

GEMF 44
(P.Oxy. LXVIII 4672)

Oxyrhynchus

III CE

ED.PR.: Colomo 2003

TRANS.: ed. pr. (English)

COMM.: ed. pr.; Serafini 2015, 256–258

LOC.: Oxford, Sackler Library, Papyrology Room

TM 101344

This papyrus sheet (H 10.6 x W 13.5 cm) is written along the fibers; the back is blank. On the right, a few letters before line-ends, there is a *kollesis*. The partially preserved upper margin is 1.4 cm and the preserved left margin is 1 cm. The line-ends run to the edge of the sheet. The sheet preserves only a formula (or perhaps the end of it), but the *praxis* is missing. Either the scribe copied the formula alone, as we sometimes find in single sheets, or this papyrus is part of a larger formulary and the *praxis* was written in the now lost preceding column. If the latter is true, it is curious that the column we have has survived in such a good state of preservation, as if it had been cut vertically in antiquity with part of the ‘original’ left-hand *intercolumnium*.

The text is written in a rather informal hand with sporadic ligatures, slightly slanting to the right, roughly bilinear, apart from the uprights of ι, ρ, τ and φ and the letter ξ, which tends to protrude above and below the baseline. Ornamentation is not particularly emphasized, although the lower extremities of the uprights often have a leftward hook, except for the η and π, which have a rightward hook. I am inclined to assign this script to the third century CE on the basis of similarities with precisely dated documents: P. Oxy. XLIII 3100 (225 CE), and P.Oxy. LXVII 3365 (241 CE or later). Cf. also P.Vat. Gr. 11, Favorinus, *De exilio* (GLH 18b–c), which has a *terminus post quem* of c. 215 CE (see Alessandri 2013, 240–241), and P. Oxy. XLVIII 3368, Menander, *Misoumenos*, written on the back of a third-century tax register. *Diaeresis* in l. 4 is visible over a lost υ. In ll. 1, 2, 10 and 11 there are short diagonal strokes high in the line used as word dividers (marked as ‘ in the text; note that in l. 1 the right-hand side of the υ of μου forms a single diagonal stroke with the divider); for parallels, see P.Oxy. LV 3812.5 (late 3rd cent.), P.Oxy. LVI 3827 (2nd cent.), 3842 (2nd cent.), 3843 (2nd cent.), P.Oxy. LX 4022 (2nd cent.), P.Mich. III 137 (Cavallo-Maehler, GB, 4b; first half of the 4th cent.), P.Oxy. LXVIII 4674.12 (4th/5th cent.) and PSI I 65 (second half of the 6th cent.). Here the dividers seem limited to the invocations of the goddess Hekate. After l. 15 there is the beginning of a forked *paragaphos* marking the end of the procedure.

The papyrus contains an erotic attraction-procedure that invokes Hekate to go at night and cause insomnia in the female victim until she consents. Similar insomnia-procedures include GEMF 57/PGM IV 2944–2966; 74.455–457/VII 374–376 or 15.425–435/XII 376–396.

recto →

GEMF 44

1 Νὺξ Ἑκάτη Ἑκάτη δέ μου ἄγγελος
 ἔστω καὶ πορευθεῖσα καὶ σταθῖσα
 πρὸς κεφαλῆς τῆς Δ ἧς ἔτεκεν
 ἢ Δ περιέλε αὐτῆς τὸν [ῥ]πνον
 5 ἕως ἐξαγαπηδήσασα ἔλθη πρὸς
 ἐμὲ τὸν Δ τῆς Δ φιλοῦσά με καὶ ἀ-
 γαπῶσά με καὶ ζητ[οῦς]ά μου τῆ
 συνουσίαν ἐπὶ τὸν τῆ[ς ζω]ῆς αὐ-
 τῆς χρόνον ατρακ[...]τα
 10 τρακα ἑτετρακῶν ἑτετρ[α]υ-
 λάκτ[α] ἄγρυπνεῖτ[ω]... [...]
 φι[λοῦσά] με καὶ ἀγαπῶ[σά] με τὸν Δ
 τῆς [Δ] καὶ ζητ[οῦσά] μου τὴν
 συν[ουσία]ν ἐπ[ὶ] τὸν τῆς ζωῆς
 15 αὐ[τῆς] πάντα χρόνον
 Ἐ[-----]

2. 1. σταθεῖσα || 3 δ(ε)ῖ(voc) | 1. ἦν || 4 δ(ε)ῖ(να) | [ῥ]πνον Pap. || 6 δ(ε)ῖ(να) | δ(ε)ῖ(voc) || 7 τῆ(v) || 9 post χρόνον spatium ca 1 cm

Night, Hekate,¹ let Hekate be my messenger!² Go³ and stand before the head of her, NN, whom she, NN, bore and take sleep from her (5) until she leaps out⁴ and comes to me (m.), NN, whom she, NN, bore, loving me, cherishing me and seeking intercourse with me for the duration of her life. ATRAK[...]TATRAKA with four dog-faces, fourfold (10) barker,⁵ let her NN, whom she, NN, bore, be sleepless ... loving me and cherishing me (m.), NN, whom she, NN, bore, and seeking intercourse with me for (15) all the duration of her life.

D. Colomo

¹ Hekate is one of several deities associated with such erotic procedures, where she is assimilated to other goddesses, for example, Artemis, Selene or Persephone; here she is assimilated only to Night, but we are probably missing the beginning of the invocation, which may have included other goddesses. Night is, in fact, an uncommon figure; see, e.g. a single verse in a hexametrical hymn to Selene (GEMF 57/PGM IV 2858) which invokes “Night, Darkness, broad Chaos and Necessity.” For an insomnia-procedures, of course, Night would be a logical presence.

² The first seven words have a dactylic rhythm, not an uncommon feature in the invocations and so-called “hymns” found in other formularies; see Faraone 1999, 142–146. The metrical irregularities here are probably due to scribal errors; see Brashear, 1995, 3420–3422.

³ Here the syntax changes inexplicably from a third-person imperative to a second-person imperative.

⁴ Such erotic procedures often aim at forcing the female victim out of her home and into the arms of the male practitioner or client; see, more explicitly, GEMF 68/PGM XXXVI 70–71, a recipe that boasts the power to “make virgins leap forth” from their homes. The parallels (e.g. 68/XXXVI 359 and SM I 40.18 and 45.46) use a simpler form of the verb: ἐκπηδάω.

⁵ For Hekate’s association with dogs, see the ed.pr., Serafini 2015, 138–154, 244–245, 257, Carboni 2015, 232 (s.v. ‘cane/i’, ‘cagna’), Sofia 2018. τετραυλάκτα is a *hapax legomenon*, while τετρακῶν also occurs in a curse tablet from the circus at Antioch dated to the fifth-sixth cent. (ed. Hollmann 2003; l. 35; cf. l. 34 τητραβάμω l. τετραβάμων, ‘going on four feet’). Apart from this tablet, the two epithets that begin with “four” have parallels only in the hymn to Selene mentioned above in n. 1, GEMF 57/PGM IV 2817–2818, where Selene-Hekate is described as “four-faced, four-named, of the quadruple ways (i.e. at an intersection of two roads).” These epithets seem to be variants of the very common “triple” epithets of Hekate that appear a few verses later in the same hymn (2821–2823) “triple-headed,” “triple-faced,” “triple-necked” and “goddess of the triple-ways,” which seem to have evolved from worship of Hekate at the triple-crossroad, for which see Johnston 1991.