# Chamalières *sníeθθic* and 'binding' in Celtic

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The Gaulish inscription from Chamalières has been the subject of many different interpretations over the years, a significant proportion of them not accepting that its epigraphic context points to it recording a *defixio* or ancient binding spell. Nonetheless it appears to be a regular-enough aquatic curse-tablet find, and a *defixio* of the handing-over or registering variety employed in the context of litigation, although it is expressed metrically and employs only native vocabulary. Moreover some of the language employed seems to be reflected in expressions used to describe key narrative features in Insular Celtic tales.

In January 1971, French archaeologists unearthed a small lead tablet from the remains of an ancient spring near Chamalières (Puy de Dôme) that bears a long Gaulish inscription; see Lejeune and Marichal (1976-77), *RIG* L-100. In light of the find circumstances, the first-century text seemed to represent a common kind of classical magical epigraph, a κατάδεσμος or *defixio* (curse or binding spell). The correct interpretation of the Chamalières text has been contested over the intervening years, however; one of the most commented on of the Gaulish inscriptions, many of the linguistic analyses proposed for it do not seem to be reconcilable with its find context. A diplomatic reading of the inscription has been simple enough to attain (even if the parsing in one or two instances remains somewhat unclear), but not a comprehensive linguistic analysis and hence a reliable overall interpretation and translation.

The Chamalières inscription clearly features two opening sentences which are followed by a list of masculine names and several final statements, the last including repeated, ring-like phrasing: *luge … luge … luxe*. The use of *i-longa* (*î*) or yod in the inscription is rather erratic (the repetition, for instance, includes the variations *dessummiíis, dessumíis* and *dessumíís*) and is usually regarded as an unreliable guide to any underlying phonological behavior. Some other features of the

inscription's spelling have also been the subject of some controversy – these are noted in the following normalised transcription by underscoring, although the readings are not always strictly doubtful:

> *Andedíon uediíumí diíiuion ri(s) sunarṭiu Mapon(on)*
>     *Arueriíatin.*
> *Loṭites sníeθθic sos brixtía anderon.*
> *C. Lucion Floron Nigrínon adgarion,*
> *Aemilíon Paterin(on),*
> *Claudíon Legitumon,*
> *Caelion Pelign(on),*
> *Claudío(n) Pelign(on),*
> *Marcion Victorin(on),*
> *Asiatícon Aθθedillí.*
> *Etic Secoui toncnaman toncsiíontío.*
> *Meíon ponc sesit buetid ollon reguc cambíon.*
> *Exsops pissíumí ịsoc cantí rịssu ison son bissíet.*
> *Luge dessumiíis, luge dessumíis, luge dessumíís, luxe.*

The opening sentence is usually thought to represent some sort of summons or prayer. The most crucial part of the inscription analytically, however, has proven to be the second sentence, that which opens with the forms *loṭites* or *lopites sníeθθic.* Although the morphological analysis of the first term as a 2nd person (seemingly deponent) imperative seems clear, and most interpreters have seen a cognate to OIr. *lúatha(ig)id* 'hurries, makes haste', here (rather than, to say Latin *loquor*), what this may mean has not been made so evident. Karl Horst Schmidt (1981:263) has argued for a meaning 'quicken', i.e., in the attack, as if the Chamalières text is a martial enchantment, while more recently Joe Eska (2002:41) in his the most recent treatment of the find has preferred to read a command for Maponos (the divinity invoked in the first sentence) to 'hasten' or 'come quickly' – both see a pronoun *sní* 'us' in the next sequence in line with their transitive interpretations of *loṭites* (although Eska sees *sní* semantically as an indirect object, i.e., an accusative of goal). In fact a pronominal reading is the key feature of Eska's overall interpretation of the text (as an initiation ritual with an anthropological 'in-group', an 'us', in opposition to his putative 'out-group' represented by *sos* < *\*sons* 'them' for expected *\*sūs*). Yet though Wolfgang Meid (1992:38-40) further

suggests to read 'speed up' (i.e., 'effect') what he sees as a healing charm, none of these readings would have clear parallels in Greek or Roman, let alone other Celtic magical texts. In contrast, however, a request that the deity called upon in a *defixio* act $\tau\alpha\chi\grave{v}$ 'quickly' is not only common, but formulaic (often doubled or even tripled, and accompanied by $\mathring{\eta}\delta\eta$ 'now') in Greek $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\sigma\mu o\iota$ (a style which is reflected in Latin curses as *quam celerisme*) – and the find site of the Chamalières inscription is typical of one in which ancient binding tablets (*tabellae defixionum*) are also found (cf. especially the many finds from the sacred spring at Bath) as are inscriptions on lead rather than gold, bronze or silver; see Kagarow (1929:19, 44), Kotansky (1994), Graf (1997:126-27) and Ogden (1999:10ff.). Even the single *ansata* or 'winged' shape of the tablet is paralleled in Graeco-Roman *tabellae defixionum*: e.g., a curse tablet from Carleon, Britain, and one even featuring an *ansata* 'stele' (i.e., boxed-in section) from Carnuntum, Austria; see Egger (1962-63:I.81ff. and 281-82) and cf. Brashear (1975:28) and Betz (1992:311) for a similar stele in a spell from a Graeco-Egyptian grimoire.[1] A likely interpretation of *loṭites* would seem to be 'hasten, be quick!', then; after all, not only are curse tablets the most common of all ancient magical epigraphic finds (over 1000 have been published to date), as Eska suggests (p.c.), *loṭites* can even be analysed as a stative. This reading would not require *sní* to be a pronoun, though, which calls into question the usual reading of the following form as *sníeθθic* 'us and' (with *sní* a sigmatic form despite only asigmatic instances of the 1st acc. pl. pronoun being known (or suspected) otherwise in Gaulish and *eθθic* a rather irregular variant of probably gradative *etic* < \**eti-kʷe*; cf. La Graufesenque *avotni* 'made us', the apparently double use of *ni* at Thiaucourt, and the employment of *eti*

