¹⁵³ By removing the heart Meroe is also linked once more to the greater Imperial witch tradition and to the practice of collecting human remains for various magical conducts. It is possible that Meroe's scene bears some distant resemblance to Erictho's divinatory rite from Lucan's *Civil War* (6.667-69).¹⁵⁴ Both scenes are connected to magic blood rituals, both witches inflict physical wounds on their victims (Meroe slits Socrates' throat, Erictho rips opens the soldier's chest cavity), and both witches tamper with their victims' internal organs (Meroe

themes: (1) the beautiful woman who acts as a 'Black Widow' and kills her partner after she mates; (2) the image of the lonely woman with no children whose envy of the romantic love enjoyed by other couples can lead to fatal fixation; and (3) the image of the malevolent 'old hag'. Also SPAETH (2010) 235. Notice that Aristomenes describes the witches as Lamiae at 1.17.5: *at ille, odore alioquin spurcissimi humoris percussus quo me Lamiae illae infecerant, vehementer aspernatur*. On the Lamia, cf. JOHNSTON (1995a), esp. 372-75, and (1999) 161-99 *passim*.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. also the discussion at SPAETH (2010) 250-51.

¹⁵¹ On the *strix* and its/her various associations, cf. OLIPHANT (1913); RINI (1929) 84; SCOBIE (1978b); JOHNSTON (1995a) 365-66, and (1999) 166-67; GAIDE (1995); MCDONOUGH (1997) 324-26; CHERUBINI (2009); SCHMELING (2011) 261.

¹⁵² Cf. *PGM* 2.160, 177; 3.418; 4.41, 79, 1545, 1999, 2094-98, 2300, 2572, 2640, 2648, 2888, 3257; 5.266; 7.222, 239, 652, 868; 8.69; 11a.2; 11b.4; 12.409, 411-35; 12.145; 13.315; 14.26; 16.5, 14, 21, 29, 39, 48, 57, 65, 72; 36.71, 233, 362.

¹⁵³ Cf. also the remarks at chapter 2.3.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. chapter 2.4.2.3.

removes Socrates' heart, Erictho washes the soldier's inner organs with hot blood). In a sense, Socrates 'broke' Meroe's heart, and so the witch retaliates by removing his. It has, moreover, been suggested that Meroe's practice is reminiscent of the shamanistic rite of the 'removal of the heart' performed by the Tungusic people of Siberia and by several tribes of Sub-Saharan Africa, among which were those of the island of Meroë, the metropolis of the Ethiopians according to Herodotus *Histories* 2.29.6.¹⁵⁵ Apuleius, who was well-known to tamper with names in order to render them more significant, may have associated practices known in the Roman world to be practised by the inhabitants of the island of Meroë with the witch Meroe. But it could very well be the case that the tearing out of the heart implicitly points towards the second stage of the *probatio victimarum*: the inspection and consultation of the entrails (*exta*) by the *haruspices* during official civic sacrifices.¹⁵⁶ Aristomenes' comment, furthermore, makes this particular insinuation more explicit: *nam etiam, ne quid demutaret, credo, a victimae religione* (1.13.6) implies that Socrates is not just merely murdered by Meroe, but he is somehow offered as a victim to a perverted sacrificial ritual.¹⁵⁷

When Meroe fulfils her part in the revenge scheme, Panthia comes back into action by placing a magical enchantment over the sponge Meroe has brought with her and provides it with a very specific instruction: the sponge is to return to the sea via a river (1.13.7). She then uses the enchanted object to conceal the sword incision on Socrates' neck. Panthia's admonition to the sponge to find its way back to the sea reveals some oblique ancient superstition about the magical-purification qualities of water. For example, Lucian reports that bathing the deceased in water was used as a purifying medium before funerals (*On Mourning* 11), whereas Medea prepares Aeson for the rejuvenation ritual by purifying him with fire, sulphur, and water (*Metamorphoses* 7.261). In some strange way, only running water has the power to break Panthia's spell, eventually forcing Socrates to breathe his last and succumb to death.

Panthia's use of the *spongia* in Meroe's 'ritualistic' killing has seemed bizarre to me for quite some time, especially while taking into account its absurd role in the scene. Sponges

¹⁵⁵ FICK (1985) 138.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. SCOBIE (1975) 108 s.v. '*a victimae religione*'; MCCREIGHT (1993) 56; BEARD, NORTH & PRICE (1998) 36. On extispicy in the Greek word, with a focus primarily on hepatoscopy, cf. ADAMEN (2008b).

¹⁵⁷ The scene bears some thematic affinities to similar sacrificial scenes from Senecan drama, e.g., *Thyestes* 755-58 or *Phoenician Women* 159-60, where the heart is also said to be (literally or metaphorically) extracted. On Meroe's murder of Socrates inverting normal details of civic sacrifice, cf. MCCREIGHT (1993). KEULEN also discusses this scene in terms of 'sexual exhaustion' by associating life-blood with sperm, but I fail to see the connection (2007: 270; also 44 with n. 142).

were known in the Greco-Roman world for their use in daily life; as we have seen earlier, they appear alongside lamps and knives in Clearchus' fragment of everyday kitchen utensils,¹⁵⁸ and they were also used widely for cleaning, bathing, and various medicinal purposes.¹⁵⁹ One of their medical practical uses, in particular, was of wound- and sore-healing, as sponges were widely used for disinfecting and drying up the sores before any medicine could be applied to the wound.¹⁶⁰ Within this medical context Meroe's sponge could have fulfilled the purpose of cleansing Socrates' wound,¹⁶¹ but the question is: from what? Meroe has already collected all of Socrates' blood in a leather receptacle apart from a single drop, so in essence the sponge as a cleansing medium is in this case quite superfluous. Nor is it of vital importance whether the wound gets cleansed and disinfected or not. In her quest for revenge Meroe has removed Socrates' heart and has drained him of all his blood; one can clearly recognise that Socrates has much larger problems at this point than to be concerned as to how or whether his wound gets an appropriate treatment.

W. KEULEN has maintained not only that the sponge gives the entire scene a sense of theatrical farce (in which way, however?), but that it also reveals the true force of witchcraft.¹⁶² The 'true force of witchcraft' is indeed demonstrated by the fact that a small and insignificant object, like a sponge, could turn into a powerful instrument in the hands of witches. It is true that the sponge performs a very good job in concealing the neck wound: as soon as Aristomenes inspects Socrates' neck the next morning, he detects no wound or traces of any incision, which makes him seriously question the dreadful happenings of the previous night. In the end, he can do nothing but accept it had been nothing more than a horrible nightmare, brought about by the copious consumption of food and wine (1.18.3-4). However, why use the sponge to perform such a deed? The power of witchcraft is, at any rate, revealed by the witch's astounding feat of concealing such an obvious neck wound and by making it appear as if nothing had ever happened.

It is also worth noticing that sponges appear just once in the Greek magical papyri, and there within the hands of angels of God—quite a stark contrast to Apuleius' depiction in

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *supra* n. 117.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. e.g., Homer *Iliad* 18.414-15, *Odyssey* 1.111-12; Hippocrates *On the Use of Liquids* 1.1. On the sponge's various uses in the ancient world, cf. VOULTSIADOU (2007).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. e.g., Hippocrates *On Ulcers* 4.

¹⁶¹ This was suggested to me by Stelios Panayotakis during a conference discussion.

¹⁶² KEULEN (2007) 275, s.v. 'spongiam'.

the hands of malevolent witches.¹⁶³ R. SEELINGER has alternatively interpreted the use of the sponge in order to close Socrates' neck wound as constituting a magical constriction of the throat.¹⁶⁴ This would make some sense, especially if we take into consideration the accounts of Aristophanes *Acharnians* 463 and Strabo *Geography* 8.8.4.25 that sponges were used like stop-up mechanisms or 'cork-lids' in antiquity,¹⁶⁵ whose sole purpose was to prevent a hole in a vessel from leaking. Therefore, in this scene by means of analogy the vessel could be Socrates, the hole could be the neck wound, and the purpose of the sponge could be to prevent the single drop of blood from dripping. In spite of the various interpretations, none of the above explanations satisfies me completely. My inclination is to suggest that the sponge, being formerly a living organism that is long dead by the time of its actual practical use, represents and foreshadows in some odd, perhaps even grotesque fashion Socrates' imminent passing from a state of life to that of death.

5.3. Magical defiling and avenging: The urination scene

*"This is the Speaker for the Dead? Judging someone
by appearances?"
"Maybe I've fallen in love with Grego."
"You've always been a sucker for people who pee on
you."*

Orson Scott Card, *Speaker for the Dead*

The witches next turn their vengeful attention to Aristomenes. Although Meroe and Panthia violate and apparently massacre Socrates, they strangely allow Aristomenes to go on living, their ulterior motive being that he can bury his friend when the time is right, thus making him an implicit accomplice to their murderous plans. But Meroe's retributive desire is not yet quenched; before she departs, she and Panthia defile Aristomenes, the 'good counsellor' behind Socrates' intended flight, by removing the bed he was still cowering under and urinating all over him.¹⁶⁶ One may argue that by urinating on Aristomenes the witches first and foremost show their disgust and disdain for the man, an act which also prefigures in

¹⁶³ PGM (Christiania) P.7.23-26: ἅγγελοι κυρίου ἀνήρθαν πρὸς μέσον τὸν οὐρανόν, ὀφθαλμοὺς πονοῦντες καὶ σφόγγον κρατοῦντες. The (holy) sponge, alongside the cross, the crown of thorns, the nails, and the spear, is considered among the most important instruments of the *arma Christi*, appearing in many art depictions of the crucifixion.

¹⁶⁴ SEELINGER (1981) 51.

¹⁶⁵ Actual corks were a Roman invention, on which cf. MAYERSON (2001).

¹⁶⁶ 1.13.8: *his editis ambae una remoto grabattulo varicus super faciem meam residentes vesicam exonerant, quoad me urinae spurcissimae madore perluerent.*

a way the emotional humiliation Lucius will be subjected to at the hands of the citizens of Hypata during the festival of Laughter in Book 3. But apart from stating the very obvious, the scene seems to have a more cryptic symbolism.

Some critics have suggested that the witches' act of urinating on Aristomenes is an eerie rite in the form of a rape, performed as some kind of punishment not only for his bad advice to Socrates, but also for his various invectives against Meroe.¹⁶⁷ Horace, too, mentions in the *Satires* that urinating and defecating on someone was a punishment reserved for adulterers (1.2.37-46, esp. 44) and liars (1.8.37-39).¹⁶⁸ From what can be inferred, Aristomenes is no adulterer, at least not yet, but he offers counsel to his adulterer friend Socrates and proposes that he desert his mistress Meroe. Yet from Meroe's vantage point, the insults Aristomenes has spoken against her are nothing but wretched mendacities and fabrications, hence her swift and devastating revenge on him. Others, taking their clues from Aristomenes' comment at 1.14.2 (*at ego, ut eram etiam nunc humi proiectus, inanimis, nudus et frigidus et lotio perlutus, quasi recens utero matris editus*), understand and discuss the scene as signifying the metaphorical 'death' of Aristomenes' former self (the urine acts as some perversion of the amniotic fluid) and his 'rebirth' into a person with a revised view on magic.¹⁶⁹

Aristomenes' humiliation and emotional degradation at the hands of the witches may also be understood in terms of gender reversal and sexual power. Verbs meaning 'to urinate' in Latin are quite often used vulgarly for ejaculation and anal penetration, with semen often being compared to urine and other bodily secretions,¹⁷⁰ which in a way brings us back to W. KEULEN's notion of rape. Moreover, the act of gender reversal is implied and indicated by the witches' choice to climb *on top* of their victim, a sexual position reserved only for men or, on much rarer occasions, hired prostitutes and known as *Venus pendula* or *mulier equitans*.¹⁷¹ Meroe and Panthia thus assume a masculine role; instead of physically and actively penetrating Aristomenes (they cannot do so as they are lacking a phallus), Meroe and Panthia metaphorically 'penetrate' Aristomenes by urinating on him. The act, then, would also serve as a sort of twisted aide-mémoire on how corporal sexuality and sinister magic overpower

¹⁶⁷ KEULEN (2006) 50-1; (2007) 275-6.

¹⁶⁸ On the association between excremental filth and evil, cf. CAVENDISH (1975) 233-34.

¹⁶⁹ MAYRHOFFER (1975) 72; FRANGOULIDIS (2005) and (2008) 56.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. ADAMS (1982) 142. On urination vocabulary, cf. *ibid.* 245-49.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 772-773: ΛΥΣ. «τὰ δ' ὑπέρτερα νέρτερα θήσει / Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης» – ΓΥΑ ἐπάνω καταχεισόμεθ' ἡμεῖς; See also the comments by DAVIDSON regarding the woman's 'bottomness' in bed (2001: 48).

and overthrow the intellect, with the ‘mighty’ Aristomenes (ἄριστον+μένος)¹⁷² being humiliatingly emasculated and rendered merely the ‘passive’ object—one could even argue he is turned from an ‘impenetrable penetrator’ into a metaphorical ‘passive’ man, a χίμαιδος¹⁷³—of the witches’ *mascula libido*.¹⁷⁴

Aristomenes’ ‘emasculaton’ and femininity is, additionally, reflected in the way he chooses to end his life a little while later (1.16). Male suicide by hanging was regarded as a rather shameful way ‘to go’ in antiquity, since it was considered primarily a *modus moriendi* for women, or a death befitting the desperate. Despite an apparent lack of mythical abhorrence towards the deed of hanging oneself (chief mythical precedents include Jocasta, Antigone, and Phaedra), in real life death by hanging was considered an unpleasant and vulgar spectacle, and the Romans did not refrain from expressing their strong disapproval towards such an act.¹⁷⁵ For example, a certain Horatius Balbus had explicitly prohibited people who had committed an ignoble suicide by rope to be buried in the cemetery which he had procured with his own money for the community.¹⁷⁶ Whenever one encounters cases of men threatening to end their lives by hanging, it is usually performed for purposes of comic relief.¹⁷⁷ In the *Metamorphoses*, too, suicide by hanging is a method women tend to resort to: after awakening from her violent dream, Charite considers ending her life either with a noose, a sword, or a suitable leap (4.25.3); upon realising that Charite had escaped, the robbers’ old woman hangs herself from a cypress (6.30.6); or as soon as the wife of a perfidious steward becomes aware of her husband’s infidelities, she ties herself and her baby to a noose and hurls herself into a well (8.22.4). One could add to this list the baker’s suicide by hanging from the nexus of adultery tales of Book 9, but this is an involuntary suicide which was forced upon

¹⁷² CONNORS & CLENDENON (2012) argue that Apuleius’ Aristomenes might be a witty, albeit comic allusion to the legendary ‘anarchist’ hero Aristomenes of Messene, whose alleged return from the dead seems to be echoed by the Apuleian Aristomenes’ recollection of gazing at the pits of Tartarus at 1.15.5.

¹⁷³ On passivity in Greek and Roman homosexuality and the χίμαιδος, cf. DAVIDSON (2001); SKINNER (2005) 124-32; OGDEN (2011). On the idea of the male “impenetrable penetrator”, cf. WALTERS (1997).

¹⁷⁴ According to Roman thought, sexual relations fell under four basic categories, two of which were typically regarded as ‘normative’ and two as ‘antitypes’: on the one hand, one can find the normal active ‘penetrating’ male (*vir*) and the passive ‘penetrated’ female (*femina* or *puella*), whereas on the opposite side were the abnormal passive ‘penetrated’ male (*cinaedus*) and the active ‘penetrating’ female (*virago*, *tribas*, or *moecha*). On Meroe being an ‘active’ sexual partner, an antitype of the abnormal woman deriving pleasure from sex and using men as her *Spielzeug*, cf. PARKER (1997) 58-59; SPAETH (2010) 251-52 and (2014) 45.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. VAN HOOFF (1990) 64-72.

¹⁷⁶ *CIL* 11.6528.1-8: *Hora[tius...] Balb[us?] ... municipibus [su]eis incoleisque [lo]ca sepultura[e] s(ua) p(ecunia) dat, extra au[ct]orateis et quei sibi [la]queo manu(m) attulissent.*

¹⁷⁷ Cf. MAY (2006) 243-44 and (2013) 23.

the baker by the vengeful spirit of a dead woman, summoned by a witch (9.30.7).¹⁷⁸ It would seem that Aristomenes is compelled to unwittingly embrace his ‘feminine side’; not only is he rendered an effeminate man due to the witches’ metaphorical rape, but he is now also indulging in feminine suicide practices, accepting this new ‘role’ the witches have forced upon him.¹⁷⁹

The urination scene, however, occurs within an episode brimming with magical rites and associations, which tends to imply that urine too was considered to have supernatural properties in antiquity.¹⁸⁰ Diogenes Laertius reports that Pythagoras linked urine to base magic and considered it precarious to urinate either on cut hair or nails (*Life of the Philosophers* 8.17), whereas Porphyry claimed that a child was supposedly deprived of his ability to interpret the speech of birds after his mother had urinated in his ear (*On Abstinence* 3.3.7).¹⁸¹ According to the beliefs of the magi, as related in Pliny’s exposition of the priestly cast, urine from a castrated ox or a eunuch could bring about temporary impotence (*Natural History* 24.72). From Pliny we moreover learn that the urine of a pure *inpubes* boy was used for a variety of beneficial magic or witch-doctor purposes (28.65), and Herodotus reports in his Egyptian exposition that the eyesight of king Pheron was restored to him only after he had washed his eyes with the urine of a virtuous and faithful wife (2.111.2). Similar to these two references, Cato the Elder also recommends cleansing the skin of newly born babies in urine, since it had many medicinal or magical properties (*On Agriculture* 157.10); interestingly, according to Soranus the urine that infants ought to be bathed in should belong to a *παῖς ἄφθορος* (*On Gynaecology* 2.12.1). This all tends to indicate that there existed a sort of connection between urine and its ‘owner’ in antiquity: the urine of pure boys and chaste women was employed for beneficial uses in various forms of ‘chastity magic’ (*Keuschheitszauber*),¹⁸² whereas, on the contrary, the urine of base and filthy witches, like Meroe and Panthia, had a more sinister and nefarious effect.

Bearing the latter implication in mind, Apuleius’ urination scene has been analysed in terms of *Defixionszauber*, prompting some critics to identify the rite as a type of constriction spell (*κάτοχος*), a subdivision of the more general binding spell (*κατάδεσμος*),

¹⁷⁸ This episode is discussed in further details in chapter 5.

¹⁷⁹ In VAN HOOFF’S words, “hanging was the method which distinguished a cissy from a man” (1990: 67).

¹⁸⁰ For a discussion, cf. MUTH (1954) 117-29 and (1967).

¹⁸¹ This act physically cleansed the ears, but religiously polluted them, as is noticed by CLARK (2000) 165 n.395.

¹⁸² On the term, cf. MUTH (1954) 118-19.

whose purpose was to prevent an individual from performing a specific action or escaping from a particularly dire situation.¹⁸³ The restraining or magical properties of urine are attested on several occasions. Petronius acknowledges the confining properties of urine twice in the *Satyrical*. At 57.3 Trimalchio's fellow freedman Hermeros scolds Ascyrtos for poking fun at Trimalchio's gifts and threatens that when he pisses around him (*circumminxero*), Ascyrtos will not know where to run to. Ascyrtos' potential inability to escape from Hermeros confirms the magical qualities attributed to the urine circle in the Greco-Roman worlds. In addition, the famous werewolf tale related by Niceros, another of Trimalchio's symposiasts, further combines urine conjointly with the creation of a magic circle.¹⁸⁴ In this story, the werewolf transforms his clothes into stone by urinating around them (*circumminxit*), so that by the force of the restraining effect nobody could remove or steal them (62.5-8). The reason for this odd action is found among the werewolf lore circulating in antiquity and is connected to the idea that the *versipellis* should repossess the clothes he had removed prior to his transformation and/or refrain from consuming human flesh while being in animal form if his reinstatement to human form were to be successful.¹⁸⁵ Josephus, moreover, reports that in the land of Baaras there grew a mysterious plant with many healing abilities, which was nonetheless hard to collect, for it tended to flee whenever it felt it would be plucked, but it was barred from doing so by simply watering it either with urine or menstrual blood (*Judaic War* 7.180-81). Urine plays also a pivotal role in a couple of spells from the Demotic magical papyri as well—strangely enough, rituals in which urine is required are absent from the Greek magical papyri. In a spell identified as a 'love spell' a woman is said to have urinated before the sun and the moon in order to stop them from rising, or to stop fields from blooming and trees from turning green.¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, an ancient pregnancy test, which in a way is reminiscent of similar modern ones, although the medium through which the pregnancy is confirmed is radically different, suggests that if a woman desired to know whether she was

¹⁸³ SCOBIE (1975) 109, s.v. *'vesicam exonerant'*; also WATSON (2004).

¹⁸⁴ On the restraining properties of magic circles, cf. Pliny *Natural History* 22.60, 25.101, and DELATTE (1961) 92-108.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. SCHUSTER (1930) 162; BORGHINI (1982) 169. On werewolves, cf. chapter 6 n.142.

¹⁸⁶ *PDM* 14.646-49 (col. XXI, 23): "[...] for she is the one who urinated before the sun at dawn, saying to the sun, 'Do not come forth!'; to the moon 'Do not rise!'; to the water 'Do not come to those of Egypt!'; to the field 'Do not bloom!'; and to the great trees of those of Egypt, 'Do not grow green!'" (translated by J.H. Johnson in BETZ (1992) 230).

with child, she ought to urinate over a plant; depending on whether the plant was found green the following day or not, the woman would or would not conceive.¹⁸⁷

Similar restraining properties might be attached to the urination scene under discussion. For starters, Meroe's constriction magic is not an unfamiliar topic for the readers of the *Metamorphoses*; Meroe has already been exposed exercising different forms of constriction earlier in the narrative, either in the form of sealing the womb of a pregnant woman (1.9.5-6), or by restraining the entire citizen body of a town within the confinements of their homes for two days (1.10.3-4). The witch now performs a different kind of restraining spell. As mentioned previously, Meroe reserves for Aristomenes the role of becoming an implicit abettor of Socrates' murder, forcing him to bury his friend at a later stage (1.13.3). She then urinates over him, thus enacting the *κάτοχος* spell, and departs from the inn. As soon as Aristomenes recovers from the shock, he realises with dread that he may soon be faced with the predicament of having to explain to the authorities the presence of a dead body in his room; in a state of panic Aristomenes weighs his options and contemplates fleeing in the middle of the night, leaving behind the presumably 'dead' Socrates. But he soon experiences the first consequence of Meroe's spell: the doors, which previously had sprung open with such ease for the witches, appear now to be bolted tightly,¹⁸⁸ and so Aristomenes has strange difficulties escaping the inn. As his 'paranoia' of prosecution grows larger (a malicious side-effect, perhaps, of the witches' distorting magic, capable of inducing a grave sense of guilt in innocent victims), Aristomenes begins to envisage Tartarus and Cerberus beholding him and to comprehend that Meroe's plan all along was to frame him for Socrates' murder and to sentence him to die on a cross.¹⁸⁹ He sees no other way of escaping than to claim his own life. He addresses one last time his trusted *grabattulus*,¹⁹⁰ the one true, albeit inanimate, witness

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 14.956-60: "The way to know it of a woman whether she will be pregnant: you should make the woman urinate on this plant, above, again, at night. When morning comes, if you find the plant scorched, she will not conceive. If you find it green, she will conceive" (translated by J.H. Johnson in BETZ (1992) 242).

¹⁸⁸ 1.14.7: *at illae probae et fideles ianuae, quae sua sponte reseratae nocte fuerant, vix tandem et aegerrime tunc clavis suae crebra immissione patefiunt.*

¹⁸⁹ 1.15.5-6: *illud horae memini me terra dehiscente ima Tartara inque his canem Cerberum prorsus esurientem mei prospexisse. ac recordabar profecto bonam Meroen non misericordia iugulo meo pepercisse, sed saevitia cruci me reservasse.*

¹⁹⁰ Aristomenes' 'final' address to his bed alludes, in a comical fashion, to Ajax's final speech to his sword in the homonymous Sophoclean tragedy (646-92); the former, however, lacks the seriousness of the latter, and although Ajax dies when he falls on to his sword, Aristomenes, on the other hand, survives his attempted suicide, thus rendering his address only seemingly a final one. An evocation of Sallust *Jugurtha* 14.22 has also been suggested, on which cf. WALSH (1994) 243. On the comic aspects of Aristomenes' intended suicide, cf. EFFE (1976). For elegiac echoes in Aristomenes' invocation, cf. WESTERBRINK (1978) 64; MATTIACCI (1993) and

to his innocence, and then hangs himself.¹⁹¹ The spell, once more, thwarts Aristomenes' plan. His comic, and feminine in nature, suicide attempt fails miserably when the old and rotten rope he uses to hang himself breaks (1.16.6). It is obvious that Meroe's *κάτοχος*, provided that one is prepared to accept the urination scene as such, does not allow Aristomenes to escape or deviate from the plan she has in store for him: he can neither flee the inn and leave the 'dead' Socrates behind, nor kill himself, and therefore not bury Socrates. As becomes evident in the end, the spell performed an excellent job: (i) Aristomenes could not escape from the dire situation he had found himself in; (ii) he was forced to bury Socrates next to the river where the latter had expired, succumbing to Panthia's curse (1.19.11); and (iii) he chose for himself voluntary exile out of his paranoiac fear that people might consider him the perpetrator of the crime, despite the fact that there were no witnesses to claim otherwise, or that the sole witness who could be produced in an potential court trial—the innkeeper—could testify that both Aristomenes and Socrates left the inn alive.

6

'Fictional reality' versus 'Real fiction'

After Socrates' attempt to desert Meroe has been punished and Aristomenes' badmouthing of Meroe has been avenged, there is nothing more left for the witches to do than depart from the inn. Their manner of departure is as miraculous as their arrival: Meroe and Panthia need only to retrace their steps and cross the threshold backwards, and the room magically reverts undamaged to its former state, proving once more, quite irrefutably, Meroe's dominion over liminal and confined spaces: the unhinged doors return to their prior position, the pivots settle back in the sockets, the bars are restored to the doorposts, and the bolts are shot back into the locks (1.14.1). Such entry and exit spaces were often associated in antiquity with magic and the supernatural; the menacing Hecate was regarded, among other

(1998) 129, 148; for the farcical elements, cf. BAJONI (1990) 152. On Roman love elegy and the *Metamorphoses*, cf. HINDERMANN (2009) 23-6; also the discussion in MCKEOWN (1979).

¹⁹¹ FRANGOULIDIS points out that Aristomenes' bed invocation re-enacts the thematics of Panthia's address to the sponge at *Metamorphoses* 1.13.7; he argues that the connection between the two scenes is reinforced not only by the fact that both appeals are related to an individual's death (Aristomenes' by Aristomenes himself while addressing his bed, and Socrates' by Panthia while addressing the sponge), but also by highlighting the stark contrast between the two different appeals (Panthia is successful at assigning a role to the sponge, ultimately claiming Socrates' life, whereas Aristomenes is unsuccessful at assigning a role to the rope in his suicide attempt) (1999: 384; 2001: 29).

things, as the patron goddess and protector of liminal places, where she was also oftentimes worshipped.¹⁹²

One might also observe with regard to the scene's organisation that while the witches are physically present at the inn, the general tumult of unhinged doors and broken beds disturbs neither the inn's 'attentive' *ianitor*, nor the peacefully sleeping Socrates (perhaps in a state of coma?). But as soon as the witches depart, both Socrates and the porter react extremely sensitively to noises. Socrates does not seem to register any of the night's happenings, not even the dreadful moment of Meroe slitting his throat and removing his heart, yet when Aristomenes lands on top of him after the former's suicide attempt goes awry and the rope breaks, Socrates immediately wakes up and scolds his friend for stinking of urine (1.17.2-6).¹⁹³ In a similar vein, the innkeeper appears to be unaware of the battering of doors and the general turmoil resulting from the witches' forced entry, yet Aristomenes' screams to the porter to unlock the door of the inn and let him out seems to have quite the opposite effect: the porter instantly reacts and refuses to let him depart in the middle of the night (1.15.1-2).¹⁹⁴ The porter, additionally, seems to instantly react to the noise of Aristomenes landing on top of Socrates when the rope breaks, since he furiously barges into the friends' room unannounced in order to inspect the origin of the commotion (1.16.6-17.1).

How does one explain these particular inconsistencies? In my view, it would not be too far-fetched to suggest that from the moment the witches enter the inn until the moment of their departure, whereupon the room returns to its prior state, the physical time of the

¹⁹² Cf. *OCD*⁴ s.v. 'Hecate' 649-50. Due to her association with the realm of the dead, Hecate was worshipped as the patron goddess of witchcraft. Witches of all time periods evoke her name and authority (cf. e.g., Sophocles fr. 535 (Radt); Euripides *Medea* 397; Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.1035-36; Theocritus *Idyll* 2.12-16; Horace *Satire* 1.8.33). Hecate is invoked on numerous occasions in the magical papyri (cf. *PGM* 3.47; 4.1432, 1443, 1462, 2112, 2606, 2628, 2689, 2711, 2724, 2727, 2742, 2748-49, 2812, 2876, 2953; 36.190; 54.14; 70.5, 25) and in surviving curse tablets from the Classical to the early Imperial period (cf. *DT* 38.14, 41a.7, 13, 41b.8; *DTA* 104-07, 180b.2; *SEG* 30.326). On Hecate and her relation to witchcraft, cf. JOHNSTON (1990), (1991), and (1999) 203-49; WERTH (2006); FELTON (2007) 91; ZOGRAFOU (2010b).

¹⁹³ EFFE notices that the death of Socrates the previous night and his apparent 'resurrection' the following morning is a comic-burlesque parody of the 'resurrection' or *Scheintod* motif from the Greek novels (1976: 368-9). The apparent *Scheintod* of a character occurs often enough in the *Metamorphoses*, so that TATUM regards it as a motif related to Lucius' own rebirth in Book 11 (1969: 502 n.37). Other memorable *Scheintode* are those of the dead corpse in Thelyphron's tale (on which cf. the discussion at chapter 5), Psyche (6.21), and the young boy in the *tragoedia* tale of Book 10 (10.5, 11-12). For a brief discussion of *Scheintod* in some of the novels, cf. ANDERSON (1984) 160-73.

¹⁹⁴ The narrative of Aristomenes' failure to persuade the inn-keeper to open the doors and let him leave has been interpreted as an awkward insertion of a farcical story of a lover's suicide in the middle of a sensational witch tale, on which cf. PERRY (1929b, and esp. 397-400 for the story's shortcomings) and (1967) 259-64; WALSH (1970) 150 and n.2; SMITH (1993) 86-7; FRANGOULIDIS (1999) 383; for reservations, cf. MAYRHOFER (1975) 73; SCOBIE (1975) 110.

narrative stands still and the action takes place in a state of limbo, of 'betwixt and between'. By stopping time, the witches are allowed to conveniently exact their revenge undisturbed, without having to worry about prying eyes; this suggestion could account for the complete lack of reaction from both Socrates and the *ianitor*. As we have seen previously, witches of the witch tradition were credited with the performance of a vast array of ἀδύνατα, some of which even included the prolongation of physical time. For example, we are told that Lucan's Erichtho could hold back day and extend night whenever she so wished (*caelo lucis ducente colorem, | dum ferrent tutos intra tentoria gressus, | iussa tenere diem densas nox praestitit umbras*, 6.828-830). Apuleius might have taken this notion from the witch tradition a notch further, hence presenting his own witches with the power to stop time. If this is indeed the case and Apuleius had conceived his witches bringing time to a halt whilst their murderous schemes were being fully developed, then this may very well be regarded as his own personal contribution to the witch tradition. Witches have been credited with tampering and manipulating physical time to their selfish needs, but no other ancient (extant) author has ever portrayed them until now as bringing time to a complete standstill. Not only would this be an Apuleian innovation, but it would furthermore be an extraordinary first case of performing such an ἀδύνατον.

One further theory I would like to suggest in order to explain the indifferent reactions of Socrates and the innkeeper towards the witches' attack is to assume that the action took place within the framework of a dream-world, with the attack itself taking the form of a nightmare.¹⁹⁵ The scene itself frequently shifts its attention from waking reality to dream world, leaving the readers quite puzzled as to whether the action described in such realistic terms belongs truly to the sphere of factuality or simply to that of an ἐνύπνιον.¹⁹⁶ There are several hints in Aristomenes' report to support the latter conjecture. To begin with, before heading to bed the two friends consume large amounts of food and drink (1.7.4), which according to ancient dream theories most often induced horrifying nightmares.¹⁹⁷ The attack occurs when Socrates is reportedly already fast asleep and snoring (*bonus Socrates iam sopitus stertebat altius*, 1.11.4) and whilst Aristomenes had only just fallen asleep (*paululum coniveo*,

¹⁹⁵ On the function of dreams in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. ANNEQUIN (1996); GOLLNICK (1999), esp. 53-60 for Aristomenes' tale; HUNINK (2006a); CARLISLE (2008).

¹⁹⁶ On dreams in antiquity and in Greco-Roman literature, cf. KESSELS (1973); HANSON (1980); WALDE (2001) HARRIS (2009); HARRISSON (2009).

¹⁹⁷ Cf. e.g., Plato *Republic* 9.571c-72b; Aristotle *On dreams* 461a14-25; Cicero *Divination* 1.60, 115; Artemidorus *Interpretation of dreams* 1.7; see also the discussion at PANAYOTAKIS (1998); LEV KENAAN (2004).

1.11.6).¹⁹⁸ This critical moment between slumber and wakeful awareness, the very moment which Aristomenes finds himself in, was the most opportune time for the apparition of a nightmare according to Macrobius *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 1.3.7, and it is at this precise moment when the nightmarish Meroe and Panthia appear. Lastly, the idea of a nightmare is further supported by Aristomenes, who upon failing to discover any wound traces on Socrates' neck the following morning interprets the entire nightly ordeal as nothing more than a terrifying dream (1.18.4-5). Even for those who remain sceptical about the existence of the witches' urine which Aristomenes was allegedly drenched in, there is a very sound and medical reason to explain its presence: the urine belongs not to the witches but to Aristomenes. Aristotle comments that it was not at all unusual for inebriated people to wet their beds during the night, especially when having disquieting dreams (*Problems* 3.34), a subtle albeit clear insinuation advanced by Socrates too (1.17.6, 18.6). In the end, and despite having listened to Socrates' account of Meroe's various miraculous feats, Aristomenes still remains partly unconvinced of the powers of witchcraft, just like the anonymous travelling companion, to whom Aristomenes is currently recounting his story. It never crosses the latter's mind that Socrates' 'resurrection', whose gruesome death Aristomenes witnessed with his very own eyes, was achieved by magic.

Ultimately, the status of the witches' attack remains extremely inconclusive and perplexing, with the reader receiving ample indications both about the attack's reality, and about its dream-like nature. But perhaps that had been Apuleius' intention from the very start, to present such a terrifying story as belonging to the realm of fantasy or that of nightmares. Surely, members of Apuleius' audience would have found several aspects of Aristomenes' tale rather disquieting, and I am confident that Apuleius did that deliberately, whether as a form of social criticism on the role of magic in society or simply because the audience was tantalised by gory details and ghastly depictions and craved to be shocked.¹⁹⁹ By adding here and there some comical elements to the narrative, Apuleius ingeniously downplays the gravity of the horror aspects and allows his readers a moment of comic relief.

¹⁹⁸ DOWDEN advances a connection between safety from magic and remaining awake: "it seems, you are safe from witches if you are awake, an interesting proposition, which also seems to drive the story of Socrates and Aristomenes" (1998: 12).

¹⁹⁹ One could compare Apuleius' audience's thrill to be shocked to a similar trend in recent horror and 'slasher' films, such as the *Hostel* or *Saw* franchises: viewers are fully aware that the protagonists will die a most violent and dreadful death in a very graphic way on screen; but instead of turning their heads away, the viewers are somehow compelled to witness the death scene, in all its gruesome glory, no matter how disturbing it may be.

This relief, however, is soon shattered when Socrates dies for real in the arms of Aristomenes, thus revealing that Meroe and Panthea's attack was anything but a nightmare, it was reality in the guise of a dream.

And then there is the perplexing nature of Socrates' predictive 'double dream' (i.e. 'visionary' dreams which more than one character of the same story share), whereby Socrates dreams of his throat being cut, a 'dream' which Aristomenes is forced to witness on the one hand, and the reader to wonder about on the other.²⁰⁰ The tale which Aristomenes relates is so bizarre and odd in nature that the (first) reader of the novel can only treat it as what the scrupulous co-traveller suggests: a story that is *fabula fabulosius* and *mendacio absurdius* (1.20.2). Yet in retrospect, as soon as Socrates expires next to the running river while attempting to quench his thirst, Socrates' dream *becomes* Aristomenes' dramatic reality, since the conditions of Panthia's curse have just been met: the cut throat reopens, the sponge leaps out of the wound, and Socrates gives up the ghost for good (1.19). Only this time, Socrates' death occurs not in a dream or fantasy world from which he can seemingly wake up unharmed, but in waking reality. Unlike the first 'dream death' the second death is permanent, irreversible, and has catastrophic consequences. Dreams, then, become a model for understanding and accepting events, which at first seem impossible because they happen outside of what might be termed 'normal experience', as real.²⁰¹

A similar 'dream versus reality' death sequence is employed in the narrative of Charite's ordeals and functions in a very comparable way to that of Aristomenes.²⁰² While the maiden is held captive by the robbers in their cave, she dreams of her fiancé Tlepolemus' violent death at the hands of her captors; Charite *perceives* this dream as reality, and so she wakes up upset and contemplates suicide.²⁰³ The old woman appointed to look after Charite suggests that the girl ought not have put her faith in day-dreams, since on most occasions such *somnia* are deceitful and untrue (4.27.5).²⁰⁴ The old woman's comment corresponds pretty well to reality; soon thereafter, Charite, Lucius-ass, and the readers find out that not

²⁰⁰ The motif of the 'double dream' reoccurs at Petronius *Satyrice* 104.1-2, where Lichas and Tryphaena share a similar dream. On Socrates' 'double dream', cf. PANAYOTAKIS (1998) 128 with n.27; FRANGOULIDIS (2012).

²⁰¹ Cf. CARLISLE (2008) 217.

²⁰² Cf. FRANGOULIDIS (1993).

²⁰³ 4.27.4: *utque clamore percito formonsae raptum uxoris conquerens populi testatur auxilium, quidam de latronibus, importunae persecutionis indignatione permotus, saxo grandi pro pedibus adrepto, misellum iuvenem maritum meum percussum interemit. talis aspectus atrocitate perterrita somno funesto pavens excussa sum.*

²⁰⁴ On Roman beliefs concerning the veracity of dreams, cf. HARRIS (2003).

only is Tlepolemus still alive and well, but he has also managed to successfully infiltrate the robbers' ranks in order to release his loved one from her tormenting kidnappers (7.12.1).²⁰⁵ But in the end, Charite's initial 'death dream' turns into a terrifying reality when Tlepolemus is murdered at the hands of Thrasyllus, one of Charite's keen former suitors (8.5). 'True death' occurs on both accounts during a seemingly happy time for the stories' protagonists: Aristomenes and Socrates assume they have successfully evaded the witches and can, thus, return to their normal lives; in reality, Socrates dies and Aristomenes abandons forever his family and country, assuming a new identity by necessity. Whereas Charite and Tlepolemus are finally married and enjoy their long-awaited 'happily ever after', yet their initial joyful romance turns into a sorrowful tragedy as Tlepolemus is violently murdered, Charite in her grief commits suicide, and the young couple's entire household miserably falls apart.²⁰⁶

A seemingly inconclusive nature can also be argued for the attack launched against Thelyphron by the witches of his story. The story itself raises essential questions about the relationship between dream world and reality. Although Thelyphron's tale does not explicitly entail a dream, the main action takes place while Thelyphron is sound asleep (*nec mora cum me somnus profundus in imum barathrum repente demergit*, 2.25.5). As with the case of Aristomenes' account, Thelyphron's narrative of the witches' attack leaves the reader questioning what is dream, what is reality, and what is a consequence of witchcraft. Similar to the sleeping Socrates, the sleeping Thelyphron fails to register the events taking place around him, despite the fact that these events affect him directly, since it is later divulged that the witches removed several of his facial features (*iniecta manu nasum prehendit: sequitur; aures pertracto: deruunt*, 2.30.7). In Thelyphron's story the role of eye-witness—the role which Aristomenes held in his respective story—is reserved for the cadaver; despite being dead, the cadaver offers a pretty accurate account of the happenings which took place the previous night when it is restored briefly to life in order to point to its murderer (2.30.1-6).

As we have seen earlier, in the tales of Aristomenes and the narrative of Charite's ordeals Apuleius toys with the motif of a 'dream versus reality' death. In the tale of Thelyphron, on the other hand, the witches' magic and witchcraft are used to blur the

²⁰⁵ On the truthfulness of Charite's dream, cf. HIJMANS, VAN DER PAARDT *et al.* (1985) 5-6; WINKLER (1985) 52-53; MIGNOGNA (1996) 95-96.

²⁰⁶ Interestingly enough, WINKLER toyed with the idea that perhaps *Metamorphoses* Books 1-10 were meant to be understood as a long narrative dream with Book 11 being a sort of "waking coda" (1985: 9). However, HUNINK (2006a) 27 n.32 has expressed some reservations on this matter.

boundaries of what appears to be a ‘dead versus living/undead’ reality. From the moment Thelyphron enters the cadaver’s room to perform the task he had been appointed to and comes into contact with sinister witchcraft (2.25) the entire scene suddenly switches between ‘deadness’ and ‘livingness/undeadness’, consequently leaving the readers utterly confused as to who exactly is dead and who is not. For example, Thelyphron (alive) is hired to protect the cadaver of a prominent man (dead) from the attack of night-witches (presumably living albeit monstrous creatures), who are in the habit of stealing human body parts (from the dead) for various magical rituals. Each person involved in the story has seemingly been assigned a clear role; magic, nonetheless, upsets these defined roles. The first instance where the fine line between life and death gets distorted is when the small weasel,²⁰⁷ presumably a shape-shifting witch, casts Thelyphron into a deathlike sleep; the next day Thelyphron does not fail to remark that due to this *profundus somnus* nobody could have been able to actively discern which of the two bodies lying in the room belonged to a dead or living man.²⁰⁸

The ‘life versus death’ confusion continues to surround the remaining of the narrative. Later that day, the cadaver is brought back to life by means of a magical necromantic ritual, and so the dead becomes ‘undead’. The now undead corpse unravels two interesting facts which further expand and complicate the scene’s general topsy-turviness. On the one hand, both the cadaver and the guardian share the same name; therefore, the reader is presented with a ‘tale of two Thelyphrons’, each of which is assigned a dead and alive status. Thelyphron/cadaver is briefly reinstated to life: hence his status changes from that of dead to Thelyphron/undead. Would this suggest that guardian-Thelyphron/alive unexpectedly succumbs to death? Thelyphron/undead continues his narrative. As guardian-Thelyphron/alive is peacefully sleeping, which leaves him looking ‘dead’ (guardian-Thelyphron/‘dead’), witches had indeed attempted to snatch away some body parts (2.30.2-3). At this stage it is useful to bear in mind that witches would only steal bodily parts from dead people, since it was believed that such parts could grant witches power over the ghost of the deceased whose remains were used in the rituals. The witches perform a conjuring spell to which guardian-Thelyphron/‘dead’, though in deathlike sleep, answers (notice that the

²⁰⁷ Aelian reports in his *Nature of Animals* 15.11 that the weasel (χερσαία γαλή) was once a libidinous female witch (γόης καὶ φαρμακίς) who had been transformed into that animal as a form of punishment by Hecate, patron goddess of witches. Aelian also adds that weasels attack unguarded dead men and desecrate their bodies by sucking out their eyes (συλῶσι τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐκροφοῦσι).

²⁰⁸ 2.25.5: *ut ne deus quidem Delphicus ipse facile discerneret duobus nobis iacentibus, quis esset magis mortuus.*

cadaver addresses guardian-Thelyphron as both 'alive' and 'dead' at 2.30.4: *hic utpote vivus quidem, sed tantum sopore mortuus*). Being under the impression that this was in fact the dead man they were seeking, the witches remove the nose and ears of guardian-Thelyphron/'dead' and leave, on the contrary, Thelyphron/cadaver intact. The witches, therefore, treat guardian-Thelyphron as if he were dead, thus compelling him to live out his remaining days as a mutilated 'corpse', a victim of their malevolent arts.

7

Concluding discussion

In this chapter, I have examined the various magical aspects and implications of Aristomenes and Thelyphron's tales and the various depictions of witchcraft found therein. Three main conclusions can be derived from this discussion. Firstly, it appears that Apuleius was apparently quite aware of Imperial literature's witch tradition discussed in chapter 2 and drew extensively upon its features for his own exposition of witchery activities in the two tales. Apuleius' malevolent witches are modelled on the various manifestations and representations of crones from Imperial Latin literature, and one might not be too wrong to suggest that Meroe emerges as a caricature of Horace's Canidia, with Panthia taking on the role of the lesser figure Sagana. Numerous aspects of their character and activities associate them with the figure of the crone: references to Meroe and Panthia's advanced age evoke the various portrayals of crones as being loathsome with age and ugly women. Moreover, Apuleius' witches, like the crones before them, lack any heroic stance; they are nothing like their divine patrons, although they strive to imitate their characters and magic. On the contrary, they are connected to a contemporary *hic et nunc* that the readership could relate to. Meroe is only an innkeeper who happens to engage in magic as a way of living, whereas nothing is ever disclosed about Panthia or Thelyphron's hags on this matter. The magic Meroe indulges in is predominantly concerned with matters of love, perhaps bringing to the forefront the connection between *cauponae* and prostitution, which once again is in full accordance with the traditional depiction of crones, and specifically the *lena-cum-saga* of Latin love elegy. Apart from love, Meroe also betrays an interest in matters of trade and law, as her transformation magic indicates, and it was also suggested that the way in which Meroe opts to practise this particular form of magic points towards the practice of casting *defixiones*.

Secondly, as was already suggested in chapter 3, Apuleius had seemingly developed a profound interest in and knowledge of magical lore, without this necessarily implying that he was a *magus*, although some might have *perceived* his philosophical and medicinal interests as magical. The discussion of the various magical allegations advanced against him in the *Apology* may have demonstrated this point. Apuleius' knowledge of magic is brought into even sharper relief when someone looks at the two witchcraft tales under discussion in unison. Apuleius offers the reader a spectacularly vast array of witchcraft, ranging from the simplest forms of love magic and *defixiones* to the more complicated sepulchral and transformation rituals, for which a large amount of correspondences to the witch tradition can be detected. Having said that, Apuleius does not merely reproduce features attested in prior literature, but certainly adds his very own unique touch to his witch portrayals by presenting witches as performing some feats not attested before, such as forestalling child-birth or possibly bringing physical time to a halt. In some cases, the reader is given a small input on how or by what means some magical rituals are effected. For example, the reader witnesses first-hand Meroe's constriction magic in action and how she effectively succeeds in shutting up an entire town within the confinements of their houses; this she achieves by summoning supernatural forces to her aid, the so-called praeternatural *πάρεδρος* that is attested from numerous magical spells of the magical papyri. In others, the reader is left entirely in the dark. We have no idea how Meroe accomplishes her transformation magic, aside from knowing that she does; nor do we know how she manages to seal shut perpetually the pregnant woman's womb. From other literary sources one hears of ancient beliefs related to child-birth and the magical tying and untying of knots, which may have something to do with this; but Apuleius remains conspicuously silent on this topic. All we are allowed to know is Meroe's ability to perform such a feat.

And lastly, every little detail Apuleius brings into the narrative of Aristomenes and Thelyphron's tales meticulously evokes associations with witchcraft. From the use of household utensils (like lamps and sponges) to the use of remains from corpses for magic, liminal spaces and threshold magic, even bodily secretions, pertain in some way to popular magical beliefs. The fact that plenty of correspondences also exist in the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, antiquity's magic-related 'cookbooks', for the numerous magical overtones and suggestions presented in this chapter, adds a further touch of realism to these tales, no matter how unbelievable, exaggerated, or ridiculous they may initially seem. The reader may

or may not be a believer in the power of witchcraft, just like the sceptical stranger at the beginning of the novel. This, however, does not imply that people did not *practise* witchcraft or that many did not *believe* in the efficiency of magic. The famous statement of the prologic *ego* at the beginning of the novel makes it more than evident that these tales of magic, and the *Metamorphoses* in its entirety, are first and foremost meant to be read for the reader's delight. Putting aside the fact that Aristomenes and Thelyphron's tales have been constructed in such an over-exaggerated way for purposes of amusement, if the reader can in some way relate to the happenings presented therein, because in some way the narrative reflects popular beliefs about magic, witchcraft, and witches, the reader will accept it, embrace it, and perhaps even be made to fear it less. On the whole, I do believe that ancient readers could associate with these stories; magic functions in these tales both on a literary and on a 'real' level. Regardless of whether one reads them for pure amusement or not, the depiction of magic reflects in many ways beliefs circulating in the second century CE about witchcraft and the people taking part in such occult practices.

