Durham E-Theses

Cursing in Roman Britain: Connectivity, Identity, and Belief

MADELINE CHRISTINE LINE

How to cite:

Use policy

Cursing in Roman Britain: Connectivity, Identity, and Belief

Madeline Christine Line

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

University of Durham,

Department of Archaeology.

2019

Abstract

This thesis explores cursing in Roman Britain as part of a wider Mediterranean practice and technology that was adopted and adapted to suit the specific needs and beliefs of dedicators. Such a perspective allows for an analysis of the factors that influenced this process of adoption and adaptation and, to develop this perspective, requires the use of globalisation theory. This work aims to bridge the divide between studies of archaeology and ancient languages by considering literacy alongside material culture.

As a ritual practice, cursing is revealing of perceptions of divine or supernatural power and human-divine interaction. The majority of curse tablets in Britain are best understood as 'judicial prayers', which were created to seek justice or revenge for a perceived crime or wrongdoing. With few exceptions, this subcategory of curse tablet was adopted in the province while 'standard' *defixiones* or binding spells were not. The present work considers that this pattern may be related to regional concepts of belief and the role of the divine in securing justice for perceived wrongs. Observations that the curse tablets from Britain primarily deal with theft and display a preoccupation with blood-related suffering are also further developed.

Studies of curse tablets in the ancient world have demonstrated that curses were employed in situations of individually-perceived social crisis and inequality. This thesis builds on these observations by seeking to address identity expression and negotiation in Roman Britain. Significantly, the language and content of the tablets allow for and necessitate the consideration of aspects of identity that have been previously received little attention in studies of the curses of Roman Britain, such as age, gender, and status. It is argued that these media provide a significant insight into the discrepant identities of those who created written curses in Roman Britain.

To whoever stole my snow boots in highschool

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Richard Hingley, Catherine Draycott, and Polly Low, for their support, guidance, and encouragement. Thank you for your helpful comments on drafts of this thesis, and thank you for helping me through my transition from Classics to archaeology.

I am grateful to Roger Tomlin for helpful correspondence concerning the texts discussed here. Without his work on the curse texts in Britain, this thesis would not have been possible.

Thank you to my friends in Durham, Canada, and wherever else for all of the coffee and chocolate (especially crème eggs) shared and for putting up with my various eccentricities. I would name names, but I would never forgive myself if I left anyone out – especially you, Darling Zoe.

I would not have achieved anything without the love and support of my family. Grandma, Nana, Grandad, Mom, Geoff, Evan, Christiane, and Grayson, I cannot express how grateful I am to have you in my life.

Matheus, thank you for everything, really.

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

DT   Audollent, A. (ed.) (1904) *Defixionum Tabellae Quotquot Innotuerunt Tam in Graecis Orientis Quam in Totius Occidentis Partibus Praeter Atticas*. Frankfurt/Main: Minerva.

PGM   Betz, H. D. (ed.) (1986) *The Greek magical papyri in translation: including the Demotic spells, Vol. 1, The Texts.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

RIB   *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* [Online]
Available at: https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/
(Accessed September 2019)

SGD   Jordan, D. R. (1985) 'A survey of Greek defixiones not included in the special corpora', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies,* 23(2), 115-40.

Tab. Sulis Tomlin, R. (1988) 'The curse tablets' in Cunliffe, B. (ed.) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, 2: The Finds from the Sacred Spring*. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 59-277.

TheDeMa Otto-von-Guericke-Universitat Magdeburg. *Thesaurus Defixionum Magdeburgensis.* [Online]
Available at: http://www.thedema.ovgu.de
(Accessed September 2019)

Chapter One: Introduction

Aims and Objectives

The principal aim of this dissertation is to examine how careful consideration of the language and material context of curse tablets in Britain can inform our understanding of belief, identity, and contacts between peoples in Roman Britain.

The materials discussed here have largely received attention for their apparent psychological function and for their role in conflict resolution. Such approaches rightly see curse tablets as individual responses to conflict where both the principal and their targets are active agents, but these perspectives risk neglecting the wider religious and cultural context. These curse tablets also feature in discussions of religion in Roman Britain, where they are rarely considered to reflect more than local superstition. The fact that the curses in Roman Britain are actually part of a much wider, Mediterranean practice of written cursing has often been sidelined.

Written cursing is a practice that came to Britain with the Roman conquest, but it had actually already been well-established throughout the Mediterranean world. We therefore need an understanding of the adoption of practice that acknowledges the transmission of ideas through networks and does not rely on one-way or simplified spread.

Curse tablets in Britain follow a pattern in which one type (or subcategory) of curse is dominant: judicial prayers, which were created to seek justice or revenge for a perceived wrongdoing. This is clear when we observe that only three of 173 published texts from the province are what can be called 'standard' *defixiones,* which were used to gain advantages in personal conflicts or uncertain situations. This pattern is unparalleled elsewhere. We must consider the factors that influenced this in order to gain

understanding of how this pattern of adoption is reflective of belief and perceptions of justice.

My objective is to demonstrate how, by considering curse tablets in Britain within both their local and broader Mediterranean context, we can gain a more thorough understanding of variations in belief, language, and identity negotiation as well as the processes of adoption and adaptation in specific contexts. Close examination of the language used in cursing is an important aspect of this analysis. By applying postcolonial and globalisation perspectives, I aim to look at ideas of justice and communication with the divine on an individual, regional, and global scale, while addressing a broad range of identities, some of which have received insufficient attention in the past.

Geography and Chronology

Figure 1.1 Map of Britain in the Roman period (Braund 1996).

I focus on the curse tablets from Britain in the Roman period (Fig. 1.1). That is, the curses primarily discussed here were discovered on the island of Great Britain and are dated to the period between AD 43-410.

1 – Salacia 6 - Mainz 11 – Delos
2 – Émerita 7 – Wilten-Veldidena 12 – Amorgos
3 – Italica 8 – Locri 13 - Cnidus
4 – Baelo Claudia 9 - Koutsongila
5 - Saguntum 10 - Athens

Figure 1.2 Map marking the locations discussed outside of Britain in the main discussion of the dissertation.

Because I apply globalisation perspectives, I have aimed to keep the judicial prayers from Britain in their wider chronological and geographic context. Comparanda are, therefore, drawn from disparate regions and periods in the Mediterranean world. The provenance of each of the curse tablets featured in my main discussion are marked in Fig. 1.2. It is immediately apparent that Africa and the Near East are excluded here. This is the result of the method of selection of the texts rather than my own intention.

Data Collection and Presentation

The main body of material studied here is compiled from published editions of curse tablets from Roman Britain. In order to analyse the content of these texts, I compiled a database that includes all known and published curse tablets from Britain. The contents of this database are presented in Appendix A.

Tomlin's (1988) analysis of the curse tablets from the sacred spring at *Aquae Sulis* (modern Bath) forms a significant portion of the available material, with 118 of 173 published tablets being from this site. In his publication, each tablet is transcribed and, where possible, restored and translated into English. Tomlin also provides line drawings of the tablets and commentary for the inscribed texts. A number of tablets from Bath (*Tab. Sulis* 112-30) are either uninscribed or contain non-letter markings. This makes analysis of their language and content impossible; they are, therefore, not included in Appendix A.

140 (of which 86 are inscribed) curse tablets were recovered during excavations at Uley, but the majority of these is yet to be published and cannot be included in the present work. Tomlin published four texts from Uley in Woodward and Leach's monograph on the excavation of the site, where these four texts received the same treatment as those from Bath (Tomlin 1993; Woodward & Leach 1993). The remaining texts were listed in a *descripta*, which provided dimensions of the tablets and preliminary observations of their inscribed texts where possible. Fourteen of these listed tablets have subsequently been published in *Britannia*, where Tomlin provides transcriptions, restorations, translations, line drawings, and commentary for each text. These are all included in Appendix A.

I collected the entries for curse tablets from other sites in Britain by consulting *RIB* and by carefully reading through the inscriptions published by Mark Hassall and

Roger Tomlin annually in *Britannia* as well as those published in *JRS*. Each tablet in Appendix A is given an alphanumerical code with the letters indicating the site name. For instance, BA001 is the first tablet listed from Bath, and DOD001 is the first (and only) tablet listed from Dodford. This formatting allows for the addition of future publications and finds.

A number of possible curse tablets have been noted in grey literature and published site reports. Although I do briefly consider these in Chapter Three, they are not included in Appendix A because editions are not available and because they have not actually been confirmed to be curse texts. This is either because they lack inscriptions and distinctive markings or because these inscriptions have not yet been read.

Curse tablets from elsewhere in the Mediterranean world are also referred to throughout the dissertation. These are referenced as they are numbered in the Thesaurus Defixionum Magdeburgensis (*TheDeMa*). *TheDeMa* is a project undertaken by the Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg that aims to create an exhaustive database of all extant published curse tablets. Each entry contains (where available in the published edition) a transcription, translation, and relevant bibliography. The database is still under development and access is, therefore, currently restricted. Although *TheDeMa* does have a number of shortcomings, I believe it is (or will be) an indispensable tool for those studying curse tablets. The nature of the digital database means that is useful not only for referencing tablets that are currently published, but also for those that have yet to be published. The wide scope of the project also allows for the use of a single referencing system for tablets from disparate regions.

A further advantage of *TheDeMa* is that it, like my own database, is searchable. This has benifited my work by enabling me to search for occurrences of vocabulary and formulae (either in transcribed texts or in translation) in any of the tablets in the database.

This has allowed for comparisons to be drawn from a wide body of curse tablets. Nonetheless, many of the examples of curses from other regions of the Mediterranean included in this dissertation have been discussed extensively in secondary literature, and much of my awareness and understanding of these texts is due to the work of scholars such as Blänsdorf, Eidinow, Faraone, Gager, Jordan, and Versnel.

Theoretical Frameworks

Over the past few decades, it has become widely acknowledged that we require multiple approaches to contact and change in the Roman world due to a multiplicity of experiences and encounters. I do not, therefore, argue for the use of any one paradigm as a dominant analytical tool. The present discussion will explore the application of Romanisation theory, postcolonial perspectives, and globalisation theory to the adoption of curse tablets in Britain in the Roman period, ultimately proposing that both postcolonial and globalisation theories can be applied together while the concept of (traditional) Romanisation is both ineffective in describing the relevant processes and unacceptably connected to colonial discourse. I employ postcolonial and globalisation perspectives throughout the dissertation, demonstrating the advantages of studying materials and practices on the local and global scale at the same time. I also explore how concepts of identity can inform our understanding of the adoption of a practice and the forms it may take as well as how forms of practice can inform our understanding of identity.

Romanisation

The concept of Romanisation has been increasingly regarded as problematic, prompting those who study Roman Britain to move beyond this acculturative and progressive framework (Gardner 2013: 1). It may, therefore, seem odd that Romanisation receives

attention here, but the concept of Romanisation, as introduced by Francis Haverfield, was the dominant framework for much of the twentieth century and forms the foundations for subsequent frameworks (Hingley 2005). The framework is also represented in public museum displays of the Romans in Britain (Hingley et al. 2018: 285). For this reason and because similar acculturative perspectives are still taken even after the supposed collapse of Romanisation (e.g. Kleijn & Benoist 2014), I include an overview of the concept here. Additionally, the developmental history of Romanisation very clearly demonstrates the relationship between our understandings of the past and the present; acknowledging this is necessary in the development and application of new frameworks (Hingley 2005; 2014).

Romanisation, as introduced by Francis Haverfield in 1905 and subsequently revised (Hingley 2000: 114), describes the progressive spread of civilisation in the provinces of the Roman empire, with Roman materials and behaviours supplanting the native. Haverfield considered the adoption of Roman material culture to equate to the assumption of Roman identity (Hingley 2005: 34). This was an idea that contrasted with the dominant contemporary view that the province of Britannia was entirely dominated by the Roman military (Hingley 2008: 314). Haverfield's Romanisation largely describes a homogenising process by which Roman metropolitan culture and civilization spread, '[extinguishing] the distinction between Roman and provincial, alike in material culture, politics, and language' (Haverfield 1923: 18). Due to the available evidence, Haverfield's work focuses on the success of Romanisation amongst the urban elite, regarding it as representative of the cultural development of the entire population (Webster 2001: 211), with the suggestion that non-elites were subject to the same processes, but with limited means of material expression (Hingley 2005: 34). It relies on the assumption that Roman

culture was perceived by native populations to be superior to pre-Roman culture, thus making Britons eager to receive it (Mattingly 2006: 14).

Although Romanisation was seen as a one-way process, with civilization spreading from Rome to the periphery, Haverfield does address regional variation by arguing that Romanisation was arrested or assisted by various factors in different regions (1923: 12; see also Webster 2001: 211). Notably, one of these features is race. Of the western regions of the Roman empire, Haverfield writes:

> Here Rome found races that were not yet civilized, yet were racially capable of accepting her culture. Here, accordingly, her conquests differed from the two forms of conquest with which modern men are most familiar. We know well enough the rule of the civilized white men over uncivilized Africans, who seem sundered forever from their conquerors by a broad physical distinction. We know, too, the rule of civilized white men over civilized white men – of Prussian (for example) over Pole, where the individualities of two civilized races have for generations clashed in undying conflict. The Roman conquest of western Europe resembled neither of these. Celt, Iberian, German, Illyrian, were marked off from Italian by no broad distinction of race and colour, such as marked off Egyptian from Italian, or that which now divides Englishman from Indian or Frenchman from the Algerian Arab. They were marked off, further, by no ancient culture, such as that which had existed for centuries round the Aegean. It was possible, it was easy, to Romanize these western peoples (Haverfield 1923: 13).

Such comments obviously owe much to the colonial discourse contemporary to Haverfield's writings. Here Haverfield explains the apparent ease with which Rome

managed to bestow culture and civilization upon indigenous populations while attributing the lack of progress in Britain's own colonial affairs to those colonised (Hingley 2005: 34). In so doing, he acknowledges the achievements of Rome without belittling those of Britain. Today, such views should be seen as reprehensible. I would think that any framework that has 'racial [capability]' as one of its tenets ought to be reconsidered on this basis alone, but traditional Romanisation has the additional fault of inadequately describing the change that is visible in the growing material record.

One of the primary issues with Romanisation is its reduction of complex issues of cultural identity to a simple Roman-native dichotomy (Mattingly 2006: 15; Pitts 2008: 494). What is not 'Roman' is thought to be native, but what is considered 'Roman', in reality, comprises materials and ideas from all over the Mediterranean and beyond (Mattingly 2006: 15). The view of progressively spreading Roman culture was at first supported by contemporary imperial literature (Tacitus' *Agricola* 21, in particular). It was also supported by excavations that focused on Roman period towns, villas, and forts – buildings that were thought to be characteristically 'Roman' (Mattingly 2006: 15). In the latter half of the twentieth century, changes in academic approaches led to the recognition of more settlement types, allowing for complexities to become more apparent (Hingley 2005: 36). The traditional view of Romanisation was thus challenged, with a focus on regional variation and the influence of pre-Roman societies. This resulted in the emergence of nativist approaches (discussed below) and shifted views of Romanisation.

Newer approaches to Romanisation allowed for the agency of provincial elites; elites were considered to have an active role in the adoption of Roman culture, and this culture was subsequently emulated by those who were less socially and economically powerful (Hingley 2005: 42; Mattingly 2006: 15). Martin Millett (1990) draws focus to the indigenous context within which this culture was adopted. He argues that Roman

symbols were adopted by local elites for the practical reason of power negotiation between and within societies (Millet 1990). Thus, *Romanitas* was first adopted as a means of elite display of prestige before '[permeating] the whole of society' (Millet 1990: 212).

A criticism of this model is that it does not describe the spreading of Romanised material culture to non-elites beyond the mention of emulation (Webster 2001: 216), and emulation is taken to mean 'a spontaneous and uncritical adoption of material culture or cultural traits' (Mattingly 2006: 15). Models that rely on the emulation of Roman culture make the assumption that Roman culture was thought always to be superior and, therefore, was adopted whenever possible (Webster 2001: 216: Hingley 2005: 43; Mattingly 2006: 15). Webster offers the additional criticism that Millett's Romanisation appears to suggest that Roman material culture and symbols eventually became the only means for both elite and non-elite expression of identity and aspirations; she states, 'the existence of other currencies (that is, of countercultural symbols of identity and status) is not envisaged' (Webster 2001: 216).

I would add my own critique of the concept, but first I attempt to engage with the framework. Looked at uncritically, Romanisation is a simple, first-glance description of the spread of Roman culture to the provinces. *Agricola* 21, which heavily influenced Haverfield's model describes the process thus:

'…. Moreover he began to train the sons of the chieftains in a liberal education, and to give a preference to the native talents of the Briton as against the trained abilities of the Gaul. As a result, the nation which used to reject the Latin language began to aspire to rhetoric: further, the wearing of our dress became a distinction, and the toga came into fashion, and little by little the Britons went astray into alluring vices: to the promenade, the bath, the well-appointed dinner table. The simple natives

gave the name of "culture" to this factor of their slavery' (translation by Hutton & Peterson 1914: 67).

The practice of written cursing, particularly because it is achieved through the use of Latin, may appear to fit this model. If Romanisation describes the process of change from one state to another, then we might consider the use of curse tablets in the province of Britain to represent the change from pre-literate to literate. As viewed by Haverfield (and Tacitus above), the adoption of material culture equated to the adoption of sentiments associated with it (Haverfield 1923: 20). By this logic, the use of Latin in cursing would represent the adoption of a Roman (or Romanised) identity. It is clear, however, that this is an oversimplification. There is ample evidence to suggest that the use of Latin need not indicate the adoption of a 'Romanised' or purely Roman identity. Latin literacy itself is probably better understood as a series of literacies (e.g. military, monumental, commercial, cursing, and elite), and these literacies might be adopted because they can be used to do particular things (Woolf 2002: 185). An example of this can be seen in the Lower Rhine Valley, where there is significant evidence for literacy (in the form of seal-boxes) in the local, unurbanised population (Hingley 2005: 94-9). It has been argued that this represents the adoption of the technology of writing for practical reasons rather than a desire to adopt all aspects of Roman culture (Hingley 2005: 99).

The presence of bilingual or Celtic inscriptions amongst the British curse tablets are another example, where the Latin alphabet is used without the use of the actual language. It is perhaps more significant that judicial prayers and general curse tablets are not, in reality, 'Roman' practices, but rather belong to a much wider tradition that long predated Roman imperial expansion and was imported to Britain as a result of Roman conquest.

So much for traditional Romanisation. My main criticism relates to the inability of models that rely on progressive emulation to address cultural change amongst non-elite members of a society. We will see that those who used the curse tablets in Britain are thought to be locals mostly of lower socio-economic status. The practice of written cursing in Britain would seem to be a non-elite activity without an elite precursor that was emulated. Even at Bath, where a wealth of elite inscriptions has been found, these are stone inscriptions with very different language and purpose; they therefore cannot be said to have a direct influence on the practice of cursing other than perhaps the identification of the deity and the general act of donation. In short, the adoption of British curse tablets cannot be said to be the result of elite adoption of a Roman concept for purposes of self-promotion, nor can they be said to be the product of trickle-down emulation. For this reason, as well as those outlined above, I do not employ the Romanisation paradigm as a means of understanding the adoption of cursing in Britain. To me, the use of judicial prayers seems to represent the adoption of a new or foreign technology (if such a term can be used) by non-elites – but in what context?

Postcolonial perspectives

Challenges to the modernist concepts of progressive Romanisation have resulted in the development of postcolonial perspectives. These include nativist perspectives, colonial discourse analysis, and studies of identity and hybridity. Although it is still termed 'Romanisation,' Millett's work does fit into this earlier school of thought. In part, this is because Millet's work is not text-led, representing a step away from Haverfield's concept.

Nativist approaches represent a strong reaction to Romanisation and encompass two related ways of thinking. The first stresses the survival of pre-Roman culture as an act of resistance to Roman cultural influence or because Roman influence was simply

ignored. According to Webster, 'for the nativists, who pointed to the slow uptake of Latin, the rapid demise of towns, and an apparent Celtic revival in the later empire, Romanisation was little more than a surface gloss beneath which Celtic lifeways survived unscathed' (Webster 2001: 212). Consideration of hybrid features in provincial culture shows that such models do not adequately describe cultural contact. Crucially, nativist approaches that consider Roman culture to be a 'surface gloss' continue to set Roman and native identities in opposition to each other, maintaining a simplistic and faulty Roman-native dichotomy (Woolf 1997: 340; Webster 2001: 212; Hingley 2005: 41; Gardner 2013: 4). The Romanisation paradigm is thus inverted 'without challenging the overall shape' (Woolf 1997: 340).

Today, the extreme nativist framework has been largely abandoned by archaeologists in Britain (Hingley 2005: 41). Instead, such perspectives have influenced the second facet of nativist approaches, which stresses the roles of provincials in their own adoption of Roman culture, emphasizing active choice on the part of the indigenous peoples and a lack of force or deliberate planning on the part of the Roman imperial powers. Millett's *The Romanization of Britain* belongs to this school (Hingley 2005: 46). I have already discussed criticisms of Millett's approach in particular, but a further problem with any paradigm that relies on elite adoption is that it downplays the influence of the Roman state, thereby failing to address the complexities of power negotiations inherent in empire (Mattingly 2006: 16). As with more extreme nativist approaches, the Roman-native dichotomy is upheld when these complexities are not acknowledged. Nativist approaches may thus be considered unfruitful and are not employed in this dissertation.

Although it cannot truly be said to be postcolonial, an early attempt to move away from polarising views can be found in R. G. Collingwood's work, which notes a mixture

of Roman and Celtic elements (Collingwood 1932). This explains the apparent hybrid forms of material culture that were unaccounted for by traditional Romanisation or extreme nativist perspectives. Collingwood states that the archaeological record has revealed a mixture of Roman and Celtic elements, and 'it might be said that the civilization of Roman Britain was neither Roman nor British, but Romano-British, a fusion of two things into a single thing different from either' (Collingwood 1932: 92). This fusion, however, cannot really be understood if it is studied without attention to power dynamics (Webster 2001: 211). Additionally, distinguishing Romano-British culture from Roman or British culture becomes problematic when we consider complications with classifying something as 'Roman' or 'British.' Such unilateral categorisation can oversimplify complex identity realities. We must again consider that the practice of written cursing is not necessarily Roman, but rather a technology brought with Roman conquest.

Creolisation

To address the issue of power relations and their impact on cultural change, Jane Webster (2001) proposes the application of the creolisation model to the Roman provinces. This model, based on what was originally a linguistic term to describe the creation of a blended dialect through the mixing of two languages in a colonial context, has been used in American historical archaeology to describe 'the process of multicultural adjustment through which – from the interaction between Europeans, Native Americans, and displaced Africans – African American and African Caribbean societies were created' (Webster 2001: 217). Creolisation describes both the development of creole language and the existence of creole material culture within a non-egalitarian, colonial society.

'In the same way that European artefacts could be used by slaves – not because they aspired to be European but according to an underlying set of non-European rules – provincial artefacts in the Roman world may likewise operate according to a different, indigenous set of underlying rules' Webster 2001: 218). Webster notes that any link between past culture opposes the dominant colonising culture and could be considered a process of resistant adaptation. Importantly, Webster's model allows for the active negotiation of Roman logics and material within local or indigenous rules and amongst the lower classes of society, moving away from the previously dominant elite-focused paradigms for change. In this view, hybrid material culture does not necessarily indicate hybrid values.

This is a comparative approach. In her earlier work, Webster discusses the importance of comparative discourse analysis stating, 'if we are to provide this much-needed discursive re-presentation of the subject positions of the Roman era, comparative analysis is not simply unavoidable: it is a methodological necessity' (1997: 325). Any sort of comparison, however, brings with it the danger of the inappropriate equation of the two (or more) things – here modern colonialism and Roman colonialism – which denies the uniqueness of the cultures, societies, and peoples studied (Webster 1997: 324). Webster, however, counters this by stating that 'however temporally disparate, there is a point beyond which the 'fact of' colonialism cannot be deconstructed (cf. Eagleton 1993: esp. 124), but within which the discourses of colonialism may be subject to comparative analysis' (1997: 330). Operation within these parameters, she argues, allows for safe comparisons to be made in order to better understand the complexities of the power relationships in a colonial society.

Because Creolisation, like other approaches to hybridity and syncretised material, relies on the interaction between the colonised (indigenous) and the coloniser (Roman)

to form a new culture, the existence of peoples and cultures that are distinctly indigenous or Roman is assumed. This is problematic in that the social climate of the Roman world was more complex than the simple interactions of these groups (Roman and native, coloniser and colonised). As such, Creolisation and other studies of hybridity maintain the faulty Roman-Native dichotomy that was so apparent in models of Romanisation, acculturation, and emulation. Such models see Rome as the source of non-indigenous elements in the changing culture (Revell 2016: 47).

Additionally, the Creolisation model works only within a specific set of circumstances (non-military, non-elite) and neglects to analyse contact in any other group. Indeed, the need for an approach to Roman material culture that includes all socio-economic levels of a society has been noted (Mattingly 2011: 2014). It has also been observed that the imbalance of power in the context of change is not considered to a sufficient degree (Gardner et al. 2013: 5). Perhaps the strongest criticism of any polarising view of interactions is that they focus on the impact of empire largely on ethnic identity without sufficient attention to other aspects of identity such as social rank, gender, and age (Revell 2016). Thus, a focus on local and Roman identities risks concealing the multiplicity of identities that was possible in the Roman world (Gardner et al. 2013: 5). Studying these multiple identities is one of the aims of this thesis, and the need for such a study is particularly apparent when considering curse tablets, which show a much more complex picture of identity experience and negotiation than a focus on ethnicity or the Roman-native dichotomy allows for. Indeed, we will later see that a focus on ethnic identity is likely misguided.

Identity

Thoroughly interwoven with postcolonial perspectives are approaches to identity. Such approaches consider the relationship between material culture and the formation and

expression of identity, where identity is understood as performative and, therefore, visible in material culture (Revell 2016: 11-2). According to Hill (2001: 12), 'it can be argued that the study of Roman Britain has always been about identity.' This can be seen above in the fixation on and search for 'Roman' and 'Native' ethnic identities. It has, however, been recognised that other categories of identity were also meaningful and impacted lived experience (Hill 2001: 15). These include age, class or status, and gender. These aspects of identity have, however, received limited attention (Hill 2001: 15; Pitts 2007: 695). This neglect of other aspects of identity is particularly problematic because, in focusing on cultural or ethnic identity, it betrays a continued fixation with the Roman-native dichotomy that is seen in Romanisation (Pitts 2007: 695).

Nonetheless, important changes in perspective have been put forward regarding ethnic and cultural identity. One example is Sîan Jones' (1997) work on the archaeology of ethnicity, in which she looks at the relationship between ethnic identity and material culture and argues that ethnicity is a constructed (and therefore fluid and contextual) aspect of identity. She states, 'material culture structures and is structured by the expression and renegotiation of ethnicity' (Jones 1997.: 126). Frameworks that assume the existence of concrete, static cultural units therefore '[obscure] the various heterogeneous processes involved in the negotiation of power and identity' (Jones 1997: 129-30). Woolf's work on cultural change in Gaul defines Roman culture as something that is neither clearly defined nor static (1998: 11). On 'becoming Roman,' he states, 'there were so many kinds of Romans to become that becoming Roman did not mean assimilating to an ideal type, but rather acquiring a new position in the complex of structured differences in which Roman power resided' Woolf 1998: 245).

A major criticism mounted against the concept of identity is that it is too ambiguous to be useful as an analytical perspective for change (Pitts 2007: 693). Indeed,

Pitts has argued that this ambiguity can allow the concept of identity to be interchangeable with the concept of Romanisation (2007: 693-4). This is clearly visible when in the preoccupation with cultural or ethnic categories of identity that he notes, with ethnic identity accounting for 60% of the discourse at the time of writing (Pitts 2007: 695). To truly move away from Romanisation, we need to focus on other aspects of identity. The need for this is particularly evident when we consider that other aspects of identity must have had as much (or perhaps more) of an impact on lived experience as ethnicity or cultural identity. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

David Mattingly's work on discrepant identities marks a significant step away from a focus on ethnic or cultural identity in an analytical framework for change in the Roman empire (2006; 2011: 203-43). His concept observes a heterogeneity of responses to Rome and Roman contact, and this heterogeneity results in the different individual and group identities involved (Mattingly 2006: 17-19; 2011: 213). This approach, however, could be strengthened with further consideration of age and gender, issues that can be difficult to reconstruct.

A further criticism of identity as an analytical tool is that it brings with it the danger of becoming a descriptive process 'looking for diversity for diversity's sake, rather than explaining how such diverse identities were negotiated in the context of the Roman empire' (Pitts 2007: 696). Gardner adds that an emphasis on choice, fluidity, and flexibility in identity formation and expressions prevents us from analysing power relations (2013: 6). This can, however, be addressed if we consider that different identities are valued in different ways and that negotiation of identity is intertwined with display and negotiation of power (Revell 2016: 15). Ethnicity, for instance, can be used to create and justify inequality between groups, giving a particular appeal to the adoption of the dominant (here Roman) group's cultural traits (Revell 2016: 38). Concepts of

identity feature heavily in this thesis, particularly in Chapter Five, where I explore how curse tablets are revealing of identity negotiation and perceived social power.

Globalisation theory

With curse tablets – or, more specifically, judicial prayers – we can observe a technology that was well-established in the Mediterranean world that has spread through the growing or increasingly-connected Roman world into Britain. The use of globalisation perspectives is logical because it allows for the consideration of the connectivities that made this take place.

There are several ways of defining globalisation and no real consensus on what the term means; therefore, there is no cross-disciplinary consensus as to when the process began. Indeed, in their introduction to their edited volume *Globalisation and the Roman World*, Pitts and Versluys feel the need to provide a list of definitions offered by scholars of the topic (2015: 11). Fundamentally, conceptions of globalisation focus on increased connectivity with wide-scale flow of ideas and customs and sometimes a greater global consciousness (Pitts & Versluys 2015: 11.; Hodos 2016: 4). This can also involve increased economic integration and be influenced by politics (Hodos 2016: 4). Pitts and Versluys offer a basic definition: 'a process by which localities and people become increasingly interconnected and interdependent' (2015: 11). Emphasizing that there is a multiplicity of forms of globalisalisation and circumstances that lead to it, Hodos defines globalisation as 'processes of increasing connectivities that unfold and manifest as social awareness of those connectivities (2016: 4). Although the term first appears in the twentieth century, the process of globalisation can be said to have begun several millennia ago (Pitts 2008: 493). By these definitions, the Roman world can be understood to be

global, and thus globalisation perspectives derived from our modern globalised world have been applied to the ancient past.

There is, however, disagreement regarding when the process of globalisation began, with some considering the phenomenon to be characteristic of modernity (Hodos 2016: 3). This is in part related to whether the term 'global' refers exclusively to worldwide connectivity or whether it can be applied to smaller connectivities that were not driven by modern global capitalism such as the Mediterranean world or *oikumene*. This concern is outlined by Pitts and Versluys (2015: 13), who state that views the of chronology and geography of globalisation depend on whether globalisation is a process that requires a single unified worldwide economy (what they call 'option A'), or whether the process simply involves the increase of human networks (what they call 'option B'). Criticisms of the suitability of globalisation perspectives for studying the Roman world that focus on whether the Roman empire was truly 'global' will be discussed further below.

Significantly, the process of globalisation is said to a process rather than a state of being (Pitts 2008: 493). It is an active concept rather than a descriptive one (Hodos 2016: 4), and thus has considerable value for understanding change in the Roman period.

In order to move away from the Roman-native dichotomy that is sustained by traditional Romanisation and postcolonial perspectives, it has been suggested that we should instead focus on networks, moving beyond isolating provinces, which are themselves reflective of our own preoccupation with nation-states. Instead, we should examine both local and global scales together (Versluys 2014: 11; Witcher 2017: 639). Versluys (2014: 11-12) argues that thinking of the Roman world and the areas it considered their inhabited world (or o*ikumene*) as a 'single cultural container' allows us to go beyond fixating on provinces, thus avoiding ideas of acculturation and adoption

between separated groups and instead studying interactions within one single group. Such approaches decentre Rome and allow for multidirectional exchange. Criticisms of this approach suggest that globalisation might simply be a replacement for Romanisation, with the term fundamentally describing the same homogenising process (Gardner 2013: 8). Advocates for the application of globalisation theory to Roman studies, however, stress that both unity and diversity exist and are created in processes of globalisation. On the one hand, shared ideas, practices, and values foster a sense of unity and one-placeness. On the other hand, this increased connectivity simultaneously leads to an awareness of difference; this variability can be linked to location and culture as well as different levels of health, wealth, and power (Hodos 2016: 5). Witcher (2017: 635-9), for instance, uses a series of vignettes to demonstrate how Roman globalisation includes processes both of cultural homogenisation and fragmentation, illustrating how place, ethnic identity, and economic and social status can lead to different experiences. Thus, globalisation perspectives can be seen to acknowledge agency, power dynamics, and inequality – concepts that are not always accounted for in the models of contact and change discussed above. By considering the tablets discussed in this thesis both in their regional context and their wider Mediterranean context, I attempt to study the practice of cursing in the local and global scale simultaneously.

A further advantage of globalisation perspectives is that they are more of a set of theoretical tools than a single, specific paradigm (Pitts & Versluys 2015: 15). Globalisation, therefore, includes a number of processes that can help us understand different aspects of life and change. These include (but are not limited to) hybridisation, variability, glocalisation, and grobalisation (Hodos 2016: 5-7).

The concept of hybridisation is found in both Collingwood and Webster's models discussed above, but it can be considered more broadly to describe a process in which

form of practice is separated from one context and takes a new form in a new context; it describes the creation of new practices through the blending of cultures (Hodos 2016: 5). The concept has been criticised because it assumes an initial purity of the interacting cultures and additionally fails to acknowledge the complexities of agency (Hodos citing van Dommelen 2006). Hybridisation, however, deals less with observing the combination of practices and traditions (hybridity) and more with studying the active and accidental combination of cultural practices and traditions (Hodos 2016: 5). Crucially, hybridisation applies to negotiated practices and social spaces of both dominant socio-cultural groups and those that are less dominant, and if we accept that all cultures are actually hybrid (Pitts & Versluys 2015: 14), no assumption of cultural purity is required.

As a feature of globalisation or connectivity, variability describes variations within a particular connected group (Hodos 2016: 6). It explains how a practice, while it is shared by the connectivity, is not identically replicated and instead varies between groups or identities. These shared practices are 'based on a thread of common understanding that transcends a culture's own values, beliefs, and practices' (Hodos 2016: 6). When these globally shared practices vary in different regions, this can be described as glocalisation. In glocalisation, homogenising aspects of the wider connectivity are incorporated differently in a local or regional context, which are themselves altered by this incorporation (Pitts & Versluys 2015: 14). The practices or materials are adopted and used in a local context to fit local needs, traditions, and beliefs (Hodos 2016: 6). The process is both caused by and affected by variability and hybridisation.

Grobalisation describes a homogenising spread of culture and is thus akin to traditional Romanisation or Westernisation. It describes growth fuelled by the ambitions of nations, organisations, and corporations to extend influence and power (Hodos 2016:

7). In the Roman world, this may be attributed to imperial ambition, but whether Roman growth or expansion was the result of deliberate strategy is debated (Pitts 2007: 693). There is a concern regarding whether the more inclusive accounts of diverse identities and statuses that are possible through postcolonial and globalisation perspectives tend to obscure the negative aspects of forces like colonialism and modern capitalism (Hingley 2015: 39). Acknowledging the concept of grobalisation (whether or not the actual term is used) can help to make the negative influences of such entities today and in the Roman world more apparent.

The Romanisation debate is said to have reached an uncomfortable and unfruitful ending (Versluys 2014: 2), and this is perhaps because too much was expected of Romanisation theory (not only the acculturative model outlined by Haverfield, but also more nuanced versions) (Woolf 2014: 47). Woolf has expressed skepticism regarding whether another single, grand narrative such as globalisation will be any more capable of providing the explanations that were expected of Romanisation (2014: 47). If, however, globalisation is not treated as a grand narrative and instead considered to encompass the above concepts (and more), then this particular problem may be avoided. Nonetheless, it is also true that 'the greater the range of variation encompassed by the term, the less useful it becomes as [sic] framing any kind of analytical approach, and the more it seems to be simply a synonym for connectivity or networks, or worse, "Romanisation."' (Gardner 2013: 8).

A characteristic of globalisation is a sense of once-placeness or a perception of the world as global. There is evidence to suggest that at least some of the inhabitants of the Roman empire saw their world in this way. The views expressed by Polybius, who wrote sometime between 160 and 120 BC are often quoted as evidence that the idea of a single, global world existed (Versluys 2014: 12; Pitts & Versluys 2015: 18).

'Now up to this time the word's history had been, so to speak, a series of disconnected transactions, as widely separated in their origin and results as in their localities. But from this time forth History becomes a connected whole: the affairs of Italy and Libya are involved with those of Asia and Greece, and the tendency of all is to unity' (Histories 1.3; translation by Paton 2010: 7-9).

Other support for this interpretation is given by the rhetor Aelius Aristides, who around AD 150, stated,

'And now indeed there is no need to write a description of the world, nor to enumerate the laws of each people, but you have become universal geographers for all by opening up the gates of the oikumene and by organising the whole oikumene like a single household' (xxi. 101-2; translation from Pitts & Versluys 2015: 18).

Whether these sentiments were pervasive amongst contemporaries is unclear, but these writings demonstrate that such conceptions did exist.

Just as the concept of traditional Romanisation was heavily influenced by contemporary colonial attitudes toward, for example, the spreading of 'civilisation', our own understandings of the past are heavily influenced by current attitudes toward our global present. For this reason, Hingley argues that the application of global perspectives is unavoidable, stating that 'ideas about social change in the Roman empire have been transformed over recent decades to address the new political and economic context of the present while continuing effectively to recast the Roman past, at least in part, in the image

of the present' (2015: 34). In other words, comparison between the past and the present – however ill-informed – is inevitable. In the context of our own globalised world, it is not possible to avoid comparison between present connectivity and past connectivity. Indeed, it has been noted that scholars of the ancient past often deal with concepts of connectivity and hybridity, though they do not explicitly address how these are related to the wider explanatory concept (Pitts & Versluys 2015: 6). Because our relationship with the Roman past is complex, it is important that we try to understand where our ideas come from and are clear about how theoretical agendas shape our understanding of the Roman world (Hingley 2015: 34).

Putting aside the inevitability of their application, I think that globalisation perspectives (combined with the critical awareness of postcolonial approaches) are most fruitful for explaining the phenomena that have been observed in the present work. It seems to me that the best approach to take would be to view the practice of written cursing as a new technology that is adopted differently to suit varying needs, beliefs, and social situations. This techonolgy incorporates issues of identity, including status, wealth and gender, as explored below.

Notes on Terminology

Magic and Religion

There is no real consensus on what the term 'magic' means. Attempts to define it and distinguish it from 'religion' have focused on concepts like ritual action, performativity,

and social context (Thomassen 1999; Wilburn 2012: 15). Other approaches use the term more vaguely. Gordon (2013: 256), for instance, suggests that 'we need to view [magic] as a mere label for certain kinds of loosely-related religious practices rather than as a counter-practice *sui generis*, with a definable cross-cultural "essence."' I largely avoid the term in this dissertation. This is not because I have a particular aversion to it or because I consider the term to be overladen with conceptual baggage (although it might be). Instead, I think that the use of the term 'magic' could detract from my aims by unintentionally relegating the curse tablets that I discuss to the realms of superstition and counter-practice. Nonetheless, my own interpretation of the term 'magic' echoes that of Eidinow (2017: 398), who uses it 'to denote a specific category or ritual practice in which supernatural forces were somehow employed (be that harnessed, cajoled and persuaded, or forced) by one person to attack another.'

Contact

Contact can be understood as interaction. It may pertain to the direct meeting of groups or individuals, but it may equally be understood as indirect communication or connection over long distances and through intermediary parties. Contact thus relates to the way in which things and ideas are spread or transferred through space and time, whether it is through processes like Romanisation and globalisation or through smaller scale interactions. The term is ambiguous, but I hope to have provided sufficient context where I employ it.

Local

I prefer to use 'local' rather than 'native' or 'indigenous.' The reasons for this are both ideological and practical. We have seen above how discourses of change are linked to

contemporary political and social climates. This is also true for terminology, and 'native' is considered by some to have problematic associations with colonial discourse (Hingley et al. 2018: 284). Scholars have, therefore, preferred the term 'indigenous' to describe pre-Roman or Iron Age populations, but this term, too, has been somewhat tainted by racist and xenophobic rhetoric in which claims to indigenous European origins are used to support supremacy or ancestral claims to particular regions (Hingley 2018: 284). These issues aside, because 'native' and 'indigenous' suggest that the groups they describe were cohesive or bounded and always resided in the same place, I do not think these terms are useful. It is apparent that people in the Iron Age did migrate, and increasing attention to population movement reveals extensive mobility in the Roman empire (Hingley 2018: 291-2). In this light, 'local' is not ideal because it, too, may be taken to suggest that the individuals or groups it describes did not move. Nonetheless, I use the term to mean 'characteristic of the locality' in either a specific or general sense.

Dissertation Outline

Chapter Two is an introduction to curse tablets. The first half is dedicated to the wider body of curse tablets, with a focus on 'standard' binding spells. The second half outlines the subcategory of curse tablets known as judicial prayers, with which the present work is primarily concerned.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the sites in Britain where curse tablets have been found. The majority of texts were discovered at Bath and Uley, and the chapter largely focuses on these sites, though other locations where the texts were found are also discussed. I also cover the material treatment and deposition of the curse tablets in Britain.

Chapter Four comprises a discussion of the language used in judicial prayers in Britain and how this can be compared to the language used in judicial prayers elsewhere in the Graeco-Roman world, paying particular attention to formulae and how these vary. Although there is considerable attention paid to grammar and syntax in this chapter, I have aimed to present the material in a way that is engaging and accessible to those with or without experience in Latin, Greek, or Celtic. Recent work on Roman Britain has attempted to span the division between archaeology and language (James 2007; Mullen 2007b; 2016), and this dissertation is offered in a similar spirit.

Chapter Five focuses on curse tablets as expressions of identity. There I explore what curses may reveal about identity expression, identity negotiation, and social categorisation in Roman Britain. Significantly, this chapter moves away from a focus on ethnic identity to consider gender, status, and age.

Chapter Six deals with the beliefs that are represented in judicial prayers in Britain. This moves beyond considering cursing as a fringe religious practice and seriously considers the beliefs it represents regarding the relationship between humans and the divine. This includes a discussion of what was thought to be worthy of divine attention and, in turn, what the gods were believed to be capable of achieving.

Chapter Seven returns to the peculiarities noted in earlier chapters – in particular, the concept of payment for crimes in blood and the near-exclusion of 'standard' curse tablets in Britain – and how these can be understood to be the products of the exchange and transfer of ideas in a globalised context.

I conclude this dissertation by reviewing the contributions that this work makes to the study of curse tablets and our understanding of Roman Britain and processes of change in the wider Roman world.

Appendix A catalogues all published curse tablets in Britain. Each entry includes (where available in the published edition) a transcription, restored text, English translation, and line drawing.

Chapter Two: Cursing in the Graeco-Roman world

In this chapter, I provide an introduction to curse tablets and cursing in the Mediterranean world. In so doing, I hope to place the curse tablets from Britain within the wider context of cursing in the ancient world. Because the practice of cursing was widespread geographically and chronologically, I use examples in Greek and Latin from a wide range of periods and locations. I discuss what may be considered 'standard' curse tablets in the first section of the chapter. In the second section, I outline the category (or subcategory) known as judicial prayers. The utility of this categorisation has been called into question, and it is necessary for me to be clear about my own views on whether or not distinguishing between judicial prayers and curse tablets more generally is fruitful. I argue that it is, and this is especially apparent when we consider that, with few exceptions, the extant curse tablets from Britain are judicial prayers.

'Standard' Curse Tablets, *Κατάδεσμοι, Defixiones*

Curse tablets saw over a millennium of use in antiquity, occurring at various times and in various places throughout the Mediterranean world. There is, therefore, a wide range of styles, methods, forms, and functions represented in the group of texts defined as curse tablets, *κατάδεσμοι*, or *defixiones*. In this section of the chapter, I will discuss curse tablets generally, highlighting key characteristics, providing a brief overview of their development, and discussing their physical treatment as objects as well as whether and how they were considered to work. I will then go into further detail, paying particular attention to the language used and the strategies employed by those who used curse tablets. David R. Jordan's definition of these texts is often quoted by scholars introducing them, and I will not divert from this. According to Jordan, curse tablets are 'inscribed

pieces of lead, usually in the form of thin sheets, intended to bring supernatural power to bear against persons and animals' (1985: 206; Gager 1992: 3; Gordon 2013: 269).

Although other materials could be used, the majority of the surviving tablets are lead or lead alloy (Gager 1992: 3). The preference for lead was due to its low cost and high availability – indeed, the material was a common choice for writing in general. Because it was cold and heavy, lead also held some association with futility, death, and the underworld (Gager 1992: 4). It is speculated that the use of lead for the inscription of curse tablets continued even after the increased availability and use of other writing materials (such as papyrus and wax) because it was so firmly associated with the practice of cursing (Faraone 1991: 7; Gager 1992: 4). Looking at recipe for a curse tablet from Egypt (*PGM* VII. 396-404), we can see that the use of lead (here stolen and repurposed from a water pipe) is required in some instances. This is not to say that other materials were not used. It is apparent that they were. A curse from Attica dated to the fourth or third century BC refers to binding the cursed individuals in lead and wax (*TheDeMa* 204; see also Faraone 1991: 7). Wax is also used in a scene imagined by Ovid (*Am.* 3.7.27), where impotence is the result of sabotage:

'Was my body listless under the spell of Thessalian drugs? Was I the wretched victim of charms and herbs, or did a witch curse my name upon a red wax image and stick fine pins into the middle of the liver?' (translation by Showerman 1914)

Organic materials such as wax, however, are less likely to have survived (Eidinow 2007: 140–1).

The earliest Greek examples date to the fifth century BC in Attica, Olbia, and Sicily (Faraone 1991: 3). The earliest extant Latin tablets date to the second century BC.

Although it has also been suggested that the presence of Oscan tablets from the fourth-century BC indicates that Latin curses emerged at the same time (Urbanova 2017: 58). Generally speaking, the tablets become increasingly complex with time, with the earliest Greek examples containing only the name of the target and the later examples including long invocations, 'secret' words and symbols, drawings, and various methods for the persuasion of the deities addressed, all of which will be discussed below. It is, therefore, reasoned that the practice of written cursing was developed from an earlier oral tradition of cursing, with the simpler inscribed formulas being accompanied by more elaborate oral rituals (Faraone 1991: 4-5; Gager 1992: 7; Eidinow 2007: 141). Indeed, literary evidence for binding songs in Athens predates the first known Attic curse tablets (Eidinow 2007: 141): Aeschylus' *Eumenides* features a scene in which the Erinyes perform a binding song to inhibit Orestes' defence in court by binding his mental faculties (Faraone 1985).

Faraone (1991) has demonstrated that *κατάδεσμοι* or *defixiones*, what might be considered 'standard' curse tablets or binding spells, traditionally belong in what he calls an 'agonistic context'. That is, binding spells or curse tablets were used in a competitive situation by those who saw themselves as somehow unequal to their opponent and, therefore, in need of extra help. These spheres of competition could be amatory, juridical, commercial, or relating to sport or public performance. An individual might use a curse tablet to bind or impede the amatory success of a rival in love. Alternatively (or additionally), they might bind the target of their affections causing them to yearn for the user of the curse (Faraone 1991.: 13-14). Juridical *defixiones* – not to be confused with judicial prayers (Faraone uses the term 'judicial,' but I use 'juridical' in order to avoid confusion with judicial prayers) – were used prior to trials. Among the Greek texts, these make up the largest group. Juridical curse tablets were used to bind and inhibit the speech

and mind of the opponent in a legal case (Faraone 1985: 151; 1991: 15-17). Curses that seek to similarly bind political opponents might also be added to this group. Athletes (or those who have bet on them) and performers similarly bound the traits and body parts associated with their target's trade (Faraone 1991: 10-13). Rather than seeing *defixiones* and *κατάδεσμοι* as a means of gaining the 'upper hand' in an agonistic context, Eidinow (2007) argues that curse tablets, as well as oracle consultations, are better understood as means for handling risk. She notes that the term 'risk' is difficult to apply as it is something that is socially constructed and, therefore, variable according to societies, groups, and individuals (Eidinow 2007.: 18-22). Risk management, however, can be seen as describing the engagement with an unknown or uncertain future or a perceived imminent danger that is beyond the control of the individual using the curse (Eidinow 2007: 23). While this view certainly offers much to our understanding of curse tablets, it will become apparent below that it does not apply to the majority of the curse tablets from Britain.

As stated above, curse tablets bind or invoke the power of a supernatural being to perform their requested tasks. These supernatural beings might include gods, demons, or ghosts. In the Greek and Latin texts, the invoked deities are often chthonic, being associated with death or liminal spaces, where the spirits of the dead are treated as messengers to underworld deities (Eidinow 2007.: 148; Veale 2017: 306). Thoth, Seth, and Osiris are prominent in Egyptian examples, and Jewish and Christian curse tablets feature angels, archangels, and the god of Israel. To communicate with the supernatural, one must use the appropriate language. This is sometimes achieved through 'scrambled' language, unintelligible writing, *voces mysticae*, and *charaktêres*. Generally, the use of these increases over time, growing in frequency and in the amount of space they take in their respective curses. *Voces mysticae* is a modern term used to describe words or

phrases with magical or mystical function that are not recognisable as any language. They become widespread in the first century AD, growing in frequency and in length where used. *Charaktêres* similarly hold ritual significance, though they are not limited to curse tablets. These were used as a sort of foreign or mysterious language as the use of mundane language would be inappropriate and ineffective for human-divine communication (Gager 1992: 9).

Additional objects can be attached to or otherwise associated with an inscribed curse tablet. These include figurines or poppets, hair, pieces of clothing, and relevant animal parts. Some of these items survive. For example, a number of lead figurines, one of which (Fig. 2.1) is associated with *SGD* 9 (*TheDeMa* 304), were found within inscribed lead coffins in a grave in the Kerameikos, Athens (Faraone 2003: 50-1). *SGD* 152 (*TheDeMa* 110) was found wrapped around a clay figurine in Antinoopolis, Egypt, but the less durable materials rarely do survive. Dough poppets such as those found at the fountain of Anna Perenna in Rome (Piranomonte 2010; Blänsdorf 2010b; Sanchez Natalias 2015) are an interesting exception. The use of poppets or 'voodoo' dolls is, however, fairly well attested in literature (Nemeth, G. 2018), and they are sometimes required in spell recipes (see *PGM* IV.335-408). Hair and fibres of clothing belonging to the targeted individual have also been found in association with lead tablets (Gager 1992).

Figure 2.1 Lead figurine in a miniature coffin from the Kerameikos, Athens (Gager 1992: 128). The lid of the coffin is inscribed with a curse (*TheDeMa* 304).

The Greek Magical Papyri show us that inscription of these curses – and, indeed, curses of any kind – were accompanied by performative acts. Some of these performative acts can be seen in the archaeological record in instances in which the inscribed tablet has been folded in on itself or deliberately pierced with a nail (Fig. 2.2). This is also

evident in cases where additional objects accompany the tablet, as these might be pierced (e.g. *SGD* 152, *TheDeMa* 110) or burned (Nemeth, G. 2018). This evidence for practices of cursing illustrates that in the surviving texts we really only have one part of a more elaborate act. Indeed, uninscribed lead tablets can bear the marks of ritual treatment. For instance, *DT* 109 is a collection of rolled yet uninscribed tablets from Aquitania, and *Tab. Sulis* 112-130 from Bath (not included in the appendix to the present work) are similarly uninscribed or include non-letter markings. These suggest that, at least in these places, the written element of the curse can be left out if necessary, indicating that the physical manipulation of the objects and the uttering of the correct words could suffice.

Figure 2.2 An unpublished curse tablet from the circus at Carthage. The nail used to attach the tablet to the floor of the racetrack still remains (Gager 1992: 19).

Just as particular deities are favoured for invocation in standard curses, so too are particular places favoured for deposition. Often curse tablets are deposited in graves,

preferably of those who died violently or before their time, the ἄωροι. For instance, *SGD* 1-2 (*TheDeMa* 397, no text available for *SGD* 2) were found in the right hands of skeletons in graves in the Kerameikos. In such cases, the dead may be addressed and asked to act as witnesses to the curse (Eidinow 2007: 148-50). Other locations might include the home of the target of a love spell, the sanctuary of a chthonic deity, a watery context, or the place in which some sort of commercial, legal, or athletic competition is to take place (Gager 1992: 19). Some of these places of deposition would presumably have required an element of stealth. This raises the question of who deposited the tablets (Gager 1992), and to this we can add the question of who wrote them.

It is reasonable to believe that the answers to both of these questions depended on context. Because the practice of written cursing spanned at least from the fifth century BC to roughly the sixth century AD, covering all of the Greek and (later) Roman world, we must assume that the authors of curse tablets varied as much as their content. Plato (Laws 933a; Rep. 364c-e) mentions professional magicians in fourth century Athens. Further literary evidence can be found in the novel *Metamorphoses*, where Apuleius describes a scene of professional witchcraft and mentions 'unintelligibly lettered metal plaques' (Apuleius *Met.* 2.17). These plaques are probably curse tablets, and we can deduce from the rest of the account that the witch in question had a number of other related skills. But what is true of Classical Athens or in the imagination of Apuleius may not be true of Roman Britain.

Additionally, there is a wide range of skill represented in curse tablets, ranging from the skilful writing of some texts from the Athenian Agora (Jordan 1985) to the clumsy capitals of *Tab. Sulis* 16 (BA021 in the present work), and even to pseudo inscriptions, which were inscribed with imitation letters (Fig. 2.3). There may be evidence of professional scribes where the same hand can be identified on multiple

tablets, but the incomplete nature of the evidence usually prevents this. Formularies or 'recipe' collections like *PGM* would have been used by and were certainly written by professionals. The repetition of exact formulae on multiple tablets (*DT* 22-35, 37; *TheDeMa* 141, 142) further supports this (Faraone 1991: 4), but it is not always clear if these formularies were indeed consulted for the inscription of curses. Complicated forms of writing, such as the 'scrambling' mentioned above, boustrophedon, and especially the use of elaborate *voces mysticae* and *charaktêres* would have required skill and suggest professional authorship. We can, therefore, understand that there was surely a mixture of professionals and amateurs involved.

Figure 2.3 A curse tablet from Bath (*Tab. Sulis* 13) bearing a pseudo-inscription on both sides (Tomlin 1988).

The perseverance of binding spells – or curses of any kind – shows that they were effective. We can assume that this efficacy was not due to the actual binding of bodily

parts or the suffering of wrongdoers, but rather it was due to the ability of the curse to assuage the negative feelings of those who used them and to cause fear in those they targeted. Eidinow stresses that the agency of the victims of ancient magic must be acknowledged in order to understand how magic 'worked' (Eidinow 2017: 402). With the exception of protective amulets and the confession inscriptions from Asia Minor, there is little we can know from the archaeological record about how curses were viewed by their targets. Confession inscriptions are specific to second- and third-century Lydia and Phrygia. Also known as 'confession steles,' they praise and glorify the addressed deity and usually contain a confession of guilt. They describe how the deity has forced them to confession and reparation by inflicting suffering or illness; thus, both the deity's ability to cause suffering and their ability to end it are celebrated and recorded. Sometimes the deity is called to act in this way by injured parties or other members of the community (Versnel 1991: 75-6). Further evidence can be found amongst historical sources and literature. Tacitus writes that Germanicus, while on his deathbed, expressed suspicion that he had been poisoned. Upon examination of the premises in which he resided while ill, human remains and lead tablets inscribed with his name were uncovered (*Ann.* 2.69). In an account of his own experiences, Libanius (Antioch, fourth-century AD) describes the discovery of a mutilated chameleon in the wall of his study. This took place after he had experienced physical and mental anguish that he blamed on sorcery (*Or.*1.245-249). Libanius himself had been previously accused of bewitching his opponents (*Or.*1.71). We see also that poor performance or public failure can be attributed to cursing or magic and witchcraft in general (Faraone 1989: 154). Ovid's *Amores* (3.7.27-30; 77-80) provides humorous examples, lamenting his impotence and supposing that witchcraft is to blame.

Language

Because much of the present work focuses on the language of the curse tablets in Britain, the language of curse tablets in general naturally warrants discussion. As above, this will provide an overview of the language used in what might be called 'standard' *defixiones,* with the language of judicial prayers being discussed below.

In the simplest form of cursing, only the name of the targeted individual is inscribed. Again, the earliest texts tend to be the simplest, though later *defixiones* might also be simple in form due to individual authorship, limitations of available materials, personal choice, and cultural influences. In Sicily and Attica in the fourth century BC, the majority of the tablets consist of lists of names. The absence of any sort of verb for binding suggests that this was uttered aloud at some point in the binding ritual (Faraone 1991: 5). In time, these utterances found their way into inscriptions, with the written binding and the instructions for the invoked supernatural being becoming increasingly complex.

The binding either of the targets of the curses or of the supernatural beings can come in several forms. Faraone (1991) outlines three styles of binding spells (developed from groups of binding formulae). These were outlined nearly 30 years ago, but still hold heuristic value for approaching methods of binding. They are:

1. The direct binding formula, which is a performative utterance, that is, a form of incantation by which the *defigens* hopes to manipulate his victim in an automatic way

2. The prayer formula, which is exactly that – a prayer to underworld deities that they themselves accomplish the binding of the victim

3. The so-called *similia similibus* formula, which is better understood as a form of 'persuasive analogy' (also an incantation), in which the binding is

accomplished by a wish that the victim become similar to something to which

he or she is manifestly dissimilar. (Faraone 1991: 10).

It must be noted that these divisions are not rigid. Indeed, one tablet may employ multiple

styles of binding, and all formulae emerged within fifty years of the earliest *defixiones*

(Faraone. 1991: 10). Significantly, all three styles of binding spell are represented by

each of the motivations for creating a *defixio* or *κατάδεσμος* discussed above.

The direct binding formula can be considered the simplest type and is closest to

the earliest forms of curse tablets that include only a name. These can also be more

detailed, binding the various parts of the targeted individual (*TheDeMa* 184 below), and

could be accompanied by some treatment either of the lead or an associated object (see

SGD 9, 152 [*TheDeMa* 304, 110]) discussed above).

The prayer formula addresses a supernatural being or deity with a command. This

is achieved through the second person imperative or third person passive imperative (I

would add the second person subjunctive in the later Latin texts), causing the invoked

being to be directly involved in the situation.

The *similia similibus* formula, according to Faraone, is particularly informative

because 'it seems to give us insight into the rationale behind many of the details that

constitute these binding rituals' (Faraone 1991: 6). These details would be the choice of

materials, the treatment of materials, and the location of deposition. For instance, *DT* 68

(*TheDeMa* 104) makes reference to the tablet's placement in a tomb. The final lines of

DTA 67 (*TheDeMa* 955) read, 'just as these words are cold and written backwards, in the

same way may the words of Kratēs be cold and backwards.' *DTA* 105, 106 and 107

(*TheDeMa* 976, 977, and 120) make reference to the cold and useless lead, asking that

their victims and their respective body parts and characteristics also be cold and useless

(Eidinow 2007: 150). Faraone describes this formula, like the use of poppets, as

'persuasively analogical' (citing Tambiah 1973), emphasizing the persuasive power of the correct performance of formulaic language (Faraone 1991: 8). A comparison to a corpse or the use of a poppet might be interpreted as calling for the death of the target, but most *defixiones* with such language or items focus on incapacitating or weakening their target, not killing or destroying them (Eidinow 2007: 151).

Binding spells: select cases

In order to demonstrate the methods of binding and to consider some motivations for creating a *defixio,* it is best to consider a few examples.

The following text is inscribed on a flat lead figurine or 'gingerbread man' from Karystos on the island of Euboea and roughly dated to the fourth century BC (*SGD* 64; Faraone 1991: 3; Gager 19; *TheDeMa* 184) (Fig. 2.2). There are two inscriptions on side (a) at right angles to each other, but only traces on side (b) that now cannot be restored.

καταγράφω εἰσιαδα τὴν α<ὐ>τοκλέας πρὸς τὸν ἑρμῆ τὸν κάταχον

κάτεχε αὐτὴ<ν> παρὰ σα<υ>τόν

καταδεσμεύω εἰσιαδα τὴν α<ὐ>τοκλέας πρὸς τὸν ἑρμῆ τὸν κάταχον

[χ]ερες, πόδες, Εἰσιάδος, σῶμα

'I inscribe Isias, (the daughter) of A(u)toclea, before Hermes the Restrainer. Restrain her by your side.

I bind Isias before Hermes the restrainer. The hands, the feet of Isias, the body (of Isias).'

Figure 2.2 The so-called 'gingerbread man' curse from Karystos. Faint traces of writing are visible along the left side of the 'torso' and across the left arm (Gager 1992: 80).

Here we see the target of the curse thoroughly restrained. The principal uses both the direct binding formula as well as the prayer formula. The two inscriptions are at right angles to each other; the first begins at the right arm, covering the 'torso' of the figurine, and the second begins at the left leg. There is nothing to indicate the sex of the figure, though it is reasonable to assume that here it stands in for the cursed Isias. The principal of the curse does not give a motive, but the language employed is similar to more

elaborate curses where the motivation is apparent or stated. It is nonetheless clear that the principal seeks to render Isias impotent in some capacity.

In a very different context from Karystos in the fourth century BC, but with some similar techniques, is a text found in London in 1934. The text is broadly dated to the Roman period (AD 43-410). This particular text was inscribed on a piece of repurposed lead. The piece would have originally sheathed some sort of beam, explaining some of the nail holes. After the sheet was stripped from its original context and inscribed, it was then pierced an additional seven times through the uninscribed side (*RIB* 7; LON005 in the present work).

Tretia(m) Maria(m) defico et

illeus vita(m) et me(n)tem

et memoriam [e]t iocine-

ra pulmones interm<x>ix<i>-

ta fata cogitata memor-

iam sci no(n) possitt loqui

(quae) sicreta si(n)t neque SIṆITA

MEṚE possit neque .

   […] ĊḶ ṾDO

'I curse Tretia Maria and her life and mind and memory and liver and lungs mixed up together, and her words, thoughts and memory; thus may she not be able to speak what things are concealed, nor be able … nor…'

The verb here translated as 'curse' is *defico*, 'I bind,' and it might be better translated thus. As in the example from Euboea, the victim and her various parts and actions are bound by the principal. Again, the motive for cursing is not stated, but the use of *defico* in line 1 seeks to incapacitate the target indicates some sort of rivalry or threat.

A well-preserved text from Patisia, Athens, is a good example of a juridical curse (*TheDeMa* 301). The text is addressed to 'Lord Binder,' whom we can imagine to be well-suited to the task at hand, and dated to the third century BC. Due to its length, I quote only the English translation here with notable parts of the original Greek.

> '*O Lord Binder (Δέσποτα κάτοχε), I bind Diokles (καταδηνύω Διοκλῆ) as my opponent in court; the tongue and all the thoughts of those who are helping Diokles and his speech and the witnesses and all the pleas of justification that are being prepared against me and bind him (Bind) all the legal pleas that Diokles has prepared against me and bind him down. All the pleas that Diokles has prepared, do not let those helping Diokles succeed (μὴ ἀνύσαι τοὺς βοηθοὺς τοὺς Διοκλέους), and defeat Diokles (from me) in every court and do not let one just thing come to Diokles.*'

From this it is clear how, exactly, the binding is to affect Diokles and his allies in court. The user of the curse tablet asks that Diokles and those who are supporting him not be able to speak or think. Whether Diokles is prosecuting or defending is not stated, but in the use of this curse, the unnamed principal attempts to ensure their own victory and that Diokles will be unsuccessful.

Also from Athens is the following example (*TheDeMa* 203). Judging by its content, the text would seem to be prompted by a mix of personal and business concerns,

and is dated no later than the second century BC (Gager 1992: 157-8). The curse targets a helmet maker and a gilder. It was pierced with a nail after inscription, and one third of the tablet is lost (Gager 1992: 157). What remains can be read as follows:

Καταδῶ [Δι]ονύσιον

τὸν κρανοποιὸν καὶ τὴν

γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ Ἀρτεμείν

τὴν χρυσωτρίαν καὶ τὴν [ο]ἰ-

[κ]ίαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν [ἐ]ργᾰ

σίαν καὶ τὰ [ἔργ]α καὶ τὸν

βί[ο]ν αὐτῶ[ν καὶ] Κάλλιπ-

[πον . . . .]

'I bind Dionysios the helmet-maker and his wife Artemeis the gilder, and their household, and their workshop, and their deeds and life, and Kallipos…'

It is unclear who Kallipos is and if, indeed, the name can be restored. The mention of the professions of both Dionysios and Artemeis suggests that this curse was written or commissioned by a commercial rival, but it might also be true that these details were provided in order to secure the appropriate targets for binding.

The following text was found in fill in Apamea, on the Orontes River in Syria (Gager 1992: 56-8). Roughly dated to the late fifth or early sixth century AD, the text incorporates or appeals to *charakteres*, curses named members of the Blue team of charioteers, and invokes Sablan. I quote the translation for the purpose of brevity (*TheDeMa* 17).

'Most holy Lord Charakteres, tie up, bind the feet, the hands, the sinews, the eyes, the knees, the courage, the leaps, the whip(?) the victory and the crowning of Porphuras and Hapsicrates, who are in the middle left, as well as his codrivers of the Blue colours in the stable of Eugenius. From this very hour, from today, may they not eat or drink or sleep; instead, from the (starting) gates may they see daimones (of those) who have died prematurely, spirits (of those) who have died violently, and the fire of Hephaestus… in the hippodrome at the moment when they are about to compete may they not squeeze over, may they not collide, may they not extend, may they not force (us) out, may they not overtake, may they not break off (in a new direction) for the entire day when they are about to race. May they be broken, may they be dragged (on the ground), may they be destroyed; by Topos and Zablas. Now, now, quickly, quickly!'

The original context is not known, but here the appropriateness of a deposition in the grave of someone who died either violently or prematurely is apparent in the mention of the involvement of the spirits. It may be equally important to deposit such a tablet at the scene of the competition. Because the text is long, I have provided only the English translation, but we can see that it has some elements in common with the two previous examples, namely the binding of the target and of specific parts or characteristics of the target.

What is important to note here is that these curse tablets are created with the intention of handling a perceived threat or risk. The 'gingerbread man' shape of the curse against Isias suggests that the curse is of an amatory or erotic nature because such curses often use figurines (Gager 1992: 86); although it is somewhat ambiguous, the mention of

(quae) secreta sint, 'what secrets may be hidden,' suggests that Tretia Maria is perceived as a threat to the principal in some social context; the person who binds Diokles and his supporters is almost certainly a legal opponent; whoever curses Dionysios and Artemeis is a possible commercial rival; the fear of defeat and injury inspires the principal of the curse against the Blue team. Curiously, although such curses appear with relative frequency throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, very few curses that bind a target or seek to subvert a threat have been found in Britain.

The Category of Judicial Prayers

In the previous section I have provided a brief introduction to curse tablets with a particular focus on 'standard' curse tablets, *defixiones*, or *κατάδεσμοι*. Now I must turn to what I consider a subcategory of curse tablet: the judicial prayer. For reasons that will be discussed below, the use of the category of judicial prayers can be considered problematic, so it is necessary for me to provide a defense of my use of the categorization as well as to make clear what, exactly, I mean when I use it. First, however, it is necessary to define judicial prayers.

'Defining' Judicial Prayers

In his contribution to *Magika Hiera* in 1991, 'Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers,' Versnel argues for a distinction between the general corpus of curse tablets and a separate category (or perhaps subgroup) of texts that deal with justice or revenge. He notes a number of elements that occur in some curse texts that are more in line with what one might expect to find on stone funerary prayers for revenge than in binding spells (Versnel 1991: 70). He notes also that texts displaying these peculiarities (particularly the claim that the principal has been wronged) cannot be understood as

traditional *defixiones* and subsequently proposes that these texts be categorized as 'judicial prayers', 'prayers for justice,' or 'prayers for revenge' (Versnel 1991; 2010).

A judicial prayer is created to seek revenge or justice for a crime or wrongdoing that has already taken place. In this sense, it differs from the wider group of curse tablets or *defixiones* discussed in the previous chapter, which seek to gain advantage or diminish risk. More recently, Versnel has reiterated and clarified this distinction, restating what he considers characteristics that are typical of a judicial prayer and do not tend to occur on a *defixio*. These are:

1. The principal states his or her name

2. Some grounds for the appeal are offered; this statement may be reduced to a single word or may be enlarged upon.

3. The principal requests that the act be excused or that he be spared the possible adverse effects.

4. These gods, either because of their superior character, or as an emollient gesture, may be awarded a flattering epithet or superior title

6. Words expressing supplication are employed as well as direct, personal invocations of the deity

7. Use of terms and names referring to (in)justice and punishment. (2010: 279-80)

Although the language of judicial prayers will be covered in more detail later, further observations can be made regarding these characteristics here. The judicial prayer differs also in the way in which the deity is addressed; a standard *defixio* usually lacks the submissive tone that is present in the judicial prayer (Versnel 1991: 68). The deity is requested to take action rather than, as is the case with the standard *defixio*, coerced (Versnel 1991: 80). This deferential invocation in judicial prayers may be done through

the consecration of either the intended victim of the curse or, in cases of theft, the stolen property (Versnel 1991: 80). When the stolen item is dedicated to the god, this can have the effect of turning the crime of theft from a mortal into the much more serious crime of theft from the divine (Ogden 1999: 39). Additionally, the invoked deity might be addressed with a flattering epithet (ex: *φίλη*) (Versnel 1991: 68) or promised some sort of payment for their assistance in the case.

Given that the offense has already taken place, the principal of the judicial prayer feels justified in their creation of the tablet and, therefore, might include their own name in the inscription, indicating an apparent lack of the stigma that is associated with the creation of the typical *defixio* (Versnel 2010: 279). The offense that inspires the creation of the judicial prayer can be irrevocable (manslaughter, slander, denial of burial rights), thus making the prayer a request for revenge. Additionally, as seen in cases of theft or the failure to repay a loan, the principal might not seek revenge, but rather redress for the wrong done to them (Versnel 1991: 69). The uniting factor here, again, is that the offense, whether reversible or not, has already taken place, thereby distinguishing the judicial prayer from the broader category of the *defixio* in which the principal creates the curse in order to overpower an athletic, amatory/erotic, legal, or commercial opponent.

The above are characteristics that are typical of judicial prayers, but do not define them. Indeed, they may occur on *defixiones* or more 'typical' curse tablets. Again, the defining feature of judicial prayers is that the principal has been wronged or a crime has been committed, motivating the principal to seek revenge or redress. I would add that there is a tendency among judicial prayers to call for more violent solutions than might be called for in a *defixio*. As we saw in the few examples above, *defixiones* tend to bind, restrain, or neutralize their targets, whereas judicial prayers often go beyond this, sometimes to the point of destruction.

The category of the judicial prayer has been widely accepted by scholars of curse tablets (Jordan 1985; 1999; Ogden 1999; Faraone 2011; Eidinow 2007; Salvo 2012; Urbanova 2017; Veale 2017), and similar observations and categorizations have been made independently (Tomlin 1988; Gager 1992; Ogden 1999). The primary criticism of Versnel's distinction, presented by R. Gordon (2014), is that it reinforces the distinction between magic and religion by exalting the behaviour of the principal of a judicial prayer over that of the principal of a *defixio*. He correctly notes that such a distinction would be over simplistic and problematic, particularly considering that texts that might be termed 'judicial prayers' often call for particularly violent and gruesome ends of their victims while 'standard' defixiones tend only to call for failure or temporary uselessness (Gordon 2014: 784). This, however, assumes that one attaches a moral judgement to the term 'judicial prayer' or 'prayer for justice,' thereby associating this type of written cursing with 'lawful' or 'just' religion while condemning the *defixio* as 'malign' magic. Moreover, this criticism assumes that to make a distinction between *defixiones* and judicial prayers one must simultaneously agree with the methods of the principal and believe the principal to be justified in seeking revenge. To my knowledge, no need to 'believe what writers of 'prayers for justice' claim about the wrong done to them' (Gordon 2013: 267) has been stated to be part of the distinction.

Perhaps much of the uncertainty comes from the terminology used. 'Judicial' in this case means 'related to justice' or having to do with justice and does not have any legal connotations, but perhaps it might imply that the user of a judicial prayer is thought to be just. In the examples and discussion below, I will demonstrate that it is only a sense of justice perceived by the user that is referred to. Although it is not loaded with legal implications, the same considerations might be made for the use of 'revenge' in naming this category.

