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The British Museum. (1814). *Statuette of Triple-bodied Hekate.* Museum number: 2005,0928.37 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_2005-0928-37

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Investigating the connection with Hecate

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15/06/2022 – Gouda

Thesis Final Version

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Liminality

Larson (2014, pp. 1032–1033) describes liminality as "the psychological process of transitioning across boundaries and borders. The term "limen" comes from the Latin for threshold; it is literally the threshold separating one space from another." The Greeks and most other ancient civilisations had special rituals and practices associated with liminality and liminal places, whether natural or artificial (Johnston, 1991, p. 217). This is primarily because these places are seen as 'in-between worlds'. These places include gates, crossroads, rivers, bridges and even suburbs (Doroszewska, 2017, p. 3). Doors and gates, for example, are between two rooms or inside or outside, a river is between two land areas, and crossroads are part of either of the three roads they are a part of. In-between places can also be taken less literal to include graves as places between life and death, for example. These places were ascribed to Hecate in the Greek world.

I will take Hecate as a case study for liminality in the Greek world since she is the primary goddess linked to liminal places and beings. Hecate was first seen in Greek society around the fifth century BC and was introduced as the goddess of witchcraft/magic and functioned as the goddess of liminality. This thesis also deals with magic as a concept with magical figurines as a specific focus. The magical aspect of Hecate is of added importance. Control over restless souls dwelling between life and death is one of the most critical factors for ancient magic (Johnston, 1999, p. 204). Many societies, including the Greeks, associated liminality with the demonic and ghosts because of their direct association with liminal places. Demonic beings are stuck between life and death, while liminal places are also classified as 'in-between', thus sharing a vital characteristic (Doroszewska, 2017, p. 3). Doroszewska (2017, p. 3) even argues that these beings inevitably gravitate towards these points, making it their natural habitat.

1.2 Magical dolls

Since the early Archaic period, magic figurines have been used in the Greek world. Magic figurines were used as a medium to restrain the victim through their representation in the corresponding doll. Restraining the victim could be done through many different actions, but most commonly, the doll was bound, twisted or decapitated (Ogden, 2009, p. 245). This practice is 'image magic' since this involves any form of magic involving image, so dolls or

other magic figurines are included (Frazer, 1994, p. 26). The general term ‘figurative image magic’ is used for image magic that uses a human image (Armitage, 2015, p. 87), so magic figurines fall into this category.

Magic dolls can be distinguished from regular dolls through a couple of characteristics noted by Faraone (1991, p. 200) and subsequently by an updated form of his classification of magic dolls by Neméth (2019b). These works classify magic figurines according to specific characteristics. The first characteristic is the presence of some form of manipulation.

- Twisting the head back
- Piercing
- Burning
- Breaking the body

The second characteristic has more to do with the manner of deposition and is common in one of the below-mentioned categories.

- Placing it into coffins/capsules
- Burial or submerging into water

The last characteristic can be put under manipulation, but since it differs in purpose, I want to mention it on its own.

- Writing names onto it

Neméth (2019b, p. 192) argues that a figurine can be considered a magic doll if one of the beforementioned manipulations can be discerned.

These manipulations aimed not to kill the target but rather to constrain or contain them. Piercing the doll would symbolise immobilising your adversary, not crippling or piercing them(Faraone, 1991, p. 193). Faraone (1991, p. 193) mentions a fragment from Sophronius, a late sixth-century Christian author who gets out of a binding spell by retrieving the doll and pulling out the nails. Public displays of magic could be deactivated or countered by removing the doll or the manipulations. Secrecy was a common element in magic. Therefore the notion that magic dolls were shown at crossroads and doorways in Plato’s *Laws* 933b is interesting since this implies that another ‘working’ doll is hidden

somewhere. The second doll would have been placed at a place of liminality such as the ones mentioned above and start the received parties' power of suggestion against themselves (Ogden, 1999, p. 84).

1.3 Research question

Given the brief introduction in the last sub-chapter, I thought it would be exciting and valuable to search for the connection between liminality and magical figurines in the Greek world. I will be doing this by taking Hecate as an example of liminality, as explained in the previous sub-chapter. This research searches to better understand the purpose and weight of liminality as a concept in ancient societies. How did this concept influence people's life and material culture? And specifically magical items with a focus on magical figurines. So I want to investigate the following research question:

- Is there a connection between magic figurines and liminality in the Greek world? And if yes: what makes this connection?

I hypothesise that there is a connection between these two subjects and that connection is liminality. Liminality is connected to both subjects after a quick look. It connects to places such as crossroads and beings living between life and death in a state of liminality. Hecate is the case study I chose for the Greek world. She is the mistress of beings and places of liminality, while magic dolls are connected to liminality in practice and deposition.

I will try to solve this problem by first gaining a general understanding of magic, magical objects and the practitioners of these rituals. I will then use specific examples of magic figurines and data of all these figurines in Greek contexts and put them into this framework. Exploring this medium will need some knowledge about liminality as a subject in both the dolls and Hecate herself. Existing collections of data on magical dolls found in the Greek world will be used for this research as Faraones: *Binding and Burying the Forces of Evil: The Defensive Use of "Voodoo Dolls" in Ancient Greece* (1991) database of voodoo dolls before 1991 and newer finds in Németh: *Voodoo dolls in the classical world* (2019). Ogden's: *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook* will be the leading resource for including ancient sources on magic in my thesis.

1.4 Sub-questions

To answer this question, I came up with three sub-questions that should help me. Liminality will be the focus of this thesis, with a material focus on magic dolls. The first question will help me establish how liminality was connected to the Hecate. Hecate was the goddess of liminal places such as crossroads and controlled beings such as demons and ghosts. Magic dolls link liminality through their deposition and use but will also see a connection to Hecate. The dolls also need a strong introduction; material evidence will give us a more in-depth look at these. Below are the three sub-questions with a small explanation accompanying them.

- How is liminality connected to Hecate in the Greek world?

This question deals with Hecate as a case study. I will look at the origins of this goddess and her introduction to Greek divinity. Her reputation as the mistress of ghosts, which are liminal beings, and her being the primary divinity of crossroads should give me a good starting point for this question.

- What are magic dolls, and how was this ritual practised in the Greek world?

The second question will deal with magic dolls and their practice in the Greek world. Looking at examples of magic dolls and a collection of all dolls in Greek contexts will be vital for this question, along with questions like; What are these dolls, and where does the practice come from? How did the binding magic employed through this medium function? The answers to these will be vital for answering this question.

- What was the manner of deposition, how does this connect to liminality, and how does this reflect on magic?

This question will continue on the last one. We first need to establish what magic dolls are on how this is practised to take a closer look at these dolls. The manner of deposition is essential to anything magical since the places they are being practised or deposited in are often directly linked to liminality. Beings invoked are also often linked to this. Material evidence for magic dolls will play a crucial part in the manner of deposition. At the same time, the first sub-question should already have given us a good indication of liminality as a subject to connect to deposition.

1.5 Magical figurines vs voodoo dolls

Since this thesis will discuss magic figurines and Hecate in the Greek world, I wanted to briefly explain why I use the term magic figurines and not voodoo dolls. The term voodoo doll is evident in earlier scholarship on these dolls and is a more popular term in current media. I will still use the term 'voodoo dolls' in this thesis to refer to works of earlier scholarship, such as Faraone's *Binding and Burying the Forces of Evil: The Defensive Use of 'Voodoo Dolls' in Ancient Greece* (1991) but I will, in general, be using the term magic figurines.