5

A RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

GHOSTS, CADAVERS, AND ZATCHLAS' NECROMANTIC RITUAL¹

Necromantii sunt, quorum praecantationibus videntur resuscitati mortui divinare, et ad interrogata respondere. νεκρὸς enim Graece mortuus, μαντεία divinatio nuncupatur: ad quos sciscitandos cadaveri sanguis adicitur. nam amare daemones sanguinem dicitur. ideoque quotiens necromantia fit, cruor aqua miscitur, ut cruore sanguinis facilius provocentur.

Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 8.9.11

1

Preliminaries

As the previous chapter should have demonstrated by now, magic in the *Metamorphoses* comes in a variety of forms: love magic, binding spells, impious sacrifices, control over the natural elements, noxious collection and use of human remains, as well as shape-shifting, are but a few of the stock motifs which had become a *locus communis* for the description of magic working in Roman literature and which are reproduced in the novel.² However, perhaps the most important and sinister of all magical activities is the one resting on the belief that the dead can be summoned from the grave at the behest of the living and be manipulated for one's own services. The current chapter, therefore, focuses primarily on the dead (and the not so dead) and has as a starting point the necromantic conjuring scene from the second half of Thelyphron's tale. As soon as the genesis of the arts of ghost evocation and necromancy have been examined, Apuleius' necromantic scene will be discussed in the

¹ This chapter traces its roots to a 2011 conference paper on the Beyond in Late Antiquity and is a revised and more thorough investigation of STAMATOPOULOS (2017).

² SCAZZOSO has identified nine different forms of magic present in the *Metamorphoses*: (i) coercion of nature, (ii) demonic magic, (iii) transformation magic, (iv) divinatory magic, (v) necromancy, (vi) love magic, (vii) sepulchral magic, (viii) transportation magic, and lastly (ix) constriction magic (1951: 46-53; 69-71).

light of its literary tradition, which will bring into relief the various patterns of literary necromantic reanimations. The final section of the chapter will cross-examine Apuleius' ritual and similar rites attested by the Greek and Demotic magical papyri and will suggest ways in which Apuleius' scene might reflect real-life necromantic practices.

2

The 'dearly departed' and the genesis of summoning the dead

"He thrusts his fists against the posts and still insists he sees the ghosts."

Stephen King, *IT*

Since the dawn of historical times ancient cultures had grown accustomed to the idea that life did not end with death—elegantly expressed in verse by Propertius as *letum non omnia finit* (4.7.1).³ The Greeks, in particular, believed that the dead were capable of interacting with the living and assumed that the 'restless' dead could journey to the upper world whenever they chose to. In the Homeric poems two types of souls were able to perform such a task: those who had not yet received burial rites (*ἄταφοι*), and those who had died before their allotted time (*ἄωροι*).⁴ This conviction is mirrored in the two ghost manifestations of the *Metamorphoses*, both of which had met a violent end (*βίαιοθάνατοι*) and both were still bearing the obvious markers of their deaths:⁵ in the 'Charite complex'⁶ the ghost of Charite's husband Tlepolemus appears to her in her sleep and unravels the true nature of his death at the hands of her lustful pursuer Thrasyllus (8.8.6-9), and in the adultery tales of Book 9 the ghost of the murdered baker also appears while his daughter is sleeping and exposes the manner of his death at the hands of a ghostly woman sent against him by a wicked hag (9.31.1). But as time gradually progressed and the Greeks came into contact with the people of Mesopotamia and Egypt, their attitude concerning the relationship between the living and

³ On Propertius' Underworld and its multi-layers of inhabitants, cf. REBELLO (2017).

⁴ Cf. Patroclus at *Iliad* 23.65-92; Elpenor at *Odyseey* 11.51-78; see also Virgil *Aeneid* 6.325-30, 426-39, and the discussions at BREMMER (1983) 89-103; JOHNSTON (1994) esp. 138-140, and (1999) 3-35.

⁵ The perception that the dead continue to be marked by the causes of their death was wide-spread in antiquity, on which cf. OGDEN (2001) 221. For more cases of this notion in Roman literature, cf. HIJMANS, VAN DER PAARDT *et al.* (1985) 90 s.v. '*pallore deformem attollens faciem.*'

⁶ The term is coined by JUNGHANNIS to refer to the larger episode of Charite which runs from the first time she appeared in the novel until her untimely death (4.23-8.14) (1932: 156).

the dead changed as well;⁷ the dead could now be called back from their graves by certain evocation ‘specialists’ known in the Greek world as γόητες or ψυχαγωγοί, much later also νεκρομάντις.⁸

From this point onward the terms ψυχαγωγία and νεκρομαντεία are going to be used quite often, so that a brief explanation of specific magical terminology is necessary. With the term ψυχαγωγία or ‘ghost evocation’ I address the general practice of summoning the spirits of the dead with the purpose of sending them against one’s enemies, or of putting restless ghosts to rest. By νεκρομαντεία, ψυχομαντεία or necromancy, on the other hand, I refer to a more specific sub-category of ψυχαγωγία, which aimed at invoking the spirits of the dead with the purpose of deriving divination from them.⁹ Consulting the dead for divinatory purposes was not limited to the Greco-Roman worlds but can be found practised in several other cultures as well.¹⁰ Although there existed various ways of receiving direct or indirect prophecy with the help of magical means (e.g., lamp, bowl, or flame divination),¹¹ summoning the dead from the afterlife was considered one of the most accurate forms of prophecy, since the dead were often regarded as being sources of arcane knowledge.¹² It should, however, be noted at this stage that although the practice of ψυχαγωγία clearly encompasses that of necromancy, this does not mean that every ψυχαγωγία ends up being a necromantic ritual.

The first documented case in Greco-Roman literature taken to resemble not only a ψυχαγωγία, but also necromancy is Odysseus’ ritual in the Homeric *nekuia*.¹³ It has been suggested by some and argued by others that the *nekuia* is a hybrid episode which blends

⁷ Cf. JOHNSTON (1999) 94.

⁸ On these terms, cf. JOHNSTON (1999) 102-23.

⁹ On ψυχαγωγία, cf. OGDEN (2001) 95-115. For a brief history of necromancy, cf. DONNADIEU & VILATTE (1996); OGDEN (2001) xxii-xxxi; BREMMER (2002b) 71-86; MARTIN (2012) 90-93.

¹⁰ For cases of Mesopotamian and Egyptian interactions with the dead, cf. SCURLOCK (1988), (1995a) and (1995b), (1997); COOPER (1992); MURNAME (1992); PINCH (1994) 147-49; JOHNSTON (1999) 86-95. For Israelite beliefs in necromancy, cf. SCHMIDT (1994).

¹¹ For instance, Pamphile performs lamp divination twice in the *Metamorphoses* (2.11.5, 3.21.4), and in the *Alexander Romance* the pharaoh and magician Nectanebo performs bowl divination (λεκανομαντεία) and so predicts Egypt’s imminent invasion by the enemy (rec. A.1.1). Both practices are variously attested in the magical and demotic papyri (cf. *PGM* 1.262-347; 4.222-60, 3209-354; 5.1-53, 55-69; 7.250-59, 319-34, 540-78; 22b.27-31; *PDM* 14.459-527; 15.750-71, 1141-54, 1199-1205). On flame divination, cf. chapter 6 n.119.

¹² Cf. e.g., Lucan *Civil War* 6.430-34.

¹³ On the Homeric *nekuia*, cf. VAN DER VALK (1935); BÜCHNER (1937); CLARKE (1967) 58-65; CLARK (1978) 37-78; MATTHIESSEN (1988); CRANE (1987) 87-134; HEUBECK & HOEKSTRA (1989) 75-77; DOHERTY (1995) 93-121; DE JONG (2001a) 271-72; WEST (2014) 122-27, 214-24. On the famous ancient Greek oracles of the dead (νεκρομαντεία), cf. Herodotus *Histories* 5.92(η); Strabo *Geography* 5.4.5; Plutarch *On Divine Vengeance* 560E-F, *Cimon* 6.4-7; pseudo-Plutarch *Consolation to Apollonius* 109B-D; Maximus of Tyre *Dissertations* 8.2. Cf. also the discussion at OGDEN (2001) 17-74.

together a purely necromantic ritual with a heroic descent to Hades, not excluding the fact that it might also betray influences from the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh.¹⁴ In our version of the *nekuia*¹⁵ it is Circe who gives specific instructions to Odysseus on how to reach the entrance of Hades and what to do there in order to summon the ghost of the prophet Teiresias and so receive directions for his journey home.¹⁶ Odysseus digs a pit, makes libations, prays to the dead and the infernal deities, sacrifices black sheep and offers their blood to the dead, at which point the ghosts start circling the pit, Teiresias among them (11.24-37). It is hard to say whether the scene of the Homeric *nekuia* had already been established as ‘typically’ necromantic by the time of the poem’s composition; however, if two instances from the fifth century BCE referring to this ritual are any indication, it seems that the scene was indeed perceived as such, at least by that time. The first example comes from one of the few surviving fragments of Aeschylus’ lost satyr-play *Leaders of Souls*. As far as we can tell, the fragment draws its inspiration from the Homeric *nekuia* and portrays Odysseus as forcing the ghost of Teiresias to manifest itself in the upper world; Teiresias appears and prophesies the

¹⁴ Cf. NORDEN (1970) 200 n.2; WEST (2014) 122-27. Heroic descents to the Underworld were seemingly a *topos* in ancient epics. Aside from the *Aeneid*, the lost *Minyas* seems to have dealt with Theseus and Pirithous’ descent to Hades (fr. 7 (West) relates an exchange between Theseus and Meleager in the Underworld), and a descent was probably included in the lost *Returns* (cf. fr. 1 (West): ἡ δὲ Ὀμήρου ποίησις ἐς Ὀδυσσεῖα καὶ ἡ Μινυᾶς τε καλουμένη καὶ οἱ Νόστοι (μνήμη γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἐν ταύταις Ἄιδου καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖ δειμάτων ἐστίν) ἴσασι οὐδένα Εὐρύνομον δαίμονα). Furthermore, Heracles himself refers to his own downward trip in *Odyssey* 11.623-25 (καὶ ποτέ μ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἔπεμψε κύν’ ἄξοντ’· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ’ ἄλλον / φράζετο τοῦδέ γε μοι κρατερώτερον εἶναι ἄεθλον. / τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν ἀνένεικα καὶ ἤγαγον ἐξ Αἴδαο), whereas several similarities between a number of disparate poets, including Bacchylides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Virgil, and the prose writer Apollodorus, led E. NORDEN to assume that there must have existed (in some form) a now lost *Descent of Heracles* epic in antiquity, on which cf. the discussion at CLARK (1970).

¹⁵ The *nekuia* itself, WEST argued, originally belonged to the proto-*Odyssey*, a term coined to refer to the first treatment or perhaps the first ‘draft’ of the poem from which our extant *Odyssey* is quite likely descended; the proto-*Odyssey* and the *Odyssey* must have been separated from each other for probably no more than one or two generations, so a maximum of no more than fifty years apart (2014: 2). In that early version of the story, Odysseus’ consultation with the dead takes place shortly before reaching Ithaca, perhaps in Thesprotia (*ibid.* 124), which would allow the explanation of a number of mismatches or even inconsistencies in the episode. For instance, most of the things disclosed to Odysseus by Teiresias are highly irrelevant to the hero’s νόστος, perhaps with the notable exception of the seer’s advice to Odysseus not to harm under any circumstances Helios’ cattle on the island of Thrinakia (11.100-113). Bearing in mind that the principal reason for Odysseus’ visit to the kingdom of the dead is to receive directions for his journey back home, it would appear quite odd that the majority of Teiresias’ revelations are concerned with far *future* happenings or events, lying at least seven years ahead—such as the state of matters in Ithaca, Penelope’s suitors, Odysseus finally appeasing Poseidon’s wrath, and Odysseus’ own death (11.113-37). Hence, it does seem quite probable that in the proto-*Odyssey* (this, of course, presupposes that one is willing to accept WEST’s, convincing in my view, line of argument about the existence of such a thing) the consultation took place shortly before Odysseus’ return to Ithaca, but it was “awkwardly transferred into the middle of the Circe episode” in the *Odyssey* (*ibid.* 125).

¹⁶ Cf. *Odyssey* 10.490-93, 538-40: ἀλλ’ ἄλλην χρῆ πρῶτον ὁδὸν τελέσαι καὶ ἰκέσθαι / εἰς Αἴδαο δόμους καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης / ψυχῆ χρησομένους Θηβαίου Τειρεσίαο, / μάντιος ἀλαοῦ. [...] ἔνθα τοι αὐτίκα μάντις ἐλεύσεται, ὄρχαμε λαῶν, / ὅς κέν τοι εἴπησιν ὁδὸν καὶ μέτρα κελεύθου / νόστον θ’, ὡς ἐπὶ πόντον ἐλεύσεται ἰχθυόεντα.

hero's death when a heron will ease itself on Odysseus' head and a prickle will cause the flesh to rot.¹⁷ The second example derives from a brief parody of *Leaders of Souls* in Aristophanes' *Birds* 1553-64, during which Socrates is portrayed as a ψυχαγωγός and Peisander is said to have used the same ritual as Odysseus (ὥσπερ ποθ' οὐδυσσεύς) to summon souls from the Underworld. It is, moreover, remarkable how later generations, clearly disturbed by the absence of an incantation in the Homeric account,¹⁸ regarded the ritual as odd and so inserted one in the original text, thus crediting Homer with a very specific knowledge of necromancy.¹⁹

Regardless of the *nekuia's* typical or untypical features, I agree with S. JOHNSTON that the practice of necromancy in the *Odyssey* is still in a very early stage. But I would not go so far as to disregard its necromantic features and treat it as a variation of the heroic *katabasis*.²⁰ Odysseus' ritual fulfils, successfully in my view, the most important prerequisite for necromancy, that is, the summoning of spirits by the living in order to provide prophecy, and it should be treated primarily as such. Circe, on the other hand, might not be the one to perform the necromantic ritual, but she is clearly the mastermind behind it; she is the 'hierophant', so to speak, who prescribes and coordinates the ritual for Odysseus. Her knowledge of evocation practices, hence, renders her suitable for the title of a ψυχαγωγός—a title befitting a person commonly regarded as a goddess of death, whose palace in addition occupies a liminal space, a gateway between the world of the living and that of the dead.²¹

In Greek antiquity the person responsible for all matters pertaining to death and the manipulation of the afterlife was the γόης, and although magic and all its modern derivatives stem from the word μάγος, it is in fact the figure of the γόης that comes closer to what one would designate a 'dark sorcerer' in modern terms.²² The term itself does not appear in any extant sources prior to the late seventh or early sixth century BCE, and its first attestation is

¹⁷ Fr. 275 (Radt): ἐρωδιός γάρ ὑπόθεν ποτώμενος / ὄνθω σε πλήξει νηδύος χαλώμασιν· / ἐκ τοῦδ' ἄκανθα ποντίου βοσκήματος / σήψει παλαιὸν δέρμα καὶ τριχορρυές. Should we judge from fr. 273 (Ἐρμῶν μὲν πρόγονον τίμεν γένος οἱ περὶ λίμναν) and 273a, the scene of the play is a lake, in all likelihood lake Avernus in Italy (cf. Radt (1985) 371); therefore, the hero did not journey to the entrance of the Underworld on this occasion; cf. also Strabo *Geography* 5.4.5: ἐμύθευον δ' οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ Ἀόρνῳ τὰ περὶ τὴν νέκυϊαν τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν· καὶ δὴ καὶ νεκυομαντεῖον ἱστοροῦσιν ἐνταῦθα γενέσθαι καὶ Ὀδυσσεῖα εἰς τοῦτ' ἀφικέσθαι. On whether Odysseus journeyed to, and physically entered the Underworld, cf. *infra* n.38.

¹⁸ Cf. e.g., Eustathius Σ.Homer *Odyssey* 10.535: νεκυομαντικῆς δὲ φασι γοητείας καὶ ταῦτα, δοκεῖ γὰρ τῆς τοιαύτης τερατείας ἢ ἐπαοιδῆς μόνῃ ἐλλείπειν παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ, τὰ δὲ τῆς λοιπῆς τερθρείας ἐκτεθεῖσθαι ἀνελλιπῶς.

¹⁹ Julius Africanus *Kestoi* 18 = *PGM* 23.1-70. On this magical incantation, cf. WÜNSCH (1909); VIEILLEFOND (1970) 277-91; and most recently the collection of papers at WALLRAFF & MECCELLA (2009).

²⁰ JOHNSTON (2005) 287-91, esp. 288, 292; cf. also FELTON (2007) 95.

²¹ Cf. MARINATOS (1995) 134; also MARINATOS & WYATT (2011) 401.

²² A somehow distant sense of the magical associations of γόης might be traced in the Modern Greek usage of the word, where γόης implies a 'charmer', a man who can 'sweet-talk' himself into things as if by manipulating some sort of magical means.

provided by the epic poem *Phoronis*. In this poem, the Idaean Dactyls, mythical dwarfish blacksmiths often identified with the Kouretes, Korybantes, Kabiri or Telchines, are credited with the discovery of the working of iron and are, therefore, pronounced γόητες.²³ The γόης was, generally speaking, a complex and multi-faceted figure, who combined the talents of magic, music, mystery religions, and interaction with the dead.²⁴ Initially he was regarded as a quasi-shamanistic figure,²⁵ who in an ecstatic state conveyed the spirits of the dead on their journey to the other side. This hypothesis has rested upon various etymological conjectures between the noun γόης and the verb γοᾶν, ‘to woe over the dead’.²⁶ If such an etymology holds any truth, only scanty evidence of the original meaning is to be found in the way that the word is used in Classical literature; traces of shamanism, as F. GRAF notices, belong, at best, to prehistory.²⁷ Moreover, it has been advocated that the γόης was a marginal figure connected with funerary and ecstatic rites, healing and divination; the general attitude towards those to whom such terms were applied was usually scornful.²⁸ But evidence, on the contrary, seems to point towards the speculation that the γόης was anything but an outcast, generally feared or despised; the illicit rites or magical acts he allegedly performed were probably carried out in full view, in front of the entire city, and not in secret. For instance, on one occasion the Spartans are said to have employed γόητες to drive out the ghost of Pausanias from one of their temples,²⁹ while an early fourth century BCE oracular tablet from Dodona inquires of the

²³ Fr. 2 (Bernabé); cf. also Sophocles *Deaf Satyrs* fr. 364-66 (Radt); Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 1.1129-31; Strabo *Geography* 10.3.7, 22; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 5.7.6, 8.31.3. The *Phoronis* fragment allows little to no room for explanation as to why the Dactyls are addressed in this manner; yet if we bear in mind that the Telchines, also legendary semi-divine smiths who allegedly had command over the weather and knowledge of the magical uses of plants, were also called γόητες (cf. Zeno 523 F1 (Jacoby); Strabo *Geography* 14.2.7; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.365-67; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 9.19.1; Eustathius Σ.Homer *Iliad* 2.789), it seems probable that what the poet had in mind when discussing the Dactyls is the association of smiths with sorcery. On the Dactyls, cf. *OCD*⁴ 724 s.v. ‘Idaeian Dactyls’; HEMBERG (1952); POLT (2013).

²⁴ Cf. JOHNSTON (1999) 102-23.

²⁵ ‘Shaman’ takes its name after the Tungus medicine men of central Siberia. The shaman is believed to detach his soul from his body in an ecstatic trance; his soul then speaks with the gods, cures the sick by retrieving their souls from the Underworld and battles demons. On shamanism, cf. STUTLEY (2003).

²⁶ For a discussion of the shaman hypothesis, cf. DODDS (1951) 135-78; BURKERT (1962) 36-8, (1972) 147-62, and (1979) 88-94; ELIADE (1964) 387-94; BREMMER (1983) 25-46; GRAF (1987) 83-4; OGDEN (2001) 116-27; *contra* ZHMUD (1992) 165-66, and (1997) 107-13. POTTER suggests that the γόης acquired his name from the sorrows he inflicted upon an individual (1994: 12); for reservations, cf. DICKIE (2001) 14. VERMEULE, on the other hand, claims that in early times the direct communicant with the dead was the chief mourner, the ἑξάρχος γόιο, who later gave rise to the figure of the γόης (1979: 16-18, 200).

²⁷ GRAF (1997) 28. Antiquity, however, began stringing together a ‘canon’ of mythical wise men who in popular imagination could manipulate their souls in various ways; among others, its most preeminent members include Orpheus, Trophonius, Aristaeus of Proconnesus, Hermotimus of Clazomenae, Epimenides, Pythagoras, Abaris the Hyperborean, Zalmoxis the Thracian, and Empedocles, on which cf. OGDEN (2001) 116 and n.1.

²⁸ Cf. GRAF (1997) 28; OGDEN (2001) 95, 116.

²⁹ Cf. e.g., Σ.Euripides *Alcestis* 1128.

god as to whether a ψυχαγωγός should be hired or not, which certainly points towards the open use of such a practitioner by a city.³⁰

Regardless, the γόης was principally an expert in matters related to the Underworld and the conjuring of the dead. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the belief that the dead were capable of returning to the upper world and communicating with the living was not new, and it seems that from early times the Greeks believed that the ‘unnatural’ dead (that is, the ἄωροι, βιαιοθάνατοι, ἄγαμοι, and ἄταφοι) could interact with the living at their own discretion. But in the early fifth century BCE evidence is encountered that things are starting to change and the dead are called from beyond the grave and made to contact the living without the dead having any real say in the matter. It is within this particular context that we find in the early fifth century BCE tragedy *Persians* the first representation of Persian necromantic γόητες. The scene under discussion depicts a ritualised ψυχαγωγία combined with necromancy. Queen Atossa approaches her husband’s grave to offer libations, and at her request the Persian Elders sing ritualistic hymns to the dead king Darius; their laments and psychagogic wailing (ψυχαγωγοὶ γόοι) succeed in summoning the dead king from the Underworld (681-90); Darius then prophesies the destruction of the Persian army during the upcoming battle at Plataea (800-42). One will surely detect at this point an etymological play between the ψυχαγωγοὶ γόοι of the text and the cloaked-in-mystery figure of the γόης, which would somehow suggest that the latter would utter γόοι in a mournful fashion to summon up spirits from the Underworld.³¹ The psychagogic ritual itself has received a great many interpretations throughout the years, ranging from a purely magical ritual to a divine epiphany,³² but it is also worth remarking that as early as the fifth century BCE ψυχαγωγία and necromancy were apparently linked to Persia and were moreover associated with the notions of barbarism and ‘foreignness’.³³ The question, however, whether this latter connection implies that the Persians were indeed notoriously known in the ancient world for their

³⁰ CHRISTIDIS, DAKARIS *et al.* (1999) 71: Διὶ τῶι Νάωι καὶ τῶι Διώνωι, ἣ μὴ χρηῖνται Δωρίωι τῶι ψυχαγωγῶι;

³¹ JOHNSTON argues that these woes are more than simple ritualised γόοι, since they compel Darius to appear (1999: 117-18); *contra* DICKIE (2001) 30 n.45.

³² For a discussion of Darius’ evocation with references to previous interpretations, cf. GARVIE (2009), 257-61.

³³ This characteristic was picked up by later generations of writers as well. On necromancy’s links with foreignness and barbarism, cf. Herodotus *Histories* 7.43.2; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.39; Chariton *Callirhoe* 5.9.4; Suetonius *Nero* 34.4; Pliny *Natural History* 30.14-18.

interactions with the dead or if this was simply Aeschylus' perception of the Persians³⁴ (that is, the enemies from the East who attempted twice to conquer Greece) is open to discussion.³⁵

So with the evidence presented so far, it is fairly reasonable to assume that during the Classical era, and at least up until the time of the production of the *Persians* (472 BCE), a consciousness of γοητεία as a discrete category of thought was slowly being formed and the Persians, in particular, were considered experts in its practice. The Persians' dabbling with γοητεία is also attested, albeit centuries later, by the church father Augustine (*City of God* 7.35), stating that Pythagoras had learnt from no other than the Persians how to perform hydromancy, which was according to Augustine exactly the same as necromancy: the purpose of both practices was the summoning of the dead to prophesy (*videntur mortui divinare*).³⁶

Darius' evocation in the *Persians* is not the only case to serve as an example of the changing of the way in which the dead were regarded during the fifth century BCE. In Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* the spirit of Agamemnon is implored by Electra, Orestes and the Chorus to come back from Hades and assist in the punishment of his murderers (489-509),³⁷ and Odysseus' inquiring of Teiresias in *Leaders of Souls* suggests that the former did not undertake a *katabasis* trip to the Underworld (as is presumably the case with the *Odyssey*, though there are no strong indications to suggest beyond a shadow of doubt that Odysseus ever set foot in the domain of Hades),³⁸ but on the contrary, made the ghost of Teiresias appear

³⁴ On this matter, cf. the discussion at HALL (1989) 56-100.

³⁵ Further evidence supporting Aeschylus' connection of γοητεία to ψυχαγωγία is to be found in the lexicographer Phrynichus, who mentions in his *Sophistic Preparation* 127 that men of the past had variously used ψυχαγωγία to bring back the ghosts of the dead by means of sorcery (γοητεῖαι) and that Aeschylus' *Leaders of Souls* touched on that very theme. The play *Bone Gatherers* (Ὀστολόγοι, frs 179-80 (Radt)), part of the same trilogy as *Leaders of Souls*, also seems to have dealt with the manipulation of the dead. One may also seek parallels for Darius' evocation for necromantic purposes in Athenian comedy (cf. e.g., Aristophanes *Birds* 1553-64), as well as in Biblical tradition (WEST has demonstrated some close parallels between the evocation scene in Aeschylus and the raising of the dead prophet Samuel by the witch of En-Dor on behalf of king Saul (1997: 550-2); cf. also SCHMIDT (1995); SEIDEL (2002)).

³⁶ On γοητεία and ψυχαγωγία in this context, cf. also Plato *Laws* 10.909a-b; Σ.Euripides *Alcestis* 1128; Proclus *Commentary on the Republic* 203.3; Synesius *On Dreams* 14.2; *Suda* s.v. 'γοητεία'.

³⁷ For a discussion of similarities and differences between the *Persians* and *Libation Bearers*, cf. AMENDOLA (2006) 23-43. It is interesting to notice that the only other ghosts in extant Greek tragedy appearing beyond the grave without being summoned are Clytemnestra in the *Eumenides* and Polydorus in *Hecuba*. Both Clytemnestra and Polydorus are cases of βιαιοθάνατοι (Polydorus is also an ἄταφος), which might explain (from a Homeric perspective) why they could interact with the living of their own accord. On ghosts in fragmentary plays, cf. BARDEL (2005).

³⁸ The various Homeric passages that address Odysseus' trip to the Underworld are quite ambivalent and perplexing in nature. When Odysseus describes his journey to the land of the dead in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, there is nothing to suggest that he truly undertakes a *katabasis* of any sort; if anything, Odysseus' journey to the Underworld takes place on a hypothetical horizontal level rather than a vertical one, which implies that he does not travel *down* but to the 'left' (East) or 'right' (West) of Circe's palace, beyond the streams of

in the world of the living.³⁹ The poet Simonides is aware of the concept of bringing back the souls of the dead, since in a metaphorical way he insists that the valour of the dead soldiers will keep their memory alive and will lead their spirits up from Hades (ἀνάγει δώματος ἐξ Αἴδου); the philosopher-cum-shamanist Empedocles, as well, argues that he can bring back from Hades the life force of a dead person (ἄξεις δ' ἐξ Αἴδαο καταφθιμένου μένος ἀνδρός).⁴⁰

At the same time, the appearance of curse tablets in cemeteries or near graves indicates that either the curses inscribed on the pieces of lead depend on the dead for their enactment by acting as 'go-betweens' and conveying the words of the curse to the deities of the Underworld,⁴¹ or they depend on the chthonic deities whom the practitioner evokes (most commonly Hecate, Hermes and Persephone) to enable the dead to do something for them.⁴² This all makes it plausible to assume that the dead are now being understood as all-purpose 'tools' for the living: they can be requested to help exact revenge, protect family members, or be used against opponents the dead are unlikely to have any personal interest in. In some curse tablets, for instance, the practitioner indicates that he has no idea in whose grave the tablet is being currently deposited,⁴³ or offers to bribe a ghost in return for its help.⁴⁴ Such actions, naturally, displease the deceased.⁴⁵ The curse tablets, thus, tend to support the notion that during the fifth century BCE the belief that the dearly departed did not appear anymore

Oceanus, that is, beyond the limits of the inhabited world, until he reaches the entrance to Hades. Yet, when Odysseus meets his dead mother Anticleia, she specifically questions him on how he came *down* to the land of shades (11.155: τέκνον ἐμόν, πῶς ἦλθες ὑπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα), and so does Odysseus Elpenor (11.57: Ἑλπῆνορ, πῶς ἦλθες ὑπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα). Ὑπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα could designate both 'beyond the western darkness' (cf. CLARK (1979) 75) or 'below to the eternal darkness of Hades.' I personally opt for the latter interpretation, since Anticleia mourns (ὀλοφυρομένη) her son as if he were already one of the dead, although she is quite aware that he is still alive (ζῶος ἐών); hence, ὑπὸ ζόφον ἠερόεντα situates the Underworld 'down under', adding further to the confusion of the topography. In addition, Odysseus too maintains that it was necessity that brought him *down* to Hades (11.164: χρεῖώ με κατήγαγεν εἰς Αἴδαο; 23.252: ἤματι τῷ ὅτε δὴ κατέβην δόμον Ἄϊδος εἶσω). For a discussion of the Homeric Underworld's topography, cf. MARINATOS & WYATT (2011), with an emphasis on the useful figures 20.2 (p. 401) and 20.4 (p. 405); also CLARK (1978) 37-78; FELTON (2007) 92. On Odysseus not crossing the threshold of Hades, cf. CLARK (1979) 76; HEUBECK & HOEKSTRA (1989) 76; DE JONG (2001a) 271; WEST (2014) 126.

³⁹ On the possible setting of *Leaders of Souls*, cf. *supra* n.17.

⁴⁰ Simonides *Palatine Anthology* 7.251.4; Empedocles 31 B 111 (DK). Ἀνάγειν is frequently encountered for the invocation of souls in the Classical and later periods.

⁴¹ Cf. GAGER (1992) 18-21; GRAF (1997) 127. This practice has a parallel in Mesopotamian rituals, where the dead also act as some kind of messengers, on which cf. BOTTÉRO (1980) 39-40; COOPER (1992), 28-29; SCURLOCK (1995b) and (1997).

⁴² JOHNSTON (1999) 71-75.

⁴³ Cf. e.g., *PMG* 4.296-466 and *SM* 47.

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g., an Olbian tablet bearing the inscription ἦν δέ μοι αὐτοὺς κατάσχης ... ἐγὼ δέ σε τειμήσω καὶ σοὶ ἄριστον δῶρον παρασκευῶ, and the discussions at BRAVO (1987); JORDAN (1997).

⁴⁵ Cf. e.g., *SEG* 37.673.

of their own volition, but on the contrary only when summoned by the living was a widely circulated one.

It should, therefore, be easy to understand that such a change in the dynamics between the living and the dead would also have led to the assumption that it would have required a specialist to invoke the dead. The specialist whose task was to contact the eternal beyond and reach out to the souls of the Underworld was destined to become the γόης. The restriction of the lamentation process, combined with the separation between the world of the living and the dead as revealed by a number of other occurrences (such as burying the dead outside the city walls, on the roads leading away from the cities, instead of inside)⁴⁶ ultimately altered the way in which people perceived and understood death, the dead, and the dying process in general. Death, thus, became a strange, unfamiliar, and discomfoting concept, regarded more as pollution (μίσημα) than a natural part of the cycle of life,⁴⁷ and the dead grew more and more terrifying due to the living's unfamiliarity with them. Presumably at this point the γόης must have risen as an expert in the manipulation of the deceased. Despite the various and radical changes in attitudes towards the dead as mentioned previously, the Greeks would still be open to the belief that the souls of the dead could interact with the world of the living and be manipulated by them, only now it required the knowledge and services of a professional to do so. The γόης, who in Greek imagination is connected to the notion of 'foreignness' and 'the other' (for instance, the mythical Idaean Dactyls are associated with Crete, whereas Orpheus is a Thracian), can be summoned when he is needed either to appease the dead in order to avert their anger and secure their help,⁴⁸ to rouse the dead into haunting the living, or even to offer rituals to the living so they could ensure that their afterlives as ghosts will be happy.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cf. SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1981), (1983), and (1995) 413-44, esp. 433-9; *contra* MORRIS (1987) and (1989); also SEAFORD (1994) 78-86; FELTON (2007) 88.

⁴⁷ This latter outlook on death and the dying process has been described by ARIÈS as the "tamed death" (1974: 1-25).

⁴⁸ Cf. Herodotus *Histories* 5.92 (Periander and the dead Melissa); Thucydides *Histories* 1.134.4, 135.1; Diodorus Siculus *Historical Library* 11.45; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 3.17.7-9; Plutarch *Sertorius* 560E-F; *Moralia* fr. 126 (Sandbach) (the haunting of Pausanias' ghost).

⁴⁹ Cf. JOHNSTON (2008b).

From the Greek γόης to the Roman witch

“Oh, very good,” interrupted Snape, his lip curling. “Yes, it is easy to see that nearly six years of magical education have not been wasted on you, Potter. Ghosts are transparent.”

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

Death and the dead is a topic of some odd fascination among the Romans; the belief that the soul survives after the human body has long perished is a deep-seated belief in their culture.⁵⁰ The Romans, as did their neighbouring Greeks, but also other cultures across the Mediterranean as has been suggested earlier,⁵¹ firmly believed that the unhappy dead may return from the land of the shadows to cause grief to the living or to inflict upon them terror and mayhem,⁵² should the latter neglect paying their respects to their ancestral dead.⁵³ Interestingly enough, although the various terms which are in use in the Greek language to designate both the practitioner of magic and the different magical activities have found their way into the Latin vocabulary, there is no term in Latin to my knowledge to refer either to a γόης or the art of γοητεία in general.⁵⁴ On the contrary, one of the most important qualities which the γόης had been invested with in the Greek world was absorbed in the Roman by the figure of the malevolent witch, regardless of her status. It really makes no difference if the witch under discussion is the divine and beautiful Medea, the deplorable Canidia, or the ghastly Erichtho; they can all summon, converse with, and interact with the dead.

Ψυχαγωγία and the witches’ ‘foreignness’ and ‘otherness’ are themes often encountered in Imperial Latin literature. In these texts experts at summoning the dead are often depicted as originating from the farther corners of the known world (Egypt, Babylon, or Mesopotamia) and/or being female in gender. The association of ψυχαγωγία with women specialists may have as a starting point the portrayal of Circe in the *Odyssey*, but the literary representation of the female evoker and necromancer is taken to the next level only during the Imperial epoch. Circe, in her capacity as ψυχαγωγός, reappears briefly in Apollonius of

⁵⁰ Cf. e.g., TOYNBEE (1971); HOPE (2009).

⁵¹ Cf. e.g., *supra* n.10.

⁵² Cf. e.g., Plautus *The Ghost* 446-531; Cicero *On Divination* 1.57.

⁵³ On hauntings and the reasons for the ghosts’ unhappiness in the ancient world, cf. FELTON (2007) 96-99.

⁵⁴ On Greco-Roman magical terminology, cf. chapter 1.2.2-2.3.

Rhodes' *Argonautica*, where she is found purifying Jason and Medea of the murder of Apsyrtus while at the same time striving to put the ghost of the latter to rest (4.659-717), whereas in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* she is said to have called up ghosts before transforming Picus' companions into animals (14.403-15). Some scanty literary evidence from roughly the same period addresses Medea's psychagogic activities,⁵⁵ whereas minor references to ghost evocation also appear in the epics of Statius and Valerius Flaccus.⁵⁶ Ghost manipulation and necromancy were favourite themes of Augustan poetry too. As it has been discussed in chapter 2, the witches of the Imperial witch tradition are endowed, among other things, with powers of evoking the dead.⁵⁷ Calling back the dead is just one aspect of the witches' impressive array of ἀδύνατα, and it is frequently enumerated among the recitation of their magical catalogues.

As might be expected by now, the witches of the *Metamorphoses* do not stray far from similar psychagogic practices. On three different occasions Apuleius demonstrates that his witches are professionals in matters of the afterlife. In Aristomenes' tale Socrates reverently, if not fearfully, relates how Meroe once thwarted her public execution by casting magic spells and performing tomb rituals (*devotiones sepulchrales*) in a ditch. The ritual, the aim of which was to summon invisible demonic forces from the beyond to her aid, succeeded in the locking up the townspeople in their houses, remarkably without causing them any physical harm (1.10). It is also mentioned in passing that the witches of Thelyphron's tale collect body parts from corpses for unspecified magical activities (2.21.7), and Pamphile's magical laboratory is filled with similar gruesome paraphernalia (3.17.5). The collection of human body parts and their use in magical conduct is a *Leitmotiv* often encountered in Imperial literature,⁵⁸ the belief behind it seemingly being that possession and manipulation of such parts may grant control over a dead person's ghost. Furthermore, Pamphile's evocation practices are also hinted at by Byrrhaena, who among other things nervously warns Lucius of his hostess' malicious sepulchral incantations (2.5.4).

⁵⁵ Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 4.51-53; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.206; Seneca *Medea* 740-49; Statius *Thebaid* 4.504-11; Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 6.439-50.

⁵⁶ Statius *Thebaid* 2.19-25 (Laius); Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 1.730-51 (Alcimedea and Aeson).

⁵⁷ E.g., Virgil *Eclogue* 8.95-99; Horace *Satire* 1.8.28-29, 40-41, *Epistles* 5.93; 17.77-81; Tibullus *Elegies* 1.2.46-47; 1.5.51-52; Propertius *Elegies* 1.1.19-24; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.17-18, *Remedies of Love* 253-54.

⁵⁸ Cf. chapter 4 n.116.

Yet the most elaborate, but no less cryptic, account of a ψυχαγωγία in the *Metamorphoses* is afforded by one of the adultery tales of Book 9.⁵⁹ An unfortunate baker comes to know of his wife's infidelity, who he then throws out of their home. The wife, wishing to win back the affections of her husband, visits a local witch and instructs her either to make the baker fall madly back in love with her, or bring his life to an abrupt end. The witch first tries to bend the baker's anger towards love, but to no avail. So she eventually resorts to ψυχαγωγία and summons the spirit of a murdered (hence, βιαιοθάνατος) woman to kill the man. Having done so, the witch has complied with the wife's wishes and, thus, can claim the reward for her 'friendly' services (9.26-31). The witch to whom the baker's wife runs for help fully conforms to the witch figure of the crone discussed in greater length in chapter 2. Lucius-ass reports⁶⁰ that the woman is of advanced age (*veteratrix femina*), but reveals nothing more of her identity; instead, more emphasis is put on what the woman could achieve by means of sorcery: she can perform anything she wishes by means of witchcraft and spells (9.29.2), which brings us back to the theme of a witch's assortment of incredible ἀδύνατα. Elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses* both Socrates and Byrrhaena recite a list of Meroe and Pamphile's magical powers in more or less identical terms; the list of powers of the wife's witch, however, is only alluded to with the phrase *quidvis efficere posse credebatur* (9.29.2) and it is not further expanded.

Lucius-ass, however, concentrates on two aspects of the witch's magical expertise, the first of which is related to the field of love. In this respect the wife's *saga* is somehow reminiscent of the *anus* from Latin love elegy, towards whom the heartbroken poet usually runs for help in his attempt to win back the affections of his desired *puella*.⁶¹ The overall setting of the adultery tale is fairly similar to that of love elegy (a love affair gone horribly awry), although the roles in the *Metamorphoses* have been slightly altered: it is not the *man* who runs to the *anus/saga* seeking magical help in regaining his *woman*, but the other way around. But the *saga's* apparent inability to bring this, seemingly, effortless task to completion without having to kill the baker suggests that she is not as competent at her arts as one would initially expect. Although the wife's witch is introduced in more or less the same

⁵⁹ These tales are: (1) the adulterer in the jar (9.5-7); (2) the baker's wife (9.11-31) which also encompasses the adultery tales of (3) Philesitherus and Arete (9.17-21) and (4) the fuller's wife (9.23-25). On these tales, cf. TATUM (1969) 514-24, esp. 519-21; BECHTLE (1995); HARRISON (2006).

⁶⁰ This is the only tale of witchcraft in the *Metamorphoses* in which Lucius witnesses events in the form of an ass; the remaining tales have either been indirectly related to him (Aristomenes, Thelyphron) or he has witnessed it in a human form (Pamphile's transformation).

⁶¹ Cf. the discussion at chapter 2.4.2.2.

manner as Meroe,⁶² hence raising the reader's expectations of witnessing something equally as miraculous as Meroe's feats, it soon becomes evident that she is neither as powerful nor as efficient as Aristomenes' witch. Chapter 2 has demonstrated that love magic was a jack-of-all-trades feat for witches of all kinds and of all epochs, and so the inability to perform the simplest of magical tasks renders the wife's witch a laughable character.⁶³ If anything, the wife's *saga* can be compared to, and related with the serio-farcical witches of Thelyphron's tale, who also exhibit a similar degree of incompetence when they mistakenly remove the facial features of the living Thelyphron instead of the cadaver.

Contrastingly, the witch seems to be much more adept at evoking and manipulating the dead to her own selfish needs. Apuleius in this case closely follows the footsteps of previous evocation scenes and portrays the witch summoning not just any random dead spirit but that of a βιαιοθάνατος to haunt and kill the baker. As with Meroe's psychagogic ritual, Apuleius again ingeniously withholds the mechanisms and 'technology' behind the evocation from the reader, who only witnesses the appearance of a ghastly woman taking the baker by the hand and leading him inside the house. The horrifying and unsettling description of the woman afforded by Lucius-ass (it could even be argued that Lucius-ass' extensive visual presentation of the ghost suggests that he had observed it in some way) allows the reader to assume that this is indeed the spirit of the woman summoned by the witch.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, *prima facie* there seem to be some very queer oddities about this ghost apparition, especially when it is compared to that of Charite's husband Tlepolemus (8.8.6-9) and the unfortunate baker (9.31). The main difference between the three Apuleian ghost manifestations concerns the ghosts' materiality and tangibility, so to speak. The main question here is: were ghosts conceived in the ancient world as shadows, or could they actively take on a physical form in the land of the living? As it will be demonstrated, there appears to be a distinction between Classical and post-classical ghost appearances.

⁶² Cf. 1.8.4: *'saga' inquit 'et divini potens...'* (Meroe); 9.29.4: *tunc saga illa et divini potens...* (baker's wife's witch).

⁶³ The witch's inability to perform the first magic task also casts the baker's wife under a more comic light, since we are told that she opts for this particular witch only after she spent a considerable amount of time investigating suitable candidates (*magnaue cura requisitam*, 9.29.2). If this is the best witch the wife could find, then she as well was clearly not efficient enough in her search.

⁶⁴ 9.30.3: *diem ferme circa mediam repente intra pistrinum mulier reatu miraque tristitie deformis apparuit, flebili centunculo semiamicta, nudis et intectis pedibus, lurore buxexo macieque foedata, et discerptae comae semicanae sordentes inspersione cineris plerumque eius anteventulae contegebant faciem.*

In the traditional epic view, ghosts are regarded as bodiless souls ($\psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}$, *animae*) or shadows of their former selves ($\sigma\kappa\iota\alpha\acute{\iota}$, *umbrae*, or $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\lambda\alpha$, *imagines*);⁶⁵ they have no physical presence, therefore they can neither touch nor be touched. In this sense, Achilles cannot embrace the dead Patroclus when the latter appears in his dreams requesting his lawful burial rites in the *Iliad* 23.99-101, nor in *Odyssey* 11.204-208 can Odysseus hug his dead mother in the Underworld; as soon as he attempts to do so, her soul vanishes from his hands like a shade ($\sigma\kappa\iota\eta\grave{\eta}$ $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\kappa\epsilon\lambda\omicron\nu$). The same applies to the ghosts of Virgil's *Aeneid*: when Aeneas journeys through the Underworld, he comes across many mythological monsters, at which point he draws his sword, eager to fight them; the Sibyl, however, assures the hero that the monsters are nothing more than incorporeal existences (*sine corpore vitas*), and Aeneas will only be piercing through shadows (*umbras*) and empty forms if he attacks them (6.282-94, esp. 290-94). Also later in the epic, when Aeneas tries to embrace his dead father, Anchises flees from his son's arms like a gentle wind (*par levibus ventis*) (6.700-02). The ghosts of Tlepolemus and the baker fit into this 'Classical' group of 'bodiless' ghosts. In fact, the two apparitions are reminiscent, if not directly modelled upon, Patroclus' appearance in the *Iliad*: both Tlepolemus and the baker appear in their loved ones' sleep (8.8.6; 9.31.1), informing them of the circumstances of their deaths (8.8.9; 9.31.1). What differentiates the two accounts is the course of action taken by the loved ones after the new information is revealed: before claiming her own life, Charite avenges her husband by gouging out his murderer's eyes, whereas it remains a mystery how the baker's daughter reacts to the news of her stepmother's murderous schemes. All that is really said is that after a certain mourning period has elapsed, the daughter decides to auction off her father's estate and sell all the animals, including Lucius-ass, who then passes, once more, to a new master (9.31.2-3).

On the opposite side, there exists a more unconventional, and also post-classical, notion which supposes that ghosts are much more than merely formless shades, since they can don a more tangible and corporeal form for a variety of purposes. A couple of examples will clarify this matter further. In Horace's *Epode* 5 Canidia's young victim curses the witches, threatening that his *umbra* will eventually return to haunt his tormentors; his angry ghost will cause lacerations on the hags' faces with its hook-like claws (91-94). The wounds, which the young boy suggests will be able to inflict on his murderous captors, suggest that this particular

⁶⁵ Cf. e.g., $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$: Homer *Iliad* 23.72, *Odyssey* 10.530; 11.37, 564, 567; 24.14; $\sigma\kappa\iota\alpha$: *Odyssey* 10.495; 11.207; $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\lambda\omicron\nu$: *Iliad* 23.72, 104; *Odyssey* 11.83, 476, 602; 24.14. *Anima*: Virgil *Aeneid* 6.264, 319, 411, 427, 436, 486, 669, 680, 713, 720; *umbra*: *ibid.* 264, 289, 294, 390, 401, 461, 510, 619, 866; *imago*: *ibid.* 293, 480, 695, 701.

violent ghost will take on a more 'real' form, since it will be able to cause physical harm, apart from haunting the witches like a Fury. In Lucian's *Lover of Lies* 27, moreover, we are told that the ghost of a recently deceased woman pays a visit to her husband to complain about one of her favourite golden slippers not being burnt together with her on the funeral pyre. It soon becomes evident that the woman's ghost is tangible, since the husband can not only physically touch, but also embrace (περιπλακείζ) his dead wife. The woman, nonetheless, vanishes into thin air as soon as she hears a small dog barking underneath the bed, reminding her perhaps of Cerberus, the three-headed watchdog of the Underworld, whose sole task was to guard the entrance to the nether region and prevent any dead souls from escaping the domain of Hades.⁶⁶ Later on in the same narrative, the Pythagorean philosopher Arignotus relates his miraculous story of how he once drove out an evil ghost (φάσμα) which had been haunting for quite some time the house of Eubatides in Corinth. This ghost, too, presumably took on a corporeal form, as it physically attacked (προσβάλλων) Arignotus, and additionally changed its shape into that of a dog, a bull, and a lion (31). The various ghosts of dead heroes parading in Philostratus' *On Heroes* can also materialise in the upper world and be touched, embraced, even kissed by the living; they apparently also leave huge footprints behind them when walking the earth.⁶⁷

Further (and more intriguing) examples of ghosts' tangibility are afforded by the supernatural tales of Phlegon of Tralles, where on one occasion it is reported that the ghost of a dead girl named Philinnion assumed a corporeal shape and returned to the world of the living to dine, drink, and consort with her lover Machates.⁶⁸ In a different story from the same collection the ghost of the Aetolian Polycritus returns to address the general assembly of the Aetolians and pleads for them to spare the life of his hermaphrodite child which has just been condemned to die on a pyre. Having failed to do so, Polycritus dismembers and devours the child, leaving only his head intact; all the while a terrified crowd throws stones at the ghost. Within moments the ghost vanishes, and the head shortly thereafter begins to prophesy the

⁶⁶ On Cerberus guarding the entrance to the Underworld, cf. Hesiod *Theogony* 767-73. Apparently, the watchdog is not always quite successful in its appointed task. Not only does it fail to keep Orpheus out of the Underworld, who enchants the fearful beast with his songs (cf. e.g., Virgil *Georgics* 4.481-84), but it is also captured and forcibly brought to the upper world by Heracles as part of his twelfth and final labour for Eurystheus (cf. e.g., Homer *Iliad* 8.366-69, *Odyssey* 11.623; Virgil *Aeneid* 6.395-96; pseudo-Apollodorus *Library* 2.122-26; Heraclitus the Paradoxographer *Unbelievable Tales* 21). Lucian touches upon these topics in his Underworld-themed writings (e.g., *Dialogues of the Dead*, *Menippus*, *The Downward Journey*) and depicts Cerberus in a more satirical fashion, often comically presenting him as a harmless mongrel.