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[1] The *tabula ansata* is a traditional shape for ex voto and may first have begun being used for curses and other spells as a reflection of the growing prayer-like or theurgic nature of classical magic in the Imperial Roman period. 'Steles' seem originally to have begun as representations of spell tablets in magical tracts, but were later reinterpreted as emphasising forms, similar to underscoring (or boxing off) today, and hence even began to appear on spell tablets like the bilingual Carnuntum find which employs steles to mark out mystical symbols ($\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\tau\mathring{\eta}\rho\epsilon$) and the name of the god Hermes; see Egger (1962-63:I.91f.), and Kotansky (1994: nos 18, 45 and 66) for similar *tabulae ansatae* on ancient amulet lamellas.

seemingly where Latin texts have *item* at La Graufesenque; see *RIG* II.2, p. 120, L-20.69 and L-127).

An alternate interpretation for *sníeθθic* has been proposed by Pierre-Yves Lambert (1987:15; 2003:156) who chooses to see a verbal form, a cognate of OIr. *sniid* 'twists', here. He translates the form as 'torment', but in fact cognates such as W. *nyddu* 'to spin' and Latin *neo* 'to spin' suggest a better translation would be 'spin' or 'bind' (and contrast OIr. *sním* 'care', *dínním* 'careless', *dernum* 'torment'). Of course Lambert's (1987:15-16) agreement with Michel Lejeune (in Lejeune and Marichal 1976-77:164-65) that the inscription represents a judicial κατάδεσμος (as one of the men mentioned in the text is described as an *adgarion*, which may well signify an accuser or advocate; cf. OIr. *adgair* 'claim, sue') would be bolstered by reading the verb in this way – and cf. the appearance of *advoc(atos)* (and *litution*; cf. OIr. *liud* 'imputation') in what is probably another Gaulish *defixio* (albeit much less well preserved) from nearby Les Martres-de-Veyres (*RIG* L-102); indeed as Meid (1992:39, n.66) points out, *adgarion* might well be a calque of *advocatus*. Moreover the etymological figure *toncnaman toncsiíontío*, 'who will destine a destiny', which follows the names, also suggests a legal process (even if we must reject the influence of *\*to(n)g-* 'swear (an oath)' on morphophonological grounds); see Charles-Edwards (1995) and Schumacher (1995) – even more so if *secoui* (hardly *Segovii* as has often been assumed, given the reading *tonk-* rather than *to(n)g-*), seemingly the plural subject doing the destining, is a collective indicating 'the cutters'; cf. the Lezoux *defixio*'s (*RIG* L-101.A2 & 6) *secoles*, MIr. *tescaid* 'cuts' (< *\*to-eks-skH-*), *eiscid* 'cuts off' (< *\*in-sekH-*) and IE *\*sekH-* 'to cut'.[2] The oppositional, perhaps allusive (*meíon … ollon*, 'little

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[2]A reading as *seg-* would be in keeping with Schimdt's (1957:265-66) dictum for personal names, but the Lezoux *defixio* (as its verb *nitixor* indicates; cf. Larzac *nitixsintor*, 3rd pl. optative passive to *ni-(s)tig-* 'curse, stick down') seems to be a typical handing-over κατάδεσμος, and hence both *secoui* and *secoles* should probably be analysed in the same light. The Lezoux inscription at least clearly begins with a patently dedicatory *Lutura eiur[u]*, followed by *secoles* (cf. Latin dative plurals in *-īs* < *-eis*, presumably locatives in origin); i.e., probably 'Lutura has dedicated to the Secoli …'. Moreover, what seems to be a relative form *poṇ-/poṃ-* < *\*kʷo-* comes next and the sequence Lambert (*RIG* II.2, p. 282) has read as *treansa* (which is clearly followed by a sigmatic form of *gab-* 'took') may represent the Celtic word for 'third' (cf. *RIG* L-35.1 *tríanís*, OIr. *trïan*), i.e., indicating what was stolen (*trientes*, Roman third-pence). Together

… great'; *reguc cambíon*, 'I straighten the crooked' etc.) penultimate section also appears to feature two pairs of statements linked by enclitic connectives (*reguc* and *i̯soc*), i.e., forms similar to that suggested for *sníeθθic*. The main problem with his reading of *sníeθθic* as a verb + enclitic connective is that Lambert's proposed 2nd sg. form does not seem to be justified by comparison with Insular Celtic evidence.