A quote from Freud can explain the term voodoo dolls.

> One of the most widespread magic procedures for injuring an enemy consists of making an effigy of him out of any kind of material. The likeness counts for little, in fact, any object may be 'named' as his image. Whatever is subsequently done to this image will also happen to the hated prototype; thus if the effigy has been injured in any place he will be afflicted by a disease in the corresponding part of the body (Freud, 1938, Ch3.2 Para.4).

This is a good explanation of the modern voodoo doll found in popular culture, where voodoo dolls are often linked to sticking these dolls with pins or nails to inflict the same result upon the intended target (Armitage, 2015, p. 85).

Voodoo dolls are directly linked to Fraser's (2009) theory around sympathetic magic. This entails that the practice is based on a 'like produces like' theory. It is based on the assumption that people believed they could be physically influenced or could physically influence others by other things that looked or resembled them. Sympathetic magic does, however, not entail that the effect of the practice is positive, just that one action precipitates another.

Frankfurter (2020, pp. 45–47) demonstrates that through contemporary scholarship, we can see that these dolls were only used as a general representation or as a medium for the ritual but did not need to have a direct link to the supposed target. Using the term voodoo doll for magical figurines is historically and contextually incorrect. He also points out that using the modern meaning of Voodoo dolls, as a cheap fetish belonging to sympathethic and manilupative magic, reflects a prejudice to Afro-Caribbean religion. Vodou for example has none of these charachteristics. Much more precise terms as voodoo doll are available and will thus be used in the thesis.

Voodoo dolls have initially been explained to have originated from the Haitian 'Vodou' religion but instead are a term that has been popularised through popular culture. Other practices like the *nkisi kondi* of the Bakongo material culture in Western Africa or different Afro-Caribbean cultures such as the Haitian Vodou culture have been used as a basis for the modern voodoo doll interpretation. If you look more closely, these practices have very little in common, have been misinterpreted as voodoo from a western perspective, and are a consequence of popular culture linking these cultures and practices to the Voodoo term (Armitage, 2015, pp. 85–86).

Figure 1: Nkisi nkondi figurine in the Manchester Museum (Armitage 2015, 93)

The *nkisi kondi* is one of these examples that Armitage (2015, pp. 94–95) gives in her chapter on *European and African figural ritual magic: The beginnings of the voodoo doll myth*. In figure 1, you can see one example of these dolls. This doll looks quite similar to our idea of a voodoo doll, with a figurine pierced with nails. The meaning behind this *nkisi kondi* is not necessarily malicious since they are for protecting and preventing the illness of the person using the doll.

The earliest period we find these magic figurines in Europe is in the Greco-Roman period, but the figurines almost certainly predate this period. The Greco-Roman context in which these figurines were found in Italy, North Africa and Palestina, with an inscription in the Greek language, indicates the importance of this culture and how widespread it was. These are a couple of examples of figurative image magic that indicate similar practices in the same era and show a resilient nature to this practice of ritual figurines dated before any influence of West-African, or Voodoo influence (Armitage, 2015, pp. 87–88)

1.6 Reading guide

This thesis starts with a theoretical framework around magic and magical items in ancient Greece. It will look at some theories around magic from current scholarship and discuss some of the views on magic in the Greek world, from rivals and ordinary people alike. I will also discuss practitioners of magic and some crucial terms in this chapter. Chapter two also incorporates a methodological aspect where I will include how I will research this subject. The third chapter will present the archaeological evidence for magical figurines and Hecate as well as literary evidence, including ancient sources, on the subject. I will summarise the findings of magical dolls and their manner of deposition and manipulation to gain an overview of how this ritual was practised in the Greek world. I will focus on Hecate's connection to liminality and magic dolls. Continuing with chapter four, I will discuss the results of the previous chapter with the theoretical framework in mind. I will discuss how the manner of deposition for magical figurines impacts the theories of magic. Next, I will try to interpret magical figurines with the Actor-Network-Theory. The final chapter will give a conclusion and thus an answer, whether or not satisfying, to the research question.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and methodological framework

2.1 Magic and magic objects in the Greek world

Magic was ubiquitous in the Greek world. It was as common as religion and medicine, and everyone knew about it or had contact with it. Magic was initially used for healing and divination, but this later changed when curse tablets were introduced, which gave an accessible medium for harming other people (Bremmer, 2019, p. 439). A good indication of this is the Greek Magical Papyri (PGM), in which hundreds of spells are listed for everything you can think of, from ailments and medicine to erotic or harmful spells (Danker & Betz, 1988; Fowler, 1995, pp. 1–2). The most common spell is known as a binding spell, *katadesmoi* in Greek from the verb *katadein* 'to bind down' or more commonly referred to as *defixiones*, the Latin title. They were usually written on thin sheets of metal with the purpose of 'binding' an individual against their will, which we today call curse tablets and are one of the most common magical objects from the Greek world (Watson, 2019, p. 57).

In the current day, magic is seen as subverting religious practices. Those who practised magic used prayers and rituals akin to public religious instances in the Greek world and were not significantly different from them. The Greeks did not have one word for what we today call 'religion.' It is often difficult to see what qualified as religion in the Greek world. Magic did not oppose religion but was seen as a term to exclude certain practices outside the acceptable margins. (Bremmer, 2019, p. 438; Dickie, 2007, pp. 357–359).

Secrecy was a key factor for magic, indicating that it might not be as universally accepted as previously mentioned. The secrecy is part to avoid responsibility for the misfortune of the intended target since that would give a reason for revenge or punishment and to avoid counter-curses to the created spell (Fowler, 1995, p. 3). Secrecy is not just necessary for the practice but also belongs to the very nature of magic. If not for the secrecy, magic would be another cult activity. Magic becomes meaningless if it does not operate in secrecy and in the face of religion and authority. This is also why magic is usually quite exclusive, it was only taught to you by a master, and the access to magical knowledge was very limited. Secrecy was vital to convince the consumer that the sorcerer or magician had access to ancient and special knowledge. If this knowledge were readily available, customers that wanted to practice something more illicit and out of the normal bounds of society would no longer be attracted (Dickie, 2005, pp. 38–39).

It is also the case that the Gods that these magical practitioners invoked were usually chthonic (belonging to the underworld). In literary sources, Hecate is the prime goddess of choice for female magicians or witches, such as Medea or Circe. Hecate emerges as the goddess of magic and witchcraft, creatures of the night and liminal places such as doorways and crossroads around the fifth century BC. Hecate was originally a goddess who protected individuals as they passed through dangerous liminal places or averted demons from such areas. Eventually, she became a more uncanny goddess since the mistress of ghosts and demons that protected her from them could also lead them on if she wanted (Dickie, 2007, p. 359; Henrichs, 2015; Johnston, 1991, p. 218, 1999, pp. 199–200)

Many places that were primarily used for magical rituals were places of liminality. Johnston (1991, p. 217) divides the rituals performed at these places into rituals in which an individual seeks help and protection at a liminal place or rituals in which the nature of liminal places is exploited. The second ritual is more common in magical rites. Liminal places were places of chaos, belonging to neither extreme but at the same time held the two extremes together, making them places outside of the organised world and perfect for magical practices.