⁶⁷ Cf. e.g., Philostratus *On Heroes* 11.2, 13.3, 21.6.

⁶⁸ Phlegon of Tralles *Book of Marvels* 1.

imminent war between the Aetolians and the Acarnanians.⁶⁹ Curiously, Polycritus' ghost combines the two categories discussed so far: he is tangible, as he can take hold of his child (ἐπιλαβόμενος τοῦ παιδίου) and tear it apart (διέσπασέ τε αὐτὸ καὶ ἤσθιε), but at the same time he exhibits an incorporeal state, since the stones thrown at him while eating his child simply pass through him without causing the ghost any harm (ἄπληκτος ὦν ὑπὸ τῶν λίθων).⁷⁰

Based on the aforementioned distinctions, the dead woman summoned by the witch of the baker's wife belongs accordingly to this latter category of ghosts. The fact that she takes the baker by the hand and leads him into the house (*manu pistori clementer iniecta*, 9.30.4) indicates that the dead woman has a corporeal entity. And as with the ghosts of Lucian and Phlegon, she can also vanish into thin air, which further suggests that the woman retains her shadowy qualities. It remains inconclusive whether the woman herself killed the baker, or if she inflicted on him some sort of madness, like an Erinys, thus forcing him to end his life. Lucius-ass is reasonably economical with the information at this point, presumably because he cannot know what takes place behind closed doors.

Before concluding this section, there is one more theory which I would like to put forward, basically that the witch never summoned—nor *achieved* the summoning of— any spirits, but, on the contrary, took on the role herself of killing the baker so as to reap the reward promised by the vexed wife. This is merely a speculation, but perhaps texts from the Imperial witch tradition might lend some support to this suggestion. Let us re-examine the description of the ghost in a few more details (9.30.3). According to Lucius-ass, our sole 'eyewitness' of the ghost, the dead woman has the pallor of boxwood (*lurore buxæ macieque foedata*). Witches of the Imperial tradition usually share a profoundly unhealthy, one would dare say otherworldly pallor: in Horace's *Satires* Priapus comments that Canidia and Sagana have a paleness rendering them dreadful to behold (*pallor utrasque | fecerat horrendas aspectu*, 1.8.25-26), while Lucan's Erictho is described as having a hellish whiteness (*terribilis Stygio facies pallore gravatur*, 6.517). The ghostly woman Lucius-ass describes has grey, unkempt hair, which she uses to cover most of her face (*discerptæ comæ semicanae sordentes inspersu cineris pleramque eius anteventulae contegebant faciem*). Canidia is often portrayed as having loose, dishevelled hair (*passoque capillo*, *Satire* 1.8.24) wherein small vipers have found an 'unnatural' habitat (*brevibus implicata viperis | crinis et incomptum caput*, *Epode* 5.15-

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 2. On prophesying heads in antiquity, cf. also *ibid.* 3.14; Philostratus *On Heroes* 28; Hippolytus *Refutations* 4.41. On Phlegon's two stories, cf. HANSEN (1996); also BRODERSEN (2002).

⁷⁰ On stoning ghosts in antiquity, cf. also Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* 4.10.

16); Sagana has hair resembling a sea-urchin or a wild boar (*horret capillis ut marinus asperis / echinus aut Laurens aper, Epode 5.27-28*); and Erictho, akin to Canidia, has long, uncombed hair infested with vipers (*impexis onerata comis, 6.518; et coma vipereis substringitur horrida sertis, 656*). Walking about barefoot is an additional characteristic that ties all the descriptions together. Lucius-ass says the ghost approached the baker with feet bare and unprotected (*nudis et intectis pedibus*). Canidia and Sagana are said to roam the cemetery freely and barefoot (*pedibus nudis, Satire 1.8.24*), and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Medea too is portrayed going out barefoot in the middle of the night searching for her magical ingredients (*nuda pedem, 7.183*).

Hence, I would suggest that Lucius-ass, in his capacity as unreliable narrator,⁷¹ presents to the reader not the description of a dead woman summoned beyond the grave to kill the baker, but instead that of the person who is considered an expert at summoning such supernatural entities. There are several reasons to assume this. To start with, (1) the ghost's description corresponds closely enough to depictions concerning the physical appearance of famous literary hags, such as Canidia and Erictho; the similarities between the various accounts tend to indicate that the ghostly woman is in fact presented in terms of a witch. (2) The dead woman's grey hair suggests that by the time of her death the woman was of an advanced age, the importance of which might be brought further into relief should we take into consideration the old age of the baker's wife's witch (*veteratrix femina, 9.29.2*). And if we also take into account (3) the witch's incompetence in the arts of magic, suggested previously in relation to her not being able to successfully perform the easiest of magical tasks (9.29.4), in conjunction with (4) the witch's eagerness to claim her reward (9.29.4), and (5) Lucius-ass being an unreliable narrator (the obvious question raised at this stage is to what extent a narrator in the form of an ass can be trusted), it may well be the case that the witch and the ghostly woman are one and the same.

⁷¹ An unreliable narrator is a narrator whose version of events is misleading and whose credibility as a narrative voice has either been compromised and for whom corrections ought to be made. An unreliable narrator often gives his own (usually biased) interpretations of a story, instead of the explanation the author wishes the audience to obtain. This type of narration, therefore, tends to alter the audience's opinion of the conclusion or frustrate their expectations. Lucius-ass acts as an unreliable narrator on several occasions: e.g., at *Metamorphoses* 10.2.4 Lucius-ass begins narrating a *tragedia* related to the 'Phaedra-Hippolytus' myth, which the *lector optimus* naturally suspects will end badly. But the story, on the contrary, ends on a happy, not a gloomy note. On Lucius/Lucius-ass being an unreliable narrator, cf. WRIGHT (1973); WINKLER (1985) *passim*; MORGAN (2004) 500 n.21; HUNINK (2006b) 268. On Lucius-ass' unreliability in the adultery tales, cf. HIJMANS, VAN DER PAARDT *et al.* (1995) 12-14.

As far as the text suggests, Lucius-ass has never seen the wife's witch; he is only aware of the witch's existence and her apparent old age, but not of her identity. Hence, he cannot possibly verify with any degree of accuracy whether the woman he allegedly 'witnessed' and described in ghostly terms is indeed a ghost or the wife's witch, or even if witch and ghost are exactly the same person. The only possible person who can potentially validate beyond any doubt any merger of identity between the witch and the ghostly woman is the baker's wife. Conveniently, she is not present during this time; in fact, the wife abruptly exits the narrative as soon as she contacts the witch and places her orders. It is therefore only the unreliable narrator Lucius-ass who *perceives* the ghostly woman as being an otherworld entity due to her terrifying appearance, but he leaves matters at that without scrutinising the facts any further. And so the readers are forced to accept Lucius-ass' truth as their own truth. On the other hand, the narrative relates that the witch's ulterior motive and driving force is her lust for money (*praeter praemii destinatum compendium contemptione*, 9.29.4). She desperately wants the handsome reward promised to her by the baker's wife; her fuming reaction when her initial attempt to enchant the baker with love magic miserably fails suggests that she is not willing to give up or allow her incompetence to get into her way. Under these circumstances the witch may have donned the appearance of a 'ghost' and murdered the baker when there was nobody around or paying attention. Apparently, Lucius-ass was observing, still being *curiosus* as ever; but to whom could he reveal the truth? He is, after all, still in the shape of an ass.

4

From *evocatio inferorum* to *resurrectio mortuorum*

*"Hateful day when I received life!" I exclaimed in agony.
"Accursed creator! Why did you form a monster so hideous
that even you turned from me in disgust?"*

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

4.1. Three 'reanimation' accounts: Apuleius, Heliodorus, Lucan

The evocation cases discussed in the previous section have two rather striking features in common: (1) the practices of ψυχᾶγωγία and necromancy are primarily concerned with the summoning of spirits from the Underworld, and (2) the practitioners are principally identified as female. However, in Lucan, Apuleius, and Heliodorus, who provide antiquity's

three most extensive and graphically detailed sequences of a return of the living dead, a new, and quite radical for the ancient world's standards, necromantic enterprise is introduced that not only allows the ghost of the deceased to be brought back from the Underworld, but the ghost is also made to re-enter its former body and be briefly reanimated. This practice is very briefly alluded to as early as the late sixth / early fifth century BCE, but it is never really elaborated; in *Pythian* 3 Pindar in passing brings to the audience's attention Asclepius, whose advanced medical knowledge was even capable of reinstating the dead back to life. But Asclepius' meddling with matters of life and death angered Zeus, who swiftly struck down with a thunderbolt both the good doctor and the reanimated man.⁷²

Naturally, when discussing potential reanimations or even resurrections, the first example cases which come to a Westerner's mind are those recorded in the New Testament Gospels, above all that of Lazarus and, naturally, Jesus. Though used interchangeably sometimes, the terms resurrection and reanimation have a slight difference in meaning: resurrection of the flesh (ἀνάστασις) is a religious concept betraying eschatological and apocalyptic influences, principally of the Abrahamic religions, and it is predominantly used to connote a more or less *permanent* return to life from death through the grace of God;⁷³ reanimation, on the contrary, has few or no religious overtones and suggests a *brief* reinstatement to life from death, usually achieved by external means, be they medical, magical, or praeternatural. Since all Gospels predate Apuleius' and Heliodorus' accounts, and the Gospel of Mark might have also slightly predated, or even coincided with, the account of Lucan,⁷⁴ it seems natural to inquire to what extent the versions of Jesus' or Lazarus' return from the dead has influenced, if at all, our three pagan accounts.⁷⁵ As intriguing as this

⁷² 3.55-58: ἔτραπεν καὶ κείνον ἀγάνορι μισθῶ / χρυσὸς ἐν χερσὶν φανείς / ἄνδρ' ἐκ θανάτου κομίσει / ἤδη ἀλωκότα·
χερσὶ δ' ἄρα Κρονίων / ῥίψαις δι' ἀμφοῖν ἀμπνοῶν στέρνων κάθειλεν / ὠκέως, αἰθῶν δὲ κεραυνὸς ἐνέσκιμψεν μῶρον.

⁷³ On the concept of resurrection in Jewish and Christian literature, cf. SETZER (2009); on the development of the belief of life after death in the ancient world, cf. SEGAL (2004).

⁷⁴ The Gospel of Mark is traditionally considered the earliest of the synoptic Gospels, dated to the early-mid 60s (possibly also shortly after 70 CE?), whereas the latest belongs to John and is commonly dated to the very early 100s CE, if not a bit earlier. On dating the Gospels, cf. BARTON & MUDDIMAN (2001) *passim*; AUNE (2010) *passim*. The earliest of our pagan accounts belongs to Lucan and his forced suicide in 65 CE offers a secure *terminus ante* for the reanimation account. On the other hand, as already mentioned in chapter 3, there has been much disagreement regarding the dating of the *Metamorphoses*; some scholars based on the absence of any mentioning of the novel in Apuleius' other works (especially the *Apology*) classify it as belonging to the climax of Apuleius' career and it is therefore placed in the period between the 170s or 180s, or even later (e.g., WALSH (1970) 248-51; HARRISON (1999) xxix, (2000) 9-10), and then there are those who assume it is a work from Apuleius' youthful writing period (e.g., CARRATELLO (1963); DOWDEN (1994)). The dating of Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Story* is much more problematic; based on internal evidence the suggested dates range from the 220s to the late fourth century CE, on which cf. the discussion at BOWIE (2008) 32-35.

⁷⁵ On novels and the gospels, cf. BOWERSOCK (1994), esp. 99-119; RAMELLI (1996).

question may be, it will not be addressed in further detail at this point, since the stark and many differences surpass the meagre similarities, and so such a task would be fruitless. The main characteristic which defines, but also separates the three pagan accounts from their Christian counterparts is the element of necromancy, or a lack thereof; although the aforementioned accounts offer varying descriptions for possible returns from the dead, any necromantic qualities are, for obvious reasons, absent from the Christian resurrection sequences.⁷⁶

To start the discussion with Apuleius, the *Metamorphoses* offers an example of this new necromantic reanimation 'technology' in the concluding chapters of Thelyphron's tale (2.28-30). For the reader's convenience I shall briefly outline the scene under discussion, since this will be helpful for the coming analysis. In the first half of Thelyphron's tale (parts of which have been discussed already in chapter 4), we encounter the protagonist as he is just hired to protect the corpse of a young man from what he is told might be impending attacks of witches. His appointed task is quite simple: to protect the corpse by any means necessary from the wicked witches, thus delivering it unscathed on the day of its funeral, and accept a generous reward; fail to do so, and he will be forced to compensate for any stolen bodily features with parts from his own body. The following day, Thelyphron seemingly delivers an unharmed body to the corpse's widow and receives his promised reward; but a lapse of tongue, perceived as an ill-omened remark, infuriates the widow's slaves, who beat Thelyphron ferociously and kick him out of the house (*laceratus atque discerptus*, 2.26.8).⁷⁷ The story now resumes (2.27-30). It is the day of the funeral, and as the dead man is being carried to his final resting place the uncle suddenly accuses the wife of murdering his nephew. The wife denies the accusations, but the surrounding crowd stands divided. In order to resolve the matter as quickly as possible the uncle introduces the Egyptian *sacerdos* Zatchlas, who, prompted by the exhortations of the old man and having already agreed to a large fee, consents to perform a brief reanimation ritual, so that the corpse can reveal the true manner of its death. The ritual which ultimately restores life to the corpse is rather simple in nature. The priest only has to place two little herbs on the corpse and silently pray to the rising sun,

⁷⁶ On resurrection and reanimation in the fiction of the Roman Empire, cf. BOWERSOCK (1994) 99-119.

⁷⁷ As it has been mentioned in chapter 4.2, PERRY treated Thelyphron's tale as a weird compound of three diverse stories, and at this point he detected the original ending of the first story in its pre-Apuleian form. He suggested that Thelyphron's ludicrous exit is reminiscent of a typical ending of a burlesque scene or a mime, and that he was *laceratus atque discerptus* not for uttering an ill-omened remark (as is the case in Apuleius' version of the story) but for failing to deliver the body unharmed, and therefore for being required to compensate for the missing parts with parts from his own body (1929a: 234; 1967: 268).

and the dead man's chest immediately begins to pulsate and the entire body is instantly filled with breath. The dead man rises, although he fervently objects to being called back to the upper world.⁷⁸ Indifferent towards the corpse's protests, Zatchlas threatens the dead man with horrible underworld tortures, thus compelling him to cast light on the nature of his death. In the end the dead man exposes his wife not only as an adulteress but also as his murderer, revealing in addition Thelyphron's facial mutilation at the hands of witches during his guardianship.

Nearly two centuries later, the novelist Heliodorus placed a similar necromantic scene in the concluding chapters of Book 6 from his *Ethiopian Story* (12-15). The novel's heroine Charicleia, accompanied by the Egyptian priest Calasiris, is in pursuit of her lover, Theagenes, who has been captured by the Egyptians. On a recent battlefield between the forces of Egypt and Persia, Charicleia and Calasiris come across an old woman from Bessa mourning over the body of her dead son. The duo offer the old woman some words of kindness but at the same time try to extract information on Theagenes' fate. The old woman agrees to escort them to a neighbouring village, but only after she has performed some nocturnal rites for her dead son (6.12-13). Charicleia and Calasiris depart, and the old woman, assuming she is free from intruding eyes, begins her necromantic ritual: she first digs a pit, lights a fire to one side, positions her son's body between the two, and makes a libation of honey, milk, and wine. She next produces a cake made out of flour and forms it into the shape of a man, crowns it with bay and fennel, and then throws it into the fiery pit. In the end she takes a sword and in an ecstatic state calls upon the moon by a series of outlandish and foreign names, cuts herself across the arm, applies the blood onto a branch of bay and sprinkles it into the fire. After performing a few more strange actions, she kneels over her dead son and whispers certain incantations into his ear, until she finally brings him back to life and forces him to stand up (14.3-4). The woman's first attempt is unsuccessful, and the corpse collapses to the ground; but after employing more powerful incantations she manages to resurrect her dead son for a second time (14.6). When the dead son stands on his feet, the old woman interrogates him on the fate of his younger brother. The corpse angrily reprimands his relative for dabbling with necromancy and prophesies the death of both his brother and mother, but also hints at the final happy reunion of Charicleia with Theagenes (15.1-4). Upon realising that

⁷⁸ STRAMAGLIA has argued that a reanimated corpse's resistance to speaking was an untypical feature in necromantic rituals (1990: 188-91, 208-09), though the cadavers of Lucan's Erictho and Heliodorus' witch might serve as proof for the contrary.

the ritual is being observed by Charicleia, the elderly witch begins to frantically search for the girl and Calasiris on the battlefield with sword in hand. In her state of frenzy she fails to pay attention to a broken spear standing upright in the field and impales herself in the groin, thus bringing her dead son's prophecy to a swift and sudden fulfilment (15.5).

It is not, however, in the pages of novelistic texts that the practice of corpse reanimation is first introduced into extant Greco-Roman literature, but in the verses of Lucan's *Civil War*. This passage has received separate treatment in chapter 2, but again a brief summary of its main points will be helpful for the ensuing discussion. In the second half of Book 6 Sextus, the son of Pompey the Great, seeks the assistance of the Thessalian witch Erictho in finding out the outcome of the war between his father and Julius Caesar. The witch performs a necromantic ritual for him by bringing back to life a fallen Pompeian soldier. As soon as the cadaver is prepared for the reanimation rite, Erictho casts a spell invoking a variety of nether gods and demanding that the ghost of the soldier is permitted to re-enter its body and prophesy (624-718). Her initial spell is unsuccessful and so the witch unleashes a second, more horrible and threatening incantation (719-49), which ultimately forces the ghost to go back into its body and stand upright (750-60). Provided that the reanimated soldier complies with her wishes, Erictho promises to lay him to eternal rest and to cast a spell that will also prevent him from being called back from the dead in the future (760-76). The prophecy the soldier utters foretells the deaths of both Caesar and Pompey, and the destruction of the latter's entire household. When the revelation is concluded, Erictho remains true to her word and delivers the undead soldier to the flames and then escorts Sextus back to his camp (777-830).

4.2. Patterns of necromantic reanimations?

Despite being the least elaborate of all reanimation episodes, Apuleius' scene shares a number of common features with the extravagant sequences of Lucan and Heliodorus, which may allow us to constitute an 'unofficial' pattern of necromantic reanimations. N. SLATER has already compared the necromantic sequences of Apuleius and Heliodorus and has offered a typology for what he termed 'novelistic necromancy': after laying out the various similarities between the two episodes, SLATER argued that the novelistic scenes represent beliefs that may have been available to the authors' respective contemporary audiences.⁷⁹ In

⁷⁹ SLATER (2007) 58.

this section, SLATER's typology will be expanded with additional features in order to accommodate Lucan's scene as well.⁸⁰

To begin with, (i) one cannot fail to detect the necromancers' direct or indirect connection with Egypt and/or Thessaly: Zatchlas is introduced in the *Metamorphoses* as an Egyptian prophet of the first rank and wears the dress of a priest of Isis, who moreover makes a living in Thessaly;⁸¹ the old woman of Heliodorus is a local inhabitant of Egypt;⁸² while Erictho is a Thessalian witch, whose magical ingredients (or at least some of them) betray indirect Egyptian associations.⁸³ (ii) In all the accounts significant emphasis is put both on the close proximity of the cadavers' death and their lack of burial: the dead man's lack of burial in Apuleius suggests that he had only died fairly recently;⁸⁴ Erictho points out that the mouth of a freshly slain corpse can speak in a plain and intelligible voice,⁸⁵ and as soon as she casts her first incantation, she addresses the recentness of the soldier's death;⁸⁶ whereas a plethora of recently slain dead soldiers are said to be lying on the battle ground in Heliodorus.⁸⁷ What is more, (iii) aside from being ἄταφοι, the three cadavers also have in common the fact that they are ἄωροι and βιαιοθάνατοι: Apuleius' cadaver reveals that he has in fact fallen a victim to his wife's murderous schemes,⁸⁸ which is the exact accusation brought against the wife by the dead man's uncle;⁸⁹ the Egyptian woman's son has perished in a recent violent clash between the forces of Egypt and Persia and is still lying on the field of battle,⁹⁰ and so is the soldier carefully chosen by Erictho from the latest fight between the armies of

⁸⁰ Some of these features can also be found in a tabulated form in OGDEN (2009) 192-93.

⁸¹ 2.28.1-3: *Zatchlas adest Aegyptius propheta primarius, [...] et cum dicto iuvenem quempiam linteis amiculis iniectum pedesque palmeis baxeis inductum et adusque deraso capite producit in medium*. Interestingly, BAKER discusses some legal undertones in Zatchlas' characterisation, which are enough for her to suggest that the prophet is portrayed "as both a magician and a lawyer" (2012: 360).

⁸² 6.12.2: ἄρτι γὰρ τῇ Βῆσση περὶ δύσιν ἡλίου πλησιάζοντες πλήθος τι κείμενον νεκρῶν ὀρώσι νεοσφαγῶν, τῶν μὲν πλειόνων Περσῶν εἶναι τῇ στολῇ τε καὶ καθοπλίσσει γνωριζομένων ὀλίγων δὲ τινῶν ἐγχωρίων. [...] γυναίκα προστυγχάνουσι πρεσβυτικῶ, σώματι τῶν ἐγχωρίων προσπεφυκῶτι καὶ παντοίους ἐγείροντι θρήνους.

⁸³ 6.677-80: *non Arabum volucer serpens innataque rubris / aequoribus custos pretiosae vipera conchae / aut viventis adhuc Libyci membrana cerastae / aut cinis Eoa positi phoenicis in ara*. The flying serpent (*volucer serpens*, 677) and the ashes of the Phoenix (*cinis phoenicis*, 680) are Egyptian in nature and are discussed by Herodotus in his Αἰγυπτιακὸς λόγος at *Histories* 2.73-75.

⁸⁴ 2.27.2: *ecce iam ultimum defletus atque conclamatus processerat mortuus, ritumque patrio, utpote unus de optimatibus, pompa funeris publici ductabatur per forum*.

⁸⁵ 6.621-22: *ut modo defuncti tepidique cadaveris ora / plena voce sonent*.

⁸⁶ 6.712-14: *non in Tartareo latitantem poscimus antro / assuetamque diu tenebris, modo luce fugata / descendentem animam*.

⁸⁷ 6.12.2: ἄρτι γὰρ τῇ Βῆσση περὶ δύσιν ἡλίου πλησιάζοντες πλήθος τι κείμενον νεκρῶν ὀρώσι νεοσφαγῶν.

⁸⁸ 2.29.5: *malis novae nuptae peremptus artibus et addictus noxio poculo, torum tepentem adultero mancipavi*.

⁸⁹ 2.27.4-5: *'per fidem vestram,' inquit, 'Quirites, per pietatem publicam, perempto civi subsistite et extremum facinus in nefariam scelestamque istam feminam severiter vindicate. haec enim nec ullus alius miserum adulescentem, sororis meae filium, in adulteri gratiam et ob praedam hereditariam extinxit veneno.'*

⁹⁰ Cf. *supra* n.87.

Pompey and Caesar.⁹¹ (iv) Necromancy, in addition, includes prayers and/or magical incantations (with or without a blood sacrifice),⁹² (v) the use of numerous magical substances and herbs,⁹³ (vi) and is generally disapproved of as a practice.⁹⁴ (viii) Bringing the corpse back to life is not an easy task to accomplish, since it involves a challenging physical reanimation, which is then followed by the rising of the cadaver: after Erichtho's first attempt to bring life into the dead soldier has failed, she gives it a second go by employing more powerful and darker magic, which only then brings about the desired effect;⁹⁵ the same applies for Heliodorus' witch, who also has two attempts at reanimating her dead son.⁹⁶ Zatchlas' reanimation, on the contrary, is seemingly effortless and the dead man stands up immediately.⁹⁷ (viii) All three reanimated corpses are angry, express resentment about the disturbance of their afterlife peace, and request that they be sent back to the Underworld instantly.⁹⁸ (ix) Lastly, the utterance of a prophecy and a substantial proof of the prophecy's legitimacy are the final features running through the three reanimation sequences.

⁹¹ 6.624-26: *dixerat, et noctis geminatis arte tenebris / maestum tecta caput squalenti nube pererrat / corpora caesorum tumulis proiecta negatis.*

⁹² *Metamorphoses* 2.28.6: *incrementa Solis augusti tacitus imprecatus*; *Ethiopian Story* 6.14.4: κατευξαμένη τὸν βραχίονα ἐντεμοῦσα καὶ δάφνης ἀκρέμονι τοῦ αἵματος ἀποψήσασα τὴν πυρκαϊάν ἐπειπέκαζεν; *Civil War* 6.693-94: *mox cetera cantu / explicat Haemonio penetratque in Tartara lingua.*

⁹³ *Metamorphoses* 2.28.6: *herbulam quampiam ob os corporis et aliam pectori eius imponit*; *Ethiopian Story* 6.14.3: πέμμα στεάτινον εἰς ἀνδρὸς μίμημα πεπλασμένον δάφνη καὶ μαράθῳ καταστέψασα εἰς τὸν βόθρον ἐνέβαλλεν; *Civil War* 6.670-80, esp. 670-71: *huc quidquid fetu genuit natura sinistro miscetur.*

⁹⁴ For the disapproval of necromancy during the Roman period, cf. GRAF (1999) 295-96; GORDON (1999) 206-08.

⁹⁵ 6.719-29: *haec ubi fata caput spumantiaque ora levavit, / aspicit astantem proiecti corporis umbram, / exanimis artus invisaque claustra timentem / carceris antiqui. pavet ire in pectus apertum / visceraque et ruptas letali vulnere fibras. / a miser, extremum cui mortis munus inique / eripitur, non posse mori! miratur Erichtho / has fatis licuisse moras, irataque morti / verberat inmotum vivo serpente cadaver, / perque cavas terrae, quas egit carmine, rimas / manibus illatrat regnique silentia rumpit.*

⁹⁶ 6.14.6: ὁ δὲ (sc. νεκρὸς) ἀπεκρίνατο μὲν οὐδὲν ἐπινεύσας δὲ μόνον καὶ τῇ μητρὶ τὰ κατὰ γνώμην ἐλπίζειν ἀμφιβόλως ἐνδοῦς κατηνέχθη τε ἀθρόον καὶ ἔκειτο ἐπὶ πρόσωπον. ἡ δὲ ἐπέστρεφε τε τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὸ ὕπτιον καὶ οὐκ ἀνίει τὴν πεῦσιν ἀλλὰ βιασιότεραις, ὡς ἐώκει, ταῖς κατανάγκαις πολλὰ τοῖς ὡσὶν αὐθις ἐπάδουσα καὶ μεθαλλομένη ξιφῆρης ἄρτι μὲν πρὸς τὴν πυρκαϊάν ἄρτι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν βόθρον ἐξηγειρέ τε αὐθις καὶ ὀρθωθέντος περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐξεπυθάνετο, μὴ νεύμασι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ φωνῇ τὴν μαντεῖαν ἀριστήμως δηλοῦν ἐπαναγκάζουσα.

⁹⁷ 2.29.2: *iam tumore pectus extolli, iam salebris vena pulsari, iam spiritu corpus impleri. et adsurgit cadaver, et profatur adulescens.*

⁹⁸ *Metamorphoses* 2.29.3: *quid, oro, me post Lethaea pocula iam Stygiis paludibus innatantem ad momentariae vitae reducit officia? Desine iam, precor, desine, ac me in meam quietem permitte*; *Ethiopian Story* 6.15.1-2: καὶ ἔτι λέγοντος ὁ νεκρὸς οἶον ἐκ μυχοῦ τινοῦ ἢ σπηλαίου φαραγγώδους βαρὺ τι καὶ δυσηχὲς ὑποτρύζων «ἐγὼ μὲν» ἔφη «σοῦ τὰ πρῶτα ἐφειδόμεν, ὦ μήτερ, καὶ παρανομοῦσαν εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπεῖαν φύσιν καὶ τοὺς ἐκ μοιρῶν θεσμοῦ ἐκβιαζομένην καὶ τὰ ἀκίνητα μαγγανείαις κινούσαν ἠνεχόμεν, σφάζεται γὰρ ἡ περὶ τοὺς φύντας αἰδῶς ἐφ' ὅσον οἶόν τε καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀποιοχομένοις. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ καὶ ταύτην ἀναίρεις τὸ κατὰ σαυτὴν καὶ ἐλαύνεις οὐκ ἀθεμίτοις μόνον τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπιχειρήσασα ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ εἰς ἄπειρον τὸ ἀθέμιτον ἐπέξάγουσα, οὐκ ὀρθοῦσθαι μόνον καὶ νεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ φθέγγεσθαι σῶμα νεκρὸν ἐκβιαζομένην κηδεῖας μὲν τῆς ἐμῆς ἀμελοῦσα καὶ ταῖς λοιπαῖς ἐπιμίγνυσθαι ψυχαῖς ἐμποδίζουσα χρεῖας δὲ μόνης γενομένη τῆς σῆς, ἄκουε ταῦθ' ἅ πάλαι σοι μηνύειν ἐφυλαττόμην; *Civil War* 6.722-25, 820-21: *pavet ire in pectus apertum / visceraque et ruptas letali vulnere fibras. / a miser, extremum cui mortis munus inique / eripitur, non posse mori! [...] sic postquam fata peregit, / stat vultu maestus tacito mortemque reposcit.*

Technically speaking, the validity of the corpse's prophecy is *effectively* proven only in Heliodorus' account. The dead son prophesies the death of his brother and mother but also hints at the happy reunion of Charicleia with Theagenes.⁹⁹ The part of the prophecy concerning the old woman's death is fulfilled within moments,¹⁰⁰ while the reunion of the two protagonists occurs only at the end of the novel (15.3).

In Lucan's case, the gloomy prophecy of Erichtho's dead soldier, foreshadowing the downfall of both Roman *principes*,¹⁰¹ is historically accurate. It is a well-known fact that Pompey indeed lost the civil war and died in a most unheroic manner in Egypt in 48 BCE; therefore, the prophecy's *unda Nili* and *Libyamque* refer to his demise on African shores. His two sons did not share a better fate either: Gnaeus died in Spain in 45 BCE (*Europam*), whereas Sextus perished in Miletus ten years later (*Asiamque*). Superfluous to say, the fate of Caesar was sealed in Rome on the Ides of March 44 BCE (*unda Thybridis*). The prophecy, however, is only partially validated in the epic. Pompey's death is the main theme of the second half of Book 8, but the assassination of Caesar—if indeed ever intended to be included in the poem—is starkly absent from the poem due to its incomplete nature. In 65 CE and at the age of 25, Lucan was forced to commit suicide under Nero's orders for taking part in the Pisonian conspiracy (its principal aim was to assassinate the emperor),¹⁰² and so the young and promising poet never had the chance to bring the epic to its desired end. Despite its unfinished nature, there has been much debate and abundant speculation over Lucan's envisioned ending for his poem; the death of Caesar might have been one of the poem's possible terminal points,¹⁰³ but it certainly was not the only one available. In fact, it may not have been Lucan's intention to extend the epic until Caesar's death, but in wanting to create a twelve book anti-*Aeneid* Lucan would probably have concluded the poem with the defeat of Cato at Thapsus in 46 BCE and his subsequent suicide, hence ending the poem on a gloomy note for the soon to be destroyed Republic.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ 6.15.3-4: οὔτε ὁ παῖς σοι περισθεῖς ἐπανήξει, οὔτε αὐτὴ τὸν ἀπὸ ξίφους ἐκφεύξει θάνατον, ἀλλ' οἶα δὴ τὸν σαυτῆς βίον ἐν οὕτως ἀθέσμοις πράξεσι καταναλώσασα, τὴν ἀποκεκληρωμένην πᾶσι τοῖς τοιοῦτοις βιαίαν οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν ὑποστήσῃ τελευτήν. [...] ἀλλ' ὁ δὴ βαρύτερον, ὅτι καὶ κόρη τις τῶν ἐπ' ἐμοὶ γίνεται θεωρὸς καὶ πάντων ἐπακροῦσται, γύναιον ὑπ' ἔρωτος σεσοβημένον, καὶ πᾶσαν ὡς εἰπεῖν ἐρωμένου τινὸς ἐπὶ γῆν ἔνεκεν ἀλώμενον, ᾧ μετὰ μυρίους μὲν μάχθους μυρίους δὲ κινδύνους, γῆς ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις ὄροις, τύχῃ σὺν λαμπρῶ καὶ βασιλικῇ συμβίβησεται.

¹⁰⁰ 6.15.5: ἕως ἀπερίσκειτον ὑπὸ θυμοῦ τὴν κατὰ τοὺς νεκροὺς ἔρευναν ποιουμένη, ἔλαθεν ὠρθωμένῳ κλάσματι δόρατος κατὰ τοῦ βουβῶνος περιπαρεῖσα. καὶ ἡ μὲν ἔκειτο, τὴν ἐκ τοῦ παιδὸς μαντεῖαν οὕτω παρὰ πόδας ἐν δίκῃ πληρώσασα.

¹⁰¹ 6.810-11, 817-18: *quem tumulum Nili, quem Thybridis alluat unda / quaeritur, et ducibus tantum de funere pugna est.* / [...] *Europam, miseri, Libyamque Asiamque timete: / distribuit tumulos vestris Fortuna triumphis.*

¹⁰² Cf. e.g., Tacitus *Annals* 15.70.

¹⁰³ Cf. MARTI (1970) 3-38, also postulating a total number of sixteen books.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. AHL (1976) 316-25, who discusses further possible endings; BAERTSCHI (2007) 169 n.29; ROCHE (2009) 1, 19.

The corpse's revelation in Apuleius is more perplexing. Instead of providing convincing evidence for the wife's involvement in his death (statement 1), the reanimated man attempts instead to expose the woman's guilt by offering crystal-clear proof of what he suggests will be the inviolate truth;¹⁰⁵ yet, the 'truth' he is eager to reveal has very little to do with the man's murderer but concerns, surprisingly, his guardian Thelyphron: the corpse discloses that the unfortunate guardian was the victim of witchcraft the night before, and as a result his face was viciously mutilated (statement 2). The authenticity of the dead man's second statement is verified instantly by Thelyphron himself, whose nose and ears fall off in his hands the moment he touches his face.¹⁰⁶ But does this *de facto* suggest that statement 1 is true as well? SLATER has already maintained that the accuracy of the dead man's claim regarding Thelyphron's mutilation cannot, and should not be adequate *rational* proof of any other statements the dead man might make.¹⁰⁷ Just because statement 2 is accurate, it does not imply that statement 1 is accurate too, especially when taking into consideration that statements 1 and 2 have little or no logical and/or factual connections between them (statement 1: wife—adulteress—murder by poisoning ≠ statement 2: guardian—witches—mutilation). Therefore, the veracity of statement 2 has to be considered, at best, circumstantial.

The way, nevertheless, in which the husband is murdered is rather intriguing, one might also say suspicious. On the most obvious level the wife opts to poison him so that she would raise no obvious suspicions regarding his death; undoubtedly, ending the man's life in a bloodier way would only have cried murder. But as discussed in chapter 2, witches were considered experts in the art of *φαρμακεία*, one of its basic manifestations being poisoning. Could this implicitly suggest that the wife is in reality a witch, possibly even among those who tried to attack the cadaver the night before? One cannot surely reject such a possibility. But what is more interesting is the fact that the reanimated husband does not explicitly accuse his wife of being a witch. One would imagine that the dead man, apart from having a post-mortem knowledge of his wife's adultery and murderous schemes, might also be aware of her supernatural wrongdoings. The only sensible excuse as to why he does not implicate her in sorcery is because she is not a witch. Alternatively, perhaps it is enough that he accuses her

¹⁰⁵ 2.30.1: 'dabo,' inquit 'dabo vobis intemeratae veritatis documenta perlucida, et quod prorsus alius nemo cognoverit indicabo.'

¹⁰⁶ 2.30.7: *his dictis perterritus temptare formam adgredior. iniecta manu nasum prehendo: sequitur; aures pertracto: deruunt.*

¹⁰⁷ SLATER (2007) 65.

of *veneficium*; this may have been enough to secure a conviction based on the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis*.¹⁰⁸ The matter still remains inconclusive. Given that Thelyphron, feeling utterly embarrassed and ridiculed, flees the scene in a hurry, it is never essentially revealed whether the crowd is convinced of the wife's guilt in the end. It is up to the readers to draw their conclusions, whatever those may be.

Despite the common aspects of all three sequences, the reanimation account of the *Metamorphoses* also deviates in several significant ways from those of Lucan and Heliodorus. For starters, (1) the rite is performed by a male and not a female, who is, (2) in addition, a priest and not a sorcerer. (3) Zatchlas agrees to perform the reanimation only in order to obtain the truth about a *past* event, and not in order to disclose *future* happenings, the revelation of which might alter the course of nature or history. (4) From a technical viewpoint, although Zatchlas' ritual is treated in terms of necromantic reanimation, it, nonetheless, alludes to certain religious practices performed by Egyptian priests. It was a widespread belief among the Egyptians that the living could still interact with the world of the dead, as it becomes evident from a collection of letters (the so-called 'Letters to the Dead'), dating from the late Old (2686-2181 BCE) to the late New Kingdom (1550-1069 BCE).¹⁰⁹ These are letters sent by living family members to dead relatives and request the departed to take some form of action on behalf of the family member in need. In some ways, Zatchlas' rite also bears some affinities to the Egyptian funerary custom of the 'opening of the mouth'. In this ritual, which can also be attested as being performed on statues resembling a human form, specific ritual tools were employed to touch the mouth and eyes of the dead in order to enable the dead person's spirit to receive food and drink, breath, and vision. In essence, the rite aimed at reinstating all living capacities for the dead.¹¹⁰ The first *herbula* Zatchlas places on the corpse's mouth could hint at the adze tool that was applied to the mummy's mouth during the funeral ceremony, whereas the one positioned on the breast could indicate that the flowers the dead were portrayed as holding on their breasts were a token of immortality granted by the god Osiris. Overall, compared to the base magic practised by Erictho and the old woman of Bessa, the witchcraft of which N. FICK described as 'magie littéraire et populaire', Zatchlas' 'magie parareligieuse' pays homage to the gods and to the laws of nature. Contrary

¹⁰⁸ On this law, cf. the discussion at chapter 3 with n.22.

¹⁰⁹ On these letters, cf. GARDINER & SETHE (1928); WENTE (1990) 210-19; cf. also GRIFFITHS (1978) 143. RITNER suggests that these 'letters' were the models for the Greek curse tablets (1993: 180-81), a view strongly contested by JOHNSTON (1999) 91-93.

¹¹⁰ For Egyptian mouth-opening ceremonies, cf. OTTO (1960); ROTH (1992).

to its evil counterpart, this 'parareligious' magic "connaît les secrets divins et, vénérant les dieux, opère en créant les conditions de l'action divine, pour favoriser les manifestations d'une surnature."¹¹¹

In this respect, it is not Zatchlas' reanimation in the tale of Thelyphron, but that of Socrates by Meroe in the tale of Aristomenes which approaches, to some extent, the necromantic accounts of Lucan and Heliodorus. Socrates' is a different and more unconventional type of corpse reanimation.¹¹² As we have discussed previously, Socrates has already established Meroe's expertise in necromantic activities (1.10.3), so it is only appropriate that the readers witness the witch in action. When Meroe and Panthia attack the inn where the two friends are timidly hiding, the readers' expectations are seemingly not frustrated. In a manner similar to Medea from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (7.159-293; esp. 285-87), Meroe turns Socrates' head to the right, cuts his throat with a sword, and collects all his blood in a leather bottle, save for a single drop. Perhaps echoing in some odd fashion Erichtho's practice of washing out the soldier's innards with blood, Meroe reaches down into Socrates' insides and tears out his heart through the neck wound, at which point Socrates seemingly gives up his ghost. Panthia conceals the wound with a sponge over which she has already sung a magical incantation, and the witches depart the inn leaving the 'dead' Socrates behind. Against all expectations, Aristomenes discovers Socrates the following morning to be still alive, only for him to die soon thereafter while attempting to drink some water from a running stream.

Several features in this episode constitute the scene as both typical and untypical of the reanimation sequences discussed previously in this section: there is a Thessalian witch-cum-necromancer performing the ritual (Meroe); there is a recent corpse (Socrates); and there is a short-lived reanimation. So far so good. But contrastingly, Meroe uses no magical herbs or substances for the procedure, apart from Panthia's enchanted sponge; no prayers are ever offered, with the exception of Panthia's incantation; and finally, no prophecy is ever uttered by the 'zombified' Socrates. The absence of these three elements would classify the scene, one would say, as necromantically 'untypical'. However, the conversation held between the two friends, from the moment of Socrates' 'awakening' to the point he dies for a second time, including Socrates' dreadful dream of having had his throat cut, can be viewed,

¹¹¹ FICK (1985) 132; 142.

¹¹² This view has been expressed by SLATER (2007) 65-66.

as SLATER has suggested, as a kind of vague ‘posthumous conversation’.¹¹³ But the fact remains that during this ‘conversation’ nothing of prophetic importance is revealed with regards to Socrates’ and Aristomenes’ past or future; quite on the contrary, the entire conversation can be regarded as some kind of anti-prophecy.¹¹⁴

5

Ghost evocation, necromancy and the *Greek Magical Papyri*

καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με, Υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου, εἰ ζήσεται τὰ ὀστᾶ ταῦτα; καὶ εἶπα Κύριε, σὺ ἐπίστη ταῦτα. καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς με, Προφήτευσον ἐπὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ ταῦτα καὶ ἔρεις αὐτοῖς. Τὰ ὀστᾶ τὰ ξηρά, ἀκούσατε λόγον κυρίου. Τάδε λέγει κύριος τοῖς ὀστέοις τούτοις, Ἴδού ἐγὼ φέρω εἰς ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ζωῆς καὶ δώσω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς νεῦρα καὶ ἀνάξω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς σάρκα καὶ ἐκτενώ ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς δέρμα καὶ δώσω πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ζήσεσθε. καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος.

Ezekiel 37.3-6

One of the questions often inevitably raised when discussing descriptions of witchcraft in ancient literature is that of the relationship between literary (i.e., fictional) presentations of magic and the witchcraft that was actually used and practised in everyday life. The practice of magic was ubiquitous among the Greeks and Romans and both the belief in and fear of magic were prevalent throughout antiquity. Belief in magic among the Romans dates back to the fifth century BCE, and although it cannot be claimed with any certainty that the clauses of the XII Tables were indeed ever used intentionally to prosecute magic *per se*, the prohibitions against magic-working found therein confirm that the threat of magic was anything but empty.¹¹⁵ That such attitudes towards witchcraft were predominantly strong during the Imperial ages becomes evident from Tacitus, whose various accounts in the *Annals* provide sufficient evidence for the widespread popularity of magic-working among the Roman populace.¹¹⁶ Witchcraft, then, was perceived as a real threat which posed a real danger that had to be dealt with; and, in fact, numerous police actions were taken against magic-working and magicians spanning over the course of several centuries.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ SLATER (2007) 66; also noted by WINKLER (1985) 72.

¹¹⁴ BAJONI (1990) discusses this scene in terms of comical chthonic propitiatory rites.

¹¹⁵ On magic in the XII Tables, cf. the discussion at chapter 2.3.

¹¹⁶ E.g., *Annals* 2.28 (evocation of spirits), 69 (various magical paraphernalia); 3.7 (suspicion of *veneficium*); 4.22 (insanity induced by magical means); 6.29 (*sacra magorum*); 12.59 (accusation of magic-working), 66 (suspicion of *veneficium*); 13.15 (*veneficium*); 16.30-31 (*magica sacra*). Cf. also the discussion at chapter 6.3.2.

¹¹⁷ E.g., (1) the edict of 428 BCE, restoring the old gods to their former honours and stamping out the new and foreign (magical?) rites (Livy *History of Rome* 4.30.9-11); (2) edict of 213/2 BCE, ordering all books on foreign

Necromancy, too, constituted part of the magical spectrum and had sufficient reality to it. We have previously seen Lucan's eagerness to portray Sextus Pompey as meddling in the arts of magic in the *Civil War*. And as a matter of fact, it has been suggested that the descendants and followers of Pompey were often associated with magical practices during the Julio-Claudian reign and that there had been a conscious effort from the side of the Caesarian party to brand all Pompeians as necromancers.¹¹⁸ This implication is suggested during the prophecy of Erictho's resurrected soldier, whereby Sextus' future necromantic conjuration of Pompey in Sicily is alluded to (6.812-15). Interestingly enough, there survives also a short epigram, entitled *de sacris evocaturis animas Magnorum* and attributed to Seneca the Younger, which deals with the evocation of Pompey's ghost, either by Sextus himself or somebody else.¹¹⁹ If we should take into account the epigram's brevity and pithiness, it might well be the case that both the episode and the various insinuations found therein were quite well-known in antiquity.

Aside from the allegations against the Pompeians, a few further cases of real life practising of ψυχαγωγία and necromancy are known from Greco-Roman sources. For example, while discussing in the *Annals* the war in Germany and the various intrigues in Rome, Tacitus states that Marcus Scribonius Libo Drusus, apart from being charged with sedition against Tiberius, had also been accused of soliciting a third party to perform ghost evocation rites (2.28). Nero, on the other hand, ridden with guilt for the murder of his mother Agrippina, was reported to have employed Persian magi to invoke her ghost and entreat it for forgiveness (Suetonius *Nero* 34.4). There are also reports of a certain grammarian, named

cults to be burnt and all new rites to be suppressed (*ibid.* 25.1.6-12); (3) *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* of 186 BCE (*ibid.* 39.16): one of the main accusations brought against the *Bacchanalia* is of conducting impious ritual acts during the night. Since isolation and secrecy are two important features of magical conduct (cf. e.g., MAUSS (2001) 29), could it be that the *Bacchanalia* were in some way associated with magical practices? (4) Edict of 139 BCE, expelling the Chaldaean astrologers from Rome along with those who practised any occult arts (Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 1.3.2-3); (5) *senatus consultum* of 97 BCE, forbidding the practice of human sacrifice which is associated with magic (Pliny *Natural History* 30.12); (6) in 13 BCE Augustus as Pontifex Maximus orders all books on occult subjects to be burnt (Suetonius, *Augustus* 31.1); (7) in 16 CE the *astrologi* and *magi* were expelled from Italy (Tacitus *Annals* 2.32); (8) *senatus consultum* of 52 CE, expelling the *mathematici* from Italy (*ibid.* 12.52): given that *mathematici* could double as, or were taken to be similar to *magi*, the magicians may also have had a share in this expulsion. (9) Similar edict against astrologers in 69 CE under Vespasian (Suetonius *Vitellius* 14.4). For actions against magicians, cf. DICKIE (2001) 152-57.

¹¹⁸ Cf. GRENADE (1950).

¹¹⁹ *Latin Anthology* 406 (Riese): *fata per humanas solitus praenosceret fibras | impius infandae religionis vates | pectoris ingenui salientia viscera flammis | imposuit; magico carmine rupit humum | ausus ab Elysiis Pompeium ducere campis. | pro pudor! hoc sacrum Magnus ut aspiceret! | stulte, quid infernis Pompeium quaeris in umbris? | non potuit terris spiritus ille premi.*

Apion, who had visited Rome when Pliny the Elder was still a young boy, and maintained that he had successfully evoked ghosts from the Underworld and had even inquired the names of Homer's parents and the poet's native country (*Natural History* 30.18).¹²⁰ Elsewhere, Eusebius relates in his *Ecclesiastical History* that the Egyptian magician Macrianus had convinced the emperor Valerian to sacrifice young children and infants for necromantic purposes (7.10.4), whereas in the *Confessions* Cyprian of Antioch openly admits that he had been instructed by the Phrygians and other barbarians in the craft of divination during his youthful pagan days and could, additionally, interpret among other things the strident cries of the dead emerging from their graves (2.3).