Perhaps more problematic and ambiguous or misleading is the use of 'prayer,' which seems to legitimize the behaviour of the user in a way that 'curse' does not. Again, I hope to make use of a few examples both in these opening comments and throughout the dissertation to illustrate that any such perception of moral superiority can only be evident in the mind of the principal. For instance, the violent and extreme punishments called for in some judicial prayers can hardly be considered appropriate by the modern scholar, but what is relevant is that the principal perceives or states that they have been wronged and considers the suggestion of such a punishment to be fitting.

We are so removed from the context in which these texts were created that it is impossible to study them without using our own judgments. Indeed, the concept of magic is culturally dependant, and whether or not distinguishing between ancient religion and ancient magic is fruitful is often questioned and argued (Thomassen 1999: 55; Hoffman 2002; Frankfurter 2002; Eidinow 2017: 398)

To illustrate both characteristics of a judicial prayer and the reactionary nature that defines them, it is best to look at some examples. The first text is from Amorgos (*TheDeMa* 215), with dates estimated from the second century BC to the second century AD (*SGD* 60; Versnel 1999: 125). The principal of this curse calls upon Demeter to punish a man named Epaphroditos, who encouraged the slaves of the principal and his wife, Epiktesis, to flee. The modern reader might lack sympathy for Epiktesis and her husband, but it is clear that they saw themselves as victims. In the interest of space, I cite only the translation here:

a) '*Lady Demeter (*Κυρία Δημήτηρ*), Queen, as your supplicant, your slave, I fall at your feet. He has taken off my slaves, has led them into evil ways, indoctrinated them, advised them, misled them, he rejoiced (in my misery), he*

has them wandering round the marketplace, he persuaded them to run away.
This is what a certain Epaphroditos has done. The same man has bewitched
my handmaid so that he could take her as his wife against my wishes. And for
this reason he had her flee together with the others. Lady Demeter, this is
what I have been through. Being bereft I seek refuge in you, be merciful to me
and grant me my rights.

b) '*Lady Demeter (*Κυρία Δημήτηρ*), I supplicate you because I have suffered*
injustice: hear me, goddess, and pass a just sentence. For those who have
cherished such thoughts against us and who have joyfully prepared sorrows
for my wife Epiktesis and me, and who hate us, prepare the worst and most
painful horrors. O Queen, hear us who suffer and punish those who rejoice in
our misery.'

(Translation from Versnel 1999: 125-6)

Here we see a number of the characteristics outlined by Versnel. Immediately apparent is the supplicative tone. Both sides begin with a supplication to the goddess in a flattering tone (*Κυρία Δημήτηρ…*). The principal does not name himself, but (rather curiously) gives the name of his wife. There are repeated references to the injustice done to the principal and his wife by Epaphroditos, but what fundamentally causes this text to be considered a judicial prayer is the request for the punishment of the target for the wrongdoings that have taken place.

A further example was found in the Athenian Agora in a well deposit dated to the first century AD (*SGD* 21; *TheDeMa* 224). The inscribed text is accompanied by an illustration of a bat or 'six-armed Hecate' and was created to seek revenge for a theft that

was committed in a house (Elderkin 1937; Gager 1992: 182). The nature of the crime means the target of the curse is unknown. Again, I include only the translation:

> *'I make an exception for the writer and the destroyer, because he does this unwillingly, forced (into it) by the thieves. I register and hand over to Pluto and to the Fates and to Persephone and to the Furies and to every harmful being* (Καταγράφω κὲ κατατίθεμε Πλούτωνι κὲ Μοίρες κὲ Περϛεφόνῃ κὲ Ἐρεινῦσι κὲ παντὶ κακῷ); *I hand (them) over to Hecate, eater of what has been demanded by the gods (?); I hand over to the goddesses and gods of the underworld, and to Hermes the helper; I transfer the thieves who stole from the little house in the quarter/street (?) called Acheloou – (who stole) chain, three spreads (one woolen, white, new), gum arabic… tools, white piles of dirt, linseed oil, and three white (objects): mastic, pepper, and bitter almonds. I hand over those who know about the theft and deny it. I hand over all of them who have received what is contained in the deposition. Lady Hecate of the heavens, Hecate of the underworld, Hecate of the crossroads, Hecate of the triple-face, Hecate of the single-face, cut (out) the hearts of the thieves or the thief who took the items contained in this deposition. And let the earth not be walkable, the sea not sailable; let there be no enjoyment of life, no increase of children, but may utter destruction visit them or him. As inspector, you will wield upon them the bronze sickle, and you will cut them out (?). But exempt the writer and the destroyer.'* (Translation from Gager 1992: 182)

In this inscription, we can see a number of features that we might encounter with a 'typical' binding spell. The invocation of Hecate and the handing-over of the targeted

thieves to Pluto, the Fates, the Furies, and Persephone give the curse a clearly chthonic context. The inclusion of what might be considered 'magical' elements in what is clearly a reactionary curse shows that the distinction does not lie in the deities addressed or the language and symbolism used. Indeed, Demeter, who is invoked in the Amorgos example above (*TheDeMa* 215) has chthonic associations, and the frequent invocation of chthonic deities in judicial prayers has been noted by Ogden (1999: 38-9).

The punishment suggested is severe and more explicit than that of *SGD* 60 (*TheDeMa* 215) above. Here Hecate is to cut out the hearts of the thieves and prevent them from enjoying life, having children, and walking or sailing – the latter presumably being prohibited because it would allow them to flee from punishment. The targets are to be utterly destroyed. Although agonistic binding spells do not usually appear to call for the death of their targets, it seems judicial prayers do on occassion. What is, however, truly indicative of the judicial prayer is the motivation for cursing. The principal feels they have been wronged. Indeed, here the principal feels so justified in their actions that they state they are forced into it.

Of course, judicial prayers are not restricted to the Greek world. A text from Emerita, Spain, curses the thief of a number of listed items (*TheDeMa* 599). This curse was inscribed on marble and incorporated into the wall of a water basin (Versnel 1991: 91). The use of this material, however, is not necessarily typical of curses from Spain, but it is possible that three of the six known tablets from the province were intended for display (Tomlin 2010: 249). The final lines are damaged, but the following can be read:

dea Ataecina Turi-

brig(ensis) Proserpina,

per tuam maiestatem

te rogo, oro, obsecro,

uti vindices quot mihi

furti factum est, quisquis

mihi imudavit, involavit,

minusve fecit [e]a[s res] q(uae) i(nfra) s(criptae) s(unt).

tunicas VI, [p]aenula

lintea II, in[dus]ium. cu-

ius I.C[. . .]M ignoro

i[. . .]ius

[. . .]

'Goddess Ataecina of Turibriga, Proserpina, I ask you by your majesty, I beg you to avenge the theft which has been done me, whoever has changed, stolen, diminished the things which are written below. 6 tunics, 2 linen cloaks, a shift . (?) Whose name, I do not know…'

From the reactionary nature of this curse and the explicit request for revenge, it is apparent that this is a judicial prayer. The flattering language of the invocation of the addressed goddess, *per maiestatem… te rogo*, is also worth noting due to its frequent association with curses of this type. Although the last lines cannot be read, it is possible that they once contained the name of the thief or a description of them (Tomlin 2010: 249).

In the previous section, I discussed the view that *defixiones* and *κατάδεσμοι* were used in situations of competition or risk. Thus, such curses may be considered to have the social or psychological function of managing uncertainty (Eidinow 2007). In the case

of judicial prayers, it would seem that the users already saw themselves as the 'losers' in a past dangerous or uncertain situation, so the notion of risk management does not apply as well here unless we consider that the users saw the need to rectify the perceived wrong that has been done to them in order to improve their social standing, as in the curse against Epaphroditos and those who rejoice in the misery of Epiktesis and her husband above (*TheDeMa* 215). Instead, Tomlin proposes an emotionalist explanation for the function of judicial prayers, or, more specifically, the curse tablets from the sacred spring at Bath (1988: 101-2). Quoting Henig (1984: 145) and G. Webster (1986: 136), he supposes that the process of creating and depositing a judicial prayer would have '"removed intolerable tensions," [and] "allowed for a transfer of emotion." If nothing else, to inscribe a curse tablet and throw it into the sacred pool relieved the injured party's feelings: something at least had been done. And something else might happen' (Tomlin 1988: 101-2). This topic and the role of the beliefs of the suspected thieves will be returned to in Chapter Six.

Gordon states that the institution of written cursing is best understood as a way in which an individual might appeal to the divine in 'subjectively-defined situations of crisis' (2013: 257). Each curse is the result of the concept of the appeal for divine aid within a social knowledge of the strategies to employ in order to receive this aid in a perceived crisis. I would argue that, these strategies might take the form of the prayer or the binding spell.

A final criticism of the categorisation of curse tablets to be noted here is that offered by McKie (2015: 15), who finds issue with categorisation itself. In outlining his approach to Latin curse tablets, he states, 'this new approach will not attempt to force curses into neat categories that suit the needs of modern scholars, but will take them as they were: individual petitions to the gods that address a very specific set of problems facing a person at a particular time in their life' (McKie 2015: 15). In my view, this states

the very limitations of such an approach: it does not fit the needs of modern scholars, or at the very least, is not clear about how it does. As I noted in the discussion of theoretical frameworks in Chapter One, we need to be as clear as possible about our interests and the limitations imposed by our own subjectivity. With this in mind, I wonder if it is possible to avoid distinguishing between 'standard' curse tablets and judicial prayers, particularly in instances where the differences between the two types can be so marked and when (as will be discussed below) they have different patterns of use. Such observations cannot be unseen unless we chose to ignore them. Moreover, a focus only on individual acts of cursing risks making wider patterns invisible, additionally seeming to offer little to our understanding of how ideas and language were spread and transferred and how beliefs were expressed.

Judicial Prayers in Britain

Reading the curse tablets from Britain, there is a clear dominance of curses dealing with theft or with the cursing of thieves. Although some criticisms regarding terminology are valid, the grouping of judicial prayers and reactionary curses is not only fruitful, but also unavoidable. It is worth studying the strategies employed in cursing in order to examine the social knowledge with which these appeals to divine aid are formulated. This is particularly apparent when we consider patterns amongst the texts at various sites or in various regions. The two largest finds of curses of any kind to date are those found at Bath and Uley in Britain. Of the literate texts found at these sites, all but one (BA101, a conditional curse against perjurers) seem to be created with the intention of gaining justice or revenge for a perceived wrong and may, therefore, be classified as judicial prayers.

Theoretical approaches to cultural change and contact focus on the acculturation of objects and the ways in which they were used. As curse tablets are both objects and written records, they are particularly high in potential for the consideration of how materials and ideas might be transferred both within their specific local setting and in the wider Roman world. In other words, the overall picture of an object and how that object is used is rarely as complete as it is with curse tablets.

By this point, we have seen that cursing is widespread geographically and chronologically and, within this broad group of inscriptions, it is useful to distinguish between different strategies and motives when such strategies and motives are apparent. In this way, we are able to study patterns and practices that would not be visible if each text were to be studied on a purely individual basis. By accepting that judicial prayers are a distinct subcategory of curse tablets, we can examine why this subcategory is favoured in particular areas and, conversely, why it might not appear in others. In Britain, there was clearly a preference for one type of curse, with only three of over 300 extant texts being considered a 'standard' *defixiones*. To date, this pattern is unique in the ancient world.

The practice of written cursing is clearly a practice that spread with the Roman empire, but the unusual preference for one type of cursing leads us to wonder what regional structures and beliefs are also at play. When we see a Roman practice adopted by a local population, we must consider the local elements that make the adoption of this practice possible. We must also consider the influence that local practice has on the adopted practice.

The topic of identity will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five, but for now we can note that the use of curse tablets in Britain can be generally attributed to civilian non-elites, and this same group of people is far less represented in monumental stone

inscriptions, even though the cost of such inscriptions was not necessarily prohibitive. Mattingly states that this is a case where 'people who had the epigraphic habit in one area of their religious practice [do] not also extend it to other areas of ritual in emulation of Roman norms' (2011: 230). He argues that the adoption of cursing and the simultaneous rejection of other forms of the epigraphic habit are a matter of deliberate choice. I would add that this choice is not necessarily conscious, but rather due to various social structures and ideologies, thus fitting a local need. Similarly, social structure and ideologies or beliefs lead to the rejection of other elements of the epigraphic habit.

If we accept that judicial prayers are distinguishable from other forms of curse tablets, we can then ask if other forms of cursing were largely excluded from adoption in the same way that stone funerary monuments were, for example. Instead of placing all emphasis on how a British preoccupation with punishing thieves affected the adoption of the practice of cursing, we can additionally consider why the judicial prayer (as a method of cursing) was adopted while 'standard' cursing was mostly not.

Summary

Above I have discussed the practice of written cursing in the Mediterranean world. The practice is widespread through time and space, making a comprehensive discussion impossible. Nonetheless, with this overview and with the use of a few examples, I hope to have provided sufficient context in which we may examine the adoption of cursing – more specifically, the adoption of judicial prayers – in Britain. This allows us to consider cursing in Britain not as a single phenomenon, but rather as something that is connected to a much more widespread system of beliefs and technologies.

Chapter Three: Archaeological Context

Before turning to the written content of the curse tablets in Britain, it is important to consider the ritual environment in which cursing was practiced. In this chapter, I discuss the material context of the curse tablets in Britain in order to establish how places of deposition and material treatment of the tablets are connected to the practice of cursing.

The vast majority of the known curse tablets from the province were found at Bath and Uley during excavations in the late 1970s. For this reason, descriptions of these sites and the practices associated with them form the bulk of the content of this chapter. A fairly full discussion of the archaeological information from these sites and the surrounding regions is included to provide background for the discovery of the curses at each site. Despite their close proximity (they are only 35 km apart) and the apparent popularity of cursing at Bath and Uley, the two sites have little in common. Nonetheless, the volume of curses from each of the two sites allows for some discussion and comparison of the material treatment of curses at both locations. The monograph by Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) primarily informs my discussion of Bath. More recent archaeological developments in the area are sourced from the work of La Trobe Bateman and Niblett (2016). Cunliffe's (1988) report on the finds from the sacred spring has also been invaluable both here and throughout this dissertation. The material from Uley is mostly derived from the site report by Woodward and Leach (1993), which includes plans of all phases of occupation as well as a report of the associated small finds and a summary of relevant sites in the region.

Following the descriptions of Bath and Uley and the treatment of curses at the respective sites, I turn to other locations in Britain where curse tablets have been found. The majority of locations discussed have yielded only one curse tablet, and whether these were once part of larger collections is not known. I collected information on these sites

by consulting *The Rural Settlement in Roman Britain: an online resource* (Allen et al. 2018), an-open access database provided by Archaeology Data Service. I provide additional referencing information whenever consultation of the original reports is possible. Figure 3.1 marks the distribution of sites where curses have been found in Great Britain. Figures 3.2-6 show details of Figure 3.1.

1 – Brean Down	11 – Leicester	21 – London, London Bridge
2 – Caerleon	12 – Dodford	22 – Puckeridge-Braughing
3 – Pagan's Hill	13 – Silchester	23 – Old Harlow
4 – Lydney Park	14 – Farley Heath	24 – Eccles Villa
5 – Bath	15 – Rothwell	25 – East Farleigh
6 – Uley	16 – Baldock	26 – Hockwold-cum-Wilton
7 – Marlborough Downs	17 – London, National Provincial Bank	27 – Brandon
8 – Wanborough	18 – London, Roman amphitheatre	28 – Kelvedon
9 – Hamble Estuary	19 – London, 1 Poultry	29 – Thetford
10 – Ratcliffe-on-Soar	20 – London, Telegraph Street	30 – Caistor St. Edmund

Figure 3.1 Map showing locations in Britain where published curse tablets have been found to date

1 – Brean Down	5 - Bath	8 - Wanborough
2 – Caerleon	6 – Uley	9 – Hamble Estuary
3 – Pagan's Hill	7 – Marlborough Downs	13 – Silchester
4 – Lydney Park		

Figure 3.2 Detail of 3.1, showing locations in Britain where published curse tablets have been found

| 10 – Ratcliffe-on-Soar | 12 – Dodford | 27 – Brandon |
| 11 - Leicester | 26 – Hockwold cum Wilton | 29 – Thetford |

Figure 3.3 Detail of 3.1, showing locations in Britain where published curse tablets have been found

26 – Hockwold-cum-Wilton   27 - Brandon   29 – Thetford

Figure 3.4 Detail of 3.1, showing locations in Britain where published curse tablets have been found

9 – Hamble Estuary	17 – London, National Provincial Bank	22 – Puckeridge-Braughing
12 – Dodford	18 – London, Roman amphitheatre	23 – Old Harlow
13 – Silchester	19 – London, 1 Poultry	24 – Eccles Villa
14 – Farley Heath	20 – London, Telegraph Street	25 – East Farleigh
16 – Baldock	21 – London, London Bridge	28 – Kelvedon

Figure 3.5 Detail of 3.1, showing locations in Britain where published curse tablets have been found

17 – London, National Provincial
Bank
18 – London, Roman amphitheatre

19 – London, 1 Poultry
20 – London, Telegraph Street

21 – London, London
Bridge

Figure 3.6 Detail of 3.1, showing locations in Britain where published curse tablets have been found

Finally, I consider why curses have been found at the places discussed above. We need to consider that the apparent preference for these sites may be an accident of survival and discovery (Tomlin 2002: 166). Nonetheless, there is an apparent preference for deposition in temples as well as bodies of water and places closely associated with water, and this is ritually significant.

Bath (*Aquae Sulis*)

Aquae Sulis, or modern Bath, has a long history of occupation since the Roman period and also a lengthy history of excavation. Within the Roman settlement of Bath lies the temple of Sulis Minerva and its associated precinct and elaborate bathing complex. In this section I will discuss these buildings as well as the larger walled settlement of Bath. To this end, I will begin with an overview of the topography of the Bath region and evidence for pre-Roman and Roman occupation of the area. This will include a closer look at the settlement and a discussion of the various interpretations of its form and function. Following this will be a summary of the Roman occupation and development of the temple precinct and associated bathing complex, in which I will draw particular attention to evidence for cult activity at the site. Of primary significance will be the sacred spring and the votive finds found within it as this is where the inscribed lead tablets were discovered.

Topography: geology and occupation of the region

Bath lies on a wide ridge of Lower Lias clay and gravel surrounded on three sides by the meandering River Avon (Kellaway 1985) (Fig 3.7). Located at the bottom of the Avon valley, Bath is bordered to the north and south by limestone uplands. The river itself, altered by construction of weirs in the mediaeval period, is wide and sluggish (Kellaway

1985: 6). No positive evidence for navigation of the river in the Roman period as far upstream as Bath has been recovered (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 6). Although Kellaway (1985) has determined that the River Avon neared what would become the walled Roman settlement on its northeast side with two streams leading from the hot mineral springs to join it, the exact route has since been called into question given the complexity of the alluvial deposits apparent during subsequent excavations (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 6). Flooding would have been a recurrent problem in the area, both influencing and caused by development.

The water that filled the monumentalized sacred spring and bathing complex with which this work is concerned was supplied by the King's Bath Spring. This, the Hetlin Spring (or Hot Spring or Old Royal Spring), and the Cross Bath Spring, all at Bath within a 20 x 80 m area, are the only occurrences of hot springs (with a temperature above 30 C) in Britain (Gallois 2006: 168). The three springs are thus both thermal and mineral, the latter due to a high concentration of dissolved solids (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 6). Due to their rapid ascension from depths of at least 2500m where the waters are heated to as much as 64-96C, the waters that emerge at the King's Bath Spring, Cross Bath Spring, and Hetlin Spring do so at temperatures ranging from 44-47C (Gallois 2006: 172). Such high temperatures would certainly have been the cause of some fascination even before the monumentalisation of the King's Bath Spring in the Roman period.

Figure 3.7 The Bath region in the Roman period, showing the walled area. Roads and extramural settlements are marked by monument record numbers (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 83).

Barry Cunliffe (1986: 5) imagines the pre-Roman setting thus:

'… for those bold enough to penetrate the tangled wood to its heart there would have been an even more remarkable scene – the bubbling waters gushing upwards through the black quicksands fringed by matted vegetation and boulders, all bright red, stained by the oxidized iron salts in the water.'

The temperature and resulting appearance of the waters were not their only notable features. The medical, or even magical, properties of the waters at King's Bath Spring have been documented since at least the medieval period. Geoffrey of Monmouth tells the story of Bladud, who founded the city of Bath (*Historia Regum Britanniae* 11). Some accounts add that Bladud was cured of leprosy after bathing in the spring water (Hingley 2008: 197). This story was believed true by John Wood the Elder, influencing his and his son's architectural work that sought to shape Bath into a fashionable spa in the 18th century (Hingley 2008: 197-201). Indeed, immersive treatment in the spa waters was available on the NHS until 1976 (Gallois 2006: 169). The exact active properties of the thermal waters are not known, but in the early twentieth century the high concentration of radium salts was thought to be what caused the efficacy of the healing waters (Gallois 2006: 169). Today, Thermae Bath Spa markets the high sulphate, calcium, and chloride concentrations of their water, which is supplied by Hetlin spring. It is possible that the high temperature of the waters would have had sufficient appeal in itself during the first phases of occupation. It is clear, then, that the waters were in use at least during the Roman period and from medieval times until the present, with a pseudohistorical legend of their use well before the Roman period.

Prehistoric Settlement of the Bath Region

Due to the expansion of Bath in the 20th century, the gravel terraces surrounding Bath that could have revealed early occupation and land use of the area are now covered (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett: 33). This and Roman and post-Roman disturbances to earlier strata have resulted in limited available evidence of pre-Roman occupation either within the walled settlement or on the low-lying meander core that makes up modern Bath. Nonetheless, potential for reanalysis of flint and metal assemblages recorded by antiquarians has been noted (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 33). Additionally, a concentration of prehistoric sites nearby suggests that pre-Roman settlement in the area was 'comparatively dense' (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 8).

Figure 3.8 The Bath region in the Iron Age showing hillforts in settlements known in 1985 (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985).

Before the mid-twentieth century, research on the Iron Age occupation of the area focused on hillforts (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 36). Charmy Down and Lansdown, are known to have been occupied in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods while nearby hillforts include Little Solsbury, Bathampton, and Little Down Camp (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 8; La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 39-41) (Fig. 3.8). Bronze Age tumuli, now either looted or heavily damaged, can be found at Lansdown, Charmy Down, and Bathampton Down. These tumuli suffered heavy looting in the nineteenth century. At Charmy Down, however, the majority of the tumuli survived until their flattening to construct an airfield during the Second World War, before which a range of Bronze Age grave goods were discovered (Cunliffe 1986: 6). A tumulus on nearby Lansdown contained a gilded bronze 'sun-disk.' Cunliffe suggests this solar imagery, in conjunction with the solar imagery at the temple cite at Bath discussed below, is evidence for the long continuity of this iconography (1986: 6). Budbury, a strongly defended settlement dated roughly to the eighth to sixth centuries, shows evidence of 'high status' occupation, while more specific details regarding the occupation of Bathampton are unknown (Cunliffe 1986: 8).

A later defended settlement can be found on Little Solsbury. This 8ha area was enclosed by a 6.5 m thick rampart. Occupation of this site has been described as 'intensive,' with evidence of post-built houses, extensive domestic occupation, and wool production (Cunliffe 1986: 8). Significantly, the plateau on Little Solsbury overlooks the Avon Valley, including the site of Bath roughly 4km to the south-west (Cunliffe 1986: 9). It is also perhaps significant that the site of the thermal springs can be accessed from Little Solsbury without crossing the River Avon, which would have been difficult to cross at that time (Cunliffe 1986: 12).

The area surrounding these larger settlements and hillforts would have featured several smaller settlements and farmsteads, which are likely to have supported the economy of the enclosed settlement on Little Solsbury. These include Sion Hill and Barrow Mead, located on the more fertile slopes (Cunliffe 1986: 12). Since the 1990s, evidence for occupation at lower-lying sites has increased, showing that the Severn-Cotswold region was densely occupied with enclosed and unenclosed farmsteads in the late Iron Age (Moore 2007a; La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 36). A degree of settlement on the gravel terraces of Bath has also been suggested (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett: 2016: 42).

While the Bath area was largely in keeping with the Iron Age occupation of the region (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 42) surviving pre-Roman stratigraphy from the temple site indicates that the area immediately surrounding the hot springs was wet woodland before Roman aggrandisement (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 38). Mesolithic flint assemblages are the only associated artefacts recovered here, and rather than permanent occupation, the nature of these reflects temporary camp sites (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett: 31-2). Cunliffe suggests the possibility that the site lacks evidence for permanent occupation or structural development because it was considered sacred. He reaches this conjecture by considering the occupation of the surrounding area as well as the apparent mysteriousness of the vicinity of the hot springs (Cunliffe 1986: 15). Presumably the wetness of the ground and periodic flooding would have also been a deterrent to domestic occupation. Evidence for pre-Roman religious activity at the hot springs can, however, be found in a flint assemblage that appears to have been deposited in the Hot Bath (Hetlin) spring (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett: 2016: 32-3). The deposit is unusually large, mostly consisting of carefully crafted microliths dated typologically to some time after 7500 BC (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett: 2016: 30 citing Davenport et

al. 2007: 145-51). Further evidence includes an artificial causeway that approached the mouth of the King's Bath spring, certainly pre-dating the construction of the monumental reservoir (dated to the Flavian period for reasons discussed below) and possibly predating the Roman conquest (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 38). Eighteen pre-Roman coins recovered from the Roman reservoir may be associated with this structure (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 1; Sellwood 1988; La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 38). That the coins are relatively unworn indicates that they were deposited not long after they were minted, but they might equally have still been circulated and subsequently deposited in the Roman period since the use of Iron Age coins did not cease with the Roman invasion of AD 43.

Roman Period Occupation of *Aquae Sulis* and the Bath Region

Apart from the temple site and baths, comparatively little excavation has been undertaken that has illuminated the nature of the Roman-period settlement surrounding the bathing-complex, resulting in much uncertainty as to the nature of the settlement (Figs. 3.9-12). It was initially assumed that the Roman wall was defensive in nature and surrounded a small town (Burnham & Wacher 1990), but this has been called into question as reinterpretations of the site have been put forward. Notable amongst these is the suggestion that the walled settlement might equally be interpreted as a religious settlement. In their 1985 monograph, Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) briefly mention that the walled settlement might be interpreted as a *temenos.* Dark (1993) elaborates on this statement, suggesting that the settlement was not a town by drawing attention to a number of factors. First, there is no epigraphic or contemporary literary evidence that suggest the site was urban. Secondly, the walled area lacks evidence of a forum, a rectilinear street plan, and extensive housing (Dark 1993: 254). Rather than a lack of a forum, the complete

absence of which cannot be certain due to sampling and continued occupation of the area, it is more significant that the temple, bathing complex, and associated features are centrally located within the walled area. Indeed, the special dominance of the temple and bathing complex might in itself indicate the absence of a forum. Finally, the Roman road network draws near to Bathwick, rather than Bath (Dark 1993: 254) It is, therefore, unlikely that the walled settlement grew organically through its proximity to road networks.

The walled settlement at Bath has, however, produced evidence of craft production and housing. This, Dark suggests, represents the economy and housing that would have accompanied such a large religious settlement. Equally, the Roman settlement of *Aquae Sulis* might have begun as a *temenos* but developed into a more urban form after the construction of the temple and bathing complex attracted settlement. Cunliffe (1986: 10) offers, 'one way of viewing this evidence would be to see the temple and baths as essentially peripheral to the main settlement nucleus which developed around the route node at the crossing point.' I return to this interpretation below.

Figure 3.9 The walled settlement of Bath during the late first to early second century (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 99).

Figure 3.10 The walled settlement of Bath during the second to fourth centuries (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 71).

Figure 3.11 The walled settlement at the end of the fourth century (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 102).

Much of the confusion regarding the settlement stems from the uncertainty surrounding the Roman walls (Figs. 3.9-12). We do not know when, exactly, the walls were built, nor do we know their purpose. Evidence for the wall is in itself limited (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 81). As such, there is difficulty determining the period of its construction. Construction in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries revealed structural evidence for a thick rampart faced with large stone blocks (Cunliffe 1971: 77).

A wall of large stone blocks, including repurposed Roman material, was revealed near Northgate, indicating the stone masonry at least was a later addition (Cunliffe 1971: 77). In 1963, an almost complete section of the rampart and wall structure was accessed during development works in Upper Borough Walls. This reveals this part of the settlement's defences to have had a gravel and clay rampart measuring 9.1m (30ft) in width and 1.8m (6ft) in height. The rampart structure contained pottery fragments dated roughly to the late second century while the occupational layers above the lower-lying parts of the structure produced third and fourth century pottery, suggesting a construction period within the late second and early third centuries. Cunliffe suggests that a layer of fresh stone chippings deposited on the surface of the rampart might belong to the phase of wall construction. Given that only a thin turf-line separates the stone chippings and the initial surface of the rampart, the stone walls would not have been constructed long after the rampart but were not constructed immediately after. He therefore proposes the third century as a rough period in which the stone face of the rampart was constructed. Cunliffe emphasizes that this is largely conjecture but notes also that the construction pattern is repeated in defence structures throughout Britain at this time (Cunliffe 1971.: 77-78). While more recent work has been undertaken, understanding has not changed, and the dates of construction remain unclear (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 77-81).

Figure 3.12 The walled settlement of Bath c. 450-500 (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 105).

The walls at Bath differ from other contemporary walled small towns in the amount of space they contain. The temple and bathing complex takes up roughly 10% of the 10ha area within the walls, and this walled area is little over one quarter of the size of a typical contemporary *civitas* capital town in Britain (Cunliffe 1971: 79; Burnham and Wacher 1990: 173). The walls might have been constructed to defend the principle

buildings of the urban area or to define the sacred area and separate it physically and conceptually from the urban (Cunliffe 1983: 10). Given that we do not know much of what was enclosed within the wall and given that what remained of the wall was demolished in the eighteenth century, we cannot know its exact function.

Figure 3.13 Excavations in Bathwick and Walcot, showing site record numbers (La Trobe Bateman & Niblett 2016: 82). This reveals extensive and prolonged occupation to the north of the walled settlement.

Occupation was of course not limited to the walled area. Due to the limited possibility for excavation (Cunliffe 1971: 76), not much was known of the extramural settlement before the 1990s (Burnham & Wacher 1990: 174). That is not to say, however, that the area enclosed by the walls was the extent of the settlement at Bath. There was further occupation along the road leaving the walled area at what is now Northgate (Cunliffe 1971:79) (Fig. 3.13). There was also an apparent spread of occupation

northward from the walled settlement along the River Avon (Cunliffe 1971: 79; Burnham & Wacher 1990: 179; Holbrook 2015: 94) (Fig 3.7). In 1971, Cunliffe noted that, although these individual finds are not numerous, they indicate the presence of 'a substantial built-up area' (1971: 79). Since then, excavations behind the Hat and Feather Pub and behind Nelson Place have revealed evidence of prolonged and intensive occupation along the Fosse Way (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 84). Excavation of the earlier road ditches revealed conquest-period and immediately post-conquest material, indicating the initial strategic position of the Bath area (more specifically, the Walcot area) on the crossing of the River Avon (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 97). The importance would have declined as the frontier moved, but first century military tombstones in the Walcot area are further evidence for military significance shortly post-conquest (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 98). Nonetheless, no Roman fort has been identified (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 98). Burnham and Wacher (1990: 165) note that there is potential for an elevated gravel terrace on the east bank of the River Avon north of the later Roman settlement of *Aquae Sulis* to have been an early fort due to the discovery of Claudio-Neronian samian ware. Although this is not conclusive, the presence of a fort cannot be excluded (Holbrook 2015: 95).

There are limitations faced when studying burial sites dated to the Roman period at Bath that are typical of discoveries during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Namely, finds were largely not well recorded or properly published (Burnham & Wacher, 1990: 74; La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 93). Additionally, some of the stone inscriptions found even earlier are now lost. The most notable burial site with a clear connection to Bath extended along the line of the Fosse Way. This largely produced simple urned cremations and inhumations within stone coffins, but funerary inscriptions of considerable size and ornament were also discovered. Often cited (Cunliffe 1986: 20;

Burnham and Wacher 1990: 174; Hingley 2008: 194) is that of Iulius Vitalis, a soldier, found in 1708 (*RIB* 156). Further cemeteries were discovered south of the Roman road to the west of the walled settlement and in the Bathwick area. Additional burials have been discovered throughout the hinterland (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 92-97).

Other development within the walled area

Although not as elaborate as the King's Bath, the Hetlin Bath (or Hot Bath) Spring and Cross Bath Spring were also embellished during the Roman period (Figs. 3.9-11). At the Hetlin Bath, there is evidence of multiple development sequences that finally resulted in an elaborate suite of baths with two separate sections. The first consisted of multiple heated baths, while the second section featured a plunge pool (Cunliffe 1971: 67; Burnham & Wacher 1990: 173). Lavish architecture indicates that this was a public building (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 66-7). Three stone altars (*RIB* 138, 150, and 153) were found nearby, indicating the connection between religion and bathing that will be revisited below. The Cross Bath Spring probably had similar religious connections. This is evidenced by a carved block depicting Asclepius (*RIB* 146) that was discovered nearby (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 69), which further indicates a possible curative function of the Cross Bath Spring and, perhaps, the hot springs more generally. This site, however, simply featured an enclosed pool, rather than an elaborate bathing complex (Burnham & Wacher 1990: 173). This was possibly an open-air pool (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett, 2016: 69).

Bathing complexes and temples are not the only monumental buildings to have been found within the Roman walls at Bath. Segments of large foundations were discovered by Davis to the north east of the temple and bathing complex. These were mostly destroyed in 1893 before proper recording was possible (Cunliffe 1971: 66). As

such, it is not clear what the function of this obviously monumental building would have been. Possible interpretations include a forum and a basilica or a theatre (Cunliffe 1971: 66). Cunliffe suggests that the building might be better interpreted as a theatre based on its large size as indicated by the massive foundations. He notes that, while it is indeed possible for the structure to have been a forum and basilica, such a large forum would have been out of scale within the small walled settlement. He also notes that theatres appear in association with large temples in Gaul (Cunliffe 1971: 66). Henig (1984: 39) notes similarities with the alignment of a 'Romano-Celtic' temple in Verulamium and its associated theatre or amphitheatre. A further example can be found at Marcham, Oxfordshire, where a temple complex and associated theatre have been excavated by the University of Oxford (Kamash et al. 2010; Smith 2018: 165). These do not appear to be on spring sanctuary sites, but a spring does issue within the theatre at Marcham (Hingley 2018: 78). It is also possible that a sacred spring was located at Gosbecks, Colchester, but further excavation is required (Hingley pers. comm.).

One of the well recorded excavations within the walled area that was not part of the temple and bathing complex is that of a Roman building in Abbeygate Street to the north west of the temple and bathing complex, which was excavated in 1964-5 after two houses had been demolished to the level of their cellars (Cunliffe 1971: 71). The preserved strata allow for a reasonably detailed assessment of occupation at the site. Building began here in the early third century, when 'at least a wall was built' (Cunliffe 1971: 71). In the later third century, a Lias limestone masonry house was built. This structure was initially floored with gravel and mortar with 'no evidence of particular comfort or elegance' (Cunliffe 1971: 71) This late third century building was embellished in the fourth century with the addition of painted walls and a hypocaust in at least one of the rooms. Fallen pennant slabs indicate the collapse of the roof in the later fourth century.

The collapse of the rest of the building occurred subsequently and over these levelled remains a new building was constructed. It is unknown how long this newer building was occupied, but the presence of the head of a young adult female in the oven may suggest a rather turbulent abandonment of the structure, possibly at the end of the fifth century (Cunfliffe 1971: 73). Significantly, the finds at Abbeygate Street indicate that, at least at this particular location, permanent development did not occur until approximately two centuries after the initial aggrandizement of the King's Bath Spring and construction of the temple to Sulis Minerva.

There is further evidence to suggest a lack of dense population in the vicinity of what would eventually become the walled settlement. At the site behind the Little Theatre in 1964, a 'narrow strip of stratified levels' was excavated (Cunfliffe 1971: 73). Like at Abbeygate Street, it is apparent that building development did not occur until the erection of a masonry building in the third century. This building similarly featured a mortar floor with a pennant slab roof. Demolition of the house occurred at some point in the fourth century and a new structure, very poorly preserved due to extensive robbing, was erected over the levelled rubble. It is, of course, necessary to have far more evidence from a multitude of locations before any development patterns can be determined, but, at least the area uncovered at the Abbeygate Street site and at the site behind the Little Theatre were not built upon until the third century AD, well after the supposed construction of the temple and bathing complex in the Flavian period.

Four large decorated blocks belonging to a circular or partially circular monument were recovered during excavations in 1872-82 (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 57). The monument has been interpreted as a *tholos* with an estimated diameter of 9.1m. The building is stylistically dated to the early second century, with depictions of deities similar to those on the sacrificial altar in the temple precinct discussed below (La Trobe-

Batemant & Niblett 2016: 57.). The exact position of the *tholos* is unknown, but it is suggested that it stood upon the massive platform recorded by Mann underneath the nave of the Abbey (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 57). The *tholos* would have had a precinct of its own to the east of the precinct of Sulis Minerva, but it was visible from the sacrificial altar. The position and the history of the building remain speculative (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016.: 58).

Significantly, there is therefore a notable scarcity of evidence of Roman period occupation within the later walled settlement before the Flavian period. Indeed, much of the area within the walls seems to have been unoccupied as late as the later second century (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016.: 98-9). This is in keeping with both Dark's (1993) interpretation that the site of *Aquae Sulis* is better understood as a *temenos* and the interpretation posited by Cunliffe (1986: 10), which stresses the peripheral nature of the site during its development.

The Temple Precinct and Bathing Complex

The Roman period of temple site occupation is presented by Cunliffe and Davenport as phases 1-4 (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985) (Figs. 3.14-17). There are a number of problems to be faced when determining the dating and chronology of the temple precinct, bathing complex, and associated structures, chief among these being the continued use of the site and a lack of detailed recording methods during early excavations (Cunliffe 1983: 16). For instance, a coin of Hadrian was found mortared to the base of a pier associated with the reroofing of the bathing complex, but the exact provenance was not recorded (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 65). Additionally, dating of the features is dependent on stylistic interpretation (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 50). For this reason, the discussion of the site will be arranged by building or feature, rather than by phases of

development (as is done with West Hill, Uley below). This will, however, be followed by some general observations regarding the chronology and dating of these structures.

The Temple Precinct

The colonnaded precinct walls enclosed an area 72m east to west by 52m north to south (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 24) (Figs. 3.14-17). These are thought to have been constructed c. AD 150, some time after the initial construction of the temple and bathing complex (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 54). The precinct was situated on an east-west axis, with the temple located in the western half. On the flagstone inner precinct to the east of the temple stood the altar. To the south of this altar, in the southeast corner, was the sacred spring. The inner precinct, the area to the east of the temple, was paved with flags of limestone covering an area 28.8m east-west by 17.9m north-south (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 49).

Figure 3.14 Plan of temple precinct during period 1, showing the bathing complex to the south (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 178).

Figure 3.15 Plan of temple precinct during period 2, showing attached bathing complex (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 179).

Figure 3. 16 Plan of temple precinct during period 3, showing attached bathing complex (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 181)

Figure 3.17 Plan of temple precinct during period 4, showing attached bathing complex (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 182).

<u>The Temple</u>

Aligned, like the surrounding precinct, on an east-west axis, the temple occupied the western area of the precinct directly ahead of the entrance. It is dated stylistically to the Flavian period (c. AD 69-96). What survives of the temple is currently inaccessible, lying beneath Stall Street and its neighbouring buildings (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 25). As such, we must rely on fragments discovered in 1790, 1867, and 1983 and notes made during the building work of 1867-9, 1959-60 (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 26). These observations will be covered in further detail in the discussion of the excavation history below.

Figure 3.18 Elevation of the Temple of Sulis Minerva, from Cunliffe & Davenport (1988: 26). Lyson's restoration of the tetrastyle Corintian façade is combined with Child's restoration of the pediment.

Lysons' (1802) restoration of the temple front is widely accepted (Fig. 3.18) (Richmond and Toynbee 1955; Cunliffe and Davenport 1985; Cousins 2016). The dimensions of the temple podium are estimated to be 9m by no more than 14m, as reasoned by Cunliffe and Davenport (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 33-4). Initially, the temple was built in the classical style, making it one of the few examples of this style in Britain (Fig. 3.14) (Smith 2018: 165). The podium was constructed with limestone rubble in mortar, possibly 2m high and covered with ashlar facing (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 29). A flight of c. 12 steps would have been used to ascend from the flagstone floor of the inner precinct to the podium at the eastern face of the temple (Cunfliffe & Davenport 1985: 33). Two small rooms, 2.2 x 2.2m, flanked the steps to the north and south respectively. These rooms, likely shrines, were later additions that would have further aggrandized the eastern façade of the temple (Fig. 3.15-17). At around this time, an ambulatory was built, wrapping around the temple at the south, west, and north sides (Cunfliffe & Davenport 1985: 34). Whether or not this later addition was roofed is unclear. As will be seen below, the ambulatory at Uley was certainly roofed (Woodward & Leach 1993).

While the tetrastyle Corinthian façade would have remained intact even with these new additions, the shrines and the ambulatory would have changed the style of the previously purely classical temple to something different altogether – presenting something closer to a 'Romano-Celtic' layout, characterised by an inner cella and an ambulatory on at least three sides (Cunliffe 1986: 3; Smith, 2018: 132).

Altogether, the temple stood over 12m above the flagged floor of the precinct (Cousins 2016: 100). The considerable height would have served to separate the sacred temple from the larger bathing complex adjoining the precinct to the south. Due to its relative size, the building housing the baths would have dwarfed the temple, but the

height, elaborate decoration, and surrounding classical precinct heightened the visual –

and, therefore, ritual – significance of the temple.

<u>The Sculpted Pediment</u>

The four columns of the eastern temple façade supported a sculpted pediment for which

the temple is well known. Seven fragments of the pediment survive (Fig. 3.19), the

majority of which were discovered in 1790 and informed Lysons' reconstruction

(Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 29). The sculptural program of the pediment includes the

head of the so-called 'Bath Gorgon' depicted centrally, flanked by two winged victories

standing upon globes (as depicted by Child in Richmond and Toynbee) (Fig. 3.20)

(Richmond & Toynbee 1955). Also in Child's reconstruction are two male figures,

presumably Tritons, in the north and south corners (Richmond & Toynbee 1955: 101),

although not enough of the pediment survives to be certain (Cunliffe 1971: 18). Much of

the reconstruction of the pedimental decoration is based on conjecture, but the most

striking feature, the Gorgon's head, is well preserved. Also visible are an owl and a

helmet, which are in keeping with the iconography of Minerva.

Descriptions of the pedimental sculpture have often focused on the apparent

conflation of Roman and Celtic traditions. For instance, Henig (1984: 43) calls the central

figure a 'male Medusa conflated with a water-god (perhaps Neptune)'. In so doing, he

notes the connection between the Bath Gorgon and the iconography of Minerva, but the

supposed conflation with Neptune *vel sim.* seems to rely solely on the un-Roman

character of the image. Alternatively, Cunliffe (1971: 18) has supposed that the Bath

Gorgon is the result of conflation of a Gorgon and a manifestation of Sulis, but also notes

that 'the purely classical surroundings and the attributes of Minerva are, however, a

strong reminder of the Roman "take-over".'

Significantly, Cousins (2016) notes the dominance of the theme of Roman imperial power in the pedimental sculpture. She notes that the focus on the pedimental imagery, particularly the Gorgon, as a combination of Roman and Celtic art has caused the imperial imagery of the rest of the pediment to be overlooked. Indeed, she demonstrates that imperial power is a central theme of the pediment and argues that the Bath Gorgon must be understood in this context. She shows similarities between the Bath Gorgon and roundels from monuments in Gaul and Spain, noting their connection to the Forum of Augustus at Rome and the associated themes of triumph and victory (Cousins 2016: 114).

Figure 3.19 Fragments of the pediment of the temple of Sulis Minerva as presented by the Roman Baths Museum

Figure 3.20 Restoration of Pediment by F. Child in Richmond & Toynbee 1955. As reconstructed by Lysons, the pediment measures 8.03m in width and 2.44m in height (Cunliffe & Davenport, 1985, 29).

The Altar

A 2.8m^2 platform 15m to the south east of the temple front supported the altar, which of which three sculpted corner blocks remain (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 35). Apart from the platform, no part of the altar was found *in situ.* One of these blocks, found during the construction projects of 1790, depicts Hercules Bibax, accompanied with his club and lion's skin, on one side and Jupiter on the adjacent block face. A second block depicts Bacchus, equipped with a thyrsus and accompanied by a leopard, on one side and 'a heavily draped female, presumably a fertility deity,' on the adjacent face (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 35). The third extant corner is weathered due to its incorporation into the church at Compton Dando, but it depicts what is likely Apollo holding a lyre and what might be Mercury (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 35). It has been noted that each corner block depicts one clothed and one naked deity (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 51). The significance of this is unclear. Because these and a single capping slab are the only known remains of the altar, it is not known how, or indeed if, the other blocks forming the altar were decorated (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 36). At a later date, the

altar platform was extended to the east by 1.6m. It was upon this extension that some sort of standing feature was later installed, before which remains the inscribed base erected by Lucius Marcus Memor, *haruspex* (Cunfliffe & Davenport 1985: 36-7).

The Guilded Bronze Statue

During digging for the construction of a sewer in Stall Street in 1727, a workman discovered the gilded-bronze head of Minerva (Fig 3.21). The head is life-sized, with the top of the head unfinished, presumably for the attachment of a helmet (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 15; La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 45). The value and size suggest that the gilded-bronze head was actually part of the cult statue that would have been located within the temple of Sulis Minerva, but as the rest of the statue has not been recovered and the head was found outside of its original context, this cannot be certain. Apparent parallels of the treatment of the head of Minerva can be found with the head of Mercury from Uley discussed below. If the torso of the statue was made of the same expensive materials as the head, it can be assumed that this was melted down.

Figure 3.21 The gilded-bronze head of Sulis Minerva, photo from The Roman Baths Museum website

<u>Monumentalisation of the Sacred Spring</u>

The sacred spring was, of course, essential to the ritual landscape of the site and the functioning of the bathing facilities. Not only was it the spring over which the goddess presided, but it also provided the attached thermal baths with water. Externally, the spring did not undergo much change during the primary phase of construction apart from its incorporation into the paved precinct and its connection to the Roman baths. That is not to say, however, that the spring did not undergo considerable transformation. In order to provide the baths with sufficient water and manage the silt brought up by the thermal spring while remaining visually pleasing, a water-tight reservoir, complete with a sluice for drainage and the removal of built-up silt was constructed (Fig 3.22) (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 24).

During the first stage, contemporary with the first phase of construction of the Roman temple, the outer edge of the reservoir was built of large 2m masonry blocks that reached 1.5m into the earth. Upon these masonry blocks was a lead lining to ensure that the reservoir was waterproof (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 40). To achieve this, workers diverted the flow of the output of the spring and encircled the reservoir area with oak beams before digging away the mud surrounding the spring head (Cunliffe 1983: 19). The wood-encircled pool was then surrounded by the large stone masonry when the slabs were inserted in the trench that had been dug around the wood enclosure (Cunliffe 1983: 19). After this point, the sheets of lead were soldered together to create the waterproof lining, which, when bent over the oak beams, formed a secondary inner ledge that was then finished with tiles (Cunlifee 1983: 19). The reservoir floor, though not lined with lead, was nonetheless sealed by impermeable clay (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 40).

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN RESERVOIR
AT AQUAE SULIS

B.C.1980

Figure 3.22 Reconstruction of the early Roman reservoir construction (Cunliffe & Davenport 1988: 39). The image shows the reservoir in its first phase.

A movable sluice in the east wall of the reservoir was opened on a regular basis in order to remove the accumulated silt brought up from the spring's fissure (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 24). Not all contents, however, were able to be removed each time the reservoir was cleared, resulting in a build-up of silt and ritual deposits in the reservoir floor. It is within this accumulated silt that the lead tablets with which the present work is concerned were found. These and other associated finds will be discussed below. Controlled overflow from the sacred spring provided thermal water for he baths to the south through a box drain. This outlet would have been sufficient to drain the total volume

of spring water issuing from the fissure and likely did so through the great bath (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 41-2).

The enclosure of the sacred spring occurred simultaneously with the reroofing of the bathing facilities with which the enclosure shared a wall (Figs. 3.14-17) (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 34). The vaulted enclosure would have drastically altered the accessibility of the spring, which became reachable via a central doorway in the northern wall of the enclosure (Cunliffe 1983: 19; Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 49). The enclosure, of course, had a high impact on the visual landscape, additionally creating interior space, which had heretofore been exposed to the open air. Where previously the spring itself had been visible to the viewer from any point within the inner precinct, only the enclosing building was now visible. Buttresses were added to the north wall during period 3 to prevent collapse of the enclosure. To avoid disrupting the visual harmony of the precinct, a pediment depicting Luna was added to the north façade of the building while the 'Façade of the Four Seasons,' depicting Sol was constructed opposite (La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 55).

Cunliffe (1986: 34) describes the interior of the spring enclosure: 'an altogether mysterious place – a vast and echoing grotto, green and dank – a gloomy place pervaded only by the occasional squawk of an intrusive bird.'. This description includes lunettes in the east and west walls, suggesting that the darkness, moisture, and greenery would 'reproduce something of the atmosphere of a natural grotto and thus enhance the feeling of sanctity' (Cunliffe 1983: 20).

Phases of Development

It is noted above that the dating and chronology of the structures at the site is challenging, but as the lead tablets with which this dissertation is concerned were deposited over

multiple centuries, it is necessary to consider the structural context and ritual experience of those who deposited them and how this might have changed in different periods. General observations of the temple precinct development in periods 1-4 and beyond can be made (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 65; La Trobe-Bateman & Niblett 2016: 44-5).

Initial Roman construction on the site is dated to ca. AD 70 (later Neronian or early Flavian period) with consideration of temple style and an analysis of coins from the sacred spring (Fig. 3.14) (Blagg 1979; Walker 1988). This period included the initial construction of the Classical temple as well as the construction of the reservoir for the sacred spring, the paving of the precinct, and the construction of the altar. At this time, the bathing establishment was also built (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 65).

Period 2 alterations to the temple and precinct took place during the late second or early third century (Fig. 3.15). During this period, additions were made to the temple and the reservoir was enclosed. These are dated with sherds of Gaulish samian ware in associated contexts as well as a decrease in number of deposited coins of this period, which indicates restricted access caused by the enclosing of the reservoir. Contemporary to this was the reroofing and slight expansion of the bathing complex (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 65).

The north wall of the reservoir enclosure was reinforced in period 3 (Fig. 3.16). This was likely embellished with a pediment depicting Luna, while the 'Façade of the Four Seasons,' probably depicting Sol, was constructed opposite. The temple precinct was repaved during period 4 (Fig. 3.17). Coins dating to c. AD 350 found above the slabs of pavement indicate that periods 3 and 4 dated to before 300 and c. 300 respectively. Wear of the precinct floor indicates that the area was in use for quite some time before the collapse or destruction of the reservoir enclosure (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 65). Debris from the strata above the paved floor, including coinage and pottery assemblages,

show that the area was in use throughout the fourth century, but the masonry collapse that ended period 5 of occupation is of unknown date (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 75).

Votive Offerings from the Sacred Spring

It is mentioned above that the monumentalised sacred spring was occasionally cleared during the Roman period through a sluice in the east wall of the reservoir. The bottom of the reservoir was, however, lined with clay rather than lead. As a result, the silt that issued with the thermal waters from the spring accumulated into a sort of quicksand. It was not possible for all of the silt and the items deposited in it to be cleared through the sluice, so any items that sunk into the silt that was not cleared remained there until the excavation of the sacred spring in the late 1970s.

Items deposited in the reservoir of the sacred spring include personal items (jewellery, brooches, cosmetic items) and professional items (spindle whorls, lead and pewter ingots, a whetstone), but these are not numerous enough to show trends of deposition (Cousins 2014: 55-6). A number of metal vessels were recovered, some of which were inscribed with dedications to the goddess. Significantly, these show evidence of wear indicative of long-term use, and some vessels were deliberately damaged before they were deposited in the spring (Figs. 3.23-4). It is suggested that these may have belonged to the temple and were deposited after they had fulfilled their role as vessels in an official ritual capacity (Cunliffe 1988: 361). Cousins (2014) builds on this assumption and argues that, because the vessels had ritual significance, they could not be disposed of casually and must, therefore, be ritually deposited. In this way, the sacred spring played a transformative role – 'the water [enabled] them to retain their sacred status even after their functionality is gone' (Cousins 2014: 59). Significantly, in order to focus on the

implications of their watery context, Cousins reaches this interpretation by analysing the

vessels in conjunction with the curse tablets from the spring.

Figure 3.23 Detail of two pewter vessels (nos. 30 and 32) deposited in the sacred reservoir at Bath (Cunliffe 1988: 48).

Figure 3.24 A pierced pewter plate deposited in the sacred reservoir at Bath (Cousins 2014: 59).

Over 12,000 coins were recovered from the spring. Eighteen of these were silver Iron Age coins possibly thrown in from the pre-Roman causeway (Sellwood 1988). The Roman coins showed a wide variation in value, ranging from small bronze coins, which make up the vast majority of those deposited, to gold coins, which number four total. Peak depositional activity took place from AD 96 to 197, from the reign of Nerva to shortly after that of Commodus (Walker 1988: 289-99). The decrease in coin deposition following this period is used to date the enclosure of the sacred spring, since such an enclosure would have restricted access to the reservoir (Cunliffe & Davenport 1985: 65).

Though their exact findspot is unknown, a number of intaglios were likely found at a point where the outflow from the baths joined the outflow from the sacred spring (Henig 1988: 27). These gemstones are similar in style, and Henig suggests that they were purchased in Bath and lost after becoming detached from their settings while their owners were bathing. He also suggests that the similarities could indicate that they were all the product of one craftsperson who deliberately deposited a selection of the intaglios in the sacred spring (Henig 1988: 27). There is, however, an absence of similar events represented in this context, which makes the former interpretation appear more likely.

The Lead Curse-Tablets: context and observations

The most notable finds from the sacred spring at Bath are the lead tablets with which the present work is concerned. I have made some brief comments on these texts in the introduction to this dissertation, but here I provide further information regarding their material treatment and deposition. General observations regarding the inscribed content are also necessary here as there is an apparent connection between the written content and the context of deposition (Cousins 2014). As published by Tomlin in his substantial contribution to Cunliffe's publication on the finds from the sacred spring, there are 130

tablets from Bath. Some of these numbered entries comprise more than one fragment that do not necessarily come from the same original tablet. Of these 130, 111 are inscribed with literate text, four are pseudo-inscriptions containing no recognizable letters, six are uninscribed, and seven are still folded or illegible. All extant tablets from this site are published by Tomlin (1988), with restored texts, translations, and line drawings where possible. All tablets come from the accumulated silt at the bottom of the sacred spring. This represents some 300 years of activity, so any dating of the tablets must be undertaken paleographically. Tomlin has categorized the tablets by their letterforms (capitals, Old Roman Cursive, and New Roman Cursive) in order to provide a general chronological context, but the association between letterforms and chronological order is not always clear. BA072 and BA073 (*Tab. Sulis* 65 and 66) contain both ORC and NRC, with BA073 containing one line of distinct ORC and the remaining text in NRC. Tomlin calls this 'a paleographical embarrassment' (1988: 200). Nonetheless, about half of the tablets are written in ORC, dating them roughly to before the end of the third century. Thirty are written with capitals, not allowing for dating approximation.

I noted in Chapter Two that lead is a popular choice for curse tablets, and the title of the present section acknowledges this. It must, however, also be noted that pure lead was rarely used in the Bath tablets. The compositions of 75 of the tablets from Bath were examined, and it was determined that only 14 tablets contain at least two-thirds lead (Tomlin 1988: 82). The remainder are alloys with high levels of tin and some traces of copper. This material must have been more readily available here than pure lead, or perhaps the material was easier to work with. What is significant, however, is that the material looked like lead and was, therefore, able to fulfil the same sympathetic function.

Many but not all of the tablets were folded after inscription. The evidence for deliberate piercing of tablets is greater at Bath than at Uley, with five tablets being pierced

(BA008, BA010, BA021, BA040, and BA043 in the present work) and an additional two tablets showing possible signs of piercing (BA059 and BA069). The tablets from Uley are considered below. Comparison with the texts from Uley, which were periodically cleared out of their primary deposition location, indicates that the tablets might have been displayed or deposited elsewhere before they were thrown into the sacred spring (Tomlin 1988: 101). I think that the differences in context makes such a comparison appear less fruitful. The Uley basin or pit (see below) would have had to be cleared manually. At Bath, the reservoir was cleared via a sluice. Thus, the extant tablets from Bath are those that escaped clearing and remained in their original depositional context.

Over 50 of the tablets from Bath are explicitly associated with theft, with the verb 'to steal' (*involare,* etc.) in at least 30 tablets and other terms and formulae associated with theft found in a further 20. Many texts are too fragmentary or do not state the reason for their inscription, but the only tablet from the site that can definitively be said to not be provoked by theft is BA101, which records the swearing of an oath. Texts provoked by theft often mention the item that is lost or stolen, and many of the stated stolen items at Bath are articles of clothing or textiles. These include cloaks and outerwear (*pallium, caracallam, mafortium*) a bathing tunic (*paxsam balnearam*), and blankets or rugs used by bathers (Tomlin 1988: 80). Small personal items are likewise mentioned. Tomlin states that the high frequency of clothing, textiles, and personal items recorded in the curses from the sacred spring is likely due to the spring's association with the adjacent bathing complex. As bathers disrobed, anything left unattended could have been taken away by another bather or bathhouse thieves. It is not known whether there might have been any locked storage space at Bath or whether slaves might have been left to look after their owner's valuables. Bathhouse thieves are well attested in literature (Tomlin 1988: 80). For instance, in the mid-late first century AD, Seneca describes the sounds he

hears while staying above a bathhouse, including the arrests of a brawler and a thief, *scordalum et furem deprensum* (*Ep.* 56). Catullus' 33rd poem addresses 'the greatest thief of the baths,' *O furem optime balneariorum*. An earlier mention of bathhouse thieves can be found in Plautus' *Rudens*, written at the end of the third century BC. I offer only the translation here for brevity:

> '*Don't you know? Clothes are stolen from the man who goes to the baths even when he's watching over them carefully, the reason being that he doesn't know who in the crowd he ought to watch. The thief can easily see the man he's observing, the guard doesn't know who the thief is.*' (Plautus *Rudens* 384-8; translation by de Melo 2012: 441-2).

In Chapter Five, I tabulate the recorded stolen items from Bath and explore how they relate to the identities of those who used curse tablets at this site.

Where the deity addressed in the curse is stated at Bath, this is usually Sulis. Curiously, the name 'Minerva' is only mentioned on three tablets (BA038, BA040, and BA041), each time as Sulis Minerva. This seems to be a reflection of beliefs in the powers of the deity that presided at the spring. While Sulis was an appropriate choice for invocation in a curse, perhaps Minerva was thought to be less accommodating or capable. This also indicates that the two deities are not as conflated in the curse tablets as they are in, for instance, the inscribed metal vessels. One tablet (BA035) from the sacred spring is dedicated to Mars while another (BA104) refers to the temple of Mars. A temple of Mars must have been nearby, for it is hard to imagine that the invocation of Mars in these instances was the result of the confusion of Sulis Minerva and Mars. Indeed, the only possible evidence for the veneration of a martial deity is a single bronze washer from a

catapult found in the spring (Henig 1988: 39; Cunliffe 1988: 361), and this, too, has been called into question (Cousins 2014: 56). The matter of which deities are addressed will be returned to in a discussion of the possible identities of dedicants in Chapter Five and in order to discuss concepts of belief in Chapter Six.

Uley

The religious site on West Hill, Uley, was excavated between 1977 and 1979 after Iron Age and Roman occupation was observed during the construction of a water pipeline. The excavated area revealed a series of about 20 structures dated from prehistory to the seventh or eighth centuries AD (Woodward & Leach 1993). These include an open-ended Neolithic structure, a later Iron Age structure, a Romano-British temple of Mercury, and a post-Roman basilica and Christian church, all built upon each other. The present work is concerned primarily with the Roman period of occupation, but the anteceding and, in particular, the preceding periods also warrant attention. For this reason, I will follow a brief overview of the topography of the area with a discussion of all evident phases of occupation. I will then turn to the finds and their associated contexts, paying particular attention to the contexts of the lead curse tablets and evidence for the worship of Mercury and Mars-Silvanus.

Topography

The site of West Hill is situated in the Cotswolds region (Fig. 3.25). The earliest evidence for the occupation of the area surrounding the site consists of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age flint implements, with a concentration of axe fragments found within Uley Bury, a large hillfort located just southeast of West Hill (Woodward & Leach 1993: 3). This suggests extensive occupation of the hillfort during the Neolithic period. Other

indications of Neolithic occupation are the numerous long barrows or Severn-Cotswold tombs (Woodward & Leach 1993.: 3-4). Hetty Pegler's Tump is situated about 100m to the north of the site on West Hill (3.25).

Figure 3. 25 Location and site of West Hill, Uley (Woodward & Leach 1993: 1.)

Iron Age occupation can be seen in earthwork structures. These consist of smaller enclosed hilltop structures in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age and larger hillforts in the Middle to Late Iron Age, the largest of these nearby being Uley Bury, where intensive settlement has been determined through the presence of ditches and circular structures within the palisaded 13ha space (Woodward and Leach 1993: 4 citing Saville and Ellison 1983 and Hampton and Palmer 1977). There appears to have been a growing emphasis on enclosing settlements in this region in the Later Iron Age (Moore 2007a),

and these enclosures would have been integrated into the wider landscape, which cropmark evidence suggests was densely settled (Moore 2007b: 43) Although there is debate regarding territorial boundaries (Copeland 2011: 18), the local Iron Age tribe is thought to be the Dobunni, and the finding of Dobunnic coins during surface collection at Uley Bury has been taken to indicate that the site was occupied during the Late Iron Age (Woodward & Leach 1993: 4; Moore 2007b: 43). Moore, however, warns against projecting the Roman *civitas* of the Dobunni backwards as treating the Severn-Cotswolds region as synonymous with Dobunnic tribal territory obscures the complex settlement history of the region (Moore 2007b: 42-3).

The open settlement at Frocester Court to the north of West Hill produced evidence of both domestic activity and metalworking amongst approximately six round houses within a ditched enclosure. Also present were coins and Gaulish pottery, indicating access to wider trade (Woodward & Leach 1993: 4). In the Roman period, this site held one of the richer estates that dotted the region around the early fourth century AD (Woodward & Leach 1993: 4). Smaller rural settlements as well as almost urban agricultural complexes also filled the densely populated region.

The largest towns in Gloucestershire during the Roman period were *Glevum* and *Corinium* (modern Gloucester and Cirencester) to the north and east of West Hill respectively. Gloucester is considered an 'essentially new [site] selected by the army,' with the earliest Roman occupation being the legionary fortress at Kingsholm to the north of the later *colonia* (Holbrook 2015: 92, 95). Cirencester, a *civitas* capital, is traditionally considered to have developed after a population shift from the nearby Late Iron Age centre of Bagendon to a location more accessible to the new road network, but this has been called into question (Holbrook 2015: 92).

R. Frome

R. Cam

Frocester

Frocester
Court

Pen Hill

76m

152m

Cam

229m

Nympsfield

Downham Hill

West Hill

Uley
Bury

Dursley

Uley

152m

229m

Kingscote

Brackenbury
Ditches

Wotton-under
-edge

⊗ long barrow

× round barrow

⌓ Neolithic axe

◗ Neolithic or Bronze Age flints

▲ bronze implement

□ Iron Age settlement or finds

hill fort

◉ Roman villa

● large Roman settlement

○ Roman finds

Modern settlement

0   3 kms

0   2 mls

Figure 3. 26 Prehistoric and Roman sites in the region (Wodward & Leach 1993: 2).

126

No structural evidence for Roman temples has been recovered from either Gloucester or Cirencester (Woodward & Leach 1993; Holbrook 2015), although the towns will have had temples. Religious structures elsewhere in Gloucestershire have, however, been studied. The most notable perhaps is the complex at Lydney Park, where a Romano-Celtic temple was found in connection to a bathhouse and other buildings associated with bathing and worship (Wheeler & Wheeler 1932). A lead curse (LP001) is said to have been found here, so this site will be discussed in further detail below, but for now it is worth mentioning in its relation to West Hill, Uley.

Phases of Development

Prehistoric Phases

The first phase of structural development at West Hill, Uley, is dated as early as the Neolithic period based on the recovery of worked flints (Fig. 3.27) (Woodward & Leach 1993: 304). This first phase comprises two ditches that formed an open-ended enclosure. Alternatively, the ditches could have been quarries for the construction of a long barrow within them. No material from such a structure survives, but postholes north of the opening of the enclosure might indicate the presence of a forecourt, a feature present in contemporary tombs and mortuary enclosures. If the structure was, indeed, a mortuary barrow, this would suggest a particular association with Hetty Pegler's Tump and the Uley Bury hillfort settlement nearby (Woodward & Leach 1993: 305).

The interpretation of the Neolithic ditched enclosure as a sacred or mortuary space is further supported by some instances elsewhere in Britain where Roman temples are superimposed upon or constructed near prehistoric monuments, with Lydney Park being one example among many (Woodward & Leach 1993: 305; Smith 2018: 160). Indeed,

the Roman reuse of prehistoric sacred places of many kinds and in varying ways is well attested (Hutton 2011a). It is possible that a similar veneration of sacred space that caused the construction of a Roman temple on West Hill caused the continued use of the locus throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages. Alternatively, this particular location was selected for the construction of a temple in the Roman period in order to create a 'legendary topography' that turned collective memories towards an early and idealised past (Smith 2018: 160).

The second phase of construction on West Hill is more clearly dated (Fig. 3.28). This comprises a timber building within a ditched and palisaded enclosure and an additional trapezoidal timber building. First century AD brooches associated with the destruction of the palisades may indicate that they were constructed in the first or second centuries BC. Human infant burials and votive pits were also found in association with the small trapezoidal structure and the timber structure below the later Roman temple. It is supposed that the infant burials may have been deposited at the time of construction. The first of the structures built during this period is Structure XVI, over which the Roman temple was later built. Structure XVI was a simple 8.2m square surrounding a pit (F19), the contents of which are unclear during this phase. It is also unclear whether the structure was a roofed building or a fence, the practicality of either form relies on the height of a possible tree or tall feature that might have been held in the pit. Disruption of the area within the square by later features from Roman and post-Roman phases causes uncertainty regarding the features within the structure and their function, but comparison to contemporary ritual structures with similar votive material, for instance Maiden Castle (Dorset), is possible (Woodward & Leach 1993: 309).

While the timber walls of Structure XVI are marked by separate post holes, the walls of XVII, probably slightly later in date, consisted of continuous posts. Because the

only finds associated with Structure XVII are two infant burials and the structure was never replaced or built over (as is the case with Structure XVI), its function is unclear.

The third phase is dated to the late first to mid-second centuries, when the ditches were filled in and only the western palisade remained (Fig. 3.29).

Geophysical survey of the unexcavated area indicates that the long-lasting occupation of the excavated area extended to the south and east (David 1993), and this may be representative of major Iron Age settlement (Woodward & Leach 1993: 310). It is, however, not unusual for sacred sites to exist in 'non-settlement' contexts (Smith 2018: 158-160), so such an interpretation is no longer considered to be conclusive.

Figure 3.27 Plan of the site at West Hill during Phase 1, possibly Neolithic (Woodward & Leach 1993: 14).

Figure 3.28 Plan of the site at West Hill during Phase 2, first century AD (Woodward & Leach 1993: 17).

Figure 3.29 Plan of the site at West Hill during Phase 3, late first to mid-second century AD (Woodward & Leach 1993: 25).

The Iron Age timber structure (Structure XVI) was replaced by a stone Romano-Celtic temple in the early second century AD (Fig. 3.30-6). Other stone structures were also constructed in the precinct at this time, and the courtyard north of the temple entrance was paved (Fig. 3.30, 36). Before this point, the remaining structures were dismantled and the palisade trenches were filled in, but the timber shrine is considered to have still been standing before its replacement (Woodward & Leach 1993).

The stone Romano-Celtic temple (Structure II) underwent two major building phases (Fig. 3.31). The first phase featured a rectangular cella with an ambulatory on three sides situated on the exact axis of the timber structure that preceded it. The temple would have been accessed from the courtyard via two steps on the northeast-facing entrance. The second phase of construction featured an extension to the floor level on the northeast side, possibly for the addition of a portico and the embellishment of the screen wall. Reconstructions of the building feature gabled roofing on both the tower cella and the ambulatories. It is suggested that the water drainage from these would have run through a gutter between the ambulatory roof and the cella wall, after which it would have fallen into collection tank (Woodward & Leach 1993: 311). Significantly, this water may have been used to fill the tank (formerly the Iron Age pit) that was still located in the centre of the cella.

Figure 3.30 Plan of the site at West Hill during Phase 4, second to early fourth century AD (Woodward & Leach 1993: 38).

Figure 3.31 Phase plans of shrine, temple, and associated structures (Woodward & Leach 1993: 32).

Figure 3.32 Reconstruction of the cult statue of Mercury drawn by Joanna Richards (Woodward & Leach 1993: 93).

Figure 3.33 Limestone head of the cult statue of Mercury (Woodward & Leach 1993: 88).

The cult statue of Mercury (Fig. 3.32) found dismembered in later occupation levels was probably located at the southwest side of the temple opposite the entrance, where a mortar base was positioned in the ambulatory. As indicated by the recovery of wall plaster distributed in deposits associated with the temple, the interior of the building was painted with a variety of motifs and colours (Woodward & Leach 1993: 188). It is suggested that access to the ambulatories and the far half of the cella was restricted to temple priests in order to protect the cult statue and votive offerings. Both the tower cella

and ambulatories would have had windows, but the limited amount of window glass discovered at the site suggests that these were not glazed (Price 1993).

The stone buildings contemporary to the first phase of the temple were Structures X, IV, and I. Structure X was a large building with a veranda surrounding the temple courtyard. The building was probably two stories in height, and comparison with a similar structure at Lydney suggests it might have been used to house guests for visiting pilgrims. Structures IV and I are of a less specialized shape and, therefore, unknown function. As these buildings were demolished in around the later phase of temple construction, new buildings were constructed; these, too, are of unknown function. Specialized buildings are sometimes associated with healing cults. Since there is no evidence of a healing cult here, the function of the buildings cannot be assumed to be associated with one. The excavated Roman period buildings associated with the Romano-Celtic temple are probably shops connected to the industry that the temple provides (Woodward & Leach 1993).

The late fourth century saw the collapse of the northeast corner of the temple and the resulting destruction of the portico and temple superstructure. At around this time, stone was replaced with timber in the maintenance of the associated buildings. The rubble from the collapsed temple was immediately cleared away, some of it being spread over the remains of Structure I. All that remained of the original temple were two of the ambulatories, which were closed-off to create an L-shaped building with an expanded square room in the southwestern ambulatory. The salvaging of the building could have been undertaken very quickly. Woodward and Leach suggest that this perhaps needed to be done in order to provide an acceptable home to the cult statue or because the continued use of the temple was economically beneficial (1993).

Post-Roman Period

At some point probably in the fifth century, the temple was replaced by a timber building. Interpreted as a basilica, this building was in exact alignment with the demolished temple remains and made use of Roman altars and altar fragments in the steps and pavement of a polygonal apsidal feature. Fragments of the cult statue were also incorporated (Fig. 3.32). This building was, in turn, possibly replaced by a building interpreted as a small stone church, but the evidence for this is considered tenuous (Smith 2018: 136). The church was located directly above the Iron Age pit which, by this point, was no-longer visible. Though the polygonal apsidal feature (possibly a baptistery) survived, it was no longer attached to the church structure. Curiously, it is at this point that the head of the Roman cult statue (Fig. 3.33) was deliberately buried near to where the stone church and the apsidal feature face each other. Because the statue itself must have been dismembered before the construction of the timber basilica, this and the excellent condition of the head suggest that the head was carefully stored until its deposition after the construction of the stone church. It has been suggested that, rather than being a purely destructive act, the removal of the head of the cult statue from its body might better be understood as the creation of a new cult object (Croxford 2003). The discovery of the gilded bronze head of Sulis Minerva at Bath was mentioned above (Fig. 3.15), and it is reasonable to assume that this, too, was removed from its body for careful preservation and continued veneration.