2.2 How did magic work in the Greek world?

Understanding what magic in the Greek world was and how it worked are two critical questions as this gives us insight into how the material evidence we have worked in the mind of the consumers. The individuals that practised magic in the Greek world were probably not overly busy with the question of how their practice worked (Collins, 2008, p. 1). This was understood just as the gods existed and were responsible for their areas, making it difficult to answer since we do not have written sources that give us an actual answer on how magic worked. These two questions themselves could fill an entire thesis, but since this thesis mainly focuses on archaeology, it will try to keep a brief overview of the current theories and how magic could work in the Greek world.

The first theory is that magic is a false science where the practitioner wrongly judges the steps between cause and effect (Frazer, 1994). It argues a false assumption for a connection between an object, such as a magical doll, and the intended target of such a spell. These theories allow magic to exist but do not let it impact the world (Collins, 2008,

pp. 3–4). Another approach is that magic is psychological. The general idea here is that magical practices help give some satisfaction in the face of impossible odds. Collins (2008, p. 4) provides the example of an illness where all avenues of conventional healing are explored. The difficulty here is that we cannot differentiate between an individual or communal response since the community already takes the relief caused by healing through magic for granted. Communal representations heavily influence individual responses. Malinowski's (1954) lasting contribution to the study of magic is that the belief in success gets boosted by participating in magic. Magical endeavours that worked were more readily remembered than those that dit not. This selective memory and anticipation of success are essential for reinforcing magical behaviour (Collins, 2008, p. 5).

Another theory is Collins' (2008, pp. 5–7) theory that magic is a way of communicating and that communication impacts how others behave. This is not the same as saying magic works because everyone believes in it but rather that you do not have to believe in magic to feel the consequence of an action that can be characterised as such. These consequences can be harmful or helpful depending on the message conveyed. For the Greek world, this means that the beings being invoked are assumed to understand Greek and other non-literary messages and that these chthonic beings realise what to do in the world of the living (Collins, 2008, pp. 6–7).

Magic works psychologically through the power of suggestion. Even if you are not superstitious, you still start to wonder and ask yourself questions when someone puts a magical doll in your door opening. Magic does not physically affect people but works as a form of communication. This can also be seen from the beforementioned Plato's *Laws* b.

> …With phenomena of this sort it is not very easy either to know the truth, or to persuade others of it if one does know it. **b**. It is not worthwhile for us to try to tell the souls of men who mistrust each other, if ever they see molded wax figures at doors or at crossroads or in some cases on the tombs of their ancestors, to ignore all such things, if we do not ourselves have a clear opinion about them. . . (Plato *Laws* 933a-b)

From this fragment, we can see that Plato believes in the same thing. Even if you do not believe in magic, receiving a message like a magical doll does something to you. You instantly start asking questions to find out who is behind this message. We can say that magic cannot impact someone's behaviour by itself, but inside a social context, you start to wonder who would do something like that. In such a way, it can impact other people's behaviour.

This way of binding magic 'working' is noted in several publications and is a fair assumption of how it functioned in the Greek world. Magic worked but not in the way it was supposed to. Prayers for justice worked by using the wrongdoer's guilt against them (Ogden, 1999, p. 82). If you already believe you have done something wrong, you are more likely to torture yourself into sickness or punishment if you know a spell/prayer has been cast against you to rectify the wrongdoings. Letting people's guilt work against them would have been more difficult with individuals who were not guilty or did not believe themselves guilty. Still, we see the impact of magic practitioners again. The job of magical practitioners was to convince the aggrieved party that they had the power to harm another person and convince the wrongdoer that they were being targeted and harmed by someone using magic and used their guilt and fear of magic against them (Plato *Laws* 933a; Ogden, 1999, pp. 82–83). Magical practitioners still performed magical rites and rituals such as writing curse tablets or making magic dolls next to their performance of convincing people of spells and power.

Magic as a form of communication is the theory I will follow in this Thesis. Collins' (2008, pp. 5–7) theory is based on magic as a social phenomenon which only works in a social context. A strong point for this theory is that Plato mentions something similar in his *Laws* b. Here he mentions men who distrust each other would not be able to ignore communications such as a magical doll in a doorway or at a crossroad. This directly relates to magical figurines and thus also immediately includes these dolls as a way of communicating. Other elements, such as Malinowski's contributions to the study of magic, are also essential.

2.3 Interpreting the context of archaeological material

To interpret archaeological objects in the discussion chapter, I want to take a quick look at the Actor-Network-Theory. This theory will help interpret magic dolls. Only a small sample of artefacts used in historical times, such as archaic or classic Greece, survive, and several materials do not even survive to the current age. Even objects that survive have sometimes lost their original context. There have also been many cases of archaeologists studying and analysing interesting material. This creates a selective record of the past, even from found materials (Stockhammer, 2015, pp. 269–270).

This is why an object's value should depend on four factors: the materiality of the

object, the archaeological context of the object, the spatial distribution of the object, and the meanings and power of the object.

First is the materiality of an object. In many cases, an object has already lost all of its historical contexts. Natural sciences allow us to work with these materials. Only superficial data can be acquired. With the help of the châine opératoire, for example, we can find out where the natural material comes from and even reconstruct the techniques used in constructing the items. Experimental archaeology plays a big part in this. A detailed study of its materiality can also give us information about the use and practices of the object itself (Stockhammer, 2015, pp. 271–273).

Second is the archaeological context of the object. Contexts such as graves and settlements are the most common, while contexts such as shipwrecks and mines are less common. Most archaeological finds for settlements are lost or discarded items. In contrast, items found in a grave or hoard are usually not a good representation of items since they were deliberately selected for those contexts. Discerning whether the object is found in its primary position is also of added importance. Is the object at the last place of its historical use, or was it relocated? Remember that even objects found in primary contexts have an entire history (Stockhammer, 2015, pp. 273–275).

Continuing with the spatial distribution of the object. This is always based on distribution maps and other findings. But these representations give a selective view of found objects. There is a tendency towards more spectacular finds while the more 'basic' finds get neglected in these distribution patterns. If there is a gap in the knowledge, we have to ask if this is a pattern or due to neglect (Stockhammer, 2015, pp. 275–277).

Finally, we have the meanings and power of an object. An object is rarely contributed one meaning. We have to think of them as changing and developing pieces with a biography. Agency might be a human concept, but objects can affect humans. Interaction between objects and humans is essential here. Time affects human interaction with items. The decay or collapse of items will change our interactions with objects. When discussing items, the object's agency, or effectancy, must be considered to interpret it (Stockhammer, 2015, pp. 277–280).

2.4 Relationships between magic, medicine, philosophy and the average citizen

Hippocrates ' *On the Sacred Disease* is a text originally published in the 5th-4th century BC. This text indicates that practitioners of magic and their practices were not looked upon favourably by everyon*e.* This text is attributed to Hippocrates, but there is no conclusive evidence that he wrote this text himself (Ogden, 2009, p. 19). This text conveys that epilepsy is not a so-called 'sacred disease' as magic practitioners called it but a general disease like others. It describes what medical professionals thought of magicians, and 1.12 shows a reason for this.