There is, however, more to necromancy than mere references to its being practised. Zatchlas' reanimation ritual in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* shares a number of common features with four very specific spells from the Greek magical papyri—a corpus of papyri from Greco-Roman Egypt, dating from the second century BCE to the fifth century CE and containing a large number of recipes for spells, hymns, and magical rituals.¹²¹ The main spells which touch upon the topic of necromancy are all included in the Great Paris Papyrus (*PGM* 4) and are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale.¹²² These spells form a continuous unit in K. PREISENDANZ's edition: (i) leading (ἀγωγή) spell of King Pitys¹²³ over any skull (1923-2000); (ii) second leading spell of Pitys (2001-2118); (iii) restraining seal (κἀτοχος σφραγίς) for unsatisfactory skulls (2118-32); (iv) Pitys' spell for the questioning of corpses (2133-37).¹²⁴ Before the reanimation process can be effective in the *Metamorphoses*, Zatchlas offers a silent prayer to the Sun god (2.28.6). The priest's invocation of *Sol* could be suggestive of a frequently

¹²⁰ Homer's *patria* and parents are two of the many mysteries surrounding perhaps the most famous poet of Greco-Roman antiquity. In Lucian's *True Histories* 2.20, the narrator travels to the Isles of the Blessed and meets Homer in person, whom he then 'interrogates' about his birthplace, spurious verses, the reasons for which the *Iliad* begins with the μῆνις of Achilles, whether or not the *Iliad* was written prior to the *Odyssey*, and whether or not the poet was actually blind (as was/is commonly regarded). All these were questions which the Alexandrian grammarians occupied themselves with. Therefore, by having his narrator obtain the answers he sought, Lucian eventually fulfils an everlasting *desideratum* of all the grammarians and interpreters of Homer. For a discussion of this episode, cf. NESSELRATH (2002).

¹²¹ On the Greek magical papyri, cf. BETZ (1992) xli-liii; BRASHEAR (1995); PACHOUMI (2007).

¹²² On necromancy in the magical papyri, cf. the discussion at JOHNSTON (2008a) 171-75.

¹²³ On the identification of Pitys with the Egyptian prophet Bitys or Bitos (cf. Iamblichus *On Mysteries* 8.5, 10.7), cf. OGDEN (2001) 211.

¹²⁴ FARAONE (2005) has argued convincingly for the existence of two longer recipes instead of four smaller ones, consisting of recipes (i) and (ii)(iii)(iv) from Preisendanz's edition. He also suggests that these spells are meant to be understood as psychagogic ἀγωγαί, the purpose of which was to lead up (ἀγειν) the ghosts from the Underworld (2005: 258). GRAF, on the contrary, maintains that Pitys' spells do not focus on necromancy but on erotic attraction by means of a skull, which functions as a magical essence that will permit Helios to find the skull's possessor (1997: 198-200).

depicted Egyptian rite linked with the concept of life beyond death;¹²⁵ but then again, a god of light and illumination seems to be an odd deity to be invoked during a necromantic ritual. *Sol* or Helios, nonetheless, is often addressed in the magical papyri,¹²⁶ and is in fact invoked twice in the first of the four aforementioned necromantic recipes. In the first prayer, meant to be spoken at sunrise, the practitioner begs Helios to be granted power over the ghost of a βιοιοθάνατος.¹²⁷ The prayer should be offered to Helios while facing east (στὰς πρὸς ἀνατολήν), just as Zatchlas does in the *Metamorphoses* (*orientem obversus*, 2.28.7). In the second prayer, intended to be offered this time at sunset (ἐπὶ τῆς καταδύσεως), the practitioner requests Helios to send a ghost to him in the middle hours of the night; the belief resting behind this seems to be that the sun, after setting in the west, will journey through the Underworld and will rise again the following morning in the east.¹²⁸ Similar hymn invocations to Helios with the request to send back ghosts from the Underworld appear three more times in the magical papyri: in two divinatory spells, known as the ‘Apollonian invocation’¹²⁹ and ‘Dream oracle of Bessa’,¹³⁰ as well as in a love spell identified as a φιλτροκατάδεσμος θαυμαστός.¹³¹

A further feature which brings Zatchlas’ ritual and the accounts of the magical papyri into close proximity is the coercion that might be applied to the corpse in case it demonstrated signs of disobedience. In the three necromantic reanimation episodes discussed previously, the necromancers threaten the cadavers with Underworld tortures in

¹²⁵ VAN MAL-MAEDER (2001) 374.

¹²⁶ Cf. PACHOUMI (2007) 1-13.

¹²⁷ 4.1943-49: δέομαι, δέσποτα Ἥλιε, ἐπάκουσόν μου τοῦ δεῖνα καὶ δός μοι τὴν κατεξουσίαν τούτου τοῦ βιοθανάτου πνεύματος, οὐπερ ἀπὸ σκήνους κατέχω <τόδε> ἴν’ ἔχω αὐτὸν μετ’ ἐμοῦ, [τοῦ δεῖνα], βοηθὸν καὶ ἔκδικον, ἐφ’ αἷς ἐὰν χρῆζω πραγματείαις.

¹²⁸ 4.1961-71: καὶ νῦν δὴ σε λιτάζομαι, μάκαρ, ἄφθιτε, δέσποτα κόσμου· ἦν γαίης κευθμῶνα μόλης νεκῶν τ’ ἐπὶ χώρον, πέμψον δαίμονα τοῦτον ὅπως μεσάταισιν ἐν ὥραις νυκτὸς ἐλευσόμενον προστάγμασι σοῖς, ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης, οὐπερ ἀπὸ (κεφαλῆς) σκήνους κατέχω τόδε· <πάντα μοι ἐκτελέση> καὶ φρασάτω μοι, τῷ δεῖνα, ὅσα θέλω γνῶμαισιν, ἀληθεῖη καταλέξῃ πραῦς, μειλίχιος μηδ’ ἀντία μοι φρονέοιτο. μηδὲ σὺ μηνίσης ἐπ’ ἐμαῖς ἱεραῖσιν ἐπωδαῖς, ἀλλὰ φύλαξον ἅπαν δέμας ἄρτιον εἰς φάος ἐλθεῖν.

¹²⁹ 1.315-24: κλύθι, μάκαρ, κλήζω σε, τὸν οὐρανοῦ ἡγεμονῆα καὶ γαίης, χάεός τε καὶ Ἄϊδος, ἔνθα νέμονται [...] πέμψον δαίμονα τοῦτον ἐμαῖς ἱεραῖς ἐπαιδαῖς νυκτὸς ἐλαυνόμενον προστάγμασιν σῆς ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης, οὐπερ ἀπὸ σκήνους ἐστὶ τόδε, καὶ φρασάτω μοι, ὅσα θέλω γνῶμησιν, ἀληθεῖην καταλέξας, πρηῦν, μειλίχιον μηδ’ ἀντία μοι φρονέοντα. μηδὲ σὺ μηνίσης ἐπ’ ἐμαῖς ἱεραῖς ἐπαιδαῖς, ἀλλὰ φύλαξον ἅπαν δέμας ἄρτιον ἐς φάος ἐλθεῖν· ταῦτα γὰρ αὐτὸς ἔταξας ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δαῖναι. On this invocation, cf. FARAONE (2004).

¹³⁰ 8.74-81: ἀεροφοιτάτων ἀνέμων ἐποχούμενος αὔραις, Ἥλιε χρυσοκόμα, διέπων φλογὸς ἀκάματον φῶς, αἰθερίαις τροπαῖς μέγαν πόλον ἀμφὶς ἐλάων, γεν<ν>ῶν αὐτὸς ἅπα<ν>τα, ἄπερ πάλιν ἐξαναλύεις· ἐξ οὗ γὰρ πέφυκε στοιχεῖα τεταγμένα σοῖσι νόμοισι, κόσμον ἅπαν<τα> τρέπουσι τετράτροπον εἰς ἐνιαυτόν. ἦν γαίης κευθμῶνα μόλης, νεκῶν ἐνὶ χώρῳ, πέμψον μάντιν ἐξ ἀδύτων τὸν ἀληθεῖα, λίτομαι σε.

¹³¹ 4.446-55: καὶ δὴ νῦν λίτομαι σε, μάκαρ, ἄφθιτε, δέσποτα κόσμου· ἦν γαίης κευθμῶνα μόλης νεκῶν ἐπὶ χώρον, πέμψον δαίμονα τοῦτον τῇ δεῖνα μεσάταισι ὥραις, οὐπερ ἀπὸ σκήνους κατέχω τόδε λείψανον ἐν χερσὶν ἐμαῖς, νυκτὸς, ἐλευσόμενον προστάγμασι σῆς ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης, ἴν’, ὅσα θέλω ἐν φρεσὶ ἐμαῖς, πάντα μοι ἐκτελέση, πραῦς, μειλίχιον μηδ’ ἀντία μοι φρονέοντα. μηδὲ σὺ μηνίσης κρατεραῖς ἐπ’ ἐμαῖς ἐπαιδαῖς· ταῦτα γὰρ αὐτὸς ἔταξας ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δαῖναι νήματα Μοιράων, καὶ σοῖς ὑποθημοσύνησι. On this erotic spell, cf. FARAONE (2002). On the φιλτροκατάδεσμος designating both a ‘violent restraint’ and a ‘friendly alliance’, cf. WINKLER (1991) 220.

case of lack of compliance: Zatchlas threatens to unleash the Furies on the corpse should it not reveal the true manner of its death (2.29.4), whereas the old women of Heliodorus (6.14.6) and Erictho (6.730-49) perform a more powerful *carmen secundum* when their first attempt is unsuccessful. The notion of a *carmen secundum* can be detected in the second ἀγωγή spell of Pitys as well, where the invoker predicts additional chastisements (έτέρας κολάσεις) for the spirit in case it does not agree to serve and follow orders.¹³²

Though the necromantic recipes are quite ambiguous as to whether their intended goal was to achieve corpse reanimation or merely ψυχαγωγία, the majority of scholarly debate agrees that ghost evocation for divinatory purposes lay at the heart of these spells. In fact, most of the necromantic recipes rely on parts of the cadavers' remains for the magical rituals, heads especially (σκύφος, κεφαλή),¹³³ and not the entire corpse (as suggested by the word σκήνος). A small necromantic recipe from the Demotic papyri also points towards the use of heads in magical rituals.¹³⁴ It is only in the case of the fourth recipe that the spell explicitly identifies itself as suitable for the questioning of a corpse (ἀνάκρισις σκήνους), which implies that corporeal reanimation was the desired effect of this spell. This particular recipe, instructing the practitioner to inscribe a number of *vores magicae* on a flax leaf which should

¹³² 4.2055-59: κατὰ τῆς Ἀνάγκης τῶν Ἀναγκῶν παραγενέσθαι πρὸς ἐμέ, τὸν δεῖνα, ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρα, ἐν τῇ σήμερον νυκτί, καὶ συνθέσθαι μοι τὸ διακονῆσαι. εἰ δὲ μή, έτέρας κολάσεις προσδόκα. For the use of coercive spells (λόγοι ἐπάναγκοι) in case the first incantation is ineffective, cf. PGM 4.1436; also GRAF (1991) 194-95 and (1997) 202. Erictho's *carmen secundum*, targeting the Furies, Hecate, Proserpina, and several other nether region deities, seems to have some close affinities with the coercive spell found at PGM 4.1443-67: Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε καὶ Ἐκάτη χθονία καὶ Ἀχέρων χθόνιε καὶ ὠμοφάγοι χθόνιοι καὶ θεέ χθόνιε καὶ ἦρωες χθόνιοι καὶ Ἀμφιάραε χθόνιε καὶ ἀμφίπολοι χθόνιοι καὶ πνεύματα χθόνια καὶ Ἀμαρτίαι χθόνια καὶ Ὀνειροὶ χθόνιοι καὶ Ὀρκοὶ χθόνιοι καὶ Ἀρίστη χθονία καὶ Τάρταρε χθόνιε καὶ Βασκανία χθονία, Χάρων χθόνιε καὶ ὀπάονες χθόνιοι καὶ νέκυες καὶ οἱ δαίμονες καὶ ψυχαὶ ἀνθρώπων πάντων. ἔρχεσθε σήμερον, Μοῖραι καὶ Ἀνάγκη, τελέσατε τὰ γινόμενα ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγωγῆς ταύτης, ὅπως ἀξητέ μοι τὴν δεῖνα τῆς δεῖνα, ἐμοί, τῷ δεῖνα τῆς δεῖνα (κοινόν), ὅτι ἐπικαλοῦμαι· Χάος ἀρχέγονον, Ἐρεβος, φρικτὸν Στυγὸς ὕδωρ, νάματα Λήθης Ἀχερουσίατε λίμνη Ἄιδου, Ἐκάτη καὶ Πλουτεὺ καὶ Κούρα, Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, Μοῖραι καὶ Ποιναι, Ἀχέρων τε καὶ Αἴακε, πυλωρὲ κλείθρων τῶν αἰδίων, θάπτον ἄνοιξον, κλειδοῦχέ τε Ἄνουβι φύλαξ.

¹³³ The earliest use of heads in necromantic consultations is attested in two Mesopotamian texts from the first millennium BCE, on which cf. FINKEL (1983-84); SCURLOCK (1988) nos 72-74 and 79-82. Contrary to OGDEN (2001) 212, FARAONE (2005), and JOHNSTON (2008a) 174, PACHOUMI (2011) counter-argues that the necromantic spells under discussion were in fact meant to achieve full corpse reanimation; the reanimated corpse would then function, PACHOUMI suggests, as a supernatural assistant (πάρεδρος). On the obscure use of σκήνος to suggest 'corpse', cf. FARAONE (2004) 228-30.

¹³⁴ PDM 51.79-86: "A way of finding a thief ...: You bring a head of a drowned man; you carry it to the fields; you bury it; you put flax seed over it until you gather the flax; you gather [it] upon it when it is high and alone; you [bring] the flax to the village; you wash the head by itself in milk; you cover it; and you take it to the place which you wish. When you want to discover a thief, you should bring a small amount of flax; you should utter a spell to it; you should say the name of the man twice, one by one (?) you should make a knot and draw it together. If he is the one who stole it, he (sc. the head) speaks while you tie the knot" (translated by J.H. Johnson in BETZ (1992) 288).

then be placed in a cadaver's mouth,¹³⁵ bears undoubtedly an affinity to Zatchlas' ritualistic placement of the small herb on the dead man's mouth prior to his reanimation. A further minor recipe (*PGM* 4.2138-2235: τρίστιχος Ὀμήρου πάρεδρος) suggests among other things that if a magician inscribes three specific Iliadic verses (10.564, 521, and 572) on an iron lamella, attaches it to the body of an executed criminal, and speaks the verses into the corpse's ear, the dead man will reveal anything the magician wishes to know.¹³⁶ The text does not specify, nonetheless, whether corporeal reanimation is achieved or merely some sort of ψυχαγωγία for divinatory purposes.

There is only one spell in the magical papyri the goal of which is explicitly identified as bringing about corpse resurrection. This recipe, situated in a section known as the 'Eighth Book of Moses' (*PGM* 13) and specifically labelled as a spell for the awakening (ἐγερσις) of a dead body, offers a prayer to the eternal god by whose power the spirit of the dead is compelled to re-enter, presumably, a dead body (τόδε τὸ σῶμα).¹³⁷ The magical process of ἐνπνευμάτωσις will empower the dead body with a new breath, and by the majestic power of god the dead will rise again and walk the earth. No doubt, the spell is suggestive of Christian and Jewish beliefs and doctrines,¹³⁸ and perhaps that is the reason for its inclusion within a larger spell (*PGM* 13.1-343) containing Judaeo-Christian and Gnostic influences.¹³⁹ However, the ritualistic details and the function of the spell are absent from the recipe, and the text itself is quite ambivalent: τόδε τὸ σῶμα could imply that the summoned spirit was expected to either re-enter its former body or to occupy any given body that simply happened to be present for the ritual.

So what do these necromantic spells really represent, and how does one account for the extreme paucity of such recipes in the magical papyri? Of nearly 600 magical spells (that is, excluding the Demotic spells) accounted for in the papyri, only eight at best represent necromantic practices; that is a meagre 1.3% of the total amount of magical recipes. Would

¹³⁵ 4.2133-37: Πίτυος Θεσσαλοῦ ἀνάκρισις σκήνους. γράφε εἰς φύλλον καλπάσου ταῦτα· ΑΖΗΑ ΒΑΛΕΜΑΧΩ (γράμματα ιβ'). μέλαν· μίλτου καὶ ζυμύρης κεκαυμένης καὶ ὤμης χυλὸς ἀρτεμισίας καὶ ἀειζώου καὶ καλπάσου. γράψον καὶ ἐνστόμισον.

¹³⁶ 4.2157-59: καταδίκω δὲ σφαγέντι ἀψάμενος εἰπέ εἰς τὸ οὖς τοὺς στίχους, καὶ ὅσα θέλεις, πάντα σοι ἐρεῖ.

¹³⁷ 13.277-82: Ἐγερσις σώματος νεκροῦ. ὀρκίζω σε, πνεῦμα ἐν ἀέρι φοιτῶμενον, εἴσελθε, ἐνπνευμάτωσον, δυνάμωσον, διαέγειρον τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ τόδε τὸ σῶμα, καὶ περιπατεῖτω ἐπὶ τόνδε τὸν τόπον, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιῶν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ <Θ>αὐθ, ἀγίου θεοῦ. λέγε τὸ ὄνομα.

¹³⁸ E.g., αἰώνιος θεός (cf. *supra* n.137) might refer to the Christian God, whereas walking (περιπατεῖτω) as proof of the cadaver's reanimation brings to mind the resurrection of Lazarus: Λάζαρε, δεῦρο ἔξω. ἐξῆλθεν ὁ τεθνηκώς δεδεμένος τοὺς πόδας καὶ τὰς χεῖρας κειρίαις, καὶ ἦ ὄψις αὐτοῦ σουδαρίω περιεδέδετο. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, λύσατε αὐτὸν καὶ ἄφετε αὐτὸν ὑπάγειν (*John* 11: 43-44).

¹³⁹ Cf. PACHOUMI (2011) 736.

this then imply that necromancy and necromantic practices, whether in the form of ψυχαγωγία or corpse reanimation, worked better on a literary level, as S. JOHNSTON suggests?¹⁴⁰ Might it also be possible that more of these spells existed in antiquity but eventually went missing over time? Or is it that with time actual necromantic practices fell out of favour and were repressed for fear of discovery from the authorities, thus forcing necromancy to go ‘underground’ or be disguised and reused in spells which, according to C. FARAONE, collapse together the celestial and chthonic realms?¹⁴¹ It cannot be denied that the papyri’s necromantic spell descriptions do not come even close to being as flamboyant as the descriptions of corpse reanimation found in literary sources. The single reference in the papyri to a corpse walking the earth lacks the spine-chilling and gruesome effect of the depiction of Erictho’s soldier coming back to life and standing upright. Perhaps the reason for which our literary texts employ such extravagant and lurid details (aside from the reader’s delight) is in order to emphasise how wrong and deplorable these practices really are. There can be no doubt that some form of necromancy was practised cross-culturally in the ancient world, and apart from the eight spells of the magical papyri, all we have to rely on are the literary references to its being practised. Archaeological records, unsurprisingly, do not survive, nor could someone really have expected any to exist.

Perhaps a more realistic question to ask would be whether the practitioners of necromancy essentially *believed* that necromancy was effective, that is, supposed they were capable of truly summoning the spirits of the dead and procuring divination from them. If our literary sources combined with the spells from the papyri are any indication, the answer has to be yes. But in spite of necromancy being considered one of the most accurate forms of prophecy, literary sources tend to suggest that ghosts were not always the most reliable divinatory mediums. With the exception of Teiresias and Anchises, the other ghosts which Odysseus and Aeneas encounter in the Underworld seem to have only limited or no knowledge of current events; even Erictho is required to cast a ‘revelation’ spell on the dead soldier so that knowledge of future events is imparted to him (6.775-76); whereas the reanimated man in the *Metamorphoses* seems to have only a very limited knowledge and understanding of events, extending merely to happenings which took place the night before. This has led S. JOHNSTON to argue that “despite its potential, then, consultation of the dead

¹⁴⁰ Cf. JOHNSTON (2008a) 171: “although the Greeks and Romans found necromancy “good to think with,” there is little indication that they actually practiced it”. Cf. also GRAF (1999) 284.

¹⁴¹ Cf. e.g., FARAONE (2004) and (2005); also GRAF (1999) 285-86; GORDON (1999) 259-61.

never seems to have caught on in a big way.”¹⁴² This, however, does not seem to be entirely true. Ghost evocation and/or reanimation might have never really reached the ‘popularity’ of other, possibly, more straightforward, more accepted, and less challenging forms of divination, but proof (even though scanty) of its practice, as terrifying and detestable as it might be, demonstrates that at least some believed in the efficiency of necromancy. These numbers could be significantly more if one is willing to accept C. FARAONE’s arguments that necromancy was forced to go ‘underground’ due to its deplorable nature and disapproval by the general populace.

6

Concluding discussion

During the course of this chapter, I have resumed the discussion of Thelyphron’s tale and have concentrated on the second half of the story, depicting a reanimation sequence. I have suggested that in the *Metamorphoses* Apuleius employs the practices of ghost evocation (ψυχαγωγία) and necromancy (νεκρομαντεία) for summoning the spirits of the dead and that both practices can essentially function again both on a literary/fictional and practical/real level. On a literary level, ghost evocation has a long tradition and descriptions of it can be found in several cultures; this practice is first introduced in Greco-Roman sources by the Homeric *nekuia*, which then became a sort of literary ‘archetype’ for all later scenes depicting ghost evocation and related rituals. Apuleius portrays ψυχαγωγία a few times in his novel, and it is always encountered in connection with witches: the witch Meroe performs tomb sacrifices and summons preternatural forces to help her restrain the people of an entire town within their houses; the baker’s wife runs to a Thessalian crone to allegedly summon the ghost of a murdered woman in order to dispatch the baker from the world of the living; and, finally, both the witches of Thelyphron’s tale and Pamphile gather human remains for what can only be psychagogic purposes. Apuleius, therefore, seems to have trodden again closely in the footsteps of the literary Imperial witch tradition, which attributed such nefarious practices to spiteful and predatory women.

But it is with the practice of necromancy that the author appears to deviate most from this tradition. Instead of following the more established custom of summoning the spirits of the dead for divinatory purposes, Apuleius employs a ‘newer’ practice—presumably first used

¹⁴² JOHNSTON (2008a) 175; *contra* OGDEN (2001).

in Greek and Roman literature, for lack of further evidence, by Lucan—of necromantic corpse reanimation. The various points of similarity between the reanimation accounts of Apuleius, Lucan and Heliodorus have allowed us to establish an ‘unofficial’ pattern of how such reanimation rituals worked, at least on a literary/fictional level. Yet, Apuleius’ invocation of the dead in the tale of Thelyphron varies from the other two accounts in that Zatchlas’ sequence is not as sinister in nature: not only is Zatchlas’ ‘parareligious’ ritual performed by someone who is a *man* (not a *woman*) and a *priest* (not a *sorcerer*, though in some respects Zatchlas resembles a Greek γόης), but it also respects the gods and the laws of nature. Though Zatchlas and the witches are capable of bringing back the dead and, therefore, of upsetting natural laws, their respective purposes and attitudes towards the attainment of their desires vary according to the dissimilarity between the realms of magic and religion.¹⁴³ Contrary to the witches of the *Civil War* and the *Ethiopian Story*, the magic of which forces and restrains the gods and diminishes them to lesser beings, the scene of Zatchlas’ reanimation is cloaked in an atmosphere of Egyptian religiosity, since a number of actions that the priest performs can be identified with real-life Egyptian funerary customs and rituals pertinent to the afterlife.

Moreover, aside from functioning on a primarily literary level, the afterlife in the *Metamorphoses* also has a very real side to it. Magic for the ancients was a practical art, which posed, in their view, an actual threat to their lives. Several references to, and indications of real life performances of necromancy have been addressed, whether concerning the cases of Libo Drusus, the emperor Nero, the descendants of Pompey, the grammarian Apion, the magician Macrianus, or Saint Cyprian. In comparison, the striking similarities between the ritual of Zatchlas and the four necromantic recipes from the Greek magical papyri tend to suggest that Apuleius’ knowledge of magic and necromantic rituals went far beyond the literary level. It should not be forgotten that Apuleius’ meddling with magic was well-known in antiquity; if anything, his trial for allegedly using *magica maleficia* proves this point. So it would appear that Zatchlas’ reanimation account blends Egyptian religious practices with

¹⁴³ During the course of this dissertation, I have used with some frequency the terms ‘magic’ and ‘religion’, but I have consciously tried to steer clear of the big topic on how one is to divide these two terms. Over the last century, there has been much scholarly debate on this question, which, in the end, has led to nowhere, apart from perhaps assuming that ‘magic’ and religion are essentially normative terms, the former applied to practices considered immoral, unnatural, or illegal, the latter to practices considered mainstream, moral, and legal. A lengthier discussion on this debate can be found at VERSNEL (1991b); BRAARVIG (1999); also FARAONE (1999) 17 n.75 citing further bibliography.

literary and factual necromantic rites, known to Apuleius, thus lending an air of verisimilitude to his account.

This verisimilitude raises the obvious question of why Apuleius chose to depict a priest of Isis performing necromantic rituals. If we shift our attention for a brief moment back to Heliodorus, we will discover that the Egyptian priest Calasiris, upon observing necromantic rituals similar in nature to the ones performed by Zatchlas, remarks that it does not befit a prophet even to observe such evil practices, since priests acquire their divinatory knowledge from lawful sacrifices and prayers, whereas necromancers do so by conjuring the dead (6.14.7). So why did Apuleius choose a priest to perform such an abhorrent act when a witch would have been a better option? I would like to suggest two reasons: firstly, it might have been the author's intention to cast Zatchlas—a priest of Egyptian religion and, more specifically, a priest of Isis, also regarded as the Egyptian goddess of magic—under a more sinister light for the purpose of comic amusement and relief. This comic aspect is also apparent in Thelyphron's case who delivers his wondrous reanimation tale during a dinner party: he has not yet begun relating his tale and the whole banquet bursts into laughter (*licentiosos cachinnos*) just from simply staring at his disfigured features (2.20.5), and at the end of the story laughter (*cachinnus*) is once again the banqueters' response to his tale (2.31.1). Secondly, by attributing necromantic qualities and reanimation rituals to a person who could (and would) clearly be identified by the novel's readership as a priest Apuleius adds a further element to the general topsy-turvy and carnivalesque atmosphere (or confusion) of the novel.¹⁴⁴ The world of the *Metamorphoses* is a world of wonders, where logic and rules give way to deception and nothing is what it first seems to be. For example, despite being *still* alive, Socrates is assumed dead by Aristomenes but succumbs to death for real soon thereafter (Book 1); Thelyphron assumes he has escaped unharmed the witches' attempt to get a piece from the corpse's remains, but later discovers he has been facially mutilated (Book 2); Lucius is forced to undergo a displeasing murder trial, only to discover that it is a cruel joke during the annual festival of Laughter (Book 3); he then foolishly assumes that he can meddle with magic without any consequences, but he soon learns how wrong he is in supposing that when he accidentally gets transformed into an ass (Book 3). Many more examples could be produced to support and enhance the idea of the *Metamorphoses*' topsy-turviness. Therefore, in such a topsy-turvy world even priests bearing the insignia of Isis could double as

¹⁴⁴ For the concept of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, cf. EMERSON (2002); BEARD (2014) 59-62.

necromancers or sorcerers. The veil of confusion is only effectively removed with the *dea ex machina* apparition of Isis in Book 11, who not only ends Lucius' ordeals on a high note but also allows him to find peace in her true mysteries.

6

A HYBRID SORCERESS

PAMPHILE, ANTI-MATRONAE, AND WITCHCRAFT

*Ach, da kommt der Meister!
Herr, die Not ist groß!
Die ich rief, die Geister
werd ich nun nicht los.
„In die Ecke,
Besen, Besen!
Seids gewesen.
Denn als Geister
ruft euch nur zu diesem Zwecke,
erst hervor der alte Meister.“*

Goethe, Der Zauberlehrling

1

Preliminaries

The sixth and final chapter concentrates on Pamphile, the last of the powerful witches appearing in the *Metamorphoses*. Pamphile is essential to the discussion of magic in the novel for mainly two reasons: She is the sole witch with whom Lucius comes in *direct* contact while in his human form, and she is also the only witch for whom a comparison can be drawn with her Greek counterpart from the epitomised *Ass*. It is reasonable to also assume that in one way or another Pamphile and her assistant Photis were also present in the Greek *Metamorphoseis*, which constituted the backbone of Apuleius' narrative.¹ Despite the several points of contact between the *Ass* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the two works remarkably share in common just a single story of witchcraft: the transformations of Pamphile and Hipparchus' anonymous wife into a bird and of Lucius/Loukios into a donkey. Similar to the *Metamorphoses*, in the *Ass* Loukios finds himself in Hypata at the house of Hipparchus and soon comes to know from a random meeting with Abroea (a maternal friend) that the wife of

¹ On the relationship between the Greek *Metamorphoseis*, the *Ass*, and the *Metamorphoses*, cf. the discussion at chapter 4.2.

his host is a μάγος and a lewd woman, who goes after young men and punishes them with magic when they do not answer her lustful calling. Loukios disregards Abroea's warning and seduces his host's slave-girl Palaestra in hopes of getting one step closer to the wife's magic. Although Palaestra herself denies any active participation in magic, she agrees to allow Loukios to spy on her mistress while she is performing a transformation.² A few evenings later, Palaestra leads Loukios to her mistress' bedroom and through a small crack in the wall he observes the mistress as she slowly transforms into a night-raven and flies out of the bedroom window. A stunned Loukios gives in to his περιεργία³ and wants to undergo a similar transformation; he asks Palaestra to fetch the same ointment for him, but Palaestra mixes the magical caskets and Loukios is instead turned into an ass (1-13).

The majority of the chapter will concentrate on the figure of Pamphile, whereas Photis will only be addressed peripherally in the present discussion, since aside from being Pamphile's slave-girl and acting as her mistress' pet she does not actively practise any magic in the novel. One could even make a case against her being a 'witch' in general. It seems that Photis functions primarily as Lucius' object of sexual desire, and her sexually promiscuous character and the various ways in which she either reflects Venus or acts as an anti-Isis have been at the centre of scholarly attention; however, R. MAY has argued that Photis is a more multi-layered character and quite different from her Greek equivalent from the epitomised *Ass*.⁴ Pamphile, surprisingly, has been rather underrepresented in scholarly debate, a gap which this chapter aims to fill. As the discussion of Pamphile will demonstrate, the powerful witch is an intriguing figure both in terms of the witchcraft she practises but also in terms of the witch tradition discussed throughout the dissertation. In examining Pamphile in this chapter, the core questions which will be addressed are similar to those in the previous ones: how much of Apuleius' representation of the witch is influenced by the Imperial witch

² It is surprising how effortlessly Palaestra settles to give in to Loukios' demand and to divulge her mistress' magical arts. Loukios refers to his request as a kind of favour that Palaestra owes him (τῆς εἰς ἐμὲ χάριτος, 12); the reasons, nevertheless, as to why Palaestra should have felt inclined to do so are not so evident from the *Ass* narrative. In the *Metamorphoses*, however, the slave-girl Photis reveals her mistress' secrets to Lucius as a way of easing her conscience for her involuntary participation in the latter's ridicule at the Festival of Laughter (3.13-21). It could be the case that although the Festival of Laughter is absent from the *Ass*, a somewhat similar episode was present in the Greek *Metamorphoseis*, which the epitomiser felt he could leave out in the shorter version and which would explain the reasons as to why Palaestra felt as if she owed Loukios a χάρις.

³ TATUM suggests that a comparison between the *Ass* and the *Metamorphoses* reveals that Loukios' περιεργία is not as sinister as Lucius' *curiositas* (1969: 492 n.22); cf. also Walsh (1970) 180. On Loukios' curiosity in the *Ass*, cf. KIRICHENKO (2008) 345-50.

⁴ For a summary of opinions and further bibliography, cf. MAY (2015).

tradition and in which significant ways does she deviate? Could these divergences be potentially accounted for by looking into the depiction of their Greek counterparts? And if so, how faithful (or not) a copy is Apuleius' Pamphile of the anonymous δέσποινα of the *Ass*?

2

Pamphile, a hybrid *maga primi nominis*

“Most witches don’t believe in gods. They know that the gods exist, of course. They even deal with them occasionally. But they don’t believe in them. They know them too well. It would be like believing in the postman.”

Terry Pratchett, *Witches Abroad*

Pamphile is, after Meroe and Panthia, the third witch that the reader comes across in the novel. The end of Aristomenes' tale finds Lucius already in Hypata, searching for the house of his host, the frugal Milo. A random stranger points Lucius in the right direction, albeit not without making what might later be regarded as an ill-omened remark: Milo lives alone with his wife and her slave-girl, his companion in adversity (*calamitatis suae comitem*, 1.21.7). Indeed, Lucius' acquaintance with the two women residing at Milo's house and his eventual knowledge of their dabbling with magic ultimately leads to the calamity of his transformation and long peregrination in the form of an ass.

The very first person Lucius gets to know at Milo's house is the slave girl Photis, who invites Lucius inside the house at her master' behest—in retrospect, Lucius entering Milo's house signifies his entrance into and then acceptance of the world of witchcraft—and brings him to the room where Milo and his wife are reclining as they are about to begin their supper. Milo's wife, the witch Pamphile, is introduced by the uninviting and, perhaps, banal phrase *assidebat pedes uxor* (1.22.6-7), and nothing within this description seems to point towards or hint at the wife's dangerous character. If anything, Lucius' first impression of Pamphile resting against her husband's feet suggests an inferior and submissive nature.⁵ As will be mentioned during the course of this chapter, Pamphile frustrates the readers' expectation on several occasions; she might at first give the impression of a good and chaste wife, but appearances, as everything else in the *Metamorphoses*, can be quite deceiving. At the beginning of Book 2

⁵ Cf. e.g., KEULEN (2007) 400 s.v. '*assidebat pedes uxor*'; also MAY (2013) 201 s.v. 'his wife was sitting at his feet'. On a man and woman reclining together being suggestive of a licit and 'respectable' erotic relationship, cf. ROLLER (2003) 399.

it is revealed that Pamphile is anything but virtuous and harmless; on the contrary, she is an authoritative and skilful *maga* and a sexual predator.

Unlike the Hypatan community, who seem to be quite aware of Pamphile's magic,⁶ it is generally uncertain whether Milo has in fact any active knowledge of his wife's magical misconduct, or whether he is even aware of Pamphile's secret room within their house where the witch tends to pursue her occult practices (3.17.3). During dinner with Lucius, Milo does indeed make a rather small sarcastic comment after he witnesses his wife deriving divination for the upcoming weather through a small lamp, which, if taken at face value, could be indicative of his general scepticism regarding any form of magic and witchcraft.⁷ (Whether Pamphile's divinatory prediction is accurate or not, we cannot really say, since no comment, is ever made about the following day's weather; and moreover, Lucius is obviously too preoccupied with his sexual endeavours with Photis in order to stop and think about the weather and the witch's prediction.) Yet Lucius, whose *a priori* opposition to scepticism is also evident from the end of Aristomenes' tale, during which not only does he *not* reject Aristomenes' miraculous story but genuinely thanks Aristomenes for agreeing to share it with him (1.20.3-6), and supports Pamphile by relating his own encounter with a Chaldean pseudo-prophet named Diophanes, who had once predicted for Lucius a long peregrination that would be recounted in numerous books (2.12.5). But Milo succeeds in rejecting this story, too, by exposing Diophanes' charlatanry after a certain salesman had asked him for a prophecy (2.13).

It is, however, Lucius' random meeting with his maternal aunt Byrrhena at the provisions market that marks the turning point for the protagonist's ἀρχὴ κακῶν.⁸ Byrrhena offers hospitality⁹ and invites Lucius to stay with her, since she is gravely concerned about her nephew's well-being and so divulges the first significant piece of magical information

⁶ Cf. Photis' comment at 3.16.4: *quod alioquin publicitus maleficae disciplinae perinfames sumus.*

⁷ 2.11.5-6: *cum ecce iam vesperam lucernam intuens Pamphile, 'quam largus' inquit 'imber aderit crastino,' et percontanti marito qui comperisset istud, respondit sibi lucernam praedicere. quod dictum ipsius Milo risu secutus, 'grandem' inquit 'istam in lucerna Sibyllam pascimus, quae cuncta caeli negotia et solem ipsum de specula candelabri contuetur.'* On this scene, cf. the discussion at SABNIS (2012) 88-95. 'Istam in lucerna Sibyllam' might also be a witty allusion to Petronius' 'Sibyl in the lamp' reference at *Satyrica* 48.8 (*nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σίβυλλα, τί θέλεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω*), on which cf. CAMERON (1970); SCHEMLING (2011) 207. According to Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14.130-53, the mortal Sibyl was granted eternal life by Apollo, but not eternal youth; over time she was destined to waste away, shrinking more and more to the point that she could be kept in a small bottle.

⁸ It has been suggested that Byrrhena marks an early, veiled appearance of the goddess Isis in the novel, on which cf. JAMES (1987) 239-42; also DREWS (2012) 128.

⁹ On the theme of hospitality, cf. VANDER POPPEN (2008); MAY (2013) 18-20.

about Milo's wife: she warns Lucius to be very careful of Pamphile, as she is not what she seems to be. Byrrhena, and later Photis too, endow Pamphile with supernatural abilities already familiar from the Imperial witch tradition discussed at length in chapter 2; moreover, Pamphile's association with certain magical practices brings her into close proximity to Apuleius' other malevolent witches; as a matter of fact, one could even suggest at this stage that Pamphile emerges as a double of Meroe. Pamphile is openly pronounced by Byrrhena to be a most powerful witch, a *maga primi nominis* (2.5.4), just as the powerful witch Meroe is pronounced a *saga divini potens* by Socrates (1.8.4). This is the first time where the readers' expectations about Pamphile are frustrated, since this piece of information comes in stark opposition to our initial impression of the woman: namely, of her being a chaste and obedient wife, reclining submissively at her husband's feet during dinner. Something similar happens also in the case of Meroe: the readers, through the eyes of Aristomenes this time, assume that Meroe is nothing more than an 'innocent' tavern-keeper, a *regina caupona*, who time and again takes a keen interest in wine, as it is noted by Socrates (*ut mihi temulentq narravit proxime*, 1.10.3). One can clearly detect the underlying sarcasm behind Aristomenes' use of *regina* in his description of the lewd witch, a title which is often reserved for addressing great goddesses¹⁰ in the *Metamorphoses*, such as Juno (6.4.2) or Isis (11.5.1; 26.3). Little do the readers know at this stage that in the end Meroe will turn out to be a ferociously vindictive *saga*, capable of bringing about life-altering events.

Pamphile's ghost evocation and necromantic activities are no real secret either, since she is credited by Byrrhena as being a master (*magistra*) of sepulchral incantations (*carminis sepulchralis*, 2.5.4), a fact also supported by Photis' comment to Lucius a little while later (*obaudiunt manes*, 3.15.7). Likewise in Book 1 Meroe performs a ghost evocation ritual and summons supernatural powers to lock up the people of an entire town in their homes (1.10.3), whereas the anonymous witch of Book 9 allegedly summons from the Underworld the spirit of a violently dead woman to kill a man (9.29.4).¹¹ Ghost evocation and necromancy are a favourite *topos* of Imperial witchcraft. All witches, but especially the crones, are credited with the summoning of, conversing with, and manipulation of the dead. The most notable cases are Erictho's extended reanimation sequence of a dead soldier in Lucan's *Civil War*¹² and that of Canidia in Horace's *Satire* 1.8, who together with her fellow co-witch Sagana is depicted as

¹⁰ On the characterisation of gods in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. VAN MAL-MAEDER (2015).

¹¹ On my reservations regarding the witch's incapability to summon the dead, cf. the discussion at chapter 5.3.

¹² Cf. also the discussions at chapters 2.4.2.3 and 5.4.1-4.2.

visiting an old cemetery on the Esquiline hill in order to dig up old graves, unearth long buried bones, and use them to summon the souls of the dead and perform necromancy (26-29).¹³

Pamphile, furthermore, appears to have a predilection for what could be termed the magic of chaos: that is, witchcraft capable of throwing the natural cosmic universe and order into utmost anarchy and confusion.¹⁴ Byrrhena ascribes powers to Pamphile that can extinguish the light of stars and plunge them into the depths of everlasting hell (2.5.4); in a similar fashion, Photis suggests that her mistress can throw the stars into turmoil, coerce the mighty gods, and enslave the elements (3.15.7), and that on one occasion she even dared threaten the sun with everlasting gloom and darkness because he had not set earlier (3.16.2). Meroe, too, is credited with the performance of similar miraculous and cosmos-upsetting feats: for instance, she is capable of throwing the three planes of natural and supernatural existence into utter confusion and complete disarray by lowering skies, darkening stars, and bringing down the gods from the heavens; suspending the earth, solidifying fountains, and dissolving mountains; summoning the dead from the Underworld, and whenever she so pleases, illuminating the ever-darkened Tartarus (1.8.4). The heavens, the earth, and the nether realm are rendered helpless when it comes to Meroe's magic. However, it is not just Pamphile or Meroe who share such tremendous magical powers; already in the opening paragraphs of the *Metamorphoses* the anonymous interlocutor scolds his co-traveller (later revealed to be Aristomenes, one of the rare survivors of Meroe's powerful magic) for foolishly believing that witches, through the intervention of magical whispers, could reverse rivers and shackle the sea, reduce winds and halt the sun, make the moon foam, extinguish stars, banish daylight, or prolong the night (1.3.1). Once again, these feats bring us back to the Imperial witch tradition, since the majority of Imperial Latin witches are portrayed as performing such a fascinating array of ἀδύνατα by their respective authors. Many examples could be produced at this point, from Virgil's rookie witch in *Eclogue* 8 to Canidia and her cronies in Horace's *Satires and Epodes*, to the *lenae-cum-sagae* of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid's love elegies, to Lucan's abominable Erictho.¹⁵ Suffice it to say that Tibullus' elegiac *saga* can, in a similar fashion, bring down the stars from the sky, chase away the gloomy clouds or make it snow during summertime, turn back rivers, summon ghosts and demons from the Underworld, call

¹³ Cf. the discussion at chapter 2.4.2.1.

¹⁴ On the witches' cosmic disturbing powers and Isis' benevolent magic, cf. Appendix A.

¹⁵ Cf. in general the discussion at chapter 2.4.

back bones from funeral pyres, gather the deleterious herbs of Medea, and tame the ferocious hounds of Hecate (1.2.45-54).

The final, and most extended, piece of information that Byrrhena relates about Pamphile is the witch's voracious appetite for principally young male lovers. It is the urgent satiation of this abnormal 'hunger' which predominantly drives her magic; as a matter of fact, whatever Pamphile does, she does for the fulfilment of her erotic lust. As with several other talking names in the novel, Pamphile's *nomen omen* (< πᾶν+φίλη, 'The All-Loving' or 'Loved-by-All') already betrays the woman's libidinous and sexually salacious nature.¹⁶ According to Byrrhena, whenever Pamphile sets her eyes on a handsome young man, she will do anything in her power to enmesh him. But if her objects of affection refuse to respond to her magical erotic callings, Pamphile will retaliate by turning them into stone, transforming them into animals, or simply dispatching them from the world of the living (2.5.5-7). Pamphile's way of punishing her unresponsive lovers surely recalls Meroe's numerous ways of exacting cruel revenge on her former or perfidious boyfriends: Socrates relates how she once transformed one of her cheating lovers into a beaver, so that he could bite off his testicles as a punishment (1.9.1-2); or through Aristomenes' eyes we witness her sacrificing Socrates in a ritualistic manner by cutting his throat, collecting his blood, and tearing out his heart, and all this because the poor wretch had foolishly tried to run away from her (1.13.4-7). The spiteful Canidia reacts in a similar way in *Epode 17* against the poet (Horace himself or one of his literary *personae*?) who has cruelly ridiculed her in his poetic *oeuvre*. The poet seems to exhibit all the negative symptoms of an erotic binding spell (would this suggest that the poet's *persona* and the witch were involved in a sexual relationship?) and begs for the witch's forgiveness and clemency. But the witch's inner anger is not so easily appeased; she simply retorts that a painstakingly slow and excruciating death awaits him and that she will take pleasure in seeing him wither away (53; 70-75).¹⁷

¹⁶ Cf. HIJMANS (1978) 110.

¹⁷ Witches, in general, tend to have a very low tolerance for rejection. One thing that never becomes quite clear is whether the witches' (oftentimes swift) revenge comes as a result of them being turned down by their potential lovers, or simply because they feel that their witchcraft has failed them, and hence, apart from being a constant reminder of their magic's ineffectiveness their lovers would also be a reminder of the witches' own personal ineptitude in the dark arts. We should remember that the main reason Canidia resorts to child sacrifice in *Epode 5* is her personal feeling of having been outsmarted by a more resourceful rival witch; apparently her rival's potion seems to have succeeded in keeping Canidia's lover Varus away from her. And so an angry Canidia is in the process of concocting a more potent potion, for which she requires the liver of a child (71-82). But even on the rare occasions where the reasons behind the witches' revenge are more or less clear, as is the case of *Epode 17*, one is still left pondering the 'true' motives behind Canidia's retaliatory spree: is she really angry because of the poet's various verbal abuses (this cannot really be the

Aside from the profound similarities in exacting revenge, it is no wonder that Pamphile uses magic to get sex, since one of the oldest and most common uses of witchcraft was for the fulfilment of erotic purposes. We have already witnessed Meroe doing the same in Book 1, where she is supposedly credited with making far-away people fall madly in love with her (1.8.6), whereas the *lenae-cum-sagae* of love elegy would purportedly teach their youthful female protégée spells in order to ensure that their lovers would not run away, that is, run away with their source of income. There might be, nonetheless, an additional reason accounting for Pamphile's voracious sexual appetite, even if a far-fetched one: it has been proposed that the licentious character of Pamphile may be an entertaining allusion to a certain Pamphila of Epidaurus,¹⁸ who composed a series of thirty-three Books of *Historical Notes* (Ἱστορικά ὑπομνήματα), mostly of anecdotal nature, from which only about ten minor fragments survive.¹⁹ Pamphila, writing nearly a century prior to Apuleius under the reign of Nero, was, if we take the *Suda* account at face value, notoriously known also as the author of a provocative work on sex (Περὶ ἀφροδισίων).²⁰ It might therefore be the case that Pamphila's supposed connection with this controversial work in antiquity, in conjunction with the fact that Παμφίλη/Παμφίλα and the masculine equivalent Πάμφιλος are names attested by Greco-Roman literature often in connection to comedy, love, and prostitution,²¹ was an additional reason behind Apuleius' choice to fashion Pamphile's figure in the *Metamorphoses* in such a morally loose way.

If we then bring together all these diverse characteristics, it can be suggested that the similarities between Pamphile on the one hand, and Meroe and the witches of the Imperial

case, since she happily accepts all the charges against her with joyous pride!), or is she truly angry because deep down she knows for certain that the poet cannot really ever be hers, and this in spite of her powerful witchcraft? If one opts for the latter interpretation, then the poet (like Varus in *Epode* 5 or Socrates in *Met.* Book 1) becomes a constant reminder of the witch's own incompetence and of the man who managed to escape her clutches and 'get away'.

¹⁸ Cf. MÜLLER-REINEKE (2006). On Pamphila, cf. *OCD*⁴ 1071 s.v. 'Pamphila'.

¹⁹ Cf. e.g., Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 1.76. Photius *Library* 175 suggests that Pampila's work was a type of σύμμικτη ἱστορία, belonging to the genre of *miscellanea*. Despite the genre's great success during the Second Sophistic period, out of the plethora of miscellanist works quoted by Aulus Gellius in the preface to his *Attic Nights* (pref. 5-9) only three survive: Pliny's *Natural History*, Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, and the much later *Saturnalia* of Macrobius.

²⁰ *Suda* π.139: Παμφίλη, Ἐπιδαυρία, σοφή, θυγάτηρ Σωτηρίδου, οὗ λέγεται εἶναι καὶ τὰ συντάγματα, ὡς Διονύσιος ἐν τῷ λ' τῆς Μουσικῆς ἱστορίας. ὡς δὲ ἕτεροι γεγράφασι Σωκρατίδα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς. Ἱστορικά ὑπομνήματα ἐν βιβλίοις λγ', Ἐπιτομὴν τῶν Κτησίου ἐν βιβλίοις γ', ἐπιτομὰς ἱστοριῶν τε καὶ ἐτέρων βιβλίων παμπλείστας, Περὶ ἀμφισβητήσεων, Περὶ ἀφροδισίων καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν. HOLFORD-STREVENS (2002) 29 n.15 strongly objects to Pamphila being the author of such a questionable treatise.

