

Defixiones (Curse Tablets) - Greek, Latin, and Oscan

Greek *Defixio* from Nemea. Probably Hellenistic period. Translated by Jorge J. Bravo III in "Erotic Curse Tablets from the Heroön of Opheltes at Nemea," *Hesperia*, Vol. 85, p. 129.

I turn Euboula away from Aineas: from his face, from his eyes, from his mouth, from his chest, from his soul, from his belly, from his erect penis, from his anus, from all his body. I turn Euboula away from Aineas.

Greek *Defixio* from Piraeus. Late 5th/early 4th century BCE. Translated by Laura Lamont in "A New Commercial Curse Tablet from Classical Athens," in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 2015, Bd. 196 (2015), pp. 162-3.

1 Hekáte Chthonia, Artemis Chthonia, Hermes Chthonios:

2 cast your hate upon Phanagora and Demetrios,

3 and their tavern and their property and their possessions.

4 I will bind my enemy Demetrios, and Phana-

5 gora, in blood and in ashes,

6 with all the dead. Nor will the next four-year cycle release you.

7 I will bind you in such a bind,

8 Demetrios, as strong as is possible,

9 and I will smite down a *kynotos* on [your] tongue

Latin *Defixio* from Rome. Mid 1st century BCE. Translated by J. Gager, in *Curse tablets and binding spells from the ancient world*, 1999, pp. 241-2.

Good and beautiful Proserpina, wife of Pluto, or Salvia, if you prefer that I call

you so, snatch away the health, the body, the complexion, the strength, and the faculties of Plotius. Hand him over to Pluto, your husband. May he not be able to escape this (curse) by his wits. Hand him over to fevers - quartan, tertian, and daily - so that they wrestle and struggle with him. Let them overcome him to the point where they snatch away his soul. Thus I give over to you this victim, O Proserpina or Acherusia if you prefer that I call you so. Summon for me the triple-headed hound to snatch away the heart of Plotius. Promise that you will give him three victims (gifts) - dates, figs, and a black pig - if he completes this before the month of March. These I will offer you, Proserpina Salvia, when you complete this in an orderly fashion. I give over to you the head of Plotius, the slave/son of Avonia. Proserpina Salvia, I give over to you the head of Plotius. Proserpina Salvia I give over to you the forehead of Plotius. Proserpina Salvia, I give over to you the eyebrows of Plotius. Proserpina Salvia, I give over to you the eyelids of Plotius. Proserpina Salvia I give over to you the pupils of Plotius. Proserpina Salvia, I give over to you the nostrils, lips ears, nose, tongue, and teeth of Plotius, so that he may not be able to say what is causing him pain; the neck, shoulders, arms, and fingers, so that he may not be able to aid himself in any way; his breast, liver, heart, and lungs, so that he may not be able to discover the source of his pain; his intestines, stomach, navel, and sides, so that he may not be able to sleep; his shoulder blades, so that he may not be able to sleep soundly; his "sacred organ" so that he may not be able to urinate; his rump, anus, thighs, knees, shanks, shins, feet, ankles, heels, toes, and toenails, so that he may not be able to stand by his own strength. No matter what he may have written, great or small, just as he has written a proper spell and commissioned it (against me), so I hand over and consign Plotius to you, so that you may take care of him by the month of February. Let him perish miserably. Let him leave life miserable. Let him be destroyed miserably. Take care of him so that he may not see another month.

Oscan *Defixio* from Capua. Probably 2nd century BCE. Translated by Francesca Murano in “The Oscan Cursing Tablets: Binding Formulae, Cursing Typologies and Thematic Classification,” in *The American Journal of Philology*, 2012, Vol. 133: pp.643-4.

1. To Keres Arentika I have entrusted, who, with respect to any their own will, their own cohort (of demons) shall invoke, [she shall smite (?) him (?),]
2. the women and the children, the relatives. With respect to Pacius Clovatus, son of Valaima, who for hatred Damia [own will, her own] /
3. cohort shall invoke. This I to you have entrusted; (I have entrusted) to Vibia Preba so that she may deliver to Keres Arentika, [(him,) Pacius Clovatus,] /
4. son of Valaima, and to her cohort. If she does not give him, harshly shall be punished her [
5. and you shall be smitten and wounded, otherwise, but if you have done it, then after that [
6. when he may start, but not . . . , when starts or if must perform something [
7. may, neither with infernal sacrifices neither with superior ones may they, whatever is good they may [. . . to Pacius Clovatus]
8. son of Valaima. When he shall start the meal, may he not be able to eat nor to crush the food [????
9. of which living men nourish themselves. May Pacius Clovatus, son of Valaima, absolutely tremble [??
10. to Vibia Aquia, if you absolutely shall have offered Pacius Clovatus, son of Valaima above [the earth; to your will]
11. and to your cohort, if as sacrificial victim you shall have offered him under the earth and under the water, [to Pacius Clovatus,]
12. son of Valaima or to Keres Arentika or to her cohort [
13. to Keres Arentika, who with respect to him who her own will her own cohort.