> 10. I think that the first people to have projected this disease [epilepsy] as "sacred" were men like those who are now mages [magoi] and purifiers [kathartai] and beggar-priests [agurtai] and vagrant-charlatans [alazones]. These people purport to be extremely reverent of the gods and to know something more than the rest of us. 11. They use the divine to hide behind and to cloak the fact that they have nothing to apply to the disease and bring relief. So that their ignorance should not become manifest, they promoted the belief that this disease was sacred 12. They added further appropriate arguments to render their method of healing safe for themselves. They applied purifications [katharmoi] and incantations [epaoidai] and told people to refrain from bathing and many foods unsuitable for the sick to eat: (Hipp. *On the Sacred Disease,* 1.10-11*)*.

1.12 shows perfectly how magical practitioners went about their healing process. The author of *On the Sacred* Disease implies that the foods they tell them not to eat are already harmful to sick people or the foods are harmful in general. Collins (2008, p. 34) even suggests that some patients might have given these foods to show how much 'better' they got after abstaining from them. The next part of *On the Sacred Disease* (1.30) describes why magic practitioners were not as accepted as religious figures or even medicine. However, all of these areas were closely connected in the Greek world.

> 30. But they seem to me impious, to believe that the gods do not exist and that they have no power, and I think there is no extreme action that they would forbear to undertake, since the gods hold no terror for them. (Hipp. *On the Sacred Disease* 1.30)

This part conveys why magic practitioners were looked down upon or regarded as on society's fringes. An impious man holds no fear for the gods and will therefore stop at nothing to receive his goals, and they undermine the powers of the gods by giving epilepsy a sacred status while that is the gods' territory (Dickie, 2007, pp. 358–359). The author of *On*

the Sacred Disease continues to point out a contradiction in the ways of the magicians. He points out that they say they have control over the gods, but when their magical treatment fails, they blame it on these same gods they were supposed to have control over (Ogden, 2009, p. 20).

Another person who was not on board with what these magicians were doing was Plato, a philosopher in the early 4th century BC. Plato shared with the author of *On the Sacred Disease* a distrust of all magic practitioners. In several passages, he details why he does not tolerate them and how they should be punished. Plato believed that there was not much to fear from most magical practitioners and that their primary purpose was to let people feel they could harm another person and let the intended target know they were being harmed. He also mentions that it would be impossible to convince others of this principle, as seen in *Laws* 933a-b and e.

> **a.** [A type of "poisoning," pharmakeia, distinct from the physical sort:] The other kind of poisoning, which operates through sorceries [manganeiai], incantations [epoidai], and so-called bindings [katadeseis], persuades those who are bold enough to attempt harm with them that they can in fact achieve something of this sort, and persuades others that more than anything they are being harmed by those who have this power.
>
> With phenomena of this sort it is not very easy either to know the truth, or to persuade others of it if one does know it. **b**. It is not worthwhile for us to try to tell the souls of men who mistrust each other, if ever they see molded wax figures at doors or at crossroads or in some cases on the tombs of their ancestors, to ignore all such things, if we do not ourselves have a clear opinion about them. . . . **e.** And if a man appears to be like one causing harm by bindings [katadeseis] or charms[epagôgai] or certain incantations [epôidai] or any "poisoning" of this sort whatsoever, whether he is a diviner [mantis] or interpreter of portents [teratoskopos], he is to be executed. But whoever is convicted of poisoning without prophecy [mantikê] is to be punished in the same way as one convicted of ordinary poisoning. In this case too let the court assess the punishment or recompense they feel appropriate. (Plato *Laws* 933a-b and e)

The previous paragraphs might indicate that medical professionals or religious figures did not accept magic or believe it worked, but this is not the case. Magic might have been at odds with religion or medicine, but these disciplines still took magic as an established factor and primary competitor in everyday life. An ailment could be treated by medical professionals such as Hippocrates, religious figures, or magical practitioners. An explanation for this criticism is that they were direct competitors, so they tried to undermine the competition in texts even though their treatments were relatively similar

(Ogden, 2009, pp. 19–21).

That magic was at odds with other members of society can also be seen by the punishment Plato proposes for magical practitioners like seers who convince others to harm others must be executed. It is difficult to tell whether they believed it worked, as seen in the previous passage from Plato's *Laws*. Dickie (2007, p. 361) argues that Plato believed that magical rituals had merit and attributed their power to demons. With how similar medical, religious and magical practices are and with Plato's master, Socrates, who was seen as a beggar-evocator, it is likely to assume that they did believe magic had its merit but was probably unfavourable to society in general (Dickie, 2005, pp. 44–45; Ogden, 2009, pp. 19–21).

2.5 Practitioners of magic

Knowing which magical practitioners were responsible for different rites or purposes is vital for this research. In the next chapter, we will primarily focus on magic figurines, but a general overview of the responsible parties for all magical practices will be helpful. First of all, the origin of the magicians in the Greek world. Magic was often mentioned as a Persian import, but this is most likely a result of the Greek tendency to project unsavoury or undesirable attributes to alien people. Magic was not a Persian import since Homer's *Odyssey* was completed far before the Greeks came into contact with the Persians (Ogden, 2009, p. 33). Homer's *Oddysey* features the story of Odysseus and his crew visiting an island where Circe lives. She gives them drugs (*pharmaka*) in their food and drinks and turns them into pigs, after which Odysseus, with the help of Hermes, reverts this through other magical means and drugs (10.133-405; 569-74 (Ogden 72)).

Magoi (magicians), *goētes (sorcerers), epaoidai (*enchanter), and *pharmakeis* (sorcerer) are Greek terms for magical practitioners. These terms all had their female counterparts as well. These terms might have indicated specialities in magic in the Greek world, but there is not much evidence for this, and it seems that all these terms were used interchangeably (Dickie, 2005, pp. 12–14, 33–34). *Magoi* is often used derogatorily after the fifth century BC. If not referring to the Persian *makuš* (mages), the wise men in the Persian empire. Calling someone *magoi* was to say that they engaged in secretive practices on the fringes of society and displeased the gods with their actions (Collins, 2008, pp. 54–55) which means that it was an insult.

Seers (*manteis*) were probably the most common magic practitioners in fifth-century Athens and Greece. Seers sold their divinatory information to individuals and even entire cities or armies (Graf, 2019, p. 124). Seers were classified in two different orders. Professional seers such as Pythia in Delphi or military seers were generally involved with temples and armies. Professional seers were respected, and one of their purposes was reading a favourable, or unfavourable, sign for military action out of the entrails of animals in a complex and theatrical manner. Itinerant seers belong to the general belief we have seen about magicians in the Greek world (Collins, 2008, p. 50). They belonged in it but were not widely accepted or believed to be entirely forthcoming. The general evidence of itinerant seers is that they were "resourceful and unscrupulous, and that they preyed upon the gullible (Collins, 2008, p. 51) ." They were, however, studied men who, through their education and literacy, had some impact on all layers of society (Collins, 2008, p. 51).

Purifiers (*kathartai)* can also be divided into professional and less legitimate status. Their primary purpose was to purify individuals, or sometimes entire cities, from an unholy experience. They were also reported to be able to discern the cause of physical or mental damage. This comes close to what we know of seers, and we should keep in mind that these divisions in magical practitioners are only artificial, and boundaries between them might have been less explicit than how they are described here (Collins, 2008, pp. 51–52).