There are several verbal constructions similar to this putative *sníeθθic* 'and bind' in Gaulish, however, some of which have been known (but not well understood) since the late nineteenth century, others of more recent discovery. The appearance of several verbal forms in -s̶s̶ among the finds at Châteaubleau (*RIG* L-90, L-93) – let alone the meaning for *sníeθθic* suggested here – make Lambert's suggestion worthy of some consideration. Reading *sníeθθic* as a 2nd sg. makes good sense in light of the Latin 2nd sg. perfects in *-stī*, after all, and Lambert has seen a pronominal *ti* affixed to a typical 2nd sg. (albeit subjunctive) desinence here, much as he has suggested for Châteaubleau *(peta)ma̶s̶si* (cf. also the MBr. 2nd sg. imperfect ending *-es* < *-es̶-*); see Lambert (1998-2000:80). Latin perfects in *-stī* (older *-stei* < $*$-s-tH_2e-i), though, have nothing to do with pronominal suffixation, but are instead formed with the Indo-European middle/perfect suffix $-tH_2e$ that features both in the Celtic 2nd sg. (deponent) imperative (Gaulish *-tēs*, OIr. *-the*, *-de* < $*$-tH_2e-i-s) as well as in the Insular 2nd passive constructions (suffixed by *-r*); see Sihler (1995:587-88). Reading a (secondarily thematised) *s*-preterite here (i.e., $*$snī-i̯e-s-t-i; cf. Gk ἔνησα, *LIV* 571-72), too, can probably be ruled out on pragmatic grounds: it does not seem likely that a 2nd person imperative would be linked with a 3rd person past form in such a way; cf. Eska (2002:42). There are similar OIr. 3rd sg. relative forms such as *sníes* (for expected $*$*sníete* < $*$snī-i̯e-t-i̯o) which appear to have desinences modelled on relative constructions of $*$H_1es-, seemingly in order to

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with the two clear forms preceded by the preposition *tri* 'through', we may translate '… whoever may have stolen (i.e., *quicumque involaverit*) *trientes*, through *aram[…]*, through *catic[.]nus*' (on the latter of which see Mees 2005:178). The connection between spinning, fating and cutting is particularly suggestive of the classical Moirae or 'Apportioners' (Clotho who spun, Lachesis who measured and Atropos who cut the thread of life), if not so clearly the various Celtic 'apportioning' (*$*$(s)mer-*) gods: (Dis) Smertrios, Rosmerta and Cantismerta.

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disambiguate them from *t*-preterital and other like forms; see Thurneysen (1946:§567) and cf., perhaps, Larzac (*RIG* L-98.2b2) *(nitiannco)bueθ* to Chamalières *bue│tid* (ll. 8-9) and Lezoux *bueti d…* (B1), the former of which Lambert (2003:173) interprets as a relative form. Yet again, it does not seem likely that we are dealing with the influence of Gaulish expressions modelled on a 3rd person form of *$H_1es$*-, i.e. < *$sn\bar{\imath}\text{-}\d{i}e\text{-}s\text{-}t\text{-}i$*, either.

Nonetheless, the new reading of the difficult Rom text by Robert Marichal in the Gaulish *recueil* (*RIG* L-198) supplies us with a reading *garti│esti* (A1-2) – or perhaps, rather, *carti│esti*, given that forms like *cartaont* (seemingly to *cart-* 'cleanse, scour', if not *car-* 'love' or a zero-grade form of IE *$kert$-* 'bind', a root not otherwise attested in Celtic) appear further on in the inscription – which appears to be a formation similar to *sníeθθic*. Moreover, there is a further similar Gaulish find that also seems to represent evidence that such forms were linked with imperatives. Although there is some dispute over the meanings of the nominal elements, one of the Gaulish Bassannac graffiti (*RIG* L-51) bears two sentences, each probably headed by verbs, one of which is clearly *lubi* 'love!', a regular thematic imperative known from other Gaulish texts. The other is *tíedi* (seemingly for *tíeθ(θ)i*), which despite the lack of a separating space is often thought to represent a 2nd sg. pronoun (a morphological accusative serving as a nominative, much as in Brythonic – although, then, probably only in Breton as *te* < *$te$*, the form which seems to be attested three times at Rom) followed by a final -*i*-retained 3rd sg. form of *$H_1es$*-. It seems more likely that *tíedi* represents a Gaulish cognate of OIr. *tinaid* 'disappears' (< 'melts' < IE *$teiH_2$-* 'be hot'), however, i.e., seemingly another *-sti* (*-θ(θ)i*) expression, the lack of a nasal infix suggesting a non-present, perhaps a subjunctive or a future form; cf. Lambert (2003:64). The final -*i* in each of these cases might be thought to be concomitant with verb movement (cf. the other -*i*-suffixed Gaulish forms such as *sioxti* and *ḷogitoị* which are clearly attested in verb-initial and final positions respectively) as they seem unlikely to represent inherited primary forms.[3] But the use of these