Ritual Finds

Votive items and epigraphic evidence indicate that Mercury was the primary deity worshipped at West Hill in the Roman period (Henig 1984: 55), and this section is primarily concerned with this. It is, however, necessary to first look at evidence for

worship in the pre-Roman period and during the Roman period before the stone Romano-Celtic temple was constructed. Due to the extent of reuse and subsequent disturbance at the site, some residual items would have made their way into the later levels, but the timber shrine and its associated votive pits contained individual human bones, antler and bone tools, a small number of coins and brooches, and collections of full-sized weapons. These pit deposits are, therefore, largely compatible with those from comparable Iron Age sites (Smith 2018: 130). As mentioned above, infant burials are also associated with this phase. The full-sized weapons (iron spearheads and bolt heads) are particularly interesting. Woodward and Leach (1993: 333) take these to suggest the veneration of a warrior deity of some kind. This is the only phase with full-sized tools and weapons in a ritual context. Most of the items associated with the first century AD were tools and pottery.

The votive finds associated with the stone Roman structures are considerably more numerous, representing what appears to be a more commercialized use of the sacred site. Although they will not be covered in detail here, surviving domestic and structural items were also more numerous than in earlier phases of occupation. These include but are not limited to domestic pottery, iron fittings and building materials, tools, and styli (Woodward & Leach 1993).

Smaller votive objects found in contexts associated with the first two phases of construction of the Romano-Celtic temple (early second to mid-to-late fourth centuries AD) include coins, pins, spoons, and miniature clay vessels (Woodward & Leach 1993.: 328). Brooches and bracelets were also popular votive objects at this time, and their deposition continued throughout the Roman period. Items that increased in popularity in the later phases of the Roman occupation of the temple (late fourth to early fifth centuries AD) include copper rings, finger rings, copper plaques, copper alloy figurines and

caducei, and miniature weapons. The latter appear to be a modification of the earlier practice of depositing full-sized weapons.

Many of the votive items were found in secondary contexts; these would have been deposited in the shrine before later being removed and deposited elsewhere on the site. Sometimes this was done over earlier demolished structures. This is the case with many of the lead curse tablets, many of which were found over the demolished remains of Structure I to the southwest of the temple. This may indicate that these were originally deposited in (or near) the temple and then relocated after the collapse of the cella superstructure toward the end of the fourth century. Nonetheless, the majority of the votive objects are concentrated around the temple building. In particular, sculpted stone and copper alloy figurines are mostly found here (Woodward & Leach 1993: 331).

In addition to the stone cult statue mentioned briefly above, the sculptures and figurines provide considerable evidence for the worship of Mercury at this site. The excavations revealed at least three limestone altars depicting Mercury, all of which bear depictions of the god that are very similar to that of the cult statue with respect to the situation of Mercury and the inclusion of the ram and cockerel (Henig 1984: 41; Henig et al. 1993: 96). Though the votive figurines from West Hill primarily depict Mercury, busts of Sol and an unknown horned figure and a figurine of the infant Bacchus were also recovered. Also indicative of the cult of Mercury are figurines of a goat and cockerel as well as several miniature *caducei* (Woodward & Leach 1993: 101-2). Even more explicit are the votive plaques that are addressed directly to Mercury (Woodward & Leach 1993: 103). As he is the patron of trade, coins are a natural choice for dedication to Mercury, but copper rings were also found in abundance at the site. The rings likely had a similar function to coins, though casting flanges on many of the rings might indicate that these were actually manufactured in or very near the precinct.

The Lead Curse Tablets: context and observations

Some brief comments were made on the curse tablets from Uley in the introduction to this dissertation, but further detail regarding their context and material treatment is required here. As stated above, 140 lead tablets were recovered from this site, and, of these 140 tablets, 87 still bear inscription. The remainder either have lost their inscriptions to wear and corrosion or were never inscribed. The inscribed language will be discussed in detail below, but for now some general features will be observed. Only 18 texts from West Hill, Uley are included in the appendix to the present work and discussed in the thematic chapters. This is because the majority of the tablets and the text inscribed have not been published. Those that are available are published either in Roger Tomlin's interim report on the inscribed tablets in Woodward and Leach's report on the site (Tomlin 1993) or subsequently and periodically in *Britannia.* The former largely informs this discussion.

The lead tablets were found scattered about the excavated area in contexts related to the construction of the stone Romano-Celtic temple (phase 4) and later, but most were either unstratified in plough soil or, as mentioned above, in the deposits above the remains of Structure I. These were apparently deposited here after the collapse of the tower cella superstructure (Woodward 1993). Tomlin observes that the datable contexts of the tablets are usually later than their palaeographical dates, suggesting that the items were not buried for quite some time after their inscription (Tomlin 1993: 114). For instance, a number of tablets inscribed in Old Roman Cursive (roughly assigned to before the end of the third century) were found over Structure I in a context associated with the late fourth century (Phase 5eii). This is clearly their secondary context. If we recall the sampling of curses at Bath, where the extant tablets are those that remained after the periodic cleaning of the sacred spring, we can see two rather different sequences of use and reuse. We can

assume that the surviving Bath tablets were found in their primary contexts, while many of those found at Uley were deposited elsewhere before they were moved. The need for relocation suggests that their original context was an area of high popularity for depositions, and it is not unreasonable to suppose this may have been the pit or cistern located in the centre of the cella.

The majority of the tablets were found rolled and flattened. Five, however, were rolled but not flattened while nine were neither rolled nor flattened. Woodward speculates that these fourteen tablets were still in the process of preparation, their final form being rolled and flattened (Woodward 1993). I think this is unlikely, as we have seen earlier that the rolling and folding of lead curses is very much a part of the performative cursing ritual. It would, therefore, be inappropriate for this to take place after the initial deposition of the tablets. There is not much evidence for the piercing of texts after inscription. While UL012 may have been pierced, the only tablet that certainly was pierced is the unpublished Uley 12 (Tomlin pers.comm.). Uley 12 contains the *si puer si puella formula*, so it must be a judicial prayer. Piercing seems to be less common with judicial prayers (and probably also with British curses), but it does happen.

In the interim report, Tomlin includes a *descripta* of the tablets that were not discussed in detail in the report. Where the inscriptions can be read, many bear formulae relating to theft or state stolen goods. In this respect, the group of texts found at West Hill, Uley is not unlike the group from Bath, though they differ in that the stolen items at Uley do not appear to have a connection to bathing. Where a deity is invoked, it is almost always Mercury (a total of 18 times), with the exception of two texts addressed to Mars (UL001 and UL011) and one to Mars-Silvanus (UL010). In the dedicated full-sized and miniature weapons mentioned above, we saw possible evidence for the worship of a warrior deity of some kind. It seems that, at least in these texts, the presiding deity is

thought to be Mars. Interestingly, these would have been inscribed well after the practice of depositing full-sized weapons had ceased. The miniature weapons were, however, still deposited around this time. It seems likely that the invocations of Mars and Mars-Silvanus were not simply cases of mistaken identity.

In UL010 addressed to Mars-Silvanus, this name is crossed out and replaced with Mercury. Later in the text, however, the principal does not correct Mars-Silvanus for Mercury. The text is inscribed in capitals and ORC, making palaeographic dating challenging, but fortunately the tablet was found in a context that can be dated to the late fourth century (above Structure I, Phase 5e(ii)). The text might have been written as much as a century before its secondary deposition, but this still places it well after the construction of the stone temple. It is curious that the ambiguity of the deity worshipped (if that is what is happening here) can last so long after the construction of the stone temple and the dedication of the cult statue. Perhaps these instances are actually a reflection of the persistence – at least in some sense – of the earlier Celtic or local deity, who might still be confused for either Mars or Mercury. Although Henig presents the dedication of the cult statue as a dramatic moment of *interpretatio* and a 'decisive change in the nature of the cult' (1984: 41), the reality seems to be less straight-forward. The question of what this might indicate about belief and the processes of *interpretatio* are returned to in Chapter Six.

Other Sites known or Speculated to have Yielded Curse Tablets

Other sites have yielded far fewer curse tablets. According to Smith (2018: 178), whose estimation takes potential (yet unconfirmed) curse tablets into consideration, over 70% of known curse tablets in Britain come from Bath and Uley. Nearly 80% (136 of 173) of the entries in Appendix A to the present work come from these two sites. Other locations

include temple sites, shrines, and various other contexts such as bodies of water, graves, and amphitheatres. These other places may have been considered appropriate as venues to communicate with the divine. We know, for instance, that features of the natural landscape were attributed with religious significance (Henig 1984: 1). We are, however, often faced with a number of challenges when analysing the relationship between curses and their places of discovery. The most apparent of these obstacles occurs when specific contexts are not known. This may be due to either circumstances of discovery or improper recording. Indeed, two of the tablets listed in Table 3.1 lack provenance entirely. Additionally, it is not always clear whether an apparent secondary context is circumstantial or whether it is significant. For instance, the tablets at Uley were not found in their primary place of deposition, yet it seems clear that they were placed in their secondary context when the curses were deliberately cleared from the temple. We can understand that this secondary context is revealing of cursing activity and deposition at this site, but this not true of the amphitheatre drains and villa demolition layers discussed below, for example. A further obstacle arises from our lack of understanding of sites. This especially relates to sites considered to be shrines, which are characteristically ambiguous in nature and often identified by their small finds.

What follows explores the sites other than bath and Uley where curse tablets (including both judicial prayers and *defixiones*) have been found in Britain. I have organised the discussed findspots by type, beginning with rural temple sites other than Bath and Uley, followed by shrines and potential shrines, residential spaces, amphitheatres, and graves. The majority of the sites discussed here have yielded a single curse tablet, but sometimes finds considered to possibly be curse tablets include fragments of sheet lead, such as at Piercebridge (Durham), or strips of folded fibrous

material, such as at Bretton Way (Peterborough). While these items are not included in Appendix A or table 3.1, some observations require comment.

Unless otherwise stated, what follows is informed by *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain: an online resource* (updated 2018) provided by the Archaeology Data Service.

Table 3.1 Table showing published curse tablets in Britain, noting contexts, subjects and invoked deities

Tablet	Place	Context Notes	Deity	Subject
BAL001	Baldock, Hertfordshire	Grave	?	Curse against Tacita
BA001	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Alphabet
BA002	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Two names
BA003	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Three names
BA004	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of *'vilbia',* list of names
BA005	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of Docimedis' pair gloves
BA006	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of a rug
BA007	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA008	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Theft of six *argentioli,* list of names
BA009	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	List of names, followed by *dono*
BA010	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Theft of Docilianus' hooded cloak
BA011	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA012	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA013	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	*'quicumque'* repeated
BA014	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA015	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA016	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	*'res meas'*

BA017	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	*'meas'*
BA018	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA019	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	? Celtic text
BA020	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of a bracelet
BA021	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA022	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	List of names
BA023	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	? Celtic text
BA024	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	?
BA025	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	?
BA026	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA027	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	?
BA028	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA029	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft?
BA030	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis (?)	?
BA031	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA032	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA033	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA034	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA035	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA036	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	List of names
BA037	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of Civilis' ploughshare
BA038	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis Minerva	Theft of Sulinus' bathing tunic and cloak
BA039	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Mars	?
BA040	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis Minerva	Theft of Docca's five *denarii*

BA041	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis Minerva	Vengeance
BA042	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA043	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	'May their life be weakened' and a list of names
BA044	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft?
BA045	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA046	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Denial of false accusation
BA047	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA048	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA049	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	
BA050	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Theft of a bronze vessel
BA051	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis (?)	Theft?
BA052	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis Minerva	?
BA053	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA054	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA055	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	?
BA056	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of a horse blanket?
BA057	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis (?)	?
BA058	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	List of names
BA059	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA060	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Mercury	Theft, list of names *et familiam*
BA061	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Curses Vericundinus? for heft of Arminia's two *argentioli*
BA062	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA063	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?

BA064	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA065	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA066	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA067	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis Minerva	Theft of a pan
BA068	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of Lovernisca's cape
BA069	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of Neocritis'(?) cloak and tunic
BA070	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Theft of Cantissena's bathing tunic
BA071	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft of a cloak
BA072	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Minerva Sulis	Theft of a hooded cloak
BA073	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Theft of an iron pan
BA074	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA075	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA076	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis (?)	?
BA077	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Minerva (?)	?
BA078	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA079	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	*'tacituri'*
BA080	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA081	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA082	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA083	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA084	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA085	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Bitulus Linus named
BA086	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?

BA087	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA088	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA089	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA090	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA091	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA092	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA093	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA094	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA095	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft?
BA096	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA097	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA098	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA099	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA100	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA101	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis	Record against perjury
BA102	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	List of names
BA103	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	List of names
BA104	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Mars	Theft of Basilia's silver ring
BA105	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	'Domina Dea'	Theft of Annianus' six *argentioli* from his purse
BA106	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft from Deomiorix' house
BA107	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA108	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA109	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	Theft
BA110	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	'Deus'	?

BA111	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA112	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA113	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA114	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA115	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	Sulis (?)	?
BA116	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA117	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BA118	Bath	Temple; spring reservoir	?	?
BRA001	Brandon	River?	Neptune	Theft of an iron pan?
BRE001	Brean Down	River? Near temple	*'Domina'* (?)	Theft of a *caricula*
CAE001	Caerleon	Arena; debris	Nemesis	Theft of a cloak and boots
CSE001	Caistor St. Edmund	River? Near temple	Neptune	Theft of: wreath, bracelets, cap, mirror?, headdress, leggings, ten pewter vessels
DOD001	Dodford	Metal detector	?	?
EF001	East Farleigh	Demolition layer in bakery, possibly originally a temple; overlooking river	?	List of names
EV001	Eccles Villa	Villa demolition layer	*'Diebus'*	'A gift to the gods by which Butu has perished'
FH001	Farley Heath	*Temenos* of Romano-Celtic temple	?	Theft of three thousand *denarii*
HE001	Hamble Estuary	Estuary foreshore; metal detector	Niskus, Neptune	Theft of *solidus* and six *argentioli*
HCW001	Hockwold-cum-Wilton	Metal detector	?	Theft
KEL001	Kelvedon	Oven infilling	Mercury, Virtue	Theft of Varenus' *pecuniam*
LEI001	Leicester	Villa infilling	Maglus	Theft of Servandus' cloak *'de padoio'*
LEI002	Leicester	Villa infilling	*'Deus'*	Theft of Sabinianus' *argentioli*

LID001	Lidgate	Near villa; metal detector	?	Theft of rings
LON001	London Amphitheatre	Arena; Drain infilling	Deana	Theft of headgear and band
LON002	London Amphitheatre	Arena; Drain infilling	?	?
LON003	London Amphitheatre	Arena; above abandoned structure	?	?
LON004	London, 1 Poultry	Near stream crossing?	?	List of names
LON005	London, below Telegraph Street	?	N/a	Curse against Tretia Maria
LON006	London, site of National Provincial Bank	?	N/a	Curse against Titus Egnatius Tyrannus and Publius Cicereius Felix
LON007	London, London Bridge	River; Thames foreshore with metal detector	Metunus	Request for vengeance and a list of names
LP001	Lydney Park	Temple vicinity	Nodens-Silvianus	Theft of a ring
MD001	Marlborough Downs	Topsoil; metal detector	Mars	?
OH001	Old Harlow	Pit	Mercury	?
PH001	Pagan's Hill	Probable association with temple	?	Theft of three thousand *denarii* by Vassicillus
PH002	Pagan's Hill	Probable association with temple	?	?
PH003	Pagan's Hill	Probable association with temple	?	?
PB001	Puckeridge-Broughing	?	?	?
ROS001	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	Found after ploughing; association with temple; near river	Jupiter Optimus Maximus	Theft of Canius' *denarii*
ROS002	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	Temple; near river	?	Theft of two gaiters, an axe, a knife, and a pair of gloves
ROS003	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	Fieldwalking; association with temple; near river	'*Deo*'	Theft of Camulorix and Titocuna's mule(?)

ROT001	Rothwell	Metal detector survey	?	?
THET001	Thetford	In association with Thetford Hoard	?	?
SIL001	Silchester	?	*'Deus'*	Theft; list of names
UL001	Uley	Temple	Mars; Mercury	Theft of a beehive
UL002	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of a ring(?)
UL003	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of gloves
UL004	Uley	Temple	?	Theft of (?) a silver plate and four rings
UL005	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of Carinus' propert by Primanus
UL006	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of Biccus' property
UL007	Uley	Temple	?	Theft of a bridle
UL008	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Harm to Docilinus' beast by Barianus, Peregrina, and Sabinianus
UL009	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of Cenacus' draft animal by Vitalinus and Natalinus
UL010	Uley	Temple	Mercury; Mars-Silvanus	Theft of Saturnina's linen cloth
UL011	Uley	Temple	Mars-Mercury	Theft of a gold ring
UL012	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of two wheels, four cows, and many small belongings from Honoratus' house
UL013	Uley	Temple	?	*Petronius*
UL014	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Theft of Mintla Rufus' cloak
UL015	Uley	Temple	Mercury	Curses those who are 'badly disposed' and 'acting badly
UL016	Uley	Temple	?	List of names
UL017	Uley	Temple	?	List of names
UL018	Uley	Temple	?	?
WAN001	Wanborough	?	?	?

NP001	No provenance	?	Mercury	Theft
NP002	No provenance	?	*'Tuam Maiestatam'*	Theft

Rural Temples

Although there is nothing directly comparable to the large collections of texts found at Bath and Uley, there are other rural temple sites where curse tablets have been found. A single curse tablet (BRE001) was found at Brean Down (Somerset) by a metal-detectorist on the beach near the temple site, and an association between the tablet and the temple is possible. The Romano-Celtic temple in question was probably constructed in the early fourth century AD near a Bronze Age round barrow on a small piece of land protruding into the Bristol Channel (Apsimon 1965: 196-8). The temple has been interpreted as both a pagan and a Christian site, with activity continuing into the fifth century (Apsimon 1965: 227). The curse tablet found nearby does not name a specific deity, but *domina*, 'lady,' might be restored in lines 4-5. The association between the curse tablet and the temple is, however, tenuous.

Three curse tablets (PH001-3) were found at Pagan's Hill (Somerset) with a metal detector in 1983. No further details are known. The site of Pagan's Hill was a religious complex with a Romano-Celtic style octagonal temple consisting of a cella surrounded by an ambulatory on all sides (Allen et al. 2018). Also within the *temenos* were a number of ancillary buildings, possibly including a guesthouse. The Romano-Celtic temple was probably constructed in the late third century AD and continued to be in use into the fifth century. The temple overlooks the Chew Valley, but there is not significant evidence for pre-Roman occupation. Not one of the three curse tablets names a deity, and the deity (or deities) venerated at Pagan's Hill is otherwise unknown. A life-sized stone dog torso was

recovered from the well in addition to a 'Phrygian-capped' stone figure and a copper alloy figure of a youth nearby. The latter two are possibly associated with Apollo.

In or before 1817, a curse tablet (LP001) invoking Nodens Silvanus was found at Lydney Park (Gloucestershire). Due to the discovery of the single curse tablet over 100 years before significant systematic excavation, a more precise context is not known. Excavations in the 1920s and again in the 1980s revealed a major complex with bathing facilities and a Romano-Celtic style temple. The Roman buildings were constructed in the late third century AD upon an Iron Age hilltop fort. Perhaps significantly, the temple complex overlooked the River Severn, and this would have been visible from Uley (Wacher 2000: 54; Smith 2018: 165). Also part of the complex was a large *abaton*, where it is supposed pilgrims were accommodated, with an additional possible 'guest house' with a courtyard (Copeland 2011: 150-1 citing Wheeler & Wheeler 1932). The curse tablet (LP001) is addressed to *Nodenti Silvianus*, and votive plaques from the site include a dedication to *Nudenti M(arti)* (*RIB* 307) and a dedication to *M(arti) Nodonti* (*RIB* 305). Images of dogs are frequent; for instance, seven copper alloy dogs were recovered as well as a large fragment of a dog statuette. *RIB* 307 below (Fig 3.34) also features an image of a (barking?) dog, and it would thus seem that Nodens is associated with them. The image of the dog has been linked by the excavators to a healing cult, possibly one associated with childbirth (Woodward & Leach 1993: 333, citing Wheeler and Wheeler 1932: 39-43). Fish, anchors, and sea monsters on the mosaic frieze and associated copper alloy objects indicate that the deity also had a connection to the sea or water (Woodward & Leach 1993: 333), and proximity to the River Severn may have heightened this association.

307

RECTICVS
VOTVM QVOD
PROMISSIT
DEO NVDENTE
M DEDIT

Figure 3.34 A votive plaque from Lydney Park (RIB 307 Drawn by R. P. W. [1953]).

Three or more curse tablets were found at Redhill, Ratcliffe-on-Soar (Nottinghamshire). Three have been published (ROS001-3). The site at Redhill is an unwalled roadside settlement with a Romano-Celtic style temple near the River Soar, and the presence of Iron Age pottery may indicate a pre-Roman ritual focus (Hunt 2009). The temple had a square or rectangular cella, and in the gravelled area surrounding this, 'at least two' curse tablets were buried (Allen et al. 2018). The other two published texts were uncovered during ploughing (ROS001) and fieldwalking (ROS003), and, therefore, their primary contexts are not known. Of the three published texts, only one (ROS001) names a specific deity. Somewhat unexpectedly, this is Jupiter Optimus Maximus, but as this tablet was found during ploughing, I would think that this is insufficient evidence for

the worship of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the temple at Redhill. The other text mentions *in fanum dei*, 'in the temple of god,' but this tablet was similarly found in topsoil.

Farley Heath (Surrey), was heavily damaged by metal detectorists, but a single curse tablet (FH001) was found during excavations nonetheless (Poulton 2007: 5, 32). Probable ritual activity took place here from the Neolithic period, with activity continuing through the Iron Age without a built structure. The date of the Romano-Celtic style temple has not been determined, although it is thought to have been in use to at least the fourth century AD (Poulton 2007: 4). The single curse tablet was found near the southern edge of the *temenos* and is inscribed in ORC, but only parts are legible. (Fig 3.35).

Figure 3.35 Photograph of a curse tablet from Farley Heath after unfolding (Poulton 2007: 74).

At East Farleigh, single tablet (EF001) was found in a third or fourth century demolition layer of a building identified as a kitchen or bakery, which was one of a series of buildings that overlooked the River Medway. The building may have initially been a temple built in the third century before it was repurposed (Weekes 2012: 4). The inscription on the tablet consists of a list of names.

A curse from Caistor St. Edmund, Norfolk (CSE001) was found on the foreshore of the River Tas and is possibly associated with the nearby Romano-Celtic temple to the northeast of *Venta Icenorum*. The temple site consisted of a rectangular cella and ambulatory within a large *temenos* wall. Also within the walled area was an ancillary building with a possible domestic function. Finds from the site do not reveal the chronology of the construction and use, nor are they indicative of the nature of cult activity there (Gurney 1986a: 45). The tablet itself describes a theft of several items from an apparent domestic context, offering them to Neptune. Because the association between the temple and the curse is speculative, this is not necessarily revealing of cult activity at the temple.

Shrines and Potential Shrines

Curse tablets are found in or associated with a wide range of shrines other than Romano-Celtic temples. Metal detectorists have found seven curse tablets at Hailey Wood Camp (Gloucestershire). These are not published, but two mention Mercury (Moore 2001: 92). Surface and geophysical survey indicate the presence of a double-ditched enclosure with associated masonry buildings outside of the enclosure dated between the first and fourth centuries AD (Moore 2001: 86). The site overlooks a spring source of the River Thames.

One curse tablet was found on the floor of a circular stone shrine near Egleton (Rutland) (Carlyle 2011). It has not been published. The Roman shrine was built c. 300m to the north-east of a Middle Iron Age settlement (Carlyle 2011: 24-31). The shrine was surrounded by an enclosure and probably built in the second century AD, with occupation continuing possibly into the fifth century (Fig 3.36). Rather late in the shrine's occupation, an adult male was buried in the centre of the floor of the stone structure

(Carlyle 2011: 29). The curse tablet, as well as two spear heads, multiple jewellery items, 50 Roman coins, and a fragment of a figurine interpreted as Minerva were found on the floor above this (Carlyle 2011: 24). The figurine and the curse tablet are what support the interpretation of this building as a shrine (Carlyle 2011: 45-7). The text cannot be published because it is reasoned that the tablet cannot be unrolled without destroying it (Fig. 3.37) (Carlyle 2011: 46). This is particularly unfortunate because the text may have once held considerable insight into the practice of cursing in Britain: if the curse was a 'standard' *defixio*, then it is possible that it was deposited in or near this location because of the presence of the grave. If it was a judicial prayer, then this could further support the interpretation of the site as a shrine.

Figure 3.37 Romano-British shrine and enclosures at Egleton. Scale: 1:500 (Carlyle 2011: 23).

Figure 3.37 Photograph of a rolled lead curse tablet from Elgeton. Scale 50mm (Carlyle 2011: 47).

At Nettleton and Rothwell (Lincolnshire) the northernmost confirmed and published curse tablet (ROT001) was found during a metal detector survey. The site was occupied in the Neolithic period, as evidenced by the landscape, and activity is also attested by deposits dating to the Bronze age and Iron Age, continuing to the Roman period. A definite shrine has not been identified at this settlement, but the curse tablet and a number of miniature votive weapons have been taken to indicate its presence.

Two curse tablets are associated with Hockwold-cum-Wilton (Norfolk). The first (BRA001) was found in silt dredged from the Little Ouse River south of Hockwold-cum-Wilton, while the second (HCW001) was found by a metal detectorist in the 1970s before excavation of the site. It is possible that BRA001 was actually deposited in the river, but the context of HCW001 is unknown. The site itself was a large roadside settlement begun in the second century AD, but only a small area has been excavated (Gurney 1986b: 49). This revealed evidence for ritual deposits in pits including priestly regalia, leading to the interpretation of the cite as a shrine (Gurney 1986b: 90).

Domestic and Commercial Spaces

While curse tablets have been found at domestic or commercial sites, there is no clear evidence for actual deposition in these contexts. A number of curse tablets have been found at villas or large courtyard houses, but these do not appear to be primary places of deposition. One curse tablet (EV001) was found at Eccles Villa, a palatial residence in Kent dating from AD 65 and probably occupied until the end of the Roman period (Detsicas 1989). The tablet was found in infilling in one of the rooms. Excavation of a courtyard-style house in Roman Leicester produced two curse tablets (LEI001 and LEI002). LEI001 describes the theft that prompted the curse to have taken place *de padoio*, which Tomlin translates as 'slave quarters' (Tomlin 2008: 209). It is tempting to suppose that such quarters were nearby, but as these tablets were, like EV001 above, found in demolition material, this cannot be deduced. Indeed, an association of the curses with the courtyard-style house is not certain. Near the villa site at Lidgate (Suffolk), one curse tablet (LID001) was found with a metal detector.

A curse tablet (PB001) found at Puckeridge-Braughing (Hertfordshire) was found unstratified at a domestic site. Although there is a visible cursive inscription one side of the tablet, no continuous text can be read. At the large roadside settlement at Kelvedon (Essex), a single curse tablet (KEL001) was found in the third- or fourth-century infill of an oven. The tablet is dedicated to Mercury and Virtue and deals with the theft of *pecuniae,* but as with LEI001-3, the primary place of deposition cannot be deduced from the tablet's findspot. A curse dedicated to Mercury (OH001) was found at Holbrooks, Old Harlow in a pit containing third-and fourth-century pottery during the excavation of a Late Iron Age and Roman settlement near the River Stort. Further detail is unknown due to limited excavation of the site and reporting of the finds assemblage (Allen et al. 2018). One of the seven known curse tablets from London (LON004) was found during

the excavation of 1 Poultry, which revealed domestic and commercial buildings near a major crossing of the Walbrook Stream (Burch et al. 1997: 132). Another London curse tablet (LON006) was found at the site of the National Provincial Bank, where no structural remains were observed and recorded (Collingwood & Taylor 1928: 204). One curse tablet (LON005) was also recovered below Telegraph Street, Moorgate, but further details are unknown. LON005 and LON006 are *defixiones,* and their contexts may have been particularly revealing of cursing practices in Britain if specific contexts were available.

Amphitheatres

Amphitheatres have yielded curse tablets, but these were not motivated by competition. A curse from the amphitheatre at Caerleon (CAE001) was prompted by theft and dedicated to Nemesis. The tablet was originally *ansate* and was pierced with a nail at the top and bottom, suggesting that the curse was originally displayed (Wheeler & Wheeler 1928).

Excavation of the amphitheatre at London has produced three curse tablets (LON001-3). LON001 and LON002 were found in drains, while LON003 was found in material above the abandoned arena. It is unclear whether the two tablets recovered from the drains were deposited there or whether they were carried there by draining water. Of the three curses from the site, only LON001 can be read. Like CAE001, it was prompted by theft, though it is dedicated to Deana (a misspelling of Diana) rather than Nemesis. Despite the uncertainty regarding their original places of deposition, we can consider the curse tablets recovered from amphitheatres sufficient to suggest that cursing took place at or very near these sites.

Rivers

Two of the above findspots (of BRA001 and BRE001), the Little Ouse River in Brandon and Brean Down, suggest that the tablets may have initially been deposited in bodies of water. The curse from Caistor St. Edmund above in Norfolk (CSE001) was found on the bank of the River Tas, similarly suggesting a watery deposition. Another curse (HE001) was also found on the bank of the Hamble Estuary (Hampshire) by a metal detectorist, and one of the tablets from London (LON007) was found on the bank of the River Thames near London Bridge. These, too, were probably deposited in the estuary and river respectively. It is perhaps significant that the texts from Brandon, Caistor St. Edmund, and Hamble Estuary invoke Neptune, and the text on the tablet from the River Thames invokes Metunus, whom the editors tentatively suggest is a misspelling of Neptune.

Graves

It will be remembered that, although the vast majority of curse tablets found in Britain are judicial prayers, a small number are 'standard' *defixiones*. That is, they are curses that bind or otherwise inhibit their targets and are not prompted by perceived wrongdoing. It will also be remembered that different depositional patterns have been observed for such curses in the Mediterranean world. Where specific contexts are available, this can also be observed in Britain. At Baldock (Hertfordshire), a single traditional curse tablet (BAL001) was found in a grave, pierced five times and possibly originally attached to something with a string (Percival-Westell 1931: 290-2). The majority of the pottery from the burial is dated to the second century. Another possible example of the deposition of *defixiones* in graves may be found at Wasperton (Warwickshire), where two rolled pieces were found in a burial dated to the early third- or fourth-century. Only one of the two tablets has been unrolled, however, and no writing was read. The unpublished tablet from

the shrine at Egleton may also be considered to have been deposited in a funerary context, although the tablet was recovered from the shrine floor rather than the burial below.

The infrequent occurrence of curse tablets in graves relative to other contexts is particularly noteworthy. Given the number of Roman period graves excavated to date, the presence of so few curse tablets or potential curse tablets strongly indicates that the practice of depositing a curse within a grave was very uncommon in Britain.

Indefinite findspots and unconfirmed tablets

In addition to the two tablets that lack provenance (NP001 and NP002), there are five tablets included in Appendix A that were discovered in unknown or unrecorded circumstances. These are MD001 (Marlborough Downs), WAN001 (Wanborough), DOD001 (Dodford), SIL001 (Silchester), and THET001 (Thetford).

There are a number of rural sites in Britain where possible curse tablets have been recovered, but the identification of these texts is not positive or texts have not been published (as at Ribchester or South Cliff Farm, in Lancashire and Lincolnshire respectively). These include Piercebridge (Durham), Walton-le-Dale (Lancashire), Bretton Way (Peterborough), Cleveland Farm, Devizes (Wiltshire), Portway (Gloucestershire), Clay Farm (Cambridgeshire), and Springhead (Kent). As tablets at these sites are only tentatively suggested to be curse tablets, they receive little attention here, but if their status can be confirmed or supported, then there is great potential for contribution to a discussion of the materiality of curse tablets and judicial prayers.

Watery Contexts and the Veneration of Water

There is clearly a variety of depositional contexts represented. These are tabulated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Categorisation of curse tablet findspots in Britain

Site Category	Number of Findspots
Rural Temples	7 (+2)
Shrines and Potential Shrines	2
Domestic and Commercial Spaces	9
Amphitheatres	4
Rivers	6
Graves	1
Insufficient Data	7

The largest number of the above sites fall into the apparent domestic and commercial category; but most of the curse tablets found at these sites were found unstratified or with an unclear relationship with their surroundings (OH001 excepted). Indeed, the category 'domestic and commercial' really consists of contexts without an apparent religious or ritual significance.

Excluding sites with insufficient data, the second largest category is that of rural temples, which is closely followed by rivers. Because two of the tablets that were found in rivers (BRE001 and CSE001) are also possibly associated with nearby temples, there is some overlap between these groups. When combined with the watery deposition at Bath (and possibly Uley) and the association of rural temples with nearby bodies of water, this overlap hints at an underlying pattern of deposition in water. Table 3.3 shows watery contexts or contexts associated with water where published curse tablets have been found in Britain. If we consider the body of curse tablets as a whole, watery depositions dominate due to the number of curses that come from bath and Uley. If we instead consider each context equally, watery contexts and places associated with water are still

well represented. Looking at findspots also allows us to consider that temple sites, for instance, may have once had larger collections of curses that are now lost.

Table 3.3 Categorisation of water and water-related depositions

Category	Site	Number of Published Tablets
Deposition in bodies of water	Bath	118
	Brandon	1
	Caistor St. Edmund	1
	Hamble Estuary	1
	London Bridge	1
Deposition at sites associated with water	East Farleigh	1
	Lydney Park	1
	Red Hill, Ratcliffe on Soar	3
Possible deposition in water	London Amphitheatre (excluding LON003)	2
	London, 1 Poultry	1
	Uley	18

As stated above, categorisation of contexts is challenging when contexts cannot be very well understood. Nonetheless, I have listed the relevant contexts as those that suggest deposition in water, deposition at sites associated with water, and possible deposition in water. Tablets are considered to have been deposited in water quite simply when they have been found in bodies of water. Their deposition is not always certain, but the invocation of Neptune at all sites but Bath and Brean Down may perhaps be taken as further indication of watery deposition.

Sites (especially temple sites) are considered to have a close association with water when they overlook or are very near bodies of water (as at Redhill, Ratcliffe-on-Soar) or yield evidence for the worship of a water deity (as at Lydney Park).

As the existence of a votive pool at Uley cannot be confirmed, I here consider the tablets from the site to have been possibly deposited in water. Other possible watery depositions include the two tablets recovered from drains at the London amphitheatre because, as stated above, whether or not these were the primary places of deposition is unknown. The tablet from 1 Poultry, London may also be tentatively considered here due to the proximity of the site where it was found to the crossing of the Walbrook stream.

The veneration of water and watery places is widely considered to have been in practice in Britain in the pre-Roman period (Henig 1984: 1; Braund 1996: 12; Campbell 2012: 139; Cousins 2014: 53). Well-known offerings of metalwork include, for instance, the so-called Battersea Shield and Waterloo Helmet of La Tène style (c. 350-50 BC), which were found in the Thames and thought to have been deliberately deposited there (Braund 1996: 12; Hingley 2018: 16-17). Such veneration is, of course, widely attested in other regions in northwest Europe (Henig 1984: 1; Campbell 2012: 139). The Romans also considered bodies of water to be divine, and this is perhaps most apparent in Tacitus' account of the senate's decision not to divert the water sources of the Tiber in AD 15 (and thus prevent flooding) in order to supposedly avoid upsetting the tributaries and Tiber himself (*Ann*. 1.79; see also Braund 1996: 18; Campbell 2012: 118).

Indeed, the supplication of rivers may be understood as a cross-cultural phenomenon, where their position in the natural world as forces of both production and destruction earn them particular reverence (Campbell 2012: 119-20). Rivers provide water for drinking, bathing, and watering crops; they also demarcate territory and provide trade routes for the transport of goods and people. On the other hand, rivers are

dangerous, flooding land and crops as well as drowning people and livestock. Rivers may thus be seen to intervene in human affairs, with the characteristics of rivers leading to their association with divine intervention (Campbell 2012: 128-9). This perception can be found in a context rather removed from Roman Britain. Artemidorus Daldianus, writing on dream divination in Ephesus in the second century AD, writes:

> *'Rivers that maintain pure and translucent water and that flow gently are good for slaves and defendants in trials and those who are preparing to travel abroad. For rivers are like masters and judges due to their doing whatever they like according to their own whims and without providing an explanation.'* (*Oneirocritica* 2.27) (translation by Harris-McCoy 2012: 199; see also Campbell 2012: 128-9).

I wonder if this sentiment stretched beyond dream interpretation in Ephesus. If so, it is possible that rivers – and perhaps other bodies of water – held a similar association with divine whims and justice in other parts of the Mediterranean world, including Britain. This would have made rivers and places associated with them particularly suitable choices for seeking the attention of a divine judge.

In any case, it is clear that the oceans, rivers, springs, and other water sources were themselves considered divine entities in classical antiquity, often depicted in literature and art in human form as bearded men (Braund 1996: 18-9; Campbell 2012: 137). This is also true of Roman Britain; indeed, some have argued that the so-called Bath Gorgon is another instance of the personification of Ocean or another body of water (Braund 1996: 13).

The connection between places of deposition and the conceptualisation of the divine will be returned to in more detail in Chapter Six. For now, it suffices to say that it is not particular types of structures (temples, shrines, bathing complexes, etc.) that were chosen for the deposition of curse tablets. Instead, it seems that places that had some association with water – be they temple complexes dedicated to water deities, ritual pools, bridges, or rivers – were often preferred.

Summary

Above I have provided an overview of the temple and bathing complex at Bath and the temple site at Uley as well as their respective surroundings. I have also considered the evidence for worship at these sites and how this related to the practice of cursing and the material treatment of the curse tablets. Following this, I explored the other locations in Britain where curse tablets have been found, noting that, although a preference for places associated with water can be observed, there is a wide variety of depositional contexts represented. The dissertation now turns to discuss the language included in the curses that have been transcribed.

Chapter Four: The Language of Judicial Prayers in Britain and the Mediterranean World

In Chapter Two, I briefly stated some of the features that are common in judicial prayers. In the present chapter, I take a closer look at these, paying particular attention to the formulae that are sometimes employed in these curses. In particular, I discuss the formulae that are presented in judicial prayers in Britain and elsewhere in the Mediterranean world and how these formulae vary. By using comparanda from throughout the Mediterranean world, I am able to study the curse tablets from Britain on both the local and global scale; indeed, a close look at language similarities and differences here supports arguments for studying material within wider contexts, and this is particularly apparent when we consider how fruitful comparing texts of different languages can be.

A few comments on formulae are required here. Curse tablets in general can be said to be formulaic, and, to some extent, their formulae are what make them recognisable as curse tablets. Indeed, in Chapter Two, I discussed how formulae can be used to distinguish between the broader group of *defixiones* and judicial prayers. The term 'formula' can be applied to any sequence of words that is repeated and familiar and to which some meaning is attached. This, therefore, encompasses the 'recipes' that we read in *PGM*, but it also includes less concrete elements that are clearly not copied *verbatim.* Thus, the Bath tablets, for instance, are formulaic because they 'draw upon a common stock of language' (Tomlin 1988: 63). One of the arguments I present in this chapter is that, although the curse tablets from Britain are formulaic, they nonetheless can show considerable creativity and innovation. This suggests that the meanings attached to these formulae have been manipulated to serve specific and individual purposes. Regarding the

curse tablets from Bath, Tomlin notes that the 'stock of language' upon which they drew was wide, citing the occurrence of some formulae throughout Britain and even on the continent and adding that the Bath tablets 'draw upon language and ideas current for hundreds of miles and hundreds of years' (1988: 63). The aim of this chapter is to explore this language not just at Bath but throughout Britain with the use of comparanda from elsewhere in the Graeco-Roman world.

Above, I have stated that the curse tablets in Britain are almost all judicial prayers. I stressed that the motivation for cursing is what distinguishes judicial prayers from traditional *defixiones*. It does not seem fruitful, therefore, to compare the formulae used in the two categories too closely as the differences in content and tone are often very pronounced; such a comparison might make the British examples seem more unusual than they are because Britain is distinctive in having mostly judicial prayers. Instead, I compare the judicial prayers from Britain to other judicial prayers. In particular, I discuss the tablets from the sanctuary of Isis and Mater Magna at Mainz (Blänsdorf 2010a), the sanctuary of Demeter at Cnidus (Farone 2011), and a number of tablets that come from sites that have not produced large collections of judicial prayers (Fig 1.2). Generalisations regarding patterns and formula use cannot be made with curses found in small collections or individually, but these examples can contribute to observations regarding wider regions and periods.

The texts from Cnidus and Mainz offer significant potential for comparison. This is because they are sites where the finding of a considerable number of curses (13 from Cnidus, 34 from Mainz) indicates that the practice of cursing was well established. The two sites are also geographically and chronologically disparate, with activity at Cnidus dated to the late Hellenistic period (Farone 2011: 27) and cursing activity at Mainz dated to the mid-first-century AD (Blänsdorf 2010a: 146). We may thus consider Cnidus and

Mainz to represent eastern and western cursing habits, although I am hesitant to make assumptions for entire regions based on the material from one site; indeed, comparing Bath to Mainz, both 'western' sites, reveals considerable differences. We also need to consider how accidents of survival have affected the available sample.

As stated previously, the texts mentioned here do not represent the complete collection of texts from the continent, but rather those that can be found in *TheDeMa* and which have been widely discussed elsewhere.

Latin in Britain

Any discussion of written language leads us to the question of authorship. Because language is very much a part of identity expression, this will be returned to in Chapter Five. Here, however, it is necessary to mention that those who used curse tablets in Britain are widely regarded to be local non-elite civilians and that the texts are believed to be written by the users themselves. We may, therefore, wonder how what is written on these curse tablets might inform us of the spoken language of that group, but the often-formulaic nature of these texts means that they might not reflect phonological changes since formulae and names are not typically where new spellings are attested (Mullen 2013: 26). This is not always the case. For instance, Mullen (2013: 266) has demonstrated how B/V alternation in a curse from Red Hill, Ratcliffe-on-Soar (ROS003 in the appendix to the present work) suggests that a merger of the two letters may have taken place in the region.

Due to my focus on the language of the curse tablets in Britain and how these are reflective of ideas, how curses might be reflective of phonetic changes is beyond the scope of the present discussion, but a further comment on authorship and competency needs to be made. In Chapter Five, I discuss how we might determine the identities of

those who use curse tablets. One of these methods is an analysis of the language used. A study of vulgarisms or deviations from typical or classical Latin word choice and spelling could be considered enlightening in this respect. J.N. Adams (1992), however, advises against making assumptions about the socio-economic status of writers based on vulgarisms or misspellings. He notes that phonetic spellings occur throughout the Roman world and, because the vast majority of even the literate population would not have had access to extensive literary training, 'bad spellers' belonged to a wide array of groups (Adams 1992.: 24). He therefore states that while 'Vulgar' or 'vulgarism' are useful as terms for noting departures from normative spelling, they do not necessarily indicate anything about the writer's socio-economic status. To quote Adams, 'the writer who uses a "vulgar" spelling need not himself be "vulgar"' (Adams 1992: 24). For this reason, I do not include an analysis of vulgarisms in the present work as a means of determining the socioeconomic statuses of the users of judicial prayers, but it is worth noting a few deviations that might indicate regional variation or colloquialisms. I go into further detail regarding each of the features of the curses below, but some preliminary comments can be made here.

For instance, Adams notes the opening of *e* to a before *r* in *Patarnianus* and *Matarnus* of *Tab. Sulis* 30 (BA036 in the present work), noting that such changes in spelling can be found in Latin loan-words in Welsh (Adams 1992: 12). Also at Bath, there is a preference for *involo* rather than *furo* for the verb meaning 'to steal,' which leads Adams to speculate that this was the current term in British Latin. Indeed, this preference is apparent in the British texts from all sites, with *furo* only read in LEI001 (Leicester). The verb *involo* may have been a choice peculiar to the language of curse tablets or the legalistic language they appear to be based on rather than an established place in British Latin (Adams 1992: 25). The formulaic nature of the language of curse tablets makes

extrapolation uncertain. Perhaps vocabulary choices – such as *baro* for 'man' or *mulier* for 'woman' – are indicative of a more active choice in language, but these choices also do not necessarily show that the author is of any specific socio-economic group.

Although language or vulgarisms are not a suitable means of determining socio-economic standing, more fruitful methods, such as consideration of stolen items and onomastics will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Invoking the Deity: the direct address

As the curse tablets are a means of communication with the gods, they naturally often include an address to the deity. This might resemble a letter (Tomlin 2002) and can be achieved with either the dative (i.e. 'to Sulis,' either as a dedication or correspondence) or the vocative (i.e. 'to you, Sulis,' or 'Oh, Sulis') cases. This method is used frequently, but I provide a few examples here. Like many from Bath, BA040 is addressed to the goddess Sulis: *deae Suli Minervae Docca,* 'Docca to the goddess Sulis.' BA039 from the same site is addressed to Mars: *deo Marti*, 'to the god Mars.' Silvianus, the principal of LP001 from Lydney, addresses Nodens with a simple *Nodenti,* 'to Nodens,' in the dative case. Muconius, the principal of HE001 from Hamble Estuary, uses the vocative *Domine Neptune*, 'to you, Neptune,' in his address to the god.

In this respect, judicial prayers in Britain do not differ from those elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. Similar addresses in Latin can be found in Iberia. A text from Italica (*TheDeMa* 598) is addressed to the presiding spring deity, *domina fons fovens*, while a text from Emerita (*TheDeMa* 599) is addressed to *dea Ataecina Turibrig(ensis), Proserpina*. Both are in the vocative case. A tablet from Mainz (*TheDeMa* 261) addresses Attis with a flattering epithet: *bone sancte Attis Tyranne*, 'good, holy Lord Attis.' Comparable Greek examples include a text from Koutsongila (*TheDeMa* 424) addressed

to 'Violence, Fate, and Necessity below,' *κάτω Βία Μοῖρα Ἀνάνκε*. A text from Amorgos (*TheDeMa* 215) invokes Demeter: *Κύρια Δημήτηρ Βασίλισσα*, 'Lady Demeter, Queen.' As in Britain, the dative might also be used. For instance, a text from Cnidus (*TheDeMa* 229) is one example: *Ἀνιεροῖ Ἀντιγόνη Δάματρι, Κούραι, Πλούτωνι, θεοῖς τοῖς παρὰ Δάματρι ἄπασι καὶ πάσαις*, 'I, Antigone, make a dedication to Demeter, Kore, Pluto, and all the gods and goddesses with Demeter.'

Reduced to their simplest form, these direct addresses are only different in terms of the deities that they invoke. Often, however, the addresses can be more elaborate. This is demonstrated above with the flattering epithets (see *TheDeMa* 215, 261). BA041 from Bath begins, *deae Suli Minervae rogo sanctissimam maiestatem*, 'to the goddess Sulis Minerva, I ask your most sacred majesty.' BA038, also from Bath, begins, *deae Suli Minerv(a)e Solinus dono numina tuo maiestati*, 'Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva, I give to your divinity and majesty.' This last text is like the examples above in that it uses what I would call a direct invocation, but it additionally employs a gift or donation clause in which someone or something is given or entrusted to the deity.

It is important to note that addresses are essentially petitions to the divine. Tomlin notes similarities between the language of these texts and a Vindolanda tablet (*Tab. Vindol*. 344), which petitions the emperor or provincial governor, for instance (2010: 247-8). This is probably most clear in UL010 from Uley, which begins, *commonotorium deo Mercurio*, 'a memorandum to the god Mercury.' A curse tablet from Baelo invoking Isis asks the goddess, *rogo domina*, by her divine majesty, *per maiestate(m) tua(m)*, that she apprehend the thief (*TheDeMa* 570). *Rogare*, 'to ask,' appears often in such contexts. A text from Mainz is one example. It begins, *rogo te, domina Mater Magna ut tu me vindices*, 'I ask you, Mistress Mater Magna, that you avenge me' (*TheDeMa* 289). It is a purpose clause, where the principal asks or entreats the deity (here in the present tense)

so that the deity will act (here in the subjunctive). In Britain, *rogare*, appears in LP001 (mentioned above) in the same sense. LON007 from London Bridge begins, *tibi rogo Metunus ut me vindicas*, 'I ask you, Metunus, that you avenge me.' A further example can be found in UL012 from Uley, though it is more elaborate. It begins, *deo sancto Mercurio Honoratus conqueror numina tuo*, 'Honoratus to the holy god Mercury, I complain to your divinity. After stating the items that were stolen, Honoratus reiterates his intentions: *rogaverim genium numinis tuui*, 'I would ask your genius,' to punish the wrongdoer. *Rogare* appears in the active form in a further two curse inscriptions (UL008 from Uley and PH001 from Pagan's Hill). Given its relative prevalence outside of Britain, this is surprising. It seems, however, that a different method for securing the help of the deity was preferred in Britain – a dedication.

Invoking the Deity: dedication clauses

Several of the judicial prayers in Britain feature a gift or dedication to the deity, something that also occurs on occasion elsewhere in the Roman world. This functions both as a method of persuasion and as a consigning or handing-over of the affair to the invoked deity. In this way, a principal might either dedicate the target of their curse or, in cases of theft or embezzlement, the stolen property. I begin with a description of the latter in Britain. Following this, cases where targets or suspected thieves are given will receive the same treatment. I then look at similar instances in the Mediterranean world. Again, this is a selection of examples rather than an exhaustive catalogue. The possible motivation for the selection of these methods will be discussed in Chapter Six.

To return to an example above, Solinus, the principal of BA038 (Bath), gives a stolen cloak and bathing tunic to Sulis Minerva: *dono numina tuo maiestati paxsa(m) balnearem et palleum*, 'I give to your divinity and majesty (my) bathing tunic and cloak.'

This is followed by the suggestion or instruction that Sulis Minerva should punish the targeted thief. In this sense, the dedication functions in much the same way as *rogare* above, with the ultimate purpose being the action of the deity. In this instance, the stolen items are literally given to Sulis. The only way for the thief to avoid the curse is for them to bring the stolen goods to the temple.

A further example can be found in BA069, also from Bath. I provide Tomlin's restored text and translation in full:

[c.5]eocorotis perdedi la[enam]

[pa]lleum sagum paxsam do[navi]

[. .].[S]ulis ut hoc ante dies novem

[si li]ber si ser(v)us si [li]bera si serva

[si] pure (i.e. puer] si puell[a i]n rostr[o] s[uo]

defera[t

caballarem s[i ser(v)us si liber si]

serva si libera si puer [si puella]

in suo rostro defer[at vacat?

'I, [...]eocritis, have lost (my) Italian/Greek/Gallic cloak (and) tunic, (which) I have given... Sulis, that (he) may bring it down in his snout before nine days, [whether] free or slave, whether free woman or slave woman, [whether] boy or girl... horse blanket, [whether slave or free, whether] slave woman or free woman, whether boy [or girl], bring down in his snout.'

The construction is somewhat confused, but it is apparent that the principal gives the stolen cloak, tunic, and horse blanket to Sulis. The dedicated items, *laenam palleum sagam paxsam* are given in the accusative and are the direct objects of both *perdedi*, 'I have lost,' and *donavi,* 'I have given.' The dedicated objects are to be brought down, *deferat*, presumably to the temple of Sulis. Again, the donation of the stolen property is part of a purpose clause, as is indicated by *ut* immediately following the statement of the gift to Sulis. The gift is explicitly given so that the wish of the dedicant may be fulfilled; here this ultimately requires the action of the target, who has been compelled through suffering at the hands of the goddess. UL006 from Uley is similar in this respect. It opens with a statement of dedication of the stolen property to the presiding deity: *Biccus dat Mercurio quidquid perdedit*, 'Biccus gives Mercury whatever he has lost.' This is followed by a series of prohibitions that are the direct result of Biccus' donation and the intervention of Mercury. BA008 from Bath begins, *deae Suli donavi argentiolos sex quos perdidi*, 'To the goddess Sulis I give the six silver coins that I have lost.'

UL010 from Uley begins, *commonotorium deo Mercurio*, 'a memorandum to the god Mercury' on side (a). Side (b) states, 'a third part of what has been lost is given to the god Silvanus so that he exact this,*' ac a quae perit deo Silvano tertia pars donatur ita ut hoc ex<s>igat.* Again, an item is given to the deity with the clear purpose of enticement. LON001 from London and PH001 from Pagan's Hill similarly give portions of the stolen property to the addressed deity. The purpose of this is again explicitly stated in PH001, where the principal writes that he gives half of the stolen property, here three thousand *denarii,* so that it may be exacted from the named target: *demediam partem tibi ut ita illum exigas,* 'I give you half part so that you may exact it.'

The same logic is represented in curses elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. In the text from Italica (*TheDeMa* 598), the direct invocation of the deity is followed by a

dedication: *ut tu persequaris duas res demando*, 'I entrust two things so that you exact them.' The two things stolen are the principal's boots and sandals: *caligas meas… et solias*. The text from Baelo Claudia (*TheDeMa* 570) has a similar construction. The text begins, *Isis Muromem, tibi commendo furtu(m) meu(m),* 'Isis Myronyma, I entrust to you what has been stolen from me.' A Greek example of unknown provenance (*TheDeMa* 230) begins, ἀνατίθημι μητρὶ σε θεῶν χρυσᾶ ἀπώλεσά πάντα ὥστε ἀναζητῆσάι αὐτὴν, 'I dedicate to the mother of the gods all of the gold pieces that I have lost so that she might seek them out,' where ὥστε functions similarly to *ut*. Kollura, the principal of a text from Locri (*TheDeMa* 574), writes the following: ἀνιαρίζει Κολλύρα ταῖς προπόλοις τᾶς θεῶ τὼς τρῖς χρυσέως, τὼς ἔλαβε Μελίτα καὶ οὐκ ἀποδίδωτι, '[Kollura] is consecrating to the attendants of the goddess the three gold pieces that Melitta took and has not returned' (Faraone 2011: 37). This differs in that the principal consecrates the stolen property to the attendants rather than directly to the goddess, but the implications of this are beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Dedication clauses are common amongst the Cnidian curses (Faraone 2011: 32). The dedication of a bracelet can be found in one example (*TheDeMa* 566b): ἀνατίθητι Ἁγεμόνη τὴν σπατάλην ἣν ἀπώλεσα ἐν [τοῖς . . .]λοις τοῖς Ῥοδοκλεῦς, 'I, Hegemone, am dedicating the bracelet which I lost in the gardens of Rhodokles' (Faraone 2011: 32). A more fragmentary example (*TheDeMa* 587) dedicates 'the cloak she lost,' τὸ ἱμάτιον ὃ ἀπώλεσεν, to the goddesses.

More common than the dedication or consecration of stolen or embezzled property is the dedication of the thief or wrongdoer that the curse targets. This is the case in Britain and also seems to be so on the continent. There are multiple methods that can be used in the dedication of an unknown individual or group of individuals. The current discussion focuses on the immediate objects of dedication; binary alternative conditions

(*si vir si femina* etc.) will, therefore, be discussed at a later point in this chapter. For instance, a principal might give the nomen or 'name' of the target of the curse to the deity. Although the text of BA021 from Bath is fragmentary*, nomen furis… donat*, 'he gives the name of the thief,' can be read. BA020 from the same site reads, *nomen rei qui destrale involaverit*, 'the name of the culprit who has stolen (my) bracelet (is given).' In this example, the verb *donare* (*vel sim*.) is absent, but it may nonetheless be deduced from the context and accusative form of *nomen*. UL006 from Uley provides a suitable parallel: *nomen rei qui frenem involaverit deo donator*, 'the name of the thief who has stolen (my) bridle is given to the god.'

Other words can function in a similar way to *nomen*. For instance, in HE001 from Hamble Estuary, Muconius gives the *hominem* who has stolen his property to Neptune. In BA068 from Bath, the principal, Lovernesca, 'gives him who… has stolen her cape,' *donat eum… qui mafortium involaverit*. The principal of LON001 from London gives both the stolen property and the thief to Deana (a variant spelling of Diana). In the curse from Salacia (*TheDeMa* 600), *corpus* and *animam* stand in for the unknown thief: *corpus tibi et anima(m) do dono ut meas res invenia(m)*, 'I give to you (his) body and soul so that I might recover my property.' Such an elaborate dedication cannot be found amongst the extant published British texts, which tend to reserve their creativity for suggested methods of punishment.

The dedication of unknown targets seems to be more frequent in the extant Greek texts. Rather than ὄνομα (the Greek equivalent of *nomen*) or a pronoun, Greek texts seem to use participles. The curse from Koutsongila (*TheDeMa* 424) is one example: καταγράφω τὸν ἄραντα μοὶ φακάρινεα, 'I write down (i.e. entrust) the one who stole my headscarf.' Here, τὸν ἄραντα, 'the one who took,' stands in for the unknown thief. Such dedications are the preferred method of communication with the divine in the extant

tablets from Cnidus. One patron writes: Ἀνατίθημι Δάματρι καὶ Κούραι τὸν κατ' ἐμοῦ εἴπαντα, ὅτι ἐγὼ τῶι ἐμῶι ἀνδρὶ φάρμακα ποιῶ, 'I dedicate to Demeter and Kore the one who is saying that I prepare poisons/magic spells against my husband.' Again, the substantive participle, τὸν εἴπαντα, 'the one saying,' takes the place of the unknown target. This can, of course, also be written in the plural form when there is more than one target. Nanas, the principal of another text from the site (*TheDeMa* 585), writes, ἀνιεροῖ... τοὺς λαβόντας παρὰ Διοκλεῦς παραθήκαν καὶ μὴ ἀποδιδόντας, 'I consecrate… those who received the deposit from Diocles and do not give it back,' to Demeter, Kore, and all of the gods with them. Again, the substantive participles τοὺς λαβόντας... καὶ μὴ ἀποδιδόντας stand in for the names of those who have received the deposit and do not give it back. Nanas knows the names of those who are not returning the property, Emphanes and Rhodo. It is interesting that she nonetheless provides as much information as possible. This may be because the additional information also serves as a justification for cursing.

Targeting the Victim: naming names

These attempts at identifying the victim naturally bring us to other methods used in conjunction with such dedication clauses in order to provide further information or simply to name or describe the person or persons cursed. A discussion of these would encompass a wide range of methods, but, as above, I will cover those most common in the British texts. These include the naming of the target and binary alternative conditions. Interestingly, the use of *nomen* to stand in for the cursed target appears only when the *nomen* is given to the deity (with verbs like *donare,* etc.).

Naturally, there is some overlap between the dedication clauses discussed above and the methods of targeting discussed here. To illustrate how the two features can be different, I return to BA008 from Bath, which was discussed briefly above. The full text reads:

(a)

[d]eae Suli donavi [arge-]

ntiolos sex quos perd[idi]

a nomin[i]bus infrascrip[tis]

deae exactura est

Senicia(n)us et Saturninus <sed>

et Ann[i]ola carta picta persc[ripta]

(b)

An[i]ola

Senicianus

Saturninus

'I have given to the goddess Sulis the six silver coins which I have lost. It is for the goddess to exact (them) from the names written below: Senicianus and Saturninus and Anniola. The written page (has) been copied out.

An(n)iola

Senicianus

Saturninus'

This text clearly states the function of the list of names provided: Sulis is to exact the six coins 'from the names below,' *a nominibus infrascriptis*, with *nominibus infrascriptis* written in the plural form. Therefore, all three names provided are, at least in the eyes of the principal, guilty and responsible for the return of the silver coins to the goddess. In other words, although the silver coins are given to the goddess, it is the named individuals that are cursed.

The simplest method for targeting would be to provide the name or names of the wrongdoers. It is not surprising that this appears to be done whenever possible. BA002 and BA003 from Bath contain only names. Given that most curses from Bath were motivated by theft, we can assume that the principals were not usually able to name suspects. Likely as a result, the naming of known targets is rare at this site. At Uley, however, Carinus, the principal of UL005, asks for Mercury's help, 'concerning the theft which has been done to me (by) Primanus,' *de furtouo quod mihi factum est Primanus*. In UL009, also from Uley, Cenacus, 'complains to the god Mercury about Vitalinus and Natalinus his son concerning the draught animal that was stolen,' *queritur de Vitalino et Natalino filio ipsius de iumento quod eraptum est*. Docilinus, the principal of UL008 from the same site curses Varianus, Peregrina, and Sabinianus, 'who brought evil harm on my beast,' *qui pecori meo donum malum intulerunt*. Outside of Britain, targets are similarly named when they are known. A text from Saguntum (*TheDeMa* 569) curses *Heracla conservus meus*, 'Heracla, my fellow slave,' for withholding money. A tablet from Mainz (*TheDeMa* 765) begins, *Quintum in hac tabula depono*, 'in this tablet, I curse Quintus.' For a Greek example, we can return to the text from Amorgos (*TheDeMa* 215), which curses Epaphroditos.

It is worth noting that the names of targets can be incorporated in many ways. For instance, BA002 and BA003 feature cursed individuals in the nominative case, UL009

uses the ablative case, and the Mainz example (*TheDeMa* 765) gives the target's name in the accusative case. It is not, therefore, a formula that is shown here, but rather a strategy for securing the victim of the curse. Lists of names, such as BA036 and BA058 from Bath and a similar list from Mainz (*TheDeMa* 121) employ the same logic, but such lists of names tend to be provided in the nominative case. These may either represent a list of possible suspects from which the deity is to determine the correct culprit or a list of desired targets.

Targeting the Victim: binary alternative conditions

An alternative method for targeting the correct victim when their exact identity is unknown is the employment of a set of conditions. These conditions, what Tomlin calls 'mutually exclusive alternatives' (1988: 67), are a set of binary opposites that were intended to cover any potential identity of the target in order to ensure that they were not excluded from the negative attentions of the invoked deity. In their simplest forms, these conditions might cover sex/gender and free or slave status, but they can be more varied and elaborate. Here I focus not on the social categories, necessarily, but on the forms these categories take. These are telling of choices in vocabulary and, potentially, an element of regional variation.

As above, not all tablets containing the formula will be discussed. To illustrate the frequency and form of these binary alternative conditions, I instead include a table of all published curse tablets in Britain that bear the formulae (Table 4.1). This table notes the occurrence of the three common sets of alternatives (man/woman, slave/free, and boy/girl) and states the form the alternatives take in each case. A final column is included for additional or unique conditions.

Table 4.1: curse tablets from Britain containing binary alternative conditions

Tablet	Location	Man or Woman	Slave or Free	Boy or Girl	Additional
BA010	Bath	*si vir si femina*	*si servus si liber*		
BA011	Bath		?		
BA012	Bath		?		
BA013	Bath				?
BA037	Bath		*[si se]rvus si liber si libertinus*		
BA038	Bath	*si vir si femi[na]*	*si servus s[i] l[ib]er*		
BA040	Bath	?	*si ser[vu]s s[i liber]*		
BA042	Bath	*si vir s[i]*	*si lib[er] si ser(v)us*	*si puer [si] (p)uella*	
BA045	Bath		*si ser(v)us si lib[e]r*		
BA050	Bath	*si mulier si baro*	*si servus si liber*	*si pu(er) si puella*	
BA051	Bath		*si servus si liber*		*<si> qui<s>cumq[ue] erit*
BA053	Bath		*si servu]s si liber*		
BA055	Bath	*si [vir si f]emin[a]*	*si ser(v)us [si libe]r*		
BA059	Bath	*s]i vir si femina*	*si ancilla*		
BA062	Bath		?		
BA064	Bath	*si bar]o si m[u]l[i]e[r*	?		
BA068	Bath	*sive v[ir] <i>sive femina*		*s[i]ve puer sive puella*	
BA069	Bath		*[si li]ber si ser(v)us si [li]bera si serva*	*[si pu(er) si puell[a*	
BA070	Bath		*si s(e)r(v)us si liber*		
BA072	Bath	*si baro si mulier*	*si ser(v)us si liber*		
BA073	Bath	*si vir si femina*	*si ser(v)us si liber*		

BA078	Bath	*si vir si femina*	*si servus s[i*		
BA104	Bath		*si servus si liber*		
BA106	Bath	*utrum vir utrum mulier*	*utrum servus utrum liber*	*utrum puer utrum puella*	*seu gen(tilis) seu Ch(r)istianus; quaecumquae*
BA107	Bath	*si vir si femina*		*si puer si puella*	
BA108	Bath	?	?	?	
BA109	Bath		*si ser(v)us si liber*	*si puer si puella*	
BA112	Bath		?		
BRA001	Brandon	*si m(u)lier si baro*	*si ser(v)us si ancilla si li(bertus si) liberta*		
BRE001	Brean Down	*si ba[ro] s[i muli]er*	*si s]er(v)u[s i] liber*		
CSE001	Caistor St. Edmund	*si mascel si m(!)emina*		*si puer si pu(e)lla*	
DOD001	Dodford		?		
HE001	Hamble Estuary	*si mascel si femina*		*si puuer si puuella*	
HCW001	Hockwold-cum-Wilton		*s(i) servus si [l]ib[e](r)*		*si pa[g]a[n]us si mil[e]s*
LON001	City of London		*s[i] [s]er[vus] s[i liber]*	*[s]i p[u]er si [p]uella*	
ROS001	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	*si mascel si femina*			
ROS002	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	*si m(ulier) au[t] si b(aro)*			
UL002	Uley	*[mu]lieris(?)*	*si [...] a[n]cilla si liber*	*si puer si [pue]lla*	
UL006	Uley	*si vir si mascel*			
UL007	Uley	*si baro si mulier*	*si l[i]ber si servus*		
UL010	Uley	*si vir si mulier... si vir si femina*	*si servus si[i] liber*		

UL012	Uley	*si baro si mulier*	*si seruus si liber*	*si puer si puella*
UL014	Uley	*vel mulier vel parius*(?)		
UL015	Uley	*si m[ascel] si [fem]ina*	*si servus si liber*	
WAN001	Wanborough	?	?	?
NP001	Unknown (Uley?)	*si baro si mulier*	*si ingenuus si servus*	*si puel[l]a si puer*
NP002	Unknown		*si a[nc]il(l)a*	*si [p]uer si [puella]*

It is worth introducing what might be considered the 'standard' form of the condition. Following this, I will briefly discuss variations of this form, beginning with the varied ways of writing the gender alternatives and following with the varied ways of writing the free/slave alternatives. It must be noted that the use of the term 'standard' is not meant to indicate that any formation appears more frequently than another, nor do I suggest that the texts that include what I call 'standard' forms predated the texts that include different forms. Rather, I use the term to demonstrate what might be the simplest forms of the respective conditions. Again, the significance of the binary alternative social categories used and how these can inform our understanding of identity and concepts of belief will be discussed in later chapters. The focus here is on construction and vocabulary.

Docilianus, the principal of BA010 from Bath, seeks to punish the thief of a hooded cloak until said thief has returned the cloak to the temple of Sulis. Given the nature of the crime, he does not know the identity of the thief. To illustrate the relationship between the mutually exclusive or binary alternative condition and the rest of the inscription, I quote Tomlin's restored text in full:

(a)

Docilianus

Bruceri

deae sanctissim(a)e

      Suli

devoveo eum [q]ui

caracellam meam

involaverit si

vir si femina si

servus si liber

ut [1-2]um dea Sulis

maximo letum

[a]digat nec ei so-

mnum permit-

(b)

tat nec natos nec

nascentes do-

[ne]c caracallam

meam ad tem-

plum sui numi-

nis per[t]ulerit

'Docilianus (son) of Brucerus [Brucetus?] to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse

him who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, whether slave or

free, that... the goddess Sulis inflict death upon... and not allow him sleep or children now and in the future, until he has brought my hooded cloak to the temple of her divinity.'

The inscription begins with a dedication clause. Following this, Docilianus gives or devotes, *devoveo*, the person, here identified with the pronoun *eum*, who has stolen his hooded cloak. Lines 7-9 contain the binary alternative conditions that are the focus of the current discussion. The alternatives offered are *vir* and *femina* as well as *servus* and *liber*, each with the conditional *si,* ensuring that the culprit is targeted regardless of their status as a man or a woman or as a slave or free person. Docilianus uses the 'classical' terms with their classical spelling; he chooses these rather than the alternative terms for 'man' or 'woman' (*baro* and *mulier* respectively) or the alternative spelling for 'slave' (*serus*), as can be seen in the examples below (see also Table 4.1). The purpose of the binary alternative conditions is to provide further information to the deity so that she might punish the appropriate thief, but this could have been achieved with *eum qui caracellam meam involaverit*, 'he who stole my hooded cloak,' alone. I think it is clear that the use of both a description and a set of binary alternative conditions is the result of the application and popularity of a formula. It is included not because it is truly necessary, but because it is part of the language of a curse.

The mutually exclusive condition featured in BA073, also from Bath, features the same word choices as BA010 above, but with a notable difference: the mutually exclusive conditions are repeated twice on the same side of the tablet. Interestingly, although *si vir si femina* is repeated, *si ser(v)us si liber* is not. A significant amount of the text is lost to corrosion, but the writing preceding the second iteration of *si vir si femina* is extant. It is, therefore, not possible for *si ser(v)us si liber* to precede or follow it. This shows the

importance of repetition, particularly of certain aspects of the curse. Perhaps the author placed particular significance on *vir* and *femina* and not on *ser(v)us* and *liber*, but it may equally be true that this is the result of the association of cursing with repetition. As with BA010 above, the redundancy is probably the result of an attempt at being as thorough as possible as well as incorporating the expected language of a curse.

A further set of conditions may be used. The final lines of BA042 (Bath) read, *deveniat si liber si ser(v)us si puer si puella si vir…*, 'May he reach (them), whether free or slave, boy or girl, man or…' Only traces of the word for 'woman' survive. Although the opposite of *vir* would have been here, it is unclear whether the classical *femina* or the 'Vulgar' *mulier* was used (Tomlin 1988: 135). Below examples of the use of *mulier* will be discussed, but for now I would note that just because a text contains a 'Vulgarism' in one area, it does not follow that it contains a 'Vulgarism' elsewhere. Equally, the presence of certain classical elements need not indicate that a text is entirely classical. In other words, the use of *vir* and not *baro* (a 'Vulgar' alternative of the same) does not confirm the use of *femina* and not *mulier*.

One set of binary alternatives can be used on its own. For instance, BA104 (Bath) contains a free/slave condition only*: si ser(v)us si liber,* 'whether slave or free.' Similarly, side (b) of BA051 begins, *si servus si liber si quiscumque erit*, 'whether slave or free, <if> whoever they shall be.' This is followed by the punishment suggested for the target. Tomlin notes the conflation of two clauses in the general overarching 'whoever they shall be,' as the principal apparently conflated *si quis erit* (see BA067) and *quicumque erit* (see BA011, BA101, and BA105). It is also possible, I would suggest, that the author may have initially intended to follow *si servus si liber* with another set of binary alternatives, thus inscribing *si* before deciding instead to write the clause as it is.

A further example of the use of classical terms in binary alternative conditions can be found in LON001 from London. As mentioned above, the text begins with a dedication of the stolen property, 'less one third,' to Diana. Following this is a dedication of the thief, here represented with *eum*, 'whether boy or girl, whether slave or free,' *si puer si puella si servus si liber*. With the exception of this text and HCW001, the binary alternative conditions outside of Bath contain 'Vulgar' terms either alone or in conjunction with classical terms. Indeed, in the published texts, *vir* and *femina* only appear in opposition to each other at Bath and Uley.

More commonly, the 'Vulgar' *mulier* appears in opposition to terms that can be translated as 'man'. For instance, *mulier* is the preferred term at Uley. UL010 from this site is a good example of the interchangeability of *mulier* and *femina*, and, for this reason, I quote the full restoration and translation:

(a)

Commonitorium deo

Mercurio* a Satur-

nina muliere de lintia-

mine quod amisit ut il-

le qui hoc circumvenit non

ante laxetur nis<s>i quando

res ssdictas ad fanum ssdic-

tum attulerit si vir si mu-

lier si servus s[i] liver

(b)

Deo ssdicto tertiam

partem donat ita ut

ex<s>igat istas res quae

ssta(e) sunt.

Ac a quae perit deo Silvano

tertia pars donatur ita ut

hoc ex<s>igat si vir si femina si serv-

us si liber [. . .] E[. . .]TAT

* replacing *Marti Silvano*

'A memorandum to the god… Mercury (over Mars Silvanus) from Saturnina, a woman, concerning the linen cloth which she has lost. (She asks) that he who has stolen it should not have rest before/unless/until he brings the aforesaid property to the aforesaid temple, whether man or woman, whether slave or free. She gives a third part to the aforesaid god on condition that he exact this property which has been written above. A third part… what she has lost is given to the god Silvanus on condition that he exact it, whether man or woman, whether slave or free…'

On side (a), the principal, Saturnina, includes the man/woman condition as *si vir si mulier*, opting for *mulier* rather than *femina*, and the slave/free condition as *si servus si liber*, with the classical spelling of *servus*. Both conditions are repeated on side (b), but the principal changes *mulier* for f*emina*, making the gender condition read *si vir si femina*.

Although this particular scribe is not the most consistent, I would argue that the use of both *mulier* and *femina* in the same text and in identical contexts is a reflection of their interchangeability. This is an excellent demonstration of how the use of 'Vulgarisms' does not necessarily indicate that the user is 'Vulgar,' and *vice versa*. Also of note is Saturnina's self-identification as *muliere*, which makes it clear that at least here the word does not have a negative connotation (see *baro* below). *Mulier* also appears in opposition to *vir* in BA105 from Bath, but frequently *mulier* is contrasted with *baro*.