Next, we have shamans, a Tungan word that does not have a direct Greek translation. Shamans are some of the earliest magical practitioners in the Greek world mentioned in the Pythagorean and Orphic traditions. Shamans were able to detach their souls from their physical form and, in this form, speak with gods and cure sickness by travelling to the underworld to retrieve souls or fight battles. Detaching one's soul and bilocation are some of the principal attributes associated with shamans (Ogden, 2009, p. 9).

Beggar-priests (*agurtai*) are beggars who sometimes claim prophetic abilities. These figures often represented a particular god, and giving to these beggar-priests might gain the favour of these gods, and sometimes they were paid for services rendered (Dickie, 2005, p. 63). Again, we can see that the various categories of magical practitioners are sometimes very similar. Seers and beggar priests both claimed prophetic abilities, for example. It is sometimes hard to tell the difference between some of these professions. Charlatans (*alazones*) indicate a general category of those who practice deception in the Greek world. *Alazones* are not exclusive to magic but show a broad group of charlatans, including those

posing as magicians. *Agurtai* are sometimes bundled with *alazones* (Collins, 2008, pp. 49–50).

The ones listed above are the most critical categories of magical practitioners, but I wanted to list a couple more in the following passage. Evocators (*psuchagōgoi*) are a category of magical practitioners who call up the souls of the dead (Ogden, 2009, p. 26). A ventriloquist is a magician whose "stomach is inhabited by a ghost or demon that speaks through his mouth" (Ogden, 2009, p. 30). Other magical terms that are good to know are bindings (*katadeseis*) and incantations (*epaoidai).*

Another important magical term is the beforementioned *pharmaka*. Initially, this meant a drug for either good or evil purposes. The first meaning was a physical substance, but there is a second meaning behind this that Plato sums up in *Laws* 933a. Here he mentions pharmaka as a poison that operates through sorcery, incantations and bindings to harm another person. One form works on the body, while the other works on the mind (Graf, 2019, p. 133).

2.6 Conclusion

How magic works is a tricky question, and some theories are given in this chapter, such as a disconnection between cause and effect and magic as a communication method. Magic was part of everyday life and had many similarities to religious and medical practices. One of the differences is that magic was typically more rooted in secrecy and relied on this secrecy to function, both for the appeal and the practice itself. Collin's theory on magic as communication with some added details from scholars Malinowski is the most convincing here. While scholars and rivals might not have believed in magic or at least thought it was not very impressive, in general, most people in the Greek world were afraid of magic, as is evident from the testimony of Plato's Athenian Stranger in *Laws* (Dickie, 2007, p. 361).

Many different specialities of magic practitioners were active in the Greek world. The many words for magician or sorcerer in *magoi*, *goētes, epodoi*, and *pharmakeis* and the number of different professions indicate that magic was widespread in the Greek world. This can also be seen when looking at all the spells in the Greek Magical Papyri (Danker & Betz, 1988), which includes over 300 spells for every conceivable ailment or need. How magic worked and how magic was practised has answered the second research question as we already have seen what magical dolls actually are in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3: Archaeological and Literary evidence

3.1 Magic dolls

An introduction to magic dolls is already given in Chapter 1, so I wanted to continue with the material evidence we have of these figurines in Greek contexts. Written sources give us a first indication of how these dolls were used in the Greek world. Németh (2019b, pp. 179–184) gathered sources that mention the manipulation of magical dolls. I added the ancient sources to the table below, where all these manipulations are summed up. Some of these sources I already named in Chapter 2, such as Plato's *Laws* and others, such as Horatius' *Satires* and the Oracle from Western Anatolia, will be discussed later when I discuss Hecate in connection to magic dolls.

Table 1:

Manipulation of magic dolls according to literary sources and inscriptions (Németh, 2019b, p. 184)

Source	**Manipulation of the doll**
Inscription from Cyrene 4th century BC	Wax doll burnt
Sophocles *Rhizotomoi* F536	Wax doll burnt
Plato *Laws* 933b	Wax doll burnt
Theocritus *Idyll* 2.28-31	Wax doll burnt
Horatius *Satirus* 1, 8	Wax doll burnt
Horatius *Epodes* 17	Wax doll pierced
Vergilius *Eclogues* 8.80-81	Wax doll burnt
Ovidius *Heriodes* 6.93-94	Wax doll pierced
Ovidius *Amores* 3.7.27-30	Wax doll pierced
Ovidius *Amores* 77-80	Woollen doll pierced
Petronius *Satyricon* 63	Dead boy exchanged with straw puppet
Oracle from Western Anatolia	Wax doll burnt
Pseudo-Callisthenes *Alexander romance* 1	Wax doll submerged in water
Inscription from Cyrene Ca. 300 BC	A wooden or clay doll is taken into an intact forest
Lucian *Philoseudes* 14	Clay doll 'animated.'
Apuleius *Apologia sive de magia.* 61	A sacrifice offered to a wooden doll
Heliodorus Aethiopica 6, 14	Dough puppet cast into a pit
Orphic *Argonautica* 950	Dough puppet burnt

Note. Adapted from "Voodoo dolls in the classical world" By G. Nemeth, 2019b, *Parthenon Verlag, Kaiserslautern und Mehlingen, 2018, p.184*

Wax and flour are also perishable materials and are not very well represented in the archaeological record because they do not survive the ageing process. Written sources also often point to the burning of dolls of flour/wax, which would be an added reason why this

material composition is not represented in the finds (Németh, 2019b, p. 192). This limits the amount of material evidence we have from wax/flour dolls compared to lead and bronze dolls. We can see that the finding places of dolls are evenly distributed between graves, sanctuaries, houses and box/vessels. Water is less represented, but this might also be because water does not preserve material like other places. The dolls are primarily made of lead, bronze, clay and wax/flour, as shown in table 2, with the first two materials being the most common and consequently the materials that are preserved the best.

In the table below, you can see the provenance of magic dolls, the site they were found, the number of dolls found and in which context they were found. In some cases, dolls were found in a grave but were first put into a lead coffin. The Mnesimachos doll is an example of this which I will comment on later.

Table 2:

Provenance, material and context for magic dolls in a Greek context *(Faraone, 1991, pp. 200–202)*

Area	Site	Material	Amount	Context	In box/vessel?
Attica	Odos Panepistimiou	Lead	1	Grave	No
Attica	Bed of the Ilissus river	Lead	1	River	No
Attica	Unknown	Lead	1	Unknown	No
Attica	Along Odos Eolou	Lead	1	Unknown	Yes, Lead box
Attica	Kerameikos	Lead	1	Grave	Yes, Lead box
Attica	Kerameikos	Lead	3	Same grave	Yes, Lead boxes
Attica	Unkown	Lead	1	Grave	No
Arcadia	Tegea	Bronze	1	Unkown	No
Arcadia	Alonistena	Bronze	5	Unkown	No
Kephallenia	Sime	Bronze	1	Unkown	No
Delos	Near the Agora	Bronze	4	House	No
Delos	Zeus Hypsistos sanctuary	Lead	4	Sanctuary	No
Crete	Unkown	Bronze	1	Unkown	No
Crete	Unkown	Bronze	1	Unkown	No
Euboia	Carystus	Lead	1	Unkown	No

How the dolls were manipulated can be compared to the material to give a sense of which material warranted which action. The material composition affected the manipulation as it was impossible to pierce a bronze puppet, and burning it was not feasible (Németh, 2019b, p. 192). Németh (2019b, p. 192) continues with a list of the types of manipulation based on the evidence we have from the retrieved dolls. I already introduced this list when

introducing magical dolls, but I wanted to show them again with their most common material attached.