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[3]Exceptions to the typical verb-second ordering in Gaulish (other than imperatives) typically occur only when the verbs are either suffixed by what are clearly enclitics (e.g. Chamalières *regu-c, toncsiíont-ío*) or with final -*i*. This

constructions in combination with regular thematic imperatives (i.e., *lubi … tíedi* paralleling *loṭites* sníeθθic), instead suggests that this inflection may represent a Gaulish development employing the IE athematic imperative suffix *-*dhí* (cf. Gk ισθí), i.e., perhaps we are dealing with contracted periphrastic forms < \**snī-… + e*θθi, \**ti-… + e*θθi etc.:

> *Lubi rutenica onobíía!*
> *Tíedi ulano celicnu!*
>
> 'Love the thirst-killers[4] (?), Rutenian!
> Disappear (?) from the hall, redness (i.e., wine?)!'

Another of the Celtic Bassannac graffiti (*RIG* L-50), *neddamon delgu linda*, 'I hold the drinks of the nearest', probably represents the basic syntactic structure (gen. – 1st sg. pres. verb – acc.) of the opening supplication at Chamalières. The positioning of the verb *uediíumí* between the two apparently gen. pl. forms, *andedíon* 'infernorum' and *diíiuion* 'deorum', however, seems to indicate that Gaulish could be lax concerning constituent order, much as Latin is, the verb here probably appearing in the middle of a prepositional or adjectival phrase. This positioning may represent not merely the verb-second rule of Gaulish (here applied hypercorrectly?), but also perhaps a stylistic (ring-like) effect. The expression *andedíon … diíiuion ri(s) sunarṭiu* seems to represent a reflection of the tradition of *daemones infernales* or *ministeria infernorum de(or)um* 'servants of the chthonic gods'; see Egger (1962-63:I.87).[5] Moreover, as Eska has pointed out, on

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behavior supports both the impression that the absolute endings of Insular Celtic originally had something to do with verb movement (Watkins 1963a:48-49 = 1994:50-51), as well as the clitic/particle theory promoted most influentially by Cowgill (1975) – preterite *sioxti* scarcely continues a (regular) primary *hic-et-nunc* form; the IE primary : secondary distinction does not appear to have survived into Gaulish in a regular manner.

[4]Comparing Gallo-Latin *vidubium* 'vouge, wood-knife', Lambert (2003:141-43) has interpreted *onobíía* as a compound of \**pono-* 'thirst' (cf. Gk πóνoς) and \**bi-* 'strike', much like a Celtic masculine ANIMAL + *bi-(i̯)o-* (masc.) construction such as the Negau A cognomen ΦΑΝΥΑΦΙ, i.e., *Banuo-bi-i* 'pig-killer' (gen.), MIr. *Failbe* < \**wailo-bi(i̯)os* 'wolf-killer' or *Artbe* < \**arto-bi(i̯)os* 'bear-killer' or the divine byname *Latobios* 'der mit Furor schlägt'; see Meid (1995), Markey (2001:113-16).

[5]The usual comparison of the difficult *ri(s) sunarṭiu* (rather than *ri(s) sunaritu*) with OIr. *son(a)irte* 'strength' (< \**su-nṛt-i̯ā*) has been criticised by Eska

etymological grounds the verb *uediíumí* should probably be glossed in a manner closer to Latin *peto* or *precor* than *invoco*, which is again in keeping with the use of supplicatory verbs in *defixiones*, especially in those of the late type which Versnel (1991) has distinguished as judicial prayers.

Similar syntactic license probably also explains why the more surely native expression, the etymological figure *toncnaman toncsíiontío*, features (archaic – cf. the Prestino inscription and Alise-Ste-Reine's *dugiíontiío Ucuetin*) verb-final word-order (albeit with postposed enclitic), rather than reflecting the verb-second style typical of Gaulish. Furthermore the 'fating' figure may be evidence of another kind that the Chamalières text deals with binding. Middle Welsh *tynghaf tynghet*, which in *Culhwch and Olwen* is the key expression, describing what compels the hero to seek out his yet-to-be-seen beloved, shares the role of the motive for heroic action that is characteristic both of the *geis* in early Irish literature and curses in Greek tragedy. Often thought to represent the anthropological notion of the taboo, both of the etymologies proposed for *geis* point instead to the world of the *defixiones* (as does the fact that *geasa* are something that kings and heroes have, rather than being inherent to certain objects, animals or acts such as is typically the case with taboos); cf. Hull (1901), Sjoestedt (1949:70-71). Whether a development of *$g^{wh}edh$-* (as in *uediíumí*; cf. the use of Latin *precor* to mean both 'pray' and 'curse', and the similar behaviour of Greek ἀρά 'curse, prayer'), as is usually thought,