²¹ Cf. e.g., Παμφίλη/Pampila: Menander *Men at Arbitration* (Sandbach); Plautus *Stichus*; Alexis *Pamphile* fr. 175-76 (Kassel-Austin); Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner* 13.591d. Πάμφιλος/Pamphilus: Terence *Woman of Andros*, *Mother-in-Law*; Athenaeus *Sophists at Dinner*, *passim*.

witch tradition on the other, render the former a mirror of the latter and in turn foreshadow the fate in store for Lucius should he remain much longer in the house of his host Milo. But Byrrhena's information has the opposite effect on Lucius. As was the case with Aristomenes, Lucius has not really been an attentive listener; if he had paid the slightest attention to Aristomenes' earlier story and had not treated it merely as a *lepida fabula* (1.20.5), he would have been able by now to 'connect the dots' and to recognise the striking parallels between Meroe and Pamphile, and thus take strong precautions against his host's wife.²² Yet, instead of inducing him to keep a safe distance from the witch, the revelation of Pamphile's preternatural powers reaffirms even further his ruinous *curiositas* about the magical arts, and it seems that not even the catastrophic consequences of Thelyphron's tale deter him from pursuing his intended goal.

Although Byrrhena addresses Pamphile's habit of going after young men only in a 'rumour has it' manner, it soon becomes evident that her insinuations or accusations are much more than jealous town-gossip, since Pamphile is indeed witnessed practising her erotic magic in an attempt to seduce a Boeotian youth, with whom she is currently madly in love. And when her magic miserably fails to attract the young man to her house, she transforms herself into an owl and flies away to him. Byrrhena's extraordinary description of Pamphile, and especially her final comment about the latter's pursuit of handsome young men, notwithstanding Byrrhena's emphasis on Lucius' own handsomeness (*per aetatem et pulchritudinem capax eius es*, 2.5.8), raise once more the reasonable expectation that Lucius will soon become one of Pamphile's objects of affection or, even worse, one of her latest victims. But any such expectations are again frustrated. Not only does Pamphile not ensnare Lucius in her nexus of magical schemes, but she seems to completely ignore him, as all her supernatural attention is currently set on how she can make the young Boeotian man her own.²³ As far as Lucius is concerned, it is not Pamphile herself but the slave-girl Photis who gets romantically associated with him, drawing him even further into the world of witchcraft.²⁴ The questions of who seduces whom in their weird relationship, as well as who dominates whom, whether any real feelings and emotions are truly involved, or whether

²² Cf. MATHIS (2008) 208.

²³ What is more interesting, and in spite of Photis' comments about having full knowledge of her mistress' magical powers (e.g., 3.15.7), Pamphile remarkably never talks to or directly interacts with Photis in the novel. Only on one occasion do we somehow witness Pamphile bossing Photis around, but her commands are only reported by the slave-girl in indirect speech (*ac me capillos eius, qui iam caede cultrorum desecti humi iacebant, clanculo praecipit auferre*, 3.16.3).

²⁴ On the relationship between magic and sex, cf. SCHLAM (1992) 67-81; also FRANGOULIDIS (2008) 130-52.

Lucius' relationship to Photis is only a clever means to an end, are still open for debate.²⁵ In any case, Lucius' manipulation of Photis and the use of sex as a means to get closer to magic would definitely raise some very suspicious, if not angry feminist eyebrows.

The million-dollar question left to be asked is: what are we to make of Pamphile? Until this point it has been suggested that Pamphile has been modelled on other witch figures from the *Metamorphoses* or from the Imperial witch tradition. This has been argued on the basis of a number of common characteristics between these figures, such as their concern with erotic magic, the manipulation of lethal herbs for use in *φαρμακεία*, the use of magical powers in controlling and upsetting the natural environment, the elements, and the heavenly bodies, shape-shifting, and the manipulation of the dead. These characteristics, as it has been demonstrated in chapter 2, are primarily associated with the figure of the elderly and ugly crone. Apuleius' Meroe, for instance, is quite old (*anus*), albeit still somehow attractive (*admodum scitula*, 1.7.7.); Horace's Canidia and Sagana are loathsome with age and atrocious: they have false teeth, wear wigs, and their hair is intertwined with little vipers or resemble sea-urchins;²⁶ and the *sagae-cum-lenae* of love elegy are usually portrayed as being of a quite advanced age.²⁷

This information comes in stark opposition to Apuleius' depiction of Pamphile. As far as the text suggests, Pamphile is neither old, nor ugly; in fact no explicit comment is made about her age or outer appearance, apart from that she is the *domina* of Milo's house. Therefore, and as far as we can infer, she cannot be a crone. Despite this, Apuleius has invested Pamphile with features and magical powers which belong essentially to crones. In addition, Pamphile is certainly not a goddess of Medea's or Circe's calibre, though at times she does seem to act or react as one: her revenge on her unresponsive lovers may point towards Medea's swift revenge on Jason, or her transformation ritual might hint at Circe's infamous transformations from the *Odyssey*. There is, however, more to Pamphile than meets the eye.

Therefore, I would like to propose that Apuleius, keeping true to his statement in the prologue of the *Metamorphoses* about bringing together different sorts of tales (*varias fabulas conseram*, 1.1.1), also expands this principle to the characters of his novel. So by 'stitching together' various diverse characteristics in his creation of the figure of Pamphile, he thus

²⁵ Some of these questions are addressed by MAY (2005); cf. also SABNIS (2012) 96.

²⁶ Cf. *Satire* 1.8.48-50, *Epode* 5.15-16, 27-28.

²⁷ Cf. Propertius *Elegies* 4.5.64, 67-68; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.2, *Fasti* 2.583.

moulded the figure of a hybrid sorceress who, although imbued with characteristics from both the categories of the crone and the powerful Greek witch-goddesses, is a witch that essentially eludes categorisation. Pamphile has the menacing powers of Meroe or Canidia without being a crone, and she acts in a way a great witch-goddess would but without having anything godlike about her. This 'hybridisation' of Pamphile might allow us to put forward a new category of witches in the form of the powerful albeit sexually licentious anti-*matrona*. This category, unlike the crones discussed in chapter 2, consists of well-born women of elite status, and the formation of this literary category was a constellation of various socio-political and ideological factors regarding the standing of women in Roman society (especially during the last century of the Republic and the Imperial era), which will be the topic of discussion of the next section.

3

From hybrid sorceress to salacious anti-*matrona*

3.1. The anti-*matrona* as a category of thought

*"Aux armes, citoyens,
formez vos bataillons,
marchons, marchons!"*

La Marseillaise

Throughout the history of Rome, literature extolled a woman's careful attendance to all responsibilities related to the household, since by their very nature women were legally excluded from taking part in most aspects of civic life: they were confined to the sphere of the household and their most important role was that of wife and then mother.²⁸ As such, Roman women remained under the legal authority of their fathers (*patria potestas*) or husbands (*manus*);²⁹ if the *paterfamilias* died while his married daughter still remained under the authority of *patria potestas* (a practice common during the late Republic), she became legally independent (*sui iuris*).³⁰ But ever since the mid-fifth century BCE women, empowered by several changes in law, were allowed to inherit and confer land and property, albeit under the

²⁸ Cf. e.g., the 'domesticity contest' between Lucretia and the Tarquinian princesses in Livy *History of Rome* 1.57.8-9, or Tacitus' glorification of women's domestic affairs at *Dialogue on Oratory* 28.4-6. Cf. also the discussions at BARRETT (1999) 7-8.

²⁹ Cf. e.g., Livy *History of Rome* 34.2.11.

³⁰ Cf. SKINNER (2011) 35-38.

patronage of a male guardian (*tutor*), usually a blood relative,³¹ thus coming into a substantial amount of wealth during their lifetime. Moreover, aside from being allowed to own property, elite women played an important role in the upbringing and education of their children,³² as well as having a say in marital arrangements.³³ On some occasions too, well-born women of eminent families could act on behalf of their entire family and determine the outcome of important family matters and crucial gatherings, contrive political proscriptions, and interfere in traditional men's affairs.³⁴

As it seems, Roman upper-class families gradually succeeded in integrating women alongside men; despite the ongoing extolling of women's attendance to household responsibilities and their legal exclusion from public and political affairs, powerful elite women could be extensively involved in, if not actively influence, the affairs (both private and public) of their illustrious families. Due to their affluence, as well as the independence, public authority, and prestige which this wealth procured, such women were recognised as formidable players not only within the family hierarchy but in societal structure too, since their money and connections could support a client base and contribute towards political and social stability (or instability in some cases).³⁵ Moreover, the marriage of influential women—at this stage prearranged by their families—paved the way for some of the most powerful alliances of great Roman families in the third and second centuries BCE.³⁶ It is, therefore, no real surprise that a group of men regarded women (even those who did not have any active political aspirations or interests), their 'emancipation' and wealth as infringing on male territory and usurping male power and dominance.³⁷ Such women eventually came

³¹ For example, the Laws of the XII Tables prescribed that heirs irrespective of sex would receive an equal amount of their father's inheritance in case a will, stating otherwise, was absent, on which cf. HALLETT (1984) 90. Cf. also CROOK (1967) 103-04; 113-16; 119-20.

³² Cf. e.g., Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi (Plutarch *Tiberius & Gaius Gracchi* 1.6; also BAUMAN (1992) 42-45); Rhea, the mother of Sertorius (Plutarch *Sertorius* 2.1-2); Aurelia, Julius Caesar's mother (Tacitus *Dialogue on Oratory* 28.5).

³³ Cf. BALSDON (1962) 203; HALLETT (1984) 5.

³⁴ Cf. HALLETT (1984) 9. Interestingly enough, although such female initiatives and engagements, when in the benefit of the entire family or of male relatives, were praised in Roman rhetoric, women's activism on their own behalf was considered a violation of female *pudor*, not to mention a selfish, licentious, and improper deed, on which cf. LEFKOWITZ (1983) 59.

³⁵ Cf. HALLETT (1984) 54-55; STRATTON (2007) 74.

³⁶ Cf. e.g., the marriage of P. Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal, to Aemilia, sister of L. Aemilius Paulus, winner of the Third Macedonian War; also the daughter of L. Aemilius Paulus, Cornelia, to T. Sempronius Gracchus, from which the future tribunes Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were born; also BALSDON (1962) 47.

³⁷ One such case was Cato the Elder and his senatorial rant against the elite matrons protesting in the streets in favour of the dissolution of the *Lex Oppia* in 195 BCE, on which cf. Livy *History of Rome* 34.1-8.

under scrutiny and were demonised by Roman males as constituting ‘threats’ to political order and stability.³⁸

With the passing of time and as the final phase of the Republic drew nearer, women’s roles began to significantly alter, hence giving rise to what J. HALLETT has termed ‘the paradox of the elite Roman women’,³⁹ that is, the astonishingly great influence and impact some elite women managed to exert over the political affairs of men during the last century of the Republic despite the legal restrictions imposed on them. Though the previous centuries bore witness to organised protests by women of elite-upper class (such as the one for the repeal of the *Lex Oppia*), only a handful of individual elite matrons, the status of which had permitted them to somehow exert some influence on public affairs, achieved to come to the forefront. On the contrary, the last century before the formation of the Principate sees the development of such influential women as an ‘institution’.⁴⁰ Different from their earlier counterparts, these women are not merely silent observers, kept away behind locked doors and unquestioningly obeying their families; on the contrary, they are uninhibited, fully emancipated, and act independently for their political ambitions, and in some odd ways foreshadow the great and often morally corrupt women of the Imperial *domus*. Such changes were essentially due to the liberal socio-political climate of this century that allowed women to address a wider range of goals which had not been possible in the centuries before. Thus, we now encounter powerful women influencing senatorial proceedings and decrees and manipulating politics for their own selfish needs,⁴¹ or commanding armies and waging wars⁴²—an unthinkable and

³⁸ On the status of elite women in Roman society, cf. HALLETT (1984) 35-61.

³⁹ On this paradox, cf. *ibid.* (1984) 3-34.

⁴⁰ Cf. BAUMAN (1992) 60.

⁴¹ E.g., Servilia, daughter of Q. Servilius Caepio and Livia (daughter of M. Livius Drusus), mother to M. Junius Brutus, half-sister of Cato the Younger, and Julius Caesar’s love affair for many years. It becomes clear from descriptions of Servilia that what lies at the centre of the woman’s preoccupations is the political advancement of her son, Brutus, and in doing so she paved the way for the ambitions of Imperial women, whose hopes predominantly revolved around their sons ascending to the throne. On Servilia, cf. *OCD*⁴ s.v. ‘Servilia’; BAUMAN (1992) 73-76.

⁴² E.g., Fulvia, Mark Antony’s wife. Fulvia took an active interest in the political affairs of Antony after the death of Caesar and in the proscriptions that ensued (ca. 44-40 BCE), which also claimed the life of Cicero in December 43 BCE. Fulvia is one of the best known, and possibly hated, women ever to take such a vigorous interest in late Republican affairs of the state. Her involvement in politics culminated in the years 41-40 BCE: with Antony away in Bithynia and Octavian in Macedonia, Fulvia dominated first the political scene by running all public affairs by herself (cf. Cassius Dio *Roman History* 48.4.1), and later the military scene with her leading role in the Perusine War against Octavian. Though she is generally considered an early prototype of the later empresses (her loyalty to Antony is only second to that of Livia to Augustus, whereas her political machinations and manly conduct of military affairs to that of the two Agrippinae and Messalina), in literature she is regarded as the embodiment of the *mala matrona*, the exact opposite of the virtuous and *bona* Octavia, Octavian’s sister; cf. e.g., Martial *Epigrams* 11.20; also *OCD*⁴ s.v. ‘Fulvia’; BALSDON (1962) 49-50; BAUMAN (1992) 83-89.

intolerable notion during the era of Cato the Elder, just a mere century earlier. And as we slowly enter the phase of the civil wars and the triumviral period, we also encounter influential women emerging in public affairs as diplomats⁴³ or public orators.⁴⁴

Aside from allegations of attempting to usurp male power and dominance, elite Republican women were also envisaged as well as dabbling in magic and *φαρμακεία*. One of these women, in particular, the aristocrat Clodia Metelli, was accused by Cicero of allegedly practising witchcraft in order to attain political aims. Knowingly or unknowingly, it seems that Cicero's depiction of Clodia in his *In Defence of Caelius* sets the grounds for the evolution of the stereotype of the questionable and dissolute elite anti-*matrona*, which, together with Sallust's description of another notorious woman, the aristocratic Sempronia, wife of Decimus Junius Brutus (consul 77 BCE), would become a *topos* in the years to come: excessively luxurious and wealthy, sexually salacious, seducing and adulterous, immodest and a lack of decorum, a need to dominate male affairs and pull political strings, as well as a knowledge of witchcraft are the principle characteristics of the anti-*matronae*.⁴⁵ Many of these characteristics would be transmitted to and fully developed in the next chapter of Roman history: the Principate.

3.2. Imperial witchcraft

"Let all the poison that lurks in the mud, hatch out."

Robert Graves *I, Claudius*

The previous section presented aspects of Roman matrons and the emergence of the anti-*matrona* as a category of thought, and it was suggested that to this category belonged powerful elite women who, aside from being excessively wealthy and independent, wielded also social and political influence. The battle of Actium and the defeat of Antony signalled

⁴³ E.g., Mucia Tertia. She was the daughter of the lawyer Q. Mucius Scaevola (consul 95 BCE), wife of Pompey the Great, and mother of Sextus Pompey. Her diplomatic mediations and interferences between Antony, Octavian, and her son Sextus resulted in the latter entering the triumvirate as a fourth member in 39 BCE; cf. *OCD*⁴ s.v. 'Mucia Tertia'; also BAUMAN (1992) 78-81. Octavian's sister Octavia together with his wife Livia played an important role in protecting, promoting, and supporting Octavian's interests in the 30s BCE, as the struggle between Octavian and Antony, culminating in 31 BCE at the battle of Actium, was steadily intensifying; cf. BAUMAN (1992) 91-129.

⁴⁴ E.g., Hortensia. She was the daughter of the orator Q. Hortensius Hortalus (consul 69 BCE), who was elected as a spokeswoman of an *ordo matronarum* to address the triumvirs after the latter published an edict ordering 1400 of the richest women to evaluate their properties and make contributions to the triumvirs' cause; cf. BAUMAN (1992) 81-83.

⁴⁵ On Clodia and Sempronia, cf. Appendix B.1.

not only the end of a century governed by civil wars and seditions (e.g., the civil wars of Marius-Sulla, Caesar-Pompey, Antony-Octavian, as well as Catiline's conspiracy), but also the end of the Republic and the dawn of the Roman Empire. Augustus' Principate brought with it major changes in the government and constituted new frameworks in the way that politics were run, the major change essentially being that all powers were conferred to the emperor, who would also act as head of state, whereas the role and powers of the senate were significantly restrained. As such, naturally, the political roles and influences of commanding women surrounding the emperors—such as mothers, sisters, wives, or even potential wives—were bound to pointedly change as well. It is during this period of Roman history and politics that powerful elite women emerge stronger than ever before; however, in most instances such women are portrayed as sexually promiscuous, encroaching on male spheres of dominance, and overly enthusiastic to engage in depravities and infidelities.⁴⁶ One final aspect to be briefly discussed before turning our attention once again to Pamphile is the anti-*matrona's* relationship to witchcraft. In his *Defence of Caelius*, Cicero openly accuses Clodia Metelli of having employed *venena* to get rid of her husband;⁴⁷ in fact, similar accusations become all the more frequent with imperial women (but also men), poison being the most effective way of ousting potential rivals, thus leaving the road to the throne open for one's own, while also advancing their own political ambitions.⁴⁸

Augustus' *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* of 17 BCE, dealing with sexual depravity and misconduct, provided grounds for convicting women of sexual crimes, resulting either in the confiscation of part of the woman's property or in exile, or in the worst case both.⁴⁹ This law in conjunction with Tiberius reviving the *Lex maiestatis*—a law that initially punished official maladministration against the *maiestas populi Romani* but now forbade any form of disrespect towards the emperor's authority or his family, a crime equivalent to treason⁵⁰—functioned as a powerful weapon in destroying political opponents. Surviving accounts of trials from Tiberius' reign onwards indicate that charges of magic, usually combined with

⁴⁶ Cf. Appendix B.2.

⁴⁷ Cf. Appendix B.1.

⁴⁸ It is useful to be reminded at this point that the term *venenum* has a double semantical coverage and works in a way similar to the Greek term *φάρμακον*: it could designate a poison, but most of the time it had a very specific magical meaning, suggesting a wicked magical deed (*maleficium*) with the help of potions and *φάρμακεία* (*veneficium*); cf. also chapter 1.2.2-2.3.

⁴⁹ On Augustus' moral legislative programme and the reasons behind it, cf. RADITSA (1980); BAUMAN (1992) 105-08; C. EDWARDS (1993) 37-42; MILNOR (2005) 143-54. On the reforms reflecting a political power of gender discourse in the empire, cf. STRATTON (2007) 96-99.

⁵⁰ On Tiberius and the *lex maiestatis*, cf. Tacitus *Annals* 1.72.

accusations of *maiestas* and/or *adulterium*, could be brought against both elite women and men who might have posed threats (real or perceived) to imperial supremacy.

The first ever noble person we hear of being officially faced with charges of meddling with magic in the empire is the aristocrat M. Scribonius Libo Drusus, under Tiberius. Drusus' trial proves beyond a shadow of doubt that it was not just women but men as well who could eventually be accused of magic and thus fall victim to political intrigues and games of power. Tacitus, who reports the incident in the *Annals*, comments that Drusus' trial was of particular interest to him, since it marked the beginning of a political and judicial system that was destined to prey upon the commonwealth and its people for many years to come (2.27.1); in hindsight, he was right. The official accusation Drusus was put to trial under was of inquiring from Chaldean astrologers (*Chaldaeorum promissa*), magicians (*magorum sacra*), and dream-diviners (*somniorum interpretes*) about his future, as well as performing necromancy (*infernas umbras carminibus eliceret*) and attempting to introduce 'revolutionary acts' (*moliri res novas*) (2.27.2, 28.2).⁵¹ During the trial, a number of Drusus' papers were read out in the senate revealing that the young man's consultation of the supernatural was nothing more than a mere joke, revealing his lack of character and prudence (2.30.2). Out of fear for the grave consequences of *maiestas*, Drusus resorted to suicide, his property was confiscated and distributed among his accusers, whereas the senate voted a *senatus consultum* that expelled once more all astrologers and magicians from Italy (2.32).⁵²

Drusus aside, Tacitus reports a few more cases involving noble men faced with accusations of witchcraft: L. Calpurnius Piso the augur was indicted for holding private conversations against the emperor and for hiding *venena* in his house (4.21); Mamercus Scaurus was accused of adultery with Livia, as well as being an addict to *magorum sacra* (6.29.4); Furius Scribonianus was banished in 56 CE for having inquired from astrologers about the end of Nero's reign (12.52.1); and Statilius Taurus, the proconsul of Asia, was falsely suspected of being reliant on *magicae superstitiones* and was thus driven to suicide (12.59).⁵³

⁵¹ If by *moliri res novas* Tacitus actually referred to a hypothetical plan to assassinate Tiberius and other members of the imperial family, a notion which he seems to entertain (cf. *Annals* 2.30.2), then Drusus was faced with more than mere accusations of witchcraft; he was being tried for high treason (*maiestas*) and perhaps with the suspicion of intending to usurp the throne for himself. In retrospect it is revealed that Tiberius did not consider Drusus a real threat, since he was intending to intercede for his life (*ibid.* 2.31.3).

⁵² Cf. also Cassius Dio *Roman History* 57.15.8. On astrologers and the art of astrology in Rome, cf. GREEN (2014) 65-74.

⁵³ On Tacitus' use of the word *superstitio*, referring to "a religious rite of which he disapproved", cf. DICKEY (2010) 87.

The combined expulsion of astrologers and magicians from Rome in 16 or 17 CE following the incident of Drusus, as well as the earlier one of 33 BCE under Agrippa,⁵⁴ implies that magic and professional magicians had found by then a permanent home in Italy.⁵⁵ In fact, some of these individuals occupied a prominent place in the houses of elite families, having become ‘clients’ of influential patrons.⁵⁶ The emperor Tiberius, for one, took astrologers quite seriously; his interest in and knowledge of the Chaldean art dates back to the years of his exile on the island of Rhodes, where he had studied it under the supervision of the Alexandrian astrologer Thrasyllus (later to become one of Tiberius’ closest associates), whom he had first subjected to a test in order to ascertain his competence.⁵⁷ Tiberius, allegedly, was so versed in the art that it is said he once even prophesied to Galba, still a consul, that one day he would have a taste of the *imperium*, alluding to Galba’s seven-month reign in 68-69 CE.⁵⁸ Agrippina the Younger would also resort to astrologers in her effort to find out what the future had in store for her son, for which she once received the ominous revelation ‘*imperaret matremque occideret*’ (Tacitus *Annals* 14.9.3).⁵⁹ Even Nero’s accession to the throne was stalled until the opportune moment predicted by the astrologers had arrived,⁶⁰ whereas Nero’s later wife Poppaea had many astrologers residing in her household, a questionable practice, so we are told, for an emperor’s wife.⁶¹

Though consultation of astrologers and magicians figured prominently in and around the imperial *domus*, formal accusations could be hurled against influential people for

⁵⁴ Cf. Cassius Dio *Roman History* 49.43.5.

⁵⁵ Whether magic, astrology, and divination were indeed perceived by Romans as separate categories is really difficult to tell; for many Romans it appears that there is no real distinction between divination and magic, or between magic and astrology; cf. e.g., Pliny *Natural History* 30.1-2; also DICKIE (2001) 192-93 and (2010) 88-89.

⁵⁶ Juvenal, for instance, envisages a horror scenario in one of his *Satires*, where in the end Rome becomes a ‘Rome of Greeks’, and scolds the elite Roman populace for being foolish enough to have allowed people from all over the Greek world into their homes and become whatever their patrons had wanted them to be, not least magicians (3.75-77). Lucian, too, advances a similar idea in his *On Salaried Posts* 40 when he maintains that some Greeks, in order to make up for their basic lack of skills, have entered the households of the rich and the powerful by donning the appearance of philosophers and by claiming to be able to supply prophecies (μαντεῖαι), magical philtres (φαρμακείαι), love charms (χάριτες ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐρωτικοῖς), and magical incantations (ἐπαγωγαί) to their patrons, only to be later dismissed as potential adulterers (μοιχοί) or magicians/poisoners (φαρμακεῖς) since Greeks were considered of easy morals (ῥάδιος τὸν τρόπον) and ready to perform any type of wrong-doing. Do Juvenal’s or Lucian’s suggestions hold any water, reflecting in some ways a Roman reality? It would appear to be so. If the numerous police actions taken against various categories of magicians and magic working during different periods of Roman history are any indication (cf. chapter 5 n.117), the employment of magic in Roman society is undeniable.

⁵⁷ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 6.20.2-21.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 6.20.2: *et tu, Galba, quandoque degustabis imperium.*

⁵⁹ Her answer, however, is more remarkable: ‘*Occidat, dum imperet.*’

⁶⁰ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 12.68.3.

⁶¹ Cf. Tacitus *Histories* 1.22.

employing witchcraft in their pursuit of power; as one would expect, the great majority of such claims reported by historians target primarily women. In some cases the reasons for which individuals are accused of resorting to witchcraft are not altogether clear. But the fact that the accused person usually belonged to an illustrious family could well indicate that some political rivalry might have been the underlying reason. Such was the case of Aemilia Lepida, a *generosissima femina* according to Suetonius *Tiberius* 49.1, who stood accused by her former husband P. Quirinius of adultery, *venena*, and consulting astrologers about the affairs of the emperor's house.⁶² It is not certain why the charges were brought against Lepida in the first place (Suetonius speculates they were due to Quirinius' excessive greed),⁶³ but from what Tacitus allows to be inferred Lepida was generally esteemed by her female peers: during her trial she entered the theatre accompanied by many women of noble birth, thus demonstrating their support for the ignominy which had befallen their friend.⁶⁴ Perhaps the fact that she had been destined to marry Augustus' grandson and successor to the throne, Lucius Caesar, thus bringing her one step closer to the imperial *domus*, might not have sat well with some within the palace.⁶⁵

Servilia, the daughter of Q. Marcius Barea Soranus, is another example: during her father's trial Servilia was charged with having given away part of her dowry to consult magicians about the fate of her father. As with the case of Libo Drusus, it had been Servilia's young age and imprudence together with her filial piety that led her to foolishly seek assistance from magicians. The young woman sternly denied of having resorted to *magica sacra* with the aim to endanger a person's life, especially the emperor's: neither had she invoked any impious divinities (*impii dei*), nor had she cast any magical spells (*devotiones*), nor placed any curses (*infelices preces*); all she had inquired into was the final outcome of the trial and whether her father would be allowed to leave with his life.⁶⁶ Apparently, he was not; and neither was Servilia.⁶⁷

One last case involves a woman named Numantina, the first wife of P. Silvanus: Numantina was indicted of having used spells (*carmina*) and magic potions (*veneficia*) to drive Silvanus insane, which had ended with Silvanus killing his second wife, Apronia, by

⁶² Cf. also *idem Annals*. 3.22.1.

⁶³ *Tiberius* 49.1.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Annals* 3.23.1.

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.* 16.30-31.

⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.* 16.33.2.

throwing her out of a window. Silvanus could not recall any of the events he was being accused of and his overall demeanour suggested that his mind was deranged and as if he were in a deep sleep. But Tiberius' inspection of the murder scene revealed signs of struggle. Silvanus opted to take his own life, but Numantina was never convicted, perhaps for a lack of evidence.⁶⁸

The death of Germanicus, Agrippina the Elder's husband, and Piso and his wife Plancina's subsequent trial is a most telling example of a case where the accusation involves death by means of *venena* and magical *maleficia*. After his return to Syria, Germanicus fell gravely ill and was under the strong suspicion that he had been the victim of *venenum*;⁶⁹ his conviction was only reinforced by the discovery of various magical paraphernalia hidden in the walls and floors of his house: remains of corpses, binding spells, curse tablets with his name inscribed on them, bloody ashes and half-burnt remains.⁷⁰ His health took a turn for the worse and with his dying breath he revealed that the culprit of his demise was Piso, acting governor of Syria and a trusted confidante of Tiberius, appointed with the task of keeping an eye on the affairs of Germanicus in the East and of undermining the latter's claim to the throne.⁷¹ In 20 CE, in the midst of a political uproar, Piso and Plancina returned to Rome and faced trial for the death of Germanicus: but before the senate could read out their verdict, Piso opted to kill himself whereas Plancina, a dear friend of Livia, received pardon after Livia's many entreaties and interventions with Tiberius. However, in 33 CE and with her patron no longer alive to protect her, Plancina was forced to take her own life after being accused of a variety of notorious crimes.⁷² It was furthermore purported that Plancina—described by Tacitus as a 'manly' woman, of the likes of Fulvia, both in her behaviour and in her conduct of affairs (*nec Plancina se intra decora feminis tenebat*, 2.55.6)—had a close friend of hers as an accomplice in her conspiracies, the infamous *venefica* Martina, who had also probably supplied Plancina with the deadly poisons administered to Germanicus. Martina was

⁶⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 4.22.

⁶⁹ Cassius Dio *Roman History* 57.18.9 reports that following his death, Germanicus' body was laid out in the Forum for everyone to witness that he had perished as a result of poisoning and witchcraft (φαρμάκω ἐφθάρη).

⁷⁰ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 2.69.3; *et reperiebantur solo ac parietibus erutae humanorum corporum reliquiae, carmina et devotiones et nomen Germanici plumbeis tabulis insculptum, semusti cineres ac tabo oblitii aliaque malefica, quis creditur animas numinibus infernis sacrari*. Also Cassius Dio *Roman History* 57.18.9: ὅστ' ἂν τε γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐν ἧ' ὤκει κατορωρυγμένα καὶ ἔλασμοι μολίβδινοι ἀράς τινὰς μετὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ ἔχοντες ζῶντος ἔθ' εὐρέθη.

⁷¹ Cf. Suetonius *Tiberius* 52; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 57.18.8-9.

⁷² Tacitus *Annals* 3.15, 6.26.4.

expected to appear in the senate and testify against the couple, but she never got the chance: she was found dead in Brindisi, in all likelihood murdered by Piso's agents.⁷³

Following Germanicus, allegations of treason, combined with adultery and witchcraft become all the more frequent as if it were a trope for elite Roman women in resolving (often female) conflicts. Livia, thus, is said to have brought charges of infidelity (*inpudicitia*), adultery (*adulterum*), attempting to poison Tiberius (*veneficia in principem*), and witchcraft (*devotiones*) against Claudia Pulchra, Agrippina the Elder's cousin, for no other reason than to spite Agrippina; apparently, the woman's only crime was being loyal to Agrippina at a time when the imperial *domus* was planning her downfall.⁷⁴ Though Livia might have had her share in imperial intrigues and deaths by *veneficia* during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, no one proved to be more masterful in employing the discourse of witchcraft and *veneficium* in bringing about the destruction of both factual and imaginary enemies than Agrippina's daughter, Agrippina the Younger. When Lollia Paulina, Caligula's ex-wife and a contender for marriage to Claudius, challenged the legitimacy of Claudius' marriage to Agrippina, the latter prosecuted and exiled (some argue executed) her for consulting astrologers, magicians (*magi*), and the oracle of Clarian Apollo;⁷⁵ Domitia Lepida, mother of Messalina and Agrippina's sister-in-law, had entered a feminine quarrel with Agrippina and was therefore charged with practising magic and threatening the life of the empress (*coniugem principis devotionibus petivisset*), a crime prosecuted under *maiestas*, and in the end was executed;⁷⁶ because she was fond of T. Statilius Taurus' (consul 44 CE) gardens, Agrippina charged the man with an addiction to *magicae superstitiones* and drove him to suicide.⁷⁷

The examples discussed thus far suggest that magic discourse had been used as a powerful tool in the hands of those wishing to effectively get rid of political and non-political opponents. The majority of cases involving witchcraft are encountered in accounts of trials in which the offenders are accused of *maiestas*, wanting to bring harm to the emperor or his immediate family. Such charges included the use of magical means to predict the future, especially with regard to the sovereign, or having put a curse on a member of the imperial house. In a few cases, too, the reasons for which individuals resorted to witchcraft are not

⁷³ *Ibid.* 3.7.2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 4.52.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 12.22 (exiled); Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.32.4 (executed).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 12.64-65.1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 12.59.

evident enough, but one may assume that political conflicts of interest were the primary reasons.⁷⁸

3.3. Pamphile: an anti-*matrona*?

*Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,
that nothing sung but death to us and ours:
now death shall stop his dismal threat'ning sound
and his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.*

Shakespeare, *III King Henry the VI*

So where has the preceding discussion led us to? Let us briefly recapitulate the main ideas which have formed the key arguments expressed therein. While discussing the figure of Pamphile, I suggested that this witch is quite peculiar in her characterisation. Many of the characteristics attributed to her by Apuleius belong either to the literary category of the crone or the majestic goddess-witches of Greek mythology, but Pamphile is neither the one nor the other, despite the many points of contiguity. Hence, she has to be something entirely different. I therefore suggested that Pamphile's hybrid nature allows us to put forward a new category of women practising magic in the form of the anti-*matrona*. This category, as discussed in the previous two sections, consists of women who share a few distinct characteristics: they are influential upper-class women demonstrating a remarkable autonomy and possessing a considerable amount of wealth, which enables them to have social and political power that understandably rendered them a threat to the sphere of male activity and achievements. Usually such women, by reflecting and expressing male fears and anxiety, are identified and depicted in literature as sexually promiscuous with an unprecedented eagerness to engage in infidelity, infringing on male territory, overly assertive and dominating, and last but not least, having a knowledge (whether active or passive) of witchcraft. Such women appear more frequently during the last century of the Republic and find their way well into the Imperial era.

A great deal of these anti-*matrona* features are abundantly attributed to women by Juvenal in his diatribe against the fairer sex in the sixth *Satire*, a poem which though intended to function as a λόγος ἀποτρεπτικός γάμου ends up being a genuinely misogynistic ψόγος against upper-class married women.⁷⁹ Despite its comical and hyperbolic nature, Juvenal

⁷⁸ Cf. also the discussion at POLLARD (2014).

⁷⁹ On Juvenal's *Satire* 6, cf. NADEAU (2011); WATSON & WATSON (2014).

has a lot to say in his *Satire* about women's overall behaviour, reproducing in some way social concerns of his times: half way through the *Satire* Juvenal (or his literary *persona*) surmises that in the old days it had been hard work, humble fortunes, and poverty that kept wives chaste, households modest and virtuous, and familial life protected, compared to the poet's present-time situation where Romans were suffering the calamities of extended peace (the *Pax Romana*) and immodest *luxuria* imported from abroad (286-305). He claims that virtuous women are but a dying breed;⁸⁰ infidelities, disloyalty, and unnatural 'manly' desires are the principal qualities governing women of his time (60-113). Wives learn from their mothers how to manipulate and cuckold their husbands (231-41) and bring *cinaedi* and eunuchs into their houses as a means to fulfil their abnormal sexual desires (O.1-34).⁸¹ *Impudicitia* has led women to transgress their gender's boundaries by assuming masculine roles and to impinge on male spheres of dominance. Juvenal ends his tirade with allegations of women's involvement in magic and witchcraft: unconcerned with the expenses they cause their husbands, upper-class women consult expensive soothsayers (548-552) and astrologers (553-64), procure magic spells (*magici cantus*) and Thessalian potions (*Thessala philtra*) which tamper with their husbands' minds, thus causing them to lose reason (610-14), and buy *venena* which they will use in order to murder their stepchildren (133-34)—a practice now deemed to be morally acceptable (*iamiam privignum occidere fas est*, 628), in all probability due to its frequent occurrence.

Now, it is true that many of the accusations Juvenal hurls against women in this *Satire* are only an "inherited stock of misogynistic themes",⁸² blown out of proportion for comic relief and amusement, but, as may have become clear from the discussion in the previous sections, it also touches upon a very real social phenomenon. On a social level, elite Roman matrons had been (knowingly or unknowingly) fighting for their rights and their 'emancipation' for a very long time,⁸³ and women had been constantly growing all the more

⁸⁰ 60-61: *porticibusne tibi monstratur femina voto | digna tuo?*

⁸¹ A parallel could be drawn here with the episode of Quartilla's priapic orgy at Petronius *Satyrica* 16-26.6. Quartilla, priestess of Priapus, charges the three protagonists of sacrilege, but is willing to forgive them so long as they take part in a big orgy in honour of the god. The episode records in a concentrated form the three day orgy between Quartilla, the protagonists, her slave-girls and the house eunuchs, as well as the attempted rape of Encolpius by a eunuch and the deflowering of a seven year old maiden by Giton. On this episode, cf. the comments at SCHMELING (2011) 44-45.

⁸² COURTNEY (1980) 252.

⁸³ In his *History of Rome* Livy ascribes to Cato a speech dealing with what was destined to go down in Roman history as one of the most remarkable demonstrations of elite women's power. It was the year 195 BCE and the abrogation of the *Lex Oppia* was being hotly debated (34.1.3). The topic was of such tantamount importance that women both from the capital and rural areas fled to Rome and protested in the streets,

powerful and politically influential, eventually encroaching on male spheres of activity and claiming for themselves a share in the administration of the government or the empire, which would have been perceived by many men, no doubt, as a threat. While this, then, was taking place on a socio-political level and male anxiety over women's independence grew more worrisome, in literature such 'menacing' and threatening women were being portrayed as anti-*matronae*: upper-class women exceeding the limits imposed by their sexual gender, with their wealth, luxury, and salacious nature reflecting that of real matrons. Anti-*matronae*, as well as real life matrons, were suspected of being privy to magic and of practising witchcraft, and as such the anti-*matrona* as a category of practitioner of magic is the exact opposite of the crone, being loathsome with age and repellent and occupying the lowest regions of the public domain.⁸⁴

blocking the way to the Forum, and exhorting praetors, consuls, and other officials to vote in favour of the law's dissolution. Cato was adamantly against the law's repeal and, while addressing the senate, he expressed his outrage at the women's profoundly 'unwomanly' behaviour. He directly reprimanded the distinguished *matronae* for having too much independence, luxury, and for being overly avaricious (34.2.2), whereas their ultimate goal was none other than to increase their influence over the affairs of men (34.2.11) and to take over the government and enslave their husbands (34.2.14-3.3). He pictured these women as licentious seductresses and a public menace and even insinuated that perhaps one of the reasons they were so willing to abandon their homes was in order to engage in adultery (34.2.9). Cato did not even question that one day women's wealth and avarice, combined with their uninhibited ostentatiousness and a desire to control men's votes, would lead them to parade across the city in chariots, as if celebrating a triumph (34.3.9). In all likelihood, most of the material Livy puts in Cato's mouth is not genuine (despite representing Cato's point of view fairly accurately; cf. STRATTON (2007) 208 n.28) and has been stitched together by Livy in free composition from known orations and writings of Cato (cf. BRISCOE (1981) 39). But they do serve the purpose of characterising the famous Censor as a dogmatic, authoritarian, and single-minded person—qualities for which Cato was well-known in antiquity—and as a firm believer that a woman's place ought to be in the house and not on the streets. Therefore, in voicing his concerns about women's independence and influence, and this in spite of women being allowed to assemble into formal groups for some social or religious purposes (cf. e.g., the case of the *matronae* getting together to form a group in order to dedicate a golden bowl to Juno made by contributions from their own dowries in the third century BCE (Livy *History of Rome* 27.37.8-9)), Cato demonises elite *matronae* and their actions: he presents them as individuals who should under no circumstances be underestimated, since their activities might suggest a potential usurpation of men's power by means of invading the male political sphere, interfering with their decisions, and undermining their authority. Furthermore, he reprimands women for their loose morals and potential licentiousness, envisioning that the true reason women were protesting in the streets was in order to find a new lover and engage in infidelity. On the *Lex Oppia*, cf. BAUMAN (1992) 25-27.

⁸⁴ Horace seems to employ some of the characteristics of the anti-*matrona* discourse in *Epode* 8 as he launches a savage attack against a morally dissolute old woman desiring to have sex with him. Many of the features the poet mocks, predominantly the woman's sexually insatiable nature, or her superannuated and repulsive body features (stained black teeth, a face burdened by wrinkles, a gaping and filthy anus, a baggy stomach and decaying breasts, 3-6), are qualities which in one way or another are encountered among Horace's other witch descriptions (especially ones of crones), with one significant difference: the old woman of *Epode* 8 belongs to the upper-class, is rather independent and quite affluent: she wears expensive pearls (13-14), she is educated and with a philosophical appetite (Stoic books are hidden underneath her pillows, 15-16), and comes from an illustrious lineage (her dead ancestors had apparently been generals, 11-12). It seems that the woman does not actively pursue any magic, but this should not be troublesome since a good deal of anti-*matrona* characteristics are reproduced in Horace's depiction of the woman: she is lustful and uninhibited, she belongs to the Roman elite, and she 'trespasses' on a sphere of male activity by using her wealth to buy

It is within this category then that I am inclined to situate Pamphile. The witch is depicted in terms of an anti-*matrona* and reproduces her chief characteristics as discussed in the previous sections. Pamphile, no doubt, belongs to the upper class of Hypatan society: she is married to Milo, a wealthy albeit frugal banker, to whom one ought to write letters of recommendation, described as one of Hypata's leading citizens (*e primoribus*, 1.21.3).⁸⁵ Moreover, her sexually libidinous and cruel nature is indisputable: Lucius' discussion with Byrrhena has already hinted at how Pamphile usually sets her eyes on young beautiful men and will do anything in her power to ensnare them, yet should they dare refuse her she will bring about their demise (2.5.5-8); but in the end it is Photis who provides Lucius with undeniable proof of her mistress' infidelities after she admits to being an accomplice to one of her schemes to 'trap' a young Boeotian man she is in loves with (3.16). The freedom that Pamphile enjoys to pursue her infidelities is quite remarkable and for a brief moment Lucius, too, contemplates the possibility of sexually seducing the powerful witch so that he may be 'initiated' into the mysteries of witchcraft, but quickly abandons the thought (2.6.1-6). One may, however, wonder whether Milo is foolish enough not to be aware of his wife's infidelities, in spite of the Hypatan community gossiping about it behind his back, or whether Milo and Pamphile have an 'open partnership', so to speak, quite similar to the one Juvenal attributes to a certain Censennia and her husband in the *Satires* (as long as Censennia keeps the money flowing, her husband will indulge her infidelities and turn a blind eye to them (6.136-41)). Consequently, a large part of the witchcraft we encounter Pamphile practising in the *Metamorphoses* is essentially employed as a means of satisfying her sexual desires. It is, thus, to the two principal manifestations of Pamphile's witchcraft that the following section will turn to: erotic magic and shape-shifting rituals.

sex, an activity normally confined only to men (on wealthy women buying sex, cf. C. EDWARDS (1993) 54). A similar situation is also encountered in *Epode* 12, where once again an apparently old woman attempts to seduce the poet for her sexual gratification. Although her age is not as openly pronounced as that of the woman from *Epode* 8, the poet's fixation on the woman's foul odour and her assimilation to monstrous beasts (4-12) implies, if not confirms, her advanced age. Her attempt, moreover, to bribe the poet with gifts of various sorts (2-3) points towards the woman's relative affluence too.

⁸⁵ On Milo being a banker, cf. KEULEN (2007) 380.

Pamphile's magic: Erotic ἀγωγαί and transformation rituals

4.1. Love magic and attraction spells

Ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnin

Virgil *Eclogue* 8

During his stay in Hypata, Lucius became the unfortunate victim of a horrible prank and so had to undergo a false murder trial during the annual festival of Laughter.⁸⁶ A guilt-ridden Photis was then forced to spill the beans about her mistress' *miranda secreta* and explain how a failure to perform successfully a task for Pamphile resulted in Lucius' involvement in the mock trial. Lucius was told that Pamphile was apparently madly in love with a young man from Boeotia; she instructed Photis to filch some clippings from his hair while he was in a barbershop getting a haircut, so she could perform an erotic ritual, identified as an ἀγωγή, with the intention to lead him directly to her house and ultimately into her bed.⁸⁷ Photis, however, got caught in the act by the barber, and in order to avoid getting punished by her mistress she brought home clippings of the same colour from some old wine skins. Assuming that the hair belonged to the youth, Pamphile locked herself up in her magical laboratory and cast the spell; ironically, instead of compelling her lover she succeeded in reanimating the lifeless wine containers. At that exact moment, a drunk Lucius returned home from Byrrhaena's dinner party at which the tale of Thelyphron was related, and in his inebriated state mistook the reanimated flasks (currently obeying Pamphile's spell) for thieves trying to break into Milo's house; after a short battle with the supposed 'intruders', Lucius victoriously slew the 'enemies'. On the following day the magistrates arrived, arrested

⁸⁶ On the *Risus* festival, cf. MAY (2006) 182-207; also BEARD (2014) 181-84. The festival has received various interpretations throughout the years, ranging from a type of initiation into the cult of Dionysus with possible allusions to other festivals (BARTALUCCI (1988); MILANEZI (1992) suggests that the episode seems to be a creation of Apuleius from diverse sources rather than a report of an actual rite at Hypata; *contra* BAJONI (1998), arguing that no specific festival can be verifiable with that of Apuleius' narrative), a carnivalesque ritual drama (ROBERTSON (1919), esp. 113-14), a scapegoat ritual (JAMES (1987) 87; MCCREIGHT (1993) 46-7; SHUMATE (1996) 83; BENDLIN (2007) 184-88, and esp. 187-88; HABINEK argues that Lucius plays the role of the φαρμακός (1990: esp. 54), on which cf. BURKERT (1985) 82-4), or a community integration rite, with the trial being the rite's δοκιμασία (FRANGOULIDIS (2001) 49-68, and (2002)). KIRICHENKO even suggests that the whole episode is indebted to the genre of Roman mime with Lucius taking upon himself the role of *mimus secundarum* (2010: 58). On the theatrical context of the narrative, cf. PENWILL (1990) 5.

⁸⁷ Cf. also the ἀγωγή at *PGM* 7.886-88: κέλευσον ἀγγέλω ἀπελθεῖν πρὸς τὴν δεῖνα, ἄξαι αὐτὴν τῶν τριχῶν, τῶν ποδῶν-φοβομένη, φανταζομένη, ἀγρυπνοῦσα ἐπὶ τῷ ἔρωτί μου καὶ τῇ ἐμοῦ φιλίᾳ, τοῦ δεῖνα, ἦχοι σηκῶ.

Lucius, charged him with a triple homicide, and led him to the theatre so that his murder ‘trial’ could commence. Sadly for Lucius, this was not the first time he had experienced the Hypatans’ unmerited way of serving justice, as his unfortunate encounter with the magistrate Pythias and the incident at the fish-market demonstrates (1.24-25). And quite similar to other stories in the *Metamorphoses*, there are several logical inconsistencies in Photis’ account, for which answers are never really provided or are never essentially explained.⁸⁸

Photis’ account of Pamphile’s love affairs not only enhances our general perception of the witch, but it also provides further details to Byrrhaena’s claims, since on this occasion Lucius is allowed a small glimpse into Pamphile’s magical *modus operandi*. Aside from being a master of divinatory practices, Pamphile is a *magistra* of erotic spells as well. The description of Pamphile’s erotic ritual, though quite concise in nature, effectively combines elements from both extant literary attraction spells and surviving recipes prescribed in the Greek and Demotic magical papyri,⁸⁹ which once more points towards Apuleius’ very specific knowledge of real life magical practices. In briefest outline, love magic⁹⁰ may be divided in

⁸⁸ For instance, how could the magistrates have any knowledge of Lucius’ involvement in the wine flasks’ fiasco, unless they were somehow physically present during the event? If this is the case, might it be that the whole incident is a planned ‘inside job’, prearranged by Milo and the Hypatan community to ‘frame’ Lucius and therefore unwillingly involve him in the upcoming community festival? If yes, what is their reaction after witnessing the magically reanimated flasks? Judging from Photis’ comment at 3.16.4, the community is already aware of Pamphile’s powerful magic, so does this mean they tolerate it?

⁸⁹ Cf. e.g., *PGM* 4.91-153, 1390-495, 1496-595, 1715-867, 2001-118, 2436-617, 2705-781, 2887-938, 2939-62; 7.862-918, 973-80, 981-93; 17a.1-25; 19a.1-54; 19b.1-3, 4-17; 32.1-19; 32a.1-25; 36.68-100, 134-60, 189-210, 295-311, 333-60, 361-71; 38.1-28, 39-1-21; 61.39-72; 62.1-22; 78.1-14; *PDM* 12.135-46, 147-64; 14.1070-77.