- Twisting the head back (bronze, lead)
- Piercing (clay, wax, lead)
- Burning (wax – written sources)
- Breaking the body (clay, wax, lead)
- Placing it into coffins/capsules
- Burial or submerging into water
- Writing names onto it (Rome, Athens, Etruria, Puteoli, Sicily)

An example of a doll buried in a box/vessel is the Mnesimachos doll (figure 2), buried in a coffin in the Athenian Ceramicus cemetery. The name Mnesimachos was inscribed on the right leg of the lead puppet, placed into a coffin and buried c.400 BC. On the inside of the coffin lid, more names: Inside coffin lid: Barburtides, Xophugos, Nicomachos, Oenocles, Mnesimachos, Chamaios, Tesonides, Charisander, Democles, and any other advocate or witness they have on their side. The doll is six centimetres long and can be seen manipulated by having its arms crossed to show a bound pose. The coffin was made from lead tablets, and the holes driven through it suggest that nails once pierced it. The inscription alludes to a simple legal binding curse (Németh, 2019b, pp. 189–190; Ogden, 2009, p. 246).

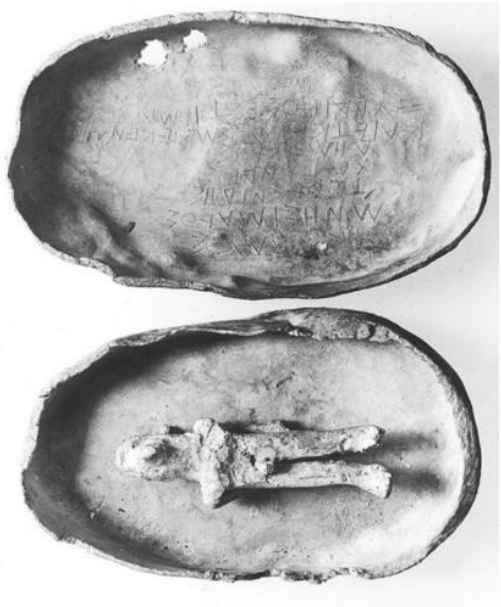

Figure 2: The Mnesimachos magic doll and its coffin case from the Ceramicus cemetery. Athens, Ceramicus Museum, case 33 (Ogden, 2002, p.247)

Bones were missing from the body in the grave, and we can assume that these were taken for other magical means. Although this combination is rare, bones were sometimes named with magic dolls. Below you can see one such case named in the Greek Magical Papyri.

> "Take unsmoked beeswax and make a little manikin. Write the characters on a tiny piece of papyrus and place it inside the beeswax. Also write the three ô's and the letters that follow, on the head of the manikin

and the bones of the victim (?). … Prick the left one into the left eye of the manikin and the right one into the right. Hold the figure upside-down on its head and put it into a new pot. Leave the pot in the dark and fill it with water, up to the shoulder of the manikin only." (*PGM* CXXIV. 10-33)

This spell to secure favour and one other in the Greek Magical Papyri are the only ones that refer to bones used with wax dolls in the entire volume (Németh, 2019a, p. 150).

Another doll I want to touch upon is the lead 'voodoo doll' from Keos, inscribed with the names of nine victims (Figure 3). The classic characteristics of magic dolls are all present here. The doll is made from lead, 9.6cm in length, the arms have been twisted behind the back, and an inscription of names is written on the back of the doll. An investigation of the alphabet and how the letters are used indicates where this doll came from. The specific use of η for ε is common for the alphabet they used in Keos (Curbera & Giannobile, 2015, pp.

Figure 4: 'Voodoo' doll from Keos with names on nine victims (Vogl et al., 2018, p.1114)

Figure 3: A possible ' voodoo' doll (Curbera, 2015, p.100)

123–125). Much of the quality of found magic dolls differ, the one in figure 3 is a well-preserved crafted lead doll, but others are not preserved so well, such as the example in figure 4. The flat magic doll in figure 4 is a rudimentary attempt at a magic doll by flattening a piece of lead. This is the only flat magical figurine currently known, but it was probably more common than we know. The curse written on this flat doll is more akin to a description of a curse tablet and not the usual name or list of names found on a magic doll (Curbera, 2015, p. 102).

3.2 Hecate in the Greek world and Asia Minor

Hecate joined the Greek world around the 5th century BC as a goddess of magic and witchcraft, dog sacrifices, and liminal places such as crossroads, doorways, and graves buried near roads (Henrichs, 2015). Lucian's *Philopseudes* 17 gives a good overview of what she looked like in the Greek world.

> I saw a fearsome woman approaching me, almost half a stadium's length high. In her left hand she held a torch and in her right a sword twenty cubits long. Below the waist she had snake-feet; above it she resembled a Gorgon, so far as concerns the look in her eyes and her terrible appearance, I mean. Instead of hair, writhing snakes fell down in curls around her neck, and some of them coiled over her shoulder. … 24. Thus Dinomachus asked, "Tell me, Eucrates, how big were the goddess's dogs?" "They were taller than Indian elephants," came the reply, "similarly black and shaggy, with dirty, matted hair. (Lucian *Philopseudes* 17, 22-4)

The barking of dogs usually precedes her appearance. These dogs often accompany her, and her massive size is also alluded to in other texts. The gorgon look is not represented in the classic view of Hecate. The usual environments for meetings with Hecate are dark and cavelike woods and rivers (Ogden, 2009, p. 273). Her depictions can be divided into single-faced (Figure 5) and three-faced (Figure 6). After c.430 BC, Hecate is often depicted as three-faced and bodied, where each of her bodies corresponds to one road as the goddess of crossroads. She is often depicted wearing a dress while holding torches in her hand. She also can be seen holding a word, snakes or flowers (Henrichs, 2015). Her triplicity was also a sign of this. She belonged to all three states of the Cosmos, and crossroads are an evident sign of this and her depiction as the three-faced goddess (Bortolani, 2016, p. 226). Liminality is connected to Hecate as it is to no other Deity. Statues with her depicted as a three-faced and bodied goddess are called *hekataia. S*uch a *hekateion* can be seen in figure 6.