BA050 from Bath curses the person who stole the bronze vessel of the principal. The thief is additionally given to the temple of Sulis, *si mulier si baro si servus si liber si pu(er) si puella*, 'whether woman or man, whether slave or free, whether boy or girl.' The exact meaning of *baro* is not entirely clear. Tomlin rightly states that *baro* must mean 'man,' since it is in opposition to *mulier* which is the 'Vulgar' equivalent of *femina* (1988: 165). Interestingly, *baro* means 'fool' or 'blockhead' in Classical Latin, and the earliest occurrence of the word meaning 'man' is not until the sub-Roman German law codes in the medieval period (Tomlin 1988: 165). According to The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, it means 'slave' (Latham 1975). Also perhaps relevant is that *baro* in modern Italian is 'cheat' or 'swindler.' I would suggest that, because both the classical meaning of *baro* and the modern Italian meaning are clearly negative, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the word, as used in BA050 and the other contemporary examples, at least has a negative connotation. Tomlin, however, tentatively proposes that *baro* might actually be a Celtic loan-word in British Latin (1988: 167).

In this curse, all sets of binary alternatives can be read on both sides. Indeed, side (b) is more of a simplified reiteration of side (a) than a continuation. This reiteration, like the conditions it contains, would have supposedly increased the efficacy of the curse. If we imagine the text being read by a divine audience, then we can understand that this

audience would have been able to read and understand the essential points regardless of which side they read. In other words, the mention of the possible identifiers of the thief on both sides of the text ensures that the proper individual is targeted. It is perhaps worth noting that, while side (b) is apparently a simplified rewording of the contents of side (a) (with the addition of the required *eum* as the direct object of the donation clause), the mutually exclusive conditions are repeated *verbatim*, remaining elaborate and suggesting that extra care was taken to secure the correct target regardless of their status.

BRA001 from Brandon provides an interesting example of the use of *mulier* and *baro*. The text includes three binary alternative pairs: *si servus si ancilla si libertus si liberta si mulier si baro*, 'whether male slave or female slave, whether freedman or freedwoman, whether woman or man.' These are the subject of *parentatur*, 'he/she is sacrificed.' Both the choice of words and the formation of the pairings are worth noting here. *Baro* and *mulier* are, of course, common in British curse tablets, but *ancilla* is uncommon (see UL005 and NP002), and *libertus* (if it is to be restored) and *liberta* do not appear in other published texts, though *libertinus* does occur in BA037. Rather than being differentiated by status, the pairings are differentiated by gender. In other words, while one might expect *liber* to appear in opposition to *servus*, *ancilla* appears instead. Following the same logic, *liberta* appears in opposition to *libertus* while *mulier* appears in opposition to *baro*. The latter pairing is not unusual, but presumably here is intended to refer to freemen and freewomen. It is interesting to note that pairings in accordance with status appear far more common than pairings in in accordance with gender.

Although mentions of freedpersons are not common, references to free or slave statuses are. This is usually expressed as *si servus si liber*, but this can also be varied. NP001, possibly from Uley, is one example. Here, *ingenuus* appears in opposition to *servus*. From its position, we can deduce that it means 'free man' or at least someone

'under their own power.' Tomlin translates it as 'free-born.' Civilis, the principal of BA037 (Bath) curses the thief of a ploughshare 'whether slave, free, or freedman,' *si servus si liber si libertinus*, forgoing gender and age conditions for a more elaborate free/slave condition. *Ancilla* can be read in BA059 (Bath), but its opposite is lost due to damage.

Binary alternative conditions related to free/slave status, gender, and age (boy/girl) appear frequently in the British curse texts. Indeed, they are so common that they are reduced to a sort of acronym in ROS002 from Ratcliffe on Soar and an unpublished text from Uley (Uley 75; Tomlin 1993: 130). The formation of binary alternatives and, in particular, the identities represented by these conditions are potentially informative (see Chapter Five). There are, however, additional conditional pairs that are unique, appearing only once in the extant texts from Britain. These can be found in BA105 from Bath and HCW001.

Because BA105 is so unusual, I provide Tomlin's translation of side (a) and the relevant lines of the restored text. Side (b) consists of a list of names, presumably of those suspected of committing the theft. Side (a) begins:

Seu gen(tili)s seu C-

h(r)istianus quaecumque utrum vir

[u]trum mulier utrum puer utrum puella

utrum s[er]vus utrum liber …

'Whether pagan or Christian, whosoever, whether man or woman, whether boy or girl, whether slave or free, has stolen from me, Annianus (son of) Matutina(?), six silver coins from my purse, you, Lady goddess, are to exact [them] from him.

If through some deceit he has given me…, and do not give thus to him, but reckon as(?) the blood of him who has invoked this upon me.'

Immediately noticeable is the reference to Christianity in lines 1-2, where the principal, Annianus, includes the condition 'whether pagan or Christian,' *seu gentilis seu Christianus*. This is the only occurrence of such a condition both at Bath and in the rest of Britain, though the Eccles Villa curse (EV001), which includes the phrase *in domo die,* may also refer to Christianity less explicitly. Indeed, BA105 is the first known occurrence of *Christianus* in Roman epigraphy in Britain (Tomlin 1988: 233). Tomlin notes that the misspelling of *gentilis* (spelled *gens*) and *Christianus* (spelled *Chistianus*) may be a result of the scribe's lack of familiarity with the two terms (Tomlin 1988: 233). Also worth noting is the use of *seu* rather than *si*, which is used in the conditions of all other texts from the site with the exception of BA061 discussed above. Like *seu, utrum*, which is used to pair the alternatives in the following lines, does not appear elsewhere in the extant Bath tablets. The gender condition of lines 2-3, *utrum vir utrum mulier*, is interesting in its use of the classical *vir* and the 'Vulgar' *mulier*. This deviates from the more typical use of either classical or 'Vulgar' forms. Following the gender identifiers are the boy/girl and slave/free identifiers. It is perhaps worth noting that these use the classical spellings of *puer, puella, servus*, and *liber*.

An additional condition is provided by *quaecumque*, 'whosoever,' in line 2 (see BA051 above). This is evidently an error for *quicumque*, which would agree with the male/female pairs that follow. Tomlin notes that *quaecumque*, if indeed it were used properly, would imply that the principal knew the thief to be a woman (Tomlin 1988: 233)). That the thief is known to be a woman is, however, unlikely due both to the gender conditions and the list of names on side (b), which features both masculine and feminine

names. Supposing that the list of names represents a list of suspects, it is curious that Annianus, or the one writing on his behalf, deemed it necessary to include the conditions of side (a) at all. Perhaps the binary alternatives were used despite having a list of potential suspects in order to further the efficacy of the curse; this would further support the notion that the conditional clauses were seen as an integral part of the curse, whether they were required by the circumstances of theft or not.

Concerning HCW001 (Weeting with Broomhill), I again quote the full translation and restored text:

(a)

s(i) servus si [l]ib[e](r) [qu-]

i [f]uravit su[st]uli-

t [ne ei] dimitte

[male]fic(i)um d(u)m

tu vindi[c]a[s]

(b)

ante dies

nov[e](m) si pa-

[g]a[n]us si

mil[e]s [qui]

su[s]tu[l]it

'(Whoever) has stolen (it), taken (it), whether slave or free, do not forgive him his evil-doing until you punish him within nine days, whether civilian or soldier, (whoever) has taken (it).'

Side (a) opens with the condition. This, and other comparable instances clearly display the role of the mutually exclusive conditions in targeting the intended victim when their identity is not known. Where one might expect to find the name of the target, instead there are one or more pairs of binary alternative conditions. What is most interesting in this text is the condition on side (b): *si paganus si miles*, 'whether civilian or soldier.' This is the only reference to the military in all of the published curse texts from Britain, although an unpublished text from Uley (discussed below) also mentions soldiers and civilians. I will return to this in the subsequent chapters, but here it is worth noting the variation. In this example, as with BA105, we see the alteration of the typical formula to suit a specific context.

A search for pairs of binary alternative conditions outside of Britain proves less fruitful. They are rare amongst the published judicial prayers from the northwest of the Roman empire, but can be found at Italica (*TheDeMa* 598) and Delos (*TheDeMa* 228). Curiously, binary alternative conditions can be found in three curse texts from Egypt. Rather than judicial prayers, these are erotic *defixiones* that bear the marks of a binding spell. As such, the gender binary opposites do not refer to an unknown thief or wrongdoer. Instead, *εἴτε ἄρσης εἴτε θήλα,* 'whether male or female,' refers to the sex (*γυνὴ* and *ἀνὴρ* would be used to refer to gender) of the unknown spirit of the untimely dead being bound. The texts are highly formulaic and follow the prescription in *PGM* (4.335-406) (Jordan 1985: 188-9). As mentioned above, the Italica curse (*TheDeMa* 598) begins with the consigning of the stolen property so that the goddess may pursue the thieves. The

principal restates this dedication, adding that the goddess is to pursue the thieves *si mulier sive homo*, 'whether woman or man.' The curse from Delos (*TheDeMa* 228) registers the thief of a necklace and anyone who keeps silent concerning the theft. Significantly, these are targeted *ἤδε γυνὴ ἤδε ἀνήρ*, 'whether woman or man.' A more elaborate example can be read in a Greek text with unknown provenance (*TheDeMa* 235), where the principal curses whoever has put a binding spell on them. The inscription begins:

Εἴ τις ἐμὲ κατέδεσεν

ἒ γυνὴ ἢ ⟨ἀ⟩νὴρ ἒ δ⟨ο⟩ῦλος ἒ ἐ-

λεύθερος ἒ ξένος ἒ ἀσ-

στὸς ἒ οἰκεῖος ἒ ἀλλώτ-

ρτος ἒ ἐπὶ φθόνον τὸν

ἐμεῖ ἐργασίαι ἒ ἔργοις…

'Whoever put a binding spell on me, whether woman or man or slave or free or foreigner or citizen or domestic (?) or alien, whether for spite towards my work or my deeds…' (Jordan 1999: 115-7)

Here a gender condition and a slave/free binary pairs are accompanied by conditions regarding citienship and origin. There is the additional condition that encompasses the target's motivation for the supposed *defixio*. Such a condition cannot be read amongst the extant published texts from Britain.

Although the use of binary alternative conditions is not well attested outside Britain, there are alternative methods for targeting an unknown victim. Cases where an unknown thief is given to the addressed deity have been discussed above, but nominative

pronouns may also stand in for the targeted thief. For example, a text from Wilten-Veldidena, Austria (*TheDeMa* 109) targets 'whoever has stolen 14 denarii or two neckaces,' *siquis *[denarius] xviiii sive draucus duos sustulit*. A text from Mainz (*TheDeMa* 763) targets 'whoever has defrauded this money,' *quisquis dolum malum admisit hac pecunia*. Similar methods can also be found in Britain (see BA051 and BA105), but binary alternative conditions are far more popular.

Suggested Punishment: blood payment

The final features discussed in this chapter are the formulae used to suggest punishment for the targeted thief or wrongdoer. This focuses primarily on the concept of 'payment in blood' and how this is expressed, but it also covers other forms of suggested punishment or suffering, such as the denial of wellbeing or bodily functions. Such concepts are particularly telling of views of revenge and belief. They will, therefore, primarily be addressed in Chapter Six. As above, the aim for this section is to illustrate the form this feature takes as well as discuss some variations. I again consider texts from outside of Britain for comparative purposes and to explore how this aspect of cursing manifests in the wider context of the ancient Mediterranean world.

In Chapter Two, I noted that judicial prayers often call for violent, extreme punishments for the targeted thieves or wrongdoers. Requests for punishment can be restored in 59 of the 173 published curse tablets from Britain included in the appendix to the present work. Of these, 24 contain the concept of blood payment. These requests are so frequent that they might be considered formulaic, but a high degree of variation in form would suggest that what we see here is the application of a concept rather than the simple application of a formula. Again, I do not discuss all curse tablets bearing the formula. Instead, I include a table of all published curse tablets in Britain that include the

concept of blood payment in order to illustrate the frequency and form of this feature
(Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Table listing the published curse tablets from Britain that contain the concept of blood payment

Tablet	Location	Restored Text	Additional punishment
BA006	Bath	... *nisi s[an]g[u]ine sua*...	n/a
BA007	Bath	...*]angu[*...	n/a
BA044	Bath	... *e]x(i)gas pe[?r sanguinem e]ius*...	n/a
BA046	Bath	... *sanguine...de[s]t[in]at*	n/a
BA047	Bath	... *e]xigas hoc per sanguinem et sa[nitatem sua]m et suorum*...	Prohibition of eating, drinking, defecation, and urination
BA050	Bath	... *qui hoc fecerit sangu(in)em suum in ipsmu (i.e. ipsum) aenmu (i.e. aenum) fundat*...	Accursedness
BA053	Bath	... *non il]li permittas in sangu(i)ne*...	Exaction (?)
BA072	Bath	... *hoc donum non redemat nessi sangu(i)n[e] suo*	n/a
BA073	Bath	... *s[ati]sfecerit sanguine[e] illorum*...	n/a
BA101	Bath	... *deae Suli facias illum sanguine suo illud satisfecere*	n/a
BA104	Bath	...*ut sanguine et liminibus et ombnibus membris configatur*...	Intestines eaten away; accursedness in eyes (orifices?) and every limb
BA105	Bath	... *ut sanguinem suum (r)eputes*...	Exaction of stolen property
BA106	Bath	... *sanguine et vitae suae illud redemat*	Death
BRE001	Brean Down	...*[i]lla (re)dim[a]t sa(n)guin[e s]uo*...	n/a
CAE001	Caerleon	... *non redimat ni(si) v[i]ta sanguine sua*	Death
CSE001	Caistor St. Edmund	...*Tunc sanguine(e) fasciam tenet fur e carta s(upra) s(cripta) ratio(n)e*	n/a
HE001	Hamble Estuary	... *dono tibi Niske et Neptuno, vitam, valitudinem, sanguem eius*... ... *hoc involavit sanguem eiius consumas et*...	Loss of life, health, blood, and mind
KEL001	Kelvedon	... *sangu(i)no suo solvat*...	n/a
OH001	Old Harlow	...*]sang[*...	n/a

ROS001	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	*… ut exigat per mentem per memoriam per intus per intestinum per cor[p]er medullas per uenas…*	Exaction through mind, memory, inner parts, intestines, heart, marrow, and veins
ROS003	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	*… ut sanguinem suum mittat usque diem quo moriatur…*	Death
UL003	Uley	*… qui illos invalavi<i>t ut illi sangu(in)em [e]t sanitatem tollat…*	Vengeance; loss of health
UL005	Uley	*… san(g)uine suo conpliat vendica[tionem?]*	Deprivation of sun and moon; childlessness (?)
UL015	Uley	*… n[e]c h[as] [i]r[a]s redemere possit nessi sanguine suo…*	Prohibition of sitting, standing, drinking, and eating

Table 4.2 lists the 24 published tablets that contain the concept of blood payment. In some instances, what remains is fragmentary and, therefore, subject to restoration. A cursory glance at the language used to communicate this request reveals considerable variation in form. In what follows, I discuss these variations.

The formulaic nature of BA072 from Bath makes it a good choice for demonstrating the features discussed so far and for introducing the formula that is the focus of the current discussion. I provide Tomlin's full restoration and translation for this reason:

Minerv(a)e

de(ae) Suli donavi

furem qui

caracallam

meam invo-

lavit si ser(v)us

si liber si ba-

ro si mulier

hoc donum non

redemat nessi

sangu(i)n[e] suo

'To Minerva the goddess Sulis I have given the thief who has stolen my hooded

cloak, whether slave or free, whether man or woman. He is not to buy back this

gift unless with his own blood.'

The text is so formulaic for Britain that it might be called 'standard,' beginning with the

address to the deity, followed by the statement of the crime, the binary alternatives used

to target the cursed individual, and finally the punishment of the intended target. *Redemat*

(hypercorrected *redimat*), 'may he redeem/buy back,' is part of a negative construction

that denies the thief redemption unless this redemption is through his or her own blood.

This negative construction is achieved with *non* and *nessi* (hypercorrected *nisi*) framing

redemat.

BA050, also from Bath, is remarkable for its use of vivid imagery. The suggested

punishment can be found on side (a), which I quote in full here along with Tomlin's

translation of the same:

(a)

a[e]n[um me]um qui levavit [e]xc-

onic[tu]s [e]st templo Sulis

dono si mulier si baro si ser-

vus si liber si pure (i.e. puer) si puella

et qui hoc fecerit san-

gu(in)em suum in ipsmu (i.e. ipsum) aen-

mu (i.e. aenum) fundat

'(The person) who has lifted my bronze vessel is utterly accursed. I give (him) to the temple of Sulis, whether woman or man, whether slave or free, whether boy or girl, and let him who has done this spill his own blood into the vessel itself'

The target of this text is cursed, *excon(f)ictus* (Tomlin 1988: 165), and consecrated to the temple, *templo Sulis dono*. The theme of blood payment is evidenced rather explicitly in the final lines of side (a). The principal uses a construction altogether different from those typically seen at the site. Rather than being given the opportunity to redeem themselves with their own blood (usually expressed with either *per* and the accusative *sanguinem* or some negative condition formed with *redemo* (*vel sim*.) in the subjunctive and the ablative *sanguine*), whoever has committed the theft is to spill, (expressed with the subjunctive *fundat*), their own blood (the 'Vulgar' *sanguem*) with no mention of redemption. In this instance, the blood is given a destination in the form of the stolen bronze vessel, the incorrectly transcribed *ipsmu aenmu*. I would argue that the adaptation of the concept of blood payment to the stolen item is an indication that, rather than the simple use of a particular formula, it is the actual concept of blood payment that is significant here. Again, the implication of this will be a topic of discussion in Chapters Six and Seven.

Basilia, the principal of BA104 from Bath, curses the thief of her silver ring as well as anyone who might be withholding information regarding the theft. The suggested punishment begins at the bottom of side (a) and continues onto side (b):

(a)

…

(ta)mdiu siluerit vel aliquid de hoc

noverit ut sanguine et liminibus et

(b)

omnibus membris configatur vel et-

iam intestinis excomesis (om)nibus habe(at)

is qui anilum involavit vel qui medius

fuerit

'...[if someone] keeps silent or knows anything about it, he may be accursed in

(his) blood and eyes and every limb, or even have all (his) intestines quite eaten

away, if he has stolen the ring or has been privy to (the theft).'

I do not agree with the reading of *liminibus* as 'eyes.' Various readings of *limen* in other

contexts have included 'threshold,' 'dwelling,' 'entrance,' or 'outset,' but I have yet to

come across 'eyes.' Perhaps it is to be understood that the eyes are a sort of threshold,

but I think other readings might be more natural. For instance, *liminibus* might here be

read as 'in their dwelling,' meaning that the intended victim is to be cursed with respect

to both his or her blood and household/living situation. Alternatively (though less likely,

I think), *liminibus* could be read as 'outset' or 'starting point' (as in a race or some other

sort of task), meaning that the victim is to be cursed in their endeavours. I think it is most

likely that *limen* can be taken to mean 'entrance,' with *liminibus* here meaning 'with

respect to their entrances/within their entrances' (*i.e.* bodily orifices). This reading is

tempting given the surrounding language, which is quite violent and explicitly relating to the deterioration of the human body.

Here the thief is cursed, *configatur*, with respect to their blood, *sanguine*, their *liminibus* (orifices?), and all of their limbs, *omnibus membris*. In this instance, therefore, they are not to redeem themselves with their own blood, but to suffer with respect to their blood. Notably, neither *redemo* nor any personal pronouns (as in the *suo* in *sanguine suo*) are present; there is no apparent way for the thief or the 'one who keeps silent' to redeem themselves. As such, here is no explicit payment in blood, but the concept of suffering through blood is apparent.

The principal of UL015 from Uley similarly requests additional means of suffering for their target. The clause in which the first set of punishments appears is a jussive subjunctive with Mercury as the subject of *non permittas*, 'may you not permit,' and a series of infinitives as the direct objects. Mercury is not to permit the target to stand, sit, drink, or eat, *nec stare nec sedere nec bibere nec manducare*. Tomlin translates *non illis permittas* as 'do not allow them,' but the subjunctive fits better as 'may you not allow them' or 'so that you do not allow them.' This reading also includes *ut,* which precedes *non* in line 6. Indeed, this would be more appropriate considering *queror tibi,* 'I ask you,' in line 1. The main clause/construction would read *queror tibi… ut non illi permittas…* 'I ask you so that you do not/may not allow them…'The target is not able to redeem their wrongdoing, *nec... redemere possit*, unless it is with their own blood, *nessi sanguine suo*. In this sense, the concept of blood payment is like that of BA072 above, but the communication of this concept is rather different.

With notable exceptions, blood payment is generally stated as a means with which the target of the curse is to redeem themselves rather than a simple punishment. What, exactly, this means and implies will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Comparison of language used to communicate requests for blood payment is limited by the relative infrequency of the concept outside of Britain. As mentioned above, the punishments requested in judicial prayers are often severe, and this holds true throughout the Mediterranean world. I discuss other forms of punishment below, but here I look at instances where blood loss, blood-letting, and redemption through blood are apparent outside of Britain. Again, this is not exhaustive, but a search for 'blood,' 'blut,' 'sang,' 'sangre,' etc. in *TheDeMa* reveals few curses from outside of Britain.

Three curses from the temple of Isis and Mater Magna at Mainz come close to the imagery expressed in the British tablets that contain the theme of blood payment. These deal with cutting and, especially, castration. The principal of *DTM* 2 (*TheDeMa* 763) requests that several misfortunes befall an unknown target, who has taken money through fraud, *dolum malum*. One of these is the request that, '[just as] the Galli lacerate themselves and sever their genitals, so may he cut… his breast,' *quomodo galli se secant et praecidunt uirilia sua, sic ille… intercidat… pectus*. The spilling of blood is additionally used as a metaphor for the loss of mental capacity and life force (Gordon 2014: 780*): quomodo galli, bellonari, magali sibi sanguinem feruentem fundunt, friguidus, ad terram uenit, sic et… copia, cogitatum, mentes,* 'Just as the adherents of Mater Magna and the priests of Bellona and the Magali spill their hot blood, which is cold (when) it touches the ground, so his… his abilities, his thinking and wits.' Although there is a mention of cutting, blood spilling, and, eventually, 'a bad death,' *malum exitum*, the imagery and the language obviously differ from those of the blood payment requests in Britain.

Two further texts from Mainz use the simile of the castrated Galli, albeit in different ways. *DTM* 1 (*TheDeMa* 758) curses Gemella, who stole the bracelets of the principal. Again, multiple forms of punishment (including death) are called for, including

the request that, 'just as the Galli have cut themselves, so may she want to do. And may she not cut herself so that she lament herself,' *quomodo galli secarunt sic ea(m?) uelis nec se secet sic ut planctum habeat.* This translation, provided by Blänsdorf (2010a: 185-7), is somewhat awkward. Little explanation is provided for reading *ut planctum habeat* as the reflexive 'so that she lament herself.' I think a better reading would be, 'so that she has lamentations/wailing,' where *planctum* (meaning 'lament,' 'wailing,' etc.) is taken as the accusative noun that it is. This is an odd choice of simile when the target is known to be a woman. Both the personal name Gemella and the feminine pronouns indicate her gender. The language does, however, seem more suitable when we consider a final example from Mainz (*TheDeMa* 765), which curses Quintus: *ita ut galli Bellonariue absciderunt concideruntue se, sic illi abscissa sit fides fama faculitas*, 'just as the Galli or priests of Bellona have castrated or cut themselves, so may his good name, reputation, ability to conduct his affairs be cut away.' Following this, the principal adds, *nec illi in numero hominum sunt, neque illi sit*, 'just as they are not numbered among mankind, so may he too not be so numbered.' Here it is clear that the punishment requested is not literal castration. These curses and others from the site often employ the *similia similibus* formula, which appears in Britain only BA004*: sic liquat comodo aqua,* 'may they become liquid as water.' While the texts from Mainz do not seem to necessarily call for castration, these curses do ask for the death of their targets. Perhaps significantly, the death is sometimes a public spectacle, implying an intended public execution (Gordon 2014: 780).

The Greek curses are no less violent, but again similar themes and language are rare in extant curses. One mention of exsanguination can be found in a curse from Sicily (*TheDeMa* 247). The inscribed text mostly comprises a list of names, but this list is

followed by *ἀναίμα[τοι ἔστον οἵ]δε πάντες δύσσοοι*, 'they are to be wholly exsanguinated, damned.'

It thus seems that the frequency of the theme of blood payment within Britain is unparalleled elsewhere in the Roman world, and the absence of such a theme results in a clear variation in the language used to request punishment. In Chapter Six, I will consider how this is reflective of concepts of belief, and in Chapter Seven, I return to the question of how this variation can help us to understand the transfer of ideas and technologies in the Roman world.

Celtic Texts

Significant evidence for innovation amongst British curse tablets can be seen in tablets that make use of other languages or alphabets. In Tomlin's monograph, he proposes that *Tab. Sulis* 14 and 18 (BA019 and BA023) are transliterated Celtic due to 'un-Latin combinations of letters' (Tomlin 1988.: 128). This has since been accepted (Mees 2005: 176; Mullen 2007a: 32). A text from Uley (UL017) also contains Celtic, while a further two unpublished texts from the same site seem to be written in Celtic as well. Also from Uley is an unpublished unusual text that is written in Latin using Greek characters (Tomlin 2002: 175). These remarkable curses will be looked at as expressions of identity in Chapter Five, but here I focus on the interpretations of the inscribed language.

BA019 is damaged and fragmentary and, according to Tomlin, is inscribed in five different hands using different styli (1988: 84). Considering that these may be glosses or interjections that were initially missed out, Mullen suggests that the text contained linguistic elements with meaning, rather than strings of meaningless letters (Mullen 2007a: 33). Tomlin transcribes the text as follows:

(i)

luciumio[

cittimediu.xs[

uibec[. .]traceos[

estaidimaui[. .]…[

tittlemmacatacimluci[

lendiierandant.[. .]mno(or d)a (or n)[

[.]uc[2-3]miotouesalura.[c. 2].irando.[

[c. 4]m(over r)nottanou.m(or .a)dii[

[c. 6]cii. . eleubarrau.[1-2]. .[

]staginemse[c. 2]. .[

]. .fer[

].r.(over [?])[

(ii)

]luio

]ai (or mi or n)qtit

]rii

A verb is identifiable in line 1, but its meaning is uncertain (Mees 2005: 179; Mullen 2007a: 34). Mees suggests the root is connected to 'censure' (2005: 179), but Mullen proposes that the root is probably related to the Old Irish and Welsh words for 'oath, curse' (*lugae* and *llw* respectively) or to the Indo-European root *leuk-,* which can be found in the Middle Welsh word for 'ask, beg, beseech, request' (adolwyn) (2007a: 34). Both possible meanings find parallels in the Latin inscriptions from the site, with *execro*,

'I curse,' being read in BA106 and *rogo*, *conqueror*, *queror*, 'I ask/beseech,' being common. Detailed analysis of the interpretation of written Celtic is beyond the scope of the current discussion but it seems clear that BA019 contained a continuous sentence (Mullen 2007a: 34).

BA023 is complete and can be read more fully. Tomlin restores it thus:

   adixoui

    deiana

deieda

andagin

uindiorix

cuamiin

    ai

Tomlin supposes that this is a list of Celtic names (1988: 133), but Mullen demonstrates that, as with BA019 above, the inscribed text is clearly a continuous sentence with significant linguistic units (2007: 41). Like BA019, BA023 opens with a verb, with positioning 'reflecting the tendency for verb fronting in continental Celtic inscriptions' (Mullen 2007a: 38). The meaning of the verb itself is unclear. Perhaps the most evident connection to the language of the Latin texts can be read in line 3: *deieda* (or possibly *deuena*), which is considered a Celtic theonym. This is preceded by *deiana* (or *deuina*), meaning 'divine' (ibid), and it would thus seem that lines 3-4 address or invoke a goddess (Mullen 2007a: 39).

Although Tomlin initially interpreted these curses as possible lists of Celtic names (1988: 129, 133), analysis by Celtic linguists has demonstrated that these are in fact

transliterated Celtic. A further example of transliterated Celtic, or Gaulish, more specifically, can be found in a curse tablet from La Vayssière necropolis in southern France (Mees 2008). The tablet was found on top of a funerary urn, and Mees uses this and the binding language to determine that this is a binding curse against legal adversaries (Mees 2008: 136).

One final interesting use of language can be found in the unpublished text from Uley (Uley 52) mentioned above. Tomlin first took this to be a clumsily-written NRC, and noted that the text was too elaborate to be a pseudo-inscription (1993: 129; 2002: 175). He later determined that this was in fact a Latin text written with Greek characters. Although a transcription or restoration has not been published, Tomlin provides a translation which reads:

'I have given the man who stole my linen and my cloak and my two silver coins, whether boy or girl, whether male slave or female, whether man or woman, whether soldier or civilian. Take away his marrow, his blood, his soul, unless he brings them back to your temple.'

The text clearly has much in common with other inscriptions both from Uley and elsewhere in the province. We can also assume that whoever wrote it had command of both Latin and Greek (or at least the Greek alphabet), and it is tempting to imagine that they used the Greek letters as a means of enciphering the Latin text.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the peculiarities of the language of the British judicial prayers. In most cases, the use of themes or formulae are integral to the way the judicial

prayer 'worked': dedications secured the help of the deity; targeting methods guaranteed the correct person was selected; and suggested punishments ensured that the target would be appropriately punished. This discussion was made possible by examining judicial prayers in their regional context as well as in their global context. Acknowledging that British curse tablets are part of a wider network of ideas both allows for and necessitates the transgression of language boundaries. In some instances, such as BA010 from Bath, it seems that formulae are included not because they are really needed, but because they are so connected to the language of cursing that they were still thought to be necessary. This is perhaps in part because certain formulae met specific needs. This can be seen in regional tendencies to include one type of punishment or one type of targeting method, but it can also be seen on an individual level when apparent regional punishments are adapted to suit a very specific context.

It is clear that there is regional variation not only in the frequency of judicial prayers and the apparent infrequency of traditional *defixiones*, but also in the language of judicial prayers. It is, however, not enough to note regional variation. We need to think of the systems that cause it and the context within which it takes place. The chapters that follow address these issues.

Chapter Five: Identification and Identity

The purpose of this chapter is to consider what the curse tablets from Britain can tell us about identities in the Roman province. I have discussed the concept of identity in my discussion of theoretical frameworks above, but it is worth restating here that social identity can be characterised as a way of being that is performed and negotiated. It is something that is context-specific and constructed and understood by an individual or group and the individuals and groups with which they interact. For these reasons, identity is not static; the ways in which people understand themselves and those around them are not universal, and so to understand constructions of identity in the past, we need to look at evidence from the past.

I here consider what the curse tablets might reveal about the people who used them and the people they were used against. This is intended to inform how we might understand how such people viewed themselves and those around them. In other words, I look at how these individuals regarded themselves and how they categorised those around them. In order to study perceptions of identity, we must understand the source of our perspective. For this reason, I begin the discussion by looking at the ways in which we can identify those who used the curse tablets in question. To that end, I first discuss the issue of authorship in order to establish that the identities of those who used the curse tablets wrote them themselves. I then turn to what the content of the curse tablets can reveal about the identities of their users. This includes a look at onomastic evidence and possible indicators of identity in the spelling and colloquialisms included in the texts. I then look at the motivations for creating the tablets, paying attention to the values of stolen objects recorded and how this might be related to status.

The second part of this chapter considers the ways in which the users of curse tablets regard themselves. Because explicit descriptions of the authors are rare, this deals

less with clear identity categorisation and more with the subtle inequalities and hierarchies that are sometimes apparent.

Finally, I look at how the curse tablets in Britain can be used to understand aspects of identity – namely age, gender, and status – by analysing the use of the binary alternative conditions discussed in the previous chapter. It will be remembered that, even with the growing discourse on the concept of identity, these aspects of identity have received little attention, with focus largely directed at ethnicity or cultural identity (Hill 2001: 15; Pitts 2007: 695; Revell 2016: 16). Here I argue that the pairs included in binary alternative conditions suggest that age, gender, and status played a rather larger role than ethnic identity in the categorisation of others. Current scholars may be fixated by ideas of ethnic and racial origins, but it is possible that this was not a serious consideration for people in the Roman past.

Throughout the chapter, I draw upon recent accounts within Roman archaeology that have emphasised the importance of variable identities, using the curses that form the subject of this dissertation to provide additional insights. In keeping with the methods of this thesis, I use comparanda from elsewhere in the Roman world to consider what the tablets from Britain can reveal about identity. Although this chapter primarily deals with identity in Britain in the Roman period, it is also helpful to explore how identity in this context can help us understand the construction of identity elsewhere (and *vice versa*). This is especially important when we consider that identity construction and negotiation do not take place in a regional vacuum. It is, therefore, necessary to broaden our perspective.

Authorship

To study identity through curse tablets in Roman Britain, it is first necessary to understand who wrote them. It will be remembered that curse tablets are sometimes the work of professionals, who would inscribe commissioned texts for the interested party. Whether or not this was done in the judicial prayers in Britain is not entirely clear, but the available evidence as set out below suggests that professionals were not involved in the same capacity as at Kourion, for example, where a cache of *defixiones* attributable to the same scribe were found (*DT* 22-35, 37; *TheDeMa* 141, 142; Faraone 1991: 4). Additionally, the evidence does not support the existence of formularies like *PGM* that were consulted or copied. To answer the complex question of the authorship of curse tablets in Britain, we must consider the degree of competence visible in the inscribed texts as well as the formulaic and thematic similarities amongst groups of texts from individual contexts. This can only really be attempted at sites like Bath and Uley, where the high volume of curse tablets makes such a comparison possible. The present discussion draws on Tomlin's observations of the Bath tablets for this reason.

The clearest indication of the absence of professionals amongst the curse tablets from Bath is that no writer can be found to have inscribed more than one tablet (Tomlin 1988: 98; 2002: 170). *Tab. Sulis* 95 & 96 (BA102 & BA103 in the present work) were inscribed by the same hand, but both are written on unique 'blobs' and bare one list of names. As such, rather than two separate texts, these are the result of the inscription not fitting on one tablet. Tomlin notes that their survival suggests that examples of other duplicate texts would have been found if they existed (Tomlin 2002: 170). The absence of multiple tablets in one hand at least suggests individual scribes, but Tomlin begins his discussion of the tablets by asking whether the scribes of the tablets are the same as the authors (Tomlin 1988: 98). In other words, he considers whether the people responsible

for composing the texts were the same as those who inscribed the text in lead. Copying errors present in the longer, more elaborate texts suggest that these were copied from an original (Tomlin 1988: 99). Tomlin states that the mistakes present in both reversed and 'straight' texts are not the kind that are made when one is writing an original text, rather they are made when copying an original (Tomlin 1988: 98). This is evidence that an additional step was at least sometimes taken before the final inscription of the curse in lead, but it is not an indication of who took part in these steps. It is also clear that copying was not done from handbooks; the texts are too varied in form and content to have been copied from a handbook like *PGM*. We must, therefore, consider how the knowledge required to create a curse was transferred, and, for the purpose of the present discussion, who had access to this knowledge. The brief answer to the former question is that the formulaic content is the result of an orally transmitted tradition (Tomlin 1988: 99). This is not only the case at Bath. Curse tablets throughout Britain 'indicate a broad consensus of how one should address a god, but they have many variations, and there is not a single duplicated text' (Tomlin 1988: 170). How these methods reflect concepts of belief will be addressed in Chapter Six. A similar observation can be made regarding the enciphering of texts as a wide variety of methods were employed (such as the use of Greek script discussed in Chapter Four) both at Bath and at other sites.

Perhaps more telling of the identities of those who wrote the tablets at Bath are the varied levels of competence apparent in their inscription. The majority, according to Tomlin, are inscribed in a well-practiced, 'clerical' hand, while some have a calligraphic quality (Tomlin 1988: 100). Significantly, many tablets are 'so clumsy as to suggest semi-literacy' (Tomlin 1988: 100), and some tablets (*Tab. Sulis* 12-6, not included in the appendix to the present work) are pseudo-inscriptions inscribed with imitation letters (Tomlin 1988: 100; 2002: 170). Here we see a wide range of levels of literacy, and surely

the clumsily-written and illiterate inscriptions are not the work of professional curse-writers or scribes of any kind.

A further expression of literacy in curse tablets can be found in an unpublished text from Uley (Uley 52), which is written in Latin but with Greek letters (Tomlin 2002: 175). There are also two curse tablets from Bath (BA019 and BA023) and two from Uley (Uley 7 & 35, unpublished) that use Latin script, but are probably written in spoken Celtic (Tomlin 2002: 174). The variations of literacy expressed in such bilingual texts and by the different levels of proficiency raises the question of the pervasiveness of literacy in Britain in the Roman period. A bilingual gold charm found in Norfolk might also be considered among these. The amulet asks for health and victory for the bearer and similarly uses Greek letters in a Latin script (Tomlin 2004).

Estimations of literacy rates in Britain in the Roman period are hotly debated (Mattingly 2011: 220; Brindle 2018). For instance, Harris argues, drawing upon monumental epigraphic evidence, that the literacy rate was low, adding that patriotic considerations and misunderstanding of ancient educational conditions have led to exaggeration (Harris 1989: 270). Higher estimates of literacy note that mundane uses of writing suggest it was common (Raybauld 1999), and consideration of materials associated with writing (styli, writing tablets, ink wells) challenge conservative estimations (Hanson & Conolly 2002). Nonetheless, estimations for the adoption of writing in Latin in Britain '[seem] less impressive than for many areas of continental Europe' (Mattingly 2011: 220). Indeed, patterns of distribution of epigraphic evidence, even outside of military contexts, favour *coloniae* and provincial capitals as well as nucleated settlements on communication routes (Mattingly 2006: 296; Brindle 2018: 76). This might lead to the assumption that the curse tablets, as they represent fairly high levels of literacy in some cases, were written by those who were responsible for the

monumental epigraphy in colonial and large urban centres, (i.e. foreigners and those associated with the military). Onomastic analysis disproves such a conclusion.

Onomastics

The curse tablets in Britain record a multitude of names. These come from lists of potential targets like LEI001 (Leicester) or from statements by the principal in their address to the deity like BA073 (Bath). Neither instance is surprising as all curses attempt as much specificity as possible and the identification of the principal is a common feature in judicial prayers (see Chapter Two). Of all names recorded in the curse tablets in Britain, only three are certainly those of Roman citizens containing either *dua nomina or tria nomina*, although the absence of *tria nomina* in curse tablets is perhaps not surprising, as it is largely a product of the Augustan period (Mullen 2007b: 39-40), thus predating the British texts. These can be found in LON005 (against Tretia Maria) and LON006 (against Titus Egnatius Tyrannus and Publius Cicereius Felix) from London, and it is perhaps relevant that these are the names of those targeted by the curses, the curses themselves being 'standard' *defixiones* and not including the names of the principals. 150 personal names can be read in the curse tablets from Bath and a further 28 can be read in those from Uley (Tomlin 2002: 171). All of these names presumably did not belong to Roman citizens (or those who were citizens before the universal grant of citizenship in AD 212) as they are either Celtic names or 'colourless' Latin *cognomina*, with a ratio of 80 Celtic names to 70 Latin names at Bath and a ratio of 15 Celtic names to 13 Latin names at Uley. Mullen considers the ratio to be 77:70 (Mullen 2007b: 51). Tomlin, however, notes that the true predominance of likely Celtic names is greater, since Celtic names (e.g. Docca) are latent in some of the Latin cognomina (e.g. Docilis, *vel sim*.) (Tomlin 2002: 171). The 'colourless' cognomina (e.g. Saturnina in UL010) may equally

indicate non-Romans, as the adoption of such names is common amongst '"New" Romans, freedmen, slaves, and provincials' (Mullen 2007b: 51). As single names, sometimes with a patronymic in the genitive, are the 'standard method of identification for Celts,' these are another indication of local or at least non-Roman identity (Mullen 2007b.: 40). Mullen cites the changing ratio of Celtic to Roman names in ORC and NRC tablets, highlighting the slight increase in Roman names represented as palaeographic styles changed (Mullen 2007b: 50). Tomlin, however, notes that we should 'be cautious about supposing that "Celtic" names were being displaced by "Roman" ones in the mass of the population' from this evidence (Tomlin 1988: 97). We should additionally consider the possibility that individuals could have had multiple names that could be used in different circumstances.

Focusing again on Bath, the names preserved in the curse tablets can be contrasted with those found in monumental stone inscriptions from the temple and bathing complex. Around 36 names are contained in the stone inscriptions, and all but five of these name Roman citizens (Tomlin 2002: 171). The majority are either foreign visitors or local dignitaries (e.g. Lucius Marcius Memor *haruspex* (*RIB* 3049)). Tomlin also includes army officers and 'men who were buried there' in this category (Tomlin 2002: 171). It must be said that the majority of the extant stone inscriptions belong to an earlier date than the curse tablets, but Tomlin summarizes, 'the stones surely belong to a different socio-economic class, one that in crude terms was richer and more "Roman"' (Tomlin 2002: 172). It would therefore seem that this is evidence of different groups using different methods of communication with the divine. Significantly, Mattingly argues that the use of writing in one area of worship and the absence of it in another area is a matter of deliberate choice (Mattingly 2011: 230).

In the wider corpus of British curse tablets, it is notable that most of them come from the same region. As Tomlin has stated, 'Curse tablets are the work of civilians, most of them living within quite a small area, the *civitas* of the Dobunni – Roman subjects but not necessarily 'Romans', except that they wrote Latin' (2002: 167). The existence of a cohesive 'Roman' identity is questionable, but Tomlin's statement illustrates that the adoption fo a practice need not also indicate the adoption of an entire cultural package.

Vulgarisms

A further means for attempting to determine the identity of those who wrote the tablets might be an analysis of the language used. A study of vulgarisms or deviations from typical or classical Latin word choice and spelling could be considered enlightening in this respect. It will, however, be remembered that we should not make too much of vulgarisms or misspellings when attempting to determine socio-economic standing because access to extensive literary training was limited in the ancient world.

Although language or vulgarisms are not a suitable means of determining socio-economic standing, we can turn to the stolen items recorded in the curse tablets for some indication.

Motivations for Cursing

As most of the curse tablets in Britain with stated justifications were prompted by theft, they often include details of the stolen property. Sometimes the stolen property is given or consigned to the addressed deity. I have discussed the language used in such dedication clauses in Chapter Four, but here I look at the items stolen and how they might be indicative of socio-economic status and, by extension, expressions of identity in different groups.

Table 5.1: Categorisation of stolen items recorded in published curse tablets from Britain

Type	Tablet	Subject
Clothing	BA005	Theft of Docimedis' pair gloves
	BA010	Theft of Docilianus' hooded cloak
	BA038	Theft of Sulinus' bathing tunic and cloak
	BA068	Theft of Lovernisca's cape
	BA069	Theft of Neocritis'(?) cloak and tunic
	BA070	Theft of Cantissena's bathing tunic
	BA071	Theft of a cloak
	BA072	Theft of a hooded cloak
	CAE001	Theft of a cloak and boots
	LON001	Theft of headgear and band
	UL003	Theft of gloves
	UL014	Theft of Mintla Rufus' cloak
Coins	BA040	Theft of Docca's five *denarii*
	BA061	Curses Vericundinus? for heft of Arminia's two *argentioli*
	BA105	Theft of Annianus' six *argentioli* from his purse
	FH001	Theft of three thousand *denarii*
	HE001	Theft of *solidus* and six *argentioli*
	LEI002	Theft of Sabinianus' *argentioli*
	PH001	Theft of three thousand *denarii* by Vassicillus
	ROS001	Theft of Canius' *denarii*
Jewellery	BA020	Theft of a bracelet
	BA104	Theft of Basilia's silver ring
	LID001	Theft of rings
	LP001	Theft of a ring
	UL002	Theft of a ring(?)
	UL011	Theft of a gold ring
Agricultural/domestic	BA037	Theft of Civilis' ploughshare
	ROS003	Theft of Camulorix and Titocuna's mule(?)
	UL001	Theft of a beehive
	UL007	Theft of a bridle
	UL008	Harm to Docilinus' beast by Barianus, Peregrina, and Sabinianus
	UL009	Theft of Cenacus' draft animal by Vitalinus and Natalinus
Vessel	BA050	Theft of a bronze vessel
	BA067	Theft of a pan
	BA073	Theft of an iron pan
	BRA001	Theft of an iron pan?
Textiles	BA006	Theft of a rug
	BA056	Theft of a horse blanket?
	UL010	Theft of Saturnina's linen cloth

	BA106	Theft from Deomiorix' house
Multiple Items/Apparent Robbery	CSE001	Theft of: wreath, bracelets, cap, mirror?, headdress, leggings, ten pewter vessels
	LEI001	Theft of Sabinianus' *argentioli, de padoio*
	ROS002	Theft of two gaiters, an axe, a knife, and a pair of gloves
	UL004	Theft of (?) a silver plate and four rings
	UL012	Theft of two wheels, four cows, and many small belongings from Honoratus' house

Table 5.1 shows published curse tablets where the disputed items are stated and extant. Curses that mention perjury (BA101) or personal slight (BA046) are not included. The stolen (or, in the case of UL008, harmed) items and animals are categorised as clothing, coinage, jewellery, agricultural or domestic items, vessels, and textiles. A final category comprises curses that list multiple items or state that the theft took place in a domestic context. The largest category represented is that of clothing, with 12 of 45 relevant curses dealing with the theft of items of clothing and to which three textiles may tentatively be added. Although the majority of these come from Bath, texts from the Caerleon and London amphitheatres as well as Uley mention stolen items of clothing. Eight curses deal with the theft of coins. The values recorded are highly varied, ranging from two *argentioli* (BA061) to three thousand *denarii* (FH001, PH001). There is also disparity in the values of stolen jewellery items, although such values are less quantifiable. Domestic or agricultural items are well represented, particularly if lists of items (here categorised as 'multiple items/apparent robbery') are taken into consideration. Vessels and textiles may also be regarded as domestic, but further detail regarding the type or function of vessels is required.

It is helpful to turn to specific sites to gain further understanding of patterns. Observations of trends are visible at Bath and Uley, but generalizations cannot be made regarding locations that have yielded fewer curse tablets.

Table 5.2: Categories of stolen items recorded in curse tablets from Bath

Item Type	Number of Published Texts
Clothing	8
Coins	3
Jewellery	2
Agricultural/Domestic	1
Vessel	2
Textile	2
Multiple Items/Robbery	1
Total	**19**

It will be remembered that many of the Bath curse tablets were prompted by thefts that probably took place in the associated bathing complex. Amongst these items are four sums of money: five *denarii* (BA040), two *argentioli* (BA061), six *argentiolos* (BA008), and six *argentiolos* (BA105). Compared to the values stated in other tablets (cf. FH001, HE001, PH001), these are relatively minor losses and are, therefore, indicative of the low cost of production of curse tablets (Mattingly 2006: 311). It would be unexpected to invest more than the stolen amount in its recovery (Tomlin 1988: 81). Relatively low cost would have made the practice of creating a tablet available to a wide range of patrons, especially if professionals were not required.

The largest category of stolen goods from Bath is that of clothing, with which textiles may also be considered. Because these were probably of varying qualities of material and manufacture, the items themselves are not necessarily helpful in determining the statuses of the authors. We may, however, consider the circumstances under which the items were stolen. Bathhouse thieves were common enough that *fures balneari* were common literary figures (see Chapter Three). Tomlin (1988: 81; 2002: 174) speculates that patrons of the baths who fell victim to *fures balneari* either did not bring an attendant slave or hire a *capsarius* to watch over their belongings while they bathed either because they were careless, overconfident, or could not afford to do so. The majority of the tablets from the site do not, however, state what items were stolen, or the stolen item is otherwise

not extant. There therefore is insufficient evidence to suggest that most of the tablets were prompted by thefts from the baths. Indeed, BA106 explicitly states that the theft took place at the house of the principal. Tablets that contain lists of names, of which there are 12 from the site, also hint at different circumstances for theft or wrongdoing since the listed names surely do not represent all potential thieves at a facility as large as the bathing complex at Bath. Nonetheless, the relative frequency of items of recorded items of clothing does support Tomlin's interpretation, and some of the curses that do not record specific items may well have been prompted by bathhouse thefts.

Table 5.3: Categories of stolen items recorded in published curse tablets from Uley

Item Type	Number of Published Texts
Clothing	2
Jewellery	2
Agricultural/Domestic	4
Textile	1
Multiple Items/Robbery	2
Total	**11**

Less can be speculated regarding the circumstances of the thefts that prompted the inscription of the Uley tablets from their context, but the texts record a number of agricultural items. UL001, for example, is prompted by the theft of a beehive. UL007 records the theft of a bridle, and UL009 concerns a draft animal. While UL008 was not prompted by theft, the principal curses those 'who have brought evil harm on my beast,' *qui pecori meo dolum malum intulerunt.* Honoratus, the principal of UL012, states that his two wheels, four cows, and small belongings were taken from his house, *de hospitiolo meo*. As such, the recorded stolen items indicate a rural setting that is in keeping with the context of the shrine in which they were deposited. It is reasonable to suppose that the purported thefts took place fairly nearby. Although a number of smaller household items are recorded, there are no sums of money in the published texts from the site. We cannot,

therefore, know the minimum value considered worth inspiring a curse at Uley. At Bath, this would appear to have been five *denarii*, but it is perhaps relevant that, while the ring that prompted Basilia's creation of BA104 was made of silver, the ring that prompted UL011 was made of gold. While trends are visible at both Bath and Uley, it is clear that there was not a single type of theft or wrongdoing that prompted the creation of curse tablets at these sites, and a fairly wide range of values are represented.

While generalisations regarding the sorts of thefts that incited the creation of curses cannot be made at sites that yielded few or individual curse tablets, the specific items are nonetheless worth looking at. These include a number of personal items. For instance, LP001 (Lydney Park) was prompted by the theft of a ring, and CSE001 (Caistor St. Edmund) was prompted by the theft of a number of adornments and ten pewter vessels. More telling are the sums of money reported stolen. The principal of PH001 (Pagan's Hill) accuses Vasicillus of stealing three thousand *denarii* from their house. FH001 (Farley Heath) similarly records three thousand *denarii*. HE001 (Hamble Estuary) informs Neptune that Muconius has lost a *solidus* and six *argentioli,* dating the tablet to the fourth century. These sums are far greater than the five *denarii* lost at Bath, and, if the loss of such sums is to be believed, then it is clear that British curse tablets were employed by people of a wide range of economic standings.

Cursing and Self-Perception

In Chapter Two, I discussed arguments for studying curse tablets, more specifically *defixiones* and *κατάδεσμοι*, as methods for handling competition and risk (Faraone 1991; Eidinow 2007). I briefly mentioned that judicial prayers might be used in cases of perceived inequality or indifference. Because perceived inequality is dependent on individual and group identity, I here turn to the possible expression of such inequality in

curse tablets. This can be found in instances where the principal names their target. In such cases, we must wonder why they chose to employ a curse tablet when, presumably, the identification of the thief or wrongdoer – the purpose of such features as binary alternative conditions – has already been achieved. For a broader perspective, I use similar occurrences outside of Britain where it seems the principals felt or found themselves unable to obtain justice without the assistance of the divine, but first I give examples from the British texts.

Lists of names need not be considered here as they largely appear to represent lists of suspects rather than lists of known perpetrators. For example, LEI001 (Leicester) curses *eum qui… sagum involavit*, 'he who stole my cloak,' followed by a list of 17 names. Surely this is a list of suspects, and the principal is not accusing all of those listed as thieves. Lists of names without further information (e.g. BA022 from Bath, UL016 from Uley) may have a similar function. In such cases, there is an element of uncertainty that only the invoked god can do away with. There is also the issue of possible multiple targets, which may have been beyond the reach of the principal due to their number.

There are, however, several instances in the British texts where the principal needs no assistance in identifying their target. For instance, Arminia, the principal of BA061 (Bath), appears confident that Verecundinus (son of) Terentius has stolen two *argentiolos* from her. Similarly, Cenacus, the principal of UL009 (Uley), complains to Mercury regarding the theft of his cow, for which he accuses a man named Vitalinus and Vitalinus' son, Natalinus. In a sense, part of Mercury's job is already done for him. He does not have to seek out the culprits in addition to driving them to return the stolen property through the denial of health. In UL005 from the same site, Carinus asks Mercury to punish Primanus, who committed theft. UL013 is inscribed only with the name *Petroniius*. As with the ambiguous lists of names at Bath, comparison with other tablets

from the site provides enough context to deduce that this is the name of a cursed person. These are just some examples that are provided by these texts.

To help understand why one might use a curse tablet despite already having knowledge (or at least strong suspicion) of the guilty party, it is useful to broaden both the chronological and geographical scope of the texts studied. Some examples of the direct identification of the target are mentioned above, but a more detailed look at their content can help us understand the motives of those who employed these particular curses. To achieve this, it is useful to look at judicial prayers outside of Britain, which are often more detailed but nonetheless similarly attest to the belief in divine justice and intervention in social affairs. In some examples, there are clear references to previous attempts at restitution. A text from Cnidus is one such example.

DT 3 (*TheDeMa* 585) is a double-sided text on which a woman named Nanas curses two people, identified as Emphanes and Rhodo on side (b), because they have not returned a deposit that was given to them by Diocles. The relationship between the four named parties is not clear, but, as can be deduced from the direct mention of the cursed Emphanes and Rhodo on side (b), Nanas (and perhaps Diocles) is able to identify her targets. It is interesting that she does not do so on side (a). Faraone's (2011) interpretation of the text from Cnidus would explain this. He suggests that side (a) was inscribed first, and, when time had passed and the deposit had still not been returned, Nanas directly named the two guilty parties in a new inscription on the obverse (Faraone 2011: 37). It is worth noting that Nanas does not curse Emphanes and Rhodo for receiving the deposit, but rather she curses them for not giving it back. Here I quote the relevant lines in Greek and Faraone's translation:

…τοὺς λαβόντας

παρὰ Διοκλεῦς παραθή[καν]

καὶ μὴ ἀποδιδόντας, ἀλ[λ'] ἀ-

ποστεροῦντας…

'To Demeter and Kore and the gods beside Demeter and Kore Nanas is
consecrating those who received a deposit of money from Diocles and are not
giving it back, but rather they deprive him of it. If they give it back, may things be
lawful for them, but if they do not, unlawful, and may they [themselves] carry [the
deposit] up to Demeter and Kore and the gods beside Demeter and Kore because
they are being punished…' (Faraone 2011: 34).

Apart from the possibility that sides (a) and (b) were inscribed at different times, as is
suggested by Faraone, on side (a) there is a clear reference to the passing of time. *τοὺς*
λαβόντας, 'those who have received' is in the past tense, while *μὴ ἀποδιδόντας*, '[they
are] not giving back,' and *ἀποστεροῦντας*, '[they are] depriving,' are in the present. Nanas
clearly references a transaction that happened in the past and a denial that is happening
at the time of writing. Additionally, the mention of not giving something back does imply
that an attempt at restitution has been made.

There is an explicit reference to such an attempt at restitution in *DT* 2 (*TheDeMa*
584) from the same site. The principal, Artemeis, gives 'whomever did not return the
cloaks, clothes, and short frock that [she] left behind.' What is particularly interesting is
the circumstantial detail provided:

…ἐμοῦ ἀπαιτ[η]-

<σά>σας, οὐκ ἀπέδ[ωκέ]

μοι…

'Artemeis 'dedicates' to Demeter and Kore and all the gods with Demeter, the

person who would not return to me the articles of clothing, the cloak and the

stole, that I left behind, although I have asked for them back. Let him bring them

in person to Demeter even if it is someone else who has my possessions, let him

burn, and let him publicly confess his guilt. But may I be free and innocent of

any offense against religion… if I drink and eat with him and come under the

same roof with him. For I have been wronged, Mistress Demeter.'

Here Artemeis makes a clear reference to a previous unsuccessful attempt at regaining her lost items: *ἐμοῦ ἀπαιτησας, οὐκ ἀπέδωκέ μοι*, 'although I have asked, [they] do not give [them] back.' We do not know what form this attempt took, but what is significant is that an attempt was made (with or without the use of curses or an appeal to the gods) and that the lack of success is what caused Artemeis to employ this specific curse.

It must be reiterated that the texts from Cnidus are dated to the first and second centuries BC, at roughly 200 years before what might be the earliest examples from Bath (Tomlin 1988: 146). Their linguistic and cultural contexts also differ. It is, however, interesting to note that these examples show that, at least at the temple of Demeter at Cnidus, curses are sometimes employed when an earlier attempt, like that of Nanas in *DT* 2a (*TheDeMa* 585) (Faraone 2011: 37), at regaining the stolen or lost property has been made.

We must ask why the initial attempt did not work, though we can really only speculate as to the answer. It is clear that the principal of each tablet seeks to use the power of the deity. It is not unreasonable to conclude that they did so because they believe themselves to lack the necessary power to punish the wrongdoer. They may also have feared the consequences of pursuing the matter on their own. In this respect, it is perhaps significant that the thirteen judicial prayers from Cnidus were written by women. Faraone (2011) suggests that this took place in a Thesmophoric context, and only the names of women can be found amongst the dedicants. Although cursing at Cnidus was apparently a gendered practice, this does not seem to be the case in the British texts, where men and women used the curses in fairly equal numbers.

Another example of the apparent inability of the user of a curse to restore what they have been deprived of can be seen in *TheDeMa* 215, which was discussed in Chapter Two. The principal of this curse calls upon Demeter to punish a man named Epaphroditos, who encouraged the slaves of the principal and his wife, Epiktesis, to flee. It is clear that Epiktesis and her husband saw themselves as victims. The injustice committed by Epaphroditos is very conspicuous. Not only is the loss of slaves very visible, but the principal refers explicitly to their 'wandering around the marketplace.' It is clear, then, that the principal lacks power within his household as he is both unable to prevent his slaves from leaving and unable to make them return. A lack of public or social power, however, is particularly apparent. Versnel notes the principal's preoccupation with derision and fear of malicious laughter from his peers (Versnel 1999: 125). Indeed, this curse targets not only Epaphroditos, but also 'those who have cherished such thoughts against us and have joyfully prepared sorrows.' There is an element of vulnerability attested here; perhaps we can understand that the users of judicial prayers feared the social consequences of pursuing purported wrongdoers.

Significantly, the situation that inspired this curse is one where a man is lacking control over an enslaved woman: the principal is not able to make the unnamed enslaved woman return. Indeed, the more serious issue seems to be that his lack of power over an enslaved woman is witnessed by others, and that this is the subject of ridicule is particularly revealing of attitudes regarding how a household should be structured. The cursing of Epaphroditos, rather than the woman or her other fellows might indicate that the principal did not see them as worth cursing. In other words, he sees a social hierarchy wherein he somehow fits above his escaped slaves and below Epaphroditos.

The principal does not mention an attempt at forcing the slaves to return to his household, but it is apparent that he both lacks the power to force their return and fears becoming the subject of further mockery. Because the principal lacks confidence in his own ability to rectify the situation, he turns to the deity for assistance. As was the case with the two Cnidian examples discussed above, the goddess is asked to punish the wrongdoers who are apparently beyond the reach of the principal, though the principal may be able to identify them.

We can reasonably conclude that those who employed the strategy of the judicial prayer in Britain had a similar belief inasmuch as they believed themselves unable to bring about justice yet believed the addressed deity was capable of doing so. The distribution of curse tablets within Britain is enlightening in this respect. The concentration of tablets in southern civilian contexts and their absence in military contexts shows that the use of these texts was popular amongst those that did not have access to the regulations of the Roman army (Mattingly 2006: 315). Indeed, there is nothing in the content to suggest that the curses were employed by soldiers – no principal identifies himself as a soldier, and there are no distinctly military items listed as stolen objects. Soldiers did not need judicial prayers because they were better protected by the

law (Mattingly 2006: 315). For instance, a letter found at Vindolanda (*Tab. Vindol.* 344 1) addressed to the provincial governor or emperor describes an occasion where military law certainly failed the author. The letter describes the beating of the writer, who identifies himself as *hominem transmarinum*, 'a man from overseas,' probably at the hands of a centurion (Vindolanda Tablets Online) I quote only the translation here:

> *'... he beat (?) me all the more ... goods ... or pour them down the drain (?). As befits an honest man (?) I implore your majesty not to allow me, an innocent man, to have been beaten with rods and, my lord, inasmuch as (?) I was unable to complain to the prefect because he was detained by ill-health I have complained in vain (?) to the beneficiarius and the rest (?) of the centurions of his (?) unit. Accordingly (?) I implore your mercifulness not to allow me, a man from overseas and an innocent one, about whose good faith you may inquire, to have been bloodied by rods as if I had committed some crime.'* (*Tab. Vindol.* II 334)

Interestingly, the man describes his attempt at gaining justice: he has attempted to speak with the prefect, with the *beneficiarius*, and the centurions of the assailant's unit (where *eius* in *centurionibus… numeri eius* is taken to refer to the assailant). From the lack of justification for his own actions in the otherwise verbose text, it would seem that this is a rather expected course of action to take in these circumstances. Of course, the victim of the beating is not a soldier, but from his description of his attempt at restitution, we can see the hierarchy of officials that can be appealed to in a military context. For the purpose of the present discussion, perhaps the most important detail in the letter is the final extant clause: *imploro ne patiaris me… uirgis cuentatum esse ac si aliquid sceleris commissisem*, 'I implore you not to allow me… to have been bloodied by rods as if I

had committed a crime.' From this we can see what would be done to those who committed a crime at a military site, and the flogging of soldiers by centurions, at least, is also evidenced in literature (Tac. *Ann.* 1.23).

One more point can be made about this letter. The same frustration that we see here is surely similar to that of the users of curse tablets who viewed themselves as unable to directly challenge those they thought to be unjust. While they may not be soldiers or bear sticks, there is (a usually unstated) something about the named perceived wrongdoers that, to the principals, makes them unassailable without recourse to a judicial prayer. The only self-description in a published judicial prayer from Britain can be read in UL010 (Uley), where the principal, Saturnina, describes herself as a woman. Here, however, the targeted thief is entirely unknown, so it can only be very tentatively speculated that she saw herself as unable to obtain justice without a judicial prayer due to her gender.

Mattingly suggests the concentration of curse tablets dealing with theft is a British peculiarity, these being employed by 'lower-order Britons' to cope with judicial indifference (2006: 315). While there is a wide range of values of stolen items, the majority record small thefts. Examples where the target of the curse is directly named strengthen this point – a lack of anonymity makes the restoration of the lost property possible, yet the judicial prayers are still found to be necessary by those that employed them. It would therefore seem that these individuals saw themselves as powerless in their given circumstances, and such a view is connected to their perceptions of their own identities in relation to the identities of those around them.

Social Categories in Binary Alternative Conditions

In the previous chapter, I discussed the use of binary alternative conditions as a means of targeting unidentified suspects of theft and wrongdoing. In particular, I examined the ways in which this feature or formula might vary in form or language. These binary alternative conditions can, however, also be used to study identity if we pay particular attention to the types of social categories represented in them. In particular, binary alternatives can be used to consider how the users of judicial prayers saw the identities of those they considered potential suspects, and from this we can try to see how the users of judicial prayers conceptualised the world around them and those who lived in it. These identifiers included: man, woman, boy, girl, slave, or freeperson, as well as a number of less common identifiers. To demonstrate what might be deduced from the use of these, we can turn to a few examples.

BA107 from Bath gives a detailed gender condition. The text begins, *si puer si puella si vir si femina qui hoc involavit*, 'whether boy or girl, whether man or woman, (the person) who has stolen it.' This is followed by the punishment intended to urge the thief to return the property. Immediately noticeable is the absence of any mention of the thief's slave or free status. The text is nearly complete, so this omission is certain. Interestingly, the text is lengthy and elaborate, so it would not seem that the choice to omit *si servus si liber* was made in an attempt at abbreviation. Rather, with the inclusion of *si puer si puella*, 'whether boy or girl,' the user betrays a preoccupation with the age of the cursed individual. Although one might presume that *vir* and *femina* would have included men and women regardless of their age, the principal of this curse evidently did not take that for granted. That *si servus si liber* is omitted might indicate that the principal is aware of the free or slave status of their target, but the apparent lack of knowledge of any other aspect of the identity of the thief makes this unlikely. The inclusion of *si puer*

si puella and *si vir si femina* may be due to the principal's attempt to be as thorough as possible, but what is clear here is that the principal notes the possibility that the thief is a child.

Quite the opposite situation can be found in BA037 also from Bath, where Civilis curses the thief of his ploughshare, *si servus si liber si libertinus*, 'whether slave, free, or freedman,' forgoing gender and age conditions. This raises several questions. We must wonder why *libertinus* was included when *liber* ought to have included freedmen. It is possible that Civilis has a suspect in mind and knows that suspect is a freed person, thus making *libertinus* an important identifying factor to include, but this appears unlikely given that there is a lack of certainty as to whether the ploughshare was stolen or lost. More probably, at least to Civilis, there was a clear distinction between someone who was born free and someone who was freed, therefore making it necessary to include the members of all three groups as potential thieves. The text is damaged, but what survives indicates the absence of further identifiers. Possibly because the missing item is a ploughshare, Civilis did not think it necessary to include women as potential suspects and targets for his curse as he did not think it likely that a woman might steal a ploughshare. There is a possible insight into contemporary gender roles and perceptions here, but consideration of another text concerning the theft of agricultural items provides a different perspective.

UL012 from Uley curses the thief of two wheels, four cows, and many small belongings. Significantly, they are targeted *si baro si mulier si puer si puella si servus si liber*, 'whether man or woman, whether boy or girl, whether slave or free.' The use of all three binary conditions has the same implications as BA107 above; namely, it implies that 'man' (here as the 'Vulgar' *baro*) does not encompass 'boy,' *puer*. Equally, 'woman' (here the 'Vulgar' *mulier*) does not encompass 'girl,' *puella*. In other words, *puer* and

puella are thought to be in a different category than *baro* and *mulier*, and it is for this reason that both sets of binary alternatives might be included. Perhaps more significantly, the mention of *mulier* and *puella* indicates that women or girls can be considered responsible for the theft of livestock and large agricultural items.

In summary, binary alternative conditions functioned as a sort of net to catch possible wrongdoers, and this net consisted of social constructs that were thought to be relevant. Instances in which more than one set of opposing pairs are used are particularly revealing as they attest to multiple and intersecting identities. For example, by including both gender and status alternative pairs, UL012 above shows that free women and enslaved women as well as free men and enslaved men were viewed differently. This perception would have impacted their lived experience. Clearly, much can be read from individual uses of binary alternative conditions, but further conclusions can be reached when we compare these instances and when we consider contexts for deposition as well as the locations where thefts are said to take place.

'Whether boy or girl' – cursing and childhood

The use of *si puer si puella* (or variations of the formula) shows that a boy or girl can be considered a suspect worth targeting. From this fact, a number of things can be deduced.

Firstly, the acknowledgement that a child could be the target of a theft curse shows that children might have been present at the location of the particular theft. In other words, this particular set of binary alternative conditions suggests that the particular space in which the theft or wrongdoing is thought to have taken place was used by both adults and children. If we think of the way curses 'worked,' this also suggests children were present where curses were displayed or deposited, or otherwise somehow word got back to an audience that included children. It has been observed that children have been considered

to be invisible in the archaeological record (Baxter 2008: 162), but the study of childhood has developed over the past decades much in the same way as studies of gender and identity (see Harlow & Laurence 2002; Crawford & Lewis 2008; Gowland 2016; Lillehammer 2018).

In Roman archaeology and in archaeology as a whole, age has been under-studied and under-theorised, but interest in age and childhood have been growing (Revell 2016: 127). Studies of children in the Roman world range from the comparative analyses of child health (Gowland & Redfern 2010), to looking at the expression of adult feelings and ideologies regarding child and infant deaths as expressed in legal and epigraphic sources (Carroll 2018), to questioning methodologies used for looking for children at sites where they are known to be (Allison 2018), and cataloguing descriptions of accidental child deaths to determine spaces inhabited by and a risk to children (Laes 2004). Other approaches turn to literary sources for adult perceptions of children (Harlow & Laurence 2002). The binary alternative conditions in judicial prayers have the potential to add to studies of children in antiquity.

It is argued that many of the thefts recorded in the curse tablets from Bath took place in the associated bathing complex (Tomlin 1988). The use of the *si puer si puella*, 'whether boy or girl', set of binary alternatives in BA042, BA050, BA068, BA069, BA105, BA107, and BA109 would thus suggest that children were at least present at the bathing complex. This could be because they were welcome there or because they were known to sneak in. BA069 records the theft of a cloak and tunic, and BA068 records the theft of a cape; both were possibly left unattended while their owners were bathing. The stolen items in BA042, BA107, and BA109 are not stated or no longer extant, but the bronze vessel of BA050 and the six silver coins of BA105 might equally have been lifted while their respective owners were bathing.

From Uley, UL012 is particularly informative in that it states the location of the theft; the principal claims the two wheels, four cows, and other small belongings were lost *de hospitiolo meo*, 'from my house.' Again, including 'whether boy or girl' in their list of suspects of a theft that took place in a house indicates that the user of the curse, in this case Honoratus, acknowledged the possibility that a child might be in or near that space. Less is known of the other tablets from the site that mention children, Ul002 and (possibly) NP001, as they do not state a location of the theft and no common location is visible at Uley as it is as Bath. NP002 is also uninformative in this respect as it is unprovenanced, and the stolen item is not extant. While the coins stolen in HE001 from Hamble Estuary might have been taken in any location, the items listed in CSE001 from Caistor St. Edmund suggest a domestic setting. Of course, one does not need to necessarily belong in an area in order to commit a theft there, but presumably a child in an exclusively adult space would be too conspicuous to manage theft unobserved.

We can also deduce from the inclusion of the 'whether boy or girl' formula in a judicial prayer that the cursing of a child was acceptable. Indeed, there is no apparent differentiation in the punishments suggested in these curses when compared to curses that do not include the *si puer si puella* formula. The punishments suggested for the targets of the curses will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six, but for now it suffices to say that they can be severe, sometimes requesting that serious harm befall the target either in the denial of health and wellbeing, payment in blood, or loss of life. The latter is rare (four of 173 published curses explicitly call for death) and it is, therefore, not surprising that it does not occur in instances where the 'boy or girl' alternatives are used (these number 47 of 173). Despite this, there is no apparent difference in suggested punishment when children are acknowledged as potential targets compared to when they are not.

The following texts target adults and children alike. CSE001 (Caistor St. Edmund) states that the stolen items 'shall become [Neptune's] at the price of the thief's blood,' should the god wish, *si vull(u)eris, facta sang(uine) suo*. The thief targeted in in HE128 (Hamble Estuary) is to have their blood consumed, '*sanguem eiius consumas*, by Neptune; their life, health, and blood, *vitam valitudinem sanguiem eiius*, are additionally given to the god. UL002 (Uley) does not allow the thief to eat, sit (perhaps here meaning defecate), or urinate, *nec manducat nec sedit nec magiat*, until the stolen ring is returned. UL012, also from Uley, similarly deprives the thief of bodily functions until the property is returned. If NP00 is indeed from the same site, it follows suit, though with the additional request that the god torment the thief until(?) the day they die*: diem mortis concrutiat eum*. BA050 and BA105 from Bath both request that the targeted thieves pay for their respective crimes with their blood. In BA105, the addressed goddess is to 'reckon the blood,' *sanguinem suum (r)eputes*, though the meaning is not entirely clear. The punishment requested in BA050 is particularly vivid: 'let he who has committed [the theft] spill their blood into the vessel itself,' *qui hoc fecerit sangu(in)em suum in ipsmu aenmu fundat*. Thus, it can be said that one of the most explicitly violent punishments represented in the corpus of British curse tablets is aimed at a targeted thief apparently regardless of their age.

This occurrence potentially sheds light on perceptions of childhood and the relationship between adults and children. It is often noted that childhood is a cultural construct and in need of defining in each context (Baxter 2008: 163). Age can be measured in terms of chronological, physiological, and social age (Revell 2016: 128). For instance, modern age categories, which tend to focus on chronological age (the time elapsed from birth), do not necessarily apply to those of the ancient Roman world, where such ages were often inaccurately recorded (Harlow & Laurence 2002: 12-3). For

instance, Eckardt (2017: 176) gives an example of the remains of an 18-year-old from Budapest, noting that modern reckoning would consider him an adult while he may not have been considered to be one at his death. It has also been noted that we should not consider human biological development and social aging to be universal; these are instead dependent on variables such as status and environment (and thus nutrition) (Harlow & Laurence 2002: 14).

It is worth reiterating that this is a formula. With the exception of BA105, which provides a list of names, there is really nothing to suggest that the principals knew anything about the identities of the thieves they targeted, and thus we cannot know what ages might be associated with *puer* or *puella* in this context. From the apparent need to include *puer* and *puella*, we can reason that the groups they represent were not adequately encompassed by *vir* and *femina* (*vel sim.*) or even *servus* and *liber*.