⁹⁰ Love magic has truly a very long tradition; its roots can be traced all the way back to the second millennium BCE ŠĀ.ZI.GA incantations, Assyrian cuneiform ‘potency’ spells designed to cause and maintain an erection during sexual intercourse. In the Greek speaking world, love magic, in the form of aphrodisiacs, is attested by the archaeological record for the very first time with the so-called ‘Nestor’s cup’, a late eighth century BCE κοτύλη found in a child’s grave at Pithecusae (modern Ischia) in Italy, which bears the now celebrated hexameter inscription telling that should a man drink from this particular cup, he will immediately be stricken with an uncontrollable desire for lovemaking (*SEG* 14.604: Νέστορος [εἰμι] εὐποτ[ον] ποτήριον / ὃς δ’ ἂν τοῦδε πι[ίησι] ποτηρί[ου] αὐτίκα κήνον / ἕμερ[ος αἶρ]ήσει καλλιστ[εφάν]ου Ἀφροδίτης). The cup’s erotic ‘spell’ may have some affinities to the Assyrian ŠĀ.ZI.GA potency spells mentioned previously. An additional early description of a potential love device can be traced in *Iliad* 14.197-217, whereby Hera requests from Aphrodite her mysterious κεστός ἱμάς, a ‘magical girdle’ (cf. *LSJ* s.v. ἱμάς) embroidered with a number of magical charms (θελκτήρια), so that by putting it to good use she might not only bring to an end her parents’ bickering, but also mend their broken marriage. This is nonsense, of course; in reality Hera means to use Aphrodite’s enchantment in order to seduce and deceive Zeus (the famous Iliadic episode Διὸς ἀπάτη), ultimately distracting the god’s attention from the war raging about the Trojan plains for her own selfish needs and purposes. There has been a lot of scholarly debate, both old and recent, regarding the ‘identity’ and function of the κεστός ἱμάς; in the past it was assumed to be an amulet hidden within Hera’s bosom (cf. e.g., *Iliad* 14.219-20: τῆ νῦν τοῦτον ἱμάντα τεῶ ἐγκάτθεο κόλπῳ / ποικίλον), but more recently it has been advocated that it was a sort of clothing worn by Hera either around the breasts or about the waist. On the κεστός, cf. the discussion at FARAONE (1990) and (1999) 97-100 and n.4; BOTTINI (2000); PENNOYER LIVERMORE (2004). Interestingly enough, chapter *kappa* (10) from the first book of the *Cyranides* is dedicated to the goddess Aphrodite and offers advice on how to construct two types of amulets which the author identifies

two big distinct groups.⁹¹ The first category could be briefly termed ‘love-inducing’ magic.⁹² this type of magic, which traces its origins to the arts of healing and protection, often comes in the form of protective amulets (like Aphrodite’s *κεστός ἱμάς*),⁹³ *φιλία*-inducing ointments,⁹⁴ and magical rings⁹⁵ or gemstones.⁹⁶ This form of magic is practised (predominantly) by wives against their husbands with the purpose of mollifying the latter’s anger on the one hand and of arousing affectionate and amicable feelings (*φιλία* or *ἀγάπη*) on the other. In some cases, an inferior man may resort to love-inducing magic so to influence the behaviour of a (male) superior, usually that of a general or a king.⁹⁷ Love-inducing magic had a rather tranquil and benign nature, in the sense that it was neither violent nor did it wish to inflict any permanent harm or death on its recipient. Having said that, however, love-inducing magic could be a source of great anxiety, since men of high social standing usually regarded it as a powerful tool in the hands of social inferiors and, hence, a way to unnaturally challenge societal and hierarchical constructions.⁹⁸ It is useful to bear in mind that love-inducing magic, like all love magic in general, was designed to subjugate and exert control over the people against which such spells were targeted by weakening, emasculating, or rendering them helpless in some

as *κεστοὶ ἱμάντες*. On the *Ḫ.Λ.ΖΙ.Γ.Α* incantations, cf. BIGGS (1967). For a discussion of Nestor’s cup and its alleged ‘magical’ aphrodisiac qualities, cf. FARAONE (1996); also REITERMAN (2014) 150-52).

⁹¹ I follow in this division the excellent discussion of FARAONE (1999). With the term ‘love magic’ I refer to the general ‘umbrella’ term of *Liebeszauber*, whereas ‘love-inducing magic’ refers to what FARAONE (1999) has termed *φιλία*-magic, on which cf. *infra* n.92.

⁹² On *φιλία*-magic, cf. FARAONE (1999) 96-131.

⁹³ On the *κεστός*, cf. *supra* n.90; cf. also Asclepiades’ epigram from the *Palatine Anthology* 5.158: ‘*Ἐρμιόνη πιθανῆ ποτ’ ἐγὼ συνέπαιζον ἐχούση / ζωνίον ἐξ ἀνθέων ποικίλον, ὦ Παφίη, / χρύσεια γράμματ’ ἔχον· «διόλου», δ’ ἐγέγραπτο, «φίλει με / καὶ μὴ λυπηθῆς, ἦν τις ἔχη μ’ ἕτερος».*

⁹⁴ Cf. *PGM* 36.211-14: *εὐχὴ ἡλιακῆ, θυμοκάτοχον καὶ νικητικὸν καὶ χαριτήσιον, οὐ μίζον οὐδέν. λέγε πρὸς ἥλιον ζ’, καὶ λιπαίνων τὴν χίραν κατὰμασσε ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς καὶ τοῦ προσώπου. Also SM 72.ii.4-6: λαβῶν μύρον ἔπασσον καὶ χρεῖσον τὸ πρόσωπον· σὺ εἶ τὸ μύρον φῶ ἢ Εἴσις χρεισαμένη / ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸν τοῦ Ὀσειρίου κόλπον τοῦ αὐτῆς ἀνδρός καὶ ἀδελφοῦ καὶ ἔδωκας αὐτῇ / τὴν χάριν ἐπ’ ἐκεῖνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ.*

⁹⁵ Cf. *PGM* 12.202-03, 207-09 (*δακτυλίδιον* πρὸς πᾶσαν πράξιν καὶ ἐπιτυχίαν. μετῆσιν βασιλεῖς καὶ ἡγεμόνες. λίαν ἐνεργές. [...]) καὶ τελέσσας τὸν λίθον ἐν χρυσῷ δακτυλίῳ φόρει, ὅπότεν ἦ σοι χρεία, ἀγνὸς ὢν, καὶ ἐπιτεύξῃ πάντων, ὄσων προαιρή. τελέσεις δὲ τὸ δακτυλίδιον ἅμα τῇ ψήφῳ τῇ κατὰ πάντων τελετῇ) and 271-72, 77-79 (*δακτυλίδιον* πρὸς ἐπιτεύξιν καὶ χάριν καὶ νίκην. ἐνδόξους ποιεῖ καὶ μεγάλους καὶ θαυμαστοὺς καὶ πλουσίους κατὰ δύναμιν ἢ τοιούτων φιλίας παρέχει. [...] ἔχων γὰρ αὐτὸ μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ, ὃ ἂν παρά τινος αἰτήσης, πάντως λήμψῃ. ἔτι δὲ βασιλέων ὀργὰς καὶ δεσποτῶν παύει. φορῶν αὐτό, ὃ ἂν τινι εἴπῃς, πισθευθῆσθαι ἐπίχαρις τε πᾶσιν ἔσει).

⁹⁶ Cf. *Cyranides* 1.4.45-51 (ἐάν οὖν τις γλύψῃ εἰς δενδρίτην λίθον τὸν δενδροκολάπτῃ, ὑπὸ δὲ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ δράκοντα θαλάσσιον καὶ ὑποκατακλείσας τὴν εὐρισκομένην βοτάνην ὑπὸ τοῦ δενδροκολάπτου καὶ φορέσῃ, πᾶσα θύρα αὐτῷ ἀνοίγεται καὶ δεσμούς καὶ κλείθρα λύσει, ἄγρια θηρία αὐτῷ ὑποταγήσεται καὶ ἡμερωθήσεται, θεοὶς τε καὶ ἀνθρώποις πᾶσιν ἔσται ἡγαπημένος καὶ εὐάκουστος. καὶ ὅπερ ἂν θελήσῃ ἐπιτεύξεται, καὶ ὃ βούλεται περιγενήσεται) and 1.10-39-42 (τὸν δὲ δεξιὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἐάν τις φορέσῃ ὑπὸ λίθον σάφειρον ἄσπιλον, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν γεγλυμμένη Ἀφροδίτη, ὃ τοῦτο φορῶν ἐπίχαρις ἔσται καὶ παρά ἀνθρώποις ἐξάκουστος καὶ ἐπὶ πάσης δίκης νίκην ἔξει. τὸ δ’ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ καὶ ὁ εὐώνυμος ὀφθαλμὸς ὑπὸ θηλείας φορούμενος).

⁹⁷ Cf. *PGM* 13.251-252: θυμοκάτοχον· πρὸς βασιλέα ἢ μεγιστᾶνα εἰσαγε, τὰς χεῖρας ἐντὸς ἔχων λέγε τὸ ὄνομα τὸ δίσκου, βαλῶν ἅμμα τοῦ παλλίου σου ἢ τοῦ ἐπικαρσίου, καὶ θαυμάσεις.

⁹⁸ Cf. FARAONE (1999) 121.

way.⁹⁹ Women, in addition, would often mix φάρμακα with love-inducing potions in order to bring about the desired effect, but sometimes the end results could be quite catastrophic.¹⁰⁰

A second and more pervasive category of love magic might be termed ‘erotic magic’.¹⁰¹ Different from the form discussed just previously, this type of magic is exercised primarily by men and is targeted against women, whereas its general purpose is to incite in the (female) victim an uncontrollable passion and sexual desire (ἔρωος) for the (usually male) practitioner. Unlike the more or less docile nature of love-inducing magic, erotic magic is more violent and forceful, as it traces its origins back to the arts of cursing and magical *defixiones*. If one were to examine the majority of erotic spells surviving in the various magical corpora from Greco-Roman antiquity, one would discover that the practitioners of erotic spells most commonly ‘curse’ their victims to be seized with a variety of unpleasant feelings (such as overwhelming erotic frenzy, madness, insomnia, and insanity), until that person yields to the practitioner’s wishes, which are usually identified with the fulfilment of sexual intercourse. Yet contrary to the magical curses and *defixiones*, erotic spells do not intend to kill their victims; they are only meant to cause extreme discomfort until the victim succumbs to the magician’s will.

Erotic spells might come in the form of ‘enchanted fruit’, such as apples (μῆλον), pomegranates (ρόα), or similar seeded fruit associated with fertility.¹⁰² But the most famous

⁹⁹ For example, Suetonius reports in *Caligula* 50.2 that Gaius Caligula’s wife Caesonia used to give a love-inducing potion to her husband in hopes of making him love her more, but the potion had the opposite effect and drove Caligula to insanity. Plutarch, on the other hand, while offering a series of marital recommendations to the newly-weds Pollianus and Eurydice, deemed it sensible to strongly advise against the common practice of women employing witchcraft against their husbands in their effort to gain control over them through carnal pleasure; this practice, claims the author, tended to have the opposite effect and usually rendered the husbands senseless and diminished them to a degenerate state (*Marital Advice* 139A). Also in the *Parallel Lives* Plutarch suggests that the general Mark Antony had not really been ‘on top of his game’ in his Parthian campaign, presumably due to the fact that he was under the influence of Cleopatra’s love potions and magic (*Antony* 37.6). An interesting account on how love-inducing magic could cause a man to become weak and effeminate is afforded by the *Cyranides* (a fourth century CE ‘encyclopaedia’ dedicated to the creation of various amulets, on which cf. KAIMAKIS (1976)); in one of its many recipes the *Cyranides* instructs how to create a very special κεστός ἴμας, allegedly similar to that of Aphrodite from the *Iliad*, which not only has the power to render the male touching it temporarily incompetent, but it could also turn its male wearer permanently and irrevocably into a catamite (10.49-57, 64-68).

¹⁰⁰ Perhaps the most infamously well-known case of a love potion gone horribly wrong belongs to no other than the mythical ‘Slayer-of-Men’, the wife of Heracles, Deianeira (< δηϊώω + ἀνήρ), on which cf. Sophocles *Women of Trachis*. Her jealousy and justified fear that Heracles might abandon her for the younger and more beautiful Iole force a restless Deianeira to seek assistance from the magical arts. Things, however, do not go according to her initial plans and in the end she accidentally kills Heracles after the robe she had previously smeared with the poisoned blood of the centaur Nessus—initially taken to be a love-inducing potion (φρηνός κηλητήριον, 575)—became firmly attached to the demigod’s body and began to eat away at his flesh.

¹⁰¹ On ἔρωος-magic, cf. FARAONE (1999) 41-95.

¹⁰² The story of *Schneewittchen* (1854) by the brothers Grimm is a good example of a modern fairy-tale where fruit are used in some magical conduct. And thanks to Walt Disney’s 1937 animation film (portraying, however, a slightly different version to the story recounted by the brothers Grimm), the entire world now

manifestation of erotic magic is the widely diffused erotic ἀγωγή (or ἀγωγήμον), which belongs to the general category of magical attraction spells.¹⁰³ It is first attested in a passage from Pindar *Pythian* 4 and Aphrodite is credited with being the πρῶτος εὐρετής of the magic ἕνυξ which, if taken literally, was a wryneck affixed to a wheel (213-19).¹⁰⁴ The purpose of this instrument was to teach Jason how to be skilful in prayers and charms (ἐπαοιδάς), so that he could enchant Medea and strip her of her reverence for her parents and her country, thus helping the Argonaut procure the Golden Fleece.¹⁰⁵ In the *Pythian* passage Pindar employs a relevant ‘language of torture and abuse’ in his attempt to portray the desired effect which Aphrodite’s ἕνυξ would have on Medea: she is meant to be burnt (καιομέναν), shaken (δονέοι), whipped (μάστιγι), and overtaken by insanity (by projecting the qualities of the μαινάδ’ ὄρνιν onto her) until she is subjugated to Jason’s will. This language betrays the exact same qualities and intentions which we encounter amongst antiquity’s many surviving attraction spells: namely, to burn, discomfort, torture, and subdue the victims long enough so as to eventually drive them away from their fathers’ or husbands’ homes and bring them directly to the practitioner’s abode.¹⁰⁶ If, as J. WINKLER suggested, the spells were cast in an appropriate

knows the tale of the jealous Evil Queen who tried to kill the beautiful maiden by offering her a poisoned apple, which ultimately put Snow-White into a coma. But employing magical fruit in order to attain one’s (primarily sexual) purposes is a practice spanning back not only centuries, but it is also attested throughout many diverse cultures. On using fruit in erotic magic, cf. FARAONE (1999) 69-78.

¹⁰³ The term seems to derive either from the vocabulary of marriage, where the bride was allegedly ‘led away’ from her father’s house and into that of her husband (cf. e.g., Hesychius *Lexicon* s.v. ἀγωγή: ὁδός. πορεία τῆς νύμφης πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα, Ῥόδιοι), or from initiation rites, an allusion perhaps to an old *rite de passage* for men and women who were forced to abandon their parents’ house after they had come of age (cf. BORGEAUD (1988) 32-33).

¹⁰⁴ Although a surviving fragment from Aristophanes’ *Amphiarus* tends to support the idea that birds were indeed fastened to wheels for similar erotic torturing practices (cf. e.g., fr. 29 (Kassel-Austin): ὄσφον δ’ ἐξ ἄκρων διακίγκλισον ἢ ὅτε κίγκλου / ἄνδρος πρεσβύτου, τελέειν δ’ ἀγαθὴν ἐπαοιδήν), later Greek and Roman descriptions mention neither the use of living nor any, in fact, birds; if anything, it appears that subsequent generations had confused or combined three distinct albeit not dissimilar erotic instruments, namely the ἕνυξ, the *rombus*, and the spinning top. On the magical ἕνυξ, cf. TAVENER (1933); GOW (1934), who provides as well some visual representations; FARAONE (1993) and (1999) 55-69 (esp. 63 n.102 for further bibliography); PIRENNE-DELFORGE (1993); JOHNSTON (1990) 90-110 and (1995b); OGDEN (2014) 295-96.

¹⁰⁵ According to an etiological myth provided by Callimachus fr. 685 (Pfeiffer), Iynx had employed magic to sexually seduce Zeus (φαρμάσσοσα), and as a result an angry Hera transformed her into a bird. Perhaps it was due to this myth that the wryneck came to be considered a promiscuous bird in antiquity; the characteristic movement of its tale and/or neck was often thought to be an obvious sign either of the bird’s salacious nature or its madness, both being characteristics which the magical practitioner, through persuasive analogy, wished to inflict upon his/her intended victim. On the wryneck’s voracious sexual nature, cf. CAPPONI (1981).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. the wish to burn (καίειν), torture (βασανίζειν), and subduing (υποτάσσειν) the victims at *PGM* O2.29-33 (καύσον, πύρωσον τὴν ψυχὴν Ἀλλοῦτος, τὸ γυναικίον σῶμα, τὰ μέλη, ἕως ἀποστή ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας Ἀπολλωνίου); 4.1412-13 (ἄξατε οὖν αὐτὴν βασανίζομένην), 2767 (φλέξον ἀκοιμήτω πυρὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τῆς δεῖνα), 2931-33 (καὶ τῇ δεῖνι, ἦν δεῖνα, βάλε πυρσὸν ἔρωτα, ὥστ’ ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ τοῦ δεῖνος, οὐ ἢ δεῖνα, φιλότῃ τακῆναι ἤματα πάντα); 7.471-72 (ἄγε μοι τὴν δεῖνα ... καιομένην τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν καρδίαν), 611-12 (διὸ ἄξατέ μοι αὐτὴν φλεγόμενην, ὑποτασσομένην, ὑπνοῦ μὴ τυχεῖν, μέχρις ἔλθῃ πρὸς ἐμέ); 17a.8-10 (ἄξον δέ μοι αὐτὴν ὑπὸ τοὺς ἐμοὺς πόδας ἐρωτικῆ ἐπιθυμῖα

manner by the magician, then the victims, allegedly, could not resist the spell's forceful power.¹⁰⁷ The most common stereotypical formulas encountered among the papyri—shaped, as C. FARAONE suggests, by generic conventions and expectations¹⁰⁸—go generally along the line “I adjure you [enter name of god/goddess], bring XYZ [daughter of XYZ] to me XYZ [son of XYZ] on this very night, blazing with everlasting desire [for me, XYZ].”

As soon as Pamphile receives the hairs which she assumes belong to her lover, she locks herself up in her magical room and starts her erotic magical rites. The witch's ritual takes place under the invisibility offered by night (*noctis initio*, 3.17.3), and this adheres to the ἀγωγαί scenarios of the magical papyri: whenever the setting of an attraction spell is explicitly mentioned in the magical papyri, the most suitable phase for the spell to be enacted is during the night, which also conforms to the nocturnal character of the magical rites in general. Quite often magicians are encountered praying and invoking various praeternatural powers and deities to burn and discomfort their objects of passion, ultimately bringing them to their doorstep *on this very night*.¹⁰⁹ In addition, the room Pamphile uses as her workshop is described as being on top of a shingled roof (*tectum scandulare*), open to all directions (3.17.3). Similarly, in the papyri the place from which the erotic spell is usually cast is described as a high room or a rooftop,¹¹⁰ and Simaetha's ritual from Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 has also been assumed to have taken place in an open upper room or the outside of a house.¹¹¹ This is done so, presumably, so that the practitioners might directly observe or converse with the moon and/or the planet Venus, divinities which could be invoked during their magical rituals. Aphrodite and the planet Venus are addressed directly in two extant spells: the first one is a

τηχομένην); 19a.50-51 (ναί, κύριε δαίμον, ἄξον, καύσον, ὄλεσον, πύρωσον, σκότωσον καιομένην, πυρουμένην, κέντει βασανίζομένην τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν τῆς Κάρωσα); 36.110-11 (ἄξον ἐμοὶ τῷ δεῖνα τὴν δεῖνα καιομένην, πυρουμένην), 200-01 (διαφιλήσαι με καιομένην, πυρουμένην πρὸς με, ναί, βασανίζομένην), 341 (ὡς σὺ κάης, οὕτως καὶ σὺ καύσεις τὴν δεῖνα); 61.16-17 (πῦρ ὑποκάτω αὐτῆς γενεοῦ, ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ πρὸς ἐμέ), 24 (ἴνα πυρώσης τὴν καρδίαν, καὶ φιλείτω με); *SM* 40.15-17 (πύρωσον τῆς αὐτῆς τὸ ἦπαρ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὴν καρδίαν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν); 42.36-37 (φλέξον τὴν ψυχὴν, τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα Γοργονία, ... ἐπ' ἔρωτι καὶ φιλίᾳ ... ἄξατε αὐτὴν Γοργονία, βασανίσατε αὐτῆς τὸ σῶμα); 45.31-32 (καύσατε αὐτῆς τὰ μέλη, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ γυνεκίον σῶμα, ἕως ἔλθῃ πρὸς ἐμέ); 48.35-36 (πυρουμένην, καομένην, τηχομένην τὴν ψυχὴν); *DT* 51 (ἐνεβάλλετε πυρετούς χαλεπούς εἰς πάντα τὰ μέλη Γαμετῆς ἣν ἔτεκεν Ὑγία [Μακρο]βίω, κατακαίνετε, καταχθόνιοι); 227 (uratur *Successa*; aduratur *amore et desiderio Successi*); 270.9-13 (uratur *furens amore et desiderio meo, anima et cor uratur* *Sextili, Dionysiae filius, amore et desiderio meo Septimes, Amoena filiae*); 271.10-14 (ἀγαγεῖν καὶ ζεῦξαι τὸν Οὐρβανόν ... ἐρώντα βασανίζόμενον).

¹⁰⁷ WINKLER (1991) 223.

¹⁰⁸ FARAONE (1999) 5.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. e.g., *PGM* 4.1581 (ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ), 2029 (ἐπερχομένη νυκτὶ), 2038 (ἐκείνη τῇ νυκτὶ), 2083 (τῆδε τῇ νυκτὶ); 7.885 (τῇ σήμερον νυκτὶ); also Lucian *Lover of Lies* 13-15.

¹¹⁰ Cf. e.g., *PGM*. 4.2465 (ἀναβάς ἐπὶ δώματος ὑψηλοῦ), 2709-10 (ἐπὶ δώματος ὑψηλοῦ).

¹¹¹ Cf. GOW (1952) II.33.

recipe for an attraction spell (*PGM*. 4.2886-910), whereas the other is an ἐπάναγκος, a *carmen secundum* in case the first spell is not successful (*PGM* 4.2910-38). The moon, in addition, is often invoked both in literary magical rituals (one only needs to recall Simaetha's constant invocation of the moon from Theocritus' *Idyll* 2—φράζεό μευ τὸν ἔρωθ' ὄθεν ἵκετο, πότνα Σελάνα), and in the magical papyri.¹¹² On one occasion, in particular, the magician is expected to offer a sacrifice with his or her gaze directed towards the moon (ἐπίθυε πρὸς Σελήνην).¹¹³

Furthermore, Pamphile's magical workplace betrays a variety of paraphernalia employed in numerous magical activities,¹¹⁴ the majority of which are either to be found in the literary witch tradition or are attested in one form or another by the magical papyri. The injurious herbs (*omne genus aromatis*) indicate Pamphile's expertise at φαρμακεία, whereas the presence of metal plaques written in indecipherable letters (*ignorabiliter lamminis litteratis*) points towards the widely diffused practice of casting *defixiones* for a variety of purposes. The remains from sunken ships (*infelicium navium durantibus damnis*) and other bits and pieces related to *naufragia* are also important ingredients in erotic spells or spells of direct vision in the magical papyri: for example, a spell addressed as a φίλτρον κάλλιστον suggests that the magician should use a copper nail from a shipwrecked vessel (ἦλω κυπρίνω ἀπὸ πλοίου νεναυαγηκότος) to inscribe a tin lamella with the names of the person he wishes to magically bind, and after enchanting it with some magical substance (that is, some part from the physical body (οὐσία)¹¹⁵ of the person towards whom the spell is directed) throw it into the sea with the order "Make her, XYZ, fall in love with me" (ποιήσατε τὴν δεῖνα φιλεῖν ἐμέ).¹¹⁶ Lastly, the collection of various body parts from corpses (*defletorum, sepultorum etiam cadaverum expositis multis admodum membris*) suggest, as it has already been discussed earlier in chapter 5, ghost evocation and necromantic rituals.

When broken down in segments, Pamphile's attraction spell consists of four distinct ritualistic steps: (i) the reciting of a charm over some palpitating entrails; (ii) the offering of libations; (iii) a 'persuasive' binding rite; and (iv) the subsequent burning of the intended

¹¹² Cf. e.g., *PGM* 4.2236, 2521, 2541, 2554, 2618, 6.756-794, and *passim*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 4.2708.

¹¹⁴ 3.17.4-5: *priusque apparatu solito instruit feralem officinam, omne genus aromatis et ignorabiliter lamminis litteratis et infelicium navium durantibus damnis, defletorum, sepultorum etiam cadaverum expositis multis admodum membris: hic nares et digiti, illic carnosi clavi pendentium, alibi trucidatorum servatus cruor et extorta dentibus ferarum trunca calvaria*.

¹¹⁵ In Euripides' *Hippolytus* 509-515 the οὐσία (referred to in this case as σημεῖον) is either a lock of hair or a thread of cloak; in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4.4 it can either be hair, shoes, or pieces of clothing. On spells found with actual hair still attached to them, cf. JORDAN (1985b) 251 with plate 68.

¹¹⁶ *PGM* 7.462-66. Parts from shipwrecks are also required for the spells at *PGM* 5.64, 68; 7.594.

victim's οὐσία. For the most part, the witch's ritual betrays influences from extant literary renditions of such spells, most notably Simaetha's from Theocritus' *Idyll* 2, the anonymous maiden's from Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, and the one attributed to a Syrian witch from Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4. Pamphile's ritual is not meant to disturb or shock the novel's audience; on the contrary, it is meant to amuse them not only by alerting the readership to its educated intertextual resonances, but also by reminding them that Pamphile's ritual is a literary interpretation of a real life practice attested in antiquity's magical handbooks. Pamphile's literary attraction spell suggests that the ritual requires a libation of some sort: just as Simaetha offers three different libations to the goddess Hecate (εἰς τρις ἀποσπένδω καὶ τρις τᾶδε, πότνια, φωνῶ, 2.43), so does Pamphile offer a libation of water, milk, and honey (*nunc rore fontano, nunc lacte vaccino, nunc melle montano; libat et mulsa*, 3.18.1);¹¹⁷ Lucian's sorceress, on the contrary, asks for a bowl of unmixed wine, interestingly enough not in order to offer a libation, but for herself to drink (καὶ κρατῆρα κεκεράσθαι δεῖ καὶ πίνειν ἐκείνην μόνην, 4.4).¹¹⁸ Part of the victim's personal belongings or some of his οὐσία are further required for the ritual, which are intended to be symbolically woven in 'knots' and/or burnt together with a variety of magical substances as a sort of *Feuerzauber*.¹¹⁹ Simaetha burns part of Delphis' cloak (τοῦτ' ἀπὸ τᾶς χλαίνας τὸ κράσπεδον ὤλεσε Δέλφισ, / ὡγὼ νῦν τίλλοισα κατ' ἀγρίῳ ἐν πυρὶ βάλλω, 2.53-54), the slave-girl Amaryllis is ordered by her mistress to weave 'knots of love' (*necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli, colores; | necte, Amarylli, modo et Veneris' dic vincula necto*', 8.77-78),¹²⁰ the Syrian woman requires either some hair, a part of clothing, or the victim's boots for her erotic ritual (δεήσει δέ τι αὐτοῦ μὲν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι, οἶον ἰμάτια ἢ κρηπίδας ἢ ὀλίγας τῶν τριχῶν ἢ τι τῶν τοιοῦτων, 4.4), and Pamphile ties the youth's hair in interlocking knots (*sic illos*

¹¹⁷ This libation was traditionally regarded appropriate for the dead; cf. e.g., Homer *Odyssey* 11.27-28; Aeschylus *Persians* 610-18; Euripides *Orestes* 113-16.

¹¹⁸ This might be a witty allusion either to the bawdy crone Dipsas from Ovid's *Amores* 1.8 or to the *anus* of the *Fasti* who drinks the entire bowl of wine used during a binding ritual (2.571-82); cf. also the discussion at chapter 2.4.2.2.

¹¹⁹ *Feuerzauber* or ἔμπυρα is a sub-category of erotic magic and a special form of the attraction spell; as the name already indicates, fire is a necessary prerequisite for these rituals. In fact, the great majority of attractions spells in the magical papyri require the use of fire (cf. e.g., *PGM* 4.1541 (κατακάω), 1550-51 (βάλλω σε εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ καόμενον), 2464 (ποίησας ἀνθρακιάν), 2710 (ἐπὶ ἀνθράκων), 2890-91 (ἐπὶ ἀμπελίνων ξύλων ἢ ἀνθράκων); 36.296 (ποίησον πυράν)) and also various (uncommon) substances which are meant to be used as burnt offerings (cf. e.g., *ibid.* 4.1826-37 (ἔστιν τὸ ἐπίθυμα τὸ ἐμπυροῦν τὸν Ἐρωτα καὶ ὄλην τὴν πράξιν· μάννης δραχμαὶ δ', στύρακος δραχμαὶ δ', ὅπιου δραχμαὶ δ', ζμύρνης δραχμαὶ δ', λίβανος, κρόκος, βδέλλα ἀνά ἡμίδραχμον. ἰσχάδα λιπαρὰν μίξας ἀναλάμβανε οἶνω εὐώδει πάντα ἴσα καὶ χρω εἰς τὴν χρῆσιν), 2705-07 (λαβῶν κύμινον Αἰθιοπικὸν καὶ αἰγὸς ποικίλης παρθένου στέαρ καὶ ὁμοῦ ποιήσας ἐπίθυμα), 2887-90 (περιστερᾶς λευκῆς αἶμα καὶ στέαρ, ζμύρνα ὡμὴ καὶ ὀπτὴ ἀρτεμισία, ὁμοῦ ποιεῖ κολλούρια καὶ ἐπίθυε πρὸς τὸν ἀστέρα)). On *Feuerzauber*, cf. KUHNERT (1894); ABT (1908) 82-83.

¹²⁰ On the significance of knots and the concept of 'twistedness' in binding spells, cf. OGDEN (1999) 29-30.

capillos in mutuos nexus obditos atque nodatos, 3.18.1). Simaetha and Virgil's maiden melt wax during their rituals (ὡς τοῦτον τὸν κηρὸν ἐγὼ σὺν δαίμονι τάκω, / ὡς τάκοιθ' ὑπ' ἔρωτος ὁ Μύνδιος αὐτίκα Δέλφης, 2.28-29; *haec ut cera liquescit / uno eodemque igni*, 8.80-81) and burn bay (Δέλφης ἔμ' ἀνίασεν· ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ Δέλφιδι δάφναν / αἶθω, 2.23-24; *Daphnis me malus urit, ego hanc in Daphnide laurum*, 8.83); Virgil's maiden, furthermore, offers herbs and frankincense (*verbenasque adole pinguis et mascula tura*, 8.65-66), whereas Simaetha burns barley and bran too (ἄλφια τοι πρᾶτον πυρὶ τάκεται, 2.18; νῦν θυσῶ τὰ πίτυρα, 33); the Syrian witch burns the man's οὐσία together with sulphur and salt while mumbling the names of the courtesan and her lover (ταύτας κρεμάσασα ἐκ παττάλου ὑποθυμῖ τῷ θείῳ, πάττουσα καὶ τῶν ἀλῶν ἐπὶ τὸ πύρ, ἐπιλέγει δὲ ἀμφοῖν τὰ ὀνόματα καὶ τὸ ἐκείνου καὶ τὸ σόν, 4.5); Pamphile, alternatively, sacrifices the hair she wrongly assumes to belong to her lover together with incense (*cum multis odoribus dat vivis carbonibus adolendos*, 3.18.2). The ritual may or may not employ an *inyx* or a rhomb for the enactment of the spell: hence, Simaetha uses a small rhomb in her persuasive ritual (χῶς δινεῖθ' ὅδε ῥόμβος ὁ χαλκῆος ἐξ Ἀφροδίτας, / ὡς τήνος δινοῖτο ποθ' ἀμετέραισι θύραισιν, 2.30-31), and so does Lucian's witch (εἶτα ἐκ τοῦ κόλπου προσκομίσασα ῥόμβον ἐπιστρέφει ἐπωδὴν τινα λέγουσα ἐπιτρόχῳ τῇ γλώττῃ, 4.5), but there are no indications of similar magical instruments being used in Virgil's or Pamphile's rituals. Perhaps the most notable deviation from this pattern is Pamphile's use of entrails (*decantatis spirantibus fibris*, 3.18.1); entrails usually denote legitimate divinatory practices,¹²¹ and as such their use in erotic attraction spells is not attested in any other extant literary or non-literary texts and spells to my knowledge.

A further, albeit different, picture of a literary attraction spell is afforded once more by Lucian, who relates in one of the inset tales from his *Lover of Lies* (13-15) the story of the love-stricken Glaucias, whose unrequited love for the married Chrysis forces him to seek the assistance of a Hyperborean magus in casting an erotic spell. The Hyperborean mage waits until the moon is at its highest peak and then digs a pit outside, in the open court of the house. He then summons the spirit of Glaucias' father so he may give his blessing for his son's uncommon union, evokes Hecate and Cerberus from the Underworld, and also draws down the moon. In the end, he produces a small effigy of a Cupid made out of clay and instructs it to go and fetch Chrysis (ἄπιθι, ἔφη, καὶ ἄγε Χρυσίδα). The Cupid immediately flies away,

¹²¹ Cf. e.g., the reading of entrails at Homer *Iliad* 24.221 and *Odyssey* 21.145, 22.318-23, and the remarks at Cicero's *Divination* 1.16: *extis enim omnes fere utuntur*; cf. also BURKERT (2005); COLLINS (2008b); JOHNSTON (2008a) 125-41, esp. 125-28.

obeying the mage's orders, and soon thereafter Chrysis is discovered knocking on Glaucias' door, madly in love with him (ὡς ἄν ἐκμανέστατα ἐρώσα).

The mage's ritual, quite ostensibly, has the exact same intention as the ones portrayed by Theocritus, Virgil, and Apuleius: to win the affections of a person and to lead (ἄγειν) him or her towards the person casting the erotic spell. Yet, this last ritual differs from the ones we have encountered so far in that Glaucias does not cast the erotic spell himself, but employs the services of a mage. This notion might seem odd at first, but there is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that Greeks and Romans would try to cause someone to fall in love with a third party—either in the form of manipulating the affections of a person on behalf of someone else or, when the love is inappropriate, as a curse—by means of magic or otherwise.¹²² Alternatively, there are also instances in which the third party is not so willing to lend a helpful hand.¹²³

The attraction spell portrayed by Lucian in his *Lover of Lies* comes much closer to being a more or less accurate representation of an actual attraction spell when compared to those of Theocritus, Virgil, and Apuleius. In his discussion of *Idyll 2 F*, GRAF concludes that although Theocritus was aware of similar erotic attraction recipes and had constructed Simaetha's ritual in such a way as to evoke associations with real life practices of erotic attraction spells, it was, nonetheless, blown out of proportion for purposes of literary amusement and cannot, therefore, be regarded either as an actual (that is, real-life) ritual scenario nor as a source of

¹²² For example, in Theocritus' *Idyll 7* Simichidas invokes Pan, the protector of male homoerotic love (on which cf. BORGEAUD (1988) 75; FARAONE (1999) 46, 147) on behalf of his friend, so that the god might bring the boy desired by his friend into the latter's arms (102-09). Elsewhere, in Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Story* the father of Charicleia urges the priest Calasiris to cause his daughter to fall in love with his nephew either by means of wisdom (σοφίαν) or by turning the magical *ἵνυχ* (2.33.6). And in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, the bickering courtesans Thais and Glycera claim that one of their rivals had her mother, a sorceress (φαρμακίς) adept in incantations (ψῆδαί), put some potions (φάρμακα) in a man's drink and, thus, achieved to drive him mad with love for her (1.2). In Roman literature, Tibullus' elderly *saga* is more than willing to assist the poet in composing a series of magical incantations which will eventually prevent his mistress' husband from recognising his wife's obvious infidelity (1.2.55-58), whereas Propertius, too, challenges the old *sagae* who claim to be capable of performing miraculous feats to alter the mind set of his beloved Cynthia and to make her go pale at the mere sight of him – then and only then will he be willing to cast away his scepticism and openly acknowledge the witches' supernatural powers (1.1.19-24). Moreover, the case of the baker's wife from Book 9 of the *Metamorphoses* should not be forgotten, who in her attempt to win back the affections of her angered husband runs for help to a local witch (9.29).

¹²³ We are informed that Homer had allegedly cursed a priestess with lust for older men after she had refused to give in to the poet's erotic advances (cf. pseudo-Herodotus *Life of Homer* 30). Parthenius, additionally, relates in his *Tales of Unhappy Love* 27 a story in which a certain Corinthian Alcinoe had dismissed unjustly her servant, resulting in the latter praying to Athena for revenge; the goddess responded to the servant's prayer and cursed Alcinoe to fall madly in love with a Samian stranger and to abandon her home and sail away with him. And then there is, of course, the well-known Phaedra-Hippolytus complex, whereby Aphrodite inflicts upon Phaedra an inappropriate love for her stepson.

information for contemporary magic. Theocritus' ἀγωγή is, at best, "a mosaic, a kind of superritual", which if "taken as a whole, would not work".¹²⁴ The same principle applies for Virgil's and Apuleius' spells. Lucian's spell, on the contrary, is quite different. In one of the surviving attraction spells from the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri the recipe instructs the magician to create a small wooden effigy of a winged Eros. The magician ought to deposit a small golden leaf inscribed with the addressee's name into the hollow back of the statuette, and then go to the house of the woman, knock on her door with the Eros, and recite a certain magical formula. He should then return home, lay the table by spreading a pure linen cloth and flowers, make a burnt offering to the effigy, and say uninterruptedly the invocation spell. At that moment the statuette would act like a supernatural assistant and bring the woman to his home.¹²⁵ The similarities between the two depictions are too obvious, and should we currently put aside Lucian's literary hyperboles, which in the end are only meant to amuse his audience, the literary scene and the magic spell are essentially the same.

However, one of the key differences between any literary and non-literary depictions of attraction spells concerns the gender of the person casting the spell (the agent) and the person against whom the spell is targeted (the victim). Contrary to the literary ἀγωγαί, the agents of which are usually identified as female and the victims as male (with the exception, as we have already seen, of Lucian's *Lover of Lies*), the magical papyri and the material record present a diametrically different picture. In the great majority of attraction spells in the papyri and from magical *defixiones* it is a *male* agent casting a spell against a *female* victim, and not the other way around.¹²⁶ As such, one encounters formulas of the type "Bring *her* (τὴν δεῖνα) to me (τῷ δεῖνα), blazing and burning with fire" or "inflict fiery love on *her* (τὴν δεῖνα), whom XYZ bore, so that for me, (τῷ δεῖνα), whom XYZ bore, she might melt with love for all the days

¹²⁴ GRAF (1997) 184. Cf. also GOW (1952) II.35-36; OGDEN describes the ritual as an "artificially elaborate erotic spell" (2014: 295); FARAONE, on the contrary, surmises that Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 drew rather accurately on the popular tradition of hexametrical binding incantations (1995, esp. 11-16).

¹²⁵ PGM 4.1839-67: ἔχει δὲ καὶ πράξιν πάρεδρος, ὃς γίνεται ἐκ μορέας ξύλου· γίνεται δὲ Ἔρωσ πτερωτὸς χλαμύδα ἔχων, προβεβληκῶς τὸν δεξιὸν πόδα, κοῖλον ἔχων τὸν νῶτον. εἰς δὲ τὸ κοίλωμα βάλει χρυσοῦν πέταλον κυπρίῳ γραφεῖω γράψας ψυχρηλάτῳ τινὸς τὸ ὄνομα· ΜΑΡΣΑΒΟΥΤΑΡΘΕ—γενοῦ μοι πάρεδρος καὶ παραστάτης καὶ ὄνειροπομπός· καὶ ἐλθὼν ὀψὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, ἧς βούλει, κροῦε τὴν θύραν αὐτῆς τῷ Ἔρωτι καὶ λέγε· 'ἰδέ, ὦδε μένει ἡ δεῖνα, ὅπως παρασταθεὶς αὐτῇ εἴτης, ἃ προαιρούμαι, ὁμοιωθεὶς ᾧ σέβεται θεῶ ἢ δαίμονι.' καὶ ἐλθὼν σου εἰς τὸν οἶκον θές τράπεζαν καὶ ὑποστρώσας σινδὸνα καθαρὰν καὶ ἄνηθι τὰ τοῦ καιροῦ ἐς ἐπάνω τὸ ζῶδιον, εἶτα ἐπίθου αὐτῷ καὶ λέγε τὸν λόγον συνεχῶς τὸν τῆς ἐπικλήσεως καὶ πέμπε, καὶ ποιήσει ἀπαραβάτως. ὅταν δὲ κλίνῃς τῷ λίθῳ, ἐκείνη τῇ νυκτὶ ὄνειροπομπεῖ· ἄλλη γὰρ ἄλλων ἔχεται.

¹²⁶ According to FARAONE (1999) 43 n.9, the great majority of published binding spells (69 in total) are cast by men and target women.

to come”.¹²⁷ Despite this being the general rule, sometimes we do encounter cases where the gender of agent and victim have been reversed: in six spells it is allegedly women summoning their male lovers, thus complying with the general picture of attractions spells we come across in literary depictions,¹²⁸ whereas in six other spells agent and victim seem to be engaged either in a male¹²⁹ or female¹³⁰ homoerotic relationships.

How does one account then for such a discrepancy between literary depictions and ‘real’ practising of erotic attraction spells and of magic in general? K. STRATTON has claimed that “the association of women with magic is axiomatic”,¹³¹ and she does have a point in saying so. Throughout antique (but also modern) literature women have been portrayed as more than eager to engage in and practise dreadful forms of witchcraft. In contrast, similar native Greek and Roman *male* sorcerers in literature are not that frequent; when we do by chance come across one, they are usually foreign specialists from Babylon, Syria, Egypt, or the lands of the Hyperboreans, and surprisingly never Greek or Roman in origin. In addition, male sorcerers are never depicted in such vile terms as their female counterparts are and this might be connected to the gender of the authors and to perceived gender power-struggles. The surviving portrayals of women behaving like witches were predominantly produced by upper-class *male* authors, mirroring deep down *male* (and also their own) concerns about the dangerous independence of women who, as we have seen earlier, had grown considerably

¹²⁷ Cf. e.g., *PGM* 36.110-11 (ἄξον ἐμοὶ τῷ δεῖνα τὴν δεῖνα καιομένην, πυρουμένην), 4.2931-33 (καὶ τῇ δεῖνι, ἦν δεῖνα, βάλε πυρσὸν ἔρωτα, ὥστ’ ἐπ’ ἐμοῦ τοῦ δεῖνος, οὐ ἢ δεῖνα, φιλότῃ τακῆναι ἡμματα πάντα). For more examples, cf. the cases cited *supra* n.106.

¹²⁸ Cf. *PGM* 16.3-8 (ποίησον φθίνειν καὶ κατατήκεσθαι Σαραπίωνα ἐπὶ τῷ ἔρωτι Διοσκοροῦτος, ἦν ἔτεκε Τικῶ. καῦσον τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ, ἔκτηξον, καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐκθλάσον μου φιλίᾳ, ἔρωτι, ὀδύνη, ἕως ἔλθῃ Σαραπίων, ὃν ἔτεκε Παράμητρα, πρὸς Διοσκοροῦν, ἦν ἔτεκε Τικῶ, καὶ ποιήσῃ τὰ καταθύμιά μου πάντα καὶ διαμείνῃ ἐμὲ φίλων, ἕως ὅτου εἰς Ἄιδην ἀφίκηται); 19b.1-3 (τῇ δεῖνα τὸν δεῖνα κομίζοι); 39.18-21 (ἐξορκίζω σε τῶν δώδεκα στοιχείων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἰκοσιτέσσερα στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, ἵνα ἄγγῃς μοι Ἡρακλῆν, ὃν ἔτεκεν Ταίπις, πρὸς Ἄλλοῦν, ἧς ἔτεκεν Ἀλεξανδρία, ἣδη ἦδη, ταχὺ ταχύ); 68.3-6 (καῦσον τὴν ψυχὴν Εὐτύχους, ὃν ἔτεκεν Ζωσίμη, ἐπὶ αὐτὴν Ἐριέαν, ἦν ἔτεκεν Ἐρχηελιώ); *DT* 270.9-13 (*uratur furens amore et desiderio meo, anima et cor uratur Sextili, Dionysiae filius, amore et desiderio meo Septimes, Amoena filiae*); 271.11-15 (ὀρκίζω σε τὸν διαστήσαντα τὴν ῥάβδον ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, ἀγαγεῖν καὶ ζεύξαι τὸν Οὐρβανόν, ὃν ἔτεκεν Οὐρβανά, πρὸς τὴν Δομιτιανάν, ἦν ἔτεκεν Κανδιδά, ἐρώντα βασιανίζομενον ἀγρυπνοῦντα ἐπὶ τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτῆς καὶ ἔρωτι).

¹²⁹ Cf. *PGM*. 32a.7-12 (καῦσον ψυχὴν καὶ καρδίαν αὐτοῦ Ἀμωνίου, οὐ ἔτεκεν Ἐλένη, ἐπ’ αὐτὸν Σεραπιακόν, ὃν ἔτεκεν Θρέπη, ἄρτι, ἄρτι, ταχὺ ταχύ); 68.7-11 (Ἀβρασάξ, καῦσον αὐτοῦ Εὐτύχους τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὴν καρδίαν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν Εὐτύχην, ὃν ἔτεκεν Ζωσίμη, ἄρτι, ταχύ, ταχύ, τῇ αὐτῇ ὄρα καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ); *SM* 54.9-10, 37-39 (ἐπιλάθοιτο Ἄννιανός τῆς ἰδίας μνήμης καὶ Ἡωνικοῦ μόνου μνημονεύτω. [...] κατάσχετε τὴν φιλίαν Ἄννιανου πρὸς Ἡωνικόν, πρῶτιστον, ἀδιάλυτως, ἀπὸ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας); cf. also the unpublished spell from Tyre quoted by JORDAN (1985b) 223 n.16: “May Juvinus lie awake on account of his affection for me, Porphyrius.”

¹³⁰ Cf. *SM* 42.11-13 (διὰ τούτου τοῦ ναικουδαίμονος φλέξον τὴν καρδίαν, τὸ ἦπαρ, τὸ πνεῦμα Γοργονία, ἦν αἴτεκεν Νιλογενία, ἐπ’ ἔρωτι καὶ φιλίᾳ Σοφία, ἦν αἴτεκεν Ἰσάρα), 37b (ποίησον Νίκην Ἀπολλωνοῦτος ἐρασθῆναι Παντοῦτος, ἦν ἔτεκεν Τμεσιώς, ἐπὶ ε’ μῆνας); *PGM* 32.1-9 (ἐξορκίζω σε, Εὐάγγελε, κατὰ τοῦ Ἀνούβιδος καὶ τοῦ Ἐρμού καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν πάντων κάτω, ἄξαι καὶ καταδῆσαι Σαραπιάδα, ἦν ἔτεκεν Ἐλένη, ἐπ’ αὐτὴν Ἡραεῖδαν, ἦν ἔτεκεν Θερμουθαρῖν, ἄρτι, ἄρτι, ταχὺ ταχύ).