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(2002:38) as phonologically irregular, although a similar development seems to explain forms like OIr. *cart-* 'clean, scour' < IE *(s)kert-/(s)kr̥t-* 'cut' and OIr. *-scara* 'separates' < *(s)kerH-/(s)kr̥H-* via *skera-/skrā-/skar-* (*LIV* 558); cf. Hamp (1992). A connection with the *daemones infernales* would suggest a similar meaning, with *sunarṭiu* presumably indicating a collective that Maponos is being summoned prior to. The oblique inflection may represent the same development witnessed in the Alise-Ste-Reine dedication's (*RIG* L-13) *in Alisiía* where the Séraucourt graffito (*RIG* L-79) has *in Alixie* 'in Alesia', i.e., the use of a morphological instrumental with locative force, with *ri(s)* 'before, prior to' (< *pris*). The Chamalières *ministeria infernorum deorum* would seem to be the *Secoui* mentioned later on in the text who are being called upon by the curser to 'destine a destiny' on the list of names, much like Culhwch's stepmother does in *Culhwch and Olwen* or the wronged Arianrhod manages to three times in *Math Son of Mathonwy*; see Charles-Edwards (1995), Schumacher (1995), and cf. the similar multiple binding on a *defixio* (featuring infernal spirits and another Celtic divinity, Ogmios) from Bregenz (Egger 1962-63:I.276-89).

or with Hamp (1981) of *\*ghed-* (cf. OIr. *ro·geinn* 'is contained', i.e., a contract or a fate), the *geis*, although restricted only to kings and heroes in Hibernian tales, may reflect the broader IE tradition of the curse-enhanced oath – something bound so well it should not be broken (but, eventually in the Irish stories, typically and tragically is) – much as curses were often added to oaths (and laws) in ancient Greek tradition to ensure they were not broken; see Watson (1991:8-9), Sjöblom (1998), and cf. Watkins (1995:448-59) and Markey (2000) on possible broader IE parallels between magical binding, ancient legal practice and the swearing of oaths perhaps reflected in Celtic by W. *hud* 'magic' and its cognates ON *seiðr* and Lith. *saitas* (< *\*soitos* to *\*sH₂i-* 'tie, bind').

Stylistic features might also explain the rather strange wording (if not the general lack of discursive flow of the charm) of the second line at Chamalières, too, with the two verbs (*loṭites sníeθθic*) grouped on the left, and the instr. sg. and adverb *brixtía anderon* 'with magic (the names which follow here) below' grouped on the right. This latter grouping makes *anderon* seem to be a gen. pl. modifying *brixtía* rather than (the flanked expression) *sos* 'these (masc.)', i.e., 'these by infernal magic (magic of the infernal ones)', rather than the clearer expression, better paralleled in classical curse tablets (e.g. as *a nominibus infrascriptis*), *andernados brictom* 'the enchantment of the group (here) below', seen at Larzac; see Tomlin (1988:65).[6] In fact these forms, like the opening supplication, could well represent hexasyllabic compositions (mostly trisyllabic dimetre, at one point, though, even apparently featuring a form of elision) in keeping with the scheme elaborated by Watkins (1963b = 1994:349-404) for Insular Celtic metres (and employing a typically Celtic, rather than Latinate scansion). Metrical considerations (and cf. the alliteration and end rhyme) probably explain the unexpected position (and overt clitic pronoun) of the verb *uediíumí*, as well as the placement of *anderon/sos*. Moreover, the two opening sentences also seem to be linked by ring composition comparable to the half-word type called *ascnam* in Middle Irish (Murphy 1961:43-45) that probably emphasises the distinction

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[6]Typical curse-tablet forms like *a nominibus infrascriptis* are also evidently the model for the opening Larzac sequence *[i]n eianom anuan[a] san'anderna*, with *in* used with the accusative having a different ('into, upon') meaning than when it is used with a dative/locative like *sinde*.

*infernus* 'underworldly' : *infra* '(here) below':[7]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Ande**d*íon* | *uedíiumí* | × × × ǀ × × × |
| *diíiuion ri(s)* | *sunarṭiu* | × × × ǀ × × × |
| *Mapon(on)* | *Arveríiatin;* | × × (×)ǀ × × × × |
| | | |
| *loṭites* | *sníeθθic* | × × × ǀ × × × |
| *sos brixtía* | **ande**ron! | × × × ǀ × × × |

'Of the infernal    I beseech
of the gods, before the power
Maponos                Arveriatis;

'be quick              and bind
these with magic   (here) below!'

Following the names and the etymological figure comes an oppositional section which has heretofore not received a complete translation. Despite the paucity of trisyllabic cadence, to judge from the rhyme and assonance it may also be metrical, albeit 'dithyrambic' (cf. especially the phonological form of the first and last lines). Moreover it also seems mostly to feature alternations of word-foot dimetre and trimetre:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Meíon, ponc sesit,*[8] × × ǀ × × × | |
| *buetid ollon;* | × × ǀ × × |
| *reguc cambíon.* | × × ǀ × × |

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[7]Scansion is a particularly fraught matter with dead languages, but a Latinate (i.e., octosyllabic) interpretation here would not explain the apparent fronting of *andedíon* (i.e., its movement to the left of *ri(s)*, the head of the prepositional phrase, to form a ring with *anderon*), as the second sentence cannot be scanned as octosyllabic – and the tetrasyllabic cadences that result from such a scansion are quite unlike anything envisaged by Watkins (contrast the approach of Eska and Mercado 2005).