Figure 6: A marble hekateion produced between 200-100 BC. One figure is holding a torch. British Museum 1849,1201.57

Figure 5: Red-figured Hydria made in Attica, Greece dated to 430 BC showing Hecate holding two blazing torches. Her name is inscribed above her. British Museum 1868,0606.8

The leading theory is that Hecate originated in Caria, southwestern Asia-Minor. Her precinct in Lagina can support this as it was the largest of all her precincts in Greece. She was one of the most important Carian deities. In her motherland, she held the form of the Anatolian Earth-Mother Goddess. In Caria, she can be seen as a city goddess, and her placement at the gates of the cities can be explained in such a way that she would protect the city by preventing anything from entering that would harm its inhabitants (Johnston, 1999, pp. 197–198). The common practice of putting *hekateion* at the city gates comes from this. Her role as city goddess in Anatolia was already occupied by other gods such as Athena or Hera. Still, her role as guardian of entrances, or the beforementioned doorways, was imported alongside her when she was adopted as a Greek goddess. A god who can protect a city can also protect a home (Johnston, 1999, pp. 198–199). Hecate is the most famous crossroad deity but not the only one. Hermes was the

original god who presided over crossroads, entrances and other liminal places. As the god of travellers, his job was to guide people through these points. The Greeks would not have assigned a new god to these areas of expertise if she was not already worshipped as a god preceding these places in Caria and with her Anatolian origins (Johnston, 1999, p. 199).

Divinities that protected entrances were supposed to keep dangers out. We might think of small things like unwanted visitors or rats, but in Ancient Greece, they were more worried about demons and ghosts/souls that had not yet crossed over to Hades. These creatures dwelled near places of liminality such as doorways, crossroads or rivers. These places belonged to neither two extremes and were places of chaos. Hecate was a divine creature who was supposed to protect against these creatures at places of liminality. Still, a goddess who could command chthonic beings to stay away could also lead them on, which probably led to her association with ghosts and demons (Johnston, 1991, p. 218, 1999, p. 200).

Another piece of evidence that Hecate was worshipped at liminal places is the 'suppers' of Hecate. This is a practice of bringing some food to a crossroad at the new moon to appease her in the transition period. It was also brought to calm the restless spirits in these places. These spirits were under Hecate's control and thought especially dangerous in these transition periods (Bortolani, 2016, p. 223).

Hecate association with these beings leads to rituals around liminal places, which I discussed earlier in Chapter 2. I want to focus on rituals that exploit the 'chaos' from these liminal places. Pollution resulting from purification rituals was left at these places since this was material that could not be left just anywhere. A place of liminality, such as a crossroad, was one of the few places where materials that were cast outside of society could easily be disposed of (Johnston, 1991, p. 221). Other rituals in this category exploit the notion that restless souls who carried out spells and were invoked by certain rituals rested at places of liminality. Restless souls and ghosts lingered at these places because of previous exorcism or bodies deposited as the earlier mentioned pollution that could not be normally deposited (Johnston, 1991, p. 223).

Here we see such a spell from the Greek Magical Papyri (Danker & Betz, 1988, p. 94), in which a love spell is described through the means of a wax figurines.

Love-spell of attraction through wakefulness: Take the eyes of a bat and release it alive, and take / a piece of unbaked dough or unmelted wax and mold a little dog; and put the right eye of the bat into the right eye of

the little dog, implanting also in the same way the left one in the left. And take a needle, thread it with the magical material and stick it through the eyes of the little dog, so that the magical material is visible. And put the dog into a new drinking vessel, attach a papyrus strip to it and seal it with your own ring which has crocodiles with the backs of their heads attached, and deposit it at a crossroad after you have marked the spot so that, should you wish to recover it, you can find it.

Spell written on the papyrus strip: "I adjure you three times by Hekate PHORPHORBA BAIBO PHORBORBA, that she, NN, lose the fire in her eye or even I lie awake with nothing on her mind except me, NN, alone. I adjure by Kore, who has become the Goddess of Three roads, and who is the true mother of. . . (whom you wish), PHORBEA BRIM6 NEBATO DAMON BRlMON SEDNA / DARDAR, All-seeing one, IOPE, make her, NN, lie awake for me through all [eternity]." *Tr.: E. N. O'Neil. (PGM IV. 2943-66)

This entire spell is closely related to Hecate. Hekate is directly named in the incantation. The chosen magical figurine is a dog from wax and dough, and this figurine is to be deposited at a crossroad, the primary liminal place for Hecate. Hecate is personally associated with the number three, a sacred number possibly derived from the trinity of air, land, and sea. She was the three-faced goddess, and adjuring her three times meant a powerful incantation (Henrichs, 2015; Potter, 2016).

Another text is one of the witches, Canidia and Sagana, who perform necromancy and erotic magic in a former paupers' cemetery.

> …There was a woolen doll, and another one made from wax. The woolen one was larger, so that it could restrain the smaller one with punishments. The wax doll held the pose of a suppliant, as if it were about to be executed in slave fashion. One of the women called on Hecate, the other on cruel Tisiphone. You could see snakes and underworld dogs wandering about and the moon blushing red and hiding behind the great tombs, lest she witness these things… (Horace *Satires* 1.8)

Here we see again that Hecate is invoked in the ritual practice of magic dolls by magic practitioners, in this case, two witches.

Now a fragment from an oracle ca. 165 AD in which Clarian Apollo gives instructions perhaps to be performed at the sanctuary of Artemis. "She will ward off your sufferings and dismiss the man-destroying spells/poisons [pharmaka] of the plague, melting the wax-moulded dolls by night with the flames of her fire-bearing torches, the evil tokens of the mage's craft" (Graf, 1992; Ogden, 2009, p. 248). Wax-moulded dolls are here mentioned as a way to deliver Sardis from a plague by burning them to activate them. Here Hecate is being directly associated with magic dolls. Artemis is the goddess addressed, but the purifier

that is supposed to purge the plague is Hecate, as can be seen from the mention of her fire-bearing torches, which are one of the prime indicators of Hecate in ancient sources.

3.3 Conclusion

We started this chapter by talking some more about magical dolls after giving an introduction in chapter 1. The manner of deposition is the first thing we answered in this chapter. Crossroads, bodies of water, sanctuaries, doorways/houses and graves where sometimes the dolls found here are also put into a lead box. These places are all connected to liminality in the manner of deposition and as the ideal place to stage a magical ritual.

We also saw how liminality is connected to Hecate in Greek religion. From her start as the Carian city goddess, her dominance over gates and travellers led to her as goddess crossroads. Here she eventually became the goddess of liminality with dominion over these places and the beings that resided there. This circles back to magical figurines deposited here and Hecate directly invoked in these rituals.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 The workings of magic dolls

To sum up, what do magic figurines entail. They are primarily materialistic binding spells, while curse tablets, which are closely related, are more of a materialistic and verbal binding spell. One of the main characteristics of these tablets is the inscription. Most of the findings of these dolls are made from lead, bronze and clay, while wool, wood, wax and dough are also used in literary sources (Ogden, 2009, p. 245). Several types of manipulation are found on these dolls: Twisting, piercing, burning, breaking, placement into coffins/capsules, burials or submerging and writing names onto them (For example, see figures 2 and 3). One of these manipulations must be present for a doll to be a magic doll (Németh, 2019b, p. 192).

The most common find places for magical dolls are sanctuaries, graves, houses and bodies of water. Several dolls found in the Ceramicus site in Athens were found in a grave but buried inside a lead box. If we take Collin's (Collins, 2008, pp. 5–7)theory for magic as a way of communication, the deposition in doorways in houses and at crossroads where the intended target might pass makes sense. Suppose you wanted to convey a message to another person; what better way than a magic doll at such a place. Liminality and direct contact are both directly connected to these places. The doll is meant here to make sure the target knows it is being targeted with a spell and let the target's mind start the power of suggestion.