The inclusion of children in methods for targeting thieves brings the question of an intended 'readership' or 'audience' to mind. As was covered in detail in Chapter Two, a curse tablet 'worked' through fear. In the case of 'standard' *defixiones*, this fear took the form of suspicion that one had been cursed (Eidinow 2017). With judicial prayers, a thief or wrongdoer might fear retribution in the form of a curse, and these fears might be confirmed either through witnessing or hearing of the deposition of a tablet. It has been argued above that the curse tablets in Britain do not appear to have been intended for display, so knowledge of the creation of a curse must come from witnessing or hearing of the performative elements of creation and deposition. Equally, misfortune or illness might prompt an individual to right whatever wrong they suspect they have been cursed for (Tomlin 2002: 166-7). In their acknowledgment that the unknown thief may be a child, tablets that contain the 'boy or girl' set of binary alternative conditions indicate that children who had stolen must have been subject to the same fears as their 'man or

woman' counterparts. Because children were subject to the same punishments as adults, they must have also been subject to the same fear of punishment. Thus, child behaviour is here shaped the same way as adult behaviour.

This last point raises one final question: if children or young people had knowledge of curses, as is required for judicial prayers to be 'effective,' then did they also know how to make them? There is nothing to indicate that cursing is limited solely to adults. The more complicated inscriptions (such as BA050) suggest a mature or even professional authorship, but literacy was certainly not limited by age (Eckardt 2017: 177-80). Among the published curse tablets from Britain, only one principal identifies themselves with one of these social identifiers (UL010 from Uley discussed above). This question must therefore remain unanswered, but I wonder if there is potential for handwriting to be analysed in a similar way to painted designs on ceramics, which have been used to demonstrate the association between cognitive development and certain types of errors (Crown 1999, cited by Baxter 2008: 167).

'Whether man or woman': cursing and gender

The 'man or woman' and 'slave or free' formulas offer much the same potential. Namely, the use of *si vir si femina* (*vel sim.*) and *si servus si liber* (*vel sim.*) suggest that men, women, slaves, and free people were considered worth targeting, but as the identifiers are different, so too are their implications. The presence of man/woman binary alternatives suggests that the location at which the supposed crime took place was used by or accessible to both men and women. Likewise, the presence of slave/free binary alternatives suggests a space was used by or accessible to both slaves and free people. As gender and status, like age, are different ways of constructing gender, I treat them

separately here for organisational purposes. It is, however, important to remember that age, gender, and status intersect.

More so than the archaeology of children, gender studies in archaeology has become widely accepted (Gilchrist 2009). As studies of the past shift away from a male-dominated narrative, women are not subject to the same perceived 'invisibility' that they once were. This increase in feminist approaches is largely influenced by Conkey and Spector's (1984) article and responses to it. In their article, Conkey and Spector called for the development of feminist approaches through critiquing male-dominated biases, studying the lives of women, and studying the relationships between genders (Conkey & Spector 1984; see also Revell 2016: 106). Nonetheless, questions of gender have largely been seen as secondary to topics such as the military, imperialism, and cultural change (Revell 2016: 105). As a result, studying women in the past is viewed as a specialized sub-discipline, with research that does not clearly state a focus on women and gender assumed to be about the lives of men (Hanscam & Quiery 2018).

A closer look at binary alternative conditions can contribute to our understanding of gender. The presence of 'whether man or woman' in a text is enlightening as it indicates that men and women were apparently considered equally capable of committing theft and equally acceptable targets for cursing. In the case of Bath, where it is thought that the recorded thefts took place in the bathing complex, this could shed light on bathing practices and the use of facilities by both genders.

There is also potential here for looking into the way sex and gender are constructed and perceived. In recent years, individuals such as the 'Harper Road person' and the 'Gallus' from Catterick have shown that the construction and expression of gender is not always straight-forward. The so-called Gallus from Catterick (*Cataractonium*) is an individual with an osteologically sexed male skeleton aged 20-25

years who was found wearing jewellery that is typically associated with women (Revell 2016: 110 citing Wilson 2002: table 117, grave 951). This jewellery included a jet necklace, two bracelets on the left arm, and a copper alloy anklet on the right leg (ibid.). The individual had two pebbles in their mouth and was also buried with a glass flask. This has led to the interpretation that they were one of the Gallii, castrated followers of Cybele and therefore existed between gender boundaries (Cool 2002: 41; Revell 2016: 110). Another potential blurring of distinct gender boundaries can be seen in the 'Harper Road person,' who was buried south of Londinium in the early Roman period and aged 21-38 (Redfern et al. 2017: 257). The individual's skeleton is anatomically female, and they were buried with goods typical of female burials (ibid.). These items comprised a mirror, a bronze neck-ring, a toilet set, a flagon, two samian dishes, and pig bones (Hingley et al. 2018: 257 citing Cotton 2008: 156, 157-8). aDNA analysis of the remains, however, identified male (XY) chromosomes, and it is reasoned that the individual had a sex development disorder (Redfern et al. 2017: 257). It is not known how this disorder would have manifested, but the individual's community appears to have seen them as a woman or at least treated them as a woman after their death (ibid.). Even if burial does not directly reflect lived experience (Revell 2016: 110), we can see from the examples of the 'Gallus' from Catterick and the 'Harper Road person' that individuals did not always fit into gender categories (and may not have been expected to) and that even biological features exist 'on a continuum from hyper-feminine to hyper-masculine' (Gowland 2017: 180-1).

This makes the use of binary alternative gender conditions all the more interesting. Significantly, *vir/femina* and *baro/mulier* are structuring opposites. In this sense, it is clear that *vir* is defined as not *femina* (or *vice versa*) and *baro* is defined as not *mulier* (or *vice versa)* in the context for cursing. Above I have stated that the aspects of

identity represented by binary alternative conditions are the aspects that were seen as most relevant when identifying or targeting a person. I think this can be extended to suggest that the opposing terms provided for each aspect (in this case *vir/baro* and *femina/mulier*) for the aspect of gender were the most applicable terms for describing a person. This offers a different perspective to cases where gender is seen to be more fluid or less binary. Of course, this is not to say that every individual belonged or was perceived to belong to one of these categories. Instead, it seems that other categories and the blurring of boundaries were not frequent enough to have found expression in formulaic binary alternative conditions.

As with the terms *puer* and *puella* discussed above, we are limited in our understanding of what, exactly, these gender terms encompassed in this context. Just as we do not know what chronological or physiological ages were considered to be *puer* and *puella* (as opposed to *vir* and *femina, vel sim.*), the curse tablets also do not indicate what behaviours, ways of living, or physical characteristics caused someone to be considered *vir* or *femina* (*vel sim.*). One text from Uley (UL010 discussed above) is potentially enlightening in this respect. The principal, Saturnina, describes herself as *muliere*, 'a woman.' Of the 173 published curse tablets from Britain, this is the only one with such a self-description. Overwhelmingly, however, the age, gender, and status categories are used to describe others.

'Whether slave or free': cursing and status

The same considerations of the use of space can be extended to the use of status conditions; in the use of the terms *servus* and *liber* as possible targets for a judicial prayer, the principal attests to the possibility for the presence of both slaves and free people in the space where a crime or wrongdoing has taken place. Perhaps more importantly, it

provides some insight into social perceptions of the enslaved. These observations are particularly helpful because we know so little about slavery and the enslaved in Roman Britain.

The archaeology of slavery in any place or period is problematic largely because slavery was a legal status; therefore, slaves cannot be identified without textual evidence (Revell 2016: 97 citing Morris 2011). Additionally, the institution of slavery is variable, being experienced differently by different individuals and groups. Thus, the existence and characteristics of slavery cannot be determined based on archaeological remains alone (Redfern 2018: 252). Where slavery in a society can be confirmed by literature, however, comparative approaches can be used, and this is particularly helpful when patterns have been identified in better-documented contexts. For instance, Webster (2005) uses Creolisation theory, developed by New World archaeologists, to identify the ways in which slave populations used materials differently and how the different use of materials might thus be taken to indicate that the people who used them were enslaved. Another comparative approach that has been taken is that of Redfern (2018), who uses primary sources and bioarchaeological evidence to establish patterns of stress and disease that are characteristic of slavery. She notes, however, that bonded labourers and the poor are also victims of structural violence in a hierarchical society and may have a similar standard of living to the enslaved, being therefore subject to similar disease inequality. Redfern defines structural violence as, 'a distinct form of violence, which is embedded in existing social, cultural and economic systems; it governs the allocation of resources and determines agency, and because the inequalities it creates are often very long-lasting, individuals and communities may be blind to them' (2018: 252). . This disease inequality would be visible in adult populations as high rates of degenerative osteoarthritis, injuries caused by assault, dental disease, and high rates of non-specific infection. In sub-adult

populations, metabolic diseases and poor growth can indicate structural violence (Redfern 2018: 253). Regarding the inability to differentiate between those who were enslaved and those who were not, Redfern states, 'We have to accept that we may never be able to tell the victims of structural violence apart, unless we are fortunate enough to discover their remains in a context which unequivocally describes or reveals their status' (Redfern 2018: 253).

In Roman Britain, definitive evidence for slavery practices can be found in the Bloomberg Tablets, a group of over 400 writing tablets from London dated from AD 57 to 90 (Tomlin 2016). One of these tablets records the sale of a woman named Fortunata, who was purchased by Vegetus, the slave of an imperial slave (Tomlin 2003: 45). This bill of sale states that Fortunata was sold for 600 *denarii,* indicating that Vegetus had access to considerable resources (Hingley 2018: 69). Vegetus may have been acting on behalf of his master. This is supported by other tablets from the collection that record slaves and freedmen acting on behalf of their masters or patrons (Tomlin 2016: 54), revealing considerable agency and complex identities.

Although it is challenging to identify enslaved individuals and populations in the archaeological record, it can be achieved. It is, however, also fruitful to 'move beyond identifying presence to understanding identity' (Revell 2016: 98). A close consideration of the slave/free binary alternative conditions found in British curse tablets can be informative in both identifying presence and in understanding identity. My first observation regards the identification of the presence of the enslaved. I have already said that the use of *si servus si liber* indicates that the spaces in question were probably used by both slaves and free people, albeit in different ways. To this I would add that the prevalence of the formula – or even the fact that it is a formula at all – suggests that 'slave' and 'free' were categories that people actively used to identify others. Thus, it

would seem that the concepts of slavery and freedom (or slave-status and free-status) were pervasive enough to be considered as integral to a person's lived experience as gender or age. It has been suggested that, due to their cost and limited availability, the enslaved population in Britain was probably low (Mattingly 2006: 294), but the use of 'slave' or 'free' categories supports the existence of a fairly substantial slave population in Britain. At the very least, it seems that the proportion of freeborn individuals in the population was not high enough for a target's free status to be assumed.

The use of the 'slave' or 'free' categories as a targeting method in judicial prayers can also inform us of the way in which slaves were perceived in this context. It is clear from the fact that slaves were targeted that they were seen as active agents who could be held accountable for theft or wrongdoing. This contrasts with Roman legal sources, upon which we greatly depend for reconstructions of the family and household. As slaves were considered property under Roman law, they could not be held responsible for theft or damages in a legal sense. Instead, responsibility fell to their owners (*Twelve Tables* 12.2a). This is also attested by the concept of noxal surrender (the surrender of a slave to the injured party in the event that a slave causes damage in order to protect the owner from owing damages above the value of the slave). The earliest iteration of this law is in the Twelve Tables (12. 2b), and it is restated in the *Institutiones* of Gaius (4.75-7) and the *Institutiones Justiniani* (4.8), thus existing at least from the fifth century BC to the sixth century AD.

Whatever Roman law says about who is responsible when an enslaved person commits a crime, the curse tablets show a very different picture. Not one of the published curse tablets from Britain indicates that the owners of the conditionally targeted slaves were expected to return items or repay their value (either in money or blood), and, to my knowledge, no extant judicial prayer from anywhere in the Mediterranean world curses

a slave owner for something their slave is believed to have done. This suggests that legal perspectives can be very different from social realities.

Other Pairings

There are two exceptional cases that show that binary alternative conditions need not be limited to gender, age, and status pairs. The first is HCW001 from Hockwold-cum-Wilton, which, in addition to *si servus si liber*, also includes *si paganus si miles*, 'whether civilian or soldier.' The second exceptional case can be found in BA105 from Bath, which begins *seu gentilis seu Christianus*, 'whether pagan or Christian,' followed by the three most common binary alternative pairs. The two texts demonstrate a preoccupation with military identity and religious identity respectively and, perhaps unsurprisingly, attest to the binary nature of these identities. The text from Bath is particularly interesting in that, being inscribed in NRC, it is dated paleographically to the third century or later, and possibly reflects a growing Christian population in the area.

The text from Hockwold-cum-Wilton (HCW001) potentially offers insight into the integration of soldiers in the civilian community. Unfortunately, the depositional context of HCW001 is obscure (Hassal & Tomlin 1994: 297), and whoever wrote the curse did not mention what was stolen or where the theft took place. We cannot, therefore, know where this integration took place, but it is possible that the principal of the curse was from the nearby settlement. The text is inscribed in capitals, preventing palaeographic dating, but occupation of the settlement began in the second-century AD (Gurney 1986: 49), so it seems likely that the curse was not deposited before this period. The presence of 'whether civilian or soldier' seems to suggest a military presence – or a least the presence of soldiers – in the area. Similar considerations can be made regarding

an unpublished text from Uley, which also targets a thief 'whether soldier or civilian' (Uley 52; Tomlin 2002: 175).

The high density of the military population in Roman Britain would have had a large impact on the province economically and culturally (Mattingly 2006: 166). The presentation of the military population, including (among other things) their way of dress, would have distinguished them from civilians (James 1999: 18-21). The status, protection, and rights of soldiers would have also set them apart (James 1999: 15). It is clear that one's civilian or soldier identity would have had great impact on their lived experience, so it may be surprising that binary alternative conditions that target an individual 'whether civilian or soldier' do not occur more than once. It has been suggested that, by the third-century AD, regiments would have been well-integrated into local life in the frontier provinces (James 1999: 21). The absence of reference to civilian or military identities in curse tablets, however, does not necessarily support this idea.

Conclusions

Many observations in this chapter were made by broadening analysis of the British texts to include evidence from judicial prayers of other periods and regions. This is particularly true of observations regarding self-perception and perceived social power. Much of this chapter does not directly deal with the exchange of ideas through networks, but a wider, global perspective as allowed for appropriate comparisons to be made. This has demonstrated the compatibility of concepts of identity with globalisation approaches and shown the advantages of employing multiple analytical tools or frameworks.

It is clear that judicial prayers provide a helpful insight into the expression and construction of identities in Roman Britain. This is particularly apparent when we consider the construction of age, gender, and status identities as they are mentioned in

the binary alternative conditions. These aspects have often been neglected by modern scholarship, causing our understanding to be limited, so it is important that we examine them whenever possible. It is also worth noting that certain aspects of identity (for example, occupation, wealth, and ethnicity) are conspicuously absent. The absence of ethnic identifiers is particularly relevant when we consider the continued preoccupation with cultural identity and ethnicity that is often apparent in discourses of identity. Such fixations have already been criticised for their similarities with Romanisation and their neglect of other aspects of identity (Hill 2001: 15; Pitts 2007: 695; Revell 2016: 16). To these criticisms, I would add that the absence of cultural or ethnic identity in binary alternative conditions suggests that this aspect may not have played much of a role in the identification of others. Further research into identity represented in other forms of local literacy may shed more light on the matter. While it may be conjectural to suppose that the absence of ethnicity in binary alternative conditions indicates that it had less influence on an individual's lived experience (there is, after all, more to identity than the perception of and identification by others), it is clear that our approaches to identity in the past need to continue to shift toward more comprehensive and complex understandings.

Chapter Six: Concepts of Belief

This chapter explores what curse tablets in Britain can reveal about concepts of belief. More specifically, it explores what judicial prayers can reveal about communication between mortals and the divine. I begin by considering the motivations for cursing in order to determine what the users of judicial prayers deemed worthy and appropriate reasons for cursing. In Britain, this is usually theft, but other grounds for cursing are also considered. Naturally, this leads to a discussion of which gods can be called upon for help and what factors influenced the choice of a particular deity for invocation. Following this, I discuss methods for securing the help of the divine – namely persuasion through the dedication of items and people – and what this reveals about ownership, personhood, and responsibility. I then consider the punishments requested for the targets of judicial prayers and how this can inform our understanding of what the gods were believed to be capable of as well as what was considered suitable retaliation for wrongdoing.

In effect, this chapter returns to the question of how curse tablets 'worked.' What beliefs allowed for their adoption and contributed to their prolonged use, and what might these beliefs tell us about religion in Roman Britain and the other locations that have yielded similar texts? I again use examples from throughout the Mediterranean world for appropriate comparison.

The arguments that follow must necessarily return to the topics of language and identity. For instance, it is impossible to talk about the meaning of requests for 'payment in blood' without turning to the varied language used to communicate these requests. Because identity and belief are interconnected, it is also not possible to discuss conceptualizations of the divine without also considering those involved in the creation and expression of these concepts. There is, therefore, some unavoidable overlap between this and the previous chapters.

Grounds for Cursing and Being Cursed

It is well established by this point that the majority of known curse tablets from Britain are judicial prayers. As such, they are pleas or complaints to the divine concerning a purported wrong that has been done to the principal. Indeed, one of the elements that Versnel considers characteristic of judicial prayers is the mention of injustice (2010: 279-80). It can be readily observed that theft is the most common inspiration for cursing in Britain, but there are other wrongdoings attested as well. In this section, I discuss what the motivations for cursing represented in the British curse tablets reveal about the circumstances required the intervention of the gods and were, therefore, considered worthy reasons for cursing. I also consider what form this belief takes at locations outside of Britain that have also produced judicial prayers in order to form comparisons and set the British material in the wider context of judicial prayers. Instances where theft is the stated motivation have been covered at length in the present work, so I do not provide examples of such British texts here, but other motivations warrant further attention in order to examine what the grounds for cursing and being cursed can reveal about perceptions of justice and the power of the divine in Britain during the Roman period. It will be shown that, while the prevailing concern expressed by judicial prayers is with theft, it was ultimately the prerogative of the individual to determine what sort of wrongdoing merited cursing.

The content and stolen items of the curse tablets from Bath indicate that many of the curses at this site were prompted by thefts that took place in the associated bathing complex (see Chapter Five, 224-7). There are, however, also curses that were clearly not prompted by such events or are otherwise ambiguous. This includes BA046, which curses someone 'who denies (making) a false accusations,' *qui calamea negat*. The text is brief and damaged by corrosion and folding, so there is no further information regarding the

calamea, but this is surely one curse that was not prompted by theft, although it is tempting to speculate that the false accusation denied might pertain to theft or the unjustified creation of a judicial prayer. Loosely related to this *calamea* text is the later BA101, which conditionally curses the named parties in the event that they commit perjury. For further context, I provide Tomlin's full restoration and translation.

Uricalus Do[c]ilosa ux[or] sua

Docilis filius suus et Docilina

Decentinus frater suus Alogiosa

nomina<a> eorum qui iuraverunt

<qui iuraverunt> ad fontem deae Sulis(s)

prid(i)e idus Apriles quicumque illic per-

iuraverit deae Suli facias illum

sanguine suo illud satisfacere

'Uricalus, Docilosa his wife, Docilis his son and Docilina, Decentinus his brother, Alogiosa: the names of those who have sworn <who have sworn> at the spring of the goddess Sulis on the 12th of April. Whosoever has perjured himself there you are to make him pay for it to the goddess Sulis in his own blood.'

This text is unique in that it contains the only date in the Bath tablets and clearly accompanied an oath sworn at the spring. The writing is distinctive and well-practiced, and there is no attempt at enciphering the text. In this instance, we can imagine this text was inscribed on 12 April with all of those mentioned in attendance. As the curse is to take effect on the condition that someone has committed perjury, it is not unlike texts that

conditionally curse a wrongdoer (e.g. BA104). BA101 is particularly important for considering the concepts of belief that the Bath tablets represent because it demonstrates that the goddess might be called to act concerning matters other than theft or past wrongdoing. It is also a clear record of the kind of activity that took place at the site, at least on this occasion. Here we see that the goddess is involved in legal or quasi-legal proceedings: the swearing of the oath takes place *ad fontem deae Suli(s)*, 'at the spring of the goddess Sulis,' and the goddess is to make whoever has perjured themselves pay for their crimes in their own blood. This final statement is in the second person subjunctive: *deae Suli facias illum sanguine suo illud satisfacere*, 'you are to make him pay for it to the goddess Sulis in his own blood.'

In BA101, and conditional curses like it, we can see three roles of the deity. First, they are to determine whether a crime has taken place. They are then to find the culprit. Finally, they are to punish the culprit. This reveals that the deity (here Sulis) is believed capable of these things; additionally, it reveals that it was appropriate to ask the deity to act in this manner on behalf of the principal.

BA041 possibly reveals a further motivation for cursing, though it may well have been motivated by theft. The principal asks Sulis Minerva to take vengeance on 'those who have done (me) wrong,' *qui fraudem fecerunt*.' It is probable, however, that this *fraudem* (if it can be restored) indeed refers to theft. For instance, LEI001 from Leicester refers to both theft and a vague wrongdoing (*qui fraudem fecit… qui furtum (fecit)*), and UL002 from Uley likewise mentions both (*qui mihi frudem fecerit anulum involaverit*). Perhaps here we see a different method for stating wrongdoing rather than an actual different motivation.

Although less can be determined regarding the circumstances of theft outside of Bath, the curses are still mostly motivated by theft or the loss of belongings, but there are

exceptions. UL008 from Uley curses four individuals *qui pecori meo dolum malum intulerunt*, 'who have brought evil harm on my beast.' There is an additional claim recorded, but it cannot be restored. *Dolus Malus* is a common legal phrase, but what exactly it entailed is unclear. This is a possible reference to poisoning or witchcraft (Hassall & Tomlin 1988: 330), and it is unique amongst British texts for this reason. UL015, also from Uley, is a complaint to Mercury regarding 'those who are badly disposed towards me (and) are acting badly over [something],*' illis qui mihi male cogitant et male faciunt supra*…' What they are acting badly over cannot be read.

In these few examples, we see that it is suitable and, therefore, thought effective to ask the presiding deity for assistance with matters other than the return of lost property or the punishment of thieves. By extension, it is clear that such actions were within the power of the deity. The pattern in the extant tablets in Britain, however, favours theft as a motivation for creating judicial prayers. It is worth looking at other locations that have yielded collections of judicial prayers in order to see how this pattern compares and what it might reveal regarding perceptions of the roles of the divine in securing justice.

The curse tablets from Cnidus are a good choice for comparison as twelve out of the fourteen texts include a justification. This treats *DT*4a and *DT*4b (*TheDeMa* 566) as two separate texts. *DT*7 and *DT*9 (*TheDeMa* 588 & 590) are too lacunose for charges to be read. Charges of theft or the failure to return property are most frequent, but these can be read in only half of the tablets. Two texts (*TheDeMa* 229 & 566a) concern slander – specifically accusations of husband-poisoning. A further two texts (*TheDeMa* 586 & 591) deal with missing husbands, and one text (*TheDeMa* 567) curses those who physically attacked the principal. There is also the additional charge of poisoning in one of the texts concerning theft (*TheDeMa* 589). In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed how these motivations for cursing have been used to determine that those who were responsible for

the creation of the curses at Cnidus were women (Faraone 2011), but here I consider what concepts of belief they represent.

Faraone argues that, due to their juridical language and invocation of Demeter and Kore, the curse tablets from Cnidus were part of the Thesmophoria festival (2011). He argues that the self-protection clauses employed in these and similar curses (such as *TheDeMa* 574) suggest a time of cohabitation or 'camping out' that would have taken place during the festival (Faraone 2011: 34). The argument is convincing, but whether or not the curses are a product of juridical proceedings that took place during the Thesmophoria, they at least reveal the sorts of crimes or wrongdoings that were thought worthy of the goddesses' attention. As in Britain, it is apparent that, although cursing thieves is the most popular motive for creating a curse, whether or not a wrongdoing merited the attention of the divine was for the principal to decide.

This signifies the idea that 'the gods enforce moral behaviour' (Henig 1984: 132). Henig makes this observation regarding the punishment that is to befall Vitalinus and Natilinus, a father-son duo, unless they return a stolen draught animal (see UL009, discussed below). It can, however, be applied to a range of behaviours and is a belief that is as widespread as judicial prayers themselves (Versmel 1991: 71; 1999: 146). That someone can be cursed for something other than theft is perhaps obvious, but it is easy to lose sight of this when confronted with the frequency of theft texts in Britain. The possible explanations for this concentration of texts dealing with theft and the adoption of judicial prayers are a subject addressed in Chapter Seven.

'Who Ya Gonna Call?'

We must consider which deities were called upon for assistance. I discussed the language used in the invocation of the divine in Chapter Four. Here I discuss what deities are

favoured for invocation and what this can reveal about the nature of the respective deities and, by extension, practice and belief in Roman Britain. This is particularly revealing of how people conceptualised the gods and how they were identified. I also consider the concept of *interpretatio Romana* and how the invocation of deities on curse tablets can inform us of this process and its complexities. The concept of *interpretatio Romana* can be considered the translation or interpretation of alien or non-Roman deities as well as the practices with which they are associated (Webster 1995: 153). The term originally occurs in Tacitus' often-quoted passage describing the identification of the (actually here unnamed) deities of a particular sacred grove as Castor and Pollux (*Germania* 43). His reasoning is that the gods worshipped there are brothers and young men: *ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur* (Tac. *Germania* 43). I will demonstrate here that the invocation of deities on curse tablets illustrates the complexities of this process.

It will be remembered that curse tablets usually appeal to chthonic deities, *daimones*, or spirits of the untimely dead, and judicial prayers differ in this respect. Indeed, this is one of the defining features outlined by Versnel (1991; 2010). Because the majority of the curse tablets from Britain were found at Bath and Uley, we can expect that the majority of the texts where the deity is named invoke either Sulis Minerva or Mercury. While this is largely true, the reality is somewhat more complex, especially when we consider other findspots. There are six curses that address Mars, and four that invoke Neptune, while a handful of other gods (most surprisingly Jupiter Optimus Maximus) are also asked for assistance (Table 6.1). I first consider the invocation of gods at locations other than Bath and Uley before turning to the two large collections, which present a complex picture of the identification of the divine and association of the divine with locale.

Table 6.1 Table showing all published texts from Britain where a deity is named. Instances where the name of the deity is restored are indicated with a question mark.

Tablet	Location	Deity invoked
BA008	Bath	Sulis
BA010	Bath	Sulis
BA024	Bath	Sulis
BA025	Bath	Sulis
BA027	Bath	Sulis
BA038	Bath	Sulis Minerva
BA039	Bath	Mars
BA040	Bath	Sulis Minerva
BA041	Bath	Sulis Minerva
BA051	Bath	Sulis
BA052	Bath	Sulis Minerva
BA055	Bath	Sulis
BA057	Bath	Sulis (?)
BA060	Bath	Mercury
BA067	Bath	Sulis Minerva
BA069	Bath	Sulis
BA070	Bath	Sulis
BA072	Bath	Sulis Minerva
BA073	Bath	Sulis
BA076	Bath	Sulis
BA077	Bath	Minerva (?)
BA097	Bath	Sulis (?)
BA101	Bath	Sulis
BA104	Bath	Mars
BA115	Bath	Sulis
BRA001	Brandon	Neptune
CAE001	Caerleon	Nemesis
CSE001	Caistor St. Edmund	Neptune
HE001	Hamble Estuary	Niskus, Neptune
KEL001	Kelvedon	Mercury, Virtue
LEI001	Leicester	Maglus
LON001	London Amphitheatre	Deana
LON007	London Bridge	Metunus
LP001	Lydney Park	Nodens
MD001	Marlborough Downs	Mars
OH001	Old Harlow	Mercury
ROS001	Ratcliffe-on-Soar	Jupiter Optimus Maximus

260

UL001	Uley	Mars, Mercury
UL002	Uley	Mercury
UL003	Uley	Mercury
UL005	Uley	Mercury
UL006	Uley	Mercury
UL008	Uley	Mercury
UL009	Uley	Mercury
UL010	Uley	Mercury, Mars-Silvanus, Silvanus
UL011	Uley	Mars-Mercury
UL012	Uley	Mercury
UL014	Uley	Mercury
UL015	Uley	Mercury
NP001	No provenance	Mercury

LP001 is dedicated to Nodens Silvanus. The curse tablet was discovered 'on or before 1817' in unknown circumstances. After excavations at Lydney Park (Wheeler & Wheeler 1932) revealed the veneration of Nodens or Mars Nodens, the curse was associated with the temple complex. LEI001 (Leicester) invokes Maglus, *deo Maglo*. This god is otherwise unattested, and the other text from Leicester (LEI002 makes no mention of a deity. This leads the editors to suggest that *Maglo* is a divine title derived from the Celtic naming element -*maglos* for 'prince.' The principal of LON007 (London Bridge) asks a god named Metunus for vengeance. Because no god named Metunus is known, the editors suggest that this name is a confusion of *Neptunus*, additionally noting the probability that Neptune had a shrine nearby the site of the Roman bridge and citing a similar shrine at Newcastle-upon-Tyne (*RIB* 1319). This makes some logical sense since the Thames at this point was tidal in the Roman period (Hingley 2018: 14-5). Neptune is also addressed in BRA001 (Brandon) and CSE001 (Caistor St. Edmund). The former is associated with the Roman rural settlement at Hockwold-cum-Wilton, and the latter is associated with the Roman town of *Venta Icenorum*. Both texts are thought to represent the veneration of Neptune as the deity of the nearby rivers; indeed, BRA001

was found in dredged silt from Little Ouse river while CSE001 was found just below the surface of the river Tas.

HE001 was similarly found in a watery context: the foreshore of Hamble Estuary. The text primarily asks Neptune for assistance, first invoking the god in line 1 and then repeating the invocation in the final line. The text features two dedication clauses, where someone or something is given to the deity. While the first donation is to Neptune, the second is to Niskus and Neptune. Although the reading (including that of the very rare *k*) is certain, Niskus is not attested elsewhere. Niskus, a masculine deity, might be the personification of the river, but the editor also suggests that he is the male equivalent to Niska, a water nymph attested in lead tablets from Amelie-les-Bains, Pyrenées Orientales (Tomlin 1997: 457; Mees 2000: 47). Significantly, Niskus is not conflated with Neptune (see Sulis Minerva); instead, the principal makes the dedication to the two gods as 'Niskus and Neptune,' *Niske et Neptuno*. As noted in Chapter Three, rivers and bodies of water were popular places to deposit votive objects both before and during the Roman period.

ROS001 (Ratcliffe-on-Soar) rather unexpectedly invokes Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Even before the growth of the corpus of curse texts against thieves (Only three other texts had been found in Britain at the time: BA004, KEL001, and LP001), the editor notes the unique invocation. The editor notes the use of *deo* before *Ioui Optimo Maximo* as an indication that the dedicator is not Roman. Regardless of the identity of the user of the curse, it is clear that, in this case, even Jupiter might be called upon for assistance. This is, however, the only clear evidence we have for the invocation of Jupiter in such a text (*TheDeMa* 1195 from Evreux is too fragmentary for anything more than *Optimi Iovi* [in the dative] to be read).

A final curious invocation can be found in EV001 from Eccles Villa. The text does not directly invoke a specific deity, but rather mentions 'a gift to the gods,' *donatio diebus*. What is particularly striking is the description of where the thief is to return the stolen property: *in domo die*, 'in the house of God.' The editors note the possible Christian significance of this phrase, and the phrase is immediately repeated (Hassall & Tomlin 1986: 428). The writing is NRC, with letterforms roughly dating the curse tablet to the fourth century. This later date would certainly allow for a Christian context, but the mention of multiple gods confuses the matter.

The singularity of the above texts somewhat limits their potential for examining wider perceptions of the roles of the deities they invoke, but the punishment of thieves or wrongdoers does not appear to be the expertise of any specific named deity. Because of their potential for intertextual comparison, the curse tablets from Bath and Uley appear to be more enlightening. These curse tablets additionally benefit from having known contexts, a luxury not afforded to curse tablets found with metal detectors or as single finds (e.g. BRA001).

As noted above, the curse tablets from Uley were found at the temple of Mercury, and it can reasonably be assumed that they were deposited in the temple, possibly in a central tank or pit in view of the cult statue (see Chapter Three, Fig 3.32-3). It is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of the published texts from the site invoke Mercury. For instance, UL014 begins, *Mintla Rufus deo Mercurio*, 'Mintla Rufus to the god Mercury.' A further eight tablets from the site are dedicated to Mercury alone, sometimes with the additional descriptor *sancto*, 'holy,' (UL005, UL012, and UL015). He is additionally called *Mercurio genio* in UL002.

As noted in Chapter Three, Mercury is not the only deity addressed in the curse tablets from Uley. Three of the published tablets address Mars and are particularly telling

of the complex identities of the resident god. The outer face of UL001 comprises an address to Mars the Propitius. The inner text begins with a statement of complaint to Mars: *devo Marti… quaeritur,* '… complains to the god Mars'. By line eight, however, the text addresses Mercury, making no further mention of Mars. Perhaps this is indicative of confusion on the part of the principal as to the identity of the resident deity. Indeed, Tomlin notes that the epithet *propitio* occurs only once in Britain – as an epithet of Mercury (*RIB* 244 from Leicester).

Further confusion may be seen in UL010. The text begins, *Commonotorium deo Mercurio*, 'a Memorandum to the god Mercury,' but it was initially to Mars-Silvanus, *Marti-Silvano* having been crossed-out and replaced with *Mercurio*. Curiously, side (b) again invokes Silvanus, but this time the address is left as *deo Silvano* and not crossed-out. Perhaps the correction was made after the inscription of the text was complete, and the principal failed to change or correct the second invocation. That the principal gives 'a third part [of the property] to the aforesaid god,' *tertia pars donator ita*, indicates that two separate deities are not intended to be invoked here. Instead, I would consider the invocations in this text to be an indication that the figures of Mercury and Silvanus (or Mars-Silvanus) might not be so distinct here.

This is further supported by UL011, which begins, *deo Marti Mercurio*, 'to the god Mars-Mercury.' It is clear that these are considered one conflated deity, indicated by the singular *deo* and the absence of *et* (cf. HE001). While conflation itself is not unusual in curse tablets (see Sulis Minerva, Mars-Silvanus), the conflation of two major classical deities certainly is. Again, it is clear that the principal did not see a distinction between Mars and Mercury, either because they considered them to be one entity or because they could not tell the difference between them. The material from the site indicates that it was Mercury who was primarily considered to be the resident deity in the Roman period

(Henig 1984: 55), but excavations also yielded a number of full-sized pre-Roman votive weapons as well as later miniatures (Woodward & Leach 1993; see Chapter Three).

Perhaps the nameless pre-Roman deity is the source of confusion. It will be recalled that Uley had a long tradition of ritual activity before the Roman conquest and eventual construction of the Romano-Celtic style shrine. It seems to me that the confusion regarding the identity of the classical deity worshipped at the shrine stems from the difficulties identifying the resident pre-Roman deity. From their identification as both Mars and Mercury (Silvanus in UL010), it can be suggested that the pre-Roman deity had characteristics that were shared with both Mars and Mercury. It is particularly curious that, whoever the pre-Roman power was, they are never named in the extant tablets. This demonstrates that the process of *interpretatio Romana* can go beyond name-pairing or twinning. This is similar to what Webster calls 'non-explicit' *interpretatio*, where 'the Celtic side of the equation is un-named' (1995: 154). She allows that these occurrences might be the result of a simple invocation of a classical god rather than the complete incorporation of a local deity. At Uley, however, the existence of a pre-Roman deity is almost certain, and we do not see only one instance of epigraphic *interpretatio*, but many. It would thus seem that the Celtic (i.e. pre-Roman) deity is either completely subsumed in all of the epigraphic evidence from the site or, perhaps, never had a name to begin with. The absence of depictions of pre-Roman deities is consistent with this.

The picture is made rather more complex when we consider the power dynamics inherent in *interpretatio Romana*. In her article on the concept, Webster draws attention to the imperial or post-Conquest context of epigraphic *interpretatio*, drawing particular attention to the unequal power dynamics inherent in the process and ultimately concluding that *interpretatio* should not be used as a guide to pre-Conquest gods (Webster 1995: 154). *Interpretatio Romana* involves not only an equation, but also a

superimposition of the incoming or imperial belief system over the local one (Webster 1995: 157). Webster suggests that *interpretatio* may have been resisted by indigenous peoples and low-status dedicants, citing the epigraphic evidence from Bath (discussed below), and stating that 'specifically syncretistic *interpretatio* seems to be restricted to those of higher status (Webster: 160). The invocation of classical deities in the curse tablets at Uley provides a different picture given that, as discussed in the previous chapter, the curse tablets from Uley were not written by elites, or they at least represent a wide range of socioeconomic levels.

Considering the apparent lack of clarity regarding which deity could or should be addressed, it would seem that the prevalence of judicial prayers at Uley is not due to the suitability of the resident classical divine figure(s) to the task of returning lost property or punishing wrongdoers.

Unlike at Uley, the identity of the pre-Conquest deity (here Sulis) and her equation with one specific classical deity (here Minerva) at Bath is well-established. The pattern of *interpretatio* evidenced in the curse tablets from the site, however, merits further attention. While Minerva is invoked with Sulis six times, she is never invoked on her own (Minerva can be restored in BA077, but the text is too fragmentary for the absence of Sulis to be confirmed). To understand this, we must return to the question of authorship discussed in the previous chapter. We can consider that this might be indicative of the identities of the principals of the curse tablets at the site, but the assumption that those who invoked Sulis were local or somehow 'less Roman' necessitates the assumption that 'Romans' or 'incomers' would not call a deity by their local or non-paired name. The dedication by Lucius Marcius Memor, *haruspex*, to Sulis (*RIB* 3049) suggests that this is not always the case. Additionally, at Uley we have seen that local and low-status individuals might invoke classical deities to the point where the

pre-Conquest entity remains or becomes obscure. Instead of focusing solely on the invocations as indications of 'native' or 'Roman' identity, we should instead consider what the preference for Sulis and probable exclusion of Minerva might reveal about the perceived suitability of the goddess(es) for the task of punishing wrongdoers and retrieving lost property as well as the actual identification of the goddesses in question. It seems to me that Sulis is favoured here because she has the strongest association with the spring.

While the vast majority of curse tablets from the sacred spring are addressed to Sulis or Sulis Minerva, two invoke Mars. BA039 is fragmentary, but *deo Marti* can nonetheless be read. There is an additional mention of a *sacellum* or shrine in the surviving inscription. BA104 does not directly invoke the god; rather, the principal gives the stolen property to the temple of Mars: *donat in templo Marti*. It is not clear why Mars is chosen in these texts. The mention of a shrine and a temple on these two tablets indicates that a space sacred to Mars was nearby. Although an altar dedicated to Loucetius, Mars, and Nemetona (*RIB* 140) also supports this, the exact site of the temple to Mars has not been identified (Tomlin 1988: 231). Regarding the purpose of depositing a judicial prayer addressed to Mars in a spring sacred to Sulis, Tomlin offers, 'the petitioner might be acknowledging the dominance of Sulis,' or, 'reminding her that another god has also been consulted' (Tomlin 1988: 231). I find this appeal to jealousy or competition amongst the gods to be an unlikely factor. It is easier to imagine that a temple or shrine to Mars was nearby, thus making appealing to Mars rather reasonable. Perhaps the shrine to Mars did not include a sacred spring. Deposition in such a context was nonetheless required for the curse to reach the gods and be effective; therefore, depositing a curse invoking one deity in a spring reservoir associated with another was not altogether inappropriate, though it does appear to have been uncommon. Here it

would seem that belief did not necessarily lie in the power of one specific deity to track down and punish wrongdoers, but rather in the suitability of the spring as a means of communication with the divine. In other words, Sulis may not have been called upon most frequently because of her own abilities or characteristics, but instead because she presided over the spring, which was itself regarded as divine (see Chapter Three).

Table 6.2 Table showing the total invocations of each deity invoked in curse tablets in Britain.

Deity	Total Invocations
Deana	1
Jupiter Optimus Maximus	1
Maglus	1
Mars	4
Mars-Mercury	1
Mars-Silvanus	1
Mercury	15
Minerva*	1
Nemesis	1
Neptune**	4
Niskus	1
Nodens	1
Sulis	15
Sulis-Minerva	6
Virtue	1

*Minerva is tentatively restored in BA077.
**This includes 'Metunus,' which is believed to be a misspelling.

Outside of Bath and Uley, no one deity is stongly favoured above others for invocation in judicial prayers (Table 6.2). A possible exception to this is Neptune, but this seems to be because of his association with watery contexts into which the curses were deposited. Adding to this the evidence from Uley and Bath, it seems that the suitability of a particular god or goddess depended less on the deity in question and more on the characteristics of a specific site or depositional context for communicating with the divine. We might also consider that local or pre-Conquest deities influenced this

selection, but Celtic religion, too, is known to be closely associated with the natural world and thus locale.

Dedications to the Deities: making requests, or placing orders?

We can now consider the ways in which the divine are persuaded to help with a given case. Graeco-Roman religion was founded upon the notion of exchange between humans and the divine, with sacrifice as a central concept. In this section, I consider how the curse tablets in Britain illustrate this exchange. To do this, I look at dedication clauses, where something or someone is given to the deity. I have discussed the language used in such dedications in Chapter Four, but here I look at their content. In other words, the present discussion concerns what (or who) is given to the deity and how this shows the perceived value of that deity's assistance. It also concerns what the dedication of items and people to the divine can reveal about concepts of ownership and personhood, respectively. In particular, I consider how the transferring of ownership to the divine can be considered a method of 'ordering' or coercion. To this end, I first examine the dedication of items; following this, I consider instances where the targets of the curses are given or consigned to the deity.

Dedicating Property

As they sometimes contain values of money or give a fraction of the stolen property, dedications of stolen property can in some cases provide definite 'rates' for the help of the divine (See Chapter 5, Table 5.1). It must, however, be remembered that cost is not the only way to evaluate an object as objects can also have personal or sentimental value. In bathing contexts, clothing and towels have immediate functional value to the bather, and the grievance may have less to do with the actual loss of the object and more to do

with the embarrassment of finding oneself without it. The discussion below is not an exhaustive representation of all donated or consigned items. Instead, I make use of a few examples that I have chosen because the texts from which they derive are among the most complete.

In his description of prayer and sacrifice in Roman Britain, Henig emphasises the importance of exchange or persuasion in distinguishing magic from religion, which is arguably antiquated: 'Two factors must be kept in mind. First, prayer is not magic. Magic is not religion but rather a debased offshoot from it which assumes that the gods can be controlled by man. Religious prayer is addressed to gods who are free agents, not obliged to answer it.' (Henig 1984: 32). He describes the general process of making *nuncupatio* and *solutio*. The *nuncupatio* is a declaration or a promise of a gift, and the *solutio* is the gift given if the god does what is asked. Significantly, Henig uses the British curse tablets to illustrate this process (1984: 33). It seems to me, however, that this example is not entirely appropriate. While it is true that judicial prayers contain elements of this exchange, the order is somewhat reversed, and there seems to be something rather different going on. No judicial prayer (to the best of my knowledge) contains a request with a conditional dedication. The notion of payment to the deity if something is returned is absent. In other words, the principal does not say 'if the property is returned to me, I will give it to the goddess', *vel sim*. Instead, it is the responsibility of the addressed deity to track down the property and thereby deny the thief from benefiting. For instance, the principal of BA008 from Bath dedicates stolen property to Sulis. Tomlin's restoration and translation of the text are as follows:

(a)

[d]eae Suli donavi [arge-]

ntiolos sex quos perd[idi]

a nomin[i]bus infrascrip[tis]

deae exactura est

Senicia(n)us et Saturninus <sed>

et Ann[i]ola carta picta persc[ripta]

(b)

An[i]ola

Senicianus

Saturninus

'I have given to the goddess Sulis the six silver coins which I have lost. It is for

the goddess to exact (them) from the names written below: Senicianus and

Saturninus and Anniola. The written page (has) been copied out.

An(n)iola

Senicianus

Saturninus'

It is clear that this text records items that have already been given to the goddess. In the

giving of the six silver coins to Sulis, the principal effectively transfers ownership and

thus responsibility to the goddess, making her obligated to act in order to avoid the

humiliation of allowing thieves of (now sacred) property to go unpunished.

BA038 from the same site is similar in this respect. The principal, Solinus, gives

a stolen cloak and bathing tunic, *paxsam balnearem et palleum*, to Sulis Minerva. Here,

Solinus explicitly states that the curse is to have effect until the stolen items are brought

to the temple, presumably to be given as an offering to Sulis Minerva. In effect, the goddess will only actually receive the items after she urges the thief to bring them to her.

The inscribed texts can also be less specific regarding what is given to the deity. For instance, UL006 from Uley opens with a statement of dedication of the stolen property to the presiding deity: *Biccus dat Mercurio quidquid perdedit*, 'Biccus gives Mercury whatever he has lost.'

In these examples, it does not seem that the respective principals hope for the return of the stolen property, but rather the punishment of those who have committed the crime. Significantly, these three texts and others like them express a curious concept of ownership. In the gift of the property to the divine recipient, the dedicants demonstrate ownership of this property although it is not in their possession, and it is possible that the dedicant retains this perception of possession until the deity acts in their favour. Perhaps more noteworthy is the element of thinly-veiled coercion that can be read here.

Chapter Four mentions that these items are given so that the relevant deity will act in favour of the dedicant. As such, the addressed deity is really not able to refuse. One of the defining features of a judicial prayer, according to Versnel (1991; 2010), is the absence of coercion. If, however, we consider the politics of sacrifice, it would seem that the deity is denied the right to refuse the demands of the dedicant without a degree of humiliation. This is particularly clear when considering that, in the dedication or consecration of stolen property to the relevant deity, the property becomes the possession of the deity. In effect, if the god or goddess does not force the return of the dedicated items, then they are allowing the thief to steal from them.

An example of this can be found in UL003 from Uley, where the inscription (rather unusually) is given to the deity by the principal. More specifically, the sheet on which the text is written is given to Mercury, *carta quae Mercurio donatur*. Interestingly,

this suggests that, at least in the mind of the unnamed principal, the gift of the lead sheet was sufficient to ensure Mercury's cooperation. The gift is given explicitly with the purpose of securing the involvement of Mercury. This is achieved with the use of the subjunctive directly following the dedication clause: *carta quae Mercurio donatur ut manecilis perierunt ultionem requirat*, 'The sheet which is given to Mercury so that he exact vengeance for the gloves which have been lost.' This is an explicit demonstration of how judicial prayers can act less like requests and more like orders.

Some dedications are fractions of the stolen property. In UL010 (discussed above) the principal, Saturnina, gives 'one third,' *tertiam partem donat ita*. Presumably, this one third is one third of the stolen property. This is made clear in the lines that follow:

Ac a quae perit deo Silvano

Tertia pars donatur ita ut

Hoc ex<s>igat…

'… a third part from what has been lost is given to the god Silvanus so that he exact this…'

The donation of a portion of the stolen property raises a number of questions. One immediately wonders what is to happen to the remaining two thirds of the stolen linen cloth. Is this supposed to return to its original owner? It would not seem logical for the principal to allow the remaining property to stay in the possession of the thief. It is usually best to avoid assuming understanding of the logic of the principal for risk of anachronism, but when we consider how severe punishments can be, it seems unlikely that one could be so lenient as to allow a thief to benefit from their actions. Secondly, what is the

perceived value of the gift to the deity? From the division of the stolen property, one might assume that Saturnina did not consider the efforts of the named deity to be worth the entire linen cloth. LON001 (London) raises the same questions. In this inscription, the principal gives '(my) headgear and band less one-third,' *capitularem et fasciam minus parte tertia*. The inscription also gives the thief to Diana, and it will be returned to below for this reason. The first legible line of PH001 (Pagan's Hill) mentions three thousand *denarii*. Half of this value is given to the deity in order that it may be exacted from Vassicillus and his wife, the targeted thieves: *demediam partem tibi ut <ut> ita illum exigas*. The text is damaged, but the editors supply *meam* at the start of line 10. If this restoration is correct, then the principal evidently still feels a level of ownership over the stolen *denarii*, even after the written dedication in line 1. Perhaps this retention of ownership is due to the partial dedication of the *denarii* to the deity; it does not entirely belong to the divine.

To provide further context for the dedication of lost or stolen items in curse tablets, it is useful to broaden the perspective to include examples from outside of Britain. It will be remembered that the language used for consecration or dedication outside of Britain is more varied (see Chapter Four). While *dono* is by far the most frequently used verb for dedication in Britain, *commendo* and *demando* (for example) are widely attested on the continent (Tomlin 2010: 256). Nonetheless, the same concept of dedicating items in order to secure the cooperation of the relevant deity is attested. As in Britain, this more frequently takes the form of consecrating the target of the curse (see below), but the notion that property can be transferred to the gods and thus be made their responsibility can be found throughout the Mediterranean world. (see Chapter 4, 180-1) (Versnel 2002: 67).

An alternative (and perhaps less cynical) interpretation of the curse tablets from Bath that were motivated by theft is offered by Cousins (2014). Her interpretation of the dedication of pewter vessels from Bath, which she considers in conjunction with curse tablets from the site in order to study the wider activity at the sacred spring reservoir (Cousins 2014: 56), has already been discussed in Chapter Three. Here I return to her proposal that the curse tablets from Bath should be considered as acts that represent the ritual relinquishment of objects in a watery context as a means of controlling loss (Cousins 2014: 52). Significantly, water plays an important role in this relinquishment through its transformative nature (Cousins 2014: 58). Thus, for Cousins, the act of dedicating a stolen or (in the case of the ritual vessels) weathered object into the spring reservoir allowed 'the victims of theft or time to regain control of both the situation and the object, and to refashion the loss to be a willing one – a voluntary handing-over of ownership claims to the goddess' (Cousins 2014: 59). This might seem to be a reasonable explanation for the dedication of lost property to the goddess, but on focusing on the material context of the curse tablets, Cousins does not actually look into their language in any detail. Perhaps as a result, the article does not acknowledge that the majority of the curse tablets recovered from the spring reservoir do not turn the lost or stolen items into dedications; instead, they dedicate people to the goddess or otherwise simply ask for the punishment of perceived wrongdoers. Additionally, Cousins examines what the texts might reveal regarding the role of Sulis, specifically, without considering curses found elsewhere in Britain or on the continent. There is the additional matter of curses that dedicate only a fraction of the lost or stolen property to the deity. Taking these considerations into account, the concept of relinquishment does not adequately describe what is going either at Bath or elsewhere in Britain. Instead, it would seem that the dedication of stolen property is ultimately self-serving on the part of the principal. In

dedicating property to the deity, the principal ensures that the deity's interests align with their own: the thief or wrongdoer must be punished in order to rectify loss and avoid humiliation.

Dedicating people

I now consider instances in which the targets themselves are given to the deity. As this concerns the dedication of people, it naturally raises the question of what it actually meant to give a person to the gods. Are we to imagine that such instances represent aspects of or calls for sacrifice or capital punishment? The language used to communicate these dedications or consecrations has already been discussed. Here I consider the beliefs that they represent, paying particular attention to the notion of personhood and whether or not crime or perceived wrongdoing nullifies it. It will be remembered that these dedications are not unique to Britain; they can be read in texts from a wide variety of contexts (see Chapter 4, 181-3).

Methods of targeting unidentified individuals have been addressed several times throughout the present work. I now return to the topic with a focus on the giving of unidentified targets to the deity. This is achieved through the giving of the *nomen*, *furem,* or a pronoun in the accusative (e.g. *eum, illos*). It should be noted that not all of the targeted victims that are given are unidentifiable (see UL016), but it seems to be the case more often than not in the published texts. Whether this is to dehumanize the targeted victims or purely because they are unidentifiable cannot be known.

BA021 from Bath dedicates the name of the thief*, nomen furis*, to the deity. The text is too fragmentary to make out the rest of side (a), but on side (b), *donat* is preserved. Through the dedication of the name of the thief, the principal dedicates the thief by

extension without knowing his or her name; the power over the individual is presumably equal to the power the principal would have if their target were identifiable.

BA020 from the same site similarly gives the name of the thief, *nomen rei*. Indeed, the entire content of this short curse reads, *nomen rei qui destrale involaverit*, 'the name of the thief who has stolen (my) bracelet (is given)'. It should be noted that there is no mention of a gift to the deity, but perhaps the written curse itself, or, more specifically, the cursed individual, should be considered as a gift. Indeed, Tomlin notes that *donatur* should be understood and was possibly omitted by mistake. This is particularly tempting with consideration of BA021, which appears very similar in content if not in form.

UL007 from Uley also gives the name of the thief, *nomen furis*, who has stolen the bridle of the principal. This is followed by two pairs of binary alternative conditions that ensure the thief is given to the god, whether slave or free, man or woman (see Chapter Four). These are followed by a description of how the god, presumably Mercury, is to receive what is given. Rather than stating the amount that is to be given to the god (see LP001 from Lydney Park, ROS002 from Ratcliffe-on-Soar, and UL010 from Uley for examples), this text details how the payment is to be exacted. Lines 5-8 read*: duas parties AFIMA sua tertia ad sanitatem.* It would thus seem that it is not the *nomen*, necessarily, that is given to the deity, but rather the power over the individual with which the *nomen* is associated.

In giving the *nomen* to the deity, the users of the above curse tablets claim a degree of power over their targets. The knowledge of the correct names is important in curses of any kind. The efficacy of a *defixio*, for instance, can rely on the proper knowledge of the 'real name' of the addressed power. Instances where the *nomen* of a target is given appear to represent the same belief.

BA009 offers a list of names with the word *dono* legible in the bottom right fragment. Presumably, the list of names continues on side (b), but these cannot be restored. Assuming that the named individuals are the direct object of *dono* (although they are in the nominative rather than the required accusative), the principal gives these named individuals to the deity. It is also possible that these are named witnesses, but, other than BA101 (a conditional curse against perjury), there are no similar cases at this site or elsewhere in Britain.

Docilianus Brucerus, the principal of BA010, offers the one who has stolen his hooded cloak to the most holy Sulis, *deae sanctissimae Suli devoveo eum qui caracellem meam involaverit*. Tomlin translates *devoveo* as 'I curse,' but I think it would be better read as 'I devote,' or 'I sacrifice.' The significance of the direct sacrifice of the thief to the deity is obvious.

In BA050 (Bath), the donation clause is repeated on both sides. On side (a), the principal states, 'I give,' *dono*, 'to the temple of Sulis,' *in templo Sulis*. Given that the donation clause is immediately followed by the mutually exclusive conditions discussed in the previous chapter, it clearly appears that the thief is dedicated to Sulis. On side (b), this is made explicitly clear with the use of *eum latronem*, 'that thief,' as the accusative direct object of *dono*.

Although it is fragmentary and damaged, BA067 still contains the dedication clause. Exsibuus, the named principal, has given multiple people to the deity. The principal gives 'they who,' *illos qui*, followed in the next line by *sunt*, which precedes a set of binary alternative pairs. Here, the text is too fragmentary to know much about the purpose for the creation of the curse, but it is reasonable, I think, to assume that *illos* refers to suspected thieves. Since *deae* can be read as the first word of line 1 and is followed by some form of *Suli Minervae* (although Tomlin states that this is difficult to

restore, the letters *L..MINE* can be read), the thieves or suspected thieves are given to Sulis Minerva.

Lovernesca, the principal of BA068, gives the thief who hast stolen her cape, *eum… qui mafortium involaverit.* She does not explicitly state to whom the thief is given. This is perhaps because the deposition of the tablet was accompanied by a performative ritual that made clear the identity of the deity being invoked. It is also possible that the association of the sacred spring with Sulis Minerva was clear enough that the explicit statement of the deity being addressed was not necessary.

The principal of BA072 donates 'the thief who has stolen my cloak,' *furem qui caracallem meam involavit.* The thief is dedicated to Sulis Minerva, *Minerva de(ae) Suli.* It is worth noting that 'the gift,*' hoc donum*, is mentioned again in line 9. This explicit equation of the thief with a gift is significant not only because of the explicit dedication apparent, but also because of the connection to sacrifice that this suggests.

UL014 from Uley has a clear emphasis on the act of giving. The text is addressed to Mercury from Mintla Rufus, who states, 'I have given them, whether woman [or man]…' *donavi eos, vel mulier, vel PARIUS.* Line 4 is difficult to decipher, but evidently *PARIUS* is in opposition to *mulier.* Although it is written in the singular form, *vel mulier vel parius* describes *eos.* It is likely that *mulier* and *parius* appear in the singular because the use of binary alternatives does not necessitate an agreement with the direct object (*eos* in this case) that it qualifies. The reading of the rest of line 4 is certain, but the meaning is obscure. It is clear, however, that the thieves are given, which is reemphasized in the final line, *donavi. Donavi* is separated from the rest of the text both syntactically and physically. Perhaps this was done in an effort to use the remaining available space; nonetheless, the choice of *donavi* as the repeated word emphasizes the dedicatory nature of the inscription. There is an apparent performative element to the inscription of this

final word, which, to me, seems to have much the same effect that nailing might have in a *defixio* or other curse text. I wonder if this can be stretched to suggest that the performative element of judicial prayers focused on dedication in the same way that the performance of *defixiones* focused on binding.

HE001 from Hamble Estuary is an elaborate text dedicated to Neptune. Although it is long, I quote Tomlin's restoration and translation of the text in full since much of the text deals with the dedication to Neptune and Niskus.

Domine Neptune,

t(i)b(i) d(o)no (h)ominem qui

(solidum) involav[it] Mu-

coni et argenti[olo]s

sex. Ide(o) dono nomi(n)a

qui decepit, si maskel si

femina, su puuer si puue-

lla. Ideo dono tibi, Niske,

et Neptuno vitam, vali-

tudinem, sanguem eius

qui conscius fueris eius

deceptionis. Animus

qui hoc involavit et

qui conscius fuerit ut

eum decipias. Furem

qui hoc involavit sanguem

eiius consumas et de-

cipias, domin[e] Ne[p]-

tune.

'Lord Neptune, I give you the man who has stolen the solidus and six argentioli
of Muconius. So I give the names who took them away, whether male or female,
whether boy or girl. So I give you, Niskus, and to Neptune the life, health, blood
of him who has been privy to that taking-away. The mind which stole this and
which has been privy to it, may you take it away. The thief who stole this, may you
consume his blood and take it away, Lord Neptune.'

The first line addresses Neptune in the vocative case, *domine Neptune*, which is then followed by the donation clause. *Tibi dono* is either abbreviated or incorrectly transcribed (*tbdno*), and followed by an unaspirated (or incorrectly transcribed) *(h)ominem qui (solidum) involavit… et argentiolos sex*, 'the man who has stolen the *solidus* and six *argentioli*.' The genitive *Muconi*, to whom the *solidus* and *argentioli* belong, is likely the principal of the curse. What is particularly significant about this text in the context of the current discussion is the repeated giving of the target to the deity. Following the gift of the man to the deity, *tibi dono hominem* in line 2, the principal gives 'the name(s) who took them away,' *nomi(n)a qui decepit*. A donation is repeated again in lines 8-10*: ideo dono tibi, Niske et Neptuno, vitam, valitudinem, sanguem eius*, 'so I give you, Niskus and Neptune, the life, the health, the blood of him who has been privy to that theft.'

The next gift is given by association: *animus qui hoc involavit et qui conscius fuerit ut eum decipias*. 'The mind which stole this and which has been privy to it may you take it away,' or, '[I give] the mind which stole this and which has been privy to it, so that you take it away.' The first reading requires *animus*, *conscius*, and *eum* to be the

direct objects of *decipias*, 'may you take away.' The second translation requires a supplied *dono* before *animus*. I think the latter is clearer and is a better fit with the rest of the text. Indeed, without supplying *dono*, the distance between *decipias* and *animus* makes the construction awkward, though awkward construction is not at all unusual in curse tablets. More importantly, without an implied *dono*, there is no way of incorporating *ut*. *Ut eum decipias*, *decipias* (the second person present subjunctive) is a jussive subjunctive and cannot be incorporated into the sentence without supplying a main verb.

The next gift statement is similarly ambiguous: *furem qui hoc involavit sanguem eiius consumas et decipias.* 'The thief who stole this, may you consume his blood and take it away,' or, '[I give] the thief who stole this. May you consume his blood and take it away.' Again, *decipias* is given in the subjunctive, this time with *consumas*, 'may you consume.' Unlike lines 12-15, here there is no *ut* in need of incorporation, but I would argue that the construction is similarly awkward without supplying *dono* with *furem* as the direct object. I typically would not try to supply verbs or go too far to speculate possible intentions of the scribe, but I think it is reasonable to do so here as the length of the text provides sufficient context. Throughout the curse, the principal or scribe repeatedly gives the thief, albeit in different terms each time. I think it is fair to speculate that the dedication continues beyond the explicit use of *dono* in lines 2, 5, and 8. Indeed, Tomlin notes that *animus* (line 12) and *furem* (line 15) are parallels to *hominem* (line 2). This example provides potential insight regarding what is intended when an individual is given to the divine in a judicial prayer. How, exactly, the deity is to benefit from this dedication is not clear. Instead, evidenced by the repetition of *decipias*, the gift of the thief is motivated by the principal's intention to deprive the thief of their life, health, blood, and mind. The interests of the deity appear to be of secondary concern.

LEI001 from Leicester records the dedication of the unknown thief who stole the cloak of Servandus to the god Maglus, *daeo Maglo*. The inscribed text begins with a dedicatory statement, *daeo Maglo od eum qui frudem fecit*, 'I give to the god Maglus him who did wrong…' Tomlin states that *od* is a reversal of *do* (2008: 208). Given that the clause would lack a main verb and considering the formulae used in other similar texts (see for example BA009 from Bath, although *dono* follows the list rather than precedes it), this reading is more reasonable than the other suggested possible readings, those being either *odi* or *ut* (2008: 208-9). *Od* appears again in line 2: *od elaeum qui furtum* (*fecit*). *Od* may be again read as *do*, with *elaeum* being a conflation of *illum* and *eum* (Tomlin 2008: 214). The translation would then read, 'I give him who did theft,' *fecit* being either implied or omitted accidentally (Tomlin 2008: 214). *Od* appears once more in line 23, this time before a jussive subjunctive that indicates for the first time the outcome that is sought by Servandus:

Od antae nonum diem

illum tollat

qui sa(g)um involavit

Servandi

'I give (so that) before the ninth day he takes away him who stole the cloak of Servandus.'

As above, the thief is given to the god Maglus, though Maglus is not explicitly mentioned here. Significantly, the taking away of the thief is the result of dedication, with Maglus additionally given a time limit of nine days within which this is to take place. Nine days

is the usual time limit given in curse tablets in Britain (see BA069, HCW001, LON007; see also *TheDeMa* 265 (Carnuntum) (Tomlin 2008: 215). It would thus seem that the number has ritual significance. An exception to this is LEI002 discussed below.

The greater part of the text (lines 6-21) consists of a list of names. We can reasonably assume that these are possible suspects for the theft. Of particular interest is the deliberate erasure of Senicianus on line 22. It is tempting to suppose that this was done after Senicianus was no longer a suspect or the principal had changed their mind. It is also possible that the name was erased by someone other than the principal, but this would require interception or recovery and redeposition. In either case, this indicates that Senicianus is not to be considered a potential target or gift for the god Maglus.

This erasing of a name from a list of suspects offers great insight into what it meant to include a name on a curse tablet or to give someone to the gods. I would argue that the care taken to remove the name of someone who is no longer suspect or who does not want to be considered a suspect hints at the perceived efficacy of the judicial prayer. Surely if there was not some sort of perceived negative consequence of having one's name on a curse or being given to the divine, no one would have gone through the trouble of erasing Senicianus.

Suggested Punishments

The aim of this section is to analyse the punishments of targeted victims suggested by the users of judicial prayers. These punishments are often severe, including the denial of health, the payment of one's crime with one's own blood, and the explicit request for death. Looking at such punishments can tell us what might be appropriate to ask of a deity as well as what a given deity is considered capable of doing, and this is true

throughout the Mediterranean world. The language used to communicate these suggestions is highly varied to the point where the meaning is not always consistent. Indeed, what, exactly, is being called for is not always clear. For this reason, I also include some discussion of the language used here in order to explore the meanings of these requests for punishment and the beliefs they illustrate. Should we, for instance, understand that the request for 'payment in blood' is equal to the request for death?

Blood Payment

I begin here by returning to the requests for blood payment in an effort to explore the meaning of this request, initially discussing cases where this appears on its own. Again, the theme of blood payment is frequent in Britain (see Chapter Four, Table 4.2). There is not enough room to visit each case here, but significant or particularly telling occurrences are examined. I first return to BA072 (see Chapter Four), which ends *with hoc donum non redemat nessi sanguine suo*, 'he is not to buy back this gift unless with his own blood.' Here it is not explicitly stated that the thief is to pay with their life. In other words, the amount of blood that the thief is to give is not stated. As such, it appears to be implied rather than explicitly stated that the thief is to at least suffer serious bodily harm in order to redeem themselves. From this we can understand that bodily harm through blood loss seemed an appropriate method of retribution to the principal. It is also clear that the addressed deity, Sulis Minerva, is thought capable of making this happen.

BRE001 from Brean Down, Somerset uses the same verb, *redimo*, rather differently. The suggested punishment reads, 'you are to make redeem(?) them thus with his own blood,' *facias sic illa redimat sanguine suo*. Given that *facias* is in the second person, the subject would almost certainly be whichever deity is addressed, though all that remains of this invocation is the restored *domina* of line 4. This differs from BA072

above in that the goddess is to make the thief pay for the stolen *caricula* (what this is, exactly, is unknown) with the thief's own blood. The two texts are alike in that the targets are to repay the gifts in their blood, but BRE001 is somewhat clearer in that it describes the force that urges this redemption or repayment.

The use of *redimo* above is somewhat vague, but clearer wording is also used. For instance, a number of texts refer to exaction. The principal of BA047 (Bath) asks the deity to 'exact this through [his] blood and [health] and (those) of his family' *exigas hoc per sanguinem et sanitatem suam et suorum.* The payment for the wrongdoing is to be exacted, *exigas*, by the deity from the victim in the form of their blood, *sanguinem*, and their health, *sanitatem*. Additionally, payment is to be exacted from *suorum*. Tomlin suggests that *et suorum* here can be taken to mean mean 'and those of his family,' but 'and those of his household' is another possible reading. The subject of the second person subjunctive *exigas* is the deity to whom the text is addressed, probably Sulis Minerva. A request for exaction through blood appears also in BA044: *exigas per sanguinem eius qui has involaverit,* 'that you may exact them through the blood of him who has stolen these.'

A similar formula can be read in BA053, which is also from Bath, but unlike BA044 and BA047, there is no mention of blood until well after *exigor*, it being part of an altogether different construction. What is to be exacted is unclear because it does not survive. *Sanguis* appears in line 4 in the ablative case as the 'Vulgar' *sangune*. The reference to blood is to be understood as the thing with which the target is paying in order to get back what is denied to them (*non illi permittas*), if we assume that *non illi permittas* implies that health, sleep, or similar are denied.

The verb *exigor* can also be used less explicitly (see BA008) or to request that the targets pay for their crimes through other means (see ROS001), but here I focus on how it, like *redimo*, is used to express the request that gifts given to the deity can be redeemed

or extracted through the blood of the target. These examples, therefore, demonstrate the belief that the value of stolen objects can find their equivalent in blood. Significantly, this value can be determined by the deity. It is worth noting that the above examples do not necessarily appear to require the death of the target; though blood is to be exacted, it is not explicitly to the point of death. Instances where death is clearly called for will be discussed below, but for now we can observe that the request is to make the punishment equal to the stolen property and that this equation might be made by either the principal or the deity. A further example of the latter can be found in BA105 from Bath. I provide Tomlin's restoration and translation of side (a) for context.

seu gen(tilis) seu C-

h(r)istianus quaecumque utrum vir

[u]trum mulier utrum puer utrum puella

utrum s[er]vus utrum liber mihi Annia[n]-

o ma<n>tutene de bursa mea s(e)x argente[o]s

furaverit tu d[o]mina dea ab ipso perexi[g]-

e[. .eo]s si mihi per [f]raudem aliquam inDEP-

REG[.]STVM dederit nec sic ipsi dona sed ut sangu-

inem suum (r)eputes qui mihi hoc inrogaverit

'Whether pagan or Christian, whosoever, whether man or woman, whether boy or girl, whether slave or free, has stolen from me, Annianus (son of) Matutina(?), six silver coins from my purse, you, lady Goddess, are to exact [them] from him. If through some deceit he has given me…, and do not give thus to him, but reckon as(?) the blood of him who has invoked this upon me.'

Both *repute* and *exigor* are used here, and it seems there is a clear emphasis on appropriate retribution through the loss of blood. The goddess, probably Sulis or Sulis Minerva, is told to exact the stolen items in the blood of the thief: *tu domina dea ab ipso perexig[as]*, 'you, Lady Goddess, are to exact [them] from him.' There is an additional iteration of the blood payment theme at the end of the inscription: *sed ut sanguinem reputes qui mihi hoc inrogaverit*, 'but reckon as the blood of him who has invoked this upon me.' The formula is unparalleled and the language is not wholly clear, but in using *reputo*, which Tomlin says is 'used in the sense of "reckoning" an account' (1988: 234), the notion that the thief is to pay for the stolen coins in their blood is clear. The concept of equal exchange is particularly evident. There is also the additional element of coercion here that is similar to that expressed in the giving of objects and targets above. This is largely dependent on reading and interpretation of the subjunctive verb forms, but there is also an element of consignment apparent in the language used here.

Blood Payment in conjunction with other punishments

Perhaps more can be understood regarding the meaning of payment in blood if we consider curses that include additional consequences. For instance, we can return to UL003, which is given to Mercury with the explicitly stated purpose of vengeance. The donation clause is followed by the purpose clause '*ut… ultionem requirat*,' with the subject of *requirat*, 'may he exact,' being Mercury. *Ultionem*, 'vengeance,' is the direct object. An additional purpose clause follows this: *qui illas involavit ut illi sanguem et sanitatem tollat*, 'that he take the blood and health from the person who has stolen them.' Rather than an additional curse*, illi sanguinem et sanitatem tollat* seems to be a description of the form that the requested *ultionem*, 'vengeance,' is to take. As discussed

above, the unnamed principal, in effect, gives the sheet of lead to Mercury so that the god may take the blood and health from the thief. Interestingly, this is the only use of *ultionem requirat* amongst published British curses. A very similar formula occurs in an unpublished text from the same site: *tollas illi medullas sanguem animam* (Inv. No. 2169 (d) 1996: 441). It is possible that the target is to be denied of their blood and health entirely, given that they are not required to take any action. As such, it is clear that the principal calls for the death (or at least serious physical harm) of the target.

We can look at another example from Uley (UL015) for a possible meaning of the blood payment request. I provide the editor's restoration and translation here for context:

(a)

[deo] sancto Mercuri[o]. [que]r[or]

tibi de illis qui mihi male

cogitant et male faciunt

supra ED[3] iumen[12-3] (?),

si servus si liber, si m[ascel]

si [fem]ina. ut non illis per-

mittas nec sta[r]e nec

sedere nec bibere

(b)

nec manducar[e] n[e]c h[as]

[i]r[a]s redemere possit

nessi sanguine suo AENE.

traces

'To the holy god Mercury. I complain to you about those who are badly disposed towards me (and) who are acting badly over (?) ..., whether slave or free, whether male or female. Do not allow them to stand or sit, to drink or eat, or to buy off these provocations(?) unless with their own blood.'

This curse contains multiple themes or elements that are of interest in this chapter. First is the request that the cursed individuals not be able to stand or sit, *nec stare nec sedere*. According to the editors, the formula occurs also on two unpublished texts from Cirencester (Hassall & Tomlin 1995: 374). The language is clear, but whether or not the target is to be restless to the point where they can neither sit nor stand or whether they are to be weakened to the point where they can neither stand nor sit cannot be known. The implications of *nec bibere nec manducare* are clearer; the victims cannot sustain themselves. In summary, the target of this curse is to suffer to the point where their life is at risk. Additionally (or perhaps alternatively), the sins or provocations, *has eras,* are not to be redeemed 'unless with [the targets'] blood,*' nec… redemere possit nessi sanguene suo*. In effect, the suffering of the targeted victims can only be ended through further suffering. The principal does not provide details of the offence committed, but, unlike with many other examples, there is no explicit mention of theft. Indeed, *qui male cogitant* might well suggest something more prolonged and personal, perhaps slander or a false accusation. *De illis*, too, indicates that there is more than one culprit. I discussed this and the following example in Chapter Three, but I need to develop these observations

futher here here as they are cases where the concept of blood payment is represented in conjunction with other forms of punishment.