[8]Rather than *ponc sesit*, Lambert (2003:159) instead reads *ṭoncsesit* (cf. Séraucourt *legasit*; *RIG* L-79), which might make more sense if *buetid* is to be interpreted as a relative form with -*id* < *-*i-de* 'that, who': i.e., 'May you destine little so that it may be big'; see Schrijver (1997:177). Eska's (2002:47) connection of -*id* with *-idid* 'it' seems to be ruled out by La Graufesenque *auotide* < * *au-ue-ud-t-id-id* 'made it' (*RIG* L-20.68); cf. *auotis, auot(t)i, auote* and Hitt. *u-watemi* 'bring (about)'.

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>*Ex*</u>*ops* <u>*pissí*</u>*umí;* | ×× I ×××
| <u>*is*</u>*oc cantí* <u>*ri*</u><u>*s*</u>*su,* | ×××× I ××
| <u>*is*</u>*on* <u>*s*</u>*on* <u>*bi*</u><u>*ss*</u>*íet.* | ××× I ××

'Little, when sowed (?),
may it be great;
and I straighten the crooked.

'Blind, I will see;
and this (the destiny?) of charm I have counselled (?),
will ensure this (?).'

    The last sequence here, beginning with *isoc*, is usually judged to be especially unclear (it actually reads *tsoccantírtssu*), although *ison son* (the former probably representing an augmented \**e-so-* and similarly *isoc* presumably < \**e-sod-k$^w$e*),[9] where the two demonstratives appear in sequence, seems to represent a similar practice to the redundant use of the article in a Greek expression like τούτων τῶν 'of these (the)' (cf. the doubly deictic *sinde se* of the Larzac inscription) rather than represent reduplication of the Old Irish *in sin* (< \**sn̥ sn̥*) variety; cf. Eska (2002:48-50) and McCone's (2003) critique of Schrijver's (1997:14-17 and 39-43) reconstruction of a Proto-Celtic \**sim* rather than \**sod* < IE \**tod* – although alternatively, the use of the double demonstrative (much as at Larzac) may represent an emphasised form, i.e., a performative use of deixis (referring to what is 'little … great'?) much as might be expected of a spell; see Faraone (1996:95-96) and cf. Schrijver (1997:49), De Bernardo Stempel (2005:196): hence 'this, this here/this, thereon'? It seems likely, too, that *cantí* is to be read as a gen. sg. of a Gaulish \**cantio-* related to \**cantlon* > MIr. *cétal*, W. *cathl*, Br. *kentel* (which are formed as if they were originally instrument nouns) much as (and perhaps having the

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[9]The similar forms with tau Gallicum, e.g. Vergiate's ɪśos (Solinas 1995: no. 119), seem to be pronouns: hence Rom's (B2-3) *i{h}ɤa <a>tat o te {h}iɤo atant* may well be an adaptation of the *si masculus, si muliebris* (*si vir, si mulier* etc.) formula typical of *defixiones* of the judicial-prayer type (and cf. also B1 & 9 *te uoraiimo*, presumably '*te donamus*' vel sim.). For the vocalic variation in demonstratives like Chamalières *isoc, ison*, Marcellus's *ison* (*De Med.* 15.106), Larzac *esi* (1a9), Châteaubleau *-esi* (2×), perhaps *eso, e[s]o* (?) at Lezoux (*RIG* L-8, L-67) and *essạna* (?) at Baudecet (*RIG* L-109), though, cf. the comparable sporadic raising in forms like Gaulish *esox, isox, esax* and OIr. *iach* (gen.) 'salmon'.

same semantic relationship as) Latin *cantus* 'singing, playing, prophecy etc.' (general) has to *cantiō* 'song, charm' (specific), or Gaulish onomastic *Anextlo-* and OIr. *anacul* have to British onomastic *Anextio-*; see Marstrander (1934), Markey (2003:295-96), *CIL* XIII 11583, *RIB* 2415.55; and the '*cétal Loga*' of *Cath Maige Tuired* §129 (Borsje and Kelly 2003:21-22). Morphologically, *bissíet* seems unlikely to be a form of 'to be' (and cf. Châteaubleau *bissiete*) as is often supposed given OIr. *bieit* 'will be' < *$biwāseti$ < *$bhi\text{-}bhwH_2\text{-}s\text{-}eti$, and a form like *$bid\text{-}si^e/o\text{-}$ 'will ensure' (cf. OIr. *bibdu* 'one who is liable, culprit, defendant, enemy', Latin *fīdō* 'trust', Goth. *beidan* 'await, expect' < *$bheidh\text{-}$) makes some sense in light of the common use of legalistic terms in κατάδεσμοι; cf. Eska (2002:50), De Bernardo Stempel (2005:196). Hardly an oblique nominal descendant of *$writ(t)\text{-}$ 'scratch, write' (> *reißen, ritzen*) as is often averred, *ri̯ssu* instead also looks to be a verbal form similar to OIr. *·ráidi*, MW *adrawd* 'said, told' (< *$roH_1dh\text{-}i̯o\text{-}$) and OIr. *ris* 'a piece of news, tidings, story (etc.)' (< *$reH_1dh\text{-}s\text{-}$), i.e., an *s*-aorist to *$reH_1dh\text{-}$ 'counsel' (*LIV* 449-50).

