



Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World

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In the ancient Greco-Roman world, it was common practice to curse or bind an enemy or rival by writing an incantation on a tablet and dedicating it to a god or spirit. These curses or binding spells, commonly called *defixiones* were intended to bring other people under the power and control of those who commissioned them. More than a thousand such texts, written between the 5th Century B.C.E. and the 5th Century C.E., have been discovered from North Africa to England, and from Syria to Spain. Extending into every aspect of ancient life--athletic and theatrical competitions, judicial proceedings, love affairs, business rivalries, and the recovery of stolen property--they shed light on a new dimension of classical study previously inaccessible. Here, for the first time, these texts have been translated into English with a substantial translator's introduction revealing the cultural, social, and historical context for the texts. This book will interest historians, classicists, scholars of religion, and those concerned with ancient magic.

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About the Author

John G. Gager is at Princeton University.

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