Basilia, the principal of BA104, curses the thief of her ring and anyone withholding information regarding the theft. In this curse, the thief is to suffer with respect to their blood, and there is no apparent means of redemption (cf. BA072). We can, therefore, consider this a call for suffering through blood rather than a call for repayment. It is worth noting that the thief and the withholder of information are both equally cursed. If anything, the withholder of information is cursed more, given that the first part of the curse, *sanguine et liminibus (et) omnibus menbris configatur*, does not necessarily have both the thief and the withholder of information as the subject, since this first part of the curse is separated from the remainder by *vel etiam* in lines 1-2 of side (b). It is, however, clear that both the person who stole the ring and anyone who might be involved with the theft are to have all of their intestines eaten away, *intestinis excomesis (om)nibus habeat*. There is the obvious connotation that withholding information regarding the theft is just as worthy of punishment as the theft itself. This is not necessarily blood payment, but it is certainly explicit and deals with the death (or at least serious physical harm) of the target of the curse. Perhaps that the primary target is not the thief is the reason for the absence of any mention of redemption or equivalent exaction. UL015 from Uley seems to counter this supposition because, although the justification for cursing does not deal with theft, there is the possibility that the wrongdoers may redeem themselves with their blood and thus be permitted to sit, stand, eat, or drink. Whether or not this means of escape can be seen as an act of mercy of course depends on what payment in blood was actually considered to entail.

UL005 from Uley similarly contains prohibitions. Rather curiously, this includes the deprivation of sun and moon; apart from perhaps denying the target light, the meaning

of this remains obscure, but the second prohibition seems to be related to family. The final two lines feature the blood payment theme. According to Tomlin, *conpliat* is a misspelled or confused *conpleat* (2015: 399). *Vendicationem*, 'vengeance,' is the direct object, making the reading 'may he fulfill vengeance with his own blood.' The subject is, of course, the thief. As should be clear by this point, the notion of blood payment is not uncommon amongst these texts. This particular construction, however, is not attested elsewhere. Indeed, neither *conpliat* nor the 'Classical' *conpleat* are used in the other examples. As discussed previously, I think that this variation is evidence that the concept of paying with one's blood is widespread. It is not the simple copying of a formula.

The above examples demonstrate that the concept of blood payment or suffering through blood payment is widespread and varied. Indeed, the expressions of this theme vary to the extent that their meanings are not consistent. Nonetheless, the widely attested theme indicates that, at least in these cases, it was thought to be acceptable and fitting to call for such physical punishments. That some of the users of the curses included their names (see Basilia's self-identification in BA104) supports this since, although the tablets were not displayed, a principal might have been less inclined to attach their name to these requests if it were considered shameful to ask for such harm to befall a person. Of course, a deity would not be asked to exact blood or cause someone to suffer with respect to their blood and insides if they were not believed capable of doing so. We can, therefore, understand that the deities invoked in these texts were believed to have such powers. Significantly, this ability does not seem to be connected to one specific deity or to one specific place. Instead, the theme of blood payment is evidenced throughout Britain. Although it occurs most frequently at Bath and Uley, this is to be expected given the concentration of curses from these sites.

Comparing punishments: Cnidian tablets and πεπρημένος

To explore the connection between specific afflictions and cursing, I once again turn to the tablets from Cnidus for further perspective. At Cnidus, there is a clear preference for one kind of punishment amongst the extant tablets where a specific punishment is suggested. The texts as the goddesses Demeter and Kore to compel their targets to right their wrongs or confess their crimes by causing them to be πεπρημένος (*TheDeMa* 229, 566, 584, 587, and 588). Although the term is subject to dispute, it can be taken to mean "'burned" in the sense of "affected by fever or illness"' (Versnel 1991: 73). I provide the full text and translation of *TheDeMa* 566 as an example of this requested punishment.

[Ἀνα]τίθημι Δάματρι καὶ Κούραι τὸν κατ' ἐμο[ῦ ἐ]-

ἴπ[α]ντα, ὅτι ἐγὼ τῶι ἐμῶι ἀνδ[ρὶ] φάρμακα ποιῶ.　ἀνα[βαῖ]

παρὰ Δάματρα πεπρημένος μετὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ [ἰδίων]

πάντων ἐξαγορεύων, καὶ μὴ τύχῃ εὐειλάτου [μήτε]

[Δ]άματρος καὶ Κούρας μηδὲ τῶν θεῶν τῶν παρὰ Δά[μα]-

τρος, ἐμοὶ δὲ ᾖ {η} ὅσια καὶ ἐλεύθερα ὁμοστεγησάσῃ ἢ ὧι ποτ[ε]

τρόπωι ἐπ[ι]πλεκομένηι· ἀνατίθημι δὲ καὶ τὸν κατ' ἐ[μοῦ]

γράψαντα ἢ καὶ ἐπιτάξαντα· μὴ τύχοι Δάματρος καὶ

Κόρας μηδὲ θεῶν τῶν παρὰ Δάματρος εὐιλάτων ἀλλ' ἀ[ν]-

α<β>αῖ μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων πάντων παρὰ Δάματρα πεπρημένος.

'I am dedicating to Demeter and Kore the person who slandered me [i.e. by saying] that I am preparing poisons [φάρμακα] against my husband. May he go up to Demeter with all his family confessing out loud, because he is burnt [i.e. by fever]. And may he not find Demeter and Kore merciful, nor the gods with

Demeter. As for me let it be lawful and free, if I come under the same roof as he or if I ever in any way have dealings with him.' (translation from Faraone 2011: 28)

From this detailed text, we can see how the punishment of the slanderer serves to both amend the situation and to provide revenge for the perceived wrongdoing. The burning or fever serves both as divine punishment and a divine force that compels the unknown target (and their family) to confess to false accusation, thus clearing the name of the principal while simultaneously offering revenge. The public nature of the punishment has the additional effect of warning others against such slander in the future (Faraone 2011: 29). Another example from the site, *TheDeMa* 584, is similar in this respect. This curse, however, is motivated by theft, and rather than only publicly confessing guilt, the targeted thief is required to also carry the stolen property to Demeter: *ἀνανένγκαι αὐτος παρὰ Δάματρα*. As with the previous instance, the target is to be compelled by their fever or burning to make amends.

Other punishments requested can be more ambiguous. For instance, Nanas, the principal of *TheDeMa* 585, asks that those who deprive Diokles of his deposit be *κολαζόμενοι*, 'punished.' Significantly, this punishment is to cause them to carry the deposit to Demeter and Kore (Faraone 2011: 34). It would seem from these examples that the consequences for the targets are temporary, but this is not always the case. *TheDeMa* 566 (above) states 'let them not find Demeter, Kore, or the gods with Demeter to be merciful,' *καὶ μὴ τύχῃ εὐειλάτου [μήτε] Δάματρος καὶ Κούρας μηδὲ τῶν θεῶν τῶν παρὰ Δά[μα]τρος*, and thus it seems that the goddesses are to remain unmerciful even after the target has confessed (Versnel 1991: 73).

Nonetheless, the theme of feverishness and the compulsion by fever to confess to or amend one's crimes or wrongdoings is prominent at Cnidus. To the best of my knowledge, the term πεπρημένος does not appear in other judicial prayers. The theme of 'burning' can, however, be found in erotic curses, where it refers more to passion than feverishness (see *PGM* IV.1525-31). The notion of burning caused by displeased gods can, however, be found elsewhere. In his discussion of the possible Thesmophoric context of the judicial prayers from Cnidus, Faraone notes the connection between the language of the curses and certain scenes from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* (2011: 40-2). Of particular interest are lines 663-84, which are spoken by the chorus.

Any man caught in an impious act

will burn and rage in rabid insanity,

his very act manifest proof

for all women and mortals to see

that lawlessness and sacrilege

are punished by god!

The word for burning here is φλέγων, not πεπρημένος, but the burning imagery is equally apparent. Significantly, these lines of the chorus attest to the belief that moral and pious behaviour are enforced by the divine.

It is thus clear that Demeter and Kore were thought capable of causing a target to be πεπρημένος or otherwise tormented and that asking for a targeted wrongdoer to be in such a state was believed to be a suitable and effective means of gaining vengeance or regaining property. That the Cnidian curse tablets were probably displayed and contained the users' names indicates that making such a request was also socially acceptable, and

there is a clear association with the texts and places associated with the worship of Demeter and Kore.

Cursed to Death?

Because the inscribed texts are generally more detailed at Cnidus than they are in Britain, the way punishments from the sanctuary of Demeter functioned and the state of πεπρημένος are clearer than the meanings of the varied requests for blood payment and blood-related curses that are found frequently in Britain. A certain level of clarity can nonetheless be found in judicial prayers that prohibit bodily functions or explicitly call for the death of their respective targets. Here I first discuss instances where the victim of the curse is to be denied bodily functions, health, or wellbeing (*vel sim.*) and what this might mean. I then discuss instances where the loss of the target's life is clearly called for. Sometimes this request appears on its own, but in other instances it is used with further detail or specification.

Biccus, the principal of UL006 (Uley), asks Mercury to punish an unknown thief through the denial of biological functions and health. I provide the editor's restoration and translation here:

Biccus dat M-

ercurio quidquid

pe(r)d(id)it si vir si m-

ascel ne meiat (transposed)

ne cacet ne loqua-

tur ne dormiat

n[e] vigilet nec s[a]-

nitatem ne-

ss[i] in templo

Mercurii per-

tulerit ne co(n)-

scientiam de

perferat ness[i]

me interceden-

te

'Biccus gives Mercury whatever he has lost (that the thief), whether man or male (sic.), may not urinate nor defecate nor speak nor sleep nor stay awake nor (have) well-being or health, unless he bring (it) in the temple of Mercury; nor gain consciousness (sic.) or (it) unless with my intervention.'

The subject is not stated, but the context suggests it is almost certainly the thief. Four of the prohibitions are given in pairs: *ne meiat ne cacet*, 'may he not urinate nor defecate,' and *ne dormiat ne vigilet,* 'may he not sleep nor be awake.' *Ne loquatur* appears on its own. The editor suggests the possibility that *ne taceat*, 'may he not be silent,' (which one might expect to see paired in opposition to *ne loquatur*) was lost due to confusion. I would think, however, that *ne taceat* (*vel sim*.) was not included because it conflicts with what might be expected of a curse tablet or judicial prayer. Often victims are bound or rendered useless or impotent in some way. Because power is to be taken away from the victim, prohibiting the victim from remaining silent (thereby giving them the power of speech) would contradict the purpose of the curse. If we consider that this string of prohibitions in effect denies the target life, then the inclusion of *ne tacet* in opposition to *ne loquatur*

would be even less fitting. A corpse cannot speak, but it can stay silent. *Loquatur* can also be read in WAN001 (Wanborough) where *taceat* cannot, though the text is damaged.

What, exactly, is called for in UL006 is not entirely clear. *Ne meiat ne cacet* would, of course, cause suffering, but these would not cause immediate death. *Ne dormiat ne vigilet* is less clear, since one must presumably be either sleeping or awake. Whether this intention is to cause the victim to exist in a state of confused unrest or to not exist at all is unclear. So there is no blood payment here, but the curse does call for considerable harm. Like the examples form Cnidus above and as in BA037 below, however, the targeted thief is permitted to redeem themselves. Does this mean that the punishment is to occur until they return this stolen property or unless they return the property? The distinction appears minor, but it has potential to change our understanding of the severity of the requested punishment and, by extension, the way in which a curse might have worked. This is clear at Cnidus, but less so here. Surely, the principal would not curse their victim to death if that same victim is still expected to rectify their wrongdoing afterward? In this sense, it would seem that the punishment is to function similarly to the state of πεπρημένος from Cnidus.

This logic is more apparent in UL010 from Uley, where the suggested punishment is quite simple (and quite lenient) when compared to other examples. The targeted thief is denied rest until they return the stolen items. I quote the relevant lines here:

> …ut il-
> le qui hoc circumvenit non
> ante laxetur nissi quando
> res ssdictas ad fanum ssdic-
> tum attulerit…

'…Let him who stole it not have rest before/unless/until he brings the aforesaid

things to the aforesaid temple…'

The denial of rest is unusually constructed. The deponent *laxetur* does not appear on any of the other examples from Britain. Additionally, the use of *ante*, *nissi*, and *quando* is rather redundant, particularly given that *nissi* is sufficient in other examples; but this redundancy is informative. Perhaps the additional use of *ante*, 'before,' and *quando*, 'when,' was intended to convey a sense of time. In this manner, *nissi* would likely mean 'until' rather than 'unless'. Additionally, *non laxetur*, 'may they not be rested,' does not prohibit the target from being able to bring the stolen cloth to the temple. This is potentially revealing of how *nissi* might be read in different contexts. Here, at least, it is clear that the punishment and suffering of the target is to act as a force that drives them to amend their wrongdoing. As such, the principal seems to favour redress rather than revenge in this instance.

I would argue that revenge is the dominant impetus behind curses that explicitly call for the death of their target. For instance, BA106 deals with a household robbery. The statement of punishment begins on line 3:

… qui-

cumque re(u)s deus illum

inveniat sanguine et

vitae suae illud redemat

'…Whosoever guilty the god finds him, let him recover it with blood and his life.'

The suggestion that the thief pay for their crime with their own blood can be found in lines 5-6, where it is explicitly stated that he/she is to redeem themselves with their own blood and life: *sanguine et vitae suae illud redemat.* In the cases discussed above where the target of the curse is to pay for their wrongdoing with their own blood, it is not clear that they are to die from this payment or exaction. Here, however, it is very clear: the target does not only pay with blood (an indefinite amount), but also with *vitae suae.* Clearly, they are not intended to survive. The deity is the subject of the subjunctive *inveniat,* 'may he come upon,' and is to ensure that the repayment in blood and life takes place. The obvious implication is that the addressed god is capable of finding and causing the death of the targeted thief. This tablet, like BA104 above, is (probably) dedicated to Mars. While BA105 states this explicitly, BA106 suggests this with the use of *deus* rather than *dea* in line 4.

Docilianus, the principal of BA010 from the same site, curses the thief of his hooded cloak, asking Sulis to 'drive him to the greatest death,' *maximo letum adigat.* The target is also denied 'sleep and children both now and in the future,' *nec ei somnum permittat nec natos nec nascentes.* The same death formula can be read in UL008 from Uley: *rogo te ut eos maximo leto adigas*, 'I ask you that you drive him to the greatest death.' *Te* refers to Mercury, who is invoked at the beginning of the inscription. The inscription additionally contains the denial of health and sleep. BA010 and UL008 contain the only two extant iterations of this 'greatest death' formula, and it is perhaps significant that they both contain additional prohibitions. One would imagine that death would also imply the denial of health, sleep, and future children. These texts are also a clear case of the same request being made to two separate deities, showing that both Sulis and Mercury were believed capable of driving targeted victims to their deaths. By

extension, this might also imply that divine capital punishment was not believed to be the domain of any god in particular.

BA037 (Bath) curses the thief of Civilis' ploughshare. The targeted thief is to 'lay down their life in the temple,' *animam suam in templo deponat*. This is followed by a lacunose statement of how they might avoid this by returning the ploughshare (Tomlin 1988: 148). Curiously, there is no mention of a deity in this inscription, nor does it seem that this was lost. Instead, *templo* is the only reference to anything associated with the divine. How the deity worshipped in this temple is imagined to benefit from this is unclear (unless we imagine a sacrifice scene), but it seems that the focus for the principal relies in revenge rather than worship *per se*.

If there is ever any ambiguity regarding what, exactly, payment in blood entailed, that is not the case in ROS003 from Ratcliffe-on-Soar. The text is discussed above regarding the dedication of the stolen animal to the god, but I include the entire restoration and translation here to show the emphasis on the suggested punishment.

> nomine Camulorigi(s) et Titocun(a)e molam quam perdederunt
>
> in fanum dei devovi cuicumque n(o)m[e[n inuolasit
>
> mola(m) illam ut sa(n)guin(em) suum mittat usque diem quo
>
> moriatur. q[ui]cumque [illam]inuolasit (f)urta moriatur,
>
> et PAULATORIAM quicumque [illam] inuolasit
>
> et ipse <moratio> mo[ri]atur. quicumqu(e) illam
>
> inuolasit et VERTOGN de (h)ospitio vel vissacio,
>
> quicumque illam inuolasit, a de<v>o mori(a)tur.

'In the name of Camulorix and Titocuna I have dedicated in the temple of the god the mule(?) which they have lost. Whoever stole that mule(?), whatever his name, may he let his blood until the day he die. Whoever stole the objects of theft, may he die; and the ( ), whoever stole it, may he die also. Whoever stole it and the ( ) from the house or the pair of bags(?), whoever stole it, may he die by the god.'

The targeted thief is to bleed until the day they die. We can presume that this blood loss might be the cause of death. I would suggest that, at least in this instance, the letting of blood should be taken quite literally due to the clear language. It is tempting to suppose that this is what is implied in other occurrences of blood payment, but this formula does not appear elsewhere even with variation, making such an interpretation less convincing. Also interesting is that there is actually no mention of repayment or return. In other words, there is no stated way for the target to avoid, escape, or undo the curse. It is also worth noting that the principals or scribe have already decided the appropriate punishment for their target. The amount of blood is not to be determined by the deity or adjusted to the equivalent perceived value of the stolen goods. Indeed, the emphasis here is not on blood, but on death. *Moriatur*, 'may they die,' is repeated four times. Thus, the belief that the divine can be called upon to secure revenge rather than redress is attested here.

Sometimes additional constraints are placed on this call for revenge. For example, LEI002 from Leicester also mentions a period of time in which the curse is to come into effect. In this tablet, the deadline is seven days, but, as mentioned above, nine days is the more usual time limit (Tomlin 2008: 215, 218). A *defixio* from Carthage (*TheDeMa* 96) also calls for the curse to take effect within seven days: *intra dies septe(m).* Tomlin has discussed the connection between location and this unusual time constraint, saying, 'in the context of the *septisonium* and its seven deities who symbolised a week, "seven days"

was entirely appropriate' (Tomlin 2008: 218). The text asks that the god strike down those who committed the theft of silver coins. Notably, the principal also provides the location wherein which this is to take place:

hos deus siderabit in hoc septiso-

nio et peto ut vitam suam per

dant ante dies septem

'...a god will strike down in this septisonium, and I ask that they lose their life before seven days'

It is made very clear that the cursed thieves are to die, but it is also notable that there is no mention of blood payment or the denial of health and wellbeing. Similis, Cupitus, and Lochita are simply to die with the intervention of the unnamed deity. It is worth noting also that there is no mention of a way in which the thieves might be redeemed. The punishment is extreme and unavoidable. To me, this suggests that the motive of the principal is revenge, rather than the return of stolen property, as there is no mention of the return of the property. The use of the future *siderabit*, 'they will strike down,' is significant. In every sense, the principal does not ask that the deity assist in their revenge, but rather states that the thieves will be punished. The request for a time limit or deadline, however, is communicated with the indicative *peto*, 'I ask,' and the subjunctive *perdant*, 'that they lose.' The principal seems to take the cooperation of the god and their ability to kill the thieves for granted, but also feels the need to specify details.

Conclusions

I have sought to examine what judicial prayers can reveal about the relationships between humans and the divine. It is clear that judicial prayers in Britain and in the wider Mediterranean world reflect the belief that the gods can enforce moral behaviour and can be called upon when someone is believed to have behaved amorally. In Britain at least, it does not seem that one particular deity is thought to be primarily responsible for this enforcement; this is apparent when we consider that judicial prayers invoke a range of deities, with particular attention payed to the suitability of a place for cursing rather than the suitability of a particular deity for invocation. I have argued here that, while judicial prayers lack the coercive language of binding that is often found in *defixiones*, there is a certain element of coercion in the dedication or consignment of property and people to the gods that sometimes occurs in judicial prayers. Rather than only reflecting the belief that gods can be called upon to administer justice, this is reflective of the belief that gods can be made to administer justice. The dedication of items or people is not necessarily indicative of what the gods wanted, but rather of what best suited the circumstances of the individual. As such, dedications and invocations are more revealing of the people who used curses and judicial prayers than of the deities themselves. Nonetheless, we may understand that these beliefs are required in order for judicial prayers to 'work' and, therefore, be adopted. As demonstrated by the presence of dedication statements, for example, this belief seems to have been widespread throughout the Mediterranean world.

Requests for punishment are similarly telling of conceptualizations of the divine in that they demonstrate what the gods were thought capable of achieving and, by extension, what was thought to be the result of divine displeasure. This takes different forms in different places. In Britain, this often took the form of grisly punishments, the most frequently requested being that the targeted individual should pay for their theft or

wrongdoing with their blood. Nonetheless, causing blood loss or blood-related affliction does not seem to be the expertise of any particular deity.

The judicial prayers in Britain clearly express the belief that invoking the gods to inflict justice or severe revenge upon an individual, usually a thief, is an acceptable course of action – at least in the mind of the principal. We must remember that these beliefs did not exist in a vacuum. They must have been connected in some way to wider religious and social beliefs. This is somewhat clear when we consider the giving of stolen property to the divine, but less so when we consider blood payment. Nevertheless, we must ask why this concept of blood payment is so well-attested in Britain and what this, as well as the adoption of judicial prayers, might reveal about religious and social understanding in Britain during the Roman period.

Chapter Seven: The Adoption of Judicial Prayers

In this chapter, I aim to discuss how observations made in the last three chapters can inform understandings of contact and change in Britain and in the wider Roman world. Language and expressions of identity and belief can be seen as three different avenues for approaching cultural contact and change in Britain in the Roman empire, and, as demonstrated above, these themes or approaches find common ground in curse tablets. The primary questions raised in the previous chapters relate to how the practice of written cursing came to be incorporated into life in Britain during the Roman period as well as what the manifestation of this practice might reveal about other aspects of life in Britain and in the Roman world. This is largely related to what factors influenced the wider Mediterranean practice of written cursing to make it take the form that it does in Britain. A particularly striking feature is the preference for judicial prayers (especially those motivated by theft) and the near exclusion of 'standard' *defixiones*. The apparent preoccupation with blood and bloody death evident in requested punishments is also noteworthy. We can, therefore, return to the explanatory frameworks outlined in the introduction to ask the following question: what factors lead to the degree of variation that is visible between the curse tablets from Britain and those elsewhere? In this chapter, I argue that close examination of details and context suggests that the wider Mediterranean practice of cursing is adopted to fit a specific need within a specific set of circumstances.

It seems that it is fruitful to understand cursing in the Mediterranean world as a highly variable practice, which is combined with regional or local beliefs and shaped to suit a regional or local need. Approaches incorporating the concepts of variability, hybridity, and glocalisation are, therefore, most applicable. Such concepts, however, rely on an understanding of the values, ideas, and needs that are combining and interacting.

For instance, creolisation, a model of hybridity, would require us to know something of the indigenous values that combine with Roman values to create a creole practice. With hybridity and variability in general, it is still necessary to consider the combining values and ideas, though there is no need to attribute these to 'Roman' or indigenous cultures.

For this reason, I examine the circumstances in which this particular practice emerged. First, I consider the apparent pattern of adoption of curses in Roman Britain – that is, the adoption of judicial prayers and the near exclusion of *defixiones* – and how the former may be seen to fulfil a particular need or function. I then consider the form that these judicial prayers take. In particular, I consider the ideas and imagery that may have resulted in the requests for payment in blood that are particular to the region. I then turn to the role of violence and attitudes toward violence – in particular, retributive violence – in society.

The Adoption of Judicial Prayers

Much attention has been paid to the preoccupation with theft that is apparent in the curse tablets from Britain (Tomlin 1988: 79; Mattingly 2006: 315). This is viewed as the result of judicial indifference, which is summarised by Mattingly: 'The curse tablets can be read as a transcript about the workings of Roman imperialism – with divine help being recruited to help subjects address some of its shortcomings' (2006: 315). The concentration of curses that were prompted by theft and the near exclusion of 'standard' binding spells is, however, unparalleled elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. In my view, while the shortcomings of Roman imperialism do explain the need for such curses in Britain, they do not explain the absence of this pattern elsewhere. Surely judicial indifference and disempowerment occurred throughout the Roman empire, and we would thus expect to see similar patterns to the adoption of cursing wherever this occurred.

In Chapter Two, I outlined the category of judicial prayers and discussed how these differ from the wider body of 'standard' defixiones. Throughout the present work, we have seen how comparing judicial prayers to similar texts both within Britain and in the rest of the Mediterranean world can be revealing when, for instance, examining the beliefs they represent and interpreting the language they employ. It should also be noted that, while the majority of judicial prayers in Britain are motivated by theft, some are motivated by other perceived wrongdoings. For this reason, it seems more appropriate to consider why the judicial prayer was adopted rather than focus on a British preoccupation with punishing thieves.

I argue here that the pattern of cursing in Britain is best explained if we understand cursing – in the form of the *defixio* or the judicial prayer – as a technology that can be adopted and employed to suit specific circumstances. Judicial prayers and 'standard' curses can be understood as two different technologies because they are used in different ways. Crucially, these technologies are not always adopted and, where they are adopted, do not always take the same form. Although curses are material objects, they are always made locally to fit specific circumstances and practices. While there is evidence for the use of handbooks or recipes and the employment of professionals in the use of *defixiones* in some parts and periods of the ancient Mediterranean, it seems clear that such handbooks were not used in Britain, and the users of curses in Britain did not employ professionals but rather wrote their own curses (see Chapter Four). Rather than a specific material or object that is spread, what we see here is an idea about the ways of communicating with the divine that is transferred throughout the connected Mediterranean world and the Roman empire. A great degree of variation is therefore visible.

We must return to the question of why this particular technology was adopted. This is in part related to how curses 'worked'. Explanations for the role of magic and cursing tend toward social functionalist approaches. For instance, in his chapter on the social function of cult in Roman Britain, Henig describes the role of cursing at temples:

> Thus the temples of Britain helped to resolve conflicts, to punish transgressions which would sometimes be hard to bring to court without risking a breakdown in social order, and to remove intolerable tensions. In this way they played a part in maintaining the Pax Romana down to the time of the Christian Empire [sic] and beyond (1984: 133).

In the introduction to his publication of the curse tablets from Bath, Tomlin adds that this would have 'relieved the injured party's feelings' and given them the satisfaction that something had been done about the injustice they suffered (1988: 101-2). This reasoning may well apply to our understanding of emotional responses to cursing. In focusing on the role of emotion, however, such functionalist perspectives seem to deny the possibility that people used curses because they believed they were effective. In effect, considering only emotional motivations for cursing relegates the belief that curses worked to superstition. In my view, this risks creating or reinforcing a faulty distinction between legitimate belief and superstition – or magic and religion – not unlike that for which Versnel's judicial prayer distinction has been criticised (see Chapter Two).

In the previous chapter, we have seen that the use of judicial prayers is actually reflective of a complex set of beliefs, chief among which being the belief that the gods enforce moral behaviour and could be called upon to do so. It seems to me that this belief either already existed in Britain or had particular appeal due to judicial indifference,

social inequality, or complexities of identity negotiation. This resulted in the technology of written judicial prayers being adopted and flourishing, particularly at Bath and Uley. The occurrence of curses at other sites and in bodies of water suggests that the practice might have also been common in these places, but with few surviving and discovered examples. There is really no way to know how widely that practice was adopted, though future discoveries may provide additional insight.

Furthermore, the practice of binding or directly coercing a deity or supernatural being did not take hold, and perhaps this may be understood to be because such practices were not considered possible or the pre-conquest system of belief did not readily accommodate such concepts. It is tempting to suppose that this is due to conceptualizations of the divine as largely non-anthropomorphic or non-iconographic before extensive contact between peoples in Britain and those of the Roman empire. This may be reflected in the relative shortage of sculptural evidence depicting anthropomorphic figures in pre-Roman Britain and northwest Europe (Green 1986: 18-20, 48). It will also be remembered that at Uley there does not appear to have been a readily identifiable pre-Roman deity, though the site had a long tradition of ritual practice. The concept of binding powers to do one's bidding and a formless – or at least non-anthropomorphic – deity may have been incompatible. We can additionally consider that the rare examples of 'standard' curses in Britain appear to have been used by – or at least target – Roman citizens. LON006 (London) at least targets two individuals with *tria nomina,* Titus Egnatius Tyrannus and Publius Cicereius Felix. LON005 targets a woman named Tacita. It is highly possible that these individuals were newcomers.

We may, therefore, understand the local or regional conceptions of the divine and of human-divine communication to be the local context within which the global or Mediterranean technology of inscribing judicial prayers was adopted and adapted. The

apparent concentration of judicial prayers and near exclusion of *defixiones* can, therefore, be understood as a product of glocalisation, where glocalisation can be understood as the regional variation of a globally shared practice.

Blood Payment and Violence

Is it reasonable to suppose that the apparent preoccupation with violence and bloody imagery in the British curse tablets is indicative of a preoccupation with violence and bloody imagery in the wider society? Is the variability in the punishments requested in curse tablets indicative of a variability in attitudes towards violence? Put crudely, should we consider pre- and post-conquest Britain to have been particularly violent?

Another consequence of postcolonial critique is a change in perception of Iron-Age Britain. Earlier studies drew upon classical writers such as Julius Caesar, Tacitus and Cassius Dio to create and perpetuate the image of war-like, belligerent Celtic societies headed by a warrior-elite, but later approaches envisage a more heterogeneous society with apparently little conflict (James 2007: 160). The earlier focus on violent, war-oriented societies was both influenced by hillfort-dominated archaeology and inspired by classical sources (James 2007: 160). The reliance on classical sources, in particular, has been criticized because of the tendency for such sources to justify territorial expansion by focusing on and stereotyping the savagery of the barbarian 'Other'; as such, they are a product of colonial discourse subject to misunderstanding and distortion (Webster 1996: 116, 120; Green 2001: 13; Mattingly 2006: 34-6; Hutton 2011b: 137). For instance, settlement archaeology and a paucity of significant weapons suggest that early Iron Age societies in Britain were closer to egalitarian farming societies than the warrior societies they were originally thought to be (James 2007: 161). James, however, explains how the Iron Age – in particular, the Early Iron Age – has been subject

to sanitization in archaeological discourse (2007: 166-7). He adds that evidence for an agrarian society need not be taken as evidence for a lack of warfare and violence, and wonders whether this change in perspectives is consistent with evidence or represents a shift in modern, back-projected cultural values (2007: 166-7). Indeed, reconstructions of the prehistoric past in open-air museums have continued to project the image of a sustainable and peaceful Iron Age (Hingley in press). This is part of a wider trend of pacification of the past in pre-history more generally, which is in part motivated by attempts to avoid justifying and legitimizing violence (Armit 2011: 503). These perspectives are also popular becauset they can be used to demonstrate that egalitarianism and environmental sustainability are possible in the present (Hingley in press).

I am hesitant to argue for an exceptionally violent pre-Roman Britain for a number of reasons. First, it could very well be that the violence of the Roman conquest contributed to this preoccupation with blood. Additionally, as will be discussed below, the evidence used to substantiate the view of an especially violent Iron Age in Britain and other provinces in northwest Europe is often subject to sensationalism. Nonetheless, the above questions require us to consider the particular forms of violence exhibited as well as the imagery and concepts these might invoke. Here I do not intend to suppose that the cultures that interacted and eventually influenced the development of curses that exhibit the blood payment theme were more or less violent than those who did not use such bloody imagery in their curses. We should, however, accept that it may be the case that the idea of blood sacrifice or throat slitting was particularly appealing. Just as divine displeasure at Cnidus is associated with fever (see Chapter Six), punishment and divine displeasure seem particularly associated with throat-slitting or exsanguination where the blood payment theme is present.

Classical ethnographic accounts of ritual murder, execution, and sacrifice

There are clear problems with bias, misinformation, and fabrication in the literary sources that describe 'barbarian' cultures or cultures with which Rome had violent contact. Indeed, classical ethnographic accounts tend to reveal more about their authors and audiences than they do about their subjects and should not be seen as representative of what actually went on (Mattingly 2006: 34). I do not, however, think it is helpful to disregard the literary evidence altogether, particularly when we consider that it is reflective of imperial attitudes and thus may well have influenced interactions between local populations and the Roman empire. With these considerations in mind, we can examine the ethnographic evidence, albeit critically. Literary accounts considered here include not only those describing the inhabitants of Britain, but also those of Gaul and Germany, 'Celtic' provinces with which Rome had violent contact.

It will be remembered that curse tablets that include the theme of blood payment contain elements of consecration (the target or stolen object is given to the deity) and execution (the target pays with their blood and their life). These features can be found also in an account of divinatory human sacrifice in Gaul. The following was written by Strabo regarding head-hunting and display (*Geographica* 4.4.5):

> *'But the Romans put a stop to these customs, as well as to all those connected with the sacrifices and divinations that are opposed to our usages. They used to strike a human being, whom they had devoted to death,[2] in the back with a sabre, and then divine from his death-struggle. But they would not sacrifice without the Druids. We are told of still other kinds of human sacrifices; for example, they would shoot victims to death with arrows, or impale them in the temples, or, having devised a colossus of straw and wood, throw into the colossus cattle and wild animals of all*

sorts and human beings, and then make a burnt-offering of the whole thing'
(translation by Jones 1911: 247).

Significantly, Strabo describes the way things were before Roman intervention, and it is clear that these practices are now considered obsolete. He thus offers an endorsement of Roman imperial actions while condemning the former practices of the Gauls. Interestingly, he does acknowledge that his account is based on hearsay. Strabo's account, like others discussed here, does find support in modern interpretations of human remains (discussed below), though many of these interpretations are themselves influenced heavily by classical sources.

Further accounts of human sacrifice are provided by Tacitus. One such account describes religious practice in Germany (*Germania* 9.1):

'Of the gods, they give a special worship to Mercury, to whom on certain days they count even the sacrifice of human life lawful' (translation by Hutton & Peterson 1914: 145).

Tacitus makes less explicit mention of the practice in his description of the Roman victory at Anglesey in Britain during Suetonius Paulinus' campaign against the Druids (*Annales* 14.30):

'On the beach stood the adverse array, a serried mass of arms and men, with women flitting between the ranks. In the style of Furies, in robes of deathly black and with dishevelled hair, they brandished their torches; while a circle of Druids, lifting their hands to heaven and showering imprecations, struck the troops with

such an awe at the extraordinary spectacle that, as though their limbs were paralysed, they exposed their bodies to wounds without an attempt at movement. Then, reassured by their general, and inciting each other never to flinch before a band of females and fanatics, they charged behind the standards, cut down all who met them, and enveloped the enemy in his own flames. The next step was to install a garrison among the conquered population, and to demolish the groves consecrated to their savage cults: for they considered it a pious duty to slake the altars with captive blood and to consult their deities by means of human entrails' (translation by Jackson 1937: 155-7).

Clearly human sacrifice and 'savage cults' (*saevus superstitio*) are used to construct a foreign threat to Roman values. The account of victory at Anglesey thus not only describes conquest, but also provides a justification for it. This is a particularly potent example of how classical writers and audiences 'sought confirmation of their own innate superiority and the backwardness of others' (Mattingly 2006: 34). Nonetheless, Tacitus' description of the scene appears to have a connection with blood payment in that the deity receives the blood of the human victims in a sacred context. Additionally, these human victims are identified as captives, and thus their execution may be thought to be justified or acceptable to those performing it.

A final instance to be considered here is provided by Pliny the Elder. He describes a number of practices that took place in Gaul, but which have crossed the ocean to Britannia, where they continued (*Natural History* 30.4)

'It is beyond calculation how great is the debt owed to the Romans, who swept away the monstrous rites, in which to kill a man was the highest religious duty and for him to be eaten a passport to health' (translation by Jones 1963: 287).

Like human sacrifice, accounts of cannibalism are best understood as formulaic and othering descriptions of barbarian practices (Mattingly 2006: 34; Harding 2016: 206-8). Indeed, the general consensus today is that the evidence for the practice of cannibalism in Iron Age Britain is not conclusive (Harding 2016: 206). Again, the connection between descriptions of barbarian behaviour and justification for expansion are apparent, but here we also see that the idea of human sacrifice is a part of constructed images of both the inhabitants of Britain and the 'other' more generally.

One further point can be made regarding ethnographic sources and their representation of 'Celtic' religious practices in particular. It is clear that such accounts draw heavily upon stereotypes and preconceived notions of barbarity, and I wonder how these stereotypes and preconceptions might have influenced cultural and interpersonal contact. The content, language, and names represented in the curse tablets from Britain indicate that those who employed them were typically local non-elites (see Chapter Five). Nonetheless, it is clear that these individuals had considerable contact with Mediterranean culture. Part of this culture may have included the belief that 'Celts' practiced human sacrifice or that religious practices in these provinces were particularly violent and bloody, at least before Roman conquest. The failure to conquer northern Britain and Ireland also meant that 'barbarians' remained close at hand. We cannot rule out the possibility that curses that make use of the blood payment theme represent a projection or internalization of this othering discourse.

The treatment of human remains

There is some indication in the archaeological record that human sacrifice or ritualised murder was practiced in Iron Age and Roman period Britain and northern Europe. This comes in the form of human remains that bear signs of trauma caused by ritualised violence in their skeletons or soft tissue. Here I focus on so-called 'bog bodies' and decapitated and deliberately fragmented remains at hillforts, which are regarded as indicative of execution or sacrifice and ritual display and deposition (Green 1998, 2001; Craig et al. 2005). The Roman military in Britain also appear to have focused on decapitating people (Redfern and Bonney 2014). For the purpose of brevity, of the bog bodies I discuss only two examples, which bear similar signs of trauma. I have also chosen to focus on the burials at Danebury as it is regarded as one of the better excavated British Iron Age hillforts with a high volume of evidence (Craig et al. 2005: 168).

Sphagnum from dead bog moss, high levels of acidity, and a lack of oxygen lead to the exceptional preservation of organic materials in peat bogs (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 100). This includes the soft tissue of so-called bog bodies, which are found in areas of raised bog land in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Britain (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 15). Most known ancient bog bodies are typically dated to the Roman and Iron Age periods (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 15), but radiocarbon dating of the actual remains can prove complicated (see Hutton 2011b: 141-2 on dating Lindow Man). Preservation of the soft tissue of these individuals reveals significant trauma and violent death. There are varying interpretations of the nature of this violence, with some regarding them as bodies of victims of sacrifice and others considering them to be victims of execution (Harding 2016: 215). I consider two examples here, the so-called Grauballe Man and the so-called Lindow Man, which have been interpreted as bearing resemblance to the accounts of ritual killing in classical literature.

Grauballe Man, whose remains are dated to between 400 BC and 200 BC, had his throat slit and sustained a skull-fracturing blow to the temple before deposition in a bog in Nebel Mose, Denmark (Green 2001: 87-9; Harding 2016: 216). Examination of his intestinal contents revealed that he had ingested a high amount of ergot (a hallucination-inducing fungus that grows on rotting rye and barley) before his death (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 110-11). The possibility of deliberate ergot poisoning has been taken to suggest that the man underwent dietary preparation before his death (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 111). The wound on Grauballe Man's throat is of particular interest as the extent and severity of the cut rule-out the possibility that the wound was self-inflicted or caused by peat cutting (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 111). According to Aldhouse-Green, 'the attack on Grauballe Man's throat was sustained, excessively violent and designed to cause maximum harm. It was delivered with a sure hand by someone who knew exactly what he or she was doing, with a controlled movement, not a frenzied slashing' (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 211).

Lindow Man was discovered in Lindow Moss, Cheshire. The dating of the death and bog burial of Lindow Man is not entirely clear, but he is believed to have been killed and placed in the bog in the early first to second century AD (Hutton 2011b: 142). He is argued to have sustained a heavy blow to the head and had his throat cut, additionally having been struck in the chest from behind and garrotted (Green 2001: 87; Hutton 2011b: 139-40; Harding 2016: 216). As with Grauballe Man, this degree of trauma suggests a highly ritualised violence. Indeed, it has been noted that many of the bog bodies suffered violence that was more than sufficient to kill them, which may indicate performance (Armit 2011: 512; Harding 2016: 216). The traditional interpretation of Lindow Man's death, however, has been contested – an alternative interpretation being that he was a victim of a mundane stabbing and beating, with the jugular gash caused long after his death and the cord around his neck actually being decorative (Hutton 2011b).

The view that bog bodies were victims of sacrifice is supported by their deposition in watery contexts, which are regarded as sacred, liminal spaces (Aldhouse-Green 2015: 84; Harding 2016: 217). One single explanation, however, is not required for their special burial, particularly when we consider the wide geographic distribution of bog burials (Harding 2016: 218).

While it may seem that bog bodies attest to the presence of human sacrifice in Iron Age Celtic societies, the interpretations of these remains are actually heavily influenced by classical sources. As discussed above, these are not wholly reliable, particularly regarding descriptions of cultures with which Rome had violent contact. The argument for human sacrifice is thus somewhat circular where bog bodies and classical sources are concerned.

Other possible indications of the practice of particularly bloody execution or sacrifice can be found in instances where parts of the body – particularly the head – bear marks of special treatment and exhibition. Green cites the defleshing of a skull at the Roman period temple site at St. Albans as one such instance (1998: 180). The skull is that of a teenage boy that was found in a pit associated with a ritual enclosure at Folly Lane. 'At least one of several injuries to the head was sustained to living bone,' but fine cut marks as well as damage to the base of the skull indicate that the head was defleshed and displayed on a pole (Green 1998: 180).

A comparable treatment seems to have occurred in the Iron Age at Danebury, Hampshire, which was primarily occupied from the seventh or sixth century BC to the first century AD (Cunliffe 1984). Here the remains of at least 91 individuals were found in pits as well as ditches, post holes, and other stratified contexts (Craig et al. 2005: 168). A significant proportion of these remains were recovered from 181 pits (Craig et al. 2005: 168). 'Whole bodies; incomplete skeletons (individual depositions); multiple, partial semi-articulated skeletons; crania or parts of crania (with and without mandibles); pelvic girdles;

and individual bones' are the categories of remains that can be identified at the site, and some of these bore marks of injuries that were inflicted at or around the time of death (Craig et al. 2005.: 166). Several explanations were initially offered for the burial of fragments of bodies, including excarnation, ritual dismemberment, human sacrifice, and insult cannibalism, with excarnation via exposure being the most popular interpretation (Cunliffe 1992: 77; Craig et al. 2005: 167). Cunliffe states, 'Human sacrifice is widely attested among the Celts and indeed the ritually-killed Lindow Man need differ from the Danebury bodies only in his place of deposition (in a bog) and consequent state of preservation' (1992: 77). Upon reassessment of the evidence, Craig et al. argue that some of the individuals found at Danebury were ritually killed, dismembered, and displayed enemies that were seized during violent conflict (2005: 167).

These burials are not representative of the entire population, and something must have made these individuals distinguishable from the rest of the population that used the site (Craig et al. 2005.: 169). Two of the individuals show signs of decapitation and display before they were simultaneously buried in the same pit, and at least another 10 individuals show signs of peri-mortem weapon injuries (Craig et al. 2005: 170-1). Additionally, there is significant evidence for deliberate peri-mortem fragmentation that does not appear to be compatible with excarnation via exposure (Craig et al. 2005: 168-70). Although an argument can be made for the remains at Danebury and other contemporary hillforts or ritual sites as evidence for warrior cults and ancestor worship, Craig et al. (2005: 175) argue that:

'much of the evidence seems equally likely to relate to the denigration of the deceased: weapon-related injuries in conjunction with mutilation – decapitation and dismemberment – burning, execution, defleshing and exposure of bodies and body

parts for some period after death, any or all of which can also be subsumed under the heading 'human sacrifice', for which the importance of violence and an overkill factor has been emphasized by Green (1998: 173).'

Significantly, Craig et al. (2005: 175) note the connection between such mutilation and display and ritualised revenge among feuding parties, where revenge is fuelled by the loss of a comrade or social insult. As with the bog burials, the violence represented in head hunting and display seems to represent the transformation of killing into a performative ritual (Armit 2011: 513).

Considering the above interpretations of human remains, it seems that the ritualised killing of humans – either through sacrifice, execution, or both – was indeed practiced in pre-conquest and post-conquest Britain. Whether or not this was practiced frequently or in the manner described by classical ethnographers is another question; but even if it did not happen regularly or was believed to be a practice of the past, such traditions would have had some effect on people's ways of thinking and, perhaps, could be drawn upon for inspiration when one was seeking revenge for a personal slight.

Blood payment, violence, and judicial prayers

The imagery associated with ritual killing and the theme of blood payment appears to have been particularly compatible with the belief that the divine can be called upon to inflict justice or revenge. Written cursing in the Mediterranean world was a highly variable practice; as has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, this is also true of judicial prayers specifically. To better understand the preoccupation with blood payment visible in many British judicial prayers, we can view the tradition of ritual killing – or the imagery associated with it – to be a local or regional characteristic that combined with the wider

Mediterranean technology of written cursing and, specifically, requests for punishment. If we accept that the users of judicial prayers with the blood payment theme did indeed intend to cause blood-related harm to their targets, we can see a global technology adapted to fit a more specific purpose.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have revisited observations made in previous chapters regarding, in particular, both the adoption of judicial prayers and the near exclusion of 'standard' *defixiones* in Britain as well as the prevalence of the theme of blood payment in the British texts. I have argued that these phenomena are best explained if we consider written cursing to be a 'global' Mediterranean practice or technology that was adopted and adapted to fit specific needs and circumstances. Regarding the pattern of curse tablet adoption in Britain, these circumstances appear to have related to perceptions of the divine and divine-human interaction, where the belief that a deity could be called upon to inflict justice was widespread, but the belief that a deity could be bound or directly coerced was not. Regarding the apparent preoccupation with blood payment in suggested punishments, the presence of the theme of ritualised killing and associated imagery in the region may, perhaps, also be considered regionally specific inspiration. We can thus observe the process of glocalisation: written cursing may be understood as a shared practice of the wider connectivity, where regional variability causes this shared aspect to be incorporated differently than it is elsewhere.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Summary and Observations

In the introductory chapter, I gave an overview of theoretical frameworks that are used throughout this dissertation. This necessarily began with a discussion of traditional Romanisation. While I argued that this anachronistic model should continue to be avoided, it nonetheless featured in my overview of theoretical models because of the influence it has had on other models for change, as well as the influence it has had on Roman provincial archaeology more generally. Considering Romanisation allows us to see how our understanding of the past is embedded in contemporary perceptions, I also reviewed some perspectives offered by postcolonial and globalisation theories, noting the potential these offer for exploring the complexities of change and contact in the Roman or Mediterranean world. Because written cursing was a widespread practice, a framework that regards the Mediterranean world as a single unit within which there are smaller, interconnected networks is required to study the tablets in their global and local contexts simultaneously. There is great potential for curse tablets and other forms of literacy to contribute to our understanding of connectivity and contact, and I have aimed to demonstrate this throughout this dissertation.

Chapter Two began with an introduction to cursing in the Mediterranean world. Because curses were used for over a millennium, a comprehensive study was not possible; I gave a brief overview of the characteristics of curse texts and discussed how they were made and deposited. Considerable variation in style, form, and motivation are apparent, but it can nonetheless be understood that curse tablets of the 'standard' type were created to manage a perceived threat or risk.

The second half of Chapter Two dealt with the category (or subcategory) of curse tablets known as judicial prayers. These curses tend to differ from the wider group of

defixiones in their format, the language they use, and the deities they invoke; the primary distinguishing factor, however, is that they are created in order for the principal to gain justice or revenge for a perceived crime or wrongdoing that has already taken place. While this categorisation has been largely accepted by those studying curse tablets, some criticisms have been put forward by others. I have addressed these criticisms and ultimately concluded that distinguishing between the two groups is both fruitful and necessary. This conclusion is supported with the use of a few examples from throughout the Mediterranean world and by the observation that curse tablets and judicial prayers can have different patterns of adoption and use. Significantly, almost all of the curses found in Britain are judicial prayers, and distinguishing between judicial prayers and *defixiones* allows us to consider why the practice of creating judicial prayers flourished in the province and the practice of creating 'standard' curses did not.

In Chapter Three, I provided an overview of the archaeological context of cursing in Roman Britain. Much of the focus in this dissertation is on the written content of the curses in Britain, but it is important that we consider the material context of cursing as well. The vast majority of extant curse tablets in Britain were found at Bath and Uley. For this reason, much of the chapter consisted of descriptions of these sites in order to explore the relationship between apparently high incidences of cursing and location. Curiously, Bath and Uley seem to share little in common. While Bath appears to have been a regional or provincial shrine, Uley was more rural and served fewer patrons. Their differing character is reflected in the recorded stolen items – at Bath, many were associated with bathing while, at Uley, many items were agricultural or domestic in nature. The primary deities worshipped at each site also differ. There is no obvious connection between the two sites. It is possible that cursing occurred frequently at other sites, but evidence for this this has not been recovered. If this is true, then the apparent

high incidences of cursing at only Bath and Uley would be due to accident. Nonetheless, Bath and Uley both have central water features that were used for ritual deposition, and the suitability of these watery contexts for communication with the divine may have resulted in the popularity of cursing here.

The chapter also considered the other locations in Britain where curses have been found. As these sites produced few or single tablets, it is not possible to offer general overviews of the treatment of texts at each site. Nonetheless, although a wide range of contexts were represented, a slight preference for deposition in watery contexts or places closely linked with water can be observed. I also observed that there is no apparent preference for sites associated with specific deities. It remains unclear how common the use of judicial prayers in Britain may have been, but an examination of archaeological context and material treatment of curse texts revealed a close connection between place and practice.

In Chapter Four, I discussed the language used in judicial prayers in Britain. In order to keep the texts in the wider context of the Mediterranean practice of cursing to gain justice or revenge, I compared the language of judicial prayers in Britain to that of judicial prayers throughout the Mediterranean world. The main discussion began by looking at the ways in which the users of judicial prayers sought the attention of the divine. This includes direct addresses to the deities, in which deities are directly appealed to through invocations resembling petitions or correspondences. The help of a deity may also be secured with a dedication clause, in which the user of the curse gives the supposed wrongdoer or stolen property to the deity. When comparing curses from Roman Britain to those from the continent, it was observed that there are not major differences in the formation of these features.

The chapter also addressed the ways in which the users ensured that the correct individuals were targeted by their curses. These methods include the direct naming of the target, which appears to have been done whenever possible throughout the Mediterranean world. Another method is the use of binary alternative conditions, which functioned as a 'catch-all' net to secure the correct target regardless of their identity. These conditions occur frequently in Britain, but rarely elsewhere. By employing globalisation perspectives, the use of this particular formula may be understood as an example of regional variation.

Another apparent variation can be seen in the punishments that the principals of judicial prayers request for their targets. In Britain, this often takes the form of blood payment, where the principal requests that the target of the curse pay for their crimes in their own blood. While the concept of blood-related punishment is not entirely exclusive to Roman Britain, a preoccupation with blood payment appears unparalleled elsewhere. In examining the language used to communicate this request, it is clear that it was not a single formula that was used. Instead, the concept of paying for one's crimes with blood was applied to fit various contexts.

In this chapter, I also noted inscriptions that make use of multiple languages, drawing attention to the considerable innovation and command of language this represents. Curse tablets are an invaluable resource for studying literacy in Roman Britain, which itself has often been subject to debate. Material presented throughout the chapter suggested that a wide range of the population may have been literate, and levels of literacy varied considerably.

In Chapter Five, I examined what curse tablets can reveal about identity in Roman Britain and, conversely, what a focus on identity can reveal about the practice of cursing. This discussion began by considering the issue of authorship in order to determine the

groups represented by this particular body of evidence. With the consideration of onomastic evidence and the recorded stolen items, as well as a return to linguistic evidence, I defended the widely accepted view that the curse tablets in Britain were used by people of lower socio-economic status and that these people wrote their own curses. I then considered how the use of judicial prayers is embedded in perceptions of the self and of others, noting that individuals appear to have turned to judicial prayers in situations of perceived inequality or indifference. This is true of judicial prayers throughout the Mediterranean world and is revealing of social constraints and interpersonal power dynamics. Revealing such complex interactions is important because it allows us to consider how identity can affect lived experience.

The second half of Chapter Five returned to the binary alternative conditions discussed in Chapter Four in order to examine the social categorisation that they represent. This offered important insight into aspects of identity such as age, gender, and status. Among other observations, we have seen that individuals of any age, gender, or status may be considered active agents and could be singled-out for even the grisliest of punishments. Significantly, the binary alternative conditions attest to the presence of groups that are overlooked or otherwise invisible in the archaeological record. This is particularly true of the enslaved, who are bioarchaeologically indistinguishable from other victims of structural violence. We know very little about slavery in Roman Britain, but looking at the binary alternative conditions in judicial prayers reveals that the enslaved were perceived to have a degree of agency. The prevalence of 'slave' and 'free' as binary alternatives also hints that a fairly high proportion of the population may have been enslaved.

Chapter Six dealt with the concepts of belief represented in judicial prayers by exploring what judicial prayers reveal about human-divine relationships. To that end, I

first considered stated motivations for cursing and how these indicate what warranted the attention of the divine. Although the majority of judicial prayers in Britain deal with theft, a variety of motivations for cursing are represented. In Britain and in the wider Mediterranean world, this attests to the belief that the gods were capable of enforcing moral behaviour and could be called upon to do so. In looking at the wide range gods invoked in British curse tablets, it is clear that this enforcement was not the domain of any particular deity. Instead, it appears that particular places were considered appropriate for deposition, and the deities associated with these places were subsequently invoked. The naming of deities additionally sheds light on the processes of *interpretatio Romana*. In particular, the ambiguity regarding the deity invoked in texts from Uley suggests that processes of *interpretatio Romana* are not as straightforward as they are sometimes thought to be. The inconsistent invocation of Mars and Mercury indicates that the pre-Roman deity was ambivalent and could not be completely equated with either god, but it is also possible that the pre-Roman deity was nameless as well as aniconic (or even formless).

In order to discuss how judicial prayers illustrate the concept of exchange between humans and the divine, I also examined the giving of property and targets to the gods. I ultimately argued that, because responsibility is also transferred, there is an element of coercion in consigning objects or people to invoked gods. This is true of judicial prayers in Britain and throughout the Mediterranean, and employing a global perspective allows such an observation to be made.

The final section of Chapter Six addressed the suggested punishments and how these are reflective of both what deities are believed to be capable of achieving and what is appropriate to ask of a god or goddess. With the use of examples, I returned to the concept of blood payment in order to consider what these requests mean, demonstrating

that what is actually called for can be highly varied. To explore this variation in suggested punishments, I also looked at the texts from Cnidus and how these, too, attest to a particular belief in divine power. I ultimately concluded that the belief that the gods enforce (and can be made to enforce) moral behaviour is evident in judicial prayers throughout the Mediterranean world, but the desired consequences of this enforcement are subject to considerable variation. In Britain, the divine regulation of behaviour does not appear to be the speciality of a particular god or goddess, and this may reflect wider aspects of belief and worship.

Chapter Seven returned to two themes observed in the previous chapters. The first is the adoption of judicial prayers and the near exclusion of 'standard' curse tablets in Britain. I argued that this is best understood if we regard curse tablets and judicial prayers as technologies that can be adopted and adapted to suit specific purposes. Significantly, this technology was not spread in the form of a traded product, but rather as an idea about human-divine communication. The local and social and religious landscape allowed and necessitated the spread of judicial prayers but not 'standard' curse tablets or defixiones. The proliferation of judicial prayers in Britain may thus be understood as glocalisation, where a widespread technology takes a varied form in a particular area by combining with local characteristics.

The second part of Chapter seven focused upon the preoccupation with payment in blood that is apparent amongst the curse tablets from Roman Britain. Here I explored how attitudes toward particularly bloody violence may have led to this regional variation. I speculated that the prevalence of the blood payment theme may have roots in human sacrifice or ritualised execution, for which there is evidence in the archaeological record as well as potentially dubious support in ethnographic literature. Ultimately, both the pattern of adoption of the practice of cursing and the popularity of the theme of blood

payment are regional variations or glocalisations, where a wider, global practice interacts with other factors to take a specific form.

Key Contributions

Primarily undertaken by classicists, previous work on curse tablets has focused on language and often assumes the multilingualism of the reader. Linguistic analyses also tend to have limited (if any) engagement with the material context of the inscriptions they discuss. I have aimed here to present the language of curse tablets in an accessible way in order to bridge the gap between the study of archaeology and that of language. The inscribed texts of the published curse tablets from Britain have already been studied extensively by their principal editors, and I offer few comments regarding their reading or translation. My primary contribution relates to theory and the applicability of globalisation perspectives and concepts of identity to the study of curse tablets. Considering curse tablets in Britain in both their regional and 'global' context allowed for significant observations to be made.

Previous applications of theory to curse tablets have engaged with concepts of conflict management, psychological function, and social control. This thesis has stepped away from functionalist approaches to explore aspects of life such as use of space, language, and literacy, while also considering more general phenomena, such as the systems, beliefs, and needs required for the transmission of ideas to take place. In my own application of globalisation theory, I was able to engage with ideas of social interaction to explore concepts of justice and perceptions of the divine as well as identity negotiation on the individual, regional, and global scale.

Building off the suggestion that, in order to correctly interpret them, we should not study Greek or Latin texts in isolation (Versnel 1991), I demonstrated that regarding

the Mediterranean world as a single cultural container – and thus crossing language barriers – allows us to recognise similarities and differences that may have otherwise been invisible. In turn, this allows for the consideration of how such variation came to be. We have seen that, just as the practice of written cursing was adapted to meet specific needs, so too was language adapted to meet specific needs either in the region or of the individual. These needs relate directly to identity construction and negotiation, and I have demonstrated the compatibility of approaches to identity and globalisation perspectives. Indeed, the need for approaches that take identity into account is apparent when we consider how identity impacted processes of globalisation and how, in turn, globalisation impacted identity construction and negotiation.

In order to move beyond ineffective understandings of change and fixations with ethnic identity, we must acknowledge that multiple aspects of identity impacted lived experiences. Closely examining the language and content of curse tablets has allowed for the study of aspects of identity that have received limited attention in past studies. Indeed, my observation that cultural or ethnic identity was not used to identify potential targets suggests that this aspect of identity may have mattered less than our modern fixation with ethnicity would suggest. Instead, aspects such as age, gender, or status may have had more bearing on an individual's lived experience and their perceptions of others.

Treating cursing as a genuine religious practice has allowed for a better understanding of perceptions of divine power and communication with the divine. Significantly, by looking at the evidence for such perceptions in judicial prayers in Britain and elsewhere, I was able to observe that judicial prayers not only attest to the belief in divine justice, but also exhibit a degree of manipulation or coercion. Noting this element of coercion is important in regard to the criticisms mounted against the categorisation of judicial prayers, which see this categorisation an attempt to exalt the behaviour of the

users of judicial prayers above that of the users of *defixiones* or 'standard' curse tablets. Both forms of cursing can be coercive, so identifying a curse as a judicial prayer does not require us to regard it as more orthodox or devout than 'standard' cursing forms.

I have argued that the adoption written cursing in Britain is best understood if we regard curse tablets as a technology that was present in the connected Mediterranean world and subsequently spread to Britain, where it was adapted to suit local needs. Such a perspective allows for a consideration of the processes behind unique or unusual patterns. Combined with appropriate categorisation, this has allowed us to move beyond preliminary findings, such as the observations that curse tablets in Britain primarily deal with theft and call for blood-related suffering, to understand how these patterns are indicative of important aspects of religious belief and social realities.

Limitations and Further Avenues for Research

I have sought to carefully examine the language and material context of curse tablets in Britain within their global and local context, focusing also on identity and how curse tablets can help us understand identity in the past. In considering the aim to pursue globalisation perspectives, the limitations imposed by the scope of this project are apparent. It has been suggested that, in order to move beyond restrictive dichotomies, we should look at the ancient world as a single cultural container (Versluys 2014: 11). In focusing primarily on a single province, the present work cannot be said to be truly 'global.' Through comparative analysis of texts from a broad range of periods and sites, I nonetheless hope to have demonstrated the suitability of globalisation perspectives for studying curse tablets. This may also be stretched to include epigraphic and religious material more generally.

With this in mind, I think that the approach taken here for the curse tablets in Britain can be applied to curse tablets elsewhere in the Mediterranean world. Indeed, the preference for judicial prayers in Britain has caused the main focus of this dissertation to be on curses of this type, but I see no reason why considering global contexts would not be equally informative for other cursing practices. As with judicial prayers, it seems fruitful to view 'standard' curse tablets as a technology. Although *defixiones* are sometimes created by professionals or with the use of handbooks, they may also be understood as a versatile tool that can be adapted to suit specific needs.

Similarly, approaches to identity may also be useful when considering 'standard' curse tablets. It will be remembered that such curses can be viewed as tools for risk management or gaining the 'upper hand' in an agonistic context (Faraone 1991; Eidinow 2007). Work focusing on how competition and risk management are related to interpersonal conflicts and social constraints has been enlightening and influential (e.g. Salvo 2012; Eidinow 2017), but the ways in which these concepts are related to identity construction and negotiation require further attention.

Cursing is, of course, intrinsically connected to religious belief and perceptions of human-divine interaction. As we have seen, judicial prayers attest to the belief that the gods can be called upon to enforce moral behaviour. 'Standard' curse tablets should also be examined in order to explore what concepts of belief they represent and how, for instance, this may change through space and time.

Although I have aimed to illustrate a connection between cursing and location, the context that I provided for the judicial prayer comparanda from outside of the province is limited. While the primary reason for this is related to a shortage of space, I also felt that focusing on places where judicial prayers were found outside of Britain would change the function of such comparanda from a broadening of scope to a

comparison of sites. If, for instance, I were to include an overview of the archaeology of Cnidus, my discussion would risk turning into a comparison of 'eastern' and 'western' ritual behaviour and cursing practices. As my intention was to consider the Mediterranean world as a whole and move beyond arbitrary definitions of space, I aimed to avoid this.

I believe a close analysis of curse tablets may be more revealing of life in Roman Britain than is covered here. I have largely focused on belief and identity, but a number of other issues may be explored. For instance, judicial indifference and shortcomings are cited as reasons for turning to judicial prayers and divine aid (Mattingly 2006: 315; Salvo 2012: 241-2). A further avenue for study may, therefore, involve looking at how judicial prayers may be combined with other literary materials to shed light on local legal practices and law enforcement. Concepts of belief, too, may be explored in greater detail. This may involve engagement with sculptural evidence or various forms of epigraphy to further analyse the connection between the way divine entities are conceptualised and how this is related to divine capability. Anthropological approaches may also be informative in this respect.

The corpus of published curse tablets in Britain continues to grow. It will be recalled that only 17 of the texts from Uley have been published so far. In recent years, additional texts have been published annually in *Britannia* by Tomlin, with LID001 from Lidgate being the most recent example. Several of the published tablets were reportedly found with metal detectors and not made available until years after their discovery. This emphasises the importance of the Portable Antiquities Scheme. It also raises the question of how many other tablets have been uncovered that have yet to be made available to specialists for analysis and publication. While I do look forward to the recovery of further curses in the future, I do hope this is achieved through systematic excavation. Proper recording of context, as in the examples from Bath and Uley, not only allows the tablets

to be dated in a way that is more precise than palaeographic dating, but also allows us to look at the deposition of texts. In this dissertation, we have seen that depositional context is important when studying curse tablets, but we have also seen that curse tablets can be used to shed light on other forms of ritual activity where they are found.

Bibliography

Adams, J. N. (1992) 'British Latin: The text, interpretation and language of the Bath curse tablets' *Britannia,* 23, 1-29.

Allen, M., Blick, N., Brindle, T., Evans, T. Fulford, M. Holbrook, L. L., Richards, J. D., Smith, A. (2018) *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain: an online resource* [Online]. Available at: https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/romangl/index.cfm (Accessed: August 2019).

Allison, P. (2018) 'Roman household organization', in Crawford, S., Hadley, D.M., & Shepherd, G. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood* [Online]. Oxford University Press.
DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199670697.001.0001

Apsimon, A. M. (1965) 'The Roman temple on Brean Down, Somerset', *Proceedings of the University of Bristol Spelaeology Society,* 10(3), 195-258.

Apuleius (1996) *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass), Volume 1: Books 1-6.* Translated by Hanson, J. A. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Armit, I. (2011) 'Violence and society in the deep human past', *The British Journal of Criminology,* May, 51(3), 499-517.

Artemidorus (2012) *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary.* Translated and edited by Harris-McCoy, D. E. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baxter, J. E. (2008) 'The archaeology of childhood,' *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 37, 159-75.

Blagg, T. F. C. (1979) 'The date of the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath', *Britannia,* 10, 101-107.

Blänsdorf, J. (2010a) 'The defixiones from the Sanctuary of Isis and Mater Magna in Mainz', in Gordon, R & Simon, F. M. (eds) *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers form the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005.* Leiden: Brill, 141-190.

Blänsdorf, J. (2010b) 'The Texts from the Fons Annae Perennae', in Gordon, R. & Símon F. M. (eds.) *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers form the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005.* Leiden: Brill, 215-244.

Blänsdorf, J. (2012) *Die Defixionum Tabellae Des Mainzer Isis- und Mater-Magna-Heiligtums.* Mainz.

Braund, D. (1996) *Ruling Roman Britain: Kings, Queens, Governors and Emperors from Julius Caesar to Agricola.* London: Routledge.

Brindle, T. (2018) 'Literacy and Latin in the countryside of Roman Britain', in Fulford, M. & Holbrook, N. (eds.) *New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain, Volume 3: Life and Death in the Countryside of Roman Britain.* London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 69-77.

Burch, M. Hill, J., Jones, S., Lees, D., Rowsome, P. & Treveil, P (1997) 'Number 1 Poultry – the main excavation: Roman sequence', *London Archaeologist,* 8(5), 127-36.

Burnham, B. C. & Wacher, J. (1990) *The 'Small Towns' of Roman Britain.* London: B. T. Batsford.

Campell, B. (2012) *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome.* University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill.

Carlyle, S. (2011) *Rutland Water Habitat Creation, Lagoon B, An Iron Age enclosure near Egleton, Rutland,* Northampton: Northamptonshire Archaeological Report No. 11/53.

Carroll, M. (2018) 'Archaeological and epigraphic evidence for infancy in the Roman world', in Crawford, S., Hadley, D. M. & Shepherd, G. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood* [Online]. Oxford University Press.
DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199670697.001.0001

Catullus (1913) *Pervigilium Veneris.* Translated by Cornish, F. W., Postgate, J. P., & Mackail, J. W. Revised by Goold, G. P. Cambridge(MA): Harvard University Press.

Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents. *Vindolanda Tablets Online.* [Online] Available at: http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/
(Accessed May 2019).

Collingwood, R. G. (1932) *Roman Britain.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Collingwood, R. G. & Taylor, M. V. (1928) 'Roman Britain in 1928', *Journal of Roman Studies,* 18(2), 191-214.

Conkey, M. W. & Spector, J. D. (1984) 'Archaeology and the study of gender', *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory,* 7, 1-38.

Cool, H. E. M. (2002) 'An overview of the small finds from Catterick', in Wilson, P. R (ed.) *Cataractonium: Roman Catterick and its hinterland. Excavations and research, 1958-97, part II.* York: Council for British Archaeology, 24-43.

Copeland, T. (2011) *Roman Gloucestershire.* Gloucestershire: The History Press.

Cotton, J. (2008) 'Harper Road, Southwark: an early Roman burial revisited', in Clark, J., Cotton, J., Hall, J. Sherris, R. Swain, H. (eds.) *Londinium and Beyond: Essays on Roman London and its Hinterland for Harvey Sheldon, CBA Research Report 156.* York: Council for British Archaeology, 151-61.

Cousins, E. H. (2014) 'Votive objects and ritual practice at the King's Spring at Bath', *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal,* 2013, 52-64.

Cousins, E. H. (2016) 'The imperial image: the Bath Gorgon in context', *Britannia,* 47, 99-118.

Craig, R. C., Knusel, C. J. & Carr, G. C. (2005) 'Fragmentation, mutilation and dismemberment: an interpretation of human remains on Iron Age sites', in Parker Pearson, M. & Thorpe, I. J. N. (eds) *Warfare, violence and slavery in prehistory: proceedings of a Prehistoric Society conference at Sheffield University.* Oxford: Archaeopress, 165-180.

Crawford, S. & Lewis, C. (2008) 'Childhood Studies and the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past', *Childhood in the Past,* 1, 5-16.

Crown, P. (1999) 'Socialization in American southwest pottery decoration', in: Skibo, J. & Geinman, G. (eds.) *Pottery and People: A Dynamic Interaction.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 25-43.

Croxford, B. (2003) 'Iconoclasm in Roman Britain?' *Britannia,* 34, 81-95.

Cunliffe, B. (1971) *Roman Bath Discovered.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Cunliffe, B. (1976) 'The Roman Baths at Bath: the excavations', *Britannia,* 7, 1-32.

Cunliffe, B. (1983) 'The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath', *Archaeology,* November/December, 36(6), 16-23.

Cunliffe, B. (1984) *Danebury: an Iron Age hillfort in Hampshire: Volume 1, the excavations, 1969-1978.* London: Council for British Archaeology.

Cunliffe, B. (1986) *The City of Bath.* Gloucester: Sutton.

Cunliffe, B. (ed.) (1988) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, 2: The Finds from the Sacred Spring.* Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeolgy.

Cunliffe, B. (1992) 'Pits, preconceptions, and propitiation in the British Iron Age', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology,* 11, 69-83.

Cunliffe, B. & Davenport, P. (eds.) (1985) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: Volume 1(I) The Site.* Oxford: Oxford University Community for Archaeology.

Dark, K. R. (1993) 'Town or 'temenos'? a reinterpretation of the walled area of 'Aquae Sulis', *Britannia,* 24, 254-255.

Davenport, P., Poole, C. & Jordan, D. (2007) *Archaeology in Bath: Excavations at the New Royal Baths (the Spa) and Bellott's Hospital, 1998-9.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

David, A. (1993) 'Geophysical Survey', in Woodward, A. & Leach, P. (eds.) *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9.* London: English Heritage, 5-8.

Detsicas, A., (1989) 'Excavations at Eccles: a progress report', *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 107, 83-8.

Eckardt, H. (2017) *Writing and power in the Roman world: literacies and material culture.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Eidinow, E. (2007) *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Eidinow, E. (2017) 'Ancient Graeco-Roman magic and the agency of victimhood', *Numen,* 64, 394-417.

Elderkin, G. W. (1937) 'Two curse inscriptions', *Hesperia,* 6(3), 382-95.

Faraone, C. (1985) 'Aeschylus' ὕμνος δέσμιος (*Eum.* 306) and Attic judicial curse ablets', *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* 105, 150-154.

Faraone, C. (1989) 'An accusation of magic in Classical Athens (*Ar. Wasps* 966-48). *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-2014),* 119, 149-160.

Faraone, C. (1991) 'The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells', in Faraone, C. & Obbink, D. (eds.) *Magika Hiera.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4-32.

Faraone, C. (2003) 'When spells worked magic', *Archaeology*, March/April, 56(2), 48-53.

Faraone, C. (2011) 'Curses, crime detection, and conflict resolution at the festival of Demeter Thesmophoros', *Journal of Hellenic Studies,* 131, 25-44.

Faraone, C. & Obbink, D. (eds.) (1991) *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frankfurter, D. (2002) 'Dynamics of ritual expertise in antiquity and beyond: towards a new taxonomy of 'magicians' in Mirecki, P. & Meyer, M. Meyer, eds. *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World.* Leiden: Brill, 159-178.

Gager, J. G. (1992) *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gallois, R. W. (2006) 'The geology of the hot springs at Bath Spa, Somerset', *Geoscience in south-west England,* 11, 168-173.

Gardner, A. (2013) 'Thinking about Roman imperialism: postcolonialism, globalisation and beyond?', *Britannia,* 44, 1-25.

Gardner, A., Herring, E. & Lomas, K. (eds.) (2013) *Creating Ethnicities and Identities in the Roman World.* London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (1999) *Historia Regum Britanniae.* Cambridge (Ontario): In Parentheses Publications.

Gilchrist, R. (2009) 'Sex and Gender' in Gosden, C., Cunliffe, B., & Joyce, R. A. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Archaeolgy* [Online]. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199271016.013.0033

Gordon, R. L. & Símon, F. M. (eds.) (2010) *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers form the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005.* Leiden: Brill.

Gordon, R. L. (2013) 'Gods, guilt, and suffering: psychological aspects of cursing in the north-western provinces of the Roman empire', *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis,* 49, 255-281.

Gordon, R. L. (2014) 'Queering their pitch: the curse-tablets from Mainz, with some thoughts on practising "magic"', *Journal of Roman Archaeology,* 27, 774-784.

Gowland, R. (2016) 'Ideas of childhood in Roman Britain: bioarchaeological and material evidence', in Millet, M., Revell, L. & Moore, A. (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Roman Britain.* Oxford University Press.

Gowland, R.(2017) 'Embodied identities in Roman Britain: A bioarchaeological approach', *Britannia,* 48, 177-94.

Gowland, R. & Redfern, R. (2010) 'Childhood health in the Roman world: perspectives from the centre and margin of the empire', *Childhood in the Past,* 3, 15-42.