Watkins (1995:63-64; and cf. ibid.:100), however, points out the parallel between *reguc cambíon* and Hesiod's (*Works and Days* 7) ἰθύνει σκολιόν, '(Zeus) straightens the crooked' which suggests this section might be a poetic reference to the righting of a wrong. Hymns are often also included in the spells recorded in the magical papyri, and snatches, especially of Homeric verse, are similarly used in many ancient charms. But the closest wording in a classical curse to this passage would seem to be on the lost second-century BC Amorgos *tabella defixionis* that includes a series of oppositional expressions (which is another fairly typical feature of the longer κατάδεσμοι) including μὴ δουλεύθοιτο μὴ μυ[κρ]ῶν μὴ ὑπὸ μεγάλου, 'may he not be served, by the great or the small' and σπείρας μὴ θερίσαιτο, 'may he sow but not reap'; see *IG* XII.7, no. 1 and Versnel (1991:69-70). On the other hand, the reference to blindness should perhaps be understood in terms of the semantics of seeing linked to figures such as the Insular *filid*, the use of future tense pragmatically replicated by similar (typically future-perfect) forms in classical curses.

One final indication that the Chamalières inscription is a curse appears to come in the last line, which as Eska (2002:51-52) has suggested probably features a four-fold (and hence obviously stylised) use of the verbal root *lu(n)g-* > OIr. *·loing*,

which he has glossed as 'bends (together), entwines' and Martin Kummel (*LIV* 416) proposes may reflect an underlying meaning 'wohin tun'. At Larzac this evidently causative verb seems to be a key piece of cursing terminology, i.e., describing the action (*lunget-*) performed by Severa Tertionicna in the *defixio* (*ponc nitixsintor sies duscelinatia*, 'when they are to be bound by malediction') and, although related to English *lock* (< *\*luk-*, *lūk-*), it is obviously reminiscent of the various 'devote' or 'consign' terms such as παραδίδωμι 'hand over', κατατίθημι 'assign', *mando* 'entrust' or even simply *do* 'give' also typical of classical curses, if not the more direct 'binding' or 'tying' verbs (καταδῶ, *defigo* etc.) which κατάδεσμοι often employ; cf. British *luciumio* (3x, L-108, Bath) in what the Latin context (most of the other finds are judicial prayers) suggest are probably verbs of the 'hand-over' type. In judicial prayers it is typically stolen items that are entrusted to the gods; an older form of handing over appears to be occurring at Chamalières, however, where it seems to be the victims mentioned in the body of the inscription (C. Lucius Florus Nigrinus etc.) who are being committed to stand before Maponos/the chthonic powers (for judgement), as is typical of handing-over κατάδεσμοι from the centuries about the birth of Christ.

A different use of *\*lu(n)g-* may be witnessed in medieval Irish, though: in a key passage from the *Wasting Sickness of Cú Chulainn* (*LU* ll. 3516-25 = Dillon 1953: ll. 316-23) the hero's fairy curse is described in the following manner:

> *Mór **espa** do*                           *láech*
> *laigi fri súan*                           *serglige,*
> *ar donadbat*                              *genaiti (.i. mná)*
> *áesa a Tenmag*                            *Trogaigi (.i. a Maig Mell),*
> *condot rodbsat,*
> *condot chachtsat,*
> *condot ellat,*
> *eter bríga*                               *ban**espa**.*

> 'Great *folly* for                         a warrior
> to lie under the sleep                     of a wasting sickness
> for it shows that                          spirits (i.e., women),
> the folk of Tenmag                         Trogaigi (i.e., of Mag Mell)
> have overwhelmed you
> have captured you
> have taken possession (?) of you
> through the power                          of womanish *folly*.'

Within a ring of forms in *espa* 'folly' (which themselves
are subordinate to a longer ring with *mór*), the use of *laigi* (to
*laigid < *leg-i̯o-*) 'lie' looks as if it may have been deliberately
linked with the difficult form *ellat* in this passage as the third
(and hence presumably most important) term in a triad of
descriptions of spellbinding. Clustered within three
tetrasyllabic (short) lines nestled between heptasyllabics
(long), however, the correct interpretation of both of the
verbs *rodbsat* and *ellat* have been subjects of some
disagreement. As *rodbsat* seems literally to have meant
'destroyed', it has either been semantically ameliorated to
'injured' by past interpreters or taken as a scribal error for
*robdsat* 'overwhelmed'; moreover, although the more
controversial hapax *ellat* has been linked by Myles Dillon
(1940:280, n. 4; 1953:64, 82) with *ell* 'a flush, blush, sudden
pang or pain', such a verb would be otherwise unattested in
Old Irish, and a corrected reading as the relatively common
*ellacht* (to *in·loing < *eni-lu(n)g-*), presumably meaning 'put
upon' or 'taken possession' in this context, might be preferred
given the meristic semantics entailed by overwhelming,
capturing and possessing; and cf. *BL* 1056: *condas ellacht Cú
Chulaind*. If so, an understanding concerning the old
etymological relationship between *\*log-i̯o-* and *\*lu(n)g-* may be
echoed here; i.e., despite the remodelled vocalism, *\*lu(n)g-* is a
nasal remake of causative *\*log-i̯o-* (with the vocalism modelled
on OIr. *boing < *bu(n)g*); see Pedersen (1909-13:II.570),
Watkins (1962:117, n. 8), Meid (1996:44).[10] The *serglige* is,
after all, literally a 'wasting-lying (or sleeping)' – Cú Chulainn
is even described as *fer seirges i lligu* 'a man who lies wasting
away' in *Bricriu's Feast*; see Carey (1999). Compare, too, the
'lay' semantic (as 'loads', supernatural 'imposts' or 'burdens')
obvious in the Icelandic *álǫg* or 'binding charms' which have
been compared both to the *tynghaf tynghet* of *Culhwch and
Olwen* and Scottish *geasa* by Rosemary Power (1987). In Irish
use, though, *·loing* came to take on a series of (typically)

