**Spell:**

*I bind Amara, to whom Desma gave birth, so that she may not fall for the affections, charms or wealth of any man other than me. May her thoughts be as hard and cold as this tablet towards any man who wishes to take her for a wife or lover. I invoke the powers of the underworld AOAOEI, through X, a restless dead. Just as you lie here, cold and unable to speak, may Amara, to whom Desma gave birth, greet those who wish to take her as a wife or lover, with a chilly resolve. Just as you are stiff and unmoving O great WYTREO, may she be unwilling and unable to move in a way that invites men to admire her or approach her. And if they do, may her voice be lost, just as yours is, O X. Great Lady Hekate, I call upon you, as Lady of the underworld, the heavens and the crossroads, you are all seeing and all knowing. With your great power, ALOTER, let Amara, daughter of Desma, know what it is to be without me. Let her mind, body and soul burn like an inferno and let her face burn up from the inside out. Only until she flees the House of Y and enters my arms, let her be free of such torment. Let her be heavy and deep at my side as my wife and lover, just as this tablet in the final resting place of X.*

*Actions: Placed in the grave of Y. Tablet is folded and pierced three times*

**Commentary:**

This is an attraction spell or erotic defixiones, inscribed on a lead tablet and placed in the grave of Y, by an assistant of the writer late at night, to avoid a connection being made between the tablet and the client. The client is a Greek male, who wishes to attract a younger, beautiful woman who lives in the family home with her parents. His name is not mentioned as this tablet is being placed in a grave and could be discovered and in turn counteracted. The placement of the tablet is important because it is closer to the underworld, making it easier to invoke those kinds of powers. The literary traditions show women as the most common users of magic and spells, but (Gager, 1992, p 80.) states that men are shown to use magical means in order to pursue women, more so than women to men. Reinforcing the literary bias of ancient writers towards women and magic. By choosing to create a spell for a man trying to attract a younger woman, who still lives with her parents, it speaks to the ancient context by which magic would have been used by men.

Those wanting to use spells often went to professionals to help them compose the perfect spell. This spell is longer and more complex, showing that it is from a later period. The formulas used are: direct binding, persuasive analogy and a target specific formula. Professionals would follow formulas often in their writing.

The opening line of spell is an example of direct binding (“I bind Amara”) which is followed up by an example of target specific formula (“to whom Desma gave birth”). Both are common features of spells and curses. For example, this extract is from a spell that centred around a competition “I deliver to you Eutuchianos, to whom Eutuchia gave birth*”* (Gager, 1992, pp. 50-51). This shows that these formulas are common in spells, no matter what the spell is for, attraction or competition. Identifying the target further by stating the house to which they belong is important in this spell because the client wants the target to leave their home, but it also helps the powers invoked to find her easily. Finally, there is persuasive analogy, which are similes that further bind the target to an object or power in the hopes that they will take on their qualities – which is imitative magic. Examples from other spells liken the target to something used or invoked in the spell: restless dead, tablet, ritual action. This attraction spell uses persuasive analogies: “*Just as you lie here, cold and unable to speak, may Amara, to whom Desma gave birth, greet those who wish to take her as a wife or lover, with a chilly resolve.”*

The powers invoked are Hekate and X, a restless dead. Hekate is invoked because of her status a Lady of the heavens, underworld and crossroads – making her all-knowing and all-seeing. This is important in the spell because the client wants Hekate to make her feel a burning pain in every ounce of her being: mind, body and soul. Hekate is a divinity that is invoked often because she is the goddess of witchcraft and a being even the gods fear. She is invoked in the spell as Lady of the underworld, the heavens and the crossroads and also Hekate the triple face – just as she is referred to in a curse for thieves (Gager 1992, pp. 182-83). The restless dead is invoked because the ritual requires the tablet to be buried in the grave of a restless dead to amplify the underworld powers.

Voces mysticae are used in the spell as an untranslatable link between the powers and the client. While it could be seen as nonsense, many believed it was a language that only the spell caster and the powers invoked could understand. By using voces mysticae in this spell, it amplifies the importance of what the client desires but also keeps a level of secrecy to it, if it were to be discovered. An example of voces mysticae is: “Powerful Typhon KOLCHOI TONTONON Seth SATH[AÔCH] EA lord APOMX PHRIOURIGX” (Gager, 1992, pp. 50-51).

The number three was considered a powerful number, in this spell the voces mysticae has been used three times and the mother’s name has been mentioned three times. Instead of the focus being wholly on the pain or suffering of the victim, it remains on the specifying the target and tying it to the powers invoked. In spells cast by men towards women there is a lot of violent language: “Cause her limbs, her liver, and her genitals to burn until she comes to me, loving me and not ignoring me.” (Gager, 1992, p. 105). The burning sensation is common and what is used in this attraction spell. This is to imitate the feeling of crazy love “*let her mind, body and soul burn like an inferno and let her face burn up from the inside out”*. Only until the target flees her family home, will she be free from this pain. The actions included with the spell are that the tablet be placed into the grave of a restless dead. The tablet itself, is folded and pierced three times – reinforcing the binding properties of the defixiones.

**References**

Gager, John G. (1992). *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells From the Ancient World*. Retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/eds/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzI4ODU3MV9fQU41?sid=b95f3c7b-82fc-47a4-9cd6-fe1fe5fff9cd@sessionmgr102&vid=0&format=EB&rid=3>