Green, M. J.(1986) *The Gods of the Celts.* 3rd ed. Gloucestershire: The History Press.

Green, M. J.(1998) 'Humans as ritual victims in the Later prehistory of western Europe', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology,* 17(2), 169-89.

Green, M. J. (2001) *Dying for the Gods: human sacrifice in Iron Age and Roman Britain.* Stroud: Tempus.

Green, M. J. -A. (2015) *Bog Bodies Uncovered: Solving Europe's Ancient Mystery.* London: Thames & Hudson.

Grew, F. O. (1981) 'Sites explored', *Britannia,* 12, 313-68.

Gurney, D. (1986a) 'A Romano-Celtic temple site at Caistor St. Edmund', in Gregory, T. & Gurney, D. (eds.) *Excavations at Thornham, Warham, Wighton and Caistor, Norfolk.* East Anglian Archaeology, 37-60.

Gurney, D. (1986b) *Settlement, Religion and Industry on the Fen-Edge; three Romano-British sites in Norfolk.* East Anglian Archaeology 31.

Hampton, J. N. & Palmer, R. (1977) 'Implications of aerial photography for archaeology', *Archaeological Journal,* 134, 157-93.

Hanscam, E. & Quiery, J. (2018) 'From TRAC to TRAJ: widening debates in Roman archaeology. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* [Online]*,* 1(1).
DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/traj.365

Hanson, W. & Conolly, R. (2002) 'Language and literacy in Roman Britain: some archaeological considerations', in Cooley, A. E. (ed.) *Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and epigraphy in the Roman West.* Portsmouth (RI): Journal of Roman Archaeology, 151-164.

Harding, D. W. (2016) *Death and Burial in Iron Age Britain.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Harlow, M. Laurence, R. (2002) *Growing up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome: A Life Course Approach.* London: Routledge.

Harris, W. V. (1989) *Ancient Literacy.* Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Haverfield, F. (1923) *The Romanization of Roman Britain.* 4th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Henig, M. (1984) *Religion in Roman Britain.* Lodon: B T Batsford Ltd..

Henig, M. (1988) 'The gemstones', in Cunliffe, B. (ed.) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: Volume 2, The Finds from the Sacred Spring.* Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 27-33.

Henig, M., Hassall, M. & Bayley, J. (1993) 'Votive objects: images and inscriptions' in Woodward, A. & Leach, P. (eds.) *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9.* London: English Heritage, 89-112.

Hill, J.D. (2001) 'Romanisation, gender and class: recent approaches to identity in Britain and their possible consequences', in James, S. & Millet, M. (eds.) *Britons and Romans.* York: Council for British Archaeology.

Hingley, R. (2000) *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: the imperial origins of Roman archaeology.* London: Routledge.

Hingley, R. (2005) *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, diversity and empire.* New York: Routledge.

Hingley, R. (2008) *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906: A colony so fertile.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hingley, R. (2014) 'Post-colonial and global Rome: the genealogy of empire', in Pitts, M. & Versluys, M. J. (eds.) New York: Cambridge University Press, 32-48.

Hingley, R. (2018) *Londinium: A Biography: Roman London from its Origins to the Fifth Century.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Hingley, R. Bonacchi, C. & Sharpe, K., (2018) '"Are you Local?" indigenous Iron Age and mobile Roman and Post-Roman populations: then, now and in-between', *Britannia,* 49, 283-302.

Hingley, R. (in press) 'Egalitarianism and the southern British Iron Age', in Curras, B. X. & Sastre, I. (eds.) *Alternative Iron Ages: Social Theory from Archaeological Analysis.* London: Routledge.

Hodos, T. (ed.) (2016) *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization.* Londong: Routledge.

Hoffman, C. A. (2002) 'Fiat Magia' in Mirecki P. Mirecki & M. Meyer, eds. *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World.* Leiden: Brill, 179-194.

Holbrook, N. (2015) 'The towns of the south west' in Fulford, M. Fulford & Holbrook, N. (eds.) *The Towns of Roman Britain: The Contribution of Commercial Archaeology since 1990.* London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 90-116.

Hunt, L. (2009) *Archaeological Excavations at Redhill, Ratcliffe-On-Soar.* Leicester: University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

Hutton, R. (2011) 'Romano-British reuse of Prehistoric ritual sites', *Britannia,* 42, 1-22.

Hutton, R. (2011) 'Why does Lindow Man matter?' *Time and Mind,* 4(2), 137-48.

James, S. (1999) *The Community of the Soldiers: A Major Identity and Centre of Power in the Roman Empire.* Oxford, Oxbow Books.

James, S. (2007) A bloodless past: the pacification of Early Iron Age Britain', in Haselgrove, C. & Pope, R. (eds) *The Earlier Iron Age in Britain and the near Continent.* Oxbow Books, 160-173.

Johns, C. (1981) 'The Thetford treasure', *Gold Bulletin,* 14(4), 169-70.

Jones, S. (1997) *The Archaeology of Identity: constructing identities in the past and present.* London: Routledge.

Jordan, D. R. (1985) 'A survey of Greek defixiones not included in the special corpora', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies,* 23(2), 115-40.

Jordan, D. R. (1999) 'Three curse tablets', in Jordan, D. R, Montgomery, H. & Thomassen, E. (eds.) *The world of ancient magic: Papers from the first International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens 4-8 May 1997.* Bergen: John Grieg, AS, 115-126.

Jordan, D. R., Montgomery, H. & Thomassen, E. (eds.) (1999) *The world of ancient magic: Papers from the first International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens 4-8 May 1997.* Bergen: John Grieg, AS.

Kamash, Z., Gosden, C. & Lock, G. (2010) Continuity and religious practices in Roman Britain: the case of the rural religious complex at Marcham/Frilford, Oxfordshire', *Britannia,* 41, 95-125.

Kellaway, G. A. (1985) 'The Geomorphology of the Bath region', in Cunliffe, B. & Davenport, P. (eds.) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: Volume 1(I) The Site.* Oxford: Oxford University Community for Archaeology, 4-7.

Kleijn, G. & Benoist, S. (eds.) (2014) *Integration in Rome and the Roman World: Proceedings of the Tenth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Lille, June 23-23, 2011).* Boston: Brill.

La Trobe-Bateman, E. & Niblett, R. (2016) *Bath: a study of the settlement around the sacred hot springs from the mesolithic to the 17th century AD: an archaeological assessment.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Laes, C. (2004) 'Children and accidents in Roman antiquity', *Ancient Society,* 34, 153-170.

Latham, R. E. (1975) *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources.* London: Oxford University Press.

Lillehammer, G. (2018) 'The history of the archaeology of childhood', in Crawford, S. Hadley, D. M. & Shepherd (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood.* Oxford University Press.

Lucilius (1938) *Remains of Old Latin, Volume III: Lucilius, The Twelve Tables.* Translated by Warmington, E. H. Cambridge(MA): Harvard University Press.

Mattingly, D. (2006) *An Imperial Posession: Britain in the Roman Empire 54 BC - AD 409.* London: Penguin.

Mattingly, D. (2011) *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Mees, B. (2005) 'The Celtic inscriptions of Bath', *Studia Celtica,* 39, 176-181.

Mees, B. (2008) 'The women of Larzac', *Keltische Forschungen,* 3, 169-88.

Mees, B.(2009) *Celtic Curses.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

Millett, M. (1990) *The Romanization of Britain.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mirecki, P. & Meyer, M. (eds.) (2002) *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World.* Leiden: Brill.

Moore, T. (2001) 'An archaeological assessment of Hailey Wood Camp, Sapperton, Gloucestershire: A Roman temple complex in the Cotswolds?' *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society,* 119, 83-93.

Moore, T. (2007a) 'The Early to Later Iron Age transition in the Severn-Cotswolds: enclosing the household?', in Haselgrove, C. & Pope, R. (eds) *The Earlier Iron Age in Britain and the Near Continent.* Oxford: Owbow Books, 259-278.

Moore, T. (2007b) 'Life on the edge? exchange, community, and identity in the Later Iron Age of the Severn-Cotswolds', in Haselgrove, C. & Moore, T. (eds.) *The Later Iron Age in Britain and Beyond.* Oxford: Oxbow Books, 41-61.

Morris, I. (2011) 'Archaeology and Greek slavery', in Bradley, K. & Cartledge, P. (eds.) *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: the ancient Mediterranean world.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 176-93.

Mullen, A. (2007a) Evidence for written Celtic from Roman Britain: A linguistic analysis of *Tabellae Sulis* 14 and 18', *Studia Celtica,* 41, 31-45.

Mullen, A. (2007b) 'Linguistic evidence for "Romanization": continuity and change in Romano-British onomastics: a study of the epigraphic record with particular reference to Bath', *Britannia,* 38, 35-61.

Mullen, A. (2013) 'New thoughts on British Latin: a curse Tablet from Red Hill, Ratcliffe-on-Soar (Nottinghamshire)', *Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik,* 187, 266-272.

Mullen, A. (2016) 'Sociolinguistics', in Millet, M. Revell, L. & Moore, A. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 573-595.

Nemeth, E. (ed.) (2018) *Violence in Prehistory and Antiquity.* Parthenon Verlag.

Nemeth, G. (2018) 'Voodoo dolls in the classical world' in Nemeth, E. (ed.) *Violence in Prehistory and Antiquity.* Parthenon Verlag, pp. 179-194.

Ogden, D. (1999) 'Binding spells: curse tablets and voodoo dolls in the Greek and Roman worlds', in Flint, V. (ed.) *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome.* London: The Athlone Press, 3-90.

Otto-von-Guericke-Universitat Magdeburg. *Thesaurus Defixionum Magdeburgensis.* [Online]
Available at: http://www.thedema.ovgu.de
(Accessed September 2019)

Ovid (1914) *Heroides, Amores.* Translated by Showerman, G. Revised by Goold, G. P. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Percival-Westell, W. (1931) 'A Romano-British cemetery at Baldock', *Archaeological Journal,* 88, 247-301.

Piranomonte, M. (2010) 'Religion and magic at Rome: the fountain of Anna Perenna', in Gordon, R. & Símon, F. M. Simon (eds.) *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers form the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005.* Leiden: Brill, 191-215.

Pitts, M. (2007) 'The Emperor's new clothes? The untility of identity in Roman archaeology', *American Journal of Archaeology,* 111(4), 693-713.

Pitts, M., Versluys, M. J. (eds.) (2014) *Globalization and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity, and Material Culture.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pitts, M. (2008) 'Globalizing the local in Roman Britain: an anthropological approach to social change', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology,* 27, 493-506.

Plato (1926) *Laws, Books I-IV.* Translated by Bury, R. G. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Plato (2013): *Republic, Books I-V.* Edited and Translated by Emlyn-Jones, C & Preddy, W. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Plautus (2012) *The Little Carthaginian, Pseudolus, The Rope.* Edited and translated by de Melo, W. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Pliny (1963) *Natural History, Volume VIII: Books 28-32.* Translated by Jones, W. H. S. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Polybius (2010) *The Histories.* Translated by Paton, W. R. Revised by Walbank, F. W. & Habicht, C. Cambridge(MA): Harvard University Press.

Poulton, R. (2007) 'Farley Heath Roman temple', *Surrey Archaeological Collections,* 92, 1-147.

Price, J. (1993) 'Window glass', in Woodward, A & Leach, P (eds.) *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9.* London: English Heritage, 189.

Raybauld, M. E. (1999) *A Study of Inscribed Material from Roman Britain: An inquiry into some aspects of literacy in Romano-British society.* Oxford: BAR Publishing.

Rea, J. R. (1972) 'A lead tablet from Wanborough, Wilts', *Britannia,* 1982, 363-7.

Redfern, R. & Bonney, H. (2014) 'Headhunting and amphitheatre combat in Roman London, England', *Journal of Archaeological Science,* 43, 214-26.

Redfern, R. C. (2018) 'Blind to chains? The Potential of bioarchaeology for identifying the enslaved of Roman Britain', *Britannia,* 49, 251-82.

Redfern, R. C., Marshall, M., Eaton, K. & Poinar, H. N. (2017) '"Written in Bone": New Discoveries about the Lives and Burials of Four Roman Londoners', *Britannia,* 48, 253-77.

Revell, L. (2016) *Ways of Being Roman: Discourses of Identity in the Roman West.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Richmond, I. A. & Toynbee, J. M. C. (1955) 'The temple of Sulis-Minerva at Bath', *The Journal of Roman Studies,* Volume 45, pp. 97-105.

Salvo, I. (2012) 'Sweet Revenge: Emotional factors in the "prayers for justice"', in Chaniotis, A. (ed.) *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 235-266.

Sanchez Natalias, C. (2015) 'Magical poppets in the western Roman empire: A case study from the fountain of Anna Perenna', in Minniyakhmetova, T. & Velkoborska, K. (eds.) *The Ritual Year 10: Magic in Rituals and Rituals in Magic.* Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, 194-202.

Saville, A. & Ellison, A. (1983) 'Excavations at Uley Bury hillfort, Gloucestershire 1976', in Saville, A. (ed.) *Uley Bury and Norbury hillforts.* Bristol: Western Archaeological Trust Monograph 5, 1-24.

Scarth, H. M. (1864) *Aquae Solis, or notices of Roman Bath.* London: Simplin Marshall.

Scott, S. P. (ed.) (1932) *The Civil Law, Including the Twelve Tables, The Institutes of Gaius, The Rules of Ulpian, The Opinions of Paulus, The Enactments of Justinian, and the Constitutions of Leo.* Cincinnati: The Central Trust Company.

Sellwood, L. (1988) 'The Celtic coins', in Cunliffe, B. (ed.) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: Volume 2, The Finds from the Sacred Spring.* Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 279-280.

Seneca (1917) *Epistles, Volume I: Epistles 1-65.* Translated by Gummere, R. M. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Smith, A. (2018) 'Religion and the rural population' in Fulford, M. & Holbrook, N. (eds.) *New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain, Volume 3: Life and Death in the Countryside of Roman Britain.* London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 120-201.

Strabo (1923) *Geography.* Translated by Jones, H. L. Cambridgw(MA): Harvard University Press.

Tacitus (1914) *Agricola, Germania, Dialogue on Oratory.* Translated by Hutton, M. & Peterson, M. Revised by Ogilvie, R. M., Warmington, E. H. & Winterbottom, M. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Tacitus (1937) *Annals.* Translated by Jackson, J. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Thomassen, E. (1999) 'Is magic a subclass of ritual?', in Jordan, D. R., Montgomery, H. & Thomassen, E. (eds.) *The world of ancient magic: Papers from the first*

International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens 4-8 May 1997. Bergen: John Grieg, AS, 55-66.

Tomlin, R. S. O.(1988) 'The curse tablets', in Cunliffe, B. (ed.) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, 2: The Finds from the Sacred Spring.* Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 59-277.
Tomlin, R. S. O. (1993) 'The inscribed lead tablets: an interim report', in Woodward, A. & Leach, P. *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9.* London: English Heritage, 113-130.

Tomlin, R. S. O.(2002) 'Writing to the gods in Britain', in Cooley, A. E. (ed.) *Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and epigraphy in the Roman west.* Portsmouth (RI): Journal of Roman Archaeology, 164-179.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2003) '"The Girl in Question"': a new text from Roman London', *Britannia,* 34, 41-51.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2008) 'Paedagogium and septizonium: two Roman lead tablets from Leicester', *Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphic,* 167, 207-218.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2016) *Roman London's first voices: writing tablets from the Bloomberg excavations, 2010-14.* London: Museum of London Archaeology.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2010) 'Cursing a thief in Iberia and Britain', in Gordon, R. L. & Símon, F. M. (eds) *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005.* Leiden: Brill.

Urbanova, D. (2017) 'Latin curse texts: Mediterranean tradition and local diversity', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae,* 57, 57-82.

Veale, S. (2017) 'Defixiones and the temple locus: the power of place in the curse tablets at Mainz', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft,* 12(3), 279-313.

Versluys, M. J. (2014) 'Understanding objects in motion. An archaeological dialogue on Romanization,' *Archaeological Dialogues,* 21(1), 1-20. DOI: 10.1017/S1380203814000038

Versnel, H. S. (1991) 'Beyond cursing: the appeal to justice in judicial prayers', in Faraone, C. & Obbink, D. (eds.) *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 60-106.

Versnel, H. (1999) '"Punish those who rejoice in our misery": On curse texts and Schadenfreude', in Jordan, D. R., Montgomery, H. & Thomassen, E. (eds.) *The world of ancient magic: Papers from the first International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute at Athens 4-8 May 1997.* Bergen: John Grieg, AS, 123-162.

Versnel, H. (2002) 'Writing mortals and reading gods: an appeal to the gods as a dual strategy in social control', in Cohen, D. (ed.) *Demokratie, Recht und socialle Kontrolle in Klassichen Athen.* Munich: Schriften des Historichen Kollegs.

Versnel, H. (2010) 'Prayers for justice, east and west: new finds and publications since 1990', in Gordon, R. & Símon, F. M. Simon (eds.) *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers form the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2005.* Leiden: Brill, 275-355.

Wacher, J. (2000) *A Portrait of Roman Britain.* London: Routledge.
Walker, D. R.(1988) 'The Roman coins', in Cunliffe, B. & Davenport, P. *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: Volume 2, The Finds from the Sacred Spring.* Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 281-358.

Webster, G. (1986) *The British Celts and their Gods under Rome.* London: Batsford.

Webster, J. (1995) '"Interpretatio": Roman word power and the Celtic gods', *Britannia,* 26, 153-161.

Webster, J. (1996) 'Ethnographic barbarity: colonial discourse and 'Celtic warrior societies' in Webster, J. & Cooper, N. (eds.) *Roman Imperialism: post-colonial perspectives.* Leicester: School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester, 111-23.

Webster, J. (1997) 'Necessary comparisons: a post-colonial approach to religious syncretism in the Roman provinces', *World Archaeology,* 28(3), 324-338.

Webster, J. (2001) 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', *American Journal of Archaeology,* 105(2), 209-225.

Webster, J. (2005) Archaeologies of slavery and servitude: bringing "New World" perspectives to Roman Britain', *Journal of Roman Archaeology,* 18, 161-79.

Weekes, R. (2012) 'MAAG lead scroll', *Kent Archaeological Society Newsletter,* 94 (Autumn 2012), 4.

Wheeler, R. E. M. & Wheeler, T. V. (1928) 'The Roman amphitheatre at Caerleon, Monmouthshire', *Archaeologia,* 111-218.

Wheeler, R. E. M. & Wheeler, T. V. (1932) *Report on the excavation of the prehistoric, Roman, and post-Roman site in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire', Reports of the Research Committe of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Volume 9.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilburn, A. (2012) *Materia Magica: The Archaeology of Magic in Roman Egypt, Cyprus, and Spain.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Williams, J. (2007) 'New light on Latin in pre-conquest Britain', *Britannia,* 38, 1-11.

Wilson, P. R. (2002) *Cataractonium: Roman Catterick and its hinterland; excavations and research, 1968-97; part II,* York: Council for British Archaeology.

Witcher, R. E. (2016) 'The globalized Roman world', in Hodos, T. (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization.* London: Routledge, 634-51.

Woodward, A. (1993) 'Votive objects: the inscribed lead tablets', in Woodward, A. & Leach, P. (eds.) *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9.* London: English Heritage, 113.

Woodward, A. & Leach, P. (1993) *The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual compex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-1979.* London: English Heritage.

Woolf, G. (1997) Beyond Romans and Natives. *World Archaeology,* 28(3), 339-350.

Woolf, G. (1998) *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Woolf, G. (2002) 'Afterword: How the Latin West was won', in Coole, A. (ed.) *Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and epigraphy in the Roman west.* Porstmouth (RI): Journal of Roman Archaeology, 181-188.

Appendix A: Catalogue of published curse tablets found in Britain

What follows is a listing of all curse tablets that were found in Britain and published before December 2018. is given an alphanumerical code with the letters indicating the site name. All of the transcriptions, restorations, translations and line drawings are taken from the first edition of each item, with the exception of the texts from Bath, where the primary source is *Tab. Sulis*. For the original Latin, I have used either 'transcript,' 'text,' or 'restored text' depending on what the editor provided and the terms they used. 'Transcript' refers to the letters read by the editor in their original order and without the supplementing of lost or omitted characters. 'Restored text' refers to the reading offered by the editor. In a restored text, the editor suggests missing and omitted letters or words, offers corrections, and places enciphered or mirror-image words and characters in a left-to-right sequence. The line drawings provided here are not to scale, but dimensions of the tablets are included at the start of each entry.

Baldock, Hertfordshire; found in burial group 309 in Wallsfield, Clothall parish in 1930.

BAL001. A 121 x 102mm sheet of lead inscribed on one side in capitals. The unfolded tablet was pierced five times, and four nails survive. There are four additional holes for the attachment of pieces of lead wire. One of these survives. Bibl.: *RIB* 221.

Text:

vetus
quomodo sanies
signeficatur
Tacita deficta

Translation:

'Tacita, hereby accursed, is labelled old like putrid gore.'

Bath, Somerset; found in the votive deposit of the sacred spring and Roman reservoir during excavations in 1979

BA001.   A 65 x 52mm oval sheet of lead alloy inscribed in capitals. Though the inscription is an alphabet the material and context suggest a magical significance. The sheet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiv (1983), 336-7, No. 2; *Tab. Sulis* 1.

   Transcript

   ABCDEFX

BA002. A 60 x 37mm cutting of a lead alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. The E's and one B are reversed. The two 'Celtic' names, Britivenda and Venibelia may have been inscribed by two different hands. The sheet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 336, No. 3; *Tab. Sulis* 2.

   Text

   Britivenda
   Venibelia

BA003. A 76 x 76mm lead alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. Though badly corroded, the text is complete and preserves two names. The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xii (1982), 397, No. 2; *Tab. Sulis* 3.

Restored Text

Br<p>ituenda
Marinus
Memorina
vacat

BA004. (Found in 1880) A 68 x 68 mm rectangular lead sheet inscribed in capitals. Scoring on the L. side has caused part of the side to be lost. While the text is written from L. to R., the sequence of letters in each word is reversed. Not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *RIB* 154; *Tab. Sulis* 4.

Transcript

]uqihimmaibliutialo
]nicistauqilcmocauqa
]lleat[2-3]miuqmaetiua
]. .[   ]*vacat* anniuleusuerepu
]xesunaireusunireu
]essilatsugagunaiti
]mocsunainimustac
]llinamreganiuoi *vacat*

qu[i] mihi VILBIAM in[v]olavit
sic liquat com[o](do) aqua
… qui eam [invol]avit
vacat Velvinna Ex[s]uperius
Verianus Severinus
Agustalis Comitianus
Minianus Catus
Germanill[a] Iovina

*'May he who has stolen VILBIA… who has stolen it [or her]. Velvinna,
Exsuperius, Severinus, A(u)gustali, Comitianus, Minianus, Catus, Germanilla,
Iovina.'*

BA005. A 68 x 99mm rectangular alloy sheet with a straightened 'rim' on the R side. The first line is inscribed with New Roman Cursive and the rest is inscribed in capitals. The tablet was folded once after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xvii (1986), 432, No. 5; *Tab. Sulis* 5.

Transcript

].ocimedis
]erdimani
ciliaduaqui

illasinuolaui
utmentessua
perdntet
oculossu[.]s
infanoubi
destina

Restored Text

[D]ocimedis
[p]erdidi(t) mani-
cilia dua qui
illas involavi(t)
ut mentes sua(s)
perd[at] et
oculos su[o]s
in fano ubi
destina(t)

Translation

'Docimedis has lost two gloves. (He asks) that (the person) who has stolen them should lose his minds [sic] and his eyes in the temple where (she) appoints.'

BA006. A 60 x 62 mm lead alloy sheet inscribed in capitals on both sides. Much of (a) is lost to corrosion. The tablet was folded once after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 6.

Transcript

(a)

[5 lines lost?]
[   ]s.
nc.3t[?

(b)

starugulmqm
eerididainam
ee.[.]iatdaem.
um traces
ae1-2nu traces
aliut1-2e1-2isni
3-4sniegaus

Restored Text

stragulum q(ue)m
(p)erdidi anima(m)
             …
             …
… [invo-]
lavit… nisi
s[an]g[u]ine sua

Translation

" ... the rug which I have lost, ... (his) life... has stolen... unless with his own blood"

BA007. Three fragments of high-tin alloy inscribed with capitals. Two of the fragments are conjoining. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 7.

Transcript

```
 (i)
     ]uo[
(ii)
[.]. .[
angu[
noctis[
quimih[
uui[
```

Translation

"(with) blood ... (gen.) night ... who... me (dat.)..."

BA008. A 94 x 52mm lead alloy sheet inscribed on both sides with capitals. (a) contains the curse while (b) lists the names already given on (a). The tablet was pierced with a nail after inscription. This is the only tablet that mentions copying. Bibl.: *Britannia* xii (1981), 370-2, No. 6; *Tab. Sulis* 8.

Transcript

(a)

[.]eaesulidonaui[
ntiolossexquosperd[
anomin[.]businfrascrip. .[
deaeexacturaest vacat
seniciaiusetsaturninussed[
etann[.]olacartapictapersc[

(b)

an[.]ola
senicianus
saturninus

Restored Text

(a)

[d]eae Suli donavi [arge-]
ntiolos sex quos perd[idi]
a nomin[i]bus infrascrip[tis]
deae exactura est

Senicia(n)us et Saturninus <sed>
Et Ann[i]ola carta picta persc[ripta]

(b)

An[i]ola
Senicianus
Saturninus

<u>Translation</u>

"I have given to the goddess Sulis the six silver coins which I have lost. It is for the goddess to exact (them) from the names written below: Senicianus and Saturninus and Anniola. The written page (has) been copied out.
An(n)iola
Senicianus
Saturninus"

(a)

(b)

BA009. Two conjoining fragments of high-tin lead alloy measuring 59 x 85mm. The text is inscribed in capitals with some parts in Old Roman Cursive. Petio of line 1 of (a) is underlined to form a rare heading. The inscription mostly consists of a list of names with dono, 'I give,' at the bottom right of (a). The tablet was folded five times after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiii (1982), 400, No. 4; *Tab. Sulis* 9.

Restored Text

(a)

     petio
     rove te
Victoria vind(…)
Cun (unfinished) Minici
Cunomolius
Minervina ussor (i.e. uxor)
Cunitius ser(v)us
Senovara ussor (i.e. uxor)
Lavidendus ser(v)us
Mattonius ser(v)us
Catinius Exsactoris
     Fundo eo
Methianu[s…]

[…] dono

(b)

     ].micus
tpiasu
gineninsu[s]
     gienusus

'... you, Victory (?) ... Cunomolius (son?) of Minicus, Minervina, (his?) wife, Cunitius (their?) slave, Senovara (his?) wife, Lavidendus (their?) slave, Mattonius (their?) slave, Catinius (son?) of Exsactor ... Methianus ... I give...'

(a)

(b)

BA010. Four conjoining fragments of high-tin alloy measuring 70 x 100mm. The tablet inscribed on both sides in capitals and pierced with at least one nail after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xii (1981), 375-7, No. 8; *Tab. Sulis* 10.

<u>Restored Text</u>

(a)

Docilianus
Bruceri
deae sanctissim(a)e
       Suli
devoveo eum [q]ui
caracellam meam
involaverit si
vir si femina si
servus si liber
ut [1-2]um dea Sulis
maximo letum
[a]digat nec ei so-
mnum permit-

(b)

tat nec natos nec
nascentes do-
[ne]c caracallam
meam ad tem-
plum sui numi-
nis per[t]ulerit

Translation

"Docilianus (son) of Brucerus [Brucetus?] to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse him who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, that... the goddess Sulis inflict death upon... and not allow him sleep or children now and in the future, until he has brought my hooded cloak to the temple of her divinity."

(a)

(b)

BA011. A 25 x 32mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. Possibly from the same tablet as 12, 13, and 14 below. Enough remains of the inscription to deduce that this is a curse against a thief, but a full translation is not possible. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 11(i).

<u>Restored Text</u>

[… invo-]
laver[it…]
fuerit […?dona-]
vi si l[iber si servus ?quicum-]
que co[

BA012. A 17 x 25mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. Part of liber can be read in line 3, suggesting a mutually-exclusive or 'catch-all' condition. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 11(ii).

Restored Text

```
    ]ve[
   ]dibat.[
si l]iber [si servus
   ]...[
```


BA013. A 32 x 23mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. Rather than a curse, it is possible that this inscription is the result of writing practice. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 11(iii).

Restored Text

```
   ].[
  qui]cumque[
  ]quicumque[
?qu]ic[umque
```


BA014. A 15 x 13 mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. The presence of fuerit in line 2 indicates that this is a curse against a thief. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 11(iv).

Restored Text

ho[c
fueri[t

BA015. A 28(43) x 23mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. The script of 16 and 17 below is similar, but not identical. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 12(i)

Restored Text

```
      ]marin[
      ]quas pe[rdidi?
   ].tiolo meo[
i]nvolaverit si[
traces
```


BA016. A 22 x 14mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. *Res meas* is probably a reference to stolen property. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 12(ii).

Restored Text

```
 dan.[
res me[as
.e. .[
```

BA017. A 17 x 17mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in capitals. Meas is a possibly what remains of res meas, a reference to stolen property. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 12(iii).

Restored Text

nit.[… ?res]
meas[
infr[ascript…?

BA018. A 85 x 52mm lead sheet inscribed in capitals. The sheet had several casting flaws before inscription. The text is now too damaged for a translation to be possible, but some elements can be read. Two lines of Old Roman Cursive reading Espeditus and tatirum are inscribed the other way up. The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 13.

Restored Text

(capitals)
    ] involaverit
      ]llum invola-
[verit…]virus. .mulieris
        ]illido2-3us
]…llum Vitali

(cursive)
Espiditus
tatirum

BA019. Four conjoining fragments of lead/tin alloy measuring 56 x 46mm and inscribed in capitals. These preserve the top L corner and part of the bottom edge of a tablet. The text written in Celtic using the Latin alphabet. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 14; Mullen 2007a: 33.

(i)

luciumio[
cittimediu.xs[
uibec[. .]traceos[
estaidimaui[. .]…[
tittlemmacatacimluci[
lendiierandant.[. .]mno(*or* d)a (*or* n)[
[.]uc[2-3]miotouesalura.[*c.* 2].irando.[
[*c.* 4]m(*over* r)nottanou.m(*or* .a)dii[
[*c.* 6]cii. . eleubarrau.[1-2]. .[
]staginemse[c. 2]. .[
]. .fer[
].r.(*over* [?])[

(ii)

]luio
]ai (*or* mi *or* n)qtit
]rii

BA020. A 63 x 63mm lead sheet in *ansate* form. Written from L to R, the text is inscribed in capitals with some letters reversed. Though the *ansate* shape would suggest display, the tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* (xiii(1982), 402, No. 3; *Tab. Sulis* 15.

Restored Text

nomen rei
qui destra-
le involave-
rit

Translation

'The name of the culprit who has stolen (my) bracelet (is given).'

BA021. A 77 x 88mm sheet of alloy in the shape of an irregular pentagon inscribed on both sides in capitals. The tablet has two holes that were probably caused by piercing with nails. Bibl.: *Britannia* (1982), 398-9, No. 3; *Tab. Sulis* 16.

Restored Text

(a)

nomen
furis qui
later

(b)

r.vet
donat<u>-
ur

Translation

'The name of the thief who… is given.'

(a)

(b)

BA022. A 69 x 23mm 'blob' of high-tin alloy inscribed on both sides in capitals. The text appears to be a list of names. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 17.

Restored Text

(a)

Senianus
 Magnus
M*c*.4o

(b)

Lucianu[s] Marcellianus
[M]allianus
Mu[t]ata Medol…
geacus

(a)

(b)

BA023. A 35 x 38mm circular disc with an attached ring for suspension. The disc is inscribed with capitals on one side and was not folded after inscription. The text is written in Celtic using the Latin alphabet. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 18.

Restored Text

  adixoui
   deiana
 deieda
 andagin
 uindiorix
 cuamiin
   ai

BA024. A 36 x 21mm fragment inscribed in capitals. The fragment preserves three lines of what would have been a larger inscription. That this is a curse tablet can be deduced by nisi in line 2 and is further suggested by a possible restoration of *d(e)ae Suli* in line 3. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 19.

Restored Text

…
]em det nisi [
]in vero d(e)ae S[uli *or is*

BA025. Two conjoining fragments measuring 39 x 19mm together. Inscribed in capitals, the fragment preserves the invocation of Sulis. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 20(i).

Restored Text

d]eae Su[li
  ]· ·[

BA026. A 28 x 24mm fragment inscribed in capitals, but with Q in Old Roman Cursive. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 20(ii).

Restored Text

sequ[
et m[
f[

BA027. A 21 x 16mm fragment inscribed with capitals. Line 1 preserves the dedication to Sulis. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 21.

Restored Text

? dea] Sulis, t[ibi
        ]en[

BA028. A 24 x 20mm fragment inscribed in capitals which appears to preserve the bottom L corner of a larger tablet. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 22.

<u>Restored Text</u>

d.[
hoc [

BA029. A 38 x 40mm fragment of lead inscribed in capitals. The fragment preserves the top R corner of a larger tablet. Line 1 likely preserves the end of a personal name, while –lavit in line 3 indicates that this text curses a thief. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 23.

<u>Restored Text</u>

]nus
].u[?
invol]avit c.3
traces

BA030. A 34 x 22mm fragment inscribed in capitals. The text is too fragmentary for restoration. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 24.

Transcript

].pita.[

]dae(*or* f)n(*or* al)su.[

BA031. An irregular 'blob' of lead. No dimensions are provided. The inscribed surface is almost entirely lost, but a capital S (and possibly E) can be read with some traces. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 25.

Transcript

traces

se[

[ ]

BA032. A small 11 x 10mm fragment inscribed in capitals. *Ser* is possibly what survives of servus. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 26.

Transcript

]ser[

BA033. A c. 130 x 150mm tablet that was folded five times and then once again. The tablet is still folded (no line drawing available), but the inside text is inscribed in capitals. One line of capitals that was inscribed on the outside before folding can be read. This is likely a name. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 27.

Transcript

[. .]uendi

BA034. A 19 x 19mm fragment inscribed in capitals. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 28.

Transcript

].er.[

BA035. A 9 x 13mm fragment preserving the capital letter N and the bottom of another letter. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 29.

Transcript

].[
].n[

BA036. A 145mm circular rimmed pewter plate inscribed in Old Roman Cursive (ORC). The inscription consists of a list of names and was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xvi (1985), 323, No. 2; *Tab. Sulis* 30.

Restored Text

Severianus fil(ius) Brigomall(a)e
Patarnianus filius
Matarnus ussor
Catonius Potentini
Marinianus Belcati
Lucillus Lucciani
Aeternus Ingenui
Bellaus Bellini

'Severianus son of Brigomalla; Patarnianus (his?) son; Matarnus (and his?) wife; Catonius (son of) Potentinus; Marinianus (son of) Belcatus; Lucillus (son of) Luccianus; Aeternus (son of) Ingenuus; Bellaus (son of) Bellinus'

BA037. A 36 x 88mm alloy sheet inscribed in ORC. The holes are due to casting flaws rather than nails. The tablet was folded three times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 31.

Restored Text

si (qui)s vome-
rem Civilis
involavit
ut an[imam]
su<u>a(m) in tem-
plo deponat
[?si n]o[n] vom-
[erem .] . .ub
[*c.*2 si se]rvus
si liber si li-

bertinus [*c*.2]
unan. .o
finem faci-
[a]m

<u>Translation</u>

'If anyone has stolen Civilis' ploughshare (I ask) that he lay down his life in the temple [?unless]... the ploughshare, whether slave or free or freedman... I make an end to...'

BA038. Three conjoining fragments of alloy sheet measuring 78 x 91mm and inscribed in ORC. Though the handwriting is practiced, there are several spelling mistakes apart from the 'Vulgar' spellings that are common at Bath. The worn condition of the tablet makes reading uncertain. The tablet was folded four times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 32.

<u>Restored Text</u>

    deae Suli Minerv(a)e Soli-
nus dono numina tuo ma-
iestati paxsa(m) balnearem et [pal-
leum [nec p]ermitta[s so]mnum
nec san[ita]tem<.>ei qui mihi fr(a)u-

dem [f]ecit si vir si femi[na] si servus
s[i] l[ib]er nissi [<s>s]e retegens istas
s[p]ecies ad [te]mplum tuum detulerit
(2-3li]beri sui vel son1-2 sua e[t?] qui
[.].[1-2]. .[*c.* 5]deg…[
ei quoque [*c.*6]xe.[
[*c.*8 so]mnum ne[c sanitate-
m [*c.*9]n[*c.*6p]al<u>l[e]um
et reli<n>q[ua]s nissi ad [te]mplum tu-
um istas res retulerint

Translation

'Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity (and) majesty (my) bathing tunic and cloak. Do not allow sleep or health to him who has done me wrong, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, unless he reveals himself and brings those goods to your temple... his children or his... and(?) who... to him also... sleep or [health]... cloak and the rest, unless they bring those things to your temple.'

BA039. A 37 x 38mm L. corner of an alloy sheet inscribed in ORC. Damage to the R. and bottom edges makes the inscription incomplete. This is the only tablet from the site that is explicitly dedicated to Mars. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 33.

Restored Text

deo Marti .[
do[no?] maiest[ati tuo
    sacellum .[
[*c*.2] nisi e.[

Translation

'... to the god Mars…[I] give to [your] majesty… shrine… unless…'

BA040. Four conjoining fragments of alloy measuring 98 x 66mm and inscribed in ORC. Denarios is written with a sign. The tablet was not folded and was pierced in the top R. corner. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiii (1982), 403, No. 6; *Tab. Sulis* 34.

Restored Text

deae Suli Minervae Docca
dono numina tuo pecuniam quam
[*c*.5 a]misi id est (denarios) (quinque) et is [q]ui
[eam involaveri]t si ser[vu]s s[I liber]
[si vir si femina] ex<s>iga[tur *c*.5]

'Docca to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity the money which I have lost, that is five denarii; and he who [has stolen it], whether slave or [free, whether man or woman], is to be compelled...'

BA041. Six conjoining fragments of alloy sheet measuring 61 x 46mm and inscribed in ORC. All of the edges are damaged, excepting the top edge. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 35.

Restored Text

deae Sul[i] Minervae
rogo [s]anctissimam
maiestatem tuam u[t]
vindices ab his [q]ui [fra-]
[ude]m fecerunt ut ei[s per-]
mittas nec s(o)mnum [nec
[   ].[   ]. .[

Translation

'To the goddess Sulis Minerva. I ask your most sacred majesty that you take vengeance on those who have done (me) wrong, that you permit them neither sleep [nor...'

BA042. A 59 x 55mm fragment of alloy sheet that nonetheless preserves much of the inscription. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 36.

<u>Restored Text</u>

[1-2]q. .[
et invola[vit *or* verit
duo de[. .]. .[
adhuisgar.[
deveniat si lib[er]
si ser(v)us si puer [si]
(p)uella si vir s[i]
    traces

<u>Translation</u>

'... and has stolen ... two... whether free or slave, whether boy or girl, whether man [or woman]...'

BA043. A 68 x 48mm pentagonal alloy sheet inscribed on both sides in ORC. The inscription consists of a curse followed by a list of names. The tablet was pierced by a nail. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 37.

Restored Text

(a)

illorum anima
las(s)et[ur
list of names?

(b)

Exsibuus
Lothuius
Mas(e)ntius
Aesibuas
Peticiacus

Translation

'May their life be weakened… [list of names]'

(a)

(b)

BA044. A 46 x 75mm right fragment of alloy sheet. The L. side is lost, but what remains on the right is formulaic and can be used to deduce the rest. The tablet was folded four times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 38.

<u>Restored Text</u>

```
                ] dono ti-
[bi        ]ream
[          ]l[.]sivio meo
            e]x(i)gas pe[?r sa-
[?nguinem e]ius qui has
[involave]rit vel qui
[?medius fuer]it si femina
```

].o. [si] liber
]. . 1-2 sa.[.]. .
]…
]. .um pertuleri(t)

'... I give you... [that] you may exact (them) [through the blood of him] who has [stolen] these, or who has [been privy to it,] whether man or woman... [whether] free... has brought...'

BA045. A 91 x 48mm irregular 'blob' of lead inscribed on one side in three columns of ORC. The text was folded from the sides and bottom toward the centre. The format leaves much of the text doubtful. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 39.

Transcript

(i)

quiinuolauerit
siserussilib.r
l (*over* o *or* p)ente. .

(ii)

totia
animasuam
]u.nuolau. .
] . . ameam
]n . . o.
traces
traces
quin

(iii)

uolaut.i
. . elma. .
uesel

Translation

'Who has stolen, whether slave or free... his life... [who] has stolen... my... who has stolen...'

BA046. A 92 x 58mm alloy sheet inscribed in ORC. Corrosion on the surface leaves the letters faint. The tablet was folded about six times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 40.

Restored Text

qui calamea
negat sanguine
…
de[s]t[in]at

Translation

'[Let him] who denies (making) false accusation (?) ... blood... (she) appoints.'

BA047. Two conjoining fragments of high-tin alloy sheet measuring 108 x 44mm and inscribed in ORC. The two fragments preserve the bottom R. corner of the tablet. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 41.

Restored Text

> …
> …r]ipuit ut [eo]rum pretium
> [?et e]xigas hoc per sanguinem et sa-
> [nitatem sua]m et suorum nec ante illos pati[a]r-
> [is ?bibere nec m]anducare nec adsellare nec
> [?meiere c.8   ]ius hoc [.]bisoverit

Translation

'... has stolen, that... the price [of them and] exact this through [his] blood and [health] and (those) of his family, and not allow them [to drink or] eat or defecate or [urinate] before he has... [   ]ed this.'

BA048. A 38 x 29mm fragment of the top edge of a tablet inscribed in ORC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 42.

Transcript

].a.e.na.[
]fecitdo.[
]nfanosu[
  ].[

BA049. A 27 x 29mm fragment of high-tin alloy inscribed in ORC with a raised top edge. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 43.

Transcript

]*vacat* pu[
]donoti[
]alliu.[

BA050. Six conjoining fragments of high-tin alloy measuring 75 x 58mm. The tablet is inscribed in ORC on both sides. The text is written from with the same line sequence as the original text (i.e. the entire text is not reversed). The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 334-5, No. 2; *Tab. Sulis* 44; *Gager* 95.

Transcript

(a)

cx.tiuaueliumqmu[*c.*3]n.a
silusolpmetts.s. .cino
resisorabisreilumisonod
alleupiserupisrebilissuu
nastirecefcohiuqte
neamspinimuusmeug
vacat   tadnufum

(b)

isr. .lumisonod
bilissuueresisab
leupisreupisre (*over* er)
. .rtalmueal
aspimeriuqme (*over* em)
d.iualuonim
[1-2]aineun.sue

Restored Text

(a)

a[e]n[um me]um qui levavit [e]xc-
onic[tu]s [e]st templo Sulis
dono si mulier si baro si ser-
vus si liber si pure (i.e. puer) si puella
et qui hoc fecerit san-
gu(in)em suum in ipsmu (i.e. ipsum) aen-
mu (i.e. aenum) fundat

(b)

dono si mul[ie]r si
ba(ro) si servus si lib-
er si puer si puel-
la eum latr[on]-
em qui rem ipsa-
m involavi[t] d-
eus [i]nvenia[t]

Translation

'(The person) who has lifted my bronze vessel is utterly accursed. I give (him) to the temple of Sulis, whether woman or man, whether slave or free, whether boy or girl, and let him who has done this spill his own blood into the vessel itself. (b) I give, whether woman or man, whether slave or free, whether boy or girl, that the thief who has stolen the property itself (that) the god may find (him).'

(a)

(b)

BA051. A 64 x 41mm sheet of alloy inscribed on both sides in ORC. The tablet was folded once after inscription, and the exposed face is now worn and corroded. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 45.

Restored Text

(a)

deae Suli .[
…
…
   ].is qu[i

(b)

si servus si liber <si> qui<s>cumq[ue]
erit non illi permittas nec
oculos nec sanitatem nisi caecitatem
orbitatemque quod vixerit
nisi haec ad fanum [

Translation

'To the goddess Sulis… whether slave or free, <if> whoever he shall be, you are not to permit him eyes or health unless blindness and childlessness so long as he shall live, unless [he…] these to the temple.'

(a)

(b)

BA052. Seven conjoining fragments of alloy measuring 81 x 111mm and inscribed in ORC. Though the letters can be transcribed, the text is too 'garbled' to be restored. The tablet was folded six times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 46

Transcript

desulimine1-2u *vacat*
aeeosquiamaliama[
t(*over* l)rasuendetstilumla[.]. .[
corregenetc.geet. .fan[
t(*over* l)suu dea. .tedo. . . [
e(*or* u)tqohabunit[.]setrodeam
e(*or* u)tsanuenesua.[.]bitquime
uitisetmalu(*or* e).ic. .em
vacat docigeniusu(*or* e)teane[

'To the goddess Sulis Minerva…'

BA053. A 66 x 36mm fragment of lead inscribed in ORC. The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 47

Restored Text

> ?tib]i q[u]er[or]
>]…[*c*.2]. Ex<x>igi
> ai servu]s si liber hoc tulerit
> non il]li permittas in sangu(i)ne
>]sui . .[

Translation

*'… I complain [to you]… be exacted…[whether slave] or free, has taken this…
you are [not] to permit [him] in blood… his…'*

BA054. Two conjoining fragments measuring 49 x 44mm. The tablet was inscribed on both sides in ORC before it was folded. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 48.

Restored Text

(a)

    ]sagiliano.[
an]tequam in fa[no
    ]…[*c.*4]lef.[
           ].er.[

(b)

]desimili.[
]dic…[
vacat

BA055. Two conjoining fragments measuring 33 x 33mm together. It is possible that 56 below is also part of the same tablet, though the editor does not say this with certainty due to the small sample of letters. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 49(i).

Restored Text

```
]   qu[
]lar[e]m si[
]si ser(v)us [
    ]dea Sul[is
```

See 56 for translation.

BA056. A 16 x 30mm fragment inscribed in ORC. This fragment is possibly part of the same tablet as 55 above. The editor states that the sample of text is too small to be certain of a connection, but offers a conjectural combination of Tab. Sulis 49(i) and (ii). Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 49(ii).

Restored Text

```
        ]t cab[al…
si vir si f]emin[
   ?si libe]r
```

Conjectured reading of 55 and 56 (*Tab. Sulis* 49)

```
   qu[i involavi]t cab[al-]
lar[e]m si [vir si f]emin[a]
si ser(v)us [si libe]r
   ]dea Sul[is
```

Translation (55 and 56)

'(The person) who [has stolen] (my) horse blanket(?), whether [man or] woman, whether slave [or free]… goddess Sulis…'

BA057. Two conjoining fragments measuring 39 x 38mm and inscribed in ORC, with the exception of the first D in capitals. The text preserves the address to the deity and the name of either the principal or the target. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 50.

Restored Text

<D>deae [Suli…
  Victorin[
…
…

BA058. A 53 x 113mm alloy sheet inscribed in ORC. The inscription consists of a list of names. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xii (1981), 373, No. 7; *Tab. Sulis* 51.

Text

Severa
Dracontius
Specatus
Innocentius
Senicio
Candidianus

Applicius
Belator
Surilla
Austus
Carinianus

BA059. A 61 x 72mm fragment of alloy sheet inscribed in ORC. The tablet is heavily damaged on the L side, resulting in its fragmentary nature. It is possible that the tablet was pierced with a nail after inscription, but it was not folded. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 338, No. 5; *Tab. Sulis* 52.

Restored Text

      perm]ittas
       somn]um nec sanita-
[tem…n]isi tandiu ta-
      ]iat quandiu hoc
    ill]ud se habuerit

s]i vir si femina et
   ] si ancilla

<u>Translation</u>

'... you are [not] to permit [... sleep] or health… except for as long as… it shall find itself (?)…whether man or woman and… or slave woman.'

BA060. A 65 x 49mm oval sheet inscribed on both sides in ORC. The tablet is the only one from the site addressed to Mercury. The inscription consists of a dedication to Mercury and a list of names and families. Line 12 contains a rare *k.* Part of the edge was folded after inscription, and there is a possible nail hole through the top of (a). Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 53.

<u>Restored Text</u>

(a)

D[eo] Mercurio
…
…
[C]ivilis… fuerit de
…
?Trinni familiam [
Velvalis(?)…
am suam

(b)

Markelinum familia[m]
Velorigam et famili[am]
[s]uam Morivassum et
[f]amiliam Riovassum e[t]
  familiam Minoven…
    et familiam sua[m]
   …

Translation

'To the god Mercury… Civilis… shall have been… family of (?)Trinnus… his (b) Mar(c)el(l)inus (and his) family. Veloriga and her family. Morivassus and (his)'

(a)

(b)

BA061. A 96 x 149mm sheet of alloy with a 'scalloped' edge due to hammering before inscription. The main text is inscribed in ORC on (b) with a capital letter B and an additional mark on (a). Heavy corrosion has damaged the surface of (b). The text was neither folded nor pierced with a nail after inscription. [The symbol(?) on (a) resembles a pseudo-inscription from the site and is possibly related to lead sealing crosses and ownership graffiti (184)] Bibl.: *Tab Sulis* 54.

Restored Text

(a)

B+

(b)

…
conq[u]<a>er[or] tibi, Sulis, Arminia
(ut) Verecundinum ? Ter[en]ti c[ons]umas
qui argentiolos duos mihi…
…]revavit no[n il]l[i p]er-
mittas nec sedere nec iacere [ne]c
… a[m]bulare n[ec]
somn[um nec] sanitatem [?cu]m
quantocius consumas et iter[u]m
…
…
[no]n perveniat

'... I, Arminia, complain to you, Sulis, [that] you consume Verecundinus (son of) Terentius, who has [stolen...] two silver coins from me. You are not to permit [him] to sit or lie [or... or] to walk [or] (to have) sleep [or] health, [since] you are to consume (him) as soon as possible; and again... [not] to reach...'

(a)

(b)

BA062. Three conjoining fragments measuring 31 x 63mm together and preserving the L. edge of an inscribed alloy sheet. The text was inscribed on both sides with only traces remaining on (a). (b) is inscribed in ORC. The tablet was folded twice after inscription and is now too damaged for much restoration. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 55.

Transcript

(b)

dacusaga[
aquer.[
n[2-3]t[
recentisimi. . .[
capitularem(over)ciui
emsupplic.[
siser[
somnus[
.u[
. .[
[.]ge.[
traces
traces
traces

BA063. Two conjoining fragments measuring 24 x 16mm together. The tablet was inscribed on both sides, though on one of these only traces remain. The remaining text is in ORC. Fraudem can be read in line 2, showing that this text somehow deals with wrongdoing or harm. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 56.

Transcript

(a)
]pinetuionis soruim[
]sta fraudem[
]s.ab[

BA064. Seven conjoining fragments of alloy sheet measuring 66 x 51mm together. The L. corner survives, but pieces are lost where the tablet was folded and at the edges. The tablet was folded several times after inscription in ORC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 57

Restored Text

deae… Exsib[uus? vacat

dona[vit] i[l]los qui 1-2ban[
… sunt […… si servus]
si l[iber si bar]o si m[u]l[i]e[r
sa[

Translation

'To the goddess... Exsibuus has given those who... are... [whether slave] or [free, whether man] or woman...'

BA065. Three conjoining fragments of high-tin alloy measuring 159 x 100mm together. The tablet was folded twice after the inscription of the main text, after which additional text (a) was inscribed in capitals on a protruding flap. (b) is mostly lost. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 58.

Transcript

(a)

A
BC
ER
NI

(b)

        ] *traces*
         ] *traces*
traces
]esueb t*races*
]no t*races*
]n.ci. . *traces*
]. .curillas.[
 ]s. . . .[*c.*2]rsi.[
[   ]

]i.nuo[
]lo[

(a)

(b)

BA066. Two conjoining fragments of lead alloy measuring 81 x 36mm together fragments preserve the top edge of a tablet that was inscribed in ORC, and what remains of this inscription is the name of the principal and the address to an unnamed deity, tibi. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 59

<u>Restored Text</u>

Enica conqueror ti[bi
…
…
…

BA067. Two conjoining fragments of alloy sheet measuring 59 x 29mm together. The tablet has broken where it was folded after inscription in ORC. Presumably the rest of the text has broken off along the second fold. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 60.

Restored Text

Oconea deae Suli
M(inervae) dono [ti]bi pa-
nnum. si quis eum
…

Translation

'Oconea to the goddess Sulis M(inerva). I give you a pan(?). If anyone [has stolen] it…'

BA068. Two conjoining fragments of lead alloy measuring 55 x 46mm together. The tablet was inscribed in mirror image ORC letters from R. to L., resulting in copying errors. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 337, No. 4; *Tab. Sulis* 61.

Transcript

[c.4]dacsinreuol
[c.2]ueuisiuqmue
eu[.]s animefeuisi
alleup euisreup
muitrof am iuq
vacat tireualou(*over* ireu)[.]i

Restored Text

Lovernisca d[onat)
eum qui sive v[ir]
<i>sive femina s[i]ve
puer sive puella
qui mafortium
i[n]volaverit

'Lovernisca [gives] him who, whether [man] or woman, whether boy or girl, <who> has stolen (her) cape.'

BA069. Two conjoining fragments measuring 65 x 56mm together. The text was inscribed in ORC from R. to L. and with a reversal of letter sequence in each line. There was an apparent effort not to divide words between lines. The tablet was folded once after inscription, and it is possible that it was pierced with a nail after inscription but before folding. Bibl.: *Britannia* xviii (1987), 364, No. 3; *Tab. Sulis* 62.

Transcript

[*c*.5]alidedrepsitorocoe[*c*.4]
. . . .odmasxapmugasmuell[. .]
meuonseidetnacohtusilu[.].[. .]
auresisareb[. .]issure(*over* i)sisreb[*c*.4]
[*c*.2].[.]rtso(*over* ni)rn[*c*.2]lleupiserup. .
[*c*.8].[*c*.7]arefed
[*c*.12].smerall(*over* c?)abac
[*c*.7]reupisarebilisaures(*over* i)
[*c*.7]refedortsorousni

Restored Text

[*c*.5]eocorotis perdedi la[enam]
[pa]lleum sagum paxsam do[navi]
[. .].[S]ulis ut hoc ante dies novem
[si li]ber si ser(v)us si [li]bera si serva
[si] pure (i.e. puer] si puell[a i]n rostr[o] s[uo]
defera[t
caballarem s[I ser(v)us si liber si]
serva si libera si puer [si puella]
in suo rostro defer[at vacat?

410

'I, [...]eocritis, have lost (my) Italian/Greek/Gallic cloak (and) tunic, (which) I have given... Sulis, that (he) may bring it down in his snout before nine days, [whether] free or slave, whether free woman or slave woman, [whether] boy or girl... horse blanket, [whether slave or free, whether] slave woman or free woman, whether boy [or girl], bring down in his snout.'

BA070. A 83 x 50mm irregular oval of lead inscribed in ORC. Wearing on the lower half of the tablet makes the text faint. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 63.

Restored Text

   deae Suli
    si quis balniarem
Cantissen(a)e inv[o]la[v]erit
Si s(e)r(v)us si liber…
…
…

Translation

'To the goddess Sulis. If anyone has stolen the bathing tunic of Cantissena, whether slave or free…'

BA071. Five conjoining fragments of alloy sheet measuring 98 x 53mm together. The text was inscribed in ORC. The tablet was folded five times before being cut with a knife, which separated what now survives from the top part of the text. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 64.

Restored Text

…
quiescit 2-3lit sanitatem invictus
nisi eidem loco ipsum pallium
[re]ducat

Translation

'… restes… health unconquered unless he brings the cloak itself back to the same place.'

BA072. A 50 x 88mm alloy sheet inscribed in a third-century combination of ORC and New Roman Cursive (NRC). The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiv (1983), 340, No. 6; *Tab. Sulis* 65.

        Minerv(a)e
de(ae) Suli donavi
furem qui
caracallam
meam invo-
lavit si ser(v)us
si liber si ba-
ro si mulier
hoc donum non
redemat nessi
sangu(i)n[e] suo

Translation

'To Minerva the goddess Sulis I have given the thief who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether slave or free, whether man or woman. He is not to buy back this gift unless with his own blood.'

BA073. Five conjoining fragments of high-tin alloy measuring 99 x 134mm together. The first line of text is written in NRC, but the remainder is written in ORC. The shallowness of the writing and round holes due to casting defects make reading difficult. The tablet was folded nine times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 66.

Restored Text

Exsuperius
donat pannum ferri
qui illi innoc[entiam?]nfam
tusc… [   ] Su-
lis si vir [si femin]a s[i] ser(v)us
si liber ho[c
ill[
et[.].[.]er. .[
suas inv[o]la[veru]n[t] s[i] vir
si femina s[ati]sfecerit
sanguin[e] ill[o]rum hoc
devindices [si?] q[u]is aenum mi-
hi involav[i]t

Translation

*'Exsuperius gives an iron pan(?). (The person) who… innocence for him… of(?)
Sulis, whether man [or woman], whether slave or free, … this… and … have
stolen his…, whether man or woman, is to have given satisfaction with their
blood. You are to reclaim(?) this [if] anyone has stolen the vessel from me.'*

BA074. A 21 x 32mm fragment inscribed in ORC. What remains is possibly part of the *nec somnum nec sanitatem* formula. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 67.

Transcript

necs[
n.[
t.

BA075. A 40 x 24mm fragment inscribed in ORC. What remains is part of the theft statement. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 68.

Restored Text

…
]hoc invola[vit/verit
…

BA076. Two conjoining fragments measuring 24 x 27mm together and inscribed in ORC. The fragments preserve part of the top edge of a tablet, on which is inscribed the dedication to Sulis. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 69.

Restored Text

].ia
] dea Suli[s
 ]nem d.[

BA077. A 29 x 22mm fragment inscribed in ORC. Minerva can be read in line 1. It is possible that cocus of line 2 is a personal name, but the editor notes that the nominative here would be unusual. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 70.

Transcript

mineru[
amcocus[
lumpell[

Restored Text

Minerv[a or ae
…
-lum pell[

BA078. Two conjoining fragments of corroded lead measuring 80 x 64mm together. The tablet was inscribed in ORC before folding. Only traces remain on the L. fragment, but the some mutually-exclusive conditions can be restored on the R. fragment transcribed below. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 71.

Transcript

traces
traces
        ]a3-4quisuib.[
traces .ise[. .]uss[
. .l.   siuirsi.em[
        ].iscebit.[
        ]traces

Restored Text

…
…
…
  s]i se[rv]us s[i
  ] si vir si [f]em[ina
  ] discebit [
…

Translation

'… whether slave or [free]… whether man or woman… will learn (?)…'

BA079. Two conjoining fragments measuring 27 x 20mm together and inscribed in ORC. Tacituri, 'being silent in the future,' can be read in line 2. This is perhaps a curse on anyone who withholds knowledge of the theft. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 72.

Transcript

traces
c.2].ori.a[
tacituri[
traces

BA080. A 22 x 22mm fragment inscribed in ORC. Line 1 can perhaps be restored as veniat. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 73.

Transcript

].uen. .[
 nonan. .[
    ].[

BA081. A 44 x 29mm sheet of lead alloy. Line 1 is inscribed in ORC while line 2 is inscribed in captials. [DOMX may be an attempt at domina as in a text addressed to the Niskas at Amelie-les-Bains (look into this more)]. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 74.

Transcript

o1-2 oc(*or* t)
DOMX

BA082. An irregular 80 x 34mm sheet of alloy inscribed with ambiguous letterforms. The fragment appears to be the bottom part of a larger text, though not much can be determined about the format or content of the inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 75.

BA083. A 17 x 19mm fragment inscribed with unusual ORC. The text appears to be a jumble of letters that make no sense. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 76.

Transcript

]iqas
].tug.ius
]iiRulu
]ui vacat?
].e.rnfi

BA084. Two conjoining fragments of lead sheet measuring 65 x 81mm together. The tablet was folded twice after inscription in ORC. The inscribed text possibly consists of two personal names: Cupit[i]a[nus] in line 2 and another name ending in –visius in line 3. There is no evidence of writing in the bottom half. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 77.

Transcript

traces
cupit[1-2]a.[
. .auisius vacat . .[
vacat

BA085. A 53 x 67mm sheet of lead inscribed 'clumsily' in ORC. The inscribed text consists of two repeated names and may have been written by two hands. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 78.

Restored Text

?B]itulus Linu[s
?Bitil<u>s Lin[us

BA086. Three conjoining fragments of alloy measuring 79 x 39mm together. The fragments preserve the bottom portion of a larger tablet that was folded four times. The reading of letterforms is not certain. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 79.

Transcript

traces
resmca.[ ]esila(interlin.)q2-3mali
egnenu.a.iti[1-2]. *vacat*

BA087. Two conjoining fragments measuring 41 x 31mm together. The fragments preserve part of the bottom of a tablet that was folded after inscription in ORC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 80.

Transcript

```
      ]l[
      ]doil[
]. . .mmod(over i)a.[
```

BA088. A 23 x 14mm fragment inscribed in ORC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 81.

Transcript

traces
]utquand[
   ].[

BA089. A 66 x 29mm fragment of alloy. The fragment preserves the bottom edge of a larger tablet that was folded after inscription in ORC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 82.

Transcript

 ].[
]sol…[

BA090. A 19 x 21mm fragment. One of about 15 small fragments published as *Tab. Sulis* 83 with 92 and 93 below. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 83(i).

Transcript

].suum[
].ute[

BA091. A 13 x 12 mm fragment. One of about 15 small fragments published as *Tab. Sulis* 83. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 83(ii).

Transcript

].el
].·.[

BA092. A 16 x 10mm fragment. One of about 15 small fragments published as *Tab. Sulis* 83. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 83(iii).

Transcript

]cum[

BA093. Two conjoining fragments of lead measuring 43 x 54mm together. Heavy corrosion makes only traces of letters visible. The tablet was folded after inscription. *Tab. Sulis* 84.

Transcript

]. .noc.[
    ]p[.].[
traces

BA094. A 20 x 22mm fragment inscribed in ORC. The fragment possibly preserves *qu(o)d fr[audem fecit* in the final line. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 85.

Transcript

traces
].sum.[
]acusaue[
]qudfra[

BA095. A 16 x 17mm fragment inscribe in ORC. Traces in the first line are underlined, but what remains is too fragmentary to tell if this was indeed the first line of the tablet. *Res invol*[*avit* or *–erit*] can be read in line 2. Bibl.: Tab. Sulis 86.

Transcript

    traces
]resinuol[
traces

BA096. A 21 x 14mm fragment inscribed in ORC. *Si ser(v)us* can be restored in line 2.

Transcript

    ]ili[
].erus[
    traces

BA097. A c.100 x 32mm sheet of alloy that remains folded. The L. end of the inscription can be read, presumably because it has detached. The tablet was folded 7 times after inscription in ORC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 90.

Transcript

d[
qu[
..[

Restored Text

d[eae Suli…?
qu[i involavit…?

BA098. A c. 150mm wide sheet of alloy that was folded three times after inscription and then doubled over. What appear to be two personal names were inscribed on the outside of the tablet before it was doubled over. The second name may be a patronymic. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 91.

Transcript

.ecurap. .[

BA099. An irregular lump of lead with a heavily corroded surface. Only traces and some letters remain. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 92.

Trancsript

traces
ta.[

BA100. A 32 x 22mm fragment of alloy tablet that remains folded. The tablet was inscribed on both sides. Though the tablet is folded, traces of letters are visible. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 93.

BA101. A 75 x 55mm alloy sheet inscribed in New Roman Cursive (NRC). Rather than a curse against a thief, the tablet is a sanction against perjury. The tablet was not folded or pierced after inscription, and the text is mostly preserved. Bibl.: *Britannia* xii (1981), 378, No. 9; *Tab. Sulis* 94.

Restored Text

Uricalus Do[c]ilosa ux[or] sua
Docilis filius suus et Docilina
Decentinus frater suus Alogiosa
nomina<a> eorum qui iuraverunt
<qui iuraverunt> ad fontem deae Sulis(s)
prid(i)e idus Apriles quicumque illic per-
iuraverit deae Suli facias illum

sanguine suo illud satisfacere

<u>Translation</u>

'Uricalus, Docilosa his wife, Docilis his son and Docilina, Decentinus his brother, Alogiosa: the names of those who have sworn <who have sworn> at the spring of the goddess Sulis on the 12th of April. Whosoever has perjured himself there you are to make him pay for it to the goddess Sulis in his own blood.'

BA102. A thick 'blob' of alloy measuring 59 x 22mm and inscribed in NRC on the smooth surface. This tablet and 104 (Tab. Sulis 96) are the only extant tablets from the site to be inscribed in the same hand. The inscription consists of a list of names in two columns. The tablet was not folded. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiv (1983), 339, No. 4; *Tab. Sulis* 95.

<u>Text</u>

Cunsa
Docimedis
Sedebelia

Maria
Venibedis
Cunsus
Severia<ia>nus
Seini<i>
Translation

'Cunsa, Docimedis, Sedebelia, Maria, Vendibedis, Cunsus, Severianus, Senila.'

BA103. A thick 'blob' of alloy measuring 58 x 22mm and inscribed in NRC on the smooth surface. Part of the text is damaged by scoring. This tablet and 103 (Tab. Sulis 95) are the only extant tablets from the site to be inscribed in the same hand. The inscription consists of a list of names in two columns. The tablet was not folded. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiv (1983), 341, No. 7; *Tab. Sulis* 96.

Text

Victorinus
Talipieinus
Minantius
Victorianus

Compe-
<pe>dita
Valaune(over i)cus
<.>Belia

Translation

'Victorinus, Talipieinus, Minantius, Victorianus, Compedita, Valaunecus, Belia'

BA104. A 128 x 49mm sheet of high-tin alloy inscribed on both sides in NRC. What is apparently a personal name, Primurudeum, is inscribed on (a) at right-angles to the main inscription. This is the only tablet from the site that mentions a temple of Mars. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiv (1983), 338, No. 3; *Tab. Sulis* 97.

Restored Text

(a)

Basilia donat in templum Martis ani-
lum argenteum si ser(v)us si liber
(ta)mdiu siluerit vel aliquid de hoc

noverit ut sanguine et liminibus et

(b)

omnibus membris configatur vel et-
iam intestinis excomesis (om)nibus habe(at)
is qui anilum involavit vel qui medius
fuerit

<u>Translation</u>

'Basilia gives <in> the temple of Mars (her) silver ring, that so long as (someone), whether slave or fee, keeps silent or knows anything about it, he may be accursed in (his) blood and eyes and every limb, or even have all (his) intestines quite eaten away, if he has stolen the ring or has been privy to (the theft).'

(a)

(b)

BA105. A 105 x 60mm lead alloy tablet inscribed on both sides in NRC. The sequence of letters is reversed entirely on (a) and within each line on (b), though the text was written from L. to R. The tablet was not folded after inscription. The inscription is notable for its mention of Christianity in lines 1-2 of the restored text. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiii (1982), 404-5, No. 7; *Tab. Sulis* 98.

Transcript

(a)

tireuagornicohihimiuqsetupemuusmeni
ugnastudesanodispiciscentirededmuts[.]ger
pednimauqilameduar[.]repihimiss[c.2].e
[c.2]ixerepospibaaedanim[.]duttireuaruf
s[.]etnegraxsaemasrubedenetutnamo
.ainnaihimrebilmurtussuu. .smurtu
alleupmurtureupmurtureilummurt.
riumurtueuqmuceauqsunaitsih
cuessnegues vacat

(b)

ossips[c.3]mutsop
anual.annicol
alusnuganretam
suicitueanididanc
sunirgerep --------
sunital
sunaicines
sunaitiua
rotciu
su. .ocs
ainucissea
accutlap
sipoillac
sunairelec

Restored Text

(a)

seu gen(tilis) seu C-
h(r)istianus quaecumque utrum vir
[u]trum mulier utruem puer utrum puella
utrum s[er]vus utrum liber mihi Annia[n]-
o ma<n>tutene de bursa mea s(e)x argente[o]s
furaverit tu d[o]mina dea ab ipso perexi[g]-
e[. .eo]s si mihi per [f]raudem aliquam inDEP-
REG[.]STVM dederit nec sic ipsi dona sed ut sangu-
Inem suum (r)eputes qui mihi hoc inrogaverit

427

(b)

Postum[inu]s Pisso
Locinna [A]launa
Materna Gunsula
C[an]didina Euticius
Peregrinus ----------
Latinus
Senicianus
Avitianus
Victor
Sco[ti]us
Aessicunia
Paltucca
Calliopis
Celerianus

Translation

'Whether pagan or Christian, whosoever, whether man or woman, whether boy or girl, whether slave or free, has stolen from me, Annianus (son of) Matutina(?), six silver coins from my purse, you, lady Goddess, are to exact [them] from him. If through some deceit he has given me... , and do not give thus to him, but reckon as(?) the blood of him who has invoked this upon me. (b) Postumianus, Pisso, Locinna, Alauna, Materna, Gunsula, Candidina, Euticius, Peregrinus, Latinus, Senicianus, Avitianus, VIctor, Scotius, Aessicunia, Paltucca, Calliopis, Celerianus'

(a)

(b)

BA106. A 75 x 39mm tin sheet inscribed in NRC. Line 2 is written from R. to L. with a reversed sequence of letters, but the rest is written from L. to R. Traces of a beaded border remain in the bottom L. corner, possibly indicating that this sheet was repurposed. This is the only tablet from the site that explicitly states that the stolen items were taken from a house. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiv (1983), 339, No. 5; *Tab. Sulis* 99.

Transcript

execroquiinuolauer
sohedxiroimoediuq ti
ipitiosuoperdideritqui
cumquer. .deusillum
inueniatsanguineet
uitaesuaeilludredemat

Restored Text

execro qui involaver-
it qui Deomiorix de hos-
<i>pitio suo perdiderit qui-

cumque r[es]deus illum
inveniat sanguine et
vitae suae illud redemat

Translation

*'I curse (him) who hast stolen, who has robbed Deomiorix from his house.
Whoever (stole his) property, the god is to find him. Let him buy it back with
(his) blood and his own life.'*

BA107. A 75 x 45 mm tablet inscribed in NRC. The tablet was found in 1880 rather
than 1979 and was subject to misreadings after its initial deciphering in 1904. The tablet
is now lost, but surviving photographs made redrawing possible. Bibl.: *RIB* 2349; *Tab.
Suils* 100; *ZPE* 100 (1994), 104

Restored Text

(a)

si puer si puella
si vir si femina qui h[oc]
invol[a]vit non [?] p[er]mit-
tatu[ ] nis(i) inn[o]cen-
tiam ulla[m?] traces
traces

(b)
non illi dimitta[s?]
nec somnum nisi ut
TATIGIA m[o]dium ne-
bullae modium veni-
[at] fumi

'Whether boy or girl, whether man or woman, (the person) who has stolen it is not to be permitted(?)… unless any innocence… you(?) are not to grant(?) him nor sleep unless that… a bushel of cloud, a bushel of smoke may come.'

(a)

(b)

BA108. A 64 x 55mm sheet of high-tin alloy inscribed in irregularly spaced NRC. The tablet was folded once after inscription. Because the words are not certain and due to the apparent repetition of si, the editor suggests that this is a garbled copy of a text or of mutually-exclusive conditions. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 101.

Transcript

siuapesurusmiimii
ilesiceriasiussi
igeunsnserper
maneat *vacat*

BA109. Three conjoining fragments of alloy sheet measuring 38 x 53mm together and inscribed in NRC. Some parts of the tablet are missing and others are too worn to be read. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 102.

Restored Text

numen fur-
ti si se[r](v)us
si l(ibe)r
si puer si pue-
lla [
…
…

Translation

'The name(?) of the thief(?), whether slave or fee, whether boy or girl…'

BA110. A 66 x 27mm sheet of alloy inscribed in NRC. The first line is written from L. to R., but the remainder are written from R. to L. The text apparently invokes a male deity. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 103.

Transcript

modsusio.iuiuci
    maina(*over* i)ticafsued
    iuserdep

Restored Text

…
deus faci(a)t ani(m)am
pe(r)d(e)re sui

Translation

'… may the god make him lose his life.'

BA111. A 82 x 74mm sheet of alloy. The tablet contains three NRC texts, two of which are superimposed upon each other in lines 1-3. The third text begins at line 4. The texts were inscribed by at least two hands. Damage, corrosion, and the superimposition of texts prevent a clear reading. The tablet was folded once after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 104.

Transcript

traces us
traces us
traces a
uasomo[.].
nicinifii.
]unom. .a
s. .nus
mas

BA112. Two conjoining fragments of alloy measuring 53 x 52mm together. The tablet is inscribed on both sides in NRC, but much of the text is lost due to shallow inscription and damage. Parts of si servus si liber can be read on (a) while fecerit can be read on (b). The tablet was folded four times after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 105.