There were also dolls found in places such as graves, whether in a lead box or not, sanctuaries and bodies of water such as the doll found in the Ilissus. These dolls must have functioned as the ‘activation’ doll. Magic dolls shown at crossroads and doorways imply that another ‘working’ doll is hidden somewhere because the spell could have easily been countered if not for such a measure. The second doll would have been placed at a place of liminality such as the ones mentioned above and start the received parties' power of suggestion against themselves.

The find location thus tells us a lot about the workings of magic if we combine our knowledge of written sources. Magic dolls in visible liminal places functioned as a way to communicate your activated curse to the target and trigger the power of suggestion. Dolls in liminal places that are not visible must have been the actual curse which must not be

discovered for the curse to work. An added lead box could be another layer of protection to ensure this did not happen.

4.2 Interpreting magical figurines

For interpreting the results of the magical figurines from the last chapter, I want to take the Actor-Network-Theory I introduced in chapter 2 and apply it to these dolls. First is the materiality of the object. From Table 2, we can already see that 13/28 finds are without context, meaning we can only look at their material. From this, we can see that all finds of magical dolls are either lead or bronze. We know from literary sources that more materials existed, such as flour, wax, wool and wood, but these do not survive the ageing processes as easily as lead or bronze.

The archaeological context of the item is liminal places such as graves, rivers, sanctuaries and houses. Again, there is a lot of missing context where we do not know where the doll came from, so we can only look at the material and added inscriptions. These dolls are all manipulated, so we can say they are magical figurines, not just lost dolls. The items that have been found in contexts of liminality have all been found in, probably, their primary position. We know from textual sources that these dolls were activated by putting them in such places, especially for the dolls found in a box inside a grave. These have never been out of those boxes. There is also not much to the biography of this item since its primary purpose was to be put into a place of liminality to be activated.

Spatial distribution is complex for these dolls since there are not a lot of findings in general. A selective view is not the case here since all these dolls are important finds. Some flat lead tablets may have been mistaken for curse tablets, such as in figure 3. Finally, we have the meanings and power of the item where an object has rarely one meaning. In this case, I would argue that the doll has only one meaning. It is constructed to activate a binding spell on an adversary. Its only purpose is either to activate the spell or to start the power of suggesting the intended target.

Dolls can thus be interpreted when looking at the found context and the material. The material is most commonly lead or bronze. Even if all of these are missing, The manipulation of the dolls can give a conclusive answer to whether or not we are dealing with a magic doll. Spatial distribution is complicated since there are not many findings known.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Is there a connection?

Starting with a quick overview of the structure of this paper. The first chapter introduced liminality, Hecate as a case study, magical figurines and their difference from voodoo dolls.

The second chapter established a theoretical framework for magic in the Greek world. I introduced some of the practitioners of magic and theories on how magic works. I believe that magic worked in the greek world and might still work even though not as intended. Magic work through the power of suggestion as a way to communicate. Magic cannot have a direct physical impact on another person, but it can have an indirect effect. A magic figurine placed inside your home might make you think twice and wonder who cast a spell on you or wants to harm/manipulate you.

The third chapter introduced the material evidence. Magical figurines were listed, and ways of manipulation defined them as magical figurines. Their manner of deposition and material composition were referenced against their finding places in Greek contexts. I also introduced literary evidence where we can see that Hecate and other Chthonic entities were being invoked in the spells accompanying magical dolls. Hecate is mentioned alongside magical dolls in several ancient sources from the Greek world. The discussion in the fourth chapter gives a final answer to three of my sub-questions.

There is a clear connection between liminality and magical figurines regarding this thesis's evidence and theoretical framework. The interesting question follows, what makes this connection? Hecate was taken as a case study for liminality in the Greek world. She is established as the Greek goddess of crossroads, a place of liminality. She became the goddess of liminal beings such as ghosts and demons, and with a god that can control liminal beings to stay away, she can also command them to interfere. She also became known as the god of liminality, magic, and witchcraft because of the characteristics of liminal places.

Magical dolls are established rituals from the start of the Archaic period in Greece as a plastic medium for binding spells. They precede even the more common curse tablets in the archaeological record. Even the material for these dolls is similar since they are both often made of lead, although magical figurines have more material compositions. These

spells could be harmful, helpful or erotic. As we saw from the archaeological evidence, the deposition manner for these dolls was most common in graves, houses (doorways), water, sanctuaries, and sometimes even in boxes or vessels inside these contexts for extra protection. From literary evidence, crossroads can also be added to the list. These places are clear places of liminality, whether by a manner of definition such as graves or an association with a liminal god in sanctuaries. Another way magical dolls are liminal is the beings being invoked along with this ritual. Liminal being such as restless souls, ghosts, demons and other chthonic entities and ghosts were the most common beings to invoke in such a binding spell. Dolls were being deposited in places where these liminal beings dwelled as a direct consequence of the ritual required. It is a direct result of liminal creatures being attracted to liminal places that made graves and crossroads prime locations for depositing magic dolls.

So what makes the connection between liminality and magic dolls? Primarily it is the places of liminality. Deposition of magical dolls is primarily seen in water, sanctuaries, graves and doorways. We saw these places linked to the embodiment of Liminality in the Greek world in Hecate and saw that these places required certain rituals. They were the prime location for rituals such as magic dolls which are binding spells in nature. Binding spells rely on chthonic beings to carry out their invocations. These beings can most commonly be found near places of liminality. These creatures lived here, and Hecate controlled them.

There is a clear connection between magical dolls and Liminality in the Greek world. This is mainly through the manner of deposition and the required rituals that work best in these places of permanent chaos. Hecate is strongly connected to liminality, which includes her in the connection through the concept of liminality.

5.2 Suggestions for further research

Liminality impacted how people deposited magical dolls and the ritual connected to them. Looking for similar links to curse tablets, to which magic figurines are closely related in function, and other magic items could be helpful in understanding artefacts and the impact concepts as liminality had on society. Further research should look into the connection between concepts such as liminality and look at their connection to artefacts such as magical dolls or curse tablets.

Abstract

This thesis will investigate a connection between liminality and magical figurines in the Greek world. It will try to gain a better understanding of ancient society and how they dealt with a concept such as liminality. By taking Hecate as an example, it investigates liminality in connection to magical dolls. In this research, we will be Hecate as an example since she is widely regarded as the goddess of magic/ghosts or liminality. I will try to solve this problem by first gaining a general understanding of magic, magical objects and the practitioners of these rituals. I will then use specific examples of magical figurines and data of all these figurines in Greek contexts and put them into this magical framework. I found that liminality has a clear connection to where the dolls were buried or placed. Most dolls were placed in places of liminality, such as graves, bodies of water, crossroads, or door openings. Liminality was also involved in why these dolls were created and buried. In most rituals, liminal beings such as ghosts and demons or even Hecate herself were invoked to carry out the invocations accompanying the doll, whether this was erotic, harmful or helpful. Liminality impacted how people deposited magical dolls and the ritual connected to them. Looking for similar links to curse tablets, to which magic figurines are closely related in function, and other magic items could be helpful in understanding artefacts and the impact concepts as liminality had on society. Further research should look into the connection between concepts such as liminality and look at their connection to artefacts such as magical dolls or curse tablets.

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Figures and Tables