¹³¹ STRATTON (2007) 24.

powerful due to the political instability during the last phase of the Republic; such powerful women were considered a threat to male dominance and as encroaching on male spheres of dominance. Furthermore, women in literature were always understood (and constructed) in terms of the 'Other' and as operating as a foil to male predominance and societal hierarchy. Hence, this male concern of women allegedly trying to overthrow male societal supremacy would inevitably have led to women being vilified in literature as witches. As for erotic magic, F. GRAF has also explained the discrepancy by examining gender conventions in antiquity. It was unmanly and 'unheroic' behaviour for a male to resort to the art of magic in order to clandestinely obtain ('attract') a woman instead of directly going after her; erotic magic, he argues, was "a secret weapon, unworthy of the ideal warrior of the world of men". Therefore, literary portrayals of women engaging in predatory love magic were not only meant to circulate the notion that magic was the concern of females and not of males, but also to remove "erotic magic still further away from the world of men".¹³²

4.2. Magical corporeal transformations

Since Photis' involvement in the attraction spell proved to be an utter fiasco, Pamphile resolves to take matters in her own hands; aware of this, Photis informs Lucius about her mistress' intention to go after her young lover by herself and her plans to perform an elaborate transformation ritual. And so one night she brings him to the room where the ritual will take place, and Lucius is allowed to peep on Pamphile through a small chink in the door, since the witch has already locked herself up in her magical laboratory so that she could be away from prying eyes. Surprisingly, at this point the narratives of the *Metamorphoses* and the pseudo-Lucianic *Ass* are in accordance regarding the ritual's description (3,22 = *Ass* 12). Pamphile first takes off all her clothes, smears herself with a magical ointment from head to toes, holds a short conversation with her lamp, and then begins to violently shake her limbs until she is transformed into an owl (in the *Ass* she turns into a night raven, κόραξ νυκτερινός). She then flies out of the window with a loud screech, disappearing from Lucius' eyesight and thus exiting the narrative of the *Metamorphoses* with a bang.

The motif of metamorphosis (both literal and metaphorical) appears quite often in the course of the first three Books of the *Metamorphoses* and ties in nicely with the overall theme

¹³² GRAF (1997) 185-90; quotations from 187, 189. An overview of modern scholarship on the topic of magic and gender/women (both in antiquity but also in modern times) is afforded by STRATTON (2014a).

of the novel, Lucius' transformation into an ass. As such, Pamphile's ritual brings her once again into close proximity with both Apuleius' wicked crones and the witches of the Imperial tradition, which further enhances the notion of Pamphile's hybrid nature. In Book 1 we have come across Meroe employing her magic arts in pursuit of her sexual desires and her eagerness to exact revenge from anyone who frustrates her *voluptas* by transforming them into wretched beavers, frogs, and rams (1.9.1-4), whereas in Book 2 the witches that Thelyphron comes in contact with are also considered to be experts in shape-shifting and could easily change their shapes even to the tiniest of flies in order to achieve their magical goals (2.22.2-3). Animal transformation is moreover a minor theme of the Imperial witch tradition: Virgil's magician Moeris from *Eclogue* 8 is said to alter his outer appearance into that of a wolf with the help of *venena* (95-98), and so does Propertius' bawdy witch Acanthis (4.5.13-14), whereas Ovid's witch Dipsas from the *Amores* is suspected of being able to shape-shift into a bird (1.8.13-14). All these magical metamorphoses, of course, trace their origins back to *Odyssey* 10.234-40 and to Circe's infamous transformations, during which Circe in her capacity as 'Lady of the Beasts' is encountered changing Odysseus' companions into swine.¹³³

Though rather succinct in nature, Pamphile's transformation (but also that of Lucius) in the *Metamorphoses* and that of her counterpart in the *Ass* are quite unique for two reasons: firstly, both are one of the very few magical descriptions to portray a mere mortal's *voluntary* transformation—that is, a transformation which occurs as a conscious and deliberate result of witchcraft, as opposed to an 'involuntary' transformation which comes as a result of external powers, triggered quite often by a curse sent by the gods.¹³⁴ In addition, Pamphile's metamorphosis is of significance because the *modus operandi* of shape-shifting is actually revealed. Whenever a physical metamorphosis occurs elsewhere in the novel, it is not stated precisely by what means the transformation has been effected, apart from that it does and perhaps the reasons behind it are also mentioned. It is said that Meroe indeed transforms one of her lovers into a beaver because he had cheated on her, or a lawyer into a ram because he had spoken against her. But how exactly these transformations happen, or what the particulars behind them are, is something which is never revealed.

¹³³ On Circe and her association with the Πότνια Θηρῶν, cf. MARINATOS (1995) and (2008).

¹³⁴ Ovid, for example, reports in his *Metamorphoses* a number of transformations into animals that come as a calculated result of a divine curse: Lycaon into a wolf by Jupiter (1.232-39), Actaeon into a stag by Diana (3.193-97), Arachne into a spider by Minerva (6.134-145), Scylla into the terrible monster from the *Odyssey* and Picus into a bird by Circe (14.55-67, 386-96).

Before the ritual *per se* can begin, a preparatory stage is seemingly required that involves nudity: both Pamphile and Lucius must first remove all their clothes.¹³⁵ Partial or full nakedness, whether literal or metaphorical, was a necessary prerequisite in certain magical rituals.¹³⁶ Hence, the removal of clothes and footwear—tokens of one’s humanity—symbolise the rejection of one’s pretension to civilisation¹³⁷ and of everything that is ‘earthly’.¹³⁸ Horace, therefore, depicts Canidia and Sagana in *Satire* 1.8 running around the Esquiline cemetery with bare feet (*nudae pedes*), presumably so that they may be in direct contact with the earth and all the infernal deities,¹³⁹ and hair unrestrained (*passus capillus*) (23-25); Tibullus pictures his old witch being chased across town naked (*inguina nuda*) by packs of angry dogs (1.5.55); Ovid’s Medea in the *Metamorphoses* is encountered as well roaming around the fields barefoot (*nuda pes*) and with hair stripped ‘naked’ of all adornments (*nudi capilli*) (7.183).¹⁴⁰

Aside from ‘bare’ feet, some magical rituals entail complete corporeal nudity: a surviving fragment from Sophocles’ *Root-Cutters* portrays Medea collecting magical herbs for use in *φαρμακεία* stark naked (*γυμνή*).¹⁴¹ In two divination rituals from the magical papyri, nakedness is a basic prerequisite: a recipe prescribing a bowl divination ritual (*λεκανομαντεία*) requires that the magician should go up to the highest part of his house and lie naked (*γυμνός*) on the floor on a pure linen cloth before invoking the sun (*PGM* 4.169-79), and a recipe requesting a dream oracle prescribes that among other ritualistic actions the magician must also draw a naked man (*γυμνός*) having a diadem on his head, a sword in his right hand, and a wand in the left (*PGM* 8.104-08). Nudity in conjunction with the repossession of one’s

¹³⁵ 3.21.4: *omnibus laciniis se devesit Pamphile*; 3.24.2: *abiectis propere laciniis totis*. Also *Ass* 12: ὁρῶ οὖν τὴν μὲν γυναικὰ ἀποδυομένην; 13: ἐγὼ δὲ σπεύδων ἤδη ἀποδύσας. As soon as Lucius is returned to his human form, he also finds himself being completely in the nude; cf. 11.14.4-5: *nam me cum primum nefasto tegmine despoliaverat asinus, compressis in artum feminibus et superstrictis accurate manibus, quantum nudo licebat velamento me naturali probe muniveram. tunc e cohorte religionis unus inpigre superiorem exutus tunicam supertexit me celerrume*; also *Ass* 54: ὁ δὲ Λούκιος αὐτὸς ἔνδον μοι γυμνός εἰστήκει.

¹³⁶ Nudity was allegedly required in certain religious rituals as well, such as sacrifices (*Aelian Nature of Animals* 11.2), incubation rites (*Σ. Aristophanes Clouds* 508c (Holwerda)), mysteries (*Aristophanes Clouds* 497-508), general religious ceremonies (*Strabo Geography* 14.1.44), and divination (*Cicero Divination* 1.113), on which cf. HECKENBACH (1911) 8-34.

¹³⁷ Cf. LEINWEBER (1994) 81.

¹³⁸ Cf. ABT (1908) 246 n.1: “Es ist eine Entkleidung von allem Irdischen”.

¹³⁹ Cf. PEASE (1967) 431.

¹⁴⁰ Perhaps Ovid’s passage intertextually evokes Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 4.43: τῇ δὲ καὶ αὐτόματοι θυρέων ὑπέειξαν ὀχῆες / ἴώκειαις ἄψορροι ἀναθρώσκοντες αἰοδαίς. / γυμνοῖσιν δὲ πόδεσσιν ἀνὰ στεϊνάς θέεν οἴμους, / λαιῆ μὲν χερὶ πέπλον ἐπ’ ὀφρύσιν ἀμφὶ μέτωπα / στείλαμένη καὶ καλὰ παρήια, δεξιτερῇ δὲ / ἄκρην ὑψόθι πέζαν ἀερτάζουσα χιτῶνος. Cf. also Seneca *Medea* 752-53: *tibi more gentis vinculo solvens comam / secreta nudo nemora lustravi pede*.

¹⁴¹ Sophocles fr. 534 (Radt): αἰ δὲ καλυπταὶ / κίσται ριζῶν κρύπτουσι τομάς, / ἄς ἦδε βοῶσ’ ἀλαλαζομένη / γυμνὴ χαλκείοις ἤμα δρεπάνοις.

disrobed clothes were particularly common notions in shape-shifting folklore, especially regarding ancient werewolf beliefs: if one were to become a part of the world of animals, clothes (representing the final symbol of one's human nature) had to be removed.¹⁴² In the *Metamorphoses* and the *Ass* the transformation itself is achieved by applying an ointment on the body¹⁴³ and requires no special condition to be met for the retransformation process to be effective (such as the repossession of one's clothes or abstinence from eating human flesh); it is revealed that a mere bite from the 'antidote' suffices to bring about the desired result.¹⁴⁴ In this respect, Pamphile's ritual is a reversed form of Circe's magical transformations from the *Odyssey*: Circe first offers Odysseus' companions something to *eat* and drink, in which baleful *φάρμακα* have been mixed beforehand, and transforms them into pigs by striking them with

¹⁴² In Petronius' *Satyrical* 62.5-6, 8, Niceros' famous werewolf must first take off all his clothes prior to his transformation, and then urinates around them, causing the clothes to turn into stone, as a precautionary measure in order to secure that nobody will steal them (this might be a form of *Defixionszauber*, as suggested at chapter 4.5.3). From a variety of ancient sources we learn that it was crucial that the shape-shifter should repossess the clothes he had previously removed (in some cases also refrain from consuming human flesh while being in animal form) if the retransformation process were to be successful. What apparently seems to lie behind this belief is the popular opinion that without access to their clothes shape-shifters could not return to their human shape. (The recovery of the clothes becomes a particularly crucial and prominent element in medieval werewolf folklore, as it is attested by the *Lai de Bisclavret* of Marie de France (12th century), the *Lai de Melion* (late 12th – early 13th century), Gervase of Tilbury's story about the werewolf Calceveyra (13th century), the medieval story of *Arthur et Gorlagon* (13th – 14th century), or the tale of Sigmund and Sinfjötli from the Icelandic *Volsungasaga* (13th century); for a brief exposition, cf. VEENSTRA (2002) 150-53.) Pliny offers a good parallel for this notion in the *Natural History*: he reports that according to a *rite de passage* related by the Greek writer Evanthes a man was chosen from a certain Arcadian family and was escorted to a nearby swamp, where he took off all his clothes, placed them on an oak tree, swam across a lake, and was then transformed into a wolf for nine years. If the man successfully refrained from consuming human flesh, he swam back across the lake, repossessed the clothes he had taken off nine years earlier, and was again turned back to his human form (8.81). On werewolves and werewolf lore in antiquity, cf. Aesop 419 (Perry); Herodotus *Histories* 4.105.2; Plato *Republic* 8.565d; Virgil *Eclogue* 8.95-99; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.232-39; Pliny *Natural History* 8.81-82; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 6.8.2, 8.2.6; Augustine *City of God* 18.17; Aetius *On Medicine* 6.11. Cf. also the discussions at SMITH (1894); BURKERT (1983) 83-134; JOST (1985) 258-67; BUXTON (1987); BLÄNSDORF (1990); METZGER (2011); SCHMELING (2011) 257; MURGATROYD (2012) 11-15; on later werewolves, cf. VEENSTRA (2002); SCONDUTO (2008).

¹⁴³ 3.21.4: *unius operculo remoto atque indidem egesta unguedine diuque palmulis suis adfricta ab imis unguibus sese totam adusque summos capillos perlinit*; 3.24.2: *avide manus immersi et haurito plusculo uncto corporis mei membra perficui*. Also *Ass* 12: ἡ δὲ εἶχεν ἐμβεβλημένον ὃ τι μὲν οὐκ οἶδα, τῆς δὲ ὄψεως αὐτῆς ἔνεκα ἔλαιον αὐτὸ ἐδόκουν εἶναι. ἐκ τούτου λαβοῦσα χρίεται ὄλη; 13: ἐγὼ δὲ σπεύδων ἤδη ἀποδύσας χρίω ὄλον ἐμαυτόν.

¹⁴⁴ 3.25.3: *sed bene quod facilius reformationis huius medela suppeditat. nam rosis tantum demorsicatis exhibis asinum statimque in meum Lucium postliminio redibis*. Also *Ass* 14: ῥάων γὰρ ἡ τούτου θεραπεία-ῥόδα γὰρ μόνα εἰ φάγοις, ἀποδύση μὲν αὐτίκα τὸ κτήνος, τὸν δὲ ἐραστήν μοι τὸν ἐμὸν αὖθις ἀποδώσεις.

her magic wand,¹⁴⁵ and later reverses the magical effect by *applying* (προσάλειφεν) an ointment on the men.¹⁴⁶

Pamphile and Lucius' metamorphosis and re-metamorphosis descriptions are quite elaborate in nature and point towards Ovid's method of depicting transformations in his *Metamorphoses* by describing step by step the progressive development of the transformative procedure.¹⁴⁷ Apuleius, accordingly, goes to similar lengths to portray for his audience the effect that shape-shifting has on the human body: after applying the ointment to her body, Pamphile begins to violently shake her limbs and feathers begin to spring, her nose becomes hardened and beaked, and her toenails turn into hooks.¹⁴⁸ In quite a similar fashion, Lucius' bodily transformation is as descriptive and informative as it can get: the body hair begins to thicken into bristles and his human skin to turn into a hide, his fingers and toes are transformed into hoofs and he grows a tail, his face expands and his facial features alter in appearance, the ears become immoderately long, and so does his penis.¹⁴⁹ A similar description, nearly symmetrical, is afforded again for Lucius' retransformation in Book 11, only this time the process is described in reverse: the bristles disappear, the donkey hide thins, the

¹⁴⁵ 10.234-40: ἐν δὲ σφιν τυρόν τε καὶ ἄλφιτα καὶ μέλι χλωρόν / οἴνω Πραμνεῖω ἐκύκα· ἀνέμισγε δὲ σίτω / φάρμακα λύγρ', ἵνα πάγχυ λαθοῖατο πατρίδος αἴης. / αὐτὰρ ἔπει δῶκέν τε καὶ ἔκπιον, αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα / ῥάβδω πεπληγυῖα κατὰ συφείοισιν ἐέργνυ. / οἱ δὲ συῶν μὲν ἔχον κεφαλὰς φωνήν τε τρίχας τε / καὶ δέμας, αὐτὰρ νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος ὡς τὸ πάρος περ.

¹⁴⁶ 10.388-96: ὡς ἐφάμην, Κίρκη δὲ διέκ μεγάροιο βεβήκει / ῥάβδον ἔχουσ' ἐν χειρὶ, θύρας δ' ἀνέωξε συφειοῦ, / ἐκ δ' ἔλασεν σιάλοισιν εὐκοτὰς ἐννεώροισιν. / οἱ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἔστησαν ἐναντίοι, ἡ δὲ δι' αὐτῶν / ἐρχομένη προσάλειφεν ἐκάστω φάρμακον ἄλλο. / τῶν δ' ἐκ μὲν μελέων τρίχες ἔρρεον, ἄς πρὶν ἔφυσε / φάρμακον οὐλόμενον, τὸ σφιν πόρε πότνια Κίρκη· / ἄνδρες δ' ἄψ ἐγένοντο νεώτεροι ἢ πάρος ἦσαν / καὶ πολὺ καλλίονες καὶ μείζονες εἰσοράσθαι.

¹⁴⁷ For instance, instead of merely claiming that Actaeon turned into a stag or Arachne into a spider, Ovid puts every single stage of the metamorphosis before the reader's eyes: Actaeon grows horns, his neck becomes out-stretched and his ear tips sharpen, his hands turn into feet, his arms into long legs, and his entire body becomes clothed with a spotted hide (*nec plura minata / dat sparso capiti vivacis cornua cervi, / dat spatium collo summasque cacuminat aures / cum pedibusque manus, cum longis brachia mutat / cruribus et velat maculoso vellere corpus*, 3.193-97); similarly, Arachne loses her hair, nose and ears, her head shrinks, her entire body becomes smaller and smaller and ultimately turns into a belly, whereas her fingers turn into small legs (*post ea discedens sucis Hecateidos herbae / sparsit, et extemplo tristi medicamine tactae / defluxere comae, cum quis et naris et aures, / fitque caput minimum, toto quoque corpore parva est; / in latere exiles digiti pro cruribus haerent, / cetera venter habet*, 6.139-144). On the echoing of Ovidian metamorphic scenes in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, cf. HARRISON (2014); also KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 257.

¹⁴⁸ 3.21.5: *quis leniter fluctuantibus promicant molles plumulae, crescunt et fortes pinnulae; duratur nasus incurvus, coguntur ungues adunci*. Also Ass 12: ἄφνω πτερὰ ἐκφύεται αὐτῇ, καὶ ἡ ῥὶν κερατίνη καὶ γρυπὴ ἐγένετο, καὶ τᾶλλα δὲ ὅσα ὀρνίθων κτήματα καὶ σύμβολα πάντα εἶχε.

¹⁴⁹ 4.24.4-6: *sed plane pili mei crassantur in setas, et cutis tenella duratur in corium, et in extimis palmulis perditto numero toti digiti coguntur in singulas ungulas, et de spinae meae termino grandis cauda procedit. iam facies enormis et os prolixum et nares hiantes et labiae pendulae; sic et aures inmodicis horripilant auctibus. nec ullum miserae reformationis video solacium, nisi quod mihi iam nequeunt tenere Photidem natura crescebat*. Also Ass 13: ἀλλά μοι οὐρὰ ὕπισθεν ἐξήλθεν, καὶ οἱ δάκτυλοι πάντες ὥχοντο οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποι· ὄνουχας δὲ τοὺς πάντας τέσσαρας εἶχον, καὶ τούτους οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ὀπλάς, καὶ μοι αἱ χεῖρες καὶ οἱ πόδες κτήνους πόδες ἐγένοντο, καὶ τὰ ὦτα δὲ μακρὰ καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον μέγα.

belly is contracted, the hoofs turn back to fingers and toes, the long neck shrinks, the head and the facial features are reinstated to human form, the ears become smaller, and the tail disappears; this description is only enhanced with the additional features that the hard, donkey teeth become human ones and that Lucius achieves an upright stance (*erectus*).¹⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, Lucius-ass' asinine phallus does not come into the discussion during his retransformation.¹⁵¹

What is more, metamorphosis in Greek and Roman culture entailed merely physical, not mental, transformation; the metamorphosis itself does not affect in any way an individual's cognitive capacities. Homer already suggested that there was a continuity of consciousness between human and bestial form, and so Odysseus' comrades retain their human intelligence while in animal form (αὐτὰρ νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος ὡς τὸ πάρος περ, 10.240) and appear to recognise Odysseus and recall what happened to them as soon as they are reinstated to human shape. In his *Metamorphoses* Ovid emphasised this fact as well by having the transformed individuals maintain their human awareness underneath the guise of animals, thus allowing them to comprehend the consequences of their actions.¹⁵² In the Ass it is the very desire of finding out whether a physical transformation would also impact one's

¹⁵⁰ 11.13.3-5: *protinus mihi delabitur deformis et ferina facies. ac primo quidem squalens pilus defluit, ac dehinc cutis crassa tenuatur, venter obesus residit, pedum plantae per ungulas in digitos exeunt, manus non iam pedes sunt, sed in erecta porriguntur officia, cervix procera cohibetur, os et caput rutundatur, aures enormes repetunt pristinam parvitatem, dentes saxei redeunt ad humanam minutiem, et, quae me potissimum cruciabat ante, cauda nusquam!* On this scene and its mixture of narratological perspectives, cf. the discussion at KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 21. The equivalent scene at Ass 54 is neither as thrilling nor as descriptive: ἐπ' ἐμοὶ ἀποπίπτει ἐξ ἐμοῦ ἐκείνη ἢ τοῦ κτήνους ὄψις καὶ ἀπόλλυται, καὶ ἀφανῆς ἐκείνος ὁ πάλαι ὄνος.

¹⁵¹ Even when in asinine form, Lucius appears to be fixated on his gigantic penis (e.g., the episode of the sexual encounter with the wealthy *matrona* at 10.21-22), and the prospect of a possible castration does not seem to weigh lightly on him (e.g., 7.23.4, 26.5). Contrastingly, the phallus, once a symbol of Lucius' earlier carnal desires that eventually drive him to enter an erotic relationship with Photis in order to access Pamphile's magic, is now replaced by abstinence from sexual pleasure and a life committed to Isis' servitude (cf. e.g., SCHLAM (1978) 104; EGELHAAF-GAISER (2000) 93). In the end not only does the protagonist not miss his huge asinine sexual organ, but when he is also back to his human form, he appears to feel utterly ashamed of his nudity and so quickly covers his genitals as an act of modesty (11.14.4; this sense of *pudor* is taken by KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* to indicate Lucius' moral and intellectual improvement as opposed to Loukios in the Ass who is still driven by his sexual desire after his restoration to human form (2015: 47)). Yet unlike the 'reborn' Lucius of the *Metamorphoses*, the Loukios of the Ass and his obsession with sexual licence and sensual pleasure does not significantly change after his re-metamorphosis; he eagerly runs to the wealthy *matrona* with whom he had intercourse while in bestial form in hopes that she will also accept him now that he has been restored to human form; but it is soon revealed that the woman was only interested in his asinine qualities and thus crudely rejects him (56).

¹⁵² E.g., Callisto at 2.485-86: *mens antiqua tamen facta quoque mansit in ursae, | adsiduoque suos gemitu testata dolores*; or Actaeon at 3.202-03 (*vox illa fuit, lacrimaeque per ora | non sua fluxerunt; mens tantum pristina mansit*). Cf. also the discussion at SOLODOW (1988) 174-96, esp. 175. ANDERSON's remark that "continuity of human consciousness is Ovid's innovation" is certainly erroneous (1997: 290 s.v. '*mens antiqua manet*'); if anything, the innovation belongs to Homer and was picked up later by Ovid.

soul that makes Loukios eager to undergo a metamorphosis in the first place (13), whereas his Latin counterpart not only preserves his human consciousness,¹⁵³ but also addresses his audience in a metanarrative way a couple of times while in asinine form.¹⁵⁴ Although it is not explicitly mentioned anywhere, it is safe to assume that Pamphile retains her human awareness too, otherwise the witch's transformation into a bird and her going after her unresponsive lover would not really make sense by human standards.

However, Pamphile's secret discussion with the lamp makes little, perhaps no sense at all within the structure of this ritual (3.21.4). It certainly plays no important role in the metamorphosis process itself, since the means which essentially brings about the shape-shifting is the ointment, and without it the transformation cannot take place. The lamp, therefore, might be required for a different ritual altogether, perhaps a lamp divination. As we have already seen earlier, lamps were commonly used in *λυχνομαντεία* with a number of recipes from the magical papyri instructing potential magicians how to attain knowledge of the future by inquiring into a *lucerna*.¹⁵⁵ Pamphile is certainly not ignorant of this practice: earlier in the narrative she divines the upcoming weather through a small lamp in the presence of both Lucius and Milo, which only results in the latter's witticism about the 'mighty Sibyl in the lamp' (2.11.6). Perhaps the intention of the secret discussion with the lamp is to illuminate where the young Boeotian man resides; it is, after all, for him that Pamphile is willing to undergo such a transformation. I am, however, inclined to disagree with S. SABNIS' view that the consultation of the lamp is a magic spell necessary for the metamorphosis

¹⁵³ E.g., 3.26.1: *ego vero, quamquam perfectus asinus et pro Lucio iumentum, sensum tamen retinebam humanum*; 4.6.2: *nam et meum simul periclitabor ingenium, et faxo vos quoque an mente etiam sensuque fuerim asinus sedulo sentiatis*. A further hint at Lucius-ass' double nature is offered in the closing paragraph of Book 3, when Lucius-ass refrains from eating some garden roses for fear that his retransformation in human might result in his death at the hands of the robbers (3.29.5-8: *nam cum multas villulas et casas amplas praeterirem, hortulum quendam prospexi satis amoenum, in quo praeter ceteras gratas herbulas rosae virgines matutino rore florebant. his inhians et spe salutis alacer ac laetus propius accessi, dumque iam labiis undantibus adfecto, consilium me subit longe salubrius, ne, si rursus asino remoto prodirem in Lucium, evidens exitium inter manus latronum offenderem vel artis magicae suspicionem vel indicii futuri criminatione. tunc igitur a rosis et quidem necessario temperavi et casum praesentem tolerans in asini faciem faena rodebam*).

¹⁵⁴ Cf. e.g., 9.30.1-2: *sed forsitan lector scrupulosus reprehendens narratum meum sic argumentaberis: 'unde autem tu, astutule asine, intra terminos pistrini contentus, quid secreto, ut adfirmas, mulieres gesserint, scire potuisti?' accipe igitur quem ad modum homo curiosus iumentum faciem sustinens cuncta quae in perniciem pistoris mei gesta sunt cognovi*; also 10.2.4: *iam ergo, lector optime, scito te tragoediam, non fabulam legere et a socco ad cothurnum ascendere*. On the use of metanarrative in the *Metamorphoses*, cf. HIJMANS, VAN DER PAARDT *et al.* (1995) 12.

¹⁵⁵ On lamps and lychnomancy, cf. the discussion at chapter 4.5.2.

procedure,¹⁵⁶ for if that were the case, then Lucius' transformation would also require a similar ritualistic step, and as far as the narrative suggests he neither consults nor discusses with any lamps prior to his transformation.

The object of Pamphile's transformation merits also some brief discussion. Pamphile's metamorphosis into a bird is certainly not unprecedented in Greco-Roman culture. The origins of the Roman concept of the witch as a bird of prey seem to point back to the idea of the Sirens as dangerous predatory women under the guise of birds.¹⁵⁷ Detailed descriptions of transformations into birds are presented by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, but these occur, as mentioned earlier, most often as a result of a divine curse and in fewer cases as a result of a divine intervention.¹⁵⁸ There are additional references to witches, this time, altering their physical appearances into birds, but these are quite few and far between.¹⁵⁹ Witches and avian transformations are often linked to the figure of the horrifying screech-owl hag (*strix*, or the more vulgar term *striga*).¹⁶⁰ Since witches—being the embodiment of anti-societal elements—were often considered to operate in a clandestine and reverse manner, their attacks were also believed to come not from the outside but from the *inside*; in the case of the *striges* these *inside* attacks were achieved by draining their victims of their blood or by removing their inner organs.¹⁶¹ There are a couple of references which link the *striges*-hags to

¹⁵⁶ SABNIS (2012) 93: "it is important that Pamphile's metamorphosis additionally requires a magical spell involving her lamp. [...] The lamp serves Pamphile in her avian transformation as Fotis does Lucius in his asinine one."

¹⁵⁷ Cf. SCOBIE (1978b) 76. The Sirens first appear in Homer's *Odyssey* and are described only as powerful enchantresses living on a remote island close to Scylla and Charybdis who try to lure Odysseus with their magical song (μελίγηρυν ὄπα) (12.39-54, 158-200); it is not until Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* that the Sirens appear in written records as half-women half-bird creatures (τότε δ' ἄλλο μὲν οἰωνοῖσιν, / ἄλλο δὲ παρθενικῆς ἐναλίγκται ἔσκον ἰδέσθαι, 4.898-99); cf. also Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.552-63 and Hyginus *Fables* 141. Virgil *Aeneid* 3.216-18 portrays the Harpies in similar terms.

¹⁵⁸ Nyctimene, for example, is cursed into a bird for misleading her father into sleeping with her (2.589-95), Philomela and her sister Procne for offering Tereus the murdered body of his son Itys for dinner (6.667-70), and Acmon for insulting Aphrodite (14.496-503); alternatively, Priam's son Aesacus is transformed by Tethys into a bird after the latter took pity on him during his suicide attempt (11.783-86).

¹⁵⁹ A brief allusion appears in Ovid's *Amores* 1.8.13-14 about the witch Dipsas turning herself into a bird, and in *Metamorphoses* 15.356-60 he mentions the custom of some Scythian witches sprinkling their bodies with magical *venena* and turning into birds; Lucian in his *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 1.2 also refers to a courtesan whose mother is able to turn into a bird and fly off in the night.

¹⁶⁰ Although the majority of scholarly debate, both old and new, largely accepts the identification of the *strix* with the screech-owl, OLIPHANT (1913) surmised throughout his article that the *strix* has more in common with the bat than the owl. However, MCDONOUGH advises that we ought to be cautious with the *strix*' identification and prefers to leave the creature unidentifiable, since he regards it as a combination of many horrifying creatures which are meant to inspire fear in humans (1997: 326).

¹⁶¹ Cf. MCDONOUGH (1997) 318-19 with n.15 addressing this phenomenon cross-culturally. Perhaps the legend of the Roman *strix* is a result of syncretism with the Greek myth of Gello, who was also thought of assaulting young children, especially ones who had died untimely; cf. also Zenobius *Epitome* 3.3: Γελλῶ παιδοφιλωτέρα: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀώρων τελευτησάντων, ἦτοι ἐπὶ τῶν φιλοτέκνων μὲν, τρυφῇ δὲ διαφθειρόντων αὐτά. Γελλῶ γάρ τις ἦν

anthropophagism and the drinking of blood and/or devouring the intestines of infants and the dead as early as the second century BCE,¹⁶² and this belief is mirrored in the *Fasti*, where *striges* are described in hybrid terms¹⁶³ in a somewhat fuller capacity: they are rapacious birds with huge heads and eyes, rapine beaks, grey feathers, and hooks for claws, who attack infants that lack the care of a nurse and defile their bodies by sucking the blood out from their chests (6.131-38).¹⁶⁴ The *striges* reappear briefly in Petronius' celebrated witch tale, in which they attack and rob a dead young boy of his heart and inner organs (63.8). Moreover, in the realm of magic and witchcraft, *striges* and parts from their body (usually feathers) are essential ingredients in magical concoctions.¹⁶⁵

In the *Metamorphoses*, remarkably, Pamphile transforms herself into an eagle-owl (*bubo*) rather than a *strix*, and it has been argued by A. SCOBIE that this was done so that Apuleius could accommodate native Roman beliefs about the connections between witches and owls.¹⁶⁶ In the Ass Pamphile's Greek counterpart's choice of bird is a night raven (κόραξ νυκτερινός) which tends to imply that for Greeks, even of the Imperial era, the owl never acquired such negative connotations.¹⁶⁷ Different from the Greeks, however, the owl was regarded as a funeral bird in Roman antiquity, thus signalling an impending calamity or death: its avoidance of sunlight, its dark colour, as well as its frequenting terrifying places and having a cry like a groan led it to be related to the underworld and the dead.¹⁶⁸ It was particularly an ill omen for public auspices, and when seen in daytime it foreshadowed an imminent disaster.¹⁶⁹ Within this broader scope, it is no real surprise that Pamphile is turned

παρθένος, καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἄώρως ἐτελεύτησε, φασὶν οἱ Λέσβιοι αὐτῆς τὸ φάντασμα ἐπιφοιτᾶν ἐπὶ τὰ παιδία, καὶ τοὺς τῶν ἄώρων θανάτους αὐτῇ ἀνατιθέασιν. μέμνηται ταύτης Σαπφώ.

¹⁶² Cf. e.g., Plautus *Pseudolus* 819-21: *ei homines cenas ubi coquunt, quom condunt, / non condimentis condunt, sed strigibus, / vivis convivis intestina quae exedint*. Cf. also Titinius fr. 22 (Ribbeck): *praeterea si forte peremit strix atra puellos, virosa inmulgens exertis ubera labris, alia praecepit Titini sententia necti, qui veteri claras expressit more togatas*.

¹⁶³ Perhaps the crude drawing found on a first century CE Greek curse tablet representing 'six armed Hecate' might be indeed influenced by the hybrid concept of the *strix*; cf. GAGER (1992) 180-81, fig. 20. GAGER (*ibid.*) believed the figure represented a bat with outspread wings (thus lending some support to OLIPHANT's claim that the *strix* was actually a bat; cf. *supra* n.160), whereas MCDONOUGH thinks it might be some kind of hybrid between spider and bird (1997: 325 n.37).

¹⁶⁴ Cf. also Propertius 4.17. SPAETH discusses the *Fasti* scene in terms of sexual violation and rape (2010: 250-51).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. e.g., Horace *Epode* 5.20; Propertius *Elegies* 3.6.29; Seneca *Medea* 731-33; also Erichtho's voice while casting her first spell imitated the sound of the *strix* at Lucan *Civil War* 6.687-88.

¹⁶⁶ SCOBIE (1978b) 77.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.* n.21.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. PEASE (1967) 375-76.

¹⁶⁹ E.g., Pliny *Natural History* 10.34. On the *bubo* being a harbinger of evil and catastrophe, cf. Virgil *Aeneid* 12.861-66; Propertius *Elegies* 2.20.5-6, 28.38; Ovid *Amores* 1.12.19, 3.12.1-2, *Metamorphoses* 5.549-50, 6.431-32; Statius *Thebaid* 3.511-12. Further references both in ancient and later literature are provided by PEASE (1967) 376-77; cf. also *DNP* s.v. 'Eulen'.

into such an ominous bird, since in many ways the owl's ill-omened nature mirrors the witch's precarious character.

This altogether brings us back to Byrrhena's initial admonition to Lucius about the witch in whose house he is residing: when Pamphile cannot have it her way, she will go to great lengths to destroy in any way possible her unresponsive lovers (2.5.5-8). But also on a narrative level, Pamphile's metamorphosis into an ill-fated bird in a sense augurs that some great adversity is about to ensue—and lo and behold, a little while later not only is Lucius transformed into an ass, but on the very night of his transformation Milo's house becomes the target of a band of savage robbers, who eventually steal Lucius-ass from the stable, thus triggering his long, Odyssean peregrination. Yet, at that exact moment in time Lucius is so utterly flabbergasted by the miracle of Pamphile's shape-shifting—Lucius pictures himself as if he were daydreaming (*sic exterminatus animi, attonitus in amentiam vigilans somniabar. defrictis adeo diu pupulis, an vigilarem scire quaerebam*, 3.22.2) and of being unaware of present reality (*tandem denique reversus ad sensum praesentium*, 3.22.3)—that he is unable to comprehend, even at the slightest, the supernatural implications of what he has truly witnessed.

5

Concluding discussion

In this final chapter, I have brought the discussion of magic and witchcraft to an end by focusing on the final witch of the *Metamorphoses*, Pamphile. As was mentioned from the very outset, Pamphile is a rather intriguing figure in the novel who has been left underrepresented in scholarly discussion for far too long. Different from her Greek anonymous counterpart in the *Ass*, whose role in the narrative is limited only to one single paragraph depicting her metamorphosis (12), Pamphile is a more intricate and multi-layered character, whose actions and interactions expand the narrative and bring Lucius all the closer to witchcraft, the true object of his desire. Pamphile is the only witch in the novel that Lucius comes *directly* into contact with during his adventures, both in human and asinine form; unlike Photis (his object of sexual infatuation) who mysteriously does not perform a single act of magic, Pamphile performs (and in some cases, is claimed by others as performing) a variety of magical feats, ranging from lamp divination and erotic attraction spells to ghost evocation and transformation rituals. Based on these feats of Pamphile, I have maintained

that Apuleius fashioned her figure according to other witch figures from the *Metamorphoses* (most notably Meroe) and from the large selection of caricature witches from the Imperial witch tradition. This has been argued on the basis of a number of common characteristics between these figures, which as demonstrated in chapter 2 are primarily associated with the figure of the crone, who in Latin literature is portrayed as a miserable woman, burdened by years and loathsome with age, or the magnificent witches-cum-goddesses of Greek mythology.

But then, we are confronted with a strange paradox: all these diverse characteristics run somehow counter to Apuleius' depiction of Pamphile, who on the one hand is neither old nor ugly and hence cannot be assumed to be a crone, and on the other is certainly not a goddess, though at times her course of action seems to suggest one. In order to account for this paradox, I suggested that in shaping the figure of Pamphile Apuleius intentionally fashioned the figure of a hybrid sorceress who despite being imbued with features from both the categories of the crone and the powerful Greek witch-goddesses, she is in the end a witch that defies categorisation in strict terms. I therefore proposed a fourth category of witches or (in different terms) of women practising magic in the form of the powerful albeit sexually promiscuous anti-*matrona*. This literary category reflects influential upper-class women, who demonstrate a notable autonomy and possess a considerable amount of wealth which ultimately allows them to wield social and political power. Such power, understandably so, rendered them a threat to the sphere of male activity and achievements. Usually such women, by mirroring and expressing male fears and anxiety, are identified and depicted in literature as sexually promiscuous with an unprecedented eagerness to engage in infidelity, infringing on male territory, overly assertive and dominating, and last but not least, having a knowledge (whether active or passive) of witchcraft. Such women appear more and more frequently during the last century of the Republic as a result of the political instability of the period, and find their way well into the Imperial era. Especially with regards to the Imperial epoch, I have demonstrated that these powerful women apparently use magic and witchcraft—and abuse accusations directed by them against other people—as a means to effectively get rid of political and non-political opponents. While such a phenomenon was taking place on a socio-political level and reflects growing male anxiety over women's independence, in literature such threatening women are being abused by being portrayed as anti-*matronae*: elite women exceeding the limits imposed by their gender, with their wealth, luxury, and salacious nature

imitating that of real matrons. Therefore, as a category of practitioner of magic, the elite anti-*matronae* are the exact opposite of the elderly and repellent crones who occupy the lowest regions of the public domain. It is within this category that I situated Pamphile, since the witch is depicted in terms of an anti-*matrona* and reproduces many of the chief characteristics attributed to this group.

In addition, I have made the case that most instances of the witchcraft Pamphile practises in the *Metamorphoses* are employed as a means of satisfying her abnormal sexual lust. On two occasions, in particular, Pamphile is witnessed practising magic *in flagrante* and so we are allowed a glimpse into magic's perceived *modus operandi*, which to an extent also complements and enhances our understanding of Meroe's magic in Book 1. The erotic attraction spell which Pamphile casts in order to bring the young man she is fixated on to her house, though quite elaborate and in some respects exaggerated in nature, betrays influences from surviving extant literary ἀγωγαί, most notably that of Theocritus' *Idyll* 2, Virgil's *Eclogue* 8, and Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 4. A comparison between the three spells and that of Pamphile has allowed us to discuss how erotic ἀγωγαί seem to function on a literary level. A few of these characteristics are in accordance with recipes for similar spells from the Greek and Demotic magical papyri (e.g., the nocturnal and/or secret character of the ritual or the hidden place from which an ἀγωγή could allegedly be cast). Yet contrary to the literary portrayals of attraction spells, the ones attested by the magical papyri present a diametrically different account regarding the practitioners' gender: though literary ἀγωγαί are cast by women against men, the majority of attraction spells in the papyri and the material record customarily portray men targeting women and so are in accordance with what C. FARAONE has termed ἔρωσ-*magic*: magic cast primarily by male agents against female victims.¹⁷⁰ I hypothesised that this discrepancy occurs because literary depictions of witches were predominantly produced by *male* authors, thus reflecting *male* concerns about the dangerous autonomy of women, who were always understood in terms of the 'Other' (operating as a foil to male predominance and societal hierarchy), which inevitably led to witches/women being vilified in literature.

Metamorphosis, moreover, is a motif that runs through the novel, especially in the first three Books, and so the transformation of Pamphile into an owl is a feature that blends in well with the overall theme of the narrative. There can be no doubt that the object of

¹⁷⁰ Cf. FARAONE (1999) 41-95.

Pamphile's transformation was not haphazardly chosen by Apuleius, since the witch's dangerous and threatening character is mirrored in her transformation into an owl, which was considered throughout the Roman world as an ill-omened bird that portended some great calamity. Pamphile and Lucius' transformations are the most detailed magical transformations to have survived from Greco-Roman antiquity, and bring Pamphile once again in close proximity both to Apuleius' wicked crones and the witches of the Imperial tradition, thus promoting even further the notion of her hybrid nature.

A few conclusions could be drawn about Apuleius' technique of depicting metamorphosis. To begin with, as it becomes evident from the metamorphosis descriptions of Homer and Ovid, transformation in Greek and Roman culture entailed merely corporeal and not mental alteration; the metamorphosis itself does not affect in any way an individual's cognitive capacities, and Apuleius seems to adhere to this rule in his transformations. Additionally, his indebtedness to the *Odyssey* and Ovid is mirrored in more than one way. We have already encountered allegations of Meroe transforming ex-lovers and rivals into animals or how the hags of Thelyphron's tale could alter their physical appearance into that of even the tiniest of flies, but it is never revealed by what means such transformations are effected. In Pamphile's ritual, however, it is disclosed that an ointment brings about the metamorphosis whereas a substance needs to be eaten in order to reverse the transformation effect; in this respect, then, the witch's ritual is presented as an inverted form of Circe's transformations from the *Odyssey*. What is more, Apuleius' descriptions of metamorphosis, both in Book 3 and later in Book 11, seem to be influenced in particular by Ovid's method of depicting transformations in his *Metamorphoses*, who describes step by step the development of the procedure. In a similar fashion, Apuleius too goes to great lengths to demonstrate the effect that transformation has on the human body. However, contrary to other extant transformation descriptions, Pamphile's and Lucius' metamorphoses are quite unique, since they belong to the very few magical descriptions to portray a mere mortal being's transformation that does not come as a result of external powers, which in most cases is identified as a divine curse.

APPENDIX A

ISIS, WITCHES, AND MAGIC

Given that the upsetting force of the witches' witchcraft has been discussed more than once throughout the course of the previous chapters, one feels inclined to contrast the witches' cosmos-disturbing powers to Isis' benevolent supernatural powers in Book 11.¹ If the witches of the *Metamorphoses* represent the base and malevolent magic of chaos, then Isis stands for the heavenly and purifying magic of the cosmic universe.² When Lucius-ass first addresses the goddess on the shore of Cenchreae in Corinth, he does so in a very vague way, as if uncertain of the identity of the divinity he is invoking. He may be referring to her as the 'queen of heaven' (*regina caeli*), but he does not know whether she is the goddess Ceres, Venus, Diana, or Proserpina (11.2.1-2).³ His choice of goddesses, however, is anything but random, since all four divinities are associated, in one way or another, both with the Moon and with Isis,⁴ but also point towards their role in earlier parts of the novel: Ceres, Proserpina, and especially Venus appear prominently in the Cupid and Psyche tale, whereas Diana's role is centralised in the Actaeon *ekphrasis* of Book 2.⁵ As soon as Isis manifests herself in Lucius-ass' dream,⁶ she is identified as a henotheistic autocratic⁷ divinity and the mighty primordial mother of all things, whose benevolent powers, presented in a self-aretalogical and hymnic-prayer style,⁸ extend over the three planes of existence, just as the witches' powers did earlier

¹ Book 11, commonly referred to as the 'Isis Book' has been in the centre of recent scholarly attention, culminating in the appearance of a third *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass* volume by KEULEN & EGELHAAF-GAISER (2012) and the most recent Groningen commentary on Book 11 by KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015).

² On the witches' preference for the magic of chaos, as opposed to the magic of the cosmos, which is essentially represented by the manifestation of Isis' benevolent magic in Book 11, cf. MARTINEZ (2000) 31-3.

³ On this scene and Isis' various names, cf. also FINKELPEARL (2012) 185-88. GRIFFITHS (1975) 147-48 discusses this scene in light of *P.Oxy.1380* (ca. late first, early second century CE) which addresses Isis in more than fifty names.

⁴ Cf. KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 107-08. HARRISON, additionally, argues that these four goddesses are meant to point towards their role in earlier parts of the novel: for instance, Ceres, Proserpina, and especially Venus appear prominently in the Cupid and Psyche tale, whereas Diana's role is centralised in the Actaeon *ekphrasis* of Book 2 (2012: 77-78).

⁵ Cf. HARRISON (2012) 77-78.

⁶ On Isis revealing herself during sleep and on prophetic dreams, cf. KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 189-90 s.v. '*oraculi venerabilis*.'

⁷ On Isis' autocratic identity, cf. *ibid.* 172.

⁸ On which cf. the discussion at TATUM (1979) 156-57; PASETTI (1999) 256-62; KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 59-61.

in the narrative.⁹ Later on and during his *laudatio* of Isis, an anamorphosed Lucius addresses the goddess in similar terms (11.25.1-4).

Thus, Isis is presented in the novel as a positive counterpart to the witches, but this aspect only becomes evident from a second reading of the novel. Although the few ‘proleptic’ hints scattered across the novel might alert an attentive reader for a somewhat Egyptian ‘interference’ at some point in the narrative (e.g., the reference to the *papyrus Aegyptiam* and the *Nilotici calami* at 1.1.1; Meroe’s name association with the Ethiopian island of Meroë or Panthia’s with Isis’ epithet *πανθέα* in Book 1; Isis’ priest Zatchlas and his controversial reanimation ritual during the tale of Thelyphron in Book 2),¹⁰ Isis’ eventual epiphany at the beginning of Book 11 comes rather unexpectedly for the linear first readers of the novel.¹¹ To the second readers, however, the entire ‘Isis versus witches’ dynamic acquires a more significant meaning and Isis’ role in the novel ultimately becomes more pronounced. Unlike the witches, whose magic is commonly employed for the fulfilment of base erotic needs, the cosmic magic of Isis, on the contrary, helps those who need it the most. Lucius, astoundingly, is the recipient of both types of magic, both of which eventually lead to a metamorphosis. It is the abysmal magic of witches that transforms him into an ass (notwithstanding, of course, his inherent *curiositas* and his rash decision to become romantically involved with Photis, a witch’s slave-girl, so that he could easily gain access to Pamphile’s magic), but in the end it is the benevolent magic of Isis that saves him and brings him back to the world of humans. The witches of the *Metamorphoses*, then, gain a new ‘identity’ and purpose during the second reading of the novel; they are not merely random villainesses that Lucius becomes acquainted with from stories narrated to him (e.g., Meroe, Panthia, the witches of Thelyphron’s tale) or happens to come across during his long journeys (e.g., Pamphile, Photis, the baker’s witch); they are now presented as Isis’ antagonists: they are, in a sense, anti-Isises. And so Isis’ manifestation to and rescuing of Lucius symbolises the ultimate triumph of Isiac religion over

⁹ Isis is not merely the mother of the universe, of gods, and of heavenly bodies; she is also the queen of the dead and of the Underworld; it is she also who commands and rules the earth (11.5.1). It appears that Apuleius is performing an elaborate *Gattungsmischung* at this stage, since by combining “traditional elements of prayer, hymn and aretology into a first-person speech” he achieves to effectively create “an elaborate hymn-style self-revelation” (KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 60). On ἀρεταλόγοι as exegetes and aretology as a phantom genre, cf. the remarks at WINKLER (1985) 234-38.

¹⁰ MAY (2013) 35 provides a few further references; cf. also HARRISON (2000) 239.

¹¹ MAY has argued that Isis’ sudden appearance in Book 11 was inspired by the dramatic manifestation on stage of *dei ex machina* (2006: 307-32).

base and earthly magic, the latter being Lucius' constant object of fascination during the first three books of the novel.

APPENDIX B

EXPOSING THE ANTI-MATRONA

1

Republican anti-matronae: Clodia Metelli and Sempronia

Clodia Metelli is, perhaps, one of the most famous examples of a Republican anti-matrona; not only is she accused of using magic in attaining her political aims, but her overall immoral character foreshadows the licentiousness of the women of the Imperial *domus*. Clodia¹ was the daughter of Ap. Claudius Pulcher (consul 79 BCE) and widow of Metellus Celer (consul 60 BCE), whom Clodia was suspected of having poisoned.² Though the model for accusing well-bred women of using witchcraft had already been established by Livy with his description of the first ever collective poison trials of upper-class patrician women in 331 BCE,³ it is only with Cicero that such accusations are openly used against an elite woman in a judicial court. During this court case, the particulars of which are recounted in Cicero's *In Defence of Caelius*,⁴ Cicero acts on behalf of his client, M. Caelius Rufus, who is being prosecuted for public violence against an ambassador and for an attempted murder under the *Lex Plautia de vi* of 70 BCE. But according to Cicero, the driving force behind Caelius' prosecution was none other than Clodia herself, her ultimate goal being to punish Caelius for abandoning her.

