**CLST 360: Greek and Roman Magic Fall 2019**

**Assignment II. Write an attraction spell or a love charm**

**Due November 1st or 4th (if you hand it in on the 1st in physical form I will have it back in a week. Otherwise you will receive it back after Remembrance Day.**

An enormous amount of ancient spells were attraction/separation spells or love charms and potions. Some of these were sneak attacks by outsiders, but some of them imagine co-operation on the part of a partner. Whichever type of spell you choose is up to you.

How to do this in steps:

1. Tell me where and when this is taking place. (City and date.)
2. Describe the magus or maga that you are (200 words max)[[1]](#footnote-1)
   1. Do you have another job within the community (doctor, philosopher, priest, civil servant) and if so, does it explain why the client came to you?
   2. Or are you perceived as an outsider to the community? Remember, that something as small as being a single person (male or female) or marriageable age could make you seem an outsider to a community.)
3. Describe the client (200 words max)
   1. Where are they positioned in the community? Are they wealthy? Are they mobile? Do they have somewhere they can do rituals? Are they insiders or outsiders to the community? Are they wealthy and well-known enough that they could expect to be under observation by the community?
4. Describe what the client wants and why they want it. (100 words max).
5. Devise the magic that you will devise for them (including a list of ingredients and the technicalities: if this is a potion how will it be consumed? If an ointment where does it go? If an amulet what is made of and how and where is placed? Etc.) The magic may contain many elements - rituals, potions, ointments, and so forth – or just go all in one element. **400-500 words.** **This is the second most important part of the assignment.**
6. Explain the magic. Describe how it will meet your client’s needs and how and why would work in ancient and modern terms. **500-700 words.** **This is the most important part of the assignment. I need to know that you understand how this worked in ancient and modern terms.**

Places to look for ideas and elements:

Ingredients: Pliny the Elder Handout on course blog

Cite this as Pliny + page number

Practicalities: Apuleius’ *Apology/Defense Speech* hand out on the course blog(Where did his accusers say he got the ingredients? Where is he accused of doing his magic? What is he accused of actually doing?

Cite this as Apuleius + page number; if you actually go and find the full defence speech and use that just ask me how to cite that

Literary ideals of rituals: Theocritus (Luck 104-08 #6)

Virgil (Luck 114-115 #10 – translation of above

Horace (Luck 110—13 # 8 + 9)

Virgil (Luck 116-121 #11)

Seneca the Younger (Luck 121-126 #12 + 13)

Petronius (Luck 126-15 #14)

Other places? **If you contribute something that you find useful to the class and someone else uses it, I will add this to your class participation score. If you don’t want to share it yourself, just email me and I will do so.**

Remember:

* Magic is formulaic
* Magic is responsive to individual and cultural needs
* Magic can be a form of therapy and fulfill psychological needs
* Magic and religion and science and medicine may all overlap with each other

Literary magic and actual magic may or may not resemble each other, but one will inform expectations of the other. In other words clients may expect you to the types of things they have read about, even if you – as a magician – do not think those work.

**Reminders:**

A. The spell should use only resources available in the Graeco-Roman world. Sadly, this excludes lots of exciting and potentially explosive ingredients that would add a certain colour to a spell. But it does mean that you can include lots of things that people in antiquity believed existed.

B. Please proofread your spell (especially magical names) and commentary carefully. (Though real magic is filled with errors)

C. If you are sending a supernatural entity after someone best to give some instructions on where they can find them and details of where they spend their time

D. Greeks and Romans clearly would consume awful things in the name of medicine and magic, but there were limits. But they don’t expect love magic or potions to be particularly pleasant, would probably distrust the efficacy of any magic that relied on nice things alone.

E. Successful magicians are good psychologists. They understand that people want to feel *something* has happened after they have contracted a magician to help them.

1. I know from heady experience that writing these biographies can encourage very elaborate backgrounds that go on and on, so restrain yourself from getting too elaborate here! [↑](#footnote-ref-1)