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[10] In fact the spelling *ellat* may have been provoked by a desire to rhyme with
*rodbsat* and *chachtsat*, the elision of the velar perhaps reflecting the influence
of the other Hibernian 'put' form which seems to have developed from IE
*\*legh-*, i.e., the suppletive *-lá* (paralleled in Continental Celtic by the Voltino
stone's **-LAI**), seemingly a reanalysed form of a *\*log-n- > \*lā(n)-* (vel sim.),
hence 3rd sg. perfect *-lái*; see Markey and Mees (2004:88).

legalistic meanings: prefixed by *fo-* < *\*upo-* it means 'support', with *in-* < *\*eni-* 'put in, put together, make a claim, possess, occupy'; and in this way it is particularly reminiscent of the compounds of Greek τίθημι commonly used in κατάδεσμοι: a term for 'put' used with the meaning 'put before the chthonic gods', 'commit to an infernal trial'. When taken in light of the employment of *luci-* (< *\*log-i̯o-*) and *lu(n)g-* on ancient magical tablets (and cf. the use of causative *legasit* < *\*legh-H₂-s-t-* in what is probably a votive context at Séraucourt; *RIG* L-79) it seems possible, if not likely that the use of the *\*log-i̯o-/\*lu(n)g-* root represents a (genre-specific) calquing on Greek (παρα)κατατίθημι – and that *\*log-i̯o-/\*lu(n)g-* forms consequently became the terms *par excellence* for magical 'handing over' (i.e., putting before the infernal courts) in the Old Celtic interpretation of the classical cursing tradition.

Eska reads the Chamalières forms *luge* and *luxe* as imperatives, however, attempting to explain away the unexpected absence of nasals in these terms as owing to the influence of non-nasal forms like *lock*. The lack of a nasal in the Gaulish examples, though, points more regularly instead to a non-present or participial form; in fact, given the formation of the Old Irish verbal noun *-log*, the terms seem to be regular *o*-stem locatives/datives; cf. Larzac ntr. sg. *sinde*. Consequently, the last line of the Chamalières text could well be translated as a tripled, though syntactically regular, verb-second and pentasyllabic *luge dessíumiís*, 'I prepare them for committing' plus a final (ring-compositional) *luxe* 'for committing!', continuing the use of the first person from the opening and penultimate sections of the charm, as well as the metrical form (word-foot dimetres and trimetres, predominately with trisyllabic cadences) especially obvious in the opening lines. Although well known in Celtic tradition, emphatic triplicity is widely attested in classical magic. Indeed the Gaulish here even seems to echo the concluding triple expression of a particularly well-preserved and effusive Greek κατάδεσμος from Carthage: ἤδη, ἤδη, ἤδη, ταχύ, ταχύ, ταχέως, κατάδησον, κατάδησον, κατάδησον αὐτούς, 'now, now, now!, quickly, quickly, quickly!, bind, bind, bind them!'; see *CIL* VIII 12509, Audollent (1902: no 239), Watson (1991:11-12).

The Chamalières inscription begins with a supplication to Maponos, presumably the god of the spring the tablet was

deposited in, as is typical of the opening lines of ancient curse texts from similar contexts; then it is succeeded, as is also typical of *defixiones*, by a list of the names of the victims of the spell. Chthonic powers called the Secoui or 'Cutters' then seem to be inveighed upon to fix the fate of what are probably the curser's legal adversaries (after Maponos had first bound them), and the seemingly very Celtic description of cursing employed is then followed by an allusive section including oppositional expressions reminiscent of some which appear in classical κατάδεσμοι. Finally, the last line, although appearing to represent some sort of chant, employs a form of emphatic rhetoric often used in classical magic to round out a spell. The Chamalières *defixio* appears to represent a Celtic adaptation of the ancient tradition of binding magic, a Celtification which seems to be particularly evident not just in some of the key vocabulary used, but also in the song-like nature of the text. Yet despite its many Gaulish peculiarities, it also remains an expression crucially dependent on the so richly attested genre of ancient *defixiones* nonetheless.

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