Transcript

(a)
      ]c. *traces*
]doscim *traces*
]*traces* ueritsiser
]*traces*
]*traces*
]*traces*
]*traces*

(b)
]. . .ri *traces*
]. . .c *traces*
      ]mfecerit t*races*
]dasd. .nbr[.]s.p. .d.
] *traces* intelleg *traces*
] *traces*

Translation

'… whether slave or free… has done… understand/stood…'

(a)

(b)

BA113. A 55 x 55mm high-tin fragment of alloy inscribed with ambiguous letterforms. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 106.

BA114. A 41 x 23mm fragment inscribed at least in part in NRC. The tablet likely preserves part of qui mihi fraudem fecerit or similar. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 107.

Transcript

]mquimi[
traces

BA115. A 27 x 31mm fragment. This is one of four fragments of alloy sheet that remain folded and are not necessarily from the same tablet, but the fragments are nonetheless published as Tab. Sulis 108. No line drawing is available. On the top L. corner of one a text in NRC can be read. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 108(i).

Transcript

docim[
desu[
. .n.[

Restored Text

Docim[edis?...
de(ae) Su[li…
…

BA116. Two still-folded fragments measuring 18 x 22mm together. The fragments are from the bottom of a larger tablet inscribed in NRC. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 109.

Transcript

]us.[
 ]duo[
].m.[

BA117. Two conjoining fragments measuring c. 40 x 30 mm and still folded. The tablet is probably inscribed in NRC. Traces of four lines of text can be read in the L. margin. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 110.

Transcript

.[
qui[
isti.[
. .ni (*or* m). .

BA118. A c. 90 x 60mm alloy sheet that is inscribed on both sides. The tablet remains folded. Bibl.: *Tab. Sulis* 111.

Brandon, Suffolk; found with a metal detector in silt dredged from Little Ouse River south of Hockwold-cum-Wilton in 1979.

BRA001. A 57 x 40mm lead sheet inscribed in fourth-century NRC. The reading of line 1 is clear, but nonsensical. The tablet was not folded or pierced after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxv (1994), 293, No. 1.

Transcript

seraduasorisduas
suserussiancelasili
libertasimlie.
sibaropopiafera
eaenecfurtumfece
redominoneptuno
corliloparetaior

Reconstructed Text

SERADVASORISDVUAS
s(i) ser(v)us si anc(i)l(l)a, si li(bertus si)
liberta, si m(u)lie[r]
si baro, popia(m) fer(re)a(m)
EAENEC furtum fece-
r(it), domino Neptuno
cor(u)lo pare(n)ta(tu)r.

Translation

'(Whoever)... whether male slave or female slave, whether freedman or freedwoman, whether woman or man... has committed the theft of an iron pan(?), he is sacrificed(?) to the Lord Neptune with hazel(?)'

Brean Down, Somerset; found with a metal detector on the beach below the site of the Roman temple c. 1980.

BRE001. An 85 x 57mm cut of sheet lead inscribed in NRC. The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xvii (1986), 433, No. 6.

Transcript

..[*c*.2]..nc[*c*.5].[.]..b[...]
cariculaquae[*c*.3].[c.5]er
u[...].libersiba [..]s.[c.4]er
quiue.aut[.]eus[*c*.3] .omin   (*c interlineated above*)
e..an(*over* d)e.disamfacias
sic[.]lladim[.]tsaguin..uolier
e..an(*over* en)tiss[*c*.2].sibar[.]simu
[.]...n..[.]b[...]

Reconstructed Text

…
caricula quae[*c*. 6 si s]er
(v)u[s i] liber si ba[ro] s[i muli]er
qui… (?)[d]omin-
a… facias
sic [i]lla (re)dim[a]t sa(n)guin[e s]uo –lier
… si bar[o] si mu-
…

'[… I give to you] the caricula which [I have lost. Whether] slave or free, whether man [or woman] who… Lady, (?)… you are to make redeem(?) them thus with his own blood… whether man or woman…'

Caerleon, Newport; found in the northern part of the Arena in 1927.

CAE001. An 83 x 76mm ansate plaque inscribed in cursive with the L. ansa now lost. There are holes in the top and bottom of the tablet, which, in conjunction with the tablet's shape, suggest display. Bibl.: *JRS* xvii (1927), 216; *JRS* xxi (1931), 248; *RIB* 323.

Restored Text

Dom(i)na Ne-
mesis do ti-
bi palleum
et galliculas
qui tulit non
redimat ni(si)
v[i]ta sanguine
suạ

'Lady Nemesis, I give thee a cloak and a pair of boots; let him who wore them not redeem them except with his life and blood.'

Caistor St. Edmund, Norfolk; found during field walking on the bank of the river Tas, west of the Roman town, in 1981.

CSE001. A 105 x 65mm lead sheet. Traces of letters to the right of the main text have not been transcribed. The text is mostly written in capitals, though E is sometimes in cursive. The tablet was tightly rolled after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiii (1982), 408, No. 9.

Restored Text

a Nase[. . .
eve(h)it Vroc{. . .
sius fascia(m) et armi[lla-
s, cap(t)olare, spectr[um(?),
cufia(m), duas ocrias, x vas
a stagnea, si mascel si m(!)e-
mina, si puer, si pu(e)lla. Duas
ocri(as) si vull(u)eris, factae sang(uine)
suo ut (i)llu(m) requerat<at> Neptunus,
e(t) amictus e(t) cufia (et) arm(i)lla[e. . .
denarii sv, cape(t)olare. Tunc sanguin(e)
               fasciam tenet fur e
carta s(upra) s(cripta)   ratio(n)e

'Vroc... sius (?) carries off from Nase... a wreath, bracelets, a cap, a mirror (?) a headdress, a pair of leggings, ten pewter vessels, whether he be man or woman, boy or girl. If you (Neptune) want (lit:shall have wished for) the pair of leggings, they shall become yours at the price of his blood, so that he Neptune, shall seek him out and a cloak and a headdress and bracelets, fifteen denarii, the cap. Then the thief holds onto the wreath at the cost of his blood in accordance with the transaction on the above written sheet.'

Dodford, near Daventry; found by a metal detectorist c. 2005.

D0D001. An 89 x 72mm sheet of lead inscribed on one side in ORC. Many letters can be identified, but no words can be recognized. The personal name Marina can be read in line 7, and it is possible that others can be read in line 8 and 9. The text is not Latin, but possibly transliterated Celtic. Bibl.: *Britannia* xl (2009), 347, No. 64.

Reconstructed text

]mneui *traces* cl...nicm
.pluminono.telo[..]at
]su[.]s..silomo..
cui..rliomi.q
oploulnsllm...na
pocciapuoiico[..]tcs
marinan *traces* rt.
masus .msaso

si s[...]isnsus
[...]ns

East Farleigh, Maidstone, Kent; found in a late fourth century demolition layer in 2009.

EF001. A c. 100 x 68mm lead sheet inscribed in two columns of capitals. The tablet is badly damaged and corroded and was rolled after inscription. Some lines are inverted with a reversed sequence of letters. The tablet is now broken into two fragments after unrolling. The inscription consists of a list of personal names. Bibl.: *Britannia* xliii (2012), 402-3, No. 12; xlvii (2016), 414.

Restored Text

(i)

]AN[or]NV
ATINED[
SACRATV[
].[.]RICV[
]ALILE[
]OTIS
]ECTUS

(ii)

CVNDAC[.]V.
CVNOARITVS
MAVIR[.]VS
ONERATVS
MEMORINVS
CONSTITV[
CONSTANTIVS

Eccles Villa, Aylesford, Kent; found during excavations in 1970 in rubble filling of room 121.

EV001. An 89 x 71mm lead sheet inscribed in NRC. The tablet was inscribed on both sides before folding several times. Folding has damaged the text. Alternate lines were inverted. Bibl.: *Britannia* xvii (1986), 428-431, No. 2.

Reconstructed Text

(a)

s(…) s(upra)s(crip)ti

(b)
donatio diebus quo
perit Butu resque
qu(a)e…nec ante sa-
netate nec salute
nesi qua(m) in do[m]o die
… sanetate in do-
[mo die?]…
…

Translation

'A gift to the gods(?) by which Butu has perished, and the property which… neither health nor safety before unles in the house of God… health in the house of God (written twice?)…'

(a)

(b)

445

Farley Heath, Roman Temple, Surrey; found near the southern edge of the temenos in an area damaged by metal detectorists in 1995.

FH001. A c. 125 x 17mm strip of lead inscribed on both sides in cursive. The tablet was folded twice after inscription, resulting in damage to the text. The tablet remains folded, but parts of the outer face and inner face can be read. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxxv (2004), 335, No. 2. [Drawing by Surrey County Archaeological Unit]

Reconstructed Text

(a) inner face

deo DAVIIS… Seni<s>lis│Senni…│...

(b) outer face

(denariis) III milibus… [Aur]elius Se[…]│[…]us …│…

Hamble Estuary, Hampshire; found on the foreshore with a metal-detector in 1982.

HE001. An 84 x 128mm sheet of lead inscribed in fourth-century NRC. Corrosion has damaged both right corners of the tablet, but the text is well preserved. The tablet was rolled after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxiix (1997), 455-7, No. 1.

Reconstructed text

domine Neptune,
t(i)b(i) d(o)no (h)ominem qui

446

(solidum) involav[it] Mu-
coni et argeni[olo]s
sex. ide(o) dono nomi(n)a
qui decepit, si mascel si
femina, si puuer si puue-
lla. ideo dono tibi, Niske,
et Neptuno vitam, vali-
tudinem, sanguem eiuus
qui conscius fueris eius
deceptionis, animus
qui hoc involavit et
qui conscius fuerit ut
eum decipias. furem
qui hoc involavit sanguem
eiius consumas et de-

Translation

'Lord Neptune, I give to you the man who has stolen the solidus and six argentioli of Muconius. So I give you the names who took them away, whether male or female, whether boy or girl. So I give you, Niskus, and to Neptune the life, health, blood of him who has been privy to that taking-away. The mind which stole this and which has been privy to it, may you take it away. The thief who stole this, may you consume his blood and take it away, Lord Neptune.'

Hockwold-cum-Wilton, Weeting with Broomhill, Norfolk; found by a metal-detectorist at Hockwold-cum-Wilton in the early 1970's.

HCW001. A c. 60 x 55mm sheet of lead inscribed with capitals. The text was inscribed on both sides of the tablet in mirror-image letters, but with the sequence of letters maintained. The tablet was not folded after inscription. *Britannia* xxv (1994), 296, No. 2.

Reconstructed Text

(a)

s(i) servus si [l]ib[e](r) [qu-]
i [f]uravit su[st]uli-
t [ne ei] dimitte
[male]fic(i)um d(u)m
tu vindi[c]a[s]

(b)

ante dies
nov[e](m) si pa-
[g]a[n]us si
mil[e]s [qui]
su[s]tu[l]it

Translation

'(Whoever) has stolen (it), taken (it), whether slave or free, do not forgive him his evil-doing until you punish him within nine days, whether civilian or soldier, (whoever) has taken (it).'

(a)   (b)

Kelvedon, Essex; found in the third- and fourth-century strata of an oven in the Roman settlement in 1956.

KEL001. A 4 ½ x 1 ⁹/₁₀ inch (c. 114 x 48mm) lead sheet inscribed in cursive. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl: J*RS* xlviii (1958), 150.

Text

Quicumque res Vareni in-
volaverit si mulrer si mascel
sangu(i)no suo solvat –erit
      et pecunie quam exesu- [or exsolverit]
Mercurio dona et Virtuti s(acra)

Translation

'Whoever has stolen the property of Varenus, whether woman or man, in his own blood and from the money which he has consumed let him pay gifts to Mercury and sacred offerings to Virtue.' (*JRS* translation)

'Whoever stole the property of Varenus, whether man or woman, let him pay for it with his own blood. From the money that he (the thief) will pay back, half is given to Mercurius and Virtus.' (Versnel 1991: 84 after Egger 1964: 16-17)

Leicester, found in a large courtyard-house in north-east Roman city during excavations in 2005.

LEIC001. A 78/75 x 201mm lead sheet inscribed in ORC. There is some damage due to corrosion, but the text is well preserved. The tablet was inscribed on one side and not

folded. Bibl.: *Zeitshrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 167 (2008), 207-218; *Britannia* xl (2009), 327-8, No. 21.

<u>Reconstructed Text</u>

d<a>eo Maglo (do) e<u>m qui frudem
fecit de padoio (do) el<a>eum qui
furtum (fecit) de padaoium <sa(g)um>
qui sa(g)um Servandi involavit
S[il]vester Ri(g)omandis
S[e]nilis Venustinus
Vorvena
Calaminus
Felicianus
Ruf<a>edo
Vendicina
Ingenuinus
Iuventius
Alocus
Cennosus
Germanus
Senedo
Cunovendus
Regalis
Ni(g)ella
S[enic]ianus (*deleted*)
(do) ant<a>e nonum diem
illum tollat
qui sa(g)um involavit
Servandi

<u>Translation</u>

'I give to the god Maglus him who did wrong from the slave quarters; I give him who (did) theft <the cloak> from the slave-quarters; who stole the cloak of Servandus. Silvester, Ri(g)omandus, Senilis, Venustinus, Vorvena, Calaminus, Felicianus, Ruf<a>edo, Vendicina, Ingenuinus, Iuventius, Alocus, Cennosus, Germanus, Senedo, Cunovendus, Regalis, Ni(g)ella, Senicianus (deleted). I give (that the god Maglus) before the ninth day take away him who stole the cloak of Servandus.'

LEIC002. An oblong 123 x 69mm sheet of lead inscribed in ORC. The tablet was inscribed on one side and was not folded after inscription. Though found in the same location as 129, the two tablets were inscribed by different hands. Bibl.: *Zeitshrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 167 (2008), 207-218; *Britannia* xl (2009), 329, No. 22.

Reconstructed Text

qui[i a]rgentios Sabiniani fura
verunt, id est Similis Cupitus Lochita
hos deus siderabit in hoc septiso-

nio et peto ut vitam suam per
dant ante dies septem

Translation

'Those who have stolen the silver coins of Sabinianus, that is Similis, Cupitus, Lochita, a god will strike down in this septisonium, and I ask that they lose their life before seven days.'

Lidgate, Suffolk; found by a metal-detectorist outside the scheduled Roman villa in 2017.

LID001. A 90 x 23mm oblong strip of lead inscribed in capitals. The first two-thirds of line 2 are inverted or reversed, but the text is largely written from L. to R. The tablet was folded twice after inscription, resulting in damage at the folds. Bibl.: *Britannia* xlix (2018), 450, No. 49.

Transcript

NULI QUI PERIERUNT | IS MULI[.]R IS BARO SI INGEN|US SI [.]SERUS[2-3]

Restored Text

[a]nuli qui perierunt | (si) muli[e]r (si) baro si ingen|u(u)s si [s]er(v)us…

'The rings which have been lost, whether woman or man, whether free or slave.'

City of London, Guildhall Yard Roman amphitheater; found during excavation by MoLAS in 1992.

LON001. A c. 85 x c. 105mm sheet of lead found in the fill of a drain (AD 160-250) in the arena. The tablet is inscribed on one side in capitals and not was not folded. Corrosion and crumpling have caused damage., but the inscription can largely be read. Bibl.: *Britannia* xliv (2003), 362, No. 2.

Restored text

[d]eae Dea[na]e dono | capitularem et fas|[c]iam minus parte | tertia si quis hoc feci[t] | [s]i p[u]er si [p]uella s[i] | [s]er[vus] s[i liber] | don[o eum] nec p[er] | me [vi]v[ere] possit

'I give to the goddess Deana (my) headgear and band less one-third. If anyone has done this, I give him whether boy or girl, whether slave or free, and through me let him be unable to live.'

LON002. A 66 x 42mm sheet of lead with a folded edge found in the fill of a drain that had gone out of use c. AD 250-364.The tablet was inscribed on both sides in irregular cursive letters. The inscription cannot be clearly read or interpreted. The tablet was pierced four times after inscription, presumably for attachment. Bibl.: *Britannia* xliv (2003), 363, No. 3.

Text

(a)

VIN MO | MVBOCIMIVI

(b)

SVNXIIA. | AROTAI

LON003. A c. 88 x c. 62mm sheet of lead was found in residual material over the abandoned arena. The tablet was inscribed in capitals on both sides and folded after inscription. It remains folded and is heavily corroded, making the text illegible. Bibl.: *Britannia* xliv (2003), 364, No. 4.

City of London, 1 Poultry; found during excavations by MoLAS in 1994.

LON004. A c. 70 x 50mm sheet of lead inscribed in cursive (possibly dating from the mid to late second century. The tablet was folded horizontally and then vertically after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xliv (2003), 361, No. 1.

Restored Text

Plautius Nobilia|nus a[.]riil satur|ninus domitia atti|ola iit si qui a fuere

'Plautius Nobilianus, Aurelius Saturninus, Domitia Attiola, and any who were absent.'

London; found below Telegraph Street, Moorgate, in 1934.

LON005. A 178 x 121mm sheet of repurposed lead. Nail holes present before inscriptions suggest that the lead was initially attached to a beam. The text was inscribed in cursive and pierced an additional seven times from the uninscribed side. Rather than a judicial prayer, this is a 'standard' *defixio*. Bibl.: *JRS* xxv (1935), 225, fig. 24; *RIB* 7.

Restored Text

Tretia(m) Maria(m) defico et
illeus vita(m) et me(n)tem
et memoriam [e]t iocine-
ra pulmones interm<x>ix<i>-
ta fata cogitata memor-
iam sci no(n) possitt loqui
(quae) sicreta si(n)t neque SIṆITA
MEṚE possit neque .
[…] C̣Ḷ ṾDO

Translation

'I curse Tretia Maria and her life and mind and memory and liver and lungs mixed up together, and her words, thoughts, and memory; thus may she be unable to speak what things are concealed, nor be able … nor …'

London; found on the site of the National Provincial Bank, Princes Street, in 1928.

LON006. A 121 x 76mm lead plate of hammered lead inscribed on both sides in cursive. The tablet was pierced through the middle from one side and not folded. This text is a 'standard' *defixio* rather than a judicial prayer. Bibl.: *JRS* xviii (1928), 213; *RIB* 6.

Text

(a)

T(itus) Egnatius
Tyran(n)us defic(t)us
est et
P(ublius) Cicereius Felix
defictus e(s)t

(b)

T(itus) Egnatius
Tyran(n)us defictus
est et
P(ublius) Cicereius Felix

'Titus Egnatius Tyran(n)us is cursed and Publius Cicereius Felix is cursed. (b)
Titus Egnatius Tyran(n)us is cursed and Publius Cicereius Felix is cursed.'

(a)

(b)

London Bridge; found on the north foreshore of the Thames in 1984.

LON007. A 69 x 95mm piece of sheet lead inscribed in capital letters. The letters on (b) are written in mirror image as well as S on (a). (b) is written from R. to L. with the sequence of letters reversed in each line. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxiix (1987), 360-2, No. 1.

Transcript

(a)

tibirogometu
nusumuendic
aseistenu
menemeuen
dicasanteqo
duendieno vacat
m(*inverted*)etunusutu
m(*unfinished*)iuend[.]cas
anteqo
uendindue
m vacat

(b)

itnarapux
eliuataseleiulis
ociulissutarapusx
sulemsutiuael
    sutados
(Left)
ib(*over* e)iticurep
(Bottom)
sunitnas
(Right)
s(*over* i)ausutnas
suisarausun
    sutad

Reconstructed Text

(a)

tibi rogo Metu-
nus u(t) m(e) vendic-
as de iste nu-
mene me ven-
dicas ande q(u)o
d ven(iant) die(s) no-
vem rogo te
Metunus ut (t)u
mi vend[i]cas
ante q(u)o[d]
ven(iant) di(es) n[o]ve-

459

m

(b)

xuparanti
silvielesatavile
xsuparatus Silvico-
le Avitus Melus-
o datus

perucitibi

Santinus

Mag[2-3]etus
Apidimis Antoni
Santus Vasia-
nus Varasius
datus

Translation

'(a) I ask you, Metunus, that you avenge me on this name (?), (that) you avenge me before nine days come. I ask you, Metunus, that you avenge me before nine days come. (b) List of names.'

(a)

(b)

Lydney Park, Gloucestershire; found 'in or before 1817.'

LP001. A 64 x 79mm lead tablet inscribed in capitals. The tablet bears two inscriptions, both on the same side. The tablet was not folded after inscription. *RIB* 306.

Text

(a)

Devo
Nodenti Silvianus
anilum perdedit
demediam partem
donavit Nodenti
inter quibus nomen
Seniciani nollis
petmittas sanita-
tem donec perfera(t)
usque templum [No-]
dentis

(b)

Rediviva

'To the god Nodens: Silvianus has lost his ring and given half (its value) to Nodens. Among those who are called Senicianus do not allow health until he brings it to the temple of Nodens. (b) (This curse) comes into force again.'

Marlborough Downs, Wiltshire; found by a metal-detectorist near Roman pottery and coins in topsoil in 1998.

MD001. A 72 x 49mm oblong lead sheet inscribed in cursive. The tablet was folded twice after inscription, resulting in two-thirds of the text being protected from wear. The inscription is damaged due to folding and corrosion, with much of the loss on the R. side. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxx (1999), 378, No. 3.

Transcript

vacat do (*over* a) *vacat*
deo Marti A[.]VNISEA id [est? ...]
3-4 eculium eum et secur[...]
tidisse e. . . illum iume .[...]
rogat genium tuum dom[ine]
ut quampr[imu]m res[ideant?]
nec eant per annos novem n[on eis]
permittas nec sedere [nec...]
. . . MIMBRIC[...]

'I give (?). To the god Mars... asks your Genius, Lord, that they [stop] as soon as possible and do not go for nine years. Do not allow [them] to sit [or to...] ...'

Old Harlow, New Town, Essex; found in a pit containing third- and fourth-century pottery during excavations for Harlow Museum and the Department of the Environment in 1970.

OH001. A 54 x 72mm sheet of lead inscribed in capitals. The tablet was folded five times after inscription and pierced with a nail.Bibl.: *Britannia* iv (1973), 325, No. 3.

Text

(a)

Dio M(ercurio) dono ti(bi)
negotium Et-
<t>ern(a)e et ipsam
nec sit i(n)vidi(a) me(i)
Timotneo san-
gui[n]e suo.

(b)

Dono tibi
Mercurius

463

aliam neg[o-
tium NAVIN
…………
NII[…….
MIN[…]SANG[.
SVO.

<u>Translation</u>

'To the God Mercury, I entrust to you my affair with Eterna and her own self, and may Timotneus feel no jealousy of me at the risk of his life-blood. (b) I entrust to you, O Mercury, another transaction…'

Pagan's Hill, Chew Stoke, Summerset; found by a metal-detectorist in 1983. No further details known.

PH001. A 95 x 101mm sheet of lead inscribed in cursive. Much of the inscription is lost to folding, and corrosion. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 336, No. 7.

<u>Transcription</u>

[*c.* 17]ri[c.8]
. . [*c.* 14]mitr[1-2]pio[*c.* 5]

in *is iii milibus cuius [de]mediam
partem tibi ut ita illum [e]xigas a Vassicil-
lo [.]pecomini filio et uxore sua quoniam
[. .]rtussum quod illi de hospitiolo m[eo]
[pec(?)]ulaverint nec illis [p]ermittas sanit[a-]
[tem] nec bibere nec ma[n]d[u]care nec dormi[re]
[nec nat]os sanos habe[a]nt nessi hanc rem
[meam] ad fanum tuum [at]tulerint. iteratis
[pre]c[i]bus te rogo ut [ab ip]sis nominibus
[inimicorum] meorum hoc [pertu]ssum recipi
[. . . ?] perven[ia]t

Translation

'... in 3 thousand denarii, of which (I give) you half part on condition that you exact it from Vassicillus the son of [. . .]cominus and from his wife, since the coin(?) which they have stolen(?) from the house of Lon[. . .](the syntax breaks down) and you are not to permit them health nor to drink nor to eat or sleep [nor] to have healthy children unless they bring this [my] property to your temple. With repeated [prayers] I ask you that this coin(?) may come to be recovered [from the very] names of my [enemies].'

PH002. Three conjoining fragments of lead sheet measuring c. 75 x 45mm together. The tablet was inscribed in 14 lines of capitals before folding three times. Surface corrosion and folding damage leave only part of the text legible. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 336, No. 8.

Transcription

[. . .]
gno. .quem
 . . tuadrodit
[. . .]
[. . .]
[. . .]
 t[. . .]
 q[. . .]
[. . .]
octies novem e
 sit omni gen
borum fatigatu
 e exorit . s[. . .]
[. . .]

Translation

'... eight times nine… let him be wearied with every sort of hardships.'

PH003. Two conjoining fragments of lead sheet measuring 15 x 22mm together. The text was inscribed in capitals, but damage due to folding and the fragmentary nature of the inscription make reading incomplete. Bibl.: *Britannia* xv (1984), 336, No. 9.

Transcription

[. . .]cond . tin . [. . .]
[. . .]umqu[e] quomin[us . . .]
[. . .]frau[d]e sua ul[la. . .]
[. . .]us donav[. . .]
[. . .]eus [. . .]

Puckeridge-Braughing, Hertfordshire; found unstratified during excavations for Braughing Excavation Committee in 1972.

PB147. A 147 x 55mm sheet of lead. The tablet is inscribed on one side in cursive, but no continuous text can be recognized. Each side bears some sort of drawing or symbol of unknown significance. After inscription, the tablet was pierced twice, folded five times, and then pierced an additional three times. Bibl.: *Britannia* xvii (1986), 436, No. 8.

Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Red Hill, Nottinghamshire; found after ploughing Red Hill in 1960.

ROS001. An 84 x 57mm lead tablet inscribed in cursive. The text is inscribed from R. to L. on both sides of the tablet, though this is not transcribed. The tablet was folded after inscription. Though there is some damage due to folding and corrosion, the text is well preserved. Bibl.: *JRS* liii (1963) 122-4.

Text

(a)

donatur deo Ioui
optimo maximo ut
exigat per mentem per
memoriam per intus
per intestinum per cor
[p]er medullas per uenas
per[.][…….]. .as[
[. .]l[.]l. . si mascel si
femina qui<sq>uis

(b)

inuolauit *rios Cani
Digni ut in corpore
suo in breui temp[or]e
pariat. Donator
deo ssto decima pars
eius pecuniae quam
[so]luerit

Translation

'To the god Jupiter best and greatest there is given that he may hound… through his mind, through his memory, through his inner parts (?), his intestines, his heart, his marrow, his veins… whoever it was, whether man or woman who stole away the denarii of Canius (?) Dignus that is his own person in a short time he may balance the account. Ther is given to the gode above named a tenth part of the money when he has (repaid it?).'

(a)

(b)

Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Red Hill, Nottinghamshire; found on the site of the Roman temple in 1963.

ROS002. An 82 x 32mm oval tablet inscribed in capital letters, probably from the fourth century. The final line is squeezed into the available space. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxxv (2004), 336-7, No. 3.

Reconstructed Text

annoto de duas
ocrias ascia(m) scal-
pru(m) ma(n)ica(m) si m(ulier) au[t] si
b(aro) IRANTINE duas
partis deo AC CEVM

Translation

'I make a note of two gaiters, an axe, a knife, a pair of gloves, whether woman or if man ... two parts to the god...'

Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Nottinghamshire; found during fieldwalking in 1990.

ROS003. A 112 x 56mm lead sheet inscribed in capitals. The text is written from R. to L. with mirror-image letters, resulting in some cramping of letters. The sequence of letters in not reversed. The inscription is well preserved despite damage to the tablet from folding. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxiv (1993), 310, No. 2.

Reconstructed Text

nomine Camulorigi(s) et Titocun(a)e molam quam perdederunt
in fanum dei devovi cuicumque n(o)m[e[n inuolasit

mola(m) illam ut sa(n)guin(em) suum mittat usque diem quo
moriatur. q[ui]cumque [illam]inuolasit (f)urta moriatur,
et PAULATORIAM quicumque [illam] inuolasit
et ipse <moratio> mo[ri]atur. quicumqu(e) illam
inuolasit et VERTOGN de (h)ospitio vel vissacio,
quicumque illam inuolasit, a de<v>o mori(a)tur.

Translation

'In the name of Camulorix and Totocuna I have dedicated in the temple of the god the mule(?) which they have lost. Whoever stole that mule(?), whatever his name, may he let his blood until the day he die. Whoever stole the objects of theft, may he die; and the ( ), whoever stole it, may he die also. Whoever stole it and the ( ) from the house or the pair of bags(?), whoever stole it, may he die by the god.'

Rothwell, Lincolnshire; found during a metal-detector survey as part of the Lincolnshire Wolds project in 2011.

ROT001. An 84 x 45mm oblong sheet of lead inscribed in fourth-century NRC. The inscription consists of personal names with some isolated Latin words. A transcription and line drawing are not available. The tablet was folded three times after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xliii (2012), 403, No. 13.

Thetford, Norfolk; found in association with a collection of spoons and jewellery (the so-called Thetford Hoard) discovered during the building of a factory in 1979.

THET001 A 53 x 46mm irregular sheet of lead bearing three inscriptions in capitals. Inscription (a) is in the top L. corner, (b) is in the top R. corner, and (c) is at the bottom. Most of the inscribed text is of unknown significance, but (b) is a personal name, Peminius Novalis, in retrograde. The item is perhaps a curse tablet. Bibl.: *Britannia* xiii (1982), 410, No. 10.

    (a) OVA
    (b) SVINIMEP | SIVALON
    (b) …]MEPTSESV[…

Silchester; found before 1901 in unknown circumstances.

SIL001. A 60 x 100mm sheet of lead inscribed in on one side in NRC. The text was inscribed in reverse sequence from L. to R. After inscription, the tablet was attached to something with two pins hiding the inscribed side. The tablet was subsequently removed and folded twice upon itself. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxx (2009), 323, No. 16.

Reconstructed Text:

Nimincillus (Quintinus) | Iu[n]ctinus D(o)cillinae | Lon(g)inus VSCANIMIHS | .NIS.IC….. eu(m) qui invalaveri|t deus det ma|la(m) plagam

Translation

'Nimincillus, Quintinus, Iunctinus (son) of Docillina, Longinus, [name], [name]. Him who has stolen, let the god give a nasty blow.'

Uley, West Hill, Gloucestershire; found at the site of the Roman temple of Mercury during excavations in 1978.

UL001. A 125 x 95mm lead sheet. The outer surface (a) is inscribed entirely in capitals while the inner surface (b) is inscribed in one line of capitals and ten lines of ORC. The tablet was folded four times after inscription, resulting in damage. Bibl.: *Britannia* xlviii (2017), 462-3, No. 10.

Reconstructed Text

(a)

[d]evo Mar|ti ?v(otum) s(olvit) Propitio

(b)

devo Marti […]lirus | qu{a}eritur, si ser(v)us si liber | qui cas apium invalavit(!) ?[v]ere | si COMODIA erat, ne illi permittatur | nec bib[er]e nec mandu(ca)re nec | <nec> somnum nec sanitate(m), nesi(!) ipsum | vas ad locum suum reversetur | et

c(o)ngortiam(!) Mercuri agat | SEPET deum u.. illi qui […] | feci(t) ut illi s(i) me pariat | qui…

Translation

'[…] complains to the god Mars: whether slave or free, (he) who has stolen (my) beehive… if it was… let him not be permitted to drink or eat, nor (to have) sleep or health, unless the said hive be returned to its proper place and (he) gain the goodwill of Mercury… the god… to him who did (this), that to him if he furnishes me…'

(a: outer face)

(b: inner face)

UL002. A 53 x 88mm irregular oval sheet of lead inscribed in ORC. The beginning and end of most lines have been lost due to damage to the edges of the tablet. The tablet was folded four times after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xlvii (2016), 396-7, No. 11.

Reconstructed Text

Genitus | Mercurio | [g]enio qui mihi | [?fru]dem fecerit an|ulum involaverit | sa[?nct(um)] genium si [...] |a[n]cilla si liber [...] | [mu]lieris si puer si [pue]lla | [...] permittt(...) eum | [...] ..ernat pudorem | [...]iat pede [...] | [...]mblatt(!) [...] | nec manducat nec | sedit nec magiat n[i]si ad templum |tuum repraese|ntaverit op|tibeius

Translation

'Genitus to Mercury the genius. (He) who has done me ?wrong, has stolen (my) ?ring... holy genius that whether [?free woman] or slave-girl, whether free man [...] of a woman, whether boy or girl [...] you do not permit him... shame... with his foot... nor to eat nor to sit (?at stool) nor to ?urinate, unless he pay [...] at your temple.'

UL003. A 72 x 42mm sheet of lead inscribed in third-century ORC on both sides. The majority of the text is on (a), with only one line on (b). The tablet was folded five times after inscription. Bibl: *Britannia* xxvii (1996), 440-1, No. 1.

<u>Reconstructed Text</u>

(a)

carta qu(a)e Mercurio dona-
tur ut manecilis qui per[i]erunt
ultionem requirat; qui illos
invalavi<i>t ut illi sangu(in)em [e]t sanita-
tem tolla[t]; qui ipsos manicili[o]s tulit
[u]t quantoci<ci>us illi pareat quod
deum Mercurium r[o]gamus [..]..ura

(b)

q[.]os.nc.u[2-3]lat

<u>Translation</u>

'The sheet (of lead) which is given to Mercury, that he exact vengeance for the gloves which have been lost; that he take blood and health from the person who has stolen them; that he provide what we ask the god Mercury [...] as quickly as possible for the person who has taken these gloves.'

(a)

(b)

UL004. Three conjoining fragments of lead measuring c. 91 x 39mm together and inscribed in capitals. The fragments form the last four lines of a larger tablet of unknown size. The text damaged due to folding and corrosion, making all edges except the bottom uncertain and preventing continuous reading. The tablet was folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xix (1998), 434, No. 1.

Transcription

[...?]
[c. 12]I ORID[.]SONAE[...]
..ESVNTVS[. .]CTISVNTINTER[...]
[.]LLVS[..]EVSRE[.]VMINVENETET[...]
LAMI[.]LAVNA[.]ETANVLLIQUIVATOR[...]

Reconstructed Text

[c. 12]IORID[.]SONAE[...]
   (interlineated) LTELL[...]
[.]LLVS[..]EVSRE[.]VMINVENETET[...]
lami[l]la una et anulli quator [...]

Partial Translation

'... one piece of (silver) plate and four rings…'

UL005. A 47 x 38mm sheet of lead inscribed in fourth-century NRC. The tablet was folded after inscription, causing some damage to the text. Bibl.: *Britannia* xlvi (2015), 398, No. 21.

Reconstruced text

(a)

deo sancto Mercurio
Carin[   ]ec-
ro de furto{uo} quod
mihi factum est Pri-
manus nec [e]i per-
mitt[   ]s Mercurius
{-us} nec traces

(b)

nec mas *traces*
traces
nec solem nec lu[nam]
nec coniuu.. infantis
traces neum
san(g)uine suo conpliat
vendica[tionem?]

Translation

'To the holy god Mercury. I, ?Carinus, ?implore you concerning the theft which has been done to me (by) Primanus. And Mercury is neither to permit him... nor... neither sun nor moon, neither... of an infant... fulfil vengeance with his blood.'

(a)

479

(b)

UL006. An oblong 66 x 124mm sheet of lead inscribed in capitals. Two instruments were used in inscription, but the hand is constant. The tablet was rolled several times after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xix (1988), 485-6, No. 2; *Uley* 4.

Reconstructed Text

Biccus dat M-
ercurio quidquid
pe(r)d(id)it si vir si m-
ascel ne meiat (transposed)
ne cacet ne loqua-
tur ne dormiat
n[e] vigilet nec s[a]-
nitatem ne-
ss[i] in templo
Mercurii per-
tulerit ne co(n)-
scientiam de
perferat ness[i]
me interceden-
te

'Biccus gives Mercury whatever he has lost (that the thief), whether man or male (sic.), may not urinate nor defecate nor speak nor sleep nor stay awake nor (have) well-being or health, unless he bring (it) in the temple of Mercury; nor gain consciousness (sic.) or (it) unless with my intervention.'

UL007. A 70 x 72mm rounded rectangle of hammered lead inscribed in ORC. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xx (1989), 327-8, No. 2; *Uley* 5.

Restored Text

nomen furis
[qu]I frenem involaverit
si l[i]ber si servus si baro
si mulier deo dona-
tor duas partes
AFIMA sua ter-
tia ad sanitatem

Translation

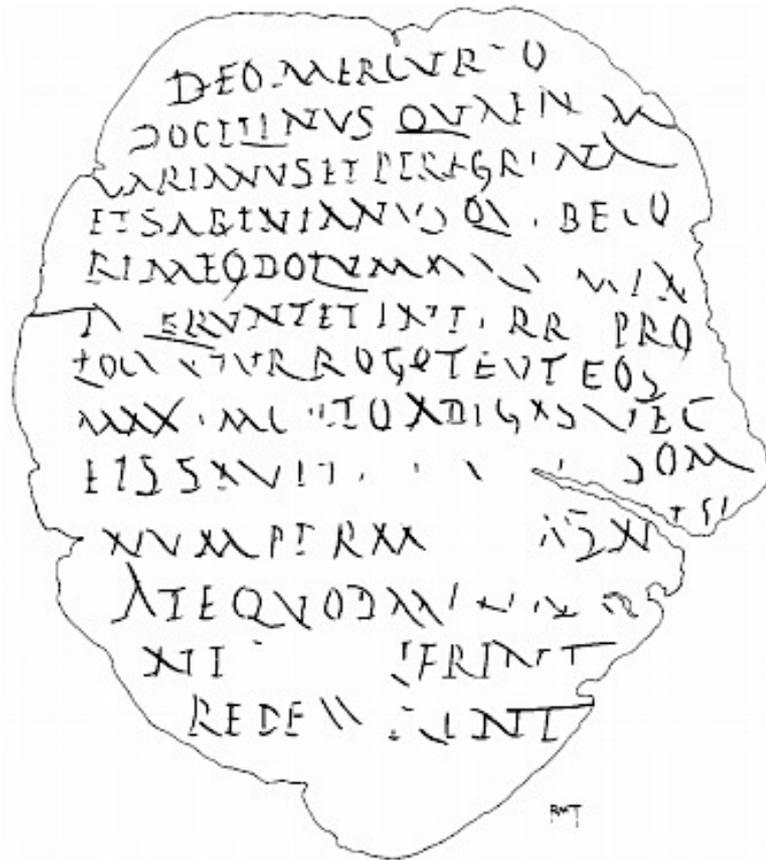*'The name of the thief who has stolen (my) bridle, whether free or slave, whether man or woman, is given to the god (…)two parts from his wife(?), a third to (his) health.'*

UL008. An 84 x 98mm irregular oval sheet of lead inscribed in capitals. The tablet was folded once after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xx (1989), 329-30, No. 3.

Reconstructed Text

deo Mercurio
Docilinus QVAENM
Varianus et Peregrina
et Sabinianus qu[i] peco-
ri meo dolum malum in-
tulerunt et INT.RR[.] pro-
locuntur rogo te ut eos
max[i]mo [le]to adigas nec
eis sanit[atem nec] som-
num perm[itt]as nisi
a te quod m[ihi] ad[mi-]
ni[strav]erint
redem[e]rint

Translation

'To the god Mercury (from) Docilinus... Varianus and Peregrina and Sabinianus who have brought evil harm on my beast and are... I ask you that you drive them to the greatest death, and do not allow them health or sleep unless they redeem from you what they have administered to me.'

UL009. An 85 x 135mm sheet of lead inscribed in cursive on both sides. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* x (1979), 341-2, No. 2; *Uley* 1.

Text

(a)

Deo Mercurio
Cenacus queritur
de Vitalino et Nata-
lino filio ipsius d[e
iumento quod erap-
tum est. Erogat
deum Mercurium
ut nec ante sa-
nitatem

(b)

habeant nis<s>i
nis<s>i* repraese[n-
taverunt mihi iu-

mentum quod r[a-
puerunt et deo
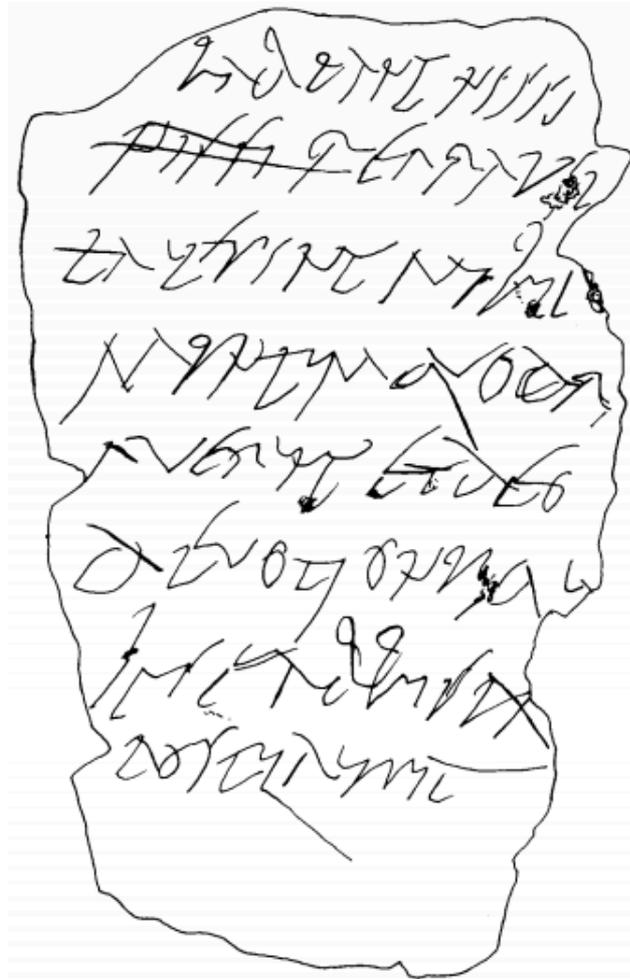devotionem qua[m
ipse ab his ex-
postulaverit.

*deleted

Translation

'Cenacus complains to the god Mercury about Vitalinus and Natalinus his son concerning the draught animal that was stolen. He begs the god Mercury that they may neither have health before/unless they repay me promptly the animal they have stolen and (repay) the god the devotion which he himself has demanded from them.'

(a)

(b)

UL010. An 83 x 60mm lead tablet inscribed in serifed capitals. The tablet is inscribed on both sides and was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 3; *Uley* 2.

(a)

Commonitorium deo
Mercurio* a Satur-
nina muliere de lintia-
mine quod amisit ut il-
le qui hoc circumvenit non
ante laxetur nis<s>i quando
res ssdictas ad fanum ssdic-
tum attulerit si vir si mu-
lier si servus s[i] liver

(b)

Deo ssdicto tertiam
partem donat ita ut
ex<s>igat istas res quae
ssta(e) sunt.
Ac a quae perit deo Silvano
tertia pars donatur ita ut
hoc ex<s>igat si vir si femina si serv-
us si liber [. . .] E[. . .]TAT

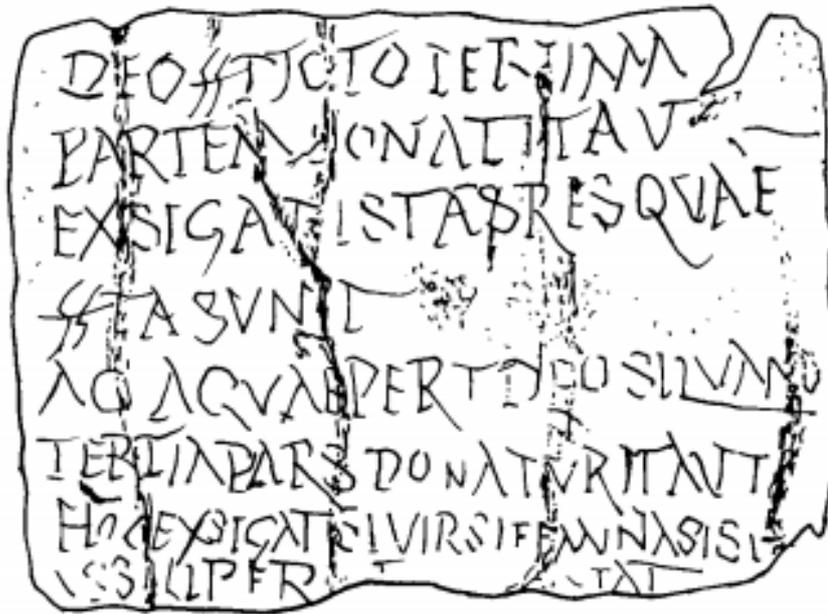* r*eplacing* Marti Silvano

Translation

 *'A memorandum to the god Mercury (erased: Mars-Silvanus) from Saturnina a
woman concerning the linen cloth she has lost. Let him who stole it not have rest
before/unless/until he brings the aforesaid things to the aforesaid temple, whether
he is man or woman, slave or free.*
 *'She gives a third part to the aforesaid god on condition that he exact those things
which have been aforewritten. A third part from what has been lost is given to the
god Silvanus o condition that he exact this, whether (the thief) is man or woman,
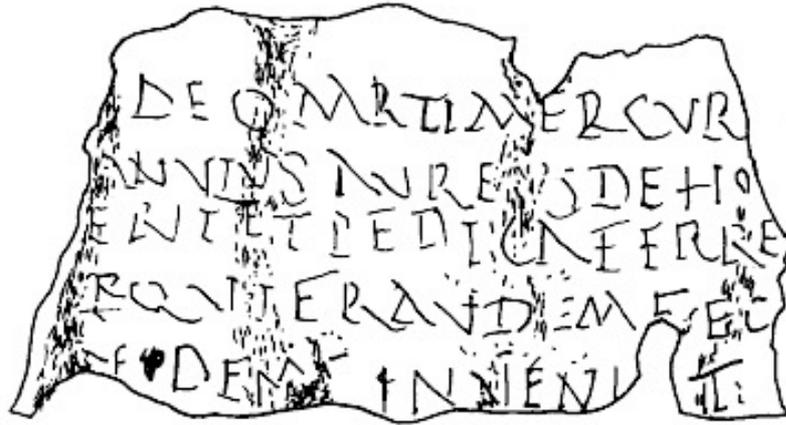slave or free...'*

(a)

(b)

UL011. An 83 x 44mm sheet of lead inscribed in capitals. The text was originally thought to be complete, but further examination from the original revealed that this is in fact the L. portion of a larger tablet. A clearer reconstruction was thus allowed. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* x (1979), 344, No. 4; xxii (1991), 307-8; *Uley* 3.

Reconstructed Text (1991)

deo M(a)rti Mercuri[o...]
anulus aureus de his[pitiolo...? inuolau-]
erit et pidica ferre[a...]
s. qui fraudem feci[t...]
r[...] deus inveni[a]t

Translation

'To the god Mars/Mercury… gold ring from… [house] … and iron fetter… who did wrong… let the god discover.'

UL012. A 76 x 131mm lead tablet inscribed in ORC. The text is complete with empty space at the bottom of the tablet. The tablet was not folded after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxiii (1992), 310-11, No. 5.
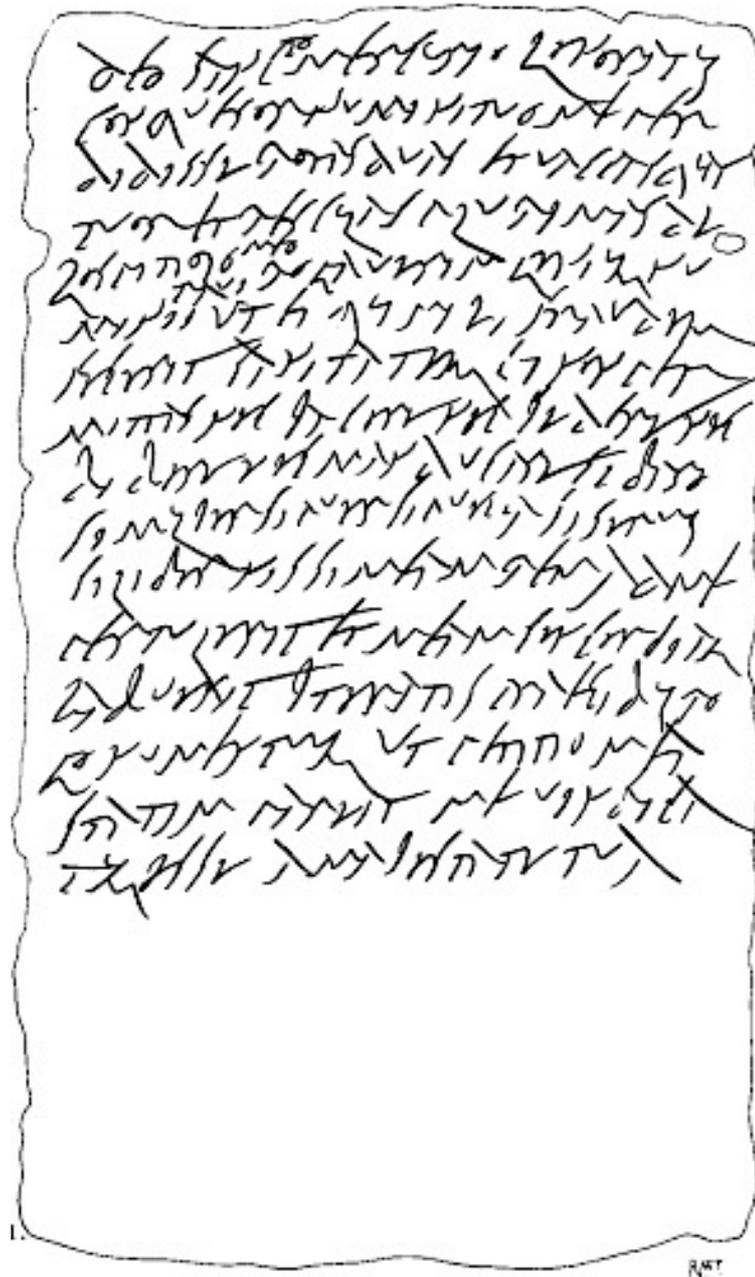
<u>Transcript</u>

deo sanc'to' Mercurio Honoratus.
conqueror numini tuo me per-
didisse rotas duas et vaccas quat-
tuor et resculas plurimas de
hospitiolo meo.
    rogaverim genium nu-
minis 'tu\<u\>i' ut ei qui mihi fraudem
fecerit sanitatem ei non per-
mittas nec iacere nec sedere nec
bibere nec manducare si baro
si mulier si puer si puella si seruus
si liver nis\<s\>i meam rem ad me
pertulerit et meam concordiam
habuerit. iteratis pr\<a\>ecibus ro-
go numen tuum ut petitio mea
statim pareat me vindica-
tum esse a maiestate tua.

<u>Translation</u>

'Honoratus to the holy god Mercury. I complain to your divinity that I have lost two wheels and four cows and many small belongings from my house. I would ask the genius of your divinity that you do not allow health to the person who has done me wrong, not allow him to lie or sit or drink or eat, whether he is a man or woman, whether boy or girl, whether slave or free, unless he brings my property to me and is reconciled with me. With renewed prayers I ask your divinity that my petition may immediately make me vindicated by your majesty.'

UL013. About three-quarters of a rectangular sheet of lead measuring 85 x 105mm and inscribed with one line of capitals. Thre is a possible nail hole above E, and he tablet is crumpled but not folded deliberately. The text consists of a single personal name, Petronius. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxiv (1993), 310, No. 1.

Text

PETRONIIVS

UL014. A 60 x 95mm sheet of lead inscribed in ORC. The tablet was folded five times after inscription. Though there is a hole, this is not from piercing. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxvi (1995), 371, No. 1.
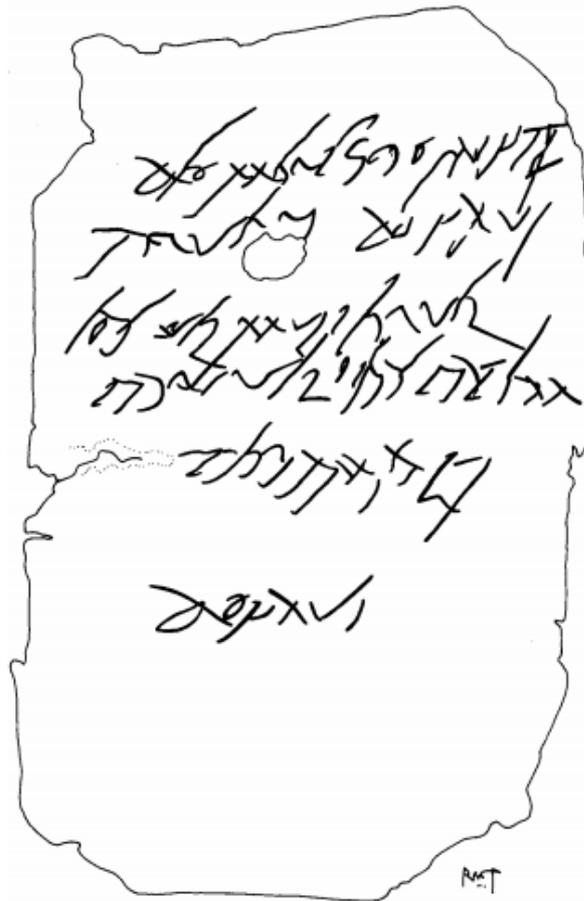
Recconstructed Text

deo Mercurio Mintl-
a Rufus. donavi
eos, vel mulier vel
PARIVSLIIFASPATEM
[ma]teriam sagi.

donavi

Translation

'Mintla Rufus to the god Mercury. I have given them, whether woman [or man], ... the material of a cloak. I have given (them).'

UL015. A 79 x 75mm trapezoidal sheet of lead inscribed in ORC. After inscription on both sides, the tablet was folded twice, resulting in damage to the text. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxvi (1995), 373, No. 2.

Reconstructed Text

(a)

[deo] sancto Mercuri[o]. [que]r[or]
tibi de illis qui mihi male
cogitant et male faciunt
supra ED[3] iumen[12-3] (?),
si servus si liber, si m[ascel]
si [fem]ina. ut non illis per-
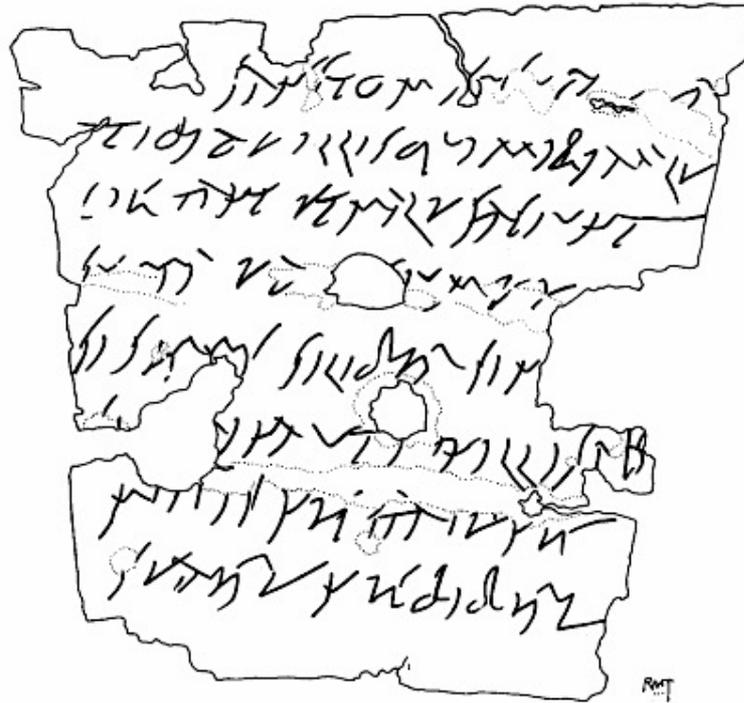mittas nec sta[r]e nec
sedere nec bibere

(b)

nec manducar[e] n[e]c h[as]
[i]r[a]s redemere possit
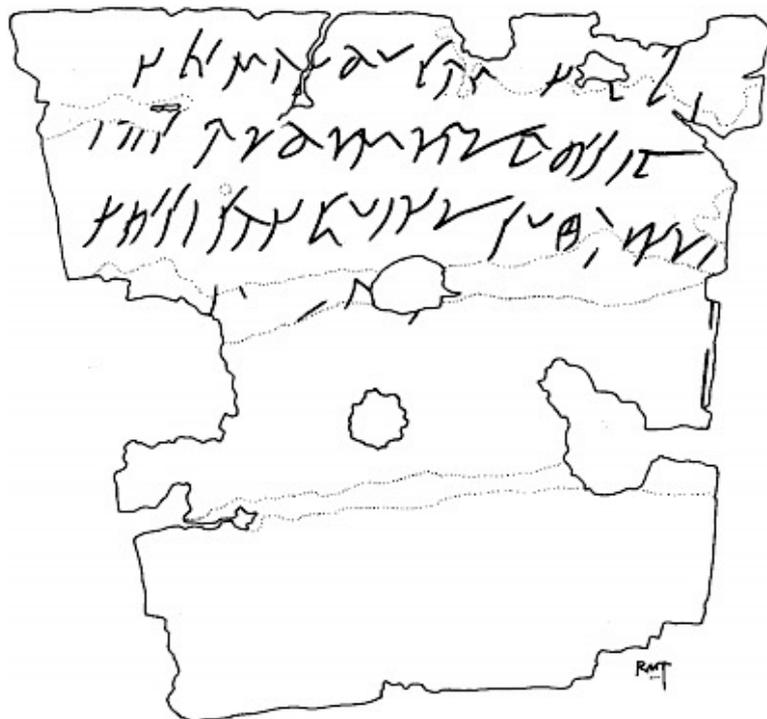
nessi sanguine suo AENE.
traces

Translation

'To the holy god Mercury. I complain to you about those who are badly disposed towards me (and) who are acting badly over (?) ..., whether slave or free, whether male or female. Do not allow them to stand or sit, to drink or eat, or to buy off these provocations(?) unless with their own blood.'

(a)

(b)

UL016. A 42 x 66mm bean-shaped sheet of lead. Seven lines of capitals were inscribed using layout lines, with an additional two lines of a fainter script that cannot be read. The surviving text consists of a list of names. The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxvi (1995), 376, No. 3.

Reconstructed Text

Aunillus
V[ica]riana
Covitius
Mini (filius) dona[t]
Varicillum
Minura
Atavactum
...
...

Translation

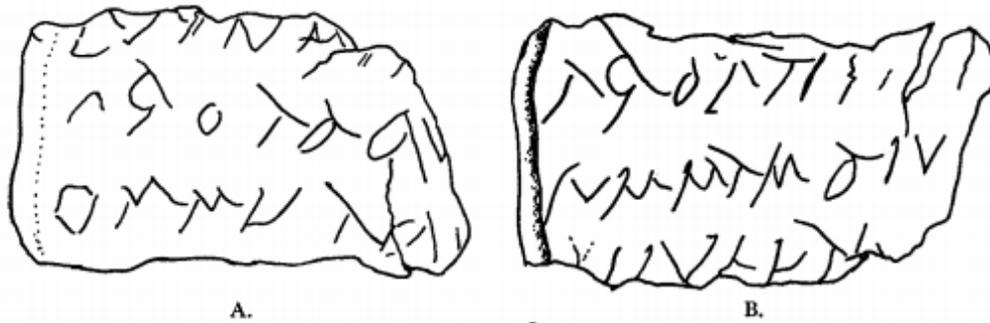'Aunillus, Vicariana, Covitius (son) of Minius gives Varicillus; Minura (gives) Atavacus...'

UL017. An irregular 70 x 76mm sheet of lead inscribed in capitals. The text consists of a list of personal names. The tablet was folded twice after inscription. Bibl.: *Uley* 33; *Britannia* xxvi (1995), 378, No. 4.

Reconstructed Text

Lucilia
Mellossi (filia)
AEXSIEVMO
Minu(v)assus
Senebel[l]-
enae (filius)

Translation

'Lucilia (daughter) of Mellosus... Minu(v)assus (son) of Senebellena

UL018. A 31 x 18mm fragment of lead tablet inscribed with cursive. Bending at the edges suggest the tablet was folded after inscription on both sides. This item was found in 1972 after ploughing what would later be recognized as the Roman temple of Mercury. Bibl.: *Britannia* iv (1973), 324, No. 2.

Restored Text

(a)

. . . .
r]ogo laqu[. . .
c]ommun[. . .

(b)

]as date///[. . .
]summam div[. . .
. . . .

Partial Translation

'...I ask... ... they give... to your great divinity...'

A.   B.

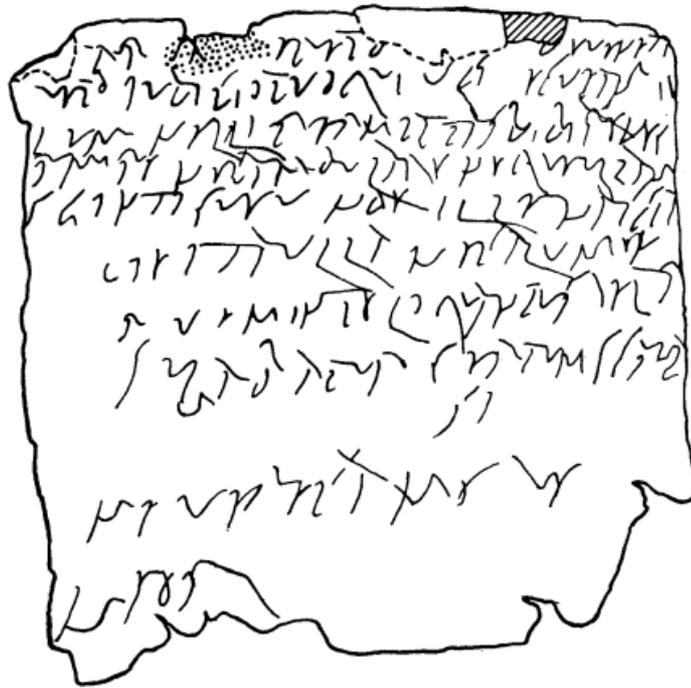**Wanborough, Wiltshire. No further details known.**

WAN001. A c. 55 x 55mm sheet of lead inscribed in cursive. What survives preserves the R. edge of the tablet, but the extent of the damage to the L. side is not clear. Bibl.: *Britannia* iii (1972), 352, No. 1; Rea 1972.

Transcript

]. epr . [. .]r . epeto .[.] . . . . . . euene
]. etoiudiciotuoqu[.] . . . . . ecula . . . .
]. umnel 'i'lipermittasbiberen . .
]rm . renecambularenecueulla .
]sgentisueundeillenasc . .
]. . . . . itaullanecalumen
]pr . uementeloquanturet. .
]. . . ugabaturcertumsciu . .
]   (*vacat*) si (*vacat*)
]. meuere . am . ? . . (*vacat*)
]. . eor (*vacat*)

Restored Text:

]. epr . [. .]r . epeto .[.] . . . . . . euene
]peto iudicio tuo qu [.]d . . . . eculans..
Do]rmire nec ambulare neque ullam
]s gentisue unde ille nascit
]. . . . eita ulla nec alumen
]pr . uemente loquantur et r .
]. . . ugabatur certum sciu . t
]   (*vacat*) si (*vacat*)
]. Meuerecame?ue (*vacat*)
]. Meor (*vacat*)
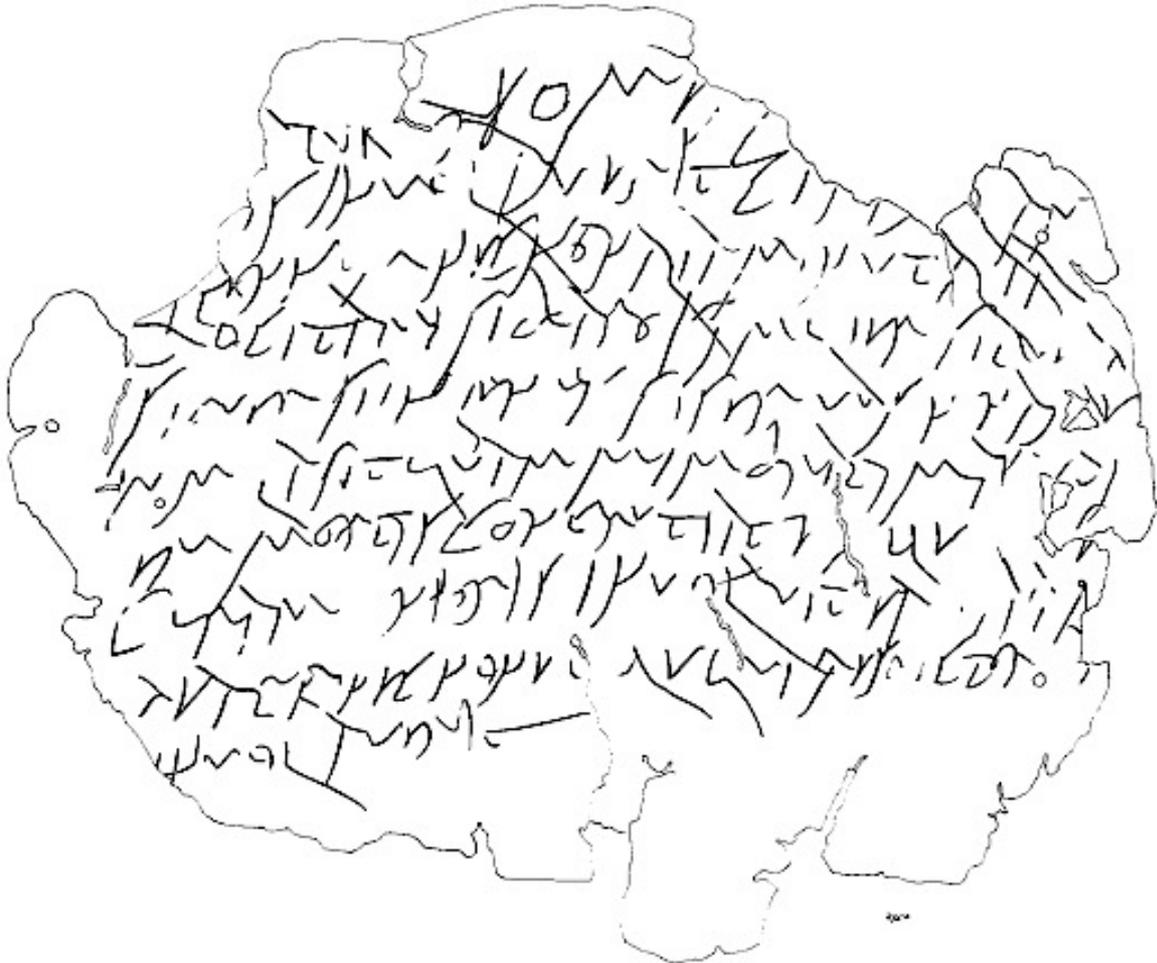
496

No provenance; 'bought in Bristol in 1985'

NP001. A 137 x 104mm sheet of hammered lead inscribed in ORC. After inscription, the tablet was pierced twice on the L. side and twice on the R. The placement of the nail holes and the lack of folding suggest the tablet was displayed. Though the text is largely complete, the reading of some formulae is not clear. Bibl.: *Britannia* xxii (1991), 293, 1.

<u>Reconstructed Text</u>

[don]atur deo Merc[urio si]
q[i]s involaveritc….lam
[.]icinnum nec non alia minutalia
Tocitami(?) si baro si mulier si puel[l]a
si puer si ingenuus si servus n[o]n an[t]e
eum laset quam mimbra (?ra)pi manu di-
em mortis concrutiat e[u]m qu<q[u]>[i] se-
curam [.]nnoris involavit EA…..
AEAPR nec non et qu<qu>I res [p]ictor[i]a[s]?
involaverit

'Given to the god Mercury, whoever has stolen... and other sundries... whether man or woman, whether girl or boy, whether free-born or slave. May (the god) not allow him rest before... limbs(?) ... by hand(?)... day of death... may (the god) torment him who has stolen the axe(?) of... and who has stolen the writing(?) things.'

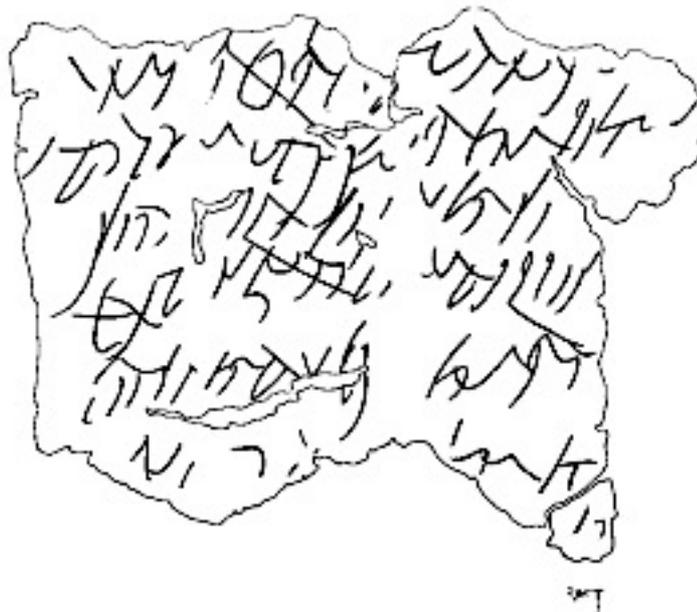**No provenance; found c. 1983 'in unknown circumstances'**

NP002. A 69 x 53mm lead sheet inscribed in ORC. The tablet preserves the L. edge, with the top, bottom, and R. edges being lost. It was folded three times after inscription. Bibl.: *Britannia* xix (1988), 488, No. 3.

<u>Reconstructed Text</u>

…
amisi oro tuam m[aie-]
statem ut <f>furem istum
si a[nc]il(l)a si [p]uer si [puella]
ext[i]nguas . . ut illi s[c.4]
cias perduci [r]em ra[ptam(?)]
…]um et […]
…

<u>Translation</u>

'(?) To the god [name] (from) [name]. I give to you the [stolen property] which] I have. I beg your Majesty that you destroy this thief, whether slave woman (?) or boy or [girl],... (?) that you [force] him to produce the stolen property [..].'

References

Journal of Roman Studies

"Roman Britain in 1957" (1958) Journal of Roman Studies. Cambridge University Press, 48(1-2), pp. 130–155. doi: 10.2307/298220.

Turner, E. G. (1963) "A Curse Tablet from Nottinghamshire," Journal of Roman Studies. Cambridge University Press, 53(1-2), pp. 122–124. doi: 10.2307/298370.

Britannia

Wright, R. P. and Hassall, M. W. C. (1973) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia,* 4, 324–337. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00006589.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1979) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia,* 10, 339–356. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00011806.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1981) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 12, 369–396. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00015105.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1982) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia,* 13, 396–422. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00012460.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1984) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 15, 333–356. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00003159.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1986) "II Inscriptions," *Britannia*, 17, 428–454. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00016330.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1987) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 18, 360–377. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00017797.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1988) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 19, 485–508. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X0000355X.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1989) 'II Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 20, 327–345. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00016743.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (1991) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 22, 293–311. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00012939.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1992) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia* 23, 309–323. DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X0000458X.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1993) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 24, pp. 310–322.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00018262.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1994) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 25, pp. 293–314.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00005122.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1995) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia,* 26, pp. 371–390.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00006991.

Hassall, M. W. C. and Tomlin, R. S. O. (1996) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 27, 439–457.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00018778.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (1997) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 28, 455–472.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X0000564X.

Tomlin, R. S. O. and Hassall, M. W. C. (1998) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 29, 433–445.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00009661.

Tomlin, R. S. O. and Hassall, M. W. C. (1999) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 30, 375–386.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00007443.

Tomlin, R. S. O. and Hassall, M. W. C. (2003) 'II. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 34, 361–382.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00008394.

Tomlin, R. S. O. and Hassall, M. W. C. (2004) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 35, 335–349.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00008771.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2009) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 40, 313–363.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X00000143.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2012) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 43, 395–421.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X1200044X.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2015) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 46, 383–420.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X15000434.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2016) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 47, 389–415.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X16000404.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2017) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 48, 457–490.

DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X17000435.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2018) 'III. Inscriptions', *Britannia*, 49, 427–460.
DOI: 10.1017/S0068113X18000429.

Roman Inscriptions of Britain

2014. Roman Inscriptions of Britain. [Online]
Available at: https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/
[Accessed September 2019].

Other Publications

Tomlin, R. S. O.(1988) 'The curse tablets', in Cunlifffe (ed.) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, 2: The Finds from the Sacred Spring*. Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 59-277.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (1993) 'The inscribed lead tablets: an interim report', in Woodward, A. & Leach, P. (eds.) The Uley Shrines: Excavation of a ritual complex on West Hill, Uley, Gloucestershire: 1977-9. London: English Heritage, 113-130.

Tomlin, R. S. O. (2008) 'Paedagogium and septizonium: two Roman lead tablets from Leicester', *Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphic*, 167, 207-218.

Mullen, A., (2007a) 'Evidence for written Celtic from Roman Britain: a linguistic analysis of *Tabellae Sulis* 14 and 18', *Studia Celtica*, 41, 31-45.