Caelius was officially charged with five criminal offences, two of which—Caelius borrowing money from Clodia which he then used to facilitate the murder of the Alexandrian ambassador Dio (*crimen auri*) and then procuring some poison to kill Clodia (*crimen veneni*)—were being dealt with by Cicero (51). On these two charges Clodia acted both as the key witness and as the chief litigant, therefore her testimony was of crucial importance to the case, a fact that Cicero was well aware of. In order to discredit the woman, he flays her with invective.⁵ He begins his assault on her right from the outset of his oration by presenting

¹ On Clodia's illustrious lineage, cf. Cicero *Caelius* 34. On Clodia Metelli, cf. BAUMAN (1992) 69-73; SKINNER (2011); DYCK (2013) 12-14.

² Cf. SKINNER (2011) 110.

³ On these trials, cf. Livy *History of Rome* 8.18; also BAUMAN (1992) 13-14.

⁴ On this speech, cf. DYCK (2013) 1-28.

⁵ The orator admits often during the course of his speech that the attack on Clodia is personal (e.g., 32, 50). There had been much bad blood between him and P. Clodius Pulcher (Clodia's brother) after Cicero testified

Clodia as a profligate and immodest female (*muliebre[m] libidinem*) and a harlot (*meretrix*), whose declarations should not be allowed to have any legal standing in court (1), since under the *Lex Iulia de vi* prostitutes were not considered credible witnesses and so were excluded from bearing testimony in courts.⁶ Aside from the many insinuations of a frivolous nature and sexual debauchery,⁷ Cicero accuses the woman of being excessively luxurious: apparently Clodia had been a great practitioner of the extravagant lifestyle with her beach and music parties, festivities, revelries, boat-trips, concerts, and various trips to Baiae (35).⁸ Adding to that, Cicero maintains as well that the woman was not unfamiliar with *φαρμακεία* since she had employed *venena* to dispatch her husband (60). He also adds a further innuendo of magic when he calls her a *Palatina Medea* (18): this ingenious assimilation of the woman to the famous sorceress not only brings to the forefront Clodia's potential involvement in her husband's mysterious death by means of *venena*,⁹ but also summarises Cicero's line of defence

against him for disguising himself as a woman and violating the rites of Bona Dea, which was considered a sacrilege for men to attend. Clodius became tribune in 58 BCE and passed a law condemning individuals who had put Roman citizens to death without a trial, something which Cicero had apparently done during his consulship with the Catilinarian conspirators. Cicero was forced into exile, and during that time his properties were pillaged and destroyed and his wife Terentia with their children suffered various ignominies, not least because of the personal differences between Clodia and Terentia. Some of these events are hinted at *Caelius* 50, more are revealed at *Sestius* 54; cf. also DYKE (2013) 13 and *ad loc.*

⁶ Cf. LEIGH (2004) 304; DYKE (2013) 13.

⁷ Interestingly Cicero's Clodia is *semper amica omnium* (32) just as Apuleius' Pamphile is *πάν (omnium) φίλη (amica)*. Apuleius was undoubtedly familiar with Rome's most famous orator (for instance, in the *Apology* Apuleius compliments Cicero's rhetorical wealth (*opulentia*, 95.4)), and evokes quite often in his work Ciceronian verbal or thematic associations (cf. e.g., Apuleius' parodic use of the now celebrated opening of the first Catilinarian oration '*quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?*' at *Metamorphoses* 3.27.5 ('*quo usque tandem*' inquit '*cantherium patiemur istum...*') or at 6.26.1. ('*quo usque*' inquit '*ruptum istum asellum, nunc etiam claudum, frustra pascemus?*'), on which cf. the comments at FINKELPEARL (1998) 51-52. KRABBE, moreover, has argued for several thematic connections between Cicero's oration in defence of T. Milo's killing of Clodia's brother and Lucius' speech in defence of his supposed slaying of the three robbers outside Milo's house in Book 3 (2003: 321-35), which makes it easy to surmise that Apuleius was not only aware of Cicero's speech(es), but was also familiar with the particulars governing this murder case and the persons involved in it. HARRISON has maintained that Apuleius emulates the language of Ciceronian orations in the *Apology*, which betrays also some influences from the *In Defence of Caelius* (2000: 44-45); *contra* HUNINK (1997) II.235 s.v. '*Cicero*': "we do not even know whether Apuleius has studied Cicero's speeches. The influence of Cicero on the style of the *Apol[ogy]* has generally been overestimated." If Apuleius was even partially familiar with Cicero's *In Defence of Caelius*, might it be then that Pamphile owes at least some of her literary characteristics to Clodia Metelli? I am well aware that the word play between *amica omnium* – *πάν φίλη* is, in all probability, nothing more than a mere coincidence, but I do find the thought that Apuleius may have had in fact Clodia at the back of his head while fashioning the anti-*matrona* character of Pamphile rather entertaining.

⁸ By the late Republic era Baiae, close to the region of Cumae—the Roman counterpart for Brighton, according to BALSdon (1962: 54)—had become such a popular 'spa' resort for upper class Romans that it eventually became a symbol of notoriety and vice; the mere mentioning of the place was enough to evoke associations of depravity, licentiousness, and avarice; cf. DYCK (2013) 103.

⁹ Quintilian, quoting a passage from Caelius' own defence, refers to Clodia as the 'fourpenny Clytemnestra' (*quadrantariam Clytemnestram*), which suggests that, like the infamous Clytemnestra, Clodia had committed adultery and had murdered her husband (*Orator's Education* 8.6.53).

for Caelius by presenting Clodia as a love stricken ‘Medea’ seeking revenge from her perfidious ‘Jason’. In addition, by situating her on the Palatine hill, Cicero alludes to the woman’s power, extravagance, and political influence.¹⁰

These aspects of Clodia’s character, in combination with her unquestionable beauty, intelligence, good education, and sharpness,¹¹ bring her in close proximity to the depiction of another influential albeit questionable anti-*matrona* of the late Republic: Sempronia, wife of Decimus Junius Brutus.¹² If Sallust’s vicious treatment of the woman in his *War against Catiline* is to be trusted, Sempronia was an implicit agent of Catiline in his attempt to overthrow the government in 63 BCE. Though described as well-educated, witty, and charismatic (25.2, 5), Sempronia emerges as a double for Catiline: both were descended from illustrious families,¹³ both were talented and bold, yet morally corrupt and debased. Sempronia had no concern for her *puḍicitia* and her prodigality became a synonym for the corruption of Roman morals. Her actual role in the conspiracy was never fully disclosed, aside from offering her home for one secret meeting (40.5). Sallust surmises in his chronicling of the events that her crimes included breaking oaths, repudiating debts, being an accessory to murder, as well as having a very sexually salacious temperament (25.3-4)— the insinuation, perhaps, being that Sempronia had exercised some of her influence on men in order for them to join Catiline’s conspiracy.¹⁴ Aside from Sempronia, it seems that Catiline had managed to attract a certain number of women to support his cause, mainly elite matrons who had resorted to prostitution as a means to finance their elaborate lifestyles but had fallen into great debts as soon as they were constrained by age. Catiline had expected that such women would be able to raise funds, hide weapons, incite slaves to set fire to the city, and in general help the conspiracy in any way they could (24.3-4).

Thus, the stereotype of the morally dissolute anti-*matrona* finds its perfect fit with Cicero’s Clodia and Sallust’s Sempronia: they are beautiful as well as seductive; they employ their beauty to satiate their immoderate passion for men; their behaviour is masculine both

¹⁰ Cf. SKINNER (2011) 106.

¹¹ This is the impression one gets of Clodia when reading Catullus’ verses addressed to his beloved ‘Lesbia’, which most scholars accept as a cryptonym for Clodia Metelli, on which cf. SKINNER (2011) 133.

¹² On Sempronia, cf. GALASSI (2014) 121-23. SKINNER suggests that Sallust appropriated the stereotype of Cicero’s questionable and dissolute anti-*matrona* in his portrayal of Sempronia (2011: 121).

¹³ Sempronia allegedly stemmed from the aristocratic *gens Sempronia*, from which the tribunes Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus had also originated, and she was related to the *gens Cornelia* and *Licina*; she was additionally married to Decimus Junius Brutus, who claimed descent from the famous Lucius Junius Brutus, the man responsible for expelling the last of the Etruscan kings from Rome.

¹⁴ HERRMANN suggests that Sempronia was, in fact, “l’âme de la conspiration” (1964: 103).

in its boldness and its fearlessness; and they manipulate their political connections to achieve their goals.

2

The anti-*matronae* of the Imperial *domus*

The emperor Augustus was not unaware of women's sexual license and the degenerate state Roman society had fallen into by giving in to excessive luxury (as a result of the renewed commercial activities) in the years following the civil wars. Marriage was clearly not the preferred *desideratum* any longer: young aristocrats opted to party immoderately and would rather have fun with slaves and mistresses than get married and father children,¹⁵ probably also because elite women were overly difficult and intractable as wives due to their independence and autonomy.¹⁶ It is within these conditions that writers of the early Principate are found imploring the new emperor to put an end to Rome's unwarranted extravagance and salaciousness, which had seen society plunge into the depths of immorality, adultery, and decadence.¹⁷ Hence, in 18 BCE Augustus instituted a programme of moral reform by enacting a series of laws intended to reintroduce Roman morality and re-establish the integrity of the Roman family.¹⁸ The first of these laws, the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* (and its amendment, the *Lex Papia Poppaea* of 9 CE), regulated issues pertaining to marriage: it encouraged men and women to marry and procreate by bestowing privileges onto those who did so and penalised those who did not (for instance, restricting one's capability of inheriting).¹⁹ In addition, the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, which was passed a year later, dealt with sexual depravity and misconduct: it turned both illicit intercourse with an upper-class married woman (*adulterium*) and fornication with a widow or an unmarried free

¹⁵ Suggested by HOLMES (1931) 41-42.

¹⁶ Cf. SOUTHERN (1998) 148.

¹⁷ Cf. e.g., Horace *Odes* 3.6, 24; Ovid *Amores* 1.8.43; Livy *History of Rome* pref. 12; also Juvenal *Satire* 6.292-95. C. EDWARDS warns that one should be cautious not to take Roman claims of adultery at face value, since most of "these colourful characters are not real people but resonant metaphors for social and political disorder" (1993: 36).

¹⁸ Augustus had apparently tried to enforce another law regarding marriage and morals in the early years of the Principate (possibly in ca. 28-27 BCE?), posing restrictions on unmarried men; but this law was met with such great opposition that in the end it was repealed—much to Propertius' delight, who had reasons to fear that such a law would ultimately drive him away from his beloved Cynthia (*Elegies* 2.7.1-3); cf. also BAUMAN (1992) 107-08; C. EDWARDS (1993) 41 n.26.

¹⁹ On this law primarily targeting the wealthy, cf. STRATTON (2007) 97 with n.119.

woman (*stuprum*),²⁰ until recently regarded only as a family concern, into a public offence which was tried in a *quaestio perpetua* and could be sternly punished, even with exile.²¹

In spite of Augustus' earnest attempts to restore moral feeling and self-respect to the Roman family in combination with the harsh punishments awaiting those who did not comply, the laws failed: neither marriage nor family was made any more popular in the end,²² nor was the imperial household fortified against frivolous sex scandals. Two such striking cases stand out in particular. Augustus' daughter Julia was, no doubt, a thorn in the emperor's side, her relationship with her family being rather estranged and problematic. She lacked many of Augustus' redeeming qualities, and there are strong suspicions that her stepmother Livia, with her strong sense of moral code (not to mention her personal distaste for the way Julia had been treating her third husband, Livia's son Tiberius), might have played a significant role in her stepdaughter's downfall. Julia, while still married to Tiberius, had engaged in unremitting infidelity, intoxicated gaiety, and nocturnal frolicking.²³ Her overall behaviour and *modus vivendi* had brought such great shame on the emperor's household (according to Suetonius *Augustus* 65.2 the emperor had felt so abashed at reading a letter disclosing his daughter's scandalous and immoral behaviour to the senate that he had his quaestor read it out instead) that in 2 BCE Augustus forced Julia to divorce Tiberius and then personally instigated a series of trials under the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* against his daughter and her lovers. Pliny surmised, erroneously though, in *Natural History* 7.149 that the actions (particularly the nocturnal gatherings) of Julia and her group of lovers—the *grex Iuliae*—were a *coniuratio* planning to assassinate the emperor in order to place Iullus Antonius (son of Mark Antony and Fulvia, married to Octavia's daughter), on the throne; they were simply a group of rebellious youths living life to the extreme without having any sense of moral decency. Iullus Antonius was sentenced to death,²⁴ whereas Julia was banished first to the remote island of Pandateria (near Naples) and then to Rhegium (near Sicily), where she died in 14 CE without ever being allowed to set foot in Rome again.²⁵

²⁰ This law also included homosexual rape.

²¹ On this law, cf. chapter 6 n.49.

²² Cf. e.g., Tacitus' comments at *Annals* 3.25.1: *nec ideo coniugia et educationes liberum frequentabantur praevallida orbitate*.

²³ Cf. Seneca *On Benefits* 6.32.1. According to Velleius Paterculus *Roman History* 2.100, Julia had consorted with a not insignificant number of men.

²⁴ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 4.44.3.

²⁵ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 1.53.1-2, 3.24.2; Velleius Paterculus *Roman History* 2.100.2-5; Seneca *On Benefits* 6.32.1-2; Suetonius *Augustus* 63-65, *Tiberius* 7.2-3, 11.4, 50.1. Also BAUMAN (1992) 108-09, 113-19.

Julia's voracious sexual libido was only the beginning of a number of sex scandals that rocked the imperial household for decades to come and signalled the starting point for imperial matrons' perceived ethical decadence. Julia was incontestably promiscuous; but nothing or no one could have ever predicted the arrival of Roman history's most notoriously known nymphomaniacs: the Claudian empress Valeria Messalina, great-granddaughter of Augustus' sister Octavia, and daughter of Domitia Lepida and M. Valerius Messala.²⁶ This depraved woman will forever be remembered for her obsession and mania in using sex as an effective tool in politics; she is often portrayed, both in literature and later on the big screen, as one of the biggest sex-maniacs of Roman history,²⁷ and all literary sources agree that she was as morally loose and promiscuous as one could ever be. Juvenal reports that Messalina habitually frequented brothels, where she would purportedly give in to her unnatural lust for men for hours and hours like a common prostitute (6.114-32), whereas in Pliny's *Natural History* we encounter Messalina taking part in a twenty-four hour sex marathon during which she apparently outcompeted a famous prostitute by consorting with twenty-five men (10.172), or in group orgies within the palace, as suggested by Cassius Dio (60.18.1-2). Tacitus enumerates at least twelve of Messalina's lovers (*Annals* 11.35.4-7, 36.1-5), whereas Cassius Dio claims in his chronicling of the events that the husbands whose wives would partake in her sexual depravities were oftentimes rewarded with honours (τιμαί) and public *officia* (ἀρχαί), whereas those who refused to conform to her wishes would be dealt with in a permanent fashion for insulting the empress (60.18.1-2). Hence, with the omnipresent fear of pandering (*lenocinium*), a criminal offence under Augustus' adultery law, hanging over their heads, Messalina managed to form a circle of sexually debauched associates, whom she would regularly manipulate or even force into fulfilling the most base of her sexual desires.

In addition, imperial women's presence, influence, and interference is nowhere more prominent than in the struggle for the succession to the throne, with elite women consuming a vast amount of time and energy in the matter, as each and every one desired to see the position filled by one of their own, and in procuring for themselves a large part of the imperial power structure and administration. Livia (Augustus' wife and mother of the future emperor Tiberius) was such a woman.²⁸ Her continuous power struggles with Octavia (Augustus' sister) and her subsequent attempts to promote her son Tiberius' claim to the throne by a

²⁶ On Messalina, cf. BALSDON (1962) 97-107; BAUMAN (1992) 167-79.

²⁷ On the modern reception of Messalina, from the 1870s to the 1970s, cf. WYKE (2002) 321-90.

²⁸ For a discussion, cf. BALSDON (1962) 63-96; BAUMAN (1992) 100-29; also KUNST (2008).

network of inter-familial marriages, disputes, and machinations²⁹ dominated the first half of Augustus' period in office until the death of Octavia in 11 BCE, which then created the necessary conditions for Livia to come to the centre stage of politics. After the death of Augustus in 14 CE and in an effort to bring together the Julians and the Claudians,³⁰ Livia was adopted into the Julian family with the title of Julia Augusta. When divine honours were conferred to Augustus, Livia became his priestess and worked prodigiously to promote not only her husband's cult, but also her own prestige and power. Greatly boosted by her new 'Augustan' status, Livia began claiming from Tiberius a share in the administration; however, her ongoing demands, antagonism, and public claims of superiority over the ruling emperor put a strain on the relationship between mother and son, which had become profoundly expressed by the time Livia died in 29 CE: Tiberius refused to attend his mother's funeral and furthermore vetoed the senate's decision to bestow upon Livia divine status by claiming that Livia had never desired such an honour.³¹

The empress Julia Agrippina ('Agrippina the Younger'), daughter of Vipsania Agrippina ('Agrippina the Elder'), was another.³² Having probably poisoned her second husband Passienus Crispus,³³ she married the emperor Claudius in 49 CE amidst legal issues regarding the marriage between an uncle and his niece, and immediately began paving the path for Claudius' successor. With a series of underground machinations she persuaded Claudius to adopt her son Nero in 50 CE and to name him heir to the throne over Claudius' legitimate son Britannicus,³⁴ and then to marry Claudius' daughter Octavia to Nero in 53 CE. The implications of her actions are self-evident: within a few years of her marriage to the emperor Agrippina had managed not only to oust Britannicus from the race for succession but also to secure her son Nero as Claudius' heir. Unlike Livia, Julia Agrippina was driven by an even greater lust for power, and in some respects she indeed proved to be her mother's daughter. She used her influence over Claudius not only to advance her son's claim to the

²⁹ Cf. e.g., Tacitus *Annals* 1.3.3, 5.1; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 53.33.4, 55.10a.10, 56.30.1-2.

³⁰ WISEMAN (1982) maintained that the principle of a Julio-Claudian dynasty never actually existed and that Claudius ascending to the throne was only regarded as usurping the Julian right to rule, a right which was restored to the Julian line as soon as Nero became emperor.

³¹ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 5.2.1. Claudius, nonetheless, upon ascending to the imperial throne decreed that Livia was indeed a goddess of the state (Diva Augusta) and would thus share a temple with Augustus (Suetonius *Claudius* 11.2; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.5.2). But unlike the divinity of Divus Augustus, Diva Augusta did not outlast Claudius' reign.

³² For a discussion of this Agrippina, cf. BALSDON (1962) 107-122; BAUMAN (1992) 179-87; also BARRETT (1999).

³³ Cf. e.g., pseudo-Suetonius *Life of Passienus Crispus*.

³⁴ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 12.25.

throne, but also to promote and enlarge in many ways her own position within the empire, which resulted in Agrippina receiving many extraordinary honours, as well as acquiring the title of Augusta in 50 CE—a title no other empress had been honoured with while alive.³⁵ Whenever Agrippina felt that her authority or power was being challenged or undermined, she was keen to take immediate revenge and execute her opponents by bringing against them false allegations.³⁶ Claudius was no exception; he had given her cause for alarm ever since he had foolishly stated during a trial for adultery over which he presided that it was his destiny to have perfidious wives, which would not go unpunished;³⁷ moreover, his public proclamations of regretting the marriage to Agrippina and the adoption of Nero, not to mention his ever-growing late affection for his son Britannicus,³⁸ were probably the reasons that drove Agrippina's murderous hand. Claudius died in October 54 CE, and all the sources agree on one thing: he had been the latest victim of Agrippina's poisons, but surely not the last.³⁹ Perhaps the one good thing that ever came from Agrippina the Younger was Seneca's return from his exile to Corsica, which Messalina had condemned him to eight years earlier, and his becoming Nero's tutor.⁴⁰ Tacitus, in addressing the actions of Agrippina, summarises in the *Annals* quite effectively the aspirations, at least on a political level, of some of the most influential imperial matrons of the Julio-Claudian dynasty: *consortium imperii iuraturasque in feminae verba praetorias cohortis idemque dedecus senatus et populi speravisset* (14.11.1).

³⁵ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 12.26.1, 27.1, 42.3; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.33.2a, 33.2.1, 33.3.

³⁶ Cf. e.g., the murder of Lollia Paulina for having consulted astrologers and magicians about the legitimacy of Claudius' marriage to Agrippina (Tacitus *Annals* 12.22; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.32.4); also the execution of Domitia Lepida (Messalina's mother) out of fear that perhaps one day Domitia might exert some control over Nero (she had been entrusted with looking after the young Nero for as long as Agrippina was in exile; Tacitus *Annals* 12.64.2-65.1).

³⁷ Cf. Suetonius *Claudius* 43; Tacitus *Annals* 12.64.2.

³⁸ Cf. Suetonius *Claudius* 43; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.34.1-2.

³⁹ Cf. Suetonius *Claudius* 44.2-3, *Nero* 33.1; Tacitus *Annals* 12.66-67; Cassius Dio *Roman History* 60.34.2-4; Seneca *Octavia* 164-65; Juvenal *Satire* 5.147, 6.620-21.

⁴⁰ Cf. Tacitus *Annals* 12.8.2.

APPENDIX C

METAMORPHOSIS

1

Have you met Lucius? He's an ass!

If, as it has been argued in chapter 6, Pamphile's transformation into a *bubo* is meant to indicate the witch's dangerous nature, what are we to make of Lucius' transformation into an ass? Aside from being the choice of animal found in the *Ass* and presumably the original Greek *Metamorphoseis*, the reasons behind the choice of a donkey, instead of a bird or any other animal, seem to be more obvious. On the most superficial level, this particular choice of animal permits the author to objectify the traits which Lucius embodies while still in a human form or the characteristics that were commonly related to the ass in antiquity and accentuate them for purposes of comic relief;¹ in doing so, this particular transformation gives the author as well the opportunity to create a series of comic inset stories and make use of entertaining antique proverbs related to asses.² For instance, Lucius' *curiositas* and personal inquisitiveness into all matters possible (e.g., 1.2.6, 2.6.1-2, 3.19.4),³ the principal characteristic which not only drives Lucius as a human but also allows the narrative to unravel, is still present in his asinine form and is moreover in seamless agreement with the overall curiosity of the ass, which is proverbially associated with prying:⁴ in his animal form Lucius-ass is an outsider to human society and so he is given the chance to eavesdrop on a number of tales which belong to people's private sphere and, thus, to satisfy his curiosity by listening to their stories.⁵ But Lucius/Lucius-ass apparently fails to see the underlying point of these stories and

¹ HARRISON suggests that Lucius is essentially "an ass in waiting: his gullibility and incapacity for effective interpretation [...], his curiosity about magic [...], and his interest in the pleasure of the flesh and especially sex makes his imminent transformation into the greedy and macrophallic ass a highly suitable and poetically just development" (2015: 14).

² Cf. the discussion at FRANGOULIDIS (2008) 163-67.

³ On Lucius' *curiositas* being a version of the Platonic πολυπραγμοσύνη, cf. DEFILIPPO (1999).

⁴ Cf. e.g., *Ass* 45 (ἐξ ὄνου παρακύψεως) or 56 (ἐξ ὄνου περιεργίας); also *Metamorphoses* 9.42.4: *summoque risu meum prospectum cavillari non desinunt. unde etiam de prospectu et umbra asini natum est frequens proverbium*. Cf. also the discussion at SCOBIE (1975) 29-30.

⁵ For instance, at 9.42.2 Lucius-ass characterises himself as 'inquisitive by nature' and 'restlessly impulsive' (*curiosus alioquin et inquieti procacitate praeditus asinus*), whereas at 9.15.6 the protagonist finds some consolation knowing that at least his long asinine ears can be used to quench his inherent curiosity. Cf. also TILG (2015) 24-27.

often superficially misinterprets their content;⁶ although these tales have the potential to serve as a symbolic *caveat* for Lucius/Lucius-ass to change his way of life, he instead focuses primarily on their entertaining aspects and disregards their remaining redeeming qualities.⁷

Another characteristic between Lucius and his asinine form is his sexually driven nature.⁸ Prior to Lucius' transformation, sex and *curiositas* go hand in hand: his keenness in the magical arts leads Lucius to enter a lustful erotic relationship with Photis, which at the same time brings him one step closer to Pamphile's powerful magic. As soon as his transformation has occurred, the first comment Lucius makes is about the enormity of his asinine penis (3.24.6),⁹ but this comment may be rather misleading. If sex and general lustfulness have been Lucius' driving force during the first three Books, the same does not apply for the remainder of the novel. During his asinine life, Lucius-ass develops a strangely critical, if not moralising, distance towards sex, one which was absent prior to his metamorphosis:¹⁰ he becomes utterly perplexed by the chaste Charite's sudden erotic interest in the new leader of the robbers (soon revealed to be her fiancé) and takes the opportunity to disparage the female sex as a whole (7.10-11); he condemns the unnatural profanity and immoral uncouthness of the Syrian Goddess'¹¹ catamite priests (8.29.3-4), and he scorns the baker's wife for not being able to remain faithful to her husband and for acting like a common prostitute for the fulfilment of her erotic desires (9.14.3-5); he even feels ashamed to copulate in public with a woman condemned to die (10.34.5). Only on one occasion, the famous sex scene between the ass and the Corinthian matron (10.19-22),¹² does Lucius-ass give in to his desire for carnal pleasure, but then again the initiative is not his own: he is swift to remark

⁶ Cf. TATUM (1969).

⁷ Cf. HARRISON (2000) 242; TILG (2015) 24-27.

⁸ JAMES discusses Lucius' sexuality in terms of his voluntary slavery to Photis that ultimately heralds his transformation into a beast of burden (1987: 93-96); also FRANGOULIDIS (2008) 162-63.

⁹ According to SCHLAM (1970) 481 and n.7, the ass is a particularly lustful animal, and the size of its phallus has been a characteristic attributed to the ass as early as Archilochus fr. 43 (West): ἡ δέ οἱ σάθη / x - υ - x ὄστε ὄνου Πριηνέως / κήλωνος ἐπλήμυρην ὄτρυγηφάγου.

¹⁰ This sexuality in the end becomes annulled by Isis who requires sexual celibacy and abstinence from Lucius (11.6.7).

¹¹ On the Syrian Goddess, cf. HÖRIG (1979); HIJMANS, VAN DER PAARDT *et al.* (1985) 286; LIGHTFOOT (2003) 1-85.

¹² This scene apparently excited some erudite medieval scribe familiar with Apuleian diction (perhaps also knowledgeable in medical studies) to intersect a small (some have labelled, pornographic) section of 81 words in *Metamorphoses* 10.21, known as the *spurcum additamentum* (the 'filthy addition'): *et ercle orcium pigam perteretem Hyaci fragrantis et Chie rosacee lotionibus expiavit. ac dein digitis, hypate licanos mese paramese et nete, hastam mihi inguinis nivei spurcicie pluscule excorians emundavit. et cum ad inguinis cephalum formosa mulier concitum veniebat ab orbibus, ganniens ego et dentes ad Iouem elevans Priapon frequenti frictura porrixabam ipsoque pando et repando ventrem sepiuscule tactabam. ipsa quoque, inspiciens quod genius inter antheras excreverat modicum illud morule, qua lustrum sterni mandaverat, anni sibi revolutionem autumabat.* On the *spurcum* and the controversy surrounding it, cf. HUNINK (2006b).

that the woman is driven by a *vaesana libido* (10.19.3) and the matron has to overcome Lucius-ass' initial hesitations before she is able to get what she has bargained for (10.22). On the contrary, it would rather seem that Lucius' desire for sex transforms into Lucius-ass' desire for food; sexual pleasure becomes only a secondary characteristic of the metamorphosed Lucius, his chief concern now being how to stuff his big belly with enough food (e.g., 7.27.3).¹³

But on a more profound level Lucius' transformation into an ass offers the author the opportunity to bring to the forefront the religious and Isiac overtones of the novel's narrative, since it is Isis herself that restores Lucius to his human form in the final Book. As had been already known from Plutarch's treatise *On Isis and Osiris* 362E, the ass as an animal was loathed by Isis for it reminded the goddess of the ass-shaped demon Seth-Typhon, who had slain and dismembered her husband (and brother) Osiris. The significance of the ass as the principal enemy of Isis in Egyptian religion is evident in the *Metamorphoses* as soon as the goddess instructs Lucius-ass to eat the roses from the priest's hands during the procession of the Ploiaphesia¹⁴ and therefore cast away, as if it were somehow a theatrical mask or costume,¹⁵ the hide of the beast which she detests above all others, clearly pointing towards its Egyptian association with Seth (11.6.2).¹⁶

This, however, inevitably raises the question why Isis of all Greco-Roman and Egyptian deities; had there been no better candidates for the job? Several suggestions and hypotheses have been offered for the presence of the goddess in the novel. J. WINKLER deduced in what is now considered an authoritative discussion of the *Metamorphoses* that Isis had been the most obvious choice for Apuleius, assuming of course that one is ready to accept that from the very start Apuleius had consciously planned to change the 'Milesian' tone of the novel in the final Book and 'transform' the story to a more serious and elevated form by meandering the story towards a final Egyptian resolution.¹⁷ Surely, WINKLER argued, other candidates had been

¹³ On the importance of food and Lucius-ass' gluttony, cf. TILG (2015) 18-21.

¹⁴ HARRISON points out that the burlesque *anteludia* parade and its participants with their fancy Mardi gras costumes comically looks back to Lucius-ass' past adventures from Books 1-10 (2000: 241-43; 2012: 78 n.26). On the Apuleian *anteludia* suggesting a Roman *pompa circensis*, which also looks forward to the upcoming Isiac procession, cf. KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 205-06.

¹⁵ On this theatrical aspect, cf. KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 49-50, 177 s.v. '*corio te protinus exue*'; also SMITH (2012) 211, pointing to Lucius' "comical and lowly garb of disguise".

¹⁶ Lucius, too, prays to Isis and begs that he be ridden of his asinine form and restored to the man he once was at 11.2.4. Cf. also the notes at GRIFFITHS (1975) 162 and the discussions at FRANGOULIDIS (2008) 169-71; DREWS (2009) 558-67.

¹⁷ WINKLER (1985) 277-79.

available to Apuleius,¹⁸ but Isis and her antagonist Seth-Typhon had been the more well-known, especially given the fact that Isis cult and worship were popular phenomena in the Greco-Roman worlds from the Hellenistic epoch onwards. The exoticness, openness, and obvious visibility of this cult (compared, for example, to the not so visible Persian cult of Mithras) would imply that readers of the *Metamorphoses* could realistically understand (or at least get a rough image of) what the author was exactly referring to when relating, for example, the Isis procession, or when mentioning Isis' hatred of donkeys.¹⁹

Based on the Isis cult's exoticness and openness, S. TILG has proposed that the reasons (selfish, in a way) for which Apuleius brought Isis into the narrative were in order to promote his novel; given the goddess' apparent popularity in the Roman world, notwithstanding too the high competitiveness in prose fiction writing during the second century CE, Isis could be used as an publicity stunt to captivate enthusiasts.²⁰ Be what it may, Isis figured quite often in antique tales as a divinity of redemption and salvation²¹ and appears in this capacity in more or less contemporary fiction, such as Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesian Tales* or in the anonymous *Life of Aesop*;²² this, then, might have been an additional reason for opting for an Isiac, instead of any other, resolution in the first place.²³

A different hypothesis, voiced by C. SCHLAM, picked up by S. HARRISON and elaborated by S. TILG, argues that the Isis material of Book 11 were not entirely an Apuleian invention (as is the scholarly *communis opinio*) but were taken over from the original Greek

¹⁸ For instance, WINKLER mentions a few reports about the Jews worshipping an ass or even the Syrian Goddess being paraded on the back of a donkey, but rejects a Jewish or Syrian final resolution the former based on the grounds that they were "despised for their alien ways" and the latter for being already present in the epitomised Ass story (1985: 277). VAN MAL-MAEDER, on the contrary, hypothesises (unconvincingly, in my opinion) that Isis' aversion for the ass reflects a polemic against the Christian religion, where apparently the ass played a prominent role (1997: 96 with n. 36; I personally do not regard the references to the donkey present at the young Christ's birth in the manger, or the one during the Holy Family's flight from Egypt, or even the one Jesus mounted during his entrance into Jerusalem as 'advantageous').

¹⁹ On Apuleius' depiction of every-day ritual space in contemporary Isis cult, cf. EGELHAAF-GAISER (2000).

²⁰ TILG (2012) 151-52.

²¹ Cf. e.g., Artemidorus *Interpretation of Dreams* 2.39: Σάραπις καὶ Ἴσις καὶ Ἄνουβις καὶ Ἄρποκράτης αὐτοὶ τε καὶ τὰ ἀγάλματα αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ μυστήρια καὶ πᾶς ὁ περὶ αὐτῶν λόγος καὶ τῶν τούτοις συννάων τε καὶ συμβῶμων θεῶν παραχᾶς καὶ κινδύνους καὶ ἀπειλὰς καὶ περιστάσεις σημαίνουσιν, ἐξ ὧν καὶ παρὰ προσδοκίαν καὶ παρὰ τὰς ἐλπίδας σώζουσιν· αἰεὶ γὰρ σωτήρες εἶναι νομομισμένοι εἰσὶν οἱ θεοὶ τῶν εἰς πάντα ἀφιγμένων καὶ εἰς ἔσχατον ἐλθόντων κίνδυνον, τοὺς δὲ ἤδη ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ὄντας αὐτίκα μάλα σώζουσιν.

²² E.g., Xenophon of Ephesus *Ephesian Tales* 1.6.2 (an oracle predicts a happy end for the couple and their offering of gifts to Isis), 4.3.3, 5.4.6 (Anthia prays to Isis), 5.13.4 (Anthia and Habrocomes express their gratitude to Isis); *Life of Aesop* 4-8 (Aesop's encounter with Isis; Isis grants Aesop his voice). Cf. also WINKLER (1985) 278; TILG (2012) 146-48 and (2014) 11-12, 85. On possible links between the *Life of Aesop* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, cf. WINKLER (1985) 276-91; FINKELPEARL (2003); EGELHAAF-GAISER (2012) 42-45.

²³ On Isis in the Greek novels, cf. HARRISON (2007).

Metamorphoseis.²⁴ Yet, what has stricken TILG to be truly an Apuleian novelty is Lucius' unexpected trip to Rome (his 'Romecoming') after his initiation into the Isis cult and argues that the final chapters of Book 11 could be read as a kind of metaliterary appendix, in which Apuleius altered or substituted predictable material from the Greek *Metamorphoseis* in order to give a Roman ending to his novel; as a result, this would inevitably draw attention to Apuleius' ability of adapting or adding material to the original narrative.²⁵ This 'Roman ending' would also bring the *Metamorphoses*, in a ring compositional manner, full circle by returning to the programmatic statements in the prologue of Book 1 and to the unidentifiable prologic *ego* introducing itself as a 'newbie' to Roman studies in the city of the Latins.²⁶

2

Metamorphoses metamorphosed

As it should be clear by now, transformation is the underlying guiding principle of the novel, with metamorphosis and re-metamorphosis occurring on a number of levels. On a physical level, there are the obvious corporeal transformations of Pamphile, Lucius, and Meroe's victims, achieved via means of witchcraft;²⁷ then there is the alleged transformation of Lucius into a 'new man', who has denounced his old sins (especially his meddlesome *curiositas* and voluptuous sexual desires) and has seen the religious and moral light of Isis.²⁸ But there remains one final transformation that takes place in the narrative, this time on a more metaphorical level but by no means less important: essentially, that of the novel as a whole. It has been claimed that Isis' epiphany in Book 11 and her salvaging of Lucius-ass

²⁴ SCHLAM (1992) 25; HARRISON (2000) 236; TILG (2014) 1-18. TILG maintains that the Greek *Metamorphoseis* would have included, aside from the two 'comic' books that Photius had already read (*Library* 129: οἱ δὲ γὰρ πρῶτοι αὐτοῦ δύο λόγοι μόνον οὐ μετεγράφησαν Λουκίῳ ἐκ τοῦ Λουκιανοῦ λόγου ὃς ἐπιγράφεται «Λοῦκις ἢ Ὀνος» ἢ ἐκ τῶν Λουκίου λόγων Λουκιανῶ), one or even two additional books with a serious religious ending (2014: 9). Furthermore, VAN MAL-MAEDER suggests that if a divine epiphany in the Greek *Metamorphoseis* were truly to be found, it would have occurred *after* Lucius' retransformation had come to pass (1997: 111).

²⁵ TILG (2014) 17, 110-11.

²⁶ Cf. *idem* (2012) 153.

²⁷ These are primarily transformations of humans into animals, but there are some indications too of metamorphoses into inanimate objects, such as rocks, statues, or trees (cf. e.g., 2.1.3-4, 2.5.7).

²⁸ Scholars have variously dealt with the question of the protagonist's characterisation in Book 11 and whether the 'reborn' Lucius has earnestly 'changed his ways' and has been cured of his 'old sins' and personal inadequacies (i.e., he has been 'transformed' into a 'new man') or whether his characterisation remains consistent throughout the novel. Opinions, overall, stand in this matter divided—some have been in favour of Lucius' true final metamorphosis and his genuine moral progress (cf. e.g., most recently DREWS (2012) 124 and (2015) 525-25; GRAVERINI (2012) 96), others have not been that convinced (cf. e.g., HARRISON (2000) 254 and (2012) 83)—and a general consensus is unlikely to be reached any time soon. In any case, in the end Apuleius has won. On Lucius' overall characterisation in Book 11, cf. KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 38-43; KEULEN (2015).

‘transforms’, in a way, the novel from its low-life and ‘Milesian’ story into a serious work with a religious ending. This apparent metamorphosis of the *Metamorphoses* brings unavoidably into question the seriousness of the final book and its relationship to the rest of the novel, as well as the resulting justification of seriousness and comedy in the work.

Ever since WINKLER’s influential analysis not just of Book 11 but of the *Metamorphoses* in its entirety, arguing essentially that the work is “a philosophical comedy about religious knowledge”,²⁹ Apuleian critics have been faced with the sometimes eccentric ‘dilemma’ of having to choose between several hermeneutic models which might help to make sense of the final Book in terms of the whole novel’s theme and narrative structure.³⁰ Not everyone, however, was willing to extend a similar courtesy to the Madaurensian author. The most polemical criticisms and harsh views belong to B.E. PERRY, who could be labelled as the principal spokesperson of an Apuleian ‘anti-unitarian’ group. It becomes clear from his writings that PERRY was no real fan of Apuleius (he might have somehow tolerated him, but he clearly had a very weird way of showing it) and regarded him as an author of lesser literary talent and importance, whose novel demonstrated only a marginal amount of unity. In a series of articles written throughout the 1920s and culminated in 1967 with his book *The ancient romances*, PERRY argued over and over again that Apuleius’ composition technique was extremely flawed and exhibited a great deal of inconsequentialities and a minimum amount of internal consistency: for example, PERRY regarded the transition from one group of stories to another illogical and incoherent, which he personally took as a characteristic of Apuleius’ lack of artistic talent, whereas the solemn purpose of Book 11 was to redeem the novel from what he considered to be “the appearance of complete frivolity and from the scorn of his learned contemporaries” by including a section of “solemn pageantry” to balance the light character of Books 1-10.³¹ (To bring in a modern analogy, I have little doubt that Apuleius would have surely not been amused by PERRY’s anachronistic *BMCR* review of the *Metamorphoses*, and several ‘responses’ of the type ‘Response: Apuleius on PERRY on

²⁹ WINKLER (1985) 124.

³⁰ This dilemma has been acknowledged e.g. by EGELHAAF-GAISER (2012) 43.

³¹ PERRY (1967) 242-45. Somehow similar, but not as polemical, views have been expressed by HEINE, maintaining that Book 11 had not been originally conceived by Apuleius, but was added to the narrative as a reaction to the ‘gradually darkening’ world of the novel (1978: 37), or FINKELPEARL, who acknowledges the *Metamorphoses*’ lack of form and unity and whose Book 11 actively reflects “the consciousness of that [sc. loose] shape” (2004: 332). TILG (2014) 91 n.17 provides further references to pre-PERRY scholars holding more or less similar views.

Apuleius...’ would have ensued; this would have been a scholarly *desideratum* many would have been eager to observe!)

Luckily, not all think so lowly of Apuleius. A number of critics strongly opposing PERRY’s view regard the religious components of Book 11 as genuinely ‘sincere’; this category of scholars, who could conveniently be grouped together as the ‘serious-unitarians’, accept that the proclamation offered by Isis’ priest Mithras of Lucius’ prior ordeals and his self-indulgence in low-life slavish pleasures³² is a protraction of an already established interpretative consistency which gives the overall serious level for the novel’s understanding. The *Metamorphoses* in this case is treated as a tale of fall and redemption, of a *Paradise Lost* and later *Regained*, so to speak, with the base and low-life elements of Books 1-10 serving as a negative counterpart for the elevated religious material of Book 11.³³ Following Mithras’ authority, some critics from this group have even gone to great lengths to try to establish the serious unity of the novel by pointing out a number of clues for an anticipated religious ending in the preceding ten Books.³⁴

Standing on the opposite side of the rink is another group of Apuleian scholars who are willing to accept the underlying unity of Apuleius’ novel, but do not agree with the proposed strict seriousness of its final Book. Treading in some way in WINKLER’s footsteps, who was the first to put forward an aporetic serio-comic approach in the interpretation of the religious material of Book 11,³⁵ these scholars have proposed a more comic-satiric understanding of the Isis-Book, suggesting that the elevated and religious atmosphere is deconstructed by a number of comic-parodic elements, both on the level of content and on that of language.³⁶ For instance, D. VAN MAL-MAEDER hypothesised that the *Metamorphoses* has lost an extended new comic scene similar to that found in the *Ass*, which would eventually

³² 11.15.1: *multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti. nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles delapsus voluptates, curiositatis inprosperae sinistrum praemium reportasti. sed utcumque Fortunae caecitas, dum te pessimis periculis discruciat, ad religiosam istam beatitudinem inprovida produxit malitia.*

³³ Cf. e.g., TATUM (1969) 489-90; PENWILL (1975) 49, 74-75; DOWDEN (2006) argues for a serious-philosophical interpretation.

³⁴ Cf. e.g., GRIMAL (1971); GRIFFITHS (1978); WLOSOK (1999). Some scholars have entertained the idea that the whole *Metamorphoses* is a parabolic exposition of the initiation rites into the Isis cult, but this opinion tends to be considered extreme (cf. e.g., HARRISON (1999) xxxvii and (2000) 237 with n. 131-132). FINKELPEARL (1998) 184-217 and GRAVERINI (2006) have both argued that Book 11 should by no means be interpreted in terms of a religious ‘commentary’.

³⁵ WINKLER (1985) 223-27; a similar view is held by e.g., GRAVERINI (2007) 124-27, 133 and *passim*. DREWS (2012) 129-31 proposes a serio-comic interpretation that is in keeping with both religious and philosophical teaching.

³⁶ Cf. TILG (2014) 93 and n.27.

tie together the comic ‘Milesian’ elements of Books 1-10 and that of the Isis-Book, thus bringing the story to an appropriate and comic end.³⁷ VAN MAL-MAEDER’s suggestion seems to stem from the seemingly problematic final word of the novel, the imperfect verb *obibam*,³⁸ which has not sat very well with many who have argued for the open-endedness of the *Metamorphoses*’ ending or for the existence of a lacuna in the manuscripts.³⁹ M. ZIMMERMAN recently offered a witty reconstruction of that possible ending (her conjecture being that the missing ending comprised a couple of sentences at the most, and not an entire scene as suggested by VAN MAL-MAEDER), stating however that she is well aware that this is nothing more than an educated speculation.⁴⁰ Moreover, S. HARRISON, taking WINKLER’s arguments one step further, concludes that although the detailed exposition of Isiac religion which is exhibited in Book 11 is used primarily as a cultural and intellectual *tour de force*, it nevertheless remains in essence a subversive parody of religion and a satire on “religious mania and youthful gullibility”: the elevated and serious material of Lucius-ass’ encounter with the goddess Isis takes a turn for the worse the moment the retransformed Lucius comes in contact with the staff of her religious cult, who do not show the slightest inhibition in taking advantage of his naiveté, resulting not only in multiple initiations but also in the draining of his wealth.⁴¹ HARRISON, furthermore, dismisses the use of the Isiac religious or Platonic philosophical components as a means to propagate elements either of a didactic or of a serious ideological nature; in his own words (fittingly, since they are also the final words of his 2000 study on Apuleius), Book 11 and the novel as a whole “is always aware of its status as

³⁷ VAN MAL-MAEDER (1997) 114-17, adopted also by HOLZBERG (2006) 109-11; *contra* GRAVERINI (2003) 181-83; ZIMMERMAN (2012) 27; TILG (2014) 139-40.

³⁸ *Metamorphoses* 11.30.5: *rursus denique quaquā raso capillo collegii vetustissimi et sub illis Sullae temporibus conditi munia, non obumbrato vel obtecto calvitio, sed quoquo versus obvio, gaudens obibam.*

³⁹ On the novel’s open-endedness, cf. WINKLER (1985) 224; KRABBE (2003) 143-44 remains unconvinced. It seems that a possible lacuna in manuscript F (the oldest and most important manuscript of Apuleius) between the end of *Metamorphoses* 11 and the beginning of the *Florida* could account for the abrupt ending, on which cf. PECERE (1987); VAN MAL-MAEDER (1997) 112-14; ZIMMERMAN (2012) 25-26; also KEULEN, EGELHAAF-GAISER *et al.* (2015) 499. TILG, who is rather content with *obibam* being the final word of the novel, discusses the palaeographical evidence and the transmission of manuscripts, but remains rather sceptical on whether the suggested lacuna actually contained any text at all (2014: 135-38, 141-45). On *obire* designating ‘dying’, thus adding a sense of closure to the novel, cf. FINKELPEARL (2004) 329-30; also TILG (2014) 141 and n.22.

⁴⁰ ZIMMERMAN’s reconstruction: “The promise of the great god that I would become a famous barrister came true indeed: Through the rich fees that I earned in the courts I was able to commission a statuette of a golden ass and dedicate it to the gods as a memory of my former hardships, and as a token of my everlasting gratitude” (2012: 27).

⁴¹ HARRISON (2000) 238-52 and (2012); a slight critique of his arguments is found in FINKELPEARL (2004) 339, who also discusses the three different ‘false endings’ in the last four paragraphs of the novel.

an entertaining narrative in the Milesian tradition, and that its self-proclaimed purpose is to bring pleasure and not enlightenment.”⁴²

Finally, some others have opted for an in-between interpretation: for instance, though S. TILG accepts both the serious and comical aspects of the *Metamorphoses* and of Book 11, he argues that strict categories such as ‘serious’ or ‘comical’ neither do justice to the text nor tackle the problem at its root, since this binary categorisation always relies on how critics of the text choose to interpret them on the one hand, and on which level of the text they refer to on the other.⁴³ Therefore, by looking back at Apuleius’ complex outlook as a philosopher and orator⁴⁴ TILG recently proposed an interpretation that verges on philosophical-rhetorical seriocomedy, a medium which is meant to convey serious ideas in a light, comic fashion, and brings in to the discussion examples from the *Apology* to support his case.⁴⁵ U. EGELHAAF-GAISER, contrastingly, has concentrated on the self-fashioning of Lucius in Book 11 and has proposed that in the final Book Lucius amasses a number of quite diverge characteristics⁴⁶ which ultimately form a highly complex literary figure with a multiple personality that does not permit merely one *definitive* interpretation. She then extends this idea of a ‘multiple identity’ to the novel as a whole, suggesting that when viewed in hindsight, these seemingly conflicting aspects might be best comprehended in terms of consecutive stages of Lucius’ life.⁴⁷

⁴² HARRISON (2000) 259.

⁴³ TILG (2014) 105.

⁴⁴ Cf. also WALSH (1970) 143.

⁴⁵ TILG (2014) 98-105.

⁴⁶ These are “(i) the religious symbolism inherent in the office of the *pastophorus*, (ii) the self-transformation of Lucius into a ‘body of sound’ for Osiris, (iii) the resulting similarity with the image of Socrates in the *Symposium*, and finally (iv) the singular body of the forensic orator, which has been transformed into an exhibit, while the orator’s brilliance in the forum is commanded by Osiris” (EGELHAAF-GAISER (2012) 45).

⁴⁷ EGELHAAF-GAISER (2012).

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Eidesstaatliche Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, dass ich die eingereichte Dissertation „Embracing the Occult: Magic, Witchcraft, and Witches in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*“ selbstständig und ohne unerlaubte Hilfe verfasst habe. Anderer als der von mir angegebenen Hilfsmittel und Schriften habe ich mich nicht bedient. Alle wörtlich oder sinngemäß den Schriften anderer Autorinnen oder Autoren entnommenen Stellen habe ich kenntlich gemacht. Die Abhandlung ist noch nicht veröffentlicht worden und noch nicht Gegenstand eines Promotionsverfahrens gewesen.

Göttingen, October 2015

Göttingen, August 2018